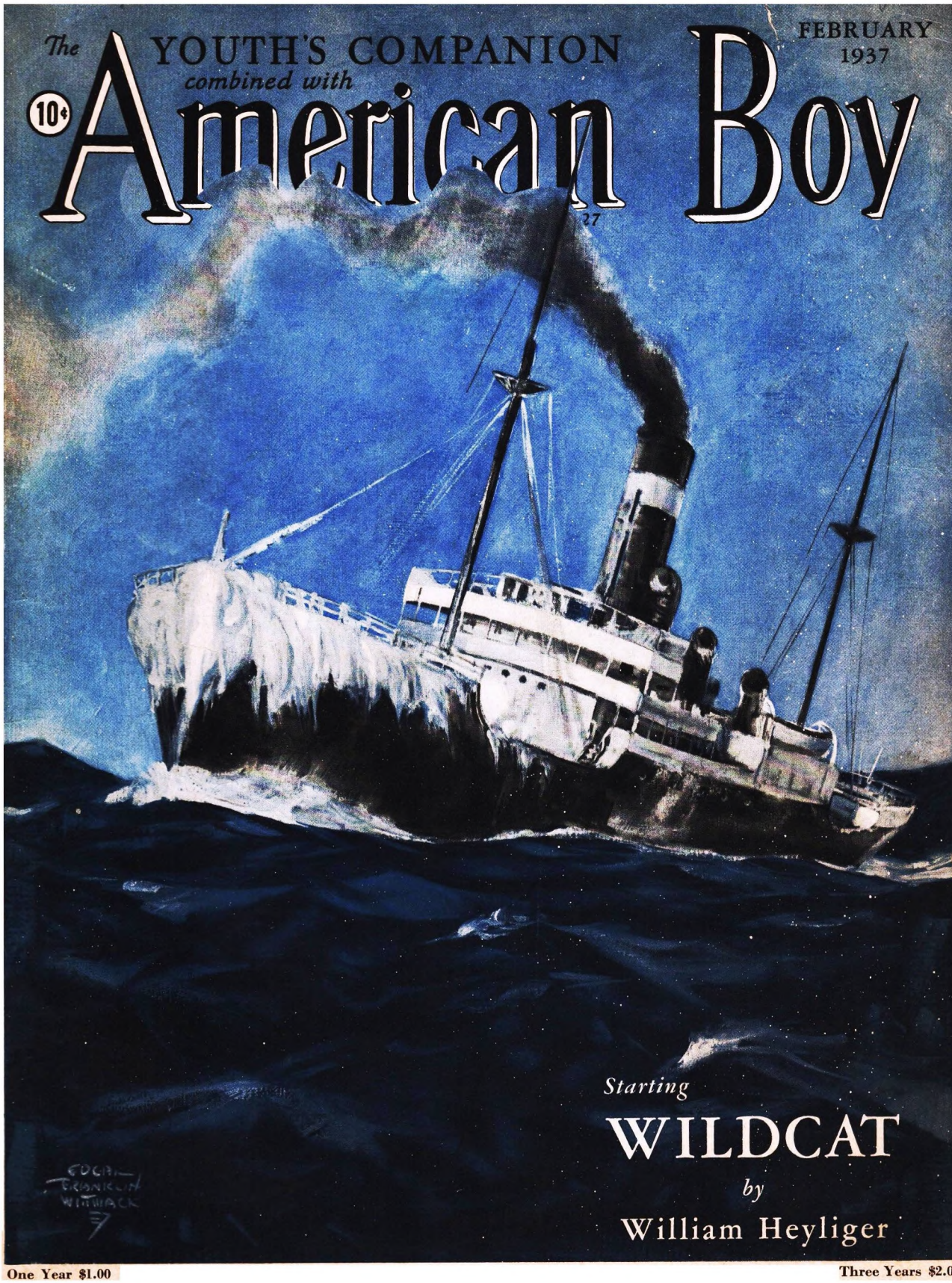
The YOUTH'S COMPANION
combined with
10¢ American Boy
FEBRUARY
1937



Starting

WILDCAT

by

William Heyliger

"Seems like a new way to fish," the little gray man said mildly. Pete mumbled in confusion – from the March installment of "Wildcat."

Sports
Mystery
Adventure

"WILDCAT" is just one of scores of stories that will come your way in The American Boy during the coming year. There will be sports, adventure, mystery, business, hobbies, school activities—the equivalent of approximately TEN BOOKS. In the March issue, alone, you will read a rollicking dog story, "Big Medicine Hide-rack," a wrestling story, "Sign of the Round Robin," an adventure in the Florida swamps by Vereen Bell, "The Man Who Couldn't Whistle," a diving story, "Coming Up!" by Franklin M. Reck, adventure in the air—"The Red Ball Express," and other stories and articles you'll enjoy mightily.

Things Really Start Popping

Next Month

As You May Well Imagine After Reading the First Installment of "Wildcat" Starting on Page 5

IN a few minutes, if you have not already done so, you will be reading the first installment of "Wildcat", a stirring new American Boy serial of the oil fields—the masterpiece of the popular author—William Heyliger. American Boy editors rank this story as one of the finest ever published in this magazine.

You are going to enjoy this story as you've never enjoyed a story before. It's a story of smoke and mud and dynamite and roughneck oil men and crooked lease-breakers. Adventure supreme!

You'll say this first installment is thrilling! But this is just a starter for what's coming. Next month with the characters all in place, action gets under way. Things really start popping! Look for glorious reading in the March American Boy.

Play Safe

IF you are already an American Boy subscriber and your subscription has at least six months to run, you may sit back happy in the knowledge that you will receive every installment of "Wildcat" without interruption. If you are not a subscriber we strongly urge you to send in your subscription order at once. You'll regret it if you discover that your newsstand is sold out leaving you stranded in the middle of the story. This story, alone, in book form would cost you considerably more than a whole year's subscription to The American Boy.

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The YOUTH'S COMPANION *combined with* American Boy *Founded 1827*

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In The Morning Mail

CONDUCTED *by* PLUTO, *the* OFFICE PUP

The Youth's Companion, Combined With The American Boy for February, 1936, Vol. III, No. 2. Entered as Second Class Matter Nov. 23, 1935, at the post office at Detroit, Mich., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Circulation, Business and Editorial offices: 7430 Second Blvd., Detroit, Mich. Published monthly. Copyrighted 1936 by The Sprague Publications, Inc., Detroit, Mich. Price 10c a copy, $1.00 for one year, $2.00 for three years in the U. S., its possessions, and Canada. Elsewhere 50c a year extra.

"DEAR PLUTO," writes Robert T. Swartz, Grand Rapids, Mich. "You have printed many stories in *The American Boy* which dealt with various vocations. Brilliantly the authors presented some of the problems and rewards to be found in each; I felt better after reading them. For instance, I knew positively after reading 'Mill in the Woods' that I didn't want to be a furniture manufacturer. In like manner I have come to the conclusion that I don't want to be a steel-worker or an ad writer.

"So, while the stories are fine enough for those who have definitely decided upon a vocation—giving them a picture of the inner workings of that vocation—they don't help us poor unfortunates who still have to make the choice! We can't just sit still and wait until your magazine tells about *all* vocations!

"I am of the firm opinion that there are lots of boys like me who would welcome a series of articles by some writer, preferably a psychologist, telling boys how to analyze themselves, find their best talents, and compare these talents with the requirements of the modern vocations."

The best way to dog an editor is to bite his heel.

THE above letter aroused so many questions that yours truly padded into the editor's office and nipped his heel—sometimes the only way an office pup can get an editor's attention is by biting him respectfully, especially when he's absorbed in a new Claudy manuscript. (We've just received one and hope to publish it this spring.) Most American Boy readers, it occurred to me, are just at the age when it's important for them to pick a life work.

HOW many of our readers, do you suppose, have picked a vocation?" I asked the ed.

"Well," the ed replied, "since more than forty thousand of them are of college age or older, approximately that many must be actually working at a job, or else training for one. Of our high-school-age readers, thousands must have their plans pretty well made. But we probably have a quarter of a million readers who aren't sure what they're going to do."

"What are we doing for them?"

"Swartz mentions one of the things we're doing—running vocational fiction, portraying in story form the ins and outs of some line of work. 'Wildcat,' which starts in this issue, is one of them. Did you know that William Heyliger, the author of 'Wildcat,' was told by New York librarians that his vocational books were widely read by young fellows seeking a career, and that many of these young fellows give Heyliger credit for helping them make up their minds?"

"Good enough," I replied. "But how about the boy who wants to analyze himself?"

"We're trying to help him, too. Beginning in this issue we're running a series of chats by Dr. Frank Howard Richardson dealing with many of the questions a fellow faces. The fifth one, entitled, 'Choosing the Right Job,' lays down some broad principles a chap can follow in determining the kind of work he's best fitted for. The entire series is designed to help a man make the most of himself, whatever vocation he selects."

Business of translating American Boy stories into Polish.

SPEAKING of boys who seem to be working purposefully toward a career, the morning mail brings a letter from James Henry, who lives on a ranch near Lander, Wyoming. Henry is a freshman in high school and works in a printing office and by the time he graduates he'll know the trade pretty well. He is, however, working for a West Point appointment. If he doesn't get it, he'll have his knowledge of printing to fall back upon.

SOME wayward bug has stirred up a whole raft of letters about two favorite *American Boy* characters. I refer to Connie Morgan, gold hunter and woodsman, and his half-cracked friend, Old Man Mattie.

"I would like to see a Connie Morgan story in the near future and I believe many other readers agree with me," says Robert Le Mense, Iron Mountain, Mich.

"Let's have more of Connie and Old Man Mattie," pleads Grant Skelley, Portland, Ore.

"If you'll pardon me, I would like to make a suggestion," writes Julian Sizemore, Virgilina, Va. "Will you please have more Connie Morgan stories with Old Man Mattie?"

With a barrage like this coming our way, we're delighted to announce that we have just purchased two Connie Morgan yarns for 1937, with more promised by the author, James B. Hendryx.

James Henry knows where to find his "P's" and "Q's".

AND here, fans, is a swell letter from Lowicz, Poland. The writer is Wasil Jagielski, a faithful *American Boy* reader. He says:

"I was born in America but came to Poland four years ago with my parents who, as Polish citizens, were returning to their fatherland. In this town not one person speaks English but me. Imagine my not speaking English for four years! When I came over to Europe I felt very lonely. I could get no English books or papers. Then I thought of The American Boy and immediately sent in a subscription, and now your magazine is my only American friend in Poland! But all my Polish friends are learning the English language because after seeing The American Boy, they wanted to read it. I translate all the stories for them and we all decided that the best story in the November issue was Carl H. Claudy's 'No Man's Space.'

"We ask you to print an ice hockey story in the magazine. After soccer football, ice hockey is the most popular sport in Europe. All my friends are sport-minded and again they ask me—they are looking over my shoulder trying to translate what I am writing—to try to get you to print a feature on track and field events from the Olympic games. Some of them were in Berlin and saw the U. S. A. win the track and field competition."

WELL, Wasil, there's an ice hockey story in this issue and some good track material coming. We recommend especially the Forrest Towns article next month. Your friends will remember him as the man who swept the hurdles clean in Berlin. Wasil, incidentally, is teaching his Polish friends American football and baseball and he says they like both games very much.

BEFORE this column runs out, we'd like to introduce to you a new *American Boy* author, Millard Ward, whose story "Midwinter Drag," appears in this issue. His picture is on this page. And here's a brief autobiography:

Millard Ward is third mate at sea but first rate at a typewriter.

"I was born at Westminster, Maryland, in 1904, where both my parents taught at Western Maryland College. We soon moved to Baltimore, however, and that was my base until two years ago when I came to North Carolina. I left high school after the third year and went to sea for a year and a half. Then I entered the U. S. Naval Academy, but had such a tough bout of flu my first winter that I was advised to try something less strenuous. I went back in merchant ships until I got my third mate's license, then I sold a couple of stories and found that that worked better than anything else. Most of my time since then has been devoted to writing and traveling when I get a chance. Western North Carolina is delightful to me and will probably be my home from now on."

AND now, this pup would like to announce to everyone that the "Texas Tech" college mentioned in our November football story, "Night Game," is *not* the Texas Technological College of Lubbock, Texas. The "Texas Tech" of the story is purely a fictitious school. Shortly after the story was published we received the following letter from a reader, Ivan Little, who is a student at the real-life Texas Tech. He said:

"In the November issue of The American Boy is a story entitled 'Night Game' in which mention is made of Texas Tech, and not very favorable mention at that. You said: 'Castle Hills' great gray team whose only loss last year was a rather severe one to Graduation this afternoon barely nosed out Texas Tech whose chief claim to public attention is that she is the only weak team in Texas. . . .' And again, '. . . After the game the team took their showers in silence. There was none of the horseplay and wise-cracks that usually follow a victory. The team last year had beat Texas Tech 40-0. And Tech wasn't any stronger this year.'

"I am a student in Texas Technological College at Lubbock, Texas, and am fairly well qualified to question these statements. Texas Tech's Red Raiders are not the weakest team in the state. They defeated Texas Christian University this year 7-0; and if you remember, Texas Christian had one of the strongest teams in the nation last year. It is true that the season has not been as successful as it might have been, but the boys have defeated some strong teams and I thought you'd like to know it."

THEN, to make our faces a little redder, came a letter from Bradford Knapp, president of the college, containing these facts about Texas Tech:

"We are the third largest institution in the state of Texas; larger in student attendance than SMU or TCU or any other school except the great University of Texas and Texas A. & M. In the last few years we have defeated SMU, TCU, Baylor, Centenary, Oklahoma A. & M., Oklahoma City University, and other very good teams. We won the international prize at the Livestock Exposition in Chicago one year with our judging team. We came fourth this year in November. You will find the name of our college in any of the college publications, the World Almanac, and dozens of other publications on education.

"I know that Northern and Eastern people will not believe us when we talk about this country, but we are just as good Americans as there are anywhere else and we do think a lot of the reputation we have tried to earn in the last eleven years. Indeed, if you will look in some of the write-ups of the past football season you will find one and sometimes two of the members of our present team mentioned. In *Collier's* you will find the name of Jim Niell, halfback on our team this year, among the honorable mentions. I assure you the teams playing against us this year did not rate us as the weakest team in Texas, and no team has defeated our team in quite a number of years as much as forty to nothing."

IN defense of all authors, however, let us say that it's easy to get mixed up on school titles. In the following list of names, can you pick out the actual schools from the imaginary ones? You should come up with seven actual schools. Before you read the answer, try to locate the actual schools by towns. Here's the list: Clemson Agricultural College, Boston University, New York Tech, Boston College, Connecticut Tech, Pratt Institute, Rochester College, Wayne University, Boston Tech, Occidental College, Niagara University, Oregon Tech.

Have you checked them? Then, just to prove that you've missed some sizable schools, we'll give you the enrollments along with the towns of the actual schools. The false ones were New York Tech, Connecticut Tech, Rochester College (there is a University of Rochester), Boston Tech, Oregon Tech.

And here are the correct ones, with towns and enrollments: Clemson Agricultural College (1,500), Clemson College, S. Car.; Boston University (10,000), Boston, Mass.; Boston College (1,500), Newton, Mass.; Pratt Institute (1,650), Brooklyn, N. Y.; Wayne University (10,000), Detroit, Mich.; Occidental College (700), Los Angeles, Calif.; Niagara University (585), Niagara Falls, N. Y.

THERE are more good letters about hobbies, pets, and the magazine, but space has an unkind way of running out. Send your comments and suggestions to Pluto, the Office Pup, *The American Boy*, 7430 Second Blvd., Detroit. All letters are acknowledged with a pup-card, and those quoted receive an autographed portrait of Pluto.

Coming Your Way!

GET out your boots and have a pair of dry socks handy. Next month you'll be back in the Okefenokee swamp with Johnny Ames and George Maher, looking for the rest of the payroll gang. And even though Johnny is an expert woodsman, fisherman, and paddler, you *may* get a ducking. The title of the story is "The Man Who Couldn't Whistle."

* * * *

SPORTS fans, next month, are in clover. Wrestling, track, and fancy diving all neatly wrapped up in one issue of the magazine! Collegiate wrestling is one of our favorite sports. Any contest in which all attention is riveted on just *two* men has more concentrated drama than a sport in which you have to watch a field full of players. In wrestling you have two well-conditioned gladiators locked in combat under the glaring ring lights, pitting strength, balance and speed against each other. There's no relief for the fan. Nothing else to watch. Just those two, straining against each other. March's wrestling story is called "At the Sign of the Round Robin," and is by an author new to the magazine, Barent von Waldron.

* * *

THE track package comes to you as a careful analysis of the form of Forrest Towns, undoubtedly the greatest hurdler who ever lived. "You Can't Run in the Air," is the title of the piece, and if you want to know precisely how a champion does the hurdles the article tells you clearly and understandably.

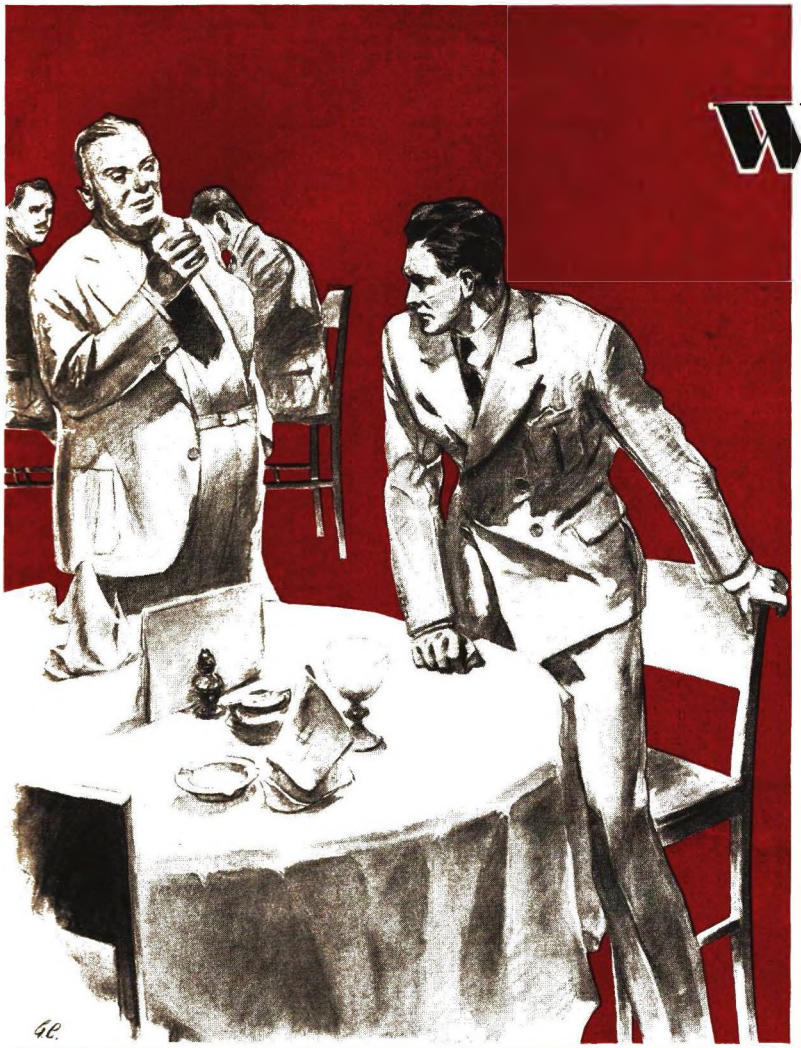
* * *

FANCY diving in the last few years has taken a sharp upward swing. Divers are bouncing off the boards today and doing things in the air that the champions, a few years ago, hadn't even heard of. Such dives as the two and one-half pike, for instance. The March diving story, "Coming Up!" by Franklin M. Reck, is about this new crop of divers who can make their bodies perform almost any sort of maneuver and still come down for a clean entry into the water.

* * *

HIDE-RACK, the collie, will be back next month, and "Red Ball Air Express," another of those air-transport yarns about Stub Macklin and Johnny Caruthers. To get material for these air stories, Fred Litten took a trip into the Mexican mountains. If he was to have his air line running over the Mexican mountains, he had to know what the mountains looked like.

While on his trip he met the Tarahumara Indians, probably the greatest natural runners in the world. They run all the time. They run as soon as they learn to walk. They run from one town to another. As they run, they kick a ball (pelote) to take their minds off the thought of fatigue.



"Tut!" Sammy Crisp admonished. "These are not the oil-field days of knock down and drag out."

WILDCAT

A serial of smoke and mud and dynamite fumes —and blind oil fever!

by

William Heyliger

Illustrator: GRATTAN CONDON

Chapter One

FLAT and parched, the rice fields stretched for limitless miles under the blaze of a sun that burned down from a dazzling blue gulf-coast sky. In this isolation of baked land, broken only by the corrugated slashes of dry irrigation ditches and an occasional lonesome stand of oak and pine, the shooting truck and the dynamite truck seemed to be motionless dots. Around these dots were smaller ones, which moved. The smaller dots were men.

Joe Janvier, the Cajun dynamiter, lowered his wires, his fuse and his two-and-a-half-pound charge of dynamite into the shot hole. Pete O'Toole filled the steel-lined hole with tamping water from the reservoir tank on the dynamite truck. Gene Brandon, at the telegraph key in the shooting truck, slapped at the flies and wirelessed a warning to the instrument truck one-half mile away that they were ready to fire.

The receiver in the shooting truck broke into an answering clatter.

"Time out," Gene called; "they haven't finished fixing the pick-up instrument."

Joe Janvier took a sooty coffeepot from the dynamite truck. The ashes of a small fire were still warm upon the ground. He fed wood to the ashes and set the pot above the blaze. Soon there would be hot coffee. To Cajun Joe Janvier the days were not divided into hours, but into cups of coffee. So many cups to each shot hole.

The sun climbed to noon and the dry heat pulsed. There was no shade. Pete O'Toole came to the shooting truck and wiped sweat from his sunglasses.

"How long are they going to be tied up, Gene?" He was mercurial, Pete. You couldn't predict him—purring one minute, growling the next.

"Don't know."

"And we figured we were going to be through with this job by noon! I thought Silvy Malot was a crack trouble shooter."

"He is." Gene spoke with calmness. Fatigue wasn't enough to upset him.

"Why didn't he get here early?"

"The recording instruments didn't go wrong until late yesterday. We phoned the Soltol offices last night. Silvy drove out of Houston at three this morning."

"Did he?" Pete's voice was full of impatient scorn. "The poor, abused guy. I'll bet he had a bath last night, and five hours sleep in a real bed. We're just out here on a pleasure jaunt. Three weeks on a hot-shot job without a day off. Put up at night where you can—and sometimes you can't. Run out of razor blades and no shaves for a week. Pay for a room only to sleep on a mattress that somebody brought out here by pack train in 1850. You drink what they call water and thank heaven you've had your typhoid shots. If the truck bogs down you sleep out and fight mosquitoes. And so poor Silvy got up at three o'clock this morning, did he?"

Gene tried to scratch the calf of his leg with his heel.

"When did you have a bath last?" Pete demanded.

"A week ago."

"Half a bucket of yellow water and a washcloth. Call that a bath?"

"It helped," said Gene.

Joe Janvier spoke from the fire. "You have coffee?"

Pete O'Toole spat dust. "One more drink of that Louisiana mud and my stomach will pinch up and quit."

"Coffee, she is not to gulp," Joe reproved. He poured the strong black fluid into a cup. Cajun fashion, he sipped it delicately.

The receiver in the shooting truck clattered. "They're ready," said Gene. He gave the distant instrument truck ten seconds to have its recording instruments going. Then he closed the dynamite switch.

The ground shook. A muffled echo thudded and a column of water spewed into the Texas sunlight from the shot hole.

"Now I suppose," Pete said tartly, "they'll find something's gone wrong with their amplifiers and we'll have to shoot again."

But the instrument truck wirelessed an okay. The seismic waves, set off into the earth by the explosion, had been photographed. The instrument truck had its seismic picture, for that particular shot, of what lay under the earth's crust. In this fashion does a modern oil company search underground by seismograph for the geological "structures" favorable for the accumulation of oil in the sands.

"One more hole," Gene announced. "We may be through by two o'clock."

They folded down the aerial. A crane truck appeared from nowhere to pull up pipe from the shot hole. Gene Brandon nosed the shooting truck around.

"This is not the way to the next hole," Pete objected.

"Gunfire orders," Gene explained. "A rancher named Ike Webb owns a spur of land that cuts across. Warned our lease men he'd shoot if we came on it. When you're warned off in Texas, you stay off. Instead of going straight ahead, we detour."

"About fifteen miles, I suppose."

"Only eight," Gene said serenely. "That's the way things go in the oil country, son. If you can't go across, you go around."

In the ovenlike heat the tires squirted dust. The dynamite truck, lumbering in their wake, was lost in a brown cloud. They took the steep irrigation dikes at an angle, thudding with sickening falls into the dry bottoms, and fighting their way up the other sides. Dike followed dike, until it seemed that nothing on wheels could survive such torture. By and by they came upon a farmyard and rolled through to a surfaced road.

Pete eased his aching body. "Soltol's had this rice land under lease for four years. Why this sudden yen for a hot-shot?"

Gene shrugged. "Who knows? Maybe some poor-boy outfit is drilling . . ."

"Nuts! The days of poor-boying a well down are past. Takes too much money today."

"I'd like a crack at it if I could find some oil land. Anyway, let's say some poor-boy is digging thirty miles from here. He goes down four thousand feet and Soltol's scouts say he's getting formations that mean oil. That makes the adjacent land worth looking over. Ever been in one of the oil company buildings in Houston when somebody spots a new field?"

"No."

"That's when you see action with its sleeves rolled up. That's probably why we're out here on a sudden hot-shot."

"You talk as though you like it."

"It's part of the game."

"You sap," Pete said acidly.

Gene made allowances. Three weeks of hard beds and tasteless food and tepid water. Three weeks of dynamite fumes, and clinging dust and burning sun. Pete had hot-shot nerves.

Soltol surveyors had been through, laying a trail for the gangs that dug and cased the shot holes. Two miles farther, a strip of yellow bunting fluttered from a bush. Gene swung off the road into a field. Again they bounced, and jarred, and battled their way over ditches. More yellow appeared at intervals and they swung left or right. Green bunting, tied to a stake, marked the spot where the instrument truck would stop and plant its pickups. Then a strip of red fluttered. They were at the last shot hole.

Joe Janvier rolled in with the dynamite truck and immediately brought out the coffeepot.

"Get a fire under it, Joe," Pete urged through caked lips.

The Cajun's eyes crinkled. "I thought you want no more Louisiana mud."

"It's something damp," Pete said, slapping dust out of soiled, grimed khaki.

They waited for the signal. Sweat dripped from them. Then the instrument truck, on location at last, wirelessed that it was ready. Suddenly the ground shook and the air grew rank with fumes hotter than the day. Finally the last shot had been fired. The crane truck backed in again, and a three-weeks' hot-shot job was finished.

Once more they crashed down into irrigation ditches and lurched out. From two directions, cars began to converge upon the road. Gene saw the instrument truck and Silvy Malot's trouble truck. The trucks gathered at a gate and Silvy opened it to let them out. When the last car was through he closed the gate and came toward the shooting truck.

He was young, this Silvy Malot, and lean. His cheeks were thin, his jaw set with a hard squareness, and his blond hair was almost silver white. But it was his eyes that dominated. They were blue, startlingly blue, and cold with a clear, direct chill.

"Run into Ike Webb?" he asked.

Gene Brandon shook his head. "Didn't see him. He was around."

"Would he really shoot, you think?" Pete O'Toole asked.

"At me?" Silvy Malot's eyes became ice. "If he did he'd better make his first shot good."

Gene thought, "A tough man to tangle with," and drove onto the road. The truck needed gas, so he stopped at a Soltol filling station. The attendant talked eagerly while Gene filled out a charge slip.

"Hear about Golconda Johnny Kline? He put a wildcat down at Thimblepack and brought in a discovery well. They say he'll come out of it with a couple of millions."

Gene stopped writing. "You mean if the lease-busters don't trim him. They've done it before."

"Not this time." The attendant was positive. "I hear he got him an army of lawyers to search titles before he signed leases. Johnny used to work around here ten years ago as a driller. Didn't have a thing but his salary check. Then he got in with a poor-boy outfit and they brought in a producer."

"And lost most of their acreage on title flaws."

"Sure. Johnny always was a sucker for the title-busters. This time he's hired him a lawyer. Anyway, he got forty thousand from that first well."

"That's oil," said Gene. "Broke today and a millionaire tomorrow." He climbed back into the truck and drove out.

Pete looked at him sourly. "You getting ideas?"

"We seem to be able to find oil for Soltol."

"Nuts! Soltol has money. What have you got?"

That was it, Gene reflected. Everything seemed to spell itself into a money value. It cost money to live, and if you wanted to save for a future that took more money. The thought of the future sharpened a discontent that had been with him a long time. It was two years since Soltol had put him on the shooting truck. Two years without promotion or a hint of promotion. Where would he be in ten years? Sometimes an engineer got into a dead pocket of a job and stuck there. Some men made fortunes in the oil fields, some lost fortunes, the majority simply earned a living. The major companies had taken the gamble out of oil. With money, equipment, trained engineers, and instruments they had turned the search for oil into a science. What was left after that? And yet, with all the odds against them, poor-boy outfits mortgaged themselves to shake dice with fate. In this miraculous oil empire of sudden riches and sudden ruin, who could say where any oil man would be in ten years?

"Still thinking about Golconda Johnny?" Pete asked.

Gene's grin looked genuine. "It's my turn to say it. Nuts!"

They drove into the Soltol camp at the Anahuac field. Though it was only a little past three o'clock gas lamps burned along the white, glaring, shell-paved streets; for here, with gas coming out with the oil from every producing well, it was cheaper to let lamps burn twenty-four hours a day than to turn them on and off. They rode past the camp—small, comfortable cottages set in trim lawns with carefully kept flower beds, the Boy Scout hut, the eating house, a fish pond brilliant in hard sunlight, the field office. Company cars sped in and out through the camp entrance and the field itself was a far-flung panorama of aluminum tank batteries, popping gas flares, "Christmas trees" on flowing wells, and skeletonized drill derricks. Off on the horizon dense black smoke ballooned toward the sky—a new well was flowing off its first run of oil and water into the burning pit.

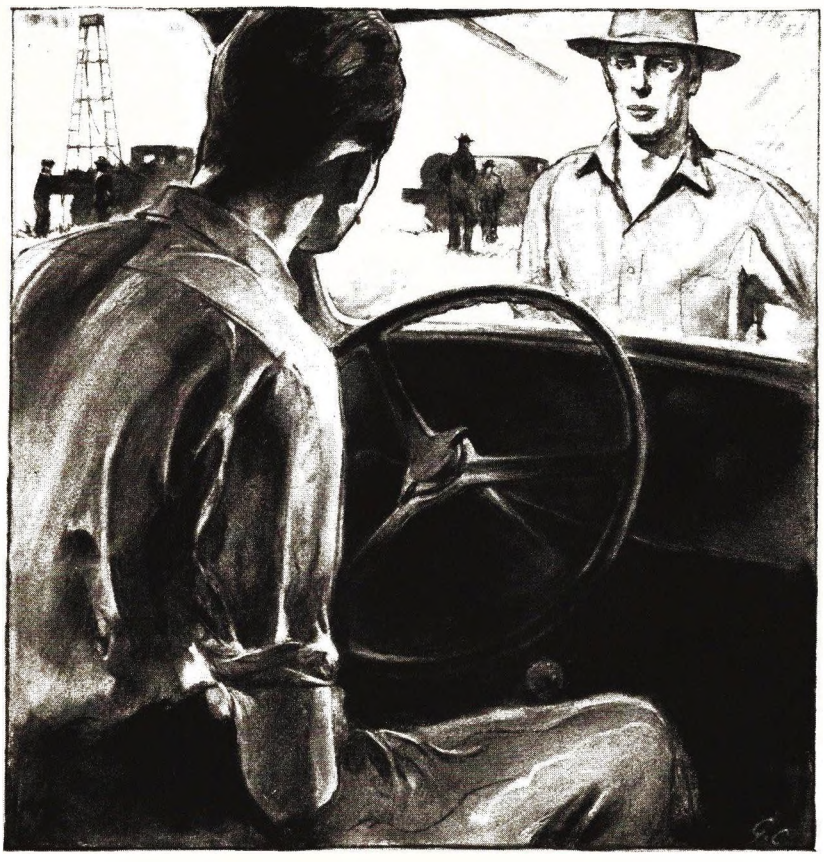
Gene's own car, left there three weeks before, stood in front of the long porch of the bunkhouse.

"We're off until Monday," he marveled. "Two and a half days. Our room in Houston, platters of fresh food, and a show. Civilization!"

"But first," Pete said, "we take a shower." He leaped from the truck, sped along the porch and popped into one of the bunkhouse rooms. Presently he reappeared with an armful of towels and soap.

They reveled under a cascade of flowing, reviving water. The miracle of unlimited water! Pete, squashing out from under the showers, looked distastefully at his litter of dirty clothing. Yet there wasn't a stitch in their grips that wasn't as soiled and grimed as the khaki they had taken off—and would have to put on again.

"Look," said Gene. "I'm giving you a picture of heaven. We have a room back at the Magnolia in



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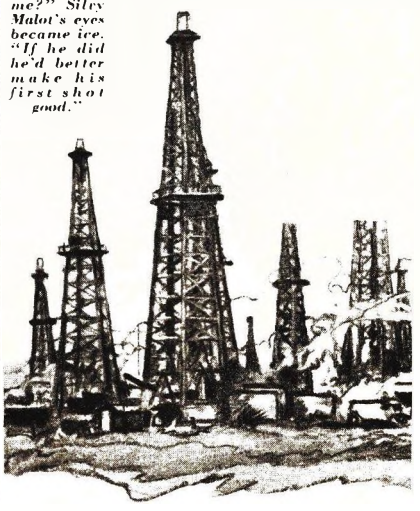


Houston. We pay for it by the month whether we use it or not. When we get there we can have another bath. We can climb into clean duds from the skin out. And Houston is only three hours from here."

"Too far," said Pete. His sopping head disappeared into a towel, reappeared. "I'll bet we made a job of that dynamiting." Hot-shot nerves were gone.

"Roughnecks"—drilling crew men—finishing their morning tower shift, crowded into the shower house. Bare feet padded the wet, concrete floor and voices boomed.

"I see Golconda Johnny brought in again at Thimblepack."

"That guy could find oil in a bald man's head."

"I got a chance to buy me a lease down there."

"Yeah? You know what happens when Soltol finds a man gambling in oil leases?"

"If I had a Thimblepack lease that wouldn't worry me. I'd tell Soltol to push over and give me room with the oil magnates."

One of the roughnecks spoke to Gene: "You seismo boys ought to be able to go find yourselves some oil."

Pete, on his way to the door, paused. "What do we do then?" he asked in sarcasm. "Just poke a finger in the ground? Or are we supposed to use a drill rig and five thousand feet of pipe?"

Gene thought: "That's the trouble; it takes money." He finished dressing and went back to the bunkhouse. Pete, once more stripped of his khaki, lay stretched out on white, cool sheets.

Gene prodded him. "You're holding up the parade. On to Houston."

"An eight-mule team couldn't pull me out of here," Pete said drowsily. "I've found the peace I crave. I'm staying here. Turn on the fan, will you?"

Gene turned on the electric fan. "Will you be in tomorrow?"

"Anything happening?"

"Fellow told me he caught some nice bass up near Enciato."

An eye opened. "How we love the great, open spaces! Didn't a three-weeks' hot-shot fill you up?" Suddenly Pete sat upright. "What's the matter with you? Ever since they loaded you with Golconda Johnny at that filling station you've been acting crazy. Sure Johnny's struck it again, so what? Sure McCarthy put down a wildcat where they said there was no oil and got a new Anahuac. Then he went to Amelia and put down another well, and it blew out and took fire and burned to a total loss. How much will that cost him? You don't hear much about the losses. Don't you know the saying in Texas that for every wildcat producer there's a dozen dry holes, and for every dry hole a busted heart? What's got into you? Oil fever?"

Gene shook his head and some strange madness seemed to pass out of him. For every Golconda Johnny there were dozens of failures. Oil was an underground fugitive. A lucky few found and trapped it. The others. . . . He grinned wryly at his friend.

"Oil fever? I can't afford to have oil fever."

"Some get it anyway," said Pete.

Gene Brandon left the Anahuac field behind. In this incredible Texan empire, towns are widely spaced and men drive fast. The needle of his speedometer touched seventy-two. Almost imperceptibly, as daylight lingered and faded, the evening breeze from the Gulf of Mexico began to blow over the land. There was a lowering of temperature and a welcome sense of relief. Gene drove in comparative comfort.

The lobby of the Magnolia Hotel throbbed with oil field talk — title and lease, producer and dry hole, twenty-four-hour potential and daily allowable. Newspapers in the rack at the cigar counter told the story of a new oil kingdom. "GOLCONDA JOHNNY KLINE BRINGS IN DISCOVERY AT THIMBLEPACK." The room clerk gave Gene his key.

"Hear about Golconda—"

"Sure," said Gene wearily. "He's done it again." He was growing sick of Golconda Johnny Kline.

"I was offered a lease the other day—"

Gene fled to the double room on the third floor. He bathed again, changed to a linen suit and came down to the dining room.

Spain and Mexico have left their trace on Texas. The uniform of the waitress blazed with color—tan and blue and gold.

"Good evening, Mr. Brandon," she said. "Haven't seen you around for a while."

"Just got back," said Gene. He ordered a steak, black-eyed peas, a salad, strawberry shortcake and coffee. A man's feed!

A voice came. "Here's to Johnny Kline. A good finder, but a poor keeper."

Gene turned his head. He recognized the voice of Sammy Crisp.

Five men at a table. There was mockery in the way the short, pudgy, pink-jowled Mr. Crisp held up his glass.

"And to the old land grants," another voice said. "Which are so dear to us," Mr. Crisp added gently.

Gene's eyes went around the group with distaste. Lease-busters all, in their feasting they reminded him of vultures. Men who had never produced a barrel of oil and never expected to produce a barrel. Shrewd and without scruples, they hovered over the oil fields in anticipation while other men explored and drilled. But let a well come in, let a new field be opened and they immediately swooped to search hungrily through old, mildewed records for flaws in titles.

They found flaws. It was almost inevitable. They had interest in land only when that land meant oil; and because of their activities a saying had grown up in Texas that a dry hole clears a title while to find oil clouds it. The generous old Spanish grants, given by the newly independent Texas to men who had been with Sam Houston when Santa Anna was overwhelmed at San Jacinto, had far too often been loosely described and indifferently surveyed. For instance sometimes the surveyor had taken a tree as a landmark, and in the course of time the tree died and fell and the landmark was gone. Then it was difficult to prove original lines and establish holdings, particularly in cases where parts of the grant or patent had been sold. Through this confusion the lease-buster craftily plied his trade and picked his profits.

Voices again came across the room:

"You cut yourself in on a jack pot, Ramon, in Johnny's last strike. I never did get the straight of that."

"Didn't you?" the answering voice murmured.

Somebody jeered. "Trust Ramon to keep his mouth shut."

"Who'll be the lucky man to call in on Johnny this time?"

"Isn't there," a new voice asked, "enough good things in this, perhaps, for all of us?"

"I don't hear Sammy Crisp saying anything."

"Sammy's as closemouthed as Ramon."

They were all, Gene thought, suspicious of one another. A bad breed, and fortunately a dying one.

"Sammy'll be at Thimblepack tomorrow," a voice pried, subtly seeking information.

"Oh, no." Sammy smiled at them. "I have no interest in Thimblepack."

The silence that followed was distrustful.

"If you think you're fooling any of us that way, Sammy—"

"Give you a smell of oil and you'd travel in your sleep."

"When Johnny Kline starts to put down a well," Mr. Crisp reproved them, "the wise man doesn't wait for signs. Johnny is too good a finder. I've had my money on a card."

"You mean you're already in, Sammy?" The voice was incredulous.

"I did not say that," the pink, pudgy man corrected blandly. He turned to speak to a waitress, saw Gene and immediately stood up and came over to him.

Gene groaned to himself, "And I've been waiting three weeks to enjoy this dinner."

Mr. Crisp was effusive. "Mind if I sit down, Brandon?" He drew out a chair. "How are you? When did you get in from your hot-shot? The Magnolia must be pleasant after the rice fields."

Gene looked at him. "You're well up on my work."

Mr. Crisp chuckled. "I make it a habit to pick up information. I missed you and made inquiries."

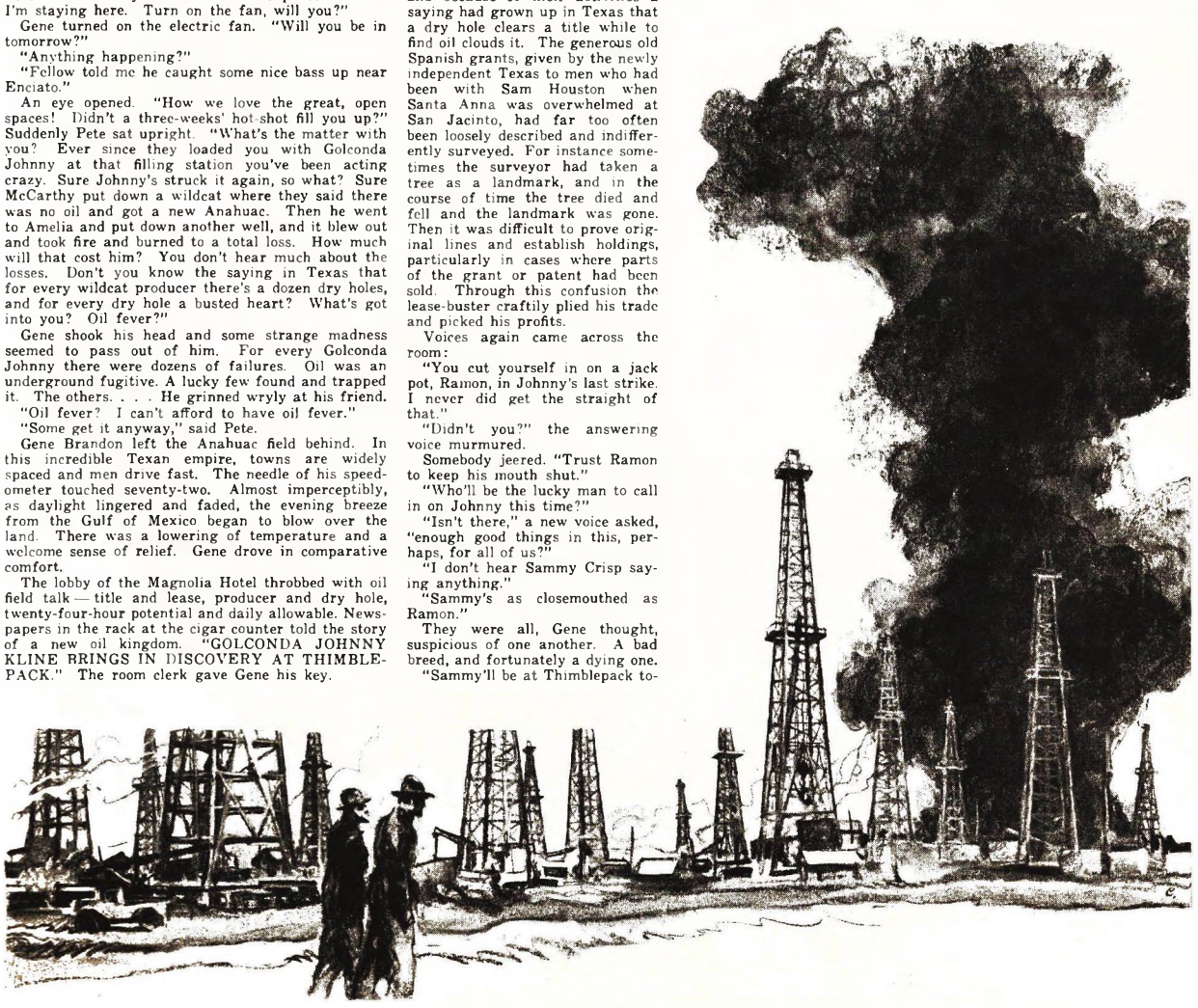
"That was nice of you," Gene said dryly.

"Not nice; practical. I wanted to talk to you, Brandon."

Gene broke bread, buttered it and was silent.

"Would you like to make some money?" the man asked. His voice, apparently, had not altered, and yet it was in some way sunken and muted.

"Everybody would, I suppose."



"Naturally. Now—" Mr. Crisp took a slender cigar from his pocket and rolled it delicately between his fingers. "You are a seismograph man. The shooting crews get—shall we say advance information?"

"Of what?"

"Tut! Oil, of course. The instruments give your crew a picture of fast and slow propulsion seismic waves with reflections coming through here and there. You bring in your pictures and a subsurface contour map is computed. You know when you're closing in on a structure that probably means oil. If I had a little advance information, a hint—" Mr. Crisp studied his cigar.

"When did you get an idea I'd sell out my company?" Gene demanded angrily.

"Not so loud. Did I say sell out? Before Soltol starts to drill they have leases. But there is sometimes some unnoticed acreage left—a little here, a little there. Is Soltol harmed if I take that?"

Gene said: "Get out, Crisp."

Sammy Crisp did not move. "I could make it worth a man's while."

The waitress approached the table with her serving tray.

"I'll eat over there," said Gene. He strode in wrath toward a table nearer the cashier's desk.

A laugh sounded faintly from the table from which four lease-busters watched.

Mr. Crisp shrugged. Sensitive feelings were a liability; they got in your way and warped your judgment. A man might insult you today and be—well, reasonable—tomorrow. He clipped the end of the cigar, lit it and savored the tang of the tobacco. Unembarrassed, he followed Gene to the new table and stood beside his chair.

"You're young," he said affably. "When you are a little older you will know that money is always money. The more money, the louder and sweeter it talks." He took the cigar from his mouth, studied it with approval and put it back. "It has been my experience that a man is usually willing to talk about money—sooner or later."

Gene pushed back his chair.

"Tut!" Sammy Crisp held up a gently admonishing hand. "These are not the old oil-field days of knock down and drag out." He bowed, moved away and came back leisurely. "I'm always around when anybody wishes to talk to me. I have to be. Because the man I pick for a talk usually comes—sooner or later."

Chapter Two

DAWN crept wanly out of the east. A raw fog, rolling in from the warm waters of the Gulf, laid a soft gray blanket of chill mist over the Texas coast country.

Gene Brandon slept. The telephone on the stand alongside the bed tinkled, and he stirred. The bell rang more sharply and he opened his eyes. Fog pressed through the windows. Who could be calling him at such an hour? A sudden summons from the Soltol Oil Company sending him back on an unexpected shooting job? Instantly wide awake, he reached for the telephone.

"Gene?" a voice said blithely.

Gene groaned. "What do you want?"

"I was worried about you," Pete said, aggrieved. "I can imagine that."

"Aren't you going fishing today? I was afraid you might oversleep and—"

"All right. And what? Get to it."

Pete sighed. "Well, listen. Silvy Malot's in Houston. He's coming out this morning with a couple of new parts for the instrument truck. If you'll wrap up some things for me and leave them at the desk, he'll pick them up."

"What things?"

"Oh, it won't be any trouble. Socks, underwear, a shirt, a tie, and pin-stripe suit—"

"No trouble?" Gene roared. "You get me out of bed at six o'clock and tell me it's no trouble? I drive in for my clothes, but you want yours sent out to you! You chiseling, double-dealing—"

"The pin-stripe," Pete chuckled, "and nuts to you." He hung up.

Gene stretched, and grinned, and murmured, "You dirty little crook." Pete knew darned well he preferred to fish in the late afternoon. Gene shivered in the dank chill of the fog and closed the windows. His watch said six-fifteen. No use going back to bed now. He brought a tackle box from the closet and began to oil a reel.

But his thoughts were not on fishing. Why had Sammy Crisp picked him as a man who could be bought and sold? Texas oil men called Sammy Crisp a lease-buster; but the Mexicans, Gene thought, had a better name for the breed. Coyote! Coyotes lived by stealth and took no chances. Skulking, they shadowed a herd of cattle until a cow had fallen behind to drop her calf. Then, with the herd gone on ahead, they slunk in to kill the new life that trembled on wobbly legs.

Would they kill some of Golconda Johnny Kline's leases? Gene stood up abruptly. No use in thinking about Johnny Kline again. He reached for the telephone and called the number of the Soltol Oil Company. At any hour, night or day, you could pick up somebody in the geophysical department—geologists, seismograph men, or trouble shooters.

A voice said: "Another early riser! What's the trouble?"

"Silvy?"

"Yeah."

"Brandon speaking. Does Mr. Lane come in on Saturdays?"

"What does Saturday mean to a geophysics man? He'll be in at eight o'clock. Anything else?"

"No."

"Good-by."

Gene murmured: "Tough baby, aren't you?" He went down to breakfast. At nine o'clock he was in that flawless structure of polished granite known as the Soltol Building, riding up in a bronzed-doored elevator to Mr. Lane's office on the twelfth floor.

In Lane's office something was in the air that shouldn't have been there. Nothing you could put your fingers on, but—something.

Mr. Lane motioned to a chair. "You boys did a nice job on that hot-shot. Don't you enjoy a day off? What brings you in here today?"

"Money," said Gene.

"Broke?"

"I mean more money."

"Not satisfied with your job?"

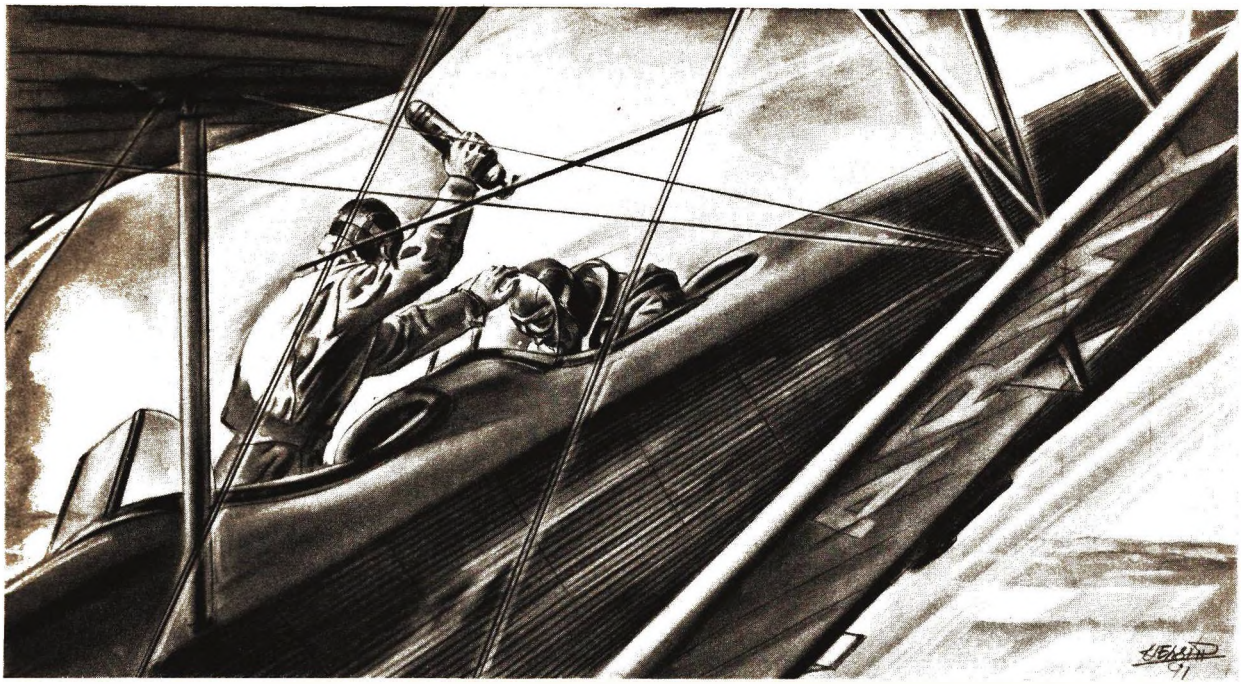
"No complaint. I like the work."

"Oh! One of the boys who wants to be an overnight executive?"

"No," said Gene. "I'm the original one-step-at-a-time man. But when do I take a step?"

The man's fingers fretted at the strap of his wrist watch. "You've heard we had a depression. Soltol didn't let men go; in fact, we added men. This was the United States; the United States wasn't going into bankruptcy. While some other oil companies let engineers go, we held our organization together so we'd have it intact when the thing was over. We haven't yet taken up all the slack. A lot of men are still crowding each other. After a while when business starts to really spread out, when there's room for promotions—" *(Continued on page 33)*

Then the instrument truck, on location at last, wirelessed that it was ready. Suddenly the ground shook and the air grew rank with fumes hotter than the day.



Pat Conover raised the polished brass case of the extinguisher and leaned back. Then for a split second he hesitated. That case could crack a skull.

Zero-Zero Squadron

by Lawrence M. Guyer

Illustrator: WILLIAM HEASLIP

PAT CONOVER scrambled down from the observation plane's lower wing, ducked under the fuselage, and scurried forward to the engine where Lieutenant "Conky" Storm sat in a uniform of grease-covered jumpers.

"Okay, Conky! Better duck," Conover said. "Here they come."

Conky Storm shoved a wrench into his pocket and jumped to the ground.

"Wouldn't do to let the general see one of his pet pilots playing grease-monkey." He grinned and walked rapidly toward the hangar. "Good luck!"

Pat Conover nervously watched the approach of an olive-drab sedan. Two white stars fluttered on its red flag. Inside, gray-haired and stern-visaged, was Major General Foxhall Branner, the corps area commander—Pat Conover's passenger on an aerial inspection trip.

It was a mission that no pilot wanted. The responsibility was paralyzing — in the rear cockpit would be the corps area's senior officer and supreme commander, one of the army's few ranking generals! If anything happened with General Branner there in the plane—

Pat suppressed a shiver. He knew well enough why he'd been selected for this job. All the air corps had chuckled over stories about Conover's caution. He was methodical, almost overprudent. There wasn't much chance of mishap with Pat Conover at the controls. Pat even had dismissed the ground crew and enlisted Conky Storm's help in checking his observation plane personally. Careful Conover, they called him. He didn't mind. The place for daredevils was the "Zero-Zero Squadron"—the attackers.

The big sedan screeched to a halt, and General Branner climbed out, agile, tall, and straight as a strut. He wore slacks and a shirt, and he had brought his own parachute with him. He began strapping it on. Major Framingway, the field commander, introduced Pat Conover.

"Mister Conover is another of our youngsters, sir," said the major with a touch of apology. "All our pilots, these days, are youngsters."

"I'd rather have a youngster," the general answered. "They think quicker and fly better." He turned to Pat. "Glad to know you, Conover. Everything ready?"

"Ready, sir," Pat replied.

They climbed in. Pat shoved on the brakes and gave the idling motor another roaring burst of the throttle. Oil pressure 60, revs 1550 per minute. Warm and sweet. Never had Pat heard a motor purr more smoothly. It calmed the nerves in his fingertips.

He released the brakes, gunned the throttle. The observation plane trundled forward, gathering speed. He nosed the big ship into the wind. Pat took no chances. He taxied twice the usual distance, and took off gradually. At five hundred feet he breathed easier. The take-off was over, at least.

Over the field at a thousand he circled, then put the nose down to drop a little lower for better observation.

Presently Pat pulled lightly at the stick to level off again. Nothing happened. Blinking through the sudden cold sweat that beaded his goggles, he grabbed the stick frantically in his full hand—then in both hands.

And it didn't budge. It was squarely locked in the set of the glide. Already now he heard the first rising whine of the Wasp motor, felt the downward lurch of the wings.

Frenzied, he unsnapped his belt, stood up and twisted to the rear. His eyes widened. The general was crouched over. He had the dual control stick clutched in both white-knuckled hands!

The general crouched momentarily lower. One of his hands let go and dived toward the floor. Then it came back again to the stick. Conover began tugging at the fire extinguisher.

The motor whined louder. Pat cut the throttle. Prop blades slowed and became twin bright knives, mawing gradually down as the ship's nose fell.

Pat Conover raised the polished brass case of the extinguisher, and leaned back. Then for a split second he hesitated. That case could crack a skull. He'd heard of it happening in training schools. Yet General Branner had frozen to the stick like a terrified student and somehow he had to get him loose.

The brass case spun down over the ship's side. Pat's fist caught the older man squarely on the temple. The general slumped down, limp. And Pat Conover scrambled back to the controls

Conky never thought he'd end up as a crazy attack pilot. But anything can happen after you knock out a general!

with a desperation he had never before known in two thousand hours of flying.

He had an instant left. But it was not enough to whip back the nose of the O-19. One last startling fact exploded to the pilot. The stick was still locked! Whatever had happened, the general had not frozen to the controls!

The big observation plane shivered with a low final whisper. The right wing skidded off sharply to the side. Pat did what he could. He cut the ignition and gave the stick a last frenzied heave that must have possessed twice his normal strength. Something splintered a little. He felt it. Slightly, the nose inched up.

Then the plane struck, bounced, struck again and rolled over. The wings tore loose with a spume of earth. The engine drove halfway back to Conover's lap. Black oil sprayed back over the crumpled fuselage.

Shocked, Major Framingway thundered orders, and commandeered the olive-drab sedan. As it swept from the concrete apron, the field's crash siren whined accompaniment. A fire engine careened on two wheels around the corner of the Administration Building; and an ambulance lurched onto the field and swept past the fire engine.

Pat Conover opened his eyes, groggily, and stared up at the indistinct features of Conky Storm and an army doctor. Far away, came the voice of General Branner. Pat heard it with a sigh of relief.

"Is Pat okay?" Conky asked.

The medical officer nodded. Pat sat up, dizzy. Conky helped him to his feet.

"What in thunder happened?" Conky asked. "Right at the last you got the nose up. Not much. But some. Without it not even an O-19's tough flanks would have saved you. What was the matter?"

Pat shrugged. "I don't know."

The M. P.'s were pushing back the crowd. Half-blurred, he saw Major Framingway and General Branner moving toward the open rear of the ambulance. He walked toward them, climbed in. The cold, glittering-hard look in Major Framingway's eyes wasn't reassuring.

"Young man," said the general, ruefully touching his head, "what'd you hit me with?"

"My fist," Pat said, unhappily. "I was afraid I might damage you too much with the fire extinguisher."

"I'm glad you were quick enough to think of *that*," the general smiled.

"He's cautious," Framingway said acidly, and Pat knew it wasn't meant as a compliment.

"Here's what happened," the general said. "A simple thing and an unexpected thing. As we nosed down, I thought one of the instrument needles was stuck. I jarred the board to find out—and the board swung suddenly loose and toward me, pivoting on the bottom hinge. You know how the panel looks when disassembled. A mass of holes for the instruments.

"Well, one of the holes looped over the stick in just the position of the descent. The harder you tugged up front, the tighter you locked that board over the stick in rear. And the tighter I tugged to move it enough to get the board back off—the tighter still you tugged up front! I should have known you'd think I'd frozen the controls stiff."

The general turned to Major Framingway.

"Mister Conover isn't to blame, Framingway. When the inquiry is held, he should be exonerated. He almost landed the plane anyway!"

The field commander nodded. He gazed at Pat with a strange light of appraisal. Pat almost believed that the major was disposed to overlook a failure at last.

But it didn't happen that way. Four days later, though officially exonerated, Pat stepped into headquarters to initial the daily bulletin—and stepped out again with written orders that transferred him "without delay" to the 77th Attack Squadron at a near-by field.

The 77th—the Zero-Zero Squadron! Attack ships. Planes that skim the treetops at two hundred miles an hour, hedge-hopping, ducking, twisting, following low valleys, hiding behind ant hills. Roaring over the earth with no horizon, no vision, no warning of sudden obstacles till they're there, dead ahead. Navigation—parachutes—instruments—they are useless. Fifty feet of altitude. No wonder they called it the Zero-Zero Squadron!

Pat trudged slowly to quarters with the numbness of a man who suddenly finds his entire life changed. He wasn't afraid. But although he knew the "attack" was a purposeful and needed branch of aviation, he had always detested the hedge-hopping because of its similarity to showing off. But now—

For a long time, Pat sat in the darkness of his own quarters, thinking. Then he crossed the hall to the rooms of Conky Storm. Conky was cleaning out his apartment, with clothes and litter heaped everywhere. He stopped work and waded through the debris to wrap an arm around Pat's shoulders.

"I just heard," he said. "It's a dirty trick, Pat. When even a general steps up and clears a man of all blame—"

"Whoa!" admonished Pat. He forced a grin. "You can't tell why I'm being transferred. The crash probably didn't have anything to do with it. Maybe I'm being transferred because I'm a little too careful—" he winced—"and need a little speeding up."

Pat stiffened, went on. "Listen, Conky," he said in a voice of ice, "I'm going to show that Zero-Zero Squadron something. They're going to see—" He became suddenly aware of the disorder in Conky's usually spotless apartment. "Say—what are you doing?"

Conky grinned. "Moving."

"Where?" Conover demanded.

"Over—well, over to the 77th," mumbled Conky. "It's been a long time now since I've had any excitement." And Pat was so pleased that he couldn't think of anything at all to say.

The 77th wasn't proud of the transfer, either. Send them Conover, eh? Old pokey. Well, they'd see. Just wait till the observation tried to spot some attack ships! Maybe the 77th flew *over* the trees on most days—but there were days coming when the 77th was going to fly *through* and *under* trees.

But the legends about Careful Conover died violent deaths. Within a week after Pat and Conky had moved into Cheverton Field's Bachelor Building there was another story about Pat Conover. "Crazy" Conover he was now. The 77th had seen lots of pilots come and go—but none like Conover. His throttle was full forward every minute in the air. Conover flew where tree limbs kept his landing gear dusted off. He went between smokestacks that were closer together than his wing-tips—he got through by banking. He bombed where the earth-spray covered even his own wing surfaces. Finally his new field commander called him in.

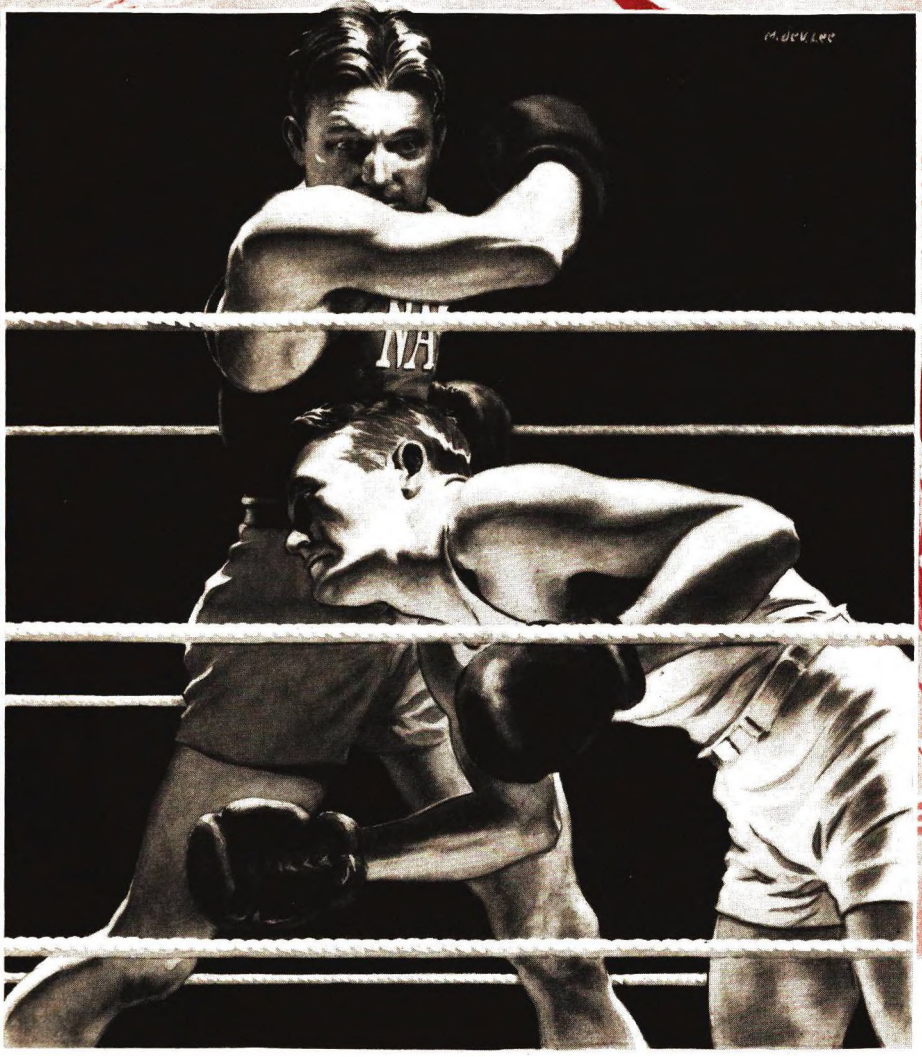
"Listen, Conover," began Major Wrenn, with a tilt of his bushy eyebrows, "this is an attack squadron—not a suicide club. Someone told me yesterday you've been measuring the Pennsylvania Railroad tunnels, too! This place is tough enough without having you make it worse. Understand?"

Pat straightened, and saluted. He understood. But he wasn't through yet—not till maneuvers were finished.

(Continued on page 29)

Pat Conover jumped from the plane and ran to draw the unconscious Major Framingway from the wedged-in cockpit.

MIDWINTER DRAG



He allowed fighting instinct to direct his blows and his defense.

Illustrator: MANNING deV. LEE

Glover was touchy about one thing—his ability to save girls from blizzards

by

Millard Ward

IN the writing room of Carvel Hall Hotel at Annapolis, Midshipman Charles Glover settled himself efficiently with fountain pen and hotel stationery. Before beginning to write, he reread the last page of a letter which had reached him that morning from Wellesley.

"I am writing now to tell you that a friend of mine, Elsa Warfield, has just gone from here to Annapolis to live—her father is going to be head of St. Stephen's College—and I thought you might like her. She's awfully attractive, red hair, and very small. Also she's nineteen and guaranteed not to grow—you see, I remember you don't like to dance with girls taller than you. I don't think she knows many people in Annapolis, and I've written to her about you."

Glover put the letter back into his pocket and began his reply: "Thanks for the advice about Elsa Warfield. However—"

A shadow and a light sound of footsteps made Glover look up. A girl had just entered Carvel Hall from King George Street. She stopped at the door of the writing room. Glover drew the unfinished letter toward him, and covered it subconsciously with his uniform cap.

This girl was a rose-crystal person, such as appeared even at Annapolis only a few times in a generation.

Glover stood up, spoke quickly against her startled look.

"You're Elsa Warfield. I've just had a letter from Wellesley about you."

Elsa's voice was pleasant.

"Then I've just had one about you, too. You're Charles Glover."

Glover tore his unfinished letter across, and dropped the bits into a wastebasket.

"Meeting someone?" he asked.

"How did you know? This must be a sort of headquarters for Annapolis."

Glover grinned. "It is. You might call it the social gymnasium." He hoped that she would know from the single diagonal of gold braid on his sleeve that plebe year was behind him. Plebes weren't very colorful.

"Speaking of gymnasiums," Elsa said, "are there any boxing matches soon?"

"Oh, yes. Some good ones. Middle Atlantic University has a fine team—that'll be one of the best matches. You like boxing?"

"College boxing is my favorite of all sports," Elsa smiled.

"I've never done any boxing," Glover said impulsively. "But I did a good deal of fist-fighting in military school. We did it just to pass the time, sort of."

He decided not to tell her that he had won nearly all his fights, often giving away fifteen or twenty pounds. As he thought it over, he wished he hadn't said anything at all about his fighting. "Boxing's better," he added. "More refined."

"I think so," Elsa agreed.

Glover liked her. He decided to do something about it. "Listen," he said. "Midwinter Hop's only two weeks off. You couldn't make yourself come with me, could you?"

Elsa hesitated. "I know only one other midshipman, and he's asked me. But I haven't given him a definite answer. You see—oh, here he is now."

Glover turned. Confronting him was Jordan Carlin, captain and heavyweight of the Navy boxing team, varsity tackle, and president of the first class. Carlin stood six feet two inches tall, giving him nine inches over Glover. He was a slow-spoken Virginian with wavy dark hair and a splendid build.

"Sure," he was saying, "I know Glover. He was in my platoon last year."

So here, Glover thought dizzily, was his competition! Carlin, the best-known midshipman in the regiment. And just a minute ago, he'd been thinking how good it was to be something more than a colorless plebe.

Glover recovered enough to say swiftly to Elsa as they parted, "My bid to that hop stands, Elsa."

That evening Glover made a full report to his roommate, Red Johnson.

"And so," he concluded, "she's perfect. In short a Cold Four. And all I have to do is take her away from Jordan Carlin."

Red closed the calculus book on his finger, and looked at Glover intently.

"All you have to do is what?"

"You heard me."

Red rose and put a hand gently on Glover's arm.

"Well, old pal," he said. "Come along with me slow and easy and we'll go up to sick bay and tell the doctor all about it."

Glover grinned.

"Have your fun. But inside of two weeks they'll be calling her 'that good-looking girl of Charles Glover's!'"

"Well, you know most of the things Jordan Carlin is," Red said. "And I'll tell you one that maybe you don't know. He's one of the nicest fellows in the Navy."

"To you, maybe," Glover muttered. "He acts over you lads on the boxing squad like a cat with one kitten."

"Well, then," Red persisted, "begin listing your own charms."

"Stars on the collar of the old dress blou," Glover said sharply. "That means brains and a standing of third last year in a class of five hundred. Drags know as well as we do that it's the stars on your collar and not the letters on your chest that count after you get out of this place."

"I never met a drag that seemed to know it," Red said. "But go ahead with your folly."

On Monday when Glover returned to his room from his first hour's recitation he found on his side of the table a small square envelope with an Annapolis postmark. He tore it raggedly open. Without explanation Elsa had written that she had been thinking about the Midwinter Hop, and wondered if his invitation were really sincere.

As soon as possible, Glover telephoned Elsa, fighting the enthusiasm that threatened to choke him, and repeated the invitation.

Elsa accepted. She cheerfully went on: "I'm going to be in Baltimore Friday and Saturday, but I'll be back on the six o'clock car."

The rest of the week was sullenly cold for Maryland winter. On Friday, with the Midwinter Hop only thirty hours away, the chilly gray of the sky deepened, and the northeast storm warning blew out hard from the signal mast on Reina Wharf. By taps snow was falling in a blind, hurrying weight. On Saturday dawn scarcely broke through the whiteness.

In the afternoon with the snowstorm still unchecked, Glover went to the gymnasium where a boxing meet was scheduled. The Navy team won, although Red Johnson lost the bantamweight bout by a technical knockout. The Navy team didn't have many out for the bantam class. Somehow Glover felt guilty about that. Red had gone out only because there were so few good little men available.

Early in the evening two tall first-classmen passed Glover in a corridor of Bancroft Hall. They were Ault, basketball center, and Bochau, lacrosse attack man. Glover caught the quick rumble of Ault's voice as they passed.

"Five-thirty car got through, but the six o'clock is stuck at Severnside for the night. Snowplow can't reach her before tomorrow."

Glover turned and followed them on the double.

"Hey," he asked, "did you say the six o'clock car from Baltimore was stuck?"

"Yeah," Ault said. "I've just come from the station. We're rounding up the fellows who are dragging. Then we're going to ask the commandant's permission to go out and bring the girls in."

"Count me in then," Glover said excitedly.

He waited with the gathering group in the high, bright rotunda outside the commandant's office. Nearly all of these midshipmen were first-classmen, as large, or seeming so, as the two athletes.

Ault was back after a few minutes. "Commandant says can do," he reported. "Uniform is reefers and two pairs of trou. Meet here in ten minutes."

From the window of his room, Glover could see that the snowfall was slackening at last. But its even depth on the seaward terrace was already close to two feet.

As he finished dressing, the door opened, and Carlin came into the room. He looked uncomfortable.

"I hear you're in a detail going out to bring in some snowbound drags. Is Elsa stuck out there?"

"That's right," Glover said suspiciously.

"Well, then," Carlin said, "don't you want me to go with you or for you or something? She would still be your drag for the hop of course."

Glover laughed.

"Not a chance! You've had dates enough with her. If something like this turns up on the only one I've had, that's my good luck."

"All right. But listen, Glover. Don't be too sure of yourself—at somebody else's expense," Carlin said.

"No sermons, please," Glover answered with heat.

After Carlin had left, Red Johnson spoke. "Could you tell me how you expect to get away with this detail? You're not built for a snowplow, you know."

"No," Glover said, buttoning his reefer. "But there are ten or twelve big bruisers already on the detail. They're going to make a fine trail through the snow. All I'll have to do is follow it and admire the scenery."

"Oh," Red said, "let the rest of the gang do the dirty work for you, heh? No wonder you get along."

"Listen," Glover said. "I should have thought you'd been in the Navy long enough to understand efficiency. Efficiency is having each man do the thing he does best. There're things they do for me, and there're things I do for them." But he felt a little uncomfortable as he went out.

Glover took time to telephone Elsa's parents before starting. Then Ault and Bochau led the double file of midshipmen by plowed paths past the academic buildings and lacrosse field through the naval hospital grounds, and out onto the state road at the beginning of the long Severn River bridge. Here the plowed paths ended abruptly. There was no traffic on the road, and a few low white mounds underlaid with strips of black showed where automobiles had stalled and been abandoned. Ault and Bochau broke trail methodically, however, on the way across the bridge, so that at the extreme end of the column Glover found the going fully as easy as he had expected. The snow, moreover, had stopped falling.

Presently they were off the bridge, and the little column swung off into what had been an unpaved lane between the state road and the electric line. The lights of the stalled electric car came suddenly into sight around a clump of scrub pine trees, and Glover felt as though no part of his body had ever been cold. A little later the midshipmen were in the car, enjoying the surprise and relief of the girls at their entrance.

He rose from his seat on the radiator and leaned over the table. "Listen," he said sharply. "I could make bantamweight."

first Navy team to lose to those eggs. A long shot beats no shot at all. My jaw's not broken; and anyway maybe this Ripley is more of a body puncher."

"He punches anywhere you don't expect," Carlin said. "You've been in tough luck lately. You're not going into the ring with Ripley when you're not right, and that's the end of it."

Glover found that he could not keep his gaze from Carlin's face. This was near the end of a distinguished athletic career for Carlin. He was not an academic star; he would graduate well down in his class. But he was an athlete, and captain of the boxing team. Now he needed an astonishing sort of help which only a very small man could give him. It was so strange and yet definite a thing that Glover did not speak at once.

He rose from his seat on the radiator, and leaned over the table.

"Listen," he said sharply. "I could make the bantamweight."

Carlin looked at him. "Did you ever do any boxing?"

"No," Glover said. "Just fighting."

"Oh. And do you know who this Ripley is?"

"Yes. He never lost a college fight, and he was runner-up in the national A.A.U. last year. I know who he is."

"Then be over at the gym in half an hour," Carlin said deliberately. "But he'll probably make a fool of you."

"That's all right," Glover said.

In the doorway Carlin stopped.

"Is Elsa going to be there, Glover?"

"Yes," Glover said. "I was to bring her. I'll still see that she gets there."

Every afternoon through the rest of the week, Glover worked in the boxing room of the gymnasium. The coach, Carlin, and the entire squad crammed him with pointers on footwork, leading, blocking, and the strategy of the ring. In this he could use the intelligence he was supposed to have as well as his stocky, well-muscled body. Yet he knew that it was likely that Ripley would, as Carlin said, make a fool of him.

But probably he was a fool anyway. He felt he held a lead in the contest for Elsa's favor. Yet now he was ready to *(Continued on page 37)*

In the sudden heat, Glover's head swam slightly. He found Elsa quickly, tucked away in a corner of her seat in a gray squirrel coat.

"Hello," Glover said. "Are you trying to break your date with me?"

Elsa rose quickly, her eyes shining.

"How in the world did you get here?"

"We walked. And that's the way you're going back with us."

Elsa laughed.

"What absolute fun! There's going to be a moon, and the conductor said half an hour ago that it was four below zero. How marvelous of you to come!"

"We've got a trail broken now," Glover said, "and we'll have the wind behind us on the way back."

Near the door of the car Ault spoke to the group.

"Come on. Let's shove off. We'll be in time for that last dance yet."

Glover could feel Elsa close beside him, warm, small, and eager.

"I'm in luck," she said, "to be wearing low-heeled shoes and galoshes." She was completely at home and cheerful in the snow.

"This looks like duck soup for you," Glover said.

"In Massachusetts two feet of snow isn't the phenomenon it seems to be here," she said.

Overhead the clouds began to break away, and black moon shadows fell across the twinkling snow.

The column moved on deliberately. Glover felt an odd affection for the broad blue backs ahead of him. They were doing their work well. On either hand the river lay, wide, gray, and frigid, and sluggish now with mushy ice. There were lights on the tower of the drawbridge, lights on the farther shore, and well away to the southeast, faint bands of brightness in Naval Academy buildings, seeming as mysterious and intangible as the gleam of the Greenbury Point lighthouse beyond.

"I guess we're going to miss the hop," Elsa said. "Navy hops end so early."

"I'll have to make it up to you," Glover said. "How about that boxing match against Middle Atlantic next Saturday? It ought to be the best meet of the year, but I'm afraid Navy is going to lose. Middle Atlantic had three men in the national A.A.U. meet last year, and their bantamweight was runner-up for the championship. He's never lost a college bout."

Too late he realized that taking her to the match would mean having her see Carlin at his absolute best. She was already excitedly accepting. "Then it's a date for next Saturday," he said.

When they reached Annapolis, the group scattered, so that for the last few blocks Glover and Elsa walked alone. Then they were at the chaste white portico before the eighteenth century brick-winged house of the president of St. Stephen's. Again there was bright light, and warmth enough to make Glover's ears and face feel hot.

Elsa presented Glover to Doctor and Mrs. Warfield. They seemed to like him.

"Splendid of you fellows to rescue the girls," Dr. Warfield said. "Takes some courage to get out in a night like this, especially when nobody is really in danger."

Again that little guilty feeling came over Glover. What had he done after all? But he deliberately thrust the thought aside. He had done enough.

On Monday afternoon when Glover returned to his room after drill, he found Carlin sitting at the table talking intently to Red Johnson. Carlin looked up as Glover entered, nodded absently, and returned to his conversation. Red lifted his head nervously and stroked the left side of his jaw.

"Is that jaw hurting you, Red?" Carlin inquired.

Red shook his head.

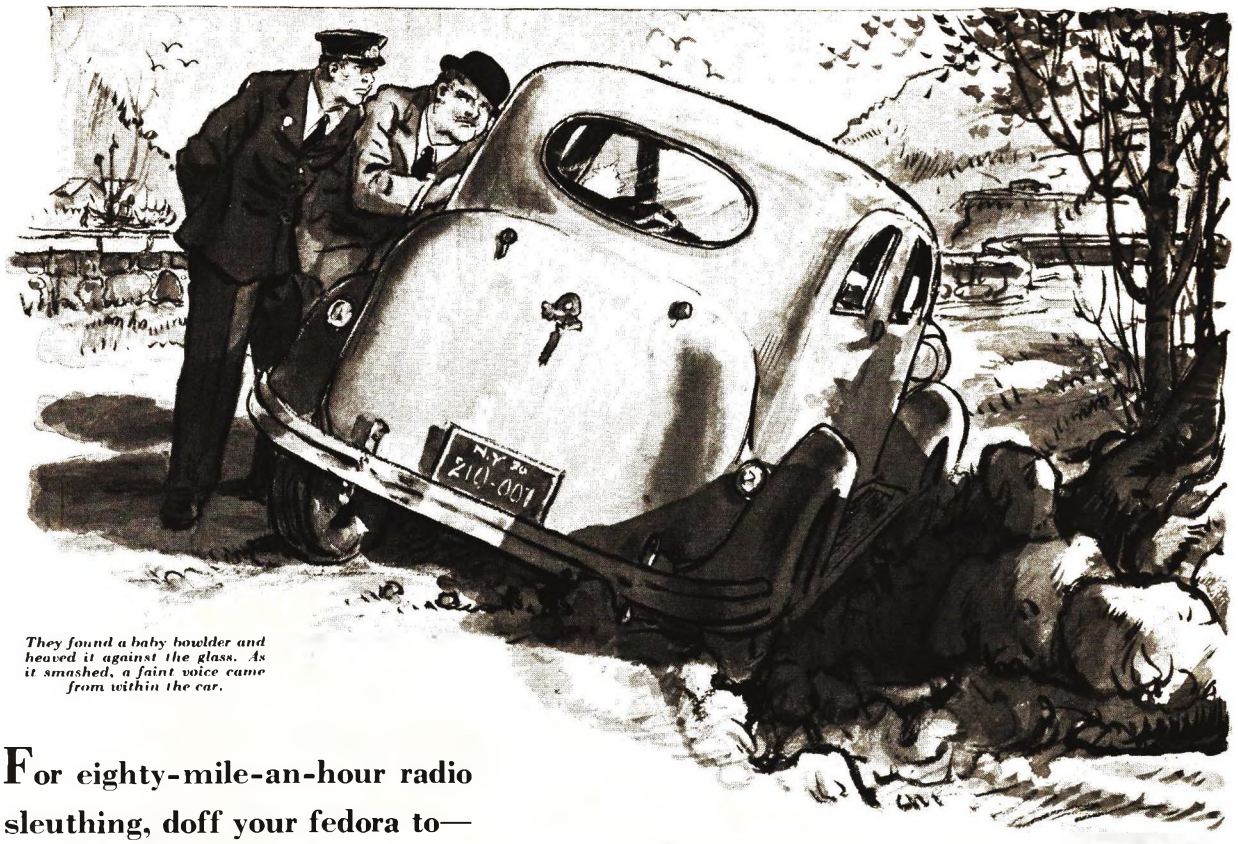
"It doesn't hurt, Skipper, but every time I open it, it sort of clicks."

Carlin stared at the big ink-spotted blotter on the table.

"Well, then," he said, "there's no chance of your fighting this Saturday. And nobody else could make a showing. We've got Riley or Picket, but they wouldn't have a chance. We'd better just default the bantamweight class."

"We can't do that, Skipper," Red said. "Yours is not going to be the

Carlin reached out without speaking and drew Glover toward him.



They found a baby bowlder and heaved it against the glass. As it smashed, a faint voice came from within the car.

For eighty-mile-an-hour radio sleuthing, doff your fedora to—

B. H. Tierney, O.T.J.

by

John A. Moroso

Illustrator: R. M. BRINKERHOFF

BECAUSE of his great help to Inspector Sweeney at police headquarters in New York City, Jim Tierney, retired detective living happily and comfortably across the Hudson in New Jersey, was provided with every modern device used in police work. In the front room of his little cottage a teletype ticked away, recording any news or messages his old chief might want him to have, to be found there by Jim on returning from the back yard he called a farm, or from the feed store where the village wits and philosophers gathered.

Under a shed near his hen house, Jim's car, with radio transmitter and receiving set, seemed about to collapse from age. But under the misshapen mass of junk was a fine chassis and an engine as good as any ever built. None but the old Bonehead would have thought of such a trick to play on the fast-working crooks of the time.

With the iron derby perched on the side of his round head, and the breath hissing through his bristly little mustache, he entered the room after a hike with his huge mongrel friend Rover, and picked up the long teletype sheet. He held it closer. The inspector needed him. The message said:

"October 10, 11 A. M. Sylvan Boulevard, between Clinton and Hillsdale, big car ditched. Bloodstains on outside of front door. No trace of anyone killed or injured. Reported by Tenafly police.

"License number sent by local police can't be traced. Number on engine chiseled out. Make of car undecided. May have been specially built. Give it a look-see, old-timer. Sweeney."

"Dinner's ready, Jim!" announced Mrs. Murphy, the housekeeper, from the kitchen.

"Watcha got, Maggie?" he called back.

"Roast chicken, Jim."

"Roast chicken! Say, Maggie, it ain't old George you cooked?"

She snorted as she stood in the door with her plump arms akimbo, her black and silver hair done in a doorknob twist on the back of her neck, the perspiration pouring down her homely, kindly face. "George! That old rooster? Me kill George and him and his wives waiting for the Townsend old-age bill to go through?"

"Har!" grunted Tierney, tossing his derby to a corner and stripping down to his violet suspenders. "George ought to get a pension. When he was a young bird there wasn't any cock could holler louder than him at three o'clock in the morning. And even in his old age George ain't to be snickered at except when a cold settles in his throat."

"Well, come sit in, Jim."

"I got a call, Maggie."

"Let it wait, Jim."

"I better get moving, Maggie."

"There's apple pie and cream after the chicken."

"Apple pie, Maggie?"

"Yes, Jim. And I'm trying a light sprinkling of cinnamon on top."

"Cinnamon, Maggie? But there's somebody been murdered up on the Palisades."

"They'll stay murdered until you get there, Jim."

"Well, Maggie, you see Sweeney is asking, and you know me, Maggie, when duty calls. Did you say there was a little cinnamon on it? Oh, well." He strode into the bright clean kitchen and tucked his fat knees under the table, adjusting a wide napkin to his collar.

When he had brushed the cinnamoned pie flakes from his mouth, Tierney heaved out to the front room and stowed in a small bag his fingerprinting equipment, enlarging glasses and a stereoscopic microscope. Before getting into his coat he slipped into the holster straps of a wicked automatic, snuggling it against his left breast.

To the accompaniment of a shriek from George and excited cackling of his wives, Jim backed out the fake wreckage and was off through the valley. Presently the car went up the steep climb to the top of the Palisades, where everything was cool and beautiful and green with the heavy foliage of July.

Sergeant Campbell of the Tenafly force stood guard at the blood-stained car.

"Hello, Chet," Jim said. "What's doing?"

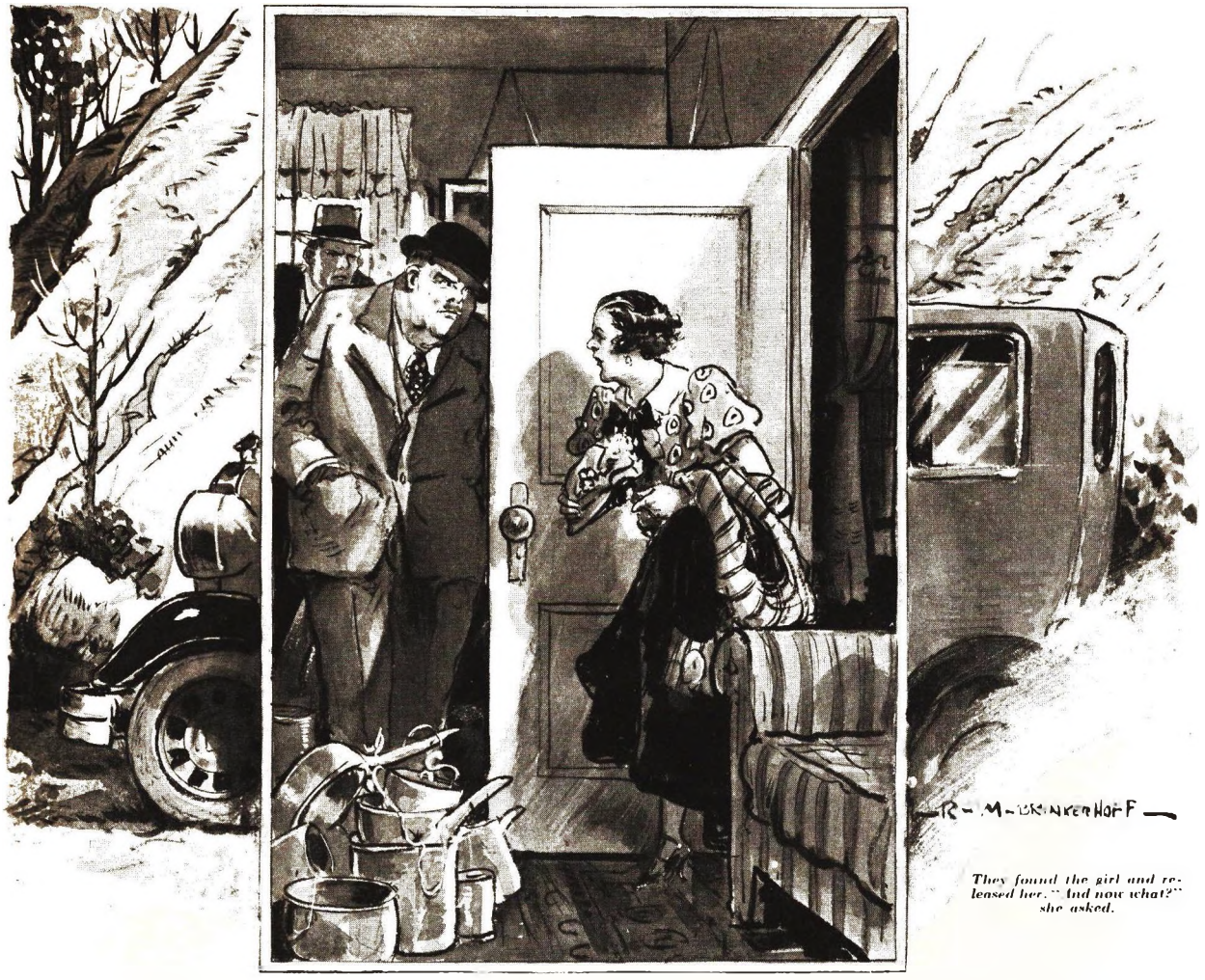
"Got a teletype from New York headquarters you were coming, Jim. Thought I'd wait for you."

"Anybody touched the car?"

"Nobody. State cop found it and stayed by it until I got here."

"Good."

Tierney's round little blue eyes, with the baby stare that had fooled many a crook, were studying the ground about the machine. There were no footprints, just a scuffing of dust beside the road. The machine, a sedan of beautiful design and equipment, had been going north, away from George Washington Bridge and New York. Its right wheels were down in the ditch. The motor was still running, idling.



They found the girl and released her. "And now what?" she asked.

Slipping on a pair of silk gloves, Jim tried each of the four doors. They were locked. The windows were closed, and bulletproof, as he knew when he used the butt of his gun on them.

"A good big rock with the two of us behind it will do the trick," Chet said. They found a baby bowlder and heaved it against the glass. As it smashed a faint voice from within the car said: *"Everything ready and waiting. Give her plenty but don't rub her out yet. Okay, Tommy."*

The radio had been going softly. It was audible enough now that the glass was broken.

Unlatching the door with the broken window by reaching within, Tierney read the dial of the receiving instrument, a modern shortwave set, the same with which his junk heap was equipped. The reading was low, one that wouldn't be dialed accidentally. Jim hurried to his own car and after several failures, managed to set his instrument at the same wave length. It was a fine break. He could leave his car under his bedroom window, connect up the loudspeaker with a powerful amplifier and be awakened immediately by any message sent. As long as the crooks implicated in this mysterious crime used that low wave they would be talking to Tierney.

Later Tierney had John Ely, a clever young mechanic, tow the mystery machine to Tierney's sunny half-acre "farm." In the house, Jim called Sweeney at New York police headquarters.

"B. H. Tierney speaking. Gimme Inspector Sweeney. Yup. . . . Hello, Chief. Tierney. We got a hummer. It might lead to anything. I'll get over in the morning, nine o'clock. Yup. . . . Uh-huh. . . . Yup. I got the car on the farm so reporters can't smear it up. Got Rover tied to it. They won't go near him. He wouldn't bite a flea but his face don't show it. Okay. So long."

Tierney found bloodstains on the wheel of the car and a woman's tapering fingerprints. The person attacked had evidently been dragged from behind the wheel to the road. There were no other fingerprints, inside or out. "Tommy" had used gloves, undoubtedly.

The pockets of the car were searched carefully and were apparently empty. But a second and more careful search yielded results. With a sharp knife, Tierney cut away the pockets, took them into his workshop and put them under his spectroscopic microscope. This showed that the lining of the driver's pocket had been knitted—indicating that it had once been torn. He removed the lining, looking for anything that would have worked its way through the torn place. He found something—a driver's license of two years back, issued in Philadelphia, had worked down in the lining hole. It had been issued to Walter G. Czernaky, thirty-one years old, white.

"Now, Walter," mused Jim as he moved to his rocking chair and lay back with half-closed eyes, "when you lost that license you went and got a new one, of course. That will be a double check on you, feller. It's easy enough to fake a plate for the car but licenses are so easy to get there wouldn't be any sense in going to the trouble of forging one. I see you coming to me, Walter."

"If you're tired," came softly the voice of Maggie from the kitchen door, "I could manage to wangle up a piece of pie and a large schooner of buttermilk."

"I hear you talking," said Jim. "And throw Rover a good juicy bone. Nobody monkeys with a dog as large as Rover when said dog is putting a veneer on a bone." He picked up the telephone and got Sweeney's office, giving the inspector the low-down.

"I got the dame's fingerprints and an old driver's license of a guy with a Polish name." He spelled out the name and the Philadelphia address. "And I expect to be in touch with his gang any minute. When I busted in the car the radio was going and a guy was talking to somebody. Yup, it was some break. Take down the kilocycles they was using and look out for anything that comes along the air lane. . . . Sure, if you can locate the transmitting station; but I think it's set up in a car, not stationary. The cops never perfect anything for catching crooks that the crooks don't go right ahead and use themselves to fight the cops."

As soon as he finished the pie and milk, Tierney resumed his microscopic study of the mended lining. It was so neatly done that it was invisible to the naked eye. It was the work of a knitting machine of the most modern type, such as can make a stocking run vanish. This was the work of an upholsterer to the very rich, he decided. He would take the lining to headquarters with him in the morning and have Sweeney's men canvass the high-class upholsterers in an effort to trace the owner of the car.

A telephone call to John Ely brought that able young man on the run with a supply of gasoline so that the motor and radio in the wrecked machine could be kept going as a check on Jim's own radio.

"Murder?" asked John, his keen blue eyes studying the car.

"Dunno."

"Listen, Mr. Tierney." The radio was talking and was sending the hum of an airplane engine. Through the droning came a series of dots and dashes. Tier-

ney and John knew the Morse code. The message ran:

"If she gives power of attorney and safe deposit box keys all's well. A lighted match to the sole of a foot might help. Let her know we mean business. Tell her Marco says she has until nine o'clock tomorrow night. Not a minute longer."

"Okay," came the answer.

"Good gosh!" gasped Ely.

"Listen," said Tierney.

The hum of the aircraft's motor had faded but was coming back strong again, then fading, then back again. Then it ceased.

"You're a mechanic, Johnny," said Tierney. "What do you make of that plane's noise?"

"The guy was making a landing, that's all. But can't you save that poor woman?"

"Never mind the woman. You know anything about airplane engines?"

"Sure; worked in a factory building 'em and testing 'em."

"What kind of engine has this feller who just landed?"

"It's a Vulcan-Hercules and it wasn't far from the radio transmitter that sent the okay."

Tierney looked at his watch. It was eighteen minutes past four.

"Them motors used by mail or passenger planes, Johnny?"

"Passenger planes of the North American Eagle Company."

"Good. More fine breaks for Tierney."

"I got a map of their route with landing fields and time schedules."

"Boy!" shouted Tierney. "Run and get it. You'll be paid plenty for your time." Johnny Ely leaped into his car, backed out the roadway and was off as fast as his machine could travel. In a few minutes he was back with the map and schedule.

"I made a trip to Chicago on one of their planes only three weeks ago," he explained. They spread out the map in the sunlight on the hood of the wrecked car. "Here we are," said the mechanic, stabbing the map with a finger. "She was due at the Philadelphia field at four o'clock. She was just eighteen minutes late."

"Listen," said Tierney. Again came the drone of a plane through open transmitter near the landing field.

"That's the New York-bound plane arriving in Philly. What's it now, Mr. Tierney?"

"Five-three."

"That's right. He's on time."

"Check and double check."

"Do you think you can save that poor woman?"

"I gotta save her. How would you like to do a little detectiving, Johnny?"

"You don't mean it, Mr. Tierney."

"Sure I do, and you get paid for it. Hurry home and tell the wife and hustle back here. I'll telephone headquarters. Maggie!" The faithful Maggie stuck her head through the kitchen window. "Make up a chicken-and-pie lunch for two. I got a hot date in Philly."

Ely was back in short order. "You going to drive to Philly?" he asked.

"Sure."

"Better use my car, Mr. Tierney. Your junk heap will never make it."

"Tsk, tsk," reproved Tierney. "You'll see. Git in."

While he was waiting for Maggie to bring the lunch, he connected up with headquarters in New York, got Sweeney and told him he was off on the hunt. He asked him to send a good department mechanic over to take down the wrecked car and study it for any clue as to the maker and owner. Also he asked for somebody to take the patched pocket lining and fingerprints back to New York.

"B. H. T., O. T. J., signing off," he said solemnly.

"What's that, Mr. Tierney?" asked Johnny. "Police code?"

"In a way, yes," he replied airily. "But I'll let you in on it if you promise not to give it away."

"I promise."

"It means Bonehead Tierney, On The Job. Ha!"

Maggie brought a huge bundle of food.

"We're off!" shouted the Bone. "Hold your hat!"

After they passed Lakewood, pausing there for chicken and pie from the bundle, Tierney turned the wheel over to his young friend. "See what you can do with the old bus while I listen in on this short wave," he said.

It was not yet dark, the early summer twilight making visibility perfect. Puzzled, young Ely slowly increased the pressure on the accelerator. Fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty—a hundred miles an hour!

Johnny turned an anxious face to the old detective.

"See what she can do," Tierney shouted. "She ain't started yet."

But Johnny Ely slowed down. They were getting into Trenton.

They reached the Philadelphia airport of the North American Eagle Company not long after nightfall.

"Now, Johnny, here's where your end of the job comes in," said Tierney. "We got to circle this field and determine from what distance the engines of the two planes registered in that open transmitter. Think you can do it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we get the radius and in that radius we'll find a lonely house and in that house we'll find this woman and her captor."

"Yes, sir. We can go out this road for about a mile and begin to circle. If a Vulcan-Hercules goes up from the field while we're doing this I think I can come close to the distance we're looking for."

They passed into ragged, straggly suburban streets but clouds had gathered overhead and the street lighting was very poor. To the southeast of the field the country was open but unplowed and untilled. The land had been bought for development and hard times had delayed building. Several ancient farmhouses, some of stone and some of wood, loomed like ghosts far back from the road, places where any crime might be committed without fear of interruption.

A roar of exhausts and then the hum of a powerful engine in the air came to them.

"Chartered plane. Some rich guy in a hurry," said Johnny. He listened a moment. "We're at the right distance now."

"Okay. That's fine. Wish we could do something else tonight, but I guess we'll have to wait till morning. We'll run into Philly and get a good night's rest after a large meal and a movie, huh?"

"Yes, sir."

They found a modest place and obtained a room with two comfortable beds. After Tierney had hooked up a portable short-wave radio, they dined heavily and fared forth for a movie. They got seats in a loge where their chairs, as well as themselves, were overstuffed. An usher awakened them when the show was over.

"It was great," grunted Jim. "Never had a better nap."

They returned to the hotel and were undressing with the short-wave radio turned on when a message brought them to attention.

"Marco says she's got to have the works if she doesn't produce by nine o'clock tomorrow night. He believes her deposit boxes are in Philadelphia. Clean them out, dump her on the road somewhere and report to New York headquarters."

"They mean to kill her," said Johnny Ely with a catch in his voice.

"One life means nothing to that bunch," Tierney said. "I think I got the layout of the thing. This Marco is the big guy in a gang and he's been using this dame to stow away the cash for him. She cleans out the boxes and puts the dough somewhere else. Marco finds out that after taking his money and putting it away in the vault of some other bank, she's going to beat it. He probably had suspected her and had her followed. But he couldn't get back his money without the keys and a power of attorney from her, see?"

"Yes, sir."

"So he sends this strong-arm gorilla after her and tells him to make her give up. This Tommy guy picks her up on Sylvan Boulevard, noses her car into the ditch, gives her a crack on the head, drags her out, ties her up, throws her into the back of his car, locks up the wrecked car so he can get more time for the getaway and here we are, all of us except Marco. Inspector Sweeney will get him. We got to get Tommy and save that woman."

"If you get these bandits what'll happen to them, Mr. Tierney?"

"Plenty, son. Plenty. Uncle Sam takes 'em and fries 'em for us because they kidnap from one state to another."

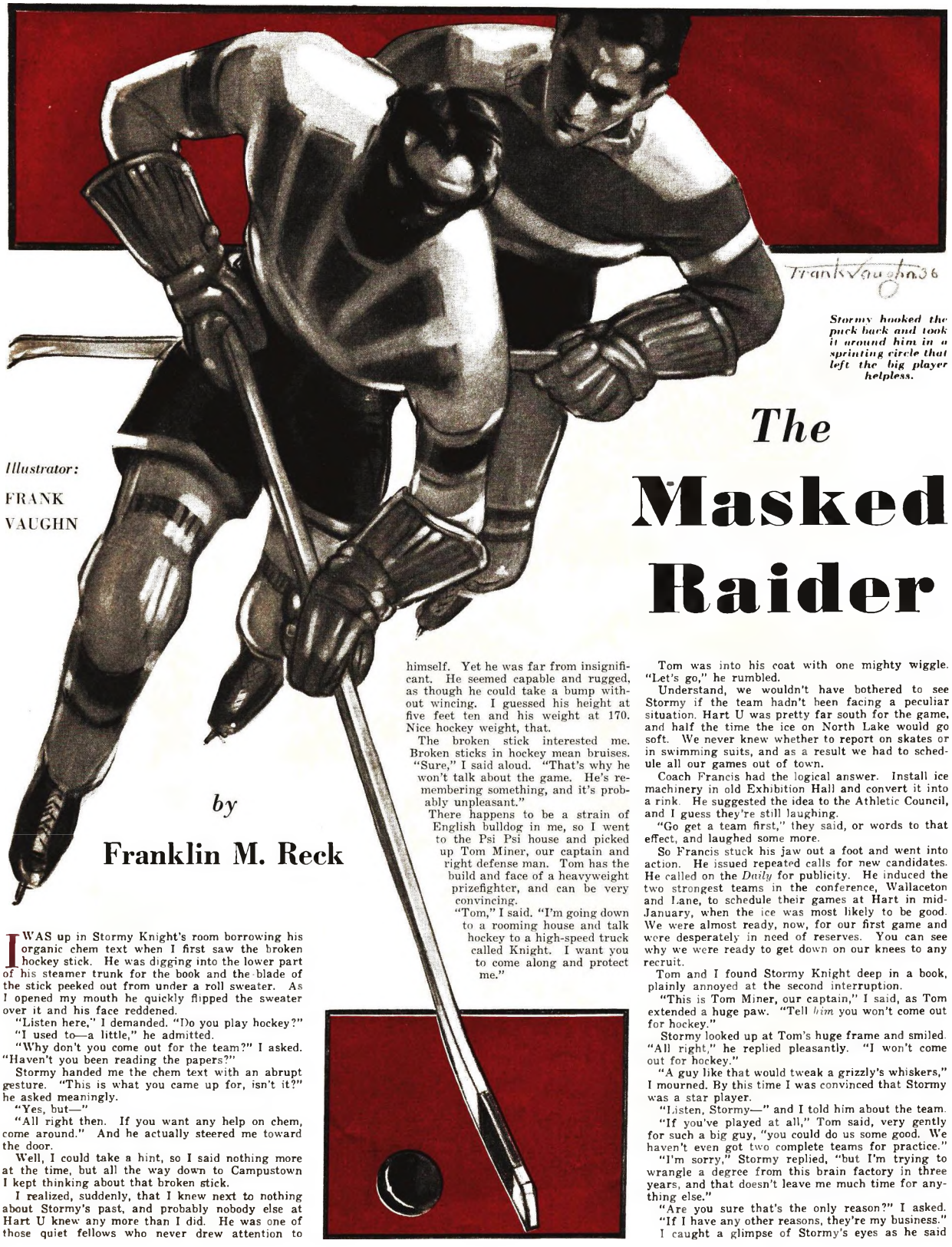
"Gee! Will this guy Tommy put up a fight if we find him in the morning?"

"Will a guy with the kidnap charge on him just give up peacefully? Get to sleep, Johnny."

As soon as the shops of Philadelphia were open the next morning, Jim Tierney and Acting Detective Johnny Ely rolled up to the side entrance of a great department store. Together they went to the basement and there they

(Continued on page 27)

It was the form of a man, and in front of it protruded the shadow of a submachine gun.



Stormy hooked the puck back and took it around him in a sprinting circle that left the big player helpless.

Illustrator:
FRANK
VAUGHN

The Masked Raider

by

Franklin M. Reck

I WAS up in Stormy Knight's room borrowing his organic chem text when I first saw the broken hockey stick. He was digging into the lower part of his steamer trunk for the book and the blade of the stick peeked out from under a roll sweater. As I opened my mouth he quickly flipped the sweater over it and his face reddened.

"Listen here," I demanded. "Do you play hockey?"

"I used to—a little," he admitted.

"Why don't you come out for the team?" I asked. "Haven't you been reading the papers?"

Stormy handed me the chem text with an abrupt gesture. "This is what you came up for, isn't it?" he asked meaningly.

"Yes, but—"

"All right then. If you want any help on chem, come around." And he actually steered me toward the door.

Well, I could take a hint, so I said nothing more at the time, but all the way down to Campustown I kept thinking about that broken stick.

I realized, suddenly, that I knew next to nothing about Stormy's past, and probably nobody else at Hart U knew any more than I did. He was one of those quiet fellows who never drew attention to himself. Yet he was far from insignificant. He seemed capable and rugged, as though he could take a bump without wincing. I guessed his height at five feet ten and his weight at 170. Nice hockey weight, that.

The broken stick interested me. Broken sticks in hockey mean bruises.

"Sure," I said aloud. "That's why he won't talk about the game. He's remembering something, and it's probably unpleasant."

There happens to be a strain of English bulldog in me, so I went to the Psi Psi house and picked up Tom Miner, our captain and right defense man. Tom has the build and face of a heavyweight prizefighter, and can be very convincing.

"Tom," I said, "I'm going down to a rooming house and talk hockey to a high-speed truck called Knight. I want you to come along and protect me."

Tom was into his coat with one mighty wiggle. "Let's go," he rumbled.

Understand, we wouldn't have bothered to see Stormy if the team hadn't been facing a peculiar situation. Hart U was pretty far south for the game, and half the time the ice on North Lake would go soft. We never knew whether to report on skates or in swimming suits, and as a result we had to schedule all our games out of town.

Coach Francis had the logical answer. Install ice machinery in old Exhibition Hall and convert it into a rink. He suggested the idea to the Athletic Council, and I guess they're still laughing.

"Go get a team first," they said, or words to that effect, and laughed some more.

So Francis stuck his jaw out a foot and went into action. He issued repeated calls for new candidates. He called on the *Daily* for publicity. He induced the two strongest teams in the conference, Wallaceton and Lane, to schedule their games at Hart in mid-January, when the ice was most likely to be good. We were almost ready, now, for our first game and were desperately in need of reserves. You can see why we were ready to get down on our knees to any recruit.

Tom and I found Stormy Knight deep in a book, plainly annoyed at the second interruption.

"This is Tom Miner, our captain," I said, as Tom extended a huge paw. "Tell *him* you won't come out for hockey."

Stormy looked up at Tom's huge frame and smiled. "All right," he replied pleasantly. "I won't come out for hockey."

"A guy like that would tweak a grizzly's whiskers," I mourned. By this time I was convinced that Stormy was a star player.

"Listen, Stormy—" and I told him about the team.

"If you've played at all," Tom said, very gently for such a big guy, "you could do us some good. We haven't even got two complete teams for practice."

"I'm sorry," Stormy replied, "but I'm trying to wrangle a degree from this brain factory in three years, and that doesn't leave me much time for anything else."

"Are you sure that's the only reason?" I asked.

"If I have any other reasons, they're my business."

I caught a glimpse of Stormy's eyes as he said

that, and what I saw made me draw my breath. If ever black thunder and white lightning blazed from a pair of eyes they did in that sudden, revealing instant, and I dimly realized why somebody, somewhere, had nicknamed the sophomore "Stormy."

"Take it all back," I said hastily. "I—"

But Tom hadn't seen the glance, and before I could stop him he nodded sympathetically toward the trunk. "Jack told me something about *that*," he said. "Did it ever occur to you that it might be a good idea to play once more—just to prove to yourself that you can still take it?"

For a minute, I thought Stormy was going to hit Tom. He sat there and glared like a cornered cat. Then the battle light died out, kind of slow, and he closed his book with a sigh.

"Come on," he said calmly. "I see the only way to get rid of you is to go down to your lake."

"Swell!" I yelped.

"But I won't play on your team," Stormy said flatly. "I'll help out on practice. That's all."

Although North Lake is only a hundred yards from the gym, we seldom have an audience at practice. The only non-squad-member present this afternoon was Pep Warren of the *Daily* staff, and he was there under protest.

Pep, with his brown hat pulled low over his eyes and his hands thrust deep in his overcoat pockets, looked on from a distance as Tom and I introduced Knight to the coach and the rest of the team.

We had Stormy outfitted in spare harness and jersey, and the moment he took the puck on the end of his stick I knew that he was no stranger to the rink. His first pass to me came just far enough in front so that I could take it without breaking my stride, and I began to grin.

"That's the stuff, Stormy!" I shouted enthusiastically.

Then came the scrimmage with Stormy at left wing for the scrubs. The varsity scored a goal in about two minutes, and during that two minutes Stormy skated about the fringes of the action, getting the feel of things and wearing off the strangeness. He was testing his skates, learning the length of his stick, trying pivots and stops.

Then, with the second face-off, he went into action. The varsity front line—Gilroy at center, Frenchy LeBeuve at left wing, and myself at right—carried the puck down past the blue line. The shot was blocked and Stormy recovered.

He started down rink. Frenchy, our fastest man, started after him, but Stormy broke into a sprint that left a gap of ice between the two. As he bore down on Tom Miner and Pat Patterson, our defense team, I forgot I was playing. "They'll stop him," I murmured.

But Stormy, coming down middle ice, feinted toward the side line, pulled a lightning reverse, and was in the clear. He swooped down on Sellers, our goalkeeper, faked a shot, drew Sellers out, and neatly flipped the counter in behind his back.

By that time all action was stopped. Tom, French, and the rest of us looked on open-mouthed. In that bit of action, Stormy Knight had demonstrated an ability to break fast, feint, back-check, and shoot left-handed. He had shown aggressiveness and speed. He was, without question, the best hockey player on the rink.

As we were skating off the rink after practice, Coach Francis and Pep Warren walked up to me with blood in their eyes.

"Up to my office," the coach said. "You, and Tom and Knight. Pep Warren, here, has an idea in the back of his head."

As we sat around the coach's office still hot from scrimmage, I felt a growing curiosity as I waited for Pep to begin. Coach Francis waved a hand at Pep to take the floor. Stormy Knight was present, puffing hard from his lack of condition.

Pep had the gleam of a crusading journalist in his eye. "I've got a plan that will get everybody on this campus talking hockey," he said. "But before I spring it, I've got to know if Stormy, here, will reconsider his decision not to play."

Stormy slowly lifted his eyes and looked from one to the other.

"You've got me on the spot," he said. "I never should have come down here." He paused. Then, defiantly: "I suppose, if I don't go out for the team now, I'm not showing the proper school spirit."

"Not a bit of it." Coach Francis, bald-headed and stocky, leaned back in his chair. "At this school we run sports for the fun of the student."

Stormy hesitated. "Let's hear Warren's plan," he murmured.

"First, let me ask the coach a question." Pep

I was so worried I went up to Stormy's room just before practice time on Monday. I found him sitting at his desk. "Jack," he said, "I don't think I can go on with it."

turned to Francis. "Do you think we can go places with Stormy in the line-up?"

The coach leaned forward seriously. "I think we can," he said carefully. "We've got seven good men now, but our trouble is lack of substitutes. A team really needs two capable first lines, so that we can play a game without losing attacking power. With French LeBeuve as the spark plug in one first line, and Stormy, here, in the other, we can go at top pace all the way. Of course, when we play schools like Wallaceton and Lane, we're really over our heads. But—" his eyes sparkled with longing—"I think we could even give *them* a scrap."

"I can get ten thousand people out for Wallaceton," Pep said calmly. "Put the wooden bleachers down on the lake and fill 'em."

That was too much for me. "How?" I burst out.

Pep got to his feet. "Hockey at this school needs a pulmotor, doesn't it?" He looked around at all of us and we agreed. "It needs a gag, a stunt, a racket to stir up the public. All right—Stormy's the pulmotor." He flung a hand at the embarrassed sophomore. "Meet the Masked Raider!"

We looked from Pep to Knight and back again, waiting.

"We'll put a mask on Stormy," Pep said. "A black wool mask fitting over the entire face. Give him a jersey with an aurora borealis effect across it. Then we'll let the campus buzz about who he is."

Tom laughed skeptically. "How long do you think you could get away with that?"

"Let me worry about the practical difficulties," Pep said briskly. He turned to Stormy. "How many fellows on this campus know that you play hockey?"

"Nobody, I guess."

"Okay. Before each game the *Daily* can throw out a challenge to the other school. *Watch out for the Masked Raider!*"

The coach frowned. "That *would* put Stormy on the spot."

But Stormy himself seemed interested now. He was sitting straight up, a half smile on his face, a look of longing in his eyes. Pep saw it and spoke up instantly.

"How about it, Stormy?"

And then the biggest surprise of all. "As long as you keep my identity secret I'll play."

"Whoops!" I yelled.

But Tom had an objection. He turned to the coach. "How about the other schools?" he asked. "Will they stand for it?"

"I can write the coaches—file a confidential report on Stormy's eligibility." Francis thought a moment and smiled. "It's a wild idea, but I think it can be arranged."

Well, we took the team into our confidence, swore them to secrecy, and Pep Warren went to work like a man inspired. He announced the Masked Raider in next day's *Daily*, and told the campus they could get a look at him at Thursday's practice.

The campus took it more or less as a joke, and when four o'clock Wednesday rolled around not more than a hundred students lined the banked snow. But by five o'clock, after Stormy had twice beaten the varsity team in dashes to the goal, these hundred onlookers were converts. Here, they realized, was something new to Hart hockey. Who was this stocky unknown, anyhow?

We had no trouble keeping Stormy's identity secret on Wednesday, or Thursday either, when fully three hundred rooters watched us work out. We barred the locker room to visitors and let Stormy out the back way.

On Friday, the night we were due to board the train for our first game with Bingham Tech, Pep Warren threw out this headline: "Watch Out, Tech! The Raider Is Coming!" A mob of students crowded the station to scan the squad for the sight of a strange face, but Stormy wasn't there. Pep Warren was driving him to Leesburg, where he would board the train and go to his own berth in another Pullman. We wouldn't see him until he got to the Bingham Hotel, and from there on he would wear his mask.

The *Technician*, Bingham Tech's paper, was politely skeptical about the unknown. "We were not aware that a mask either helped or detracted from a player's ability," they said disdainfully, "but whether the Raider is good, bad, or indifferent, our boys may be counted on to give him a typical Tech welcome."

But they didn't. On the Tech rink, Stormy showed us something new in hockey. In the first two minutes of play, he loosed a shot from mid-ice that traveled between the two defense men like a rifle bullet and smacked into the corner of the netting before the startled goalkeeper could lift his stick.

Early in the second period, he carried one of his single-handed assaults down to the goal mouth, tricked the goalie out, and slipped the puck behind him, just as he had done in practice.

Tech was a better team, but our two-goal lead made them panicky and their co-ordination disappeared. They went scoreless until the middle of the third period when their center, enraged at Stormy's ability to sift through the Tech defense at will, laid back for him and caught him with a hard body-check that thudded him headlong on the ice.

I skated past Stormy and noticed that the gloved hand on his stick was trembling. The Masked Raider wasn't much good to us for the next few minutes and that was when Bingham scored its only goal.

Going home on the train the squad was hilarious—that is, everybody but me. I got Tom in a seat alone.

"Stormy's still afraid of hockey," I murmured, and told him what I had noticed on the ice in the third period.

Tom looked dismayed. "What'll he do when we meet Lane?"

That was something to think about. Lane had a pair of the huskiest defense men in the league in Bangs and Morton. Broad-shouldered battering rams who body-checked with the force of a runaway express.

"Well, they'll either drive him out of the game—or he'll meet the test."

When I read Pep Warren's Monday headline, I groaned aloud.

"MORTON AND BANGS BEWARE!" it went. And in the story following: "The Tech defense has fallen before the Masked Raider, and *your turn is next*. When you reach for the Phantom of the Northland you'll grab nothing more substantial than an icy gale. . . ." And more like it.

The Lane game was the first big scrap ever scheduled on Hart ice, and there were two thousand students around the big open-air rink, all seated in the narrow band of bleacher seats. Not a great crowd, but the largest ever to attend a game at Hart. It was mid-January and the ice was blue and fast.

I looked at the big, crimson-clad Lane men and wondered. Morton and Bangs, two rugged huskies, loomed as big as giants in their bulky harness and pads.

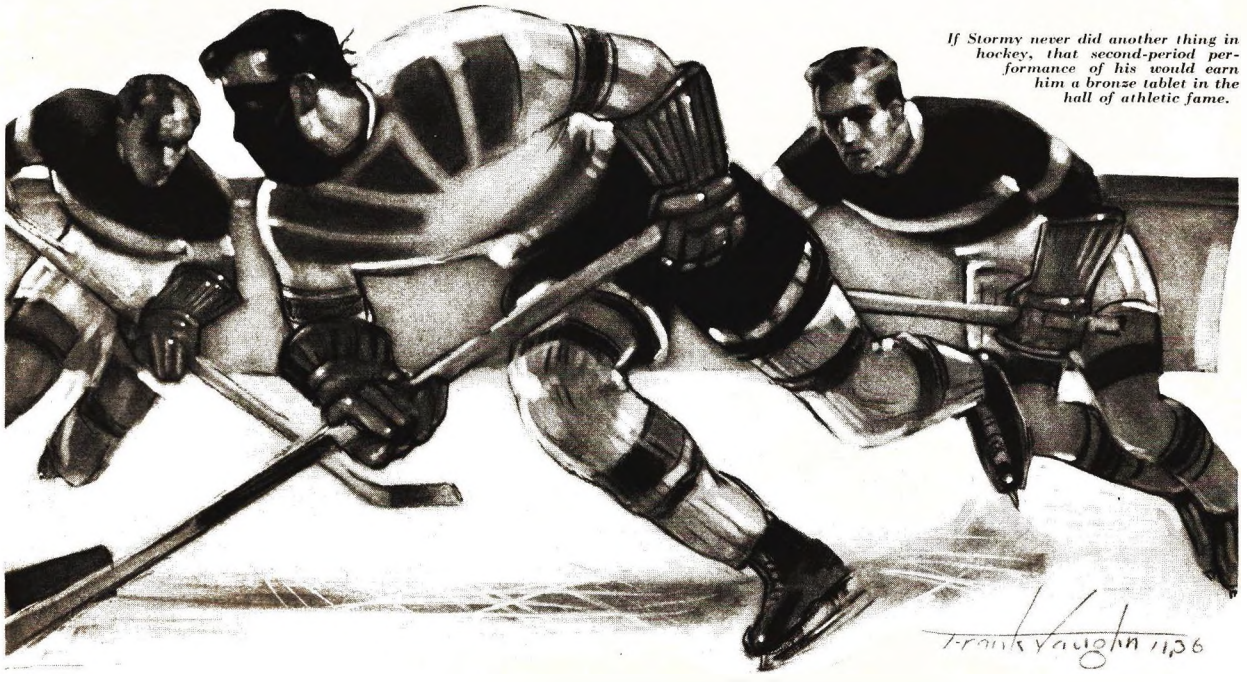
Lane scored first with a powerful three-man attack that fairly rammed the puck past Sellers for the counter, but in the second quarter, Stormy made good on Pep Warren's promise. On his first attack he started in almost lazy fashion, scooping the puck along in front of him like a man shoveling snow. He flipped the rubber to me in our end of the rink and took a return pass.

Then he started. From a lazy stride, he suddenly burst into full speed. With a fast check and pivot he circled the opposing center and angled down on Morton and Bangs.

Grimly they drew together, toeing the blue line and waiting. Close to them Stormy checked his speed and invitingly shoved the puck toward Bangs, as if to say, "Take it!"

Bangs reached for it, and that was his undoing. The instant he committed himself, Stormy hooked back the puck and took it around him in a sprinting circle that left the big player helpless.

The goalkeeper waited like a doomed man. In the maneuver that we knew so well Stormy made for the corner of the net until he had drawn the goalkeeper out, then swerved in front of the net for that easy shot behind the man's back. But the Lane goalkeeper was wise to that trick and threw his stick



If Stormy never did another thing in hockey, that second-period performance of his would earn him a bronze tablet in the hall of athletic fame.

across the goal mouth, close to the ice, to block the shot.

Then it was that Stormy pulled another trick from his bag. With a peculiar upward flip he lofted the puck over the stick and into the net as neatly as a golfer chips to the green.

At that exact instant Hart began to go hockey mad. We *did* have a team! Here it was in the second quarter and we had the powerful Lane team tied!

Five minutes later we were ahead, 2 to 1, when Stormy delivered one of those masked shots from mid-ice—the shot that travels so fast the eye can hardly follow it—and the school gave itself heart and soul to the Masked Raider.

Like an underdog with a hard-won bone, we ruffed our collars, snarled, and protected our one-point lead, with Tom and Pat bearing the shock. Well into the third quarter we were busy defending our goal from a fusillade of shots, until at last the Raider snaked the puck out of a mix-up and started on the long trip.

This time he outskated Bangs with a sheer burst of speed, and in the last instant the desperate man threw his stick out in an effort to poke the puck away. Bangs' stick left his hands and caught between Stormy's skates.

I don't know whether the tripping was intentional or not, but the result was appalling. From a vertical position, the Raider arched through the air like a thrown lance. He landed on his shoulder, skidded twenty feet, and lay stunned.

I hurried to him, but before I could reach him he had bounded to his feet and started toward where Bangs stood, stickless and slightly amazed.

I reached the Raider and grasped his arm, swinging him around facing me.

"Let me go," he said in a strangled voice.

The arm under my fingers was like quivering bands of steel. The eyes looking out of the hollow holes of the mask were afire with the light I had detected once before, in Stormy's room. But now I thought I knew what those flashes were. Panic.

"Stormy," I hissed. "Come to! What's the matter?"

The arm relaxed and the eyes lowered. "My shoulder," a broken voice murmured. And his head drooped almost to my arm, and from the mask came an involuntary sob.

The coach saw that Stormy was badly shaken and immediately substituted our other first line headed by French LeBeuve, while Bangs was ordered to the penalty box for tripping.

Although Lane had only five men on the ice to our six, she seemed to take heart with the departure of Stormy, and sending all but the goalkeeper down the ice she literally rammed a counter down our throats.

At the beginning of the extra period we took the field with Stormy again, and I noticed that on the first assault Stormy steered wide of Bangs and lost the puck to Morton. His movements were less sure, less dashing, and I knew we were a gone goose.

Stormy tried. You could see that. He tried to meet Bangs and Morton with the same sheer audacity that had scored two goals against the most formidable defense team in the conference—but he couldn't carry it off. Midway of the overtime Lane sent five men down the ice in an irresistible wave and scored the winning goal.

But the school didn't see anything wrong with it. They knew only that we had forced the fast Lane team into overtime, and lost by the bare margin of a goal. To them, Hart had arrived, and the Masked Raider had become a flaming beacon. Watch out, Wallaceton! Hart is coming up! Up!

Personally, I knew different. In fact I was so worried that I went up to Stormy's room just before practice time on Monday. I found him sitting at his desk, his head resting in his hands. At my entrance he turned a face to me that was very pale and tired.

"Jack," he said, "I don't think I can go on with it."

My blood turned cold. I sank into a chair. "Why?" I asked weakly. "You mean that bump—Saturday?"

Stormy nodded, and when he spoke there was a sort of despair to his voice. "It seems that whenever the pinch comes—I can't—I can't be sure of myself. I've always been that way, you see. And it's too late to beat it now."

"But Stormy, you can't quit!" I cried, leaping to my feet in great agitation. "That's admitting defeat. If you don't keep trying, you may never lick it. Think of—" I cast about desperately for the right words—"Think of going through life dodging the issue. You've got to keep fighting!"

"Keep fighting." As Stormy repeated the words a ghost of a smile appeared on his lips. "I'm not sure that's the right medicine—for me."

"But you can't give up!"

Stormy's eyes were veiled.

"Besides," I went on, sparring desperately. "Whether you dodge the mix-ups or barge into 'em, you're still our main threat. We've got to have you. For Wallaceton, anyhow!"

Stormy drew a deep breath. "All right—I'll play. Against Wallaceton, at least."

As we walked out of his room together I trembled with relief. What a farce that game would be without Stormy! And after all the build-up!

In the locker room a half-hour later, Pep Warren was waving a fistful of papers exultantly.

"Two thousand advance sale for Wallaceton!" he shouted. "By the time I get through with my promotion it's going to be a sellout! Listen, my good men! This paper announces the great guessing contest: Who Is the Masked Raider? Ten free tickets to the first ten correct guessers! And look at this headline for Wallaceton!"

He scattered copies about with great abandon. I picked one up and read: "Coming Your Way, Pollock! The Masked Raider has swept through the Tech and Lane defense. You're next. We know the kind of game you play, Mr. Pollock—slashing, tearing, and hard-checking. Try it on the Masked Raider and see what happens!"

"Swell stuff, don't you think?" Pep asked exultantly.

"Yeh," I said glumly.

Stormy, sitting on the bench beside me, had his eyes glued to the page. His left hand, curled around the edge of the paper, was crushing it into thin pleats.

"Contest closes Thursday noon," Pep went on, "and at Thursday's practice, as a curtain-raiser for the big game, we'll unmask Stormy."

Stormy was on his feet. "No," he was saying in a strained voice. "There'll be no unmasking until after the Wallaceton game."

The room fell silent. There was a frantic touch to Stormy's voice that everybody caught instantly. Finally Pep cleared his throat.

"Okay," he said in a subdued voice. "I'll put in a correction. Unmasking immediately after the final gun on Saturday."

And that was that, without another word.

I hope never to live through five days such as followed the appearance of Monday's *Daily*. The coach drilled us late and hard. Then there was the task of keeping Stormy from prying eyes. Crowds of students lined the path from lake to gym. Every night we had to throw a blanket over Stormy and carry him in. One night he had to hide himself in the storeroom until ten o'clock. Hart, for once in its life, was hockey mad.

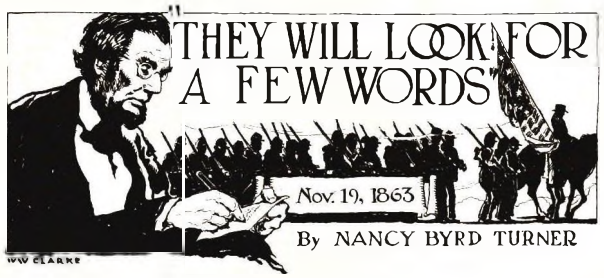
Well they might be, with Wallaceton coming to town. The mainspring of the Wallaceton works was Pollock. He was that swell combination—a great defense man who can also go down on attack. His hard and crushing style of play had been adopted by the rest of the team. They were rough and ready customers and I knew we were in for a merry time.

Yet, in spite of that, I was relieved when we walked down the path to the rink at two o'clock Saturday afternoon. A condemned man probably feels that way when he goes to the chair. I got a thrill when I saw that the extra bleacher sections were jammed to the top row, and another thrill when I saw the maroon-clad Wallaceton players circling and weaving over the ice.

I went through the warm-up in a complete daze that didn't clear away until Gilroy and the Wallaceton center, Dodd, were facing off in the center of the rink. But though my head was clear at the face-off, for the rest of the first period I was caught in a whirlwind of action that gave me no time for a single connected thought.

Sometimes I'm doubtful about the value of publicity. Certainly, the net effect of Pep Warren's valiant headlines was to stir up Wallaceton to the greatest one-period exhibition of hockey it has ever been my privilege to see.

Our only sight of the puck in that period was in black streaks as it cannonaded by us from every conceivable angle. Wallaceton had four men on offense and we had to draw our whole team back to stop them. They swept us off our feet. They circled us dizzy. They whammed shot after shot at the net, taking rebounds from our skates and bodies to wham *(Continued on page 31)*



By NANCY BYRD TURNER

THE fast express for Gettysburg roared north
Among the hills one autumn day long gone,
At thirty miles an hour, from Washington
To the great Field; and beating along the ties,
Crying across the rivers, on it drew,
Echoing under bleak November skies.

The coaches rocked. One awkward traveler rode
Hunched in his seat, too tall for comfort there,
A gaunt, plain man with memorable air
Who talked at intervals with other men —
Companionable, keen of word — and then
Lapsed into silence, with his brooding look
Long on the changing scene, mile after mile—
A strange man, musing strangely, deeply, while
The rest talked on, or counted ties.

After a long, long time
Somebody reckoned the journey was half gone.
And all thoughts turned together to the town
Where soon the crowds would meet to praise their dead,
Their numberless dead, living in memory.

THE tall man's eyes grew darker. "They will look
For a few words from me," slowly he said.
And, searching clumsily for paper, spread
A crumpled scrap across his dusty knee.

Then while the long train on and upward beat,
His pencil slowly stumbled through the grime
On the smudged sheet. And as the breathless climb
Conquered the longest rise of all, and topped
A hill above a plain far-flung and broad,
The pencil wrote, *This nation under God . . .*
Then, shaken through phrase by phrase, after a time
Wrote, *Shall not perish from the earth . . .* and stopped.

and the earth said: "SHAKE!"

A Personal Meeting With Earthquakes As Told to Franklin M. Reck

by

Upton Close

Our most destructive earthquake was at San Francisco in 1906. Much of the city was destroyed by fire, and the homeless lived in shacks, like that above.

UPTON CLOSE'S real name is Josef Washington Hall, but the world came to know him as Upton Close when his dispatches from the Chinese war front appeared in newspapers under the signature, "Up Close," meaning that he was close to the action.

As expert on Oriental affairs, lecturer, and world traveler, Upton Close has lived through many adventures, but none of them was more thrilling than his two experiences with earthquakes, described here.

MY OLDER sister had one habit that I resented highly. Every morning she would come to my bed and shake it, gently at first, then with increasing vigor until finally I had to get up and go about the painful business of dressing, eating breakfast, and hustling off to high school.

On this particular morning it seemed to me she was shaking the bed with unusual energy. Bouncing it over the floor, in fact. With sad resignation I opened my eyes.

The Southern California quake of 1933 ripped away the walls of buildings in Long Beach, exposing living quarters to the gaze of everyone. Left: Here's what a good temblor does to a house.

My sister was standing at the foot of the bed as usual. Her hands were gripping it in the usual fashion. But the expression on her face was new. Her eyes were round and horror-struck. Her cheeks were white. Her posture rigid with terror.

"Get up!" she screamed. "Earthquake!"

I looked out of the window and saw trees dancing crazily in the yard. With a leap I was out of bed, pulling on my clothes. Half-dressed I ran to the stairs, got part way down it, and stopped transfixed.

Out the open front door I could see a water tank across the street swinging back and forth in long arcs, like an inverted pendulum. At that instant a violent tremor shook the house, the bricks of the chimney came tumbling into our living room and I did a headfirst somersault down the stairs.

If I had any doubts left, they disappeared. Sitting on the floor, one hand to my head, I knew I was without any question in the middle of a big-time, major-league earthquake.

If, by any chance, you haven't been introduced personally to earthquakes, it's high time you were. By the time you have shuffled through this unstable, rumbling globe of ours you'll have met plenty of them. No matter where you live an earthquake is almost certain to knock gently at your front door, and say, "Shake."

Whether the higher forces that made this earth did a good job of it can be debated. The bedrock underneath your feet is lined with fractures that are constantly slipping, like the faces of two blocks insecurely held together. The slip may be a few inches or many feet. It may be horizontal, vertical, or both. But every slip sends up a series of tremors and when these tremors are violent enough the earth crust dances, cracks and fissures open, and cities topple.

Be thankful that most quakes are nothing more than a wavy line on a seismograph! One patient scientist has listed 160,000 earthquakes. Japan has between 500 and 1,000 a year. Italy can count on more than 100 annually. In Greece they're as regular as dinner. Our Western coast has its share. If all these quakes were destructive we'd have migrated to Mars long before this. Most of them you don't even know about until you read in the papers next morning that the delicate instrument in Professor Jones' laboratory, last night, did a gentle dance for five minutes.

Scientists have given the name seismology to the study of earthquakes, and if I had been up on my seismology, I'd have *(Continued on page 28)*

Upton Close passed through the Great Wall of China here, on his way to his worst earthquake.

Friendly talks
WITH THE EDITOR

THE next time you approach a traffic policeman at a busy corner, you can be certain that he has something on his mind besides seeing to it that you make a left turn properly. Handling traffic is his main job, of course, but don't be surprised if he looks you over with some curiosity as you pull up for that left turn. In his pocket he has a notebook, and in that notebook he may have a few scribbled lines reading something like this: "Be on the lookout for Wallace Johnson, seventeen. Height 5-9. Weight, 130. Sandy hair, blue eyes, light complexion. Blue serge suit. Gray hat. Checked overcoat. Black shoes. 7422 Ravenswood. Missing from home since Tuesday night." When the officer sees your checked coat and gray hat, he wonders if you are the missing person. If his closer inspection reveals further similarities, such as blue eyes, sandy hair, and black shoes he may even hold you for questioning. Every traffic officer, every patrolman on a beat, every scout car driver has a notebook containing the descriptions of missing and wanted people. Sometimes, naturally, they may think *you* are one of the wanted people. One man, so unfortunate as to look like Dillinger, was picked up and questioned a half-dozen times before the real Dillinger was found.

Wanted Men

THE other day we happened to be in the room at police headquarters to which traffic officers report before going on duty. There was a row of lockers on one side of the room and a big blackboard on the other. One corner of the blackboard was filled with the license numbers of stolen cars. The rest of it was devoted to the descriptions of wanted people. Several policemen were sitting at a large table, copying all this down in their notebooks. One description interested us especially. It went: "Wanted William Logan, 24, height 5-6, weight 150. Has several aliases. Also James Rank, 27, height 5-11, weight 175, swarthy, heavy features. Blue sedan, license number J-5843-2. Wanted for bank robbery. Logan has bullet scar on left wrist. If you stop these men have gun ready. They will shoot to kill." Here, in a little back room at headquarters, some two thousand bluecoats—scout-car men, patrolmen, and traffic officers—were getting a word picture of two wanted men. And these policemen, on duty later, were carrying that picture in their minds. And yet some criminals delude themselves into thinking that they have a chance to get away with a life of crime.

Police Are Specialists

ON OUR visit to police headquarters we learned that there's very little actual gun pulling in police work. The modern city policeman may be in the sign and paint division, in which case he spends his time seeing that the "stop" and "slow" signs at street corners are bright and readable. He may have to make safety lectures at schools. He may work at a counter issuing drivers' licenses or at a desk investigating the causes of accidents. Police work today is as highly specialized as engineering. If you're a detective, you may be a specialist in narcotics, or bad checks, or holdups. You might be a laboratory man peering through a microscope at the markings on bullets or the stains on cloth. It's a complicated business, this job of making a large city behave, and most of the time the policeman is dealing not with criminals but respectable citizens.

They're All Marksmen

YET an officer may have to shoot, and when the time comes he wants to shoot straight. Once a year every policeman has to go down to the pistol range in the basement at headquarters and shoot for record. He fires two ranges, 20 feet and 40 feet, and must make 70 out of a possible 100 on each range. He fires ten shots at each range, five rapid fire and five slow. If his score is below 70 he must practice until he brings it up. Police use .38 caliber revolvers, commonly called six-shooters. They prefer the six-shooter to the automatic because it's more sure—the automatic may jam. There's a light .38 and a heavy. The heavy one shoots a somewhat longer shell with more penetrating power. Traffic policemen usually carry the lighter gun, while detectives, who may come face to face with criminals, carry the heavier revolver. The bullets are lead, rather flat-nosed and unpleasant-looking. In addition to his revolver, the officer carries his badge, notebook for descriptions of wanted men, a summons book for traffic violations, and a whistle. With those few items of equipment, he sallies forth daily to keep the town in order. And does a pretty good job of it, everything considered.

Reporting Accidents

IF YOU ever have occasion to report an accident, the police will pin an unofficial medal on you if you give them clear-cut, specific information. If there's a man injured, say so and the police will have an ambulance on the way in a few seconds. Give the location. And give this information to the first man who answers the phone. It's an extremely interesting and busy place, the telephone switchboard at police headquarters. At one end of the board are three telephone company men, taking calls from all parts of the city. "Husband and wife quarreling at 250 Pine Street." "Accident at Fourth and Elm." The telephone company men give this information to police broadcasters sitting next to them and these men broadcast the information directly to radio scout cars. You stand behind one of them and listen: "Number fourteen-three (a car in precinct fourteen), go to 8735 Walker. Car thieves working in the alley garage." And in less than two minutes the scout car is on the spot, investigating the trouble. In one month, 150,000 such calls came into headquarters in one large city, and as a result of these calls scout cars made 1,500 trips a day during that month.

Nice Doggie!

NOW and then the police have strange tasks to perform. In fact there's no telling just what an officer may have to do. A man came out of a grocery store and found an immense St. Bernard dog sitting in the rear seat of his auto. He said, "Come doggie," snapped his fingers, and whistled, but the dog wouldn't budge. Respectfully eying the dog's great bulk he called a policeman to eject the intruder. The officer tried coaxing. He even put a careful hand on the dog's neck and tugged—without result. Not exactly wishing to climb into the car and wrestle with 125 pounds of bone and gristle, the officer and car owner gave the dog a free ride to the police station. Several officers went to work on the culprit. They boosted from behind and pulled from the front and finally, by main force, separated him from the car. Throughout, the great St. Bernard remained perfectly amiable and unruffled. He wasn't mad. He just wanted to stay in the car.

Speaking of Minuteness

HOW much is one millionth of an inch? Can you feel it? Can you see it? There's a man named Johansson in Dearborn who makes precise gauges that are exact down to the millionth of an inch. Sometimes visiting engineers are skeptical about the exactness of these blocks. When Johansson shows them three blocks and says that the middle one is a millionth of an inch shorter than the other two, they sometimes ask, "How do you know?" Whereupon he proves his point in unique fashion. He lays another block over the top of the three blocks and binds all of them in a tight frame. Then he goes into a dark room and politely asks his visitors if they know their physics. If so, they know that if there were a slit a millionth of an inch wide, the only light that could get through would be violet. So Johansson turns on a white light and holds the bound blocks up to it, and in awe the visitor sees a thin violet streak along the top of the shorter block. He's looking at a millionth of an inch.

Undersea Adventure

IF YOU'D like to know how it feels to step out of a submarine into the ocean at 315 feet—deeper than any diver has worked—and try to repair a broken plate in the submarine's side, read "Spanish Ingots," by Commander Edward Ellsberg (Dodd, Mead $2). At that depth the water pressure is 140 pounds, nearly ten times the air pressure at sea level. There in the deep gloom of the ocean bottom, hampered by a clumsy diving suit, you must work with fingers and wrench! "Spanish Ingots" is a swift undersea story of treasure hunting.

Galahad inched forward. When only six feet separated them, the young cock looked up again. Galahad came to a dead point—tail up, body rigid.

MISTER GALAHAD

Jay McKain bought Galahad and took care of him—but it was Jay who needed help

by

Vereen Bell

Illustrator: PAUL BRANSOM

JAY McKAIN heard the swish of the nurse's starched skirt, heard the doctor's cough, and knew that the examination of his knee was over.

He opened his eyes. Next to the wall, beyond the nurse and the doctor, stood a trainer for the Giants. Beside him was a reporter from the *Tribune*.

Jay tried to read the doctor's face. It was dark, grim. The knee must have looked pretty bad.

"Out for winter practice?" Jay asked.

For a long time the doctor didn't answer. Then he said, "Out for good."

He turned and left the room. To help ease the silence, the nurse approached and made aimless little pushes at the sheets.

The Giant trainer came over and shook McKain's hand, and then he, too, went out.

The *Trib* man asked softly, "Anything to say, Jay?"

McKain was staring at the place where the doctor had stood. "No."

The reporter turned to go, then stopped. "Anything to say about Harvey Allen?"

McKain shrugged. "Why should I bother to think up something to say about a squirrel?" He motioned toward the door. "You were going to use that, weren't you?"

"Sorry, McKain," said the *Trib* man, moving away. "It's my job, worrying people, you know." Still he didn't go. "McKain—you're a good egg. Don't let this get you." Then he was gone.

Harvey Allen came in for the first time the next morning. "I'm sorry about all this, McKain," he said. "But it couldn't be helped." Allen, slim and mousy and dapper, stood by the window, hat in hand. He smoothed his wispy mustache nervously. "My insurance company is taking care of the bills. There'll be an indemnity fund, too—cash."

"That'll buy me a new leg, won't it?"

Allen huffed indignantly. "I should think it would help!"

"Oh, get out, before I have somebody sprinkle you with insect powder."

The first few weeks after the accident were torture for McKain. After they took the casts off and he was permitted to go home, most of the physical pain left. Then followed a mental anguish that was worse.

Even that went, finally. But in its place came bitterness—and the bitterness did not leave.

There had been so much to look forward to! Now there was nothing.

Hobbling stiff-kneed about his little house, he was constantly reminded of the only two things he had ever cared about—hunting and baseball. Both of these were hopelessly gone, now.

His guns were there on the deer-foot racks. Little doubt that the hunting was gone. You couldn't hunt with a horse in this country, with its gullies and fences. And afoot, the dogs would leave him. It takes an able-bodied man to follow a brace of good bird dogs—a man with a stiff knee didn't have a chance.

There were reminders of baseball, too. On one wall of his bedroom were pictures of baseball heroes. Some dated back thirty years, some six months. He might have had a chance to be up there himself, sometime. The newspaper clippings in his scrapbook told his story.

High school star to go pro, rumor, the one yellowest with age said. Then: *McKain signs with Crayville Tuesday. Young rookie stars at short in opener. Crayville takes Kingston; Jay McKain gets homer. McKain's triple in tenth gives Crayville pennant. League votes McKain most valuable player. McKain to get try with Giants. Terry admits McKain looks good in spring practice. McKain pinch-hits two-*

Even handicapped as they were, McKain and Sleepy found birds. Sometimes four covies, sometimes two, in a day's hunt. Sleepy could scent a covey at an unbelievable distance.

hagger to save opener against Pirates. Young rookie playing regular short. McKain ends good season with Giants; has future ahead, Terry.

And then, three more headlines brought the story to its conclusion with swift, merciless strokes. *Speeding auto wrecks young Giant player near home town; endangers career. Septicemia complicates McKain's leg injury. Stiffened knee permanent; McKain out for good.*

There it was. The story was ended. But McKain relived every moment of it daily. The wreck particularly stuck with him. He remembered every detail of that with photographic vividness.

The thing was inexcusable, really. In his little topless roadster, he had been returning from the country club and a round of late-season golf. He was just ambling along, whistling, entirely contented with his golf score and the world. There was a thin, casual flow of traffic on the paved, two-lane highway. For some reason, McKain noticed an oncoming car. It was a foreign make, with fenders that pointed skyward like a police dog's ears. Then, suddenly, McKain became aware that another car was pulling up beside him. The next few seconds were blurred, but even in those tense moments McKain's brain recorded facts: The automobile that had overtaken him was being driven by Harvey Allen. He was attempting to beat the foreign car to the passing point. The final fact hammered home: Allen would never make it.

McKain was right. Allen didn't make it. To save himself, he swerved into Jay's roadster, knocking it off course. The roadster swayed, plunged onto the shoulders out of control. Hitting the ditch, it swung in a half-circle and went over.

Jay was thrown almost out by the impact. Almost, but not quite. When help came, his right leg was pinned, just at the knee. The knee was crushed.

No, it wasn't a thing to forget in a hurry. McKain wouldn't forget. It used to take him five minutes to walk to town. Now it took closer to fifteen. That sort of change was hard to get used to. Worse than hard—impossible.

On one of these walks to town, Bill Ransom stopped him.

"I want you to see my dogs," Bill said. "They're five months old now."

For a moment, McKain didn't answer. It would do no good to see them. He'd better forget about dogs. But even as he made his decision, he found himself following Bill Ransom.

"English setters," Bill was saying. "They're by King Arthur of High Point out of Pompous Lady."

The blood was there. Lady was good, and King Arthur was a field-trial champion.

Bill and Jay walked around the house and out of the Ransom home into the back yard. Five puppies were playing in the center of the dog run.

McKain knew dogs. He knew enough about them not to put too much faith in their looks. But his roving gaze picked out a lemon and white puppy that lay, nose high, in the sun by the kennel.

"That dog's nice-looking," Jay said.

"Yeah. But blind," Ransom answered. "That's Mister Galahad."

McKain looked at the puppy with quick interest. "Galahad—here!"

The dog didn't move. Ransom explained, "Mister Galahad is only a name for the pedigree papers. He got a habit of batting his eyes, so I started calling him Sleepy." Bill paused. "I didn't know he was going blind."

"Sleepy—here!" Jay called.

The young dog rose and walked unhesitatingly to the sound. He put his cool, moist nose in McKain's palm.

McKain looked at Ransom. "What happened to his eyes?"

Bill told him everything about Sleepy. He hadn't been born blind. His eyes had been as good as anybody's, at first.

Even when he was just a tiny puppy, with plastered-down ears and pink, working feet, he had showed signs of being the pick of the litter. For one thing, his tail was slender and sharp; and any old-time dog man will tell you that's a good sign. Too, his head was long and well cut.

At the age of four and a half months Mister Galahad discovered the game chickens across the wire on the property of Leroy Proctor. People said Leroy made his living betting on chicken fights. He didn't work, at any rate.

It was plain that Mister Galahad didn't know what to think of the chickens. He couldn't get very close to them, of course, but they must have had a funny smell . . . a very provocative smell. Anyway it made the hair along his back rise, and his muscles grow rigid.

"You better be glad there's a fence between you and those chickens," Bill warned him. "If one of 'em jumped on you it would take three men to pull him off."

But it was too interesting a matter for Galahad to give up. While the other puppies were barking and growling and tumbling over each other in the yard, Galahad would stalk up and down the fence, trying to satisfy himself about that elusive odor.

Then one day, he discovered that the higher openings in the wire were wider than the lower ones. For instance, if he held his head low, he couldn't squeeze it through. But if he held his head level, it slipped through easily. So he climbed up a little, squirmed his shoulders, and fell tumbling into the chicken yard.

Walking with four pullets was a cock, proud master of his domain. He was young, still in training—still possessor of his natural spurs. At the sound of Galahad's fall, he looked up in annoyance, then resumed his scratching.

Galahad inched forward. The smell was strong, now. Sharp and gamy. When only six feet separated them, the young cock looked up again.

Galahad came to a dead point—tail up, body rigid, eyes frozen in their sockets.

The cock's hackles lifted. He lowered his head and dropped his wings. He came toward Galahad in short little runs. Then he sprang into action.

Surprised, scared, yet Galahad held his point. Something inside—something inherited from generations of good bird dog ancestors—forbade him to move. Even when the avalanche of spurs and feathers exploded in his face, Galahad did not move.

The cock was furious. What had begun as an attempt to scare an intruder had roused his killer instinct. Repeatedly he catapulted into the dog's face, hooking his spurs murderously.

Finally Galahad could stand it no longer. He sank to his belly on the ground and whimpered aloud. After what seemed hours, help came. Bill kicked the cock aside. Then Galahad was lifted to the safety of a woolly jacket.

Inside the house, cool, soothing things were applied to his wounded eyes, and rough, comforting words were muttered to him.

"Little yap," Bill said. "*Told* you not to bother those chickens! Who do you think you are—Rin Tin Tin or somebody?"

The next day, the puppy began blinking his eyes in an effort to see. Then it was that Bill Ransom nicknamed him.

In a week, Sleepy's eyes turned milky blue. He didn't walk around much now, because he found that things were always getting in his way. Most of the time, while the other puppies played, he lay in the sunshine with his nose high, sniffing the wind.

"He's got a good beak," Bill said. "He can lie right here and know everything that happens in this yard. Other dogs look at things with their eyes. He hasn't got any eyes, so he looks at things with his nose."

"What're you going to do with him?" McKain asked presently.

Ransom shook his head. "I've been wondering. Put him out of it, I guess."

"I'll buy him. He'll do for me. I can't keep up with other dogs. But this one—he'll have to go slow. Maybe we can work something out."

"You don't have to buy him."

But McKain, like most men who have turned sour on the world, declined to accept favors. He drew a pocketbook from his trousers and handed Bill two five-dollar bills. "My dog?"

Bill looked at him for a long moment. Then he nodded. "Your dog."

McKain took Sleepy to his little house across the creek from the Ransom and Proctor places. They got along well from the start. He talked to the dog a lot. In a way, that was strange, because McKain had become most taciturn since the accident.

And yet, it wasn't so strange, either. McKain felt that Sleepy could understand. Sleepy had a career ahead of him, too. But that was gone, now. There was no more place for a blind bird dog in field trials than there was for a crock in baseball. Sleepy could understand all right.

Three days after he got the dog, Jay filled out the registration blanks and sent them in. On the paper, of course, Sleepy was "Mister Galahad." McKain didn't like that name.

"This—" he shook the papers—"is the only place you're 'Mister Galahad.' Forget the fancy handle. Gallantry is all right for movie heroes, but for guys like you and me it's only a laugh."

After Sleepy got a little older, life began to change slightly for McKain. For one thing, he could hunt again. And training Sleepy kept him so busy he hardly had time for his brooding.

To prevent his running into obstructions, McKain taught the dog directions before he ever took him into the woods. Even with this, occasional mishaps were bound to be met. There were hidden things to strike the dog, and holes McKain couldn't see. These little accidents Sleepy underwent with calm stoicism.

His gait was acquired, of course. It would have been disastrous for him to have followed the urge for speed that he had inherited. While if slowed to a blind dog's gait, he'd have never found any birds. So his adopted pace was something of a trot.

Sleepy's initial quail point gave McKain his first grin in months. They were hunting in the open woods. At least Jay was hunting. Sleepy, puppylike, was running beside him, biting his trouser leg. Occasionally he'd venture off to one side and sniff the grass for rats and small birds.

Then abruptly, Sleepy slowed, stopped. You could tell he was puzzled. He moved his head slowly from one side to the other. The long white hairs on his back stood up. He was saying, plain as day, "There's something here!" He didn't know what it was. He only knew he wasn't going to move. He became rigid, petrified.

McKain was doubtful. "Come on, puppy."

But it always gives a puppy self-confidence if you respect his points. When Sleepy continued to hold, McKain leveled his gun and walked deliberately in.

Suddenly there was a thunder of wings about him. He shot twice, and two quail heeled over into the brush.

Grinning, McKain clucked. "Get 'em, boy." He moved to the vicinity of the dead birds, and made the puppy find them. Sleepy retrieved them proudly, unhesitatingly. Some great, long-dead ancestor had learned that for him.

It's also good for a dog's confidence if you make a lot over him when he does nice work. McKain almost overdid that. He picked the puppy up and limped all the way home with him in his arms—Sleepy licking his face most of the way.

The rest of Sleepy's training came easy, after that. He was still a puppy, of course. He ran completely over birds sometimes. Other times he'd forget what he was hunting for, and go sniffing the broomsedge for cotton rats. But McKain wasn't worried. Sleepy would grow out of all that.

There were a few days when Sleepy and McKain weren't in the woods hunting. On these days, McKain would sit around and mull. His face would grow bitter again, and often as not he'd start talking to Sleepy about life's mercilessness.

"You and I never had a chance, Sleepy. The game was over before we ever came to bat. Right?"

Sleepy waved his plume tail. Anything McKain said was right.

But morbid days like that grew farther and farther apart. Just now, hunting days were taking their place. Sleepy was no longer a puppy. He was a dog—a first-class hunting dog. By necessity slow, but otherwise perfect.

They say a lot of the strength of an injured member passes to another member. Something like that must have happened in Sleepy's case. His sense of smell was developed almost to abnormality. He could scent a covey of birds at an unbelievable distance. Moreover, he knew what the distance was and, head high, tail straight, he'd ease right up into the midst of them and freeze.

Even handicapped as they were, McKain and Sleepy found birds. Sometimes four covies, sometimes two, in a day's hunt. Eight coveys a day by anybody was considered good hunting around Ash City.

McKain began wondering about Sleepy's nose. Then he began to wonder about other things. Finally he bought books on dogs, and subscribed to dog magazines. The subject interested him immensely. But somehow, the books were incomplete. Too many of his questions were left unanswered.

"Sometime I'll find out for myself," he told Sleepy. "Then *I'll* write a book." *(Continued on page 30)*

Suddenly there was a violent swish of feathers. Two spurs raked his jowls, a spearhead beak thumped against his skull.

You're Better Than That!

by DR. FRANK HOWARD RICHARDSON

"IF a fellow only knew more about himself, he might be able to get something done," growled Deac Jones. "What a day!"

Deac Jones had just gone through the most unsatisfactory day of his life. A day of major and minor mishaps that included spilling cream over his suit at breakfast, speaking out of turn to a prof, forgetting an appointment, fritting away the hour he had intended to spend at the library, and wasting three hours on a chem assignment that should have taken thirty minutes. He had ended it all by throwing the book halfway across the room, taking a good look at himself in the glass, and wondering what species of genus homo he was, anyhow.

Days like that are common enough. Days that make one wonder if he can ever learn to control himself, and run his own show successfully enough to get anywhere.

Nobody, of course, is completely going to master that task. If people ever learn to do a hundred per cent job of self-management we'll have a race of supermen. But we can learn enough about how the mind operates—why we behave as we do—to do a reasonably intelligent job of steering our own ship. And that's what this and the five succeeding discussions are about.

One good way of understanding your own mind is to observe other people. Watch them and try to figure out why they act as they do. Then apply their cases to yourself—ask yourself if you have ever thought their thoughts or acted as they have. You'll be able to see yourself objectively then. From the vantage point of another person.

So let's take a critical, friendly look at a few familiar types. First there's Bob Hadley. Bob dreads being called upon in class and has a tendency to flush up and muff his recital. He's slipping in his studies and knows it. He has decided that he dislikes school. He has taken recently to avoiding party invitations. He seldom joins in a general discussion. He is growing moody and shut-in.

If you were to look inside Bob's mind you'd find an assortment of fears and doubts. When he cracks a book, he spends most of his time wondering why he can't "get" the stuff as fast as his friends do. He suspects that something is wrong with him. He has been growing more and more sensitive. He thinks people talk about him behind his back, and he's certain they don't like him.

Bob represents one type, and it's common enough. Now let's look at Val Stuart. On the surface, Val is exactly the opposite of Bob. Val talks a great deal. To put it bluntly he boasts—boasts about his family, his advantages, his own unusual athletic feats.

Help Yourself!

IN this, and five more articles to come, THE AMERICAN BOY is tackling the matter of self-management.

In crisp, to-the-point discussions, Dr. Frank Howard Richardson will talk over with you such subjects as the tendency to alibi, to boast, to worry about yourself, troubles at home, and getting along with other people. Simple subjects, these, but they rise to plague all of us sooner or later!

Dr. Richardson has directed and advised young men in camp, clubs, and as an army officer. He has three grown sons of his own. His articles on human behavior have been widely published. From the background of his experience he is thoroughly convinced that a person can understand enough about his own mind to operate it with fair intelligence.

Perhaps you'll want to read this series over with someone—your brother, your dad, or a friend—and make it the basis for a helpful discussion on the all-absorbing subject

"Why We Act as We Do"

He's fairly convincing about it, and you're inclined to believe him until you know him better. Then you discover that his family isn't quite as important or his own athletic ability as great as he would have you believe.

Val is a diametrically opposite type from Bob, you say. But wait. Before we go into that, let's glance at a third type.

Sam Wallace is inclined to be scornful. On the surface he affects superiority to the troubles and pleasures of ordinary mortals. He will assert, in a conversation, his scorn of a long list of things—Rotary Clubs, the silly things folks do at parties, Mickey Mouse, the latest book, the latest movie, and the current athletic star. He goes to parties but he stands aloof. He's above all that.

Three types—the worried Bob Hadley, the braggart Val Stuart, and the scornful Sam Wallace. Yet underneath, the same thing is troubling all of them, and you've probably guessed what that thing is. It's the ever-present inferiority complex. The feeling that you're not as good as other people. Lack of confidence.

In the case of Bob Hadley the inferiority feeling is fairly apparent. He has probably had some minor setback in athletics or studies. He may have made a dunce of himself at a party (and who hasn't?). Perhaps some unthinking friend has told him he's not so hot, and he's taken the words much too seriously. The truth probably is that Bob has a better-than-average mind in a better-than-average body, but he has worried so much about his imagined faults that he has magnified them all out of proportion. He has spent too much time depreciating himself.

The result is the Bob you see today. Moody. Shut-in. Sitting at his books and not concentrating on them. Afraid to meet people. Wondering what they say about him.

Val Stuart covers up his lack of confidence—his feeling of inferiority—by boasting. It's his inner uncertainty about his family and himself that drives him into rash statements. Val could learn a lesson from this little incident:

A chap arrived at summer camp and the director asked him the usual questions. Could he swim? Could he play tennis? Could he ride? Yes, he could do all of those things, and he went out of his way to tell the director of some of his accomplishments. It was apparent that he was building himself up—selling himself to the director.

Could he box? The answer was an indifferent "yeh," as though his boxing ability weren't worth discussion. He dismissed boxing with that single "yeh" and went back eagerly to the subjects of swimming, tennis and riding.

The next week proved that he was a bad rider, an ordinary swimmer, and no great shakes at tennis. As for boxing, he could lick his weight in wildcats. Boxing, the subject he didn't think worth discussing! He was so good at boxing he hadn't bothered to sell that idea at all!

Val could take a tip from that. He might remember that a fellow doesn't waste time boasting about the thing he's sure of. If his family really is important, a chap doesn't bother to tell people. They probably know it already, and if they don't he doesn't worry.

Taking a peek under Sam Wallace's mask of scornfulness, you find that he, too, is afflicted with a feeling of inferiority but won't admit it. His scorn covers a great longing. He'd like to be a great athletic star, but can't—probably because he hasn't quite the physical equipment. So he comforts himself by deciding that he's superior to athletics. He'd like to shine at a party, but his early attempts to shine were none too successful. So he decides he's above party antics. He covers his feelings of inferiority with scorn.

Now there are ways of combating this feeling of inferiority that takes such an unnecessary toll in your own happiness and energy.

The first thing to remember is that most feelings of inferiority are unjustified. Fellows so afflicted are better guys than they think they are. There's nothing wrong with them.

So decide, firmly, that this worry about yourself—this lack of confidence—is just a state of mind. Face it for what it is.

Then decide that you can lick it. Stick your jaw out *(Cont. on page 31)*

B. H. Tierney, O. T. J.

(*Continued from page 16*)

bought as many kitchen utensils as the rear of the junk heap could hold, pots and pans, washtubs, basins and bowls.

"We'll do a little peddling," laughed Jim. "But listen, Johnny, if any shooting starts with a customer don't you get into it unless you see Jim Tierney sprawled out on the doorstep."

Rain was falling when they reached the suburbs and began a slow circling of the airport. Housewives marveled at the disreputable affair that rattled up to their kitchen doors.

"Bargain day!" bawled Tierney, derby in hand, holding up with the other hand a teakettle. "Twenty-fi' cents takes the kettle. Guaranteed not to leak for twenty years." He sold it. The caravan clanked on. At each house Tierney's round little eyes studied customers and as much of the house interiors as possible. He kept his short-wave set open in the hope that "Tommy" would send word of what progress he was making.

Leaving the more thickly settled neighborhood, Jim and Johnny reached a section of farmhouses that was much more likely to hide their quarry. At night the abandoned farmhouses had seemed ghostly. In daylight they were sinister, set far back from the highway, peering with empty sockets through trees and tangled shrubbery. The gardens that had delighted their owners a half century before had become places of ambush.

The junk heap left the highway and rattled through one of these wagon roads to a tottering clapboard farmhouse with dormer windows staring out over the trees.

Tierney had noticed the crushed growth in the road where a car had passed. In the back of the house was what was left of a barn. If this were the place, the kidnaper's car would be there.

"Steady, John," urged Tierney.

"I'm steady."

The rattling of the junk heap had brought no challenge from house or barn. As Tierney put on his brakes the silence was ominous.

"Get your left arm full of this kitchen stuff," Tierney instructed Johnny. "Keep your right hand on your gun, but remember what I told you. And keep your eyes on the barn. The feller might be out there at the radio of his car. I'll tackle the kitchen door with a few pots and pans. All set?"

"Yes, sir."

Tierney lifted his voice as he got to the ground with his wares and yelled:

"Bargain day! Bargain day! Guaranteed kitchenware at less than cost price. Fine kettles and pots and pans, first-class crockery. Bargain day!"

The muffled scream of a woman came from within, and the scuffing of feet over the floor.

"Bargain day! Bargain day!"

"Get out of here or I'll set the police dogs on you!" came from the kitchen. But Tierney knew that if there were police dogs within they would have made themselves known.

"You'll never get a better chance for a bargain," pleaded Tierney. He turned his eyes from the barn to the kitchen door. A shadow, like a swiftly drawn curtain, crossed the kitchen window. It was the form of a man and in front of it protruded the shadow of a thing Tierney knew to be a submachine gun. A pressure of the finger and a sweep from right to left would mow him and his young friend down.

"I warn you to get out!" shouted the bandit.

"Get ready to drop to the ground, Johnny."

"Yes, sir." Johnny slipped up close to the house.

Suddenly the unlooked-for thing happened. From Tierney's car came sharply a message from Tommy's master:

"Why don't we hear from you?"

Tierney and Johnny fell flat to the ground and rolled swiftly against the house for cover. The submachine gun rattled, smashing the windowpanes.

"Steady, son. Steady."

"I'm steady, sir."

From the car:

"New York police hot after us, Tommy. Marco says you'd better get rid of Sandra and head for cover."

"You stay here, Johnny. And if he shows himself let him have it."

"Yes, sir."

Tierney crawled away, hugging the brick foundation, and disappeared around the back of the kitchen. The minutes seemed to stretch into eternity for the young mechanic. Pistol in hand, he rose and flattened himself against the side of the kitchen, watching and covering both door and window.

On the other side Tierney rose with a great rock in his right hand. He heaved it through the window, echoing the crash with two shots sent within as he crouched and held the gun overhead on the window sill. The submachine gun sputtered again. Johnny smashed the window beside him, took quick aim at the hunched man inside and fired, once, twice, thrice. One of the bullets scraped Tierney's right ear but the other two struck the gunman. They heard the submachine gun hit the floor.

"Keep him covered, Johnny!" yelled Tierney. "I'll come around and bust down the door." He did, and found the kidnaper groaning on the floor, helpless. Johnny's bullets had crashed through both shoulder blades.

Peering down at the rodentlike face of the injured man, Tierney heaved a sigh of gratification.

"See that, Johnny?" he asked. "It's Tom the Tattler. He spies on all the crooks working for his master, the vice king of New York. He ain't a human being. He's vermin."

"Help me, help me," called the wounded prisoner.

"Sure, I'll help you. To a doctor first, and then to the nearest police station and get you on your way to the chair."

They found the girl Sandra and released her. She was a coarse brunette, trembly but impudent.

"And now what?" she asked.

"Although you been kidnaped, sister," said Tierney, "you've got plenty coming to you for being an accessory to Marco. We're going to get that money from you and send you to prison along with your ex-boss."

Tommy could walk to the junk heap. Wearing a kind of bracelet that she never would have chosen for herself, Sandra was put in the mass of bargains with him. Johnny sat between them.

"Just a minute, folks," said Tierney as he set his transmitter and hooked up with New York headquarters.

"Sweency. . . . Yes, Tierney. . . . Hello, Chief. I got the guy and the girl he kidnaped. . . . Yup. . . . Say, that's fine! Marco himself, huh? Gee, I'm glad. . . . Yup. . . . Yup. I'm taking the two of them to the nearest station in Philly. Telephone Maggie I'll be home for supper — corned beef and cabbage and pie with cinnamon on it. Okay. . . . B. H. Tierney, O.T.J., signing off."

and the earth said: "SHAKE!"

(*Continued from page 21*)

known that the tremors which sent me bouncing from my bed that morning were due to a slip in the San Andreas rift. This is a long rock fault extending north and south along the Pacific Coast, running straight through the city of San Francisco.

No, I didn't know anything about the San Andreas rift that morning of April 18, 1906. If anyone had told me that the engineers who fashioned this world had sliced down through the rock supporting our fair city just as you would slice through a loaf of bread, and that the seaward section was likely to slide north a few feet, almost any time, I might not even have been interested.

All I knew was that before breakfast, that fine spring morning, something far mightier than my sister's hand was shaking my little world, that houses were falling, people screaming, the earth giving forth a most terrifying rumble, and there'd probably be no school. The insane asylum was near our house and during the day I saw a procession of inmates, half-naked and bloody, running down our street. That, I think, was the grimmest moment of a grim day.

When the earth decides to slip and slide a bit, it doesn't accomplish the deed all at once and then call it a day. Like a finicky gentleman going to bed, it continues to make minor adjustments until it's comfortably settled for a fairly long sleep, and these minor shiftings are accompanied by more rumbles and tremors.

So, during the days that followed, while fire consumed the city, laying waste to 497 city blocks and ruining some half billion dollars worth of property, there were constant little shocks that kept everybody on the jump, including our high school teachers.

Any time a tremor shook the desks of our classroom the alarm would ring and out into the street we'd pour for an unexpected recess.

We liked those recesses—they provided welcome interludes in the day—and when the recesses became less frequent, Dan Tubbs, Vic Smith, and I perfected a little plan for prolonging the fun. We found that we could make the floor shake by lifting our feet on our toes and pressing with all our force on the floor, and by keeping this up in smooth cadence. We sat in widely separated parts of the classroom, and when we all pressed together we could work up a respectable quiver.

One afternoon at a prearranged signal we started, the desks began to tremble, a few other daring souls joined in, and the frightened teacher leaped for the earthquake alarm. In two minutes the school was empty.

The recess didn't last long. School was reconvened immediately and as soon as we were seated the principal came storming in.

"Who rang the alarm?" he wanted to know.

"I did," our teacher admitted hesitantly.

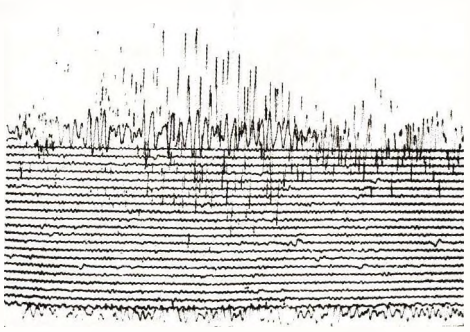
"The instruments have recorded no quakes!" the principal roared.

The teacher was bewildered. Dan Tubbs, Vic, and I remained discreetly quiet.

My next earthquake, just 15 years later, was a vastly more awesome experience than the first. Fortune decreed that I was to be a member of the party that was to bring the world the first detailed reports of the great Kansu quake which occurred on the evening of December 15, 1920.

Where the San Francisco quake destroyed one city, the Kansu quake destroyed hundreds. Where a few hundred lost their lives in San Francisco, the estimated dead in Kansu totaled nearly 200,000. The San Francisco quake was localized. The Kansu quake covered an area of 170 miles from north to south and 150 miles from east to west. The source of the San Francisco quake was near the surface. The source of the Kansu cataclysm was deep down in the earth.

Kansu is a province of China bordered on the north by Mongolia and the west by Tibet. A mountain range traverses it diagonally downward from the northwest corner, and except for this range the land is a thick blanket of loess (windblown soil), much like the soil of Missouri.



This is what a sizable quake looks like on a seismograph. See those up-and-down lines? They are the earth's vibrations.

I was a member of the International Famine Relief Committee. With our party was the Reverend John D. Hayes and two army officers. We carried considerable supplies because there are no railroads in that frontier province and we knew we would be gone for months.

As we traveled westward through the province of Shensi, warmly bundled against the bitter-cold winds of March, caravans of refugees gave us our first intimations of disaster. These simple peasants weren't acquainted with the science of seismology. They thought that the Chinese dragon had waggled his tail, as he is supposed to do every 300 years, and in thumping it against the sides of his cavern had caused the earth to shake.

"The dragon waggled his tail and the mountains walked," they told us, and we wondered what they meant.

From Sianfu, capital of Shensi, where we found minor damage to the houses, we were to walk along an increasing trail of destruction. We came to the region of the cave dwellers who had dug their homes into cliffs of earth, and found whole rows of cave dwellings shaken down into tombs.

Beyond Pingliang, in Kansu, we discovered what the natives meant when they said that the mountains walked. Topping a rise, we gazed upon a scene of desolation. The hills around the valley were not rock, but soil, and the quake, originating deep in the bedrock below this thick covering of earth, had done queer things to the hills.

Great slides had occurred—in this valley we counted seven of them—completely covering entire villages. We gazed down on wavy piles of earth and knew that many feet below them were houses and pens and stalls containing people and cattle, all of them dead of suffocation. The mountains had indeed walked.

One farmer had leaped out of his hovel to find himself and his lands being transported at a swift rate across the country. He was riding the top of a great slide that rolled across a valley and came to rest, hardly damaging his home at all.

We came to a road bordered with poplars and found a long section of it missing. A mile away the missing section rested intact in its new location, the poplars still standing along the edge of the road.

We came to a village where everybody had died but one old couple. "Our children grew tired of us and made us move to this house on the edge of the village," they said. "This is the only house not buried."

In another village, a hill slid up to within a few feet of a farmer's door and stopped short, sparing him. Moving mountains of earth slid across the beds of streams, damming them up and creating lakes where none had been before. A farmer and his sons found themselves riding the back of a slide down into the valley where two other streams of earth met them and forced them a quarter mile up a gulley. They came out of the ride unharmed.

Everywhere we found famine and suffering. Rich farmers were tearing down their houses, selling the timbers for fuel, and using the money to get out of the country. Crops were destroyed, livestock buried, and people could find little fuel with which to warm themselves.

Yet, in the midst of the desolation, the philosophical Chinese found one cause for rejoicing. There is a Mohammedan population in Kansu, and just before the quake the Mohammedans were working themselves up into a holy war under the whip of their leader, a man by the name of Ma.

Ordinarily, in any district, the Mohammedans are the dominating race, but in Kansu they were not permitted by the Chinese to hold office. They were the downtrodden people and every now and then they rebelled. Their rebellions took the form of religious outbreaks in which they killed thousands of Chinese.

On the night of December 16, when the bedrock under Kansu slipped and dislocated the thick blanket of soil above, Ma and 300 of his sub-leaders were holding council in a cave dug into the side of a mountain. The mountain walked, and in its stride snuffed out the lives of Ma and all his command.

San Francisco and Kansu. The quake that destroyed a city builded upon rock, and the quake that whipped to pieces a great province built upon soil.

Always underneath our feet our imperfect bedrock, lined with faults and fissures, is readjusting itself. It was my lot to witness at first hand two of the most destructive of modern earthquakes. But don't lose sleep over it. The chances are that your personal experience with quakes will be nothing more than a tremble that shakes the pictures of your den and is gone.

That is the experience of most people. The earthquake, in spite of its frequency, isn't nearly as destructive of life and happiness as the common cold.

Zero-Zero Squadron

(*Continued from page 10*)

He tempered down and bided his time.

And then came a shock. The first morning of the maneuvers, an olive-drab sedan flying two white stars whisked down the line at Cheverton Field. Instinctively, Pat Conover ducked for the shadows of his wings.

The sedan squealed to a stop beside Conover's ship. Out climbed a tall, agile, white-haired figure, as erect as a strut. General Branner; with Major Wrenn at his side. They walked straight up to Conover.

"General Branner desires to see the maneuvers from the attack angle," said the major, with a deep, warning insinuation in his voice. "He has asked for you as pilot."

Conover felt his heart sink. He had long awaited a chance to show Framingway what a good pilot he'd lost, and here, once again, was General Branner, the flying commander! It seemed pretty unfair. After all the flying and practicing he'd done—to end up as a taxiplane pilot!

General Branner's eyes had a peculiar glint.

"Heard you were over here now, Conover," he said crisply. "Everything ready?"

"Ready, sir," said Pat.

They climbed in. There was no dual control stick this trip. General Branner squeezed himself inside the metal ring of a machine gun. They waited momentarily for the attack formation to take off and clear the sky ahead of them. A mechanic tied to the wings some red streamers that signified the ship was neutral. Pat Conover almost exploded.

Then they winged out. Not at fifty feet, ceiling zero-zero, but at three thousand feet. The attack squadron disappeared far to the northeast, and began separating into three-ship elements. Off to the west lay the weaving road-columns of an infantry regiment. High above, circling protectingly, the 2nd Observation Group began splitting up, scattering to the four points of the compass, searching now to pick up the low-flying attack planes. Radio would warn the infantry to dive for shelter. Major Framingway himself, in a gold-streamered ship that hung over the column, would mark the failures, and note, for future reference, the necessary changes in observation tactics.

The minutes ticked by, with only Major Framingway's plane sharing that strata of sky with them. Pat circled, dismally. He was wondering what the major would think if he knew that Conover, once again, was piloting the corps area commander. He was thinking, enviously, of the fun that Conky Storm and the others were having, weaving their way in, skimming the trees, ducking every inch of the way to avoid being picked up by the observation group.

He squirmed. If only he were down there in the thick of it! His jaws clamped. His would've been an attack plane Major Framingway and his squadron would never have seen, even if Pat Conover had had to zoom through the broad, high two-tracked railroad tunnel that had started what Major Wrenn thought was an absurd rumor!

Pat squirmed again. Then his breath caught, and his blood cooled with a sudden chill. Major Framingway's observation plane was losing altitude. Swiftly and queerly. It was gliding down, yet at times its nose lifted as if in desperation. From the engine cowling there were swift blue flashes of fire. Even the general had noticed it. His tap on Conover's head was insistent.

Pat cut the gun.

"What's the matter over there?" General Branner asked.

"I don't know, sir," Pat replied. "It looks like engine trouble." He started to say "no gas," but of all people, Major Framingway wouldn't run out of gas. "She's backfiring, and that's sure," he yelled.

The general's grunt was lost in the prop blast. They continued watching. And suddenly, with a sweep that took their breaths, the big observation plane toppled over on its nose. Time after time, as she dived in, the pilot raised her back up with ineffectual lurches. Pat Conover's eyes flashed ahead to the interstate power lines that lay below. Stretched out like a string of beads, they formed, between the ridge to their flank, and the hills on the opposite flank, a short, narrow and cuplike little pocket.

And into that pocket the observation plane was clearly headed! Worse still, the observation plane wasn't even going to clear the high voltage lines. Conover blinked. Then, with eyes half-shut in horror, he saw the twin golden wings flash up as if a bomb had burst. The plane struck the wires, cut some of them through, dropped others to short-circuit on the ground, and then with a wing-over spray of dust and dirt, crumbled in wreckage deep inside the pocket, and almost at the foot of the ridge.

From the short-circuited lines, a licking flame of fire leaped out to the dry grass and began spreading. Pat watched breathlessly. But no pin-point figure separated itself from the wreckage and began a dash for safety. Whatever else had happened, Major Framingway was trapped, helpless—and it would be only a matter of minutes until the grass fire reached those gas-splashed wings.

General Branner was again thumping on Conover's head.

"You've got to get down there!" he bellowed. "There's not another ship within fifty miles! Not even that infantry can get there in time!"

Pat hesitated. He stared down again at the hill-fringed pocket into which the observation plane had crashed. Like a cup, with high-voltage power lines forming the rim. Not a straightaway landing lane within three miles. Not even Crazy Conover could set a ship down in a pocket like that. It wasn't possible.

The general was tapping Pat's head again.

"Get down there, Conover!" he snapped. "I don't care how you do it —*but get down there!*"

Their eyes met. The general's snapped cut an order from a senior officer to a junior officer.

The attack ship nosed, whining. Conover felt a heady sweep of intoxication as the powerful engine roared down in a power dive, and leveled off with wheels skimming the trees. Zero-zero! He flew as if in the dark, with only a two-hundred-mile-an-hour glimpse of his course.

Pat cut the gun. He swooped down into the pocket with his landing gear a matter of inches from power lines. He dipped his tail. Far ahead, more power lines leaped at him.

No soap. No pilot could go over those lines and still land in the pocket beyond.

He climbed in a chandelle, circled, swung far out, circled again, and measured the close-set poles with his eye. Then the glinting wings leaped over the hills. The throttle was back to the

slowest speed Pat dared. The terrain flickered by like a motion picture. Trees, stumps, hills, rocks, grass—fire—and then a set of power poles closer together than even the span of his wings.

The attack ship howled with a shrill shriek as it banked up. Wing-tips ducked under power lines and faced the poles tilted. The stick hopped over and back again. The throttle cut. The nose settled. Then the tail. And rubber wheels blistered as they rolled from fire to brown grass, and skidded crazily to rest at the foot of the ridge.

Pat Conover jumped from the plane, and drew the unconscious Major Framingway clear of a wedged-in cockpit. General Branner helped as they dragged him up the hill. Once, momentarily, as the roar of ignited gas sounded, they paused to watch two army airplanes being wrecked by explosion and flame. Major Framingway watched, too, in spite of the pain of his broken legs.

"Good work, Conover," he whispered. "You always did work like that. It burned me up when the general took you away to the 77th." He smiled, wanly. "Excuse me, sir."

General Branner looked at Pat.

"It's true, Conover," he said, gently. "I saw that you had the makings of a great flyer. You knew how to fly, and how to think. Cautious? Yes, you were that—but at the right times. All you needed was experience, so I had you sent to the 77th—where experience comes fast." The general smiled. "If you don't like the attack, you can go back."

Pat couldn't answer. He walked a few steps away, and looked far out over the hill, first at the straggling column of khaki infantry, then at the dull, lightninglike flashes that were attack ships skimming the trees in the valley ahead. The Zero-Zero Squadron! The words gave him a thrill, now that he knew why he was here.

"No, sir," he answered smiling. "I think I'd like to stick."

Then he turned and began climbing the hill to signal the infantry for assistance.

Mister Galahad (*Continued from page 25*)

One night Bill Ransom came over to see him. They talked about birds, and hunting. Then, after a while, Bill asked: "Jay, I don't like to meddle—but what are you going to do when your insurance money is gone?"

McKain laughed. The laugh didn't have a pleasant sound. His mouth twisted. "What *can* I do?"

"Oh, heck, Jay. A hundred things," Bill rasped. He rushed on: "Your leg's not your handicap. You're blocked by something in your attic."

McKain was gazing into the fire. "Nuts. Sleepy and I—"

"Wait a minute. Leave the dog out of it. Your case and his aren't parallel. I'm no philosopher, Jay, but I'd say the dog's fulfilling his destiny a heck of a sight better than you are." Bill paused, struggling for words. "Both of you got bad drives—right into the rough. The dog's playing his lie—and making a pretty decent shot of it. You're doing nothing. You're sitting on the ground looking at your ball."

McKain didn't agree. "Sleepy's all right. He's everything to me. But, in reality, he's only a blind bird dog. Put him in a tight place, and he'd be helpless."

"I don't believe it," Ransom returned, stubbornly. "I think he'd still play his lie and make a good shot of it. He's a thoroughbred, Jay. His kind don't ask for odds."

After that night, it was a week before Bill Ransom made another visit. This time he was flushed with excitement. He had an idea. They were to go into the dog business together.

Their work would dovetail a lot, of course, but in general, McKain was to raise the dogs, and Bill, being ablebodied, was to train them.

"The breeding stock will be all we need money for," Bill explained. "Your place here is great for kennels. Why, man, we can sell good dogs faster than we can raise 'em!"

For a moment McKain, bright-eyed and hopeful, allowed himself to be caught up with the idea.

Then Bill made a mistake. He added, "It'll do you good, Jay. You've changed you know. You need something to occupy your mind—something like this."

"So *that's* it!" McKain said. He rose angrily. "Still trying to be the little white father! Well, get this, Ransom: If I've changed, it's no skin off your back. I don't want your benevolence, or chivalry, or whatever pretty name you've got for it. The dog business is out."

Grim-lipped, Bill got to his feet. "Okay, you sap." He opened the door. "If you change your mind—"

"I won't."

"But if you do, come over to see me. Maybe I can convince you that I wasn't trying to be your guardian angel. I merely wanted to go into the dog business with a man who knows dogs. So long." Then he went out.

The last day of hunting season came three days later and McKain planned to make one final all-day hunt.

There were birds in the piney woods that bordered the creek. They hadn't been shot into.

Sleepy found the covey twenty minutes after he and McKain left the house. The covey was large. McKain was so surprised by the size of it that he almost forgot to shoot. He fired once, and got a bird. When he remembered to watch the singles down, all of them were out of sight except one lone hen that drummed across the creek and volplaned on up the hill.

Taking the quail from Sleepy's mouth, McKain thought about his next move. First thing would be to cross the creek for the bird that had flown toward the houses. The rest of the covey had wheeled. They were down the creek, somewhere.

Sleepy pinned the hen under the moldy branches of a fallen oak, and McKain fired quickly on the flush. Too quickly. Both barrels missed.

"Whoosh!" McKain exclaimed. "The shot was too easy. Come on, Sleepy."

But Sleepy had turned and was moving deliberately up the rise, nose high, reading the wind. He was obviously puzzled.

McKain didn't understand it. Of course, another bird might have crossed the creek. And yet, the dog didn't seem to be scenting birds.

He wasn't. He was scenting a game chicken. Twenty yards from the dog's quivering nose stood a young cock, hackles raised.

The chicken, McKain thought, was probably from Proctor's run, which was just a little farther up the rise. It couldn't have been the one that blinded Sleepy, of course.

That Sleepy recognized the scent, there was no doubt. And the young cock, evidently in a belligerent mood, was going to attack. The unholy justice of the thing appealed to McKain.

The dog didn't move. The scent in his nostrils was heavy now—the cock was advancing. Suddenly there was a violent swish of feathers. Two spurs raked his jowls, a spearhead beak thumped against his skull. Plunging frantically, Sleepy brushed the cock off with his front feet. Free for the moment, he laid about him with snapping jaws.

But the cock was too agile to be bitten by a sightless dog. He sailed again, hooking his spurs. He missed, and Sleepy's leaping jaw snatched feathers from his lean underside.

The bird pivoted, got set, and darted in again, swerving. This time the spurs struck, and two blood flecks appeared on Sleepy's face.

Like a boxer, the cock weaved in and out, feinting, thrusting, jabbing. Sleepy was frankly bewildered. With only his nose and ears for guidance he was necessarily kept on the defensive.

Then he changed his tactics. At the slight, telltale flurry of wings that always preceded a rush, the dog rose to meet his enemy, flailing the air with his feet.

The first time, it didn't work. His blows glanced. And the cock drove his spurs into the exposed throat.

In trying to make his recovery, a spur hung under the dog's collar, and for a split moment, the cock dangled there, wings drumming frantically.

One of the beating wings came too near Sleepy's mouth. His jaws seized it by the long end feathers. Helpless, the gamecock fluttered and gyrated.

"Hold him!" McKain breathed anxiously.

But the bird's wild flapping got results. He tore himself loose, leaving wing feathers in Sleepy's mouth. Once free, he prepared to charge again. Head low, he circled, watching for an opening.

Following the scent, Sleepy circled, too. Then his supersensitive ears caught the beginning of the wing flurry and he arose. This time, the maneuver worked. The chicken was slammed to the ground.

But a cock doesn't know how to quit. Clumsily he attacked again, and again he was knocked down. The cock was groggy, now. Instead of rising to meet the next advance, Sleepy moved forward, jaws agape.

A lurch, a quick head-thrust toward the hottest scent, and Sleepy had the cock just below the throat.

"You've got him!" McKain exulted.

The dog remained motionless for a few seconds. Then, instead of closing his jaws in the death grip, he turned and walked to McKain. He laid the cock, stunned but uninjured, at McKain's feet.

Jay understood that. There's no malice in a bird dog. But now, he understood something else, too. "His kind don't ask for odds," Bill Ransom had said.

Resolutely, Jay turned, started toward the next house.

At that moment, Leroy Proctor appeared on the back porch. He waved a greeting.

"Your chicken here just jumped on my dog," McKain told him. "I don't think the chicken's hurt, but if he is let me know and I'll make it up to you."

"Forget it. That's Red—he's always getting out. He'll jump on anything that breathes. Meanest young cock I ever saw," Proctor said. "Out for a last day's hunt, are you?"

"I was, but I'm quitting." He gave a quick grin that Proctor wouldn't understand. "Right now I'm on my way to see Bill Ransom about some dogs."

Sleepy, for once, hadn't heard him walk away. The dog was standing where McKain had left him.

"Come on," McKain called. Then he remembered something, and grinned again. "Come on — Mister Galahad!"

You're Better Than That!

(*Continued from page 26*)

a little and say to yourself, "Here's where I quit fussing about myself." Deliberately forget you and get after the job in hand.

Plain, garden-variety courage is a great enemy of the inferiority complex. The courage to tackle a state of mind and conquer it. The courage to forget your worries and get at something more profitable.

Still another way to combat inferiority is to realize that other people aren't nearly as interested in you as you think they are. They don't care a great deal, one way or the other, what impression you make. Get a firm hold of that thought and many of your worries are over.

Bob Hadley had an awakening on that subject. When Bob enters a room in which four or five people are sitting around, he feels that all eyes are centered on him. There's a moment of stillness, naturally, when he enters. Bob feels that he should make some bright remark. He casts about desperately for something to say, but can think of nothing. He feels like a prize fish on display at the aquarium. All this, of course, under the surface, so that when Bob sits down he's ill at ease and embarrassed.

The last time this happened, Joe Cumberly came in shortly after Bob. Joe yelped "Hi, gang," tripped on a rug, hit the deck with a crash, and turned to look at the rug with great reproach. Being a happy-go-lucky sort, he grinned unconcernedly at the razz that broke out, and the incident was immediately forgotten.

That was an eye-opener to Bob. Joe's clumsiness was of no vital concern to anybody else. And if they didn't care whether Joe tripped over a rug, or not, they probably weren't much interested in whether Bob made a bright remark or not.

It was at this instant that Bob decided to quit worrying over what people thought of him. They probably weren't thinking of him at all.

The mind is a sensitive machine. It's often affected by doubts and fears and uncertainties. And these doubts cause fellows to strike poses. Hence Sam's attitude of scorn and Val's boasting. If a fellow can't pose, he draws into a shell, like Bob.

But if, by observing the Sams, the Vals, and the Bobs, you can spot the inferiority feeling when you see it, you've won half the battle. Get it out in the open where you can take a look at it and it ceases to be formidable.

When you realize that the inferiority complex is a state of mind in which you spend entirely too much time thinking and fretting about yourself, you're in position to stick Self resolutely in the background and attack with new energy the next task facing you.

Next month: "Getting Along With Dad."

The Masked Raider

(*Continued from page 20*)

and wham again. The miracle is that they scored only three goals.

Well, it looked like a rout, a fiasco so gigantic that I began looking for a nice big hole in the ice to dive into. Unmasking! Ugh!

But the great thing about sport is that you can survive those scoring sprees and come back. Wallaceton had spent herself, and she started the second period coasting. Inside of two minutes she learned that there was to be no coasting on this zero afternoon.

Stormy's first march began from our own goal. A pass to Gil and a return pass in center ice. Keeping the puck close to his body, Stormy lifted himself up on his skates and started a run down his alley. He got by the first defense man and met Pollock past the blue line.

There was a tangle, and out of it the Masked Raider emerged, the puck still on the end of his stick—how he kept it, I don't know. Pollock caught up with him in front of the goal but was left flatfooted by a lightning reverse. I doubt if the goalkeeper ever saw the shot that sizzled by his glove into the net.

Stormy's second march went only as far as the blue line and ended in that rifle shot between Pollock and his defensive mate.

Wallaceton looked dazed and flatfooted, and in the third march they fell victim to all of Stormy's tricks. He got past Pollock by offering him the puck and taking it away. He lured the goalkeeper out from the net, swerved over behind him, and flipped that gentle loft shot over his outstretched stick into the strings.

If Stormy never did another thing in hockey, that second-period performance of his would earn him a bronze tablet in the hall of athletic fame. He tied the ball game, and Hart was just getting started.

Then it was that the thing happened. Just before the next face-off the rough and ready Pollock, his cheeks flaming an angry crimson, coasted up to the Masked Raider. Before anyone knew what he was up to, he reached out a rude hand, grasped the woolen mask in his knotted fist, and ripped it off Stormy's face.

His eyebrows lifted. "I thought it was you," he said in a harsh voice.

"Hello, Pollock," Stormy said quietly.

A look of grim satisfaction came over the Wallaceton player's face. "Well, well, well," he grinned. "It's a small world after all." Whereupon he skated away and rejoined his teammates where he talked in a low voice, gesturing toward the Unmasked Raider as he talked.

The side lines had broken into a babble of excited comment. "Who is it?" "Stormy—Stormy Knight." "Who's he?" "Engineering student." The babble increased to a roar and the roar broke into a crashing: "Stormy!" But I hardly heard it.

Now I knew the meaning of the broken stick. Somewhere, somehow, these two—Stormy and Pollock—had clashed. A bone-jarring collision that had turned Stormy's blood to water, and —who knows?—probably sent him to the hospital. I could well understand how a player of Pollock's type could make life unhappy even for the hardiest player.

Tom Miner was standing near me and I could see that he had caught the significance of the incident. His face was as long as a horse's.

With the start of the third period, Wallaceton staged another offensive like that bombardment in the first period, but this time Hart, lifted to

fury by Stormy's magnificent performance in the second session, matched them move for move, climbing over them, rushing and harrying them so tenaciously that they had no chance to get set for a telling shot.

For three minutes they spent themselves in a furious assault that gained them nothing, and then I carried the puck around the net, swished it to Gil, and we were off. As we surged up to center ice three abreast, we found a new line-up waiting for us. Not two defense men at the blue line, but three.

Gil tried to take the puck through, failed, and passed back to Stormy. Stormy angled for the side line and the three-man defense swung to meet him with Pollock in the tail position. Stormy feinted past the first man and evaded the second with a rebound off the boards, but Pollock met him with a vicious check that sent Stormy sliding across the ice on his knees.

It looked like a cross-check and a major penalty to me, but the referee didn't see it that way. I scooted to Stormy's side, my heart in my mouth.

"All right, Stormy?" I asked anxiously.

He didn't answer. His eyes, round as saucers, were on Pollock and I groaned. As I skated back to defense I thought I knew what was happening. Pollock, aware of Stormy's weakness, was out to make him quit.

We stopped Wallaceton's thrust and started up the ice again. This time I tried to take the puck through but all I got for my pains was a jarring check from Pollock that loosened my eyeteeth.

Down the ice went Wallaceton into our zone where Tom poke-checked the rubber from Dodd and passed to Gil. Gil to Stormy, and at the blue line Pollock climbed all over the Unmasked Raider. In the mix-up I distinctly saw the butt end of Pollock's stick come up with smashing force into Stormy's middle. The Raider gasped and turned white. The blow was screened from the referee by Stormy's body. For the first time in hockey I felt a wild desire to swing my stick and break somebody's head, but that wasn't the medicine needed here.

I swooped down beside Stormy and drew him aside. I had to keep him going! Make him forget his complex.

Once again those steel bands under his jersey were trembling.

"They're playing a bit hard," I tried to say it calmly, "but—" I shook his arm. "There's no harm done. After all, nothing happened, did it?"

The wild look that I had seen three or four times in those blue eyes faded away. He looked at me as though he had just begun to comprehend my words.

"No," he said wonderingly. "There was no harm done."

Stormy seemed to think I had said something important. At any rate, with a laugh that was more like a battle cry, he started down the ice.

For a minute we had our hands full around our own goal and then Tom Miner barged into the middle of a scramble and came out with the disk. As fast as we were, we found three men waiting for us at the blue line. As we circled for an opening, the entire Maroon team drew back to stop our advance. There were only two minutes left to play, and Wallaceton was grimly determined to force this game into overtime, when their superior teamwork would tell.

Stormy tried the flank and found it blocked by a swinging wall of men. He carried the puck back to center ice, his eyes sweeping the Maroon ramparts. The defense drew closer together, ready to swing either way.

After what seemed an interminable wait, Stormy started for the gap between Pollock and the man on his right. Warily these two drew a bit closer, fearing a feint that would leave them both stranded.

When he was ten feet from them, Stormy shifted from low to high. I myself expected him to swerve outside at the last instant, but he didn't. Calling forth every last ounce of speed he roared like an express train straight for the narrowing gap.

They closed on him but not soon enough. There was a shock and a grunt that everybody in the place could hear. Pollock and his teammate were swung outward like a double gate, off balance and out of the play.

Stormy went through, jersey torn, puck still on his stick, skates flying.

I followed him through the hole and veered to the left of the net. Stormy drew the goalkeeper to one corner. The pack was on our heels.

Stormy looked at me and grinned. I saw the puck sliding across the ice accurately to my stick. All I had to do was to give it a slight flip. The goalkeeper, afraid to leave Stormy's side unguarded, had no choice.

That was the winning goal. We had defeated Wallaceton 4 to 3.

In the locker room, sweaty and triumphant, we yelped and swatted each other, threw jerseys and harness into the air and banged locker doors. We tore Pep Warren's coat. A swinging elbow caught Coach Francis on the nose and he laughed through his tears. When the hilarity subsided I sank down on a bench beside the Raider.

"Well," I murmured confidentially, "you licked your fear."

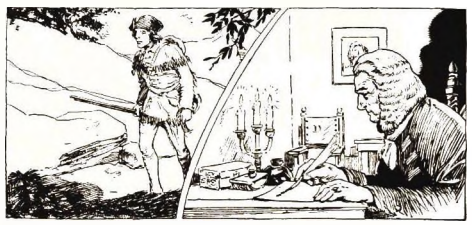
Stormy didn't answer. Instead he opened his locker, fished in his pocket for his purse, and extracted a faded clipping. He handed it to me. Bewildered, I opened it. The clipping was four years old. It said: "KNIGHT SUSPENDED

"For swinging his stick at Eddie Pollock's head last night, Frank Knight has been suspended by the Interscholastic Hockey League for the balance of the season."

"I used to be a stick swinger," Stormy said softly. "And now I know why. It *was* fear. And because I was afraid, I'd lose my temper and swing. All season long I've been afraid of what I'd do if I got bumped.

"But tonight," he went on huskily, "when Pollock gave me the butt and you stopped me before anything happened—I knew then I had it licked." He put a hand on my knee. "Thanks, Jack," he whispered, "for staying with me in the clutch."

Well, do you know, for some reason my eyes were damp.



"I Am Sending a Person of Distinction"

A Poem for George Washington's Birthday

by NANCY BYRD TURNER

THE Governor of Virginia took his pen
In hand, his long-quilled, solemn pen, and wrote
To Pennsylvania's Governor a note.

Trouble was brewing at the border again;
The settlers asked for aid. Someone must go,
Someone of spirit and strength, to make an ending
Once and for all of this aggression; so
Dinwiddie wrote to Hamilton he was sending
A person of distinction, who would deal
Capably with the matter; and set his seal
And signed his name.

Upon an early day
The Person of Distinction started forth
On his long errand. Far the journey lay,
Four hundred mounting miles to west and north,
With peril on every hand and death at heel.
His company would be mustered on the way;
He made the start afoot, Dinwiddie's man,
With gun and knapsack. Eyes alert to scan
Thicket and copse, he went—age, twenty-one;
Height, six feet in his socks; name, Washington.

THE road he took was an old trail that started
High in the Blue Ridge, crossed a valley, and climbed
Into the Alleghenies. He had timed
His going with dawn. . . . Toiling, he gained a steep,
Halted, and looked behind. The sun was lifting,
The little valley towns were still asleep,
Lost in their darkness; but the fog had parted.

He turned and looked ahead: the great mist, shifting,
Moved like a curtain drawn. Long, long he stood,
Staring. Below him meadow and field and wood,
River and plain stretched on unendingly
To the sky's edge. How many miles unrolled
In rivers unnamed, and ranges yet untold,
And forests dark with midnight, to the sea?
How long before the far coast caught the dawn?

Silent, the Governor's messenger stared on,
The slow fog cleared, the picture sharpened and
shone. . . .
His native land, waiting her destiny,
He with her. . . . As the last gloom broke and thinned,
Dispersed before a long, far-gathering wind,
Down in the valley a traveler, looking high,
Said: "Yonder a tall man stands against the sky."

Wildcat (*Continued from page 8*)

Gene's scalp prickled. The words were clear enough, but the haunting something had sharpened. Mr. Lane was suddenly like a man absently speaking one thought and thinking another. And the other thought, obviously, was disturbing.

"Would you care to go foreign, Gene?" the man asked suddenly. "Venezuela?"

Gene shook his head slowly. "No."

"What do we pay you here—one hundred and eighty? You'd draw double foreign. Free living quarters, three hundred and sixty a month—"

"No business," said Gene. The mystery increased. Why did they want to send him away? "I'd risk the climate, but there's another consideration. How long would I be there? Three years? Or ten? When I came back to Texas who'd know me here at Soltol? I'd be starting almost at the bottom again. You see what I mean?"

"Of course." Mr. Lane took a report from the desk, glanced at it and put it down. The telephone rang. He listened, asked a question or two and gave an order. He reached for the report again, swung around in the swivel chair and shot a question? "How much do you see of Sammy Crisp?"

The mystery was no longer a mystery. Gene thought: "Somebody spotted us last night." Did Soltol think he was playing around with lease-busters? He picked his words carefully. "We both happen to live at the Magnolia."

"See much of him?"

"No more than I can help."

Mr. Lane looked at him sharply. "Dine with him often?"

"I've never eaten with him. A little peculiarity of mine—I like to pick my own company. If you mean last night, he barged over to my table."

"Friendly chat?"

"He told me there'd be money in it for a seismo man who slipped him a hint when our shots showed we were closing in on a structure."

"Was that why you went to another table?" The man relaxed now, smiled.

"It seemed a good enough reason at the time," Gene said coolly.

The disturbing, hidden thing was gone. Outdoors, the early morning fog had cleared; the room was suddenly filled with sunshine and fresh air.

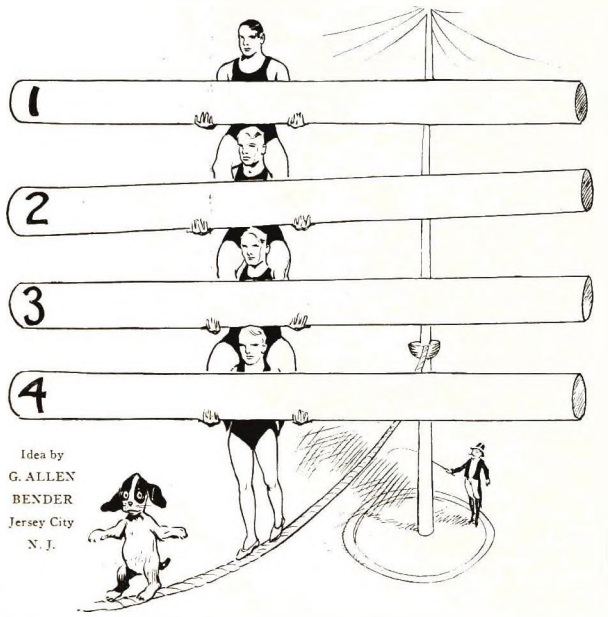
"Sammy's growing bolder," Mr. Lane commented thoughtfully. "This is the first time I've ever heard of his attempting bribery. We'll have to keep him checked. As for that other matter—Soltol is still Soltol; we expect to stay in business for a long time; good men will keep stepping up. With respect to Venezuela—"

Gene waited.

"—we'll forget about that. There's still plenty of oil in Texas." Mr. Lane's smile warmed.

Gene warmed, too. Later, as he drove toward Enciato, that sense of warmth in him grew. Evidently Venezuela had been a bid to take him away from a situation that might possibly have proved dangerous. To whom? Hardly Soltol. Firing him would be simpler. Then, to him? Did they figure he was

Balance This Month's Stories!



Idea by
G. ALLEN
BENDER
Jersey City
N. J.

YOU want a well-balanced magazine and that's the kind we'd like to give you. Help us, please, by ranking the four best stories in this issue, placing the title of the best story on the top pole, and the next three in order. Then clip the ballot and mail it to the Best Reading Editor, The American Boy, 7430 Second Blvd., Detroit, Mich. If we know what types of stories you like best, we can give you more of the same.

Your Name.....Age.....

Street.....

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

young, too young to cope with the wiles of a Sammy Crisp? If they thought that, and still sought to save him—well, that would indicate they rated him a pretty good guy, wouldn't it? He threw his hat into the back of the car and stepped on the gas.

The roadside was vivid with the color of Texas bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes. He roared through an immensity of space. A sign gave him warning; he slowed and crawled over a stretch of road that had been washed by spring floods. A repair crew worked on the bridge across the river and heat shimmered from the concrete. The car shot forward again toward a vague horizon.

Gene ate at the Spanish Trail Posada near Enciato. It was an old inn, paint-peeled and warped, with some brooding memory about it of the days when travelers came to its hospitality on horseback or in carriages, and motor cars were unknown. He climbed a groaning stoop to a rose-covered porch, and a very old woman served him food on very old plates bearing a faint Spanish crest. But the knives, the forks and the spoons had undoubtedly come out of a five and ten. The old and the new! Forever they met in this prodigal, semitropical land that had seen the fading glory of old Spain and the dawning power of new America.

From the inn Gene drove to the river. Willows grew along the gentle slopes. The sun was like fire on the water; it would be an hour before there'd be any use in casting. There was coolness under the trees and, sitting there in the quiet, it was hard to believe that only four hours away dynamite smashed the earth and drill stem and bit gnawed into its depths.

He held the rod out and ran the lure gently back and forth through the water. The spinner fouled with plant growth and he brought it in. The peace of the day lulled him and made him drowsy.

Suddenly the drowsiness was gone. His nose crinkled. He sniffed. He drew a longer, investigating breath.

"Gas," he said a little stupidly, as though catching a vagrant whiff of gas in this peaceful spot had shocked him. He said again, slowly, thoughtfully: "Gas!"

Abruptly he leaped to his feet. The gas was gone. And as he stood there, after a few moments, his nose again caught the odor he could not mistake. Gas from an oil reservoir? Gas seepages were rare in the gulf-coast region of Texas. Yet if this was gas—but the odor was gone again.

His eyes were suddenly hot. They searched the land as he stood there. There had been a flood recently; the high waters had scoured the outer margin of a sharp bend in the river. His gaze lingered on the bend. There seemed to be a fresh dark-colored exposure. The exposure across the narrow river filled him with a tingling curiosity. There was no other human being in sight. He stripped, plunged into the water, and swam across.

The dark-colored exposure was only shale. But the beds were sharply tilted. Unusual, that. Plainly the local geological structure had been disturbed by faulting. He scratched at the lobe of one ear and frowned. That strange excitement would not down.

"Gas," he murmured. "And now a fault." Gas and a fault *could* mean oil. Unconsciously he had begun to walk, searching feverishly for some other sign. And suddenly, adjacent to those first beds of shale, he found it.

Here, too, the flood had made a fresh scouring. This outcrop of bedded rock was large, tilted almost in a reverse direction from the first exposure—and of an entirely different lithological character. This second outcrop consisted of thin, alternating beds. There were sandy clays—mottled, maroon, red and yellow in color. He sat down naked in the sun and scratched his ear again.

Clearly the first exposure was Beaumont clays. But what was the second find? Lissie sands? The Lissie sands should be buried far below the Beaumont clays, but here they were at practically the same elevation. Then the Lissie — if it was Lissie — must have been profoundly uplifted.

At the thought of uplift, he came to his feet with a bound. His heart had begun to throb. Uplift—the chief factor in building geographical structures favorable for the accumulation of oil!

He swam back across the river. Fishing was of no moment now. He dressed and disjointed the rod and packed it away in its case. Names ran like a sweep of music through his mind. Dad Joiner of east Texas, McCarthy of Anahuac, Golconda Johnny Kline of Thimblepack— He pulled himself up sharply.

"Easy!" he said. "Stay on the range."

He started to walk back from the stream.

The gulf sun burned down upon him. Once he stopped and scanned the horizon in all directions. He went on. "If this indicates a possible pool—" His voice was hoarse. How far had he walked—one mile, two miles? The flame of sun began to throw shade; a suspicious shadow caught his searching eyes. He went toward it.

And then the trembling of his nerves became something he could no longer control. Somebody had been in here drilling for oil. It had been a long time ago, but the signs were unmistakable. Here was the flattened mound of dirt where they had set the foundation of the drawerworks. Here was the dried slush and there were the crumbling walls of what had been a slush pit. He stood amid the wreckage of a dream. Texas is full of them—dry holes, graves of stillborn oil wells.

But nobody had believed there was oil in east Texas until Dad Joiner—

"Don't go haywire," Gene told himself fiercely. "Every fool thinks he's going to be a second Dad Joiner. Get sense. Get down to earth."

The faint bark of a dog reached him and he looked toward the sound. Smoke rose in a thin wreath from a grove of live oaks hung with Spanish moss. As he came through the grove the barking ceased and he saw broken-down corrals, a bunkhouse with a forlorn look of desertion, and a ranch house built in the Mexican manner around a courtyard. A small, black dog peered out at him through a screened door. He strode across the clearing and a precise, angry voice came from the house:

"Opie, I protest. I protest bitterly. Is this the way to treat the scion of a proud and illustrious family?"

"You ain't added much pride to it," another voice said dryly. "There's no use arguing; that's all I can give you. You're already drawn two months ahead on your allowance."

"Allowance? Is a Beecher to be placed upon an allowance? Am I to be forever cast in the position of a dependent living on alms? Twenty-five dollars. Twenty-five paltry, miserable dollars. Sir, I have my pride. Is this the manner in which a Beecher—"

The dog clawed at the screen and broke into a fury of barking, and the dry voice said something in an undertone. The other voice retorted.

"Does it matter who hears me? Isn't it a common jest from Corpus Christi to Beaumont that Tom Beecher lives upon an allowance? Allowance! I find the word an abomination. Some day, sir, I shall forget pride of family and ask my attorney to rattle the Beecher skeleton in a public courtroom and end this outrageous conspiracy."

The screened door opened. The black dog and a small graying man came out together. The dog charged threateningly, but stopped short of Gene, sniffed him cautiously and wagged a stump of black tail. The man, walking with solemn gravity and with a slight unsteadiness, brushed past as though completely unaware of another human being's presence. The sombrero he wore was knocked out of shape and his clothing was baggy and unpressed; but his shoes had been polished, he was cleanly shaven and his shirt was immaculate. He went on toward the grove of oak.

The door opened again and a man came out. "Anything I can do for you, stranger?"

"Would you give a thirsty man a glass of water?" Gene asked.

"With pleasure. Come up and set?"

Gene went up on the porch. The pillars that held up the porch roof were solid oak logs; the outside walls of the house were of slabs expertly notched together. An old house, evidently built in the days when sawmills were few and finished lumber was scarce and expensive; but a house that looked solid and comfortable.

Opie Beecher came out with a jug and two glasses. He, like the man who had left, was small and gray. A windbitten, sun-tanned man marked with a slow, quiet simplicity. He set the jug and the glasses upon a table, took a coffee strainer from his hip pocket and tapped it against the slab wall. Then, to Gene's amazement, he strained the water into the glasses.

"Read some years ago," he said, "of a man swallowing a snake egg in drinking water and coming near to dying. Probably nothing to it, but I reckon it might not be a bad idee to run water through a strain. Then there's tomatoes. You go much on tomatoes?"

Gene's amazement grew. What sort of queer coot had he run into? "I like 'em all right."

"I read another time how tomato seeds brings on appendicitis. For a while I picked out the seeds, but that got to be too much trouble so I give 'em up. When your years are running out you sort of reckon to hold on hard to what's left. Now, when I was a younger man, that was different. I see me roll up in a blanket and sleep on the ground near a chuck-wagon fire. I drank where water was and I ate my fill without regard."

"This was once a ranch?" Gene asked. His brain was seething with thoughts of oil.

"As good a ranch as you'd find in the Enciato country. You see, stranger, there was three brothers came out from Ohio to pitch into this Mexican fight and they was with Sam Houston at San Jacinto. Afterwards, they took land patents adjoining. What with dying off, it finally came that my branch of Beechers had it all. There was high money in beef cattle, especially from '14 to '18 with the big war on. After the depression of '21 come, prices sagged bad. Seemed like there was money enough in the family to keep us anyway, and I reckoned I was getting a little too old, so I give it up. Me and Maverick live on here and have it soft." He nodded toward the dog. "She don't take often to a stranger."

Gene dropped his hand and rubbed a black ear. "How did you folks escape the oil scramble?"

"We didn't. They had up a drilling rig with old Mac Lee putting her down. Old Mac's a good driller, I hear tell, but even old Mac couldn't do miracles."

"Dry hole?"

"Two of them," Mr. Beecher said matter-of-factly. "Not satisfied the first time they moved off a piece and tried her again. Then they just paid off on their lease contract and let go."

"One of the major companies?"

"Soltol. They like to blow up the ranch firing off blast powder, but it didn't mean nothing in the end."

Gene's heart sank. Soltol, then, had already seismographed the field. "When was that, Mr. Beecher?"

"Let's see. Must have been about '24 or '25. Maybe '26. Seems like nothing come of it except cows stepping into holes and breaking legs."

"The companies always fill shot holes now," Gene said absently; "too many damage claims." 1925? He began to tremble once more, and stood up. "Thank you, Mr. Beecher. I'll be getting along. My name's Brandon—Gene Brandon. If I get around this way again—"

"Sure enough. Drop in." Opie Beecher nodded wistfully. "Times ain't like what they used to be with cows in the corral, and ructions in the bunkhouse, and cowhands coming and going."

Gene took the long trail back across the forsaken grazing lands to his car. If Opie Beecher was right in his dates, if Soltol had made its geophysical survey as far back as 1925. . . . Excitement grew in him. Would Pete O'Toole be at the hotel? Pete O'Toole was the one man he wanted to talk to tonight.

At the Spanish Trail Posada he stopped for gas. Under the palm trees in the yard, purpling phantoms gathered; the darkening western sky was shot with streaks of orange. Music tinkled from the rose-hidden porch and a tenor voice sang a Mexican love song in the dusk. A man stepped out from the shadows under the porch.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but do you happen to be driving toward Houston?"

"All the way in," said Gene.

"If you should care for the companionship of a wayfarer—"

Gene held open the door. Tom Beecher stepped into the car. His eyes were bloodshot and his head rolled. The evening breeze from the Gulf whispered around the windshield as they drove off into rose-scented evening.

"Sir, do you patronize that vile establishment we have left behind us?"

"I ate there today," Gene told him.

"I have honored them for the last time. In this accursed heat a man is apt to grow faint. Desiring refreshment before starting on my journey I tried to purchase a pint of good whiskey. I was refused. Do you understand the enormity of that, sir? I was refused. I was told my brother Opie, my own brother—are you acquainted with Opie Beecher?"

"I've met him."

"Then, sir, you have met a scoundrel. He posted me. Posted me in a liquor establishment as a man not to be sold. If there is a just law in the land I will have him up for damages— But that is not the worst of his infamies. He inveigled himself into the good graces of our father. When the will was read he was named both executor of the estate and my trustee. Could there be anything more preposterous? Must I be placed upon an allowance and ruled by a guardian as though I were a moron incapable of conducting affairs? Must I be compelled to accept what is doled out to me by a niggardly viper whom an accident of birth has made my brother? They write me down as a ne'er-do-well because my free, untrammeled spirit soars to realms they cannot comprehend. Am I to be bound down to the level of an ignoramus who strains his drinking water and knows nothing but cows?" He hiccoughed and peered at Gene owlishly. "I am afraid you have the advantage of me. Your name, sir?"

"Brandon."

"Brandon? The name is unfamiliar. Have our paths crossed before? I sometimes find myself hazy about the past."

Gene shook his head. "No."

"Then, sir," his passenger said with stiff dignity, "this exchange of confidences must terminate. A Beecher does not discuss his personal affairs with a stranger." A traffic light blinked through the night and they rode toward a crossroads of small stores. "Kindly permit me to alight."

The light turned red and Gene stopped the car. Tom Beecher fumbled at the door, stepped uncertainly from the running board to the road.

"I thought you were going to Houston," Gene protested anxiously. Befuddled, this strange man might come to harm.

"My destination is of no moment. I will go to my grave unwept, unhonored and unsung, a castoff and a derelict." The little, gray man bowed ceremoniously. "Thank you for your hospitality. Some day, when the comedy of life elevates me to my proper place, I may be of service to you." He wove an unsteady course toward the roadside.

Two hours later Gene was in Houston. Main Street glowed with thousands of electric lights as though a mad, lavish hand had strewn a riot of fire and color through the thoroughfare. Crowds flowed along the sidewalks past the gay shops, the restaurants, the theaters, the oil buildings, and the hotels. Policemen guarded every corner, for in this Texas city traffic rolls with Texan speed, and the pedestrian who steps out against a red light invites arrest.

Gene left his car at the Magnolia Garage. Carrying rod, tackle box and creel, he hurried around the corner and into the lobby of the hotel. If he could find Pete O'Toole—

Pete, coolly relaxed in a lobby chair, waved a languid greeting. "You look as though you've been fried twice on both sides. And by the look of that creel, it's empty."

"I didn't wet a line."

"That's a new alibi."

Gene had him by the arm. "But I found something." His voice shook with excitement. "Something big—oil. It may be so big—"

"Any luck?" a soft voice said over his shoulder.

Gene turned slowly. How much had Sammy Crisp heard? The eyes in the pink-cheeked face were greedy.

"No fish," Gene said, suddenly cool.

The lease-buster laughed. "That's queer, isn't it? A man who can find oil hidden away underground shouldn't have any trouble hooking into a fish, not with Texas waters full of them. Where did you go?"

"Watson Bayou."

Sammy Crisp was watchful. "I never heard of anybody taking fish from that roily water."

"I'm ready to believe it," Gene said dryly.

Pete looked bewildered. "But I thought—"

Gene's heel came down upon his toes. "That I'd wait for you until ten o'clock? I did. In fact, I waited until eleven. Did you expect me to wait all day? Coming up?"

They walked toward the elevators. Pete tried not to limp.

They left a short, pudgy man whose eyelids drooped down over his eyes like veils and who plucked thoughtfully at a fat, pink cheek.

Chapter Three

PETE O'TOOLE hobbled across the bedroom, sank down upon the bed, kicked off his shoes and rubbed outraged toes.

"My pal!" he announced bitterly. "Strolls in on my peace and gives me the heel. Nearly maims me for life and—"

"Listen!" Gene's voice was almost a whisper.

"I'm listening. First you tell me you're going to Enciato. Next you tell Sammy you fished at Watson Bayou, two hundred miles the other side. Then you heel down on me—"

"Listen! There's been a flood at Enciato. There are outcrops of bedded rock. I found Beaumont clays."

"What of it? You're supposed to find Beaumont clays near the surface."

"And not far from them, something that I think is Lissie sands. I've brought away a sample. You know what that would mean? Faulting—uplift—a possible structure. Pete, there may be a gosh-awful amount of oil around there some place."

Pete ceased to rub his toes and got up from the bed slowly. "You're trying to get me excited," he complained. Something had happened to his placidity. "I don't want to get excited about oil—I've seen too many victims of oil fever. Anyway the major companies have combed this part of Texas. If there's an outcrop that would indicate a fault, if those are exposed Lissie sands—wouldn't one of the major companies have spotted them?"

"Somebody was in there."

"Who?"

"Soltol."

Pete sighed slowly. "Now you can forget this madness. If Soltol didn't think it worthwhile to dig—"

"Soltol did dig," Gene told him, "and got two dry holes."

Pete went back to the bed. "That's the answer, isn't it?"

"Maybe. Maybe not. I have a hunch it isn't."

"Hunch? Oh, my gosh! You've been around the oil fields long enough to know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been thrown away on hunches. How did Soltol come to dig?"

"They seismographed the field."

Pete groaned. "This gets worse."

"But Pete—"

"Skip it. I'm going to bed." He sat upon the bed and began to take off the other shoe.

"You'll go to bed," Gene said grimly, "after you've listened to me. I burned up the road from Enciato to tell you this story and you're going to get it. Do I look like a crackpot? How much did it cost Soltol to drill those two holes? Plenty. Why did they spend it? Because their geophysical men assured them there were indications of oil. Perhaps they didn't pick the right spot to dig. Look at the drilling map of any proven field. Here's a dry hole and right next to it a producer. A difference of five hundred feet in locating a hole may be the difference between drawing a blank and drawing an oil sand. Soltol was so reasonably sure of oil they were willing to spend their money. And now I find this outcrop."

"Nuts! It was probably there all the time."

"This is a fresh exposure. And there's something else."

"What?"

"Half a dozen times I caught a whiff of gas."

"Gas probably doesn't mean a thing," Pete argued stubbornly.

Gene threw up his hands. "You ornery bullhead! Don't you want to believe this?"

Pete sat up, and now his face was grave. "Gene, I'm afraid to believe it. Yesterday, at Anahuac, a man drifted in and touched me for five bucks. Four years ago he was what you'd call rich. What did it? Wildcatting. Before I was in these fields a year I made up my mind to have nothing to do with oil gambling. When did Soltol drill?"

"Ten years ago."

"Ten—" Suddenly Pete's eyes began to burn. "When did they shoot the field?"

"Back in '24 or '25," Gene cried in triumph; "back in the days when seismograph work was in its infancy. They didn't have today's instruments. Shoot that field today and you'll probably get a far different map. Don't you see it, Pete? Even though their information was imperfect they thought there was oil. Now I've found a fault they didn't know existed. Perhaps there *is* oil."

A muted elevator door slid back and forth. Down in the street a voice shouted and was drowned in the honking of an automobile horn.

"We'll put in for an early vacation," Gene said. "We'll go to Enciato—"

"Oh, no; we won't." Pete was on his feet. "Not me. Not this baby. You're not going to talk me into this. Anyway, what could you do if you did find satisfactory evidence?"

"Lease."

"Are you trying to get separated from a pay check?"

"Lease," Gene said with finality. "Got any money saved?"

"Fourteen hundred dollars."

"I have sixteen hundred dollars."

They looked at each other steadily. Pete wet his lips.

"How are you going to drill a well on three thousand dollars?"

"Poor-boy her down."

"That's out. The poor-boy days are past; the boom days are finished. Spindletop was the last big, wild splurge. You can't bring in a well and run it wide open any more. Everything's regulated. You have to choke down the flow and they limit you to a daily barrel allowable."

"That needn't worry us. We'd never operate. We'd sell out to one of the major companies."

"How are you going to get pipe?"

"Notes."

"Don't you think the supply houses have been stuck for plenty on wildcat notes? Do you think they're sticking out their necks for more?"

"Trade off acreage."

"That's an idea, isn't it? I'll bet the supply houses hold enough worthless, dry-hole acreage now to make a state as large as Rhode Island."

"If I find signs of oil," Gene said slowly, "I'm going to lease and I'm going to drill down a well."

They stared at each other again, and Pete's nostrils grew pinched and white.

"You really mean this, Gene?"

"Every bit of it."

Pete wrenched his eyes away. "You're balmy." He strode toward the bathroom. "Count me out."

"Pete!"

"No. Don't you hear me? No." Pete swung around. "I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. I—" His voice stopped.

"Are you in," Gene asked across the silence, "or do I go it alone?"

"Gene—" Pete swallowed. "Okay. Okay, Gene. I'm—in."

(To be continued in the March number of THE AMERICAN BOY.)

They Won Cash Prizes

FIRST prize in our December contest, "The advertisement I like best in this issue—and why," goes to a girl. That's something new for THE AMERICAN BOY. New, but not unexpected, for thousands of sisters read the magazine, and hundreds have entered previous contests.

A score of outstanding entries were considered for the $10 first prize, and the judges had no easy time deciding the winner. Ruth Odell, 18, Tufts College, Mass., finally won because her essay, like the Eastman ad that she selected, was straightforward and to the point.

SECOND prize of $5 went to Eben T. Bennet, 15, Lubec, Maine, for his crisp comment on the Ford Motor ad, and third prize of $3 to Ray Baldwin, 16, Kennesaw, Ga., for his comprehensive argument in favor of the Junior Literary Guild ad.

The seven $1 winners and their subjects:

Daniel E. Button, 19, Newport, Del. (Eastman Kodak); Lloyd A. Craig, 18, Malden, Mo. (Oh Henry!); Don Davis, 16, Springfield, Ohio (Underwood Typewriter); Dick Ellison, 13, Lansing, Mich. (New Departure Coaster Brake); Wendell Knowles, 18, Salina, Kan. (Eastman Kodak); Scotty Stidham, 16, Fort Robinson, Nebr. (Waterman Pen); Bob Young, 17, San Francisco, Calif. (Lionel Train).

The ten honorable mention winners:

Jack Campbell, La Grange, Ill.; R. Christopher, West Haven, Conn.; Dean Elder, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; William Glenn, Cheraw, S. C.; John Mitchell, Aberdeen, S. D.; Bob Quick, Denver, Colo.; Henry Shull, Dallas, Tex.; Raymond Smith, Stratton, Colo.; Floyd Souders, Oak Ridge, N. C.; James R. Victorin, Cicero, Ill.

Stamps Honoring Heroes Now on Sale

STAMPS

by Kent B. Stiles

AS FORESHADOWED here last month, release of the long-deferred "heroes" series was begun in December. Ten days before Christmas the Army 1c with portraits of George Washington and Nathaniel Greene and the Navy 1c with likenesses of John Paul Jones and John Barry were placed on sale at Washington, and at post offices generally elsewhere on Dec. 16.

Each stamp is green and of the size of our special delivery, arranged horizontally. The Army's illustrates Mount Vernon between the ovals containing the heads; while on the Navy's we find depicted naval vessels of the late eighteenth century, and inscribed are the words *Bon Homme Richard* and *Lexington*, famous war craft which Jones and Barry, respectively, commanded.

It was the Post Office Department's plan to bring out the Army 2c red (Andrew Jackson and Winfield Scott) and Navy 2c red (Thomas MacDonough and Stephen Decatur) in January; the Army 3c purple (Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman) and Navy 3c purple (David G. Farragut and David Dixon Porter) in February; the Army 4c brown (Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson) and Navy 4c brown (George Dewey, William T. Sampson and Winfield S. Schley) in March; and to complete the set about April 1 with the Army 5c blue (West Point) and Navy 5c blue (Annapolis).

A department notice to postmasters uses the words "in commemoration of" (the Army and Navy) in describing the two 1c designs; nevertheless the series does not fall within the strictly commemorative classification philatelically.

The stamps are historical in character but they do not recall any specific dates or events; the men pictured are honored for their careers and services.

Announcement is made by the Post Office Department that after the Army and Navy series has been completed there will be a special issue honoring Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

U. S. Illustrations

MEANWHILE from Washington emanates startling news, pleasing to philately, that the Post Office Department is seeking to have changed the federal law which prohibits reproductions of our country's stamps. The department would have newspapers and magazines, including philatelic publications, accorded the legal privilege of illustrating Uncle Sam's designs. This would require sanction by Congress, and the idea may or may not be opposed by the Treasury Department, which has been consistently against it.

Foreign stamp catalogs and magazines contain reproductions of United States postal paper. Such publications are ostensibly barred from this country, but they manage to get through nevertheless and thus compete with American publications forbidden to print the illustrations. Moreover the scientific value of articles about United States stamps is lessened because of the ban. Thus the plan for liberalization is hailed joyfully by American collectors.

It is obvious that the Post Office Department has suddenly decided that it, as a branch of the federal government, possesses authority by law to print illustrations of stamps issued by itself—because early in 1937 the department is publishing a booklet containing "photographs and descriptions" of all United States stamps from 1847 through this past Dec. 31. These illustrations are in black and white, and the descriptions will be supplemented by a complete list of plate numbers for all commemoratives.

The above is from Austria's annual charity semi-postal set.

The department's announcement did not state the price of the booklet, but it is moderate. Inquiries may be addressed to Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

It is significant that all previous editions of this booklet have contained no illustrations!

In Foreign Lands

AUSTRIA'S annual winter-relief series comprises 5 plus 2g green, St. Martin on horseback; 12 plus 3g violet, succoring the sick; 24 plus 6g blue, St. Elizabeth giving bread to the poor; 1 plus 1sh red, a family before a fire.

Commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the modernizing of its national postal service, by Sir Robert Hart in 1896, China has released four stamps with panel illustrations of ancient junk and modern mail steamship. A 2c orange shows an airplane above a camel caravan crossing mountains; 5c yellow-green, Shanghai harbor, with mail truck, cruiser and plane; 25c blue, Shanghai Central Post Office; 100c carmine, Nanking Ministry of Communications Building.

Cuba has finally issued a commemorative series, promised late in 1935, in honor of Maximo Gomez, army general and patriot, in connection with the unveiling of a Gomez monument in that earlier year and which illustrates the 2c carmine. On 1c green are symbolized Peace and Labor; 4c magenta, Torch of Liberty; 5c ultramarine, Independence; 8c deep green, Dove of Peace; 5c violet air, tropical storm with rainbow and lightning; 10c orange air, Flight; 10c orange special delivery, Angel of Victory break-

Cuba honors Maximo Gomez, army general and patriot.

STAMPS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ing Chain of Slavery.

Charity semipostals for relief of the "white collar" or middle class workers have been released by France, with portraits as designs—Callot, engraver, on 20 plus 10c red-brown; Berlioz, musical composer, on 40 plus 10c green; Victor Hugo, novelist, on 50 plus 10c brown; and Pasteur, scientist, on 1fr 50c plus 50c blue. Inscribed on each is *Pour les Chomeurs Intellectuels* (For the Unemployed Intellectuals).

With this stamp France aids unemployed intellectuals.

After Ethiopia (philately's Abyssinia) was conquered by Italy the latter's King Victor was accorded the additional title "Emperor." So it is not surprising to learn that Italy is issuing stamps which, bearing his head, are inscribed *Rex et Imperator.*

Inauguration of a postal museum at Vaduz has been used by Liechtenstein as an excuse for reissuing the current 20c red and 30c blue in a single imperforate sheet comprising two of each.

Recalling the centenary of the birth of Dr. Pablo Arosmena, statesman, Panama has overprinted his portrait on several current stamps.

Britain's New King

THE abdication of Edward VIII as the British sovereign alters the philatelic picture throughout the world. On this page in recent months I told about the plans of the British dominions, colonies and other possessions to issue stamps, including coronation commemoratives in May, with Edward's portrait. Now the situation changes, because the accession of the Duke of York to the throne as George VI automatically terminated those plans.

Designs had been selected by approximately fifty governments, some of which had even gone so far as to place engraving under way in anticipation of early 1937 Edwardian postal paper — a stamp program now abandoned.

Revised preparations obviously call for a likeness of the new king, Edward's brother, George VI. Also it is likely that when the latter's coronation is held some of the commemoratives will present also faces of his queen and their daughter Elizabeth, who may herself some day be a British queen. Meanwhile, in England, the current stamps with portrait of Edward will be displaced by ones with that of George VI.

The new British king and queen and Elizabeth will not be newcomers to our hobby's gallery, however. A likeness of George VI is on the 2c of Canada's 1935 Silver Jubilee issue; he was then Duke of York. Princess Elizabeth is shown on the 1c of the same series and on the 6c of Newfoundland's 1931 set. As the Duchess of York, the queen graces the 7c of Newfoundland's 1932 series.

Midwinter Drag

(Continued from page 13)

throw away that advantage by being completely humiliated before Elsa by a man exactly his own size, while Carlin was being a hero. On the other hand, there was a strange contentment in knowing he had a job cut out for him, and him alone. Furthermore, after a week of working out he believed that, strangely enough, Navy's best bantamweight would be in the ring with Ripley.

On Saturday evening, when Glover climbed through the ropes in the middle of the Naval Academy gymnasium, the same mood held him. This was his own personal job. Remembering that, he could forget that this was his first official bout, to be witnessed by a crowd of five thousand — officers and their families, midshipmen, girls and favored civilians who were in seats spread over the white floor of the gymnasium—and that so much bright color was concentrated upon this small square of raised canvas.

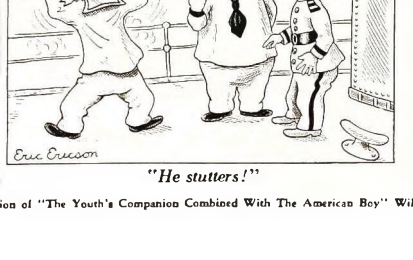
He looked across the ring at Ripley. Sporting page photographs had shown that Ripley had dark curly hair, a long face, and long arms; but they had not conveyed the strange impersonal apprehension in his expression. Glover was disturbed by this. It could mean that Ripley habitually defended himself until his opponent was in ribbons, making him a dangerous type of boxer. The next minutes would answer all questions.

At the bell Glover came out carefully. He had never seen Ripley fight. He was curious less about his fancy boxing than about how hard he could hit. He brushed aside Ripley's long left lead, ducked under a crisp right, then pushed himself out of a half clinch. Every reaction of Glover's body was warm and smooth. He stepped forward smartly and hooked his left. Ripley slipped the blow, retaliated explosively. There was a sudden glare, like the light of a photographer's flash, and Glover staggered back.

The flash dimmed. Glover tried to swallow the taste of sulphur that hurt his tongue. He felt as though half his face had been removed and placed in some other part of the ring. The warmth of blood covered his upper lip and mouth, but he went toward the place where Ripley awaited him.

Glover's footwork was no longer good—there seemed some danger that he might trip himself. A right landed on his eye, sending him backward.

Because of the smarting above his eye, he thought that he had been cut again. He danced hastily about the ring without attacking. In this college game when you were bleeding a little, you had to make a great point of showing the referee you were not hurt, or he would stop the bout.



"He stutters!"

The bell sounded, and he realized that in one round he had not landed a solid blow.

The rest period was more than enough to clear Glover's mind and loosen his muscles. In the second round he tried to match Ripley's cleverness, to repay the time the coach and Carlin had spent on him. He weaved and feinted with a high guard and then a low guard. Yet with only half as much effort, Ripley met every maneuver that needed meeting. He was ghostlike in elusiveness and unreasonably patient. At the end of the round his dark hair was hardly rumpled. There was no perspiration on his body, and no blood except Glover's.

On his stool this time, Glover knew that all that intelligence and planning could do had been done, and the lead against him was almost funny. There was only one more thing left for him to try.

At the bell for the last round Glover came fast out of his corner, feet firm on the canvas. He smiled at a stinging blow in the face, and began swinging hard and rapidly. He allowed fighting instinct to direct his blows and his defense, and immediately he felt confident and dangerous. His punches became lethal, and somehow Ripley's counters seemed weakening.

He felt better and better. This was the only fighting he knew. This was academy fighting. Go in and start hitting. Keep hitting until somebody dropped. If you were better than the other fellow, he was the one who dropped. It had been a mistake to fight somebody else's way.

But he knew he'd have to keep Ripley against the ropes and in the corners with driving fists. Because Ripley was dangerous. Ripley could hit. How he could hit!

The surprise of finding that Ripley was elusive no longer but standing flat-footed, taking blow after blow, was almost as great as the surprise a few seconds later of seeing him on hands and knees on the canvas.

At the count of nine, Ripley was barely on his feet. Glover came close, felt the sweat which had broken out now on Ripley's shoulders slip against his arm. Then he sent two blows straight to their mark. Ripley's hands dropped and he tumbled face forward to the canvas. At the count of ten he had not moved.

Glover, standing in a neutral corner, breathed deeply and carefully, his gloves at his side. Then he heard the Navy coach's voice: "Nice going; beat it up to Misery Hall and get your face glued together."

In a few minutes Glover returned and found the match tied. Then Carlin climbed easily into the ring and hammered out a victory on points in the deciding bout.

Later, as he came out onto the nearly empty floor of the gymnasium, in service uniform, he saw Carlin and Elsa standing together at the entrance. As he passed them Carlin reached out without speaking and drew Glover toward them.

"I can't tell you," Elsa said, "how well I think you both did tonight. You were splendid!"

"I didn't think we were going to win," Carlin said.

"I didn't think we were either," Glover agreed.

The collar of Elsa's fur coat folded over her arm tickled Glover's hand.

"I'll describe your victory in glowing terms to Mary Sue," Elsa said to Carlin. "Mary Sue," she explained to Glover, "is a junior at Wellesley who is about my best friend. She's supposed to marry Jordan eventually. I'm absolutely certain she made Jordan promise to take me around when I came to Annapolis."

Carlin turned toward her with a smile. "It was a pretty painful assignment," he teased.

Glover didn't say anything at all. He stood perfectly still because he could feel Carlin's hand resting on his shoulder, and he was afraid that any movement might displace it.

FEBRUARY 1937

The YOUTH'S COMPANION combined with *American Boy* founded 1857

VOL. 111 NO. 2

Cover Painting by *Edgar Franklin Wittmack*

Published Monthly by
THE SPRAGUE PUBLICATIONS, Inc.
GRIFFITH OGDEN ELLIS, *Editor* ELMER P. GRIERSON, *General Manager*
FRANKLIN M. RECK, *Managing Editor*
WALTER ADAMS, *Assistant Editor* VEREEN BELL, *Assistant Managing Editor*
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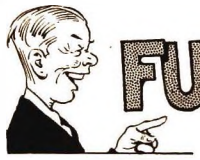
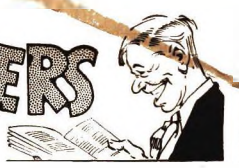


FUNNYBONE TICKLERS



Short

Summer visitor to village loafer in northern Maine: "I suppose your summer season is rather short up here?"

Village Loafer: "Yeah. I think it came on a Wednesday last year."

Temperamental

Teacher: "Use the word commercial in a sentence."

Student: "When I call my dog, she will either commercial stay according as she feels."

The Real Problem

Husband: "Have you ever wondered what you would do if you had Rockefeller's income?"

Wife: "No, but I have often wondered what he would do if he had mine."

His Will

An old Negro woman and her small son had come to a government lending agency to attend to the mortgage on her house, after her husband's death.

The government agent asked, "Mandy, did your husband leave a will?"

She answered, proudly pointing to her son, "Yassuh. Will, Jr."

Queer!

An American staying in a London hotel was introduced to an Aberdonian who asked him:

"An' what country do you belong tae?"

"The greatest country in the world!" replied the American.

"Man! so dae I," replied Sandy, "but you dinna speak like a Scotchman."

In Sunday School

The pastor was examining one of the younger classes, and asked the question: "What are the sins of omission?" After a little silence one young lady offered:

"Please, sir, they're sins we ought to have committed and haven't."

Quick Results

Recently the following testimonial was received by a patent medicine concern: "For nine years I was totally deaf, and after using your ear salve for only ten days I heard from my brother in Nebraska."

Room for (F)all

Patron: "This is a very large skating rink you have here."

Manager: "Yes, it has a seating capacity of ten thousand."

The Widower's Mite

"Five pounds!" exclaimed a parishioner. "Is that all the squire is giving to the Church Fund? Why, he ought to give at least fifty!"

"Ah," said the vicar gently, "I expect he forgot the 'ought'!"

For Shame, Nevada!

Two rabid Californians were caught in a heavy rainstorm in Los Angeles. Both watched the downpour with embarrassed expressions. Finally, after a deep silence, one said to the other: "Boy, some terrible weather certainly blows in from Nevada, doesn't it?"

The Terrible Example

An old Scots woman was wandering round the local museum with her grandson when they came to the usual statue of Venus de Milo, with half an arm missing on one side and the whole arm cut away on the other. "There ye are, my lad," pronounced the old lady, wagging her finger toward the youngster. "That's what comes o' bitin' your finger nails!"

How Could He Duet?

Neighbor: "Where's your brother, Freddie?"

Freddie: "He's in the house playing a duet. I finished first."

The Way Out

When a money-lender complained to Baron Rothschild that he had lent 10,000 francs to a person who had gone off to Constantinople without leaving any acknowledgment of the debt, the baron said: "Well, write to him and ask him to send you the 50,000 francs he owes you."

"But he owes me only ten," said the money-lender.

"Precisely," rejoined the baron, "and he will write and tell you so, and thus you will get the acknowledgment of it."

Too Late

Son (entering office): "Well, Dad, I just ran up to say hello."

Dad: "Too late, my boy. Your mother ran up to say hello and got all my change."

"Today is Topsy's birthday and I want her to pick out her own fish."

Impossible

Friend: "Did you raise any cucumbers this year in your little garden, as you expected?"

Bride: "No. The directions said to plant the seeds in hills, and you know our lot is perfectly level."

His Only Reason

A well-known judge dined recently at a hotel, where the man who takes care of the hats is celebrated for his memory about the ownership of headgear.

"How do you know that is my hat?" the judge asked as his silk hat was presented to him.

"I don't know it, sir," said the man.

"Then why do you give it to me?" insisted the bewildered judge.

"Because you gave it to me, sir," replied the man, without moving a muscle of his face.

Welcome Change

Mrs.: "I have a lot of things to talk to you about."

Mr.: "Good. I'm glad to hear it. Usually you want to talk to me about a lot of things you haven't got."

No Sympathy

"I told that man I was so dead broke that I had to sleep outdoors, but he wouldn't give me a nickel."

"What's the matter—is he a miser?"

"No; he said he was sleeping outdoors himself and had to pay the doctor for telling him to do it."

So Why Complain?

Bingo: "How's your new boarding house?"

Stingo: "The rooms are just tolerable, the table is so-so—but the gossip is simply great."

The Other Angle

Summer Boarder: "What a beautiful view that is."

Farmer: "Well, p'raps 'tis. But if you had to plow that view, harrow it, hoe it, mow it, fence it, and pay taxes on it, how would it look?"

Gone With the Wind

Mother: "Tommy, the canary has disappeared."

Tommy: "That's funny. It was there just now when I tried to clean it with the vacuum-cleaner."

We Aim to Please

Chief of Police: "I'll put you on touring duty with a squad of veterans. The police cars are all equipped with radios now."

New Policeman: "Gee, that's mighty nice of you, Chief. I like music."

Insomnia

Rastus: "What's de mattah, Mose? Yo' ain't actin' lak yo' self."

Mose: "Ah's got insomnia. Ah keeps wakin' up ev'y two or three days."

"Chess" Like That!

The worried husband was trying to balance his budget. Presently his wife came across to him and presented a list of requirements.

He seized it savagely.

"More money!" he sighed. "This life is like a game of chess. Nothing but check, check, check!"

"And," she quietly put in, "if you don't give me more money it will be more like a game of chess. It'll be pawn, pawn, pawn!"

Joys of Motoring

Amiable victim (bowled over by automobile): "I'm perfectly all right, thank you. I'm not a bit hurt."

Motorist: "I say, you're behaving jolly well about it. It is a real pleasure to knock down a thorough sportsman like you."

Extra Time

Office Boy: "May I have overtime money this week, sir?"

Employer: "Whatever for?"

Office Boy: "I dreamt about my work all last night, sir."

He Got Reult (We Hope)

A country editor hit on the following device for dunning delinquent subscribers to the paper:

"There i$ a little matter that $ome of our ubcriber$ have $eemingly forgotten entirely. $ome of them have made u$ many promi$e$, but they have not kept them. To u$ it i$ a very important matter—it'$ nece$$ary in our bu$ine$$. We are very mode$t and don't like to $peak about $uch remi$$ne$$."

The Professor Again

Judge: "But you didn't feel the thief's hand going into your pocket?"

Absent-minded Professor: "Yes, but I thought it was my own."

Not Only Hard Words

Diner: "Did you serve me this cherry pie today because it happens to be Washington's Birthday?"

Waiter: "That's right, sir."

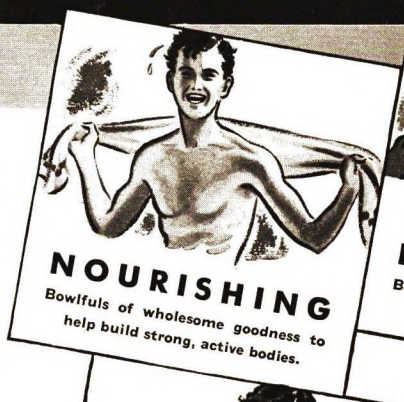
Diner: "Well, get me his hatchet so I can cut it."

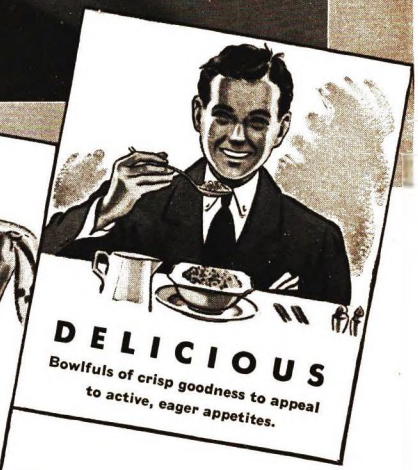
Everybody needs PEP

PEP to win in athletics. Pep to be a leader. Pep to get ahead in studies. Pep to feel ship-shape all the time. Everybody needs pep. And Kellogg's PEP 30% Bran Flakes will help you get it.

Here's rich nourishment of whole wheat. Packed with delicious crispness and flavor. Here's protein to build bodies . . . precious vitamins and essential minerals. Calcium for bones and teeth. Iron for blood.

Every bowlful of Kellogg's PEP has 30% Bran Flakes . . . just enough to help keep you fit and regular. Enjoy these crunchy flakes of toasted wheat and bran for breakfast. Good again after school or at bedtime. Always oven-fresh at your grocer's. Ready to eat, with milk or cream. Made by Kellogg in Battle Creek.





Kellogg's PEP 30% BRAN FLAKES