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Adventure

SEPTEMBER

HARK, AFRICA!

by JOEL TOWNSLEY ROGERS

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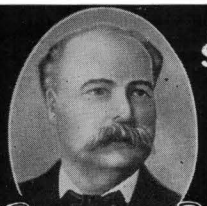

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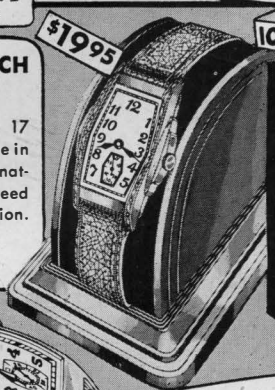

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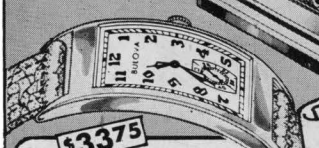

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Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

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Howard V. L. Bloomfield, Editor

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Lost Trails

Luella Winans Campbell, Las Cruces, New Mexico, wants word of relatives of late Major Ira Winans, Rochester, New York, or relatives of Walter Winans, Baltimore, Md.

Where is Robert Pinkerton of 131st Company, U. S. Marine Artillery, Quantico, Va., 1917-1919? His friend Thomas P. Jordan, 1523 N. Main Ave., Scranton, Pa., queries.

William L. Harcus, Kerrville, Texas, wants news of his brother Henry (Harry) L. Harcus, Kansas City, Mo., fearing abrupt end of correspondence in 1922 meant sudden death.

Wolffe W. Roberts, Box 56, Amherst, N. H., wants word of Frank R. (Jack) Frost, last heard from at Oakland, Calif.

Richard J. Lutz, R. D. 1, Verona, Pa., would like to hear of Frank Fittante. They were marines at Quantico in 1926, when Lutz was ordered to China and Fittante to Nicaragua.

Anyone in D. Company, 15th U.S. Infantry, that went to China in 1912, or anyone in the Band of the 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers, in China 1913, 1914—write Pennock S. Broomall, 216 West 5th St., Chester, Pa.

Frank Merteul, care The Billboard, 25-27, Opera Place, Cincinnati, Ohio, wants word of a wartime friend, James (Roughhouse Jim) Novak, grenadier, voltigeur 10th Company, First Regiment, French Foreign Legion in 1918; later transferred into Czechoslovak legion in France; last heard from 1925-1926 camping at Caddo Lake in northern Louisiana trying to recover his health.

A letter has come from Pendleton, Bangkok, Siam, for Capt. R. W. van Raven. Who knows Capt. van Raven's address?

Word wanted of Hamilton Redfield Norvell, sometimes called "Reddy" or "Curley," by his brother Stevens Thompson Norvell, 4449 Howard Ave., Western Springs, Ill. Their father died on Dec. 30, 1936. Norvell lived in Cincinnati until 1932, went to Southern Ontario.

Clarence Bailey, Cherryvale, Kansas, seeks news of Wylie Boss Smith, who sailed as oiler in June, 1934, from New Orleans on S. S. Point Salinas.

Otho Amos Duckwiler, formerly of Roanoke, Va., joined U. S. Army in 1914. Stationed Texas City, Texas, in 1914. Transferred to Field Artillery stationed Canal Zone 1918, 1919. His sister has died, and her daughter, Virginia Pulewich, 10 East 109 St., New York City, wants to get in touch with him.

Jock Miller, D D ranch, Beeville, Texas, wants word of William Henry Miller, who left home four years ago at age of 14 and was last heard from digging gold at Ridgway, Colorado.

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SHARK!

By Major Paul Brown

THERE will forever be the fascination of the thrillingly unexpected in field collecting for museums.

Dr. Russell J. Coles obtained much of his early scientific knowledge of the great white shark by the simple but dangerous process of going where the shark could be found, and bringing home a specimen.

That particular shark is the worst creature on the face of the globe, attains lengths commonly in excess of thirty feet and spends most of its time in a ceaseless and merciless quest for food.

It is likely the only type of shark which can be depended upon to attack man, yet Dr. Coles repeatedly baited the ocean for wide areas with chopped fish, and killed many of them off Point Lookout, North Carolna.

The sharks would be attracted by the food, and then Dr. Coles would either shoot or harpoon them. Often this intrepid scientist would actually go into the sea after a particular desirable specimen, armed with only a harpoon.

Frequently the sharks would charge the boat in which they were being hunted. On one occasion Dr. Coles had resigned himself to death, and later freely admitted it.

He had wounded a shark, which slowly circled the small boat in which the doctor was standing. Then he started to charge! As it rose slightly from the surface of the sea and opened its great gaping tooth-filled mouth to engulf the bow of the small craft, a tremendous loggerhead turtle rose from the depths of the sea and was struck instead!

The boat was almost capsized by the impact of turtle and shark—but the doctor continued to pour lead into the creature until it was killed. Then both turtle and shark were towed ashore and eventually found their way into a museum. The turtle, even without the enormous chunk bitten out by the shark, weighed nearly twelve hundred pounds.

A novelette

HARK, AFRICA!

By Joel Townsley Rogers

IN THE EARLY morning Nbem, the white man's drummer, removed the covering mats from his great call-drum, beneath the thatch-roofed little drum-shed at Bouboufonké. He reached in through the drum cleft and pulled forth his two sticks of heavy polished ebony. Standing meditatively a moment, like a great artist before a concert grand, Nbem surveyed with pleasure the great oval hollowed log, eleven feet long and three feet in diameter, worn and polished to an old luster by thirty years of drummings, which rested on its two saw-horses in front of him. The great call-drum of Bwamba. Nbem pushed his red fez on the back of his head and spat upon his hands. The morning was fresh and young, and he felt the creative urge within him, the urge for the making of loud and glorious sound.

"Boom!" he struck the great resounding wood experimentally. "Bawa!" he throbbed a double note out of it.

Then with both sticks and a play of rippling shoulder muscles beneath his faded khaki militia coat he bent to work, shattering the still, windless tropic dawn with a great cataclysm of rapid furious notes that melted into each other like the roar of a troubled flood.

"*Ob ba bawa!* Pause and listen!

They were in the middle of the B'gi village.

Pause and listen, chiefs and peoples! A new commandant of the whites, a lord of lords, has come to Bouboufonké!"

With swift, powerful, yet delicately precise strokes, faster than the eye could follow, faster than the hands of any white musician, Nbem, the government drummer, beat out his rolling drum-speech on his great call-drum. Thudding along the cleft of carefully pitched gradations which extended along the wood's resounding length, striking the thicker lip of the male edge and the thinner lip of the female edge with lightning-quick precision, in a fury like a demon he thundered forth his flow of booms and bawas, of half notes and tenth notes and furtive fugitive little grace notes, in syllables as precise and articulated as the syllables of mouth-speech, till the drum was like the voice of a man shouting words to a great multitude, while the sweat poured out of him.

"To the hill people and the river people! To the bush people and the forest people! A great new white commandant, a lord of lords, has come to Bouboufonké! Come and bow your necks before him, all you peoples!"

Sounding the *ndans,* the call-names, of

all the tribes within the district. Of the Ngumbas, of the Bulus and the Benes, of the Mpongwes, whose women are the most beautiful in Africa, beautiful even according to the white man's standards and famous in the stories of many an old colonial back in Berlin or Paris, of the Yebekolos, who once ate the man meat, of all the peoples along the upper Bom beneath the flag of France. . . . Seventeen or twenty miles away the sonorous vocables would pulse and quiver in the forest silence, till on the farthest shores of echo their last reverberation died.

The drums, the radio of Africa! Nbem, the white man's drummer, broadcasting from Bouboufonké.

"To the Bulus and the Benes! To the Yebekolos and the Mpongwes! To the dirty B'gis, the pigmies, who eat carrion and dung! This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of Hé Do-mé! This is Nbem, the government drummer, drumming from the great French palaver house at Bouboufonké! A new commandant, a new white lord of lords! He is your father! He is your mother! He is the lord and sun above you! He is the great and famous chieftain who has been sent to rule over you by the lord of all in the land of Paris, to decree the law, to sit in judgment over your lawsuits and disputes, to collect your taxes, to reward the virtuous and punish evil-doers! He is a famous warrior! He is a high-born king's son! He is a man stronger than an elephant and more beautiful than a bull rhinoceros! He is an illustrious Frenchman, fearless in battle, with great horns of hair upon his lip like the horns of a wild bush cow and devil-devil eyes more terrible than the glass eye of Hé Do-mé the Crocodile! His name is Me-lay-gou the magnificent! Come and make obeisance to him! Bring your troubles for his judgment! Bring your money troubles and your woman troubles! Bring your cattle troubles and your goat troubles! Bring your witchcraft troubles and your mother-in-law troubles! Call to palaver! To all peoples! The great new white commandant at Bouboufonké!"

Nbem rested on his sticks a moment, sweating.

"This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba!" he began again. "This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of Hé Do-mé, drumming on the great call-drum of Bwamba! Pause and listen! A new commandant! Bring your gift offerings to seek his favor! Bring your chickens and your peanuts! Bring your vegetables and melons! Bring your wives and fairest daughters! The white man is great and powerful! He is rich and he is generous! Fortunate the man who pleases him and wins his favor!"

NBEM paused again a moment to scratch his stomach with one of his sticks. The new resident-administrateur—Monsieur Milegout, his name was—had arrived by wheel-litter from Toucou, at the end of automobile transportation forty-seven miles down the Bom, in the late middle of the night, only a few hours ago, with his porters and the guard of black militiamen who had taken the body of his predecessor down last month and had waited around Toucou to escort him back.

He had had twenty steady hours of being bumped and jolted over the jungle trails, and it was possible, it was in fact extremely likely, that he was still asleep. But that did not bother Nbem. Any man who does not thrill to the boom of the great call-drum, awake or asleep, alive or dead, has no soul. And if he stays in West Africa long enough, it might be added, where the drums are always talking, eventually he will have no mind, either. So he might as well get used to it. No drummer so magnificent as Nbem, the son of Bwamba. No drum so great and thunderous and

mighty as the great call-drum of Bwamba, who had been the drummer of Hé Do-mé, the great and cruel Crocodile.

There was a strange deafness about the ears of most whites, of course, which made them unable to understand the language of the talking drums, even though it might be tapped out in their presence as simply and slowly as to a baby. It was like the incredible insensitivity of the pinched nostrils of their pink bony noses, which made them unable to distinguish the difference in the individual odors that men have, so that they couldn't tell who a man was by his smell at all, but only by looking at him. Those were peculiarities not explainable, just something that had been left out of them, like monkeys which cannot count above three, though men can count to ten.

In all other ways, however, the whites were like other men, and in some ways even more so, Nbem had heard the women say. Even though the new white lord could not understand drum-speech, still he must be admiring the magnificence and splendor of Nbem's drumming in his dreams.

Nbem's nostrils sniffed as he scratched his stomach for the moment. The smell of cooking, of pheasants' eggs frying in karite butter, of brewing coffee, of dumboy sizzling in palm oil, of baking hot cassava bread to be eaten with tinned butter and coconut jelly, drifted pleasantly to his nose from the kitchen of the administration house. The white lord's breakfast was already being prepared for him against the time when he should awaken, even if that might not be for hours, lest he should wake up suddenly and have to endure twenty minutes of waiting hunger.

That had been the custom for twenty years or more, ever since the days of Hé Do-mé the Crocodile, who otherwise might have been put in an enraged mood, starting the day off roaring around and mercilessly punishing with whip and boot.

Though the French lords were not like the old Germans, being more easy going, the custom had been kept up through a succession of commandants and cooks, for the African is an ultra-conservative, a man of tradition and habit in all he does. Nbem sniffed again with pleasure. His nose told him that this morning breakfast was being prepared in extra abundance, too, as the white man had ordered before he fell asleep. The previous commandant had been a small and scrawny man who had eaten no more than a cockroach, a sip of coffee, a bite of fruit, which was probably why he had curled up his toes one night like a cockroach and died of the yellow fever, which is nothing to make a strong and hearty eater even take to his bed, leaving three black widows wailing for him.

The new French lord was—so Nbem had surmised from the awe-struck look which he had got of him upon his arrival in the night—the new lord was a good sleeper and a good eater, it could be guessed. Which showed that he was a profoundly wise man, with an understanding of the important things of life and what it was all about.

Nbem's sweating chocolate face was creased with deep thick wrinkles. His ivory teeth flashed in a grin. He was going to like the new French lord, he had the feeling. He was, he hoped, going to add several more inches to his own already well-larded middle, Mamadou the cook being his tribal brother. For when the lord eats like a cockroach, his household eats like microbes. But when the lord eats like a lion, his household at least eats like very fat and well-fed buzzards.

Nbem's naked breech-clouted legs did a little shuffling dance. He tossed his sticks up into the air and caught them whirling. He cut a buck and wing. With a great boom he thudded down on his

resounding drum, speaking to a thousand square miles of forest, bush, hills, clearings, villages and trails.

"Bring," he boomed, "your youngest wives and loveliest daughters! Bring your concubines and female ouolosos! The white man is brave and handsome! He is rich and he is generous! He wears shoes, he sleeps in a golden bed, he eats chop three times a day! He has come alone to Bouboufonké! He is here without a woman! Fortunate the man who has one to offer on whom the great white lord's eye might light with satisfaction! Fortunate above all other women in the world the one who pleases the great white lord, whom he takes beneath his roof to make his bed, to do his washing and his mending, to soothe his headaches and nurse his fevers, to eat at his table with him, after the white man's custom with their women! *Ab ba alu! Ba ba balu!* The white man eats!" boomed Nbem.

"Pause and listen! A new commandant, a great white lord of lords at Bouboufonké!"

The Bulus heard him, and the Benes heard him. The Yebekolos, the Ngumbas and the Mpongwes heard him. In their hidden villages in the forest the timid little B'gis heard him, sitting huddled pot-bellied around their small dawn fires. A great booming through the jungle. A great new white commandant! Nbem, the white man's drummer, broadcasting from Bouboufonké.

FAINT and intermittent, at the end of miles of distance, von Dormer heard it in the forest where he lay, the great booming drum. For the moment it brought the gooseflesh to his spine and a shivering to his heart. At first, before he had got the beat of it, he thought that it might be some message about him, him for whom the drums had so often beat; and warily, rolling his red-rimmed eyes, he listened. But he was nothing, he was not even a hunted man any more, he was forgotten, and Bwamba's drum, the great drum at Bouboufonké, would not throb out its messages for him or about him any more in honor or in anger, in fear or glory, whether he was alive or rotting in the jungle. . . .

In his darkened bedroom in the administration house, beneath the mosquito netting on the great gilded wooden bed with its scrollwork filigree and its double-headed eagles in bas-relief, Commandant Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, pronounced Mealygou, the subject of all that exaltation, slept on.

The booming of the drum did not disturb him, for he was somewhat deaf, and it came to him only like the podding of peas through the shutters of his windows which had been closed against the light and heat to come. Then, too, he was utterly exhausted, in every bone and pound of blubber, from his long and arduous ride in the jolting litter. His bald head shone with sweat, his lips bubbled softly with his breathing. Except for his thick glossy brown mustaches, which lay spread out beneath his whistling nose like a pair of misplaced buffalo horns, their waxed points encased in tight little paper curls for the night, his expression was like that of a baby, and in his dreams he smiled. Perhaps the smell of breakfast cooking drifted to his nostrils and mingled pleasantly with his dreams. Or perhaps somehow in his subconscious mind, in the magical intuition and clairvoyance of sleep, he interpreted and understood the booming bawa of the drum. Or perhaps he just smiled because of a large healthy digestion and the gladness of being who he was.

He was Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, the sole lord, in the name of the Republic of France, of all the district of the Upper Bom within the Cameroons. The sole law and the sole judge, tax assessor, chief of police, president of the board

of aldermen and chairman of the waterworks, over a hundred and twenty thousand blacks, of whom approximately half were female. Greater and more absolute in his own sphere than any European dictator. He didn't even have to wake up until he wanted to. It would be enough to make any man smile contentedly while he snored on a golden bed. Monsieur de Milegout had never been in Africa before. He didn't know the things that might get a man, even a great and absolute French commandant, and so had nothing to worry him.

For a moment, though, his eyelids opened.

"*Mon commandant!*" said the black militiaman who stood erect and motionless, in fez and khaki coat, with naked legs, at the foot of his bed. "*Mon commandant!* You are my father and my mother! Are you sleeping well?"

"Very well," said Louis-Phillipe. "Who are you?"

"*Mon commandant,* I am Ougoulou, the brother of Nbem, your drummer, the sergeant of your guard. I am always with you, lord, to watch over you and guard you even at the cost of my own life."

"That's very nice. What is that drumming I hear?" said Louis-Phillipe sleepily.

"Lord, it is the great call-drum of my father Bwamba, who was the greatest drummer in all Africa and was the drummer of the Germans at the time of the great war between the whites. It is telling the greatness of your lordship to all the jungle."

"How can it do that?" yawned Louis-Phillipe, who did not understand drum-speech.

"It is true that even it is inadequate," said Ougoulou respectfully. "It is endeavoring, however, to make an approximation. And your lordship is sleeping well?"

"Very well, indeed," repeated Louis-Phillipe. "I never slept on a bed half so comfortable. Where did it come from, anyway?"

"Mon commandant, it was the great golden bed of Hé Do-mé, the great and terrible German lord who once ruled over half the Cameroons, in the time before the great war between the whites. Sixteen porters it took, working in relays and sweating heavily, to bring it far through the jungle."

"The Germans make the best beds that I have ever known," yawned Louis-Phillipe contentedly, still nine-tenths asleep. "I was in command of one of their villages in the occupied zone after the war, with some Sengalese like you, Ougoulou. I ought to know. Much obliged to the Boche for having left it. We owe them a lot." He blinked his eyes, for the moment a little more awake. "Hé Do-mé!" he said. "Was that the Boche's name? I've heard something about him. He never left the Cameroons, I understand, and used to cause disturbances at some other stations. If he ever shows his face here, instruct your men to give him the whip, sergeant. I won't take anything from a Boche. That is, if he's still alive."

"Hé Do-mé is only a ghost, lord," said Ougoulou with white eyes. "A hungry ghost. He will never show his face here. He is afraid of the great drum of Bwamba. That is why," he muttered beneath his breath, rolling his eyes in the darkness, "that is why you will find Nbem beating it so frequently."

"What did you say the drum is beating for, again?"

"It is telling your lordship's greatness to the whole world," reiterated Ougoulou. "It is summoning the people of all the tribes to palaver, to make obeisance to you, my commandant. For you are lord of all within the villages, within the bush and jungle."

Boom! beat the great call-drum, in the early dawn.

"This is Nbem, the Yebekolo!" Nbem

beat with a great thundering. "This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of the Germans! Drumming you a mighty drum-speech now about the great new French commandant! Where are they gone now, the old Germans? Where are they gone, the cruel masters? They are fled beyond the sea! They are dead within the forest! Long ago the vultures have torn the hearts from them! Long ago the bug-a-bugs, the army ants, have picked and cleaned them! Long ago the phosphorescence, the green ghost light, has played on their moldering bones! They are ghosts now, all of them! The great French lords sleep on the beds they had, the great French lords eat the food they had, the glory of the great French lords is the theme that I, Nbem the drummer, drum upon the great call-drum that once beat for the glory of Hé Do-mé the Crocodile, whom Bwamba followed to the forest. *Ba ba ma toe!* Cross his hands on his breast!"

For the moment Nbem's sweating face was working as he thudded on the drum with savagery.

"This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who knew all devil-devil secrets and the mysteries of the Other World, for whom the great ghost drum beat the death cry! Drumming on the drum of Bwamba the glory of the French. Pause and listen! A new commandant. . . ."

Ob ba bawa! the great drum notes went thudding in the early morning, traveling a mile in five seconds, echoing, echoing, the great booms and little quavers. And some of them would go winging almost two minutes through the air before their last quaver died.

"Pause and listen! Pause and listen!"

Through the jungle far away.

THE HUNTING SCREAMS of the leopards, the throb of the night dance drums from lost and lonely little villages or from the Devil Bush, had died away with the end of the black African night. Promptly at half past four the pepperbirds, the alarm clocks of the equatorial forest, had burst forth on all sides with their maniacal din of raucous screeching, from every bush and tree. They, and the brief torrential deluge which had come bucketing down with the first grayness, had put an end to von Dormer's fitful, nightmare-riddled sleep, though not to the hunger of his liver.

Shivering, rubbing his red eyes, scratching his matted hair and beard with clawlike hands, von Dormer sat huddled in the crotch of the great tortured baobab tree which extended out over the rushing little jungle stream, twenty feet above the ground. Like a tall, emaciated, pallid ape he squatted on his hunkers miserably, while the leaves of the forest drubbed above him with the bulleting drops and the rain sluiced down his naked backbone from the tree bole. In a few minutes the cloudburst had passed and the slathers of water ceased. Von Dormer closed his eyes again. He had had a dream of some endless banquet he had been attending, in a clawhammer coat and white tie, with medals on his chest and a red ribbon across his starched shirt bosom—a banquet beginning with platters of rich hors d'oeuvres, pickled herrings, shrimps and eggs, patés de fois gras, thick liverwurst canapes, and going through all the meats in the calendar, great red dripping joints of beef, saddles of mutton, pork roasts and huge pink hams, all larded with rich sauces, gravies, spices, gorgeous smells, which had been set before him in an endless stream of courses, everyone around him guzzling and guzzling, though unfortunately he had been confused trying to remember which were the proper knife and fork to use, so that the dishes had been removed before he could start eating. He tried to sleep again now to recapture the dream, this time to grab with both hands and stuff and gorge himself before they were

whisked from him. But he was cold and wet to the marrow of his bones, and the worms of hunger gnawed at his guts. He could not escape the ravening of reality. He opened his red eyes, remembering where he was and why he was here. The night was over. The look of things was taking shape. Suddenly fully conscious and alert, von Dormer began inching his gaunt frame slowly and carefully, on hands and knees, with endless crafty patience, out on the huge horizontal tree limb to one side of him which extended out over the rushing jungle water.

High up above the roof of the forest the clear early morning light that the blacks called the Bath of the Monkeys filled the sky now. The depths of the jungle were still shadowy all around, a place of somber browns and grays, but a few streaks of light filtered down through the heavy and still dripping foliage here and there, tracing mottled and deceptive patterns on the ground below and amidst the branches of the great tree. Twenty feet out on the limb of the giant baobab, von Dormer paused suddenly in his slow, crafty creep and lay stretched out as still as stone. Speckled shadows moved around him with the filtering light, but he did not move at all. With red, unwinking eyes he watched the ribbon of mottled shadows which lay looped at the end of the bough in front of him, six feet beyond his head.

Some suggestion of a movement in the snake's quiet, sleek coils amidst the leaves had caught his watchful eye. A sluggish rippling, a slow stirring in its thick powerful muscles beneath its velvet hide, where it lay camouflaged amidst the speckled shadows. As if it was awake and watching him, and on the verge of some sudden, more swift and total movement. It might have been only a trickery of the stirring pattern of foliage, of course, which had made it seem to stir. It might be motionless and asleep. Still, von Dormer thought it best to lie quietly where he was, as still as stone or death, until the shadows played no more about it.

The screeching of birds had stopped when the rain crashed. There was no scream or cry or furtive, half-glimpsed movement of any other kind of life now in the great quiet jungle. A stillness like eternity had fallen for the moment on the whole world. The minutes passed, and shadows played upon the thick mottled ribbon at the bough's end in front of him. But whether it was awake or not, and watching him, von Dormer was not sure.

A LIGHT footfall broke the inaudible silence presently. The underbrush on the ground below stirred in a moment more. A brown girl stepped softly and lightly out upon the edge of the jungle stream, from off some nearby trail. As

wild as a doe, and as silent. Von Dormer wet his lips, waiting till she should go away.

Her black hair rippled. Her hide was pale as coffee with milk. She was clad in a leaf apron and a string of beads about her supple loins. On a flat wet stone at the edge of the water she paused, beneath the great twisted baobab tree, unaware of him on the bough above. Poised on one foot, she tested the coolness of the rushing, rain-swollen brown current tentatively, preparatory to crossing it or bathing herself in it, it seemed.

Shadows played upon her amber shoulders. She moved so quietly, like a figure on a silent screen. And presently she would go on, and vanish as she had come. Yet for an instant she lifted her great dark shining eyes, her smooth young dusky face. Swaying softly, she seemed to be listening to the vast pulsing silence of the jungle, as if straining to catch something in it, an inaudible music in the air.

"Aie-o!" her voice arose, softly and eerily singing to herself. "Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains!"

She began to swing her hips, her back and shoulders quivering, stepping softly and lightly on the rock.

"Aie-o!" she sang softly and wildly in the silence, keeping time with the swaying of her body and the stepping of her feet. "My mother had a white lover, she followed him afar! He had a sword and a glass eye, he was the chief of war! He took the Bata men by surprise, the Island men he slew like flies! Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Aie-o! Hé Do-mé the Crocodile is marching again! Hé Do-mé!"

Her body twisted, her light feet stepped. At first slow, then faster and faster. She was weaving in the gestures of the dance of the malinga, the dance of Spanish Guinea, which had been brought back from there twenty years ago, at the end of the great war between the whites, by the women who had followed the askaris of the Germans to refuge under the Spanish flag after their last defeat by the French and British in the Cameroons—a dance which was a corruption, probably, of one that had once been danced in Spain, by far off Andalusian girls—danced to a different song, no doubt, but by girls little less brown than she. She was weaving in the malinga, and singing the song that the black women had made in memory of the time when they had gone over the mountains to the sea—making a gaiety, as black women do, out of the agony of that terrible retreat—and which giddy young girls now sang as a love song.

"Aie-o!" she sang, the song of the malinga, weaving and swaying, wild and eerie, with a beat of inaudible tomtoms, so it seemed, in the padding of her naked feet.

Her head and shoulders were jerking wilder and wilder, her black hair tossing. Her body shone with sweat and karite butter, smooth muscles rippling beneath smooth brown skin. Her head bucked back and forth as if it was going to fly off. No longer singing now, but crazed and breathless, "Yi! Yi!" she shouted, panting, with sheer barbaric love of life and sound and movement. "Yi! Yi! Yi!"

With a last leap and shout, she sprang into the air. For a moment she posed on her toes like a victorious tribal wrestler, which is to say much like a white ballet dancer, also, with arms outstretched and head bowed down, as if acknowledging inaudible shouts of applause and triumph. Then she tossed back her hair and her great shining eyes laughed. With a shriek of giddy, hilarious African joy she stepped down into the water.

THE WINDLESS air of the forest had begun to pulse with a far off intangible beat. Some remote drum. There was al-

ways some drum talking. *Ob . . . ob . . . ob . . . ob . . .* the throb of it beat no louder than a spider's footfall on a leaf, from the ultimate limits of sound, while the brown girl splashed and von Dormer lay motionless as death on the limb of the great tree.

Faint and intermittent, at the end of miles of distance. But in a moment, as it grew louder, von Dormer recognized the deep, vibrant, sensual throb. Each drum has its own voice. It was the government drum, the great drum at Bouboufonké. The old talking wood of Bwamba, the best along the upper Bom, if not in all the Cameroons.

It had been years since von Dormer had been in this part of the jungle, within sound of the great drum. How loud it had once beat for him, and furiously, while he lay hidden, with silent laughter. Years ago, when he had been young and strong, when guns and war walked in the jungle, when life had been a breathless game.

But the wars were long over, and he was a hunted man no more, and the great drum of Bwamba would not beat again for him, in fear or glory. The little drums, yes. The little frightened drums of lost and lonely villages might beat when he came too near. But not again the great government drum at Bouboufonké.

"To the Ngumbas!" beat the drum. "To the Bulus and the Benes! To the Yebekolos and the Mpongwes! To the B'gis, the little people, who hide humbly in the forest! A great new French commandant, a lord of lords, has come to Bouboufonké!"

The throb of it had been for a long minute only the shadow of a sound. But now for the moment the surge of it arose in volume, as somewhere in the intervening distance a slow wind shifted, bringing it nearer.

"Pause and listen, chiefs and peoples! This is Nbem, the Yebekolo! This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of Hé Do-mé, drumming on the great call-drum of Bwamba, which is the best in Africa! This is Nbem, the mighty drummer, drumming you a great and famous drum-speech about the great new French lord of lords at Bouboufonké. He is a warrior, brave and handsome! He is a king's son, rich and generous! His name is Me-lay-gou the terrible! Come and make obeisance to him! Bring your troubles for his judgment! Bring your gift offerings for his favor! The great new white commandant, the lord of lords, at Bouboufonké!"

For a minute the air pulsed, the tree leaves seemed to tremble. The boom came like a waterfall. The drummer was laying it on furiously. He must be working off ten pounds of blubber. Clinging to the smooth bark of the great limb with cold-ribbed, shivering flesh, von Dormer twisted his lips beneath his matted beard and cursed silently. With red eyes he watched the stirring ribbon on the bough's end in front of him, with silent, silent cursing.

"He is famous! He is illustrious! His name is known as far as the sun shines! He owns cattle and goats by the thousands on the hills of Paris where he comes from! In the great war between the whites alone he slaughtered by the tens of thousands the Germans whose great guns go boom-boom! There has been no man in the world before like him! Lord of lords!"

By degrees it faded out again, the surge of throbbing booms and quavers, into an indistinguishable pulse of sound, as somewhere in the miles between the intervening wind shifted again. The tree leaves stirred, and the silence came again, and it was gone complete. Though for a few moments more the voiceless pulse seemed still to vibrate in the jungle quiet, like the inaudible murmur of a seashell, like the ghost of a lost sound.

The drums, the radio of Africa.

"Croakers!" von Dormer cursed.

He dug his nails into the bark and cursed. He cursed the damned giddy-hearted young brown wench who was scrubbing her hide in the stream below, he cursed the booming drum. He cursed all Frenchmen, hide, hair, horns and hoofs. He cursed the gnawing in his belly and the sleek ribbon of cold mottled life lying looped on the limb in front of him. He cursed with a great fluent cursing, lying motionless without a sound.

He had not moved, he had hardly let his heart beat for fifteen minutes. The snake at the bough's end had been disturbed by the voice and active movements of the girl below, and had begun to stir with a vague, irritated restlessness for a moment. It had been annoyed further by the podding vibration of the drum.

For the moment, at the height of the beat, its head had risen, and it had begun to sway. But now it had subsided and was lying motionless once more, in a seeming state of lethargy and quiescence, and it had not become aware of him, von Dormer dared to hope.

It would remain comatose now, since it had stirred no further, through any lesser sound and quieter movement which he might make. Von Dormer lifted his head carefully, an inch at a time, from his flat limb-hugging position. A spotted gecko, one of the small amiable sucker-footed lizards which swarmed everywhere in the Cameroons, ran giddily and brainlessly down an interlacing branch above the mottled snake, while von Dormer watched. It sprang down onto the limb below, and darted across the motionless velvet body of the reptile like a rabbit across a log, and apparently with no more notice taken of it than a log might. Von Dormer exhaled a silent breath. Shivering in every bone, inching his gaunt knees with care and laying aside intervening leaves and twigs with crafty patience, he resumed his stalking creep out the limb towards it.

CHAPTER II

THE ROAD TO LIFE

THE SNAKE WAS a young python, about four feet long, plump and healthy, and full of good solid meat—the best meat in the jungle, firm white, and sweet as pork. Von Dormer had marked it out just as darkness fell last night, slithering in amongst the branches of the great baobab above him when he paused at the jungle stream to drink. It was heavy with food, by the sluggish way it had been moving. In the blackness von Dormer had climbed up to the tree crotch, pulling himself up with the last strength of his shaking, stringy muscles, clutching and hanging to rattans and creepers, his naked feet seeking footholds in the vines.

Unable to locate the snake in the darkness of the impenetrable tropic night which had fallen almost at once, he had roosted in the tree crotch where it could not escape him, waiting for daylight to disclose its whereabouts. Clutching in one hand the rattan noose that he had made, he continued out along the limb towards it, gaunt, matted, with burning eyes.

Only four feet from it now, almost within reach of one of his long skeleton arms, if he stretched out to seize it. Its beady lidless gaze was motionless, blind. Like velvet it lay amidst the speckled leaves, its body smooth and strong. It was young, but there was plenty of fight in it. Its head could hit like a sledge-hammer; its jaw was punishing and strong. Von Dormer lifted his noose carefully and measured for the cast as he inched along, with his shaking body tensed and his breath tightened against the quick, desperate struggle ahead of him the instant he got the loop over.

Inching. Crafty. Suddenly now—Oh, *krieg in Heligoland!*

It had been too much to hope that he might creep upon the mottled ribbon inert and unaware. The thudding of the damned call-drum had disturbed it too much, as well as that amber young wench below singing, weaving, splashing, slapping, and yelling. It might not have fed so completely as von Dormer had hoped, anyway, or it might have been a different, and a hungrier, snake. Another ripple passed through the python's velvet trunk in the camouflaging shadows where it lay. It rippled, and suddenly it slid like water, as von Dormer, with a desperate croak erupting from his throat and one arm flung around his head to shield his face, hurled himself the last three feet along the limb, casting his noose furiously and frantically at its slick, swift-streaking head.

"Damn you, wait a minute!" he croaked furiously, in German, Bantu, French pidgin and Cape Dutch.

But the python had not waited. There was something about von Dormer's smell it had not liked. It had not trusted his red eyes and crafty creep. It had slipped instantly like a rope of water amidst the mottled shadows, and all that von Dormer's whipping noose caught was a rustling of leaves. The thick foliage at the limb's end stirred, and that was all. Von Dormer was left alone.

"Come back here, you yellow louse!" he croaked and raved. "You can't do that to me!"

Below him the water splashed and the girl screamed—a sudden wild screech that was hardly human, cut off in a muffled, gurgling bleat, horrible to hear. With red eyes, shivering from exhaustion and spent tension, von Dormer crouched a moment on the great bough, staring down through the speckled foliage that still stirred and quivered with the snake's drop.

"Ha! Ha!" he breathed in spasms.

The python had landed on her shoulders as she splashed and waded in the waist-deep water, knocking her from her feet. Convulsively it had coiled its thick constricting body about her neck. Her scream of mortal terror was stifled out of her. For the moment her flailing arms, with frantic and swiftly weakening gestures, beat the water into foam. Threshing, suffocating, amidst the spume and welter of the brown flood she turned up her suffused face and livid lips, no cry left in her, with her eyes like death from the middle of that mottled, terrible collar about her breast and throat.

SHE HAD lost her footing. The current was carrying her rolling, suddenly inert form along in the clutch of the knotting serpent, her head below the surface.

"Hold it!" von Dormer croaked, crouching and shaking on the limb in an insane frenzy. "I'm coming!"

The drop to the opaque, rock-strewn water was too far for him to risk. Bubbling at the lips and shaking with a palsy of weakness, giddiness, and crazed excitement, he went scrabbling and lurching on all fours back along the great limb.

"Hold it!" he croaked and gibbered. "Grab it by the neck and hold it! *Bijang abwi!* Good meat!"

Clawing and tearing, he swung himself down the rattans of the tree trunk with spasmodic jerking grips, landing with a staggering drop on the ground at the foot. He started down along the tangled bank beside the rushing current with sprawling, lop-sided leaps, his bony legs shaking beneath him, staggering like a peg-legged man on his stiff old-broken knee. His gaunt skeletal frame, emaciated and hollow-ribbed, naked except for the gray mildewed rags of what had once been a pair of white army ducks torn off above the knee, his dead white flesh scarred by the old livid hatch-marks of bullet, knife, and claw and the red, still festering wounds of poison vines and recent thorns, was burning and shaking all over with the fever of the hunger-kill. It seemed to him that he could tear that snake to pieces with his hands and gulp it raw if he got hold of it. Python! Python!

"Hold it! Get it by the neck! It can't hurt you!" he was croaking and gibbering.

But the python had loosed its spasmodic coil about the girl before von Dormer was abreast upon the bank. It slid from her with a swift muscular threshing. Down the stream amidst the swift swollen current it went away like a twisting arrow, vanishing in the brown flood thirty feet farther on around a bend of rock.

"Damn you, you screaching, useless brown ape!" von Dormer croaked.

A tree root on the bank tripped him. He was near collapse with weakness and despair.

Cursing, he stumbled a stride into the water, towards where the girl rolled and floated in middle stream, pale-lipped and spewing water, her face barely afloat, her breast heaving, her eyes still glazed.

"Get up! You aren't drowned, you fool!"

His red gaze on her was baleful. If she hadn't struggled so wildly and desperately, the bewildered python, clutching her by instinct, might not have loosed its hold till von Dormer could have seized it. If she hadn't appeared on the scene at all, it might not have been disturbed in the first place, and he could have snared it in the tree where he was stalking it. Von Dormer was shaking as he waded out. He would grab her, anyway, if she wasn't dying, and make her lead him to her village. She was young and healthy; she was probably worth something to them. With her as pawn and hostage they wouldn't just vanish into the forest, taking all their food and animals with them, as they usually did when he approached, damn their dirty stinking hides.

"Get up, Nyissa, wife of Ze Zaikut!" he said with a hoarse croak of triumph, recognizing who she was.

With sudden augmented effort he surged towards her.

"Get up, Nyissa," he croaked croonингly, "*moné zip!* Come here, I'll take you home. Wait a minute, you brown, slippery fool—"

But there was no laying hands on the brown girl. Her glazed eyes had focused on him in wordless terror as he came splashing through the stream, on his gaunt dead-white frame like a skin-covered skeleton and his red and glaring eyes. With a gasp and a frantic threshing, agile as a fish, she swirled and got her feet beneath her on the stream's

bed. Swiftly and frantically she splashed towards the opposite shore, leaping like a deer with rippling muscles, wasting no time in empty screaming, but filled with the terror of the wild.

Von Dormer croaked a futile oath. He stopped and staggered in the whirling current. He was weak and shaking all over, a doddering, toothless lion. She was too young and lithe and quick; he could never catch her. The very current was too strong for his thin, stringy legs. Swaying, snarling, he watched her vanish into the trees on the farther bank, swift as a shadow, still staring back at him with her great eyes in transfixed terror over her shoulder.

That finished it. She would raise the alarm about him in no time, swiftly running. Their damned drums would be beating presently.

Unseen faces peering. Silence. Stealth. He knew it. Their little frightened drums beating in the forest.

"Hé Do-mé! He Do-me!" they would be warning. "Hé Do-mé with the glass eye! The hungry ghost of Hé Do-mé the Great Crocodile is near within the forest!"

So the little frightened drums would beat.

VON DORMER floundered back onto the bank behind him. He had remembered who the brown girl must be when he had started towards her, suddenly, She must be the one that he had heard the drums speak of as Nyissa, *moné zip,* the gazelle of the forest, the wife of old Ze Zaikut, the pigmy king. Old Ze Zaikut had bought her when she had been no more than four years old, or maybe two—twelve or eighteen years ago, some time after the war. He had paid a high price for her, too, the wealth of his whole village in elephant tusks, gold and copper ornaments. He had drained his people dry and loaded them with debt for a generation, for her mother had been a Mpongwe woman, and one of the most beautiful. It was not often that the submerged and humble little B'gis had an opportunity to get hold of one like her.

A high price, a high price, considering her state of infancy and the risk of total loss by smallpox, snake bite, or any other of the hazards of jungle living before she developed to be of any value. But she had turned out a good investment. She had grown up to be what she was, Nyissa the dancer, famous and sought after at all the dances and plumed-warrior meetings of the jungle tribes, the darling of the little people. Often far off von Dormer had heard the little drums speak of her. Because of her old Ze Zaikut and his tribe had honor among their kind.

Nyissa the dancer, the gazelle of the forest. In Europe, thought von Dormer, she would be worth now a hundred times, a thousand times or more, what old Ze Zaikut had paid for her, in white man's money. In almost any white man's money. At some night club or in some music show with her wild supple dancing, her wild eerie voice.

The waste of life!

Wrinkled old Ze Zaikut, the toothless, pot-bellied little pigmy king. Ze Zaikut must be almost a hundred years old now, if he was still alive. An old buck to be mate of the gazelle of the forest. Perhaps, though, old Ze was dead, and von Dormer had missed the mourning drums about him. If so, she would have passed on to one of his sons or great-grandsons. But still the glory and treasure of her village. She had walked into his hands, almost, thought von Dormer with a spasm of bitter futility. If he had only realized a little sooner who she was, if he had only had the speed of limb and the strength of arm to catch and hold her, she would easily have been worth the price of a kid or even a heifer from the B'gis.

He had forgotten that the pigmy

village was so near, in its lost and forgotten jungle clearing, a place that not all men knew, nor the hidden trails to it. Yet he still remembered them. Even in the blackness of the darkest night he could still remember them, a trail once taken. But it would do him no good to make for the B'gi village now, without her as a hostage, for he would find the huts vacant when he reached there—the banked fires still burning in the clay ovens, the smell of meat and baking cassava roots in the air, but the pots empty, the last bunch of plantains taken from the rafters, the last goat and kid and dog driven into hiding. He would be left with no more satisfaction than to smash their ovens and burn their thatches and fill his belly full of air. Stealth and silence! Hidden little faces. And around him while he raved and destroyed, the little frightened drums would beat, but there would be no one to be seen.

Or perhaps they would have left poisoned meat behind for him to feed on.

The B'gis were noted for their hospitality. The Benes and the Bulus were noted for their hospitality. The Yebekolos, the Ngumbas, and the Mpongwes were all noted for their hospitality. To all strangers in the forest. To all who came sitting on their mats silently requesting with the glances of their eyes that their hunger be appeased. The best of whatever they had it was their eager pride to supply to the stranger in abundance, according to the guest-law. And if they had no best to offer, if the fare was meager, then they were ashamed. But not to him, Hé Do-mé, the Great Crocodile. He had eaten up his welcome with them too long, too long ago. He was a ghost.

Von Dormer collapsed cross-legged on the bank of the jungle stream, hugging his gaunt abdomen. His burning eyeballs throbbed. His head felt light and giddy. He pulled at a bunch of coarse grass and stuffed it into his mouth. But his tortured intestines twisted inside him and his throat rejected it. Heavily he fumbled in a pocket of the moldering rags about his loins and pulled forth his monocle reposing there. He wiped it carefully on a corner of fabric and screwed it into his eye, sitting surveying the problem of existence, which is very problematical to a naked man in the jungle.

He might as well face the facts. In a few hours, he thought, he would probably die. Perhaps just sitting here. Scraps of the dream he had had in his miserable sleep floated before his vision, though his eyes were open. Shadows of a great banquet, and endless meats which faded away before him.

The world swam before him. Yes, today he had come to the end of his hunger, and he would probably die.

"Ob ba bawa!"

The call-drum note was podding again. Not the great remote drum of Bwamba now, nor even the ghost of Bwamba's drum, which sometimes still, they said, beat in the jungle when a man died. Some other drum, some smaller but much nearer drum, perhaps from old Ze Zaikut's own hidden little B'gi village not far away, had picked up and was rebroadcasting on its own small one-horse station the sonorous message of the great government drum at Bouboufonké.

"Pause and listen! A new commandant! A new commandant of the French at Bouboufonké! . . . ."

"Verdammnis!" breathed von Dormer. "Chuck it!"

But they had to reiterate the whole damned thing by rote, in their solemn monkey way.

"He is great and he is mighty! He is rich and he is handsome! He is famous and he is fearless! . . ."

Another little squirt Frog civil-administrator at Bouboufonké. Paugh! They didn't last forever at any of the

He watched the stirring ribbon on the bough.

back country stations, these cream-puff Frogs, too far away from their aperitifs and their restaurant terraces and their Mimis and their Fou-fous and all their pretty little comforts. Six months to a year at the most, and then the heat and the loneliness got them, and too much liquor and too many black women threw them off the handle, and they had tom-toms beating in their skulls and pink crocodiles crawling in their beds, so that they either blew out their brains with a big bang some fine feathered night, or were transferred to Dakar or Timbuktu.

THERE had been a time when a new commandant at any of the more remote and lonesome little up-country stations could be counted on, as a mat-

ter of course, for a couple of days at the very least of free food, bed, liquor, and bad cigarettes. A fellow white man in the jungle, and so on. Hands-across-the-Rhine stuff, over a bottle. Von Dormer had sometimes got a week out of a new Frog before they kicked him out, and one time with a particularly frightened, helpless, lonely youth he had lived on the fat for almost a month, and even then had to be kicked out by the guy's successor when he came along in three or four weeks.

That had been ten or fifteen years ago, though, when he had been somewhat more elegant in appearance, and had owned a shirt and shoes. The length of their hospitality generally depended on how lost and hungry they were for white company, any white company, on how large a supply of liquor and canned goods they had brought along with them, on how little they had heard before about him, and how long he could manage to listen courteously and humbly to their swaggering Frog boasting before he bent himself around a couple of bottles some fine feathered night and started raising hell and kicking their black girls around and telling them what he thought of Frogs.

The last new commandant that he had ventured to try to sponge on had been the one at Madaké, more than two years ago. Two years, or was it four? Two years, or four, or eight since von Dormer had eaten white man's food and drunk white man's liquor, with his feet beneath a white man's table like a gentleman? Not that he cared so much for white man's food any more. He would turn down the most succulent pressed duck ever cooked for a good mess of dog. Still it was food.

He pulled another bunch of grass, and his raw guts screamed within him.

"He eats from plates!" the drum podded. "He has chop three times a day!"

Von Dormer had never been back to Bouboufonké. Bwamba's old tribe of Yebekolos lived thereabouts, and Sasa's Mpongwe village was only a few miles down the river from it. There might be localities less filled with hate and terror, if that was possible, for Hé Do-mé the Great Crocodile.

How many years ago had it been since he had been Hauptmann von Dormer there, beneath the black-crossed battle banner with the double-headed eagles on it of Imperial Germany? Hals von Dormer, Captain von Dormer, of Bouboufonké! Bouboufonké had been the only white man's outpost of any sort in the back country in those days, himself the law and lord and God over a great district.

No flag in the whole world so great and victorious as the great white battle flag of Germany! Nowhere else was it saluted with such fervor and terror by the blacks, twice a day at its hoisting and its hauling down, as by the blacks of Bouboufonké. No man so mighty and so terrible as von Dormer *das Krokodil,* the Crocodile!

With hobnailed boots, with a leather quirt looped to his wrist whose leaded cat-o'-nine could strip the flesh off a man's back like the rip of a flensing rake, and guns at both hips, and blood and murder in his fists, and his hard lean smile! He had known how to handle blacks, perhaps too well. And yet with all of that he had built up a strange fanatic loyalty in some of them, his picked askaris, his fighting Yebekolos, so that they had gone to death for him when war came, and to worse things, poor wailing fools.

"Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Aie-o! . . ." They had even made a song about him during that terrible time in the jungle and the mountains, and the black and brown girls sang it now who did not know that he was still alive. To whom he was only a dim far off tribal god and legend. Dancing the warm

love dance, the lure dance, the dance of steaming Guinea, to the bloody marching song of his starving women and his dying askaris.

Ha!

He had been something once.

Von Dormer of Bouboufonké, beneath the Imperial banner. But now the imperial banner of Germany was no more, and Bouboufonké was ruled by the French, with all the Cameroons; and he who had been so terrible and fierce and strong was only meat in the bush now, a wild animal in the jungle, an eater of ants and snakes. Though the blacks were still afraid of him, and more afraid than ever.

It would not be pleasant to go back there now, where he had been so great, to beg starving and naked from a damned civil-service Frog. It might, in fact, be death, if the blacks had guts enough. Yet the jungle was terrible and lean, and if a man did not eat, and eat soon, he would just keel over. And when the life had gone from him he would lie here dead and rotting, with no drum to beat the mourning cry, unless the ghost drum of Bwamba.

PERHAPS he was dying already, with the world whirling about him. Perhaps the buzzing tumbo flies had come to lay their eggs in his flesh already, their fat white grubs to hatch and burrow in his liver while he was still alive. Perhaps the ants were eating him at this moment; he felt small stings, but he had lost the keenness of pain, his flesh was too dull to fully feel. Perhaps in a few minutes, or a few hours, sitting here faint and foodless, he would lay his head down, and while he still was breathing, with open eyes, some leopard, some stinking hyena, would find him, and death would be too long.

He would like to lay his head down now. Flashes of things. The time of war. The mountains. Fleeing and hiding, hunted like a dog. The drums, the great drum at Bouboufonké booming, the drums beating all around. Sasa's smooth young brown body, old Bwamba's wrinkled, leering face. The caves beneath the rocks where they had made their last stand, the drip of water from which they had drunk, the roaring of the Frogs and Cape British outside who had left their dead within, and dared not come in after them like men. Woodsmoke, shadows. Sasa's smooth young body growing gaunter. The wailing of the other woman when they had cast the dice, what had her name been? The white eyes of the men. Old Bwamba had been the last of them to die, old Bwamba had been damned tough.

Shadows. . . .

Something rustled in the bush. Von Dormer jerked his head up. He would have to get on his feet again, and keep on them.

A new Frog at Bouboufonké was bound to be good for one replete and gorging meal, anyway, if he was halfway human. And if his black men slipped some poison in it, it would still be food. It was better to die full than to die empty, better to die beneath a roof, in the companionship of men, than alone in the rotting jungle.

Von Dormer arose on unsteady legs. He brushed his matted hair and smoothed his beard with an instinctive hand. Carefully he straightened the knot of an invisible white tie, and smoothed down the tails of an invisible clawhammer coat. The stream beside him flowed down to the Bom, and the Bom down to the French station at Bouboufonké. With his monocle in his eye, clutching invisible gloves and walking stick, von Dormer proceeded elegantly down along the wild jungle margin of the rushing stream, gaunt, torn, matted, and except for the mildewed rags about his loins as naked as Adam, with the air of a well-known man about town strolling down some fashionable boulevard, ready to

lift his silk hat to the ladies of his acquaintance if he saw any, en route toward some grand and elaborate banquet at the duchess's to which he had been invited.

"Good day, good day!" he muttered, scratching himself under the arm pits.

Where was he? What! Stealth. Silence. The thick unstirring foliage of the jungle all around. Little eyes watching him, it might be, in the deep green unseen. Little eyes in terror. Drums, drums, drums! Beat your little frightened drums! The hungry ghost of Hé Do-mé the Crocodile is walking in the forest! Why don't you beat your little frightened drums, if you are there? Oh, damn them, anyway!

He stumbled over great roots like snakes. Thorns ripped at him. Insects stung and burrowed. But he would get to Bouboufonké yet, and fill his belly. He had missed the snake, he had missed the girl, but he would not miss a dinner with the Frenchman.

"He is rich and he is generous! He is a lord's son, strong and handsome!" the little near-by drum was still industriously podding. "He is beautiful as the sun! There is none like him! Melay-gou his name is, lord of lords, says Nbem the drummer drumming on the great call-drum of Bwamba, who was the drummer of Hé Do-mé! . . ."

Presently von Dormer struck the faint and hidden trail used by the little jungle people. There was a footfall light as silk which had preceded him along it, he saw, toward Bouboufonké.

CHAPTER III

"HE NEVER SURRENDERED"

COMMANDANT Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, the sole lord, in the name of the Republic of France, of all the district of the Upper Bom within the Cameroons, was probably the ugliest Frenchman who had ever been invented, which is saying a good deal.

He was also probably, of all Frenchmen who have ever been invented, the most passionately devoted to *l'amour,* which is saying almost as much.

L'amour, or the love, is, as everybody knows, the consuming attraction toward persons of the opposite sex which burns in many men, particularly Frenchmen, particularly fat pear-faced Frenchmen with handlebar mustaches, ape-furred bodies, hairy moles on the end of their bulbous purple noses, bald heads, and the tic, and which is even more important to them than the appetites for meat and drink, although those latter are by no means to be ignored.

Louis-Phillipe was a Frenchman, and he loved the ladies. In his dreams and from afar he had loved them since he was thirteen years old, for thirty years, as only an ugly man can love.

But unfortunately the ladies, at least the ladies of France, the white and civilized ladies whom he had known, had never reciprocated in the slightest the feelings of attraction which Louis-Phillipe had for them in such abundance. The very sound of his blubbery voice and the sight of his cockeyed, googling stare turned amorously on them, not to speak of the repulsive grin, the winks and grimaces which he put on as an enticement and an expression of his affection for them, were enough on first sight to send almost any sane and healthy woman scurrying down the street away from him with a gasp of breathless fright.

Fifty million Frenchwomen might be wrong, but fifty million Frenchwomen had never liked the looks of Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, not even one of them. And as a consequence Louise-Phillipe, like many another man who feels vast but unsuccessful yearnings towards *l'amour,* had as time passed increasingly emphasized, in all his talk and acts, an outward air of utter indifference and

contempt for women and all their ways.

The grapes that are out of reach are always sour. Since he couldn't have them, he didn't want them. He, Louis-Phillipe Gousselon de Milegout, was—or so at least he liked to believe and have the world believe about him—a puritan and a woman-hater, a moralist, a two-hundred-and-ten pound chunk of solid ice, a stern, silent man who despised the whole sex root and branch and wouldn't even be caught dead looking at one of them.

Such a pretense of indifference and acting of contempt didn't, naturally, change Louis-Phillipe's innate fondness of the species in the slightest, any more than with any other moralist. In fact, it probably only increased it by bottling it up inside him.

The one brief period when he had been popular and admired by them, and even jealously fought over by them, remained in his memory still, after more than fifteen years, as the one bright and glorious spot in his otherwise dull and monotonous existence.

It had been after the great war, when as a sergeant in the French quartermaster corps he had been in command for five months of a small German village, Schleesdorf, in the occupied Rhineland, with a platoon of twenty-four Senegalese under him. War exhaustion and the sickness of defeat had beaten down the German spirit, while the sheer starvation which had gripped them made dogs of even the proudest men and the loveliest women of them.

Being in command of what food supplies there were, with the sole and final and unappealable authority to say to whom they should be issued and on what terms, Louis-Phillipe had been a very great and important and much-besought man, indeed. He had had the power of life and death, the power to say who might survive and who must starve.

When he had strutted bandy-legged down the sidewalks of his little village empire, with the strap of his tin helmet holding his fat chins up, with a victorious conqueror's smile on his pear face, with his chest stuck out, with a swagger stick slashing in his hand, glaring furiously with his small, pouchy, splay-footed eyes to right and left across his mole-tipped nose, grunting at the head of his swaggering, grinning, cocky Sengalese, with a tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet and a slap, slap, slap of rifle leather, the way had always been hastily cleared before him, and standing or crouching out in the manure of the street the respectful Boches had ducked their knees and lifted their hats worshipfully as he went by, while the wan faces and large eyes of the women, even the youngest and most alluring of them, had been turned on him not with abhorrence but with a dumb and yielding supplication.

He had lived in a requisitioned castle of eighteen bedrooms, with a wine cellar that fifty blonde and desperate and stiffly smiling women could never drink quite dry. He had rolled and lorded, he had swelled and swaggered; when he had scowled, the men all trembled, when he snapped his fingers, the women danced. Or if they didn't, they lived to regret it. His obedient Senegalese had rifles, and he had food.

He might have been court-martialed and sent to prison for fifty years for some of the things that he had got away with, no doubt, if his superiors had learned about them. But who was going to report him?

IT had been a very fine time for Quartermaster Sergeant Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, and it was a pity that it couldn't have gone on forever. But like all good things, even the best bottle of liquor or the most marvelous dream, it had come to an end, and all too soon.

The armies of France had been called

back to France, and Louis-Phillipe had taken off his all-conquering horizon-blue uniform to sink back to his previous obscure and unimportant level, like thousands of other quartermaster heroes throughout the world, in a life of drab reality—in his case, to resume his position as a forty-dollar-a month copy-clerk in the French Colonial Administration, Department of Supplies and Accounts, Bureau of Maintenance and Equipment, Division of Tools and Small Gear Purchasing, Classification of Screws and Fishhooks.

And there, filing correspondence on screws and fishhooks, adding endless columns of figures on screws and fishhooks, analyzing, sampling, comparing and tasting screws and fishhooks, living and breathing screws and fishhooks, Assistant Sub-clerk Louis-Phillipe de Milegout had remained for seventeen years and seven months of his priceless life, growing no wealthier as he grew older, growing no handsomer, no more distinguished, no more appetizing to the mind or eye—growing, in fact, even fatter and more cockeyed, even hairier and more waddling-legged, even more shunned and distasteful and abhorred in his obscure and unappealing poverty to the lovely ladies of France.

The ladies of foreign parts! They were different, it seemed to him. For years they had melted in his dreams, humble, supplicating, and responsive. Therefore he had breathlessly sought and eagerly obtained the post of resident-administrateur at Bouboufonké when he had learned that the previous incumbent had died with unexpected dispatch and that there was no other man available at the moment to replace him; because he had heard from his wartime Senegalese that the women of Africa were warm and willing, cowed, submissive, affectionate and unparticular, especially the women of Bouboufonké, between Gaboon and the Middle Congo, in the crocodile and insect-infested back country along the Upper Bom.

"It's a dull place, Milegout," the chief of personnel had told him, staring at him curiously. "It pays only eight hundred francs a month, which is less than you get here. It's the sort of place for a young romantic fool who doesn't know yet what it's all about, and who might as well learn the hard way. After all, you've cut your milk teeth. I don't see why you want it. I might as well be frank with you, the last three residents we've had there have come out in a box. The damned drums beat all the time till they wear your skull away and your brains are naked and raw.

"It's really quite tame, of course, There's no danger of any kind if you don't walk into a crock's mouth or try to play skip rope with a mamba, or get the blackwater or be bitten by a tsetse. The natives are quite peaceable and law-abiding. They make good soldiers when there is a white man to lead them and make them fight, because they are so docile. But they aren't warriors on their own account.

"Most of the troubles that come up you handle at mammy-palaver, pidgin for domestic relations court—the blacks are always getting into disputes about their women. Some of the women of the Mpongwes are really lovely. If you were a younger man that might be an inducement. Sorry! Just my joke, Milegout. I remember your principles. You don't go in for them, do you? You're above that sort of thing. Well, you can have it if you want it, Milegout. I don't mean to talk you out of it. We're too hard up for a candidate. A *resident-administrateur* is supposed to be a gentleman, but in this case it probably doesn't make any particular difference. Good luck! Oh, one thing more. If you happen to run into von Dormer in your territory, watch out for him, that's all. He's a damned human ape, a renegade, crazy and not to be trusted. Even the natives don't have anything to do with him."

"Who's von Dormer, sir?"

"HALS VON DORMER, Cap von Dormer. The Crocodile, they called him. German commandant at Bouboufonké at the time of the war. He gave us a hell of a fight." The grizzled colonial smiled reminiscently. "Us and the British and the Portuguese and the Cape Dutch," he said. "Von Dormer, was he a headache! He fought us in the forest and he fought us in the swamps. He ambushed us from the tree-tops, and sneaked past our sentries to carve us in the night. We had him outnumbered, though, forty to one, and we kept pushing him back, him and his askaris and his few whites, with their women.

"We took his villages one by one, cut him off from his supplies, and he was finally licked. He led the remnants of them in a desperate starvation march over the mountains to reach neutral territory in Spanish Guinea, and those who didn't die along the way made it finally. But von Dormer himself didn't cross the frontier. With a handful of half a dozen of his most faithful blacks and his favorite woman Sasa, and perhaps one or two women more, he turned off at the last minute to hide out in the mountains, with the idea of continuing a private war on us of his own.

"His faithful man was Bwamba, who had the reputation among the blacks of being considerable of a devil priest. Sasa was Bwamba's wife, which was an added bond of devotion which the black man felt towards von Dormer, too. Von Dormer probably counted on the fear the blacks had of him to feed him and help him hide between his forays on our posts. But most of the tribes had come over to us—the African always likes a winner—and instead of helping hide him they helped us close in. With the drums booming on all sides of him, we were after him in no time. Soon we were following him with forced marches night and day through the mountains, letting him break the way for us and giving him no chance to rest. And though Bwamba was shifty and von Dormer was a hellion and crafty and strong, we overtook them finally and got them cornered in a system of caves in the rocks.

"We thought we had them then, they were played out and pretty weak, and they had exhausted their last food supplies several days before, so far as we knew. But they still had plenty of rifle ammunition left, as we found out when we tried to go in after them. We couldn't send the black boys. They wouldn't have minded shooting Bwamba in the daylight, if a white man told them to, but they were afraid of him in the darkness of the caves, and they would rather be shot than go. We had to go in ourselves, and when we did, why, there were plenty of young Cape farmers and boys from Marseilles and Yorkshire and Lisbon who took lead in their hearts or had their guts ripped open in the narrow blacks twists and corridors. My God. the bangs and yells! We were

slipping in our own blood and jammed with our own dead.

"We got out of there, taking our wounded and dead with us—there was one of them we never did get out, he lies buried under stone there still in the mountains. There were a couple of hundred whites of us, and a thousand or more blacks, and only that one German hellion and four or five blacks with him at the most, but there was nothing we could do.

"We tried smoke, of course, but the caves were too deep, and there were too many air vents and cracks. We gave it up, mounted squads with machine-guns at every possible exit, and sat back on our heels to wait for our field-pieces to come up. We camped there a month. Someway they must have got hold of a little something to eat—perhaps they caught spiders or bats for a while and made some messes out of them—for we smelled wood smoke and saw the seep of it drifting through the cracks in the rocks now and again in the days that followed.

"How they held out, though, on what they could find in those caves, God knows. Yet two or three of them were still alive after three weeks, for when we tried to go in after them again, having seen no sign of anything for days, again the rifles spoke. But we knew they were dying. Then one night after weeks we heard Bwamba beating on his drum from the cave, telling us he was dead. We knew he was the toughest of the blacks, and would be the last to go.

"THEY talk on their drums, somehow, you know," the grizzled old chief explained with a dry face. "It all sounds pretty much alike to me, but even I got the beat of it that night. It was drumming *ba ba ma toe!* That's the death call of the Yebekolos. It's something that gives you the creeps, even in ordinary circumstances, when you can see the dead man sitting up, all decked out in his finery and grinning, and the funeral drums beating around him are more like a friendly farewell. *Ba ba ma toe!* Cross his hands on his breast! And the *ndan,* the call-name, of old Bwamba.

"The blacks all knew that it was Bwamba's own great call-drum, too. They recognized the tone of it. It scared them out of their wits. They deserted by the hundreds that night, simply ran in panic, with that ghost drum hounding them through the forest, till some of them fell down dead. A ghost sound, I say, because there was no drum they could have had with them in the cave, and the drum of Bwamba was still back at Bouboufonké, a hundred and fifty miles away, where our own drummers had been drumming it plenty in the hunt for von Dormer. By God, I don't explain it. But old Bwamba drummed out his own death cry on a ghost drum, and the blacks ran, and that was that.

"You've got," explained the grizzled old colonial a little hastily, "you've got to simply ignore the whole question of black magic in Africa, I might say, Milegout. You are, fortunately for yourself, a dull, thick-headed—I mean to say a practical and firm-minded fellow, I can see. In the same circumstances you might not have even heard the drum. Perhaps it was just mass hypnotism. Perhaps there was no sound at all.

"But five or six days later we heard it again, *ba ba ma toe!,* with the *ndan* of Sasa this time. Sasa the Mpongwe, the woman von Dormer had liked best. And somehow you knew that there was only von Dormer left in the blackness, and the drum seemed waiting for him. It still raises the hair on my head. Well, the next day our field pieces came up, and we blew the rock to hell at point-blank range. We smashed it to flinders and to dynamiting dust, and we went in. We kicked and poked and jabbed our bayonets around, and we found the

torn and mangled body of Sasa beneath the rock chunks and the skulls and bones of those who had died before. But we never found hair or hide of von Dormer. One of the honeycombing exits must have been left unguarded the night before when the black men ran yelling again from the ghost drum, and he had got away.

"He never was caught, either, during two years more of war, though for months every night the drums would be podding from some village here or there, reporting him seen in the neighborhood, and we would send out squads to run themselves bow-legged in pursuit. And even a year or so later we would have the drums booming about him now and again. But alone in the jungle, just one man, he could hide in a bush or tree, and he never left a trail that we could pick up any more than a monkey. He had ceased to bother us, anyway, no doubt because by that time the problem of sheer survival had become the all-consuming one with him, and after a while we ceased to bother about him, either.

"After the war von Dormer began by degrees to reappear, tentatively—trying us out, you might say. We began to get reports of him here and there, at some black village or white logging camp, and presently he was even showing up at our stations in the back country, when he found that we didn't want him any more, cadging what he could as a free guest on the strength of being a former German officer and a gentleman. We made various offers to repatriate him if he wanted to go, but he had been in the Cameroons since 1907, and there was nothing to take him back to a jobless and starving Germany. He wasn't a criminal, of course, and by the terms of the peace treaty we couldn't deport him merely as a former enemy, so long as he didn't notoriously and flagrantly break any of the few laws there are for a white man.

"Poor devil! I remember seeing him soon after the war, when he had come out of hiding. He had aged twenty years in two, they tell me, shrunk down from two hundred and forty pounds of solid iron six foot two flesh to a hundred and thirty or so, a bag of bones, all shot to hell, rotting away inside him he looked, a horrible living skeleton. He had got hold of a little cache of elephant tusks and a few native baubles in copper and gold at that time—best not to ask how or where, at least no native caravan was ever reported ambushed and murdered—and he was looking for a purchaser. He sold them to a Ngumba trader for twelve English pounds, which was about one fourth what they were worth. That's been more than eighteen years ago, and he's been in the Cameroons ever since. Hell knows how he's lived. He smells, and he's probably crazy, and he's a damned white nigger. I had finally to start warning all new men we were sending out against him, like you. Still in some ways," said the grizzled old colonial grimly, "I feel sorry for him. He put up a good fight. He never surrendered."

"VON DORMER won't get anything out of me, sir," Louis-Phillipe had promised, curling his mustaches ferociously. "You think of me as only a subclerk of screws and fishhooks, *M'sieu' le Colonel,* bent over a dull task day by day. But I, too, have been a soldier, with a brilliant war record, though it is not I who should mention it. There is nothing I will take from a Boche. I spit!" said Monsieur Milegout, drooling. "I spit upon the Boches!"

He wiped his dribbling chin.

"Screws and fishhooks," murmured the grizzled old warrior meditatively.

"Monsieur?"

"I was just thinking that you have been pretty faithful, Milegout, I have seen you here for years, and I never even knew your name before today. You have

been faithful, Milegout," he repeated, "and I am glad to give you the opportunity for wider spheres of activity in the service of France, if it is what you want. I am still a little curious, however, frankly," he admitted, staring at Louis-Phillipe still speculatively, "as to what you expect to get out of it."

For the moment Louis-Phillipe's pear-shaped face had grown somewhat mottled. He looked across his mole-tipped nose to right and left, whuffling a little with his lips without saying anything.

"If you must know, sir," he said, pulling at his mustaches, "I am by hobby and inclination a—uh—gourmet, for my amusement. A humble one, but a keen one. I have tasted all the dishes of Paris, and in my day, the Rhine. I should like to taste the curious dishes of Africa. Someday I expect to write a book."

"Um! A gourmet?" his chief had said. "A gourmand, anyway, no doubt. Yes, you rather give one that impression. Well, some of the dishes of Africa are worth looking into. That may be a worthy effort, Milegout. Good luck to you. I hope you get material for your book. Screws!" he had muttered beneath his breath, to M. Milegout's departing back. "Screws and fishhooks!"

CHAPTER IV

ME-LAY-GOU THE MIGHTY

FIFTY yards across the clearing from Milegout, beneath the drum-shed Nbem the drummer beat upon the great polished hollowed log with a resounding cadence.

"Bring your wives and loveliest daughters!"

Milegout the Great and Terrible had arrived as Pharoah of all the Upper Bom.

In his new starched civil service whites, Louis-Phillipe did look like some great pot-bellied red-faced cockeyed demon or tribal god as he sat there beneath the *nkalabande* at his gargantuan breakfast, worthy of all the booming *bawas* which Nbem had been pouring out about him to a thousand square miles of jungle since early dawn. Like a great scowling pear-faced Bo-Bo of the devil houses for all blacks to prostrate themselves before with fear and groaning. His sword—he wasn't a military officer at all, Louis-Phillipe, and was only a commandant by courtesy, but there was no one to tell him that he didn't rate a sword, or that he dare not use it if he felt like it to whack at any heads or buttocks it pleased his imperial fancy—his sword, or rather saber, a huge carved ancient cavalry saber of the vintage of the Franco-Prussian war which he had bought in a Paris second-hand army goods store before he sailed, reposed together with his new sun helmet upon the table before him while he ate, the symbols, the crown and scepter of his majesty.

With Ougoulou standing rifled and bayoneted, in a khaki tunic and breechclout, at his back, with Mamadou the cook scurrying to bring newer and more elaborate delicacies on, piping hot from the kitchen, whirling each new dish on his fingertips at arm's length above his head in a kind of paean and exalted joyous salutation to the great white lord, Louis-Phillipe had breakfasted, sniffing each dish judiciously with his purple hair-tipped nose buried in it a moment, then gravely spooning a magnificent helping forth and devouring it with fat jaws working, with breath grunting, with lips smacking and teeth sucking, with little gurgles of pleasure, while the overflow of each large bite goozled down the corners of his mouth, and while dozens of pairs of patient worshipful cowed black eyes—some of them bright and rolling and young, as he was contentedly aware—watched his every look and gesture with fascination, with humble hope, with more than awe from the edges of the clearing all around.

Wild strawberries with goat's cream, dripping dumboy with green coconut jelly, pheasants' eggs fried with little hot green African peppers, some great strange squashy dead-white fruits as soft as rotten oranges but very palatable and full of guzzling juice inside, and more strange dishes whose names and contents he couldn't understand from Mamadou's or Ougoulou's attempted explanations, but which he didn't need to understand, knowing only that they were plentiful and good, and tasted well in his jaw pockets and slid smoothly down his esophagus, and were more than he could wrap his great belly around the half of it if he were twins, had been planted before him for his deliberative joy and his profound consumption.

He was no longer screws and fishhooks, he was Milegout the Magnificent, the Lord of Lords of Bouboufonké, a man stronger than an elephant and more beautiful than a bull rhinoceros. Home was never like this, nor even Schleesdorf in the Rhineland in the days of his youth. Cramming the last bite of dripping dumboy that he could estimate he possibly had room for into his mouth with four fingers, he leaned back with a lordly wave of his hand.

"Tell them to come on and make their obeisance to me in order," he said. "The young ones first."

"The great new white commandant!" bellowed Ougoulou behind his chair.

"The great new white commandant! *Ob ba bawa! Ob ba bawa!*" Nbem thundered in the drum-shed across the little clearing upon his great call-drum.

"Me-lay-gou the mighty sits in council!" bellowed Ougoulou.

"Me-lay-gou the mighty, *ob ba bawa! ob ba bawa!*" thundered Nbem. "Bring your troubles for his judgment! Bring your gift offerings for his favor! He is brave and he is handsome! He is rich and he is generous! He is a king's son! His father was all white! His mother became white, too, when she married him! He owns cattle and goats by the thousands on the hills of Paris where he came from! His name is known as far as the sun shines! Fortunate the man who wins his favor! Fortunate above all other women in the world the one who pleases the great white lord any more. *Ab ba alu! balu! balu!* Me-lay-gou the mighty at Bouboufonké, lord of lords!"

LOUIS-PHILLIPE DE MILEGOUT, sitting back relaxed and contentedly, with his hands folded on his fat stomach, surveying the circle of shining black faces and bright eyes and the smooth lines of the glistening oiled black bodies crouched around the rim of the clearing with sultanlike deliberation and complacence, sitting there so royally at the very summit of his greatness, at the very apogee of his life, at the very apotheosis of his fat bloated soul, had suddenly his complacence and repose and fat anticipatory contentment shattered, and shattered utterly.

Louis-Phillipe de Milegout clutched suddenly the arms of his chair. He lifted his fat grunting body half an inch with strained intensity. With cock eyes bulging he stared for a moment motionless across the sunlit clearing in the direction of the drum-shed, beside which a slender brown girl had appeared like a shadow out of the edge of the jungle, wild and wary as a doe, standing one-footed and lightly, looking at him with a kind of strange wild ecstasy in her great liquid eyes.

Shadows played upon her supple body. Her posture was all grace and charm, and delicacy and the swift dancing fleeting beauty of life, and shadowy dreams of an intangible ecstasy. At the edges of the great jungle. In that instant like a dream. And Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, staring across at her, frozen motionless at the first glimpse, knew why he had come to Africa, knew

why he had ever been born. And in the depths of his ignoble little soul there stirred in that instant a spark, a tiny fire of immortality, an understanding of the strange things of beauty and loveliness and the ungraspable evanescence of life which are beyond all desire. And the prayers of artists and the hope of saints.

He had never seen a one like her in all of Paris, along all the Rhine, nor had any man, nor would, so simple, supple, full of natural forest grace, so delicate and so wild, standing with her great eyes in awe upon him at the edge of the Eden jungle. And for a moment a spark was in the soul of Louis-Phillipe, a knowledge of the things of music and beauty which no hand of man can ever seize, and better that they never try. The spark was in him, but it died, smothered in his rolls of fat, in the greediness of his soul. He had half started to get himself to his feet, as even a man who is not a gentleman does by instinct when he sees something beautiful and delicate and rare, such as he has never seen before, and worthy of a spontaneous tribute and attention. But he sank back again, well-filled, arrogant, gross and heavy. He was Milegout of Bouboufonké. He was lord. He snapped his fingers at her. His face twisted up in a hideous grin.

"*Moné zip!*" thundered Nbem upon his great call-drum, in an ecstatic frenzy. "Her name is Nyissa, *moné zip!* The gazelle of the forests!"

THE sun baked. The wind was still. No breath blew from the hot glassy river. Insects swooned and died upon the wing in the air that was like a furnace.

Since dawn Nbem had been booming on his great call-drum intermittently, resting, sweating, scratching his stomach, and then thundering again. When Nbem had said that the great white lord was as beautiful as a bull rhinoceros he had said it all. Anything more than that was merely a gilding of the lily. But Nbem loved the sound of his own talk. He loved the boom of the great call-drum. It was hot drumming, but it was hotter doing nothing. With the drifting in of the first arrivals of a visible audience to sit in the shade and watch and admire him, he had been stirred to a redoubled magnificence, fury, enthusiasm and insanity. With the appearance of the great white lord to eat breakfast out in the *nkalabande* at the great council table, he had almost broken the drumsticks in his hammering arms, though they were hard as iron.

"Me-lay-gou the great white lord of lords!" he boomed. "Me-lay-gou the magnificent! In the days of the old Germans we thought that there were great men! In the days of the old Germans we thought that there were strong men! In the days of the old Germans we thought that there were beautiful men! But above them all stands Me-lay-gou the mighty as an elephant stands on ants! Where have they gone, the old fierce masters? Where have they gone, the pickle-headed helmets? Where is Hé Do-mé of the glass eye, the great and cruel Crocodile? They are fled beyond the sea! They are dead within the forest! Long ago the hyenas have torn their rotting flesh! Long ago the green ghost light has played on their moldering skeletons! But he shall live forever! Forever and forever! Magnificent and in glory! Me-lay-gou the terrible, the beautiful, the great white lord of lords!"

Nbem did his dance with shuffling feet. He tossed his whirling sticks into the air and caught them, grinning. And suddenly in the midst of his great booming, beside his drum shed there at the edge of the clearing, that light lithe amber girl with her wary step, her great wild eyes, had come stepping softly out of the forest.

Stepping softly, wary as a doe, and pausing with one foot lifted, with the

rapt light of the inspired and maniac dancer in her eyes. Her shoulders stirred, her hands moved softly to her breast, she quivered slowly from the hips. There was a frenzy in her, the frenzy of the dance.

"Hush, hush!" her wild eyes seemed to say. "Let there be music, music!" Nbem felt the demon heat run through his own blood instantly in response to her muted frenzy. The demon heat, the glory of the dance, the wild hot blood of Africa!

"Boom!" he struck the great deep shivering note. "Boom! Boom! Boom! Glory! And glory forever! She has come, the gazelle of the forest!"

The heat was in his blood. "Yi-o! Yi-o!" he yelled. His flailing arms beat down with glorious fury.

"She is the gazelle of the forest! She is the daughter of Sasa, loveliest of the Mpongwes! She is Nyissa of the lost and hidden places! Rarely do we glimpse her for a moment, ranging far in our hunting, fleeting lightly where only the wild antelope flies and the shadowy, timid monkeys cry! But much we have heard of her, and much we have longed to see her, and much we have beat our drums in invitation to her in vain! Glory to *moné zip,* the gazelle of the forest! The glory of the little people, the gazelle of the forest!"

Nbem's head was almost jerking off his shoulders as he flailed with frenzy on the drum; his fez had gone off flying. The sweat rolled out of his fat hide, his white eyes glared, his thick lips foamed, he did the leopard walk, crouching, slipping, twitching, pausing, stalking down along the drum towards her while he beat forth his exaltation on it, the thunderous bawa of his sticks rolling forth in a cataclysm of pauseless liquid sound.

And with a final boom and a great yell Nbem leaped into the air. He threw his drum sticks from him. He caught down his carved bullshead dance drum from beneath the rafters of the drum shed.

"Yi-o!" he yelled. "Dance, dance! Glory and glory forever! Dancing and glory forever! Dance, gazelle of the forest!"

And whirling, spinning with the madness in him, he collapsed crosslegged on the ground, with the dance drum clasped upright between his knees. In a frenzy, with glaring eyes and yelling mouth he drubbed both fists with rhythmic booms upon the stretched rhinoceros hide—a drum less wide in range and less vocable than the great call-drum, but more primitive and sensuous, and in its range as deep.

THE beat of the dance drum thundered. She quivered from the hips. Her eyes were remote before her, they were maniac and wild. There was the frenzy in her, the frenzy of the dance. The beat grew wilder, her lips were parted, they made a little gasping sound. And suddenly she stamped down her foot.

"Aie-o!" her wild voice rose exultantly. "Aie-o!"

"Malinga! Malinga!" the blacks were all yelling. "Malinga, gazelle of the forest!"

With gestures soft and shy she stepped out from the shadows, her demon-haunted stare upon the great white commandant, her knees quivering softly, one hand upon her breast. Her light feet moved at first slow, and then faster and faster, while her wild voice rose up in the wild song. She was tossing her hair, she wove like water, she spun in the center of the hot sunlit ground. The tomtom boomed, the blacks clapped their hands in breathless sweating silence now, while in the center of the sunlight she tossed and spun, lithe and barbaric, yet strangely virginal, in a dance that had in it all the ungraspable longings of men's lives, the despair of artists and the futility of saints.

"Aie-o!" she sang, advancing towards the *nkalabande* beneath whose shadows

de Milegout sat mute and sweating, with his fists locked on his chair arms and his eyes like marbles in his head.

"Aie-o!" she sang, provocative, alluring, her black hair tossing. "My father was a white man, my mother fair and brown! They were hungry in the forest, the men were falling down! Aie-o! Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Hé Do-mé is marching on! Hé Do-mé!"

Advancing, retreating, spinning, advancing again.

"Aie-o! There's no black man who would have me, I am too wild and young! I dance within the shadows, the jungle trees among!"

The rhinoceros hide beneath Nbem's fists roared and boomed, the squatting blacks around the circle of the clearing crouched forward on their fists and knees.

"Aie-o!" the blacks all roared. "Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go; Hé Do-mé the Crocodile is marching again! Hé Do-mé!"

The ripple of her amber muscles, the tossing of her hair! Her wild, wild eyes, her leaping feet. Louis-Phillipe de Milegout sat gripping the arms of his chair with his fat lips drooling.

She was across the table from him, within five feet. A hideous grin, his look of allurement and irresistible enticement, spread over his pear-shaped face. He reached across the table toward her, scattering food and plates with the grunt of his surging belly.

But that tore it. At the first gesture of him she had paused instantly in her wild dance, with a gasp, as if something had snapped, as fragile as a spider thread, but as strong as steel. Wild as a doe she slid back. Shadows passed across her menaced eyes as swift as light on water. She shivered like a woman coming out of a trance.

The demon had left her. She had the look as if she did not quite know where she was. She gave a breathless gasp. Backing, she stared bewildered at M. Louis-Phillipe de Milegout's glaring cock eyes, his hideous grin of jewfish allurement, his pear-shaped face with its bristling horns of mustache and the added flowerpot of waving maiden's-hair fern upon his nose, while M. de Milegout winked at her ferociously, screwing up his face again and again.

"All right!" said Milegout. "I liked your dance. *Bis! Bravo!* Come here, and I'll give you a coconut. I'm lord here."

But with another inaudible gasp, and wild, wild eyes, she turned from him. She fled back across the clearing quick as a shadow. She seemed to skim in a leap the drum that Nbem was still thudding. Without a backward glance she vanished in the forest.

"Get her!" yelled Milegout, beside himself. "Get her! Make her come back! Ougoulou! Your men! Send them to catch her! By God, she won't flout me! I'll have her whipped into her senses! I'm the lord here! Go get her!"

OUGOULOU shook his black face with hopeless regret. "Mon commandant," he said, "you are my father and my mother. You are a man wise beyond all utter wisdom. It is not for me, O lord, to point out to you that the rhinoceros does not catch the light and timid little golden cat far in the forest, nor yet the warthog the mocking bird in the sky."

"Something frightened her!" said Louis-Phillipe, glaring about him. "What could it have been?"

Nbem the drummer had sprung up, kicking his dance drum away. He snatched up the sticks of his great call-drum from the ground where he had hurled them.

"O little gazelle!" Nbem played upon his drum, with a pulse deep and vibrant through the forest. "Oh, little gazelle, you came from your far off secret places,

from the home of the timid little people, to give the only gift you had, the glory of your dance, in honor of the great white commandant! In your heart you hoped that he would be pleased by it, for the honor of the little people! Do not think now that he was displeased by it! Do not fear his anger! When the great white commandant closed down one eye terribly and with deliberation at you it did not mean that he was giving you the devil-eye, on the contrary it meant that he was pleased with you, after the manner of the great whites with their women! When the great white lord with look and gesture invited you, a woman, to eat at his table with him, he was not trying to force and lure you into violating any of the inviolable tabus, so that demons might seize your soul and flesh within the darkness for your sin! Strange are the ways of white men; they have not the tabus of the B'gis! Come back, come back," Nbem pled with vibrant drum. "Come back, gazelle of the forest!"

His great drum notes rolled pleadingly. Tears were pouring down Nbem's face. He knew too well now it was hopeless. How many times he had drummed for her, in vain.

"Come back, Nyissa, daughter of Sasa, best-loved wife of Bwamba! Who followed Hé Do-Mé to the forest, and for whom the great ghost drum beat! This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba by the Ngumba woman, calling on the great call-drum of Bwamba, come back, my sister, come ba—"

Nbem's rippling hands stopped in the middle of a particularly poignant and throbbing beat. He stopped abruptly. He let the great drum of Bwamba break off with a call unfinished, which was something that the great drum had never done before, for far and wide over a thousand miles of villages and forests it would bring an eerie fear and a terror of the devil-devils to the people, as to what had silenced the great drum in the middle of its talk, like a man suddenly strangled with hands about his throat. Yet Nbem broke off with the beat unfinished—he could not help it, for he felt as if hands suddenly were strangled about his own throat.

Ah!

Nbem's nostrils were quivering; a peculiar muddy color had spread over his face. His eyes rolled, and suddenly he backed out from beneath the drum-shed with a glance of breathless terror up at the great silk-cotton tree which stood at the edge of the forest, with great branches overgrowing the thatch roof. There was nothing to be seen, but Nbem's knees were quivering and the whites of his eyes were jelly, and his heart had ceased to beat. In a moment the grunt of a crocodile croaked down at him, half mockingly, half as a man who speaks little clears his rusty throat, and through the thick foliage a pair of red-rimmed eyes, a matted lean head of blond-gray hair, a fragment of gaunt bearded face showed, peering down at him.

"*Mbolo!* Greetings, O industrious woodpecker!" croaked the rusty voice, a little weakly but with insolence. "Do not let the smell of the crocodile interrupt the woodpecker's industrious pecking. I sit on your mats, O son of Bwamba, and I listen."

"Hé—!" jittered Nbem.

"I hunger, son of Bwamba," muttered the red-rimmed eyes. "I have come back, I have come back. To fill my belly. Give my obeisances to his rhinocerosship ape, and tell him that I have come to sit on his mats, a stranger from the jungle—"

But Nbem had heard, "I hunger!" and he did not stay for the rest. He had felt the flood of life and mobile terror beating through his veins again after that moment when his heart had altogether stopped. With a wild, unearthly screech, still grasping his drum sticks, he fled into the forest.

CHAPTER V

THE CROCODILE'S FEAST

VON DORMER eased his shaking frame carefully down onto the roof of the low shed. He slid down the thatch on his tail. He would not have been able to have climbed the silk-cotton at all, but its fork had been only a step from the ground, and it had not required many ounces of strength, of which he had few to waste. He had wanted to reconnoiter, to look the old station over, and so for a little while he had lain upon the tree in watchful silence while the dance drum boomed and the brown girl danced and the roaring song of the blacks went up in honor of the great new Frog who had come to rule from the old throne of Hé Do-mé at Bouboufonké.

Bouboufonké! So this was it again. Von Dormer had envisioned something greater in his foggy memories and his dreams than this. He had built up, over years, the illusion of a great plantation house that there had been, a rich vista of barracks, shops and barns, vast fields of ripe grain, herds of fat dappled cattle in lush flower-filled meadows, orchards loaded with apples, peaches, plums, oranges, guavas, all growing and ripening together in endless profusion, a paradise beyond heat or cold and beyond time. But it had never been like that. It had been only a little sun-baked clearing, a small bare shack in a hell of green jungle, a place of misery, heat, and flies. Nothing is ever important except in a man's own mind, of course. Bouboufonké had been important only in a dream.

He remembered the time when he had planned to bring a wife out here, a girl who had been his childhood sweetheart back in Schleesdorf on the Rhine. He had made great preparations for her, had had a bed, bureau, an elegant shiny dining room table, and other luxuries sent from Germany and brought in with great effort by his blacks from the coast, hacking through the jungle. He had filled her in his letters with stories of the glories of Bouboufonké, until he had come to believe in them himself, perhaps.

The war had broken out, she had not come. And perhaps just as well. She would have been disappointed. He had forgotten her name now. He had even forgotten what she had looked like. She had been white, of course—she must have been white, for she had had blue eyes and yellow hair, and she had been German, though in his mind, when he tried to conjure up the picture of what she had looked like, he could see only brown skin and negroid features. Yes, it had been just as well she had not come. It might have been she whom he would have had with him in the caves within the mountains.

Bouboufonké—he had overrated it in his own mind, he saw with condescension, as he slid carefully down the thatch. It wasn't so much as he had dreamed it. It never had been. It was a puddle fit for Frogs. But he was von Dormer; he was still as good. He would go on to great things yet, just as soon as he got his feet beneath him. They were all still afraid of von Dormer. He had given them a good fight. Just the look of him, they trembled. Ha, that black ape's screech, the son of Bwamba!

He was the great von Dormer—only a little faint, that was all. The food had been thin, the hunting poor. He didn't move quite so fast as he used to, that was granted. They had come to know his smell. For the last few weeks, or months, or was it years, things hadn't been going quite so well. But he would let the Frenchman feed him, and when he had eaten he would be himself again.

There was food now waiting for him. Beneath that thatch, upon the table. The Frog was a good eater, that was fortunate. A dyspeptic eater means a

meager larder, and von Dormer felt that he could eat bushels, that he could eat tons, that he could eat the world. Food to eat, to champ, to guzzle, gulp—ah, he musn't think of it, or he would collapse before he got there. His knees were shaky.

He had been walking hours, since early morning, when beside the stream in the lost jungle he had listened to the drum-speech, and had arisen to go to Bouboufonké. Yet so long as he had been on his feet, shuffling and shuffling heel and toe, at the energy-conserving, steady pace of Africa, he had not felt too weak. There had been a momentum which had carried his stringy muscles, his starved blood, along. He had walked sixty miles within a day, he had walked perhaps a half million miles in Africa. Yet for a moment now, as his sliding feet hit the ground, and he staggered, with caving knees, von Dormer had the ghastly awful terror that he could never cross that last little distance of fifty yards or so to where the table stood.

He swayed, he staggered. Then he had got his legs in movement beneath him. With his monocle in his eye von Dormer proceeded across the sun-baked clearing, counting each step.

His knees were shivering beneath him. The recurrent dream that he had had of vanishing, empty banquets still terrified him. But this was real. The smells, he knew them every one. The ample dishes, still well filled, after the Frenchman had been satisfied. Oh, God, if he died now, before he reached it! A demon in a nightmare waiting to strike him down. He walked, he walked, the long, long steps, fooling the waiting nightmare demon. Then the Frenchman was before him, standing clutching the edge of the table, the table spread with all that food, as if in a gesture of hospitality. Von Dormer halted before the fat white bulk of the Frenchman. He had reached it.

HE could not have gone, he thought, another step. He was on the verge of collapse. He would like to grab and snatch with both hands, with gobbles, croaks and bleats, and gorge and gorge and gorge. But he was a gentleman, of course. He wouldn't let a Frog think he was hungry—not *that* hungry! Very elegantly von Dormer clicked his heels together. He bowed stiffly from the hips to Milegout.

"Captain von Dormer, formerly of the Imperial Prussian Guards," he introduced himself with a croaking drawl, fingering his monocle. "At your service, *m'sieu' le Administrateur!* Happened to be in the vicinity, and heard you had just arrived. Thought I might drop in to wish you luck, and to offer any service. Fellow white men in the jungle, you know. Mush is thicker than blood —I mean water. Hands across the Rhine. As an old Camerooner, I'm always glad to help a new man out." He took a deep croaking breath, and his entrails screamed inside him. "Ah!" he said with an air of red-eyed casualness, as if just observing the table. "I see you have dumboy! Few cooks know how to make it really properly. Is your boy doing all right by you, commandant? Let me see."

Oh, that was a nice touch. He hadn't even expressed an appetite. He wouldn't let a Frenchman know that he was hungry. He wouldn't beg from a damned Frenchman. He wouldn't beg from God. He was just one gentleman calling on another, and expressing a friendly interest in the merits of the other's cook. Just for a sample now, to see if it was real, before he was invited to sit down and spread his legs beneath the Frenchman's table! Fingering his monocle, von Dormer reached over casually and snatched a lump of dripping cassava with claws which in the last instant he could not help making a little ravenous and quick.

"Awk!" he breathed, with a hoarse croak of anticipation.

Monsieur Louis-Phillipe de Milegout stood clutching the table edge, choked with cock-eyed rage. The damned matted, naked, red-eyed living death, with his monocle and his impudence of a gentleman! Coming and snatching food with his dirty claws. Thinking he could get away with it.

"Why, you damned ape!" screamed Milegout.

He struck the trembling clawlike hand that was swiftly and covertly streaking towards the other's hairy mouth. With another furious screech and yell he picked up one of the pale squashy fruits and slammed it in the dirty Boche's face. It spurted like a bag of water. With more maniac yells Milegout grabbed up handfuls of dripping buttery foods and hurled them in von Dormer's eyes and beard and hair. That brown girl who had fled so maddeningly a minute ago had crazed the honest Frenchman. Something had scared her. It could only have been this specimen hiding in the treetops. Yelling, Milegout snatched up the swimming dishes bodily and sloshed their contents wholesale at the matted, red-eyed skeleton.

"Get out!" he screamed. "Get out!"

Von Dormer staggered. With sprawling outstretched arms he tried to fend off the hurtling barrage of eggs, fruits, sauces, creams and hardtacks which came sloshing and whizzing through the air at him from the reeling hands of Milegout. For the moment he was blinded and bewildered by this munificent rain of overwhelming hospitality. He tried to lick his face, but the stuffs were running off too fast for him to get more than a taste, if that. Yelling, Milegout slopped the contents of the coffee pot, emptying the table.

"That finishes you! Get out!"

Red-eyed, von Dormer glared at the empty table. Oh, God, the nightmare dream! He couldn't believe it. With a half articulate croak and gobble, all his defenses of gentlemanliness gone by the board, and only an animal of crazed hunger for the moment, he sprawled down upon his knees. On all fours, he raked with frantic claws at the foodstuffs sloshed and scattered over the ground, mingled now with dirt, leaves, twigs, ants.

"Seize him!" screamed Milegout. "Don't let him have anything! Kick him out!"

BEHIND the enraged lord of Bouboufonké, Ougoulou, the Yebekolo, stood for an instant motionless with terror. But a couple of other black militiamen, of tribes which had been less close to Hé Do-mé, were on hand to grab his clawing wrists and elbows. They weren't afraid of the old Crocodile when there was another white man by, and particularly the great French lord commandant.

They hauled his bony form to his feet, holding his clenched fists which still fought crazily to reach his mouth. In their grip von Dormer stood gaunt and shaking. He had been kicked out before from other stations, but never without a full belly. Never without one bite. Oh, God, the food that had been hurled at him, the food upon the ground! Like a nightmare of the hells of Tantalus. Not one bite. He couldn't believe it.

"Pardon me," he croaked. "Pardon me. I didn't mean to force myself uninvited. It has been a little while since I have chopped, though. Perhaps I seemed too greedy. Sorry to confess it, but the fact is I'm starving. Damn it," he whispered, with a skeleton grin of despair, "I'm starving. Do you know what that means? I'm a white man. Give me food, or I'll die!"

"Die," said Milegout, still in a rage. "You'll get no food here, you living death, now or any other time, and that's final. I know all about you. Why do

you think I came to Africa? To feed the scullions of the jungle? Die and rot. You would smell as sweet. Die right now, if you want to."

Not that he was necessarily a totally unfeeling man, Louis-Phillipe de Milegout; he was not quite inhuman. But he had his own hunger and his own starvation, and that is all that any man can think of. The long, long years! Then that moment of swirling splendor, at the apogee of life, with that amber girl dancing like a flame before him, when he had felt himself a god, an all-devouring god, reaching out to seize her. And all of it abruptly torn to tatters. This skeleton death, this specimen!

"Damn you," he said with crying rage, "if she hadn't smelled you in the treetops, she wouldn't have been scared away! Even the blacks don't like the smell of you. Rot and starve, that's nothing to me. Only keep away from here. I'm not going to have you frightening off my natives. What do you think I came to Africa for, to meet a dirty white man? Paris is full of white men. Why did you have to come along and ruin it?"

Von Dormer glared at him with burning eyes.

"Oh," he sneered, "so that's the way of it!"

"What way?" said Milegout, with bubbling lips.

"The brown wench," sneered von Dormer gauntly. "You want her, do you, Frenchman?" He laughed with a hoarse croak. "I had almost forgotten that men want them. Feed me, Frenchman, and you can have her."

"What do you mean?" bubbled Milegout.

He regretted that he had betrayed, in his rage, the madness that the brown forest dancer had aroused in him. He was indifferent to the women, lock, stock, and barrel, as anybody knew. He would not have them laughing through the jungle. Laughing that Milegout the great white lord of lords, had been flouted by a dancing brown wench. He was a stern, silent man.

"Feed me, Frenchman," said von Dormer, with burning eyes. "I have been too long hungry. It has been too long since I have had even ants to eat, and they set up a poison in the gut. I have been too long hungry, and I know hunger when I see it. The brown girl isn't hard to reach. She belongs to old Ze Zaikut's village. No one knows the way there better than I. In the blackest of the deepest night once even I found it! Feed me, and I will lead you to the B'gi village, I swear it."

Louis-Phillipe curled the points of his mustache coldly.

"As it happens," he said with an aloof and formal air, "I had already planned a small tour of the villages in that direction, to get acquainted with the people. I won't feed you, von Dormer. I don't trust you that far. But if you should happen to go along with me on such a tour of the native villages," he suggested indirectly, looking down with both eyes contemplatively at the mole on the end of his nose, "and if we should happen on her village to which you know the way I would doubtless see to it that you would be included in any hospitality offered us by the natives, if it is a fact that you really are hungry."

Food, food! Von Dormer closed his eyes a moment. But if he died right there, he would die empty.

"You are tough, aren't you, Frenchman?" he said. "I pity the worms that you tread on. But even more I pity the worms that try to eat you when you die."

DIE! Well, it had never occurred to Louis-Phillipe de Milegout that he would ever really do anything like that. But in the blackness of the impenetrable night, in the great demon-haunted jungle, the fear of death had come upon him, with the throb of the little drums

podding all around, podding from nowhere in the blackness.

Louis-Phillipe had come to Africa to live, and not to die. But other men had done that, too, and still other men had died in Africa.

Pod, pod, pod, pod, throbbed the little drums! Hush! the darkness pressed in, rustling. Great trees whose trunks they went scraping past, from whose hanging limbs snakes suddenly whipped and lashed across a man's face till he could scream with terror, till he remembered they were only vines.

Seated in the jolting litter, Louis-Phillipe bumped, swayed, jolted, bounced, and jiggled. The skeleton form of von Dormer walked ahead and Ougoulou, the glint of his rifle on his back, carried the lantern. There were three or four other militiamen somewhere in the rear, perhaps only a couple of yards behind, perhaps a quarter mile, perhaps nowhere, if they had suddenly and silently been cut off. Pod, pod, pod, pod, the little drums, and the blackness was alive with something, but what it was Milegout did not know.

He held his great cavalry saber athwart his fat thighs. He had his pistol in his hand, gripping it unsteadily, with wavering muzzle swaying from one side to the other against the walls of blackness. He had a bottle of cognac clasped between his legs upon the seat, its cork drawn. With each jounce the liquor slooshed. With each jounce Louis-Phillipe grabbed the bottle and took a jiggling sip of it.

The blackness had fallen with instant speed. The great black night of Africa. Even Ougoulou and the other blacks did not know where they were any more, Milegout knew. That gaunt living skeleton was supposed to be leading them along some faint trail upon the forest floor. But whether he was not lost, too, was a question. Milegout took another swig of his bottle. He wished he had fed the Boche before they started. The fellow was dying on his feet. It would be pretty if he died now, and left them in the midst of this.

Pod, pod, pod, pod! What were they saying in the darkness?

Just before the swift darkness crashed, twenty miles out of Bouboufonké Milegout had called a rest, for his liver by that time had become considerably green and moldy tasting inside him. But when they stopped, and the black boys holding his wheel-shafts had steadied him while he dismounted, and they had all thrown themselves down, he had looked ahead and seen von Dormer still continuing his shuffling, shuffling, heel and toe walk, going on without them. At that forward-leaning, barely lifted pace of his, like a perpetual stagger. They had already left the marked trails, and so they had had to get up and hurry after him, lest they lose him from sight in a moment more.

"What's the matter with you, you bearded ape?" Milegout had yelled when with sweating effort they had overtaken him. "I called a halt! You can stand a rest."

"They'll come and get you while you're still alive," Milegout had heard him muttering incoherently in reply, over his shoulder. "You've got to keep on your feet, or you're done for. You've got to keep moving till you have a roof above your head and a meal to fill your belly. If you don't you'll just fall down and die empty and alone. You've got to keep moving till you get to Bouboufonké. The new Frog there ought to be good for one meal, anyway."

"What are you talking about, you specimen?"

"We're marching over the mountains!" von Dormer had croaked. "Come on, get your legs beneath you before I give you the whip! You've got an empty gut, have you? I'll fill it with lead! Come on, we're marching another twenty miles tonight! And you women

"Pause and listen, chiefs and peoples!"

can wail and you men can die, but we're going over the mountains!"

Croaking and muttering to himself for a long time, walking heel to toe behind the gaunt, matted skeleton, Ougoulou had rolled his white eyes around at Milegout in the rolling litter. But after the darkness came, von Dormer had fallen silent.

Now the blackness of the starless African night, of the jungle, had crashed down, and for endless minutes, perhaps hours, perhaps years and years, the thickness of it, the rustles, the whipping sudden snakes of it, had been all around them. And now the drums were podding.

Pod, pod, pod, pod! With shaking hands Milegout lifted the bottle again and sloshed a burning gill down his esophagus.

"Listen!" he barked. "Listen, what are they saying?"

But the black men fore and aft in the shafts, pulling and pushing his rhinocerine hide, were sweating too much to answer him, if they knew. The terror grew in Milegout. Little steps, little peering eyes, little poisoned blow-guns all around in the blackness! You could feel them! The Boche was leading them

into ambush! It was a trick to get them all killed.

"Halt!" roared Milegout, with the liquor reeling in him. "Squads about face! The enemy are upon us! It is an ambush! Give them a volley like soldiers!"

He waved his gun, which unfortunately he had forgot to load before departing from Bouboufonké. Breathing hoarsely, he tried to pull out his saber from its sheath, but the ancient blade was rusted in. "About face! To the rear, advance!" he boiled. But the black men were used to drunken commandants, and they understood that in that condition great white lords were not to be taken seriously, or else they'd get their pants kicked off them in the morning. Cackling and laughing among themselves with barnyard hilarity, they pushed on after Ougoulou and that gaunt pale zombie of a Boche.

The drums had ceased now. The black silence pressed around. And Milegout knew terror. Suddenly with no word of warning his jolting litter stopped. Milegout heard his own whooling breath like the whooling of the hippopotamus to her child. Von Dormer had abruptly halted in front of him. His men had stopped so quickly he had been almost catapulted out. The darkness breathed. The darkness was alive with unseen little eyes. Stealth! Silence The little frightened eyes! Von Dormer took the dim lantern from Ougoulou, and held it up.

"Me-lay-gout the great white lord sits on your mats, O little people!" he croaked. "Beat the drum and bake the kid! Let the feast be heaped up and women dancing! Me-lay-gou the mighty sits on your mats, with a hunger in his liver! And I! And I!" he muttered.

Suddenly around them where they stood motionless as stone in the middle of the silent darkness squares of light blazed out in a circle. The doorway mats had been whisked away from two dozen little beehive-shaped thatched dwellings all around, as if one had done it, and the torches being nursed within blazed forth through the open doorways. They had landed in the middle of the B'gi village.

CHAPTER VI

VON DORMER FEASTS

ALL AROUND them the doorways blazed, little men came rushing out from them with blazing flambeaux, little women, little men, with curious long heads, pot-bellied, wrinkle-faced, like black gnomes, to make a circle of the torches round them.

From a somewhat larger beehive dwelling confronting them a majestic four-foot-figure stepped, preceded by two dancing boys playing a shrill weird music on wooden whistles, with his own wrinkled little face, with his own pot belly, with a square of some ancient rotted white man's fabric—it looked like a particularly rain-rotted and wind-torn specimen of an old white German battle banner, with the black cross and the double-eagles on it—tied around his neck and falling down his back in lieu of a robe of royal ermine, with a notched wand in his hand for staff and scepter and on his head a tin can for a crown.

In the center of the clearing eight little pigmies sat cross-legged in a line with padded drumsticks held erect and motionless over eight antelope-head drums. The eight little pigmies ducked their heads in unison, in unison they struck their drums.

"Ob ba bawa! Ob ba bawa! He is great and he is mighty! He is glorious and fearless! He is beautiful and magnificent He is wise, he is immortal! His name is Me-lay-gou the terrible! Glory to Me-lay-gou the mighty! Glory to Me-lay-gou the brave and mighty! Glory to Me-lay-gou the beautiful and mighty! Glory and glory forever and ever to Me-lay-gou the wonderful, the

mighty, the great white lord of lords!" beat the eight little pigmies on their drums.

Preceded by his writhing, strutting, cakewalking, whistling fife-boys, the pigmy king came out to the chair of Me-lay-gou the mighty. He fell upon his knees and prostrated himself on the ground.

"Glory to Me-lay-gou the great and mighty!" he said. "I am Ze Amba the son of Ze Zara the grandson of Ze Zomber the great-grandson of Ze Zaikut who lived a thousand years! And we have all been great and mighty kings and have lived a thousand years! But in a thousand generations have we not seen the wonder of it, in a thousand generations of the kings of the forest we have not been honored by a lord so great and mighty, nor shall we be again till the world end. Me-lay-gou the magnificent, I am but the flea upon the small head-flea which you pick off and crush between your fingers. I am but the worm within the worm of the tumbo grub which burrows in your foot. Me-lay-gou the mighty, welcome, who have come to sit upon my mats. What I have to offer from my crown to the life of my own miserable groveling body is yours at your command, great lord!"

And he struck his wizened little face three times upon the ground with dull and reverberating thuds. Milegout the magnificent, though he could not understand the clicking pigmy speech, was well pleased by the demonstration of respect and devotion. He holstered his gun and put his sword down. Clasping his bottle of cognac by the neck, with a great belly sigh he started to get down. One of the litter men between the shafts leaned over to tap the pigmy king on the shoulder and motion him that he might arise, but the gesture upset the equilibrium of the chariot, and Milegout the mighty was precipitated out like a load of hard coal from a dump truck. He landed on his hands and knees somewhat informally on the ground, where on all fours he shook hands with the pigmy king.

"Pod, pod, pod, pod! Pod, pod, pod, pod! He is great and he is mighty! He is terrible and he is dreadful!" beat the eight little pigmies on their drums.

The pigmy king clapped his hands. He shouted orders in a rapid clicking to eight corners of the clearing, with his brow sweating, an intense and anxious frown upon his wrinkled little face. In the shadows of the circle beyond the blazing flambeaux little runners went darting off into the darkness. Preceded by the dancing, gyrating fife-boys like a couple of writhing, whistling worms, Milegout and von Dormer followed the pigmy king into his ten-by-ten royal palace, bending beneath the royal doorway.

THEY sat cross-legged on the earth floor in the palace of Ze Amba, king of the B'gis, awaiting supper, looking out through the open doorway at the flambeaux and the row of little drummers and the smooth hard dancing ground in the center of the village, with the great darkness all around. A little man came running to the doorway. He thrust his wrinkled face in with a rapid clicking. He ran off again into the darkness.

Behind the hut, through the small rear door, fire could be seen heaped high in the communal stone stove, and the shadowy figures of the little women moving about it. The smell of strange pigmy messes cooking arose not too palatably on the air from there. Milegout wrinkled up his nose and took a drink from the bottle. He even felt so pleasant now that he proffered it to von Dormer and the pigmy king.

The torches flared outside, casting shadows. In the middle of the clearing the eight little pigmies beat upon their drums. Suddenly into the circle of light before their eight bent, industrious fig-

ures she had swung, Nyissa the dancer, with her dusky, lithe body, her amber grace, her great eyes staring through the doorway at Louis-Phillipe de Milegout, as if fascinated by him like a bird. Pod, pod, pod, pod! Pod, pod, pod, pod! played the eight little pigmies on their drums.

She was dancing, not the wild white man's malinga, the Spanish dance from Guinea, but the more native gazelle dance, the dance of the shadows of the forest, of the light and wary doe. One foot paused, and one foot paused, stepping light, light and furtively, with her great eyes flaring round her, with a quivering of her nostrils, like the wary doe who smells the bloody hunter, her glances wide with terror, going through the part.

"*Moné zip, alé a daneyu . . .*" her voice sang, with a little frightened cry. "Little gazelle, the night has deepened. . . .!" Soft and eerily she sang.

Staring all around her at the darkness, while the firelight played and she paused one-footed. Milegout watched her for a little while with head a little swaying. But he preferred the other dance of hers. This art stuff bored him. He would have the other presently. He could wait.

"Ze Zaikut bought her to be my bride when I was a babe as she was," said the little king, Ze Amba, proudly. "Many elephant tusks she cost. We sold the mats from under us and the copper earrings from our noses, and still we had to borrow from other tribes. We went in debt for a thousand years. But she is the gazelle of the forest, and a pearl without price. Because of her we are famous everywhere. Ze Zaikut had wanted her to breed strong pigmy kings by me, but she is more beautiful as she is."

Milegout moistened his lips.

"You mean she is not actually your wife?"

"Oh, yes, she is my wife. She was Ze Zaikut's wife, and she was Ze Zomber's and Ze Zara's wives. She is the wife of all of us. She is the gazelle of the forest."

"I mean has no man ever loved her?" muttered Milegout, staring at the little wrinkled pigmy. "What a waste!"

"What is love?" said the pigmy wonderingly. His little wrinkled face grew sad. "Perhaps it is something that we do not know," he said humbly. "We know so little. But we know that she is beautiful to watch, and that is what she does, she dances. The great white lord seems contemptuous. Yet what else could we use her for? Should we use her as one of the breeding or cooking women, or perhaps as one of the women who gather ants? There are others to do those things. To us she is beautiful to watch."

"So you think now that she was worth the price, Ze Amba?" said von Dormer heavily.

He sat against the center pole of the little hut, with his head leaning back against it heavily. The drink which Milegout had given him had gone like fire through his starved blood, and his head rolled a little.

"Oh, yes, Hé Do-mé, she was worth it, though it was beyond one ever heard of. She was worth it, had we had it, twice."

"She was born beneath the earth," said von Dormer dreamily, "on the night that Bwamba died. There were only the three of us left. She came into the world as Bwamba went out of it, so that there still were three. Her mother lived a week, then her mother's milk went dry. Her mother died.

"I got away with her slung in my kerchief tied around my neck. She nursed on hippopotamus and bush-cow milk. I knew that it would make her sleek and strong. Some times she lay cradled in the crotch of a tree while the hunt for me was all around. The gliding snake fondled her, and the butterfly danced

about her; the birds sang for her, and the monkeys came softly and watched her while she slept. And she grew brown and strong. She learned music, rippling movement. She learned also patience, silence; she learned to obey.

"Ze Zaikut said, 'Suppose she does not survive?' Ze Zaikut said, 'The price for the goods is high, and who pays the insurance if she dies, as one child out of two must do before it has reached man or woman age?' But I knew that she would survive and would be a paragon among women. I am glad that you do not think I asked too high a price, Ze Amba."

"You sold her?" said Milegout with bulging eyes, with disgust in his voice. "You sold her to these people?"

Von Dormer opened his gaunt eyes a moment.

"WHY NOT? I had saved her to sell," he said coldly. "It was not easy, those first weeks and months. I went hungry myself at times to see that she was fed. There were times, when the hunt was on, when it would have been easier for me to have left her beneath a bush, as a proprietary offering to the leopards. Should I not realize something on all that?

"I would have liked to have saved her for a white man, who might have paid a hundred times as much, but the investment over the years, waiting for a better return, was more than I could see my way clear to swing. Considering her youth, I knew that the B'gis would pay the highest price. I came into their village with her one night when the Country Devil was walking abroad and they dared not flee into the night from me. Ze Zaikut and I haggled hours, but I stuck to my price. I sold the stuff I got for her for twelve British pounds. It fed me for almost five years."

At intervals three or four others of the little men had come rushing silently to the door, speaking rapidly with a click to the little pigmy king, and had turned and gone out again into the darkness running. Ze Amba's little wrinkled face was worried.

She was still dancing in the circle of the dwindling torches. Shadows played upon her amber body. She would dance as long as there were drums.

The smell of cooking came from the stone stove behind the hut. It came to von Dormer's stiffened nostrils, where he lay with eyes closed, head back against the post. How long, how long? He could smell rice and peppers. They wouldn't give him and Milegout any of their pigmy messes of carrion and ants, that set up a poison in a white man's gut. He and Milegout were too royal. He smelled the cooking, and his gaunt entrails screamed inside him. How long, how long?

"Ground chop nut will be ready presently, O lord," said Ze Amba, looking at von Dormer with his little wrinkled face so anxiously, reading his hunger.

Milegout swayed, bottle in hand. He wiped his mouth. He offered it to the pigmy king.

"Have her come in and eat with us," he said. "Tell her to join us for dinner."

His tone was a little thick, his Bantu fragmentary, his gestures not too conclusive. Fortunately the little pigmy king did not understand him.

"The B'gis don't eat with their women, Milegout," said von Dormer. "It's damned tabu. The devil-devil would get them. It might get them even if they knew you had suggested it."

Smiling ironically, with his eyes closed. How much Milegout had to learn! How much to learn. . . .

More little heads in the doorway, wrinkled, shaking. One by one they came. Ze Amba talked rapidly and desperately to them in the clicking bush tongue, which is not Bantu. Which is, in fact, not like a tongue of men at all, but more like a rapid popping of a man's

tongue against his teeth, such language as the monkeys might use. The little sweating men at the door ran off. Milegout passed the bottle again, and this time von Dormer took a deeper swallow, and so did the pigmy king.

"He is trying to get a young goat, I think," explained von Dormer, laughing a little giddily and foolishly with the heat in his starved veins. "Their click is a little beyond me when they start smacking it too fast. They are pretty damned poor, I guess. Poorer even than I had imagined. They don't want to feed us ants. They give a white man a poison in his gut. I couldn't stand them myself, and they'd kill you. Ze Amba's trying to borrow from all the other jungle villages. He's sending men out into the jungle, too. Maybe they'll get a python. I missed a fat one this morning, not far away. My God, they take forever! I'm hungry."

"I'm beginning to feel starved myself," said Milegout. "Do you know that I haven't eaten since breakfast."

"It is too bad about you," said von Dormer. "It is too, too, too, too—"

He laughed crazily. The liquor had been too much for his starved blood.

Pod, pod, pod, pod! The little drums were subsiding like a fall of peas. The torches were dying down. As the drums died down, as the torches failed, the dancing girl, Nyissa, faded into the shadows.

Milegout smiled. He felt almost fond of von Dormer, laughing so crazily. Good old von Dormer. Quite a fellow when you get to know him. Put him in pants, and he'd be white. Milegout's own blood was bright and warm.

"The trouble with you, von Dormer," he said, "is that you're a man at loose ends. You've the type who should never have come to Africa. You're not the sort who is psychologically a roamer and an adventurer. You really belong in a dull routine job in some office taking care of screws and fishhooks, probably married to some nice dowdy little middle-class woman who would take care of you and make you wear your rubbers in the rain and nurse your colds and feed you wienerschnitzel. You need stability like that to keep your emotional balance. Why didn't you ever get married?"

"I was going to once," said von Dormer. "She was coming out from home, a childhood sweetheart. I had painted a bright picture of Bouboufonké in my letters to her. She was looking forward to it wildly. She would probably have been disappointed in it if she had seen it, of course. A hot, mosquito-bitten little hell-hole in the back bush, a puddle for small frogs. No offense, Milegout.

"But I had done the best I could with it, had bought the great gilt bed on which our children were to be born, the big table at which they were all to eat, with myself sitting at the head carving paterfamilias style, the bureau in which they would stow away their clothes so very neatly. Six strong sons with blond hair, strong men for the jungle—I had planned it all out.

"She was blonde herself, blue eyes, that sort of thing. Her name, I just remembered it, was Hilda. She was white, of course, pure white. A little prudish, but she loved me, and she was my dream." Von Dormer laughed.

"Funny," he said, "I can't think what she looked like, any more. When I close my eyes and try to see her, all I see are negroid features and brown skin. Well, the great dining table at which all those blood sons were going to eat is the council table at Bouboufonké now, behind which beneath the *nkalabande* for eighteen years generations of French administrators have sat bored and sweating listening to the blacks argue their little lawsuits about dogs and women at court-palaver and mammy-palaver. And I guess that the other items of furniture have seen other uses as strange.'

"What happened?" said Milegout.

"OH, SHE was sailing on the first of August, '14," von Dormer said. "I was going to meet her down in Dakar, and we were going to be married by the consul there on the fifteenth of September, after she had arrived. Britain declared war on Germany, and her gray ships kept our ships from the seas. On the fifteenth of September the expeditionary forces of the allies had marched into the Cameroons, and I was meat in the bush, or little better, a wild man in the jungle, fighting with my askaris against them in the south and east and north. With my damned old askaris and their women.

"I marched them over the mountains," said von Dormer. "Where they said no man could go. Women and men, they marched with me, and if they didn't, they died. There's a song the black girls still sing about me," he said. "Did you ever watch the black girls dance and sing? *Aie-ho!*" he sang in his cracked croaking voice, leaning back against the hut post. *"Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Aie-yo!"* He had the bottle by the neck and he was swinging it, his eyes closed, his head rolling back and forth upon the post.

"Aie-yo! Hé Do-mé is marching again! Aie-yrup!" he croaked. "It goes something like that. You ought to hear the blacks sing it while they dance!"

"Why didn't you go back after the war?" said Milegout. "To the nice little sweetheart who was waiting and the domestic peace and the job in screws and fishhooks that you were cut out for?"

"I'll tell you," said von Dormer drunkenly. "Strictly confidentially. You are a gentleman, and so am I. Never talk about the women except with gentlemen. She was there in her occupied village in the Rhineland after the war, see? There was some swine in command of the village. She wouldn't be nice to him, and that made him mad, and he let her and her family starve. They were the big shots of the village, she was the Baroness Hilda—well. Anyway, the swine was sore at her, and he wanted to show her up, that she wasn't any better than anybody else. She had some younger sisters, and they had to eat, so she broke her pride and came and begged the Frenchman. Well, the sisters were starving.

"Ha, ha!" von Dormer laughed. "She was blonde, I remember that, but when I try to think of her all I can see is black."

"What was," said Milegout, "the name of this village on the Rhine?"

"Schlee—Schleesdorf," said von Dormer drunkenly. "Ever hear of it?"

"Oh!" said Milegout. "No, I never heard of it. There are lots of towns in Germany. I have never been in Germany myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said von Dormer. "I was pretty wild at first when I heard about it, I guess, the way that things had happened. I would have liked to have tracked that damned rhinoceros down and given him a punch in the snoot. But time changes everything. And down the rain barrel. That's where she stuck her head in and drowned herself, the fool. They say that I am crazy, but I would rather be that way than full of thinking. . . ."

He lurched, hiccuping. He almost lost the support of the post behind him, falling backwards.

THE DRUMS had died to a faint podding. The eight little pigmy drummers sat in a row, with drumsticks slowly, slowly dropping, as if their hands were tired. The torches had long ago burned down. In his agitation Milegout had not noticed the brown girl fading into the shadows at the edge of her dance, how long, how long ago?

He had finished the bottle. The food was coming on, a great steaming plat-

ter, three feet wide, and piled up high, fragrant smells of peppers, meat, peanuts, coconut, plantains. Four little pigmy women brought it in. They sat it down upon the floor. They stepped back hastily, not to desecrate the feast. Around it on the ground the two white men squatted with the pigmy king. Von Dormer's claws dug into the fragrant mess. He wolfed it with both hands.

Milegout was ravenous, too, with the hunger of alcohol and the hours since he had breakfasted beneath the *nkalabande*. Never such a hunger in his gut. It screamed for food. He dug his hands in, as the other was doing. He smacked his lips, his mustache was greasy, his lips gobbled, his teeth champed and sucked, he grunted and whoofled and snarled.

"Good eating," he took time to grunt. "What is it?"

"Ground chop nut," mouthed von Dormer. "Best dish in West Africa. When you've eaten it, boy, you know you've eaten something."

"What kind of meat?" said Milegout.

"Don't ask. Maybe dog, maybe snake."

"Good eating, anyway," Milegout grunted, gulped, and gobbled. "Some day I will write a book about it. That was what I came to Africa for, and that's no lie."

He wiped his hands upon his uniform, but it was hard to get them clean. His uniform was greasy all over. Slobs of food still trickled down the corners of his mouth, but there was no more room for any more inside him. He sank back on his hips heavily with a sigh, full, stuffed, satiated, bloated. He sucked his fingers one by one, and wiped his mustache off.

"Yes," he said, "I like good eating. I learned good eating on the Rhine. The German girls used to fix me their fanciest dishes. I knew the Baroness Hilda, von Dormer, don't fool yourself. Requisitioned her castle, in fact. To hell with her, and you, too."

He felt strong, he felt brave, he felt ferocious, he felt victorious and unafraid of von Dormer—with food, for one thing, and for another, because von Dormer had keeled back against the post with his eyes closed, and he had passed out.

The podding of the drums had died. The little pigmy drummers had taken up their drums. In the blackness of the night they had vanished.

"Ba ba ma töe! . . ."

Oh, there they were beating again! No, that wasn't the little podding pigmy drums. A faint and eerie prickle crept beneath Milegout's skin, all over. It sounded like the great drum at Boubou-fonké. Yet he could not be hearing that great drum with his ears that were slightly deaf, so far off through the lost jungle.

Through the demon-haunted jungle.

Faint, sonorous, slow, and deep.

"Ba ba ma töe!"

Von Dormer lay with his head back against the roof post. Now, he might be able to tell what that drum was, if he hadn't passed out. Milegout looked thoughtfully, sucking his fingers. No, von Dormer hadn't passed out. He had died of a glut, a surfeit. He had taken more than his gaunt, starved body, his screaming intestines, could assimilate, and it had poisoned him. Or else there had been some poison slipped into his food.

"To hell with you," said Milegout. "I will have all Africa! You are a dead ape! I am the king! I am the king!" he roared. "The king of Africa!"

He turned to Ze Amba, who crouched beside the dish, but had not eaten, while the white man had eaten.

"Now I want to watch the dancer."

THROUGH the darkness Nbem skittered full of terror, Nbem the drummer, Nbem the Yebekolo, still clutching his drum sticks that he had been holding when he had fled from the sight of

that gaunt starved face, those terrible red eyes, peering from the foliage of the great silk-cotton limb above him, and from the sound of that dreadful croaking voice, "I hunger!"

Oh, he had been only the littlest of little black pickaninnies, had Nbem, the drummer, when there had come the time of the great war between the whites. And the Bata men and the Island men had been marching in with their great guns that said pow-pow, and his father Bwamba had kissed him, and had taken his favorite wife Sasa, and with Hé Do-mé the Great Crocodile had gone away.

And there had been wars, and there had been wars, and there had been women weeping, and there had been hunger. And the word had come that Hé Do-mé had led them over the mountains, and that now in the mountains he was hiding out with Bwamba and Sasa, and a handful more. And they had them cornered in the mountains, said the drums. They were deep beneath the earth in the mountain places, and they were hungry, and all the terror, and the drums, and the drums, and the drums.

Mdiko, Nbem's black ugly Ngumba mother, had clasped him to her breast.

"They hunger," she had said. "But they will not die. For your father Bwamba is a great devil priest, weeping boy, and there are things allowed by the old law lest a devil priest should die! The old law," she had tried to comfort him, "and they say it is sin. But surely it is a greater sin that a devil priest should die. There, there, my little pickaninny!"

But he had felt her arms quivering about him, and she had been trembling with him.

They were starving in the mountains, but they would not die! The terrible things there had been within that cave! Nbem knew. Nbem knew, for his black sires for generations had been Yebekolos, as were the sires of all men once, and his father was a devil-devil man, though he was a Christian boy. There had been the wailing of the women and the woodsmokes in the cave. The women first, but Hé Do-mé must have held out against their taking Sasa, and Bwamba perhaps not averse, for she had been a Mpongwe and young. Now there must be the men. The lots cast in the nights, by the wood fires smoking, the gaunt spectral faces, the hush as the lots fell. The next of them to go.

There had come the night when there must have been only the three of them, and Bwamba had said to Hé Do mé, "We must have this woman, my wife, your woman! So says the devil-devil, and I obey."

But it had been Bwamba who that night had died.

Oh, the great ghost drum that had told the jungle! Drumming the death cry of Bwamba! For a devil priest had died by violence, and it had been a sin.

There had been a child born that night, Nyissa the dancer, pale and amber brown. But still the hunger, still the hunger, and Sasa could not nurse, she had gone dry.

Ba ba ma töe!

Hé Do-mé had taken that child with him when he had suddenly seen the way open, and had got away. Why? Why! But he had found a waterhole where there was game, so he had had food enough. He had saved her, to sell to the little people.

The poor little people, he had taken all they had. Nyissa the dancer, the gazelle of the forest.

They said that the ghost drum of Bwamba still beat when anyone did that thing again. There had been the bad Bulu man ten years ago and his mother-in-law, and many had said they had heard the ghost drum beating then, and all the time while he hung by the rope to which the French had hanged him. Oh, yes, the drum could still speak, the great ghost drum of Bwamba! But Nbem the drummer hoped that he would

not hear the great ghost drum tonight.

Still as he ran, still as he ran, Nbem's two sticks within his hands beat spasmodically on the empty blackness rushing before him. Beat, beat, beat, his hands he could not control. *Ba ba ma töe! Ba ba ma töe!*

"NOW!" said Milegout, breathing heavily. "Now I want the girl, the dancer!"

The pigmy king crouched on his hands, with wrinkled face.

Faint, sonorous, the drum was beating in the night. In the lost jungle, in the demon-haunted wilderness. Von Dormer sat leaning back against the roof post with his skeleton grin. He had died, and it might have been poison which had done it, slipped in by the hand of the little pigmy king, for the little pigmy king had not liked well the thing which von Dormer had forced on him. But von Dormer still was grinning. For he had fed at last. He had not died empty, not lost and alone in the demon-haunted jungle, with no drum to beat the mourning cry for him. He had died full, and beneath a roof now in the company of men. Nor yet without the warning drum.

Grinning.

"But, O lord—" said the little pigmy king to Milegout.

He was crouching by the great platter, with his little wrinkled face. And there were tears upon his face, there were tears of hopelessness and emptiness and despair. And suddenly Milegout remembered that the little pigmy king had not eaten, he had not eaten at all, while he and von Dormer had been eating.

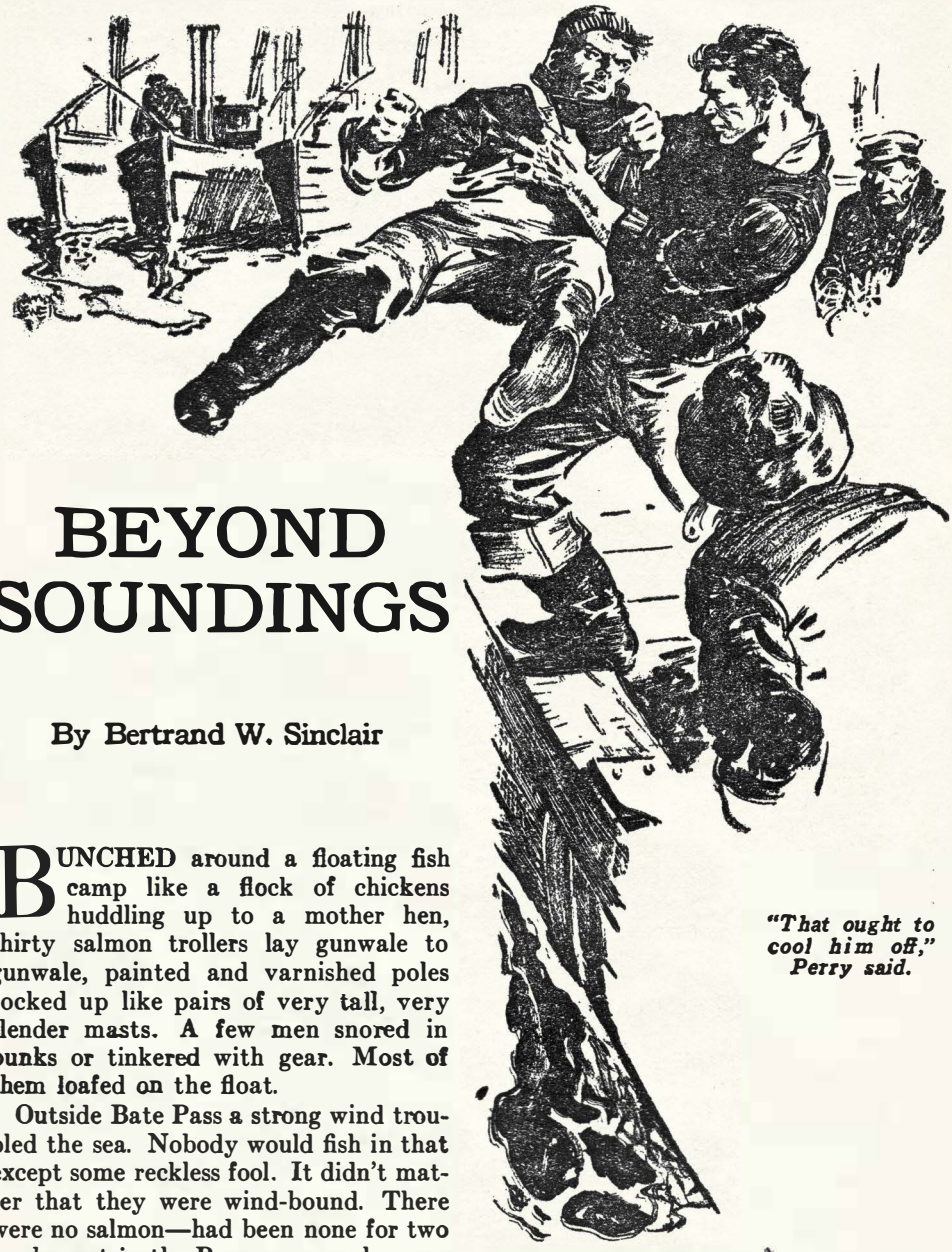
"But, O lord—" he said with a futile gesture, and the tears ran down his face.

That dancing amber girl!

Milegout understood. . . .

THE NEW commandant at Bouboufonké is a thin, earnest young Frenchman, a graduate of the Sorbonne, who has a hobby of entomology. He goes out in the forests with a net, flying around with spectacles on his face, in shorts and bare-headed, leaping and plopping down with small victorious yells on any butterfly, beetle, mosquito, or bug he sees. And since there are a good many bugs along the Upper Bom, it keeps him pretty well occupied and out of mischief.

The grizzled old chief of colonial personnel back in Paris shakes his head. He says a little pessimistically that they all either kill themselves or go crazy at Bouboufonké, and some do both, and perhaps the station had better be folded up.



"That ought to cool him off," Perry said.

BEYOND SOUNDINGS

By Bertrand W. Sinclair

BUNCHED around a floating fish camp like a flock of chickens huddling up to a mother hen, thirty salmon trollers lay gunwale to gunwale, painted and varnished poles cocked up like pairs of very tall, very slender masts. A few men snored in bunks or tinkered with gear. Most of them loafed on the float.

Outside Bate Pass a strong wind troubled the sea. Nobody would fish in that except some reckless fool. It didn't matter that they were wind-bound. There were no salmon—had been none for two weeks, not in the Pass nor anywhere up and down a hundred miles of coast. The North Pacific salmon is like that. He comes and goes in myriads and no man knows whence nor where nor why, except during spawning season.

"They ought to show up pretty soon," Mel Adams said. "We can't talk 'em into our hatches, anyhow."

Mel was trying diplomatically to shut off a very touchy argument about where spring salmon and coho could be taken best.

Perry Connor had talked himself red in the face. When Perry got steamed up his face always turned a shiny brick color.

The Duke of Belize, a little man of forty with a wistful expression on a deeply lined face, sat on an empty oil drum and wondered why Perry Connor got so mad if you set up a theory about fish against any notion Perry advanced. There was so much guesswork about salmon.

The Duke of Belize wasn't very well qualified to stand up against Perry's bluster, which was perhaps what nettled him. Not one man in that group realized that the Duke fairly ached to throw a haymaker at Perry Connor's jaw.

Mel Adams' oil didn't soothe the troubled waters. Perry Connor said belligerently:

"Any troller that thinks you can take salmon with a spoon out beyond soundings is just a damned fool."

"I ain't a damned fool," the Duke of Belize said. "I have taken salmon a hundred miles at sea. The Americans at Forrester Island go to sea for 'em too. The best catch ever was made by a single boat on this coast was a day's run off Swiftsure Lightship."

"You're just a plain, unvarnished liar," Perry Connor growled.

The Duke slid off the drum. He looked down at his hands. They had been poisoned with salmon slime and were still sore. The bones in both hands had been broken more than once. The Duke knew they were brittle, but he didn't care. He bounced at Perry Connor like a fox terrier tackling a Great Dane.

A good little man can whip a big dub. But Perry Connor was no dub. He was big and cagy and red-headed, an experienced brawler with the guts to make his word good anywhere.

It was just too much for the Duke of Belize to spot Perry Connor fifteen years and forty pounds.

His small fists beat a drum-roll on Connor's ribs. He shifted his aim when Perry's hands came down and smacked Perry on the mouth with a left and right. He crossed a left hook with lots of steam. He felt the bones in that hand buckle.

And he didn't even stagger Perry, merely surprised him by the waspish ferocity of his attack. When Perry Connor's feet and hands began to move, he came in weaving and bobbing, almost as nimbly as the lighter man. He blocked the Duke's blows with powerful forearms. Perry drove his right just once and sent the little man staggering back.

Several trollers, with a distaste for a one-sided fight, stepped in then. It should have stopped then and there. But the Duke of Belize darted between two husky Scandinavians and socked Perry Connor once more, with a knowledge of where and how to hit and every ounce of his hundred and thirty pounds in that right-hand punch.

Perry went right down on his stern. He sat there a second. He wasn't even dazed, merely astonished.

"Why, you darned runt!" he said. "You sure must want to be took to the cleaners."

"Nobody can call me a liar," the Duke panted. "Not if he was six feet wide an' ten feet high."

Perry Connor bounced up. He rushed the Duke of Belize, who threw punches without giving an inch.

Perry didn't try to hit him. His lusty young arms clamped about the Duke's small frame. He lifted him up and cast him off the fish scow into ten fathoms of green sea.

The trollers guffawed. It was not unkind laughter. It merely looked so absurd to see a little angry man soused in the drink, especially when Perry Connor said casually:

"That ought to cool him off."

It was better than socking the Duke, they thought. And a lot funnier.

But the Duke of Belize didn't see any funny side to it. He clawed out on the float, dripping like a spaniel, in a fury of humiliation, knowing that anything

else he could do would only make him more ridiculous. He went aboard his boat without a word.

IN the *Iron Duke's* cabin the Duke himself sat on his bunk in dry clothes. He turned his radio dial until he found a hot orchestra and tried to put that fracas out of his mind. Damn it, you *could* troll salmon farther offshore than any of this bunch ever went, if you had an able boat and the guts to go offshore. By offshore the Duke meant past the hundred fathom line, away beyond soundings, beyond sight of land.

The trollers picked up the schools fifteen or twenty miles at sea, but only in charted depths. When the salmon were not there, nor on the shoals and kelp reefs under grim headlands, they had to be at sea. The Duke knew they could be taken at sea, but nobody in that fleet believed him. The salmon, they said, went deep until they came inshore. A hundred miles out you couldn't get down to them. So they waited for them to come in. They always came.

"By God, I'll show 'em." The Duke scarcely heard the music. "Wait till this blow peters out. I'll make that red-headed walloper eat his talk. Fifteen years ago I'd gone round him like a woodpecker round a tree an' pecked him to death."

The Duke cooked his supper. His cabin was like a miniature apartment, done in cream and green with chromium trimmings. Everything in and around the *Iron Duke* was good—and immaculately kept. No matter how many thousand pounds of salmon the Duke handled, his ship never smelled of fish. His floors and decks were as clean as his table.

The *Iron Duke* was bulky, heavily ironed, well and truly fastened. Everything shipshape, everything strong. An ocean-going packet on thirty-six feet overall length. But she had nine foot six inches beam and five foot draft. (A ship is always "she", though her name be Benjamin Franklin. The old salts say that is because the rigging generally costs more than the hull.)

So it wasn't mere wishful thinking when the Duke of Belize promised himself to show them. Since there were no salmon inshore, he would lose nothing by going to sea. In the last week he had tried to get two or three boats to steam out a full day's run. They were willing to try almost anything to get salmon, but they wouldn't try out the Duke's scheme. And he wasn't so hungry for fish that he would go it alone, a hundred miles offshore.

Not then. Beyond soundings, beyond sight of land, the sea is a lonely place. But Perry Connor had stung the Duke to the quick.

Most trollers have a sort of partner. They run in pairs, in little close corporations of three and four. They shift together from one place to another. If one gets in a jam the others stand by him. Every man on his own, and yet a loose-jointed companionship, with often an astonishing amount of loyalty.

The Duke of Belize had trolled with a side-kicker for a couple of seasons. But his partner had become a fish-packer and then a buyer. The Duke hadn't taken up with anyone else. He wasn't shy, this little man with the sad face, just quiet and rather reserved.

He had been places and done things, long before they christened him the Duke of Belize. He'd been a feather-weight boxer who was just about tops in his prime. He had acquired fame of a sort, a fortune, and a wife, lost all three before he was thirty, and found his feet again on the Pacific Coast, together with an occupation which satisfied him and gave him good material rewards. That curiously sad and wistful look was merely the outer mark left by a deep inner hurt, now pretty well forgotten.

Nobody knew his ring name. Few

knew his real name. Someone had called him the Duke of Belize, because his boat was named the *Iron Duke*, and he had wintered once in Belize Inlet, trapping. His ducal estate was ten acres of waterfront with a log cabin an a float. His crest, he thought with amusement, should be a salmon rampant over crossed picaroons.

The Duke looked down at his hands before he turned out the light. The right was swollen. He had cracked Perry with all he had, and the old mitts weren't tough enough now for an iron jaw.

"He ain't a bad guy at that," the Duke mused. "But I sure don't like to be called a liar when I tell the truth. One of these days—"

"ONE of these days" came sooner than the Duke expected.

When he rose the next morning the wind had gone the way of winds. The *Iron Duke* put out with the rest of the fleet. Nobody was very hopeful of fish, but they had to keep trying. Spring salmon and coho won't jump into a troller's fish-box while he lies at anchor. More than any other type of salmon fisherman, the troller has to hunt down the schools of fish.

The hunt wasn't very successful that morning. The fleet at noon was scattered twenty miles, combing a sea corrugated with long, slow swells under a clear, breathless sky.

The glass was up. The Duke watched his glass. A little after noon he steamed in with six fish, sold them, took on gas and oil, talked Dave Smith, the buyer, out of a ton of cracked ice.

The Duke wasn't planning an offshore solo. He meant to go out to the thirty-fathom line and anchor on that bank all night. He would do a patrol in the morning past Triangle Island, a blob of granite covered with hemlock that stuck out of the ocean well off Cape Scott. The B. C. mainland was just a purple haze in the east when Triangle lay abeam. There were tide-rips north of Triangle, and sometimes the salmon schooled along the rip. With a ton of ice and calm weather, he could stay out two days or more and save a lot of running to port.

The fleet rolled home. At sunset the *Iron Duke* swung to a hundred-fathom line in thirty fathoms of water, holding to a light spidery kedge anchor, taking a chance on an offshore wind. He didn't feel terribly alone. The faint loom of Vancouver Island to the south took the curse off that empty waste.

The Duke of Belize slept soundly. July winds are short at 54 degrees N. His packet lifted and sank on a gentle ground-swell. In a pale dawn he pulled his killick, strung out his lines from the long, boomed-out poles and cooked his breakfast as he trolled.

He saw the fleet come out of Goletas Channel, watched them scatter, each to his own course.

Five miles short of Triangle Island, with the fleet hull down, the Duke reversed his course, took a slant northeast with the flood tide. No fish anywhere.

No early fog that morning. The sun had waxed to a brassy glare, a breathless, ominous heat that baked the Duke of Belize in his small steering cockpit aft, where he pulled his lines with a short tiller between his knees.

He drew up to a few other trollers about mid-afternoon, fifteen miles outside Mexicana Point, inside which headland Goletas Channel opened to Bull Harbor and Bate Pass. Still no fish. The Duke's wind-browned face burned. He cooled his dry mouth with a bit of ice.

The fleet headed home. The *Iron Duke* chugged at the tail of the parade, a couple of miles behind. From time to time he craned his head to look past the bow. He was low in the steering-well

and the pilot-house cut off direct view ahead.

Taking one of these casual glances the Duke saw far ahead, just under the lee of the land, a dark streak on the face of that smooth sea. He got up on the deck for a better look at that. And then he reached in by the spoked wheel for a telescope, and took a good look.

And then he laid hand on his gurdy levers and began to pull lines. The main line reeled up on little brass spools, gear-driven. They came in to the first lead, and the last five fathoms had to be pulled by hand. It took the Duke of Belize perhaps fifteen minutes to get the last spoon stowed. When he got up on deck to hoist his poles that dark line spread from Cape Scott in the south to away north of Hope Island like a barrier reef.

The Duke worked fast. He knew what was coming. It might be a brief squall, but you didn't trifle even with summer squalls. He lashed his poles securely to the mast, hoisted his bow poles and lashed them too, put the hatch over his cockpit and battened both that and his main hatch. He screwed tight the port-holes in the bow-strakes of the *Iron Duke.* His little dinghy was always securely lashed on top.

"All right," he grumbled. "Blow your head off."

When he stared over the bow from the wheelhouse he could see white patches now behind that dark line. Through an open window cool puffs of air struck intermittently, as if Neptune sighed gently as he rose from sleep to go on a rampage.

The trollers that hit that broken water began to jump like fleas, pitching in those short sharp seas and flinging off white wings of spray. The *Iron Duke,* doing seven knots, began to come upon them, as if they had slowed to a snail's pace. There must, the Duke thought, be strength in that wind.

THERE was. It hit him like a blast from a giant funnel. On the forefront of that wind the sea was flattened out, streaked with white scud. Wire stays, shrouds, set up a eerie whining. Halyards snapped, slatted against the mast. The Duke could see the slender tips of his trolling poles, thirty-five feet aloft, bend like fishing rods in that blast.

Then he began to smash into a wicked chop. Presently the chop lifted to green seas with weight in them, the wind taking white tops off them in sheets, like wraiths of thick fog.

He had come up on those boats because the wind held them. It held him now. Driving full speed, it still held him. There were boats far ahead that had got partly under the lee of Hope Island. Of the five trollers bucking that blow, only two gained way—Mel Adams' *Condor,* Nick Harmon's *Manchu,* able forty-footers with power to spare. They forged into the teeth of that gale, looming high on a crest, vanishing into a watery hollow till only their mastheads showed.

The other three no more than held their own, and the Duke of Belize scarcely gained on them. One was Perry Connor's *Shamrock.*

Sometimes spray, the torn top of a breaking sea, spread an opaque film over the Duke's wheelhouse windows. He could feel his little ship come up like a rearing horse and plunge deep into a green pit. The Duke had no qualms about driving hard. The *Iron Duke* had the lines and timbers to stand a pounding. But he made no headway. The Duke kept an eye on distant land bearings. He didn't gain an inch in an hour; none of them did, except the *Manchu* and the *Condor.* They were pulling away. In another hour they would be in easier water. Out there it would get worse. Sometimes, lifting as an extra big one rolled up, the Duke felt himself

shoved backward by invisible hands.

No summer squall this. A rip-snorting southeaster out of the blue. The barometer never lies, but sometimes it has no story to tell in advance.

"This is no good," the Duke muttered when for the twentieth time he swooped into a great hole so fast it was like falling into a well. The oncoming wave, high and sharp, would break over his bow. Green water swished over his lashed gear and streamed aft along the pilot-house wall.

An open cockpit boat would have swamped in twenty minutes. The *Iron Duke,* flush-decked and battened tight, could take anything except a sea breaking over her with sufficient force to carry away her wheel-house. Water might pour over her, but it couldn't pour in.

The Duke knew he would have to ease up. The seas were getting bigger. Driving hard, he might ship one that would burst his wheel-house windows. They could never buck in against that wind. It rose in gusts to fifty-mile speed. If they kept pounding full speed a big sea was going to get one of them. Hove-to, the *Iron Duke* could ride out anything. Better to be blown offshore than drive a boat under trying to make shelter.

Behind them a red flare of setting sun tinted a scudding cloud-wrack blown swiftly out from land by that offshore wind. The Duke eased his throttle. At once that violent pitch slackened. He began to drop back from the others. He slowed until he had just sufficient steerage way to keep her head up to those endless ranks of waves that came rolling at him with a hiss and a snarl.

Presently the others took a leaf from the same book, eased their boats by slowing down. The wind brought them back toward the *Iron Duke.*

Then the Duke had another idea. He was going fairly dry now. No more green water over the stemhead. Only light spray blown aboard. He was still on soundings—thirty or forty fathoms.

So the Duke clawed over the cabin, clutching life ropes rigged there, and unlashed a coil of light line—a hundred and twenty fathoms fast to a light hook. He shoved that spidery kedge over and let the line run, got back to his wheelhouse and waited to see what would happen.

Mud bottom and gravel. If that hook bit, maybe it would sink deep and hold. If it didn't hold, seven hundred and twenty feet of line and a twenty-pound anchor made a good drag. With the little triangular riding sail aft, the *Iron Duke* would lie pretty well head-up.

The others were following suit. Presently the *Iron Duke's* anchor line grew taut in a bow chock. The hook had taken hold. The Duke watched it awhile. The spring in that long light line eased the strain. It held. He flattened his little sail drum-tight. Then he shut off his engine.

IN THE silence the watery whoosh of those running seas, the whine and whistle of the wind in the rigging, made confused, forlorn sounds.

The Duke watched the others. One by one their anchors took hold. Two of them were still between him and land. The *Shamrock* sagged back until she was well astern and two hundred yards to starboard. Then Connor, too, brought up on a hundred fathoms of line.

Dusk was at hand, an unearthly grayness shot through with threatening sights and sounds.

The Duke of Belize switched on a six-watt riding light at his masthead. Three other little yellow pin-points bobbed in the darkness. None could help the other, but it was something to see and know that others lived, floated, defied the storm in that blackness. An inch and a half of wooden plank between each man and that raving, tumbling sea.

The Duke held fast with one hand against the pitch and roll while he made

hot coffee. He ate bread and jam and half a tin of corned beef. Then he pulled a mattress and blankets off his bunk and lay down on the floor. Down next to the keelson it felt as if the *Iron Duke* rode those seas like a floating gull. She lifted high, gently, settled as gently into a green valley streaked with spume. There was so much spring in those fathoms of line the Duke couldn't feel her bring up when she surged.

There was nothing more to do, just trust in whatever gods keep watch on seamen, and sleep if he could. If the *Iron Duke* couldn't swim she could sink. If the hook didn't hold she could drag.

The Duke of Belize dozed off to sleep with a fatalistic calmness in his soul. Early in the night he wakened, lay listening. The wind whistled its sinister song. The seas snored. He looked out. Two lights glowed, one to landward and one astern. What of the third? A light burned out, or another salmon troller gone to Davy Jones' locker? It took the Duke of Belize a long time to go to sleep again, thinking of that extinguished riding light. And he didn't sleep long before he was wakened once more, aware of a slightly different motion in his ship. He couldn't quite make that out. He hated to get up off that floor, but after a time he did, and stared through the wheel-house door.

At first he saw nothing but white mounds appearing suddenly in the blackness, huge Easter lilies that bloomed and vanished. He saw no lights at all. That chilled him, at first. Then he got a glimpse of one solitary light, showing intermittently, off southeast, and he knew why there had come that slight change in the lift and fall and roll of the *Iron Duke*.

He had pulled his mudhook off that bank. He was off soundings, adrift, making leeway toward the coast of Siberia at probably six knots an hour.

The Duke shrugged his shoulders and lay down again. Nothing he could do about that. Safer to lie-to than to attempt to buck heavy seas in total darkness. He drifted off to sleep, wondering about that solitary light bobbing off there. Just one.

He kept dozing and waking fitfully all night, but he didn't stir again until a gray light began to filter through portlights and wheel-house windows. He lay looking up at the carlins, listening, as he smoked a cigarette. He had lived through the night and the wind sounded less strident, the motions of the Iron *Duke* not quite so dizzy.

He got up at last and put his head outside as the sun began to shoot long, golden spears across the sea. White, cottony tufts of cloud raced across the sky. The wind had fallen to a fresh breeze, that ruffled a thundering swell worked up by that all night gale.

The *Iron Duke* floated in the center of an empty, watery ring. Nothing but green sea meeting blue sky at every point in the circumference of that circle.

Being blown beyond sight of land didn't worry the Duke. All he had to do was steer easterly. He had fuel in his tanks to drive six hundred miles, and he could scarcely be more than a hundred miles offshore. He had grub for two weeks, and plenty of fresh water.

Still, it gave him a queer feeling to be away out there alone. A fly-speck on the ocean.

"Me for some Java," he muttered.

He stoked the galley stove. The Duke really spread himself on that breakfast. Hotcakes and honey. He had to hang on sometimes to keep the pan on the stove, but the wind was dying away to nothing, as those violent summer blows often did. He felt better after food and a smoke.

The Duke stood by his mast, one shoulder braced against the wheel-house, and scanned the sea, first with the naked eye, then with his glass. He thought he saw something to the north, but he wasn't sure until he got on top of the wheel-house to focus the telescope.

He stared for a full minute. Then he went forward and hauled that anchor line until the thin-fluked anchor was inboard. After which he started his engine, and went rolling away across those shifting green hollows—toward a troller in distress.

PERRY CONNOR'S *Shamrock* wallowed in the trough. She sat very low in the water. From her side an inch and a half stream spurted. The pump stopped and Connor's flaming red head popped out when the Duke rounded-to a few fathoms off.

"Trouble?" the Duke called.

"Trouble? Naw. Just good, clean fun," Perry Connor yelled back.

"Can the funny stuff!" the Duke bawled crisply. "D'you need help? If you do say so."

"I dunno," Perry stopped wise-cracking. "I shipped a big one just before daylight an' I got water inside halfway up my flywheel. This wing pump is the weeds. Box pump got washed overboard, or I could work faster. You might stick around, if you like, till I get the water down so I can start the old mill."

"I'll stand by," the Duke said.

"Okay." Connor's red head withdrew. The water began to spurt again. The Duke let his boat drift while he had a smoke. In a few minutes he had an idea. He put in his clutch and moved up close to the *Shamrock*.

"Ahoy!"

"Yowsah!" Perry popped out again. "Little man, what now?" he bellowed.

The Duke of Belize muttered in his beard. He didn't like that "little man," never having heard of Hans Fallada.

"We're a long way offshore," said he. "The wind's gone an' the sea's flattenin'. I could put a line on you. We'd be makin' headway home. You could pump while I tow."

"By golly," Perry said, "you do have a sound idea once in awhile. I'll pass you my big line. Ease in a little."

He heaved a two-pound lead on a trolling line. The end of that cord brought an inch manilla aboard the *Iron Duke*. With the end fast to his bitts, the Duke of Belize headed southeast. The *Shamrock* wallowed two hundred feet behind. The *Iron Duke* made about five knots with this tow.

The Duke could see the sun glint on the jet of water spurting from the pump outlet. The swell kept flattening. The sky had a benign glow. The air was warm and still. In a couple of hours the *Shamrock's* red water-line began to show. They had made ten or twelve miles and still there was no smudge of blue on the skyline. The Duke sat by his wheel steering a compass course, speculating on how long it would take Perry Connor to get his engine started.

He happened to glance overside, down into the clear green water streaming by.

A COUPLE of fathoms deep the sea was full of bright little flashes, like bits of silver zigzagging. Herring. Where the herring run, the salmon follow.

Beyond soundings. The Duke of Belize experienced an authentic thrill. He kicked out his clutch. When the line fell slack he unfastened it and let the end go. He yelled. Connor came on deck.

"Take in your line," the Duke yelled. "I'll be crusin' around. I'm goin' to troll."

"You're cuckoo," Perry cupped his hands into a megaphone. "A hundred miles offshore. You're bugs!"

"That's what *you* think." the Duke snarled.

But he didn't stay to argue. He dropped his poles, ran his lines. The brass and silver spoons, wobbling like the herring, sank on the leaded lines.

Perry Connor stood watching, his red head like a port running light. Then he threw up both hands in mute acceptance and went back to pumping his ship.

For twenty minutes the Duke didn't get a strike. He could see the herring, acres of them.

He put on more lead, let out more line. There ought to be salmon where herring schooled.

There were. At thirty fathoms deep, with thirty pounds of lead, he hooked one. Two more struck while he hauled the first. After that his gurdys were steadily reeling in and letting out lines. The first dozen fish averaged thirty pounds. Big red-meat springs, the kind that go into cold storage on the Pacific Coast and sell for fancy prices to Eastern markets. Those springs running in the open sea were dynamite when they hit a spoon.

The Duke steered zigzag. The herring were everywhere, and deep down were those voracious springs—silvery fish with a sheen like burnished metal and faintly irridescent colors under the bright scales when he flopped them on deck and into the fish-hold.

The Duke of Belize thanked his stars he had plenty of ice still. It melted slowly in the fish-hold.

He didn't care two whoops how far offshore he was. Beyond soundings! And big salmon coming in over the rail as fast as he could bring them up to gaff.

He came back by the *Shamrock*. Passing to port he landed a fish. Swinging close across the stern he got another. A little off the *Shamrock's* starboard side he hit a big one, better than fifty pounds; it almost pulled him out of the cockpit before he snaked him in.

"You're a gentleman an' a scholar, an' I'm a liar!" the Duke of Belize yelled at Perry Connor, who had come up at sound of the Duke's exhaust. "You're the wise coot an' I'm a wild-eyed runt. You can't take salmon off soundings. You can't troll salmon in blue water. Ya-ah! Nuts to *you!*"

That last big fish had warmed up the Duke, got him a little excited, or he would not have broken out like that. He felt a little ashamed after a minute.

Connor didn't answer. He just stood watching the Duke haul fish for awhile. Then he ducked below.

In about half an hour the *Shamrock's* motor fired, spat blue smoke and coughed hoarsely, and then settled to regular business.

As soon as his ship got under way Perry Connor put his poles down and got his spoons out and began to follow the *Iron Duke.* And almost immediately Perry began to take fish.

The Duke of Belize, watching, smiled grimly.

It fills any man's soul with glory to prove a wild-eyed theory as scientific truth and thrust it down the throats of doubting Thomases.

For hours they worked on that school of fish. Where it began or ended no man could say. The Duke steered southeast. If he ran out of fish he could double back. But mile after mile the herring flashed under his keel, and the cowbells on his trigger-sticks clanged the strike of one salmon after another

Presently, through the telescope, the Duke saw a blue smudge break the horizon. Land ho!

He was getting weary. His back ached. His weak hands were sore, especially the swollen right that he had whanged against Perry Connor's jaw. He had been going steadily since three A. M. It was time to call it a day.

The *Shamrock* put on speed and came alongside, so close that Perry's pole-tip almost touched the Duke's.

"I hate to quit," Perry said. He seemed a trifle subdued. "But how's about beatin it? If we had ice we could lay out here all night an' make one hell of a killin'. Only what we got won't keep till tomorrow night."

"I got ice," the Duke of Belize said. "Put up your pole an' lay alongside, an' I'll split it with you. I'd like to work on this school in the mornin', myself."

They lay lashed together, riding the

long, smooth swell, and shoveled ice across decks into Perry's hold.

They worked silently, dressing and icing down salmon. Then they untied and slid apart to wash down decks and cook their suppers.

At dusk the *Iron Duke* and the *Shamrock* lay a couple of hundred yards apart, riding to sea-drogues. There was a faint air out of the northwest that gave them a slight adrift inshore.

It was sort of pleasant, the Duke of Belize reflected as he turned in, to see another riding-light close by. And then he chuckled. He had sixteen hundred pounds of salmon aboard. Oh, no, you couldn't troll salmon beyond soundings!

THE Twin Brethren rode their mastheads that night. The Duke lay down wondering if it would blow again.

But he bounced out at the first buzz of the alarm clock to a clear, windless morning, with the sea mirror smooth. In the brightness of sunrise the distant mainland mountains cut the skyline. And a half hour of cruising put them on top of that big school of big fish.

At noon the Duke was through. His spirit was strong but his flesh weakened. His hands were done for the day. He had hauled the fish steadily for eight hours. There was a pile of them to dress, and it was a long way to Bate Pass.

The Duke cocked up his poles. Immediately Perry Connor followed suit. The *Iron Duke* hit her seven-knot stride. The *Shamrock* plowed after.

They had been moving in with that school of fish. Driving now full speed, the shoreline became a deeper blue, turned purple, took on at last the dark green hue of the forest that everywhere clothes the north coast like a velvet cloak. Between six and seven o'clock they were forging up to Mexicana Point.

A gray steam cutter of two hundred tons, flying the Blue Ensign, bore out of Goletas Channel. She whistled them down as she came abeam. A uniformed officer megaphoned from her high bridge:

"You fellows all right?"

"Naw," Perry Connor roared. "We're sick abed. We're ghosts of drowned trollers come back to haunt the coast."

"Lay off that stuff," the brass-bounder bellowed. "Pete Groll, License 947, has been missing two days. See any wreckage afloat?"

They hadn't. The *Malaspina* stood out to sea. The *Iron Duke* and the *Shamrock* slid side by side.

"He was anchored with us, that night," Perry said soberly. "I guess Pete lost out in that sea."

"His boat wasn't so good," the Duke nodded. "Too bad."

Every season somebody stayed out in heavy weather and never came in. Pity—but a man took his chances. Men died in their beds on land, too.

The Duke made a motion with his hand. Perry swung the *Shamrock* tight alongside. They lashed them together Both engines driving, they slid as one across the smooth green sea.

"I'm kinda empty," he Duke said after a while. "You steer while I rustle a snack."

Perry leaned on the Duke's wheel. The Duke passed up hot tea, buttered slices of bread, a tin of jam. He sat on the wheel-house doorstep and munched. They didn't say anything for a long time. Then Perry Connor said reflectively:

"There's times I think I know it all. Then somethin' comes up that makes me think I don't know near as much as I think I do."

The Duke of Belize grinned, made a deprecating gesture with one hand, the hand that was still swollen and sore from that earnest wallop to Perry Connor's cast iron jaw. They didn't say any more.

OVER Nawhitti Bar in a red sunset, past the gut of Bull Harbor, into the fish camp in Bate Pass.

Perry got over to his own steering wheel. They didn't untie, just slid right up to the fish-scow, bow on. The Duke reversed his propeller and Perry gave his motor the gun ahead, and the two boats spun in a short half-circle to lay their sterns against the float.

All the trollers were in, some at anchor, most of them tied to the scow. A number of fishermen on the float sidled over to have a close look, to ask how they made out in that blow. Dave Smith said:

"We'd kinda give you fellers up for lost. We got word to the *Malaspina* that there was three boats missin' two days. I guess Pete got his, eh?"

"How's fishin'?" Perry asked.

"Pretty slow. High boat a couple of hundred pounds today," Smith told him.

The Duke was taking off his hatch covers. He began to fork out those big springs. So did Perry Connor. Bop, bop, bop, on the wetted float. The twin piles grew to mounds. Trollers began coming to the scow in skiffs to see those cargoes come off. They stood around looking. Nobody said anything. They just stared enviously at those piles of fish.

Dave Smith and his helper weighed both catches on a big steelyard. The helper began stowing the salmon on ice, while Dave totted up the weights and counted out money.

Then he walked over to a notice board where he posted the current price of fish, and messags, and the high boats for each day.

"I been buyin' fish in the Pass for six seasons, he said. "Them two is high boats for all time. Thirty-three hundred pounds fer the Duke an' twenty-nine hundred for Perry. They make close to three hundred bucks apiece. That's fishin'."

"Where'd you hit 'em?" one troller asked.

"Offshore," Perry Connor said quickly. "To hell and gone at sea, where we was blown that night. Beyond soundings. Plumb outa sight of land."

"I seem to remember you risin' up on your hind legs the other day," Mel Adams put in. "Declarin' salmon couldn't be trolled away out in blue water."

Mel grinned at Perry Connor.

"I was wrong," Perry said loudly. "The Duke was right. He proved it."

The Duke leaned on his picaroon, very tired, with just the shadow of a smile on his face. He had stuffed a handful of currency in his pocket, but it wasn't the money that gave him so deep a feeling of satisfaction. Something much less tangible gave him that contented smile.

"It was some catch, anyway," Dave Smith said.

"It was," Perry reached out and patted the Duke on one shoulder. "An' when bigger an' better catches of salmon are made in these waters, me an' the Duke of Belize'll make 'em!"

DUST

By MacKinlay Kantor

He was ninety, but still alive.
He looked at the darkened prairie,
And stumbled slowly across his porch
The dust was trying to bury.
"There's forty head that we can save,"
He heard his grandson say.
"We'll leave old Pappy to mind the ranch,
And trail to the Santa Fé."

The cattle blatted like brassy horns,
The chickens were smothered deep,
The ranch dog slobbered under the bed
And sneezed in its anguished sleep.
The old man tightened his beaded belt
When he saw that the boys were going;
He spat the ashes out of his mouth,
And shut his ears to the lowing.

He was gray as a sun-dried bone,
He was stiff as an Indian paddle,
But he left the house, with the younger men,
And clambered into the saddle:
"I knew this land," they heard him say,
"When there wasn't a fence in view. . .
And if you're handling forty head,
I'm riding along with you."

They swore and pleaded, but he was firm.
They started the howling herd.
There wasn't breath for a man to breathe,
There wasn't air for a bird,
There wasn't a sun in the umber skies,
But only the sleety trickle
Of a tempest gritty as blowing coal
And sharp as a cactus prickle.

And the old man climbed as well as he could
The hills that he saw them rise on,
And he narrowed the roughened lids of eyes
That had gazed on the herds of bison. . .
And he moistened the mouth that had talked with Earp,

And he whistled a lonesome tune
For the ears which had heard the crash
of Colts
In a Wichita saloon. . .

. . . They were lost, they were lost in
an hour's time,
In that peppery hurricane;
It stung their eyes to a blinding rage,
Like the snap of a mustang's mane.
The cattle staggered, a hopeless pack;
The herdsmen rode in a coma.
"This may be hell," came a weary cry,
"But it sure ain't Oklahoma."

They were belly deep, they were drifted
up,
They stood in an eddied wallow,
And not a man of them fit to lead,
And nobody fit to follow.
Then Pappy loomed at the hollow's edge
(He was ninety, but still alive):
"I'm trail boss, boys," they heard him
screech,
"Like I was in 'Seventy-five!"

And he yelled throughout that awful
day,
"I knew Ben Thompson, once!"
The forty head were thirty-two,
But he sang of the buffalo hunts. . .
The coughing horses fell and died
And slept in a desert sheathing;
But the riders clung to his stirrup straps,
And he taught them about their breath-
ing.

There were Texas men, he cried, who
rode
With an energy fit to shame them;
(But only his eyes could see their shapes,
And only his lips could name them).

It was nine o'clock on that blistered
night
When they struck the railroad line.
They started with forty Hereford steers
And ended with twenty-nine,

And ever the darkness lay on him,
The man who had brought them through.
(When the boys rode out toward home
again,
They told him, "The sky is blue. . .")
The only tears that Pappy shed
Were tears for his horse they shot there.
And how he guided them, no one knew.
(He was blind as a mole when they got
there).

"Alastair needs us now."

NO QUARTER

SECOND PART OF FIVE

By Maurice Walsh

IT WAS the second day after the sack of Aberdeen, and our Highland and Irish fighting men were angry and grimly vengeful. As a sort of half surgeon, I did not go down into the city until the second day, but I knew that our Captain General, the Marquis of Montrose, had sanctioned the sack of the city.

I went down there with my foster brother, Tadg Mor O'Kavanagh, and we had the streets to ourselves until we came upon the public stocks—and a young woman, ankle-locked there outside the arched door of a church of the Covenant. Margaret Anderson, her name was, and Andrew Cant, the minister, was punishing her for not coming to hear his sermons—and not listening to his courtship.

We were a little tipsy, both of us, but not too much but that we knew what to do. We took his fine coat and locked him in the stocks, and Margaret Anderson, she of the sharp tongue, came along with us to camp, for there would be no safety for her in that city, once our army had gone.

It was ten months before we fought through to Maviston of Lochloy, where

she had wanted to go. And by that time she had made a strong place for herself in the regiment and was like to bide in it.

About that time we were short of supplies, and Montrose ordered a party of us to forage in the lands of one Rose of Belivat. We were after cattle, and we found them—and something we had not bargained for. An old castle, it was, with a warning bell on the tower and a bolted door and a sullen gaoler guarding it.

We took the keys from him, and I went into that prison. Some of our men might be held there, and Rose of Belivat was no kindly turnkey.

At the head of the stairs I found a locked door. The key was in the lock and I turned it and tapped on the wood.

"Come in," said a voice inside. And the voice made me start. For the prisoner of Belivat—it was a woman!

CHAPTER III (continued)

SHE walked across the floor to me, shoulders braced and head at full height, but that was no higher than my shoulder. She was small, but she was not silm, nor was she squat, and her neck was rounder than it was long. She had the shoulders of a boy, but her breast and the soft flowing lines of her were all woman.

I stepped aside to let her pass, and she went by me to the head of the stairs without tremor or a turn of the head. But I heard a small hard intake of breath as she stood with her back to me, and for the first time realized that here was a girl of very great courage. She was about to face men of an exceeding savage reputation in this countryside, and one of them stood behind her.

"You need have no fear," I said gently.

"It is not fear, I think." Her voice was husky. "But the tales they tell of you make me wonder, and, looking into your eyes, I am not sure that the tales are all lies."

"Not all," said I, "but we do not kill men or hurt women in cold blood and say our prayers at the same time, like some."

She turned then and went down the stairs, and I followed her slowly. Sure enough, we found the wrestling match at a finish. Black Rab Fraser was securely on his back, his arms spread and held and Tadg Mor's great knee across his thighs. He could neither heave nor wriggle. But suddenly Tadg Mor loosed his grip, sprang to his feet, and jerked the beaten man to his.

"You have the root of the game in you, black lad," he commended, patting the thick shoulder, "and if I had time to learn you one or two clips you might puzzle the best."

And here Ranald Ban MacKinnon threw back his flaxen pow and laughed.

"My soul to God! Here is Martin Somers at his old game of rescuing ladies. A dark queen this time, and no Meg Anderson."

He opened his mouth for further laughter and shut it again, his eyes fixed on the dark queen. I smiled to myself. Without speaking she had already impressed herself on this quick-minded Gael. She stood very still and straight on the step of the door and looked them over, and I, standing behind her, could not tell whether her glance was cold or scornful. And then she turned her head and spoke to me.

"You were right. There are one or two I am not sure about myself."

Black Rab Fraser shambled across the gravel and faced forward by the jamb of the door. He was still prepared to defend his lady.

"Was it a fair throw, Rab?" she questioned him.

"He had a trick or two beyond me, Mistress Iseabal," he admitted surlily.

"And there goes my fine tartan plaid." But she still kept her plaid over her arm.

Ranald Ban MacKinnon was off his pony now, his bonnet in his hand.

"At your service, my lady," said he.

Again I was smiling to myself. I could not see her face but I could see theirs, and already there was something diffident and embarrassed in their eyes. This was no ordinary wench facing them, and the limber tongue of Ranald Ban had a knot in it.

"So young, so young," said she in that quiet, prophetic voice of hers, "and one of them bonny with his flaxen hair, and all to die so soon."

Ranald Ban started, and Colin Grant, holding my horse, turned his head and peered fearfully down into the slowly darkening hollow of the valley.

"Not too soon, I am hoping," said Ranald Ban at last.

"Tomorrow or next day, when the men of Moray meet ye."

Tadg Mor looked over his shoulder and rubbed his red head desperately.

"Maybe it would be as well for us to start running now," said he.

"Indeed and indeed," said Ranald Ban, "one should stand up for one's own as long as one can, even if the men of Moray have been boasting a long time, with little to show for it since Bannockburn."

She turned her head and spoke softly to me. "I am showing poor manners, I know, but that is fear. Will they know that I am afraid?"

"They are too much afraid themselves to notice, O terrible one!" said I, and she gave me a quick glance out of her dark eyes before she faced round again.

"You and I might be well matched," she murmured.

"If this is your prison, my lady," hinted Ranald Ban, "you are now outside it."

"That is my difficulty," said she.

"No difficulty at all," said he quickly. "It would be no trouble to lock the door on you, and give the gaoler back the key."

"I am no' her gaoler," growled Black Rab.

"That would be a tame ending," said the lady. "Now that I am out I am afraid to show that I am afraid to be where fear is."

"I know," said Ranald Ban wisely. "It is fear that bares teeth. Where would you be now?"

"I am not sure yet. I only know that I am afraid to take courage in my two hands. But here comes a man who might help me to decide—if ye do not kil him before that."

THE man was coming up the path from the riverside hamlet. He came on steadily, in no hurry, yet with purpose in his firm striding. He was a tall and bony man in an old gray suit, but already I could see that he had the white bands of a Calvinist minister at his neck. He was a bold man too, but not many of his calling were anything else. Still, not many of them would be willing to stride forthright into danger as this man was striding. Not that he was in any danger, but he would not know that. All that he would know was the reputation of Montrose's foragers for harrying men of his cloth when Montrose was not there to curb them. The sun, low in the west, was shining full in his face, and as he came nearer I was surprised to see that he was a young man in years. He had a strong and rugged face, clean-shaven, and there was no hat on his tossed fair hair.

"I am no uglier than that man, I think," I whispered at Iseabel Rose's shoulder.

The man was in our midst now below the shadow of the tower, and halted, his hand coming to a brief salute. We waited for him to speak. His face was gray and stern, and, remembering Andrew Cant of Aberdeen, I wondered if he would begin by calling us sons of Belial doomed to the pit. But all that he said in a low voice with a lowland twang was:

"I am John Balfour, minister under God of this parish of Ardclach."

And the Highland gentleman that we knew as Ranald Ban replied:

"I am Ranald vic Ailin vic Eoin vic Donald vic Fingin of Mull and Clan Ranald, and these are gentlemen out of Ireland."

"I have met gentlemen of Clan Ranald," said the other.

"But not of Ireland?" murmured Tadg Mor.

He waited for us now. No doubt he was wondering what cat-and-mouse game we were going to play with him. His eyes had not rested at all on the young woman, though he had given me a quick and curious glance as I stood behind her shoulder.

"I hope," he said then, "that this lady is safe—that she is not your prisoner?"

Ronald Ban thought he saw a road. "Is she prisoner to your Kirk?"

"God forbid that the Kirk have any part in this imprisonment."

"Then," said Ranald Ban quickly, "we cannot do better than place her in the hands of you and your Kirk for protection!"

This John Balfour at last faced the young woman, and his deep-set eyes were steady on her. But, said she, her voice quiet as ever:

"If I am free, Master Balfour, what am I to do?"

"You can obey your father, Iseabal Rose."

"Always—in all things?"

"In all that is lawful."

"You will tell me what is lawful." There was a harsh note in her voice now. "You will tell me what is lawful, John Balfour, and you will think well before you tell me."

"Oh God!" said John Balfour, and it was a young man that spoke in pain, and there was pain in his eyes too.

"Think well, John Balfour. I have nothing now but my own soul, and the advice you give me may make me an evil woman of the Roses."

He did not answer her but turned aside to Ronald Ban MacKinnon. "Gentleman of Clan Ranald, might Mistress Rose and I speak together in private?"

"And welcome! Come, friends."

"Stay!" said the minister. "Mistress Rose and I will move the other side of the corner, if it pleases her."

"Anything must please me this day," said the lady, and she stepped down on the gravel.

The tall, stiff man and the softly-lined young woman went together round the corner. Black Rab Fraser went behind unhindered, and I heard him say: "I was running down to you when they grippit me, meenister."

I went across to my friends and we clustered close together and whispered, our horses close behind us.

"That small one frightens be," said Tadg Mor.

"Maurteen Somers," said Ranald Ban solemnly, "you are no safe man when women are about. What devil prompted you to unlock that door?"

"Tadg Mor," I told him.

"She is worse than your Meg Anderson in her own way."

"Leave Meg out of it this time," Tadg Mor warned him.

"Listen!" whispered Colin Grant anxiously. "Let us mount and make a run for it. This is no safe place for us, with enough broken men in Dulsie Wood to cut our throats in the dark. She is the daughter of Hugh Rose, and he is a dangerous man to meddle with. Leave her to him, I say."

"What do you think, Maurteen?" Ranald Ban queried.

"This is no business of ours indeed," I said, "but I tell ye she is afraid, and not so much of us as of something on her mind. No, my friends, here we stay, and if we can put her on a safer road, we will do that."

"I knew well we would do nothing else from the beginning," said Tadg Mor.

Ranald Ban grinned. "She reminds me of the story of the lad that waited for the *Leenawn Shee* at the gable end of the priest's house in Uist."

I often wonder what that story was, for it was one of the few we never heard. The man and woman came round the corner of the tower, the man leading, his face set, and she with her head no longer in the air but turned thoughtfully on the ground.

The man came to his business at once.

"I am going to do what a man of my race has not done these many years," said he, and a whimsical smile lit up his stern face. "I am going to put my trust in men of the Gael."

"Many bad things have been said of us," said Ranald Ban, "but the Gael has never been accused of breaking trust. Well, sir?"

"I have lived with men of Clan Ranald in the schools at Edinbro, and I know that is true. My request is that you give this lady a safe conduct to the port of Lochloy below Auldearn."

Tadg Mor nudged me, and I nodded my head. Lochloy was where Margaret Anderson's uncle lived.

"Does the lady wish it?" Ranald Ban queried.

"It is what I wish," said the lady in a low voice, without lifting her head.

"Tonight?"

"The sooner the better," said the man.

"We will take the lady safely to Lochloy," said Ranald Ban.

"I thank you, sir. Once there, no further demands will be made on your courtesy. And now ye had better hurry, for this is no safe place for the King's men."

The minister turned to the lady, and his face was so stern that it could be only a mask to hide his feelings. "God be with you, Iseabal Rose!" And his voice also was too stern for that prayer.

She never looked up, and he turned away, but at that she impulsively caught his sleeve and held him.

It was the first impulsive thing she had done, and there was a new, deeper note in her voice.

"I am sorry for you, John Balfour. This is not the place for you, this wild Ardclach full of broken Roses and men bickering over land and beasts and wives. Go back to your own Lothians, where men may listen to your gentle prayers and preachings, and one here and there take heed. Here they love to be scourged with hell's fire and, sure of that fire, go out and make doubly sure of it. Come —come with me!"

But he was firm as a rock.

"No, my duty is here, amongst the poor ones that need me. I will go now."

He did not see the hand she reached him. He looked into her eyes and his own went clear and wide for a moment, telling their own story; and then he turned on his heel and strode out from amongst us and down the brae into the darkening valley.

"There walks a man, by God!" said Ranald Ban MacKinnon.

"You get good men everywhere," said Tadg Mor, "and that is a strange thing."

"It is the first time that I am inclined to agree with a MacDonald and an Irishman," said Iseabal Rose.

Then she sighed wearily, and looked round us. "Ye will forgive me, I hope," she said simply. "It is only the bad Rose blood speaking in me."

"It is a brave blood," said Ranald Ban. "Will Mistress Rose take my pony?"

She looked at the horses. "Whose is the big one fit to carry double?"

"At your service, my lady," I told her.

"Then I will ride pillion with you, if you will ask me."

"I will not do less."

"And only meet, if what your laughing friend says is true, rescuer of ladies."

"He is the sort of friend that gave me this black eye," I told her. "That is the sort of friend he is."

ISEABAL ROSE rode behind me down to Auldearn, my cloak well padded under her, her hand in my belt, and her head at the level of my ear. Her own tartan cloak was on her shoulders, and I hoped she had forgotten the exchange that I had won. I would not like to lose my Irish cloak.

The droving road we were on was rough and twisting, looping round stony braes and dipping deeply into rocky hollows, and the sun was set before we got out of the watershed of the Findhorn to the head of the last steep pitch that opened the long easy northern slope. Far down that long slope the plain of the sea spread before us, and beyond the sea, the ramparts of the hills stood up stark against the white glow of the west and north. At that hour there was no cloud in all the sky, and one or two stars were faint in the paleness of it.

Ranald Ban and the others, except Tadg Mor, were ahead of us down the slope. Tadg Mor was close behind, and I twisted my head to see how his pony was making the last stiff scramble to the head of the rise. There was a man at his side holding the stirrup leather, and in the half light I could not be sure who he was. And there the girl called out.

"Where are you going, Black Rab Fraser?"

"Where am I not going?" came up the surly voice. "I am going as far as my legs will take me from your father Hugheon Rose."

"Will you be any safer amongst the Irish?"

"I could not tell you that, Mistress Iseabal, but for the time I feel middling safe with one of them."

Tadg Mor laughed, and the lady said to me, "A man is always safe with the man who has beaten him."

I considered the ironic wisdom of that, and marveled where she had gathered it. All the way up from the belfry tower we had not spoken a word, but now, having again found her voice, she began questioning me in that strange, quiet way she had.

"Martin Somers is your name, I gather."

"That is it."

"A rescuer of ladies! Your friend named one?"

"Margaret Anderson, and the only one."

"Not a tame rescue, like this?"

"We were drunk at the time, Tadg Mor and I. That is he, my foster brother, riding behind, the best man in the world."

"He might not be a good man, even so. Where was this rescue?"

Out of a ramshackle iron stocks near the kirk with two spires at Aberdeen."

"Ah! The tale of that has gone abroad. So you were two of the ten savage men that stripped the great Andrew Cant naked and set him in the parish stocks."

"Only the two of us. You have your hand on Master Cant's coat the last half hour."

"You cut his tongue out as well?"

"We had that in mind, but I was too drunk to make a good job of it, so Tadg Mor would not let me."

"I do not believe that, of course. But what did you do with this woman, this Margaret Anderson?"

"She is below in the camp that you will see over the next rise."

"It might be well for her that you had left her in the stocks," she said smoothly.

"I could not tell you that," said I, "but you could ask her, for you have a habit of asking questions that come close to the bone."

"Have I offended you?"

"I will put it this way. You are going down to Lochloy in our keeping, and no one will put a hurting finger on you. But if you return to your own place next month or next year, you will, maybe, be hearing scandalous whispers of all the hurt that came to you at our hands."

She thought that over, and her face flushed a little.

"I see what you mean," she said then. "We had drink taken, it is true, but we took a girl with blood-shot eyes and a dry throat out of the stocks, and put a cruel man in her place; and if I took his coat I needed it, and it was the only thing taken. He was using his tongue to preach hell's fire when we left him."

"I hope you will not hold a grudge against me," she said, "though I think you are a man that would."

"Margaret Anderson is my friend." I felt warm on this. "And she is noble, too, and any man that says a word against her in my presence will have to fight Tadg Mor O'Kavanagh."

"BUT I am a woman and can say what I like."

"That is a habit of yours too, and I will never know you well enough to pick a rod for you."

"I would need one often." she granted. "But you would not do your own beating?"

"I am no fighting man," I told her. "I am only an adjutant of women."

"Adjutant of women?"

"That is my rank and my title, and if you were in O'Cahan's regiment you would know that it had its importance, and you might be sorry for yourself a time or two."

"No doubt of that. I am sorry for myself now. But will you tell me how it is that, being a captain of women, you have not a woman's curiosity?"

"I am bad enough as I am."

"But are you not wondering why I am here and why I was locked up back yonder?"

"You are here to go down to Lochloy, and you were back yonder because, I think, your father had a middling good reason of his own to put you behind a stout door with a lock on it."

"When it comes to frankness," said she, "I will take lessons from you, but meantime I will tell you the kind of man my father is."

"Our camp is over the next ridge," I hinted.

"Ride slowly, then. I have a reason for telling you. You may have heard of the Roses?"

"In passing only. They refused to join Montrose after Inverlochy. A clan half Covenant, half Highland, fond of land and fond of bickering.

"Those are the Roses of Kilravock, the honest branch of the family. The Roses of Belivat are even more land hungry and more quarrelsome, and to that family I belong."

"I can well believe that," I said.

"Three, two generations ago they owned much land and many houses in this county, and they were greedy for more; and that more they took by force or by fraud.

But in the end their greed betrayed them, and, again by force and fraud, the Roses of Belivat lost—lost everything but the small place of Fleenas, and that place my father, Hugheon Rose now holds; and ye, Montrose's reivers, are driving most of his poor beasts down there."

"If he had joined Montrose for the King last February, when the Moray lairds were invited, he would not be reived now."

"And he would have joined if he thought that Montrose and his ragged army had any chance to win. And there you have him.

"He is no honest covenanter like the Brodies or his kin of Kilravock, for what was won by force and fraud and lost the same way he would now regain by cunning and alliances."

"You are hard on him."

"I have reason. In order to restore some of his power he would force me to marry Walter Dunbar of Moyness, grandson of the man that ruined us."

There was the kernel of the nut at last.

"It seems that you did not want to marry this man?"

"I do not."

"You told your father so?"

"With all my might."

"So he locked you in prison to chasten you?"

"You have it all now."

"Your father did not know you very well," I said. "Did this man of the Dunbars know what your father had done?"

"He would know."

"Then I take it he wants to marry you."

"I will not if I can help. He has red hair."

"That is not a good reason."

"He is young and unwed, but he has two sons half grown."

"I will assume that you are not putting his faults in order of magnitude. Might I go on questioning you?"

"I need not answer."

"Is there a man that you would marry?"

"There is no man that I want to marry—but there is one man that I like."

"Does he like you?"

"He is John Balfour, the minister, and he loves me," she said calmly. "That is why I am not sure that he is entirely honest in the advice he gave me."

"A man in love has his own dishonesty."

"You will know. He advised me to take ship secretly at Lochloy and sail to Edinburgh, where I have cousins."

"He was honest then, for he turned his back on your urging him to go back with you."

"He might change his mind in his own time. Men sometimes do at the touch of loneliness or the touch of desire. But what is there for me to do if I stay here? I am only one small woman, and since time out of mind women obey men in this land and marry when they are told or when they are let. Even our Mary Queen found she could not do as she liked. Should I obey my father, then?"

"Why do you ask me?"

"Because you have no interest but to judge honestly, and you are franker than the Gael. No, that is not the reason. You have already befriended one woman—and kept her honest, I do believe."

And after a while I said: "There is one thing I know and it is this: you will do what you are doing."

"Must I?"

"You must because you will. Any road you set your feet on you will walk to the end, and any advice I might give you, you would only follow if it led your way. But will you get a boat at Lochloy?"

"Alick Anderson, the shipmaster, and a friend of John Balfour, sails a coastwise boat with hides and malt once a month to Leith the port of Edinburgh. He is due to sail this week."

"Margaret Anderson has an uncle—"

"The same. That is how the tale of your exploit got as far as Ardclach, gathering force on the road. The Kirk in Scotland has a long arm, Master Somers. Aberdeen sent two of its elders to Lochloy to warn her uncle that the fallen woman—that is how they put it—that she must be returned should she seek refuge with him."

"One thing I am sure of," I told her. "You need have no fear while you are in our hands."

And she said, in a low prophetic voice I barely heard, "That might be my greatest fear."

"There is Auldearn below us now," I said.

WE HAD come over the ridge of Kinsteary. It was night by then, with a black cloud lifting out of the west, and the lights of the village and the camp gleamed red and yellow, and sent shimmering reflections amongst the trees

about us. The buzz and murmur of an army came up to us too, with the anxious lowing of beasts and the ho-hoing of herders as our booty moved away eastward towards our cattle pound in the Hardmuir.

We were coming down on the strung-out hamlet from the rear, and all the back doors were open and glowing warmly from the fires within. Beyond the kirk-mound of the village the square bulk of the House of Boath stood out against the dark, every window lighted. There was Montrose's headquarters. Camp-fires blazed all round the curve of the Castle Hill and all along the edge of Kinsteary park, and dark figures moved busily about them.

"Why, it is a great army!" murmured Iseabal Rose in some awe.

"Three thousand and no more," I told her, "and Montrose and Colkitto handle it like a hooded goshawk."

Small fleering breaths of air betokening rain whirled about us and rustled in the young leaves, and one drift of air coming up from the village brought us a glorious smell of cooking meat. I heard Tadg Mor swear pleasantly behind us. The cooks had got early to work on the first herd we had sent in.

"I thought I should be hungry," said the young woman, "and I find I am."

Ranald Ban MacKinnon was waiting for us at the foot of the slope and was talking, excitement in his voice, to a man who had come out from the camp to meet us. In the throw of light behind him I saw that he was a small man, and before I heard his deep strong voice, I knew that he was my colonel Manus O'Cahan. Manus or Magnus means great, and O'Cahan was not that in body, but he had a steadfastness and greatness of spirit that was not excelled by Montrose's and certainly not by Colkitto's. Colkitto was great but he was not steadfast.

"Battle tomorrow!" cried Ranald Ban. "The MacKenzies and the men of Ross have joined Hurry, and he is back at the other side of Nairn. Nat Gordon is just in from outriding."

Manus O'Cahan laughed pleasantly. "Has Martin Somers been at it again?" he wanted to know.

"He got away from me," Ranald Ban told him.

"This is Mistress Iseabal Rose, a lady of Ardclach," I said gravely. "And tonight she goes to the port of Lochloy under safe conduct."

"My duty to Mistress Rose," saluted O'Cahan, his hand to his leather basnet, "but she cannot have a safe conduct this night. The outriders of the Covenant are across the Nairn and strung by the coast to Findhorn Bar. No lady may get to Lochloy in safety."

"Is this the end, then?" said Iseabal Rose, the intoned prophetic note in her voice. "Where will ye and I be tomorrow?"

"Where God decides," said O'Cahan, "and some of us indeed past all knowing."

"Most of us," said Ranald Ban, "will be trailing back to camp after drowning the last of the MacKenzies in Ness Water."

"Even if we are not as successful as that," said O'Cahan, "our women will have lines opened behind us. You will get to Lochloy in good time, Mistress Rose."

Like the man he was, he displayed no curiosity about this lady who had come riding into camp behind one of his officers.

"This lady will have to stay somewhere tonight," I said then, though I already knew where she was going to stay.

"I have a friend in the village," she told us quickly. "In the double-storied house at the corner of the Cawdor Road."

"All the villagers were moved out three hours ago," O'Cahan told her, "and are now in shelters in Darnaway Forest.

The old man straightened up. "You wad dae Aelick a hurt?"

The houses are held by my men for the night, but you will be welcome to private quarters—"

"The best and quietest place will be with Margaret Anderson," I interrupted him. "She has a bothy of her own at the back of the Kirkyard."

"It is a quiet place I want," said the lady. "Few people must know that I am in Auldearn."

"It will be known in all Moray," I told her. "We have burned your boats."

I HAD some fifty women under my own particular charge in O'Cahan's regiment at that time, as well as a few half-grown lads and one or two children in arms. Thirty or so of these, under Sorcha MacNeill, were the usual foragers, camp makers, cooks, bearers, anything they could put a hand to; a dozen specially chosen, in charge of Margaret Anderson, made up my nursing and medical staff, and these, with two or three men wounded in the rear-guard fight at Ford of Gight, were quartered in village houses at the back of the Kirk-mound. Margaret had a bothy to herself snug under the wall of the kirkyard at the end of a lane running up from the Boath Road; a poor enough clay building of two rooms, but with a drawing stone chimney, and a brick hearth where food could be prepared for herself or the wounded.

My feet clattered on the loose cobbles of the path leading from the lane, and Margaret's clear voice came through the door.

"Come, lads! I knew ye'd smell yer diet."

She never lost that strange, strong Doric dialect, though she could now string sentences in the deep-throated Gaelic, the strangest Gaelic ever heard as she rendered it in her Aberdeen tongue.

Iseabal Rose had not to bend her head

under the low lintel. Margaret Anderson turned from a pot at the fireside, and straightened and stiffened. Behind her a fine peat fire, flaming under a bellied pot hanging from a black crane, lit up the cavern of the room, and, in addition, a lighted tallow candle was set in a withered old turnip on the rough table. In the gleam of that candle I saw Margaret's face go queerly still, and her gray-lit eyes widened and held on our dark young guest. I have seen the same look in the wide open eyes of the horned owl at the time of taking flight at the close of the day.

Margaret Anderson's day dress was kirtled for her cooking, and her short scarlet petticoat showed her clean ankles and her silver buckled shoon; she had shed her outer jacket and her knitted body vest outlined her loveliness and left her neck and arms bare, and no earl's daughter had ever more shapely arms: white and slender, with no trace of that thickening below the shoulder that ill-fits many a bonny face. Her linten plaits were wound thickly about her head and held by her comb.

"Wha' is it?" Her eyes never left Iseabal Rose, and her voice was lower than I had ever heard it.

"Mistress Iseabal Rose of Ardclach," I told her. "She will be your guest for the night, Margaret."

"I fairly ken noo," she said dryly.

"She will be taking ship tomorrow or next day with your uncle at Lochloy for Edinburgh."

That was all I could tell her then, though I knew that later she would have the whole story out of me.

"You spoke of supper," I said, "and my nose tells me it is about somewhere."

The lid of the bellied pot on the fire tutthered, and a jet of steam perfumed the air to the watering of hungry mouths.

"The lady is welcome," said Margaret, her head unbending. "Will she take this hassock by the fire? Whaur's Tadg Mor?"

"Foddering. He'll be here in a minute."

The dark girl came to the fireside and her eyes went calmly over the tall fair one.

"So you are Margaret Anderson," she said softly. " I knew of course that you must be bonny."

"What do ye mean, young lady?" A small spot of color came flecking into her cheeks.

"If your Martin Somers had drink taken it did not spoil his eyesight."

"He's no my Martin Somers."

"He is a fool then," said the other and sat on the straw hassock.

I sensed at once a strain between these young females and felt distressed about it, for I had expected them to be friendly, seeing that a fine spirit of personal integrity inspired them alike.

Iseabal Rose looked thoughtfully into the fire, her pose very still, and Margaret Anderson busied herself at the table.

"No mony dishes among us," she said, trying to be casual. "Three beechen platters, but enough spoons to go round." She was silent then, and I missed her accustomed chatter of the day's doings. In the forenights, when we three usually gathered, Tadg Mor and I had ever to go over the whole day's work and listen to comment and criticism.

There was another clattering of feet up the path and Tadg Mor's red head came under the lintel, his eyes wary.

"Meg darling, would you be having the scrapings of a bone for a friend of mine?"

"God be here. Anither woman?"

"And bonnier than yourself. Let her look at you, Rab girl."

Tadg Mor crouched into the room, and the ragged bullet head and heavy shoulders of Black Rab Fraser appeared round the jamb of the door.

"Protect us!" exclaimed Margaret. "Is there life in it?"

"And a great emptiness."

"I didna ken there was an uglier loon

in a' the world than my ain twa. Come awa, in, laddie, an' let's see the rest o' you."

Rab Fraser's sullen eyes went from her to his mistress, where she sat by the fireside, her tartan plaid fallen loose off her boy's shoulders.

"Na, na," he said in his half-Gaelic half-Doric way. "I will take a bite out here out of your way, an' I get it."

Before he might draw back she had him by the collar and jerked inside the threshold, his head bumping the lintel.

"This is my hoose," she said, "and you'll do as you're tell't."

He looked at his mistress dumbly, and, for the first time, she laughed.

"My poor Black Rab! You and I are in a strange mad world of the Irish and the women that own them."

"Noo, than!" ordered Margaret. "Lift ye the skillet, Tadg Mor."

THAT was a welcome meal, but I forget what the viands were—beef or mutton fresh killed, with bannocks, almost certainly bannocks, for Margaret never failed to bake bannocks if we were camped near a mill. We were hungry, I know, and ate silently for a while, until Tadg Mor, remembering his Irish manners, began to make table talk for us.

"Heard the news, Meg?"

"Ay, have I. We'll be busy, all of us. Will ye be lickit the morn?"

"Who is to lick us in all Scotland?"

"The men of Moray and of Ross," said Iseabel Rose.

"And if we be lickit, young lady," said Margaret, "the road to Lochloy will be an ill one."

"I fear me so, but one grows used to fear."

"O'Cahan will keep the road open, as he said," I promised her, rising to my feet and reaching my cloak down from a deer's prong in the wall. "Whatever happens, there is a busy night in front of some of us, for the attack may come at dawn. While the camp-fires give us light, it might be well to see that our lines are open to our place in the Hardmuir. Margaret, you will have your women ready at blink of dawn, a hot meal cooked and a cold piece put aside for height of day. There is a broomy bank near the burn over the howe behind us that should make a first station, and we will go over it first thing in the morning. Come, Tadg Mor."

"Stay, Master Somers!" Iseabal rose also on her feet. "You are forgetting the plaid you won in exchange."

"So I am," said I reluctantly, "but I will not hold you to your bargain."

"A wager is a wager, and you have the best of the bargain," said she, her cloak out to me.

That dark green plaid with the red line was of sound, closely woven wool, but not so weather-proof as my silk-lined Irish cloak. I knew that, but the exchange had to be made in good part.

And then Tadg Mor and I, with Black Rab at our heels, went out into the night, leaving our two young women to the obdurate ways women have.

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE OF AULDEARN

I WAS weary and sullen-tempered that morning. I had been on my feet most of the night and it a wet night, and Iseabal Rose's plaid was sodden on my shoulders. I had two hours sleep before dawn, and then with Father MacBreck, our chaplain, Margaret Anderson and Tadg Mor, established our first wounded station at the rear of the Irish lines. It was in cold, wet, spirit-sapping dawns like that that Margaret showed the great heart in her. Then she was no longer fleering but very helpful and full of fine gaiety and even tenderness. She said no word of Iseabal Rose, nor did I.

While Margaret and the others went back to the bothy to prepare some breakfast, I went forward to report to O'Cahan. His regiment, nearly six hundred strong, were lining the woods immediately left of the village below the slope of Kinsteary and screened by the trees, so that Hurry should not see where our strength lay.

The Irish were in a gay and laughing mood this morning, and even the clansmen, usually dour before battle, were not taking things too seriously. They were confident, too confident, to my sour mind. They were well fed, well equipped at last, and well placed; and though Hurry had four first line regiments, five squadrons of Moray horse, and all the fighting clans of Ross, still the odds were less than two to one, and such odds they were used to.

The men had been in battle stations since dawn, and it was now nine of the clock. No cooking fires were allowed in the woods, but the women had cooked behind the slope and brought up pots of meat, measures of new milk and oatmeal cakes. The men, arms piled, head pieces and targes laid aside, and corselets unlaced, were sitting about in groups among the trees, careless of the damp ground and dripping leaves, eating busily and joking with the women.

Their good humor did not help to banish my sullenness, and I was surly to O'Cahan's gay greeting when I came upon him at the edge of the wood, spooning his breakfast out of a bowl. There was a hazel bush growing in front of him and he could watch the open ground through the leafage. That open ground was little more than a quarter mile wide. Beyond it a wood of dark pine hid the town of Nairn, but we knew that between the wood and Nairn our fore skirmishers were already in touch with the Covenanters advancing to the attack. No one would guess the imminence of battle, looking out across that empty ground.

With O'Cahan at breakfast were Angus of Glengary, Black Pate Graham of Inchbrakie, and Owen MacAndra MacPherson, captain of clan Vuirich. These your officers were Montrose's staff amongst the men of the Gael, and they kept the Highlandmen and the Irish in close alliance, at least on the field of battle. In camp and foray the two branches of the Gael had their own bickerings and horseplays, and hurling matches little safer than the pitched field, but in line of fight they had a soldierly trust in each other and charged home shoulder to shoulder.

"The first station all ready, O'Cahan," I saluted my colonel, "and our lines open to the Hardmuir."

"Good and better," said O'Cahan. "We are in order then. Sit in and put your hand in the skillet with us."

He was a small, firmly built man, with blue-shaven jaw and very blue eyes, and though he was a young man still, there was a single band of white across his black hair.

He laughed. "Man Maurteen! You look as blue as your blue eye. You would think, to look at you, that you had buried most of us already."

"I might do that later in the day," said I, "if I had time."

"Has Hurry the beating of us, think you?" queried Glengarry.

"Will he ever have a better chance?" I queried back.

"True enough," agreed the half-lowlander Graham.

"All the same," said the MacPherson equably, "we have the beating of him here about us this day—or any day."

A burst of men's and women's laughter at some broad jest came from the men's lines, and O'Cahan saw my hand jerk as it lifted a rib of mutton from the skillet.

"You do not like that, Maurteen?" he said quietly.

"I do not. Laugh in the morning and cry at noon. There was not much laugh-

ter amongst us the morning of Tippermuir."

"*Dhia!* but there was not. I was afraid before and I have been afraid since, but that was the father of all fear." He slapped MacPherson's shoulder. "Do you mind, Owen?"

"I dream about it yet in a bad night," said MacPherson.

"I dreamt about it last night," said I, and left them there.

ALL MY dispositions for the wounded were made, and I had nothing to do now but wait. And waiting was not easy, though I no longer carried arms in the line. I went back to my dressing station on the banks of the burn, and talked for a while to Sorcha MacNeill. Margaret and the others had not yet returned, so I followed the stream downwards to the back of the village. At the foot of the Kirkmound I came on a group of saddled horses held by Huntly horse boys, and, on rounding the corner, I saw Montrose and some of the staff on the summit of the mound. The Kirk of Auldearn, a low building with narrow windows, stood on a sudden swell of ground close behind and overlooking the village street, and giving a wide prospect north and west to the sea and to the mountains.

Margaret, Iseabal Rose, Father MacBreck, Tadg Mor and Black Rab Fraser had just finished eating as I bent head under the lintel.

"Ye are taking time to it on a busy morning," I grumbled at them.

"Lazy loon!" chided Margaret. "Ye dinna deserve the spoonfu' I kept warm for you in the pot. Sit in!"

"I broke fast with O'Cahan—"

"In that case," said Tadg Mor quickly, "Rab and myself will put the last big spoonful on the top of the half-one that we got from her."

"Ay will ye," agreed Margaret, and she came and took the damp plaid off my shoulders, and spread it on a hassock before the fire.

"Your cloak was warm and held no dreams, Master Somers," Iseabal Rose told me. "I will lend it to you for the day while your plaid dries."

"Rain or shine, I will need no cloak today," I said, "and you may see why."

She at any rate did not look weary this morning. Her darkling eyes were clear and the blood warm in her dusky cheeks.

"You slept, I think," I said.

"Your Margaret Anderson gave me her own pallet."

"Wha's Margaret Anderson?" said the girl crossly. "I'm my ain mistress in the hoose, and go my ain gait ootside it."

"And where will that gait lead you, I wonder?" said the other smoothly, and closed her teeth on something further she had in mind to say.

"I think, my children," said Father MacBreck, "that we should go back to our posts now."

Margaret looked at the other woman. "Do ye bide here, Mistress Rose?"

"Anywhere that I may be useful."

"Then ye had better be wi' us. It will be safer, where if ye can stan' the sicht o' blood an' wounds."

"I have seen wounded men."

I had hoped that these two would have got to understand each other in the night, but with regret I noted that some strain was still between them. I do not know anything about the mental qualities of women, but I know that they do not get over dislikes as men do.

It was a fine, fresh morning outside, and the rain clouds had blown away. And, not for the first time, there came to me a hopeless kind of wondering that men should want to kill one another on a day like this.

Iseabal Rose touched my sleeve. "Who are those up there?"

"Our captain general and his officers."

"Which is the king's great man?"

"Can you not tell?" I wondered.

"Not from here. But does greatness shine out in any man? Can we go nearer?"

"Surely. He is an easy man to look at and speak to."

"I do not want to speak to anyone, but I would like to see a field stripped for battle."

"You can see all there is to be seen. Come!"

WE CLIMBED the mound together between the leaning headstones of the village fathers, Tadg Mor and Black Rab behind us. Looking over my shoulder for Margaret, I saw her halted and tapping the ground with her foot, her eyes down in some thought; then she threw her head and shoulders back and went hasting up the burnside after Father MacBreck.

We went round to the front of the kirk and looked about us. The door was open and the two MacBeth brothers, already stripped to the waist, leaned against it. These fine clean bodies would be spattered red to the neck ere the day was done. Behind them in the porch some of the Keppoch women were plucking apart a pile of peat-hag moss that we used for padding wounds.

These two MacBeth brothers out of Mull were surgeons to the Duart MacLeans, and the ablest men of their trade in all Scotland. They could clean a festered wound and quell a fever better than any king's physician, and had secret simples of their own handed down from father to son since their forefather, MacBeth Finlaig, was king of Scotland in Danish times. That was the king that Will Shakespeare made a play about and strained the truth to make his drama. I gave the brothers good day, and the elder said to me:

"If the day is not hard on us here, Martin, I will send Fergus down to help you."

Montrose and his little group of officers were below us and to the right.

"I think I see your great man," whispered Iseabal Rose at my shoulder. "He is the smallest there, and the jauntiest."

Montrose was aye the gallant in his dress. He was now wearing a fluted steel corselet and thigh pieces, but, as was his habit, he carried his plumed basnet in his hand, and the northern breeze had tossed finely his darkly-fair hair and brought the warm color to his brown cheeks.

"Bonny enough in plain company," remarked Iseabal Rose. "Is that your terrible half-Irish Colkitto, the tall man with the gashed cheek?"

"That is Nathaniel Gordon, captain of Huntly, and the Gordons think he is as good a man as Colkitto any day."

"If he were as good," said she, "how much better would the Gordons think him?"

I looked down at her in wonder. Her face, below her faintly waved dark hair, was young and clean, and there was no sardonic line yet bitten in the smooth darkness of it.

"You are not yet old," said I. "How come you to be so wise and bitter."

She smiled at me a wistful smile that touched me strangely. "Not wise, and as for the other, that was the sour Rose blood speaking in me."

"And it could be that you are proud of that old blood too."

"That is the pity of it." She turned away from me to the scene in front of her. Almost at once her head was again over her shoulder. "But where are the armies in array? I see only a few men in the gardens down there."

Indeed, to look over that empty peaceful spread of country between wood and wood, no one might guess that in half an hour it would be a tangle of fighting men shouting and hacking at their deadly work. Our foot were hidden along the margin of the wood and our horse in the hollow of Kinsteary park. The enemy was still out of sight over the

ridge between us and Nairn, but the ridge was so low that we could see the towers and smoking chimneys of the town. Outside the bar, at the mouth of the Nairn River, the big ship we had seen on the previous evening was lying at anchor, sails furled; and so clear was the rain-washed air that we could see her crew clustered high up in the rigging. They were there to enoy a peepy show that few men had seen in such safety.

Behind them the northern firth was as clear as bottle glass before a light, and small white horses ran and jerked before the whip of the northern breeze; and behind all the great hills of the north were peacefully blue above the dark woods of Cromarty and Ross. A grand fine sunny spring morning with the white clouds sailing, and somehow there was no weight of foreboding of the killing so soon to come.

I showed her where our lines lay and pointed out the strength of Colkitto's position, below us and to the right. At the rear of the fenced village gardens a short slope ran down to a stream strong running after the rain but easy to ford. Beyond the stream was miry ground. Colkitto had broken down the side fences of the gardens for ease of movement, and had repaired the gaps of the tumbledown clay and stone wall at the rear with bushes and whins. The royal standard was fixed firmly on the summit of this wall, and it was so placed as to lead Hurry to assume that here was our main strength. The right flank was guarded by the Castle hillock with its stone circling wall.

IT WAS a very strong defensive position, and Montrose had planned it all in two hours in the middle of the night. But would Colkitto be content to hold that defensive position until Montrose was ready to swing his iron door? Montrose knew Alasdair's impulsive nature, and that was why he was here now on the kirk-mound. He was doubtful if the raw Gordon levies with Cokitto would stand fire.

These young Gordons should not have been in the gardens at all. That was Colkitto's first mistake that morning. His own personal cohort of fighters, his bodyguard, the spearhead of many an onset, totaled about twelve score, mostly gentlemen of Ulster and the Isles, picked and fearless smiters, each equipped with breast-plate and headpiece, targe, broadsword and two pistols.

Their usual method of attack was to fire off one pistol in the face of the enemy and drive in with the broadsword. If they were compelled to fall back they kept the second pistol in reserve and locked their targes. They had never been broken or worsted in fight before Aulderan.

Early that morning, because of some old pact between Clan Ranald and Clan Gordon, Colkitto, without consulting Montrose, had rashly exchanged one hundred of these veterans for three hundred Gordons fresh from the glens. A good exchange, one might hold, for the Gordons were all swank lads and held themselves to be cocks of the north; but in a generation of peace they had never seen the cold sheen of steel drawn for the kill, never heard the wicked whistle of a Highland arrow, the bark of an arquebus, the thunder of a culverin; and the very best of raw troops are subject to a sudden panic sometimes in their first battle. I could see that Montrose was anxious by the restless way he moved about, head forward and eyes searching the dispositions along the gardens.

"Look!" cried Iseabal Rose, and the beat of her heart was at last in her voice.

MY OWN heart jumped too. At last the enemy was in sight. Outriders on the flank, the left wing of the covenanting army came over the swell of the brae

less than half a mile away. A long, thick line, a little uneven, five or six deep, the sun sparkling on its steel points. I looked at it under my hand.

"Kilted men!" I said. "The Northern clans—Mackenzies and Frasers."

"They are facing this way," she whispered.

"That is to be hoped."

"But why not swing round by the coast and come in behind your barricades?"

"Their backs to the sea! They have not forgotten Inverlochy." I touched her arm. "We had better go now."

"Is it not safe up here?"

"Safe enough if the wind holds. No arrow will reach this far, though a spent ball from flintlock might. But my work—"

"Just a little while," she urged. "I am excited and frightened, but I want to see how men face each other."

"It will not be pleasant."

I looked at the advancing clansmen. A second body of foot had appeared on their right, and though it was kilted too, I saw by the smooth dressing of its line that it was a regular regiment. I learned later that it was the first-line regiment of Lawers, one of the best in Scotland, and composed mostly of Campbell clansmen. The centre and right wing had not yet appeared and it was evident that Hurry was slanting his wing to attack our right and outflank us, in which case my regiment would not be engaged for some time.

"You will not like this," I told her, taking her arm and leading her to a square-cut headstone four feet out of the ground. "There is your breastplate." I stood at her side, and Tadg Mor and Black Rab went to the Kirkyard wall just below us. I noticed that the Fraser man had a scabbardless, rusted, two-handed claymore hanging from his left shoulder.

That battle began like all battles. The bark of an arquebus, and then a scattered barking, a distant shouting and piping growing nearer, the thunder from the castle hill of one of the culverins, the round ball of which could be seen hurtling out of the smoke puff and falling far short of the advancing line; a hard smatter of fire, the curving streak of arrows, slogan cries and gathering tunes lifting shrill and mad; and, before one knew, the blended clamor of battle filling the air.

That first thud, that first shout, that first shrill of the pipes strikes one as with a physical blow to the very heart, and one quivers with what is very near dismay; but the blended clamor not only deafens the ear but sets one in a new world, where one is dazed, yet clear, and has no longer a flesh-shudder against steel or bullet. A haze of smoke began to drift down the field between the lines.

THAT first attack by the covenant highlandmen was finely delivered. They came sweeping in a good line, five deep, across the open, banners forward, pipes blowing, slogans pealing; and if the ground had been easier they might well have washed over the defenders. But the miry ground, the strong stream, the brief slope to the gardens slowed their impetus, and the manned wall brought them up short.

It was touch and go for a long two minutes, and the fight heaved and swayed all along the wall. Some of the more active of the attackers actually flung themselves over the loose stones against the targes and died in the air. But the wall held firm after that critical two minutes.

Colkitto's veterans fought coolly and very terribly, but they could not be everywhere, and the young Gordon soldiers had their one touch of panic; at every bark of shot and whiz of arrow they ducked their heads like boys at stone pelting, and their officers had to beat them with fist and sword-flat to keep

them from scattering back to the apparent safety of the houses and the kirkyard.

I had my hand on Iseabal Rose's shoulder to drag her away when the attack broke. Just in time the Gordon lads learned from the example of Colkitto's smiters that manning the wall was safer than anything else they might do; it gave them the advantage of the upper ground, and they saw how Colkitto's men held their targes slanting from shoulder over head against the MacRae arrows, and gave the point downward at men leaping for the wall. They gathered heart then, like the sound men they were at bottom, struck lustily, and began to raise a shout or two of their own. "A Gordon! A Gordon!" "Strathbogie!" "Remember James of Rhynie!" The attackers drew back from the wall at last, not because they were yet beaten, but to gather force and impetus for another rush.

Once again they came, but, the first attack having failed, there was less and less hope for any other. They hurled themselves against the wall in vain gallantry, their dead and wounded littering the brae face, and again they fell sullenly back to the brink of the burn, while the defenders hastily reloaded pistols and flintlocks and arquebus. And now, too, the culverin from the castle hill began landing round shot in the rear ranks. The Keppoch women were running down the mound past us to bring in the wounded.

Nat Gordon told me later that when Montrose saw the steady, deadly defense made against that second attack he slapped his basnet against thigh-piece and cried out, "Well done, young Gordons!" We have them now." He was in the act of turning away to direct the next sortie when Alasdair made his second and last mistake of the day.

Alasdair was an impetuous man and used to making onsets, not withstanding them. There was never in all the world a better man to lead a charge, but holding a stone wall was not in his mood. Not more than forty paces separated defenders and attackers, and at this juncture a big man of the Hays, a notable wielder of the broadsword, leaped in front of the line and flung a taunt in his great voice. "Cowards! Come out and fight like men." And the taunt was taken up by the men behind and went thundering down the line. And then Hay walked three slow paces forward and clanged his targe with broadsword. "Blade to blade, Alasdair. Come out and fight me!"

That challenge was more than Alasdair could stand. Impulsively he jerked a thorn bush out of an old doorway, leaped through, yelled his war-cry: "Gainsay who dare!" and charged down at Hay in great bounds. And like one man, his own bodyguard, a hundred strong, leaped the walls and charged behind him. But the Gordon lads stayed where they were. They had a loving confidence in that defending wall; they had held it so finely and would keep on doing that, but it was beyond the power of their wills to force their shrinking young flesh to the sally beyond it. And I will not say they were wrong, for it is very possible that, if they had charged with Colkitto, the battle would have had a different ending.

It was then that Montrose left the mound. He left it running, hair streaming and thigh pieces clanking, going in leaps down the slope, throwing himself on his horse and spurring. His staff clattered after. All but Nat Gordon. Gordon leaped the other way, over the kirkyard wall, his curses streaming out behind, and out into the gardens amongst his clansmen like a raging wind. But I hardly saw him, for the only man to watch was Alasdair.

And Alasdair was having his bad time. The first drive of his charge shocked the Covenanters back to the burn and into it, but he had not enough

weight of numbers to break or drive them. One hundred men, no matter how impetuous, cannot drive a dozen times that number of fighting men in a killing humor. For a tense minute they strained against each other in a dead and deadly lock; then the sheer weight of numbers lifted Colkitto's men backwards. And that looked to be the end.

But it was then that that chosen hundred showed their quality. For they did not break. If they had broken the enemy would have flooded over them and over the gardens. Instead, they fell back step by step, targes in line and pikes dunting on them, pistols spitting, broadswords shearing, men yelling, men falling. The close press of men anxious to slay was their very saving.

Alasdair himself did ten men's work. He slew Hay, some say by an underhand trick. That is not so. At the time Alasdair's broadsword was broken at the hilt, and he was warding off Hay's blows with his targe. It was then he said, "I will not deceive you. There is a man of mine at your back." Hay turned his head for one look, and Alasdair had time to snatch the sword that MacDavid of Ard-na-Cross reached him; and forthwith that blade shore through Hay's targe and shoulder. MacDavid died beneath the pikes.

Tadg Mor O'Kavanagh turned his face up to me, the flame of battle in his grey-blue eye, and his teeth bare under the strong hook of his nose.

"Alasdair needs us now," he cried, and leaped the kirk-yard wall. Black Rab Fraser, tugging his sword over his shoulder with his two hands, tumbled after him. I caught Iseabal Rose by both shoulders and swung her around. "Run —run now!" I cried, and pushed her roughly toward the corner of the kirk. Then in turn I leaped the wall and down the brae.

My cowardly soul revolted against it, but I had to go. My foster brother and I had an understanding—never put in so many words—that in danger where one went the other had to go, without question and without pause. The urge of that understanding was stronger than any cowardice. It was the thing that kept some manhood upright in me, and I had to hold by it.

MY FATHER'S sword was back at the dressing station, but there were swords to be had down there. Let me say at once that I did not need a sword that time. Alasdair and some seventy of his gentlemen won their way back to the garden, and the Gordons, under the lash of their terrible Nathaniel, helped them nobly in the last difficult minute over the wall. The position was again secure, but near thirty fine men were dead or wounded outside it.

The last man in was Ranald Ban MacKinnon. Tall and strong and with the lithe whip of a lance in him, he was as good a man as Alasdair that day. In camp he was light-headed, light-hearted, loose-tongued fellow, but in fight he was as steadfast as steel and as deadly.

In the beginning I used to be afraid that Tadg Mor and he might come to blows, and I had heard men dispute as to which was the better man; but I soon got over my fears. They bickered often enough in camp, and played wicked tricks on each other, but when Ranald Ban was off on a ploy Tadg Mor was missing too, and, with drink taken, though Ranald Ban was inclined to take offense without being quarrelsome, nothing could disturb Tadg Mor's pleasant temper.

As I ran across the garden, Ranald Ban's back was in the doorway that Colkitto had charged through, and I could see his limber shoulders jerk and stiffen as the Campbell pikes dunted on his targe. And there Colkitto caught him by the belt and heaved him into safety. One over-keen pikeman, anxious for a final lunge, thrust head and shoul-

der inside the doorway and I saw the terrific downward swing of Alasdair's blade. The man's head fell between Ranald's feet.

"Ye'll be twa fine Covenanters together!"

Ranald Ban turned to us and I drew in my breath. The barb of an arrow and six inches of shaft stood out of one cheek and the feathered end stood out of the other, and his teeth were clenched on the wood. I leaped toward him, Alasdair caught him round the shoulders and thrust a strong thumb between his teeth, and I, breaking the arrow close to his cheek at the feathered end, jerked it smoothly from the wound.

Alasdair shook his bleeding thumb in the air and swore mightily. Ranald Ban had bitten it to the bone. *"Chreesta Tigearna!"* he roared. "There goes the first of my blood this day." Then he slapped me on the shoulder. "Good boy, yourself, Maurteen! I knew you and Tadg Mor would be down to give us a hand." He thrust Ranald Ban into my arms. "Take him up to the MacBeth and see if he has made a meal of his tongue." Alasdair was a rough warrior.

Ranald Ban looked at us with wild eyes, and for once had not a word to say. His lips were tight shut and a small trickle of blood ran down his chin. He was afraid to try his tongue, but he did not want to leave the field. He struggled in my arms till Tadg Mor came to his other side; and then we lifted him clear off his feet and rushed him up the mound to the kirk-yard. Fergus MacBeth met us at the wall and helped us over.

"I saw," said the surgeon. "Has he spoken?"

"Not as much as a whisper," said Tadg Mor in distress, "and how could he with his tongue in his paunch! Oh, wirra, wirra!" he lamented, "this will be the dull army now wanting his fine pleasant stories." Then he patted Ranald's shoul-

der. "But never you mind, my darling! Sure, you have given tongue enough already to last you all your days."

Ranald Ban looked at him with eyes gone strangely wistful, and all the light of war quenched in them, but he kept his lips pressed tight and swallowed once.

In the kirk porch Fergus MacBeth faced him to the light and took hold of his chin.

"Let us have a look, avic! Open it—open it, I say! And if you bite me I will put my finger down your gullet. There! Fine—oh, fine! But I do not want to jump in. Look, Maurteen!"

I had expected tongue and palate to be pierced and his teeth shattered, but there was scarcely a trace of blood in his mouth, and tongue, palate and teeth were whole.

"Like enough he had his mouth wide open and he yelling 'Another for Hector!'" He chucked Ranald softly under the chin. "Say something, white Ranald."

"Gug-gug!" said Ranald for a beginning.

"Ay, surely!" said Tadg Mor. "That was your mother's black hen she got from the priest that used lay two eggs every day but Sunday. You told us that one often. Give us a new one this time."

"That bloody MacRae dog!" said Ranald Ban.

"Now we have it!" said Tadg Mor.

"Did you see how I stood to them, Tadg Mor?" His words came in a rush now. "Did you see how I stemmed them, and five pikes in my targe?"

"I did not," denied Tadg Mor firmly. "All you did was to walk backward so fast you cut a hole in the wind."

"I got one with my first pistol, anyway, and if my sword had not stuck in its sheath I would not have got this wound. I dropped my targe hand to hold my belt and it was then the bowman got me. And *Dhia!* I missed him with the second bullet. A black Macrae in his red philabeg! Man, Maurteen! I thought I would never speak again!" And then he laughed. "I was like the man I knew in Mull that had a habit of swearing, and one day in a storm a thunderbolt hit his house and knocked half the chimney down; and he looked up the vent and started to curse, and at that a stone fell and broke his nose and four of his teeth. He did not speak a word for a week, and ever after that when he was minded to swear he used first of all look out of the door to see if there was a cloud anywhere in the sky."

"We will put a salve on that cut," said the surgeon laughing, and drew Ranald Ban into the kirk.

"Oh, sad day!" cried Tadg Mor tauntingly after him. "The rest of the year now you will be telling us even on of all the men you killed at Auldearn—and most of them snug at home."

A deep long breath was drawn at my shoulder and I turned to look down into Iseabal Rose's dark eyes.

"It is terrible," she breathed. "How can you make fun of it?"

"I told you to run."

"I tried to, but my feet would not carry me. How can men be so terrible and so fierce—and still laugh and banter?"

"Do you know any better way of facing death day after day?"

"It is all wrong—wrong!" The color was out of her face and her eyes were all black pupil. "I think that I am going to fall," she said quietly.

"You will be all right, girl dear," I whispered, my arm around her. "I should not have let you see."

She leaned against me. "I did not know it would be like that, but it had to be—I did not know—and you went down into it."

"And kept well out of it too, as you saw."

I looked over her head at the field of battle. "It is time for us to go."

Hurry's center had come out of the woods at last, three regiments in line. His left having failed its push, he had to bring up his center, and that fine disciplined column, dressing its line along the margin of the wood, looked massive enough to restore the balance of the day. And I knew that the swing of that balance would give me plenty to do. We hurried off the mound, the girl holding my arm, and Tadg Mor behind us. Black Rab Fraser had stayed behind in the gardens.

"If he gets the chance," said Tadg Mor, "he'll be off with the Frasers."

I DID not see any more of that battle, but all the world knows about it. I am often sorry that I missed seeing the charge of the Huntly horse. When Montrose galloped back from the kirk mound he knew that Alasdair was in a tight place, and that he himself had to strike now or never. He drove in amongst his cavalry, shouting to young Gordon: "It is a great shame on us that one man should always be winning the honors. There is great Alasdair beating the enemy before him. Let us charge at once and win our share of the glory!"

And the Huntly horse went yelling forward, knee to knee. Drummond's troopers shirked that charge, but some say that Drummond was a traitor to the covenant. Whether he was or not, he was tried for it and shot at Inverness three days later.

Young Lord Gordon wheeled his squadrons finely and drove sheer home on the flank of the Lothian regiment, crumpled it to pieces against the center, already suffering from the steady Irish fire, and at that opportune moment the Highland clans and the Irish regiments made the onset. The iron door had clanged and the fight was won.

O'Cahan and Clan Vuirich, to relieve Alasdair, dressed their lines to strike the Campbell Lawers, who staggered and broke under the blow, rallied again, and died dourly in the field.

The Covenanters' left wing, seeing the disaster to the centre, drew back from the village, slowly at first, and then at a run for the fords of Nairn—all but the MacRaes of Kintail, three hundred strong, who had a boast that they never ran from any field while the blue banner of Kintail floated. It was then that Alasdair gathered his remnant for vengeance, and the Gordons, lashed to fury by the terrible tongue of Nathaniel, sallied forth, no longer shy, no longer backward, only eager to kill or be killed killing. And once again the Gordons proved their title to "cocks of the North." The banner of Kintail went down, rose again, and flew over the fight till the last circle of the MacRaes died about it.

The dour stand of the Lawers Campbells brought many wounded to my station, and I scarcely heard the noise of battle trailing away westward and dying down. In time there was only the groan of wounded men and the soothing voices of women, broken once and again by distant gun peal. And soon the women bearers had rest, for there were no more wounded. But I was busy till the sun went low.

Iseabel Rose proved her mettle that afternoon of Auldearn. She subdued her first whimsy against blood; despite my dissuasion she kirtled her wine-red dress, borrowed an apron, and bared her arms —creamy soft round arms that soon showed ugly red stains. Only once she went away by herself, and when she returned I saw by her colorless cheeks that she had been sick. She stood by Margaret and myself hour by hour, and her firm hands and cool quiet voice were soothing to hurt men.

When the work was done and all our men moved to the shelter of the village houses—there was no need now for our hidden place in the Hardmuir—we washed in the burn and moved down by the side of it to Margaret's bothy.

"*Roisin Dhuv,*" said Tadg Mor—he insisted on calling her that pet name, the little dark rose—"if you will be staying in camp, I fear there is one I know will have to look to her post."

"One woman is enough in camp, I think, tall man," said she.

"Dinna be haverin', young lady," Margaret said brusquely, "and forty and more o' them were running aboot you all the day."

"I—and your Martin Somers—saw only one."

"The battle of Auldearn is over long ago," I said angrily.

At that point Black Rab Fraser came trotting up the burnside, his mouth open like a spent hound's, and his black hair in wisps over his brow. His surliness had almost given way to a grin, and he was more nearly in good humor than I thought he could be. His claymore was gripped in his oxter, and the rust streaks had been rubbed away.

"Where were you, Black Rab? We needed you here," his mistress asked sternly.

"West a bittock," he panted.

"I thought you were making off with your rogues of Frasers," said Tadg Mor.

"Na, na! Them were the red Lovat Frasers, and no kin o' mine. When I lookit ower the dyke down below I saw two men of the Findlaters of Easter Ross, a piper and his brother that misused me once over the sale of a stoat at Geddes market. 'Here's for ye!' says I, and ower the dyke with me in front of the Gordons. An' it was hot work, I'm tellin' ye. I got one on the nock of Ardersier, but the piper lad won away in a cobble into deep water off the Chanonry. Ah well! I'll have him for another day."

"If Hugheon Rose does not come up with you first," said his mistress, and at that name the man at once grew surly and cowed. That sudden change showed me clearer than anything she had said that her father was a wicked tyrant.

And that was the end of that bloody day.

CHAPTER V

LOCHLOY AT LAST

IT WAS the afternoon of the Monday following the battle that we took Iseabal Rose down to the port of Lochloy. We could not do it earlier because of our wounded, and we had to do it then because Montrose decided not to lay siege to Inverness that time, but to march back at once through Forres and Elgin and establish touch with the second Covenant army under Baillie.

We had a good many wounded, mostly pike thrusts and sword cuts, but the men of the Gael at that time thought little of clean wounds given by steel. We half-surgeons were used to wash the wound out with sour wine, or even triple-run spirit if the hurt went deep, bandage it with a dry dressing of peat-hag moss and trust to nature and clean blood.

Bullet wounds our fighting men did not like, and that is why they were inclined to be a little unsteady facing powder and ball. The bullet bit deep and stayed in the festering wound. There it was that the MacBeth surgeons showed their skill. With pointed hooked and pincered small instruments of their own forging they were enabled to probe the wound and extract the bullet; and their salves and simples saved many a man in the after fever.

These clean-blooded hill-bred fighters had a wonderful power of healing and recovery. I have seen them on their feet the third day after a wound that would kill most townsmen and lay any other men on their backs for a fortnight. Thus on the third day after Auldearn the greater portion of our wounded could march with their share of help from the women, and this help they often enough

decried unless the loss of blood made them stagger. The few men hard hit we carried on stretchers, sometimes between ponies.

The little company that convoyed Iseabel Rose to Lochloy consisted of Ranald Ban MacKinnon, Black Rab Fraser and myself. Margaret Anderson came too, but she made Tadg Mor stay behind to watch two of our men in a fever.

"I must see Uncle Alick ae day or anither," said she carelessly.

"You will not stay with him?" I put to her, showing some anxiety.

She looked at me.

"What for no?" she asked.

"The kirk has already reached a long arm to Lochloy searching for you."

"Ay, would they. But how did ye ken?"

"I ken. Is your uncle a Covenanter?"

"He mightna be, but the kirk has the power. In his young days he was a wild ane, and neither to hau'd nor to bind."

"In that case," said I, "he will now be the devil's own Covenanter."

"I must see him onywey." She threw her proud head in the air. "And he can take a peek at me to see how ill ye gangrels ha'e used me."

"He might recall," I warned her, "that a certain woman was resplendent in scarlet and bedizened with jewels."

"Ye'll be twa fine Covenanters together," she taunted me.

Ranald Ban's pierced cheeks hardly incommoded him at all, but perhaps the little heat in his blood made him more light-headed than usual. He insisted on coming. His jaws were bandaged, and MacBeth, in order to keep them steady, made him clamp his teeth on a kippen of peeled hazel. But he would keep on chewing it and talking away out at the side of it.

Lochloy was not more than two miles across country and we went there on foot. All that low country-side was sand-blown, and away to the east a great dune shone yellow in the sun above a dark wood of fir.

The hamlet of Maviston of Lochloy consisted of two score or so of stone and thatched houses. A low promontory, grown with bent-grass, jutted across the mouth of the inlet to hold off the beat of the northern seas, and so made the deep water of the basin a safe anchorage in all states of weather and tide.

Some five or six half-decked boats were beached on the sloping shore of clean sand, and the tide, half made, was lapping about their heavy rudders. Here and there a jelly fish was pulsing in the clear green water.

"He-oro!" cried Ranald Ban between his teeth, looking out across the sparkle of the sea at the high portals of Cromarty, "it makes me homesick for the green waters of Mull and the white beaches of Iona."

Anchored a couple of cable lengths off shore was a good-sized black vessel of two masts. I was not sailorman enough to notice that its spars were bare, and no furled sails on the yards.

"There is your Edinburgh boat, Mistress Rose," I told her. "We are in good time."

THE only soul in sight was a bearded fisherman staunching a cobble on the sand above high-water mark. After one sour look over his shoulder at us as we approached, he went on working tow and a brown resinous substance into a crack in the planking.

"God bless the work, boatman," I addressed him in the English tongue. "Could you be telling us where one Alexander Anderson lives in this place."

"There be mony o' that name in this place," he replied coldly, and went on poking with his pointed stick.

"Which one is Alick Anderson the ship-master?"

"Hoo would I ken?"

"You mean you will not tell?"

"I wad tell ye naething," said he stubbornly, "for I micht be blamed for it and yer work done."

I looked at Ranald Ban and Ranald laughed softly. "He is a Covenanter, this young fellow," said he.

"I haè my ain religion," said the old fellow dourly.

"And it a stiff-necked one," added Ranald Ban, and went on speaking carefully in English, his hazel stick like an Indian pipestem in his teeth, and a suspiciously silky tone to his voice. "But indeed you pay us the great compliment, old man of boats, for you knowingly take shelter behind your years, knowing that my sword will not itch your ribs and your memory in the eyes of the ladies. If you would be a young fellow, now, you would go trotting the road in front of us, and if you would not trot it is myself would make you trot. We will be doing you no harm, surely, but if your memory does not come back to you in two hops and a jump we will be kicking two or, maybe, three holes in this fine black boateen of yours. Are you listening, father?"

I looked down at Ranald Ban's feet. He was wearing the soft rawhide Highland brogans not made for kicking holes. But I stepped forward and placed my shod horseman's boot on the gunwale.

"Where does Alick Anderson the shipmaster live?" I questioned.

"Take your time to it, man of boats," Ranald Ban advised him.

The old fellow straightened up then. "Ye wad dae Aelick a hurt?"

"We will be hurting no one this day in this place, unless it be this bit of a boat of yours—"

"Ah weel!" said the old man resignedly. "I hae done a' I could. The man ye want bides in the hoose at the end of the street—a thatched hoose that sheuldna be thatched. Ye'll ken it."

We left him standing there glowering after us, and if his eye carried the evil a blight might well have fallen on us.

"You would not hurt the poor man's boat?" Iseabal Rose looked up at me.

"Yon auld fool kennet fine he would," Margaret answered for me.

WORD may have gone amongst the houses that the Montrose scourge and some of its loose women were down on the fishertown, for no one moved out of doors and only women's eyes peeked at us through the bottle-glass panes. Some of the men would be at the fishing, doubtless, and some of the younger ones in Sir John Hurry's army and now getting their wind back at the safe side of Inverness. Not many would be dead, for the men of Nairn had made a fine run for it early in the day.

At the far end of the hamlet we came on a good-sized stone house of two storeys standing by itself, with a walled garden behind it. It carried a thick coat of bent-grass thatch, and Ranald Ban laughed when he saw it.

"The old fellow was right," he said. "This is it. Never before have I seen a thatched house with two floors to it."

The shipmaster must have seen us coming, for as we faced in to the house the door opened and he stepped out on the broad white-chalked door tread. A tall upright figure of a man in seaman's blue, well on in years but not old, and at the first glance I knew that he was our Margaret's uncle. He had the same mould of face, the same strength of cheekbone, the same gray eyes, but his hair and his spade beard were not lint-white but snow-white. He stood up straight and looked us over, his glance flashing past his niece to rest on Iseabal Rose.

"My duty to you, Mistress Rose," said he, bowing briefly.

"I am come to see you, Master Alick," said she.

"And in strange company, young lady." His voice had Margaret's very quirk, though the Doric *blas* and way

of speech were not so noticeable. His eyes came back and rested on his niece, and a light came in them that I knew. "I ken you, my lass. You are in strange company too."

"It is the company of my ain choice, uncle," said Margaret, quietly for her.

"Prood of it then?"

"I am. It is the finest company in a' the world."

Her voice had a thrill to it that time; her head was thrown up, her eyes flashing into his, and there was a spot of bright color in her cheeks.

"It hasna shamed you anyway—"

"Waur shamed would I be bed-mate to Andra Cant," she stopped him.

"Let's no' talk o' bed-mates, my girl." He lifted a shoulder. "I can see for myself they have taken good care o' ye, if that's ony sign o' virtue." There was a softening about his firm mouth that hinted a humorsome mind behind his stern front. That set him in a new light for me.

"Master Anderson," said I, "I would ask you to be very careful worded in the things you hint to this lady."

"She is my niece, young man."

"You will be worthy of her, then, I do hope."

"My sirs!" cried he in half-mock wonder. "Dinna tell me you are one o' the finest company in a' the world. Was it she gave you that bonny black eye?"

"The ear is her favourite target," said I.

"Hoots, ye foolish men!" cried Margaret disdainfully. "Aye at the quirkin'. Uncle Alick, this is Surgeon Martin Somers of O'Cahan's Irish army, and this is Ranald MacKinnon of Clan Ranald."

"Now we ken. I haè heard Brodie speak his mind of O'Cahan's Irish and the three or four times they prostrated him, house and lands." He smiled at Ranald Ban. "And as for Clan Ranald, all Scotland has heard Clan Ranald wonder at the greatness of that clan."

"Man, oh man!" said Ranald Ban. "I feel at home with you already, and I listening to your niece the better part of a year. You remind me—"

"Mistress Rose has business wi' you, uncle," Margaret cut in. "If you would deal wi' that, ye micht than haè time to turn you fleerin' tongue on me and my frien's."

"Business, Mistress Iseabal! That's another thing." And he bowed to our dark lady. "Will you ladies—and gentlemen—come in the house?"

Iseabal Rose, who had listened silently to this joust of tongues, spoke up. "No need to trouble you that far, Master Alick."

But he was firm. "Na, na! I wouldna have it said I kept one o' my ain blood on the cauld side of the door. You will come, to please me."

WE WENT inside behind the ladies, but Black Rab Fraser turned away and moved down towards the beach, swinging his mistress's satchel. Ranald Ban whispered in my ear.

"I knew fine Meg came of sound stock. I often said it—"

"And other things as well."

"Eh? Only fun between friends."

Our host led us into a wide room with a low beamed ceiling, a carved mantelpiece, and dark oaken furniture that must have come by sea out of Edinburgh. He opened a press and placed two odd-shaped wicker-covered bottles, a brown jar, and big crystal glasses on the table; and at his call a serving woman—he was widowed and childless—came with a dish of cakes.

"Sit ye!" he invited. "This is of the dry grapes of the Garonne, and the ladies need not fear it; and in the joog ye have a triple brandywine of a neater flavor than our Highland spirit."

He served the ladies and, before I might halt his hand, filled my glass with a rich amber spirit. At that time, prob-

ably due to the strange American blood in me, strong liquor went to my head over quickly, and so I was very cautious sipping that powerful spirit that had in it a flavor of grapes and sun and dry sand. And as I sipped I noticed how the shipmaster's glance could not keep away from his niece Margaret. The lustre of her eyes and her linten hair lit up that dark room. She would be at home in a house like this. That was the thought in his mind and in mine.

Iseabal Rose came to her business without delay.

"Master Anderson," said she, "your friend John Balfour, the minister of Ardclach, sent me down in charge of these gentlemen to take passage with you to Edinburgh."

"Then I know they are gentlemen," said he. "But Edinbro, Mistress Iseabal?"

"Edinbro it is."

"But have ye no' heard? The plague has struck Edinbro, and the port o' Leith is shut to shipping these two months."

"Do you not sail, then?" her voice remained quiet.

"Not to Edinbro. That canna be."

And that was that. Reports, indeed, had reached us that the terrible plague was in the Lowlands as far north as the links of Forth, and that was one of the reasons that kept our army behind the Highland line.

"'Edinbro is hard come by," added the shipmaster, "and the dead lyin' unburied in the narrow wynds, o't."

Iseabal Rose turned to me, her eyes dark and wide, and her voice gathered that husky, prophetic tone.

"I knew it in my bones, Martin Somers. I knew I was setting out on a strange adventure when I rode behind you over Lethen Bar."

But I turned to the shipmaster. "Where do you sail, then?"

His hand was in his beard, his smile almost shame-faced.

"Just a fancy I had since I was a lad. All my days I haè been ploughing back and forth to Leith and two or three times to Kingston-upon-Hull and once to London Port, but I aye had the notion to sail north-about on a voyage of my ain."

"To what port?"

"A long-off one." He was a trace eager now. "But there would be no loss in it that I can forecast. Drink up, gentlemen! Ye see I could load a half cargo of wool hereabouts, and pick up a puckle more down the west side, and a wheen o' hides and salt and ale out of Dublin, an' a bolt or two of broadcloth at mouth of Avon in Bristol, and then—here's my fancy—face the seas of Biscay for the port of Bordeaux and a barter for a cargo of Garonne wine, same as that. I could make my money out o't in London, and in Edinbro too if the plague abates, as well it might by that time.

"When would you sail?"

"Ah, weel! There's the rub. Facing yon seas, the *Moray Quoine* calls for a new suit o' canvas and rigging. Not before the fall of the year at the earliest."

There was no more to be said. Iseabal Rose could not make Edinburgh by sea. She sat, eyes downcast, the middle finger of one hand tapping thoughtfully on the table. And as if in answer to that tapping came a loud knocking on the door. We were silent listening to the serving woman shuffling along the passage, and then came the depth of a voice that I knew.

"That is my foster-brother, Tadg Mor O'Kavanagh," I told them. "Will you pardon me?"

And I went out to find the serving woman holding the door against Tadg Mor, with Black Rab Fraser behind him.

"A word in your ear, Maurteen," he said, short of breath after hurry, and drew me out into the roadway. Black Rab sat down on the white step and waited.

"Manus O'Cahan sent me," began Tadg Mor, "and here is his message. A man has come into camp looking for his daughter. One Hugh Rose of Belivat, where we were two nights ago."

"He brought courage with him," I said.

"And ten men to join Montrose, and a friend with twenty as well. And there is the point, brother: Seumas Graham is not like to offend a man of Nairn friendly to his King's cause. He has been asking for you and Ranald Ban, and for me too; and Manus slipped me off to warn you. We will have to attend at the House of Boath this evening."

"Things are getting worse as they go," I said. "Mistress Rose was to sail in that boat for Edinburgh, and it is not sailing at all now."

"And the man Rose will get back his daughter?"

"I could not tell you that yet. Stay where you are."

And I went back into the house.

"MASTER ANDERSON," said I, "our thanks for your hospitality, the first offered us kindly under a Scots roof-tree."

"We'll no' be sayin' where the blame might lie," said he.

I looked at Margaret then, but her eyes for the first time avoided mine.

"It is time for us to go," I said.

"Man, man!" protested our host, "your glass is full. Wasna the liquor to your taste?"

"A very great liquor," said I, having learnt some courtesy in Ireland—sometimes to my hurt, as now. "Good health with you and all under your roof." And I tossed off my drink, and it burned its way deeper than I thought I had stomach to hold it.

The uncle was looking at his niece now.

"Must you be going so soon, my lassie?" He put it to her quietly.

"Would you bid me stay, uncle?"

"By the Lord, an' I would!" His voice and his eyes flared like her very own. "For it is mostly my blame that you are where you are. It was my blindness in single ways that held me from bringing you out o' Aberdeen when your mother married the second time. You are my ain blood, and I dinna mind anything that has befallen you."

"Nothing has befallen me," said she proudly.

"I will take your word for that." Then he struck his hands together and shook his massive head like a strong man helpless against something stronger. "It canna be, my girl! The kirk has a hand out for you already. Brodie of Brodie would ken you were wi' me by the morn's morn, and you'll ken what that means. Na, na! my bairn. Guid kens I may be wrong, but ye maun bide where ye are till the times do alter—if alter they will."

"It is we will alter them," cried Ranald Ban, remembering the song Tadg Mor was ever singing. "Listen, you! Margaret Anderson will ride a white horse into Aberdeen, two thousand and three thousand of the Gael at her back, like Joan of France."

"Laddie, laddie!" said the old man. "This is cauld Scotland and north-about is sunny France. But we can aye have our dreams." And then he faced Margaret and placed his hands gently on her shoulders. "Wha kens? If you are not too far away an' the will with you, mind that the *Moray Quoine* sails this year. Look you! I will make it the last week of October. Sunny France is south awa and we have naething to hold our bones in cold Lochloy. Will you mind?"

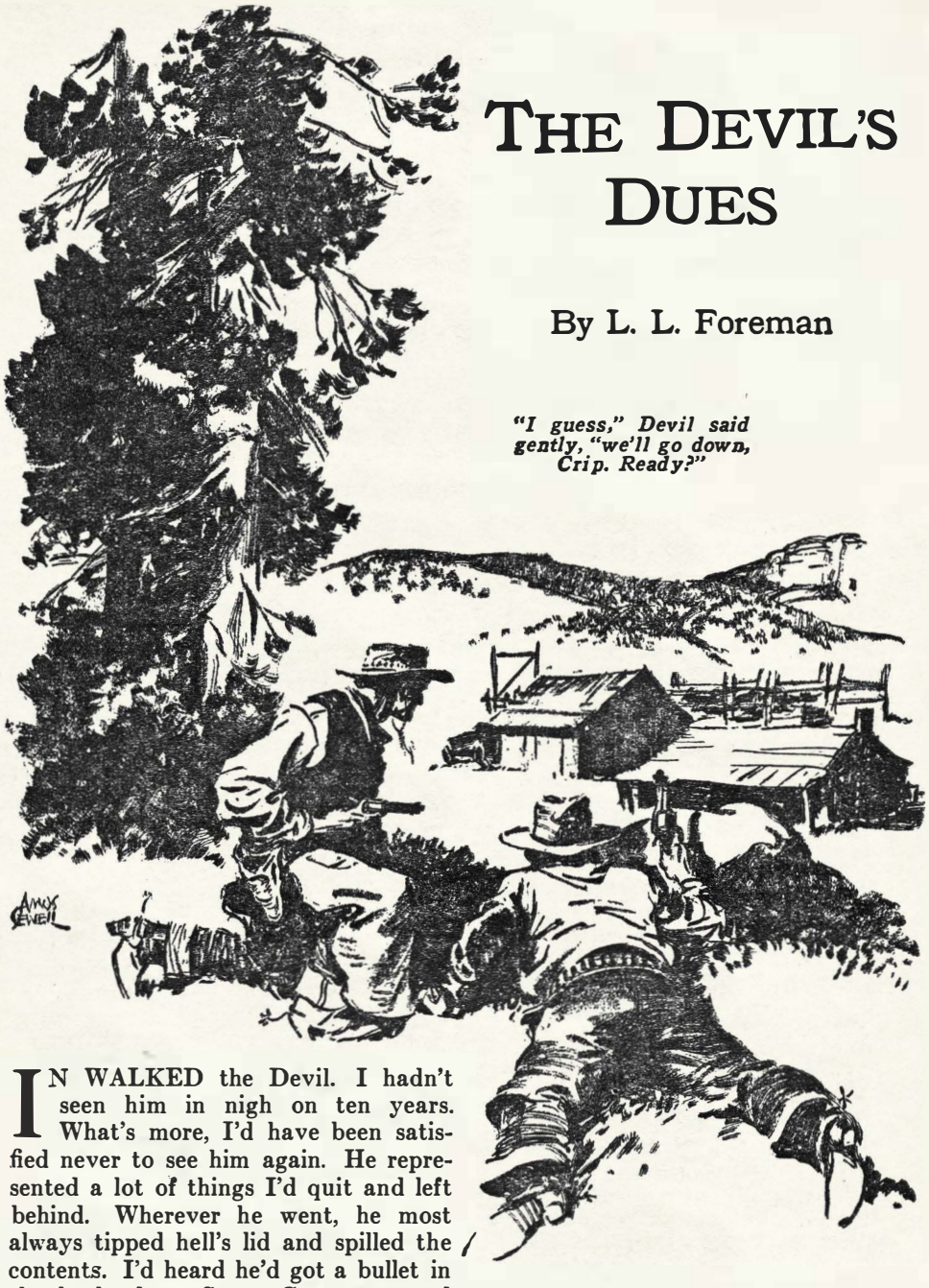
"I will mind weel, Uncle Alick." And the two looked into each other's eyes, not heeding us.

He shook his head again. "Do I see another dream ahin' your e'en, lassie? Weel, weel! The Lord keep you!"

(To be continued)

THE DEVIL'S DUES

By L. L. Foreman



"I guess," Devil said gently, "we'll go down, Crip. Ready?"

IN WALKED the Devil. I hadn't seen him in nigh on ten years. What's more, I'd have been satisfied never to see him again. He represented a lot of things I'd quit and left behind. Wherever he went, he most always tipped hell's lid and spilled the contents. I'd heard he'd got a bullet in the back, down Santa Cruz way, and gone under.

But no. I looked up and here he was blocking the doorway of the Crooked Horn Saloon, standing sort of loose and watchful, like I always remembered him. His big hands were hanging low, and those cold, blank eyes swept over the tables and bar.

"Lookin' for Crip Colster," he said softly. "Any you gents seen him?"

The Crooked Horn got mighty quiet.

When Devil Haggerty asks questions a gent thinks fast and generally gives the right answers. He's got that look about him. Several of them present slanted their eyes at me. So, with an empty feeling in my innards, I scraped my chair out from behind the water cooler.

"Sure, Devil," I piped up. "Here I am."

"Howya, Crip." He nodded, grave, no surprise on his hard, lean face. He never shows his thoughts. "Step outside. Want to talk."

Right there I got what you might call a premature look at my own funeral. The saloon crowd practically went into mourning. I could almost hear their thoughts saying what a decent fellow I'd been after all and how I'd be missed, as I limped across the floor and followed Devil out into the sunshine.

We stopped at the hitchrack.

"I didn't run out on you, that time in Pinalino," I said quick, wondering was I as fast on the draw as I used to be. "The sheriff showed up with a posse, an' I had to light out 'fore—"

"I know," he said. His eyes bored into mine. Then he gave his dry ghost of a smile. He ain't changed a bit from the way I remembered him, except there's more gray round the temples. "Your horse handy, Crip? No? Well, borrow one. That'n there."

"But that roan belongs to—" I stopped when his deadly calm eyes met mine again.

"Won't be the first horse you borrowed," he reminded me quietly.

I mounted the roan. It belonged to Jeff Harbee, who don't like me anyway. I had to shorten the off stirrup, account of my stiff leg. It's been stiff that way for years. Got a bullet in the knee, one time, fooling in a range war. Devil was with me at the time. That's when we first got acquainted. He smacked two slugs into the man who did it. He was bad, even way back in those days.

Devil mounted his own horse, a big dapple gray what I was certain he'd never paid cash for. We rode out of Split Creek, and the looks we got along the main street told me my long and careful built reputation as a solid citizen was all shot. And only the day before I'd put in my bid for sheriff's job, that office being recently and violently vacated. No self-respecting cowtown was going to elect sheriff a man who hobnobbed with the likes of Devil Haggerty.

"WHERE we goin', Devil?" I asked, when we cleared town.

"The Suttle place," he answered. "Know where 'tis? Good. I don't. I'm seein' the Suttle boys. Thet's why I looked yuh up. Wouldn't want a better hombre with me."

Well, that was a compliment, a relief, and a large chunk of bad news, all combined. I knew the Suttle bunch. Four brothers. Me and Devil had run across them a few times in our joint career, but never teamed up with them. Gun-swifts, all four, and plain ornery.

They'd come into the Split Creek country about a year ago and bought up a rundown nester's outfit. Nobody had much to do with them. I'd figured they were like me, trying to settle down decent, so kept my trap shut about what I knew of them. They did the same for me.

"They're hidin' out," remarked Devil. "Hear 'bout thet big Nogales stage holdup last year?"

"Uh-huh. Sixty thousand dollars lifted, wasn't it?" I looked sideways at him. "Suttles pull that?"

"Yeah, them an' another feller. The Suttles double-crossed the other feller, later on. Shot him. They got clear with all the loot. So," Devil added gently, "I'm seein' 'em."

"I heard you got plugged in the back," I said. "Down Santa Cruz way, last year."

He nodded. "Jingo Suttle did thet. Pulled a s'prise on me. Took me six months to get back on my feet. Been doin' consid'rable trailin' since then."

"That feller what got double-crossed, the one what helped the Suttle bunch pull the stick-up," I said, "happen to know who he was?" I tried to sound casual.

"Your guess," murmured Devil, looking round at the passing landscape, "is as good as mine, Crip. Stranger to me." There was no way of telling whether he meant that sarcastic or not, but I had my suspicions.

"Devil," I said, slow and choosy with my words, "you an' me rid long trails together in the old days. Mostly, we was on the wrong side of the law. But that's all past an' gone now. For me, anyway. I'm a respect'ble citizen these days. I'm even runnin' for sheriff o' Split Creek."

"So I heard. Thet's fine, Crip." His smile was almost kind. "By the by, there's money in this Suttle business, o' course. I figger to cut yuh a share in—"

"I don't hanker for that kinda dinero nowadays," I broke in sharp.

"No?" He raised one dark eyebrow. "Mebbe yuh'll change yore mind after we see the Suttles."

"I don't wanta go through with it, Devil," I blurted, and started to drag rein.

"Eh?" He swung his hard face to me. "Lost your nerve? Well, for— Wouldn't back out on me, Crip, would yuh?" Maybe it was accident, but his right hand dropped careless-like to his thigh.

I'd seen that big, tapering hand do remarkable things. It looked just as capable of doing things right now, or even more so. Life hadn't softened Devil, not the kind of life he led. He wasn't going to let me high-tail, after telling me so much. And he always could beat me on the draw.

"No, Devil." I answered, after swallowing once. "I wouldn't back out on you. Wonder if all four Suttles are to home today?"

"Hope so," remarked Devil, and we rode on. He looked at me a couple times as we jogged along, like he was measuring me. I felt damn uncomfortable.

IT WAS a weedy little outfit, the Suttle place. Just a log shack with a flapping tarpaper roof, a lean-to wagon shed close by, and a two-by-four corral. The horses in the corral looked all right, though, apart from being a mite fuzzy. Saddles hung on the poles.

The place lay in a wide hollow, like a big dishpan. Poor spot to build a house. You'd need webbed feet to get around there during the heavy rains. I said as much to Devil. We lay on our bellies, peeping down into the hollow, with our mounts grounded a quarter-mile behind us.

"Yeah," muttered Devil. "I see they've cleaned out all the brush. Feller can't sneak up on the house 'thout bein' spotted. Y'know, they're smart, 'sides bein' ornery. Big Suttle's the bright one. He's downed quite a few, one time an' another. Next worst rattler o' the outfit is Jingo. He's mine, Crip. Tim an' Tersh ain't no angels, neither."

"Plenty bad outfit," I agreed. "Mebbe we oughta wait awhile, till—"

Devil gives me that long, studying look again.

"I guess," he breathed gently, "We'll go down, Crip! Ready?"

I wasn't. If it came to that, I wasn't ever going to be ready to march down into that nest of killers with a lobo gunhawk at my side, to battle for stolen loot. But, ready or not, I had to go. It didn't seem the time to argue the point, with Devil Haggerty's cold eyes on me. What's more, his big guns were out. I slid out my own old gentler, and nodded.

We went down. That is, we started

down, fast and light-footed. The Suttles had either seen us beforehand, or else they kept constant guard, because a gun blatted three times through a crack in the boarded window before we covered a dozen steps. Two more guns joined in, then a fourth, spitting through the half-open back door.

A slug screeched past my off ear. Another nicked me in the shoulder. I flopped so hard I knocked all my wind out, and rolled the rest of the way to the back of the wagon shed. Then I sat up and looked to see what Devil was doing.

He was doing plenty. Still leaping toward the shack, he was, zigzagging, both guns spurting his fast trigger-play. The door slammed shut. He ducked a double blast from the boarded window, chopped a shot at it, and sprinted around the corner for the front.

I could hear feet pounding across the floor of the shack, then the bark of guns round the other side. The shooting kept up for maybe ten seconds, fast and furious, then slackened. A voice I recognized as Jingo's yelled: "His guns're empty! C'mon, git him!" Then the clatter of a cross-bar as they started to throw open the front door.

Here was my chance. The wagon shed was between me and the shack. I could high-tail up that short slope out of the hollow and be gone. The Suttles likely thought they'd downed me with that first blast, anyway. They were all at the other side of the shack, tearing open the front door to get at Devil, who was likely crouched close and reloading in a hurry.

Here was my chance, all right. But something happened to me. Don't know what it was. All at once I was a young bucko on the loose again. Sharp and clear I could see Devil Haggerty standing over me, grinning his hard, cold grin. I was pinned under my dead horse, with a smashed knee, and the gunny what did it was coming up to plant a finishing slug. Devil was slamming two shots into that same gunny.

I went down the rest of that slope in a limping run, and it seemed natural as hell to let out my old war-whoop. That back door was bolted, but it flew open when I chucked my weight at it. Then I was barging through the shack and nigh stretching my length over Tersh Suttle, who was sprawled on the floor. The front door was open, sure enough. Jingo was jumping out, with Big hard behind. Tim, still in the shack had twisted round at the sound of me. I caught a glimpse of his glaring eyes as he brought down his gun for a chop shot. We both fired.

Mine got there first. His shot went over my head. Liked to've parted my hair, came so close. He went backwards, still glaring, and I fanned hammer. Big took my second slug, but it didn't down him. He sort of shook, turned, and his guns trailed smoke as he swung them at me.

Then two shots thudded out, close to the door and outside the shack. Big Suttle let his guns sag. He stared at me, kind of mad and regretful, as he folded over. Past him, I saw Jingo stop dead. He muttered something, teetered, and took a header.

DEVIL stepped over Big's body and into the shack. He still looked the same. He never changed expression.

"'Bliged, Chip," he said, quiet and casual. "Thought they had me for a spell. Sounded good, thet old yell o' yours."

I nodded and limped out through the front, breathing hard. I ain't got the wind I used to have. After awhile I heard him ripping up the floorboards, and knew he was hunting for that loot. Then I heard something else. It was the sound of hoofs, plenty of them, and coming this way.

"Hey, Devil!" I shouted. "Mob

comin' from town, sounds like. Curious t'see what we're up to, reckon. We better vamose."

He didn't answer, so I jumped back into the shack. He was still pulling the place apart, frowning and thoughtful.

"Y'hear me, Devil? Half Split Creek's headin' this way!" Made me sore, the calm way he went on working.

"What of it?" he inquired, absent-like. "Damn! Where'd they cache thet—"

Hoofbeats drowned out the rest. Through the open front door I could see about forty riders coming into the hollow. There was old Colonel Braddock, T-Bar Hanson, Chipper Dundee, and all the rest of Split Creek's leading and active citizens. Right bristly and purposeful they looked, too, not just curious. They'd seen the bodies.

"Ah, here 'tis!" Devil actually raised his deep voice as he hauled a sack up from the floor he'd ruined.

"Helluva lot o' good it'll do you!" said I, and sighed, knowing I was in as deep as him. Split Creek ain't got much use for loboes. My law-abiding ten years wasn't going to weigh much against four dead men, Devil Haggerty, and sixty thousand dollars in stolen cash. Certain citizens already suspicioned a few things about my regretted past.

"Come out, you two!" That was Colonel Braddock's sandpaper voice. "We've got all sides covered, so think twice 'fore you start anything!"

I wouldn't think o'startin' anythin'," drawls Devil, strolling out with the sack tucked under his arm. "It's all finished! What you gents want?"

That was a question, all right. It made me blink, too, as well as the crowd. I followed out after Devil. The Colonel stared at us. They all had guns out.

"You can holster those things," said Devil, cool as a rippling stream. "Or turn 'em some way thet ain't at me. Li'ble to be an accident. I've jest ended a job thet took me over a year, so my humor is good. But don't strain it. An' don't figger on tryin' to cut in on the reward, either. Colster helped me wipe out these Suttle road-agents. He gets half. If he wants it, thet is."

"Reward?" I blinked at the sack. "Why, I—huh?"

"Reward," nods Devil. "Two thousand a head bounty on the Suttle boys. Thet's eight thousand the four. 'Nother ten thousand offered by the express comp'ny for the return o' their cash. I aim to split the eight thousand with yuh, Crip. Thet all right?"

"Uh—sure," said I playing up to his talk. It sounded foolish, but I was willing to back up any crazy bluff of his to get out of this mess.

The colonel snorted, his eyes calling us both liars and double-dyed candidates for the hang rope. "You're Devil Haggerty—"

"Special Marshal Haggerty," corrects Devil. "Appointed by the governor of this—"

"Wha-a-aat?" I gaped at the gold badge he flips out of his pants pocket.

"H'm?" He looked at me. "Didn't yuh know? Hell, thought yuh did. Sure. Four years ago, short time after I got married. Want to see her picture? Here. Fine gal, Crip. Like yuh to meet her. I met her first when I was sheriff o' Mariposa."

He pulls papers out of his pocket, passes them up to the colonel. The colonel looks at them, all the rest of the crowd stretches necks to look at them, and then they all look at each other.

"Good man, this Colster hombre," remarks Devil. "Got a whoop thet'd scare an Injun. Ought've heard him awhile back. Say, Crip, I could mebbe git yuh a dep'ty marshal job, if—"

"The hell with that!" cut in the colonel, sharp. "He's put in his claim for sheriff, an' he ain't goin' to back out. Hell, he's practic'ly elected!"

"Congratulations, Crip," murmured Devil. " 'Bout time you settled down, yuh dang hell-buster!"

TRADITIONS OF THE DEEPWATERMEN

by WINDAS

HORSE LATITUDES

In early days ships bringing horses from Europe to America were often becalmed in latitudes 30° to 33°. As drinking water for the animals was limited, some of the horses would be thrown overboard in an attempt to save the others. Because of this, latitudes in these areas became known as the HORSE LATITUDES.

GET YOUR WEB-FEET OUT

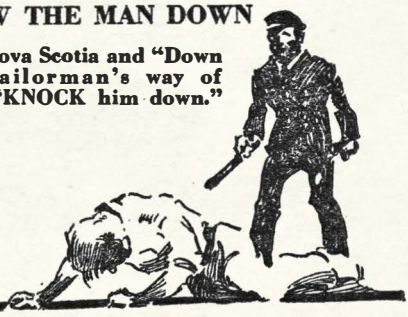
Advising young seamen that bad weather was approaching, and that they should put on their sea-boots, sou'-westers, etc., old-timers would say "Better get your WEB-FEET out of your chest."

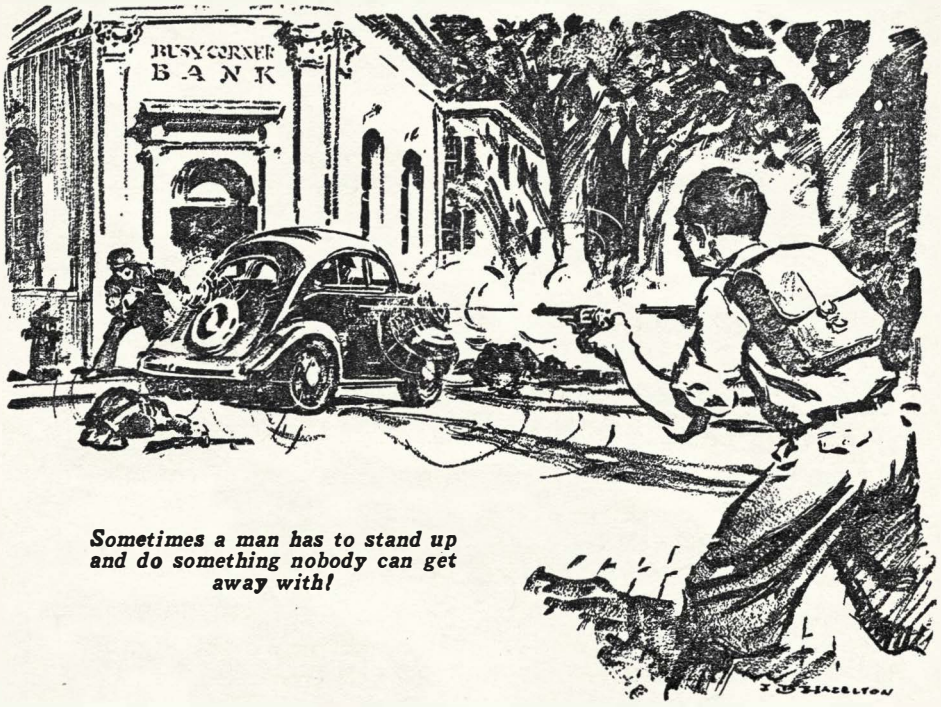
SHE'S A SPOTTED COW

Because the device on the banner of Simon of Utrecht (Lord of Hamburg) was a white cow with black spots, sailormen for many years have called all ships registered at Hamburg, "SPOTTED COWS."

BLOW THE MAN DOWN

Just a Nova Scotia and "Down East" sailorman's way of saying "KNOCK him down."





Sometimes a man has to stand up and do something nobody can get away with!

VALOR GETS A BREAK

By Raymond S. Spears

DAVID SKANIS worked for the Elsner, Iskerm & Stolls Company, on Canal Street, their king-pin employee, pulling down $150 a week. His wages were about four times as big as he looked. He weighed one hundred and thirty pounds, and if he didn't look out, he walked with a sharp, perky twitch. His wife was just shy of six feet tall and she weighed two hundred pounds, and his two daughters and son were already larger than he was, and he was full of pride, satisfaction and modesty because of how fine and wonderful it was.

Every day he read the newspapers to find stories about brave and self-sacrificing men, performers and performances of valor and might, and every day somebody qualified—sometimes a dozen different heroes appeared in the pages. Every account he clipped out, with the picture on the illustrations page, and put it away in a scrap book, neatly pasted in.

Every-day items, probably just a paragraph about a cop or fireman on their heroic jobs, and sometimes a big front-pager, like a mine disaster and the miners going down in the skips to dig probably five or fifty men buried in a cave or firedamp explosion; or a ship sinking in the great, overbearing swells of the sea and a little boat with a mate at the tiller crossing to the doomed carrier to get the crew and others. But whether it was front page or inside filler, David Skanis spotted it, and he knew physical, moral, spiritual courage, which made him breath deep and admire.

Too big a life, this, for lots of people, but for others it is just the long monotony of the job, going to and coming

from it. So with David Skanis, he was sure. On Saturday afternoons and Sundays his wife and children told him what to do, and he did it. Motion pictures, too, some nights, and he had to fight, sometimes, for time to clip and paste his hero records, which made his family shake their heads. They loved him, and hated to think he envied and admired the big fellows, so brave! But it wasn't quite that, he thought, though he could not tell why he saved those items about the good ones, the police and fire department heroes, the Carnegie hero reports, the Congressional Medalists!

Just around, three blocks, under the elevated, was a shooting gallery, and when the family went to shows, leaving him alone, he slipped around two or three nights a week and practiced on the targets with his two 22-caliber revolvers on 38-caliber frames—right and left! This was his private, personal secret, knocking over plaster of Paris mice, birds, plugging the jumping fox, ringing all the bells with BB caps or high speeder brass shells! It wouldn't do to let the family know—

For fifty weeks a year David Skanis belonged to his job and family, to have, to hold and be bossed around. But for two weeks he had a vacation with pay. And on vacations—well, he would go to cemeteries, standing by graves of dead heroes. He knew battlefields, wells, shores where there had been wrecks, mines where disasters had come, places where fires, floods and explosions had hit.

One evening, on the subway, all of a sudden, there was the picture of his own boy, Morris Skanis. By it was a little girl, Loula Rauley, who had got confused in front of a lot of traffic—but Morris, champion hop-skip-jumper, was on the job. She was all right, but his arm was broken! Such a boy to have! And his mother, Madam Chairman of meetings, speaker of the evening in so many places, at home and around—no man was ever as good as his family!

SO ONE more vacation came, and David Skanis had two weeks by himself. His wife and two girls were up to her people's in Jefferson county. Morris was in New Hampshire, visiting the Rauleys, who seemed real glad he had beaten the trucks to their Loula. So David Skanis locked up the house and jumped the Erie to Elmira, to go down the central parts of Pennsylvania—with a fine map itinerary made out by the touring manager of an oil company from Elmira to Cumberland Gap, Pound, the Blue Ridge, and so on. Probably the touring manager would have been badly disgusted if he had known David Skanis was going out on foot, not even burning a gallon of gas!

David Skanis had thick soles on his number seven shoes; he wore golf breeches, a thin woolen shirt, and a shoulder pack with spares like socks, shirts, long pants, a neat nesting aluminum lunch outfit, some grub and so on. In every valley was flood time heroism, the places of people who took it! A brave, beautiful, wonderful land!

Skanis had not gone half a mile when a commercial fellow picked him up and dropped him twenty miles or so down the line, and on foot again, over the first little hill he was outdoors, with hardly a house in sight. He come to the top of a hill like Lexington Avenue at 102nd Street. A nice smooth street, but with ditches instead of gutters, and on both the east and the west the uplift of long, mighty ridges, on which Central park would probably make just a plaster.

David Skanis was all alone on probably a whole square mile, a strange feeling. He saw a funny animal, some bigger than a cat, run up on a round rock, fuzzy, big bodied, squinty little eyes—a woodchuck not in a cage!

There was a tree beside the road. A

lot of yellow apples were on it. Nobody was in sight, so Skanis picked up an apple, and when he bit into it, it was sure an appetizer. And by and by it was noon, the last hour to it a slow one, and he sat down under a tree to eat his lunch, which a restaurant girl had put up for him. It was quite a job to eat the lunch and not include some bugs. But this was all right, too. And afterwards he came to a front yard of an open field that was full of red raspberries, the kind that come in boxes an inch deep and four inches square, for ten cents.

"I bet I et forty cents worth!" Skanis said, afterwards.

This was not hero-hunting. A man could forget it, out here. Maybe it was just as well, sometimes, to let the mind go from all its fifty weeks of concentration, the $150 a week job, and the pageant of events in the newspapers, with the hero ones who are the salt and pepper of life.

Suddenly, the sun was down. The clouds in the high sky changed to yellow and gold, to rose and purple, and long, old-gold sundogs reached like wheel spokes across the undersides of the heavens.

Conscious of weariness, Skanis stepped along, beginning to look. Time to think of stopping for the night. Around a bend, down a sidehill, into a valley, and then a funny jigger of a place, not hardly fifty houses, two stores, a town in the dark! A rocky looking two-story wooden building, but a hotel!

Supper, too, in the dining room. He was almost too late. A girl came strolling in—round-faced, appraising eyes, the country sister of waitresses Skanis knew, not intimately, in town. So he could have roast pork, beef, apple, mince or cusard pie, coffee or tea, and, *Sure!* a glass of milk, if he liked it fresh. The light was a kerosene lamp. Just for that David Skanis could count his trip a big success!

In his room, a nice clean one, with windows on two sides, and stars above the dark earth shadows visible through both of them! So he laid his head in a thick pillow. And suddenly he woke up. The moon—not quite full—was shining on his face.

This place, whatever it was, had gone to bed. Not one light was burning. And there were the stars, and the face of the moon. So he sat by the window for a while, with his head against the mosquito netting, looking at the shine upon the houses and the woods and the gray mist rising. He saw the shadow of a big, beautiful tree black on the concrete roadway. He watched the headlights of an automobile coming, heard it thunder by. And in the quiet, afterward, he heard water running, lots of water roaring and pouring in the night. This would be a creek, or river, some such thing!

SO David Skanis lost some sleep in a bed he had paid for. In the morning his shoulders were stiff from his pack straps, and his legs were feeling funny. He paid $1.50 and started on. And right away a commercial traveler picked him up for fifty miles! Just like that! So they had a drink together—What would Mrs. Skanis say to that, and Mrs. Skanis covered all over with the White Ribbon?

And down beyond the town, Skanis saw a roadway that actually didn't have even stone crushed and spread on it. It led under some overhanging trees across a creek, that same singing creek of the previous night, probably! And so David Skanis headed across the creek, and up the hill beyond through the woods.

Up like six stories high, and then a flat place; then up along the side of the hill for a while, and around into a place as deep as the bottom of Nassau Street, but all trees instead of office buildings—and through the trees big chunks of rock, and steep places, and a flock of

birds in a dusty place—wild birds, big as chickens! And then two gray squirrels, like in Central Park! And three deer—sure as God—one with horns, one sleek and red, and then a spotted little one. And with a flip of their tails they jumped and ran right into the woods.

Up—up through the woods, through fields that needed lawn-mowing, past houses in need of painting and nobody in them! And more woods! And a steep climb up a mighty poor pathway.

So on top at last, after noon, David Skanis felt he was up in the Empire State Building of the mountain country! He looked down so far his eyes blinked. There at the bottom was a narrow white line, and there was a lot of houses, buildings, a village. He looked at the map. The roads, the names of towns, the streams and so on—he just didn't know where he was. There was Elmira, and there was the town he slept at—or wasn't it? Fifty miles or so back—but which was it? He had lost his places of heroisms!

His eyes widened! He had a funny feeling—lost somewhere in Pennsylvania, it must be! And there it was, 45,000 square miles of Pennsylvania, according to the statistics—45,126 square miles! On top of a high place, he could see miles away another mountain to the west, a long, magnificent beauty! There, too, was a river in the valley, and a freight train with black smoke, the long-drawn roar of a mile of cars booming up to him, louder than the train looked big enough to make.

Night caught him as he tramped along the back of this ridge. He came to a cabin late in the afternoon. It was built of logs. The foot-path he followed along the top took him down to it, in a hollow with a spring of water by it. The water came up out of the dirt. He was thirsty, but he had to be nervy, drinking that stuff. Well, here goes!, he thought, and drank. Cold, sweet water—if it killed him with germs or whatever, all right! A camp—well, he would trespass!

And in the cabin, he built a fire in the stove. He got himself a meal he couldn't have bought in the best restaurant in New York—but he had helped his wife out, getting meals when she was busy with her meetings and secretarying or chairmanshipping, and so on.

Chopped up beef and fried potatoes and rolls—*Golly!* And then he slept on branches of trees, little ones, in blankets which he pulled out of wire cloth bags hung on rafters. He didn't want to go to sleep that night, but he couldn't keep awake. And in the morning he went on his way, with his great night behind him, his night alone on a mountain!

Men had slept on Pike's Peak, on Mt. Everest, in the Mountains of the Moon, in the High Sierras; they wrote about it in the magazines; they had pictures of their tents, their fires, their trails. Well, so did David Skanis have now a memory.

Of course, it was in Pennsylvania. This was on a mountain big enough for a little man to feel good about. He could feel, maybe it was the little shadow of the great, burning feats of the big time adventurers!

Sure, it was a two week's vacation idea—funny, probably, except to him. His wife, his brave son, his two daughters would put their arms around Papa, loving him. Always they protected and upheld him—a little man, never allowed to forget it, but not that any one meant to make him feel small. Yes, sir, $150 a week! He was big in his brains. He was better than many a big lunkhead of a fellow! Only if he could just once feel—well, he was feeling now pretty good!

Every day was fine. He was on the side-roads, on the mountain paths, and he had marked off every day the date. Two weeks to go, from Saturday noon till the next Monday morning, but two. Come the Saturday after one week! Come the Sunday, then Monday—The

moon was rising later and getting down in size into diminishing light. Then on Tuesday he came down into a quite a big town. He had slept out on mountains, in valleys. He had peeled from his sunburn. He was tanned good. He was stepping off jauntily, feet not sore any more, thanks to knowing how to take care of them, and making sure about his long stockings. He had been three days living out of his pack, just like a man in Alaska, or the Canadian Northwest, or even Africa or Thibet!

A JAUNTY little man, rapt in his own adventures, he swung lightly on the valley road into the town. He could think of Denver, El Paso, San Francisco, Walla Walla, Chicago, St. Louis —places away off yonder! This was only in Pennsylvania—a nice, good place, bigger than he had expected, at that!

The hour was early, yet. He was hungry, but to eat lunch in town at eleven o'clock—Not yet! So he bought some things to put into his pack. Flour, potatoes, a tongue, a pound of butter, some rolls, a loaf of bread, some oatmeal, two little cans of condensed milk, and so on. A nice pack on his shoulders, about twenty-five pounds! Eats for four or five days—he was getting good, up there in the wild Alleghanies! Ridges twenty miles long! One place where he didn't see anybody going across for all one day, from afternoon till this morning! Then he had in mind to go across country, not bothering with any trail at all.

So he was killing time till about 11:30 o'clock and walked down the street, people smiling at him and his little boy look, smiles of sympathy and amusement. There was the busy corner with a monument in the middle to keep traffic swinging wide.

There were automobiles and just some few people out around. And all of a sudden, in the bank across the corner, was a *"Ponk!"* Then two more *"Ponks"*—like shots in a shooting gallery. And come to look at the front of the bank, there was a machine parked by the red curb. A man was crouched under the wheel, a tough little son-of-a-gun—like a jockey, with a cap on. And out of the bank came a fellow with a red gun in his hand—a red machine-gun. Another fellow came running out with a bag in his hand, a heavy bag, and a revolver in his other hand.

A loud scream in the bank, and then two shots more! And suddenly up the street came a policeman. He was pulling his gun and he was jumping and running. The fellow with the red machine-gun pulled up his weapon and there sounded the rattling of the weapon, just like some exciting moments in the gangster motion pictures!

The policeman reeled and began to shoot. He fell forward on his face. Screams, and everybody ducking into doorways, and a big plate glass began to come down, smashed by the bullets of that damned robber! And then the automobile in front of the bank began to wriggle and jerk.

It seemed like a very long time to David Skanis, this performance. But when the hand of the clock moved forward for one minute over the bank corner, he realized that it was only just a few seconds. And his thoughts swirled up in a terrific indignation!

There in the street, squirming around, was a policeman, shot down!

"Damn those crooks!" Skanis thought to himself, "That ain't right, shooting a cop! Those fellows do their duty, you bet!"

And to him came the idea to do something about it! He had inside his shirt his revolvers. They were just little ones, 22-calibers. He wore them to make him feel like somebody. He had shot them thousands of times in the shooting gallery, feeling silly and comical, but dreaming about them, too!

Now, they were loaded with high-

velocity rimfires—and here was a good cop, a brave cop, shot down by damned bandits. That was a dirty proposition!

David Skanis pulled his two revolvers and began to pop away with them, *mad!* Only a fellow who was gone crazy would stand up to five robbers, one with a machine-gun and three with revolvers and automatics, and a fellow under the wheel to run the pirate machine! But sometimes a man has to stand up and do something nobody can get away with!

Stepping out all clear, David Skanis pulled his guns and let go, and the kick of the first shot was nice in his palm, too—By Golly, those high-speeders were good ones! The fellow with the machine-gun staggered and pulled his gun around, letting strip a lot of shots, and Skanis hit him again—hit him in the head, and he dropped like a bag of vegetables.

And the robbers, the others, began to bang away. The bullets came around David Skanis. He heard them going by. He heard them strike behind him in glass and against a brick wall or something.

"Sure, I am a damned fool!" he told himself, but he aimed when he shot. Now he was in for it. Maybe the little .22 slugs would spoil their aim some more.

Something nicked him in the right leg. It stung. Well, probably he was up against it. Anyhow, the machine-gunner was down, and another fellow, he whirled around and ran a ways and fell down. Then another fellow staggered and acted like he was sick. He sat down on the gutter,—no, he fell down! And the automobile started.

That wouldn't do. Maybe a .22 slug would make trouble for that rat-faced little scoundrel—Skanis took a good whack at the chauffeur and the automobile made a sharp U-turn where the sign said"No U-Turn," and rammed into the monument in the middle of the corner.

Nobody was shooting at David Skanis any more. He looked, surprised. One fellow was hanging over the side of the automobile. Another was headfirst through the windshield. And there were three fellows over in front of the bank —one on the sidewalk, one in the gutter, another on beyond—squirming, two of them, mighty sick. All five down!

Well, the cop, he was down, too! Skanis looked around to see who had been shooting with a big gun. The whole street was bare. Nobody, for a minute, was in sight. Then a man ran to the policeman, a man with a little hand bag, a doctor's medicine case! Good, he was taking care of the wounded officer! Two women ran to the cop, and people began to run out of the stores, and heads were sticking out of the windows upstairs. Two men ran out of the bank and one grabbed up the bag a robber had dropped. He looked into it, and beamed as he looked around, a large, fat faced man—and he looked at David Skanis and yelled;

"Snappy work, old man! They didn't get away with a dime!"

ALL of a sudden, David Skanis saw what he had done. He looked at his two guns, one in each hand. He looked around for some places to duck into, and there was an Arcade Building, with a hole straight through into another street at the back. And so David Skanis put his two guns back into their holsters and ducked. He was a little man, but he was fast on his feet, a good man at keeping from running into people and anything. In just about ten seconds he was on the other end of the Arcade, and he took it along the street there, not too fast to attract too much attention, you bet. Around the next corner was a bridge over a creek. He crossed the bridge and on the road on the other side, a truck driver asked him if he wanted a ride, and so he hopped aboard.

Down the line a dirt road led into the woods toward the east, where he was going, he told the man, and on foot he headed up the mountain.

He kept going right up, right along. And on top he followed the back, and then, seeing a lot of woods but no road toward the east, yet, he headed into that rolling country, a big, wild hideout land.

All that afternoon he just bounded and hopped along. He didn't do much thinking! He was just getting away from this place in the middle of Pennsylvania, or wherever it was! His breath was short and his mouth was dry. He hustled himself, sweating and scurrying! He had to get away from there!

In his mind was that rotund, smooth-faced, smiling-lipped man, the banker who had found the loot of the robbers from his institution intact! "Snappy work, old man!" Sure, snapping shots! He could just see himself probably at a big dinner, and the Chamber of Commerce, the reporters, and the news photographers standing him up and all those things!

"I must get out of this!" he told himself, "I mustn't get caught—Gracious!"

And in the night after sunset he was by a little brook in the big woods. This was a fine, wild place. He hadn't seen a soul since he started. He was in the clear, probably. He came to a funny little house, a little shack, built of little logs and big enough for one person. It was a one-man hideout. He found a lantern inside for a light, and he built a little fire on the hearth. He was practically starved to death, and wet with the sweat of his getaway.

He took off his wet underwear and put on some dry, clean things. He ate a long, full meal, with a can of corn and a big piece of apple pie. Lucky he had bought supplies before he got into this big mixup. He had missed his lunch!

He was shaken. He trembled all over, and he was hit in the leg by a bullet, a real, actual bullet. It was a sore place, that hit! Not a big bullet, but he was sore, now. He had hardly noticed that wound, a real wound, till he stopped for the night.

He patched it with first aid, both ends of it. He looked at his golf breeches, and the big stain of blood, surprised and also with an increasing satisfaction. A good thing it hadn't been on the same side with the truck driver who gave him a ride. Well, there it was! He cleaned and bandaged it.

Sitting in the little camp, not ten feet long, not eight feet wide, he stared at the fire and listened to an owl hooting in the big woods, caught the sounds of the wind blowing through the trees, a lonesome, increasing wind. When at last he stretched out on the bunk covered with cedar boughs and the fall of rain began, he was glad he was away out there alone.

The rain was pouring down in the morning. He stayed right there for three nights. The storm kept coming three nights and two days. A great downpour, so the woods dripped, the gulley ran with a little flood, and the ground underfoot was soggy and loose, slick with water.

And now he was come to Friday morning! A bright, beautiful, sunny day. He had only Friday, Saturday and Sunday to get back home. He mustn't let anybody see him, find him, or recognize him. And so he fled through the woods. He changed to long trousers. He took off his pack and carried his stuff awkwardly under his arms. He made himself all over. He took a stage and he hitch-hiked, gaining miles. He was feeling very much relieved when he came down to the Delaware river and slipped over into New York, at Port Jervis, and then circled around into New Jersey, and began to feel as if he had escaped any pursuit that might be made to find him.

Sure, he was sore! His leg was tender. He limped. Not much of a limp, but it was a good nick, at that. If he had been

a bandit, an outlaw himself, he would not have been more careful to scout out and hide out. He plodded on his way. He was through with his vacation by Saturday afternoon. He could stretch it out over Sunday, but the way it was —No! He would better figure something different.

SOMEHOW he never would be perfectly clear in his own mind what happened from Tuesday, just after eleven o'clock, till Saturday, just after nine o'clock, when he arrived home. A man on the jump, getting away, couldn't keep much track of things. Well, on Sunday, when he woke up back home, he stretched and looked at the two little holes from front to back in his right leg. They were in good shape, where the bullet went in, and where it went out! They were plugged up, all right.

He felt bad about his knee breeches, but he washed them and gave them with the union suit to the Salvation Army. Wouldn't do to let Mrs. Skanis know he had been shot at! Good thing she would be gone a while longer! So he was back on the job on Monday morning. He had a little limp. It was a big relief, being back on the job, at that! A man making $150 a week—he was bumped going down in the train; he was bumped and crowded, especially as far as 125th Street, going uptown. He was going to miss that sore place. And when it was going to rain, and he felt it beforehand like it was rheumatism—he smiled!

His wife came home. His son came home. The two daughters were in ecstacies—Papa looked so fine, all tanned up that way! Did he have a good time on his vacation? Sure! All he did was just go to the beaches on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, run around some in the stages and see Niagara Falls, and so on. That's all!

"And you were glad to get rid of us, for a change!" Mrs. Skanis said, with a queer smile she did not exactly mean.

He wouldn't argue with her about that. So it went along for a month, for six weeks after the big experience. Like a dream, now, like something imagined, and which couldn't really have happened. But for the little limp and those spots on his leg he could have refused to believe that he, David Skanis, had been through all that thing! He shook, now, at times—supposing he had been hit hard enough so he couldn't get away!

No damned bankers and Chamber of Commerce had caught up with him. And he could read newspapers right along, for he no longer was afraid of finding they were on his track, that they had his fingerprints, or something to get him by! He had buried his past! He had left it behind him on the other side of the big woods.

He found where, every day, some hero performed a feat of valor. He read those stories how men and women, and even youngsters risked drowning, or burning to death, even bumping into a tree, rather than hit probably a baby or somebody in the roads! And the papers told about aviators and mountain climbers— heralded heroes of the day!

Personally, he had been scared to death. He still had goose pimples, thinking what might have happened if that fat banker had ever got hold of him, or found out his name! David Skanis couldn't bear to think about what would have happened if he hadn't gotten away. Sure, he had the New York Sullivan Law gun toting permit, all right. But in Pennsylvania? Maybe they'd a law over there about foreigners or New Yorkers or tourists or trampers packing guns. Suppose they had caught him? He had shot his guns off right at a busy corner—Every town forbids shooting around inside the city limits!

And then the Sunday paper came. David settled back to enjoy the big inside pages, full of brave stories, divorces, and Westerns and the actualities of detectives—he flinched, thinking of the

wonders performed by finders of lost people, catchers of counterfeiters, chasers of bandits and gangsters. He looked, his ears warming up;

UNKNOWN HERO STILL A MYSTERY!

Pictures of that town where he had been, the bank and the president of it, with a big, round face. And an artist's picture of a man with a pack on his back, a gun in each hand, and shooting it out with a man with a Tommy gun, and three others with short guns, and even the automobile driver, too, banging away! And the windows behind the "intrepid marksman" were falling down, smashed by bullets. In the bank the watchman and cashier had been wounded, too.

"It is known that he was wounded, because Truckman Saumers, all unaware he was helping the hero escape, found blood on the seat of the truck after the man headed into the woods"—"Three of the men were killed, two recovered, and plead guilty of bank robbery"—"They were hit by high-speed .22-caliber bullets, with terrible, deadly accuracy!"

"Scores of people saw him, but in the excitement this modest exponent of valor, obviously a pedestrian on a tour, made his escape. Policeman Hank Slunell was shot down when he ran to attack the five desperadoes. When he was hit, the unknown stranger took up the gauge of battle and won it!"

No matter where David Skanis looked on that page, there he was, "Hero," "Valor," "intrepid"—all those kinds of words were used! But he was "unknown." "He remains a mystery."

And then;

"According to Mr. Tauvers, president of the Busy Corner Bank, the stranger was dressed in a golf suit, carried a pack on his back and was a tall, broad-shouldered, athletic man, at least 175 pounds in weight. Spectators agreed that he was stalwart, handsome and carried himself with an athletic swing. He was about six feet tall and had sharp blue eyes. The Chamber of Commerce has posted a reward of $100 to the person who identifies this heroic stranger. He will be given an engraved wrist watch, and a testimonial dinner."

David Skanis couldn't read the account straight through, just glanced here and there at the reading matter, and looked at the pictures of the wounded cop, the pictures of the bandits and the statements of the authorities on what bad men those outlaws were. It made a man nervous!

"Six feet tall!" he sighed, "Well, they'll never find me. Wouldn't believe it if they did find me!" He smiled, relieved.

"More heroes, Daddy?" Mrs. Skanis inquired, with one of those mixed looks of affection, despair and admiration. "Why do you bother yourself about such things, anyhow? Not many men can earn $150 a week!"

"I know!" he nodded, "Oh, I'm not envious—"

"Well, you haven't any right to be!" she spoke with asperity. "I always feel —well, we all love you, just as you are!"

"Sure!" he shrugged his shoulders, and clipped the full page out to put in his scrapbook of such things. And his wife kissed him. He was all right, sure! And so why always worry about it?

It was up to me to get him.

MAD DOG EXPERIENCES

A fact story by Ozark Ripley

PERSONALLY I have no fear of the so-called mad dog. Yet I'm no braver than the average mortal. Neither can I claim the steel nerves which heroes are thought to possess. On the contrary, I'm of a nervous temperament and somewhat excitable. But the average mad dog scare simply cannot get on my nerves or cause my pulses to jump erratically. I have been called brave, but erroneously, because I didn't go into hysterics when I came across a dog that suddenly began to stagger around, froth at the mouth, gaze about blankly and then with chafing jaws suddenly fall to the ground in convulsions.

Instead of becoming the least bit frightened I dragged the dog or carried it to a cool place, or in lieu of this, put my coat over it to shelter it from the hot sun. Then I calmly awaited the end of the convulsions. When they were over I caught hold of the dog's collar, as it began to gain strength in its legs, grope around mentally for bearings, and finally to stagger, as though influenced by a purpose to go somewhere else than where it then was. I knew it would require many minutes before the poor animal could have its mind function clearly again.

Then I had a horror of a senseless mob forming around the poor creature as its mind or instincts began to clarify. Ten to one, were it to see such a mob, all influenced by the old mad dog scare, it would sense their enmity and try to defend itself against these attackers in the only way the Lord had provided for it—by biting. Upon which the dog

would without further thought be destroyed, as thousands of dogs have been destroyed, because they were "guilty" of being afflicted with worms or had been furnished food which caused the poisonous matter which brought on the fits, especially if the animal was subjected to heat. If such a dog should be killed and its brain examined by a bacteriologist, negri bodies would be discovered—the infallible proof that it had rabies! They never fail to find negri bodies in such cases.

Another time when I'm very "brave" is when the fit takes the form of running fits, or different forms of fright disease. Here is a harder task for me. All at once the dog glares around, stares blankly, as though it were afraid of something. Whereupon it gives a yelp, begins barking and, still barking, runs as fast as it can until all at once it falls to the ground in a convulsion, sometimes a quarter of a mile from where the strange seizure began.

The only reason for the belief that I am a hero in the presence of the so-called mad dog which is having a fit and naturally, at the time, froths at the mouth, is because I know positively that mad dogs do not have fits, nor fall in convulsions and then rise again. The bite from a dog which has fits is no more to be feared than the scratch of a pin. All the treatment required is a good antiseptic dressing. The public should be educated upon this point—police departments especially. If humane treatment is to be given our dumb animals there's no better time to start than when they most need it—when they're having a fit. Fits in dogs may show up any day as result of distemper, worm infestation, and the constant feeding of improper food. I saw one poor animal go from one convulsion into another for fifteen hours. It finally died, and the cause was found to be heart worms.

Forty years of constant contact with dogs have produced in my consciousness a total absence of the fear of rabies. I well know that real cases of rabies are few and far between. I also realized how people may suffer terrible mental anguish unnecessarily when they happen to be bitten by a dog after it was recovering from convulsions.

One case of supposed rabies had me guessing for a while, because in the neighborhood where I was at the time training dogs professionally I had scoffed at the idea of mad dogs. All at once, while I was away from home, one of my own pointers ran amuck. It began by killing two young dogs kenneled in the same quarters with it. After which it climbed the enclosure and escaped. For two days it had a wild career, biting livestock, snapping at everything that came near it. Finally it took refuge under a barn several miles away on the very day I returned home. Here was all sorts of evidence that that pointer was suffering from rabies. I was told of two horses and five cows which it had attacked and bitten, and numbers of dogs. It was up to me to get my "rabid" pointer from under that barn.

The pointer was far back under the floor beams of the barn. I could see him with a flashlight. When I walked on the floor above him he growled, and when I called his name he seemed to growl more ferociously and snap at the floor. But from his actions I felt sure he was very weak from his long seizure of running and lack of food. I had brought with me a stout cord, and I crawled under the beam next to the one where the dog was, because I knew he could not attack me from that direction, and I could observe him safely. I saw a dark colored drool over his mouth, and his sunken eyes. He was far from being a pretty sight. I cut a place in the rafter, then made a noose with my cord and dropped it over his muzzle. After drawing it tight I carried the cord on back of the pointer's head, then around his neck, and tied a knot in it. With this I was able to drag him into the daylight without danger to my person.

When I came out from under that barn with this weak looking pointer the crowd of bystanders armed with pitchforks and every other sort of implement of offense made a mad dash for a place of safety. Then all at once I discovered a huge swollen place on the pointer's left jaw. Drawing its lips gently back I discovered an enormous abscess far back in its jaw. I took a sharp stick and punctured it, and a large amount of pus was discharged, and with it a sharp sliver of bone—the thing which had caused the swelling. I carried the dog home, and it never had another seizure.

For a year not a Negro around the various plantations could be induced to come near me, through fear that I too might go mad suddenly and bite one of them. Not a head of livestock nor a single dog which the pointer bit ever showed any indication of hydrophobia.

The weird ramifications of the minds of nervous people have no limits, especially when since childhood they have been taught to fear dogs, and that every canine acting anyway out of the ordinary is either rabid or on the road to an attack of the disease. A strange slant which mortals have in this connection is the belief which exists in some sections that if a person is bitten by a dog, and that long after the bite the animal has rabies, the person so bitten will also become a victim. I knew one case of this sort which took on a very serious phase.

IN A certain section of the South the opulent owner of many plantations was a heavy drinker. After his bouts with Bacchus, for several days during the tapering off or straightening up process, he suffered badly from nerves. But as soon as they became calm and his stomach began to act as it should, he resumed his libations until once more he had to desist. During one of his drunken spells he wandered into the yard of one of his tenants and a hound got in his way. This so angered him that he kicked it several times, and the animal retaliated by biting him on the leg. For the time being he paid no attention to the matter. Then came a mad dog scare. Nearly every animal in the neighborhood was destroyed. Their heads were examined, and the report was circulated that negri bodies were found, and that all of them had been on the road to attacks of rabies.

My drinking friend learned of this while starting to straighten up after one of his many sprees. He was in a most nervous state at the time. Somehow word came to him that the dog which had bitten him showed, after a post-mortem examination, that it was about

to be attacked by rabies. Three days after this he called me and told me he was certainly afflicted— he was surely going mad, as the dog had bitten him. He was immediately treated with the Pasteur treatment, but it apparently was of no avail. Two days after this they had to strap him in a strait jacket at times. His wonderful physique helped to keep him alive that long.

Then I heard that the dog which had bitten him had not really been killed. It had been away, self hunting, while the local slaughter was going on. During a moment when the patient was calm I asked him if he would remember the hound that had bitten him. He stated emphatically that he would. I brought the dog to him. At first he gazed at it in the presence of his physician as if he would attack it. Then he seemed to begin thinking logically, and finally a smile came over his face. From that instant he began to improve. Strangely enough, for many years after this experience that hound was his constant companion, and thereafter the man became a teetotaler.

Man's mind follows strange currents, and if a man is the least bit nervous his mind is influenced all the quicker. The individual is not to blame so much as are the instructors of his youthful days, as well as his early associations which have implanted the mad dog fright firmly in his consciousness. And dogs, too, have queer mental flights.

I had a very large mongrel setter which we called Pelock, because it had been wished on me by a Polish settler of that name. He was the pet of the children, and made his resting headquarters in a long box on the back porch. He would play for hours with the youngsters. He was subjected to all kinds of thoughtless punishment in play. Pelock loved it all. And he loved that box on the porch. Let any other dog come near it and a fight resulted almost immediately.

One day I brought home a little female setter, and Pelock took a shine to her. She immediately took possession of that box. At the same time Pelock's disposition changed. He became surly, refused to eat, and growled at all of us when we approached the porch. My wife became worried. The rabies idea was the source of her worry! She felt sure Pelock was going mad. And I was myself puzzled about him.

But a thought came to me and I followed it. I got a smaller box and filled it with straw. Then I burned all the straw in Pelock's box and replaced it with a fresh supply. Immediately the little female took possession of the smaller box. Pelock suddenly brightened up. With a joyous look on his homely face he once more made his headquarters in his old box, began to eat ravenously, and from that instant was again his former jolly self.

One case of so-called rabies caused a great deal of excitement near where I then lived in St. Louis. In front of the fine residence of a friend a big crowd gathered. I asked the cause, and was told that their fox terrior had gone mad, and was still in the house. Hardly had my informant told me this when Mrs. B. called to me in a state of great excitement.

"Our fox terrior has gone mad!" she exclaimed. "He's there in the nursery tearing up things. I hate to have him killed in the house. Can't you do something?"

I went upstairs to the nursery, and almost laughed aloud at what I saw. At the door of the room stood a huge policeman with a club. Every now and then he opened the door slightly, striking inside the room with his club, then suddenly closing the door. He was very pale. He told me the mad dog was in there, and he had to kill him, but hated to fire a shot in the room with his revolver.

After a moment of questioning he boosted me to the transom. From there I got a good view of the room. The

little fox terrior, whose name was Dewey, was running around the room, snapping at the rugs, then at its stomach, then rolling on its back. After which it would resume its circular course, snapping at everything it passed. I told the policeman I was going into the room and get the dog. He thought I was crazy, but I felt sure I could accomplish it without danger to myself, as I had observed a small bed in the center of the room, and this I decided to make my point of attack.

After I had explained my plans the policeman, much against his will, let me into the room. When Dewey was making a circle, and his back was toward me, I ran in quickly and jumped onto the bed, apparently unobserved. Then the first time he passed close to me I pounced upon the little fellow and muzzled him with my handkerchief. After that I carried him in my arms like a fearless stage hero before the gaping spectators and placed him in a small box stall. (They had stables in cities in those days.) Then I made a safer muzzle with a cord. After which I went to the drugstore, bought a bottle of castor oil and a large dose of santonin, and administered it to the little dog.

How Dewey had survived such a great infestation of round worms so long I cannot explain. Soon he began licking my hand and wagging his tail. That was the end of Dewey's madness.

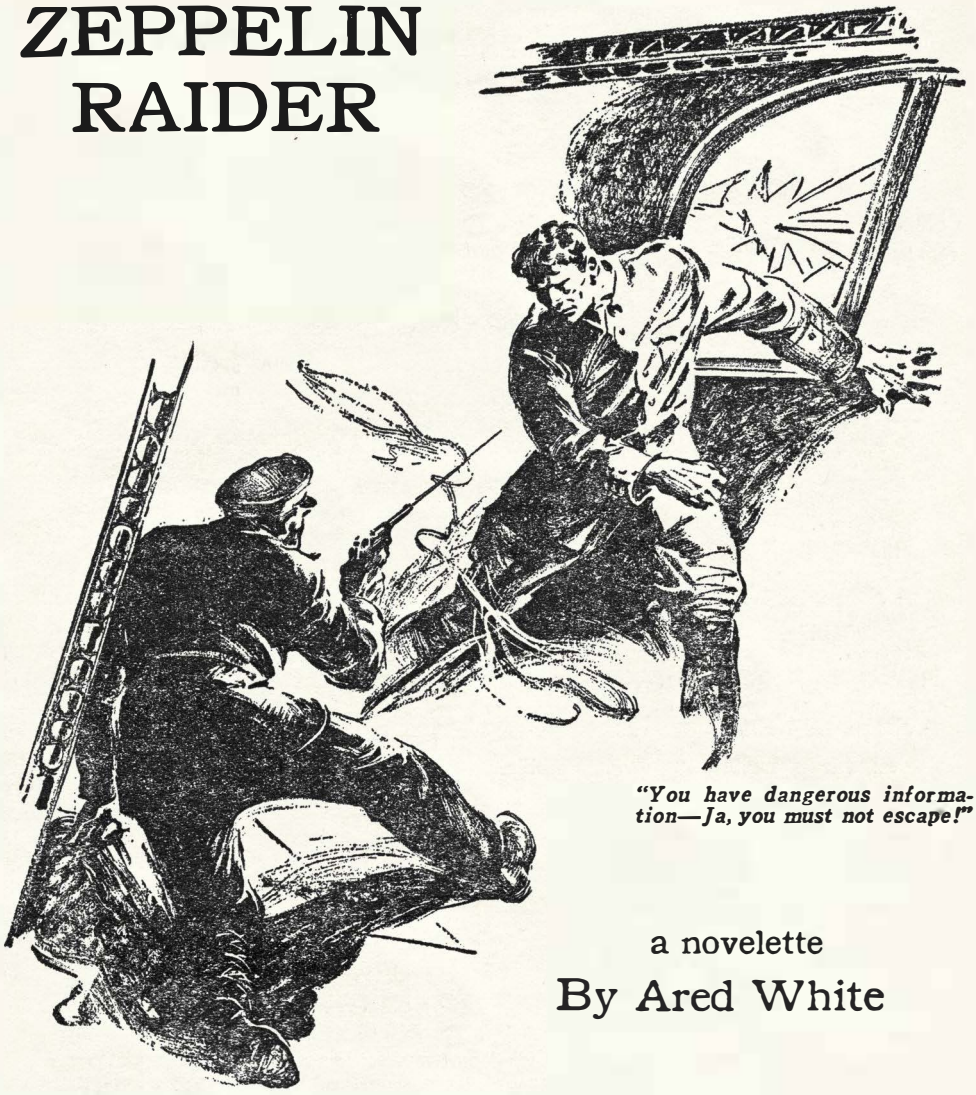
Was I a hero? Not in the least. The instant I saw the poor little fellow snapping at his stomach I knew what was the trouble, and that only riddance of the parasites would bring him back to normal.

Cases of true rabies are very infrequent. Just circularize hospitals with a query to that effect, and the truth of this statement will be established. Know, too, that warm weather doesn't have any influence on the disease, but warm weather does make dogs afflicted with worms more susceptible to fits. Fits are proof that a dog is not suffering from rabies.

The frothing at the mouth during convulsions is a natural, harmless accompaniment. Dogs having fits ought not to be destroyed any more than should a human being during an epileptic fit. They ought to be cared for and the cause removed. All dogs suspected should of course be confined where they can do no injury. If a dog were confined forty-eight hours, no doubt could exist about rabies—the dog would be dead.

Giving attention to the above advice will help the public to become educated regarding these truths, and save many a nervous child and grownup from suffering untold mental agony when he happens to have been bitten by a dog which was acting queerly.

ZEPPELIN RAIDER



"You have dangerous information—Ja, you must not escape!"

a novelette

By Ared White

THE whole of the Allied secret service had been goaded into a state of desperation by the development of the past three weeks. Not only had the most dangerous of Teuton enigmas failed to yield itself to a solution but the best military agents, on the trail of the German puzzle, had been picked up as fast as they presented themselves at war-time Berlin and Kiel.

Added to that was the goad of German secret service impertinence in sending a formal letter to American, French or British headquarters announcing details of the arrest, trial and execution of each Allied agent who stood against an Imperial German wall at daybreak.

"We've got to break throught at all costs!"

This decision flashed through the intelligence departments of all the great Allied headquarters. Commanders and technical staffs joined with the secret service. The best mechanical and wireless men in Allied Europe were brought into the quest, men who knew all the intricacies of communications. But day after day brought only somber shakes

of the head. There was no making heads or tails of the strident buzzing roar that was the only sound coming in off the German wireless stations these past few weeks.

The American chief of staff in France scowled as an aide-de-camp brought a large white envelope into his office and passed it across the desk. The general's fingers trembled slightly as he tore the missive open; his lips compressed into a bloodless line as he read the taunting contents.

> Sir—I have to inform you that Captain Jasper Holt, American spy, was arrested Tuesday at Kiel while in the act of attempting to place himself aboard a submarine at Kiel. Since he was disguised as a German sailor the case against him was conclusive and your captain was executed by hanging the succeeding A. M. We will be pleased to keep you posted of other executions of your agents from time to time as they occur. Respectfully—Imperial Intelligence, Kiel.

The American staff general, veins welling at neck and forehead, stabbed the call button that summoned his confidential aide into the room.

"Have Colonel Rand report to me immediately!" he commanded.

The American espionage chieftain hurried in from his adjacent section of the ancient French caserne that housed American general headquarters. The blood drained from Rand's red face as he took the German taunt and read its grim purport.

"Sir, if I may be allowed to say so," he said, "it's murder to send our men into Berlin and Kiel at present. They haven't got a Chinaman's chance."

"Yes, and it's going to be big-scale murder if we don't!" the staff general shot back. "Hang it all, Rand, we've got to get to the bottom of that German wireless buzz if it takes every man we've got in the secret service! What about your plan to send Major Fox Elton over? Has he left yet?"

Colonel Rand shook his ponderous head and all but groaned. The colonel was gifted with small imagination and no great initiative, moreover he was highly conservative. His dominant virtue was thoroughness in detail, and a great deal of luck in picking field agents who possessed, in remarkable degree, the qualities he lacked.

"But Elton has a big job, sir. He's got to learn to be another man—Oberleutnant Kemmerer—who is held in an Italian prison camp. If he's going to do a thorough job of it, he's got to know enough about that German to pass himself off as Kemmerer if the Kaiser's agents catch up with him in Germany."

The staff general debated briefly and his mouth hardened in decision.

"You will start Elton off immediately, tonight at latest!" he ordered. "Tomorrow you will send another agent—I'd suggest Captain Trent—and the day after that another agent. Keep them going, day after day, until one gets through!

Rand swallowed hard. Such audacity on the part of the chief of staff seemed out of all reason. Make haste slowly in this desperate welter, that was Rand's own motto.

"That's all, Colonel," the staff general said quietly.

Rand had been at the point of speaking but the staff general's finality shaped his own words. He bowed stiffly.

"Yes, sir," he agreed and strode from the room.

MAJOR FOX ELTON reported hard on the touch of his colonel's call button. A faint smile, as of an inner amusement, sparkled in the level blue eyes of the young officer as he noted Colonel Rand's tragic humor. But as the colonel looked up at his star field agent his own grim brooding gave place to a quick look of nettled astonishment.

"I thought, Elton," he remarked, "that I had you promoted some three

days ago to the rank of major, yet I find you wearing captain's bars."

Elton smiled. He was an officer of medium stature, trim, athletic build, and the mildest of friendly faces.

"A mere whim, Colonel," Elton said with a certain light gravity. "Please don't think me unappreciative, but I like to think of myself as captain. Of course, if I draw pay as a major, that's O.K. But being a major, that might have a bad psychological effect on a man of action, sir. Might sort of slow him down and give him a sense of dignity, so to speak, which would be bad for a man in my shoes."

Rand stiffened. Into a bargain of his own eagles for a star the colonel would have yielded his right arm and perhaps one leg. But Elton's voice was respectful, and Rand muffed the mildly mischievous glint in Elton's eyes.

"What I brought you in for, Elton," Rand announced, his face resuming its grimness, "is to tell you I've orders from the chief of staff to shoot you into Germany immediately. Have you completed your plans far enough to make a stab at it?"

"All set to go, sir, whenever the colonel gives the word," Elton said unconcernedly. "I've polished up on my Kemmerer role until I think I could almost get by with the Kemmerer family, if I should run across any of them in Germany."

"Trying for it at Berlin or Kiel?" Rand asked.

"The main thing," Elton evaded, "is to find out what the Kaiser's wireless sending sets are squawking about, and I'd rather not be tied down by places or details."

"Good enough, except that you're naturally tied down to the sending station at Berlin or on one of the submarines at Kiel, aren't you?"

"No doubt, sir," Elton said, and changed the subject with, "Anything further the colonel has to suggest?"

Rand got up and extended his hand, his beefy face etched in grimness.

"I needn't tell you I'm sending you on a thousand-to-one shot, Elton," he rumbled. "They got poor Holt at Kiel, which was only to be expected. I want you to know I'm rushing you ahead because I have no choice in the matter—and wish you good luck."

CHAPTER II

TIGHT QUARTERS

FROM Colombes les Belles, under the foothills of the Vosges Mountains, Elton took off in a captured German plane at dusk. He wore the uniform of an *oberleutnant* of the Kaiser's White Hussars and carried the credentials of one Oberleutnant Kemmerer, assigned to the Imperial secret service in Italy. As a matter of fact, upon receiving Colonel Rand's forced orders Elton had been at the point of insisting that he start at once—while it was the dark of the moon, which was a necessity of his own special plan of operation.

As for Berlin or Kiel, he meant to take the risk of neither place, despite the colonel's thoughts in the matter. The Imperial secret service must have concentrated its best agents at those places as a reception committee for goaded Allied spies. Leastwise the loss of Allied agents in the past fortnight offered small invitation to others.

There was one other place at which the secret of German army communications might be penetrated, Elton had determined. That place was Namur. It meant an audacious fling and, so far as his life was concerned, perhaps Rand's percentages of risk were not too high. But if he found the German secret, at least he'd have an excellent chance of communicating his report into England, under his Namur scheme of operations. After that, the matter of his personal

safety behind the German lines was of consequence chiefly to himself.

For his descent into Germany, Elton had picked the region immediately back of Koln. His American aviator, veteran of bombing raids into the Rhinelands, was able to place him over Koln without difficulty by following the vague, filmy ribbon of the Rhine under starlight. Notwithstanding the German engines in the plane, Teuton listening stations were sure to follow the craft from the moment it crossed the western front. But, by zooming close to earth at frequent intervals along its course, the pilot left a trail too complicated for detailed German investigation of possible parachute visitors.

Elton went overboard from a height of 3000 meters at a point estimated at five or six kilometers north and east of Koln. His plane continued on its course toward Berlin, planning a wide swing over a zig-zagging course on its return to France. His parachute opened promptly and lowered him slowly down through the black void, luckily coming to earth in a small wheat field. He floundered to his feet, unstrapped the parachute and dragged it into thick brush at the edge of the field.

Orienting himself by means of his German compass, he made his way in the course of two hours of marching into the outskirts of Koln, finally picked up a horsecab and had himself driven to the *bahnhof*. As he expected, a ration train was leaving at midnight for the northern section of the western front and would pass through Namur. Elton's flawless German, his uniform, his identification card and Imperial staff orders, put him aboard the ration train without undue question.

On leaving the train at Namur, Elton made himself conspicuous at the station. If German military police and disguised counter-espionage agents were on the alert, they were hardly looking for someone who walked boldly about under the lights of the station and who gave open instructions as to disposition of certain baggage expected from Berlin.

Having thus established his presence in Namur as that of an officer who had arrived in regular form on an official train, Elton went to a hotel and slept until noon. Then he took a horsecab and drove past the advanced zeppelin landing field, taking casual observations of the lay of the great emergency hangars. There were no signs of activity and he returned to his hotel, remaining in his room under cover until late in the afternoon, when he made a second trip past the zeppelin field, to find that place still dormant.

Elton was conscious of a growing restlessness as the day passed without development. He knew that each hour made his position in Namur more untenable. His one hope of escaping inquisition was speedy action at the zeppelin field, which he had expected with the first night of the dark of the moon. Unless he had timed his arrival with an impending zeppelin raid on London, he would be forced to quit Namur promptly. That meant a try at Berlin or Kiel.

He remained under cover at the hotel that night and until afternoon of the next day, in the knowledge that too many trips by horsecab past the zeppelin rendezvous were sure to attract early attention. But now, as he came into sight of the great hangars, his hopes vaulted at view of half a dozen huge zeppelins and scores of soldiers of the ground forces hovering about under them. An expedition to London was in course of swift preparation, darkness palpably the time of departure.

Returning to his hotel, he waited in a fever of impatience for several hours, occupying his mind with the next moves in his desperate game. With the approach of evening he drove back to the zeppelin field, dismissed the horsecab and strode across to the *kommandantur* to present himself and his orders.

THE little headquarters office was filled with German naval officers, grimly contained under the tension of impending adventure, as they stepped forward for last instructions or made their final reports of readiness to a thin, cadaverous *korvettenkapitan* of the Imperial Navy, who commanded the field. Elton seized his first chance to step forward to the Navy file's desk and present himself and the orders that had been forged for him by experts of the French Deuxième Bureau at Paris, orders authorizing Oberleutnant Kemmerer, Imperial Army, to accompany an expedition of zeppelins to London for the purpose of certain technical observations.

The *korvettenkapitan* scowled, pursed his thin lips and glared truculently at Elton.

"Does the grosser staub think our zeppelins are for junkets to London?" he muttered querulously. "*Ja*, but this is a busy time, Herr Oberleutnant Kemmerer, and you will wait until I have time for you!"

An irritated toss of the *kommandant's* squarish head sent Elton to one side. He suppressed a smile, felt a lessening of his own tension. He had read in the other's mood only the ancient conflict between army and navy over conduct of the zeppelin fleets.

He guessed that at the last minute the *korvettenkapitan* would pass on his orders, send him scurrying aloft to an assigned place on the flagship a few minutes before the take-off.

He was observing, with a display of injured dignity, the final staff preparations when an officer in military uniform stepped in front of him and saluted.

"*Herr oberleutnant,*" the officer said in a crisp undertone, "I would like to have a personal word with you, if you don't object."

Elton surveyed the man with a cool deliberation, as if debating the official propriety of conversation with an unknown officer. The other wore the marking of the Imperial ordnance service. A large, broad-shouldered man, but with the thoughtful eyes and heavy expression of a technical specialist. There had been in the officer's voice a quizzical note which Elton did not immediately define, but he promptly concluded that the fellow was not of the counter-espionage forces.

"You're welcome, of course," he said stiffly, "to say anything you wish, provided it is not of an official nature."

"In another room," the officer suggested, "we can speak without offending the *Herr korvettenkapitan*. There will be some little time, I gather, before he is ready to receive our orders."

"If you insist," Elton agreed.

There was a labyrinth of small rooms leading out of the headquarters. The first of these was unoccupied. Elton, puzzled and alert, closed the door behind them and turned to the other in sharp inquiry.

"I overheard the *Herr korvettenkapitan* address you as Oberleutnant Kemmerer," the German officer spoke up at once. "May I inquire of you your given name and the place of your family home?"

"My official orders contain that information," Elton retorted. "But if you'll give me any good reason why—"

"Your pardon," the German interrupted. His voice was easier and his smile was ingratiating. "There can be no harm in comparing our cards of identification, and then you will understand my rather whimsical request. It may be that we have a great deal in common, *Herr oberleutnant.*"

Elton had been searching the other's every word, tone and movement in sharp appraisal. He found himself puzzled by the German's present reserved friendliness, by a new touch of mischief in his voice. He decided that prudence commanded he yield to the fellow's whim, break through his hidden purpose.

"As you say," he agreed calmy, "there's no harm in identifying ourselves to each other. But I'll expect you to give me later, your reasons for your request."

Each took from an inner pocket of his tunic the small cardboard folder containing name, rank, organization, assignment and photograph. These they exchanged with each other. The German laughed as he passed over his card and stood to watch the effect on Elton's face.

"I had thought," the German said pleasantly, "that there were but two officers of the name of Kemmerer in the Imperial service, myself and my brother Konrad, who met with misfortune in Italy. It may be that we are distant cousins—"

He broke off as he glanced at the card Elton had handed him. Konrad Kemmerer, *oberleutnant,* Imperial German Army. Assigned to Intelligence duty. Age. 27. Home, Bonn.

The photograph that accompanied this legend was that of the officer before him, but the record unmistakably was that of Konrad Kemmerer. The thing was conclusive; there could be no mistake.

"Himmel!" Kemmerer gasped. His face was ashen, his jaw fallen, he was staring at Elton while sharp suspicion crystallized in his mind. "Himmel, but why are you masquerading as my brother?" he demanded. "It would be best that you explain—fast!"

"I regret a circumstance that seems to bother you so much," Elton said calmly, "but in the Intelligence service we are not expected to make long explanations."

For several tense seconds Kemmerer stood gaping; then his decision shaped itself into action.

"But it may be you are an imposter—a spy!" he gasped. *"Ja,* I will let you explain this to the *Herr korvettenkapitan!"*

CHAPTER III

THE ZEPPELIN RAIDER

ELTON smiled, a cynical, unpleasant smile, shaped by the trick fate had played on him by sending into this particular zeppelin raid this brother of the Imperial secret agent whose passports he carried. He accepted instantly the unpleasant necessity that lay before him. In this game of war, one life was not to be weighed too seriously.

Kemmerer must have caught the sinister threat behind the taut smile in front of him. He leaped back and his hand went to the holstered Luger at his side. Elton's hand moved in the same instant, a deliberate, piston-like sureness of movement. His own Luger was clear of its holster before Kemmerer had more than caught the butt of his pistol. Elton raised his weapon with swift, sure coolness. The violence of such emergency was no new experience to him.

Down the thin, long barrel of the German pistol he saw Kemmerer's smooth forehead. He also saw Kemmerer's pistol rising into line, goaded by stark desperation. His finger squeezed the trigger, an explosion filled the room. In the next instant there was a second roar, Kemmerer's pistol exploded by the convulsive clutch of a dying man's hand.

Elton stepped quickly forward and bent over the stricken German to recover the passports of Konrad Kemmerer. He thrust the dying Kemmerer's passports in a pocket of his own tunic and stepped back as the door burst open.

"Donnerwetter—what violence is this!" roared the korvettenkapitan. "A duel, a murder—or what?"

"A duel if you wish to call it that, Herr Kapitan," Elton said, facing the *kommandant* coolly. "But no ordinary brawl. One has no choice when a suspected enemy agent whips out his pistol

when asked to produce his passports. What better proof can one have?"

The Naval officer glared at Elton, while his mind weighed situation and explanation. His scowl deepened.

"But what business is it of yours?" he demanded. "If you suspected a spy you should have reported the matter to me—I'm in command here!"

"I attempted to communicate with you, but you motioned me to one side, as you'll perhaps remember. Besides, it is the business of the Intelligence corps to look out for spies, wherever they may be found."

"There is no time now to talk about this matter," the *kommandant* decided. "The fleet must be put in the air at once!" He turned to a chubby little staff officer. "Place the *oberleutnant* under arrest pending investigation, and we'll go into things later!"

"Your pardon, *Herr Kapitan,*" Elton spoke up, a sharp note of authority vibrating in every word. "I've no objections to being under arrest, but under no circumstances must I be held here tonight. My orders are specific. My military superiors would be furious if I should be delayed in executing my present mission."

"*Nein,* I will not hear you story now!" the officer blurted. "Nothing must delay the zeppelins!"

As the *korvettenkapitan* turned on his heels, Elton moved impulsively after him, brushing aside the stubby officer who tried to hold him back. There was but one desperate last card to play now. He forged ahead of the zeppelin field commander and blocked his course.

"Please, you must hear me, Excellency," he said, speaking in a low tone. "I do not wish to be disrespectful, neither do I wish your excellency to gain the ill temper of the *herr feldmarschall.* I submit to your order of arrest willingly. But I insist you allow me to go aboard the flagship and carry out my mission. That will allow you time to finish your investigation, and you'll not be bothered by having me on your hands."

Elton's voice had skillfully blended a veiled threat and an obsequious politeness. For a moment the German officer wavered at the verge of an explosion, then prudence gained the upper hand of his volatile temper.

"Let me examine your orders, *Herr oberleutnant!*" he demanded.

As he read the documents that directed an officer of the Imperial general staff to accompany the zeppelin fleet on its raid over the British Isles his face slowly relaxed. He yielded in a burst of ill humor.

"*Ja,* the Imperial staff is interfering always in our operations!" he complained. "But you'll remain a prisoner of the Navy and I shall so instruct the commander of the fleet that he hold you in arrest until I give the order of release. You'll report aboard immediately!"

The huge envelopes, wolf-pack of the night, were vibrating under a light breeze and the roar of their engines. Flag signals were being waved, orders barked to the batallions of the ground crews, flag officers were scurrying aloft with final orders for the take-off. Elton was sent up in charge of a flag lieutenant who carried last-minute wind observations from the German station at Ostend. He was reported to the commander of the fleet at the control car and turned over to a sailor, who took him down the keel inside the hull to a small room in the fore part of the corridor.

SUNSET was fading into dusk when the great zeppelin fleet rose into the air amid the din of roaring motors and formed behind the flagship with noses pointed to the north and west. Elton sensed rather than saw the movement of the flagship. He consulted his Ger-

man wrist watch and noted that the hour was short of six o'clock. At maximum speed the craft would not arrive over England before midnight. An hour would be taken up in maneuvering through the discharge of their deadly cargo, then the return under whatever conditions of weather that prevailed. If everything went well the fleet should be back over occupied Belgium by daybreak.

But Elton knew the precarious lot of the zeppelin raiders. Fall was turning to winter; sudden squalls, even furious storms might roar into the heavens against the best weather calculations of German observers and instruments. Then there were the multiplying anti-aircraft defences. Zeppelin raiders lived in the shadow of death, facing risks even greater than those of the falcons of the pursuit squadrons down the western front.

To these risks of the air, however, Elton gave small thought. With the craft actually under way, he felt a lessened tension, a sense of having won a first precarious toss of the dice with disaster. His mind turned to an estimate of the situation. For the time being he was only technically under arrest, arrest pending investigations. Thus, he would not be held in actual close confinement. The fleet officers, for the time being, would be wholly concerned with their gamble with death over England and the North seas.

Back at Namur, the *korvettenkapitan* would be fretting and stewing over his zeppelins. Doubtless he would make prompt telegraphic report of the dead *oberleutnant,* of the mystery of the Allied spy. That would be enough to set German counter-espionage on its toes. Agents would go to Namur from Imperial field headquarters at Spa and from the great staff offices in Wilhelmstrasse by fast plane. Once at Namur they would not be very slow in discovering the ruse that had put Elton aboard the flagship of their zeppelin fleet.

But before that could happen, Elton judged that the raid would be over, the fleet, or its surviving craft, battling the winds back to German hangars.

Elton smiled ironically over his personal situation. As for the usual dangers of the raid, those were only a part of the game of war. Long since he had learned to manage nerves and imagination and close his mind to the risks of the open trail. But in this situation he saw that all avenues of escape were closed, unless a whim of chance gave him some slender thread upon which to weave a magical fabric of escape. There was no such thing as dropping out by parachute, nor of escaping arrest and a firing squad if the flagship landed safely back behind the German lines.

His thoughts turned shortly to the stern purpose that had brought him into this tangle. Somewhere aboard the flagship he knew there was to be found the guarded secret that might turn the scale of ten thousand human lives—might even turn the scales of victory, since the Imperial command would hold the upper hand that goes with complete secrecy of operations just so long as their communications were inarticulate to enemy ears.

Although he knew he must work against time, against the mysterious buzz of the German wireless that would bring his own death warrant, Elton mastered impatience and waited. Two relentless hours passed. From the vibrations and movement about him he guessed that the fleet had struck high winds. But by this time he estimated that the craft must be well across Belgium, perhaps out over the North sea.

A sailor came in at eight o'clock with the war ration of pea soup, biscuits, eggs, sausage and tea. The visit told him that he had not been forgotten, the fullness of his menu suggested that he must be under no serious suspicion.

Another endless hour brought a junior officer from the control room, a small, trim young man who asked, with a blunt official politeness, to examine orders. The officer studied Elton's sheaf for a moment and looked at him in inquiry.

"I am permitted to tell you," Elton said, "only that I wish to observe the operations of your fleet during combat."

"Very good," the other agreed. "But the weather is getting heavy and the *Herr Kapitan* can permit no one, not of the crew, in his control car."

"Any other point of vantage will do as well," Elton said. "I shall leave that to your own judgment."

"As you please, *Herr oberleutnant,*" the naval lieutenant agreed. "Perhaps the best place for you to see from will be in the gunners' platform, which is located astern. If you will come with me, please."

CHAPTER IV

BY WIRELESS

ELTON followed the officer down narrow corridors laid under the monster gas cells. He kept his feet with an effort, reeling and groping under the pitch of the craft. Out on the gunner's platform, sunk snugly in the stern, he saw only the black void of a starless, tempest-ridden night. Rain stung his cheeks. The howl of the wind rose against the sides of the monster gas envelopes in a shrill fury.

"*Himmel,* but what a night to be up!" the zeppelin officer complained as they turned back into the ship." The weight of ice is so heavy, we have been forced to drop our water ballast in order to stay up a single mile!"

Elton made no comment. He acknowledged the German's words with a stiff nod, maintaining the coolness, the stiff politeness that reflected the current friction between admirals and generals over operations of the zeppelin fleets.

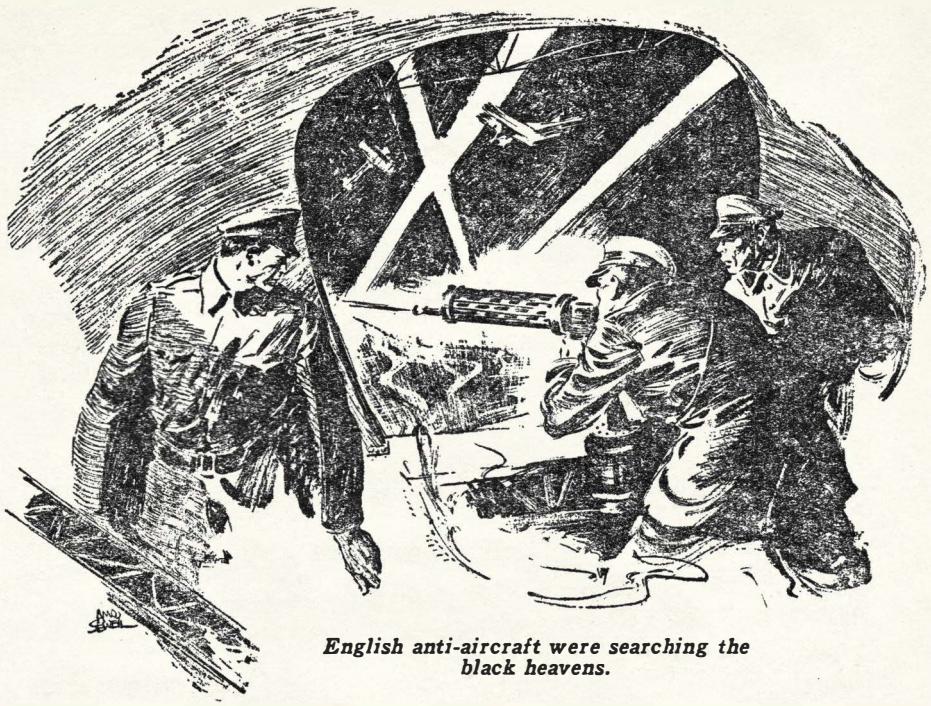
"I've taken my bearings, *Herr lieutenant,*" Elton said when they were back at his allotted quarters. "You will not need to bother with me when you go into action over London. But be good enough to instruct your gunners that I am not an intruder when I go from my cabin out to their platform."

In the hour that followed, Elton found himself in the throes of a growing uneasiness that he could not wholly fight down. The increased motion of the craft told him of the rising violence of the storm. Out of the tiny porthole he was able to see only black nothingness through the ice-encrusted glass. By the rolling, tossing, plunging motion, he guessed the ship was bucking unfavorable winds. It was next to impossible to keep his feet now, or to sit upright. What if the ship should be forced to turn back, the raid abandoned in the teeth of an impossible storm! That would mean the end of his mission as well as the end of himself.

Anxiously he gauged every movement of the zeppelin. After an hour of this suspense, his uneasiness lightened. It was now eleven o'clock, the craft battling onward. He thought he detected a lessening of the pitch, sensed a steadier movement forward. The thought came to him that the ship might have turned tail, although he had caught no faintest sensation of such a maneuver.

His plan had been to raid the wireless station during combat. But now he decided to act at once. Slender as was his chance of escape out of Germany, once the fleet landed back on home soil, at least he might be able to deliver the secrets of the wireless room.

He floundered down the corridor, now plunged in darkness, toward the stern. A dozen steps and he collided with someone. He guessed, from the man's exclamation, that he was a member of the enlisted crew. In the voice of authority Elton upbraided the shadow for his



English anti-aircraft were searching the black heavens.

clumsiness, received a muttered apology, and moved on.

Coming to a point that he estimated must be under the control car, he sat down in the dark and waited. Dimly he could make out the burr of the ship's engines and, more vividly, the howl of the wind. There were no voices, no sounds of confusion or emergency. He guessed that the crew must be at their posts, in the control car, in the observation nest, in the engine rooms, or swung in hammocks in black cubby-holes.

Then, above the sounds of the storm he heard a harsh, metallic rasp. It was clear, sharply defined, unmistakable. There was about it the racking sharpness of a machine-driven saw biting through heavy timber. One single burst of this sound came to him.

Elton's nerves went taut. It was the sound of the German wireless, the mysterious buzz that had laid the Allied command posts by the heels for a month past. Time and again he had heard it, coming in over the Allied listening stations. Now here it was echoing through the flagship of the zeppelin raiders with some unintelligible command from Imperial headquarters.

Elton's brows knotted. What possible communication could be sent in a single whirr of sound? He waited with straining ears for its recurrence, but there was no further signal. He crawled nearer the wireless station. But the intervening corridor, he knew, was filled with sailors, asleep in plunging hammocks.

DISCREETLY he waited, trying to guess again the direction of travel. Then came, less distinctly, a tick of a wireless instrument. It tapped out a message in dots and dashes. Elton followed the sounds, attempting to memorize the sequence of signals. Dot-dash-dash-dot-dash. It was tapped out slowly but the message was short. He heard it repeated shortly, the same message.

Elton, expert in codes and ciphers,

knew the futility of breaking the message from its code formulas. Many such messages would be required for that task, and then long weeks of time juggling letter frequencies.

But his alert ears had caught a peculiar note in the message. It lacked the metallic vitality of the usual wireless instrument. In fact, he thought as he reproduced the sound in his memory, that the dots and dashes seemed more like those coming from a dead instrument.

He groped his way back to his quarters and consulted his watch. Midnight had passed. The fleet should be approaching the English coast by this time, unless driven off its course or forced back by the storm. He groped his way to the stern, to find only the black void of the stormy night outside. Resolutely he returned to the ladder leading into the wireless station and clung there, waiting.

Half an hour and he heard the clamor of alarm. Sailors began reeling to their posts. Then again that raucous buzz of the mysterious radio signal. His ear could make out no difference from the other single rasp he had heard. But in a moment there followed those slow, devitalized dots and dashes.

Impulsively he pressed forward to the wireless station. In the dim bluish light, working under a small, bright ray of light, he saw an officer sitting in front of a small, ordinary phonograph. The disc of the phonograph was turning; from its horn emerged those peculiar dots and dashes of a message.

Elton's brows knotted again. What did it mean? Sharply his eyes examined the phonograph. It was an ordinary instrument. Then came another of those loud rasps. Across the room was another instrument, a recording phonograph. Quickly a record was processed and passed to the officer at the phonograph. There came from that instrument another slow succession of dots and dashes.

The officer at the phonograph looked up sharply, as if prompted by a warning intuition. He sprang to his feet at seeing the form of a man at the door. His eyes, straining through the bluish light, caught the military uniform.

"But what are you doing here, *Herr oberleutnant!*" he barked. "It is forbidden that anyone come to my station!"

"I'm sorry," Elton said calmly. "But I'm aboard officially, and wanted to know when we are going into action. I was told—"

"This is not the place to come for such information!" the officer snapped back.

"But since I am here, will you be good enough to answer my questions," Elton rejoined, a touch of arrogance in his voice. "Are we bombing London tonight, and if so, at what hour?"

"*Ja,* but we are not bombing London —it is Middlesworth we are coming to at this moment!" the German blurted.

Elton swung out of the wireless station and returned to the lower corridor. He knew that he would not be long in feeling the fleet commander's wrath over this invasion of the wireless station. But at least punitive action would be deferred until after battle.

He hurried to the gunners' platform to verify the report of impending action, to orient himself if possible to the craft's position over Middlesworth. Confirmation leaped out of the night all about him, long, quivering fingers of light from the English anti-aircraft defenses searching the black heavens for the monsters of death that had driven down off the winds of the black sea.

CHAPTER V

SPIRES AT DAWN

THE gunners were already at their stations. In those vital few minutes that he had stood at the forbidden wireless room, the crew had been hurried to posts, the fleet was maneuvering for position in which to lay its deadly cargo

on the English city. The zeppelins were dropping their parachute flares; below was the dim outline of earth. Elton caught in the distance the flash of light on a zeppelin. The craft nosed upward, its sides flashing like the white belly of a huge shark as it struggled for the safety of scurrying clouds.

The tossing light flashed across the wings of an English airplane. The craft, in the instant of its visibility, seemed no more than a wasp flitting headlong to the attack. He caught, above the noise of the flagship, the sharp whirr of airplane motors, felt the swift upward rise of the ship under him. The German gunners opened fire at sheer sound, sending shot after shot hurtling into the void in the thin hope of striking the unseen plane.

In the brief moments that he stood there, the whole scene seemed to Elton some hideous nightmare, a vision of nether regions in which strange unearthly monsters sought to destroy one another. But from this violence he turned, making his way back to his quarters. With a wrench and screw driver he attempted to release the thick glass covering of the porthole. This failing, he slowly counted the leaves of his notebook. Seventy-nine.

He lay down, bracing himself in a corner of the little room, and began writing. With the greatest difficulty he framed his words in block letters. Added to the pitching of the ship, his fingers were shaking from the new excitement that had gripped him as he stood at the door of the wireless station. In that moment he had stripped the mask from Imperial Germany's most important war secret. Since then he had followed through the details of mechanical sequence. The German wireless puzzle no longer was a secret.

Feverishly he applied himself to his task. A few words told the story. The very simplicity of that stark enigma of German communications startled him. It was as simple as the German trick of hurtling great shells more than half a hundred miles from beyond the Forest of Laon into Paris—by directing them through the stratosphere. Simple, that is, once you knew the formula.

Page after page he covered with terse messages, each a copy of the other. Thirty of these he wrote. Then with a wrench he smashed the glass at the porthole and began dropping messages overboard, one at a time. He used every available weight, every procurable device to attract attention to the fallen messages, once daylight came over Middlesworth. One of them he attached to the visor of his German cap. His Prussian belt went over with another, then the holster of his Luger. His compass went, his pocket knife. He reckoned it a certainty that one of these messages would find its way. They were addressed to the British admiralty, with the legend "urgent—deliver at once!"

Within a few hours after receiving one of these precious slips from Elton's notebook, the Allied secret service again would be reading German code messages, hurtled through the wireless by the Imperial high command. His message read:

> Record German wireless messages on ordinary phonograph cylinder. To decipher, play it on phonograph at slow speed—Agent B-6.

It had been as simple as that, the elusive German formula, and yet as complicated. The Imperial command had adopted the expedient of putting its secret messages in wax and hurling them into the air from a phonograph operated, by special mechanism, at terrific speed. Thus a message of considerable length sounded in Allied detectors as a mere raucous squawk, a rasping burst of sound that baffled experts. But now the Allies would reduce that uncanny rasp to its components, record its details at leisure, just as did the German

submarines, zeppelins, and wireless stations down the fighting fronts and in foreign possessions.

As the last of his messages went through the shattered porthole, Elton saw that the frantic fingers of light over Middlesworth were fading in the distance. He went back out into the corridor and groped his way astern.

A group of sailors, swung in hammocks, were talking noisily. He heard that shrapnel had torn into the hulk of the zeppelin, that hydrogen gas was pouring from some of the giant cells. All of the water ballast had been dropped. The craft was flying low, and one of the engines had broken the connecting bolts in the flanges of the drive shaft. One machinist had been lost overboard in the feat of repair, another man was out now on the propeller outrigger to place new bolts. But the wind, at least, was behind them, aiding escape.

"*Ja,* we will be in Germany for a late breakfast!" a voice boasted in the darkness.

ELTON returned to his room. The seaman's words echoed in his ears. The zeppelin would nose its way down behind the German lines—for late breakfast. He smiled grimly, in the knowledge that there could be but one reception waiting for him in Germany.

He sprawled back on the floor and resumed the writing of messages. There was substance in the thought that he had accomplished his mission. As for a firing squad, he dismissed that with a shrug. It was a part of the game, the inevitable end of the trail in this mad game of war.

He smiled again and centered his mind back on the messages. The hour was now past two o'clock. Daybreak would find the zeppelin over Belgium, perhaps France. Even if his calculations as to location were faulty, he meant to exhaust his sheets of paper.

Twenty more sheets had been covered with block letters, secreted in his Prussian tunic, when he was interrupted by the creak of the door. He looked up to see an officer. The German entered, closing the door after him, and motioned Elton to his feet.

"I am Commander Hiltschrock," the officer announced, through thin, hard lips. "You will deliver to me at once your passports, orders and all papers, together with your sidearms."

"My orders," Elton objected, "were examined at Namur, and again aboard ship. Will you—?"

"You have heard your orders, *Herr oberleutnant!*" the German cut him off. "You will comply immediately!"

Elton smiled coolly. There was something, he saw, more than naval spleen toward an Imperial staff officer in the fellow's humor. Commander Hiltschrock was a squarish, severe type; a man of forty, face set off in sharp angles and harsh lines. Heavy jaws, square head, bristling pompadour and scowling black eyes set close to a bleakish nose, completed the picture of a naval martinet, one who would execute orders to the letter without qualms.

Elton delivered his orders and, at the other's command, faced about to surrender his Luger pistol by passing it behind him.

"Until we land in Germany, *Herr oberleutnant,*" Hiltschrock said, "you are confined a prisoner to this cabin."

Turning about, Hiltschrock marched from the room, slamming the door behind him. Elton heard the click of a key.

A glance out the porthole disclosed only the pitch-black night. The wind was down, the zeppelin was running with it. Thus, if the engines had suffered no serious damage in the scrimmage over London, Elton estimated that the return to German territory might be cut down to a mere five or six hours of travel.

He lay down and repeated his message on the remaining sheets of paper from his notebook, then swung a hammock and turned in, one wary eye open for the first touch of dawn. As he reenacted the events of his adventure and weighed them, he shrugged an end to his own chances of escape. German reprisal loomed a certainty, unless he counted upon a German secret service stupidity that he had no right to expect.

Hours seemed to have passed before there was a thinning of the black night into the first gray of dawn. Elton climbed out of his hammock, furled it away, and went to the broken window. He discerned presently that the ship was holding an altitude of not more than five hundred meters. Trees flitted below, then the masses of a village, smoke pennanted from chimneys.

A few minutes later and he saw below another and larger village. Spires of a church rose above the place. Elton's heart leaped as he studied the outlines of streets, dwellings and spires. They were of French pattern, at least southernmost Belgium, in no event German.

CHAPTER VI

A MESSAGE FOR KIEL

ELTON sprang back and began weighting his messages. From the little cabin he stripped a section of moulding, broke it into bits with his hands. One by one, as he got them ready for release, he dropped his messages. From the lookout nest, sharp German eyes might see those white flecks swirling behind. But Elton gave no heed to that danger. Another strip of moulding came off and went into weights. He tore loose the hammock, cut it into sections, and sent the strips overboard to carry down his diminishing supply of messages.

The click of the bolt at his door interrupted. He turned to face four officers of the ship. The first to enter was a bristling figure in the undress uniform of a captain of the line.

"I am the commander of the fleet," the German announced in a low, crisp voice. "As such I have the right of trial and death in dealing with enemy spies. By wireless from Namur I have received the charge that you are an enemy agent and accordingly have convened this general court. The court will now receive any statement you wish to make in your own defense."

As the captain spoke, the officers with him lined up at his left. Elton found himself facing four sets of level eyes, eyes of men who had made up their minds. Hiltschrock, with a muttered apology to his captain, stepped forward and thrust his hand into the pockets of Elton's German tunic. He brought forth the remaining dozen copies of the telltale message, stiffened as he read, and handed the sheaf to the captain. The captain read and the blood drained from his face.

"This seems to make the case against you most complete," he said tartly. "Are you ready to hear the sentence of this court announced to you?"

Elton gazed coolly at the fleet commander and said, "A needless formality, *Herr Kapitan*. I presume I am to be shot at daybreak, the usual penalty provided in such circumstances."

"Hanging would be more suitable," the *kapitan* rejoined. "In any event I pronounce the penalty of death!"

He turned abruptly to Hiltschrock, gave a crisp order and strode from the cabin, two of his henchmen following. Hiltschrock remained behind, locked the door from the inside, put the key in his pocket and crossed the cabin to a chair that was lashed to the forward wall. He sat down, drew a Luger pistol from his belt and held it across his knees, his eyes fixed on Elton.

Elton was left at the open porthole. He looked out and thought the great

ship had dropped lower, was cruising now at a height of under four hundred meters. The sputtering of motors that he had heard during the night was now missing, the ship seemed drifting with the wind. He turned to Hiltschrock and his face twisted in a whimsical smile.

"I trust," he said, "that you do not expect me to escape by jumping out the window, Herr Hiltschrock."

"My orders are," Hiltschrock said, "to see to it that you do not escape under any circumstances. I warn you to keep your distance or I shall be compelled to shoot you."

Elton chuckled cool amusement.

"But what difference could that possibly make to me," he asked, "since I'm to be executed anyhow?"

Elton had guessed Hiltschrock's mission in the cabin—the German's words and face now confirmed his deduction.

"You mean that you are to act as a one-man firing squad, if your zeppelin is forced down back of the Allied lines?" he inquired.

Hiltschrock nodded, and said stolidly, "*Ja,* I have my orders."

Elton turned back to the porthole. His eyes told him that the ship had lost altitude, that it was sinking slowly to earth, drifting with the wind, though its steering fins kept it on something of an even keel. Slowly but surely the great gas cells were yielding their hydrogen gas through the gaping wounds from English anti-aircraft shrapnel. Underneath was the rolling terrain of France.

Gray ribbons of dust marked a network of roads, which told him that the zeppelin had been carried far south out of the region of last night's storms. They also revealed racing black military camions that were keeping pace with the wounded monster of the skies, ready to strike once it settled down to earth. Elton fixed Hiltschrock with resolute eyes.

"I presume you are familiar with the practices of international law," he said. "I mean that if your ship lands in France, you forfeit your right of execution over my person."

Hiltschrock glared a moment's uncertainty, then the lines of his face hardened.

"It is as the *Herr Kapitan* said," he snarled, "you are a man with dangerous information. *Ja,* you must not escape."

HILTSCHROCK'S fingers tightened on the hilt of his pistol, as if he expected his words to provoke some quick treachery of assault from his prisoner. There was a momentary glint in Elton's eyes as he measured the distance, an involuntary flexing of his muscles as he felt an impulse of attack. But he turned away with a shrug. The zeppelin was swinging lower, toward level terrain. Elton saw that it was flying now at an altitude of not more than two hundred feet and sinking perceptibly.

Swiftly his mind estimated his situation. In the crash of the zeppelin there would be a chance for attack. But he saw that the ship was shaping itself for a measured landing, a fact with which Hiltschrock must be familiar. Thus the very maneuvers of landing would touch off the German's Luger.

Elton, his face yielding no hint of his purpose, set himself for the gamble of surprise attack. Out of a corner of his eye he was observing Herr Hiltschrock, waiting for the first touch on earth of the great grappling anchors.

The shock of anchor impact came suddenly, with a force that racked the giant ship into uncontrollable pitching. Elton was dashed across the cabin, striking a wall with such violence as to leave him momentarily dazed. In the jumbled instant he caught the roar of an exploding Luger, saw Hiltschrock sprawling on the floor.

The German groped and floundered to get his feet under him. His weapon was stoutly clutched in his hand, his face a grimace of murderous determination.

Elton worked his feet under him, but before he could coordinate his actions there was another impact of anchors. Again the Luger cracked, but Hiltschrock's aim was hopeless, the wild careening of the ship sent him headlong to sprawl his full length across the cabin.

Elton, unable to find his legs in this crisis, coolly kept his wits, waited his chance to fasten his grip upon Hiltschrock. Twice he plunged forward but failed. Three times Hiltschrock fired, at close range, but there was no such thing as accuracy. Instead of emptying his weapon, hoping for a random hit, the German held his fire thereafter, waiting for the ship to steady down.

Another crash and the two men were thrown together in a staggering impact. Elton's fine coordination of brain and brawn seized upon that fleeting instant. His fingers clutched Hiltschrock's tunic, their grip tightened. As they went down together, Elton's other arm fastened about Hiltschrock's body. The German attempted to swing his pistol into play; his desperate finger jerked the trigger. Elton felt the burn of powder in his face.

The zeppelin quieted down perceptibly, seemed to be settling to its anchors. Elton released the grip on Hiltschrock's tunic, slipped it across the German's throat. With a quick movement he released his other hand and caught the dangerous Luger by the muzzle. Hiltschrock lost his wits and threw himself into a frenzied battle to free himself, tugging at the trigger with his right forefinger. Three shots more, shots that sent their missiles into the side of the cabin, and the Luger clicked into harmlessness, its magazine exhausted.

Elton climbed to his feet, seized the other's pistol hand and wrenched the weapon free. A tap of its heavy butt took the remaining fight out of Hiltschrock, piled him up in a dazed huddle.

Out through the little porthole, Elton saw that the zeppelin was riding against the earth, anchors securely fastened. French infantrymen were pouring across the fields. The German crew was climbing down to earth, hands lifted in the air.

Elton took the cabin key from the dazed Hiltschrock, unlocked the door, and dragged his way down the corridor. His nostrils caught a pungent smell. He hurried to the long ladder of rope, now prodding Herr Hiltschrock ahead. The zeppelin crew was already clear, in a moment the great envelope overhead would break into a mass of incendiary flames, flames meant to destroy code book and the secret of Germany's mysterious communications.

As Elton came to the ground with his prisoner, a French officer dashed forward in a burst of expletives to order the two into the huddle of German prisoners. Elton identified himself, surrendered Hiltschrock, talked the French commander into the use of a camion to take him to a military telephone.

The broken remnants of the great aircraft broke into flames as Elton drove off. He smiled grimly at the spectacle of what might have been his own funeral pyre. On reaching the telephone he succeeded, after an eternity of effort over the muddled French communications, in getting Colonel Rand on the wire at American headquarters.

"You—Elton!" Rand sang out in an incredulous staccato. "Yes—we got your dropped messages, Major—great work—great! But we just got a message in from Kiel this morning—one of those German jibes—they said you were coming in to Kiel by zeppelin to be hanged. We thought—"

"Their mistake, Colonel," Elton broke in laconically. "But I'll admit they sent the word out in all good faith. I'll report in at headquarters as soon as I can borrow a plane from the French, sir, and if you'll get me a phonograph, I'd like very much to buzz back a little reply to that last message, if you have no objection."

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

ANOTHER comrade who fought in Canadian ranks as an "American Legionnaire" is Robert Tad Phillips of Maricopa, Arizona. Tracy Richardson's reminiscences stirred him to write us this letter.

As a regular old time reader, I was delighted when your magazine brought up the subject of the American Legion that served with the Canadians during the world war. I was a member of that lost legion and it has been a source of much annoyance on my part that they received no credit for their gallantry. Unwept, unhonored, and unsung they fought—and died.

It is my earnest desire that someday a competent writer will compile, as much as can be compiled, a history of these reckless, hard-bitten fighting men; Americans with as glorious a fighting record as any American unit that ever existed. Altogether I believe nearly a hundred thousand Yanks went over with the Canadians.

My regiment, The Niagara Rangers, was probably fifty percent Americans. Furthermore they carried a huge Old Glory alongside the Union Jack in all their marches. Scum, jailbirds, artists, poets, even a millionaire—we had them all.

I recall one amusing incident that was typical American. We had two huge men, both young, both American. One who went under the name of Boyle was rumored to be the chief of detectives' son of Buffalo, New York. The other was a giant Jew named Sam something or other. Now the provost sergeant was an old timer Britisher with thirty years service all over the world and a flock of medals. The youngsters of the outfit were swell chaps, but this old soldier was smug, superior, domineering and what have you. Anyhow Sam saw the sergeant one day packing a lovely shiner. "How come, Sarge?" Sam asked. "Oh," the sergeant snarled, "I just told Boyle to hell with the bloody United States and the blighter hit me!" "Yeah, then how do you like this one!" Sam said and finished what Boyle started. Don't know what happened to Sam but a little later Boyle was doing most of his soldiering in a prisoners' squad. I saw Boyle at Ypres in 1917 and often wondered what happened to him after that. I got four wounds at the taking of Passchendaele Ridge November 5th.

Another American Legion regiment, I forget its number, was at Camp Borden in late 1916 or early 1917. The politics mentioned by Captain Richardson played havoc with these boys too. I guess there were probably twenty-five or fifty thousand men in that camp. The American Legion had their own bugle band equipped with long American trumpets. At "lights out" the huge camp would become strangely quiet, expectant. Then the stillness would be broken by the clear voice of a bugle playing American "taps". Not a Canadian bugle sounded until the last clear note had died away, then all the Canadian regiments would sound "lights out". Decent of the Canucks eh? But somebody at headquarters busted up the fun and issued orders to replace all the long American trumpets with short Canadian issue bugles. The bugle band deserted *en masse* taking with them even the huge regimental bass drum.

Five of us Americans lived in the same tent at Borden. Ken Couillard, adding machine salesman from Syracuse; Scratchley from New York; John Brow, artist and big man today if he's still alive; Austin Murray, ex-Devil Dog, and myself a wild eyed kid out of school. On July 4th, I conceived the brilliant idea of celebrating. Somebody woke up about 4:30 A. M. and aroused the rest with the bright crack that it was the Fourth. We had been on the rifle range the day before and the Ross rifles were stacked around the tent pole. On a dare I put the muzzle out the

tent flap and turned loose five rounds. All hell broke loose but the corporal of the guard came straight to our tent and collared Couillard. I confessed rather than see Ken suffer, because I knew he wouldn't tell. I told the C. O. I had shot blanks to celebrate our Fourth. He grunted a bit skeptically and gave me two days sanitary fatigue. Several days later Lieut. Thairs, a fine fellow, looked me right in the eye and said, "Some damned fool fired two shots through the top of my tent, the other morning!" I looked very innocent and had no comeback. Thair's tent was on a hillside opposite our billet.

NAVIGATION on the Great Lakes is something we see few stories about, and yet there must at times be dangers worse than on the seaboards where perhaps shorelines and soundings are more regular and it is a simpler problem to keep off-shore in thick weather. We have an interesting letter on the subject from Comrade Herb Gardner of Lake Worth, Florida.

Since I've been sitting around the "Campfire" circle for the past eighteen years, I believe the other members will let me have the floor for a few words.

Regarding Mr. Lempertz's letter to "Campfire" and for Mr. Perry's information.

Times have changed since Mr. Lempertz did his sailing on the Great Lakes. Increasing numbers of lake ships are now carrying radios, direction finders, wireless, and gyroscopic compasses. Magnetic compasses are still carried by all ships, but, are used by some only as a check on their gyros and direction finders, and in the event the gyro gets out of order.

Some areas on the chain of lakes do exert great influence on magnetic compasses. In particular in and around the Knife River district of Lake Superior, and the so called "Magnetic Reef" on Lake Huron. This disturbance is supposedly caused by huge iron ore deposits. However, since all ships must follow pretty much the same courses or "trachs" in these localities, and the magnetic variations are checked trip after trip, no hazards are experienced. While on those ships using gyros, magnetic variation and local attraction simply do not exist, since the gyro is a mechanical compass which points *true* north, and not *magnetic* north. All these new fangled gadgets take the guess work out of navigation, and effectively dampens the romance of the old "dog barking" school.

I remember quite vividly getting caught in a November blizzard on Lake Superior, when we floundered around for over three days looking for a landmark that we could take a departure from. Snow being driven by a howling gale, so thick that visibility beyond twenty feet was entirely out; seas roaring over our rail, as ice two feet thick formed on the weather side. And the entire ship resembling nothing so much as a glittering iceberg, with a huge, black funnel poked thru her "innards" alternately vomiting fire and smoke.

Then the hair raising thrill when the snow curtain finally parted, and we discovered another ship—dead ahead, and not over fifty yards away. We had not seen nor heard her, nor she us. For the simple reason that our whistle pulls were so coated with ice that we could not move them.

No radio compass stations those days to give us our position, and no electric windshield wipers on the pilot house windows either.

Mr. Lempertz seems to think that lake pilots pay no attention to government markers, etc., when running the rivers and channels. It is true that the ship, from time to time, is aimed at some factory smokestack ashore, or some point of land, etc. This is done merely to allow for the drift of the current in the river or channel. One can readily see how even a small current could cause a six hundred foot ship to drift off sideways, when eighteen to twenty feet of her is buried beneath the surface of the water, and said channel is full of twists and turns.

And now in order to develop grey hairs prematurely, suppose we take this same six hundred foot ship, and put her in one of these channels not over three hundred feet wide, and head her downstream where she dare not "plant the hook," cannot turn around, and where she is constantly meeting upbound ships. For good measure add a pea soup fog. What happens? Usually nothing, save you keep on going, for the men who pilot these ships know their rivers and channels better than we know our own back yards. Yet it is not to be wondered at that Captain Hansen, when caught in such a predicament, and some wag in his crew suddenly decided to imitate a cock-crow, yelled. "Veelsman! Hard a port! py yimminy v'ere headed for a barn yard."

Captains on lake ships are their own pilots. They must know each and every harbor,

river and channel. They even pilot their ships thru the locks of the Sault Ste. Marie.

Traditions? Seamanship? Adventure? Lord, yes!

AND F. W. Stowell, of Maple City, Michigan, pulls this out of the ditty bag.

The reference to Great Lakes navigation in the July issue got a rise out of me.

I will go back two decades for the scars on my wrists from the soogey. At that time the Trust boats were all striking time on the ship's bell. That was one of the wheelsman's jobs, the lanyard to the bell being right over his head and incidentally on the center line of the ship. The reason for the same being to help the wheelsman line himself up when running down a range. The wheelhouse is so far forward on an ore boat that extreme care is necessary, otherwise the ship is apt to run to one side of the channel.

As to the matter of steering on their own marks, the only time that is done is when there are no government marks to be seen and that is not very often. Gyro compasses are now in very general use, so the antics of the old magnetic compass are no longer a source of trouble except when the old man gets an idea and starts playing with the gyro —and they are getting over that habit rapidly. The places where the magnetic compass is apt to go crazy are in the approaches to the ore shipping ports at the upper end of Lake Superior and at the lower end of Whitefish Bay, just before one gets to the Gros Cap light ship. The attraction at this point is caused by the wreck of an old laden ore boat. These things use to call for dropping the hook in thick weather but with the advent of the gyro and radio compass the majority now keep right on going. In recent years I have run the lower St. Marie's river ranges in weather it was not possible to see the ranges in. That is the exception, though I happen to be an ex-quarter master in the U. S. Navy and am good at steering compass courses.

FROM Brownsville, Texas, comes J. W. Davis to tell what he saw at the fatal Chilcoot slide during the rush to the Klondike, and he takes issue right along the line.

Being an old Klondiker and also almost an eye witness of the Chilcoot Pass snowslide, I feel that Mr. Holbrook's description of same in your May issue should not go unchallenged.

I have been waiting to see if some old sourdough who was on the ground at the time it happened would not appear on the scene and dispute Mr. Holbrook's tale.

Mr. Hughes' reply in the July number is good as far as it goes, but as he went over the White Pass trail, he had not the opportunity to see what actually happened.

My party was made up of Mr. Marston, ex-newspaper reporter; my brother John Davis, a blacksmith; Neff, a carpenter; and myself, a civil engineer, all young men, husky and competent to meet most any situation that might arise. We went over the Chilcoot Pass to Lake Bennett, built our boat there and as soon as the ice broke, followed the chain of lakes and connecting small rivers at the head of the Yukon, down to the Yukon River proper, through Miles Canyon, White Horse Rapids, Five Finger Rapids, and on down to the Klondike country. There were three main routes into the Klondike, by steamer, by way of Bering Sea to St. Michael and up the river, by river steamers to Dawson City. This was a long and slow route and the majority chose the shorter route from Dyea over the Chilcoot trail, or from Skagway about three miles distant over the White Pass trail. Chilcoot is shorter but somewhat higher. Both came together at Lake Bennett and from there on the route was the same.

The distance from Dyea to the head of Lake Bennett is about 28 miles and the Summit about 4,000 feet above tidewater, not 10,580 or two miles as stated by Mr. Holbrook.

There was no harbor at Dyea and steamers anchored some distance out and lightered freight and passengers to shore.

The distance to the Summit of the Pass is 13 miles and this distance was made in several relays. First from the beach to a small settlement known as Canyon City, about seven miles over an easy trail which could be negotiated with sleds. Here a small canyon, narrow, but not deep, commences and extends about three miles to what was known as Sheep Camp. This canyon was called Box Canyon.

I note Mr. Holbrook calls the trail beyond Sheep Camp, Box Canyon. As a matter of fact, there is no other canyon except the one I mentioned between Dyea and the Summit.

Sheep Camp was about ten miles from tidewater and was quite an extensive flat in

the hills. Freighters with teams and sleds operated over this section and would haul your outfit from Dyea to this point, for $30 per ton. Sheep Camp was the main stopping place for the prospectors, because plenty of fuel was available here and none beyond until you got over the Summit and down on the other side. This was also the reason very few camped between here and the Summit, as it necessitated packing up wood, as well as your supplies.

Three miles up from Sheep Camp was The Scales. The aerial tramway was in operation from here to the Summit and would transport your outfit to the Summit for so much per pound. This necessitated weighing anything they transported, hence the name "The Scales." Most of the prospectors back-packed their own supplies and even packed for others, for so much per pound.

The height from The Scales to the Summit was approximately a thousand feet, and steps were cut in the ice and snow and a rope strung along the side to assist you in the ascent. At intervals at one side were benches cut in the ice and snow, so that you could step out and rest. After you reached the Summit you deposited your burden at your "cache" and returned by a route at one side, so as not to interfere with those going up. We usually packed from fifty to a hundred pounds each and made four trips per day, when we returned to our camp at Sheep Camp.

If there was a restaurant at The Scales where one paid a dollar a cup for coffee and a dollar an hour for sleep, I never saw it. There was a small tent restaurant on the Summit, where one could get a cup of coffee and two doughnuts for twenty-five cents.

Now for the snowslide. From Sheep Camp to the Summit is a narrow rapidly ascending valley with a mountain ridge on each side, and the trail ran along the right side. These mountain ridges ranged in height above the trail from a thousand to twelve or fifteen hundred feet.

For several days there had been an almost continual snowfall but it did not seem to interfere much with traffic up and down the trail.

There was no blizzard such as Mr. Holbrook described.

On the day of the slide, we with many others decided that conditions were not favorable for work and decided to remain in our tent at Sheep Camp. A comparatively small number however, ambitious to get their supplies over, went up to "The Scales" and started packing. The snowfall got so heavy that most of them decided to return to Sheep Camp. In order to keep together and not get off the trail they strung out on a rope said to be about 150 feet long and began the descent. About half way down, the snowslide came down from the right side and engulfed most of them. Those at the front were completely buried, but some at the rear end of the rope escaped and were able to pull out a number who were only partially covered.

As they had no shovels they could not dig out those who were buried deeper.

Now there is another old Klondiker living here, Dick Sethman, who was at Sheep Camp when it happened and one of his partners, Frank Bishop, was on the rope, but at the end that was not buried. He was one of the first, if not the first, to bring the news of the disaster to Sheep Camp. Immediately many men seized their shovels, myself and partners among them, and rushed to the scene of the disaster. We dug out a few alive, where the snow over them was comparatively shallow, but all who came out later were dead by suffocation.

I don't believe anyone who was as much as six or seven feet under the snow came out alive. This in spite of Holbrook's statement that old man Smith survived after being buried 23 feet under snow.

Just how many bodies were recovered here, I do not recall, but I remember seeing about twenty laid out in a big tent used as a morgue at Sheep Camp. In addition there was a group of men, probably as many as twenty, who were working for the Aerial Tramway Co., who were buried in one group. Some bodies I've been told were not recovered until the snow melted in the spring.

Now as to the depth of the slide, my estimate is that it did not exceed twenty feet. As to the number of men encamped along the Chilcoot trail, I believe 10,000 would overestimate it. As to there being 50,000, this is a gross exaggeration.

As Mr. Hughes states, there were many more who took the White Pass Trail than went over the Chilcoot route.

I believe his estimate of forty thousand in the interior during the gold rush is conservative, especially as his information came from the Canadian Government, which through the Northwest Mounted Police kept close tab on everyone entering the Yukon. I recall after being checked on the Summit we were rechecked at a station on Lake Tagish.

What started the slide is unknown, probably a drift of snow broke loose and coming down the side swept the snow that had accumulated there with it. Frank Bishop said

it was all over in a few minutes. Three days later, conditions were normal on the trail, and everyone was about his business of getting his outfit over the Pass.

Any correction of the above, by any old Klondiker who went over the Chilcoot Pass, will be appreciated.

IN TELLING his fact story "Mad Dog Experiences," Ozark Ripley gets off his chest something he has wanted to say for a long time.

He is well known as a writer on fishing and on dogs. His books on the training of bird dogs are authoritative, and he has himself handled thousands of setters and pointers and other breeds.

What distresses Ozark Ripley is the needless extermination every year of many thousands of good dogs, field dogs or household pets, because of the unreasoning cry of "Mad dog!" There is something about those two words that must reach back into primitive fears, because they arouse the same clutching, instinctive panic as a cry of "Fire!" in a theatre.

When this is printed, the local newspapers will all have items about mad dog scares, dogs suspected of hydrophobia, etc., local policemen will be called to come with their revolvers, and in perhaps one in a hundred cases, or one in several hundred, the excitement will have some justification.

But many thousands of dogs' are owned by our comrades, and it will please Ozark Ripley that his item appears during "dog days". Some of those dogs are likely to be given a chance to cool off and be quiet, in safe places where no humans are in jeopardy, and recover from heat prostrations or other ailments that fearful women would immediately diagnose as "mad dog".

H. B.

ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewere

NATIVE paroquets once flew over Albany, N. Y.

Request:—In the April issue of *Adventure*, Mr. H. Bedford-Jones mentioned "Parrakeets" in his story entitled "Dan'l Morgan's Stripes".

Could you please tell me if these birds ranged as far north and west as Ohio and Indiana before they vanished from this country?

Also could you tell me which is the fastest bird in flight and about how many miles per hour it flies?

—John Burbach, Sagola, Mich.

Reply by Mr. Davis Quinn:—Yes, Mr. Jones is quite correct in his statement that the paroquet's range once included Ohio and Indiana. The bird was found as far north in the East here as Albany, New York.

According to my records, the fastest bird so far clocked by our rather limited methods is the lammergeier, a large vulture. When chased by an airplane this bird did a nose dive at one hundred ten miles per hour by the pilot's air-speed indicator. The next fastest record is that of the swift. This bird overtook and made circles around an airplane going sixty-eight miles per hour.

ORIENTAL or Occidental, the crawl's the same.

Request:—How does the American crawl differ from the Japanese crawl?

Can you give me three programs for instructing large swimming classes of these varied abilities?

(a) Non-swimmers: unable to paddle a stroke, often possessing fear of water.

(b) Beginners: able to paddle a short distance.

(c) Swimmers of mediocre ability.

Are girls and women more difficult to instruct than men?

Is it actually more difficult to swim in shallow water than deep water?

—Sterling H. Dover, Keokuk, Ia.

Reply by Mr. L. DeB. Handley:—All kinds of views have been aired concerning differences between the American and Japanese styles of crawl, but I am of opinion they do not exist.

At the Olympic games of 1932 I not only jotted down full descriptions of the strokes of all the rating Japanese swimmers, but I had long talks with Matuzawa, Nipon's head coach, and later I studied carefully articles on technique by Takaishi and other leading Japanese authorities. This done, I came to the conclusion that those who saw differences had not gone thoroughly into the subject, but reached their verdict through observation of some particular star they considered typical of Japanese thought.

This conclusion has since been supported by American and European experts who attended the games in Berlin last summer.

Just to illustrate: One of the chief claims, following the 1932 Olympiad, was that the

Japanese used a much faster arm recovery than ours. This impression was conveyed by the fact that most of the Orientals at Los Angeles were short in stature and naturally executed more strokes per minute than our taller contenders. That it was a wrong impression is proven by my above mentioned notes, which reveal that the arm action of the Japanese varied all the way from twenty-six to forty-two strokes per minute. And I may add that Ray Ruddy, of New York City, used forty-two strokes per minute, steadily, in winning our national long distance championship a few years ago.

In teaching classes of non-swimmers I never take into account those who are afraid of the water. Their number is too insignificant. The very few in the category I simply eliminate from class work and instruct separately, rather than retard the whole group.

Always I use shallow water for teaching beginners, so pupils know they can reach bottom and stand up at will. If the class is small, I divide the pupils into two groups and pair them off, so that while one receives instruction, the other stands by in the water and helps him, or her, if necessary. Then I make the working group line up with back to wall, take a deep breath, and push off for motionless floating, telling them beforehand how to get up from swimming to standing position without floundering. The floating is done face-down, of course.

Next I repeat the pushing-off and make pupils try a narrow, easy, relaxed, thrash of the legs. As soon as they do this acceptably, I instruct them to start the legs first, then rotate the arms alternately, rolling heavily from side to side. While they are doing this I notice how the legs swing and determine by that on what side each pupil should turn to inhale. Next, I teach inhaling and exhaling while pupils stand on bottom, bending forward from waist. After that I combine the breathing with the stroke. Finally, I change the elementary action of the arms to the advanced action and gradually develop form.

With large classes I usually find it more practical to teach the leg thrash while pupils hang on to side of pool, or scum gutter, or a rope placed at the right height for the purpose. The support also can be used for teaching the arm action and breathing, but with the average class I prefer the push-off system.

With beginners who can paddle a little, I use the same method, and with more advanced pupils, I make them swim back and forth across pool, giving individual instruction in turn, as required.

I have found girls and women easier to teach than boys and men. As a class they have more natural buoyancy and their greater limberness is very helpful. I teach both sexes exactly the same way.

I don't believe depth of water makes it any easier or harder to swim. But there is definite drag in swimming through very shallow water and this affects speed.

COLUMBUS carried no rapier. They came later.

Request:—I should appreciate your opinion on the value of a pair of matched Spanish rapiers, dating apparently from the time of Columbus; second, a saber that bears silver scallop shells upon its basket type guard; and last, an unmounted crusader type blade, apparently forged by the same smith who made the saber.

All four of these swords have been in my family for about forty years, and my mother believes that my father got them in San Domingo. The rapiers bear a label in his writing stating that they had belonged to one family in San Domingo for many generations and had been handed down from father to son before coming into his hands.

The blades of these rapiers are thirty-five and a half inches long and taper from about one and one half inches wide at the hilt to about three-fourths of an inch about two inches above the point. The hilts have bell type guards protecting the figure-eight type finger hold and cross bar and have evidently seen hard service, as there are several deep cuts on the bell guards, and in one place a small sliver has been cut off by a sword cut.

The saber has a thirty-two and a half inch blade with a peculiarly shaped point, this blade being one and fifteen-sixteenths inches wide at the hilt and one and five-sixteenths inches wide an inch above the tip.

The unmounted straight blade is thirty-three and one-half long, tapering from one and nine-sixteenths inches wide at the hilt to thirteen-sixteenths of an inch, two inches above the tip. Its tang is seven inches long with an enlargement one and one-fourth inches long where the cross bar was evidently designed to be secured, and it bears the same inscriptions and designs on its blade that the saber shows. On the tang, stamped into the metal as with dies, are the letters S. D.

I have studied arms and armor enough so that I have some idea of the period to which pieces belong and how they were used, but not what they are worth in the antique

market. Incidentally, I have the impression that pilgrims and Crusaders to the Holy Land marked their weapons or their garments with scallop shells, as a Hadji wears a green turban, to prove their feats, and if so my old saber with its thirteen silver scallop shells must at some time in its history have belonged to a Crusader or to a *hidalgo* with such shells in his coat of arms.

—Preston S. Lincoln, Wareham, Mass.

Reply by Captain R. E. Gardner:—The period of the rapier, 1540 to 1700 A. D., would prevent us from dating these weapons from the time of Columbus. I assume, that yours are of the cup-hilted variety, equipped with long quillons and a knuckle guard. I am also assuming that the figure eight lies above (toward the top or point) the quillons and within the cup. If this be correct your blades date from about 1640-1680. With the background you possess of these weapons I see no reason why they should not be authentic, and as such, they are highly desirable and worth from about $50.00 to $150.00 according to the workmanship.

I approach the matter of the saber you describe with some doubt. I should have enjoyed viewing this piece as it is a specialized type and not of general distribution. It may be of Spanish origin and, I would say, under Moorish influence. The pommel type is the same as those usually found on the "stag-hangers" or hunting weapons, but the blade ends leads me to believe that it is of the type employed by the sea raiders of the late XVIIth century.

The unmounted blade is of the type found in cross-hilted weapons of the cutting classification. You have not indicated the cross-section of this piece, that is, if of flattened, diamond shape, or fluted with a groove. I can say with certainty that, if authentic, this piece antedates the rapiers.

FOR those interested in monkey business.

Request:—Several years ago I secured the late Professor Garner's book "Apes and Monkeys", which I have read several times with great interest. Could you give me the names of any other books along this line? This book outlines, in an interesting way, intelligence tests to which monkeys have been put. Garner also relates how he set about to learn the speech of monkeys.

2. How do natives effect the capture of monkeys in South America?

3. Have any books been written on the lives and habits of monkeys in their 'native heath'?

4. In Garner's book, he speaks of the Brown Cebus, the White-face Capuchin; and again of the White-face Cebus. Is the White-face Cebus and Capuchin the same animal?

5. Are Rhesus monkeys more inclined to be vicious than those commonly called 'ring-tails'?

6. Why is it that the woolly and golden monkeys are so seldom seen in captivity? Are they harder to capture, or more difficult to transport?

7. Could you tell me how monkeys are shipped from South American ports to the United States?

8. Are there dealers in the South American cities who export monkeys, either as a business or side line? About what is the wholesale price, in S. A.? Is mortality at sea very great?

9. For what scientific purpose are Rhesus monkeys used in hospitals?

—A. E. Kemmerling, Wilkensburg, Pa.

Reply by Dr. P. V. Shaw:—1. The following books will be helpful to you: Giraud Elliot, "A Review of the Primates," pub. by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1913. Forbes (Henry O.), "A Handbook to the Primates," London: Edward Lloyd, Limited, 1896, 2 volumes.

2. Natives occasionally capture the young ones during their hunting parties. A process, that as far as I know, has never been really proved, consists in partly filling a strong basket (*combuca*) with corn and leaving an aperture that will only allow the monkey's hand through. The basket is firmly tied to a tree. Once the monkey fills his hand with corn he cannot draw it out, and the *caboclos* say he can be captured before resolving to release the corn. The same method is cited as being used by natives of the Malay Archipelago. The Brazilian saying, "*Macaco velho nao mete a mao em combuca,*" (an old monkey doesn't put his hand in the basket) has its origin in this supposed process.

3. Most Brazilian textbooks on Zoology give some account of the habits and life of neotropical species. Forbes gives quite a lot of information on the subject.

4. Capuchin is a general name for the genus *Cebus*, and probably both names refer to the same species. *Cebus albifrons* is generally termed the "white-fronted capuchin", and according to Forbes, has the face, forehead, throat, shoulders and crest white. Varieties of *Cebus flavus* have also a white forehead and sometimes are entirely albino. *Cebus niger* is another species with a whitish face.

5. I know very little about Rhesus monkeys

as they do not belong to the neotropical fauna.

6. The woolly monkeys from the Amazon are very tame and are often found in captivity here in Brazil. Miranda Ribeiro says he has seen them captured and that they only howl, not even trying to bite their captors. He has had both species (*Lagothrix lagothrix* and *L. infumatus*) in captivity, reputing them the tamest monkeys to his knowledge. Forbes says, "They are not very hardy, seldom surviving a passage down the Amazon to Pará, but nevertheless the Zoological Society has had a considerable number of them in confinement during the past twenty years." Bates in his "Naturalist on the River Amazon" has interesting references on the woolly monkeys.

7. & 8. I do not know of any dealers in monkeys in Brazil. In the states of Bahia and Pernambuco monkeys are sold to travelers and probably there is some sort of local trade to keep up the stock. Dealers in wild animals generally send their collectors to Brazil and I do not think any local dealers of any amount exist.

9. Rhesus monkeys are used in Brazil especially in yellow fever investigation because of their susceptibility to many human diseases.

MAD enough to coin coins, as well as words.

Request:—Among some coins I bought lately is one of which I have found no description. It is a copper coin just a little larger than the old large cent. The obverse side bears an eagle with lifted wings and the legend "Substitute for Shin Plasters." Below the eagle is an inscription thus Novr and date, 1837. On reverse side, the legend "Species Payments Suspended". Inside the wreath, apparently oak leaves, is the date, May tenth, 1837.

Can you tell me any thing about it?

J. T. Owens, Tempe, Ariz.

Reply by Mr. Howland Wood:—The copper piece you have was a private issue in the nature of a token to pass for one cent at a period when there was a great deal of popular feeling against Andrew Jackson on account of his putting an end to the Bank of the United States.

Some of the expressions of the people were vented in tokens like yours and similar pieces. They had a general circulation at the time. Yours happens to be one of the common varieties and sell according to condition anywhere from 5c to 25c.

"THE old man of the mountain." A term of honor among Tibetans.

Request:—I'd like some information about a mountain peak in China which, I heard somewhere, was higher than Mount Everest. My knowledge of it is vague, but I wondered if it were in the same range that Mr. Harrison Forman tried to reach.

Have other expeditions into this region published any reports on this peak?

—Hugo Levin, Chicago, Ill.

Reply by Mr. Seward S. Cramer:—The mountains to which you refer are the Amnyi Machen mountains. They are sometimes called the "Mystery Mountains" but this is incorrect as the only mystery is a way to get there and make a proper exploration of them. They are well known to all Tibetans of the northern, central and eastern sections. As a matter of fact, one of their principal gods is named Amnyi (old man) Ma chen (peacock great). The "old man" is a title of great respect and most Orientals give their treasures such a title—witness the Japanese Fujiyama (Fuji San—Mr. Fuji).

I really don't know what foreigner or white man was the first to see Amnyi Machen. I believe that Sven Hedin once reported it though the actual credit seems to have gone more to the British General Pereira and the American Dr. Joseph F. Rock. The latter is the one who took the pictures that you mention. They were published in the February 1930 issue of the *National Geographic Magazine*.

The pictures that Dr. Rock took were taken from a great distance and do not have any tremendous value except as rarities because there is no method of computing their height with accuracy. He estimates the height as at least 28,000 feet—more than 1,000 feet less than Mount Everest. However more exact measurements in the future may correct this figure so that it will equal or surpass that of Mount Everest.

The Amnyi Machen mountains are actually three peaks—the center one of which gives its name to the range though it is really the smallest. It is on this center one that the god is supposed to live, protected by the two higher peaks.

LEARNING the "innards" of a motorcycle takes study.

Request:—I have an Indian Scout 45 Model 1927. I would like to have some good book or books on the repairing and upkeep of this machine. As we have no expert around, we have to beat about the bush to find our troubles.

—J. L. Lamonde, Megantic, Canada.

Reply by Mr. Charles M. Dodge:—I can well understand that you might have some trouble in getting expert service for your '27 Indian Scout, although it is one of the cleanest and most foolproof little motorbikes built. There aren't so many Indian or Harley Agents in Canada.

The best thing for you to do is send twenty-five cents to the Indian Motorcycle Company, Highland Station, Springfield, Massachusetts, U. S. A., with the request for an instruction book for this model, *giving your motor number.* This last is highly important, because there are so many different models. In fact thereare no less than sixty two of them, including American, domestic and foreign models for different countries. Your motor number will tell them the whole story and the book they'll send you will be the right one for your particular motorcycle.

This number is on the lower left side of the motor base and should, if it's a 1927, begin with the letters "BGP"; the B means 1927, the G means Scout and the P means forty-five cubic inch job as differentiated from the 37. But whatever it is, be sure you have it right and the book you'll get in return will have not only all the usual kinks about good care, but a complete cutaway diagram of the whole motor wide open so you can see what it's all about; a wiring diagram; a description of the generator, the magneto, and everything you'll want to know.

MISCELLANEOUS inquiries on things photographic.

Request:—I have heard that films can be developed in a very short time by means of some cleanser besides water. Can alcohol be used for this?

I have often tried to take pictures in which there were clouds showing in the sky but without success. Can this be done with an ordinary folding camera?

Can you tell me of any way in which it is possible to take pictures in color with an ordinary snapshot camera?

What kind of camera would you consider best for newspaper photography. Our town has several newspapers but all the pictures in them come from some news service. Our papers never have pictures of happenings here in town.

How is it possible to take moonlight pictures with an ordinary snapshot camera?

—William Geasey, Shamokin, Pa.

Reply by Mr. Paul L. Anderson:—From your reference to alcohol, you are probably thinking of the rapid drying of negatives. If you will immerse a negative for five minutes or so in alcohol, the water is removed, and the negative will be dry enough to print from in a few seconds after taking it from the alcohol. Several precautions must be observed; first, use pure grain alcohol, not wood and not denatured. Second, see that the negative has been *entirely* washed free from hypo. Third, do not immerse too long, or the celluloid will be softened.

You can get clouds in your pictures by using a ray-filter over the lens. If you are using orthochromatic film (Verichrome, Plenachrome, or the like) use a K 1 filter, and give five times as long an exposure as you would without the filter.

Write to the Defender Photo Supply Co., Rochester, New York, and ask for information about Dufaycolor film. This is put up in rolls, for ordinary cameras, and gives photographs in natural color.

Newspaper photographers use all sorts of cameras; there is no one kind which is especially adapted for the work. Probably the one most generally popular is the Speed Graphic, either 3¼x4¼ or 4x5.

Moonlight pictures can be taken with any camera, by giving a long enough exposure. Not knowing what your camera is, I cannot tell you how much exposure to give; it may range from three minutes to two hours, depending on the speed of your lens and on what you are trying to take. Most of the so-called "moonlight" pictures, however, are made by pointing the camera toward the sun, preferably when it is behind the clouds, and giving a very short exposure. These however, do not look like real moonlight, and would deceive no one but a novice.

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ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Boxing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

Canoeing: *paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 603 Brainard Av., Libertyville, Ill.

Coins: *and medals*—HOWLAND WOOD, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *salt and fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait; camping outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, (Ozark Ripley), care of *Adventure.*

Football—JOHN B. FOSTER, care of *Adventure.*

Globe-trotting and vagabonding—ROBERT SPIERS-BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure.*

Health Building Activities, Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Horses: *care, training of horses in general; jumping; and polo; the cavalry arm*—MAJOR R. ERNEST DUPUY, care of *Adventure.*

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motor Camping and Trailer Camping—MAJOR CHAS. G. PERCIVAL, M.D., 152 W. 65th St., N. Y. C.

Motorcycling—*regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, 379 Marlborough St., Boston, Mass.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1632 So. Hayworth Av., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT FROTHINGHAM, Mayfield, Fulton Co., N. Y.

Old-Time Sailoring—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. No. 3, Box 69, Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns: *foreign and American makes; wing shooting*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure.*

★**Skiing and Snowshoeing**—W. H. PRICE, 3486 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.

Small Boating: *skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Stamps—DR. H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Av., Denver, Colo.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.

Swords: *spears, pole arms and armor*—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, 1354 N. 4th St., Columbus, Ohio.

Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, 125 Lambert Rd., Jenkintown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—CHARLES B. CRANFORD, School of Education, New York University, Washington Square, New York, N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Pl., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American; north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Automobiles and Aircraft Engines: *design, operation and maintenance*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure.*

Aviation: *airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders*—MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Big Game Hunting: *guides and equipment*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Entomology: *insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, Arendtsville, Pa.

Ethnology: (*Eskimo*)—VICTOR SHAW, 20th & W. Garfield Sts., Seattle, Wash.

Forestry: *in the United States; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry: *tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, Chapel Hill, N. C.

Fur Farming—FRED L. BOWDEN, 104 Fairview Av., Binghamton, N. Y.

Herpetology: *reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure.*

Marine Architecture: *ship modeling*—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mining: *territory anywhere in North America, Mining law, prospecting outfitting; any mineral, metallic or nonmetallic*—VICTOR SHAW, 20th & W. Garfield Sts., Seattle, Wash.

Motor Vehicles: *operation, legislative restrictions and traffic*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure.*

Ornithology: *birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 3508 Kings College Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 86 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Precious and semi-precious stones: *cutting and polishing of gem materials; technical informa-*

tion—F. J. ESTERLIN, 901-902 Shreve Bldg., 210 Post Road, San Francisco, Calif.

Radio: *telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J.

Railroads: *in the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure.*

Taxidermy—SETH BULLOCK, care of *Adventure.*

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE SUBJECTS

Army Matters: *United States and Foreign*—CAPT. GLEN R. TOWNSEND, 5511 Cabanne Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Federal Investigation Activities: *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, 251 Third St., Fair Haven, N. J.

Police, City and State—FRANCIS H. BENT, 251 Third St., Fair Haven, N. J.

U. S. Coast Guard—Lt. Comdr. T. F. DOWNEY, U. S. N. ret., 11 Murray St., Wakefield, Mass.

U. S. Marine Corps—CAPT. F. W. HOPKINS, care of *Adventure.*

U. S. Navy—Lt. Comdr. T. E. DOWNEY, U. S. N. ret., 11 Murray St., Wakefield, Mass.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Quartzsite, Ariz., care Conner Field.

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, Port Moresby, Territory Papua, via Sydney, Australia.

★New Zealand: Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 18a Sandridge St., Bondi, Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Cardoss," Suva, Fiji.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon.*—V. B. WINDLE, care of *Adventure.* **2** *French Indo-China, Hong Kong, Macao, Tibet, Southern, Eastern and Central China.*—SEWARD S. CRAMER, care of *Adventure.* **3** *Northern China and Mongolia.*—PAUL H. FRANSON, Bldg. No. 3 Veterans Administration Facility, Minneapolis, Minn. **4** *Persia, Arabia.*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure.* **5** ★*Palestine.*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

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South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile.*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure.* **2** *Venezuela, The Guianas, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil.*—DR. PAUL VANORDEN SHAW, care of *Adventure.*

★West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Central America★—SEYMOUR POND, P. O. 2103, Cristobel, Canal Zone, Panama.

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Canada, Part 1 *New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island.*—FRED L. BOWDEN, 104 Fairview Ave., Binghamton, N. Y. **2** ★*Southeastern Quebec.*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 24 Plessis St., Quebec, Canada. **3** ★*Height of Land Region, Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec, Southeastern Ungava and Keewatin.*—S. E. SANGSTER, care *Adventure.* **4** ★*Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario.*—HARRY M. MOORE, *The Courier Advocate,* Trenton, Ont., Canada. **5** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks, Camping.*—A. D. L. ROBINSON, 1163 Victoria Rd., Walkerville, Ont., Canada. **6** *Lake of Woods Region.*—R. F. LINCOLN, care of *The Minneapolis Tribune,* Minneapolis, Minn. **7** *Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C.

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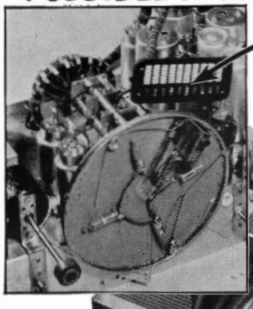

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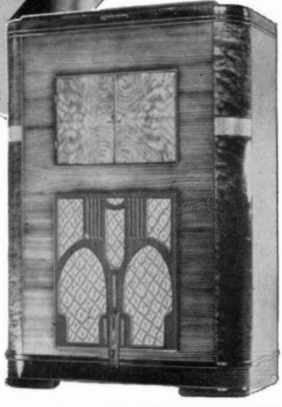

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