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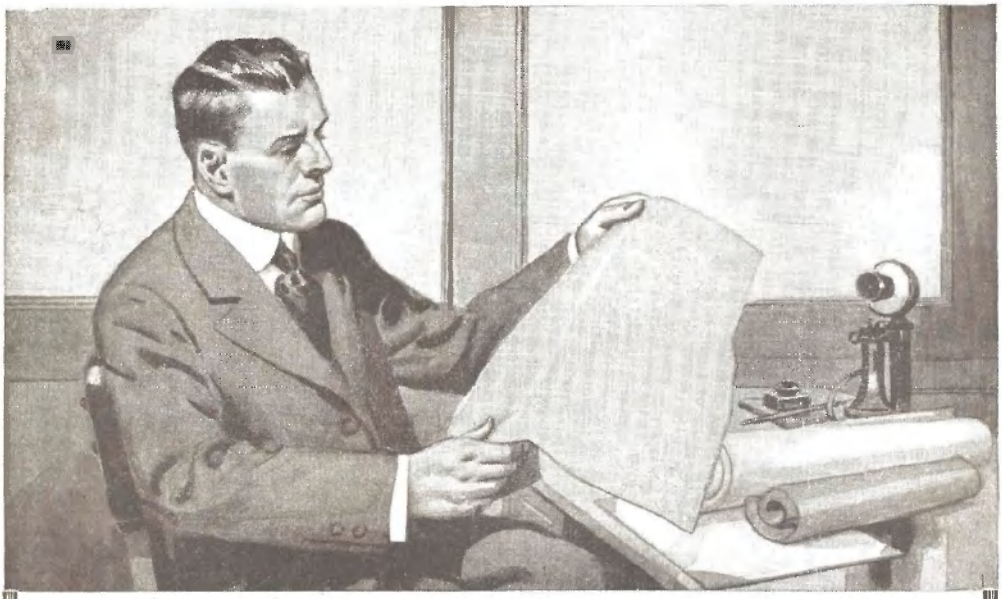

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Volume 29
Number 5

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Contents for First June, 1921, Issue

**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from preceding page)

DON EVERHARD invades San Francisco once more to lock horns with a band of international crooks. His operations take him, with an automatic in each hand, through midmost Chinatown and to the murder house on Belvedere Island. "SORCERY AND EVERHARD," a four-part story by Gordon Young, begins in the next issue.

IN THE Air Service, where there are as many risks to be taken in peace-time as in war, a personal feud threatens to wreck the careers of two crack pilots. "WHEN GOOD FELLOWS GET TOGETHER," a complete novelette by Thomson Burtis, in the next issue.

NO MAN is the hero of this story, but a quag—a deep morass of black mud that every Spring sucks down its yearly sacrifice. How it fought for mastery with "*Lily-White*" *Hand*, of sinister reputation, is told in "THE BLACK QUAG," by Arthur Mallory, one of the complete novelettes in the next issue.

WHEN men go to lonely islands in the South Seas they find sometimes enchanting ease and idleness, and sometimes—other things. What young *Bruce* found and what came to him while he was delirious and could not know of it, is told by Norman Springer in "A TROPIC IDYL," another of the complete novelettes in our next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

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The MOON MASTER

A Complete Novelette

by J. ALLAN DUNN

Author of "No Man's Island," "The War-Cloth," etc.

THEY were playing the last round of jacks on the veranda of Craig's bungalow — Craig, Kellogg, his storekeeper; Hardy of Mallu Landing; Maxwell from Karra River; Benson of Watiri Harbor; and the two "new-chums," Lodge and Tomlinson, who had recently bought in the copra plantation of Evarts, deceased.

On the wide, wire-screened porch there was no sound but the click of chips, the riffle of shuffling cards, the scratch of a match, the brief, occasional sentences of the absorbed players. Benson was sitting out. He was unlucky, heavily in debt to Craig.

Great moths, feathered rather than scaled, ruby-eyed, wide of wing, crawled perpetually up the screens. A Malaytan houseboy, naked save for his loin-cloth, squatted on his haunches, still as a statue of ebony.

It was one o'clock in the morning. A full moon rode high amid glittering stars, washing sea and shingly beach, bush and mountain-range, with silver. The land wind, fragrant with the smell of forest and grassland, orchid and herb and scented leaf, slashed and rustled in the stiff plumes of Craig's coconut grove.

The lap-lap of the lagoon water on the beach merged with the muttering roll of the breakers on the distant reef. The naked crest and shoulders of Mount Lammas towered above the range and its mantle of matted jungle, eight thousand feet above sea level, summit of Guadalcanar, second largest island of the Solomon Group.

Craig, in pajamas and house slippers, his sandy beard forking over his chest, closely estimated each player with his small, shrewd, pale-blue eyes from under a shade of green celluloid as he dealt the final hand. His thin-lipped mouth puckered as he looked at the tall piles of chips in front of Lodge. The latter was the heavy winner,

Hardy the big loser, Craig himself well behind the game.

It was not the first time the new-chum had been the victor in the four months since his arrival. Craig could not appraise him to his own satisfaction. Wedded to old methods, he resented the new ideas on copra-raising that were advanced by Lodge as amateur and impractical.

Lodge, lounging in his rattan chair, swiftly skinned his cards, hardly seeming to glance at them, laying them down in a squared pile. His manner was languid to boredom. His long, narrow face with its angular features, colorless eyebrows and lashes, showed no more expression than a mask. His fair skin had tanned aggressively to a rich mahogany.

"He looks," Craig had said to his fellow copra-pedlers, "like a bay horse looking up out of a cellar window."

There was a measure of truth in this verbal caricature. Lodge had a high forehead and a scanty forelock that aided the illusion. He had also a jutting chin.

Tomlinson, his partner, was different; athletic, red-blooded, vigorous, broad of shoulder. He appeared younger than Lodge, though there was only a year between them. He looked like the recently graduated college half-back and it was not so many years since Yale Bowl had resounded with his name. Tomlinson was an open book to Craig and Lodge a cryptogram.

Hardy, next to the dealer, raised heavily when the bets came round. Lodge trailed. His air was that of the winner who feels he should contribute as much to the final pot as anybody.

Five times the betting was tilted before the draw, Tomlinson throwing in his cards on the third raise. Hardy grunted and called for two cards. Before he dealt, Craig called over his shoulder to the squatting native:

"Tui, you fetch fresh nut. Quick!"

The Malaytan rose like a spring uncoiled, muscles rippling under the plum-black satin of calves and thighs, gliding down the veranda. Craig tossed out the draw cards—two to Hardy, one to Kellogg, two to Maxwell, taking two himself.

Lodge stood pat, his bony, capable-looking fingers tapping silently on his cards but not with nervousness. He seemed to be deliberately practising some intricate passage on imaginary keys. There was a piano at Evarts' Cove and Lodge was no mean performer.

Hardy dropped out on the second raise after the draw, Kellogg reluctantly on the third. Maxwell finally called Lodge's bet and Craig, after a hesitation born of inability to decide whether Lodge was bluffing on his winnings or not, did the same. Maxwell had a flush of hearts, Craig three queens on sevens and Lodge gathered the pot with four eights. Craig shoved back his chair.

"WHERE in ——'s that Tui!" he exploded.

As he spoke the Malaytan reappeared, his arms full of unhusked green coconuts, clammy with moisture. Halfway to the players he stiffened, the supple panther body freezing suddenly like that of a dog on point, every sense alert. Wide nostrils flared back of the bone ornament that pierced the cartilage. His eyes dilated, catching the light of the overhead lamp, matching the ruby orbs of the crawling moths; rolling bushward, white crescents showing at the outer corners. Even his ears, with their stringy, perforated lobes, seemed to project forward.

A slippery nut slid to his knees and thudded to the floor. He reached out a prehensile foot and halted it. Craig yelled at him irritably.

"What name you drop that? Too much you butter-my-finger, you bush fella!"

Lodge, watching Tui, perceived him deaf to Craig's explosion, his whole being concentrated on whatever had captured his shallow soul. It was something vastly potent, something that was felt rather than heard, a sound that broke through wind and surf.

Then he himself became suddenly conscious of a condition, an active impulse, a sound that broke through the monotones of wind and surf, transcending them. It was hard to translate. The nerves that served his ear tympans could not immediately interpret it any more than they could place the direction whence it came, from the sea, the bush, underground or overhead. It affected his diaphragm, all the ganglia of his body, with an eery sensation, a disposition toward goose-flesh. And hitherto Lodge had flattered himself that he had no "nerves."

"Too much trouble walk along bush," said Tui, depositing his nuts on a side table.

"That Quakka he bimeby make big fella trouble."

"Just a *sing-sing*, probably," suggested Hardy.

Tui shook his lime-bleached wool emphatically.

"No. That not *sing-sing* drum. That Quakka *ibitoe* drum. Big devil-devil drum. Plenty I savvy him."

The islander's manner had relaxed as if, the source of his disturbance solved, it held slight interest for him.

With his *casaka* knife he commenced deftly to slash off the tops of the nuts, converting them into natural goblets containing almost a pint of clear, slightly sparkling and acidulous liquid. Lodge was the only one who did not lace the drink with Scotch whisky or Hollands gin.

"What is *ibitoe?*" he asked his seat neighbor, Benson.

Lodge was making a close study of native customs and acquiring a vocabulary. Benson was tropics-broken. His well-shaped features had begun to blur; his hands were tremulous. There were puffs beneath his eyes; his wide mouth was loose above his double chin and his paunch gross and flabby. But his forehead was almost as good as that of Lodge; his speech and manners held, in contrast to the rest, distinction.

"Every male islander," said Benson, "as soon as he reaches puberty, goes off into the bush and hides himself while he manufactures a drum, of size according to rank or ambitions. The voice of that drum is supposed to be the voice of the ghostly affinity of its maker; who thus becomes *ibitoe*. North American Indians have a similar custom when they seek their secret *totem*."

The *boom-boom-boom* now seemed to dominate all other sounds, charging the air with vibrations as gas charges water with insistent, ever rising bubbles. His winnings cashed in and disposed of in wallet and pocket, Lodge lounged with half-closed eyes, drawing evenly on his pipe, fascinated by the rhythmic percussion of the devil-devil drum, conjuring up a picture of the great hollow log, carved to the semblance of a grotesque, bestial face and dwarfed, distorted limbs and body; pounded by Quakka, the wizard, or one of his attendants in some skull-surrounded sanctuary of the densest bush.

He found himself breathing, exhaling smoke, in time with the beat, drowsing toward a species of hypnosis in which the *booms* first regulated themselves to the throb of his pulse, then ruled it, quickening the flow of his blood, each link of sound forging itself to the one ahead in a chain of animate vibrations, primitive, savage, cannibal.

Visions rose before him of black figures weirdly painted, posturing wildly about a fire with brandished spears; the grim shape of a stone idol smeared with blood, a prone figure upon a combined altar and chopping-block; smoke and fire rising from baking-pits that naked women with pendulous breasts tended while they chanted a barbaric feasting-song.

The querulous voice of Craig recalled him.

"THE bushboys are getting out of hand. I always claimed it didn't pay to use local boys—they're too cocky—but what are you going to do when you can't recruit any more? Labor Law has spoiled 'em. The commissioner makes pets out of 'em. Getting to the place where you can't punish a hand any more. Got to send him to Tulagi for judgment and all he gets is a talking-to.

"But I flogged the —— hide off one of 'em the other day for being cheeky. He sulked —but he's working; you can lay to that. He started to spring something about Quakka before he got too busy thinking where the next lash was going to cross-cut. I Quakka'd him—proper."

"Quakka had some trouble with Evarts, didn't he?" asked Lodge.

Craig looked at him curiously, half-maliciously.

"Heird about that, did you? Wonder if you heard all of it?"

"I don't know. Ito mentioned it. I didn't question him at the time."

"Going to keep the Jap on?"

The others listened, finishing their Solomon highballs.

"I hope so," answered Lodge. "He turned over the plantation affairs in good shape, and I understand he administered them since Evarts' death."

"He's smart enough."

Craig made the admission grudgingly.

"Like all Japs," he added. "They're nosing all through Melanesia since the Allies gave them everything above the Line. They'll be running the South Seas fifty

years from now, you mark my words.

"As to Evarts, I don't know how much Ito knows about his run-in with Quakka; but it's common talk enough, and this much is straight: Two of Evarts' boys ran away after a flogging.

"We've all got a working agreement with Cha about runaways. Cha—King Cha—is the chief headman of this side of Guadalcanar. Quakka is his cousin. Cha rounds up runaways in the bush and claims a reward. Otherwise, unless they were of his own tribe, he'd kill and *kai-kai* 'em.

"But Quakka got hold of these two, and he wanted something or other that Evarts wouldn't come through with. Quakka insists and Phil kicks him off the place, clean down the veranda steps into a croton-bush.

"That was bad business. Much better to have shot him and good riddance to a trouble-maker. But Evarts boots him and makes him lose face in front of the whole plantation, including a dozen or so Guadalcanar boys.

"Quakka picks himself up and limps off. He makes a little image of clay and named it for Evarts. Modeled it round a sharp stick and stakes it out in the stream riffles. Then he sends word to Evarts that he'll die slowly as the clay figure melted in the running water, and pass over the same day the image was destroyed.

"Phil had the temper of a blind snake. Pig-headed! If he didn't want to kill Quakka after that he should have squared him. Might have known Quakka couldn't afford to bluff with a white man. Instead he grabs the image out of the stream that afternoon, strips it off the stake and squashes it under his foot.

"They found him dead on his veranda—your veranda, Lodge—the next morning. Stiff in his pajamas. Bliss, the missioner, is our doctor man and he called it heart-failure. Figured Evarts drank too much and that this was a judgment, I suppose. Native boys all believe Quakka bewitched him.

"Phil Evarts was a queer duck. Moody, and didn't mix with the rest of us. Stayed home and strummed on the piano he had shipped in. But if he had heart-failure I'm dying of consumption."

"You think Quakka poisoned him?"

Craig shrugged his shoulders at Lodge's question, swishing about the last of his drink in the bottom of the nut before he answered.

"He was a —— fool to kick a wizard before witnesses. That's what I have to say about it. No mark on the body of course; and Bliss didn't analyze the stomach.

"Quakka is a pet of his, anyway. He expects to convert the whole island through the wizard and become high lord bishop of the Solomons, with Quakka singing *himinis*, taking up collections and teaching in the Sunday-school down to Aowawa. Yah!"

He drained his nut and tossed it unexpectedly at Tui. Tui caught it left-handed, nonchalantly as a star first-baseman spears a wild throw.

"Quakka has got a tremendous following and it's growing," said Benson. "Growing at the expense of Cha. High chiefs are hereditary on Guadalcanar. Cha has no brother. With Cha out of the way Quakka would be heir to the leadership. If that happens we'll all have to look out.

"Cha married the girl Quakka wanted, you see. Took her by right of kingship. That was a long time ago, and the girl is dead; but Quakka hasn't forgotten the matter. He didn't amount to much those days although he was the king's cousin. He was just an ordinary bush sorcerer, not a fully fledged *tindalo*.

"He had brains. An eclipse of the moon came along, and the tribes were scared stiff. Some of the wizards have got a working knowledge of the constellations, but they have no calendar stones; they can't foretell eclipses. So, when the bright night darkened they all fell on their faces and bellies from the king down.

"It was a Melanesian *ragnarok*—the twilight of the gods. The *po-ele-ele*, the uttermost darkness, was upon them. An evil demon was eating up the moon. The end of all things. *Pau!*

"I don't doubt that Quakka was frightened with the rest; but he figured he might as well go out bluffing. So he jabbered away with his spells, and when he saw the shadow passing he told them to get up and see what he had done for them.

" 'Wah! Eyah! Mighty was Quakka!'

"He made the most of it. His fame spread, and now he's the biggest *tindalo* on the island. Right at this moment he's more powerful than Cha, to my notion.

"Cha is friendly with the whites, or he pretends to be, because he's afraid of

reprisal. He got shelled out three years ago. The gunboat came up in the night and started shelling at dawn.

"Cha didn't have any warning, and for once the shells did some real damage. They burst fair in the village and killed about twenty bachelors in the council-house. Since then Cha's been a good savage.

"QUAKKA hates us. He'd like to drive all the whites into the sea. He's boasted he will some day, and if he gets the chance he'll try. Then another gunboat will come along sooner or later; but in the mean time we stand a good show of having our heads become Exhibit A in Quakka's headquarters. With Cha's parked next.

"Cha's men killed the native curate of the missioner who preceded Bliss. Cooked and ate him in the missionary garden at Aowawa.

"When the missioner arrived and expostulated they did the same to him. I've heard, on good authority, more than once, that his skull is in Cha's collection. The men who saw it knew it by the two gold teeth.

"I've never been curious to corroborate their evidence. I don't fancy traveling in the bush. The beach is good enough for me. And now Quakka's sucking round the Reverend Marcus Bliss."

"Grafting off him," put in Maxwell. "He knows jolly well better than to come near any of us. Trying to make himself solid, allay suspicion or most likely beg or steal pills and stuff he can pass off as his own medicine.

"Some day Bliss is going to be a martyr. They call Aowawa the Gate of Heaven anyway. He's the seventh missioner since they started the mission there, and all six have passed through the Gate to glory.

"Two died of fever, being lucky. Four were long-pigged after they were tomahawked.

"You can't civilize Solomon Islanders with a Bible and a harmonium. We're all living on the side of a volcano and it's liable to break out any day. Listen to that —— drum!"

"Aren't you going to do something about it?"

Lodge rose, tall and lank, putting on his coat and refilling his pipe. Tomlinson, shifting his big, well-proportioned bulk almost as easily as Tui moved, crossed to the side of his partner, and the native eyed him admiringly.

Craig had taken off his eyeshade with the ending of the game. Now he winked at his fellow traders.

"Well, you see, Lodge, we've sort of been waiting for some one to come along and advise us just what to do. We're apt to be busy looking after our own affairs; and the bush is a big place, and a dangerous place, to go hunting for wizards.

"My own idea is to leave Quakka to the parson. While they are amusing each other the rest of us can go on making copra or playing the piano, whatever we like best.

"Why don't you take a hand in the matter? You and your pal are newcomers. You can see things with fresh eyes. Maybe you can see what we can't."

There was little actually offensive in the words; but the tone, the wink, the sneer that accompanied them made them little short of a direct insult. Tomlinson flushed beneath his tan; his big fist doubled and he made a half-step forward. Craig retreated. Lodge set a restraining hand on his friend's forearm.

"Maybe we can, Craig," he said quietly. "At any rate I'm going to try and do something. Good night. Come down to Evarts' Landing next week, all of you, for a session. Stir up those boys of ours, will you, Tommy? Got a match, Benson?"

Rousing their sleepy, outsprawled boatmen, the partners went down the beach to the wharf and got into their whale-boat, Lodge taking the steering-sweep. Swirls of phosphorescence came from the oar-blades, marking their progress as they headed for Evarts' Cove, down the lagoon inside the reef.

"THAT Johnny Newcome of a Lodge," said Craig sullenly, cramming tobacco into his pipe, "thinks he's smart. But he'll come a cropper with his new-fangled ideas on planting. Aims to make his own oil and stearin. Going to manufacture coir as a by-product.

"If he monkeys with Quakka the plantation will be on sale again before long. He hasn't got pep enough to make a go of it anyway. And his partner's all bone above the collar."

"Lodge is a long way from being a fool, to my mind," said Benson. "He's a New

England Yank and his manner is apt to fool you. A man may have pep and not want to sprinkle it all the time. As to that pal of his, I wouldn't start trying to kid either of them if I were you, Craig. He came close to taking a swing at you just now for ragging his pal; and that husky would be a nasty customer in a rough-house."

Craig looked sourly at Benson, restraining his impulse to make mention of the other's debt.

"I can handle my own affairs," he said shortly. "Any of you fellows going to stay overnight? Welcome."

They all declined, though they joined their host in a farewell dram.

"Lodge plays a mighty good game of poker," said Maxwell as he poured out his drink. "What he loses on his plantation he'll likely make up on us so long as we are willing to play with him. He's too strong for me, I'll admit that freely."

"Any fool can win when he has the cards," snarled Craig. "He's had a phenomenal run of luck."

"I've never noticed him wasting much money when there was a better hand out. And he sure knows when to lay down and how to draw. Coming, you chaps?"

The three turned to go, Benson sharing Maxwell's boat. As they left the wharf they heard Craig berating Kellogg for something or other, then cursing Tui. And, pulsing steadily from the mysterious bush all the way to their plantations, they heard the *boom-boom-boom* of Quakka's devil-devil drum.

DAWN flashed as the whale-boat of Lodge and Tomlinson rounded the promontory that sheltered Evarts' Cove. Night dissolved, the sky clearing like a chemical reaction in a test tube. The land shone as if newly varnished beneath a sky of apple-green, flecked with high-floating, feathery clouds of pink and orange.

The lagoon water was liquid emerald, the waves outside the reef pure ultramarine, purpling in the shadows, topped with white foam that rainbowed as it seethed upon the coral barrier. Pigeons and parrots rose cooing and squawking above the trees.

A stream, clear and fast flowing, ran into the cove between shingly beaches shaded by wide-spreading trees, free from mangroves, mud and mosquitoes. Bream and barramundy leaped in the tidewater pools. The dense bush, blackish-green save where it was relieved by feathery clumps of palm and bamboo, topped here and there by giant forest trees, mounted to grassy highlands that spent their last shallow wave of verdure on craggy heights five thousand feet above the plantation terraces.

Bungalow and outbuildings, close set with glossy breadfruit, orange, lime and shaddock, were on a wide ledge above the landing. Everywhere on the lower levels plumy groves of coconuts in all stages of growth flashed back the sky from their polished blades. The cool morning air was dense with flower perfume.

A bevy of complaining gulls came swooping over the boat as it made for the wharf, bound from an islet beyond the promontory where Lodge secured guano for fertilization.

A flag rose on the halyards of a staff in front of the bungalow as the bow oar leaped to the planks with the painter. The folds of the bunting caught the first light airs of the ocean breeze that came with the sun, fluted and fluttered out, red stripes alternate with white, stars on a field of blue.

"Ito's up and about as usual," said Lodge. "He's one mighty good satisfaction. I wish we could have a hundred more Japanese. It would solve the labor problem."

Ito, major-domo for the deceased Evarts, retained for efficiency, trim in white ducks and mess-jacket, met them on the veranda with a bow and an indrawn hiss of welcome.

"You rike breakfast rightaway?" he asked. "Can do."

"Hardly worth while turning in, Tommy? We've got those nurseries to pit out and none too much time before the rains."

"I'm not sleepy," said Tomlinson. "All I need is a shower and a change of clothes."

"Then make breakfast in an hour, Ito. I want a chat with you before I bathe."

He led the way into the airy living-room, Tomlinson going down the veranda to his own quarters. Lodge seated himself on the bench in front of the piano that Evarts had imported.

"What do you know about Mr. Evarts' death, Ito?" he asked. "You found him. I hear Quakka had something to do with it, or threatened him the day before he died.

"I have been told Evarts refused to give

him something he wanted and kicked him off the place. How much truth is there in that?"

"Mr. Evarts very good master to me. Sometimes he have very quick temper. Quakka, he *tindaro*. He bring back two men who run away because Mr. Evarts frog them for stearing from store-house. Quakka not want to take any one thing but automatic pistol that berong to Mr. Evarts. Mr. Evarts he say 'No.' He think it very bad for Quakka to have such gun.

"Quakka he rike to be king instead of Cha. Then he kill all white men arong this coast, I think. Quakka say:

" 'You pay me that gun. Suppose you no pay me that gun I take those two men runaway arong of me.'

"Mr. Evarts he say—

" 'You get to —— off this prace.'

"Quakka not going, Mr. Evarts kick him. Quakka fall down steps into bushes. Native boys all see.

"Quakka make little cray figure, name it for Mr. Evarts, put in stream, say Mr. Evarts be sick and die."

Lodge nodded. He had been inclined to think Craig had been trying to string him, to get a rise out of him with the story.

"I heard about that," he said. "Get on to the night."

"I don't know very much about that night. I sreep. Hear no noise. But I think maybe Mr. Evarts hear some noise and come out on veranda. I think maybe be take arong gun with him. I find him dead in his pajamas. I think he been dead three-four hours.

"Reverend Briss he come rater, he think not dead so rong I think. He say Mr. Evarts have very weak heart on account drink too much. I don't know. I think maybe his heart all right."

"What else do you think, Ito?"

The greenish-gray eyes bored straight into the Oriental irises of dark brown, almost as dark as the pupils, and saw in their depths a swift flash. The Japanese looked cautiously about him and lowered his voice.

"I think Quakka maybe put poison thorn on veranda. Make noise for Mr. Evarts to come out, step on thorn. Mr. Evarts' face rook rike very great pain strike him—quick. I think he die—rike that."

Ito flicked an imaginary something from the tip of his forefinger with his thumb. "Quakka, he pick up rest of poison thorn and go away. Gun go too. I never find when I rook."

"When did you see Quakka after that?"

"Not till one week when I go arong to Aowawa. I berong to Christian church. I see Quakka that time. He talk very thick with Reverend Briss. Reverend Briss think maybe Quakka turn Christian."

"And you don't?"

"I think Quakka too much devil-devil man. I think perhaps he much better suppose he dead."

The flash came again in the slanting orbs.

"All right, Ito. And thank you. I think we'll investigate Quakka a bit. *Papaia* and barramundy fish for breakfast, with plenty of coffee."

HE TURNED to the piano as Ito noiselessly left the room. When Tomlinson came striding back, fresh from his shower, Lodge was playing with crisp delicacy "Anitra's Dance" from the "Peer Gynt Suite."

"Great composer, Grieg."

Lodge played the last chord and stood up.

"Always seems to take the snarls out of my gray matter. Tommy, I thought Craig might be trying to gammon us last night about Quakka and Evarts and the devil-devil drum. We are tenderfeet and fair game.

"But I've had a chat with Ito, and I believe they're gammoning themselves. I've got a hunch that Quakka is up to serious mischief, and I think that his kowtowing to the missionary is the core of things. Tell you more about it at breakfast."

Tomlinson nodded. He was unemotional, sparing of words, content for the most part to follow the quicker reactions of Lodge's brain. Opposites as they seemed in many ways, the pair were close together.

The partnership was one of skill and capital. Lodge was a forestry expert. Tomlinson was his chum, with money, without special predilection toward a profession. Both had a streak of adventure in their cosmos.

The suggestion of Lodge that there was more money in copra under modern methods than in reforestation plans or lumbering in the United States quickened the urge for seeing strange and savage places in Tomlinson, and he had put up his money against the other's technical ability.

Lodge came back as breakfast was brought on. Both sat down with hearty appetites for Ito's savory food. Lodge looked up from the finish of a barramundy filet, perfectly broiled.

"That drum got under my skin and into my blood last night. There yet. It must have got into the blood of a thousand or so tribesmen in greater measure. Meant just for that, to my mind."

"I know what you mean. I don't get worked up easily as a rule, but I'll swear I could feel hair lifting all up my spine as we were coming home in the boat. The boatboys didn't half-like it either."

"Any more than Tui did. They smell trouble. They know they are due for the ovens if Quakka is going to pull off anything big. If my hunch is correct, forewarned is forearmed. If we as white men can't outwit Quakka we deserve to be *kai-kai'd.*"

"A lot of canoes have been going up and down inside and outside the reef in the last two weeks. They weren't fishing-parties either. War-canoes."

"I've noticed that. Also, our Guadalcanar boys have been a bit uppity of late. That's one reason I put 'em to work on the fertilizing job. There goes the bell."

The big gong sounded in the labor quarters, and the partners met the men coming out. There were between eighty and ninety of them—a low-looking lot, sooty of skin, dirty, their woolly locks bleached by lime in all shades from rusty orange to chestnut.

They wore only strips of trade-cloth, tucked front and rear under their belts and carried between their legs. There was a naked *casaka* knife in every belt. Nose ornaments swung and bobbed below their blubbery lips; pipes, scraps of tin and brass, clock-wheels, safety pins, stuck in their hair or in the perforations of their distended ear-lobes.

Lodge sent twenty of them off to the nurseries, where the young nuts were covered with mud and seaweed until they sprouted and grew roots. These were now ready for planting in the pits. Tomlinson followed them to watch that they did not injure the delicate roots in handling.

The Guadalcanar hands were told off to mixing compost of mud and guano as a bedding for the young plants, close by the holes already dug.

Lodge gave the rest orders for the clearing of fresh ground from the bush, watching them for a few minutes to see that they understood directions. Then, following a narrow trail through the thick growth, he paused just before he emerged on to the natural terrace where the planting-pits were being prepared.

A tall tree or two had been left to furnish present shade. Against the trunk of one of these leaned a bushman, talking to his fellow tribesmen, who had stopped mixing the compost and were hunkered in a rough circle, listening intently to the orator with sudden grimaces and shifting of shallow eyes as he seemed to make a point.

The stranger was a buck-dandy. His skin shone with palm-oil. His hair was yellow. A second glance assured Lodge that it was a native wig worn on a skull shaved smooth with shell or safety razor.

About his forehead was a string of white cowries. Others were stuck just below his knees. He wore clam-shell armlets and additional wisps of scarlet and yellow bark paper.

For necklace and belt, native shell money was woven closely as wampum, strings of it hanging down the shoulders. His *lava-lava* was a gaudy fathom of trade-cloth. The nose-ring hung almost to the point of his chin in a circle of polished turtle-shell.

Apparently he carried neither knife nor cartridge-belt. Such things might be in his dilly-bag of fine matting, drawn together by long strings that suspended the carryall from his left shoulder. A clay pipe, made over on the island of Bougainville from white clay, shaped like a Cork dudeen, was thrust through a hole in his right ear-lobe.

The most important article of his toilet was the great crescent of pearl-shell worn on the chest, its horns covering the collar-bones, worn only by those of high rank.

For a moment or so Lodge listened, understanding a word or phrase here and there. Then he strode forward, fire in his eyes. He wore an automatic revolver on his right hip in a flapless holster, but he kept his hand away from the weapon.

The bushman stepped back a little from the tree. He was magnificently muscled; there were no scars on his body, no tattooing. He stood apart from the contract laborers as a chief, better reared, better fed, finely proportioned. His face was cruel, his eyes defiant.

The squatting circle shifted a little uneasily on their haunches. Their eyes were like the eyes of apes, intent but shallow, restless, staring at Lodge, expectant.

White man against chief! What was going to happen? There was only one mind among them, and it was not yet made up. When they acted it would be as a mob, to go back to work or—perhaps—to rush Logi the "white marster."

"What name you come along this place?" demanded Lodge.

He sensed that this visit was hostile to him, aside from the few words whose meaning he had translated.

"What name you?"

"My name Ambulul. Me big fella chief. I come talk along my fella boy."

"All right; you talk, now you get along. This fella boy my fella boy. I pay them work along me, not talk. What name you fella no work?" he exploded with a flash of temper.

The mob shifted again, but made no actual move to obey. They reminded Lodge of a pack of wolves squatting about a fire. Ambulul hauled up his dilly-bag, opened it, took out a small mirror and surveyed himself deliberately. Next he mixed betel-nut and lime with the leaves and seed of pepper-vine, thrust the mass into his mouth, chewed rapidly and spat crimson-flecked saliva to the sand between him and Lodge.

Every mouth expanded with show of teeth and gums. Hands began to creep toward the handles of *casaka* knives. Ambulul made no directly hostile move.

"Me no go," he said.

IT WAS Lodge's first test as a new-chum. In the old days he could have shot the man dead without warning and made up his own story if inquiry was made. Now Ambulul had right of appeal to the commissioner at Tulgai equally with Lodge, and the official was inclined to favor the native against the trader, especially when the latter was an American. To fail now was to lose all respect of labor, if he got out alive from the rush they evidently wanted to make. It meant at the best the smash-up of the plantation.

There were about ten paces between them. Neither moved position.

"My word, Ambulul, suppose you no clear out when I speak along of you, you no get along off my land, plenty big fella trouble you catch. Plenty big fella lash you catch along Tulagi. I no gammon you."

Ambulul replied with a gesture—indecent as applied to a white by a black; contemptuous. Lodge, while his released temper flashed like a sword from scabbard, keen and ready, marveled at his attitude.

Then he saw, paddling in mid-lagoon, a war-canoe, so high of prow and poop that it was almost a crescent, the paddlers trailing their blades, the steerer on his platform in the stern, sparkles of light marking the pearl insets of the hull.

From the nurseries the first barrow-loads of nuts and their wheelers appeared, halting at the tableau. Lodge saw Tomlinson out of the corner of his eye even as he snaked automatic from holster and fired. The bullet found target as Tomlinson came swiftly up. The pipe in Ambulul's ear shattered into fragments while the chief put up a startled hand, his eyes bulging, a trickle of blood dripping through his fingers to his shoulder. Lodge's action had been too fast for his eyes to follow.

"Next time bullet stop along your head, Ambulul! My word, it make small hole where it go in. Where it come out too much big fella place. Now you get out and walk along salt water."

Lodge turned away, gun still in hand, motioning to the laborers, who were already on their feet, laughing with the victor, deriding the crestfallen chieftain.

Ambulul's black face convulsed with rage. What small restraint he had snapped inside his head and he went amuck. His right hand shot out toward the rifle he had brought. It was set in a groove of the shade-tree's shaggy trunk, hidden by the bark and an ambitious creeper..

Swiftly as he moved, Tomlinson was quicker. His right hand shot out, fast as the strike of a snake, gripping Ambulul's right wrist, grinding the small bones together savagely as he twisted the arm inward, racking it with a dynamic burst of all his strength.

The chief's features snarled with the pain. Fatally he attempted to sidestep, Tomlinson turned his back toward him, working fast, Ambulul's wrenched forearm over his shoulder. One tremendous heave from the hips, into which he put all his back muscles, all the tug of both arms,

aided by the chief's own movement—and Ambulul went whirling, heels over head, while all the blacks shouted.

Tomlinson snatched up the rifle, finding a cartridge already in the breech. Lodge whirled, automatic ready.

Ambulul fell sprawling, like a tortoise dropped by a bird. His wig went flying and lit on one of the smaller piles of guano. His right leg dropped into one of the three-foot pits, his left hand smashed down upon the wig, burying it in the unsavory mess. His face plowed through the sand, which got into his eyes, his mouth and nostrils. The nose-ring cut his lips and blood streamed down as he extricated himself, dizzy, unaware of what had happened to him save that he had been picked up like an infant and shamed forever.

His gun was gone. He had lost pipe and dilly-bag and reputation.

The white men had made a mock of him. And it was borne in to him that he had sadly underestimated them. Hatred was subdued for the while by the swift thoroughness of defeat. His legs were wrenched at the crotch. His money-belt had broken.

He rose slowly, facing the flare of the white devil's green-gray eyes, the muzzle of the pistol that had spurted fire and lead so swiftly, facing the big man who had thrown him. Facing the mockery in the eyes of his low-caste fellows.

He gathered his pride. He would not beg for his dearest possession, the confiscated rifle. They would not give it to him. He would not stoop for his dilly-bag.

Turning, he limped away, jumped lamely off the terrace to the beach, stooping to cleanse his face in a tide-pool before he motioned arrogantly to the canoe. It came gliding in. Ambulul waded out to it and vaulted into the bows. With a deft swirl of paddles the war-craft raced off, Ambulul defiant in the prow, brandishing a spear.

The laborers had gone diligently back to work. Tomlinson held the rifle out to Lodge. It was not a Snider, nor any of the clumsy rifles owned by some of the bushmen, but a modern, high-powered rifle. The browning, in native fashion, had been scraped from the barrel, which was polished bright as silver. It was well oiled and in perfect condition.

"More shells in the dilly-bag," said Tomlinson as Lodge found the magazine full.

His forehead creased as he turned over the powerful weapon.

"Ever see one like this anywhere round here?" he asked Tomlinson in a low voice.

"Yes. Guns are one of the things I do notice. Craig has one of these in his gun-rack in his bungalow. Might be coincidence."

"Might be evidence. This chap was stirring up trouble. I couldn't understand all I heard; but it was to the effect that they were fools to work, that they would not have to work much longer. *Ka Marama Runa* would send them a word before long. He added a few choice remarks about the white man in general."

"*Ka Marama Runa?*" What does that mean?"

"The Moon Master. Title for the mighty wizard who controlled the eclipse. Quakka."

THE work of the plantation went on uninterruptedly day after day. Sometimes Lodge or Tomlinson surprized the Guadalcanar laborers muttering furtively among themselves. But they always performed their full share of work.

Almost every day canoes appeared gliding along the lagoon or outside the reef—war-craft, inlaid with pearl-shell, highly varnished, decorated with streamers. Sometimes the sound of chanting was landblown from them. The paddlers carried weapons but did not especially exhibit them.

There was no especial menace in their appearance, nothing unusual save in their number. But they gave the suggestion of constant excitation among the blacks.

And every night the *boom-boom-boom* of Quakka's devil-devil drum came puslating from the heart of the bush. Lodge likened it to a stone being regularly dropped into the center of a black, deep pool, sending ripple after ripple, wash upon wash, circling through the darkness. Sooner or later, he believed, the ripples would be fretted into waves, might swing into a maelstrom.

Such thoughts came after he had gone to bed, dog-tired with the day's work, hurling himself next morning into the business on hand with its necessary perpetual watch over workers who had no interest in their labor, who were clumsy and careless and naturally stupid. The matter of the high-powered rifle he let slide for the present.

To suggest to the commissioner at Tulagi that Craig was smuggling such arms to the natives would be waste of time. Though

the deed to Evarts' Cove had been duly confirmed by the government, Lodge, Tomlinson and Benson the unlucky were the only Americans in his district. Lodge felt that they were merely tolerated, that they might expect a scanty justice but that the scales would be already weighted in favor of Britishers.

It was utterly against the law to provide the islanders with weapons—the old Sniders among them were confiscated as opportunities offered—but Lodge had no proofs against Craig. And the details of daily drudgery prevailed against mere suggestions of evil.

One thing had come out of the affair with Ambulul. Of the discomfited chieftain they had seen or heard nothing; but one of the Guadalcanar boys had attached himself to Tomlinson with a doglike devotion and admiration.

It was the feat of physical superiority that demonstrated to Apiapi that Tomlinson was a demi-god among white men. He begged to be taken as house-boy, as personal servant.

"What name you think you savvy house-boy work can do?" demanded Tomlinson, a little embarrassed by the fawning and unbreakable attitude of the Melanesian.

"Plenty quick I savvy ev'rything belong along of you," said Apiapi. "Fix everything big-fella style."

Tomlinson appealed to Lodge.

"I'd as soon have a baboon hanging around. It would be cleaner."

"We'll take him on as house-boy. Ito will find something for him to do. And you give him a fetch-and-carry errand once in a while. He may come in handy."

So Apiapi was installed, given a pair of white ducks as sign of office, even coaxed miraculously to a bath by Ito.

A message came from Craig, generally postponing the poker party until the planters were through pitting-out. A date was set that found the transplanting at Evarts' Cove completed, save for the erection of braided palm-leaf shades above each young nut. The partners relaxed for the day after luncheon, lounging on the veranda over an extra pipe.

Lodge took a slip of paper from his pocket and studied the words upon it, a dozen Melanesian equivalents of common nouns. Such lists he was always compiling and acquiring.

So it was Tomlinson who first saw the big canoe. It was of unusual size, bowling along under an enormous sail of matting, gaffed out to a high point. Some thirty men occupied it, one high in the curving stern, steering as it seethed with its outrigger almost buried in the wash. Prow and stern fluttered with bright-hued flaxen streamers; glints of light broke from shell insets; the natives glittered with ornaments. The hullabaloo of their savage chanting came faintly through the muttering thunder of the reef. Its character struck Tomlinson as different.

An object attached high on the snaky stem caused him to reach for the field-glasses. He brought the canoe sharply within focus and gave an exclamation that fetched Lodge out of his study to take the binoculars.

"Look at that woman's head they've got tacked to the stem. It's newly severed. And they've smeared the poor ——'s blood all along the side of the canoe. —— them, I ——"

Lodge checked his partner's impetuous rising.

"You can't do a thing, Jim. The girl's dead. Killed to propitiate the launching of a new canoe. Rest of her eaten, or will be. Savagery, cannibalism, I grant you; but you can't stamp out what has been a native custom for a thousand years by taking a pot-shot and starting something we'll never finish except as contributions to the ovens."

Tomlinson subsided.

"You're right, I suppose; but that sort of thing makes my blood boil. Devil-work like that is right in Quakka's line. I haven't taken a lot of stock in your hunch, old man, but I'm beginning to since Ambulul tried his hand. The whole bunch is working up to something. Why should they launch a new war-canoe right now and go swaggering past?"

"I don't know, Jim. Wish I did. They launch them every once in a while. I ——"

He broke off, picked up the glasses and pointed them seaward, away from the canoe that flaunted barbarically southward.

"Here's a man who may clear some of it up," he said. "It's the padre. I know the patch in his lug. I think we'll find out something about Quakka, though he may not know he's imparting it. He's a good

scout, is the padre, and I wouldn't hurt his feelings for a whole lot."

"Better get that man Friday of yours to scare up some young nuts, Jim. They'll be here inside of thirty minutes."

THE Rev. Marcus Bliss was a lean and nervous man who gave the impression of being generally frayed. His white ducks were threadbare, ragged of cuff and bottom and collar. His pale-blue eyes behind the convex lenses of his glasses were almost painfully eager; his manner was overearnest, stressing the most minor matters; his gestures inclined to be spasmodic. But above everything else he conveyed the impression of utter sincerity, lifting the evident futility of his strength for the work to which he was sworn into noble purpose.

The man was dyspeptic, undernourished, consumed with the feverish, perpetual activity of one who knows his physical weakness but whose mind drives him on and on to drop in harness rather than to rest, to pause and acknowledge lack of progress. Of such stuff were martyrs made; and the Rev. Mr. Bliss had deliberately accepted a mission that was almost an assurance of martyrdom unless a miracle intervened.

Lodge, welcoming him, responded as always to the will of the man, burning like a flame. It made him feel a little ashamed of himself. As the sight of Bliss, overworked, undernourished, underpaid, made him feel protective.

The missionary gave them each a dry, hot hand, fussed semi-apologetically until he was sure of the comfort of his boat's crew—a sleek, fat-bellied lot of idlers—gulped down the contents of a coconut with distressful action of his Adam's apple and sat awkward, ill at ease, refusing pipe or cigar.

Lodge led small talk, discussing plantation matters. He made no mention of Ambulul, the war-canoes or Quakka, feeling sure that the visitor had come with some other purpose than a mere call.

"How are things going at Aowawa?" he asked. The missionary's eyes lighted up.

"Excellently well. I have secured fourteen converts within the past six months. Ten of them have continued constant."

A flush of enthusiasm crept up beneath his face tan.

"And the way is opening to—to a wider vista. Mr. Lodge, do you possess a Nautical Almanac for the current year?"

"Yes."

"Could you inform me then of the date of the next eclipse of the moon?"

Lodge achieved a cross-glance with Tomlinson as he rose to get the volume, coming back with it opened in his hands.

"The next eclipse of the moon will be on August the seventeenth. What is described as a partial eclipse, though the shadow will extend over three-fourths of the moon's diameter. August the seventeenth falls on Thursday."

"Thank you. Thursday, the seventeenth of August. You are quite certain of the date?"

"Quite."

Tomlinson noticed that Lodge's genial tone had chilled.

"Do you prefer to see it for yourself?" he asked, holding out the volume toward Bliss.

The missionary put up a deprecating hand.

"Oh, not in the least," he said embarrassedly. "If I may make a note of it—Thursday the seventeenth; three-quarters of the surface in the shadow. I thank you. I—er—merely wanted to be sure. There is a great deal depending upon it."

He looked at Lodge deprecatingly, his manner so apologetic for what he felt had been rudeness on the part of a guest that Lodge's conscience smote him. But he hardened his heart.

"Indeed?" he said. "Going to use it as an object-lesson, Mr. Bliss?"

"In a way—yes. I have always felt that if I could convert a leader among the natives his example would be a wonderful factor for enlightenment. I have tried King Cha, but so far he has not been responsive. His mind is sluggish, primitive.

"With his cousin Quakka I have been more successful. Quakka is a *tindalo*—a wizard—the South Seas equivalent of priest.

"It is not to be wondered that barbaric peoples fear the forces of nature that they can not understand and which seem to bring them evil. Most of their gods are devil-gods. They propitiate them, rather than worship them. On the other hand the sun that brings them heat and light—the moon that brightens the dark nights—the stars in lesser measure—are to them beneficent beings. Anything that diminishes their

friendly power—storm or darkness—comes from the agency of demons. I trust I do not bore you; I have no wish——"

"Not at all. It is extremely interesting."

There was such sincere conviction in Lodge's voice, in the faces of both the partners, that the missionary, unused to such encouragement, went on cheerfully.

"QUAKKA came to me of his own accord. The man is intelligent. He was able to conceive of one Supreme Being with power over all influences. That was the first step.

"Then I explained that the sun and moon and stars are but a part of the machinery of the universe created by God and operating according to his plan. I have shown him with simple models for practical illustration something of the movements of the principal heavenly bodies. You understand; elementary examples with a lamp, an orange, and so on. It held his interest intensely.

"He told me that once the moon was darkened and that all the tribe feared the end of the world had come. That he had fought against it with spells and the trouble had passed. Now he saw his spells were feeble things—if what I had told him was true—and there was no cause for fear.

"But his people, he said, were simple and could not understand the things I had made plain to him about the shadow of the sun. But if the God of the white men controlled the sun, the moon, the stars; if he listened when I prayed; would I not find out from Him when next the moon might be darkened? So might he be able to comfort his people and explain to them how the white man's God ruled all things.

"He put it as a test, you see. If I answer correctly it seems certain he will be convinced. He had been skeptical, he told me—you will pardon me for mentioning this—because no other white men appeared to worship this God of mine."

"That was a good argument," said Lodge gravely. "We have been remiss. Mr. Bliss, after this one or both of us will make an effort to attend services regularly at Aowawa."

The missionary jumped up from his chair and effusively shook hands, first with Lodge, then with Tomlinson.

"My dear sirs," he said fervently with something suspiciously like a sob in his throat, "you can't imagine what that would mean to me. It has been hard to—to——"

"Thoughtlessness on our parts, Mr. Bliss. But—about Quakka. Has it occurred to you that he might use the knowledge of the date of the eclipse to forward his own power rather than yours? There has been restlessness among the tribes lately; many war-canoes along the coast. You have heard the booming of the drum they call Quakka's devil-devil drum, night after night."

"I have indeed. It is a nerve-racking sort of thing until you get used to it. But if you will pardon me, gentlemen, you as newcomers are apt to exaggerate symptoms that we of longer experience would diagnose as harmless; in point of fact desirable. Mild eruptions of the surface carrying off evil humors."

He sat back, thumbs and fingers touching at the tips, his whole manner mildly benevolent.

"That drum for example. It is being played nightly on account of the rehearsal for the *souruka* dance, a great event among them. Rehearsals sometimes last for months under the supervision of the *tindalo*.[5] Then they go and make a round of the island."

"Quakka tell you?"

"Yes. But I must be going. My district is a wide one, and I act as doctor as well as shepherd.

"And do not permit yourselves to become alarmed. Quakka has been, I am sure, maligned. Sorcerer as he has been, he has erred through ignorance.

"The heathen in their blindness
Bow down to wood and stone.

"But their eyes may be opened. The smallest spark of faith may be fanned into a flame. We shall see. Perhaps on the seventeenth of August.

"I told Quakka that wisdom had been given to certain white men who had the movements of the heavenly bodies charted and forecast. I did not wish to deceive him in any way—to let him think I prayed and obtained a direct answer. The foundation must be built without flaws."

He seemed painfully anxious to obtain the endorsement of his hosts.

"Naturally," said Lodge. "Hardly necessary though, I think, to say that you got the information from us. I shall not mention it. If we planters attended service

it would be different. Come and see us again."

He escorted his guest to the landing with punctilious politeness, Tomlinson remaining on the veranda with puzzled eyes. As Lodge came up the steps he broke out:

"I know you're the brains of this corporation, Lodge, but, if Quakka is going to use that eclipse for his own ends, as it is a *cinch* he will, why did you give the padre the date? One of the first things Quakka would attend to would be to bump off the white missionary."

Lodge nodded gravely.

"Not much doubt about that, Jim. But —you can't very well stop an eclipse that is due by not mentioning it."

"I know."

Tomlinson paced up and down the veranda in, for him, an unusual state of excitement.

"There'll be something stirring on the night between the seventeenth and eighteenth. Barely three weeks off. We can't stop it, but I'm hanged if I can see why you should load Quakka's gun for him beforehand."

"Because I'm figuring on slipping him either a blank cartridge or one that will explode in the barrel. I don't know which as yet."

Tomlinson looked at his partner a bit wistfully, but he knew the other's methods of silence concerning unperfected plans. And he was certain from the way Lodge sucked at his pipe with introspective eyes and a crease between his eyebrows that he was pitting his white man's brain against the cunning of Quakka.

BENSON was the first guest to arrive in the evening, coming over in his whale-boat, which needed paint even worse than did that of the missionary. He walked and talked steadily enough, but Lodge saw that he was not entirely sober. Lodge had a kindly feeling toward the only other American besides themselves on their coast, a feeling that offset his opinion that Benson's troubles had been caused by his own weakness.

"I'm afraid your poker party is off for tonight," Benson announced. "Kellogg is holding down the plantation and Craig is off hunting."

"Hunting? What? Alligators?"

"Two-legged game. Tui. Ran away into the bush two days ago. Craig swears he'll catch him and make an example of him.

"Craig went on one of his drinking-bouts the other day. Always does after a hard spell of work. Tui crossed him some way. He lashed him and tied him up.

"Between us—" Benson lowered his voice— "it was devilish rotten. He had Tui tied up to the trunk of a tree in the scrub with his hands over his head and wire round the wrists. Kellogg told me the flies were eating his eyelids and the ants were busy where the lash had cut into him.

"Kellogg made Craig take him down and then Tui ran away. Craig ragged Kellogg and said he wasn't going to chance Cha catching Tui; he was going to get him himself and skin him alive."

Benson shrugged and shuddered, poured himself a slug of whisky and swallowed it neat.

"Craig'll get in wrong some day with the commissioner," he said, answering the look on the faces of his hosts. "No use your interfering. The commish has no use for Yanks. I'm one, too. Besides Craig has got me tied up almost as tight as he had Tui.

"And I can't run away," he added with a forced laugh. "Got to pay my debts, even in this hole. If I can't, take my medicine. Don't want to give the U. S. a bad name.

"Hardy and Max'll be over after a while, I imagine," he went on. "I'll sit in to make five if you want me to, only you'll have to take my I. O. U. For what it's worth.

"Lodge, I wish you'd do something for me. Not money. Play me something on Evarts' piano. I haven't heard any decent music since Phil passed over. Used to come here once in a while and listen to him. Did me a world of good."

They went inside, and Benson sat listening while Lodge played. He smoked perpetually and kept his glass refilled, drinking straight liquor. Lodge did not notice that; Tomlinson did not know how to check it.

Presently Benson began to tap time to the measures, muttering to himself. Then Lodge stopped and swung his long legs across the bench.

"Much obliged, ol' man. Carries a man back—you know—days of auld lang syne an—an' self-respec'. I'm de-derelic',

you chaps. But for the grace of Craig there goes Bill Benson, beach-comber.

"Craig's utter blackguard, y' know. Got me where he wants me. Have to jump through the hoop when he holds it; ——his rotten soul."

The beginning of the speech had been maudlin; the last four words were gritty with emphasis that came from the bottom of Benson's soul.

"In deep?" asked Lodge.

"Up to the chin. I don't own Watiri any more. He owns t. I'im his storekeeper, tha's all. Crooked me out of it, but I can't prove it. But he jobbed me, jus' the same."

He started to refill his glass, half-spilled it, put down the bottle. He stiffened in his chair.

"Lodge, ol' man," he said in a hoarse whisper, vibrant with horror, "do you see anything crawlin', crawlin', across the mattin', between you an' Tomlinson?"

Lodge got up, lightly crushed with his foot the enormous cockroach that had come out of the night, picked it up, exhibited it to Benson on his palm and tossed it over the rail of the veranda.

"Never can get used to those beggars myself," he said lightly. "Tommy, ask Ito to bring in some coffee, black. Three cups."

Tomlinson nodded comprehension and left.

"Thank ——! Thank ——! It was real."

Benson buried his face in his hands. Lodge watched him for a moment sharply, then crossed to his own bedroom and brought out the rifle taken from Ambulul.

Ito came in with strong coffee made from powdered extract. He offered it to Benson, who stared vacantly, roused himself, took the cup and swallowed it.

"Gimme another," he said. "I —— near had the Jimmies. Got to cut out the hooch. *Got* to. Tha's all. What's that you got, Lo'ge? New gun?"

Lodge displayed it to him.

"We took this from a chief named Ambulul," he said. "Tommy kept it as a trophy of war after he'd thrown Ambulul with a flying mare for getting fresh. Barrel's scraped, but it's the same type of rifle Craig has on his gun-rack. Do you suppose Ambulul stole it? That it is Craig's?"

Benson's face, relaxed with liquor, suddenly stiffened. His eyes lost their watery vagueness and became cunning, suspicious.

"Search me," he said. "I'm not interested in guns enough to know one type from the other, except pistols. I don't believe I ever saw one like that before. If Craig had one stolen I'd have heard."

"I'll have to show it to Craig then," said Lodge carelessly. "Ito, put that away, will you?"

Tomlinson winked at his partner. It was patent that Benson was lying.

Benson finished a third cup of coffee and they went outside, overlooking the lagoon, the reef and the sea. The moon, serene, at three-quarters full, turned the water to quicksilver. The breakers lifted lazily at the coral barrier. The night was hot, lacking breeze.

"There's that devil- —— drum," said Benson. "Quakka up to mischief. Craig thinks you can play off Cha against Quakka, but he's wrong. You mark my words, Quakka will be saying, 'Alas, poor Yorick,' to Cha's skull before many moons. Here come Hardy and Maxwell in Hardy's new launch."

THE launch came puttering through the channel, across the lagoon and up to the wharf. Benson made a fairly successful effort to pull himself together as the two planters came striding up to the veranda. Under the light their faces showed drawn and serious. Hardy spoke, glancing at the table set with chips and cards.

"No poker tonight, I'm thinking. Just before we left, Pierson, of Totoro, came in to my place. He brought news that Richmond and his partner Edson over at Levalla Island have been murdered. A canoe crew landed there just before sunset, across the island from the store, made their way through the bush and raided the plantation.

"They shot Richmond and Edson down from cover; killed two or three of their boys. The rest took to the bush and canoes. One of them brought the news to Pierson. The devils took the heads of all they killed, and the bodies of the natives for eating. The boy who escaped swears they were a Guadalcanar outfit."

"Are you warning the coast?" asked Lodge. "How about your own place?"

"This isn't a general rising, though it might flame into one later. It was the

paying-off of an old score. Richmond recruited over here the last time he needed labor. Two of the boys died from fever.

"You know what that means. There had to be two white men's heads from Levalla to even up the score. Well, they've evened it, with interest. Burned all the buildings. You could see the reflection of the fire from Pierson's."

"He went over," said Maxwell. "Too late, of course. But he found out something. Richmond and Edson had been shot with steel-nosed bullets from high-powered rifles. Not Snider slugs. Pierson suspected it from the condition of the bodies; and he dug this out of a charred upright of the copra shed."

He flung a scored bullet down on the table by the chips and cards and added two brass cases of exploded cartridges.

"Some fiend," he said, "has been delivering modern rifles to the bushmen. He ought to be strung up. It is nothing short of murder."

Lodge picked up the empty shells and examined them. From within he fetched half a dozen cartridges.

"Same make and caliber," he said shortly. "We got these out of a dilly-bag a chief dropped here the other day. Come inside and I'll show you something else. The boys are in quarters, but the house-boys have big ears."

Hardy and Maxwell examined the rifle he had shown Benson, who was now cold sober. Hardy turned to Benson and handed him the weapon. He took it with shaking hands.

"Craig's got one like this, hasn't he?" asked Hardy.

"I—I couldn't say."

Hardy looked at him coldly.

"Where is Craig?" he asked.

"Tui ran away into the bush. Craig's out after him."

Hardy and Maxwell exchanged glances but made no comment. Then Hardy turned to Lodge.

"We thought we'd come over and tell you, Lodge. This thing will have to be gone into. We'll keep our eyes open. No sense in spreading the news generally that there are such rifles about.

"I don't know that it means anything serious. It was a reprisal. And there is no use in taking up the matter with the commissioner unless we know who to accuse. It's a grave matter."

"It is," answered Lodge tersely. "I'll keep my eyes open, also. And so will Tomlinson. Thanks for coming over, gentlemen. There'll be no poker, of course. You'll have a drink?"

"I believe I will. This thing has broken me up. Poor Richmond was a close friend of mine. Maxwell's too. Then we'll be going. We can't handle the affair too carefully, Lodge. If you get on the trail of anything let us know."

"I will."

They took their liquor in silence. Hardy offered Benson a tow, which he accepted.

"What do you think of it, Tommy?" asked Lodge after the launch and whaleboat had passed out of the channel.

"I imagine that reprisal part of it is straight. But I think Maxwell and Hardy suspect Craig. They almost gave themselves away when you sprang the rifle on them. Did you see Benson?"

Lodge nodded.

"They'll cover Craig, if they can. Whitewash the evidence if there is any. Craig would have been careful. He's had a hard time to get labor on account of his cruelty. He might have offered such rifles to secure help.

"But they'll hang together. And they expect Benson to keep his mouth shut. Craig has got him under his thumb."

"Murder, Hardy called it. Looks almost suicidal, to me. I'll bet it was that canoe with the woman's head on the prow. We'll have to be on our guard from now on."

"That's certain. Though Maxwell and Hardy didn't seem to worry. The head-for-a-life motto is one of the risks of recruiting.

"We thought we might run into adventure down here, Tommy. It begins to look like it with a vengeance."

He went in. Tomlinson stayed outside to smoke a pipe. Presently he heard Lodge playing. Through the harmony of the keys sounded the throbbing syncopation of Quakka's drum, beating out a blood-lust tempo from the bush.

TWO days later seventeen of the native boys, all but one members of the Guadalcanar group, were taken violently ill with symptoms of cholera. Within twelve hours the violence of the attack, coupled with the non-resistant nature

of the patients, had reduced these to a state of extreme prostration. They lay in the sheds with cold, blue, wrinkled bodies, their pulses at a minimum, voices reduced to husky, imploring whispers between the frightful cramps of their limbs and the griping abdominal pains.

Fear ran through the labor-quarters like wildfire. Lodge and Tomlinson worked with desperate energy. The natives, the wild bush and cannibals back of them, the sea in front, with all craft guarded for their own salvation, were beside themselves with alarm.

Whether it was simple or malignant cholera could not be diagnosed from patients who could only chatter hoarsely and incoherently, crazed with terror.

"It may be unripe fruit, shellfish, ptomaines from the last case of salmon," he said to Tomlinson. "I don't believe it is malignant, but they are all ready to die from sheer funk. Looks to me as if the Guadalcanar crowd had been eating something special to themselves; but the sick can't tell me and the well won't. Thank —— we've got a good medicine-chest."

In turns they dosed with Dover's powders, with opium pills and injections of opium while they forced the unattacked to keep the sick ward scrupulously clean and to have a constant supply of cold young coconuts on hand for the sick whenever they perspired. They made the unwilling nurses bathe the sick, giving them hot baths when collapse threatened. They organized a fly-flapping brigade, dividing duties into twelve-hour watches.

Ito was an able assistant. Apiapi, trailing Tomlinson as his shadow though knee-shaky with apprehension, did his clumsy best.

At the end of the third day of the epidemic none had died, but nine more were stricken down. Strict dietary had been established with absolute cleanliness; but an epidemic seemed imminent.

Then, a full month ahead of the season, it began to rain incessantly until the ground was sodden. The sun came out on the fourth day, and the earth steamed with dank, depressing odors. The fifth day it rained again, continuing the next day—and the next.

Seven of those first stricken seemed distinctly improved. The vomiting and purging had disappeared with the cramps, and Lodge was sure that the pains had lessened. But the South Sea islander has slack moral fibers; he can turn his face to the wall and die upon the conjuration of a wizard.

Insidiously the word spread that they had been poisoned with the *samani* (salmon) of the white men. The sick could be injected with opium but not with hope.

The fact that the two "white marsters" tended them night and day did not offset the suggestion of treachery. For it was noted that neither of the whites nor any member of their household contracted the disease.

Man after man declared himself sick, showing some symptoms, apparently in great pain, sick at the stomach. Doggedly the partners kept at their task. No one died, no one recovered.

Another day of sun, bringing the atmosphere up to that of an overtaxed laundry, ended with thirty-seven patients, the rest going more and more unwillingly about their tasks, beginning to look at the sick with envious eyes.

"I believe half of those symptoms are purely sympathetic rather than epidemic," declared Lodge. "If the rainy season has not set in early and the barometer offers to turn back to fair we may be able to get them on their feet as soon as the sun dries things up. A couple of really fine days will do that.

"If they don't come along, we're up against it. We can keep 'em from dying, but that's all. And if we lose one we'll lose the lot; and that means the end of the plantation."

Tomlinson assented wearily. Even his bull strength felt and showed the strain. All thoughts of the rifles, Craig, Tui the runaway, even the murders of Richmond and Edson, were forgotten.

Despite the rain Quakka's drum boomed nightly; but they did not notice it. Awake, and up, they were too busy; in bed, they were too tired, or asleep.

A yellow flag hung limp from the halyards of the staff, proclaiming quarantine. Evarts' Cove was shut off from the world.

"I'd like to get hold of a powerful galvanic battery," said Tomlinson. "I'd shock the beggars on to their feet."

"I'd like to know what started it," said Lodge. "I wish we had a powerful microscope, I'd try and segregate the *spirillum*."

"Whatever that is. Half of them are

faking, to my mind, but they don't know it and you can't prove it. I've been slapping mustard plasters on their stomachs that would blister the hide off an elephant; but I'm hanged if they don't seem to like it.

" 'Plenty big-fella medicine.' That's what they say. And this muggy, dank, rotten weather is enough to give any one the malarial blues."

The air was heavy to breathe, and it stank with rotting bush vegetation. It smelled like the water in which flowers have been too long standing.

Mold was forming on everything about the place. All metal, unless constantly wiped, tarnished. The struggling sun had given up the fight for the day and was sinking, exhausted, upon a tumbled bed of clouds.

"Better take a drink of Scotch, Tommy," Lodge suggested. "How are you sleeping?"

"Like a top. Some one coming in through the reef. It's the padre!"

It was the missionary, blandly disregarding the flag, his crew seeming unconcerned as himself, squatting on the wharf smoking their pipes while the Rev. Mr. Bliss came up the lawn, sagged down by the weight of the black bag he carried. The partners met him half-way and relieved him of the weight.

"We've got cholera, or something that looks mighty like it," said Lodge.

"So has every plantation from Timbu Point to Cayman Bay. How are you off for medicine? That's what I came for, and to suggest treatment. I'm making the rounds as fast as I can."

The eagerness of the man was there in full measure; but there was nothing of the dreamer about him, nothing of uncertainty. Preacher and physician had merged. Desire and capability to help had joined hands.

He seemed thinner than ever; his flesh appeared to be worn thin by the attrition of overlabor. It was like a shell with a light shining through it, the illumination of faith and endeavor. He emanated efficiency that reenergized Lodge and Tomlinson as they sat there talking to him. He was charged with a radio-activity of force and ability.

THEIR own labors seemed puny compared with the facts he gave them with the quiet manner of one describing a regular program. The missionary had averaged less than four hours' sleep out of every twenty-four for the past eight days, and most of those had been snatched in the bottom of his boat between plantations. He had dispensed medicine, had organized hospital camps, demonstrating, nursing. He examined the quarters, approved, praised.

"You've done the right thing," he said. "I'll leave you some chlorodyne, ipecacuanha—you'll have to be careful how you give that; some can't take it at all—and castor oil.

"It isn't cholera, simple or malignant. It's dysentery. Marvel you haven't got it yourselves. Hardy's down, and Craig. Both going to pull through. Benson's getting over it.

"The reason I'm so sure about it is that I've seen it before, and my predecessors had to treat it. Comes from lack of care in eating. In this epidemic I believe I've traced it to the little shellfish, *opihi*, they are so fond of. The beach natives know when at certain times it is poisonous; the bush natives naturally do not. And as there is small love between the two, the bushmen gather them unwarned.

"On every plantation it has started with the bush natives. It is contagious, of course, and where cleanliness is not enforced the others will get it, often because they lower their vitality from fear so that they offer no resistance to the germ. I'm not a first-class physician; but all South Sea missionaries know bacillary dysentery and Shiga's germ.

"I'd advise you to segregate more thoroughly the original cases. I can spare some carbolic, in crystals. Hang up sheets well soaked between your various types of cases.

"And don't be impatient. Convalescence is slow. I am more certain of the diagnosis since so far as I can gather there are no cases back in the bush. So I hear from Quakka."

"Ah!"

Tomlinson looked curiously at Lodge as he made the exclamation.

"Your men seem unaffected by disease or any fear of it," Lodge said.

The missionary's eyes brightened.

"They believe that God will take care of them," he said simply. "Their faith is perfect, save that I fear they incline to make it personal with me.

"Your own immediate house-help has escaped. That is not altogether due to more careful feeding and better local

conditions. They take color from your attitude. It is at once a great responsibility and a great possibility.

"I must be getting on before it is dark. Thank you for the meal. It is the first really good one I have been able to snatch."

"There goes a *man*," said Tomlinson as the whale-boat sailed off into the watery sunset. "I'd hate to lose any good opinion he might have of me."

In his turn Lodge regarded his partner closely.

"So would I," he said finally. "Hope I sha'n't. I wonder," he went on, "if Craig got his man. He is evidently back on the plantation."

"And the padre said he had lost twelve boys. Hardy twenty-one. We have been the only ones immune. We're lucky."

"Lucky that the treatments for cholera and dysentery aren't so far apart. Now we ought to be able to build them up. What is it, Apiapi?"

The Guadalcanar bushman stood with his eyes fixed on Tomlinson. He took orders from Lodge, but Tomlinson was his fetish.

"One fella come along bush make talk along of me. This fella he Malaita fella. He name Tui. One time he work along white marster Keragi. He too much big-fella trouble along of Keragi allatime. He make for run away along bush.

"Now he like speak along white marster Logi, he tell to me. I tell him too much big-fella trouble here. Too much fella plenty sick. He speak he no 'fraid. Plenty more 'fraid stop along bush. No food, rain all spoil. Bimeby maybe bush fella catch him, make him plenty fat, *kai-kai!*"

It was a long speech for Apiapi. He concluded it with the indescribable, tearing mouth movement of the cannibal tribes that too vividly suggests the feast of the "long pig that talks."

Tui had been hiding in the bush for many days. Somehow he had escaped both Craig's pursuit and that of Cha's men, if they had been notified at all. But it must have been a time of infinite and constant terror. In the quarantine of Evarts' Cove, once accepted, Tui would be safe.

Both Lodge and Tomlinson thought of Benson's description of the wire-bound hands, the flies and ants. There was no question of decision. And before Craig regained rights over Tui, Lodge resolved that he would have a talk with the planter about his methods. There was plenty of water likely to flow under Craig's bridge before that, he fancied.

"Bring him along, Apiapi," ordered Tomlinson.

Tui the panther-bodied, Tui the sleek of skin, was in sore case. The steady rain, the lack of food, of sleep, perpetual fear and watchfulness had wasted away his flesh until the bones of his skull stood out, sharply stretching the skin.

His eyes were bloodshot; there were sores on his mouth from eating raw fruits with strong acid juices. His back was a mass of scabs and opened welts where the slightest break of the skin beneath the lash had turned to hideous yaws. His eyelids were suppurated. His hair hung limp and matted.

He was absolutely naked as he stood dejectedly on the veranda, his only hope a vague intuition that these white men, these *Merikanis*, were different.

He had been hiding, he said, in a hollow of the main trunk of a great banyan-tree for many days and nights, though he had lost count of actual time. Surrounded by the far-spreading root-limbs and boughs, such as often cover half an acre or more, he had been fairly secure. The hollow was high above the ground. He had lived like a great ape, never setting foot to dirt.

"Thataway they no smell me when they come along," he said. "No can see. I fix no can hear. One time Keragi come close by.

"One time some bushmen close along, make *kai-kai* under that tree. I climb along topside, look down. They all same talk plenty savvy along that devil-devil drum. One time bimeby that drum stop; then this day more—" he extended the three middle fingers of his right hand—"plenty trouble maybe come along white-fella marster. Every one go along *sing-sing* place make big-fella talk along of Quakka.

"Suppose they kill Keragi, take head, make *kai-kai*, my word I too much glad. Suppose you good along of me, not make me get along to Keragi, I tell you this.

"I like stop along this place. Too much devil in bush. No *kai-kai*. Rain make um fruit no good. No can do."

"You take him in the kitchen, Apiapi," said Lodge. "You give him plenty *kai-kai*, hot *kai-kai*, hot coffee. Tell Ito I say this. Bimeby I come fix your back, your eyes,

Tui. Plenty soon you feel more better. You stop along this place."

An unmistakable gleam of gratitude came from beneath the sore, puffed eyelids as Apiapi led him away.

"I'd almost forgotten about our friend Quakka until Bliss mentioned him," said Lodge. "Tui's information is worth thinking about. We've got to take notice of it."

"If the rains have really started," Tomlinson suggested, "we'll not be able to tell whether there is an eclipse or not. And if Quakka counts on that——"

"We can't count on the rains. It's the fourth of August. Records show September first as the almost universal earliest date for the wet season to start.

"Tommy, you've got Apiapi now so he'll eat out of your hand. I wish you'd concentrate on him. Make him fetch and carry more for you personally, curry him and scratch him back of the ears—mentally, of course. Cinch his devotion. We may need him like the very ——."

"All right. He hasn't got much brains."

"We don't need brains. But we'll need his senses. He knows the way to Cha's head village and the big *sing-sing* grounds. That's Quakka's hangout. In all probability you and I will have to make a little trip up there the night of the seventeenth."

"The night of the eclipse?"

Lodge nodded. Tomlinson gazed at him silently for a moment and then got up and stretched his big body.

"You're giving the picnic," he said. "Count me in."

THE sun reasserted its power. The laborers—sick, convalescent, unaffected—absorbed the rays and transmuted them into strength and even a measure of liveliness that increased daily.

The missionary made one more call, bringing news that the epidemic was everywhere diminishing. No whites had been seriously ill.

Rain and dysentery combined had made the beach practically *tabu*. There were no more raids, no canoes racing up and down the reef. Only the great drum beat regularly.

Plantation-work was at last resumed at Evarts' Cove in swift preparations for the inevitable rains. The quarantine flag was hauled down. The same evening, Lodge and Tomlinson, daring to relax thoroughly for the first time, lounged on the veranda in the long rattan chairs.

"We've beaten it," said Lodge.

"But the beggars are ungrateful," answered Tomlinson. "They've still got a haunting idea that we wished this on ourselves; that they ought to be rewarded by taking all the medicine we dosed 'em with. I'll except Apiapi, but he wasn't sick.

"Seems strange to have an hour by ourselves, don't it? Seems as if there was something lacking somehow. I can't express it, but I've got a funny sort of feeling that there is something unattended to, though for the life of me I can't place it. Must be in the air."

Lodge smoked on in silence for a few moments without replying.

"It is in the air," he said at last. "It's the first night the drum hasn't begun to beat an hour after sunset. And it's the fourteenth, three days from Quakka's gathering at the *sing-sing* grounds."

"Three days from the date set for the eclipse," observed Tomlinson.

"Ah-ha. Send Apiapi for Tui, will you, Tommy? I'd like to question him again."

Apiapi came, went, returned without Tui. The quarters were searched without avail. Tui, reinvigorated by medical treatment and good food, had skipped back into the bush.

"No good kind, that Malaita man," said Apiapi. "Take everything, say nothing. He take along my *casaka* knife, my dilly-bag, my *lava-lava*. My word, too much he steal."

"We're well rid of him," said Tomlinson. "I give you another knife and loin-cloth, Apiapi. And I give you canvas sack for dilly-bag."

The native grinned with delight.

"I say I thank you plenty along of that," he declared.

"You know the way along to Cha's place? You know bush trail to *sing-sing* ground?" asked Lodge.

Apiapi's eyes sought confirmation from Tomlinson before he answered.

"Plenty I savvy. Three-four trail. Big-fella trouble suppose you go along, no savvy. Big-fella pit, big-fella spear, big-fella plenty arrow. You no see; they kill you plenty too —— quick."

"You take Tomilinisoni, you take me along one trail?"

Apiapi's face grew rigid. He stuck out

his lower lip. His shallow eyes seemed to quiver on the surface of their whites like a compass card.

"What name you want go along that place?" he asked.

Lodge ignored the question.

"My word, Apiapi, suppose you do this, you very rich bimeby. Knife, tobacco, twenty fathom cloth, *samani* (salmon), make-music box (harmonica), all you get."

The savage's face twitched; his eyes grew covetous, longing. He scratched a calf with the toes of the other foot.

"How much *tabaki?*"

"One case. I give one blanket, one dozen box-matches, one dozen fish-hooks, one ax."

Apiapi sucked in his breath. He was becoming bewildered with the prospects. But he had one proviso before he capitulated.

"You give me before I go?"

It appeared that he considered his chances of getting through better than those of the white marsters.

"I give you one-half. One-half when we come back."

"When you like get along that trail?"

"Three nights from tonight, Apiapi."

All the anticipation died out of the native's eyes. He shook his head, addressing Tomlinson.

"Much better I think you not go along that time. Maybe you go tomorrow day, all right."

Tomlinson shook his head.

"Then I think no can do," decided Apiapi.

"All right, Apiapi," Lodge said with special carelessness. "We find some one else. You get along."

The native stood like an uncertain child, moving slowly off as Lodge commenced to talk with Tomlinson on other matters. At the end of the veranda he paused irresolute, but though the "white marster" glanced his way he gave no sign and Apiapi disappeared.

"That means bush telegraphy—or telepathy—has been working, Tommy. Quaka has got his word through somehow. Our lot knows it. And Apiapi is afraid of being found escorting white men along the trails.

"But he's nearly hooked. That harmonica practically fetched him. Is there any one thing you've noticed that he craves more than another? If there is, you might casually mention it was a pity he wasn't going, as you figured on making him a present of it on your own account."

To tackle the trip without him would be taking too many odds. Tomlinson thought for a few minutes.

"I've got it," he said finally. "He's crazy over a hot-water bag. He handled it several times when we tried it for cramps. It's the greatest invention in the world for him, and he'll be the only native to possess one.

" 'Suppose trouble walk along belly, walk along tooth,' he said, 'this —— fine.' "

"I'll try him on it."

"Not till tomorrow. Let him dream over his possibility of riches."

"WE'VE struck the bargain," announced Tomlinson next morning. "He's not to have it till we get back. He's swelled up now on account of it. If I'd promised him a million he couldn't be prouder or more contented."

"Good Tommy, you'll have to run the plantation for these three days. I'm going to be busy. And I'm going to annex Ito most of the time, so we'll be eating picnic meals."

Tomlinson, with his rare faculty that helped to make him a true balance in the partnership, wondered much but asked no questions as Lodge and Ito went off together in the power whale-boat on strange expeditions. They messed on cold victuals, and Lodge seemed engrossed with various experiments. Once or twice the house smelled like a laboratory when Tomlinson came in to midday tiffin.

"Met Hardy outside in his launch," Lodge volunteered on the morning of the seventeenth. "He wasn't over and above friendly. Lost nineteen of his boys. Seemed to think our immunity was beginners' luck—or fools'.

"I fancy we're going to be ostracized, Tommy. His manner suggested that."

"On account of the rifles?"

"Exactly. I got some news from him. Nothing has been seen of Tui, for one thing. For another, the padre is over at Levalla Island, practically taking charge of affairs.

"Poor Richmond's boys got the dysentery pretty badly, and with no one in charge there would have been a nice mess. So the padre took hold. Went yesterday; expects to stay the week. He believes in looking after their bodies first. You can't convert a dead man."

"He's a hundred per cent.," agreed Tomlinson. "But he'll burn out if he isn't killed. We ought to do something to make things easier for the padre."

"I agree with you. That is one of my reasons for paying a call on Quakka tonight. We'll have to start early this afternoon. The moon rises between eight and nine."

"What are you taking—rifles as well as pistols?"

"Nothing that has to be carried in plain sight. We'll sling an automatic apiece in a shoulder holster under our coat. We've got to take tricks with something better than bullets."

Lodge possessed a peculiarity of temperament in that he disliked to share the plans that he worked out alone. Tomlinson did not so much respect this idiosyncrasy as he did not notice it, confident of Lodge's judgment, content to follow it, as he would have the signals of his coach in his old football days.

Apiapi had been given one-half of his reward, including the harmonica but lacking the hot-water bag. He cached them somewhere. At two he presented himself, ready to take the trail. He wore no ornaments; his loin-cloth was reduced to a gee-string and a belt, in which was set his new knife to replace the one stolen by Tui. His body was oiled from crown to sole.

The laborers were at their appointed tasks when Lodge and Tomlinson, led by Apiapi, made their way through a tangle of guava scrub at the back of the quarters, unnoticed. Ito was to attend as usual to the bell that gave notice for work to be ended. There was no reason to think that their absence would be noticed.

Lodge did believe that the bushmen of the Guadalcanar lot would break quarters after their supper and make their way upbush to the *sing-sing* grounds. This would have been hard to stop in any event. By the time they started the white men would have reached the village of Cha and Quakka.

It was a difficult trail though they went slowly, Apiapi scouting ahead. Once in the bush the heat was oppressive. Their clothes stained with sweat, became saturated.

"Clothes no good," said Apiapi once as they rested. "Suppose some Kanaka look for you along bush, too easy for them smell white man. Oil much better."

The way led upward steadily. The path was one for single file. The jungle on either side was like a cliff of living green. Trees were entwined by ground-vines that were wattled in with the fecund underbrush, lianas, orchids, blossomed, roped and swung overhead, forcing the trunks to spring leafless for a hundred feet, their crowns high above the sea of verdure. Enormous banyans sometimes abutted the trail. Everywhere was a silent, persistent, seemingly motionless wrestle for existence.

No ray of light penetrated through the dense thickets. The only sound was the occasional soughing of the wind through the protruding treetops. There were no birds, but sometimes wide-winged butterflies floated across the path.

The dense air was charged with a mixture of innumerable perfumes from flower and fern and leaf, tinged by the flavor of decay from the vegetation that had reached its life limit and was slowly turning into mold beneath the ever shooting growths that buried it.

Now and then the curving tendril of a tough vine snaked its way across the packed dirt of the footway, beaten down by millions of naked, horny feet. Any of these might prove the trigger to a set snare, bring a great spear catapulting through the unwary, or a poisoned arrow.

At every sharp curve Apiapi bade them beware of touching any branch that protruded, ever so naturally. Fallen leaves might mask a pit. Once he uncovered such a trap—a hole set with sharpened stakes.

They crossed a swamp where leeches swarmed upon their ankles and savagely attacked Apiapi, who tore the sucking mouths from their bloody holds without regard for pain or inconvenience, leaping swiftly from tussock to tussock until he reached the other side, where he plucked thick leaves from a parasitic plant and applied the astringent juice to the tiny wounds, advising the whites to follow his example.

Bush again and then grasslands where the stems reached high above their heads and where patches of saw-grass grew that slashed like razor-blades. Through this the slender trail went beaten.

Half-way across this upland the guide turned aside and led them to a jut of lava rock, standing like a butte, immersed in the green grasses. Bidding them be careful, he

showed them the way to the summit, where they caught a glimpse of the sea, far below, across the shifting seed-vessels, beyond the jungle and shore-palms. They could plainly see the promontory by Evarts' Cove, the little guano islet and to the south the broken shell of a crater, showing bare and black.

Turning, they saw the fire-tortured crags of the range, mile after mile of bush leading up to stony terraces marked by old lava-flows. Apiapi pointed out a spot that he declared harbored Cha's village, though the white men could not distinguish it from the rest of the jungle.

"We get there time sun go down—mebbe lele more time," he said.

Tomlinson ached for a smoke and said so. They had brought pipes and tobacco along, but the native forbade them.

"Suppose, so you say, you no want them know you come along, much better you not smoke. Mebbe can see, more better can smell, long way."

LODGE wished to make their entry entirely unannounced. He banked almost everything upon the effect of two white men strolling into the village at such a time.

The effrontery of it would, he calculated, assure Cha, even Quakka, and all the tribesmen, that these "white marsters" were sure of their backing. All he wanted was temporary truce, a chance to make himself heard.

He had almost mastered native idiom. With the aid of a Melanesian dictionary and lists compiled by himself he had gained a vocabulary of several hundred words and carefully rehearsed a speech.

He reckoned heavily upon the effect of addressing them in their own tongue. With the exception of the missionary there was no other white man locally who knew more than a smattering of words and terms. All relied upon Beach-English, spoken by all the natives. And he had other things in his kit.

The grasslands passed, they began to come upon skulls in rotting pyramids of ancient trophies, lower-jawless, scaling and moldering, bamboo cages packed with the grisly exhibits, skulls pendent from limber poles or spiked on naked boughs, grinning ghastly, ghastly grins, gazing from cavernous eye-sockets; at once a warning and a boast of the strength of the tribe.

They forged through a thicket of giant bamboo where skulls were strung on sennit ropes as a schoolboy strings chestnuts. The thicket was on a rounded knoll, in the midst of which stood a hideous idol-god carved out of hardwood, painted black and daubed with red and white. Its shell eyes glared unwinkingly at them.

A breeze hit this higher ground, swaying the feathery branches, which clicked lightly against each other while the skulls revolved slowly with a dipping motion.

At the foot of the idol was a stone trough which buzzed a great cloud of flies. The place stank like an unclean slaughter-house, and they hastened to pass the horror. Bones gleamed here and there amid the scanty grass beneath the bamboos; pelvis and shank, arm and ribs that stretched talon-like.

Once more the bush, with Apiapi gliding like a shadow on ahead, nostrils agape, eyes wide, ears open, touching with fearful hands every suspicious tendril twig and bough. At intervals the sun had touched the path; now it had slanted too far into the west to reach the trail, and they went in a gloomy twilight.

Once Apiapi squatted, turned with an imperative gesture and laid his ear to the trail. They could see his nostrils work as he snuffed. Like quail afraid of a hawk they waited and thought they heard the muffled tread of feet, the sound of a cough.

After a while Apiapi rose and beckoned them up.

"One more trail go along of this. Very close. —— lucky those *kai-kanakas* (man-eaters) no take this trail."

They agreed silently, wondering whether Apiapi considered himself purged of cannibalism.

Twilight sifted down steadily. High above them were gorgeously tinted clouds of afterglow; but in the bush it was almost night, the trail seeming to dissolve in the thickening dusk. Hurriedly they swallowed the food they had brought with them, washed down by Scotch whisky and water. Apiapi got his share of the spirits; and his guttural grunt of supreme satisfaction as the stuff warmed his stomach was almost ludicrous.

He left them and wormed forward on his belly, vanishing immediately in the gloom. Minutes passed without a sign from him while the gorgeous clouds died and the stars

came out. The suggestion of treachery—of Apiapi fallen victim to some cunning trap in the dark, or of his capture by outposts—came more forcibly with every moment.

Inaction was becoming unbearable when a light hiss came from above, where a massive bough of banyan arched the trail, a root pillar either side of the path. Apiapi, perched apewise, could not be seen. His whisper pierced the darkness.

"All right. This way you come. You climb, I help. All very easy. Every one *kai-kai*. Man belong along gate *kai-kai* too."

Lodge was more agile than Tomlinson at climbing. He gave his partner his back for platform, then his shoulders, Apiapi lending hand from above. The banyan bough creaked under the added weight. Lodge swarmed up the root pillar; and Tomlinson reached out and caught him beneath the armpit, boosting him into place.

"Easy," said Lodge. "You'll spill my bag of tricks."

"Didn't know you had any. Where is it?"

"My pockets. Which way, Apiapi?"

For what seemed an hour they crawled in a labyrinth of boughs high above the ground, their shoes, their unaccustomed fingers and their blunted senses making the inferiority of the white men marked beside the savage, who swung along as easily as if he were a professional gymnast going through a practise stunt in full daylight. He was ahead, aside, behind, above, with a whisper and a guiding, helping hand for their clumsiness.

At last gleams of firelight shone through the jungle. They made out a tall wall of stone, a gateway armed with a heavy portcullis of weighted bamboos, skull-set. A fire back of the gate projected its grate in shadow, high-lighting the sentry guard of four cannibals, asquat, spears in the hollows of their left arms, club or tomahawk suspended from the right shoulder, busy with chunks of meat they tore from the bones they held in both hands.

"—— fool," whispered Apiapi. "Too much *kai-kai*. Easy kill um."

To Lodge the sentries did not appear so utterly careless. The gate itself was stoutly closed; the wall was high, and it had been filled with clay and plastered with coral lime so that it was unscalable. The jungle had been lopped carefully back. The top of the wall was a good twenty feet away from the end of the nearest bough.

Inside, beyond the guards, thatched houses, each with its stockade, stood about at random. Toward the apparent center of the village these were grouped in a rude circle, leaving little alleyways through which came the reflection and the light of one or more big fires. They could see a carved ridge-pole, deckled with skulls, outlined by the ruddy glow.

"Now I show you —— good trick," said Apiapi.

With his success he had grown boastful. He had practically completed his work. He would not dare to enter the village with them though he might adventure later. He had only to lead them home to secure wealth far beyond any ambitions he had held.

Truly it was a good thing to attach one's self to a strong white man like Tomilinisoni. Only, he feared that Tomilinisoni and Logi would surely be killed. But he was not sure. Anyway, half of his riches was safely hidden.

HE BEGAN swiftly to mount the forking branches of a *kurui*-tree. With him he carried a cable of liana he had slashed from where it looped between trees. Without difficulty they followed up the arboreal stair, far out upon one mighty arm that did not sag until they had almost reached its extremity in a tuft of leaves that ended the bough.

Swiftly Apiapi adjusted his green rope so that it dangled in a narrow swing full thirty feet from fastenings to loop. Lodge tested the knots. The scheme was plain—to slide down and swing out until they were over the wide top of the wall, in which growing clumps of bushes gave protection to any invader who could achieve the summit.

Apiapi made the landing, standing to check them as they pendulumed out.

"Bimeby you all same find me this place," he said. "Me not come along of you. I look out plenty. You find me here."

"All right, Apiapi. You've done big-fella job. I give you fifty extra stick tobacco when we get back."

The savage grinned at them, caught hold of the liana, and with legs as supple as his arms clung to it as it swung back and forth until finally he landed safely in a mass of

foliage. Lodge looked at his wrist-watch with its radio figures.

"Seven o'clock," he announced. "Good going. Come on, Tommy; we've got all the time in the world. Make for the back of that place with the carved roof; that's the council-house. Go slow and easy. 'Ware dogs."

Fortunately every hound in the village was hovering about the big fire, lighted for illumination, where the food baked in pits was being devoured with savage gluttony. They inched their way on between the stockades without discovery. Once a pig grunted as they passed, and they heard a woman's voice soothing the family treasure.

They crept down the alley beside the council-house and peered across the central clearing.

Between four and five hundred savages squatted opposite each other, divided into ten groups, devouring the food that was laid out before them. The meat was dog or pig in all probability; but the suggestion of their greedy, beastlike feeding was eminently cannibalistic.

There were no women or children present, even as servers. It was an occasion. All were naked save for loin-cloth and ornament. Their repulsive faces had been whitened with lime to emphasize eyes or mouth. There were dabs of white and scarlet on their bodies; streamers and feathers stuck out of their wool.

One stout man, whose hair was gathered into a bottle-shaped basket painted bright red, had his arms swathed in brass wire. On his broad chest rested a disk of pearly shell. Those near him wore crescents of the same, such as Ambulul had boasted.

"That should be Cha," said Lodge. "I don't see any signs of Quakka. He and his priests will be in their own quarters, I imagine. Apiapi said the *sing-sing* grounds were over there, back of the big banyan."

"Is that a banyan? It's got strange fruit," said Tomlinson.

He envied Lodge his nerves. He had his own under control but it was only by an effort as he watched the play of the firelight on brass and shell and bone, the gleam of teeth that tugged at tough fragments, eyes shining in the firelight like those of wolves while the grotesquely smeared features grimaced.

The ridge-pole with its grisly appendages projected far out beyond the front of the council-house. Its platform and steps were deep in shadow only partially broken up by the fireglow, because of the carved pillars that helped to uphold the roof. Lodge and Tomlinson swiftly climbed the side of the platform, gripping its bamboo rail, and stood back of the pillars unobserved.

Whang! The sound came gouging out from the cave of the big banyan. Before the metallic vibrations slowed down a second beat added to the clamor.

The eating stopped. Raised hands dropped. Eyes gleamed as they turned toward the banyan with its "strange fruit," which looked like faintly luminous globes irregularly placed.

Cha rose, his chiefs with him, the shell breast-plates suddenly flashing. Lodge, crouching, went swiftly down the steps and Tomlinson saw him apparently sprinkling something on the ground.

"Light your pipe, Tommy," he said. "But keep the match out of sight. You and I are going to materialize and spoil Quakka's grand entrance if I am not mistaken."

He retreated into the shadow and filled his own pipe. When it was going he produced a small vial.

"Come on, Tommy," he said. "Look your easiest; don't let the glare startle you. It will be behind us."

He carried the vial in the palm of his hand. They took position at the foot of the steps, the clanging still coming in waves of brassy sound, all attention directed toward the banyan.

Suddenly Tomlinson found himself apparently enveloped in the heart of an intense white glow. He heard a slight sizzing, saw their magnifying shadows hurled over the ground toward the feast as he and Lodge strolled leisurely that way, serenely smoking their pipes while a gasping series of shouts and yells went up at the startling apparition of two white men calmly walking where, a moment before, there had been nothing. And this in a guarded camp surrounded by the bush that was practically impenetrable for whites!

Silence fell. The unseen gong ceased. The white men held the stage. There were more subdued gasps, accompanied by eye-rolling, when Lodge spoke to them in their own vernacular.

"We come in peace, O Cha. We have

heard of the power of your tribe and of your own greatness. We have heard of the wonders of your cousin, Quakka the wizard, Quakka the Moon Master, and we have come to witness them."

Lodge spoke with his hands in the pockets of his coat, his pipe discarded, though Tomlinson still puffed at his. They had halted opposite to where Cha had been seated, ten paces from the nearer rank of eaters.

The hush that followed Lodge's words was charged with a magnetism that told him he had gripped his audience. Back in the banyan where the gong had clanged he knew Quakka was listening, his own grand entrance deferred if not spoiled.

CHA got heavily to his feet. He was an obese man who still showed signs of a powerful frame back of the fat that fitted him in loose folds. Although he waddled rather than walked, although the flesh on upper arms and thighs, on his sagging jowls, his triple chins and his protuberant stomach shook like so much jelly, there was still fire in his small eyes, a certain dignity about him.

Those eyes were aslant; there was an unmistakable suggestion of the Orient about his features. Seated, he suggested a Mongolian god.

His chiefs surrounded him; but Lodge noted that there seemed a lack of trust between them. They were plainly separated into two groups that viewed each other askance. All had weapons that they took up as they rose—tomahawk or club, spears and basket shields, knives in their belts.

Cha had neither shield nor ax nor spear. He grasped a curving club of hardwood studded with the conical ends of big shells.

Cha was in the position of an unpopular pirate captain with the crew ready to slip him the "black spot." Quakka had come out in the open.

"He was the Moon Master. He would darken the moon for a sign of the evil times that had come upon the tribe, the restrictions of the white men who were their enemies and despoilers of the land."

This was a direct blow at Cha's unwritten treaty with the white government.

"And he would restore the moon, bright and shining, to show the clear and brilliant future of the tribe under proper management."

Cha was very far from a fool. He did not believe Quakka could do this by his magic. He remembered the previous eclipse, long since, and he surmised that Quakka had got information of a like phenomenon. He guessed its source and silently cursed himself as not having been quick-witted enough to do the same thing to his own advantage.

It did not matter what he thought. It was what affected the tribe; and he knew that Quakka would stage the thing theatrically and persuade them of the truth of all he said.

To resign in Quakka's favor was suicide, ignominious death. He had resolved to die fighting, as became a king.

In his royal hut, wrinkled now, aged and dim of eye, was the woman he had taken from Quakka. In a barbaric way they had been lovers. He knew she would not survive him. For Quakka, cruel and revengeful, would torture her.

With him would die such of his retinue as Quakka had marked for loyalty to Cha. It would be a good fight. He was fat and old; but his back was against the wall, and desperate need had nerved his arms.

It would be a great fight. He had made a great feast and he would make such an ending as even Quakka could not rule out of the tribal *meles*. If only he could reach Quakka when the time came!

Then the white men came in a blaze of light. He had not seen these two before, but he had heard of them. The big one had tossed Ambulul aside like a light branch. And Ambulul now was to his left, among the disaffected, ready to throw in his lot with Quakka and be among the first to strike at Cha. He had his eye on Ambulul.

He wondered at the temerity of these men to appear in the midst of the tribe. He figured the blaze of dazzling light to be a *teriki* (trick). He did not know how it was done, but he had seen many wonders performed by the white men. In his heart he hated them and feared them.

They talked his language, they knew of Quakka's coming treachery, they stood serene—the big one smoking, the lean one with his hands in his pockets.

One great difference between the conquering white and the black is that the white man goes out to meet trouble and grapple with it; the black seeks to avoid it unless he loses his self-control. Cha's mind revolved the chances of what this might mean for him. He could not lose anything

by taking the part of the whites. They might outwit Quakka. They were not fools. He determined to be neutral until affairs were brought to an issue.

"I have heard of you, O Logi," he said in a deep voice, husky with overfeeding and overdrinking, "and of you, O Tomilinisoni the Strong One. I am sorry you did not come in time to join us at the feast. Will you drink *kawa?*"

He clapped his hands and ordered a calabash brought of the soapy-looking extract. *Kawa* had been one of his cards for tonight's play. It had been plentiful, and the bowl had passed rapidly. None had dared to refuse to drink from the king's calabash.

Kawa leaves the head clear, but tends to paralysis of the body ganglia. The chiefs' coordinations had slackened. Cha had greater capacity than theirs, and he had juggled more than half of what he appeared to consume.

Lodge took the bowl and poured a little on the ground. Then he drank. Tomlinson did the same.

"How did you enter my village?" asked Cha.

"You saw," answered Lodge.

"That, I think, was a *teriki*," said Cha. "It was a good *teriki*, but it is in my mind you came like other men. Send in the gatemen."

He was still king. His great voice held command. Four men ran swiftly and came back with two, cowering.

"Why did you let these friends of mine pass without telling me, so that my face is ashamed that they were not given honor?"

They faltered, looking amazedly at the whites.

"They did not pass through the gate, O Cha."

The king's face changed to a contorted mask of rage. His great port swelled.

The mighty club swept up, across, crashing down upon a head that smashed like a rotten pumpkin, spattering blood and brains. It circled swiftly, up and down again, and the second gateman fell with his skull a shapeless, scarlet pulp. The weapon had played as swift and easily as a light quarter-staff of bamboo.

"*Eyah!* I am Cha the King!"

He gazed about him, flame-eyed and terrible. From the banyan came the clang of the brazen gong, a sound of shrill panpipes, a stamping of feet. Quakka had taken up his delayed cue.

THE fires had died down, unattended. The strange globular fruit on the tree resolved to hundreds of skulls, smeared with phosphorescence. The root pillars of the banyan had been rubbed with the same rotting wood and showed dimly lambent. It was a tree of death and sorcery, festooned with a thousand skulls.

Torches showed within the aisles of its cavernous temple. Priests came dancing in double file. Above their elbows and below their knees were circlets of braided grass from which hung long strips of fiber and flax, dyed red and yellow, fantastically fluttering as they leaped.

Brass wire, necklets and anklets of knuckle-bones and teeth clicked and rattled. Their black bodies were outlined with white to look like skeletons, and across each face was a band of red between eyes and mouth.

They dodged among the pillars, shaking gourd rattles. Some beat drums shaped like enormous wooden steins, held in one hand, pounded by the other. There were nose flutes and panpipes, and syncopating the jangling but rhythmic discordancy came the clang of a big gong—loot of some wrecked junk or else a tribal heirloom—borne on a pole between two prancing devils. A third whanged it with a human thighbone.

They wove their way out of the tree and circled the group of Cha, his chiefs and the two strangers. Last of all came Quakka.

Lodge had never seen him before. If Cha was of Mongolian type, there was no mistaking the heredity of Quakka, in whose veins ran the same blood.

Tall and thin, his skin painted with zebra stripes, he stalked, a grotesque and horrible figure. His hands were blood-red—not with paint but with some sacrificial gore. His skull had been bound in infancy and was conical. His wool was clipped close to resemble a helmet.

From the warlock sprouted plumes of paradise and white cockatoo feathers. He wore a disk of pearl almost as large as Cha's—token of his title as Moon Master.

He was stark naked, without ornament, without weapon, at first sight. But he wore one strip of bark about his middle, set with shark's teeth; and from it swung a holster.

"Evarts' automatic," Lodge said aside to Tomlinson. "Watch it."

Quakka's tilted eyes were mere slits welled

with glittering deviltry above his prominent cheekbones. He sneered deliberately at Cha, who faced him stolidly.

Then his gaze went over the group of chiefs, and a slow smile effaced his sneer. His nose, small and almost finely shaped, showed flattened nostrils that he blew out with a sudden trick.

The tribesmen flinched before his gaze; many of the chiefs were uneasy. He stood by the two dead men, at first affecting not to see them.

"The air is heavy with blood tonight," he said in a voice that was metallic, a voice devoid of any purely human inflection. "The gods have cried for blood and will not be satisfied."

Slowly he lifted his slanting, evil orbs and stared malignantly at the two white men.

"You have come here with open eyes," he said. "My spirit watched you as you came up the trails. It saw you climb the trees and so cross the wall."

It was not a hard guess to make. If he had hoped for any sign of chagrin from Lodge or Tomlinson he was disappointed.

"You say you have come to see," he went on. "It is well. For presently it will be light. And then will come darkness. Perhaps the white men are not afraid of the darkness?"

He used the native idiom, common to all the South Seas—"*ka po ele-ele* (the uttermost darkness, the void to which the souls of the dead are consigned). It was a phrase of dread, seldom uttered, pregnant with menace.

"We are not afraid," said Lodge. "And I do not think there will be any darkness, for the moon is soon to rise. Even now the sky shakes behind the mountain."

Fancy could almost hear the universal shift of the eyes of all the savages to where, back of a crag, the halo of the coming moon made itself manifest.

"When the moon rises, white man, then shall you see, while yet your eyes are open, the demon Rangai swallow the moon and bring blackness, because the gods are angry with this tribe. This even I, Quakka the Moon Master, may not prevent.

"It is a sign for the tribe to become strong, to stop crawling before the white men, who are not our friends but our enemies. Who seek to make slaves of our young men that they may build houses for them and plant crops. Who seek to take our lands from us. But who shall yet be driven into the sea!"

"*Eyah!*"

The deep gutturals went up from the crowd as Quakka's keen voice reached its climax.

"And the moon, O Master of the Moon?"

Lodge filled in the pause, his voice tinged with mockery.

"I have made peace with the gods with pleas and promises. I have wrought upon them, with mighty spells—I, Quakka, descended from the gods. So shall I make the demon vomit forth the moon to shine upon us as long as the tribes shall obey the laws of their fathers."

"O Quakka; and you, O Cha, my friend," said Lodge, "who also are descended from the gods, even as Quakka; I, Logi, Maker of Moons, feel sad that Quakka, Master of the Moon, may not prevent this darkness. But I—" Lodge let his voice suddenly ring out—"I, Logi, who am a white man and a friend to Cha and to this tribe; I will prevent this Rangai from his meal and prove that my heart is one with the people of Cha."

QUAKKA had overlooked one thing. He had not asked for the hour of night when the eclipse started. He might have doubted whether even the wisdom of the missionary extended that far. Lodge had taken care not to comment upon the omission or to supply it.

"How soon," he asked with biting sarcasm, "before the demon comes, O Quakka?"

Quakka hesitated for a moment. Then:

"Rangai answers not to your bidding, O Logi, who calls himself the Maker of Moons. When the time comes let us see you make a moon for us."

"Make a moon? Why not? It is surely easy for a wizard to make moons. See, here is a little moon for you, Quakka."

He lifted his hand, palm open, fingers extended, empty. Suddenly he tiptoed while the tribe craned breathless, seemed to clutch at a little globe of pallid light that appeared in the air, caught it, showed it in the dark cup of his palm, pulsing with blue-green flame, tossed it from him.

The circle of chiefs stepped back. The luminous ball hung, swinging pendulous, its radiance beating in the midst of it like a heart.

"There is a moon for you, Quakka. A little moon, just out of the egg. Perhaps I will make bigger ones for you, Quakka, by and by."

He caught the thing and offered it, extended on his palm, to Cha. The king made no move to accept it. Lodge placed it on his own forehead with a swift movement about his head and it remained above his brows like a third eye.

"Here comes your moon," he went on. "As for Rangai, perhaps he sleeps."

As he spoke he remembered the similar words of an old-time prophet, though he had used them unconsciously. The full disk of the planet rose, placid and benign, lifting between and above tortured pinnacles, serene above the range.

"You have made your spells," said Lodge. "Now I will make mine. I but make the sign of the moon upon the sand, O Quakka. And presently you will know that the white men are sons of light and not of darkness."

The central square of the village was strewn with grit crushed from the hardened coral with which the natives had built their walls. Lodge, Tomlinson following him, walked calmly away a little to where there was shadow from trees and council-house. It would take an hour or more before the moonbeams reached the place he selected.

Quakka stood still, his face working with hate, his fingers itching for the butt of the automatic he had taken from the murdered Evarts. He dared not fire. He dared not evade the challenge that Logi had flung down. He knew how easily the simple minds of the tribesmen shifted. He knew that they were divided, that he had lost followers, that unless he outwizarded the white man he would lose them all. It was a matter of *teriki*, and he began to fear that he was outmatched.

The blaze in which the intruders had appeared he set down rightly to magnesium powder. That he knew, and fireworks, and galavanic batteries, the sizzing powders that made water boil, the water that burned.

The little moon puzzled him. He guessed Logi had palmed it. He himself was an expert at such things. But it had not looked like a lamp, a *lekitriki* lamp. Such things were in a tube or on a heavy wire.

Now Logi was strewing sand in a wide circle, a little ridge of piled-up sand. Now he had produced more of the little moons. He was juggling with them, four in the air at once, dancing in the dark. Now he had placed many of them at regular intervals round the circle.

Quakka folded his arms and looked at the real moon. There was not a cloud in the sky, only a host of stars—young moons.

Panic thrust at him in the swift suspicion that the missionary had lied to him, that he had been in league with the white men to make a fool of him. But he parried the thrust. The white men made a mock of the missionary; and no missionary had ever lied. That he knew. He must play for time.

He gave an order, and his musicians formed, panpipes and flutes and the big gong, with its thighbone drumstick, to one side. The others formed a wedge-like phalanx, four ranks of fours, then three of threes and so to the apex where he placed himself.

With bodies bent double they wriggled, swaying heads, arms and legs, marking time with their feet, their ornaments rustling and clicking in rhythm with their movements. So they went in an oval, the torches flaring, increasing speed and motion, shouting a harsh chant, leaping and twirling while once again from the *sing-sing* ground back of the skull-strung banyan the devil-devil drum began to boom.

Hollow log after log came booming in, and the air was aquiver with vibration. The seated tribesmen began to rock back and forth and join in the song of blood-lust.

"He's got them going," said Tomlinson. "They can keep that sort of thing up for hours."

"I'll give them twenty minutes," said Lodge, looking at his watch. "This box of little moons took the first trick. I thought they might come in handy some day, though I meant them for trading."

They were small radio-globes used for locating electric lights in the dark, bought by Lodge as something new for barter. He was perfectly cool.

"Take this vial of acid, Tommy," he said. "Crouch down on that chunk of rock. Keep on smoking if you like. But if Quakka tries to step inside the circle spill a drop or so on this heap. There is quick-match all round the circle. Sugar and chlorate of potash, with a pinch or so of magnesium here and there. Ito and I fixed it up. I packed the stuff in my pockets.

"Remember the crater we saw from the rock in the grassland? It's just about beneath the Southern Cross. You'll see something in that direction if the boat-motor

hasn't broken down. Ito is our assistant conjurer this evening."

The dancers gyrated and bent themselves like bows, springing high into the air, sweat washing off their painted decorations, though they still looked like demoniac skeletons. Some began to foam at the mouth. Quakka outleaped the rest, like a lean devil. The thunderous racket of the drums, the *whang* of the gong, the shrilling of the pipes, seemed to perforate the body.

"Two minutes of," said Lodge. "I set Ito's watch with mine."

Then, topping the trees, round and yellow-red as a great orange, there sailed up from the direction of the sea and the extinct crater another moon, slowly rising, at a slight tangent. Cha was the first of the tribe to see it, and his grunt caught the attention of those nearest him. The seated natives almost twisted their necks to see.

The dance dwindled, stopped in disorder. The rude music ceased—only the drums beat on.

"Another moon, O Quakka!" shouted Lodge. "Bait for Rangai. Perhaps he will make a mistake and swallow it."

By now the drum-beaters had seen the sky portent. The booming died away. All watched the sailing globe. Higher it rose, higher, slowly diminishing.

It changed direction and came floating buoyantly toward the village. High overhead it paused and again began to mount. It became the size of an actual orange, a berry, a pin-point, and at last disappeared. A great gasp came from the squatting, sweating crowd as if they had held their breath since the portent first appeared.

"I WAS afraid the blamed thing might catch on fire," whispered Lodge. "But it didn't; and the wind couldn't be better."

"Fire balloon?"

"Yes. I suggested the idea and Ito the model. Big paper bags with a wire hoop for the bottom. Cross wires holding a chunk of waste worked in alcohol. Made a dozen of 'em and scheduled out a program. Ito sends them up from different places, usin' the launch."

Lodge clipped his speech. Tomlinson thought him concentrated and a little worried.

"I don't believe we're goin' to get out of this without a scrap, Tommy. And we may have to start it ourselves. We've got Cha with us, and the rest of 'em are fifty-fifty so far.

"Our balloons are long-distance magic—that's the trouble; and those confounded drums and jazz music get right under their skin. If I can get Quakka to make a break——"

"I'm with you. Must be a lot of plantation bushboys piled up outside the gate about now. It'll be a lively scrimmage. But I suppose it wouldn't do to risk waiting for the eclipse."

Lodge laughed, low but heartily. Tomlinson caught the flash of his teeth. Fresh torches of cocoa-palm had been lighted; the dance was recommencing.

"Tommy," said Lodge, "there ain't goin' to be no eclipse."

"But you said— You read——"

"It was in the Almanac all right. I forgot to tell the padre that it wasn't visible in the South Seas. It happened somewhere along about three this afternoon, local time."

Tomlinson's comment, spoken or unspoken, was broken by the crash of the thighbone on the gong. The savage pandemonium started all over once again.

The character of the dance changed. The torch-bearers stood in a circle surrounding the gong-bearers and the musicians. In the extreme center stood Quakka, stiff, upright, arms extended above his head. The leaping figures formed two outer circles, revolving in opposite directions.

The tune, if such a jumble could be called a tune, had altered distinctly. It seemed to be used for general assembly.

In twos and threes, then by fives and tens, the tribesmen joined the swirling hoops of wild men, shaking their weapons, yelling, working themselves up until they were nothing but a part of the rhythmic impulse of which the drums were the arteries. They were a mob, hot-blooded, with vacant minds waiting for a concrete suggestion.

Only Cha and his chiefs stood apart, from dignity. Yet their nerves and muscles twitched, feet beat out the time, as if itching to join in.

Every now and then the barbaric music achieved a crest, like tumbled surf, and instantly the dancers reversed, streaming past in great bounds. Quakka alone stood still, rigid, like a rock in a whirlpool. He had achieved an artificial catalepsy of the

body, a fake trance, in which he bade against Time.

The frenzied dancers whirled on. Some of them began to drop out, exhausted, lying prone where they fell with the rest hurdling them.

"May work 'em up, but it winds 'em," Tomlinson called in Lodge's ear above the clamor.

The two of them seemed forgotten, with the howling mob between them and the chiefs with Cha. They might well have been audience, rather than actors waiting for their cue.

Once more Lodge looked at his watch.

"Guano Island this time," he said. "They are about tired enough to notice, too. Breaks are comin' our way."

Not one, but two balloons appeared this time—twin spheres sailing side by side on the tide of the sea-wind, rising and drifting landward right in the face of the true moon. The panting, laboring dancers, slowing down from the terrific pace, saw them, gazed awe-stricken, falling out of the broken ranks. The music faltered, ended.

Again silence. Save for the sharp intake and expulsion of laboring lungs silence held the place. The scattering circle formed in an irregular crescent, open toward the white men, Quakka in the center of its curve.

"More moons, Quakka! I can make them faster than you can destroy them, O Moon Master."

Quakka's rigidity broke like a shattered icicle. The realization that he had been fooled blazed within him. He was still a little worried about the circle with its radiant globes, puzzled by the balloons. But he was sure he had been fooled about the eclipse.

He strode over to the circle, hand on the butt of his gun. It stayed there as he marked the motionless figure of Lodge in a pose of easy confidence, his eyes cold as ice in the torch-flare. Tomlinson crouched, smoking imperturbably, waiting on the side-lines for the chance to get into the game.

The hard-breathing cannibals, their lungs pumped out from the mad dance, were getting their second wind while they gazed at the two moons the white man had made. They were in hypnosis that dammed back the tide of blood, charged and hot with the will to kill.

"If you can darken the moon, O Quakka, show your power—now," taunted Lodge.

"Get ready, Tommy," he added in a swift aside.

"See, O Quakka," he resumed, turning to the native, "my moons have gone to shine among the stars. And Marama still shines untarnished. The face of Marama is laughing at you, Quakka.

"And now mark where her light comes on the sand. When it touches my ring something will happen, O Quakka. See that you keep outside the circle. Step within it and you die. For you are not the Moon Master, Quakka. You are but a boaster and a liar."

Lodge sensed the shift in the broken crescent of natives as the balloons vanished. He saw the hard gripping of weapons. The hypnosis had passed. The racing blood, spurred by the dance, demanded action.

At his challenge and insult a deep murmur ran through the irregular ranks. There was a movement of Cha and his retinue, a division of the chiefs. But there was no rush, only the wave of passion mounting, curling . . . .

THE moon-rays, widening their scope as the planet lifted, almost touched the mystic circle Lodge had raised on the sand and outlined with the radio globes. The light on his brows showed plain from the shadow.

Quakka, affronted before the tribe he had plotted to conquer, drew back half a pace. His face metamorphosed from human semblance to that of a snarling, furious beast as he snatched the pistol from his holster and launched himself across the ring.

Instantly Tomlinson dropped acid on the quick-match. A sputtering line of fire and acrid smoke raced about the circle with high flashes where magnesium dust was piled.

The wizard's shot went wild. Lodge's gun slid out—up—down—the bullet smashing fairly through the splintering disk of pearl and splitting the heart of the Moon Master. When the swift fire died down Quakka lay within the circle, motionless and dead.

A high yell came from where the chiefs had divided. A spear flashed toward Lodge. Ambulul, eager to wipe out his shame, came bounding at Tomlinson, swinging his long-handled tomahawk. Back of him a dozen

crescented chiefs were calling on their followers, who charged in a hysteria of blended rage and terror that even the fear of magic rings lost power to check. The wave had broken.

Deep, booming through the war-cries, came the shout of the king:

"*Cha!* Cha! *Cha!*"

Lodge and Tomlinson, firing into the thick of the charging crowd, saw the king and his chiefs breaking through the mass, Cha's great club rising and falling, the shell-points bloody, the wood splashed crimson as it thudded home. His own chiefs were with him, smiting and thrusting. Men rallied about them, attacking their fellows in the rear and on the flank.

The clips of the automatics were exhausted in a moment. Men fell before the close, accurate fire, but the effect was no more than slapping at a cloud of gnats. Lodge retrieved Quakka's gun, shouting to Tomlinson—

"Council-house steps!"

He shot the nearest man fairly between the eyes, the next in the throat, dodging a thrust—a blow. He fought in cold blood.

Tomlinson felt a surge of fighting lust flood him, giving him a dynamic outburst of power, a glory in the hand-to-hand battle. He shouted back at the horde, muddled in their mass attack.

A man thrust at him with a spear. He side-stepped, catching the shaft between arm and side and gripping it there while he smashed his fist to the man's jaw.

Jumping back, he reversed the spear, using his bayonet tactics learned beyond seas. He lunged hard at the next opponent and the bone point ripped through the flesh, between the ribs, broke off as the savage toppled, a tomahawk, looped to his wrist, falling from his hand.

Tomlinson caught it by the handle, snapped the sennit cord and just in time parried a blow from Ambulul's beaked club. Ambulul spat at him, his teeth snapping, off balance for the moment.

Tomlinson swung the light, effective ax, bringing it down where Ambulul's neck met the shoulder. It clove deep. There was a tug as the chief toppled, his head falling limp one side, the severed neck spouting gore.

"Come on, you beggars!" shouted Tomlinson.

"The steps, Tommy," called Lodge, his last cartridge discharged.

Two men leaped forward, bearded giants with spear and wicker shield. Tomlinson's blow rebounded from the tough, pliant weave and he just dodged the thrust, dropping to one knee to avoid it.

He saw the other spear descending. A lightning lunge came from back of him; another spear transfixed the second warrior through the throat. Apiapi's joyous yell sounded.

"Yah-Yah-Yah! Tomilinisoni!"

Tomlinson smote upward and split the first man's stomach, getting to his feet and bounding backward as the entrails gushed. He was side by side with Lodge, who had gained a club, and Apiapi, yelling gleefully.

The rush had borne them back almost to the council-house. The maddened horde were massed too close for effective individual efforts as the three gave back slowly, feeling for the bottom step, mounting, closing in with just room for free play of their arms between two of the carven pillars.

"*Cha!* Cha! *Cha!*" sounded the bellowing roar of the king, echoed all about him as he charged through the mass, spearing, cutting, bludgeoning a lane. "*Eyah*, Logi!" he roared. "*Eyah! Cha!* Cha! *Cha!*"

With his warriors he scythed clear the lower steps and ranged his company to front the insurgents. They wavered, Quakka dead, Ambulul and other leaders dead.

More and more men took up the cry of "Cha!" The rush was broken, the cause lost. There was one feeble rally that Cha at the head of his men routed, driving the insurgents scattering through the houses, through the banyan-tree, clambering like frightened apes over the wall, opening the gates and fleeing to the bush.

Cha came back, snorting and puffing, his great chest rising and falling under the pearl disk, his eyes still flaming, blood-smeared, triumphant.

He put down the great club wearily, the muscles that had tensed beneath the flaccid flesh wearying as the battle lust died down with victory.

"*Eyah*, Logi, it was a fight," he panted. "The white men are mighty in war and magic."

He rolled approving eyes at Tomlinson.

"The Moon Master is dead. There shall be no more wizards in the tribe. I, Cha, am king and wizard. Now we shall feast."

"Tell me, Logi," he asked. "Have your spells defeated Rangai that he will not devour the moon?"

He glanced half-fearfully at the brilliant globe.

"Rangai has fled," said Lodge. "If he ever threatens you, O Cha, call upon us and we will master him. This is a sign."

He took the radio bulb from his forehead where he had secured it by a pack-thread, made a loop and slipped it over the top of the king's head. The wicker basket hat had vanished in the fight; the bulb glowed and gleamed in the heavy wool of Cha's hair.

Men ran at Cha's bidding and women streamed out from the houses, hastily preparing a feast.

"I suppose we'll have to take it in," said Lodge. "They'll get laid out with *kawa* before long and we can slip away. I've avenged poor Evarts, and there will be no more raids on the plantations for a while. I hope we can get some laborers out of this."

"Did you have that in your commercial mind?" asked Tomlinson. "It was a bully scrap anyway. What's the king doing to Apiapi?"

"Knighting him, I fancy."

An investment of sorts was taking place. A pearl crescent, taken from a dead chief, was placed about the proud Apiapi's neck by Cha, who then took the former's *casaka* knife and lightly slashed his own arm and that of the newly decorated savage. Each touched the other's wound and tasted the blood.

"Were you fighting men in your own country?" asked the king when the feast was set at last.

"We fought in the big war," answered Lodge.

"*Eyah!* Of that I know. It was a great war, though I do not believe there were so many killed as they say. For there would be none left. But I saw the big smoke canoes go past.

"I wonder that they let you leave, for you are both mighty warriors. If you would join me I could conquer Guadalcanar. What say you? There is gold in the rivers that shall be yours."

IT WAS after dawn before the partners, escorted by a guard of honor down an easier trail, came out of the grasslands and struck the last stretch of bush. They came to a cross-path paralleling the sea. There Lodge dismissed the escort back to the *kawa* they had forsworn for this duty.

As they lingered, giving savage salute, a native came into sight and darted into the thick bush. Cha's men gave instant chase and caught him struggling to reach a tree. As Lodge and Tomlinson hurried up one of the guard held up a dripping head. It was that of Tui. Another handed Lodge a dilly-bag.

"That bag my bag!" exclaimed Apiapi. Lodge gave it to him. He took it with a grunt of disgust at the stains upon the matting, then dumped the contents out. An object rolled and bumped along the trail to fetch up at their feet—the livid, grinning head of Craig.

"A private vendetta," said Lodge. "Poor devil. That eases Benson up and stops the rifle-smuggling. Lucky for us there were none up yonder. Craig dug his own pit. We'll take this along for burial.

"Tui didn't get Kellogg or he'd have taken his head too. Probably didn't have any grudge against him."

They went on with their grisly relic. The warrior who had killed Tui carried off his trophy. Two others picked up the body. It was not to be wasted.

"I go back," said Apiapi. "Cha speak along of me to go back. Pretty soon I come along your place again."

He walked off proudly, as became a chief.

The Stars and Stripes was flying from the pole. Ito, sphinx-like, greeted them.

"Good work, Ito," said Lodge. "We're going to get into some clean things. No breakfast for me. I'm off food for a bit. But you can bring some coconuts and the whisky."

On their veranda an hour later, cleaned from the blood and sweat of the fight, the two partners pledged each other. Tomlinson had been slightly cut in the neck with a spear; Lodge had a bruise purpling on his shoulder.

"Peaceful enough down here," said Lodge. "Like a nightmare last night. We'll be short-handed today. Let's call it a holiday; the men will be fed up with news. It's all over the coast by now.

"And there were Ito's balloons. They saw them, without doubt. You and I will go over to Craig's.

"Quakka's death lets me out with the

padre," he went on. "I'd hate to have to explain to him that I put even a white lie into his mouth. It's ten to one he was too busy over at Levalla to think about the eclipse, much less hope for it. We'll have to go over to Aowawa the day after tomorrow, and see."

"Day after tomorrow?" yawned Tomlinson.

"Sunday."

"Sunday? In the Solomons! I'd forgotten there was such a day."

"Don't tell the padre."

At Craig's they found Benson, sober for once, shaken by the murder. Kellogg had found the planter's body, headless, in his bed, the mosquito-net dragged down, the mattress soaked with blood.

"Mr. Benson's going to take charge," he said. "I'm no good for running the plantation and the natives are all excited."

"They'll calm down," said Lodge. "Tommy and I will go back then. We're knocked out. Going to turn in."

"Up last night?" asked Benson.

"We neither of us had much sleep," he answered dryly. "Coming, Tommy?"

At Evarts' Cove they found a body of a hundred bushmen with Apiapi at their head, all red-eyed and logy from *kawa* but grinning amiably.

"Cha, he send along this fella boy to work on plantation," announced Apiapi. "Mebbe you make me all same foreman?"

"I don't know that we can use a hundred," said Lodge thoughtfully. "Or rather, I don't know that we can afford to pay them right now. Some of our men's contracts end soon. Maybe——"

"Cha, he say these men all paid, —— plenty big-fella pay," explained Apiapi. "They plenty glad to work along of you. One year they work. Then same number fella come along, they go back.

"Cha, he say you big-fella fighter. No pay. Mebbe," he concluded with a sly look and grin, "suppose you like—you like make 'em present."

RED SLEEVES

by **H. P.**

IN 1837 some white trappers made a feast for some Mimbreno Apaches and then slaughtered the guests because their scalps were worth one hundred dollars in the State of Chihuahua. The chief of the Mimbrenos was Red Sleeves, or Mangas Coloradas as the Spanish called him. As a result of the scalp-feast the Mimbrenos massacred the miners at the Santa Rita copper-mines.

Red Sleeves, however, agreed to bury the hatchet and pledged his word to General Kearny when the latter assumed control of New Mexico in 1846.

When the United States-Mexico Boundary Commission arrived at Santa Rita the Mimbrenos resented being deprived of some Mexican prisoners. Then a Mexican murdered an Apache and the commissioners refused to hang the Mexican offhand.

Red Sleeves' band at once stole the commissioners' stock. The commissioners proceeded with their survey, and the Mimbrenos congratulated themselves on having frightened them out of the country.

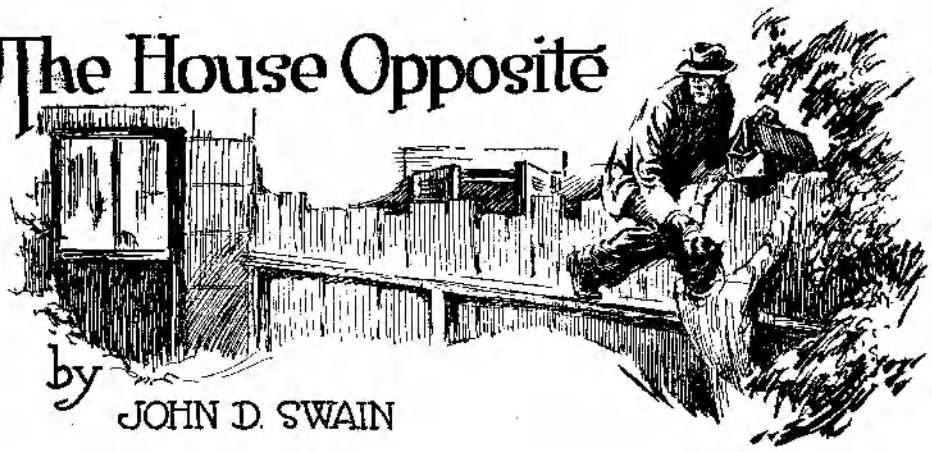
To complete Red Sleeves' wrath against the whites some Pinos Altos goldminers tied him up and lashed him. On effecting his escape he took to the warpath with a large following, and for years his name spelled terror for the settlements. When he was wounded at Apache Pass in Arizona his warriors took him to Janos, Chihuahua, and handed him over to a surgeon together with the threat to sack the town if he was not cured.

He recovered.

There is a conflict of statements concerning the finish of this red scourge. Dunn in his "Massacres of the Mountains" says he was taken prisoner by some Californians in January, 1863, and was goaded with a red-hot bayonet into making an attempt to escape, when he was promptly shot down.

Bell in his "New Tracks" says he was invited to Fort McLane, New Mexico, to make a treaty of peace, that he was imprisoned and that a guard shot and killed him on the pretext that he was trying to escape.

The House Opposite



by JOHN D. SWAIN

FOR the fifth successive evening Kennan turned down the solitary gas-jet in his room, crept to the window and peered beneath the spotted green shade which he had drawn to within a scant two inches of the sill. The house opposite intrigued him very much indeed.

The residence, a top-story room of which he occupied, was one of a dozen lodging-places which had during the past two or three years intruded in the once aristocratic Locust Street West. There were still plenty of homes occupied by descendants of the original settlers, but here and there the sign "For Sale or Rent" stared above weeds in forlorn front yards, and peeling stucco, rotting wood-trim and rusting iron grillwork testified to the fatal senility which was inexorably killing Locust Street as an exclusive section.

The house which interested Kennan differed in no essential respect from its fellows, which had been built in an era of brownstone, basement dining-rooms, pull-bells, mansard roofs and Corinthian porches. Unoccupied for many months, it had recently been leased for a year, although its unmowed lawn, close-shaded windows and generally secretive air gave little evidence of life within.

Kennan himself was in hiding. The police of many cities wanted him and orders had gone out to pick him up on suspicion wherever found. He had so far escaped mugging and finger-printing, always managing to leave by the scuttle just as the police entered by the door, and his activities had covered a wide range, from dealing them off the bottom of the deck to poor capitalists on the ocean liners to smuggling whisky across the Canadian line for the rich proletariat. He had avoided homicide and arson and was known as a good mixer, both social and rough-and-tumble, and for a readiness to try anything once or twice.

In Mrs. Weld's rooming-house, the shabby counterpart of its neighbor across the street, Kennan had registered under his own name, which he never used vocationally, and was known to her as a solicitor for automobile insurance with a roving commission. A pocket toilet-case and a change of linen in a small unlocked hand-bag comprised his luggage and in order to gratify his landlady's curiosity he had a few automobile insurance blanks in the top bureau drawer.

Paying rent in advance, he was able to leave at a moment's notice and his irregular hours were regarded by Mrs. Weld as incidental to his profession, his lack of mail unsuspicious because he had told her that in his migrations from city to city he quite naturally patronized the postal general delivery; that great clearing-house of the homeless, unfortunate, shady and anonymous.

Could she have seen his money-belt, stuffed with notes of high denomination and with one small glove-buttoned compartment half-full of unmounted stones, she would have been prepared for the squat Browning carried loose in a side pocket and the half-dozen long, slender and beautifully made keys which, with a "spider" for working "safety" locks, rose and fell with the

beat of Kennan's heart in their inside waistcoat pocket as he knelt in his darkened room, eyes of a steady and penetrating vision fixed upon Number Forty Locust Street West.

Predacious men, at once hunters and hunted, possess many of the traits of their four-footed counterparts. These traits may be inherent or acquired. Chief among them is an intuition or instinct or sixth sense which apprizes them of the proximity of prey or of a stalking foe. It is something which can neither be seen nor heard, tasted, smelled nor felt; yet its warning is as infallible as any conveyed by the normal senses. Those possessing the gift may regard it with superstition or as a matter of course or even with a certain ignorant pride; but they never ignore it. It warns them before the stealthy hand of the plain-clothes man falls heavily upon their shoulders; before the rude ax deals its first splintering impact upon the thick paneled door behind which they lurk; before they who pursue are aware that the quarry is flushed. When a dick having this gift is on the trail of a fugitive likewise endowed, an epic chase ensues through the jungles of cities and the morasses of the underworld.

IT WAS this instinct which told Kennan with the first careless glance from his upper window that the house opposite, its front blotched and peeling as from disease, was somehow wrong. There were houses within a stone's throw that were in worse condition, with broken window-panes and porches from which half the boards had rotted away. There were others as close-shuttered, peopled by mysterious hermits who shuffled in and out only to the corner grocery or the nearest postbox.

But Kennan *knew*. Not that he cared; but for a few weeks, while the faithful police were seeking him in the Middle West across whose flat miles he had dragged an anise bag, he spent most of his daylight hours inside, reading and smoking and planning what he would do with his plump roll when it was prudent to emerge with the mustache he was growing and the new walk he was carefully practising—since the skilled trailer of men observes first of all his victim's manner of walking, that being harder to disguise than voice or facial expression. So that he had much time on his hands and though patient, as are all men of the feline type, he was also nervous and dynamic.

He itched to know what was going on across the way. Whatever it was, he had no intention of horning in; but he wanted an answer to the problem. Something sordid and trivial, he presumed. No furtive cars crept to its door late at night. No strangers came or went and the postman always passed by. He had seen no woman go in or out and no parcels or suitcases were borne by the four men who lived there.

The place then was not a dive, a gambling-joint nor a blind-tiger. Queer money might be produced there, but Kennan thought not. He knew all the big crooked engravers by sight; the quartet opposite were all strangers to him. He watched and smoked and yawned. He would have trailed the men as they left Number Forty; but feared that he might forget that he was himself pursued and suffer the chagrin of being picked up while gratifying an idle whim.

Mrs. Weld, whose inquisitiveness was confined to her lodging-house and those of her rivals up and down the street, knew nothing of the newcomers, contenting herself with the vague surmise that they were "furriners." Kennan agreed with her. In his simple ethnographic scheme, the continent of Europe was populated by squareheads, by which he loosely designated all those of Scandinavian or Germanic stock; by guineas—or Latins—and wops; which latter included Russia, the Balkans, Turkey, Greece and any little principality otherwise uncatalogued.

He confidently placed the four men who lived across the street as wops. There was one, tall and somewhat distinguished-looking man who always dressed in a frock-suit, with top hat, gloves and walking-stick to match, and possessed a full set of diplomatic whiskers. His three companions dressed roughly and looked much alike, being short and stocky, clean-shaven and slouching in gait, although one of them was of the blond type with blue eyes and his fellows were swarthy. Kennan, a shrewd observer of trifles, at once decided that the tall, distinguished man was dressing better than his station in life warranted, while the other three were wearing coarse laborers' clothes as a sort of make-up.

His observation had taught him that

there was no class-line drawn between them; the rough men addressed their more splendid companion with no hint of servility and he listened to them as equals. It was plain that the domestic situation across the way was not that of a gentleman with three servants. True, occasionally a fine big limousine of expensive make was driven by one of the three, with the silk-hatted man inside; but this, as Kennan saw it, was a part of their game, whatever it might be.

Standing on their porch, bitter invectives in an unknown tongue had drifted across to his ears and it was clear that no one of them deferred to the rest, and that whatever it might be that held them together, it was not the relation of master and man or employer and employed. On one occasion the blond wop had nonchalantly fished a roll of bills from his pocket without counting it and handed it over to his frock-coated partner, who stuffed it into his trousers without a word.

The silent watcher in Mrs. Weld's house observed furthermore that although the men left the house every night at about the same hour they did not go together, but drifted away one by one up or down the street. But always one of them remained in the house. Day or night one of the four was left at Number Forty. They seemed to take turns, although occasionally the same one stayed at home two or three times in succession.

Overcoming his caution, Kennan followed the gentleman wop one evening, and presently saw him enter one of the Beacon Street clubs whose portals are especially difficult to pass. The doorman greeted him with respect, as a frequenter of the sedate old club behind whose bay windows may be observed at any hour men whose influence in city and nation looms large. Curiosity still mastering him, he followed two of the others. One of them went directly to a hall where a well-known communist was to address an audience of laboring men.

The other, slipping a bill into the horny palm of a watchman at the gate of a foundry whose night-shift was at work at their flaming hearths beyond the shadows of the yard, passed within. He remained a couple of hours and upon emerging made at once for an all-night soft-drink place and called in husky tones for a bottle of near beer. Kennan deduced that he had been haranguing the men inside.

A "wobbly," or anarchist, he decided; and was not surprized to note, a couple of days thereafter, a newspaper paragraph concerning a strike of puddlers at the foundry the wop had visited. But the other? He was puzzled. Between the Winterset Club and the grimy Cambridge Street foundry a deep gulf was fixed. But if the quartet was really engaged in I. W. W. or soviet propaganda, it might well be that one of them had been planted in that social stratum of Boston, which is represented by big business and banking, in order to work from the other end of the industrial situation and get what he could from his association with the capitalists. Kennan knew that funds were available for work of this sort and that there were plenty of clever imposters who, supplied with forged credentials, could enter exclusive clubs and guarded homes as readily, if not as crudely, as the blond wop had slipped through the gate of the Cambridge Street foundry.

Having to his own satisfaction evolved a plausible theory, his interest in Number Forty began to wane. In the struggle between capital and labor he was strictly neutral. He took toll from both and was interested only in locating the sucker with the roll and not at all as to whether he customarily wore overalls or sport-clothes. The consideration that the furtive brotherhood he had whiled away his idle hours in watching probably kept a healthy contingent fund somewhere in the house, did for a moment cause him to lose himself in a pleasant day-dream; but the impulse passed as quickly as it came, because he was in no condition just at present to take any chances.

A little later perhaps, when the hue and cry for himself had died away, he might look the place over some night. He would really deserve the gratitude of conservative society were he to annex the fund of the wops; and he suspected that the victims would not enlist the services of the police to recover, but would make it a strictly personal affair, which would be pleasantly exciting and quite as all feuds should be settled in Kennan's belief.

Meanwhile, he lost interest in the comings and goings across the way and ceased to keep his lookout beneath the greasy shade of his window; and it was only by chance that he was peering out one night when that happened which gave to what had been a rather bored curiosity, the tingling thrill of the vividly human interest.

IT WAS a sultry night, the stars set like smoky lamps above the locust-trees which had given the street its name. In nearly every house windows were thrown open to the lifeless air, but Number Forty was as usual closed and shade-drawn. A faint glow from the hall-light crept through the cobwebbed grill above the front door. Kennan, sitting shirt-sleeved and in the dark by his window, a cigaret drooping listlessly from his lips, gazed across at, but without thinking of, the house whose inmates had intrigued him through the dragging days of his unholy retreat.

He was thinking that in a short time he would bid Mrs. Weld adieu, and fare forth to some distant city; Montreal, perhaps, an oasis to which at present thirsty plutocrats were flocking. There, at Little Peter's just off the Place Viger and later on at whichever of the big hotels held the plumpest fowls for his plucking, he could mingle and spend with the best of them until the right prospect loomed up. Suddenly, as his eyes kindled to the pictures fancy painted for him against the background of what is to-day America's liveliest metropolis, a sound pierced his consciousness like a stiletto and fixed his attention, rigid as a pointer's, upon the house opposite.

It was not a loud noise; the thick walls and closed windows muted it to a degree where an ear less feral than Kennan's would hardly have isolated it from the multiple fragments of the night; but for him it possessed a significance a duller ear might have missed. It was without any question the scream of a woman and he recognized in its timbre fear and despair alike. He was even able to guess that it had been torn from the throat of a girl or young woman at least; and it was immediately followed by a second and muffled cry as if a hand had been clapped over her mouth.

Every sense strung to the most tense expectancy, he was able to distinguish the murmur of angry voices, the scraping or dragging of something along the hardwood floor, punctuated by incidental sounds which visualized to him a frantic creature being tugged and hauled along and clutching madly in her progress at such objects as her hands could reach; a portière, whose rings clattered with faint music as they fell, a chair, a light table as it overturned.

There followed the slamming of a distant door and silence. Presently the three men as usual emerged from the house, stood for a moment in the shadow of their dilapidated piazza, and one by one slipped away into the night. The tall man, Kennan noted with interest, bore a long, angry scratch upon his face. It showed as he passed beneath the arc-light just above Number Forty and he mopped it with a dirty handkerchief out of character with his shiny topper and dove-colored spats. One of the others had a torn sleeve; but it was quite in keeping with his make-up of a poor laboring man. The blond wop remained behind in the house, now as silent as ever.

This was highly interesting, Kennan reflected; this injection of the woman into the problem. He had never suspected that any one else save the four men occupied the house; and it was plain to him that the woman whose voice had with faint menace stirred the sluggish air was held there against her will, for purposes unknown but not unguessable.

He liked women, though he distrusted them. On the occasions when he had been obliged to employ one as confederate, he had never breathed easily until the trick was turned and the loot divided. He was easily fascinated by a pretty face, a good figure—and was forever encountering one or both among the little gamin-like irresponsibles of the underworld through which he moved—and was given to brief but frantic idyls which narcotized his usual cunning and had more than once nearly led to his undoing. Not that women were squealers; they were more loyal than men and at least as brave. But they acted on impulse, often right, but at times calamitously wrong, and nothing in his experience equaled their venom when betrayed or even flouted.

He had fancied himself in love many times; but always after the break-up he had known that he was not. He had been nearer to it with the Canadian girl, Sophie of Point Levis, than with any one excepting perhaps the divorced wife of a Marblehead yacht-club commodore, a woman who would not have permitted her sport-skirt to brush Sophie's rowdy clothes. From the little Canuck Kennan stole a few kisses and from her high-born sister a couple of thousand at bridge; but for either, or any woman who cried for help, he would have put himself to any inconvenience or the last degree of peril. He gave as freely as he took.

Now, stirred by the smothered cry of an unknown, he suddenly found his casual curiosity in the mysteries of the house opposite changed to an acute interest. It became an intensely personal matter with him, to look upon—perhaps to kiss—the lips from which had fled that despairing call into the night; in any case to offer his amiable services in her need. He was warmed by the beckoning adventure which broke in upon his ennui.

With the entrance of the woman an entirely new adjustment was necessary. Perhaps the secrecy of the place centered, not about radicalism, but abduction. It was even conceivable—but not likely—that the girl was insane; the wife, or child of the well-dressed man. No one remotely resembling a nurse or attendant had Kennan ever seen about the house however; no visitors were admitted.

There was not even a telephone in the place. He had found out by calling "information" from a booth in an all-night drug-store and asking to be connected with Number Forty. Whatever the situation, he proposed to investigate it; to have speech with the unknown owner of the voice, hoping that it might speak some other tongue than the outlandish one used by the four wops. If he could not understand her, he would merely free her, offer her some notes from that wadded money-belt that plagued him with its sleeping capital, have a pleasantly thrilling evening to break the monotony of his present life.

The only danger he was concerned about was that of a possible publicity. The mere breaking into a strange and guarded house and carrying off a woman whose seclusion was evidently a matter of some import to four capable-looking men, was a casual incident to one accustomed to bet heavily on anything, and on himself to the limit!

It was nine o'clock as announced by the rusty curfew from an old steeple on Charles Street which had for the past half-century faithfully and ineffectually called upon the neighborhood children to go home and to bed. The three wops never returned before midnight. There were then several hours in which to gain entrance to Number Forty and interview the prisoner, as Kennan thought of her. He began to move softly about his room, opening drawers and raking shelves.

He always traveled light, buying from time to time a new shirt or a pair of shoes and throwing away worn garments. Because of the prestige it gave him, he had bought a cheap leatherette hand-bag upon securing a room at Mrs. Weld's, but it held nothing save a change of linen. He never indulged in pajamas.

Emptying the bag upon his bed, he proceeded to don his extra underwear and shirt, putting them on over what he was wearing and stuffing into his coat pockets a pair of fresh-laundered collars, some socks and handkerchiefs. He fitted his few but expensive toilet accessories into their flat morocco case; a jointed gold safety-razor and brush, tubes of shaving and tooth paste, pocket-mirror, a flat ebony clothes-brush.

He looked a little stouter when he had done and after he had put on a light Angora sweater he was more conscious than before of the sultry night air; but he was burdened with no hand-luggage, not so much as an umbrella. His only pair of shoes were of pliable Russia leather with thick, soft rubber soles, and when he had put on his dark homespun cap with wide vizor, he was ready to go around the world, if necessary.

The bag, from which he had scratched the factory number, he did not need if—as he suspected—it should prove inconvenient to return again to Mrs. Weld's. He had paid for his room up to the following Saturday and had merely to walk out with all his worldly goods on his person. He cast a final swift look about for a possible forgotten trifle, found none, switched off the single gas-jet beside the bureau, and stepped out into the dim hall. A moment later he had closed the house door without sound, and was in the street.

AN ARC-LIGHT, dimmed by its throng of infatuated insects, cast a murky gleam through the branches of a dying locust which stood just above. The next light was far down the street. On the other side of Number Forty stood an empty house whose weatherworn sign "For Sale" testified to the languid condition of real-estate transactions in the vicinity. A high board fence separated the properties which were bounded in front by rather ornate iron fencing, eaten away in places by rust. Kennan sauntered slowly down the street, crossed over at the end of the block and returned. A quick glance up and

down showed the empty, tree-shadowed vista typical of so many of the older Boston streets after dark. Two blocks north, the shrill clamor of the ghetto which surges up to the very rim of the Locust Street sector, came mingled with the barking of dogs and the cries of hucksters presiding over two-wheeled barrows under flaring torches. But here, there was nothing more than a dim, shirt-sleeved figure lounging on a front porch and a slinking gray cat making its nightly round from ash-barrel to garbage-can. Kennan swerved in through the gap where an iron gate had once hung, and stepped beneath a gnarled tree in the weedy yard of the empty house.

The shirt-sleeved man down the street yawned and stretched and turned to request a match from some invisible companion within the hall. The gray cat dropped softly into a half-filled barrel, and foraged rustlingly amid its debris. A single bell announced half after nine. After a moment or two, Kennan crept from shadow to shadow across the yard, skirted the house, came to a back yard where weeds and shrubs were higher and ranker and stood at length beneath the board fence.

The fence, reeling and staggering a little under the assaults of time, was yet stanch enough to bear the weight of a man without doing more than sway warily. It stood eight feet high and Kennan clutched its edge firmly, shook it a little, and then chinned his hundred and seventy pounds up and peered over into a yard differing in no way from the one in which he stood. No lights showed from the windows of Number Forty; so with an easy swing he straddled the fence and dropped down on the other side.

The neglected yard in which he stood knee-deep was a little wilderness in whose rank growth slinking things writhed from his cautious advance. Once he put his foot on the fat, wattled back of a sluggish toad and lifted it with quick repulsion. Everywhere, at the gates of cities as in the unpeopled jungle, Nature lies patiently and craftily in wait to reclaim her own and pluck apart the cunning artifices of man, who is only a passing phase. In this yard, untouched for years, she had already obliterated carefully laid brick walks, neat flowerbeds, an ornate sun-dial.

Through the clinging stalks and briers Kennan made his slow way to the rear. Here at last were lights and even sounds. From the topmost room in the mansard, which had presumably been a servant's chamber in former times, a faint light spilled through close-drawn blinds. Here, he felt, well out of sight and hearing of curious neighbors, must be the woman whose voice had drawn him from his own safe retreat. One of the ground-floor rooms was similarly alight and from it came the faint rattle of crockery, the thud of heavy steps; evidence beyond question of the presence of the fourth wop left on guard for the evening.

Kennan retraced his steps to the unlighted side of the house and, feeling carefully along the rough stucco, came at length to a shutter on a level with his shoulders. It took him some time to throw open the leaves; not because they were well-fastened, but since they were old and dry, with rusty hinges, and his work must be done noiselessly. When he had finished he was confronted by a very dirty two-paned window. The room beyond was black and silent.

He took from a finger its ring with a small diamond and began outlining a half-moon directly over the center of the upper pane, at its lower edge. It was not possible to do this without some noise; a shrill, dry scraping followed the contest of hard glass and yet harder crystal. It was not much louder however than the evensong of crickets in the grass and from second to second he desisted and listened for any sound within the dark room. There was none and presently he had scored a deep circular groove in the glass and replaced his ring.

Next, cutting from a roll of surgeon's plaster a strip some three inches long, he moistened its sticky side with his warm breath and pressed it firmly upon the pane so that it covered the upper edge of his scored mark. When assured that it adhered along all its surface, he struck the outlined segment sharply with his knuckles. It broke clean and hung suspended by its hinge of plaster, leaving an opening through which he passed thumb and forefinger, slipping the window-catch.

It was not an easy task to raise the window which had warped and stuck from long disuse, but Kennan knew windows and their crotchets and in less than ten minutes since he had begun, his way into the house stood clear. He drew himself up and ventured to flash his pocket-torch about before entering.

The room he saw briefly and vividly outlined was evidently not one used by the present tenants. A patina of thick dust lay everywhere; on the flat surfaces of walnut table and bookcases, on the haircloth seats of stiff and uninviting chairs, along the tarnished frames of gloomy pictures and on the bare floor. It had seemingly been the library; a dozen shabby volumes still straggled on the shelves of the cases; the framed steel engravings were of pompous or simpering authors of the Civil War era. Kennan slid over the window-sill and inside, turning to close the blinds, but leaving the window up.

Again using his electric torch, but dimming its rays in a cupped hand, he swept the dust from before his advancing feet, so as to leave no telltale footprints. For a like reason he was careful not to touch chair or table. The paneled door before which he at length stood at the far side of the room was unlocked. He snapped off his torch and slowly and carefully turned the white china door-knob. A moment later he looked out into the long entrance hall, faintly illumined by a dim gas-lamp overhead.

To the right the hall terminated at an open door leading into a dining-room whose untidy table littered with unwashed dishes was faintly visible by the light coming from the kitchen at the rear, in which Kennan could now plainly hear some one moving about. In front, an ornate newel-post marked the curving sweep of stairs leading to the upper floor. Toward it he moved soundlessly in his rubber-soled shoes, feeling solicitously for any loose board that might proclaim his presence there.

IT WAS a stoutly built house, constructed by honest labor and of material not easily purchasable today. The treads gave out no protest as he mounted them, careful to keep close to the wall. The upper hall, a duplicate of the one below, showed gaping black openings into four bedrooms. With only a glance at them Kennan proceeded up another flight and found himself in the mansard and opposite a door from beneath which as well as through the keyhole crept a light sufficient to reveal the bare and cheap finish of this upper domain, once peopled by old-time cooks and housemaids. He knelt before the keyhole and saw indistinctly a young woman slumped in a chair before her bureau, her hands clenching and unclenching, lips moving soundlessly. He saw masses of blue-black hair piled high on a rather small head, and caught the dusky rose of her cheek beneath the gas-jet over her shoulder.

How to attract her notice without alarming her and causing her in turn to alarm the man two flights below? Quite likely she spoke only the uncouth tongue, phrases of which he had caught from the four wops as they stood on the piazza of Number Forty. After a moment of indecision, he took a blank page from a note-book and slowly printed across it in large capitals the single word AMERICAN. Surely she would understand that—and it would convey no menace, if it brought no hope. He scratched gently on the door and noted that the girl froze to attention. Then he slipped the paper beneath and into the room.

After an instant she rose and crossed the room, and stooped to take up the paper. Her startled whisper in an unknown language came to his ear.

"*S-s-s-h!*" he warned; and began gently coaxing the lock with first one and then another of his slim, flat keys.

Presently he found one that caught the wards. Very slowly and firmly he turned them back. He rose to his feet, opened the door and stood before the most striking woman he had ever beheld.

She was not tall, but held herself erect and looked out and down from a small head thrown back ever so slightly, so that she gave the impression of height. Her eyes were enormous and very black, shot with motes of gold and fringed with deep lashes beneath arched and questing brows. In color she was of a translucent brunette, so that the rich blood seemed visible as its current flowed beneath; the oval face and broad, low forehead were pure Russian, in which a hint of untamed Cossack can coexist with patrician disdain.

The whitest of teeth just showed between parted lips and her firm white hands were pressed against a breast whose firm curve was not concealed by the tailored suit which was at once inconspicuous and defiantly Parisian. Kennan took in all these details without knowing that he did so in the three seconds while he faced her in the open door. Then, leaning forward but with hands carefully held at his side, he whispered—

"Anything wrong, kid?"

The girl replied, also whispering, and her words to him were a jumble of consonants. A troubled look crossed his face. Kennan was no linguist and was about to launch at her his only hope—a sentence in what he called French. He had learned the lingo from Sophie of Point Levis; and Sophie's French would have caused an Academician to howl with anguish and would not even have been comprehensible to a Paris cabby. Kennan had, in learning the patois, mutilated it yet further. It was in this indescribable jargon that he now asked the black-haired girl—

"Voo parly frongsay—hein?"

To his vast relief a flash of comprehension set the golden fires in her eyes to dancing. Not only did she know French, but she knew it so profoundly that she could track it through the most obscure and degraded dialectic thicket in which it sought to conceal its cadences. She understood him and she was able to make him understand her; using the simplest nouns, the commonest verb forms, as one addressing a child. Kennan never suspected her skill and was rather complacent over his own linguistic feat.

There was fortunately no need of mutual warnings in regard to silence. Unchecked by her, Kennan had closed the door and now she drew close to his side in the middle of the room, her lips almost brushing his ear, the faint perfume of some disturbing Eastern essence vaguely troubling his senses as he followed her carefully enunciated sentences, broken at every other minute when she paused to listen for stealthy footsteps below.

The story she told him in this strange way was intensely dramatic, yet commonplace enough in the distracted land of her birth. Her name was Maria Mejanz and she had been a nurse assisting Dr. Botkin in the little household of the Romanoffs during those dreadful months when their unhappy fate had led them from the splendors of Czarskoe-Selo to the bleak house in Tobolsk and finally to Yekaterinburg and death.

Of that household she alone remained alive today. The royal couple, the feeble heir, those young girls Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, dragged from Popoff's house to the Ipatieff cellar opposite and there shot and hacked to death like mad dogs, their rifled bodies cast into an abandoned mine shaft, had sucked down in their ruin Dr. Botkin, a chef, maid and nameless waiter.

Maria Mejanz escaped because she had pretended to sell herself to Lenine as a spy. In this character she had made regular reports of imaginary happenings in the family life of the Russian Czar. All was done with the cognizance of the family to which loyalty would have led her to offer her own death, had not her life been so much more important. For to Maria had been entrusted the secret hiding-place in the palace of Czarskoe-Selo, prepared years before so cunningly that complete demolition alone might disclose it and in which reposed the most valuable of the Romanoff jewels, and more important still, certain archives vital to Russia.

The Red leaders of Moscow knew of these inestimable treasures and had never ceased to seek them; but they had not suspected Maria of any complicity. After the tragedy she had followed Leonid Solodouhin, an intellectual radical, who with three comrades had been sent as emissaries to America. They had made their way to Sweden and thence by forged passports had gone to Holland, to Paris and finally come to Boston, establishing themselves at once in the house on Locust Street leased for them in advance.

Maria had expected no difficulty in slipping away from them and going to Washington, to lay her information before Baron Rosen, the former Russian ambassador to the United States and many other nations. But shortly after her arrival at Number Forty, effected very quietly one night, secret advices from Moscow had warned Solodouhin that she was under suspicion as a traitor; since which she had been closely questioned and threatened, and as she believed, in imminent danger. Sokolof, Pignotti and Loupin, the three agents who worked with Solodouhin, took turns in guarding her. Sokolof was a Lett, one of the wild beasts who actually struck down the hapless victims in Ipatieff's cellar. It was he who was below stairs tonight.

"An animal!" Maria said. He had the attributes of animals; enormous strength and agility, uncanny hearing, and—so he often boasted—the gift of actually tracking down a foe by scent, like a wolf or a bloodhound. He was by far the most dangerous of the four; her anxious glance for the hundredth

time sought the closed door of the room as she whispered his name. And even as she uttered it, the knob turned slowly and soundlessly and the door swung back a foot.

THE blond head of the Lett appeared, his deep-set blue eyes fixed in angry astonishment upon them. As the girl had said, Sokolof must have sensed the stranger's presence in some feral manner and stolen up to listen. Kennan's ears were almost preternaturally acute —yet he had heard nothing. Maria went limp and seemed about to crumple to the floor with terror.

"*Tovonish*—comrade!" She gasped, her eyes black pits of horror.

"So—Mashka, little one," he said in Russian. "So thou art a spy, after all!"

The words were meaningless to Kennan, but not so Sokolof's intent. The Lett gave him but a fleeting, almost indifferent glance. Then, it seemed that in one motion he whipped a heavy knife from his belt and leaped for the girl as a football player leaves the ground in launching himself for a deadly tackle.

Instinctively Kennan lurched forward, his shoulder catching Sokolof's and turning him aside. His hands clutching empty air, he sprawled at full length from the very force of his thrust, his knife dropping as he struck the floor. In a flash Kennan was on top of him.

He might have shot him dead, but even in his surprize he did not forget that he must avoid all publicity and that a shot would probably bring unwelcome assistance to Number Forty. He chose what seemed the safer way of matching strength with the Lett, his immediate aim being to frustrate his desperate efforts to regain the knife a scant two feet beyond his fingers.

So rapid and confusing were their body shifts that Maria had no chance to take any active part; but she was quick-witted enough to dart forward and kick the knife far beneath the bed, well out of reach.

If the American lacked the gift of tongues, he could fight in many dialects and was hampered with none of the conservatism of the Marquis of Queensbury. In the schools where he had taken post-graduate courses everything went and one fought to disable one's opponent as soon and as completely as possible. But the Lett was unlike any one he had ever met. His short, chunky body seemed to be a mass of gristle, his thick, hairy hands gripped whatever they found like ice-tongs. He was as dangerous underneath as on top. Kennan was glad when a convulsive wrench tore him loose and enabled him to regain his feet.

He set himself as Sokolof lowered his head and charged again, arms outthrust, fingers hooked. An old trick of the London docks came to Kennan and just when the Lett was within reach, he threw his arm before his face, crooked and with elbow out, and leaped to meet him. Sokolof's arms flailed past on either side and Kennan's sharp elbow, driven by his full weight plus that of his opponent, caught him square on the bridge of the nose, smashing it flat to his face and ripping his upper lip away from the teeth. Sokolof staggered back, his face a thing awful to look upon. But incredible as it seemed he was not stunned and the pain only added to his fury. Before Kennan could avoid him, he was clasped in the other's arms and drenched with his blood.

They wrestled about the room, smashing chairs, overturning a table or two, neither able to secure a fall. Once Kennan got the other in a strangle-hold, locked his two hands and exerted his utmost force to break his neck; but he might as well have attempted to garrote a mountain-ash. He disengaged, lifted his knee violently, and forced Sokolof to relax his hold. Then he leaped back, set himself as Sokolof tore in again and threw his left fist straight at that loathsome pudding of blood which was the Lett's face.

It happened that the onrushing man stood directly in front of the half-open door; and, yielding to the inevitable law of mechanics, he fell backward through it, his head striking the banisters of the staircase, breaking one and wedging itself tightly between two others. Wishing that he had time to get the knife and finish up the job right, Kennan leaped into the hall just as Sokolof wrenched himself free and was struggling to his knees. He clasped Kennan about the legs, and, seeking to drag him down, rolled over the edge of the stairs. By seizing the post with both hands he saved himself, and Sokolof's own weight tore him loose.

He sprawled down three or four steps, clutched the banisters, was on his feet like

a cat and bounding up the stairs as strong as ever. Kennan stood on the landing above him, breathing hard through his mouth. One hand was in his pocket, on his gun. It seemed to him that the man was like one of those hasheesh victims who run amuck and may be shot full of holes or slashed to strips, but are never stopped till a bullet is put into brain or heart. He was on the point of shooting now; but as Sokolof's unspeakable face rose above the last stair, he changed his mind, and with a quick step swung his right foot in the long, clean, straight-limbed arc of the distance punter.

The toe of his shoe caught Sokolof directly under the chin. It was a hundred-and-seventy-pound hammer, traveling at immense speed; and it lifted him clear of the stair he was on. There was a sharp crack as his head snapped back; for an instant he swayed, his head rolling like an overheavy apple on a slender twig. Then he seemed to collapse like a torn parachute and to strike the stairs like something inert and inconsequential. Kennan did not even follow him as he rolled slowly and soddenly down to the landing below. He turned and went back to where Maria Mejanz leaned white and wide-eyed against the jamb of the door.

"He's croaked," he said.

AT THIS instant there came an interruption as sinister as fate could devise. From far below sounded the harsh jangle of the door-bell. Kennan looked a startled inquiry.

"The others?" he managed to pant.

"No! They never ring," she whispered.

He turned without hesitation and sped down-stairs. At the foot of the first flight he stepped over Sokolof's body without glancing at it. Making no sound, he crept to the front door, knelt and listened. Dimly through the keyhole he could discern a man's figure on the porch. A low voice came to his straining ears.

"Nobody home, Bill! It's alley-work for ours. We'll wait."

Another voice replied—

"Why not go in and look the place over before they get back?"

"Nothing doing. It'll keep. When they are all safe home we'll make the pinch and get the men and any papers they've got besides. Come along!"

Their footsteps creaked on the rickety piazza flooring. Kennan slipped into a front room, and from its window, between broken shutter-slats, he beheld two men in citizens' clothes cross the street. They lighted cigars and stood for a moment looking across at Number Forty. Then they sauntered away in opposite directions.

"Uncle Sam's men," decided the watcher. "They're wise. This will be a —— of a conspicuous place for me to be in a little later!"

He returned to Maria Mejanz.

"Kid," he said in his best Point Levis, "you gotta beat it. *Now.* This dump is due for a raid. When your pals find old Socks here, there'll be some noise. When the fly cops find them and him, there'll be more. You don't want to be in this at all. Hurry up and get everything you can together. Don't leave a hairpin behind to show there's been a dame in the joint. I hope you don't shed any of that black hair, but we got no time to use a carpet-sweeper!"

She understood and began scooping her few possessions into a small valise. There were no clothes but those she wore and a fur coat. Kennan glanced at himself in her mirror, which had miraculously escaped in the recent melée; wrenched off his rag of collar and thrust it into a pocket, hastily wet a towel and wiped face and hands clean and sponged the blood from his clothes. He had suffered surprizingly little, considering that he had been so near death in that madman's arms.

While Maria was packing, he went down to where Sokolof lay and calmly frisked him, finding two or three women's rings and a thick roll of good American bank-notes. These he stuffed nonchalantly into his hip pocket. He wished there were time to search the house. Likely there might be a lot more cached there! So far as he was concerned he would have taken the chance but Maria must be kept out of it. She was coming now, bearing her valise, the fur coat over an arm.

"Shut your eyes, kid!" he commanded, reaching for her valise with one hand and taking her arm with the other. "He ain't easy to look at."

Her sweeping lashes closed down obediently and he swung her over the crumpled body. He felt certain of a getaway, now. Later on, when they were ready to make the pinch, a couple of bulls would

be posted at the rear; but not yet. He stepped confidently out of the window by which he had entered, and eased the girl after him. It was a bit harder getting her over the fence; but she was strong and supple, and thank God, the shadows were dense here.

Back of the other house and finally to the gnarled tree in its front yard. A tall man, smoking a cigar, sauntered slowly by on the opposite side of the street. When he had passed, Kennan leaned toward Maria Mejanz.

"Can you say 'Washington,' girlie? That's the idea! Now try 'South Terminal.' You got me. Go there! South Terminal and buy a ticket for Washington to see friend Rosen. There's a train leaves every night at eleven-thirty. You got plenty of time. It's August and Rosen is probably at Coney Island or wherever he goes for a vacation. But Washington is a good burg for foreigners to lose theirselves in. Just stick round till the old bird blows in. Get me?"

She nodded vigorously.

"*J'y comprends, mon ami. Parfaitement.* South Tairmeenal? Vasheengton?"

Kennan grinned.

"You're a quick study, I'll say! And your French is as good as mine. Here—you'll need some kale. Aw, forget it! Pay me back if it hurts you. Think I'm going to never see you again? Not so you'd notice it! I'll take a look at Washington myself, a little later. But I gotta lie low a few days. Say! Lost any rings?"

"All of them they have taken," she admitted.

He drew forth those he had found in the dead man's pocket.

"Try these on!"

She smiled in the shadow. He could tell by the gleam of her teeth and by her voice when she thanked him. The money he gave her was from his own belt. A curious delicacy forbade him to offer her any that had been handled by that carrion back there under the stairs. Besides, it might be identified. You couldn't tell about these things. If so, he didn't want any of it to be found on Maria Mejanz.

He dreaded to have her go, but feared delay. Characteristically, he spoke churlishly:

"Beat it now, while the going's good! Don't crab the game just as I got everything framed right!"

Maria had a query.

"If I am taken, my bold one?"

Kennan nodded approvingly.

"You may be, at that! May pick you up at New York. If so, tell the truth. Our courts are different from yours. They're on the level. Just tell the truth. Say a strange guy blew in and croaked old Socks and helped you make your getaway."

"And they shall ask me how this strange one looks; and me, I shall say he is a fat man with a broken nose and red hair and the thumb of his left hand missing!"

Kennan nearly laughed aloud, but checked himself in time. Some little pal, this! He'd have to revise his prejudices against women if he could work with her. But she wasn't that sort. He'd knock the block off any bird that insinuated she was.

Suddenly firm arms were thrown about his neck. That bewildering perfume that he had noted at first, faint but intoxicating, made him feel that he was wallowing in clouds of crimson and gold and listening to a million-dollar quartette sing the song he loved best, and hoping he would never wake up.

Warm lips pressed against his, once, twice; and he was alone underneath the gnarled locust. He strolled heedlessly out through the gap in the rusty iron fence. Far up the street, back to him, stood a tall man smoking a cigar.

Kennan lighted a cigaret and sauntered across the street and toward home. It was written that he was to return to look once more upon his new leatherette bag, after all! It was much safer, he argued, to stick along for a few days. Inquiries would be made in the vicinity, on general principles; and any one taking French leave on this particular night would render himself thereby a suspect.

IN HER open doorway sat Mrs. Weld, yearning for a gossip and unwitting that she breathed tragedy and romance with every sultry air that drifted from the house opposite. Kennan paused to speak to her.

"Your joint is so quiet, Mrs. Weld, that I shall hate to pull out. No; not for some days yet. Business is fine. Insured two new cars today."

"I aim to get me nice, genteel folks," admitted his landlady. "Young men like you, if I may say so, that minds their

own business and comes and goes quiet-like and don't keep me chasing after 'em for the rent—which is little enough compared to what others is getting right on this very street."

Up-stairs in his own room he went over his clothes more carefully, washing out all spots. He removed his superfluous shirt and linen, bestowing it in his bag. Then he sat by his window, watching the house opposite.

Eleven-thirty struck. Maria, he devoutly hoped, was pulling out of the South Terminal for Washington and the wise and kindly old Baron Rosen. The minutes dragged. He sat motionless, an unlighted cigaret drooping from his mouth.

Just before midnight, the distinguished-looking wop returned, produced his latch-key and entered Number Forty. At the same time two men strolled quietly through his yard and passed on to the rear. Things began to happen fast, now.

Comrades Pignotti and Loupin returned together and vanished within. A man directly beneath Kennan's window spat out his cigar and ground it into the pavement and swung his arm. Then he crossed over to the house opposite; while from up and down the street other figures started forth from the shadows of tree or porch.

The first man mounted the steps and yanked its bell. Just as his hand touched it a wild cry echoed weirdly from within, and a babel of excited voices. Kennan grinned. He guessed that they had just discovered comrade Sokolof!

The cries ceased abruptly with the jangle of the bell, to be followed by absolute silence. Then came the distant shiver of broken glass and two shots from the rear of the house. At the same time one of the men who had now gathered upon the piazza raised high over his head a heavy ax and began to smash in the thick panels of the door.

From doorways and cross-alleys onlookers began to gather. Women called shrilly from window to window up and down the dark street. Kennan was merely one of many spectators, sitting shirt-sleeved in his window. He lighted his cigaret, unaware that he had done so.

The door collapsed utterly, after stubborn resistance. A police van swept up the street, its bell clanging. Into it were hustled the distinguished wop—without his silk tile—and his two comrades. It drove away and was presently replaced by another and more sinister vehicle.

After a time two white-jacketed young men bore a covered stretcher out, upon which lay the man who had committed so atrocious a murder in a cellar five thousand miles away and had come so very far for his reward.

Little by little the crowd thinned out. Across the way a couple of patrolmen lounged in chairs beside the broken door.

Kennan yawned, stretched, pulled down his shade and began to unlace his shoes.

"I'll call it a day!"

He sighed contentedly.

A WOMAN VETERAN

by **H. P.**

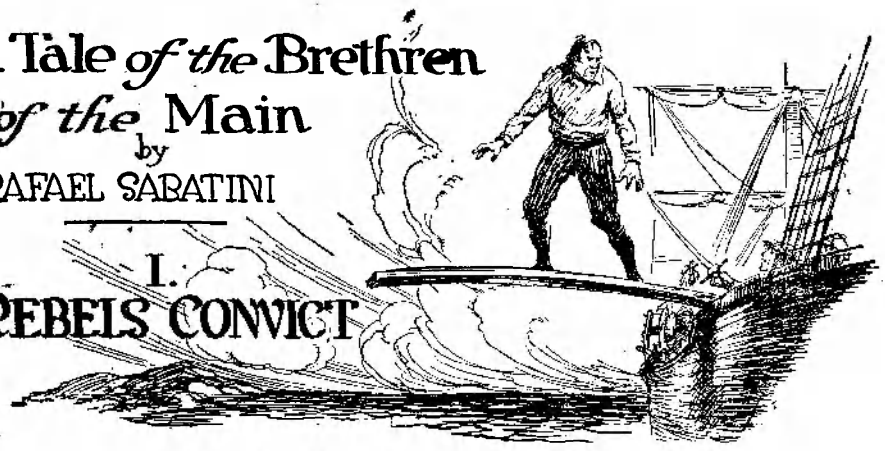
ONCE when General Custer was conducting a campaign against the Plains Indians he left Mrs. Custer at Fort Hays. Mrs. Custer had for a maid a colored girl, Eliza, who had passed through as many adventures as many soldiers. She was born a slave but gained her freedom after the first year of the Civil War and for three years served as cook for Custer. Twice the Confederates captured her, and both times she escaped, made her way back to the Union lines and joined the general. Of her Custer says, "She was present at almost every prominent battle of the Potomac, accompanied my command on all the raids and Winter marches." (Quoted from "My Life on the Plains.")

During a battle where Custer was at the front Eliza also was at the front, making coffee. She would remain at her task with shells bursting all around her, even when veterans were not above taking to cover. Custer says that from General Sheridan down she was a favorite with all officers and men in the cavalry corps.

A Tale of the Brethren of the Main

by

RAFAEL SABATINI



I. REBELS CONVICT

Author of "The Pretender," "The Word of Borgia," etc.

WITH his armed negroes following at his heels, like a brace of hounds, Colonel Bishop came suddenly and softly round a corner of one of the avenues intersecting the great blocks of ripening amber sugar-canes. Thus he disturbed a close and intimate colloquy between Jerry Pitt, the rebel convict, and another man, who plunged away incontinently into the woods that almost bordered the plantation at this point.

Colonel Bishop let him go unpursued and gave his attention to Jerry Pitt—an unfortunate who had been shipped to Barbados and there sold into a ten-years' slavery for having been out with Monmouth in the West Country. Under the planter's baleful glance the rebel convict turned cold and shivered, despite the sweltering heat.

The colonel, a massive fellow, lightly clad in biscuit-colored taffetas set off with certain gold-lace fripperies, stepped forward, swinging a slender bamboo cane.

"And what was the bashful Nuttall saying to you?" he asked, his voice thick and sneering.

The convict hung his head and shifted uncomfortably on his bare feet. A pair of cotton breeches, loose and ragged, clothed him from waist to knee. Above and below he was naked, save for a broad hat of plaited straw that sheltered his unkempt head of golden hair from the tropical sun.

The planter's bamboo cane descended with stinging force upon those naked shoulders.

"Answer me, scum! What is his commerce with you?"

The young man raised sullen eyes, set in a face that a year of slavery and degradation had almost stripped of its erstwhile comeliness. But still he made no answer.

"Stubborn, eh?" The colonel was sarcastically humorous. He knew a dozen ways—some of them quite diverting—of conquering stubbornness in these convict swine. "'Swounds, you impudent dog! Do you think I'm to be mocked? D'ye think I don't guess the business that brings him sneaking here?"

"Why weary yourself with asking, then?" said Jerry.

There was something in his voice of the bitter recklessness that is begotten of despair. If the planter really guessed the business that had brought Nuttall secretly to see the slave, death could matter little.

Brute fury awoke in Colonel Bishop and he fell to lashing those defenseless shoulders until, stung beyond endurance, the lingering embers of his manhood fanned into momentary flame, Pitt sprang toward him.

But as he sprang the watchful blacks sprang also. Muscular bronze arms coiled crushingly about the frail white body and in a moment the unfortunate slave stood powerless, his wrists pinioned behind him in a thong of hide.

"Fetch him along," said the planter, and he turned away.

Down the avenue between golden walls of cane the wretched Pitt was hurried to a plateau, smooth and green, before the roomy white house of the overseer. From here a

view was commanded of Carlisle Bay, the fort, and the long sheds of the wharf, to which a few shallow boats were moored. Out in the roads, standing in for the shore, before a gentle breeze that scarcely ruffled the sapphire surface of the Caribbean, came a stately frigate flying the English ensign.

Colonel Bishop stood and gazed a moment, shading his eyes with his hand. Light as was the breeze, the vessel spread no canvas to it beyond her spritsail. Her every other sail was furled, leaving a clear view of the majestic lines of her hull from towering stern-castle to gilded beak-head aflash in the brilliant sunshine. So leisurely an advance argued a master indifferently acquainted with these waters cautiously sounding his way as he crept forward.

The planter turned from his survey of her to give his attention once more to Master Pitt. Within the stockade about the house of the overseer stood a pair of stocks for slaves who required correction. Into these at a word from the colonel the negroes had meanwhile clapped their prisoner.

"Mutinous curs that show their fangs to their master must learn good manners at the cost of a striped hide," snarled Colonel Bishop and with that he went about his executioner's job.

That with his own hands he should have done what most men of his station would, out of self-respect, have relegated to a negro, gives the measure of the man's beastliness. It was almost with relish, as if gratifying some feral instinct of cruelty, that now he lashed his victim.

And by the time that from very weariness he flung away the broken remnants of his bamboo, the wretched slave's back was bleeding pulp from neck to waist. His body had sunk forward, and he was moaning faintly, his senses mercifully dulled by pain.

Colonel Bishop set a foot upon the cross-bar, and bent over him.

"That will learn you a proper submission," said he. "And there you stay without meat or drink—without meat or drink, d'ye hear me?—until you are ready to confess the business on which Nuttall sought you." He took his foot from the bar, and stood up. "When you've had enough of this, send me word—and we'll have the branding-irons to you."

On that he laughed, swung on his heel and strode out of the stockade, his negroes following, and Pitt was left alone.

PRESENTLY, from the partial stupor which pain had mercifully induced, a new variety of pain aroused him. The stocks stood in the open, under the full glare of the tropical sun, and its blistering rays scorched the lad's mangled, bleeding back like flames of fire. And soon to this was added a torment still more unspeakable.

Flies—the cruel flies of the Antilles, drawn by the scent of blood, descended in clouds upon him. The ingenious Colonel Bishop, who so well understood the art of loosening stubborn tongues, knew that not all his ingenious cruelty could devise a torture more intolerable than that which Nature would procure a man exposed to her in Pitt's condition.

The slave—who in far-off Somerset, a year ago, had been a man of some substance and position—writhed in the stocks, and writhing, screamed in agony.

Thus was he found by Mr. Peter Blood, who to the troubled vision of that anguished lad seemed to materialize suddenly before him out of nothing. Steadying himself a moment to look up, Pitt found a pair of light-blue eyes regarding him from under brows that were very black and very level.

The condition of Mr. Blood's shirt and breeches was such that they barely held together. He wore no stockings, and his feet were thrust into wooden shoes that he had been at pains to fashion for himself; also his hat was of plaited straw of the kind worn by negroes and slaves, but it was rakishly cocked; this and the ringlets of his thick black hair, his small turned-up mustachios and little pointed beard, suggested a gentleman fallen upon evil days, who sought to make the best possible show upon the slenderest resources.

With a large palmetto leaf Mr. Blood whisked away the flies that were devouring Jerry's back, then slung the leaf by a strip of fiber from his neck, to protect him from further attacks. Next, sitting down beside the sufferer, he drew his head on to his own shoulder, and bathed his face from a pannikin of cold water that he carried.

Jerry quivered and moaned on a long-drawn breath.

"Drink!" he gasped. "Give me drink, for the love of God!"

The pannikin was held to his lips. He drank greedily, nor ceased until he had drained it. Cooled and revived, he sat up.

"My back," he groaned.

"Och, be easy now," said Mr. Blood. "Sure your back's taking no harm at all since I've covered it up. I'm wanting to know what's happened to you. Glory be, now! D'ye think we can do without a navigator, that ye go and provoke the beast Bishop until he all but kills you?"

Jerry sat up and groaned again; but now his anguish was mental rather than physical.

"I don't think a navigator will be wanted this time, doctor," he said, and proceeded to explain. "Nuttall came to me an hour ago in the plantation. He is in trouble through this boat he's bought for us. The magistrates sent for him yesterday, to explain how he, a debtor, comes by money to purchase a boat, and what he wants with it. Nuttall's in despair."

"And is that all?"

Mr. Blood got up and shrugged. He was a gentleman of something more than middle height, sparely built, with a lean, good-humored, bony face burnt by exposure almost to the golden-brown of a half-caste Indian.

"Nuttall'll be forced to keep a close tongue for his own sake. There's mighty unpleasant penalties for helping slaves to escape, worse than being branded on the forehead. But—" He checked, suddenly grave. "Does the colonel know?"

"He more than suspects. It was to wring the facts from me that he did this. I'm to rot here unless I speak."

"Bad cess to the filthy slaver!" snapped Mr. Blood, and fell thoughtful. "It must be contrived nevertheless," he muttered. "We can't go without you, and you'll not be disappointing a score of us that depend upon your seamanship."

"But we're not going, Peter," the prisoner insisted.

"Ye're light-headed," said Mr. Blood. "Not going! And everything prepared, and the weapons snugly stowed away in the wharf, the navigating implements, the provisions, and every other blessed thing required?"

"But don't you understand that we've no boat? The magistrates have ordered it to be confiscated unless Nuttall can satisfactorily account for his possession of it."

Mr. Blood stood quite still, stricken dumb for a moment by the cruel realization that he had toiled and schemed through long months, with the patience of a spider, only to be balked on the very eve of action, when all was ready and success seemed fully assured. The worst difficulty had been to obtain money for the boat. He had contrived to communicate with friends in England, and these friends had loyally assisted him. They had sent out merchandise from home consigned to a friend that Mr. Blood had made in Bridgetown, and this friend had sold the merchandise and held the proceeds at Mr. Blood's disposal.

He turned away, and with agony and despair in his eyes looked out to sea, over the blue water by which he had hoped so fondly soon to be traveling out of this hell of slavery into freedom.

SLOWLY and majestically the great red ship was now entering the bay, and already one or two pinnaces were putting off from the wharf to board her. From where he stood Mr. Blood could see the glint of the brass cannons mounted on the prow above her beak-head. And then another object interposed itself in his line of vision, and a furious voice assailed him.

"What the —— are you doing here?"

The returning Colonel Bishop strode through the opening in the stockade, his negroes following.

"The duties of my office," answered Mr. Blood, bland as a Chinaman.

Before he had turned soldier of fortune and again after some six or seven years of that roving life, Mr. Peter Blood had been a surgeon. Indeed, it was this that had undone him. Established at Bridgewater when Monmouth's army marched thither, he had been requisitioned to attend a wounded gentleman of the duke's immediate following.

Purely from motives of humanity he had gone, and purely from motives of humanity —having no interest in or sympathy with the cause—he had remained to minister to other wounded. With them he had been taken prisoner after Sedgmoor. He had explained himself, but none had listened to him.

"And what for should I be out with the Protestant Champion, seeing that I'm a Papist bred?" he had asked Jeffreys, when he came to stand his trial for high treason.

But he had been browbeaten, silenced—no easy matter this—and finally sentenced to death. That sentence had finally been commuted to transportation. Slaves were

urgently required in the plantations, and rebel convicts were cheaper than negroes.

Mr. Blood swore that he had performed his last service in the cause of humanity; nor could he have been induced to practise medicine in Barbados had he not discovered that by doing so he could mitigate a lot that must otherwise have proved unendurable. His services were lent from time to time by his master, Colonel Bishop, to other colonials; and it was thus that he had come to make that friend at Bridgtown who had served him in the matter of the sale of the merchandise from home.

The colonel, striding furiously forward, observed two things. The empty pannikin on the seat beside the prisoner and the palmetto leaf protecting his back. The veins of his forehead stood out like cords.

"Have you done this?"

"Of course I have." Mr. Blood seemed surprized.

"I said that he was to have neither meat nor drink until he—until I ordered it."

"Sure, now, I never heard you!" said Mr. Blood.

"You never heard me!" He looked as if he were about to strike the man. "How should you have heard me when you weren't there?"

"Then how did ye expect me to know what orders ye'd given? All I knew was that one of your slaves was being murdered by the heat of the sun and the flies. And says I to myself, this is one of the colonel's slaves, and I am the colonel's doctor, and sure it's my duty to be looking after the colonel's property. So I just gave the fellow a spoonful of water and covered his back from the sun. And wasn't I right now?"

"Right!" The colonel was speechless.

"Be easy now, be easy!" Mr. Blood implored him. "It's an apoplexy ye'll be contracting if ye give way to heat like this. D'ye know, colonel darling, ye'll be the better for a blood-lettin', so ye would."

The planter thrust him aside with an imprecation, stepped up to the prisoner, and ripped the palmetto leaf from his back.

"In the name of humanity, now—" Mr. Blood was beginning.

"Out of this!" roared the colonel. "And don't you come near him again until I send for you unless you want to be served in the same way."

He was terrific in his menace, in his bulk and in the power of him. But Mr. Blood never flinched. Aforetime the colonel had found him a difficult man to cow. He remembered it now, as he found himself steadily regarded by those light-blue eyes that looked so arrestingly odd in that tawny face—like pale sapphires set in copper. And he swore to himself that he would mend the fellow's impudence. Meanwhile, Mr. Blood was speaking, his tone quietly insistent.

"In the name of humanity," he repeated, "ye'll allow me to do what I can to help his sufferings, or I swear to you that I'll forsake at once the duties of doctor, and —— another sufferer will I 'tend in this unhealthy island at all. And I'll be reminding you that your own lady is mortal sick this minute with the fever."

"By ——, you dog! D'ye dare to take that tone? D'ye dare make terms with me?"

"I do that." The unflinching glance squarely met the planter's eyes, that were blood-injected, and yellowish in the whites.

Colonel Bishop considered him for a long moment in silence.

"I've been too soft with you," he said at last. "But that's to be mended." And he tightened his lips. "I'll have the rods to you until there's not an inch of skin to your dirty back."

"Will ye so? And what would your lady do then?"

"Ye're not the only doctor on the island."

Mr. Blood actually laughed.

"And will ye tell that to Governor Creed that's got the gout in his foot so that he can't stand? Ye know very well it's —— another doctor but myself will the governor tolerate at all, being an intelligent man and knowing what's good for him."

But the colonel's brute passion, thoroughly aroused, was not to be balked so easily.

"If ye're alive when my blacks have done with you, perhaps you'll come to your senses." He swung to his negroes. "Make him fast, and let him have a hundred lashes so that——"

The rest of his command was never uttered. At that moment a terrific rolling thunder-clap drowned his voice and shook the very air. Colonel Bishop jumped, the negroes jumped with him, and so did Mr. Blood. Then the four of them stared together seaward.

Down in the bay all that could be seen of the great ship, standing now within a cable's length of the fort, were her topmasts emerging from a cloud of smoke in which she was enveloped. From the cliffs about the bay a flight of startled sea-birds had risen to circle in the blue, giving tongue to their alarm, the plaintive curlew noisiest of all.

STARING from the eminence on which they stood, not yet understanding what had taken place, they saw the British flag dip from the masthead and vanish in the rising cloud below. A moment more, and up through that cloud to replace the English ensign soared the gold and crimson banner of Castile. And then they understood.

"Pirates!" cried the colonel, and again, "Pirates!"

Fear and incredulity were blended in his rasping voice. He had paled under his tan until his face was the color of clay, and there was a wildness in his glance. His negroes looked at him, grinned idiotically, all teeth and eyeballs.

The stately ship that had been allowed to sail so leisurely into the bay under her false colors was a Spanish privateer coming to pay off some of the heavy scores piled up by such Brethren of the Main as Morgan and his successors. And no suspicion had she aroused until she saluted the slumbering fort at short range with a broadside of twenty guns.

Even as they watched, they beheld her creep forward from under the rising cloud of smoke, her mainsail now unfurled to increase her steering way, and go about close-hauled so as to bring her larboard guns to bear upon that unready fort.

With the crashing roar of the second broadside, Colonel Bishop awoke from stupefaction to a recollection of where his duty lay. In the town below drums were beating frenziedly, and a trumpet was bleating, as if the peril needed further advertising.

As commander of the Barbados Militia, Colonel Bishop's place was at the head of his scanty troops in that fort that was being pounded into rubble by the Spanish guns. Remembering it, he went off abruptly at a run despite the heat, his negroes trotting after him.

"Now that," said Mr. Blood, "is what I call a timely interruption. Though what'll come of it," he added, as an afterthought, "the —— himself knows."

He picked up the palmetto leaf, and carefully replaced it on the back of his patient and fellow slave. As yet a third broadside thundered forth, there came, panting and sweating into the stockade Kent the overseer, followed by best part of a score of plantation workers, some of whom were black and all of whom were in a state of panic. Ahead of them Kent dashed into the low white house to bring them forth again almost immediately, armed now with muskets and hangers, and equipped with bandoleers.

A little knot of rebels convict that had followed hung timidly about the place, questioning Mr. Blood.

As the hastily armed force hurried away, Kent paused a moment to fling a word of counsel to the white slaves.

"To the woods!" he roared. "Take to the woods, and lie there quiet until we've gutted those Spanish swine."

On that he flung away after his men, whom he was going to add to the forces massing in the town to oppose and overwhelm the Spanish landing-parties.

The slaves would instantly have followed his advice, had not Mr. Blood detained them.

"Sure now, and where's the need for haste—and in this heat?" he asked. "Maybe there'll be no need to take to the woods at all, and anyway it'll be time enough for that when the Spaniards are masters of the town."

And so, joined now by other stragglers and numbering in all some thirty men—rebels convict all, and most of them associates of Blood and Pitt in their now shipwrecked project of escape from the island—they stayed to watch the fortunes of the furious battle that was being waged below.

The landing was contested by the militia and by every islander capable of bearing arms, with the fierce resolution of men who knew that no quarter was to be expected in defeat. But they had been taken by surprize, and their fort put out of action, while the guns of the frigate effectively covered the landing-parties that made the shore in their own boats and in several of those that had rashly gone out to the Spaniard before her identity was revealed.

By sunset two hundred and fifty Spaniards were masters of the town, the

islanders were disarmed, and at Government House Governor Creed, supported by Colonel Bishop and some lesser officers, were being urbanely informed by Don Diego Valdez of the sum required in ransom. For a hundred thousand pieces of eight and fifty head of cattle, Don Diego would forbear from reducing the place to ashes.

And what time their suave commander was settling these details with the apoplectic British governor, the Spaniards were smashing and pillaging with every form of violence, feasting and making merry after the hideous manner of their kind.

When the tropical night descended there were not above ten men on guard aboard the *Cinco Llagas*—as their ship was named—so confident were the Spaniards of the complete subjection of the islanders. And while their fellows feasted ashore, the gunner and his crew, who had so nobly done their duty and insured the easy victory of that day, were feasting on the gun-deck upon the wine and fresh meat fetched out to them from shore by Don Diego's son and lieutenant, who had remained to join them.

Above, two sentinels kept watch at stem and stern; and an indifferent watch it must have been, for they saw nothing of the two pinnaces that under cover of the darkness came gliding from the shore with well-greased rowlocks to bring up under the frigate's quarter. From the stern gallery still hung the ladder by which Don Diego had descended to the boat that had taken him ashore. The sentry in the stern, coming presently round the gallery in his pacing, beheld the black figure of a man standing before him at the ladder's head.

"Who's there?" he asked, but without alarm.

"It is I," softly answered Mr. Peter Blood in Spanish.

A considerable sojourn in the Spanish Netherlands had made him fluent in the language.

The Spaniard came a step nearer. "Is it you, Pedro?"

"Peter is my name, but I doubt I'm not the Peter you're expecting."

"How?" quoth the sentry.

"This way," said Mr. Blood.

The wooden railing was a low one, and the Spaniard unsuspecting. Save for the splash he made as he struck the water below, narrowly missing one of the crowded boats, not a sound announced his misadventure. Armed as he was with corselet, cuissarts and headpiece, he sank to trouble them no more.

"Whist!" hissed Mr. Blood to his waiting companions. "Come on now, and without noise."

Within five minutes the rebels convict were aboard, all thirty of them, overflowing from that narrow gallery about the sides of the round house, and crouching on the quarter-deck itself. Lights showed ahead. Under a lantern in the prow they saw the black figure of the other sentry, pacing on the forecastle.

Crouching low, they glided noiselessly as shadows to the companion and slipped without sound down into the waist. A score of them were armed with muskets taken from the overseer's house and others from the secret hoard that Mr. Blood had so laboriously assembled against the day of their escape. The remainder had equipped themselves, some with cutlasses and some with pole-axes.

In the vessel's waist they hung a while, alert, until Mr. Blood had satisfied himself that no watcher showed above decks save that inconvenient fellow in the prow. Their first attention must be for him, and it was Blood himself who crept forward with two companions, leaving the others in charge of a resolute fellow named Ogle. When they returned there was no watch above the Spaniard's decks.

MEANWHILE the revelers below continued to make merry at their ease in the conviction of complete security. Even when their quarters were invaded and themselves surrounded by some thirty wild, hairy, half-naked men who, save that they appeared once to have been white, must have looked like savages, the pirates could not believe their eyes. Who could have dreamed that a handful of forgotten plantation-slaves should take so much upon themselves?

The half-drunken Spaniards, their laughter suddenly silenced, the song perishing on their lips, stared stricken and bewildered at the leveled muskets. And then from out of that pack of uncouth savages stepped a slim, tall fellow with light-blue eyes in his tawny face, eyes in which there was a light of wicked humor. He addressed them in excellent Spanish.

"You will save yourselves pain and

trouble by considering yourselves my prisoners, and suffering yourselves to be quietly bestowed under hatches, out of harm's way."

"*Por Dios la Virgen!*" swore young Esteban Valdez, which did no justice at all to an amazement utterly beyond expression.

After that the rebels convict refreshed themselves with the good things in the consumption of which the Spaniards had been interrupted. To taste palatable Christian food after months of salt fish and corn dumplings was in itself a feast to those unfortunates. It required all the firmness of which Mr. Blood was capable to prevent excesses. Dispositions were to be made against what must yet follow before they could abandon themselves to the full enjoyment of the fruits of victory, and those dispositions occupied some considerable portion of the night.

Soon after the sun had peeped over the shoulder of Mount Hillbay, one of Mr. Blood's sentries, who paced the quarter-deck in Spanish corselet and headpiece, a Spanish musket on his shoulder, announced the approach of a boat. It was Don Diego Valdez coming aboard with four great treasure-chests containing the ransom delivered to him at dawn by Governor Creed. Six men at the oars accompanied him.

Aboard the frigate all was quiet and orderly. She rode at anchor, her larboard to the shore, and the main ladder on her starboard side. Round to this came the boat with Don Diego and his treasure. Mr. Blood had disposed swiftly and effectively. The slings were ready, and the capstan manned.

Don Diego, stepping on to the deck alone and entirely unsuspecting, was promptly and quietly put to sleep by a tap over the head from a marlinspike efficiently handled by a one-eyed giant named Wolverstone. He was carried away to his cabin, whilst the treasure-chests, handled by the men he had left in the boat, were swiftly hauled aboard. Then the fellows who had manned the boat came up the ladder one by one, to be handled with the same quiet efficiency. Mr. Blood had a genius for these things and almost an eye for the dramatic. For dramatic now was the spectacle presented to the survivors of the raid ashore.

With Colonel Bishop at their head and gout-ridden Governor Creed sitting on the ruins of a wall beside him, they glumly watched the departure of the eight boats bearing the Spanish ruffians who had glutted themselves with rapine and murder and violences unspeakable. They were between relief at this departure of their remorseless enemies and despair at the wild ravages which, temporarily at least, had wrecked the prosperity and happiness of that little colony.

THE boats pulled out, with their loads of laughing, jeering, taunting pirates, and they had come midway between the wharf and the frigate when suddenly the air was shaken by the boom of a gun. A round shot struck the water within a fathom of the foremost boat and hurled a shower of spray over its occupants.

They paused on their oars, turning in angry dismay, volubly to anathematize this dangerous carelessness on the part of their gunner, until to silence them came a second shot better aimed that crumpled the boat into splinters and flung them, dead and living, into the water.

But if it silenced them, it gave sudden vehement, angry and bewildered tongues to the occupants of the other seven boats. From each the suspended oars stood out parallel with the water, while on their feet in their excitement the Spaniards screamed oaths to the frigate, asking themselves and it what madman had been let loose amid her guns.

Plump into the middle of them came another shot, smashing a second boat with fearful execution. Followed a moment of awful silence, then among the pirates all was gibbering and jabbering and splashing of oars as they attempted to pull in every direction at once. Some were for going ashore, others for heading straight to the frigate and there discovering what might be amiss. That something was gravely amiss there could be no further doubt, particularly as while they discussed and fumed and cursed two more shots came over the water to account for yet a third of their boats.

After that their opinions were no longer divided. They went about—or attempted to do so, for before they had accomplished it, two more of them had been sunk. The three boats that remained afloat, without concerning themselves with their more unfortunate fellows struggling in the water, headed back for the wharf at speed.

If the Spaniards understood nothing, the forlorn islanders on the shore understood still less, until at last to help their wits the flag of Spain came down from the masthead of the frigate, and the English ensign soared to its empty place. Even then bewilderment persisted, and they observed with fearful eyes the return of their enemies who might vent upon them the ferocity aroused by these extraordinary events.

The resolute Ogle, however, continued to give proof that his knowledge of gunnery was not of yesterday. After the fleeing Spaniards went his shots, and the last of their boats flew into splinters as it touched the wharf. That was the end of that pirate crew, which not ten minutes ago had been laughingly counting up the pieces of eight that would accrue to each of them from their easy victory.

The few stragglers that swam ashore had afterward reason to regret it.

The mystery of the succor that had come to the islanders at the eleventh hour to turn the tables on the Spaniards and preserve for the island the extortionate ransom that had been wrung from it, remained yet to be probed. That the frigate was now in friendly British hands could no longer be doubted. And the only possible inference ran the truth very closely. A party of islanders must have got on board her during the night. It remained to ascertain the precise identity of these mysterious saviors and to do them fitting honor. Upon this errand—Governor Creed's condition not permitting him to go in person—went Colonel Bishop as the governor's deputy, attended by two officers.

Stepping from the ladder into the frigate's waist, the colonel's eyes sparkled when they alighted upon the four treasure-chests, the contents of one of which had been entirely contributed by himself. Ranged on either side of them stood a dozen men, in two martial files, with breasts and backs of steel, polished Spanish morions on their heads, overshadowing their faces, and muskets ordered at their sides.

The planter could not be expected to recognize at a glance in these upright, furbished, soldierly figures, the ragged, unkempt scarecrows that but yesterday had been his slaves. Still less could he be expected to recognize at once the courtly gentleman who advanced to meet him—a lean, graceful gentleman dressed in the Spanish fashion, all in black with silver lace, a gold-hilted sword dangling beside him from a gold-embroidered baldrick, a broad castor with a sweeping plume set above his carefully curled ringlets of deepest black.

"Be welcome aboard the *Cinco Llagas*, colonel darling," the planter heard himself greeted in a voice vaguely familiar. "We've made the best of the Spaniards' wardrobe to do fitting honor to this visit. Though I confess it's the governor himself we were expecting."

"Peter Blood!" ejaculated Colonel Bishop. And then understanding and exultation followed swiftly upon his amazement. "Gadsmylife!" he roared. "My slaves! And it was with these you took the Spaniards and turned the tables on them. Ods-wounds, it's heroic!"

"Heroic, is it? Bedad, it's epic," said Mr. Blood, and added fervently, "Blessed be my genius!"

The colonel sat down on one of the chests, took off his broad hat and mopped his brow.

"Y'amaze me," he said. "On my soul, y'amaze me! I couldn't have believed it. I'll take oath I couldn't. To have recovered the treasure, and to have captured for us this fine ship, with all she'll hold! It will be something to set against the losses we have suffered. Gadsmylife, Blood, you deserve well for this; you all deserve well for it, and —— me, you shall find me grateful. His Excellency shall write home an account of your exploit, and maybe some part of your sentence on the island will be remitted you."

"I'm thinking so myself," said Mr. Blood, in a tone that made the colonel look up. Among the rebels convict some one made so bold as to laugh. "And meanwhile there's a matter of flogging that's due to me. Ye're a man of your word in such matters, colonel, and ye said, I think, that ye'll not leave a square inch of skin to my back——"

The planter rose abruptly, to interrupt. Almost, it seemed, the suggestion offended him.

"Tush, tush! After this splendid deed of yours, do you suppose I can be thinking of such things? There's no longer any question of that for you, my friend."

"Yet I'm thinking it's mighty lucky for me the Spaniards didn't come today instead of yesterday, or it's in the same case as poor Jerry Pitt I'd be this minute. And if I'd been like that, where was the genius

that would have turned the tables on these thieving Spaniards?"

"Why speak of it?"

"Because ye've worked a deal of mischief and cruelty in your time, and I want this to be a lesson to you, a lesson that ye'll remember. There's Jerry Pitt lying up there in the cabin with the fever and a back that's every color of the rainbow. And if it hadn't been for the Spaniards maybe it's dead he'd be by now. That's bad enough. But when I think that ye meant to do the like by me, I'm wondering if I'll let you go ashore at all."

"What the —— do you mean?"

Alarm leaped at last within the colonel's soul, and though his tone was blustering his face was white.

"Anyway, I think I'll just keep you aboard as a hostage for the good behavior of Governor Creed, and what's left of the fort, until we weigh anchor and put to sea."

"Until you——"

Horror prevented Colonel Bishop from echoing the whole of that incredible speech.

"Just so," said Mr. Blood, and he turned to the officers who had accompanied the colonel. "The boat's waiting, sirs. You'll have heard what I said. Convey it with my compliments to his Excellency."

"But, sir——"

"If you please, gentlemen, my name is Blood, elected captain of this ship, the *Cinco Llagas*, taken as a prize of war from Don Diego Valdez, who is my prisoner aboard. We've turned the tables on more than the Spaniards. So now you'll understand. There's the ladder. You'll find it more convenient than being heaved over the side, which is what will happen if you linger."

They went, though not without some hustling, despite the bellowing of Colonel Bishop, whose monstrous rage was fanned by terror at finding himself at the mercy of those men whom he had so foully abused.

THERE were among them some six or seven who possessed a fair knowledge of seamanship being men of Devon. These, with others to assist them as directed, went about the handling of the ship. The anchor weighed and the mainsail unfurled, they stood out for the open before a fair breeze without any interference from the fort.

As they approached the headland, east of the bay, Mr. Blood returned to the planter, who, under guard and panic-stricken, was seated dejectedly on one of the treasure-chests he had fondly dreamed of taking ashore with him.

"Can ye swim, colonel?"

Colonel Bishop looked up, at once fierce and sullen, making no answer.

"As your doctor now, I prescribe a swim to cool the excessive heat of your humors," Mr. Blood pleasantly explained himself; and as the colonel still made no answer, he continued: "It's a mercy for you I'm not by nature bloodthirsty. And it's the devil's own labor I've had to prevail upon these lads not to hang you from the yard-arm. I doubt if ye're worth the pains I've taken, but ye shall have a chance to swim for it. It's not above a quarter of a mile to the headland there, and with luck ye'll manage it. Come on! Now don't be hesitating, or it's the —— knows what may happen to you."

Colonel Bishop rose and shrugged. A merciless despot who had never known the need for restraint in all these years, he was doomed by ironic fate to practise restraint in the very moment when his feelings had reached their most violent intensity.

Mr. Blood gave an order. A plank was run out over the gunwale and lashed down.

"If you please," said Mr. Blood, with a graceful flourish of invitation.

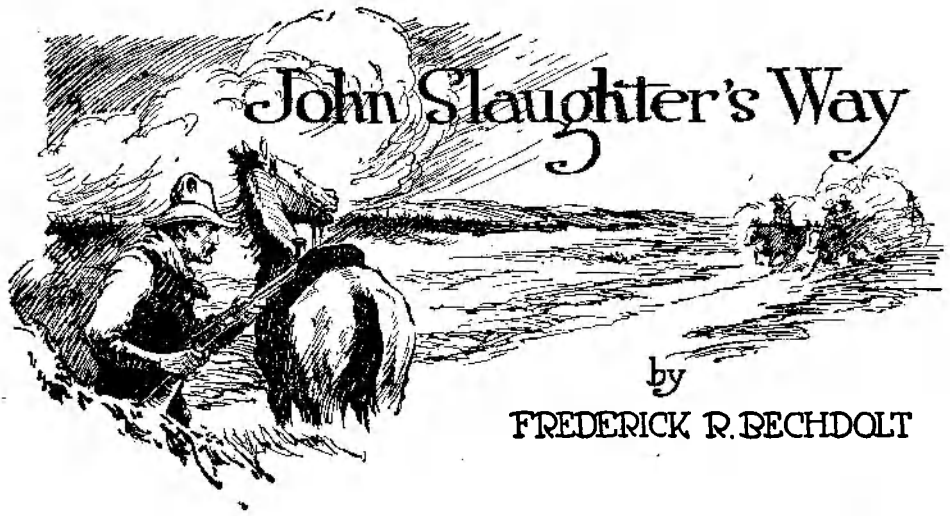
The planter looked at him with burning fury in his glance. Then he kicked off his shoes, tore off his coat, and sprang upon the plank. A moment he paused, looking down in terror at the green water rushing past some twenty-five feet below.

"Just take a little walk, colonel darling," said a smooth, mocking voice behind him.

Clinging to a ratline, Colonel Bishop looked round in hesitation, and saw the bulwarks lined with faces—the faces of men that but yesterday would have turned pale under his glance, faces that were now all wickedly agrin.

He uttered an oath, and stepped out upon the plank. Three steps he took, then missed his balance, and went tumbling down into the green depths below.

When he rose again, gasping for air, the frigate was already some furlongs to leeward. But the roaring cheer of mocking valediction from the rebels convict still reached him to drive the iron deeper into his soul.



John Slaughter's Way

by

FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT

NOTE—As you know, we seldom break our habit of printing fiction stories only. You prefer fiction on the whole, and in our magazine's field it is particularly difficult to insure an article's being absolutely true to fact. Occasionally we have ventured an exception, without at all abandoning the rule. We do so in the case of this series of articles on prominent figures in the development of the West, believing that the author's standing is sufficient guarantee of trueness to essential fact and that your long displayed interest in our country's early history is sufficient warrant.—A. S. H.

IT WAS Springtime in southwestern Texas and John Slaughter was gathering a great herd near the mouth of Devil's River for the long drive northward over the Pecos trail. Thousands of cattle were moving slowly in a great mass, obliterating miles of the landscape, trampling out clouds of dust which rose into the blue sky; the constant bellowing came down the wind as a deep, pulsating moan which was audible for miles.

The Man from Bitter Creek reined in his horse and turned in the saddle to look back upon that scene. He was a small man with hard, quick eyes; they grew harder as they rested on that wealth of beeves.

In the wild country farther up the Pecos the Man from Bitter Creek was known by the name of Gallagher. Among the riders who roved over that land beyond the law, taking their toll from the north-going herds as gray wolves take it under cover of the night, he passed as the big he-wolf, the leader of the pack. Wyoming's sage-brush hills gave sepulture to eleven of his dead and since he had fled hither he had added two graves to the Boothill cemeteries of the Southwest.

Now, as he gazed over John Slaughter's cattle, he promised himself that when they came on into the region where he maintained his supremacy, he would seize them and, at the same time, increase his grim list of victims to fourteen.

It was an era in some respects very much like the feudal days of Europe, a time of champions and challenges and deeds of arms, a period when strong men took definite stands for right or wrong and were ready at all times to defend those positions with their lives. The Man from Bitter Creek had received John Slaughter's gage within the hour. He had dismounted from his pony at the cattle-buyer's camp, attracted by the spectacle of that enormous herd destined to pass through the country where he and his companions held sway, and he had hung about the place to see what he could see.

He noted with satisfaction that the cattle were sleek and fat for this time of the year; and the satisfaction grew as he peered through the dust-clouds at the riders who were handling them, for every one of the wiry ponies that passed him carried a swarthy *vaquero*—and half a dozen of those

Mexicans would not be a match for one of the hard-eyed rustlers who were waiting along the upper Pecos in that Spring of 1876. Just as he was congratulating himself on such easy pickings the cattle-buyer noticed him.

John Slaughter was in his early thirties but his lips had settled into an unrelaxing line, and his eyes had grown narrow from the habit of the long sun-smitten trails. He was black-bearded, barely of middle stature, a parsimonious man when it came to using words. When he was a boy fighting under the banner of the Lost Cause, he sickened and his colonel sent him home where he did his recuperating as a lieutenant of the Texas Rangers fighting Comanche Indians and border outlaws.

Then he drove cattle into Kansas over the Chisholm and Western trails and got further seasoning in warfare against marauders, both red and white. To maintain his rights and hold his property against armed assault had become part of his every-day life; guardedness was a habit like those narrowed eyes. And when he recognized the Man from Bitter Creek, whose reputation he well knew, he lost no time in confronting him.

So they faced each other, two veteran paladins who had been riding under hostile banners ever since they first bore arms; and John Slaughter delivered his ultimatum in three syllables.

"Hit the trail," he said, and clamped his lips into a tight line as if he begrudged wasting so many words.

His eyes had become two dark slits.

IT WAS a case of leave or fight and the Man from Bitter Creek had never allowed such a challenge to go unanswered by his gun. But, during the moment while he and John Slaughter stood looking into each other's eyes, he reflected swiftly and it occurred to him that it would be wise to postpone this killing until the cattle-buyer had brought the herd on into the upper country where, without their employer, the Mexican *vaqueros* would be of no more consequence than so many sheep.

That was an inspiration: thousands of cattle for his own, where he had hoped to steal a few hundred at the very outside. He felt that he could well afford to mount his pony and ride away in silence. Now, as he settled himself in his saddle after that last look backward, his heart was light with the thought of the wealth which was to come to him within the next two months. He urged the pony forward at a gallop toward the Land beyond the Law.

The days went by, the Springtime passed and Summer found the Man from Bitter Creek in the upper river country which lies just west of the great Llano Estacado. Among those lonely hills the badness of the whole frontier had crystallized that year. Outlaw and murderer, renegade, rustler and common horse-thief—all for whom the eastern trails had been growing too hot—had ridden into this haven beyond the range of the boldest sheriff until even the vigilance committee could not function here for the simple reason that there were too many to adorn the ropes and too few to pull them.

The ranchers of Lincoln County were starting in business and the temptation to increase one's herds by means of rope and running iron—a temptation which was always strong on the frontier—was augmented among them by a wholesome regard for their own lives and property—better to give shelter to outlaws and buy stolen cows for a dollar or two a head than to defend your own stock against an overwhelming force of dead shots.

That was the way they reasoned; and the rustlers had easy pickings, stampeding range cattle across the bedding-grounds of the trail herds, gathering unto themselves the strays, disposing of their loot right on the spot. They were taking full advantage of the opportunity and the Man from Bitter Creek was getting his share of the spoils.

But all of this struck Gallagher as petty business now; he was waiting impatiently for John Slaughter's herd. At Chiscum's ranch, where he and a number of his companions had enforced their presence as unbidden guests since the passing of the Spring he proclaimed his plan openly after the manner of his breed; and he even went so far as to exhibit a forged power of attorney by virtue of which he intended selling the beeves in the Northern market, after he had killed their owner and driven off the Mexicans.

"I'll lay for him up Cedar Canon way," he told his fellow wolves, nor did he take the trouble to lower his voice because he saw several cowboys from neighboring outfits among his auditors. It was a tradition among those who lived by the forty-five,

thus to brag and then—make good. And it was a firmly established habit in Lincoln County to mind your own business; so the project, while it became generally known, created no furor.

THE Man from Bitter Creek went up the river to Cedar Canon when John Slaughter's herd drew near the Chiscum ranch. He made his camp and bided the arrival of the cattle; but that arrival did not materialize. He was beginning to wonder what could have delayed them, for the fords were good and this particular section was one where no drover cared to linger. And while he was wondering a rider came to him with tidings that brought oaths of astonishment to his lips. John Slaughter had taken his herd off the trail and made camp at the Chiscum ranch.

Now every one in the country knew that the Man from Bitter Creek was holding down the Chiscum ranch that season, and the action was nothing more nor less than a direct challenge. It did not matter whether sublime ignorance or sublime daring prompted it, it was defiance in either case. There was only one thing for Gallagher to do—get the killing over in quick time. Moreover he must attend to the affair by himself—for just as surely as he took others to help, his prestige was going to be lowered. So he saddled up at once and rode back to Chiscum's with a double-barreled shotgun across his lap and two single-action .45 revolvers at his hips.

He was an old hand at ambush and so he took no chances when he drew near the ranch but reconnoitered a bit from a convenient eminence. The house stood on the summit of a knoll; the land sloped away before it to the river, bare of shrubs or trees. Those of the Mexicans who were not riding herd were down among the cottonwoods by the stream, busy over some washing. In the middle of the open slope, two hundred yards or so from the ranch buildings and a good quarter of a mile from the nearest *vaqueros*, a solitary figure showed. It was the cattleman. No chance for ambush here. The Man from Bitter Creek spurred his pony to a dead run and came on blithely to shoot his way to wealth.

John Slaughter watched him approaching and waited until he was within easy range. Whereat he picked up a .44 caliber rifle and shot his horse from under him.

Pony and rider crashed down together in a thick cloud of dust. The Man from Bitter Creek sprang to his feet and the flame of his revolver made a bright orange streak in this gray-white haze. He left his shotgun where it had fallen; the distance was too great for it. As a matter of fact it was overlong range for a Colt .45; and now, as he came on seeking to close in, it occurred to Gallagher that his prospective victim had used excellent judgment in selecting a weapon with reference to this battle-ground. Evidently he was engaged with one who knew things about the game himself.

He took good care to keep weaving about from side to side during his advance, in order that the bead of that Winchester might find no resting-place with his body outlined before it. And he kept his revolvers busy throwing lead. One bullet was all it needed to do the work and he was trying hard to put one into the proper place, using all the skill he had attained in long practise under fire, when a shot from John Slaughter's rifle broke his arm.

The Texan was firing slowly, lining his sights carefully every time before he pressed the trigger. The Man from Bitter Creek was darting to and fro; his revolver-bullets were raising little clouds of dust about the cattleman. He was nearing the area wherein the .45 revolver was more deadly than the clumsier rifle, when John Slaughter shot him through the body.

But he was made of tough fiber and the extreme shock that would leave some men stunned and prostrate only made him stagger a little. His revolver was spitting an intermittent stream of fire and it continued this after a second slug through his lungs had forced him to his knees. He sank down fighting and got his third fatal wound before the cowboys carried him up to the ranch-house to die. There, after the manner of many another wicked son of the border, he talked the matter over dispassionately with his slayer and in the final moment when death was creeping over him he alluded lightly to his own misdeeds.

"Anyhow I needed killing twenty years ago," he said.

No one mourned the passing of The Man from Bitter Creek; the members of the pack who hunt the closest to the big he-wolf are always the gladdest to see him fall. Nor was there any sorrowing when John Slaughter departed for the north. On the

contrary both outlaws and cowmen watched the dust of his herds melting into the sky with a feeling of relief.

The former continued as the weeks went by to speak his name with the hard-eyed respect due one whose death would bring great glory on his slayer; the latter cherished his memory more gratefully because hundreds of cattle bearing his road brand were grazing on their ranges. All hands were more than willing to regard the incident as closed—all save John Slaughter.

THAT was not his way. And in the season of the Fall round-up when the ranchmen of Lincoln County were driving their cattle down out of the breaks into the valley, when their herds were making great crawling patches of brown against the gray of the surrounding landscape, the black-bearded Texan came riding back out of the north. He visited every outfit and greeted the owner or the foreman with the same words in every case.

"I've come to cut your herd for my brand."

That was the law of the cattle trails; every man had the right to seek out his strays in the country through which he had passed. But it was not the custom along the Pecos. In that Land beyond the Law the rule of might transcended any rule of action printed in the statute-books. And the new possessors did not fancy giving up the beeves which had been fattening on their ranges during all these weeks. In those lonely hills John Slaughter made a lonely figure, standing on his rights.

But those who gathered around him when he made the declaration always noted that he had his right hand resting on his pistol-butt and the memory of what had taken place at Chiscum's ranch was still fresh in every mind. So they allowed his *vaqueros* to ride into their herds and, in silence, they watched them drive out the animals which bore his brand. Sometimes the affair came to an issue at this point.

Chiscum, who was an old-timer in the country and had fought Comanches all along the river before others had dared to drive up the trail, produced a bill of sale for sixty rebranded cattle which the Texan's *vaqueros* had cut out. John Slaughter allowed his tight lips to relax in a grim smile.

"You bought 'em all right—but 'too cheap," he said and ordered his foreman to take them away.

Chiscum stormed a bit, but that was as far as it went. And John Slaughter rode off behind his *vaqueros* without so much as looking back.

At Underwood's there was trouble. The cattle-buyer had recovered one hundred and ten steers from a bunch of one hundred and sixty, and when Underwood heard about it that evening he stated, in plain and profane terms, that he would kill John Slaughter unless those beeves were turned back to him. He had a pretty good reputation as a dead shot and he took two friends, who were known as good gunmen, along with him. They set forth for the Texan's camp. All three were armed with rifles besides their six-shooters.

But John Slaughter saw them coming, for he was keeping his eyes open for visitors these days, and dismounted on the opposite side of his pony. He received them with his Winchester leveled across his saddle and he answered their hail without lifting his eyes from the sights.

"Where's Underwood?" he demanded.

The cowman announced his identity; it took more than the muzzle of a rifle to silence him.

"I bought those cattle and I paid for them," he shouted.

"And I'll pay you," Slaughter proclaimed across his sights, "just as sure as you try to take them away."

This was about all there was to the debate. The Texan was never strong when it came to conversation and the other party seemed to realize that further words would merely amount to so much small talk under he circumstances. It was a showdown—shoot or ride away. And the muzzle of that rifle had an unpleasant way of following any one of the trio who made a move in the saddle. They were men of parts, seasoned fighters in a fighting-land, but they were men of sense. They rode away.

Some miles farther down the river John Slaughter was biding the arrival of two half-breeds and a pair of rustlers who had announced their intention to get him, when a *vaquero* whom he had summoned to help him receive the guests showed symptoms of reluctance. While the *vaquero* was talking the invaders came into view, riding fast.

"Fight or hit the road," John Slaughter bade his swarthy aide.

The latter announced his choice in Spanish; and the cattle-buyer paid him off with one hand while he pulled his rifle from its sheath with the other. The discharged *vaquero* did not wait to gather his scanty personal possessions and started down the road as fast as his legs could take him, but before he was out of sight his former employer had fortified himself behind his pony and brought the rustlers to a stand.

A cattleman by the name of Richardson tried swearing out a warrant as a means of recovering the beeves which John Slaughter cut out of his herds, but the deputy returned with the paper unserved.

"He told me to keep it in my pocket," the officer explained. "Said I couldn't serve it."

Richardson met the cattle-buyer riding to his ranch the next day, having heard in the mean time some stories of what had taken place farther up the river.

"I've made up my mind to withdraw that complaint," the ranchman said. "I saw a chance to buy cheap cattle and I guess I got off wrong."

So John Slaughter rode on southward, taking with him such of his cattle as he could find, and men who boasted that they would kill him before nightfall came back to their companions in the evening, glad that they were there to tell the tales of their defeats. Finally he vanished down in Texas with his *vaqueros* and the salvaged herd.

When he had come up the river that Spring one man was seeking his life; now he left behind him a full score who were as eager to slay him as the Man from Bitter Creek had been. But the outlaws of Lincoln County did not see him again for three years.

That next Spring he began breaking trail to a new market through a country where others did not dare to drive their herds. The market was southeastern Arizona, on whose ranges the grass grew belly-deep; its stockmen, who were beginning operations in 1877, were in sore need of cattle. But the interval between the Rio Grande and these virgin pastures was a savage land; Victorio's bands of turbaned Apache warriors lurked among its shadowed purple mountains; there were long stretches of blistering desert dotted with the skeletons of men and animals who had died of thirst.

John Slaughter brought his first herd west of the Pecos with the coming of the grass and his cowboys lined them out on this forbidding route. They crossed wide reaches of sand-dunes and alkali flats—ninety miles was the length of one of those dry drives—where they never saw a water-hole for days, until the cattle went blind from thirst and sun-glare and wandered aimlessly over the baked earth lolling their tongues, moaning for drink, ignoring the red-eyed riders who spurred their gaunted ponies through the stifling dust-clouds and sought by shouts and flaming pistols to hold them to the proper course.

The Apaches watched them coming from the heights and crept down to ambush them, but John Slaughter had learned Indian-fighting while he was still in his teens until he knew its tricks as well as the savages themselves; and he led his cowboys out against them, picking his own ground, swooping down on them from vantage-points, routing them.

The herd came on into the long, thin valleys which reach like fingers from northern Mexico to the Gila River. On the San Pedro the cowboys turned them southward and the outfit made its last camp near where the town of Hereford stands today.

HERE the Texan established his home ranch, for he had made up his mind to forsake the valley of the Rio Grande for this new country; and hither now, over the trail which he had broken, his men drove other herds; he sold them to the cowmen of southeastern Arizona as fast as they came in. From now on he devoted himself to stocking the ranges of the Santa Cruz, the San Pedro, the Sulphur Springs and the San Simon, turning a tawny wilderness into a pastoral commonwealth.

For he brought more than Texas cattle into this land which had heretofore been the hunting-ground of Apaches, the wild refuge of white renegades more savage than the Indians. Where he came he took with him the law. It was his way—the way he had taken on the Pecos and he kept it now—to stand for his own rights, to fight for them if needs be, until he established them; thus he maintained a rule of action, a rule that accorded with the definition of the old English jurist, "prescribing what is right and prohibiting what is wrong."

He rode during those days on far journeys, eastward to the Rio Grande, northward to the country where the land breaks toward the gorges of the Colorado; and,

because a cattle-buyer was always a marked man, carrying large sums of money with him, there were many who sought his life. But all of these he either slew or drove away.

There came a time when the demand for stock was so heavy that he looked about him for a new point of supply and saw Mexico. Troops of bandits rode through the southern republic, gathering tribute where they willed. He loaded down pack-mules with 'dobe dollars, led his cowboys down across the boundary, played hide and seek with bands of swarthy murderers in the mountains and battled with them at the desert water-holes.

His fame spread until forty-five guerrillas came riding up from Sinaloa to gain wealth and glory by murdering his little company. They found John Slaughter and two cowboys encamped in a hamlet down beyond Montezuma with the nucleus of a herd which they were gathering; a sharp-eyed scout reported two pack-mules, their *aparejos* bulging with 'dobe dollars, in the train. Immediately thereafter the Mexicans whom the drover had employed as *vaqueros* and guides, deserted him; the people of the hamlet closed their houses against the trio of gringos.

The bandits watched their prospective victims going from door to door, seeking four walls to shelter them against attack, and laughed. That was fine sport to their way of thinking; they held off, just as a cat holds off from a cornered mouse; there was plenty of time for the killing, no use of hurrying.

The shadows lengthened between the little adobe buildings; dusk came on. They had a final round of drinks in a mescal groggery, swung into their saddles and went jingling down the street to enjoy the massacre.

Bad news travels fast. The tidings sped northward like a stray horse running home. One day a rider came to the ranch on the San Pedro with the story: how John Slaughter was last seen alive in the dismal hamlet at the foot of the Sierra Madre, abandoned by his Mexicans, with two cowboys as his only companions, and half a hundred well-armed bandits on their way to murder him.

A grim tale for the ears of a woman who was sitting at home waiting for some word from Mexico.

A WOMAN heard it out, John Slaughter's young bride. He had brought her to the ranch-house a few months before and in these first days of her happiness, a happiness made the more poignant by those deep anxieties which the brave-souled women of the frontier had to bear, she listened to the announcement which abiding dread had foreshadowed during many a lonely night. When the rider had departed she ordered a team harnessed to the buckboard and set forth for Mexico within the hour.

It was growing late when she passed the custom-house; they had no confirmation of the rumor for her there, nor contradiction either; the best they could do was to try to hearten her and advise her to wait. But she shook her head to the advice and drove on southward in the darkness. She was alone. Blackness hid the land before her; save for the drumming of the hoofs and the scrape of the wheels in the rough roadway there was no sound. The wilderness remained silent, invisible, offering no sign of what tragedy it held for her.

The night passed; gray dawn came; the sky flamed above the ragged crests of the Sierra Madre; the sun climbed past the mountain wall; morning grew on toward noon. Far to the south—so tenuous at first that it barely showed against the clear air, now thickening until it was unmistakable at last—a gray-brown dust-column was climbing into the cloudless sky. It came on toward her as she urged the jaded team on toward it, the signal of an advancing herd.

She strained her eyes and saw the thin, undulating line beneath it; the sun gleamed on the tossing horns of the cattle; their lowing sounded faint with distance, growing into a deep pulsating moan. She distinguished the dots of horsemen in the van; and now one came on swiftly before the moving mass. She recognized her husband from afar.

John Slaughter had seized his opportunity while the bandits in the mescal shop were drinking to their own good luck and his death. He and John Roberts, his foreman, had taken the treasure-laden mules up a steep-walled canon five miles away. When the murderers followed the hot trail they found themselves, with the coming of darkness, in the narrowest part of the defile, so neatly ambushed that they wheeled their horses and rode down the

gorge in full flight before the fight had fairly begun.

John Slaughter's wife was a brave woman. She rode beside him now on many an expedition; into the sand-hills of southwestern New Mexico, and down across the border into northern Sonora. She saw the smoking remnants of wagon-trains beside the road, the bodies of Apaches' victims sprawled among the ruin. She looked upon the unutterably lonely crosses which marked the graves of travelers where Victorio's turbaned warriors had traveled before her into Mexico. She slept beside her husband where the desert night wind whispered of lurking enemies; and watched enshadowed soap weeds beyond the ring of firelight taking on the semblance of creeping savages.

He beheld her drinking deeply from the cup of dread which was the bitter portion of the strong-hearted women of the frontier. And when he journeyed away without her he had for company the constant knowledge of what other men had found on return to their ravaged homes—what might be awaiting him when he came back. And so he enlarged the scope of his warfare, which heretofore had been confined to the defensive; he began a grim campaign to keep the Apaches out of his portion of the San Pedro valley for all time.

He led his own war-parties out to hunt down every roving band who passed through the country. He used their own science of reading trails to track them to their camping-places, and their own wiles to steal upon them while they rested. He improved on their methods by making his raids during the darkness when their superstitions made them afraid to go abroad.

ONE midnight he was deploying a company of Mexicans about the mesquite thicket which sheltered a band of Victorio's warriors. As he was about to give the whispered order to close in, the unknown dangers which awaited them within the blackness became too much for his followers. They balked, then began to fall back. He drew his .45.

"First man that shows another sign of hanging back, I'll kill him," he said in Spanish, and drove them before him to the charge.

Gradually the Apaches began changing their war-paths into Mexico, and as they swung away from his ranges John Slaughter increased the radius of his raids until he and his cowboys rode clear over the summits of the passes in the Sierra Madre which lead eastward into Chihuahua.

With nine seasoned fighters at his heels he attacked a war-party in the heights of the range on the dawn of a Summer morning; and when the Indians fled before the rifle fire of the attackers—scurrying up into the naked granite pinnacles like frightened quail—they left a baby behind them. The mother had dropped it or missed it in her panic, and the little thing lay whimpering in the bear grass.

John Slaughter heard it and stopped shooting long enough to pick it up. With the bullets of her people buzzing around his ears, he carried the brown atom down the mountainside and took her home on his saddle to his wife.

That was one of his last expeditions, for his name had become a byword among the tribes, and Geronimo himself gave instructions to his people to leave John Slaughter's herds inviolate, to avoid his range in traveling. With this degree of peace ensured, the cowman had bought an old Spanish grant not far from where the town of Douglas stands today and was settling down in the security for which he had been fighting, when the Tombstone rush brought the bad-men from all over the West into the San Pedro and Sulphur Springs valleys; and with them came the outlaws of the Pecos who had been waiting to kill him during these three years.

In the wild cowtown of Charleston where the lights turned pale under the hot flush of every dawn the desperadoes from the Pecos learned how John Slaughter had established himself before them in this new land; how his cowboys patrolled the range which he still held on the San Pedro and the new range farther to the east, guarding his herds by force of arms; and how the silent Texan had already declared war on the whole incoming tribe of cattle-thieves by driving Ike and Billy Clanton from his old ranch at revolver's point, bidding them never to show their faces there again.

They heard these things in the long adobe dance-halls while rouge-bedizened women went whirling by in the arms of bold-eyed partners wearing revolvers on their hips. From stage-robber, stock-rustler, horse-thief and the cold-faced two-gun man who sold his deadly talents to the

highest bidder, the stories came to them. And then, to the beat of the piano and the cornet's throbbing blare, the bad-men of the Pecos told of the passing of the Man from Bitter Creek, and how his slayer came back down the river recovering his stolen cattle in the Fall.

NOW another champion had arisen among the bad-men of the Pecos since the day of Gallagher, a burly, headstrong expert with the .45 known by the name of "Curly Bill." Already he had shot his way to supremacy over the other he-wolves who had flocked into the new country; he had slain Tombstone's city marshal and defied the Earps when they came into power in the booming mining-camp.

When it came to a question of single combat he was acknowledged champion among those who lived by what toll they could exact at the muzzles of their deadly weapons; when it came to warfare he was the logical leader. And so, when John Slaughter's name was spoken in Charleston's dance-halls the eyes of his followers were turned on him. He saw those glances and he read the unspoken question which they conveyed; he met it with a laugh.

"I'll go and get that fellow," he proclaimed. "I'll kill him and I'll fetch his herd in to Charleston myself."

He started forth to make good his boast, and twenty-five hard-eyed followers went riding at his heels. It was a wild project even in that wild era and Curly Bill deemed it wise to do his massacring down in Mexico, where it was every man for himself and coroner's juries were not known. He took his company across the boundary and lay in wait for John Slaughter on a mesa overlooking a little valley, down which the herd must pass.

Mesquite thickets gave the outlaws good cover; the slopes below them were bare of brush; the valley's floor was open ground. They bided here and watched the country to the south. The dust-column showed one cloudless morning and they saw the undulating line of cattle reveal itself beneath the gray-brown haze. The herd came on down the valley, with dust-stained riders speeding back and forth along its flanks, turning back rebellious steers, urging the main body forward. Curly Bill spoke the word of command and the twenty-five bad-men rode forth from their hiding-place.

The sun gleamed on their rifle-barrels as they spurred their ponies down the open slope. They rode deep in their saddles for the ground was broken with many little gullies and the horses were going at a headlong pace. They drew away from the shelter of the mesquite and descended toward the valley bed. Some one heard a rifle-bullet whining over his head. The man glanced around as the sharp report followed the leaden slug; and now every face was turned to the rear. Twelve cowboys were following John Slaughter, keeping their ponies to a dead run along the heights which Curly Bill and his band had so blithely forsaken.

It was a custom as old as Indian fighting, this bringing-on of the main force over the high ground whence they could guard against surprize and hold the advantage over luring enemies. By its result the ambuscaders were ambushed, riding headlong into a trap.

It was a simple situation, apparent to the dullest mind. Who lingered on the low ground would never steal cattle again. The outlaws wheeled their ponies to a man; and now as they raced back up the hill they saw the cowboys coming onward at a pace which threatened to cut them off from the shelter of the mesquite. Then panic seized them and it held them until the last cow-thief had spurred his sweating horse into the thickets. By the time Curly Bill had regathered his scattered forces the herd was nearly out of sight.

He did not seek renewal of the attack. He let it go at that. And when he came to Charleston he announced that so far as he was concerned the incident was closed; he was going to do his cattle-rustling henceforth over San Simon way where cowmen did not maintain rear guards and scout out the country ahead of them for enemies. He changed his base of operations to Galeyville within the month and came to Charleston for pleasure only.

The story spread and every bad-man who deemed himself worse than Curly Bill saw his opportunity to demonstrate his qualifications as a killer by succeeding where the leader had failed. Doc Holliday tried it one night on the Charleston road. Next to Wyatt Earp he ranked as the highest in the faction that was ruling Tombstone. Unquestionably he was an artist with deadly weapons, and the trail of his wanderings through the West was marked by wooden

headboards. On the evening in question—it was the evening after the bloody and unsuccessful attempt to rob the Benson stage and several men were riding hard toward home and help and alibis—he was spurring his sweating horse to Tombstone when he got sight of John Slaughter's double rig ahead of him.

The cattle-buyer had drawn ten thousand dollars from the bank that afternoon and was taking the specie home with him; the fact was known in Charleston where Doc Holliday had stopped within the last half-hour. The vehicle was rounding a long turn; the horseman cut across-country through the mesquite; he reached the farther end of the curve just in time to draw alongside the team.

John Slaughter's wife was beside him on the driver's seat. She saw the rider bursting out of the gloom and then her eyes fell on the .45 which he was in the very act of "throwing down."

"That man has a gun in his hand," she cried.

Without turning his head her husband answered—

"So have I."

She glanced down at his cocked revolver; its muzzle was moving, to follow the enshadowed figure in the saddle less than ten feet away. She raised her eyes; the horseman had lowered his weapon and was wheeling his pony off into the night.

"Knew his bronco as soon as I saw that blazed face show," John Slaughter said in explanation of his quick draw.

That same vigilance, which had become second nature with him, combined with an almost uncanny swiftness in putting two and two together, which latter had come to him during the years when guarding his life was a part of his trade, kept the cowman a step ahead of his enemies on every occasion. These things were instinctive from long habit; he prepared himself to meet a situation just as an expert gunman draws his .45—just as a scientific boxer blocks a blow—without wasting an instant in thinking.

IT WAS thus with him when Ed Lyle and Cap Stilwell waylaid him on the road to the Empire ranch over near Fort Huachuca. These two, who had endured humiliation under the muzzle of the Texan's pistol on the Pecos trail, brought four others along with them and planned to do the murder in the night. Three took their stations on one side of the wagon-track and three on the other, all well-armed. They had spotted the victim's buckboard several miles back.

Now when it came on to the spot which they had selected, the two trios galloped up to do the killing—and found John Slaughter leveling a double-barreled shotgun while his wife held the reins. One glimpse of that weapon at the cattle-buyer's shoulder was enough; they did not wait for him to pull the trigger but fled.

John Slaughter was wearying of this sort of thing. Lyle and Stilwell were men of parts—good men of whom to make examples. He sought the former out in Charleston. They met in front of a saloon on the main street. John Slaughter drew and, as he threw down—

"I've got no gun," Lyle cried.

"If you were armed," the cowman said, "I'd kill you now. But if I ever see you in this country again, I'll kill you anyhow."

Lyle left and Cap Stilwell, receiving his sentence of banishment in the same manner, departed within the week. From that time the bad-men let John Slaughter alone; he was too big for them. He took his family to his new San Bernardino ranch and it was beginning to seem as if the days of constant warfare were over; he was settling down to enjoy peace in his home, when a call for help made him forsake the security which had been so hard to earn.

That security was unknown elsewhere in Cochise County. The strong men who had seized the reins in Tombstone, wielding their power for their own selfish ends, were gone; they had ridden away with warrants out against them. The outlaw leaders were dead; Jack Ringold, Curly Bill, the Clantons and others who had swaggered where they willed, had met violent ends.

With their passing the courts were trying to administer the statutes, but the courts were impotent. The statutes were mere printed words. For the rank and file of the bad-men were raiding and murdering under the guidance of new leaders who furnished them with food and ammunition, notified them of the movements of the officers, procured perjured witnesses to take the stand in their behalf and bribed jurymen.

Money and influence were taking the place of deadly weapons to uphold a

dynasty whose members reigned unseen and under cover, whose henchmen looted express cars, stole cattle and murdered men on the highways; until things had come to such a pass that President Arthur had issued a proclamation threatening martial law in southeastern Arizona.

And now the people of Tombstone, grown sick with blood and much violence, called to John Slaughter to take the office of sheriff and bring the law to them. It meant the abandonment of his herds just as he was getting them nicely started, the putting aside of plans which he had cherished through the years. But he answered the call and forsook the San Bernardino ranch for the dingy little room beside the courthouse entrance. Before he had gotten fairly acquainted with the new quarters war was on.

Cochise County was being used as a haven by bandits throughout the Southwest. Four train-robbers fled hither from Mexico where they had looted an express car and killed the messenger, soon after John Slaughter's term began. He took his chief deputy, Bert Alvord, and two others and followed their trail high into the Whetstone Mountains. In the nighttime the posse crawled through the brush and rocks to the place where they had located the camp of the fugitives.

A man must leave many things to chance when it comes to choosing his position in the dark and it so happened that when dawn came the sheriff and his deputy found themselves right under the nook where the bandits were ensconced; the other members of their party had become separated from them.

They had the enemy nicely cornered, with a cliff to cut off escape to the rear, but they were themselves in the open—two men against four and the four entrenched behind outcroppings of the rock.

A small space of time was jammed with many large incidents immediately after this discovery. Men attaining supreme exaltation died in the instant of that attainment; pulses that leaped with the joy that comes when sight lines with bead, bead with living target and the trigger finger begins to move, ceased their beating more abruptly than a machine stops when the power is turned off.

The leaden slugs snarled as thick as angry wasps when the nest has been disturbed; the crackling of the rifles was as a long roll; little geysers of dust spouted among the rocks; the smoke of black powder arose in a thin blue haze.

A bullet clipped away a little portion from John Slaughter's ear. He called to Alvord—

"Bert; you're shooting too high; pull down; I see you raising dust behind 'em every time."

Alvord, fighting his first battle, clenched his teeth and lowered his front sight. John Slaughter had prefaced his advice by killing one of the bandits; he supplemented it by putting a bullet through a head that bobbed above the rocks. And when the other two members of the posse came to take part in the fight, there was only one train robber living. They found him breathing his last where he had crept away among the cliffs.

But killing desperadoes would not eradicate the reign of lawlessness, unless a man slew the entire pack; and John Slaughter had no intentions of instituting a St. Bartholomew's Eve in Cochise County. Thus far he had managed to get along with less bloodshed than many a man who had not accomplished nearly so much as he. So now he went on with his task as he had gone about his business always and proceeded to smoke out the men who were responsible for this state of affairs.

It was not so hard to learn their identity as it was to get the proof of what they were doing. That was slow work. But he had hired Bert Alvord as his deputy with just this end in view. For Alvord was hail fellow well-met in every barroom of the county, owner of a multitude of friends, many of whom were shady characters. In later years he gained his own dark fame as an outlaw, but that was long after John Slaughter left the office of sheriff.

At present Alvord was working honestly and hard, getting such information as he could concerning who was who among the desperadoes, gathering data as to their movements. The facts began to accumulate: a word dropped in a gambling-hall, a name spoken before a noisy bar, a whispered confidence from a prisoner who felt his companions had not done all they might in his behalf.

Gradually the evidence took the shape of a long finger pointing toward Juan Soto, who was living in the little town of Contention, as the leader who was handling

matters in the San Pedro valley. About this time John Slaughter began riding out of Tombstone under cover of the night. The days went by; the sheriff came back to Tombstone morning after morning, red-eyed with weariness, put up his pony and went about his business saying nothing as usual.

ONE day news came to the county seat that two cattle-buyers had been robbed and murdered down near the Mexican line. John Slaughter saddled up and rode over to Charleston that morning, and when Juan Soto came into town he met the sheriff, who addressed him over the barrel of a leveled .45.

"I'll just take you along with me today," John Slaughter said.

It was a good tight case. Tombstone was startled by the news that Juan Soto had been a member of a bandit band in California. The sheriff was able to give some first-hand testimony concerning the defendant's nocturnal habits. But the community's excitement slumped to sullen anger when the jury brought in its verdict and Juan Soto smiled as he departed from the court-house, a free man.

Things had reached a pass where a vigilance committee looked to be the appropriate climax. But that was not John Slaughter's way; if any one were going to take the power of the high justice he proposed to be the man. He rode over to Contention and camped in front of Juan Soto's house late in the evening. The night passed and when the bandit leader came riding home from Charleston with the dawn, he saw the sheriff standing before his door.

Both men reached for their revolvers at the same moment but John Slaughter's hand was quicker. It was his chance to kill; according to the ethics of the gun-play he had that right. But he chose a different course.

"Leave the country," he said. "If you're here after ten days, I'll kill you on sight."

Soon after Juan Soto departed on his exile, the town of Wilcox over in Sulphur Springs valley was treated to a sensation in the banishment of Van Wyck Coster. Every one thought Coster had enough money and influence to keep him immune from legal proceedings, but John Slaughter wasted none of the county's money in arrest or trial.

"I've known what you were doing for a long time now," he told the other, holding his revolver leveled on his auditor while he spoke. There was some debate, but the sheriff clinched his argument by going into details, and when he had finished outlining the prosecution's case he delivered his ultimatum, "Get out or I'll kill you."

COSTER joined Juan Soto in exile. And then it became a simple matter of hunting down outlaws, bringing them in for trial. The arm of the law was limbered and justice functioned in the Tombstone court-house as well as it does in any city of the land—far better than is the case in some more pretentious communities. There was of course plenty of work left. Tombstone is full of stories of John Slaughter's exploits.

A desperado, seeking to kill him, threw down on him as he was entering a saloon. Caught unawares for once, the sheriff flung up his hand and as he grasped the pistol, thrust his thumb under the descending hammer. Meantime he drew his own weapon and placed the man under arrest. Two train-robbers sought to lure him to Wilcox by a decoy letter stating that his nephew had been killed. The instinct which had saved him from other ambuscades made him investigate; and when he learned that his nephew was living he summoned a friend, who made the journey with him. The spectacle of these two old-timers emerging from opposite doors of the day coach, each with a double-barreled shotgun under his arm, drove the conspirators from the depot platform. Years afterward one of them confessed the details of the plot.

John Slaughter served two terms as sheriff and when he retired from office Cochise County was as peaceable as any county in the whole Southwest. The old-timers who witnessed the passing of events during his regime invariably speak of him when they are telling of great gunmen. Yet, from the time when he started up the Pecos with that herd in the Spring of 1876 until the day when he went to his San Bernardino ranch to take up life as a peaceful cattleman, he slew fewer men than some whose names are absolutely unknown. What he did he managed to accomplish in most instances without pulling a trigger. That was his way.

The Foot of a Baboon

by

EDWARD M. THIERRY

KHAZA the Mashona involuntarily thrust the thing he had found into the bosom of his shirt. The impulse sprang from a subconscious feeling that some one was near him in the dark. He felt an incomprehensible depression in the midst of his sudden exultation. It hit him like a cold douche the instant before he saw the other man's shadow, thrown by his own miners' lamp, grotesquely large and misshapen against the wall of the low cavern.

Therefore he was not surprized when he turned swiftly from his work of raking down the clods of blue clay and recognized Mobengula the Matabele. The latter's tall muscular figure seemed inordinately large though he stood at the foot of the sloping mound of clay raked down out of the room-size hole Khaza had dug off the tunnel where lay the tracks for the electric trains of dump-cars; they were on the sixth level of the Dutoitspan mine, five hundred feet underground.

Mobengula was naked save for a tattered pair of trousers and his perspiring black body shone like polished ebony. His large mouth was open in a grin and his eyes sparkled, though not with laughter.

"Ah, Khaza, our luck has turned!" said Mobengula in the language they both knew. "So you found one, too."

His tone carried no interrogation and he smiled craftily at the look of surprize on Khaza's face.

"I saw you find it," he went on. "You put it in your shirt."

Khaza froze up. He smelled trouble. He was an inch shorter than the other, but a trifle heavier, built in better proportion and with a skin that seemed more of a dark brown than a black. Where Mobengula's face was heavy of feature, with a distinct touch of cruelty in the set of the wide mouth —an obvious inheritance from the race of fighters to which he belonged—Khaza's had a pleasanter cut.

The Mashona's lips were not so thick nor his mouth so wide and his nostrils not so broad and flat; he had a firm chin, though his eyes were mild, in keeping with the peaceful traits of his pastorally inclined kinsmen.

Khaza did not like Mobengula and showed it. Primarily, perhaps, he disliked him because he was a Matabele. For the Matabeles, descendants of the outcast branch of the once mighty Zulus, were invaders of the Mashonas' country and had persecuted the latter for eight decades. Hatred and distrust, however, were more personal. For Mobengula, though scarcely even an acquaintance of Khaza's, was regarded by the latter as a personal enemy.

"Water is never tired of running," Khaza sneered when he finally broke the silence.

The axiomatic insult was not lost on Mobengula. It angered him to be told by this Mashona that he talked too much. But he stifled a hot retort and spoke calmly.

"Let us not quarrel like women, Khaza," he said. "I came to tell you I had found one, too. Are your ears so——"

"What? A white stone! You, Mobengula—you found a white stone, too?"

Khaza stopped abruptly. He realized

that in his excitement he had admitted his great good fortune. Mobengula laughed.

"Yes, I found one—just now. I am glad you have said you found one because it is as I said. It was no use pretending you had not, since I saw you. Here, I will let you see mine. And then you shall show me yours. And after that I will tell you what is running like the fire of the *veldt* in my brain—how Khaza and Mobengula can get away to our own *kraal* with all the yellow gold these white stones will bring! Think of that, Khaza! Why should we share with the white men of Kimberley when we can take it all and buy so many cattle they can not be counted from dawn till darkness? See, Khaza!"

Mobengula paused and looked swiftly up and down the black tunnel for a speck of light heralding somebody's approach. He stepped up a pace with one bare foot on the damp mound of clay, leaned forward and opened his hand under the other's eyes. In his palm lay a diamond as large as a man's thumbnail. It was approximately square though irregular in contour, concave on one side and pointed a bit at the end. In spite of the dirt clinging to it the stone sparkled and shone in the flickering light from the miners' cap-lamps.

In an instant, while Khaza was still sucking in his breath at the sight, Mobengula snapped shut his fist and with a lightning movement hid the rough uncut gem in his trousers pocket. Again he looked warily into the dark tunnel. For the fear of the white man burned strongly within him and he knew his dream of wealth would vanish with the discovery of a diamond withheld for a mere moment from the white foreman. He looked at Khaza expectantly. And the latter, now convinced nothing could be gained by refusing to show his find, put a hand inside his shirt and drew it forth.

Just a fleeting glimpse Mobengula got of a bright shining thing in Khaza's palm. This diamond was larger, quite as big as a walnut, round and smooth on one side and rough and irregular on the other. Even an inexpert eye would judge its worth to be twice that of Mobengula's find.

Mobengula's eyes sparkled avidly. His sole thought was what these white stones meant in gold—gold meaning cattle, and cattle meaning wealth in the Kafir eye.

Both he and Khaza were too busy scheming, as they inspected each other's stones, to give a thought to the fact that the two of them, fortunate ones out of the thousands of Kafir laborers in the four great diamond mines of Kimberley, had just written a brilliant page in mine history. Two diamonds actually found in a single day! In the same mine! Two diamonds picked out of the blue clay in neighboring diggings out of the same tunnel—a few yards apart! It was unprecedented.

Ordinarily both were perfectly aware how rare it was for anybody to find a diamond in the unwashed blue ground. Even among the untutored Kafirs employed at Kimberley there was a vague notion of the truth of diamond mining as a South African industry—that only an infinitesimal percentage of the diamonds produced by Kimberley are picked up by accident; that all others are so small and so well hidden that it requires tedious months of disintegration of the blue clay on the outdoor drying-floors and painstaking washing of the ground through the great washing-machines and mechanical filtering and combing to sift out the diamonds finally on the grease-covered tables of the pulsators.

THEY knew how rare were the occasions when a Kafir found a diamond; how he rushed off to report it to the foreman, gaining the promised bonus of money and white men's clothing and instant freedom from his four months' contract in the compound. It was this very hope of finding a diamond, this one chance in a thousand—indeed, one chance in a million for so many tragically disappointed ones—that was the lodestone bringing unending streams of Kafirs from far and near to work in the Kimberley mines.

Stories of the occasional great luck of a native filtered to far lands and overcame a natural abhorrence for the kind of grueling intensive labor the peculiar money-mad white man had introduced into an otherwise easy-living, easy-working continent.

From Mashonaland in far-off Rhodesia had come Khaza and Mobengula to look for white stones. They were beckoned by this same glittering dream that called other black men of varying shades of skin and of numerous races and tribes, and of uncounted dialects and languages—Basutos, Zulus, Bechuanas, Shanganis, Swazies, Namaquas, Griquas, Pondos and the people of the Transkei. And even an occasional distant

Matabele, a Mashona or two and even a Barotse from the Zambesi.

Little they knew or cared about the exact ratios of reward a Kafir received for finding a diamond, that the bonus was five shillings a karat up to ten karats and a percentage of its total value. They knew if one found any sort of sizable stone it meant riches for the finder and a like reward for the white foreman through whom it was reported. The thing that mattered was gold in bulk and freedom.

Release was worth much, too. For it was prison life there in the compound, made so by the white man's fear that otherwise the mines would be looted by workers. So the black men were kept in an immense stockade, with bunk-houses along the walls, where they slept and ate and played between shifts in the mines, which they entered by a shaft within the compound walls.

It was a prison, except that the prisoners were paid for their work. It was a place from which escape was impossible, for the walls were high and outside was a succession of impenetrable barbed-wire entanglements, electrically wired for alarms. There was nothing to do inside but work and dream of a diamond and the cattle and wives it would buy; and nothing to do when the four months' contract was finished but trek back in disappointment and disillusionment to the home *kraal;* or perhaps, if optimism was not yet killed, to follow the example of many and sign on again and again for successive four-month stretches of labor in the hope of better luck.

Of course there was the rather high wage to be considered, three to five shillings a day plus food and quarters, or as much as seven shillings for the more skilful. And the white foremen were not unkind, for foremen had a motive in treating the Kafirs well. It paid, because a Kafir who found a diamond could rob a foreman of a share in the reward by simply ignoring him and reporting the find directly to the compound superintendent. The system was a check on the possible abuse of power by foremen.

And now the gods had smiled on two in a single day. Khaza and Mobengula were seized with different emotions. Khaza was not normally selfish, but he begrudged the other his luck because it swept away his momentary elation that his own find had permanently removed Mobengula from competition for Isala. And Isala was the dearest thing that riches could bring him.

Khaza, like others of more enlightened races, reflected bitterly on the preponderant influence riches had on affairs of the heart. Mobengula gloried in Khaza's good fortune as much as in his own, not because he did not begrudge it personally but because it presented to his nimble brain an opportunity to profit twofold—and incidentally to pay off a few old debts to Mashona.

Only the far-away, never ending rumble of the diamond-bearing blue ground pouring down the shafts from level to level had broken the silence of the dark tunnel. Then the rattle of an approaching train was heard and the two Kafirs swiftly fell to work, Mobengula with one of Khaza's picks, till the train thundered past. The train of one-ton cars was on its way to the shaft that poured the entire mine's raw material into the great hopper on the lowest level, whence it was carried away to the skips that shot it up by the ten-ton load to the tipple above-ground where trolley-operated dump-cars caught it automatically and conveyed it to the drying-fields.

The moment the train was gone Mobengula threw down his pick.

"Tell me, Khaza," wheedled the Matabele, seizing the other's arm; "you are not going to turn in your white stone?"

"No, I am not going to turn it in," said Khaza grimly.

Mobengula showed his elation. Why, he did not even have to argue with the Mashona dolt as he had expected! Things were certainly coming his way.

"You are clever and you see far," he said in praise. "I have told you my brain is on fire with a plan that will make us both rich in cattle and wives. Listen——"

Khaza interrupted quickly. He had winced at the reference to wives.

"Hear me first, Mobengula," he said. "You can not mean we shall try to take our white stones out of the compound? You know, Mobengula, no clever man ever licked his own back!"

There was a sneer in Khaza's voice. He spoke in the Kafir custom of dressing up maxims in the clothing of terms familiar to them. It was his most forceful way of saying a man of brains did not attempt the impossible. Mobengula glowered and was about to speak, but Khaza went on:

"I said I, Khaza, was not going to report the white stone. But hear this, Mobengula:

My thoughts are not always for my own belly. I am young and strong and others are not. There is one of our people who has dreamed of finding a diamond longer than Khaza. And I shall give mine to him and shall have joy in doing it, his joy and my joy. He will turn in Khaza's white stone."

Mobengula was shocked. Generosity of this kind was beyond his understanding. Self-sacrifice had no meaning to him.

"You fool!" he spat. "The curse of the king's witch-doctor on you! May the roof of your hut fall and bury you! Your heart leaks blood for nothing! Stew in your own pot if you like! But not I. Mobengula has finished four months in the mine. I am at the end of my path and it has not made me dizzy in the head. Throw your white stone away if you like, but I will leave the compound after two more dawns with my white stone safe from the white men's hands!"

Khaza was unmoved by the vehement excoriation, though he shivered a little at the curse called down upon him. He laughed at the other's boast and could not resist one direful warning that the Matabele was pursuing a dangerous course even to think of eluding the watchful white men.

"You are creeping on your knees to the fireplace," he warned.

Mobengula snapped his fingers scoffingly and backed down off the mound of blue clods into the darkness of the tunnel. In a moment Khaza could hear him at work in the neighboring jetty.

As he resumed his own labor, Khaza reflected on the words of Mobengula. He shook his head soberly, as if the Matabele's boast of the extraordinarily daring treachery he intended was no more than might be expected.

"It is just as Isala said," Khaza told himself. "It is the sign—the foot of a baboon!"

Which foot is known to every Kafir, by one of the proverbs they use to express their sententious wisdom, as the sign of a treacherous man.

II

AS HE worked, Khaza's thoughts were in the past. They traveled back to his father's *kraal* on the Rhodesian *veldt*. Yes, he reflected, Mobengula was correct when he said his contract in the Dutoitspan compound would be at an end in two days. For he remembered well the circumstances attending the departure from the *kraal* of Mobengula, first of the younger men of the north country to follow in the footsteps of the unfortunate Masilonyane, father of Isala.

It was years before that Masilonyane had heard the call of Kimberley. But none other had ventured so far until the new native commissioner, just transferred from Bechuanaland, brought the news to Mashonaland of the growing custom of the young men of the southland of flocking to the diamond mines to try to duplicate the wonder story of the Kafir who within four hours after being assigned to work on a blue-ground dump in the mine yard—not even underground—found a diamond of four hundred forty-four and a quarter karats! *

It had been a happy circumstance for Mobengula, reflected Khaza as he reviewed the events of those days, that the native commissioner's story of the great diamond find had been so opportune. It had given Mobengula an excuse to pose before the coy Isala as one who would do a spectacular thing.

Khaza frowned as he thought how Mobengula now had uncannily made good his brag to Isala. But as he let his mind dwell on Isala's words concerning it he had a serene glow. It was just three months since he had seen her, for he had come to Kimberley a month after Mobengula.

Freedom was just two days off for Mobengula. Freedom and riches, or—what? Khaza ground his teeth and hoped mightily it would not be the former. Especially since his own contract had a month yet to run—a month of grueling labor, during which he would be buoyed up only by anticipation of the indirect reward he reckoned would be his by reason of his self-sacrifice. He paused suddenly to reconsider that. Was he acting wisely? Would Masilonyane appreciate his generosity? Could the old man be trusted? Would Isala understand?

Ah, Isala! The memory of this fairest of the Mashonas banished, for the moment at least, the newborn fears and qualms. Khaza's mind turned again to a contemplation of his victory over Mobengula. His memory toyed with it, harking back and forth to words and scenes, like a sweet morsel of food rolled deliciously on the tongue to obtain the fullest satisfaction of eating.

* NOTE: This is a true incident on record at the Kimberley diamond mines; a native boy in September, 1917, four hours after he went to work at the Dutoitspan mine, found a diamond weighing 444¼ karats, the value of which was sixty thousand pounds sterling.

Even before Mobengula appeared in the Mashonaland village six months before, Khaza remembered his own heart was filled with unspoken worship for Isala. He was so wrapped up in it he was blind to rivals, quite oblivious of the wily Mobengula's courtship. He had paid close attention to his work with Isala, the girl of his choice, as the goal to be won by work.

Isala was a lithe maid, little and slim. To Khaza her rich brown skin was as the soft-shining velvet in the stately gown of the governor-general's wife, whom he had marveled at in the brief glimpse he had gained of the great white folk when the official train had stopped one day at Taumba to take on water.

Isala's eyes were the kind that snapped. She wore a short skirt of wonderful plaid material given her by the wife of the white missionary who used to be over at Taumba; she had cut its hem into a succession of points, a bit crooked and crude in workmanship yet an effect that was singularly distinctive, and the envy of most other girls of marriageable age in the *kraal*.

She had a trick of drawing a blanket about her body so that it slid down over her round shoulders and left half-exposed an extremely graceful back. And her black straight hair, crowned with a band of bright-red cloth, was long enough to hang down over her shoulders in narrow strands, cleverly plaited in the latest fashion with clay and oil; yet not so long as to hide the large flat bone earrings that were her pride.

Altogether Isala, in beauty, in figure and in dress, was an undoubted leader among the younger women of the village. She knew it and she reveled in her popularity. When Khaza, finally deciding he had worked himself to such station where he could honorably take the step, began his courtship, she had encouraged him. It was pleasant now for him to recall the little signs by which he knew he was welcome.

It has been a great day for Khaza when he had managed, by skilful trading of a part of his last mealie crop at the white man's store in Taumba, to obtain the wooden snuff-box that was to be the token of his marriage proposal. He remembered the half-hour of torture he had spent in his hut when, having sent his gift to Isala, he waited for the messenger to return and tell him whether she had accepted it. Acceptance of the gift would signify willingness to open marriage negotiations; refusal of the gift at the messenger's hands would be a sign of the suitor's rejection.

And then the messenger had returned empty-handed. Khaza giggled pleasurably now at the thought of his joy and how he immediately determined to press his suit, to this end gathering together a few of his men friends and leading them off to the gateway of Isala's *kraal*. There they had stood waiting, hands on one another's shoulders and eyes cast down humbly, until a headman of the tribe appeared and they could ask to be allowed to see Isala.

She, observing the coming of Khaza and his entourage, had hastily gathered a party of her maiden friends. And after all the correct formalities had been gone through, she received them in her hut and after a babel of conversation they had burst forth joyously into the adjoining *kraal* and danced in celebration. Till finally the others had tired and, having seen this ceremony through, had gone away.

They left Isala and Khaza in the gateway, while Isala's mother and her two uncles and their wives grinned and chattered over the mealie pot in the doorway of the hut and smaller members of the family, brothers and sisters and cousins, in the nudity of infancy or the semi-dress of youth, shrieked in play near by.

THERE had been welcome, love and acquiescence in Isala's manner, but also a coyness. She was not to be won in a single swoop. Apparently she had merely given Khaza an option on her hand; by reason of her acceptance of his gift she was willing to play the game with him, but he had by no means won the game yet. Khaza, standing there beside her, had checked the rapturous flight of his brain to consider this new angle of the courtship. He realized he now had the inside track with Isala, but the conquest was not over.

Of course, there was the customary alternative in such a case of maidenly coyness and hesitation, of going straight off to the girl's father and calmly settling with him as to the number of cattle he would sell his daughter for, a transaction which by custom the girl would have to bow to whether she liked it or not. But such a practise, while quite common among his people and known by the term Uketeleka, was distasteful

to Khaza; and moreover Isala's father had long been absent and there was no brother to deal with legally in his stead, only the elder of the two uncles.

"I can drive up my cattle now," Khaza had said, "but my cattle are not many and might not be pleasing to Isala's uncle—not enough in dowry for the daughter of Masilonyane."

Isala smiled teasingly.

"How can I tell, Khaza? It is for you to decide the worth of one you wish for a wife. Is that not so?"

"Yes, Isala," Khaza had replied. Then a sudden resolve had fired his brain. "And I see now that much more is needed," he said. "Too much could not be given for one so fair. I will go and get more—more than any girl of our *kraal* has ever brought her father in dowry!"

Isala's vanity was tickled. She gave a little cry of delight. Then her eyes had become roguish.

"Where will you go, boastful Khaza?" she demanded, giggling. "Where others who boast go to do great things? Eh, Khaza? Perhaps to the far-off land where the white men dig shining things out of the earth and pay our people in bags of gold for helping them find little white stones? There—where Isala's father has been two, three, four years? You would not go there, would you, Khaza? Would I send two men to that far-off land?"

"What do you mean—two men? You did not send your father?"

"No, my father does not obey his children. He went long ago because a white trader told him of riches. And no others have gone since, except only one man, because all our people who come from the south bring the word he passes out from the high-fenced *kraal* where he works, the word he gives to those who are content to go that he is tired and weary but can not give up till he finds a white stone—and he had found none, so he can not come home. We all feel sore in the heart for him and hope some day he finds what he seeks and comes back to those who love him and keep his hut clean and the pot boiling for him. No, it is not my father I sent there."

"Who then, Isala—who have you sent away to the Land of the White Stones?"

Isala smiled with deep satisfaction.

"Why, I sent Mobengula away! You know him—the Matabele. Have your eyes been shut, Khaza? A month ago he sent me a marriage gift——"

"What!"

"Yes. But it moved not a drop of blood in my heart. I sent his marriage gift back. I would not touch it."

Khaza sighed with relief. The specter of a rival faded.

"I sent it back," Isala went on, "because it was a loathsome thing. Like Mobengula himself. I shut the door of the hut so I would not see him. Then he sent me a message that he was going away to—to—how do you say the name?—Kimberley, that is the place—and he would make me eat bitter root when I saw him do something my father could not do. He would come back with a white stone and make me beg him on my knees to marry! My blood was on fire, Khaza. To think that a Matabele could do what Masilonyane, my father, could not! My father is head of a great Mashona family, Khaza!"

The girl had dropped the bantering tone she used at first and was tense with the anger of outraged pride. Among Kafirs one might insult a mother, but never a father; the more aged a man the more he is revered, the older the woman the less she is respected.

Isala's words had been an inspiration to Khaza. Self-abnegation was a virtue he would turn to good account.

"You speak what is true, Isala," Khaza had said loyally. "Masilonyane your father is great and will be rewarded, while Mobengula makes the mistake of beginning with the meal before the water is boiled. He is counting his white stones before they are found."

Khaza's subconsciousness had whispered ironically, "You too are gathering eggs before the chicken has settled on the nest."

But he resolutely put this thought from him and took Isala's hand.

"You sent Mobengula away," he said, "but Khaza will go away by his own sending. Yes, Isala, I shall go to the Land of the White Stones. I will leave my heart here and keep my eyes ever on the ground—looking for a white stone that will bring me riches enough to fill Masilonyane's *kraal* with cattle, so many that Isala shall have the biggest dowry of any girl in the village. Then will I return and be content. For you will keep your heart open to me and

your eyes and ears closed to others—will you, Isala?"

Isala's face had become radiant, mirroring the pleasure that tingled through her at this tribute. She had pressed his hand and before he left her in the gateway of the *kraal* she had whispered an assent—and a warning.

"Beware, my Khaza, of Mobengula the Matabele in the Land of the White Stones. His eye was open when he was here and he saw my heart was for you. I knew and he knew, though you had not spoken. I shook in the knees every time I saw him. He could not hide the sign of himself—in his eyes—in everything he did—in the gift he sent me! Khaza, remember Isala's warning—it was the foot of a baboon!"

III

COMING up out of the shaft from the mine into the night air of the compound, Khaza shivered. It may have been the cool wind striking his damp body. Or the thought of his secret—the diamond hidden away in his shirt. More likely, though, it was the memory of that day three months before in Mashonaland when Isala had whispered her warning.

For the excitement of the remarkable events of the day underground now bore home to Khaza the connection between those events and the significant thing Isala had said. Mobengula had proposed treachery; it was, indeed, the foot of a baboon!

In some perturbation Khaza crossed the big open space toward the bunk-house where he was billeted. He was glad it was dark so the guilty look in his eyes would not show. He had not seen Mobengula since their talk in the dark tunnel. He wondered where the Matabele was. The sharp cries of the native police, who acted as compound guards under white foreman, could be heard calling the tired miners to hurry to the concrete-covered shower baths in the center of the compound court.

Ordinarily Khaza was among the first at the baths. But tonight he was troubled. He was in a momentary panic over what disposition to make of his secret treasure while he ran to the shower bath. It was the custom for the miners to go to the baths naked and afterward, as they cooked and ate their mealie meal and lolled around at rest, to wear only a blanket, or on a hot night a mere loin-cloth, or perhaps not even that. It was only on Sundays, when white visitors sometimes came sightseeing, that word from the central permit office that women were in the parties brought the order from the compound superintendent that proper clothing must be worn.

Hurriedly Khaza made up his mind. Thrust down between the inside board of his bunk and the wall was a pair of shoes that he reserved for wear out in the towns when he was traveling and wished to be the dandy. Bending over the bunk with his back to the room, he made a lightning motion and deposited his precious white stone in one of the shoes. He heard the faint rattle as the diamond hit the leather and he trembled as he straightened up and glanced around warily. But nobody was paying any attention to him, seemingly, and with unusual speed he stripped off his clothing and ran toward the shower baths.

Standing in line waiting his turn, Khaza turned over in his mind the spasm of doubt that had assailed him down in the tunnel after telling Mobengula he planned unselfishly to give his diamond to another. Was this a wise course, he asked himself again? Khaza stopped to wonder if Mobengula had guessed that it was Masilonyane on whom he planned to shower his camouflaged generosity. And he wondered whether Mobengula had guessed his purpose.

"I will kill two bucks with one *assagai*," Khaza told himself. "Masilonyane will be happy and gay. He will see that he is in my debt. He will come to me and say: 'Khaza, my son, you have held a buffalo by the horn for me.' He will see with both eyes what great help I have given him and I will tell him of the agreement Isala and I have made. He will see that my white stone is a dowry no suitor ever has thought of giving, and so I shall have Isala for the price of the riches and the greatness among our people that a diamond brings. And Isala's father shall be ever in my debt."

Thus Khaza argued. Then he was assailed again by fears. Could he depend upon the honesty of Masilonyane? Would Isala's father remember a month hence, when Khaza got back to the *kraal* from Kimberley, what Khaza had done for him? Especially since the crafty Mobengula, enriched by his own diamond—if he succeeded in accomplishing the impossible—would be on the spot renewing his old courtship.

And there was Isala! In spite of her dislike for Mobengula, could she resist Mobengula's superior riches?

Just then Khaza's train of thought was broken by sight of Masilonyane himself. The old man was coming slowly away from the shower bath, from a line opposite that in which Khaza stood, still a score of men from the front. Masilonyane was heavy of frame in spite of his age, though he was bent in the shoulders; his knees gave a little as he walked and his skin was shrunken around the neck and eyes. The old man showed the effects of his long stay in the mines. A dozen times he had renewed his four-month contract, never once leaving the compound.*

Khaza had a sudden impulse, on catching sight of Isala's father, to go through with his original resolve. He would take a chance.

"Hi, Masilonyane," he called.

The old man stopped and stared stupidly toward the line Khaza was in.

"It is Khaza calling, Masilonyane. Wait for me. The pot will boil tonight for two. Make your ears ready to hear great things."

That hint of important disclosures was as far as Khaza felt he dared go within the hearing of the crowd.

Then a surprizing thing occurred. Masilonyane did not reply to the invitation. If the old man heard what was said he gave no sign. His wrinkled face, clearly visible in the glare of an electric light overhead, was immovable. The stupid stare was still in his eyes and for an instant he remained looking toward Khaza, though giving no intimation that he had seen him. Then Masilonyane turned and walked rapidly away from the baths.

Khaza was startled. What did this queer conduct mean?

This perplexing thought, coupled with fear for his diamond's safety, made Khaza fret and fume as he waited in line. At last it was his turn. Khaza sloshed swiftly through the shower and in a moment was out. With a momentary pause to shake off the water with a dog-like motion characteristically Kafir, the dripping Mashona streaked away toward his bunk-house.

The bunk was just as he had left it. His trousers and shirt, stained with the blue clay of the mines, lay where he had placed them, in affected carelessness, so they covered the spot where the shoes were thrust down between the bunkboard and the wall. With one motion he reached for his blanket—and for the shoe where his treasure was hidden.

Khaza's fingers clawed inside the shoe for the precious white stone. A spasm of pain shot through him. He was positive he had the proper shoe. Now, in cold fear, he dragged both shoes out on to the bunk. He plunged his hands into them, searching frantically. And he turned them upside down and shook them. His body and mind felt sick.

Then Khaza collapsed weakly on the bunk. His white stone was gone.

When the inert body of the naked Kafir stretched drunkenly on the bunk stirred again there was evidence all around that the hour had grown late. Khaza sat up wearily and stared sluggishly at the shoes lying where they had fallen on the blanket-covered bunk. He shivered with the cold, but he made no move to cover himself. The blood in his veins was like ice-water.

To Khaza the bottom had dropped out of his world. His nerves had been high-strung since the excitement of his marvelous find. His mind had been like a wire stretched taut. Everything was builded on that tiny white stone. So when the appalling discovery of its loss came his overwrought mind snapped and crumbled.

Now he stared about the bunk-house. There was only the single light in the center that by compound law had to be kept burning all night. It showed every bunk filled. Outside there was silence and only a few dying firestone fires could be seen through the doorway. Khaza realized he must have huddled there senseless for hours. To him it was not unnatural that no one had noticed him or tried to rouse him. Others probably thought him asleep.

Khaza's torpid brain slowly came to life. He had an impulse to shout his loss to the world, to stamp and rave, to rush out in search of the one who had despoiled him of his happiness, to call down on the thief the most terrible curse of the Mashona thunder-god Magondi. But he restrained himself. The habit of the white man's discipline was strong within him. He knew the

* Authentic cases of natives renewing four-month contracts year after year are many at Kimberley. In 1919 the Dutoitspan mine still had an old Kafir employee known as "Charley" who had not left the compound in twenty-five years, and who had never found a diamond.

compound law—no native outside his bunkhouse after the sounding of the ten o'clock night whistle. It would avail nothing to raise an alarm now, anyway. He would not be believed; only cursed and perhaps beaten by a surly native guard roused from nodding on duty.

So Khaza slid down on to his bunk again. His heart was filled with a conflict of murderous anger and a sickness that weakened and poisoned his mind and body. Others slept but Khaza did not.

IV

NATURALLY Khaza suspected Mobengula of stealing his diamond. It could be no other, for none but Mobengula knew of his find. All night this thought had run through his tortured brain. And when at last dawn came and others were stirring he itched to start out for revenge.

Khaza was glad the new day was Sunday. It was a day of rest in the mines, a day given over to idling, to tribal dances and games, to barbering and tattooing and other rites of vanity, to washing of clothes, to sewing tattered garments on the white man's magic machines, or to posturing and strutting before such white visitors as the day might bring. There would be no hurrying down the hungry shaft into the mine, but ample time to seek out his enemy.

In his native *kraal* Khaza would not have hesitated to kill the Matabele on sight. He would not have waited for more conclusive proof of his guilt than he already possessed. It would be quite sufficient to kill him at the earliest opportunity, afterward explaining his reason to the chief.

Stealing ordinarily was a minor crime among Kafirs, save in the case of cattle. But this diamond was so tremendously more important than a whole *kraal* full of cattle that the killing would be justifiable in the chief's eyes—after the formality of paying the chief a fine of say seven cattle—though perhaps not so easily glossed over with the white authorities, who normally took jurisdiction in all important cases if they heard about them, which very frequently they did not.

Here in Kimberley Khaza had sense enough to know he could do nothing like that. He had the African native's characteristic fear and respect for the white man and the white man's laws—when he was in the white man's country. So he pulled a blanket around him and, with his tongue his only weapon, started out to find Mobengula.

Outside the door he had a shock. Early risers clattering around with pots and wood for the morning fires were chattering excitedly. Khaza at first paid scant attention. Then he became aware of a name repeated over and over in the babel. The name of Masilonyane was on every one's tongue!

"Masilonyane? What did you say of Masilonyane?" he demanded of one group of gossipers.

Silence fell over the knot of natives he addressed. They stared at him in astonishment. Then one laughed and spoke—

"The Mashona laughs at us, making us think he does not know."

"Know what?" said Khaza, perplexed. "I do not laugh at you." He looked around at the group with serious eyes and added the assurance that he was groping in the dark. "No, I do not know about Masilonyane. I am wandering in the belly of a bullock."

"What!" they chorused. "Why, Masilonyane found a white stone!"

Khaza's jaw sagged. He showed shocked incredulity.

"Masilonyane found a white stone!" he cried in alarm. "When? How? Where is he?"

"Yesterday," volunteered one. "Why should you ask how? In the blue clay—who cares what spot?"

"Yes, how can the spot where he found it matter!" said Khaza ironically. "But tell me, where is Masilonyane?"

The spokesman of the group laughed again.

"Is the Mashona still asleep, or do weeds grow in his head?" he said in sharp sarcasm. "Where would any man but a fool go the minute he found a white stone but straight to the foreman, without letting the grass sprout in his path, and claim the gold and the open gates of the compound we are all seeking?"

Everybody laughed. Khaza winced at the speaker's unconscious indictment of Khaza himself as a fool. Yes, he had been a fool! If he only had rushed away with his find immediately, spurning the wily Mobengula! If he had not been such a fool as to give soft thoughts to Masilonyane, if

he had forgotten the very existence of Isala's father, if he had rushed to the foreman with his diamond—if he had done that, he and not the false Masilonyane would now be outside the compound with a rich reward in his pocket, sufficient to buy Isala and a half-dozen other wives.

With a sour face Khaza turned away from the Kafirs who had given him the news. They stared after him wonderingly.

Khaza pondered. Only one thing could have happened: Mobengula, divining the purpose Khaza had hinted at underground, had stolen a march by giving one of the diamonds to Masilonyane. That explained Masilonyane's pretending not to see him in the bath-line the night before. The adroit Mobengula must have worked rapidly—perhaps hurried ahead at quitting-time and caught Masilonyane as he came from the reserve dump. And then, finishing at the shower early, Mobengula had waited the departure of Khaza for the baths to sneak into the bunk-house and steal the diamond.

Had the Matabele given his own diamond to Isala's father on the mere chance that later he would find opportunity to steal Khaza's? Or had he merely hinted to Masilonyane what was in his mind, warning him to keep away from Khaza, and then having stolen Khaza's diamond had leisurely consummated his deal with Masilonyane while Khaza lay inert from the shock of his loss?

And most important of all: Had he given Masilonyane one diamond—or had he given him both diamonds?

Surely not both! It was inconceivable that he would run the risk of Masilonyane's turning one in and trying to smuggle out the other. But which diamond, granting there was only one, had he given Masilonyane? And how was the Matabele going to contrive to smuggle out the other, and thus make good his boast?

All these questions crowded Khaza's mind as he crossed the wide yard of the compound toward the bunk-house where he knew Mobengula was quartered.

Out in front of the bunk-house he found Mobengula squatting on his haunches in company with a half-dozen others around their community breakfast-pot. The Matabele was not of the aloof type like Khaza, who preferred having his own mealie bag and his own fire-pot, but chose to share the onerous duties of feeding himself with congenial companions who might be persuaded to do most of the work.

"Hi, Khaza!" exclaimed Mobengula impudently. He grinned complacently at him and added, "What brings the Mashona with the coming of the sun?"

"You know well what brings me, Mobengula," said Khaza sharply. "Walk with me so we may talk."

The Matabele laughed evilly.

"Why, no," he replied loudly. "I do not go away and hide in the bush when I talk."

Khaza frowned.

"Very well, Mobengula," he rasped, "let the world hear me if you wish and let the wind carry what I say and brand you in every *kraal* for a thief! For you are a thief! Give me the white stone you stole from my bed—the white stone I found in the blue clay! You stole it last night in the dark while I stood at the running water."

The angry Mashona, trembling with wrath, pointed an accusing finger at the Matabele. One might expect a guilty one such as Mobengula to cringe under such a public exposure. But to Khaza's astonishment nothing like that happened.

Instead the whole crowd burst into laughter, the voice of Mobengula rising raucously above the rest.

"Hail, Mobengula the witch-doctor!" shouted one gleefully.

"The Matabele has the spirit's eye!" cried another. "He knows what is in other men's minds!"

"Is it not as I told you?" demanded Mobengula triumphantly. "Did I not tell you last night that Khaza the Mashona would come to me with this funny story—that I had stolen a white stone from him?"

"You did, Mobengula!" they chorused. "You see into the future."

"His white stone!" derided one. "Khaza the Mashona thinks he found a white stone! He thinks he is Masilonyane! How could two men find white stones in one day?"

The group around the breakfast-pot rocked with laughter, scoffing at the idea. The loud voices had attracted other Kafirs and the gathering crowd, hearing the last remark, joined in the chorus of derision. Grinning faces turned on Khaza. From the first burst of laughter he had stood tongue-tied under the astounding reception his accusation had received. Too late he saw his mistake in talking as he had to the

crafty Mobengula. He might have known the Matabele would cover his tracks in just such a way. Khaza, rid of the last flickering doubt of Mobengula's guilt, stood helpless before a hostile crowd, whose sharpest weapon was ridicule.

Realizing this, he said nothing, but turned away and strode back to his own bunk-house, closing his ears as best he could to the ribald jests shouted after him and his eyes to the smiles of the compound. It seemed the news of his incredible accusation had spread like a *veldt* fire and that the entire black population of the compound was laughing at him. What a fool he was!

ALL day Khaza sat by himself in gloomy brooding. He thought of a dozen plans to outwit Mobengula, but rejected all as futile. Now he was at a tremendous disadvantage, the laughing-stock of the compound, perpetrator of the biggest joke in mine history. Nobody would believe him. Finally he decided there was only one thing to do—make a last try and appeal to the superintendent of the compound.

It was difficult to obtain an interview with the big *baas*. Minor white officials were indignant at the presumption of a mere Kafir boy begging a personal talk with the superintendent. But he was respectfully and abjectly persistent and to be rid of him they finally led him into the office of Superintendent Donaldson. The superintendent, a big man credited with an uncanny knowledge and efficiency in dealing with the incomprehensible black, sat behind his desk smoking a pipe. He listened to Khaza's story in silence.

The superintendent smiled. The idea of two boys finding diamonds simultaneously seemed preposterous. It appealed to him as a joke, but he did not fail to note the sincerity in the Kafir's tone.

"You say you saw the other boy's diamond?" asked Donaldson.

"Yes, *baas*, I saw it with my own eyes."

"And you showed him your diamond?"

"Yes, *baas*."

"Perhaps he was just pulling your leg about finding one, too," smiled Donaldson. "He just told you he had found one—like yours— and you believed him. Eh?"

"No, *baas*, no!" protested Khaza firmly. "He held his white stone in his hand for me to see. I saw it was smaller than mine."

"How much smaller?"

Khaza hesitated. He did not quite know how to make the white man understand the difference. Donaldson perceived his quandary and rang a bell.

"Bring me a handful of pebbles—all sizes," he commanded the native guard who appeared.

When the pebbles were brought in and strewn on the desk the superintendent ordered him to show how big the two diamonds were.

The Mashona's eyes lighted. He searched among the pebbles a long time and after some hesitation picked out two, one twice as large as the other. He did it carefully, selecting as replica of his own lost gem a pebble that was rectangular and smooth on one side and rough on the other; and as Mobengula's a pebble that was more nearly square, with a hollow on one side. These he presented to the superintendent.

The latter started. Then with extreme care he took two pieces of paper on which he scrawled identification before placing them under the two pebbles, now lying side by side on his desk blotter. Going to the big wall safe, he twirled the combination and opened it. He took from a small drawer the diamond turned in by Masilonyane the night before—too late to be sent to the sorting-room at Kimberley mine headquarters in Stockdale Street till Monday. He held it out for Khaza to see. Before he could speak Khaza cried out excitedly:

"It is the little white stone! It is Mobengula's!"

Donaldson compared the diamond with the smaller pebble on the table. They were extraordinarily alike in size and even in shape, astonishingly so considering that the replicas had been picked from a haphazard handful of pebbles.

The white man appeared impressed. Thoughtfully he locked up the diamond. The Kafir sounded sincere, but the superintendent seemed to be unable to get over the improbability of such an unprecedented thing as two diamonds found in Dutoitspan in a single day. It was not logical. Why, two diamonds had never been found in all the four mines of Kimberley in a single day —no, not even in the same month. Finds were too rare.

So Donaldson, cutting short Khaza's renewed appeal that Mobengula be forced to

disgorge the stolen gem, dismissed him with a promise to "look into the matter." As he left Khaza had the slight satisfaction of seeing the big *baas* put the pebble-replica carefully away in a drawer, which gave him vague hope that the superintendent really meant to investigate.

V

A SENSATION was created in the compound later that Sunday when a squad of guards under command of a deputy superintendent swooped down upon Mobengula's bunk-house, searched it so carefully a pin-point could not have escaped unnoticed, and forthwith carried off the Matabele and every stick and stitch of his belongings to the discharge barracks.

Crowds of awed natives watched this unusual procedure. Khaza, now known to every one as the complainant against Mobengula, was the object of stares and speculation. He ignored all these and stood at a distance, his heart swelling with gratitude toward the big *baas* and overflowing with faith and hope—that his precious diamond might be found—and with mighty little charity toward the author of his woes.

Mobengula took it all with a studied braggadocio. Before a guard bade him be silent he managed to say loudly—

"It matters not to me—for after another dawn I am at the end of my path in the mines and will be running free, like the elephants in the bush!"

Three days passed, feverish ones to Khaza. The others in the compound speedily forgot Mobengula. He might still be in the discharge barracks or he might be free. Nobody knew. A native whose contract had expired was not seen again after he entered the discharge barracks. Khaza had never been through that ordeal, for this was his first term at Kimberly. But others who had worked in the mines and gone away only to return again for another try for the elusive white stones had gossiped of the three days' examination a Kafir invariably had to undergo in there on the eve of his departure.

They had told the now familiar tale of how the departing workman was stripped bare and his clothing searched minutely for stolen diamonds; how emetics and other drugs were administered and the effect watched, in fear he might have tried to smuggle out a stolen diamond by swallowing it; how his body was scrubbed and examined, even to the probing of recent wounds—for there have been times at Kimberley when crafty and hardy Kafirs actually suffered the torture of a self-inflicted cutting of the flesh sufficient to hide a small diamond in the wound.*

The evening of the fourth day Khaza was lolling dejectedly outside his bunk-house door when he saw Superintendent Donaldson on a periodical tour of inspection. The big *baas* stopped when he saw Khaza.

"Ah, you are the boy who complained about a stolen diamond?" said the superintendent, apparently in sudden recollection.

"Yes, *baas*," murmured Khaza.

"Well, I fancy you will be satisfied now. I had that Matabele boy searched inside and out—and he didn't have it. We turned him loose this evening. Quit dreaming now, boy! Get back to work and perhaps you'll find another diamond—a real one. And the next time you'll turn it in right off or it will be the worse for you!"

The superintendent chuckled and strode on. Khaza gulped in dismay.

DRAGGING himself out of the mine from another day's toil, the more torturing because of the despondency that filled him now that all hope was gone, Khaza the following night was unprepared for the changed world into which he stepped. Coming out of the shaft's mouth he saw a crowd of workers chattering in high excitement around a native guard. Their gossip did not interest him and he shuffled on.

Suddenly a shout went up.

"Khaza! Khaza!" came the cry. "Great is Khaza the Mashona! Khaza cooked the dish that made the thief eat thunder!"

He whirled. What was this? In the Kafir book of proverbs a "thief that eats thunder" is one who has "attracted the lightning of exposure." Khaza, his heart beating with excitement, instantly became the center of a dancing group of blacks.

Now guards came running to suppress the demonstration and presently order was restored and the excited natives were driven away to their shower and the evening meal.

* These incredible incidents, vouched for by old mine officials, were not uncommon at Kimberley. When probing of wounds was introduced the practise ceased: no cases occurred in recent years.

The dazed Mashona scarcely comprehended what had happened. Then gradually, as he stood in the bath queue where hero-worshipers poured details into his ears and later as he sat an invited guest at the very community mealie pot where Mobengula had flouted him, he got the story—just as it had been gossiped by one of the native guards who had witnessed the arrest of Mobengula.

Mobengula arrested! Mobengula taken prisoner! Khaza's whirling brain sang with the music of the words.

And only the night before, when the superintendent told him Mobengula had been searched in vain and released, he had cursed the big *baas* as stupid. Ah, you could not beat these wise white men. Khaza contritely called upon the god Magondi to take the water of the skies and wipe out every single curse he had so unjustly uttered against the all-wise white men.

For, by the guard's story, the big *baas* had sent the deputy superintendent with four native guards to trace every movement Mobengula made upon his release from the discharge barracks the previous evening. They had seen the Matabele make his way down the road past the Bultfontein mine, thence through Beaconsfield, Kimberley's southern suburb, turning south across the railroad tracks to the native village—known to white people as Tin Town, because it comprised a remarkable collection of huts covered with flattened paraffin cans.

Here lived several thousand Kafirs who worked elsewhere than within the barricaded square miles of mine property. There the pursuers watched Mobengula begin a shifty creeping and dodging within the shadows of the huts until he finally came to the one adjoining the pump where the villagers obtained their water. Concealing themselves, they had watched him circle around the rear of this last hut and steal softly toward the pump, which was deserted at this late hour save for a figure they suddenly made out curled up against a tree in the rear, well hidden by the fence of the pump enclosure from the alley-like street.

Before the trailers could divine his purpose, Mobengula had crept up behind the man sitting under the tree and had dealt him a blow on the head with a heavy stick he carried. They heard the victim's stifled cry at the same moment the deputy superintendent hissed—

"Get him!"

And in a moment the four black guards were upon the assailant. They had been so busy subduing the wildly struggling Mobengula that they left the victim of the attack to the deputy. The latter had busied himself there in the dark with the senseless figure and then suddenly had straightened up. Then, waiting only to raise the alarm and instruct the villagers who came running to take care of the injured man, the white deputy ordered the guards to handcuff Mobengula and march him back to Dutoitspan compound.

"They got back late last night," the spokesman told Khaza, concluding his tale before the dinner-pot. "Mobengula must be in there now."

And he pointed to the prison barracks, next to the superintendent's office, where unruly workers occasionally were disciplined by confinement on a scanty diet.

"Who was the one he struck with the stick?" asked Khaza quietly.

"Why, who else but Masilonyane the Mashona? The guard said the deputy told them it was Masilonyane."

Khaza grunted, though not from surprize.

"Why should Mobengula attack Masilonyane?" speculated one in the group. "What did he do that the Matabele should want his blood?"

"It was not that Masilonyane had done anything—it was just the foot of a baboon again," said Khaza, getting up to go.

Khaza had shrewdly conjectured what the others had missed. And he was not surprized presently when he was summoned to the office of the big *baas*. The gossiping population of the compound, watching him open-mouthed, were surprized that he should stop to gather up his clothes and other belongings from his bunk-house before obeying the summons. The guard who came for him also exhibited astonishment. And so did Superintendent Donaldson when he saw him; but Donaldson, with another and larger diamond in his safe, was wise enough to hide his surprize and chuckle—and make a mental correction in his previous snap judgment, a judgment unfortunately so prevalent among white men, that the South African native is stupid.

The young Mashona, proud of his

triumph of vindication, had been quite correct in his conjecture about the other diamond. So he did not see the compound again. He went out the other door—with a bag of gold.

VI

IT WAS two days' and two nights' journey in the dingy third-class railway carriage from Kimberley to the *kraal* far north in Mashonaland.

Hours had wings, though, to Khaza. His heart sang all the way. Besides the happiness of it all, there was the glory—dear to the Kafir heart—of being idolized as the great man in the native railway carriage.

The other travelers were respectful to him. When the train paused at stations in the Bechuanaland country, where Kafirs crowded about to sell their buck-hides and carved bowls and wirework curios to the white passengers in the string of first-class carriages behind, Khaza's fellow travelers proudly pointed him out. And all Bechuanaland gazed at him in awe—the Mashona who had found the big white stone at Kimberley.

Khaza had a companion on his journey. Masilonyane sat beside him and wondered, in some confusion of mind, whether it were just that Khaza should get most of the glory, when he too had found a white stone—or at least had come out of the compound as the finder of a white stone. Occasionally he would tenderly massage the bump on his head, the bump that Mobengula's blow had raised, and which was now entirely devoid of pain but nevertheless remained a mark of distinction, if not of actual glory, that Masilonyane was proud of.

Masilonyane was comforted, though. He had sense enough to realize that he would have fared far worse than this if it had not been for Khaza. He knew from Khaza's lips, after the latter had come to Tin Town to take him home, all that had led up to Mobengula's attack, all the details of Khaza's appeal to the big *baas*, whose act in having the Matabele shadowed had saved him from theft and perhaps death.

The travelers in the carriage, who of course knew nothing of all this, save that Masilonyane also had won a reward at Kimberley, gave him a share in the glory. It was a secondary glory, however, for Khaza could not resist letting it be known that Masilonyane's white stone was smaller than his and that the old man for some mysterious reason was really indebted for this luck to his young companion.

So they came to the home *kraal*.

They got off the train at Taumba, where Khaza lost no time. There were cattle-traders here. And he dipped into the leather bag of a hundred shining gold sovereigns—given him by Superintendent Donaldson as reward because the diamond recovered in the capture of the wily Mobengula was so like the pebble put away in the superintendent's desk that Khaza's tale of having found it was amply proved.

Some of these gold-pieces Khaza used to buy twenty cattle, which on the spot he turned over to Masilonyane to drive proudly into his own *kraal* as the price Khaza had paid to make Isala, daughter of Masilonyane, his wife. Not ten cattle, the average in Kafirdom of the customary payment for a wife—not ten cattle, mark you, but twenty!

"Isala as wife of Khaza is worth more than any ordinary bride—as much as two!" declared Khaza proudly.

Which remark was repeated by Masilonyane to Isala, after the home-coming; and by Khaza to Isala herself, so that she smiled happily and preened herself; and by the villagers one to the other till it spread through all Mashonaland, and became as well known as the wonder story of the great Khaza's exploit at Kimberley.

These circumstances made Isala most remarkably joyous and contented, since she thereby gratified woman's two dearest wishes—to be raised to a proud pinnacle in the eyes of her neighbors by a husband in whom she could justly have pride.

THE only person in Mashonaland who was not completely pleased about all this was Masilonyane. He was by no means displeased with Khaza; rather the contrary. He was a bit peevish at fate, over thought of what might have been.

In spite of the twenty cattle he got for Isala—more than he ever expected the girl would bring in the marriage market—and in spite of his own reward, paid him for the diamond Mobengula had given him as a detail in a unique scheme that almost succeeded, in spite of this glad recompense for four otherwise lean and disappointing years at Kimberley, Masilonyane privately could

not help thinking how very much richer he might have been.

That is, if he only had been clever enough to guess Mobengula's motive that day when the Matabele dumfounded him by pressing a diamond into his hand, bidding him report it as his own find and meet him later by the pump in Tin Town so they might trek home together. He had been so dizzy with astonishment at the time that all he remembered was a brief mention of "cattle" and "Isala."

Coming up on the train, Khaza had rebuked the old man in disdainful tone, "Did you think, Masilonyane, a Matabele would be so bursting with a warm heart that he would give everything to you because you were Isala's father?"

"But he did not tell me you also found a white stone," Masilonyane had complained.

"No, but evil and treachery were shown you by his very act."

Khaza saw nothing incongruous in the argument that Mobengula could not be without evil design in the very same generous proposal he himself had planned. For was not Mobengula a Matabele and he a Mashona—the former a people of ill repute in the eyes of the latter?

"I knew Mobengula could not take the other white stone out himself," Khaza went on. "Nobody could do that. The big *baas* knew he could not."

"Yes," said Masilonyane, "but you did not know and the big *baas* did not know Mobengula would get the white stone out by sending it out with me—that the Matabele took the white man's needle and thread and hid the white stone inside the fuzzy button on top of my old cap made of the skin of a sheep! How could I know I had a white stone on my head when I did not even know there were two white stones?"

The old man's wail had made Khaza smile.

"Yes, Masilonyane, you were wandering in the belly of a bullock," he said sympathetically. "But do not grumble. You know now that Mobengula's evil brain planned to kill you so he could get my white stone out of the button of your cap and also rob you of the reward you got for the white stone he found and gave you."

Khaza had paused while the old man considered that temporary peril he had been in. Then, with the words Isala had used long ago to warn him against just such treachery as this, Khaza went on—

"When he gave you his white stone he put into your hand the foot of a baboon!"

Masilonyane agreed it had been indeed the foot of a baboon. But treachery, as a moral issue, meant less to him than the diamond he had unwittingly carried atop his stupid old head through the vaunted impregnable walls of Kimberley. However, neither he nor Khaza ever said anything about this circumstance, for the Kafir nature would have made a grand jest through Mashonaland of the one's clumsiness and the other's artless innocence.

"The well ahead is not to be depended upon!" they would have jeered.

And back in Kimberley Superintendent Donaldson said nothing about it for quite a different reason. It would have been humiliating to confess the faultless system if Kimberley permitted finders of diamonds to quit the compound without the customary three days' ordeal of search—as Masilonyane had done—though who could imagine a man just finding a diamond would have another to smuggle out?

Wherefore a new rule immediately went into effect at the Kimberley diamond mines and few ever learned why Mobengula received such a long sentence to prison. Not even the white foreman of the sixth level, who was the innocent victim of circumstances that cheated him out of two rewards, ever knew. Which made him henceforth hate all Matabeles and Mashonas impartially.

The Torch-Bearers

A Four-Part Story

PART III

by

HUGH PENDEXTER

Author of "The Road to El Dorado," "The Floating Frontier," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

THE "Swamp-Fox," General Marion, was baffling the British troops in South Carolina during the doubtful days of the Revolution. I, James Lance, was sent by my uncle David Macson to take money to our kinsmen the Macsons of the backwoods. Uncle David was a Tory and our kinsmen rebels. I was neutral.

Uncle David got me a pass through the British lines. In the British camp I came upon soldiers preparing to whip a half-witted youth. The victim was a native of the woods, and I thought of a plan to use him on my mission to my kinsmen.

"Let me have the boy as a guide," I demanded, and after much wrangling the officer in command permitted the boy to go with me.

The half-wit guided me to the cabin of Ellis Ambros, an old Tory. There we met four of Ganner's "Regulators," a lawless mounted band hostile to both rebels and loyalists. In a skirmish Ambros in the cabin and I outside killed three and the other galloped away. My half-wit guide disappeared after the fight.

Ambros directed me to the cabin of Angus Macson. There I met Big Simon, Angus' boorish son, and my pretty cousin, Elsie Macson. They all regarded me suspiciously and expressed their contempt of Uncle David. They were disgusted at my neutrality in the struggle between Whig and Tory. Big Simon and I even had a fist-fight.

They accepted the money and put me up grudgingly for the night. In the morning I rode away with my pretty cousin Elsie as my guide.

ELSIE conducted me to General Marion's camp, where I met the Swamp-Fox himself. I found him more sympathetic toward my neutrality than the other rabid rebels.

On leaving the camp I met my former half-wit guide riding madly. I stopped him and discovered that the half-wit was the pretty Elsie in disguise. She was pursued by a troop of British soldiers. We had no chance to escape. I quickly gave her one of my two passes through the British lines before we were surrounded. Even with my passes our posing as British spies gained us little, for Captain Tickridge of the soldiers forced us to accompany him along the Georgetown trail.

We stopped at Ellis Ambros' cabin and there the soldiers discovered that Elsie was a woman. I declared that I was Major Wemyss of his Majesty's troops. Our position was desperate. Then came the sound of hoofs, and Captain Harrison of the Tories rode up with his detachment. He said that Major Wemyss was following. The major had been ambushed by rebels.

In the excitement Elsie and I fled for our lives. The rebels attacked our captors and we were free to escape. I rode to Charleston and Elsie returned to her own people.

On my journey I blundered into a band of Ganner's Regulators. They held me for ransom in a cabin. In the cabin I stumbled on to Ellis Ambros, who was hiding there, and we escaped together. Ambros was spying on Ganner to settle old scores.

I reached Charleston and there found the town aroused at my disloyalty to the Crown. News of my posing as Major Wemyss had arrived ahead of me, and my uncle was terrified. My friends rallied to my aid, but I was arrested and held for trial.

"Bah! Your trial will never reach a general council," Captain Posby, my friend, assured me. "That beast of a Tickridge showed his spleen too plainly to take in his Majesty's officers. Gad! But that was a pretty turn you gave the evidence when you said you used Wemyss' name because of its influence! I'll swear Colonel Tarleton will be jealous when he hears it. Major Wemyss should be here any time now. He'll be in high humor to find Lieutenant Drance has arrived."

"Why? Why should he?" I forced myself to ask.

"It was he who sent in word Drance was laid by the heels. While there's some rank between them, and some years, the two families are very thick, and the major and the lieutenant have carried on the friendship."

CHAPTER VII

INTO THE SHADOWS

NOW that Elsie Macson was in the city and sure to be detected in her masquerade my own situation faded into insignificance. How could she think for a moment she could evade discovery? I could only explain it by blaming it to her ignorance and her unsophisticated upbringing on Lynch's Creek. So my poignant worry on her account made my own imprisonment a trifling affair.

I stood at the door of the room serving as a cell expecting every minute to hear some street sounds which would proclaim the girl's capture. Even if by some miracle she succeeded in fooling his lordship's staff there still remained the menace of Major Wemyss, who knew the genuine Drance. Wemyss had sent in his complaint of me and would be riding to the city on the first opportunity. His friendship with Drance was close and the poor child had swaggered into a trap which might be sprung at any moment.

The midday meal was brought in by the gaoler; decent enough fare although I missed the fruit and wine of Posby's basket. I did the food scant justice. I found cause for alarm in not having received another hamper from Posby. Something unusual had come up to make him forget me. Perhaps the girl had been exposed and was now a prisoner, with her name and antecedents known; and my friend could not bring himself to face me with the evil news.

But the sun crossed the noon-line and swung off to the west and there was no excitement on the street, no word from any of my friends that the inevitable had happened. In the middle of the afternoon the gaoler brought five men to my door, all civilians and good friends, who wished to express their good-will, and to assure me the court proceedings could amount to nothing.

The sympathy of these excellent fellows would have meant more to me if not for the other worry eroding my mind. The situation was awkward for all of us as beyond their optimism they had no assurances to offer. They left me after a brief stay and I found myself waiting for Captain Posby to come.

It was nearly time for the gaoler to light his lantern at the entrance of the basement before I heard Posby's hearty voice. I jumped to the door, trembling with anticipation. I picked out the gaoler's lifeless tread and noted the captain was not my only visitor. The next moment my knees went weak as Posby and Lieutenant Drance peered through the grating. Behind them stood Captain Masters, almost as close a friend as Posby.

"You give your suspects rather airy quarters," commented Lieutenant Drance, calmly examining the apartment which had been turned into a cell.

"Ordinarily there are from six to a dozen in there," spoke up Buck Masters from the background. "Mr. Lance is fortunate enough to have it all to himself."

"Mr. Lance's friends consider his retirement to be only temporary," Posby stiffly informed him.

"I was simply trying to explain that in Savannah we never pamper even suspects," drawled Lieutenant Drance, closing one brown eye as he stared at my flushed face.

"This *gentleman* has yet to be convicted of any offense," coldly said Posby.

"But I meant nothing personal," lazily assured the lieutenant. "I was speaking generally of conditions in Savannah and that sort of thing. Gad! I've cause to feel rough toward the beggars after the way they laid me up. —— sturdy lot."

"Mr. Lance isn't considered to be a rebel," Posby tried to explain, his despair of conveying the truth to the lieutenant's mind being richly humorous. "I haven't presented him as some might think the ceremony a slap at etiquette. But I'm proud to claim his acquaintance and friendship."

"So am I," cried Masters.

"Now that's downright good of both of you. Of course I can't feel enthusiasm for strangers, especially when a stranger is accused of making free with one's very dear friend. But what you two gentlemen indorse must be quite all right."

"Major Wemyss will be here in a day or so. Perhaps he'll view the use of his name less seriously," said Posby.

"I dare say," murmured the lieutenant, his interest seeming to lag while his gaze shifted toward the entrance.

"I'd wager they're bringing in another prisoner. I'll hazard that Mr. Lance is

about to have a cell-mate. No. I lose. It's but a soldier."

All this time I had been standing before them, my face wooden, my heart thumping most villainously. As I gazed into her face I marveled that each second did not shriek out her identity. As they conversed I had studied her. Her make-up was most artistic. The foppery of the period minimized the femininity of her figure and features. The wig, the coat of tan, the chin held high and aggressively thrust forward, permitted her to appear a handsome boy.

Lord, but she did carry it off well, this little backwoods cousin of mine. Where she picked up the style of speech, the swaggering little ways, was a mystery. But she had them; and a piece of black court-plaster hid the dimple.

She drew back and stood beside Masters as a sergeant came up and, saluting, handed a paper to Posby. After the man had retired Posby opened the paper and carelessly began running his gaze over it. His expression soon changed and incredulity and horror were plainly stamped on his face as he perused the communication for the second time.

"Good ——!" he whispered, steadying himself with a hand against the grating.

My heart contracted. I caught his wild gaze and held it, my eyes demanding to know the worst. With a groan he bowed his head and thrust the paper through the grating and turned his head that none might see his face.

Captain Masters must have sensed what the paper contained, for pressing forward, he hoarsely exclaimed:

"——! You've got friends, Lance. If it's something that calls for our help—a round robin or something like that sort of thing—we'll stand by."

As the good-hearted fellow blurted this out, my cousin behind him dropped the mask from her face. There was an awful fear in her brown eyes as she glared at the paper clutched in my right hand.

"We'll appeal to his Majesty if the case demands it," cried Masters.

"What's to be done must be done on this side," groaned Posby, without turning his head. "Read it, Jim, and have it over with."

It bore the date of that day. My mind refused to accept its meaning for some moments, although my friends' upset had prepared me for the worst. I read:

> The adjutant of the town will be so good as to go to Mr. James Lance in the provost's prison and inform him, that, in consequence of the court of inquiry held this morning on his account, Lord Cornwallis and the commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Nesbit Balfour, have resolved upon his execution on Saturday the ninth instant at six o'clock in the morning for having given aid and comfort to the enemy, and having opposed the British Government, though he had accepted the protection of that government, after the reduction of Charleston.
>
> C. FRASER,
> Major of the town.

"Today's the seventh," I heard myself saying. "Two days and it's all over."

"It's *the* order?" whispered Masters.

I pushed it through the grating, and declared:

"I never dreamed I was being tried on any affair on which my life or death depended. I do not believe that any member of the court had any idea of that sort. My uncle declared his allegiance to Great Britain when the city surrendered. I was only a boy at the time. I declared nothing. I have never accepted the protection of the royal government. But whether considered as a British or an American subject, I'm entitled to a legal hearing and an impartial trial."

"A court of inquiry determines what subject-matter shall be taken up by a general council," mumbled Posby without realizing he was criticizing the official acts of his superiors.

Masters, who had been staring numbly at the paper, broke out with—

"It's all so —— informal!"

Elsie was at his side, her gaze running hawk-like over the writing. Now she stepped to the door and said:

"Condolence from a stranger may not be desired. Certainly you wish to be alone or to have a chance to consult with some adviser. Allow me to wish you better fortune than this paper promises. And much, *very* much, can be done in two days."

With a stiff little bow she backed from view, but her last glance contained pity and encouragement.

Captain Posby was his old self again, and said:

"I can secure a respite of a few days. I'll go to headquarters. In the mean time you draw up a letter to his lordship and

Colonel Balfour, setting forth the circumstances of the inquiry, the lack of evidence, the absence of legal procedure and the fact you were allowed to believe the whole affair was only preliminary to a general council. Explain that you were not represented by counsel because of this understanding, state that you've never declared allegiance or accepted the government's protection and, in winding up, ask for a review of the case and that I be appointed as your counsel."

His brusk directions drove the numbness from my brains and I was keen to get to work. When one has only forty-eight hours of life there is no inclination to waste time. They hastened away and I plunged into the task of drawing up a remonstrance to the outrageous sentence. The paper was soon prepared and the gaoler summoned. Captain Posby had anticipated my need of a messenger and a soldier presented himself to take the paper. I ate no supper that night.

I realized I might not receive an answer until the last minute; yet because of my uncle I hoped to receive early attention. The more I reviewed the gist of my brief the less excuse I could find for the sentence. It did seem as if they must receive the justice of my appeal and at least allow the case to go to a general council.

I had quite convinced myself that this last bit of leeway would be granted, and was preparing to retire when a messenger from the town major's office brought me a curt denial of my petition, and at that, on grounds that swept away every vestige of hope.

> I have to inform you that your execution is not ordered in consequence of any sentence from a court of inquiry, but by virtue of the authority with which the commander-in-chief in South Carolina and the commanding officer in Charleston are invested. And their resolves on this subject are fixed and unchangeable.

Long after I extinguished my candle and had thrown myself on my couch the horrible finality of "their resolves" seemed printed in fire on the bare wall. In announcing the sentence it was declared to be "in consequence of a court of inquiry," and now it appeared that court had nothing to do with it. It was obvious I had been marked for death. The very promptness of the reply evidenced an anticipation of my appeal, and a set purpose to discourage, once and for all, all hope. Yet, curiously enough, I slept that night; slept as if I had been drugged.

MY GAOLER—Minch was the stolid animal's name—continued to stare at me curiously after leaving my breakfast. It was unusual for him to remain in the cell, and thinking he might have some message for me, I asked:

"Well? What is it?"

"Lordy! Nothing, sir," he mumbled, rubbing his stubbly chin and tilting his head further to appraise me. "Yes; I dare say it'll be that."

"What will be that?" I demanded.

He coughed apologetically, and answered—

"Not to put too fine a point on it, sir, the way you're to be took off."

"The way I'm to be killed?" I choked. The thought was appalling. Never during any phase of my danger had I surrendered all hope. I had failed heretofore to convince myself of the reality of being done to death by violence. I think the fellow's words and bearing did more to make me sense my position than had the order for my execution.

Presumably Minch now took it for granted I was deeply interested in the manner of my execution; interested, at that, in a gossipy way. For he leaned one rounded shoulder against the wall and, with the air of a pedagogue addressing a child, instructed:

"It's got to be by rope or musket. Not being an officer, it'll have to be by a rope. No doubt about *that*."

He was horrible. My hands kept creeping up to shield my throat. In less than forty-eight hours I would feel the bite of the rope. It was a monstrous thought. I had been afraid for myself, but had not dwelt on the details of the execution.

Minch accepted my silence as an indorsement of his speculations; and with more of the schoolmaster in his bearing he ran on:

"I've seen 'em come and go. Yes, sir. It's the rope, nine times out of ten. You ain't the first I've felt friendly enough to, to warn, 'Don't fight ag'in' it. Just fall limp, a dead weight; and it'll all be over before you can say your name.' Them's the words——"

"Get out!" I yelled, advancing toward him. "I'm not dead yet. Get out of here!"

He backed precipitately through the door, but before he could turn the key a voice was calling for him to wait, to leave the door unlocked.

"I ain't got no orders to let him see any one in his cell," sullenly called back Minch.

"Open that door, sirrah, or I'll see the color of your insides!" roared Posby, now coming into view, his hand on his sword. "Blue devils! The town adjutant to be held up by scum!"

"I couldn't see who you was, cap'n. I was looking toward the light and it blinded me," defended Minch, as he threw open the door and waited for the captain to enter before locking it. After he had scuttled away I went as weak as a rag and fell back on my couch, whispering—

"He's just been telling me it'll be by the rope, captain."

"To —— with his croaking! Two days' respite!" he snapped, tossing a paper into my lap.

Two whole extra days! My good fortune seemed incredible. Forty-eight extra hours. Having lived them, I would be at the same point of worriment as I was when the gaoler scared my soul. Eternity took on a new meaning. It could be found inside of four dozen hours.

"That's better," I muttered, fighting to control my ragged nerves. "Much better than being hung day after tomorrow."

He nodded gloomily. When he volunteered nothing I knew I was to expect the worst.

"You asked for a longer respite so my case might be investigated further?" I asked.

Tears stood in his eyes and without attempting to conceal them or to wipe them away, he brokenly replied:

"God knows so. I would have crawled on my face, but it was useless. Your uncle has lost none of his standing, as yet, but Wemyss' report of how you used his name, also that scoundrel Tickridge's stories, has set them all against you beyond curing. Then again, young Drance's reports from Savannah and Ninety-Six shows headquarters things aren't going as well as the surface would indicate. I'm told his lordship is in a beastly frame of mind. He expected too much after whipping Gates."

"That seems to settle it. Young Drance will be leaving soon?"

"Very soon, I take it. He's a mighty likable youngster once you get to know him. Wanted me to tell you he was sorry. He meant it, too."

"That was very polite of him."

"You've said the thing is settled. It would seem so. It's a —— black business, but I can't believe it's settled."

"It's all over for me unless I can break out of here," I desperately insisted.

He backed away from me, frowning.

"As his Majesty's officer," he sternly began; then went to pieces.

Turning his back to me, he groaned:

"That's a matter between you and your conscience. What I don't know I can't be expected to stop. I think the gaoler can be bought—Smith the gate-keeper is venal. But tell me nothing of your plans. My duty—my honor—To hang the best billiard-player in South Carolina! Good ——! If you have any wild notions about the window forget them. Abominable! Damnable—The only way out must be paved with hard money. Perhaps you know of some one who could advance a likely sum. The least intimation of any plans to escape must be reported by me to Major Fraser— Masters will be in tomorrow morning. If any one went through his pockets they'd find fifty or sixty pounds. He has thirty already and I can raise as much more—God bless you! Good luck!"

He had called the gaoler and was gone before I could try to express my gratitude for all his goodness. He had given a new focus to my case. I must bribe my way out. Although I had nearly four days of life left I was impatient to begin at once with my plans of bribery. I went to the door to call the gaoler, eager to learn his price. He was already approaching and bringing some visitor. It would be some of my friends come to waste the vital moments with attempts to lessen my mental anguish by instilling false hopes.

"I know the young varmint's strong room," snarled a familiar voice. "You can go back. I'll call you when I want you."

The gaoler turned back with never a word of resentment and old Ambros stepped to the door and shook his white head mournfully.

"The way of the transgressor—" he began and I shut him up with a curse.

"I'm not here to rejoice over your downfall, young sir," he said.

"Our debts are squared off. There's

nothing to talk about. I have four days, lacking a few hours, then I'm to be hung. I have much to think about. Please go."

"It's true you and I owe each other nothing," he admitted. "But there's a debt I've owed David Macson for many years. He befriended me when we both were younger. I always pay my debts. And while loyalty to his gracious Majesty tells me you should pay the price for aping one of his officers——"

"Go! I'll call the gaoler. I wish I'd let Ganner's men get you in your cabin."

"No chance of that with my dogs on hand," he grimly reminded me. "Don't git hot under your collar. I'm here at a great wrench of my conscience to git you out of this muddle."

Blessed words! And how beautiful was his ancient face! No more threats of calling the gaoler. I clung to the door and stared into his narrow eyes and waited for him to speak. He began to speculate on the eccentricities of that quality called "courage."

"When promised a baking before Ganner's open fire you was cool enough," he muttered. "Once you got outside I had work to get you away. Now you've been told you must die—and we all must die—and you go to pieces. As to hanging, it's more kindly than a long illness. Surely more pleasant than being baked before a fire——"

"Can't you talk about what concerns my living?" I implored.

"That's very simple. Your uncle says he'll come forward and take all the blame unless you're set free. That would mean two nooses instead of one. To keep him quiet I've taken up the dirty business of buying you out—with his money of course."

"Minch, the gaoler?" I excitedly whispered.

"Bought for fifty pounds. You must knock him over the head so it'll look like an attack from behind. Here's a duplicate of his big key. You're to hang it on the hook in his closet when you escape."

"And that's all?" I exclaimed, amazed at the simplicity of it.

I had been suffering in hell and an old man came along and calmly announced he had purchased my life for fifty pounds!

"There remains Levi Smith. His price is higher, but he'll take it. Beginning tonight a black boy will be on the Strawberry Road two miles outside the gate with your horse and arms."

"Good! Then I start tonight!"

"Not tonight. I've mentioned two men to be passed. They're the least of our troubles. But on the street will be other men, every one a danger. To make the gate from this place is the real problem. So you'll start tomorrow night. That'll give us time to plan other things. Tell your friends tomorrow that you can't see any of them after sundown as you have much writing to do. I'll get word to you some time tomorrow, telling you the hour to do it."

WITH a curt nod he departed, leaving me afire to bridge the next twenty-four hours. It was curious, this mutability of my mind. Until old Ambros came with his unexpected scheme of deliverance I begrudged each fleeting minute. Now I was wishing time away.

The entire town was talking about my arrest. I wondered if it were as commonly known how I had been sentenced to be hanged. As the morning hours wore away and none of my acquaintances came to see me I suspected my fate was advertised and that erstwhile friends were not anxious to compromise themselves by visiting me. But if the plight of Elsie Macson had been forced to the back of my mind by the shock of sentence it now came to the fore as I began hoping anew. Toward noon Captain Masters presented a most doleful countenance at my door.

"It's a rotten game!" he violently announced. "I've canvassed my mess, Jim, and only some of the junior officers will sign the round-robin. The older men hold back. Curse such caution! I never knew before that middle age makes a man cautious. One would think that the closer one gets to the grave the more free he'd be to express himself. Posby's all broken up. If I wasn't in uniform——"

"Hush, my friend. It would help me none if you forgot yourself," I interrupted. "After all, I've three days after this. Something may turn up."

"I wish the colonies were in ——!" he passionately continued. "The whole thirteen of 'em aren't worth your life."

I laughed in genuine amusement at his exaggeration. And I also laughed because I stood on the threshold of freedom and

the dear, loyal fellow never suspected it. There was nothing he could say. There was no hope he could honestly extend. In face of such a drab business he showed rare courage in coming to me. There were others, civilians, who did not come. Nor did I blame them. They could do me no good. I know it was this realization rather than fear of being compromised that kept the majority of them away. To make it easier for the captain I spoke optimistically of what three days might profit me. He believed none of it for his eyes remained gloomy while I talked. When I had finished he said:

"You'll see me again—tomorrow. I may be beastly drunk—when I have a fat purse in my pockets I always get drunk. When I wake up I'll know it's gone but never an idea where it went to. Whoever gets it will be richer by nearly a hundred pounds. Always that way with me. Easy come—easy go. Don't eat the stuff the gaoler brings. I'm dining with young Drance and a few others at the tavern. They're there now, fixing up a basket for you— Seemed so —— cold to send in a basket without coming ahead of it to wish you good luck."

He thrust a hand through the door and I pressed it warmly. I requested:

"Do me this favor: find out when Major Wemyss is to arrive. Ask the fellows at the tavern. He'll be here by tomorrow, I think."

"By George and the lions! We'll get after him like a pack after a fox. We'll get him to put in a word in your favor. I'll hurry back and set their wits to buzzing."

I smiled to myself as he hastened away. The idea of Wemyss saying a word to aid one who had filched his name and used it to serve a rebel was sardonically amusing. It did me good, however, to believe that by bringing in the major's name I had conveyed a warning to Elsie. They would talk it over at the tavern and she would be reminded of her danger.

Soon after the captain left me two soldiers brought in a huge hamper. In it was enough food for four men and enough wine for six. Minch came in at their heels. After the soldiers, the richer each by a silver-piece, departed Minch lingered to explain!

"I don't trust 'em, sir. I know they'd be taking one of your bottles if I didn't keep an eye on 'em."

"Very friendly of you, Minch," I warmly acknowledged. "And I know you will take one of these bottles as a slight token of my appreciation for your courtesy to me."

He had come in for just such a donation, but my flow of language quite floored him. He ducked his head, grinning foolishly, grabbed the bottle and hurried back to his closet at the head of the stairs. I removed the contents of the basket and near the top came to a huge section of pink ham, plantation-cured, and was thrilled to find a piece of paper fastened to it with a pin. I opened it and read:

Beginning at ten o'clock tonight a special guard will be stationed outside cell. Order of Major Fraser. Learned A's plan by calling on uncle and making self known. Can't find A to tell him of danger. Use club at nine. Come to my uncle's for change of clothing. Horse will be waiting. Comforting note to uncle will inform me of receipt of this. BUNTY.

Here was a piece of news. Old Ambros had not counted on a special watch. He had disappeared on some of his mysterious business, leaving the conclusion of my affairs until the morrow. Fraser perhaps had been informed of my many visitors and was taking precautions. Her reference to "my uncle" could only mean Uncle David. She would be waiting for me there. I shivered at the narrowness of my escape and rejoiced at the prospect of seeing the young daredevil and fleeing from the city in her company.

I destroyed the note and then wrote a few lines to my uncle, telling him to be of good cheer and believe that my innocence must soon be apparent. Signing this, I called Minch and, presenting him with another bottle, easily persuaded him to forward the message to the Tradd Street house.

I ate a few mouthfuls, then paused to use some chicken-fat in greasing the key. I had barely finished this task before Captains Posby and Masters and several of the tavern dinner company invaded the basement. Their noisy behavior proclaimed an overindulgence at the table. Their uniforms were drenched and I knew it was raining hard. I was anxious to be rid of them but nothing would do but that they should enter the cell and open the remaining bottles of wine and drink good luck to me.

I joined in a bumper and listened for some thirty minutes to their good-hearted, but at times scandalous, vows. Captain Masters darkly hinted at his intentions of "calling some one out," while Posby tearfully declared he would ask to be relieved of his office as town adjutant. Some of the others I only knew as pleasant acquaintances and I feared lest there be one among them who would report the loose talk and make trouble for my friends.

At last, after repeatedly insisting I had much writing to do and that it would require much of the evening to finish it, they finished the wine, swore to send me a pipe of it, and noisily stamped out into the stormy night.

It grew dark early because of the storm. With one ear on guard to prevent discovery by Minch, I turned my couch on its side and wrestled with one of the short, stout legs until I had pulled it from the frame. Propping the couch in position with an empty bottle, I composed myself to wait. At last St. Michael's chimes proclaimed the curfew hour and I had another sixty minutes to kill before making my desperate venture. For the last twenty minutes I stood with the key ready to insert in the lock.

Came the crucial minute. The big key worked smoothly and the door was unlocked. Thrusting out my head, I was pleased to observe the door at the entrance was closed. Minch was not in sight and I knew he must be in his closet. All my hopes hinged on the next few seconds. Running on my toes, I gained the wall within ten feet of the door, expecting every minute it would open to admit some one who would give the alarm. Only the storm beat against it, however.

On the wall at my side hung a heavy storm-coat and a rough hat, the gaoler's property. I slipped them on and grasped my club more firmly. I could have gained the door and made my escape without hindrance from Minch but my flight would have soon been known. I edged along to the door of the closet. It was half-open. Minch sat on a stool in his shirt sleeves, his head on his arms and his arms on a table. An empty wine-bottle at his side told the rest. It would not do to leave him without an alibi. If I took advantage of his drunken stupor he might blab all he knew and implicate old Ambros.

It was a gruesome business, one of the hardest tasks ever required of me. Yet it was his alibi and, therefore, for his own good. I threw his coat over his head and prayed his skull might be tough and my blow not too severe; and closing my eyes, cracked him over the head. I dropped the club beside him and hung the key on the hook. The bottle I slipped under my coat, so he could not be accused of drunkenness.

Then opening the door, I stepped out and hurried up the gusty street. A lantern burned over the door of the prison, and so long as I was in sight of it I continually glanced back to see if any one was entering. The storm shrouded me in oblivion. With the collar of my storm-coat turned up to my ears and my rough hat pulled low, I sped for my uncle's home, and, as I hoped, for Elsie Macson.

CHAPTER VIII

A RECRUIT FOR MARION

THE storm was a downpour and there was no chance for passers-by to satisfy their curiosity concerning each other. With chin hugged into the collar of my long coat, I made my way unmolested to my uncle's house and turned the corner to gain the side entrance. As I fought against the wind a shape emerged from the porch and a quavering voice said:

"I's Ol' Tan, Massa Macson butler, sah. Yo' have business hyar, sah?"

I gave my name, and with a fervent, "Bress de good Lawd!" the faithful soul led me under the porch and would have ushered me inside had I not detained him, saying:

"Better keep out of the house, Tan. What you don't see and don't know won't hurt you any. Is that boy out on the Strawberry Road with my horse?"

"He is 'less he want he hide took off."

I repeated my order for him to go and not to show up until I had departed, which would be within fifteen or twenty minutes, and then softly entered. The room was in darkness except for the faint light from two candles burning in the adjoining room. While I was hesitating about braving the light of the next room and while I was beginning to wonder why my uncle did not come to meet me, I was suddenly confronted by an officer. I snatched up a light chair and raised it above his head.

"Softly, Cousin James," drawled her dear voice. "So it worked all right."

We were alone in the obscurity of the shadows and I dropped the chair and sprang forward to greet her, but her slim, strong hands held me at arm's length, and she was saying—

"Hardly do for his Majesty's officer to be seen bussing an escaped prisoner."

"We're cousins. There's no one to see us and no light to see by," I grumbled as I released her. "Where is my uncle?"

"On the couch in his office. He fell and cut his head open. Fell down the cellar stairs— Only a scalp wound. I came just after it happened. I've dressed the hurt and in a day or so he'll be fit as a fiddle. He'd been hiding his money, I believe."

"Poor uncle!" I cried, entering the living-room where the candles glorified into precious gems the rain-drops pelting against the window. Crossing the room, I entered the smaller apartment which served as an office. My uncle was stretched out on a couch with a bandage about his head. The cloth was faintly discolored, proving the cut must be a nasty one.

"It's really you, Jim?" he faintly cried, extending both hands.

I kneeled at his side and patted him and inquired about his accident.

"It's nothing. Angus Macson's girl fixed me up. But I'm sore unstrung. When a gay fop of an officer came I thought it was all up with me. Then to learn she was a woman and Angus' girl at that sent me as weak as a rag. But she's got a head! Don't think her a hussy for wearing breeches. Aye, she's got a head that'll beat a man's."

Then with a cry of fear, a peculiar little bleat that reminded me of a frightened lambkin, he added:

"Aye, a pretty neck, too. A pretty neck they'll be glad to stretch for her if she's caught. —— in heaven! Such tricks as she's played on his lordship! I've died a dozen deaths for her ever since she stole in here. Good ——! The minx must be crazy and her people are worse than that— they're murderers!"

"Gently, gently, Uncle David," she cautioned from the doorway. "It's a strong trap that can hold a Lynch Creek Macson. In another thirty minutes you can rest in peace, for I'll be out of the city and on my way to the High Hills of Santee or Snow's Island."

"We have no time to lose," I chimed in. "I gave the gaoler an honest crack and his head must be ringing like the ——. The minute he comes to he'll rouse the city. He's got his price and has received the blow; now he'll be intensely loyal. You spoke of some clothing?" The last to the girl.

"It's in the kitchen. Change at once and we'll be going."

I hastened to the kitchen and found it dimly lighted by one candle. The windows were screened with heavy coverings. Old Tan had disobeyed me and was crouching in a corner, trembling violently.

"Clear out!" I hissed. "Do you want to be hung if they find me here?"

"Ef dey cotches yo', young massa Jim, dere'll be de —— to pay fo' ol' massa!" he whimpered. "Ol' Tan jes' couldn't go 'thout sayin' dat much."

"Hold your tongue and help me shift. We won't be caught and if we are it won't be here."

The prospects of being rid of us—for he shared Uncle David's knowledge of the girl's masquerade—made his fingers nimble and in a few minutes I was dressed in the uniform of a foot soldier and my clothes were taken away to be concealed or destroyed by Old Tan. The girl knocked on the door and I bade her enter.

"You're forgetting your manners," she reminded me. "You should salute your superior— No, no. This is strictly military. Now, sir, you'll make your way to the city gate and curse your luck to Levi Smith for being sent with a message from the town major to the Pelton house half a mile outside the gate."

"And you?"

"Leave me to me," she laughed. "If the boy hasn't been scared out of his skin and deserted he'll be waiting with your horse a quarter of a mile from the gate. Also your arms."

"I'll speak to my uncle and be going."

Returning to his room, I told him I was about to depart. He shed a few tears and groaned—

"I can't ever forgive myself for not coming out in the open and making a fight for you!"

"If you'd been that foolish I'd not be here tonight, a free man," I soothed.

Old Tan, ignoring my scowl, now crept into the room and demanded:

"What ol' massa goin' say w'en dey come rampoogin' round hyar? He mighty sick man. He can't talk good fo' hisse'f."

I rubbed my chin and stared down into my poor uncle's frightened eyes. He had hidden his money and torture could not drag the secret from him; but he was afraid, wofully afraid. His hurt and the knowledge of how he received it gave me my inspiration.

"Uncle, I'm going to tie you hand and foot and rob you," I whispered.

"Good ——! You, too, lost your head!" he moaned.

"It was I who gave you that clout over the head," I continued. "Scoundrel and graceless dog of a nephew that I am! Robbing my old benefactor!"

"But you'd never hurt my head—" he began, his voice shaking and faltering.

He lifted his head as he spoke and now dropped back. Forgetting that dead men do not close their eyes, I thought he was gone. As I bent over him a rare smile spread over his face and two big tears trickled down his thin cheeks.

"Jim," he faintly whispered, "if you ain't hung you'll make a general yet. In the drawer of the desk are two hundred pounds in gold. I didn't dare hide all of it. Make the robbery real by taking that. I'll swear you cleaned out all my cash. Old Tan must clear out and not come back till morning. If I'm not visited and found before then he must come back and find me. He must spread the alarm without untying me. I must be gagged, too. It's beautiful, Jim, beautiful!"

I stepped to the door and called the girl and told her of my scheme. She slapped her thigh and declared it was magnificent, but shrewdly reminded me: "We must take off the bandages. Never do for the brutal nephew to have compassion enough to dress the wounds he gave. Wait! Let me do it."

She bent over my uncle and with a few deft movements of her slim brown hands removed the cloths and commanded Old Tan to destroy them at once. I added a word for the butler to leave the house and keep away until we had a good start. From the draperies between the office and the living-room Elsie procured a stout cord with which she tied my victim's ankles and wrists. The latter she left quite loose, instructing him to explain how hard he had worked to free his hands. Uncle David, now quite cheerful, again spoke of the two hundred pounds and insisted that I take it.

"He'll take it," grimly assured my cousin, running to the desk.

I would have bungled that part of the plot by simply pocketing the money. She taught me the niceties of the game by strewing papers over the floor and leaving the room in disorder. Not only the desk but the old carved chest from Holland was treated in this disrespectful manner. Pausing, with her wig awry, she decided:

"There! That looks something like. They'll think Ganner's men have been here."

"Why not upset things in the other room a bit?" I suggested, eager to do everything which would divert suspicion from my uncle.

"You forgot that you're the robber and that you know all the ins and outs about the house and where he kept his money," she reminded me. "Never overdo. It's time we were going."

I stepped to the couch and whispered my good-by to Uncle David. In a trembling voice he said:

"You must gag me, lad— Not too tight. Tell Angus when you see him that I'll get more money to him soon. To think it was one of the Lynch Creek tribe that got you out of this! Old Ambros meant well, but he never should have quit the city while you was in danger. Now the gag, Jim. A soft one and not too large."

The girl caught up his neckerchief from a dresser and fashioned it into the semblance of a gag, then stooped and kissed him and softly patted his head where it was not hurt. Tears welled from his eyes and despite the gag he clearly said—

"God bless you, Miss Elsie."

WE BLEW out the candles and got as far as the door of the living-room when the knocker on the front door sounded peremptorily. It was like the thunder of doom, and we both stood just inside the darkened office, slack of jaw and gaping wildly.

She recovered first from bewilderment and hissed—

"The side door!"

And she would have started for it, passing

through the lighted living-room, had I not dragged her back. The knocker rose and fell a second time and above the storm a hoarse voice called:

"Inside there! Open the door or I'll have it down. Open in the king's name! How dare you hold a door against his Majesty's officer?"

The girl whispered:

"Tousle your hair over your eyes. Take the two candles and go and open. The wind will blow them out. Then steal back to the side door and we'll overcome any sentinel there. If they glimpse you they'll think you've been posted here. Now, quick!"

It was time, for the knocker was now the ——'s tomtom. Disheveling my hair, I darted into the living-room, seized the two candles and hurried to the door, exclaiming:

"I'm coming, sir! Coming!"

I left the living-room in gloom and the girl scurried to the room opening into the small hall at the side door. Twisting my face into a grotesque expression, I fumbled with the front door and at last threw it back. As the girl had foreseen the wind instantly extinguished my candles, leaving the hall in darkness.

"You ——'s spawn! What do you mean, keeping me, officer of his Majesty, waiting?" bellowed a deep voice. I knew him at once, Captain Ben Tickridge, somewhat befuddled with liquor.

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir," I mumbled. "Old gentleman's been hit over the head and hurt. I was with him when I thought I heard the knocker——"

"Thought you heard it, you fool!" he passionately broke in. "Bleed me white! But think I want to stay in this —— coop of a hall all night? Show the way to the living-quarters."

"Just a moment, sir. I'll have a light in a moment, sir. I was waiting for the others to enter——"

"I'm alone," he growled, slamming the door shut with a crash. "Get on with you."

I could have purred with content. Such rare luck was not to be expected. I led the way into the living-room without delay and while he stumbled about and fell over a chair and cursed horribly, I managed to light the candles and place them on a small table in one corner. Then I fell back toward the room where I knew my cousin was hiding and repeated for her benefit:

"Alone, sir. Yes, sir."

This comment stirred his wrath and he drunkenly demanded in the fiend's name what it was to me whether he came alone or with his troopers. I mumbled apologies and took care to keep at a distance. I felt very confident, for I believed him to be staggering drunk. Suddenly he rose from his chair and resting a hand on the center table, pointed a trembling finger at me and commanded—

"Step forward here, into the light, blast you!"

I promptly obeyed, saying:

"Yes, sir. Posted here by Major Fraser's orders, sir."

He now had a square view of my uniform, and it, together with my mention of the town major's name, seemed to satisfy him. He collapsed into a chair and closed his watery eyes. He remained thus for several moments and I was thinking him asleep and was edging back toward the girl when he suddenly demanded—

"Why are you here?"

"You must ask Major Fraser, sir," I replied.

Once more he got on his feet and threw aside his long military cloak and ordered:

"Get out! I'm here to talk business with David Macson. Send him in—and some brandy—rum."

Time was vital and the girl and I should have been through the city gate before this. I had no intentions of permitting the brute to hold me there until my escape from the provost's prison was discovered; nor did I intend to leave until he was eliminated from my immediate pursuers. I advanced, saying:

"But Major Fraser's orders, sir. No one is to see the old gentleman unless he shows an order."

"——! You numskull!" he roared. "Do you think that even Major Fraser's orders apply to me when I'm on his lordship's business? Send the old fool in here or——"

Without waiting to learn the penalty, I straightened out and buried my fingers in his fat throat. Over he went and I piled on top of him. Once down, he attempted to draw up his knees and catapult me over his head. I flattened out until our faces were close together.

Intelligence shot through his eyes. His lips framed my name and I knew that he

recognized me. I sent my fist under his ear and he became quiet. I rolled to one side and almost instantly the girl was kneeling by him, her fingers in the breast of his coat. For a second I had the wild notion she was trying to knife him.

"His papers!" she hissed. "They may be hidden."

I rolled him over and stripped off his coat and threw it to her and motioned to the draperies. I barely completed the gesture before she had removed the second thick cord. I fastened his wrists at his back and then tied his ankles and stuffed his neckerchief into his mouth. Taking him under his arms, I dragged him into the office and, aided by the girl, propped him up in a chair. My uncle's eyes twinkled like diamonds as he witnessed the little game.

The captain opened his eyes and groaned.

"You nearly spoiled my plans, captain," I jeered. "I had just bagged the money when your coming threatened to stop my getting away with it."

He rolled his eyes over the room and noted the signs of disorder; the scattered papers, the desk drawer bottom-side up on the floor, the Holland chest, with its cover open and more papers strewn about. Then he beheld Uncle David, and fresh comprehension glowed in his eyes. Uncle David, too, played his part nobly, for he fell to groaning in a smothered key. I bent over him as if to make sure his bonds were secure, made a like examination of the captain and then deprived him of his pistols. Returning to the living-room, I slipped on his coat and threw his long military cloak over my shoulders, pulled his hat down over my eyes.

The girl, becloaked and ready for the road, was kneeling in a corner and by the dim light of the candle placed on the floor was finishing a hasty examination of the papers taken from our prisoner. Now she jumped to her feet and whispered:

"I told Old Tan to have my horse at the corner. Come!"

We stepped out into the rain and wind and turned the corner into Tradd Street just as the clangor of some bell pierced the storm.

"They've discovered your escape!" she said. "You take the horse, cousin, and ride for it."

This showed how silly a brave girl can be. I did not bother to answer her but when we came up to a horse held by a small boy I picked her up and tossed her into the saddle and mounted behind her. It was all done before she could know what I was about.

Tickridge was a big man and his cloak was voluminous. I gathered the skirts of it about her the best I could and we were off at a gallop for the city gate. Had we had more time I do not doubt our success in escaping by water, as I knew the coast well and could have made the mouth of the Santee on the darkest night. Yet to have landed and taken our luck afoot would have had serious drawbacks. The rain continued falling heavily although the wind was dropping. To the ringing of bells was added the discharge of guns.

"——'s to pay, Cousin Jim, and paper money won't be accepted," she said over her shoulder.

WE WERE making by the shortest route for the gate, nor did we dare let the horse race for it. Glancing back, I saw lights showing mistily through the rain where searching-parties were out with lanterns. Thanks to the darkness we two, riding double, were but a bulk in the night. As we scattered the wet sand the girl leaned back against me and over her shoulder said:

"I was forgetting the word. It's 'Long live the king.'"

"There are lights on both sides of the gate. They're on the lookout," I warned.

She checked the horse almost to a walk and we narrowly escaped riding down a squad of men marching at double quick for the gate. I gave the horse my heels and we were through them in a stride; then seizing her hand, I quickly pulled in and loudly bawled back—

"Who's in charge there?"

"Sergeant Newt, sir."

"See that no one afoot passes you. Our man is behind somewhere."

"Yes, sir," barked the sergeant.

And he ordered his men to spread out so as to cover the full width of the street.

"We can't go through the gate riding double," Elsie said.

"We'll bolt through before they know what's happened."

"And have a troop of light horse after us in no time if the guards fail to bring us down with their fire."

I swung off to the ground and restrained her from following my example.

"You go through as Drance," I ordered.

"Take the horse and leave me to my wits," she angrily protested, struggling to dismount.

"Are you crazy?" I hissed, for Sergeant Newt and his men were rapidly drawing nearer. "You have no business to be on foot when you leave the city. They'd be suspicious of you in a second if you approached the gate afoot. As Lieutenant Drance, dispatch-bearer, you can come and go as you will—mounted. I am Captain Tickridge with a file of men behind me. Now ride on or my head goes into a noose."

She gave my hand a spasmodic grip and whispered:

"I'll be waiting for you. If you don't follow me I'll come back. God help us! Good-by."

She trotted on, her cloak drawn close. I put my best foot forward, for the sergeant was fetching along his men too rapidly to please me. I must reach the gate and pass through before Newt came up to spoil my game. I saw the lanterns draw together from the sides as the guard pressed forward to investigate the girl. I could even make out Levi Smith as he stood close to the stirrup, holding his lantern up. Then he ducked his head and the lanterns receded and I knew she had given the magic word. I saw her pass leisurely through the gate with never a backward look and become swallowed up in the darkness. She had been in no danger so long as she was mounted and openly bound for the outside.

Now came my test. Sergeant Newt's voice sounded very close as he called out an order. Holding the middle of the road, with Captain Tickridge's cloak concealing my private's uniform and falling well to my heels, and his hat pulled well forward, I swaggered toward the gate and Smith. I feared his sharp eyes more than I did the dozen soldiers huddled under open sheds on either side. I entered the area of lantern-light just as Newt and his squad began emerging from the darkness. I turned about and bawled—

"Divide your men, sergeant, and post half on each side of the road."

"All right," he called back.

"—— you, say, 'sir,'" I shouted.

"Yes, sir," was the humble correction, and I heard the regulars under the sheds snickering at our provincial showing.

That one touch alone went far to remove any suspicion. The gate-keeper and the guard took it for granted I had come down with the sergeant and the squad. And I was convinced that the sergeant was accepting me for Tickridge. Thanks to the cloak, the difference in bulk could not be noticeable. I continued to the gate and this time the guard did not swarm into the road. Even Smith was content to remain by his little coop, lantern in hand. I made for him and he pulled his forelock and meekly bobbed his head.

"Nothing suspicious yet?" I asked in a hoarse voice.

"Not a thing, sir. I was just telling Lieutenant Drance——"

"What's that to me?" I growled, turning away. "'Long live the king.' I'm going outside for a bit. Keep your eyes open."

With bold steps I passed through the gate. I could imagine Smith glaring after me suspiciously. I expected every moment for him to detain me until he could have a look under my hat-brim. Pure fancy, I suppose, but very real while I was making the distance of twenty feet. Nothing happened, except as the guard came to attention. I passed the dead-line. The glow of the lanterns kept me company for a bit and it was difficult to decide when I was beyond its radius. I forced myself to proceed with no undue haste until it was necessary for me to pick my steps. Then I ventured to glance back. The gate and the lights were a yellow blur through the rain. Gathering up the cloak, I ran.

It was the firing of several guns at the gate that brought me to a halt, although the alarm should have quickened my heels. My pause was fortunate, however, as it permitted me to detect the sound of horsemen coming from the west at a gallop. Drawing to one side, I threw myself on the ground and a mass of mounted men swept by, making for the city. Regaining the road, I ran like mad, for once these newcomers reached the gate they would turn about and search for me. If the boy stationed on the Strawberry Road should be false to his trust—and he would be sure to seek cover from the storm, I believed—I could picture myself hunted down on the morrow. Then, indeed, would there be a

short shift. This worry over self was short-lived when I realized the galloping horsemen must have encountered Elsie. I ran the faster.

Now more horses were approaching and again I flattened myself on the wet ground. As they drew near I knew there were only two or three of them and they were in no haste. They were abreast of me—a blur of shapes. The idiotic belief I had been seen sent my hand to Tickridge's pistol; then a low clear voice plaintively called—

"Jim! Oh, Cousin Jim!"

I leaped to my feet and raced toward her and was met with the stern command—

"Halt, or I shoot!"

"Only Cousin Jim," I panted.

"God 'a' mercy, lad! In another second —There! There! Mount. The next few minutes decide it."

"Men passed me," I said as I took my belt of arms from the saddle and buckled it on.

"Detachment of Wemyss' troops. Wemyss himself follows at their heels. We must get by him and his men before the others turn back from the gate and come after us."

I swung into the saddle and asked—

"They held you up?"

She laughed softly and corrected:

"I held them up. Lor! But luck or the good Lord was with me. I found the boy with your horse, then came the troopers. I never dreamed they'd be Wemyss' men. So I held them up and said I was Lieutenant Drance and asked if they had met a horseman or a man on foot making toward Strawberry. Not till I'd called myself Drance did I learn they were Wemyss' men—but the major was not with them. He'll be along any time, however."

"Then we'll avoid him by swinging toward Dorchester and cross the Ashley due west of Monk's Corner and from there strike for Nielson's Ferry. Once over the Santee you'll have no trouble in getting back to Lynch's Creek."

"And you?"

"I don't know. I haven't had time to think."

"Perhaps you can find some neutral troops and join them," she murmured.

"Make fun, but don't visit Charleston again."

"I'd risk it a thousand times for the pay I received this trip," she passionately declared. "I have news for General Marion that would fetch me a commission from Governor Rutledge if I were a man."

"Thank the Lord you're not!"

"I doctored Drance's reports so as to cast a gloom over headquarters."

"Where is he?"

"Snow's Island. La! How he swore when they took his clothes and boots for me. He's a likely looking lad. I have news for General Marion that'll never be printed in the *Royal Gazette*. Cousin Jim, I'll tell you something. If I don't get through will you take the message to General Marion?"

I promised.

"Just tell him that Cornwallis plans to shift to Virginia, leaving Charleston heavily garrisoned. He probably won't make the change until next year, but he'll do it most certainly. I knew it before we caught Tickridge; and among his papers were orders for him to return to North Carolina and learn what strength will rally to Cornwallis should that State be invaded by a British army. When Cornwallis marches into North Carolina it's to march into Virginia. And by the brave soul of Sergeant Jasper, once he enters Virginia he's in a trap and we'll have him!"

"On guard! They're coming. Ride to one side."

"Hold the road. I'm Captain Masters. You're Posby. Wemyss knows Tickridge."

"He knows Masters and Posby."

"Tickridge is fresh in his mind. 'T' others are only officers. Now we have it!"

THEY were almost upon us. We called out lustily and gave half the road. Some one blundered into me and my big roan shouldered him into the ditch.

"——, blockheads! Where are you riding?" yelled an angry voice.

There were five of them.

" 'Blockheads' is scarcely the word to use to his Majesty's officers," I replied. "Who the —— are you?"

"Major Wemyss. Who the —— are you?"

"Captains Posby and Masters, on important business," spoke up Elsie in a voice that showed her knack of picking up the tricks of one's speech; for had I not known the truth I would have sworn it was Masters talking.

"Oh—Posby and Masters, eh? The ——'s own night for riding. Excuse my heat, gentlemen. Such a —— hard ride! Is Lieutenant Drance in the city?"

"He is," I said.

"We must ride on," spoke up Elsie. "But we're to understand the darkness was responsible for the term 'blockheads?' "

"Of course. But young blades needing blooding can find lots of opportunities in town," fumed the major. "Get along, men."

We made the best of the heavy going, knowing full well the pursuit was on by this time. The trick at the gate was known and the first detachment of Wemyss' troops had reached the gate and had turned back to run us down. Major Wemyss' fury on meeting his own men and learning of the game put upon him caused Elsie to chuckle, but I had little heart for laughing. The chain of posts held by the British were Georgetown, Camden, Winnsboro', Ninety-Six and Augusta.

This huge half-circle rested on Georgetown, Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah. An interior chain of posts consisted of Fort Watson on the Camden road, dangerously close to Nielson's Ferry, where I had proposed we cross the Santee, and Motte's house and Granby on the Congaree. Dorchester and Monk's Corner—Biggin Church, some called it—were rest-posts and supply-depots. The line from Georgetown to Camden, running between the Santee and Black Rivers, would be difficult to cross. Let us get beyond Black River and we'd call the race won.

"You'll not leave me; Cousin Jim?" she begged, reaching across and finding my hand.

"You'd take me where?"

"To join General Marion's forces."

Her hand was warm on mine. I knew my days of "neutrality" were over and that Cornwallis would hang me if he could.

"To General Marion we ride," I surrendered.

CHAPTER IX

HOW A JOURNEY ENDED

AS WE rode to join General Marion, prince of partisan leaders and the master strategist of swamp and forest, Elsie was unusually grave and often she glanced at me soberly. When I finally asked the meaning of all this she quite broke down and confessed she was worried lest by joining the patriots I might lose my life. Pressed for reasons why this should disturb her inasmuch as her father and brothers shared a similar danger, she explained that she felt personally responsible for my fate because she had influenced me to take up arms against the king. It was thoroughly a woman's reason, quaint and illogical, and yet not a bit displeasing.

The first day we spent largely in hiding after traveling all night and covering only twenty miles. We hid in the ruins of a half-burned barn, due west of Strawberry. It stood near a cross-roads and entirely in the open. During the day we saw several small bands of horsemen scurry by or pause and beat up every cover within our field of vision. The barn was too obviously open for inspection to warrant a search.

That evening I knocked over a barnyard fowl which the raiders had overlooked and we cooked it in a hole in the ruins and ate heartily, although without salt the meal had slight savor. The second night's travel was over better roads, the sandy soil having had time to absorb the moisture of the recent storm, and yet we covered only a little better than twenty miles because of the need for caution.

We camped just before sunrise within a few miles of Nielson's Ferry. The proximity of Fort Watson made this an unusually dangerous stopping-place, but there was nothing else to do. The girl had been confident we could cross the Santee before daylight overtook us, but the sun found us several miles behind our schedule. From my point of view we were better off to have the Santee between us and Fort Watson, and I would have been contented if we had found decent cover.

The best we could do was an open grove of pines with a thicket of bushes on the northern side. If not for this undergrowth we might as well have camped in the open; for the boles were bare of branches up to twenty feet from the ground and four horses abreast could have been driven anywhere through the timber. As for hiding, one would have to stand behind a tree. The bushes while insignificant to look at served our purpose well, perhaps better than a more pretentious cover.

I assumed the role of hunter and stole to

a mixed growth south of us and with my pistol shot a lean hog and butchered him on the spot. Returning to the pines, I observed that Elsie had been primping and bathing in the near-by brook, for she was as fresh and sweet to gaze at as a wild rose. We hung up our cloaks to conceal the light of our small fire and in a crude fashion managed to cook some of the pork.

I shall always remember it as a most miserable meal, the meat being tough and lean, overdone on the outside and underdone on the inside. No troops came near us until late in the evening when we had extinguished our fire and were preparing to start; then a score or more of troopers swung by at a smart gallop, making for the ferry. We decided they were stationed at Fort Watson and were on their way home.

We set out close behind them and followed them to within half a mile of the ferry when we turned off and made the river in the shortest line. The water was deep and the current swift from the storm and I had to swim behind my horse, holding his tail. Elsie escaped with a partial wetting. She was for stopping to make a fire to dry me out, but I was determined to make the third stage our last one and we pushed on.

Morning found us within a few miles of Lynch's Creek and without seeking shelter, we kept on. Elsie boasted that we would have traveled fully forty miles once we struck the creek at the big bend. Now came a chance to relax. During our hazardous trip we had talked practically none. At night we rode apart, each taking turn at leading the way. During the daytime one slept while the other watched. I looked ahead to conversing with her when we reached the creek. The country was much wilder than any we had passed through and we rode boldly, giving little thought to danger.

"Here's the creek," she softly called back to me. I advanced to her side and noticed she was pale and that her face seemed much thinner.

"You need to sleep the clock round," I prescribed.

She smothered a yawn and countered:

"You should see yourself. What a rough stubble! You look very seedy."

"We'll both sleep," I mumbled. "No need of standing guard now."

The horses gratefully came to a halt on the banks of the creek and I threw myself on the ground and would have been asleep in half a minute had not her manner aroused me. She had cast off her drowsiness and was staring up and down the creek and wrinkling her upper lip as she sniffed at the fresh air. Not satisfied with this, she dipped a finger in the water and held it up to test the imperceptible air-currents.

"Don't discover anything that needs looking into," I groaned, unwilling to believe it would be possible for me to move.

"I smell smoke," she whispered. "Get up! It comes from down-stream."

"From Snow's Island," I dreamily suggested.

"That's nearly thirty miles from here. Come, lazybones! No sleep for you yet. We must cross the creek and scout it down-stream. The fire's on this side, I think."

With a dismal groan I crawled to my feet and climbed on my horse and followed her into the shallow ford. We emerged into much laurel and underbrush and were forced to make a detour in advancing down-stream. Fortunately we finally hit upon one of the innumerable cow-paths which led in the desired direction and thereafter traveled in some comfort. She slid to the ground and I followed her example. Motioning me to remain where I was, she left the path and stole into the woods toward the creek. Very soon she was back and announcing—

"Just opposite this point."

Leaving her in charge of the horses, I took my turn at investigating. She was soon beside me, saying the horses were too tired to run away. From the volume of smoke she drew several conclusions; it was a British camp, the men were regulars and knew little about the advantage of a small fire. They were in considerable force and consequently would be well provided with food.

"Where did they come from? What are they up to?" I asked.

"From Georgetown, for we passed none on the road from Charleston. They plan an attack in force on our island."

We could only see the smoke as the height of the bank, some fifteen feet, and the screen of trees cut off all view of men or equipage. Only the smokes from the different fires marked the location. The leader must have felt very secure or else been very ignorant of border-warfare, for we could discover no sentinels along the bank. Had there been Tory woodsmen among them scouts would be out ranging both sides of the creek. It

was imperative that we scout them and estimate their numbers.

The girl was eager to cross at once and would have slipped in and swum across had I not restrained her. We stole up-stream a few hundred feet where I had no difficulty in finding two drift-logs hung up by the last high water. I tied these together with some vines and had her get forward with a long pole while I waded and pushed. In mid-channel I was compelled to swim, but for most of the distance my long legs found bottom. Running the raft among the bushes, we scouted down-stream, keeping under the bank.

When at the edge of the camp we crawled up the slope and obtained an excellent view of the enemy. We estimated their number to be a round hundred not including the batmen and other servants. Several tents well back from the creek were the officers' quarters. Close to the bank and near our hiding-place stood a covered wagon. The horses had been unharnessed and were grazing some rods away.

"We can go now," I murmured.

She pressed my hand and stared intently at the wagon. Several hogsheads showed through the opening at the end.

"The men live off the country. The officers live high," she fiercely whispered, nodding toward the wagon.

A glimmering of what was in her mind penetrated my thick head and I can't say that I liked the idea.

"We've done enough," I discouraged her.

"Never enough until we've done all we can," she quickly corrected. "If that wagon could be swung around it easily could be started rolling down the bank. Before they could get to it the hogsheads could be rolled aside under the bushes. General Marion needs some of those supplies."

Remonstrance was useless, and of course I was bound to follow her. So the two of us, I in the regimentals of his Majesty's foot soldiers and she in her stolen officer's uniform, worked along the lip of the bank until almost behind the wagon. It stood parallel to the edge of the bank. Had it been left with its hind wheels at right angles to the bank very little exertion would have been necessary to start it on its downward plunge.

While we were studying the problem a batman came up to the wagon and from a broken hogshead filled a kettle with freshly killed pork. We were within a dozen feet of the fellow. Elsie's eyes twinkled with quiet amusement as we watched him glance stealthily toward the tents and then sneak a deep swig from a jug. Wiping his lips and assuming an air of great innocence, he returned to the cook's fire.

"Let's have it over with," I urged, anxious to get her back across the creek.

"Wait! More men coming."

There were six of them and each carried a big bucket. The girl groaned.

"They'll empty the wagon if this keeps up."

THE squad was not after supplies, however, but water. When they reached the wagon four of them spread out so as to block the view of any one in the camp while the remaining two stooped quickly and caught hold of the long pole and swung the wagon about until the rear end opened on the bushes at the edge of the bank. The girl softly gasped in delight in having our problem so expeditiously worked out for us.

The maneuver was immediately explained. Passing along the wagon to go down the bank for water, each man stopped and sampled the jug, the position of the vehicle effectually screening them from any observation. Elsie's hand rested on mine and trembled with excitement and anticipation of victory. The squad spent no time at the creek but hurried to return to the jug, which they drank from again.

"Good discipline!" she jeered. "Now's the time before another squad gets thirsty!"

We crawled from the bushes and were at the tail-board. Between us and the nearest group of soldiers walked the squad with the water-buckets. It would be impossible to sight more than our legs as the body of the cart was well filled. Elsie seized one wheel and I the other and we pulled together. We had just time to leap aside as the wagon started crashing down to the creek. An angry sergeant shouted some orders and we slid down the bank in the path made by the wagon and paused long enough to throw half a dozen hams into the bushes and to roll out one hogshead and push it deep among the vines.

Men reached the top of the bank when we started for the raft. We were not seen, nor was our presence suspected. I heard one

soldier proclaim that the bank had "caved in." The bend of the creek hid us from the view of any men gathered about the wagon and we adopted a bold course and started with the raft. When within less than a rod of the shore a musket banged and a ball splashed in the water behind us. Had we crossed a few rods farther up-stream we could have landed unseen.

We dived into the woods and ran for our horses. More shots followed at random. Their discovery of us drove all thought of salvaging the broken wagon from their minds. When we were abreast of the camp we took time to peep through the bushes. A score of men had descended the bank and were searching for a likely crossing. Their leisurely movements suggested a distaste for the task. Those on top of the bank continued pouring bullets into the woods where we had left the raft. I do not think any of them had any suspicions that we had dared to come down-stream. Officers next arrived on the scene and began shouting orders for different squads to cross over.

We regained our horses and followed the cow-path. I was in the lead and we had left the camp nearly a mile behind us when my heart gave a flop and I halted my animal and stared blankly at the half a dozen gun-barrels thrust through the foliage on the right of the path and all but touching me.

"Freedom forever," shrilly called out the girl, recklessly crowding her horse between me and the guns.

"I'm Elsie Macson!"

The bushes rustled on my left and a tall, angular man stood beside me. I saw him from the corner of my eye as the brown gun-barrels would not let me turn my head.

"By jing! If it ain't the young gentry come back to help us!" cried a familiar voice. "Mistress Elsie back again, too!"

It was the man who had guided me from the island. Elsie commanded—

"Tell them to lower their guns, Shonts."

The guns already were being withdrawn. A young man with the first fuzz on his cheeks stepped into the path and grinned delightedly at Elsie, then stared questioningly at me, his eyes hardening as he beheld my uniform.

"Your prisoner?" he rapped out, seizing my horse by the bridle.

"My cousin, not an enemy. Get back with the others. M'Cottry's men, I take it."

"Six of us," he replied, backing into the bushes and still eying me sharply.

"We may be followed by redcoats. They have a camp above here on the opposite bank. This man has come to fight with us. Place your ambush."

Shonts began:

"Lorky! But this gentry's visit to the island put more heart into my old gizzard——"

"Shut up, Shonts. Scout ahead and see if they're coming," she commanded.

The leader of the squad gave an order and his riflemen, lean, brown fellows, tall and gaunt, broke into the path. The leader cried:

"There'll be no ambush. General Marion is attacking 'em from t'other side. Come on, boys, or we'll be missing the fun."

Away they streaked after Shonts, trailing their long rifles and running in single file like Indians. With a shrill cry of excitement the girl wheeled her horse and rode after them. I had been unable to prevent her from entering Charleston, but it did seem ridiculous to permit her to ride into a battle. I caught up with her and insisted:

"Pull in. This is something you can't do."

"Jim, you're hurting me!" she angrily protested. I had clutched her slim wrist overhard.

I turned my horse across the narrow path and declared:

"No farther. You've done your part."

"Out of the way! Don't you hear them? M'Cottry is there with all his men. The Horrys are there! My brothers are there! The general is there!"

This as the noise of combat rolled across the creek and found us among the trees.

I would not give ground and she desperately tried to force her horse into the bush and thus elude me. To simplify matters I threw my arm around her waist and tore her from the saddle and held her before me. She fought like a wildcat, then we both had our attention acutely attracted by a harsh voice crying:

"Lean one side, you young fool! I've got him!"

Her officer's hat was off. Her wig was gone. Her bobbed locks were disheveled. Tears of rage stained her brown cheeks. But at the sound of the voice she shrieked in terror and flinging both arms about my neck flung herself against me. Old Angus

Macson, her father, was bounding down the trail, a long knife in his hand, his useless rifle discarded.

"It's Cousin Jim, father!" she screamed. "Keep back!"

"No quarter on Lynch's Creek this day!" he bellowed, dancing about us and seeking an opening at me.

"He's come to be one of us, fight with, die with us," she cried, flinging herself to one side to keep between me and the knife.

He ceased his murderous maneuvering and stared blankly, and exclaimed:

"Then what the —— does all this bear-wrestling mean? But never mind that now. We'll get at the truth of it later. Don't let him get near our men in that uniform. They'll shoot and ask questions afterward. Take him to the island, or I won't answer for his life. I'm off for the fight!"

"There's a wagon of supplies over the bank at the edge of the creek!" she called after him.

He was gone and she turned a rueful smile on me and slipped to the ground.

"I scratched your hands, I'm afraid," she murmured.

"You young wildcat!" I gritted.

"Only a soft, purry kitty," she said, taking my hand. Before I knew what she was up to she had bowed her head and kissed one of the red welts.

The next moment she was springing into the saddle and beckoning me to follow. She rode at breakneck speed down the creek toward the island. The sound of the battle was growing fainter, the gun-fire diminishing rapidly. Turning her head, she shouted back to me—

"They're licked! Licked out of their boots, —— 'em!"

WHEN the men began straggling into the island-camp there was a trophy of the fight hanging from each saddle. That they had found and plundered the wagon was shown by the hams of bacon, the fowls ready for roasting, bags of biscuit, turkeys—a dozen I counted—and several pigs ready for the coals. The pigs were fat and Elsie told me they were brought from Georgetown as the native product never had enough to eat since Charleston was captured. Others carried quantities of white shirts, knapsacks and blankets.

At least a dozen of the men covered their rags with dragoon-cloaks. Elsie had conducted me to the grove of trees reserved for General Marion. Although many curious and not a few hostile glances were cast at my uniform no one came near us. Several called out greetings to the girl, and Captain William M'Cottry, of M'Cottry's Riflemen, rode within a few rods of us and expressed his pleasure at my cousin's safe return.

At last came General Marion with old Angus and Big Simon and one of the Horrys riding with him. I looked for trouble from Simon but to my astonishment he grinned broadly on beholding me and thrust out a huge hairy paw.

Elsie recalled me to Marion's recollection, which was scarcely necessary as his glance told me he remembered our last meeting. He dismounted and she began detailing our adventures in Charleston, but he cut into her narrative by saying:

"I know all about that. I receive the *Gazette* by courier as fast as it's printed."

Then to me:

"We're not so blind as Cornwallis may think. My methods of collecting the news allowed me to keep track of all you endured, Mr. Lance. The death-sentence, following the informal court of inquiry, violated all justice and decency. However, you're well out of it and I'm glad you've found yourself."

With that he gave me his hand.

As I studied him more closely I discerned a radiance in his face and a sparkle in his eyes which were difficult to explain. Surely it was not because a Lance had finally made a decision. Elsie, too, was puzzled and she knew him and his moods so well I concluded the cause must be out of the ordinary. Big Simon and his father kept up an incessant chuckling, a mode of behavior in the latter that was positively startling.

The girl's glance darted from the general to her relatives, then back to the general again. Marion raised two fingers to his mouth and gave the peculiar whistle the girl had sounded while disguised as Runty. The men came swarming toward him from all directions. As they ranged about us in a circle I estimated there were about fifty of them. Clapping a hand on my shoulder, General Marion said:

"This is your new comrade. This is his second visit here. This time he comes to stay with us. You will make him feel welcome despite the uniform he wears. He has

suffered much from the enemy and narrowly escaped being hung. His name is James Lance and he is distantly related to our excellent friends the Macsons."

Pausing a bit and allowing exultation to show in his dark face, he continued:

"Now I have news for you. After General Gates was defeated I did not care to tell you at first, for fear it would discourage some of you. But this news will not keep. It is glorious news! On October seventh Colonel Ferguson of his Majesty's forces was completely defeated at King's Mountain. His fourteen hundred troops were either killed or captured. Our old enemy Colonel Tarleton is even now out to avenge the defeat. The patriots at King's Mountain were led by Colonels Shelby, Cleveland, Sevier, Campbell and Williams. All honor to them and may we do our part as well! It will be a long time before Cornwallis tries to conquer the western part of the State again. It is our duty to prove to him that his army is very unwelcome in this part of the State."

This was a long speech for Marion to make, I have since learned. And never before did I realize how much noise half a hundred men could make when overjoyed. But then, Big Simon was a host in himself, his mighty bass making the atmosphere reverberate as if every yell was a thunderbolt. Old Angus shouted in a jargon I was afterward informed was Cherokee. And the thin, staccato yelps of the girl Elsie nearly split my ears.

After the cheering was finished I called Big Simon one side and removed Tickridge's big cloak and coat from my saddle-roll and displayed them to him. His eyes lighted like those of a child over Christmas gifts.

"He is a big man and I had you in mind when I took them," I said, gathering the garments up from the ground and dumping them into his arms.

He stared at them and then at me.

"Giving them to me?" he muttered, seeming not to understand.

"Who else on Lynch's Creek and the Pedee can wear them?" I replied. "I'm sure the skirts trailed the ground when I put them on."

"Swallow me whole!" he gasped. "Such a brave coat! Such a brave cloak! He was a monster big man you got them from, Cousin Lance. Did he give them to you?"

"Not willingly," I answered.

The girl laughed aloud and let the cat out of the bag by crying:

"Ah, Simon, brother of mine! You should have seen the two fighting on the floor!"

"Aye? Fought, did they?"

And he gaped at me in amazement.

"Yet it was a stout clout you gin me up home."

And he rubbed his head and grinned sheepishly.

"Cousin Lance, it's neighborly of you to fetch me these from the city. From what our general has told us you must been sort of pressed for time. Lordy! but I'd love to meet that man at hand-grips! He must be worth while. Cousin Lance, I'm terribly beholden to you— That spy-talk of mine shows what a big fool a man can be. You forgot it, I hope?"

"Entirely; and for good measure these should go with the cloak and coat." And I produced Tickridge's two pistols, beautiful weapons, and gave them to him.

He was dazed by these last gifts. He examined them reverently, then thrust them through his belt, only to pull them out and aim first one and then the other at an imaginary foe. I turned away to escape the embarrassment of further thanks and Elsie walked by my side and gazed up into my face and cooed: "It was good of you to remember Simon. The scratches—like his spy-talk—are all forgotten, I hope."

"All forgotten, cousin. But I shall never forget the time you stood at my stirrup!"

"La! That was only between cousins and you make me ashamed by remembering it," she rebuked.

My forward words drove her from me for she quit me on the spot and hurried to where Marion was seated in his favorite patch of shade. I wandered aimlessly about the hollow until a black boy found me and informed me I was wanted by the general. Elsie was still with him when I obeyed the summons.

"You wish to join us, Lance," he stated in a crisp voice.

I nodded. He went on:

"You must have different clothing. To be captured in that uniform means death as a spy."

"To be captured in any uniform means death for me," I reminded him.

"Then we'll make the shift so my men won't shoot you by mistake. You seem to be a young man of considerable judgment and should have a lieutenancy. We'll call

it done. I'll keep you with me until I can place you with one of my captains." Then whimsically—

"Your horse alone, you know, ought to be worth a commission to you."

"Take him for yourself, sir."

"Not yet. Perhaps I may need him some time, but not yet."

My proffer of the horse recalled to my mind for the first time the money we had brought from my uncle's home. I asked Elsie for her saddle-roll and by the lighting-up of her face I knew she understood. She darted away and the general glanced after her in a bit of surprize but made no comment. To me he said—

"That is all, lieutenant."

"If you'd let me stay a bit— We brought something for you, Elsie Macson and I," I said.

He nodded good-naturedly and fell to studying a map. Soon the girl was back, flushed with her run and the weight of the roll on her slim shoulder. She threw the roll at my feet and I unstrapped it and placed the bag of gold before Marion. I explained:

"The fruits of robbing my uncle, David Macson. He wished me to tell you that more money would be forthcoming soon."

Marion opened a bag, and I heard him whisper:

"Gold! Life-blood!"

Then to me—

"How much?"

"Two hundred English pounds."

"Lieutenant Lance, you've done good work for the United States," he gravely said. "I had not heard about the 'robbery.' Let's have it."

I briefly gave the circumstance. When I finished he nodded appreciatively, and resting a hand lightly on the girl's shoulder, said:

"Even better than the gold—and God knows we needed it dearly—is the news you brought me, Elsie Macson. Now run away and change back to your gown. Lieutenant Drance is growing peevish in spirit and must have his clothes and be paroled."

IN THIS way was I made to feel at home in Marion's camp. Let none get the idea from anything I've written that Marion was slack in military matters that counted. It would have been impossible for him to impose the usual military discipline on ragged, half-fed troops serving without pay. Only loyalty to him and the Cause held them. They might number twenty today and a hundred tomorrow. If they stole away to visit their families, or to attend to their meager planting they always returned to him.

Therein was the miracle. They always returned. From his own lips I was to learn that throughout the greater part of the war his force seldom exceeded seventy in numbers. With this shrinking and expanding strength he worked wonders. If he did not require of his men all the niceties of discipline he did on the other hand demand services that few king's Regulars could give. He expected his men to ride seventy miles on a stretch in order to attack a superior force and for twenty-four hours eat nothing but cold potatoes.

I remember when one fellow was brought up before him on the charge of desertion. The general immediately ruled the chap was too worthless to waste a court-martial on. And yet he was an excellent drillmaster. The secret of his success in this particular was his unfailing patience. Had he been given large bodies of troops to handle he would have led as finely a drilled lot of men as could be found on either side of the war, either north or south.

When his destiny reserved him for the command of ragged backwoodsmen he cut his cloth according to his limited pattern. And surely none ever elevated partisan leadership to a higher plane. Working with the material at hand and under conditions dismaying to one less stout of heart, he wisely eliminated all non-essentials.

There were five principal rules for his followers. They must ride well, shoot straight, never be taken by surprize, always expect to attack a foe outnumbering them, be humane to the wounded and the prisoners.

Beyond these general requirements his men would have been the despair of a martinet, for they were always coming and going between home and camp. If they took frequent leaves to assure themselves that all was well with their families, also did they scout deep into the enemy's lines. If they were absent planting or harvesting their scanty crops, they were ever on the alert when in service so that their beloved leader should not be taken by surprize.

If any have imagined Marion's men to have been little better than outlaws in their warfare they have gravely maligned one of

the most gentle, most humane and most just men who ever fought for a righteous cause. In a time and region where quarter frequently was denied by both sides, when neighborhood strife resulted in savage extremes, there is no record of Marion's ever permitting prisoners to be executed or the wounded neglected.

All these things were not fully understood by me when I joined Marion's command of reckless riders. I was to learn by degrees as each sally brought out some characteristic of the man. One fact I did quickly realize, and that was the intense loyalty of the men to their leader and their blind faith in his astuteness. Some have described him as being gloomy of temperament. I, too, have seen him when the gravity of the national situation made deep lines in his face.

Undoubtedly the great Washington at times suffered from a touch of depression. On that, my first afternoon in his camp, however, while the news from King's Mountain was fresh, while he was scheming to take advantage of the girl's important news concerning Lord Cornwallis' plans to betake his military talent to Virginia, while my uncle's gold lay at his feet, I can say that his dark features were lighted by the faith of one who sees a glorious ending to a sad and stressful journey.

CHAPTER X

BIG SIMON REJOICES

ACCUSTOMED to viewing the resources of the British in Charleston and the surrounding posts, it was a revelation to learn on how little men can make war. Marion's men often rode into battle when equipped with less than three rounds per man. There were other times when fully half of his small force were spectators until a friend or foe fell and had no further use for muskets and ammunition.

Very often the majority of his troopers had to fight with nothing more deadly than swan-shot. To possess buckshot was to give a fellow a fine feeling of security. In fact, I can conceive of no troops waging war with so little to make even a defensive program possible. And yet, with munitions reduced almost to the vanishing-point, with his men always underfed and insufficiently clothed, Marion was ever on the offensive, darting in like a hornet against superior numbers.

I soon found my full story was known. Elsie Macson, now demure and maidenly in her coarse gown, said a word here and there before leaving the camp and what she left unsaid her brother, Big Simon, boomed out in a rhapsody of praise and flaunted his fine coat and cloak to prove my prowess. Shonts, the scout, for some reason placed me at the pinnacle of his esteem and did me homage at every opportunity.

The man's regard, so lavishly and publicly bestowed, actually shamed me. He had endured more in any fifteen days of the war than I had been subjected to in all my eighteen years. Officer and private made me feel welcome.

As their courtesy continued the more insignificant did I become to myself. How could a man plume himself and feel he was entitled to such attentions when in the company of such men as the five James brothers? There was Major John James, under whom served the Captains M'Cottry, Henry Mouzon, John M'Cauley, and John James of the Lake, a cousin to the major. Then there were those fierce warriors William, Gavin, and Robert James.

I came to know three other sets of brothers, for in the Williamsburg district if one went in, all went in. There were the Witherspoons, the Postelles and the Horrys. The last two groups were of Huguenot blood, as was Marion. Hugh Horry was a trusted adviser of Marion's. His brother Peter caught my fancy more because of his humorous ways. When excited he was inclined to stutter. Once, when in a tight fix, he was unable to give the order "fire!" His men waited while the crest of the danger swept down upon them. At the last moment he profanely loosened his tongue, bawling:

"Shoot, —— you! Shoot! You know what I want to say."

Among the others I greatly admired and would gladly have patterned after had it been within my capacity were Captains Conyers and Baxter. Conyers was of medium build, and one of the most recklessly brave men I ever saw. He was a superb horseman. Withal, he was rather a romantic figure and madly in love with Mary Witherspoon, daughter of John Witherspoon.

He found time to court his sweetheart between fights. Captain Baxter was fully as big a man as Simon Macson, which is saying much. It would be impossible to associate him with any thought except that of magnificent courage. In one engagement prior to my joining Marion he remained at his post after receiving four wounds, any one of which would have disabled an ordinary man for further fighting. In addition to these—only some of the notables—always coming and going on mysterious errands, we were constantly hearing of the work done by Sumter and Morgan and other heroic leaders who held the Torch high and kept it blazing brightly.

Naturally I felt abashed in such an atmosphere. There had been a time when the enemy had been inclined to jeer at Marion's followers. There was a time when I could not feel much respect for them; when I was shut up in Charleston and heard of them through prejudiced speech. But ever since Lord Cornwallis wrote to Colonel Tarleton, "I most sincerely hope that you will get at Mr. Marion," the general's reputation gained new respect even among his opponents.

Any one of the conditions and types of men surrounding our leader might have expected a bold, dashing fellow like myself to forge quickly to the front of affairs. But those who went through the mill know that among Marion's warriors were men who would have given distinction to any branch of the service in the proudest army ever to take the field. I quickly realized I was most fortunate in receiving a lieutenancy and permitted to remain near General Marion to act as messenger and the like.

Several days passed without my seeing Elsie and I asked old Angus where she was. He shortly replied—

"Where she belongs; working for the Cause."

"She shouldn't be allowed to go to Charleston again," I insisted.

"She scarcely will, now we've turned young Drance loose and he's gone to town to receive old Cornwallis' blessing," retorted Angus with a grim smile.

"The younker wouldn't 'a' minded staying here as prisoner if he could 'a' seen Elsie every day," guffawed Big Simon.

I was glad the young prig was gone.

That same day Shonts returned from a scout. His long face was wreathed with grins as he passed me to report to the general; and from the corner of his mouth he confided hoarsely:

"Whang-doodles, my fine young man. Whang-doodles afore 'nother sundown."

He was with Marion some minutes and shortly after his dismissal the order to mount was given. It was my first participation in a "brush" and my nerves were jumpy. I did not relish the prospect of shooting a ball or sticking a home-made sword into men whose uniform had been familiar to me for several months without arousing resentment. While I felt bitter toward those who would have stretched my neck, I had only kindly remembrances of such fellows as Beau Posby and Buck Masters and others. General Marion's kindly heart prompted him to guess what a stew my mind must be in, for he called me to him and briefly said:

"It comes rather rough to you, no doubt; yet I think you'd better jump in and have it over with. It's Colonel Harrison up Lynch Creek that we're after. There must be a first time for you. Afterward you won't mind it so much. Harrison has Tories with him who are close relatives of some of my men. Their situation is worse than yours. They'll be fighting kinsmen; you'll be fighting sentiment."

I saddled my horse and fell in at the tail of the gallant if disreputable-looking company. I knew Harrison had been in the field for some time prior to my first visit to Lynch's Creek and I did not believe I would encounter any of my Charleston friends. This was my consolation as we rode from the island and galloped through hidden trails and cow-paths, across streams and through woods.

Shonts passed me on a bony tacky, and called out:

"Whang-doodles at last. I'm achin' to make a killin'."

The fellow positively relished the pending encounter. I possess the physical and moral courage of the average man, but my faith in Marion had not had time to crystallize to the fineness where I could contemplate with composure a contest which seemed to be most unequal. The odds of numbers were hopelessly against us. There would come a time when I would view this disparagement of numbers as the ordinary

condition of a fight. Such was not my frame of mind that afternoon, however.

ON WE sped, passing along byways which only Marion's scouts and wild creatures knew about. I soon lost all sense of direction and yet we were not more than five miles from the island before we were halted and word ran down the column that another scout was reporting. His news must have been important for we changed our course and headed toward the creek, traveling southwest. As I passed the point where Marion had received the scout's report the girl Elsie swung in beside me, wearing a hunter's costume and riding astride. She was as gay and debonair as if going to some merry-making.

"You're not in this," I sternly informed her.

"Just riding back to where I came from," she demurely answered.

"Where's that?" I suspiciously demanded.

"Home."

"We're near it?" It seemed impossible.

"Quite near. You don't say you're glad to see me."

I reached for her hand but her animal swerved aside.

"You brought news to the general," I said.

"Colonel Tynes is at the forks of Black River. He has quite a force, which doesn't matter. He has many supplies, brought up from Charleston, which matters much. It's all right for me to tell you this, as you'll strike before they know you're at them."

"Where have you been since leaving the island?"

"At home. A nice little housewife."

"Ride nearer. No? How do you know about Tynes if you've been cooped up at home?"

"Little birds tell me. They fly up to the door and say *'cheep! cheep!'*"

She was most tantalizing. For all she knew I was riding to my death. (I can smile now at my mushy sentimentality without wincing.) Never before had I realized how dear a woman can be to a man. The head of the column broke through the last screen of bush and came to plunge into the creek. She turned off to the right to take the homeward trail and waved her hand mockingly. I stared soberly into her laughing face and set my head to the front. There was a bewildering rush of hoofs, as if the devil was hot after a sinner he had forgotten, and when I collected my wits she was riding stirrup to stirrup and shyly saying—

"Come back, Jim, after it's over."

The two men in front passed through the screen, leaving us isolated in a ten-foot world for a portion of a minute. Nor did she refuse this time, and the glory of her honest eyes always abides with me, and memory crowns that day as perfect.

Such gusto and racing of hot blood as I spurred on to overtake my mates! How scornful of the enemy's superior numbers! Her lips had made such a paladin of me that I would have galloped alone against the whole British army. And it's well that youth can be thus inspired; and it's natural and right that average men will gladly die in defense of their women-folks.

Now we were across the creek and Shonts was riding far ahead, his tacky developing a speed that was amazing to me who had been used only to well-nourished horseflesh. Other scouts were thrown out to guard against surprizes. We slowed our pace a bit; and in sober reflection I marveled anew how a girl in a lonely cabin beyond the creek could know of Colonel Tynes' movements. We even halted and idled away considerable time. There seemed to be no orderly procedure in our venture. The men laughed and chatted; some dismounted and snatched a few winks of sleep. At last Shonts came back and reported and was off again. The word was passed that Tynes was at Tarcote in the forks of Black River.

Other scouts were continually going and coming, combing the country ahead and on both flanks. Once a sixteen-year-old boy startled me by crashing down through a lofty pine, his body seeming to fall from bough to bough, with the last twenty feet covered in a dead drop. He had been in the topmost branches of the pine, searching the country with the eyes of a hawk. Thus did Marion keep informed of the enemy's whereabouts.

Arriving at the northern branch of the Black River, we followed it down to the lower ford near Nelson's plantation and crossed. It now lacked three hours to midnight. We halted and breathed our horses and enjoyed the luxury of stretching out at full length on the ground. Shonts found us and said he had scouted the

enemy's position thoroughly and that there was no danger of our presence being suspected. Colonel Tynes either imagined himself to be invincible, or else was grossly ignorant of partisan tactics, as he had neglected to place sentinels outside the zone of his fires. There were many Tories in the camp who should have known better. They, also, must have felt secure for Shonts saw them sleeping or eating or playing cards.

Marion gave a few low-voiced orders. The men mounted and advanced cautiously until we could glimpse the camp-fires. The greater part of the force then dismounted, leaving a few mounted riflemen for cavalry. With the horsemen on the wings the thin line curved forward into a semi-circle and we were approaching the camp. It seemed astounding that no obstacles were placed in our way. We simply walked forward. I was afoot and Shonts had left his tacky and walked at my side. If not for anticipation of what was to follow it would have been less exciting than hunting squirrels. I began to think we would plump into the groups of card-players before the action began. We were almost upon the fellows. One of them triumphantly cried out:

"—— my blood, but that's a good one! Smash them again!"

A stentorian voice—I identified it as belonging to Big Simon—called out—

"Surrender!"

Those awake made a mad scramble for their guns. A ripple of fire swept around the semi-circle and I saw three men go down—one of them who had damned his own blood. For a few seconds after the volley the camp might have been the resting-place of the dead, so quiet was it. Then it upheaved and belched forth men. Then came the charge and a worse confusion or more idiotic running back and forth I never expect to witness again. All I could liken it to was the insentient spinning about of a hen, whose head the ax has claimed. I found myself rushing forward, Shonts at my elbow shrieking in a fiendish voice:

"Whang-doodles, boys! Whang-doodles!"

I never learned the true meaning of this eccentric phrase, but the men apparently accepted it as a battle-cry. There was scarcely any firing after the first volley for very few of the enemy offered any resistance. Some broke away into the darkness while those unable to escape meekly submitted to surrender. I must have cut rather a ridiculous figure as I dashed frantically into the camp, with two pistols drawn and no one to give me battle.

Men stared at me blankly as if I were some sort of raree-show as I rushed through the various groups. The only signs of fighting were where the enemy were breaking through our thin line and into the Tarcote swamp.

Shonts, lusting for action, made for this point, and, as it was awkward to remain with men who had no heart for fighting, I kept close to his heels. We were half-way through the confusion when by the light of a fire I beheld a figure making a rush from a tent for a horse tethered near by. The glimpse I got of his uniform, let alone the fact he came from a tent, satisfied me he was an officer. Leaping after him, I caught him just as he was about to vault into the saddle.

"Leave go, curse you!" he snarled, trying to kick me in the face.

I struck him over the head with the barrel of my pistol and yanked him to the ground. It was not until I got him back to where our men were rounding up the prisoners that I learned he was none less than Colonel Tynes. Shonts, too, had bagged an officer as had Big Simon.

It was ludicrous to see Big Simon with his prisoner tucked under one arm, his feet barely scraping the ground. We had not lost a man. What impressed me the more was the fact that while gathering up the plunder more than a score of those safely concealed in the swamp came forth and voluntarily surrendered and asked to be enrolled in our troops.

With the prisoners placed under guard and the officers paroled, we hurriedly collected the stores and destroyed what we could not take with us. There were new muskets and pistols with powder and ball to load them. There were broadswords and bayonets and there were new saddles and bridles. Those who had ridden bareback, or in worn saddles, speedily equipped themselves.

And more than one home-made sword was hurled into the swamp to be replaced by a more decorative weapon—but I doubt if more effective. Those of our men who were armed with rifles, after the Kentucky pattern, refused to replace them with new

guns. The powder and ball, however, were pounced upon with avidity.

One fellow fervently exclaimed:

"Thank God! I can go into the next fight with a loaded gun!"

SHONTS would have nothing to do with a sword, nor would he change his gun, but he did thrust three pistols in his belt and proclaim himself ready to fight any five Tories in the State. Of the food-stuffs we were compelled to burn much, although every saddle was heavily loaded. Of the generous liquor supply Marion allowed each man a dram—Shonts sneaked two stiff ones extra—and stood by while the rest was poured on the ground. On being questioned about the large amount of supplies, Colonel Tynes ruefully replied they were intended for the new recruits he had expected to enlist in and about Tarcote. Some of the very men who would have joined Tynes now were eager to join us.

From this surprize-attack through many viciously contested affairs I saw enough to know that General Marion never butchered the captured. And I hold to this with any fashion of argument despite the letter written by Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, charging that nearly all the inhabitants between the Pedee and the Santee Rivers were in arms against his Majesty because of Marion's "cruelty," and "opportunities for plunder" that he afforded his followers. Balfour followed his lordship's example in complaining of Marion's treatment of prisoners. These charges were ridiculous and there were few, if any, of the English officers who believed them.

From Tarcote we slipped back to the security of Snow's Island and feasted like conquerors. Twenty bushels of salt which we had brought off the field were sent to as many Whig families, one bushel being given to Angus Macson to take home. Thus ended my first brush with the king's men, without my firing a pistol or striking a blow except the crack over the head I gave Tynes. I was pleased to find the capture of the colonel was much to my credit, although I could see nothing valorous in pulling a man from his horse.

"You did your part," the general was good enough to tell me the morning after we arrived back at the island.

"The whole business was different from what I had expected," I confessed. "There was no fighting."

"You'll have a chance to see fighting," he gravely promised. "The surprize at Tarcote gave us arms and food and quite a few recruits. We couldn't have gained more if we'd killed half a thousand men. The way it ended does our cause much good. And after all we don't want to kill off all our old neighbors unless we have to. When the war is over we'll be neighbors again."

"But these new recruits? Will they stick?" I ventured to ask.

"The most of them will," he surprized me by saying. "T'others will bolt at the first chance. But those who bolt won't fight against us again. They've got their bellies full. I'd rather have them out of camp and not eating up our supplies than to have them here. When one bolts I don't try to get him back. I won't have him back. Those who stay will be good soldiers. They're men—something like yourself at one time, Mr. Lance—who were slow in finding themselves.

"There are many men, too, who want to fight on the winning side. When we win they flock to us. When we lose they keep away. After General Gates' defeat I recaptured from the enemy one hundred and fifty of the Maryland line. Only three would join my command. The others refused, saying the Cause was lost. Gates' defeat was heavy upon them. They were honest. Doubtless the most of them are back in the fighting by this time."

Later that day Tom and Dick Macson came into camp and delivered a written message to Marion. When they sighted me they whooped a welcome and came racing toward me, their faces distorted with friendly grins. Ducking bashfully, they came to a halt and expressed their satisfaction in finding me on the "right side."

"You could 'a' cracked my head with a turkey-feather when Simon told us you was all right," said Dick.

"How's your sister?" I asked.

Tom gave a hoot of amusement and fumbled inside his shirt and pulled out a piece of paper sealed with a bit of gum.

"By jing," he cried as he handed it to me, "but Elsie would be mortal mad if she knew I came near forgetting that. It's her writing to you, Cousin James. She put on the gum so's we wouldn't read it. Please notice it ain't been busted."

I made a note of the integrity of the gum seal and then broke it. My fingers trembled a bit as I opened the paper and I'm afraid the brothers observed my nervous state for Tom had his tongue in his cheek when I glanced up. My fingers were steady enough when I had finished reading and my heart was heavy. For her message read:

COUSIN LANCE: It must not ever happen again. You must think me without shame. Do not come here as I should die of shame to see your face.

E. M.

I accepted it at face-value and savagely yearned for a real battle.

"Is there any chance for fighting?" I asked the boys.

They exchanged sly glances and Dick said:

"Sis sent something to General Marion. It seems to have started him planning something. Things usually happen after she sends in word. See! The general's walking back and forth and spitting out orders to Colonel Hugh Horry."

"She's been away from home again," I said.

They shook their heads.

"Not farther than down to the creek," said Tom. "But Sis ain't the same the last two days. Reckon she must have ague coming on. First she'll be all excited and laugh easy. Then she'll mope round like a sore owl in the sunlight."

"If she's been at the cabin how does she find out things to tell the general?"

"That's her business. We never ask her," replied Dick.

I deserved the rebuke and said as much. Instantly they were sunny and lovable again; and Dick further informed me:

"I can say this much; there's going to be a —— of a fight mighty soon. No tame little Tarcote business, but a real whangdoodle, as old Shonts calls it. That's why it took two of us to fetch the message. We're going to the fighting."

Old Angus and Big Simon also were going to the fighting. The latter came to me after the boys had run away to investigate the camp. Simon's broad face was glowing in anticipation of the bloody business ahead. Only one thing marred his pleasure; the general had learned that Major Wemyss on leaving Charleston had retired to Georgetown. Simon's great ambition was to encounter Wemyss personally.

"I'd break every bone in that barnburner's body," he wrathfully declared.

"How do you know he's in Georgetown?" I asked. "Not long since Elsie and I met him riding into Charleston."

"The general has ways of learning things. He says he's in Georgetown. That's enough," said Simon.

"The boys say Elsie is at home. She is in no danger?"

"She's at home and will stay there for a while. She's able to look out for herself."

"She's a woman."

"She's a patriot," he stoutly retorted.

That was their way of reasoning. The women were expected to do their part—do a man's part if necessary.

The camp began to bestir itself and Simon hurried away. When the Macson boys brought Elsie's message to the general there were in camp the Captains James, Mouzon, Waites and Logan. Young Lieutenant Scott found me and said we were ordered to perform certain routine duties preliminary to a thrust at the enemy. Our work mainly consisted of examining and selecting the best of our horseflesh and to see that the men were adequately armed. This was work, especially the judging of horses, in which I could show to advantage. We were soon able to report our tasks finished.

"We are after some Tories on the Black Mingo, less than twenty miles from here," said General Marion.

We felt highly complimented, for Marion as a rule kept his plans to himself or refused to discuss them even when they were obvious. Although he often conferred with his veterans, especially with Colonel Hugh Horry, the men seldom knew where or when they were to ride. If they saw Oscar, the cook, preparing an extra kettle of boiled potatoes, or journey-cake, they knew they were in for a twenty-four-hour smash.

THE day passed with the men on edge to start, but no order was given. Late that night Shonts came in, his horse gone lame, and Marion was at once aroused by Lieutenant Scott to receive the scout's report.

I learned the gist of it from Scott as Marion made no secret of the information.

"We ride early in the morning," Scott gleefully informed me. "This time you'll see real fighting. We'll bleed the Tories so they'll never want to see the Black Mingo again."

"How many men have they?" I asked.

"The general may know. We never bother with trifles like that."

My sleep that night was troubled with dreams of warfare in which I was ever fighting with a broken sword or an empty gun. It was a relief to be up and shivering in the crisp dawn and confronted with the day's job. After a hurried breakfast we were kept waiting nearly an hour. Big Simon hoarsely confided that Marion was waiting for reinforcements which should have arrived during the night. The enemy were very strong.

This convinced me that Marion gave thought to the odds against him even if young Scott did not. My conclusion was somewhat hasty, however, for now Marion quit his place under the trees and strolled among the men. He said little and there was something in his bearing that discouraged any intrusion. His dark eyes scanned every expectant countenance. His slight figure and his slender cut-and-thrust sword contrasted oddly with the bulk of the Williamsburg men and their British broadswords. Strolling back to his clump of trees, he gave the order to mount, and remarked to old Angus:

"The men are in fettle for it. We must fight when we are in the mood. I'll wait no longer for laggards."

"In God's great mercy let us have it done with," softly cried Angus, his gaze as wild as that of a fanatic.

So after all young Scott was right. Marion always had been compelled to fight superior numbers. His deficit in men and armament, however, he more than balanced by his method of attack. No leader more thoroughly possessed the knack of securing the initial advantage by taking the enemy unawares than did Marion.

At the outset of every brush he knew the foe held all the court-cards. We rode from the island, Shonts exulting as was his habit, Big Simon as happy as a child, old Angus mumbling blood-curdling threats with fragments of prayers. The young Macsons were boyishly exuberant. I found myself worrying about them, for in each I detected something which reminded me of Elsie.

Once clear of the island I again witnessed the phenomenon of men dropping from trees and emerging from the woods or the high river-swamps, each with some new word. One of the last scouts to join us was a black man and his report sent Marion's head high and started fires in his dark eyes.

To us who rode near him he confided—

"The enemy are under command of Captain John Coming Ball."

The veterans exchanged puzzled glances. From the general's expression they had expected to hear that Wemyss was waiting for us. Then Marion explained his elation by adding:

"Captain Ball, the slave tells me, rides a most excellent horse. I must have that horse!"

Half an hour later the general summoned Shonts and ordered him to scout ahead and precisely locate the enemy.

"Take some one with you to relay back the information," the general added. Shonts grinned and ducked his head toward me.

"Lieutenant Lance is the man you want? I think it a good choice," said the general.

I saluted and rode from the line after Shonts. As we galloped ahead of the troops he gleefully confided to me:

"This will be one of the biggest whangdoodles we ever had. Them Tories are as thick as fleas on a yaller dawg. An' they're hard to git at. But the gineral will have them out their holes an' their hides hung up to dry afore ye can scratch your head."

Our reconnaissance was direct and simple and unmarked by any adventures. We found the Tories at Shepherd's Ferry on the south side of the Black Mingo, and so strongly posted as to forbid our using the ford near their camp. The Black Mingo was deep, Shonts informed me, and could not be crossed except at certain points.

So we scouted up the stream and proceeded unmolested for nearly a mile before we came to another crossing. This was through a bog and over a plank bridge. We made our way back and found Marion eager to get our reports. Shonts insisted on my being spokesman and after I had described the physical situation the general gave the order to advance. We made a detour and approached the bridge in a wide circle to avoid premature discovery. We were favored by the same lack of precaution which had made the Tarcote affair such a

success; the enemy neglected to keep their scouts out.

THE last few miles were ridden in darkness and it lacked less than an hour of midnight when we came to the bridge. I kept my place by pressing close to Lieutenant Scott, who had a better knack of night-riding than I. General Marion always expressed a dislike for using bridges and usually burned them when occasion warranted.

When engaged in a surprize attack he invariably chose to take to the water. Owing to the swampy nature of the country at this point and the thick darkness, he reluctantly ordered us to use the bridge. The first twenty men had barely cleared the crazy structure before a gun was fired by an outpost. The hoofs of our horses pounding on the planks had betrayed us.

Stealth was discarded and the whole command rushed along the narrow bush-lined road at a reckless gait. We struck into the main road about a quarter of a mile from the enemy. Marion gave an order and all but a handful of men dismounted to fight as infantry.

Down the road was a dwelling known as Dollard's House. Our skirmishers reported the Tories were using this as a fortress. Captain Waites was ordered to attack the dwelling. Colonel Hugh Horry led two companies to the right while the small band of cavalry rode to the left to reinforce Waites. General Marion brought up the reserve force and kept me by his side to act as messenger.

From out of the darkness came Shonts, yelling—

"They've quit the house an' posted themselves in a field behind it!"

I was immediately sent after Horry to inform him of this fact and to save him from stumbling into a trap. But he had too long a start and I came up with his command just as they blundered into the hidden enemy. A terrific volley hurled them back, dazed for the moment. Having failed to deliver my warning in time, I remained to take a hand. The men gave ground rapidly for a few moments, then recovered and pressed forward viciously.

Whatever nervousness I had experienced now left me as I mixed in actual battle. For fear of riding down our own men, or being potted by them by mistake, I dismounted. The black night was streaked with red lines and fitfully lighted by volley-firing. Men were falling around me and I could not see that we were making much headway, although conscious of opposition at almost every step and also realizing I had taken no backward step. From this I deduced we must be going ahead.

My impressions were entirely different from those I registered at Tarcote. This was real battle and yet more vague in outlines than the Tarcote affair. I fought a duel with a blurred form and purely by luck brought him down with my sword. Another unreal shape cursed at me horribly and snapped a pistol in my face. I was dully surprized to hear my own weapon barking and to have the fellow fall against me. Then the pressure in front began to thin out and I found myself awkwardly plunging about in open places.

The men about me began cheering wildly and I soon discovered I was being left behind. I had to run my nimblest to catch up with them. Colonel Horry kept in the lead, yelling his name so friends would not fire on us. It was all a puzzle to me, a groping-about in the darkness; but it was very plain to the colonel. He knew the troops under Captain Waites had fallen on the enemy's rear and that there was no more fight in them. This ended the fight, except as we chased the fleeing foe into the swamps.

With nothing further to test my mettle I returned to where camp-fires were blazing. I walked slowly to recover control of my nerves, which were performing the devil's dance and making me shake as if suffering from ague.

A large number of prisoners already had been collected. Many of these were petitioning Marion to enroll them among his troops. The general had no ears for such at present as he was concerned with one of the battle's tragedies. With Angus Macson and the younger Macson boys he stood gazing down on Big Simon who was going fast. I joined the group and stared at the dying man.

In a wheezy voice Big Simon was saying:

"First feller that ever give me a real fight. Bury us side by side. 'Twas nip and tuck, but I got him."

Young Dick was sobbing. Tom, with scarcely more control, tugged at my sleeve and pointed to a figure a few feet away.

It was that of Captain Ben Tickridge and he was dead with his head twisted to one side in a most peculiar manner.

"——! Simon broke his neck with his bare hands!" sniveled Tom. "Never was such a man as Simon!"

Big Simon must have overheard the eulogy, for he grinned with pale lips, and muttered:

"Nip and tuck, and he was a most proper man. 'Twas a fair and square fight, but I never was denied once I got my hooks into my meat. Bury us side by side."

"You shall be buried side by side," Marion softly promised. "I will miss one of my best soldiers."

"And bury me in my cloak and coat that Cousin Lance fetched me," insisted Simon.

"Waste of good cloth," complained old Shonts from the edge of the group.

"In your cloak and coat, Simon," I told him.

"Aye, Jim Lance, is that you? Some one throw some wood on the fire. Gits pesky dark. Keep a eye on Elsie; she needs a man to look after her."

The last was scarcely audible, but I caught it. Then his father and brothers knelt beside him and we others drew back.

Shonts, the scout, described to me with much relish the fight between the two giants. It had taken place in the full glare of the camp-fire and there had been numerous spectators. Tickridge had quit his heavy slumbers too late to find and buckle on his arms. Big Simon had encountered him as he ran from his tent.

Rejoicing in the opportunity of having such a fit antagonist, Simon had promptly thrown aside his own weapons and the two had grappled with great fury. Tickridge had put up a terrible battle and was not the drunken Tickridge I had toppled over on the floor by a surprize assault. But Simon, as he had said himself, was not to be denied and he had snapped the bull-neck of his opponent and in turn was knocked over and mortally wounded by a chance musket-ball.

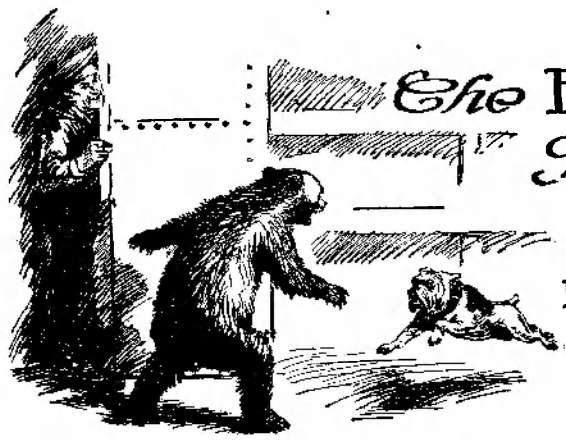
Now they were bringing in the other dead and among them we were saddened to find Captain Mouzon and Captain Logan. Lieutenant Scott was bleeding from wounds which we believed to be fatal. Although he recovered he was barred from ever seeing active service again. In all, our losses took a third of our troops. Captain Ball was down, and half the enemy were dead or wounded.

At the outset of the fighting they had outnumbered us two to one and had had the advantage of getting in the first volley. Nevertheless we had whipped them. The ——able pounding of the horses crossing the plank bridge had cost us dear. Yet it was a signal victory.

Although warned of our coming, the enemy had been decisively defeated. The cumulative effect of Marion's repeated successes was demonstrated that night as prisoner after prisoner offered to join us, while those hidden in the swamp yelled their desire to come out and follow Marion if assured of quarter.

Captain Ball's horse, a noble animal, was found and led up to General Marion, who from that night called him "Ball" after his master and rode him through many raids and battles. We turned back to our retreat, sensible that we had suppressed Tory activities along the Black Mingo. But my heart was sad over Big Simon's death, although I knew he had died as he would have wished, his mind happy at having a man worthy of his terrible strength. And his injunction that I look after the girl lay very close to my heart.

TO BE CONCLUDED



The Heart of the Crew

by KENNETH GILBERT

Author of "The Man Who Could Read Static," "Lights of Peace," etc.

SOME wise guy of a philosopher insists that the answer is always *cherchez la femme*, "look for the woman"—oh, I know French; see the two overseas-service stripes on that sleeve?—when the bottom busts out of everything or the telephone's busy or your poker winnin's disappear while you sleep, and I kinda agree with him, bein' a married man myself. The ladies *have* given us prohibition, haven't they? But how about practically turnin' a thirty-six-thousand-ton superdreadnought inside out? No woman could do that, could she? Yet that's what Dio, our mascot, did. But let me tell you about it.

This Dio was an undersized Jap bear; everything but mountains is undersized over there, it seems. A liberty party from the *Luzon*—my packet, you know, and the only superdreadnought of the Asiatic Fleet—brought her aboard. We'd had everything in the shape of a mascot from a Maltese tom-cat to a Tasmanian devil, exceptin' a bear, so naturally she was a novelty. Tame, well-behaved little brown cuss she was, too. Her head would just about reach your shoulder when she stood up.

With the exception of a few recruits we picked up at Mare Island, all of us had seen service with the Grand Fleet in the North Sea durin' the war and we'd come out to the Asiatic Station to finish the cruise. Some ship was the *Luzon*, a "home" for fair. Maybe you think we weren't proud of the gold star riveted to our funnel, showin' what we'd done to a German sub. But even more proud were we of the gunnery trophy, the red burgee with a black ball in the center, which had flown from our main-truck for four years running. That's what showed 'em what we could do with the big fourteen-inchers. What if other ships could swab us with their race-boats or ball-teams; we were the hard-hittin' boys that always ruined the targets. And feed? Say, there wasn't a ship in the fleet that could compare with us! Seems like the skipper, Captain Bissell, knew how to keep us jollied along with good chow, plenty of shore-liberty and other little privileges dear to a man-o'-warsman's heart and we responded by shootin' the old *Luzon* into first place and keepin' her there.

And this Dio mascot. Smart as could be. 'Twas no time before she'd learned how to answer "mess-call." She'd gather at the mess-deck hatch with the rest of us, waitin' for me as bosun's mate to pipe down for chow. And when I'd sound the whistle you'd better have looked out. Dio would start for her table as though she was a "first to fight, first to eat" marine recruit. If you happened to get in her way, —— help you! She'd bowl you over as quick as a wink. And then she'd sit up at a table Chips had built for her and scoff her beans or hash like a coal-passer just off watch.

Likewise we taught her that the only class of human bein's she could trust wore the blue blouse and bell-bottomed trousers of a man-o'-warsman. When some one in civilian clothes, like a bumboatman, for instance, would offer her something to eat and she'd start to take it we'd cuff her ears. It didn't take her long to get the idea in her

head and once there it stuck. She'd have died first before she'd have accepted food from a civilian.

That's the kind of a pal she was and we'd have gone through —— and a flock of typhoons for her.

Lieutenant-Commander Wilkins, the executive officer, put the situation into words. He was on the bridge with the navigator and they were watchin' Dio maul us around playfully while we loafed on the fo'csle durin' the noon-hour.

"Mr. Folsom," says the first luff to the navigator, "that there bear is the heart of the crew. Personally I'm not strong for mascots; they're a nuisance. But that cub has done more to keep up the good spirits of the men than all other things combined."

The quartermaster who relays this conversation to us says that the navigator agrees. And they were both right. If Dio had decided that she liked some other ship better than she did the *Luzon* half of our crew at least, "plank-owners" included, would have applied for a transfer with her. Pretty nearly every man-jack of us was figurin' on shippin' over for another cruise on the strength of stayin' on the *Luzon*.

That's how things were goin' when we dropped our mudhook at Yokohama, early in Autumn, for a farewell call before headin' southward for the Philippines and target-practise. And they were goin' too smoothly as we shortly found out. Queer, isn't it, how the sun sometimes shines and the sea flattens out like a millpond before the glass begins to drop, signifyin' that a storm is headin' your way? And it was no little undersized gale of trouble comin' in our direction, but a daddy-sized typhoon of grief.

We got our first hunch that we were about to head into somethin' when the steam-launch we had sent ashore as soon as we anchored came back with mail and cablegrams. I was doin' my bosun's-mate watch aft when I see the captain's writer come streakin' out of the Old Man's cabin.

"Shorty," he says to me, "we're goin' to get a new skipper. Be here this afternoon to take command. The Old Man's just ordered his things packed."

I didn't like it, somehow. Of course we'd all hate to see Captain Bissell go after bein' shipmates with him for two years in the North Sea. But there was more to it than that. It meant a change, you see, and you never know what's in store for you when a new hand takes the wheel. Maybe this new man would be all right; probably he would, yet we *knew* Bissell was O. K., and we could not be sure of the new skipper until he'd taken hold.

But we were hopeful. Nothing, we felt, could disturb things on the *Luzon* overmuch. We'd been treated right and it was unlikely there'd be any great change. At that, we mulled it over among ourselves, until four bells that afternoon, when we sights our steam-launch comin' from the quay and she signals that the new skipper is aboard.

We muster on the after-deck then in our best liberty-clothes. The ship shone from step to stern like a marine's belt-buckle, but it was usually that way, so we didn't have to go to any great pains to get her fixed up for the inspection the new captain would be sure to make.

UP THE gangway he came and as I was gettin' ready to pipe him over the side I hears McCluskey, gunner's-mate, and my pal, who was standin' hard by, whisperin' to me:

"Tribbetts, sure as I'm alive! A good man, but a bullheaded disciplinarian, if there ever was one."

There was no chance for me to question McCluskey, but I gained from his words that maybe he'd been shipmates with Captain Tribbetts before and it had been something too unpleasant to forget. McCluskey's dope seems partly confirmed the next moment when Captain Tribbetts stops just at the head of the gangway and peers at the ship's side. From where I was I couldn't make out what he was lookin' at, but I guessed. Too late it came over me that I had forgotten to make sure that the side-cleaners had removed their sling when they knocked off. It was my fault as that section of the ship's side was in my charge.

He pauses long enough to scowl at this evidence of carelessness and then stepped aboard. He was a sandy-haired little man with cold blue eyes; spare, and as neat and trim in his uniform as a yacht under new canvas. We half-expected to see him smile in a friendly way when he shook Captain Bissell's hand, but nary a smile.

When we knew him better, we found out it was his style.

But the new skipper was not alone. Trotting at his heels was the ugliest bench-legged bulldog I've ever clapped eyes on. Sharkey, he was called, we learned later, a libel on the name of as good a fighting sailorman as ever drew on the mitts. His underjaw stuck out like an old-fashioned underwater-ram while his eyes was as cold as his master's. I'm naturally fond of dogs, but Sharkey was the kind of a ki-yoodle you wanted to kick soon as you laid eyes on him, if you get what I mean.

Captain Tribbetts' orders were read and then came inspection. Believe me, it was some shakedown. If there was one rivet that hadn't been properly painted that escaped his eye we never found it. Main-deck, berth-deck, mess-deck, fire-room, engine-room, dynamo-room, fire-control and turrets, he never missed a thing. We'd always felt rather proud of how neat we kept the ship, but when he got through we figured we'd been living aboard a collier. He didn't say much, but by the way he sniffed every time he discovered some little "holiday" on the paint-work or bright-work, we knew that he was thinkin' and thinkin' hard.

By and by he'd seen everything but the forward compartment on the berth-deck. As he neared the head of the companionway, Sharkey, who had been trotting at his heels, suddenly stops and sniffs and then beats it down the ladder to the berth-deck as fast as his short legs could carry him. Immediately a —— of a commotion down below. Growls, barks and yells mingles in one grand uproar.

It busts loose just as Captain Tribbetts with his party reaches the head of the companionway. He stops and looks questioningly at Captain Bissell. But before the latter can hazard a guess as to what it's all about somethin' happens.

Up the ladder, —— bent, shoots somethin' brown and furry, as if the devil was behind. It was Dio, and the devil was behind, too, in the shape of Sharkey.

Captain Tribbetts' position from a strategical angle, as the fire-control sharks would say, was unfortunate. He's standin' square in Dio's way and bein' that she's in a hurry and by habit not in the way of walkin' around things, she forges straight ahead. She thinks she sees room enough between the captain's legs to get through, but she was wrong, yet you couldn't blame her for tryin'. So she dives and down comes the skipper, dress-sword, dignity and all.

It was a —— of a situation; I can see that now. Maybe old Captain Bissell could have accidentally keel-hauled himself and no one would have thought much about it, but for a new man, not aboard long enough to get his dignity saddled on to the crew so that they took him seriously, it was a grievous proposition. Skippers of a thirty-six-thousand-ton superdreadnought are not supposed to tumble about on deck. It was so unexpected that it was funny. I know I had to bite my lower lip to keep from grinnin', while I fancy I saw a twinkle in Captain Bissell's eyes.

Captain Tribbetts' face went white as a holystoned plank as he got up and smoothed down his clothes. Yet he was cool about it, so darn cool in fact that it gave you a chill just to look at him. If he heard the subdued snickers of the deck-hands drawn up in their divisions behind him he paid no attention.

Dio, by this time, was swarmin' up the lattice-work of the forward cage-mast with Sharkey barkin' his head off in rage because he couldn't climb too.

The skipper cocks his eye at Dio, just to make sure of the nature of the brown torpedo that had sunk him, and then turns to the first luff.

"To whom does that bear belong?" he asks in a voice all frizzled with icicles.

"The crew, sir," responds Wilkins.

"Have it sent ashore immediately, if you please!"

"But, captain—" breaks in Captain Bissell in remonstrance, for he sensed what the order meant.

Captain Tribbetts merely turns and stares at him without a word and the old skipper shrugs his shoulders as if to say, "Well, it's your funeral." And then they go on with the inspection.

Well, sir, when dismissal comes a minute later the old packet begins to hum like a beehive. Sharkey had given up the siege and had gone aft to the cabin, so we coax Dio down with a piece of candy. About that time the first luff's messenger hurries up with word from Wilkins that the captain's order is to be carried out at once.

We're gathered amidships, practically every man off watch, mulling over this thing. The boys was excited and if some fool had made a wild suggestion there was

an even chance it would have been put into execution. But there's a few of us older ones that keep our heads and we prevail.

So when the messenger comes up with the first luff's order I frowns down the chorus of "noes" that went up and leads Dio aft where the steam launch is waitin'. I gets permission to go ashore with her.

The way the boys bade her farewell would make you think they was partin' with a sweetheart. Every one of them files by and either strokes her head or shakes her paw. I looked around to see if the new skipper was pipin' this off, but he was nowhere in sight.

What to do with her when I get her ashore puzzles me for a bit and then I remember the big zoo they have there. That's the place for Dio, thinks I. She'll get good food and have no one to pester her.

So straight for the zoo we heads when we touch the wharf. Three of the steam-launch crew comes with me as a sort of honor-guard. The little Jap superintendent of the place is all smiles when he learns our mission and after seein' Dio housed in a nice, big cage and biddin' her good-by, we shoves off.

THAT night the ship is ominously quiet. Every one was so sore that even the customary band-concert didn't draw a crowd. All hands turned in early because they was too mad to sit up and talk about it. But before midnight fifty of them slipped into a couple of cutters at the boat-boom and jumped ship, something no one on the *Luzon* had done in months. We hadn't needed to under Captain Bissell; we could get all the shore-leave we wanted. But these boys just jumped ship to show their spite although they were the ones who had to suffer when they returned.

When the new skipper heard about it at "quarters" the next morning his face went white again.

"Stop all shore-leave," he directed.

That was all. Just a short, snappy order that he shot out between his teeth. But every man in the divisions drawn up for inspection felt like goin' into action. Fight! That's what the new skipper meant to do. He'd break us; he'd show us, would he?

Then we hears that we're goin' to sail the next day at noon for the Philippines, to get ready for target-practise. Ordinarily it would have been good news for we'd pretty near had our fill of Japan for a time. But it worked just the other way. We were leavin' our mascot behind.

Just to make sure that Dio's all right, I gets permission to go ashore on some pretext. On the way to the zoo I buys her a big sirloin steak. When she spots me comin', a hundred feet away, she pretty nearly tears down the cage in her joy. I slips her the steak and she wolfs it down as if she was starving. Just then one of the attendants come runnin' up.

"She no eat!" he exclaims, makin' signs. I don't get him at first, but pretty soon he makes out that the steak I gave her was the first grub she had taken since we'd brought her there the day before.

Then the reason dawns on me. She had been taught not to take food from any one but a man in uniform! And this Jap is in civilian clothes.

Why, —— it, Dio would starve when we went away! What the boys would say to this when I told 'em, I could well imagine.

Suddenly I gets an inspiration.

"Listen, Togo," says I to the attendant. "I'll go get her some more steak, but hereafter when you want to feed her put on a uniform of some kind; get me?"

Of course he didn't, but finally I put the idea over and he nods and smiles. Then I goes back to the ship.

Mad? Say, you ought to have seen and heard those gobs when I slipped them the news. At a word they would have deserted in a body, but we older hands finally eases them off. And the next day we gets away for Manila, a happy ship no more, but a boilin' —— packet; every man itchin' to do somethin' that would show how he felt.

Several times the night before I had come on groups of the younger lads talkin' excitedly among themselves, but when they seen me comin' they'd disperse. Whatever devilment they were up to they wouldn't let me in on, figurin', perhaps, I'd vote "no" and try to talk them out of it. So I was glad when the top of old Fuji sunk below the horizon without any real trouble breakin' out among us.

FOR three weeks we lay at Olongapo, the naval base sixty miles from Manila, gettin' ready for target-practise. Hot? Say, you could have fried a steak on the deck-planks. She's so

torrid that we have to keep the decks slushed down so that the tar wouldn't bubble out.

This climate didn't agree with Sharkey at all; we could see that. Every day the skipper would have the dog taken ashore for a walk in the shade with a Filipino mess-attendant. And every time an armed marine guard was sent along. We guessed the skipper feared we would kill the brute if we got a chance. But he should have known better; that he didn't merely showed he didn't understand bluejackets after all his years at sea with them.

Yet don't think we transferred to Sharkey any of the affection we'd lavished on Dio. No, sir. He seemed to know that he wasn't welcome forward because he hung around the cabin. Every time we laid eyes on him we thought of Dio.

Things steadily got worse aboard the *Luzon*. Our shore-leave was cut down to a minimum and the rations got skimpy. We sent delegations to the skipper to protest, but he told us flatly we were gettin' all the regulations called for and that we were a spoiled, complainin' lot to be kickin' about trifles.

One day I hears the paymaster talkin' to the skipper.

"Now that we're about to go on the target-range, perhaps I'd better give the men somethin' extra in the way of rations, captain," says "Pay." "It's customary, as you know."

"When I want you to make a change in the rations I'll tell you about it, sir," snaps the skipper.

And "Pay" turns away, mentally kickin' himself, judgin' from the expression on his face.

Thus the feud went on; the captain never oversteppin' the regulations, but givin' them to us just as they lay. The men weren't sayin' much then; they'd reached the stage of what these psychologists call a "dangerous silence."

And one day we casts off and moves out to the range. Just before we make the first run, I spots the gun-crews gathered around the scuttle-butt. I runs on to them before they can choke off Barto, captain of the forward fourteen-inch turret.

"Are you with me, boys?" he was sayin'. "We'll square yards once and for all. What if we do lose——"

"Pipe down!" sings out somebody to Barto, as I heave in sight.

And pipe down they did, nor could I get any of them to tell me what they'd been talkin' about. Which worried me some for I hated to see the boys go and make fools of themselves. Just then the bugler sounds "quarters," and the gun-crews go to their stations.

Our first run is to be a mile long. The target is bein' towed by a collier, five miles away. We are to come up on the target's starboard quarter and fire as rapidly as we can with the big guns until the spotters on the towin' ship signal us the run is finished.

I'm with a spottin'-crew in the top of the after cage-mast. Captain Tribbetts I can see on the bridge. Sharkey isn't with him and I guess that he's still aft, under care of the mess-boys. The heat sure was "gettin' " the mutt.

From where we're perched I can see the wave from our cutwater widen and deepen as we loosen up a few knots in order to overtake the collier and the target. Presently the collier signals we're to begin. Our range-finder crews gives the distance to the gun-crews through telephones. The muzzles of the fourteens in the turrets are swung out almost across our beam.

"Commence firin'!" says the bugle. And there's a hush falls over the ship. I can see a kind of strained look come into the faces of the men in the top with me and, old as I am in service and as many times as I have been through this sort of thing, I catch myself holdin' my breath momentarily.

Suddenly the ship reels slightly on her port beam and a thunder of sound like some one bangin' a bass-drum close to your ear comes up to us. It's the forward turret—a range-findin' shot. A white geyser that shoots up a hundred yards behind the target shows where the shot has gone. Then the other gun in the same turret lets loose and a second later the after turret opens.

Boom-m! Boom-m! Boom-m! It's a —— roarin' cataclysm of sound that envelops us up there aloft. The air was acrid with burned gas and the ship seems enveloped in the thinnest of hazes.

"What the ——" barks the lieutenant in the spottin'-top with me as he peers through his glasses at the target. "Tell them their range is off! All the shots are goin' one place, right over the mark!"

I telephones quick to the range-finders

and the guns and in half a minute back comes the reply—

"Range is correct, sir!"

"But, —— it, it's not correct!" yells the lieutenant. "Every shot would be a hit if the gunners would hold lower. Take a look at your sights!"

Again comes back the reply—

"Sights all O. K., sir!"

"——!"

The lieutenant starts down the ladder so fast you'd think he was goin' to abandon ship.

Then, all of a sudden, I *know!* It's those devilish young gun-pointers; they're deliberately shootin' just over the target, to show the skipper what they could do if they tried—all of them are first-class marksmen—missin' it on purpose in an effort to get square with the captain. I recall Barto's harangue to them before we started the run. And I remember that, contrary to custom, we had made no bets with other ships on the probable size of our score.

They know what will happen if their score is low, do those gun-pointers. We'll lose the gunnery trophy and make a laughing-stock of the ship. Perhaps the skipper will get a call-down from the admiral; maybe there'll even be an investigation of him, but that's nothing compared to the price we'll pay. The *Luzon* will be a hoodoo ship. They know, do these youngsters, yet they can't realize it all as clearly as I do.

In a minute I'm on deck, hurrying toward the forward turret, where I know I'll find Barto, in an effort to bring the fools to their senses. I can see the *Luzon* is comin' about, havin' finished the first run, without any more shots bein' fired. The crews are comin' out of the turrets, lookin' sullen as spanked kids.

AS I round a deck-house which shelters an air-shaft and ladder comin' from the fire-room, I runs slap-bang into somethin' that makes me think my eyes are goin' woozy.

Dio!

So help me bob, there she was, sittin' on her haunches, cool as could be, at the mouth of the shaft. Her fur is full of coal-dust, as I notice when I stroke her head, for I can't help seein' if she's real. Then I hear some one pantin' up the ladder and one of the black-gang, his face smeared with grime, sticks up his head.

"Come here, you brown ——!" he says to Dio, takin' hold of her collar. "You will desert, will you?" And he makes a move to start back down to the fire-room with her.

"Wait," I says. "When did she get aboard?"

He looks at me in surprize.

"Fer the love of Pete; weren't you in on it?" he asks. "Why, we smuggled her aboard the night before we sailed from Yokohama. She's been livin' in an empty coal-bunker ever since."

"Holy cat-heads!"

He's lookin' right by me and I notice the gun-crews that had crowded around fall back a little. I looks up, my heart in my mouth. Yep, there he was—Captain Tribbetts.

He's near the bustin'-point, I can see that; right at the edge of where a man either goes nutty or gets a stroke of apoplexy. It's an even bet that he's never so near tears—tears of rage, mind you—since his ma told him he couldn't have another slab of pie. The first luff and my spottin'-officer is with him; the skipper's got the straight of it all. And here's the cause of his troubles, sittin' there and calmly blinkin' at him.

What would have happened the next two seconds I don't know; the skipper wasn't one of those kind that can blow off steam and ease his mind. Save for the throb of the engines and the swish of the waves against the side you could have almost heard the chronometer tickin' in the chart-house.

"*Hi-yah!*"

We jump and face aft. The cry comes from a Filipino mess-attendant, who is racin' toward us. Ahead of him, danglin' two feet of broken chain from his collar, is Sharkey. Only he isn't the Sharkey we had known about the ship. His eyes are rollin', he's slaverin' foam and he's snappin' and growlin' at everything near him. He's stark ravin' mad. The gun-fire on top of the heat had curdled what little brain he possessed and now he's runnin' amuck.

The crowd opens up like breakin' ranks after inspection, each man jumpin' for somethin' that will swing him clear of the deck and this demon thing that's comin' like a bullet. Only the captain and me stands fast. I don't know why I didn't run.

"Sharkey!" calls the skipper, and in his voice there's pity and sympathy for the beast. And Sharkey responds, but not in

the way you'd have expected. He leaps straight for the skipper's throat!

It caught us by surprize. I'm no hero, but I'm enough of a man-o'-warsman to have jumped in and saved the skipper. But it seems like I couldn't think fast enough; events had been comin' too rapidly.

Yet even before Sharkey's forepaws had left the deck for the leap, there's a whinin' growl right beside us. Dio, seein' this maniacal brute rushin' for us, figured he was goin' to attack her. Maybe she's kind of been mulling things over in her mind and had decided that she did wrong when she let him chase her the first time they met. And here he is again.

Bwup-p!

That's the nearest I can describe the sound. Dio had merely started her left forepaw from the deck, with enough force to knock a man ten feet, and she'd caught Sharkey alongside the head while he was in mid-air. He snaps sideways, end for end, and although his head struck an iron bitt with force enough to crush his skull, his broken neck made it unnecessary.

What these playwritin' fellows call a "dramatic silence" grips for a moment. Out of the corner of my eyes, I see Captain Tribbetts' face workin' like a man rasslin' with a dozen different emotions at once. He looks toward the still form of his pet lyin' against the bitt and then back at Dio. Then his hand steals out and darned if he doesn't pat her head! Without utterin' a word, he turns toward the bridge again.

It was the first luff who struck while the iron was hot. There's a hint of somethin' like moisture in his eyes when he begins to speak.

"Boys," he says, "it's all right now and I'm glad. And now let's get busy and do some shootin'.

"We're comin' up on the second and last run in a few minutes, and there's still a chance to keep the gunnery trophy for the rest of the ships won't get a fifty per cent. score. *But you gun-pointers will have to make a hit each shot!* You've never done it before, but you can if you try, I'm sure. Only a hundred per cent. score from now on will save us!

"To your stations!"

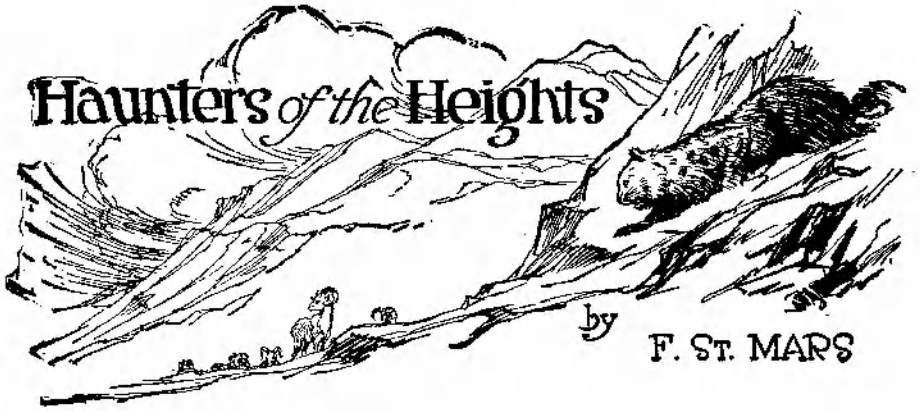
Did we do it? Take a look out there, near the breakwater. That's the *Luzon*, "Tribbetts' Home," they call her now. I'm on my way back to her to ship for another cruise.

Squint hard and you'll see a red burgee with a black ball in the center, flyin' from her main-truck. There's your answer!

CHANGED COURSES

by Glenn Ward Dresbach

AS ONE who drank poor wine from cups of gold,
Then turned to golden wine in earthen things;
As one who turned from splendors bought and sold
To find strange beauty in his wanderings—
Some ships when old are moved from busy ways
Once marked for them to ports where dreams have died
In power-lust. Now far in little bays
These old ships loiter with the sunset wide
And glorious about them. Scents of bloom
Drift down to them from island hills; and slow,
Sweet music whispers from the palms that loom
In hazy beauty where the breakers throw
Their pearls. . . . What cargoes wait? What ports may be?
Touched once again with magic from the Sea?



Author of "Citizen Yurumi," "Goomasaka Makes Good," etc.

"Something hidden. Go and find it.
Go and look behind the Ranges—
Something lost behind the Ranges;
Lost and waiting for you. Go!"
—*Kipling.*

THERE are a few places in the world where you can be at once transported right back to the beginning of time, when a cloud hung o'er nature and "the mountain burst from the tormented bosom of the earth." This place was one of them. But very few white men have penetrated there. Still fewer have come back again.

The hill was weeping—it *was* a hill; anything under a few thousand feet here was a mole-heap—so that it could not refrain from oozing water at every crack. Below, the slope ran sheer away like the roof of a house, and out in boiling mist, and beneath that the crests of other hills filled the gaps miles down. Above, the slope ran up, worse than the roof of a house, into a boiling caldron of fog, and above that, floating sublimely on nothing, the peaks of mountains shot sheer into the narrowed sky, miles up. To the right a giant rhododendron forest dripped eternally. To the left—nothing. At least, if you had taken three strides into the mist that hung there, you might have reached a bottom or you might not; you would certainly have taken a long time.

Men said that this was the land of the pillars that upheld the roof of the world. They might have upheld the canopy of the sky—those everlasting regiments of sublime, still peaks.

Then, as if to clinch the matter, there flung out across the grand scene a mighty bird, part eagle, part vulture, but larger than either, sailing, sailing, sailing, on nearly ten-foot motionless wings; a wonderful sight vouchsafed for a second or two by the mist and gone again in a breath. It was a lammergeier.

Nothing else seemed to live here. Nothing else could, one would think, in this dizzy abode of Time, flung up here above all things, in this land of everlasting silent sleet and mist. Looking hard at the scene for as long as one liked, one could have been quite certain that there was nothing else alive in it at all.

A gray ball of mist seemed to detach itself suddenly from the swirling welter above and come down-hill in great bounces. Of course, it made absolutely no sound. It just arrived, almost before one knew what had happened. But it might have been a 13.5 inch live shell, by the effect it had.

Seven—no, nine—light-brown beasts, three of them with beautiful circular horns, got up from the perfectly bare ground where they had been lying, quite invisible because motionless, and went off down the slope, dragging a welter of red earth after them, avalanche-fashion, with a clatter and a speed that was hair-raising; six resplendent, jeweled birds, all gold and flaming crimson and streaming tails, burst aloft from behind a boulder like small shells and whirred away over the unseen depths, and two little fat, guinea-piggy beasts dived into the bowels of the earth without comment. These were bharal, which are a species of wild sheep, golden pheasants, and a species of rodents known as marmots.

THE mist-cloud pulled up short, snarled, and turned into a thing like a leopard, but not a leopard exactly. Where leopards are tawny it was gray, beautiful, silvery gray. Where leopards have small black rosettes, it had large wandering ones, with the centers a fraction darker than the gray fur. Where leopards have none, it had a black line starting in the middle of its back. Where leopards have short, crisp coats, it had a coat of great length and even more beautiful and, where leopards have a medium-length tail, tapering like a cat's, it had a tail of nearly equal thickness all down, very long hair, and of great length. No man ever measured that beast, but certainly seven and a half feet would not have covered its length. It was an ounce, or snow leopard, and a fine old male into the bargain.

This beast was in a temper; any one could see that by the flatness of the thin ears. Nor did the unscathed departure of the bharal sheep, the golden pheasants, and the marmots improve matters. When a cat is full fed, the cat a saint is he; but when a cat is empty, the cat a devil will be. This applies to the whole tribe from King Leo downward, and this snow leopard was a cat and he was hungry.

Game, as a matter of fact, for one of those mysterious reasons known only to the game themselves, had ceased almost to be in that part of the world for days. Also, there are only three things that will make a cat fight—namely, love, hunger, and being cornered. The snow leopard was afflicted by the first two, and became a walking trouble center in consequence, and—*pff!*—the third had him.

It had happened so quickly and so secretly that even he, smartest of all beasts to spot danger, as a rule, had failed to scent it.

Down-hill of him, fifty yards away, a gray-fawn, grizzled beast, something wolf-like yet bigger than any wolf, walked stiffly out of the rhododendrons with its tail up, like a setter when about to "set," and its legs moving as if in splints. The snow leopard whipped half-round, crouched and snarled.

Up-hill of him, about fifty yards away, a second beast duplicated the first in action and appearance, neither giving any explanation at all. The snow leopard pivoted again like a hairy caterpillar on a pin and spat cat-fashion and furiously.

To his right there was a sound of pattering, as if a pack of hounds ran unseen in among the rhododendrons, and another pattering—of falling moisture from shaken leaves. The snow leopard leered sidewise and showed his teeth there also.

He had not been alone in his stalk upon the bharal and the marmots and the pheasants of gold. He knew it now, and if he had not been so very hungry and intent on his prospective dinner, he would have known it before he rashly showed himself in the open. As it was, his life at that moment was not worth much, and he knew that also.

These beasts, biggest of all the wild canines, perhaps, these two great brutes above and below him, and the others that he couldn't see on the edge of the rhododendron forest, these gaunt, furred shapes that were neither dog nor wolf but more deadly than either, were wild dogs, the wild dogs of those parts, and they are like the wild dogs of no other part of the world.

Those who have not lived in that unknown land will never be able to realize the precise force of the terror that surrounds the very name of these beasts. Dread is not the word for it. The very scent of a single wild dog days old will clear the deer of those parts—and they are, like the dogs and the rest of the outfit of that land, still little more than a mysterious name to the world—right out of the district for weeks, and set the wild sheep and ibex climbing till they go from sight completely among and beyond the clouds.

This explained one or two things that had puzzled the snow leopard; the scarcity and nervousness of the game for one, and his consequent hunger, for another.

Then, in an instant, as if at a given word, both dogs faced round at him with a snarl. Came a rush among the rhododendrons, and he was staring at a row of slavering-jawed, long-limbed brutes standing just outside the forest.

The snow leopard's body seemed to have slowly melted and run into the very ground, but at this new move his head went up and he began, crouched all the time, a horrible half-snarl, half-growl, glancing quickly from side to side. He was measuring his foes, calculating distances and chances, and searching for the weakest point.

Since he had himself put up and frightened out of reach the very prey which the

dogs had been tracking, and finally, stalking, he expected, and was like to get, no quarter. He had become the prey, that was all.

Suddenly there was a rush; five seconds tense with ferocious possibilities, and—silence, broken only by the horrible, ceaseless growling snarl of the leopard. The wild dogs had closed in another ten yards and stopped, that was all. They were surrounding him.

In the interval that followed could be distinctly heard the click and jar of a falling stone displaced by some ibex or wild sheep unseen in the mist and mystery far above, and, very far away, the dragging roar of an avalanche.

Then quick, deadly, horribly purposeful in its silence, another rush, followed by another pause. The wild dogs had closed in another ten yards, and the two big flanking males had edged round a bit farther.

And all the time the snow leopard had never stopped his ominous, snarling growl and the ceaseless twitching of the black tip of his lovely long tail. But now his note changed. There was a fiercer, more excited tone to it. He raised his head higher. He looked sharply from side to side with those eyes of intense hate—the merciless hate of the unconquerable free spirit that dwells in the eyes of all the cats. One felt that something was going to happen. The situation grew tense as drawn wire. And then, in a flash, the snow leopard charged.

There are probably no swifter beasts on Nature's earth than the cats for a short distance, and of the cats, except for the cheetah, the leopards and the puma are the swiftest, perhaps. The cats are sprinters past beating.

The snow leopard did not so much charge at the weakest point in the line of the investing enemy as move from the spot where he had crouched to the outflanking dog up-hill, without any appreciable interval of time and without seeming to touch the ground in the process. The calm, unemotional voice of fact, however, bids us record that he charged in low, long bounds, typically cat-fashion.

The big wild dog tried to get out of the way, while his fellows closed in with a yell that made the blood run cold, but he might as well have tried to get out of the way of a lightning-flash as that felinc devil. Before one could wink, the ounce seemed to have leaped on to, and off, the wild dog, and the latter was rolling down-hill all asprawl and yelling, and he was horrible to behold.

But this check, fractional as it seemed to human eyes, gave the pack time to suck in, all the same.

What followed will probably never be made clear exactly. It was all over before it seemed it had well begun, and most of the things seemed to happen at once, which, of course, was impossible.

There was just one ghastly, yelling, growling, snarling, leaping, clawing, tearing, slipping, rolling, wrenching, bristling whirl of savage bodies, in and above which the big snow leopard seemed to be forever bouncing from spot to spot, clean into the air, like some immense woolly rubber ball, a spitting, clawing, striking, almost sparking apparition of fury.

If he ever touched the ground at all one did not see it. Mostly he came down on the back of the wild dogs and kicked himself aloft again, or, leaping and dodging quicker than the eye could follow in and out, hitting right and left as he moved, managed by some miracle to avoid being torn to shreds ten times over by the maddened pack.

Then he was through—through before you could wink—was away up-hill like a great gray streak, the pack, stretched to the last inch, racing and raging at his tail. A hundred yards slid beneath him like running water—two—three. A bound, and then—a third and tremendous flying leap; a fourth—a slip and more than instant recovery—a wild, frantic spring; the strenuous scratching of claws on rock, and the frenzied pack raging, foaming, leaping at the base of the sheer cliff, and the snow leopard half-way up, thirty feet above their heads, crouched on a ledge that looked as if it would puzzle a monkey, glaring down at them with an expression of unspeakable hate.

Heaven knows how he got there without dropping incontinently into the bristling, gnashing jaws below. It was one of those miracles which was only not a miracle because of those that had already gone before.

TWO hours later, through the rifts of a driving shower of ice-cold sleet, the pack was still gazing up at those awful unblinking, staring orbs of hate on the cliff's face, waiting, with that

terrifying patience of all the dogs, for their prey to move.

Four hours later he was still there, that big snow leopard, crouched and almost invisible on his impossible aerie, while the snow-clad regiments of towering peaks turned in the setting sun by way of pale rose to ruby, to deep port-wine, to thinnest blue, and, as the stars came out one by one, to hang like golden gnats about their heads, to deep blue-black.

Had he fallen he would, after hitting the slope below, have rolled a full thousand feet, to pitch at last into nothing beyond—to pitch clear to the valleys miles below.

But he did not fall, for his was a nickel-steel nerve, and heights had no terror for him. He had no imagination, and therefore giddiness was not for him. He came down instead, leaping lighter than thistle-down, whilst very far away, down in the depths of some hidden valley, a sound, half-moan, half-yell, rose lightly upon the sublime stillness of the mountain night.

That was his friends, the wild dogs, but the cry was not for him. They were on the trail of some other unfortunate, and he no more than curled a supercilious upper lip and breathed a whiny snarl in answering malediction.

Cats travel more than most people realize when they are hungry, and the snow leopard was hungry. Moreover, it looked as if he were going to have to travel a very long way, for the news of the coming of the wild dogs—and it is nothing short of miraculous how news does seem to spread, as if by wireless, in the wild—seemed to have sent almost everything out of the country for more than a day's march.

But if the wild dogs have the power of imparting more fear to their prey than any other living creature—and the same is true of the smaller wild dogs of India and Africa—it is still the cats who are the most highly perfected hunting-machines on the face of the globe.

Although he was a big beast, and got along at a fair pace, it was next to impossible to see the snow leopard. There was a moon, but even she could not do more than accentuate, if anything, the resemblance between the gray fur of him broken up by black rosettes with the gray rocks and stony ground broken up by the black shadows, over which, soundless as a ghost, alert as a startled hind, he moved with long, loose, effortless strides, on padded paws that never made a mistake, never displaced a stone, and never snapped a twig.

He was crossing a gap between two belts of those black rhododendrons that seem to weep eternally, across a slope that oozed water at every pore, when, without a hint of what he was going to do, he dropped flat. It was as if the ground had slid beneath his feet—and, having regard to the vehement slope of the mountainside, this would have been no cause for surprize.

It had not, however. He was looking ahead, to where, motionless in the pale silver flood of the moonlight, weird and uncouth, ungainly and ugly, stood the very spirit incarnate of this land of chaotic antediluvian beginnings. The figure might have been turned straight out of the Ice Age.

It was a bear. Ancient and out-of-date as the bears are, this one "out-beared" the bears, so to speak.

Followed a pause of forty-three seconds, during which the figure stood, peering down, like a beast carved in rock. Then slowly it turned its great low-hung head and stared straight at the ounce, and the enormous breadth across the creature's cranium was noticeable, and that spelt enormous strength of jaw. That bear was what is known as a parti-colored bear—a mystery, a name and, like many other beasts of that land, still little else to this day.

Very few rocks could have moved less than did the snow leopard during the next few seconds. He seemed to have literally crawled into the ground.

He knew as much as the theorists about harmonizing with his surroundings and ten times more about the value of "freezing." He "froze," acordingly, in a fashion that would have done credit to an ice-block. And it needed no little effort for a highly strung beast like a leopard to keep like that under the cold ursine stare—dead still.

What the bear would have done if he had seen the cat is known only to that slow animal. It is enough that he did not, and passed on. All the same, the snow leopard was probably ahead of any white hunter in having met the mysterious bear of that land face to face.

Later he came upon a path, the work of the mysterious natives of the land, half-built,

half-trodden out of places a monkey might crawl along. It looked rather like a spider's web hung along the face of a rockery, only, in this case, if one missed his footing—and that was slippery and scarce a foot wide—he dropped a few thousand feet into the next world.

Moreover, to step aside from the path on the "up" side, one would have to be a bird or a bat, no less. These paths, therefore, are not ones to be entered upon lightly by day even, let alone by night. Still the snow leopard trotted along as easily as if he were going down a wide street, till he came upon a black mass, motionless, and he collapsed in his stride like a pricked bladder.

THE black mass was a takin. That is a beast quite indescribable. Imagine a brute big as a donkey, shaggy forward, part American bison, part bull gnu, with a temper like that of no other animal on this earth—and entirely without fear of man or beast or devil.

Now, it is one gentle little eccentricity of the takin's—pronounced tarkin—that he invariably charges on sight. It doesn't appear to make any difference at all what the size and character of the chargee may be, apparently, and probably it would make no difference if the chargee were an elephant. Its own ungainly, mysterious self alone knows why the takin should do this. It is the law, that is all, and all the more pointed because of his sharp horns.

This takin was no exception ready to prove the rule. Without the fraction of a second's hesitation he hurtled forward, head down, and *whistling* with fury. And the snow leopard went. It is not to be explained how he managed to pivot on that nine inches of level path and hold to it at full gallop—never mind the gaps which had crumbled away—for nearly half a mile, till a convenient boulder, about as big as a house and miraculously poised there without reason, gave him a chance to spring aloft and let the living thunderbolt go by. After all, his feat was nothing to the clumsy takin's, who never slipped and never made a blunder in spite of his hoofs.

Then the snow leopard resumed his path calmly, loosely, easily, effortlessly, of course, just as if nothing at all had happened.

Finally he turned upward—there being nothing left alive below, apparently—and climbed to the clouds and beyond. It was then that the meaning of his big, thick beautiful coat was made plain. Nothing dressed in anything but arctic attire could have faced the cold and lived. It was perishing cold, and to add to it, he was now at a height at which the rarefied razor-sharp air would have set a man spouting blood.

The snow, in spite of his padded paws, crisped sharply under his weight at every stride, and it was by the same token that he learned that all the blue shadows behind the snow-laden rocks were not blue shadows.

At least, one of them suddenly bounded up and came to halt, rigid as its own perch, on the top of a boulder—a magnificent old ram ibex, standing nearly three and a half feet at the shoulder and carrying great curved, heavy, bossed horns not a fraction under fifty inches along the curve.

Down sank the snow leopard, as one sinks who stands upon an elevator. The snow took him into its bosom, and he became a faintest smudge on the spotless white. It was a wonderful thing, this power to make himself well-nigh invisible in the very open.

And the stillness of the immemorial mountain-peaks—which is greater than the stillness of the desert, even—engulfed them and covered them up. It was by the same token, too, that the ibex was on the alert; that telltale crunching of paws on snow had sounded far a-magnified.

Then, in a breath, a stupendous bound; another; a headlong rush of half a dozen more blue shadows springing to life; a wild and reckless dash of the amazed snow leopard; a lightning sweep of the great armed paw; a fleck of hair floating away on the wind, and—the leopard, his forepaws plowing deep, as he pulled up in a cloud of snow and watched the ibex herd, with the grand old ram bringing up the rear guard, going headlong down a positively awful precipice, leaping like bounding stones from side to side of the chasm—down, down, till they became no larger than mice, than ants, and faded from sight.

Then he turned away with a curl of the lip and a whiny, yarly snarl; some trick of the wind had, he knew, played him false, and sent perhaps the only meal he was likely to see that night beyond the reach of him or any other living hunter,

for the ibex have a smelling-apparatus delicate as a Marconi receiver.

THE sun was leaping from peak to snow-clad peak in fiery splendor, the mists were wreathing up out of the valleys like the smoke from burning cities, and in the pine-woods below, the wonderful scented halls of a thousand pillars, the pheasants were crowing one to the other as the snow leopard slowly and sullenly slouched down from the bitter heights, empty, angry, cold and seeking a lair.

Suddenly from beneath the great cat's very feet it seemed there whizzed up almost in his face a jeweled and dazzling wonder. Purple and coppery red, metallic green shot with purple and blue, blue-green, golden green, crimson, bronze, marble-white, and jet, it flashed and flashed again in the new-born sun-rays, a glittering, jeweled splendor, as the snow leopard sprang, a wild, twisting spring, as quick as he knew how, striking *wheep*, *wheep* with his great taloned paw at—air, just air, and one flaming feather twiddling and floating down in the calm sunlight, just to show him how near he had been to a breakfast.

It was an old cock monal—precise species not remembered—and the snow leopard watched him as, after the first leap upward, he shot out from the slope horizontally, whirring like an avion, and then, shutting his wings, fell headlong, a very stream of flashing gems, into the steaming veiled gulf beneath.

After that the ounce found a temporary lair in a cave and went to sleep, too disgusted even to snarl. Verily, it is not so much beer and skittles as it looks, to be a hunting beast when luck turns against you. This one had not eaten for forty-eight hours at least, probably a good deal more; but luckily, like the Red Indian, he could fast and feast with a vengeance, and withstand the effects of both.

Yet there was more in this failure to secure prey than met the eye. In a certain secret den not many miles away he owned a mate, and both of them owned cubs, and, although not actually too weak to hunt for herself, the chances of her obtaining enough prey—mind, she needed almost a double share—for all in the present state of panic and emigration brought about by the shadow of the presence of the wild dogs were, if not remote, at least rather small. They were depending upon him, our friend who had so far failed. It is not invariably exactly cat-like, this husbandly affection, but it is pretty, and sometimes—even with the lion or the tom-cat—it does exist very strongly.

Sunset, always an enchanted hour, is particularly wonderful in that land of mountains, but the snow leopard had little care for such. He was out early because he hoped to surprize a golden or an Amherst's pheasant going to roost, but beyond a half-guessed glimpse or two of the former's gold and crimson, and the last foot or so of the latter's vanishing wonderful tail, he saw nothing of them.

Then he spent a fruitless half-hour lying outside some marmots' holes for the owner who refused to come out, and put all the best work he knew into an elaborate stalk on deer scent up-wind, only to find at the last, on peering through those pestilential rhododendrons, that the scent belonged to a mighty rare and antlered Thorold's stag well on the alert, a proposition even the promptings of his empty belly would not coax him into tackling that journey.

Withdrawing circumspectly, as he alone could, from the proud horned presence, without any wish at all to start it investigating on its own account, he floated—there is no other word that can describe his wonderful progress—always down-hill, searching, or smelling, rather, for prey.

NIGHT had come by that time, and the stars hung like "gimlet-holes in the floor of heaven" exactly above in the narrow glimpse of sky the mountains allowed, but the moon was behind the peaks as yet, and all around lay in deep shadow.

At last, after an interval of time countable mainly by the snow leopard's growing hunger, the ground on one side ceased to run away forever down-hill, and he found himself upon an immense tableland, a place not unknown to him as a haunt of giant, wonderfully horned wild sheep and strange horse-like creatures of the waste. And even as he set foot upon the level ground for the first time in many days and nights, there rose upon the utterly still air a sound that turned him, between stride and stride, to a beast of stone. It was the single, thin, appealing plaint of a domestic goat.

From that moment for some time the

ounce ceased to exist as a living mammal of this earth at all, and became a spirit, a wraith, a djinn.

When next the brute appeared it was beside a walled-in enclosure, lonely, desolate, filthy, and built of rocks. It might or might not be inhabited by anything wild or tame, for no sound came from the other side of the wall, but the bleat of the goat had come from here, and the leopard had his own wonderful nose to back what his ears had heard.

To the eye of a man the place was absolutely unassailable from an animal's standpoint. To the eye of the ounce it was not. He crouched; he danced on his feet, as the natives quaintly put it, and, light as a bird, he flew over the top, landing with a thump on the other side.

The snow leopard, by the way, only a little less than his common cousin, is by way of being an expert at this kind of game; not alone from cunning, but because he is one of the most sudden beasts on earth. With one movement he noted that the enclosure was crowded with goats, sheep, and one or two sour-looking, flat-eared rats of shaggy ponies; with another movement he had a pony by the throat, and with another—though this was hard, and he nearly bungled it—had given a double wrenching twist, severing the rather useful vertebræ, and coming down, pony and all, in a heap in the filth.

All this had happened so swiftly that the rush and crowding together of goats and sheep was still taking place as the ounce looked up, and must have realized for the first time that it was one thing to slay the pony, but another to take it away. Stopping there to feed was out of the question.

Instantly, and quite without a pause, it seemed, came a flickering, spotted streak across the mire-covered enclosure, the wild bleat of a goat, choked as soon as uttered, and the snow leopard flying back over the wall by the way he had come, wonderfully taking the goat with him.

But he had reckoned without his hosts this time, although he might have known that the strange natives of those parts would scarcely have herded their flocks, even in that place, without at least one intelligent guard, and that things had remained too suspiciously quiet to be safe.

The leopard was yet in the air when the night was smitten with a roar, and two great beasts, blacker than the surrounding blackness, rose from the earth beneath him. Also there was a shout from behind—that is, from within the enclosure, and the glare, as of a torch.

There are a few occasions in the lives of the wild creatures when they do, under stress, some wonderful things. That leopard somehow managed to twist, or wriggle, or do something in mid-air so that he, as it were, re-jumped without touching anything, and landed a bit farther on than where he was going to. It was a little way, and, mind, he seemed to have had no time in which to think, but it was enough. It put the black beasts out. And they, those black beasts, were Tibet dogs, probably the largest domestic canines in the world—huge beasts, larger than a mastiff, just as lion-hearted, and twice as fierce.

The snow leopard landed, still gripping his goat, and for one brief, frenzied second he had a glimpse, close to him, of a head, domed, immense, beetle-browed; of sunken, bloodshot eyes; of a face lined and seamed and incomparably fierce; of a deep jowl; of great overhanging lips and huge jaw. Then he went—went as he alone knew how—like a great smoky streak, and the dogs roared and raged in his wake.

Half a mile up the slope, in the impenetrable still blackness of the pines—where his eyes smoldered like coals—the snow leopard stopped to breathe and stare back at the riot he had raised. It was his own fault for meddling with man's affairs, for he knew that it is one of the strictest laws of the wild that man only of all the beasts must be left alone, unless he attacks. Any who disobey that law are like to find the transgression exceedingly unhealthy.

Finally he turned and slouched on, still carrying his goat, but by this time lighter because relieved of its "innerds," which had partly transferred themselves to the "innerds" of the snow leopard. Up-hill, mile after mile, through drenching rhododendron break, clinging, still pine wood, black as the Pit, along precipices that would turn an Alpine guide giddy, by the paths of the avalanche and the snow-slide and the rumbling torrent he clambered, his steely limbs working as smoothly and easily as if on the flat, climbed, climbed, climbed from cold to colder cold, till at length, just on the fringe of vegetation, and only a little way below the snow-line, he came to a series of

lonely, darksome, forbidding-looking caves, and, ignoring the growl of some other beast thing from another den, entered in. His coming had been expected for hours—aye, days almost. It was his home.

In a few minutes, however, his sinister, glowing eyes appeared shining steadily in the darkness of one of the cave entrances—there were several—and, almost immediately after his shadowy form showed, going away. Apparently his hunting was not yet finished.

The wind on the knife-edged top of the ridge, as he reached it and peered cautiously over, was almost unendurable in its bitter cold. Even he, in his woolly underfur, blinked and shrank perceptibly under its punishment. Then suddenly he crouched and drew back.

INSTANTLY with swift silence he turned and trotted quickly along below the line of the ridge, his shadow dancing on the snow in front of him in the now full moonlight. There was a slight suggestion of lesser darkness in the hollows and shadows now, that false light which goes before the real day.

Finally he stopped, flattened, wriggled snake-fashion to a boulder that crowned the ridge, squeezed himself, as it were, literally over the sky-line into the wind and the cold beyond, and gathering his powerful hind legs up under him with one brief twitching, so to speak, aiming pause, charged.

The nyanmo, which is a female argali, which is a kind of wild mountain sheep, proceeding on private affairs of her own just below the top of the ridge on the far side, knew nothing about the presence of the snow leopard till she heard the short, sharp, grunting roar of the charge, and then there was no time to do anything but jump. She jumped, as nothing but a wild sheep or goat could without warning, more than instantly.

He, the snow leopard, did not spring upon her in the old conventional picture-book way. He rushed her in a series of low, long bounds, so quick that the fourth bound hit her fair and square on the jump, and the two fell headlong, the leopard's paw hooked round her shoulder, rolling over and over down the slope.

The end of that roll was a dramatic and marvelously skilful spread-eagled stop on the part of the snow leopard, and a quick grab with his powerful jaws, barely in time to haul the luckless nyanmo back by a kicking hind leg just as she was about to disappear over the abrupt edge of the slope into the nothing beneath.

That he had himself stopped within only a yard of that unspeakably horrible yawning abyss affected the ounce not at all. He had no nerves that way, you see, and proceeded to seize the wildly struggling sheep by the throat and strangle the life out of her while still within his own length of oblivion. He did, however, have the decency to drag the carcass up the shelter of a huge, many-ton-weight boulder before he started his meal, but even that, it may be, was rather more because of his tribal desire to get to cover than any weak emotions caused by the unnerving giddiness of his dangerous position.

Having divested that wild sheep of her heart and other internal machinery, as well as part of a hind quarter, the agile great cat climbed that gigantic boulder with the remains, which he hid in a cleft near the top, well out of reach of wild dogs, bears, and other inquisitive prowlers. Then, in the light of full day, he let out for his lair once more.

There seemed no reason at all why the snow leopard should suddenly stiffen from head to foot, and, flat-eared and growling horribly, sink slowly, slowly, slowly on the snow. Next instant he turned a complete somersault backward, even as a heart-catching, smacking report shattered the immemorial silence of the Mother of All the Ranges into a thousand splinters, and went echoing away and away, starting an army of fresh echoes in its wake, which answered each other from slope to slope as they bounded and whooped and halloed far, far into the heart of the unknown.

In a flash the big cat was on his feet again, and with a coughing, short roar, charged full tilt, with low, long bounds, straight along the slope at the sound—the sharp *click-clack click-clack* a bolt-action magazine rifle makes when swiftly worked. The short, stubbly muzzle of a perfectly kept Lee-Enfield Government Mark III magazine rifle peered over the ridge; for one brief second there was a breathless pause, broken only by the ghostly whisper of the leopard bounding over the snow, then—*bang!* A jagged tongue of flame

licked out and back again, and the snow leopard, with one terrific, clawing, clutching spring, fell all of a crumpled, lifeless heap upon the spotless white carpet stained only by the angry bright crimson of his own blood.

It was a beautiful shot, but all the same makes one pause and wonder if the paternal government that issues them to its British regiments knows into what strange hands and curious places the rifles that are stolen from their racks in the barracks on India's northwestern frontier sometimes find their way. One can not help thinking that, if it could ever be set down—which, of course, it never, never will be—the histories of some of these weapons, which, by the way, were intended for quite another purpose, and other hands, would make curious reading, as this story hints. At least, it is quite certain that no white man, soldier or civilian, ever trod, or has since trodden, the path of him who carried that rifle which slew the beautiful spotted haunter of the snowy heights, the old male snow leopard, on that glorious, smiling morning.

LINDI

by Edmund Leamy

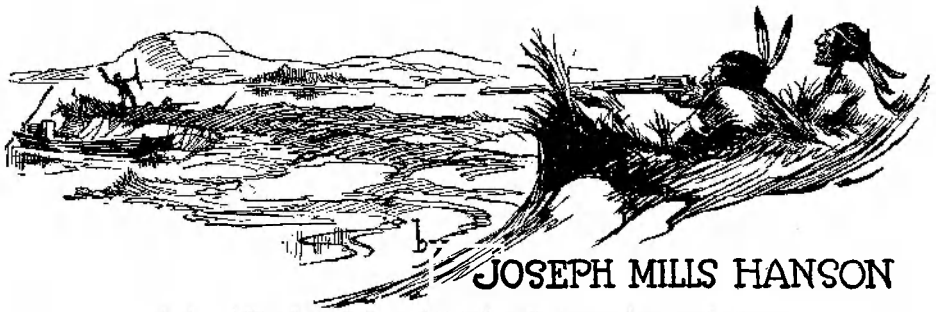
PESTILENTIAL were the breezes
On the spicy, scented air,
And the sun in the wide heavens
Looked down with scorching stare
Where the streets were white and blinding,
Where the heat was like a blow,
In far, fever-haunted Lindi
A long time ago.

When the stars came out at night-time
In the distance, very gay,
Came the sounds of some *ngoma*
And of native youth at play;
Then the laughter of hyenas
And the jackals' shrilly cries
With homesickness were fellow
Underneath the southern skies.

And how we railed at Lindi,
At the bitter, taunting sea,
At the creek up to Mingoyo,
At each dumpy mango-tree,
At the bare-backed, grinning coolies
Who sang and never guessed
The loneliness that haunted,
And the hunger in each breast.

And then one day from Lindi
We were outward-bound and free,
But, of each heart a little
Was left in witchery;
And now we talk of Lindi,
Of the life we used to know,
And we often wish for Lindi
That we hated, long ago.

The Sand-Bar



JOSEPH MILLS HANSON

Author of "In the Red Glare of Friedland," Flower of the Battle," etc.

THE brown mule, "Paradox," which was blind in one eye, and the sorrel mare, "Paragon," which had a spavin on her off-foreleg, made slow progress down the valley-road against the hot south wind. The empty lumber-wagon which they were pulling, three boxes high with grain boards, occasionally speeded up to a jangling rattle as the reins were slapped spasmodically over their backs, but for the most part they proceeded at a walk over a road which was alternately heavy with sand and rough with dried gumbo-mud.

Their driver, sitting limply on the spring-seat with his legs dangling in the empty wagon-box, did not appear to count the time of arrival at his destination as among the vital interests of life. On the contrary he seemed to derive a deliberate and somber satisfaction from watching the dusty and drought-wilted sunflowers which writhed and tossed in the wind beside the little-traveled highway, or in contemplating, from beneath the flapping brim of his felt hat, the barren outlines of the river bluffs, half-shrouded in yellow clouds of dust driving up the valley from the Missouri River sand-bars on the breast of the sultry September gale.

Billy Middleton was down-hearted. He had just hauled his last load of wheat a distance of eleven miles to the nearest railroad elevator at the county seat where it had graded No. 4 and sold on a sagging market. Going up-town from the elevator, he had then settled his last outstanding bills, paid a remaining balance on his taxes and banked the sum of $97.42 as the profits of a year of hard work, frugality and isolation. At the post-office he had received the weekly newspaper, a circular from a firm of painless dentists in Minneapolis, a post-card quoting the price of muskrat skins in Duluth and a letter from his girl back home in Indiana.

Quite naturally it was the last-mentioned document alone which stirred Billy's emotions to any marked extent. But it stirred them deeply enough to bring to the surface all the shreds and giblets of gloom which had place in his normally optimistic disposition. For in it Eva Elizabeth informed him, among other things, of the fact that she had been obliged to forego taking a school for the coming year because her father's eldest sister, a crotchety spinster, had come to spend the Fall and Winter with them, thereby doubling the housework and, further, that the company which had been prospecting for coal on her father's farm had found none and had given up the search and departed.

In unequivocal terms Eva Elizabeth stated her eagerness to become at an early date Mrs. Billy Middleton and in that estate to forsake the depressing environments of Indiana in favor of the clear, bracing atmosphere and cheerfully active existence of a Dakota farm.

"Clear, bracing atmosphere!" ejaculated Billy to the sunflowers, his eyes upon the murky sandstorm sweeping up the Missouri. "It's about as bracing just now as the Sahara. Cheerfully active existence! I'll tell the world it's active enough from 4:00 A.M. on till dark. But how in tunket can it be cheerful when you get ninety-seven forty-two for all your activity, and the drought eats up half your crop, and the

Missouri bites off a third of your land? Eva Elizabeth, I haven't got enough spuds to pay your railroad fare out to Dakota now, let alone feeding you next Winter. Oh, why in Samuel H. Hill didn't I stay in Indiana and blast coal or something instead of getting ambitious and coming out here to stake a claim? Giddap, Paradox! G'wan, Paragon!"

The burst of speed induced in the brown mule and the sorrel mare by Billy's admonition brought the wagon measurably nearer to a man whom Billy had been observing for some time in the distance, walking down the road ahead. This individual was carrying his coat over his shoulder and a small bundle in his hand and now and then he raised his head, bent against the gale and looked intently toward the barren bluffs on the other side of the river.

As he drew closer Billy decided that the pedestrian was not one of his remote neighbors of the valley, but it was only after he had driven up within a few yards that the man heard the approaching wagon-wheels and turned, disclosing the bearded and grizzled face of a total stranger. He was decently dressed, wearing a light flannel shirt, corduroy breeches and high, laced boots. Billy pulled up and offered him a place on the spring-seat.

"Outrageous windy," remarked Billy, as they jogged on.

"Hit sure is," returned the other, glancing at Billy from a pair of mild blue eyes. "Do you-all have much of this boisterous breeziness hereabouts?"

"In the Fall, some," Billy replied.

Then, with the Western loyalty which had unconsciously grown up within him, he added—

"But it's a pretty fair climate, mostly."

Silence ensued while Billy ruminated and his grizzled passenger studied the bluffs across the river. Presently Billy opened his mouth.

"Giddap, Paradox! G'wan, Paragon!" he said.

The stranger glanced at Billy's team interestedly. After a moment he inquired—

"Why do you-all call that brown mewel Paradox?"

"Because," responded Billy, "he conflicts with every preconceived notion of what is reasonable or possible."

The man chuckled and looked at Billy with more attention.

"Well, say!" he ejaculated.

"Take today," pursued Billy. "He's as mild as a cherub. But maybe tomorrow the only way you can make him start plowing or hauling is to back him half a mile around the field before his wheels get to going forward again."

The stranger, chuckling once more, remarked simply—

"I know mewels."

Again silence fell until Billy discerned far ahead and to the left between road and river, the roof of his own claim shack. Then he felt spurred to inquire—

"Where you headed?"

The grizzled wayfarer turned his face from his scrutiny of the river-bluffs and said in a voice which somehow seemed to Billy to possess a quality of suppressed excitement—

"I'm headed for a place somewhere along here where I can bring the peak of a cut chalkstone bluff across the river spang into line with a big white rock on the knob of the hogback behind it."

Billy studied this surprizing statement for a moment before making comment. Then he said—

"There's a place right close to my shack where you can see something like that across the river."

He pointed to the high ridge beyond the Missouri.

"That's the white rock, over there. The crest of a cut bluff comes in line with it farther down. I've often noticed them."

Billy's passenger shaded his eyes with his hand and, through the sand-cloud below it, gazed intently at the ridge.

"By Hector!" he said slowly. "Hit shorely looks about right. But I can't tell yet. I haven't seen it for forty-one years."

"Forty-one years!" exclaimed Billy. "Why, there weren't any white men living in these parts forty-one years ago, were there?"

"Not as you'd say exactly *living*," returned the other. "But they was some scattered ones drifting through. And—" he added, grimly—"sort of dying off along the way."

Presently they arrived at the entrance to the dimly marked lane leading off to Billy's farm. The owner thereof pulled up his team.

"Want to light?" he asked.

The other, whose eyes had been constantly busy with the distant hills, replied:

"If you don't mind, I'll go down to yore place with you. Hit looks more and more right hereabouts."

"Why, sure," said Billy and drove on about half a mile down the lane until he arrived at his own farmyard. A humble enough place it was, with a tar-papered cabin whose stove-pipe stuck up through the roof, a small stable built chiefly of logs and poles, a few good agricultural implements under a shed, a cattle-and-hog pen and a pump; the whole establishment rather well-sheltered beneath a group of large, bottom-land cottonwood-trees. Billy, followed by his visitor, climbed out of the wagon and began unharnessing his team.

THE stranger looked about, then concentrated his gaze toward the river. The stream itself lay about a half-mile distant but the cut bank was within forty rods of the cabin, a wide stretch of naked bar, from whose surface the wind-blown sand was now whirling up in long ribbons, lying between it and the water's edge, for the Missouri, as usual in September, was very low. Across the river from the farmyard the crest of a chalkstone bluff lay directly in line with a large white rock on the knob of the hogback behind it.

"Hit certainly does look right," ejaculated the visitor for the third time, but now with more emphatic conviction and a decided quiver in his voice.

"Where does your land lay, if I might ask?"

"From a quarter-mile this side the road, clear down there to the water," replied Billy, jerking his thumb toward the Missouri. "Three years ago, when I staked it, I had one hundred and sixty acres of good land. That Spring the river cut in and took about sixty acres. But the next year the current seemed to get caught on something out there and she shifted back to where she is now and left me about two hundred acres of sand-bar, by riparian rights. But it isn't worth a cent; it won't raise anything but fleas and dust-storms."

"Sho!" said the other. "Hard luck."

He stroked his grizzled beard for a moment thoughtfully, then turned to Billy with an access of confidence.

"My name is Cosgrove, seh," he said. "Originally of Missouri; later of New South Wales, Cape Colony, Peru and other places. Would you-all mind if I look over your sand-bar, Mr. —ah——?"

"Middleton," prompted Billy, regarding the elderly, self-proclaimed globe-trotter with considerable astonishment. "If it'll ease your mind any, Mr. Cosgrove, to look over that good-for-nothing sand-bar go to it and welcome."

"Thank you, seh," said Cosgrove and strode off toward the river, his head inclined sidewise against the wind but his face turned always toward the chalkstone bluff and the white rock beyond.

It was drawing toward sundown and Billy, busy with his evening chores and his own downcast thoughts, did not pay much heed to his peculiar visitor beyond glancing now and then toward the river where, through the sand-clouds, he could see Cosgrove walking slowly back and forth over the heaved surface of the bar, now looking long and intently up the river and again casting the same steady gaze down-stream but always keeping in line in front of him the bluff-crest and the white rock. At sunset, as usual, the south wind died down and in a few moments the air was clear of blowing sand. Billy was cooking a double portion of supper, fried potatoes and bacon, over the stove in his cabin when the figure of Cosgrove darkened the doorway.

"Evening," said Billy. "Any luck?"

"Plenty," returned Cosgrove, his mild blue eyes roving around the interior of the shack and resting with a flash of appreciation on the pine-board bookshelf in one corner with its old Chambers' Encyclopædia, Shakespeare's Works and a few other well-worn volumes of everlasting worth. "I've found the spot, back-sights and all, a heap easier than I ever expected to."

Billy set the coffee-pot and the skillet of potatoes and bacon on the table.

"You must have your mind on something worth while," he said, "to be prospecting around this God-forsaken country. Sit down. Thought you'd like to have some supper," he added significantly, "before you go."

"Thank you, seh. I would," replied Cosgrove, taking the proffered chair. "In fact, Mr. Middleton, I'd like for to stop with you-all a few days and go some deeper into your sand-bar, seh. I'm not overburdened with wealth at present, but I have

enough left so as I can pay my boahd."

"Shucks!" exclaimed Billy. "If you want to linger around this fag-end of the habitable earth and eat potatoes and pork there isn't any board coming. I'll be glad of your company. I'll make you a hay shake-down here behind the table."

"You're more than kind, Mr. Middleton, seh," returned Cosgrove, smiling frankly through his beard. "I don't lay out you shall lose by it. You don't happen to have a well-auger?"

"Yes, but I do," said Billy, as he ladled some potatoes into a plate and handed it across the little table.

"I'm going to put down a well over in my pasture some time this Fall." Then, curiosity getting the better of reticence, he hazarded—

"If you're looking for coal or mineral water or anything like that, I'd say you'd have a better show up on the main bank than out on the bar."

Cosgrove assumed a confidential air.

"It's been said," he remarked vaguely, "there was a steamboat once, back in fur-trading days, got snagged somewhere in these parts. You know those fur-company boats into the Indian country used to carry up a lot of barreled whisky and such knick-knacks. That wreck would be worth finding."

"*Um!*" said Billy, a light breaking in, but at the same time sorry for a man pursuing such a will-o'-the-wisp. "So would a diamond be worth finding in a straw-pile."

"Well, there's nothing like persistence," philosophized Cosgrove and then the talk drifted to other subjects.

They spent the evening for the most part in silence, Billy commencing a letter to Eva Elizabeth in which the hopefulness of youth struggled to argue away discouraging actualities and Cosgrove with his nose buried in one of the well-thumbed volumes from the bookshelf in the corner.

Next morning Billy set forth for Fall plowing in his wheat-field while Cosgrove, shouldering the well-auger, went out upon the sand-bar and began boring holes in the sand in some sort of systematic series. Thereafter a number of days elapsed, the young man and the old working industriously at their divers occupations. Cosgrove never visited the wheat-field nor did Middleton, who disliked to seem prying, ever set foot on the sand-bar.

From time to time, however, the elder man, whose physical well-being seemed to increase with hard labor, borrowed first a shovel and then a saw and hammer and nails and a quantity of cottonwood boards which Billy had sawed up the previous Winter for sheds and fences. From the farmyard one could see out on the bar a large heap of moist sand, growing larger day by day, where Cosgrove was digging.

ONE noon, when an Autumn gale was blowing again from the south, whirling clouds of sand along the river, as the two rose from their midday meal, Cosgrove said:

"Mr. Middleton, seh, I'd like for you to come out there with me if you've time. There's something I'd like for to show you."

Billy consented with more real eagerness than he cared to show. Arrived at the pile of moist sand, he gazed down into the hole from which it had come and uttered an exclamation of amazement. The sides of the oblong excavation, which was about twelve feet deep, were shored up with his cottonwood boards and at the bottom of it lay uncovered the middle portion of what seemed to be a large barge or keel-boat, crudely fashioned out of massive, hewn planks. The wood was water-logged but apparently still preserved sound by its burial in the sand. The gunwales, which were at least three inches thick, had been carefully uncovered and in the upper edge of one of them showed a round hole, about an inch in diameter.

"I was fo'tunate," remarked Cosgrove, gazing contemplatively into the excavation. "I reckoned the Missouri'd be low in September. But if there'd been water over the wreck I'd have had to coffer-dam it and I hadn't money enough to do that without letting in somebody besides us."

"But is that what you've been after?" queried Billy. "That's nothing but a row-boat. I thought you were hunting for a steamboat."

"No, it isn't a steamboat; I just threw you out that idea. It's worth a lot more than most steamboats. Nor yet it isn't a row-boat. It was one with a stern sweep, and a little square sail when the wind was fair. It was Jim Roland thought of the sail. Poor Jim!" The old man sighed deeply. "He was the second one to get hit."

Billy Middleton stood silent, a sense of mysterious awe beginning to creep over him. After a moment Cosgrove spoke again, moving to the short ladder he had made which leaned against the side of the excavation.

"Come on down," he said, "out of this scandalous wind and I'll tell you about it."

Billy followed him down the ladder. At the bottom Cosgrove turned to him a face whose usual grave kindliness was softened by emotion. He spoke with a certain ceremonious reverence.

"You are now a-standin', seh," said he, "on the deck of what was once the keelboat *Lucky Strike*. But an unlucky craft she proved for most of us; maybe the unluckiest of all for me. Won't you sit down, Mr. Middleton?"

It was as if he were in his home, inviting a guest to make himself at ease. Billy sank down upon one of the oozy gunwales of the ancient boat and Cosgrove seated himself upon the opposite one. Above them, the wind moaned over the top of the excavation and sent sifting down upon them little whispering streamers of sand; that ever restless, ever shifting sand which, left to work its will, would in a few weeks fill up an excavation even as large as this one, smooth it over and utterly obliterate it. Even here, on his own valueless piece of property, Billy suddenly felt strangely remote from familiar environments, touched by a sense of uncanny, musty mysteries. He regarded his companion with uneasy eyes.

"I told you-all once, seh," said Cosgrove, smoothing his beard thoughtfully, "that I was originally from Missouri. When the Civil War came along I was just a youngster but I joined up with Sterling Price's Confederate Army and fought with 'em for three years. But things kept goin' from bad to worse and when Price made his big raid into Missouri in the Fall of '64 and was so unmercifully beat up at the Osage River, I got plumb discouraged.

"With three other boys, all of us with good muskets and plenty of ammunition, I became part of what was called 'the left wing of Price's Army,' and we all lit out across the Kansas plains for the upper part of the Rocky Mountains, where we'd heard about the big gold-strikes for a year or more past.

"I don't know how we ever did it through all that hawstile Indian country and the early Winter blizzards, but we were young and tough and in the upshot we got to Bannack City, Dakota Territory—the whole Northwest was Dakota Territory in those days, you know—and then we pushed on to Alder Gulch and stayed the Winter out, working pay-dirt on wages for other fellers who had made strikes. When Spring opened up we set out for ourselves into the mountains—the four of us and two more young bucks we'd got chummy with; daredevils that I reckoned, though I never knew, were deserters from the Yankee Army, same as we were from the rebel.

"We prodded the hills and chipped quartz and panned creeks away off where no white men had ever been for seven weeks before we hit anything worth while. And then, one afternoon, we stumbled on to a little boiling mountain brook in a small canon and, by Hector, Mr. Middleton, seh, I never saw anything like it before nor since; never! You could dip your hand down into that water and scrape up from the bottom nuggets of gold as big as the end of your little finger. First we thought we'd gone crazy and were seein' things. But we wa'n't locoed. The stuff was there and we went for it.

"For more than two months we worked like mad, first divertin' the creek into another passage and then pannin' the old bed. Nobody else came our way and we kept at it continuous, by shifts, four of us pannin' while the other two hunted game and roots and berries to keep us from starvin'. By the latter end of August we'd combed the creek bed pretty thorough and, what with our axes and shovels and picks and guns, we had all that the whole crowd could tote, even going mighty slow and double-portaging in the worst places. So we hit off down the creek, which emptied into a bigger one, and we followed that a cruel, everlastin' distance down to the Yellowstone. And there we set to work choppin' down trees and hewing 'em into planks to make a boat. After all our hardships we were just crazy to get out of that country before Winter and back to civilization."

Cosgrove paused a moment and pressed his hand over his eyes as if the crowding memories hurt him. The wind, laying hold of a loose end of the uppermost shoring-board above them, shook it as with an unseen hand until it rattled. The little

spirals of sand, spinning down before his eyes, seemed to Billy like ghostly, clutching fingers, vainly reaching out for recognition and fellowship. Even in the still, oppressive air of the excavation, he shivered slightly and his intent eyes did not leave the grizzled face of his companion. Then the old man resumed:

"We launched just about this time of year; to'ds the end of September. Happened to be moonlight while we were in the Yellowstone, so we traveled mostly at night, knowing the Indians were powerful ugly, along of the drubbing they'd got from the Sully Expedition the year before. But we saw nary soul, red nor white, till we were out of the Yellowstone and well into the Missouri. After that two or three times we saw mounted warriors back on the hills. But the weather was getting cold and we were scairt of a freeze-up coming, so we got reckless and traveled daytimes, reckoning on being too strong for the redskins to dare tackle.

"Finally, one sundown, we came along to a place where there was a big snag just out of the channel, in a shallow cove like, on one side of the river and a smooth bar, like this one here, on the other side, with a quarter-mile of naked sand between the water and the main bank. My pal, Dick Collins, and Nord White, one of the Yanks, wanted to snub the boat up to the snag and stay there all night, as we'd been doing since we knew that Indians had seen us. It was the safest way by long odds but it was mighty cramped trying to get any rest in the boat and I stood out for tying up alongside the bar and getting out and sleeping on the sand, arguing that no Indians would dare crawl out on us there from the timber on the main bank a quarter-mile away.

"The rest of the boys were neutral but willing to get a decent night's rest so finally I had my way and we pulled over to the bar, drove a couple stakes and tied up. It was a cutting bar, with a perpendicular bank standing up about four feet above the side of the keel-boat, which was a bad thing in itself because some of the sand might cave off and drop into the boat and partly fill it. But we were a careless bunch of kids.

"We'd shot a buffalo that day and had plenty of meat and while we were cooking supper I looked over the country as I had a habit of doing and noticed the crest of that cut bluff with the white rock on the hog-back behind it."

Billy started.

"So this was the place?" he asked.

"Sure, this was the place," replied Cosgrove. "It was your farmyard grove that was part of the timber up on the main bank. But this bar isn't the same bar. From what you've told me, there have been several bars cut away and made in here again since that day. Well, anyway, I noticed the bluff and the white rock and I also noticed how the bluffs lay up and down river on a cross line; in fact, without thinking much about it, I had the position of the boat exactly located in my mind.

"Before it was fairly dark we rolled up in our buffalo-skins and went to sleep. The night was still and frosty, we were dead-tired and those skins felt mighty snug and warm, so that we slept like logs. I don't know what time it was but probably about three o'clock in the morning, I waked up sitting, with what seemed the yells of all the devils of —— in my ears, mixed with the cracking of musket-shots.

"It was as dark as a black cat but the flash of muskets spitting out like lightning a few rods back on the bar showed where the Indians had crawled up on us. I grabbed my musket, which was lying beside me, threw myself on my belly and shook Dick Collins, who was sleeping next to me. But he didn't stir; he had been killed where he lay, at the Indians' first fire."

THE sweat was standing out on Cosgrove's forehead. He raised one trembling hand and brushed it away, while his other hand clutched the top of the gunwale beside him with a vise-like grip. Billy Middleton scarcely breathed.

"I knew the game was up," resumed Cosgrove. "There was no telling, in the pitch dark, how many dozen redskins were on top of us. I fired once, in their general direction, and then yelled, as I started reloading:

" 'Roland, White, Farrell! Where are you?'

"Somebody jumped up and stumbled over me.

" 'Here I am,' said Jim Roland's voice. 'For ——'s sake, let's cut the boat loose.'

"I scrambled to my feet to help him when several guns flashed out on the bar, Jim

whirled half-around, caught his chest and gasped:

" '——! I'm done!' and crumpled up at my feet.

"At that same second the big voice of Ben Robertson, one of the Yanks, roared out:

" 'Cosgrove! Roland! Come over here with us and rush 'em back, so's we can get a chance to cast off the boat.'

"I went, but alone, and found the other three boys together only about fifteen feet away. Robertson gave the orders.

" 'Are you all loaded? I think the main bunch is over beyond that little sand-ridge about twenty-five yards southwest. We'll go for them. Ready? Then, charge!'

"We jumped up with a big yell and rushed toward the little ridge. We could hear a wild scramble in the darkness, with shouts of fright. Two or three shots were fired and then we were on top of the ridge where we threw ourselves flat and fired. Some Indian shrieked but whether we'd killed him I never knew, for we'd no sooner emptied our guns than we heard yells behind us, back by the boat, and then we got a scattered volley that knocked over Nord White but unluckily didn't kill him outright. While we were reloading, ready to make another rush back to the boat, we heard something from that direction that chilled our blood. It was the heavy thud and splash of earth into the river.

" 'My ——!' cried Farrell, 'the ——s are shoving over the cut bank into the boat!'

"We started to charge back and then remembered White, who was groaning and twisting on the ground. We wouldn't leave him to be scalped alive so we grabbed him and carried him back with us. But that very thing settled our chances if we ever had any. We came so slow, account of White, that the redskins had plenty time to finish their job, and they also got Farrell as we came close to the bank. Then Robertson and I rushed; they ran back a little way and we reached the boat.

"Just as we feared, the *Lucky Strike* was half-filled, on the shoreward side, with the sand the Indians had pushed off the bank into her, the water was pouring in over the gunwale on that side and the outer gunwale was sticking up in the air, but settling fast.

" 'No good, Jack,' said Robertson to me. 'Nothing for it but jump in and swim for the other bank.'

"We fired toward the Indians up the bar and down, then threw our muskets out into the river, slipped quietly into the water and swam. But the redskins evidently knew what we would have to do. We weren't forty feet out into the current before they were at the bank again. I splashed a good deal as I swam and that located us for them in the dark and they began to shoot. But it wasn't me they hit; it was poor Robertson, swimming quiet as a beaver. He just groaned:

" 'Oh, my shoulder! Good-by, Jack!' and sank.

"As I swam with all my might against the current I even heard poor Nord White's screams as they scalped him, back on the sand-bar. I reckoned I'd never reach the other shore, for I had my boots and my revolver on, but I did, a mile or so downstream; it's not so very wide here, you know. Lucky for me it was a bar and not a cut bank I struck. I just crawled half out of the water and lay for an hour without moving. Then daylight started coming and I got up and dragged myself into the willows. I lay there all day, mostly asleep and sometimes raving, I reckon, with the horror of the night before. The Indians must have thought they'd got all of us, for they didn't seem to hunt for me. From where I was hid I could see them on the sand-bar across the river, having a dance around the bodies of the boys. But I couldn't see our boat and I knew it must have sunk clear down.

"When night came again I started off down-river. Though my boots and revolver and cartridge-belt had nearly drowned me, they saved my life afterward, for I could never have gone the miles I did barefoot in that cold, late Fall weather, nor have kept from starving if I hadn't shot something occasionally. After about three weeks, traveling by night and hiding by day, I came to a white settlement. But I didn't tell anybody the facts. Oh, no! I made up a cock-and-bull story about where I'd been, for I was so locoed by my experience and the fact that it was all my fault for insisting on sleeping on the bar that night instead of tying up to the snag as Collins and White had wanted that I had a perfect horror of talking about it. I wanted to get as far away from it all as I could.

"So I lit out down-river and kept going and next year I was in New South Wales. From there I went to one place and another and I made and lost fortunes, usually with mining. Years after, in Cape Colony, I married an English girl and years after that she died, leaving me a daughter. We finally went to Peru, where I made another fortune and sent my girl to Paris to study music for grand opera; she has a fine voice. Quite recent I got sold out down there by a crooked partner. I always knew that some time, if I lived, I'd come back to look for the *Lucky Strike*, much as I'd hate to do it. I've never got over the horror of it all. But now, I had to. The girl must finish her musical education and I've been broke. So here I am. But I'm glad, Mr. Middleton, seh, it's come out this way. You've told me about Eva Elizabeth, so everything'll go to good purposes, won't it?"

"I don't know exactly what you mean," said Billy, relaxing with the conclusion of the tragic story and considerably mystified. "Everything?"

"Why, what's on this boat," returned Cosgrove, tapping the water-soaked gunwale beside him. "It's on your land, your sand-bar, your accretion. But you'd never have known it if I hadn't come along and dug it up."

"Sure, that's so," agreed Billy.

"So I reckon a fifty-fifty division is fair, isn't it?" pursued Cosgrove.

"Why, yes," said Billy; "fair enough, sure. But what is there to divide? I don't see anything but some old, water-soaked planks."

Mr. Cosgrove cleared his throat a bit nervously, thrust his hand into his pocket and with some exertion drew out a knotted handkerchief. Then he thrust a finger into the round hole in the gunwale beside him.

"See that hole?" he inquired.

"Yes," said Billy.

The elder man unknotted the handkerchief and opened it. Within lay a heap of gold nuggets and dust which made Billy's eyes pop open and his breath come in a gasp.

"This," said Cosgrove, pointing to the gold, "came out of that," and he stuck his finger again into the hole in the gunwale.

"Good ——!" ejaculated Billy. "Why—why—there must be—" he put his hand under the heavy handkerchief—"there must be four thousand dollars' worth of gold there!"

"Just about," agreed Cosgrove.

"I never saw so much gold in my life," said Billy. "And I get two thousand dollars of it!"

His eyes looked as if heaven were opening before them.

Mr. Cosgrove regarded him quizzically.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Keep a little surprize on tap, please, seh."

He took out his jack-knife and began digging at the top of the gunwale about ten inches from the hole, in a spot which Billy now, for the first time, noticed was not a part of the grain of the heavy plank but a round plug. The spongy wood yielded readily, breaking in two, and Cosgrove dug out the pieces. Beneath lay another heap of nuggets and dust. He smiled at Billy, who was utterly speechless.

"Four thousand more," said Mr. Cosgrove, waving his hand like a magician. "Moreover, seh, there are thirty-one holes like that around this gunwale, both sides. One hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars, we figured it."

Billy was staring stupidly at the plugs which he now saw all around the edges of the gunwale.

"One hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars," he echoed dully, "in those holes!"

"I reckon," said Mr. Cosgrove, "that creek we boys struck was the best one Montana ever had. But—" he shook his head sadly—"those holes made the boat top-heavy, so she sunk easier. Poor boys! Poor old Dick Collins!"

He bent his head a moment in silence. Then he roused himself and spoke briskly:

"Let's go up to your house, Mr. Middleton and get some grain-sacks. We should take this stuff in to the bank today."

Billy came to himself with a rush.

"Yes!" he cried. "And I've got to send a letter to Eva Elizabeth."

"Telegraph," said Cosgrove. "It's quicker. I'm going to cable a draft to my girl, care the Credit Lyonnaise."

Half-way up the ladder Billy stopped and turned a dismayed face down to Cosgrove, who was on the lower rung.

"Good ——, Mr. Cosgrove!" said he. "I hope that Paradox's wheels won't be running backward when we start for town today!"

The Padre of Paradise Street

by S.B.H. HURST

Author of "The Second Fall," "The Mending," etc.

FATHER ASPLAND stood on the steps of his little church. The bleak afternoon was closing in with a wrack of cloud which presaged a night of wind, snow, hail. And the padre of Paradise Street frowned over his perennial problem.

Paradise Street, in Liverpool, at the time when men were discussing the possibility of the *Great Eastern's* next voyage across the Atlantic—to lay the first cable—was a problem, but amid all its scum of humanity, all its flotsam and jetsam, one sinister quicksand made the place a positive menace. That quicksand was Paddy West. His noisy boarding-house for sailors had wrecked more lives and bred more pain and misery than any building in the world.

One might find a certain grim humor in his shanghaing the youthful farm-hand, and in his naming such offerings to Neptune neither able-bodied nor yet ordinary, but extraordinary seamen; and there was something of a crude wit in his shipping a drunken parson and a dead man aboard the same ship; but in his spitting in the face of a little girl and cursing her as she knelt and prayed to him not to take away her insensible father—whom she never saw again—in this there is nothing but satanic inhumanity; and in the broken homes, the broken hearts, the waiting women—wondering at the fate of their helpless men—the wrenched lives, the suicides—in this there shows only a hideous greed for the well-named blood money and a devilish cleverness in being on excellent terms with the police. For there are tales of him which can not be told, save among old sailors when they gather in their bone-yard club to fashion into conversation the warm blood of memory.

And Father Aspland could see no light on that unhappy shore, no warning to stand at the door of Paddy West's boarding-house. For seven valiant years Aspland had fought the good fight, but there had been many times when only his faith had prevented his admitting himself beaten.

The night came, with the wind gathering into a gale with squalls of hail. The padre attended to the duties of his church. Later, with a whole gale smashing its thunderous way across England, he started to walk, as was his custom, about the district he fathered. Paddy West! Was there no way this devil could be eliminated? The vilest crimp the seas had ever known. Why, the majority of ship captains were afraid to cross him by employing other shipping-agents! Some way, some time! As a man of God, Aspland craved either the extermination or the conversion of Paddy West. The first might occur through kindly circumstance, but the latter . . . Regretfully, Aspland remembered that the age of miracles was past.

The gale blustered the gas lamps, buffeting the priest until he was glad to regain his breath at a corner where the colored globes in the window of Batley's Chemist

Shop had developed a weird heliotropism, blunting the shapes displayed by the small stock of goods, beckoning frantically to the few who hurried by with the wind or struggled against it, and uncannily reflecting the hail.

The stacked shutters made a certain refuge, from where the padre could view the interior of the shop. And he knew his people so well—for no other church stood in that few squares of vileness; thus to Aspland all were his children, whatever their brand of Christianity—that he could look through the window of that drug store, watch moving lips and be, as it were, inside.

Batley was wearily draped behind his prescription case, while his faithful wife—obviously twin souls, these—wondered with loving curiosity how many days would pass before her husband again plunged into that abyss of horror where lurked strangely distorted devils, weirdly colored rats, flying lizards, a menagerie of imagery.

Came the noise of human hands fumbling with the ill-fitting door. The wifely head withdrew itself into the tiny living and sleeping room where it could hear just as well, and Batley languidly extended his neck so that his tired eyes could view the customer. Against the droning pulse of the gale breathed an oath in feminine tone. The door, responding to a violent shaking, allowed itself to be opened, and a woman entered.

To protect a garish dress she wore a shawl. The many feathers of her hat drooped like those of a doleful hen. Her regular features told of the beauty of other days. Her tired, bold eyes explained the present.

She shook herself and the wet dripped from her upon the checkered oilcloth of the shop floor. She grinned at Batley's head, familiarly yet with a certain sympathy. The light showed her tall and well-proportioned.

On the narrow counter she jangled some coppers, at which the druggist looked with complete understanding but without avidity.

"Ounce of the usual, Bat," she exclaimed, more for the relief of talk than for any other reason; she knew that Batley knew what she required as well as she knew herself.

Batley wasted no energy on needless reply. He extended himself a trifle more, still seated upon his high stool. His shaking fingers urged to the edge of a shelf, until his hand could grasp it, a large bottle marked with gilt letters *Tr Opii*. With a sigh of both mental and physical relief he succeeded in clutching the bottle with both hands, and lifted it safely behind the prescription case. Into a graduated glass he poured an ounce of the laudanum. He reached round the end of the case and handed the glass to the woman, gathering up the money on his recoil.

As if it were so much water, Meg Brown swallowed the draft. She coughed slightly. For a few moments she stared about the dingy shop, while, watching her, Father Aspland fought for the thousandth time against the feeling that his task was too heavy. For the priest was not a mere ritualistic father. He craved a healthy family in Paradise Street—and all the children were sick.

"Oh, Bat!"

Meg Brown felt the drug warming her veins. With his weary habit the man extended himself into her view, waiting wordlessly.

"Bat, you're a good chap, and so is the missus! You've known me too long to think I'm getting religious, or something, but why don't you change your drinks? Oh, I know," she hastened to explain, "I know your hair is dropping out, an' all. Been that way a long time, you 'ave! But wot I'm a-getting at is why don't you take wot I takes for it? It's cheaper than whisky and it don't give you the horrors. You never seen me with 'em, did you? So, Bat, for the sake of the missus, why don't you take what I takes?"

Not a muscle of Batley's face had moved, but his weary eyes had followed her every word. Then, in the hollow tones of a ghost:

"Can't! Wish I could. Opium, any shape, puts me to sleep. Wake up sick. You're lucky. Have another drop, on me?"

"It's a —— shame," she whimpered, a trifle impressionistically. Then, with her almost infinite toleration, she swallowed half an ounce more laudanum. "Don't seem right, does it, that you have to drink that there horrid booze when you might as well be taking this 'ere?" And she returned the empty glass.

Batley did not reply, neither did he watch her go out into the wild night. Father Aspland prayed to One who had, also, sympathized with Magdalenes as Meg Brown staggered past like some wind-blown bird. Then he looked through the dirty window.

Under a light Batley had propped a book which he studied with the concentrated interest of a girl telling her fortune from a pack of cards. It was a fairly large book, and the chapter which so greatly interested Batley was headed *Tabes*.

Aspland turned away. Prayer was good, but action was better. The poor druggist could hardly be helped, but Meg Brown was not beyond the reach of kindly hands. She would not be the first unfortunate girl rescued from the dark river when her white face showed its closed eyes as it drifted down the tide under the careless stars. But Aspland did not go back to his church at once. He went to his room, and there, in the company of a very old and most odoriferous pipe, began to plan a new campaign against the entrenched evil of his district.

The wind shrieked, as if in irony. The priest smoked, thinking and watching the coals in the grate. Again a heavier squall yelled like a sarcastic, world-filling devil. Aspland knocked the ashes out of his old brier. Then he knelt down.

"God, you made the wind, you made me, you made all things. It is not Thy will that anything should perish. Thou knowest what is in my mind to do. Help me, for I know Thou seest the fitness of my fight!"

Then he went back to his little church.

SLEEP, to Meg Brown, was something which needed more wooing than even her life could teach her. But she could lie down, haunted though such rest might be. And the night was cold, wet, miserable, likely to be unprofitable. Besides she had swallowed more than her usual amount of opium, and since she worked only for the poppy, why should she trouble to roam afield, harried by the slurs, leers, torments of her existence?

She would not! The decision came, relieving. —— the dreams! Her room offered refuge from the wet, the wind, from some of the world. She headed toward the dim, dirty, rubbish-strewn alley, above which, reached by very rickety stairs, she, more or less, lived.

In those days electric light was embryonic in the mind of a thinker. The street called Paradise was ill-lighted. Head down, buffeted by the gale, a man came from the opposite direction. Meg, careless of men, moved not from her course. Indeed, she did not realize his nearness, although she saw his blurred figure. They bumped into each other.

The language of the district, common to both, told loudly of this collision. The wind tossed their voices to the infinite. But, had any one heard, the affair was too trivial, too utterly commonplace to interest. The eloquence of the female, shrilling, threatened victory. Therefore, the fellow aimed a blow at her, which she avoided.

Slipping past him, she struck him shrewdly on the nose. As she would herself have told of the matter, she "tapped his claret." She disappeared among the shadows, and began to climb to her room.

The man, wiping his blood upon his coat sleeve, had recognized her, of course. In his cunning, brutal brain a plan of revenge was brewing.

Meg Brown reached the lockless room, panting. She slid the bolt inside and lighted her solitary candle. This stood in a tallow-filled dusty saucer. The "dip," with the charity of its kind, merely hinted at the appearance of the place. For this stray Magdalene had not achieved the gilt and mirrors of her luckier—if the term be permissible—sisters. Not even a bottle of cheap scent relieved the accumulated smell of sleep.

A cracked wash-basin and pitcher, standing upon an upended packing-case which was carelessly draped with a worn, red table-cloth which revealed rather than concealed, was all the furniture, save one pathetically aged cane-bottomed chair. The bed—it had once been one of those generous things—loomed like a tragedy of unusual pain.

The window, which boasted no shade—neither did it need one—was of four wood-divided panes of glass. That is, there was one whole pane, opaque with grime; another was broken, falling out bit by bit; the others were stuffed with ancient newspapers, in the crevices of which had crowded the dust of much time.

But to poor Meg this was *home*. It was all the home she knew, or expected to know. In sanctuary, she could keep that bolt shot, pretend to be out, and like any other sick animal understand the curiously comforting feeling of having a hole in which to suffer and in which to die.

The wind shook the aged window. The hail beat against it, and occasionally

through it. Meg removed her drooping hat, swore at its appearance, cursing wet weather. Otherwise fully dressed, she lay down, partly covering herself with the indescribable blankets.

Vague yearnings, for which she lacked words, troubled her. The affair with the man in the street had slipped entirely from her tired mind. More often of late had she suffered these yearnings. A number of yearnings, coalescing into one aching longing. It was not for opium, it was not for the society of humans. The longing was for something which her dimly groping brain could only think of as "awful."

And this wild night, when outside the Mersey ships were fighting for life and men stood grimly to the strain, when the street echoed and sobbed to the blows of the wind, when all the world seemed to be breaking into elements and the clashing and hurrying clouds threatened to blot out the memory of light—on this night was Meg Brown more than ever conscious of her agony, of the something she failed to understand as, doubtless, the snowdrop fails to understand why it should bud into beauty when the world is still cold and but weakly whispering of the coming Spring.

Usually, if she fought it sufficiently, the pain would leave her. Sometimes the struggle for existence would compel activity, forcing her to forget. But none of these anodynes offered this night, and, eventually, more disturbed than ever before, agitated into movement, she untangled herself from the blankets, put on her hat, unbolted the door, blew out the smoking "dip" and crept down the creaking, shaking stairs, without her bold, professional swagger but with a craving for dark places.

She had no thought of direction. Amid her depression, she wondered why the unusual amount of her drug had failed of its wonted stimulation. Had the Prince Charming—that strangely sacred dream-love of every Magdalene who ever lived—met her suddenly under a guttering gas-lamp, instead of greeting him she would have dropped to her knees and welcomed the blessed relief of tears.

Nigh blindly she headed into the wind, one hand holding her hat, the other at her breast. After what seemed like a long time of walking, but which was but a little while, she raised her dazed eyes from the wet-streaked pavement, and paused.

THE SHE knew the place. Often had she passed it, in company, with a careless laugh. Perhaps she would have crept past it now but for the warm sort of light hinting at peace, shown by the slightly open and inviting door. Three worn steps led upward to that door, and Meg's wet right foot had lifted to the first step before there came to her the hesitation of the ashamed. As she hesitated, the door opened more widely and Father Aspland looked out into the night.

With a slither, Meg dragged her foot to the pavement. In the added light from the doorway the name of that tiny, gallant building became visible. But Meg knew the name without reading any sign. She felt certain that the priest had seen that hasty action of hers. Then, amid a seethe of emotion, she could only appreciate that her foot upon the step of the Church of the Sacred Heart was entirely out of place.

Her brazen stare was as absent as if it had never been. Her cultivated swing of the hips lay quiescent in a body which bowed in an utterly new reverence. To walk past that calm gazer into the night, even with eyes upon the sidewalk and drooping as a withering flower in sheer sunlight, was beyond Meg Brown, who for so long a time had respected neither God, man, devil, nor the memory of what mother had borne her.

To turn, then! To turn back, and to do it with as near indifference as she could pretend. This parody of her usual attitude offered the only escape. To escape! To get away from there. To go where she could feel more like her usual self. To where the staring specter of her life would not so persistently haunt her.

Ah, she had sixpence! Batley might have closed his shop, but he would get out of bed for her. Another ounce! What if she did not need it? Tomorrow? —— tomorrow! There were more pennies in Liverpool!

"Wouldn't you like to come in and sit down and rest? Daughter, you are tired and wet. Rest. There is no preaching, no payment."

To turn and run! This avenue seemed closed. And there was no other.

The girl's wet, ill-shod foot again pressed that strange step. Again she hesitated. Father Aspland was watching the cloud-distorted sky.

Cringing with the crowding atavism of

tribal fears so pathetically shown by the criminal; drawn toward a warmth infinitely beyond her understanding; like a frozen plant in a noisome cranny which aches toward an unexpected gleam of sun—hardly knowing that she did it, Meg Brown climbed the steps, watching with animal caution the man at the edge of the porch.

The priest, with that decent instinct which causes men to turn their heads away when some poor devil is arrested, stared still skyward. Had he turned and spoken, God only knows what Meg would have done. It is doubtful if she would have done what she did do. There was something going on there not altogether unlike what one may see when a wild thing is coaxed gently to where sympathy may dress its wounds.

At the door the girl paused a moment. Then, very much like a tired child that knows it has been naughty, but which also knows that its mother still loves it, Meg Brown slowly passed through that inviting door. From the narrow hallway she peered timidly into the church. The light that had welcomed her now mingled with the dimness of the peaceful shadows, and Meg's aching soul was grateful.

Discerning kneeling figures—half a dozen, here and there—she sought with awed footsteps the loneliest of the simple wooden pews. So, as one in a dream, she sank to her knees and buried her face in her hands. But, craving tears as never before, her eyes were barren as a rock.

She fumbled dumbly among her unhappy memories, vainly seeking utterance of a prayer. Some time passed. Suddenly in broken whispers:

"O Gawd! Gawd 'elp me, for I'm rotten! O Gawd, I'm —— rotten—excuse me, Gawd, but it's the truth!"

Presently she began to peer through her locked fingers. It was Monday in Holy Week, but the candles, the symbolism only puzzled Meg. Yet, when she lifted her eyes above her hands to stare at the windows, she was quite able to appreciate that strange sense of vastness, of infinity, which looms through stained glass when the night is black and the light is dim within.

Again she watched the kneeling figures, until presently an old woman tottered feebly from her pew to the vague picture of the Descent from the Cross; there to kneel in utter adoration. Again the specter of Meg Brown's life stared at her contrastingly. Hastily, on tiptoe, doing her utmost to make no sound, afraid to disturb the sanctity of the place, feeling that there was something the matter with her eyes, she made her way to the door, and out.

There was no sign of Father Aspland, and Meg—grateful for his kindly understanding—carried her confusion home to her lodging. She was surprized next morning at having slept so refreshingly.

It is very easy to understand why it became the poor girl's evening habit to wait until the street was deserted and hurry up the steps to rest in the church. Meg would never be "religious." She was "rotten!" Like a certain person written of long ago, she knew it, and admitted her knowledge. Had she heard the word publican she would have thought of the individual at the family entrance of the Bull's Head from whom she sometimes purchased gin. But she understood very well indeed the meaning of the word sinner.

And Aspland relegated mere doctrine to its dusty tomes. Meg did not need theology; she wanted something less common and far more valuable. For ten nights few words passed between priest and Magdalene. Then, with a diffidence unusual in a man of his profession, but common to Father Aspland, he approached her.

It was difficult. Had the woman been a Catholic, Aspland's wish to aid could have been told to her in the quiet of the confessional. But Meg Brown, although she might have heard of the institution in the abstract, would not have recognized it in the concrete, and an invitation to enter therein would have aroused fear in her or a far more embarrassing emotion. For by now she was grateful, with dim notions of payment. So Meg heard of the world outside Paradise Street in the tiny hall of the church.

Sordid as was her response to sympathy, it was the story of thousands of English women of the period. Of the period? She had been born in Paradise Street. Her father was a mythical person. Her mother had cursed her bearing. At five years of age Meg had been a child of the gutter, existing as only such children could explain, and her mother had been "buried on the parish." Her later life—a life beginning before she was twelve—needs no biographer.

"How would you like to live where there are no streets? Where the hay grows, and all is quiet? How would you like to go to Derbyshire and work on a farm? The Church is able to do such things, and able to keep secrets. On that farm you will earn a good living, and the people will know you for a widow-woman. Paradise Street will believe you dead."

"Gawd!" Poor Meg reacted familiarly.

"At the hospital of the sisters you will get well. When you need laudanum they will give it to you, with other medicines which will cause you not to need it. You will be with the sisters for some little time, of course—er, until you are quite well. But you will be so kindly treated that you will learn what real love is. Would you like to have everybody know you as Mrs. Brown—a widow-woman?"

"Gawd!" responded Meg Brown.

"After tomorrow, then, Paradise Street will know you no more. Do not even say good-by to people who know you—it will be better not to. Bring your bundle, and come here at ten tomorrow night. A sister will meet you. Let Paradise Street think you have died—let them believe you have fallen into the river, if they wish."

—

THE night was quiet but without stars or moon. The afternoon of Paradise Street had been violent and noisy with drunkenness. but these were now sleeping, having fallen variously. Behind his prescription case, listless, sat Batley. He had grown weary of his pathological study. The tiny cuckoo clock above the bed in the back room chirped out nine. It was a bit too early to shut up shop and go to bed.

Batley possessed and read repeatedly two works of fiction, "Oliver Twist" and "David Copperfield," and now he fumbled amid the litter of a drawer for literary surcease of his ennui, for a moment of forgetfulness. He liked to allow chance to decide his reading—pushing a blind hand into the litter, and withdrawing whichever book that hand touched first. *David* or *Oliver?* It made no difference to Batley.

His fingers had closed about a book when the unusually sudden opening of the door of the shop actually caused him to drop his feet to the floor and stand beside his high stool. He frowned. The customer "only a lady friend of Meg Brown's." What did she mean by making such a disturbance?

Somebody might have swallowed carbolic acid, but, while Batley was always willing to donate the needed alcohol, he had repeatedly told people that they must first run for a doctor, because, while Batley could also try to force the would-be suicide into swallowing the alcohol, the task, besides annoying him, was too strenuous for his depleted nervous system, and the reaction inevitably sent him to his bout with his familiar devils a day or two before the bout was due. So he frowned at Annie Timms, while with swift mechanism he reached for a bottle.

But this was no announcement of suicide. After the first understanding glance at the girl's face Batley knew that whatever had brought her to him in such haste was something far more disturbing than attempted death, and something far more unusual.

Annie gasped, emotion-wrung. Her carefully cultivated *savoir faire* had deserted her. Observing this, again, Batley believed that she had murdered some chance love and had come to him either for imagined sanctuary or for advice about the best way of escaping the police. He felt much flattered. Indeed, he was stimulated out of his usual indifference.

"Yes! What is it? What do you want, Annie?"

The girl gulped painfully. Then, gasping—

"Paddy West is shanghaing Meg Brown aboard the *James Bains* wot sails tonight for America!"

Batley could only stare. It was not that his gathering understanding of the villainy of West shocked him, for nothing West would do had power to shock. True, never previously had any crimp shanghaied a woman; but it was just like West to do the unusual and be proud of his originality. No, the druggist was not shocked by West's action, neither did the picture of Meg Brown in a ship's forecastle upset him—he could imagine her enjoying it, *if*— If!

It was that if which aroused Batley the druggist and drove him into action. For he knew! Not as the ignorant, the cruel, the foolish, the callous, the religious. No! Batley knew, and, knowing, understood the hell of agony through which poor Meg would be compelled to live before her need

of laudanum killed her. For the medicine-chest of the *James Bains* would not carry more than an ounce, at the best. And would Meg be able to obtain even this reprieve?

And Batley also knew that West knew all this as well as he did. Yet, as he shrilled a word to his wife and grabbed for his cap, he was puzzling about the motive. What reason had Paddy West for shanghaing poor Meg on the *James Bains?*

But Mrs. Batley, who had of course heard every word, hastened to obstruct her husband's progress. He was more precious to her than all the women in Liverpool, and the idea of his thus running so bravely into danger aroused her fiercely. She would not let him go! Catching the panic, Annie Timms also threw herself to impede.

That poor, worn Batley, armed only with his feeble hands, intended to beard West in his den and rescue Meg Brown was naturally Mrs. Batley's interpretation of her hero's activity. But Batley had no such intention. In the first place he was not so foolhardy. Secondly, he understood the futility of such action. He had a better plan. And that he meditated no desperate attack upon the boarding-house he imparted to the women convincingly.

"But wot?" Mrs. Batley's question as she released her convulsive grip of her mate might well have been uttered.

"Not thur perleece?" Annie Timms voiced scorn of any such hope for aid.

"Come on, Annie! Alice, tend shop! Going for Father Aspland!"

And as the shop door slammed behind them Annie Timms and James Batley began to run, hand in hand.

The tiny church with its open door was not far to seek, but its shadowy peace revealed no Father Aspland. For a few moments the two who had entered on tiptoe despite the urgency of their errand were stunned by alarm. That Aspland should not be at his church—what calamity had befallen?

Neither the man nor the girl had knowledge of either churches or priests; for Batley was a sometime loud professor of atheism and the girl a silent professor of nothing at all. Yet some weird association had fixed in their minds the tacit belief that Aspland was eternally anchored to his little chapel, and both in the stress of the situation had drawn upon some vague yet potent ancestral reverence until, in their passing devoutness, they would have borne arms against Cromwell.

But that whisper out of the past failed to pass their emotions, told nothing to their brains; and in his desperation Batley rather timidly walked down the aisle to where a kneeling woman showed among the pews. He attempted to cough questioningly, but succeeded only in spluttering; and all of what he thought his diplomacy failed to rouse the praying and very tired washerwoman whose husband had long before contracted the cheerful habit of beating her, and who went to the chapel to seek the relief her creed denied her legally.

Then, of her, Batley, hoarse with a million different feelings, barked a falsetto question, intending the undertone of some chorister—for Batley had heard of choristers from Charles Dickens. The woman worn of toil and matrimony started and turned, still kneeling, to face this heathenish interrupter. Then the name he had spoken stayed her anger, and his evident need aroused her sympathy.

"An' where would he be but visitin' the sick—God bless 'im?"

The simple if obvious question was sufficient. For Batley knew the sick—the sick, that is, who were so very sick that they were willing to trade their scanty coppers for what relief his drugs offered. These were few—perhaps a dozen round about—but as the man's hand again clasped that of Annie Timms, who had waited distraught and awed, the names of the ailing whirled in his dizzy head. Amid them desperately he sought the right one. What sick person would Father Aspland be visiting?

And Batley, that night, stirred beyond himself, had something more informing than a mere catalog of facts. Blindly seeking, the antennæ of his mind guided him. He did not know it, but intuition took charge of his actions. So, hand in hand, he again ran with Annie Timms. His weakening feet held to the right road. Panting, these grimy holders in sympathy paused at the first door that seemed likely. Father Aspland walked quietly out of it.

THAT Aspland was startled out of his customary calm is not surprizing. The curious simplicity of the attitude of the two confronting him—hand in hand, waiting in great haste—their

rapid breathing, the unusual spiritual stir they manifested!

What?

Like a tortured frog, Batley panted out his information, Annie Timms corroborating with loud lamentation and emitting facts she had seen. In her distress she shrieked detail. She had chanced to pass the unusually quiet house of West, and she had also chanced—if her curiosity could ever be accidental—to look through a lower window, imperfectly shaded.

"Like a corp," she described the form of Meg Brown; like a "poor" corpse, laid out on a table, about to be shrouded in the uncouth dungarees of the sailor who lacks other clothes, and surrounded by grinning and indecent men.

Becoming enthusiastic, she would have shouted further details, but the quick-witted priest stayed the revolting account, to her evident distress.

"Go home," he commanded quietly. "Go to your homes. Say nothing about this. I—" his fist clenched, his strong face flushed slightly in the window-light—"I will take care of that poor girl and also of West!"

And he strode rapidly away, a fighting man, while after him Annie Timms shrieked her eternal understanding of corruption—

"It's no use going to the perleece—West gives 'em money an' booze!"

But Father Aspland, planning, had no time for platitudes.

Just what could he do to stop this crime? The police of the district might be corrupt but not all the municipal authorities were swine, nor could West control them. But who had been touched by poison, and who were clean? Father Aspland could evoke high church dignitary, and through him shake the city. But such action would take time, and during that time what would happen to Meg Brown?

Besides, even this would be subject to the same yard-stick as an appeal to the mayor. For West would at once hear of it, and before action could be taken all evidence would have been destroyed. West would be able to prove by a hundred witnesses that Meg Brown had never been in his house. He would say that he had not cast eye on her for weeks, that he held no account against her, and—why should he shanghai a woman?

Against this the priest had no evidence of his own—nothing but the story of Annie Timms. The tale of a street-walker would weigh nothing. No! More direct action was needed if Meg Brown was not to sail that midnight on the *James Bains*. And it was past ten.

Came the impulse, as he hurried, to cast aside all discretion, walk into West's place and manhandle the brute. But, again, breaking Paddy West into small pieces would not help Meg, and all trace of Aspland would be lost in the further melee with West's gang.

Among the man's crowding thoughts only one showed clear features, only one outlined the cameo-profile of Hope. He must appeal to Cæser! Father Aspland prayed that the appeal might not be fruitless. For Cæser was an American. Anyway, the struggle loomed like Marengo, with defeat leering and but one chance of victory. At that moment Father Aspland would have bartered his hope of heaven for the squadrons of Desaix!

But would the captain of the *James Bains* act? In his distress Aspland saw this captain as a man who would not trouble; who would refuse to credit the story. Why should he bother to turn everybody out of the forecastle? The priest realized what a mad and extraordinary search that would be, in the night!

No, the captain would growl and refuse to allow any such disturbance—denying carelessly the chance of any woman's being there, amused at the notion of what her presence would portend.

Again, how many captains bowed to the beckoning finger of the czar of Paradise Street? If he of the *James Bains* were of these, only God could help poor Meg Brown!

The advantage of position. Militantly the priest saw the matter. Paddy West must be outmaneuvered. Time, in war as in chess, was all-important. The priest, then, must get aboard the *James Bains* before West's runners took Meg Brown aboard. To appeal to the captain *after* the thing had been done would be like trying to turn back the hand of time.

To appeal, to threaten, if need be—with the law, the long arm of the Church, the press—holding the advantage of position, in time these weapons might win. They must be made to win! The man breathed the easier. His problem solved, only fighting remained. Which was the shortest way

to that part of the water-front off which lay the *James Bains?*

He paused in a narrow street. Yes, as a last resort. The greater the danger fronting the enemy, the greater chance of success.

The three balls showed balefully in the dim light. A pawn-shop of hebdomadal pledges. Also a shop of sorrow, where cherished relics waited vainly for deliverance. Where many a man and woman redeemed their Sunday clothes of a Saturday night; to pawn them again Monday morning. An ancient custom of poverty!

Even in his stress Aspland could not altogether control a smile at himself. What an errand for a priest!

So thought the Jew who served him; yet with the discretion of his race this one showed no amazement. Why should he? It was not his business to know what the priest wanted with a revolver. He observed that Aspland handled it with the nervous awkwardness of the amateur. It was the pawnbroker's business to earn a living, selling such things.

About the proffered cartridges the priest was dubious. Might it not be better to pretend the thing was loaded? Could he actually shoot at a man—in his direction, even—if driven to adopting extreme measures? Embarrassed, and with that human craving for any aid in extremity, he asked the Jew for his opinion! The Jew, selling cartridges, was gravely certain that they were very necessary.

"For why? If, father, you wish not to kill—make a big noise. Scare, like ——!"

And Aspland, feeling that the pawnbroker was better informed, bought the shells. But it was the Jew who loaded the gun.

IN THOSE days the water-front of Liverpool was not the concrete monument of modernity it is now. When the panting priest reached the place he sought, he found a mere float, to which were moored small boats. The night had clouded more blackly, although still calm. The last of the flood-tide sang against the fenders. With the ebb the *James Bains* would slip down the Mersey.

Was Meg Brown to slip out to sea—to that deeper sea—on the same tide? Father Aspland lifted his eyes and saw, twinkling against the darkness, the riding light of the vessel whose captain he sought. But whether that light were a star of success or but a dim warning of the outer dark, the priest could not know.

Men lounged dimly about the float. Since the priest had not spoken, these took him for a loafer. In the murky light figures blended with the color of the aged timbers and the dull water of the river. Pausing on a prayer, Aspland turned to seek information regarding the hiring of a boat. That shadowy, silent vessel with the tapering spars and single light was the field of battle whereon he must take advantage of position.

There leaned upon a high bollard of wood a man of size, whose profile showed indistinctly with a short pipe predominating, strangely like the beak of some weirdly breathing bird. Of this one Aspland asked if he could hire a boat to take him out to a ship in the stream. In the quiet the priest's voice carried, and men rose from among shadows, asking to be hired—all claiming water-skill, and each with the best boat and lowest price.

"What ship?"

The strong note of the man against the bollard drowned the scattered demand for employment. The hand of Father Aspland, gesturing with emotion, indicated the *James Bains*. Through the heavy sky enough light came filtering to enable the man with the pipe to discern the cloth of the one who spoke to him, and a rich brogue answered.

"Shure, father." The big man lifted his cap. "I have her boat here. The old man's ashore—we're waiting for him, an' he won't be long. Is it him ye want to see?"

"The captain—yes!"

Aspland trembled with eagerness. The disappointed watermen retired again to their shadows.

"I'm the second mate." The man removed his pipe, adding this.

But Aspland, bowing acknowledgment, hardly heard. His racing mind was too harried by Meg Brown to be spurred by second mates. They waited. Time, to Father Aspland, wore the effect of a dose of *canabis indica*. Minutes dragged over the weary route of hours. He was occasionally conscious of the second mate's efforts at conversation, and once he believed that the big man offered him the bollard, against which to lean for rest.

Answering the favors of his politeness,

the second mate heard mere vague mutterings, while the priest paced nervously to and fro. Presently the second mate blushed. Under his breath he swore at himself. Here was the priest, walking about, saying prayers! And he, with fat-headed politeness had been all the while interrupting him! He bit on his pipe with savage self-contempt.

Would that captain never come? Or, would he come too late—after Meg Brown had been thrown into the forecastle of the *James Bains?* Suddenly cunning came to Aspland. Why not hire a boat, get aboard? And, when West arrived, when his runners brought Meg, watch where they put her? Then bring her ashore again in his boat! He could do it!

His agony vanished in thought of action. He opened his mouth to call a waterman.

"Here's the captain, now!"

The second mate, still dubious concerning the interruption of prayers, said this as softly as his huge voice would permit. Father Aspland had waited less than five minutes.

"There's a—" the second mate began to tell his superior about the priest waiting to see him, but Aspland had hastened to the side of the gaunt, tall man—standing strangely like a mast stripped for a hurricane—with, "Oh, sir!" And in low tones, lest among the watermen lurk a spy of West's, he pleaded the cause of the Magdalene who had fallen among thieves.

"And what do you want me to do?"

"Do, sir! Why, will you allow such a crime, such a murder—on your ship?"

"How would you suggest that I prevent it?"

"Why, let me get a boat. And when they bring the poor woman, I will take her ashore again."

"What about West?"

The voice of the captain had evidenced no emotion. He might have been giving everyday orders aboard ship. Aspland felt the contrast of his own feelings. Was he being taunted? The old Adam arose, tingling. Father Aspland ceased to be a priest. He gripped—no longer nervously—the revolver.

"—— West! I tell you, captain or no captain, that that woman shall not sail tonight on your ship—so help me God!"

The captain laughed.

"Don't let it worry you, bishop. That's my opinion exactly. I ain't got much use for women, anyhow! On board ship they're worse than usual—you never saw a comfortable ship when the old man carried his wife with him, did you? But I was just asking you—when you jumped me—what your plans were. Particularly, what are your plans about Mister West? Yes, particularly about him!"

"About West?"

Aspland was divided between listening to the captain and watching the second mate, who, standing behind his superior, appeared to be intensely diverted by the cynical cross-examination.

"Yes; you ain't going to let that swine go scot-free, are you? Of course not—it wouldn't be religious! So, just think up the worst punishment you can for him, and I'll raise it the limit!"

"Raise it the limit?" Father Aspland questioned with the vague curiosity of one who plays not poker and is, also, English.

"That's all right. I ain't throwing out any hints, but me and this West has met before—we're what some might call old friends. There's other ways of putting it. He spits tobacco on some quarter-decks, but nobody ever sees him aboard *me.* I got the toughest second mate that ever crossed the Western Ocean, and that's saying something. This is him, here! He needs exercise—getting fat, because nobody has the nerve to try to lick him.

"This shipping a woman into my forecastle would be one —— of a joke on me, wouldn't it, bishop? West could go around telling every water-front bum that I had so little control of my crew that they carried their lady friends with 'em! I guess that's why he's doing this—trying to hit me when I'm not looking. Trouble is I have to use him as a shipping-agent.

"—— of a country! I only needed one man, and here I get a woman! It's one of that low-down swine's jokes, eh? Salty —— joke, you might say. So, as I said, think up a few thumb-screws and things, and me and my second mate will make 'em look like kisses!"

The huge second mate chuckled with the enjoyment of complete understanding, but Father Aspland could only stare.

"Cheer up, bishop, and we'll get busy. There ain't no woman ever going to sail aboard me. Better take a few weeks vacation, and cross to the other side with us.

You'll have the time of your life. I ain't throwing hints, but get busy and think of the worst thing that could happen to West. Don't forget what I told you about the second mate."

The captain had talked in such tones that only a word here and there could by any chance have reached the loafing watermen, and now he whispered certain orders to "the toughest second mate that ever crossed the Western Ocean." That gentleman then told two of his crew of four men—lying alongside the wharf in the boat of the *James Bains*—to come on shore. The two others, obeying some further order, rowed the boat toward some shadowy destination.

"Come along, father." The captain took a friendly grip of the priest's arm, and began to pilot him along the gangway to the shore, the second mate and the two men following. "You see, it's this way—and don't get sore with us experts for running this job for you—this West dumps his cargo out of a moldy hack he hires—always the same hack and the same dirty driver, of course—on to a bit of a wharf he rents, about a quarter of a mile farther up the river. It's quiet there. The swine don't give a —— for God, man or devil, as you might say, but he ain't such a fool as to take chances. He's taken a —— of a chance tonight, though—shipping women aboard me! You see, some poor guy's wife or relations—although a sailor ain't got no business having wives or relations—some guy's wife might organize a posse some time. So West has this little wharf that he don't advertise."

Behind a pile of lumber alongside the muddy path leading to West's wharf the captain concealed his party. A hundred yards up-stream the two men of the *Bains* waited in the boat. The night remained calm but very black. From the city came the noises of the night—a hush of peace compared with the nights of now. What few of that new sort of river-craft called steamers—how archaic would one of them seem today!—paddled about the Mersey did so with a discreet avoidance of noise; as if their skippers were a thoughtful race of men who would not for all the gold of oceans disturb with the blare of whistles. Perhaps they did not covet an argument with that strangely shore-like race of sea-going men called engineers, who manifested congenital objection to steam's being wasted in sound.

"GETTIN' bleeding dainty, ain't yer? Next thing you'll be telling me that your brothers is orficers and engineers, instead of being sailors and firemen, as they is. And your sisters ——!"

The voice of Paddy West, an unpleasant voice, since nothing so betrays the soul's condition as does the voice, whined its lurid way to the pile of lumber. The captain chuckled grimly, after his habit.

"West's runners don't like their job—or are they hitting him for more pay?"

"They're scared," whispered the second mate contentedly.

"They're going to be worse than that, eh, bishop?" suggested the captain.

"I hope so!"

The gentle Aspland of the Church of the Sacred Heart might have never been.

The rattle of the wheezy old hack had issued from among the other sounds of the city. The hackman's confidential command to his horse had ended this. Other noises had clearly told of men alighting, and lifting of something from the hack's roof—a wheelbarrow! Oaths had interspersed this performance.

The hack had whined upon its ancient springs, while orders from Paddy West had told of something being removed from its inside. Even the lack of ordinary care, the brutal indecency had been limned to the waiters behind the lumber-pile by sounds.

Once Meg Brown had been dumped into the boat, West would return to the waiting hack and drive back to his house. His runners would then row to the *James Bains* and do their master's business there. Through the clinging mud footsteps slopped and the wheelbarrow made its somewhat difficult way. And—apparently as necessary as is music to an opera—coarse language never ceased its accompaniment.

"All set?" The captain's voice was sibilant. "Bishop, you'd better wait here while we do the dirty work."

"If this night passes without my hands being laid roughly on West, may I never see heaven!" responded Aspland fervently.

"Let her go, Gallagher, then," chuckled the captain. "Stand by—when I give the word. Seems to me that you guys don't need no instruction in rough-house!"

The noise of the wheelbarrow, the labored breathing of the man pushing it, the voices, the oozing of the protesting mud—these, to Father Aspland, drew nearer with the

increasing volume of sound of the band of a regiment, marching past. And the sound was as stimulating to action, as stirring, rousing an atavistic tingling along his spine, an itch to fight. For Father Aspland had not merely ceased to be a priest. He had forgotten that he had ever been one.

Yet the captain's language—an extraordinary concession to propriety—indicated memory of Cloth.

"Now!" he hissed as the crimp and his gang drew abreast. "Jump the sons of—the illegitimate sons of a thousand degenerate ancestors! At 'em!"

An overwhelming rush of enraged men. A yell of fear from the individual at the wheelbarrow. A shock of wood as he dropped the handles. Paddy West wheeling for flight; silently followed by the other runner. The silent, savage, gorilla-grappling of the second mate. Father Aspland flinging himself upon West's shoulders, throttling him into gutturals, bearing his weight upon him as they fell, and pressing his face into the receptive mud.

A curiously distinct crack, like two boards meeting, as the second mate obtained complete submission from the runners by the simple process of banging their heads and faces together. The two sailors of the *James Bains* had stood aside at a gesture from the captain, who had surveyed the short melée, appreciatively chuckling.

Never before had Aspland known such thrillingly satisfying joy. Under him, choking, lay the fellow he had set out to defeat. *Vae victis!*

"It's all right, of course, bishop—I ain't got no objections to your killing the swine. But think it over. If you beat a man up and kill him, he wins and you lose. You never get another chance to beat him up, you know!"

The captain's voice held the friendly advice of a second to a fighter in the ring, and Aspland accepted it as such.

"Turn him over to my two men, like the second mate's doing with his lot. And, mister, jump forrard and hold up that lousy hack-driver. We may need him an' his chariot. Anyway, we don't want him bleating this all over Liverpool."

Dragging West roughly to his knees, then to his feet, Aspland hurled the cringing, whining crimp into the gleefully waiting hands of the sailors. Getting his breath again, West protested:

"Wot 'ave I done? Yer carn't 'andle me like this. Wot's it all about?"

The question was addressed to the captain, whom the crimp had recognized, but the captain did not answer. With the politeness of fighting men the master of the *James Bains* left decisions, words, judgments, and, if any, explanations to Aspland.

The figure of the latter, in the dim dark, puzzled West. He thought he knew the man who had so handled him, but the knowledge seemed absurd. And whatever chance there might have been of the priest becoming himself again, of his anger being glutted with victory, passed into greater savagery when he surveyed the limp, unconscious, distorted figure of poor Meg Brown in the wheelbarrow.

There was an echo of the kindly plan he had made for the girl. A sister of mercy was even then waiting at the church, and a bed waited in the hospital. But, contrastingly, or perhaps naturally, this only served to whet Aspland's appetite for revenge, and more furiously stirred his anger.

Some dim appreciation of decency prevented his striking the babbling lips of the boarding-house keeper. But, with a fierceness the tough second mate could not have bettered, he shoved his face against that of West—and now the crimp fearfully knew his opponent—gratingly asking—

"Why did you try to shanghai Meg Brown?"

"Try is good," chuckled the captain.

West struggled to find a lie which would serve, but the steel of the soul staring at him forced the truth.

"She hit me—made me nose bleed," whined the crimp.

"Poor feller!" The captain's sympathy was tremendous. "It's too bad. That tale of wo will blow all over the sea. Too bad! A woman busted poor Mister Paddy West, of Liverpool, England, on his delicate snout. Made it bleed, she did. And West ran away, blubbering and hollerin' for help!" And as his men laughed, courtier-wise, he added: "Don't believe I owe you very much, Mister West. Not now. The bishop does, of course, and I can't disappoint my second mate. He might quit me if I did, and there ain't another like him."

And about Paddy West blew the chill of a terrible premonition.

The priest glared balefully, his habit of speech a minor and discarded habit, but the

captain was accustomed to giving orders in unexpected situations.

"Put a good seizing on their wrists," he told his sailors. "Have their hands behind their backs." He pulled a whistle out of a pocket and signaled his boat. "When the boat comes alongside, dump the swine into it. The second mate will be down in a minute—he'll look after you."

He turned toward the wheelbarrow and Aspland turned with him. No words were needed between them. Neither would condescend to imitate a runner of Paddy West's. Very gently they lifted Meg Brown and began to carry her to the hack. Against the breast of Father Aspland her head rested, but to the priest there was nothing anomalous in the situation.

They found the second mate amusing himself by twisting the driver's right hand in one direction while he ground his own powerful palm about the fellow's wrist oppositely. In his agony the hackman squirmed in the mud. As if nothing were going on—and the driver heeded the second mate's warning not to make a noise lest worse befall him — priest and mariner tenderly lifted the Magdalene into the conveyance.

"I'll drive, bishop, if you'll say where to. Don't want to make my second mate mad by taking his toy away from him!" And a backward nod indicated the now weeping driver.

"Providence Hospital." Aspland found it very difficult to talk. "And stop at my church for the sister."

Even the "please" of an essentially polite man had been discarded with the other useless conventions of weakening civilization.

"Aye, aye, bishop."

The captain slammed the door, leaving Aspland sitting with Meg Brown in his arms. He even forgot to be thankful that she was still unconscious.

He must have heard the captain speaking to the second mate, and the protest of fear and horror wrung from the hack-driver by the order given. Dimly he heard the laughter of the second mate as he dragged the driver toward the waiting boat. But something held Aspland. A long dead ancestor wakened, controlled him. One who had lived before words were born, when animal-like grunts were sufficient for needs. Thus, words and protest fell upon his ears unheeded, like so much rain.

The hack struggled over the uneven road, compelling the priest to hold Meg Brown very tightly. The rage stirring him was beyond his comprehension. The idea of attempting to understand never even occurred to him. Yet it was an obvious rage. But where was the dust that caused it? What paleolithic, or earlier, man—Aspland's great grandfather thousands of years removed—had so borne back to his lair his mangled woman, brooding death and revenge on her slayer?

THE tapering masts of the clipper seemed to melt into the murky, low-hanging clouds. A wavering wind had risen, making eerie music among the rigging. The Mersey lay silent at high water. Under the break of the poop an unusual court was about to pass judgment. The prisoners shivered in various attitudes. To gratify his sense of humor the captain had ordered that West should be handcuffed with his arms around a stanchion. The driver of the hack and the two runners were herded by a cheerful second mate. Still the avenger, Aspland stood by the captain's side.

"Hell's certainly brewing ashore for you animals," the captain spoke with convincing harshness. "You dirty scum of the British nation went too far when you set out to insult the American flag by what you tried to do. What we fixed up ashore for you will get you twenty years. I have to hand it to British Law—it don't harbor no tenderness for things like you. But you'll be —— glad to get to the pen. It's an even bet you don't get there, though. We stirred up such a muss that it's going to reach the House of Lords! ——, didn't that old judge foam! The police is so scared about their jobs that they'll never let you swine tell about it in court. There must be a hundred waiting for you ashore at Liverpool! Was any of you ever beat to death before?"

He paused as upon a tasty morsel. As one man the prisoners began to plead—whining excuses, babbling of families which had no existence, blaming the helpless West, cursing him for getting them into such trouble—they never wanted to do it! Such was the burden of their plea. And West, more terribly afraid than any of them, if such a fear be possible, cursed back at them.

The captain waved a hand, and the

second mate heavily used his to compel silence.

"We towed your boat alongside, as you know. Throw them three over the side, mister, and let the police eat 'em up!"

"Please, captain," a trembling runner begged, "let us get away to the Birkenhead side—do you think the coppers will be there, too, sir?"

"Wot in —— do I care where the police get you? Kick a little discipline into them, mister. The nerve of him—asking me to tell him what to do!"

Followed an interlude of scuffling, after which two very wet runners and one nearly drowned hack-driver managed to scramble into their boat without capsizing it. Cursing one another, panic-stricken, they began with choppy strokes to row toward the Cheshire side of the river—away, as far away as their imaginations believed possible, from the mythical one hundred police of Liverpool!

"Those guys will be hitting it for the interior, to live with the Indians," chuckled the captain. "Oh, I forgot, there ain't no interior to this island—nor Indians neither. I wonder where the —— they will get to before they stop running? And now for the *peace dee resistance*, as the French say. Bishop, you're now going to get the cream of the bill of fare. ——, it tastes good already—don't it, mister?"

The second mate made gustatory noises.

"Mister West." The captain stepped toward the crimp and Aspland went with him. "Mister West, I'm only the prosecuting attorney in this case. His reverence, here, is the judge. If the second mate wants to—and I'm —— sure he don't—he can be attorney for the defense."

"——, no!" the second mate declined the dubious honor.

"Then, Mister West, you'd better ask God for help. But you'll maybe find Him hard of hearing!"

West, like a cornered rat, began to fight verbally. They had no right to threaten him. Let them take him ashore—he would fix the police. It was against the law to hold him against his will!

"That last's good!" interpolated the captain.

Then West, sensing his fate, swore he would fix the captain. He had power, he had! And money! And friends—in America, too! It would go hard with any man who did him dirt!

For fully ten minutes he threatened, but not a word answered him. Then his fear drove him to pleading again. He was willing to forget it—all they had done to him. He was willing to be friends again. Send him ashore, and they would see what a fine fellow he could be. He would give to the poor! And so on, *crescendo*, reaching his highest note.

"For Gawd's sake, Captain Dixon, let me go. I'll never shanghai another man! I'll pay you——"

"That'll do! Your defense is in. If he opens his mouth, mister, while I'm speaking to the judge, shut it for him—*you* don't need telling how!"

The captain addressed Aspland: "Your reverence, it's time Liverpool got a cleaning-up. Let's do it. There's only one thing to do with this swine. He won't bother Paradise Street again. He spoke truth when he said he'd shanghai no more. But that's nothing. A sea voyage will do him good. It's what my second mate—and maybe the men in the forecastle—will do that will cure him! The medicine will taste bad. He won't believe it's going to do him any good. But it will. Sentence him, judge!"

"You mean?" Aspland, however, knew what the captain meant.

"Yes! We'll take him with us. I am a man short—thanks to his trying to ship me a woman. Can't you come along, bishop, and see the fun?"

"No. I wish I could. This is justice." And to West, "You will sail with this ship to——"

"——!"

The shriek of the crimp was silenced by the heavy hand of the second mate, and Aspland continued.

"You will remain aboard this ship. And, and—I wish I could remain, also, to see what they do to you!"

"Good for you, bishop. Come into the cabin and swallow a toothful before you go ashore."

They turned toward the light of the cabin door.

"And, mister, come in, too. But first, kick that fellow forrard, where he belongs!"

THE *James Bains*, slipping down the river with the ebbing tide, hung for a moment like a vague cloud, altered her helm, and passed from Father Aspland's sight. For a few minutes he

stood in the silence. The sky was clearing. From somewhere within the city a bell tolled.

Father Aspland shivered in response to the mellow vibration. What had he done? A feeling almost of horror claimed him. What devil had possessed him during the recent hours?

On his knees, again himself, he heeded not the mud. Pouring out his soul in penitence, he saw himself as a man may be, but not as a priest.

"And I have promised to follow, to try to imitate Thee. That sinner! Was he worse than I? That could not be! He was only false to his fellow men. I have been false to Thee. The words! The words! Had I been Thy true servant, I would not have sent him with them. For a servant of Thine there should have been only Thy words, 'Go thy way and sin no more!' "

CAPTAIN JOSEPH LA BARGE

by **H. P.**

A RARE riverman was Captain Joseph La Barge, and the story of his life is a story of the Missouri River. Chittenden's "History of Early Navigation on the Missouri River" is based on the life and experiences of this veteran boatman and trader.

He went on the first boat that reached the upper river and for years navigated the utmost reaches of the Missouri, piloting his craft through to Fort Benton, and, as Chittenden says, "reached a point farther from the sea—3,575 miles from Gulf of Mexico—by a continuous watercourse than any other boat had ever been."

He joined the American Fur Company in 1832 when he was but seventeen years old. He was to be paid seven hundred dollars for three years of service, and he was first set to work at Cabanne's Post, a few miles above modern Omaha.

His first experiences as a trader was a trip to the permanent villages of the Pawnees on the Loup Fork of the Platte. He passed the Winter of 1832-33 in the lodge of the chief Bad Axe, and improved his time by learning the language.

On leaving the village in the Spring he was accompanied by Major John Dougherty, an Indian agent, who had ransomed and brought with him a Crow woman whom the Pawnees were intending to burn. A few miles from the village Spotted Horse galloped by them and shot an arrow through the woman's heart.

La Barge remarks—

"There are enough forgotten graves to make the shores of the Missouri one continuous cemetery from source to mouth."

In August of 1833 La Barge was sent back to the Pawnees with a small outfit to trade for buffalo meat. During the meteoric shower of that year—November—he was camping on Trudeau's Island, two and a half miles above the mouth of Weeping Water River, afterward called Hurricane Island, and finally washed away. In 1834 he varied the monotony of routine by taking the Winter express from Cabanne to Fort Pierre.

He returned to Cabanne's in time—April—to bring down the Winter trade from the Pawnee village.

Shortly after making the village the Sioux stole sixty horses from a corral. The nineteen-year-old trader took seventy-five warriors and gave chase. He came up with the thieves on the Elkhorn, killed eleven and recovered all the horses.

Coming down the Platte from the Pawnee village, the party was greatly bothered by rattlesnakes. Whenever they camped the snakes swarmed in to get warm. La Barge used his coat for a pillow, and on the first morning found two huge rattlers under it. They became so numerous that the Indians would shift their camp.

La Barge says he can not recall a single instance of death from rattlesnake bite. In May of that same year La Barge took the robes in mackinaw boats down to St. Louis.

In recounting his experiences among the Indians he mentions the horses' fondness for cottonwood bark. The limbs were cut in four-foot sections. In Winter it was necessary to thaw the bark as the shavings, when frozen, were like so many knife-blades and sometimes caused death.

Among traders it was called "hoss wood."

The *Barrigudo*

A Complete Novelette

by

ARTHUR O. FRIEL

"Author of "The Tailed Men," "The Trumpeter," etc

HAVE you noticed, *senhores*, the big, slow-moving monkey which that oily-faced trader over yonder is taking down the river with him?

It is a *barrigudo*—the "bag-belly" monkey—and one of the largest I have seen, though I have met many of those big fellows during my years of service as a rubber-worker in the Javary jungle. From the end of its solemn nose to the tip of that strong tail, which it can use as a fifth leg in the trees, it must be more than four feet long.

The trader tells me that he intends to sell it as a pet in Para. But unless he is very lucky his monkey will be dead long before the end of his journey. For the *barrigudo*, *senhores*, is a creature of this upper Amazon alone, and when he is taken away from his own country he dies.

Why this is so I can not tell you. Looking at his bulky body, you would think he could endure almost anything. Yet he is *mortál*, as we Brazilians say—delicate, not hardy. It may be that in his silent way he grieves himself to death because he has lost his own land and his old friends. You can not always tell, by looking at either monkey or man, what sort of heart is hidden in his breast. And, after all, the heart is the only thing that really counts.

This may seem, *senhores*, like idle talk, but it is not. I have a tale to tell you—a tale of the most surprizing *barrigudo* I ever met.

I CAME upon this creature at the time when the great yearly floods had passed their crest and were going down again. Indeed, they had gone down so far that I was worried; for I was far from where I ought to be, and in strange country where I might soon find myself stranded in the midst of unknown jungle.

With my comrade Pedro Andrada, a fellow-workman on the big rubber estate of old Coronel Nunes, I had paddled across country from our Javary region into the upper reaches of the Jurua, a low-lying and very crooked river to the south and east Then, after meeting with queer experiences and traveling some distance down the river, we had turned homeward, journeying along a flooded *furo*, or natural canal, until we met a number of roving North American soldiers who saved us from death at the hands of a horde of fierce savages. Now these men had left us and gone back toward the Amazon, whence they had come; and we were trying hard to reach our own territory before the ebbing waters should leave us trapped in some blind flood-channel.

As I say, I was worried. If we had known where we were I should not have cared so much, for then we should have been able to

judge our course. But neither of us had passed this way before, our only guide was the sun, and we had to trust to that and to luck to carry us through the maze of twisting water-courses opening around us on all sides.

The *furo* itself, which had been fairly plain, now was becoming harder to follow, winding here and there in a confusing way; and already we had blundered off it more than once and lost much time in learning our mistake. Besides this, our food supply now was none too plentiful, and we found little game to shoot. And inch by inch, day and night, the thick tangle of bush was rising steadily around us as the waters slipped away.

Yet these things, serious though they seemed, suddenly became nothing at all. They were swallowed up by something far more grave.

Pedro fell sick.

It must have been the Spotted People who gave the disease to him. We came upon them in the morning of a sweltering day when no breeze stirred. We were stripped almost naked, breathing with mouths hanging open, gasping now and then for the air which it seemed we could not get, but shoving steadily onward. All at once my comrade, up in the bow, held his paddle and called sharply:

"*Quem vai la?* Who goes there?"

No answer came. No sound of any kind followed his hail. He was peering at a tangle of trees rising from the water at his left.

"Do you see anything, Lourenço?" he asked.

"Nothing," I replied.

"Yet I thought I heard— Let us go and look."

We turned the canoe into the trees. As we neared them a figure rose behind a big blown-down tree-trunk. It held a bow and arrow. Instantly we backed water and snatched up our rifles.

For a moment we hung there, the man menacing us with his arrow but not daring to loose it with our gun-muzzles covering him. He was a naked Indian, and seemed to be standing on the water.

"*Baah derekoh?* What is the matter with you?" he growled sullenly in the Tupi tongue.

"*Anih baah.* Nothing," I answered in the same language. "Put down that arrow if you would not be shot."

He lowered his weapon in a surly way.

"What are you doing here?" Pedro snapped.

For answer the man stooped and held up a spear, on which a fine big fish hung quivering.

Laying down our rifles, but keeping them within instant reach, we pushed up to him and found that he was in a small canoe hidden by the prostrate tree. He still held the spear, and the water on its shaft showed that he had plunged the barb into the fish just before Pedro shouted. We saw that he was peaceable enough, and that he was a very ordinary-looking fellow except for one thing. His face was blotched with hard, rough, black spots.

After telling him we meant no harm to him or to any other man who did not attack us, we asked him whence he came. In a slow, heavy manner he replied that his people lived close by, up on a little hill above the reach of the floods. We asked him if they were many, and he said no. Then, without questioning us in turn, he dropped spear and fish into his canoe, picked up a paddle, and began to move away.

"Wait," said Pedro. "Will you sell that fish?"

He stopped, squinted at the fish and at us, and said he would barter for beads. But we had no beads, for we were not on a trading-trip. We offered him some empty cartridge-shells, though, telling him they were lucky bells which would keep demons away. He hesitated so long that we thought the fish was ours. But then he grunted, "No," and started on.

"Wait," Pedro commanded again. "Is there fruit at your town?"

The fellow said there was much fruit. So then we told him that if he would give us fruit he could have the lucky bells. At once he consented. We followed him a short distance through the watery forest to the hill where his village stood.

IT WAS a miserable little place of a few scattered huts, and the people in it seemed as wretched as the town. When we walked boldly in among them, following our guide, they gathered around us in a sluggish way and looked us over without saying anything. Their eyes were dull, their expressions blank, their movements lifeless and their skins spotted with those same black patches which

disfigured the fisherman. Every one of them —men, women, children—was spotted.

The older they were, the worse they looked. The children had only small spots, with lighter rings around each blotch. But the grown people were crusted with hard patches, and among them I saw a withered man whose face was one great black scab. And not only the people, but the town itself, seemed sick; for there was a smell in the air —a heavy, depressing odor of disease which made me wish we had not come.

"Let us get our fruit at once and go," I muttered. "I can not breathe well."

"Nor I," my partner agreed. "But I want something fresh to eat, and I will have it. Here, stabber of fish! Fetch the fruit quickly, or we will go and keep our demon-bells."

The fisherman grunted, moved his head for us to stay there, and went away. He was gone for what seemed a long time. We stood still, and all the others stood still, staring without a blink. And the odd thing was that they stared not so much at our guns and breeches as at our skins. After a time it dawned on me that they marveled because we were not blemished as they were.

"*Por Deus!*" muttered Pedro. "When we leave this place I shall take a bath. These people make me feel slimy."

"I feel the same way, and the smell here makes my stomach squirm," I said. "But here comes our man."

The fisherman was returning, bent forward under a long *atura* basket which hung down his back. We turned at once toward the water. He followed, and at the canoe he put basket and head-line and all into the bottom.

Handing him the empty shells, we pushed off and away, leaving him jangling his "demon-bells" in his palms. No doubt he thought we were great fools to give such a charm for a simple basket of fruit. And the time was not far off when I was to believe we had indeed lost our luck at that place.

We paddled away fast and traveled some distance before we either ate of the fruit or took the bath we had promised ourselves. Somehow the sickly smell of that village seemed to stay with us long after the town itself had disappeared behind us. A thin mist had hung over the place of the Spotted People, and the same vapor was crawling along the water and keeping up with us. Not until we finally got clear of it and breathed clean air once more did the odor fade away.

"Phew!" whistled Pedro, his nose wrinkled. "What an unwholesome hole! Now that we are quit of it, let us bathe and eat."

So we found a firm bare spot where we could stand and pour gourds of water over ourselves. We wanted to take a swim, but the water did not look inviting and we knew well that under its surface might be lurking death in the shape of fish or reptile, so we bathed on land.

When we felt clean again we ate heartily of the fruit, which tasted very good. And as we paddled onward after that we munched now and then at other fruits taken from the basket.

That night neither of us ate well. Our stomachs did not want the usual ration of dried *pirarucu* and *farinha*. So we devoured the rest of the fruit and were satisfied.

Before dawn I awoke to hear Pedro moaning softly in his sleep. He had a bad dream, I thought. So I yelled and roused him, grumbled that he was disturbing me, turned over in my hammock and shut my eyes again. He said nothing, and I slept almost at once.

When next I looked around me it was day, and my partner was sitting up and holding his head in his hands. He only grunted when I spoke.

I got breakfast, but he would eat none. This was so uncommon that I looked sharply at him, finding his skin pale and his face drawn. But when I asked him what ailed him he said only that he had not slept well.

We paddled away as usual, and all through the hot, sunny morning he said no word. His stroke lacked its regular power, and several times he stopped work and bent forward as if to favor his stomach. I grinned, thinking he had a touch of colic from eating too much fruit and was too stubborn to admit it. At last I snickered outright.

"Poor little man!" I mocked. "Does his little belly ache? Perhaps he needs a little drink——"

I DID not finish. He groaned, wavered dizzily, and slumped into the bottom of the boat.

This scared me. He was not the man to let anything overpower him as long as he

had an ounce of fight left in him, and I realized that he must be very sick.

As quickly as possible I got the boat to shore. There I found that his illness was not a mere ache of the stomach.

He had fever. And it was not the ordinary jungle swamp-fever—which is bad enough—but a deadly sickness which burned and froze and griped and turned him inside out. When at last his spasms ceased he lay so limp that I thought him dead.

He could not even whisper. He could not move. He lay like a corpse and he looked like one, and only the feeble throb of his heart and his shallow breathing told me that he still lived. And there was not a single thing that I could do to help him, for we had no medicine—not even a mouthful of rum to strengthen his heart.

Squatting beside him, I tried in a dumb, dazed way to think of something I could do.

He was more to me than any one else in the world. He was far closer than a blood brother—he seemed a part of myself. A handsome, happy-hearted, boyish man, strong of hand and quick of thought and action, he had been my comrade in fair weather and foul, in times of merriment and times of deadly fight. Either of us would throw away his own life to save the other—yes, or endure torment worse than death, if by it the other might escape.

And at that very moment I was in such torment of mind as I hope will never come to me again. I could not let him die, but it seemed that I could not aid him to live.

At last I thought of a thing, though it seemed of little use. If I could find some *pajemarioba*, a bitter medicinal herb sometimes used by the Indians to make a sort of tea, it might start him to sweating and drive the fever out. The *pajemarioba* grows wild in many places, and some might be there.

I started at once and hunted all about the spot where we were. But I found none.

I came back to him just in time. He lay on the ground as I had left him, limp and motionless. And half-way out of the water, crawling up toward him, was a big alligator.

I leaped at the beast in fury. It slewed and slid back under the surface. Then, lifting my partner, I laid him in the canoe and stroked swiftly away from that accursed place.

As we went onward I watched along both sides, hoping to see a patch of *pajemarioba* on some point of land. The chance of finding it was poor, I knew, but it was all I could do, and at any rate I was doing something. So, hunting desperately for some sign of that herb, I kept on for I know not how long.

At length I came into a place where the water widened out and met open shores covered with fine *matupa* grass, beyond which grew ferns and slim *assai* palms. I paddled slowly near one bank, thinking that here I might land and seek again for the *pajemarioba*. And while I looked around and thought it over, an astonishing thing came about.

On the empty shore, a few feet from me, a voice spoke.

"*Ko tam baheh?* What is that?"

I started, looked at the spot whence the words had come, and saw no man. Nothing was there except thick tufts of grass, and the grass was not tall enough to conceal any one unless he were lying down. Yet I was certain the voice had spoken at that place. Watching it steadily, I turned the canoe straight at it.

But just as the bow touched shore the voice came again from another spot.

"*Bih pende hoh?* Where are you going?"

The question came from a small bush standing a foot or so above the grass and a few feet to my left. As before, no living thing was there—no living thing with a voice could be there. The bush was so thin that I could see through it, and beyond it was nothing except grass and trees.

I felt a little chilly. Then I grew angry. If some man was there and making sport of me I would spoil his joke. Picking up my gun, I stepped ashore into mud that rose over my ankles, and through this I plowed straight to the bush.

I found nothing at all. No man was there and no man had been there, for the mud held no tracks but my own.

THEN, as I scowled around me in wonder, a new thing came. It was a sound of singing.

It seemed to be far away, yet very near—almost over my head, a clear, sweet song without words, up in the blank air above me. I stared upward, and, seeing that nothing but the sky was over me, I grew chilly again. Was I going mad? Was I too about to become delirious with fever? Was this a place of demons, where grass and bushes spoke and the air sang? I di..

not know. But I did know I wanted to get out of there. Turning, I sloshed back through the soft mud to the canoe.

As I got into it the voice spoke once more. From the water near me rose the same question the spotted fisherman had asked:

"*Baah derekoh?* What ails you?"

For the first time I answered. With my eyes on Pedro I growled in Tupi:

"*Heraku.* Fever."

Then I shoved off. But a reply came that stopped me.

"*Ehe ahrahm. Che ahoh apuh ayuh.* Wait. I will cure the sickness."

This time the voice seemed to be heavier, more like that of a man; and it came from a place near the edge of the trees. I looked sharply at that spot, but saw no man there. For that matter, I did not expect to see anything human, after what had happened.

But this weird voice had said it would cure Pedro, and if the great horned devil himself had risen beside me and given me that promise I would have embraced him. Holding the canoe still, I told the Thing to come to me.

It answered that it could not come, for it had no body but was only a spirit. But if I would go and find a man who now was sleeping on the shore of a narrow neck of water beyond us, and would follow him, the fever should be driven out.

That was all. I asked the Thing just where this man was, but got no reply. No sound of any kind came to me. The *natupa* grass, the bush, the water, the trees—all were vacant and silent. I drove my paddle into the water and heaved the dugout ahead.

Pedro moaned, squirmed a little, and lay still. Looking at him, I shut my jaws and began watching along-shore for any narrow water such as the Thing had told about. And soon, *senhores,* I found it. And I went into it, and under a tree I found a sleeping man.

He was half-lying, half-sitting with his back against the tree-trunk. His mouth hung open, and from it came a gurgling snore. But after I looked at him I came near turning about and going away. No such creature as he, I thought, could ever cure Pedro.

He was a greasy, bag-bellied *barrigudo* of an Indian. Hairy as a monkey he was, too, and the black hairs of his whole body were matted with clay, plastered on thickly to keep biting bugs from reaching his hide. The long, stringy hair of his head hung down over his face so far that I could see little of it, but what little I could make out looked blank and stupid.

As I have said, I would have welcomed the devil himself if he had offered aid to my comrade; but the devil, *senhores,* has brains, while this creature looked as if he hardly knew enough to scratch an itch—a mere mass of fat, hair, and dirt.

I grunted with disgust, and half-moved my paddle to push out and away. But just then the queer voice spoke again.

"*Hemba eah hy,*" it reminded me. "You are sick."

It came from the tree, a little above the sleeping man. I looked first at the tree-trunk, on which was nothing alive. Then my eye swerved again to Pedro. And instead of going away I drove the dugout to shore, stepped out, and prodded the human *barrigudo* with my paddle.

His snoring ended. I caught the glint of eyes staring through his hair. He grunted, and the sound seemed to come from the depths of his belly. Then he sluggishly pushed himself up higher against the tree, yawned with a wheezing noise, and growled—

"*Baah derekoh?*"

"My mate has fever," I answered, pointing at Pedro.

He sat blinking. Then he yawned again.

"*Hembara ahreteh.* I am very tired."

And his head drooped as if he meant to go back to sleep.

His callousness angered me. In one long stride I was at the canoe. In another I was back, with my cocked rifle in his face.

"Get up, you filthy beast!" I snarled. "Get up and take care of my comrade, or the next alligator that comes here will find a fat feast awaiting him."

He got up. Slowly, as if afraid he might touch the gun and discharge it, he rose and stood against the tree. When I lowered the weapon he waddled past me and stared at Pedro. Then, with a sour grunt, he pointed a thick finger and moved his head to show I was to pick up my partner and go somewhere with him. After scowling at him I did so.

He led me for some distance back into the bush—so far that before we stopped I was breathing hard, for Pedro was no light

weight to carry. Yet I would rather carry him myself than have that dirty Indian do it, even if he had offered to.

As I look back at that time I wonder that I followed him at all, for in spite of the promise made by the queer voice I had faint hope of any real help from him. But I kept on, and presently we entered a cleared space where were huts and people.

THE *barrigudo* man, striding along easily in spite of his size, went straight to a hut set off at some distance from the rest. Half-blinded with sweat, humped over under the burden of my partner's hot body, I trailed at his heels.

We passed through the doorway into a dim room of shadows, where a tiny fire smoldered in the middle of the dirt floor. There the Indian pointed to a sort of legless bench or bed of woven sticks, which hung like a hammock but was straight and flat. On this I laid Pedro.

Pedro squirmed again and kicked about, and for a minute I had to hold him to keep him from rolling off. When he quieted I straightened up and turned toward the *barrigudo*. But he was gone.

Puzzled, I stared around. He could not have gone outdoors, for I was between him and the spot where he had last stood, and I should certainly have known it if he had passed me. Yet there was no other opening in the house except a small smoke-hole in the roof ten feet above me, and he surely could not have gone out there. But he was not in the place. The huge creature had vanished into air.

Peering at the walls about me, I found no sign of any door except the one where we had entered. The walls were made in basket fashion of tightly woven sticks and creepers. On them hung strange and horrid things—skins of deadly snakes and huge lizards; great black poison-spiders; skulls of ugly beasts and of fish with terrible hooked teeth; a vampire bat, and other things of the sort. But all these were dead. No living thing was in the room but ourselves.

As I gaped around I thought I heard a slight chuckle somewhere, but whence it came I could not tell—indeed, I was not sure that I really heard it. Then came a thing that made me forget it. Behind me sounded the hiss of a snake.

I whirled, looked, and saw on the farther wall the head of a big boa. Yes, *senhores*, only its head—a head as dead as the skins and skulls near it. But as I looked at it its mouth slowly opened; and out of that mouth came a hissing voice that told me to go.

The head closed again and hung silent as before. Feeling rather prickly, I stood watching it until a slight rustle near me drew me around again. There beside Pedro stood a great figure muffled in a garment of bark-cloth.

Senhores, I was now so confused and bewildered that I recoiled and leveled my gun at the thing. If it had moved toward me or touched Pedro I would have shot it. But it did not move. It only stood there, and though I could see no eyes on it it seemed to be watching me with no fear whatever.

As I scowled back at it I thought it must be the *barrigudo* man, but then I saw that it was much taller than he had been—so much taller that it could not be he. Moreover, it seemed not even to be human. It was armless and headless.

The cloth hanging over it showed no sign of a man's head underneath. It hung as if from a pair of shoulders whence the neck and head had been sliced off. Seven feet high, shapeless and silent and still, it loomed up in that dim and smoky room like a specter born of fog and fever and nightmare—a thing which the eyes saw but which could not exist; a thing which had taken shape as silently as the *barrigudo* had vanished. And again there came to me the thought that I was crazed: that I had fever or worse, and all this was delirium.

Then the Thing spoke. Out from the folds of cloth rolled a voice, deep and powerful, unlike any voice I had yet heard here.

"The dead live. The living die. The blind see. The seer is blind. This man dies, yet shall live. You live, but you shall die. Go, but remain."

Without realizing it, I let my rifle sink. Stupidly I stared at the thing before me and tried to make sense of its words.

"Go!" came the voice, deeper than ever. "Three suns shall set, two shall rise. When the third sun sinks low this man shall walk again. Until then, go and stay."

"I will not go," I growled. "I stay with my comrade while he lives or until he is surely dead. Whatever you are, help him if you can."

"Go!"

"*Vive Deus*, I will not!"

The thing and I fronted each other for minutes, neither of us moving. Then it said:

"You would help your comrade? Then take from the wall that vampire, which shall draw the fever from him."

Glancing around, I saw the dead vampire, which I had hardly noticed before. I went to it and tried to take it down.

But it was fastened tight. So I pulled harder, then yanked at it. Suddenly it came away, and from behind it a quantity of dusty powder fell into my upturned face.

The dust stung my nostrils and choked my throat. I coughed and turned back toward Pedro, carrying the vampire. But I did not reach him.

A swift chill ran down my back. My muscles stiffened. The house whirled. The headless figure swelled to a huge blot. I felt myself falling. Then I was floating in some place far, far down, where all was still.

AFTER a long time I found myself lying on a bare dirt floor. Above me was a roof, around me were walls, beyond me was an open door; but they were not those of the house where I had fallen. The walls were bare mud, and in this house was no fire, no sick comrade, no shapeless monster—not even my rifle. As I realized that my gun was gone I reached to my belt for the machete which usually hung there. That too was gone.

I started up. As I reached my feet I turned dizzy and nearly fell again; but soon the place stopped whirling and I became steady. At once I strode toward the doorway.

But before I reached it it was blocked. Two men jumped into it from outside and stood with spears leveled at my stomach. I stopped and peered at them.

They were tall, well-muscled fellows with clean faces which looked good-humored but rather determined. Presently one of them smiled slightly. But they held their weapons ready.

"What is this?" I grunted. "Drop those spears and step aside."

They stood their ground. The one who had smiled answered:

"Sit down and be still. You can not go to the House of Voices until it is time."

"I do not understand," I told him. "What house is that? And what house is this?"

"The House of Voices is the one where the other stranger lies. You will stay here while he stays there. Make no trouble, if you are wise."

I asked where my gun and machete were, and why I was held here. They looked at each other in a puzzled way, and one said they knew nothing of gun or knife. I was here, he added, because Pajé ordered it. I would remain here until Pajé gave the word to free me.

Now I knew that the *paje* of a tribe is its medicine-man, but never before had I heard Indians speak the word with such respect. This man had used it as if it meant God. And I saw that what this Paje had ordered would be done. Yet I growled again, told them to get out of my way, and advanced on them.

Their faces tightened, their arms tensed, and their shoulders swayed forward a little. They were in deadly earnest. Unless I stopped they would plunge those spears into my body. So I halted, laughed as if I had only been joking, squatted, and rolled a cigaret.

They relaxed, though they still watched me closely. Studying them through my tobacco-smoke, I thought the wisest plan would be to pretend friendliness and talk of other things, meanwhile watching for a chance to spring and snatch the spear from the nearer man. For I was very uneasy about Pedro, and I did not intend to wait here longer than necessary.

Giving no sign of my thought, I began to talk of our journey from the Jurua. They listened with much interest. When I told of the Spotted People both nodded quickly, and the taller one spoke.

This town too, he said, was once a place of black-spotted people. He himself had been spotted from boyhood, and the black patches had grown until he was repulsive and useless. But then Pajé came to them, and with him came demons of the air who had no bodies; and by the magic of these air-devils and strange-tasting water he had driven out the black sickness and made them strong.

I smoked up my cigaret and slowly made another while I thought about this. Their *paje* was far more powerful than any I had met in my jungle wanderings. Those whom I had seen before now were good enough

at healing wounds or setting broken bones, and some of them were wise in the ways of poison; but when they had to deal with a pain or sickness whose cause was not clear they all worked in the same way.

The medicine-man would make a huge cigar, and with great ceremony he would blow the smoke from this thing on the place where the sick man's pain was worst. Then he would suck that spot for a time, and at length he would stand up and take out of his mouth a long whitish thing looking much like a worm. This evil worm, he would say, was what had caused all the trouble, and now that it was out the sufferer would get well. The truth was that the white thing was no worm at all, but a soft plant-root which he had hidden in his mouth before beginning work.

Did this Pajé of theirs draw worms from their bodies? I asked. They looked puzzled and a little offended. The taller one replied that Paje did nothing of the sort, and that he and his people were not wormy. I asked them what sort of man Pajé was. And who was the fat, dirty man who had led me to the House of Voices? Surely he was not Paje?

Both grunted scornfully at this. No, the fat man was only a lazy drunkard and the servant of Pajé. Yet he was valuable to them because he was the only one who knew how to call Pajé when his help was needed in time of sickness. He could talk with the air-devils, too.

So the men of the town watched over him carefully when he was drunk, and saw to it that no alligator or snake or other evil thing should destroy him while he was helpless. If they should lose him they would have no way of reaching the ear of Pajé.

For Pajé was not a man like themselves, but a demon-spirit who came there when summoned and took the shape of a great headless creature without arms. When he did appear it was always inside the House of Voices. This house once had been that of an old medicine-man who had little power and who finally had died suddenly in the night, leaving the people with no medicine-man at all.

Then, many moons later, a drifting canoe had brought them the fat hairy man, who at that time was not fat but almost dead from starvation. They had fed him and put him in the empty house of the dead medicine-man to recover his strength if he could. And he had grown strong, and after a time he had found a way of calling the air-demons, and after that he had brought Pajé himself to cure them.

As you may suppose, I did some more thinking and puzzling about this. Then I asked how Pajé worked on wounds or hurts if he had no hands. They said they did not know—even the men whom he cured did not know.

A man would be taken to the House of Voices, they said, and the fat servant would take him inside. Somehow the hurt man would always fall into a deep sleep before anything was done to his injury, and although he might stay there for days he would remember little or nothing of what went on around him while he lay there. Only a few had ever seen Paje himself, and those few could tell only that he was a monster with a deep voice that made them quake with fear.

In driving out the spotted sickness, they added, Paje had not been seen. The fat man had gone about and ordered certain ones to come later to the House of Voices. When they obeyed, much afraid but not daring to remain away, they had found the house empty of life.

But the air-devils had spoken around them, saying queer things and singing as if far off, and finally commanding them to drink deep of strange water in a big gourd on the floor. The same persons had to go each day for a time to the house and drink of the same water, and at length the sickness and the spots had left them. And this kept on until all in the town were well.

They asked me what had come to me in the House of Voices, and I told them. When I asked them in turn how I had reached this place where they now guarded me, they said that while they watched the House of Voices from a safe distance—for nobody ever went near that house unless called—they saw me tumble out of the door as if thrown. Then a loud voice had come, telling them to take me away and guard me. And they intended to guard me well until further orders.

WHILE we talked the sun sank low. It glared in at the doorway, half-blinding me. I moved aside, and instantly my guards grew tense. There was small chance for me to jump

them now or later—they were too wide-awake, and probably expecting me to do that very thing. Watching the path of light lengthen across the dirt floor, I remembered the words of the headless giant:

"Three suns shall set, two shall rise. When the third sun sinks low this man shall walk again."

The first sun now was sinking. Forty-eight hours must pass before I should know whether the promise was true or false. To remain here in useless idleness was all against my will.

Yet, even if I did break out of my prison, what could I do to help Pedro? Nothing. Against his fever I was helpless as a babe.

"How far is the House of Voices from this house?" I asked.

They looked suspiciously at me. Then one replied:

"Not far. Why do you ask?"

"If Paje should call to you from there could you hear him?"

"We could hear him."

I nodded and said no more. If the House of Voices was within easy call I too could hear any cry coming from it; and the voice for which I would listen was not that of the misshapen Paje but of Pedro. At the first sign that he was not being well treated I would fight my way to him somehow. Otherwise I might serve him best by waiting.

So I settled myself to wait the sinking of the third sun.

Before night came other guards arrived. One of them brought my hammock, which I slung inside my prison hut. Women also came, bringing food—a big pot of thick stew which seemed to be partly of fish and partly of sweet turtle-meat. The savory odor of it put so keen an edge on my hunger that I completely cleaned out the pot.

Lying back in my hammock to smoke after eating, I spied a little smile on the face of one of the new guards. All were watching me intently. Before my cigaret was half-smoked a heavy drowsiness came over me. And as the darkness of night fell on the jungle town the darkness of sleep numbed my mind. The vigil of the jailers had been made easy by some drug in my food.

I think, *senhores*, that I was kept drugged most of the time for the next two days. I know that I felt dull and sluggish, that sleep came very easily, and that it was hard for me to keep awake long at a time. There was no chance for me to walk outside and shake off the drowsiness, for I was not allowed to leave the hut. Always guards were there to block me with ready spears.

Suspecting that my lethargy came from something in the food, I refused to eat anything the next noon, but this did no good; for I had a great thirst, and the water I drank must also have held some sleeping-powder. Both nights I lay like a dead man, and both mornings I woke with difficulty, long after the sun was up. The time slipped away in a sort of daze, and it was not until after noon of the third day that this feeling left me.

Then, rousing myself from a *siesta*, I found that once more I was wide-awake. In the doorway squatted the same two guards whom I had first seen there. As I arose they also stood up.

"What is the word?" I demanded.

"No word has come."

"My comrade—does he live?"

They lifted their brows as if to say that was a question which no man could answer. When I insisted on a reply the tall one said:

"Only Paje or his servant can tell. Paje has not spoken, and the fat drunkard has not been seen. The House of Voices is closed. What lies within it we know not."

"And no sound has come from the House?"

"Yes. On the night of the day when you came a hoarse voice babbled broken words as if struggling in fever. That is all. We have heard nothing more."

I chewed my lip and looked at the sun-shadows outside. The third sun had not yet sunk low, but it was beginning to slip down the western sky. The time of which the monster had spoken would soon come. And then—what?

The next two or three hours, *senhores*, were the longest of my life. I tried to sit still and talk about other matters; but my eyes always were on the creeping shadows, and at times I had to stride around the room to keep from springing at the sentinels. When at last the light began to glare in at my doorway and crawl across the floor I could no longer hold myself back.

"The time has come," I said, stepping toward the men. "Stand aside."

But they fronted me with weapons low.

"When Pajé orders it—" the taller one began doggedly.

I growled. My toes gripped the floor. But just as I was about to leap at them there came a shout outside.

"The House opens!"

We hung there as we were—poised, watching each other, but listening. And then sounded a thundering voice.

"The closed door opens. The open door shuts. Slave of fever, thou art free. Guards of the free man, your task ends. Go forth, ye two, but go not hence."

SLOWLY, as if not quite certain that they understood the words, the watchmen at my door lowered their weapons and glanced out. At once I walked between them into the open. My gaze darted to the House of Voices. Outside it, staring around as if bewildered, stood Pedro.

"Pedro!" I called, running toward him.

"Ah, Lourenço!" he answered, smiling in a relieved way. "So you are here."

He walked to meet me, but his step lacked its usual lithe swing. His face was drawn, his eyes and cheeks hollow, his skin pale. But he was alive and free of fever. I nearly seized him and shook him in my joy, but restrained myself in time.

"What place is this?" he asked, glancing at the Indians who were gathering. "Who are these people? How came we here? What has happened?"

"You have been sick."

"Yes, I know I have been sick, and I must have been crazed—I thought I was dead and roasting in hell with some huge headless devil watching me. I feel now as if I had been through purgatory, at least. But what——"

He stopped, staring around him again. I saw that he swayed on his feet.

"You are safe and sound now," I said, slipping an arm around his body. "Come and rest in my hammock, and you shall hear all about it."

And I drew him on toward the hut which had been my prison.

Indians, men and women, crowded beside us and behind us as we went, muttering among themselves but smiling at us. At the doorway I halted and spoke to them.

"My sick comrade is well again but very weak. Will you, my friends, bring food to make him strong?"

Several at once answered that they would do so.

"And do not put into it the thing that makes men sleep," I added. "I have slept overmuch."

At this most of them looked blank, but two of the older men grinned in a knowing way. We passed into the house, which now was unguarded, and Pedro slumped into the hammock.

"My legs are water," he muttered wearily, "and my head is a whirlpool."

Squatting against the wall, I waited for his weakness to pass. Soon his eyes opened and he repeated his questions. I told him all I knew.

"So I was not so crazed as I thought," he mused. "There is a giant without a head. And singing voices. I heard them too. I thought they must come from heaven, and wondered why I was in the other place."

His brow wrinkled, and I saw he was puzzling over what I had told him and what he had seen and heard. Presently he added—

"Are you sure we are in our right minds?"

"No, I am not," I grinned. "But we are alive, and that is something. Tell me what you can remember."

"It is not much. I became horribly sick while paddling. My head split and my body burned. Voices came and went, some singing, some speaking.

"At last I felt that I was awaking from a frightful dream. I looked around and saw fire, awful things back in the shadows—snakes and skulls and spiders—and a demon without head or arms. I was sure I had died and gone below. But I felt no pain—the demon did not torment me. Then he was gone——"

"How did he go?" I cut in.

"I do not know. I saw no opening anywhere, no light except one small fire. The monster was there and then was not there. It must have been night, and I must have slept a long time after that, for the next thing I can remember was just before I came out and saw you.

"The place was lighter then, and there was a small hole up overhead where brightness showed—the sunshine outside. Not a living thing was in sight anywhere. Then a door slowly opened and I looked out into the daylight.

"And, Lourenço, nobody opened that door. I looked straight at it and saw both

sides of it as it swung, and nothing touched it. It opened itself."

We stared at each other. I shook my head, for I could make nothing of it.

"And then?"

"Then a voice came. A queer little voice that seemed to come from a jaguar-skull. It told me to arise and go. And I got off a strange flat hammock—it went out from under me as I did so, and I fell on the floor.

"I crawled through the door on hands and knees, fearing it might close again before I could reach it. While I was scrambling out another voice sounded behind me—a deep voice that said——"

" 'The closed door opens—the open door shuts?' "

"Yes. So you heard it. As soon as I was outside I stood up. Then I saw you."

We were silent for a time, thinking.

"Here is another odd thing, Lourenço," he added then. "The deep voice spoke in the Tupi tongue. But the odd little voice from the skull, telling me to go, used our own language—Portuguese."

"*Deus Padre!* That is strange!" I muttered. "No man here except ourselves speaks Portuguese——"

"Here is food," announced an Indian voice at the door.

A man and two women stood there. The women held bowls. The man was the taller guard who had watched me during the day. He held no weapon now, and as I went to the door he pointed to each of the bowls in turn.

"This broth for him—this stew for you," he said.

Moving his lips close to my ear, he went on in a whisper:

"In his broth is a little of that which makes sleep. Sleep gives strength. It is the order."

"Whose order?"

"It is the order," he repeated.

"And is my meat also heavy with sleep?" He grinned.

"No. You have slept enough. Now make your own sleep."

"Who watches us tonight?"

"There is no watch. But it is the order that you stay here until the man with you is strong. Until then your canoe is hidden."

I scowled at him, but he had spoken sense. Pedro must gain strength before we went on, even though the water was ebbing steadily away.

"Where are our guns?" I demanded.

He turned away without reply. The women put down the bowls and left us. Saying no more, I took Pedro's broth in to him. He sniffed at it, tasted it, and drained it to the last drop.

I ate my own stew more slowly. When I set down the empty vessel and glanced at Pedro I found him sleeping as peacefully as a tired child.

A WOMAN carrying a bundle came to the door, dropped her burden, and went away. The thing she had left was Pedro's hammock, brought from our canoe.

As I picked it up I saw another figure come lurching along from the direction of the House of Voices. It was fat and hairy—the *barrigudo* man who had led us there.

With the hammock under my arm I stepped out to meet him. Frowzy and filthy he might be, but he had guided my dying partner to the spot where death's hand was warded off, and now I would say my thanks and offer him reward. Yet I did nothing of the kind. For as he came near me I saw why he staggered. He was drunk—stupidly, disgustingly drunk.

His bloodshot eyes were glazed and set, staring straight past me. His heavy mouth sagged. He breathed thickly, and he hiccoughed. He reeked of liquor as if he had spilled a quart of it down over himself. His look, his reeling gait—and his smell—were those of a man who had wallowed in drunkenness for days. Sickened, I stood back and let the sodden brute stumble past, then swung on my heel and returned to our hut.

There, as I threw another look after him, I noticed that he was being trailed by two armed men. The words of our guards came back to me—that this bleary creature was the only one who could summon the great Pajé, and so he was always protected from danger while drunk.

Perhaps, I thought, the monstrous Pajé was the devil himself, and this servant of his had bartered his hope of heaven for unlimited drink. If ever I saw a man who seemed to have sold himself, body and soul, to the king of all rottenness, the Barrigudo was that man.

But the Barrigudo's future was nothing to me, and I gave him no further attention.

After slinging my hammock I curled up in it. And all that night Pedro and I slept peacefully side by side.

I awoke late, but earlier than Pedro. The morning light showed that his color was better and his face did not look quite so hollow. He had rested almost twelve hours when at length he stirred, yawned, blinked at me, and lazily demanded a cigaret.

"Do we go on today?" he asked between puffs.

I shook my head.

"Not until you can swing your paddle again."

"I can swing it now."

"For a time, yes. But not all day."

I did not tell him that our canoe had been hidden and that we were under orders to remain here. That would only have made him determined to go at once and to fight any one trying to stop us. And he was in no condition for fighting.

"So you are afraid you would have to do all the work?" he laughed. "Perhaps you have it right. I feel lazy this morning. Yet we should start onward soon. The water must have sunk while we stayed here, and we are far from the Javary."

"There will be water enough. And I like the cooking of these Indian women."

"Oho! So that is it! The broth they gave me last night was delicious, it is true. I could eat more now, and meat with it."

"You shall have it."

Calling an Indian boy near the house, I told him to get food. He went away, and soon the same women and the same guard came with the clay bowls. The man looked at Pedro, smiled in a satisfied way, and went out.

After he had gone I thickened my comrade's broth with some of my turtle-meat, and we both ate our fill. When he had smoked again he arose and stretched himself.

"I am going to walk and see the place," he said.

And he went out, lounging along languidly but with far more sureness in his step than he had shown when last he walked. I followed.

Outside we stood and looked long at the House of Voices. For the first time I noticed that it was round. The wall curved away in a circle, and its high pointed roof also was round. An odd thought came to me—that the demon's house was bigger outside than inside; for my memory, though somewhat hazy, told me that its one room was rather small. But as I thought again I could see why it might have seemed small—because of the things that were in it: the heads on the wall, the fire in the middle, the flat hammock, the body of Pedro, and that giant figure looming up in the smoke. And then I forgot it, for again the *barrigudo* man appeared.

He shambled up toward us, heading for the demon-house, followed by the same men who had trailed him last night. He looked even more sodden than when I had last seen him, but not so drunk; the look of a man who had slept off some of his liquor but was stupid from the sleep and from the drink still working in him. His guardians were heavy-eyed, and it was easy to see that they had been awake all night.

I expected him to pass as before, but this time he halted near us and stared at Pedro. And Pedro stared back with disgust plain in his face.

"Phew! What an animal!" my partner sniffed. "The rest of these people look clean. Why do they not wash this beast or throw it to the alligators? An alligator will eat anything—and the fouler the better."

"This is the noble gentleman who brought us here. The Barrigudo, of whom I told you. Embrace him and give him thanks."

"Ugh!"

Pedro gulped as if sickened by the thought.

"I would rather touch a corpse that had lain in the sun. He is worse than the Spotted People. But I can thank him, unless the wind changes and blows his scent this way."

Changing then from Portuguese to Tupi, he spoke to the man.

"You are he who brought me here and called your Paje to heal me? I am grateful for my life. If I have anything which you or Paje want, speak. You shall have whatever I can give."

The Barrigudo made no reply. He only stared stonily at us both. His eyes, though, held an expression I did not like—a look that seemed anger. Yet why should he be offended? Such an uncouth creature surely could not understand what we had said of him in Portuguese, and he would scarcely resent Pedro's offer to reward him.

But, as I say, he made no answer. He gave one sour grunt and plodded on.

"You said you had to put a gun in his face to make him guide you," said Pedro. "I can believe it. We owe him no gratitude."

And we forgot the drunkard as quickly as we could, not even watching to see where he went.

STROLLING slowly, we walked among the little houses of the Indians, who received us with a quiet dignity which increased our liking for them. Before long we found with us the tall guard who had told me of the orders and had come each time with the women bearing food.

"Are we still under guard?" I grumbled.

Looking slightly surprized, he said no: I knew the orders and of course would heed them, and he came only because his father wished to see us. When we asked who his father was, he astonished us by replying—

"The chief."

Somehow we had not thought of a chief in this place, and still less had we thought that a chief's son was one of our guards. I did not know whether to consider this an honor or an indication that the real ruler here was Paje. But I said nothing on this point. To make talk as we crossed the clearing I remarked that the dirty servant of Paje was drunk again.

He nodded, as if I had said the sun was hot or water was wet. Pedro, still disgusted, asked him the same question he had asked me: why they did not make that man keep himself clean. The Indian said they could not do so without treating him roughly, and in that case he might sulk and refuse to call Paje when needed.

"And no one else can call Paje?" I asked.

"I have said so."

"But in time he will rot himself to death. Then how can you reach Paje?"

"We can not. But he is strong and will live many years."

"Perhaps. Yet he might leave you at any time and go to another tribe."

The Indian's face grew grim. The fat man would not go away alive, he said. And I saw that the *barrigudo*, though he did as he pleased, was not much better than a prisoner.

We found the chief to be old, thin, but clear-eyed and shrewd-brained. He asked us many questions and answered none of ours. When we left his mud house we had learned nothing new, and we felt that, so far as he was concerned, we were neither welcome nor unwelcome here. The servant of Paje had brought us to the place, and if he and his headless master wished to amuse themselves with us it was nothing to the head of the tribe.

Outside, as we stood a moment talking with the young chief, a man came up with three fine fish. One was a splendid *surubim*, as long as my leg, beautifully spotted and striped. The others were *tucunares*, with the big eye-spots on their tails. The man laid them down respectfully before the young chief, who glanced at them, then picked up the *surubim* and started away toward the House of Voices.

"The finest fish goes to Paje," said Pedro as we strolled back to our hut. "Let us see whether he comes out to receive it."

We saw nothing of the monster, but we soon heard something from him. At the doorway of the round house the tall young savage stopped, spoke, laid the fish down, and backed away; then stopped again, seemed to listen to a voice, backed once more, swung on his heel and came straight to us.

"At the sinking of the next sun the *gamba* drums will beat," he told us.

"What does that mean?" Pedro yawned.

"It is the night of the full moon, when demons are restless. Many voices will be round about. Demons of water and air and earth will be near. No man may stay in his house, lest a devil seize him in the dark. All must gather around the House of Voices, where the drums will beat and Paje himself will protect us. Sleep well tonight, for tomorrow night there will be no sleep."

With that he strode off toward his father's house.

"Demons seem to rule this place, Lourenço," my partner said. "Voices in the air—a monster without a head—devils who seize men in their houses when the moon is full—I shall not be sorry to leave it all behind me."

He spoke half in jest, but he expressed my own thought. We had already been delayed too long, and I had seen more than enough of this devil-ruled village.

Since there was nothing to do, we did nothing but eat, sleep, and argue about Paje and his fellow demons until the night of the full moon came. In that time Pedro's strength flowed steadily back into him.

And when the sun dropped low and we saw men carrying the long log drums to the House of Voices, the old reckless twinkle was in his eyes as he said:

"Since we must sit up and evade the devils, let us start a *pira-purasseya* fish-dance with some of these good-looking girls while the drums beat. Ask the young chief to bring out some *cachassa*, too, and we can make a real night of it."

"Playing with girls and rum is no way to dodge the devil," I told him.

"But if you have a handsome girl and plenty of drink, why care if the devil does get you?"

I knew well that he cared little for women or liquor. But I retorted:

"Your friend the Barrigudo has plenty of rum. See what it has done for him."

"Ugh!"

He wrinkled his nose as if I had put something offensive under it.

"I hope I shall not meet him again tonight. He spoils my appetite as well as my thirst."

"Have courage. I have not seen him since yesterday, and he probably is sleeping off more drink. We are not likely to be near him."

I was wrong. We were soon to be much nearer to that Barrigudo than we expected. And before we parted from him— Well, *senhores*, you shall hear.

THE sun slid down and was gone. Fires sprang up around the House of Voices. The thunder of the big *gambas* filled the jungle, each beaten by a man astride the log, pounding the skin head with his knuckles. The clatter of *caracasha* rattles broke out. And all the Indians, big and little, hurried to the round demon-house where they could be safe. Walking more slowly, we followed.

The fires surrounding the House were many but small, none being very close to the curving wall. We found that there were really two rings of these fires, with a fairly wide space between the inner and the outer circle; and in this space the people arranged themselves.

As we approached, the young chief came out to meet us and pointed to a spot where we were to squat. When we had settled ourselves we found the old chief himself beside us, staring at the ground. The young chief sank down on the other side of us.

Nobody spoke. Talk would have been useless in that booming, rattling uproar. Patiently we waited for Paje to walk out, or for something else to occur. But we waited long and nothing happened. The drummers and rattlers kept up their work without a pause, and every one else squatted or sat motionless while the bright moonlight flooded the clearing. At length I tired of it and arose to go back to my hut.

At once the young chief sprang up and blocked me. Other men also arose and moved toward us. Shouting in the tall fellow's ear, I told him I did not want to stay here, and that I would risk being carried off by devils. I wanted to get into my hammock.

But he yelled back that the danger was not mine alone. If a demon got me, that demon would keep coming back each night and taking others. And when I still insisted on going, he added that no man could be allowed to imperil the rest in that way, and that any one trying to leave the fire-circle would be killed at once.

I sat down again.

Then came a sudden break in the drumming. The door of the House had swung open. Out from it came the *barrigudo*. He lifted a hand. The racket of the *caracashas* ceased. With the end of the tumult the place seemed still as death.

"Paje, master of demons, has come," he said in a throaty tone. "Be still."

We were still. And in the stillness we heard whisperings and squeakings in the air above and around us. The air-devils also had arrived.

Thin voices spoke from nowhere—in the grass, up overhead, at the very walls of the House. And they spoke one word only:

"*Hewy!* Blood!"

A singing voice answered them:

"*Ehe ahrahm! Ehe ahrahm!* Wait a while! Wait a while!"

Another singing voice, high and sweet, played around in the air over us, saying nothing—only singing without words. But then, from the smoke-hole at the peak of the House, a harsh little voice croaked:

"*Hewy! Hahmbuya heh!* Blood! I am hungry!"

And another voice, sharp and squeaky, cried:

"*Heyimbeh! Kunyimuku!* A heart! A young girl!"

Fear showed plain in the faces of the

Indians near me as they heard the demands of the dreaded demons. All stared at the roof. I too looked up there; but, seeing nothing, dropped my gaze and glanced along the line of terrified eyes gleaming in the light of fire and moon.

For a moment all was very still. Then out rolled the sonorous tones of Paje himself:

"Seek ye the blood and hearts of beasts, not of my people. Begone from this place!"

The command came from within the House. The Barrigudo was not in sight. The door stood partly open, and in the dimness beyond it I saw a giant figure—tall and thick and headless—standing in smoke. Others saw it too. Pedro drew in his breath sharply, and the old chief gave a startled grunt. Slowly the door swung shut.

Queer snarling noises sounded on the roof, as if the hungry demons raged at the command to go. Silence followed. When it had lasted for the space of a dozen slow breaths, Paje spoke again.

"So ye would snatch at the lives of young girls, the mothers to be? Ye would drink the blood of the strong men? Then I, Paje, will give my people to drink of that which will not harm them but will burn you if ye touch them. Slave, take this bowl and give to all except the two strangers."

Again the snarls sounded above, with broken cries of rage. The door opened, and out came the Barrigudo, grunting under the weight of a tall clay jar of liquid. This he set down beside the old chief.

"Three swallows," he growled. "Then pass on. Do not step outside the fire circles. You and you—" looking at Pedro and me—"stand inside the inner ring. You get none of the drink of Paje."

Wondering, we obeyed and stood watching. The Barrigudo tilted the jar. The old chief drank three times from it, arose, and made room for his son. When the young man had taken his three swallows he also moved on. And one by one, in their turns, men and women and children stopped at the jar, drank, and passed along between the fires.

At length the old chief returned, having walked all around the house, and sank into his place facing the door. Every one in the circle except Pedro and myself had taken of the drink, and the jar was almost empty.

"Let the drums beat," muttered the Barrigudo.

The old chief cried out shrilly. The thundering of the logs broke out again. Pedro and I, not knowing what else to do, squatted where we were. When we tired of squatting we lay down on our backs and watched little clouds drift across the big white moon.

For some time the drumming went steadily on, and I became so used to it that I began to grow sleepy. If this was to last all night, I thought, I might as well take what rest I could there on the ground. So I shut my eyes, and was dozing away when I noticed that the drumming seemed to be growing weaker. The drummers were tired, I thought, and should be relieved. But I did not bother to look at them until Pedro softly gripped my shoulder.

He was wide awake and grinning. He moved his head toward the nearest drum. I looked and found that its drummer was no longer astride it, but lying beside it. He seemed asleep. Beyond him another drummer was swaying drowsily, and soon he slipped off his log and lay still. Only two of the dozen drums now were booming, and soon there was only one. Then that one stopped.

But the place was not silent. Now that the drums were quiet we could hear a chorus of snores. All around the circle lay Indians sound asleep, and others were drooping forward and slumping down on the earth. Both the old chief and his son lay as if dead.

By ones and twos they all slipped down and remained where they dropped. We heard a short, hard chuckle from the door of the round house. In the opening, his teeth gleaming in his dirty face, stood the Barrigudo.

AS WE looked at him he walked away from us, around the house. Returning to the door, he went in, remained a moment, and came out with an *atura* basket on his back. In his hands he held our guns and machetes. Straight to us he came.

"Come," he grunted.

He was sober, or nearly so. He walked away with a sure, steady stride. We arose and trailed behind him.

"Get your hammocks," he ordered, pausing before our hut.

Swiftly we untied our beds and slung them over our shoulders. Across the moonlit clearing he swung then to the edge of the deep jungle shadows. There he halted.

"A torch. In the basket."

I dipped a hand into his *atura* and found at the top a fagot of twigs and bark. Pedro lighted it. The Barrigudo took the flaming bundle and started on. I walked along behind him, Pedro coming after me. Under the trees it was very black in places, but our leader never hesitated. Before long we reached water.

The fat Indian held his torch out, and we looked down into our own canoe. He dropped our weapons into it and motioned for us to get in. Throwing in our hammocks, we did so. As we picked up the paddles he turned away.

"Wait! What does this mean?" I demanded.

"Wait! You shall see what it means," he retorted.

His torch moved a few yards along the bank, dipped, wavered about, then stood still. In a moment it moved outward. A paddle dipped. The *barrigudo* also was afloat.

Along the narrow inlet the boats moved until they entered a wider space where the moonlight shone down. Here the *barrigudo* pulled the torch from its fastening at the bow, plunged it hissing into the water, dropped its charred stub into the bottom of his canoe, swerved to the right, and slid on along the wide *furo*.

For hours we worked steadily westward, saying nothing. To me, after the days of inaction, it was a joy to feel my muscles loosen and stretch, to be going somewhere, even though I knew not where or why.

Pedro too, though not so strong as before his sickness, moved with his usual swaying stroke. The *barrigudo*, however, with his big belly and his weight of fat and his muscles rotted by rum, soon found his task harder and harder.

Often we heard him gasp and grunt as if driving himself beyond endurance. But he kept on doggedly, though splashing more and more, until we marveled that he could still move. Not until the sinking of the moon made the channel very dark did he quit.

Then he dropped his paddle noisily into his canoe. Wheezing and groaning, he slumped forward, clasping his huge stomach. We drew alongside and waited. After a time his distress passed and he straightened up.

Beside us opened another narrow cove. He swung his head toward it, lifted his paddle, and shoved his boat into it. When well away from the *furo* he stopped again.

"Keep awake," he said hoarsely. "I must sleep. If any one calls do not answer. Wake me at sunrise."

Exhausted, he laid himself down in his canoe, gave a long sigh, and slept.

"What do you make of this, Lourenço?" my partner asked.

"Nothing, unless he is escaping with us," said I. "Yet for us it is not really an escape—we should soon have been freed. But we shall see."

"Would soon have been freed?" Pedro puzzled. "Were we not free to go at any time after I left the House of Voices?"

"No."

And for the first time I told him of the hiding of our canoe and the orders of the young chief.

"I wish I had known that," he grumbled.

"Yes, and you would have made trouble for yourself. We are out of the place now, so forget what is past. You had better sleep a little too. I will keep watch."

He retorted that he was no child and could watch as well as I. Yet after he smoked a cigaret he did curl up on our hammocks, and soon I was the only one awake.

When the sun had burned away the morning mists I touched Pedro and prodded the *barrigudo*. Pedro sat up a little stiffly, but with a smile. The slave of Pajé and of liquor had hard work to sit up at all, but after several attempts he managed it. He scooped up some water in his hands and drank it thirstily. After blinking a minute he again took up his paddle.

"*Por Deus!* Your *barrigudo* now drinks water!" Pedro laughed. "What marvel shall we see next?"

The *barrigudo* gave him an ugly look through his hair. I began to suspect that the man did know Portuguese. So I spoke to him in that tongue.

"Let us eat."

He only grunted as if he did not understand and did not want to, and shoved his dugout toward the *furo*. We did not stop to eat, but pushed out in his wake.

Again he turned westward. And all

through that hot forenoon, *senhores*, he kept going. Sweating, breathing hard, groaning at times, but always pulling away at his paddle, he drove onward until noon. By that time his strokes were so weak that his boat merely crawled, and we were so hungry that we were ugly.

"Are you trying to kill yourself and us with work and hunger?" I complained. "What does all this mean? Where are you going?"

Slowly, looking us straight in the eyes, he answered:

"*Eheh ahoh putare heretamo koteh.* I am going away to my country."

So that was it. Somehow it seemed strange that this creature could have any country other than the place where we had found him. Yet I did not despise him now as I had. His grim fight to keep going in spite of his clumsiness and his rum-rot made me respect him a little. I was about to ask him, in a more civil tone, where his country was, when Pedro broke in.

"So are we. But we have eaten nothing today, and I am going ashore now to eat and rest a while."

The *barrigudo* watched him a minute, then stooped, drew something out of his basket, bit off a piece, and threw the rest to us. It was a flat cake of pressed leaves and bark, wet and sticky as if it had been soaked.

"Chew that," he said. "Swallow."

Seeing that he was already chewing his own, we each bit off a chunk and ground it between our teeth. It tasted both sweetish and sour, quickly filling our mouths with water. After we had swallowed a few times our hunger left us and we felt refreshed.

"What is it?" Pedro asked.

"*Petema.* Tobacco," he replied with a slight grin. "*Yahoh uahn.* Let us go now."

And he resumed paddling.

"It is no more tobacco than my foot," Pedro snorted in Portuguese. "But I will not let that bag-belly outpaddle me."

And his shoulders also began to sway again and we moved on.

IT WAS sundown when we stopped at last. Up another inlet we went, around snake-like curves, and into a large, rounded pool.

"Here we are safe," panted the hairy man.

Picking a shelving spot, he drove his dugout ashore, high and hard. As the canoe struck he tumbled forward and lay wheezing. When he was able to get up he crawled out on hands and knees, looking more than ever like a huge monkey.

While we landed he sat in the soft mud by the water, his head hanging, his eyes closed; and he stayed there until we had put up our hammocks, made a fire, and prepared to eat.

"Come and eat," I called.

Wearily he lifted his head and slowly he got up. But he did not eat. He looked at the fire, then stumbled over to it and flopped down beside it.

"*Anih hahmbuya heh.* I am not hungry," he sighed—and went to sleep sprawling on the bare ground, with the smoke creeping over him.

We let him lie. We did not feel hungry either at first, but after the first few mouthfuls we ate like starved men. When we were full we were stupid from fatigue and heavy eating. After building up the fire so that it would burn slowly and long, we tumbled into our hammocks; and I fell asleep at once.

When I opened my eyes on a new day the Barrigudo was gone.

My machete also was gone. The rifles were there, however, and nothing else was missing. And when I looked at the water's edge, there was his canoe, just as he had driven it up at sundown.

Of the man himself, though, there was no sign—no blood on the ground, no fresh tracks near the water. He had not been killed or carried off, and he seemed not to have walked away. He had simply vanished.

Wondering, I made breakfast and awoke Pedro. We called, but got no answer. So, after some talk and argument, we ate and smoked, intending then to search the bush. Before our cigarets were finished, however, a deep voice spoke behind us.

"Good morning!"

The words were English. The voice was not that of the Barrigudo, yet it was familiar. And the man we saw as we whirled and looked was not the Barrigudo either—not the Barrigudo we knew; but it was such a man as the Barrigudo might be if, by some miracle, he should become clean.

A broad, heavy white man stood there. Yes, *senhores*, a white man—burned to a coppery brown by the sun, black-haired of body as well as of head, but a white man for all that. His whole body glowed as if it had

been scrubbed and scraped and scrubbed again. His hair was not long and greasy like that of the Barrigudo, but cut close to his broad skull; and his scalp, too, was rosy as if rubbed almost raw.

Under his black brows a pair of deep brown eyes looked straight at us without wink or waver. His mouth was not loose-lipped but set in a resolute line. His head was up and his shoulders back; and, though he was overfat, both face and body were those of a man strong and self-reliant.

Open-mouthed, we stared until he spoke again.

"Understand English?"

"Y-y-yes, *senhor*," Pedro gulped. "We both speak it. But—but are you—the Barrigudo?"

"I was. Yesterday. Today I am—somebody else."

He talked slowly, halting for words as if it had been so long since he had last used his own language that it did not come easily to his tongue.

"Now that I am fit to do so," he went on, "I will eat breakfast. Been cleaning up at a little pool back in the bush."

Calmly he advanced and handed me my machete. In a dazed manner I took it.

"Yours," he nodded. "I used the back to scrape myself and the edge to saw off my hair. Overdid the haircut a bit. Shall have to make a leaf hat now. What have you to eat?"

Dumbly I arose and got out more *farinha* and dried fish. With the *farinha* I tried to make some *chibeh*, but I paused to stare at him again and spilled half of the water.

"Never mind the *chibeh*," he said, gnawing off a chunk of the *pirarucu* fish. "I will make it myself. Sit down. You seem upset."

A little vexed, I put my mind on my work and made the *chibeh* as it should be. Placing the gourd on the ground, I made a new cigaret and watched him eat.

"Roll me a smoke too, if you please," he added. "Haven't had one for four years. Now that I have quit boozing I need a smoke to steady me."

"You have stopped drinking?" I repeated as I reached for my pouch.

"I have. It's gnawing at me now, but I'm through with it. —— the stuff! It's been my curse. I'll beat it or die trying. And I'll not die."

He bit savagely into the fish again, and chewed it as if grinding up with it his craving for drink. He ate his *chibeh* in the same fierce way. When that was gone he drank heavily—of water. After that he swiftly lighted the cigaret I had made, sucked the smoke into his lungs, coughed, choked, tried again, and made better work of it.

"Got to learn to smoke all over again," he grumbled. "It makes me dizzy and it tastes rotten. But it helps some.

"Now you fellows are bursting with questions, I suppose. Shoot them quick. We've got to move."

"Anything you wish to tell us, *senhor*, we shall be glad to hear," Pedro replied. "We ask no questions about matters that do not concern us."

"Thanks. Mighty decent of you. Then I'll say this much now, for it does concern you: About another day's paddle from here we hit a rambling sort of river running northeast. Are you hunting for a way to the Amazon?"

"No. We seek the Javary, in the northwest."

"Oh. I see. Probably this *furo* continues northwest after we reach the river. Not sure about that, though. We'll see. If you go northwest I leave you at the river. I travel northeast."

"To the Amazon?"

"To the Amazon. Then to the Atlantic. Then to America—North. Three A's in a row. They spell 'Home' to me. Let's go."

He heaved himself up, winced from the pain of stiff muscles, clamped his jaws, and marched to his canoe. As soon as we could gather up our hammocks, weapons, and food we entered our own craft, and again we were off.

ALL day we kept on his wake. All day he drove himself to keep his paddle going, eating nothing, only chewing a few mouthfuls of that "tobacco" of his which banished hunger and subdued fatigue. And as mile after mile crept past and the sweat continued to roll off him he seemed slowly to shrink—shrink to firm muscle and slough off his gross fat.

Whether or not this was only my fancy, I know that when we stopped that night on the far side of his rambling river—for we did reach it late that day—he was shaped more like a man and less like a monkey. And his face, with new lines eaten into it, was that of a man fighting a hard but winning fight.

That night, too, he bathed himself again, though so tired that he could not stand steadily. And he ate and smoked before he lay down by the fire.

"Take my hammock," I urged.

But he would not. And when I spoke of snakes, he retorted:

"Any snake that bites me will die of delirium tremens. There's a lot of bad booze in my system yet. I'll take the chance. Good night!"

So, as before, Pedro and I slept in our hammocks and he on the ground. And, as before, he was up first in the morning.

"Now," he said after breakfast, "we have time to talk.

"You're wondering, of course, how I came into this part of the world. Briefly, then, I was a surgeon. I was a good surgeon. But I drank. More than once I operated when I was nowhere near sober. That meant trouble ahead.

"The trouble came. There was a delicate operation—a young woman—and I was shaky from the effects of a wild night. I had to quit in the middle of the job. Another doctor finished it, but the damage was done. She never recovered consciousness. It was just as well that she didn't.

"That botch broke me. I lost my grip. I drank harder—slid down-hill fast. Lost my practise and about everything else, including self-respect and hope. Never committed any crime, though. I'm clean in that way if in no other.

"Drifted into Brazil as 'doctor' of a crowd of wealthy bums who came up the Amazon on a steam-yacht, calling themselves 'explorers.' Lots of money and fool ideas, but no brains. Only thing they explored was every known variety of Brazilian booze. I was the best explorer in the bunch when it came to that.

"Had a drunken row and got put ashore at some Indian town and left there. Thought I had hit the bottom then, but there was still some distance to slide. Yes, there was.

"I kept drinking. Quit everything else—even quit wearing clothes—but I kept drinking. Went from one place to another with Indians—only friends I had left, and some of them not very cordial. I was a no-good white, down and out.

"Just how I got into that place back yonder I don't remember. Drifting around, drunk whenever I could find booze—finally got lost, starved nearly to death, woke up in a place of scabby spotted folks who had fed me and then dumped me in a medicine-man's hut.

"I got well, looked for more booze, and couldn't find enough. But I fixed a way to get plenty. Then I stayed with it until you fellows came."

He paused, scowling out at the river flowing past, as if he saw the last four years of his life floating by him on its surface. We said nothing. After a time he went on.

"There is more than one way of getting booze. Buy it, make it yourself, get others to make it for you. When you're lazy and broke there are objections to all these ways. Making it yourself means work and waiting. Buying it means paying for it. And folks won't make it for you unless they receive something in return.

"Of course, a man who won't make his own and has no means of buying it has two ways left—to beg it or steal it. But there are places where even these ways won't get you much. And I was in one of those places.

"There was a little booze in that town, but only a little. The reason why there wasn't more was because the people were too sick and sluggish to work and make it. What little I could get was only a teaser for a two-handed rum-hound like me. I grew desperate. And in my desperation I got a big idea.

"I had bummed many a drink—and many a drunk—among Indians who gave it to me because I could do surgical and medical work for them. I had knocked around in this country long enough to pick up a knowledge of your jungle diseases, and also of the medicinal virtues of your native roots, herbs, leaves, barks, and so on. I had seen that scabby, spotty skin disease before, and I knew how to cure it.

"But I was tired of begging drinks; I wanted to command them. And while I was in that dead medicine-man's house I got the idea. I began to play God.

"I mean just that. God created men. I had to create men too. Those spotted Indians were nothing but living corpses, and I had to take those dead-alive people and turn them into healthy folks. Otherwise they wouldn't make booze for me.

"So, for the sake of rum, I became a creator and a savior of bodies. Their souls didn't interest me. My own didn't interest me either.

"Worrying along with what rum I could get and driven by my idea, I worked like a beaver inside the round house until it was ready. Then I made the air-devils talk and sing. After that I built Paje.

"Paje was just the boy to handle those Indians, both before and after they were cured; and I saw to it that he never botched things as I had botched that operation back home. So everybody got well, and as the servant of Paje I lived on the fat of the land and was soused to the collar most of the time.

"And then you chaps came along and woke me up. That's all. Make me another cigaret, please."

"BUT *senhor*, that is not all," I protested. "What was that work which you did in the round house? How did you make air-devils and Paje? What is Paje? How did you——"

I broke off and glanced upward. Above our heads sounded a sweetly singing little voice. Nothing was there; the air was empty. As I dropped my gaze again to the Barrigudo I found him grinning.

"The singing voices follow us," he laughed. "And so does Paje."

Without moving, he suddenly boomed out in resonant tones:

"You have eyes but you see not. You have ears but your brain is deaf. I am Paje, master of demons! I am the air-devils! I am the whole —— works! Give me that cigaret!"

It was the voice of Paje himself.

"But how—" I gasped.

"Oh, give me the makings and let me roll my own smoke," he said impatiently in his usual tone.

When his cigaret was lighted he explained.

"I built an inner wall to the house. A false wall, with space between it and the real wall for me to move. Fixed a blind doorway on a slant in a dim spot at one side. Kept the house dark and smoky all the time to conceal it. Could appear and disappear in no time that way.

"The great Paje was hidden between the walls. He was nothing but a light framework fitting over my shoulders, with dark cloth draped over it. Had a very thin place in the cloth so that I could see through it. Trickery and a change of voices did the rest."

"*Por Deus!*" muttered Pedro. "You fooled us with our own trick. We ourselves used such frames and great false heads to terrify Indians back on the Jurua. But yours was headless and armless——"

"And you were sick, and I kept up the demon stuff, and the Indians firmly believed I was an infernal monster and told you so. As for the air-devils, I happen to be good at ventriloquism—throwing voices around, you know.

"I had a bag of tricks inside the house too—strings which would open and shut the door or the jaws of heads on the wall, and so on. You saw some of them, Lourenço. Remember the boa's head that ordered you out and the vampire that put you to sleep? That dust that fell into your face when you pulled down the vampire was a sure-fire knockout powder.

"There were other things which you didn't see because I didn't need to use them on you. I had a very complete workshop there."

"I believe you," I agreed. "But if you yourself are the air-devils, how did you throw those voices all the way from the place where we found you to the spot where I first heard them? How did you even see us through all that bush? Why, *senhor*, you were asleep!"

"No more asleep than I am now," he chuckled. "Wasn't far from you, either. I was right at the edge of the bush, squatting and grubbing around for a certain kind of root, when you hove in sight.

"Happened to have just enough rum in me to make me feel good. Kept out of sight and tossed voices around just to see what you'd do.

"Then, finding you had sickness aboard, thought I'd look it over. While you were paddling down-stream and then going up that cove looking for me I took a short-cut, lay down under a tree where you couldn't miss me, and pretended sleep. After that I had to be surly and carry out my role. Anything else?"

"Yes. What ailed Pedro, and how did you cure the Indians of spotted sickness, and——"

"Not so fast. I am not going to tell you all I know. But if ever you become diseased with that spotted ailment, make

strong sarsaparilla and drink it. Very strong, plenty of it.

"Pedro had malignant fever, which kills in a few hours. You brought him to me barely in time, and I had a job to pull him through. Didn't touch a drop of rum in all the time I was working on him—didn't sleep a wink either. The minute he was out of the house, though, I gulped about a gallon of jungle lightning."

I nodded, remembering his appearance when he passed me an hour after Pedro's release from the House of Voices. After being sober and sleepless for forty-eight hours, it was no wonder that he had become drunk so swiftly and completely when the tension ended.

"Now that I know what I know," Pedro said slowly, "I am sorry, *senhor*, that I said what I did when I saw you the next day."

"You needn't be. It was exactly what I needed—a look at msyelf through another man's eyes. It jolted me into realization of just how much of a beast I had become.

"When I had shut myself up inside the round house and knocked out my hangover with a little home-made bracer I sat down and did some real thinking. Didn't have to meditate much concerning my exact social status—your disgust showed me where I stood.

"But I had to figure out a way to get out of there quick. Knew I had to go quick or I'd lose the ambition to go. Knew the Indians would never let me go if they could stop me.

"So I fixed them so they couldn't stop me. Scared them with the air-devils and then fed them that Paje-drink, which was doped heavily enough to knock them cold for twelve hours. So here I am."

"And now that you are here, what will you do?" I asked.

"Go home, I told you. When I reach home I'm going to atone for sacrificing that young woman's life on the altar of Bacchus. I'm going to save a good many other lives in its place.

"No, not by surgery—I doubt if I shall ever operate again. But, as I said before, I've learned a good deal down here about native medicines, and I've experimented a lot and worked out new remedies of my own. Had to do it in order to keep up my bluff. The result is that I know powerful drug combinations of which North America knows nothing. But North America is going to hear about them soon. See that basket?"

He motioned toward the *atura* which he had brought from the House of Voices on that last night, and which now lay in his canoe.

"It's full of leaves, bark, roots, twigs, pieces of vine—stuff which you'd call rubbish. But every one of them has a big value in medicine, and I know exactly what each is good for.

"In the next few years there may be good jobs here for men who will collect those things for the North American market. Want a job like that?"

We laughed.

"Thank you, *senhor*, but we are *seringueiros*," Pedro told him. "We collect nothing but rubber, mosquito-bites, and danger. Those three things keep us so busy that we have no time for anything else."

"Suit yourselves," he said, and arose. "You say you go westward from here. But you haven't found the *furo* yet, so we'll travel together until you think you've hit it.

"Now let's move. My Indian jailers may be coming this way, and I'd rather make a clean getaway than have to fight them."

He planted his big body in his dugout and pushed out and down-stream. Half a mile below our camping-place he slowed.

"Looks like a channel there, running west," he said. "Your *furo*, perhaps. Going to chance it?"

After studying the quiet water opening out on the left bank we decided that it was what we sought. We urged him to come with us to the headquarters of our *coronel*, who would send him home as a gentleman. But he shook his head.

"I'm through with bumming," he snapped. "I'm working my way home. Glad to have met you, gentlemen. Good-by."

"Wait!" cried Pedro. "You must take a gun. Here is one given me by an American soldier back toward the Jurua—he and his comrades had come here on a treasure-hunting journey, led by a crazy man, and when they went back toward the Amazon they gave us each a rifle. We have another, and plenty of cartridges. Take it, *senhor*, and some of our food, and my clothes —I shall not need them."

"I'll take the gun and some cartridges if you insist. Been wondering how you chaps got those Army Springfields, but didn't like to ask. Nothing else, thanks—not a thing. I can handle myself in the bush. Thanks again, and good-by."

HE HELD out a hand, and we grasped it in farewell. Then he slapped his paddle into the river and heaved his boat down-stream. Holding our own craft steady, we watched him until he passed out of sight. Not once did he look back.

"If he holds that pace to the Amazon he will grow much thinner than he is now," said Pedro as we turned into the *furo*.

"He will be hard as *itauba* stone-wood and free from all drink-craving when he reaches the great river," I agreed.

"Do you honestly believe he will win his fight with himself? He has far to go, and he may find Indian villages on his way."

"He will win. He has something to look forward to now. I have seen such men before. At first he drank as you and I drink when we feel like it—for the fun of carousing with others. Then he drank to drown the memory of the girl he had killed. Here in the jungle he drank to forget that he was, as he said, 'a no-good white, down and out.'

"But now he has before him the thought of home and the knowledge that he can wipe out his past. With that to draw him on, the rum of Indian villages will not snare him."

"You have it right," my comrade admitted. "A man's life depends on what is in his own heart. Yet you named him rightly when you called him *barrigudo*. Do you know what happens to a *barrigudo* when he leaves his own country?"

"He dies."

"He dies. And this man, leaving his own land, died and became a beast."

"But now the *barrigudo* is dead and a new man lives in his place."

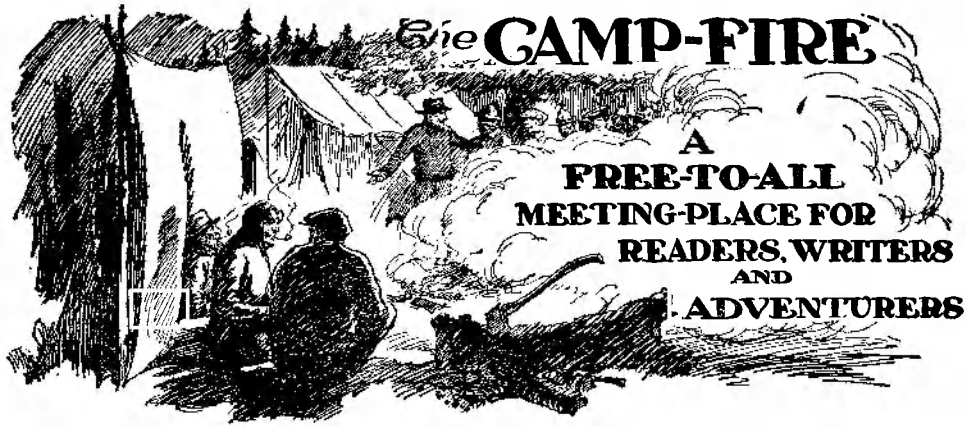
"*Si.* It is as it should be. Now let us lean on our paddles, for we have many miles to go and the water ebbs."

We shot away along the *furo*, homeward bound.

THE BROKEN WHEEL

by E. E. Harriman

WHERE the alkali plain with its scattered sage
Lies level and sad in its hue of age,
My cayuse shied till I roweled him
At sight of a broken and splintered rim
That bulged from the sand, alone, forlorn,
Beside a skull and a weathered horn.
Worn and gashed by the drifting sand,
A dull, gray shape in a dull, gray land,
The shattered rim of a heavy wheel
Lifted its curve by my horse's heel.
I glanced at the wreck, then looked away
Where the desert dun met the desert gray.
Across the stage of the drear expanse
The dust devils led their eddying dance;
Fluttered the curtain of dust aside,
Showed me the ghosts of that crawling tide
That dared the perils of ways unknown,
Where the star of hope resplendent shone.
I visioned the empire they found and won
Under the beams of the western sun,
And I bared my head in love and pride
For those who won and those who died,
Adventurers peerless, whose peril and pain
We brothers who follow may reckon our gain.



THAT white chief of some South American Indians. Maybe the King John Edgar Young inquired about. Arthur O. Friel of our writers' brigade talking:

Brooklyn.

I'm afraid that Mr. Lyon's pen slipped a bit, as he speaks of "Javary Indians in the interior of the Rio Negro country." The Javary Indians would have to do quite some traveling to get into that place. However, that's a minor point beside the big question of the mysterious English chief of red fighters.

I MAKE no bones of saying that I have no authentic information regarding this legendary white man. I say "legendary" because every now and then some tale of such a man bobs up. Sometimes he's English, sometimes American, sometimes Spanish or Brazilian, and he seems to be in different places east of the Maranon—sometimes very far east. Who he is—or even whether he is—I don't know. But I'm not brash enough to pooh-pooh the legend and assert that no such chief exists. Many a strange thing has come about in that vast mysterious Amazon region, and it would be a mighty cocksure man who would declare that these tales were all moonshine.

Personally I wouldn't be at all surprized to learn that there were more than one white chief of Indians in different parts of the Amazon country—white men who for various reasons have taken to the bush and gone native. And if I personally started out to find and interview such a man I'd want to go with my hardware tied down. Indians may be bad, but a renegade white is apt to be poison.

"The Sloth," to which Mr. Lyon refers, is largely fiction. It has a certain basis of fact, but not of the kind which would help establish the identity of the white chief now under discussion. And the *Senhor Eduardo* in that tale was not himself a chief; he worked through the Indian chief, and his say-so was good only as long as it came from the chief's mouth. When he wound up by smearing that chief he was out of luck at once.

SPEAKING of Edgar Young's little friend "King John," here's a random thought that drifted into the hollow recesses of my dome awhile ago. Away back in 1742 the Chunchos (who, as you know, are a big bunch of bad actors inhabiting the general region of the upper Ucayali) wiped out all the missions around the Cerro de la Sal and in general made eastern Peru a closed country to white men. And they were led by Juan Santos Atahaullpa (or Atahualpa). Get that *Juan?* Of course he's dead these many years—the original Juan. But the Chunchos are there still, as ugly as ever; and they're generally supposed to be descendants of the Incas. Now it's not altogether impossible that in recent years some gink familiar with Incan customs may have got next to these fellows and convinced them that he is a reincarnation or descendant of old man Juan. If he could put this over he'd have the whole bunch eating out of his hand; and with that gang behind him he'd be a real King John.

Just a random thought, as I said; but perhaps worth smoking a pipe over.—ARTHUR O. FRIEL.

SNAKE-BITE. Makes one feel like stopping tobacco. I'm no tougher than a rattlesnake.

Eufaula, Oklahoma.

Will only give you and the Camp-Fire boys my cure of any snake-bite from a rattler down to the garter-snake. It is so simple that the Camp-Fire boys will hardly believe it, but let some one try it and it will soon make a believer of him.

HERE goes:

Take an onion, just an every-day onion the size of a hen egg, a large tablespoon heaping full of just every-day salt, and about two square inches of any plug tobacco, just plain chew tobacco. Cut tobacco up very fine; also the onion. Mash the onion up with the salt and tobacco. The sap in the onion will make a nice soft poultice. Place or paste the mixture on a cloth, apply to the wound same as any other poultice, the mixture next to the wound. Let this poultice stay on till dry; then, if not entirely cured, a second poultice may be applied, but unless the bite is of long standing one application is enough, sure thing.

The Camp-Fire boys may not know how to kill a snake with tobacco. Take a forked stick. Place the fork across the head of the snake, spit a little tobacco-juice in his mouth, the snake's mouth. It will kill the snake just as soon as the snake swallows a little of the tobacco-juice. Always carry a few onions

with you on a camp hunt in snake season. You must always have the others. Don't use any whisky. If you have any whisky to spare, send the whisky to the writer. He can make use of it for other purposes than to waste it on a snake-bite.

The Indians have other snake-bite remedies but this one is as good as anybody wants. Did anybody eyer hear of an Indian dying from a snake-bite? No, not among the Creek Indians—CHARLES GIBSON.

THOUGH the story in this issue is not his first in our magazine, time allowance must be made for F. St. Mars and he is none the less welcomed when he follows Camp-Fire custom and rises to introduce himself. Neither his profession nor his friendship with "Teddy" will hurt him any in our circle.

Southsea, England.

You have written to me and extended the hand of friendship from around the "Camp-Fire" and asked for a few words about myself. Well, that is real friendly of you and I feel I must write and thank you. I should have written before—for which delay, humble apologies—but they have got me roped to a bedpost, with ice on my chest, head, in mouth—a gastric blood vessel having "dang gone bust" through the trials and privations inseparable from field nature-study. Good folks have often told me I should end up in a hot place, but I never bargained for an ice-pack!

MARK TWAIN allowed that any man who set out to write about himself would prove to be a liar, in print, no matter how honest he might be really. Wherefore, not being twin brother to *Telescope Tolliver*, nor yearning after that little bronze bull, we will—as did *Captain Gubbins*—"let a plain statement suffice."

Born, 1883, Bromley, Kent, England—the place where the hops come from that go into the beer you no longer get—about the first thing I remember was watching the red squirrels leaping among the tree-tops from my nursery window. Next thing remembered, worrying everybody to tell me names of the animals in a natural history book of the world, said names being known correctly before I could read. Spent all money I could get, on nature books as soon as I could read, going to zoological gardens, air-gun shooting, and such like.

RECEIVED the little education I got, mostly in London, but the real education—and that was free—came on vacations spent on odd farms and in back pastures and woods, serving, by choice and unconsciously, apprenticeship to that profession which in after life was to be mine. Good (or bad) relations came and shook their heads over me, and said no man ever yet made a living out of natural history. That was true talk, but they forgot I was top of my school in composition. As a counter-blast I was then sent to an outside broker's office (about the same as your Wall St.) where, it seemed to me, I was expected to answer three telephones, interview two clients, and fill ten pairs of cuffs with market quotations at one and the same moment. I stuck this, or they stuck me, for about eighteen months, when the boss sent for me and told me I was not Pierpont Morgan or Rockfeller in the bud. I could have told *him* that, also that I spent my spare time poaching rabbits and dodging gamekeepers very far from any office.

THENCE, then, I quitted to a farm in the "West Countree," there to learn farming under a cider-drinking character whose ancestors must have got left behind by—or thrown overboard from—the *Mayflower*. He was a sour apple. I could write a book about him. When he had shown me more ways of doing hard work than I ever dreamed existed in this wicked world, and my time for serving was up, I—well, I just drifted from one wild lone spot in the world to another, with various guns in one hand and binoculars in the other, most of the time as a "remittance man." Then I got hold of Teddy Roosevelt's speeches, all about home carving and making good, and the rest of the virile stunt. That sickened me of "remittance men," and I there and then set out with one fountain pen and five dollars capital to do as he said, and—that's about all, I think. I've made a living out of natural history after all, or, leastways, it was before the war. And Teddy, he wrote and took back in my case in particular what he had said about nature fakers in general, and became one real friend over whose loss I can never cease to grieve.

So that's that, and thank you kindly.—F. ST. MARS.

P. S. May I please have the honor of wearing one of those real buttons to prove that I am one of the lucky ones permitted to foregather with you all around the Camp-Fire?—F. ST. M.

MAYBE there seems no excuse for merely putting letters in our Camp-Fire cache and drawing them out at random and at need. But you ought to try arranging them by dates, arranging them by topic, arranging them for variety, arranging them by permission to use, arranging them by a few other things and all at once. Anyhow, it's too much for me.

Most of our letters lose none of their interest by delay and of course others are not delayed at all. Just chance. But sometimes, as in the following written in June, 1920, a letter would have been even more interesting if printed as soon as received.

Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico.

The following may prove of interest to some who, like myself, are blessed—or shall I say cursed?—with the wanderlust, and this may prove to be the means of saving them some money and certainly a lot of disappointment. I might mention that I have knocked around the world some and am not exactly a greenhorn, having found myself broke and one hundred and fifty miles from the nearest habitation in a strange country, and many miles from a railroad, but got through anyway.

At any rate, I had never been through Mexico, so decided about a month or five weeks ago to take a trip through old Carranza's playground.

I started out, leaving Portland, Oregon, through San Francisco to Tucson, Arizona, then to Nogales, where, without any trouble I obtained a Border

permit. This costing me 50 cents for 6 photos and $2.00 to the Mexican Consul for a vise. Of course the American Consul also had to visé it, but no charge is made by him. I bought my ticket, after having to wait two days for a train, they running only every other day, over the S. Pacific de Mexico, said ticket, to Mazatlan, costing $13.40 gold or $26.80 Mexican. Distance about eight hundred miles. The price mentioned above is second-class.

I, knowing no Spanish, got into a first-class car, which means plush seats with backs. Second-class is plain wooden slats with no backs. The only way to get any sleep or rest is to lie down with the rest of the cattle, not minding some big Mex's foot in your face during the night and some one else using your chest for a pillow. I found this out the third night, as the first day and night I worked my ticket for a first-class passage, as I had learned to do in France during the war, when we had a chance to go on furlough. It worked to a place called San Blas. From there I had to ride second-class.

TRAINS run to Guaymas, stopping there all night, as they dare not run at night through the Yaquis' country, who are quite bad. Each train has guards and two cars of Mexican soldiers with rifles, revolvers and machine-guns ready to repel any attack by Indians or bandits.

THE natives never go out unless in force, and then do not venture very far off the railroad. Prospecting and mining here are absolutely at a standstill owing to the menace of Yaquis, etc. This applies to all the country from Nogales to Esperanta. I have had several long talks with men who know the country and was told at Mazatlan that a number of Americans had tried to penetrate below Acoponeta, which at the present time is the end of the railroad, the road below being destroyed, but have been turned back, as they say (the people living down this way) that a dollar is plenty for some of these natives to knock a man on the head for.

Everybody here is armed to the teeth, but any one crossing the Border can *not* bring any firearms or ammunition and you can't buy them here, so any one having a prospecting or walking tour in mind would have to depend on his two fists or his knife for protection. I wanted to walk to Mexico City, and then either south or else to Tampico or Vera Cruz, but it would be a trip which I would not care to undertake alone after seeing the country. I had in mind that if I could after arriving at Mexico City, I might try to explore the country down to the Panama Canal, but I am told that, although it has been done, it is absolutely impracticable now, owing to the unsettled conditions. Mazatlan is a seaport where the Pacific Mail Steamships stop, going south and north about every ten days, but they will not hire any one there.

THESE Mexicans have learned the value of the American dollar and you can not get anything besides half-baked tortillas and frijoles for less than fifty cents gold. Rooms cost $1.50 gold.

The branch of the S. P. running from Corrall has not had a train over it for a number of years, owing to the Indians. Camping out is out of the question, owing to the danger.

Fleas, flies, mosquitoes abound, as do also a variety of smells.

I might say here that our American Consul at Mazatlan is a gentleman in every sense of the word, as is his assistant.

There are quite a number of Americans down here, but for the man without plenty of capital, Mexico is a good place to stay out of, as you can not get a job down here unless you want to work for seventy-five cents per day like the Mexicans do, for the hardest kind of labor. It's cost me about two hundred dollars gold to find this out, so hope that no one else will make the same mistake.—G. M. FULTON.

P. S.—The only way to get to Mexico City at the present, if you go by way of Nogales, is to go to Mazatlan, then take the steamer to some port further south. Fare from Mazatlan to Balboa or Colon is eighty-three dollars gold.

AS TO lands yet to be discovered. While we simply haven't space for most of the newspaper clippings sent in, a few, like the two following, seem to demand a place. First, the sender's letter:

Chicago.

Dear Pals of the Camp-Fire: I have often cursed my fate for being born too late to take part in the discovery and settlement of the West and other countries, but it looks like there are some places on the earth's surface remaining to be discovered and exploited. Am sending an article which I picked up in a local paper which verifies this. I am sure this article will interest you Camp-Fireites. When the proper time arrives I shall hie me hence of this stretch of country to explore yon stretch described in the article.

This is not all. As I was reading this morning's periodical I read of a trapper's fight for life in the North Country. I think it will also interest you, *lectores amigos*, therefore I am sending it along. Probably some of you know him and would probably like to hear his finish. This the first time I have had my say around the Camp-Fire, so you will, I am sure, not deal harshly with me.— —— ——.

Names of the papers from which the clippings were made were not given and the sender did not give his address, so we can not give credit until we get the needed data:

"There ain't no land to discover just now." The Canadian North-West Mounted Police have proved quite recently that this is wrong. Within the last few years, they have discovered great lakes, mountain ranges, mighty rivers, herds of game and tribes of Indians and Eskimos whose existence was previously unsuspected.

INSPECTOR PELLETIER and three white companions set out from Fort Saskatchewan and made a journey of 2,343 miles—1,800 of which was never before visited by white men. Among other things they discovered a "lost" herd of caribou, numbering over one hundred thousand; also a tribe of Eskimos in command of an Englishman known as "Lucky Moore"—an explorer long given up as dead.

It is difficult to believe that two new lakes, almost as large as Lake Ontario, and a range of mountains

two hundred miles long could be discovered without creating some sort of a sensation. Yet this has happened. Sergeant Mellor and companions discovered a tributary to the Buffalo River, which in places was a mile in width. It ended in a lake which opened up like a great sea and judged to be 30 to 40 miles wide and 80 to 100 long. By these discoveries a huge blank space on the map has been filled in.

The Pas, Manitoba, Feb. 15.—Out of frozen expanses of Barren lands, 200 miles from the nearest trading post, news has just reached the provincial police here of the tragic death of A. O. Rinehart of Duluth, Minn., a trapper.

His body was found in a shack last October by two other trappers. Beside it was a diary which recorded how for months he had fought a solitary and courageous battle against disease, hunger and cold. The last entry was dated April 9, 1920.

RINEHART left The Pas in August, 1919, on the long journey into Barren lands for a trap line. During the next three months his life, apparently, was without incident for the first entry in the diary was dated November, 1919.

Four months later, March, 1920, the trapper's notes revealed his almost helpless plight—helplessly confined to his bed. Realizing his predicament, he had stored all his supplies within reach.

The final chapter told of his inability to get out of bed to keep the fires going, the exhaustion of his water supply, and his slow death.

S. P. McCLENAGHAN, one of the trappers who found Rinehart's body, said the diary showed the doomed man had scorned suicide, and to make sure he would keep his resolve not to end his life he had broken the mechanism of his revolvers and rifles. His notes expressed hope that some one would come to his rescue.

A letter the dead trapper had written to a relative, Waldo Rinehart of Shawnee, Wis., also was found in the cabin.

FOLLOWING our Camp-Fire custom, Raphael Sabatini rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine. We are to meet *Captain Peter Blood* in other stories.

London, England.

The institution of your Camp-Fire is favored with a spice of that Romance which is the soul of Adventure. If there is some diffidence in my manner as I stand forward into the blaze of Camp-Fire, it is because in my actual self you may discern little that is romantic or adventurous. I am a mere chronicler of the great deeds of others, and the most that I can claim is a parental pride in the achievement of some of those who, like *Captain Peter Blood*, are my children.

THE only personal feature of interest that I can discover in myself is a purely fortuitous one. It lies in the fact that the language in which I have chosen to write—or, rather, in which Fate has dictated that I should write—is not my mother-tongue. I am Italian, as my name implies; indeed, ***civis romanus;*** and Italian was my first language. But if Italian by birth, by blood I am half English and by temperament almost entirely so. Owing to the fact that my mother is an Englishwoman, I acquired a smattering of the language in early years, and developed a taste for English literature almost in infancy. But never having been at an English school (my education was as mixed as my descent, and took place partly in Switzerland and partly in Portugal) I never properly addressed myself to the study of the English language until I was upon the threshold of manhood, at which time I came to take up residence in England.

As a novelist I am not entirely singular in this. I can point to at least one illustrious instance of a contemporary British author to whom English is an acquired language. Still, the fact remains perhaps singular enough to be worth stating, and is, anyway, the only singular personal fact about myself that can possibly be of much interest to you.—RAFAEL SABATINI.

IF THIS comrade would bring his paste-pot and settle down in our office for a few weeks we'd sure make him welcome. We'll even furnish the paste-pot. I'd be doing this stunt of his myself if only I had time.

Santo Domingo City.

Just a line to tell you about the book I am starting for Camp-Fire.

I could not offer to have a Camp-Fire Station as, being a marine, it would have to be more or less portable, so I am starting a book I call "Camp-Fire Adventures."

It is just about the size of *Adventure*. I have to trim the top of the pages to make them fit.

Here is what it is going to be. The cover has one of Adventure Camp-Fire headings and my name and Card No. 10542 (Metal Card).

Inside front cover is that page of Free Services pasted in; then comes the heading and addresses for "Ask Adventure"; then comes the information for month of January third, first issue pasted in. Also Lost Trails. Then where that space for "Trail Ahead" is I paste anything of importance from Camp-Fire, also on the next five pages. Then anything of interest I write in and when January eighteenth issue gets here I start pasting again. In the rear of the book is a place for alphabetical index of information and a large map of West Indies.

I leave this book on the table in my tent at all times and the fellows are already beginning to notice it.

Well, I guess I will ring off before it is too late.—HARRY A. DASHMER, Sgt. U. S. M. C.

HORSES. I think there were none in this country till the Spaniards came, but, like the inquirer, I'm far from being an authority:

Penn Yan, New York.

I think that of all the things we have discussed in the Camp-Fire, there is one that is more vitally associated with adventure in general and the development of our western empire in particular that has not come up for any discussion, or if it has, not since I crowded in back in 1914.

AND that is—horses. Did Columbus, or the Spanish conquistadores that followed after, introduce horses on the American continent? If they did, how do you account for the great herds of wild horses that have, and still do, in a much smaller degree, roam our Western plains. Also, is it not to be wondered at that the Indians, who never knew of horses until the Europeans brought them over, became such excellent horsemen? Do you ever come across any anachronisms on the use of horses by the plains Indians? Is it not possible that horses did exist on the American continent, or in the northern parts of it, independantly previous to their introduction by Europeans. I am entirely ignorant on equine history and wonder if any of the comrades have any dope on this. Anyway, it can not be denied that the horse was as great a factor in the development of the West as the Winchester, the Colt or the prairie schooner.—GEORGE C. LYON.

WITH his first appearance in our magazine F. R. Bechdolt follows Camp-Fire custom and rises to introduce himself. As you will see from his letter—or know already—he is particularly fitted for a seat at Camp-Fire, and especially because he and we have been doing the same thing—collecting, from the comparative few who are still with us to speak from direct knowledge, all the information possible concerning the dramatic history of our West. His article should be an additional spur to our old-timers to pass on to us their stories of the old days so that the facts can be preserved in print.

Of the forty-six years of my life I've spent all but the first two west of the Mississippi; and the last twenty-five west of the Rockies. So I call myself a Westerner although I was born in Pennsylvania.

I WAS brought up as a boy in Mankato, Minnesota, where they hanged thirty-eight Sioux Indians after the big outbreak of the sixties; and not so very far from the place where the James and Younger boys came to grief in the seventies trying to rob the Northfield bank. When I was a youngster my father took me along on a trip into southeastern Montana, near the scene of Custer's last stand; and during that Summer I saw much of the cowboy. The cowboy of the eighties, I mean, who wore the Colt's single action forty-five as a matter of course and was so truly depicted on canvas by Remington, on the printed page by Owen Wister. In years that followed I came to know the vanishing survivors of this fine breed more intimately—and to admire them even more than I did in my teens. To this day it is a keen pleasure to me to find some little nook of the Old West still existing 'way away from the railroad, where men still talk with the straightforwardness and act with the directness of those decades when the saddle pony and the buckboard were the means of rapid transportation.

IN THE nineties my father came out to Seattle and I graduated from the University of Washington in '96; after which I worked on Government survey in the Cascades, went to Alaska before the big rush, which found me out at Lituya Bay. I joined the crowd on returning to Juneau; packed over Chilkoot and Whites Pass; drove dogs and came back to Seattle in '98 to go to work as rodman at Cascade Tunnel. There I learned to run a drill and quit the place to go to newspaper work. As a reporter I worked in various cities of the West. Police detail always appealed to me most strongly.

In 1907 S. S. McClure, to whose magazine I had sold three or four short stories, gave me a job under George Kennan who was handling the graft prosecution story in San Francisco. Since then I have stuck to fiction and article writing.

DURING these years, in which I got about over a good deal of country west of the continental divide, I managed to listen to a great many tales told by men who had been actors in them or who had heard them first hand, tales of real incidents; and gradually I became impressed with the fact that they were better than most fiction written about the same country—excepting only the fiction of Owen Wister and one or two other real masters. And so it got to be a sort of hobby with me to look up such stories. The West is full of them, but the men who tell them are fast dropping off. I would like to be able to collect and set down a great many of them because I believe they are so well worth preserving.

And I guess that about sums it up—the way I came to join your company and become one of you. If the friendship endures for a long time I am sure that none of you who read this will be any better suited than I will.

A JUST comparison of the two races is difficult, but, whether or not the Five Nations—or Six Nations—were superior in "accomplishment and refinement to the whites who ousted them," certainly our democracy could gain much by studying, and on some points copying, the political machinery of the Six Nations. Hugh Pendexter has already made them familiar to us and in a serial by Arthur D. Howden Smith, now scheduled for our Fall issues, you will get further insight into their very interesting political system.

Natchez, Mississippi.

At an earlier Camp-Fire a descendant of one of the tribes of the original Five Nations, Learny Benton by name, if I remember rightly, spells the name of the tribe he sprung from as "Oneidoes" and in your note on his letter you imply a desire to learn the cause of his ending.

The ending is as correct as the ending usually used, as far as authenticity is taken into consideration.

THE Oneidas were called Oneyte and Aneyte by the French Jesuits, and Oneidoes and Oneidas by the Dutch. The latter term which is used to-day entirely, originated exclusively, I think, with the Dutch traders of Orange (Albany) and scabs they surely were in their treatment of this tribe and of all others, as were all those who bore to the red man those two seemingly inseparable aids, the Bible and the fire-water.

But be the spelling what it may, all four were applied to the "People of the Stone," the lightest hued of the Five Nations, the most peaceful, and the superiors of the whites who ousted them by chicanery, both in accomplishment and refinement.

I am just going to sign my initials to this as I don't desire to appear in the limelight in any way. My object was to extend the information you desired, not to air my too-deficient knowledge, having in mind that quatrain of Khayyam's which starts, "Not alone for you this world was made."—W. M.

CONCERNING his story in this issue Captain Joseph Mills Hanson gives us the following:

Yankton, South Dakota.

It's been more than four years since I have written a story. After getting into the Army and going to the Border and then to France, all my writing was devoted to military history, and since I came home again it has been entirely about the A. E. F. fighting in Europe. Lately I have felt like tackling some stories again. I am enclosing herewith the first one I have done, hoping that it will suit *Adventure*, which, naturally, is the magazine I think of first.

THIS story while not strictly "true," has a strong basis of historial fact. In the Summer of 1863 a large party of miners with, it was said, three keel-boats, were returning to the States by the Missouri from the Dakota (later Montana) goldfields, when they were attacked near where Bismarck, N. Dak., now stands by a great force of Indians. These Indians were the ones who were retreating from Minnesota before General Sibley's expedition, which had set out to chastise them for the Minnesota massacres of 1862.

The miners happened to come along just as the Indians were crossing the Missouri and they were set upon and all killed and their boats sunk. About a month later, when Sibley's column reached the Missouri at the mouth of Apple Creek, evidences of the fight were found. More or less well-founded reports have it that the miners had a great quantity of gold, dust and nuggets, which they were carrying down, plugged up in auger-holes in the gunwales of their boats. These boats, with the gold in them, still lie buried somewhere in the sandbars of the Missouri, near Bismarck. I have often discussed the matter with Captain Grant Marsh, the veteran Missouri River steamboatman, whose life I wrote in my first book, "The Conquest of the Missouri," and who died about five years ago. He knew all the facts and legends about the occurrence, was at the site of the fight, as nearly as it was known, with the Sully Expedition in 1864, and he always believed that if some one with proper equipment would make the effort, the sunken keel-boats could be found and the gold recovered. There may be more gold there than the justly celebrated Captain Kidd is reputed to have hidden away somewhere along the New England coast.—JOSEPH MILLS HANSON.

YES, it has been some time since we've had a story from this old member of our writers' brigade and we're glad to welcome him back. Little matters like the war and being an official historian of same have kept him away from us except in his capacity as an "A. A." expert. Back in 1917 at our request he wrote us the following letter which changed plans kept out of "A. A." At the end of it his reference to the Rhine, two months before we entered the war, is rather interesting.

San Benito, Texas.
Feb. 10, 1917.

Doubtless it is a prejudice born of provincial devotion to the things of one's native land, but I am frank to say that, deep in my heart is a conviction that if the Missouri Valley were not in the United States the nation would be less attractive by half. Certainly any one must admit that it contains a large proportion of the area and the potential wealth of the country, whether or not they will grant that it is unduly endowed with natural charms. Not much of the broad, fertile region between the Rockies and the Mississippi, the Canadian line and the Cimarron River, is today a promising field for hair-breadth adventure. But it used to be, from the times of Coronado and Verendrye, on through those of Lewis and Clark, Zebulon Pike and Jim Bridger, to those of Custer, "Sandy" Forsyth and "Buffalo Bill." Though its bison herds are gone, it still offers to the lover of the open its own peculiar charms in the way of hunting, boating, camping, motoring or just plain hiking which are not the less attractive merely by reason of the fact that they are easy of access and inexpensive.

BEING a native of Dakota and coming at a vivid interest in all the plains country by way of a love for its history which has found expression in a number of books on the subject, I have come to understand it, I believe, pretty thoroughly, its present robust vitality and its future glowing aspirations, as well as its stirring past. I have navigated its rivers in every kind of craft—steamboat, motor-boat and row-boat—hunted its woods and prairies, camped among its hills, helped to push good roads through more than one of its States, written poetry about its sunsets and blizzards and prose about its live stock and crops, as well as about its heroes and bad men. Of course, I do not know everything about my middle Northwest; it's a tremendously big country, but I believe I can help the stranger to decide which are the most interesting parts of it to visit and how he can best reach them and most thoroughly enjoy them. I can tell him something about the prospects for sport and I have considerable confidence that I can tell him anything within reason about the history or the Indian tribes of any given region. Although, at the present time, I am encamped, as captain of my company of the South Dakota National Guard, on the banks of the Rio Grande, far from the Northwest of which I am to be *Adventure's* spokesman, I trust that the Mexicans and the Germans will soon permit me to return to the place when I can look out upon the Missouri River; I like that view much better than the one across the Rio Grande—or the Rhine. Meantime, under the handicap of absence, I will do my best to enlighten those who seek information of the region from the Ozarks to the Turtle Mountains and from Pembina to the Arkansas.—JOSEPH MILLS HANSON.

NOT meaning to make a goat out of Captain Hanson, I add some data concerning him which he did not furnish me. Modesty is a virtue, but sometimes, as editor and as "toast-master" for Camp-Fire, I regret the modesty that makes many of our writers suppress mention of various data creditable to themselves. No, I don't really regret their modesty, for they have the real spirit of Camp-Fire and act accordingly. What I regret is that interesting things concerning them don't get to you, for we of Camp-Fire like to be as thoroughly acquainted as possible. So now and then I'm going to add some of this information on my own hook, starting with Captain Hanson:

Commd. captain, S. D. N. G., May 1, 1916; Mexican border service, June 21, 1916—Mar. 9, 1917; in Federal service, Mar. 27, 1917; Capt. and adj. 2nd Battn., 147th F. A., Oct. 2, 1917, Mar. 19, 1918; with A. E. F., France, Jan. 11, 1918, Oct. 28, 1919, and on duty Gen. Hdqrs., A. E. F. later; Discharged Oct. 30, 1919. Cavalier Order Crown of Italy, 1919. Hon. mem. Mo. Hist. Soc., Vets. Assn., 165th N. Y. Vols., Mem. S. D. Hist. Soc., Soc. Midland Authors (v. p. for S. D.), Loyal Legion, Am. Legion, Sec. of com. in charge of celebration of jubilee anniversary of creation of Dak. Ty., 1911, and arranged pageant of Dak. history.

A WORD from one of our writers' brigade. An exploded buried-treasure myth. And an Indian.

Russellville, Arkansas.

Dear Camp-Fire Comrades:—Just a line to tell of meeting a most interesting person, Chief Red Fox, son of Black Eagle, a chief of the Sioux tribe of Dakota. He was lecturing in our State recently, telling of Indian customs and history, and because I am interested in Indian lore and legends I had many questions to ask him.

ARKANSAS abounds in Indian mounds and relics, many of the latter being contributed to the Smithonsian Institution. We live within a few miles of the old Dwight mission where Cephas Washburn was missionary to the Cherokees soon after the founding of Arkansas Post, and there are many stories of buried treasure in this section. Only a couple of miles from our little city is Cagle's Rock, rising abruptly some fifty feet out of the ground; on one side of this rock is a large Indian picture painted with ocher. The main figure is a lizard hanging head downward; above it are a number of symbols. It has been there since before the memory of the oldest settlers and has always been supposed to be a guide to some mine or treasure. The ground all around has been dug into many times, and once it was reported some gold ore had been discovered. I described the picture to Red Fox and he told me what tribe the symbols belonged to, and that it was merely a water sign.

He talked interestingly of Custer's last battle, of the warlike traits of the Sioux, and did the snake dance in a most realistic manner. He has served several years in the Navy, and gives a plea for loyalty and fair dealing that would make many a white man ashamed of himself. He thinks the Indians are now being treated fairly, and attributes their civilization not to the fear of bullets, but to Christianity. He gives many of the dances and describes Indian customs and thinks they should be preserved as future history. All in all, he is a most interesting person and it is a treat to talk to him—RUBY ERWIN LIVINGSTON.

FIREARMS discussions are a problem. Start one and it becomes an explosion. Answers, arguments, opinions, refutations rain down upon us so that, if we printed them all, there would be nothing else in either "Camp-Fire" or "Ask Adventure." Which, on the other hand, means great interest in this subject. Compromises are dangerous things, but let's try one. Let's have an *occasional* gun discussion, making Wild Bill, the Gila monster, Custer's massacre, Billy the Kid, etc., give firearms an equal chance. If the discussion tries to take too much space we won't let it.

Our old friend Dr. Robertson of Honduras is the tempter this time. He sits down and makes marksmanship so easy that only a child can do it, or words to some other effect. He has surely started something and on his own head be it. Me, I'm an innocent bystander and standing back far enough to avoid getting what the innocent bystander usually gets. However, before I take cover permanently I want to ask Dr. Robertson whether he learned to shoot by the method he lays down or whether he laid down the method after he learned to shoot. Also, is he sure *any* one can do all the simple little things he mentions and do them perfectly?

Galeras, Olancho, Honduras.

Touching shooting now: I note experts issue instructions how to become a marksman. I have no doubt they are experts with a large E and that they know all there is to know about the matter, but still there are men—and men, and there are systems—and systems. In this case perhaps the system of some dub might work better with another dub than the method authorized by the experts. I am one of the dubs, and as such would be willing to help out other dubs who, like me, are too silly or too simple to learn by the rules laid down by those who live and have their being in the intimate intricacies of ballistics.

I CAN hit a barn at 500 yards—if it will just hold still for a jiffy. Of course if it capers and cavorts around in a manner unbecoming a decent barn or in any way controverts the rules of conduct for barns, I

could not well be blamed if I should fail, being as aforesaid a dub—not an E.

Admitted that the barn behaves, I can hit it almost every time, and that ought to admit me into the ranks of marksmen. I think so anyway, for as yet I have not met any of the self-decorated marksmen who can do any more than I seem to be able to do—and all without a diploma. They ought not to be said to do better, but I ought to say they do not do less ill. All that is to say that I know something about shooting, and the reason why.

THERE is more bunk blatted about shooting than about almost any other matter. And just because a gun makes a noise when it goes off. Take away the bang, and it would be like any other act. Now shooting is a purely mechanical act, and no art as asserted by the experts who fancy they are worthy of great kudos. Pshaw, any two by four carpenter who lines out a picket fence does as well the same thing—maybe better, for there is no bang. It is simply a matter of lining two objects one with the other, and the coordination with that lining of a pressure. One sight and a pressure, then, is the whole thing. I can not see any reason to make a muckle of that.

Any six-year kid has his hand so coordinated with his eye that he can point to what he wants, and his index finger will unerringly line with the object. He has the great essential of shooting, and a six-year kid is nothing marvelous.

THERE is nothing at all in shooting that can not be acquired easily by you or me or any other of the dubs, irrespective of sex or affiliation. It is simply what all of us can do now—the lining of two objects. There is none who can not, save persons suffering from some aberration. I speak now as a scientist. All to be done further to complete the necessities of shooting is to forget that we have been told it is an art, and also forget the bang, and to coordinate the pressure on the trigger with the act of lining.

Line your gun on the object; maintain that line till the bullet is sped, and you will find it where you pointed it—if the sights be alined and the elevation correct. There is no perhaps at all. It is absolute. The rest is a matter of common sense and judgment and varies with every shot so that NO RULE can be laid down for it. I refer to windage, atmospheric conditions and such fortuitous circumstances. They call for instant decision and can not be forecast nor plotted. There are only two matters to be considered by the shooter, line and elevation. Of course the ball has to be discharged at the instant lining and elevation are perfect. If the operator fires in such a manner as to disturb line or elevation, those are not correct at the instant of fire and the result will not be the desired one, while it will most certainly be the proper one for the line and elevation at the time of fire. Any gump can see that. Then it is a case of learn to fire at the proper time and to line exactly. No two eyes are identical, thus again no law can be evolved. The sights of a gun must be arranged to the eye which will be used.

Divested of all the claptrap, shooting is one of the simplest forms of mechanical endeavor, and none need look upon it as an art. Line the arm and see that the trigger is pulled in such a way as not to interfere with the line and if the gun is made according to rule and the ammunition also, the ball will be found where desired. If not, one of those things is out. The matter can be reduced to—two and two make four.

Now say you wish to learn to shoot at a moving object. Nature has been working since you were born—probably before also, but that is out beyond need of consideration—to coordinate the hand with the eye. The coordination is almost perfect. This is for all. Point your finger at any object, maintain the point, and sight along the finger. You will find it to be laid exactly on the object, however small it may be. This is a law made by nature, not one made of the experts. Therefore if the finger falls exactly on the object pointed at, there ought to be no difficulty in using the same coordination when pointing out with a pointer. There is not. In many cases a pointer is used to distinguish one of many, and always it, if sighted, will be found to be alined with the object.

As the finger ever gives with the object pointed out, there ought to be no difficulty in pointing with a pointer, and there is not, as demonstrated by many who use such in their daily occupations. Practise with a pointer for a time, then have a pointer of the shape of the arm you wish to use. Point with that till you are convinced that the eye and the hand are so made that they act in perfect coordination without the sentient direction of the ego. As soon as you now that, begin to co-ordinate a pressure equal to that of the trigger you will use, with the moment of perfect alinement. The culmination of the pressure will correspond with the moment of alinement. You have, then, all the mechanism of shooting.

There is remaining therefore but the mental husks in which custom and charlatanry have enwrapped the so-called art. Conquer them and you are a shot. Get a wooden gun of the form of that you shall use, and practise pointing with it. Then the actual gun, and last the gun and BBs. From BBs to .22 short, and so on. In no time you will be able to hit anything you point at. Always remember that the bang had nothing to do with the matter and has not to be considered. Remember that you are just pointing out something with the gun. As you point, you tighten the finger, and at the actual moment of best alinement the pressure culminates. That is all there is to it, and any jackanapes can do it as well as the E. You can learn to do the same with the rifle also. Of course it takes a person who can dominate his mental processes, but every man ought to be able to do that.

The whole thing is in getting the proper viewpoint, and having confidence in nature's processes.
—W. C. ROBERTSON.

LETTERS have been coming in from readers who want to establish Camp-Fire Stations as well as from those who have already hung out the sign. We hope to print some of these soon. We hope also to print in the near future a map showing how the stations are scattered over this hemisphere. They are getting to be pretty well distributed but there are still plenty of places where new ones can be started without crowding.—A. S. H.

VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES FREE TO ANY READER

THESE services of *Adventure* are free to *any one.* They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you *read and observe the simple rules,* thus saving needless delay and trouble for you and us. The whole spirit of this magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we *can* help you we're ready and willing to try.

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure,* New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

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A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 *Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply* Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL BUY: Dec., 1910, and Jan., 1912. Must be in perfect condition. Will pay one dollar per copy. Write before sending.—WALTER E. GOODWIN, P. O. Box 90, Dover, N. H.

WILL SELL: Oct., 1914, vol. VIII, 6. IX, 1, 3 and 6. XI, 2. XIII, 3, 4, 5 and 6. XIV, 1, 2, 3 and 4. XXIII, 3, 6. All 1917 to date: at cost.—Address ATT'Y WM. A. GOLDEN, 404 Diamond St., Pittsburgh, Penn.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of this issue.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address WAYNE EBERLY, 519 Citizens Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested, inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections subject only to our general rules for Ask Adventure, but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. Ask Adventure covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. ★ Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

2. The Sea Part 1
BERIAH BROWN, Seattle Press Club, 1209 Fifth Ave., Seattle, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next department.*)

3. ★ The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay; river, lake and road travel; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs, and their markets.

5. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Orlando, Fla. Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

6. Eastern U. S. Part 3
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 44 Central Street, Bangor, Maine. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

7. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. The Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas. Hunting, fishing, travel. Early history of Missouri Valley.

8. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
JOHN B. THOMPSON, 1006 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands: big timber sections.

9. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
LARRY ST. JOHN. Melbourne Beach, Fla. Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Lake Michigan. Fishing, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, clamming, early history, legends.

10. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

11. Western U. S. Part 2; and Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 West 10th St., Austin, Tex. Texas, Oklahoma, and the border States of old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, natives, hunting, history, industries.

12. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, Lista de Correos, Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico. Lower California: Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, natives, business and general conditions.

13. North American Snow Countries Part 1
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Height of Land and northern Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. R'y); southeastern Ungava

★(*Enclose addressed envelope with 5 cents in stamps NOT attached*)

and Keewatin. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit.

14. North American Snow Countries Part 2
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Ottawa Valley and southeastern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation.

15. North American Snow Countries Part 3
GEORGE L. CATTON, Tweed, Ont., Canada. Georgian Bay and southern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing.

16. North American Snow Countries Part 4
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Hunters Island and English River district. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

17. North American Snow Countries Part 5
ED. L. CARSON, Burlington, Wash. Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

18. North American Snow Countries Part 6
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, Carmel, Calif. Alaska. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

19. North American Snow Countries Part 7
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel.

20. North American Snow Countries Part 8
IAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and southeastern Quebec. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping. auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power.

21. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 632 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. Customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

22. Central America
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, language, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

23. South America. Part 1
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

24. South America Part 2
P. H. GOLDSMITH, *Inter-American Magazine*, 407 West 117th St., New York, N. Y. Venezuela, the Guianas, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentine Republic. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, natives, languages, hunting and fishing.

25. Asia, Southern
Red Sea, Persian Gulf, India, Tibet, Burma, western China, Siam, Andamans, Malay States, Borneo, the Treaty Ports; hunting, trading, traveling.

(NOTE:—Gordon MacCreagh, the editor of this section, is on an exploration trip, and owing to our inability to obtain a suitable substitute this section is suspended during his absence.)

26. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, 1555 Wilcox Ave., Hollywood, Calif. History, natives, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

27. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Me. Japan. Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

28. Russia and Eastern Siberia
MAJOR A. M. LOCHWITZKY (formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A., Ret.), Austin, Texas. Petrograd and its province; Finland, northern Caucasus, Primorsk district, island of Sakhalien. Travel, hunting, fishing; explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

29. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, Carmel, Monterey Co., Calif. Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, Niger River to Jebba, Northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora, tribal histories, witchcraft.

30. Africa Part 2
GEORGE E. HOLT, Frederick, Md. Morocco; travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

31. Africa Part 3. Portuguese East Africa
R. W. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc.

32. ★ Africa Part 4. Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East Africa, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Ile de Lerne, par Vannes, Morbihan, Brittany, France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

33. Africa Part 5. Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, 40 South Clark Street, Chicago, Ill. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

34. ★ New Zealand; and South Sea Islands Part 1
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport. (*Postage 8 cents.*)

35. South Sea Islands Part 2
CHARLES BROWN, JR., 213 E St., San Rafael, Calif. French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society, Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn). Natives, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and cocoanut culture.

36. ★ Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, Hotel Sydney, Sydney, Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

WEAPONS, PAST AND PRESENT

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the Ask Adventure editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Shotguns (including foreign and American makes). J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers (including foreign and American makes). D. WIGGINS, Salem, Ore.

C.—Edged Weapons. Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc. LEWIS APPLETON BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting; live bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Sup't of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines, Virgin Is., Guam and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters or for specific data. Address John Barrett, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. C. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Comm., Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

Wants to Buy Elephants

JUST prior to his departure for South America Mr. MacCreagh sent us the following question and answer:

Question:—"Am contemplating the purchase of some elephants. Will possibly want to make a personal trip to some Asiatic point, city or island, where I can make purchases of India elephants and other animals. But the elephants are the most important.

Understand on most of the islands and mainlands that they are under the protection of the English Government.

Would one have trouble getting them over?

Do you happen to know what elephants usually sell for in any of those countries? Prefer small ones.

Can you give me an address who could put me in close touch with the situation in case I made a personal trip?

What strategic point or city would it be advisable to buy ticket to? That is, where I would be in the heart of the elephant country."—JUNE HALL, Anacortes, Wash.

Answer, by Mr. MacCreagh:—You are right in assuming that Indian elephants are under governmental protection. But that by no means precludes their purchase. The Government has arrogated to itself the monopoly of trapping elephants in all of its Eastern possessions—which means India and Burma—and of selling such animals as are not required for its own use.

The price of a healthy elephant—tame enough to be manageable but untrained in any useful labor—is about seven thousand rupees (three rupees to the dollar).

The city for your headquarters would be Rangoon; for the trapping, or *keddah*, operations are at present being carried on in the Katna district of Upper Burma.

Quite recently the Government leased out a concession for the *keddah* to one of the big English firms operating in the East. I am sorry I don't know which firm it is; but should you go there, there would be no difficulty in finding out.

Pointers on Colts

ALSO a few side remarks on holsters, as well as on the legal status of gun-toting:

Question:—"Please answer the following questions on the Colt's Single Action Frontier and the Colt's Double Action New Service revolvers; also give me any additional information you may have on the above revolvers.

Which of the two revolvers do you think would be best for use horseback as well as on foot to be carried in a Mexican holster? What length of barrel would you advise? What caliber—the .38-40, or .44-40 or the .45?

Where can I purchase a good Mexican holster for the revolver you favor? How wide a cartridge-belt would you suggest?

Which of the above revolvers is the most popular sidearm in what is left of the wilds of our West? Is it unlawful to carry a gun in any of the following States providing it is not concealed: Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico?"—JOHN M. HIGGINS, New Brunswick, N. J.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—I would prefer the Colt Single Action revolver with 5½-inch barrel in the .45-caliber size for a belt gun, in preference to the New Service of the same make. I like the 5½-inch barrel, as I have found it accurate and easier carried and quicker to get into action than the 7½-inch.

The .38-40 shoots very well, as does the .44-40, but I like the old .45 much better. I have two .45s, a Smith & Wesson and a Webley, both shooting the .45 Colt cartridge, and like both.

For a holster, I would advise a letter to the following address:

Captain A. H. Hardy, Denver, Colorado.

This gentleman is a noted shot as well as a saddlery expert, and can give you the best service of any one I know.

I do not think it is unlawful to carry a revolver unconcealed in any of the Western States, as it is in New York, but I would advise a letter to the Secretary of State of each named State to be sure.

You will find the old Colt .45 with modern loading a little less powerful than with the old black-powder loads, but more desirable in most other respects. Black-powder loads of forty grains in that old gun shoot like ——, and kick likewise.

I would advise wooden grips, and an ivory bead front sight; have some good gunsmith ease up the trigger pull also, is my advice.

Where the Fightingest Bass Are

BLACK flies or no black flies, Mr. Catton's description of the fishing at the mouth of French River will make even the tenderest-skinned fisherman r'aring to go:

Question:—"I am asking for some information regarding the Muskoka district. Self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed, and I thank you in advance for your assistance. The questions follow below.

1.—What is considered the best bass-fishing district in Muskoka, Georgian Bay and southern Ontario?

2.—Is it possible to purchase from the Canadian government a small island in any of these districts?

3.—If possible to purchase an island would you give me the name of the right person to write to. Also can you give me any ideas of cost—based on a small-sized island suitable for Summer camps?

4.—Your comments on mosquitoes and black flies in these districts—time worst and time most free—will be appreciated."—H. B. KIRKPATRICK, Pittsburg, Penn.

Answer, by Mr. Catton:—

1.—The best bass-fishing district is without question the mouth of the French River. This question will be answered differently by any two people in this country—there are so many good fishing-grounds in Muskoka, Lake of Bays, and Georgian Bay; but from my own experience I have found Georgian Bay, at the mouth of the French River, the pick of them all.

I have caught in two hours fourteen small-mouthed black bass that weighed 38 pounds in Muskoka Lake. I have caught the same fish weighing as high as five and a half pounds among the islands off Parry Sound. I have caught several two and three pounders in the Lake of Bays.

But the biggest and heaviest catch of the fightingest bass I ever reveled in was taken at the mouth of the French River. The beauty of that spot is that you never can tell what you are going to hook with your next strike, and the black fellows don't seem to be quite so "or'nary" there. If they bite you will have to hide behind a paddle to bait your hook. And if they don't bite you've got the wrong bait, that's all.

2.—Yes, it is quite possible to purchase a small island from the government, especially in Georgian Bay. Write Mr. H. A. Macdonell, Director of Colonization, Toronto, for information on this subject.

3.—Cost would depend on location more than on size of the island. Also, I would think, on what it was to be used for, the amount of valuable timber upon it and its proximity to the mainland. Islands in the Lake of Bays have been sold for one hundred dollars in 1913; I can't say what they are worth now.

4.—Mosquitoes start in with the first warm days in the Spring, and stick around till the frosts come in the Fall nights. Black flies show up, in a warm Spring, about the middle of May, and are pretty well gone by the middle of August. That applies pretty well to the whole of the fly and mosquito-infested areas.

But don't let insects bother you. Take lots of netting with you for night use, and fly-dope for your hands and face for day use. There are dopes made now that when used right are quite efficacious.

Send question direct to expert in charge—NOT to the magazine.

Chances in South Africa

MAYBE it will be as much of a surprize to others as it was to me to learn that the Kimberley diamond-mines are managed by Americans now:

Question:—"Will you kindly furnish me with information relative to opportunities for employment and general living-conditions in Cape Town and vicinity?

I am twenty-three years old and have knocked about the States quite a bit, but have no trade, having put in most of my time working for various railroads."—J. J. CURRAN, West Hoboken, N. J.

Answer, by Captain Franklin:—You will, I am sure, find South Africa a good country in which to obtain the kind of work you are accustomed to. Of course from time to time South Africa has its labor troubles like any other country, but an able-bodied and sober man can always find employment on the mines or on the railroads or even up-country on the various estates if he is forced to it. The climatic conditions are good, and in my opinion you would have as good a chance if you decide to visit South Africa as you would have 'most anywhere.

I should if going certainly strike Cape Town first of all and get in touch with the American consul there, who should be able to fix you up with a job on one of the mines. There are a great number of Americans all over South Africa, especially on the mines of Kimberley, which are managed by Americans.

You can buy a good suit of clothes in Cape Town today for thirty dollars, and board costs about twelve pounds a month. Wages run from twenty pounds a month. Please let me know if you decide to go.

The Tragic Edmonton Route

SOMEHOW or other the letter of inquiry that prompted the subjoined answer got lost; but Mr. Solomons' information is too valuable to be suppressed on that account. And anyway the nature of the questions may readily be inferred:

Answer, by Mr. Solomons:—Heroic treatment is sometimes needed to do one's real duty by the men who want to try the frozen North equipped with one manicure set and a soda cracker.

You are "figuring on going North from Edmonton on a prospecting expedition to Alaska," and you want to know what the prospects are up there for a well-equipped party. They are fine—if you ever get there and have the dough wherewith to purchase a "well equipment." What you start with from Edmonton won't do you much good for you will doubtless eat, wear and use it up, plus several more, before you get to Alaska. Stout, able-bodied and fairly skilled and intelligent men used up several outfits during the two or three years of their journey.

Unless you elect to try the air lanes for your route and a Handley-Page "canoe" for your vehicle I can not promise you any greater speed.

The "equipment" you "would need from Edmonton to Circle City" would in the enumeration of it give you such a distressing headache that I mercifully forbear to mention it in detail. It's a matter of canoes and batteaux, with numerous portages, for the first thousand or two miles, and canoes, dogs, sleds and snow-shoes the last thousand or two. You take lots of Summer and Winter clothes, including a ton or so of every kind of footgear possible, and grub enough for emergencies— the latter consisting mostly of a year or two more than you figure on, and you figure on a year or two at least to start with.

The best man of the many victims of this route to Alaska that I ever knew—and I think he was a dandy—sat down two solid evenings in my best soap-box chair in my cabin in Dawson City and told me some of the lights and shades of this journey. He and his party made good time. They started in the Summer of 1897 and reached Circle City December, 1899, and they lost by death only one of their party of eight and only two by insanity. The rest quarreled, of course, but they did no more than maim each other.

Your question, "How long could we stay on the inside?" suggests the wild and harrowing thought that you actually figure on going into Alaska, staying a while and returning to Edmonton the same Summer! I think it is that sentence that determines me to risk your displeasure by the tone I

adopt in this letter rather than fail to resort to any device to enlighten you upon the hare-brained temerity of what you propose.

Not that you will do it, for you are too intelligent a man—as your letter amply proves—to really go to Edmonton and make a start. But unless something like this reaches you *pronto* you and the other five may waste a lot of time and money before you get wise. The Edmonton route was the one tragic joke in the Klondike, for four years—and I guess it still is; I don't know.

Pearling in the South Seas

THERE'S money in it, but not for amateurs with small capital:

Question:—"Can you furnish me information relative to the pearl industry of the South Sea Islands? Information to cover all details for the guidance of an amateur who is seeking adventure; also name and location of best place to locate for convenience and comfort."—E. H. LUDINGTON, Camp Abraham, Eustis, Va.

Answer, by Mr. Mills:—There is not much encouragement offering for the amateur in the pearling industry. It is an expensive enterprise, and will certainly provide you with all the thrills and adventure that you could desire if your intentions are serious.

It is a general impression that wherever there is a lagoon in an island in the South Seas there are pearls, Don't you believe it. The pearl, like all other gems, takes some finding.

Pearling is a decided industry along the northwest coast of Australia. Thursday Island. off the top of Queensland, is the center of big business in pearls. It is surrounded by lesser islands, and is only ninety miles from the coast of Papua (New Guinea), in the region of which pearling also goes on.

Every island within a radius of fifty miles of Thursday Island is occupied by crews of the pearling-fleets. The boats are commanded by Europeans and manned by Malays and kanakas and Japanese, the latter being particularly facile in diving, which is not done nowadays in nakedness, but with up-to-date diving-appliances. You will therefore realize that pearling today is no game for the amateur.

Pearls are found in the Pacific at wide intervals of watery space, but at no group is it an industry such as at the area I have mentioned. On Christmas Island, which is three degrees north of the Line, there is one of the largest lagoons to be found on a Pacific bit of land. There are pearl-shells in this lagoon. This is a British group.

In the Low Archipelago (the Tuamotu group), which is French, black-edged Tahiti shell (most valuable) is found in great quantity. In this archipelago atolls (small coral islets) are as thick as currants in a cake.

On the altar in the cathedral erected by the Catholics on Mangareva, principal of the Gambier group, are some pearls of rare value. These were donations from the pearl-fishing natives on their returns from their various voyages.

A number of pearling-luggers are licensed in the western division of New Guinea to fish for pearls and shell. In the southeast portion of New Guinea black-lipped shell is found in abundance.

As to the dangers to be guarded against, they are many and expensive. You first get your pearling-ground (and that, as I say, takes some finding in these days of adventurous fortune-hunting), then you get your craft and your crew, and your up-to-date diving equipment; and then there is the greatest danger of all—diving.

And when you get your pearl of great price your life is in danger from the Japs, kanakas and other humans who in such out-of-the-way places where pearls are found hold life very cheap. They won't cut your throat for the sake of a seed pearl, but they hesitate not at all for a pearl of price.

I trust that these notes will induce you to go a little further into the subject before "giving it a go." If you have the money to spare, you would find it well worth while to take a trip to Thursday Island and see pearling as it is done along business lines. You would find, however, that adventure has not been eliminated. *Kia Ora!*

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to Ask Adventure editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

Savages of Tierra del Fuego

THE advice quoted by Colonel Roosevelt, "speak aisy and carry a big stick," goes for the Cape Horn district too:

Question:—"Would you kindly give me general information about the habits of the people living in the southern part of South America (Cape Horn)?"—JOHN ROMEYS, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Answer, by Captain Dingle:—The natives of Tierra del Fuego, who are the only human beings living near to Cape Horn, are the Onas, a low-grade race of people similar to the poorest of the North American Indian tribes. They are not a sea race, though they live almost in the sea, so to speak, for their country is cut up by the inlets and sounds of the water maze of the Straits. They depend upon hunting, which they do with primitive spears and arrows.

They are not at all friendly. They will stop even wrecked men from landing if they can.

The Alacalufs, a tribe from Patagonia which sometimes voyages across to Tierra del Fuego, are also treacherous, and will mop up any solitary white, or small number, if known to be unarmed; but they won't bother, say, half a dozen whites if there's a gun among the bunch.

There are other natives, the Yahgans, not strictly belonging to the region you mention, who are tractable and safe to get along with.

I don't know your reasons for inquiring about these people, of course; but if you think of going down there for placer gold or fur you could take a chance with a couple of pals and a good rifle apiece. I have been among those folks a lot, and I have never been molested actually; but I recall many a time when I might have been had I not accidentally discharged my gun at a critical moment.

The Silver Fox

TEN thousand dollars is the price of its skin, if you can get $10,000 for it:

Question:—"What is the value of a silver fox, the best?

How often do they have pups?

Do you know of a fox-ranch at Eagle River, Wisconsin, owned by Mr. T. H. Dryse?

Is there a market all the time for silver foxes?

Will be glad to receive anything on fur-farming in the way of information that you can give me."—STONY P. HOWARD, Columbus, Ga.

Answer, by Mr. St. John:—Silver foxes have sold as high as ten thousand dollars, but the average price is much less and going down all the time. The market for all furs is very poor this year, and silver fox is only a fad at best. The fur is not as pretty as the prices indicate, a good cross fox in our opinion being far more beautiful.

In captivity I believe that they do not figure more than one litter of puppies a year; and all of these will not be silver foxes as they are not a distinct species but a color variant of the common red fox.

I am not acquainted with the fox-farm you mention. A good many of them are springing up and those that are making money are doing so on selling breeding-stock. It is quite an industry at Prince Edward Island.

There is always a market for the skins, but no telling how long high prices will prevail. I would consider fox-farming a hazardous undertaking, financially.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington. D. C., has several bulletins on fur-farming which are sent free.

Sport in an International Reserve

BY THE time the two subjoined letters reach your eye, the map to which Mr. Phillips refers below will doubtless be ready for distribution by the railroad which prepared it:

Question:—"Will you please furnish me information as follows in regard to lake and river districts about one hundred and twenty miles north of Duluth; that is, near Winton, Minn.:

State of weather about June 15th; whether mosquitoes are very bad at this time of the year. Also give all information you can relative to a canoe trip which I would like to take in that country, such as renting canoes, hiring guides and procuring maps of this region.

I am enclosing stamped and addressed envelope for your reply."—H. P. PHELAN, Moberly, Mo.

Answer, by Mr. Phillips:—The country north of Witnon, Minn., above the Canadian boundary is known as the Quitico Provincial Park; that on the American side as the Superior National Forest. Both together comprise about 3,000,000 acres.

June 15th is a little bit early for a canoe trip. The mosquitoes are at their best—last year there were countless myriads. Two weeks later is better; or July 15 is still better.

It would be impossible to tell you concerning weather conditions; a person on a canoe trip must be prepared for the worst at all times. However, I have found that the weather conditions are very favorable as the Summer advances.

You can obtain canoes at Ely Boat-House, Ely, Minn., at $1.25 for the first seven days; $1 per day thereafter. Drayage charge $3 each way to have canoe delivered at Winton depot, which should be your starting-point owing to its convenience. The men at station are the most accommodating on earth and will help you down to Falls Lake. Your canoe should be sixteen feet long for two people, seventeen feet for three, with three paddles and carrying-yoke.

I can recommend American, Canadian and Indian guides. Their charges are $8 to $10 per day. They will do all the heavy carrying and packing; also some cooking. Better do the latter yourself however.

The routes are fairly well marked, and with a general knowledge of woodmanship it is possible to serve as your own guide.

The Duluth and Iron Range Railroad, Duluth, Minn., is about to publish a map of this country showing canoe routes. This will be ready in a few days.

Fishing is generally good—bass, Northern pike, yellow perch, whitefish, lake trout. You will probably see moose, deer, bobcats, porcupine, etc., depending on season. No firearms of any sort are allowed in park.

Aviation in Mexico

NOT much chance yet for the free-lance, unless he can get a job running valuables past the bandits:

Question:—"Would appreciate any information you can give me with regard to aviation in Mexico.

Are climatic conditions in Mexico City favorable for flying?

Are there any aircraft companies, or any one that desires American pilots?

How are living conditions in Mexico City?"—H. J. GOODSTEIN, Chicago, Ill.

Answer, by Mr. Mahaffey:—The only important aviation carried on in Mexico is by the Mexican War Department.

They have a field and quite a plant at Valbuena, in the outskirts of Mexico City, and have bought a number of Farman planes from Europe, also a number of planes—I do not know the make—from the United States. Some months ago there was quite a bit in the papers regarding aviation and a very extensive program was outlined; but owing to the financial crisis in Mexico as well as the United States I assume this will not be carried out so promptly.

I understand they build planes at Valbuena, and I have seen some very good propellers turned out there. In the articles in the papers some American aviator was to have charge of the proposed new units, but believe that there is a very slight chance of landing anything as the motto is generally "Mexico for the Mexicans," and as the same officers are in charge as during the Carranza administration I assume the same policy is carried out.

Mexico is very careful not to employ any foreigners in important parts of her military program, and

even a naturalized foreigner is, according to the Constitution of 1917, incapable of serving in the Army or Navy.

Some time ago the oil companies in and around Tampico were considering using planes to carry pay-roll money to their outlying camps, but as the bandits are all now government troops in town I suppose the thing fell through.

Mexico City is at an elevation of about 6,500 feet; but as it is located in a broad valley I assume air currents are not bad, and considerable flying is carried on. You can get board and room at any price you care to pay from $20 gold a month up to the blue sky.

The officer in charge of aviation is Coronel Alberto Salinas, Dpto. de Aviacion, Secretaria de Guerra, Mexico, D. F., Mexico. If you are interested in the Army plans write him, telling him fully your experience, etc. It probably will not do any good, but is worth the trial.

Why not go to the Mexican consul-general in Chicago and see what kind of a reception he gives you? He may also have some info I have not got so far. Write to the Latin-American Division, Department of Commerce, Washington, for the latest Supplement to Consular Reports in Mexico City.

About Fireplaces

NOTHING doing if you want to keep warm when it's right cold. Take Mr. Harriman's tip instead:

Question:—"About what size of a cabin would be needed for four or five young fellows?

What would be needed for furnishing such a cabin?

How to build a cabin and also a hint or two about putting a fireplace in a cabin will be fully appreciated by me and my three chums. Have enclosed a stamped envelope for your reply."—TED THOMAS, Flint, Mich.

Answer, by Mr. Harriman:—I have bunked with three others in a cabin 10 x 16 feet, with a leanto kitchen at the back that was 6 x 8 feet, and we were quite comfortable. Once I spent a short time with two others in a cabin 9 x 12 and no leanto kitchen. One thing about it, we kept from freezing in Minnesota weather that hung round the forties.

Our furnishings in each cabin consisted of a table made from box boards, with pole legs, benches made from split basswood, with pole legs, bunks made with pole frames, springy little poles to hold bed, a lot of marsh grass and some blankets. A little stove with three holes for pots, a movable oven, coffee-pot, frying-pan, kettle, large saucepan, common tin pan, tin plates, steel knives and forks, tinned spoons.

Windows of four lights 8 x 10 inches. Door, two thickness of boards, one across, the other vertical. Floor, dirt, packed hard.

A fireplace is a delusion and a snare in a cold climate. When a fire is burning, three-fourths of the heat ascends the chimney. When the fire dies out the cold air drops down the flue like a deluge of cold water. A little stove will heat better than four fireplaces.

But you can build one by laying up a pole crib and building a stone and clay mortar chimney inside this crib. Use a piece of old wagon tire or spring to hold the arch above opening, letting it run clear across chimney and turn up at ends, center bent in arch.

To build cabin, notch logs together at corners, fill cracks with split chunks and daub with clay mud. Put up rafters, cover with cross-poles, then thatch with grass or rushes or cover with bark laid like mission tile or like shingles. Close gables with bark or thatch.

Lands for Veterans

THEY receive special consideration according to the length of their service; but it should be borne in mind that all, or practically all, the good government land open to entry has already been taken up:

Question:—"I wish information as to South Dakota.

1. Homesteading (timber or cut-over lands).
2. Placer mining.
3. Trapping.

I am an ex-soldier, veteran of the Spanish-American War and also of the World War. Have a small amount of money; also willing to work.

Have small amount of knowledge of placer mining.

4. Can one prospect on the Black Hills Government National Park?"—ED. H. BEAL, Kansas City, Mo.

Answer, by Captain Hanson:—In reply to your first question, about taking up a homestead on timber or cut-over lands, I would say that, as an ex-soldier, providing you had 2½ years or more of Federal service, you would only have to reside seven months on a government homestead to prove up on it. Write to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing-Office, Washington, D. C., and ask for the following circulars of the Department of the Interior, General Land-Office:

Circular No. 641—Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Serving during Operations on the Mexican Border and during the War with Germany, etc.
Circular No. 649—Vacant Public Lands on July 1, 1919.
Circular No. 523—Stock-Raising Homesteads; Instructions.
Circular No. 541—Suggestions to Homesteaders and Persons Desiring to Make Homestead Entries.

The above will give you most of the information about existing public lands and a soldier's rights in acquiring them.

I fear it will be hard for yout to find much profitable placer mining in South Dakota or elsewhere in the Northwest now. Of course, there are plenty of places where you can try it; but I doubt satisfactory results. You had better write to the U. S. Land-Office, Rapid City, S. Dak., to find out whether you can prospect for mineral in the Black Hills National Forest or Barney National Forest; I do not know.

In regard to trapping in South Dakota and the laws governing it, you can get a copy of the "Bulletin of the Dept. of Game and Fish of S. Dak.," by writing to H. S. Hedrick, State Game Warden, Pierre, S. Dak.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

HARMON, NANCY MABEL. Married at the age of seventeen years in 1894 to John W. Scott. Separated 1895 when her son was seven months old. Father's name was Steve Harmon and brother's name Andrew Harmon. Heard she had remarried and was living in Louisiana. Any information will be gratefully received.—Address MADELINE BOWMAN REESE, P. O. Box 383, Dinuba, California.

BROCKMEIR, OTTO H. Formerly of U. S. M. C. Left him in Puerta Plata, San Domingo, 1918. Any of the old gang write to the "Harp." Very anxious to hear from you.—Address L. R. MCCOOL, 1316 N. 11th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

BAGLIN, JACK. Home was in Springfield, Ill. With me in British Columbia; later soldiered together in Philippines in 1898 and 1899. Made trip across on transport *Sheridan* in 1902. Last heard of in San Francisco about time of fire in 1905.—Address BILLY STEWART, 408 Wall St., Seattle, Wash.

GILBERT, ROBT. E. Write at once. Letters addressed to governor returned. Have something in view.—Address J. W. METTE, Main Camp Guard-House, U. S. Marines, Paris Island, S. C.

ALL former members of the 657th Aero Aquadron kindly communicate at once with ex-sergeant Long at 10404 South Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio.

FAIRBANKS, JOHN CUSTUS. Born in Odessa, Del., about 1847. Carriage-painter and striper by trade. Also has been in or connected with wholesale and manufacturing business. Last seen about thirty years ago when he called on relatives in Wilmington, Del. Rumors received that he was in railroad service in or near Chicago about fifteen years go. Also heard about ten years ago he was in Alaska. Any information as to his present whereabouts or if dead when he died and where buried, will be appreciated.—Address HARVEY FAIRBANKS, Dublin, Ga.

MITCHELL, BEN. Served in the 1st U. S. Cavalry at Camp Setosenburg, P. I. 1907 to 1910. Any information will be greatly appreciated by an old friend of his. Ben if you see this write for I have important and welcome news for you.—Address L. T. 416, care of *Adventure.*

PENDLETON, EUGENE. Last heard of in Deer Lodge, Mont., several years ago. Any information will be appreciated.—Address ARTHUR PENDLETON, R. R. 1, Box 112, Sapulpa, Okla.

MAHAR, DANNY. Mischaud, Heavey Frank, Harvey George or any of the boys of Batt. D. 21st F. A. A. E. F. Please write to LEO J. (RED) BENNETT, 519 Lodi St., Syracuse, N. Y.

ALLEN, LUTHER B. Son. Last heard from at Antelope, Oregon, 1913. Lived there several years. Left Portland, Oregon, and might have gone to Canada. Age thirty-nine, height five feet ten inches, weighs about 175 pounds, light hair and blue eyes. Any information concerning him will be appreciated.—Address MRS. W. H. SWINDEN, 811 Josephine St., Grants Pass, Oregon.

DUNKLEY, GUNNER LESLIE HILL. Was with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and was demobilized on December 11, 1918. Any information as to his whereabouts please write—L. T. 415, care of *Adventure.*

SHELDON, MRS. ELLA. Mother. Fred and Adelbert Sheldon, brothers; Henrietta Sheldon; sister. Last heard from at Lowell, Oneida Co., N. Y. thirty-three years ago. Any information concerning their whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address W. H. SHELDON, 110 Rochester St., Fulton, N. Y.

RELATIVES of John Burger who left his home in Duluth, Minn. about fourteen years ago. Has one sister, Rose and a brother Alex. Other names not known. Any information as to their whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address L. T. 417, care of *Adventure.*

ROBBINS, ELLSWORTH H. Co. G. 4th Inf. Discharged May 9, 1920 from Camp Pike, Little Rock, Ark. Last heard from at that place. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write to his mother.—Address MRS. B. E. ROBBINS, 31 W. Baltimore, Lynn, Mass.

FREDET, PETER. Uncle. Died somewhere in the United States thirty-one years ago. Any one knowing the name of the place he died will receive $5.00 reward.—Address HARRY COTE, 472 Arlington St., Ottawa, Ont. Canada.

BURGESS. Swedish descent, age about forty, light complexion, brown mustache. Came to Beaumont, Texas from Houston, Texas three years ago with a friend. Stopped overnight at the Crosby Hotel and were separated. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated. —Address B. F. CALLEASE, De Quincy, La.

MUNKINS, HAVEN. Private in Co. A. 137th Inf. Thirty-fifth Division. Last seen on the roadside on way to Argonne battle. Any one having any information concerning him please write.—Address H. M. WILLIAMS, 1308 Stewart St., Kansas City, Kansas.

CLARK, WILLIAM H. Brown hair and blue eyes. When last heard of was supposed to have sold his ranch in Arizona and gone to Tampa, Florida. Any information will be appreciated by his mother.—Address MRS. SUSAN A. CLARK, 5 North 50th St., W. Phila., Pa.

WELDON, FRANK. Brother. HATTIE WELDON. Mother. Lived in Sarnie, Ont., Canada. Last seen in 1884 when I was adopted by Henry Mason of Detroit, Mich. Brother was three years old at that time. Any information will be appreciated.—Address MRS. MINNIE SUGDEN, Birmingham, Mich.

SONS and daughters of Joe Hancock. Was foreman of a mine in California—believed to be the New Holman. Was killed at mine. Any information as to any of his children will be appreciated by their aunt.—Address MRS. ELLEN PEARCE, 3004 Wharton St., Butte, Mont.

BERGER, OLE ELEASSEN. Born in Sondre, Odalen, Norway. Age about eighty-four. Left for U. S. fifty-six years ago. Last heard of in Walla Walla, Wash. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—Address HJ. SANDER, care of "Aftenposhen," (Evening Journal) Kristiania, Norway.

WEBB, JOSEPH RALPH. Left Phœnix, May 29, 1920. Height about five feet ten inches; dark blue eyes and black hair. Weighs about 160 pounds; nineteen years old. Probably headed for South America. Mother needs him and would like to know his whereabouts.—Address MRS. G. W. WEBB, 603 No. 2nd St., Phœnix, Ariz.

McDONALD, JAMES (Pinky) or Watson, Theodore. I have no ill-will whatever, and only wish you good. Would like to hear from you. Any one knowing of this chap's whereabouts please communicate with F. C. H., care of Naval Radio Station, Yerba Buena Island, San Francisco, Cal.

BRADY, GEORGE S. Age about thirty-three, brown hair and eyes, weighs about 165 pounds. A painter by trade. Believed to have gone to Canada or Cuba. Any information concerning him will be appreciated.—Address BERNICE GRADY, R 17, Anchorage, Kentucky.

McMULLEN, MRS. GRACE (Aunt Grace) or C. H. McMullen. Please write and let me hear from little Paul. If any one sees this who knows where they are please write.—BOX 55, Oakton, Va.

NIECES and nephews of Fred and Sallie Gibson (Deceased) who lived at Henderson, Texas. Please write me immediately, as I have important news.—Address JIMMIE BANKS, Big Cedar, Okla.

CURTS, FRANK E. Theatrical name Frank Manning. Disappeared from Lusk, Wyo., about March, 1918, while engaged in business of quarrying. For years prior he had conducted the Frank Manning shows. Height five feet six inches, light hair, blue eyes, solid build, scar over left eye on the forehead. Any information concerning him will be appreciated.—Address R. M. ANDERSON, Beloit, Kansas.

DOPPMAN, FRANK C. Father. Age sixty-five years. Formerly a foreman at the Phœnix Brewing Co. Left Pittsburg about twenty year ago to go to Brooklyn, where he was supposed to have gone in the hotel business. Anybody knowing his present whereabouts please write.—Address MRS. WM. R. FRAZIER, 7123 Mt. Vernon St., Pittsburg, Pa.

A. E. P. or PAT. Would like to get in touch with you. Write L. E. P., care of *Adventure*.

THE following have been inquired for in either the First May or Mid-May Issues of Adventure. They can get the name of the inquirer from this magazine.

ALLEN, CHARLES K.; Barnett, Mrs. James; Barrow, Otis W.; Botting, Leonard: Buck, Sadie; Burns, Jim; Cummins, Mozart; Darlington, Michael P.; Davis, Frank; Decker, Chas.; Fredet, Peter; Gilberto, Ruacho; Hank, I. J.; B. F.; Harry, G.; Hilliard, Houghton; Hitter, Phil; Hodges, George Otis; Hoffman, William; Horton, Fred; Hugh, Edward; Hupp, Charles E.; Jenness, Dale; Jones, Merlin; Kannengiesser, Olga; Kelly, Joe; Mason, Henry Arthur; McDonald, Duncan; Montgomery, A. J. H.; Mothes, Paul, M.; Pierce; Pinians, Robert O.; Pollitt, Percy W.; Reynolds, John; Rice, Herbert O.; Robinson, Dan; Schlegel, Phil; Scott, Henry E.; Shaffer, Edw. W.; Shultz, Mrs. Julia A.; Smith, Harold; Soderberg, Sergeant Bob; Swenson, Neil; Rag, Howard J. H.; Teets, Earl J.; Thrope, Frank; Tidblad, Carl Erhard; Toulsness, Ole; Underwood, Ray; Whitey, Adolph; Williams, "Kid."

MISCELLANEOUS: Fellows in Mexico with Troop D. 13th Cav. 1916-1917.

MANUSCRIPTS UNCLAIMED

HASTLAR GAL BREATH; Ruth Gilfillan; Jack P. Robinson; Ray Ozmer; Miss Jimmie Banks; O. B. Franklin; Lieutenant Wm. S. Hilles; G. H. Bennett; Byron Chisholm; A. B. Paradis; E. E. S. Atkins; G. E. Hungerford; A. Gaylord; E. J. Moran; F. S. Emerson; E. Murphy; J. Higmon; J. E. Warner; L. E. Patten; L. T. Bennett; Sinn Cardie; James Mosse; C. E. Wilson; R. W. Kimsey; C. H. Huntington; D. Polowe; George Stanley; S. C. Holston; P. Brady.

UNCLAIMED mail is held by Adventure for the following persons, who may obtain it by sending us present address and proof of identity.

ALDRIDGE, F. P.; Allen, Paul; Beaton, G. M.; Mr. and Mrs. Bennett; Benson, E. N.; Bertsch, Miss Elizabeth; Blighton, Frank; Bonner, J. S.; Bromell, Mr.; Buckley, Ray; Campbell, Maurice Viele; Carpenter, Robert S.; Carr, John; Chisholm, D. F. K.; Clark, Ernest S.; Cleve, Jim; Clingham, Charles; Coles, Bobby; Connor, A. M.; Cook, Elliot, D.; Cook, William N.; Corbett, Fred P.; Curtis, D. A.; Courtlandt, Victor; Fisher, 1st Sgt. R.; Hale, Robert E.; Harris, Walter J.; Hoffman, J. M.; Howard, Charlie; Hughes, Frank E.; Hunt, Daniel O'Connell; Irving, Thos. L.; Jackson, Robert R.; Klug, Chas. C.; Kuckaby, William Francis; Kutcher, Sgt. Harry; Lafler, Mrs. Harry; Lanahan, Robert; Lancaster, C. E.; Lander, Harry; Larisey, Jack; Lee, Capt. Harry; Lee, Wm. R., M. D.; Lonely Jock; Lovett, Harold S.; McAdams, W. B.; MacDonald, Tony; MacKaye, D. C.; Mackintosh, D. T. A.; Mendelson, Aleck; Nelson, Frank Lovell; Nylander, Towne, J.; O'Hara, Jack; Olmstead, Harry E.; Parker, Dr. M.; Parker, G. A.; Parrott, Pvt. D. C.; Phillips, Buffington; Phipps, Corbett C.; Pigeon, A. H.; Raines, Wm. L.; Rich, Wagoner Bob; Rogan, Chas. B.; Rundle, Merrill G.; St. Clair, Fred; Schmidt, G.; Scott, James F.; Smith, C. O.; Starr, Ted.; Soloway, Jack M.; Van Tyler, Chester; Von Gelucke, Byron; Ward, Frank B.; Wiley, Floyd; Williams, Capt. W. P.; J. C. H.; W. W. T.; S. 177284; L. T. 439; WS-XV.

PLEASE send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at address given us do not reach you.—Address L. B. BARRETTO, care of *Adventure*.