

The **WIDE WORLD**

THE
MAGAZINE
FOR MEN
APRIL 1951
1/3



Art. Watson



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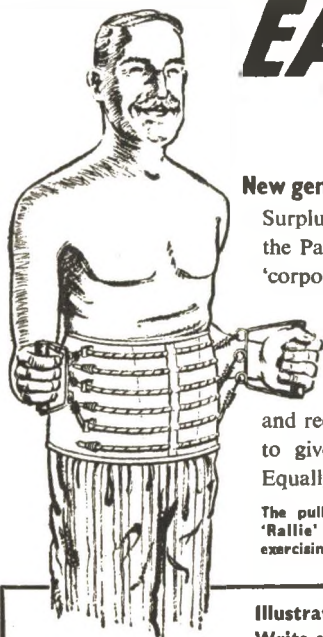


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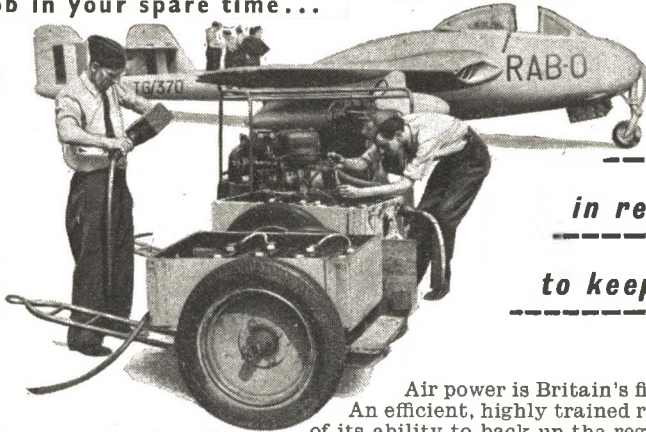


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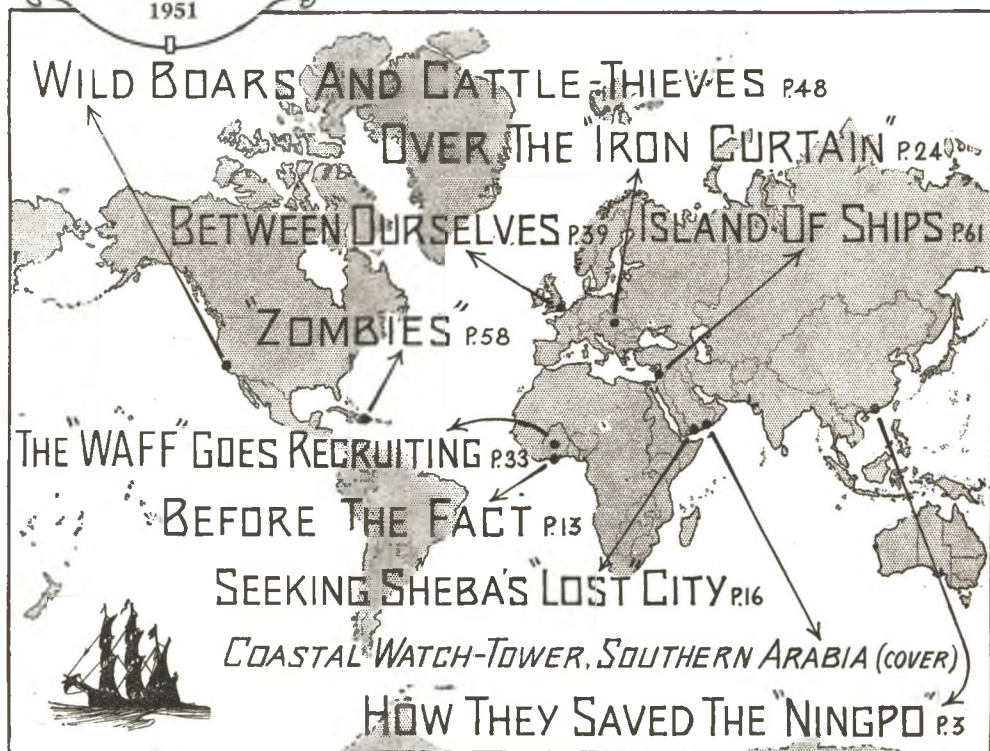
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APRIL
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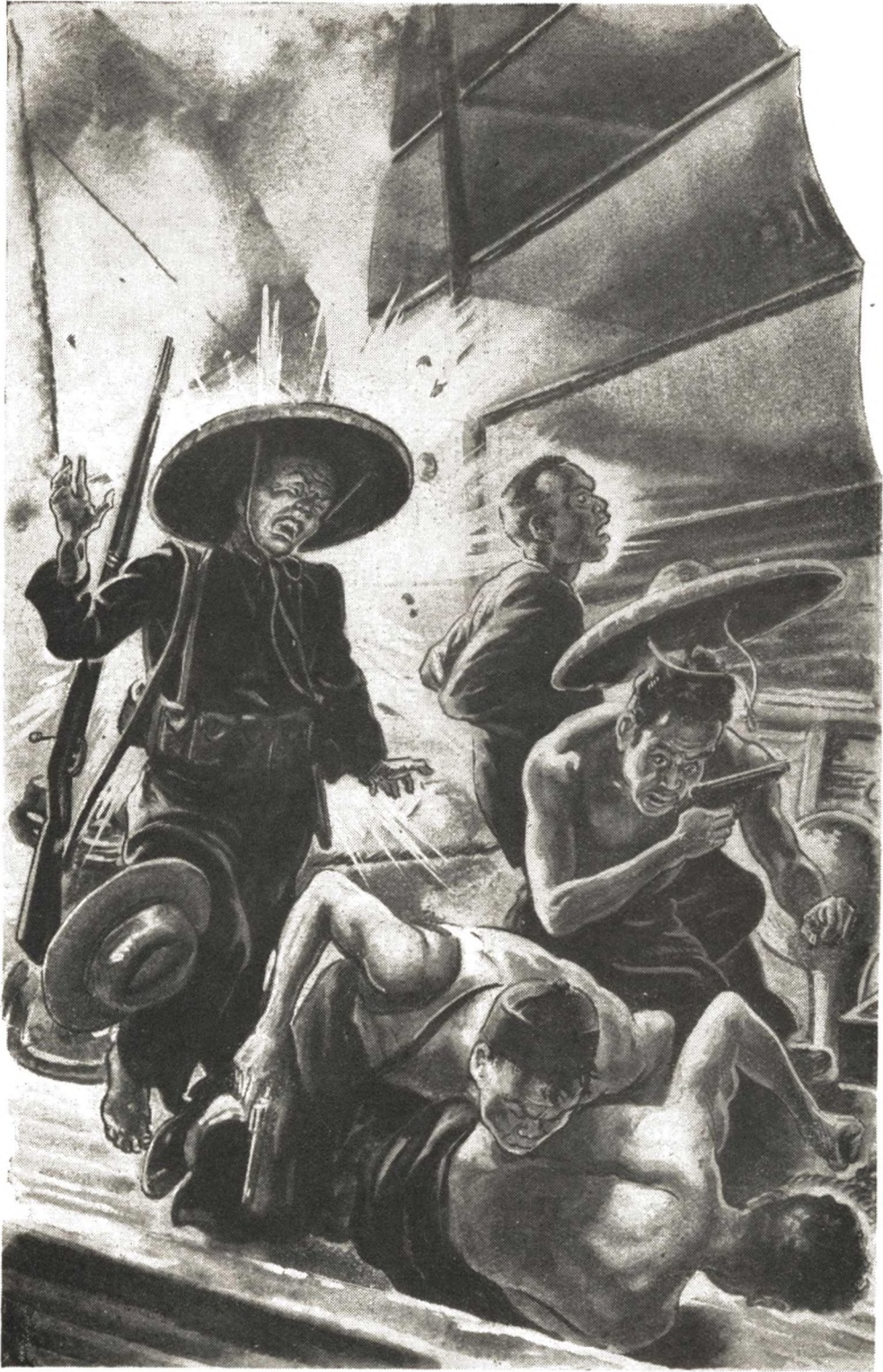
In the middle ages the church was the sponsor, and very often the centre, of literature and the arts. The beautiful illuminated writings, preserved to this day, from amongst the archives of many European abbeys and monasteries give permanent expression to the skill of these medieval writers. The media they employed were fluid inks, usually of their own composition and manufacture, applied to parchment or vellum by means of reeds, quills and brushes.

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"HAND GRENADES EXPLODING AMONG THE TERRIFIED PIRATES." (SEE PAGE 3.)

HOW THEY SAVED THE "NINGPO"

By WILMON MENARD

THIRTY miles south of Hong Kong, on October 11th, 1945, two slow-moving Chinese junks were approached

by five pirate sloops. In the bow of one of these vessels stood the 38-year-old leader of the China Sea free-booters, Wong Kung Kit, and he smiled as he thought of the rich cargoes in the holds of the junks, which were undoubtedly trying to evade the Customs officials with contraband goods of various kinds—and possibly illegal gold shipments from the Portuguese port of Macao, destined for Southern Asia. Wong, a former wartime collaborator with the Japanese invaders, was a notorious killer, and the "big boss" of Macao's seething underworld.

Presently he raised his hand as a signal for the flotilla to attack. Swiftly the sloops manoeuvred into position, cutting off the escape of their intended victims to the open sea; then a shell screamed across the bows of the leading junk. The stage seemed set for yet another successful raid, but suddenly, to the stupefaction

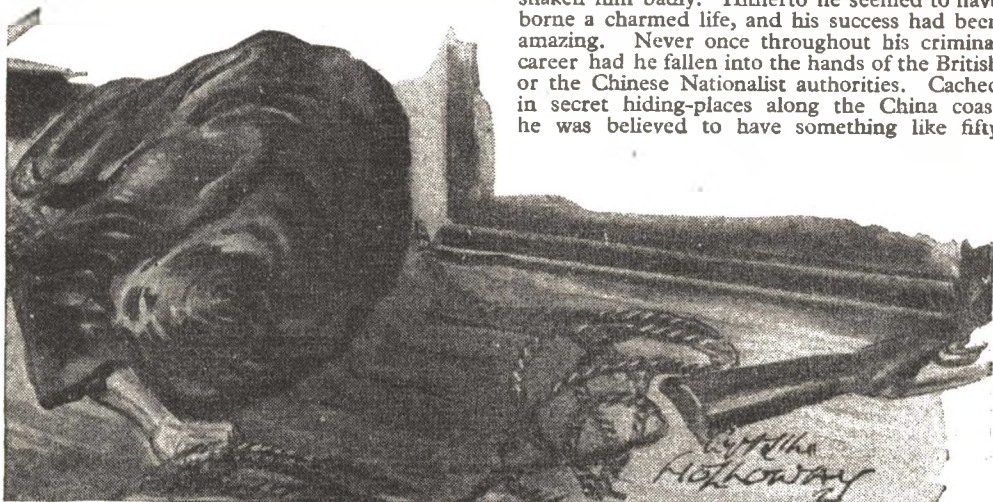
Owing to the chaotic conditions prevailing in war-torn China during recent years there has been a marked recrudescence of piracy; many quite large ships have been captured, their cargoes looted, and their unfortunate passengers held for ransom. This remarkable story deals with one of the rare occasions when the tables were turned on the sea-thieves. Having seized a small steamer, in accordance with a carefully-arranged plan, the pirates speedily discovered that, in the person of her captain, they had indeed caught a Tartar! It is one of the most striking instances of courage and resource in the face of disaster that we have ever published.

of the pirates, the decks of the innocent-looking merchant ships filled with British Commandos in battle-dress; the sunshine glinted on their steel helmets, Vickers sub-machine guns, and mortars!

Wong's mouth fell agape; he stared fatuously, hardly able to believe what he saw. Recovering himself with an effort, he

shrieked the order to withdraw, but the command came too late. Hand-grenades arched through the air, trailing serpentine threads of fuse-smoke, exploding among the terrified pirates and rending sails and rigging. Accurately aimed shells struck two of the sloops below the water-line; they sank almost immediately. A third blew up, her ammunition store hit by tracer bullets, while a mortar-bomb wrought havoc amidships on Wong's own flagship. His sloop, however, was now in full flight, and eventually the crafty miscreant succeeded in making his escape, running his damaged vessel ashore some distance below Macao.

The discomfited pirate chief felt infinitely relieved to have dry land under his feet; this disastrous encounter with the decoy junks had shaken him badly. Hitherto he seemed to have borne a charmed life, and his success had been amazing. Never once throughout his criminal career had he fallen into the hands of the British or the Chinese Nationalist authorities. Cashed in secret hiding-places along the China coast he was believed to have something like fifty



million dollars in money and jewels; his piratical fleet, operating as far north as Shanghai, numbered over two hundred motor-launches, sloops, and *sampans*; and he was still quite a young man.

Now, however, his usual luck appeared to have deserted him. Unknown to Wong, the Chinese Communist Army, only three days previously, had sent troops to occupy the strip of territory on which the pirate and his henchmen landed. The Reds were none-too-well disposed towards this unscrupulous ruffian; he had "hi-jacked" many valuable cargoes they coveted for themselves! Wong and his followers were promptly arrested, being later turned over to the Macao police in exchange for a payment of 20,000 *paiacas* (\$5,000). This typically Chinese transaction suited the pirate excellently; he laughed to himself over the foolishness of the Communists. Apparently they were unaware that he wielded great power in Macao, being the acknowledged chief of the underworld.

Wong and his satellites were duly incarcerated in the Macao jail; then the "Big Boss" sent word to an influential official informing him that he expected his release bright and early the following morning. But, to his surprise and indignation, the iron-barred doors did not open. Summoned by a peremptory message, the pirate leader's former ally spoke apologetically through the bars.

"It is lamentable that you should be subjected to such indignities," he said, "but it seems I am powerless to help you."

"What do you mean?" demanded Wong, uneasily.

"Haven't you heard that agents of the Allied War Criminals Investigation Commission are looking for you? They have been hunting you for months!"

"What does that matter? They haven't enough evidence to bring me to trial!"

"That may be," returned the official. "Nevertheless, my dear Wong, they are well aware that you carry, locked in your mind, the names of all the important Chinese who secretly aided the Japanese conquest. Some of these same men now hold high positions in the government of Chiang Kai-Chek. They are afraid you might talk, so they have decided you must be kept in protective custody."

THE VISITORS

Wong stormed and threatened, but all in vain. His once-powerful friends seemed to have vanished into thin air; the head of Macao's gambling-ring actually refused to come and see him. During the evening of January 2nd, 1946, however, he heard the key grate in the lock of his cell door. In the dim light of the corridor he made out the features of two men who appeared to be high officers of the Macao police.

"So you have come to release me at last!" cried the pirate chief. "That is well—but don't imagine I shall forget the insults which have been put upon me!"

Making no comment, the new arrivals conducted him to a big black limousine waiting outside the jail. Not till the car was heading toward the outskirts of the town did the senior officer speak; his tone was grave.

"You acted very unfortunately in bribing a guard to send a note to the agents of the War

Criminals Commission in the hope that they could secure your release," he said. "Captain Frank Farrell, of the U.S. Marine Corps, and First Lieutenant Marvin Gray, of the Army, duly received your message. They will arrive in Macao at noon to-morrow, expecting you, as you promised, to tell them all you know about the wartime collaborators in China."

Stark fear gripped Wong. "But—but I only intended to give them false information," he stammered.

"That may possibly be the case," murmured the officer. "But there are important people who do not think it advisable to allow you to talk to the American investigators."

Presently the black car pulled up in front of a large mansion, and the officer pointed toward its shadowed façade. "There is the fine home where you and your beautiful lady-love, Chung Lo Yu, spent so many happy days," he said. "We thought you might like to take a last look at it!"

As he spoke the second officer, seemingly quite casually, opened the car door and let it swing back. Convinced that these men were really friends, giving him an opportunity to make a get-away, Wong leaped out and dashed towards the belt of shrubbery which surrounded the house. He had almost reached it when two revolvers exploded practically simultaneously. The pirate screamed, stopped in mid-stride, and then crumpled to the ground—dead! The official report as to his death was "Shot while trying to escape."

The redoubtable Wong was no more, but that did not put an end to the evil activities of which he had been the head. Rising to the occasion, his exotic mistress—the Chung Lo Yu already mentioned—promptly determined to take over his responsibilities. Leaving her hiding-place in Macao, she landed, under cover of darkness, on the fortified pirate island of Ma Lo Choa, opposite the Portuguese colony, where Wong's ruffians lived in the intervals between their raids on shipping. Here they carried on like members of a law-abiding community, growing their own crops, raising livestock, weaving cloth, and cobbling shoes. Their up-to-date hospital was staffed by capable doctors; a modern ship-repair plant worked day and night. Machine-shops hummed with activity; skilled armourers repaired weapons stolen from Government arsenals. Wong had certainly established a very remarkable headquarters.

Arrived at the pirates' lair, "Madame Wong" immediately called a meeting of the various sub-leaders. She sat at the head of a table in the centre of a large room, and in front of her—grim indications of the authority she intended to exercise—lay two pearl-handled automatics. The lady spoke briefly, but entirely to the point, and the assembled leaders listened intently.

Within a few weeks of that conference piracies began to increase around Hong Kong, the notorious Bias Bay, and Macao. Junks and *sampans* smuggling gold out of the latter place were intercepted and looted, and it was not uncommon for two or three coastal vessels to be plundered every week. The Nationalist Government—distracted by local disturbances and later preoccupied by full-scale war with the Chinese Reds—could not spare large forces

of police or soldiers to hunt down Madame Wong and her rovers. Early one morning in December, 1947, the two-thousand ton Dutch passenger steamer, *Van Heutz*, was seized by pirates only twenty-five miles north of Hong Kong. The plunder consisted of half a million dollars in money and jewels, not to mention six wealthy Chinese passengers who were removed and held for ransom payments of \$10,000 apiece. It seemed incredible that this vessel, equipped with "anti-pirate" spiked grilles, steel wire mesh and barred doors, and provided with armed guards, could be captured by twenty of Madame Wong's henchmen, who had taken passage aboard disguised as steerage passengers, but the seemingly impossible had happened!

Hong Kong, about this time, gradually became a haven for all kinds of undesirable characters—cut-throats, smugglers, pirates, and spies, who found plenty of scope for their nefarious activities. Guns and ammunition were being shipped from this great port to war-lords and bandits in the interior and also to fighting guerrillas in Indo-China. Junks plied backwards and forwards between Hong Kong, Canton, and Macao, loaded with silks and other rich cargoes, and often moving by night in attempts to evade the Customs blockade. Madame Wong's followers, using fast modern motor launches, preyed mercilessly upon this traffic. Her spies frequently worked in coolie stevedore gangs on the Hong Kong wharves, making careful note of the cargoes consigned to different vessels. Things went from bad to worse, and the confused conditions precipitated by civil war eventually led to a revival of the maritime scourge which the British Navy had successfully suppressed in 1931—piracy on the high seas. This, in turn, gave rise to the amazing affair I am about to describe.

THE CAPTAIN'S CHALLENGE

In January, 1949, tall, good-looking Captain Donald MacPherson, skipper of the small passenger steamer *Ningpo*, happened to make a heated remark at a meeting of the Shipping Board in Hong Kong. The members had been anxiously discussing the ever-increasing menace of piracy, concerning which the Captain held decided opinions.

"If that Chinese good-for-nothing dares to send any of her ruffians aboard

my ship she'll see what will happen to them!" he cried, defiantly.

The *Hong Kong News* printed those angry words, and Madame Wong read them in her well-guarded citadel on Ma Lo Choa Island. She immediately decided to accept the implied challenge and, sending for one of her lieutenants, gave him certain orders.

On March 16th, 1949, the *Ningpo*, moored to a cargo-littered wharf at Hong Kong, was ready to sail for Singapore. On the bridge Captain MacPherson paced backwards and forwards impatiently, annoyed by a last-minute order from the Chinese shippers to delay his departure for an hour. MacPherson was superstitious; he considered it decidedly unlucky to change one's sailing-time.

The *Ningpo* was no beauty; she was beginning to show signs of old age and hard usage. Built many years previously for the China Coast and Malaya-East Indies passenger and freight service, she had now been out-classed by the relentless competition of faster and larger vessels. Though still a staunch ship, she looked shabby and rusty, but Captain MacPherson loved her, and for her sake had refused better berths aboard modern liners.

Presently a motor-truck filled with armed



"He knocked the nearer man down."

guards roared up alongside the steamer and a number of small, reinforced steel chests, with heavy padlocks, were unloaded and quickly carried aboard. The Captain knew what those boxes contained—gold from Macao, busiest transfer-point in the world, consigned to Asiatic ports.

In the shadow of the neighbouring *godown* (warehouse) lounged a Chinese stevedore, watching indifferently. When the treasure-guards disappeared into a companionway leading off the *Ningpo's* promenade-deck he straightened up and hurried away.

The sergeant in charge of the gold-escort was somewhat taken aback at the lack of anti-pirate security measures aboard the vessel. She appeared to carry no special guards of her own, and there was a complete absence of the usual heavy steel-mesh wire protecting the stairways to the bridge and separating the fore-part of the steamer from the midship quarters of the officers and first-class passengers. Moreover, there was no spiked gratings and steel-taloned "catwalks" (raised gangways), safeguarding vital approaches against pirates bent on climbing from the well-decks to the bridge. The only protection the old *Ningpo* possessed took the form of barred doors over the port and starboard ladders leading out of the steerage-class well-deck, where pirates were likely to be found disguised as coolie passengers.

The gold having been safely stowed away, the guards departed and the ship cast off her mooring-lines, moving slowly away through tiers of high-pooped junks and small harbour craft, her bows pointed toward the sea. She passed fleets of fishing *sampans* returning to port, left sundry curious rocky islands astern, and presently reached open waters, rolling gently to the smooth swell.

Captain MacPherson had felt strangely uneasy ever since the *Ningpo* cleared Hong Kong. Sleep refused to come to him that night, and just after hearing four bells struck he rose, dressed, and went out on deck. Everything seemed to be in order. The engines thudded monotonously, the ship drove steadily onward through the night, her wake glittering with phosphorescence.

Halting at the railing above the steerage well-deck, the skipper stared down thoughtfully at the pin-points, representing lighted cigarettes, which studded the crowded mass of Chinese humanity huddled on the planking. Men, women, and children were sprawled there with their mat-wrapped possessions, filling every available inch of space. The holds below held many more steerage passengers unable to find room on the airy deck. Various strangely-mingled odours filled the hot, heavy air.

Suddenly Captain MacPherson's muscles tautened; he listened intently. Directly behind him he had heard the soft rustle of slipped feet. Turning swiftly, he peered into the darkness that encompassed him. He could see nothing, and the mysterious sounds had abruptly ceased. All the same, he felt certain someone was standing motionless only a short distance away.

"Is that you, Mr. Duncan?" he demanded, but there came no answering word from his Chief Officer.

Where he stood the only illumination came from the engine-room skylight, aft of the *Ningpo's* single funnel, and as the skipper glanced suspi-



ciously about him he observed a shadowy figure pass across this dimly-lighted area.

"Who's that?" he called, sharply. Still there was no response; the silence remained unbroken save for the heavy wash of the China Sea along the ship's sides, the thrumming of the engine-room blowers, and the hissing of a valve.

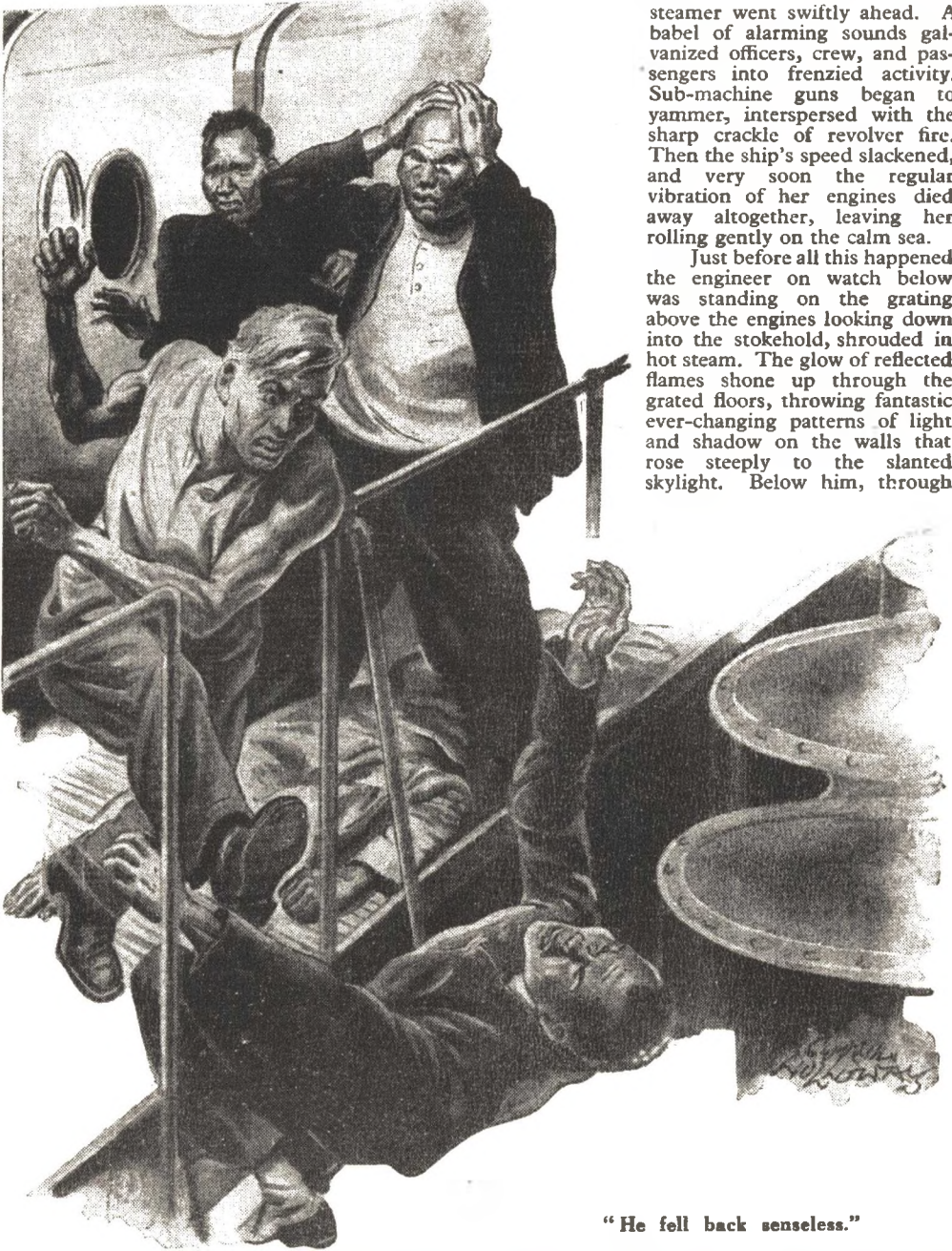
Annoyed, Captain MacPherson moved swiftly forward to overtake the unknown prowler, but when he reached a good vantage point for a clearer view he saw to his surprise that the deck was empty. The man's disappearance worried him. The steerage quarters were filled to overflowing, and it was quite possible that some of the Chinese there were disguised pirates. One of these gentry might be reconnoitring with a view to an attack.

Making for the chart-room, the skipper had a chat with the officer on watch—Mr. Grigson, the second mate.

"We've got to be specially careful on this voyage," he told him. "I want you to break out the rifles and the Vickers, with plenty of ammunition, and see that guards are set at all important points."

THE ATTACK

This matter attended to, Captain MacPherson felt somewhat easier in mind; he had a cup of coffee and then returned to his cabin, intent upon trying to get some sleep. Pushing open the door, he stepped over the high casing, and was in the



steamer went swiftly ahead. A babel of alarming sounds galvanized officers, crew, and passengers into frenzied activity. Sub-machine guns began to yammer, interspersed with the sharp crackle of revolver fire. Then the ship's speed slackened, and very soon the regular vibration of her engines died away altogether, leaving her rolling gently on the calm sea.

Just before all this happened the engineer on watch below was standing on the grating above the engines looking down into the stokehold, shrouded in hot steam. The glow of reflected flames shone up through the grated floors, throwing fantastic ever-changing patterns of light and shadow on the walls that rose steeply to the slanted skylight. Below him, through

"He fell back senseless."

act of reaching for the light-switch when he was struck a heavy blow from behind. It caught him full on the back of the head, and he fell full-length forward, shouting for help. Once down, he tried to raise himself to his knees, whereupon his invisible assailant hit him again and again, eventually stretching him senseless on the floor. Before unconsciousness finally engulfed him, however, the Captain realized that his half-formed fear had been correct—there were pirates aboard the *Ningpo*!

While the skipper lay helpless in the dark cabin the carefully-planned seizure of the

the curtain of misty vapour, the engines worked pantingly. The huge crank-heads shot up with reverberating force, only to be jerked back again by the connecting-rods. Everything was as it should be.

Suddenly the engineer heard a sound behind him, and made to turn round, but next instant he received a crashing blow on the head and slumped to the gratings unconscious. The pirates had captured the engine-room!

Similar scenes were now being enacted all over the ship, from deck to deck and cabin to cabin. Heavy footfalls raced hither and thither;

above the noise of sporadic shooting the hoarse, angry voice of Mr. Grigson shouted orders. From forward came the dull thudding of human bodies being hurled against bulwarks and bulkheads, followed by splintering crashes as if wooden chests and crates were being toppled over. A long-sustained wail of terror arose from this section, gradually swelling to blood-chilling Chinese shrieks. Floodlights on the fore-peak boom-mast suddenly illuminated the well-deck, revealed a seething crowd of fear-crazed passengers. A mass of figures was swarming up the port ladder, fighting one another, screaming, and beating with their bare hands on the barred door.

Meanwhile, from the hurricane-deck, machine-guns spat viciously; the ship's officers and crew were firing over the heads of the mob in an attempt to restore order, and soon the frenzied climbers fell back, toppling head-over-heels down the iron rungs to pile up in squirming heaps at the bottom.

Covered by the panic of the passengers, the pirates were wasting no time. Three of them crouched against the obstructing door on the starboard ladder, cutting through the metal with hacksaws. Another party stood guard at the head of the steerage companionway, holding back the alarmed Chinese passengers who were trying to reach the open well-deck. Each group of pirates had its own special task. One party were to silence the radio cabin directly the boat-deck was captured; another, which included an expert helmsman and navigator, was intent upon seizing the wheelhouse, later taking the *Ningpo* to a hidden cove below Macao where the vessel would be thoroughly looted. Madame Wong herself would doubtless be present, watching the process with grim satisfaction.

Several pirates from the forward well-deck were soon climbing up over the superstructure, scaling the bridge by making use of every ledge and crevice where hands and feet could get a grip. Now and then one lost his hold, or was struck by a bullet from the defenders, falling back with wildly-waving arms.

THE FIGHT IN THE WHEELHOUSE

Burly Chief Officer Duncan had been one of the first persons to reach the bridge when those startling noises warned him of trouble. Entering the wheelhouse, he stopped dead in his tracks, for a stranger was standing at the wheel! On the floor beside the grating lay the inert figure of the *Ningpo's* quartermaster. The pirate did not immediately notice Duncan's arrival; he was bending over the binnacle as he gripped the spokes of the wheel. The young Chief Officer acted instantly, leaping across the wheelhouse, but simultaneously the Chinese swung round and fired his .45 automatic at almost point-blank range. The bullet whined over Duncan's head, shattering a window behind him. A second later the officer's fist crashed against his assailant's jaw with terrific force. Hurling clear of the wheel, the pirate fell into a corner near the starboard door, where he started shrieking for help.

Duncan was on him again before he could regain his footing, beating him over the head with a heavy flash-light until he became unconscious. The officer then studied the fellow's face, recognizing him as one of the Chinese first-class passengers; he recalled him as one of a trio of European-attired Chinese who

had occupied a table just inside the entrance of the dining-room. The First Officer knew instinctively how the other two would be engaged—busy silencing the ship's radio shack!

The *Ningpo*, he noted, was now moving again, and he instinctively grabbed the wheel and put the steamer back on her correct course. Just then, out on deck, there came a loud, exultant shouting as the pirates broke through the barred door on the starboard ladder and charged onwards. The members of the ship's company guarding the hurricane-deck were quickly overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers, disarmed, and hustled into the crew's quarters forward. While this was going on Duncan heard a scuffling sound at the door, but before he could take any action he was seized by a couple of pirates. Freeing himself with a jerk of his broad shoulders, he knocked the nearer man down. The second ruffian, however, struck at him with the butt of his pistol, splitting the young man's lip and breaking two of his teeth. Duncan fell to his knees, groping blindly for his assailant, but was knocked out by another blow on the head.

Within half an hour the battle was over; the bridge, engine-room, and radio shack had been occupied by the pirates, and all resistance had ceased. The officers and crew were under guard, as were the first-class and steerage passengers. The captured *Ningpo*, set on a course towards the lair of the pirate fleet, forged ahead through the darkness of the night.

Presently—had there been anyone about to notice it—the blurred figure of a heavily-built man might have been seen moving cautiously along the cat-walk leading to the fo'c's'le-head. He paused once or twice, glancing back apprehensively at the pale light shining through the front of the wheelhouse; he also studied a shadow on the open wing of the bridge, just under the red port-light; then, reassured, he crept on again.

The figure was that of Captain MacPherson, recovered from that savage attack in his cabin, and now filled with a grim determination, whatever the risk, to somehow save his ship from the villainous gang who had seized it. He was very nervous about the wheelhouse; if the Chinese navigator or the man at the helm glimpsed him he would make a perfect target for their guns. But his luck held; there was no sudden outcry and no shooting, and he was able to continue unmolested.

Reaching the end of the fore-and-aft catwalk, he hugged the wings of the fo'c's'le and drew a breath of heartfelt relief; under the very noses of the pirates he had safely accomplished that hazardous passage!

It was all-important to the audacious scheme the skipper had in mind that he should not be detected at this stage. Quite apart from his value as the crew's natural leader, he was laden with two sub-machine guns, his pockets bulged with no fewer than six revolvers, and his belted shirt was stuffed with pistol ammunition and loaded clips for the guns. All these things the resourceful skipper had obtained from the arms locker in his own cabin directly he regained consciousness. Needing the co-operation of his officers and crew in the daring plan he had conceived, and knowing that the pirates would have taken care to disarm them, he made up his mind to provide them with as many weapons as possible.

The Captain was just thinking out his next move when the catwalk vibrated under the weight of someone hurrying along it. Anyone at liberty would inevitably be an enemy; MacPherson realized he must not be discovered! The paint-locker was at his elbow, its door luckily standing ajar, and the skipper hastily squeezed himself inside the narrow enclosure, praying that he would not dislodge any loose cans. Somewhere close by a door opened, and the sound of Chinese voices drifted out; then it slammed shut again and silence ensued.

After waiting a few moments Captain MacPherson peeped out. It was so dark in this part of the ship that he could hardly make out the fo'c's'le companionway, and he was just about to leave the locker and continue on his way when he suddenly observed the glowing end of a cigarette! It was so close that he could have reached out and snatched it from the lips of the smoker—one of the pirates, of course. Hastily he shrank back, and the man passed on unsuspectingly, moving toward the rail. This fellow, the skipper decided, represented a formidable obstacle to success. Every moment was precious now, and while the pirate wandered around, liable at any instant to spot him and raise the alarm, his chances were perhaps slipping away. The man must be got rid of!

Temporarily dumping the arms he carried, MacPherson slid out after the Chinese, moving as noiselessly as possible.

Perhaps the pirate heard some sound; possibly he actually glimpsed the vague crouching shape that advanced upon him. But the Captain gave him no time to shout or use a weapon. Rearing up quickly, the skipper got his adversary across his shoulders and, with a sudden mighty heave, catapulted him over the rail into the sea! There was a splash and a choked cry—nothing more.

RESCUING THE CREW

His task accomplished, the skipper went back to the paint-locker, retrieved his store of weapons, and cautiously approached the door leading to the companionway. Passing through it, he boldly descended the ladder. The voices of sundry pirates, apparently engaged in ransacking the crew's lockers, warned him that a critical moment was approaching. Stealth was of little use now; his only chance lay in quick action and sudden surprise.

Grim-faced, and with a levelled sub-machine gun in his hands, MacPherson stepped boldly over the metal sill into the fo'c's'le and confronted the astounded ruffians, who were clustered round a pile of loot. Lined up against the end of the room, watching their captors with sullen faces, were the Chinese seamen and Malay stewards of the *Ningpo*; the Captain was also glad to notice several of the Europeans, including

Mr. Grigson and Mr. Larsen, our carpenter. Nodding reassuringly to the officer, but never once taking his eyes off the pirates, the skipper called out:

"Get their guns, Mr. Grigson. Then take a few men and stand on guard at the top of the companionway. Lively now; time's very precious!"

While the scowling pirates were being dis-



Captain MacPherson, Chief Officer Duncan, and Mr. Malcolm Stuart, a passenger who gave evidence before the Board of Enquiry.

armed the Captain hurriedly outlined his plan to the crew, who listened eagerly. It was indeed a daring scheme! By means of a bunker manhole in the port alleyway, MacPherson explained, they could obtain access to the first-class quarters amidships. This bunker—out of use since the *Ningpo* ceased to be a coal-burner—would now serve as a sort of secret passage, providing a safe means of approach to the heart of the ship. He issued his store of guns to carefully-chosen men, with a supply of ammunition, and told the rest: "Sorry I can't arm all of you. Get hold of lengths of chain, stools, bits of wood—*anything*. Hop to it now, lads! In an hour or so the *Ningpo* will be inside one of the coves, swarming with Madame Wong's scum, and we shall have lost our chance!"

Taking the lead, the skipper led his party back through the long-forgotten bunker into the very bowels of the steamer, where another manhole opened out at the top of the iron-runged ladder leading into the storeroom. Pausing only long enough to make certain there were no pirates in the adjoining corridor, the Captain whispered instructions to Larsen to take several of the men and overpower the Chinese guarding the first-class passengers in the main saloon.

"When that's done," he continued, "you can start cleaning out any of the beggars you find in the first-class cabins."

Followed silently by the remainder of the crew, MacPherson next made for an iron door in the starboard alleyway, abaft the galley. This was noiselessly rolled back a fraction of an inch, releasing from the engine-room below the smell of heated oil and the steady throb of the engines. Peering through the crevice, the skipper saw the red-headed Second Engineer, with his hands

tied behind him, lying on the grated control platform below the steam- and water-gauges. Knocked unconscious by a blow from a rifle-butt, he was now slowly awakening to a sense of reality.

Crouched on their haunches close by were three evil-looking pirates armed with sub-machine guns, keeping a vigilant watch on the engine-room staff below, among whom squatted two more guards.

Quickly rolling the door right back, Captain MacPherson stepped over the casing, levelled his gun, and shouted in Chinese: "Drop your weapons! You're under arrest!"

One of the pirates made to raise his gun, whereupon the skipper gave him a short burst from the Vickers and he fell forward without a sound. That ended all resistance; the guards on the platform immediately surrendered, while their two comrades down below, dropping their guns, came climbing sheepishly out of the pit. Meanwhile the liberated Second Engineer, shaking his aching head dazedly, was leaning against the guard-rail rubbing his numbed hands to restore the circulation.

"Do you feel able to carry on here?" Captain MacPherson asked him, and the engineer nodded.

At that moment he observed the first pirate from the stokehold nearing the platform. His eyes narrowed, he growled angrily, and then lashed out with his right foot. The ruffian's head had just risen above the level of the grating, and the impact was terrific; he fell back senseless into the arms of the man below him.

The Second Engineer turned to the captain.

"Sorry, sir," he said, apologetically, "but I think that was the blighter who laid me out."

"You can leave their punishment till we drive them down the gangway at Hong Kong," the skipper told him quietly. "We're not out of the wood yet! Jerking his thumb toward the dial of the engine-room telegraph, where

the indicator pointed to "Full," he added: "I think the pirate navigator top-side has just ordered 'Stand by.'"

As he spoke he winked significantly, and the engineer, with a comprehending grin, immediately reached over and worked the levers and throttles behind the guard-rail.

Leaving four of his party to protect the engine-room, MacPherson then hurried up the stairway to the main saloon to render any assistance the ship's carpenter might need.

He discovered, however, that Mr. Larsen and his stalwarts had the situation well in hand. At the very first burst of sub-machine gun fire the frightened raiders had flung away their rifles and pistols and obeyed the order to stretch out on their backs on the floor, meanwhile yelling frantic pleas for mercy. The well-nigh hysterical European passengers, fearing a fierce counter-attack might be forthcoming from the pirates not yet captured, likewise threw themselves down between the tables. This proved a wise move, for a few minutes later bullets began to rip through the walls of the saloon.



"Duncan stared at him dazedly."



The main body of the enemy, stationed on the bridge, had realized something was wrong when the engines stopped and they could obtain no response from the telegraph. Forthwith they swarmed down the ladder to the boat-deck, intending to seal this area off against a surprise attack. The leader—a short, wiry Chinese dressed in a khaki uniform and a Panama hat, and sporting a shoulder-holstered pistol—also sent a party of pirates to the main saloon to strengthen the defences there, but when these rascals discovered the crew in possession they fired a few wild shots and then fled back to the bridge.

CLEARING THE CABINS

There now remained only one job down below for the carpenter and his augmented force. Several pirates were engaged in methodical ransacking of the first-class cabins, and must be dealt with. If they elected to fight it out, as seemed quite possible, it would be a dangerous room-by-room fight. Moreover, not all the first-class passengers had been shepherded into

the main saloon; some had been confined in their cabins, others had locked themselves in the bathrooms, and several old folk remained in their bunks, too scared to move. Indiscriminate shooting might cause fatalities among these people.

At this juncture the "Number One" Malay steward conceived a bright idea. If protection could be afforded them in the corridors, he said, he and his boys were prepared to slip quietly into the cabins, one by one, and, knife in hand, winkle out the pirates. This would eliminate the chance wounding or killing of passengers.

Grinning widely, the veteran steward continued: "Besides, sar, these bad Chinese have made much mess and confusion all over cabins, which I and my boys must tidy up in morning. Privately, I say, we are *very* unfriendly at them!"

The eager Malays duly started their hunt, and ten minutes later eight badly-scared pirates, many of them suffering from severe knife-slashes, were herded into the saloon. Apparently they had set out to loot the cabins amidships, but had paused to regale themselves liberally



with liquor found in the passengers' baggage. When the stewards attacked in force the startled raiders, taken completely by surprise, leaped wild-eyed and screaming into the corridors, where their lithe brown pursuers swarmed over them like a cloud of angry hornets.

Meanwhile Captain MacPherson and his remaining men had moved cautiously to a position just below the boat-deck amidships. Sporadic shooting commenced from the bridge, where at least fifteen pirates had barricaded themselves in. The time-element, the skipper considered, was still the all-important factor; it was quite possible that speedy motor-launches, crowded with reinforcements for the enemy, were even now moving out from some hidden cove towards the *Ningpo*. Members of the crew had already recaptured the radio shack, and if the equipment had not been damaged it was imperative that a message should be flashed without delay to any British or American patrol vessel which might be cruising in the vicinity.

Speaking in a gruff whisper, the skipper whined his men: "It's going to be a tricky business from now on. Take care of yourselves; I don't want any dead heroes on my hands! They have the advantage of being above us, and shooting down is a lot easier than shooting up. Keep well under cover as we move up to the bridge—and don't blast too many holes in my cabin!"

Rifles, revolvers, and sub-machine guns began to speak from behind cabin structures and alleyways as the members of the *Ningpo's* crew advanced slowly up the boat-deck towards the bridge. The pirates' return fire was surprisingly weak; and twenty minutes later a white shirt fluttered from the starboard opening of the bridge. The enemy had capitulated!

But the excitement was not entirely over. While being escorted down to the saloon the khaki-clad pirate leader suddenly broke out of the line of prisoners and darted toward the boat-deck rail. It is impossible to say whether he

intended to commit suicide rather than face Madame Wong's fury at his failure, or whether he intended to attempt the long swim to land. Climbing cat-like over the rail, he was just about to plunge downwards into the sea when a sailor grabbed him and jerked him back. Squirring out of the man's grasp, however, the desperate Chinese raced aft down the deck and once more swung his legs over the rail.

At that precise moment, entirely by chance, Chief Officer Duncan—at long last recovered from his beating—appeared on deck, revolver in hand. It is doubtful whether he was aware that all the pirates had been captured; his faculties were still more or less clouded. Anyway, he caught sight of the flying fugitive and immediately pulled trigger. The Chinese slumped backwards, clutching at his throat, and rolled over dead! Duncan stared at him dazedly, surprised at the accuracy of his shooting.

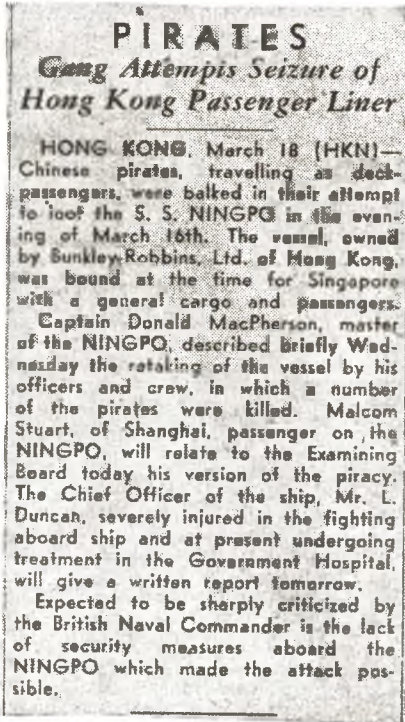
About thirty-five pirates from Ma Lo Chao Island, it later transpired, had participated in the seizure of the *Ningpo*; of these eight were dead and nine seriously wounded. One member of the ship's crew had been killed, a Chinese steerage passenger had been hit by a stray bullet, and more than twenty coolies were suffering from superficial wounds and bruises.

The steamer returned without further incident to Hong Kong, where police summoned by radio were waiting on the dockside to escort the captured pirates to jail.

Captain MacPherson—despite sundry wounds covered with adhesive tape and a variety of bruises—was in a decidedly cheerful mood as he stood on the bridge surrounded by a bevy of newspaper reporters.

"All I have to say is this," he told them. "After what I'd said about Madame Wong I couldn't let that she-cat and her mangy cut-throats get away with the *Ningpo*!"

Which strikes me as a classic example of British understatement



A newspaper cutting referring to the events narrated in this story.



The QUEER SIDE of THINGS

BEFORE THE FACT

By the REVD. DONALD S. CHING

I WAS quite unable to understand it then; at the present time, fourteen years later, I still cannot make up my mind.

At first the problem troubled me greatly; in those days I expected to be in a position to form a definite opinion about whatever circumstances I encountered. Now, however, I regard the affair in a rather different light, for I have learned that certain things are beyond human comprehension.

When these events happened I was a missionary on the Ivory Coast, in French West Africa, stationed at a place called Grand Lahou. Some years previously the great Ivory Coast forest had been the scene of a remarkable mass-movement towards Christianity. Though the country and its climate presented considerable difficulties, our greatest embarrassment was to find enough missionaries to meet the demand; if our staff had been ten times larger we should still have been short-handed. From Grand Lahou I had to supervise an area of over three thousand square miles of tropical forest, containing a hundred and forty-seven small towns and villages, whose inhabitants spoke no fewer than five different languages. My nearest colleague was at Dabou, about a hundred and fifty miles to the east, and his charge was of similar extent, as was that of the next missionary beyond him, and the next again.

At Dabou we had an Institution which was the mainspring of our work, for here were trained the African catechists who acted as sub-pastors in the various communities. We missionaries were too few in number to minister adequately to the scores of thousands who were waiting for our teaching, and year by year the Dabou Training Institution turned out more and more young men to work under our supervision. Now and again one of these would prove unsatisfactory, and in consequence had to be discharged, but on the whole they were grand fellows, carrying out their duties with real success and a genuine sense of vocation.

One such was Victor Akmel. He had distinguished himself in his studies at the Institution, and when he was posted to my section he came with excellent recommendations. During his first two years with me I found all that had been said of him fully justified. He was intelligent and devoted to his work, but his zeal did not make him too narrow in outlook or insensitive to the troubles and failings of ordinary folk. Courageous in his convictions and wise in judgment, Victor was a man on whom I could depend. Being so sure of him, I eventually stationed him at Ahuanu, on the Bandama River.

Here, related by a former missionary, is a puzzling story concerned with some of those dark secrets of primitive Africa which the white man will probably never be able to fathom. "The facts are absolutely true," writes Mr. Ching, "but I have changed the name of the catechist out of consideration for his relatives."

This was a post of considerable importance. It lay over a hundred miles up-river from Lahou, and I was able to visit it only about once a year.

The success or failure of our work at this place would affect, for good or ill, a score or more of villages in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the people of Ahuanu and the surrounding district were Appoloniens — fine, upstanding folk with great independence of outlook. Their catechist must be a man of strong character, who could win their respect, and also possessed of considerable tact. Victor Akmel was an Odjukru, and so a "foreigner" to them, but I felt he was just the man for the Ahuanu station.

All went well for about a year. I contrived to visit Ahuanu twice, and each time found steady progress being made and the people well satisfied with their catechist. Then, one day, I heard that Victor was ill. This rather worried me, for in bygone days the Ahuanu folk had earned a sinister reputation as subtle poisoners—the Borgias were innocent babes by comparison!—and I was well aware that the catechist had a difficult task. From what I had seen on my up-river treks, however, I did not think it likely that Victor had courted the traditional treatment meted out to enemies; nevertheless I decided to neglect no precautions. I therefore sent a note telling him, if he were well enough to move, to get his friends in Ahuanu to bring him down to Lahou by canoe for medical attention.

A few days later the young man arrived. He certainly looked very ill; he was much thinner than when I had last seen him, and seemed to be suffering from an incessant but fluctuating fever. The paddlers who had brought him down were clearly much concerned about him, telling me how anxious the people of Ahuanu were for his recovery. We took Victor to the hospital, where the doctor—a Frenchman of excellent qualifications and great skill—put him to bed and treated him for nearly a month. At the end of this period Victor was his old self again, well-fleshed and cheerful. He was eager to return to his post, but I thought it advisable to keep him with me for two or three weeks longer, during which time his health improved still further. Then he went up-river once more to Ahuanu.

Within three months he was back at Lahou again. This time the Ahuanu people did not wait for me to send for him, but brought him down quickly, for he was very ill. We rushed him off to the hospital, where the doctor, after examining him, expressed great surprise.

"What's the matter with him, doctor?" I asked.

"It's swamp fever again," he replied. "But

it's acting in a very peculiar fashion. Ahuanu is a comparatively healthy place, and the patient was in excellent condition when I finished with him last time. I shouldn't have been surprised at mild recurrences of the trouble a little later, but this severe attack, and so soon. . . . It isn't reasonable!"

Reasonably or unreasonably, Victor was undoubtedly in a bad way. Yet, as before, he quickly responded to treatment. The doctor worked on him for a full month, and then the young man came to stay with me again, once more well and happy.

"I'm going to keep you here for a month or two," I told him. Victor would have preferred to get back to Ahuanu, but I refused to hear of it.

Two weeks later he did not appear for the midday meal. I had built two small houses in the compound, close to my own, so that catechists or other visitors might be accommodated whether I were at home or not. Victor was living in one of these, but had his meals with me. I sent my "boy" to call him, but he brought back a message to the effect that Victor was tired and asked to be excused; he was lying down. I thought the rest would do him good if he felt like it, for the weather was insufferably hot.

In the early evening Tano, my interpreter, came rushing in.

"*Monsieur, monsieur,*" he cried, breathlessly. "Come quickly. Victor is desperately ill!"

I hurried across the compound to the catechist's house. He lay helpless, his face drawn with pain and streaming with perspiration. His breathing was short and stertorous.

"What has he eaten to-day?" I asked.

"Nothing, *monsieur,*" replied Tano.

"Has anyone been to see him?"

"No one," returned the interpreter. I think he read the unspoken suspicion in my eyes, for he continued: "I have been with him most of the day. Nobody has got at him, that I'll swear!"

"Get that door off its hinges," I directed. When this had been done we laid Victor gently on the improvised stretcher and hurried him off to the hospital.

The doctor would not commit himself to an opinion till he had made a thorough examination, but he promised to send a note round to my house within the hour. When the message arrived it brought no surprise and small comfort. "Double pulmonary congestion of great severity" was the diagnosis; and the medico added: "If God helps us we may save him." The doctor being an atheist, I took this to mean he had little hope.

Poor Victor died about dawn next morning.



"The paddlers who brought him down were clearly much concerned."

Tano, who had spent the night at the hospital, brought me the news at once, and I was over there by half-past six.

"We did all we could," said the doctor, "but there wasn't a chance. The syncope snuffed him out like a candle."

"What did he die of?" I asked, miserably.

"Pncumonia," replied the doctor, briefly. "You'd better see him."

The young catechist lay as he had died. Apart from the cool peace which had replaced the burning fever, the only remarkable thing I noticed was that one of his eyes was suffused with blood.

"What caused that?" I inquired.

"That's nothing," returned the doctor. "A technical explanation would only mystify you. You can take my word for it that it's not unusual."

"But what caused the pneumonia?" I persisted. "It can't be poison or anything like that; he's been at the hospital, or with me, for over six weeks."

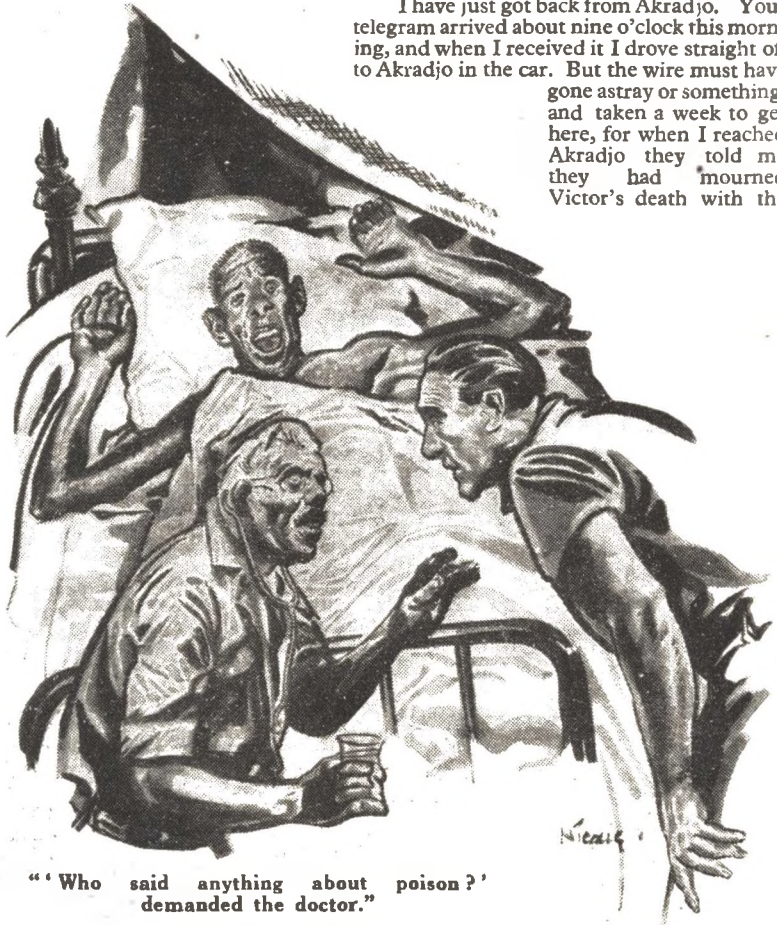
"Who said anything about poison?" demanded the doctor, sharply. "Are you questioning my professional opinion? If there were any signs of poisoning, or anything else unusual, I should have said so. He died of pneumonia, and that's all there is to it!"

As I left the hospital, after promising to send for the body, I remembered that I must get word to the dead man's relatives as quickly as possible, though they could not arrive in time for the burial which, owing to the climate, would have to take place that afternoon. The catechist's home village was Akradjo, in the area in charge of my colleague at Dabou, a hundred and fifty miles distant. I hurried to the telegraph-office, but had to wait a few minutes until it opened at eight o'clock.

"Victor Akmel died pneumonia daybreak to-day please inform family Akradjo," intoned the telegraph-clerk, reading off my message. "Very good, *monsieur*; it shall be sent at once."

I will not trouble you with an account of the burial that afternoon. I was sad and perplexed, but the funeral was normal enough. What I could not understand—and still cannot—was the letter I received the following day from my colleague at Dabou. He wrote:—

I have just got back from Akradjo. Your telegram arrived about nine o'clock this morning, and when I received it I drove straight off to Akradjo in the car. But the wire must have gone astray or something, and taken a week to get here, for when I reached Akradjo they told me they had mourned Victor's death with the



"Who said anything about poison?" demanded the doctor.

usual funeral ceremonies a week ago! A messenger had brought them word direct from Ahuanu, but did not give his name.

You had better make a row at the telegraph-office about the delay in sending your wire.

But I knew there had been no delay. And Victor had not been in Ahuanu for over six weeks!

My subsequent inquiries proved absolutely fruitless; the mystery remains unsolved to this day. So far as I have been able to reason the affair out, it seems to me one has the choice of only two alternatives. Either my unfortunate friend's mysterious death was due to some obscure poison, or else it was brought about by what I can only describe as an uncanny form of concerted telepathic malevolence—possibly aided in its early stages by the poison aforesaid. Why was it considered necessary to kill the catechist? Here one is on very debatable ground, but possibly—knowingly or unknowingly—Victor may have infringed some taboo which led to sentence of death being secretly pronounced upon him.

All this, however, is merely conjecture, based on my knowledge of the reputation and capabilities of the Ahuanu people; I readily admit that it runs counter to the doctor's emphatic opinion.

SEEKING SHEBA'S "LOST" CITY

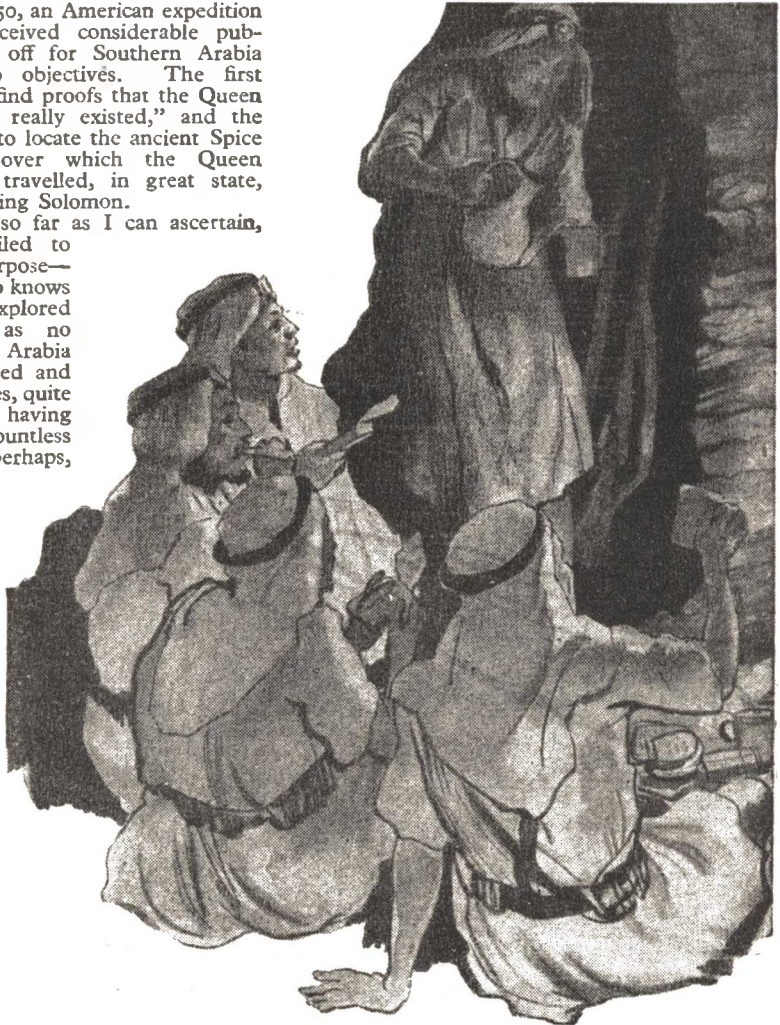
By GILBERT M. HARRIS

Many explorers have tried to reach the legendary capital of the Queen of Sheba in the arid wilds of Southern Arabia, but they have invariably been defeated by the difficulties of the terrain, the hostility of the inhabitants, and the lack of water-supplies. Mr. Harris, a former R.A.F. officer, describes his adventures in this little-known region and his accidental discovery of a practicable route to the mysterious city—abandoned for many centuries—in which no European has yet set foot.

I

IN May, 1950, an American expedition which received considerable publicity set off for Southern Arabia with two objectives. The first was "to find proofs that the Queen of Sheba really existed," and the second "to locate the ancient Spice Route" over which the Queen probably travelled, in great state, to visit King Solomon.

The expedition, so far as I can ascertain, appears to have failed to achieve either purpose—which, to anyone who knows this wild and little-explored country, will come as no surprise. Southern Arabia contains many deserted and buried towns and cities, quite a number of them having been abandoned for countless centuries. Some, perhaps, have archaeological or historical interest, but of them all, Shabwa—which is Arabic for Sheba—is the one that will provide the first explorer to reach it with the richest reward. So far no European has entered this long-abandoned city; many have tried, but all have failed. I make the bold claim that I am the only white man who knows of a comparatively easy and safe route to the ancient capital of the Queen of Sheba. As to the "Spice



Route," it is still used by Arabian caravans, and I have travelled considerable distances along it.

Shabwa lies roughly two hundred and fifty miles N.N.E. of Aden. It was forsaken by its people many centuries ago—no one knows exactly how many—and there was a very simple explanation for its evacuation. It is a common occurrence in Arabia for seemingly permanent wells to suddenly dry up for no apparent reason, and in such cases the folk dependent upon them must either move quickly or perish. If you have to travel perhaps as much as two hundred miles on foot or by camel to reach an adequate water-supply only a few personal belongings can be taken with you; many articles of value must perforce be left behind. In these circumstances cherished possessions become cumbersome burdens, so that investigators may well find rich spoils beneath the ever-encroaching sand that covers this forgotten town.

Shabwa is shown on modern maps of Southern Arabia, having been located during an aerial survey made by the R.A.F. before the late war. In spite of the fact that it has been unin-

habited for hundreds of years it still seems to be in a fairly good state of preservation. I have flown over it for close on half an hour, at "nought feet," in an open-cockpit aircraft. The streets are well defined, many of the principal buildings appear to be more or less complete, and the city walls and forts remain practically intact. In lay-out and general appearance it is far more impressive than any other buried town I have ever set eyes on.

Home-keeping readers may wonder, seeing it is only two hundred and fifty miles from Aden, why the place has not yet been explored. The explanation lies in the nature of the arid surrounding country. Shabwa is situated in a deep *wadi* which breaks into the Hawaq Plateau from the dreadful desert of Ramlat Sabatain. The obvious route from Aden presents many difficulties; there are, of course, no roads in Southern Arabia. Between Aden and Shabwa a range of mountains rises to 10,000ft., but this obstacle is surmountable if you know the passes and where to find water. To reach the city along this route it is necessary to pass through the Aulaqi and Upper Aulaqi countries, which are inhabited by unfriendly and distinctly warlike tribes. They strongly resent the intrusion of strangers and, being a trigger-happy crowd, usually shoot on sight. This discouraging habit has so far been successful in defeating all the explorers who have attempted to run the gauntlet. Some have disappeared altogether; the others have returned hot-foot to Aden.

Having penetrated into the Aulaqi country as far as Umqlita, and twice visited Nisab, in the Upper Aulaqi, I can vouch for the hostile attitude of the tribesmen in both areas.

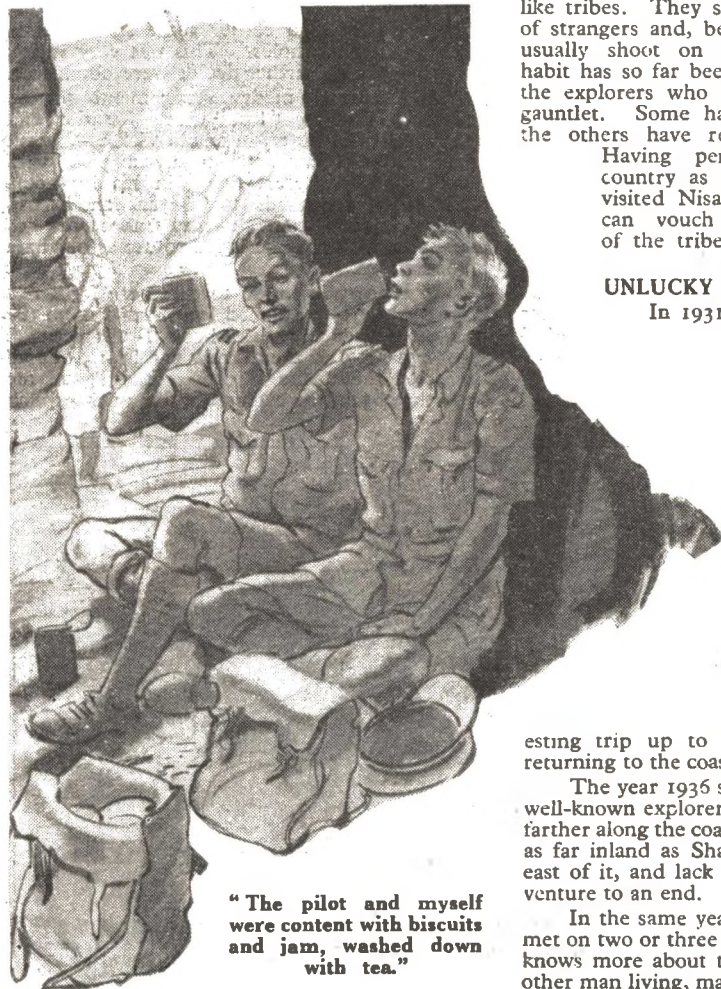
UNLUCKY EXPLORERS

In 1931 Weissman, a lone German traveller, made a journey in the direction of Shabwa, starting from a point about two hundred miles along the coast; he probably intended to skirt the Aulaqi territories. Weissman got as far as Amd, some seventy miles from the "lost" city, but then encountered insuperable difficulties—mainly, I believe, a complete absence of water. He therefore changed his plans and moved north-east, making an inter-

esting trip up to the Hadramaut Wadi and returning to the coast by a different route.

The year 1935 saw Mr. St. John Philby, the well-known explorer, make an attempt from still farther along the coast. He reached a point about as far inland as Shabwa, but sixty miles to the east of it, and lack of water finally brought his venture to an end.

In the same year Harold Ingrams, whom I met on two or three occasions, and who probably knows more about this part of Arabia than any other man living, made an effort to reach Sheba's city from still farther east, working his way along the northern edge of the great plateaux lying



"The pilot and myself were content with biscuits and jam, washed down with tea."

between the coast and the desert of Ra-lat Sabatain. Ingrams, I believe, got within fifty miles of his goal, but, finding no water beyond Bir Asakir, had to abandon his journey. Later he tried again along the same route, but once again lack of water beat him.

In 1938 Freya Stark set out along Weissman's track, but when fifty miles inland was stricken down by illness. The R.A.F., carrying out a tricky bit of rescue-work, brought her safely back to Aden.

To the best of my knowledge these are the only serious efforts that have been made to reach the deserted city, although I should add that in 1937 two R.A.F. officers landed an aircraft in its vicinity. Before they could begin an inspection, however, they were driven off by hostile tribesmen.

In the course of my own work in Arabia I covered all these routes either overland or by air, exploring vast areas of the great southern plateaux. I also travelled well north on the western side of the Shabwa country, from which no attempts on the city appear to have been launched. In this area I got as far north as Beihan Sailan, but here again there were unfriendly tribes and the usual trouble about water-supplies. After these various surveys I came to the same conclusion as Ingrams: that the only way to reach Shabwa was from the east, along the northern side of the plateaux. The problem of water, however, remained insoluble. Strangely enough, it was when I had no thoughts of the place in my mind that I discovered a certain way of reaching Sheba's capital. I think you will find the story interesting.

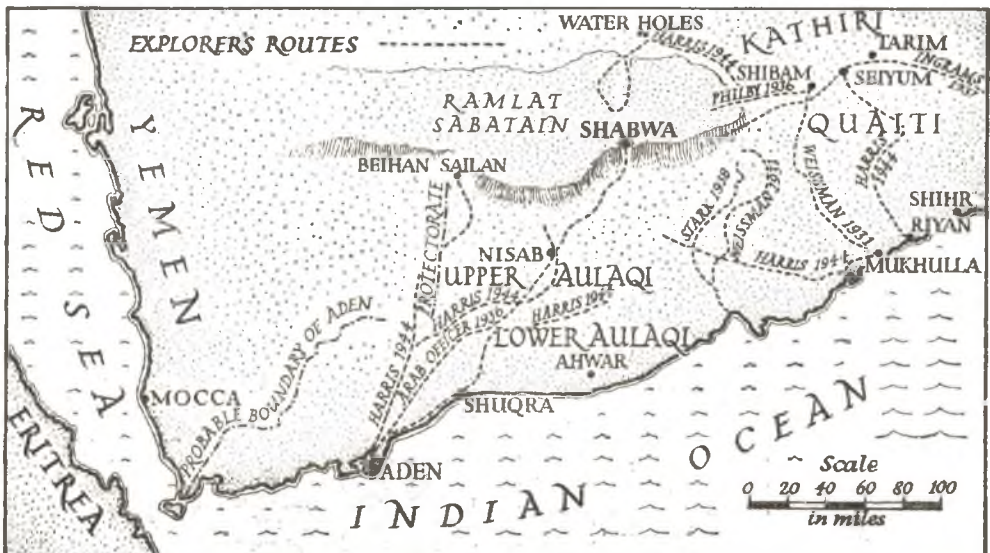
A small network of field wireless stations was maintained in the Protectorate at spots where trouble was most rife. These were manned by specially-trained Arab operators, who kept us informed of the movements of bandits and so forth, enabling us to take quick action. When I arrived in Arabia these stations were one of my responsibilities. Most of them were out of

action, and one of the most vital had been silent for a long time. It was situated close to a couple of very important water-holes at the junction of a number of caravan-routes. If this water was not available, all traffic between north and south would come to a standstill, together with much of the east and west traffic; without these central springs the distances between the available water-holes on every side were too great for the endurance of men and camels. This, of course, made the junction an ideal spot for caravan-raiders, but when in operation the wireless station, protected by a small garrison of Hadramaut Desert Legionaries, had done much to thwart these gentry.

When I made inquiries as to why the station had been silent for such a lengthy period I was told that the Signals Officer who had installed it had gone back to England some time previously, and since then nobody had been able to find it! All the information I could obtain as to its probable location was that the water-holes lay about a hundred and eighty miles inland from the Hadramaut coast, in a wadi somewhere on the far side of the Ramlat Sabatain wilderness. A strip of desert suitable for landing an aircraft had been marked with a whitewashed stone cairn at each corner some six or seven miles south of the holes. This was very vague, of course, but no further details were obtainable.

Eventually I made arrangements for an attempt to find the "lost" wireless station, and one morning I took off in an old Vickers-Vincent open-cockpit aircraft, flown by a pilot with many hours of desert flying in his log-book. We headed eastwards for Riyan, an R.A.F. coastal air-strip some twenty miles east of Mukhulla, which we intended to use as our base of operations.

It was my intention to stay here for a day or two while I questioned local Arabs as to the whereabouts of the water-holes I was seeking. Although most of them knew the holes, or had heard of them, the directions they gave me were sketchy in the extreme. The most explicit

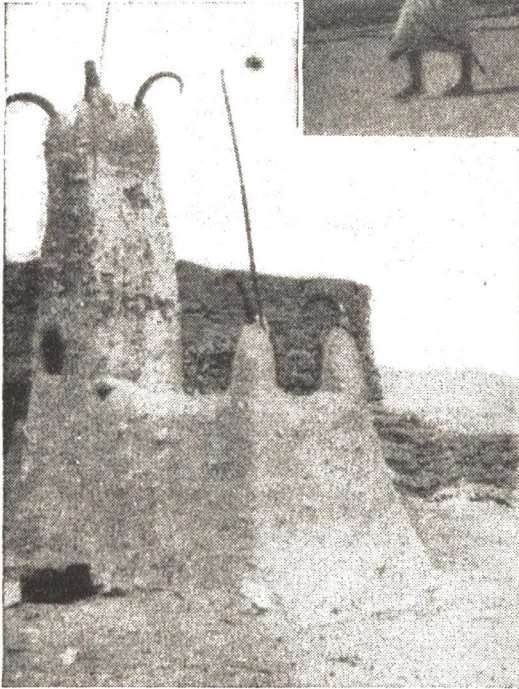


This map shows the various places mentioned in the article.

(Right) The city of Mukhulla, where the Author obtained information which enabled him to locate the water-holes.



(Below) The tomb of an unknown Arab ruler—one of the pilot's landmarks.



we discovered it was the beginning of a vast plateau. It was hard to realize we were at such a height, for the surface was almost completely flat. As we got farther over, however, we discovered that it was occasionally cut into by amazingly deep *wadis*, in the bottom of which we occasionally observed large towns and villages unmarked on any map.

A FORBIDDING DESERT

After just over an hour's flying the plateau came to an end as abruptly as it had started, but the cliffs on the far side were not more than two or three thousand feet high. At the foot of these stupendous precipices we could see a caravan-track running east and west, but decided to fly straight on to find the notorious Ramlat Sabatain desert. This we had no difficulty in identifying when we reached it—great rolling sand-dunes, continually shifting, with not the slightest trace of any living thing. It was indeed the abomination of desolation! A heavy heat-haze hung over everything. We flew across this vast waste for forty miles before reaching the northern verge, where we observed some signs of life—a little scrub and one or two wild camels. We swept on eastward for many miles, seeking those elusive water-holes, and then changed course to the west—entirely without success.

was: "March northwards for two days; then bear right for half a day. Turn sharp right along a branch caravan-route for about another two days, until you reach the edge of Ramlat Sabatain; then travel east along its southern side until you come to a narrow track running under some low hills. Follow this, and it will take you to the water-holes." How far an Arab marches in a day is anybody's guess, so I did not find these instructions very helpful!

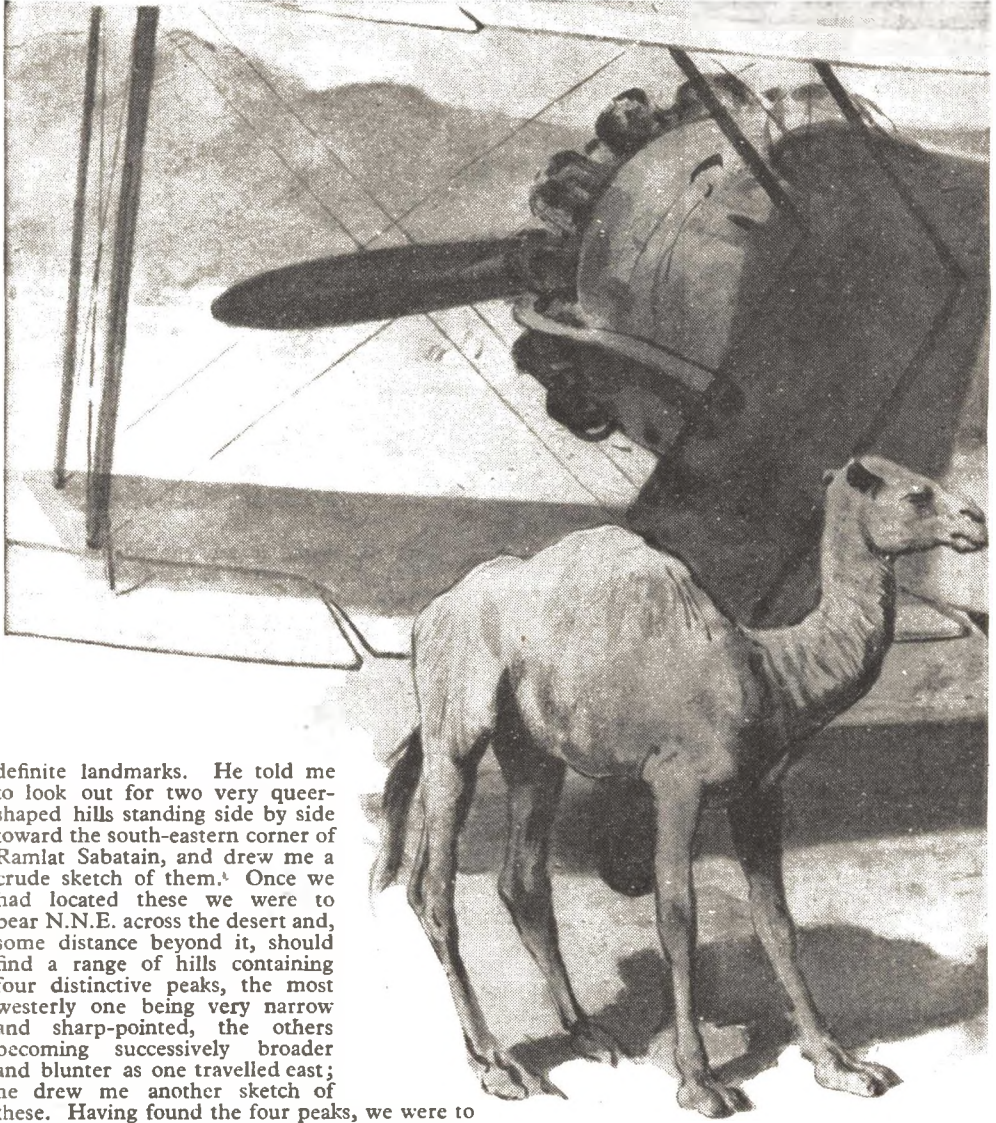
Penetrating farther inland until we came to a range of foothills, we followed these in both directions, but again the search proved fruitless. Next, picking up a likely-looking caravan-track, we traced it for miles, hoping it would lead us to our objective—once more all in vain.

Many of my informants offered to take me overland to the springs, but this meant seven or eight days' journey on foot, whereas we could fly there in two and a half hours—if we only knew where to fly to! Faced with this situation, we decided, on the morning of the second day, to take off and chance our luck.

Our petrol was now running precariously low, and eventually we had to abandon our quest and make for the coast. We flew back over another section of the plateau, and—by better navigation than either of us had hoped for—dropped down over the seaward edge very close to our coastal air-strip.

Twenty miles inland we came up against an almost vertical wall of rock rising to close on 10,000ft.; it was only with difficulty that the pilot was able to get the old aircraft up to a sufficient altitude to give us safe clearance. Once this great barrier had been surmounted

We were disappointed, but not dispirited. I spent the rest of the day in Mukhulla, seeking further information. This time I had a bit of luck, encountering an Arab trader who gave me some



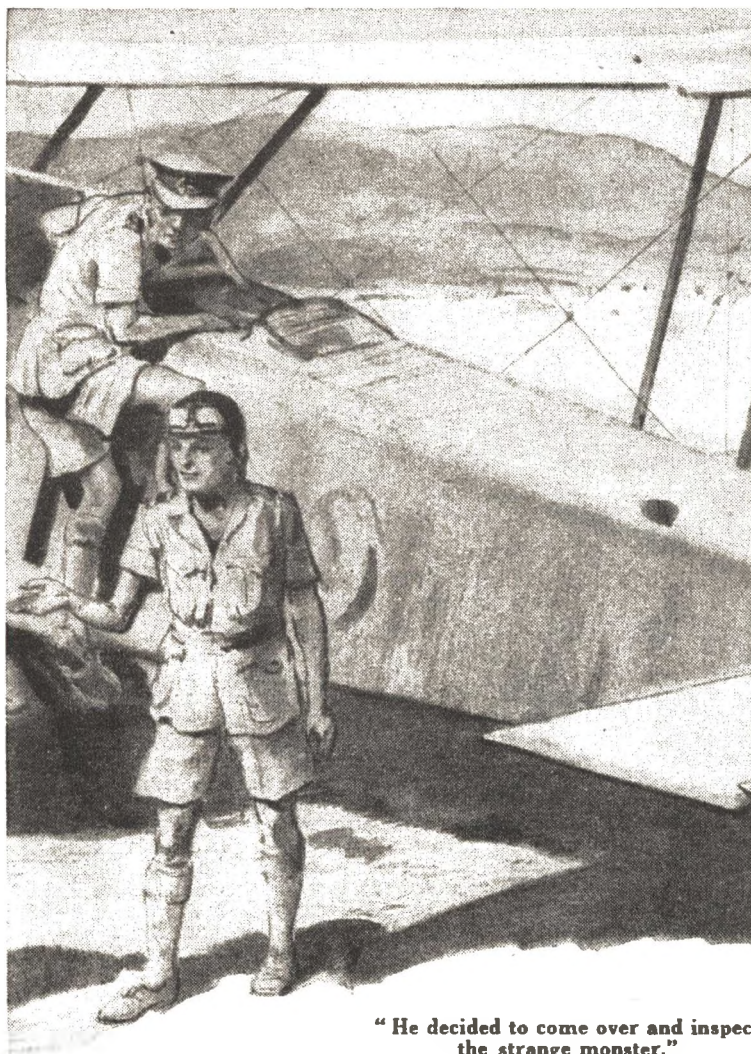
definite landmarks. He told me to look out for two very queer-shaped hills standing side by side toward the south-eastern corner of Ramlat Sabatain, and drew me a crude sketch of them.⁴ Once we had located these we were to bear N.N.E. across the desert and, some distance beyond it, should find a range of hills containing four distinctive peaks, the most westerly one being very narrow and sharp-pointed, the others becoming successively broader and blunter as one travelled east; he drew me another sketch of these. Having found the four peaks, we were to look for a wide *wadi* at their eastern end, with a camel-track running along it. If we followed this for a while it would lead us direct to the water-holes and the fort that guarded them! I felt greatly elated at having something tangible to work on. I remembered the two queer-shaped hills, for I had remarked on their unusual appearance, and was confident I could find them again.

Armed with this fresh information, I returned to Riyan and made arrangements to take off again early the following morning. Soon after first light we once more set course for Ramlat Sabatain with the intention of flying along its southern edge until we located the two hills. We reached the desert easily enough, but the heat-haze was so dense that visibility was down to less than five miles, making our search much more difficult. We agreed, however, that our best plan would be to fly into the desert for a few miles and then turn east in the hope that we might be able to discern our landmarks.

We flew on this course for about fifteen minutes, but all we saw was that awful desert beneath us. Then the heat-haze began to thin out, and visibility rapidly improved. Soon, some twenty miles ahead, we could dimly make out the first two hills. This was encouraging! We pushed on a little farther, to make quite sure they were the right ones, and then, following our instructions, turned N.N.E. and set out to cross the desert once again. Reaching the far side, we sighted the four jagged peaks, altered course, and made for the eastern end of the range, seeking the promised *wadi*. The Arab trader's directions proved absolutely reliable. There was the great wide *wadi*, just as he had described, with a narrow camel-track snaking its way along it!

THE SILENT STATION

Dropping down to less than a hundred feet, we followed its tortuous course in and out of the



"He decided to come over and inspect the strange monster."

bends of the *wadi* for about six or seven miles, when it suddenly widened to a breadth of almost a mile. On the left-hand side of this expanse were two small water-holes, lying close together, with a caravan resting beside them. Perched on a rock in a commanding position we noted a stone building with a small aerial mast sticking up from its roof. We had found the "lost" wireless station!

The next business was to locate the landing-strip. This, I knew, was somewhere outside the mouth of the *wadi*, so after a couple of circuits to get a good look at the place we set off back down the track. Once in the open again, we searched every likely spot for the four whitewashed cairns. Nowhere, however, could we spot the landing-ground—which was distinctly disconcerting. After a short discussion over the "inter-com" we decided to return up the *wadi* to see if it was possible to land anywhere along it. This proved a wasted journey; there were no stretches of sufficient length which were free from boulders. Thereupon we turned back once more. The pilot announced that we

could spend only another ten minutes on the hunt, otherwise we should not have enough petrol left to return to the coast. By this time, needless to say, our elation at discovering the water-holes was beginning to evaporate!

Out of the *wadi* once more, we came down to about twenty-five feet in the hope of spotting the cairns more easily. The allotted minutes were rapidly dwindling when, under our nose, I thought I detected a pile of stones that appeared rather whiter than most of the others round about. The ground stretching away from it for some hundreds of feet appeared to be comparatively flat and free from boulders. Even if this wasn't the official landing-strip, it looked as if it would serve our purpose.

The pilot flew along it, with the wheels only a few feet from the earth, so that we could inspect the surface closely. He passed it as satisfactory, so

I fired a Verey cartridge into the ground, the smoke giving us the wind-direction; then the pilot swung the nose of the machine round and put her down. The landing was bumpy, but the old aircraft was used to such surfaces and came to no harm. No wonder we had experienced difficulty in finding the cairns! Frequent sand-storms had almost completely removed the whitewash; they looked little different from their surroundings until one was quite close to them.

We were now confronted with a six- or seven-mile walk back to the water-holes. I glanced at our thermometer, fixed to one of the wing-struts. It registered 101 deg.—not an ideal temperature for a long tramp! That march over broken, stony ground was the reverse of enjoyable, but we survived it. The little garrison, consisting of a sergeant and four men, plus the two wireless operators, had anticipated our landing and set out to meet us. They came up with us about half-way, and gave us a great welcome. What was still more satisfactory, they insisted upon carrying our



The fort and the wireless station.

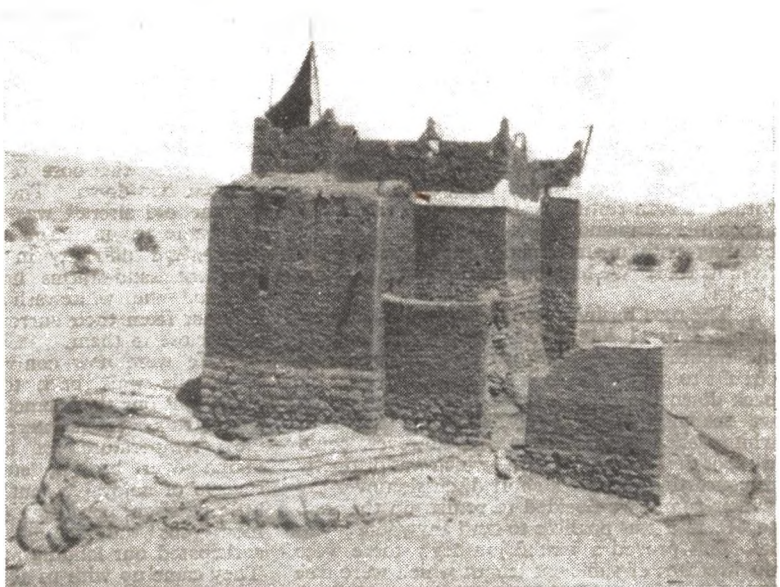
packs, revolvers, and everything else of which they could relieve us.

By the time we reached the fort the senior operator had explained the long silence of his station. Petrol, food, general supplies, and their pay were supposed to be sent up to them monthly by caravan, but for the past three or four months nothing whatever had arrived! All the caravans carrying their eagerly-awaited stores had been robbed before they reached the station! The luckless garrison had been compelled to use what little cash they could muster between them to purchase food from passing caravans, and had not done too well, for it was unusual for these wayfarers to have eatables to spare. For this reason, as you may guess, they were more than pleased to see us, having subsisted for many weeks on a meagre daily diet of water and a handful of millet apiece!

On reaching the fort we produced from our packs tea, sugar, tinned milk, Army biscuits, bully beef, sardines, and jam, and the overjoyed men soon had a scrub fire going and a massive copper pot of water boiling for tea. We managed to find each of them a tin of sardines—the Arab tribesman is inordinately fond of sardines—and a packet of hard biscuits to go with them. They soon polished these off, with much

appreciative smacking of lips, and followed up with a second course consisting of lumps of "bully" liberally smeared with jam. The pilot and myself were content with biscuits and jam, washed down with large mugs of tea.

Feeling refreshed after this meal and a rest, I went to have a look at the water-holes. The supply was meagre, and poor in quality, but apparently it was constant—a very important detail in such arid country. At this juncture it dawned on me that the caravan which, from the air, we had seen resting, was now missing. I asked the sergeant when the party had left, and he told me that directly our aircraft appeared they had hurriedly packed up and departed, in spite of their declared intention to remain for a



Another view of the fort.

couple of days. He added that he suspected they were either carrying drugs or looted cargoes. He had been unable to identify the tribe to which they belonged, and they showed marked reluctance to give any information about themselves. Most of the caravans using the water-holes were honest traders, but there were others who did not come within this category.

An inspection of the wireless transmitter showed that certain replacements would be needed before it could be got into working order again. This meant returning to Aden for the spares required. Two days later we were once again winging our way over Ramlat Sabatain, with the old aircraft loaded to the limit. We had a new petrol-electric generating plant for charging the batteries, and also a large box of parts for the transmitter. Stowed in odd corners were eight four-gallon tins of petrol, a hundredweight and a half of millet for the garrison rations, and half a side of sun-dried shark. Packed in amongst this lot were two relief Arab wireless operators, greatly thrilled at their first flight in spite of the fact that they were huddled up in the fuselage and could see nothing at all.

WE MAKE A FRIEND

Flying straight to the water-holes, we dropped the garrison a message-bag asking them to come out and give us a hand with the stores and then turned back to make our landing. Believe it or not, it took us twenty-five minutes of careful searching to find the landing-strip, though both of us felt confident we had noted plenty of landmarks! We came very near disaster, moreover, for just after we had touched down a young wild camel that had been grazing in the nearby scrub decided to make a frantic last-minute dash across our bows. He was so close that I suspect we must have whisked more than a few hairs out of his tail!

After the machine had come to rest he stood for a long time gazing at us intently. Then

curiosity overcame his timidity; he decided to come over and inspect the strange monster which had so nearly ended his young life. He turned out to be the only friendly camel I ever met, insisting on remaining with us and allowing himself to be petted with a very good grace.



The aeroplane at rest in the *wadi*. The men of the little garrison are seen close to the aircraft.

Frequently, however, we had to restrain him from sampling the fabric of the aircraft.

Sheltering from the sun under the welcome shade of the wings, we waited for the garrison to come out to us. They reached us within an hour, and I was glad to note that they had rustled up a pack-camel from somewhere to carry the bulk of the stores. The young camel refused to leave us, and accompanied us on our journey up the *wadi*; he became so much a member of our party that we christened him "Egbert." We spent the night in the fort, Egbert complaining bitterly because he was not allowed inside the building. In the morning I got the wireless gear functioning once again, and that afternoon, with the station on the air once more, the garrison well provisioned, and their pockets full of back pay, we set off back to base. Fresh arrangements were also made for future supplies; all stores were to be sent up by caravans which avoided the areas where the earlier ones had been plundered. All things considered, we reckoned we had done a pretty good job, but more trouble was in store for us!

(To be concluded.)





OVER THE "IRON CURTAIN"

By "AILERON"

BERTOLO was a handsome lad with dark, flashing eyes, strong white teeth, and finely-chiselled features; he



obviously possessed the dazzling vivaciousness and spontaneous good humour of his race. We gleaned all this from the faded print old Guiseppe, his father, had proudly produced from the family album. Guiseppe owned a restaurant and wine-store in the Via Potignane, Bari, Southern Italy—a sound investment in that land of perpetual sunshine, music, and laughter.

We came upon the Fornari establishment in the autumn of 1945, when the war was over and Italy, impoverished but deliriously happy, was still celebrating the peace and the capitulation of the hated *Tedeschi*. Our squadron was engaged on the wearisome work of air-transporting stores, equipment, and occasional miscellaneous personnel to and from the British garrisons and Military Missions in the capitals of the Balkans and Central Europe. The days were long, arduous, and monotonous. Once discovered, we made extensive use in our free time of the *Ristorante Fornari*, savouring to the full "Mama's" delectable spaghetti and the choicest of Chianti from *padrone* Guiseppe's cellar.

Papa Fornari belonged to the old pre-Fascisti school. A provincial from Venezia-Giula in the north, he had worked as a young man in the

This remarkable narrative deals with a sequence of exciting events which occurred in December, 1945—several months after the end of the war. Acting quite irregularly, two R.A.F. officers secretly endeavoured to effect the rescue by air of a young Italian who, after escaping from a Russian prison-camp, was hiding precariously in Budapest. For obvious reasons sundry names have been changed, and the Author writes under a pseudonym.

Brindisi vineyards, liked the soft southern climate, and eventually married and settled in the area. Years of back-breaking toil and diligent saving had enabled him to retire and purchase the small restaurant and wine-shop which now provided for his own and his family's

needs. The easier life had taken its toll, however, and fat had replaced the former muscle and sinew. There were deep wrinkles in his mahogany countenance, but the old man still retained the natural dignity, arrogance, and independence of the north.

It took us a long time to gain his confidence. After all, we were foreign troops in his native land, and, until quite recently, we had been bombing Italian cities and Italian people, however inadvertently. But when, by restraint and decent behaviour, we had established a mutual basis of respect, the *padrone* mellowed and allowed himself an occasional pause at our table and a few words of general conversation, limited only by mutual lack of fluency in our respective languages. We felt ourselves honoured indeed when the time came for us to be invited into the recessed kitchen in the rear of the establishment to partake of some of the *padrone's* own special stock of wine. It may have been our extreme youth, or perhaps the potency of the crystal-clear *Spumanti*, but it was on that occasion that the old man first mentioned his son. I can see him now in the low-ceilinged, whitewashed



kitohen, his lips trembling with emotion, his eyes tear-filled, as he reverently caressed the photographs in the leather-bound, family album. "Ah! Bertolo. Bertolo!" he breathed. And the tears fell unashamedly.

Bertolo, it appeared, had served in the Balkans in the Alpine Division during Mussolini's inglorious campaign against the Greeks. Taken prisoner, he had subsequently been freed by the advancing Germans. Conscripted into the Reichswehr, he had again been captured—in the Carpathians this time—and was now, so far as Guiseppe knew, a Soviet prisoner somewhere behind the "Iron Curtain."

The old man obviously doted on his only son, and was deeply grieved by his prolonged absence. The uncertainty of his whereabouts, of whether or not he was still alive, was preying on his mind. Hardened though we were by six years of contact with suffering and privation, we felt very sorry for him and wished we could do something to help.

NEWS OF BERTOLO

One evening, several weeks after we had made the acquaintance of the Fornaris, my friend Frank and I paid one of our customary visits during an off-spell from flying. We had hardly entered the door when Guiseppe was upon us, his face flushed, his mouth working with excite-

"Nor did we relish the sight of the tommy-guns pointing at us."

ment. He ushered us into the back room, closed the door, paused dramatically, and then broke the momentous news. Bertolo was alive and safe! He had escaped from incarceration in Hungary and was now in hiding in Budapest. A compatriot, escaping *via* the Austrian Tyrol into Northern Italy, had forwarded the joyful news by letter, at the same time mentioning a certain coffee-house in Budapest through which contact with Bertolo might be established.

The old man was in the seventh heaven of delight, and insisted on opening a bottle of very old Hungarian Tokay to celebrate the occasion. We joined him in his merry-making, although we had grave misgivings about Bertolo's chances of getting away. The whole country was under the inexorable Russian jackboot, with the "Old Bear," Voroshilov, acting as supreme commander in Budapest. Marshal Tolbukhin's victorious Third Ukrainian Army, which had swept as far as Vienna, was in occupation, busily engaged on the task of rounding-up Axis escapees and political undesirables. The odds against poor Bertolo were indeed heavy, for death would be infinitely preferable to capture.

It was later in the evening, after the festivities had been in progress for some time, that Frank suggested we might perhaps be able to help. I was astounded, but the more I thought of his plan, after he had outlined it, the more I warmed to it. Our squadron, he explained, made a weekly freight-run from Bari to Budapest. It might be possible for us to arrange to undertake the trip, get in touch with Bertolo, and even smuggle him home! The flight, involving a night stop at Budapest, was a long and uncomfortable one over the Alps, and not by any means a popular schedule with air-crews. Apart from the fact that we liked old Guiseppe, there was an element of danger and excitement about the scheme which, in our present mood, appealed to us immensely.

The *padrone*, of course, was transported with joy. Tears of gratitude mingled with laughter during the remainder of the evening, and Mama Fornari's services were impressed for the preparation of a sumptuous spaghetti supper washed down with copious draughts of good *vino*.

The following week Frank and I managed to arrange to take the Budapest Dakota freight-and-passenger run. It was a five-hour haul from Bari, along the Adriatic and over the Dolomites. We found the airfield of Pest, to the north-west of the city, strongly guarded by Ukrainian troops, who suspiciously scrutinized every incoming passenger and item of freight or baggage. We reconnoitred the airport routine carefully, for we had decided to make this first trip a "dummy" run, leaving the actual operation of getting Bertolo out of the country until later. Landing formalities having been completed, we were conveyed by a British military brake over the rough, rubble-scarred, frozen roads to the mess, a large block of requisitioned flats in a northern suburb of Pest. We were forced to take the liaison officer, whom I will call Captain Morgan, into our confidence. Surprisingly, for we were anticipating opposition from the Army, he readily agreed to assist, even lending us a jeep from the transport pool and providing us with detailed instructions as to how to find our rendezvous.

After dinner we had little difficulty in

reaching the coffee-house, which was situated in a quiet corner of Sip Strasse in central Budapest. Having explained our mission to the proprietor, and presented our credentials—a letter and signet-ring belonging to Guiseppe—we were led into the back of the establishment. Bertolo, unfortunately, was lying low in a suburb of western Buda, across the Danube, and, owing to the danger from roving Communist troops, could not be brought to Sip Strasse at such short notice. It was arranged, however, that the following week he should be in waiting at the coffee-house, and would then return with us to Bari, posing as a crew-member, and clad in blue British battledress which we would supply. We shook hands with the proprietor, and returned to our billet, the mess annexe in Stephanov Strasse, well pleased with the arrangements and fired with thoughts of impending success.

The following evening, back at Bari, Guiseppe was overjoyed when we outlined the scheme to him. Mama and he could not do enough for us! Their hospitality became so embarrassing, indeed, that we almost regretted the whole project.

Eventually the day arrived for the vital trip. Above "ten-tenths" cloud the flight over the Alps was uneventful; we touched down on the airfield at Pest dead on schedule, and unloading was completed without incident. Soon we were speeding through the desolate countryside towards the city and our transit quarters in Stephanov Strasse. On arrival, Johnson, our radio operator, repaired to the sergeants' mess in high glee; paradoxically, Service feeding in Soviet-ravaged Hungary was twice as sumptuous as in Italy.

Dinner dragged interminably, for we were both anxious to get on with the work ahead. Towards the end of the meal, Morgan entered, wrapped to the ears in an ex-Luftwaffe flying jacket.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "The two types! Got something for you chaps." With that he fished from an inside pocket a rather grubby envelope addressed somewhat naively, in capitals: "THE FLYING CREW, BRITISH HEAD-QUARTERS, STEPHANOV STRASSE."

"Handed in a couple of days ago by a kid," he went on. "Expect it's for you bokes." Then he stamped out, blowing on his hands.

THE LETTER

Frank slit the envelope open and withdrew the contents—a single sheet of notepaper, handwritten on both sides. We read together uncertainly from the Italian:

"My dear Friends,

"I have heard of the great risk you are prepared to take on my behalf. Words cannot express my gratitude to you or my sorrow that I cannot go through with the plan. The coffee-house is being watched, and even as I write may be raided by the Russian Police. The situation in Buda is now too dangerous, and I must try to leave the country before it is too late. Do not again visit the coffee-house. There may be great danger there for you, too. I shall leave this letter with a trusted friend for delivery to you. Please tell my father to have faith and to have no fear for me. With God's help I will rejoice him soon.

"B."

"Well, that lets us out!" I growled, feeling thoroughly disappointed and frustrated. Apart from the obligation to Guiseppi, I had the same sensation as a small boy who has been quite suddenly whisked away from his local cinema in the middle of an enthralling "Western."

Frank continued to frown at the letter in his hand. "We'd better go down and have a look," he suggested. "I don't feel like facing old Guiseppi until we've made absolutely sure."

"Suits me," I responded, and with that we excused ourselves from table. Once more, in our borrowed jeep, we found ourselves picking our way through the shattered, snowbound streets of Pest. Fifteen minutes' cautious driving on treacherous surfaces brought us to the dingy Sip Strasse. It was immediately evident that something was wrong. The hour was not particularly late, but the coffee-house was in darkness. Sleet drizzled down on the bleak, deserted thoroughfare. We might have been in a city of the dead.

Frank pulled the jeep up on the other side of the road and we warily approached the shop. The front was heavily boarded and shuttered, and across the doorway was pasted a paper banner bearing the legend in Russian and English: "CLOSED, BY ORDER OF THE KOMMANDATURA." We stared at the ominous words in silence.

"Well. I suppose that's that!" remarked Frank in a dull, flat voice. As we retraced our steps towards the jeep I happened to glance at him. He was about to speak when his face suddenly froze into a rigid mask of apprehension. I looked round quickly and my heart sank in dismay. A large black private car had driven silently into the deserted street, and from it emerged two fur-capped, jack-booted soldiers wearing the red armllets of the Russian Security Police. They were followed by a tall, black top-coated senior officer and a smaller, squatter individual in a heavy civilian overcoat.

"M.V.D.!" whispered Frank. But it was too late

to move, nor did we relish the sight of the tommy-guns pointing at us from the trigger-happy fingers of the escorting soldiers.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the officer, speaking smoothly in good English. (We later discovered his name to be Major Petrov.) "May I see your identity papers, please?"

In discreet silence we produced our military identity cards; Petrov studied them closely.

"We require you to come with us to Kommandatura Headquarters," he announced at length. "I regret the necessity, but..." He smiled slightly and shrugged his shoulders.

"What have we done?" asked Frank, who was evidently keeping a tight hold on his uncertain temper. "You can't do this sort of thing, you know. After all, we're Allies!"

The stout civilian made some remark in Russian, and the two soldiers moved menacingly closer. Petrov said silkily: "It would be better to go. You will not be detained long."

"What about the jeep?" I asked.

"Your vehicle will be collected and taken to Headquarters," I was told.

"I suppose we might as well go along," said Frank, doubtfully. Both of us were uncertain as to whether or not we were out of bounds in this particular section of the city. If

we had only committed some technical offence it might be better to co-operate willingly and get the business over. Accordingly we made for the car, the Russians watching us closely until we were safely seated inside. Petrov and one soldier squeezed in beside us, in the back seat; the civilian sat in front beside the other man, who drove.

Not a word was spoken during that ride through the darkened city to Russian Police Headquarters. On arrival we were hustled quickly inside and carefully searched—courteously, but quite thoroughly. We were then shown into a long, bare room, sparsely furnished with a plain deal table and several chairs, and lit by one powerful, naked bulb in the centre of the ceiling. Major Petrov and the civilian



This map shows the route taken by the rescue-plane.

entered, accompanied by an older officer, who was obviously much their senior, for their attitude towards him was one of marked deference. Seating themselves behind the table, the trio motioned us to take chairs opposite. Then began the interrogation!

THE INTERROGATION

Petrov did all the talking, though there were several interjections in Russian from the senior officer. He began by checking our names, rank, and reasons for being in Budapest—information which he undoubtedly already possessed, for Marshal Voroshilov, Supreme Commander in Hungary, made a point of personally “vetting” and sanctioning every foreign flight into the territory. This was an unsatisfactory arrangement so far as the British and American Military Missions were concerned, but, with the Ukrainian Army in occupation, there was little they could do about it. Under this system the Russians were able to keep a tight check on every entry to, and exit from, the country by air.

We began to wonder just how much our interrogators knew or suspected, but Petrov did not keep us long in suspense.

“What were your reasons for being in the neighbourhood of Sip Strasse?” he inquired, in his former urbane tones.

“Actually, old man, we were—er—looking for a lavatory,” replied Frank, boldly.

The shadow of a scowl passed over the major's face. “We have reason to believe you had a rendezvous at the coffee-house,” he retorted, coldly. “We cleaned out that nest of spies and deserters a few days ago. You see, my friends, we've been expecting you!”

“Don't be ridiculous—,” began Frank, but Petrov's raised hand motioned him to silence. My own guess was that this was pure bluff, although it was not improbable that our scheme had been betrayed to the Russians by some informer, for Budapest, at this time, was not unlike Berlin in the early days of the Nazi *putsch*.

The senior officer rattled off some remark, and Petrov got to his feet.

“Well, we shall see if your memories have improved by morning,” he snapped.

“You mean you're going to detain us?” Frank was now getting really annoyed. “This is fantastic! I demand that you telephone the British authorities at once and let them know we are here.”

Petrov smiled. “All in good time, gentlemen. Meanwhile, we must safeguard ourselves; we cannot afford to deal lightly with enemies of the Soviet. You, of course, gentlemen, have nothing to fear—if you are telling the truth.”

He pressed a small bell on the table and almost immediately the door was flung open to admit the two soldiers who had been in the car, together with two additional and equally robust-looking comrades. We were marched out, up two flights of stairs and along a corridor to a small, gloomy room, fitted with two single iron bunks, a rickety table, and one solitary chair. The window was unbarred, but, as we were now two storeys up, escape by that route seemed doubtful.

Our guards departed, locking the door, and we were left to contemplate the bare walls of the little room. The situation, to say the least, had deteriorated considerably; we had heard countless tales of civilians and Allied troops

disappearing overnight both in Soviet-occupied territory and even in the American and British zones of Vienna. The Russians, as always, would blandly know nothing if inquiries were made about us.

Presently I saw Frank examining the catch on the window.

“Like to try your luck at getting out of here?” he asked.

“You mean . . .” I followed his gaze to the iron bunks, each with its neatly-rolled blankets at the foot.

“Why not?”

Within a couple of minutes we had rolled and knotted together three of the blankets, pushed up the lower half of the window, and silently moved one of the iron bunks over. It was the work of a moment to attach one end of our improvised rope to the bunk and sling the remainder silently out down the side of the building. Snow had started falling again—ideal for our purpose. I let myself gingerly out of the window, and, taking a firm grasp of the blanket rope, and bracing my feet against the outer wall, slid slowly down. Reaching the end of the rope, I was still some distance from the ground. Judging it, in the darkness, to be some ten feet below, I let go—not without misgivings—and dropped safely into the soft surface snow of the garden behind the building.

“Hello, there!” Frank's stage-whisper drifted melodramatically down through the darkness. “All right?”

“Yes,” I replied. “Get a move on.” Inside a minute he was beside me, and we carefully picked our way across what was obviously the large back lawn of the requisitioned Kommandatura building. Snatches of conversation and laughter, not to mention the stale smell of cooking-fat, told us the mess faced this side, but the windows were heavily curtained and it was impossible to see either in or out. The seven-foot wall surrounding the grounds presented us with no great difficulty. Soon we had put the length of several good-sized gardens between ourselves and the Russians, and were crouched in a clump of frozen shrubbery behind another large, isolated house. In marked contrast to the Kommandatura building, however, lights twinkled from practically every window and there was considerable movement. Black-clad figures flitted backwards and forwards, but there was a noticeable absence of noise.

“What d'you make of it?” asked Frank.

I had been gazing intently at the scene. “They're nuns,” I said. “Must be a convent, or something of the kind. Shall we go in?”

“Sure!” agreed Frank. Although scant respecters of the inviolability of the Church, the Russians, up to this time, had observed the conventions, leaving unmolested the servants of the powerful Catholic Church in Hungary. There were no more sincere anti-Communists in the country, however, than the latter. Every church, every priory, and every convent in Hungary constituted a centre of potential anti-Soviet nationalist activity—a state of affairs that Voroshilov and his successors were soon to remedy.

FRIENDS IN NEED

Cautiously we approached the glazed glass door at the rear of the convent. The nun who admitted us preserved an admirable calm in view of our dishevelled condition and strange

uniforms, and forthwith led us to the Mother Superior. We explained our predicament, deliberately omitting any reference to the Russians and merely stating that we had lost our way. The Superior, luckily, spoke excellent English and when we had finished our story she smiled.

"You wish to go—where?"

"Stephanov Strasse," replied Frank.

"Well, we must help you to get there; you will not find it alone. Janine!"

A quiet-faced nun, aged perhaps forty, entered, and the Mother Superior continued: "Janine will accompany you to make sure you do not get lost." Thereupon she said something to the waiting nun, who nodded impassively, her grey, expressionless eyes meanwhile surveying us from head to foot. From a deep cupboard at the back of the room the couple then produced two black nuns' habits and indicated that we should try them on. The robes completely covered our heads and bodies and trailed only a few inches from the floor—as complete and effective a disguise as one could imagine. The Superior chuckled as she let us out of a side door.

"Our Russian masters have no sense of humour," she remarked. "It is a pity they will not see the joke!"

Frank glanced at the Superior in perplexity. "How did you know?" he asked.

"You are not the first, my friends," she answered, "nor will you be the last. Now go—and God speed you!" We looked long and earnestly into her kindly face as we mumbled

our thanks; then we followed Janine into the icy darkness.

It was an arduous trek through the snow to Stephanov Strasse. The Central European winter is intensely cold, and even through our uniforms and the disguising robes, we could feel the gnawing bite of sub-zero temperature. Once we passed a lighted doorway where three Soviet soldiers stood on guard—obviously some minor headquarters, or perhaps the residence of a general. An obviously ribald remark floated after us, but they made no attempt at interference.

At last we turned into Stephanov Strasse, and there, a mere hundred yards away, lay British headquarters, an oasis of safety and security in this frozen, frightened city. The familiar, tinny strains of dance music could be heard from the radiogram of the sergeants' mess on the first floor.



"Ah! Bertolo!" he breathed. And the tears fell unashamedly."

"If I should die, think only this of me," began Frank, facetiously. I turned to thank our gentle guide, but she had gone. Only the dim outline of her dark, shrouded figure could be discerned against the driving snow, returning along the way we had come. "*Auf wiedersehen!*" drifted slowly back to us on the chill air.

"*Gute nacht,*" I replied stupidly, still combing my limited German vocabulary for something appropriate to say as we turned towards the mess.

When the "Army types" had recovered from their hilarity over our appearance, and explanations had been demanded and duly given, there remained the serious problem of escape. Air was the only avenue of exit for British or American personnel from the Missions in Budapest at that time, but this arrangement could at any time be peremptorily terminated on the orders of the Supreme Commander, Voroshilov. Though we were due out at dawn for Italy, it would be the easiest thing in the world for the Russians to cancel the flight and bar the airport gates with a ring of bayonets. To the Soviet mentality, possession was ten-tenths of the law.

"You birdboys give me a pain," grumbled Morgan. "We get along famously with the Russkis most of the time, but whenever there's a rumpus you can bet your last inflated rouble it's over the 'Dak' flight. This time it looks as if it's going to cost me a jeep."

Frank grinned at me. Morgan's hatred for anything and everything Soviet was notorious, even back at Bari.

"Can't understand this smuggling racket at all," he continued. "I expect you're collecting at least a cool billion *lira* for flying this blessed Italian out! Well, I suppose we shall have to try and help you somehow. You may not realize it, but at the moment you're hotter than Hiroshima!"

"Do you suppose they've already discovered we're missing?" I asked.

"It's more than probable. But they won't be able to touch you unless they pick you up at the airport. That's where the trouble will be! They'll have that place buttoned up like the Bank of England, unless . . ." Morgan stopped speaking, his clenched fist smote his knee, and his "handlebar" moustache quivered.

"Unless what?" queried an Army officer at his elbow.

"Unless we could squeeze you on to the 'Meat and Veg.'" he concluded.

Now the "Meat and Veg." I should explain, was a special lorry run out to the airport about an hour before the official brake left with passengers and crew. Its business was to store aboard the plane outgoing mail, baggage, and miscellaneous equipment. It took its name from the tinned provisions, Naafi stores, etc. etc., collected on similar trips from incoming aircraft.

"We'll do whatever you say," Frank told him. Anything was better than the prospect of being cooped up in the British mess throughout the long Hungarian winter.

Morgan and his minions bustled about, and in next to no time we were fitted out with khaki battledress and Army greatcoats; Johnson, our radio-operator, was similarly disguised. We then lay down, in our Army clothes, to await the dawn. About six a.m. we were awakened. A hurried wash, a quick breakfast, and we were ready for "Operation Meat and Veg."

It was still intensely dark as we clambered into the stores truck outside H.Q. Including ourselves, there were about a dozen troops in the loading-party. Morgan had cancelled the passenger-list of two—one officer and one N.C.O. proceeding on leave. They would travel out on the next trip, the following week.

"All set?" Morgan's voice came out of the darkness.

"Yes. O.K."

"Well, good luck, chaps. And remember—no arguments at the airport. If there's any trouble at all, come straight back to the mess."

THE ESCAPE

The truck pulled away through the deserted side-streets and out over the snowbound suburbs to the north-east. During that long, cold drive, Frank and I occupied ourselves in studying the weather report obtained by radio from Zwechat, Vienna, during the night. There was a likelihood of scattered snow-showers over the Hungarian Plain, but conditions over the Alps and Northern Italy were good, winds moderate, visibility excellent. Once clear of Hungary there should be no meteorological worries.

Presently we turned into the tree-lined avenue leading to the airport, our tyres leaving deep, symmetrical imprints in the virgin snow. The brakes on our vehicle screamed as we came to a halt at the arc-lit Russian control-post outside the airport gates. A few guttural remarks were exchanged between the guards and our sergeant interpreter, who was seated in front with the driver. A light flashed over us. Behind it we could discern the shapes of two squat Ukrainian tommy-gunners. For a moment it seemed that the game was up, but it was only a routine check. The barrier was raised, and a moment later we were on the airfield perimeter, speeding towards the parked aircraft.

It seemed incredible that, so far, the Kommandatura people hadn't missed us. Perhaps they had, but had not yet informed the airport, or possibly they were playing things cunningly, intending to collar us when we arrived at the official take-off time in the crew coach. Anyway, we wasted no time analyzing the reasons for our good fortune. Loading took about ten minutes, during which period Frank made a careful check of the instruments, while I busied myself with routes, maps, and charts. No one came near the aircraft. The nearest Soviet guard was at the barrier control-post, now on the other side of the field. Considering the early hour, the darkness, and the additional element of surprise, we were allowing ourselves three to four minutes from start until take-off. If nothing unforeseen happened, we should by that time be safely in the air. Owing to the intense cold, starting might give us some trouble. We should have to use the internal batteries, and not the mobile, motor-driven external, both to save time and to eliminate the possibility of being spotted. This method was not very satisfactory, but it was a justifiable risk that must be taken. We had further agreed to wait until the truck had cleared the airfield; if our scheme failed, there would be no point in involving the loaders. Either way it would be better if they were well on their route homewards when the "balloon"—in this case piston-engined—went up.

The sergeant's head popped into the cabin. "Loading's finished, sir," he reported. "If you're all set, we'll be off."

"Right!" returned Frank. "And thank you for all you've done."

"It's nothing, sir. I hope you make it. Wish I was coming with you!"

Following him along the fuselage, I locked the rear door from the inside. The truck pulled away, and we watched its red rear-light dwindle in the distance towards the main gate. There was normally no check on leaving, and so little danger of discovery of the deficit in numbers. I glanced at Johnson, who was seated in front of his silent radio. He was engrossed in a magazine—a habit he had never completely relinquished since his operational days over Germany, when enforced "radio silence" had provided him with long periods of inactivity.

"They're almost there," announced Frank. I peered out of his side window. It was still dark, but there were a few streaks of grey in the eastern sky. The truck was slowing as it approached the pool of light outside the control-post. Presently it stopped. For an interminable moment it stood outside the guard-house. Then, at last, the barrier was raised, and it moved off. We could hear the whine of its engine receding down the distant avenue.

Frank looked at me. "This is it!" he said, quietly. Taking a deep breath, he pressed the starter buttons. The motor whined; the engines coughed and died. I looked out of the side window. The airscrew blades rotated furiously.

"Curse!" exclaimed Frank. "Cold!" He looked at me anxiously, and tried again. After fully twenty seconds, the starboard engine coughed and roared into life, followed an instant later by the port. The aircraft lurched with the sudden vibration. We had removed the chocks from beneath the wheels earlier, under cover of the loading lorry.

"Whoopee!" yelled Frank, and began taxi-ing madly away from the direction of the control-post towards the far end of the runway. Fortunately there was no surface wind, and direction of take-off would matter little. While he revved up to clear his engines of congealed oil, I maintained a watch on the now-distant guardhouse. A vehicle with headlights blazing was just drawing away from the barrier in our direction as we turned on to the single, snow-covered runway. A last quick instrument-check and we were off, throttle open, down the centre. Towards the far end, Frank eased the heavy aircraft off the field. We were airborne!

A MATTER OF MINUTES

As we banked slightly left to get on to course, south-west for Klagenfurt, our first check point, we looked back over the port wing at the receding outline of the airfield. "Oh, to be in England—" began Frank, but he stopped abruptly as a sudden cluster of red Verey lights burst over the runway. The Russians had come to life—fortunately for us—just a few moments too late!



"I let myself gingerly out of the window."

There would be rantings and ravings, and quite possibly recriminations; altogether Budapest was not going to be a particularly pleasant spot. Marshal Voroshilov, in sheer petulance, would almost certainly cancel the next two or three flights. Apologies, however, cost nothing, and we felt sure that British H.Q. would deeply deplore the irresponsible activities of certain of the more undisciplined members of its Air Force. It would certainly promise that such a regrettable event should never occur again, and that the perpetrators of this particular outrage would be summarily and severely dealt with.

For the next hour I was kept busily employed checking on the navigation. It would be the height of irony to make a mistake now, possibly get lost, and have to land in Russian territory!

We were at 15,000 ft., high over the Alps and across the Austrian frontier, *en route* for Bari *via* Klagenfurt and Udine, when Frank came back, having synchronized the automatic pilot.

"Well, old man," he said, joyfully. "The devil looks after his own, eh?"

I laughed. I was thinking of the curious events of the last twelve hours and wondering how, in some small way, we could repay our strangely-contrasted benefactors. A crate of oranges, perhaps, for "Janine" and our good friends at the convent, to be forwarded on some subsequent flight. The fruit—a priceless commodity in Hungary—would be easily obtainable in Tel Aviv or Cairo on our next Mediterranean trip. We could also get a few pounds of coffee for Morgan and the mess—invaluable bartering currency in Central Europe.

"I'd almost forgotten about Bertolo," continued Frank, thoughtfully. "Wonder whether the poor beggar will make it?"

"I wonder," I echoed; and I shook my head, for I knew how heavily the odds were stacked against him. The insides of Soviet "corrective" camps were much akin to German ones, and Bertolo, if unsuccessful in his bid to escape *via* the land-route over the Dolomites, would most certainly be better off dead.

When our long trip was over, and detailed (if somewhat incredible) explanations had been made to Intelligence, we repaired again to the *Ristorante* Fornari. Our sombre faces hinted at the disquieting news we brought. Guiseppe, however, took the blow like a man, and his simple acceptance of the disaster as the will of God was deeply moving. Frank and I quitted the wine store that night, leaving the two lovable old people to their private grief, but still unquenchable hope, with a very real feeling of deep humility.

We were only to see them once again, for a few days later the squadron was ordered home. We left Bari and the *Ristorante* Fornari with many regrets. The farewell dinner provided by Mama was *not* a signal success. There was much wine, and some brave but unconvincing talk by Guiseppe. The occasional uncomfortable silences and the surreptitious weeping of Mama, however, served to underline the topic we all scrupulously avoided—the fate of the unfortunate Bertolo. Our last thoughts before we took off for England, demobilization, and a new chapter in our lives was that, though the incident might be cynically classified as one of the myriad minor tragedies of war, it was, to that old couple, the end of a whole lifetime of unceasing toil and planning. Everything that followed would, for them, be stale, flat and—without their beloved Bertolo—completely meaningless.

The sun shone from a cloudless Mediterranean sky as I turned into the Via Potignane. It was 1950, and high summer. I paused uncertainly outside the wine-shop. The old familiar aromas assailed my nostrils, but a strange name now sprawled above the large windows. In a doorway close by, sunning himself and thoughtfully picking his teeth, sat the inevitable loafer, clad in a discarded *Carabinieri* jacket and patched trousers. I tried him with my sadly-neglected "conversational" Italian.

"I was looking for Guiseppe Fornari, who owned this café during the war," I stammered. "Can you tell me—is he still in Bari?"

"Ah, *si!* Guiseppe Fornari." The beady brown eyes appraised me speculatively, taking in my brick-red sunburn and tourist clothes. I joggled his recalcitrant memory with an English cigarette.

"*Si,*" he said again. "Guiseppe. He has gone now, *signor*. Emigrated to America. At his age, too!"

"Emigrated?" I echoed, blankly.

"*Si*. With his family, *signor*. His wife, Maria, and his only son, Bertolo, who was a prisoner for so very long. Two years now, at least, he will be gone."

I was scarcely conscious of his surprised "*Gracias, signor!*" as I thrust the whole packet of cigarettes into his hands. Retracing my steps along the paved roadway, glaringly white in the hot Adriatic sunshine, I felt immensely glad the Bertolo affair had ended on a happy note. I prayed that, in the new land across the ocean, the old couple and their idolized boy would find the peace and security which had been denied them in war-torn Europe.



The "WAFF" GOES RECRUITING

By COLONEL A. W. VALENTINE, C.B.E., D.S.O.

Every now and again the Royal West African Frontier Force—the famous "Waff"—sends an officer up-country with a small party to interview and enrol likely young tribesmen who aspire to become soldiers. The local chiefs co-operate and, generally speaking, "a good time is had by all." The Author describes some amusing aspects of one of these recruiting treks.

"LUCKY blighter!" remarked the Adjutant. "The C.O. is going to send you up to the Northern Territories to get some recruits."



At that time, about twenty-five years ago, I was serving on the Gold Coast with the West African Frontier Force—before it became "Royal."

I was overjoyed at the news. Soldiering at Home seeming dull, I had applied to serve in West Africa, but had been disappointed in Kumasi, our headquarter station. Life was very much the same there as in any other garrison town, and the social side predominated. Living, too, was expensive; all the subalterns longed to get away to a bush station or go on trek.

"There'll be twenty-five carriers," the Adjutant continued. "You will have to work out the distribution of your loads. Be prepared for two months. Lorry to Navarro, then walk—unless you want to take a horse. The R.S.M. will go with you; he knows the ropes, having been on the last trip."

R.S.M. Salafu Grunshi came from Navarro, and was delighted to hear that we were to start recruiting near his home. "I get you plenty

recruits," he told me, confidently. He was a striking figure in his scarlet Zouave jacket with belt and sword. Cut deep into his face, when he was a small child, were the tribal marks of the Grunshis which, starting on either side of his forehead, ran down his face to below his chin.

My orderly, Bafhasi Grunshi, was equally pleased, for he was likewise a Grunshi. "I get you plenty chicken and eggs," he assured me, adding, as an afterthought: "And I shall see my dear father and mother."

My "boy," Braima, showed no enthusiasm; he was getting on in years and loved his home comforts. A veteran of the last Ashanti war, he was the best type of steward boy—quiet, honest and efficient. "Northern Territories no good," he exclaimed, disgustedly. "No chop!" Despite his apparent lack of keenness, however, he proved to be quite tireless on trek, and—what was most important—a first-class cook.

Boys always have a small "piccanin" to do the dirty work, and Braima was no exception; Tocafa, a Frafra youngster, about twelve years old, completed the domestic staff. He knew no English, but would stand on the table on festive occasions and sing "Tea for Two," learnt from a gramophone record.

I had so often imagined what I would take if



A village compound in the Northern Territory.



A typical rest-house.

I was ever sent on trek that I quickly decided what I needed. Loads had to weigh about 60 lb., the amount which a carrier could head-load all day without distress. Chicken and eggs would be plentiful, but I had to take tinned vegetables, bacon, butter, and flour for making bread. Camp kit was necessary, of course, and another load consisted of lamps and kerosene. Bales of clothing sufficient for a hundred recruits represented a number of loads, and a specie-box had to be taken to carry the money for their pay and subsistence. These boxes were made of solid iron, and a thoughtful Government provided them with a length of rope and a small wooden buoy to facilitate their recovery if you happened to drop one in a river—a not unlikely occurrence in those days.

It was a three-day journey to Navarro, which lay near the Northern boundary of the Gold Coast, and is now known as Navarongo. We stopped one night at Yeji, where we crossed the Volta on a primitive ferry, and spent the next at Tamale, a company station in the Northern Territories where I had to eventually deliver my recruits.

At Navarro I reported to C—, the Provincial Commissioner, who installed me in the Rest House—two round mud houses—and told me that I was to have all my meals with him. A shortish, powerfully-built man with iron-grey hair, he had spent a lifetime in the Colonial Service, and was held in the highest respect by both Europeans and natives. He had great charm of manner and was the perfect host. I could not have been more courteously welcomed or more hospitably entertained if I had been the Chief Commissioner, instead of a very junior subaltern.

A COLOURFUL PROCESSION

That night at dinner C— told me he had arranged a meeting of the chiefs for the following day. Next morning I heard sounds of drumming, and looked out of the Rest House window to observe a gay and colourful procession as one of the chiefs passed on his way to the meeting. First came the drummers and musicians, the latter with stringed instruments made from calabashes. Some were dancing, now and again leaping in the air and uttering strange cries. Then came the chief, a dignified figure mounted on a small, wiry horse. His long flowing white robe served to accentuate the vivid splash of colour provided

by his gaily decorated mount. The saddle, of bright red leather, was studded with silver and brass; the bridle, of the same material, was embellished with a fringe of many colours.

Next came the headmen, mostly dressed in robes of blue native-dyed cloth, and mounted on horses which reared and plunged amongst a crowd of excited followers on foot.

Finally, there were the women, carrying on their heads bowls of food and drink for the refreshment of their masters.

In a moment the cavalcade had disappeared in a cloud of dust, leaving the impression of a crowd of happy, smiling faces. All of them were obviously enjoying themselves.

When we arrived and took our seats, the chiefs were seated in a semicircle. After they had paid their respects, I was formally introduced, and C— explained the reason for my visit, asking them to give me every assistance. Outstanding in appearance was Efoko, the tall, handsome chief of the Kanjargas. He has since died, but his successor has carried on the same tradition of loyalty and service to the Crown; at the outbreak of the late war he offered to raise a battalion of Kanjargas and serve in it himself as a private.

The meeting soon came to an end. The chiefs mounted their horses and, with guns firing and horses leaping in the air, made a spectacular departure.

C— announced that, to ensure I had a good start, he would take me to Tongo, in the Frafra country. Frafra, by the way, is not the real name of this tribe, but is derived from their form of greeting. They bend down, clap their hands, and murmur "Fra fra." It is by this cognomen that they are always known in the regiment, and the Frafra tribe has a fine reputation for good service in both wars.

The boys and loads preceded us in a truck, and that afternoon, in C—'s little air-cooled Rover 8, we chugged along the astonishing road which he built every dry season, only to see it completely washed away during the rains. I call it "astonishing" advisedly, because it consisted of a strip of laterite just wide enough to take the car—every foot of it beaten by hand to provide a surface almost as hard as concrete!

The country here is quite open; the only trees to be seen were the *shea* butter trees, which

are preserved for their oil. This part of Africa is very thickly populated, and as far as the eye could see in every direction were little compounds—groups of flat-roofed mud houses surrounded by double walls, and all built only about an arrow's flight apart. This appears to show that in the old raiding days they must have known something about the principles of "defence in depth."

That night we stayed in the Rest House at Tongo—three circular mud houses standing on a rise at the foot of the Tong hills. C—'s boys produced an excellent dinner, tastefully served, and I marvelled at the skill of the cook who could conjure up a five-course dinner with only one small wood fire for everything. I was interested to note that the servants had brought along a complete china dinner-service. No enamel plates for C—!

After breakfast the following morning we saw the Chief and arranged for him to bring any available recruits to the Rest House that evening. Then C—, after wishing me the best of luck, left me to carry on alone.

That afternoon, when Braima brought me my tea, he was bursting with news. "Master," he cried, "the chief bring fifty recruits!" He was highly delighted, for he knew we only wanted a hundred, and that when we had obtained that number we should return to the home comforts of which he was so fond.

Going outside, one look at the sorry-looking specimens paraded for my inspection showed that the chief had taken little notice of C—'s instructions that they must all be fit young men and genuine volunteers.

He introduced them with obvious pride; evidently he felt he had more than done his duty.

"You want one hundred recruits," he said. "Well, here be fifty."

A MIXED BAG

Walking down the line, accompanied by Salafu, I spoke to all of them. Some were too old, some too young; some were sick, and some were lame. With the exception of three,

"Not one had the slightest wish to become a soldier!"



moreover, not one of them had the slightest wish to become a soldier!

"Why bring me all these men who don't want to join?" I asked the chief, sternly.

"But they are all very bad men," came the surprising reply. It was obvious that he had seized on this opportunity of getting rid of all his "bad hats" at one

fell swoop, and felt quite justified in doing so. Perhaps he had not been uninfluenced by the fact that the chief received ten shillings "bringing money" for every recruit he provided! Luckily he was the only chief who adopted this attitude; everywhere else I found a genuine desire to help the Regiment by persuading the best type of young man to join.

These first "recruits" were highly delighted when I dismissed them and told them to go home. The three volunteers remained. Unfortunately one of them, a nice-looking lad called Sidi Frafra, was not up to the height standard, and as I had received strict instructions from the Colonel that there was to be no lowering of the physical standards I was reluctantly compelled to tell him that he could not be accepted. He was greatly upset at being rejected, making an impassioned appeal to be taken.

"I shall grow taller when I am able to get more food," he urged.

"Perhaps next time I come you will have grown," I said, consolingly, meanwhile wondering if I should ever see him again.

The Frafra, as a matter of fact, were invariably undernourished, and their physical development after joining the Regiment was remarkable. Their country was over-populated, and though every inch of ground was carefully cultivated the fear of famine was never far away. A Frafra woman, when cooking the

humorous badinage would pass to and fro. Sometimes a man came silently out and joined our column, to present himself for enlistment later in the day.

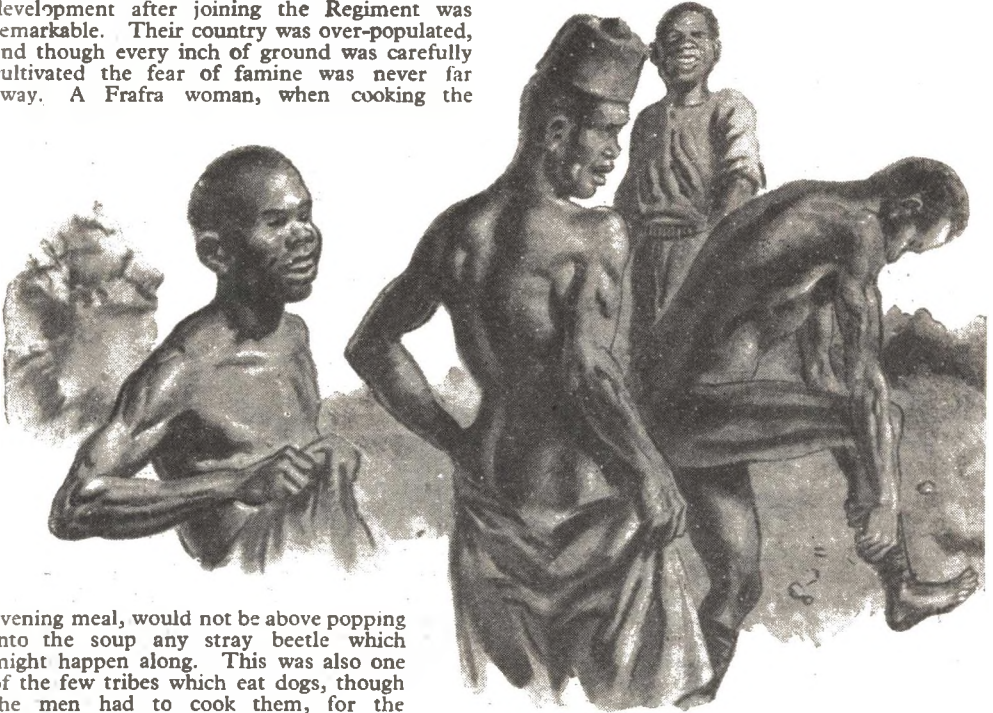
About 11 o'clock we would reach our destination and go to the Rest House, the round mud houses which every village had to maintain for visiting white officials. News of our coming, of course, had preceded us; we invariably found wood and water ready in the compound. After a bath and change I prepared to receive the local chief, who, in accordance with the custom of the country, brought presents—sometimes a sheep, and always chicken and large quantities of eggs.

THE GIFT-EGGS

Braima who was no respecter of chiefs, always tested the eggs at once in a bucket of water. It was decidedly disconcerting when, on one occasion, I asked Salafu to thank a chief for his gift of a hundred eggs, and heard Braima interpolate sourly: "And tell him sixty-three be bad!"

After tea I inspected the recruits and attested those found suitable.

Then Bafhasi proceeded to dress them; he



evening meal, would not be above popping into the soup any stray beetle which might happen along. This was also one of the few tribes which eat dogs, though the men had to cook them, for the women drew the line at *that*!

Early the following morning we left Tongo and thenceforward kept to the same daily routine, always starting between three and four o'clock in the morning in order to complete our trek before the heat of the day. I was fond of walking, so I did not take a horse. Trekking along the winding bush paths in the early morning whilst the air was still cool was a delightful experience. As it grew light one could see men sitting on the flat roof-tops to catch the first warm rays of the rising sun, and they would shout cheery greetings to us as we passed. My recruits replied suitably, and much broadly-

was the quartermaster of our little column and issued the clothing. These tribes wear practically no clothes, although the women sport a few leaves in rear. Although they are perfectly content to live in this state in their own country, they are well aware it is not the fashion elsewhere, and would not have dreamed of joining unless we clothed them. On enlistment, therefore, we gave them shirts, shorts, green Kilmarnock caps, and puttees. For some reason which I could never discover, the puttees were the most popular items, and very often they would put these on first and strut up and down admiring

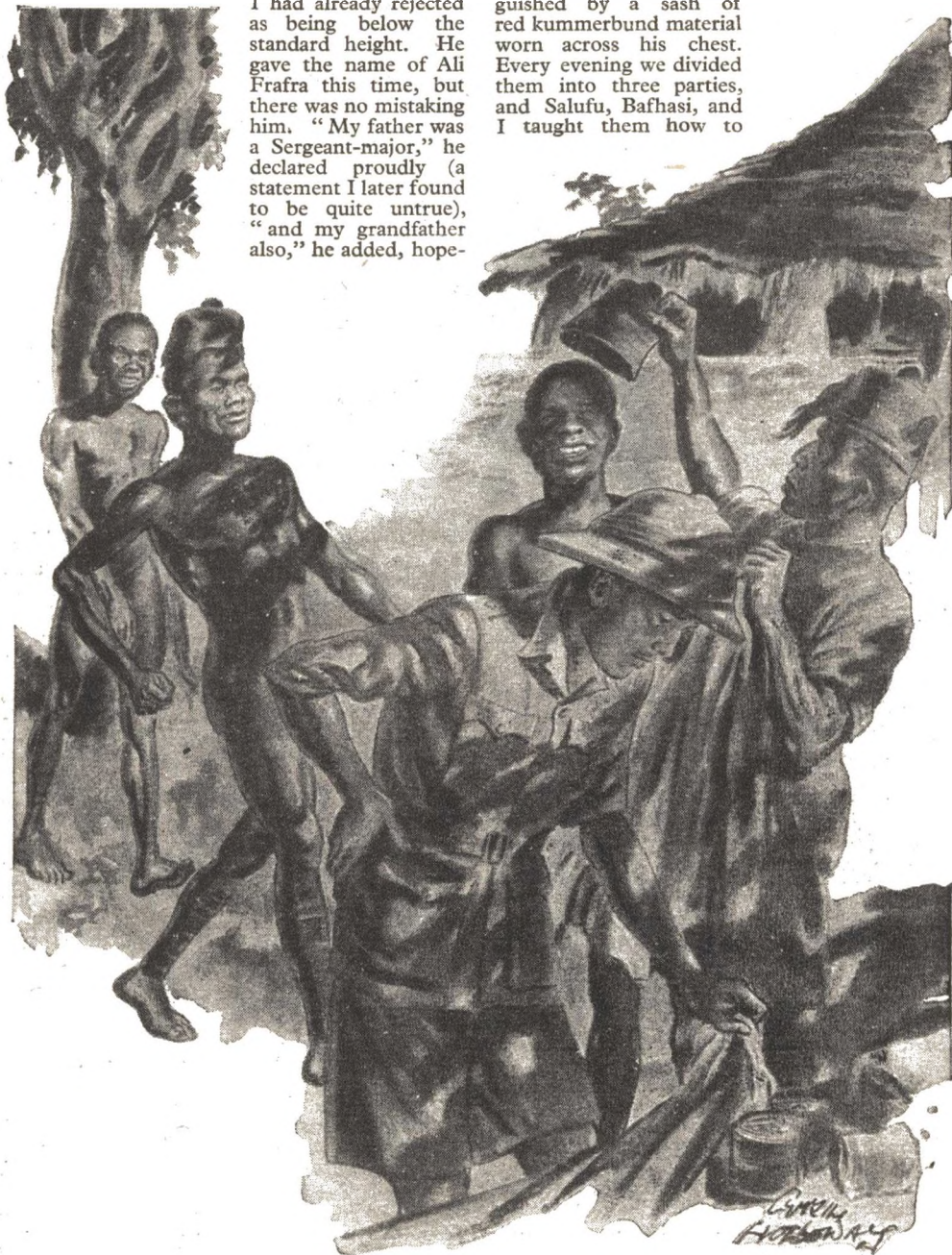
themselves. A party of newly-joined recruits clad only in puttees presented a decidedly bizarre appearance!

Medical examination had to come later when I reached a station where there was a doctor, and any men found unfit would be discharged. About two days' trek from Tongo I spotted a familiar face in the evening line-up. It was Sidi

Frafra, the boy whom I had already rejected as being below the standard height. He gave the name of Ali Frafra this time, but there was no mistaking him. "My father was a Sergeant-major," he declared proudly (a statement I later found to be quite untrue), "and my grandfather also," he added, hope-

fully. But it was no use. We couldn't take him, and despondently he went away.

After our initial set-back I found no difficulty in securing recruits of the best type, and as I trekked along the Tong foothills I realized that the time had come to get some sort of order into my cheery band of bushmen. We therefore grouped them in squads by villages, the squad commander being distinguished by a sash of red kummerbund material worn across his chest. Every evening we divided them into three parties, and Salufu, Bafhasi, and I taught them how to



"Bafhasi proceeded to dress them."

march in step and gave them a little elementary drill. They were eager pupils and made rapid progress.

When darkness fell the squad commanders were taught how to come and report their squads present or otherwise. They would come up with tremendous salutes and shout cheerfully, "Numbah One squad, all pleasant, Sah." With this agreeable salutation ringing in our ears we went to bed.

When we got to Sandema, in the Builsa country, I was welcomed by the chief, Efoko, mentioned earlier in this narrative. The following day was market day, and a huge crowd assembled. I went down with Efoko and he addressed the assembly, urging the young men to join the Regiment. The response was magnificent, and we soon got the number we required.

THE CHIEF'S ARMLET

I stayed a few days in Sandema and one evening, when Efoko was paying me a visit, I happened to admire a heavy stone armlet he was wearing. He told me that these armlets are cut out of one piece of stone by small boys to while away the time whilst sitting on their little wooden platforms amongst the guinea corn, scaring off the predatory birds. Next

morning the chief's messenger was waiting outside the Rest House with a similar armlet as a gift to me from Efoko. There was a curious "sequel" to this incident.

A few days later I was back in Navarro preparing for the final trek south to Tamale, and at C——'s invitation went along to the Court House with him to hear him deal with the morning's affairs. The first people to appear were a couple of itinerant traders who had a complaint. Three days previously, they declared, they had been passing through Sandema when they had been seized upon by the chief's men and beaten, after which a stone armlet had been forcibly taken from one of them. They wanted the ornament back, or suitable compensation. Seeing that I was now in possession of this armlet, I felt it was up to me to pay the small sum which they demanded, so the case was soon settled.

From Navarro we trekked south to Tamale, where I had to hand over my recruits. Two men were sent one day's march ahead, as an advance party, and made preparations with the chiefs for our arrival. At one village the hospitable chief had a whole cooked chicken awaiting each man, and the charge was only threepence per head! The food was excellent,

and the men were in high spirits. They have a strong sense of humour and as they marched along they sang a song of which the following is a rough translation:

"A chief is a lucky man.

He does not have to work for his living.

He does not have to grow guinea corn.

He gives his men to the Gold Coast Regiment, And gets ten shillings each."

The day before we arrived at Tamale Salufu came into the Rest House grinning. "That Sidi Frafra is here again," he announced. "He wants to be your boy until he grows enough to enlist. He has been with us all the time," he added, "but he has kept out of your sight."

I admired the youngster's persistence. Here, surely, was the right spirit; and perhaps the Colonel wouldn't mind if I took just one man under height. He might not even notice him! So, to his huge delight, Sidi became a soldier. It is of interest to record that he eventually reached the rank of sergeant—but he never grew any taller!

For some time after our return I had to sort out the new recruits' complicated matrimonial transactions. A man would come to me and say: "I have paid Akanzali Frafra, a farmer of Wulugu, the sum of two cows, three hoes, and a leather belt towards the head-money for his daughter. There still remains one cow and a native cloth."

I would then arrange to stop his pay until he had enough to pay his debt, and sent it to the District Commissioner. This official completed the transaction, whereupon the father would despatch the blushing bride on the hundred-and-forty-mile journey to join her future husband.

I told Braima that very soon I hoped to go on another trek. He displayed no particular enthusiasm, and when I next paid him asked me to save some money for him.

"What are you saving for?" I inquired.

"I want to get a new wife," was the answer. (I should explain that the number of wives is only limited by the income of the husband.)

"But you already have a good wife," I pointed out, thinking of the amply-proportioned "Mammy" and five children living in the hut at the back of my compound.

It appeared, however, that Braima was insuring against the future. "I want to get a small one for travelling," he explained.



R.S.M. Salafu Grunshi.

BETWEEN OURSELVES

By THE EDITOR



SEVERAL "bottle messages" have come to hand since I last mentioned this subject. Unfortunately, however, their voyages are not spectacular enough to warrant description; the one desire of these unambitious vessels appears to have been to get back to land as speedily as possible! Rewards have been duly sent to senders and discoverers who complied with the rules, but we think it advisable to mention again that, owing to the great number of launchings of which we were advised, we have found it necessary to limit further payments to bottles thrown into the sea prior to May 1st, 1950.

LONG OVERDUE

Talking about bottle messages, you may remember that, several months ago, we printed a letter from a Royal Navy man who asked whether we thought it possible, by a careful study of Admiralty charts and tide-tables, to more or less "plan" a long-distance bottle-message voyage. We told him we didn't think such a plan feasible; so many unknown factors come into play that human calculations are completely upset. Here, from the Australian

Melbourne Herald, is a cutting which illustrates our point and incidentally shows how little reliance can be placed upon wind and tide when one is dealing with vast expanses of water. Several readers have kindly drawn our attention to this remarkable case, and their letters enable us to elaborate the newspaper story. It appears that when the Bass Strait steamer *Loongana* left Launceston on October 26th, 1915, bound for Melbourne, her passengers included young Tom Harding, on his way to the 1914-18 war. Passing Beauty Point, his home, he threw overboard a bottle containing a letter to his mother. This was picked up on the beach in Anderson Bay, near Bridport, Tasmania, in July, 1950, the finder being Mr. T. Salter, a fisherman of Scottsdale. Through the good offices of the Rev. W. H. MacFarlane, of Bridport, bottle and letter were returned to Mr. Harding—now a grandfather—

who still lives at Beauty Point. The glass of the bottle has been worn to the thinness of tissue-paper by the action of the sea, but the letter inside remains quite legible. Bridport, it should be added, is only about thirty-five miles in an air line from Beauty Point—and the message took exactly the same number of years to complete the journey! What a story of endless drifting, to and fro it would have to relate if it could only speak! We imagine no one was more surprised at the arrival so near home of his long-forgotten message than Mr. Harding himself.

A MYSTERY MESSAGE

Yet another bottle message apparently enshrining something of a mystery is referred to in a cutting from the East London (South Africa) *Daily Dispatch* of October 11th, 1950, sent to us by Mr. J. R. Millard, of Stirling, East London. We haven't the space to reproduce the document itself, but are publishing the newspaper account on page 40. Mr. Millard adds the comment:

"Many troopships called at Durban during the war, and hosts of men, both from Overseas and the Union, sailed in them. It would be of great interest to discover whether, among the many thousands of readers of the **WIDE WORLD**, there is a man somewhere who can throw light on the origin of this particular message."

FOR NEW READERS

The **Wide World Brotherhood** is a fraternity of men (and women) of good will, linked by the common bond of a love of travel and adventure. It has only one rule—a solemn pledge to treat fellow-members as brothers and, if need arises, give them any help possible. There is no annual subscription; the only expense is 2s. 6d. (U.S. 35 c.) for the gilt-and-enamel buttonhole badge (brooch for ladies) and certificate of membership. The badge should be worn regularly to enable Brethren to recognize one another.

Although not yet two years old, the **W.W.B.** is now represented in nearly fifty different countries and is steadily increasing its strength. Through its "Pen-Friends' Section" members can communicate with Brothers of similar interests in every corner of the earth.

Why not join this great society and be assured of finding good comrades wherever you go?

letter came to hand we received the extract from the South African *Sunday Times* on page 41, forwarded by Brother Arthur Van Buren, of Johannesburg, to Brother D. Cameron, of Forest Gate, London, who sent it to us. The paragraph is self-explanatory, but the amazing thing about it is that the long-delayed bottle was found practically on Mr. Joubert's doorstep, having floated to within almost a stone's throw of his present home!

THE HOME-COMING

Mr. E. Roth, of Bridgwater, Somerset, sends us an account of a stroke of good fortune which came at a time when he was in a position to appreciate it to the full. "During the war in the Pacific," he says, "I was under Japanese detention in Hong Kong. Throughout that period my wife, who was in England, purchased the **WIDE**

THE SOLUTION

A kindly Fate apparently determined to take a hand in clearing this puzzle up speedily so far as the **WIDE WORLD** was concerned, for a few days after Mr. Millard's

WORLD month by month and put the copies aside for me. When I arrived home in 1947, therefore, I found *six years'* magazines awaiting me—truly a pleasant surprise and something to get on with!" Our correspondent was lucky indeed—even more fortunate than he knows, perhaps, for owing to the exigencies of war and various other handicaps not all our readers, even in Gt. Britain, succeeded in getting copies regularly, and many people had to rely upon the good nature of friends to keep in touch

35 YEARS TO REACH LAND
LAUNCESTON, Monday.—A bottle containing a message, which was thrown overboard from the Bass Strait steamer *Loongana* in 1915 by a soldier off to the First World War, has been washed up on the beach at Bridport, off the north coast of Tasmania.
 The bottle was thrown off the *Loongana* by Mr Tom Harding, of Beauty Point, on the River Tamar.

A bottle which, according to the dramatic message it contained, had taken nearly 10 years to float from Durban to East London, was washed up on the West Bank of Buffalo Harbour last week.
 The message read: "To whom it may concern. That before I die by an Italian torpedo, that we shall fight to the last man."
 On the left side of these words is the date June 16, 1941, and the name, S.S. *Empress of Japan*. An undecipherable signature and the words: "Thrown overboard at Durban, just outside the harbour," complete the message.
 The paper on which the message is written is torn and has grown soft with age.
 The bottle in which the message was found was washed up on the rocks close to the site where a fishing boat is being built on the west bank of the Buffalo River. It was found last week by Mr. T. Baker, 19 Jackson Street, West

Bank, who is building the fishing boat. He brought the message into the Daily Dispatch offices yesterday.
 There is no way of checking the genuineness of the message but it is known that the *Empress of Japan*, a liner of about 26,000 tons, did call at South African ports during the war while carrying troops from Britain to North Africa, by way of the Cape. She was not sunk, however, and her name has since been changed to *Empress of Scotland*.

SOLD OUT!

In our Sept.-Oct. issue we published a letter from Mr. Robert Christie, of Brunsfield Place, Edinburgh, stating that at the age of 84, having accumulated quite a library of WIDE WORLD volumes, he had decided to offer them for sale at 5s. each for the benefit of other readers. We suggested at the time that this was an opportunity for a feast of good reading at "bargain prices." Now Mr. Christie writes: "I wish to express my sincerest thanks for your kindness... The response has been wonderful! I have had *sixty-two* requests for the volumes, and all have been sold. I had three separate offers of £1 per volume, but, alas, they had already been disposed of!... If I were to repeat the high praise given to your magazine in the letters you would need a new hat; evidently you have many admirers!"

A WORTHY CAUSE

Mention of old WIDE WORLDS reminds me that no regular reader is ever guilty of the heinous crime of destroying a copy; when he has finished with it he either stores it carefully away or passes it on to friends or relatives, who perform a similar good office to *their* circle, so that the number keeps on going round and round until it literally falls to pieces from old age and hard usage. For the benefit of those who have not yet found deserving recipients for their read copies, however, I have been asked to point out that the admirable W.V.S. is seeking stocks of magazines and books for distribution among our troops in the Far East and elsewhere; the boys are woefully short of reading matter. The address is: "Book Appeal," W.V.S. Headquarters, 41, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1.

with their old favourite.

THE "MUSICAL BRIDGE"

One of those cautious folk who never really believe anything until they have investigated it for themselves tells us that, after reading "The Musical Bridge" in our issue for December, 1949, he wrote to the proprietor of an hotel at Ballina, Eire, for confirmation, and received the following interesting reply. "Yes; there is a 'Musical Bridge' at Corrick, about eighteen miles from Ballina. Whatever the composition of the stones and mortar used in its construction, when a stone is slid along the flat parapet musical sounds can be heard—something like church bells in the distance. Some people maintain that definite melodies can be distinguished, but I have never experienced this myself. There is also a local legend that the bridge can never be finished. A large stone is missing at one end of the parapet; though it has been replaced on many occasions it never stays in position long." Our correspondent is now fully convinced of the authenticity of the article, and adds regretfully: "All unknowingly I passed within a few miles of the bridge in August, 1949."

Big A-Material Deposit Found
DARWIN, Australia, Sept. 4 (U.P.)—The discovery near Katherine of deposits of radioactive ore for the production of atomic bombs was announced officially today.
 An official said the discovery was a massive formation.
 An engineer said the deposit was so strong it set the clicks of a Geiger counter off into a long, continuous buzz.

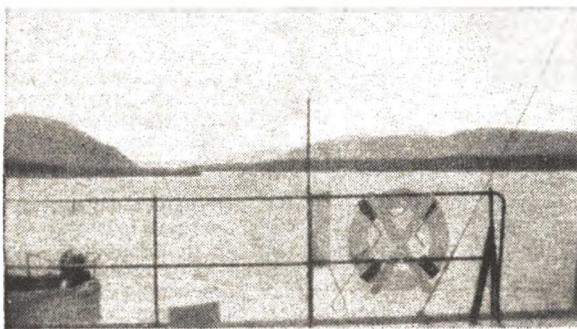
THE ROCKS THAT SHONE BY NIGHT

You will probably recall that fascinating article, "Seeking the 'Ruined City,'" which appeared in our August, 1950, issue (Australian September) and described the author's experiences while exploring a remarkable rock-formation in the Far North of Australia. Referring to a weird glow which

suffused this strange place after dark (greatly terrifying his aboriginal companions) Mr. Young mentioned his theory that the ghostly radiance might be due to the presence of radio-active substances. Now, all the way from Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A., a reader sends us the cutting on page 40, from the local daily newspaper, the *Post-Herald*. I might add, in this connection, that the extraordinary increase in the number of WIDE WORLD "sequels" never ceases to astonish us; they literally pour in from all over the world, every one of them calculated to inflict a jolt upon the members of the fast-diminishing army of arm-chair sceptics!

LIFE "DOWN UNDER"

Here's a breezy letter from an enthusiastic woman reader in far-away Queensland. "During my war service in the W.A.A.F. I married an Australian pilot and eventually came out here. We are mainly interested in shooting and fishing; nearly every week-end during the fine weather we pack up and go off camping on various rivers. No tents for us! My husband and I sleep on ground-sheets or blankets; my small daughter on the seats of our old car; and my father-in-law—who is minus a leg since World War One—on a stretcher. In the winter we go out for the day rabbit-shooting, thereby paying expenses and making a little pocket-money. . . .



"My husband built our house at week-ends; it is a fairly large eight-roomed dwelling constructed of concrete blocks in bungalow style.

"The prospects out here for intending immigrants are excellent. This is a vast country with many undeveloped areas which should be of particular interest to those on the land or anxious to take up farming. There is also a crying need for skilled tradesmen, particularly in building, while motor-mechanics and factory workers are likewise badly needed. 'Teenagers' and young people would find this a land of

Message Cast Into Sea Follows Sender For Ten Years

"SUNDAY TIMES" CORRESPONDENT

East London, Saturday.

LANCE-BOMBARDIER J. L. JOUBERT, of the South African Artillery, nonchalantly tossed a bottle into the sea outside Durban harbour in 1941 on his way to war adventures in the North.

Nearly ten years later the bottle with his message in it floated ashore practically at the doorstep of his new home in East London.

It was a much surprised Constable J. L. Joubert, of the Railway Police, East London, who this week recognised his handwriting in a newspaper reproduction of the message, which floated ashore in its bottle in Buffalo Harbour last week.

In the early days of 1941 Joubert was a member of a draft that left Potchefstroom to embark at Durban for Abyssinia in the troopship *Empress of Japan*. He and three companions had a bottle of

brandy, which they finished as the ship was preparing to sail.

"I remember that as the ship moved away from the quayside a woman on the Bluff was singing, 'Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye,'" he said this week. "The four of us were chatting together and wondering where we would be spending the next Christmas.

"FOR THE FUN OF IT"

"When our bottle of brandy was empty, I decided to put a message in it just for the fun of it."

He pushed it into the bottle,

replaced the cork and tossed the bottle overboard without even glancing to see it hit the water.

From then on the incident passed from his memory.

The bottle took nearly ten years to travel the 220 miles away by sea from Durban to the Buffalo River.

promise; there are so many avenues open to them.

"The main drawback, of course, is the housing situation, but that can be overcome with a little determination. . . . A big factor is the state of mind of the migrants themselves. It is no use coming out here expecting everything to be handed to one on a silver plate! They must arrive willing to like the country and the people. Then, if they are prepared to work hard, they can make a good new career for themselves. Don't get the idea that I was a country girl myself before I arrived, I lived in a large seaside town and, previous to joining the Air Force, did clerical work. Since I've been out here, however, I have taken to the life like a duck to water."

LAND OF GOLD AND URANIUM

The next letter we have to consider whisks us thousands of miles away from Australia to the other side of the world—the Far North of Canada, to be precise. It comes from Mr. John Thompson, c/o The Marine Engineers' Association, 319, Pender St., W., Vancouver, B.C., and is in the nature of a double-barrelled "sequel." He writes: "In the Sept.-Oct. number I found an account of LaBine's uranium discovery on Great Bear Lake, in the North-West Territories, and also a 'sequel' regarding a certain 'Yorky' Turner, prospector, and his intended return to the Nahanni country in quest of a rich gold-strike. I am enclosing a snapshot (on left) which, in a way, connects these two incidents. The picture shows the shores of Great

Bear Lake and the outlying ranges of the Nahanni Mountains; it was taken from the upper deck of my last ship, the *m.v. Radium Yellowknife*, of which I was second engineer during the summer of 1950. The vessel is owned and operated by the Northern Transportation Co., a subsidiary of the Eldorado Mining and Refining Co., of Edmonton and Port Radium, N.W.T.

'Eldorado' is a Government-owned company operating the uranium deposits at Port Radium—LaBine's wonderful 'find.' It struck me as a remarkable coincidence that I should have in my possession a picture more or less linking two totally different stories, appearing in the same issue, for earlier on I had read very fascinating accounts of the mysterious Nahanni country and the 'Valley of Headless Men!' [A place where, one after another, the skeletons of solitary prospectors who disappeared were discovered—in every case with



Montreal and later from Vancouver."

The Nahanni country, to which Mr. Thompson refers, has figured in several WIDE WORLD stories and articles. It is a grim and difficult region, with a decidedly sinister reputation, having been the scene of several inexplicable tragedies. But the old-timers are convinced that it is rich in gold—and that is quite enough

lure for the hardy prospector!

THE LIGHT-KEEPER

Here is a very interesting letter from a Brotherhood member who must be one of our loneliest readers—and that's saying something! He writes: "I am light-keeper at the light-station on Egg Island, British Columbia. This island—uninhabited save for my wife and myself—is situated in the middle of Queen Charlotte Sound, and the lighthouse is one of the most isolated in the whole Canadian

Service—in fact, in the entire North American chain of stations. My wife and I comprise the entire staff. The lighthouse is built on an outlying knoll, connected to the main island by a bridge. The island itself is only about one square mile in area—just a green dot amidst a vast expanse of blue-and-white sea. It is continually exposed to the heavy swells of the broad Pacific, which never abate to any appreciable extent. Owing to this fact, the landing of supplies and mail presents a difficult task at any time of the year. The tiny island has no bays or beaches; a gap in the rocks, exposed to breakers at both ends, affords only the most precarious shelter. The light-

house tender, however, uses a special model of work-boat well suited to rough waters—a replica of the open whale-boats carried by the old-time New Bedford whalers.

"Supplies are hauled up from a cable in the middle of the gap, controlled by a power-operated winch adjacent to the lighthouse. At times the boats receive a terrific pounding when endeavouring to put our supplies ashore, and on occasion the task proves utterly impossible; then the tender has to run for the mainland inlets and take shelter until calmer seas are running.

"Despite the loneliness of our location, and the entire absence of "company," we find our life worth-while and enjoyable. The main route

Maoris Ban Fishing In Lake, Alleging Graves Desecrated

ROTORUA, Saturday (P.A.)—Desecration of the graves on the sacred island of Motutawa in Green Lake, Rotokakahi, is believed to be the reason for the assertion by the Maoris of a right to control the lake and the publication of an advertisement banning fishing and boating on it.

The Maoris claim that when the late Mr. J. G. Coates concluded agreements for taking over the lakes in the Taupo and Rotorua districts he agreed to set aside Lake Rotoaira, at Tokaanu, and Lake Rotokakahi, at Rotorua, for the sole control and use by the Maoris.

Lake Rotoaira was jealously guarded and an arrangement by European fishermen some years ago resulted in a Court action, the upshot of which was further State action to preserve the natives' rights. Rotokakahi was proclaimed under the

Native Lands Act in 1925 and a board was to be set up to control it. No positive action was taken with fishermen and others operating boats.

Skeletons Dug Up

Recently the Maoris became very resentful when it was found that graves on the sacred and tapu burial grounds on Motutawa Island were being interfered with and that overzealous university students were digging up skeletons. Steps were then taken to set up a control board and to publish the advertisement banning use of the lake and threatening to confiscate boats not removed after a given period.

The island of Motutawa is strictly tapu and is held in great veneration. Prior to the Tarawera eruption it was owned and occupied by the Tuhourangi hapu of the Arawas and was believed to be the scene of the murder of a number of Ngapuhis. This caused the dreadful revenge by the Ngapuhi chief, Hongi Ika, on the Arawas at Mokoia Island when hundreds were slaughtered, Hongi having mistaken the island in Lake Rotorua for Motutawa in the Green Lake.

the skull missing!—Ed.]

"I used to talk to our pilot about this strange valley and its 'lost' McLeod Mine. His name is Henri Lafferty, and he hails from Fort Simpson, the jumping-off place for search-parties. Henri has trapped and prospected the area around Fort Simpson all his life, and 'Yorky' Turner would do well to get in contact with him for help and advice.

"If 'Yorky' is agreeable, I would be willing to pitch in with him this summer and share dollar for dollar in expenses. In conclusion, I may state that I came to Canada from Southwark, London, S.E., and have been here just three years, shipping out first from

of all ships bound for Alaska and the Orient passes our lighthouse, and a never-ending stream of vessels of every type is a source of constant interest. Our station is also a Government weather-station, and we report conditions three times daily by radio for the information of coast-wise shipping and the Government Forecasting Bureau. Talking about weather, I may mention that in November, 1948, the lighthouse was completely demolished and hurled into the sea by a phenomenal storm and tidal wave. It has since been replaced by a very substantial structure of reinforced concrete (seen in the accompanying snapshot) which, in the opinion of engineers, should successfully withstand the utmost fury of the sea. This massive building is the latest of a series of lighthouses, each erected to replace a predecessor destroyed, or partially destroyed, through the savagery of the elements.

"I greatly enjoy your Magazine, and look forward to each new issue when our mail and supplies arrive every two or three months."

We are greatly obliged to Brother Dupuis for this account of his life on Egg Island. How many of our readers in crowded cities, we wonder, would care to exchange jobs with him?

"BLUSHING UNSEEN"

Our readers—bless their hearts!—are wonderfully appreciative. Here's a flattering letter from an American correspondent who is anxious to see our efforts suitably acknowledged by those in high places. He writes: "I have now been a reader of the *WIDE WORLD* Magazine for thirty-four years, and during that period, through its pages, have acquired a better knowledge of geography than whole libraries of books

could have given me. I trust that your universities and geographical societies have shown their appreciation of the valuable work you are doing for geography and a better understanding between the peoples of the world by making you an honorary member. They would certainly do it over here." Up to the present time, J. K. H., the august bodies you mention have not seen fit to indicate official approval of your Editor's labours; so far as they are concerned he remains a modest violet! I have an idea that—in Britain, at any rate—they do not work along the lines you suggest. Some of them, however, evidently find the Magazine useful, for not long ago I received a letter from a professor at a well-known English university requesting permission to reprint one of our articles in a text-book. He regarded it, he explained, as "a fine example of a geographical contribution." Which, of course, is exactly why we published it. Every article and story that appears in the *WIDE WORLD* teaches one something new and interesting about far-away places and the conditions of life there. Many a home-keeping reader, as the result of a long acquaintance with our Magazine, has astonished veteran travellers by his intimate knowledge of distant countries.

MAORI "TAPU"

Just after reading the article "Among the Maoris" in our July, 1950, issue, a New Zealand reader came across the paragraph on page 42 in his local newspaper, the *Auckland Star*. It will be noted from this that the Maoris still preserve a very understandable veneration for their ancient tribal burial-grounds and have not abandoned the use of *tapu*.

THE WIDE WORLD BROTHERHOOD

WRITING to tell us that he has already received many "wonderful letters" and made a number of good friends through our "Pen-Friends" Section, a Brother in Norway encloses the only unpleasant communication which has reached him—one of those ridiculous "chain letters" of which the recipient is supposed to make a dozen copies and post them to his friends. If he does this, it is alleged, all sorts of good fortune will come his way; if he "breaks the chain" he is threatened with dire catastrophe. The effusion which our friend in Norway forwards mentions airily that a detective who laughed at the good luck idea "died instantly in an accident," while a colonel who failed to pass on the letter "died at the stake in the Belgian Congo." The individual who sends the copies on is supposed to add his own name, and our correspondent adds: "I only hope, in this case, that the person concerned is not a member of the W.W.B."

"CHAIN LETTERS"

So do we, E. R. K. These "chain letters" are absolutely futile—eloquent testimony to the superstitious folly of the misguided folk who help to keep them going. Launched by cranks and kept going by thoughtless nit-wits, they can do no good whatever and may even cause an infinity of mischief. Our advice to W.W.B.s

who receive these egregious documents is to "break the chain" immediately by consigning them to the fire. The more one thinks about the matter, the more amazing it seems that, at the present time, after a couple of generations of compulsory education, people can be found sufficiently gullible to waste time and money on copying out a farrago of nonsense and posting it on to others in the hope that, somehow or other, they will thereby qualify for good luck! Reverting to the specimen that lies before us as we write, we note that two examples of this "luck" are quoted. "A private in the Philippine Army won first prize in a sweepstake" after passing on the chain, while "President Roosevelt was elected for his third term fifty-two hours after mailing his chain letters!" The man who would believe *that* would believe anything! We sincerely trust that members of the Brotherhood—who have evidently been selected as likely victims by some "gate-crasher"—will play their part manfully in snapping the links of this idiotic business.

OVERWHELMED

Another Brother—this time in Toronto—voices the first grumble that has come to hand in connection with our correspondence section. He writes: "I sent eleven letters to 'Pen-Friends' interested in the same hobby as myself, but so far have only received seven replies. Why

APPLICATION FORM

To the WIDE WORLD BROTHERHOOD, Tower House, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.
I wish to join the Brotherhood, and enclose herewith 2s. 6d. (35 c. U.S.) for Buttonhole Badge and Certificate of Membership.

(Block Letters, please).

NAME

ADDRESS

American readers can apply to our authorized subscription agent: Jeremy North, Bookseller, "Friendship House," Jamestown, Rhode Island. If you do not wish to mutilate your copy, this application may be made in letter form.

do people put their names in the section if they are not prepared to answer letters dealing with their pet subjects? This is impolite, to say the least; I make it my duty to answer everyone who writes to me." That, of course, is the proper Brotherhood spirit, J. G., and we are glad to think that most of our members endeavour to live up to it. Don't be in too much of a hurry, however, to condemn the folk you haven't heard from; some of them may have been temporarily overwhelmed, so to speak, by a totally-unexpected flood of correspondence. Several people have asked us to remove their names from the lists for a while, explaining that they are still manfully working their way through the astonishing number of letters already received as a result of their first announcement.

"LET 'EM ALL COME!"

The amazing success of our "Pen-Friends" Section is well illustrated by a breezy letter from Brother J. V. Gilbert, of New York. He writes: "My name and address in the Sept.-Oct. issue of the best man's magazine published brought me 132 letters by the first mail and 87 by the next—and the end is not yet! Let 'em all come! I'll answer every one of them if I have to stay on the job twenty-four hours a day. Cheerio to all W.W.B.s!" We hope all Brethren will act in the same admirable spirit. The only letters that should be ignored are those coming into the "undesirable" class, and concerning this type of communication we should like to issue a very strong warning.

BE ON YOUR GUARD

The well-known journal *Tit-Bits* recently published an article dealing with rogues who make use of correspondence clubs in order to further their nefarious ends, and we take this opportunity of quoting a couple of paragraphs.

"The police to-day are actively concerned at the lack of adequate supervision over correspondence clubs and the risks they entail. Any scoundrel can launch a new pen pals club, or take over an old-established respectable organization and convert it into a vast information centre on potential swindle victims.

"Scores of such friendship and correspondence societies have sprung up since the war. Mainly, of course, they are genuine clubs. Thousands join them, and the organizers reap high but legitimate profits from registration fees, subscriptions, socials . . . and in some cases commission on the marriages of members. Yet the secretaries are keenly aware of the undercurrent of danger.

"For unscrupulous friendship clubs *do*

operate—from small back rooms or through accommodation addresses—and serve as contact agencies for undesirables. . . .

"Again, one of the most successful begging-letter writers in England operated through a pen pals club. So skilled was he in establishing confidence that seventy-three victims contributed to a non-existent charity for which he was supposed to be a volunteer worker. Boosting his story with printed appeals and fake annual reports, he had a house, car, and cash in the bank before the Fraud Squad caught up with him."

In view of this lamentable state of affairs, we earnestly advise all W.W.B.s to correspond only with fellow-members who give their official numbers, to consign all "doubtful" letters to the fire, and completely ignore begging-letter writers and would-be-interprising folk with appeals for charity, goods to sell, or get-rich schemes they want to unload on the unwary. One never knows when a "bad hat" will turn up, even in the best of company, so be on your guard and use your common sense!

OUR SHOP-WINDOW

Here are a few announcements in connection with Brotherhood matters. Firstly, we are glad to announce that further supplies of W.W.B. ties are again available. The price is now 15s. (U.S. \$2.10), including postage to any part of the world, and members are reminded that stamps can *not* be accepted. P.O.s should be *crossed*, and made out to Messrs. George Newnes Limited. The tie—which is now officially registered—is of dark-blue silk, bearing miniature woven reproduction of the Brotherhood emblem in red and silver. Secondly, the long-awaited "transfer" of our badge—for fixing inside the windscreen or window of your car—is now ready for issue. Printed in gold and colours, it measures about three inches across, looks very impressive, and will last for a long time. Send crossed 1s. P.O. (not stamps) for the transfer and instructions for fixing—which is quite a simple business. Incidentally, if you would like a neat ornament for your study or "den," this motoring badge lends itself admirably for the purpose. All you have to do is to mount the transfer centrally behind the glass in a suitable small frame, use some dark-coloured paper or other material as a background, and you will have a very effective exhibit to remind you and your visitors of our fraternity.

CAN YOU HELP?

No. 9651 Brother S. Stonehouse, of 68, Lime Road, Redcar, Yorkshire, invokes the aid of the Brotherhood in the following matter. He served

in Malta during the late war, and there made the acquaintance of a man named Frank Guntie, who owned a big hairdresser's shop in Tower Road. After returning to England Mr. Stonehouse wrote to his friend, but, receiving no reply, asked a Brother in the island, Mr. Stoneham, to look Guntie up. All Mr. Stoneham could discover, however, was that the barber had emigrated to Australia. Now, still anxious to trace his wartime chum, Mr. Stonehouse appeals to anyone in Malta (particularly Sliema) or Australia who can supply information as to Frank Guntie's whereabouts to communicate with him.

"GET TOGETHER"

A member in Essex tells us that he is now

engaged in forming a local lodge or club of W.W.B. members. The idea is to get together for rambles, camping, coach-rides, dances, lectures, and all sorts of other functions. Everything is going to be done on the self-help principle. For instance, our correspondent is a printer by trade, and has undertaken to attend to all the printing required without charge; other members will make themselves responsible for services in various directions. We are gratified to hear of such activities, and wish them every success. There's a tremendous amount of good will lying more or less latent in the average man (and woman); it only needs bringing out and harnessing to definite objectives to make this world an infinitely happier place for all concerned.

PEN-FRIENDS' SECTION

We have pleasure in printing below another list of Brethren anxious to correspond with fellow-members all over the world; the headings indicate their special interests. In order to discourage "gate-crashers" you are advised to quote your official number in every communication and to have no dealings with outsiders. Begging-letter writers and other undesirables, of course, should be completely ignored.

Members wishing to be included in forthcoming lists should forward name, number, and full postal address, adding a single word to denote their favourite subject, such as "Stamps," "Sport," etc. Address your letter to the WIDE WORLD BROTHERHOOD, Tower House, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, marking the envelope "Pen-Friends."

Membership Number	Name and Address
GENERAL	
14438	ALWIS, P. de., Hedunuwawa, Gampala, Ceylon.
10219	APPLETON, (Mrs.) M. M., 2 Robinson Street, Skelton, Saltburn, Yorkshire.
14376	ARNOLD (Miss) E., 62, Causeyside Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland.
10555	BENNETT, J., 60, Hayling Road, Oxhey, Hertfordshire.
8337	BENNETT, W. T., Hut No. B220, H.E.C. Camp, Bronte Park, Tasmania, Australia.
5254	BOTTOMER, F. A., 25, Whitmore Road, Guildford, Surrey.
394	BRIGGS, J., 14, Jesmond Avenue, Watson Road, Blackpool, S.S., Lancashire.
9576	BURGESS, E. C., 22, Austin Street, Waltham, Christchurch, S.I., New Zealand.
14454	CHAND, Captain, S. P., c/o Grindlays Bank, Ltd., Mint Rd., Bombay, India.
10420	CUMMING, J., Letham Grange Gardens, By Arbroath, Angus, Scotland.
14623	DAVIES, (Mrs.) O. W., Gable End, Hitchin Burnham, Buckinghamshire.
14344	DUNN, J. D., P.O. Box 611, New Bern, North Carolina, U.S.
15118	FLEMING, H., 33, Woodhouse Hill Road, Leeds, Yorkshire.
15085	GARDINER, F., c/o 102, John Street, Workington, Cumberland.
12725	GILLARD, R., Chillingham 4C, Murwillumbah, New South Wales, Australia.
13384	GLOVER, J. A., 255, Thurcaston Road, Mowmacre Hill, Leicester, Leicestershire.
14886	GOVENDER, C., 82, Walmer Avenue, Mayville, Durban, South Africa.
14875	GRAE, A. E., c/o Recreation Club, Messina, North Transvaal, South Africa.
9774	GULSTON, P. A., 36, Oxford Road, Sidcup, Kent.
14345	HAGEN, C. H. B., 609, E. Joppa Road, Towson, 4, Maryland, U.S.A.
13169	HANLEY, E. A., LSF.X. 853613, L.C. 48 Mess, H.M.S. Falcon, Hal-Far, Malta, G.C.
6953	HYDER, (Miss) J. M., 35, Little Heath, Charlton, London, S.E.7.
14565	KERR, (Miss) Y., Box 569, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, South Africa.
13419	KERRIDGE, A. E., 45, Belgrave Road, Victoria, London, S.W.1.
13149	KNIGHT, A. R., 34, Gwendoline Avenue, Upton Park, London, E.13.
13634	LANG, (Miss) A. T., 63, Espieside Crescent, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, Scotland.
13049	LAWAL, A. O., 2, Market Street, Ebute Metta, Nigeria, West Africa.
14926	LEIGH, R., The Royal Marquesan Hotel, Nukua-Hiva, Marquesas Island, South Seas.
15136	LWTH, G., 13, Somerset Street, Dublin, Eire.
14572	LUMSDEN, W. E., Suite No. 14, 79, Wellesley Street, Calcutta, 13, India.

Membership Number	Name and Address
13942	LYNCH, E. J., King Edward Sanatorium, Castel, Guernsey, Channel Islands.
920	MCALISTER, K., 7, Newnham Gardens, Greenford, Middlesex.
14878	MACLACHLAN, L. T. S., Milnwood, 171, Finnart Street, Greenock, Scotland.
13264	MADDISON, F. W., Post Office, Murray Upper, Nr. Tully, Via Townsville, North Queensland, Australia.
7930	MALLION, G., St. Margarets, South Street, Crowborough, Sussex.
14347	MALTRY, L. U., JNR., 25, Sagamore Road, Bronxville, 8, New York, U.S.A.
12093	MEREDITH, H. R., 4024378 L.A.C., S.H.Q. Fire Section, R.A.F., Habbaniya, M.E.A.F. 19, British Forces in Iraq.
14490	MOORSE, F. R. G., 11, Lymescote Gardens, Sutton, Surrey.
8477	MORRIS, E., 1, Fore Street (Side Entrance), Ridgway, Plympton, Nr. Plymouth, Devon.
14876	NEL, U. W., c/o Recreation Club, Messing, North Transvaal, South Africa.
15426	NINNIS, W. E., 14, Nanjivey Terrace, St. Ives, Cornwall.
12265	PADGETT, (Miss) H., 45, Raven Terrace, Fairweather Green, Bradford, Yorkshire.
4114	PANANGALA, L. F., No. 505, Union Place, Colombo 2, Ceylon.
14626	PENDLETON, A., E.R. Dept., R.M.S. Scythia c/o Cunard Line, Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.3.
14485	PETER, (Miss) M., 15, Seymour Street, Dundee, Angus, Scotland.
14369	PHAMOTSE, E. E., Geduld Prop Mine Ltd., No. 2 Shaft Room, 10, P.O. Dersley, Transvaal, South Africa.
14452	RAHEMTULLA, N. G., P.O. Box 1476, Nairobi, East Africa.
10384	RAO, S. S., c/o Suirghalo Saw Mills, P.O. Timboroa, Kenya, East Africa.
14947	RAPSON, J. H. J., c/o Lloyds Bank Ltd., Ottery St. Mary, Devon.
14222	SEENEY, E., 8, Norfolk Buildings, Waterworks Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 16.
3173	SHIMMIN, R. L., 3, Derwent Avenue, Streatley, Luton, Bedfordshire.
15024	SLOMAN, M. B., c/o Post Office, Torsten, Ic, New South Wales, Australia.
12896	SMITH, D. W., Stronvar, Major's Loan, Falkirk, Scotland.
14411	SOLOMON, F. T., 49, Edison Blvd, Vauderbyl Park, Verseniging, Transvaal, South Africa.
14353	SULLIVAN, W. J., M.A., Asthall, Burford, Oxford, Oxfordshire.
14690	SYKES, E., 594, King Street, Newtown, New South Wales, Australia.
15040	THRUMUDI, P., Flay Division, Ulu Remis Estate, Layang Layang, Johore State, Malaya.

Membership Number Name and Address
GENERAL (continued)

- 13265 TITHER, R., Post Office, Murray Upper, Nr. Tully, Via Townsville, North Queensland, Australia.
 13831 TOY, J. E., Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, New South Wales, Australia.
 6687 TURVEY, P. H., Marlyn Road, Strickland Avenue, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
 14413 VILLIERS, H. C. A. de, Jnr., Welcome Farm, P.O. Simonstown, South Africa.
 10261 WHITFORD, A. E., 170, Florence Avenue, Burnley, Lancashire.
 14650 WILKINSON, C., 7, Birdcroft Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.
 14956 WILLIAMS, J. G., "Bayntison," Hay, Via Hereford, Herefordshire.
 8206 WOOD, D. H., 54, Moira Street, Off Melton Road, Leicester, Leicestershire.

STAMPS

- 15092 ADCAULT, R., P.O. Box 1518, Singapore, Malaya.
 15132 CHARLTON, W. F., 18, Furnivall Road, Balby, Doncaster, Yorkshire.
 6865 GEARY, M. F., c/o National Provincial Bank Ltd., 8210, Notting Hill Gate, London, W.11.
 14200 GOGA, H. J., P.O. Box 42, Ladysmith, Natal, South Africa.
 15191 HARTELL, Captain T. M., The Treasury, Jos, Northern Nigeria, West Africa.
 14664 HEPPLWHITE, A., 41, Henwood Road, Durban, South Africa.
 15038 LAWTON, D., 75, Park Road North, Chester-le-Street, County Durham.
 14487 MARCHANT, G. P., "Moledina House," 144, Samuel Street, Bombay, 9, India.
 15284 MELLOR, J., 14, Brooklyn Road, Mile End, Stockport, Cheshire.
 4993 MURRAY, F. H., P.O. Box 71, Foxten, New Zealand.
 14672 NAGRANI, V. V., P.O. Box 546, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, S. Africa.
 15285 NEAL, E., 7, Shelly Beach Road, Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand.
 14380 SMITH, A. W., Box 49, Nakuru, Kenya, East Africa.
 12033 TAYLOR, R. D., 67, Greenfield Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire.
 15075 THADANI, N. N., 20a, University Students' Hostel, Shivjinager, Poona, S. India.
 14851 WALKER, G. H., "Nestleton," Nannop, W. Australia.
 14451 WELCH, H., Carter's Garage, Bell Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire.
 12621 WILLIAMS, E., "Wilhet," Sandhurst Road, Wynberg, Cape, South Africa.
 11695 WILLIAMS, A. E., 8, Warren Street, Rathmines Portobello, Dublin, Eire.

TRAVEL

- 14442 BOWYER, I., 43, Lower Morden Lane, Morden Park, Surrey.
 14820 BULL, G. (Staff), Hotel Grosvenor, Swanage, Dorsetshire.
 14966 COLLINGS, D., 62, Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1.
 14667 COOKSON, A., 46, Dads Lane, Mosley, Birmingham, 13, Warwickshire.
 14965 COVENTRY, G., 62, Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1.
 13018 SIMPSON, J. L., 1506, Malvern Road, Gardiner, S.E.6, Victoria, Australia.
 15306 TEARLE, M. J., 57, Pleasant Way, Alperton, Wembley, Middlesex.

EMIGRATION

- 13735 BOYD, B. M., c/o Ybod Monomarks, London, W.C.1. (Preferably Canada).
 15126 CHAPMAN, H., 26, Aquinas Street, Lambeth, London, S.E.1.
 14732 GHOSH, A. K., 2/3, B. Southern Avenue, Calcutta, 26, India.
 62 MILES, A. E., 29, Fitzroy Street, Knowle, Bristol, 4.
 15389 YOUNG S., 5, Abernethy, Seven Sisters, Neath, Glamorganshire, Wales.

SEEKING ADVENTURE

- 13489 COLE, P. W., 1891502, Cpl., M.T. Section, R.A.F. Station, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire.
 4674 DEMPSTER, (Miss) V. J., Met. Office, Prestwick, Airport, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland.
 14558 HILL, C. A., 17, Glamis Drive, Hornchurch, Essex.
 7362 MCCONNELL, C. E., Ward 19, Whittingham Hospital, Nr. Preston, Lancashire.
 14401 WESTON, T. H. W., 8, Maida Road, Chatham, Kent.

Membership Number Name and Address
MISCELLANEOUS

- 6119 ADAMS, J. S., "Allan Vale," Greta, Tasmania, Australia. (Gun-shooting: rabbits, deer, kangaroo etc.)
 14384 ALLPORT, R. B., Barton Court, Kintbury, Newbury, Berkshire. (Education and Music.)
 15240 ALMEIDA, L., c/o Smith Mackenzie & Co. Ltd., P.O. Box 81, Zanzibar, Africa. (Music, Cycling, and Sport.)
 10218 APPLETON, G., 2, Robinson Street, Skelton, Saltburn, Yorkshire. (Stamps and Photography.)
 15186 ARKHURST, J. M., Surveys, P.O. Box 214, Sekondi, Gold Coast, West Africa. (Mathematics, Chemistry, and Surveying.)
 14699 BAKER, W. H., 245, New Road, Porthcawl, South Wales. (Geography, Geology, and Sport.)
 2521 BARKER, E., 130, Grant Road, Dovecot, Knotty Ash, Liverpool, 14. (Sport.)
 13201 BATTISTA, 10596583 Sgt. de F., 624 Ord. Depot, Benghazi, Cyrenaica, M.E.L.F., 6. (Sport.)
 14450 BATTY, P. W., 2, Havelock Terrace, Sunderland, County Durham. (Stamps, Literature, Sport, and Travel.)
 14177 BEAUMONT, (Miss) G., 165, Rutland Road, Westbridford, Nottingham. (Music, Art, Swimming, and Cycling.)
 7237 BINEY, D. C., O.S.C.T., P.O. Box 56, Takoradi, Gold Coast, West Africa. (Sport.)
 14304 BOSTON, P. P. C., 9, Circular Road, Freetown, Sierra Leone, British West Africa. (Reading, Drawing, and Sport.)
 14478 BOWES, T. A., 246 Albert Street, East Brunswick, N.11, Victoria, Australia. (Sport and Travel.)
 11784 BRITTER, G., c/o A. E. & C. I., Ltd., Box 989, Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. (Sport, Hiking, and Short-story Writing.)
 14549 BROWN, B., 1007-22nd Avenue, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. (Sketching.)
 15407 BURNS, J. R., 57, Balaclava Street, St. Gabba S.2, Brisbane, Australia. (Stamps and Fishing.)
 15025 CARDIN, N., 216, Abbey Road, Batrow-in-Furness, Lancashire. (Travel and Adventure.)
 8640 CAREY, L., 1a, Liverpool Avenue, Doncaster, Yorkshire. (Stamps and Adventure.)
 14288 CHAMBERS, J. C., 86, Station Road, Darnall, Sheffield, 9, Yorkshire. (Geography and Foreign Coins.)
 12497 CHARLTON, R. S., 158, Kilburn Lane, Paddington, W.10. (Stamps, Dancing, and Sport.)
 5222 CLARK, J. E., 20, Beaver Street, St. Albans, Victoria, Australia. (Hypnotism.)
 9759 CLOHERTY, J., 3, University Road, Galway, Eire. (Sport.)
 8872 COSTELLO, W., 19c, Wolfetone Square, Bray, County Wicklow, Eire. (Exchanging Magazines and Picture Postcards.)
 12732 COVINGTON, R. J., 1642, Garden Terrace, Charlotte 3, North Carolina, U.S.A. (Travel and Photography.)
 14542 CROFT, D. J., 21, Retford Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey, U.S.A. (Short Stories and Fishing.)
 8846 DANIELS, J. R., 7, Princes Street, Nuneaton) Warwickshire. (Rover Scouting, Interplanetary Travel, and Short-story Writing.)
 14494 DAVEY, L. N., 175, Strickland Street, Spreydon, Christchurch, New Zealand. (Stamps and Sport.)
 14493 DAVEY, S., 175, Strickland Street, Spreydon, Christchurch, New Zealand. (Stamps, Pottery, and Journalism.)
 14312 DAVIES, J. H., 59, Wickham Street, Ayr, North Queensland, Australia. (Views and Picture Magazines of Australia in exchange for Seashells.)
 631 DESMOND, 22392269 Pte., R.A.M.C., 20 Coy, Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Southampton, Hampshire. (Painting and Drawing.)
 15327 DOWLING, D., Jamestown, Glenmore, via Waterford, Eire. (Coins, Stamps, and Travel.)
 15259 DUNNE, W., Foxboro, Ballin Cough, County Roscommon, Eire. (Sport.)
 14410 ELEY, H. J., 21, Kruger Avenue, Vereeniging Transvaal, South Africa. (Sport—particularly Baseball.)
 14248 EVANS, C., 178, Ladykirk Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 4. (Stamps of U.S.A., Art, and Photography.)
 15155 FOWLER, F. E., 42, Adelaide Avenue, Brockley, London, S.E.14. (Stamps and Sport.)
 5835 FRANCIS, W. T., 132, Barnsley Street, Wigan, Lancashire. (Radio, Cycling, and Camping.)
 13212 FULLER, H. F., 5631-34th Avenue, S.W., Seattle, 6, Washington, U.S.A. (Photography, Sailing, and Exploration.)
 14686 GABRIEL, S. B., P.O. Box 653, Beirut, Lebanon, Syria. (Travel, Photography, and Collecting Antiques.)
 14670 GARACH, T. K., No. 12, 12th Street, Vresworp, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa. (Emigration and Photography.)

Membership Number	Name and Address
MISCELLANEOUS (continued)	
15091	GLENN, E. W., 18, School Street, Randfontein, Transvaal, South Africa. (Mining and Prospecting.)
14326	GOFORTH, C. H., 503, E. Aberdeen, Independence, Missouri, U.S.A. (Railroading.)
12780	GONZALES C. (age 18), Gloria Terrace, 2nd Victoria Road, Bombay, 27, India. (Stamps and Sport.)
13711	GREENALL, W., 101, Kelawei Road, Penang, Federation of Malaya. (Stamps and Photography.)
9597	GRIFFITHS, E. G., 1, George V Avenue, West Way, Brighton Road, Lancing, Sussex. (Music and Sport.)
14419	HADGOOD, N., 85, Tuffey Avenue, Gloucester. (Adventure, Drama, and Stamps.)
15062	HISCOX, W. C., 120, Douglas Road, Adcocks Green, Birmingham, 27. (Youth Clubs and General.)
15066	HODGSON, R. L., 45, Green Lawn, Rock Terrace, Birkenhead, Cheshire. (General and Photography.)
14402	JACKES, R. H. M., 15, Halford Road, Durban, Natal, South Africa. (Photography, National Customs, and Dances.)
14418	JACKSON, (Miss) C., 15, Howard Street, Blackpool, Lancashire. (Stamps, Music, and View Postcards.)
9627	JELLEY, 4023249 Cpl. L. G., Fire Section, R.A.F. Station, El. Hamra, M.E.A.F.15. (Music.)
573	JOHNSON, H. R., White Leaves, 13, Park Road, Hucknall, Nottingham. (Amateur Cinematography.)
12119	JONES, A. E., D/SX820468, E.2 Mess, R.N. Barracks, Devonport. (Cycling and Rambling.)
13869	JONES, J. R., "Northdene," 127, Broad Street, Crewe, Cheshire. (Farming, Birds, and Music.)
12922	JONES, L., 255, Shantock Hall Lane, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. (Psychic Phenomena.)
12301	JOYCE, J., 29, Lister Street, Keighley, Yorkshire. (Jazz Gramophone Records.)
14660	KUMLEHN, G. H., P.O. Box 93, Cape Town, South Africa. (Photography.)
8202	KYI, Maung Ba, P.O. Box 791, Rangoon, Burma. (Photography and Social Organizations.)
15246	LAWRENCE, P. N. (age 17), 1, Woodstock Close, Stanmore, Middlesex. (Entomology, Hiking, Fishing, and Drawing.)
15153	LEGG, J. B., Cranford House, Denver Road Topsham, Devon. (Gardening.)
15308	LURIE, L., P.O. Box 756, Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. (Stamps and Travel.)
15328	MCGRATH, A. L., Maby Street, Eltham, New Zealand. (Coins.)
15376	MCKEOWN, B. R., P.O. Box 164, Atherton, N.W., Australia. (Accountancy and Sport.)
15225	MENAB, J., 369, McAslin Street, Glasgow, C.4, Scotland. (Sport.)
15073	MARTELL, H. E., 50, Single Quarters, Van Dyk Mines, P.O. Box 220, Boksburg, Transvaal, South Africa. (Photography and Weight-lifting.)
14605	MARTIN, A., 106, Good Street, Granville, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. (Hunting and Travel.)
13713	MATHLIN, L. J., 16, Clarke Avenue, Glandore, South Australia. (Motor-cycling, Sailing, and Travel.)
12975	MATTHEWS, C., P.O. Box 584, Govt. Indian High School, Nairobi, British East Africa. (Adventure and Photography.)
12345	MITCHELL, B. K., "La Paloma," Chapel Road, Naphill, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. (Animals, Friendship, and Adventure.)
12270	MORGAN, M. C., 46, Foundry Lane, Millbrook, Southampton, Hampshire. (Books, Physical Culture, and Adventure.)
14495	MORSE, D. H., 76, Octavia Street, East St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia. (Pen-friends in Scotland.)
14154	NEVIN, M. R., 41, Manon Street, Cliftonville Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland. (Stamps, Sport, and Travel.)
2148	NEWTON-HOWES, (Miss) A., 21, Enfield Road, Babbacombe, Torquay, South Devon. (Correspondence from South Sea Islands, West Indies, and South America.)
13358	O'CLEPPO, (Miss) A., 145, President Street, Passaic, New Jersey, U.S.A. (Fishing.)
15543	PAREKH, A., P.O. Box 136, Port Sudan. (Stamps, Coins, and View-cards.)
15298	PARKER, J. A., 94, St. Johns Park, Blackheath, London, S.E.3. (Travel and Literature.)
14954	PEARCE, W. E., 6, Hawarden Avenue, Liverpool, 17, Lancashire. (Native Wood-carving.)
12510	PEARSON, C. E. M., 87, Watlington Street, Reading, Berkshire. (Travel, Engineering, and Poetry.)
14301	PEIRSON, D., The Grammar School, Windermere, Westmorland. (Short-wave Radio.)
14718	PERMEZEL, D. F., Orr Street, Queenstown, Tasmania, Australia. (Bushcraft and Hiking.)
15276	PITT, J., 65, Eltham Hill, Eltham, London, S.E.9. (Adventure and Treasure-seeking.)

Membership Number	Name and Address
MISCELLANEOUS (continued)	
11427	PULLICH, (Miss) T. C., Horsley's Green Camp School, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. (Emigration and Travel.)
13048	QUARANTA, B., Hilton Hall, Hilton, Hampshire. (Travel, Big-game, and Exploration.)
11055	RAWLINS, J. A., 34, Hazel Grove, Staines, Middlesex. (Radio and Gardening.)
1553	RENNER, O. E., Assistant Workshop Foreman Loco Erecting Shop, Nigerian Railway, Ebute-Metta Lagos, Nigeria, West Africa. (Locomotives.)
14082	RHIND, H. E., c/o Thomason, 1278, London Road, Glasgow, E.1, Scotland. (Railways and Railway Photographs.)
12347	RICHARDS, D. B., 46, Cannon Park Road, Coventry, Warwickshire. (Cycling and Swimming.)
10321	ROBERTS, G. J., 66, Melbourne Street, Gloucester. (Erecting and Maintaining Provender Milling Machinery.)
13577	SAUNDERS, B. F., 14, Chelmsford Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire. (World Hitch-hiking.)
2430	SEATON, A., 5, Quarryhill, Angus, Culter, Scotland. (Ranching and Forestry.)
13245	SINCLAIR, C. (age 16), 4, Station Cottages, Sudbury, Derbyshire. (Typography.)
11541	SLATER, (Miss) J., 86, Abbey Road, Torry, Aberdeen, Scotland. (Music, Tennis, and Cycling.)
14309	SNELL, P., "Deck Boy," M.V. <i>Manoora</i> , c/o Adelaide Steamship Co., Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. (Travel, Stamps, and Coins.)
15173	SPILLANE, D., 2, Barrack View, Roman Street, Cork, Eire. (Ships.)
14315	STAMB, J. F., 312, Highland Street, Syracuse (3), New York, U.S.A. (Books, History, Stamps, and Travel.)
14885	STONER, W., Box 551, Vineland, Ontario, Canada. (Flying and Exploration.)
14810	STRANG, G., 58, Beatrice Street, Invercargill, Southland, New Zealand. (Motor-cycling.)
2639	STUP, C. E., P.O. Box 383, Frederick, Maryland, U.S.A. (Travel, Stamps, and Seeking Adventure.)
14414	SUMNER, T., D/JX161589 Ldg./Tel., 5 Mess, H.M.S. <i>Highflyer</i> , c/o F.M.O. Trincomalee, Ceylon. (Radio and Theatre.)
15192	SWATLAND, C., 22202398 Cpl., H.Q. Central Inspectorate, R.E.M.E., B.A.O.R.1, Minden, Germany. (Horse-riding, Farming, and Travel.)
13823	TAUK, K. K., P.O. Box 394, Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa. (Art, Photo-colouring, and Reading.)
14556	TESCH, (Mrs.) D. N., P.O. Box 3334, Cape Town, South Africa. (Travel, Journalism, and Photography.)
14197	TOIT, D. S. de, P.O. Box 99, Cleveland, Johannesburg, South Africa. (Freelance Journalism, Books, and Travel.)
14526	TOLLERUD, (Miss) J. V., P.O. Box 5680, Johannesburg, South Africa. (Amateur Collector of Coins Stamps, and Curios.)
10471	TRAIN (Mrs.) M., Weavers Goat Farm, Felstead, Essex. (Goat-breeding.)
14564	WAIN, A., 3, St. Margaret Street, Sliema, Malta. (Stamps and View-cards.)
14527	WEBSTER, (Mrs.) M., Glangarry, Woodthorpe Lane, Sandal, Wakefield, Yorkshire. (Stamps and Social Welfare.)
8653	WILLIAMS, D. L., 23, Canal Side, Aberdulais, Neath, Glamorgan, South Wales. (Bakery Science and Amateur Dramatics.)
11639	WILSON, A. F., P.O. Box 6539, Cleveland 1, Ohio, U.S.A. (Himalaya Mountains, Brain Sciences, and Astronomy.)
13558	WISBEY, W. A., 26, Dufferin Street, Fort Erie, North, Ontario, Canada. (Stamps and pictures of other countries.)
14730	WRIGHT, H. N., 3, Stanstead Grove, Catford, London, S.E.6. (Photography.)
8588	WYLES, T. W., 48, John Wilson Street, Woolwich, London, S.E.18. (Drawing, Exploration, and the Occult.)
12018	YESSON, M., 38, Avondale Crescent, Dabyhulme, Manchester. (Reading, Radio, and Photography.)
11634	YOUNG, M. W., Box 484, Albert Lea, Minnesota, U.S.A. (Stamps, Genealogy Research, and Phonograph Records.)
40	YOUNG, V., S.E.C. Clover Dam, via Wodonga, Victoria, Australia. (Hunting and Nature Study.)
13045	YOUNGER, W. H., 18, Hurstbourne Road, Forest Hill, London, S.E.23. (Steamship, Hotel, and Railway Labels.)
15270	YUSAF, H., P.O. Box 5856, Nairobi, British East Africa. (Photography, Sports and Stamps.)
11643	YUSOFF, O., 49, Tanjong Tokong Road, Penang, Malaya. (Stamps and Sport.)
9075	ZAINNEY, M. F., 4, Malay Bazaar, Taiping, Malaya. (Stamps and Music.)
13069	ZUNCKEL, M., Wilhelmshohe, Box 66, Bergville, Natal, South Africa. (Stamps and Sport.)

WILD BOARS AND

Out of the Past



"The boar was on top of him."

THAT the sight of an ugly scar on a man's leg should be the means of sending me, and two companions, off for two weeks of wild adventures on a lonely island in the Pacific Ocean sounds more like fiction than something that actually happened. Yet that is precisely what took us to Santa Cruz, where our hunting-trip ended in a series of experiences far more thrilling than anything we had anticipated.

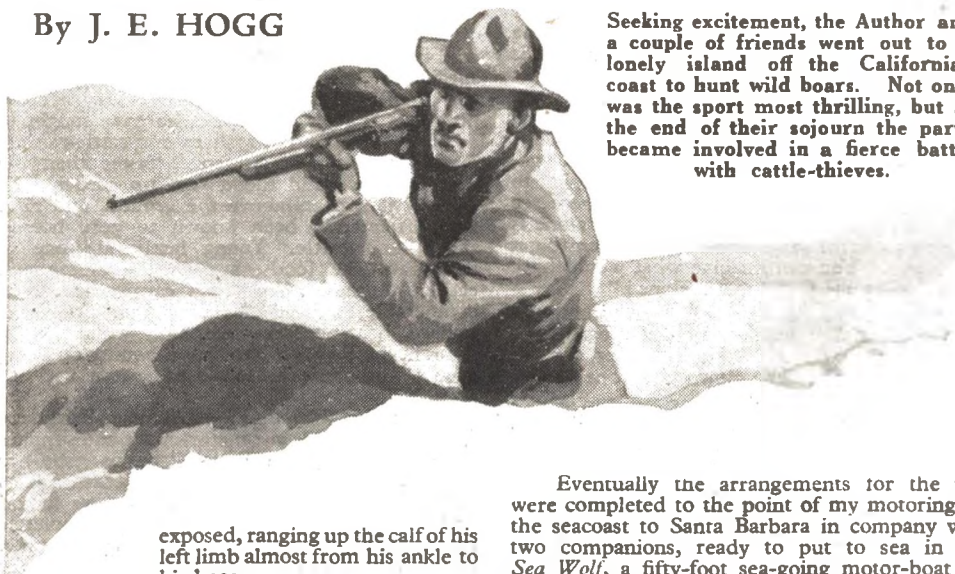
I saw that scar just outside New York City, in the men's dressing-room of a Pullman car that was taking me home to California, after having been mustered out of the American Army a few weeks subsequent to the signing of the Armistice after the 1914-18 war.

The train had not been under way many hours when I adjourned to the dressing-room, found a comfortable seat, and sat down to enjoy a smoke. My pipe was drawing nicely when a young man in the uniform of a Tank Corps lieutenant came in. The pair of us were alone in the little room, and with the prospect of five days and five nights on the train, it was only natural that I should engage the officer in conversation. It transpired that his name was Gibson, and that he came from Los Angeles, my own home city, to which, like myself, he was now returning.

Meanwhile Mr. Gibson had started undressing, and divested himself of most of his clothing with the exception of his underwear, which was of the abbreviated knee-length variety. As he removed his trousers a great white scar was

CATTLE-THIEVES

By J. E. HOGG



Seeking excitement, the Author and a couple of friends went out to a lonely island off the Californian coast to hunt wild boars. Not only was the sport most thrilling, but at the end of their sojourn the party became involved in a fierce battle with cattle-thieves.

exposed, ranging up the calf of his left limb almost from his ankle to his knee.

"Looks as if the Jerries may have handed you a bit of high-explosive shell," I remarked.

"No, it isn't that," replied Gibson. "I got that slash about a year before Uncle Sam made a soldier of me. It's the result of a hunting trip on Santa Cruz Island. I was over there hunting wild boars about three years ago, and one big brute got his tusk into me."

This was interesting. I had often heard of the ferocious wild boars of Santa Cruz Island and the wonderful hunting they afford to daring sportsmen. I had even contemplated going there myself, but had never before met anyone who had actually visited the island. Suffice it to say that wild-boar hunting now became our chief topic of conversation during the remainder of the five long days that Gibson and I spent on the transcontinental train together. By the time the train pulled into the Arcade Station in Los Angeles I had secured most of the information I sought. I had also obtained a letter of introduction from my new acquaintance to Mr. Benito Ordoñez, of San Francisco, a brother of Mr. Carlos Ordoñez, the principal inhabitant of the lonely island, whose scanty human population consists of the personnel of a solitary sheep and cattle ranch.

It was nearly three years before I succeeded in getting to San Francisco and locating Mr. Ordoñez, to whom I presented the letter Gibson had given me. I found Mr. Ordoñez to be a most pleasant and obliging gentleman; when I told him of my desire to visit Santa Cruz he said he would be pleased to assist me in any way possible. Thereupon we began the arrangement of details, which were concluded by his giving me a letter to his brother on the island, requesting him to furnish me with horses, dogs, guides, and anything else I might need.

Eventually the arrangements for the trip were completed to the point of my motoring up the seacoast to Santa Barbara in company with two companions, ready to put to sea in the *Sea Wolf*, a fifty-foot sea-going motor-boat we had chartered for the voyage to Santa Cruz. There were stores, arms, and ammunition to be loaded, and the work was further increased by the difficulty of stowing three motor-cycles, two of them with sidecars, which we were taking to the island to provide ourselves with speedy and dependable transportation inland.

Captain James Eaton, a picturesque seafarer, the master and owner of the *Sea Wolf*, had written to me in response to my inquiry concerning the chartering of his boat: "The boars are large and fierce, but sportsmen who really enjoy hunting dangerous game will find on Santa Cruz Island all the thrills and adventure they seek." Had we known then how strikingly the old skipper's words were to be verified it is probable we should have decided to abandon the trip forthwith! Even before we left Santa Barbara Bay the truth of this excerpt from Captain Eaton's letter was brought home to us in a most forcible manner. With my companions, Johnston and Gay, I was standing on the deck of the *Sea Wolf*, assisting with the loading of the stores, when Captain Eaton pointed to a man, swathed in bandages from head to foot, who was limping painfully along the dock on a pair of crutches. "That fellow was hunting boars on Santa Cruz two months ago," said the Captain. "He's only been out of the hospital about three days."

"I'd like to have a word with him," I cried, and promptly hurried after the bandaged figure.

THE HUNTER'S TALE

In conversation with the injured man I learnt that he and a companion had been hunting on the island when they cornered a large boar in a canyon. He fired three shots at the animal without doing it serious injury. At his fourth shot the gun jammed, and before he knew what was

happening the boar was on top of him, ripping him to pieces with its six-inch tusks. But for the quick action of his companion, in getting a death-dealing bullet into the animal, the hunter would undoubtedly have been killed. As it was, he had been rushed from the island to a Santa Barbara hospital, arriving almost dead from loss of blood. It had taken more than *three hundred* stitches to close his wounds, and the man declared he would carry the scars to his grave. When I told him that we were just leaving for a hunting-trip on Santa Cruz he shook his head. "Unless you've got a rifle that'll shoot dynamite," he told me, "you had better stay away! But if you're determined to go, never, under any circumstances, attempt to hunt alone! It's not so dangerous if there are two or more in your party, but hunting alone is almost equivalent to suicide if you happen to get into a jam. You can imagine what would have happened to me if I'd been alone!"

By this time Captain Eaton was tooting the *Sea Wolf's* whistle for me to come aboard, so I hurriedly thanked the injured hunter for his information and swung down the rope ladder on to the deck of the boat.

Santa Cruz Island, one of the Santa Barbara group, lies in latitude 34° North, and longitude 118.45° West. The discovery of these islands dates back to the exploits of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Spanish navigator who landed on Santa Cruz Island in 1542. I do not wish to weary my readers with historical details, but a glimpse of the history of Santa Cruz is essential to the understanding of the wild-boar hunting that obtains there to-day. The animals are not natives of the island; they were introduced by the Spaniards early in the sixteenth century. The story, as it was told to me in Spanish by Quate Espinosa, one of the oldest inhabitants, is as follows: After Cabrillo discovered the island, and partially explored it, he returned to Spain and reported to the Crown that it was worthless. "The island is a mountainous semi-tropical jungle," he said, in his report to the Crown. "It is useless for anything other than a penal colony." Spain, however, happened to be in need of a penal settlement at that time, and in 1547 some three hundred-odd thieves, usurers, heretics, and divers other transgressors were loaded on board a galleon and transported to the island. The ship put into the little cove where we later landed with the *Sea Wolf*—now known as Prisoners' Harbour. There the hapless convicts were dumped ashore. They were supplied with a few tools, some chickens, and a few head of horses, cattle, and pigs, and told to work out their own salvation as best they could. They did! The vessel that had landed them was scarcely out of sight over the horizon before the men set to work hewing down timber on the forested mountain-tops. From this green lumber they constructed the frames of some rude boats. Then they killed the horses and cattle, and covered the boat-frames with the skins, sealing the seams with pine resin to make them watertight. In these makeshift boats they put to sea, leaving the pigs on the island. History isn't clear as to just what became of them, but it is believed that they landed safely on the Californian mainland, where they settled down in what are now Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties—to become the ancestors of some of the State's oldest and most respected Spanish families!

FORMIDABLE FOES

After being abandoned on the deserted island the pigs wandered off into the forests to shift for themselves as best they could, multiplying and evolving through the centuries that have followed into a race of ferocious wildlings. Santa Cruz is now literally infested with them. They have lost practically every trace of their original domesticity, and have become powerful wild beasts, as fleet of foot as deer. The mature specimens have enormous tusks, long hoofs, and bristles that are like wire; they are the plague of the ranch-people who have sought to develop the island for sheep and cattle-raising. The boars tear down fences faster than the ranchers can build them, root up garden stuff directly it appears above the ground, and have not infrequently been known to gore horses, sheep, and cattle. Young lambs are one of their favourite foods, and in the killing and eating of these they show carnivorous traits comparable to the tactics of wolves. In consequence, boar-hunters are usually welcomed by the ranchers. They have put a bounty on boar-snouts, and there is no closed season nor bag limit.

The *Sea Wolf* duly landed us at Prisoners' Harbour, and after our motor-cycles and supplies were ashore Captain Eaton bade us good-bye and put to sea again. He was to return in two weeks to pick us up. Until that time we should be left entirely to our own resources, completely cut off from the rest of the world. We promptly busied ourselves getting our outfit in shape for transportation inland, packing up the two sidecars with the view of moving off to some suitable point where we could establish a permanent camp.

No great mileage of roads exists on Santa Cruz, but there is a main highway, built by the ranch-people, extending across the island and to its western end—a distance of about twenty-one miles. By merely removing the sidecars, however, we were able to travel over sheep- and cattle-trails into the very heart of some of the best hunting-country. Other sportsmen who have visited the island, lacking such transportation facilities, have had to seek most of their sport near the seashore or at no great distance from it.

It was mid-afternoon when we landed at Prisoners' Harbour, and the balance of the day was spent touring inland for a distance of about five miles, where we set up our camp on a grassy oak-thicketed *mesa* at the bottom of a high-walled canyon. There was plenty of fallen oak for firewood, and only a few paces from our tents was a roaring torrent of pure cold water.

After supper that evening we enjoyed the incomparable pastime of smoking our pipes round the camp-fire and swapping yarns until we became sleepy enough to retire to our tents. We hadn't been asleep long, however, before we had an introduction to the wild life of the island. I was awakened by the sound of some animal walking stealthily among the leaves and twigs in the vicinity of the camp. I reached for my pistol and listened. Presently something went "Sniff! sniff!" from a point most startlingly near, and almost simultaneously two gleaming eyes appeared in front of a hole in the tent that had been burned by a spark from some camp-fire long ago. With far less ado than it takes to tell it, I drew a bead between the two eyes, and fired. With a flash and report of the weapon

there was a blood-curdling snarl outside the tent, and the whole camp came tumbling out at the double-quick. A flashlight inspection outside the tent revealed that my bullet hadn't been wasted. Beneath the hole in the tent wall lay the quivering body of a civet-cat. He was stone dead, his head having been shattered.

THE RANCHER

Next morning, after putting our camp in order, and caching our supplies out of the reach of possible marauders, we loaded our rifles and pistols and set out for the hunting ground on the motor-cycles. We stopped *en route* at the Ordoñez ranch to introduce ourselves to the ranch-people and take advantage of the services that had been arranged for us. We were welcomed by Señor Carlos Ordoñez, whom we found to be as fine a gentleman as his brother. The kindness that was extended us was even greater than we had anticipated, and very shortly we were on our way to the hunting-grounds with four boar-dogs and Quate Espinosa, an old Spanish cowpuncher, whom Señor Ordoñez had assigned to us as a guide. Spanish is the language of Santa Cruz Island. Señor Ordoñez could speak fairly good English, but it was rather difficult for him, and accordingly I conversed with him in Spanish, interpreting for Gay, who was the only member of our party unfamiliar with the language. Quate and the dogs understood no other. The dogs were lively little fellows of terrier breed, scarred from head to foot from previous encounters with wild boars. They answered to the names

of "Pistola," "Thomasio," "Jerito," and "Miguel." English meant nothing to them, but if one spoke to them in Spanish they immediately became alert. An expression such as "*Sicola, Pistola! Coche, coche! Mira la coche!*" ("*Sic'em, Pistola! Pigs, pigs! Look at the pigs!*") would set them all jumping and barking in anticipation of the chase.

Quate was armed with an ancient 45-70 black-powder musket of almost prehistoric vintage, and we put him in one of the sidecars, though he muttered something in Spanish about preferring a horse. We stowed the four dogs in the other car. Then, with Gay—whom we know familiarly as "Pinkey"—bringing up the rear on the solo motor-cycle, we set out for the hunting-grounds. This was a place known as the "South Ranch," where, according to our guide, our chances of finding game were excellent.

The trip to the South Ranch was one of about twelve miles, and the road thither left a lot to be desired. We made the trip, however, in about forty minutes, with no inconvenience greater than some fervent Castilian mutterings from Quate about the advantages of horses. Finally we came to a gate across the road where he declared we had better abandon the machines; to proceed farther with such noisy contraptions would probably scare the pigs away.

THE FIRST HUNT

Setting out from the gate on foot, we soon came across fresh boar-tracks; we also found numerous places where the ground had been newly uprooted in the animals' quest for food.



"Two gleaming eyes appeared."

The country at this point was a lofty grassy headland with scattered thickets of heavy brush, broken by numerous deep canyons and ravines. Presently we came to the brink of a very deep canyon where the dogs picked up a fresh trail, and dashed off baying into the thicket at the bottom. Almost at the same instant five boars tore out of the undergrowth, and headed up the opposite canyon wall with the speed of a herd of deer. It was long-range shooting, but we all got into action. "Ker-bung! Ker-bung!" roared Quate's black-powder blunderbuss; "Ping! Ping! Ping!" sang Johnston's high-powered smokeless. "Bang! Bang!" went "Pinkey's" deer-gun. Johnston hit his quarry with all three shots, but it took the third to send him, hoofs up and squealing, crashing to the bottom of the canyon six hundred feet below, followed by an avalanche of loose dirt and rocks. "Pinkey" floored a fine-looking "meat pig" with his second shot, and the animal, falling through the brush of the canyon wall, lodged in the bushes half-way down. Quate had apparently missed with both his shots, for when the smoke cleared away from in front of his fearsome weapon we could see no trace of anything he had put down. As for myself, I singled out a monstrous black boar travelling fast up the canyon wall and let drive four shots from my high-powered smokeless automatic rifle. The first was apparently a clean miss, but the other three evidently found their mark, for the boar turned and bit at himself even as he ran. Furthermore, I had actually seen the dust fly out of his bristles with each of the last three shots.

While our rifles were cracking the dogs had reached the top of the canyon, and were going pell-mell across the headland in the distance in the wake of the two boars that had gained the summit of the canyon wall. Quate, "Pinkey," and Johnston immediately began scrambling down the slope, crossed the thicket at the bottom, scaled the wall on the opposite side, and set off after the boars and dogs. Meanwhile I was hot-foot on the trail of "my" boar. Getting across the canyon and up the wall on the other side proved a feat in itself, and by the time I arrived on the floor of the grassy headland where I had last seen the animal I was pretty well winded. I was puffing like a porpoise and, with my heart beating fast, I dropped into the grass, thinking to rest for a moment. As I sat down I put my hand in something wet—fresh blood. I was on the trail of my boar all right!

Momentarily forgetting my fatigue, I took up the pursuit again. There was a distinct track leading off into a near-by jungle thicket. The brush was so thick that progress was a matter of inches per minute, but my only thought at the moment was to get that massive head and the javelin-like tusks that adorned it. Flattening out, I began to wriggle in. Later I learned the foolhardiness of this venture. A wounded boar, said Quate, can charge like a streak of lightning through undergrowth where a man can scarcely move at all.

Finally I emerged into the sunlight again, finding myself on the edge of a large grassy area completely surrounded by a dense growth of jungle-like thicket. At the far end of this open stretch I could hear my boar grunting and squealing. He was evidently badly wounded, and in a terrible rage. Sneaking up behind the

low brush of the clearing I finally caught sight of him. Blood was gushing from a bullet-hole in his left shoulder, and he was venting his wrath by driving his tusks into the ground or against anything he came in contact with. After each onslaught he would back up for another rush, hurling great chunks of earth fifteen or twenty feet into the air. Several times, as I manoeuvred about to get a shot at him, he charged the brush, uprooting stout oak saplings as if they were stalks of corn. Finally he turned broadside toward me, and I let drive another bullet into his shoulder. Those .351 calibre soft-pointed missiles are like sticks of exploding dynamite when they hit, but that shot only further infuriated him; he took it without so much as turning a hair! A second and a third shot had no more effect, but the fourth revealed to him the source of these whizzing hornets. With a bellow that seemed to set the bushes vibrating, and the bristles on his back standing up like bundles of wire, he wheeled around and plunged at me, his great knife-like tusks bared for action. There was just one more cartridge left in my rifle. With no time to re-load, and having witnessed his ability to assimilate lead, I had little confidence in my pistol; if the rifle couldn't finish him, the revolver would be like tickling him with a feather duster!

The boar was within twenty feet of me, bearing down like something hurled from a catapult, when I drew a careful bead between his eyes and pulled trigger. That last bullet, luckily for me, did its work; the boar collapsed as if every bone in his body had turned to water. With the momentum of his charge he turned a double somersault, landing in a heap at my feet—so close, in fact, that I had to jump aside to avoid being struck down by the hurtling carcass. He was stone dead, but to make quite sure I did not venture to touch him until I had reloaded my rifle and put a bullet into his heart to make certain he would not jump up and come at me again. The head of that old tusker will always be one of the most prized trophies in my collection, for if I live to be a hundred I can never forget the tense moment when his huge black bulk was bearing down upon me.

It was nearly an hour before the other hunters returned and began shouting through the brush in an effort to locate me. Their surprise can be better imagined than described when they crawled through the tangled vegetation and found me calmly smoking my pipe beside the body of what Quate declared to be the biggest boar ever seen or killed during his forty years on the island. My friends had returned empty-handed. The two boars that had gone over the hill had been chased for nearly two miles. Several times the dogs had cornered them, but before the hunters could get near for a shot they broke and ran again. Finally the tuskers had made good their escape by plunging into an impenetrable thicket where neither dogs nor men could hope to follow.

A WEIGHTY TROPHY

Our next problem was that of getting the big boar to camp. He weighed five hundred pounds if he weighed an ounce, and it was as much as the four of us could do to budge him. In order to lighten him as much as possible Quate skilfully gutted him. This reduced the weight by fully a hundred pounds; then, by dragging, carrying, and rolling him, inch by inch, we at

last got him across the canyon to the sidecars. The great beast was a heavy load for the little machine, flattening the springs down against the chassis. The carcass was too big to go into the car, making it necessary to hang the huge head and shoulders out over the cowl after this had been braced with pieces of oak to prevent it collapsing under the weight. After getting the big boar loaded we went back and secured the head of Johnston's three-hundred-and-fifty-pound tusker. We also cut up "Pinkey's" "meat pig" for camp pork; the dogs, still panting and exhausted from their hunting, made a meal of the liver. Being tired, they were quite content to ride back to the ranch in the other sidecar with Quate without being tied in, as had been necessary on the outward trip.

The following morning we had fresh pork chops for breakfast. The wild pork is chiefly acorn-fed, and is a meat that even the most critical epicure would approve. It is only the flesh of the young boars, however, that is fit for human food. We tried to eat some chops from my huge tusker, but it was as tough as a boot-sole, and had an objectionable "piggy" flavour.

As a result of our strenuous efforts we found ourselves somewhat stiff the following morning, and hence were all in perfect accord when "Pinkey" suggested a day's fishing down at Prisoners' Harbour. This plan was duly carried out; we went down to the sea with the sidecars, and succeeded in filling one of them with fish before the middle of the afternoon. As a matter of fact, it wasn't fishing at all. It was just a case of baiting a hook, throwing it into the water, and letting the fish leap at it. Every cast would bring out a two- or four-pound rock cod, sea bass, or white perch. With more fish than we knew what to do with we knocked off an hour or two before sundown and made for the Ordoñez Ranch, where we gave the major portion of our catch to Vasquez, the ranch cook. The diet of the ranch-people chiefly consists of mutton, and hence the fish were received with great appreciation.

For the next day's boar-hunting Quate suggested a trip into *El Portrero del Norte* (the North Pasture), one of the wildest and most

picturesque sections of the island. Here, he declared, the pigs were so numerous that they were literally eating the scenery off the landscape! Although this location was some ten miles from the ranch, we were able to get to within two miles of it with the sidecars. We spent just an hour bouncing the old Spaniard and the dogs over the rough trail before we came to the end of vehicular possibilities, and set out into the hunting country on foot. Progress through the Portrero country was slow and tedious,



"We were welcomed by Señor Carlos Ordoñez."

owing to the heavy brush and rough topography of the region. We encountered fresh boar-signs, but hunted for several hours without catching sight of any game. At last the dogs found a promising lead, and went off yelping and barking into a canyon thicket. In another moment our campaign of action was outlined. Johnston, the best marksman in our party, was to work his way round the head of the canyon, and take up his position on the opposite wall to cut off the possible escape of the game in that direction. "Pinkey" was to guard the near-by wall, while Quate and I were to drop to the bottom of the canyon, at widely-separated points, and work up and down along the floor of the gorge in the direction of the baying dogs. The fact that we heard no grunts or squeals led us to

believe that the dogs might be on the trail of some other game, but nevertheless we proposed to investigate.

Having somewhat of an advantage in years over the old Spaniard, I arrived at the bottom of the canyon and reached the dogs some minutes ahead of Quate. Our conclusions as to the nature of the game proved correct. Instead of boars, I found the dogs barking skyward at the foot of an oak tree, in the upper branches of which they had treed a fox. "A nice skin for a fur for my wife!" I thought, as I took a bead on Mr. Reynard, squeezed the trigger, and brought him tumbling out of the tree-top with a single bullet.

IN THE CANYON

The echo of my shot had scarcely died out between the walls of the canyon when Quate cut loose with his black-powder artillery from somewhere down the canyon. A second later it sounded as if Bedlam had broken loose! From a point a little way below where I had descended there came a perfect pandemonium of squeals, snorts, and howlings. At the same time I heard Johnston call out from his elevated position on the canyon wall: "There they go, 'Pink'! Let 'em have it!" Then Johnston's rifle cracked, and the echo of his high-powered weapon was still rolling between the canyon walls when "Pinkey" let drive from his side of the wall and Quate's blunderbuss roared again with its detonating "Ker-bung! ker-bung!" Meanwhile, there I stood, looking first up the gorge and then down, wondering from what direction, and when, the show was going to begin for me. Apparently, all unknowingly, I had been right in the midst of a herd of boars and had let those silly dogs divert me to a fox!

Just then Johnston's rifle cracked again, again, and again, the third shot being accompanied by the sound of a heavy body crashing to the floor of the canyon. The hunter's voice rang out exultantly: "I got him, 'Pinkey,'" he cried. "Quick! Cut off that big fellow! He's going down the canyon!"

This was decidedly interesting for me, for if there was a boar heading down the canyon he must be travelling my way! The dogs, meanwhile, had vanished, doubtless heading toward the scene of activity, wherever it might be.

Hearing Johnston's voice, and the sharp staccato "Bang!" of "Pinkey's" rifle, I spun round on my heel and started up the ravine, but I had scarcely gone ten yards before I ran right into the source of all the rumpus. The canyon at this point was very rocky and narrow, and I was splashing along through the little stream at the bottom, with water up to my knees. As I rounded a right-angle bend between almost perpendicular cliffs it seemed that all the combined noises of a circus and menagerie had been let loose to echo and rumble between those narrow walls. I heard intermingled bellows, snorts, grunts, and squeals, accompanied by the barking of dogs and the crashing of rocks and boulders. Hastily jumping up on a flat rock, I stood with my rifle raised ready for action. About the same instant, perhaps fifty feet in front of me, I saw a huge boar coming down the canyon with Pistola and Jerito dangling on his ears. Thomasio was hanging on to his tail; Miguel was snapping at his hind legs. Nevertheless, the boar plunged stubbornly ahead, dragging all four dogs with him, and several times managed

to shake his tormentors off. The dogs, however, were as quick and nimble as cats; they were no sooner rolled aside in the water and loose rock of the canyon floor before they were up and on to their quarry again. Several times I drew a bead on the boar for a shot, but in that confused free-for-all scrap between boar and dogs I didn't dare to fire for fear of killing one of our faithful little comrades.

THE END OF THE BATTLE

After several fruitless attempts the boar shook all his opponents off, and made a clean break down the canyon. This was my chance, and I let him have it! The bullet caught him on the left shoulder and toppled him against the canyon wall. It didn't floor him, by any means—it only staggered him—but his hesitation was fatal, for at the same instant the dogs were atop of him once more. Recovering somewhat from the shock, the old tusker made what I conjectured to be his dying effort. He rose on his hind legs, stretching himself upright with a dog dangling from each ear. There was just time enough for me to swing my rifle into position and blaze away. The bullet took him between the forelegs, and with a stifled grunt he collapsed like a wet rag, shot through the heart. He was a magnificent specimen, weighing about four hundred pounds, and with a beautiful pair of recurved ivory tusks nearly five inches long.

I had hardly succeeded in pulling the wildly excited dogs off the carcass when Johnston and "Pinkey" came running down the canyon. They had been trailing the big fellow I had killed, and had practically chased him in front of my gun. Johnston had accounted for two big tuskers; "Pinkey" had disposed of two more. Presently Quate came trudging up the canyon carrying another fox, and proudly announced that he had a fine mess of pork chops a couple of hundred yards below.

By the time we had taken the heads of the five boars, quartered Quate's hams and chops, skinned the two foxes, and lugged the whole outfit to the sidecars, all of us were pretty well fatigued. Pistola, the best of our hunting dogs, had received an ugly tusk-slash across the back of his neck. The dog, however, wasn't the only casualty; I found myself suffering from several cuts and numerous scratches where I had snagged myself while plunging over the rocks and through the brush. These minor injuries had gone unnoticed while the excitement was on, but after it was all over they became painfully evident. Johnston had lost the seat of his breeches and a generous layer of skin immediately beneath, through losing his footing and doing a toboggan act down the wall of the canyon. His left elbow was also badly gashed. "Pinkey" was in agony as a result of having unthinkingly chased one of his boars through a thicket of spiny cactus. Our old guide, Quate, was the only member of the party who had come off without a scratch. Our "first aid" outfit came in mighty handy that evening, and there was a brisk demand all round for iodine and bandages.

CATTLE-THIEVES

On the second day after our hunt in the Portrero Canyon, Señor Ordoñez arrived in our camp on horseback. He had not had his breakfast, so we prepared a meal for him, and

for an hour or two afterwards he sat in camp with us drinking coffee and telling us interesting stories about the island. His most startling tale concerned the heavy losses he had suffered from stock-rustlers who secretly landed on the island to steal cattle and sheep. He estimated that, during the previous year, these cunning thieves had stolen stock to the value of ten thousand dollars. The rustlers, he said, were mostly Japanese, Austrians, or other aliens, unnaturalized in the United States. They pretended to be "fishermen" in order to escape the vagrancy courts, but were actually professional stock-thieves.

Owing to the great size of the island, and the rugged nature of its topography, it was almost impossible to capture any of these rogues and hand them over to the law, but he had recently obtained the co-operation of the Coastguard Service, and hoped this might lead to satisfactory results.

We told Señor Ordoñez that if we could be of any assistance to him in protecting his property, it would give us great pleasure. Little did we dream at the moment that this remark, a few days later, was to lead us into an exciting duel with the stock-thieves!

All too quickly our time on the island slipped away, and at last we had to begin thinking about breaking camp and moving down to Prisoners' Harbour, there to meet Captain Eaton and the *Sea Wolf*. We had eighteen pairs of boar-tusks, and several fine heads prepared for the taxidermist. The trip had been a complete success, and we were reluctant to face the prospect of departure.

I was acting as camp cook, tossing up griddle-cakes for breakfast above the collapsible sheet-metal stove, and "Pinkey" and Johnston were busy over their tin plates, when our breakfast was most unceremoniously interrupted. Into the camp at a gallop, his horse lathered with foam, came Señor Ordoñez. He was obviously excited, and from the expression on his suntanned face it was evident that something serious was troubling him. As he sprang from the saddle he addressed us in Spanish.

"I came here to see if I could get you boys to help us," he burst out. "Quate has just telephoned from the South Ranch that he and three of our *vaqueros* are standing off a band of ten or fifteen Japanese cattle-thieves at the South Ranch Landing. The villains are loading our cattle aboard a schooner! Our men are hopelessly outnumbered, and helpless without reinforcements. We have other men at the ranch, but it would take them an hour to get to Quate's aid on horseback. You boys can be there in half the time with your motor-cycles. Will you help us?"

"We'll be on our way in two minutes!" I shouted, leaping to my feet. The situation was hurriedly explained to "Pinkey," and within another minute the three of us were roaring toward the South Ranch on the motor-cycles, taking with us all the firearms and ammunition we had in camp.

A RIDE TO REMEMBER

Of all the wild motor-cycle riding three human beings ever did I believe that "Pinkey," Johnston, and I established a world's record for speed over the eighteen miles of tortuous, bumpy road between our camp and the South Ranch. With the engines roaring we tore over the trail, utterly disregarding ruts and bumps, streams to

be forded, and everything else. We never even slackened speed for the curves, but simply skidded round them, leaving clouds of dust and the smell of burning tyre-rubber behind us. Our sole prayer was that the machines would stand up under the punishment and hang together long enough to get us to the South Ranch. Suffice it to say that they *did* hang together. We covered those eighteen miles of profanity-provoking roads in exactly twenty-six minutes from the time we left our camp.

Arriving at the hill-top just beyond the South Ranch landing, we espied a small schooner, with her mainsail set, drifting slowly out into the cove. Quate and the other three cowpunchers were scattered about behind various rocks, banging away with their black-powder blunderbusses at the fleeing craft. The pirates aboard the vessel were returning the fire. Hastily we grabbed our rifles and dropped for cover behind various boulders. Little puffs of smoke and fire were spurting out of the schooner's deck-house, and the air around us was alive with the drone of bullets. Just as Johnston settled down behind a rock and poked his rifle out for a pot-shot at the pirate craft, a bullet chipped the stone, the flying fragment tearing his hat into shreds. This so enraged him that I could hear him cursing above the cracking of the guns. Utterly disregarding his own safety, he sprang to his feet and centred his sights upon a man who was climbing up the schooner's mainmast, apparently to make some adjustment to the sail. Almost at the same instant the sharp "Ping!" of his rifle rang out, and the Japanese on the mainmast fell heavily to the deck, where he lay motionless.

"Got him!" I heard Johnston exclaim, as he pumped the bolt of his weapon to throw a fresh cartridge into the firing chamber. Meanwhile "Pinkey" and I were putting plenty of lead into the schooner's deck-house. A gun that had been persistently cracking from the starboard window suddenly dropped out on to the deck, and the face which, a moment before, had been behind the weapon disappeared from view, announcing that one or more of our bullets had not been wasted. "Pinkey" continued to fire at the deck-house; I centred my activities on the man at the tiller, who had barricaded himself behind a mattress thrown over the after-rail. I emptied a whole magazine into that mattress as fast as I could pull trigger, and just as I reached into my pocket for a fresh magazine and clipped it into the weapon the schooner swung round, broadside to the wind. When it did so the mattress no longer obscured the after-deck. I noted that the tiller was swinging idly backwards and forwards with the wash of the sea against the rudder; the fellow who had been holding it lay sprawled out flat on the deck. Evidently the mattress was not as bullet-proof as the helmsman had hoped!

HOT WORK

Another Japanese sprang out of the deck-house and seized the tiller. Then he pulled the mattress round, so as to keep himself covered, and began firing steadily over the top of it with an automatic pistol. Thereupon "Pinkey" and I concentrated our fire on the mattress, but by this time the little craft was getting well out to sea, so it is probable we only wasted our bullets.

In the midst of all this shooting a bullet struck the muzzle of Johnston's rifle, ruining

had made good their get-away. Emerging from shelter, Quate shook his fist at the receding schooner, cursing heartily the while. "At least forty head of the Señor's cattle have been taken!" growled the old Spaniard. "The cowardly sneak-thief devils! Forty head of the Señor's



"He turned a double somersault."

the weapon! The shock stung his hands until they became almost useless, and several small splinters of lead embedded themselves in his forehead. Without even stopping to take stock of his injuries, the enraged Johnston hurled the broken rifle aside, ran to one of the motor-cycles, under a hail of fire from the schooner, and returned with another rifle and two boxes of ammunition. Then, his benumbed fingers continually fumbling, he went on hurling a stream of lead at the pirate craft.

We kept up the bombardment until the schooner got so far away that our bullets began to fall short. Further shooting was merely a waste of ammunition, so we ceased firing and came out from behind the cover of our sheltering rocks. With no boat capable of giving chase nearer than Prisoners' Harbour, the rustlers

cattle!" he went on. "And we have to stand by helpless and watch them put to sea to sell their ill-gotten gains on the mainland!"

The old Spaniard was still raving when I chanced to glance out at sea to a point some sixty or seventy degrees to the west of the pirate schooner, which by this time was almost out of sight. A tiny smudge of black smoke had appeared on the horizon. "Quate," I exclaimed, grasping him by the arm. "Look! There's a steamer!" Thereupon the old Spaniard crossed himself, calling upon all the saints to assist him. Then, without another word, he ran to the ranch-house, and presently returned with an arm full of smoke-rockets. By this time the hull of the approaching vessel had begun to loom above the horizon, and with my field-glasses I made her out to be a Coastguard gunboat.

I imparted this information to Quate, who was so delighted that he grabbed me in his arms and kissed me. Then a rocket was sent aloft as a signal to the gunboat. The first rocket and a second failed to elicit any response, but the third brought the deep "boom!" of a four-inch naval gun floating over the sea. Looking through the glasses again, I saw that the craft had changed course and was heading towards the island. At that moment Señor Ordoñez came galloping on to the scene on horseback, and when we saw the gunboat coming we all threw our hats in the air.

THE CHASE

Half an hour later the gunboat dropped anchor in the cove, a boat was lowered, and two officers came ashore. It took only a few moments to explain what had happened, and at the officers' suggestion our entire party went aboard the craft to view the chase and capture of the outlaws. By this time the thieves' schooner had gone completely out of sight, but we knew the general direction they had taken. Furthermore, when the twin screws of the gunboat began to revolve under a full head of steam, pushing her along at a speed of something like twenty knots, we knew that the ruffians were as good as captured already.

By the time we overhauled the outlaw vessel the highest peaks of Santa Cruz Island had dipped below the horizon and the scenery consisted solely of sky and water. As we came alongside the schooner, the decks of the gunboat were cleared for action; then two four-inch guns swung into position for use if necessary. The rustlers, however, surrendered without any trouble. Seeing the array of naval artillery that confronted them, they realized that the gunboat could send their old windjammer to Davy Jones's locker with a single shot. Accordingly the whole crew—or what was left of them—appeared on deck holding their hands aloft to indicate surrender. The gunboat came alongside the schooner and made fast. Then, one by one, nine of the most villainous-looking Japanese I ever set eyes upon were marched on to the deck of the coastguard craft, clapped in irons, and dumped unceremoniously below. Six of the schooner's crew, however, did *not* march aboard the gunboat. Three of them were dead, and three more so badly wounded that they had to be carried aboard the naval craft and deposited in the sick bay.

It was only after we had had the opportunity of going aboard the schooner that we realized the havoc we had wrought while firing at the thieves from the shore. The deck-house was a mass of splintered and bullet-riddled woodwork; the deck itself was badly furrowed, while the mattress abait the tiller was full of holes.

Beneath the deck—taken into the craft through a specially-built door in the hull, fitted with a gang plank constructed for the purpose of loading livestock—we discovered thirty-eight head of Señor Ordoñez's cattle. Señor Ordoñez and his men had worked hard to produce these

fine beasts, and here were these alien scoundrels, masquerading in the guise of law-abiding fishermen, preying upon the fruits of their efforts.

After the officers of the gunboat had inspected the wreckage, a seaman was detailed for duty at the tiller of the captured craft. A line was then made fast to her bow from the gunboat, and the whole outfit towed back to Santa Cruz Island. Meanwhile Johnston had sought the services of the Medical Corps seaman aboard the gunboat, who picked the fragments of lead from his forehead, painted him with iodine, and sent him on deck with his head in bandages and smelling like a chemist's shop. Before we reached the island, however, one of the three wounded Japanese breathed his last, and his body was added to the three covered with a sheet on the deck of the gunboat awaiting delivery to the coroner of Santa Barbara County. The injuries of the remaining two were not serious, and after a spell in the hospital ward of a jail in Santa Barbara they were turned over to the Federal authorities to face the law courts along with the other nine miscreants. In due course, after a trial by jury in Los Angeles, they all received indeterminate sentences of from ten to fifty years apiece.

After we landed on the island again the balance of the day was spent in taking affidavits and depositions for use when the eleven cattle-thieves were brought before the courts. This work, which was carried on by Señor Ordoñez with the aid of the gunboat's officers, was made both difficult and tedious by the fact that none of the prisoners could speak either English or Spanish. Finally, with the pirate craft still in tow, and the prisoners in safe keeping, the gunboat steamed away toward Santa Barbara.

Señor Ordoñez insisted that we should be his guests at dinner that evening, and since we had become somewhat weary of camp cookery we cheerfully accepted his invitation. We sat down to a meal that was little short of a banquet.

Before we left our host that evening, he shook hands with us all round, assuring us he could find no words to express his appreciation of what we had done for him. "If you ever wish to hunt on this island again," he said, "or if there is anything else you want, just let the fact be known." His last act was to present Johnston with a blank cheque, to which he had appended his signature. "Take this, señor," he said, "and, when you get home, go to your gunsmith and select the rifle that suits you."

The following day we broke camp and moved down to Prisoners' Harbour, where we found Captain Eaton with the *Sea Wolf* riding at anchor. Very soon we had our motor-cycles and the rest of the outfit aboard, hauled up the anchor, and put to sea. As we sailed out into that placid indigo ocean, with the highest peaks of Santa Cruz gradually sinking below the horizon, the island looked so peaceful and quiet that it required quite a stretch of imagination to picture it as the abode of vicious wild animals and the scene of such deadly strife as we had recently witnessed.

PHASES OF LIFE

FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

ZOMBIES" are the uncanny "living dead" alleged to exist in the interior of the Negro Republic of Haiti, in the Caribbean — hapless folk who have become mere automata, unhesitatingly obeying every order they receive, but incapable of thought or speech. A letter concerning these unfortunate creatures, published some time ago in "Between Ourselves," aroused much interest among our readers, and we asked the author to elaborate his statements in the form of an article, documented as well as the peculiar nature of the subject permits. It should be added in fairness that the Haitian authorities, as might be expected, refuse to admit "zombie" tales have any foundation in fact. Here is Mr. Norlund's account.

Weird tales of Voodoo and "zombies" still leak out of Haiti's steaming jungles and wild mountain country despite strong measures adopted by the Government to damp them down. Such fantastic things, the authorities consider, are incompatible with a civilized State and membership of the United Nations! But the simple-minded and exceedingly superstitious Negro peasant of this Caribbean Republic, with his African heritage, takes little interest in modern progress or the United Nations; he has his hands quite full enough in making a living and fighting the evil powers he fears so greatly.

Notwithstanding the protestations of overzealous officials, who strenuously deny the stories, many responsible foreign observers and travellers have returned to their home countries with circumstantial accounts of strange doings witnessed in the fastnesses of lonely mountains or well-nigh impenetrable jungles in the interior of Haiti. One of these men was the Rev. Arthur Turnbull, a 73-year-old British missionary who came back to England some time ago after forty-seven years of faithful service in the Negro Republic. He was obviously a man who knew his subject intimately, and had an amazing tale to tell.

Interviewed by the London *Daily Mail*, the veteran missionary described how an acquaintance of his, a general in the Haitian army, somehow contrived to incur the bitter enmity of a Voodoo priest who solemnly cursed him, predicting his death within ten days. Nine days later the general died, and Mr. Turnbull himself officiated at his funeral. The very next day, however, the grave was found to be empty!

In view of the high rank of the deceased, a military patrol was sent out to find the grave-robbers, and about a week later came upon a party of men who, at sight of the soldiers, immediately

"ZOMBIES"

By CRIS NORLUND

Vivid little "close-ups" descriptive of manners and customs and prevailing conditions in various parts of the globe. We welcome contributions to this feature.

fled into the jungle, leaving behind a prisoner who appeared to be in some sort of daze. The man was taken to Jacmel, where the general's wife and Mr. Turnbull immediately identified him as the supposedly "dead" officer!

It was the missionary's impression that the general likewise recognized both of them, but he was unable to speak and his mental powers appeared to be completely paralysed. In other words, he was a typical "zombie"—one of the aptly-named "living dead." It would be interesting to know what eventually became of the unfortunate man; this information, however, Mr. Turnbull could not supply.

William Seabrook, a well-known American author, now deceased, won for himself a high reputation as an authority on Negro magic and mysticism. He wrote a remarkable book, "The Magic Island," dealing exhaustively with sorcery as practised in Haiti. When visiting the country Seabrook himself saw "zombies" working in the sugar-fields, and describes them as "walking dead men." The result of his investigations seems to corroborate previous testimony as to the alleged occult powers of certain Haitian witch-doctors or Voodoo men.

One of Seabrook's stories—related to him by an educated Haitian—concerns what is perhaps the most sensational "zombie" case on record. This came to light in 1918 at a place where one would least expect to encounter such incidents—the extensive estates of the well-known Haitian-American Sugar Company, a thriving and thoroughly up-to-date corporation. It is difficult to imagine a more prosaic and matter-of-fact setting, with its great factories, wailing steam-whistles, noisy machines, and clattering freight-cars. That year was a very prosperous one for the "Hasco," as the company was called. Orders for sugar literally poured in, and both male and female Negroes, seeking employment, flocked to the factory from all parts of the Republic.

One morning a number of strange individuals registered at the works office. Their faces had a peculiarly vacant look, but their leader—a certain Ti Joseph, from the town of Colombier—explained that they were just ignorant village folk from a remote district on the Dominican border, and quite unaccustomed to the bustle going on all round. He added that his men were excellent workers, and suggested they might be assigned to duty well away from the noisy factories, where the din of the machinery naturally scared them.

Hands were badly needed, and nobody paid much attention to the newcomers. Ti Joseph's recruits were duly sent to sugar-fields so far

from the barracks of the other workers that the chance of their being recognized by friends or relatives hailing from their home district was very remote. Ti Joseph had to avoid this eventuality at all costs, for it transpired later that his "ignorant village folk" were actually "zombies" whom he and his wife Croyance had collected to slave for them!

Weeks passed, during which the odd-looking Negroes toiled for their callous master, who often beat them to make them work harder. Every pay-day Ti Joseph went to the paymaster alone and drew the combined earnings of his gang—which, needless to say, he kept for himself. A "zombie" needs no money, having no inkling of what is going on around him! Each week-end Ti Joseph and his wife took it in turns to look after their charges and prepare their simple food. This latter, it is claimed, must never contain salt, for salt will cause a "zombie" to wake up to the fact that he is actually a dead man! While husband or wife was thus occupied the other partner would hasten to the nearest village to take part in the Saturday evening dance-orgies or — on Sundays — the usual cock-fights.

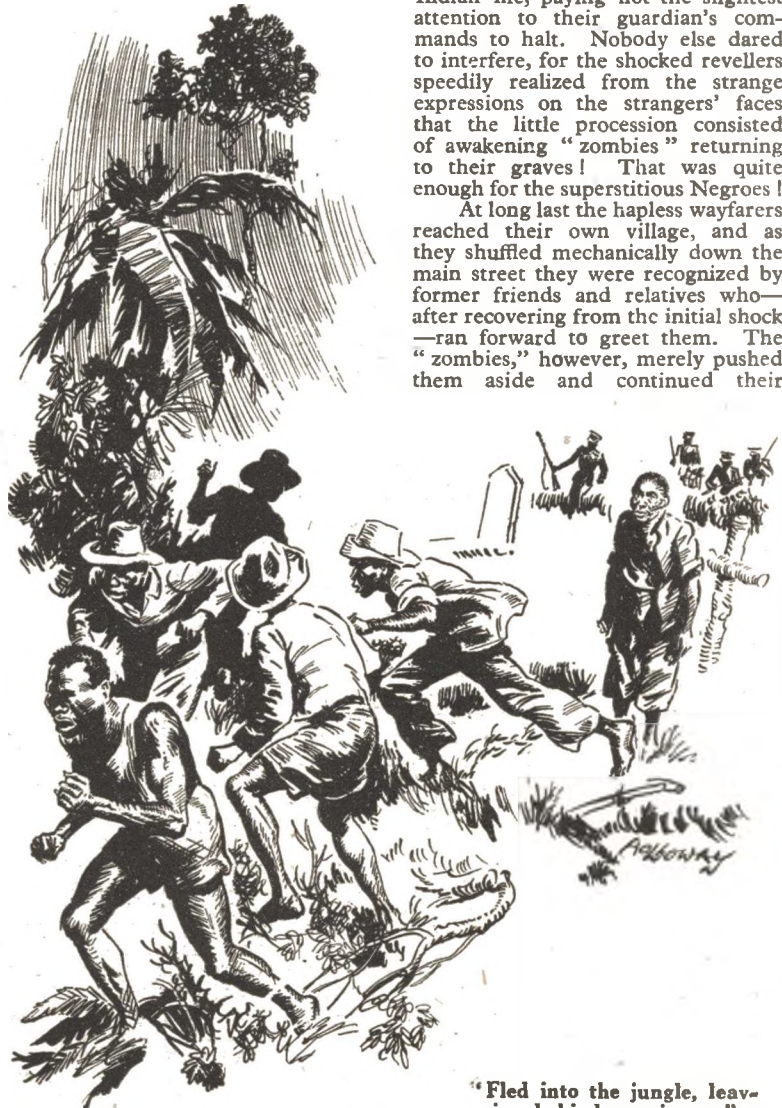
Eventually the important *Fête Dieu* came round, and it was arranged that Ti Joseph should take a short holiday and enjoy himself while Croyance remained with the "zombies." On the Sunday morning, however, her loneliness having set her thinking, Croyance began to ponder over the sad fate of the poor robots who did nothing all day but toil hard without receiving any reward. It is also highly probable that she felt an urge to join in the *Fête Dieu* celebrations! Finally she decided it would do no harm to take her hapless charges along to the nearest town, where the local folk knew nothing about Ti Joseph's workers and cared less.

Croyance went to town, dutifully followed by her

silent attendants, still gazing vacantly about them with unseeing eyes. The heat in the crowded market-place was insufferable, and presently she ordered the "zombies" to sit down in the shade of one of the many booths. Various kinds of candies, nuts, and sweetmeats were being hawked by small boys who walked about shouting their wares, and after a while the woman bought her flock some pistachios to keep them occupied.

But the nuts must have contained salt, for the "zombies" had not been nibbling them very long before a terrifying change came over their demeanour. Up to this time they had not made a sound, but now they commenced to utter horrible, inhuman cries and raise their dull eyes towards the distant mountains whence they had originally come. While Croyance watched in dawning horror they scrambled awkwardly to their feet and moved off toward the hills in Indian file, paying not the slightest attention to their guardian's commands to halt. Nobody else dared to interfere, for the shocked revellers speedily realized from the strange expressions on the strangers' faces that the little procession consisted of awakening "zombies" returning to their graves! That was quite enough for the superstitious Negroes!

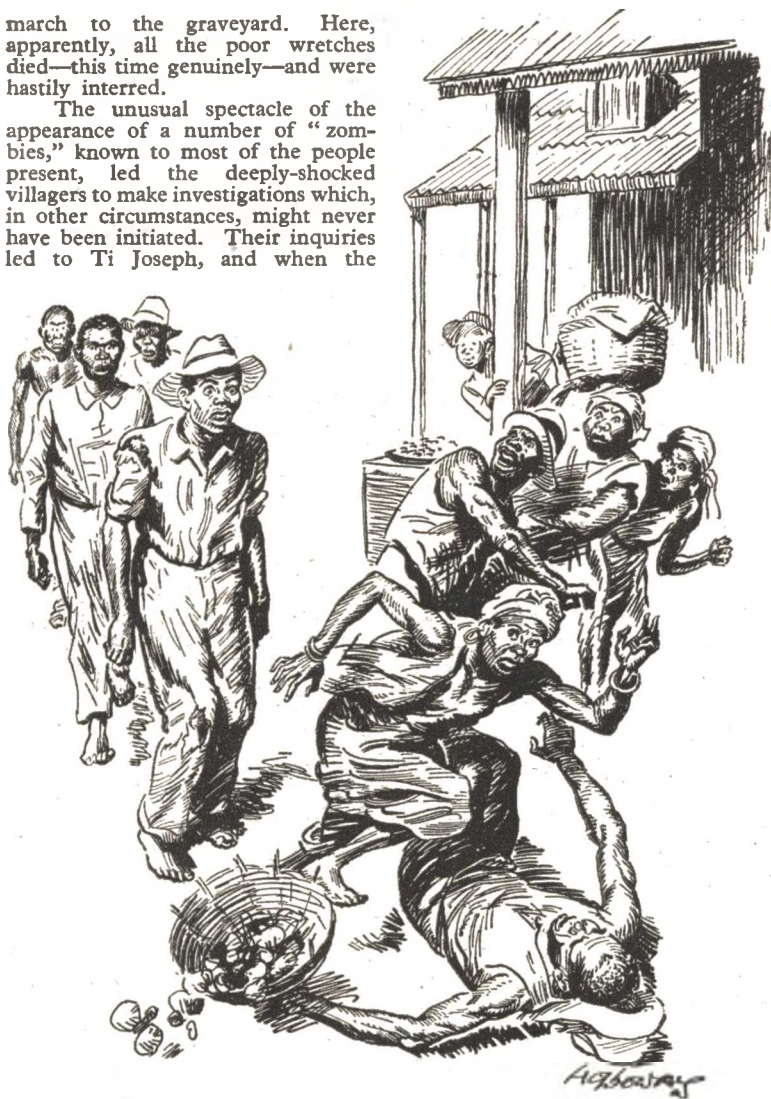
At long last the hapless wayfarers reached their own village, and as they shuffled mechanically down the main street they were recognized by former friends and relatives who—after recovering from the initial shock—ran forward to greet them. The "zombies," however, merely pushed them aside and continued their



"Fled into the jungle, leaving behind a prisoner."

march to the graveyard. Here, apparently, all the poor wretches died—this time genuinely—and were hastily interred.

The unusual spectacle of the appearance of a number of "zombies," known to most of the people present, led the deeply-shocked villagers to make investigations which, in other circumstances, might never have been initiated. Their inquiries led to Ti Joseph, and when the



"They shuffled mechanically down the main street."

peasants discovered the infamous part he had played in this dreadful business they swore communal vengeance. In due course, a plan of campaign having been drawn up, the miscreant fell into an ambush, where somebody hacked his head off with a *machete*.

This macabre story will no doubt strike many readers as utterly fantastic and impossible; they will regard it as merely superstitious nonsense. How can dead people be resuscitated and thenceforth made to work for others as mere automata? The idea is incredible—preposterous! Yet there must be something behind it, for the Penal Code of Haiti, issued by the Ministry of Justice, contains the following significant clause:—

"Also shall be qualified as attempted murder the employment which may be made against any person of substances which, without causing actual death, produce a lethargic coma more or less prolonged. If,

after the administering of such substances, the person has been buried, the act shall be considered murder no matter what result follows."

This legal enactment must prove an awkward snag to those who persist in declaring that "zombie" stories have no foundation! There seems hardly any point in denying the existence of Voodoo and its attendant horrors so long as the Penal Code includes such a tacit admission.

"Zombies," to my mind, are real enough, even if they are not "dead" in the literal sense but merely in a species of artificially-produced cataleptic coma. In a country like Haiti, where autopsy is unknown, and the tropical heat necessitates immediate burial of deceased persons, this truth seldom dawns upon the ignorant peasant, who still believes blindly in the terrifying powers of the Voodoo priest. The

Government may have proscribed this dreadful cult, which practises the worst forms of African fetish-worship, but its votaries continue to meet in secret places.

Last year an enterprising American woman journalist determined to investigate the "zombie" mystery. After overcoming all sorts of difficulties—particularly from officials who, as always, categorically declined to discuss the subject or afford her any facilities—she succeeded in gleaning some startling facts. She discovered that the deep coma or trance-like state which characterizes the typical "zombie" is produced by infusions of a certain root which has marked narcotic properties. This preparation, secretly mixed with the victim's food and swallowed unsuspectingly, produces a condition closely resembling death. Owing to the climate of Haiti, and in accordance with the regulations of the Public Welfare Department, the "corpse" must be buried at once. Normally, of course, this

would mean suffocation for an individual still alive, but when they need a slave to work for them the fiends concerned take care to exhume their victim before this happens.

Apparently the drug does not affect the brain-centres controlling the muscular system and sensory organs, but completely paralyses the cells connected with the intelligence. Thus a "zombie" will eat, drink, work, and sleep like an ordinary being, but—owing to his inability to think—unhesitatingly carries out any command he receives. It is alleged that "zombies" can be employed for any type of manual labour for periods of varying length, according to the potency of the drug administered in each individual case. Sooner or later, however, the effects of the preparation wear off, whereupon the victim once again becomes normal. Although, as a rule, he remembers nothing of his "zombie" existence, he nevertheless represents a potential menace to the miscreant responsible for his "death." But it is an easy matter to get rid of him forever; if he is ordered to walk over a precipice to destruction he will immediately

obey! The poor wretch has already been declared legally dead and duly buried; nobody bothers about a corpse found at the bottom of a deep ravine, and so the murder passes unnoticed and unpunished. People may have their suspicions, but there the matters ends; in the more isolated interior districts, where most "zombie" cases occur, the Negroes are too fearful of the powers of darkness to take any action that might bring down upon them the displeasure of the dreaded Voodoo priests—often equivalent to a death-warrant.

The Haitian medicine-man or witch-doctor, like his fellow-practitioner in the "Dark Continent," has obtained a powerful hold over the native mind, and keeps the ignorant peasant-folk in a state of abject terror for his own evil purposes. Although the ambitious and far-reaching development schemes put in hand by the present Haitian Government are eminently praiseworthy, undoubtedly making for enlightenment and enhanced prosperity, it will probably be many years before the sinister activities of Voodoo are finally ended.

ISLAND OF SHIPS

By GEOFFREY d'EGVILLE

IN the summer of 1943 I found myself camped in a scorpion-infested spot among some olive trees on the Lebanese coastline, exactly eleven kilometres south of Tripoli. A unit of the branch of the service in which I was serving at the time was preparing to go into the Aegean islands as soon as conditions made that possible. A particular kind of craft was required—easy to handle, so that it could manoeuvre in and out of small harbours, but sufficiently capacious for the installation of printing machinery, a generator, and other paraphernalia connected with its mission. It was thought that a *caïque*,

the type of schooner peculiar to the Aegean Islands and the Levant

coast, would be most suitable.

It fell to another officer and myself to make inquiries and keep our eyes open for likely craft. In pursuit of our investigations we visited most of the little ports from Haifa northward up the Lebanese and Syrian coastline to Latakia.

Our quest took us finally to the island of Rouad, lying off the Syrian coast, not far from Tartous or Tortosa—the "Antaradus" of the ancients. In most of the harbours we had sought and received helpful advice from the British Naval Officer in Charge or the Sea Transport Officer, but at Tartous we dealt with the French,



The picturesque waterfront, showing one of the shipyards.



The island craft are built to-day very much in the same way as they have always been.

who gave us an introduction to their post on Rouad Island.

We were accompanied by one of the three richest men on the island, all of them ship-builders; we were to be his guests at lunch at his island home. It was fortunate that we also had with us a major whose Arabic was passably good—at least sufficient for the exchange of compliments, if not for technical discussions on the merits of *caïques*.

Rouad—sometimes spelled Ruad—was the Arvad or Arad of Biblical times. Its people are mentioned in Genesis x, 13, and their naval and military prowess is recorded in Ezekiel xxvii, 8 and 11. The island was known to the Greeks as Arados, and is absolutely unique in one respect, having been a shipbuilding centre for close on *four thousand years!* Ships and the sea are in the blood of its inhabitants, for ships have always provided their livelihood; they talk, think, and dream of nothing else. Small boys, drawing idly on the walls, do not attempt to sketch human figures or animals, but always ships, ships, and more ships.

A brief historical sketch of this strange isle may not be out of place before we step ashore. For all its long history as a prosperous schooner-building centre there is no doubt that Rouad

has seen better days. Its most glorious era was two thousand years ago, in the pre-Christian era. Set in the cradle of civilization, the place was well known to Phœnician traders, who built a great wall of huge slabs of native rock round the whole island.

In those far-off days, when the sturdy men of Arvad were renowned as mariners and soldiers, they extended their dominion to the mainland, where they founded a number of towns, known as "the daughters of Arvad." This kingdom, though mainly coastal, at one time included cities as far inland as Hama, Thapsacus, and Nisibis. In course of time, however, the Arvadians were forced to recognize the suzerainty of the Assyrians, the Pharaohs, Babylonians, Persians, and Romans. The Persians used the

(Continued on page 63)



When the youngsters draw on the walls they always draw ships!



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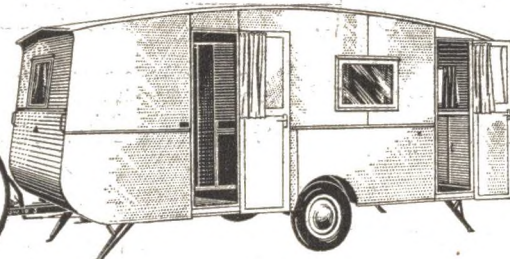
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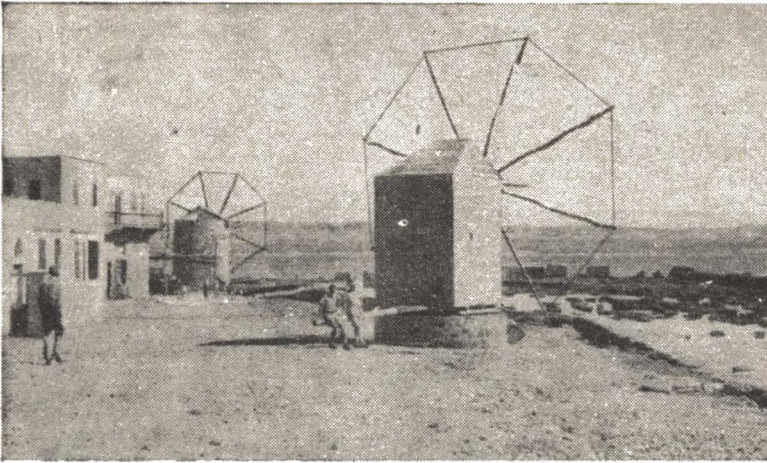
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The island abounds in odd little windmills, whose sails are made from old ships' canvas.

Arvad fleet against the Greeks in the disastrous battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. About this period Greek civilization had its influence on the island, which contained many sculptures by Pheidias and, a century or so later, by Praxiteles.

If Andros—to give Rouad its Greek name—could ever have been described as a world power, in the then limited application of the term, the Roman Conquest of 64 B.C. effectively ended it. The subsequent absorption of all Syria by the Arabs left the island in the hands of the Byzantines as a naval base, well protected by its gigantic walls. Not until A.D. 640 was the place captured by Muslims and the protective rampart razed. It is not surprising that the nineteenth century French historian Renan should have described these Phœnician frag-

ments as "the most imposing ruin in the world." Those giant slabs remain a feature of the island to this day.

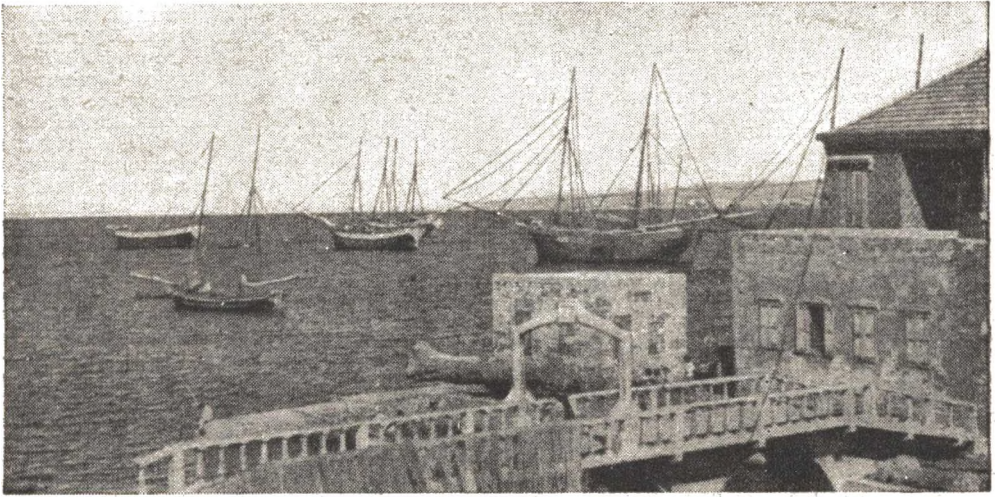
The Crusaders built a fine fortress on the island which, until recent years, was occupied as a barracks by the French garrison. Wrested from the Crusaders by the Muslims in 1302, Rouad remained in their hands until the French warship *Jeanne d'Arc* sailed in and captured it in 1914. They held it until the successful conclusion of Allenby's campaign against the Turks in 1918. During World War I food was smuggled from the island to feed 300,000 Maronite Christians in Syria who would otherwise have starved. After the war, Rouad was included in the French mandate over Syria, but the conclusion of World War II found them unable to maintain their position, and on January 1st, 1944, the states of Syria and Lebanon became free and independent republics.

A trace of the Crusaders' occupation still exists. Carved on the stone wall of the fort is the crest of the Lusignan family, a lion and a palm tree. After the Turks captured it in 1302, they carved a chain round the lion. According to local legend, a fragment of the last Turkish shell to be fired at the island in World War I broke the chain, thus setting the lion free!

Seen across the two miles of Mediterranean



Rouad has been building ships for close on four thousand years!



Island-built *caïques* lying in the little harbour.

which separates it from Tartous, the island gleams white in the sunlight. After the trip across—in a queer square-sailed craft equipped with an outboard engine—we stepped ashore to find ourselves in a world apart. In the harbour lay numerous *caïques*, old and brand-new, some of them awaiting masts from the scarce timber-supplies on the mainland. Others were beached for careening—or, in un-nautical English, turned over on their sides to have their bottoms scraped. Here and there one caught glimpses of ships in various stages of construction.

It was fascinating to watch the craftsmen at work. If blueprints exist, they cannot have changed since time immemorial, but personally I doubt the necessity for such things. These men build from memory and by eye! The urge to create ships, and the gift for doing so, is the heritage of Rouad youth, and quite small boys may often be seen at work under the supervision of their elders. Apart from a small sponge-fishing industry, the natives' constructive energy is devoted entirely to the building of their typical schooners, which ply the coasts of the Levant to-day as they have done for centuries past.

We duly paid our respects to the French before lunching with our Arab friend; we also inspected most of the island. It is small enough, to be sure; its 2,500 or so inhabitants occupy an area measuring about half a mile by 550 yards. There is no wheeled traffic and no roads; and only narrow passages and steps provide a footway between the two-storied houses and miniature courts and gardens. At times one's path is barred by a flock of sheep, poor beasts which have never known—and never will know—the joys of grazing on grassland. The chickens also lead a dog's life, so to speak; if only because of the native youths' custom of taking them swimming!

The castle, dating from Saracen times, is still intact, but the immense slabs of stone which once formed the island wall are the sole reminders of the Kingdom of Arvad of 2000 B.C. A curiosity which often bewildered ancient besiegers of the island is the water supply, which,

it was known, was not always sufficient for the inhabitants. Yet somehow the islanders were always able to hold out long beyond the supposed capacity of their water-tanks. The secret lay in a fresh-water spring under the sea which the natives were able to tap with the aid of a pipe, thus replenishing their cisterns!

The extravagance of an Arab's hospitality is usually the measure of his wealth. If the lunch our host gave us at his home, the largest house on the island, may be taken as a yardstick, he must have been fabulously rich! Although only four of us sat down to the meal, a dozen to fifteen dishes were placed before us. Some small fish—sardines or whitebait—appeared in four separate guises, both cooked and pickled, and there were also hot and cold meats, vegetables, and fruit. The native *arak* stood on the table, with Syrian and Palestinian wines, but a signal to the servant brought whisky, gin, and brandy. We drank our coffee and sipped our liqueurs at small tables in a lofty room furnished with sofas and rich hangings in the Arab manner. Through open french windows, leading to a balcony over the sea, we could see *caïques* at anchor, the mainland shoreline, and the mountains of the Lebanon beyond.

During World War II, Rouad, for all its turbulent past, was a haven of peace. For some time after the disarming of the Vichy French the British maintained a "garrison" consisting of one sergeant, whose duties consisted of maintaining good relations with the people of the island and accompanying a French non-commissioned officer and a Lebanese Customs official on inspections of incoming schooners. While matches and other trifling contraband occasionally reached the island from Turkey, there were other possible importations which, in wartime, were of a more serious nature.

Great warriors and great mariners as the men of Arvad were of old, World War II passed them by. Nowadays they go about their business without much thought for their glorious past and little concern for what the future may hold. "Why should we worry?" they say. "There will always be ships!"



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Echoes of the Past

SOME of our readers have mighty long memories; one of them recently suggested I should look up a paragraph—which had apparently greatly impressed him—that appeared in these columns *thirty-eight years ago!* Unfortunately this proved impossible; during the late war one of Hitler's aircraft dropped a bomb on a section of our offices, completely destroying (among other things) the early files of "Man and His Needs." I was thus precluded from perusing the item our correspondent had kept in mind for so lengthy a period. Perhaps it was just as well! It always seems to me that studying forgotten efforts in almost any field usually produces one of two reactions—both equally unsatisfactory. Either you think: "Is *this* the sort of stuff I turned out in those days?" or else: "Pretty good! I wonder

if I'm up to that standard now?"

The "Razor-box"

Apparently, when I recently mentioned that ingenious little oil-bath contrivance for extending the working life of safety-razor blades, I did not interpret the theory of it quite correctly. The factors which sooner or later destroy a blade, the inventor points out, are too-frequent use, exposure to the air, accidental contact with other surfaces, and damage caused by careless wiping. Steel is known to keep its temper longer if immersed in oil, and prolonged experiments have proved that blades suspended in this "razor-box" *directly after use*, and afterwards called upon for duty only once a week, retain their original keenness for a surprisingly long period. It is not necessary to dry the blade; all you need do is to rinse it, or

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Figure-belts

Sedentary workers and men who are no longer so young as they used to be continue to write to me about "middle-age spread" and, in particular, that objectionable bulge—sometimes euphemistically referred

to as "bow-window" or "corporation" — which so often mars the symmetry of the masculine figure after one has left one's athletic days behind. Exercise can do a good deal to improve matters, of course, but many of my correspondents are not in a position to do much of it, nor do they feel inclined for anything very strenuous. In such circumstances a great deal of benefit can be derived from a properly-made



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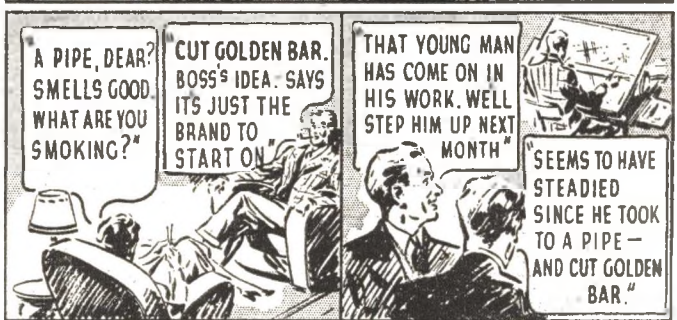
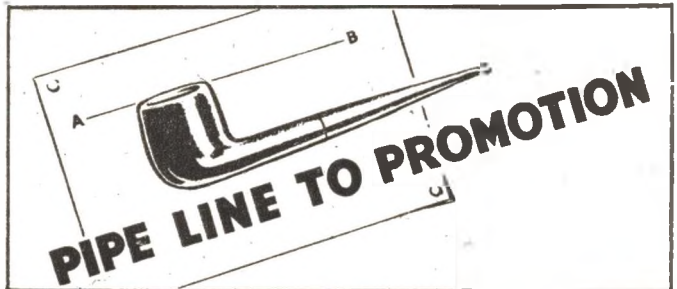
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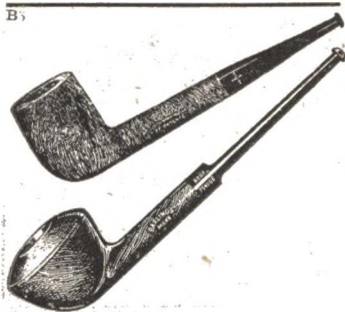
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Quick Work

Our American cousins are great lads for cutting out non-essentials and going straight to the heart of a matter; I suspect they even have their own method of streamlining the business of courting a girl! Having read my recent remarks concerning the best way of breaking in a new briar pipe, a reader in Texas writes:

"You go to altogether too much trouble. All you have to do is to sand-paper the varnish from the rim of the bowl. Sometimes there is also a trace of varnish inside; if so, sand-paper that as well. Your pipe will then smoke coolly from the very first puff. Try it!" We are much obliged, G. M. C., and sand-paper is being requisitioned forthwith.

Sunshine and Shaving

A correspondent in Queensland, whose work keeps him out of doors throughout the greater part of the year, sends along a tip which should be of interest to men who suffer from chafing and soreness after shaving. "Folk with tender skins," he says, "ought to try exposing their faces to direct sunshine for a certain period every day.

This process, if properly carried out, will gradually toughen the cuticle and enable them to shave without discomfort. When my own skin has its normal healthy tan I find I can easily shave 'dry,' but directly the tan wears off my face becomes sensitive again." Acquiring a useful layer of sun-tan isn't quite so easy as it sounds in our uncertain British summers, but I suspect that the "toughening" business is actually attained by a combination of sun-rays and fresh air, which shouldn't be too difficult. Man certainly wasn't meant to spend the greater part of his time cooped up indoors; small wonder that, under such artificial conditions, his epidermis tends to lose its original characteristics! It may also occur to some of you that *homo sapiens*—which means us—probably wasn't intended to shave off the whiskers Nature thoughtfully provided for his protection, but seeing that most of us, willy-nilly, are slaves to convention, there's not much we can do about it!

How About This?

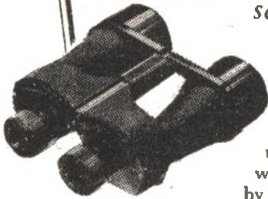
Our Queensland friend evidently does a good deal of thinking during his spells in the bush, for he has another interesting suggestion to offer—this time to the makers of electric dry-shavers. He writes: "I'd like them to see if they can't make a really practical model with a coiled-spring motor for the use of people who have no electricity avail-



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able. I am well aware that there is already at least one British razor of this type worked by hand-pressure with a pliers action, but this strikes me as rather inconvenient. A shaver operated by a spring that could be wound up would eliminate the hand-action, which undoubtedly interferes with shaving. The spring, I suggest, could be housed in the body of the machine, and a key that folded or pulled out to wind would not get in the way. Even if two or three windings were necessary to complete the shave they would only occupy a few seconds of one's time." Here's a chance for some mechanical genius; there should certainly be a huge demand for a handy

non-electric dry-shaver of this kind.

" Galloping "

Readers continue to send me stories of the eccentricities of erratic wrist-watches. A little experience of my own in this connection may not be without interest. A sixteen-jewel wristlet suddenly developed an alarming tendency to "gallop," gaining hours during the day, and paying not the slightest attention to some drastic adjustments of the regulator. When I took it to a repairer he went through the usual routine, finally asking me to call back. Then, speaking like an archbishop, he gravely informed me that it was a very badly-built



watch, needing a lot of adjustment, but I could rely upon getting it in a fortnight's time. At the end of that period, of course, it wasn't ready; he explained he had never had such a stupidly constructed watch in his hands before. Yet, mark you, this was a known make, awarded various medals at horological exhibitions!

The Upshot

I heard him out with what patience I could

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muster, finally asking what was actually wrong, and why he suggested the makers didn't know their own business. His reply was masterly: the details would be altogether too technical for my poor intelligence! Finally, after six weeks, I got my wristlet back, paying the expert £2 and receiving the dignified assurance that never again would he tackle a watch of that make; it wasn't worth the trouble. It kept fair time for exactly one day; the next it started to "gallop" as of yore, and on the third day it stopped; the mainspring had broken! Deciding to give an old friend one more chance, I called in at the shop of a little repairer near my home in the country and asked him to fit a new spring, adding casually that I should be glad if he would check over the time-keeping. One week later, with only a small fee to pay, I got it back—and it has kept perfect time ever since. From which it would appear that the repairer is as important as the watch!

The Estimate

Letters which come to hand on this subject reveal sundry odd facets of a difficult problem. One knows, of course, that it is often complicated by the ignorance or downright carelessness of the wearers, but some of my correspondents suspect that many repairers are not only incompetent but occasionally not above taking unfair ad-

vantage of the customer's lack of technical knowledge; to speak colloquially, they "have him for a mug." Here's a curious story told by an Inverness reader. He writes: "Thinking a wrist-chronograph was due for cleaning and re-oiling, I sent it to a well-known firm and asked for an estimate. The watch was most carefully packed. . . . Back came an estimate stating that a new mainspring, balance-staff, and hairspring were required. This, please note, in spite of the fact that the watch had been keeping perfect time! There was nothing I could do, however, but forward a cheque for approximately £5.

Coincidence?

"When this watch was returned I forwarded a first-class pocket stop-watch, also in perfect working order, to another equally well-known firm. Then things became really interesting! This time I was told the watch required not only a new mainspring, balance-staff, and hairspring, but also replacement of a jewel. Another few pounds went west!

"After a third stop-watch was also said to need exactly the same replacements I had the temerity to point out to the people concerned that the timekeeper was in first-class order and had merely been forwarded for cleaning and oiling. In reply they stated that they valued their reputation so highly that they did not dare to risk

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returning a watch without fitting a new mainspring, in case the old one failed. . . . I admit my experience may be unique, but the striking similarity of the replacements claimed to be essential strikes me as rather extraordinary.

"As a youngster I used to spend most of my holidays helping an old watchmaker in my home town and, under his supervision, cleaned many a watch and clock. The fee he charged for a 'petrol clean'—the most expensive in those days—was 3s. 6d., or, if the mainspring was broken and too short to re-hole, 5s. 6d. These things make one wonder!"

The Veteran

Nearly all the complaints about bad time-

keeping concern wrist-watches; sturdy "tur-nips" and other pocket models of earlier days continue to give faithful service. Here's a typical letter from a 75-year-old reader. "I have a gold half-hunter, jewelled in umpteen holes, presented to me in 1920. . . . It has never been cleaned or had anything done to the works for over thirty years, but keeps excellent time. The makers were a well-known London firm, and the only repair has been the replacement of the inner glass, broken about 1940. I have been told again and again that it should be cleaned, otherwise the bearings will be ruined, but I hesitate to interfere with perfection. What do you think?" In theory, of course, the advice is perfectly correct, E. H. R. The most wonderful piece of mechanism in the world cannot be expected to function indefinitely without cleaning, lubrication and skilled attention. But I can quite understand your reluctance to take risks while your watch is putting up such a flawless performance. When you do screw up your courage to part with it for a while, I should strongly recommend you to entrust your treasure to nobody else but the original makers. They aren't likely to let you down, even if only for the sake of their reputation!

Breezes of Araby

And now for another instance of the long-memory business I mentioned earlier on. Asking if I can tell him of a

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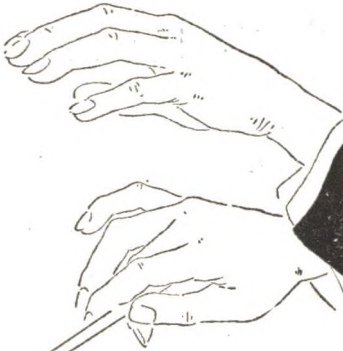
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W.A.S.R.

handy specific for quickly removing from one's breath the odour of things like onions, a reader reminds me that something of the kind was mentioned in "Man and His Needs" twenty years or more ago. I did contrive to recall this preparation, but apparently the firm that intro-



duced it has long since gone out of business. You had better consult your chemist, H. C. M.; if he hasn't anything special in stock he can soon make up something for the purpose. This correspondent's letter reminds me of an old story. For many years a certain elderly managing clerk had sat opposite his lawyer employer in a stuffy office. Every morning, directly the hostelrys opened, he would disappear unostentatiously and hie him to a snug little nearby bar where he indulged in a "quick one" and a few minutes' conversation with sundry old friends.

The Limit

Came the day when one of these latter happened to remark: "Doesn't

your boss ever notice the whisky on your breath?" "I—I don't think so," replied the clerk, rather startled. "I should think he's bound to," continued the friend, sagely. "You should do as I do, and chew a clove. Here; have one now!" Gratefully the old clerk accepted it, nibbling lustily on his way back. He hadn't resumed his seat in the office very long, however, before the solicitor sniffed the air and fixed him with an accusing stare.

"Brown," he said, severely, "I've put up with the smell of whisky for many years, but I'll be hanged if I'll endure cloves as well!" Which goes

to show, of course, that one can't be too careful about odours!

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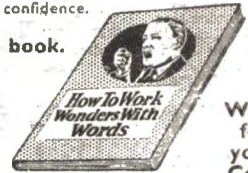
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The Captain

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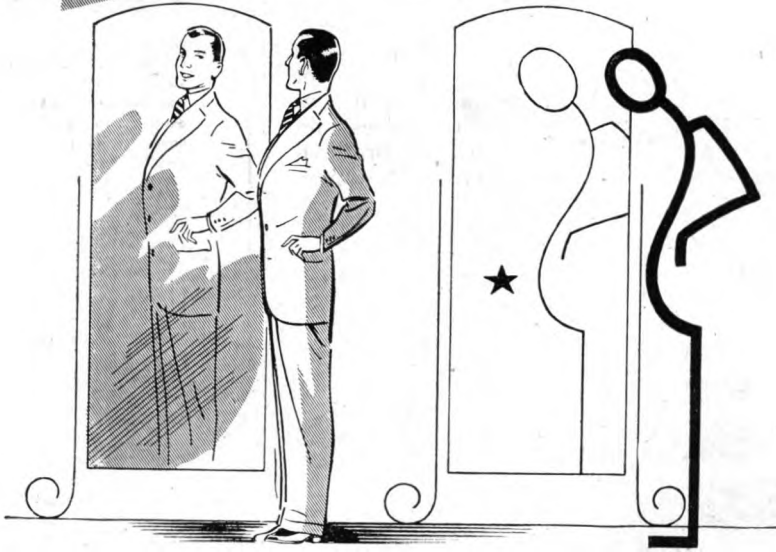
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