The WIDE WORLD

MAGAZINE

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

JUNE 1948

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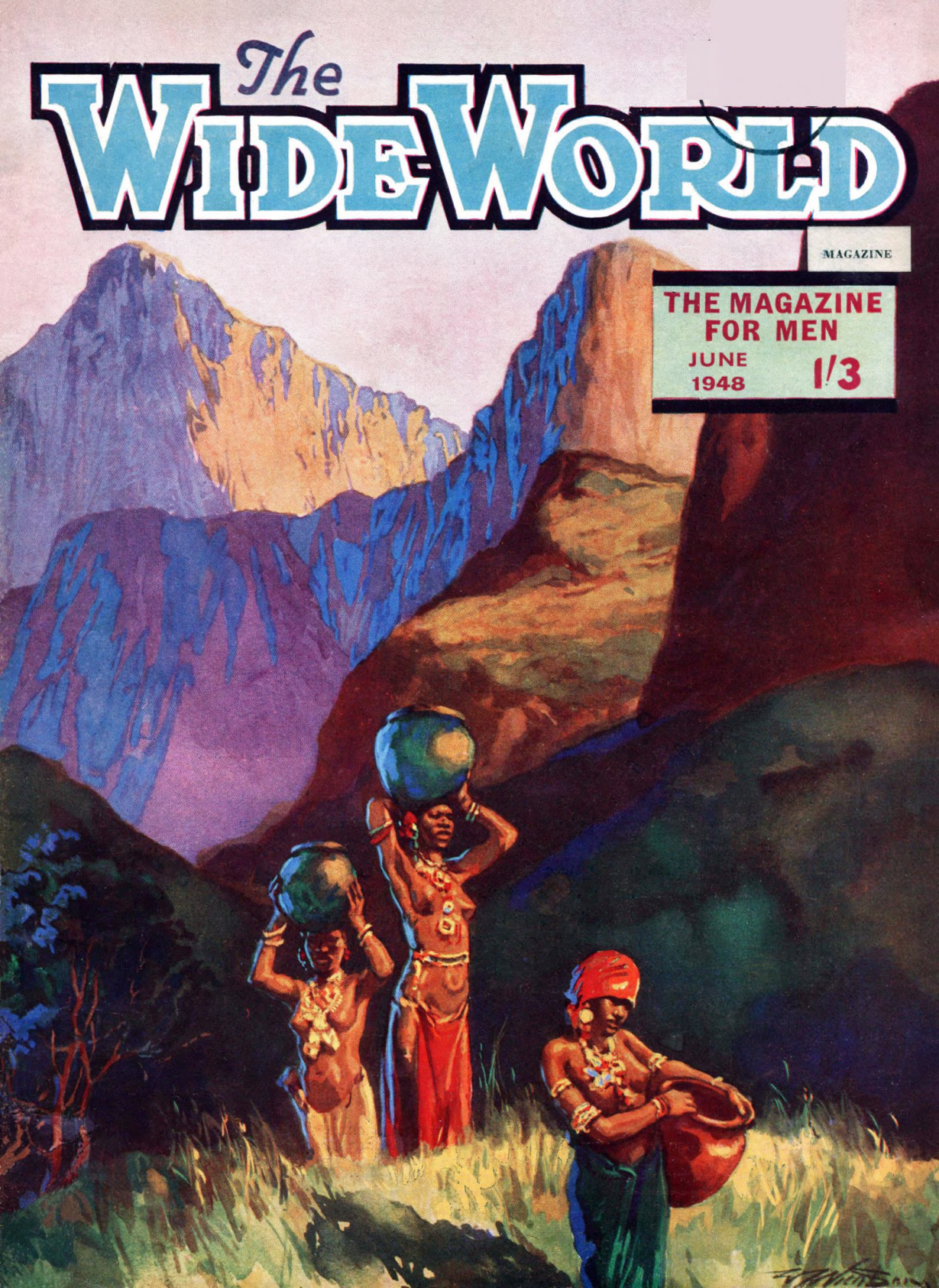

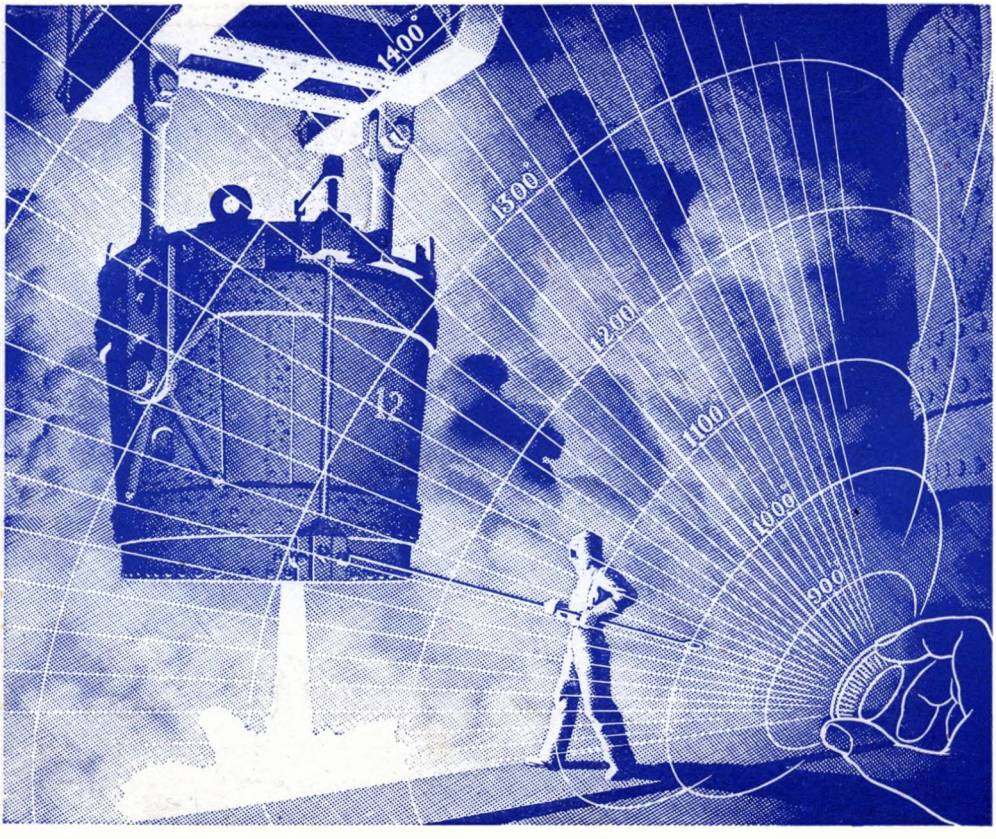

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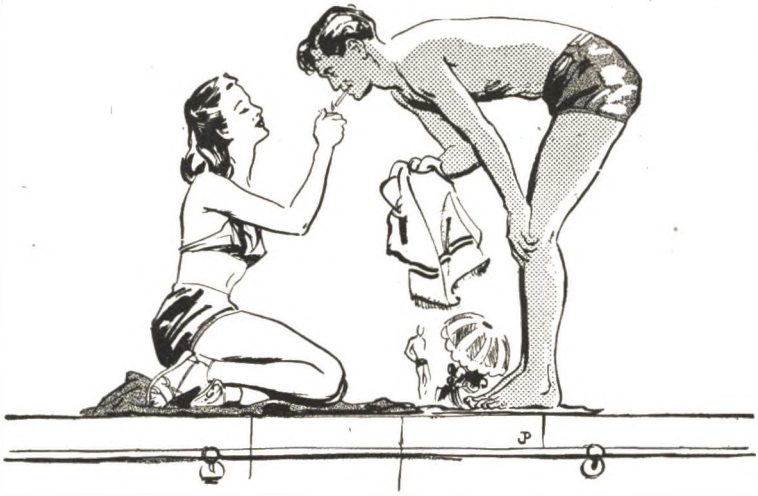

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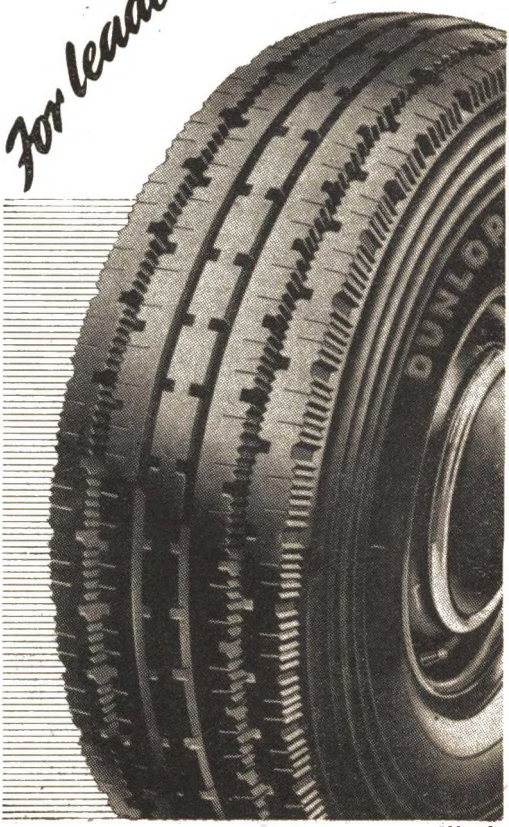

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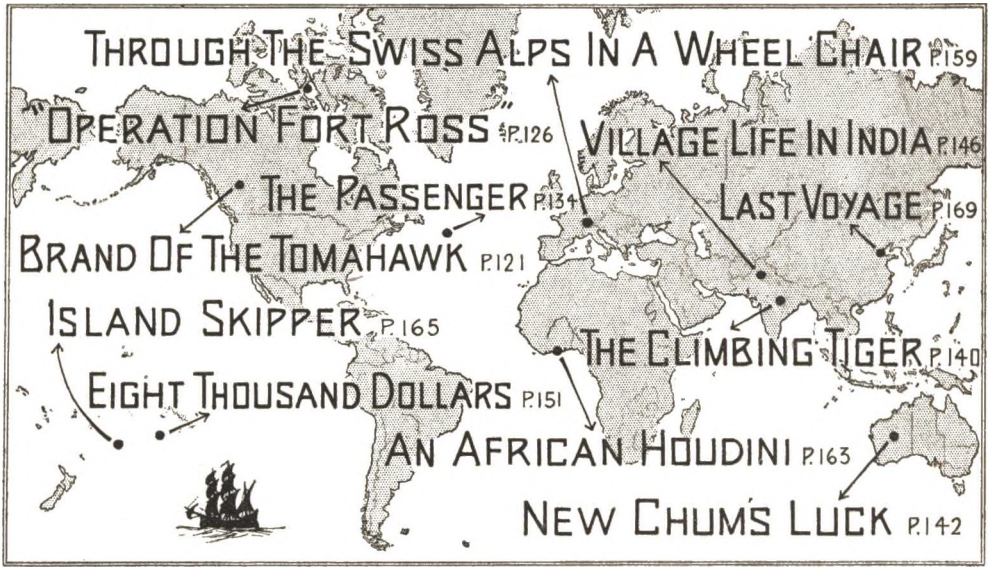
GOOD READING

"OPERATION FORT ROSS"
AN AFRICAN HOUDINI
LAST VOYAGE



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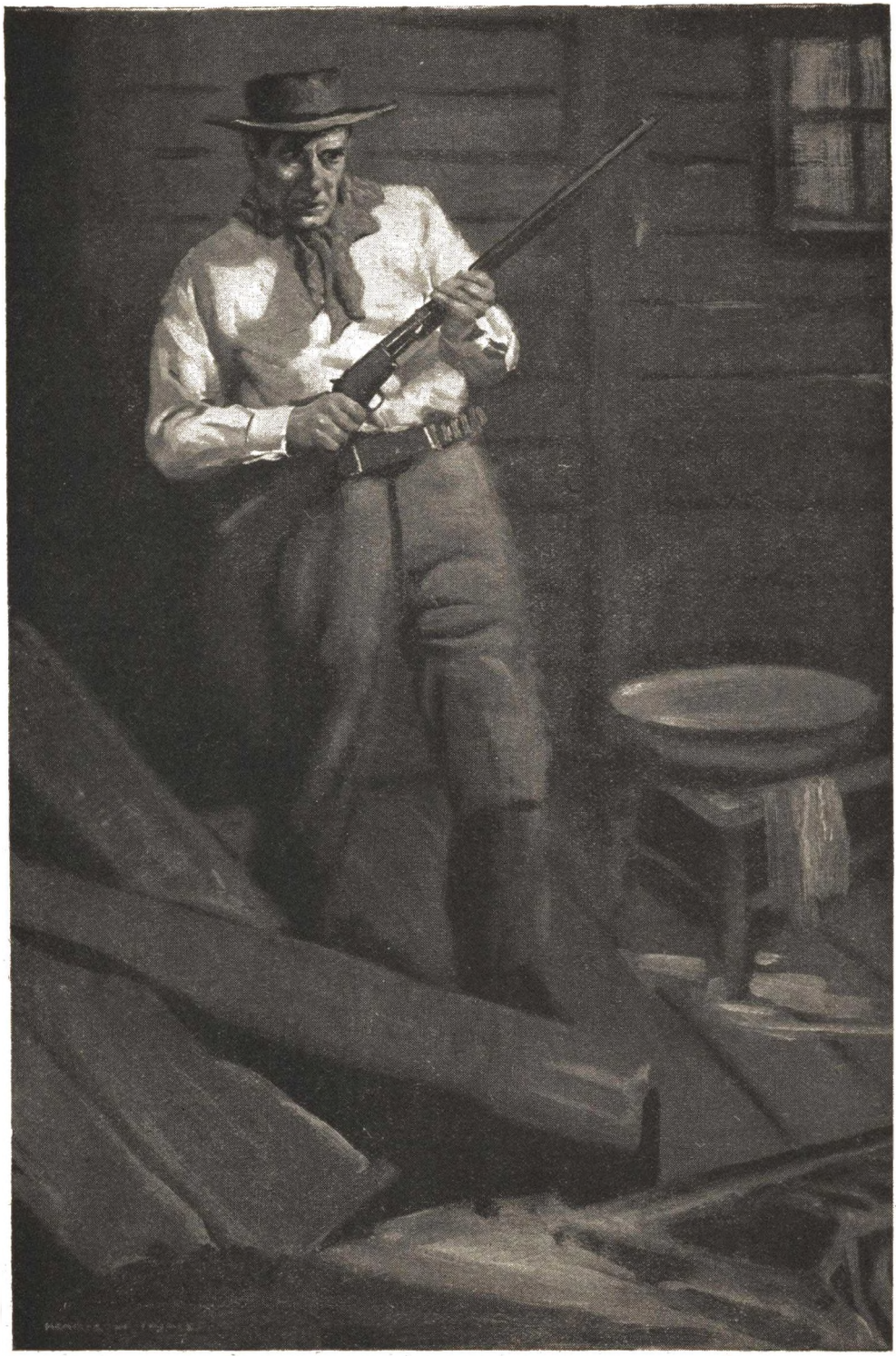


"LYING ON THE BUNK WAS A HUMAN SKELETON." (SEE PAGE 124.)

BRAND OF THE TOMAHAWK

By PHILIP H. GODSELL, F.R.G.S., Author of "Arctic Trader"

The Author, formerly a veteran Hudson's Bay Company officer, writes: "This is one of the strangest stories I have ever come across during my travels in the Canadian North-west. I heard it while staying at Fort St. John, and every word can be vouched for."

FORT ST. JOHN lay shimmering under the opalescent haze of Indian summer. From the conical tepees of Chief Montagnais' tawny Beavers, in from their Rocky Mountain haunts to trade bear and beaver skins and barter their winter trapping outfits, came the monotonous throb of tom-toms and the quavering whoops of bedizened dancers.

Over on the sandbar in the swift-flowing Peace River, John Armson eyed his gold-pan disgustedly. Then he turned impulsively to Twelve-Foot-Davis, "Banjo" Mike and "Nigger" Dan, his partners in prospecting.

"We're wasting time, boys," he growled, as he wiped his sweat-beaded forehead with a red bandanna. "First thing we know old Keewatin (the winter wind) will come roaring down from the north and we shan't have enough dust to buy a decent grub-stake. It's me for the tall timbers!"

"An' where yo' all aim to go?" demanded Nigger Dan. "Dese Beaver Injuns claim this hyar country to the nort', an' won't let no strangers go in to trap thar."

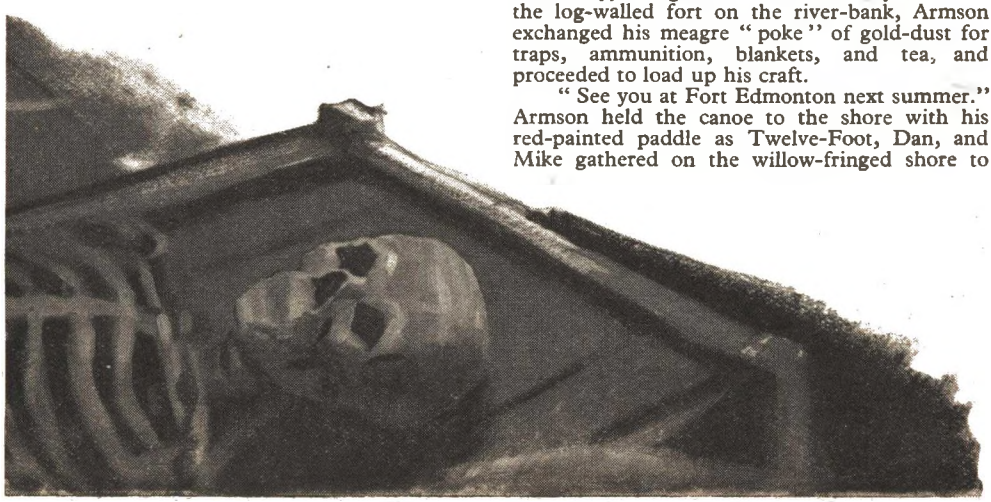
"I've got that all figured out," returned Armson, tightening the gaudy L'Assumption sash around his buck-skin trousers. "I'm figuring on hitting up the South Line. No Indians hunt there, excepting maybe an odd Cree or Blackfoot. There's heavy timber up towards the Pine Pass; it should be likely country for beaver and good dark marten."

That night Armson discussed his plans with his Indian wife, Little Fawn. Niece of the renowned Blackfoot chieftain, Old Sun, and the comeliest of all the dusky beauties of the tribe, she had only one physical imperfection. Years previously, while chopping wood for the tepee fire, she had struck the second toe of her left foot with a tomahawk, leaving a scar which extended from the toe-nail in the form of a livid ridge. Armson had met and married Little Fawn a couple of years after leaving his home in distant England to seek fortune in the forests and prairies of the North-west, and had never regretted his action.

Little Fawn was delighted at the idea. "The woods should be full of moose and deer and the headwaters of the mountain streams alive with beaver," she said. "By next spring we ought to have lots of skins to trade."

Obtaining a dugout canoe from John McKinley, the grizzled Hudson's Bay factor at the log-walled fort on the river-bank, Armson exchanged his meagre "poke" of gold-dust for traps, ammunition, blankets, and tea, and proceeded to load up his craft.

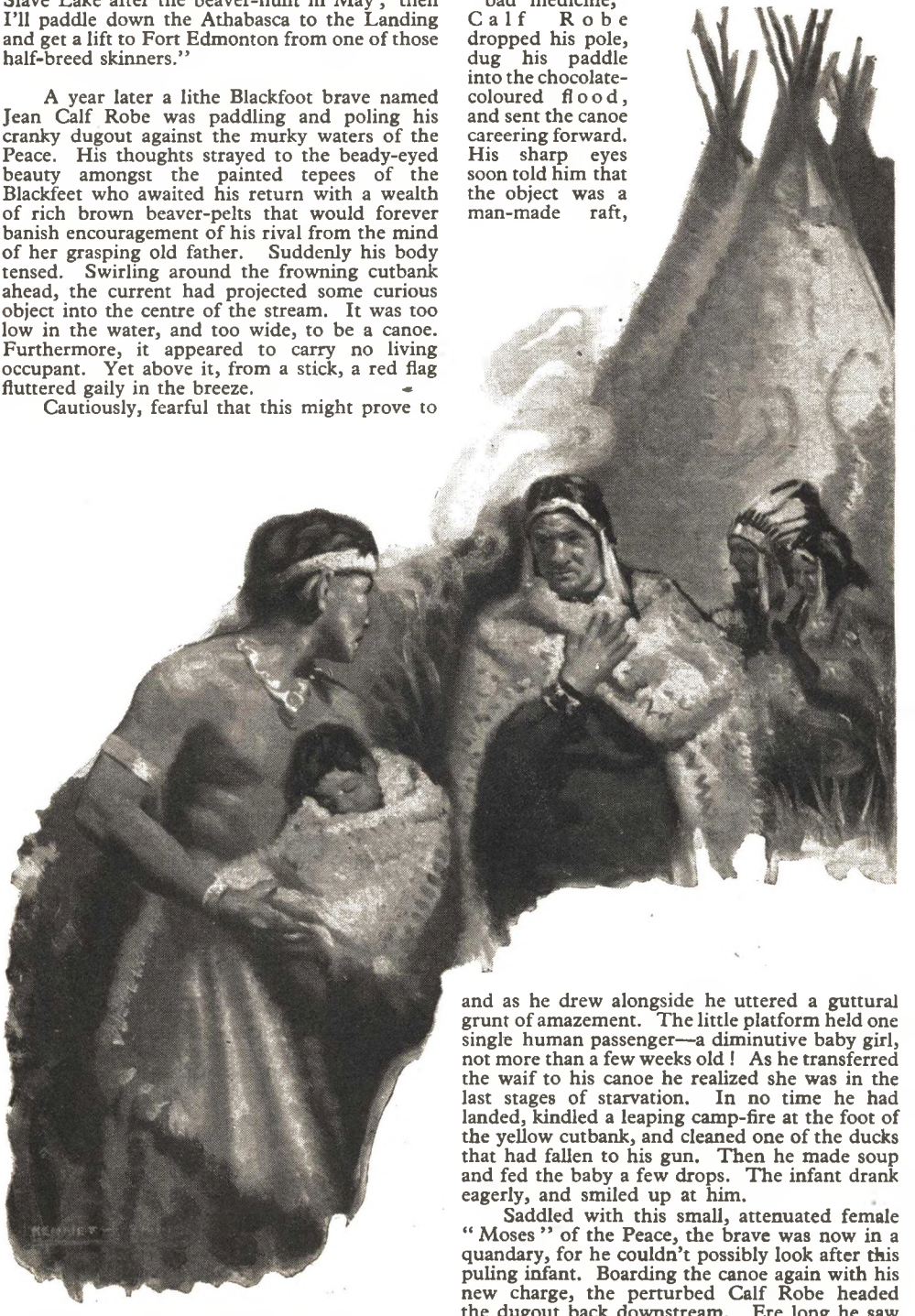
"See you at Fort Edmonton next summer." Armson held the canoe to the shore with his red-painted paddle as Twelve-Foot, Dan, and Mike gathered on the willow-fringed shore to



bid him good-bye. " I figure on reaching Lesser Slave Lake after the beaver-hunt in May ; then I'll paddle down the Athabasca to the Landing and get a lift to Fort Edmonton from one of those half-breed skinners."

A year later a lithe Blackfoot brave named Jean Calf Robe was paddling and poling his cranky dugout against the murky waters of the Peace. His thoughts strayed to the beady-eyed beauty amongst the painted tepees of the Blackfeet who awaited his return with a wealth of rich brown beaver-pelts that would forever banish encouragement of his rival from the mind of her grasping old father. Suddenly his body tensed. Swirling around the frowning cutbank ahead, the current had projected some curious object into the centre of the stream. It was too low in the water, and too wide, to be a canoe. Furthermore, it appeared to carry no living occupant. Yet above it, from a stick, a red flag fluttered gaily in the breeze.

Cautiously, fearful that this might prove to be some sort of " bad medicine," Calf Robe dropped his pole, dug his paddle into the chocolate-coloured flood, and sent the canoe careering forward. His sharp eyes soon told him that the object was a man-made raft,



" He presented the waif to the excited squaws."

and as he drew alongside he uttered a guttural grunt of amazement. The little platform held one single human passenger—a diminutive baby girl, not more than a few weeks old ! As he transferred the waif to his canoe he realized she was in the last stages of starvation. In no time he had landed, kindled a leaping camp-fire at the foot of the yellow cutbank, and cleaned one of the ducks that had fallen to his gun. Then he made soup and fed the baby a few drops. The infant drank eagerly, and smiled up at him.

Saddled with this small, attenuated female " Moses " of the Peace, the brave was now in a quandary, for he couldn't possibly look after this puling infant. Boarding the canoe again with his new charge, the perturbed Calf Robe headed the dugout back downstream. Ere long he saw the blue spirals of tepee-smoke arising above the cottonwoods. Hurrying ashore, he strode into the camp of a band of nomad Beaver Indians,

presented the waif to the excited squaws, and related his story.

"*Wah, wah!*" exclaimed a leathery-faced old crone, as they gathered round to examine the child. "Look at that mark on the baby's foot."

The brave's eyes followed the pointing finger, and he observed on the second toe of the left foot a blue ridge like a healed wound.

"That scar," continued the old squaw, "is a birthmark. It's *older* than the child!"

The following day Jean headed back upstream, leaving the infant with the Beavers, who soon afterwards broke camp, loaded tepee-covers and packs upon their shaggy cayuses, and moved off toward their forested hunting-grounds to the northward in search of moose and bear. And that was the last to be heard of the female "Moses" for some considerable time.

Quite a few bitter winters had cracked down on the forests and canyons of the Peace when Alfred Garrioch, veteran missionary on Canada's western frontier, happened to camp at a road-house one night with a young couple named Vining, who said they hailed from St. Paul, Minnesota. The missionary noticed that they had with them an unusually pretty and vivacious young girl, who attracted his attention.

"I suppose this girl you have with you is your daughter," he remarked to Jack Vining.

"No"; she's no relation at all," replied Vining. "As a matter of fact, we 'bought' her from a trader at Fort Edmonton! He'd picked her up from some nomad Indians during his travels in the Peace River country. Amy"—he nodded toward his wife—"decided to adopt her, so we're doing our best to bring her up."

By some strange twist of Destiny it wasn't long after he had parted with the Vinings that Garrioch's trail crossed that of Jean Calf Robe, now happily married to his dusky sweetheart. Hiring Jean as guide, he hit north to Lesser Slave Lake and the Peace. Then one night, as they reclined on an aromatic spruce-bough bed before the leaping flames of a camp-fire, watching the blue spirals of tobacco-smoke wafted from their pipes, Jean told the missionary how, years previously, he had found the little girl castaway floating down-river on a raft.

Haunting thoughts raced through his mind kept the sky-pilot awake till far into the night. Some psychic "hunch" persisted in his mind that the Vinings' adopted daughter and the raft-baby were one and the same!

Next morning he told his surprised guide about his suspicions. "I'll never rest," he said, as he saddled his buckskin pony, "till I've found out where that child really came from."

Inquiries at the camps of wandering Beaver braves told him nothing. Everywhere his queries concerning the orphan of the Peace were met with stony faces and set lips. Never friendly towards intruding palefaces, the Beavers preferred to keep their secrets to themselves.

Garrioch had already learned from Calf Robe that he had come across the raft two days' journey upstream from Fort Dunvegan. That meant the child must have been sent on its strange journey somewhere along the Upper Peace River or on one of the two larger tributaries which flow into that majestic stream, along the southern frontier of the hunting-grounds of the untamed Beaver tribe. But who, he asked himself, would deliberately consign a baby to what must have seemed almost certain death? Could marauding Beaver Indians, cousins of the fierce Apaches to the southward—who hated the whites with an unquenchable ardour—have fallen upon the camp of the parents, and had they, in a last desperate attempt to save their child, sent it on its voyage in the almost forlorn hope that it might be picked up by friendly hands?

It seemed likely that the raft had started its journey south of Fort St. John, otherwise it would probably have been spotted by lynx-eyed Indians as it passed that place. The most reasonable conclusion, therefore, was that for some mysterious reason the youngster had been set adrift somewhere up the South Pine, which debouched into the Peace twelve miles below the fort.

Frustrated at every turn, the missionary eventually found himself seated in a *babiche*-netted chair in the log-walled dwelling-house of Fort St. John. But even Factor McKinley, uncrowned king of the coppery tribesmen who traded at the lonely fort, could tell him little.

"Mon, ye're wastin' your time," he declared. "I did hear tell o' a youngster that was picked up on a raft and handed to some o' them Beaver Injuns tradin' at Fort Dunvegan, but I never took much stock in the yarn. You'd better have a talk with that old rock-rat, Bill Sizerman. He's bunkin' at the Injun house."

Over flapjack, coffee, and sowbelly, Garrioch discussed the mystery with Bill Sizerman, a rugged frontiersman who had trapped and prospected from Athabasca Landing to the Cariboo.

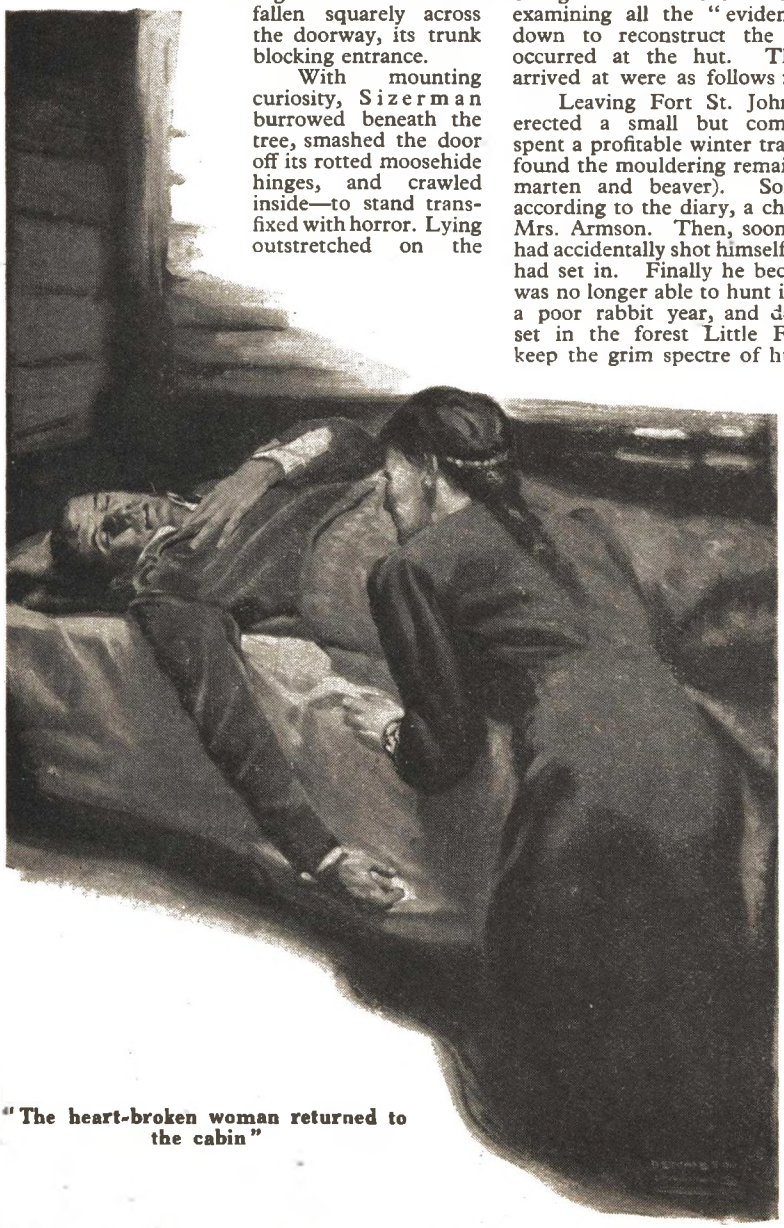
The Author.

"Waal, parson," said Bill, thoughtfully, "I'll see what I kin do. I was kind o' figurin' on lookin' over that thar Pine River country myself, and I guess I kin keep my eyes skinned. But I think the whole thing's just a parcel of Injun gossip."

Up in the forested fastnesses of the Pine the keen scrutiny of the veteran woodsman was rewarded by the sight of weathered axe-cuttings. Following these, he came upon the unmistakable signs of an old trapline with yellowed, pitch-matted "blazes" on the trunks of sentinel pines. At last his moccasined feet led him to a small log cabin almost hidden in the undergrowth.

A giant cottonwood had fallen squarely across the doorway, its trunk blocking entrance.

With mounting curiosity, Sizerman burrowed beneath the tree, smashed the door off its rotted moosehide hinges, and crawled inside—to stand transfixed with horror. Lying outstretched on the bunk was a human skeleton, and on the floor beside it yet another. A scurrying pack-rat alarmed him for a moment; then his eyes turned to a peg on the wall from which hung a notebook tied up in a piece of deerskin. Part of this, he discovered, had been kept as a rough diary by a man named John Armson. On the floor were the rat-gnawed remains of a baby's rattle, parts of an Indian moose-bag cradle, and a shattered gun. But, though he searched in vain, nowhere could he find any sign of a child's skeleton.



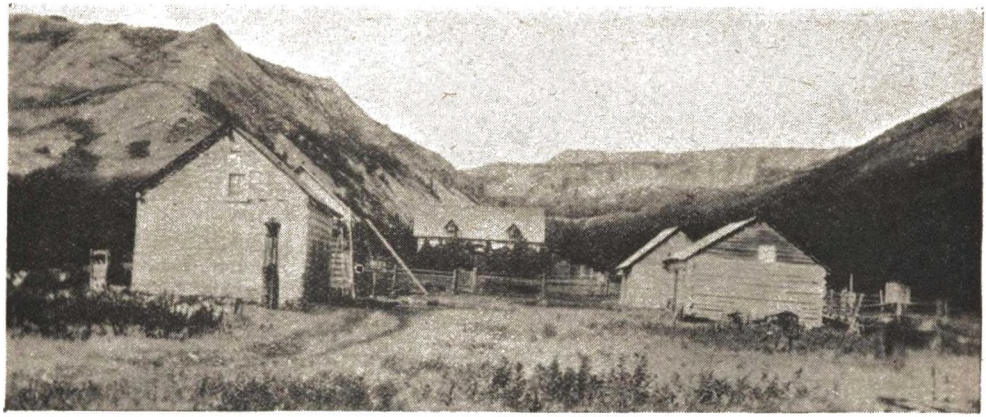
"The heart-broken woman returned to the cabin"

Throwing together a raft, Sizerman committed himself to the swirling waters of the mountain stream, sought out old Garrioch, and brought him to the cabin. After carefully examining all the "evidence," the couple sat down to reconstruct the tragedy which had occurred at the hut. The conclusions they arrived at were as follows:—

Leaving Fort St. John, the Armsons had erected a small but comfortable cabin, and spent a profitable winter trapping (Sizerman had found the mouldering remains and pelts of many marten and beaver). Some time in March, according to the diary, a child had been born to Mrs. Armson. Then, soon afterwards, Armson had accidentally shot himself, and blood-poisoning had set in. Finally he became so weak that he was no longer able to hunt in the woods. It was a poor rabbit year, and despite the snares she set in the forest Little Fawn was unable to keep the grim spectre of hunger at bay; slowly but surely father, mother, and the infant were starving to death. When it became obvious that Armson could not recover, his distraught wife had staggered down to the river and exerted the last of her ebbing strength to make a raft, on which she placed the child. Then she pushed the raft and its precious burden into the current, leaving her infant in the hands of Fate. This done, the heart-broken woman returned to the cabin to die with her husband.

One entry in Armson's notebook-diary served to explain the mark on the child's toe which had interested the old Beaver squaw.

"Born this day, a girl, perfectly formed and with vocal organs in fine working condition. When Mrs. Armson's



Fort St. John, from which John Armson and his wife set out on their ill-fated trip.

glancing hatchet hit her toe she inflicted a hatchet-mark in duplicate, for on the corresponding toe of the baby's foot there is a perfect replica of that scar of hers!"

Another entry read:—

"May 15; I am dying . . . effects of a gun-accident. My first wife, who died in England, left a son, now five. Write to legal firm of Blake and Barstow, London, England. Present wife and babe weak from starvation. The Lord will provide."

Fate must have been very busy just about this time, for old Garrioch, still intent upon following his "hunch," sought out the Vinings again and handed over the notebook describing the tragic happenings in the wilderness cabin and the birth of the "branded" baby, thus effectually establishing the identity of their adopted child, now a charming and cultured girl of eighteen.

The missionary learned that the girl, whom they had christened Lily, was shortly to marry a handsome young man named Herbert Melven, fresh out from England. Lily's foster-parents immediately cabled to Blake and Barstow, stating the facts, and asking for the name and address of the son mentioned in the diary.

As Vining ripped open the flimsy envelope handed him by the telegraph-operator and read the words on the yellow form inside, his face turned pale. The solicitors had wired back that the son's name was Herbert Melven, and that to the best of their information he was now living in the vicinity of Fort Edmonton! There wasn't a shadow of doubt that the Herbert Melven Lily was about to marry was her half-brother!

With a shaking hand, Vining passed the tragic message across to Garrioch; he felt crushed at the thought of the sorrow which had been precipitated out of a cloudless sky upon the luckless youngsters.

"I'd say it's a blessed slip 'twixt cup and lip," announced the missionary, when the first shock of the news had passed. "That cable has saved our young friends from what would otherwise have been an awful tragedy."

Having played this scurvy trick, however, Destiny apparently decided to make ample amends. A year later Lily was married to Gerald Clive, a well-to-do young rancher, and shortly afterwards Herbert Melven appeared in Calgary with a charming British bride.

Foster Beatton of Fort St. John, who also heard the story.

"The sled struck concealed

"OPERATION

FOR the hundredth time the Hudson's Bay Company's supply-ship *Nascopie* rammed the white barrier; then her bows ran up the ice and she stopped, shuddering from the collision. On the bridge, Captain Tom Smellie signalled the engine-room to back her off. Above and below decks the crew awaited the next shattering impact, their knees flexed to absorb the shock of steel prow meeting floe-ice ten feet thick. The *Nascopie's* engines reversed, and she slid off the floe with the sound of a knife slashing taut silk. Slowly she eased away, backing into the narrow lane her bows had cut through the pack-ice. Then once again the engine-telegraph shrilled: "Half-speed ahead." Blocks of ice bobbed and danced in the swirl of the propellers. The little ship struck the pack with a report like that of a gun. Shattered particles of ice exploded at the point of impact; the *Nascopie* rebounded violently.

Time and again the vessel charged the barrier at the same spot, hoping to split it. Winter was close at hand, poised to envelope Fort Ross, the Hudson's Bay Company's trading-post founded in 1937 at Boothia Peninsula, on Northern Canada's icy coast. William Heslop, the newly-appointed manager of the post, and his bride, Barbara, arrived at the little settlement aboard the *Nascopie* in September, 1940. The Heslops, the post clerk, Darcy Munro, and their Eskimo companions knew that for another twelve months it would be impossible for Captain Smellie's stout little ship to break through the ice of Prince Regent Inlet with supplies. At such times the fur-trader mutters: "There's nothing to worry about—so long as you don't get appendicitis, or something—but you feel just a bit lonely when you wave good-bye."

Probably that was how the Heslops and Munro reacted to the departure of the *Nascopie*, but they little imagined just then that their eventual rescue would require the co-operation of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the U.S. Army Air Force when, for two consecutive years, ice defeated the supply-ship; or that the threat of starvation, the first parachute-jump in the Arctic, and sundry other thrills were to precede an eleventh-hour deliverance.

The Heslops were scheduled to work at Fort Ross for three years. It was recognized, however, that the *Nascopie* might not always succeed in battering her way through the ice from Fort Churchill, some two thousand four hundred miles distant, and though, in an emergency, rations could be dropped by air or secured by dog-team from Arctic Bay, two hundred and fifty miles along the coast, the authorities decided in 1942 to transfer the couple to a more accessible post on Baffin Island.

Day after day Bill and Barbara Heslop, "all packed up and ready to go," watched sea-ice forming in Bellot Strait; but there was no sign of the *Nascopie*. "I don't think she'll make it this autumn," Heslop told his wife, and ere long a radio message confirmed this depressing assumption. "Arctic Bay calling Fort Ross. The *Nascopie* has tried hard, but can't get through to you. Tom Smellie has left your mail here; Canon Turner will deliver it to you next April." The glaring white ice held Fort Ross in

hummocks of ice and capsized."

FORT ROSS"

By FRANK ILLINGWORTH

One of the most remarkable stories in the annals of the Arctic. The supply-steamer having repeatedly failed to get through the pack-ice to a remote Hudson's Bay post on Northern Canada's desolate coast, the little party marooned there faced first short commons and then starvation. The Air Forces of Canada and the United States co-operated to drop stores, and eventually, after incredible difficulties had been overcome, the whites were rescued by 'plane, the ship later taking off the Eskimos

an iron grip, and for the first time in twenty-two years of Polar navigation Captain Smellie had to admit defeat.

Fort Ross "bedded down" for the long, dark, frigid winter; and shortly before Canon Turner, the missionary, arrived on a seven-hundred-mile tour of his "parish" by dog-team, Darcy Munro left for Arctic Bay. His was a hazardous trip, made partly over moving sea-ice; several men had been lost in the blizzards on this very journey. The risks had to be taken, however, for it was now eighteen months since Fort Ross had received food-supplies. Tinned goods from the Arctic Bay settlement were necessary to tide over the period until autumn permitted Captain Smellie's *Nascopie* to rescue the Heslops, Munro, and the Eskimos.

For ten days Munro drove his dogs at top-speed. Sometimes he and his team floundered in deep snow, sometimes the sled struck concealed hummocks of ice and capsized. But he won through to Arctic Bay, and after his safe return Heslop declared thankfully: "We'll be O.K." But he did not know by how narrow a margin Fort Ross was to survive.

The long, dark winter passed very slowly, a succession of blizzards howling around the oblong log cabin. March brought welcome relief from the monotony of the winter night. The sun, a flaming red ball, peeped over the crest of the white hills; and the following month the "yip" of a dog team and the shouts of a man grew louder as a dark speck on the horizon materialized into Constable L. de Lisle, of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, on the annual police patrol. De Lisle's arrival was warmly welcomed at Fort Ross; it broke the months of loneliness, ended the nerve-strain produced by the long, dark, worrying winter, and injected new life into everybody.

No sooner had the little settlement recovered from the excitement of a new face than the roar of aero-engines disturbed the spring silence—a 'plane, bearing U.S. Army Air Force stars, reconnoitring the Fort Ross area in preparation for a possible rescue by air.

Meanwhile, back at Fort Churchill, the *Nascopie* had once again left for Ross, and by September, 1942, she was heading down Prince Regent Inlet, the narrow passage leading to Fort Ross, her bows cutting open water as smooth as glass. Captain Smellie had successfully broken through the thousand-mile barrier of ice that had defeated him the previous year. The sun, hot and bright, peeped through banks of brilliantly-white cumulus cloud, and the crew were in high spirits.

"I think we've made it this time," Smellie

told his "Number One." "We'll be unloading at Ross in a couple of days."

A BITTER STRUGGLE

But the Arctic's whims are unaccountable. Towards dusk on that mid-September day in 1942 the supply-ship ran into scattered ice that bumped and scraped along her flanks. Soon the masses were packed closer together, and the *Nascopie*, her speed reduced, was edging between them. Finally there was no open water ahead, nothing but a mass of broken blocks of ice jammed together and piled into pyramids. Before long the *Nascopie* was fighting for a passage, thrusting her curved prow on to the floes, splitting them with her weight when they withstood the impact of her charge. Slowly and steadily she shouldered her way forward until she came up against a floe four feet thick. Twice the ice-breaker rammed it, breaking through only to come to an abrupt halt once more. By then it was dark, and Captain Smellie decided to stop his engines. With dawn, the vessel went into action once more, continually charging and reversing, but after twenty-four hours she had reduced the distance to Fort Ross by only fifty yards.

Captain Smellie, Master of the *Nascopie*.

Once again, it seemed, the *Nascopie* was beaten; ice ranging in thickness from four to ten feet stretched unbroken to the horizon. Then, suddenly, a change of wind split the floes asunder: lanes of open water streaked like bolts of black lightning across the white field, and Captain Smellie put on full speed. Every few hundred yards the supply-ship had to smash her way forward, but generally one lane led to another and the *Nascopie* made good headway.

From the trading-post the Heslops and Darcy Munro could see the ice-breaker's smoke; they were confident she would win through. But once again the Arctic played a trump card. Across the *Nascopie's* path a solid sheet of ice five feet thick stretched to the horizon. For hours the little ship plunged at the barrier, climbing on to the floes that defeated her sharp prow. She charged one block fourteen times to gain a hundred yards! Then, on September 18, the wind changed once more. But this time, instead of scattering the ice, it brought more in, piling it between the *Nascopie* and her goal. Tirelessly she punched at the white barrier—all to no avail. Eventually Captain Smellie found himself locked in pack-ice, and the question changed from: "Can we reach Fort Ross?" to "Shall we ever get out of the Inlet?" Thus it came about that, in the bleak and bitter Arctic, where storms are to be dreaded, sixty seamen prayed for a gale to break up the obstruction.

For three more days the *Nascopie* butted and battered at the ice, constantly charging and reversing.

"We'll make it yet," declared Captain Smellie. "All we need is a change of wind, and the ice will break up."

But the wind held steady, and the supply-ship, locked in the pack, was carried back the way she had come; and when at last a lane appeared between the floes Captain Smellie was reluctantly compelled to seize the opportunity and steam out of Prince Regent Inlet as fast as conditions permitted in order to escape the fate of Parry's *Fury*, which foundered here in 1824.

Wartime restrictions on the use of wireless at sea prevented Tom Smellie from radioing the bad news to Fort Ross. But there was no need for the *Nascopie* to break the radio-silence rule: the bitterly disappointed people there could see the supply-ship's smoke receding into the distance, and realized what had happened.

There was depression at Fort Ross, for the *Nascopie's* forced retreat meant another winter on short rations. But there was nothing for it but to husband food and coal, kill as much game as possible, and wait patiently for a possible rescue by air the following April, or—at the worst—when the ship came north again in September, 1943. Food supplies, luckily, were augmented by a stock in the Anglican Mission warehouse. All would be well, the Ross folk thought. They did not know, fortunately, that the "battle" of Fort Ross was destined to develop into one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of the Arctic.

The winter of 1942-43 dragged slowly by, with the snow piled high around the trading-

post. Within its log walls Mrs. Heslop went about her household duties with a Husky puppy, "Mitzie," as her constant companion. There was little difference in the order of the days. Blizzard followed blizzard, and the bundles of silver fox, Polar bear, and seal skins increased as Eskimo trappers stamped into the trading-post to barter and chatter. The only unusual happening was the murder of an Eskimo by his wife, Miktaeyout, at an encampment one hundred miles distant. She had been "traded" by her first husband to her second—a custom fairly common among the Eskimos—and when her new master beat her she killed him. The woman had no objection to being arrested and tried for murder, and she sent word that she would arrive at Fort Ross in time for the *Nascopie's* hoped-for arrival in September.

Heslop kept in touch with the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company at Winnipeg by radio. Week by week he or Munro, with Police Constable De Lisle at their elbow, tapped out messages. "Running out of canned beans ——Bitterly cold——Not much flour left—— Blizzard again——Have reduced scale of rations."

Winnipeg replied encouragingly: "Keep going! Hope to rescue you by air in spring."

The Royal Canadian Air Force was already prepared with rescue plans, which included the most northerly parachute-jump ever contemplated; and week by week Winnipeg kept Fort Ross informed of developments.

STORM AFTER STORM

Meanwhile, at Fort Ross, the four white people and their Eskimo companions "denned up" against the increasing cold, going out only when necessary. Heated by coal and log fires, the trading-post was warm and comfortable, but outside blizzards whipped across the *tundra* on the wings of one storm after another. For a few days the wind would drop, and then the inhabitants of Ross lived in a world of silence. The snow sparkled beneath a peculiarly brilliant moon, the stars shone brightly, and the Aurora Borealis flamed across the heavens like a luminous curtain, flinging radiant arcs athwart the sky. And then the blizzard would return. A puff of wind, a few snowflakes, and in a moment moon, stars, and Aurora Borealis were blotted out in whirling snow.

Occasionally Heslop, Munro, De Lisle, and the Eskimos went hunting. Moose, fox, wolf, and seal are abundant in northern latitudes from April to September, together with various species of goose and duck; the *tundra* teems with wild life. But the goose and duck had long since departed for less frigid regions, and owing to the particularly severe winter even the hardiest animals had moved south with the first blizzards. The hunters returned to the trading-post to radio Winnipeg: "Little game about. Tightening our belts a bit more."

Slowly the winter blew itself out. Equally slowly daylight returned to the Far North. Then, one day, the sun reappeared for the first time in four long, weary months. Its rebirth was celebrated with an extra handful of sugar, but things were fast becoming desperate.

The Fort Ross radio crackled: "Almost out of flour—sugar running low—canned beans in short supply."

The first sign that help was on the way was the drone of aero-engines. With the return of the sun a 'plane roared overhead. Winnipeg had already advised Fort Ross that a rescue aircraft was standing by for better weather to reconnoitre the Ross district, but its appearance was none the less an exciting moment for the fur-traders marooned on the edge of the frozen Bellot Strait. A 'plane to the rescue! Heslop and Munro knew it would still be some time before they could be rescued by air. By this time the Husky pup, Mitzie, was full grown, and Barbara Heslop told the great animal: "You'll be coming along with us soon; I wouldn't

Captain Fletcher releasing a parcel of supplies over Fort Ross.

want to leave my Mitzie behind." She and the Eskimos were in high spirits.

A dark object dropped from the aircraft; then another. Parachutes billowed above them—yellow mushrooms against the steel-blue sky—and the Eskimos raced over the ice, their high-pitched chatter mingling with the excited howl of the post's sled-dogs, to retrieve the supply-canisters.

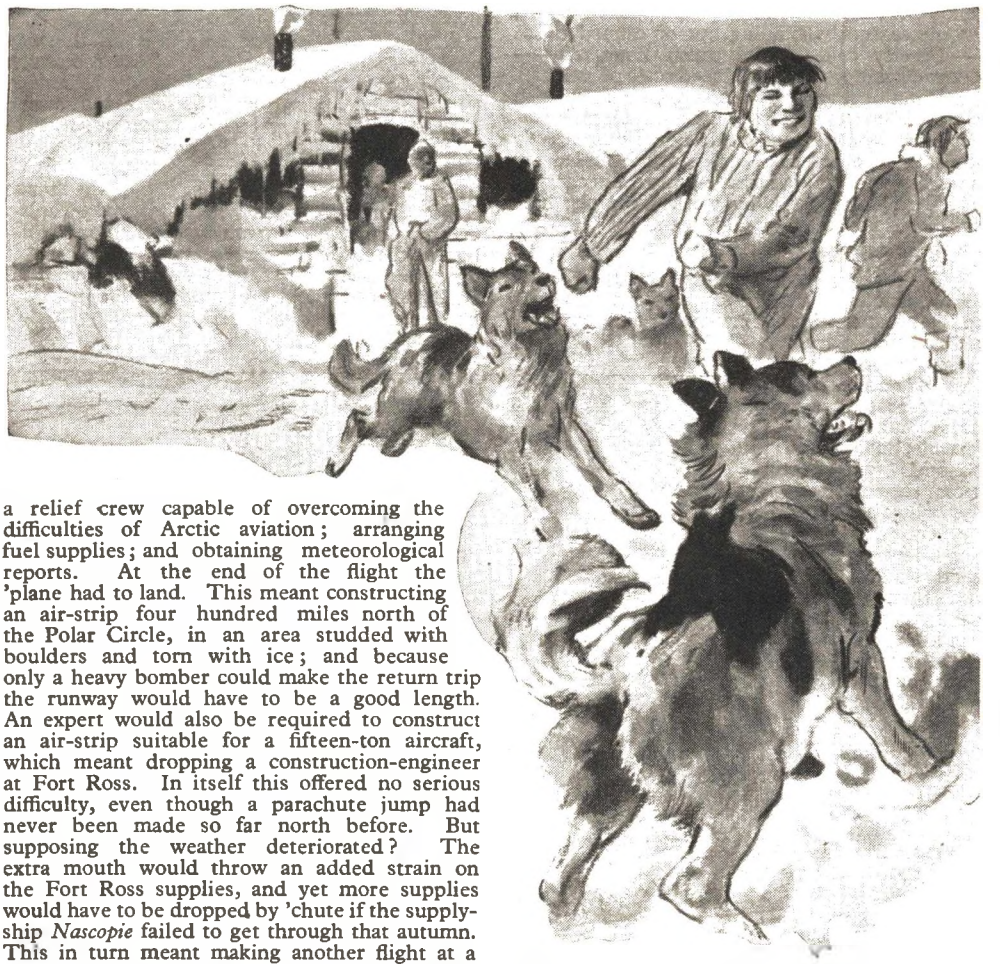
De Lisle joined Heslop and Munro before the Fort Ross radio when the newly-arrived aircraft called up the trading post: "Just having a look round. We'll be seeing you soon. So long!"

But how was the 'plane to land at Fort Ross? A small group of airmen had worried over this point all winter. Not only did their planned flight entail fitting a special 'plane with skis and extra fuel-tanks; choosing a crew and a relief crew capable of overcoming the difficulties of Arctic aviation; arranging fuel supplies; and obtaining meteorological reports. At the end of the flight the 'plane had to land. This meant constructing an air-strip four hundred miles north of the Polar Circle, in an area studded with boulders and torn with ice; and because only a heavy bomber could make the return trip the runway would have to be a good length. An expert would also be required to construct an air-strip suitable for a fifteen-ton aircraft, which meant dropping a construction-engineer at Fort Ross. In itself this offered no serious difficulty, even though a parachute jump had never been made so far north before. But supposing the weather deteriorated? The extra mouth would throw an added strain on the Fort Ross supplies, and yet more supplies would have to be dropped by 'chute if the supply-ship *Nascopie* failed to get through that autumn. This in turn meant making another flight at a time when Canada needed every available bomber to hunt German U-boats in the North Atlantic. "Operation Fort Ross," in fact, presented all the difficulties of a two-thousand-mile bombing raid.

Despite the snags, however, a suitable plan was devised, and Winnipeg wirelessed Fort Ross: "We're coming. Stand by." At Ross spirits rose. Very soon rescuers would be at hand—in a matter of days, perhaps, if the weather held. But a second message soon dispersed this elation: "Sorry; the R.C.A.F. can't spare a Liberator from war operations at the moment." U-boats were again prowling the North Atlantic in force, some of them penetrating as far north as Greenland waters. The Winnipeg message continued: "Send us meteorological reports. We're contacting the U.S. Air Force."

The Americans offered a C-47 Douglas transport if the R.C.A.F. could supply a crew. The Canadians had suitable men available, and mechanics immediately set about fitting the C-47 with skis and four additional hundred-gallon petrol tanks.

By this time the summer had faded into the



autumn of 1943, and the sun was once more dipping towards the months-long winter night. The first cold winds were sweeping over the frozen Bellot Strait; seals were lying out on the ice, black specks against the white background, but most game was already heading

southwards. The ice of Bellot Strait was such that the *Nascopie* could not hope to get through. Unless the air-rescue plans materialized quickly the little band at Fort Ross faced yet another stark winter. Fortunately weather conditions for flying were excellent, and Bill Heslop radioed Winnipeg accordingly, adding the one ominous word, "Hurry." Winnipeg's reply was encouraging: "We're on our way now."

ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT

Rescue, indeed, was just round the corner; but the Arctic is unfathomable. Two hours before the Douglas reached Fort Ross a November mist closed in, completely hiding the post. The drone of engines was heard clearly at Ross as the machine circled, desperately searching for its "target." "Can't find you," the Douglas radioed sadly. Then the drone died away. The C-47, its mission unfulfilled, was returning to base!

"Eskimos raced over the ice to retrieve the supply-canisters."

On October 17th Constable De Lisle, convinced that there would be no rescue that winter, set out on a four-hundred-miles sled journey, with supplies for only half that distance, in a desperate effort to obtain help. That he survived the hazardous journey is a tribute to the toughness of the Mounties.

Meanwhile radio messages crackled between Fort Ross and Winnipeg, the hungry prisoners stressing the need for haste. Even the canned beans were running low. Only six pounds more remained, together with twenty-four pounds of flour and three tins of sausages. And within a matter of days the northern winter would render rescue by air impossible!

But relief was not far distant. November 4th brought word of another rescue attempt. Bill Heslop and Darcy Munro remained at the post to maintain radio contact with the 'plane, while Mrs. Heslop and the Eskimos set off for the smooth ice of nearby Hazzard Inlet.

Once again the drone of engines was heard, and hats soared in the air and shrill whoops greeted the appearance of yellow parachutes. Supplies were now assured even if the rescue attempt failed. But Barbara Heslop knew yet another black speck was to follow the supply-canisters; Winnipeg had radioed that an airfield engineer would parachute from the C-47. His descent, the first parachute jump in the polar regions, was not without perils. Those aboard the Douglas knew that Captain Fletcher's parachuting experience amounted to one hour's instruction at the Shilo parachute-school, Manitoba; and two other airmen were ready to jump if Fletcher "came unstuck." But his leap into space was successful, and presently the 'plane droned away.

What jollification ensued at Fort Ross! The folk at the post lost no time in broaching the 2,000lb. of supplies, while Captain Fletcher set to work to find a suitable landing-strip for the Douglas. Even hours were valuable, for at any moment the Arctic winter might close in.

The sea-ice proved too tumbled for the fifteen-ton plane; the only suitable 'place was a frozen lake. This was not only small, but hemmed in by hills calculated to make a take-off difficult, if not impossible. The risk had to be taken, however, and the whole population of the little settlement turned out to clear a track one thousand yards long by fifty wide, marking its boundaries with coal-sacks.

Heslop wirelessed Winnipeg: "Airstrip completed. All is ready."

Then the little party repaired to an ice *igloo*, built on the lake, to await the Douglas.

On November 7th they heard the hum of engines again. Fog and low-lying clouds tried to hide the landing-ground. Could the C-47 pick out the coal-sacks marking its edges? And could it straighten out over the surrounding hills in time to land?

The beleaguered folk watched the Douglas circle the landing-strip, make a second run, and dip its nose towards the lake. Finally, with its skis sending up showers of snow, the transport trundled to a swaying halt.

It would not be possible to take off all the people, Eskimos and "whites" alike. The Eskimos were better able to fend for themselves, and the Douglas carried sufficient supplies to last them until the *Nascopie* got through the following autumn, 1944.

"Hurry with the unloading," yelled the Second Pilot, above the roar of the engines. "We've got to keep the 'plane moving in case her skis freeze to the snow. Hurry!"

Within a few minutes the transport had been turned round for the take-off. But could a fifteen-ton Douglas gain sufficient speed to take off from a thousand-yard runway—and, if so, could it clear the hills at the far end?

There was little time to consider the risk now; and sixteen minutes after the Douglas landed the Heslops, Munro, and Fletcher clambered aboard, together with Mitzie, Barbara Heslop's pet husky.

"You'll have to leave the dog behind," announced the pilot, but Mrs. Heslop protested. Testily the worried airman indicated the hills ahead. "I've got to get over those," he told her. "Can't afford to carry extra weight. You must leave the dog behind."

Thereupon Mitzie was bundled out on to

In the rescue 'plane en route to safety. Left to right: Darcy Munro, Mrs. Heslop, Mr. Heslop, and Capt. Fletcher.

Locked in the ice on her way to the relief of Fort Ross.

the snow-clad lake-ice, where an Eskimo dragged the disappointed animal away. The engines roared, and the Douglas raced forward, lifting her bulk toward the hills. At the last moment, when it seemed a crash was certain, the pilot pulled her nose up and the skis cleared the rocks with a bare two feet to spare!

"Operation Fort Ross" had proved successful, but safety was not yet guaranteed. An unexpected head-wind sprang up, eating into the fuel supplies, and the pilot watched the petrol-indicator with growing anxiety. He had overcome the difficulty of locating a minute airstrip amid a vast Arctic expanse, and had made a good landing and take-off in spite of the difficulties. Would he now have to crash-land for want of fuel? Presently the motors coughed and died, whereupon the pilot switched on his last reserve tank. The engines picked-up again, and the Douglas reached its base with only enough petrol left for another ten minutes' flying time! The "Battle of Fort Ross" had been won, but it had taken three years to win it.

There was still a final chapter to be written in the saga of Bellot Strait. As already stated, a handful of Eskimos remained behind at Fort Ross. Though largely self-supporting, the Eskimos of the Far North rely on the white man for medical supplies, hardware, tobacco, a certain amount of clothing, and ammunition with which to keep their larders stocked. The Douglas had left them a quantity of iron rations and ammunition, and the promise that if the *Nascopie* failed to get through in 1944 further supplies would be dropped by air.

The early summer of 1944 saw Captain Smellie back among the ice-floes, battling the two thousand three hundred miles to Ross. There were worrying days when ice gripped the *Nascopie* in solid white masses—days when it seemed impossible she could get through. But the sturdy ice-breaker battered doggedly into the barrier, making a few miles at a time until, in September, she entered Bellot Strait, and the Eskimos clambered up her rope-ladders.

The woman wanted for murder, however, was not among the Eskimo party. Early winter storms had prevented her travelling across the *tundra* to Fort Ross, and the *Nascopie*, fearful of getting stuck, hurried for Fort Churchill as fast as the ice-floes would permit.

To see that justice was done the ship had to return to Fort Ross the following year. This time the wanted woman arrived at Ross just as the vessel smashed her way through the last mile of ice. A murder trial, however, must be preceded by an inquest, and so the corpse of the murdered man was taken from beneath a pile of rocks, wrapped in a blanket, strapped on a dog sledge and driven five hundred miles to Fort Ross. The inquest completed, the murder trial commenced—in the saloon of the *Nascopie*.

Everything had to be translated from or into Eskimo, and after three hours the charge was commuted from murder to manslaughter, on the grounds that the dead man had been a poor hunter and therefore a poor provider. In the Arctic, where there is a constant struggle for existence, this point is all-important, and the woman was eventually sentenced to a short term of imprisonment.

The trial over, the door of civilization was finally slammed on abandoned Fort Ross, and the first snow flurries of winter speedily claimed the possessions of Man.

It only remains to add that last summer the *Nascopie* struck a reef off Southern Baffin Land. Her crew were compelled to abandon her, and during an October storm the gallant ship slid off her rocky perch and vanished beneath the waters of Davis Strait.

The PASSENGER

By HERBERT CHAMBERS

This story, says the Author, is the most remarkable he has ever come across during many years at sea. Related to him by the two officers mainly concerned, it presents a very puzzling problem. All names have been changed

ONE of the pleasantest things in life, I think, is to meet old friends in congenial surroundings, with ample time in which to dine, wine, and recall mutual experiences. I had known Captain Melton and Jimmy Rolls for a good many years, having sailed with them both as a brother-officer and a passenger, and our little reunion dinner was most enjoyable. Most of the conversation, naturally, concerned ships and shipping, and during the course of the evening I learnt the full details of a story which, in my opinion, is decidedly uncanny. It borders, indeed, on the fantastic, and my two companions, while cognizant of most of the facts, could offer no really satisfactory explanation.

I had already heard fragmentary accounts of the affair, but now that the two men mostly concerned in it were together, they were able to supply the missing links which enabled the whole queer business to be welded into a coherent whole. Here is the gist of the tale which, between them, Melton and Rolls unfolded to me.

One Saturday morning in 19—— the thirty-thousand ton liner *R.M.S. X*—— left Southampton for New York, via Havre. It was the height of the season, and she carried some four hundred first-class passengers as well as her full complement of "tourist" and "third." During the first two days Rolls, as purser, found his office humming with activity; then, when a thousand-and-one queries had been answered, dozens of complaints settled, and mistakes rectified, things settled down to normal. As usual, a number of "regulars" were travelling in the ship, and Rolls had his customary round of entertaining to do, considering himself fortunate if he got to bed by 1 a.m.

That particular evening, however, he made his escape somewhat earlier, and just after midnight was smoking a final cigarette in his cabin. There came a knock on the door, and the Third Officer entered.

The purser groaned audibly. "Don't you fellows *ever* sleep?" he asked, "If it's a drink you're after, go ahead and help yourself. I'm turning in."

The Third grinned.

"Thanks," he replied. "But I don't want a drink; you pursers have one-track minds. As a matter of fact, I've come for some advice."

"Well, the office is closed," growled Rolls. "Call again to-morrow."

"Don't be an ass, Jimmy! It's serious."

"It must be, to bring you along at this hour. Well, spit it out!"

The Third sat down and lit a cigarette.

"Actually this doesn't really concern you," he began, "but Number One (the First Officer) is a bit livery to-night; he's practically unapproachable. Besides, he always says I've got an over-developed imagination."

"He's probably right," interjected Rolls. "Carry on."

"Well, I had just finished my rounds for the night, and was returning to the bridge along the boat-deck, when I noticed something queer about one of the starboard lifeboats. I stopped, and saw a fellow squatting cross-legged on the canvas covering of a boat in the lower tier."

"A passenger?"

"Yes; he was wearing a dinner-suit. I asked him what he was doing there, but he didn't reply—just sat there staring straight ahead, like a man in a trance. The chap was so still that he might have been dead."

The purser was interested, in spite of himself.

"What did he look like?" he asked.

"Well, the light wasn't too good up there. He had a very white face and thick hair—a smallish man, I should say."

"Queer sort of place to park himself—a lifeboat! And you say he didn't speak?"

"Not a blessed word; never even looked

The QUEER SIDE of THINGS

at me! I carried on to the bridge, but before I went up I turned back to have another look at the fellow. He'd gone! What do you make of it, Jimmy?"

Rolls frowned. The incident certainly seemed odd. It appeared probable that the passenger was an eccentric, and as a veteran purser he was only too well aware how many queer and unconventional individuals are to be found among the travelling public. Sometimes they were harmless enough; sometimes they gave endless trouble.

"I don't know," he remarked, at length. "Such conduct is unusual, of course, but you needn't let it worry you. I don't see you could have done much, apart from warning the fellow that if the ship rolled he stood a good chance of going over the side. In any case, you'd better have a word with Number One about it—liver or no liver! It's hardly my pigeon, you know."

The purser thought no more about the incident until the following afternoon. Then, just as he was about to leave the office, he heard someone inquiring for him, and moved across to the counter to see what was wanted.

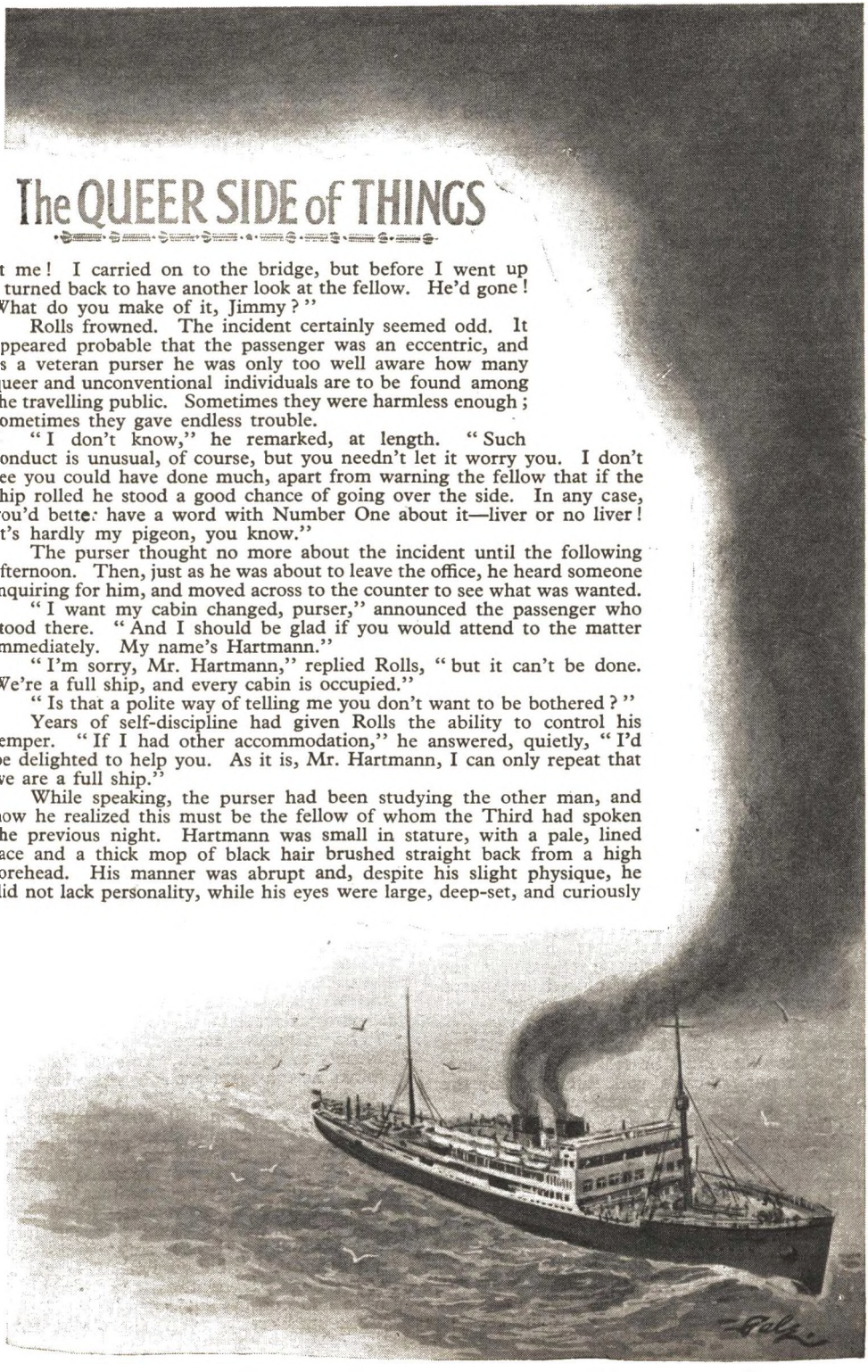
"I want my cabin changed, purser," announced the passenger who stood there. "And I should be glad if you would attend to the matter immediately. My name's Hartmann."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hartmann," replied Rolls, "but it can't be done. We're a full ship, and every cabin is occupied."

"Is that a polite way of telling me you don't want to be bothered?"

Years of self-discipline had given Rolls the ability to control his temper. "If I had other accommodation," he answered, quietly, "I'd be delighted to help you. As it is, Mr. Hartmann, I can only repeat that we are a full ship."

While speaking, the purser had been studying the other man, and now he realized this must be the fellow of whom the Third had spoken the previous night. Hartmann was small in stature, with a pale, lined face and a thick mop of black hair brushed straight back from a high forehead. His manner was abrupt and, despite his slight physique, he did not lack personality, while his eyes were large, deep-set, and curiously



piercing. An unusual character, thought Rolls, and quite likely an eccentric.

The passenger's next remark helped to confirm this theory.

"I presume you know who I am?" he asked.

"Apart from your name, I'm afraid I don't," admitted Rolls.

"That's a great pity," returned the other; then, without another word, he walked away.

Before leaving the office Rolls turned up Hartmann's particulars; he believed in finding out all he could about "difficult" passengers, and he had a strong conviction this particular gentleman was going to prove decidedly awkward.

He discovered that Hartmann was an American citizen, independent, single, and aged sixty. The purser blinked at this last detail, feeling morally certain the fellow was nearer forty; he certainly looked it. Another curious thing was that, although an American citizen, Hartmann had no accent at all, but this might be due to the fact that he was a cosmopolitan. The visas to his passport indicated that he had apparently spent much time travelling in the Near and Far East.

The rest of the afternoon and evening passed off uneventfully, and midnight found Rolls chatting to a few late stragglers in the "Purser's Square." Finally the little party broke up and after a few words with the night-steward on his deck Rolls went to his own cabin. Pulling aside the curtain across the doorway, he stepped inside—only to halt abruptly. Hartmann was sitting in a low chair, facing him. He did not rise, but smiled gravely.

"Good evening, Mr. Rolls," he said. "Please forgive the intrusion, but it is imperative that I should see you quite alone."

The purser checked an angry retort. "I'm afraid you must wait until the morning," he replied. "I'm not accustomed to passengers entering my private cabin uninvited."

The other seemed quite unruffled. "I'm afraid I was compelled to do so," he said.

"Compelled?"

"Yes, I've got to convince you that I *must* have my cabin changed."

Rolls sighed inwardly. His premonition had been correct; this fellow was going to cause trouble right enough, making mountains out of molehills with a cheerful disregard for the trouble and inconvenience caused to others. The purser sat down and lit a cigarette.

"Mr. Hartmann," he said. "I've already explained that I can do nothing for you. I'm sorry, but there must be reason in everything, and even pursers can't work miracles. By the way, what's wrong with your cabin?"

"Nothing at all," came the astonishing reply. "It's the situation I can't tolerate."

"But surely you saw a plan of the staterooms when you booked? You must have known yours would be on 'B' deck."

"Of course! But I could hardly have known that a previous occupant of my cabin, or an adjacent one, would prove to be antagonistic!"

Rolls eyed the man sharply. "What on earth do you mean?" he demanded.

Hartmann returned his glance quite evenly. "I'm sorry that remark slipped out," he said "It concerns something you would hardly understand."

"Why not?" The question was automatic; Rolls had suddenly revised his opinion of Hartmann, and an uncomfortable suspicion was forming in his mind.

The man did not immediately reply, but fixed the purser with a strangely-penetrating stare. A moment later he said: "I think your steward is waiting to speak to you."

Glancing round, the purser saw the night-steward standing in the doorway."

"You wanted me, sir?" the man inquired.

"N—o," replied Rolls, rather uncertainly. "I——"

Hartmann's voice broke in. "Of course you didn't want him, Mr. Rolls, but perhaps you *imagined* you did! Just think it over till to-morrow."

With that he got up and left the cabin; the steward had already withdrawn. Left alone, Rolls poured himself out a stiff drink.

"Ye gods!" he muttered. "One of us must certainly be crazy!"

Immediately after the Captain's inspection next morning the purser followed the "Old Man" into his private sanctum and told him the whole story. As he listened Captain Melton bit on his empty pipe and stared thoughtfully out of a forward window.

"I sometimes wish I were back in tramps, Jimmy," he commented, when Rolls had finished. "These passenger ferries ought to be run by hotel Johnnies, not sailors. And so you think this man is mad?"

"At first I put him down as an eccentric," said Rolls. "Later I decided he was crazy. After that I wasn't sure *which* of us was sane!"

"And he complains about an 'antagonistic atmosphere' in his cabin?"

"That's what he said; I assume he's one of those rum blokes who dabble in occult stuff. But I must admit the business of the steward shook me. I still can't fathom it."

"You say the steward denied that he had been along to your cabin at all?"

"Absolutely," returned Rolls. "I questioned him very closely, and he swore he'd never left his post."

"Then you either imagined the whole thing, Jimmy, or else our friend hypnotised you!"

The purser looked decidedly startled. "I certainly didn't imagine it," he snapped. "And if you're right about the hypnotism, what on earth could be his motive?"

The Captain shrugged his shoulders. "Probably to impress you," he said. "Possibly he thinks he can scare you into complying with his wishes."

"And what about all this 'atmosphere' nonsense?" continued Rolls. "The business just doesn't make sense to me."

"I'm not so sure," returned Melton, slowly. "This isn't the first time I've come across 'occult stuff,' as you call it. I sailed with a mate once who dabbled in mysticism. He was no fool, and he not only told me some mighty queer things, but gave me a few practical demonstrations. Since then I've always kept an open mind on the subject."

The purser stared at the Captain in amazement. "You're the very last man I should

'The Captain roughly thrust him down into a chair."

have expected to take *that* view," he said. "But hypnotism—if it *was* hypnotism—is not exactly occult, is it?"

"No," replied Melton, "but it's another of those things the ordinary man doesn't understand. Still, this talk isn't getting us anywhere. Do I understand you'd like me to interview Hartmann?"

"I certainly should," responded Rolls. "As a matter of fact, I suspect he will come along of his own accord pretty soon, in order to complain about your disobliging purser! If he does, perhaps my experience with the gentleman will give you a few pointers to work on."

"It most certainly will, Jimmy," the Captain assured him.

Rolls was wrong, however, in his assumption that Hartmann would shortly seek an audience with the commander. Instead, an extraordinary incident caused Captain Melton to send for the passenger himself. Shortly after midnight the Captain went up on to the bridge for a final look round before turning-in. Everything appeared normal in the darkened wheelhouse, and he walked out on to the open bridge to exchange a few words with the senior officer. Suddenly a sharp exclamation brought both men back through the sliding doors. Inside the wheelhouse the Third was speaking excitedly to the quarter-master. "What the dickens are you playing at, Wicks?" he demanded. "Are you drunk? Keep your eyes on the course, man!"

"What's wrong?" asked the First Officer sharply.

The Third looked worried. "Wicks must be ill, or something," he explained. "We're fifteen degrees off our course, and he doesn't seem to understand what I'm saying to him!"

It was true enough. The helmsman still grasped the spokes of the wheel, but his eyes were not on the compass, and in the faint glow of light from the latter all three officers could see that his face was bathed in sweat. The

quartermaster appeared quite unconscious of what was going on around him.

"Change the quartermasters!" snapped the Captain. "Send this man below and call the doctor to him. And tell the purser I want to see him in my cabin immediately."

Less than a quarter of an hour later Hartmann was sitting in the commander's cabin. He appeared quite unperturbed as he waited for the other to speak.

"I imagine you know why I sent for you, Mr. Hartmann?" began the Captain.

"Naturally, Captain. I expected your summons."

The master's face set like granite. "I'm a plain-speaking man, Mr. Hartmann," he continued, "and now I'm going to talk to you pretty straight. I understand that you claim to possess—er—unusual powers, and I have reason to believe that to-night you interfered in some way or other with the proper navigation of my ship. Is that correct?"

"Perfectly, Captain," returned Hartmann, coolly. "And I should like to say that I admire your perception in the matter. Most men in your position would have been too ignorant, or too bigoted, to accept such an explanation."

"That's as it may be," snapped Melton, grimly. "On the face of it the idea is fantastic—ridiculous. But I consider that anything which concerns the safety of my ship, fantastic or otherwise, is of the utmost importance. I warn you, Mr. Hartmann, that I will not tolerate such conduct."

"A perfectly correct attitude," commented Hartmann, dryly. "And the only possible one in your case, eh? But I'm afraid you still don't grasp the significance of what has happened. Let me explain. I'm a student of the occult—the psychic, if you prefer that term. I've travelled extensively in the East, and learned a great deal there . . . I merely mention this to prove to you that I'm no charlatan. My present problem is simple enough. Someone who previously travelled on this ship has left behind certain disturbances—shall we call them vibrations?—which are definitely hostile to me. If I can be moved to a cabin on another deck I shall be quite satisfied. The purser absolutely refuses to act in the matter, so I am compelled to give you a slight demonstration of my powers in an effort to induce *you* to do something."

"And if I refuse?" growled Captain Melton.

Hartmann shrugged. "Has it occurred to you that if your quartermaster let the ship get off her course when you were nearing land, or making port, the results might be very unfortunate?"

The Commander's face darkened angrily, but he spoke quietly enough. "I dislike threats, Mr. Hartmann," he said, curtly. "As master of this ship I have my duty to perform, and I intend to do it. Understand this once and for all. If you attempt any more 'funny business,' or if I receive any further complaints about you from my officers, I'll put you under lock and key for the rest of the voyage! That's all I have to say."

"But it's not all *I* have to say!" cried Hartmann. He was on his feet now, his strange eyes blazing. "If you don't comply with my wishes I'll run your ship ashore, and nothing you can do will prevent me! Put me in chains if you like, but it won't help you. It's my *mind* that counts, you obstinate fool!"

That outburst was the last straw! In a couple of strides the angry Captain reached the passenger, grabbed him by the collar, and roughly thrust him down into a chair. "You stay there!" he ordered, sternly. Turning aside, he picked up his desk telephone. "Send me the Master-at-arms," he snapped. "And tell the doctor I want him here immediately."

Even as he spoke he felt Hartmann's eyes fixed upon him, and carefully refrained from meeting them.

Ten minutes later the passenger, protesting loudly, was led below by the burly Master-at-arms, leaving the doctor with the Captain.

"I'm placing this fellow in your care, Doc," explained Melton. "Put him in the hospital, keep him under observation, and *on no account* allow him out. I'll give you fuller details in the morning. It may, or may not, be a mental case."

Left alone, the Captain filled his pipe and relaxed into a chair. He felt mentally and physically weary; even his own familiar cabin seemed rather unreal. He was sure he had done the right thing—taken the only possible course. But supposing this strange passenger was able to carry out his threat? The notion seemed utterly ridiculous, yet he remained convinced Hartmann possessed uncanny powers. Melton couldn't forget that queer episode in the wheelhouse.

The next few days were anxious ones for the Captain and such of his officers as were in the secret. Although Rolls still scoffed at the idea of hypnotic influences, he had to admit the affair was beyond him. It seemed to him, however, that Hartmann couldn't possibly cause any further mischief while virtually in close confinement. The behaviour of the quartermaster had now been thoroughly investigated, but the man could give no reason for his lapse. It had been reported that Hartmann had been seen talking to Wicks just before he went on duty, but this the seaman was unable to confirm; his mind appeared to be a complete blank concerning the whole business.

"Perhaps Hartmann hypnotized the Q.M. before he went on duty," Rolls suggested to the Captain, during one of their many discussions. "That might explain a lot."

"I'm inclined to think that is just what *did* occur," agreed Captain Melton. "In fact, I feel almost certain."

"Well, the fellow is harmless enough now," declared the purser. "He's pretty well a prisoner."

The Captain, however, refused to commit himself.

"I hope you're right, Jimmy," he said. "But I'll reserve my judgment until after we've docked."

From the moment he was placed in the ship's hospital Hartmann refused all food and drink. He made no fuss, but merely sat on his bed, with arms folded, head sunk on his chest, and eyes closed. He would not speak to anyone, and at the expiration of forty-eight hours still declined nourishment.

"I hope the fellow isn't going to die on

us," remarked Rolls to the doctor, after a visit to the hospital.

"Not he!" replied the medico, grinning. "He's a remarkably fit man."

"What's your own opinion about this thought-transference business, Doc?" asked the purser. "It's got me beaten."

"Just a disinclination to take undue risks," replied the doctor.

"What on earth do you mean?" asked the mystified Rolls.

"I mean that if our odd friend doesn't soon leave off trying to put himself into a trance, I'm going to use my own discretion."

"I still don't understand," confessed the purser.

The doctor smiled. "Well, let me put it another way. In the circumstances, Jimmy, I think it would be much better if Mr. Hartmann had a long, healthy sleep."

"In other words, you propose to——"

"I'm not proposing anything, Jimmy! And, as a practising medical man, I don't think I ought to discuss my patients with a layman—and that includes *you*, old chap."

Rolls laughed. "Serves me right for being inquisitive," he commented.

Whether or not the medico was responsible for Hartmann's failure to cause any further trouble is a question that must remain unanswered. It is a matter of record, however, that Captain Melton docked the *X*—— in New York without any unusual incident. Surprisingly enough, Hartmann went ashore quite normally, and without making any complaints concerning his incarceration in hospital. A few days later the commander received a letter which ran somewhat as follows:—

"Dear Captain,

I wish to apologize for my attitude while aboard your ship. Although my reasons were very strong ones, I realize that I should not have allowed my feelings to overcome my discretion and good manners. I do not imagine that we shall ever meet again, as I am shortly going to China—probably for good. So please accept my renewed apologies, and never forget that 'there are more things in heaven and earth,' etc.

Sincerely Yours,
I. HARTMANN."

But that was not quite the end of this curious affair. On sailing-night of the following voyage Rolls went along to the Captain's cabin.

"You remember that Hartmann business?" he began. "Well, it got under my skin so badly that I made a few inquiries at the Office, and discovered that, three voyages ago, we had a passenger, a wealthy Eurasian, who occupied Cabin No. 31—that's the next but one to Hartmann's. I recall the fellow now; don't know why I didn't think of him before. But young Williams, my assistant, was quite pally with him, and he told me something that made me think. This Eurasian was writing a book on ancient Indian cults, and it seems he wasn't being too polite about some of them."

The Captain looked thoughtful. "That's decidedly odd," he commented. "Perhaps Hartmann was a follower of one of these cults! Seems to suggest he wasn't exactly talking through his hat when he complained about an 'antagonistic atmosphere,' eh?"

"That's what I thought," said Rolls. "And yet he couldn't possibly have known about the other fellow. Which reminds me of a question I meant to ask you. Do you seriously think he could have carried out his threat to make trouble for the ship?"

Melton was silent for a long moment; then he answered quietly:—

"I don't know, Jimmy. It seems absurd, and I hesitate to credit it, but—strictly between ourselves—I have a strong feeling we've got a lot to thank the doctor for!"

A South African Puzzle

HERE, from the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* is a striking sequel to the story, "The Madubhani Mystery" which appeared in our issue for October 1947. We have published several accounts of "flying stones" manifestations of this kind in various parts of the world, but no really authoritative explanation seems to be forthcoming, and in most cases the possibility of practical jokers being at work has been eliminated by careful investigation.

Mystery Barrage on Roof

"Sunday Times" Correspondent

George, Saturday.

AN odd assortment of missiles, stones, potatoes, bits of brick, and sweet potatoes, crashing down at night on to the roof of their house at Outeniqua siding, near George, has been driving Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Barnard to desperation each September during the last four years.

This year the evil visitation has been worse, for the stone-throwing has continued even after September.

Although previously Mr. and Mrs. Barnard courageously refused to consider the nuisance as anything but the work of someone maliciously inclined towards them, for they always found the stones on the flat roof at the back of the house, Mrs. Barnard, at least, is now beginning to feel worried and uncomfortable, as well as being angry. During the last few weeks the noises on the roof have left no visible tokens of what caused them.

DULL THUDS

Mrs. Barnard said that lately the noises have been dull heavy thuds, as if caused by sods of earth falling on the roof. When the occupants of the house rush out to look, they find nothing.

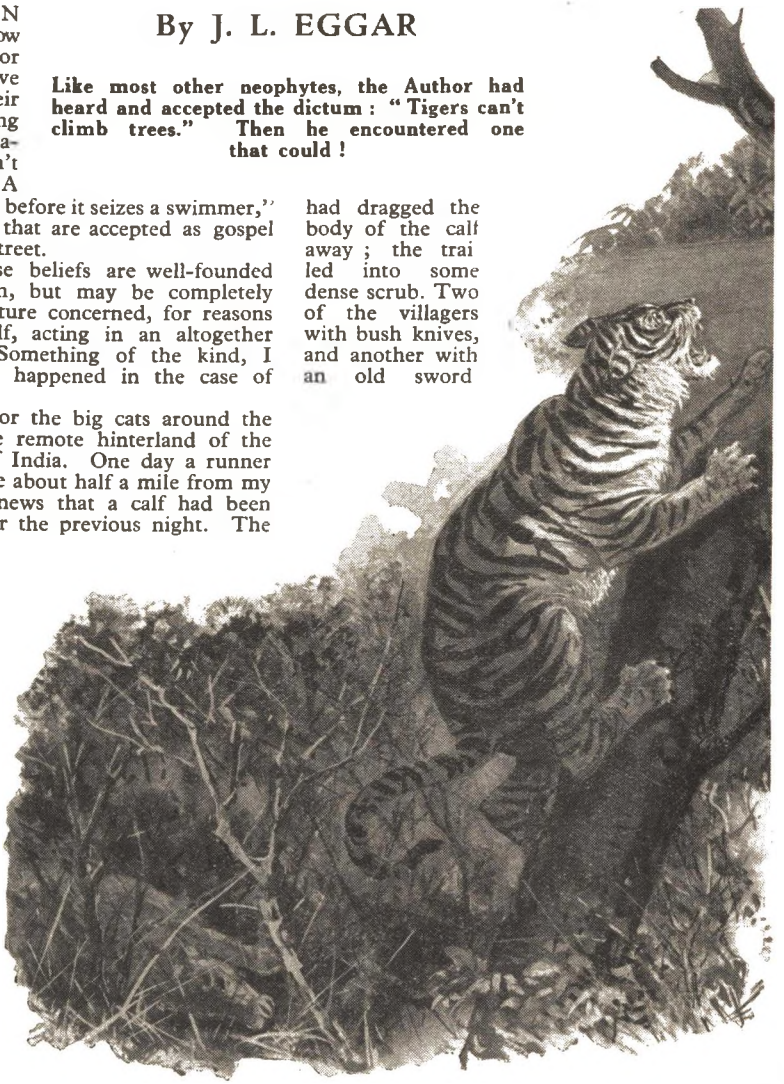
Mr. Barnard is furious because, he says, the nuisance is proving very harmful to his little girl, who is delicate, and it is upsetting his wife.

None of his efforts to find the perpetrators of the stone-throwing has been successful. He has had helpers watching outside on many nights, but they have detected nothing amiss and were themselves startled when stones fell near them. Sometimes the shower of stones begins immediately after the watchers have gone indoors.

THE CLIMBING TIGER

By J. L. EGGAR

Like most other neophytes, the Author had heard and accepted the dictum: "Tigers can't climb trees." Then he encountered one that could!



I OFTEN wonder how many poor fellows have lost their lives through relying on such popular fallacies as "Tigers can't climb trees," "A shark must turn over before it seizes a swimmer," and a dozen others that are accepted as gospel by the man in the street.

Certain of these beliefs are well-founded enough in the main, but may be completely falsified by the creature concerned, for reasons best known to itself, acting in an altogether unusual fashion. Something of the kind, I imagine, must have happened in the case of my tiger.

I was looking for the big cats around the Halon River, in the remote hinterland of the Central Provinces of India. One day a runner arrived from a village about half a mile from my camp bringing the news that a calf had been carried off by a tiger the previous night. The victim had been lying under a tree in the centre of the hamlet, and its bleat of terror at sight of "Stripes" had awakened the headman just in time to see the kill and note the direction in which the brute retired, dragging the calf with it.

Would the *Sahib* please come at once? asked the headman. His people were afraid the tiger would return.

Forthwith I instructed my Gond gun-bearer to bring along an axe, a vacuum flask full of tea, and my pneumatic mattress. I took my .470 rifle and a dozen rounds of solid ammunition, and we set off for the scene. The .470 was the very thing for night hunting; it had an electric torch fixed to the underside of the barrel, with a switch just in front of the trigger-guard.

Arrived at the village, we were given a great welcome by the inhabitants, who seemed to take it for granted that now the *Sahib* had arrived all their troubles were over.

The headman showed us where "Stripes" had dragged the body of the calf away; the trail led into some dense scrub. Two of the villagers with bush knives, and another with an old sword went ahead to hack a path through the thick growth.

We had left the huts less than a hundred yards behind when one of the clearers suddenly shouted excitedly and pointed between a couple of bushes. There lay all that was left of the unfortunate calf; only the hindquarters had been eaten. Telling the men not to touch the remains, I looked round for a suitable tree in which to build a *machan* (platform).

I soon found one that seemed about right,

and the natives set to work, while my bearer took a cycle-pump and proceeded to inflate my bed. Then he cut a couple of bamboos and made a ladder long enough to reach to the platform of branches, now taking shape.

By the time the *machan* was complete and the mattress, ladder, etc., in place, it only wanted an hour to sunset, and the villagers, after implor-

"He was still clawing his way toward me."

ing their gods to guide my bullets to their target, lost no time in hastening back to their homes. I sent my bearer with them and, climbing to my look-out, made myself as comfortable as possible. I carefully examined my rifle and the flashlight, took a swig of tea from the flask, and then began thumbing the pages of a magazine to pass the time till the sun disappeared. But somehow I couldn't concentrate on reading; my mind kept straying to the business in hand.

Once more I took stock. Everything seemed O.K. The .470 lay close to my left hand (I am a left-handed shot), and I could see the remains of the calf lying some forty-five feet from the base of the tree. Would "Stripes" return to-night? That was a question I couldn't answer; tigers are unpredictable creatures. A particular animal will come back to a kill twice and even thrice; another will make a fresh kill for every meal. Occasionally the mere fact that someone has walked round his kill will be sufficient to send him loping away, yet I have known a tiger to feast off a cow that natives had climbed over and actually moved. To-night I was to learn one more valuable lesson as to the eccentric behaviour of these great cats.

I was now reclining on the mattress, and after the sun had set the temperature began to drop rapidly. The bearer had thoughtfully brought along a blanket and, feeling distinctly chilly, I wrapped this round me in such a way that I could instantly throw it off. In a few minutes it would be quite dark, and my quarry was likely to put in an appearance at any moment. On the other hand, of course, he might not show up at all.

At this point in the proceedings I did the very last thing I had intended—dozed off to sleep. According to the calculations I made later, I must have slumbered for about an hour when I suddenly awakened with a feeling that I was being watched. Recalling my position, I lay perfectly still and listened. Yes; I could hear the heavy breathing of some large animal, and again I experienced the uncomfortable sensation that unseen eyes were studying me. "Unseen eyes," by the way, is quite correct! If this were a fiction story, you might have read that a pair of green, blue, or pink orbs glared at me out of the darkness. Unfortunately for writers of thrillers, however, this happens to be another of the widespread fallacies already mentioned. A wild animal's eyes do *not* show at night unless they are reflecting light, such as the beam of a torch.

Presently I heard the sound of some weighty body moving over the carpet of dry leaves beneath my tree. The creature seemed to be progressing stealthily, as though stalking something—or someone! Someone? The idea startled me, for I was the only "someone" in the vicinity, and if anybody was being stalked it was *me*! "But wait a minute," I told myself. "This tiger isn't playing the game properly; he's not supposed to know I'm up here! It's my job to watch *him*, not his to watch *me*!"

I eased myself gently over so as to be able to look around, so far as was possible in the darkness, edging my rifle into position at the same time. Ah! Now I could even *smell* the beast—that peculiar musky odour which, once encountered, is never forgotten.

Then another thought struck me. "If he's near enough to smell," I reflected, "he's near enough to shoot!"

Crane my neck and strain my eyes as I would, however, I could see no sign of the brute. Then, suddenly, there came up from right beneath me that grunting cough which "Stripes" uses to indicate annoyance!

To say that I nearly jumped out of my skin is to put it mildly—very mildly! I lay on my frail platform absolutely motionless, fearful that some slight noise might scare him off. But the precaution was useless; the sagacious animal had

evidently detected my presence, and I heard him pad away. Confound the luck! Anyway, that was *that*; he'd gone for good, and now I could snooze again for the rest of the night. So, laying the .470 down, I rolled the blanket round me once more and settled myself as comfortably as I could; there was nothing to prevent me sleeping till morning.

That's what I thought. But before the sun rose I was fated to look Death right between the eyes—and I shall never forget the experience.

I must be one of those fortunate folk who possess a "sixth sense" which warns them of danger. I don't know how long I slept that second time, but once again I awoke with the feeling of an evil presence close at hand. Not by any sound or smell did the intruder betray his proximity, however, and I was on the point of rolling over and continuing my interrupted nap when I spotted something. A dark patch, blacker than the night, was moving slowly toward where I knew the kill to be!

Could it be the first tiger returning? All my experience was against that idea. The animal had somehow discovered my presence, and no tiger in his right senses would risk coming back to such an obvious trap. Some other member of the tribe must have come upon the calf by accident, and I vowed he shouldn't get away like Number One.

He had almost reached the kill when I wriggled carefully into position and trained my rifle on his black bulk. A moment later he was standing over the remains, making those half-growling, half-purring noises used by the big cats to express pleasant anticipation. I had a spot of luminous paint on the back of my foresight, and aligning this on his shoulder, as nearly as it was possible to judge in the darkness, I pressed the switch of the torch. A miniature searchlight immediately flood-lit the scene, and "Stripes" slowly turned his head, staring straight into the beam and giving a low growl which seemed to start from his stomach. Then I fired.

Following the explosion there came a terrific, bellowing roar. "Look out!" I told myself. "He's coming!"

Nine feet from the bottom of my tree the tiger sprang, landing ten feet up the trunk. I jerked the bolt to reload; then I pulled trigger again. Nothing happened; the cartridge was a "dud"! And—suffering catfish!—he was coming up! Didn't the brute know tigers can't climb trees?

Apparently he didn't, because he was still clawing his way toward me. Just as I reloaded and fired for the third time one of his great paws struck the edge of the *machan*. The front of his head disappeared, literally blown to pieces, and his body dropped back, hitting the ground with a dull "plop"! As for me, I broke into a profuse sweat. I never want a narrower escape!

Subsequent investigation in daylight revealed the following facts. The *machan* was twenty-five feet from the ground, but the tree sloped about thirty degrees from the perpendicular, which no doubt helped "Stripes" considerably in his ascent. From the spot on the trunk—ten feet up—where his leap landed him, to the edge of the *machan* was a good fifteen feet; the tiger climbed that distance like any domestic puss. And that, mark you, with one of my .470 bullets through his ribs!

NEW CHUM'S LUCK

By N. A. RADDATZ

The Author writes: "This story is true in every detail; I witnessed the happening myself."

CHRISTMAS, 1923, was a real scorcher in Western Australia, where I was spending a brief holiday with my old friend, George Kirby, then manager of Summer Downs cattle-station. With the thermometer stationary at 109, we sweltered in the shade of the homestead veranda after one of the finest Christmas dinners I have ever eaten.

There was ten of us men—George Kirby, four regular station hands, a new-chum "jackaroo," only recently out from England, three travelling drovers, and myself. Mrs. Kirby and Dinah, her aboriginal servant, were elsewhere in the house.

All morning these men had been telling such yarns as only drovers and stockmen can—and drinking beer! But now both the yarns and the beer were on the wane, and mostly we sat looking out at the heat-shimmers, where sky and earth seemed to meet in a long flickering line far out on the unbroken plain.

Presently Kirby, who had not spoken for some considerable time, burst out:

"I've just thought of a great idea! What about running a bit of a competition to liven things up a bit? I suggest a sort of kangaroo hunt. We'll all stick a couple of pounds into the 'kitty,' draw lots for paddocks, grab a horse and rifle apiece, and go out. First home with a dead 'roo, or 'roo skin, collects the lot. How does that sound for an afternoon's sport?"

Judging by the applause that followed, it must have sounded pretty good to the majority—the minority being the new-chum jackaroo, who was only getting a few shillings a week and his keep. Two pounds was a lot of money to him, but he sparked up like a man and joined in with the rest.

In a very short time the horses were yarded from the horse-paddock, caught, and saddled. I declined the offer of a mount, preferring to put in my £2 and remain where I was rather than attempt to match my poor efforts against the skill of these experienced old hands.

It was just as well I stayed out, for when it came to rifles, a muster revealed only seven, of various makes and calibres, including two heavy .44s. This left the new chum out of the picture altogether, and when he asked in a rather doleful voice :

"Isn't there a rifle for me?" I lent him mine—a .22 Hi-Speed, a beautiful weapon, wonderfully accurate.

When they drew numbers for paddocks out of a hat, "Chum" was unlucky again, for whereas the other competitors got paddocks known to be frequented by kangaroos, he drew one full of spinifex and barren top-rock, where the marsupials were seldom seen.

Before the hunters started out a good few side-bets were made, Kirby keeping a tally of the lot. Just to encourage him, I put £1 on the "chum," amidst much laughter; I could have laid far heavier bets had I wished.

At last the men set off, to an even start, the jackaroo riding a wiry piebald pony. Kirby and I settled down, with a bottle of whisky which he had magically produced, to await results.

And now, for the purpose of this little story, we will follow young Ted Blake, the new chum, setting forth his experience as he related it to us that night.

As he rode towards the gidgee scrub a couple of miles out his heart was heavy. Two pounds was a lot to lose out of his meagre salary, particularly as he was saving every penny he could to bring his sister out from England as soon as he had collected the emigration fare. He was thinking of the other hunters, especially Conway, the head stockman, and Paddy Moore, one of the drovers. Both these men had drawn good paddocks, and were armed with .44s, one bullet from which, would send the toughest 'roo to Kingdom Come. Only that morning, when visiting the windmill in the "Five Thousand Acre," Ted had disturbed a mob of twenty kangaroos feeding on the green near the water-trough. Sam Conway had drawn that paddock, and everybody knew Sam was a crack shot.

With these saddening thoughts coursing through his mind, he presently reached the edge of the gidgee scrub. Then *Ba-ang!* The first shot of the hunt rang out across the plain. There was no mistaking the origin of that sound. It was a .44, and Conway could hit an egg at a hundred yards. Blake was greatly depressed! It didn't seem worth while going on, yet something urged him not to turn back. He was carrying a good rifle himself, and he wanted to use it even if he didn't win the £20 in the "kitty."

Had he only known, however, one shot does not always mean a dead 'roo, even with marksmen like Sam Conway and Paddy Moore. If "Chum" could have seen Sam at that moment, he would have observed a very wrathful man swearing profusely at his steed, a high-strung thoroughbred, for spoiling his chance of the day.

Sam had ridden direct to the windmill, where he observed an "old man" kangaroo eyeing him sedately from a distance of about two hundred yards. It was a lovely shot, so hastily dismounting he levered a heavy .44 cartridge into the breech. But he had reckoned without his horse. As he knelt down to take aim, with the reins slung over the crook of his arm, the timid animal suddenly jerked back, throwing the barrel upwards and causing him to pull trigger, the bullet going perhaps two hundred feet above the target. Having heard these noises before, and witnessed the death of many a kinsman, the "old man" took the warning to heart, and was soon out of Sam's allotted area.

"As he knelt down to take aim the animal suddenly jerked back."

" The kangaroo landed squarely on the pony's back."

Meanwhile " Chum " rode on, combing the open channels that ran between the spinifex and top-rock in the gidgee scrub. No more shots came to his ears, but this fact brought little consolation, for the paddocks were immense, and some of the hunters already miles distant. His own paddock was small—a mere two thousand acres of waste land, used only for scrub-cutting in times of drought.

Presently he reached the only likely spot in his whole area—a narrow lane cut through the bush by fire and soil erosion, affording plenty of shelter, and a few scattered tufts of Mitchell grass. Here " Chum " tethered his pony and crept to a vantage-point whence he could see along the entire length of the lane. Everything was still, with that breathless atmosphere of the West. The only sounds were his own breathing and the shrill chirping of cicadas in the drooping bush.

Presently something moved in a patch of shadow a hundred yards away. Yes ; there it was ! He glimpsed the brown body of an immense 'roo, stretched out luxuriously in the shade. Sliding the long barrel of the rifle through the fork of a bush, he drew a bead on the centre of the dark lump and pressed trigger

The sharp report of the cartridge ripped across the plain, the brown shape leaped high into the air, and then sprawled motionless.

Mounting in haste, Ted cantered along the clearing. There was still a hundred - to - one chance of collecting the £20.

But not so fast, " Chum " ! The kangaroo suddenly staggered up, its eyes blazing wrathfully. The jackaroo halted about five yards away, striving frantically to re-load the rifle, but somehow the mechanism beat him.

While he was debating his next step, he heard the crack of another rifle in the distance. That decided him. He would ride up to the animal and knock it cold with a stirrup-iron, as the stockmen did with dingoes and foxes. At that moment the old 'roo came boldly to meet him, obviously full of fight. An experienced bushman would have kept well away from a wounded " old man," for they are murderous brutes when cornered. But the youngster wanted this one badly, and wanted him quick, so he urged his mount forward to meet the attack half-way. The pony, however, thought otherwise, and just as " Chum " was about to deliver the fatal blow it swerved. At that moment the " old man " kangaroo decided to do something himself. Blowing down his nose in short, sharp snorts, he charged the pony's stern, misjudged his jump, and landed squarely on its back, just behind the saddle.

Before " Chum " could form a clear impression of what had happened he found a pair of hairy arms around his throat and a set of sharp teeth imbedded in the back of his neck ! This was too much for the piebald ; he took the bit between his teeth and bolted.

Meanwhile, back at the homestead, George Kirby and I sipped our whisky slowly, knowing that, even with luck, an hour or so must pass before we could expect any of the hunters to return. We heard the flat bark of Conway's .44, and George remarked :—

"Conway's got it. He's a wizard with that gun."

We could see the skeleton of the mill through the shimmering heat-haze, but when ten minutes passed and there was no sign of Conway's return, we decided that, for once, he must have missed.

Mrs. Kirby and Dinah joined us, and time passed. Then we heard another rifle crack—once, twice.

"They're getting into it now," said Kirby. "There will soon be a rush for home."

Almost as he spoke I heard the familiar crack of my own rifle. It was now my turn to get excited.

"That's the jackaroo!" I said. "'Chum's' found something at last."

Mrs. Kirby added feelingly:

"I wish he'd win."

"Not a chance!" cried Kirby. "Here come two riders now—Conway and Paddy Moore."

Mrs. Kirby could not restrain her excitement.

"They're racing!" she exclaimed.

It was true. The two horsemen were still a couple of miles out, heading in at top speed from different angles.

Something made me glance towards the gidgee scrub, and I saw the jackaroo's piebald approaching like a cyclone.

"Here's 'Chum'," I told them. "And he's coming like an express!"

Excitement ran high. Mrs. Kirby and Dinah jumped about, Mrs. Kirby calling out:—

"Come on, 'Chum'! I hope he wins!"

But Kirby and I weren't too sure. Conway and Moore were flogging their horses, and Conway's mount was a thoroughbred. The piebald, however, was much closer.

Then I heard Mrs. Kirby gasp.

"Look! Look!" she cried.

Kirby and I looked—and gasped in our turn. We couldn't believe our eyes!

Riding behind the jackaroo, swaying and bouncing violently, but with its fore-paws tightly clutching Blake's neck, we beheld an immense "walleroo"!

While we were still gaping, the terrified piebald, completely out of control, flew past with its strange double burden, perhaps forty yards ahead of Conway. Straight for the garden fence it headed; then it suddenly "propped," and "Chum" and his hairy companion turned a neat half-circle in the air before landing among Mrs. Kirby's rose-bushes, where both of them sat up and stared at each other stupidly. Kirby and I rushed to the scene, discovering the "old man" to be so badly wounded that we had to kill it with a stick. Conway had arrived meanwhile, and surveyed the operation from the back of his panting thoroughbred.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he remarked, disgustedly.

I shall always remember "Chum" as he staggered to his feet, still in a sort of daze, and made for the veranda. Here he paused with his eyes fixed on the bottle of whisky, now nearly empty.

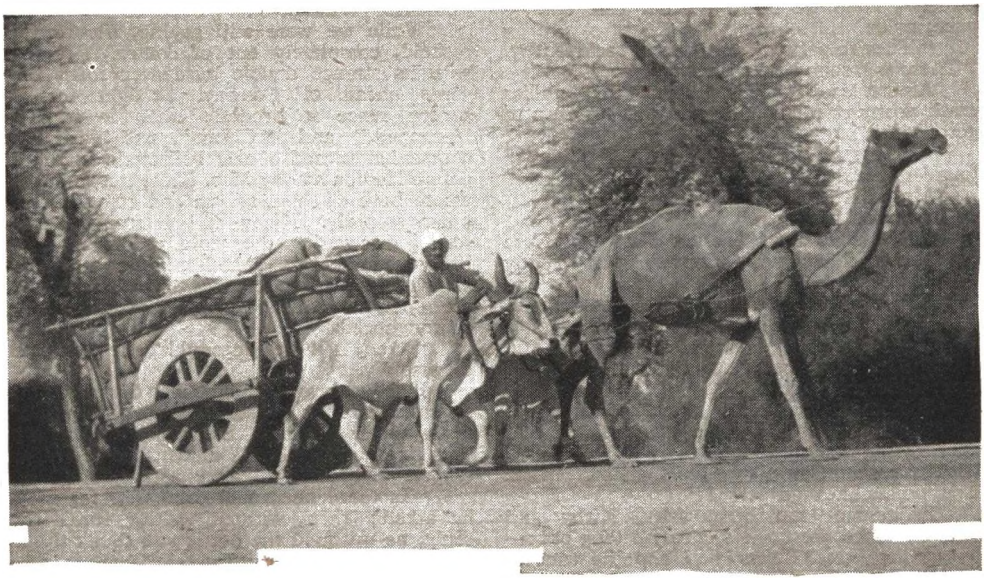
"Is there one small drink left for me?" he asked; then, without waiting for Kirby's reply, he upended the bottle and drank the lot. He obviously needed it!

All the men were good sports, and when the jackaroo had described his adventure he was unanimously voted the winner of the competition.

A MARKET ON WHEELS

HOUSEWIVES living in villages off the beaten track in Britain are familiar with the van, laden with all sorts of household requirements, that periodically makes the round of a district. America, of course, has improved upon our somewhat primitive vehicles, and the "travelling shops" which tour various towns and cities must constitute a serious menace to the ordinary shopkeeper. Observe the up-to-date equipage shown in the accompanying photograph. A correspondent writes: "Every day this 'market,' stocked with vegetables, fruit, and other foods, makes the round of the streets of an American city dispensing its wares. A blast on a musical horn heralds its arrival, and women hurry from their homes to patronize it. The 'market' comes to their very doors, shopping there is much easier than going to a crowded store. Good-quality stuff is carried, and most of the items are fresh daily. A loud-speaker announces the day's 'special lines,' and customers are never lacking."

VILLAGE LIFE *in*



A camel harnessed with bullocks to draw a heavily-laden cart.

POLITICALLY-MINDED India has been given its latch-key, so to speak, but the lives of the vast majority of Indians must inevitably remain static. Seventy-one per cent. of the population of four hundred millions is quite illiterate; it comprises the cultivators, the artisans, and the small shopkeepers—the "little men" of Indian village life. The sub-continent, it should be remembered, is essentially agricultural. There are five hundred thousand villages in India, but fewer than forty towns inhabited by more than a hundred thousand people.

The villagers of India know nothing of politics, independence, partition, or Dominion status; the idea that the course of government should be affected by popular opinion is foreign to their traditions. They accept things as they come, living in pathetic contentment with their hard lot. They ask for nothing more than water and a good crop, though at the sight of the new moon the hardy Punjabi peasants of the North-West murmur: "O moon! make us prosperous and happy, give us bread and clothes in plenty."

The lives of many thousands of people in the Punjab have been abruptly changed; Hindus have fled east and Muslims west. These cultivators and artisans cannot read or write; they rely entirely on hearsay and the evidence of their own eyes. Education—as the West knows it—has left rural India untouched, but there still exists a mediæval culture which has changed little during hundreds of years, and the primitive ways and passions of Asia continue.

The village life of India has no parallel elsewhere. The village is not, as with us, a group of farms, cottages, and homesteads, centred around a few shops and a church or chapel. It is a block of mud houses, surrounded by mud walls and covering only a few acres. It is without water other than that brought by women from the well, the village pond, or a near-by canal. The streets, if they can be called streets, are narrow—mere alleys where two persons can scarcely pass and down which flows the communal sewage. This mud-pile village often stands above the surrounding country, for hamlet has been built upon hamlet, century after century, on the debris of crumbling old walls forming the foundation. The cattle, the goats, the chickens, and dogs roam at will, eating what the garbage offers. The houses seldom contain more than one room, about twelve feet square, with double doors secured by a rough chain and padlock fastened to the lintel or step; there is no chimney, window, or covering to the floor.

The entire family live within this narrow space, keeping themselves warm in the winter and doing their cooking on a fire of cow-dung kindled on the floor. Wood is scarce, coal does not exist, and charcoal is expensive, so the cow-dung is collected by the women and children and plastered upon the outside walls and flat roof to dry in the sun; though badly needed in the fields, it is more valuable in the home. The furniture seldom consists of more than one or two crude wooden frames, across which string

INDIA

By N. F. COOKE

Home-keeping folk in this country, trying to understand the background of the troubled Indian scene, will find this authoritative article extremely illuminating. It describes the lot of literally hundreds of millions of people whose primitive way of living has hardly changed at all in a thousand years.

A kilted nomad from the hills carrying his belongings and his little daughter on his back.

is laced to form a bed. Sanitation of any kind does not exist. Ninety per cent. of the inhabitants are born, live, and die in the same village, and their mental horizon is just as limited.

The social make-up of the village is as traditional as the life. The community is ruled over by a headman or a body of joint proprietors, often drawn from the higher castes, while below them are the cultivators, artisans, traders, and menials. There are the craftsmen: the carpenter, to shape crude agricultural implements; the blacksmith, to shoe the bullocks and provide the metal work; the shopkeeper; the grain merchant; perhaps a priest; and the inevitable moneylenders. The lowest castes and classes maintain a standard of cleanliness which would be intolerable in the West. Near the village one usually finds the shrine of the local godling, whose power means more to the people than the many exalted gods of the Hindu faith. If it is a Mohammedan village, there will be a mosque—or a mud platform as a substitute. The fields have few demarcations, except, perhaps, those of an irrigation channel, but every man knows just what he possesses or rents according to the boundaries dictated by tradition.

The cultivator's equipment is as simple as his mode of life. His plough is a shaft shaped from a tree, with a yoke for the two bullocks and a hardwood plough-tail tipped with iron. It has not advanced beyond the Biblical age. With this he scratches the soil to a depth of a few inches, later harrowing the land with a flat baulk of timber, like a railway sleeper. To this, also, he hitches his bullocks and, standing upon it to add extra weight, goads them into activity with a sharp-pointed stick. He sows by hand and reaps with a sickle; his cattle tread out the grain on a threshing floor of watered and well-beaten mud. He winnows his crop by spilling it from a basket into the hot April breeze while standing up in the back of his bullock-cart. He has no fear of rain at harvest-time, for the monsoon does not break before late June and till then the temperature will never be less than one hundred degrees in the shade.

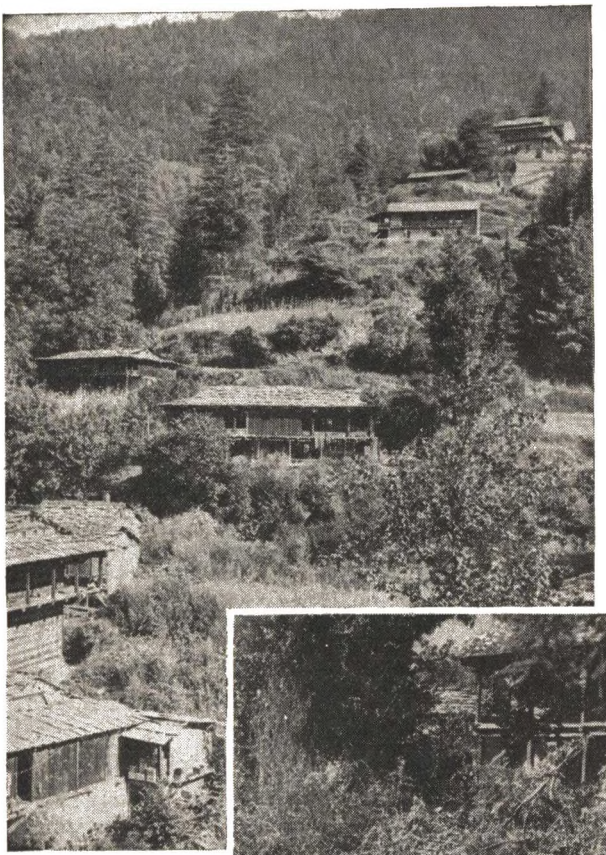
His harvest is meagre, for it is grown on overworked and undernourished soil. Some he retains for his own use; a little he may sell to a local trader for ready cash to pay his land-revenue—unless this is paid in kind—but the bulk will be handed to the village shopkeeper at a time of low harvest prices, or else to the moneylender to provide for his wants until the next crop, or to pay the debts incurred from the last. The majority of small cultivators, unfortunately, are hopelessly in debt. Religion dictates—and custom demands—the performance of rites and ceremonies out of all proportion to his means. At the birth of a son, the marriage of a daughter, or the death of a relative, he must entertain the whole village. This may take a week and all the money he possesses. But life is based on fear—fear of the priest; the opinion of his fellow-men; the elements; the local godlings; and everything which does not have a simple

explanation—and the customary ceremonies *must* be performed. The peasant, therefore, turns to the moneylender, and often the major portion of his crop is mortgaged before it is sown, for he may already be burdened with the debts of his father or an advance due to the failure of a previous harvest. The moneylender invariably extorts exorbitant interest. He does not care if the loan is needed for religious observances or the improvement of the land ; he is out for money alone, and the power of money.

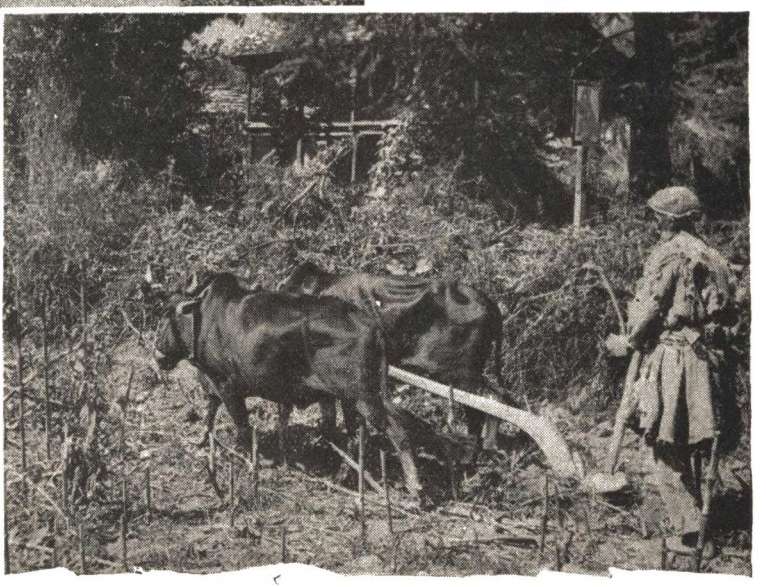
The whole system of Indian agriculture is bound up in age-old tradition dictated by circumstances and custom. Religious law provides that on the death of a parent the estate must be divided equally among the sons and male relatives, which leads to a deplorable breaking-up of land, while the pursuits of the people have been predetermined by occupational caste or a guild system. The break-up of properties often results in the small cultivator possessing, or renting, several holdings of a few acres, so distributed that they cannot be worked economically, and most efforts to persuade families to exchange their lands in an attempt to rectify this defect have failed. The good earth is not to be bartered, they declare, and can only be relinquished when the burden of debt has become intolerable.

The absence of organized trade, the lack of communications—maintained only by the slow-moving bullock-cart or pack-animal—has compelled the isolated village to remain a compact but impoverished unit, with a production strictly confined to local needs. Except in the immediate vicinity, where other similar communities may exist, it is generally surrounded by barren, undeveloped plains, denuded of pasture and undergrowth by lack of water, uncontrolled grazing, or the promiscuous cutting of the sparse trees. Even the nearest market may not be in contact with the railway without a journey of many miles, and road-transport is a haphazard affair at best. The cultivators, therefore, have little incentive to produce in excess of their own needs ; and where everyone is growing the same crop there is no encouragement at all. Increased toil brings no reward when there is nothing to spend the money on, except the trinkets on sale at the periodical religious fair.

The life of the cultivator depends on water ; without it he can do nothing. Water is scarce in North-West India, except in the hill tracts, for the monsoon is practically spent by the time



A picturesque hill village.



A cultivator at work with a primitive plough.

The nomad tribes graze their sheep and goats in forest clearings.

The " amusement park " of a village fair. Notice the primitive " big wheel."

it has blown so far. In the East Punjab the annual rainfall varies from 14in. to 20in., and in the West Punjab plains from 5in. to 10in., but in the submontane tracts there is as much as 36in., which exceeds the average of England. This rain, however, is seasonal: it falls between the end of June and late September, and upon it depends the autumn crop and the spring sowing. The winter rain comes in January and February, and, though slight, materially affects the prosperity of the spring harvest.

The climate of the Punjab is also clear-cut. In the summer the June shade temperature mounts to 120 degrees; in the winter there is ground-frost and a variation of as much as 30 degrees or more between night and day.

The small cultivator augments the scanty rainfall by simple irrigation systems, and draws water from wells with the aid of Persian wheels, an endless chain of buckets or earthenware pots rotating on a large wheel by means of motive-power supplied by bullocks or a camel. The water spills out of mud-made channels into the fields, which are divided up into squares by small earthworks six inches high. Vast areas consist of the driest sand, yet from this unpromising soil the peasants coax a scant harvest of wheat, barley, sugar, pulses, and cotton. Failure of the rains or the drying-up of the wells means famine, which can reach the dimensions of that experienced in Bengal in 1943, when one and a half million lives were lost.

In the hill tracts the villages are still more remote, and communications can only be maintained by pack animals. The crops are mostly maize, rice, and potatoes, and the work of the cultivators is terribly arduous. On small plateaux of the outer Himalayan ranges, below nine thousand feet, one finds villages built of wood, the houses roofed with slabs of local stone or crude thatch. In the dry season water is conducted to the terraced fields from hill streams and natural springs, which, if not carefully watched, may do much damage when swollen by the monsoon. The villager harnesses water to his use by constructing water-wheels which turn dressed stones to grind grain and pound rice—work which, in the plains, is done by hand. Sheep and goats graze at will in the forests and on the uncultivated hillsides.

Like most hill-folk the world over, the people here are the prey of countless superstitions. Gods and godlings of queer design and nature—trees, stones, and little wooden dolls—are found in shrines and natural grottos, and visitations to these and certain sacred pools are part of a recognized ritual. In some areas—notably in the Kulu Valley of the East Punjab—village gods are taken to visit each other, bedizened with all the tawdry splendour the communities can afford. Fairs are held on dates connected with the moon, and are made the occasion for much simple merrymaking, the sale of cattle, the purchase of brides, and the hiring of servants.

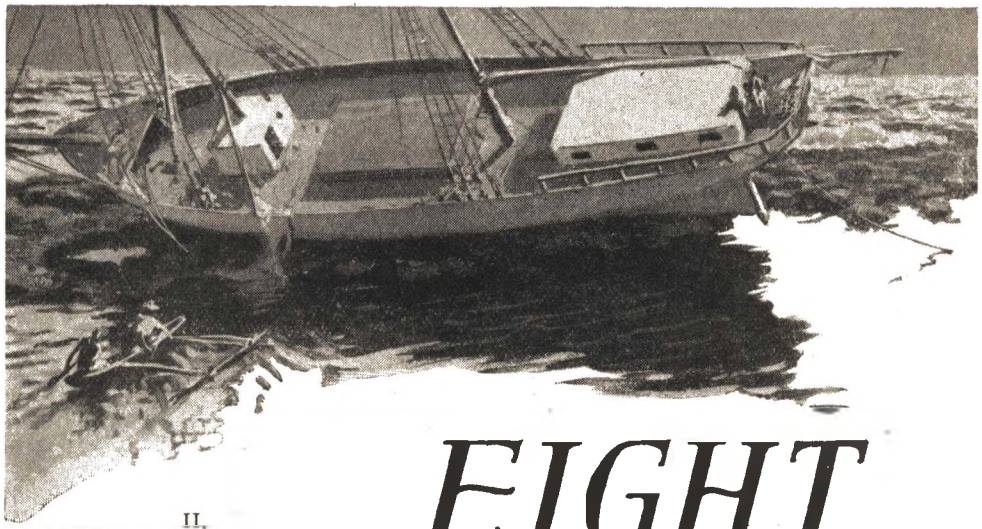
As the autumn comes, however, and the snow creeps down the Himalayas, the inhabitants of the higher villages enter upon a decidedly drab and chilly existence, spending their days spinning cloth for their own use from the coats of their sheep and goats, and seldom moving outside at night for fear of evil spirits, ghosts, and hobgoblins. While they shiver in their mountain homes, their brethren—four, six and eight thousand feet below in the plains—till their fields in the equivalent of Riviera sunshine. But during the summer these same people pray for rain to relieve them of the stifling heat, while the hill-folk bask in the sunshine, tending their sheep to the tune of their crude flutes. Then the monsoon breaks, and they become enveloped in mist, rain and dampness which lasts for three months.

Owing to Mohammedan influences on northern India there is much fatalism in the outlook of the people, and this has greatly added to the difficulties of those who work for their advancement. "It is the will of God" is the usual way of facing up to disaster, whether it be the failure of crops, the lack of rain, floods, or epidemics. All through the centuries the Punjab has known little peace and order. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, indeed, northern India was seldom free from strife, and the demands of the State upon the land were such that it often became a liability rather than an asset. One of the first tasks of the British, when they entered the Punjab less than a hundred years ago, was to institute an inquiry into the rights in land, and from these records a system was introduced for the payment of land-revenue on a permanent basis or for a period sufficiently long to relieve the holder from the anxiety of uncertainty. The next task was to build huge irrigation systems to tap the five rivers of the Punjab, thus utilizing water which had hitherto flowed to waste into the Indus and the sea. The colonization of the canal areas was likewise taken in hand, and unproductive land made to produce two crops a year.

With the object of defeating the money-lender and helping the cultivator, the co-operative movement was introduced, and the post-war programme included large-scale farming and the levelling of eroded land by means of mechanical equipment. But nothing short of vast irrigation systems many times the size of those which already exist—and which the governments of the Indian Union and Pakistan cannot afford—can raise the standard of living in India for many generations.

No fair-minded person visiting the North-West could fail to be struck with the magnitude of the work which has been achieved in so short a time. But India is so vast, and its population so huge, that in spite of the great areas which have been brought under cultivation by scientific irrigation, earning for the Punjab the title of "Granary of Upper India," the cultivator on his little plot is still a man of few resources, with small means for meeting his needs and an outlook stunted by tradition and environment. Upon him, however, depends the prosperity of India. Without the peasant and the careful husbandry of his labours, the improvement of his methods, and the extension and maintenance of the existing irrigation systems, there is little hope of providing sufficient food to meet the needs of a country whose population is increasing at the alarming rate of five to six millions a year.

OUT OF THE PAST



EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS

By J. E. BROWNE

First published in 1915, this exciting story deals with the days before law and order came in the South Seas. In those times many strange things took place among the countless islands dotted about that vast waste of waters. The Author narrates how, as supercargo of a small schooner, he took charge of two chests of silver dollars which sundry rapscallions determined to gain possession of at all costs. "The events recorded actually occurred," he writes, "and my friend was robbed just as described. Captain Hart died in Tahiti in 1901."

II.

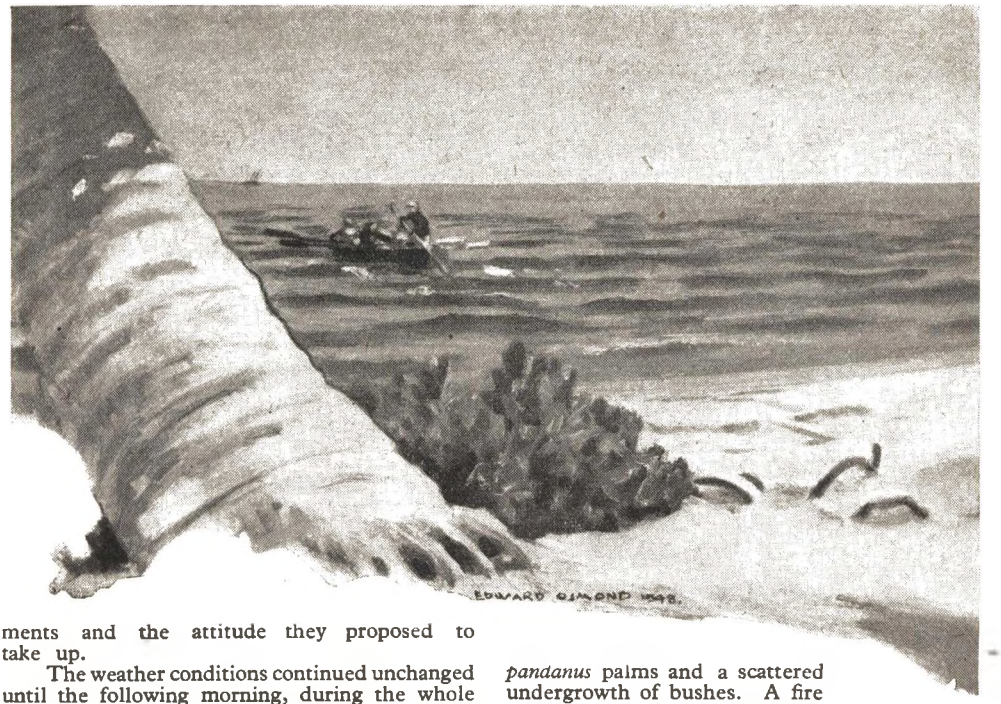
THE first instalment described how the Author sailed as supercargo of the schooner *Amélie*, having in his charge two chests containing eight thousand silver dollars. He became suspicious of X——, the skipper, who was drinking heavily and fraternizing with the white deck-hands. Stuart, the mate, told Mr. Browne he believed there was mischief afoot, and the couple staged a carefully-planned quarrel which caused the captain to take Stuart into his confidence, revealing a plot to seize schooner and specie and throw the supercargo overboard. Confident in the loyalty of the three Tahitian sailors on board, the Author and Stuart decided to nip this precious scheme in the bud, and, accordingly, took X—— and his accomplices by surprise and placed them in irons. Endeavouring to navigate the vessel himself, Mr. Browne had the mortification of running her on to a reef, where she remained. In view of the position he was reluctantly compelled to free the four plotters from their fetters before preparing to leave the stranded *Amélie*.

YOU CAN NOW READ ON.

When it came to obtaining food and water the three Tahitian sailors were of the greatest assistance, for, notwithstanding the sloping decks, these bare-footed rascals, who could get about with cat-like agility, succeeded in securing from the cabin aft a supply of biscuits and sundry tins of preserved meats. They also managed to dip out a small supply of water from the scuttle-butt, lashed to the rail, but we found this to be brackish and almost undrinkable.

The Tahitians reported five feet of water on the lee side of the cabin, but to windward everything seemed to be dry. The slope of the deck, however—the schooner being almost on her beam-ends—made it impossible to reach the weather berths. We had no choice but to remain for the present under shelter of the small deck already referred to, in company with our late prisoners.

Huddled up in our wet clothes, but little was said by anyone during the whole of that weary day. It seemed to me, however, that X——, who had scarcely opened his lips, must have already reached some understanding with his confederates concerning their future move-



ments and the attitude they proposed to take up.

The weather conditions continued unchanged until the following morning, during the whole of which time we were continually drenched by flying spray. The strong wind rapidly diminished, however, and before noon had fallen to a flat calm, although the long, oily, Pacific swell continued to break with considerable violence over the low-lying coral reef.

So far as I could judge, notwithstanding the severe shocks to which she had been subjected when grinding on the reef, the schooner had sustained no serious damage to her hull. Both masts remained standing, but the sails were hopelessly torn.

Ignoring X——, who, I realized, could in no circumstances be trusted, I at once assumed charge of operations, hoping, as time went on, to win the other white men over to my side.

LAUNCHING THE BOAT

Our attention was now turned to the boat, a fair-sized, serviceable craft used for bringing off produce from the shore. After some little difficulty, all hands working hard, we succeeded in getting her into the water. The sea on the exposed side of the vessel still continued to break with considerable force, but under our lee we found it comparatively quiet.

A demijohn of water from the scuttle-butt, some tins of biscuit, and a supply of tinned meats were then passed into the boat. The quantity we could take, seeing we had nine people to carry, was limited, and I considered this load was as much as we could manage with safety.

Finally, with two hours of daylight ahead of us we shoved off from the wreck and rowed slowly in the direction of the islet inside the lagoon. Darkness had set in by the time we reached it, but we got our provisions ashore and the boat itself hauled up on a sandy beach. We found coconut trees in abundance, as well as *pandanus* palms and a scattered undergrowth of bushes. A fire was lighted by the Tahitians, and after our evening meal, utterly worn out from exposure and want of rest, we all slept soundly beneath the shelter of some scrub until daylight appeared.

The island proved to be of considerable size, oblong in shape, and having an extreme length of perhaps half a mile. The only living things observable, however, were land-crabs, whose holes could be seen in all directions.

Here, on this tiny oasis, far removed from the habitations of men, perfect silence reigned. Miniature wavelets lapped the silvery beach, and brilliantly-hued fish could be seen darting here and there in the clear, limpid waters amid branches of growing coral.

After our recent experiences this temporary haven of rest seemed to come as a sort of Paradise. At the same time, pleasant as our surroundings might be, my mind was filled with misgivings about certain members of our party. Concerning the loyalty of the mate and the three Tahitians I had now the most absolute confidence; on the other hand, there remained the three mutineers, over whom our late skipper seemed still to exercise his sinister influence. Desperate men, I knew, are apt to resort to desperate measures; it would not do for me to relax my vigilance.

In our present situation all hands were outwardly on the same footing—shipwrecked sailors on an unknown island, from which we were awaiting an opportunity to get away. I fully realized, however, that so far as the mutinous section was concerned, the last thing they desired would be to reach a civilized port in my company, for a few words from me would place them within the clutches of the law, with all its unpleasant consequences.

" We perceived the boat being rowed rapidly away."

Breakfast that morning, at which all of us were present, consisted of tinned meat and biscuits, washed down by "milk" obtained from young coconuts. Then pipes were lighted and I took the opportunity of suggesting a conference as to our future movements.

All hands at once looked up attentively, although I observed that X—— and the three sailors, none of whom had uttered a single word during our repast, seemed to await my remarks in sullen silence.

"We have had a pretty narrow escape from Davy Jones's locker," I began, "and for that we ought to be thankful. The next thing is to devise some means of getting away from this island."

At this point X—— muttered something in an undertone to his three supporters ; then he rose to his feet, after relighting his pipe.

"Seems to me," he said, looking round him, "that before we start talking about leaving the island we ought to understand each other a little better. Twenty-four hours ago"—he turned on me menacingly—"you had me and these men tied up by the heels like a lot of criminals."

"And another thing," broke in one of the sailors, "I ain't for helping you to give us away."

"One man's as good as another on this island, says I," growled the third man; "but if it comes to choosing bosses, I propose Captain X——."

This last thrust at once made the conspirators' attitude plain, but it seemed to me that the present was not the moment to provoke open hostilities. Desperate men who dared not show themselves at any port, these rascals were obviously determined to work out their destiny in their own way. Moreover, they would not stop at extreme measures in order to accomplish their ends.

"I can't agree to that," I retorted, decisively. "As representing the owners, and all on board, the command should be mine."

But X—— and the three sailors had evidently already decided upon their course of action, for all four immediately strolled off into the scrub, and were soon lost to sight.

"It seems they mean it to be war, Charlie," I remarked to the mate. "Have you anything to propose?"

"What about taking another look at the schooner?" he suggested.

The idea of revisiting the wreck had been in my mind from the moment the *Amélie* had been abandoned; I had never for an instant relinquished the hope of refloating our stranded craft as soon as a favourable opportunity offered. The cargo, I feared, must have been hopelessly damaged, but there remained the two boxes of dollars beneath my berth, and these I determined to secure at all costs.

The weather conditions having now become settled, I at once agreed to the mate's suggestion to pull off to the wreck. We could at any rate assure ourselves of the safety of the money, and also obtain a further supply of provisions and other necessaries. Accompanied by Stuart and the three natives, therefore, I started in the direction of the beach, where we had left the boat.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY

At that moment, one of the natives, who had gone on in advance, came running back with the startling intelligence that the boat was not there! Filled with apprehensions, we all broke into a run, and upon reaching the water's edge perceived the boat being rowed rapidly away. The three white sailors were at the oars, while X—— held the steer-oar, whaleboat fashion, over the stern.

We had been cleverly duped, and X—— was now master of the situation, leaving us absolutely powerless—marooned on a nameless island in the centre of a lagoon. To make matters worse, I realized that our predicament was due to inexcusable carelessness in not keeping a better look-out on the all-important boat.

"But they're sure to come back, sir," suggested the mate. "They can't get very far in that cockleshell."

"All the same, it's a bad look-out for us, Charlie," I replied, bitterly. "X—— is no fool. He'll board the schooner, obtain all the food he needs, and grab those dollars."

"Admitting all that," rejoined Charlie, "what can he do with an open boat, and no land in sight?"

To this query I made no reply, but I guessed in my own mind what X——'s movements were likely to be. Unlike myself, he knew our position and the lie of the islands. After getting what he wanted from the *Amélie*, including the specie, he would coast along the inside of the reef, hoping to reach one of the numerous *atolls* that are to be found at intervals in most of the lagoon reefs in this archipelago. On many of these there are native settlements which are visited from time to time by trading schooners.

Several days elapsed during which, although we patrolled the island shores regularly, no signs of the schooner's boat could be detected. We had now built a primitive hut, but as time went on the general outlook did not improve. The last tin of preserved meat had been eaten, and our diet now consisted almost exclusively of coconuts, with a change in the shape of land-crabs, baked in the ashes, and occasionally some small fish the Tahitians succeeded in catching.

"I think we more better go see the schooner," was the surprising proposal made one morning by one of the natives.

"Swim?" I suggested, sarcastically, fancying he must be attempting a little joke.

"No—canoe," he answered. "Plenty coconut tree here."

"You savvee make canoe, Tirao?" I inquired, becoming interested.

"In one week," he answered, "can make *two* canoe. Have got axe," he added, and pointed to a tomahawk that had been brought ashore, with other odds-and-ends, from the *Amélie*.

I was greatly pleased at the notion, although I doubted Tirao's ability to construct a craft that would carry us safely over the ten miles or so to the wreck. The man, however, assured us it could be done, and the following day our native crew selected two large coconut trees growing close to the water's edge and chopped them down at a point close to the roots. The trunks were then cleverly hollowed out with the tomahawk, and in the course of a few days I was delighted to find that they had fashioned two narrow canoes of a shape common throughout the Paumotus. To these they proceeded to attach outriggers — necessary for securing stability—and eventually the frail craft were completed.

It was on a clear, calm morning that we started on our voyage, the mate, with two natives, in the larger of the canoes, whilst I, with a roughly-shaped paddle in my hand, accompanied Tirao in the other.

By dint of steady paddling over the glass-smooth water we soon approached the schooner, still lying on her side, and upon drawing nearer observed that there was very little surf on the reef. Without much difficulty we succeeded in climbing on to the sloping deck of our stranded craft, which, since our departure, had been driven farther over the coral, until her stern now hung over the lee side of the ledge.

This change in her position suggested the possibility of launching the vessel into the smooth water of the lagoon—an idea that was eagerly seized upon by my companions. It was here that Charlie's seamanship came into

play. First of all, he said, we should have to lighten the *Amélie* by jettisoning a considerable quantity of cargo in order to make it possible to haul her stern-first over the ledge, for which purpose a kedge-anchor would have to be run out as far as possible into the lagoon.

"And now for the dollars!" I remarked to the mate, although I spoke without any hope. With the assistance of the others I succeeded in reaching my cabin, the door of which had been splintered, apparently with an axe, indicating that someone had been before us. Upon entering the small apartment my worst fears were realized; where the two precious boxes had been stowed there was now a vacant space. The dollars had gone! There seemed no room for doubt that X—— and his friends had obtained possession of John Hart's money, but it was useless to waste time in vain regrets. What we had to do now was to take every advantage of the fine weather and endeavour to float the stranded schooner.

Under Stuart's direction the Tahitians threw overboard a large quantity of cargo. A kedge was next dropped some sixty or seventy feet distant; then the mate sang out: "Take a turn or two round the windlass."

A SALVAGE JOB

All hands put their united strength on to the windlass handles until the stout kedge-line tightened like an iron bar. Presently, as the hull of the schooner lifted slightly to an incoming swell, a perceptible movement was felt. She had shifted a couple of feet! A fresh strain was then put on the rope as we bent our backs to the windlass, and the process was repeated again and again until, at long last, we had the satisfaction of seeing our craft riding smoothly to the kedge-hawser, her bows pointing to the reef.

So far we had succeeded beyond our wildest hopes, but we had yet to learn whether, and to what extent, the *Amélie* might have been damaged below the water-line. The pump was manned, and within half an hour ceased to throw water. Upon sounding with a rod, our vessel was found to be completely free!

The erstwhile trim *Amélie*, with her canvas in rags and her running gear and rigging in a tangle, looked a derelict indeed, but the confusion seemed to us at that moment a small matter which could easily be remedied.

A fire was promptly started in the galley, and we partook of the first decent meal for many a day.

The food seemed to put new life into us, but we had much to occupy our attention. At any moment a strong wind might spring up, and for this we were not prepared. After enjoying a smoke, therefore, we set to work again. The torn sails were ripped from the gaffs and spars, and a spare suit from the sail-locker bent in their place; then, so far as I could see, there was nothing to prevent our getting under way. I decided, however, on the mate's advice, to first run down to the islet and complete our preparations for sea there. Hoisting the jib and foresail, it did not take long to reach our old camp, where we anchored in five fathoms within a hundred yards of the beach.

The schooner, we now discovered, was "riding light," in consequence of our having discharged so much weighty stuff when on the reef. The three sailors were therefore set to work to bring off in the canoes a quantity of ballast in the shape of blocks of coral. The *Amélie*, be it remembered, was built on clipper lines, and without plenty of weight below was very "tender" under canvas; we did not care to run more risk than necessary in that direction.

In the course of a day or two the vessel was made ready for sea, with the rigging repaired and new sails bent. After taking on board a supply of coconuts, the anchor was raised and we headed towards the reef, following its course in a south-westerly direction, with the ledge on our starboard hand. From our position inside the lagoon the line of reef, over which the surf broke continually, could be clearly discerned.

The wind continued light, our speed being not much over five knots, and on the second day land was sighted right ahead. Upon approaching nearer, we made this out to be a good-sized *atoll*, covered, as usual, with coconut palms. We soon saw that the place was inhabited, for when we rounded a point at its eastern end the scattered huts of a native village came into view. We also caught sight of a white-painted schooner —evidently a Tahiti trader—at anchor inside the passage.

We had brought our canoes along, and it did not take us long to get one of them over the side and paddle towards the vessel, for I was anxious to get on the track of our late skipper. Stepping on deck, I at once recognized Captain Grelot, a French skipper trading for Brander, of Tahiti, and an old acquaintance of mine.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Grelot, gazing at me with astonishment. "X—— said that you were drowned!"

"X——?" I echoed. "Has he been here?"

"There's something crooked about this," returned Grelot, looking puzzled, and motioned me to follow him down the companion. Upon entering the cabin, Frenchman-like, he placed before me a bottle of *vin ordinaire*, and then informed me that X——, accompanied by three men, had arrived at the island six days previously in the *Amélie's* boat and reported the wreck of his schooner. The *Amélie*, according to X——, had struck a submerged rock and sunk within two minutes. X—— added that he and the three men had succeeded in swimming to the boat, which was washed overboard as the *Amélie* disappeared. In the hope of picking up one or other of the crew, he had waited at the spot for a considerable time, but finally, the sea being rough and the wind increasing, he had put the boat before it in order to avoid being swamped, reaching this place three days later in a famished condition.

"And where is X—— now?" I asked, eagerly.

"Left yesterday for Tahiti, after getting a stock of provisions from me," replied Grelot. "Said he was in a hurry, and that with the south-east trades he could reach Papeete in a week."

The name of the island we had arrived at, I learned from Grelot, was Aratika, latitude 15 S., longitude 144 W., one of the northernmost of the Paumotu group, and distant from Tahiti about six hundred miles. I did not believe for a moment, however, that X—— really intended to steer for that place. My late skipper, it appeared,

was an old acquaintance of Grelot's, and would not now be seeking former friends. What he desired rather would be to get on board some outward-bound craft to whose master he was unknown.

"The scoundrel!" cried Grelot, after he had heard my version of the affair. "And to think that there were eight thousand dollars underneath those bags in the boat!"

The chances of catching X——, or recovering the money, were now decidedly slim, particularly if the villain happened to succeed in getting picked up by some passing vessel bound to San Francisco. I realized that searching the seas for so small an object as a ship's boat would be simply wasting time, and therefore decided to make a fresh start for the Marquesas as soon as possible. Captain Grelot was good enough to supply our requirements in the shape of provisions. We were, however, without a boat, nor could I obtain one from the shore. It might be possible, Grelot thought, to get one from Brander's agent at Takaroa, an island situated within a day's sail of Aratika, and to this agent, whom I decided to visit, Grelot gave me a letter with a request to supply me with anything I needed, including a ship's boat.

Sail was again made, and the nimble *Amélie* was soon sweeping through the narrow passage to the open sea with a fresh breeze from the south-east. The following morning found us entering the Takaroa Pass, where we anchored abreast of the little jetty fronting Brander's store.

I was received very graciously by Brander's agent, to whom I presented Captain Grelot's letter of introduction, and he at once agreed to supply all our requirements.

"By the way," remarked the agent, over a parting glass of excellent lager, "a ship's boat arrived here yesterday with four men. They told some yarn of having lost their vessel."

Instantly I was on the alert. "What kind of a boat? Where are they?" I demanded eagerly.

"Oh, it was just an ordinary boat, painted black," answered the agent. "They did not stop long, but went round the point yonder, where there is a native settlement."

"It's X——, or I'm a Dutchman!" exclaimed the mate, who had overheard all that was said. "We'll get the beggars as sure as eggs!"

"Could you lend us any firearms?" I asked the astonished agent. Then, in a few words, I proceeded to explain what had taken place, and the likelihood of the strange boat proving to be our own.

The German at once summoned half a dozen natives and, manning a large whaleboat that belonged to the station, we were shortly rowing as fast as four oars in the hands of sturdy islanders could take us towards the point where the strange craft had preceded us the day before.

In the stern of the whaleboat beside me were the agent, who had asked permission to make one of the party, and Charlie Stuart. All of us were armed with Winchester repeating rifles, for although we were greatly superior in numbers I did not propose taking any chances. X—— was a man who, in my opinion, would not easily surrender, even against great odds.

Upon rounding the point indicated by the German the first thing that caught my eye was a boat hauled up on the beach some distance from the native settlement. I quickly recognized it as that belonging to the *Amelie*, but of the mutineers themselves we saw no sign. Our approach must have been noticed, and in the face of such numbers the blackguards evidently declined to risk an encounter, preferring to retire to a safe distance.

Our first thoughts were naturally of the dollars, but on reaching the abandoned boat we found in her only a quantity of tinned provisions, a cask of fresh water, sundry articles of men's clothing, and sundry other equipment. The principal object of our search, the money, was not there, although I felt convinced we were hot on the tracks of the mutineers. It was, in fact, quite possible that they were even now watching us from a distance.

"Now, boys," said I, addressing the men assembled around the boat, "listen to me for a moment. This, as you know, is the boat in which X—— and his three sailors absconded, leaving us stranded on that scrap of an island. When we boarded the schooner a few days ago the two boxes of dollars were missing. They came here in this boat, and I'm not going to leave the island until I can lay my hands on them. What say you?"

Before the others could reply the kindly agent spoke.

"The whole of my establishment is at your service," he assured me. "I have here a lot of excellent fellows upon whom I can depend, and even if we don't find the money we are bound to catch the mutineers."

BURIED TREASURE

At that moment one of the native crew, who had been doing a bit of exploring on his own account, came running excitedly towards us. He had, he said, followed footprints from the boat that led through some scrub to a place where earth (really sand) had been recently disturbed.

"I think," said the native, eagerly, "him bury dollars there."

All hands at once followed him to a spot in the thick scrub, where we found unmistakable evidence of digging. Since there appeared to have been no attempt at concealment, I inferred that the task had been hurriedly abandoned.

The natives, at my direction, now started digging up the coral sand, using, for want of better implements, a piece of a broken paddle. The soft sand yielded easily to the improvised spade, and in the course of a few minutes an obstruction was met with. The point of the paddle had struck against a hard substance that prevented any greater depth being reached.

"I think catch something this time," remarked the native, redoubling his efforts; and in another moment, amid shouts from the crowd, there was lifted to the surface first one and then another box that I immediately recognized. There, staring me in the face, was the stencilled address: "Captain John Hart, Taiohai, Marquesas."

Delighted beyond measure at our discovery, the boxes were carefully examined. So far as could be seen, the fastenings were still intact, but in order to make certain that such was really the case, the lid of one of the chests was prised open at one end with an axe, exposing a layer of neat

brown paper rolls, each about six inches in length. One of these, with a view to making assurance doubly sure, I cut with a pen-knife, until the edges of silver pieces showed white and shining.

That was sufficient for me! The box was securely renailed and our valuable prizes carried down to the whaleboat, where they remained in charge of the mate pending our departure for the settlement.

"And what do you propose to do about the mutineers?" asked the agent, as we were preparing to embark.

"The mutineers?" I answered, absently, temporarily quite unmindful of all that the agent had done on our behalf. "Oh, they can go to blazes, unless *you* want to catch them."

"Pardon me," replied my companion, rather reproachfully, "but that is really not my affair. I only thought to do you a service."

Apologizing for my brusqueness, I hastened to assure the German of my grateful appreciation of the valuable assistance he had rendered at so critical a moment. In extenuation of my hasty words, I explained that I was anxious to continue our voyage as early as possible. John Hart, I knew, would be much concerned at our non-arrival at the Marquesas, where we were long overdue.

"But surely, my friend," remonstrated the agent, who had accepted my apology with the utmost good humour, "you do not intend to let these villains off scot-free?"

"There, staring me in the face, was the stencilled address."

Much as I should have liked to start on a man-hunt over the island of Takaroa, however, I did not care to delay our departure further, but at his suggestion I promised to leave with him a written statement detailing all the circumstances connected with the stranding of the *Amélie* and the theft of the boxes of money. This was to be handed to the captain of one of the French warships that made periodical visits to the various islands throughout the group, and whose assistance towards bringing the miscreants to book might be counted upon

HOMEWARD BOUND

Taking our recovered boat in tow, all hands now embarked on the whaleboat and headed for the settlement. The two precious boxes we had so luckily recovered were once more stowed in their former resting-place beneath my berth, and, after giving the friendly agent the promised letter, as well as an order on our Tahiti agents for the value of the stores received (we did not now require a boat), sails were hoisted, the anchor raised, and a fresh departure taken on our long-delayed voyage to Nukahiva.

Our fo'c's'le hands were now limited to the three Tahitian sailors, but with the steady Trade winds that prevailed hereabouts we found no difficulty so far as sailing the schooner was concerned; I took charge of one watch of four hours, and the mate the other. As regards the navigation, however, I was in somewhat of a bit of a quandary. Our chronometer had been completely ruined by sea-water during the time the schooner lay exposed on the reef, with the result that I had no means of determining our longitude, and consequently I had to depend on "dead reckoning," at which I was by no means proficient, in order to reach our destination. Nevertheless, I felt sure that I could manage, somehow or other, to reach one or other of the islands comprising the Marquesas group.

Reclining on the after-deck of our little clipper on the morning following our departure from Takaroa, I experienced a feeling of exhilaration, after all the trials and difficulties we had gone through, that I am unable to describe. It was true that the remaining cargo had been hopelessly ruined, a suit of sails lost, and a certain amount of damage done to the schooner's hull. On the other hand, the comforting thought remained that we had saved our vessel, and had also—which was of even greater importance—recaptured the lost dollars. Now I was anxious to reach our destinaton as quickly as possible and give an account of the trying events of the past few weeks. As for X—— and his three companions, I felt that we were well rid of a pack of scoundrels who would doubtless, sooner or later, meet with their just deserts.

I now turned my attention towards the navigation of the ship. I knew, from the position of Takaroa on the chart, that we must be far to the eastward of the Marquesas, and I decided, in the absence of a chronometer, to follow the method adopted by native skippers when cruising amongst the islands. By attempting a direct course I should run the risk of missing the islands altogether, for faulty steering or unknown ocean currents might easily put us off the proper track.

With a sextant and a "Nautical Almanack" I should have no difficulty in ascertaining our latitude; it was the longitude that bothered me. I therefore steered, as near as the schooner would lay, a course due north until reaching latitude 7 S.; that being the position of Nukahiva. Arrived at that parallel, by sailing a compass course due west, we could not fail to hit the island sooner or later.

Arriving at latitude 7, the vessel's head was slewed round to the west, and a few days later the correctness of my calculations was verified by a cry which came from aloft: "Land Oh! Right ahead!"

Mounting the fore-rigging I could make out with my glasses the dark outline of mountains lying directly in our path. Presently, on our port bow, the steeplelike peaks of Uapo also came into view, thus putting all doubts to rest as to the identity of the group. Before night we rounded the "East Sentinel," a small islet on the weather side of the Bay of Taiohai, and less than an hour later the anchor was dropped near the small jetty under Prison Hill, directly opposite John Hart's big store.

Already I could perceive a boat pulling out from the shore, in which I soon recognized Hart himself, immaculately attired in white.

The dilapidated appearance of the schooner, as my old friend approached, could not have escaped his notice. Torn sheets of copper sheathing hanging from her grimy sides at the water-line, broken bulwarks, and other evidences of rough usage, all showed clearly that our erstwhile trim craft had come through a strenuous time.

"Been in the wars, evidently," remarked Hart, ruefully, glancing around as he gripped my hand. "I see you have Charlie Stuart, but where are X—— and the other hands?" he added, with some anxiety.

"Come down below, Hart," I suggested, placing a hand on his shoulder. "I have got a great deal to tell you."

We descended the companion together, and in the fewest possible words I gave Hart an account of my stewardship.

"Let's get ashore, old man," he said, after hearing my yarn. "We may as well take along those confounded dollars and put them in a safe place."

The two boxes were passed into the boat and carried by natives from the beach to Hart's private office, which was separated by a light partition from the main store.

"The first thing to do," said Hart, "is to get this wretched money into the safe. Goodness knows, it has given trouble enough!"

Tools were obtained and the lid of one of the boxes removed, thus exposing a top layer of *rouleaux* of dollars.

Hart picked up one of the brown-paper rolls of coin which had become partly embedded in a quantity of coral sand; then he suddenly turned to me.

"There's something wrong here," he growled.

"What on earth is it, Hart?" I gasped.

"Old man," he replied, gravely, "you have been *SOLD!* Look here!"

I held my breath in sheer amazement as he pushed aside the top layer of dollars. Underneath was nothing but white Takaroa sand; the rest of the money was missing! The villainous X—— had beaten me after all!

I should like to be able to tell you the pirates came to a sticky end, but as a matter of hard fact they were never captured, and I have no idea what became of them. There was a rumour some years later that X—— had been seen in Western Australia, and that the police were on his track, but nothing came of it. I do not suppose he will ever be caught now, after all these years; but if he still lives I am sure that, like myself, he will never forget those eight thousand dollars.

THROUGH THE SWISS ALPS IN A WHEEL CHAIR

The Furka Pass and the Rhone Glacier. Gletsch and Grimsel in foreground.

The story of a very gallant exploit. Although he has lost the use of both legs through infantile paralysis, the Author—an ex-Royal Navy officer—still yearns to see the world. Some time ago, aboard his little motor-tricycle, he set out all alone to tour the Swiss Alps! What is more, he successfully accomplished the journey, meeting with some very interesting experiences.

By O. A. DENLY

EVER since childhood I have longed to travel; I joined the Royal Navy to see the world, and greatly enjoyed the life. About two years ago, however, while serving in the Tropics, I lost the use of my legs through infantile paralysis, and was invalided out. Since then I have been journeying around in a one-and-a-half horse-power tricycle; with a little self-propelling chair strapped on the side of my runabout. I have once again become a "mobile unit." Not long ago the old familiar *wanderlust* attacked me so strongly that I decided to set off for Switzerland, all on my own, in search of adventure.

Unfortunately the French authorities refused to allow me to travel in the guard's van, as I do in England, so I determined to go by road. To satisfy myself that I could accomplish the distance—no mean feat for a one-and-a-half horse-power tricycle—I made a trial run, driving from London to Yeovil, in Somerset, and covering three hundred miles in two days. Everything went splendidly, but although the experiment gave me all the confidence I needed my frends continued to shake their heads doubtfully, and before I finally set off I took on a number of bets with sceptics who felt certain I should meet with disaster.

I left London one fine evening. I had cut my load down as much as possible, but took the hand-propelled chair and also my own bed, in case I came to places where there was nobody to carry me upstairs. Despite the elimination of everything I thought I could dispense with, the load was approximately 250 pounds—rather a lot for such a small engine! Packing my kit in limited space was quite a job in itself. I should explain that I couldn't speak a word of French, but had persuaded a friend to write down for me all the essential phrases I thought I should need.

After spending the night at my home in Shoreham, I caught the Newhaven boat to Dieppe, and speedily discovered some of the advantages of Continental touring when one is confined to a wheel chair. Obviously I couldn't enter Custom and other offices, so the officials came out to me instead! There was no standing in queues, no staggering along in the heat loaded down with heavy bags, and no frantic rush to catch trains.

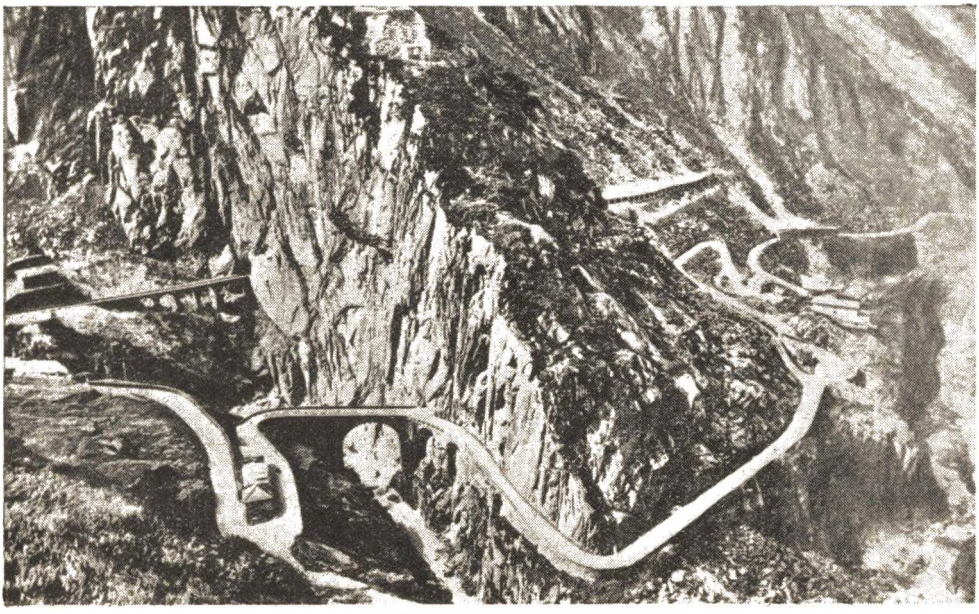
The Author ascending the Furka Pass.

At Dieppe, after my tank had been filled with petrol, such a large crowd gathered round to inspect my novel equipage that all traffic was stopped, and a *gendarme* had to disperse the sightseers before I could get going. As I set off for Paris I felt a glow of exhilaration; my adventure had really begun! After a few hours, however, things didn't look quite so rosy. I ran into a violent thunderstorm, with heavy rain, and it began to get dark. With the chilly rain trickling down my back, and visibility rapidly diminishing, it suddenly struck me that I was in a strange country, far from home and friends, and completely ignorant of the language. I didn't even know where I was going to sleep that night—and already I was getting wet through!

Eventually I pulled up outside a small hotel, at Gisors, only sixty miles from Dieppe, but the good folk there seemed so genuinely pleased to see me, and gave me such a warm welcome, that my troubles were soon forgotten. When I pulled out my list of French phrases and tried to indicate my requirements, the whole family roared with laughter, and I had to join in their merriment. They anticipated my every want; the language-bar proved no obstacle whatever. During the whole of my trip, incidentally, I had no difficulty about accommodation or food, and met with nothing but the greatest kindness.

The following morning, bidding farewell to my charming hosts, I started up the engine and went chugging off—I hoped non-stop—for Paris. The wheel chair made heavy weather of the cobble-stones, nearly shaking the life out of me; I began to speculate as to what would break first. But the sturdy little motor never faltered, and I reached the capital safely, eating a picnic lunch at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. Paris enchanted me, though I spent only three hours there, deciding to devote a couple of days to exploring the city on the homeward journey.

On my second night, which I spent in Provins, I was most fortunate. I happened to get into conversation with a young French girl whose father had served in the *Maquis* during the war. He had lost a leg as the result of a mine-explosion, and was the proud possessor of a motor-chair similar to my own. Nothing



The wonderful road from Wassen to Andermatt.

would satisfy the young lady but my going home with her to meet her father, and when I arrived they made much of me, insisting upon me staying the night with them. All of them, fortunately, could speak a little English, and I sat up into the small hours listening to tales of the German occupation and present-day conditions in France. The father, it appeared, was an agricultural engineer, and very often during the war, after the children had been sent to bed (they were carefully kept in ignorance of his doings at the time), he would bid farewell to his wife and disappear into the night. He engaged in some very dangerous exploits in connection with the "Resistance," but luck was with him, and he never failed to come back just before dawn, sometimes utterly exhausted and soaked to the skin. As I listened to his quietly-told stories I watched his wife sitting there, smiling gently, and pictured her feelings as she waited, night after night, praying for her man's safe return. It was the steadfast courage of families like this which enabled so many of our stranded airmen to escape from the Continent.

Not till late the following afternoon would these kindly folk consent to let me go; then I pressed on toward the frontier. Although I was traversing well-known tourist routes, I nevertheless felt almost like a pioneer pushing into unexplored country, and the surprise and delight of the people I met heightened the impression. One might have thought they had never seen a motor-propelled invalid chair before, and as a matter of fact I believe that such a journey had never been previously attempted in a similar vehicle.

With the engine going splendidly, I pushed on until eleven o'clock that night before I pulled up at an hotel. Although the night-porter could speak no English, we contrived to understand one another, and I was soon asleep on my own bed, tucked away in a snug corner downstairs. It was a "recommended" hotel, and I was somewhat surprised next morning to discover that I was expected to wash in a bucket. The breakfast, too, was disappointing, consisting of bread as hard as stone, served without butter, and black coffee *sans* sugar. I couldn't grumble, however, for I was only charged 1s. 8d. for a bottle of beer, bed, and breakfast

It was a lovely day, and I felt in high spirits, but a few miles along the road my ambitious trip nearly came to a most inglorious end; the engine became so hot that it set fire to my baggage! The carburettor was only a few inches from the flames, and I had alarming visions of the whole chair catching alight. Pulling up, I hurriedly cut my impedimenta adrift, thus averting the main danger. Then throwing aside a few things that were hopelessly ablaze, I was able, in spite of a high wind, to put out the rest of the fire. Luckily my passport and other valuable documents were only slightly

The Author stops for lunch at the top of the Furka Pass.

charred, and the engine undamaged, but as I drove on I told myself I had had a very narrow escape.

Late that evening I crossed the frontier and entered Basle, having covered the five hundred miles from London in four days. I found the brilliantly-lit shop windows and the bustle of the city so wonderful that I forgot all about my fatigue, and drove around for an hour before seeking an hotel for the night. When I eventually found one, I was told to drive straight

The Author rounding the hairpin bend at the Devil's Bridge, St. Gothard Pass.

in and park my chair in the *foyer*. Then, after an excellent dinner, with a juicy, tender steak and a nice bottle of wine, I sat back in my little chair and watched the guests dancing until midnight, finally retiring to bed very pleased with myself for having reached Switzerland.

The following morning I explored Basle, and was shown over the Burgenspital, one of the most modern buildings in the country. From the roof one gets an excellent view of the city, and in the distance I could see the mountains for which I was heading—an impressive goal indeed!

Taking to the road again, I drove through Berne, reaching the shores of the Thunersee just as the sun was setting. I halted beside the lake, where the only sounds that broke the stillness of the evening were the gentle lapping of wavelets on the beach and the muffled beat of the paddles as a steamer glided past. Picturesque chalets were dotted here and there, and the last rays of the sun gilded the sails of several yachts. The wonderful mountain air, coupled with the beauty of the scene, made me feel that, whatever befell, my long journey had been well worth while.

Next day, in my little chair, I took the train to the Jungfraujoch, over 11,000 feet high, where I met with a curious experience. We were caught in a terrific thunderstorm, and although everyone else in the party felt the electricity in the air the rubber tyres on the wheels of my chair completely insulated me.

Returning to my faithful tricycle, I set off from Interlaken toward the mountain resort of Grindelwald. So far everything had been pretty easy; I had not encountered any steep hills. After leaving Interlaken, however, the road began to wind higher and higher, and eventually I found myself in the shadow of the 13,000 feet Eiger. Everyone I met declared I should never get up to Grindelwald—but I *did*.

Returning to Interlaken, I headed for the Susten Pass, which rises to an altitude of 7,200 feet before descending into the valley on the other side. When I saw the road high above me, leading up the side of a great mountain, I must confess my heart sank; I felt convinced I should never make it! But the engine continued to purr merrily, and the chair climbed steadily higher and higher, leaving me amazed at its performance. I had taken the precaution of bringing a rope along, in case I had to ask a car for a tow, but I reached the summit entirely unaided. Here I found myself well and truly in the clouds. Although it was now late evening, and I was all alone among these mighty peaks, my exaltation was so great that I burst into song as I coasted down the long slope into Wassen and sought quarters for the night.

Now, of course, I was in the heart of the Alps, and had to tackle the job of getting out again. There was an easy road, but that didn't appeal to me; I decided on the "tough" route across the Furka Pass. A young English couple whom I met kindly offered to take part of my baggage in their car, and without their assistance I feel sure I should never have been able to carry out my programme. After doing some shopping in Andermatt I eventually reached the summit of the Furka in safety, though covered from head to feet in the white dust of the road. All the people I encountered were amazed to see an invalid chair chugging up the Pass, and my arms became quite stiff from acknowledging their cheery salutes.

At 7,976 feet, thrilled by the success of my climb, I pulled up to admire the magnificent view. Ahead could be seen the beginning of the Rhone Valley, with the Bernese Alps to the right and the Valais Alps to the left. Far below lay Gletsch and the Grimsel road, winding upwards to 7,100 feet, with a corner of the Grimsel See glistening in the bright sunshine. I was very proud to be able to add one more pass to the credit of my faithful wheel chair.

After driving down past the Rhone Glacier, I was presently bumping and jolting up the rough-surfaced Grimsel Pass, arriving at the summit in bitter cold. This constituted the second stiff climb of the day, and after saying good-bye to my English friends I turned about and began the easy run down the Rhone Valley.

The climax of the trip was now over, but many more happy days lay ahead. I found the lower Rhone Valley very hot and somewhat uninteresting, but the climb to Montana, a summer holiday-resort, was well worth making; there was a wonderful view across to the Valais Alps and the Wisshorn. I met with a minor mishap at Vevey, puncturing my front-wheel tyre in the tramlines, but luckily I was near a garage and the damage was soon put right. Don't think I couldn't have tackled it myself, if necessary; I was quite prepared to squat on the ground and tackle my own running repairs.

After a very pleasant sojourn in Ouchy, by the side of Lake Geneva, exploring Lausanne and Geneva meanwhile, I left Switzerland with five days left in which to do some sight-seeing in Paris and reach Dieppe. I crossed the Col de la Faucille with ease, enjoying the picturesque scenery. The following day, although it never ceased raining, I pressed steadily on. Within two days I covered two hundred and fifty miles to Provins, where I once again stayed with my friend of the *Maquis* and his family. They greeted me like a lost brother!

Off again on the long, long trail, I spent two most memorable days in Paris. I arrived on the eve of their National Day, and had a very enjoyable time. Eventually, feeling much fitter than when I started out, and not in the least tired, I completed the remainder of my journey and returned to London—where I duly collected my winnings from the Jeremiahs who had betted I shouldn't accomplish my task.

When I put my wheel chair away in the garage that night I gave the sturdy little engine an affectionate pat, still marvelling at its wonderful achievement. Altogether, during the twenty days of my holiday, I had covered 1,520 miles, at a total expenditure of £30. I hope it will not be long before I start on my travels again.

PHASES of LIFE
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

AN AFRICAN HOUDINI

By JOHN T. MILLS, Late Director of H.M. Prison, Gold Coast

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

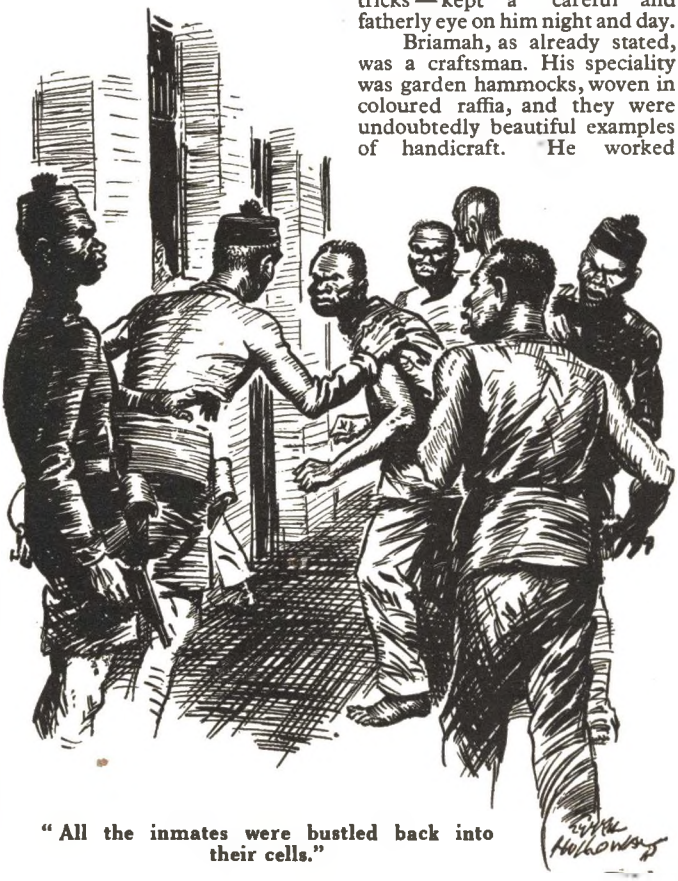
I FIRST made the acquaintance of Briamah Moshie in the Central Prison at Sekondi, on the Gold Coast. He was doing a seven-year "stretch" for burglary; I was Assistant Superintendent of Prisons and officer-in-charge of prison industries. My senior knew Briamah well, and liked him, and I soon developed a soft spot for the old reprobate myself.

As his name implies to those familiar with local conditions, he was a Moshie man from the French Territory lying to the north. These Moshies came south to work in the Ashanti gold-mines, and Briamah had drifted down with the labour-gangs some years previously.

He was a born thief, absolutely incorrigible, and officially classed as a recidivist, or "old lag," but nevertheless possessed many redeeming qualities. He never used violence, for instance, and was a first-class craftsman. He spoke "pidgin" English, and there was always a cheery grin on his ebony countenance. Nothing perturbed Briamah; he looked so amiable and harmless that a stranger would have taken him for a model prisoner until informed that no bolts or bars could hold him once he felt the urge for the wide open spaces.

My chief was only too well aware of this, for Briamah had made two wonderful getaways while in his charge; and an escape invariably means lots of "Please explains" from Headquarters and an eventual unpleasant hauling over the coals. Briamah was therefore incarcerated in a specially-strong cell on the ground floor of the main block, and never allowed out of the prison yard. His workplace was under a shed, in full view of the Superintendent and Chief Warder's office, and the whole of the African staff—who were well acquainted with his little tricks—kept a careful and fatherly eye on him night and day.

Briamah, as already stated, was a craftsman. His speciality was garden hammocks, woven in coloured raffia, and they were undoubtedly beautiful examples of handicraft. He worked



"All the inmates were bustled back into their cells."

"He then wriggled through the opening."

alone, taking six months to make a single hammock, and from the moment he started until he finished he was "safe" so far as attempts at escape were concerned. The danger came during the interim period—before he began the next one. He never attempted a bolt until a hammock was completed. Such is pride of workmanship!

I suspect he made his plans while doing his weaving. Those bright eyes of his observed everything that happened around him, and as he unobtrusively studied his guardians his quick brain duly registered and filed away for possible future use the little habits men get into and never notice, especially when they are following a routine.

No prison ever built can hold a determined escapee indefinitely. That is a recognized fact, and as a result the game of custodian and captive has developed into a battle of wits. All authority can do is to maintain constant vigilance, meanwhile endeavouring to create so many obstacles to be overcome before freedom is attained that the time taken to accomplish the process makes the enterprise not worth attempting. Let us see how the system worked in Sekondi Prison.

First of all, the cell had to be escaped from, secondly the block, thirdly the block-enclosing wall, and fourthly the outer wall. All these represented formidable barriers; in addition our friend Briamah had to deal with leg-irons and handcuffs, which, in view of his record, were clamped on him every night during the "danger-period" between the finishing of one hammock and the commencement of the next. Add to all this patrolling warders, with "staggered" hours of duty, so that no point went unwatched at any time of day or night, and you have a very difficult nut to crack. Yet Briamah cracked it!

He accomplished the feat one very dark night during the rainy season, when the wind howled and the rain poured down incessantly, and none saw his passing. At 5.30 a.m. next morning the day-staff came on duty and filed off to unlock the cells. When Briamah's cell was opened the handcuffs and leg-irons lay on the floor, his blanket was neatly folded, and everything else in perfect order. The prisoner himself, however, was missing!

Then the balloon went up with a vengeance!

All the inmates were bustled back into their cells, and a routine search began. It didn't take very long to discover what had happened.

Under the outer wall we found the handle of a drinking-mug which had been ground down to the shape of a blade suitable for use as a screwdriver. Marks on the concrete floor of the cell indicated how *that* had been done. The iron grille over the cell door revealed signs of tampering, and inspection showed that the screws had been carefully greased with the palm-oil from the prisoner's food and later taken out. It must have taken Briamah months to loosen these screws; all of them had been removed except the two centre ones at the sides. When the job was done all he had to do was to tip the frame, and over it went like a fanlight. He then wriggled through the opening, pushed the iron frame back into position, and Obstacle Number One had been surmounted.

The patrolling warders made their rounds every fifteen minutes. At each strategical point in the prison there was an electric bell-push, enclosed in an iron box fitted with a lock. The warder had to unlock the iron gate of the block, step inside, relock it behind him, walk down to the end, past the floor-cells, mount the stairs, walk along the upper corridor to the far end, past the top cells, unlock the box on the wall, and press the button. The signal thus made was recorded on a paper drum fitted to an elaborate electric clock in the Superintendent's office.

Picture what happened on this particular occasion, as we carefully reconstructed the incident. It was a dark and stormy night with the rain coming down in sheets. Briamah, having got out of his cell, was crouching in the shadows. Presently the warder on duty arrived to press the bell. He was exceedingly wet and uncomfortable and had his cape over his head to protect himself from the downpour. Having let himself in, he did *not* lock the iron gate of the

block behind him, but hurried along the bottom floor and stumbled up the stairs to punch the bell.

How many hours had Briamah spent nightly listening to hear if the door-lock clicked? He had spotted the fact that most of the warders omitted to relock it after their entry, and duly noted it for future use.

Obstacle Number Two had now been overcome; directly the warder had gone upstairs he slipped outside and concealed himself in a dark corner.

The old rascal didn't get panicky; he let the returning patrol pass by, all unconscious of his proximity; then he crept out into the rain-swept yard and climbed over the block wall into the carpenters' shop. Here he took off his prison clothes and donned a boiler-suit belonging to the machine-warder which, according to custom, was draped over the circular saw. A twelve-foot plank placed against the outer wall of the prison made a good scaling-ladder, and the cover of the planing-machine came in very handy to lay over the broken glass on the top. There was a fourteen-foot drop on the other side, but the ground was wet and soggy and Briamah very agile. A jump into the dark, and he was out and free!

Months passed, and no trace of the fugitive could be discovered. Then there happened to be another wild night of storm and rain. At 2 a.m. the senior warder in charge of the prison gate was startled to hear a loud hammering on the door. Running out, he yelled: "Who's there?" whereupon a familiar voice replied "Briamah Moshie." A peal of mocking laughter followed; then came the fading sound of running feet.

The escapee was eventually recaptured, but not for some years. This time he duly completed his sentence, and on his release kept clear of crime. Probably he had decided he was getting too old for the game.

In 1939 I met Briamah in the Central Province. Recognition was mutual; we sat down by the roadside and talked. Presently I asked him how he had contrived to get out of the handcuffs and leg-irons when he made his get-away, this being a puzzle we had *not* solved.

"Master," he said, "I like you too much. I shall never come in prison again, so I tell you." And this is how it was done.

The handcuffs were of the old screw type—now quite obsolete. The screws had square, sunken heads, and were unlocked with a key similar to that of a clock. Owing to the humidity of the Gold Coast, rust starts very quickly, so most metal is kept well oiled. The prison handcuffs and leg-irons, when not in use, were stored in a bath of oil, so it will be seen that the screws would move very easily.

Briamah's procedure was to unpick with his teeth the strong red twine that bound the end of his blankets. Then, using fingers and teeth, he twisted this into a loop which, by dint of much delicate manipulation, he was able to work over the square screw-head. Next, holding his hands to his mouth, with the doubled ends of the thread between his teeth, he moved his head anti-clockwise, slowly and gently untwisting the screw! Infinite patience and good teeth were needed, but I succeeded in doing the trick myself after Briamah had explained the method. Once his hands were free he found it child's play to remove the leg-irons.

As I have indicated, he was a lovable old rascal, and I shall always remember him.

ISLAND SKIPPER

By HAROLD J. POLLOCK

SMALL boats which have accomplished long ocean voyages have always fascinated me, but the queerest craft in this category that I ever encountered is Captain D. H. Cambridge's little ketch *Taipi*. I came across this tiny ship in Ngatangiia, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in March, 1946. The vessel herself is romantic enough, while the life of her indomitable skipper contains enough adventure to fill a book

I shall never forget my first glimpse of the *Taipi*. There she was, sitting high and dry in a grove of coconut-palms at least two hundred yards from deep water; I learnt she had been blown there bodily by a January hurricane. Four men were repairing her battered sides with primitive tools and materials. Three of them, I could see, were Polynesians; the fourth was a small, spare European. I guessed his age at about sixty-five.

As I approached he leisurely laid aside his caulking-tool and sat down on an old tree-stump.

"Cambridge is my name," he greeted me. "Looking for a job?"

"Well, not exactly," I returned. "I should just like to learn something about your ship."

He eyed me quizzically.

"There she is—at her worst," he said. "But you're welcome to look her over. She's forty-seven feet overall, fifteen feet beam, and draws 6 feet 6 inches. Certainly not much to look at, but a finer sea-boat I never sailed in."

Thanking him, I walked round the little vessel. Squat and fat, she sat on her props like a duck, her high topsides reminding me, in miniature, of one of the old coal-hulks you see in any big port.

She had no keel to speak of, and the thought struck me: "How does she sail to windward?" I was to learn later that she just *can't*. In her stern I noticed a blocked-up hole where once had been a propeller-shaft; the little captain obviously relied entirely on his canvas. The rudder was of rough bush timber, held together with iron bolts. The ship had never been painted.

Most vessels in the islands are just tarred, and *Taipi* was no exception.

In shape she was almost a double-ender, but not quite; high above the waterline was a little "tuck" stern. Climbing the ladder, I saw that she was flush-decked, with a companion-way to the fo'c'sle, and a sliding hatch leading to the captain's cabin aft of the mizzen-mast. The steering-wheel was of the old sailing-ship type, with a barrel winder attached to the rear.

I descended into the hold. For her size she had wonderful cargo-space. She was unlined, and I noted her massive frames. A more crudely-built craft I have never seen, but she was very stoutly fashioned. I had already noted enough to wonder if my pre-conceived ideas as to hull-design, structure, and gear were correct. *Taipi* had undoubtedly done her job, riding out hurricanes that had wrecked much larger and stouter craft. I remembered the old adage: "A ship is only as stout as her crew."

Clambering on deck again, I noticed four bricks against the stern scupper, held together with a piece of wire. The bricks were fire-blackened, and the skipper later explained that all his cooking at sea was done on this little "hot-pot."

Descending to earth once more, I approached Captain Cambridge again.

"Seen all you want?" he asked. "In three weeks I'll have her afloat; I'm taking a cargo to Manihiki. Care to come?"

I am usually quite willing to go to sea in anything that floats, but on this occasion I made my excuses.

"Tell me, Captain," I went on. "How did you come to be the owner of this ship?"

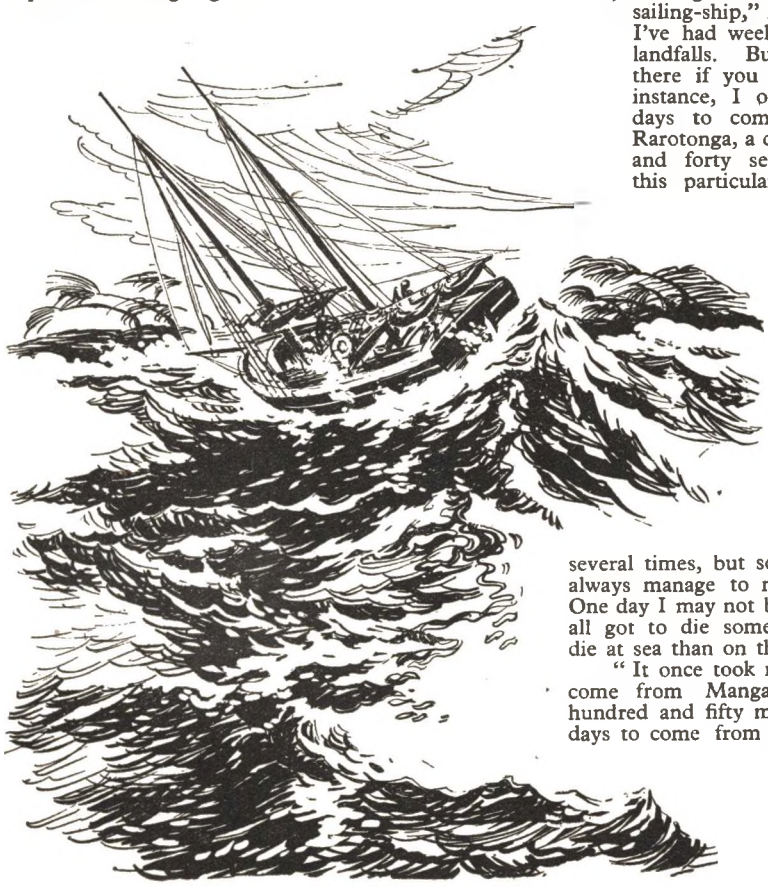
"It was in Suva," he answered. "I came across her lying on the beach in a state of disrepair. Two young Americans had sailed her out from Belize, British Honduras, and—like a lot of other ocean voyagers in yachts—finished up in Suva dead broke. I bought her pretty cheaply; nobody wanted her. She needed a lot of doing-up but, being planked with pitch-pine, she was quite sound. She was then rigged as a cutter, but I purchased one of the spars belonging to the *Cimba*. No doubt you've read 'Saga of the *Cimba*?' (I had to admit I hadn't). Well, I stepped that spar as a mizzen-mast, made a set of sails from calico, and sailed *via* Samoa, Manihiki, and Suwarrow to Rarotonga. That was in 1941. Since then I've been trading regularly round the Cook Group."

"You sailed from west to east?" I inquired. "I understand it's difficult to do that in the latitudes of the Tropics."

"Yes; it's regarded as being tough in a sailing-ship," he agreed. "At times I've had weeks of beating between landfalls. But you eventually get there if you keep on trying. For instance, I once took twenty-two days to come from Aitutaki to Rarotonga, a distance of a hundred and forty sea miles. Twice on this particular passage I was in sight of 'Raro, and once almost up to my anchorage. Then the wind changed and I was blown out to sea again. The people on Rarotonga had given me up for lost, but I eventually got home one Saturday—in time for the bowling-match.

"As a matter of fact I've been given up for lost several times, but somehow, sometime, I always manage to make the home port. One day I may not be so lucky, but we've all got to die sometime, and I'd rather die at sea than on the land.

"It once took me thirty-one days to come from Mangaia, a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, and twenty-four days to come from Master's, Palmerston Island, two hundred and seventy miles. On that last passage we ran out of water, but I always carry a few dozen coconuts just in case. We drank



"Blown by a January hurricane."

Captain Cambridge, second from right, with his native shipwrights.

coconut water and did not suffer much from thirst. Usually I carry a forty-four gallon drum of water, lashed on deck. I have no built-in water-tank."

"How heavy is your anchor?" was my next question.

"Never carry one, or even a warp."

Seeing my look of astonishment, the Captain added: "I carry odd lengths of chain and tie up on the various reefs at the islands I visit. A coil of wire comes in handy, too. I have my own mooring-places at the islands on my circuit and, being of shallow draught, I can moor where the trading schooners can't go. That's where I score over the larger ships. For instance, *Taipi* is the only vessel that has ever been inside the reef at Aitutaki. All the people who were supposed to know told me I couldn't get through the narrow passage on account of the swift current, and that I'd lose my ship if I tried. But I'm so used to folk telling me things can't be done that I don't take much notice when advice is proffered. I find I can't sail *Taipi* by the usual rules; she's just a ship on her own. All the seamen here prophesy that I'll never get her down to the water again; when she was blown ashore by the hurricane they sympathized with me over her 'loss.' I told those know-alls that, previous to the storm, I deliberately moored her in such a position that she *would* be blown up where she now sits! I've nearly completed her annual overhaul, and the hurricane has saved me £10 in slipway fees. I'll worry about getting her down when I'm ready, not before!"

I was dumbfounded at the old skipper's courage and tenacity.

"How many hands do you carry?" I asked next.

"I usually carry three Rarotongans as crew. They do all the sailing; I have only to make the landfalls for them. The boys are wonderful sailors and shipwrights; I've even taught them to navigate. White people here declare the natives are brainless and can't be taught anything. Don't you believe it; given our education they are just as clever as the *papaa* (white man)."

"What instruments do you carry for navigation purposes?"

"Come aboard and I'll show you," he said. Down below he dug in a drawer and produced an old-fashioned little chronometer that must have seen at least a century of service; an ancient quadrant; and a small compass in a box. You just carried the box and placed it where you wanted it.

Picking up his navigation-tables, I turned the yellow, thumb-marked pages and discovered to my amazement that the old tome was none other than Bodwich's "Navigation Tables of 1820"!

"That's the lot," he told me.

"How about charts?" I questioned.

"I make my own." Thereupon he proudly exhibited one masterpiece drawn on a piece of drawing-paper, showing the degrees of latitude and the meridians of longitude. Nothing seemed beyond the ingenuity of this remarkable man.

"And now tell me how you came to take up this 'Sinbad the Sailor' sort of life among the islands," I invited.

Captain Cambridge deftly rolled another cigarette.

"Years ago I skippered coasting vessels in New Zealand," he said, "but I suspect there was always a bit of the vagabond in me. I

chucked up the sea for a while and went gold-mining on the West Coast, but didn't make much of it, so I returned to my first love as master of the island schooner *Tiare Taporo*. Later I commanded another schooner of the same type, the old *Tagua*, but since coming to the South Seas I had always cherished the idea of owning a small ship of my own and trading round the islands in this group with a native crew. Then I came across *Taipi*, and I guess you pretty well know the rest."

"How come you called her *Taipi*?"

"It's just a native word meaning 'flood-tide.' It sounded sort of romantic to me, although at the start I nearly called her *Taipo* (Maori for 'devil'). Sometimes, when I've had an extra rough passage, I think the latter name would have been more appropriate."

"What type of cargoes do you carry?"

"I carry islands produce such as copra, arrowroot, pearl-shell, etc., for some of the trading firms here. When I go to the remote islands, seldom visited by any vessel, I just trade on my own, exchanging tobacco, calico, and tinned meat for *hula* skirts, native strings of beads, pearls, mats, and other local produce. I don't make much profit, but I get a living, and I see places and people that few other white men ever come across. You're a sort of god, you know, to the natives on some of the remote islands, and they treat you royally. Almost every day you see something to laugh at and something to cry over. Life is for ever interesting; that's why I like it. There's too much sameness in the cities for me."

"Do you ever carry passengers?" I asked.

"Yes; and I've carried a few celebrities, too. Dean Frisby, the author, of Puaka Puaka fame, and John Pratt, who sailed the beautiful yacht *Vagus* out from England, were marooned on Suwarrow Island a few years ago after a terrific hurricane. Pratt lost his yacht, and they saved their lives by clinging to the only tree that was left standing after the storm. I brought the old *Taipi* to the rescue and took them back to Rarotonga."

"But where do you house your passengers?" I asked, recalling the scanty accommodation.

Captain Cambridge smiled. "I house them wherever they can find space in the hold," he explained. "They don't have to come if they don't like it, of course. That's what I told Pratt and Frisby on Suwarrow that time. But those boys were sure glad to see *Taipi* on the horizon, for after the hurricane they had nothing but their trousers left."

Taipi **high and dry at Ngatangiia**

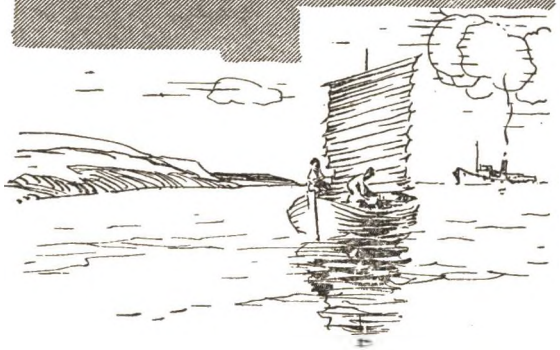
"Have you ever had a serious leak develop whilst at sea?" was my next question.

"Yes; on one occasion, when we were about two hundred miles from land, she started to leak very badly, just below the waterline on the starboard bow. We became rather alarmed, for we couldn't stem the flow. After the water started to slop over the floorboards, however, we managed to patch her up with a piece of kerosene-case and some soap. It's surprising what dodges you think of in an emergency, but as a rule leaks don't worry us so much as lack of wind. Many a time just when we've made our landfall, the wind has failed. Then we get out the sweeps and try to make port. When that happens I expect we look something like an ancient slave-galley."

Then, bidding me farewell, Captain D. H. Cambridge—ex-gold-miner, farmer, and now owner-skipper of the twenty-ton ketch *Taipi*—went back to his caulking.

Back in my *kikau* hut that evening, I sat and thought over our interview, marvelling at the courage and determination of this wonderful old seaman. It is two years ago now since I saw the *Taipi* on the "hard" at Ngatangiia, but the Captain evidently got her afloat again, despite the prognostications of the "know-alls," for the last I heard of the indomitable skipper was at Aitutaki, which port he had just cleared, outward bound, with a cargo of arrowroot for Rarotonga.

LAST VOYAGE



By MAJOR ALEXANDER GRABER

The story of an exciting trip down China's Yellow Sea. There had been much talk of pirates; the Author and his companion laughed at the old skipper's fears. What happened immediately afterwards, however, caused them to change their attitude!

WHEN I first saw the steamer *Lwoong Hwa* I was not at all impressed. She was a rakish-looking little craft of some seven hundred tons, weather-beaten and long overdue for repainting. It depressed me to think I should have to spend six days aboard her in order to reach Shanghai, but there seemed to be no alternative.

The year was 1929, and North China was becoming distinctly unhealthy, for Japan was already preparing for the "China Incident." Things looked so menacing that Jim Berry, my unofficial guardian and friend, decided it was time we got clear. Letters from home contained similar suggestions; my family had been back in England a year, but they understood the situation in Tientsin pretty well. Jim had greater responsibilities than myself, and proceeded to pack. Nearly fourteen years his junior, and realizing the value of his experience, I decided to accompany him.

We met on the Tientsin Bund at an appointed time. It was raining heavens hard; a low mist hung over the Pei-Ho river. Jim pointed to the *Lwoong Hwa*, and announced: "There she is."

I had already suspected that this old coaster was destined to take us away, and merely nodded gloomily. Burdened with suitcases, I staggered along behind him to the gangplank. A diminutive Chinese showed us to our cabin, and a moment later Captain X—— arrived to welcome his only passengers.

He was a small man, with a weather-beaten face fringed by early-Victorian side-whiskers, and keen blue eyes. He spoke in a broad Scottish accent, and at times leaned heavily on a stick.

"So you're bound for England, home and beauty, eh?" he remarked. "Or does one of you happen to be a Scot?"

We confessed that both of us were English, whereupon he grinned. "Ah, well, you're none the less sensible to be getting out," he went on. "If I had any brains at all I'd be back in Edinburgh myself, instead of wasting my time on the China Coast! All your baggage aboard?"

Jim nodded. "When shall we reach Shanghai, Captain?" he said.

"It's about a five- or six-day trip if the weather holds," replied Captain X——. "I hope to land you on the Bund by Monday."

"That's cutting it pretty fine, Jim," I remarked, anxiously. "If we miss the big ship at Shanghai we shall have to wait a month for another."

"You'll catch the big ship all right," X—— assured us. "That is, of course, if we get safely past the mouth of the Yangtze!"

Jim and I laughed, for at that time the Yangtze river was a standing joke; rumours concerning the activities of the pirates who infested its mouth had become the chief topic of conversation in the North China clubs. The latest tale was that these ruffians were led by a mysterious woman, were over a thousand strong, and had secret agents everywhere. Regarding these stories with great scepticism, we were much amused at the skipper's remark, but sobered down somewhat when we noted the grim expression on his face.

"Have your fun, laddies!" he commented, drily. "Did you hear what happened last week?"

Sheepishly we confessed we hadn't.

"Well, the pirates came out in junks, armed with cannon, and attacked a big freighter miles off shore. . . ."

"Were they led by a beautiful Eurasian girl with red hair?" interrupted Jim, slyly.

"They were led by a Chinese woman," growled X——, sternly. "They looted the ship and seized the officers for ransom."

Jim grinned derisively. "Come off it, Captain!" he said. "We heard that yarn in Tientsin last week. Nobody believed it!"

X—— glowered at us and moved toward the door, where he paused, looked back over his shoulder, and said quietly: "The first officer of that ship was the best friend I ever had. The vessel hasn't returned to port, and goodness

only knows what has happened to those aboard."

With that he closed the door behind him, leaving us looking awkwardly at each other. A few days later we had reason to feel considerably more foolish.

After lunch Captain X—— seemed to have forgiven our disbelief; he nodded cheerfully as we passed him on deck. A little Chinese sailor was standing before him, and X—— was closely examining the man's papers.

"You can't be too careful when you're taking on new hands," he explained. "The pirates often try to smuggle confederates into a crew. They are mighty good organizers, and reckon that one man on board a ship they're going to attack is worth ten in a junk. And they're right!"

A more harmless-looking individual than the fellow X—— was interviewing would have been hard to find. His dress denoted abject poverty, his manner was servile, and his haggard face expressionless. He answered the Captain's questions in a thin, piping voice; his hands shook with nervousness as he took the papers the skipper returned to him and thrust them inside his padded coat.

The Chinese was duly engaged, and X—— turned to us. "That chap will be your steward," he announced. "He's done the job before and, though he looks a bit of a wreck, is the safest type to take on at a time like this. Oddly enough, he's got a reference signed by the officer I told you was missing. A man who was good enough for *him* is good enough for me!"

With that he climbed up to the bridge, while Jim and I leaned on the rail and took a last look at Tientsin. The little Chinese was sent below to tidy up our cabin.

In due course the *Lwoong Hwa* got under way, but before we had been at sea an hour the wind was blowing a gale, causing our little ship to roll and pitch madly. The diminutive steward informed us that the Chinese nickname for the vessel was "*Shui hu*" (Kettle) and she certainly deserved it. How she managed to avoid capsizing amazed me.

What a night that was! We tossed sleeplessly in our bunks until dawn, while the labouring ship performed the strangest acrobatics. The sight of breakfast proved too much for my weakened stomach; I was violently ill. Lashed by the wind, I hung dejectedly over the rail, longing for dry land. Later on, however, the wind dropped somewhat, though the sea remained rough, and a fog came down. I felt a little better, and Jim and I approached the bridge. From its lofty elevation, the Captain greeted us.

"'Morning, gentlemen!" he called out. "Rides it well, doesn't she?"

Remembering that awful night, we made no reply.

"Do you still think we shall reach Shanghai by Monday?" shouted Jim.

"If the fog lifts I'll get you there before then," answered X——, confidently.

At that moment the ship plunged her nose deep into a sea, and further conversation was impossible until the racing propeller became submerged once more.

"When do we strike the Yangtze?" shouted Jim.

The Captain smiled. "If the weather remains as it is we can forget the Yangtze," he yelled back. "This will keep the pirates indoors!"

The fog lifted by evening, and at midnight the sea became calm. I found myself able to eat again, and promptly forgave the *Lwoong Hwa* for all her misdemeanours. That night Jim and I rolled into our bunks and slept heavily; it was nearly eleven o'clock the following morning before the little Chinese steward aroused us.

If ever a man put himself out for the comfort of his passengers it was this one; he was the soul of quiet efficiency. He personally cooked our food, scorning the help of the galley-boy, and, despite the conditions, continued to serve it with some degree of daintiness. We learned that his name was Fu-Lang and that he hailed from Hanoi, in French Indo-China. Apparently he was working his way home in stages; he said he had a wife and four children in Hanoi. We questioned him as to his knowledge of the Yangtze, but on this subject he shut up like a clam; the mere mention of the river had obviously unsettled him.

We left him cleaning the cabin as though his life depended on it. Arrived on deck, we found the sea like a mill-pond. Captain X—— was sunning himself in a long wicker chair on deck, while a Lascar, who acted as mate, was at the wheel. The Captain jerked his thumb towards the placid water.

"This is bad," he remarked, sorrowfully. "If it keeps like this we can't skirt the coast. Far too risky!"

Jim smiled at me; I knew what he was thinking.

"What speed can a pirate junk do?" he asked.

"With this wind, perhaps eight knots," answered X——.

"And this ship?"

"If pushed she can make twelve."

"What's the worry, then?" asked Jim. "You can easily outpace them."

The skipper shook his head. "You try to outpace a cannon-ball!" he snapped. Rising from his chair, he went on: "Your conception of these pirates is all wrong; and I should like to add that your notion I'm a nervous old fool is also wrong. I've sailed these waters long enough to worry about the things that matter and forget the things that don't. It's not a case of an occasional pirate junk robbing a *sampan*. What bothers me is a carefully-organized plot for the capture of a particular ship."

Standing there, frowning thoughtfully, he pointed the stem of his big briar pipe at us and continued: "If we are down on the Yangtze pirates' list as their next victim we shall meet them at night. The first thing you'll hear will be a shot across our bows; the second, if we fail to stop immediately, will be a fusillade. Do you realise that some of their junks carry up to ten cannon? Our only hope is to call up a gunboat, and there are mighty few of them about."

"What happens if the pirates get aboard?" I inquired.

By way of answer Captain X—— rolled up the leg of his trousers. His left ankle, I noticed, was terribly deformed, apparently as the result of some old injury; it amazed me how he was able to walk about as well as he did.

"*That's* what happens!" he growled. "The passengers usually get off more lightly, unless they try any heroics; the pirates just take them ashore and hold them for ransom. But the officers and crew are rounded up and put out of action as soon as possible."

"How did your ankle get like that, Captain?" asked Jim.

"In a freighter off Bias Bay in 1922," replied X——. "The pirates came aboard at Hong Kong disguised as passengers, took control of the ship off the bay, and handed her over to the junks. Like a fool I offered fight. They laid my ankle over a capstan; a rifle-butt did the rest."

That little story, so laconically told, greatly impressed us.

"Are you sure of your present crew?" I asked.

"As sure as any skipper can be," he answered. "The only new hand I've had on board during our last three trips is Fu-Lang, your steward. He seems harmless enough."

"How about the hostages the pirates take?" I remarked, trying hard to appear unconcerned. "I suppose they're treated well enough?"

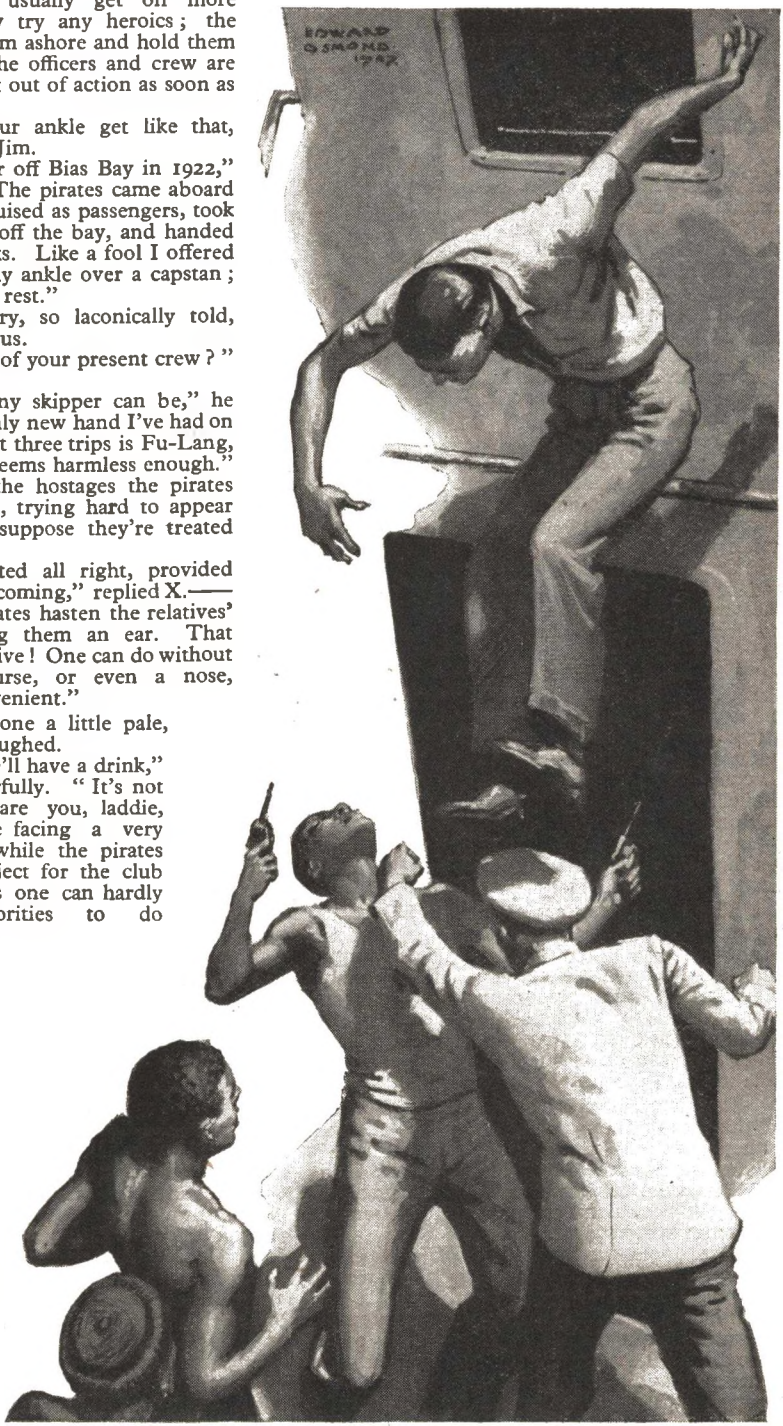
"They're treated all right, provided the ransom is forthcoming," replied X.—— "Otherwise the pirates hasten the relatives' decision by sending them an ear. That usually proves effective! One can do without one's ears, of course, or even a nose, but it's very inconvenient."

I must have gone a little pale, for the Captain laughed.

"Come on; we'll have a drink," he said, more cheerfully. "It's not my intention to scare you, laddie, but we seamen are facing a very real danger, and while the pirates are made the subject for the club jokes of landlubbers one can hardly expect the authorities to do much about it."

It was the morning of our fifth day at sea. Captain X—— frankly admitted we had lost time during the gale, and more still when he altered course in order to keep clear of the coast. He now estimated that we should tie up at Shanghai about 5 o'clock the following afternoon.

The sea was still calm and the temperature rising; Jim and I donned shorts and lounged about in whatever shade we could find. Evening drew on, and when darkness



"By this time I was on my way down."

fell we joined Captain X—— on the bridge as usual.

At 10 p.m. we were still chatting amiably, and presently Jim offered the skipper a last cigarette before turning in. As he flicked open his case the engine stopped.

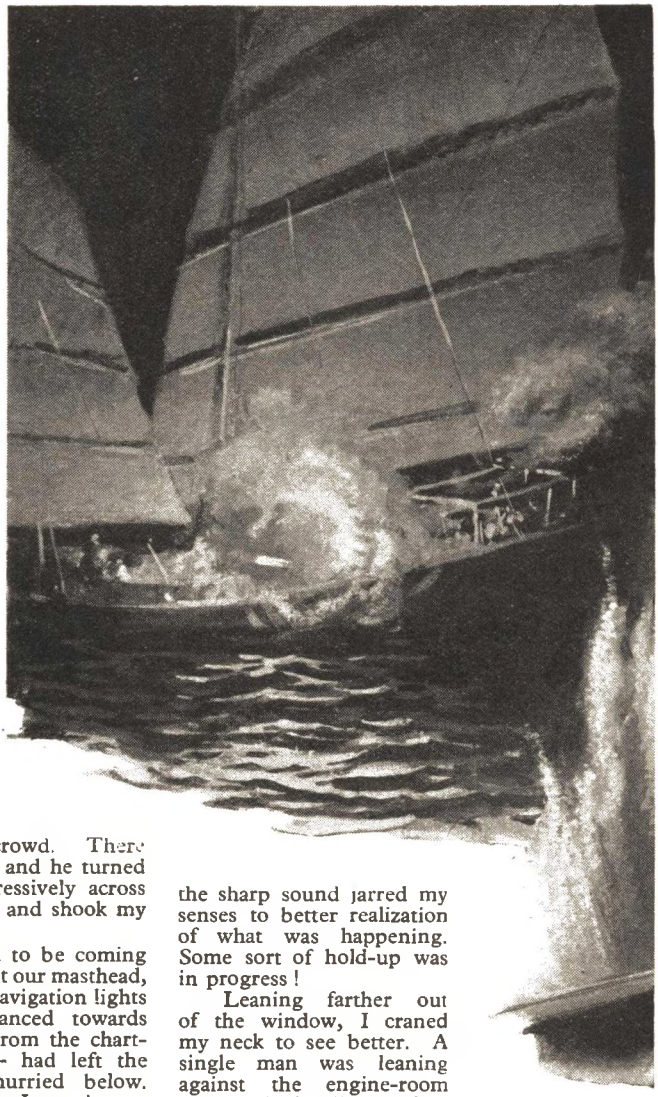
I glanced at X——'s rugged face; his expression did not alter. Almost lazily, he turned to the speaking-tube.

"What's wrong down there?" he demanded.

There was no reply. After the steady drone of the engines the silence was intense. The ship gradually slowed, and then stopped. Jim followed the Captain as he made his way toward the door leading to the engine room.

Going down on deck, I leaned against the rail. The only sound to be heard was the sea lapping against our sides. Something was very wrong; I felt it in my bones.

Suddenly a light winked out from the darkness, and the members of the crew on deck immediately clustered together, leaning on the rail close beside me. Pointing at the light, they chattered unintelligibly among themselves. Hitherto I had never noticed them particularly, but now, assembled in a bunch, the Chinese looked a motley crowd. There was one big Negro among them, and he turned to me and drew his finger expressively across his throat. I gave a sickly smile and shook my head.



The light out at sea seemed to be coming nearer. Looking around and up at our masthead, I noted with relief that our own navigation lights had been doused. Then I glanced towards the bridge. A dull glow came from the chartroom windows; Captain X—— had left the light switched on when he hurried below. Scrambling up on to the bridge, I put it out. The man at the wheel had disappeared.

Just then I heard a shout from the direction of the engine-room, and the group on deck gathered round the door. By this time a blanket of silence had fallen over the ship; the crew were talking in hushed whispers.

I felt very nervous as I pushed open the chartroom window and peered down.

The engine-room door opened; involuntarily I gasped with surprise at what I saw. Five figures trooped out on deck, their hands held high above their heads. The leading pair were Jim and Captain X——; the others were the engineer and his two stokers. Another figure appeared behind, apparently driving them forward. Silently the five men joined the crew, who gaped at them in amazement. Then, one by one, the deckhands likewise raised their arms, stupefaction written on their faces.

The engine-room door slammed shut, and the sharp sound jarred my senses to better realization of what was happening. Some sort of hold-up was in progress!

Leaning farther out of the window, I craned my neck to see better. A single man was leaning against the engine-room door, with a levelled revolver in each hand covering the rest of the party. I recognized him instantly—Fu-Lang, our Chinese steward!

One can't help admiring a cool customer, and this fellow appeared to be the coolest I have ever set eyes on. He lounged there all alone, holding up that bunch of helpless seamen as if it was the easiest job in the world. It struck me that somebody might risk rushing him; but nobody did. Meanwhile the little Chinese kept them covered like the hero of some Western film.

I glanced seawards, to observe that *three* lights were now dancing close to us, on the port bow. Then a shot cracked out from the darkness, to be immediately answered by another from one of Fu-Lang's pistols.

So far, apparently, the little villain had not noticed my absence. That gave me a chance to do something, but the "something" would

"We were drenched with spray as the shots fell short."

obviously have to be done quickly. It was a good twelve-foot drop from the bridge to the deck and, frankly, I was very frightened. At the moment, however, there seemed to be only one man to deal with. I had no wish to lose my ears, and I was well aware there was not a soul east of Suez who would pay a penny of ransom-money to preserve them.

The chartroom window, luckily, was wide open, and the rising moon had momentarily disappeared behind a cloud. Climbing shakily out on the sill, I measured the drop to the pirate's head. One of the crew—the Negro—glanced up at me. Following his gaze, Fu-Lang likewise looked up. During that split second the watchful skipper seized his opportunity; his fist crashed against the little rascal's jaw, hurling him to the deck. By this time I was already on my way down.

With the impetus of his blow, Captain X—— had staggered forward, and as ill-luck would have it I landed fairly on his shoulders. The pair of us rolled in a confused heap on the deck. The little pirate was up before us, but the Negro seized him round the waist in a bear-like hug and Jim promptly disarmed him. Next moment two men were sitting on Fu-Lang's chest.

Captain X—— scrambled to his feet, cursing vigorously, and dashed down into the engine-room, followed by the engineer and the stokers. Meanwhile somebody had hit the struggling Fu-Lang on the head, knocking him unconscious. Leaving him stretched out on the deck, the rest

of us ran to the ship's side to discover what was happening.

Bobbing lights now seemed to be all around us; strange voices were calling from the void. Suddenly, through the gloom, we discerned the shadowy outline of a big junk and heard the menacing clatter of rifles being loaded. A few moments later, to our joy, the ship's engines started once more, and as she began to gather way the moon sailed out from behind the obscuring clouds.

We could see the junks clearly now—four or five of them—although the men on board were still invisible. Three of the craft were barely fifty yards away, and presently a burst of flame and thunder came from one of them. Like fools we remained at the rail, gaping, and were drenched with spray as the shots fell short. How those pirate gunners succeeded in missing us at such short range is beyond my imagination. They soon fired again—this time, apparently, over the top of us, but I don't know where that salvo went, for I was lying flat in the scuppers!

The skipper was now back on the bridge, and the *Lwoong Hwa* was moving fast; most of the crew, at X——'s shouted command, scurried to their posts. We almost ran the second junk down; luckily we were too close for her to use her guns, but she had a crack at us from astern, contriving to put two neat holes through one of our boats.

Presently Captain X—— turned the ship's nose east and increased speed, leaving the junks astern. The pirates continued to blaze away long after we were out of range, but none of their shots did any damage. We waved them a derisive farewell; then Jim and I made our way up on the bridge.

Captain X——was now swearing even more luridly than before. Apparently he had ordered the prisoner to be brought to him, only to discover that the fellow had completely vanished! Either Fu-Lang had remarkable recuperative powers or else he had merely feigned unconsciousness, for it was only too obvious he must have taken advantage of the excitement to slip quietly over the ship's side, and had doubtless been picked up by his confederates.

The old skipper almost danced with rage while he told us about it, and Jim hastened to get him a stiff whisky by way of consolation.

I was young and romantic in those days, and, illogical as it sounds, for the man was doubtless a hardened ruffian, I was secretly rather glad Fu-Lang had made his escape; there was something about the little pirate that appealed to me. Perhaps, after all, it was just his amazing audacity. Holding up a ship's crew single-handed is no mean feat; it was only due to a fluke that he didn't get away with it, in which case this story might have had a very different ending.

We reached Shanghai the following day. It was a great relief to be in civilization again, but—now it was all over—Jim and I agreed we would not have missed the experience for worlds.

Remembering our former attitude, we took leave of Captain X——in a decidedly chastened mood.

"You'll report the incident, of course?" asked Jim.

"Aye," sighed X——, "I'll report it, but I doubt if the Chinese authorities will do anything about it. If only we'd managed to hold that cunning little steward things might have been different. Think what a good laugh they'll have over the affair in the North China clubs! We haven't even had a man wounded! Mark my words, laddies: one day the British will lose patience and clean out these pirate nests—all the way from the Yangtze to Bias Bay. Until that happens there'll be no peace for us sailors."

X——'s prophecy proved correct. At a later date decisive action was taken by the Naval authorities, and nowadays the sea-lines in that vicinity are comparatively clear of pirates.

We heard subsequently from a friend that the *Lwoong Hwa* never sailed again. Considering she had had her day, the Chinese owners sent her to the shipbreakers' yard, while Captain X—— went into well-earned retirement. He had survived two brushes with pirates; perhaps he thought it would be tempting Providence to chance a third! He was a grand old fellow, and I often wonder if he is still alive to recall the last voyage of the *Lwoong Hwa*.

NOT QUITE WHAT IT SEEMS

BANKS, as a rule, like to house themselves in impressive-looking premises conveying a reassuring impression of solidity and prosperity. Away from large centres of population, however, this is not always practicable, and one occasionally comes across buildings that appear somewhat unsuitable for their purpose. Here, for instance, is a picture from New Zealand showing an unpretentious corrugated-iron shed which seemingly announces to the world that the much-respected Bank of New Zealand has gone into the business of buying scrap metal! The explanation is a simple one. The place is actually the office of a metal-buyer, but for the convenience of local customers a bank official attends on Mondays and Fridays to receive deposits. This primitive "bank" is situated on the Great South Road, between Penrose and the city of Auckland.

MAN AND HIS NEEDS

By
"THE CAPTAIN"

Address all communications for this department to "The Captain," c/o THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE, *Tower House, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and send stamp if a reply is required.*

The "Brotherhood"

AMIDST the surprising shower of congratulations that has descended upon us from all parts of the world in connection with our fiftieth anniversary, I have been gratified to find numerous flattering tributes to this feature. Some of these "bouquets" have taken the eminently practical shape of food parcels and boxes of cigarettes—doubly welcome at this period of austerity. Never, in my most roseate pipe-dreams, did I imagine I should live to see the day when admiring readers of "Man and His Needs" would be supplementing my rations! I need hardly say how much I appreciate such kindly encouragement; it is very inspiring to discover that one's efforts to be of service have forged so many links of friendship. As pointed out on previous occasions, the "Brotherhood of the WIDE WORLD," with the passage of the years, has become something very real.

New Sports Jackets

There was a time when tailors were among the most conservative of folk, but during recent years something like a revolution has taken place, quietly and unobtrusively, in the whole theory of cutting. Nowadays the tailor goes in for what is technically known as "drape"—an easy-fitting, casual-seeming, but absolutely scientific cut which gives perfect fit and balance

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. . . . **and available soon!** Two new B.S.A. Air Rifles, the ·177 'Club' and ·22 'Airsporter' —both underlever models.

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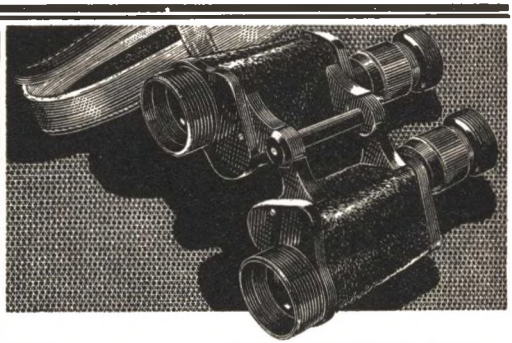

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without any sacrifice of comfort. Body-movements do not distort a " draped " garment ; it automatically falls back into its own designed " line." This being the case, I think many of you will be keenly interested in some new " draped " sports-jackets now available in the shops. These possess several entirely novel features, including the elimination of the centre-seam from the back, allowing the maximum of looseness and ease combined with style, and also enabling stripes and checks to be matched up without distortion. There is a new shoulder-line, the general appearance is exceedingly smart, the value offered remarkable, and— best of all!— only ten coupons are needed to purchase these coats as compared with the normal thirteen.

The Hat Campaign

At long last, according to the newspapers, the manufacturers concerned have decided to launch a combined campaign to combat the growing menace represented by the " no hat " fashion. The feminine side of the industry has already made a start, endeavouring to re-educate the younger women as to the added attractiveness of a face set off by a carefully-chosen hat. As a mere male I should like to add that I wish them well ; anything more objectionable and depressing-looking than those all-too-familiar head-scarves it would be difficult to imagine ! Women claim to possess infinitely better taste than men when it comes to details of attire, yet hundreds of thousands of them have unthinkingly adopted head-wrappings which reduce them to a common level of cheapness and conventionality.

A word in your ear

ARE YOU THINKING of cashing some of your savings and spending the money? Well, it is your money and you can spend it if you like.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Britain is a free country to-day, because you and millions more like you toiled and suffered to win that freedom as a heritage for your children and theirs to enjoy.

SO YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF, to those who died in war, and to their children, not to use your money in any way that will jeopardise the future for which so high a price was paid.

YOU WILL JEOPARDISE THE FUTURE if you save less and spend more before the battle for production is finally won. So — a word in your ear — *are you still going to cash those savings?*

ISSUED BY THE
NATIONAL SAVINGS COMMITTEE

A Novel Notion

One well-known firm has struck a decidedly original note in connection with the plan to popularize male headgear. Prominent actors in British films are to wear British-made hats, as is only right and proper, and retailers will show photographs of famous male stars sporting the latest styles. This is an excellent move, for no leading man in films dare take any risks with his appearance, and you can be quite sure these stars will look very smart indeed in the models they select as most suitable to their personalities. Which means, of course, that ordinary men's wives and girl-friends will make mental comparisons and press for appropriate action!

The Value of Appearances

If a man wants to get on in the world, incidentally, appearance is still a most valuable asset—particularly in these days of clothing coupons and enforced shabbiness. It is all very well to go hatless in one's leisure hours, when one has only one's self to please, but I strongly advise young men in offices not to abandon headgear just because others do so. The " bosses " have a curious knack of expecting employees to look " businesslike," and—even if they don't say anything—they are apt, in secret, to frown on folk who go about hatless and wearing *negligé* garments.

Careless Clothes

There is a lot to be said for the fitness of things, even in these go-as-you-please times, and a fellow without a hat, wearing an open-necked shirt and a check sports jacket, hardly suggests a

responsible representative of a reputable firm. Moreover, if his chief has "old-fashioned" views about clothes, as so often happens, he is hardly likely to become one! So don't thoughtlessly prejudice your own chances by dressing carelessly. It is very easy, in pursuit of "comfort," to achieve a slovenly turn-out, whereas an employer cannot fail to be struck by the appearance of a man who invariably "looks the part." Many things have changed in the modern world, but any suggestion of freakishness or careless attire is definitely out of place in business.

For "Wet" Smokers

A correspondent in Co. Cork offers two suggestions which, he claims, will definitely end the troubles of the "wet" pipe-smoker. The first is to crumple a cigarette-paper into a loose ball and place it in the bottom of the bowl before loading-up; the second is to train yourself to the regular use of those ingenious "smokers' circles"— the method whereby one rolls the 'baccy up in paper prior to inserting it in the pipe. Both these ideas, he points out, will give you an absolutely dry smoke; they also prevent the formation of carbon in the bowl, thus indefinitely prolonging the life of the briar.

Jamaican Cigars

Being very fond of a good cigar, I was saddened when Havanas practically disappeared from the British market; there seemed—to the smoker with a discriminating palate — no really satisfactory substitute. Eventually an authority introduced me to Jamaican

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cigars, and since then I have watched with great interest the steady improvement in the quality and popularity of these excellent smokes. The Jamaican Government has wisely taken steps to regulate and foster this important industry, and every year more and more of the cigars are being imported. Quite a number of different brands are now available, at various prices and in several sizes, and I can vouch for the fact that several of them are of top-hole quality, well worth the attention even of the connoisseur. Well-made, cool-smoking; and of delightful flavour and aroma, the best makes challenge comparison with the choicest Havanas of former times.

For the Home

Handyman readers who have used various types of "plastic wood" for household repair jobs do not need to be told that some of the brands on sale are not altogether satisfactory. They are expensive, the stuff needs to be built up in layers if the hole to be filled is of any depth, and it is apt to contract badly in drying, leaving the crack or cavity still plain to the eye. Moreover, once it has been exposed to the air it speedily becomes hard and useless. I have recently been experimenting with a new make which is free from all these disadvantages. For a start, it does not shrink, with the result that quite large gaps can be filled right away. Once set it can be treated exactly like real wood and planed, sawn or drilled, and stained, painted or polished. Should the residue become dry or crumbly, it may be quickly restored to workable condition with plain water; no inflammable solvents are

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necessary. This means that the preparation is usable to the very last scrap in the tin, so there is no waste. It is available in 1s. 6d. sample tins, a 2s. 6d. size, or a large "economy" tin at 7s. 6d., and I heartily recommend it.

"Cures" for Smoking

In connection with this rather melancholy subject I have received several further letters from readers who have tried advertised "cures"; some of them state that the method worked, but the majority seem to have met with failure. One correspondent writes: "I tried a powder 'cure' which the proprietors claimed would be successful in a few days; they also asserted that the preparation could be given secretly to 'tobacco addicts.' This may possibly be true, but as the stuff is slightly effervescent I imagine only smokers with a decidedly indiscriminate palate would fail to detect it. After following the treatment for four days I reduced my cigarette consumption from twenty-five per diem to four or five. I kept to this for a few days, and then began to feel that a non-smoker was at a social disadvantage. I also worked up an insatiable appetite, meanwhile losing none of the craving for cigarettes. . . . Eventually I abandoned the treatment. It is my opinion that will-power is the only real 'cure.'"

The Captain

S.P. ADELAIDE.—Have noted date of your arrival for the Test Matches, and shall be glad to see you.

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"in the quietude and aroma of PUNCHBOWLE"

From a Midland Vicarage came this letter with its peeps of War and Peace . . . .

Nov. 6/47.

"*Dear Sirs,*

"*I always read with great interest the copies of letters you receive telling how smokers of your tobacco have discovered tins of their favourite brand in the most unlikely places. For my part I have bought 'Punchbowle' in spots remote from civilisation but never from anywhere more romantic than a NAAFI canteen.*

"*To my mind, however, in these days of shortages, with so many smoking men of discriminating taste about, it is more amazing that my tobacconist can still find me my Saturday Tin, than that Punchbowle has been found in the Arctic or the Tropics.*

"*My parishioners have you to thank for many mellow sermons composed in quietude and the aroma of 'Punchbowle'.*"

TO YOUNG SMOKERS, EVERYWHERE

In your quest for the tobacco of abiding joy, you are asked to give trial to Barneys*—which has won so many friends from the recommendations of older smokers.

298 * Barneys (*medium*), Punchbowle (*full*), Parsons Pleasure (*mild*) **4s. 3½d.** oz. each

MADE BY JOHN SINCLAIR LTD., BATH LANE, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, ENGLAND

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JAMAVANA

JAMAICA'S FINEST CIGAR

CORONA GRANDES	CORONAS	PETIT CORONAS
122/11 per 25	97/11 per 25	83/4 per 25