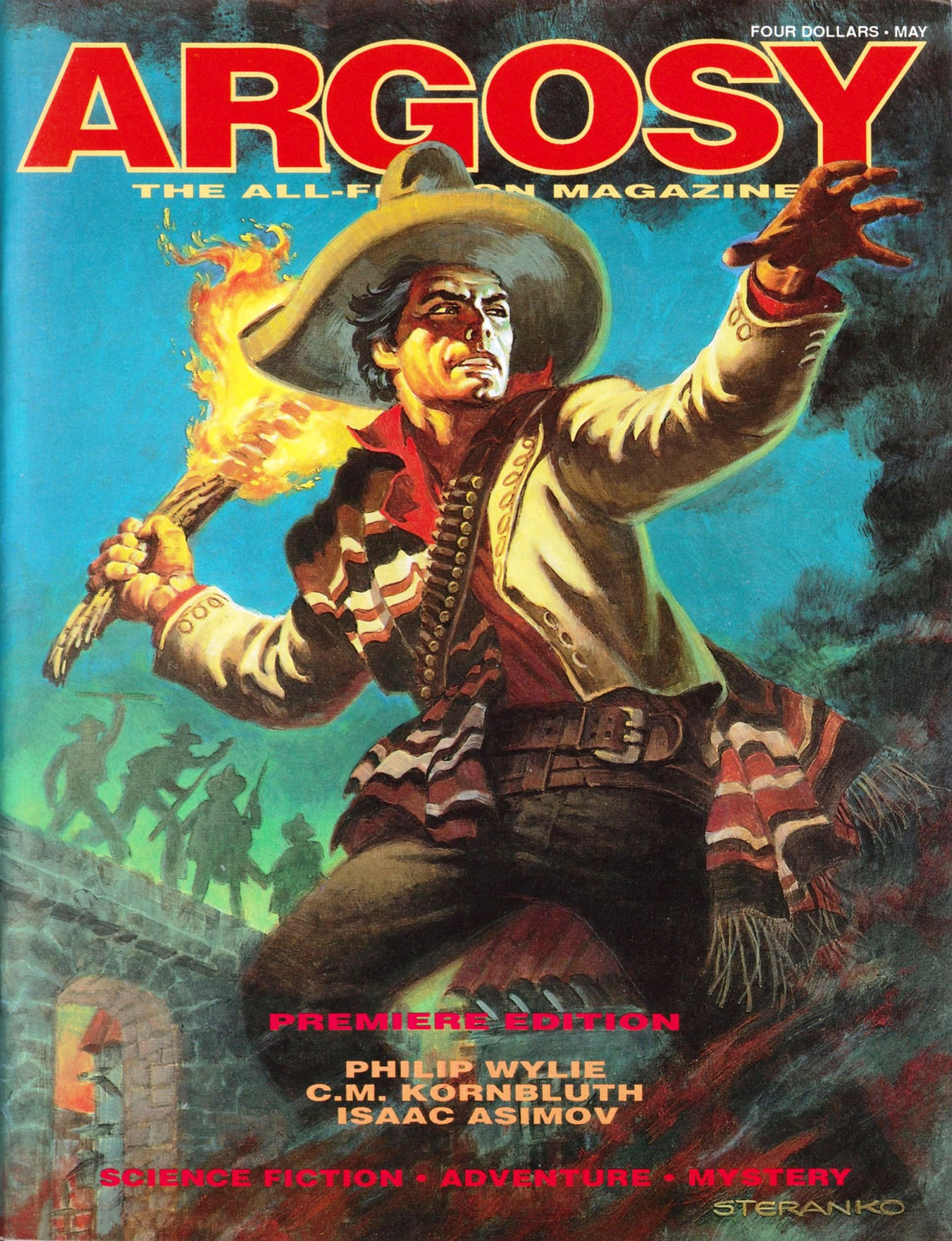
FOUR DOLLARS • MAY
ARGOSY
THE ALL-FI ON MAGAZINE
PREMIERE EDITION
PHILIP WYLIE
C.M. KORNBLUTH
ISAAC ASIMOV
SCIENCE FICTION • ADVENTURE • MYSTERY
STERANKO

PAGE ONE

WELCOME TO ARGOSY.

It's been twenty-five years since America had an all-fiction magazine. Now ARGOSY is here to stay.

Our contributors this issue: Philip Wylie, Isaac Asimov, C.M. Kornbluth... names you know. Boston Blackie...a character you may have heard of; Jack Boyle...an author you probably have not. George Metzger...creator of America's first graphic novel, *Beyond Time and Again*. John Staib and Bruce Pelz...names you'll want to remember. Steranko, D. Bruce Berry and Glen Murakami...illustrators who bring words to life.

Outstanding writers and artists — and outstanding stories.

STERANKO

PHILIP WYLIE wrote the first novel about a physical superman, *Gladiator*, co-authored the classic *When Worlds Collide*, and wrote the extraordinary *The Disappearance*. As a mainstream novelist, he authored *Finnley Wren*, and as a social critic the even more audacious *A Generation of Vipers*. He delved into nuclear physics when no one but scientists and science fiction writers had heard of the field. He became an acute — and bestselling — social critic long before the establishment pundits leaped on the bandwagon. He was an ecologist before it was the vogue. He wrote hundreds of thousands of words of popular fiction, as well, from romances to detectivestories.

And he wrote "The Savage Gentleman."

Just as his *Gladiator* helped inspire Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster's "Superman," so "The Savage Gentleman" inspired the countless Doc Savage pulp magazine stories. But there was never a second story about Henry Stone, the Savage Gentleman.

There's still the first, however, and here it is, rediscovered after forty-five years, one of the great stories of popular fiction...

CYRIL KORNBLUTH spent a significant part ofhis life on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion in World War II. Before that he was a professional writer — and a gifted one — while still in his teens. And after that he collaborated with Frederik Pohl on the classic science fiction novel *The Space Merchants*. Reportedly, he completed his entire libertarian science fiction novel, *The Syndic*, over a long weekend because he hated to write outlines. "The Reversible Revolutions," beginningon page 12, is as fresh as though it were written tomorrow.

JACK BOYLE was known first as a pre-World War I San Francisco newspaper reporter, then as an editor — and then as an opium addict, strongarm bandit, convict, magazine writer, and silent film scripter. An incredible journey. The hard, gritty, and — admittedly — sentimental Boston Blackie stories (which bear no resemblance to the B-movie series of the 1940s) appeared in the best magazines of the day, and in Jack Boyle-written movies. He died, apparently in New York City, sometime around 1930. But "Boston Blackie's Mary" still lives.

JIM STERANKO revolutionized the graphic story field with his now-famous S.H.I.E.L.D. stories for Marvel Comics — which introduced a complexity of design and graphic storytelling unseen before, and helped create the modern graphic novel — and then he turned to book illustrations, ranging from The Shadow and Sherlock Holmes to Ray Bradbury and Harlan Ellison, with equally spectacular results. Now he has agreed to become a regular ARGOSY cover artist. "The Rebel," his dynamic cover painting this issue (which suggested the story by John Staib you'll find on page 23), is only the first. Steranko, brand new and brilliant, will be back next issue — and the issues after that. I know you'll want to be here for one of America's greatest illustrators.

GEORGE METZGER, creator of *Trucktn'* (as well as *Moondog*, the "Mal-ig" stories, and the famous graphic novel *Beyond Time and Again*) lived the life he wrote and drew about during America's social revolution of the '60s and '70s. "The Doll House," beginning on page 22, is a very different kind of tale. Or maybe it isn't...

EXPERIENCE IS LIFE itself. We value it above everything. And yet most of the stories in this issue have been "lost," some as long as fifty years — as though the classic films of the '30s and '40s had been lost, buried in a forgotten studio vault. We've not only lost the past, we've lost the emotions and thoughts and ideals of its people — we've lost experience that could help us build the future. Our "traditional" vision of tomorrow, built on the premise of a calamitous future that seems more unlikely with every passing day, has failed. Now we need all the resources of experience to take us into the 21st Century.

The illusion of the film critics of the '30s and '40s was that important experience had to *seem* important, too. Grim, even. Certainly not entertaining. There was no place for melodrama, and "King Kong," and "Gunga Din," and "Casablanca" were unimportant.

That's been the illusion of literary critics, too.

Time has proven the film critics wrong. I hope ARGOSY will prove the literary critics wrong, as well. But whether we publish a "lost" story that re-discovers the past, or print a brand-new story that re-discovers the future, I promise you we'll always be a magazine of entertainment.

— THE EDITOR

ARGO

NOVEL: Part One of Two

PHILIP WYLIE'S THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

He was six feet, two inches. He weighed 190 pounds. His hair was bronze, his eyes turquoise, his skin mahogany. His intelligence was trained far beyond any normal man's. His name was Henry Stone. He was the result of a fantastic experiment. He came to New York never having seen a woman, he came finding himself the owner of a great communications empire — never having read a newspaper through.

The story of what happens when the perfect man encounters the mad world of civilization, the modern girl, and the men who want to steal his birthright.

The lost novel that inspired Doc Savage.

Illustrated by D. BRUCE BERRY

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NOVELET

24 BOSTON BLACKIE'S MARY by JACK BOYLE

Illustrated by D. BRUCE BERRY

"A prison strait-jacket, fully tightened, shuts off blood circulation throughout the body almost completely. For the first five minutes oppressed breathing is the only inconvenience felt. Then the stagnating blood commences to cause the most excruciating torture — a thousand pains as if white-hot needles are being passed through the flesh. The feet and limbs swell and turn black, irresistible weights seem to be crushing the brain..."

Opium Addict...Strongarm Bandit...Convict — Jack Boyle wrote about the world he knew...

SHORT STORIES

8 THE REVERSIBLE REVOLUTIONS

by C. M. KORNBLUTH, writing as Cecil Corwin

Illustrated by GLEN MURAKAMI

"'I need your help,' said Miss McSweeney. 'It's a plot — a big one. A kind of revolution. You probably know more about them than I do, but this one seems to be the dirtiest trick that was ever contemplated.'"

A science fiction story by the author of The Syndic, *and "The Marching Morons."*

23 A HOT AFTERNOON by JOHN STAIB

"The man with the scar peered into the blazing Chihuahua sun at the empty street shimmering in the heat, his eyes returning again and again to the point where trail and horizon met." *A tale of Revolutionary Mexico...*

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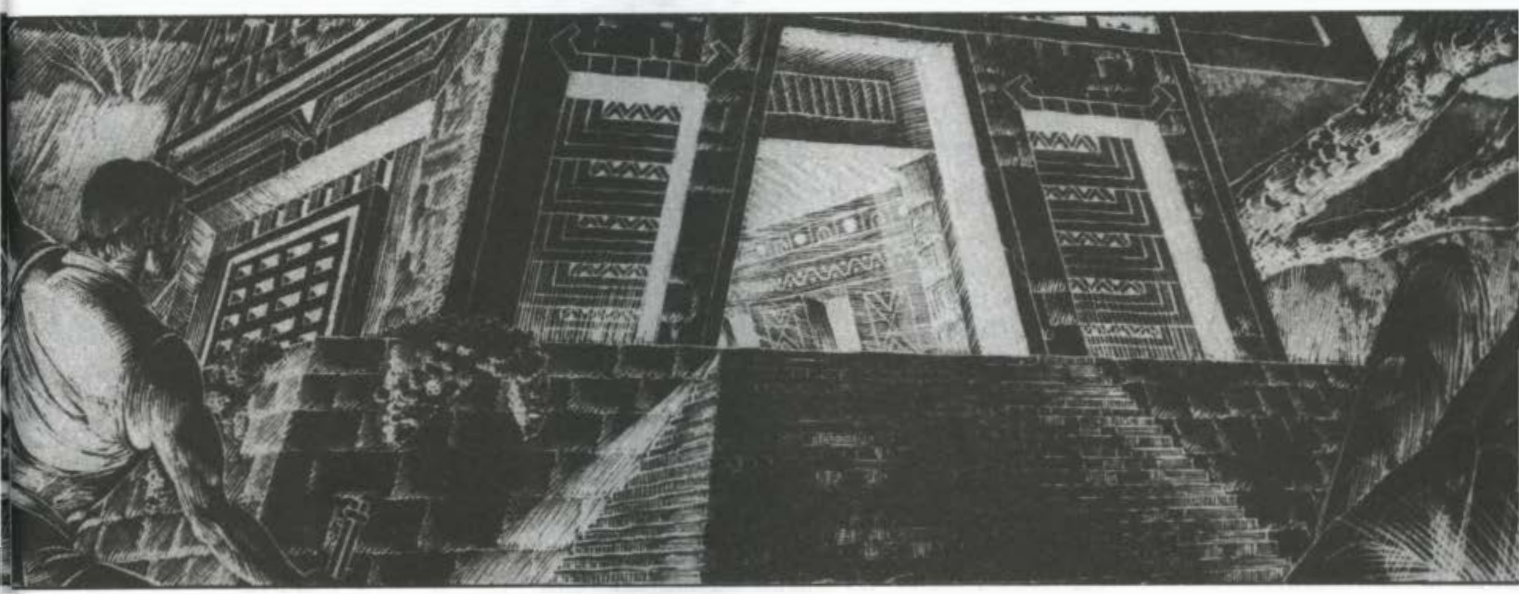
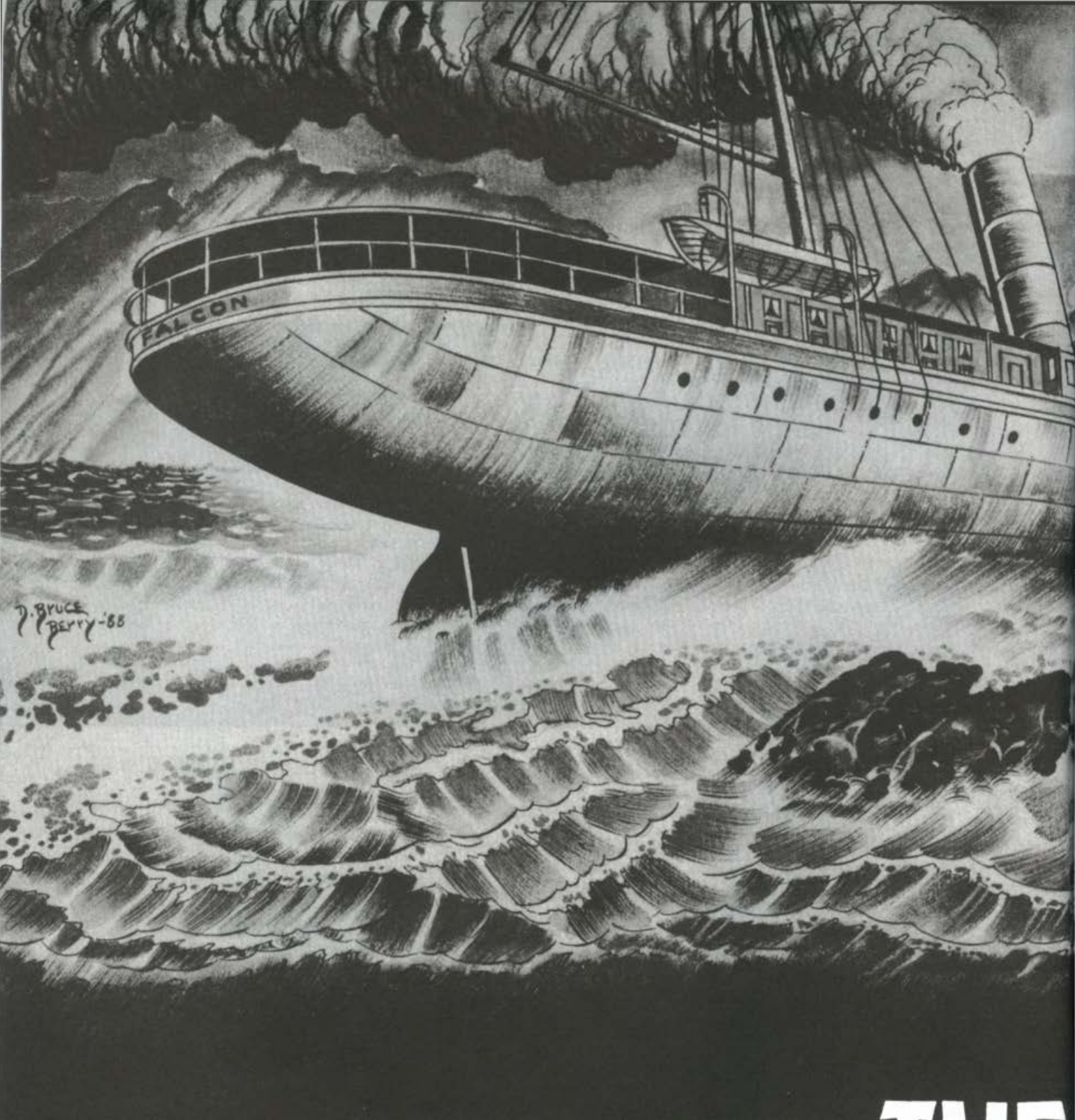


GRAPHIC STORY

THE THIRD DIMENSION

COVER: "The Rebel" by STERANKO

ARGOSY®, May 1990, Volume 3, Number 1. Published quarterly by Richard Kyle Publications, 242 East Third Street, Long Beach, California 90802. Single copy $4. Four issues (one year) $15. ARGOSY® is a registered trademark of Richard Kyle



PHILIP WYLIE'S THE

THE LOST NOVEL THAT INSPIRED DOC SAVAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY D. BRUCE BERRY

SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

PART ONE: THE EXPERIMENT

CHAPTER ONE

WITHIN THE TRIANGLE that is formed by Ceylon, Tasmania and Madagascar, on a pitch black night, shortly before the turn of the century, a steam yacht beat its way against the massive seas. It was a storm-worn vessel. The sails reefed close to its spars were dark and patched. Its

brasswork was not bright. Hot sun had blistered its paint, and salt water had stripped it away. Yet these ravages could not conceal the ship's jaunty lines or eradicate the impression of an original luxury — a luxury now being ignored for stern use.

It carried no lights, except the dim radiation on the hurricane bridge. The sharp bow lifted and plunged. The single screw beat the black water to foam, turned in the air, and bit again in fresh swirls of phosophorus-flecked froth.

The light on the bridge sharply illuminated a compass and was reflected upon the countenance of a man at the wheel.

He was a tall, hawk-like man. His face was seamed and tan, and the dim illumination glinted on eyes that were like jewels in dark pockets. He wore a heavy ulster and his chin jutted over his collar. He swung with the working of the ship but his stiffly planted feet did not budge. His hands were tight on the wheel. They were white and long-fingered; the man had a seeming of former luxury like that of the yacht.

Eight bells rang on a small ship's clock.

The man leaned forward and peered through the deck housing.

He saw nothing.

Then, abruptly, he began to see. He was looking at the mauled deck before he realized the fact. His horizon expanded with rapidity. The tumultuous scene became visible around him — long ranges of ominous mountains, white-capped and ponderously advancing, and a low-hanging sky that scudded darkly across the other half of his world.

The man's face was statuesque in the fantastic dawn. His lips were taut. His hair was a dark and rugged forest. In his rigidity he was the image of relentless and unshakable purpose.

He seemed not a man in thought, but one whose thoughts had become stonily transfixed, a man with a grim deed to do, a soldier shot through the heart and still moving forward.

Below decks, in a dim storeroom, a baby cried to the unanswering storm and struggled aimlessly with the rungs which kept it from being thrown to the floor.

A man in an oily cap dozed on a braced kitchen chair that that had been placed beside a pounding engine.

A giant Negro opened his eyes and rose, fully dressed. He tottered to the galley and began the difficult operation of preparing coffee.

There was no one else aboard the hell-bound vessel. Green water washed itself from the name on its stern.

It was the *"Falcon."* Its port was New York.

The man at the wheel moved his lips. He scrutinized the compass. His gaze was no longer introverted; with every rise of the bridge it scanned the horizon.

The Negro appeared, coffee in a metal bottle; he pulled the door shut against the wind.

"Morning, Mr. Stone."

The man nodded.

"Coffee."

The pilot took the bottle, held it for the Negro to uncork, and drank slowly.

"Mighty bad weather, sir."

"Yes, Jack."

That was all. The door opened again. Wind fanned through the enclosed bridge. The Negro fought his way back toward the galley. He went from there by a companionway to look at the baby. He stood over it for a while, shaking his head.

At eleven o'clock the wind died. A patch of blue appeared in the clouds and their color changed from purple-black to gray and white. At noon the sun shone.

Stone rang to the engine room and the man who had been there joined him.

"Take the wheel, Mr. McCobb."

The Scotchman complied. He bit his downturned pipe and glanced occasionally at his employer. Stone shot the sun and scrawled on a board.

"Five points east," he said.

At two he came up from a visit to the infant and took the wheel.

"You can go, Mr. McCobb."

An expanding of the lips that was not a smile came on Stone's face when he saw the island. It was, at first, little different from the waves on the remote water — the summit of a blue and vegetated hill. A lost, mist-hung oasis in the desert of the ocean.

The baby slept.

The Negro made sandwiches.

The Scot sat dully beside his engine.

From the sea the island emerged. It presented a narrow promontory, but the rise of hills inland indicated that it was of considerable extent. Immense evergreens grew upon it, interspersed with palms. Its coastline, which the *Falcon* presently skirted, was rocky and precipitous. The water around it was blue, brilliantly blue beneath a sun now hot and white.

Stone steered in shirt sleeves. His eyes followed the coast. He signalled for half speed.

In the engine room the Scotchman jumped at the jangle of the bells. Half speed meant — what? A caprice of the ship's master? Danger?

He did not think of land. In that latitude, no one thought of land.

Stone swung toward an indentation. When he seemed on the verge of colliding with the rocky shore, he swung again. The outbent greenery almost touched the decks of the yacht. In a moment a broad and long harbor opened before the entering vessel. It was a wild, natural, unpopulated expanse of water. A green bird came as an escort from the forest and sat upon the bulwarks.

The bell jangled for full speed. The *Falcon* gathered momentum and its course was toward a golden beach.

There was no expression in Stone's irrevocable eyes.

When he was five boat lengths from shore he summoned the engineer to the speaking tube.

"On deck, McCobb. We're going aground. You've only a few seconds."

The interval of plate glass water between ship and shore diminished.

When the *Falcon* hit, part of her bottom went out. Deep furrows of sand turned up on both sides of the bow. Stone was pressed against the wheel. The splintering crash shook boughs in the jungle and echoed from crystalline escarpments on the hills. The baby was thrust against the head of its padded crib and woke, crying. Steam began to issue from broken pipes with a velvety roar and water rushed into the boiler room.

McCobb had gained the deck in time to discover the yacht in full motion across an unexpected harbor. He saw the oncoming shore and braced himself.

After the shock, he lit his pipe and stared methodically at all parts of the unsalvagable wreck which had been the *Falcon*. Then he walked to the bridge.

Stone was gazing at the island, with his arms spread in exultation. The mold of his long mood had been scorched away. He was like a Crusader who stood at last before the walls of Jerusalem. McCobb regarded him attentively, breathlessly. He knew that the beaching of the *Falcon* represented the attainment of a goal for the ship's master.

But what goal?

Stone's lips moved. "We're here!"

The Scot found himself repeating dully, "Here?" Then he gripped himself. Everything was trance-like. The spell had been broken and yet its effect lingered. He cleared his throat and tapped his pipe on the ledge of a window.

"We're here, Mr. Stone, wherever here is. And we're here to stay. Stranded. I'm not a curious man by nature — but I think that since I'm mixed up in this — I should have an explanation. I trust you'll pardon plain speaking?"

McCobb calculated that his words would jolt Stone into his senses — unless they had been lost irretrievably. But the *Falcon*'s owner merely took his arm and led him to the open bridge.

The sun poured down on them and the island lay like jade on all sides of the wreck.

"It's beautiful," Stone whispered. "Beautiful, beautiful."

McCobb squinted his steel eyes. "It's pretty. And I can believe it's dangerous. These islands sometimes are."

Stone turned. His transfiguration departed somewhat. "Sorry, McCobb. My soul is overwrought. I'll explain — as much as I can explain."

At that moment they heard Jack's voice and, turning towards the stern, they saw him. He was clinging to the rail, his great arms knotty with muscular effort.

"Jack!" Stone called.

The giant presented a melancholy face. "We're dead, boss. We crossed to the promised land."

"Nonsense. We've run aground on an island. Talk to him, McCobb. I'm going to have a look at the baby."

The engineer went down to the deck. He stood beside Jack, and Jack seemed as tall again as he. "It's all right, Jack. We just hit shore here."

The big man shook his head. "I don' know," he said, "Mr. Stone must of been mighty restful to run into so much of something after going so long on so little of nothing." The ellipsis of the observation pleased Jack; he laughed involuntarily.

A smile came and went on McCobb's face. "At any rate, we're safe."

McCobb went below. Water had filled the coal bunkers, water had flooded the boiler room — water that would rise and fall with the tides, bringing corrosion and sand and sea urchins. The *Falcon* would never again move.

"It was this island...I realized that no other man on earth had seen this place."

The forward hatches were dry — or fairly so. The pens which contained the five goats that furnished milk for the baby, and the chickens which occasionally laid eggs for the crew of three, were intact. The goats blaaed, and the chickens cackled. McCobb wondered if they could smell the land.

He did not understand the deliberate smashing of the ship, but he had a feeling that he should understand it, that the clues to comprehension were in his possession. It was certainly more than a gesture, assuredly a plan. It explained why Stone had sailed from Aden with but two men aboard.

McCobb finished his survey. The sound of steam was dying. The danger of fire had passed. he returned to the bridge and opened a large book of charts. His eyes transferred the position Stone had marked on a small map to the general map of the Indian Ocean.

He located the island, roughly. Then he looked for trade routes. There was a route from Albany to Aden. One from Ceylon to Cape Town. One from Cape Town to Batavia. None came within two days' steaming of this remote speck of land. He had expected that. McCobb had followed marine engines through the seven seas for twenty years, and he would have heard of this isle if any man had heard of it, if any ship had been in the place, if there were a reason for a ship there or a hope that a ship might go that way.

There was a body of water as large as North America and a few vessels skirted its edges, but none penetrated the center. None.

Nothing.

He closed the book.

Stone came up to the bridge. he sat down. He was smoking a cigar. He could scarcely keep his eyes from the emerald wall outdoors.

"I see you've investigated our — isolation."

"I have."

"You find it — "

"Excessive," McCobb answered, and smiled ironically.

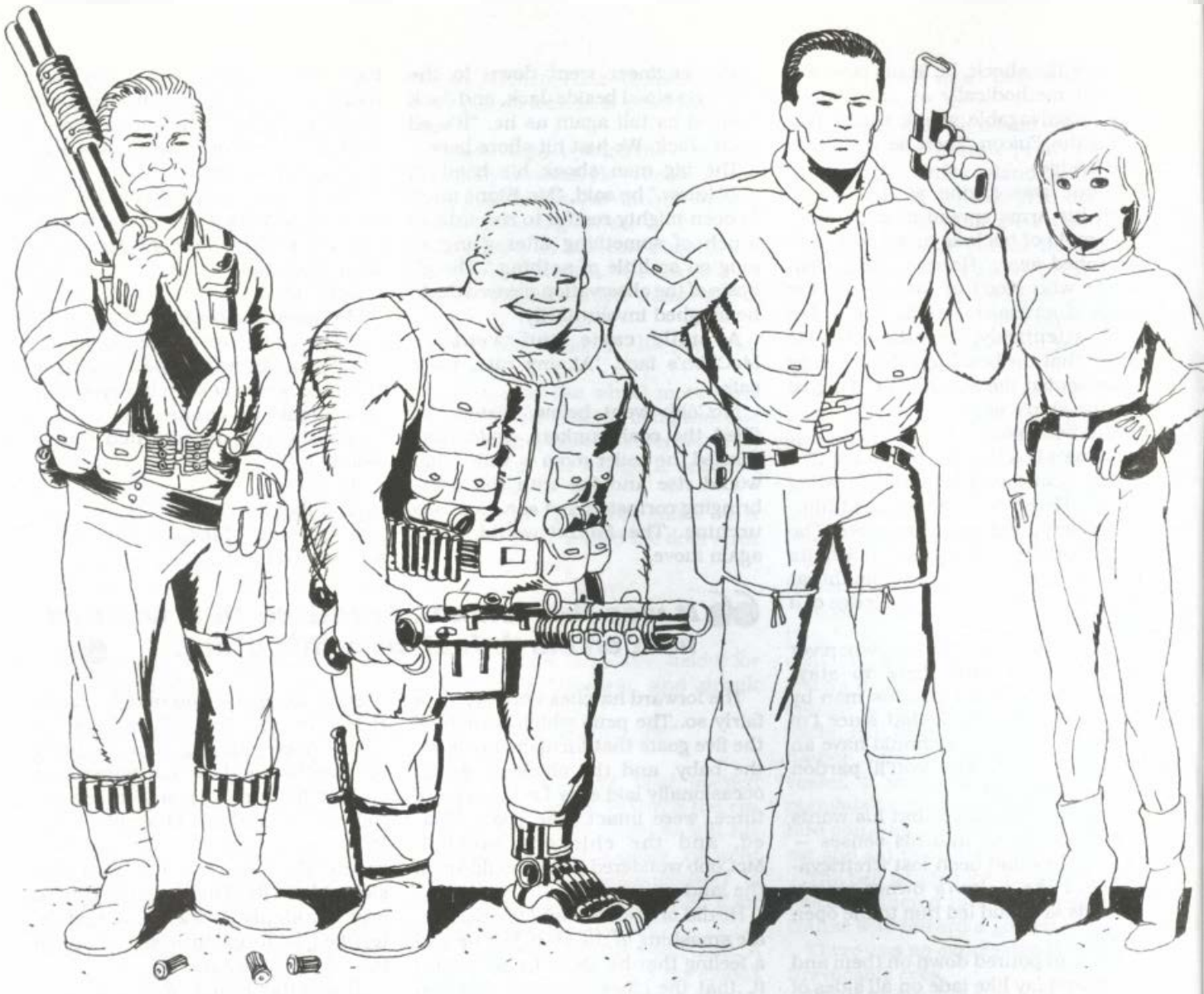
Stone laughed. "You're right. Quite right." he dropped ashes from his cigar. "A few years ago I took a party around the world. We cut across here — just for fun — just because we were all good sailors. One night I was at the wheel and there was no other watch. The moon was full. Everyone slept. I kept the *Falcon* on her course and suddenly I was shocked — terrified — to catch a shape out of the corner of my eye.

"It was this island. We passed it at a distance of less than a mile. I caught a glimpse of this wide bay through the opening. I saw the rocky hill yonder. And I was on the verge of waking everyone when something made me stop. I realized that no other man on earth had seen this place. I shared a knowledge of it with — the gods. So, instead of calling everyone, I put down the position accurately and I sailed on. I'd lost sight of it, dreaming, before I realized that my approach had been dangerous. There might have been reefs."

McCobb held a match to his pipe.

Stone continued in an enthralled voice. "The thing never left me. Year after year I thought of going back. I imagined myself wrecked there. I even amused myself by making lists of what I would require for a long stay there. Then — "

continued on page 20



He was Lt. J.C. Battle, Soldier of Fortune.

J.C. BATTLE, late of the Foreign Legion, Red Army, United States Marines, *Invincibles De Bolivia* and Coldstream Guards, alias Alexandre de Foma, Christopher Jukes, Burton Macaulyand Joseph Hagstrom— *nee* Etzel Bernstein— put up his hands.

"No tricks," warned the feminine voice. The ample muzzle of the gun in his back shifted slightly, seemingly from one hand to another. Battle felt his pockets being gone through. "Look out for the left hip," he volunteered. "That gat's on a hair-trigger."

"Thanks," said the feminine voice. He felt the little pencil-gun being gingerly removed. "Two Colts," said the voice admiringly, "A Police .38, three Mills grenades, pencil-gun, brass knuckles, truncheons of lead, leather and rubber, one stiletto, tear-gas gun, shells for same, prussic-acid hypo kit, thuggee's braided cord, sleeve-Derringer and a box of stink-bombs. Well, you walking armory? Is that all?"

"Quite," said Battle. "Am I being taken for a ride?" He looked up the dark street and saw nothing in the way of accomplices.

"Nope. I may decide to drop you here. But before you find out suppose you tell me how you got on my trail?" The gun jabbed viciously into his back. "Talk!" urged the feminine voice nastily.

"How *I* got on *your* trail?" exploded Battle. "Dear Lady, I can't see your face, but I assure you that I don't recognize your voice, that I'm not on anybody's trail, that I'm just a soldier of fortune resting up during a slack spell in the trade. And anyway, I don't knock off ladies. We— we have a kind of code."

"Yeah?" asked the voice skeptically. "Let's see your left wrist." Mutely Battle twitched up the cuff and displayed it. Aside froma coupleof scars it was fairly ordinary. "What now?" he asked.

"I'll let you know," said the voice. Battle's hand was twisted behind his back, and he felt a cold, stinging liquid running over the disputed wrist.

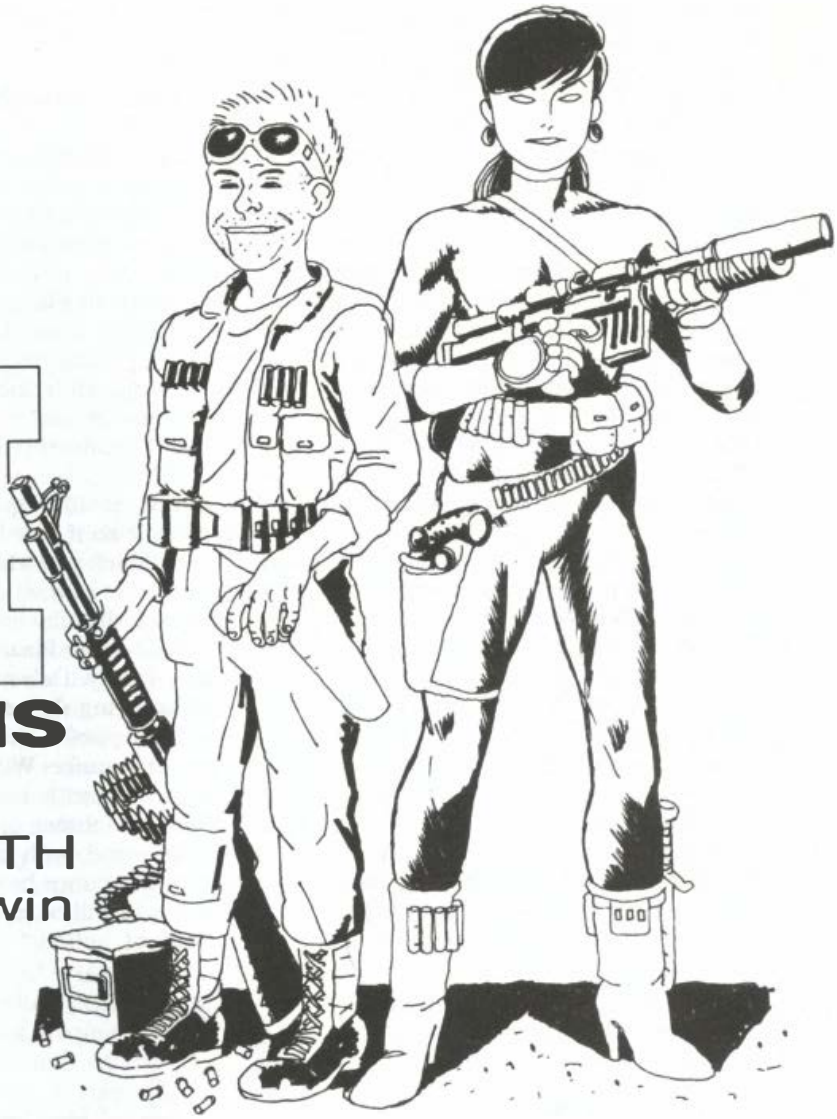
"What the—?" he began impatiently.

"Oh!" ejaculated the voice, aghast. "I'm sorry! I thought—" The gun relaxed and Battle turned. He could

The REVERSIBLE REVOLUTIONS

by C.M. KORNBLUTH
writing as Cecil Corwin

Illustrated by Glen Murakami



Her name was Spike — and she was made for him...

dimly see the girl in the light of the mercury lamp far down the deserted street. She appeared to be blushing. "Here I've gone and taken you apart," she complained, "and you're not even from Breen at all! Let me help you." She began picking up Battle's assorted weapons from the sidewalk where she had deposited them. He stowed them away as she handed them over.

"There," she said. "That must be the last of them."

"The hypo kit," he reminded her. She was holding it, unconsciously, in her left hand. He hefted the shoulder-holster under his coat and grunted. "That's better," he said.

"You must think I'm an awful silly," said the girl shyly.

Battle smiled generously as he caught sight of her face. "Not at all," he protested. "I've made the same mistake myself. Only I've not always caught myself in time to realize it." This with a tragic frown and a sigh.

"*Really?*" she breathed. "You must be awfully important—all these guns and things."

"Tools of the trade," he said noncommittally. "My card." He handed her a simple pasteboard bearing the crest of the U.S. Marines and the simple lettering:

"Lt. J.C. Battle
Soldier of Fortune—
Revolutions a Specialty"

She stared, almost breathless. "How wonderful!" she said.

"I never major insurrection for the past thirty years," he assured her complacently.

"That must make you—let's see—" she mused.

"Thirty years, did I say?" he quickly interposed. "I meant twenty. In case you were wondering, I'm just thirty-two years old."

"Then you were in your first at—"

"Twelve. Twelve and a half, really. Shall we go somewhere for a cup of coffee Miss—er—ah?"

"McSweeny," she said. And added demurely, "But my friends call me Spike."

"CHINA? DEAR me, yes! I was with the Eighth Route Army

during the celebrated Long Trek from Annam to Szechuan Province. And I shouldn't call it boasting to admit that without me— "

Miss Spike McSweeny appeared to be hanging on his every word. "Have you ever," she asked, "done any technical work?"

"Engineering? Lines of communication? Spike, we fighters leave that to the 'greaseballs' as they are called in most armies. I admit that I fly a combat fighter as well as the next— assuming that he's pretty good— but as far as the engine goes, I let that take care of itself. Why do you ask?"

"Lieutenant," she said earnestly, "I think I ought to tell you what all this messis about."

"Dear lady," he said gallantly, "the soldier does not question his orders."

"Anyway," said Miss McSweeney, "I need your help. It's a plot— a big one. A kind of revolution. You probably know more about them than I do, but this one seems to be the dirtiest trick that was ever contemplated."

"How big is it?" asked Battle, lighting a cigarette.

"Would you mind not smoking," asked the girl hastily, shrinking away from the flame. "Thanks. How big is it? World-scale. A world revolution. Not from the Right, not from the Left, but, as near as I can make out, from Above."

"How's that?" asked Battle, surprised.

"The leader is whatyou'd call a scientist-puritan, I guess. His name's Breen— Dr. Malachi Breen, formerly of every important university and lab in the world. And now he's got his own revolution all planned out. It's for a world without smoking, drinking, swearing, arguing, dancing, movies, music, rich foods, steam heat— all those things."

"Crackpot!" commented the Lieutenant.

She stared at him grimly. "You wouldn't think so if you knew him," said Spike. "I'll tell you what I know. I went to work for him as a stenographer. He has a dummy concern with offices in Rockefeller Plaza and a factory in New Jersey. He's supposed to be manufacturing Pot-o-Klutch, a device to hold pots on the stove in case of an earthquake. With that as a front he goes on with his planning. He's building machines of some kind in his plant— and with his science and his ambition once he springs his plans the world will be at his feet!"

"The field of action," said Battle thoughtfully, "would be New Jersey principally. Now you want me to break this insurrection?"

"Of course!" agonized the girl. "As soon as I found out what it really was I hurried to escape. But I knew I wasbeingfollowedby his creatures!"

"Exactly," said Battle. "Now what's in it for me?"

"I don't understand. You mean— "

"Money," said Battle. "The quartermaster's getting shorthanded. Say twenty thousand?"

The girl only stared. "I haven't any money," she finally gasped. "I thought— "

"You thought I'm a dilettante?" asked Battle. "Dear lady, my terms are fifty percentcash, remainderconditional on the success of the campaign. I'm sorry I can't help you— "

"Look out!" screamedthegirl. Battle spun around and ducked under the table as a bomb crashed through the window of the coffee shop and exploded in his face.

"OPEN YOUR eyes, damn you!" growled a voice.

"Stephen— the profanity— " objected another voice mildly.

"Sorry, doc. Wake, friend! The sun is high."

Battle came to with a start and saw a roast-beef face glowering into his. He felt for his weapons. They were all in place. "What can I do for your, gentlemen?" he asked.

"Ah," said the second voice gently. "Our convert is arisen. On your feet, Michael."

"My name is Battle," said the Lieutenant. "J.C. Battle. My card."

"Henceforth you shall be known as Michael, the Destroying Angel," said the second voice. "It's the same name, really."

Battle looked around him. He was in a kind of factory, dim and vacant except for himself and the two who had spoken. They wore pure white military uniforms; one was a tough boy, obviously. It hurt Battle to see how clumsily he carried his guns. The bulges were plainly obvious through his jacket and under his shoulder. The other either wore his more skillfully or wasn't heeled at all. That seemed likely, for his gentle blue eyes carried not a trace of violence, and his rumpled, pure white hair was scholarly and innocent.

"Will you introduce yourselves?" asked the Lieutenant calmly.

"Steve Haglund outta Chi," said the tough.

"Malachi Breen, manufacturer of Pot-o-Klutch and temporal director of Sweetness and Light, the new world revolution," said the old man.

"Ah," said Battle, sizing them up. "What happened to Miss McSweeney?" he asked abruptly, remembering.

"She is in good hands," said Breen. "Rest easy on her account, Michael. You have work to do."

"Like what?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Trigger work," said Haglund. "Can you shoot straight?"

In answer there roared out three flat crashes, and Battle stood with his smoking Police Special in his hand. As he reloaded he said, "Get yourself a new lathe, Doctor Breen. And if you'll look and see how close together the bullets were— "

The old man puttered over to Battle's target. "Extraordinary," he murmured. "A poker-chip would cover them." His air grew relatively brisk and businesslike. "How much do you want for the job?" he asked. "How about a controlling factor in the world of Sweetness and Light?"

Battle smiled slowly. "I *never* accept a proposition like that," he said. "Twenty thousand is my talkingpoint for all services over a six months' period."

"Done," said Breen promptly, counting out twenty bills from an antiquated wallet. Battle pocketed them without batting an eyelash. "Now," he said, "What's my job?"

"As you may know," said Breen, "Sweetness and Light is intended to bring into being a new world. Everybodywill be happy and absolute freedom will be the rule and not the exception. All carnal vice will be forbidden and peace will reign. Now there happens to be an enemy of this movement at large. he thinks he has, in fact, a rival movement. It is your job to convince him that there is no way but mine. And you are at absolute liberty to use any arguments you wish. Isthat clear?"

"Perfectly, sir," said Battle. "What's his name?"

"Lenninger Underbottam," said Breen grinding his teeth. "The most unprincipled faker that ever posed as a scientist and scholar throughoutthe long history of theworld. His allegedly rival movement is called 'Devil Take the Hindmost.' The world he wishes to bring into being would be one of the most revolting excesses— all compulsory, mark you! I consider it my duty to the future to blot him out!"

His rage boiled over into a string of expletives. Then, looking properly ashamed, he apologized. "Underbottam affects me strangely and horribly. I believe that if I were left alone with him I should— I, exponent of Sweetness and Light!— resort to violence. Anyway, Lieutenant, you will find him either in his offices in the Empire State Building where the rotter cowers under the alias of the Double-Action Kettlesnatcher ManufacturingCorporation, in his upstate plant where he is busy turning out not only weapons and defenses but his ridiculous Kettlesnatcher, a device to remove kettles from the stove in case of hurricane or typhoon."

Battle completed his notes and stowed away his memo book. "Thank you, sir," he said. "Where shall I deliver the body?"

"HELLO," WHISPERED a voice. "Spike!" Battle whispered back. "What are you doing here?" He jerked a thumb at the illuminated ground-glass of the door, and the legend "DoubleAction Kettlesnatcher Manufacturing Corp., Lenninger Underbottam, Pres."

"They told me where to find you."

"They?"

"Mr. Breen, of course. Who did you think?"

"But," expostulated the Lieutenant, "I thought you hated him and his movement?"

"Oh, that," said the girl casually. "It was just a whim. Are you going to knock him off?"

"You mean Underbottam? Yes. Do you want to watch?"

"Of course. But how did you get here?"

"Climbed one of the elevator shafts. The night-watchman never saw me. How did you make it?"

"I slugged the guard and used a service-lift. Let's go in."

Battle applied a clamp to the doorknob and wrenched it out like a turnip from muddy ground. The door swung open as his two Colts leaped into his hands. The fat man at the ornate desk rose with a cry of alarm and began to pump blood as Battle drilled him between the eyes.

"Okay. That's enough," said a voice. The Lieutenant's guns were snatched from his hands with a jerk that left them stinging, and he gaped in alarm as he saw, standing across theroom an exact duplicate of the bleeding corpse on the floor.

"You Battle?" asked the duplicate, who was holding a big, elaborate sort of radio tube in his hand.

"Yes," said the Lieutenant feebly. "My card— "

"Never mind that. Who's the dame?"

"Miss McSweeney. And you, sir, are— ?"

"I'm Underbottam, chief of Devil Take the Hindmost. You from Breen?"

"I was engaged by the doctor for a briefperiod," admitted Battle. "However, our services were terminated— "

"Liar," snapped Underbottam. "And if they weren't, they will be in a minute or two. Lamp this!" He rattled the radio tube, and from its grid leaped a fiery radiance that impinged momentarily on the still-bleeding thing that Battle had shot down. The thing was consumed in one awful blastof heat. "End of a robot," said Underbottam, shaking the tube again. The flame died down, and there was nothing left of the corpse but a little, fused lump of metal.

"Now. You going to work for me, Battle?"

"Why not?" shrugged the Lieutenant.

"Oke. Your duties are as follows: Get Breen. I don't care how you get him, but get him soon. That faker! He posed for twenty years as a scientist without ever being apprehended. Well, I'm going to do some apprehending that'll make all previous apprehending look like no apprehension at all. You with me?"

"Yes," said Battle, very much confused. "What's that thing you have?"

"Piggy-back heat-ray. You transpose the air in its path to an unstable isotope which tends to carry all energy as heat. Then you shoot your juice light, or whatever along the isotopic path and you burn whatever's on the receiving end. You

want a few?"

"No," said Battle. "I have my gats. What else have you got for offense and defense?"

Unberbottam opened a cabinet and proudly waved an arm. "Everything," he said. "Disintegrators, heat-rays, bombs of every type. And impenetrable shields of energy, massive and portable. What more do I need?"

"Just as I thought," mused the Lieutenant. "You've solved half the problem. How about tactics? Who's going to use your weapons?"

"Nothing to that," declaimed Underbottam airily. "I just announce that I have the perfect social system. My army will sweep all before it. Consider: Devil Take the Hindmost promises what every person wants—pleasure, pure and simple. Or vicious and complex, if necessary. Pleasure will be compulsory; people will be so busy being happy that they won't have time to fight or oppress or any of the other things that make the present world a caricature of a madhouse."

"What about hangovers?" unexpectedly asked Spike McSweeney.

Underbottam grunted. "My dear young lady," he said. "If you had a hangover, would you want to do anything except die? It's utterly automatic. Only puritans—damn them!—have time enough on their hands to make war. You see?"

"It sounds reasonable," confessed the girl.

"Now, Battle," said Underbottam. "What are your rates?"

"Twen—" began the Lieutenant automatically. Then, remembering the ease with which he had made his last twenty thousand he paused. "Thir—" he began again. "Forty thousand," he said firmly, holding out his hand.

"Right," said Underbottam busily, handing him two bills.

Battle scanned them hastily and stowed them away. "Come on," he said to Spike, "We have a job to do."

THE LIEUTENANT courteously showed Spike to a chair. "Sit down," he said firmly. "I'm going to unburden myself." Agitatedly Battle paced his room. "I don't know where in hell I'm at!" he yelled frantically.

"All my life I've been a soldier. I know military science backwards and forwards, but I'm damned if I can make head or tail of this bloody mess. Two scientists at each other's throat, me hired by both of them to knock off the other—and incidentally, where do you stand?" He glared at the girl.

"Me?" she asked mildly. "I just got into this by accident. Breen manufactured me originally, but I got out of order and gave you that fantastic story about me being a steno in his office—I can hardly believe it was me!"

"What do you mean, manufactured you?" demanded Battle.

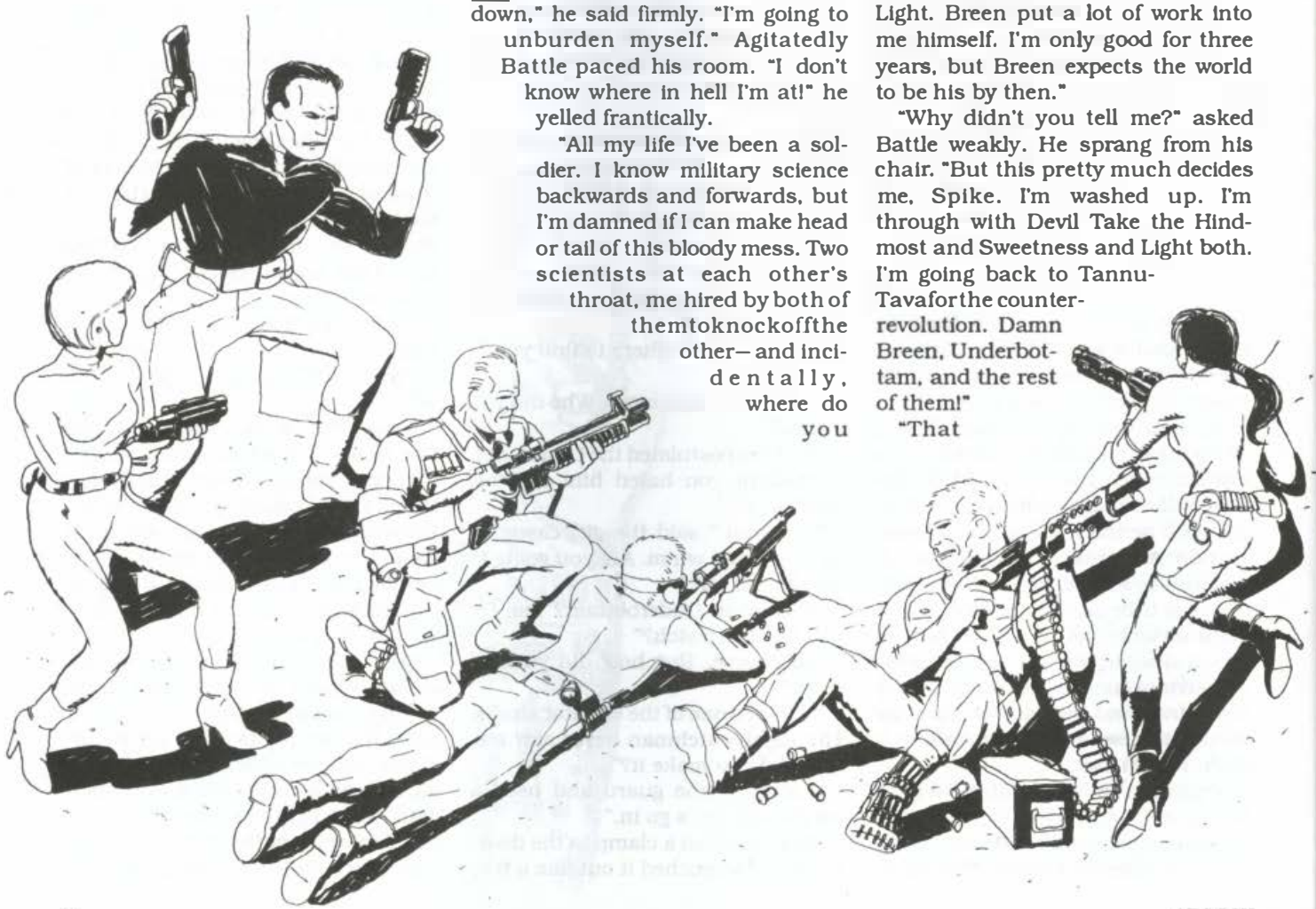
"I'm a robot, Lieutenant. Look." Calmly she took off her left arm and put it on again.

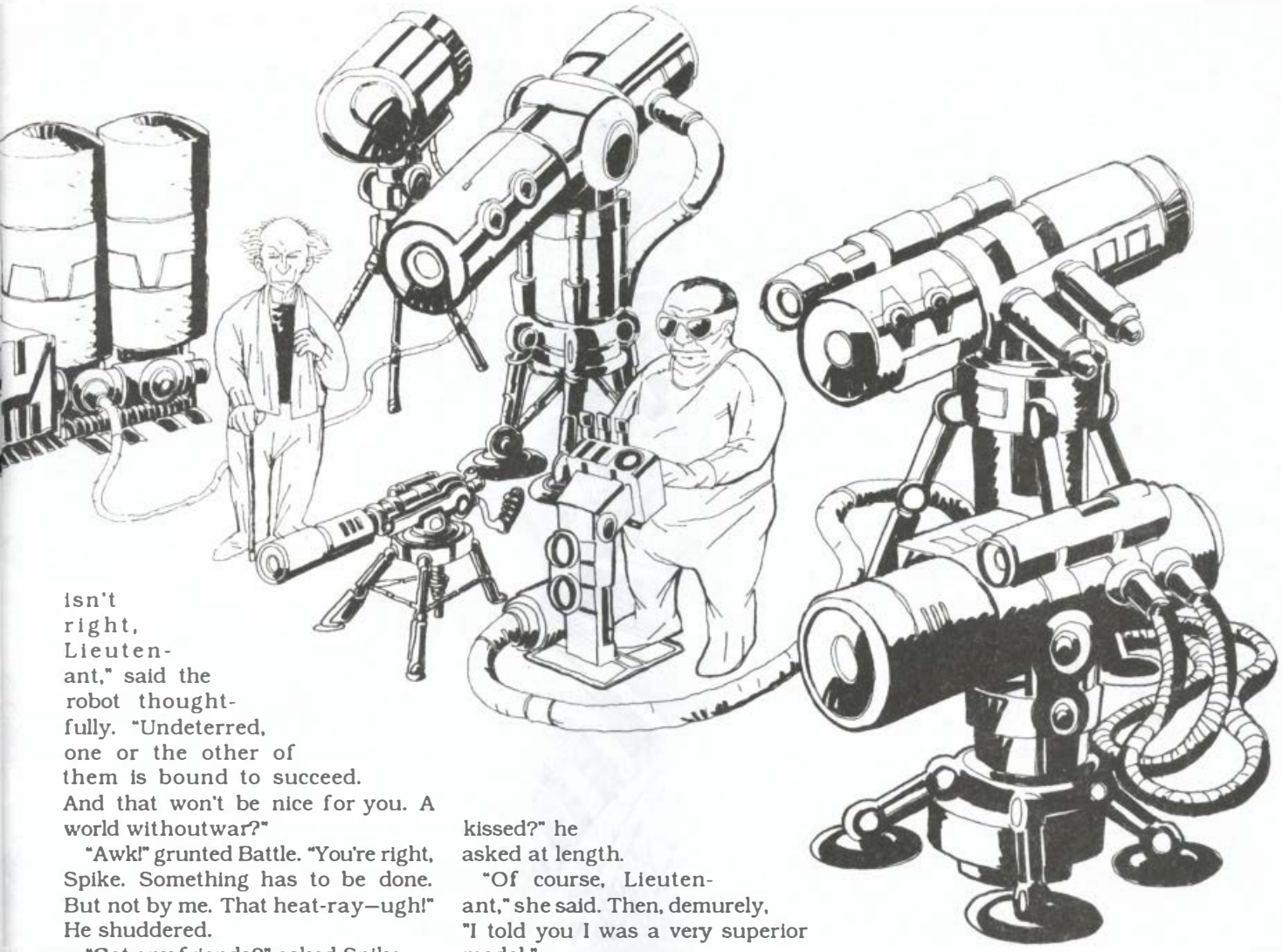
Battle collapsed in a chair. "Why didn't you tell me?" he groaned.

"You didn't ask me," she retorted with spirit. "And what's wrong with robots? I'm a very superior model, by the way—the Seduction Special, designed for diplomats, army-officers (that must be why I sought you out), and legislators. Part of Sweetness and Light. Breen put a lot of work into me himself. I'm only good for three years, but Breen expects the world to be his by then."

"Why didn't you tell me?" asked Battle weakly. He sprang from his chair. "But this pretty much decides me, Spike. I'm washed up. I'm through with Devil Take the Hindmost and Sweetness and Light both. I'm going back to Tannu-Tava for the counter-revolution. Damn Breen, Underbottam, and the rest of them!"

"That





isn't right, Lieutenant," said the robot thoughtfully. "Undeterred, one or the other of them is bound to succeed. And that won't be nice for you. A world withoutwar?"

"Awk!" grunted Battle. "You're right, Spike. Something has to be done. But not by me. That heat-ray—ugh!" He shuddered.

"Got any friends?" asked Spike.

"Yes," said Battle, looking at her hard. "How did you know?"

"I just guessed—" began the robot artlessly.

"No you didn't," grated the Lieutenant. "I was just going to mention them. Can you read minds?"

"Yes," said the robot in a small voice. "I was built that way. Governor Burly—faugh! It was a mess."

"And—and you know all about me ?" demanded Battle.

"Yes," she said. "I knowyou're forty-seven and not thirty-two. And I know you were busted from the marines. And I know your real name is—"

"That's enough," he said, white-faced.

"But," said the robot softly, "I love you anyway."

"What?" sputtered the Lieutenant.

"And I know you love me, too, even if I am—what I am."

Battle stared at her neat little body and her sweet little face. "Can you be kissed?" he asked at length.

"Of course, Lieutenant," she said. Then, demurely, "I told you I was a very superior model."

TO EXPECT A full meeting of the Sabre Club would be expect too much. In the memory of the oldest living member, Major Brueghel who had been to the Netherlands Empire what Clive and Warren Hastings had been to the British, two thirds—nearly—had been gathered from the far corners of the earth to observe the funeral services for a member who had been embroiled in a gang war and shot in the back. The then mayor of NewYork had been reelected for that reason.

At the present meeting, called by First Class Member Battle, about a quarterofthe membershipappeared.

There was Peasely, blooded in Tonkin, 1899. He had lost his left leg to the thigh with Kolchak in Siberia. Peasely was the bombardier of the Sabre Club. With his curious half-lobhe couldplace a Mills or a potato masher or nitro bottle on a dime.

Vaughan, he of the thick Yorkshire drawl, had had the unique honor of hopping on an axis submarine and cleaning it out with a Lewis gun from stem to stern, then, single-handed, piloting it to Liverpool torpedoing a German mine-layer on the way.

The little Espera had left a trail of bloody revolution through the whole of South America; he had a weakness for lost causes. It was worth his life to cross the Panama Canal; therefore he made it a point to do so punctually once a year. He never had his bullets removed. By latest tally three of his ninety-seven pounds were lead.

"When," demanded Peasely, fretfully, "is that lug going to show up? I had an appointment with a cabinetmaker for a new leg. Had to call it off for Battle's summons. Bloody shame—he doesn't give a hang for my anatomy."

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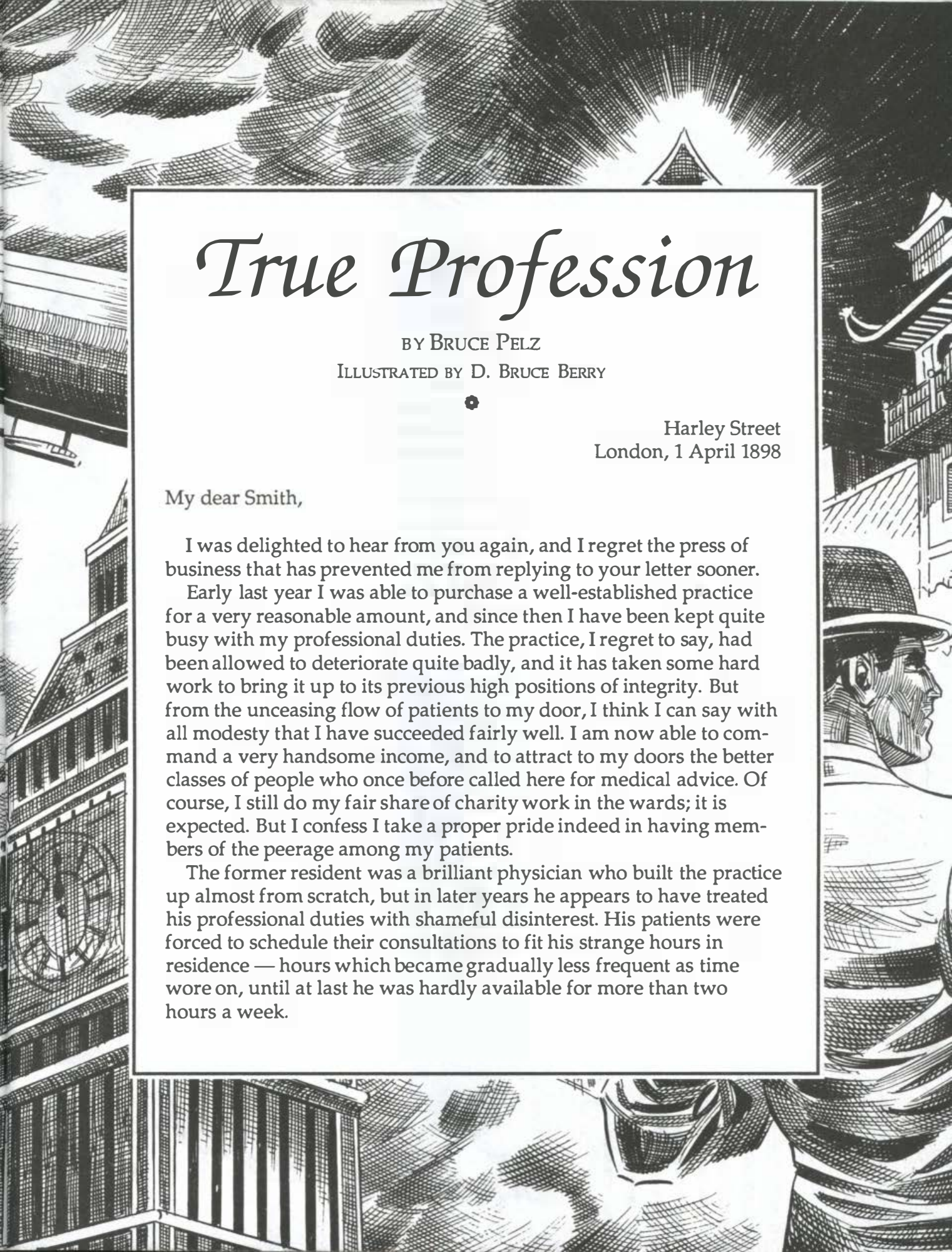


True Profession

BY BRUCE PELZ

ILLUSTRATED BY D. BRUCE BERRY

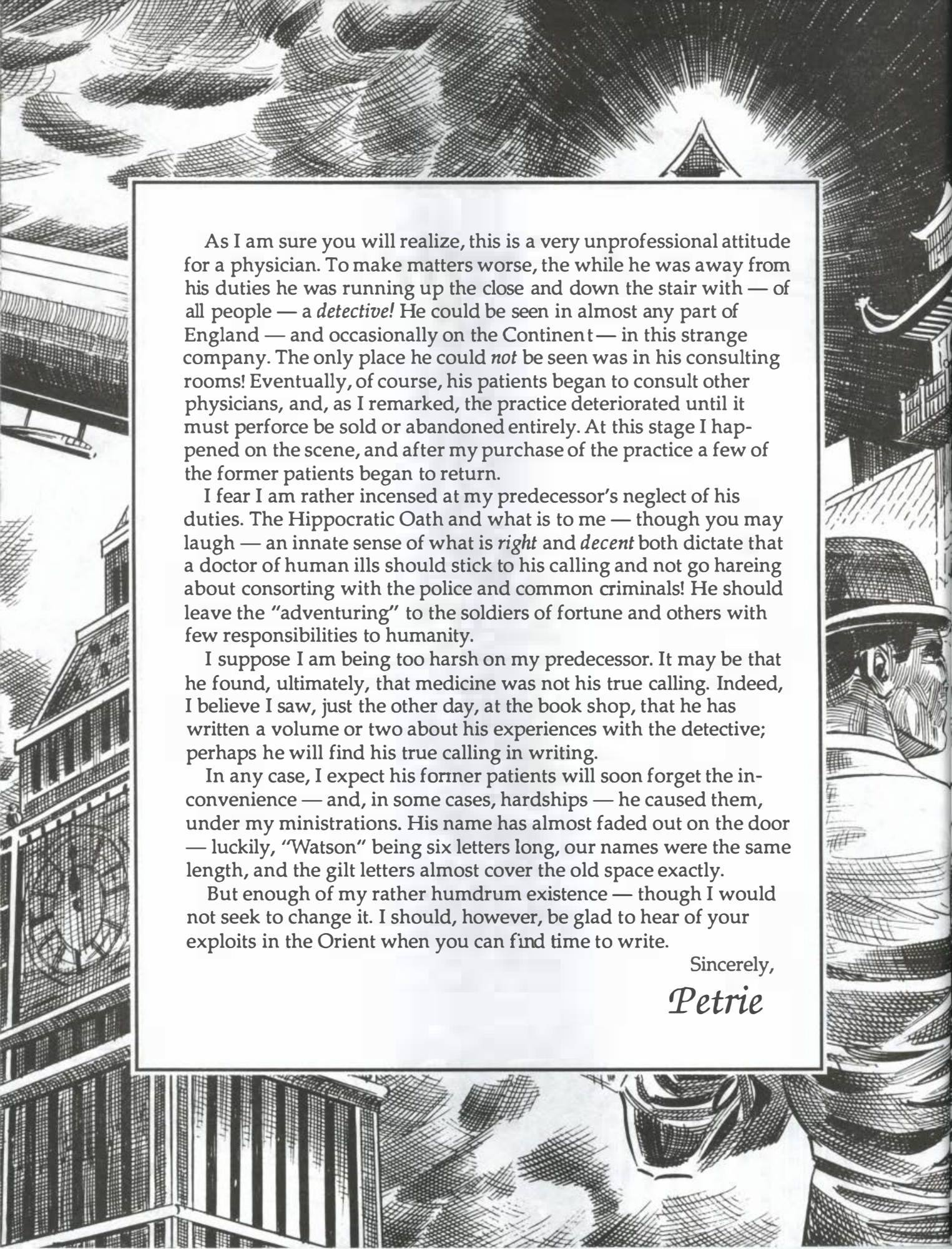
Harley Street
London, 1 April 1898

My dear Smith,

I was delighted to hear from you again, and I regret the press of business that has prevented me from replying to your letter sooner.

Early last year I was able to purchase a well-established practice for a very reasonable amount, and since then I have been kept quite busy with my professional duties. The practice, I regret to say, had been allowed to deteriorate quite badly, and it has taken some hard work to bring it up to its previous high positions of integrity. But from the unceasing flow of patients to my door, I think I can say with all modesty that I have succeeded fairly well. I am now able to command a very handsome income, and to attract to my doors the better classes of people who once before called here for medical advice. Of course, I still do my fair share of charity work in the wards; it is expected. But I confess I take a proper pride indeed in having members of the peerage among my patients.

The former resident was a brilliant physician who built the practice up almost from scratch, but in later years he appears to have treated his professional duties with shameful disinterest. His patients were forced to schedule their consultations to fit his strange hours in residence — hours which became gradually less frequent as time wore on, until at last he was hardly available for more than two hours a week.



As I am sure you will realize, this is a very unprofessional attitude for a physician. To make matters worse, the while he was away from his duties he was running up the close and down the stair with — of all people — a *detective!* He could be seen in almost any part of England — and occasionally on the Continent — in this strange company. The only place he could *not* be seen was in his consulting rooms! Eventually, of course, his patients began to consult other physicians, and, as I remarked, the practice deteriorated until it must perforce be sold or abandoned entirely. At this stage I happened on the scene, and after my purchase of the practice a few of the former patients began to return.

I fear I am rather incensed at my predecessor's neglect of his duties. The Hippocratic Oath and what is to me — though you may laugh — an innate sense of what is *right* and *decent* both dictate that a doctor of human ills should stick to his calling and not go hareing about consorting with the police and common criminals! He should leave the "adventuring" to the soldiers of fortune and others with few responsibilities to humanity.

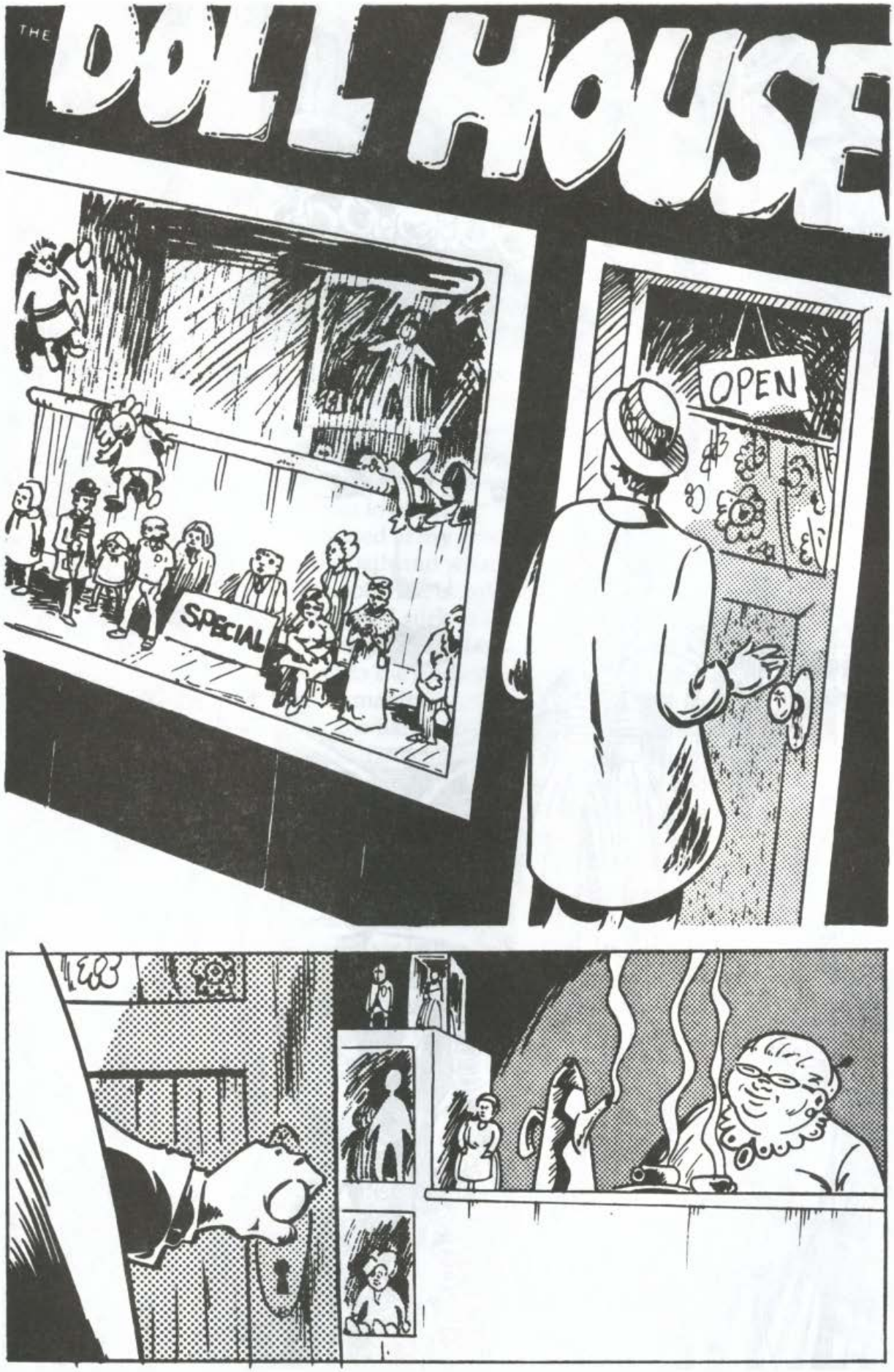
I suppose I am being too harsh on my predecessor. It may be that he found, ultimately, that medicine was not his true calling. Indeed, I believe I saw, just the other day, at the book shop, that he has written a volume or two about his experiences with the detective; perhaps he will find his true calling in writing.

In any case, I expect his former patients will soon forget the inconvenience — and, in some cases, hardships — he caused them, under my ministrations. His name has almost faded out on the door — luckily, "Watson" being six letters long, our names were the same length, and the gilt letters almost cover the old space exactly.

But enough of my rather humdrum existence — though I would not seek to change it. I should, however, be glad to hear of your exploits in the Orient when you can find time to write.

Sincerely,

Petrie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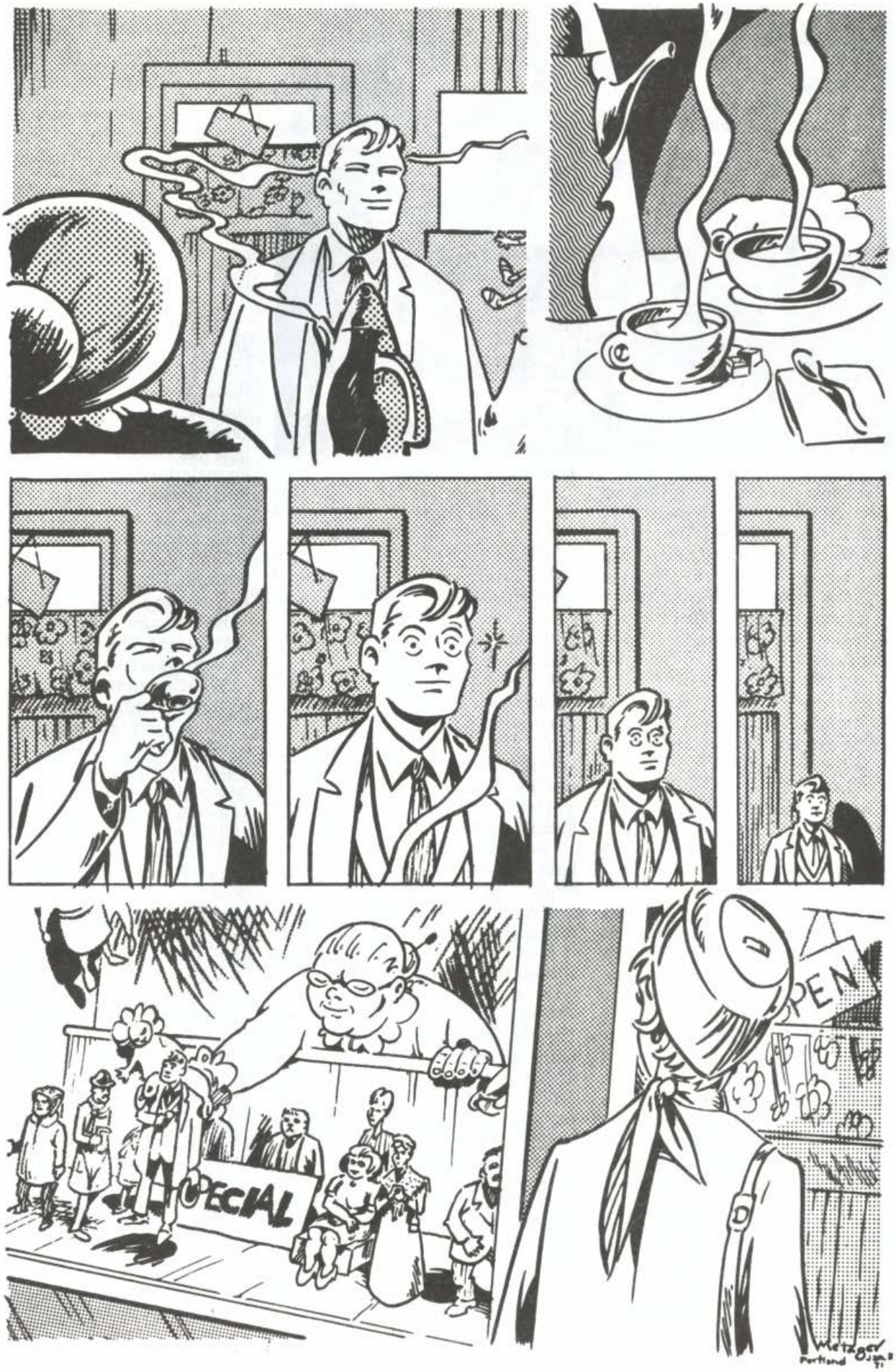
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THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

continued from page 7

"Then?"

Stone moved to the steps that led to the deck and looked away from McCobb. "You're a silent devil. How much do you know about me? I mean — aside from the fact that I own the New York *Morning Record?* That I own a string of banks? That I have a fine yacht? Know the right people? How much?"

"Very little, sir."

"Stone. We'll drop the 'sir' — you and I." He was quiet for a moment. Then he turned. "Did you know I was married?"

"I did."

"Did you know my wife's name?"

"Yes."

McCobb walked to the windows and stared out at the island. He knew that he would find the answer to the mystery of their arrival in the next few moments. He saw that Stone was distressed. He prompted in a low voice. "I was sitting at a café in Paris once, when she passed. Everyone stood and gaped. 'There goes Nellie Larsen,' they said. Her horses stopped to let an old woman cross. She sat there, pale as an angel. Blossoms from the horse-chestnut trees fell on her and stuck in her hair. Then she drove on. I remember her."

Stone's hands were clenched and white. "You remembered her. And so shall I. We were so happy, McCobb, that it could not last. Yes — it could. She went away."

McCobb murmured. He did not say words, but Stone was given to understand by the sound that McCobb knew about her going away.

"When I reached my house that day," he said hoarsely, "she was not there. I called up the stairs and I laughed. I thought she was out. Then — her maid — just — hinted. I went everywhere. I ran my horses to foam. I had a revolver. But she'd gone far and fast — with a man whose name shall never pass my lips.

"I was wild. The thought is still intolerable. I sat for a long stretch of alternating dark and light beside our son — ours no longer but only mine. I did not know what to do. I could not face my friends. If anyone had said 'too bad,' in those days, I would have killed that person.

"Suddenly I remembered this island. I knew, then. And I knew another thing — I knew that my son was going to be brought up to young manhood without the influence of women. Without the knowledge of women which they imbue in men. I knew. So I began to get ready."

Tears had scalded Stone's cheeks. The Scot was watching the green birds which had now come to the ship in numbers.

Stone checked his emotion. "When you signed that contract — you must have expected — something."

McCobb shrugged. "I did it with my eyes open."

"The last step — was beaching the *Falcon* here. We'll be here — a long time."

"A long time."

"You don't think anyone will find us, do you?"

McCobb smoked. "Someone might come tomorrow. No one will come, in all probability, for years. Years. Years."

"So I thought. It's going to be a glorious adventure, McCobb!"

"And arduous. And tedious."

"At any rate — there's no turning back." Stone stood up. "Now — for the island. We'll explore the shore here. It seems to rise a bit almost at once. Perhaps we can build very near."

"Build?"

"Build!" Stone took the engineer's arm. "A fine house with a stockade around it and a big cellar to store the things I have brought. A pen for the goats and one for the chickens. A garden, by and by. A sawmill and a little blacksmith shop. We won't want for materials. I have everything. This is no inadvertant and makeshift shipwreck. This is a planned arrival, a deliberate colonization. Come!"

Some of Stone's spirit infected McCobb. His square face lighted. "It may not be so bad," he said slowly.

Jack banged the dinner gong at that instant. The two men went side by side toward the salon.

"What about him?" McCobb asked as they walked.

Stone gestured with his hands. "Jack? I found Jack in a blind pig in Hampton Roads. He was drunk. He had a chair by the leg. There were two coppers on the floor and three still trying for him. He was laughing and yelling. I never saw such a splendid specimen. I said, 'Put that chair down, son.'" Stone chuckled and led McCobb into the salon ahead of himself. "He put it down. 'Come on,' I said. He grinned and sobered a bit. 'Yes, Boss,' he answered. It cost me two hundred dollars to square things. I saved him a nice stretch in the pen but — now — Jack's my man."

McCobb nodded. The floor of the salon was canted, but not so much that they could not sit down at the table. Jack came with a tray of food. He served them and then stood still. It was not like him. Both men were aware of his curiosity.

Stone looked at him. "Something on your mind, Jack?"

"No, boss."

"What is it?"

"How long are we going to be here, boss?"

"I don't know. A long time."

"Yes, boss."

"Years, maybe."

Jack chuckled. "That's a real long time. Yes, indeed. That's a right long time."

He departed, holding his tray over his head. When he returned with meat and potatoes he appeared to have reflected further. "I was thinking this was a bad accident, boss. Mighty bad. Can't clean out the water. Can't push her off. I was thinking — "

It was obvious that the recesses of Jack's subconscious were grappling with the possibility that the accident might have been deliberate. But he was incapable of realizing the fact of their position. A mere suspicion kept him agitated.

Stone allayed it. "Don't worry about the boat. It's no good now. We're going to build a house on shore and move there. I want you to watch the baby this afternoon. Don't leave the room at all. I'll give you a gun. We won't be far away. But we're going ashore to see what's what."

"Yes, boss."

CHAPTER TWO

STONE JUMPED down on the sand. McCobb followed. They crossed the beach. At the edge of the forest-jungle they looked back. The *Falcon* lay in the sand, her decks sloped and her funnel awry. They heard Jack's voice singing to the baby. McCobb shivered from a combination of sentiments he could not describe.

They rounded a screw palm, walked through a clump of ferns, and vanished. The trunks of ebony trees and tall evergreens rose around them. Through the trees ran nets of flowering vines. Moss hung from them and their lofty foliage blotted out the sun and held in a deep quiet. The silence, however, was more illusion than fact, for it was constantly pervaded by the hum of insects and the chirp and flutter of birds. A broad and brilliant butterfly settled on a waxy orchid.

Then, in their path, a mottled coil moved slowly and the head of a snake was raised. Stone fired at it. The coils threshed.

"That's a big one," McCobb said softly.

They watched it die. "Not as big as it might be," Stone answered. "It's a boa."

The ground rose in a miniature plateau over which the forest green was spread on mighty boles. On the western slope of the plateau they heard the sound of water and came upon a lusty brook which ran down toward the sea. Its water was clear and in a still pool they saw a swarm of multicolored fish.

Behind the plateau was thick brush. On the eastern side it fell way again to a tangle broken by huge boulders.

They went back to the top of the plateau. It was perhaps twenty acres in extent.

Stone regarded it. "This is the right place as far as winds are concerned. And it's not far from the *Falcon* — "

McCobb nodded. "So I was thinking. The small stuff by the brook will make a good stockade. We can cut a road to the beach and put corduroy on the sand. Then — maybe we could get the winch up here and rig a boiler."

"The winch?"

"Sure. We could use it to pull a sort of stone boat over our road. A railway to the ship. See what I mean?"

"By George!" Stone exclaimed.

"Afterward we could haul rocks from the brook with it. Rocks for a cellar and chimneys. If we can dig here — "

"If we can't dig, we can blast."

"So we can. It will take time."

"But it will be worth it." Stone stared up at the trees. In the distance a small band of what were presumably monkeys scurried and gibbered through the leaves. "If we took down about fifty trees — we'd have quite a clearing."

"And a view," the Scot added. In the presence of this prospect of creative work, his mind had become entirely objective. He paced through the shadows. "The cellar here. The chimneys there and there. You have cement? Good. And if you can saw — why — there's no limit to what we can do. We can build a private Taj Mahal. I imagine Jack is a kind of an engine in himself. It'll give us something to think about — in any event."

Stone nodded his head in affirmation. His expression, as he regarded McCobb, was one almost of relief. The engineer had admirably withstood the shock of his arrival on the island. Stone had considered other possibilities — the man might have been savagely angry, might even have turned murderous. He might have failed absolutely to comprehend the motives that led to the shipwreck. He might have been swept away by despair and proven helpless and useless.

Stone had not expected those things — he understood the men who went to sea and he understood also the temperment of the Scotch — but he was none the less freed of a burden.

They made their way back to the ship, moving warily and with distrust. They thought of the boa with every step. They thought of other things to which they later gave voice.

When they came on board, Jack sprang from below decks. He had discarded his gun and in his hand was a sinister knife.

Stone smiled. "Hello, Jack."

"You, boss?"

"See anything?"

"No, sir."

"Hear anything?"

"I hear lots of things in the woods. But I don't see anything."

"Good. You can get dinner, now. We're going to start to work this afternoon over on the island. We'll work two at a time. You and I or McCobb and I, or you and McCobb."

"Yes, boss."

"Baby asleep?"

"Yes, indeed. That's the sleepinest baby I ever saw. First he sleeps on one side. Then he wakes up and if you put him on the other he goes to sleep again. he can't seem to nothing but sleep."

"Good. It's going to be hard work."

Jack showed his teeth. He hesitated and then asked an oblique question. "I heard a shot — or maybe I didn't hear no shot."

"That was a shot."

"Trying out the guns?"

"Snake," Stone said.

Jack stiffened a little but his smile did not fade. "That's what I thought."

THE SETTING sun had brought a little wind from the sea. McCobb stood on the broken stern and sniffed it. He took out his tobacco and filled his pipe reluctantly. All afternoon he

had been plagued by the thought that soon he would cease smoking. He sighed.

His mind ran in a medley that was partly irregular because of fatigue and partly stirred by the variety of experiences he had undergone during the day. He thought about Stone's opinion of women. It must have been due to the fact that Stone had had very little experience with women. There was, McCobb's day-dream reminded him, a Malay girl who had worn a flower in her hair, and an Irish trollop in San Pedro, and a girl with devious eyes who had called to him on the streets of Buenos Aires. These women were all bad, but their badness had not affected him the way the flight of one woman had affected Stone.

He was too hard. Too idealistic. Too impetuous. Too much a man of brain and too little a man of honest passions. There was a girl here and a girl there, McCobb's senses whispered.

Now there would be no more girls.

No more.

He might die here. He discarded that thought. He had a certain faith in Stone's brain. That faith had increased during the afternoon when he had assisted in the unloading of the first, forward hatch. It had contained precisely what they would need to commence their siege for occupation of the island. Precisely. Nothing missing. Stone was a great organizer.

McCobb whispered pipe-smoke into the air and watched it make a personal cloud against the soft indigo of the harbor and the uplifted verdure of the island.

The hills were rank with growth. They had a luster. They were ominous and pregnant. They had been sitting there for thousands and thousands of years generating their own life. Now they were invaded. Now man had come there.

How big was the island? Three or four miles in diameter, perhaps. What lived on it? Insects, birds, monkeys, snakes. What else? Who knew? There came a coughing from the forest, and a dismal wail; McCobb's spine tingled. It grew dark.

STONE WAS in his quarters. He unlocked an immense book, dipped a pen, and began to write. His brow was lined and his fingers slowly traced long sentences.

"November 3rd, 1898. After leaving Aden, where I made the preparations already detailed here, I proceeded south and east to the island mentioned in a foregoing portion of the diary and, after a stormy passage, sighted it early this morning. The harbor I had previously glimpsed was deep and ended in a fairly precipitious beach upon which I ran the *Falcon* under a full head of steam."

He adjusted the oil lamp and continued. "My plan thus culminated, I hastened to explore the immediate shoreline, afterfinding thespiritsof my engineer to be good and the Negro's reaction puzzled but in no way overwhelmed. It — the shore — rose in a small hill which lent itself admirably for a bulding site, inasmuch as it is protected from the south and east by a small mountain and is surrounded by large trees.

"We have commenced unloading. The baby appears to be in fine health and sleeps most of the time under heavy mosquito bars. He has become quite accustomed to goat's milk and is both ruddy and fat. Sometimes I feel I have done him an injustice, but when I fasten my mind upon — " Stone halted a full minute before he filled the blank — "Nellie, I know that I am doing all — the only thing — that could be done under the circumstances. *The child must never be told our shipwreck here was intentional.* With expectations of future tranquility, with a zestful interest in the possibilities of our new home, with faith and hope, we commit ourselves to Providence."

Stone locked away the sententious words. Like almost every man of action, he was self-conscious and awkward when he wrote, and he had never furnished any other copy to his newspaper than an occasional heavy-handed editorial. It was policy and growth which had interested him. But now, he felt that it was essential to keep a certain record.

He went to sleep after a brief walk on deck — a walk which was punctuated by listenings, occasional frowns of perplexity and nods. He slept more steadily and more deeply than he had slept for many months.

A shout woke him.

His feet hit the floor. The baby whimpered in the basket that hung above his bunk.

The shout came again. It was Jack.

Stone was on the deck in an instant, the door shut behind him, a revolver in his hand.

"Go on," Jack yelled into the darkness. "Get out of here. We don' want you. Beat it!"

"What's up, Jack?"

"Ho — Jack!" McCobb's voice cut through the darkness.

They met amidships.

"It was a man," Jack said. Stone's heart stopped.

"Goon."

"That's all. A man. A big man with blue eyes. Hairy. I was lying in my bed looking at the stars and he came to the door. I grabs a butcher knife which happens to be under my pillow. 'Go 'way!' I says."

> ***"It was a man, Jack said. Stone's heart stopped."***

"I heard you," Stone muttered absently.

"He went. Plumb off the ship and as quiet as a cat."

"Are you sure it was a man?"

"Yes, boss. Leastwise it might of been a woman."

"Which way did it go?"

"In them woods where you're fixing to have a house."

McCobb and Stone stared into the murk.

"There was something mighty funny about that man," Jack said, almost to himself and in a trembling voice. "Something mighty funny. I seen it at the time, but now I can't recollect what it was."

Stone turned. His tone was hard. "Try to remember."

"I forget."

"Did it carry a spear?"

"No, boss."

"Did it walk on its hands and feet?"

"No, boss. It was a-standin' at the door."

"Did it have a top-knot? Or lips that stuck out? Or a hat on? Or

Continued on page 30

A HOT AFTERNOON

a story by JOHN STAIB

The thick adobe walls of the cantina stood at the west end of the square, overlooking the dusty road from the east. Within its cool darkness a man sat at the table near the doorway, a bottle of bourbon before him, a barely touched glass by his hand. He peered out into the blazing Chihuahua sun at the empty street shimmering in the heat, his eyes returning again and again to the point where trail and horizon met. The scar along his jaw was fresh.

After a time, a dot appeared against the yellow sky, and the man with the scar sat erect. First, the sombrero, then the bearded man, then the black horse. At the edge of the village, the rider's shoulders squared and the horse broke into a canter.

The man with the scar watched, following each studied turn of the rider's head, each puff of the black horse's hooves. His own horse, tethered in the shade of the cantina, whinnied.

When the rider dismounted before the cantina, and drew the saddle bags off the black horse, the man with the scar relaxed once more. He cocked his leg against a cane-backed chair weighted by a bandoleer of ammunition, and sipped from his glass for the first time since noon.

"Bartender!" called the bearded man, shaking dust from the saddle bags.

"He is not here," said the man with the scar. "There are no civilians left in Santiago de Olmeda." He took a glass from a pyramid on the adjoining table. "Please join me. There is an excellent bourbon from the North."

The bearded man's eyes were unmoving as he settled into a chair across the table and pulled the saddle bags close beside him.

"Yes," he said with care, "I am a soldier. And you—?"

The man with the scar glanced at the saddle bags. "I have a message for the general, as well."

The bearded man lounged back. He poured a drink. "A strong man, our general," he said, raising his glass. The man with the scar raised his own, and they drank.

"A strong man," said the man with the scar. "I am told that years back the Comanche Five Horses swore to take his scalp, and Lieutenant Andrade — as he was then — took the chief's, instead. It's said Five Horses walked with great confidence into his own trap."

The bearded man sipped and looked out into the burning daylight. "Until I saw your horse, my friend, I thought the village was deserted. And yet I was told the people were sympathetic to the general — "

"Civilians," said the man with the scar. "The men without livers, the women and children and horses and dogs — all left at sunrise. They fear a battle here, when the army arrives tonight — "

The bearded man laughed and drank and leaned back in his chair, cocking his leg up much like the man with the scar. "The rebels have no soldiers left — not after the battle at the river. They either died or ran!"

"Yes, many ran," said the man with the fresh scar. "Some retreated."

"There is nothing more beautiful than war," said the bearded man. "Beside it, the bullring is nothing. You enemies in flight, their blood swirling in the water like schools of tiny red fish, the madness of the horses — "

The man with the scar had reached into his shirt, and now he withdrew a small tooled leather case, and silently passed it over. It opened like a book, and as the bearded man gazed at the picture within, no muscle moved in his face.

"I speak only of a man's world, of course," he said, laying the closed leather case between them. "Very beautiful, especially the eyes, mirrors of the soul."

They sat for a time, silently.

"You have an assortment of cartridges," ventured the bearded man, nodding at the bandoleer.

"Some for my rifle, some my pistol, most to trade to others who might have cartridges I can use. You know how it is."

"I see five 44-40 rounds — "

"You are interested in 44-40s?"

"For my revolver, a fine Remington. But on my way here, I was set on by bandits and used all my ammunition."

The man with the scar leaned forward slightly. "You have no ammunition?"

"None."

"I could get three, four pesos a round when the soldiers arrive— "

"But can one soldier let another meet his chief unprepared? And I have extra 7mms." He motioned toward the rifle of the man with the scar.

After a time, the man nodded. They traded ammunition, the man with the scar watching as the bearded man loaded and holstered his pistol. The bearded man poured two drinks.

"To kindred spirits, my friend — and may matters of personal honor be settled when they do not conflict with duty," said the bearded man.

"But my honor and my duty do not conflict. Indeed, I requested this assignment," said the man with the scar, observing the bearded man's glass stop halfway to his lips. "This is now a rebel village. I am a rebel soldier. And you are a prisoner of war." For the first time, the man with the scar smiled. "If you choose."

The thick adobe walls absorbed the sound of the revolvers, and the man with the scar did not think the gunfire had passed beyond the village. The bearded man still moved on the earthen floor, his slow, heavy Remington fallen beside him. At last his body was silent, and the man with the scar holstered his own light Colt.

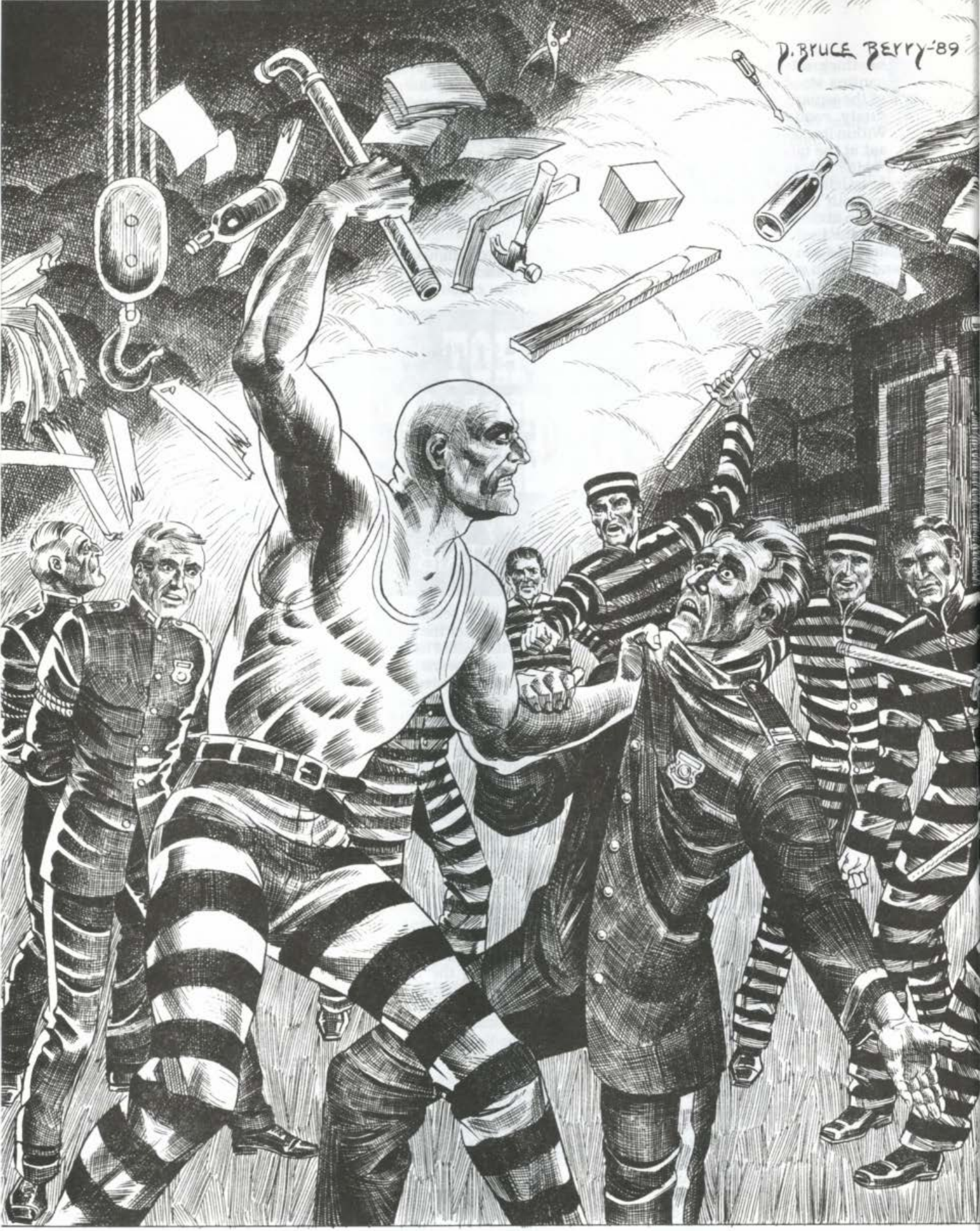
"Back to your posts, my friends," he said to the townsmen who had burst in, rifles ready, at the first sound of shots. "We have the dispatches. Now the general must find a village empty save for a single messenger."

He turned the body over and closed the unspeaking eyes and set the Remington in its holster. "Bury him with it."

"But my captain — "

It was late afternoon. Soon the drum of the army's hooves would be heard in Santiago de Olmeda. The man with the scar slung on his bandoleer and walked to the doorway. The horizon to the east was no longer visible, and after a while he turned away. There was much work yet to do.

"Let him keep his pistol. One soldier cannot let another meet his chief unprepared." ■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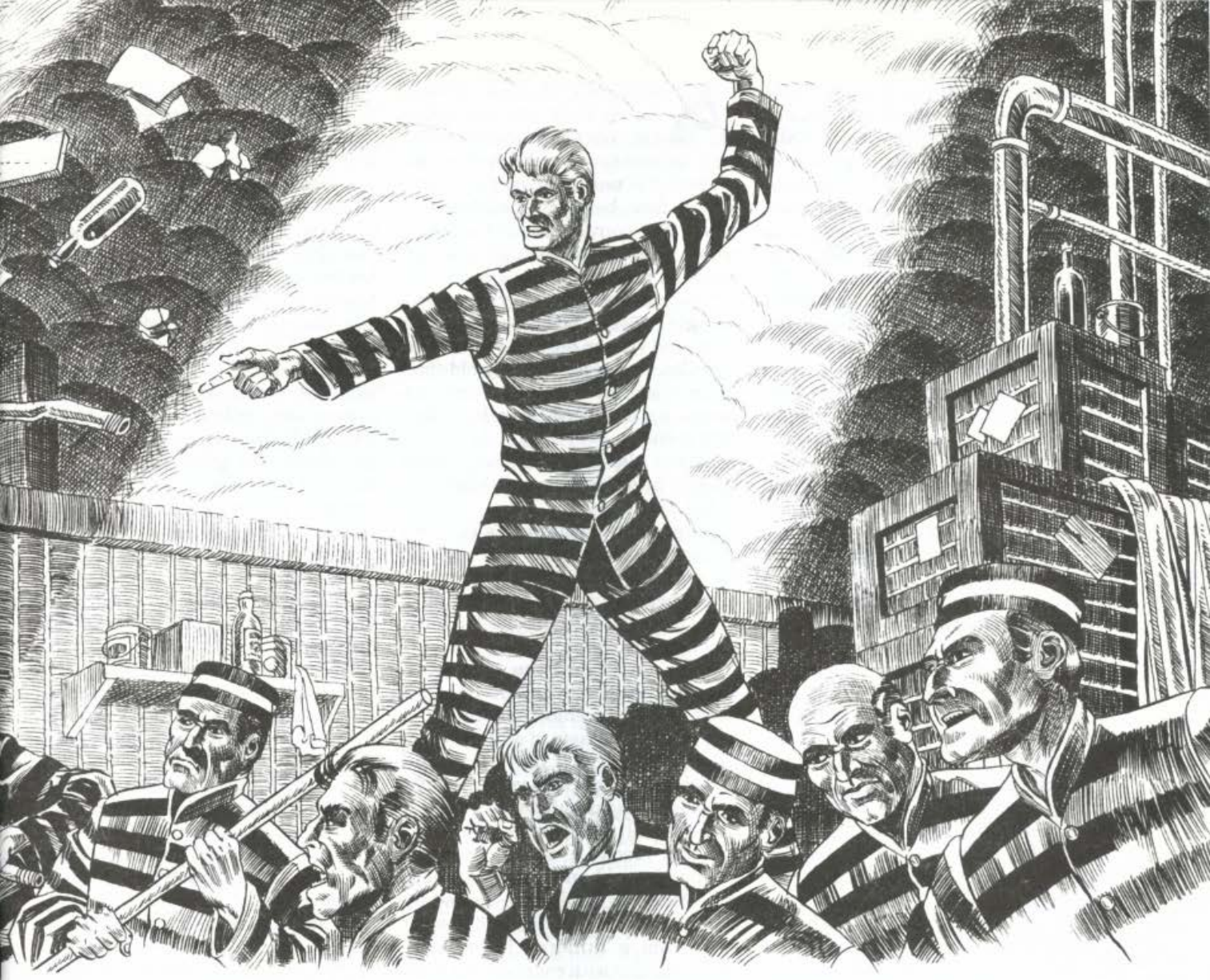

1917: Reporter...Opium Addict...Strongarm Bandit...Convict — Jack Boyle knew what he was talking about when he wrote...

BOSTON BLACKIE'S MARY

by Jack Boyle

THE GREAT JUTE-MILL of the San Gregorio penitentiary was called by the board of prison commissioners "a marvel of industrial efficiency." The thousand stripe-clad men who worked there— hopeless, revengeful bits of human flotsam wrecked on the sea of life by their own or society's blunders— called the mill "the T.B. factory"— "T.B." of course meaning "tuberculosis." Both were right.

The mill was in full operation. Hundreds of shuttles clanged swiftly back and forth across the loom-warps with a nerve-racking, deafening din. The jute-dust rose and fell, swelled and billowed, covering the floor, the walls, the looms and the men who worked before them. Blue-clad guards armed with heavy canes lounged and loitered through the long aisles between the machines that were turning out so rapidly hundreds of thousands of grain-sacks, destined some day to carry the State's harvest to the four corners of a bread-hungry world.

To the eye, everything in the mill was as usual. Every convict was in his place, feverishly busy, for each man's

ILLUSTRATED BY D. BRUCE BERRY

task was one hundred pounds of sackcloth a day, and none was ignorant of what happened in "Punishment Hall" to any who checked in short by even a single yard. Outwardly nothing seemed amiss, and yet the guards were restless and uneasy. They gripped their canes and vainly sought this new, invisible menace that all felt but none could either place or name. Instinctively they glanced through the windows to the top of the wall outside, where gun-guards paced with loaded rifles. The tension steadily increased as the morning dragged slowly away. Guards stopped each other, paused, talked, shook their heads perplexedly and moved on, doubly watchful. Something was wrong; but what?

If they could have read the brain of one man—a convict whose face as he bent over his loom bore the stamp of power, imagination, and the ability to command men—they would have known. They would have seen certain carefully chosen striped figures pause momentarily as they passed among the weavers delivering "cobs" for the shuttles. They would have guessed the message these men left—a message that would have been drowned in the roar of the machinery had it been shouted instead of spoken in the silent lip-language of the prison.

The word went out through the mill in ever-widening circles, leaving always in its wake new hope, new hatred and desperate determination. Those who received it first passed it on to others near them—others chosen after long study by the convict leader; for a single traitor could wreck the great scheme and bring upon all concerned punishment of a kind that the outside world sometimes reads about but seldom believes.

Trusted lieutenants, always approached on legitimate errands, reported back to their leader the acceptance of his plans by the hundred men selected for specific tasks in the first great *coup*. Each had been given detailed instructions and knew precisely what was required of him. Each, tense, alert and inspired by the desperate determination of their leader, awaited the signal which was to precipitate what all knew was truly a life-and-death struggle, with all the cards against them.

A CONVICT WITH a knife-scar across his cheek and sinister eyes agleam with excitement approached the loom at which worked the one man in the secret whose face betrayed nothing unusual. The convict emptied a can of "cobs" and spoke, though his lips made no perceptible movement.

"Everythin' sittin' pretty, Blackie," he said. "Every body knows wa't's doin' and w'at to do. Nobody backed out. Give the high-sign any old time you're ready, an' there'll be more mess round this old T.B. factory than she's ever seen.'

Boston Blackie, the leader, looked quickly into the eyes of his lieutenant.

"You told them all there's to be no killing?" he questioned with anxiety, for none knew better than he that bloodshed and murder ride hand in hand, usually, with the sudden mastery by serfs about to be unleashed.

"Told 'em all w'at you said, word fer word," replied the man, "though I don't get this no-blood scheme myself. Give 'em a taste of w'at they give us, fer mine. But I done what you told me. Let 'ergo, w'en you're ready!"

Boston Blackie, university graduate, student, safe-blower and international crook—a man honored in the underworld and feared by police from Maine to California—looked up and glanced around the mill. Covert eyes from a hundred looms were watching him with eager expectancy. The guards, sensing the culmination of the danger all had been seeking, involuntarily turned toward Blackie's too, and reading his eyes, started toward him on a run.

Instantly Boston Blackie leaped to the top of his loom, high above the sea of faces beneath him, and flung up both arms, the signal of revolt.

One convict seized the whistle-cord of the mill siren, and out over the peaceful California valley beyond the gray prison walls there echoed for miles the shrill scream of the whistle. Another convict threw off the power that turned the mill machinery. The looms stopped. The deafening noise within the mill ceased as if by magic.

THE GUARDS rushing toward Blackie with clubs aloft, were seized and disarmed in a second by squads of five convicts who acted with military precision and understanding. Ropes appeared suddenly from beneath striped blouses, and the blue-coated captives were bound, hands behind their backs. Two squads often ran through the mill armed with heavy wooden shuttles seized from looms, and herded to the rear scores of their fellows who, because of doubtful loyalty, had not been intrusted with the secret.

The guards' phones connecting with the executive offices from the prison were jerked from the walls, though there was none left free to use them. The great steel doors of the mill were flung shut and bars dropped into place on the inside, making them impregnable to anything less than artillery.

In three minutes the convicts were in complete control of the mill, barred from outside assault by steel doors and brick walls.

The gun-guards on the walls surrounding the mill-yard turned their rifles toward its walls but they held their fire, for there was no living thing at which to shoot.

Calmly, with arms folded, Boston Blackie still stood on his loom watching the quick, complete fruition of the plans that had cost him many sleepless hours on his hard cell-house bunk.

Of all the officers in the San Gregorio prison, Captain Denison, head of the mill-guards, was hated most. He was hated for his favoritism to pet "snitches"—informers who bought trivial privileges at usurer's cost to their fellows. He was despised for his cowardice, for he was a coward and the convicts instinctively recognized it. When he was found hiding behind a pile of rubbish in a dark corner of the mill and dragged, none too gently, into the circle of captive guards, a growl of satisfaction, wolfish in its hoarse, inarticulate menace, swelled through the throng that confronted him. What Captain Denison saw as he turned his ashen face toward them would have cowed a far braver man than he—and he fell on his knees and begged piteously for his life.

Boldness might have saved him; cowardice doomed him. As he sank to his knees mumbling inarticulate pleas, a convict with a wooden bludg-

eon in his hand leaped to his side and seized him by the throat.

"We've got you now, damn you," cried the volunteer executioner, called "Turkey" Burch because of the vivid-hued neck beneath his evil face. "Denison, if you've got a God, which I doubt, talk to Him now as you never will till you meet Him face to face. Pray, you dog, pray! Do you remember the night you sent me to the strait-jacket to please one of your rotten snitches? I told you when you laughed at my groans that some day I'd get you. Well, that day has come."

Burch stooped toward his victim, his lips curling back over his teeth hideously.

"In just sixty seconds," he snarled, "this club is going to put you where you've put many a one of us— underground."

The prostrate mill-captain tried to speak, but choked back his words. The convict's grip on his throat tightened like a vise. A roar of approval came from the stripe-clad mob. Some one leaped forward and kicked the kneeling form. Burch raised his club, swinging it abut his head for the death-blow. "Stop!"

The sharp command was spoken with authority. Involuntarily Burch hesitated and turned.

Boston Blackie sprang from his vantage-point on the loom and snatched the club from Burch's hand. He flung it on the floor and roughly shouldered his fellow-convict from the man he had saved.

"I said no blood, and that goes as it lays, Turkey," he said quietly but with finality.

The convicts, being human—erringly human but still human—screamed their protest as Blackie's intervention saved the man all hated with the deep hatred of real justification. Turkey Burch, encouraged by the savage protest from his mates, caught up his club.

"Get out of my way, Blackie," he cried. "That skunk on the floor has to die, and not even you are going to save him."

"Listen," said Blackie when the howl of approbation that followed his threat died down: "He's going out of this mill without a scratch. I planned and started this revolt, and I'm going to finish it my own way."

Burch was a leader among the men scarcely second in influence to Blackie himself. The blow Blackie had intercepted would have been compensation, to his inflamed mind, for years of grievances and many long hours of physical torture. He caught up his club again.

Boston Blackie seized an iron bar from a man beside him.

"All right," he said, standing aside from the kneeling Captain Denison. "Croak him whenever you're ready, Turkey, but when you kill him, I kill you. It's your move."

The two convicts faced each other, Blackie alert and determined, Burch sullen and in doubt. For the first time the crowd behind was stilled. Thirty tense seconds passed, in which life and death hung on balanced scales.

"Why don't you do something?" Blackie said to Burch with a smile. Then he threw his iron bar to the floor. "Boys," he continued, turning to the crowd, "I hate that thing on the floor there that's wearing a captain's uniform more than any of you. I didn't stop Burch from croaking him because he doesn't deserve it. I stopped him because if there is one drop of guard's blood shed here today, we convicts must lose this strike. If we keep our heads, we win. Now it's up to you. If you want to pay for that coward's blood with your own, Denison dies. But if he does, I quit you here and now. If you say so, he goes unharmed and we'll finish this business as we began it— right."

He turned unarmed to Burch, standing irresolute with his club.

"You're the first to vote, Turkey. What's the verdict?" he asked.

Burch hesitated in sudden uncertainty. Denison cowered on the floor with chattering teeth. Then the convict tossed aside his club and stepped away from his prisoner.

"You've run this business so far, Blackie," he said slowly, "and I guess it's up to us to let you finish it in your own way. If you say the dog must go free, free he goes, say I."

There was a chorus of approval from the convict mob.

"Fine," said Blackie. "I knew you boys had sense if I only gave you a chance to use it. Now we've work to do. The first thing is to boot our dear Captain out those doors, and I nominate Turkey Burch to do it."

Action always pleases a mob. Joyous approval greeted the suggestion. Denison was dragged to the doors. They were unbarred, and then, propelled by Turkey Burch's square-toed brogan, Captain Denison shot through and into the yard, where he was under the protecting rifles of the guards on the walls. One after another the captives were treated similarly.

"Take this message to Deputy Warden Sherwood," said Blackie as the last of the bound bluecoats stood ready to be kicked past the doors. "Tell him we control this mill. Tell him all this gun-guards and Gatling guns can't touch us in here. Tell him that unless within one hour he releases from Punishment Hall the ten men he sent there yesterday for protesting against the rotten food, we're going to tear down his five-million-dollar mill. We're going to wait just one hour, tell him, for his answer. Now go."

The man shot out. The doors were banged shut and barred behind him, while the mill resounded with the joyous shouts and songs of the convicts, hugging each other in the unrestrained abandonment what followed the first victory any of them had ever known over discipline.

Deputy Warden Martin Sherwood, disciplinarian and real head of the prison management, sat in his office gripping an unlighted cigar between his lips. The screaming siren had warned him of trouble in the mill. Wall-guards reporting over a dozen phones had told him all they knew—that the men had seized the mill and barred its doors against attack and were ejecting guards one by one.

"Any of them hurt?" Sherwood inquired.

"Apparently not, sir," the subordinate answered. "Their hands are tied, but they don't seem to be harmed. Captain Denison is out and on his way up to you."

"If Denison is out and unharmed, nobody needs a doctor," Sherwood said with a glint his eyes that just missed being disappointment. "If they had spilled any blood, his would have been first. Strange! Twenty men at the mercy of a thousand uncaged wolves, and nobody dead, eh? I wouldn't have believed it possible, and I thought I knew cons."

He turned and saw a nervous assistant buckling on a revolver.

"Take off that gun and get it outside the gates quick," he commanded. "Don't leave even a bean-shooter inside these walls. This is no ordinary riot. There's headwork behind this. It looks as if we might be in real trouble."

Deputy Warden Sherwood reached into his desk, struck a match and lighted his cigar. When Martin Sherwood lighted tobacco, he was pleased. The whole prison knew this habit. Among the convicts the sight of the deputy warden smoking invariably sent a silently-spoken warning from lip to lip.

"The old man's smoking. Be careful. Some one's going to hang in the sack (strait-jacket) tonight," they would say, and the prediction was seldom unfulfilled.

It was true that Martin Sherwood took grim, silent delight in inflicting punishment. He hated and despised convicts and took pleasure in making them cringe and beg under the iron rod of his discipline. Somewhere well back in his ancestry was a cross of Indian blood—a cross that revealed itself in coarse, coal-black hair, in teeth so white and strong and perfect they were all but repulsive, and lastly in the cruelties of Punishment Hall—cruelties that made San Gregorio known as "the toughest stir in the country."

There was a reason for this strange twist in the character of a man absolutely fearless and otherwise fair. Years before, he had brought a bride to his home just outside the prison walls. She was pretty and young and weak—just the sort of girl the attraction of opposites would send to a man like Martin Sherwood. There were a few months of happiness during which Sherwood sometimes was seen to smile even among the convicts.

Then came the crash. A convict employed as a servant in the deputy's home completed his sentence and was released. With him went the Deputy's wife, leaving behind a note that none but the deserted husband ever saw. He never revealed by word or look the wound that festered in his heart, but from that day he was a man as unfeeling as iron—a man who hated convicts and rejoiced in their hatred of him. Punishment Hall, when he could use its tortures with justice, became his instrument of revenge.

This perhaps explains why Martin Sherwood sat in his office calmly smoking a cigar when Captain Denison, white and shaken, rushed in and tumbled into a chair. His superior read in a glance the story of the scene in the mill.

"They might as well have killed you in the mill as to send you here to die of fright in my office," the Deputy said with such biting sarcasm that Denison, terror-stricken as he was, flushed.

A few quick, incisive questions brought out the facts about the revolt. "Deputy, there is serious trouble ahead," Denison warned in conclusion. "These cons have a leader they obey like a regiment of soldiers. He is—"

"Boston Blackie, of course," interrupted Sherwood. "There isn't a man down there who could have planned and executed a plot like this but Blackie. I should have known better than to put him where he could come in contact with the men."

The guard who had been given the convict leader's ultimatum to the deputy warden rushed in.

"He says he wants the men out of Punishment Hall and your promise of better food from now on, or he'll tear the mill down in an hour," the man reported.

The Deputy Warden tossed away his cigar and stepped out into the courtyard, bright with a thousand blossoms of the California spring.

"Sends an ultimatum to me, does he?" he repeated softly to himself. "He's a man with real nerve and brains. There is no way for me to reach the men while they're inside the mill. I must get them out and up here in this yard where the Gatlings and rifle-guards will have a chance. And then I'll break Mr. Boston Blackie and the rest of them in the jacket—one by one."

His eyes gleamed as he thought. He turned to the men in his office.

"I'm going down to the mill," he said. "Have a Gatling gun ready in each of the four towers that cover this yard—ready but out of sight, do you understand?"

"Down to the mill?" cried Denison in amazement. "Deputy, you don't realize the spirit of that mob. You won't live five minutes. They will murder you as surely as you put yourself in their power. Don't go."

"If I am not back in half an hour, your prediction will have been fulfilled," Sherwood said. He took his pocket-knife and a roll of bills from his pocket and locked them in his desk. "If I am not back in half an hour, Denison, call the Warden at his club in San Francisco, tell him what has happened and that they got me. Say my last word was for him to call on the Governor for a regiment of militia as quickly as he can get it here. But for the next half-hour do nothing except get your nerve back—if you can."

Sherwood pulled a straw from a whisk-broom on his desk, stuck in between his teeth, from which his lips curled back until the abnormally long incisors were revealed, and started for the mill-yard as calmly as though he were going to a luncheon.

White-faced guards at the last gate tried to stay him. The uproar from within the mill was deafening. Songs, curses and cries of frenzied exultation came from behind the steel-barred doors.

"Open the gates," commanded Sherwood. "Lock them behind me and don't reopen them again even if you think it's to save my life."

Still holding the straw clenched between his teeth, the Deputy crossed the yard, neither hurrying nor hesitating. Nothing in his face or demeanor gave the slightest indication that he knew he was delivering himself, unarmed, into the power of a thousand crazy men, every one of whom had reason to hate him with that sort of undying hatred that grows from wrongs unavenged and long-suppressed.

Sherwood hammered on the door with his fist. The clamor inside suddenly died.

"Open the door, boys," he commanded. "I'm coming in to talk to you. I'm alone and unarmed."

The man on guard at the door raised the iron wicket and looked out.

"It's the Deputy," he whispered. "He's alone, too. Once we get him inside!" The man sank his teeth into his lip until blood streamed across

his chin. Primeval savagery, hidden only skin-deep in any man, reverts to the surface hideously among such men in such an hour.

With hands trembling with eagerness, the convict unbarred the door, and Martin Sherwood stepped quickly in and faced the mob.

For five seconds that seemed an hour there was dead silence. It was broken by an inarticulate, unhuman, menacing roar of rage that rose to a scream as the men realized the completeness of their power over the man who to them was the living embodiment of the law which denied them everything that makes live livable.

A man in the rear of the mob thrust aside his fellows, rushed at the Deputy and spat in his face. As calmly as though he were in his own office, Sherwood drew out his handkerchief and wiped his cheek, but never for an instant did his eyes waver from the inflamed ones of the men he faced. His teeth, whiter and more animal-like than ever, it seemed, gleamed like a wolf's fangs as he chewed at the straw between them.

"I'll remember that, Kelly, the next time I get you in the jacket," he said slowly to the man who had spat upon him. The convict laughed, but pressed backward, cowed against his will by the fearless assurance of his antagonist.

Boston Blackie was in the rear of the mill when the sudden silence warned him of new developments at the front door. Forcing his way through the crowd, he was within ten feet of the Deputy Warden before he saw him. The striped leader's face paled as he recognized Sherwood—paled with fear not of him but for him. If the official were killed, as there was every probability he would be, he knew it meant the gallows for himself and a score of the men behind him. He had risked everything on his ability to prevent bloodshed. The lives of all of them depended on the safety of the hated autocrat who stood before him calmly chewing a broom-straw in the midst of hundreds of men hungering for his life.

Blackie caught the Deputy Warden by the shoulder and turned him toward the door.

"Go," he said. "Get out before they kill you."

Sherwood threw off his hand.

"You may be able to command this convict rabble, Blackie," he said in a voice perfectly audible in the new silence which had fallen on the mob, "but you can't command me. I came to talk to these men, and I'm going to do it."

From somewhere in the rear came a metal weight which missed Sherwood's head by inches and crashed against the door behind him. The screaming blood-cry rose again. One struck at the Deputy's head with a shuttle, but Blackie, quicker in eye and hand, hit first and laid the man senseless at his feet. Then he jumped to the top of the loom.

"Men, if you want to hang," he cried, his voice rising even above the bedlam about him, "I'll go along with you, if you'll listen to me first."

The outcry died down for a moment, and Blackie talked to them. He made no pleas, asked no favors. He told them their situation and his plan to attain the ends for which they had revolted—the release of the prisoners in Punishment Hall and better food for themselves. He pointed out the futility of the hope of escape, ringed about as they were by Gatling guns and rifles in a score of watch-towers, even if they could force the walls as one suggested. Gradually, by sheer force of mind, he dominated the crowd; and when at last he called on them to follow him to the end, their cheer was that of soldiers to a recognized leader.

All through this harangue Sherwood stood listening, his face as inexpressive as the walls behind him.

"Deputy," said Blackie, turning to him, "we have been told you said you would keep the men in Punishment Hall in the strait-jacket until they die, if necessary, to find out who smuggled out the letter complaining about the rotten food. Is that true?"

"It is," said Sherwood, who never lied.

"We make three demands, then," said Blackie: "first, the release of all the men undergoing punishment; second, your promise that no man concerned in this revolt shall be punished; third, your guarantee that henceforth we get the food for which the State pays but which the commissary-captain steals."

"And if I refuse, what then?" asked Sherwood.

"At noon we will destroy the mill."

"Boys," said the Deputy, "I have listened to your spokesman. You know I can't grant your demands without consulting the Warden, who is in San Francisco. I will do this, however. I will declare a half-holiday. It is almost dinner-time. Come over to the upper yard, have your dinner as usual and we'll all watch a ball-game in the afternoon. Before night I will give you your answer."

With the thought of the Gatling guns and rifles that covered the upper yard in his mind, Sherwood smiled grimly. The men cheered and made a rush in the direction of the doors, thinking the victory won.

"Wait," cried Blackie, barring the way with uplifted arms. "Nobody is going to stir out of this mill until you, Mr. Sherwood, have given us a definite promise all our demands are granted. You would like enough to get us into the upper yard away from these protecting walls and where we couldn't do a dollar's worth of damage, but we're not going. When the men in Punishment Hall are free and you, who have never been known to lie, have told us we'll be fed right and no one harmed or punished now or in the future for this morning's work, we'll go into the upper yard—not before."

"Boys," said the Deputy, still hoping to urge the man into the trap, "do as I suggest. Why should you let this man"—contemptuously indicating Blackie—"order you around. He's only a con like yourselves. Come on up to the yard, and I'll issue an extra ration of tobacco all round. Are you going to go along with me or stay here with him?"

"We'll stay," answered Blackie for the men. "It's no use, Deputy; the game doesn't work this time."

A shout from the men proved Sherwood's defeat. He wasn't a man to delay or lament over a beaten hand.

"You're quite a general, Blackie," said the Deputy slowly, a flicker of admiration in his eyes. "I'll give you an answer in fifteen minutes. But"—he looked straight into Boston Blackie's eyes with steely determination—"don't think you are always going to have all the cards as you have today. The next time you and I clash, I'm going to break you like this."

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THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

continued from page 22

clothes? Or a feather in its hair?"

Jack shook his head. Surprise had routed his memory. "I can't say what it had, but what it had was mighty funny."

"Something people don't usually have?"

Jack's eyes rolled whitely in the starlight.

"Something I ain't never seen on no pusson before. But I can't recall. It come quick-like an' it went quicker when it seen that there knife that was lying accidentally under my pillow."

"Never mind the knife. Go back, Jack, and try to sleep. Keep your door shut. If it comes again, shoot. Don't fool around with a knife."

"I ain't much on guns, I — "

"You shoot."

"Yes, boss."

Stone and McCobb went toward the bow of the stranded *Falcon*. Stone's silhouette towered over the shadow of his engineer, even as Jack towered above Stone.

"I hadn't given much thought to savages," Stone admitted.

McCobb's voice reflected his temper. "I hadn't given any."

"Of course it's possible."

"And then — Jack may have been mistaken."

There was a pause. Stone ended it. "Anyhow — he saw something."

"No doubt of that."

"Perhaps we better have a watch. You become so accustomed to security on a ship that you forget your vulnerability when you're aground."

"I'll watch first."

"Right."

McCobb lit his pipe. His hands were as steady as a rock.

Stone hesitated before he re-entered his cabin. "By the way — I noticed you smoked and I brought along a big supply of tobacco in air-tight tins. Besides that — there's some seed — so you don't need to stint yourself."

"Thanks," McCobb said, in quick and suppressed tone. The door closed. "Thanks," the Scot repeated, and sat down with his rifle across his knees. It passed through his mind that there were worse things than being lost at the bottom of the globe with Stephen Stone.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOREST on the plateau had been opened so that a vast square of it was illuminated by the sun. Around the edges of the square was a stockade with two gates. One gate led toward the brook and one made a pasage for the road that ran to the beach a hundred yards away. The top of the stockade was strung with five strands of barbed wire.

Smoke unfolded itself softly from the chimney of the boiler that fed steam to the winch, which puffed and rattled under the manipulations of Stephen Stone. A taut cable was reeled in slowly and it brought over the rough road a sort of sled on which was piled gear from the hatches of the *Falcon*.

When the sled had entered the stockade, Stone shut the gate and began to unload it.

He was naked to the waist. His trousers were stuffed in leather boots. His shoulders were tanned by the sun. When he lifted, his muscles rose and undulated on his body. A more powerful spectacle was presented by Jack, however. Under his brown skin, as he raised stones up on the chimney scaffold, a torrent of oiled strength bulged and slid. He grinned and sometimes sang as he worked.

The baby sat in its basket in the shade of a small bush. Around the basket was a screen. A similar protection had been made for the chickens, and the goats sunned themselves beneath a steel unloading net.

There was a rifle within reach of each man. They had revolvers in their belts. A box of ammunition lay open on the cement foundations of the house. It was obvious that they did not trust their new environment — although they had been working in it for four weeks and no untoward incident had occurred.

"I'll take that big flat one," McCobb called from his perch on the chimney.

"This one?" Jack asked.

Jack lifted the stone. McCobb scraped up a trowel full of cement and slapped it against the rock. He fidgeted it in place, put on more cement, and turned toward Stone.

"I can get along without Jack now, for a while."

"Right. We'll drag the sled back and get another load."

The corral gate opened and closed. McCobb slapped at a purple fly which had landed on his neck. He, alone, wore a shirt. He began to whistle and when the baby made a sound he talked to it.

The steam winch had been invaluable. It acted as elevator, railroad, wagon, plow, stone carrier, and log mover. It pulled whatever was needed into the stockade.

Next, McCobb thought, looking at the walled cellar which rose to sturdy foundations and the two tall chimneys, they would start the saw and cut wood. Two-by-fours for studding. Inch thick boards for walls inside and out. Soon after that they would have a house. A big house, with five rooms and a porch. With a view of the bay. A house that had been painted — he had seen the paint come upon the sled — two barrels of it.

It would be a rather fine place to live.

On the *Falcon* Stone dropped into the hold, rolled a keg to the sling, and gave word to Jack who hoisted it on a block and tackle, swung it outboard, and dropped it on to the sled.

Jack sang. Stone found himself whistling.

When the load was complete, they walked back to the stockade. McCobb came down from the chimney scaffold to let them in. The winch rattled again. Jack lifted stones. The scene was not much different from any construction — save for the richness of the foliage in the background, the firearms, and the rough logs and poles which made the scaffold on which McCobb worked.

Late in the afternoon Stone went out alone. A small boat was moored beside the *Falcon*. There was a larger craft, equipped with sails, still on the davits, but that was reserved for a later day.

Stone pushed off the small boat and rowed some distance out on the bay. His eyes constantly searched the shore line as he moved through the water. He saw nothing.

After he had satisfied himself that he was far enough off shore he took a jointed rod from beneath his seat, set it up, strung it with a line, affixed a reel and baited it with an artificial lure. He propped the pole in the stern, let outline, and began to troll slowly.

He had rowed perhaps a dozen strokes when the pole bent, the line cut water and the reel screamed.

He grabbed his tackle. Stone had caught salmon in New Brunswick and tarpon in the Gulf. What he had now was in no way inferior to those fish.

It made a long, determined rush. He slowed it with his thumb and the boat began to move in answer to the pull. The fish gave up, after a fairly long run and broke water three times. It was large and slender, silver-backed with rose splotches. He could see it plainly the third time and while he was wondering about its identity it went under the boat.

He whipped his pole around the stern. His only thought was to save his tackle. He realized that he should have brought stronger weapons to the conquest of an unfished bay. For five minutes he resisted an attempt of the fish to get into the open sea. Then came the surrender. It was compromised when he reached down to pull it from the water by a last rush, but in another minute he had it aboard.

He rowed back, still watching the shore. He tied the skiff. He walked with the fish and his rifle to the stockade. he had been gone just twenty minutes.

McCobb shouted from the chimney. "Luck already?"

Stone felt a stirring of pride that supplemented the elation he had known while the conflict was in progress.

"Something for supper." He slammed the gate.

McCobb whistled. "Something indeed."

Jack took the fish. He grinned. "That'll taste mighty good."

The Scotchman counted out loud. "Let's see. There were the ducks. And the grouse — or whatever they were. And the oysters. The clams and the turtle. That fish makes the sixth natural contribution to our larder — in the way of meat. If you include the fruit — "

Stone nodded. "Not so bad, eh? And when we get a garden going. Peas and beans and carrots and beets and potatoes and almost anything else you can name." He turned to Jack. "You go down and fix the fish. I think if you stuff a midsection with bread and onions and roast it — "

"Yes, boss. Got to milk first."

They watched him enter the goat pen. Jack's relations with the three dams and the two rams were the relations of a man to his equals. He had names for all five. Miss Susie. Linda. Clara. Little Joe and Snake Eyes. Snake Eyes had once butted him rather forcefully, and the talk he gave to the goat, the anxiety and grief he expressed, had kept Stone and McCobb in silent mirth for a whole evening.

Milk rang on the side of his shining pail.

McCobb and Stone continued with their work. When Jack had gone they chuckled, and looked at each other.

It passed through their minds simultaneously that they were forming an intense friendship. There was no need to talk about it — no need to talk about anything except the casual points of conversation, which made hard work, day by day, into a sort of pleasure.

In another four weeks the sawmill was voicing its nasal menace to the forest. Planks emerged from the spinning disc like cake slices. Log after log of hardwood gave itself up. The two-by-fours were already in place, forming the skeleton of the house, with holes where the doors and windows were to be and a geometrical slant of roof. Window glass and ready-made frames had been brought from the *Falcon*.

The baby sat in his basket in the shade. The goats were about their continual experiments with the local vegetation and grass. The chickens laid regularly.

In January, McCobb began to lay flooring. In February, he finished the outside sheathing. In March, they had lined the inside with vertical boards. The boards on the exterior ran horizontally and overlapped, like clapboards. The work once again became diversified.

Jack thatched with palm leaves over the wooden roof. Stone fitted the bunks from the *Falcon* into the three bedrooms. McCobb painted.

Before long, the entire contents of the yacht would have been transferred to the house. In the cellar were forty large copper drums which had been filled with materials they would need in years ahead and from which the air had been exhausted. In the cellar also was a vast supply of wines and spirits. A smaller building of stone housed the tools in use. The library of the *Falcon* had been transferred to the large general room. It was an enormous library, noteworthy for the completeness of its reference works and educational volumes as well as for its absolute lack of fiction in any form. Also they had moved a vast stock of drugs and medicines.

There was a multitude of unpacked boxes and crates and barrels, the contents of which would be revealed at some less busy time.

The *Falcon* was beginning to show more than her emptiness. All the glass had been taken from her bridge. The ports would follow when they moved. Brass railing was gone and the hardware from many of the doors and windows. In due time, stripped to the bone, she would become nothing more than a reservoir of metal —

a mine, a source of supply. The gear would go first, then the canted funnel, then the parts of the engine.

For a time the dismantlement of the ship had depressed McCobb, even though he knew it would be impossible to float her, hopeless to try to repair her. But gradually his interest was transferred from the ship to the house. He knew that when the house was in order, interest would be then turned to the mysterious island behind the stockade, which remained silent, almost unresisting, and wholly unknown.

They moved officially in April.

They had their first taste of wine that night. McCobb and Stone sat at the table. Jack beamed and served.

Stone lifted his glass. "Thanks, McCobb. Here's health."

McCobb bowed. "Here's luck, sir."

The baby cooed in the stronghold they had made for him.

After the meal they went out on the veranda and sat in comfortable chairs behind screens which shut out the humming insects.

Their reflections were varied and they gave partial and random voice to them.

"We might almost be within an hour of civilization," McCobb said.

Silence.

"I wonder what's going on in Little Old New York tonight?" Stone had never uttered that thought before, although he had doubtless entertained it.

"It isn't night in New York."

Both men chuckled.

Silence.

"Ever have anything to do with natives, McCobb?"

"Savages?"

"Yes."

McCobb drew on his pipe and it bubbled. "I have. The bushmen in Australia. The Senegalese in Africa."

"Doesn't it seem strange to you that they would send one deputy to search us and then never appear again?"

"Not like anything I ever heard of. They're either hostile or else curious. I don't think aborigines of any kind would hide for months like this."

"Odd."

Silence again.

Jack began to play his banjo in the kitchen. He added his voice to the music. The appearance of the banjo was a nine-day wonder on the island — and a very acceptable wonder.

Stone lifted his voice. "Come on out here on the porch, Jack."

He came, reluctantly, and they were compelled to beg him to play. Finally they desisted and he sat as long as he felt politeness demanded. It was only after he had returned to the kitchen that flavor was restored to the music.

"Funny beggar," Stone murmered.

"I've known worse," McCobb said. It was not necessary for Stone to agree out loud.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RAINS had started late in April — rains on the southeast monsoon — but they had been light and infrequent, although the sky was generally cloudy for days at a time. The house had been put in shape for them, however, and the three men went ahead with work on its interior whenever the weather hampered outdooractivities.

By midsummer for the northern hemisphere, and what amounted to midwinter for them, they had all the major details complete. It was then, and only then, a vague spirit of restlessness appeared, first in Stone and then in the Scot.

McCobb noticed it in Stone when he found him staring at the rocky summit of the small mountain which rose behind the house. But McCobb did not notice it in himself when he became petulant over the fact that the iron runners he had carefully made for the winch sled did not fit.

Stone found him glaring at the metal strips, spittingdisgustedly and swearing under his breath.

He grinned. "Why don't you kick them, McCobb?"

"Hell! They're too short."

"Well — we'll make a new sled. It's easier."

"Yes."

They looked at each other and laughed. That day at lunch Stone said: "You know, it's getting to be about time for us to do a little exploring around the place. I was looking at the hill the other day. It wouldn't be too much of a trick to climb it."

McCobb was surprised at the intensity of his impulse. "That's an excellent idea! I've been itching toget in and around for weeks."

"Feel shut in?"

"Well — "

"Why not admit it? I do. But I didn't want to go out and look for trouble until we were comfortable here. The rest of the island could wait on us."

McCobb ate in silence for a moment. "What was your impression of the size and shape of the island when you saw it from the sea?"

"Just what I gave you when I first discussed it. Vague. It wasn't very large — although I couldn't see it all on account of the relativefeebleness of the moonlight. Coming this time, it was misty. I think it's about four mileslong, running north and south, and perhaps three miles and a half wide."

"There ought to be a good many interesting things and places, then."

"We'll see."

They walked out of the stockade side by side. Jack shut the gate behind them. McCobb felt his nerves tingling.

"I'm excited," he said, in a tone that did not appear to contain any emotion whatever.

"So am I."

Stone led the way around the wooden, wire-topped wall. At its rear, he broke into the green riot of vegetation. He went gingerly, in spite of the fact that he was shod in knee-high leather boots. He carried his rifle in the crook of his arm, and its triggerwas seton the safetycatch.

The ground behind the house descended at first into a sort of valley filled with deep ferns. Insects hummed there and birds flew overhead. They saw a small monkey at a distance, and one of the boas with which they had become familiar moved lazily from theirpath.

Onthe opposite sideofthevalethe trees grew thick and vines ran between them so that they were forced to hack their way in places. A steady rise commenced and with every hundred yards the walking conditions improved. Eventually Stone stopped and pointed.

The trees thinned. A few rods distantfromthem, theywere supplanted by grass as high as the armpits of a tall man. They hastened to the edge of this unexpected prairie. A broad, rolling savannah dotted here and there with clumps of trees opened

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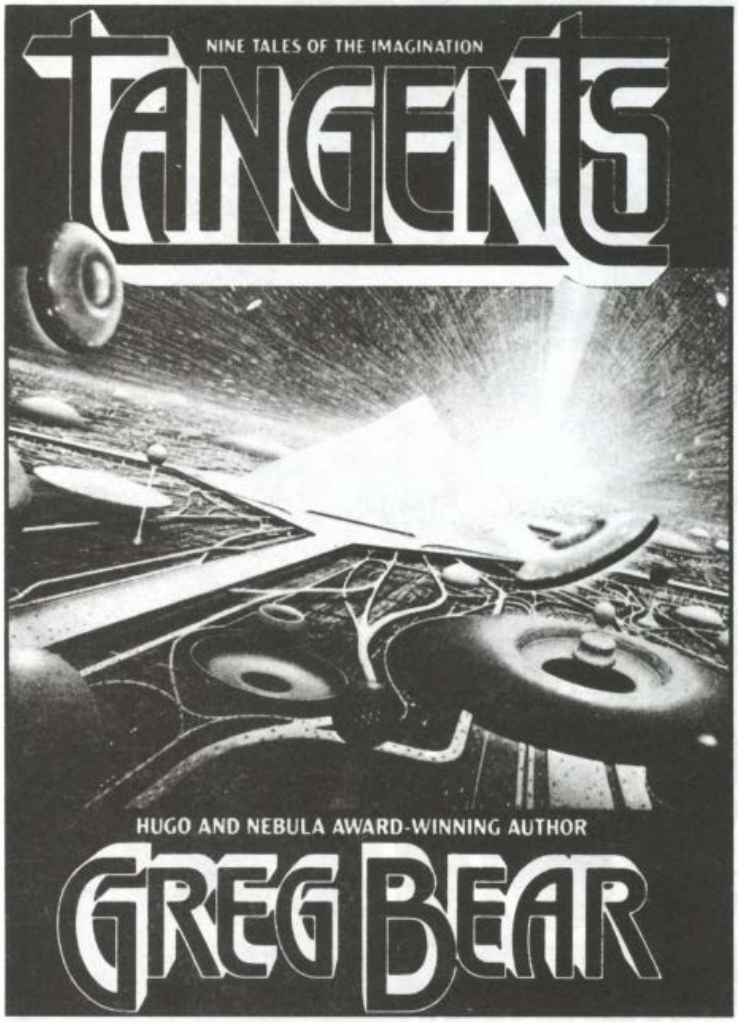

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TANGENTS

before them to the base of the mountain.

It was much like the African veldt, and, while they were looking, a herd of animals moved up over a small rise.

"Good Lord!" McCobb whispered.

Stone gripped his arm. "Those are a kind of zebu. Little ones. The ancestors of cows."

The men waited in the shadow while the herd approached. The creatures were certainly cowlike, although their legs were slender and on their backs they had a large hump. They were led by a bull and presently they stopped to graze. They ate with a continual switching of their tails and a frequent uplifting of their broad, bland faces.

Stone stepped from cover and whistled. The heads shot up. They stared in stony immobility at the men. But when the men did not make any further sign, they recommenced their browsing.

"That doesn't look as if there were natives," Stone murmured.

"Shall we get one?"

"On the way back."

"Will it be safe to cross the plain? Maybe they'll charge."

Stone considered. Finally he began walking toward the animals. They gave him a casual attention until he was within a hundred yards, then, slowly, they began to walk away from him.

"It's all right," Stone called, and, with the sound of his voice, the zebu-oxen increased their walk to a lumbering trot.

Stone and McCobb went across the grassy plain gaily.

"Meat," Stone almost shouted. "By George! McCobb, there's fine meat there. And I wouldn't be surprised if you could domesticate the damn things. Milk them, maybe."

"And the hides. So far," McCobb said exultantly, "I've seen only monkey fur for our feet. But we can make real leather out of those hides and real shoes. Chaps, too, and boots."

They plunged into the green ring which encircled the base of the mountain. It was difficult to cross, filled with boulders which which had dropped down the steep sides, and thick with a long-thorned briar. Snakes lived among the rocks, but already they had leaned not to waste ammunition on snakes. A staff five or six feet in length served their purpose.

They sweated and toiled over the uneven ground, making their way constantly upward. The discovery of the animals on the plain had led them to expect many more surprises. And, with the moment near when they would know the precise size and shape of their island, they felt an increasing tension.

McCobb, especially, held in his mind a picture of an islet three miles in diameter, of which every nook and cranny could be explored in a few days and with would furnish nothing afterward to break the monotony of their long confinement. His hopes alternately triumphed over and fell prey to his fears. When they had finally worked their way through the green belt and could look back, he turned his head with an unbearable emotion.

He was depressed. The treetops fell away steeply below them. The plain of the zebus was perhaps a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide. Beyond it, and further north, was the forest that ran to the shore, a blue blur coiling from the chimney of the house which made a white square in the trees, a glint of bay, a view of the stern of the *Falcon*, looking from the mountain-side like a toy, and the sea. A shoulder of the mountain shut out the view eastward and the bulk of the mountain itself lay between them and the south.

"It's gorgeous," Stone said thoughtfully.

"Yes," McCobb replied. "Let's go up to the top."

They scrambled up igneous ledges. They paused to marvel at huge, weather-torn outcroppings of crystals. They skirted a precipice which was fully a hundred feet in height and they came to a rocky shelf where nothing grew and from which, they knew, the top would be reached by a moment's effort.

They stopped. McCobb looked at the pinnacle above.

"Give you a leg up," Stone said.

The Scot shook his head. "No. I'll boost you. I haven't the courage to look for myself."

Stone understood. "It may be a terrible disappointment," he admitted. "I'll go."

McCobb bent down and Stone stood on his back. McCobb felt the pressure of the feet diminish and then depart. He shut his eyes. There was a silence so long that McCobb could not endure it.

"What do you see?" he called.

"Come on." Stone's face appeared at the edge of the short declivity and McCobb knew by its expression that it was not disappointment which awaited him. He took the down-reaching hands and was lifted bodily onto a little, flat summit.

He looked from the sitting posture in which he had arrived. He gasped. He swore softly.

"The entire island spread beneath their gaze. It was the shape of a sting ray with a forked tail..."

The entire island spread beneath their gaze. It was the shape of a sting ray with a forked tail — and the fork was their bay. They had built their house at the end of the "tail" — at the end of a long and narrow peninsula. It was this peninsula which had given Stone his idea of the island's dimensions.

Actually, the main body of the island ran north and south for at least fifteen miles. From east to west it stretched some twenty miles. The pinnacle on which they sat was its highest point.

A rim of rock ran along the southern shore. The land was half savannah — like the stretch though which they had made their way — and half thick jungle and forest. But in the center of the main body of the island was a large lake. The new green of the grasses, the darker sheens of the trees, the blue of the lake, the tawny colors of the coastal rocks and beaches and, above all, the indigo of the surrounding sea made a magnificant spectacle.

McCobb thrilled with an emotion almost religious. Here was beauty, adventure, variety, area. Above all — area. Space to move in, space to investigate, and an end of the oppres-

sive feeling of smallness.

Then he looked at Stone and Stone was standing on the rock, his mane of dark hair blowing, his gaunt face set, and tears on his cheeks.

They remained there for more than an hour, drinking in the extent of their kingdom. Then they made separate analyses of the territory. They talked a little and mentioned especially that there was no sign of human habitation, no smoke except their own, no clearings or village visible.

After that they went back.

On the prairie they relocated the herd of zebu-oxen and Stone's rifle brought one to earth. They carried away as much meat as they could and presently they returned to the stockade.

That night their spirits knew no bounds. They told Jack a hundred times what they had found, and beneath his easy calm Jack realized its significance. They ate the fresh meat with gusto, and uttered reasonable praise of its qualities.

And that night, after dinner, McCobb gave voice to his one remaining doubt. He spoke to Stone when they were on the wide porch.

"There's one little thing," he began, "that I can mention now. I couldn't speak of it until we had reached an understanding of each other. But everything has turned out so well — "

Stone prompted him. "What is it?"

"I like it here. It's making a man of me. I like you. I like Jack. I don't mind staying fifteen or twenty years, if twenty are necessary. When I get back I'll have enough money to keep me the rest of my life. If I hadn't come here I'd have probably married a shrew — " he was alarmed by that inadvertent statement, but Stone only laughed — "and settled into a little hell called home.

"But since we landed here I've known something you have done but not mentioned."

"Yes?" Stone's voice was placid.

The Scotchman smoked in silence for a time. "Just exactly how long will we stay here?"

"Why — you know as much about that as I do."

An inner fear sounded in McCobb's words.

"There isn't any real reason for keeping me in the dark. You know the day. You planned everything so perfectly that certainly you've left in New York or somewhere — even in several places — " McCobb laughed with a heartiness he did not quite feel — "instructions to be opened in fifteen or twenty years. Instructions telling the opener how to rescue us, giving the position of the island and funds to send an expedition here."

When the tall man did not speak, McCobb continued. "I know your type of man. You wouldn't throw yourself and your son away when there was such an easy and sure method of accomplishing this isolation for education and of making a return sure."

No answer.

"What about it, Stone?"

McCobb peered through the dark. "Stone!"

He leaped to his feet. He went to Stone's side. Stone had fainted — and McCobb knew that there was one thing of which the great organizer had not thought. Even while he unbuttoned Stone's shirt and felt his faltering heart, the Scot looked over the sea and thought icily that it would some day ripple beside the grave of an old, old man who had been himself.

"Stone!" he shouted. "Jack!"

CHAPTER FIVE

NEW YORK was loud and hot. Horse cars rattled over the cross-town tracks. A steam engine pounded on the elevated railway and ground to a stop. The sound of hoofs beat on the cobblestones. Wagon wheels, iron-tired, set up a continuous rumble and among the wagons moved broughams and victorias.

In an office building on Park Row which was not skyscraper but which was high enough to overlook Brooklyn Bridge, two men were greeting each other.

One was Elihu Whitney, the most famous corporation lawyer in Gotham. The other was a Mr. Harriman.

The lawyer wore a Prince Albert — its black coat falling to his knees. His collar was high and his tie black and narrow, knotted crosswise on his starched bosom.

Mr. Harriman carried a bowler in his hand. His suit was light and very tight. In one of the two buttonholes on his coat lapel was a rose. His vest also had lapels which were buttoned together two inches below his collar.

Mr. Whitney's voice was basso and meticulous. "A fine day, indeed, my dear Harriman. I'm delighted to see you."

Harriman stroked his giant mustache. "A pleasure. May I tender my congratulations on the return of your son and your charming daughter-in-law? A happy couple. One envies these youngsters their honeymoons, eh?"

Whitney chuckled. "Two birds in a bush could not be happier." He bowed and waved his friend to a chair. He pulled a bell cord and an office boy brought a box of cigars. The men helped themselves. The lawyer struck a match on the sole of his shoe and held it for his guest.

"Big ruins. Temples, I should think — all made of stone. Carved gods and altars and more decoration than you ever dreamed of. They must have been very beautiful once, but they're old as time, now. And they've been under water."

"Your son is brilliant," Harriman continued. "Very brilliant I wish you would convey Mrs. Harriman's salutations to them and tell them that we are both going to call as soon as they can bear to have their nest disturbed."

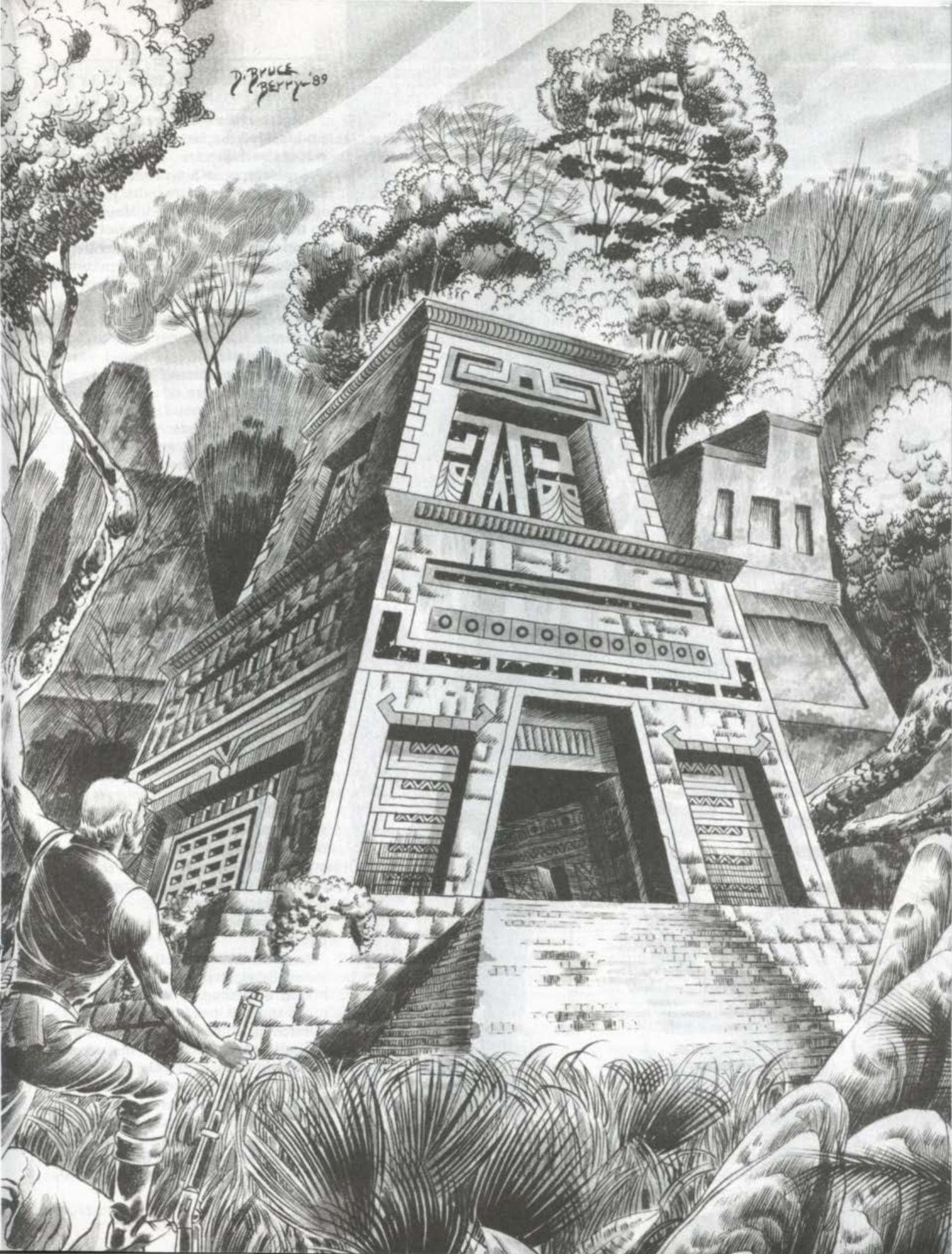
"They'll be delighted."

"I read so much about them in the *Record.* "

"Yes, yes," Whitney said. He patted the under side of his cheek whiskers with the back of his hand and wondered how soon Harriman would reach the point.

The other man drew on the floor with his cane. "*Record* has depreciated since — ah — Stone left, don't you think?"

continued on page 46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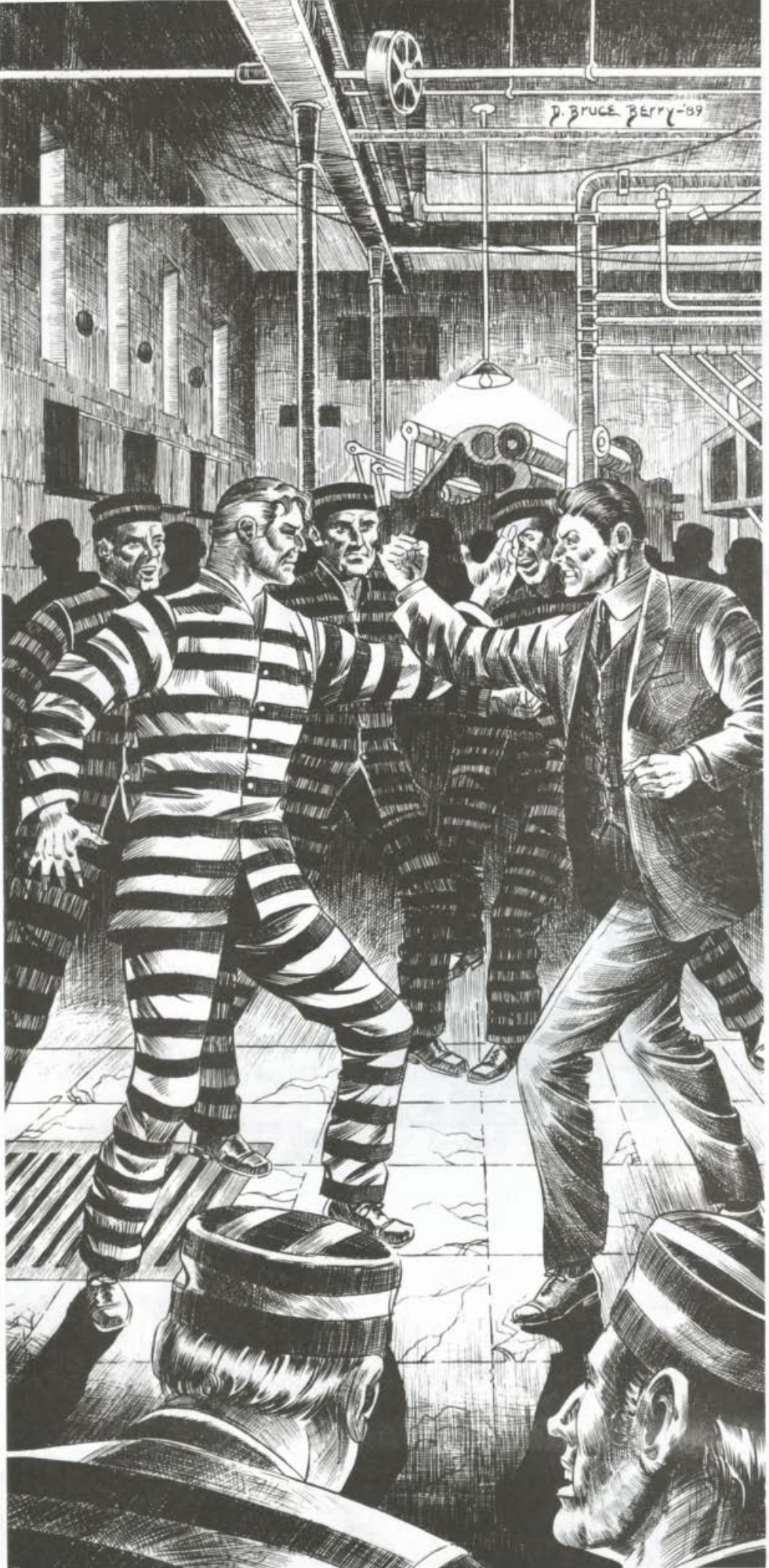

Boston Blackie's Mary

continued from page 29

He jerked the straw from his mouth and twisted it apart; then he walked out of the mill.

A quarter of an hour later ten pain-racked prisoners from the punishment chambers were welcomed back to the mill with an outburst of exaltation such as San Gregorio Penitentiary had never seen. With them came the Deputy Warden's acceptance of Boston Blackie's terms. The men rioted joyously in an abandonment of happiness. In the midst of the turbulent jollification a half-witted, one-armed boy nicknamed "the Squirrel" climbed to the top of a loom, drew out his one treasure, a mouth-organ, and tried to express his joy in the one way he knew—and his dismal interpretation of "The Star Spangled Banner" floated out over the crowd.

"Cut out the bum music," cried a burly convict to whom the spirit of the hour had given a wanton impulse to command. "Where d'you figger in this, you nutty Squirrel?"

The boy's eyes filled with tears, and his notes faltered and died in the middle of a bar.

Boston Blackie, always sensitive to the feelings of others, stopped the lad as he slunk from his perch on the loom and lifted him back.

"Go ahead. Play, little Squirrel," he said encouragingly. "Your music is as good as a band. Go to it. You're one of us, you know, and we're all happy."

Intuitively Blackie had salved the wound caused by the gibe. Radiant now, the Squirrel pressed his mouth-organ to his lips and played on and on with a light in his dull eyes that made Blackie mutter: "Poor kid! A pardon wouldn't make him any happier."

And the convicts, only one degree less childish than the Squirrel, celebrated and sang in their cells that night until at last they settled into silence and care-free sleep. No thought of a tomorrow disturbed them; but Boston Blackie, quiet and wakeful, lay on his cell bunk anxiously probing the future. In his mind he still saw the broken bits of Martin Sherwood's broom-straw fluttering to the mill floor and heard his threat:

"The next time you and I clash, I'm

going to break you like this."

MARY DAWSON—Boston Blackie's Mary she was, to his world and hers—was a prison widow who never missed visiting day at the San Gregorio Penitentiary. Twice each month she crossed the bay from San Francisco to the prison. Twice each month, with others like herself beside her, she rode from the station to the prison-gates in the rickety old stage and waited in the reception-room acquiver with impatience and longing for the first glimpse of the man she loved. When he came, when he caught her in his arms and kissed her, looking into her face with eyes that answered the love in hers, then for a pitifully short half-hour both forgot prisons and the law and separations and were happy.

Boston Blackie and his Mary reckoned time from visiting-day to visiting-day. Those half-hours together, separated though they were by thirteen long blank days, made life endurable. Neither ever spoke of the long years that must elapse before Blackie would walk out through the gates and go home a free man with Mary. Blackie reckoned them at night in his cell, and Mary checked them off each day on a calendar in her rooms, but when they were together, they let no evil thoughts mar their happiness.

Ever since the strike, Blackie had been apprehensive and watchful. Deputy Warden Sherwood had made no attempt to punish any of the men concerned in the revolt. He was not a man to break his word, but when any of the men involved in it transgressed a prison rule, even in a trifling matter, the punishment that followed proved that Sherwood neither forgave nor forgot.

On a bright Saturday afternoon Blackie was impatiently pacing the yard, awaiting the summons to the reception-room and Mary. It came at last, and he hurried through the gates, pass in hand. She was waiting for him and sprang to his side, hands outstretched and trembling with eagerness, in her fear of losing even one second of their thirty precious minutes. Their kiss was interrupted by the gruff voice of Ellis, the reception-room guard.

"Wait a minute there, Blackie," he commanded. "Who is this woman?"

"Who is she?" repeated the convict in blank amazement. "Why she is Mary, my wife. You surely know her well enough. She has been here every visiting-day."

"I know she has managed to slip in here on visiting-days," said Ellis said. "But what I ask you is, who and what is she? We're told she's an ex-con herself. If so, she can't visit you. The rules don't permit it."

The man turned to Mary.

"Isn't this your picture?" he asked sneeringly as he handed her a photograph of a woman with a prison number pinned across the breast.

It was Mary's picture. Years before, Mary Dawson, daughter of Dayton Tom, a professional crook, had been sent to the penitentiary because she declined to clear herself at the expense of her father's pals. She was not and never had been anything worse than Boston Blackie's Mary, but now her past had suddenly risen up to deprive her of the single treasure that life held—her half-hour visits with Blackie.

"It's my photograph," she said in a voice choked with anguish, for she knew prison rules too well to not to realize what admission meant. "But Mr. Ellis, please, please don't bar me because of that. I'm not a thief. I never was. I did time—yes; but I wasn't guilty. For God's sake, don't take our visits away from us. They're—they're—all we—have." The girl's voice was broken by her sobs.

"Of course you weren't guilty! That's what they all say," the guard answered. "You better beat it, woman, while you've got a chance. You're lucky the Deputy don't put the city dicks (detectives) on to you. There's a bunch of them over here today, too."

Boston Blackie, white as a marble image, glared into the guard's face with eyes that narrowed dangerously. The man's reference to the Deputy made everything clear. This was Martin Sherwood's revenge for the mill revolt.

"Did the Deputy tell you to bar Mary from visiting me?" he demanded of the guard.

"What's that to you?" the man answered with pointed insolence. "I don't want her here, and she's barred—that's all. She's got nerve to come here anyway among decent women, the—"

The word never left his lips. Boston Blackie's blow caught him on the chin, and Ellis sprawled across the room and toppled to the floor. In a second Blackie was upon him again, grasping his throat in a frenzy of savagery.

The whole reception-room was in an uproar. Women screamed; convicts shouted encouragement. Blackie's vice-grip was strangling the all-but-unconscious guard. Mary's voice, pleading with him frantically, restored the convict to sanity.

"Don't kill him! Don't kill him!" she begged. "For your sake and mine, let him go, dear. Think what it means to us both!"

Slowly Blackie's grip loosened. He dropped the man and took Mary in his arms.

"Good-bye, dear one," he said. "I've tried to get by here without trouble, but Sherwood won't let me. From now on I've just one purpose. I'm going to beat this place. I'm going to escape. Watch and wait for me; it may be a month; it may be a year—but some day I'll come."

Guards summoned by the uproar rushed in, and one struck Blackie over the head with a club, laying him bleeding and senseless.

Blackie, still unconscious, was carried inside the gates and to the Deputy's office, where Sherwood was informed that Boston Blackie had committed the most heinous of prison crimes; he had struck an officer.

"Take him to Punishment Hall and leave him there for tonight. Don't give him punishment of any kind. I'll attend to him in the morning," the Deputy ordered.

As the guards carried Boston Blackie across the yard toward the punishment chamber, Martin Sherwood took a match from his desk and lighted the cigar he had been chewing.

BOSTON BLACKIE lay on the floor in Punishment Hall trussed up in the straitjacket as tightly as two able-bodied guards could draw the ropes. Great beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. A thin trickle of blood showed on his chin, beneath where

his clenched teeth bit into the flesh. The man's eyes betrayed the torture he was suffering, but no sound came from his lips.

Martin Sherwood stood above him, looking down at the helpless form in the canvas sack. He was smoking.

A prison strait-jacket hanging on a wall is nothing alarming to the eye, but in operation it is an instrument of most fiendish torture. The victim stands upright, arms straight down before him and hands on the front of each leg. The jacket itself is a heavy canvas contrivance that extends from the neck to the knees with eyelets in the back in which ropes make it possible to clinch it to any degree desired, as a woman's corset can be tightened. When the jacket is adjusted over the arms and body, the man is laid face downward on the floor and guards tighten the jacket by placing a foot on the small of the convict's back and drawing in the ropes with their full strength.

Fully tightened, the jacket shuts off blood-circulation throughout the body almost completely. For the first five minutes, oppressed breathing is the only inconvenience felt. Then the stagnating of the blood commences to cause the most excruciating torture—a thousand pains as if white-hot needles are being passed through the flesh run through the body. The feet and limbs swell and turn black. Irresistible weights seem to be crushing the brain.

Four hours in the jacket made one convict a paralytic for life. Some men have endured it for a half or three-quarters of an hour without crying out, but only a few.

Boston Blackie had been in the jacket for an hour and five minutes, and as yet Martin Sherwood had waited in vain for groans or pleas for release.

The prison physician stood by, looking on anxiously. One man had died after the jacket had been used on him in San Gregorio, and the newspapers made quite a fuss about it. The doctor didn't want a repetition of that trouble, and yet he knew the man on the floor had been under punishment fully twenty minutes too long. Still the Deputy gave no indication to release him.

Five minutes passed. Blackie's face was a ghastly purple. Blood oozed form his nostrils. He rolled aimlessly to and fro on the floor, but his lips still were clenched, and no sound came from them.

"He's had enough—more than enough, Deputy," he urged. "Hadn't we better call it off?"

"Never till he begs," said Sherwood, biting off his cigar in the middle and tossing it away. Perspiration stood out on his brow too.

Five more minutes passed, and the form on the floor, too horrible now to be described, ceased to roll and toss. The doctor stooped over him quickly.

"He's out," he announced. "You've got to quit now, Sherwood. A few more minutes are likely to kill him, and anyway he's unconscious and you're not doing any good."

"Release him," said the Deputy Warden curtly. "Take him over to the hospital and bring him around. We'll try it again tomorrow."

Hours later Boston Blackie, slowly and painfully, came back into what seemed a blurred and hideous world.

"He didn't break me," he said over and over to himself. "I've beaten him again. I'll do it just once more, too. Nobody has ever escaped from this place since Martin Sherwood has been deputy, but I will."

The relieved doctor gave Blackie a drink that sent him off into an uneasy slumber in which he was climbing an interminable ladder to a garden from which Mary stretched down her arms to him, but when he seized her hands the fingers shrivelled into cigars, and her face changed to Martin Sherwood's whose white teeth bit into his flesh until he clenched his lips to keep from crying out.

"When Blackie gets out of the hospital, put him in charge of the lawn in front of my office," said Sherwood to the assignment captain the following morning. "I have decided not to give him any more of the jacket."

The captain wonderingly obeyed. It was the first time he had ever known the Deputy to deviate from his inflexible rule that a convict once sent to the jacket stayed until he begged for mercy.

MARTIN SHERWOOD, from within his office, stood fixedly studying Boston Blackie, who was spraying the courtyard lawn with a hose. The convict was more like a skeleton than a living man. His striped coat hung sack-like across his emaciated shoulders. His cheek-bones seemed about to burst through the crinkled, parchment-like skin that covered them. His eyes were dull, deep-set and haggard, his movements slow and languid like a confirmed invalid's.

"He's ill, without a doubt," mused the Deputy Warden. "The doctor's evidently right about the stomach trouble. No man could counterfeit his appearance; and yet—" Sherwood's brow was wrinkled with perplexity as he studied the convict. "Everything may be as it seems. If he were any man but Boston Blackie, I should be wasting my time thinking about it. But because he is Boston Blackie, I'm puzzled. It's three months since I barred his wife from the prison and gave him the jacket—three months in which he has been docile as a lamb, though I know such a man must have murder in his heart every time he lays eyes on me. Why this calm?"

The perplexed furrow in the Deputy's brow deepened. For ten minutes he stood studying Blackie without making a movement or a sound.

"One of two things is true," the Deputy concluded. "Either he is just a common con after all and I did break him in the jacket, or else he's getting ready to cover my king with the ace of trumps. Suppose his plan, whatever it is, requires him to sleep in the hospital. He'd have to be sick to get there, of course—really sick, too."

Just then Boston Blackie, unconscious of the Deputy's scrutiny, turned toward him, and the sunlight fell full on his emaciated face.

"Gad, he looks like a corpse now," was Sherwood's thought. "It's impossible that this sickness is a trick, and yet nothing is impossible to a man who can stand the jacket without a murmur. I'm going to play safe. I'm going to move him out of the hospital, though there isn't a surer place to keep a man inside the walls, as far as I can see. I'll move him, anyway. If he tries to get back there again, I'll know I'm right."

Sherwood turned to his clerk.

"Phone to the doctor to come over," he said.

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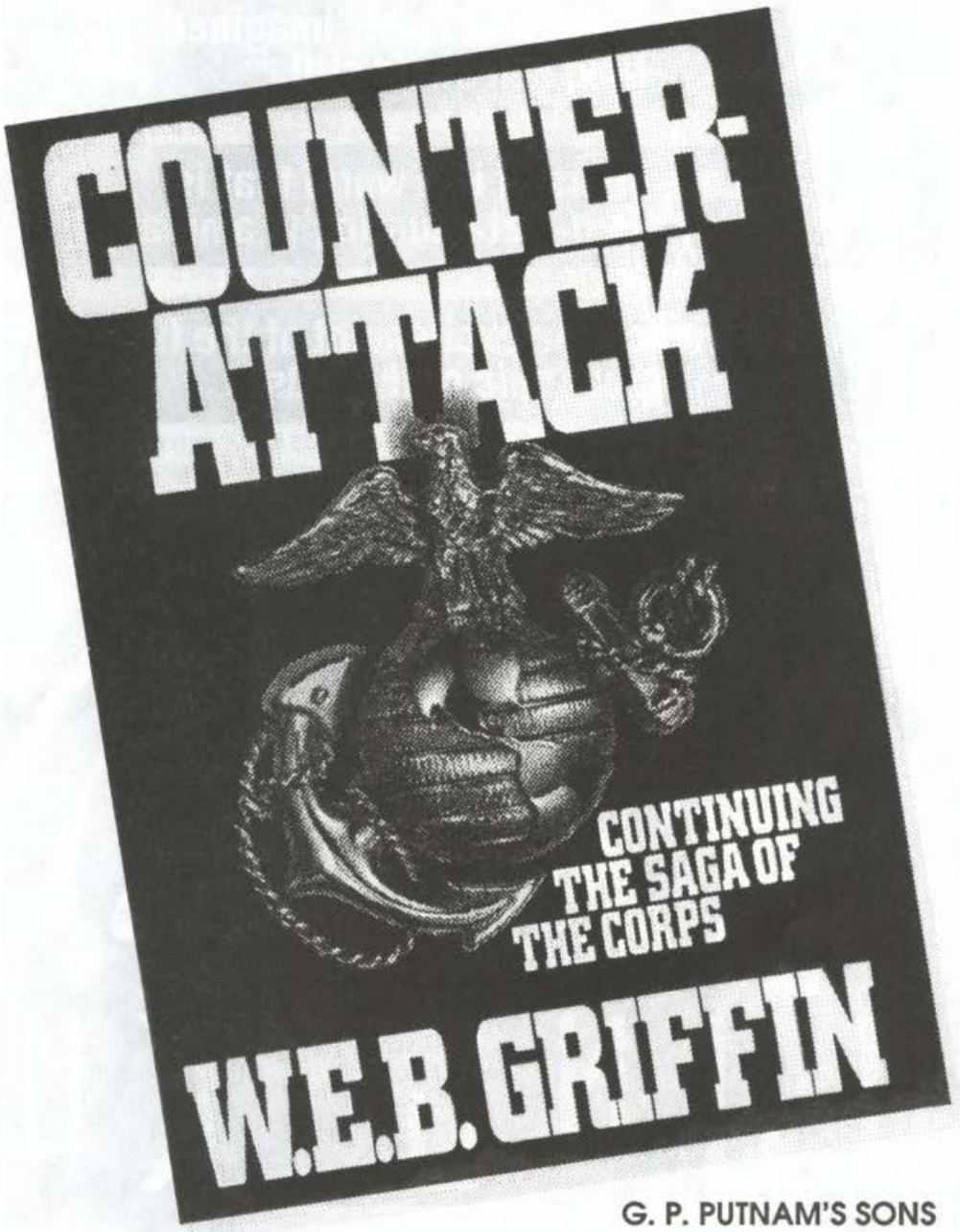

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THE PHYSICIAN protested strongly against the Deputy Warden's order to transfer Boston Blackie from his cell in the hospital to one of the dormitories in the cell-house. "The man's nothing but a living corpse now, Deputy," he argued. "He has a stomach complaint I haven't been able to diagnose. He isn't likely to live another three months. He hasn't eaten a thing but hard crusts of bread for weeks. Let him die in the hospital."

"Move him over to C Dormitory tomorrow morning," Sherwood commanded with finality. "I'm going to put him in with Tennessee Red, who'll keep me informed of what he does nights. I've got a hunch, Doctor, that Mr. Boston Blackie is framing another suprise-party for us. I'll find some excuse to move Red's present cell-mate out by tomorrow morning."

The doctor went back to the hospital shaking his head at the strange vagaries of his superior concerning Boston Blackie. He sent his runner, the half-witted, one-armed boy Blackie had protected on the day of the strike, for the turnkey.

"The Deputy has ordered Boston Blackie out of the hospital," he said when the messenger returned with the officer. "He thinks Blackie is framing something. I told him the man won't do anything worse than die, but he's set on moving him and so we'll have to do it. Look's to me as if Blackie's sort of on the old man's nervessincethe affair of the jacket. I never knew him to worry so much about any man in the prison. He's going to put him in with Tennessee Red, his chief stool-pigeon, and see what he can find out. The Deputy won't have Red's cell-partner out until tomorrow, so don't say anything to Blackie to-night."

The officers separated. The Squirrel climbed back on his stool and looked out through the barred windows to the lawn, where he could see Boston Blackie laboriously dragging hishose acrossthe grass. Therewas new grief in the Squirrel's dull eyes. He had heard what the doctor had told the turnkey. They were going to take Blackie away from the hospital dormitory— Blackie, who gave the Squirrel tobacco and the inside of a loaf of bread each night—Blackie, who always protected him when the other men teased him—Blackie, his friend. Theboy's eyesfilledwith tears. Blackie was the only one who liked to hear the Squirrel play his mouth-organ, and now they were going to take him away. But Blackie was smart. The doctor had said "not until tomorrow." Maybe if the Squirrel told Blackie at dinner-time what he had heard, Blackie would find some way to make them let him stay in the hospital. Slowly the ideas filtered through the haze that clouded the dull brain.

BOSTON BLACKIE was sitting in his dormitory cell slowly chewing the crust of a half-loaf of bread, from which he had hollowed out the soft inner portion that his tortured stomach couldn't digest, when the Squirrel slipped by the turnkey and dodged silently into the cell. The boy laid his finger on his lips as Blackie started to speak.

"They mustn't know I'm here," he said. "I heard what the doctor told the screw (turnkey). "They're going to take you away, out of the hospital."

Boston Blackie's loaffell to the floor.

"When, little Squirrel, when?" he whispered hoarsely, gripping the boy by the shoulder. A great fear showed in the convict's eyes.

"Tomorrow, when the Deputy gets a place ready for you with Tennessee Red," the boy answered.

"Thank God, I've one more night. One night must be enough." Blackie, scarcely aware that he was voicing his mind, sank back in relief so intense it left his whole body dripping with perspiration. A new danger occurred to him.

"What else did the doctor say, little Squirrel?" he asked.

"He said the Deputy thinks you are framing something, but it isn't so because you're going to die in three months. Are you going to die in three months, Blackie?"

"No, not in three months, little Squirrel," answered Blackie, and then softly to himself he added, "—but maybe tonight." He turned again to the boy, his mind swiftly grappling with the details of the task before him, which must be done now in a single night.

"Will you play your mouth-organ for me tonight, Squirrel?" he asked. "Will you play it *all* the time from lock-up until the lights go out? All the time, Squirrel, and loud so I can hear it plain. Here's a sack of tobacco for you. You won't forget? All the time, and loud."

"Yes, all the time and loud," the boy repeated, doglike devotion in his eyes.

Boston Blackie mopped a forehead dripping with cold perspiration. All his hopes of freedom depended on a half-witted boy and his mouth-organ.

BOSTONBLACKIE'S mindthat afternoon was a jumble of torturing doubts, painstaking calculation and unflinching resolution. The Deputy Warden's intuition had not misled him. Blackie had planned an escape, and his every act for weeks had been taken with that sole purpose in view. His plan required that he sleep in the hospital dormitory used for the tuberculosis patients and others unfit for cell-houses, but not bedridden. To accomplish this he diluted prison laundry-soap, strong with lye, and drank it day after day until it ruined his stomach and left him unable to digest any food but hard-baked crusts of bread. The lye had caused him excruciating anguish, but in ten days it accomplished its purpose. Blackie had been ordered to the hospital dormitory to be put on a diet and given treatment for his puzzling stomach-trouble. He had been there two months and was still using the lye to prevent the possibility of beingturned back to his old quarters. He had wrecked his physique, but each night saw him a step nearerhis goal.

He wasn't ready to make his bid for freedom, but the Deputy with uncanny divination had given him no choice. He must make the attempt thatnightor never.

First he took a spade and laboriously began to dig around the rose-bushes that flanked the lawn. No one saw him uncover a rudely improvised saw made with his hoe-file from a steel knife stolen from the kitchen. The saw and a tobacco sack containing a five-dollar bill were quickly hidden in his blouse. The bill had come from Maryin the coverof a book sent to him according to in-

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THE REVERSIBLE REVOLUTIONS

continued from page 13

"Ye'll coom when 'e wish, bate's un," drawled Vaughan unintelligibly. Peaselysnarled at him.

Espera sprang to his feet. "Miss Millicent," he said effusively.

"Don't bother to rise, gentlemen," announced the tall, crisp woman who had entered. "As if you would anyway. I just collected on that Florenza deal, Manuel," she informed Espera. "Three gees. How do you like that?"

"I'd have done a cleaner job," said Peasely snappishly. He had cast the only blackball when this first woman to enter the Sabre Club had been voted a member. "What did you use?"

"Lyddite," she said, putting on a pale lipstick.

"Thot's pawkyexplaw-seeve," commented Vaughan. "I'd noat risk such."

She was going to reply tartly when Battle strode in. They greeted him with a muffled chorus of sighs and curses.

"Hi," he said briefly. "I'd like your permission to introduce a person waiting outside. Rules do not apply in her case for—for certain reasons. May I?"

There was a chorus of assent. He summoned Spike, who entered. "Now," said Battle, "I'd like your help in a certain matter of great importance to us all."

"Yon's t'keenin' tool," said the Yorkshireman.

"Okay, then. We have to stormand take a plant in New Jersey. This plant is stored with weapons—dangerous weapons—weapons which, worst of all, are intended to effect a world revolution which will bring an absolute and complete peace within a couple of years, thus depriving us our occupations without compensation. Out of self-defense we must take this measure. Who is with me?"

All hands shot up in approval. "Good." Further complications are as follows: This is only one world revo lution; there is another movement which is in rivalry to it, and which will surelydominate if the first does not. So we will have to split our forces—"

"No you won't," said the voice of Underbottam

"Where are you?" asked Battle, looking around the room.

"In my office, you traitor. I'm using a wire screen inyour clubroom for a receiver and loudspeaker in a manner you couldn't possibly understand."

"I don't like that traitor talk," said Battle evenly. "I mailed back your money—and Breen's. Now what was thatyou said?"

"We'll be waiting for you together in Rockefeller Center. Breen and I have pooled our interests. After we've worked our revolution we're going to flip a coin. That worm doesn't approveofgambling, ofcourse, buthe'll make this exception."

"And if I know you, Underbottam," said Battle evenly, "it won't be gambling. What time in Rockefeller Center?"

"Four in the morning. Bring your friends—nothing like a showdown. Byheaven I'mgoingto save the world whetheryou like it or not!"

The wire screen from which the voice had been coming suddenly fused in a flare of lightand heat.

Miss Millicent broke the silence. "Scientist!" she said in a voice heavy with scorn. Suddenly there was a gun in her palm. "If he's human I can drill him," she declared.

"Yeah," said Battlegloomily, "That's what I thought."

THE WHOLE length of Sixth Avenue not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse, as the six crept through the early-morning darkness under the colossal shadow of the RCA building. The vertical architecture of the Center was lost in the sky as they hugged the wall of the Music Hall.

"When do you suppose they'll finish it?" asked Peasely, jerking a thumb at the boarding over the Sixth Avenue Subway under construction.

"What do you care?" grunted Battle. "We need a scout to take a look at the plaza. How about you, Manuel? You're small and quick."

"Right," grinned Espera. "I could use a little more weight." He sped across the street on silent shoes, no more than a shadow in the dark, but he had been spotted, for a pale beam of light hissed for a moment on the pavement beside him. He flattened and gestured.

"Come on—he says," muttered Miss Millicent. They shotacrossthe street and flattened against the building. "Where are they, Manuel?" demanded Battle.

"Right there in the plazabesidethe fountain. They have a mess of equipment. Tripods and things. A little generator.

"Shall I try a masher?" asked Peasely.

"Do," said Miss Millicent. "Nothing

would be neater."

The man with the wooden leg unshipped a bomb from his belt and bit out the pin. He held it to his ear for just a moment to hear it sizzle. "I love to hear the noise," he explained apologetically to Spike. Then he flung it with a curious twist of his arm.

Crash!

Battle looked around the corner of the building. "They haven't been touched. And that racket's going to draw the authorities," he said. "They have some kind of screen, I guess."

"Darling," whispered Spike.

"What is it?" asked Battle, sensing something in her tone.

"Nothing," she said, as women will.

"Close in under heavy fire, maybe?" suggester the little Espera.

"Yep," snapped Battle. "Oops! There goes a police whistle."

Pumping lead from both hips, the six of them advanced down the steps to the plaza, where Breen and Underbottam were waiting behind a kind of shimmeringillumination.

The six ducked behind the waist-high stone wall of the Danish restaurant, one of the eateries which rimmed the plaza. Hastily, as the others kept up their fire, Vaughan set up a machinegun. "Doon a' fu' leefl" he ordered. They dropped behindthe maskingstone.

"Cae oot, yon cawbies!" yelled Vaughan.

His only answer was a sudden dropping of the green curtain and a thunderbolt or something like it that winged at him and went away over his head to smash into the RCA buildingand shatterthree stories.

"Haw!" laughed Peasely. "They can't aim! Watch this!" He bit another grenade and bowled it underhand against the curtain. The ground heaved and buckled as the crash of the bomb sounded. In rapid succession he rolled over enough to make to make the once-immaculate Plaza as broken a bit of terrain as was ever seen, bare pipes and wires exposed underneath. Underbottam's face was distorted with rage.

The curtain dropped abruptly and the two embattled scientists and would-be saviors of the world squirted wildlywith everything theyhad—rays in every color of the spectrum, thunderbolts and lightning-flashes, some uncomfortably near.

The six couldn't face up to it; what they saw nearly blinded them. They flattened themselves to the ground and prayed mutely in the electric clash and spatter of science unleashed.

"Darling," whispered Spike, her head close to Battle's.

"Yes?"

"Have you got a match?" she asked tremulously. "No—don't say a word. She took the match-pack and kissed him awkwardly, and abruptly. "Stay under cover," she said. "Don't try to follow. When my fuel-tank catches it'll be pretty violent."

Suddenly she was out from behind theshelterand plastered againstone of the tumbled rocks, to leeward of the worldsaver's armory. A timid bullet or two was coming from the Danish restaurant.

In one long, staggering run she made nearly seven yards, then dropped, winged by a heat-ray that cauterized her arm. Cursing, Spike held the matches in her mouth and tried to strike one with her remaining hand. It lit, and she applied it to the pack, dropping them to the ground. Removing what remained of her right arm she lit it at the flaring pack. It blazed like a torch; her cellulose skin was highly inflammable.

She used the arm to ignite her body at strategic points and then, a blazing, vengeful figure of flame, hurled herself on the two scientists in the plaza.

From the restaurant Battle could see, through tear-wet eyes, the featuresof the fly-by-night worldsavers. Then Spike's fuel-tank exploded and everything blotted out in one vivid sheet of flame.

"Come on! The cops!" hissed Miss Millicent. She dragged him, sobbing as he was, into the Independent Subway station that led out into the Center. Aimlessly he let her lead him ontoan express, the firstof the morning.

"Miss Millicent, I loved her," he complained.

"Why don't you join the Foreign Legion to forget?" she suggested amiably.

"What?" he said, making a wry face. "Again?"

THE END

THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

continued from page 37

A glint came in Whitney's eye. Harriman had come to talk about Stone. The lawyer would have offered odds at his club that Mrs. Harriman's curiosity was responsible for the visit of her banker husband.

Whitney shrugged. "Perhaps. But the profits are up. I have a balance sheet here — "

"Don't bother. Don't trouble yourself." Harriman's smile distorted his mustache. "Funny thing for a man like Stone to do — lose himself at sea."

"Very strange. But he was shaken. Grievously shaken."

"Oh — True. A tense man. An idealist. A great loss to journalism."

"To the country, Harriman."

"Yes, indeed. The whole country." He paused. "You don't believe, do you, that there's any chance — any remote chance — that he isn't lost — for life?"

It was the hundredth time Whitney had been asked the same question — in public and in private, by dowagers at austere functions in Washington Square and by his office boy. He realized that Harriman expected to receive a true answer — and he was ready with the truth as he knew it, although he felt he was answering Mrs. Olive Harriman's curiosity rather than the banker's honest interest.

"I think the *Falcon* went down," he said gravely.

"No hint of anythingelse?"

"None."

"How did he leave his properties?"

"In trust. In a holding company. For his son — for ninety-nine years. Then for the extant employees of the organization or organizations."

"I see. Don't you think that's a bit suggestive?"

The lawyer walked to the window. He rocked on his feet so that his Prince Albert touched the front and then the back of his knees. He watched the carriages and vans that poured back and forth across Brooklyn Bridge. "Not at all. He expected to return. At least — he expected his son to come back."

"Ah."

"But I've had everypossible investigation made. He sailed from Aden in October. There were winds and storms. He went woefully undermanned — a crew of two, I believe. The *Orkney*, bound from Cape Town to Batavia, sighted him, making south under a little sail. That was the last. There was nothing in the way of land south of his position except the Antarctic ice. I'm afraid he's gone, Harriman."

The banker seemed disappointed. "I had hoped — as my wife — that you might give a few friends — privately, of course — a vestige of optimism."

"I'm sorry." Whitney was impassive at the mention of Harriman's wife — but his recognition of the source of the call was affirmed by it.

"Well — I must go along. Business, you know. Business. It's improving — although 'ninety-seven nearly dumped my cart."

"Please pay my respects to Mrs. Whitney."

They bowed twice.

Mr. Harriman went out on the street. A newsboy recognized him and tipped his hat. He signalled to his coachman and presently drove away toward WallStreet.

Some while later Elihu Whitney appeared on the sidewalk. He stepped into one of the carriages which lined the street. The driver took down the "For hire" sign.

"Mouquin's," the lawyer said.

TIME BEGAN to mint the bright years. Man's dates turned the century. The tempo of life in America increased. Stephen Stone began to be forgotten and the type on the masthead of the *Record* carried his name in less and less conspicuous sizes. The *Record* bought a paper in Cleveland and one in Chicago. Elihu Whitney's sideburns produced their first streak of gray. Harriman shaved off his mustache. Gas lights went out and electric lights took their place. Telephones spread everywhere. Phonographs played. Langley and Wright began to watch birds.

ON THE ISLAND there was one marked change. The baby that had been brought there in a basket had deserted it. Jack used it now for carrying coal from the pile on shore to McCobb's forge. There was, in fact, no baby any longer — but a person. A very young person.

Henry Stone, at six, had blue eyes and hair the color of a new penny. His skin was dark, like his father's, and, despite a round muscularity, he showed no signs of becoming at least as tall as the owner of the now disintegrated *Falcon*. He had an amazing vitality and a constant interest in all the phenomena of life, no matter how common or how inconsequential.

His first step had been a delight to the three men. His fiftieth step had inaugurated their worries.

"The sight of that newspaper devastated him. He pulled the tacks with his nails, heedless of the pain. He rolled the wet paper with the utmost care, and hurried secretly back to the house. The first words he saw inflamed his mind."

They were entranced when he had started to talk. And at that time Stephen Stone had put in effect his policy for the child.

Henry was disciplined.

He was taught to read at the age of four, sitting on his father's knee, holding a book, scowling and perspiring in an effort to do as he was told.

He was educated in the manner of independence. He dressed himself. He did his own errands.

Duties were given to him. He fed the chickens and hung up his own clothes.

He was also tutored in the uses of an outdoor life. At five he could swim almost indefinitely in the wire enclosure which McCobb had made in the sea. His short legs could keep up tirelessly with his father's strides. Possibly Stephen Stone was impatient to see his system in effect, and perhaps the boy was precocious, for he had advanced in learning to read and write and spell well beyond the place designated for a child of six by common schools. He certainly had gained on all ordinary children of his own age in the matter of his knowledge of the outer world. McCobb had supplemented his father's lessons in games and sports with all the knowledge of trees and flowers, insects and reptiles, and birds and animals which he had gained. McCobb had become a competent biologist in six years, with the aid of books which Stone had brought from America.

Jack, who was devoted to him, contributed little to his wisdom and much to his soul. Jack had the power of consoling him when he had been hurt or frightened and of amusing him when time hung heavy on his small hands.

Time was seldom freighted for him, however. His progress was largely due to the fact that his life became the principle concern of the three men — their entertainment, their escape, their amusement, their pride — and, in different ways — the outlet for what might have been their love.

Stone permitted no great show of affection or friendship. He insisted on justice, prohibited pampering, and developed a code of relationships in which he was master, McCobb was a sort of uncle, and Jack was a privilegedretainer.

Henry loved the life. He was born, in any case, to love life and he knew no other existence.

In the morning he would wake with the birds. He would go to the beach, accompanied by Jack who carried a rifle — in all those years vigilance had not relaxed and there had been occasions to justify it — and swim inside the net. Then he would feed the chickens. After that he would have breakfast with his father and "Mr. McCobb."

When breakfast was finished, lessons began. At six he was reading and using a dictionary for the words he did not know; he had commenced arithmetic; he was studying geography; he could write quite well; and McCobb was teaching him how to weave baskets and mats and hats and how to make maps out of clay and book-ends from boards cut with a scroll saw.

After lunch, for one hour, he rested. Then he was permitted to join in the life of his community. Sometimes he went fishing with Jack. Sometimes he walked along the beach with McCobb and learned about the things that lived there — or into the woods with his father. He volunteered for everything — from washing the clothes to butchering one of the tame zebus.

Often he gave cause for alarm.

There was the momentous day when his wail came from the edge of the stockade on the inside.

"Father! Father!"

Stone ran through the door. His son was standing on something.

"Come here! I got one!"

"One what?"

"Snake."

Stone ran. Henry was standing on the end a stick— the opposite end of which pinned to earth a venomous serpent.

White-faced, Stone dispatched the reptile. His fear made him angry.

"Don't you know any better than to meddle with a thing like that?"

Henry nodded his head. "I know better. But it was coming after me so I picked up the stick and put it on it. I couldn't hold it down with my hands so I stood on it. Then I couldn't reach it and there weren't any stones or sticks — so I had to get somebody."

"Good Lord."

"It was just starting to slip when you came."

Stone realized his son's embarrassment and careful explanation was in apology for the fact he had found it necessary to summon assistance. He did not, at that precise moment, take the trouble to admire the quality.

"After this, if you see a snake, you get out of its way as fast as you can and call someone immediately."

There was the day when Stone himself had carelessly left open the door of the stockade. Henry had wandered out and McCobb had shut the portal. They had not missed the child for what they afterward assumed to be more than an hour.

Jack announced the first sign of the disappearance. "I'm looking for Mr. Henry."

Stone, who was reading on the porch, glanced from his book at his watch.

"He's probably out with McCobb."

"No, sir. Mr. McCobb's in the shop making shoes."

"Then he's in the compound. Henry!" Stone called through the window in the tone parents use the world over to summon their offspring.

No answer.

"You'll find him."

Ten minutes later a grayish Jack returned. "He's gone."

"Gone!" Stone's book dropped.

In a second he was in the yard. He had picked up his rifle. Jack had summoned McCobb. They threw open the gate.

"That way, McCobb. I'll go this. You take it to the beach, Jack."

Jack nodded and flourished the butcher knife which he had snatched from the kitchen table. His expression would have chilled a gorilla.

McCobb paused long enough to call, "Don't worry, Stone. The boy will be all right."

But Stone had already plunged out of sight on the trail to the zebus.

McCobb trotted toward the brook with an anxious face. Stone ran headlong to the corral and found nothing. It was Jack who located the child and set up a wild halooing. They converged on the beach. Jack was wreathed in smiles.

"He was sitting here on the sand fishing," Jack held up a pole which had been pulled from a bush and to which was tied a long vine. There was neither hook nor bait.

Henry fidgeted.

His father sat down weakly.

"You know you should never go out without someone, son."

"How old do I have to be before I can go alone?"

"Fourteen."

"Couldn't I go a little way when I'm seven?"

"No."

McCobb caught his breath. "Did you think you'd be able to catch anything with that, Henry?"

The child looked at his tackle. "Nothing very big," he confessed, "but I thought maybe a little teeny, teeny fish would bite the end and I could pull it out before it could let go."

Jack exploded into laughter. Stone postponed his lecture on taking illicit advantage of open gates. They returned to the house.

Sometimes, at night, McCobb and Stone would talk. Often they would sit for long hours in silence — for they had covered long ago most of the subjects which they thought would be of mutual interest. Occasionally, now, their discussions would be of the world and what was taking place there.

"We left at an interesting time," McCobb would say, and Stone would not need to wonder if there were faint and unprotesting regret in his voice. "That fellow Edison was starting things to hum. I don't think the possibilities of electricity were ended with the invention of incandescent lights and power, and what-not, either.

"Then — there's flying."

"Fiddle-faddle," said Stone, remembering an editorial he had written on the subject.

"Well — you can't overlook balloons."

"I can overlook balloons," Stone would reply. "And I do overlook balloons." Something of his drawing-room manner would return to him. "Let's straighten out the problems of travel on the ground, I say, before we start spinning cobwebs in the sky. I trust I am progressive — but I also trust a thousand years of civilization are realized before man takes wings."

"I'd like to have a look at the bay on the southeast corner of the island," McCobb always submerged his wonderings about the world they had left with a little forage on his own in the local bush.

"Go ahead. Take the boat."

He would take the boat—if the weather promised to hold — and in some seasons it was absolutely steady — and sail out of the harbor and along the coast.

Then a new McCobb would come into being. He would be master of himself, sailing his own small ship, in his own world, on his own business. He'd smoke and steer and stare.

He had, thus, found the crocodile-ridden swamp at the head of the lake. He had discovered the unnamed birds which were taller than ostriches and laid eggs a foot long and which had an extremely violent dispositions.

One day he returned from an absence of forty-eight hours with a cloth bag which he took to the "shed." He spent some time there and talked to Stone about it that night, after they had shared a bottle of wine to celebrate his home-coming.

"I have a little surprise for you," McCobb said.

"New bird. Because if that's it — I had enough of birds the first time I saw those filthy creatures."

"No." McCobb fished in his pocket and poured a handful of shining metal on the table.

Stone stared at it. "Is it?" he asked finally.

McCobb nodded. "Gold. Pure gold. I found it in those hills north of the lake. In rotten quartz. There's enough on the surface to sink a ship."

Henry bent over the treasure. "Can I have some?"

"May I have some," his father suggested.

"May I?"

"You may have it all, Henry. It's no good to me."

> ***"Gold. Pure gold. I found it in those hills north of the lake."***

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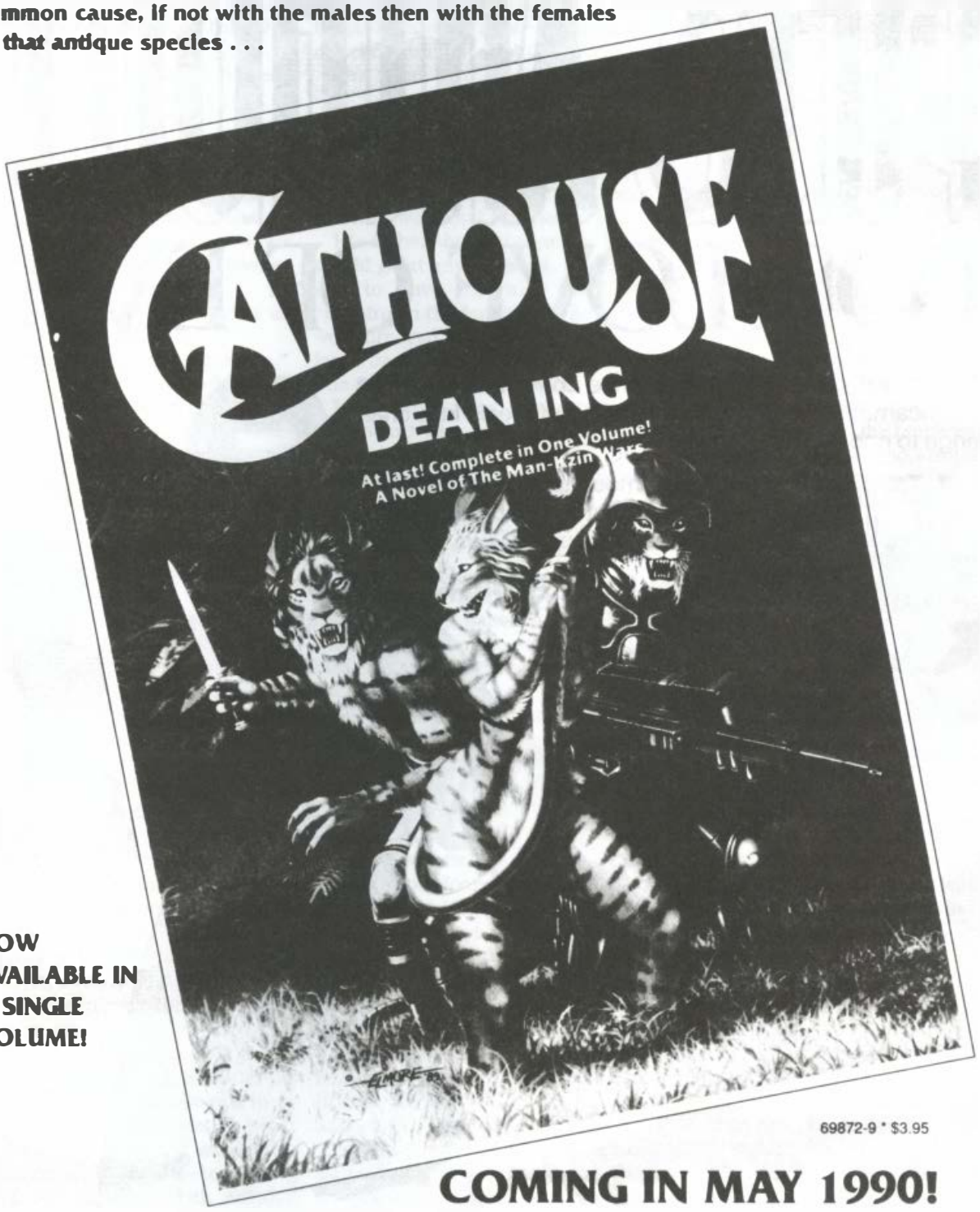

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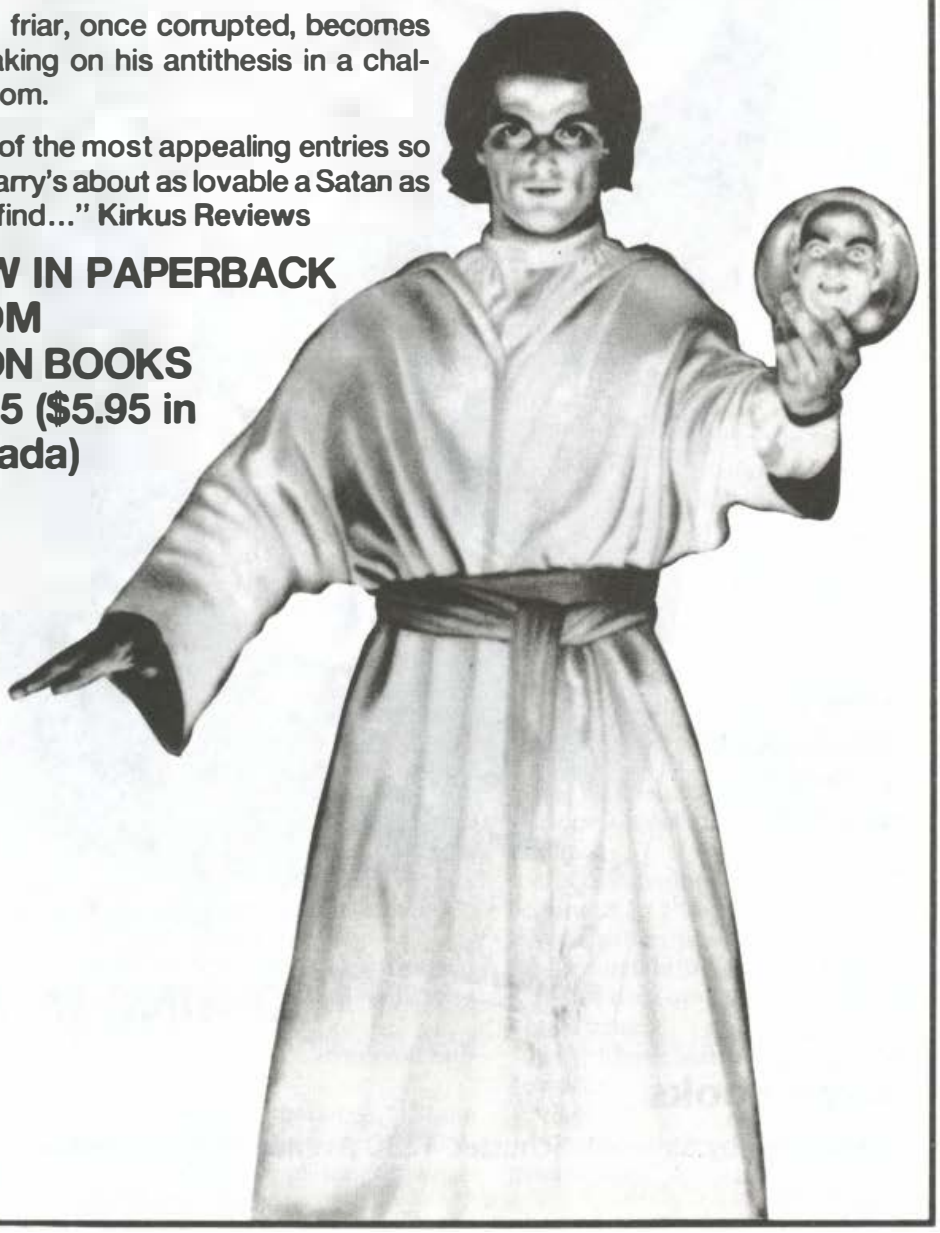

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"Unless," Stone suggested, "you want to go into the ornament business. It works easily — and it might be something for Henry to learn. There's a book about it around here. Benvenuto Cellini and so on."

The Scot stared at the metal. "I wonder if I could do that sort of thing?"

"Whynot?"

McCobb developed a new interest which eventually became almost a passion.

THE YEAR 1905 they remembered as the year of the hurricane. It came at the end of the monsoons.

Henry was at his studies when McCobb spoke about it to Stone. "Probably time for it now."

"For what?" Henry asked, glad of an excuse to end his work.

"A change of the prevailing winds," his father said. "Go ahead, now. Seven plus six plus three divided by four is how much?"

Outside the skies were thickening — not rapidly as in a northern thundershower, but slowly, as if more fury was to be reaped for patient effort. The sun went out before the morning "schoolwork" was finished. The sky where it had been was first white, then cream colored, then gray in darkening shades to black.

Leaves withered and scant puffs of air made them swing heavily.

The first lightning was very far away and merely made the beholders guess that they had caught a flash. Soon distant clouds were evanescently silhouetted. Thunder stirred.

Then it was on them. The wind rose like a siren. The rain came slantwise and so rapidly that it collected on slopes, and the ground in the compound seemed to be bouncing with peas from a celestial hopper. It became impossible to talk in anything like an ordinary tone.

Henry was calm. He watched his father's face for his cues. But presently, as the speed and pressure of the gale grew, it became obvious that his father was worried. Henry bent toward his ear. "It's only wind and rain. They're soft," he shouted.

His father answered with an absent nod.

It grew cold — colder than it had ever been on the island. Jack lighted a fire in the grate, but a separate gust came down the chimney and blew it into the room. A second fire was extinguished by a rush of water.

Henry stared through the window. It was dark outside but he could see under the sides of the nearest trees turned whitely upward in the wind.

The thunder bowled directly overhead. Lightning never stopped but danced from place to place.

The wind increased in pitch and velocity until those who sat in the shaking house believed could increase no more, and until it became intolerable to their nerves, and then it did increase and add to its ferocity.

Henry was least terrified of all.

His father thought that the house would go at any moment. It was unsafe to leave, for huge trees were crashing in the forest and their roots were dragged like brooms across the land. Jack sat and rocked his body. The Scot muttered steadily.

Henry bent near to the big man and heard him wail, "I wish I was home, home, home!"

When he went to McCobb, the Scot looked at his watch and shouted to him, "You better go to bed. That's where all good little boys and girls should be now."

Henry went finally and sat beside his father on a hassock. The thatch was ripped from the roof in a single blast and water began to dribble into the room.

For six hours the terror was endured and then, abruptly, its last breath whistled over the Indian Ocean and peace was restored.

The men relaxed.

It was early night, and here and there a star briefly appeared. Everyone went outdoors to investigate the damage, but Henry was abstracted. He did not react in his usual way when Jack came running from the zebu pen and said that a man was lying under a tree.

They went, armed, to see. They found a hairy back and a body that had a shape more or less human. But it was not a man. It had a tail and a fox-like head and it was dead.

Stone stared at it. "That's a lemur," he said, at last. "A giant lemur. There were some in prehistoric times. They must be mighty shy — not to have showed themselves in all these years."

Jack frowned. "That's not a man?"

"No, Jack. Not a man."

"Dawgone. That's what I saw the first night we was here. And now I recollect what was funny about that there man. He had a tail."

The minds of McCobb and Stone harked back through time to the first hours of their arrival and they remembered Jack's "man." They exchanged glances. Here was at last the final lifting of the long unspoken thought that perhaps somewhere in the secret places of the island a breed of men lived furtively. They turned over the dead animal and looked at Jack and smiled.

But Henry had received two new ideas, born of the stress of the hurricane. He was scarcely interested in the lemur. He spoke of his ideas when his father came to his bedside before he had fallen asleep.

Henry's blue eyes were wide and intent in the gloom. "Father!"

"Yes, son."

"Isn't this home?"

"Yes, son. It's all the home we have." His silhouette, tall and supple, bent over the bed.

"Then why did Jack say he wished he was home?"

"Oh — did he say that?"

"In the lightning."

"I'll explain all about it tomorrow, son. It's part of your geography lesson."

"Oh."

"Go to sleep."

"Father!"

Patiently now, "Yes, son?"

"What are girls?"

A long pause. A pause so long that it marked the mind of the child. "Girls?"

"Boys and girls. I'm a little boy. What's a girl? Are they little, too?"

Stone realized that they had grown away entirely even from the mention of women. His silence had been the result of this life. But the silence of McCobb and Jack was doubtless in deference to him. "Girls are part of another lesson, son. I'll tell you about them."

"Now?"

"Not now. Go to sleep."

" 'Night."

"Goodnight."

CHAPTER SIX

THE YEARS on the island passed with unbelievable speed, from the

standpoint of retrospect. They mingled and telescoped in a memory of similar days and regular changes of the two seasons. Little things made separate days stand out. They recalled events, but they confused dates.

A day when Henry was observed by his father floating in his boat on the pond-still harbor and looking intently overboard. His father stood on the beach and watched. He wondered what the boy was seeing. And then, suddenly, the water near the boat broke and there emerged a long and terrible arm, a sinuous arm, covered with saucer-shaped suckers and feeling in the unfamiliar air.

Henry regarded the arm with interest but his father paled.

"Row, son, row! Come ashore!"

"There's an odd thing down here in the water — "

"I know. Hurry — it's a devilfish."

Henry rowed in obediently although reluctantly and his sweating father saw that the monster followed him nearly to the water's edge.

Was Henry nine then, or ten?

How old was he when they began to talk in French and German instead of English. Eight for French? Seven?

It was on his twelfth birthday that he showed his father the chalice he had carved from wood and covered with gold leaf. Its shape was handsome, but the horses he had engraved upon it were faintly like the pictures of horses but woefully unlike horses in the flesh.

It was on his twelfth birthday that Stone discussed him with McCobb. Faithful McCobb. He had passed fifty. His eyes were still clear and his muscles firm — but his hair was salted with gray.

"What do you think of the lad, McCobb?"

"He's a grand lad."

"And what are his faults?"

"None," the Scotchman said loyally.

"And what characteristics might become faults in him?"

McCobb drew on his pipe. "That's different. He's independent and fearless. He's idealistic. You can have ideals here in this wilderness but the world would shock them rudely. He's willful and stubborn."

"That's true."

"And I've never seen a lad who had no contact with the lassies. It makes them strange. He's manly enough and he's polite. He'd make friends swiftly in any city — but he's strange. There's a look in his eye — an absent look — that's going to increase, Stephen, when he passes fourteen and begins to feel things he cannot define."

Stone sighed. "I've told him, McCobb — all about women. About women as mothers. And I've recounted their sins. Their shortcomings. Their lack of imagination and their superficiality. I've tried to educate him — prejudice him, perhaps — without lying. He understands."

"But will he understand when he begins to hunger — "

"That hunger," Stone said with a quick anger, "is deceitful."

"Deceitful, maybe — but it's strong, Stephen, it's mighty strong. And here it'll be like wanting the moon. Not even the moon — because you can see that."

"Do you resent my plan, McCobb — after all these years?"

"I do not. He's a fine lad. I was thinking only yesterday that I'd like to start him with the higher mathematics. You'll be well along to making a newspaper man of him, with your exercises and your editorial writing and your discussions of news and policy. But I can make an engineer of him, too, and it'll do no harm. Jack's taught him to play the banjo — and we might as well combine to make him the cistern of all our knowledge. I'll teach him science."

"You've done very well."

The Scotchman chuckled. "I've done a little. He's learned his botany and his zoology. There isn't a plant on the island he hasn't gathered and we've invented names for the ones we cannot find in the books, as you know. But I made a mistake about not telling him of devilfish — having never seen one in these waters."

"I don't think you should be blamed for that. He should have had the sense to see that it was an unwholesome thing."

McCobb shrugged. "That's a characteristic him. He has the sense — but his interest is always getting the best of his caution."

Henry came round the house at that moment. He had been spading in the garden. His young shoulders were bare and his skin was Indian color. His hair had darkened a little and it now hung damply over his brow. He wore trousers of soft-tanned leather and shoes not unlike low riding boots. He grinned.

"I got the new bed spaded. I'll plant it this afternoon."

"Good work. You didn't have to finish it today. It was a two-day job."

"You get full of energy," Henry said to his father. "And then — you want to work."

"Even on your birthday?"

"Of course. What's the difference?"

"I was going to give you a recess from your studies this afternoon."

"I'd like that."

"And you can choose what you want to do."

Henry sat down on the step and considered. "Well — I'll fix that clock right after lunch. I've had it apart for four days now and every time I put it together there's something left over." He laughed.

McCobb interrupted him. "He won't let me help."

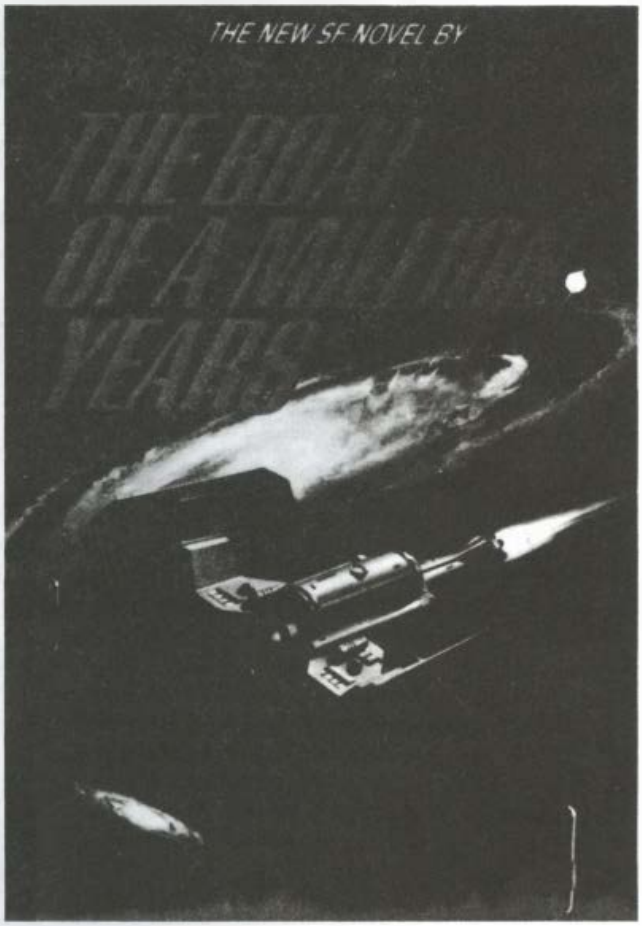
"I'll get it. Then I want to swim. I swam a hundred and six feet under water yesterday. McCobb measured it. After that — let's go for one of those pumas."

That was when Henry was twelve.

At fourteen or fifteen he sailed the big boat alone in the harbor and sometimes even outside the harbor. He went with his father and helped him build three signal fires — one on each claw of the land that surrounded the bay and one on the top of the mountain. He read about the use of the lasso, at that time, too, and the idea enthralled him.

He made a lariat and practiced throwing it with such intensity that it was difficult to make him study for weeks. He became proficient in the use of his lasso, and startled his father by announcing that some day he was going to find where the big lemurs lived and rope one of them so that he could bring it home alive.

In those years they had one very long and wet rainy season. They opened a good many of the copper drums which Stone had stored in the cellar. Jack caught a fever which kept him in bed delirious for a long time and once, while Henry was taking care of him, the big man raved



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for an hour and more about a girl named Clara.

In those years they moved the garden from the stockade to the broad pampas where the zebus lived in their corral and they worked the ground by setting the steam winch in the middle of the place selected and pulling in the plow and harrow, so that the patch resembled a huge wheel with the furrows for spokes.

Stone was stung by a scorpion and was incapacitated for many days. McCobb filled his room and the shelves in the livingroomwith golden ornaments and statues and vases and bowls which he made in his shop. Henry often helped him work.

In those yearsHenry'svoice broke into sudden bass notes and returned two octaves to its childhood pitch until it finally settled in a rich baritone. Jack taught him to sing parts. Stone forbade the ballads about women. They made brand-new furniture for the house and they developed flowergardens insidethe stockade.

Henry grew rapidly — too rapidly, for a while — so that his towering back and his spreading shoulders were gaunt and thin. But when he began to fill that frame with sinew it became apparent he would be a majestic man. His boyhood handsomeness took on some of his father's sculptured aquilinity.

They found where the lemurs lived — in the thick forest on the other side of the mountain. They found sapphires in a rusty escarpment of one of the lesserhills. Henrymade a dozen maps of the island and it was he who became fatigued with the familiar terms, "The Island," "The Mountain," and "The Lake."

He changed them to Stone Island, McCobb Mountain and Jack's Lake.

To him, all the years were divided into happy and fascinating days. The world was his. He was having the romance of a Robinson Crusoe with the equipment that might have been provided by a Jules Verne. He was the modern man and the dawn man. No better life could have been arranged for a boy. None more exciting, none more healthful, none more adventuresome.

THEN, IN 1915, a strange cloud passed over them.

It began with the change of the monsoons. This time they blew with almosthurricaneviolence, but steadily. Day and night the storm-racked trees bent and sang. The surfturned the color of canvas and toiled mightily over the reefs beyond the end of Stone Island.

Henry read and studied in his father's dogeared library. He counted the hours of the storm and waited patiently for it to abate. There was nothing else to do.

But, after the seventy-fifth hour, the rain ceased falling and the wind continued. The vegetation shook itself dry. The sea piled up prodigiously, so that its smash upon the shore could be heard above the gale.

"...the big man raved for an hour or more about a girl named Clara..."

The skies cleared a little and illumination came with the hours of dawn.

Henry grew restive. He went finally to his father and shouted that he was going for a walk. His father bade him be careful, and he left.

He went along the more exposed land arm of the bay. He forced his wayagainst the wind — which penetrated even the undergrowth.

He came out on a rocky headland where the sea broke. it moved in lofty, sunken billows. They bent forward,stumbling on theirgreenbases, and wrecked themselves upon the rocks, changing into foam and hurling ragged spray into the wind. The spent waves were sucked back. New waves came.

That spectacle Henry watched with mature composure.

He had an inward desire to throw out his arms and shout back at the surf with all of his power, but he controlled it and stood still, watching the unreasoning fury of the sea before andbelowhim.

In a few moments he was drenched with spray.

He tossed back his hair and grinned a personal taunt atthe water. He felt exalted. He felt strong.

He stayed for an hour, watching the tumult. Then he was joined by McCobb, who picked his way carefully over the slippery headland and shouted something in his ear which could not be understood and which was vaguely explained by signs.

McCobb, too, felt the majesty of the sight. McCobb at heart was an artist. His northland exterior hid a multitude of appreciations and sensitivities.

They were like two men listening to a great orchestra — each delighting in the fact that his companion also heard and comprehended.

Then, suddenly, Henry felt McCobb's fingers bite into his arm. He looked with surprise at the Scotchman and found that his face was chalky and his arms extended.

The boy's eyes followed the arm. Far out at sea, beyond the place where the waves individualized themselves, there was a ship.

Henry froze.

McCobb screamed in his ear, "Get your father."

Henry ran back. He ran like a madman, ignoring the ripping brush and the irregular ground. In his mind's eye was a picture of a ship — a distant, diminutive hulk with bare spars sticking up against the inhospitable horizon.

He burst furiously into the house. "A ship!" His voice clove through the tempest's uproar.

His father read assurance on his face. His father rose gropingly. Into his eyes a fever came and he shook like a leaf. He trotted to the kitchen, plucked Jack's arm, and together theyfollowedHenry.

McCobb was dancing and screaming on the headland. He whirled his arms.

Stone looked. Then he regarded his son, whose soul was in his eyes.

Jack had knelt and folded his hands. He stared into the clouds that scudded overhead and his lips moved in prayer.

The drama on the rocks was horrible in its intensity. Henry found himself frozen, and he could neither think nor move. Stone praised God. Here was a ship at the very hour and year when he had hoped a ship would come. His son was ready for the world. He thought that it would be

impossible to light the fires. He reckoned with acid determination upon the chances of the vessel.

It was still far away, and yet it must have sighted the island. It was making slowly toward it — and it could not have made it in any other direction. A schooner. One of its masts had been hacked down by the gale. It wallowed heavily — as if it was partly filled with water.

It approached.

McCobb continued to scream and wave his arms. Henry stood still.

The waves visibly lifted it. They could see water washing over the decks. They could see the laborious rise of the bows and a long rope that had broken loose and stood out horizontally from a mast.

It was two miles away.

One.

They tried to wave it toward the harbor mouth, although all of them knew that direction was impossible.

Stone bruised his son's arms. They saw how far the ship had settled.

Their voices ripped into the air, shrilly. When, at length, they could see the forms of men moving on the bridge, they went mad.

Then a wave came from which the vessel rose only with the utmost difficulty.

They saw a huge hole that had been staved in the hull. Whether the ship had hit a rock, or the mere power of the sea had broken it in, they did not know.

On the next wave the decks were awash.

On the third wave, only the stern rose and the bows were buried.

The masts made an angle with the water.

The stern stood high.

She sank.

McCobb beat his fists upon the rocks until they ran red.

Jack rent his clothes.

Henry wept.

And now, only Stone stood still — as if a judgement had come upon him.

There was no sign of the ship — save that by and by they observed pieces of wreckage and, for a while, what they thought was a man swimming.

Henry ran for his boat. Jack and Stone needed their united efforts to hold him back. Henry's boat would not have been able to round the harbor mouth in the sea that ran there.

As if in satirical compensation the wind died that afternoon and the sun appeared. With its first rays, the four men who sat on the rocky point were able to salvage the first high-tossed bit of wreckage.

It was an oar.

Then came a box in which were four drowned chickens.

A coat.

After that, a broken boat, a life preserver that floated high in the subsiding surf, and a chair.

They struggled with numb endeavor to reap these precious and yet melancholy items from the waves.

Bits of ship itself drifted shoreward. Late in the afternoon their heap of débris was augmented by a score of things — wooden bowls from the galley, spars, planks, a straw cover from a bottle of wine, and a pillow.

They saved everything as it came in, and all that time they had not spoken to each other.

At last Stone, wading on the rocks, picked up a cupboard and he perceived that the inside was lined with newspaper, tacked on shelves.

The sight of that newsprint devastated him.

He hugged the box to his person. He pulled the tacks with his nails, heedless of the pain. He rolled the wet paper with the utmost care and, when he saw that his find had not been noticed by the others, he hurried secretly back to the house.

The first words he saw inflamed his mind. He could not help his selfishness and fanatic greed for news.

GERMANS ADVANCE ALONG MARNE SECTOR.

That is what he had read.

As he went to the house his mind reeled. Germans advance. There was a war up there in the world. A war involving Germany.

He locked himself in his room. He spread the wet pages with agonizing care and as he worked his eyes gleaned fragments. Woodrow Wilson was President of the United States. England was at war with Germany. Also France. The name of Russia appeared as a combatant.

Finally, the papers were spread and he focussed his eyes. He read.

He forgot his son and McCobb and Jack.

He became for a little while the man he had been — the man of the world, the political power. And he became a student of the new world. They were moving troops through Paris in omnibuses and taxicabs? What were taxicabs? The *Stutram* had radioed for help. What was radioing?

> ***"The ship was still far away, and yet it must have sighted the island."***

The British line was holding well and Paris would be saved.

Paris.

Ah, God, Paris.

The curves of the Seine and the cold gray of Notre Dame. The wide passage of the Boulevard Montparnesse past the place where he had lived when he had studied there. The still dark places of the Bois and the songs and the wine and the lights and the music.

German guns were belching and French blood was making a red mud of Flanders fields but Paris would be saved.

Paris!

On the headland, wading in the sea weed and sliding on the rocks over which water gushed, three men hunted for souvenirs of their Gethsemane.

Henry rubbed shoulders with McCobb. The Scotchman was holding a shoe.

"Somebody's," he said in a world where "somebody" was a word seldomused.

The expression was forlorn, so hopeless and woebegone, that Henry's spirit turned in its tracks.

He grinned.

"We can make better shoes than that."

The sentence rallied the Scot. His eyes lighted and on his tough face there came a smile both radiant and

calm.

"Let's go back to see your father," he suggested. "There's no virtue in this salvage and more'll wash up on the sand down the point."

"Right. Come on, Jack."

The big man flashed his teeth from habit. "Yes, Mr. Henry."

They moved away from the place in a slow file, heartened by an emotional chemistry which the indomitability of Henry's eyes had started.

Thrice they knocked at the locked door of the bedroom before reluctant motion responded.

Stone came out and never did he look more like the substance of his name. His granite face was fixed. he recognized them as if they were not people, but far-fetched theories.

"There's a war," he whispered.

McCobb had seen madness and he was much frightened, but Henry, who had never seen it, laughed.

"War? What are you talking about, father?"

Vacantly, Stone stared. "I found a newspaper in that stuff — that floated — ashore. I've been reading it."

"That's fine, father! It must have been great!"

"It was hideous."

"What do you mean?"

"I — "

He walked into the center of the living room, where the hand-made furniture was arranged between shelves of books and corpulent cupboards, where McCobb's golden handiwork gleamed and where in the shadows were the stuffed birds and animals Henry had collected. "I — "

McCobb pulled out a chair. "Sit down, Stephen. You're overwrought. Jack — bring a drink of whiskey."

Stone swallowed the spirits. He began to talk. "I've read it all. It will be dry soon — and then the rest of you can have it. It taught me — something. It taught me a great deal. It taught me that my coming here was — criminal. It was criminal to you and to Jack — but I had discounted that. It was criminal to myson — but I had an alibi for that.

"It was criminal to myself."

Henry gave back the words he had been told so often. "Why — father — you know it was an accident. The ship was in bad shape and you needed water and you smashed up here — and why blame yourself?"

"It — " Stone began and McCobb, terrified lest the boy who was so nearly a man be told the truth, held up his finger and spoke heartily.

"You couldn't help it. It's nothing."

Stone avoided the eyes of his son. They were very bright and speculative at that instant. He cleared his throat. "But it's my fault. I took too great a risk. And I stranded all of us here."

"Fiddlesticks!" said McCobb.

"You are plumb out of your haid," Jack said.

"When they need me," Stone continued. "When they need me. They need me in America today. They'll need me more tomorrow, if I am any reader of signs. I had a duty greater than any other and I ran away from it into this cloying wonderland. I'm a fool."

"Stephen — "

"Father — "

"A fool, gentlemen."

Stone stalked from the room. No one followed him for several minutes and then Jack stepped from the shadows. "I think I'll just run along behind to see that everything's all right."

McCobb nodded. "Go ahead, Jack. Thanks. And take this." He held out a revolver. Jack stuck the gun in his belt. It pulled his trousers tight enough to reveal in relief the blade and handle of a butcher knife secreted along his thigh.

Silence descended in the house.

McCobb poured himself a drink from the whiskey bottle.

Henry stared at his feet. His face was covered with a fine, golden down. His chin was like his father's. His hands were lean and powerful. He stroked the down.

"Of course," he said softly to McCobb, "I've always known it wasn't — an accident."

McCobb dropped his glass.

"Steady there, son," the Scot murmured.

"I don't mind — much."

McCobb began the speech to which Henry had been long accustomed. "It was a bad night — "

Henry interrupted in a low, forceful voice. "I don't mind a great deal. At first — it was just a feeling. When I was little I experienced it. No one ever talked about how we got here. No one ever talked about why the voyage was made. That wasn't natural. So I just felt that our shipwreck was intentional.

"But gradually" — Henry's eyes expanded as he spoke — "I began to think. You taught me about engines and engineering. I looked at the wreck down on the beach. I dove around it. The propeller had snapped. That, of course, wouldn't happen under accidental conditions — would it?"

The Scot drank again. This recital of the powerful blonde youth who sat idly in the chair was more harrowing to him, in a way, than the afternoon's disaster.

He said nothing.

"I don't mind. I know my father did it."

"Henry my lad — "

"Don't worry. I'll never accuse him of it. He'll never guess that I know."

"Good man!"

"Or that I know why."

McCobb's scalp prickled. "Why?" he repeated stupidly.

"Why. It was — on account of a woman." He did not raise his eyes to ask for confirmation. Instead, he rose and poured McCobb's third drink, which he took from limp hands, back into the bottle.

"Let us take a walk, too," he said with a smile that was poignant and charming and that McCobb always accounted afterward as a sort of miracle.

It was the second time that day that Henry had saved McCobb from intolerable emotions.

They went out into the sunlight together.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IT WAS 1917.

The table in the "living room" on the island house was exquisitely set. A strange function was taking place.

Separated by spotless napery and beautiful silver, by white china and crystal glasses brimming with wine, were Stephen Stone and his son. Their ordinary habiliments of heavy cloth and soft-tanned rawhide were missing. Instead, they wore dinner clothes. Dinner clothes of the late nineteenth century — Stephen's fitting perfectly, and Henry's somewhat too small for his frame — but dinner clothes with satin lapels, and boiled shirts.

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Boston Blackie's Mary *continued from page 43*

structions delivered by a discharged convict.

Next he asked permission to air his blankets on the clothesline in the lower yard. The toolhouse in which his garden implements were kept was near by. From beneath its floor he took the treasures that had cost him the hardest work and greatest risk—a civilian pair of trousers, a blue shirt and a mackinaw coat made from a blanket, and cap. It had taken him one full month to steal them from the tailor-shop where the clothes of the new arrivals were kept after they received their prison stripes. The trousers Blackie put on under his striped ones, pinning up the legs well out of sight. When his blankets went back to his cell, the coat, shirt, and cap were hidden in them.

A half-hour before lock-up time Blackie rolled up his garden hose and carried it to the toolhouse. Once within its doors and alone, he cut off six feet of the hose and wound it around his body, tying it securely in place. Next from a pile of rubbish he unearthed a single rubber glove which he had filched one day from the dispensary. He had tried in vain to get its mate. Two hundred feet of heavy twine from the mill completed the list of his preparations.

It would have puzzled even a man as shrewd as Martin Sherwood to determine how Boston Blackie planned to escape from San Gregorio Penitentiary with the motley array of contraband he had gathered together. The hospital dormitory where he celled was on the top floor of a detached building that stood alone in the yard, fully a hundred feet from the wall that surrounded the prison. It was conceivably possible for a man with even such a makeshift saw as Blackie's to cut the bars of his window and escape his cell, but freedom from his cell with a long step from real freedom. There still remained the thirty-foot wall to be scaled—a wall guarded on top by a gun-guard in a watchtower, and patrolled at the bottom all night by other armed guards.

AT FIVE O'CLOCK Boston Blackie and the other hospital inmates were locked in their cells for the night. Thereafter, twice each hour, a guard was scheduled to pass and inspect the cells. At five minutes past five the Squirrel, faithful to his promise, began to play on his mouth-organ.

And as the boy played, Blackie chipped away the soap and lamp-black with which he had plugged a half-sawed window-bar and cut at it with his pitifully inadequate saw in frantic haste. The noise of the mouth-organ drowned the gentle rasping of the saw, a vitally necessary precaution.

A mirror hung on the wall near the door warned Blackie of the approach of the guard each time he made his rounds. Hour after hour the Squirrel played, and hour after hour Blackie sawed. He had spent a month and a half sawing through the first bar and halfway through the second. Tonight in four hours he must complete the task, for at nine o'clock "lights out" would sound throughout the prison, and silence would settle over the dormitory, making further work on the bar impossible.

The saw-blade cut into his hands and tore his finger-tips. His arms were numb with pain. The singsong rasping seemed like a voice crying out a warning to the guards. The saw grew hot, and and again and again he had to cool it in the water-bucket. Often it seemed as if he couldn't drive his tortured muscles another second, but he conjured into his mind a picture of Martin Sherwood's face with the teeth gleaming in a white line as he bent over a form in a strait-jacket. Sheer will-power kept the saw moving then, and so slowly it was almost imperceptible; but surely, nevertheless, it bit through the steel that seemed a living thing bent on binding Blackie to years of prison slavery and punishment.

At last it was done! With fifteen precious minutes to spare, the saw grated through the outer rim of rust and left the bar severed. With two bars cut and bent outward, Blackie knew he could squeeze his body through the window to the wide ledge outside and four stories above the guarded courtyard below. He swept the glistening filings into his water-bucket, hid the saw, worn now smooth as a knife, and tumbled into his bunk a quivering wreck.

The prison-bell tolled out nine; the lights winked out; and silence settled over the dormitory.

At one o'clock Blackie waited for the guard to pass, and then, with a half hour at his disposal, slipped out of his convict clothes and fashioned them into a dummy which he covered with blankets to resemble a sleeping man.

He dressed in his civilian clothes, with his six-foot length of hose coiled about his body. He tucked his one glove carefully into his breast beside the ball of twine. Then he pulled out one of the heavy legs of his stool and tied it across his back. His preparations were complete. He took another stool-leg, and, using it as a lever, bent the severed bars straight out. A moment later he stood outside on the window ledge.

BELOW HIM the wall fell away sheer for four stories. Six feet above his head the rain-gutter marked the level of the flat roof. So

far, Blackie had followed in the footsteps of other men who had tried to escape. But the others, once free from their cells, had gone down, each to be shot to death as he lurked in the courtyard vainly seeking a means to cross the towering wall that barred him in.

Instead of going down, Blackie went up. He took off his shoes and hung them about his neck. With fingers and toes clutching the bricks that jutted out a few inches around the window coping, he climbed slowly and with infinite caution. A single slip, the slightest misstep, and Martin Sherwood would smile and light a cigar in the morning when they carried his body in.

Inch by inch Blackie raised himself, pressing his body close to the wall to keep from overbalancing. For the first time he realized his physical weakness. His arms were like dead things, and unresponsive to the iron will that commanded them. Again and again, in the agony of forcing his wasted muscles to obedience, he thought of releasing his clutch and falling to a quick death—relief! But always, in the wake of that thought, Martin Sherwood's face danced before his eyes, and the cruel satisfaction of the Deputy nerved Blackie to climb on.

At last his groping, bloody fingers clutched the edge of the roof-gutter. He faced the last crucial task. He must now swing his feet clear and raise himself to the roof by his arms alone—no great feat for a well man but, to the ill and exhausted convict, one that taxed even his iron resolution to the last atom of its resource.

Somehow he did it and lay at last safe on the roof, blinking back at the stars, which hung so low it seemed he could reach up and touch them. He lay still, thoughtlessly content, until the chiming prison-bell forced on his wandering mind the realization that a precious half-hour was gone, leaving him still inside the walls that barred the road to Mary.

Blackie rose and crept silently to the edge of the roof nearest the wall. He was high above that stone barricade from which he was separated by a full hundred feet of space. Nothing, apparently, spanned that impassable gap, and yet when one looked again, something did span it—two glistening copper wires that ran down from the roof at a sharp angle to a pole outside the wall above which they hung a full twenty feet. They were uninsulated, live wires which fed the prison machinery and lighting system with a current that was death to whatever touched them—yet they were the key to Boston Blackie's plan of escape.

Carefully he unwound the length of rubber hose from about his body. Carefully he laid the insulating rubber over the strands of shining metal. With infinite pain he bound and rebound the stool-leg to the dangling length of rubber that hung beneath them. The result was a crazily insecure trapeze which swung under wires the touch of which was fatal.

THEN BOSTON Blackie pulled out his ball of jute twine and attached it to a brick chimney, the only thing upright and secure in sight. He glanced toward the wall far beneath him, where a sleepy guard dozed in his tower; then Blackie unhesitatingly seated himself on the bar of his improvised trapeze. With his back toward the wall, he swung clear of the roof and began to slide down the wires, regulating his speed with the cord on the chimney.

The light wires swayed and sagged but supported his weight. Yard by yard he let himself down. Half the perilous journey through the air was accomplished, and he was directly over the wall, when the chimney cord that kept him from shooting madly backward down the incline, suddenly snapped. The hose trapeze shot downward at headlong speed. Instinctively Boston Blackie reached up with both hands to seize the wires and check his fall.

Even as he reached, realization of the certain death they carried flashed through his brain. He stayed one hand within inches of the wires. With the other—the one covered with his single rubber glove—he caught one of the wires and gradually checked his fall. Slowly he slid over the wall and down toward the pole outside the prison inclosure. When its shadow warned him he had almost reached it, he stopped himself and turning his head, studied the network of wires with deep caution. Seeing no way of avoiding their death-dealing touch if he tried to work his way through them and clamber down the pole, he slipped from his seat on the trapeze, hung by his hands for the fraction of a second and dropped.

The fall jarred him from head to foot but left him crouching by the light-pole—uninjured and outside the walls.

For five minutes he lay motionless, watching for any sign of alarm from the walls. None came; he was free.

Slowly and on his stomach, Indian-fashion, Blackie worked his way out from San Gregorio and across the sweet-smelling fields that led toward the world of free men. When the last watch-tower was behind him, he rose to his feet and raised his arms toward the blinking and kindly stars in a fervent but unspoken prayer of thanksgiving. He had done the impossible. He had escaped from the hitherto unbeatable prison ruled by Martin Sherwood.

Just as the morning bell was rousing the sleepy cell-houses at San Gregorio to another weary day of serfdom, a gaunt wraith of a man climbed a rear stairway to a tiny apartment on Laguna Street, San Francisco. The early morning fog added to his ghost-like appearance as he softly rapped at the bedroom window with the knock that is the open sesame of the underworld. The woman sleeping within awoke instantly with a start, but lay quiet, fearing she still dreamed, for in her dream she had been with Boston Blackie, her husband.

Again she heard the soft rap at the window. She sprang to the sash, looked out and threw it open, seizing in her arms the scarecrow of a man who stood there and dragging him inside.

"Mary!" he cried.

"Blackie!" she answered.

All the endearments of all the languages of the world accentuated a hundredfold were in the two words.

"God in heaven, I thank you," she whispered, falling to her knees with Blackie's stained and haggard face clasped to her breast.

BOSTON BLACKIE is missing from his cell in the hospital, sir. He sawed two window-bars and got out during the night. He left his clothes rolled into a dummy on

his bunk, and the night-guard didn't discover it until the morning a moment ago. But he can't be far away. He couldn't have got over the wall and must be hidden somewhere about the prison, the night-captain thinks. He has ordered the whole force out to make a search."

The hospital turnkey saluted the Deputy Warden and stood awaiting his orders. There was no surprise in Martin Sherwood's eyes, and no excitement in his manner.

"And so he's gone," he said. "His convict suit in his bunk, you say?" The guard nodded.

"Tell thecaptainhe needn'tbother to search the prison yard or buildings. He's wasting his time," Sherwood continued. "Blackie has five to seven hours' start at least, and he's miles away from here now."

"But he can't be. He must be inside the walls. He couldn't have got over them," protested the guard.

"He'soverthe walls, safe enough," Sherwood returned with conviction. "Boston Blackie isn't a man to saw hiswayout of a cell and then hide in a dark corner of the prison and wait for us to find him. He's gone, without a doubt."

The Deputy pulled his phone toward him and called the chief of police of San Francisco at his home.

"Boston Blackie, the safe-blower, has escaped," he said when a sleepy voice answered him over the wire. "What? It's the first time, yes, but there has to be a first time for everything, you know, particularly when you are dealing with a man like Blackie. Now, Chief, he's bound to go straight to Mary Dawson, a woman who is living somewhere in your town. I wish you would put your best men out quick to locate her. It ought to be easy, for every crook in town knows them both, and somebody will be sure to tell where she is living. You haven't a second to spare, for both she and Blackie willdropout of sight before night so completely we never will find them. We'll offerfive hundred dollars reward for Blackie. Sure! All right. I'll be over."

Martin Sherwood hung up the phone and turned to the work before him with something akin to pleasurable anticipation on his face. Like all truly strong men he found satisfaction in a battle with a worthy foeman.

MEANWHILE, IN Mary Dawson's Laguna Street apartment, Boston Blackie was no less alert than Martin Sherwood.

"Does anyone know of this address?" he asked the woman who sat on his knee stroking his hair and running gentle, loving fingers sadly over the deep lines left in his haggard face by pain and illness.

"I moved only a month ago when you sent me word," she said. "Scarcely anyone knows. I met Diamond Frank and Stella last week, and they were up hereto dinner."

"We must get away from here at once," Blackie said. "We've got to disappear so completely it will be humanly impossibly to trace us. One overlooked clue—the slightest in the world—will lead the Deputy Warden to us. He's no ordinary copper. It's a hundred to one he has half the detectives in the town out hunting this flat now, for he knows, of course, that I'd go to you. But, little sweetheart, I'll promise you this: whether he finds us or not, he'll never take Boston Blackie back to San Gregorio. Have you any guns?"

Mary nodded, shuddering, and began to throw clothes into a trunk.

"Never mind packing the trunk, Mary," Blackie corrected. "Just throw together what you can get into a coupleofsuit-cases, dear. We'llleave everything else behind. We're not going to use any transfer-men in this move, little woman."

Mary sighed as she obeyed without question. Little feminine trinkets are dear to a woman, and she hated to leave them, but Blackie's word wastheonly law she knew.

There was nothing to distinguish the man and woman carrying suitcases, who took a car near Mary's apartment and crossed to the other side ofthe city, from scores of other passengers who travelled with them—except the man's emaciation. They rented a room in a modest lodging-house on the edge of a good residence district.

"Mary," said Blackie the moment they were alone, "there's work for you to do quickly. We're safe here until tonight, but no longer. Go downtown to Levy's theatrical costuming shop. Tell them you're playing a grandmother's part in an amateur play and get a complete old woman's outfit—white wig, clothes, shoes, everything. Get a cheap hat and a working-girl's hand-me-down, too. You're too well dressed not to attract attention where we're going. Draw every dollar we have in the bank just as soon as possible, for every moment you are on the street is a danger. You better bring me something to eat, too—just a loaf of bread, for I ruined my stomach with lye to get into the prison hospital, and I can't eat anything but crusts. Above everything, be careful no one recognizes you and tails you out here. Every copper in town must be looking for us by this time."

He drew two revolvers from the suit-case, looked carefully to their loads and laid them on the bed.

"I'm going to sleep while you're gone. I didn't get much rest last night," he said, smiling happily.

AT NOON THAT day, while Boston Blackie lay sleeping in the crosstown lodging-house, the police located Mary Dawson's Laguna Street apartment. Diamond Frank had casually mentioned the address to another crook, who happened to mention it to a bartender who was a stool-pigeon; and so, deviously but surely, it finally reached headquarters.

The chief of police called in a dozen of his best men, armed them and sent them out in two autos.

"Take no chances with him, boys," the chief warned. "When he's lying dead in a morgue, it might be safe to walk in on him, but I wouldn'tgamble on it then unless I had seen him killed. He's a bad one. Take care of yourselves."

The chief's men did so to the very best of their ability. They put officers with drawn guns at every door and window—outside. When everything was ready and not even a mouse could have escaped from the house without being riddled by a dozen bullets, the captain in charge of the expedition asked who would volunteer to enter the apartment and arrest the escaped convict. The policemen shifted uneasily on their feet and glanced expectantly at each other, but no one spoke. Someone hadan inspiration.

"Let's send the landlady to the door with a phoney letter," he suggested. "When the girl comes to the door, we'll grab her and bust in on Blackie before he knows were in the joint."

The plan was adopted. The landlady knocked on the door, with four brawny men behind her ready to seize whoever opened it. There was no response. Repeated knocks were equally fruitless. Finally the landlady took a passkey, and opened the door.

"Gone," chorused the detectives as theythe empty rooms.

"The girl's out somewhere probably to meet him. Then they'll come back here, both of 'em," the captain declared. "Theyhaven't blowed. Look at the trunks and clothes. Now we'll get 'em dead to rights. We'll just plant inside here and cover them when they come back."

But the guards in Mary's flat stayed there three days ready to pounce on the man—who never came. Meanwhile Sherwood started a canvass of every hotel and lodging-house in the city. On the third day a detective brought in the information that a landlady, when shown Blackie's picture, identified it as that of a man who came with his wife and rented a room on the morning of the escape. They had two suit-cases. The woman went out and came back with some packages. The next morning when she went to collect her rent for the second day, the couple had gone. That was all the landlady could tell.

"I thought so," Sherwood mused when the news was phoned him. "He's hidden somewhere he thinks is perfectly secure. Every exit from the city is guarded, but that's pretty much wasted effort, for Boston Blackie, if I know him, won't stir from his place of refuge for weeks, maybe months. The man who finds him now will have real reason to compliment himself. And," he added with unalterable determination, "I'm going to be thatman."

Sherwood turned the management of the prison over to a subordinate and spent his time directing the investigation of the hundreds of clues the reward brought to the police. But all proved futile. Fewer and fewer clues came in. A newer sensation crowded stories of the hunt for Boston Blackie from the first pages of the newspapers. The police frankly were beaten. Only Martin Sherwood kept at the task.

Sherwood puzzled and pondered for dayswithout findingthe clue he sought. Every detail of the escaped convict's appearance as he last saw him on the prison lawn was graven photographically into his brain. He remembered the emaciatedface, the too-brilliant eyes, the shrunken shoulders from which the flesh had fallen away during his illness in the hospital.

"The doctor said that illness was real," he pondered. "Stomach trouble, he said, and he's not a man to be fooled. Blackie was really sick, without a doubt, and yet that sickness couldn't have been mere chance. He hadn't eaten anything, but outer crusts of bread for weeks. Even the night he escaped he left the inside of a loaf in his cell. Ah! The inside of a loaf—and he always did that—always threw away the inside of bread loaves because he couldn't digest them."

Martin Sherwood sprang to his feet more nearly excited than he had been inyears.

"It's a long chance," he said to himself. "But it is a chance. He'll be more than human if he has thought of that too."

The Deputy Warden ordered his car and drove out to the city incinerator where the garbage wagons of the city consigned their ill-smelling burdens to a cleansing flame. Sherwood explained to the superintendent.

"Tell every garbage-collector in the city," he said, "that I'll pay the man who finds the hollowed-out insides of loaves of bread in a garbage can one hundred dollars for the address from which the can was filled."

IN THREEDAYS, Mary, just three short days, we'll sail together through the Golden Gate. You and I will be together with a new world ahead, and Martin Sherwood behind, nursing the bitterness of defeat!"

Mary, with a better, sweeter happiness in her eyes than Boston Blackie had ever seen there, clung to him as he spoke. Theywere in the two small rooms—kitchen and bedroom—in which they had lain securely hidden during the ten days which had elapsed since Blackie's flight from prison. Their landlady, who scrubbed office-building floors at night to support herself, lived alone in the floor below. The house was an attic cottagewith agarden, inSan Francisco's sunny Mission. Boston Blackie and his Mary sat hand in hand planning a future without a flaw—a future as rosy-hued as the girl's cheeks. The realization of their hopes was very near now. In three days the *Colon* sailed for Central American ports. Their passage was paid. The hunt for Blackie had died down. Once aboard the steamer and out of the harbor, a matter of little risk now, they would be safe and free and unafraid.

So they sat and planned in happy whispers — for caution still bade them be low-voiced while their landlady was in the house — while just below them, low-voiced and cautious too, Martin Sherwood questioned the landlady.

"I have no roomers but a Miss Collins and her mother, who is an invalid, poor soul. They have the two rooms in the attic," she was telling the Deputy. "The girl is learning shorthand and don't go out much. The old lady is crippled with rheumatism and can't leave the rooms. Oh, they are nice, quiet, respectable people, sir."

Sherwood was deeply puzzled. From the garbage-can behind this house had come a half-dozen loaves of bread in three days, with the crusts—and only the crusts—eaten off. he had come to the house after painstakingpreparation, feelingthat Boston Blackie and victory were in his grasp. The landlady's story of a girl who studied shorthand, and an invalid mother, found no place in his theory of what he would find there, and yet it was evident the woman spokethe truth.

"What does the girl look like? What is the color of her hair?" he asked.

"Red, sir—a beautiful red like a polished copper kettle."

Mary's hair was coal black. For the first time Martin Sherwood's confidence was shaken.

"When did they come here?" he asked.

"Why, let me see," the woman reckoned on her fingers. "It was a week ago Thursday, sir, in the evening. They saw my advertisement in the

paper and came just before I went to work—which is nine o'clock, sir."

Blackie had escaped early on the morning of the day she mentioned. On that Thursday night he and Mary had disappeared from the lodging-house which was their first place of refuge. The date and hour of their arrival decided Sherwood. He would have a look at this redhaired girl and her invalid mother.

"I would like to go up and see them for a moment," he told the woman. "I'm an officer." He showed his star. "Oh, no, nothing wrong at all. I just want to see them. I like to keep track of people in the district."

"Certainly, sir. I'll call Miss Collins and—"

"No, no—that isn't necessary," hastily interrupted Sherwood. "I'll just step upstairs and knock."

THOUGH HE tried to step lightly, as Sherwood's tread sounded on the uncarpeted stairway there was a sudden shuffling of feet on the floor above. He smiled, for that augured well, and he felt for the gun slung inside his coat. Then he rapped.

Muffled sounds came from behind the door. A chair squeaked as it was pushed across the floor. A few seconds of silence, and then, plain and unmistakable, came the sound of a woman sobbing hysterically. Sherwood tried the door, found it locked, and knocked again peremptorially.

The door suddenly was flung wide open, and in a flood of light from within a woman faced him—a woman with a wealth of bronze hair that should have been black, a woman with tears on cheeks that were as bloodless as death, a woman whom he instantly recognized as Boston Blackie's Mary.

Martin Sherwood sprang inside with drawn revolver ready to answer the stream of lead he expected from some corner of the room. None came. Instead he saw a woman, white-haired and evidently feeble, sitting beside a bed with bowed head while her body shook with convulsive sobs. On the bed, covered with a sheet that was drawn up over the face, lay a silent, motionless form that told its own story.

Sudden disappointment gripped Martin Sherwood's heart. Had the man he had rated so highly cheated him of his long-coveted triumph only by the coward's expedient of suicide?

"Where's Boston Blackie?" he demanded, his gun still covering the room.

Mary pointed silently to the still figure on the bed.

"Dead!" exclaimed the Deputy Warden. "When? How?"

"An hour ago," she sobbed. "You starved him to death in your prison." She dropped to her knees. "God have mercy on us now!" she prayed.

Sherwood strode to the bed, beside which the aged woman still sat sobbing, and leaning over, lifted the sheet. As he did so, his gun for the first time failed to cover all the room. Beneath the sheet, instead of the face he expected, he saw a roll of blankets carefully molded and tied into the semblance of a human form. Before he could turn, cold steel was pressed against the base of his brain.

"Drop that gun, Sherwood," said Boston Blackie's voice from behind him. "Drop it quick. Raise it one inch, and you'll be as dead as you thought I was."

Sherwood hesitated as a full realization of the new situation flashed through his mind; then he smiled as he thought of the posse he had thrown around the house and let his revolver slip through his fingers to the bed. Here was a worthy antagonist—a bit too worthy, as the cards lay just then! But the deal was far from done.

"Pick up his gun, Mary, and lay it on the table in the corner well out of the Deputy's way," directed Blackie. "Then see if he has another. I don't care to move the muzzle of my gun from his neck just yet. Now," he continued, "slip off these skirts. I'm not overly well used to them, even though I've worn them for ten days, and if Mr. Sherwood should forget the company he's in and get suddenly reckless, they might be in my way."

"Now turn around, Sherwood, and face the music," ordered Blackie a moment later.

The Deputy Warden turned and faced the convict behind whom lay a discarded white wig and an old woman's garments. He met his captor's eyes without a tremor, and smiled.

"Well done, Blackie, I must admit," he said. "But I should have known when you didn't shoot as I came in, things weren't as they seemed.

"I didn't expect you, Sherwood," Blackie replied, "but as you see, I made preparations to receive you in case you came."

THE CONVICT'S face grew pale and suddenly grave. His grip on the gun leveled at the Deputy's gun tightened.

"You understand, Sherwood, I've got to kill you," he said then.

"As matters stand, naturally it wouldn't surprise me," the Deputy answered. His voice was absolutely calm and unshaken, his eyes without the remotest trace of fear.

"If you have anything to say or do or think, be quick," said the convict.

"I haven't—thank you."

The men stared into each other's eyes, the silence broken only by Mary's sobs.

"I hate to kill a man as brave as you in cold blood," said Boston Blackie slowly. "You're a brave man, Sherwood, even when you don't hold all the cards in the game as you do inside your prison. I hate to kill you, but I've got to. I can't tie and gag you. You'd get free before we could get away from the city. I can't risk that."

"Naturally not," said Sherwood.

"I couldn't trust your promise not to bother me, in a life-or-death matter like this, if I let you go alive," continued Blackie with troubled eyes.

"I wouldn't give it if you did." There was no hesitation in the answer.

"Well, then." The gun that covered the Deputy Warden's head swayed downward until the muzzle covered his heart. "Are you ready?"

"Any time," said Sherwood.

The hammer rose under the pressure of the convict's finger on the trigger. Mary Dawson, crying hysterically now, turned away her face and covered her ears.

"Do you want to go, Mary, before I—I do what I must do?" asked Blackie, realizing what the scene with its inevitable end must mean to the girl. "It would be better for you to go, dear."

"No, no," she cried. "I want to share with you all blame for what you do. I won't go until you do."

Sherwood turned his eyes curiously on the woman. Sherwood knew what

he would have risked for such a woman and such love.

Boston Blackie's face was strangely gray. The hammer of the revolver rose, hesitated, fell—then rose again. The Deputy, his gaze returning from the woman's face, looked into the gun unflinchingly and in silence. Another pause freighted with that sort of tension that crumbles the strongest; then slowly the convict let the muzzle of his weapon drop below the heart of the man he faced.

"Sherwood," he said in a voice that broke between his words, "I hate you as I hate no living man, but I can't kill you as you stand before me unarmed and helpless. I'm going to give you a chance for your life." He stepped backward and picked up the Deputy Warden's revolver. He pushed a table between himself and the man he couldn't kill. He laid the revolvers side by side on it, one pointing toward him, the other toward Sherwood. The clock on the mantel showed three minutes of the hour.

"Sherwood," he said, "in three minutes the clock will strike. I'm exactly as far from the guns as you. On the first stroke of the clock we'll reach together for them—and the quickest hand wins."

MARTIN SHERWOOD studied Boston Blackie's face with something in his eyes no other man had ever seen there. He glanced toward the guns on the table. It was true he was exactly as near them as the convict. Nothing prevented him from reaching them and firing at the first touch of his finger on the trigger. Blackie deliberately had surrendered his irresistible advantage to give him, Martin Sherwood, his prison-torturer, an even chance for life. For the first time the Deputy's eyes were unsteady and his voice throaty and shaken.

"I won't bargain with you, Blackie," he said.

"You're afraid to risk an even break?"

"You know I'm not," Sherwood answered, his gaze turning once more to the woman who stood by the door, staring panic-stricken. It was plain that the issue to be decided in that room was life or death to her as well as to the men.

Boston Blackie reached for his gun, hoping the Deputy Warden would do likewise and end, in one quick exchange of shots, the strain he knew was breaking his nerve. Sherwood let Blackie recover his weapon without moving a muscle. Once more the convict's revolver rose till it covered Martin Sherwood's heart. They stood again as they had been, the Deputy at the mercy of the escaped prisoner.

Seconds passed, then minutes, without a word or motion on either side of the table over which the triangular tragedy was being settled not at all as any of those concerned had planned. The strain was unbearable. The muscles of the convict's throat twitched. His face was drawn and distorted.

"Pick up that gun and defend yourself," he cried.

"No," shouted Sherwood, the calm which his mighty will had until then sustained snapping like an overtightened violin-string.

"You want to make me feel like a murderer," cried Blackie in anguish. "Why didn't I give you bullet for bullet when you came in the door? I could have killed you then. Now I can't unless you'll fight. Once more I ask you, will you take an even break?"

"No," cried Sherwood again.

With a great cry—the cry of a strong man broken and beaten—Boston Blackie threw his gun upon the floor.

"You win, Sherwood," he sobbed, losing self-control completely for the first time in a life of daily hazards. "You've beaten me."

He staggered drunkenly toward Mary and folded her in his arms.

"I tried to force myself to pull the trigger by thinking of the life we hoped for together, dear, but I couldn't do it," he moaned brokenly. "I'll go back with him now. Everything is over."

"I'm glad you didn't, dear," she cried, clinging to him. "It would have been murder. I don't want you to do that, even to save out happiness. But I'll wait for you, dear one, wait till your time is done and you come back to me again."

BOSTON BLACKIE straightened his shoulders and turning to Sherwood, held out his wrists for the handcuffs.

"Come, come," he urged. "For God's sake don't prolong this. Don't stand there gloating. Take me away."

Martin Sherwood, with something strangely new transfiguring the face Boston Blackie knew and hated, reached to the table and took up his gun slowly. Just as slowly he dropped it into his pocket. He looked into the two grief-racked faces before him, long and silently.

"I'm sorry I disturbed you folks," he said quietly at last. "I came here looking for an escaped convict named Boston Blackie. I have found only you, Miss Collins, and your mother. I'm sorry my misinformation has subjected you both to annoyance. The police officers who are outside—" The Deputy Warden opened a crack in the window-curtain and pointed out to them dim shapes in the darkness—"and who surround this house, will be withdrawn at once. Had Boston Blackie been in this room, and had he by some mischance killed me, his shot would have brought a dozen men armed with sawed-off shotguns. Escape for him was absolutely impossible. I saw to that before I entered here alone to capture him. But it has all been a blunder. The man I wanted to take back to prison is not here, and I can only hope my apology will be accepted."

Blackie stared at him with blazing, unbelieving eyes. From Mary came a cry in which all the pent-up anguish of the lifetime that had been lived in the last half-hour found sudden relief.

"Good night, folks," said Martin Sherwood, offering Boston Blackie his hand. The convict caught it in his own, and the men looked into each other's eyes for a second. Then the Deputy Warden went out and closed the door behind him.

Mary sprang into Blackie's arms, and they dropped together into a chair, dazed with a happiness greater than either had ever known.

"He is a man," said Blackie. "He is a man even though he's a copper."

Martin Sherwood let himself out of the house and beckoned the cordon of police to him as he looked back at the windows of the attic rooms and spoke softly to himself.

"He is a man," he said. "He is a man, even though he is a convict."

It was the greatest praise and the greatest concession either had ever made to another man.

THE END

THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

continued from page 57

Behind them, as they commenced to eat their green turtle soup, Jack stood at rigid attention and there was no sign of amusement on his face.

Stone touched his napkin to his lips and spoke to his son, "They tell me, Mr. Stone, that Bryan's championship of bimetallism will sweep the country."

Henry lifted his eyebrows with elegant *hauteur*. "I've read his speeches. A cheap and dangerous demagogue. Something about 'crucifixion on a cross of gold.' Well — if gold is too heavy a burden for the people to carry about, they'll find that free silver will make their pockets light enough."

"William Jennings Bryan is a menace — " Stephen Stone began, after laughing politely at Henry's witticism. "A decided menace." He interrupted himself.. "Henry — that's not the way to hold a wine goblet. Like this."

Henry followed his father's instructions. "Am I right, now?"

"That's better. Now. I'm the ambassador from Spain. You have just criticized Spanish actions in Cuba and you are unfortunately seated beside me at a dinner given by Mrs. Astor. I am a little bit — perhaps, guardedly, a great deal — perturbed at this unhappy incident. I am thinking of something definitely unpleasant to say about your newspaper. Proceed."

Henry flashed upon his father a winning and wholly artificial smile. "My dear Mr. Ambassador — "

"My dear Ambassador Chinito — "

"My dear Ambassador Chinito — this is luck. I've been wanting to meet and talk with you for months. The information we receive at my office relative to Spanish foreign policy is at best vague and uncertain, and this opportunity to discuss it with a master of statecraft is handsome Providence indeed."

Stephen Stone smiled. "A little flowery. But good. I am — oh — Jack — remove the soup. The serving plates. I am — "

The conversation continued endlessly. The meal lasted two hours. It was a new function on Stone Island. A new course in Stephen Stone's education of his son. He had planned it long, long ago. He had brought the necessary adjuncts. He was training Henry for his social life, training him how to be a perfect guest, a polished conversationalist, and diplomatically quick-thinking — all in the manner and according to the very best traditions of a period that was already twenty years old.

He taught him how to dress — although when he had ordered the clothes, in London, in 1897, he had not guessed his son would attain such stature. He taught him etiquette, and how to dine and what to order, and how to order from a waiter in Delmonico's and from a waiter in Jack's, and what to do in London and Paris and Vienna and where to go. He taught him how to behave in a men's club and a bank and a box of an opera.

He taught him all the important trifles and they lived through a thousand scenes and situations, for one night each week was designated to represent some sort of function. Invitations were sent and Henry answered them. The table was set meticulously and Stephen Stone portrayed the various guests — sometimes playing three or four rôles at once.

At the same time, he intensified his courses in politics and the newspaper business. He made Henry write a complete edition of a newspaper for Stone Island every two weeks. He discussed with his son the politics of his day — for there was no other material open to their contemplation. He taught the mechanics of the business, the functions of the various departments, the financing and the methods of development.

He educated his son to be a public speaker, and with Jack and McCobb for his audience, Henry frequently stood on the front porch, vines, trees and gaudy birds behind him, the sea before, and waxed eloquent on the administration of a proper government, or the fallacies of the Populists, or the trend in policies in the State Department. Sometimes, for variety, he and his father had a debate. McCobb, who rarely joined in these intellectual and social pastimes, was instructed to act as chairman or referee in such cases.

Henry addressed an imaginary Senate Committee on the freedom of the press. He ranted endlessly about Bryan. He raked over the ancient scandal of the Tweed Ring.

He also talked with dowagers in imaginary carriages. Dowagers — and they were always stuffy and frigid — were the only women who invaded this educational policy, and their invasion was rare. He rode in street cars under his father's tutelage. He walked on Fifth Avenue on Easter Day. He listened to sermons and sang hymns — although Stone was himself an agnostic.

A great, vicarious world expanded before him, amplified by poor drawings in books and by his father's excellent descriptions. In that world one thing was paramount: Ideals.

Stephen Stone made them the foundation of all else.

Never lie.

Never cheat.

Be honest.

Be forthright (but tactful).

Stick to your party but hold your country above it.

Be a gentleman (a thousand times

that!).

Be a good sport.

Be tolerant (except of certain evils).

Be moderate. Drink moderately. Smoke moderately.

Keep informed.

Sleep eight hours a day and work twelve.

Never, never, never, never believe a woman.

Women are ruin. Love is a myth. Marry when you are over forty-five and marry someone you do not love.

Love is ruin.

Be, above all, fearless.

The precepts were banged out on the table with a fist. They were infiltrated through all their discussions. Henry was shown up flagrantly for the slightest lapse from them.

This was Stephen Stone's reaction to the numb days that followed the sinking of the ship off the headlands. He had stayed away from the house all night — with Jack in the brush nearby — and he had come back changed. The gaiety which had grown in him vanished. He applied all his energy now to the training of his son.

And Henry slowly lost human contact with his father. He obeyed. He even respected. He worked like a slave. But a rift grew between them. McCobb thought that it was an unconscious breach caused by Henry's unspoken resentment of the fact that his father had stranded him — probably for life — on the island.

It was not.

It grew because the two men were fundamentally different. There was something fanatical, puritanic, masochistic and sadistic in Stephen Stone. Henry was broad-minded by nature, and generous.

If Henry had been the man whose wife had run away — he might have forgiven her. If Stephen Stone had been the individual whose father had deliberately stranded him on an island, he would have eaten out his heart with secret malice and thwarted ambition. The strength of the two men lay in different sinews of the soul.

IT WAS May and 1921.

Stone sat bitterly in his house. Henry had been gone for three days in the sailboat. Stone was bitter because he himself had planned that his son should be independent and go where he pleased — and because he found that such journeys occasioned him only worry and loneliness.

He stamped on the floor with a cane which hung on the arm of a chair.

Jack looked from the kitchen. "Yes, boss?"

"Bring me a glass of that port."

"Yes, boss."

When Jack came with a glass on the tray, Stone said, "How much have we left?"

"Of this port?"

"Of this port."

"About a barrel."

"Well — next time I ask for port, bring me some of that stuff we made ourselves. It's not bad."

"No, boss."

"And you get back to your cooking."

McCobb entered from the compound. He was carrying a brace of ducks.

"Nice ones, eh?" He held them up.

Stone did not look at the ducks. He banged irritably on the floor. "It's as quiet around here as the inside of a tomb."

McCobb nodded. "You'd get over that gout quicker, I think, if you were careful with the wine."

"Hell!" Stone seldom used even that initial word of profanity. "Wine! Who wouldn't drink wine? Why the devil doesn't that young whipper-snapper come back here?"

"He'll be in soon," McCobb said. He did not mention his own worries — worries he always felt when Henry travelled alone. He passed behind Stone's back and looked at him almost pityingly. Stone was growing old — and he did not know it. Some day — the mirror would tell him irrefutably.

McCobb was growing old, too. He was years older than Stone, but life had not told so heavily upon him. He had an oaken constitution and a valiant heart. He was ready for the years.

A shrill whistle floated up from the bay. Stone jumped onto his feet and scarcely noticed his gout. He hobbled to the door.

"There he is, damn it!"

McCobb was at his side. They waited impatiently while Henry made fast his boat and came up the road.

He swung with a prodigious stride. He was a full six feet two inches, now. He weighed a hundred and ninety pounds. His hair was bronze, his eyes turquoise, his skin mahagony. He was a magnificent man. When he laughed his voice poured from deep and resonant lungs.

As he strode through the gate they saw that he had a sack on his shoulders and there was motion inside the sack. He took the front steps at a jump.

"Hello, father. How's the foot?"

"Better, son. Better."

"McCobb! Glad to see you." He dropped the bag, which squirmed. He took the hands of the two men.

"We've missed you," McCobb said.

Henry laughed again. "I've been all over. Put in at the bay north of Jack's Lake. Carried that canoe over to the lake and took myself a paddle."

He walked into the house, the men beside him.

"How was it?" Stephen Stone asked the question.

"Marvelous. Plenty of crocodiles, but they didn't bother the boat. Wouldn't like to be upset, though." A squeal came from the porch and Henry went out to collect the bag. "I caught a pair of those little peccaries or whatever they are. Hey, Jack!"

The door to the kitchen flew open.

"McCobb clicked the rubies together in the palm of his hand. "Funny..."

"I was a coming. I had the lids off the stove and the potatoes in my lap."

"Here's a pair of pigs. We'll breed them up for a steady supply of pork."

"Mmm — *mmm*," Jack said. He picked up the bag and looked back. "Glad to see you home, Mr. Henry."

"Thanks."

Stephen Stone sipped his wine. "Well? What else happened?"

"Nothing. I worked on that cabin I'm building at the head of the lake. It's going to be a dandy little spot. Then I'm going to study the geology

of the island. I have it all doped out–"

"We had, too, before you were old enough to talk."

"It's volcanic — and the remnant of a continent — isn't it?"

Stone nodded. "There used to be a continent that ran from Africa all the way to India. The lemurs were evolved on it. Madagascar is about the only part of it left."

"That's what I thought. McCobb Mountain is the highest point remaining — and it's part of the rim of the volcano. Jack's Lake is in the crater. And, by the way, there are hot springs up at the head of the lake. They spout out of a row of mud dunes. All colors of mud. Nothing growing. Some are sulphurous and some are salty."

The Scotchman chuckled. "We ought to take your father's gout there and establish a spa."

"The devil with my gout. What else, Henry?"

"Something I want you to see."

The man with the cane laughed. "I knew it! I knew it when you whistled. Well, sir?"

"Ruins."

"Good Lord!"

"Buried in the jungle. I came on them while I was chasing those pigs. Big ruins. Temples, I should think— all made of stone and covered with carving. A language — it looks a little bit like Sanskrit — but I'm not sure. They must have been very beautiful, once, but they're old as time, now. And they've been under water."

"What?"

"Fossilized barnacles and things inside the rooms."

"Are there rooms?"

"You bet there are rooms. Scores of rooms. Big rooms. Carved gods and altars and more decoration than you ever dreamed of." He turned toward McCobb. "We won't have to dig our gold out of the rocks, now. There are tons of it there. And stones. All kinds." He thrust his hand in his pocket and produced two rubies as large as the ball of his thumb. They had been rolled and polished into perfect spheres.

The stones passed from hand to hand. "Silver and other metals. They did a fine job, those people, whoever they were. And they must have left in a hurry, because their things are all over the place. Sand mixed with them. Shells. But they're there, nevertheless."

McCobb clicked the rubies together in the palm of his hand. "Funny."

Henry shook his head. "Very funny. I wouldn't be surprised if it was the temporary sinking of their temple under the sea that brought them to an end."

"How long ago did you think — ?"

The young man shrugged. "I can't guess. We'll try to figure it out when we go there — but it must be old. Older than Egypt, I should imagine. Older than anything you've told me about."

"The lemur continent went down," Stone said pensively, "in the ages before man appeared."

"Then he's been on the island recently," Henry smiled. "Say in the last twenty-five thousand years. Or maybe even in the last ten. Which — in a manner of speaking — is only yesterday."

NOVEMBER 3, 1923. Stephen Stone wrote the date in his diary. He wrote it slowly and carefully and his hand was not quite steady. Then he continued:

"It was twenty-five years ago today that we landed on Stone Island. A quarter of a century. Tonight we are having a banquet to 'celebrate,' but our celebration is rather a brave defense than a jubilee.

"Except for the single ship which foundered off our shores, not so much as a gull or a drifting branch has come to us from the world beyond. We might as well be upon another planet with the infinite reaches of the ether between ourselves and those regions which once we called our home. The last statement cannot apply to Henry, whose only home has been the island, although I catch him sometimes in poses of rumination that suggest to me he is not altogether without a dim sentiment for the land from which he came and an inarticulate desire to be there.

"Consciously, however, he seems to prefer the island and has often assured me that he would rather live and die here than to mingle with the society and participate in the enterprises for which I have fitted him to the best of my ability.

"It is never my practice, of course, to admit that he will be a prisoner here for life and I keep asserting that with the developments in ocean travel which have doubtless been made and the interest in exploration bound to rise, it is sure that a vessel will one day reach this place. My doubt can only be entered here.

"Horrible thoughts sometimes assail me. A hundred times I have read the portions of the newspaper which came to us with the ill-fated ship and I have thought about the war in progress then. The fact that no one and nothing passes here makes me wonder if the war did not increase to such proportions that it virtually destroyed civilization.

"I imagine sometimes all ships destroyed, all commerce ended, and the people in America reduced to the pioneer state. Or, perhaps, some dreadful weapon has decimated the populations of the world.

"A catastrophe which would blot out mankind, even, might take place unbeknownst to us. Thus, in years, I have commenced to understand the fullness of the isolation which I, in a fit of frenzy and despair, contrived.

"And because that doom was forged by the weak willfullness of a woman, I have redoubled my tutelage of Henry in the subject. Yearly, the idea of woman grows more detestable to me, and in it I repose all my *apologia pro vitamea*.

"Of manners, people, custom, science, and art we have little to add to Henry's store. We have given him our all, searching our minds through the long days for any fragments of truth or wisdom that would be of value to him. He is, I think, a man cultured and disciplined far above any I ever met in life, and, although his manner is generally light and affable, it is but the bright garment with which a pleasant disposition conceals a stern mind.

"We have managed almost annually to invent a new form of entertainment and new interests for him and ourselves. At first these were uncomplicated and simple tasks. The domestication of the zebu-oxen, the establishment of ample vegetable gardens, the building of our now luxurious flower gardens, horticultural experiments with the local flora, the collection and classification of all living things on the island — even, at the last, to a study of micro-

scopic life.

"As time passed, however, these interest became broader. Henry, who has a remarkable physique, passed through a stage of physical exercise and development. McCobb taught him to box and I to fence when he was a child. He became a proficient swimmer and I daresay his prowess in that direction would astonish any of his 'civilized' contemporaries.

"When he was sixteen and until he was twenty-four his studies enveloped him. I believe he has read every one of the books in my library.

"In the past two years he has lived away from the compound a good deal of the time, studying the ruins which he discovered, and his archæological conclusions are very fascinating to him. With the help of my library he has more or less identified the people who built the temples as the offshoot of a very early race — possibly of the Atlanteans, but more probably the descendents of the inhabitants of a great continent in the south Pacific which he predicates from a reading of their inscriptions.

"He is engaged now in writing a book about the people, and I have seen a few chapters which I find remarkable both for their clarity of style and for the vividness with which he is able to create a background from his reading, a background so lucid that it makes all his deductions most plausible. He informs me that he will seal the book — which contains his full studies of the ancient languages — in one of my copper drums so that it will be available long after his living testimony is not.

"Jack's hair has suddenly turned white. I find my own is graying. McCobb is not as alert and agile as he used to be. We are growing old.

"I wonder who will be the first?"

HENRY SAT beside McCobb on the top of the mountain which bore the Scotchman's name. McCobb smoked and Henry ate an apple. They had had apples for twenty years.

The tropical sun beat upon them. It sparkled over the waters of Jack's Lake. It glinted on the tower of a temple far away. Henry had cleared the vegetation around the best preserved portion of the ruins and the result was that a single minaret could be seen from any high spot on the island.

They could see, to the north, the tiny dot which was Jack on the harbor, fishing.

McCobb squinted his eyes so that a hundred wrinkles came at their corners.

"I asked you up here with me, son, because I wanted to talk with you."

"Yes? What about?"

"About yourself."

"Me?"

The old Scotchman nodded. "About you. Yesterday I thought I'd gather some clams for chowder for dinner, so I went down to the outside beach on the west headland."

Henry flushed, but he said nothing.

"There was somebody sitting there," the Scotchman said, trying with a heavy hand to be impersonal, "who was crying. I could hear him from where I was. He was looking out over the sea and sobbing. Then he threw out his arms and reached — as if he was reaching for something out there toward the west. Then he beat his chest."

Henry threw a stone over the cliff and the sound of its landing came to them before McCobb continued.

"Finally he laughed. It wasn't a nice laugh to hear. He laughed a long time. Then he jumped into the water and swam and swam. Out where there are sharks. Out where there are devilfish. He swam until an old man with failing eyes, maybe, could see him no more. Then it was the old man's turn to sit and cry."

Silence.

"I thought you weren't coming back."

"So did I," said Henry.

"But you turned and came in. I saw that, too. So I asked you up here."

Henry looked at the Scot. His face was hard. "I was bored, McCobb. Couldn't stand it."

"I know."

"Would it be so much if the sharks got me?"

"Well — let's see. It would matter to your dad, of course."

"He doesn't deserve — "

"All right. All right. I don't defend him. But — it would matter to Jack. And to me."

"I'm sorry, McCobb."

"Oh — that's nothing. It's all right. But I had in my mind another person. Yourself. It would matter to you, Henry. A great deal."

"Not as much as you'd think."

"No?"

Henry leaned back on his elbow and squinted at the glittering panorama. "I'm at a loss, McCobb. I'm nothing. I'm like a clock — a marvelous clock — that someone spends a lifetime to make and then puts in a grave. I can only tell time to the worms and the worms can't profit by it. My chimes are for stones. The earth holds in my ticking."

"Is that the truth indeed?" McCobb chuckled. "And suppose somebody digs up the clock. What then? You know, laddie, your father is right. Every year that passes adds to the chance that somebody will come past this place. They'll run out of land to explore some day and then they'll start on the sea and cover every square mile to be sure they've missed nothing. They'll cover the surface and drag the bottom.

"And they'll find Stone Island. They'll see McCobb Mountain. We'll touch off this pile of brush" — he gestured toward the heap of wood which had been kept in perennial readiness — "and they'll take us back. Think, Henry. You've never seen even a town — let alone a city. You've never seen a horse. Or a cable car. Or the steam engines that pull the railroads. Or the great bridges on the rivers. Or the steamships. Or a woman."

Henry stirred. "No. Or a woman."

"Never seen a woman," McCobb whispered.

"I'm not sure I want to."

The words struck McCobb's heart forcibly. Never seen a woman. He knew what women would say when they saw Henry. And he was searching frantically for a reason to tie the young man to his calm life, to give him strength and hope. He dared to trespass on Stone's unchanging sermon.

"Did it ever occur to you, laddie, that your father might be mistaken about women?"

"What do you mean?" Henry spoke breathlessly.

McCobb was frightened. "Nothing much, lad. Nothing much. But it's possible that your father's a bit warped on the subject. Not all women

might be bad."

"I don't believe it."

"Think it over. They're the same flesh as yourself. They have the same emotions. They have different minds, it's true – but there are women who don't cost a man his soul. Many."

"Is that true, McCobb?"

" 'Tis true. But you'll not tell your father I've said it?"

"I won't tell him."

"Thanks, lad."

Henry nodded. "That makes a difference in my life, McCobb. A difference you'll never understand. I've been thinking about women so much that I've been sure they'd ruin me the minute I got back to land – if I ever did. I found that I would pay no attention to my father's teachings. I was sure I would be lost – as he had been. I don't know why. He said their spell was destruction – and I've never seen them – but somehow – I could know something about that spell."

"I've no doubt."

"Look." Henry suddenly reddened. He stuffed his hand into his shirt and from his bosom drew a tiny figure that had hung round his neck on a delicate chain. It was the figure, presumably, of a nude woman.

McCobb looked at it. He did not laugh. He said soberly, "I'll make you one, Henry. I'll make you one like a living woman."

"I didn't do it right," Henry said slowly. "I know. But father tore all the pictures from the books. Even the medical books."

"Let's go back, son."

Henry stretched himself. "I feel – changed, McCobb. Different. Thanks."

"Don't mention it."

For a long time after that Henry did not swim away from shore and he did not weep on the beach. He was sunny again and even his father, who was slowly becoming estranged from everyone, noticed the difference. He attributed it to resignation.

To be concluded in THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN: PART TWO, *THE RETURN*

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LETTERS TO ARGOSY

It's good to see a fiction magazine with modern layout and design that publishes vintage stories — *great* vintage stories, at that.

GEORGE MARKER
Eugene, Oregon

Not only vintage stories. In the 1990s ARGOSY *will publish new stories by some of fiction's finest writers, as well as great "lost" stories — and new stories by new writers who will become the "standards" of the Twenty-First Century. And that's a promise.*

More science fiction...!

M.L. QUEREN
Racine, Wisconsin

One of the greatest science-fiction stories of all time, by the author of one of science-fiction's most famous stories, "lost" for more than thirty-five years, will appear in the next ARGOSY *— along with C.M. Kornbluth's second incredible adventure of Lt. J.C. Battle, Soldier of Fortune, "City in a Sofa." Science fiction — innovative science fiction — will always make up a big part of* ARGOSY.

...Book reviews and interviews...

HAL GOLDSTONE
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

No book reviews. But we will have interviews — next issue, an unpublished and revealing interview with "Blade Runner" *and* The Man In The High Castle *author Philip K. Dick, conducted by Gregg Rickman.*

I liked the stories in the first issue of *ARGOSY*, but I really miss a good western story.

FRANCIS T. ZAPF
Edmonton, Alberta

So does ARGOSY. *Good western fiction is hard to find. But next issue we'll publish a classic non-fiction story by the great western artist and writer Frederick Remington, out-of-print since 1893...*

D. Bruce Berry is a real find — one of the best artists to come along in a long time!

TED O'NEILL
Tacoma, Washington

It's wonderful to see D. Bruce Berry back. Where has he been since *Imagination?*

KEVIN WARREN
San Diego, California

Except for a few years when he was novelist D. Bruce Berry, illustrator D. Bruce Berry has never left. Political cartoonist, advertising artist, magazine and book illustrator, graphic story artist, Berry's work has appeared in every print medium. We're proud to have him as a Contributing Editor.

What is "The Third Dimension" section?

HOWARD GALLI
Baltimore, Maryland

We're giving the name to the part of ARGOSY *that features stories, articles, and interviews about the world of fiction.* ARGOSY *will always be a general fiction magazine first, but we believe long-time fiction readers like a glimpse below the surface of their favorite stories and characters — the third dimension of fiction.*

...Mystery stories...

THOMAS ATWATER
New Orleans, Louisiana

This issue we have Jack Boyle's memorable crime story "Boston Blackie's Mary." John Righter's new (and impressive) private detective series will debut soon. And we hope to announce a major mystery surprise in the next ARGOSY.

Please, more graphic stories!

HAROLD FISHER
San Francisco, California

Graphic stories will be a regular and important feature of ARGOSY *— and in our next issue we'll feature the latest and one of the finest stories ever written and drawn by Jack Kirby. Never before published, it's a story you'll always remember.*

I like your plans, but ARGOSY will have a hard time matching the success of [popular-fiction historian] Sam Moskowitz in the rediscovery of "lost stories." He's in a class by himself.

GEORGE M. TRIKORIS
Denver, Colorado

He is, indeed — and so we've asked Sam Moskowitz to contribute to ARGOSY. *For more information, turn to "Coming Attractions."*

I'd like to see something — anything! — from William Ashbless.

TIMOTHY LOCKE
Santa Ana, California

We'll do our best!

I've always admired the old *True* magazine — will you publish non-fiction stories, too?

IRA SPIEGEL
Bayonne, New Jersey

ARGOSY *will always be primarily a fiction magazine. But from time to time, we'll publish exceptional non-fiction. The Frederick Remington story next issue is the first. The second — brand new, and with a picture of America that will stay with you for a long time — is on my desk now.*

For years now, we've had a handful of science-fiction magazines, a couple of mystery magazines, and sometimes an intermittent western fiction magazine. It's great to have a real, all-fiction magazine back again!

T.R. COX
Lincoln, Nebraska

Please go monthly.

CATHERINE CHANDLER
Kansas City, Missouri

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THE EDITOR

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Star Empire

by Isaac Asimov and Charles Schneeman

THE BEGINNING

"*The Star Empire* comic strip drawn by Charles Schneeman from a script by myself was created about 1950, which was two years after I got my Ph.D. and after I had joined the faculty of Boston University School of Medicine. The strip was still-born. Schneeman was hoping to rouse interest on the basis of that first bit but apparently never did. I never heard of it again and I went on to write my novel *The Stars, Like Dust* (Doubleday, 1951) on the idea I had vaguely developed for the strip."
—ISAAC ASIMOV

Perhaps more than any other writer in the early days of modern science fiction, Isaac Asimov had a sense of the "ordinary" in life. His stories, carrying the touch of day-to-day life, are peopled with professional men and women recognizable in today's world. Unlike the heroes of so many other writers, Asimov's protagonists do not appear to have stepped off the grand opera stage in full costume, gaudy officers of the guard waiting for the second act.

Even today, fifty years after the creation of modern science-fiction by John W. Campbell and the writers — like Asimov — who contributed to his *Astounding Science Fiction* magazine, cavalry boots, shako, and raygun are still *de rigueur* in too many comic strip and comic book "science fiction" yarns, no matter how seriously intended.

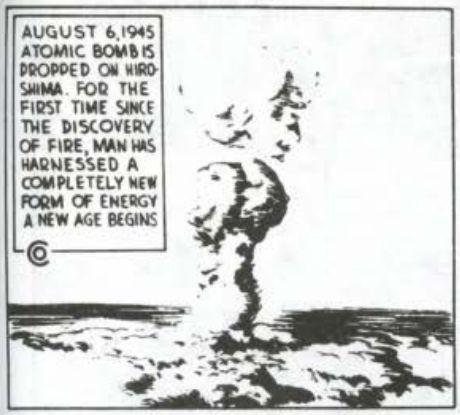
"Star Empire," like the science fiction of the '40s, had another vision, though, one that mixed grandeur with the commonplace. For although Asimov celebrated the ordinary in mankind, he was always conscious of the extraordinary. This quality, emphasized again and again in John Campbell's *Astounding Science Fiction*, was shared by the late Charles Schneeman, one of the magazine's leading artists in the late '30s and early '40s. Though Schneeman had not yet mastered the technique of the graphic story when this page was drawn, the promise is there — not of a Sunday newspaper page, where the drama must be too high for the serious science fiction story, but of a fully developed graphic novel, forty years before its time.

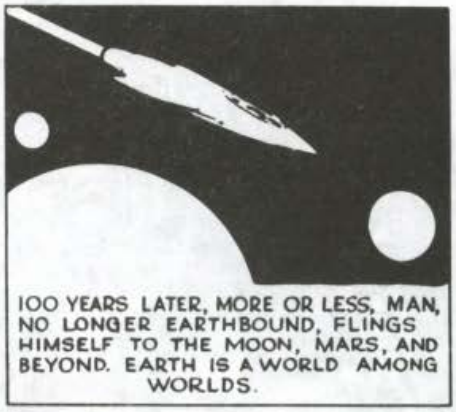
●

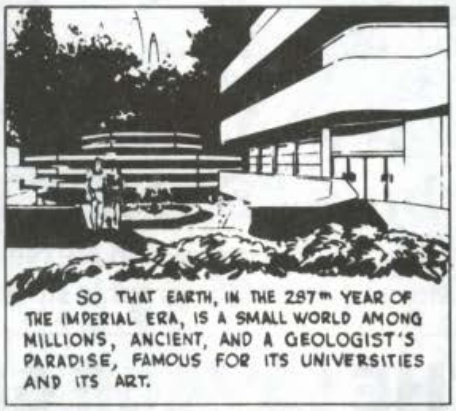
This page of "Star Empire" has ben reproduced from especially processed snapshots of the original art, taken under difficult conditions by Matthew Tepper. Much of the fine detail of Charles Schneeman's work has been lost. The whereabouts of the original artwork is now unknown

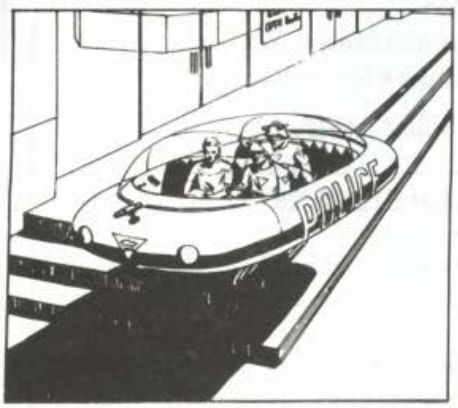
STAR EMPIRE

By ISAAC ASIMOV and CHARLES SCHNEEMAN









COMING ATTRACTIONS

Jack Kirby's "STREET CODE"

A new 10-page graphic story, recreating a lost world — New York City street life in the late '20s. An autobiographical story by one of the graphic story's greatest artists and writers.

PHILIP WYLIE'S THE SAVAGE GENTLEMAN

Part Two: The Return. Henry Stone meets his first woman.

The conclusion of the lost novel of what happens when the perfect man encounters civilization, the modern girl — and the men who want to steal his birthright.

C. M. Kornbluth's *The City in the Sofa*

Lt. J. C. Battle, Soldier-of-Fortune, receives his toughest assignment when he's sent to the Billionaire's Club to fumigate a sofa. The fate of the world depends on it.

A Hot Trail by Powhatan Clarke, U.S.A., with Frederick Remington

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK REMINGTON

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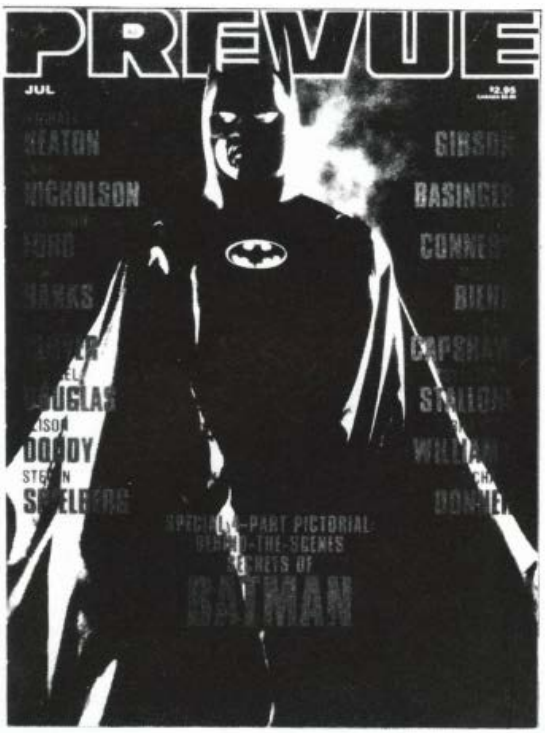
■ PIPER IN THE WOODS: PHILIP K. DICK ON LIFE AND DEATH. An interview conducted by GREGG RICKMAN.

■ And science-fiction historian SAM MOSKOWITZ's first contribution to ARGOSY is at hand — a fascinating study of one of the most gifted and contradictory figures in the history of American publishing, Hugo Gernsback — publisher, editor, writer, inventor, the man who created the science-fiction field (and the term "science fiction"), and introduced the word "television" to America. And — in today's money — spent a half million dollars a year.

Where can you meet Clint Eastwood, Linnea Quigley, Sly Stallone, Steven Spielberg, Meryl Streep, Michael Keaton, Kim Basinger, Jack Nicholson, Elvira, Mel Gibson, Sean Connery, Kathleen Turner, Timothy Dalton, Robert Reford, Patrick Swayze, Goldie Hawn, Eddie Murphy, Harrison Ford, Jodie Foster, Madonna, Nick Nolte, Jane Fonda, Charles Bronson, Robert Englund,



Robert DeNiro, Bruce Willis and Paul Newman?

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