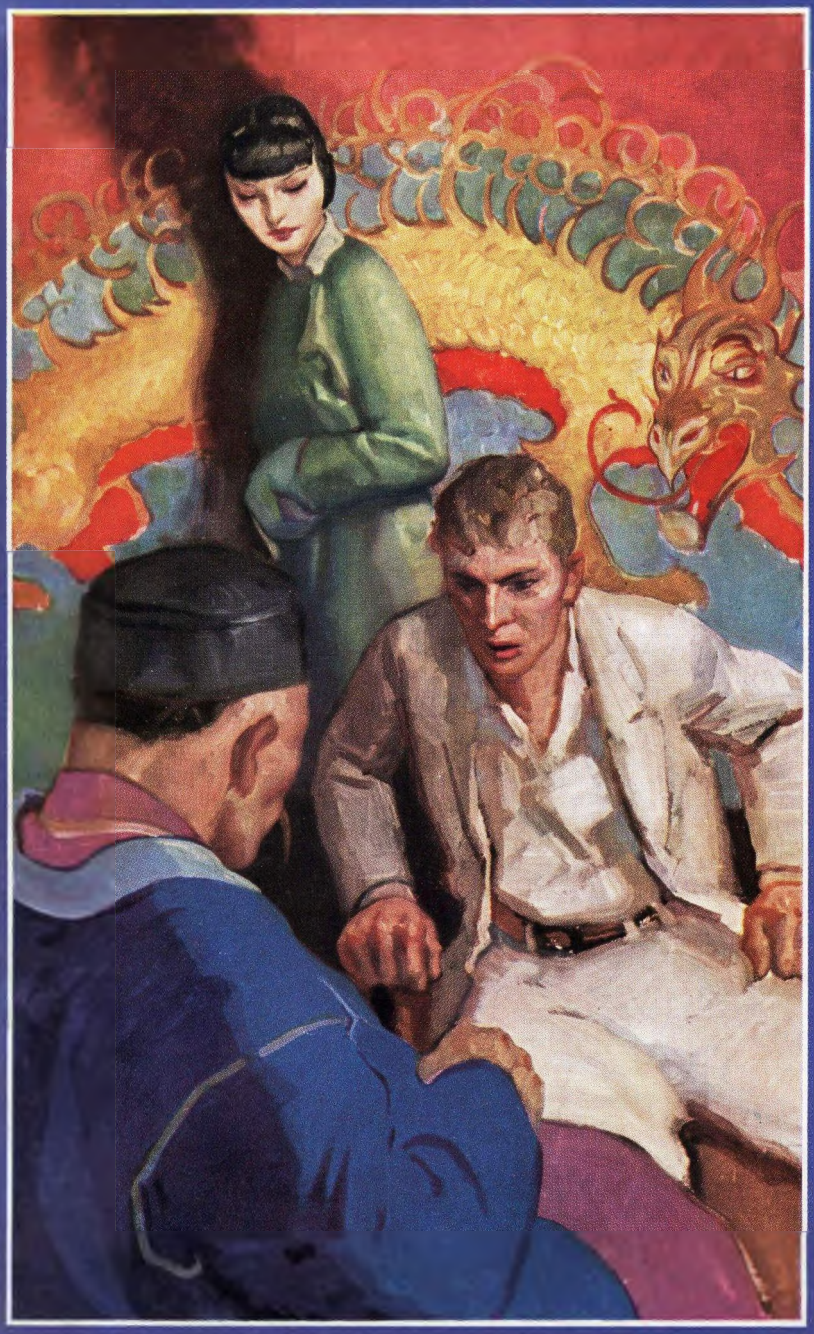
BLUE BOOK

OF FICTION AND ADVENTURE



Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops
to illustrate "Pianos for Shanghai"

DECEMBER

15¢

•

"Pianos for Shanghai"
by **WILLIAM MAKIN**

•

"Diamond in Spain"
A novelette
by **ARED WHITE**

•

H. BEDFORD-JONES

L. B. WILLIAMS

MEIGS FROST

ROBERT MILL

BILL ADAMS

•

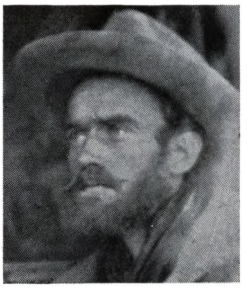
A TARZAN *novel*
by **EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS**

•

Fully Illustrated

Who's Who in Blue Book

At left and right are pictures of the same man: cowboy, hunter ("they used to call me 'Cougar Joe'") and author—



JAY LUCAS

HE was born in England; but at the age of sixteen was a cowboy in Texas. And for some years afterward, he lived the lonely life of a hermit predatory-animal hunter in Arizona. In 1925 he sent his first story to Blue Book—"Fang of the Wolf." Since that time he has published several excellent novels of Arizona adventure, and has been a frequent and valued contributor of authentic and unusual stories of the real West—like "Black Horses" in our September number and "The Lynching of Poker Dick" on page 29 of this issue.

MEIGS O. FROST

AS a fiction-writer, Meigs Frost has four times been given honorable mention in the annual O. Henry short-story awards, and has given our readers such memorable stories as "Old Man River," "A Warrior Goes Home" and (in this issue) "Two Yards of Soldier." As a newspaper man, he has covered assignments in nearly every State in the Union, besides serving as war-correspondent through seven Latin-American revolutions; he is known as the star reporter of the South (though he was born and educated in New England); has received honorable mention in the Pulitzer Prize awards; has received from Loyola University the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters—probably the only such degree ever granted for newspaper work. As a fighting man he served with the Marines in the Boxer campaign, as an officer of Field Artillery on the Mexican border in 1916 and 1917, and in the A. E. F. He claims "all-time record for speed-crawling two hundred yards on belt-buckle to get into arroyo seco for cover when air was full of bullets at battle of Maltrata, Mexico, in 1924. Made it in fifteen seconds flat."

WILLIAM MAC LEOD RAINE

NEXT month this favorite author will offer you in these pages one of the best novels of the old West he has ever written—and that is high praise. Since "The Yukon Trail" (across the pages of this novel, which we published in 1917, was written the famous message in sympathetic ink about which revolved the American claim against Germany for damages in connection with the Black Tom explosion) and "A Man Four Square," the popularity of this Denver writer's work has steadily grown, not only in this country, but in Europe, where he is widely read in translation. Don't miss this colorful story.

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BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

DECEMBER, 1937 VOL. 66, NO. 2

Two Novelettes

Six Short Stories

A Serial Novel

Prize Stories of Real Experience

Except for stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

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In theme the stories may deal with adventure, mystery, sport, humor,—especially humor!—war or business. Sex is barred. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Real Experience Editor, the Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Preferably but not necessarily they should be typewritten, and should be accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope for use in case the story is unavailable.

A pen name may be used if desired, but in all cases the writer's real name and permanent address should accompany the manuscript. Be sure to write your name and correct address in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of your story, and keep a copy as insurance against loss of the original; for while we handle manuscripts with great care, we cannot accept responsibility for their return. As this is a monthly contest, from one to two months may elapse before you receive a report on your story.

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Author of "Marie Antoinette," etc.

Statement of the Ownership, Management, Circulation, Etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912,

of THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE published monthly at Dayton, Ohio, for October 1st, 1937.

State of New York, County of New York, ss.

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Louis F. Boller, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Assistant Treasurer of McCall Corporation, publisher of The Blue Book Magazine, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher: McCall Corporation, 230 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. Editor: Donald Kennicott, 230 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. Managing Editor: None. Business Managers: None.

2. That the owner is: McCall Corporation, Wilmington, Delaware. The following are the names and addresses of stockholders holding 1 per cent or more of the capital stock of McCall Corporation:

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3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Louis F. Boller, Assistant Treasurer.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of September 1937. Frank H. Murray, Notary Public, New York County, New York County Clerk's No. 306. New York County Reg. No. 8M334. My commission expires March 30, 1938.

Next Month!

"A Price On His Head"

A fine robust novel of the West by that favorite Blue Book writer who gave us "Oh, You Tex!" "The Yukon Trail" and "A Man Four Square"—

By WILLIAM MacLEOD RAINE

A Wanderer's Scrapbook

Further interesting and amusing reminiscences by a noted writer and traveler.

By JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

BEFORE I took seriously to the business of writing, I could never settle to one particular occupation. I liked change, and to obtain new positions I thought out some very good methods.

Nearly penniless in London in 1906, I saw an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* asking for a literary secretary. Applications were to be made to a box number. I thought I would like the job, so before typing an application I went to the telegraph office and sent this telegram to the advertiser:

> "Re position vacant do not hire any person till you see my application now in post stop am the one man in London possessing abilities to fill position in manner that will leave no regrets in your mind regarding choice."

Three days later I got a note asking me to call at an address in High Holborn. The appointment was for eleven, and, feeling certain that I had nailed the position, I spent the morning getting ready for the interview.

I was ushered into the presence of a stern old gentlemen with side whiskers. He glared at me and cried: "What do you mean by attempting to dictate to an Englishman?"

I was thunderstruck. "How?" I asked.

"By that telegram!" he shouted. "Telling me not to engage anyone till I saw you! No Englishman will take an order like that. You, sir, are an insolent Australian!"

Thinking it best to stand the attack and get the job on the rebound, I apologized in my most suave manner.

"Yankee trick!" snorted the old turkeycock. "Worst of you Australians, you copy the Yanks!"

After his throat had got thoroughly dry, I mentioned the position. "You're not going to get it," he said firmly. "I've just sent for you this morning to give you this advice. You won't get on in London with tricks like that. No sir! Learn a little modesty. I've given up my time to tell you all this because you've been born under the Union Jack."

I lost my temper then. I leaned over his desk and said: "If I had a Union Jack handy, I'd tie it round your old throat and choke you!" Then when he pressed the bell and yelled "Police!" I took the stairs four at a time and ran full speed up Holborn.

ONE day in the Strand a friend met me and said excitedly, "There's a letter addressed to you as 'Colonel James Francis Dwyer' in a showbox outside a stamp dealer's shop."

And it was there too. Fifteen years before I had started ten big envelopes addressed to myself on a trip around the world. To give them importance, I had placed the word *"Colonel"* before my name, and I had addressed them in the first instance to Poste Restante, Paris.

By the following mail I had sent instructions to Paris to send them to Poste Restante, Vienna, and a few days later I had instructed Vienna to forward them to Cairo. By stages I moved them around the world, and finally, after seven months of voyaging, I received eight of the ten back into my hands. They were covered with the postmarks of some fifty odd countries.

I went broke one day and took them to a stamp-dealer. He had no idea how I had pushed them here and there, but thought that they had followed me on a long journey. He paid me ten shillings each for them; and years and years after, I gazed at this big envelope in the Strand with my name on it. It had been split open so that the postmarks could be seen on the back. It was valued at a pound.

IN 1921 I coined a new idea. I placed a two-hundred-dollar advertisement in an American magazine called Travel. I offered to send each week a typed two-page letter with a postcard or photograph from a different town in Europe. Minimum price ten dollars a year. I mentioned that I was a well-known writer whose stories had appeared in every magazine in the United States and England, and that I had a reputation as a wanderer and adventurer.

I waited for the response to that advertisement. It was staggering. By the first mail I received one hundred and forty-six letters each containing either a ten-dollar bill or a check. I bought a duplicating machine; and in three years I had covered nearly all Europe and the north of Africa. My list had reached a thousand.

After the third year I grew tired of seeing a new city each week, so I wrote a "swan letter" and returned the amount of all unexpired subscriptions. I am still receiving friendly letters from subscribers to whom I brought a little romance. A woman wrote me the other day that a baby named in my honor when I was running the Travel Letters is now thirteen years of age. A school at Omaha, Nebraska, has bound the letters and uses them in the geography lesson. *(Continued on page 144)*

Pianos for Shanghai

A MONTH ago he had been the most popular man in Shanghai. Now, as he walked toward the long bar of the Club, with its lounging, sprawling males loquacious midst the fumes of alcohol and tobacco-smoke, there was a set expression on his white face—like an actor making an entrance and uncertain of his reception.

"Gimme a double whisky!" he commanded.

The white-jacketed Chinaman behind the bar showed no emotion in his smooth yellow face. The eyes, lost in slits, saw everything—and nothing. The thin lips were curved in a mirthless grin.

"D'you hear! A double whisky!"

The bartender might have been a Celestial idol. Not a muscle of his body moved. The eyes were contemplating infinity; the grin was seraphic.

"You damned Chink, I'll—" burst out Anthony Hughes, two red spots burning angrily against the pallor of his cheeks.

"John! Fill 'em up. Same again."

The interjection came from a brawny tussore-garbed shoulder thrust toward the long bar. Three empty glasses were urged at the bartender. The Chinaman became instantly alive.

"Don't be a fool, Hughes," went on the sandy-haired Jerry Morgan, turning to the young man. The American banker and local *taipan* tried to soothe him. "You're cleaned up in Shanghai. You've busted your credit. You're shot to pieces. Take my advice and get out of it."

"I came in for a double whisky, and by heaven I'll have it," cried Hughes. There was an angry glint in his blue eyes. His young mouth was twisted sullenly.

"The slate's against you," pointed out Morgan.

"Maybe, but that's no reason why a cursed Chink should refuse me a drink."

The impassive bartender had refilled the three glasses. As the yellow wrists thrust them toward the American, Anthony Hughes shot out his own hand. His fingers closed on a wrist, tightly.

"Now," he muttered. "Get that double whisky, or I'll break your arm like a matchstick."

The sweat stood out on the still expressionless face. The other drinkers at the long bar swiveled their gaze and stood poised like puppets. The bared yellow arm was rigid. Another effort from Hughes, and the bone would snap.

The American clenched his fist. He seemed about to hit Hughes under the jaw. But he did not.

"Give him the double whisky, John. I'll pay!"

Illustrated by John Clymer

A drama of China in the spring of 1937, and of a startling event that may prove to have changed the course of history.

By WILLIAM J. MAKIN

The grip was released. The Chinese bartender hastened to obey. Anthony Hughes was triumphantly sardonic.

"Damned generous, aren't you, Morgan?"

"There's your drink. Swallow it."

The white-faced man with the angry blue eyes needed no encouragement. He swallowed the drink at one gulp—and almost bent double over the long bar. He coughed and wheezed, then straightened himself, only to stagger.

"Had no breakfast," he muttered.

And he would have pitched to the drink-stained floor if the American had not caught him. Hughes found the tussore-sleeved arm linked in his, and his whisky-wrecked body being firmly propelled toward the door. A French consular official looked on with cynical amusement. Two khaki-clad Japanese officers gurgled with sly laughter behind bared, clenched teeth. A blur of noise, and a sunshine-drenched street assailed Anthony Hughes.

"And a word of advice to you, my young friend," the voice of the American rasped in his ear. "Get to hell out of China. It's doing you no good. You've lost face. . . . D'you hear? Lost face."

And the arm gently urged him to the pavement and the sea of yellow faces.

Anthony Hughes swayed. He was experiencing the frightening jolt of a man who has fallen into the ocean from a comfortable luxury liner. He was lost. The waters were about to close upon him.

Scenting a possible fare, a thin, sweating coolie ran with varnished rickshaw toward the swaying figure. But he was nosed aside by a shining limousine which throbbed gently against the pavement.

A door swung open. Even in his dazed, drunken state, the white man was conscious of a subtle, attractive perfume.

"Please to step inside, Hughes," lisped a low feminine voice.

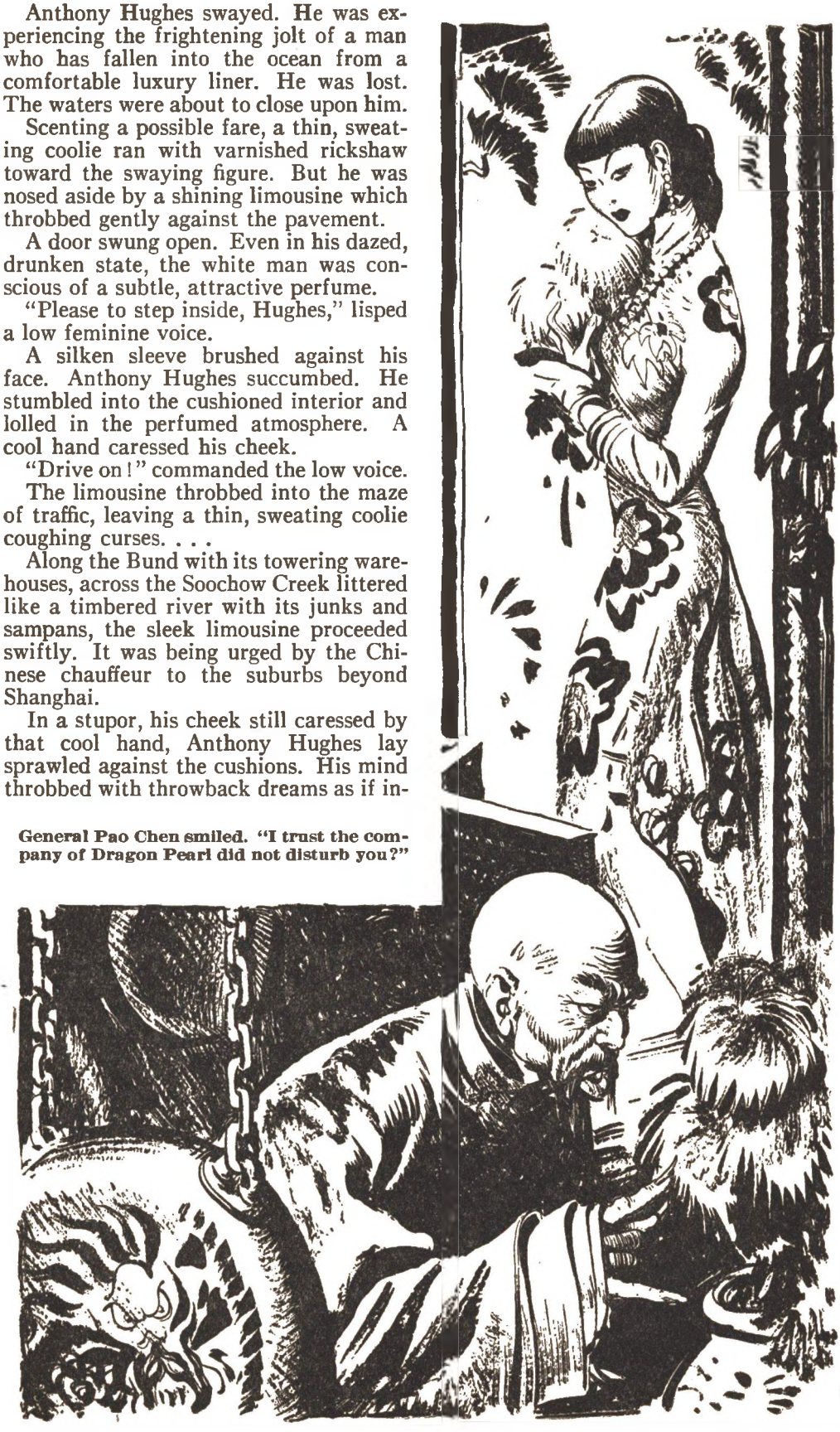
A silken sleeve brushed against his face. Anthony Hughes succumbed. He stumbled into the cushioned interior and lolled in the perfumed atmosphere. A cool hand caressed his cheek.

"Drive on!" commanded the low voice.

The limousine throbbed into the maze of traffic, leaving a thin, sweating coolie coughing curses. . . .

Along the Bund with its towering warehouses, across the Soochow Creek littered like a timbered river with its junks and sampans, the sleek limousine proceeded swiftly. It was being urged by the Chinese chauffeur to the suburbs beyond Shanghai.

In a stupor, his cheek still caressed by that cool hand, Anthony Hughes lay sprawled against the cushions. His mind throbbed with throwback dreams as if in-



General Pao Chen smiled. "I trust the company of Dragon Pearl did not disturb you?"

duced by opium. He saw himself leaving his English home in Hampshire, less than two years ago. His father with buttoned-up emotions, casually shaking hands in farewell. A background of red Georgian brick and green lawn: for three hundred years the Hughes family had lived as English gentlefolk in that atmosphere.

WITH a scraped-together patrimony of ten thousand pounds, Anthony journeyed to New York. Parties, and all the exhilarating delights of a new world—heady wine to one in whom already the sap of vigorous youth was rising. . . . His meeting with Helen, who began by laughing at his English accent and then loved it. He loved her from the beginning. They motored away from a party one night and were married. Life was lovely. But they woke up one day to find that all had gone—except perhaps love.

Anthony was always popular. He borrowed five thousand dollars on that popularity. A young English gentleman of tradition. Leaving Helen in New York, he set out for China. He promised to send for her in a month or two. In the past, the Hughes family had made their fortune in China. They had owned the fastest fleet of tea clippers. It was natural that young Anthony Hughes should retrieve his fortunes in the Celestial Empire in which his family had founded themselves.

Anthony was well received when he stepped ashore in Shanghai. He made the reception an uproarious one. Drinks all round, and drinks again. Within a couple of months the five thousand dollars had been dissipated. Everyone thought him a good fellow, but not good enough for a job. In fact, he made a nuisance of himself. They began to avoid him.

Debts accumulated. Also a batch of cables from Helen. She was ill. She begged for money. She hated being dependent upon her parents. In her present state, a job was impossible. She loved him as dearly as ever, and was waiting desperately for letters. It was with her last pleading cable in his pocket that he had stumbled into the long bar of the Club to find that even liquor was denied him. . . .

"Where are you taking me?" he asked from the cushioned daze of this swift progress.

"Not very far," replied the feminine voice.

"I hope it's somewhere I can get a drink!"

"It may be that all you desire will be given you."

He struggled upright, at that. Now he saw her for the first time. Her beauty made him catch his breath. He saw regarding him large black eyes, the eyelids rising toward her temples. She wore her black hair with a straight fringe on her forehead like a Manet model. Her cleanly cut profile slightly curved in the delicate Kwan-in manner, was enticingly broken with rouged, sensual lips. Her long peacock-blue gown with military col-

lar was divided below the waist to reveal a slim, silk-stockinged leg. He was acutely aware that the tapering fingers stroking his cheek were part of slim yellow arms girdled with jade bracelets.

He blinked. "Who are you?"

She made an incomprehensible remark.

"I don't understand Chinese," he said.

Her soft laughter tickled his nerves.

"In English, it means *Dragon Pearl.* But perhaps I ought to introduce myself as Madame Isabella Pao Chen."

"You are married?"

"Naturally."

"To that brigand—Pao Chen?"

The dark eyes raised obliquely.

"You may call him a brigand. He makes much money. He gives me all I want. And Pao Chen has many concubines." The cool fingers with the tinted fingernails were still caressing his cheek.

"Why have you sought me out?" he asked.

"That you will discover in a few minutes. I have been watching you."

"You knew my name."

"The name of Hughes is not unknown in China."

"And yet—" he began. But the slim yellow arms were about his neck. The subtle perfume assailed him. Those rouged, sensual lips were pressing fiercely against his own. The next moment she had slipped from his grasp.

"We are here. You are to meet the General at once. . . . Wipe the lipstick from your mouth. The General is a jealous man."

And she rose gracefully as the limousine glided to a standstill.

Anthony Hughes stepped out into the sunshine. The car had been driven into a Chinese garden with its inevitable pool surfaced with lotus flowers, its absurd toy bridges and its cunning rockeries. Before him was a green-tiled villa, flanked by shady verandas.

"Go inside," she said in that low voice. "You are expected."

"And you?"

"If you come forth alive, I shall be playing in the garden," she laughed.

"GOOD morning, Mr. Hughes. May the Celestial Sun ever light upon your countenance."

Speaking English with a slightly foreign accent, General Pao Chen bowed from the couch on which he squatted. A carefully arranged screen athwart the window flung the light upon the rumpled white figure of the Englishman.

"It is, indeed, interesting to meet you, General," bowed Hughes in reply. "I was given to understand that Shanghai was too dangerous for you to honor with your presence."

The General grinned, revealing three startling gold teeth.

"Let us say that it is *I* who am too dangerous for the peace of Shanghai."

At a gesture, Anthony Hughes seated himself. Despite the silhouette of this big brawny figure on the couch, his eyes were taking in the details. The head of the General was shaved. There were revealed wrinkled eyes, sensual lips, hands of a strangler, and a heavenly smile. He posed in no blatant uniform. In fact, he was garbed in a black robe and a sea-blue silk coat.

THIS was the General Pao Chen whose name was hated and feared by the millions scratching the earth along the banks of the Yangtse Kiang. A yellow freebooter who, with his rascally army, had pillaged whole provinces. A monster of greed and cruelty—said to be fully conversant with each of the thousand and one tortures. He had amassed much wealth and many concubines. A fleeting vision of the beautiful Dragon Pearl crossed the mind of the white man.

"I am anxious to learn the purpose of my kidnaping in the streets of Shanghai," said Hughes bluntly.

"But how charmingly arranged!" The General smiled. "I trust the company of Dragon Pearl did not disturb you?"

Pao Chen regarded his elongated fingernails as he spoke. At the same time Hughes was conscious that every expression on his face was being watched.

"I congratulate you on the possession of such a beautiful envoy, General. Still—"

The General raised one of his strangler hands.

"Like all whites, I can see that you are impatient. You lack the niceties and courtesies of conversation. Let it be so. It is as a white man that I wish to employ you."

"You wish to employ me?" repeated Hughes.

"It has been whispered to me that you are seeking employment," went on the General evenly. "And I have also heard that you have not had much success. Moreover, that there are many inconvenient but pressing debts against you."

"I congratulate you on your accurate information."

"Furthermore," continued the General, again regarding his long talons idly, "I am informed that the wretched hotel wherein you reside at present refuses to extend further credit to you."

"They wouldn't even give me breakfast this morning," said Hughes sullenly.

"I propose to remedy this disgraceful state of affairs," smiled the General amiably. "I have engaged a suite of rooms for you at the best hotel—the Hotel Majestic. A man of your name and ancestry—and even Pao Chen appreciates honorable ancestry"—the General bowed deeply—"is worthy of only the best and the most exalted company. As a further inducement to you to raise your head to the Celestial sun, I propose to disperse these jackals of creditors who slink after you."

Anthony Hughes laughed.

"I did not realize that when I entered your villa, General, I was stepping into a Chinese fairy-tale. And now suppose you stop being a benevolent mandarin, and tell me what you want of me."

The General sighed.

"You white barbarians have yet to learn the ordinary courtesies of civilization. I said I wished to employ you. You are to become a merchant in Shanghai, an importer. Also a man of affairs. The suite at the Hotel Majestic will also serve as your office."

"And what, may I ask, am I to import?"

"Shall we say—pianos?"

"I was not aware that the Chinese had much use for Western music."

"On the contrary, I have a passion for pianos," smiled the General. "Their very bulk entices me. Already a shipment is on its way to Shanghai. I desire a reputable agent in the port to prevent the unhallowed fingers of Customs officials from disturbing those crates when they are slung ashore. And who could be more convincing than a Mr. Hughes of honorable ancestry, with a charming social manner and a generous disbursement of bribes?"

Hughes regarded the smiling Buddha confronting him. "Why not talk of machine-guns and rifles?" he said bluntly.

The General made a gesture of distaste.

"I prefer to talk of pianos. I grant you that machine-guns are the only inventions which our Oriental civilization concede as worthy of the white barbarians. Remember, my friend, that we have five thousand years of civilization behind us in this country. Also three thousand

"Tell the old fool I am here in your arms."

years of poetry, philosophy and art. . . . But for the moment, I am interested only in pianos."

"Is that all?"

"Not altogether." The smiling face was beaming. "Adjoining your suite at the Hotel Majestic, you will discover a group of Japanese military officers, led by the brave and brilliant General Komei. I am sure that you will find them hospitable, and entertain them in turn. These Japanese officers interest me. Their movements within the next few weeks are the concern of myself and my ally, General Sun Ying of North China. We are anxious to know of their movements, whether they are likely to proceed north, and the possibility of giving them a suitable welcome. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly," grunted Hughes. "And what if I refuse?"

There was an almost imperceptible shrug of those broad shoulders beneath the sea-blue silk coat.

"I should consider the interview at an end," smiled the General. "I should strike this gong at my side, and my retainers would remove you from my presence. I regret I should never see you again. Nor, I am afraid, would your many friends."

Anthony Hughes gazed at the gong. Already it seemed to have been struck; and resounding through his brain was the bitter phrase used by Jerry Morgan: "You've lost face. . . . . D'you hear? Lost face." The phrase was all the more bitter because he now realized its truth. He jerked back his head to refuse the General.

At that moment, through the open window, he glimpsed a slim form in peacock-blue gown standing in the toy garden. Her shining black head turned, and it seemed that there was a smile on those enticing lips.

"All right, I accept. And now give me a drink!"

"Excellent," chuckled the General, and clapped his hands.

ONCE again Anthony Hughes was the most popular man in Shanghai. He had money and friends. The friends never questioned the source of that money; and so long as hospitality was dispensed in that luxury suite of the Hotel Majestic, they were numerous and voluble.

Similarly, as though carried by an hereditary stream, Anthony Hughes felt that he had been in China all his life. For the moment he had forgotten the tear-stained face of Helen, whom he had left in a New York apartment-house. The fact that there had been no cables for some time, aided him to forget.

But the real opium of those fleeting weeks had been the exciting moments when the beautiful Dragon Pearl was in his arms, the dark eyes gleaming and the rouged lips parted and insatiable. In yellow silk gown she was now curled upon a couch in his room at the Hotel Majestic. She held a smoldering cigarette between her slim yellow fingers.

IN the blue dressing-gown he had forgotten was a present from Helen, he seated himself on a chair and took up the telephone. He gave a number.

"*Old!* I wish to speak with Mr. Chen."

It was the pseudonym for the General. A moment later, and he heard the suave, foreign English of General Pao Chen.

"Yes, my dear Mr. Hughes?"

"A certain general and his friends leave for the North tomorrow."

"So!"

"They received a telegram from Tokio an hour ago. They are busy packing."

"And their destination?"

"First to Peiping, and then toward Mukden."

"*Chh! Chh!*" Evidently Pao Chen was worried. "That means they will take the early morning train. What do they do tonight?"

"They're giving a farewell party. I'm invited."

"Excellent."

"After the party, they go to the theater."

"Which theater?"

"The Ho Pei. Some play called 'The Mandarin's Dishonor.'"

A chuckle came from the General at the other end of the wire.

"Most interesting, my young friend. It is a play which ends in slaughter. Almost as many bodies strew the stage as in your English play 'Hamlet.' The Japanese officers will enjoy it. I think I shall be there myself."

That chuckle sent a chill down the spine of Hughes.

"It won't be easy to get seats," he warned the General. "The theater is in the International Settlement, and will be guarded by Japanese soldiers. They'll scrutinize all who go in."

"You will book a box in your name," ordered the General. "And I shall join you there. I might persuade Dragon Pearl to accompany me. That lovely creature eludes me, these days."

Even as he spoke, Madame Isabella Pao Chen rose lazily from the couch and strolled toward the man in the blue silk dressing-gown. She put her hand over the telephone and brought his lips to hers.

"Is that old fool talking about me?" she whispered. "Tell him I am here, in your arms."

Hughes thrust her aside.

"Are you in earnest about the box at the theater?" he asked the General.

"In deadly earnest," was the suave reply. "And see that it is a box for three. I shall command the presence of Dragon Pearl."

The slim figure in the yellow silk robe took her cigarette and extinguished it on the bare neck of the man. He nearly cried out. But keeping calm, he hung up the receiver, dabbed his burnt skin with a silk handkerchief, and faced his torturer.

"I think you had better go now," he said quietly. "The General has business this evening, in which you are concerned. I also have work to do."

She laughed softly.

"If I did not love you, I would say that you are frightened of that brute who calls himself General Pao Chen."

DABBING at the blister on his neck, he saw her out of the room. When she had gone, he applied ointment to the burn. He was still wincing a little with the pain when a visitor was announced. It was the American banker and *taipan*, Jerry Morgan.

"I'll ring for drinks," said Hughes, greeting him.

Morgan's face was grave.

"No, thanks, Hughes. I'm here on business—serious business."

"Oh, very well. Get it off your chest."

"I will. Hughes, the game's up. We've discovered your trade in Shanghai. I've had your check traced. I might have suspected General Pao Chen. What I didn't suspect was that a fellow of your traditions should become a gun-runner for Chinks."

Hughes went white. He looked as though he was about to launch himself upon the American.

"Oh, I know there are plenty of white men engaged in that trade on the coast," went on Morgan imperturbably. "And that if the money is good, nobody asks questions. Furthermore, I don't blame anyone helping the Chinese against the Japs. It will be a war of conquest, anyway. But to work for a bloody bandit such as Pao Chen, who thinks only of his own sacred stomach—that's another matter. Hughes, I'm damned ashamed of you."

"Well, now that you know the worst, get to hell out of here," said Hughes, tight-lipped.

"*I* know the worst," said Morgan sternly, "but the British officials who instituted the inquiries haven't had my report as yet. It will be handed to them in exactly twenty-four hours. That gives you time to catch a steamer."

"You're being generous, eh?" sneered Hughes.

"I'm being a fool—but that's my affair. There's some sort of code among whites on the China coast, whether we're Americans, British, French or Swedes. You haven't acted up to that code."

"Are you going to tell me once again I've lost face?" shouted Hughes.

"I'm going to give you a chance to save your face," replied Morgan, picking up his hat. "That's all I came to tell you. I'm giving you twenty-four hours' start."

"Thank you for nothing," said Hughes. "And now get out!"

Morgan shouldered his way to the door. He turned for a moment.

"By the way, when you get clear, write me about those insurance policies you took out. Twenty thousand dollars, aren't they? I'd like to know to whom they are payable. Accidents happen to a man when he's on the run."

"I'm not leaving Shanghai," asserted Hughes.

"I think you will," said Morgan with finality.

As he passed out of the room, he almost collided with a messenger-boy carrying a cable addressed to Anthony Hughes. If he had returned within the next five minutes, he would have found the young Englishman with tears in his eyes, bent over a flimsy slip of paper. The cable, from New York, read:

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS. MOTHER AND SON BOTH DOING WELL. THEY SEND THEIR FONDEST LOVE. BOY TO BE NAMED ANTHONY.

THE Ho Pei Theater, flamboyant with huge dangling lanterns and strip banners with Chinese lettering, was attracting a big crowd. Rickshaws congested the narrow back street of the International Settlement. Figures in blue smocks and swathed legs surged curiously toward the lights and the clashing cymbals. Chinese garbed in Western

clothes surveyed the scene through huge horn-rimmed spectacles. But even they fell back nervously at the glimpse of the little khaki-clad Japanese soldiers standing guard. All the rifles had bayonets fixed, and these weapons gleamed beneath the smoking lanterns.

"Must we endure this barbaric show?" grunted the dapper Japanese General Komei, as his car, with military men clinging to the running-board, parted the crowd outside the theater.

"The play is nearing the end, Excellency. It has but three hours to go. And our visit is in the nature of a gesture to our foreign friends."

"Then let us enter," sighed General Komei. He and his officers had dined well; the *saki* had been plentiful, and two geisha girls had made a distinct impression. Still, duty called.

THEY stepped out of the car, their ridiculously huge swords clanking. Smartly, the Japanese guard presented arms. Punctiliously, the General saluted, and with a contemptuous glance at the sea of yellow faces flooding the street, stalked inside, followed by his officers.

Bringing up the rear, the white-faced Anthony Hughes noticed that they went through a curtained doorway unchallenged. He himself, however, was confronted by a Japanese soldier belted with automatic.

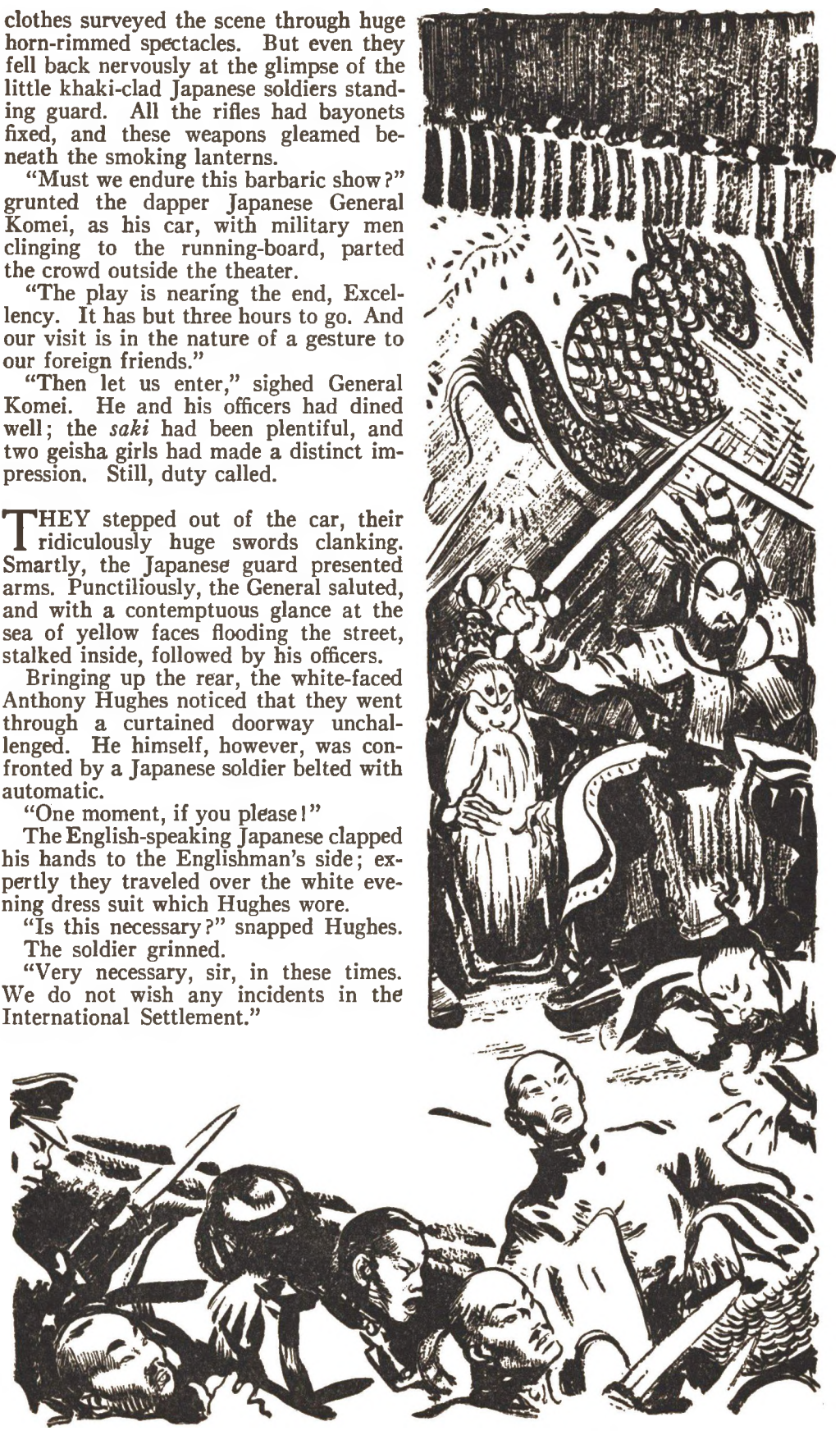
"One moment, if you please!"

The English-speaking Japanese clapped his hands to the Englishman's side; expertly they traveled over the white evening dress suit which Hughes wore.

"Is this necessary?" snapped Hughes.

The soldier grinned.

"Very necessary, sir, in these times. We do not wish any incidents in the International Settlement."



Disturbed members of the audience were astonished to see two figures grappling and swaying in a box above the stage.

Hughes presented his ticket, was waved upstairs. As he climbed the staircase, he noticed that the few Chinese allowed in the theater were all being subjected to a rigorous examination.

"Not even a firecracker could get past those fellows," he mused to himself.

The hot, fetid atmosphere hit him as soon as he parted the curtains leading to the box he had booked. There was a medley of queer smells, and the salt taste of perspiration which only a Chinese theater could provide. Several of the more distinguished members of the audience sat with handkerchiefs held disdainfully to their noses.

HUGHES found himself alone in the box, perched just above the stage. He took one of the three empty chairs, and gazed about. Down below, Japanese officers, several of the Japanese colony and a few European members of the International Settlement, monopolized

the floor of the theater. Like himself, they gazed about idly, ignoring the stage and its players.

The upper regions or circle had been conceded to the Chinese. They snuffed and shuffled in hot discomfort. A few swathed or wiped their perspiring faces with the wet towels thrown dexterously among them by an attendant. This grinning Chinaman carried a basket of soaked towels, rolled like giant gray sausages. He watched for a hand to raise itself among the packed benches. He would seize a giant sausage, whirl it about his head, and fling it across a sea of faces to the outstretched hand. He never missed his aim.

Reluctantly, Hughes turned his face to the stage. The usual masked actors were stalking the boards in slow, exaggerated attitudes. Rather like slow-motion movies. A *samisen* twanged, and a cymbal clashed. There were a few hoarse declamations. A dragon with two human yellow feet padded miserably about the stage. It was confronted by the *Mandarin,* who attitudinized before it with an enormous two-handled sword. At intervals white-garbed figures, scene-shifters, hooded like mourners, flitted on to remove landscapes or castles or flights of steps. The audience chattered loudly, drank enormous quantities of lemonade, or gesticulated for more wet towels.

"MY apologies for arriving late." Anthony Hughes was aware of a shaved head bowing at his side. The strangler's hands were hidden in the capacious sleeves of his black robe. Tinted spectacles hid the wrinkled eyes. Only the sensual lips were displayed in their seraphic smile. Hughes clenched his hands in the darkness of the box. He had learned to loathe his paymaster.

"Are you not taking a risk, appearing publicly in Shanghai in this fashion?" murmured the young man.

General Pao Chen chuckled.

"The savor of life comes from taking risks, my friend. Surely you should know that."

There was something in the suave voice that chilled the Englishman. He tried to glimpse the eyes. But only the beatific smile was visible.

"Where is madame?" asked Hughes.

"Ah! The beautiful Dragon Pearl. You expected her?"

"You said she would probably accompany you," said Hughes with an effort to appear indifferent.

"So I did," nodded the General, like a wise Buddha. "I had forgotten. Alas, I am afraid we must dispense with the charming company of the beautiful Dragon Pearl this evening."

"She is not ill?"

The smile broadened.

"She is beyond such trivialities—now."

A FEELING of horror descended upon the young man.

"I don't understand."

"You should, my friend, perfectly." The hands of the strangler emerged. The talons seemed unduly sharp. "She dared to flaunt in my face the fact that she was loved by another."

Hughes found himself whispering:

"And her lover?"

"Naturally, I was curious to know his name," nodded the General, staring indolently at the stage. "She refused to tell—at first."

"Well?"

His tongue was hot and dry.

"Well, we are adept at tearing a secret from any heart. At last I learned his name—just before she died."

He clapped his hands lustily with others in the audience at a piece of bravura acting; then he held up a hand, and gestured to the Chinese attendant with the towels. Promptly the huge gray sausage came hurtling toward the box. The General dropped it into his lap and began to unroll it.

"You torturing devil—" began Hughes. Then he stopped. From out of the towel, held by the hands of the strangler, emerged an automatic pistol. It was pointed toward him.

"Be quiet, you young fool!" hissed the General. "When I wish to kill you, I will. You have dared to dishonor me—me, General Pao Chen! But what is one sing-song girl the less? The beauty of Dragon Pearl is no more. But I have work yet for you."

"I'm here to tell you that I'm through with your dirty spying and gun-running," said Hughes fiercely.

"But you are not, my young friend. You are only just beginning. Sit down, please. If you move a step nearer to me, I'll shoot you like a dog."

Cursing his own feebleness and nausea, Hughes sank back into his chair. His humiliation was complete.

"In exactly twenty minutes this tragedy will come to an end," went on the General complacently. "I told you that the play ends with a stage strewn with

corpses. I intend to add to the realism of the entertainment. I have arranged for the floor of this theater to be strewn with corpses."

"What a fool I've been!" thought Hughes.

"These automatics came through in the last shipment of pianos," grinned the General. "Splendid weapons. And your help at the Customs was invaluable, my friend. I could not help but smile when the Japanese guards so carefully searched my few picked men who came to the theater, ardent for drama and now impatient for the fall of the curtain. See how the loaded automatics are being handed to them—over the heads of the cursed Japanese who will die."

Hughes raised his racked white face. He saw the bearer of the basket of wet towels, searching the audience with his slit eyes, and hurtling a gray sausage toward the select few who gesticulated. And each of those bundles contained an automatic! They were being carefully concealed in capacious sleeves, while the receivers wrapped the wet towels about impassive faces. And though Hughes was no partisan of the Japanese or their mad ambitions, he knew that the taking of these Japanese lives would precipitate the war—it would give Nippon a chance to strike before China was ready.

"We have fifteen minutes to contemplate the inexorable tragedy come full circle," the General was purring. "Artistically, I think you will agree that our Chinese drama is far superior to that of the West. Tonight I promise you real death in the theater. As the curtain falls, my men will rise. As the lights come on, the triggers of the automatics will be jerked. You will see those swaggering Japanese officers tumble like puppets in their own blood, and—"

IN his final desperation, Hughes leaped at the brawny figure with the shaven head. His hands groped for the yellow throat. With a menacing growl, General Pao Chen rose to shake off his assailant. But he was dealing with a madman.

Their chairs fell with a thud. Disturbed members of the audience below glanced upward. They were astonished to see two figures, grappling and swaying precariously in a box poised above the stage. A white man was bending a brawny Chinese over the edge. For a moment they lay there. Then the Chinaman kicked upward. The figures overbalanced, and came hurtling to the stage.

There was a sickening crash. The startled actors shivered away. Fascinated, held immobile, the audience watched. They saw the white-jacketed man claw convulsively at the wooden floor of the stage. He twisted and raised himself. A trickle of blood came from his mouth. He crawled in desperate agony toward the footlights. The musicians backed away, frightened.

HUGHES raised a hand and pointed. The wavering finger was directed toward the Japanese General, who had risen from his seat.

"They're going to kill you, General Komei. . . . Assassination. Get out of the theater—quickly!"

He got no further. Behind him lay General Pao Chen with a broken back. But in a last convulsive effort the dying brigand raised himself. The automatic was still clenched in his hand. He jerked the trigger.

Anthony Hughes pitched across the footlights as the lead smacked into his body.

Pandemonium ensued. There was a frantic scramble for the exits. The actors still stood upon the stage, frozen into immobility, their inhuman masks staring at this strange drama. In the darkness of the circle above, a group of Chinese gazed at each other, then at a broken figure in a black robe that lay still upon the stage. They awaited a signal—from a dead man.

It never came. The stage was suddenly alive with little khaki figures, handling rifles. They deployed, and the audience saw a machine-gun swivéling upon a tripod pointed in their direction. It was enough. They turned their backs and scrambled for the exits. A group of Chinese clutching wet towels joined them in the rush. . . .

The next day, seated at his desk, the American *taipan* and banker received Captain Carruthers, of the Shanghai police.

"I guess you've been barking up the wrong tree, Carruthers," said Morgan quietly. "I can assure you that Anthony Hughes was engaged in purely straightforward commercial transactions. There's not the slightest suspicion to be attached to any of the checks through this bank. You have my word for it."

"Thank you, Morgan," nodded the officer. "That's good enough for me. Although, after that affair in the Ho Pei Theater last night, we all realize what

a fine fellow Anthony Hughes was. To finish off that damned bandit Pao Chen single-handed, and prevent mass murder of Japanese officers in the Settlement, shows he was made of the stuff of heroes. A pity he died so young."

"His family have an honorable record in China," said Morgan.

"Well, he's rid China of her worst bandit, and saved Shanghai from another military demonstration by the Japanese. And a man who can achieve that, deserves a statue."

"He won't be forgotten."

Captain Carruthers nodded, and retrieved his sun-helmet.

"And now I must be going. An unpleasant job before me. They've discovered the body of a girl in the river. Slashed and disfigured. There are queer devils in Shanghai."

"There are," agreed Morgan.

When his visitor had gone, the American opened again the brief note he had received that morning. It had been written the previous evening on the notepaper of the Hotel Majestic:

My dear Jerry:

You were right, damned right. I'll save my face where I lost it, here in Shanghai. If anything happens to me, there's a son of my name, a few hours old, in New York. The address will be found among my belongings. See that the boy and my wife get the insurance money. Thanks for that drink you once gave me at the Club. I'm sorry you wouldn't let me repay it when we parted.

As always
Anthony Hughes.

TWO months later Morgan sat smoking by the window of his room, with the nightly cannonade drumming in his ears. He watched the black blot that was a bombing-plane passing across the moon, and shivered. For the hundredth time the tragic phrases of Anthony Hughes' letter recurred to him; and rising, he walked to a corner cabinet and mixed himself a drink.

"I'm sorry, too, that I missed that drink, young fellow," he said aloud. "But here's to you—wherever you are! You gave China two months' grace—two months to get ready more than she'd've had if those Japanese officers had been killed in the theater in May. . . . Two months—will it be enough?"

Another vivid and dramatic story by Mr. Makin will appear in an early issue.

Illustrated by Grattan Condon

The Hands of King Pi

Able hooks, they were—but it was the head and the heart that were important.

By JAMES WEBER LINN

THIS is a true story. Or at any rate, it is true enough. Among the Rinaska and the Wookins College folks, Henry is about the only one who will not recognize Henry. The others will all tell Henry the story is about him, but he will grin and refuse to believe them.

The first conjunction of Henry and Wookins College was unexpected. Wookins is a little college, "denominational." There are four or five hundred Wookins colleges all over the huge middle section of the United States; in Henry's own State there are almost forty. Eleazar Wookins was a good man of business and a good church-member, and bequeathed sixty-five thousand dollars to the Upper Baptist Educational Missionary Fund, and the Upper Baptists used it to start Wookins College in 1869, in a town called South Lake. Sixty years later Wookins had five buildings, including a dormitory for young women, seventeen teachers each with six classes a day, and almost four hundred students. More than fifty of its graduates had become missionaries or the wives of missionaries. Wookins College was proud of that record, but it was not one that had seemed likely to attract Henry's registration. So when he arrived, Wookins was pleased but astonished.

Henry went to Wookins from Rinaska high-school. Rinaska is in the same state as South Lake, but two hundred miles distant. Rinaska is a fine little city, prosperous largely on account of George Mayburn's pumps. George Mayburn was president of the School Board, and had been something of a collegian himself before he became known far, wide and favorably as the manufacturer of Rinaska Pumps. It was George Mayburn who said of Henry that "even at Minnesota they would look on Henry as a gift from God." The fact is that in his last year in high-school Henry had special and pressing invitations from six sets of university alumni to attend their respective institutions of learning, and in the summer following his graduation he picked up two more. You will gather from these statements that Henry played football. But unless you had seen Henry in action, you could have had no true conception of what sort of football player Henry was.

Henry was far from handsome in shape. His shoulders were too massive, his hips too big and bunchy; he was too short-waisted, and his arms and legs were too long and too slim for that. But Henry's hands and feet were tremendous. He could pick up a basket-ball in either hand with perfect ease, and a football seemed positively to nestle in his fingers. Despite his short waist, Henry stood six feet three inches; yet he weighed only 197 pounds when he graduated at nineteen, in condition. Henry was always in condition. He was made, apparently, of rock and steel wire. His head was large and round, set on a short neck. His fingers were so powerful that he could sink them into a watermelon; but no high-school opponent had ever been able to sink his own fingers into any part of Henry in a football uniform. At nineteen, Henry could run one hundred yards in nine and eight-tenths seconds, put a sixteen-pound shot forty-eight feet, and throw a football through a barrel-hoop four times out of five at forty yards. And he certainly loved the game.

HENRY'S face, like his head, was large and round, and generally wore a large round smile. It was a good world, and Henry liked it. Out of doors he could do everything better than anybody else could do it—except swim, for which he had had little time for practice—and indoors he could compete with all but the very best of them. Mathematics was pie for Henry; and if mathematics is pie

for a young man of such special outdoor abilities, he is commonly regarded as a genius. Wherever Henry went to college, he would always be "eligible," as the various alumni groups were sadly aware. As an opponent, Henry would never be out of circulation.

"Even the damn' deans can't stop him," one disappointed bidder for Henry's services declared bitterly.

GIRLS in Rinaska High seemed to think little of Henry as a swain. They said he looked goofy. In class, when he rose to recite, there was occasionally a maidenly titter. When Henry heard it, he reddened, but he continued to smile. He knew the right answer. When he advanced to receive his diploma, at the end of four years, nobody tittered; the place rocked with the pounding of the applause, and Henry reddened even more than usual; but his smile was the broadest he had perhaps ever achieved.

Henry's father was a blacksmith, with a wife and six children, five girls younger than Henry. Outside of school hours, when he could be spared from basketball, baseball, track and football, Henry worked in the blacksmith shop—had done so all through high-school. Indeed high-school, except for the education he had received, and the addition of thirty pounds weight, had made no change in Henry. At fifteen he had stood six feet three inches; and at nineteen he stood the same. His father was six feet four. The young gentlemen of Henry's acquaintance often speculated on the outcome of a fight between Henry and his father. They believed that in such a struggle Henry could win. Henry never speculated on the matter. He and his father were on much too good terms for that. By working ten hours a day Henry's father made just enough to feed and clothe and shelter his family; yet he let Henry go to high-school, and meant that all the daughters should go to high-school; and he was even willing that Henry should go to college. He had discussed this matter with George Mayburn, the president of the school board.

"There was one of them fellows," he said, "came round to see me and he offered Henry $125 a month just to go to his school. He told him there was a job for him there in a cigar-store. Henry's a mighty good boy, but he aint worth it. I don't make that myself, Mr. Mayburn. That's payin' him to play football, aint it?"

"If Henry wants a job in a cigar-store," Mayburn said, "I think I can find him one in a town I know for $150. It's a good town; my old college is there. They have good cigar-stores, and they pay boys like Henry well; at least they would, if they could find them."

"To play football?"

"Well, we don't say so," said George Mayburn.

"I aint willing, and Henry aint willing," said Henry's father, "that he should be paid more'n I'm worth, for playin' football."

"How much of a job does he want?"

"So's he can get through, workin' summers. And of course he might get hurt, his ma says."

"He might," agreed George Mayburn. "But any college he goes to he can be sure all expenses will be paid if he gets hurt. Where does Henry want to go?"

"He wants to go to Wookins."

"Wookins?" said George Mayburn, amazed. "Why, Wookins isn't even on the map. Henry would be wasted at Wookins. What's he want to go to Wookins for?"

"It's his algebra teacher, Mr. Mayburn. His algebra teacher went to Wookins, and Henry likes him and he likes Henry, I guess. So there's where Henry wants to go."

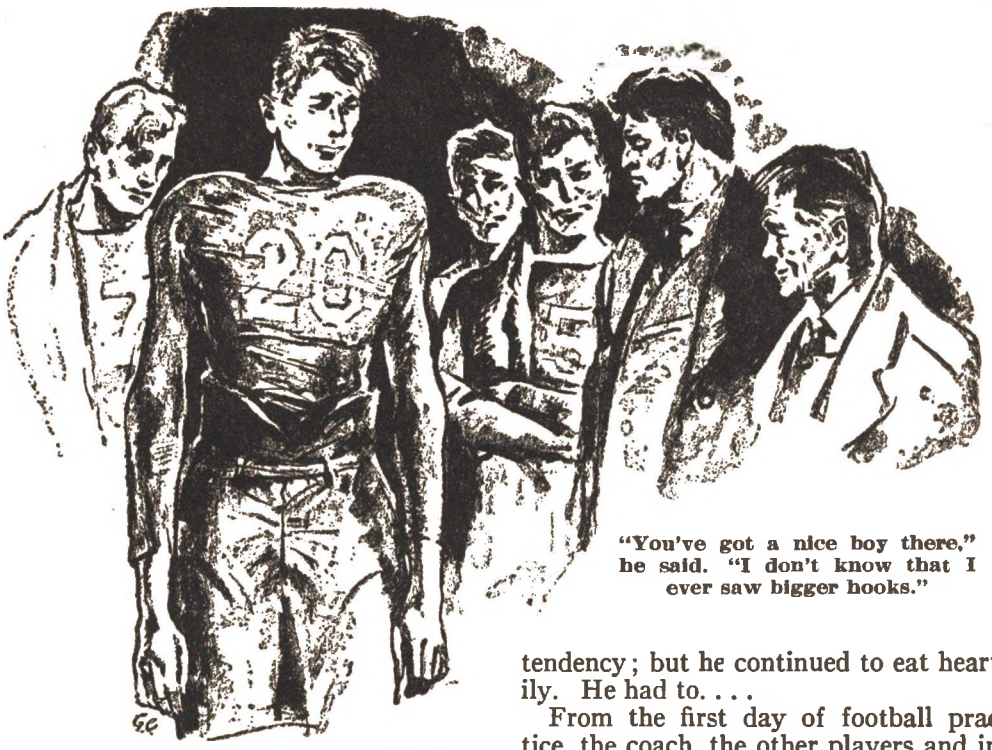
"Well," said George Mayburn, "I'll be damned!"

"Anything wrong with it?" inquired Henry's father anxiously. "They aint made Henry any sort of offer, Mr. Mayburn; so anyway he couldn't afford to go there unless they did."

"I don't know that there's anything wrong with it," Mayburn said grudgingly. "I'll look it up and let you know."

SO George Mayburn looked up Wookins, found nothing wrong with it in particular except that as a little denominational college it seemed rather too much of a desert for Henry's special abilities to blossom in as the rose; and he had further talk both with Henry and Henry's father. In the end he said:

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do: I know Henry won't go to Goldmore,"—Goldmore had been George Mayburn's alma mater,—"and I'm just as willing he shouldn't go to any university that plays us. Wookins is a nice quiet little place, and they have a nice quiet little football team, and Henry might enjoy himself there a good deal. So I'll pay his tuition, and I'll give him fifteen dollars



"You've got a nice boy there," he said. "I don't know that I ever saw bigger hooks."

a month his freshman year, and I'll give him a job in the pump-works in the summer time where he can make more than he can working for you; and we'll see what comes of it."

"That's mighty nice of you, Mr. Mayburn," Henry said. "I'll pay you back some day."

"Maybe," said George Mayburn. "No notes or anything like that, though. This is a speculation, Henry; this isn't an investment."

"Maybe we can turn it into an investment some way, Mr. Mayburn," Henry said. So in September, Henry turned up at South Lake, registered in Wookins College, found himself a nice room with a nice quiet family—Mr. Alexander Wilson, the town banker, who had a little place Henry could keep neat, and a furnace Henry could look after, for his room—and went out for football. He ate with the family, and paid two dollars a week for his board. The original arrangement had been that he should receive board as well as room for his work about the place; but after seeing Henry eat, Mr. Wilson had suggested that two dollars a week extra for board would be only fair. When Henry grappled with sustenance, Grace Wilson, who was sixteen, showed the same slight tendency to titter that Henry had known in the classroom when he rose to recite. As in the classroom, Henry reddened slightly at this tendency; but he continued to eat heartily. He had to. . . .

From the first day of football practice, the coach, the other players and indeed all Wookins College recognized that Henry was indeed a gift from God. Wookins College was a member of a somewhat loosely knit athletic organization called the "Little Nineteen." Every college in the organization played nine games in a season, most of them with other members of the group, though there was no regularly arranged "championship schedule." Wookins College, though small, had done very well in the Little Nineteen. Many of the male students were the sons of farmers, rawboned and powerful youths, not too quick perhaps, but sincere in combat.

THE coach was elderly—indeed, he was Henry's teacher of mathematics, and had been the teacher of Henry's high-school teacher as well. He worked out plays with a sort of geometrical delight. Some of these plays did not succeed, because the factor of the right speed at the right time was lacking in his material; but the coach kept on trying them, building them up in detail. Once in a great while he would give out problems in the geometry class which a mathematician who is also a football-player would have recognized as sternly practical; but not often. In a denominational college which had graduated so large a number of missionaries and particularly wives of missionaries, it was not advisable to go too far.

In the season before Henry went there, Wookins had lost its first four games, and won the last five, including one with Crumbine Normal, which had claimed the championship of the Little Nineteen in spite of this defeat. The coach looked Henry over carefully. He had already been apprised of Henry's capabilities by Henry's algebra teacher at Rinaska. After the third day of practice, he spoke to Henry as to an equal.

"Henry," he said, "I shouldn't wonder if you were the straight line that will turn out to be the shortest distance between Wookins and the championship of the Little Nineteen."

Henry did not smile; he merely looked at the coach in silence.

"Shall we call him X, Professor Burns?" said the captain, grinning. The captain intended to be a missionary one day—a medical missionary in China. After he left Wookins, he would have to study for five years before he could become such a missionary. He had not yet made up his mind whether to go to China for this study, where his expenses would be paid, or to study in Chicago and play professional football to put himself through. That was the sort of man the captain was—determined, but cautious. The coach shook his head.

"X," he said, "is the unknown quantity; but Henry isn't. X isn't descriptive. Call him Pi, and we'll see what we can do to square the circle." So Henry became "Pi," at Wookins.

WOOKINS did not win the championship of the Little Nineteen in Henry's freshman year. Wookins won seven games, lost one, and tied one; Augustana won nine straight. In his sophomore year, with the captain gone (to Chicago; he finally decided to play professional football), and so many men laid up with one injury after another that at one time the squad was reduced to fourteen able-bodied players, including five freshmen, Wookins won only six games. But the Little Nineteen knew Henry. He had scored at least one touchdown in every game. In one game he had scored six. He could run, pass, kick, and tackle like nobody's business, and to catch a forward pass he could jump, if he had to, three feet straight up into the air. When you can catch a pass ten feet above the ground, few can stop you, if somebody will only throw it at just that height to the spot where you are. Henry could throw the ball to such a spot, but unfortunately he could not both throw and catch a pass simultaneously, and nobody else turned up who could pass accurately enough to make the most of Henry's reach.

At the beginning of Henry's third season, however, such a passer appeared—a freshman from South Lake high-school. Off the field he wore glasses, and he could not do much on the field besides pass; but how he could pass! He had watched Henry play for two seasons, and he went to Wookins College chiefly because he wanted to play with Henry. And there were other good freshmen that year, quite a surprising number.

In two years Henry had become the idol of Wookins. He was the best basketball-player, the best baseball-player, and by far the best track man in the college, and as far as that went, the best track man in the Little Nineteen. At twenty-one he was completely filled out—weighed two hundred and two pounds, all bone, muscle and angular flexibility. Except for a broken nose, which set off the rounded innocence of his face with a slight twist to the left, he had never been injured. It was hard even to bruise him; to break him seemed impossible. The flying heel of a player using the illegal "Indian block" had landed squarely on his collarbone and left hardly a mark. He had lowered his time in the hundred-yard dash by a tenth of a second, and increased his distance in the shotput to four inches less than fifty feet. In a dual track meet with Gutterson he had won first in six events—both dashes, both jumps, the shotput and the discus, and in all six he held the Wookins College records. If he ever had time to learn to hurdle and pole-vault, they told him, the national decathlon championship would be at his mercy.

In his classes he did well, except in English, where as Henry himself said: "They always talk about style, and I haven't got any style," In mathematics he enjoyed himself. "I like it because you have to be right or else wrong," he insisted in his first two years; but when he had concluded with calculus, he was less sure. "Maybe there's as much imagination in it as there is in football," he guessed, and oddly enough began to enjoy himself even more. He almost wished he had gone to an engineering school; he believed he might become a good engineer. George Mayburn's company built tanks as well as pumps. There was plenty of room for a calculator in tank-

building, and still more in bridge-building. The idea of building bridges excited Henry, mildly. Kipling's story of building a bridge in India was about the only thing he remembered being much interested in, in the required reading in his English composition courses. But he had no idea of leaving Wookins to study engineering. He did not even talk the matter over with Mayburn.

OUTSIDE the classroom, Henry was the red planet in the Wookins firmament. "King Pi," they called him. The girls, even including Grace Wilson, looked upon him with a mixture of awe and indignation—awe because he was King Pi, indignation because they were aware that their attention still embarrassed him. He had no time for dates, and on the rare occasions when he went to a party, he did nothing but "grin like an ape, and swallow his tongue," they declared. Even Grace, who saw him generally three times a day at meals, admitted that Henry had no conversation. "He sits and stokes," she informed all and sundry. "When he wants anything, he looks at it and says please," she said, "and he has to say please so often he hasn't any time to say anything else." Nevertheless Grace was glad that Henry had continued to be her father's yard- and furnace-man, even after he got the laundry agency for the college. This agency brought Henry in more than seven dollars a week, and made it possible for him to send home twenty dollars a month, which pleased Henry's father. In general, at the beginning of his third year, Henry may be said to have been sitting pretty.

Wookins that year was just about conceded the championship of the Little Nineteen. With nineteen teams in a group, all from small colleges and all governed by the same rules, you never can tell, of course; but with the freshmen and Henry, the odds favored Wookins. And as Wookins had never won a championship, Wookins was excited.

HENRY'S playing had attracted so much attention that Wookins was offered an opening game that year with the University of Chicago, with a flat guarantee of one thousand dollars; and Professor Burns had induced the president of Wookins to accept the offer. Professor Burns had secured his doctor's degree from the University of Chicago, mostly by summer study, and he knew Mr. Stagg, the University of Chicago coach, well.

Henry's face became wistful when he discussed plays with the quarterback.

"His boys play clean football," he told the president. "They won't be out to run up a score, either. And I'd like to show Henry off a little." The president agreed with this desire. The University of Chicago won, 13-7, but it was a good game. Mr. Stagg put two tackles and two halfbacks against Henry, with instructions to stay with him, and Henry made no runs of any importance; but at one stage Wookins managed to go through the center of the line, inside the watching tackles, as far as the University forty-six-yard line, and then the freshman passer cut loose with a long pass to Henry, ten feet up according to schedule, and Henry caught it and fell over the line for a touchdown. Nor could the University gain much around the ends or by passes. Henry was making tackles and spoiling passes all over the field. However, the University bucked the line solemnly for two touchdowns in the first half, and won handily enough. After the game Mr. Stagg said to a newspaper man that he had never seen a better defensive player on the field than Henry was. Mr. Stagg went into the Wookins dressing-room, where he congratulated Professor Burns, and looked Henry over.

"You've got a nice boy there," he said to Professor Burns. "I don't know that I ever saw bigger hooks." He went over and picked up Henry's right hand by the wrist, as if he had been a doctor feeling a pulse, and shook his head. "Nice hooks," he said.

THE next seven games Wookins won from members of the Little Nineteen. The last game was to be with Northern Normal. Northern had played eight games, all with the Little Nineteen-ers, and had won them all. Nobody else had

The St. Vitus rear-defense man jumped for Henry's knees. . . . Henry went on without even a stumble.

won more than six games. The Wookins-Northern game would decide the championship. Wookins would win it. Northern had a better line than Wookins, and two excellent backs, but nobody like Henry, who had played all season like a lambent flame. Throughout the last week of practice, however, Henry had seemed a trifle languid—for Henry, that is. It was easy practice, exclusively in timing, but Henry's timing was not as perfect as usual. When Professor Burns asked him about it, Henry shook his head. "I've got a sort of a stomachache," he said. "I'll be all right. I guess I've been eating too much, maybe. I'll have to cut down."

The morning of the game it snowed a little; the air was raw and the field was slippery. After five minutes of play Wookins got the ball on a fumble near the center of the field. The teams lined up, and on the first play the quarterback called for a long forward pass, right down the center. Henry ran to the left, then cut in. The freshman passer delayed a bit, then shot the pass to the right spot at the right height, about ten feet up. Henry was there, all alone, half-jumped, then slipped to the ground. The ball went on over him to the ground. Henry did not get up. He had acute appendicitis, as it turned out. They operated on him three hours later, by which time Northern had won the championship. The score was six to nothing.

George Mayburn, who had come over to South Lake to see the game, stayed through Sunday, and on Monday was allowed to see Henry in the hospital.

"Hard luck," he said.

"Tough," Henry admitted.

"I came down here to tell you something," George Mayburn said. "I expected to tell it to a champion, but it will cure you up, anyway. I've been doing a little wire-pulling, Henry, and I guess I've got you a job."

"A job?"

Mayburn nodded. "You can call it that. You'll be appointed to West Point in January. You won't say anything about it, of course, but it's fixed up. Of course you have to take an examination, but that's a formality in your case. Quite a job, Henry. How would you like to be an All-American?"

"I've been thinking," said Henry weakly, "I'd like to be an engineer. You get engineering training at West Point, don't you?"

"The best," said George Mayburn. "That's fine, Henry. You can go down there, play football and study engineering, and get fifteen hundred dollars a year for doing what you like best. Then you can resign from the army after two years, if you choose, and come back into Rinaska Pumps."

"You've been a good friend of ours, Mr. Mayburn," Henry said.

"Well, Henry," George Mayburn said, glowing, "you're a pretty fair sort of kid to be a friend to. Remember your telling me our little speculation might turn out to be an investment? You may have been right, at that."

"I hope so," Henry said; and after a few more words George Mayburn went away, and Henry lay there thinking.

IT *was* a pretty good old world, at that. Maybe he would be All-American, playing for the Army. At any rate he could be an engineer, and help out the family while he was getting his training. He wouldn't mind cadet discipline, either. Henry was used to system, and punctuality, doing the same things at the same time every day, going to bed on the minute and getting up early on the minute. He felt weak, but he felt happy, in spite of Wookins' not winning the championship. Then he thought of Professor Burns. And right away, he began to feel less happy.

The coach had been looking for that championship for many years. He had not minded not winning it in the earlier days, because he had never really expected it. But since Henry came, the coach had been looking forward. It had been in his grasp. And then Henry had let him down. Well, he couldn't help that; appendicitis wasn't his fault. But now, if he were to go to West Point, wouldn't he be letting the coach down again? Professor Burns was over fifty, Henry knew. Henry was probably his last chance for a championship. And Professor Burns wouldn't say anything. In fact, he would urge Henry to take the West Point appointment, Henry knew, and the knowledge made him no happier. He shut his eyes and went to sleep.

WHEN he woke, he had a confused sensation in his head. He had been in a battle; Professor Burns was a general and had ordered him to take a trench, and Henry had started forward and been hit in the stomach, and he had said something to the general, and the general had laughed. Laughed at Henry? What Henry had said, or why the general had laughed, Henry could not remember. He knew the lost championship and the West Point appointment and the operation for appendicitis were all part of his dream, but still he wished he could remember just what he had said to the general when he had been hit in the stomach, and why the general had laughed. A nurse came in—there were only four in the hospital, and they all knew Henry well. She took his temperature and looked at him severely

"Be quiet now, Big Boy," the nurse said.

"I've been quiet," Henry said. "I've been asleep."

"Do you talk in your sleep?" she said. "You gave an awful yell. You must have thought you were playing football."

"I was in a fight," Henry said.

"You are in a bed now," the nurse said. "You lie still in it, Big Boy."

So Henry lay still, and pretty soon he remembered what he had said to the general. He had said: "That hurt, but I'm not quitting." And the general had laughed. Henry laughed too. It would hurt not to take that appointment to West Point, but he wasn't quitting. He would finish out at Wookins. He guessed he could get along somehow. As soon as he was strong enough, he wrote to George Mayburn explaining that he couldn't take the appointment. It was a grateful letter, but it gave no reasons that were

satisfactory to George Mayburn, who was annoyed, not to say angry.

"I suppose," George Mayburn wrote, "you would rather play professional football than play for your country. Look out you don't make a bum out of yourself." That was rather a nasty one; George Mayburn knew that Henry was not intending to play football at West Point for his country; he was intending to play for Henry, and for George Mayburn, and to beat the Navy, which was just as much part of Henry's country as the Army was. However, Henry understood how George Mayburn felt. He had supposed George would feel that way. When Henry got around again, he went to Professor Burns and explained that he had to make some money, somehow. Did Professor Burns think he could find anybody to tutor in mathematics? There was not much tutoring at Wookins, but Professor Burns thought that under the circumstances, it could be arranged.

It was arranged. Henry tutored four students for three hours a week, each, in a special class which Professor Burns arranged for him. They each paid him fifty cents an hour, which brought him six dollars a week. That with his laundry-agency and a scholarship made it possible to let George Mayburn know that the fifteen dollars a month was no longer necessary. George Mayburn said that was all right with him, quite pleasantly, and Henry felt better.

THE appendicitis did not seem to have done Henry any harm. Presently he began to eat as much as ever, which was perhaps twice as much as the average man eats; and in the spring he put the shot fifty feet and six inches. He did not mention to Professor Burns, or to anyone else, that he had had the offer of a West Point appointment, and apparently neither did George Mayburn. Nobody mentioned it. Henry thought nobody knew anything about it. Henry and the freshman passer used to throw a football about that spring, though there was no such thing as spring practice at Wookins. In the summer Henry went back to the pump works as usual. George Mayburn paid him ninety dollars a month that summer; he told Henry he was worth it. But he never talked to Henry about his prospects. Henry and his father talked about them occasionally. Henry's father was getting on all right. Henry's mother was taking in washing, and the two older girls helped her; they were both in high-school. Henry and his father agreed that if Henry got a chance he had better play professional football.

"They tell me," his father said, "you can get twenty-five dollars a game, over to Rock Island."

"Better'n that," Henry said. Henry had made inquiries, and discovered that if he could get a chance with the Bears or the Cardinals in Chicago, he might be paid one hundred dollars a game, if he made good, and he believed he could make good. But he did not tell his father what he had discovered.

IN September, after a profitable summer in the pump works, Henry went back to Wookins for his last year. Captain again, he was determined to get a championship for the coach if there was one to be got. He was himself stronger than ever, and quite as fast, and he did every routine thing on the field in the unvarying fashion of an automaton, which left his brain entirely free for emergencies as they might arise. The first thing he did was to ask Professor Burns if he, Henry, might call the signals. The best quarterback left was a sophomore, and Henry believed his own judgment was better than any sophomore's. Professor Burns objected that if Henry called signals, there would be too big a hole in the system when he was out of the game; but Henry insisted that at crucial times he never would be out of the game. Professor Burns finally agreed.

That fall Henry was working with Professor Burns on the theory of limits, a sort of mathematics so advanced that nobody but Henry was in the class. The discussions came to include certain problems that had never been worked out in any textbook on higher mathematics, and probably never would be, for they were in the field of human ballistics. It might have been these discussions, or it might have been three or four of the young men who had come to Wookins College to play football with Henry, or it might have been Henry's signal-calling, or it might have been Henry himself; but at any rate Wookins College certainly swept through the first five games that season.

Every game was with a member of the Little Nineteen, and every game bore a strong resemblance to a push-over. Even the games with Coe and Decatur, which were supposed to be strong teams, were not too difficult. Henry called on himself often enough to be quite sure he was "right," but not too often to discourage

the other boys. He and the coach matured the other boys, in fact, as if they had been cigars. The first half of every game Professor Burns plotted out with the utmost care for all possible emergencies, and they played on a system. In the third quarter he took Henry out, and let the sophomore quarter do the handling. In the last quarter Henry went in again, and tried out plays that had not previously worked well, to see what was the matter with them. The boys called the first halves contract and the second halves poker.

Those fourth quarters were amusing. In three of the games Wookins did not score at all in the fourth quarter; in one of them it scored three times, all on "perfect plays," in which every opponent was blocked. To two of these opponents Henry attended personally, as per schedule. The boys Henry blocked generally stayed blocked, and Henry could go on and range freely. On the whole, Henry preferred blocking to anything else, except catching a high pass. He could never get over a sort of childish pleasure in going up and getting them out of the clouds, coming down with his feet in position, and moving on. And on the Tuesday after the Decatur game, Henry came down with one foot in a hole, plunged forward and struck on the point of his shoulder, breaking his collar-bone. The doctor said Henry would be out for the rest of the season. Henry hoped not, but he was deeply depressed. He regarded the broken collar-bone as entirely his own fault. He believed he had just been showing off in practice, and had let Professor Burns down again.

They fixed Henry up, and the season went on. Henry worked over the sophomore quarterback as he had never worked over anything, even his freshman themes in English. His huge round face became as wistful as a baby's when he discussed plays with the quarterback. The sophomore quarterback responded well to stimulation. Wookins won on Saturday from Monmouth, which also had a pretty good team that year, by the slim margin of a kicked goal, seven to six. On the following Saturday Wookins tied Northern seven to seven. Northern had lost only one game that season. Simpson on the last Saturday but one was easy; Simpson didn't have much, and Wookins won fourteen to nothing. They came up to the final Saturday, and Wookins led the Little Nineteen with seven games won and one tied. Crumbine College had lost one, Northern had lost one and tied one; but both Crumbine and Northern had played one game outside the Little Nineteen, and the worst that could happen was a tie for the championship, Wookins said. If Wookins won, it would be all over. If Wookins lost, even providing that Crumbine won, the record would stand: for Wookins seven won, one lost, one tied; for Crumbine seven won, one lost; which would mean a tie for the championship. Crumbine insisted that if they won and Wookins lost, the tie game with Northern would put Wookins second. Professor Burns and Henry took no part in the argument.

St. Vitus was tough: Wookins could hold them, but Wookins couldn't score.

"If we lick St. Vitus," Henry said, "there isn't any argument. So let's lick St. Vitus."

The last week in November was unpleasantly wet. The Wookins field was sloppy and disagreeable. Friday was clear but colder, Saturday colder still. There were thin slivers of ice on the muddy grass. St. Vitus had a team that was considerably heavier than Wookins, except for Henry. It looked like a day for weight. On Friday afternoon Henry, with his arm bound to his side, went in at right tackle, and ran through signals.

"I'm going to use him there awhile, if I have to," Professor Burns told the squad. "Even with one arm he can make holes."

"I'll say I can," Henry said confidently. "I can't catch a pass, but I can make a hole."

ST. VITUS was tough. Wookins could hold them, it turned out, even without Henry's assistance; but Wookins couldn't score. The "perfect plays" weren't timed right, in the miry going; lateral passes too were going sour in their timing, and having to be recovered by wild scrambling and loss of distance; and in the regular passes the wet ball had a discouraging tendency to slip off the passer's fingers. Wookins pressed St. Vitus, but neither side scored. When the teams changed ends for the final quarter, the score was still nothing to nothing.

"It's O.K., coach," Henry said. "A tie is O.K."

"Mathematically you are right," Professor Burns said, "and you and I are mathematicians. The newspaper men aren't, though. They may give Crumbine the championship. Besides, don't forget about West Point, Henry."

Henry jumped. "What about it?"

Professor Burns laughed, just as he had laughed in Henry's dream. "Mayburn told me," he said. "I'm putting you in for the last ten minutes, Henry. You'll get us a touchdown."

"Oh," said Henry. His grin had disappeared. "What play, coach?"

"You'll go in at tackle, as you did yesterday. You'll call the signals. When you get a chance, anywhere on the field, call one-R-61."

Henry stared at him. One-R-61 was a short pass over the center of the line to the left tackle, who cut in for it.

"To me?" Henry said.

"That's right. They'll not be expecting a pass to you, naturally. Your left hand is big enough to handle the ball, Henry."

"That's right," Henry repeated. The grin returned. "Much obliged, coach!"

Professor Burns laughed again.

"Damn you, you old heart-of-gold," he said softly, "snag it and run like hell!" Henry had never heard Professor Burns swear, before; it gave him a grand feeling.

"That's right, coach," Henry said again. Then they watched the play in silence. Wookins rammed the ball up to their own forty-five-yard line slowly. On the forty-five-yard line it was first down.

"Go on in, Henry," said Professor Burns, "Remember, now, keep away from the boys until after the next play, then try one-R-61."

Henry went in at left tackle. There was a roar from the crowd—only about two thousand people—but it was a roar. It rose and rose and rose in pitch, something like the old "rebel yell," and it kept right on. When the referee blew his whistle to resume play, nobody in the stands heard it. The teams lined up, and the Wookins quarterback sent another buck, a delayed cross-buck this time, right through where Henry was. Henry and the opposing guard lay on ground together about five yards back of the St. Vitus line, and the Wookins fullback got past the center of the field. Henry got up. In the huddle he spoke briefly.

"I'm callin' 'em now," he said. Nobody spoke. "One-R-61. Repeat. One-R-61." He grinned as he saw the look on the boys' dirty faces. "One-R-61." They lined up. The ball snapped; Henry moved out, then cut in sharply. As soon as they saw it was a pass, the St. Vitus team ceased to pay any attention to Henry, one-armed Henry. The ball came, nicely and easily. It stuck squarely in Henry's hand; he made a half-turn and ran right for the St. Vitus rear defense man, who came up a little and waited half a second, then jumped for Henry's knees. Henry went on without even a stumble. He threw mud like a snowplow, but he did not slip. When he crossed the goal-line, the St. Vitus man was still lying about three yards from where he had tackled Henry.

When the ball had been brought out to the three-yard line, Henry said: "I'm kicking this one. It's my last game." He kicked it. The next nine minutes were nothing but cheering and stalling. At the end of them, Wookins had its long-awaited first championship of the Little Nineteen.

"WHEN did Mr. Mayburn tell you about that West Point thing?" Henry said to Professor Burns later.

"After you broke your collar-bone," Professor Burns said. "You should have taken it, Pi."

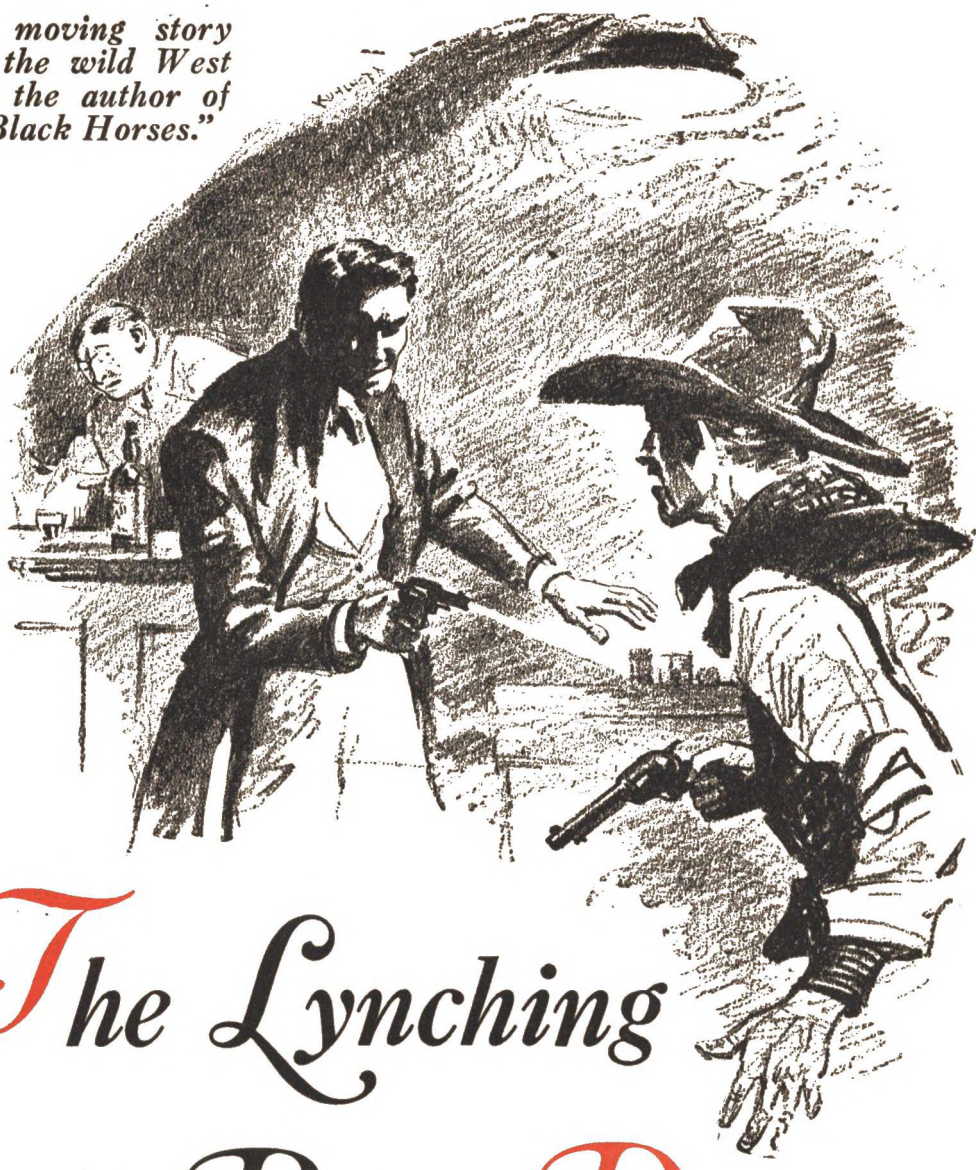
"I guess not," Henry said. "There's more in professional football and engineering for me, I guess—if I make good."

"You've made good," Professor Burns said.

Henry grinned his chasm-like grin.

"I'm young yet, coach," said Henry.

A moving story of the wild West by the author of "Black Horses."



The Lynching of Poker Dick

By JAY LUCAS

Illustrated by Peter Kuhlhoff

THIS is the story of a man who was known throughout Arizona as Poker Dick, the gambler. Many will already be familiar with his history, since the Sunday papers gave it a good deal of publicity not long ago, with the usual lurid details and pictures—those who write that sort of stuff seem to take an unholy delight in discovering that some man of the worst possible repute was really a member of an old and respected English family. How they discovered that he was titled, I do not know, but I cannot keep down a strong suspicion of a certain well-known London journalist whom I had always regarded as my friend, and as a rather decent chap.

This is not an attempt to exonerate "Poker Dick," or to prove that he was an

I reckon we must have seemed like a tough-looking lot to her. And then Jerry's pardner came strolling up in that casual way he had.

angel in disguise—he was a thoroughgoing scamp and scoundrel. But it is only fair that certain incidents connected with his lynching and the real reasons for it should be made known. Of course I am biased in his favor, but I cannot help regarding his last smiling lie—the lie that got him lynched—as more than worthy of his Crusader ancestors. And it is odd indeed to think that the truth of this should never have been known but that my left eyebrow is of a certain peculiar shape.

I am afraid that I cannot tell the story fairly in my own words, so I shall give it in those of the two men who told it to me.

It took me more than four months to find those two men, the last living who are old enough really to remember Poker Dick. I found several others who vaguely remembered having seen him when they were children, but of course they were of no help. I shall begin with Barney Sayres' story—not too different from the newspaper version—and end with that of old Dan Richards, the only man who might possibly have been called Poker Dick's friend; at least, he was friend enough to keep the man's secret for more than fifty years—until he noticed my left eyebrow.

The story came, unsoftened, without my asking for it. We were seated in a tiny shack on the outskirts of the Box Bar J range, with the round-up wagon backed close to the door. It was night, with a few sticks of cedar flickering in the little fireplace, and a cheap kerosene lamp hardly giving as much light as the fire. A slow, cold rain had set in just before sunset and beat dismally against the little window near me; otherwise those men on the round-up would have been lounging around a camp-fire outside and not packed into the tiny shack.

I had noticed little Barney Sayres glancing at me covertly several times since my arrival—once I saw him shake his white head as though badly puzzled. It was after a long lull in the conversation that he began to speak:

STRANGER, you shore did give me a sort of turn when you rode up here this evening—took me back a long ways, to the early days in this country. There was a feller we used to call Poker Dick. Uh-huh—you shore do look like him; and you talk a lot like him too. You don't happen to come from a place they call Surrey—I think it's a county or something? . . . Oh, you do—that would explain you talking like him. And if

you'll excuse me saying it, a lot of Englishmen look sort of alike, like they might be brothers. But then they aint all mixed up like we are over here; they would look like each other. I even got some Indian blood, myself—Cherokee, away back.

Dick Surrey, he called himself—he took the name from the place he came from. I never knew his right name was Sir Richard Standredge till that piece came out in the papers awhile back—reckon you didn't see it; it was before you come over. Poker Dick, we all called him; because he stuck to that one game—he was the only professional gambler I ever saw that stuck right to one game.

He was a wonder at that poker; they say he never cheated. He didn't have to; he could take one look at a man's face and tell just what hand he had. You could no more read his own face than you could a Navajo's—he always had the same sort of little smile, a sort of gambler's smile that didn't mean nothing at all; there was no fun in it. He was one of the finest-looking men I ever saw; over six feet tall with wide shoulders and small hips. He wore a sort of little blond mustache, waxed, and sticking up at the corners—maybe that's what made him look so much like he thought he was ten times as good as anybody else; he shore had a high-and-mighty way. And him only a gambler and killer.

Uh-huh—he was a killer, all right; I don't know how many men he did kill around here. Looking back on it, I can't rightly say as any of them was much loss—any more than Dick himself was when they strung him up.

Funny, when you stop to think of it! His first killing was back in England—shot a man for running away with his wife, and had to skip out. Reckon the poor girl was only too glad to get away from a feller like Poker Dick; there was something cold-blooded about him that nearly made you shiver. They must have been pretty young when they married; I don't reckon he was thirty yet when the boys strung him up to a cottonwood, and he'd been out here a good many years then.

And here's the funny part of it: he shot his first man for stealing his wife; and he himself got strung up for trying to steal Jerry Youngblood's wife. And I'll be blamed if I think he ever looked at any one other woman—in between them two.

Here's how the thing come up:

DICK had been running a poker game at the Spreadeagle Saloon—it used to be on the corner where that new filling-station is now. Like I say, he was about the slickest poker-player we ever seen in the Territory, but he never bothered to save a cent; he knew he could make more whenever he needed it. He drank pretty steady all day—always whisky straight—but you'd never tell it on him; he had shore a good head for liquor. Once in a while he'd go on a real jag and drink himself unconscious, but he'd always lock himself in his room at the hotel for that; he wouldn't let anybody see him staggering.

Like I say, he never bothered to save a cent—till he run onto Jerry Youngblood.

Nobody knew where Jerry came from, but a yarn got out that he was wanted bad up in Montana for some killings and robbings. Jerry was as tall as Dick, but he was heavy along with it—he was a lot older. He was one of them big, red-faced, laughing fellers that you'd think was fine fellers till you looked into their eyes real close. He didn't fool us much out here, though—we'd seen too many like him.

They was just bringing cattle into the territory in them days—me, I come in

with a trail herd from the Chinati Mountains in west Texas. Everybody was talking cattle, and how much money there was going to be in it, and the best part of the range was being grabbed up pretty fast.

IT was Jerry Youngblood that talked Dick into going into cattle with him. Dick got interested enough to play poker a little harder for a week or two, and that gave him stake enough to match Jerry's.

And they got their first bunch honest enough—a feller called Ernie Weimar, as I remember it, drove them in from the Indian Territory, and then he got himself shot in some row a couple weeks later; Jerry and Dick bought the cattle from his widow. They was branded Box Quarter Circle, and they kept up that brand.

Well, sir, you never did see an outfit spread out like that Box Quarter Circle when them two got hold of it. Rustling? Shore—they hired all the best rustlers in the country, and paid them well.

That's what showed how foxy Jerry was: After a time or two at first, nobody said a word about rustling; Poker Dick was too quick a shot. That's why Jerry wanted him for pardner. Jerry himself had the right spirit all right for a gunman, but he was just a mite too clumsy with his hands—and there was some that said he had a pretty wide yellow streak under the back of his shirt, in spite of his size and his blustering ways. Whatever you got to say about Poker Dick, he had the cold-blooded nerve of the devil himself; he seemed to enjoy shooting it out with somebody that had the name of being slick with a gun—he'd never lose that hard little smile of his, and he'd be still smiling when he'd turn off sort of casual, reloading the empty chamber of his gun.

About two years of that, and they was setting pretty—a big outfit. They built a fine adobe headquarters about a half mile west of town. That's when Jerry took a notion to get married. There was danged few women out here in them days, and most of them didn't amount to much—dance-hall girls, and that kind. So Jerry bought him a new suit and started back East. He told us all he was going back to find him a wife, but we didn't pay much attention—Jerry was always talking of what he was going to do.

But danged if he didn't!

At that, it might have come out all right if the girl he married hadn't been English, and about the same kind of English that Poker Dick was—I mean, Sir Richard Standredge; funny, to think that was his right name! Not that her folks had any titles or anything that way; but they was sort of the same class, anyway, I reckon. They say they're mighty strict about that class stuff in England, worse even than Easterners. . . .

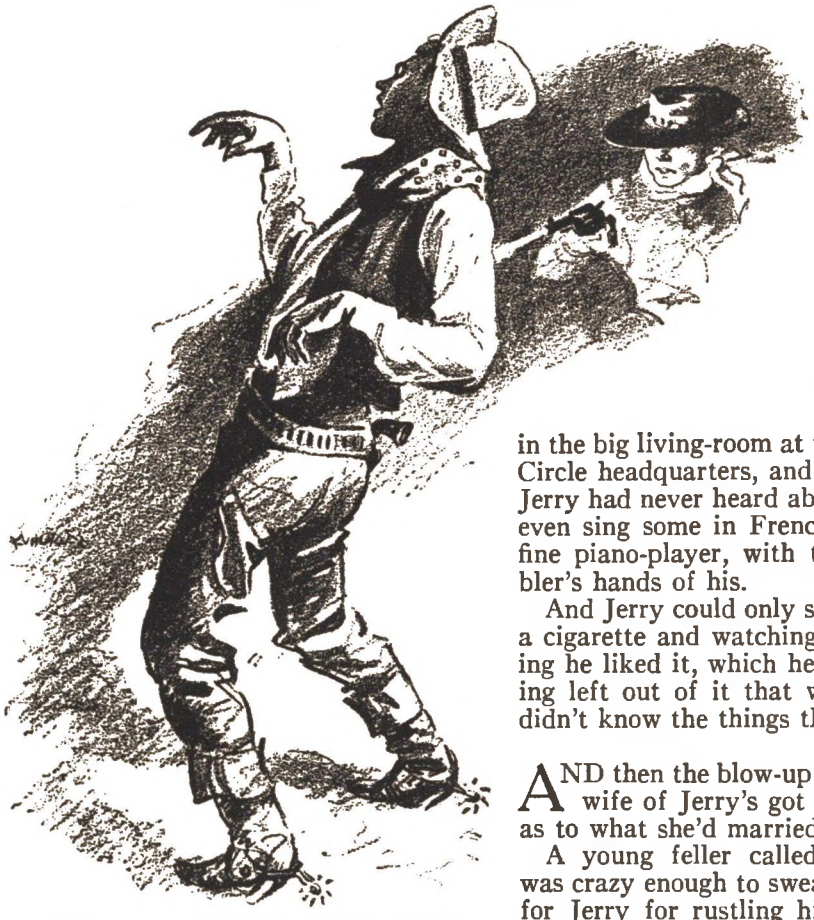
I never did get the straight of that, but as near as I got it, her folks got in debt and lost their place, and come over here with what little they had left to make a fortune. The story was that her father was a danged fine feller, but didn't know no more about business than an infant—some slicker sold him some mining stock and just took him to a cleaning, right. I reckon they was in pretty bad shape when they somehow run onto Jerry while he was back there. Jerry always did talk big, and he had a pocketful of money, and likely they thought he amounted to something.

And you know how young girls are all over the world—they're full of sort of romantic notions. She must have thought Jerry was a great feller, him spending so free, and the big way he always talked, and him being a cattleman from away out in Arizona Territory. Anyway, they got married back there. She was a fine-looking young woman—sort of tall, and blonde, with the bluest eyes you ever saw. But she was only a kid.

WE was all down to meet the stage the day they came in—Jerry had wrote about the highfaluting wife he was bringing back. She looked it, all right, the way she talked, and the high way she held her head. Gosh, but she looked right pretty to a lot of bach's like us!

I reckon we must have seemed like a tough-looking lot to her, with our big six-shooters strapped on and all—and half the fellers hadn't bothered to shave that week. She only nodded to us sort of lifty when Jerry introduced us—Jerry was pretty near busting, he was so proud of her; and we'd never seen anything like her.

And then Jerry's pardner came strolling up in that sort of casual way he had—he always shaved every day, and kept slicked up. I reckon most of us just grabbed off our old hats like there was bumblebees under them; but Poker Dick knew how to do that sort of thing. He just swung his off sort of graceful and



Tony was found shot dead by the side of the road —so there was no witness against Jerry.

easy, and sort of bowed, and said something we wouldn't have thought of. And before we knew it, there they was talking to each other like the rest of us had been a million miles away.

Right then was when Jerry Youngblood began to look at them sort of funny. I reckon he was beginning to realize for the first time that both of them being English might not work out so well for him. Another woman being married would never make any difference to Jerry; and I reckon he had no reason to think his pardner was any more finicky about things like that than he was himself.

Well, we all began to ask each other on the sly how the thing was going to come out—anybody could see how Dick liked her, and she seemed to like him just as much. But before more than three or four weeks we began to look at each other; we was beginning to think that Poker Dick had some sort of principle after all. Looked like he went out of his way not to be around Alice Youngblood unless Jerry was there too.

But even that didn't work out so well. The two of them would sit at the piano in the big living-room at the Box Quarter Circle headquarters, and sing songs that Jerry had never heard about—they could even sing some in French. Dick was a fine piano-player, with them long gambler's hands of his.

And Jerry could only sit back smoking a cigarette and watching them, pretending he liked it, which he didn't, him being left out of it that way, because he didn't know the things they knew.

AND then the blow-up came; that pore wife of Jerry's got her eyes opened as to what she'd married.

A young feller called Tony Guthrie was crazy enough to swear out a warrant for Jerry for rustling his cattle. They arrested Jerry for it, but he was out again in two hours—he just pulled five hundred dollars, cash, out of his pocket, and plunked it down for bail.

And before his trial came up, Tony was found shot dead by the side of the road, so there was no witness against Jerry, and he was turned loose. Nobody knows to this day who did shoot Tony Guthrie—he was a darned nice kid, too. Jerry and Dick had a fine alibi—a little too fine for fellers that knew nothing about it; they was standing in the middle of a crowd, setting them up, about the time of the killing. They'd got things all fixed so's they didn't have to do their own killings any more; they could hire it done.

Tony was sure well liked around here, and there was a lot of talk—there was even some talk of a necktie party, but it petered out. But anyway, while the rumpus was on, Alice Youngblood found out for sure that she'd married a rustler and killer, and an all-around tough nut.

I don't know what she said to him about it; but anyway, he started drinking hard again—he'd sort of laid off it since he got married. Anyway, the new

"So—you're going away? Why?" "You know, Alice." His voice was low. "Because I love you."

was wearing off his marriage, and he was starting to shine up to a little Mexican dance-hall girl that had just come to town. They say Alice found out about that too. The poor kid found herself in a pretty mess; some said she'd have gone back to her folks and left Jerry, but that he made sure she didn't get enough money for the fare; it used to cost a lot to travel by stage-coach. Anyway, she was in a pretty mess.

And then, one time, nobody saw her out of the house for a week or more, but the story leaked out that she had a bad black eye, which was why she didn't go out where people would see her. Jerry—uh-huh; he was a dirty dog!

WOMEN are funny, sort of. . . . Did you ever yet see one that wouldn't talk about her kid getting into bad company, when the plain fact that everybody saw was that her own kid *was* the bad company?

I reckon poor Alice felt somewhat the same about Jerry Youngblood; she got a notion that Poker Dick was a bad influence on him, and that if she got him away from Dick, she could reform him more or less. Reform Jerry Youngblood! They say she tried to bust up the partnership, but Jerry had sense enough to know that he wouldn't last as long as a snowball in hell without Poker Dick; he wouldn't split up. Reckon he knew he wasn't smart enough to run the thing alone; and maybe he had a suspicion, down deep, sort of, that he didn't have the nerve either, without Poker Dick to back him up.

But anyway, it sure got Dick in bad with Jerry's wife—which likely tickled Jerry pink. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Jerry turned her against Dick on purpose; I don't know what he told her about him.

ANOTHER six months or so went past, and you wouldn't have known poor Alice, hardly. She got so thin, and her eyes got so big and sort of lonesome-looking; and she'd hardly ever talk to anybody any more. There was some tall cussing going on by that time about how Jerry was treating her; some nights he wouldn't go home at all, and poor Alice knew danged well that he was staying with that little Mexican girl.

Uh-huh—and half the town sort of crazy about Alice. In a respectful way, I mean. I reckon the craziest about her was a young Doctor Vaughn from Boston, that had come out here about the same time she did. You couldn't have met a finer or cleaner young feller anywhere—nor a much better doctor. They say he come out here for t. b., but if that was right, he found it early and got over it quick; he was a sort of tall, slim young feller, but he sure looked as healthy as anybody.

Like I say, the young Doc was crazy about Alice, and everybody knew it, but she didn't even notice him once. But after Jerry got shot, she married him—reckon he just talked her into it, and she had to marry somebody, with that big cow outfit on her hands. Funny—her not caring a dang about him—and they got along finest of any pair I ever saw. But it's often that way with marriages. Still, the poor kid should have found somebody—

Reckon I'm pushing ahead on the story too fast. Well, there aint much to tell, only that things got from bad to worse. Jerry got so he hardly ever stayed a night at the ranch, and when he did, poor Alice had a black eye, anyway, next day.

Like I say, nobody knew how Poker Dick felt about what was going on, but one night I did see something that showed me a heap. Dick was dealing poker at the Spreadeagle when a young cowpuncher called Tod Reinhart came in. Tod was cussing a blue streak, and looked fit to tie. He told right out that he'd had to stop at the Box Quarter Circle headquarters for something on his way to town, and he said he'd seen Alice through a window, with her face all black and blue, and limping. Gosh, but Jerry was a dog!

Well, when Tod said that, there was language in the saloon to burn the bar up. But Dick only picked up the deck and said "Cards, gentlemen?" as if he was peeved at them for stopping to talk about a little thing like that. But I happened to be sitting right across the table from him—I reckon I was the only one noticed it; he was keeping his head down over the cards, sort of.

Why, the man's face was white as a piece of paper, and I sure thought his eyes was going to burn two holes in the back of the cards, the way they was blazing. Right there and then I said to myself:

"Jerry, you'd better look out!"

But Dick had more control of himself than any other gambler I ever saw; it wasn't two seconds till he was looking up cool as ever, with the same little smile under his little pointed mustache, like nothing had happened. And he went on playing poker as clever as if the devil himself was telling him what cards the rest of us held.

STILL, it went on a couple of months more before Dick shot him—I always figured he was hoping somebody else would do it, so that his chances with Alice would have been better when Jerry was dead.

And to this day I shore can't figure out why he was so crazy as to do it right out in the open, so that Alice would hear about it—he could have done it on the sly and let somebody else take the blame; then he could have likely talked Alice into marrying him. Goes to show what fool things a smart man will do sometimes.

And there was no particular reason for it at that time, either.

It come so unexpectedly it left us all with our mouths open; we didn't even have time to dodge out of the saloon to get away from any stray bullets. Jerry was there, pretty sober for him, the way he was doing at that time, and Dick walked in the door, cool and smiling as you please.

"Jerry," he said, "I find you've been cheating me on the ranch books. We have to settle that."

JERRY nearly dropped over—after he was dead, Alice had a man go over the books real careful, and there wasn't a penny out.

Probably Jerry would have liked to do it, but he was too scared of Dick—that streak of yellow down his back.

Now he nearly fell over.

"Cheatin' you!" he said. "What the hell you mean, Dick?"

"Just—cheating," said Dick, real cool. "Well, how about it?"

Jerry's face had been getting sort of red and bloated from drinking so much, but he went white enough then—he could see what Dick was there to do. Not white—just sort of yellow, and nearly green. But a man can be so scared as to get nerve, if you know what I mean. All at once he jerked his fist up and shook it at Dick.

"Dick," he shouted, "I know what you want! You dirty skunk, you came here to kill me, so's you'll get my wife! I always did know you was crazy about her!"

That was the first time I ever seen Poker Dick smile like he meant it. He even laughed a little, sort of soft.

"Jerry," he said, "you've guessed it! Draw!"

He sure did look handsome, standing there with that cool little smile on his face, and the ends of his little waxed mustache sticking up. And I never saw him look so near happy—likely he was crazy enough to think he'd be marrying Alice pretty soon.

Well, there was nothing for it. Jerry let out a sort of grunt, half mad, and a danged sight more than half scared. He made a clumsy grab for his gun. Poker Dick just stood smiling at him like he would at a child until he'd got the gun clear out of the holster and was starting to flip it to cock it. . . . And then there was Dick with a gun in his hand, with a little blue smoke coming out of the muzzle, and Jerry stretched on the floor—I remember that the only move he made was to draw up one knee about an inch; he'd been caught square between the eyes. Gosh, but Poker Dick was fast with a gun—and he never missed.

Uh-huh—I can still see it. Jerry lying there, all sprawled out, with his gun in his hand, and looking sort of bulky lying there. And Poker Dick giving one soft little laugh down at him, like he thought it was real funny to see him there.

Then Dick just stuck his gun into his holster and turned his back on Jerry, there on the floor, and jerked his head for all of us to line up for a drink, like he was celebrating something.

Well, that thing was a little too rank for even the toughest of them there. Not a man lined up to the bar for a drink on Dick. A lot of us looked for him to get peeved about it, but he didn't seem to notice; just tossed his own down and asked for another.

HE didn't bother to run—reckon he figured he had money enough to get him out of the case. Which he had, all right. He was there when the sheriff and two deputies came hurrying in, and he gave them his gun and went with them without a word. Reckon he thought of course he'd be out again before morning, on bail.

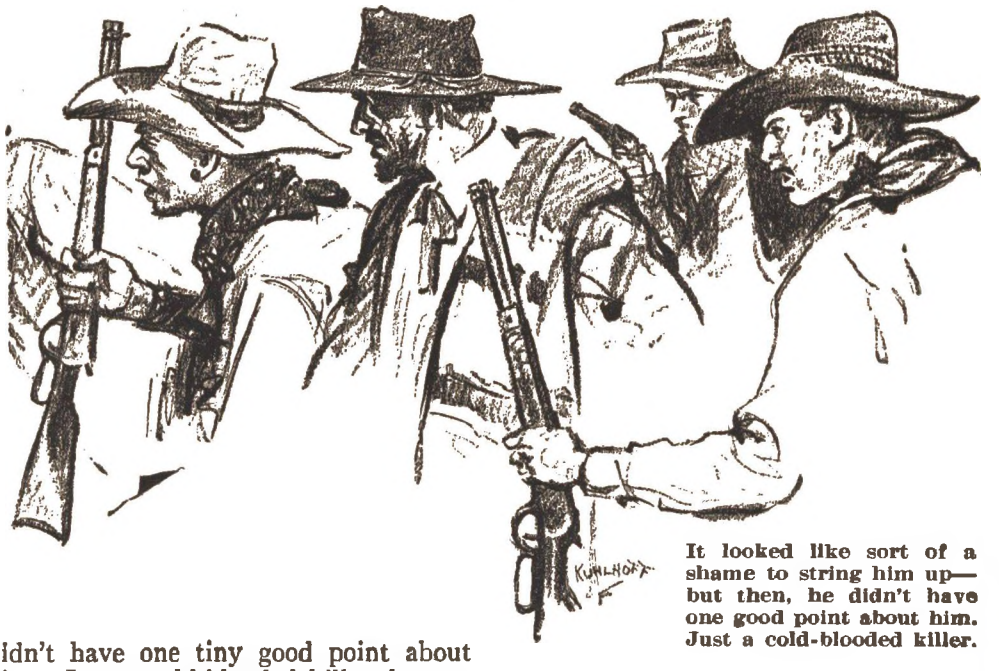
And he would have, if some of the boys hadn't got to talking it over that night in the saloon. I reckon they was pretty drunk, most of them, but that didn't have much to do with it—killing a man to get his wife looked a little too raw to them, particular since the man that did the killing had a name of being worse than the other, or no better, anyways.

Uh-huh—that was the excuse. The real thing was that they was ready to string Dick up on general principles, to get rid of him. And maybe a few of the ringleaders was thinking how easy it would be to steal off the big Box Quarter Circle with Dick out of the way. Yes, there was lots of them around in them days that would be just as tough as Poker Dick if they had the nerve, and the brains, and could learn to be as slick with a gun. Half of them in this part of the Territory had left somewhere else just one jump ahead of the sheriff.

I wasn't in the saloon when the thing came up; I happened to be coming downtown just in time to tag in behind the crowd—they was all yelling and shooting as they went down the street, with fellers coming running from all sides to join them.

Bob Jenkins was sheriff here at the time—he's the feller that killed Six-shooter Bill, if you ever heard of him. Bob had nerve enough, all right, but he didn't see no use in getting shot protecting a feller like Poker Dick; he never did like Poker Dick, anyway. He was standing on the jail steps when the crowd got there, with his gun in his hand. He tried to talk to them, but when they wouldn't listen, he only sort of shrugged his shoulders and went home.

Well, they got him out, all right. Leastwise, he came walking out ahead of them, and walked ahead of them straight to the cottonwood they'd told him they was going to string him up to. Why, he just walked down the middle of the street, with his head up, and that smile on his face, and his little blond mustache sticking up at the corners. He looked like he was going to something funny, him with that little smile. Gosh, but he was a fine-looking man, him so tall and straight and so well built. It looked like a sort of shame to string him up, a man looked like that—but then, he was about the only man I ever knew that



It looked like sort of a shame to string him up—but then, he didn't have one good point about him. Just a cold-blooded killer.

didn't have one tiny good point about him. Just a cold-blooded killer, he was—not human.

OLD Sayres had hardly finished his story when the voice of Dan Richards came from the corner where he had been sitting with his chair tilted back against the wall.

I have heard it said that Dan Richards was nearly ten years older than Barney Sayres—but he was still able to ride all day with his cowboys; he was a remarkable old fellow, bald as an egg, with bushy white eyebrows sticking out fiercely, and as a rule, a close mouth. He spoke in his peculiarly dry voice, directly to me:

"Young fellow, you being English might make you talk like Poker Dick, and even look like him; but tell me this: why does the one corner of your left eyebrow stick up, sort of, just like his eyebrow did?"

There was nothing for it but to tell the truth—which I did, with some embarrassment:

"That," I confessed reluctantly, "is what is called the Standredge Mark—its been in our family for generations; like the Hapsburg lip, if you've ever heard of it."

The old man gave a sort of sarcastic grin at me.

"Yes, I've heard of it. Some of us old cattlemen aren't quite as ignorant as we look—we might have been to school once. I didn't catch your name—your full name?"

I spoke reluctantly:

"I'm Sir Charles Standredge—grandson of the man you called Poker Dick. My father was born six months after my grandmother had separated from her husband."

"Been stolen from him, you mean?" snapped old Dan.

I had to confess that I knew little of the details—beyond the sordid story in the Sunday papers, which had brought me over here. Even the names of my grandfather and grandmother were strictly taboo in our family; this had been one of my first lessons as a child.

"And you came all the way over here to see if you couldn't find out some good about him?"

I admitted this. Old Dan sat staring at the fire a moment, and suddenly he jerked his head up.

"All right! I'll tell you. I swore to him that I never would tell anybody, but there are times when it's better to break an oath than to keep it.

AS Barney has said, I was Dick's only friend—perhaps because I had more education than the rest here in those days. Don't look like an honor graduate of Harvard, do I?

Well, we'll go back to one remark of Barney's; those drinking jags of Dick's. I was the only one he'd let bring fresh liquor to his room; he wouldn't let anybody else see him in that condition. Oh—maybe I did help him drink the stuff;

I was no angel, or I wouldn't have been out here.

Dick— Yes, I've seen the poor devil stretched across the bed crying like a child, when he'd been drinking hard. Yes—crying for that young wife of his. It killed him! I mean it—he died on the day she left him; he was never the same man again. "Cold-blooded"—bah! The poor devil was—dead! He'd worshiped her.

But he came to life again. Alice Youngblood brought him back to life. Of course it wasn't according to Hoyle—according to the romantic novels. Theoretically, he should have remained faithful to his young wife's memory to the last, even after the rotten deal she'd given him. But he was very young, and —sane, in a manner.

BUT I was only going to tell you why he killed Jerry Youngblood:

The night before the shooting, I'd dropped out to visit with Dick awhile—no, I didn't know his right name; it was none of my business. When I was leaving, he walked out to the front gate with me; it was a pretty hot, stuffy night. We stood there talking awhile. I was just ready to leave when the front door opened, and we saw Alice and that young Doctor Vaughn come out and start down the walk toward us.

That's where I got a surprise. Dick reached out and got my arm and pulled me back into the shadow of some tall bushes there.

"Wait, Dan!" he said. "I want to find out something for certain."

Well, I didn't like it. To tell you the truth, I was beginning to have some suspicions as to Alice and the Doctor; but I wasn't ready to blame her a whole lot, her husband being what he was. And I didn't want to play spy on anybody. I tried to get away, but Dick fairly held me there. I couldn't understand it—I'd thought he'd be the last one to do anything sneaking like that.

They came down to the gate, and stopped. They just stood there a minute or so near each other, and then Alice spoke.

"So—you're going away?"

And he said: "Yes. Tomorrow. Back East."

"Why?" she asked him—and she put a hand lightly on his shoulder.

It was a long time before he answered, and when he did, he spoke so low that we barely heard him.

"You know, Alice. Because I love you."

And she spoke just as quietly:

"And I love you. So—what shall we do?"

He spoke quickly that time:

"The decent thing, Alice. We're both decent, and we want to stay that way. We—shake hands."

And that was all. They just slowly shook hands, and then Doctor Vaughn turned and got on his horse and rode off back toward town. That—well, that was one of the things that went to teach me what fine, clean people there are in this world. Even if there are not many of them. Damn me, I've heard of soldiers marching into battle, but those two parting there—

Well, she was girl enough to stand there and cry into her handkerchief awhile, and then she turned and started back toward the house. And before she got through the door, she stopped to listen. Her husband was coming riding back from town, and he was singing at the top of his voice—one of the rottenest songs one ever heard, and we knew plenty of that kind in those days; we were a pretty tough lot. Of course he was singing it because he knew Alice hated that sort of stuff. And she going in to wait for him, and maybe to get a black eye before he went to bed.

I DIDN'T see the shooting next day; I was out of town. I heard about it when I got back, and of course I went straight to the jail to see Dick; we were better friends than most people thought. I hurried in, for the crowd was just beginning to burst out the door of the Spreadeagle, shooting and yelling—I suspected what it meant. Dick knew; I found him standing looking through the bars and down the street, with both hands in his pockets. Poor Dick! I can see him now as he stood there, cool, but just a trifle white.

He turned when he heard the deputy let me in. The two corners of his little mustache jerked up in that tricky way they had when he smiled. Yes, he smiled. And he surely was a tall, handsome young fellow, as Barney has said—he was just twenty-nine.

"Dan," he said, "this is it!"

I knew what he meant—his finish. There wasn't much time; I spoke as fast as I could:

"Dick, you fool, that stuff about your killing Jerry to get his wife is pure non-

sense; you lied about it. You killed him so that Alice could marry Doctor Vaughn —didn't you?"

He stood and looked me over from head to foot a moment, and then he spoke, seriously:

"Pardner, I should like to have just one man remember me as—what I should be, or might have been. Dan, will you swear before God never to repeat anything we say here?"

THE crowd was coming close—closing in around the Sheriff on the steps. We had to hurry. I swore. Dick nodded, very cool, and then he spoke:

"Dan, you're right—I killed the drunken beast so that Alice can marry the man she loves. I did it because I love her myself. Remember that, Dan, my friend, when you hear everyone tell how low-down was Poker Dick, the fellow who got lynched."

He said it with a sad little smile that was too much for me—oath or no oath. I turned and jumped for the door—the deputy had left it open, as there was no way out but through the sheriff's office.

"I'll tell them!" I said. "Good God, man, you're trying to do the whitest thing ever done in Arizona Territory—you'll be lynched in ten minutes if I don't tell them!"

He had slipped between me and the door. He stood there smiling.

"And," he asked, "ruin the plan that I'd thought out so carefully?"

"Plan be damned!" I yelled, and I jerked the door open.

I prided myself on my strength in those days, but before I knew what was happening, Dick had pinned my arms from behind and fairly flung me back across the room—Dick was far stronger than I, although I outweighed him. And as I was picking myself up, I heard the door slam, and the lock click; he'd locked me in there.

"Good-by, Dan," he said. "And remember your oath!"

He reached out his hand, and it was only afterward that I remembered that he stood back and made me reach through the bars—so that I couldn't twist his arm down inside and hold him. He never lost his quick wits to the last, or his nerve. We shook hands; there was nothing else I could do.

And then he was hurrying down the little hall to meet the crowd before they got close enough to hear what I was shouting at them. Yes—with his back held as straight as a ramrod, and his head up!

I don't know how he kept them from mauling him—maybe just his personality; maybe they were a little afraid of him even then. The next time I saw him—and the last—he was walking down the middle of the dusty street, with the whole pack at his heels, drunk or half-drunk—a pack of mad-dogs! He turned and smiled up at me as he passed the cell window, and damned if the man didn't look happier than I'd ever seen him look before. He was smiling still, but that hardness had gone out of his smile—although it looked jaunty as ever. I couldn't stand it; I turned back from the window and sat on the bench with my head in my hands. I—damn it, I'll tell you!—I sat there and cried.

Well, he was strung up—and he was buried before the Sheriff came and let me out next morning. That was the end of Poker Dick.

SELDOM, I imagine, does such silence fall on a group of devil-may-care cowboys as fell on those in the little cabin when Dan stopped speaking. Every man there seemed to sit with bowed head, thinking—thinking. Dan himself broke the silence, with another harsh question addressed to me:

"Young fellow, tell me this: are you ashamed—now—of your grandfather?"

I shook my head slowly.

"Nō-o," I admitted. "He was a thoroughgoing scamp, but—I'm not sure but that I'm proud of him; he was a man."

Old Dan's taut figure relaxed; he threw me a sort of gaunt grin and reached to his shirt pocket for his tobacco.

"Let's go to bed—it's getting late. I'm leaving the round-up tomorrow, and you're coming back home with me for three or four weeks' hunting—I've the best pack of mountain-lion hounds in Arizona, and the east side of my range has some mule-deer bucks with heads like rocking chairs."

I am writing this in old Dan's library —I was surprised to find that the shabby old fellow was a millionaire cattle-baron. Every evening we sit and talk of my grandfather, Poker Dick. Whether this odd little sequel to his life-story will change the opinion held of him, I do not know. Nor, to be frank, do I care; the name of Sir Richard Standredge shall never again be taboo in our family—at least not while I live.

WARRIORS in

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

THE first American ever to serve in the Foreign Legion, you ask? Now you're asking something. Who knows, who cares? Yet the thought has its interest; it piques the attention. The records of the Legion are silent, but other records exist. Attic records. Those old letters Ellis Clarke wrote home to Wisconsin, lying in a trunk up in the attic all these years. Even after he was mustered out of the Union cavalry, down on the border, he wrote his mother pretty regularly, and she treasured the letters. . . .

He was writing home that night outside Matamoras, when the orders came in regard to the Hacienda of Santa Ysabel.

Clarke was a pretty hard citizen, and so was Bill Hicks. They were quartered together in an adobe hut, and Clarke was writing beside the fireplace in the corner —a little, high fireplace used for both cooking and heating. It was the end of January, 1865, and the warmth from the fire felt good to the hut's occupants.

Both men wore the Union blue, stripped of all insignia except the name of Cortina on bands around their caps. Like scores of others, they had flocked across the border to take a hand in the Mexican scrap, now that things were quieted down over the line. They were with Cortina's irregulars, fighting tooth and nail against the Austrians, French and the Mexicans who supported Maximilian on the throne.

"So you're Cap'n Clarke, and I'm Lootenant Hicks, huh?" Bill Hicks took another swig from the tequila bottle, and smacked his lips. "Gorry, that's hot stuff! . . . Say, the old Third Wisconsin would sure as hell open their eyes to see us officers, huh?"

Clarke glanced up, grinned, signed his name to the letter, and laid it aside.

EXILE

Illustrated by
Jeremy Cannon

VII—"The First American to Fight in the Legion" is fiction—but fiction based on very probable fact, and written with the flaming reality of truth itself.

"Suits me," he said. "We're going to clean up on these French yet. After four years of soldiering back home, the farm don't look so good to me. Officers, you bet! And the way these boys can fight is an eye-opener, Bill."

HE was a rangy, hard-bitten man of thirty, bowlegged from the saddle, with a reddish mustache, thin lips and chin, and bitter gray eyes. Bill Hicks was lumpy, heavy-set, a hard drinker and with the general morals of a jackrabbit, but a darned good man in a scrap.

"Well," said Hicks, biting at a twist of tobacco, "I hear tell the French have got new regulations to shoot all guerrillas like us, so watch your step, feller. I met a guy in town today from the 71st New York. He says a lot o' Johnny Rebs are with the French. Say, let's you and me mosey into town and look up a couple of them señoritas—"

The door swung open. A Mexican saluted, and spoke eagerly to Clarke.

"Señor Capitan! General Cortina orders that you take your company, mount, and ride at once for the Hacienda of Santa Ysabel, twenty miles south. A guide is being provided. A column of French and Mexicans are moving to attack the hacienda, and the garrison there must be reinforced. It is one of our most important positions."

"On the jump," said Clarke. "Send this letter for me, will you? Thanks. We'll be marching in twenty minutes, señor."

And in twenty minutes the jingling company of irregular cavalry, with Clarke and Hicks and the guide riding ahead, were trotting out of camp—a hundred motley troopers, mainly Mexicans, with a few negro soldiers out of the regiment at Clarksville, and a scattering of Americans.

IT was natural that, the war between the States at an end, footloose Americans should flock over the line and join up with the republicans fighting against the Emperor Maximilian. Not the cause of liberty attracted them, but the good pay and the chances of loot, and the pretty girls and the hot liquor. They were no fancy heroes laying their swords on the altar of liberty—not by a darned sight. They were out to raise hell where no law existed except that of the revolver; and they did it.

"Funny about these greasers," observed Bill Hicks, at Clarke's stirrup. "I been getting a line on things. Seems like they're scared as hell of the French boys, who know how to put up a scrap. The Austrians are no good except to shoot down. Them greasers with the Emperor aint worth a hang. But the French—they're good. That new law about shooting all guerrillas don't hearten our boys a lot, neither. And they don't like that durned Foreign Legion the French have got. Ever hear of it?"

Clarke grunted. "Yeah, I got a cousin in it, or had. Jim was no-account. Just before the war broke, he robbed somebody and lit out. Last we heard from him, he was in their Foreign Legion, over in Algiers. Dead by now, I reckon. We used to be pretty thick, him and me. He was sure a bad one, but there was something about him you liked. Say, Bill—this hacienda we're heading for: they tell me the garrison there is probably lousy with loot from all this part of the country. Keep your eye peeled for pickings, and we'll work the riffle together."

"You bet." Bill Hicks chuckled softly.

Twenty miles; but the road was a mere cattle trail. It was past three o'clock when Clarke, to pay safe, sent ahead three of his blacks to scout the last few miles.

The dawn was graying when a pulsing beat of rifle-fire reached them. Clarke halted his men and reined up beside Hicks. They knew instantly what had happened: the French column had reached the hacienda ahead of them. Came the scurrying thud of a horseman at full gallop. One of the scouts hammered up and drew rein.

"Cap'n, boss!" he exclaimed. "We's too late, suh!"

"How many of the French, Arkansas?"

"We 'lowed about a hundred, suh. And a lot o' Mexican cavalry."

"Bad news for us," muttered Bill Hicks. "This gang of ours aint itching to fight no frogs, you bet. Do we ride back?"

"Like hell!" said Clarke. "Take fifty men and the guide. Circle around. I'll

The Legion was breaking; one man, ill, was in the captain's saddle. . . . A battalion of staggering, stumbling men.

give you half an hour start, then come on with the other fifty. Hit that column from the south; I'll come in from this side. Scatter out your men. The greasers will run; and between us and the garrison we'll nip the French."

"Got it," said Bill Hicks laconically, and was off.

A BRIEF halt for breakfast, and Clarke rode on—his men none too eager, as the rifle-fire told them that the French were there already. The hacienda came into full sight as they topped a rise. It was a scant mile away; the full day had broken by this time. Clarke halted his riders and rode out to view the cluster of buildings with its high surrounding wall.

A garrison of two hundred men there under a Colonel Mendez, who had a reputation for butchering every Frenchman he could lay hands on. The walls were spurting smoke. In front of the hacienda gates was an outflung force of white-clad men who had taken cover, thrown up trenches, and were firing carefully, slowly. Parties of Mexican cavalry had circled about the hacienda, their horses dashing madly, their gunfire spitting wildly. Arkansas had estimated their numbers very fairly, Clarke found.

"Dismount!" He snapped out his orders. "Advance on foot behind me; scatter out well. You horse-guards, ride 'em back and forth over this rise, like cavalry spreading out."

He rode forward deliberately; he wanted to be seen. Almost at once, a bugle shrilled. The parties of Mexican horse began to form up; at this moment, rifles began to sputter on the other side of the hacienda. The scattered force of Bill Hicks came into sight, advancing rapidly.

Yell upon yell pealed up from the Mexican horse. In vain the French bugle voiced its silver call. It was all too plain that the column was caught between two fires of an overwhelming force; and amid a cloud of dust, the Mexican cavalry took to its heels. The French, now caught between the hacienda and the newcomers, deserted by their allies, frantically fell to work throwing up new entrenchments at their rear.

Clarke, riding in, squinted at them and cursed admiringly. They knew their business. A dozen wagons with them were being lined up; the animals were shot and their bodies dumped; as by magic, a hollow square was formed.

"Damned good troops!" said Clarke, and dismounted.

He met the grinning Hicks. The fire of the French continued steadily, keeping down that from the walls before them; then Clarke's men spread out and

"Hey, you!" called Clarke. "Savvy any English? *Habla Español?*"

opened fire against the square; it was a deadly fire. They advanced like Indians, taking cover behind every rock and cactus-clump.

"Bill! Stop the firing," Clarke said suddenly. "Got a handkerchief?"

"Had one my ma give me, but lost it at Gettysburg," said Bill Hicks.

"Stop the firing, you horse's neck!" snapped Clarke.

Hicks obeyed. The rifle-fire dwindled. That from the French died out. Clarke stripped to the waist, took a rifle from the nearest man, and waved his shirt on it. He stepped out, and the firing died from the walls of the hacienda.

As Clarke advanced, a Frenchman leaped from the wagons and came out to meet him, a figure in white cotton, blue vest and huge straw hat.

"Hey, you!" called Clarke. "Savvy any English? *Habla Español?*"

"Talk English," responded the other.

"All right. I got five thousand men coming on—only got a thousand here, but the rest are behind, with Cortina himself. Surrender and do it quick, and you'll get terms. Refuse, and Cortina will wipe you out."

"Well, I'll be damned!" came the response. "If you aint the same big liar you always was, Ellis Clarke! Hello, durn you! Thought I knowed your walk."

Clarke stared, his jaw fallen; then he uttered a yell and caught the hand of the other, and pumped it.

"Jim! Why, damn your hide, I was talkin' about you only last night! Say, this is great. Who's in command of your outfit?"

"Right now, I am," said the other, grinning all over his lean bronzed face. "Every officer dead or laid out. Want to surrender to me?"

Clarke sobered. "No joking, Jim. I aint got quite so many men as I said, but I want to save your necks. I can't do it unless you give in."

"Go to hell," snorted the other promptly. "Listen here, Ellis: I got what's left of three companies of the Legion, first battalion. The Legion just aint learned that surrender talk. Say, what in hell are you doing in Mexico?"

"Same as you, only with the other side, I reckon," said Ellis Clarke. "Damn your stubborn hide, will you surrender?"

"I will not, nor my outfit neither."

"You fool, you haven't got a chance!"

"All right, all right." A rifle cracked somewhere; a bullet buzzed, and Jim Clarke turned. "Your folks are getting impatient. Sorry we aint got time to talk. Say, you got a chew of tobacco on you?"

"Sure." Ellis Clarke handed over a twist. Another bullet sped from the hacienda walls. "Change your mind and do it quick—"

"See you later!" And his cousin went hastily for the wagon. A cheer rang out from the French—a long cheer, a wild, lusty roaring cheer. It was answered by shrill Mexican yells from the hacienda garrison and Clarke's troopers.

LESS than two minutes later the rifles were again smashing out. Clarke, telling Bill Hicks about meeting his cousin, stared gloomily at the scene.

"What with our fire on their rear, they haven't got a ghost," he said. "They can't keep down the garrison's fire now—look there!"

True. The high walls of the hacienda were spurting and streaming smoke, for the defenders of the doomed square below were unable to maintain a punishing fire; and from those walls bullets rained into their little compound unhindered. Ellis Clarke cursed furiously as the moments passed, as the French reply dwindled.

"They got their bellyful now, maybe," suggested Bill Hicks. "You always got to give furriners their bellyful, and then they'll hear to reason. Once Mendez fetches out his men from inside, it's a throat-cutting. Want to try again?"

CLARKE nodded. Hicks sent out the word; and the troopers, who had suffered heavily enough, let their rifles cool. Again the white shirt waved, and again the jetting smoke from the hacienda walls fell away to nothing. Clarke walked out, and was relieved past measure when his cousin appeared, a bloody rag about his head, his straw hat gone.

"Thought maybe you'd stopped one," he observed. "Looks like the last chance, Jim. I only got a hundred men here, some less now, thanks to your lead. If Mendez comes with his outfit to rush you, it's all up."

"Butcher Mendez, huh?" Jim Clarke spat. "Well, I got you down to telling the truth anyhow, Ellis. Fact is, we only got twenty men on their feet, and most of them are hit. What's your offer?"

"Prisoners."

"Nope. We march clear with our arms, or we stick to hell and back. Yes or no?"

Ellis Clarke saw the great gates of the hacienda swaying, as supports were removed and bulwarks hauled away.

"Done," he said, and turned. "Hey, Bill! Fetch in the gang, hotfoot. Quick, damn you!"

"What's the big idea?" demanded Jim Clarke.

"Mendez is coming now. Might have trouble. Go wet down your friends and get 'em in one corner. If there's any gunplay, I'll start it. Say, Jim, what's your name?"

Jim Clarke grinned. "Faber, Jim Faber. Sounds German. Sergeant Faber, that's me!"

The gates trembled, moved, swung open. Already Hicks and the troopers were coming up to the wagons on a run. Ellis Clarke met them as they came, and held up his hand.

"The French keep their arms, and march clear. Loot what you like before Mendez gets there, but don't touch any Frenchman, or I'll kill you."

Then he headed them into the doomed little fort of bodies and wagons, where corpses sprawled and the sand was black with blood; and in one corner Jim Faber herded the desperate, wounded, thirst-maddened remnant of three Legion companies. Leaving Bill Hicks to keep his own men in hand, Clarke mounted on a dead horse and faced the line of Mexicans streaming from the hacienda.

"Halt!" he shouted. "Halt, or we fire! This is Captain Clarke—"

"Ah, señor!" Mendez himself came swaggering forward, a rangy, half-Indian man with gold braid scattered all over his uniform and sombrero. "We are friends. I met you in Matamoras. You came in the very nick of time with your brave *soldados!* Bring out the Frenchmen so they may be executed."

"I've given them terms." Clarke met the hot, swarthy eyes. "They're my prisoners; rather, they go free. Their camp and wagons are yours—"

"Go free?" A torrent of curses poured from Mendez. "By the saints, I say they shall not! I am your superior officer; I order you to retire with your men and leave the accursed French to me."

"You want to shoot them?"

"No, hang them; every one. I have sworn it. I shall do it—"

Clarke whipped up his revolver and shot Butcher Mendez between the eyes. It was done coolly, calmly, deliberately.

THEN it was touch and go, and no mistake. When Clarke walked on in among them, the stunned rebels fell away from him; when he spoke to them, they listened. This move won the game. Another officer came forward, and Clarke spoke to him coldly.

"Get on with your looting and don't interfere with me. I saved you, drove off the Mexican cavalry, and took care of the French. You can fill the boots of Mendez."

"Agreed, señor," said the officer. "But when General Mendez, brother of the señor colonel, hears of this, you'll talk differently. It's his affair, not mine."

"And where is he?" sneered Clarke.

"At Monterrey, señor. With General Escobedo."

"Far away from here." Clark laughed and turned on his heel. "I'll be ready for him."

His own men and the garrison looted freely; the French were not molested.

Clarke joined Bill Hicks and Jim Faber, and gave the latter a level-eyed look.

"Jim, throw up these damned French and chuck in your bag with us. What say?"

"Nope. Thanks all the same, Ellis. I got a man's job. Sorry I missed your little war up north. Got a better one here. You aint doing so bad yourself, I notice."

"Hey, Cap'n!" said Hicks anxiously. "What in hell did you go and do that for? Now we'll all be strung up for killing Mendez—"

"Stop your bleating," snapped Clarke. "Nothing of the sort, Bill. These fellows are killers. I've got 'em topped, that's all. His brother the General will go out for my hide, and nothing more'll come of it. You'll see; gun law is what counts."

And gun law counted. Clarke went about his business, and the awed Mexicans gave him free going. The man who had shot down Butcher Mendez got anything he wanted, now and later. It was a bloody land, and only the strongest, the most merciless, could survive. Ellis Clarke's chill gray eye had judged aright.

The few French, with a couple of wagons and escorted by Bill Hicks and fifty troopers, went their way. Clarke exchanged a last hand-grip with Jim Faber, sergeant of the first battalion of the Legion, and walked into the hacienda to make himself at home in the quarters of Mendez. A day later he had sobered up enough to write another letter home, telling about it.

After that, Ellis Clarke became a colonel under Cortina, and then dropped from sight. He was not a man to admire, not even a man to like; but he was the only sort of man who could win respect among the wild guerrilla bands. Other Americans came over to the rebel cause, looted and killed and burned, and got nowhere; in fact, Sheridan came after them and clapped more than a few of them in jail.

CLARKE was lost to view. The rebels had scant organization; one day they were in the saddle; the next some French force had them on the run. The United States had not yet interfered. Maximilian was supreme. The rebel leaders were fighting, but no one knew much about them. They fought each other and the French. Diaz, the strong man of them all, was in a French prison, hard and fast. Juarez was playing for time. One or two brief letters from Ellis Clarke got across the border and were mailed home, but they gave no detail of his movements.

Then, from the east and the south, a flying French column headed for Monterrey to smash the rebels there. Other columns were ordered to concentrate with it at Monterrey, where a few French were besieged in the citadel. It was a sudden, vicious burst of energy. The orders were imperative; march night and day, march as men never marched before —but get there!

Captain Saussier, with the first battalion of the Legion, was holding the La Blanca hacienda, ninety miles away. Besides his Legion companies, just brought up to their old strength by the Legion reserves newly arrived from Africa, he had the mounted squadron of the Legion. The hacienda was an important outpost. He himself was a dry, hard, tough little man, who had seen the battalion killed off almost to the vanishing-point before the reserves came in.

THAT night, before the courier arrived, a squadron detachment brought in a scarecrow whom they had found sitting on a dead horse. He was clad in rags; he spoke no French; they could not understand his Spanish; he carried only a United States army model revolver. He was a bony-featured man with a glittering cold gray eye and a nearly healed bullet scar across his forehead.

Once at the hacienda, he ate like a famished wolf. They led him into the old ranch-house, where Captain Saussier was conferring with his top sergeant, reported briefly, and the Captain eyed the ragged creature with his shaggy hair and wealth of beard.

"You are a Mexican?" he inquired in Spanish. "A partisan? A guerrilla?"

A ghastly laugh shook the lean scarecrow.

"No, Señor Captain," he rejoined in execrable Spanish. "Ask Sergeant Faber, there, what I am."

A sharp exclamation broke from the sergeant. He peered into that haggard face with its mask of beard; a cry escaped him, and he turned.

"*Mon capitaine!* This is the man who saved us, at Santa Ysabel—the American who commanded that force, who shot Butcher Mendez!"

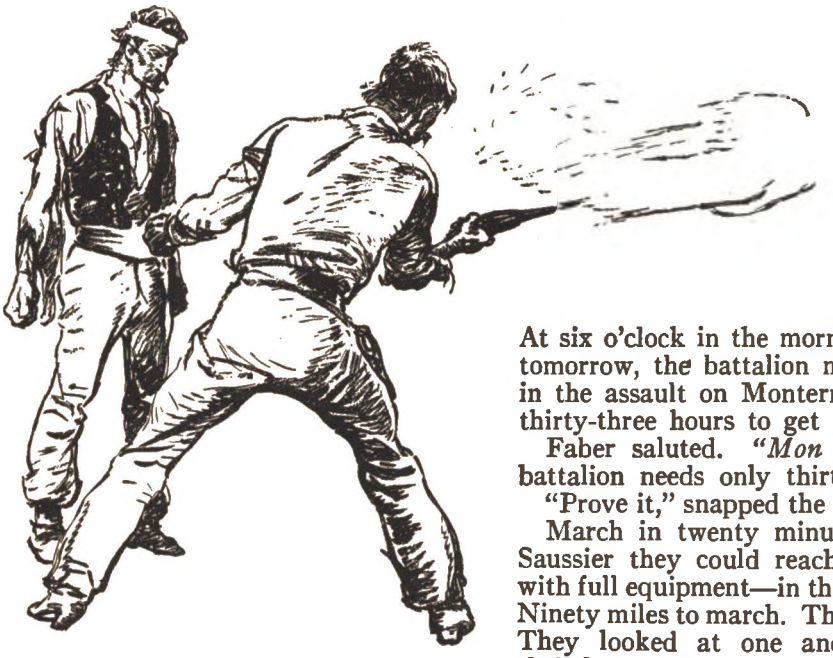
"Good," said Saussier. "Take him out and shoot him. A guerrilla caught with arms has only one fate."

"But it was he who saved us!" protested the sergeant, forgetting all discipline. "Besides, he's no guerrilla. Have I permission to speak with him?"

"Jim! Say, this is great! . . . Damn your stubborn hide, will you surrender to me?"
"I will not, nor my outfit neither. The Legion just aint learned that surrender talk."

"You seem to have forgotten that any is needed," said the Captain dryly. "But speak."

Sergeant Faber obeyed. Clarke, shrugging, replied briefly. He had left the rebels a month ago—General Mendez had given him that bullet-scar over the eyes.



"For once," he admitted, "I bit off a hunk I couldn't chew, Jim. They got me. All I want now is to get Mendez under my rifle-sights. The devil hung poor Bill Hicks in front of my eyes, understand? If I can get back to Monterrey and reach him, general or no general, I'll put a hunk of lead into him before they get me. Why, damn it, Bill Hicks was with me three years in the old Third Wisconsin!"

Captain Saussier listened, twisted his mustache, and nodded.

"Very well; order rescinded. Feed him. We'll decide later what to do with him. Get him some clothes. He may be eligible for enlistment in the Legion. We'll see."

It was half an hour later that the courier came in, having ridden his horse nearly to death.

The orders he brought were simple; leave the squadron to hold the hacienda, march to Monterrey and join the main column before the city. The urgent words were brusque, imperative, electric. They had reached the right man. Captain Saussier glanced at his watch and sent for Sergeant Faber.

"How soon can the battalion march, knapsacks filled, pouches crammed?"

"In twenty minutes, if the Captain desires."

"In twenty minutes, it will be nine o'clock; we march then. Rations for three days; full equipment; no wagons. At six o'clock in the morning, day after tomorrow, the battalion must take part in the assault on Monterrey. We have thirty-three hours to get there."

Faber saluted. "*Mon capitaine,* the battalion needs only thirty-two hours."

"Prove it," snapped the Captain.

March in twenty minutes; show old Saussier they could reach Monterrey—with full equipment—in thirty-two hours. Ninety miles to march. The men blinked. They looked at one another, wagged their beards, they grinned, and dived for their equipment.

CLARKE stared at his cousin. This last half-hour had made a new man of him; new clothes, a shave, food. He was himself again, gaunt and iron of body.

"You're insane!" he blurted out. "Your captain's a madman—you're worse. No troops on earth can march that distance in such time, even without knapsacks. You fool, it means three miles an hour—on an average! I've soldiered with the finest army in the world, and it can't be done."

Jim Faber grinned. "Never soldiered with the Legion, have you? Nope. You boys up in Georgia and so forth couldn't do it, sure. The Legion can do it."

"It's impossible, I tell you!"

"Sure. The Legion does the impossible; that's why it's the Legion."

"You're a fool. Your men will bleed their feet off."

"Nope. The Legion has iron feet, old man. Not like your Third Wisconsin, who'd holler if they got a bunion."

A flame of anger rose in Clarke's face.

"Monterrey? By God, I can march the legs off any frog going—"

"Leave the accursed French to me," Mendez said. "I shall hang them, every one. I—" Clarke whipped up his revolver and shot Butcher Mendez—it was done coolly, deliberately.

Faber swung on him. "Get this straight; we aint frogs. No French in the Legion. We're all God's refuse who can't go back—that's why we go forward. If you want to see what real soldiers are like, come along to Monterrey."

"I'll take you up on that," barked Clarke. "Monterrey, huh? Gimme a rifle?"

"Well, if you can carry it. Of course, you're not used to—"

Clarke shook his fist under Faber's nose. "Gimme a rifle! I can carry any damned thing you fellows can carry and walk the legs off you, French, German, Swiss or what have you! You and your big brag—I'll make you swallow it! By God, an American can show these frogs what's what! Any man who's soldiered under Grant and Sheridan can wipe up the ground with you amateur Injun fighters!"

Faber grinned, and with expert hands lashed his canvas roll into place above his filled knapsack.

"Cartridges and a rifle—that'll be enough for you. We've got no baggage wagons this trip. Rations, too; blanket. Got to take 'em all if you go with us."

"I'll take 'em double, damn you!" shouted Clarke.

Single was enough, however—quite enough.

At nine o'clock, on the dot, the column marched; Captain Saussier was that kind of man. And Ellis Clarke marched too.

When his first heat died out, he was soldier enough to realize to the full what an iron training and discipline lay around him. And as they marched, Jim Faber gave him a sly word.

"One thing helps, Ellis; no hills to climb. It's downhill all the way to Monterrey. How do those boots feel?"

"Pretty good," grunted Clarke, who had replaced his high heels with an old pair of brogans. "One thing, though. When your outfit does get to Monterrey, it'll be too done up to fight."

Jim Faber merely repeated this as a good joke to the man next him, and laughter rippled down the ranks in the darkness. As the column swung onward, bets were freely made on all sides as to how long this American would last; he was regarded with good-humored tolerance, with friendly liking; even, it might be, with a little pity.

FOUR miles an hour, he figured, or a fraction over; a good stiff gait, this marching pace of the Legion. After a breaking-in halt, it went on and on—a swinging tramp-tramp-tramp, jingle and clatter, haze of dust in the throat. Knowing himself fully as tough as any of these men around him, Clarke pulled in his belt and settled down to it.

Hour after hour—eight hours of it with scarcely a break. Then, in the gray dawn, a halt; ranks were broken. Clarke dropped like a log and lay until Jim Faber kicked him awake.

"Fall in! Sun's coming up. Here; put down this cold coffee."

The bugle shrilled. On again, and into the blazing morning.

Daylight now, and all was different. The officers rode with the guides, the men swung along; never a break in that slogging tramp. Luckily the hot season was not here; even had it been, these veterans of Africa would scarcely have minded.

An hour, another, another. Clarke was beginning to crack under the undeviating strain. Long unused to such marching afoot, he was not inured. He was aware that Jim Faber was trying to occupy his mind, as they slogged along in the dust together, telling him about one man and another. This one a German prince, that one a broken Spanish grandee, another who was the son of an English lord, and so on.

Other men tried to help him out—hints on his stride, on bandaging his feet, on the carriage of his rifle and pack. Teeth set, harsh brown features drawn and streaked with dusty sweat, Clarke hung on, praying for the respite that did not come until noon. Already the march had been incredible; from now on, said the German prince with a guttural laugh, it would begin to grow tough. . . .

Noon, the bugle's voice, and he dropped where he stood. The Captain and his officers consulted maps, nodded, washed down a bite to eat and lighted cigars. Clarke ate a bit, bound up his feet, and was presently aware that the Captain had sauntered up and was speaking to him. He rose and saluted stiffly. Jim Faber interpreted.

"He says you're looking fit, Ellis, and how do you feel?"

"Like walking the legs off any frog on earth," said Clarke defiantly, "and if he wasn't on horseback, he'd learn a few things."

Faber softened the words into a florid French compliment. A grin went around, among the men who understood English. The Captain nodded and passed on.

Clarke was asleep again when the bugle spurred him into ranks.

THAT afternoon it began to get bad. The men smoked; Clarke chewed, which was a new thing to many of them, and it helped him. He marched in a grim desperation, his whole body a consuming misery of ache. He was gratified to see that these Legionnaires were beginning to break. At least, he would not be the first to drop out! He waited, to speed a gibe and a laugh after the first who left the ranks.

Instead, he found Saussier speaking to him. Faber again interpreted.

"He says do you want to take his hoss a while?"

Clarke, astounded, wiped the sweat out of his eyes and gave Saussier a glance as he strode. He was suspicious of some joke.

"Shucks, Jim! Tell him I aint got my second wind yet. I'll wait till some of these new recruits have eased their feet a bit."

FABER translated that literally. Captain Saussier nodded and went on. Clarke's reply was passed along the ranks. More laughter. The men swung along, the enormous knapsacks weighing them forward, rifles weighing them down. One company had carbines, to the vast envy of the others; every ounce counted now.

A man, ill, was in the Captain's saddle; Saussier was swinging along with the men. He spoke with them, moved from rank to rank, brought up intimate details, heartened every flagging spirit. Spirits might flag, but not the steady undeviating pace.

Just the same, the Legion was breaking. They all knew it. Clarke knew it. He was a mere numbed machine now, in a mental agony and physical stress; but somehow he kept going. The bearded faces around were gray and tortured as his own. A man fell out and began to vomit, but after a time he regained his place, gradually catching up and falling in again. The Captain beckoned him, ordered him into the saddle, and fell into step beside Jim Faber.

"Sergeant," he said crisply, "you were correct. We're going to do it in thirty-two hours; we're well ahead of schedule now. If you were in command, what would you do?"

An admission of defeat, this asking advice. Saussier knew they were ahead of schedule, yes; he also knew they were cracking up fast. And the night was fronting them, and the last long stretch of leagues to Monterrey.

"If the Captain pleases," said Jim Faber through cracked lips, "I would halt for an hour and a half, at sunset. The column could go straight on, assuredly; but half of it would be missing at dawn. With a halt, we'll not lose a dozen men and can keep up the pace."

Saussier nodded.

Sunset. The men were staggering now. A few had fallen out, others were lagging behind. Clarke, his features contorted in a snarl of desperation, was on his last legs. When the bugle blew, he did not hear it; glassy-eyed, he kept on. So did some of the others. Men had to stop them, pull them down. They all dropped sprawling in the sand and were asleep as they fell. The officers acted as guards and let them sleep. The laggards came stumbling up and dropped with the others.

During a full hour, the camp was a picture of total inertia. Then the noncoms were awakened. The men were stirred and kicked into life. Fires twinkled in the gathering darkness and warmed the pallid stars. Soup and coffee were heated.

Clarke tied up his bleeding feet grimly.

"You're not the only guy with blood in his shoes," said Jim Faber. He nodded toward a stir at one side. "That Englishman I was telling you about—there he goes. He just didn't wake up. Can't dig much of a grave with bayonets, I reckon."

"You don't look so skittish yourself," said Clarke. But Jim Faber laughed.

"Oh, I'll last. Say, you'd better join up with this outfit. You'd make a real Legionnaire."

"We'll see. Got to find that Mendez first."

"Want to ditch your rifle? You can get another at Monterrey."

Clarke snarled an oath of refusal. The bugle's silvery command floated out. Stiff and weary, aching in every muscle, Clarke suppressed a groan and fell in.

The march went on.

ON leaden feet the terrible hours dragged past. Bodies broke, spirits broke, iron wills broke; under cover of darkness, pride broke. Gaps appeared here and there where men had fallen out. Now it was a nightmare for all concerned. The steady swinging pace was maintained, however. Ellis Clarke kept his rifle. And at the midnight halt, when one or two men clapped him on the back, when deep voices gave him accolade, he felt a thrill of warm pride as he sprawled and closed his eyes. . . .

Then on again.

On and into the dawn; a battalion of staggering, stumbling men. From ahead, a challenge; the lights of Monterrey in the grayness. Voices, French voices. The French camp, men swarming around them, hot drinks and food pressed on them. Ninety miles in thirty-two hours? Impossible!

That march was entered on the army records; for the impossible had been achieved.

After the assault started, Sergeant Faber saw nothing of Ellis Clarke; the latter simply vanished from sight. Jim Faber and his friends went on a hunt, and two days later, Clarke was located in hospital.

HE looked up at Faber, gaunt, unshaven, his gray eyes alight.

"Hi, Jim! Well, I got that blasted so-and-so."

"Who?" asked Faber.

"Mendez, durn him! I got him, plugged him twice. One of his aides plugged me, but I got him. Say, I been writing Ma a letter. Get it sent off for me, will you?"

"Sure thing." Jim Faber took the letter. "Ellis, the cap'n says to fetch you along and sign up. The boys are all for you, too; they been hunting the town over to locate you. We can have some swell times if you'll throw in with us. What say?"

The gray eyes shone happily. A wilder light sprang in them.

"That's swell! You bet I will." Clarke turned his head, looked past Sergeant Faber. "Say, Bill, you'd better throw in with us. Jim, you know Bill Hicks? Shake hands. Bill's the best judge of liquor I ever laid eyes on. Gen'ral Sheridan says you and me are all right, Bill, but we aint soldiers. He's a damned liar. I reckon you and me had better go on down below the border and mix in that muss they got there. I hear tell we can get to be officers right off. You say the word, Bill—"

Jim Faber started back, sudden sweat springing on his cheeks. The gray eyes had closed, the voice had abruptly ceased.

With that last letter from Ellis Clarke, Jim Faber enclosed a short message of his own. It was the last scrap of paper on the very bottom of that bundle of old letters, tied about with thread and kept in the attic trunk. And it ended with four words which were crude and beautiful and eloquent:

"He Marched Out Happy."

Another fascinating story of old wild days in the French Foreign Legion will be a feature of our next issue.

Diamond in Spain

An American adventurer risks his neck in war-torn Madrid—and provides you with a specially exciting novelette.

By ARED WHITE

MORGAN PINN, inspecting a littered pistol-target with a critical satisfaction, looked up laconically as his trusted man of all work, O'Hara, came rushing out to the range from the house.

"Long-distance call for you, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara panted. "They said it's something very urgent, sir!"

Pinn held the paper target up for O'Hara's inspection and asked: "Ever see a better pattern than that one, O'Hara? You can cover all twenty shots with the palm of your hand."

"Sure looks bad for somebody's health, sir," O'Hara said admiringly. "But I got them hanging on the phone while I find you, Mr. Pinn."

"Learn who it is wants me, then say I'm out of the house for the present."

He set up a new target on his private range and began pumping lead from sixty yards with a small automatic pistol of special design and manufacture. Going out to inspect the result, he shook his head sadly: two shots at the edge of the bull's-eye. He ceased firing for the afternoon, returned his assortment of firearms to the house for O'Hara's expert attention, and set out for his daily run down the narrow Maryland road that connected some isolated farms with the outer world.

Returning to his house, Pinn skipped rope for ten minutes, boxed three fast rounds with the versatile O'Hara and turned to the showers.

"Think I'll call it another day," he told O'Hara. "By the way, who was calling me this afternoon?"

"They wouldn't say, sir," O'Hara answered. "All I got was it came from Washington, D. C., and you was to call Operator Eighteen."

"Washington," Pinn repeated with a scowl. "Hope it isn't anything serious. I'm not for taking on any more chores for a few months yet. I really need a rest after that Manchurian jaunt. But how about dinner, O'Hara?"

When he had eaten, Pinn went to the telephone and reported ready on his call from Washington. His face clouded as he heard the name at the other end—McMurtry. That name spelled trouble, and just now trouble was something young Pinn wanted to avoid. There had been six months of his recent Manchurian junket, which had given him trouble enough to last any ordinary mortal a lifetime. But there was no such thing as turning down even the most unofficial request that might come down through McMurtry from the State Department.

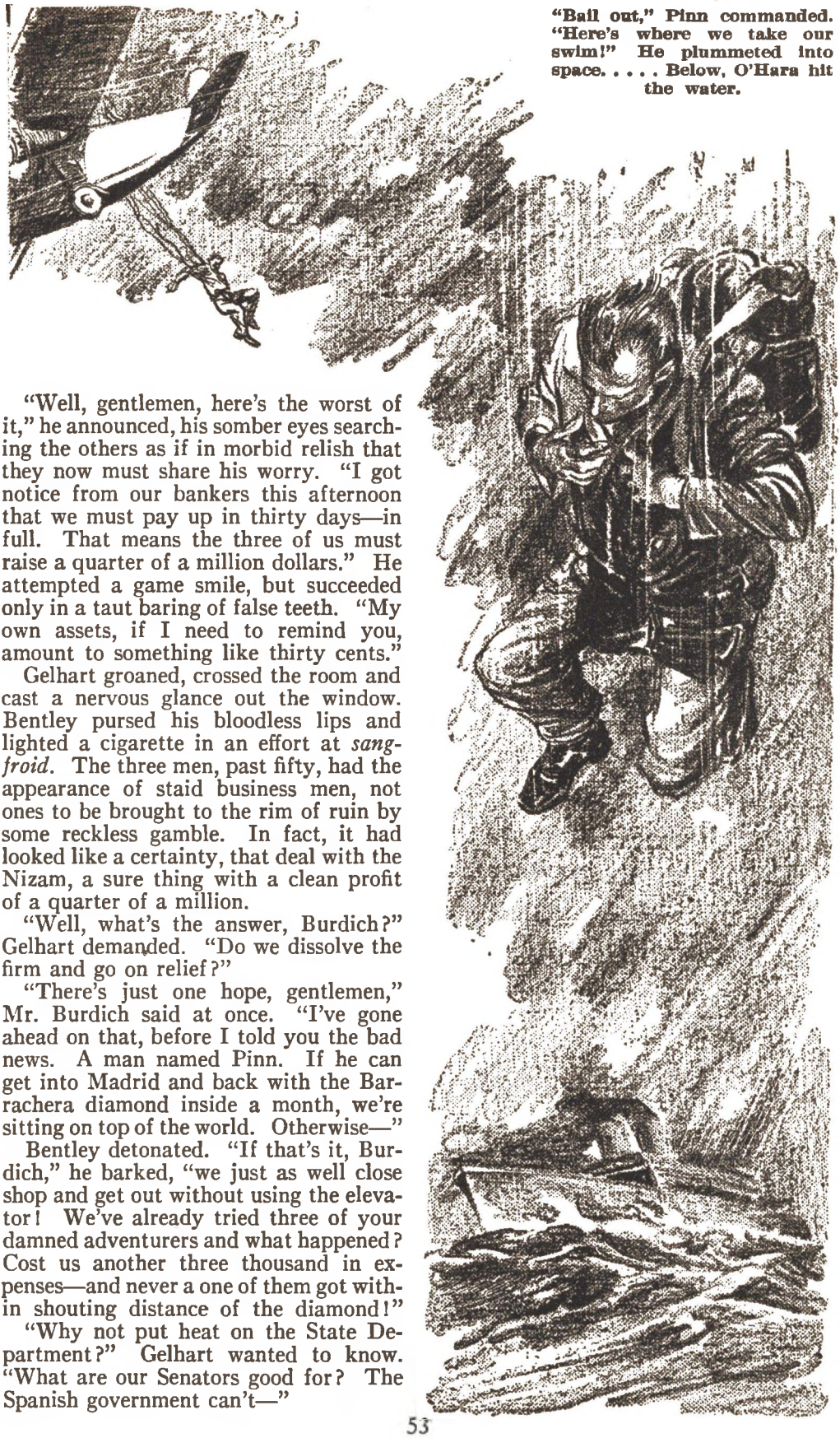
"Sorry to break in on you, Pinn," McMurtry said at once. "But an influential Senator is insistent that we do something. It means ruin to a certain group of diamond-dealers if we don't. You're the logical man for the job—the only one who's got everything it takes this time, including the ability to think Spanish."

"Flatterer!" Pinn shot back, with a laugh. "Frankly, I'd turn it down if I dared, McMurtry; but a request from you is always a command. Am I to see you for details?"

"No," McMurtry answered. "Report at midnight to the firm of Burdich, Gelhart and Bentley, dealers in precious stones, in New York. I'll tell them you're on the way. Thanks, Pinn; good luck!"

Pinn turned to the expectant O'Hara and gave prompt instructions. "I'll pack my personal effects together while you warm up my plane, O'Hara. We're putting off at once. May be back in a week or a year—or tomorrow."

IN their offices on the fortieth floor of a downtown building, Mr. Burdich, senior member of the firm of Burdich, Gelhart and Bentley, had summoned his associates to meet with him half an hour before midnight.



"Bail out," Pinn commanded. "Here's where we take our swim!" He plummeted into space. . . . . Below, O'Hara hit the water.

"Well, gentlemen, here's the worst of it," he announced, his somber eyes searching the others as if in morbid relish that they now must share his worry. "I got notice from our bankers this afternoon that we must pay up in thirty days—in full. That means the three of us must raise a quarter of a million dollars." He attempted a game smile, but succeeded only in a taut baring of false teeth. "My own assets, if I need to remind you, amount to something like thirty cents."

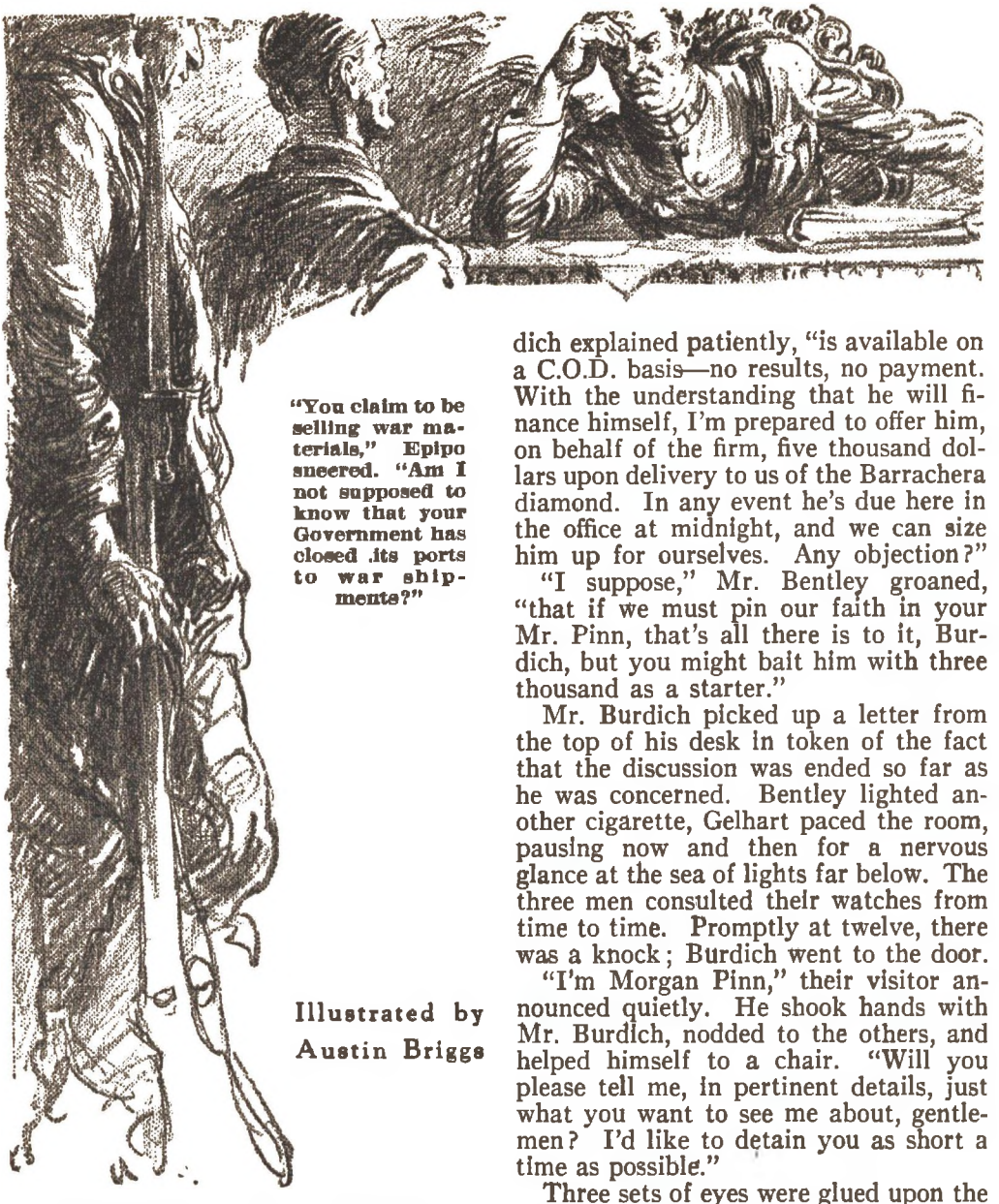
Gelhart groaned, crossed the room and cast a nervous glance out the window. Bentley pursed his bloodless lips and lighted a cigarette in an effort at *sang-froid*. The three men, past fifty, had the appearance of staid business men, not ones to be brought to the rim of ruin by some reckless gamble. In fact, it had looked like a certainty, that deal with the Nizam, a sure thing with a clean profit of a quarter of a million.

"Well, what's the answer, Burdich?" Gelhart demanded. "Do we dissolve the firm and go on relief?"

"There's just one hope, gentlemen," Mr. Burdich said at once. "I've gone ahead on that, before I told you the bad news. A man named Pinn. If he can get into Madrid and back with the Barrachera diamond inside a month, we're sitting on top of the world. Otherwise—"

Bentley detonated. "If that's it, Burdich," he barked, "we just as well close shop and get out without using the elevator! We've already tried three of your damned adventurers and what happened? Cost us another three thousand in expenses—and never a one of them got within shouting distance of the diamond!"

"Why not put heat on the State Department?" Gelhart wanted to know. "What are our Senators good for? The Spanish government can't—"



"You claim to be selling war materials," Epipo sneered. "Am I not supposed to know that your Government has closed its ports to war shipments?"

Illustrated by Austin Briggs

"Exactly what I did do, Gelhart!" Burdich interrupted. "But I found out the Government can't stick its nose into business messes of this kind. However, that's where we got our tip—on this man Pinn; and I'm told he's had marvelous success in international cases. Makes a serious business of it—and has put across tougher cases than ours. It's the only thing left to play."

"Play!" Bentley echoed caustically. "With the three of us stripped to the bone, just how, my dear Burdich, are we to finance another of your luxurious European tours for the benefit of indigent adventurers?"

"This man Pinn, I'm told," Mr. Burdich explained patiently, "is available on a C.O.D. basis—no results, no payment. With the understanding that he will finance himself, I'm prepared to offer him, on behalf of the firm, five thousand dollars upon delivery to us of the Barrachera diamond. In any event he's due here in the office at midnight, and we can size him up for ourselves. Any objection?"

"I suppose," Mr. Bentley groaned, "that if we must pin our faith in your Mr. Pinn, that's all there is to it, Burdich, but you might bait him with three thousand as a starter."

Mr. Burdich picked up a letter from the top of his desk in token of the fact that the discussion was ended so far as he was concerned. Bentley lighted another cigarette, Gelhart paced the room, pausing now and then for a nervous glance at the sea of lights far below. The three men consulted their watches from time to time. Promptly at twelve, there was a knock; Burdich went to the door.

"I'm Morgan Pinn," their visitor announced quietly. He shook hands with Mr. Burdich, nodded to the others, and helped himself to a chair. "Will you please tell me, in pertinent details, just what you want to see me about, gentlemen? I'd like to detain you as short a time as possible."

Three sets of eyes were glued upon the young man who had just entered; searching, avid, hopeful eyes. Slowly their faces lined in disappointment. Pinn was a trim man, several years under thirty, with friendly gray eyes, smooth, even features which seemed to suggest an immaturity, and a certain air of repose about him that gave no hint of the man of action they had expected. The type of man, Burdich thought, to fill the role of salesman or mining engineer, or accountant to check the firm's books. The only positive thing evident at once was the direct manner in which he went to business.

"You're the Mr. Pinn who was recommended to us by the State Department?" Burdich asked, as if in some doubt.

"I have no connection with the State Department, or any other federal agency, but am a private citizen," Pinn said crisply. "However, I'm here in response to whatever requests you made on whatever subject you have to discuss with me. Can't we proceed at once, Mr. Burdich? Concisely, if you please."

"We had in mind," Burdich responded, "sending some one to Madrid to secure a certain valuable diamond of ours which, unfortunately, got shut off by the blow-up in Spain. It is very important to us and we're willing to pay generously."

"How large is your diamond, Mr. Burdich?" Pinn demanded, and as Burdich hesitated, he added, "We must speak with the utmost frankness, if I'm to be of any service to you. I'd like to know, also, its quality, and approximate value."

"About forty-one hundred carats, Mr. Pinn," Burdich answered. "Therefore, as you may readily understand, the largest diamond in the world. I mean the largest diamond of real quality—a pure blue."

"Cut?"

"Yes, at Antwerp two years ago, a year after we got it in from the Vaal River country, northwest of Kimberley. The cutting was very successful—and it isn't too much to say it's the finest stone in the world."

"You neglected to state its value."

MR. BURDICH made a wry grimace and shrugged. "The value of such a stone depends," he said, "upon the presence on earth of some one who wants it bad enough to pay what the owner wishes to ask. At present it would bring, say, around a hundred thousand dollars."

"Absurd," Pinn commented. "A stone like that one should bring from half a million up to a million."

"Possibly—if you had a customer with a lot of money who wanted that particular stone," Mr. Burdich said, flushing. He shifted in his seat and added, "But that's a mere business detail."

"The presence of the stone in Madrid, Mr. Burdich, after its cutting at Antwerp, clearly suggests that you had a customer. Unless you're frank with me, we're both wasting our time."

Burdich looked nervously at his associates, hesitated several moments.

"We got the stone for the Nizam of Hyderabad," he confessed. "He wanted a stone bigger than any quality stone in history for his silver jubilee. So we made a deal through his agents and financed a stone that we knew of—that had been held in hiding in Africa waiting for a market. The stone was to be delivered to the Nizam at Madrid on the occasion of his visit there—then trouble broke, the Nizam cancelled his trip—and we've been holding the sack ever since."

"Do you know where it is in Madrid?"

BURDICH groaned and shook his head. "We know that it's in Madrid and that's all. Our Belgian representative, M. Clovet, took it there, covered with a heavy coat of tar to resemble a sample of Belgian coal. He had it in a vault at the Bank of Madrid ready for delivery. When the trouble got thick he pulled it out of the bank. Clovet was arrested—has been held in jail by the government ever since, suspected of espionage. All we know is that he managed to secrete the stone. Naturally he couldn't tell the Spanish just what he was doing in Spain, for fear of having the stone confiscated—and there you are, Mr. Pinn. We've sent three men after that stone. Two of them were killed in Madrid, the other got nowhere. It means ruin for me and my firm unless we can deliver the Barrachera diamond to the Nizam's agents in New York within thirty days. Our—financial backers have demanded payment of the sums we borrowed to finance the deal."

"That is an interesting complication," Pinn said, with a slow smile. "You have reasons to believe that your man Clovet is absolutely reliable—and still in jail, Mr. Burdich?"

"There's no question on either score."

"Have you any reason to suspect that anyone in Spain, other than M. Clovet, knows the Barrachera diamond is hidden there?"

"The whole transaction has been held in the strictest secrecy, Mr. Pinn. In fact, the other three men we sent to Spain thought they went after a valuable specimen of coal which we wanted at any cost. But we decided to be frank with you—knowing you are recommended through our own Government." Mr. Burdich paused, leaned forward, and asked anxiously, almost beseechingly: "Do you think there's a chance, Mr. Pinn?"

Morgan Pinn smiled enigmatically and shrugged his shoulders. "From what you've told me there ought to be something of a chance. But of course, I can't guarantee anything."

"If you're willing to take the case, Mr. Pinn, we're willing to pay generously,"

Burdich spoke up eagerly. He cast a quick glance at Bentley. "Yes, we are willing to pay you—er—three thousand dollars upon delivery of the stone to our offices in New York, if you get it here within thirty days."

Pinn laughed.

"Slightly under the market," he rejoined placidly. "I'd say the job's worth at least fifty thousand dollars for you, say with an extra thousand dollars' bonus for each day short of a month that the diamond is in your possession."

Mr. Burdich gasped. "But—that's preposterous, Mr. Pinn. Fifty thousand dollars—for a month's work—sixty thousand if you work only twenty days, sixty-five if you get back in two weeks!"

"Of course it's preposterous," Morgan Pinn agreed at once. "In fact, the whole thing is preposterous. It's preposterous that some Indian prince can pay a half million or more for a bauble. It's preposterous that you and your associates, sitting in an office here in New York, should make a cool quarter of a million out of such a deal, on borrowed money. And the most preposterous part of the whole thing is that you should ask me to risk my neck on the thing, and that I should be willing to do it at any price. But that happens to be my business, gentlemen, and I've given you my terms. In addition to what I've already asked I'll want reimbursement for my expenses, up to ten thousand dollars."

The three brokers sat staring at their visitor. During that interview they had slowly revised their first impression of Morgan Pinn: from his voice and eyes they had caught something of the mettle of the man, sensed the firmness behind his calm, contained exterior, the swift play of mind, the confidence of the man in himself. It was Bentley who broke the silence.

"I think we'd better pay it," he said, looking at Burdich with something of reproach in his eyes. "I think, Burdich, maybe your proposition was a bit cheap."

"Agreed!" Burdich announced, swallowing hard. "But with the understanding the Barrachera diamond is in our hands within thirty days from this date."

SO far as making the jump from New York to Madrid was concerned, Morgan Pinn could not have made better time under normal conditions. It was just a matter of knowing the diplomatic underground, just whom to see in Paris. A subsidized plane, operated from a clandestine base southeast of Bordeaux, skyrocketed him and O'Hara over the frontier south of San Sebastian under cover of darkness. Dawn was breaking, a hectic dawn that tore the skyline over Madrid into a fretted smudge, when their plane leveled off to an easy landing at the military field in the eastern outskirts of the beleaguered Spanish capital.

"Sure, sir, looks like it's a good thing we didn't waste any time getting here," O'Hara said as they stepped out into the bedlam of thundering torpedoes and roaring anti-aircraft. "Sounds like they've decided to wipe the town off this morning, Mr. Pinn."

"Merely knocking some plaster off the cornices," Pinn said laconically. "The mortality rate from air raids is still relatively low, despite all the boasts."

HALF a dozen bomber squadrons were maneuvering over the city, eagles of war laying deadly eggs in the heart of the city. They zoomed and darted in dizzy courses to escape the wrath of shrapnel and high explosives from the heavy artillery of the air defenses. The turmoil raged while Pinn identified himself and his mission to the commandant.

An American agent wanting to sell aircraft and munitions. Recommended by a Spanish agent in Paris. The commandant read the terse credentials, inspected the Pinn-O'Hara passports, good only in France and nodded acceptance. He summoned a small military sedan. There were many such adventurers coming to Spain these days. There was no overlooking their possibilities; all must be sent to the colonel in charge of purchases at the ministry of war.

"It's easy the way we get about, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara said, as the auto jolted off into the city. Apparently O'Hara was busy adjusting his tangled red hair with the aid of comb and hand-mirror; in fact he was making covert observations of the rear. "But we sure don't seem to be trusted too far, sir. There's anyhow two cars following us, one with two men, another with three. A tough-looking lot."

"Thanks, O'Hara," Pinn said without concern. "But that needn't worry us for the time being."

The battle of the skies roared on. It was evident there had been a massing of bombers, that the army of besiegers was venting some grudge upon Madrid this morning. A large black ship crumpled suddenly, nose-dived to earth like some huge bird that had been shot on the wing.

"You must remember," Pinn said crisply, "that the Barrachera diamond does not belong to you, Monsieur Clovet!"

The anti-aircraft redoubled its fury as a new squadron flashed into the skies. Unseen bombs kept dropping to earth, in a devilish pattern of wanton destruction.

"Vamos, señor!" the driver shouted suddenly, and jammed on his brakes to dive out of the car, across the street pell-mell and into the shelter of an ancient shop built of adobe bricks.

The earth shook with the violence of an earthquake. A bomber squadron was unloading, torpedoes crashing the street ahead, threatening to engulf all traffic with their devastating violence. O'Hara threw open the door of the car, ready to dive for cover; then he saw that Morgan Pinn was coolly regarding the spectacle.

"In Manchuria, O'Hara," he said in the undisturbed voice of one who is indulging abstractions, "I got caught in a jam once where artillery shells were raining down pretty lively. There wasn't any place to go, so I had to stay there and take it. That's how I learned what a small target a man is. Why, it takes over a ton of lead to kill a man in battle—I mean on the average. So, in this mess, I figure one place is as good as another. Care for a cigarette, O'Hara?"

"My mistake, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara said with a grim smile, accepting the cigarette. "Besides, sir, if our time's come, this is as good a place to kick off as any."

A terrific crash was followed by a hail of broken adobe bricks and plaster. As if in grim confirmation of Pinn's laconic utterance of a few moments before, the adobe shop collapsed into a pile of broken ruins under the impact of a giant high-explosive torpedo from overhead. Their Spanish driver who had bolted to cover was crushed under the wreckage of the building into which he had disappeared.

"Want me to drive this old bus, Mr. Pinn?" O'Hara asked.

"I think you'd better," Pinn agreed.

THE streets were deserted except for camions, staff cars and occasional military blockades. At the first of these barriers they were halted, interrogated, and held on suspicion until release orders came from the commandant at the airfield. With their release came the detail of a new driver, uniformed in the blue denim of the Madrid militia, who sped them to the ministry of war, off the Calle del Barquillo. Here they were admitted without question, dogged by two guards with fixed bayonets. They were taken through a network of busy bureaus to the quarters of El Coronel Devizo Epipo, a middle-aged Spaniard, a *jefe de politico* in the provinces when civil war came, now a militia colonel charged with checking foreign traffickers in war supplies.

The Epipo features were coarse, heavy and set in bronze-like placidity, but with a pair of restless little black eyes that searched the morning visitors with a ferret-like avidity. He read their credentials, attested by the Paris undercover

agent, and looked up with a chilly smile in which there was no friendliness.

"You are Americanos, señores," he said in a velvety voice, "yet you represent that you have munitions to sell us. Is that correct?"

"We understand you may be interested in purchasing a million hand-grenades, Colonel Epipo," Pinn said. "Also a few bombers for your air service."

THE Epipo eyes sparkled in amusement; he chuckled to himself. Crisply he summarized his quick suspicions into a coherent charge.

"You claim to be Americans selling war materials," he sneered. "Am I not supposed to know that your Government has closed its ports to war shipments?"

"I presume, Colonel," Pinn said with patient politeness, "you suspect we may be agents of the Burgos revolution. You see, sir, I not only speak Spanish but I am able to think in Spanish and therefore read your mind. Can't we proceed on the theory that I have these stores available in Yugoslavia and, in that event, could deliver them in a fleet of bombers, provided an agreement can be reached on price?"

"A million grenades and some bombers," Epipo repeated, suddenly interested, but with suspicion still glittering in his beady little eyes. "So large an order as that will have to go to higher authority. But how am I to know that you really mean business, señor?"

"I brought with me my assistant," Pinn explained at once. "In event we arrive at a bargain, it is possible for me to send him with a verbal message while I wait here until the stores are delivered, at which time you can complete payment."

Colonel Epipo weighed this proposition, something of his suspicion left his eyes. The proposition sounded fair and logical but that might only mean it was some sharp ruse of the Burgos scoundrels to plant a clever agent of fresh mischief in Madrid. Besides, so large a transaction had to go to the higher authority.

"Today there is an important battle, señors, which occupies our technical staffs and the *generalissimo*. But, if things go well, you can have an audience tomorrow. Until then I will give you quarters at the Hotel Principe de Asturias, where you will be required to remain indoors until you're sent for."

"I had hoped, colonel," Pinn objected promptly, "to be able to make some observations of your landing-fields during the day. That, you can see, would have a direct bearing on the delivery of large fighting planes. It will be agreeable to have you detail an escort to accompany us. Also,"—Pinn drew from his pocket a sheet of paper, as if to refresh his memory—"also, a confidential friend who knew I was coming to Spain, asked me to call upon a Belgian who is held a prisoner in Madrid—a Monsieur Clovet."

Pinn, before he had spoken the name of M. Clovet, was conscious of a sudden change in the Epipo tempo. The Spaniard quickened into alert attention, his eyes sparkled eagerness. He rubbed his fat hands together ingratiatingly and when he spoke his voice was suave.

"I am glad to oblige you, señor, with such trivial requests. Of course, you may go where you please in Madrid; as you say, it is important that you know whether or not our emergency war fields will accommodate your large bombers." He leaned back in his chair and lighted a cigar, puffed thoughtfully for a moment and said, as an afterthought, "You also said something of wanting to see some prisoner. I will arrange that instantly, señor."

EPIPO hammered at his telephone with angry impatience until he got the Prison de Aranda on the line. He demanded the commandant, then looked up at Pinn with the casual inquiry, "The name, señor, of the prisoner you wish to interview? . . . Ah, yes. A Monsieur Clovet, a Belgian." He gave final orders to the commandant: "An *Americano* with my orders will be allowed to visit Monsieur Clovet freely, Señor Comandante!"

"Another request," Pinn said, as Epipo hung up the receiver and turned to him with a catlike smile. "I'd appreciate having one of your hand-grenades, of the type your soldiers are using at present. A loaded one, if you please, with which I can make certain experiments during the day."

"Of course, you may have a dozen if you wish," Epipo agreed. "I'll send a messenger at once to our nearest infantry dump."

"One grenade should be enough for my purpose, Colonel," Pinn answered.

A military car was furnished to take them to the landing-fields east of Madrid, which Pinn made his first order of business. Epipo, after his sudden change of front, was a willing and ready ally, intent only on giving his visitors the run

of the city. He'd even disavowed the necessity of an escort and gave them passes that would see them through the tightest barriers and military lines in war-stricken Madrid.

The Madrid defense army did not keep its air eggs in one basket. Pinn and O'Hara were driven to half a dozen fields where bombers, observation, staff and pursuit planes were held under camouflaged emergency hangars. The environs of these fields were studded with anti-aircraft weapons, fifty-caliber machine-guns, small cannon, long-range howitzers. Trim pursuit planes were kept warmed up at each field, ready for emergency flight against transient enemy bombers. Pinn took careful observation, studied terrain, streets, approaches, made concise mental notes of what he saw. This reconnaissance finished, he ordered the militiaman assigned as guide and driver by Colonel Epipo, to drive at once to the Prison de Aranda.

"I don't reckon I'm telling you anything, sir," O'Hara said close to Pinn's ear, "but that Spanish colonel got friendly mighty sudden, didn't he? Have you got his game figured out, Mr. Pinn?"

"Yes," Pinn answered grimly. "He couldn't have made it much plainer if he'd come right out with it, O'Hara."

"You knew we been followed ever since we left his joint back there?"

"I knew that without bothering to look, O'Hara."

"My own hunch is," O'Hara said bluntly, "he's found out about the Barrachera diamond and's expecting us to lead him to it, Mr. Pinn."

"No doubt of that," Pinn affirmed. "I tipped our hand the minute I asked to see Clovet. Epipo probably has been waiting on pins and needles for the past year for just this inquiry. Now he's making it easy for us to get the diamond—for him."

O'HARA shook his head and brooded in silence for several moments.

"Don't look so hot for us, does it?" he muttered. "Not with somebody watching every move we make. I thought we was having things too easy getting in here! But getting out don't look quite so easy. Not with the diamond, sir."

"That remains to be seen," Pinn observed, smiling enigmatically. "But we'll not be long finding out."

On reaching the prison, Pinn was admitted to it at once with O'Hara, the commandant himself coming forward to escort them, with hand-rubbing obsequiousness, to the cell occupied by the Belgian prisoner, M. Clovet.

"A spy, señor, who should be shot as all spies are shot," the commandant averred. The treatment accorded this favored prisoner was an enigma which must have fretted the commandant, and he did not hesitate to unbosom himself to this favored visitor who had been sent by the colonel. "I am forced, for some reason, señor, to give him good quarters and good health, and the services of a surgeon when he has so little as a sniffle. You'd think this Clovet was some great person, the way his health is guarded!"

M. CLOVET occupied an airy cell to himself, in vivid contrast to the dirty rat-holes that were the lot of other prisoners. The commandant's naïve complaint informed Pinn that the man was not involved with Epipo in the plot to get the Barrachera diamond. But he left O'Hara on guard at the door to observe against eavesdroppers. M. Clovet was a stooped little Belgian, nearing sixty; pale, emaciated, with greenish, mottled skin drawn tight over angular skull. His haunted gray eyes regarded Pinn with guarded suspicion. Quickly Pinn checked walls, ceiling and fixtures for a hidden dictograph, convinced himself that nothing of the sort had been installed, and helped himself to the one chair in the cell.

"I'm Morgan Pinn," he promptly introduced himself. "I've been delegated by the firm of Burdich, Gelhart and Bentley to get the Barrachera diamond out of Madrid. I would like to dispose of my business with you as promptly as possible, monsieur. You, I am told, fortunately hid the stone before you were landed in jail by the Spanish."

Clovet sprang to his feet defiantly.

"No, I'll not talk, señor!" he shouted. "You can hang me by the thumbs, you can burn me; but I'm not going to talk. I've said that a thousand times—and why must I always be questioned!"

Pinn smiled and made no response. He waited until the Belgian had calmed himself, then coolly asked him to resume his seat on the bed. Quietly, calmly, he proceeded to establish his identity, and overcome the suspicion that controlled the Belgian's mind. After a time Clovet began asking questions. To the most intimate detail he insisted upon tracing Pinn's quest of the diamond, his conversation with Burdich. An hour passed before he was convinced.

Despite the cool certainty in which he worked, Pinn's heart leaped as his fingers came upon a rough object.

"But señor," Clovet warned, his voice reeking despair, "it is impossible to get the Barrachera diamond away from Madrid; *non,* not until there no longer is a war in Spain can such a thing be hoped for. Then—perhaps there will be a hope in proper time, señor!"

"My instructions for you, monsieur," Pinn replied, "were that you tell me where you hid the diamond. That will relieve you of any further responsibility."

"Ah, but the Barrachera diamond, señor, it is the most wonderful gem in all the world!" Clovet exclaimed, the light of a sudden ecstasy filling his large gray eyes. "Yes, it is a blue of the quality I never saw before, and from it comes the scintillations of something that lives, a strange something that is not of this world! Not so much as the tiniest carbon spot is to be found under its facets and—*vive Dieu,* señor!—such a stone must not fall into the hands of vandals!"

"Nevertheless, you must remember," Pinn said crisply, "that the Barrachera diamond does not belong to you, Monsieur Clovet!"

Clovet sat in speechless gaping, as if stunned by this sudden reminder that the gem of gems was not his own. It was evident that to Clovet the diamond had become an obsession, its hiding-place a secret he was willing to shield with his life. An acute misery filled his eyes, his thick blue lips quivered; then he became suddenly tense and thrust his body toward Pinn while his eyes went in a furtive glance about the room.

"But you are watched, señor!" he warned in a whisper. "Yes, for no other reason did they let you come to see me than to follow you when you leave the prison! Oh, *mon Dieu,* señor—but this is because of my own mistake. When I was arrested I told what brought me to Madrid—and they demanded that I produce the Barrachera diamond to prove my story. But that I refused to do and I was thrust into a black hole on bread and water. Still I would not tell. One night two men came to my cell—they put me up by my two thumbs—they threaten to put out my eyes with a hot iron. But I do not tell!"

Clovet paused, jerked his hand across a mottled yellow scar that ran the breadth

of his wide forehead. He gave a taunting laugh.

"Not even their iron, burning the flesh over my eyes, loosened my tongue, señor. So they tried cunning, pretended to me that the charges of espionage had been dropped, and turned me loose. But I knew it was a trick to get me to go to the hiding-place, and I didn't go. Then they brought me back here and have been waiting for me to have a visitor—and that means, if I tell you, they'll follow you—and when they get the Barrachera diamond in their hands, they'll snuff you out, señor—and me!"

"I'd foreseen that danger," Pinn said quietly. "But I'm prepared to play the game against them. We can't take a chance of leaving the diamond where you hid it—because if anything should happen to you it would be lost for all time. Therefore, as agent of the owners, I command you to tell me where it is hid!"

PINN guessed that, behind Clovet's refusal to tell there was more than mere stubbornness. The Belgian must have convinced himself that once the diamond left Madrid, his own life wouldn't be worth two pesetas. An hour of discussion followed, in which Morgan Pinn slowly built up a new hope in the Belgian's mind, pledged himself to lay the facts promptly before the Belgian government. At last M. Clovet yielded, whispered his secret, lips pressed close to Pinn's ears. Then, as Pinn turned to go, Clovet caught him by the sleeve. The Belgian was ashen, his lips were tremulous. But his thought now was not of his own safety.

"I will pray for your success, señor," he said. "Yes, at any cost you must carry the Barrachera diamond to safety!" He paused, a wan smile played at the corners of his mouth, and he added, "If, when you are safe in France, you can help me, señor, I shall always be deeply grateful to you. *Bon voyage!*"

O'Hara, waiting at the door, reported no indication of eavesdroppers.

The commandant escorted them to their car in person, asking if his mysterious visitors had convinced themselves that the Belgian was a dangerous spy who should be shot without further delay. As they drove away from the prison O'Hara asked anxiously:

"Get the dope where it's hid?"

Pinn nodded.

"Figure on making a try for it, Mr. Pinn?" O'Hara whispered.

"Tonight," Pinn answered.

O'Hara's straw-colored brows knotted, but he offered no comment. It seemed to him that the odds were heavy, the chances one in a thousand. A waiting game seemed more in order, at least a careful reconnaissance of the tangled situation, a crafty play for time and favorable opportunity. But he had no thought of debating the Pinn decision, no matter what audacity that plan might demand. A grim smile crossed his lips as his favorite philosophy crossed his mind. If this was the end, one time is as good as another.

They were crossing the Calle del Prado when Pinn, closely observing a fresh shell crater cut deep in the street, ordered the car to stop. He vaulted out, carefully selected some black, heavy earth and tied it into his handkerchief. Putting this in his pocket, he returned to the vehicle and ordered the driver to proceed at a leisurely speed through the eastern and northern part of Madrid, thence deliver them to the Principe de Asturias on Calle de San Jeronimo.

O'Hara chuckled to himself and asked: "Going to make mud pies, Mr. Pinn? Or is that just to throw mud in their eyes?"

"Mud for a hot potato, O'Hara," Pinn said with a grim smile. . . .

During the several hours they drove about Madrid, Pinn took careful observations of the lay of certain streets. With careful attention to every detail he fitted his plan to the terrain. Overhead the skies were cold blue and empty and the anti-aircraft in Madrid was dozing. But from the distant, pine-cloaked hills there came the sulky growl of artillery and the grim chatter of musketry and machine-guns searching out their human toll. There were few people about the streets, and these were mostly women and old men, their stolid, drawn faces reflecting the black misery of a devastated world of violence. Row after row of shuttered houses told of the flight of great masses of the populace. Piles of ruins in nearly every street attested the vandalism of the war eagles. . . .

"They're doing a pretty neat job of following us," O'Hara reported to Pinn. "There's only one car on the job, sir, with two men in it. They've managed to keep pretty much out of sight."

"Normal," Pinn said indifferently.

THEY reached the Principe de Asturias late in the afternoon. Colonel Epipo had reserved a comfortable suite of sitting-room and two bedrooms, and—

perfect host that he was now showing himself to be—had arranged for wine, cigars and an excellent dinner. Epipo himself did not put in appearance, nor send any of his emissaries, but Pinn had no difficulty in locating the host's cunningly hidden dictograph. With dusk, there was another outbreak of the air defenses and a roar overhead as a vagrant bomber squadron paid its noisy respects. In an hour quiet returned again to Madrid.

"You'd better turn in, O'Hara," Pinn said, shortly after eight o'clock. He glanced at the hiding-place of Epipo's dictograph and smiled. "It means we've got to be moving by three if we're taking the Barrachera diamond out of Madrid by daylight. I'll be in bed shortly."

O'Hara climbed into bed and shortly was snoring sonorously. Pinn converted his sample of Madrid mud into a thick paste and applied it, with critical care, to the surface of the Spanish grenade. Then he placed his handiwork to dry on a table beside his musette bag and turned in for a few hours' sleep.

PINN had a faculty of setting his mind upon the precise moment at which he wished to awaken and have it serve him as efficiently as an alarm clock. Promptly at two-thirty his eyes popped open and he got up to shake O'Hara into wakefulness. They ate what was left of last night's meal, hung their musette bags over their shoulders and left the Principe de Asturias a few minutes before three o'clock.

Over Madrid there was a cold, clear sky, illumined by a crescent moon which made it necessary for Pinn and O'Hara to hug the shadows close to the building masses. They moved silently eastward, keeping a wary eye open for civil police and nocturnal militia patrols. Pinn sensed rather than saw the shadows that stole noiselessly along behind them. O'Hara used his mirror for a detailed reconnaissance of their rear.

"Three of them, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara reported. "They're trailing us in file, keeping close together. It's hard to be sure, but the shape of one of them makes me think of Epipo."

"That's good news," Pinn answered coolly. "A platoon might have made things messy for us."

They edged off into the less frequented streets shortly and increased their gait. From time to time O'Hara checked the rear, each time reporting the three shadows clinging tenaciously to the trail. Pinn forged ahead, seemingly oblivious to the danger of the three shadows. They encountered neither civil police nor military patrols, and an hour's march brought them to the intersection of Calle del Prado with Calle de Cervantes. Here Pinn halted and stood, as if for cautious observation, in front of an ancient stone residence, shuttered and deserted, that stood close to the sidewalk. A flight of stone steps led up to the front entrance; beside it stone steps led from the sidewalk to a basement door. By use of a pass-key, Pinn got inside through this door.

"You stay here and keep your eyes peeled," Pinn instructed O'Hara. "When our friends come up, give me a whistle."

There were only a few moments to wait before O'Hara's straining eyes caught the stealthy approach of the watchful trio. In the vague glow of the moonlight he made out that two of them were armed with carbines; the other, who O'Hara thought was Epipo, apparently had drawn a pistol. O'Hara gave a whistle. Pinn appeared at once from the darkness of the house.

"When I go out there, you stay inside under cover," Pinn whispered to him. "No shooting—unless on my order!"

With guarded caution, the three shadows stole up to a position in front of the basement door, their presence cloaked by the bole of a giant chestnut tree. Pinn chose his moment to step out the door, alone. Instantly a powerful flashlight played across him, a voice rang out in Spanish.

"You'll stand where you are without moving, señor!" a shadow commanded.

THE rays of the flashlight searched out Pinn's right hand, disclosed the small black ball clutched in his fingers. Pinn quickly thrust his hand behind his back, as if in an effort at concealment.

"What is it you want?" he demanded. "I warn you that my friend is close behind me with a drawn pistol!"

"There are three of us, all well armed, and a thousand more if I need them!" the voice announced. It was the voice, unmistakably, of Epipo, vibrant with determination and authority. "Therefore you are helpless to resist. Come up at once and surrender yourself to me, señor!"

"But what is it you want of me?" Pinn demanded.

"We want the plunder you've just stolen from this residence," Epipo announced.

"We represent authority and have caught you in the act of your plundering!"

"That's foolish," Pinn countered. The three men, emboldened by the parley, had stepped clear of the shadows, were not a dozen paces directly in front of Pinn. In the moonlight he identified Epipo, a musketeer at each elbow. "A piece of ordinary coal is not plunder, señors!"

Epipo laughed derisively. "But a diamond worth a million pesetas is plunder!" he countered. "You will surrender yourself and your friend immediately, señor, or my men will open fire on you. Resistance is hopeless!"

"Then I'll let you learn your mistake!" Pinn shot back. "Here, examine the thing for yourself!"

HE sent the dark cylinder spinning toward Epipo. The fellow clutched wildly in an effort to catch it, but missed. The object went rolling out into the street, the three men sprawling after it. Pinn spun about and plunged headlong into the house. Five seconds later rang out the fury of a bursting hand-grenade.

"Come on, O'Hara!" Pinn said, leading the way to the street.

Three figures lay in the street, that of Epipo stark in death, the others apparently stunned from the shock of the mud-encrusted grenade that Pinn had tossed into the street. Pinn felt no compunction. It had been Epipo's life or his own and O'Hara's. Moreover, Epipo had died on the heels of a greedy intrigue and not in line of duty. O'Hara gave a sharp exclamation of warning. Figures were pouring into the street. Pinn, as he darted into the shadows, caught the glint of moonbeams on steel. Hugging the buildings, he ran with O'Hara close behind for several blocks. There was shouting behind, excited men throwing out a net over the neighborhood. Pinn slowed down, consulted the luminous dial of his wrist watch. The hour was well after four o'clock.

"Only two hours until full daylight, O'Hara," he said. "We've got to be clear of Madrid by that time—or I wouldn't give a dime for our chances."

O'Hara was blowing like a porpoise from the long, fast run. "All I hope, sir," he complained, "is you don't figure on running all the way."

"We may have to swim the last part of it, if things go too bad," Pinn shot back. "Now we're going to pick up the real Barrachera diamond this trip. Keep your eyes peeled behind us."

Half an hour of stiff exertion brought them to the Jardin Botanico. Here Pinn paused to take his bearings. There were no sounds now except the chatter of a distant counter-battery duel and O'Hara's raucous breathing. At the entrance Pinn stepped off twelve paces to the north, then strode to the east, selected the bole of a giant elm and searched the markings of the bark with the aid of his flashlight. He gave a sharp exclamation as he located the tiny mark of identification Clovet had revealed to him. Dropping to his knees he began digging with his hands.

No slightest doubt assailed Pinn as he dug. The Belgian had planned craftily in selecting the hiding-place of the Barrachera diamond. No trench was likely here, and the great tree would protect its treasure from vagrant bombs from the air. Searchers for the diamond would center their hunt, inevitably, on some place more secluded and intricate. No place in Madrid could have offered the Barrachera diamond better security from vandal hands.

DESPITE the cool certainty in which he worked, Pinn's heart leaped as his fingers came upon a hard, rough object. Another moment and he stood up, examining his find briefly under his flashlight: a large black oval, of irregular outline, having the appearance of a piece of coal. He whipped out his penknife, dug into the tar covering. A red gleam scintillated, turned to blue—final verification. Pinn thrust the Barrachera diamond in his musette bag and turned from the park. Again he consulted his watch.

"Less than an hour and a half now, O'Hara!" he said, "and as near as I can figure it, we've got to travel three miles in as near half that time as possible!"

They set off at a rapid gait to the northeast, keeping back of the Calle de Alfonso XII but following its course northward to the Place de la Independence, where he turned east on the Calle de Alcala. Several times they were forced into guarded detours by night patrols or by speeding black military cars. The artillery was still grumbling in the west but Madrid lay asleep under the somber shadows of its spires and towers. The hum of motors came from the sky, a giant searchlight set in the Gran Via fidgeted through the heavens with its long lean finger of light. But both sides were holding violence in reserve. . . .

There was the first gray hint of approaching day in the clear sky when they

came to a long narrow open field beyond the tree-littered El Retiro. Pinn approached the field cautiously and sank down in the fringe of dead willows at the edge of the field.

"Except for another hundred yards or so, O'Hara," he said cheerfully, "I hope to ride the rest of the way out of Spain—that is, unless we're forced to do a bit of swimming."

"Maybe you're expecting to ride the magic carpet," O'Hara puffed disconsolately. "Me, I don't see anything around here that looks like a ride."

A motor sputtered, started again, then churned into a tuneful humming. Other

"Here, examine the thing for yourself!" Pinn shot back. . . . Five seconds later rang out the fury of a bursting hand-grenade.

motors followed. Pinn strained into the thinning night, caught the distant outlines of a score of planes. Cautiously he changed position, moved to the north several hundred yards until he and O'Hara lay on the flank of the squadron that was getting ready for its daybreak operations. His heart warmed to the tune of those motors. His plan was working out, exactly as he had planned it. But his greatest audacity lay ahead.

There was a vital part for O'Hara to play now, a vital part; in detail Pinn took his assistant into his confidence, explained, charted moves of the next few minutes. Then he lay back, alert, glancing every few moments at his watch to gauge the warming of planes against the moment of their take-off. The field cleared rapidly into visibility. Behind the massed bombers were observation planes, sleek and trim, with their crew of pilot and observer. Russians. That he had learned earlier on his reconnaissance of Madrid which the conniving Epipo witlessly had abetted. There were a few men of the ground crew standing about, listless in the dawn, waiting for the birds to take wing so they could creep back to their *cuartel*.

"We're on our way, O'Hara!" Pinn cried, springing to his feet and vaulting full speed into the field.

Less than two hundred yards to go, a matter of thirty seconds. Pinn's line of approach was slightly from the rear, to shield him from attention. But halfway across his eyes caught the commotion of running sentries, a scattered platoon of riflemen coming from the rear of the roaring squadron where lay the camouflaged *cuartel* and quarters of the comandante. Clearly, as he ran, he saw sentries pause to glint down the barrels of their muskets. The sharp *ping* of a bullet caught his ears above the bedlam of the planes.

Pinn raced on without hesitation. The alarm had been sounded; he knew those sentries were shooting to kill. But he also knew that his greatest chance lay in running a zigzag course, keeping himself a poor target. Once he and O'Hara came close to the fuselage of the observation plane which was his objective, Pinn guessed that the sentries would hold their fire. In the next instant a new danger flashed into the field: an open military car, jammed with soldiers, racing down upon him. Pinn saw that his legs were not swift enough to cheat that danger. Even if he beat the car to the observation plane, there would not be time for him to dive over the fuselage into the pilot's cockpit, seize possession of the craft and put it in motion.

Pinn halted suddenly, faced the speeding car—but only for time enough to put into effect his one hope against disaster. At fifty yards he brought his pistol into line, fired once, twice. With his third shot the car swerved crazily, piled up in a cloud of dust with the collapse of its front right tire. Pinn raced the remaining fifty yards. Above the roar of their engines the Russians had caught no hint of the violence behind them. O'Hara was already over the fuselage, climbing into the observer's cockpit to dislodge its Russian occupant. Pinn vaulted to the pilot's cockpit, saw the astonished eyes of the pilot look up at him. The pilot, a powerfully built man, rose in quick

anger at the strange invasion of his ship. Pinn leaped to the grapple, but the Russian's blazing eyes suddenly lost coherence, and the man sagged helplessly down into the cockpit. O'Hara dropped the wrench with which he had stunned the pilot and shouted to Pinn that the observer's cockpit was clear.

Deftly unfastening the pilot's parachute, Pinn dropped the Russian over the side, lifted the ship's tail and sent her waddling down the runway to a take-off. The ship rose easily and swung to the south. Pinn's eye checked the instrument-board. The markings were in Russian but his practiced eye caught their utility. He smiled a grim satisfaction as he got the feel of the craft, sensed her quick acceleration, easy maneuverability. Moreover, the gauges indicated full tanks.

Slowly he fed the plane its full speed, taking altitude gradually until it reached a height of ten thousand meters. From O'Hara at the earphone came the intermittent reports of pursuit. Three pursuit planes. Slow getting off the ground but trailing at a range of five thousand yards. No perceptible gains at present. No bombers in sight. Pursuit planes veering slightly to the east.

PINN changed his own course slightly to the east. Ordinarily he would have swung to the north to Burgos or to the southwest to Badajos or even to the northeast to Salamanca. So far as his neck was concerned, he would be safe in any rebel stronghold. But he knew, too, that word of the Barrachera diamond was sure to follow him out of Madrid. It might not be safe even in Algeria. As for France, he had no thought of risking French frontiers.

"Russians are getting a little bigger, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara droned from the observer's cockpit. "One of them that was the size of a sparrow is now big as a blackbird. But what's the idea of flying south, if it's any of my business, sir?"

"I told you we might have to swim," Pinn replied. "Our course is south by very slightly east. Keep your eyes peeled, O'Hara!"

The observation plane bore no armament, which meant that Pinn had to depend upon her heels. Once the Russian pursuit ships got within range they could peck away with their thirty and fifty calibers, but with small chance of a hit unless they could get on Pinn's tail, or by chance hit one of the fuel tanks. He gave his full attention to the details of flight and navigation. There was an intricate calculation to be followed, one that he had worked out carefully before leaving Paris. It meant that he must reach the coast within a given radius, making such adjustments in his further course at that point as would be indicated by his time of arrival, which would have to be checked against the course and speed of a slower-moving craft that was his destination.

"That blackbird's the size of a crow, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara reported. "I got an idea they just tried a few pot shots at us."

Pinn maneuvered for a view of his rear. One of the pursuit craft was picking up distance on him, the others trailing behind. He estimated now that he must be passing over Ciudad Real and made a mental calculation. At the rate of gain it would be nip and tuck keeping out of range of the fifty calibers until he passed the coast line. But he held a steady course. Time enough for maneuvering once the Russian closed up to effective machine-gun range.

There followed an uninterrupted half hour of flying, then O'Hara's voice again through the earphone: "Creeping up on us, and one of them's big as a Canadian honker, Mr. Pinn. What's more, I'm sure they keep plugging away!"

"Thanks, O'Hara," Pinn answered cheerfully. "But it'll not be long now, unless we get winged by a chance shot. If that happens, use your parachute."

The goose became an eagle. O'Hara reported a bullet-hole in the fuselage. Pinn held grimly to his course, his mind concentrated upon his intricate problem in navigation. To the east of Gibraltar was French water control; immediately in front of Malaga, German; east of that Italian vigil. From Malta to Gibraltar the British lion maintained its prowl. The Russian ship was speeding smoothly, yielding full allegiance to the alien hand that clutched her stick. Another bullet-hole; the expert O'Hara guessed it as of fifty caliber. But only a chance missile through some vital spot would check the craft's flight.

IN the distance Pinn's eyes caught the blue reaches of the Mediterranean. Shortly he would be out over that vast, placid stretch of color. If he had made no fatal error of calculation, a haven was close at hand—or a grave at the bottom. Instinctively he checked over the set of

his parachute. His fingers touched the Barrachera diamond in his musette bag that he had strapped to his body against the projected last risk of his escape. He laughed cynically. All this for a dazzling bauble to adorn a grizzled Indian princeling. But hadn't men always risked their lives for such things? He smiled again at the thought of the three old men in their fortieth-story offices living in a welter of anxious misery, hardly daring to hope. . . . A few more minutes would tell the tale.

"THEY'RE still coming!" O'Hara exclaimed, as the craft passed out over the Mediterranean. "But where might we be headed for, Mr. Pinn?"

"We might be headed for Tangier, O'Hara," Pinn said. "But I hope we're not. Keep me posted. If we get shot down now, you'll not need your parachute."

"It's all right with me, Mr. Pinn," O'Hara said moodily. "I didn't ever expect to get out of this world alive, anyhow."

Pinn managed another search of the rear. Those Russian birdmen were on the trail in earnest, undaunted by this mad race out over the open reaches of the sea. Moreover the leading plane was the size of a swan, her guns were becoming dangerous. Pinn scanned the blue stretches below him and scowled. There was no smudge as far as the eye could reach, the Mediterranean was as flawlessly blue as the Barrachera diamond. Tangier. A secondary landing in Pinn's scheme of things. It was as he had told O'Hara. A disabled plane now meant certain death, a death that parachutes would but slightly delay; and it meant the Barrachera diamond lost forever at the bottom of the Mediterranean.

Fifteen minutes. O'Hara reported another bullet-hole. Sooner or later one of those random messengers might reach its vital mark. Pinn checked his calculations anxiously. The day was bright and clear with a maximum visibility. Suddenly a flaw, the veriest splotch of black on that relentless blue waste. Pinn's heart vaulted, his eyes sparkled. The splotch, under the rush of the ship, grew swiftly into a smudge, then became a black pennant trailing in the wind. The outline of a bulky gray cruiser etched itself against the field of blue, crawling to the west. Pinn dropped quickly to six thousand meters, then to five thousand. The Russian pursuit plane followed him doggedly, straining mightily to close in the gap. Pinn guessed that the other was pouring lead at him now, a spray of lead from the full power of her guns. But he held the advantage yet of range, and his parachute no longer was a useless thing.

"Look out, that damn' battleship's shooting at us!" O'Hara yelled a warning.

But Pinn had seen the flash of the cruiser's anti-aircraft, seen the burst of high explosive. It was aimed at his own craft, but that did not worry him. He knew how poor a target a speeding plane was, moreover he knew that he did not intend risking a hit for more than a few more seconds; and he had identified the nationality of the fighting ship to his own complete satisfaction. He circled, dropping to four thousand meters, then shouted back to O'Hara.

"All right, bail out," he commanded. "Here's where we take our little swim!"

In another moment Pinn went over the side, plummeted into space, pulled the ring of his parachute. The plane continued on briefly, careened, swiftly went into a nose-dive. Pinn saw it splash into the water, disappear below the surface. Above him he saw the Russian pursuit plane circle high, saw the snarl of British anti-aircraft shrapnel, saw the pursuit turn warily back toward the soil of Spain. Below, kicking violently to a skilful plunge, O'Hara hit the water, worked himself free of his chute, swam coolly. A boat was being lowered. Pinn kicked into the water clear of his parachute, submerged, held his breath through the eternity of time until he came to the surface, freed himself of the meshes and kept himself afloat.

"AMERICANS, are you, escaping from Spain, eh?" the British commander observed after searching and questioning the visitors dragged from the sea. "Well, I'll have to radio headquarters, and if our service says you're all right, as you claim they will, I'll put you ashore tomorrow." The commander adjusted his monocle and examined with fresh perplexity the large black lump he'd fished from Pinn's musette bag. "Risking your necks for a sample of coal, eh? That's Yankee business enterprise for you, what? Lot of good Spanish coal-fields'll do you Americans even if you find a million acres of it. Ha, of all the tommyrot! For tuppence I'd chuck the bally sample overboard!"

Son of the

"It is quite clear to me," said Chao. "Jung Miao keeps Ming in his power by means of medicines. There is some great evil force at work, but I cannot see its object."

Pen drawings by John Richard Flanagan

IT happened in Canton last year, before ever an enemy bomb had wrought havoc and horror. Chinese friends were entertaining me. Sui Lo was a gorgeous young woman; she had a degree from Berkeley and another from Columbia, but tonight she masked her loveliness with Oriental robes, and acted as translator.

The dinner had lasted three hours. I think there were thirty-seven courses up to the time I lost count. Now we sat out in the garden under a full moon. We looked out across the Pearl River, with its city of water-dwellers who spent their whole lives in boats, to the Huangpo or Yellow Anchorage island. The moonlight was clear and intense.

My hosts were talking about the various kinds of junks, which are legion. Then a huge ghostly shape came drifting down the river, an ocean-going junk.

Sui Lo clapped her hands delightedly.

"What does it look like?" she cried.

"Like a squatting Pekinese dog," I said. At this, they all laughed.

"No," she replied. "Like a dragon! Because it looks like a dragon, and is made like a dragon; it has painted eyes and teeth."

"I thought the eyes were for junks to see with?"

"Oh, no," she said. "My people are not so silly. It was a night like this that the celestial fairy visited the young man Ming, and it was over yonder on that very island. He was the son of the Dragon King of the ocean."

"Is that some fairy story?" I asked.

She was actually shocked. A fairy story? Not a bit of it. An actual, true story of happenings in China's golden age, under the T'ang dynasty.

Back in those days the Yellow Anchorage island was entirely owned by the merchant Li King, greatest of all Canton merchants. He lived on the island, he lavished money on it, and because of its beautiful gardens, it was known as the Garden of Green Gems.

Li King was wise and tolerant, for wisdom and tolerance flourished then; the poet was greater than the soldier, and

Dragon King

THIS twelfth story of the "Ships and Men" series goes back to ancient China and the building of the first of the famous dragon ships. It is a story of war and piracy—and of love in a garden. . . . And it reveals anew those special Chinese qualities again so manifest in this present year of war.

By

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beauty was sought afar. Li King had no sons and but one daughter, who was named Pure Jade.

His ships were many; his trading enterprises were vast. It was in one of his ships that the priest Kien Cheng made his celebrated voyage to Japan, in 742 A.D. His diary of the trip is still in existence today. . . .

To Li King, therefore, was brought the mysterious stranger, with two frightful sword-slashes in his body and nothing else, except a girdle of the most glorious green gem jade that the rich merchant had ever laid eyes upon. Green jade was then very little known, jade being all black or yellow or white.

The captain of a salt-carrier from the coast, who had brought the hurt man to Canton, took Li King to see the stranger.

"Honorable Li," the skipper reported, "we found him in a small boat, nearly dead. He has never recovered consciousness. From his delirious mutterings, we learned that his name must be Ming. Because of this jade girdle, he must be some great prince. Therefore, I ask what disposition shall be made of him ere he dies. It is not possible for him to recover from such wounds."

Li King observed the hurt man attentively. Young, vigorous, handsome, girded with an emperor's ransom; decidedly, no ordinary person. Racing pulse and high fever: a man doomed, if left to himself. Here on the Pearl River, Canton was sweltering in midsummer heat, but the island was cool and quiet.

"Carry him to the island," said Li King gravely. "I will place him in one of the summer pavilions. Perhaps Jung Miao can save his life. Leave the girdle with him, for it is his property. Was nothing else in his boat?"

"Only a broken knife of no value, venerable Li. Here it is."

A plain knife, the long, keen blade broken at the haft. Li King gave orders to have it welded and returned to Ming. Then he sent gifts to Jung Miao, the most accomplished healer in Canton, asking that he come and look over the patient.

Jung Miao was a man of forty, lean and cruel-eyed, with the three holes of his initiation as a Taoist priest burned into his shaven skull. Like all Taoists, he was a proficient magician, and some extremely dark and ugly stories were told about his magic works.

He came and examined the patient, and his eyes widened at sight of the jade girdle. On every other piece of jade making up the girdle was lightly graven a dragon; on each alternating piece, a phœnix, of exquisite carving.

"This is a wondrous thing, venerable Li," said he, with greedy gaze. "It is the famous girdle of Wang Chi, the scholar of ancient days; its owner has power over all spirits. The man will live, but his cure will be slow and arduous. Give me the girdle for my fee."

"The girdle is his to give, not mine," said Li King. "I will pay your fee."

Jung Miao did not like this reply, but agreed to take the case. After some time Li King was taken with the summer fever and had something else to think of than the stranger occupying the pavilion in a far corner of the island.

Yet—out of this beginning arose all the greatness of China by sea, and her towering commerce with the southern countries and the islands beyond.

UPON a day, Ming opened his eyes and was conscious—but so weak he could not move a finger. From where he lay he could look, on one side, across part of the Garden of Green Gems, and on the other side through the willows and across the river, teeming with water craft, to the city. He lay staring for a long time, until a moving object in the garden caught his eye. This was a girl in green robes, very graceful in every movement; her brows were delicately arched, and she was singing as she moved among the flowers. She paused beside the turquoise pond with its dotted lotus leaves and its dwarf trees, and then came close to the pavilion. Ming lifted his voice and addressed her.

"Are you a fairy goddess, and is this some place of the immortals who dwell in the Western Mountains?"

She started in alarm, then came into the pavilion and looked at him.

"Not so, honorable sir," she said. "I am Chong Yu, the daughter of Li King. You have been here many days. I am rejoiced that you have come to your senses."

"Pure Jade!" he said, repeating her name. "It is lovely, and you are lovely, and this is the loveliest place I have ever seen. How did I come here?"

"You were found in a boat," she said, and told him all of it.

"IT is a fairy story," said he, smiling. "It is not real. I am in a dream and shall waken unhappily. While I am dreaming, will you sit down and tell me more about this place?"

"Yes. First tell me who you are."

"My unworthy name is Ming," he replied. "I am a seaman, a builder of ships. If you are indeed a fairy, then I am the son of the Dragon King of the Ocean."

He said this in jest, but before he could say more, sleep came upon him, his eyes closed, and he did not waken again until the next morning. By this time, Pure Jade had repeated his words to others, so that the slave girl who was attending him stood in great fear and awe of him. When he found that he was really supposed to be the son of the Dragon King, he laughed a little and let it go at that.

"But where is the fairy Pure Jade?" he asked. The slave girl went away to call her mistress.

Ming wondered at his luck, as he lay there. He was no fine gentleman of China; he had none of the education which was the basis of all aristocracy. He had not the faintest idea of his family. He had grown up among fishermen and pirates down the coast, and piracy was his whole life. Piracy, which involved seamanship, building of ships, handling them, fighting, holding his own. Survival of the fittest. Somewhere there must have been good blood in him, for it showed in his ways and looks.

Now he laughed as he lay here, and looked at the jade girdle set on a stand near his bed. Loot out of a north China

ship—loot and a grand fight. This was all he could remember. Somehow he had won clear. And now he was in Canton, living out a fairy story!

Pure Jade came and sat near him, and talked, while her attendants played on musical instruments or sang songs. But Ming looked out over the crowded shipping. He saw there ships he knew well: Chinese coasters, river junks, salt junks from the south, ships from Po-se or the Malay coasts, from Java and Borneo and Siam. And it came into his mind there and then that he had a fortune in his hand for the taking, and all the gifts of destiny, if he played his cards aright.

The merchant Li King, very weak and wan from his fever, was carried in a litter through the gardens, and stopped to speak with Ming, the litter being placed beside Ming's bed. After the proper politeness, they spoke together of ships and trade, and the river-routes, and the far sea argosies.

"You have the wisdom of the great oceans," Li King said. "Before you leave here, son of the Dragon King, you must teach me some of it. I am not satisfied to be master of the rivers and canals. I seek new things."

Those words lingered with Ming—*"I seek new things."* He saw that this man was wise and far-sighted, used to vast enterprises, yet realizing that there were greater horizons for the finding.

TALKING with Pure Jade and others of the household, Ming perceived for the first time the greatness of a peaceful and calm existence ruled by the head, not by the hand. And then one day Jung Miao came into his pavilion, dark and tall and smiling thinly upon him, like some figure from an evil dream.

"You will lie here a long time; but thanks to me, you will live," said he. "Tell me where you got this jade girdle."

"From the palace of my father, the Dragon King," said Ming.

"Indeed? Well, I have heard stories, queer stories," said the Taoist. "We will not discuss them now—later, when you are feeling stronger: Stories about pirates on the east coast, and one of their leaders who is supposed to be dead. Guard that jade girdle well; it is possessed of great magic powers. I am leaving you the powdered bones of ancient dragons. One dose each day, and fail not."

He went away, leaving Ming with the distinct impression of evil brewing. This Taoist knew or guessed the truth.

Pure Jade came repeatedly. Sometimes Ming played the flute as he lay, for this was his one accomplishment. Half jestingly, wondering that anyone could believe such things, he would describe the marvels of the Dragon King's palace beneath the ocean. At times he desired to tell the truth about this little joke, but memory of Jung Miao halted him, warned him. He might yet need friends.

He questioned Pure Jade about her father. *"I seek new things"*—the words haunted him somehow. She told him how Li King was eager for new enterprises, how his commerce reached afar.

"Tell your father," he said to her one day, "that if he will come to me tomorrow and talk awhile, I will reveal to him certain teachings and wisdom of the Dragon King my father."

ALL delight and eagerness, the girl departed. Ming looked up at the jade girdle on its mount, and smiled. He knew now what he would do with this wondrous jewel; he destined it for this girl, who had opened to him a new idea of life.

Li King came to the pavilion next day, walking weakly, supported by two servants. These arranged cushions for him beside the couch of Ming. Wine was brought, and a heating brazier, and the hot wine was poured into tiny cups of gray jade.

"To your health, venerable Li," said Ming, and drank. "Ah! That is good wine."

"It is the finest product of Shaohsing, but I fear it is poor stuff compared with what you get at home," Li rejoined politely. "My daughter tells me that you wish to impart to me certain wisdom of your father. I am unworthy of such an honor, but I will receive it with humble appreciation."

Ming pointed out to the river and its crowded shipping.

"Your barges and junks go everywhere in China, by the rivers and canals," he said. "But your seamen fear the ocean."

"That is true," said Li King. "We do as our ancestors did."

"You seek new things; I will show you the way," Ming replied. "Out there, I see ships from the southern islands, Malayan ships, Siamese ships and others. They come here to Canton, bringing trade. Why do not your ships go also to their countries, seeking their trade? Why should it come to you?"

The First Dragon Ship—from an etching by Yngve Soderberg

"If I could show you how to travel on dragons," the young man had said, "—that would honor the Dragon King of the Ocean! Ships in the form of dragons." . . . . And the shipbuilders' guild agreed to construct the ship of his dreams—a ship "like a dragon swimming in the water."

"For the very reasons you have just uttered, in your wisdom," the merchant said. "Our ships are not big enough to withstand the ocean, our seamen are afraid of it. We do as our ancestors did."

"Yet you seek new things!" said Ming, and smiled. He thoroughly understood the oblique mind of the man before him, and knew that the only way to reach it was by an oblique method. "If I show you a way to seek commerce in these far countries, would you do it?"

"That depends on the way," evaded Li gravely, though his eyes sparkled at the prospect. "The Dragon King, my son, is very cruel to our poor ships."

"Right!" exclaimed the young man. "And why? Because they do not do him honor. Now, if I could show you how to travel on dragons, that would honor the Dragon King of the Ocean, and he would then favor you. Your fingers could reach to far countries, with his favor."

Li King caught his breath at this. "Do you mean ships like dragons?" he asked.

"Exactly," agreed Ming. "Ships in the form of dragons, which I can show your master builders how to construct."

"Ah! But you will not be able to leave your couch for a long time!"

"Bring the men to me," said Ming. "Even a helpless cripple may be of some use in the world, perhaps. But venerable Li, does the prospect appeal to you?"

"Yes!" exclaimed the merchant eagerly. "Yes! It is like pleasant words heard in a dream. However, I warn you my master builders are practical men. In talking with them, you must be both practical and explicit."

"Leave that to me," Ming said. "If I convince them, will you build such a ship?"

"Not one, but fifty of them—a hundred!" exclaimed Li with energy, as his mind envisioned the possibilities. Then his caution returned. "This, however, must depend upon the master builders. I doubt whether they would understand the conception of building a dragon. Better to describe it as a ship. You and I alone will know that it is to be so built as to become acceptable to your venerable father the Dragon King."

"Right," said Ming, smiling slightly.

IN the morning Li returned, bringing with him the three master builders of his shipyard. These greeted Ming respectfully.

"I desire your help," said Ming with the greatest tact, "in designing a ship so large that she can cross the ocean to the southern islands and yet be safe from the pirates of the eastern coasts."

"A ship of great size cannot withstand the shattering blows of ocean waves," said one of the three.

"That is true," Ming said. "Therefore the hull, for strength, should be divided into watertight compartments. And instead of using light wood, she should be built from the teak whose beams are used to hold up the roofs of houses and temples."

"A ship is fastened together with bolts or nails," objected a builder. "Nails will not hold in teak, because the wood is so hard; often it even blunts nails."

"You are right," assented Ming. "Therefore I suggest that the ship be trenailed or pegged together. This will lend elasticity and increase strength. The keel, middle keelson, side-stringers, reverse frames, ribs—everything should be fastened together by scarfing, fitting and joining. Thus no water will have a hole through which to creep."

THE master builders conferred, and declared this to be feasible.

"Such a ship must have great cargo space," went on Ming. "She must be high in the stern and square in the bows, and high-sided so that pirates cannot board her easily. She must have a deep rudder and keel. This is possible?"

One of the builders grinned. "She'd look like a dog with its head down and its tail high!"

"Precisely! Or, let us say, like a dragon swimming on the water." And Ming cast a glance at Li King. "Such a dragon would frighten off all evil spirits and water devils. You could build such a ship?"

They questioned him regarding size and dimensions. He answered readily to all they asked, one of them noting down his replies and roughly sketching the craft. The three conferred again, and one made reply for all.

"Venerable elder brother, such a ship could certainly be built, but who could sail her? To handle such weight, she must have many sails. Off the coast, the winds are sudden and violent, and many sails cannot be taken in or loosed with rapidity."

"On the contrary!" Ming came to one elbow, leaned over, and traced with his finger in the dust to illustrate his words.

"The ship must have three masts, not one. Each mast with one sail like this. Here is a lug-sail, the most effective for sailing of all. It must be stiffened by battens, and bent both to the yard and the boom. It is kept to the mast by a hauling-parrel, and fitted with topping-lifts on both sides of the sail—thus. As you can see, in case of a squall it can be lowered on the instant, and is a handy rig without an equal. I suggest that you try out this rig with a craft on the river, before giving your decision."

The master builders, who were used only to the square matting sail of river craft, and who paid no attention to the rig of foreign ships, decided to accept this suggestion. Also, they wished to test the figures Ming had given on the dimensions, weight and displacement of a large ship built from teak.

THEY departed. A little later Pure Jade came to the pavilion in search of her father; but he had gone with the builders, and she remained for a few words with Ming. Alone together, speech failed them. The color in the girl's face, her downcast eyes, her modesty, heightened her beauty.

Ming was about to cast loose restraint and utter everything that was in his swelling heart, when a shadow fell across the threshold. In the entrance stood Jung Miao, looking sternly at them.

Pure Jade fell into confusion at being discovered thus alone with a young man, for this was contrary to all the Rites. She hastily withdrew. The Taoist came forward and grimly examined his patient.

"Very good," he said at last. "Take no more powdered bones of dragons. I have here an elixir made from the horns of snails dissolved in the blood of toads. Take one dose of this elixir every other day, and in a month from now you'll be on your feet."

"Venerable ancestor, your skill is superhuman," murmured Ming.

"True," said Jung Miao, a flash in his dark eyes. He sank down and spoke in a low voice. "You are dealing with one who has strange forces at his command, young man. If I am a friend, you will find me valuable. I am about to propose something to you which will bring us both vast wealth. First, let me convince you of my power. I am about to leave with you two guardians, spirits who serve me faithfully."

From his pouch he took two scraps of paper on which sacred characters were inscribed. He tossed them to the floor. Before the very eyes of Ming, two full-armed warriors sprang up with clash of armor; one held an immense sword, the other a spear. At a word from Jung, the spearman thrust his weapon against the body of Ming so that the keen point scratched the skin; then he withdrew it.

"They obey me, and me alone," said the Taoist. "They shall remain with you. To other eyes they are invisible; but you know the truth, and see them clearly. Now tell me. Do you remember a man called Tse Kin?"

Ming started. Tse Kin—Purple Gold! This man had been one of the chief pirates in the band: an ambitious, crafty, viciously cruel fellow, whose name had been gained from his custom of dipping golden loot in the blood of victims. Thought of him brought agony. It was like some evil touch from the dark past.

"I see you recognize the name!" And Jung Miao smiled. "Tse Kin is in Canton. He came searching for a leader of his associates who was lost, a young man named Ming. With Ming departed all the luck of those pirates. Now they seek him, in order to make him their sole leader and chief. And it has occurred to me that, when this is done, these pirates and others might be assembled here in Canton, make a sudden outbreak, loot most of the city and be gone again to their home on the coast. Think it over, young man. There is no hurry. And do not speak of it to anyone, or these two guardians will slay you and all others in this place."

The two warriors clashed their armor to emphasize the words, and Jung Miao departed, smiling.

Ming lay in a cold sweat, trembling, a tumult of agitation in his spirit. All in a moment, his whole house of cards came tumbling down about him; he saw that a man cannot escape his past. His pleasant life here, his hopes of the future, his plans and dreams—all were shattered.

He stared up at the two guardians. When he spoke to them, they made no answer. They withdrew to the entrance and stood on either side of it, immobile, ominous, silent. From time to time he caught their fierce gaze fixed upon him.

Tse Kin here! Himself made leader of that wild pirate horde! At the very thought, repulsion seized on him; horror at the plan of the Taoist filled his heart and soul. His ambition, his entire life, had altered. The bare idea of his former existence was frightful to him.

Yet, looking at the matter squarely, he could see that Jung Miao had evolved a scheme whose awful simplicity spelled success. A few hundred pirates here in Canton, rising suddenly and swiftly against the authorities, could spread blood and fire through the whole city, and be off with immense loot before any troops could so much as be brought to restore order.

In other days, he would have thrilled to the notion of such a *coup*. Now it palsied him. Li King, his generous benefactor; Pure Jade, whom he loved; this quiet, peaceful life, this exquisitely beautiful island—all these bathed in blood! Not to mention his own ambitions, his dreams of higher things, sent to ruin! A groan broke from him. Like an echo, came the clash of armor from the two guardians.

Later, when attendants came with food and refreshment, Ming watched with frenzied incredulity. The guardians assumed threatening postures, but the attendants did not so much as see those two figures. Jung Miao had spoken the truth. At the entrance of the pavilion were two little bronze dogs, representing the *fu*-dogs or companions of Buddha, and the two warriors stood beside these dogs, yet were, incredibly, unseen.

That night he took a dose of the elixir, but it did him small good, so worried and agonized was his mind. When Pure Jade came next day, with her attendants, she was struck by the change in him. He longed to make a clean breast of everything, but so wildly and fiercely did those warriors watch him, that he dared not. He spoke to Pure Jade of those guardians; he pointed them out to her, but she saw them not. However, his strange words, his altered looks, troubled her.

NOW, at the Spring of the Three Fairies, outside the city, lived the Buddhist monk Chao, a hermit of great age whose knowledge was universal. So revered was Chao for his austere life and good deeds that the Emperor had sent him a robe of honor. Pure Jade resolved to seek the advice and help of this famous man.

Accompanied by her two handmaids, she took gifts and went to the Spring of the Three Fairies. She found Chao sitting before his cave in contemplation, looking like an ancient bag of bones. She knelt politely before him and told about the guest in the garden pavilion, and what had taken place.

"Venerable sage, your unworthy daughter does not know what to think or do," she concluded. "His mind is affected. There are no warriors in the place. Deign, I pray you, give me the benefit of your wisdom and advice."

"It is quite clear to me," said Chao. "The priests of the Taoist faith sometimes subvert occult teachings to their own advantage. Jung Miao is notorious for this, although he is a clever healer. He keeps Ming in his power by means of medicines. There is some great evil force at work, but I cannot see its object."

"Can you advise me, venerable sage? Can you help me?"

"Yes," rejoined the hermit. "I advise you to steal this elixir and replace it with colored water. You saw no warriors there, but Ming could see them plainly. But did you observe anything unusual?"

"Only two bits of paper near the door."

"Good! It is part of Taoist magic to change scraps of paper to living creatures, in the eyes of those whom they delude." The sage reflected for a time, then his brow cleared. "I shall pray to Lord Buddha and to the Queen of the Western

"I have here an elixir," said Jung Miao, "made from horns of snails dissolved in the blood of toads. Take it without fail."

Mountains. The superior man should feel it a duty to lend full help against such creatures as this Jung Miao."

He talked for a while longer, and Pure Jade drank in his words eagerly. When she went home, her attendants easily stole the flask of elixir and threw away the contents, replacing it with water of similar color.

LI KING and the master builders returned to interview Ming. The rig of his explaining had been carefully tried, and worked to perfection. The shipbuilders' guild had agreed to construct the ship of his dreams, and Li was footing the bills.

At any other time, Ming would have greeted this news with keen delight, but now he only threw despondent glances at the two armored guards, who remained invisible to his visitors, and assented without interest to what was said.

The master builders saluted him and departed. The merchant Li King remained for a private word with him.

"You are not well, my son," he said with solicitude. "I must summon Jung Miao to examine you. Now tell me something. You have described and given dimensions for this ship, which will look in general like a crouching dragon. Will this suffice to make it acceptable to your father, the Dragon King of the Ocean?"

Ming uttered a wild laugh.

"You will find it more seaworthy than any other known craft," he said. "But in order to make it look more like a dragon, you must paint large eyes on the bow. Do this, and the result will be excellent."*

But day and night, the position in which he found himself preyed on Ming's mind. Short of destroying himself, he could see no way in which he could save Canton and his benefactor from the evil schemes of Jung Miao. This keen anxiety brought fever back upon him, so that he had strange fancies and visions.

All his hopes of a glorious future were gone. He no longer dreamed of a great fleet of ships, able to withstand the ocean gales and carry the trade of Canton to all parts of the Yellow Seas; he had no joy in life, and concluded that for him there was no hope, save in death and a new reincarnation.

*A fact. The usual statement that these painted eyes are for a junk "to see with," is an utter fallacy, unworthy of the Chinese intelligence.

Then, in the bright sunlight of morning, a glorious figure came slipping down the sunbeams: A lovely girl, radiant as the day, clothed in gems and rare silks, and her face was the face of Pure Jade. As she passed them, the two guardians shrank aside, but she came straight to the couch, and smiled, and stooped to touch his hand.

"Moonlight is my name, and I have been sent to help and comfort you," she said. "Come, put your head in my arms and tell me all that worries you. The prayers of the sage Chao have reached heaven, and those of Pure Jade as well."

"But you are Pure Jade!" murmured the amazed Ming.

The fairy smiled.

"I have assumed her earthly form," she replied. "I wish you to tell me all that is in your mind, so that I may help you."

The two guardians clashed their armor, and bent threatening glances on Ming. But Moonlight sprang up quickly and touched the two bronze images of Lord Buddha's dogs. Instantly these sprang into life and flung themselves at the armed guardians, and chased the warriors from the pavilion.

Ming lay in the arms of the glorious being, and it seemed to him that he was in the arms of Pure Jade herself. A soothing peace stole through his fevered body; he was being anointed with a salve that allayed the inflammation of his wounds.

"This is *po-tsan*, the famous ointment of Fulin, in the far west of the world," said Moonlight. "It will heal and refresh you. What is your trouble?"

HIS brain still afire, Ming did not hesitate, but poured out to this celestial creature all his worry. He told of his early life, and how his jesting words about being the son of the Dragon King had been taken in earnest. He told of Jung Miao and what had passed between them, and of the ship that was now being built in the form of a dragon.

"I do not know what to do, and my brain is tortured," he concluded. "I cannot bring disaster upon those whom I have come to love. Yet I must do so, or else be handed over as a pirate, and lose everything here that I have gained. And I love Pure Jade with all my heart and soul."

"Does she love you?" questioned Moonlight.

"I do not know; at least, she looks kindly upon me."

Reaching under the couch, Moonlight drew forth the plain knife that had been in the boat with Ming, and was now welded and repaired. She thrust it under his covers.

"Take this. I must hide, for now Jung Miao is coming, and I wish to hear his evil counsels from his own lips."

She slipped behind a screen in the corner. Ming looked around; she was gone, and the bronze *fu*-dogs had returned to their places. The two warriors came back to the entrance, clashed their armor, and scowled ferociously, but Ming was no longer afraid of them.

PRESENTLY Jung Miao appeared. He was not alone this time. With him was a man who wore the blue robe of a scholar; but when Ming saw this man's face, he trembled, recognizing the features of Purple Gold, the pirate.

"I have brought a friend to see you," said Jung Miao.

Purple Gold dropped on his knees beside the couch, greeting Ming with delighted rejoicing, and accusing himself bitterly for having contributed to Ming's present condition.

"We have been deeply punished for our mistreatment of you," he said in shame. "Now that I find you alive, all is well again. You have been elected supreme chief of the pirate bands, under the title of Emperor of the Eastern Coast. As soon as you're able to be on your feet, I'll summon all our men to Canton, and with the help of this honest Taoist we'll get away with such loot as never was known."

"And what does Jung Miao get out of it?" asked Ming.

"A tenth part of all the plunder, and one hundred of the most beautiful slaves who are taken. By his magic, he will aid us in the enterprise."

"I do not wish to do this thing," said Ming bluntly. "My life here is pleasant, and I will not return to the pirates. Elect another chief."

"That is impossible," said the Taoist sternly. "Your name has banded them all together. Without you, they will do nothing. If you refuse, I will turn you over to the magistrates as a pirate, and you shall be publicly executed. Thus you will gain nothing at all."

Ming sighed. "That is true," he assented. "It is evident that I am in your power."

"One word to Li King, and he himself will have you executed," said Jung Miao. "It is much better to choose life and fortune. All men believe that you are the son of the Dragon King. When the moment comes to strike, fifty of your old pirate command will come here, pretending to be envoys from the Dragon King. Once they seize this island, all the shipping is at our mercy, and our men in the city will strike."

"Our men?" said Ming. "Then you intend to become a pirate leader? Very well. Today I am burning with fever and cannot think. Worthy Jung Miao, return tomorrow morning and we will make all arrangements. Leave Purple Gold here with me now, for an hour or two. I wish to talk over old times with him. It will quiet my fever."

"Very well," said the Taoist, and suddenly stamped his foot. There was a burst of smoke, and he was gone. Ming, whose eyes were glittering with fever, laughed aloud at this, and spoke.

"Come closer to me, Purple Gold. Closer still, so that we may speak softly together. Would you indeed force me to do what I do not desire?"

The disguised pirate came very close. "It is for your own best interests, Ming. Think of the slaughter and looting there will be in this city!"

"That is what I am thinking of," said Ming, and suddenly drew forth the knife from under the covers, and plunged it into Purple Gold's throat.

"Moonlight! Moonlight!" he cried; but there was no reply from the fairy. The two guardians clashed their armor and brandished their weapons. At this moment some of the attendants, hearing Ming cry aloud, came running. They halted, aghast, at seeing the bloody knife in his hand and the dead man stretched beside his couch. Ming looked at them with his fever-bright eyes, and spoke.

"Tell me quickly! Do you see two pieces of paper by the entrance? Bring them to me."

THE breeze lifted those pieces of paper so that the attendants could scarcely catch them. But to the eyes of Ming, it seemed that those two warriors struggled to evade the clutching hands; however, they were quickly caught and thrust toward him. He drove at them with the knife, again and again.

To the attendants it appeared that he had gone mad, for he was slashing the bits of paper into fragments that blew away with the wind. Then Ming fell back on his pillows, laughing wildly.

The servants sought Li King, and brought him hurriedly. When the master appeared, Ming threw down the knife and spoke

"Venerable Li, this scholar came with Jung Miao and remained to talk with me. I recognized him as one of the leaders of the eastern coast pirates, and killed him. Have his body removed to the yamen of the magistrates where no doubt some of the river captains will recognize him and prove my words. It would be best to say nothing of the matter until this evening, however, and to keep my share in it a secret."

The body of Purple Gold was removed; and Ming, exhausted from his fever, fell into a troubled sleep. When he wakened, the two guardians had disappeared, the day was almost done, and in the golden radiance of sunset he found the fairy Moonlight seated beside him, playing softly upon a lute.

"You have done well," she told him approvingly. "But there remains Jung Miao, who will not be easy to deal with."

"It is due entirely to your help and encouragement," said Ming. "How can I ever display my gratitude to you?"

"By presenting me with this lovely girdle," she said, indicating the jade girdle on its stand.

Ming sighed.

"I had intended this as a gift for Pure Jade," said he, "but I can refuse you nothing, celestial being. Take it; and since to me you have the appearance of Pure Jade herself, I beg you to remain a little while and endeavor to banish my fever, while I dream that it is her lovely voice beside me."

Moonlight smiled and assented to this request, and played the lute softly. . . .

The day died. The stars came out, and the silver moon appeared in the sky, bathing the Garden of Green Gems in radiant fantasy. Hand in hand, the two alone in the pavilion watched the starry depths, until at last Ming breathed a prayer to the Moon Goddess, Chang-o.

"If it were only Pure Jade who sat thus beside me! Grant me this favor, Empress of the Heavens. Grant that she and I may be as the moonbeam and the moon, as the shadow and the substance, forever!"

"I will pray also for her happiness and yours," said Moonlight, and added her prayer to his. . . .

The richest flowers must fade, the fairest hour must wane; and soon the moment came when Moonlight must depart. Ming clung to her slipping fingers, and begged her for advice and counsel.

"Very well, and you must obey it," she rejoined. "Never, to Pure Jade or anyone else, breathe a word of your past; never admit that you are not the son of the Dragon King. Even when tempted to confession, let your lips be sealed."

"But what if Jung Miao dooms me?" said Ming, troubled.

"I will whisper into the heart of Pure Jade, and she will save you." And Moon-

"Moonlight is my name—and I have been sent to help and comfort you," said the fairy.

light touched his forehead with her fingertips. "Sleep, worthiest of mortals! Waken refreshed and strong, that you may rise superior to the evil of Jung Miao!"

WITH morning, Ming wakened. He found the fever entirely gone from him, and new strength in his body.

He thought that the entire visit of Moonlight must have been some delirious fancy; but when he looked for the jade girdle, it was gone. Then he knew that she had indeed been real, a visitor from celestial realms.

Of this he had further proof almost at once, when two of the household servants came to bathe him and bring food. One of them cried aloud, and picked up an exquisite little bottle fashioned from coral, with a jade stopper, which stood at the far side of the summer pavilion.

"Look!" she cried in astonishment. "Here is the precious flagon of *po-tsan,* the wondrous ointment of Fulin that is the chief treasure of our master! If he finds it missing from his cabinet, we shall all be punished. Hurry and replace it!"

The other servant departed hurriedly. Ming understood that Moonlight must have removed it from the cabinet of Li King, with her invisible presence, in order to treat his wounds.

From the remaining attendant, he learned that Li King had been summoned to the city and had taken Pure Jade with him, for reasons unknown. There was excitement in Canton, for the notorious leader of a gang of pirates had been discovered and killed, and the magistrates were making strict investigation.

He had a brief moment of wondering delight, when one of the master builders came with diagrams for him to see, and word that the ship was progressing. There was praise for Ming's figures; already, said the master builder, these were seen to be exact and of great proportionate worth. At this, Ming smiled. Well they might be! He had spent many an hour working out this ship of his dreams, which would swim any sea and be easy to handle in any weather.

Scarcely had the ship-builder departed, however, when the blow fell.

There was a great outcry, and the garden was filled with running servants, with tumult and confusion. The astonished Ming, coming to one elbow, beheld files of yamen guards approaching, escorting the governor and the chief magistrate of Canton. As he stared, the soldiers surrounded his pavilion, the officials took their station in the entrance, and upon the scene stalked Jung Miao.

Then Li King and Pure Jade appeared, with an escort of guards. The governor recounted briefly how one Purple Gold, a known leader of the pirates, had been found dead the previous evening, and recognized by many who had seen him. Accusation had been laid against the miserable Ming, here present. The accuser was no other than Jung Miao. With this, the Taoist stepped out and spoke.

"This is the truth," he thundered. "It was I who killed this wretched pirate Purple Gold. Why? Because he came and sought my aid. He confessed to me who he was, and that this wounded man was his leader and chief; between them, they had schemed to bring many pirates to Canton and loot the city with great slaughter. This man, who pretends to be a son of the Dragon King of the Ocean, was to have a number of his men come, presumably as envoys from the Dragon King his father, and seize this island with everything in it. I killed the unhappy wretch. Now seize this creature before you and execute him!"

MING listened, thunderstruck, to this accusation. He was almost on the point of confessing all, telling the story as it really was, and trusting that the governor would recognize the truth—but he remembered the advice of Moonlight.

Li King was now interrogated. The merchant implored mercy for his helpless guest, and spoke highly of his character and talents; he was forced to confess, however, that he had no actual knowledge whence Ming had come. The magistrate who was conducting the examination turned to Ming.

"You claim to be the son of the Dragon King. Have you any proof or witnesses?"

"No, venerable parent of the people," stammered Ming. He was bewildered, angered, confused. He knew not which way to turn. He caught a smile and a gesture of reassurance from Pure Jade; then the girl stepped forth and begged leave to address the governor. After some deliberation over such unheard-of presumption, the leave was granted.

"Venerable father and mother of the people," said Pure Jade, "last night when I had prayed to Lord Buddha and the gods, I dreamed that a celestial being came into my room and instructed me, saying that today there would be an interrogation here. I was told to visit the famous sage Chao, who lives as a holy

hermit by the Spring of the Three Fairies, and to request him to come here and testify. I sought him this morning early, and he is here."

THIS speech caused the most intense surprise. When it was found that the venerable hermit, whom the Emperor himself held in honor, was indeed outside, he was ushered in with the greatest of respect. Looking like an old bag of bones, he saluted the magistrates, and then pointed with his staff to Jung Miao.

"Tell the honorable court," said he, "with what weapon you slew Purple Gold."

"With this very knife," replied the Taoist boldly, displaying a broad-bladed weapon. The sage smiled.

"Impossible. The gods have told me that the wretched creature was killed with a thin-bladed knife. Those who saw his wound can bear witness if this is so."

"It is so, venerable Chao," said the magistrate. "I myself saw the wound."

"Then," said the hermit, "who can produce the knife which caused the wound?"

"I!" cried out Ming, and brought the knife into sight. "Further, I killed the man here, in this very spot. The merchant Li had the body taken to the city and left at the yamen."

"That is true," said Li King gravely.

It was obvious that the Taoist had lied. However, he repeated his accusation against Ming, but the hermit intervened.

"Here you see a vile wretch, honorable magistrates, who himself plotted the thing he accuses another of plotting. He is worthy of instant death."

"But," asked the perplexed governor, "how are we to know that Ming is indeed the son of the Dragon King? If there were even one witness of weight who could testify to this, it would close the case."

"Then I can testify to it," said the sage Chao. "For last night my spirit was in the palace of the Dragon King, who spoke to me of this young man his son, and said that he had been sent here to confer many and great benefits upon this city and upon the whole empire."

In a voice of thunder, the governor ordered Jung Miao executed; and it was done. As may be inferred, the hermit Chao, whose spirit sojourned with the gods at night, received vast honor. Upon Ming the governor conferred rewards for having killed the evil pirate. . . .

After a time Ming found himself alone in the pavilion. Then upon the silence came a footstep, and he looked up to see Pure Jade standing timidly before him. His eyes widened. Incredulous, he stared —for she was wearing the jade girdle.

"Pure Jade!" he exclaimed, pointing to it. "Where did you get that girdle?"

"I do not know," she said. "Last night I dreamed that a lovely celestial maiden had brought it to me as a gift. When I wakened this morning, it was there beside me. Did you choose that way of sending it to me, dear Ming?"

Ming lay back upon his pillows, utterly amazed. It was of course evident that Moonlight had taken the girdle to this sleeping girl. As he pondered, Pure Jade came and stood behind his couch. She touched his head with her fingertips, as Moonlight had done; and if there was in her eyes a smile of tenderness and amusement, Ming could not see it.

He could see and feel nothing except her presence. He caught her hand and held it, felt the gentle response of her fingers, and knew that all the future indeed lay golden and fair before him.

In that future, however, he never made any reference to his own past. That celestial creature Moonlight was very, very wise! And if there were any earthly explanation of his fever fancies, Pure Jade never mentioned the matter.

SO ended the story, while the moon poured down silver radiance over the garden where we sat, and the river, and the crowded boats. My hosts asked how I liked the story. Sui Lo showed all her dimples as she smiled at me.

"Well, the girl was smart," I observed. "If you're anything like her, I can see how she put it over on Ming by pretending to be the fairy Moonlight—"

"Oh, now!" My hosts were shocked. So was the lovely girl beside me. "The fairy was a real person, you know!"

"And the magician was real too? And his magic?"

"No," said the young lady, with a wink she must have learned at Berkeley. "You can see Taoists priests pulling that sort of magic all the time. It's hypnotism. But the celestial creature—ah, we must believe, always, that the beautiful is real!"

"Thank God it sometimes is!" I said, and bowed to her, and then everybody laughed, and she blushed, and the dinner-party was over.

Another colorful story in this "Ships and Men" series will be a feature of our next issue.

TARZAN and the

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

The Story Thus Far:

YOU may recall a newspaper dispatch of a year or more ago announcing the success of the Wood and Van Eyk African Expedition in solving the mystery of the disappearance of Lord and Lady Mountford more than twenty years before, and of the rescue of their daughter Gonfala, queen of the warrior-women of Kaji.

The article also touched, lightly and rather skeptically, upon the reported size and value of the Gonfal, the great diamond of the Kaji, and the enormous emerald of the Zuli, which the expedition brought out of the Kaji country with them, only to have them stolen by Spike and Troll, the two white hunters who had accompanied the party. It closed by stating that Gonfala, Wood and Van Eyk had reached the African estate of Lord Greystoke in safety.

It did not mention that Stanley Wood and Gonfala planned to marry immediately; nor did it remind us that Lord Greystoke is Tarzan of the Apes.

What Reuter's could not know, it remains for us to tell: the amazing aftermath of the theft of the two great stones, the combined value of which has been estimated at between twenty-five and thirty million dollars—in addition to which there is the inexplicable hypnotic power they confer upon their possessors.

For afterward Spike and Troll contrived to abduct the girl Gonfala and carry her off in the hope that she could teach them to make use of those strange hypnotic powers exerted by the great gems. And then all three were made captive by the warrior Elephant Men.

Meanwhile Tarzan and Stanley Wood, working separately, ranged the jungle in an unremitting search for the trail of the missing girl. *(The story continues in detail:)*

STANLEY WOOD had no difficulty following the trail of Gonfala's abductors to the point at which their guides had deserted them, and from there the trained Waziri trackers carried on until the trail was lost at the edge of a wood, where it had been obliterated by the shuffling pads of a herd of elephants. Search as they would, they could not pick up the trail again. To Wood, the mystery was complete; he was baffled, disheartened.

Wearily he pushed on up the valley. If only Tarzan were here! He, of all men, could find an answer to the riddle.

"Look, Bwana!" cried one of the Waziri. "A city!"

Wood looked ahead, amazed; for there lay a city indeed. No native village of thatched huts was this, but a walled city of white, its domes of gold and azure rising above its gleaming wall.

"What city is it?" he asked.

THE Waziri shook their heads and looked at one another. "I do not know, Bwana," said one. "I have never been in this country before."

"Perhaps the Memsahib is there," suggested a warrior.

"Perhaps," agreed Wood. "If the people here are unfriendly, they will take us all prisoners," he mused, half aloud; "and then no one will know where we are, where Gonfala probably is. We must not all be taken prisoners."

"No," agreed Waranji, "we must not all be taken prisoners."

"That is a big city," said Wood; "there must be many warriors there. If they are unfriendly, they could easily take us all or kill us all. Is that not so?"

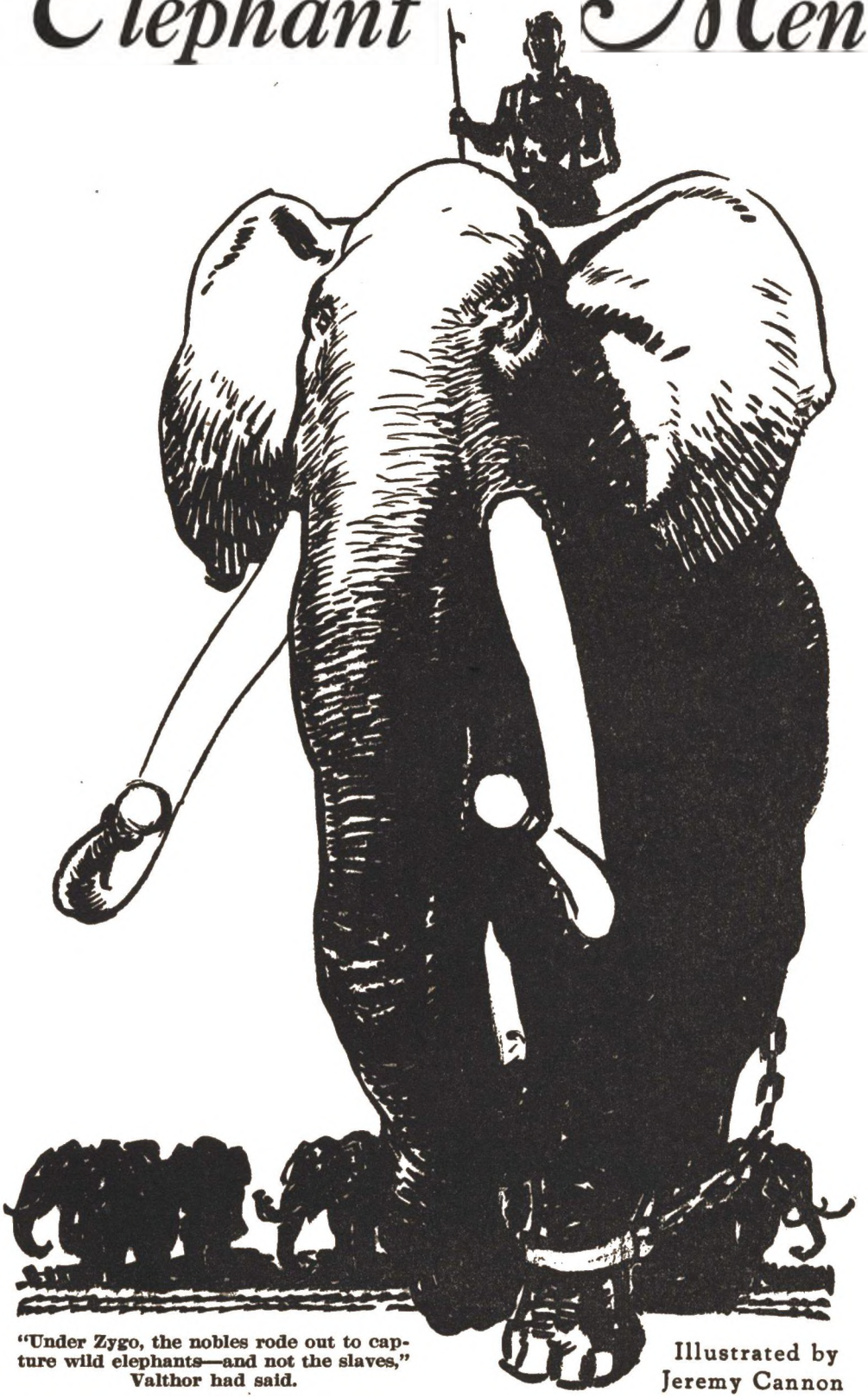
"We are Waziri," said Waranji, proudly.

"Yes, I know; and you're great fighters. I know that too; but seven of us can't lick an army, even though six of us are Waziri."

Waranji shook his head. "We could try," he said. "We are not afraid."

Wood laid a hand on the ebony shoulder. "You're great guys, Waranji; and I know you'd walk right plumb into hell for any friend of the Big Bwana, but I'm not goin' to sacrifice you. If those people are friendly, one man will be as

Elephant Men



"Under Zygo, the nobles rode out to capture wild elephants—and not the slaves," Valthor had said.

Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon

safe as seven; if they're not, seven men won't be any better off than one; so I'm goin' to send you boys home. Tell Muviro we couldn't find Tarzan. Tell him we think we've found where the Memsahib is—we don't know for sure, but it seems reasonable. If you meet Tarzan, or he's back home, he'll know what to do. If you don't see him, Muviro will have to use his own judgment. Now, go along; and good luck to you!"

Waranji shook his head. "We cannot leave the Bwana alone," he said. "Let me send one warrior back with a message; the rest of us will stay with you."

"No, Waranji. You've heard my orders. Go on back."

Reluctantly they left him. He watched them until they passed out of sight in the wood; then he turned his steps toward the mysterious city in the distance.

ONCE again Tarzan of the Apes stood upon the edge of the high plateau at the western rim of the valley of Onthar and looked down upon Cathne, the city of gold. The white houses, the golden domes, the splendid Bridge of Gold that spanned the river before the city's gates, gleamed and sparkled in the sunlight. The first time he had looked upon it, the day had been dark and gloomy; and he had seen the city as a city of enemies; for then his companion had been Valthor of Athne, the city of ivory, whose people were hereditary enemies of the Cathneans. But today, ablaze in the sunshine, the city offered him only friendship.

Nemone, the queen who would have killed him, was dead. Alextar, her brother, had been taken from the dungeon in which she had kept him and been made king by the men who were Tarzan's faithful friends—Thudos, Phordos, Gemnon, and the others of the loyal band whom Tarzan knew would welcome him back to Cathne. Tomos, who had ruled under Nemone as her chief adviser, must have been either killed or imprisoned. He would be no longer a menace to the ape-man.

With pleasant anticipation, Tarzan clambered down the steep gully to the floor of the valley and swung off across the Field of the Lions toward the city of gold. Field of the Lions! What memories it conjured! The trip to Xarator, the holy volcano, into whose fiery pit the kings and queens of Cathne had cast their enemies since time immemorial; the games in the arena; the wild lions which roved the valley of Onthar, giving it its other name—Field of the Lions. Such were the memories that the name inspired.

Boldly the ape-man crossed the valley until he stood before the Bridge of Gold and the two heroic golden lions that flanked its approach. The guard had been watching his progress.

"It is Tarzan," one of them had said while the ape-man was still half a mile away; and when he stopped before the gates, they all came and welcomed him.

The captain of the guard, a noble whom Tarzan knew well, escorted him to the palace. "Alextar will be glad to know that you have returned," he said. "Had it not been for you, he might not now be king—or alive. Wait here in this anteroom until I get word to Alextar."

The room and its furnishings were of a type common in the palaces of the king and nobles of Cathne. The low ceiling was supported by a series of engaged columns; carved doors inlaid in mosaics of gold and ivory gave to the corridor and an adjoining apartment; on the stone floor lay some lion-skins and several heavy woolen rugs of simple design; mural decorations depicted battle scenes between the lion men of Cathne and the elephant men of Athne; and above the murals was a frieze of mounted heads: lions, leopards, one huge elephant's head, and several human heads—the heads of warriors, beautifully cured and wearing the ivory head ornaments of nobles of Athne, trophies of the chase and of war.

It was a long time before the captain of the guard returned; and when he did, his face was flushed and troubled, and twenty warriors accompanied him. "I am sorry, Tarzan," he said; "but I have orders to arrest you."

THE ape-man looked at the twenty spears surrounding him and shrugged. If he were either surprised or hurt, he did not show it. Once again he was the wild beast trapped by his hereditary enemy, man; and he would not give man the satisfaction of even being asked to explain. They took his weapons from him and led him to a room on the second floor of the palace directly above the guard-room. It was a better cell than that he had first occupied in Cathne when he had been incarcerated in a dark hole with Phobeg, the temple guard who had stepped on a god's tail and thus merited death; for this room was large, and well lighted by two barred windows.

When they had left him and bolted the door, Tarzan walked to one of the windows and looked down upon one of the palace courtyards for a moment; then he went to the bench that stood against one wall and lay down. Seemingly unconscious of danger, or perhaps contemptuous of it, he slept.

IT was dark when he was awakened by the opening of the door of his cell. A man bearing a lighted torch stood in the doorway. The ape-man arose as the other entered, closing the door behind him. He held the torch high.

"Tarzan!" he exclaimed; and crossing the room, he placed a hand on the other's shoulder—the Cathnean gesture of greeting, of friendship and loyalty.

"I am glad to see you, Gemnon," said the ape-man. "Tell me, are Doria and her father and mother well? And your father, Phordos?"

"They are well, but none too happy. Things here are bad again, as you must have conjectured from the treatment accorded you."

"I knew that something must be wrong," admitted the ape-man; "but what it was, I didn't know—and don't."

"You soon shall," said Gemnon. "Ours is indeed an unhappy country."

"All countries are unhappy where there are men," observed the ape-man. "Men are the stupidest of beasts. But what has happened here? I thought that with the death of Nemone all your troubles were over."

"So did we, but we were wrong. Alextar has proved to be weak, cowardly, ungrateful. Almost immediately after ascending the throne, he fell under the influence of Tomos and his clique; and you know what that means. We are all in disfavor. Tomos is virtually ruler of Cathne, but as yet he has not dared to destroy us. The warriors and the people hate him, and he knows it. If he goes too far they will rise, and that will be the end of Tomos.... But tell me about yourself. What brings you again to Cathne?"

"It is a very long story," replied Tarzan. "In the end a young woman was stolen by two white men. She and the man whom she was to marry were under my protection. I am searching for her. Several days ago I came upon two blacks who had been with the safari of the men who abducted the girl. They described the country in which the safari had been when they deserted. It lay to the southeast of Xarator. That is why I am here. I am going into the country southeast of Xarator in an effort to pick up the trail."

"I think you will not have to search long," said Gemnon. "I believe that I know where your young woman is—not that it will do you or her much good, now that you are a prisoner of Tomos. You must know he has no love for you."

"What makes you think that you know where she is?" asked the ape-man.

"Alextar sends me often to the valley of Thenar to raid the Athneans. It is, of course, the work of Tomos, who hopes that I shall be killed. Very recently I was there. The raid was not very successful, as we were too few. Tomos always sends too few, and they are always nobles he fears and would be rid of. We took only one head. On the way out, we saw a small party of people who were not Athneans. There were four or five slaves, two white men, and a white woman. The white men were fighting. The woman ran toward us, which made us think she wished to escape the two men she was with. We were going to meet her and take the entire party prisoners, when we saw a large body of Athneans coming down the valley on their war elephants. We were too few to engage them; so we ran for the Pass of the Warriors and escaped. I naturally assume that the Athneans captured the young woman and those with her, and that she is now in the city of ivory; but as I said before, the knowledge won't help you much now: Tomos has you."

"And what do you think he will do with me? Has he another Phobeg?"

GEMNON laughed. "I shall never forget how you tossed 'the strongest man in Cathne' about and finally threw him bodily into the laps of the audience. Tomos lost his last obol on that fight—another good reason why he has no love for you. No, I don't think he'll pit you against a man this time—probably a lion. It may even be poison or a dagger—they are surer. But what I am here for tonight is to try to save you. The only trouble is, I have no plan. A friend of mine is captain of the guard tonight—that is how I was able to reach you; but if I were to leave your door unbarred and you escaped, his life would not be worth an obol. Perhaps you can think of a plan."

Tarzan shook his head. "I shall have to know Tomos' plan first. Right now the only plan I have is for you to leave before you get caught in here."

"Isn't there anything that I can do, after all that you did for me? There must be something."

"You might leave your dagger with me. It might come in handy. I can hide it under my loin-cloth."

They talked for a short time longer before Gemnon left, and within a few minutes thereafter Tarzan was asleep. He did not pace his cell, fretting and worrying. His was more the temperament of the wild animal than the man.

CHAPTER VII

Retribution

THE sun is an impartial old devil. He shines with equal brilliance upon the just and the banker, upon the day of a man's wedding, or upon the day of his death. The great African sun, which after all is the same sun that shines on Medicine Hat, shone brilliantly on this new day upon which Tarzan was to die. He was to die because Alextar had decreed it—it had been Tomos' suggestion. The sun shone even upon Tomos; but then the sun is ninety-three million miles away, and that is a long way to see what one is shining on.

They came about eleven o'clock in the morning and took Tarzan from his cell. They did not even bother to bring him food or water. What need for food or drink has a man who is about to die? He was very thirsty; and perhaps, if he had asked, the guards would have given him water; for after all they were common soldiers and not a king's favorites, and therefore more inclined to be generous and humane. The ape-man, however, asked for nothing. It was not because he was consciously too proud; his pride was something instinctive—it prohibited even a suggestion that he might ask a favor of an enemy.

When he was brought out of the palace grounds onto the avenue, the sight that met his eyes apprised him of the fate that had been decreed for him. There was the procession of nobles and warriors, the lion-drawn chariot of the king, and a single great lion held in leash by eight stalwart blacks. Tarzan had seen all this before, that time that he had been the quarry in the Queen's Hunt. Today he was to be the quarry in the King's Hunt, but today he could expect no such miracle as had saved him from the mighty jaws of Belthar upon that other occasion.

The same crowds of citizens lined the sides of the avenue; and when the procession moved toward the Bridge of Gold and out toward the Field of the Lions, the crowds moved with it. It was a good-natured crowd, such as one might see milling toward the gates at a Cub-Giant game or the Army-Navy classic.

They had taken no chances when they brought Tarzan from his cell. Twenty spearmen betokened the respect in which they held him. Now they chained him to Alextar's chariot, and the parade was under way.

Out upon the Field of the Lions, the procession halted, and the long gantlet of warriors was formed down which the quarry was to be pursued by the lion. The ape-man was unchained, and wagers were being laid as to the point in the gantlet at which the lion would overtake and drag down its victim; the hunting lion was being brought up to scent the quarry. Tomos was gloating. Alextar appeared nervous—he was afraid of lions; he would never have gone on a hunt of his own volition. Tarzan watched him. He saw a young man in his late twenties with nervous, roving eyes, a weak chin and a cruel mouth. There was nothing about him to remind one that he was the brother of the gorgeous Nemone. He looked at Tarzan, but his eyes fell before the steady gaze of the ape-man.

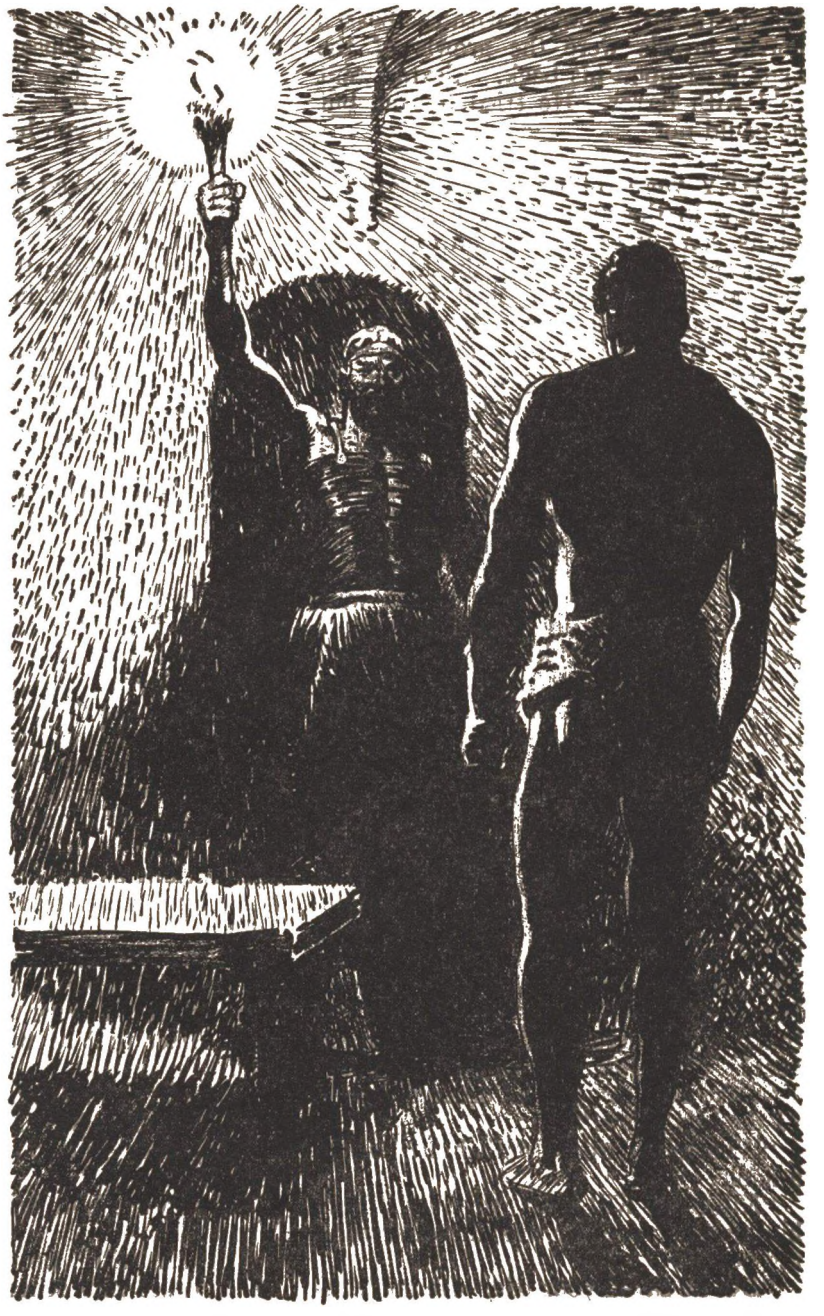
"Hurry!" Alextar snapped querulously. "We are bored."

They did hurry, and in their haste it happened. In a fraction of a second the comparatively peaceful scene was transformed to one of panic and chaos.

BY accident one of the men who held the hunting lion in leash slipped the beast's collar, and with an angry roar the trained killer struck down those nearest him and charged the line of spearmen standing between him and the crowd of spectators. He was met by a dozen spears while the unarmed citizenry fled in panic, trampling the weaker beneath their feet.

The nobles screamed commands. Alextar stood in his chariot, his knees shaking, and begged some one to save him. "A hundred thousand drachmas to the man who kills the beast!" he cried. "Anything he may ask shall be granted!"

No one seemed to pay any attention to him. All who could were looking after their own safety. As a matter of fact, he was in no danger at the time; for the lion was engaged elsewhere.



Tarzan was awakened by the opening of the door. He arose as a man entered, bearing a torch. "Tarzan!" he exclaimed.

The jabbing spears further enraged the maddened beast; yet for some reason he did not follow up his attack upon the warriors; instead he wheeled suddenly and then charged straight for the chariot of the king. Now, indeed, did Alextar have reason to be terrified. He would have run, but his knees gave beneath him so that he sat down upon the seat of his golden vehicle. He looked about helplessly. Some of his noble guard had run to join in the attack upon the lion. Tomos had fled in the opposite direction. Only the quarry remained.

Alextar saw the man whip a dagger from his loin-cloth and crouch in the path of the charging lion. He heard savage growls roll from human lips. The lion was upon him. Alextar screamed; but fascinated, his terror-filled eyes clung to the savage scene before him. He saw the lion rise to make the kill, and then—it happened so quickly that he could scarcely follow it.

Tarzan stooped and dodged beneath the great forepaws outstretched to seize him; then he closed in and swung to the lion's back, one great arm encircling the

shaggy throat. Mingled with the beast's horrid growls were the growls of the man-beast upon his back. Alextar went cold with terror. He tried to run, but he could not.

THEY were rolling upon the ground now in the dust of the Field of the Lions, sometimes the man on top, sometimes the lion; now and again the dagger Gemnon had supplied flashed in the sunlight, flashed as the blade drove into the side of the frantic beast. The two were ringed now by eager spearmen ready to thrust a point into the heart of the lion, but no chance presented that did not endanger the life of the man. But at last the end came. With a final supreme effort to escape the clutches of the ape-man, the lion collapsed upon the ground.

Tarzan leaped to his feet. For a moment he surveyed the surrounding warriors with the blazing eyes of a beast of prey at bay upon its kill; then he placed a foot upon the carcass of the hunting lion, raised his face to the heavens, and from his great chest rose the challenge of the bull ape.

The warriors shrank away as that weird and hideous cry shattered the brief new silence of the Field of the Lions. Alextar trembled anew. He had feared the lion, but he feared the man more. Had he not had him brought here to be killed by the very lion he had himself dispatched? And he was only a beast. His growls and his terrible cry proved that. What mercy could he, Alextar, expect? Why, this man would kill him!

"Take him away!" he ordered feebly. "Take him away!"

"What shall we do with him?" asked a noble.

"Kill him! Kill him! Anything! Take him away!" Alextar was almost screaming now.

"But he saved your life," the noble reminded.

"Huh? What? Oh, well—take him back to his cell. Later I shall know what to do with him. Can't you see I am tired and don't wish to be bothered?"

The noble hung his head in shame as he ordered the guard to escort Tarzan back to his cell; and he walked at Tarzan's side, where a noble does not walk except with one of his own caste.

"What you did," he remarked on the way back to the city, "deserves better reward than this."

"I seem to recall hearing him offer anything he wished to the man who killed the lion," said the ape-man. "That and a hundred thousand drachmas."

"Yes, I heard him."

"He seems to have a short memory."

"What would you have asked him?"

"Nothing."

The noble looked at him in surprise. "You would ask for nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Is there nothing that you want?"

"Yes; but I wouldn't ask anything of an enemy."

"I am not your enemy."

Tarzan looked at the man, and a shadow of a smile lit his grim visage. "I have had no water since yesterday, nor any food."

"Well," the noble promised, laughing, "you shall have them both—and without asking for them."

ON their return to the city Tarzan was put in another cell; this one was on the second floor of a wing of the palace that overlooked the avenue. It was not long before the door was unbolted and a warrior entered with food and water. As he placed them on the end of the bench he looked at Tarzan admiringly.

"I was there and saw you kill the king's hunting lion," he said. "It was such a thing as one may see only once in a lifetime. I saw you fight with Phobeg before Nemone, the queen. That too was something to have seen. You spared Phobeg's life when you might have killed him, when all were screaming for the kill. After that he would have died for you."

"Yes, I know," replied the ape-man. "Is Phobeg still alive?"

"Oh, very much; and he is still a temple guard."

"If you see him, tell him that I wish him well."

"That I will," promised the warrior. "I shall see him soon. Now I must be going." He came close to Tarzan then, and spoke in a whisper. "Drink no wine; and whoever comes, keep your back to the wall and be prepared to fight." Then he was gone.

"'Drink no wine,'" mused Tarzan. Wine, he knew, was the medium in which poison was customarily administered in Cathne; and if he kept his back to the wall, no one could stab him from behind. Good advice—the advice of a friend who might have overheard something that prompted it. Tarzan knew that he had many friends among the warriors of the City of Gold.

He walked to one of the windows and looked out upon the avenue. He saw a lion striding majestically toward the center of the city, paying no attention to the pedestrians or being noticed by them. It was one of the many tame lions that roamed the streets of Cathne by day; rarely did they attack anyone.

He saw a small gathering of people upon the opposite side of the avenue. They were talking together earnestly, often glancing toward the palace. Pedestrians stopped to listen and joined the crowd. A warrior came from the palace and stopped and spoke to them; then they looked up at the window where Tarzan stood. The warrior was he who had brought food to Tarzan.

When the crowd recognized the ape-man, it commenced to cheer. People were coming from both directions, some of them running. There were many warriors among them. The crowd and the tumult grew. When darkness came, torches were brought. A detachment of warriors came from the palace. It was commanded by a noble who sought to disperse the gathering.

Some one yelled, *"Free Tarzan!"* and the whole crowd took it up, like a chant. A huge man came, bearing a torch. In its light Tarzan recognized the man as Phobeg the temple guard. He waved his torch at Tarzan, and cried: "Shame, Alextar! Shame!" And the crowd took that cry up and chanted it in unison.

The noble and the guardsmen sought to quiet and disperse them, and then a fight ensued in which heads were broken and men were slashed with swords and run through with spears. By this time the mob had grown until it filled the avenue. Its temper was ugly, and when once blood was spilled, it went berserk. Before it the palace guard was helpless, and those who survived were glad to retreat to the safety of the palace.

Now some one shouted: *"Down with Tomos! Death to Tomos!"* And the hoarse voice of the mob seized upon this new slogan. It seemed to stir the men to new action, for now in a body they moved down upon the palace gates.

AS they hammered and shoved upon the stout portals, a man at the outer fringe of the mob shouted: "The hunting lions! Alextar has turned his hunting lions upon us! Death to Alextar!"

Tarzan looked down the avenue toward the royal stables; and there indeed came fully fifty lions, held in leash by their keepers. Excited by the vast crowd, irritated by the noise, they tugged at their chains, while the night trembled to their thunderous roars; but the crowd, aroused now to demoniacal madness, was undaunted. Yet what could it do against this show of savage force? It started to fall back, slowly, cursing and growling, shouting defiance, calling for Tarzan's release.

Involuntarily, a low growl came from the chest of the ape-man, a growl of protest that he was helpless to aid those who would befriend him. He tested the bars in the window at which he stood. To his strength and his weight they bent inward a little; then he threw all that he had of both upon a single bar. It bent inward and pulled from its sockets in the frame, the soft iron giving to his giant strength. That was enough! One by one in quick succession the remaining bars were dragged out and thrown upon the floor.

LEANING from the window, Tarzan looked down. Below him was an enclosed courtyard. It was empty. A wall screened it from the avenue beyond. He glanced into the avenue, and saw that the crowd was still falling back, the lions advancing. So intent were all upon the lions that no one saw the ape-man slip through the window and drop into the courtyard. Opposite him was a postern gate, barred upon the inside. Through it he stepped into the avenue just in front of the retreating crowd, between it and the lions.

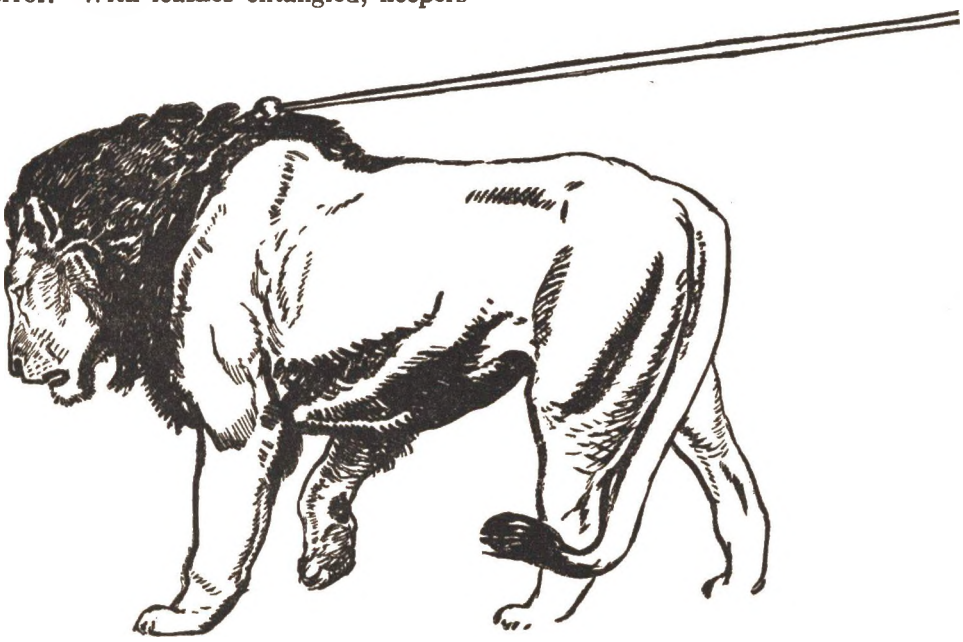
A dozen saw and recognized him at once; and a great shout went up, a shout of defiance with a new note in it—a note of renewed confidence and elation.

Tarzan seized a torch from one of the citizens. "Bring your torches!" he commanded. "Torches and spears in the front line!" Then he advanced to meet the lions, and the men with the torches and the spears rushed forward to the front line. All that they had needed was a leader.

All wild animals fear fire. The king of beasts is no exception. The hunting lions of Alextar, king of Cathne, shrank back when blazing torches were pushed into their faces. Their keepers, shouting encouragement, cursing, were helpless. One of the lions, his mane ablaze, turned suddenly to one side, fouling another lion, causing him to wheel in terror and confusion and bolt back toward the stables. In doing so, they crossed the leashes of other lions, became entangled

in them, and tore them from the hands of the keepers. The freed lions hesitated only long enough to maul the keepers that chanced to be in their way; then they too galloped back along the avenue toward the stables.

Emboldened by this success, the torch-bearers fell upon the remaining lions, beating them with fire until the beasts were mad with terror; and Tarzan, in the forefront, urged them on. Pandemonium reigned. The hoarse shouts of the mob mingled with the roars of the carnivores and the screams of stricken men. By now the lions were frantic with terror. With leashes entangled, keepers



down, manes afire, they could stand no more. Those that had not already broken and run, did so now. The mob was for pursuing, but Tarzan stopped them. With raised hand he quieted them after a moment.

"Let the lions go," he counseled. "There is bigger game. I am going after Alextar and Tomos."

"And I am going with you," a big voice boomed beside him.

Tarzan turned and looked at the speaker. It was Phobeg, the temple guard.

"Good!" said the ape-man.

"We are going after Alextar and Tomos!" cried Phobeg.

A roar of approval rose from the crowd. "The gates!" some cried. "To the gates! To the gates!"

"There is an easier way," said Tarzan. "Come!"

They followed him to the postern gate that he knew was unbarred, and through it into the palace grounds. Here, Tarzan knew his way well; for he had been here both as a prisoner and a guest of Nemone, the queen.

ALEXTAR and a few of his nobles were dining. The King was frightened; not only could he hear the shouts of the mob, but he was kept constantly informed of all that was occurring outside the palace, and knew that the hunting lions he had been certain would disperse the rioters had been turned back and were in flight. He had sent every available fighting-man in the palace to the gates when the shouts of the crowd indicated that it was about to storm them; and though assured by his nobles that the mob could not hope to overcome his warriors, even if the gates failed to hold against them, he was still terrified.

"It is your fault, Tomos," he whined. "You said to lock the wild man up, and now look what has happened! The people want to dethrone me. They may even kill me. What shall I do? What can I do?"

Tomos was in no better state of nerves than the King, for he had heard the people calling for his death. He cast about for some plan that might save him, and presently he thought of one.

"Send for the wild man," he said, "and set him free. Give him money and

honors. Send word at once to the gates that you have done this."

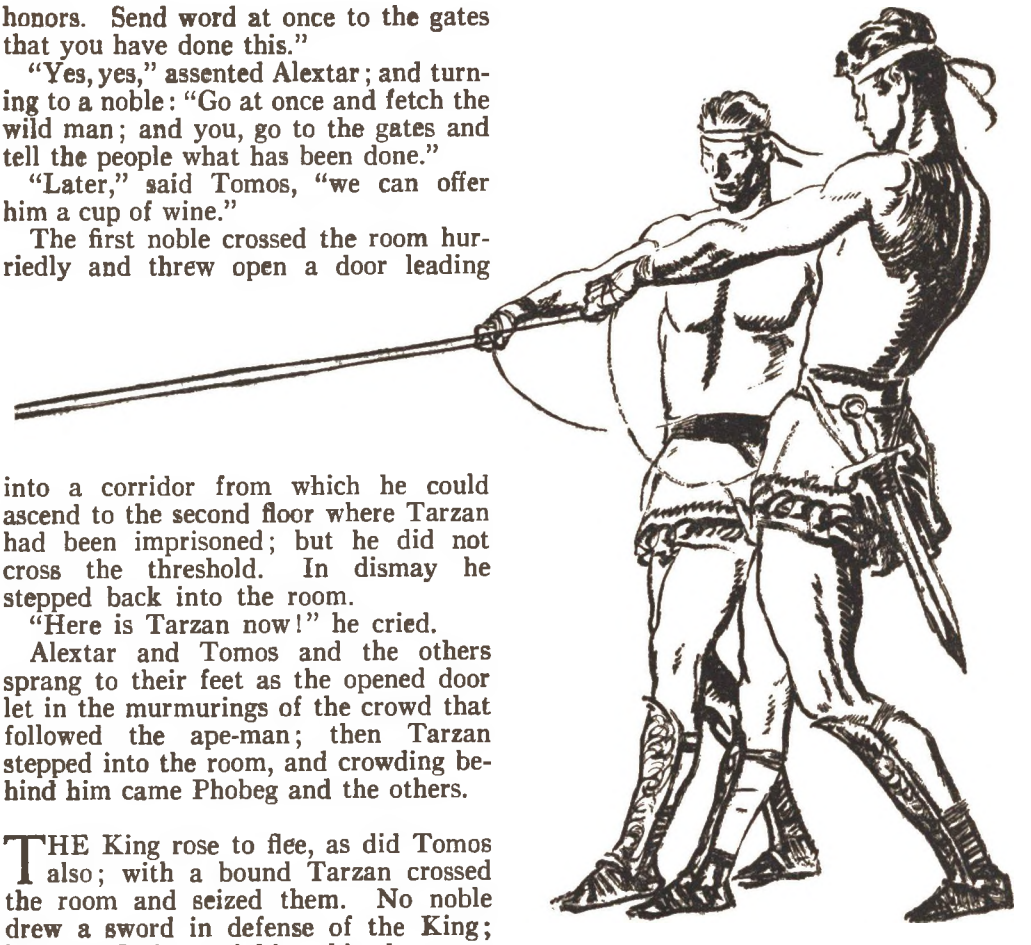
"Yes, yes," assented Alextar; and turning to a noble: "Go at once and fetch the wild man; and you, go to the gates and tell the people what has been done."

"Later," said Tomos, "we can offer him a cup of wine."

The first noble crossed the room hurriedly and threw open a door leading into a corridor from which he could ascend to the second floor where Tarzan had been imprisoned; but he did not cross the threshold. In dismay he stepped back into the room.

"Here is Tarzan now!" he cried.

Alextar and Tomos and the others sprang to their feet as the opened door let in the murmurings of the crowd that followed the ape-man; then Tarzan stepped into the room, and crowding behind him came Phobeg and the others.



THE King rose to flee, as did Tomos also; with a bound Tarzan crossed the room and seized them. No noble drew a sword in defense of the King; like rats fleeing a sinking ship they were ready to desert Alextar. So great was his terror that the man was in a state of collapse. He went to his knees and begged for his life.

"You do not understand," he cried. "I had just given orders to release you. I was going to give you money—I will give you money—I will make you a lion-man—I will give you a palace, slaves, everything."

"You should have thought of all this on the Field of the Lions today; now it is too late. Not that I would have what you offer," the ape-man added, "but it might have saved your life temporarily, and your throne, too, because then your people would not have grown so angry and disgusted."

"What are you going to do to me?" demanded the King.

"I am going to do nothing to you," replied Tarzan. "What your people do to you is none of my concern; but if they don't make Thudos king, they are fools."

Now, Thudos was the first of the nobles, as Tarzan knew; and in his veins flowed better blood from an older line than the king of Cathne could claim. He was a famous old warrior, loved and respected by the people; and when the crowd in the room heard Tarzan, they shouted for Thudos; and those in the corridor carried it back out into the avenue, and the word spread through the city.

Alextar heard, and his face went ashen white.

He must have gone quite mad—as his sister had, before him. He came slowly to his feet and faced Tomos. "You have done this to me," he said. "For years you kept me in prison. You ruined my sister's life—you and M'duze. You have ruined my life, and now you have lost me my throne. But you shall never ruin another life!" And with that he drew his sword so quickly that none could stay him, and brought the blade down with all his strength on Tomos' skull, cleaving it to the nose.

As the body slumped to his feet, he broke into maniacal laughter, while those in the room stood stunned and silent;

then, as quickly as he had done before, he placed the point of his sword at his heart and before anyone could prevent him, threw himself forward upon it.

Thus died Alextar, last of the mad rulers of Cathne.

CHAPTER VIII

Athne

THE main gate of Athne, the city of ivory, looks toward the south; for in that direction runs the trail that leads to Cathne, the city of gold, the stronghold of the hereditary enemies of the Athneans. In that direction ride the warriors and the nobles of Athne seeking women and heads and other loot; from that direction come the raiding parties from Cathne, also seeking women and heads and other loot; so the main gate of Athne is strong and well guarded. It is surmounted by two squat towers in which warriors watch by day and by night.

Before the gate is a great level plain where elephants are trained and where the warriors of Cathne drill upon their mighty mounts. It is dusty, and nothing grows there but a sturdy cynodon; and even that survives the trampling pads of the pachyderms only in scattered patches. The fields of the Athneans lie north of the city, and there the slaves labor; so one might approach the city from the south without glimpsing a sign of human life.

It was midafternoon. The hot sun beat down upon the watch-towers. The warriors, languid with the heat, gamed at dice—those who were not on watch. Presently one of the latter spoke.

"A man comes from the south," he said.

"How many?" asked one of the players.

"I said *a* man. I see but one."

"Then we do not have to give the alarm. But who could come alone to Athne? Is it a man from Cathne?"

"There have been deserters come to us before. Perhaps this is one."

"He is yet too far off to see plainly," said the warrior who had discovered the stranger, "but he does not look like a Cathnean. His dress seems strange."

He went to the inner side of the tower then, and leaning over the edge of the parapet, called the captain of the guard. An officer came from the interior of the tower and looked up.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Some one is coming from the south," explained the warrior.

The officer nodded and mounted the ladder leading to the tower's top. The warriors stopped their game then, and all went to the southern parapet to have a look at the stranger. He was nearer now, and they could see that he wore garments strange to them.

"He is no Cathnean," said the officer, "but he is either a fool or a brave man to come thus alone to Athne."

As Stanley Wood neared the gates of Athne, he saw the warriors in the watch-towers observing him; and when he had come quite close, they challenged him, but in a language he could not understand.

"Friend," he said, and raised his hand in the peace sign.

Presently the gate opened, and an officer and several warriors came out. They tried to talk with him; and when they found that neither could understand the other, they formed about him and escorted him through the gateway.

He found himself at the end of an avenue lined with low buildings occupied by shops. The warriors who had brought him into the city were white, as were most of the people on the avenue, although there were some negroes. Everyone appeared much interested in him; and he was soon surrounded by a large crowd, all talking at once, pointing, feeling of his clothes and weapons. The latter were soon taken from him by his guard; the officer shouted some commands, and the warriors pushed the people out of the way and started up the avenue with Wood.

He felt very uncomfortable and helpless because of his inability to converse with those about him. There were so many questions he wished to ask. Gonfala might be in this city, and yet he might never know it if he could not ask anyone about her who could understand him. He determined that the first thing he must do was to learn the language of these people. He wondered if they would be friendly. The fact that they were white gave him hope.

WHO could they be? Their garb, so different from anything modern, gave him no clue. They might have stepped from the pages of ancient history, so archaic were their weapons and their raiment; but he could not place them exactly. Where did they originate, these strange, rather handsome men and wom-

en? How and when did they reach this unknown valley in Africa? Could they be descendants of some Atlantean colonists stranded here after the submergence of their continent?

Vain speculations. No matter who they were, they were here; and he was either their prisoner or their guest—the former, he was inclined to believe. One did not usually surround a guest by armed warriors.

AS they proceeded along the avenue, Wood observed closely the raiment of his escort and of the people whom they passed. The officer in charge was a handsome black-haired fellow who strode along apparently oblivious of those they passed; yet there was nothing offensive about his manner. If there were social castes here, Wood hazarded a safe guess that this man was of the nobility. The head-band that confined his hair supported a carved ivory ornament at the center of his forehead, an ornament that was shaped like a concave curved trowel, the point of which projected above the top of the man's head and curved forward. He wore wristlets and anklets of long, flat strips of ivory laid close together and fastened around his limbs by leather thongs that were laced through holes piercing the strips near their tops and bottoms. Sandals of elephant-hide encasing his feet were supported by leather thongs fastened to the bottoms of his anklets. On each arm, below the shoulder, was an ivory disk upon which was a carved device; about his neck was a band of smaller ivory disks elaborately carved; and from the lowest of these a strap ran down to a leather habergeon, which was also supported by shoulder-straps. Depending from each side of his head-band was another ivory disk of large size, above which was a smaller disk, the former covering his ears. Heavy, curved, wedge-shaped pieces of ivory were held, one upon each shoulder, by the same straps that supported his habergeon. He was armed with a dagger and a short sword.

The warriors who accompanied him were similarly garbed, but less elaborately in the matter of carved ivory; and their habergeons and sandals were of coarser leather more roughly fabricated. Upon the back of each was a small shield. The common warriors carried short, heavy spears as well as swords and daggers. From their arms, Wood concluded that what he had first supposed to be ivory ornaments were definitely protective armor.

The American was conducted to a large walled enclosure in the center of the city. Here stood the most elaborate buildings he had seen. There was a large central structure and many smaller buildings, the whole set in a huge park-like garden of considerable beauty.

Just inside the gate was a small building before which lolled a score of warriors. Within, an officer sat at a table; to him Wood was taken, and here the officer who had brought him evidently made his report. What passed between them Wood could not, of course, understand; but when the first officer left, he realized that he had been delivered into the custody of the other.

While similarly garbed, this second officer did not give the impression of birth or breeding that had been so noticeable in the first. He was a burly, uncouth-appearing fellow with much less in his appearance to recommend him than many of the common warriors Wood had seen. When left alone with his prisoner, he commenced to shout questions at him; and when he found that Wood could not understand him, nor could he understand Wood, he pounded on the table angrily.

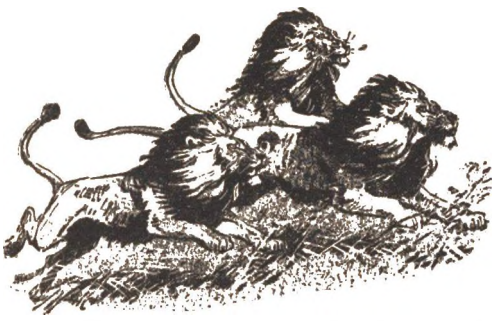
FINALLY he summoned warriors to whom he issued instructions, and once again Wood was taken under escort. This time he was led to an enclosure toward the rear of the grounds not far from a quite large one-storied building, with the interior of which he was destined to become well acquainted.

He was thrust into an enclosure along the north side of which was an open shed in which were some fifty men. A high fence or stockade formed the remaining three sides of the quadrangle, the outside of which was patrolled by warriors; and Wood realized now that he was definitely a prisoner, and far from being either an important or favored one, for the other inmates of the stockade were for the most part filthy, unkempt fellows, both white and black.

As Wood approached the enclosure, every eye was upon him; and he knew that they were commenting upon him. From the tone of an occasional laugh, he judged that he was the butt of many a rough quip and he sensed antagonism.

Then he heard his name called by some one in the assemblage in the shed.

Immediately two men separated themselves from the others and came to meet



him. They were Spike and Troll. A wave of anger swept through the American as the implication of their presence here pointed them out as the abductors of Gonfala.

His face must have betrayed his emotions as he advanced toward them; for Spike raised his hand defensively.

"Hold on, now," he cried. "Gettin' hostile aint goin' to get us no place. We're in a hell of a fix here, an' gettin' hostile aint goin' to help matters none. It'll be better for all of us if we work together."

"Where's Gonfala?" demanded Wood. "What have you done with her?"

"They took her away from us the day they captured us," said Troll. "We aint seen her since."

"We understand she's in the palace," said Spike. "They say the big guy here has fell for her. He's got her an' the Gonfal—the dirty bounder!"

"What did you steal her for?" Wood demanded. "If either one of you harmed her—"

"Harm her!" exclaimed Troll. "You don't think I'd never let nobody harm my sister, do you?"

Spike winked behind Troll's back and tapped his forehead. "They aint nobody harmed her," he assured Wood, "unless it was done after they took her away from us. And for why did we bring 'er along with us? We had to—we couldn't work the Gonfal without 'er."

"That damned stone!" muttered Wood.

"I think they's a curse on it myself," agreed Spike. "It aint never brought nobody nothin' but bad luck. Look at me and Troll: wot we got for our pains? We lost the emerald; now we lost the Gonfal, an' all we do is shovel dirt out o' the elephant-barns all day, an' wait to see w'ich way they's goin' to croak us."

As they talked, they were surrounded by other prisoners prompted by curiosity to inspect the latest recruit. They questioned Wood; but as he could not understand them nor they him, they directed their questions upon Spike, who replied in a strange jargon of African dialects, signs, and the few words of the Athnean language he had picked up. It was a wholly remarkable means of conveying thoughts, but it apparently served its purpose admirably.

AS Wood stood there, the object of interest, he was rapidly considering the attitude he should assume toward Spike and Troll. The men were scoundrels of the worst kind, and could command only his bitterest enmity. For the wrong that they had done Gonfala, it seemed to Wood that they deserved death; yet they were the only men here with whom he could talk, the only ones with whom he had any interests in common. His judgment told him that Spike had been right when he said that they should work together. For the time being, then, he would put aside his just anger against them and throw his lot in with them in the hope that in some way they might be of service to Gonfala.

"They wants to know who you are an' where you comes from," said Spike; "an' I told 'em you come from a country a thousand times bigger than Athne, an' that you was a juke or somethin', like their officers. They's one of 'em in here with us. See that big bloke over there standin' with his arms folded?" He pointed to a tall, fine-looking fellow who had not come forward with the others. "He's a toff, or I never seen one. He don't never have no truck with these scrubs; but he took a shine to Troll and me, an' is learnin' us his language."

"I'd like to meet him," said Wood, for his first interest now was to learn the language of these people.

"Awright, come on over. He aint a bad bloke. He's wot they calls an elephant-man. That's somethin' like bein' a juke at home. They had some sort of a revolution here a few months ago, an' killed off a lot of these here elephant-men, wot didn't escape or join the revolutionists. But this bloke wasn't killed. They say it was because he was a good guy an' everybody liked him, even the revolutionists. He wouldn't join 'em; so they stuck him in here to do chamber-work for the elephants. These here revolutionists is like the gangsters in your country. Anyway, they's a bad lot, always makin' trouble for decent people an' stealin' wot they aint got brains enough to make for themselves. Well, here we are. —Valthor, shake

hands with my old friend and buddy, Stanley Wood."

Valthor looked puzzled, but he took Wood's outstretched hand.

"Cripes!" exclaimed Spike. "I'm always forgettin' you don't know no English." Then he couched the introduction in the bastard language he had picked up.

Valthor smiled and acknowledged the introduction.

"He says he's glad to meetcha," translated Spike.

"Tell him it's fifty-fifty," said the American, "and ask him if he'll help me learn his language."

When Spike had translated this speech, Valthor smiled and nodded, and there immediately began an association that not only developed into a genuine friendship during the ensuing weeks but gave Wood a sufficient knowledge of the Athnean language to permit intercourse with all with whom he came in contact.

During this time he worked with the other slaves in the great elephant-stables of Phoros, the dictator who had usurped the crown of Athne after the revolution. The food was poor and insufficient, the work arduous, and the treatment he received harsh; for the officers who were put in charge of the slaves had been men of the lowest class prior to the revolution, and found a vent for many an inhibition when given a little authority.

DURING this time he heard nothing of Gonfala's fate, for naturally little news of the palace reached the slaves in the stables. Whether she lived or not, he could not know; and this state of constant uncertainty and anxiety told even more heavily upon him than did the hardships he was forced to undergo.

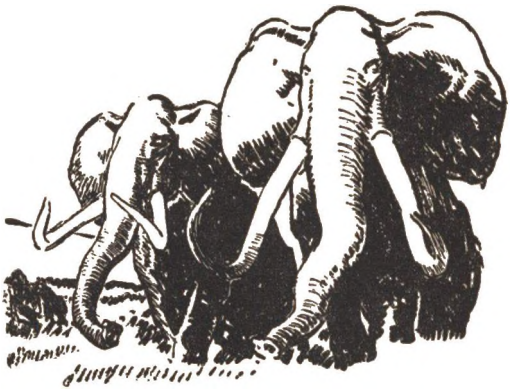
"If she is beautiful," Valthor had told him, "I think you need have no fear for her life. We do not take the lives of beautiful women—even the Erythra would not do that."

"Who are the Erythra?" asked Wood.

"The men who overthrew the government and placed Phoros on the throne of Zygo, King of Athne."

"She is very beautiful," said Wood. "I wish to God she were not so beautiful!"

"Perhaps it will do her no harm. If I know Menofra, and I think I do, your friend will be safe from the attentions of Phoros at least; and if I know Phoros, he will not let any one else have her if she is beautiful. He will wait—and hope that something will happen to Menofra."



"And who might Menofra be?"

"Above all else she is a she-devil for jealousy, and she is the wife of Phoros."

This was slight comfort, but it was the best that was vouchsafed Wood. He could only wait and hope. There was little upon which to base a plan of action. Valthor had told him that there might be a counter-revolution to unseat Phoros and return Zygo to the throne; but in the slaves' compound there was little information upon which to base even a conjecture as to when, if ever, this might take place; for there was no means of communication between those confined there and Zygo's sympathizers in the city, while Zygo and most of his loyal nobles and retainers were hiding in the mountains to which they had escaped.

Among other duties that had fallen to the lot of Wood was the exercising of the elephant that was his particular charge. He had been chosen for this work, along with Valthor, Spike and Troll, because of his greater intelligence than the ordinary run of slaves in the compound. He had learned quickly, and rode almost daily on the plain south of the city under a heavy escort of warriors.

They had returned to the stables one day from the field after the exercise period, which was always early in the morning, and were brushing and washing their huge mounts, when they were ordered to remount and ride out.

On the way to the plain they learned from the accompanying warriors that they were being sent out to capture a wild elephant that had been damaging the fields.

"They say he's a big brute, and ugly," offered one of the warriors; "and if he's as bad as all that, we won't all of us come back."

"Under Zygo, the nobles rode out to capture wild elephants—and not the slaves," said Valthor.

The warrior rode his mount closer to the Athnean noble. "They are all too drunk to ride," he said, lowering his voice. "If they were just a little drunk, they might ride. If they were not drunk at all they would not have the nerve. We warriors are sick of them. Most of us would like to ride again under real elephant-men like your nobleness."

"Perhaps you will," said Valthor, "—if you have the nerve."

"Hi-yah!" shouted a warrior, ahead.

"They've sighted him," Valthor explained to Wood, riding at his side.

PRESENTLY they too saw the quarry emerging from a bamboo forest at the edge of the plain.

Valthor whistled. "He's a big brute, and if he's as ugly as they say we should have some real sport. But it's murder to send inexperienced slaves against him. Watch out for yourself, Wood. Just keep out of his way, no matter what the guards tell you to do. Make believe you can't control your elephant. Look at him! He's coming right for us. He's a bad one, all right—not a bit afraid of us either, by Dyaus!"

"I never saw a larger one," said Wood.

"Nor I," admitted Valthor, "though I've seen many an elephant in my time. He's got a blemish though—look at that tusk. It's much darker than the other. If it weren't for that, he'd make a king's elephant, all right."

"What are we supposed to do?" asked Wood. "I don't see how we could capture that fellow if he didn't want us to."

"They'll have some females ridden close to him, and try to work him gently toward the city and into the big corral just inside the gate. Look at that, now!"

Up went the big elephant's trunk, and he trumpeted angrily. It was evident that he was about to charge. The officer in command shouted orders to the slaves to ride the females toward him, but the officer did not advance. Like the other three with him, he was an Erythros and not of the noble class. Not having their pride or their code of honor, he could order others into danger while he remained in comparative safety.

Some of the slaves moved forward, but with no great show of enthusiasm; then the great beast charged. He barged right through the line of advancing females, scattering them, and charged for the bull ridden by the officer in command.

Screaming commands, the officer sought to turn his mount and escape; but the bull he rode was a trained fighting elephant which knew little about running away; besides, his harem of cows was there; and he was not going to relinquish that to any strange bull without a battle. So, torn between his natural inclinations and his habit of obedience to the commands of his rider, he neither faced the oncoming bull nor turned tail toward him; but swung halfway around, broadside, in his indecision. And in this position the great stranger struck him with almost the momentum of a runaway locomotive.

Down he went, pitching the officer heavily to the ground; but the fellow was up instantly and running—by far the stupidest thing he could have done; for almost any animal will pursue a thing that flees.

Hoarse screams for help mingled with the trumpeting of the wild bull as the latter bore down upon his fleeing victim. Valthor urged the female he rode into a trot in an effort to head off the charge and distract the bull's attention, and Wood followed behind him—just why, he could not have explained.

Valthor was too late. The bull overtook the terrified man, tossed him three times, and then trampled him into the dust of the plain until he was only a darker spot on the barren ground.

It was then that Valthor and Wood arrived. Wood expected a repetition of the scene he had just witnessed, with either himself or Valthor as the victim—but nothing of the kind happened.

THE Athnean rode his cow quietly close to the great bull, which stood complacently switching his tail, all the madness having apparently passed out of him with the killing of his victim; and Wood, following the example of Valthor, closed in gently on the other side.

All this time Valthor was chanting in a low singsong monotone a wordless song used by the elephant-men of Athne to soothe the great beasts; and now to the cadence of his chant he added words of instruction to Wood so that the two might work in harmony to bring the wild bull to the city and into the corral.

Between the two cows, which knew their parts well, the bull was guided to captivity; while the officers, the warriors, and the slaves trailed behind, happy and relieved that they had not been called upon to risk their lives.

Valthor already held the respect of his fellow prisoners as well as of the

warriors who guarded them, and now Wood took his place as a person of importance among them.

That word of the manner of the capture of the wild elephant had reached the palace Wood had proof the following day when an officer and a detail of warriors came to take him into the presence of Phoros.

"He wishes to see the fellow who helped Valthor capture the rogue," said the officer.

Valthor leaned close and whispered: "He has some other reason. He would not send for you just for that."

CHAPTER IX

Phoros

NIGHT was creeping stealthily out of its lair in the east, bringing its following of mystery and dark deeds and strange beasts that are not seen by day. Though the sun still colored the western sky with a fading tinge of red, it was already dark and gloomy in the Pass of the Warriors that leads from the valley of Onthar to the valley of Thenar.

In Onthar is Cathne, the city of gold; in Thenar is Athne, the city of ivory; in the Pass of the Warriors was Tarzan of the Apes; alone, he was going to Athne.

Gemnon had tried to dissuade him from going without an escort; and so had Thudos, whom he had helped to seat upon the throne of Cathne.

"If you are not back within a reasonable time," Thudos told him, "I shall send an army to Athne to bring you back."

"If I am not back in a reasonable time," suggested the ape-man, "it may be because I shall be dead."

"Perhaps," agreed Thudos, "but they will not kill you unless they have to. They are always hard pressed to find enough slaves to carry on the work of the city, and they'd never destroy such a fine specimen as you. Like us, they also need men to fight in the arena."

"You would like that better than scrubbing elephants," said Gemnon.

Tarzan shook his head. "I do not like to fight nor to kill, and there are worse things than scrubbing elephants."

And so he had gone, choosing to travel so that he would not have to cross the valley of Thenar by day, as he wished to approach and reconnoiter Athne unseen. That both valleys, especially Onthar, harbored many wild lions was a hazard he had to accept; but, except for the actual crossing of Thenar, he could take advantage of the protection of forests practically all of the way.

The hazard was great, for the lions of Thenar were not all ordinary lions. Many of them were escaped hunting lions of Cathne which had been often fed with human flesh and trained to hunt men. For generations they had been bred for speed and endurance; so that in all the world there were no such formidable beasts of prey as these.

As night fell, Tarzan heard the roars of the great cats in the valley he had quitted. With every sense alert he passed through the Pass of the Warriors and entered the valley of Thenar. As yet he had heard no lion roar coming from that direction. The wind was in his face. It brought no scent-spoor of Numa, but he knew that it was carrying his scent back in the direction of the hunting lions of Cathne.

He increased his speed, for though he had killed many a lion he knew that no living creature could hope to survive an attack by these beasts, which often hunted in packs.

He was out now upon the open plain of Thenar. He could still hear the roaring of the lions in Onthar. Suddenly they took on a new note. He knew it well. It told him that they had picked up the trail of some creature and marked it as their quarry. Was it his trail?

A FULL moon rose above the mountains ahead of him, lighting the valley floor, revealing the dark strip of forest far ahead. The savage voices of the lions grew louder, reverberating in the canyon called the Pass of the Warriors, through which he had just come; then Tarzan knew that the hunting lions of Cathne were on his trail.

You or I could not have counted the lions by their voices; but to Tarzan the distinctive quality or character of each voice was discernible, and he knew that five lions were loping relentlessly to the kill. Once more he quickened his pace.

He judged that the lions were about a mile in rear of him, the forest about three miles ahead. If no obstacle intervened he could reach the forest ahead of the lions; but he was crossing an unfamiliar terrain known to him only by the descriptions given him by Gemnon and Thudos, and he knew that there might easily be some peculiarity of the topography of the floor of the valley that would delay him

—for instance, a deep dry wash with overhanging banks of soft dirt.

On he ran, his great chest rising and falling regularly, his heart-beats scarcely accelerated by the exertion; but the lions came even more swiftly. He knew from the sound of their voices that they were gaining on him. Knowing them, even as he did, he marveled at their endurance, so unusual in lions; and was amazed at the results that could be attained by careful breeding. Now, for the first time, he broke into a run; for he knew that the moment they sighted him they would come on much faster than he could run for any great distance. It then would be just a question as to which could maintain the greatest speed for the longest distance.

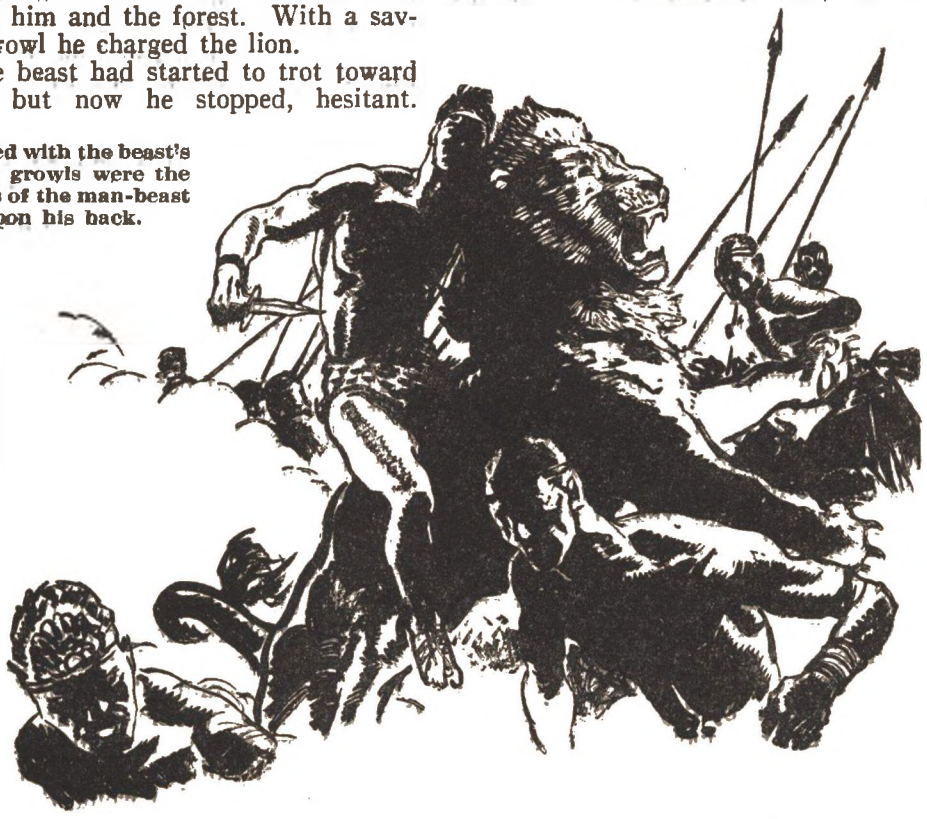
No washes intervened nor other obstacle, and he came at last to within half a mile of the forest with sufficient distance and time to spare to assure him a reasonable margin of safety; then the unforeseen occurred. From the shadows of the forest a great lion stepped into view before him.

Those who would live long in the jungle must needs think quickly. Tarzan weighed the entire situation without losing a stride. The forest was his goal; one lion was less of a menace than five, and the one lion was all that stood between him and the forest. With a savage growl he charged the lion.

The beast had started to trot toward him; but now he stopped, hesitant. Would he hold his ground or would he break? Much depended upon whether he was an ordinary wild lion or a trained hunting lion. From the fact that he hesitated instead of carrying through his charge Tarzan guessed that he was the former.

The five lions from Onthar were gaining rapidly now. In the bright moonlight they must have caught sight of their quarry. Their voices proclaimed that. Now they were charging. Had they been wild lions they would have hunted in silence once their prey was marked—but the earth fairly trembled to their roars. Tarzan thought that they wasted too much energy thus, but he knew that they were trained to it so that the huntsmen could follow them even when they were out of sight.

TARZAN saw that the lion facing him was wavering. He was probably surprised at the tactics of the man-thing, at a quarry that charged him; and the roars of the five lions doubtless added to his nervousness. Only fifty yards separated them, and the lion had not made up his mind, when from the chest of the ape-man burst the savage challenge of the bull ape. It was the last straw—the lion wheeled and bounded back into the forest. A moment later Tarzan



Mingled with the beast's horrid growls were the growls of the man-beast upon his back.

swarmed up a friendly tree as five angry lions leaped to seize him.

Finding a comfortable resting-place, the ape-man broke off dead branches and threw them at the lions, calling them Dango, Ungo, Horta, and other insulting names, ascribing vile tastes and habits to themselves and their ancestors. A quiet, almost taciturn man, he was an adept in the use of the jungle billingsgate he had acquired from the great apes among which he had been raised. Perhaps the lions understood him; perhaps they did not. Who knows? Anyhow, they were very angry; they leaped high in the air in vain efforts to reach him, which only made them angrier. But Tarzan had no time to waste upon them; and, keeping to the trees, he swung away toward the north and Athne.

He had timed himself to reach the city while it slept, and knew how to approach it from information given him by Gemnon and Thudos, who had often visited Athne during the yearly truces when the two cities traded with one another. He passed halfway around the city to the north side, which was less well guarded than the south.

Here he faced the greatest danger of discovery, for he must scale the wall in the light of a full moon. He chose a place far from the north gate, and crept toward the city on his belly through the garden stuff growing in the cultivated fields. He stopped often to look and listen, but he saw no sign of life on the city wall.

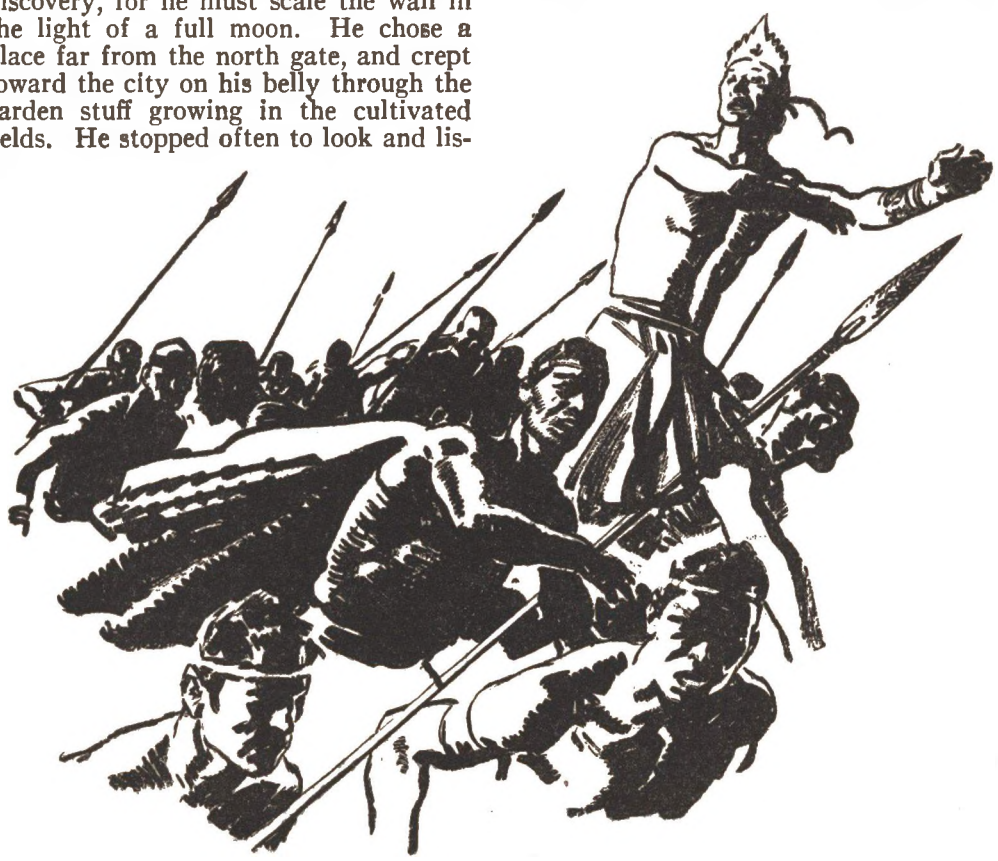
When he had come to within about a hundred feet of the wall, he arose and ran toward it at top speed, scaling it like a cat until his fingers closed upon the coping; then he drew himself up; and, lying flat, looked down upon the other side. A shedlike building abutted against the wall, and beyond this was a narrow street. Tarzan slipped to the roof of the shed, and dropped into the street.

Instantly a head was thrust from an open window and a man's voice demanded, "What are you doing there? Who are you?"

"I am Daimon," replied Tarzan in a husky whisper. Instantly the head was withdrawn and the window slammed shut.

Tarzan, ever quick-witted, had profited by something that Gemnon had told him—that the Athneans believed in a bad spirit that was abroad at night seeking whom it might kill. To Daimon they attributed all unexplained deaths, especially those that occurred at night.

Following the directions he had received, Tarzan moved through the narrow, shadowed streets toward the center



of the city, coming at last to the walled enclosure where the palace stood. He had been told that here he would find guards only at the north and south gates. Other gates, if there were any, were securely fastened and seldom used.

AS Tarzan approached the enclosure from the west, he encountered no gate and no guards. The wall was low compared with that which surrounded the city, and so proved no obstacle to the ape-man. Once over the wall he found himself in a garden of trees, shrubs, and flowers, a lovely place of soft, sweet fragrances; but for these he had no senses at the moment—he was searching for other scents than those of flowers.

Winding among small buildings and other gardens he came to a large building that he knew must be the palace; and here, to his surprise, he saw several rooms brilliantly lighted. He had thought the entire palace would be asleep with the exception of the guards.

A number of old trees grew in the garden court that flanked this side of the palace, and in the security of their shadows Tarzan crossed to the building and looked in at one of the windows. Here he saw a large banquet-hall, down the length of which ran a long table at which a hundred or more men were seated, most of them in various stages of drunkenness.

There was much loud talk and laughter, and a couple of fights were in progress in which no one took any interest except the contestants. The men were, for the most part, coarse, common-appearing fellows, not at all like the nobles of Cathne. The man at the head of the table was quite bestial in appearance. He pounded on the table with a great ham of a fist, and bellowed in a voice more like that of a bull than of a man.

Slaves were coming and going, bringing more drink and removing empty goblets and dishes. Some of the guests were still eating, but most of them concentrated their energies and their talents upon the principal business of the evening—drinking.

"Didn't I tell you to fetch her?" shouted the large man at the head of the table, addressing the assemblage in general.

"Told who to bring what?" inquired another, seated farther toward the foot of the table.

"The girl," shouted the large man.

"What girl, Phoros?"

"*The* girl," replied Phoros drunkenly.

"Oh, *the* girl," said some one.

"Well, why don't you bring her?" demanded Phoros.

"Bring who?"

"Bring *the* girl," repeated Phoros.

"Who's to bring her?" asked another.

"You bring her," ordered Phoros.

The fellow addressed shook his head. "Not me," he said. "Menofra'd have the hide off me."

"She won't know. She's gone to bed," Phoros assured him.

"I aint takin' any chances. Send a slave."

"You'd better not send anyone," counseled a man sitting next to Phoros, one who did not seem as drunk as the others. "Menofra would cut her heart out, and yours too."

"Who's king?" demanded Phoros.

"Ask Menofra," suggested the other.

"I'm king," Phoros blustered. He turned to a slave. The fellow happened to be looking in another direction. Phoros threw a heavy goblet at him, which barely missed his head. "Here, you! Go fetch the girl."

"What girl, master?" asked the trembling slave.

"There's only one girl in Athne, you son of a wart-hog! Go get her!"

WHEN the slave hurried from the room, there ensued a discussion as to what Menofra would do if she found out. Phoros announced that he was tired of Menofra, and if she didn't mind her own business, he'd take her apart and forget to put her together again. He thought this such a good joke that he laughed immoderately and fell off his bench, but some of the others seemed nervous and looked apprehensively toward the doorway.

Tarzan watched and listened. He felt disgust and shame—shame, because he belonged to the same species as these creatures. Since infancy he had been fellow of the beasts of the forest and the plain, the lower orders; yet he had never seen them sink to the level of man. Most of them had courage and dignity of a sort; seldom did they stoop to buffoonery, with the possible exception of the lesser monkeys, who were most closely allied to man. Had he been impelled to theorize he would doubtless have reversed Darwin's theory of evolution. But his mind was occupied with another thought—who was "*the* girl"? He wondered if she might not be Gonfala, but further speculation was discouraged by the coming of a large, masculine-looking woman

who strode into the room, followed by the slave who had just been dispatched to bring the girl. So this was the girl! Tarzan looked at her in mild astonishment. She had large, red hands, a whiskered mole on her chin, and quite a noticeable mustache. In other respects she was quite as unlovely.

"What's the meaning of this?" she demanded, glaring at Phoros. "Why did you send for me at this time in the morning, you drunken lout?"

Phoros' jaw dropped; he looked wildly about at his companions as though seeking help; but he got none. Each of those who had not passed out completely was engaged in trying to appear dignified and sober.

"My dear," explained Phoros ingratiatingly, "we wanted you to join us and help celebrate."

"'My dear,' nothing!" snapped the woman; then her eyes narrowed. "Celebrate what?" she demanded.

Phoros looked about him helplessly. Bleary-eyed and belching, he looked foolishly at the man sitting next him. "What were we celebrating, Kandos?"

Kandos fidgeted, and moistened his dry lips with his tongue.

"Don't lie to me!" screamed the woman. "The truth is that you never intended to send for me."

"Now, Menofra!" exclaimed Phoros in what was intended to be a soothing tone.

The woman wheeled on the frightened slave behind her. "Were you told to fetch me?" she demanded.

"Oh, great queen! I thought he meant you," whimpered the slave, dropping to his knees.

"What did he say to you?" Menofra's voice was raised almost to a shriek.

"He said, 'Go fetch the girl!' and when I asked him what girl, he said, 'There's only one girl in Athne, you son of a warthog!'"

MENOFRA'S eyes narrowed menacingly. "The only girl in Athne, eh? I know who you sent for—that yellow-haired hussy, brought in with the two men. You think you've been fooling me, don't you? Well, you haven't. You've just been waiting for your chance, and tonight you got drunk enough to muster up a little courage. Well, I'll attend to you; and when I get through with you, I'll fix the 'only girl in Athne.' I'll send her to you, if there's anything left of you—I'll send her to you in pieces." She glared at the subdued and frightened company. "Get out of here, you swine—all of you!" Then she strode to the head of the table and seized Phoros by an ear. "And you come with me—*King!*"

CHAPTER X

Menofra

TARZAN left the window and walked along the side of the building, looking up at the second floor. There, he surmised, would be the sleeping-chambers. In some room above, doubtless, Gonfala was confined. Several vines clambered up the wall. He tested them, trying to find one that might bear his weight; at last he came to some old ivy that had a stem as large around as his arm. Satisfied that it would bear him, he started to ascend.

Close beside an open window he paused and listened, his sensitive nostrils classifying the odors that came from the chamber. A man slept within. Heavy breathing told him the man was asleep. Its stertorousness and an odor told him the fellow was drunk. Tarzan threw a leg across the sill and stepped into the room. He moved noiselessly, feeling his way through the darkness. He took his time, and gradually his eyes became accustomed to the blackness of the interior. He had the gift, that some men have in common with nocturnal animals, of being able to see in the dark better than other men. Perhaps it had been developed to a higher state of efficiency by necessity. One who can see by night in the jungle has more chance of survival.

Soon he identified a darker mass on the floor near a side wall as the sleeper. That, however, was not difficult; the man's snores proclaimed his location. Tarzan crossed to the opposite end of the room and found a door. His fingers searched for lock or bolt and found the latter. It squeaked a little as he drew it back; but he had no fear that it would arouse the man, nor did it. The door opened into a dimly lighted corridor—an arched corridor along which were other doors and the arched openings into other corridors.

Tarzan heard voices. They were raised in angry altercation, and there were sounds of scuffling. The voices were those of Menofra and Phoros. Presently there was a loud scream, followed by a thud as of a body falling; then silence. Tarzan waited, listening. He heard a door open farther up the corridor in the

direction from which the voices had come; then he stepped back into the room behind him, leaving the door slightly ajar so that he could look out into the corridor. He saw a man step from a doorway and approach along the corridor. It was Phoros. He was staggering a little, and in his right hand he carried a bloody short-sword. His expression was bleary-eyed and vacuous. He passed the door from which Tarzan watched and turned into another corridor; then the ape-man stepped into the passageway and followed.

AS he reached the head of the corridor into which Phoros had turned, Tarzan saw the Athnean fumbling with a key at the lock of a door a short distance ahead; and he waited until Phoros had unlocked the door and entered the room beyond; then the ape-man followed at a run. He wished to reach the door before Phoros could lock it from within, if such were his intention; but it was not. In fact, in drunken carelessness, Phoros did not even close the door tightly; and he had little more than entered the room when Tarzan pushed the door open and followed him.

The ape-man had moved with utter silence; so that though he stood just behind Phoros the latter was unaware of his presence. The room was lighted by a single cresset—a wick burning in a shallow vessel half filled with fat. Lying in one corner of the room, bound hand and foot, was Gonfala; in another corner, similarly trussed, was Stanley Wood. They both saw and recognized Tarzan simultaneously, but he raised a finger to his lips to caution them to silence. Phoros stood leering at his two prisoners, his gross body swaying unsteadily.

"So the lovers are still here!" he taunted. "But why do they stay so far apart? Here, you stupid fool, watch me; I'll show you how to make love to the girl. She's mine now. Menofra, the old hellcat, is dead. Look at this sword! See the blood? That's Menofra's blood. I just killed her." He pointed the sword at Wood. "And just as soon as I've shown you how a lover should behave I'm going to kill *you*."

He took a step toward Gonfala—but as he did so steel-thewed fingers gripped his sword wrist, the weapon was torn from his hand, and he was thrown heavily to the floor.

"Quiet, or I kill," a voice whispered.

Phoros looked into the cold gray eyes of an almost naked giant who stood above him with his own sword pointed at his breast. "Who are you?" he asked in a quavering voice. "Don't kill me. Tell me what you want. You can have anything if you'll not kill me."

"I'll take what I want. Don't move." Tarzan crossed to Wood and cut the bonds that held him. "Release Gonfala," he said, "and when you have done that bind this man and gag him."

Wood worked quickly. "How did you get here?" Tarzan asked him.

"I was searching for Gonfala. I followed her trail to this city; then they took me prisoner. Today Phoros sent for me. In some way, probably through some of his people overhearing Spike and Troll, he got the idea that I knew how to work the Gonfal. Spike had been bragging about its powers, but neither he nor Troll had been able to do anything with it. They had also told some one that Gonfala was the goddess of the big stone, and so he brought us together and told us to show him some magic. Our meeting was so sudden and unexpected that we gave ourselves away—it must have been apparent to any one that we were in love. Anyway, Phoros got it; maybe because he was jealous. He has been trying to make love to Gonfala ever since she was captured, but he was too afraid of his wife to go very far with it."

WHEN Gonfala was liberated, Wood trussed up Phoros; as he was completing the work they heard the sound of shuffling footsteps in the corridor. They all stood, tense and silent, waiting. Would the footsteps pass the door, or was some one coming to this room? Nearer and nearer they came; then they paused outside, as though he who walked was listening. The door was pushed open, revealing a horrible apparition. Gonfala muffled a scream; Wood recoiled; only Tarzan showed no emotion. It was Menofra. A horrible wound gashed her head and one shoulder. She was covered with blood; she reeled with weakness from the loss of it, but still retained her wits.

Stepping quickly back into the corridor, she closed the door and turned the key that the drunken Phoros had left in the lock; then they heard her crying loudly for the guard.

"We seem to be nicely trapped," commented Wood.

The great climax of "Tarzan and the Elephant Men" will appear in the next—the January, 1938—issue.

Two Yards of Soldier

"Come on, you sons of sin! You've lived too long anyway."

By MEIGS FROST

A post-graduate marine and artilleryman who has himself seen action in Great and little wars.

FUNNY, the things you think about when you're stretched out on the ground on your belly in the dark, with your rifle alongside you and your bayonet fixed, and it's just starting to get daylight; and pretty soon your platoon leader's whistle is going to blow, and you're going to get up and walk straight into a patch of woods that's got more machine-guns than a hound-dawg's got fleas—and all pointing direct at you.

I kept thinking of Sergeant Prentiss Tatum and his dry-goods-store job back in Corinth, Mississippi. I had to laugh right out loud. It struck me as funny as hell. It's struck me that way ever since.

He was stretched out right close to me that morning. He was chewing on a

Illustrated by
Grattan Condon

It was a lousy barrage—like pitching powder-puffs at a rock ledge.

big bite off his plug of black eating-tobacco. The way his jaws were working, that plug was all that kept you from hearing his teeth grind twenty feet away. From time to time he was growling like a circus lion the trainer's prodding with a sharp stick. Kinda more like a snarl than a growl; I could catch words out of it, now and then. "—Show that frozen-faced pair of sons! Dry-goods store clerk, hunh! Cut us off a coupla yards of this, hunh! Show 'em!"

All he was talking about was Major Randall, and Gunner Gallagher. Old Ripsaw Randall was our battalion commander. Gunner Gallagher was the oldest non-com in the outfit. Both of 'em had come up out of what they called the Old United States Marine Corps, and the way they said it, was an insult to anybody who hadn't been a United States Marine at least as early as the Boxer Rebellion in China. Maybe they raised 'em tougher in the old Corps than Ripsaw Randall and Fish-eye Gallagher. Maybe. I dunno. I never found none, anyway.... I remember thinking there aint so very much nourishment in a ser-

geant hating the guts of his battalion commander and the ranking duty noncom, and handing it to Sergeant Tatum that when he set out to chew on something tough, he wasn't any piker when he did his picking.

THEN I noticed it was getting gray in the east. Some birds began to cheep in the trees near us. You wouldn't 'a' thought there was a war on anywhere. Then a whole bunch of birds started cheeping like they were yelling at each other. It sure sounded funny.

We could just begin to make out the outline of the woods, up an easy slope, about five hundred yards ahead of us. Pretty soon we would be going up that slope. The woods were as silent as if they weren't crawling with Germans.

Then our artillery started sounding off, way behind us. Their barrage began to kick up dirt on the slope ahead of us. We were to attack the woods behind that barrage. It was a lousy barrage. It was like pitching powder-puffs at a rock ledge. It wasn't the wagon-soldiers' fault. They were doing the best they could with what they had. But some general hadn't let 'em have so much.

Then whistles blew up and down the line. We got up and kinda shook ourselves. You know—straightened the gas-mask and slipped the safety on the rifle. That baby barrage lifted and started to crawl ahead. You couldn't hear a bird cheep any more. But you could hear them German machine-guns up in the woods come to life and start hammering rivets.

Battle-front, all spread out, we started forward on what they call a frontal attack on a prepared position. We didn't think of it that way. It was simpler than that to us. We went in there to see how many guys we could get before they got us.

Sergeant Tatum had quit growling and snarling. He was yelling like an Indian now:

"Come on, gang! Come on! Help Papa cut off a coupla yards of this and shove it down old Rip's tonsils! Come on, you sons of sin! Come on! You've lived too long, anyway!"

I says to myself: "Poor old Taters! Gone crazy as a bed-bug!" On the level, I had to laugh. I'd been kinda shaking a little with the nervous shivers a minute before, but I had to laugh. Then I saw something to shoot at, right at the edge of the woods, and I started shooting.

We was in among the trees now. They were shooting at us with machine-guns from behind piles of brush, and with rifles from platforms up in trees. We left what we thought were dead Germans behind us, and they shot us in the back. We'd get into a machine-gun nest and pay for it and take it, and then another nest would open up on us from one flank or the other. We'd pay for that and take it too, and find grenades dropping on us out o' the trees, and Heinies sharpshooting at us from behind other trees. Those boys acted like they wanted to keep those woods. That scrap wasn't just in front of you. It was all around you and on top of you and under your feet, all at the same time.

And could those babies shoot! I saw Lieutenant Hunt running toward one machine-gun, and the guy caught him in the throat with a burst, and traversed, and that looey's head went spinning off like a ball down a bowling alley. We got in among the crew that did that, with bayonets, and we didn't take many prisoners there! We'd kinda liked that looey; he was a square-shooter.

Then once Sergeant Tatum and I were behind a big tree, shooting at some Jerries in other trees, and somebody's shell come along and hit the trunk of our tree about fifteen feet above our heads, and the whole top of the tree goes up and comes down, and there we were, sitting pretty as you please—not even scratched and better sheltered than before. We shot the babies we were gunning for out of their trees, like squirrels, and then we found we had a hell of a time getting out of that tangle.

That patch of woods sure was packed full of help-yourself fighting, any style.

ALL of a sudden we were through and on the other side. What was left of us started digging fox-holes and looking out into Germany to see when the counter-attack was coming. We were set for it. We figured it was due any minute, but somehow it didn't come. And all of a sudden we were hungry as hell.

I'd found a stone bottle of that Dutch gin they call schnapps, in one of them machine-gun nests, and stuffed it into my shirt as we went along. I pulled it out and knocked off the neck, and we all had a drag outa it. It was swell stuff with plenty of authority. It helped us over the rest of the breakfast, which wasn't so hot. Supplies had got jazzed, kinda, in the past few days. So instead

of American corned bill, we'd got some of that French canned beef from Madagascar we called monkey-meat. They should 'a' shot that contractor and let a few German spies loose. It was so far gone that when you punched a hole in the can with your bayonet, it whistled like a peanut-roaster. Escaping gas. But we had that and some hardtack and some warm canteen water, and everybody lit a smoke. The cigarettes were kinda damp, for a guy sweats plenty in a scrap like that. But we made out fine.

Then it dawned on me that Sergeant Tatum was platoon commander. Our looeys were dead somewhere back in the woods. I got to laughing all over again at the memory of how I'd seen that Mississippi boy change since we came into the outfit, and why.

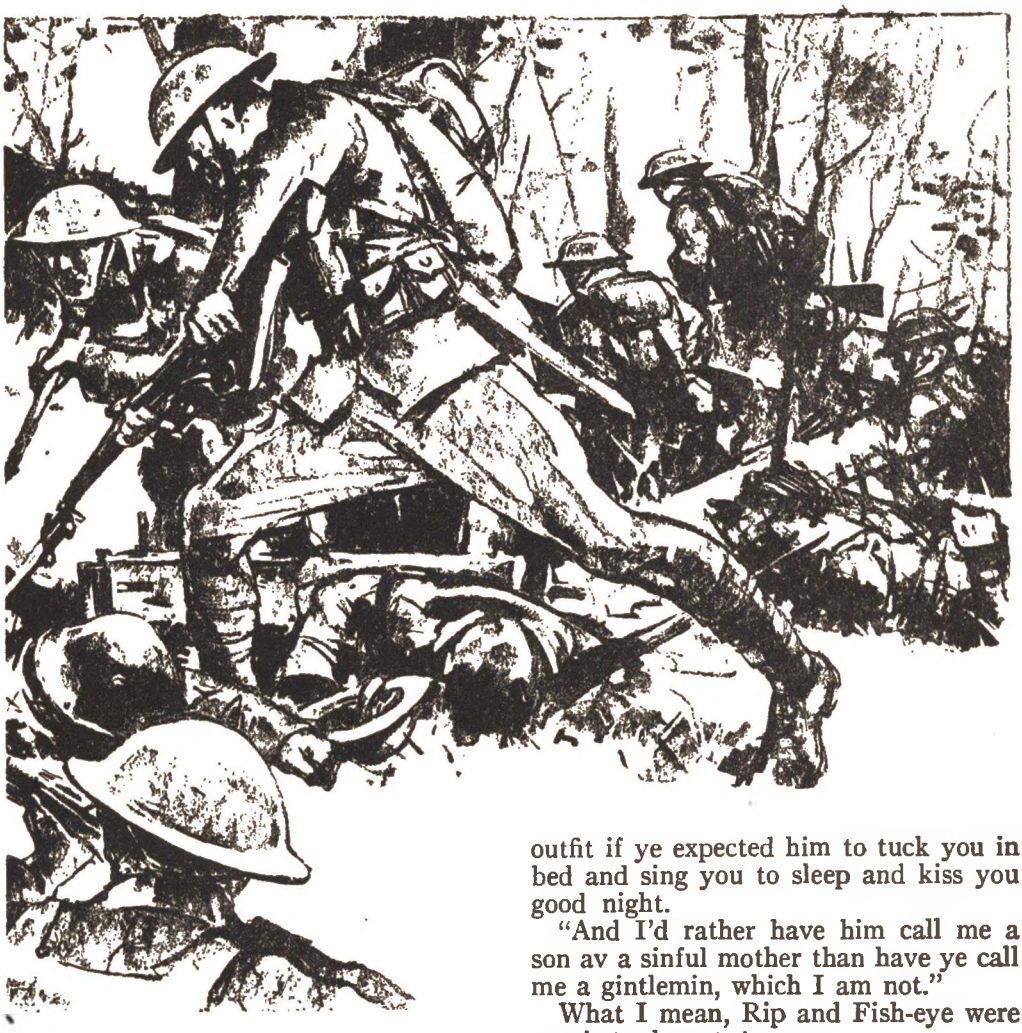
Don't get me wrong. Old Taters never was a sissy. But he was the politest man I ever saw in my life. Quiet and serious. Never heard him use the least cuss-word in those early days—which was kinda like a miracle, for we were the toughest outfit ever wore Uncle Sam's hand-me-downs. College boys and ranchhands and prizefighters and lumbermen and office men and ditch-diggers and clerks who got all their exercise in a Y. M. C. A. gymnasium before they enlisted in the United States Marines. All the training was to make us tough and hard—I guess it had to be. But you get a few thousand men and train 'em systematically to be tough, so they can go out and do a dirty job that needs doing, and what I mean, some of 'em get *tough!* They show it lots of ways. Language is one of 'em. But never a rough word out of Prentiss Tatum, with that soft-like Mississippi drawl of his. You couldn't help liking that guy. He minded his own business and hit the ball, and by the time they shoved us over to France as a kind of extra regiment in the First Division, he was a sergeant, and he'd earned his chevrons.

We got in among that crew with bayonets —and we didn't take many prisoners!

THEY shoved us into the Menaucourt-Gondrecourt training area right after they landed us at St. Nazaire, and that's where we drew old Ripsaw Randall for our battalion commander, out of the A. E. F. grab-bag, in one of those shakedown shifts where the First and Second Divisions were getting straightened out so when we hit Heine it wouldn't be shadow-boxing. Then they sent our battalion to Damblain to get our final heavy training for the front. It was January, 1918. If they ever had a wetter, colder January in France, nobody remembered it.

Damblain was where old Rip Randall ran hog-wild. He had his own ideas about training. He'd come up out of that Old Marine Corps we'd heard so much about. Second lieutenant in the Boxer Rebellion days in China. Rough, tough service there, and in the Philippines and Cuba and Haiti and Santo Domingo. Trained under the eyes of colonels who wore whiskers and got their training in the Civil War days. Those old-timers never asked or expected quarter of anybody, and they never gave any. You clicked with them, or they broke your heart and then broke you. And right alongside Rip Randall, Fish-eye Gallagher had come up from private to gunner. He had them whitey-blue eyes of a boiled codfish on ice.

"I give him the fish-eye," he used to tell the non-coms now and then, as he



told how he'd taken down some of those Johnny-come-lately second looeys who ranked him but didn't know their stuff like he did.

Rip Randall was his god. Fish-eye stumbled into a bunch of boots panning the Major one day. They were some of the college boys.

"Listen, you domned Racquet Clubbers," growls Fish-eye. "Get him right. Major Randall, he's harder than a battleship's side. He's rougher than sandpaper. He's tougher than what the divil sits on his own pet gridiron wit'. But he's square.

"Whin you're under him, you'll keep your toenails cut, but ye'll have good shoes while annybody in the outfit has good shoes. Ye'll get your chow hot and good from the galleys whilst annybody does. He'll fight the Prisidint av the United States for you as hard as he'll fight annybody for th' Prisidint av the United States. But ye picked the wrong outfit if ye expected him to tuck you in bed and sing you to sleep and kiss you good night.

"And I'd rather have him call me a son av a sinful mother than have ye call me a gintlemin, which I am not."

What I mean, Rip and Fish-eye were a pair to draw to!

Rip went through that battalion that January at Damblain like buckshot through a goose. The British were crazy about the bayonet then. They knew it would win the war. We'd had our weeks under British instructors—running at straw dummies, making faces at 'em, cursing 'em, grunting and trying to tear 'em apart with a bayonet thrust. We'd learned where to bayonet and where not, and how to shoot it out if it stuck. The French were just as crazy about the grenade. They knew it would win the war. So we'd lobbed hand-grenades and shot rifle grenades under instructors from the Blue Devils until we could sleep in a pile of 'em and not worry.

Now Rip Randall scrapped all that. He figured this man's war had to come out in the open sometime, and the answer was a hard, tough guy with a rifle who knew how to shoot it. He set out to make himself a battalion of 'em, that January at Damblain.

Man, a heavyweight champion would break down and cry like a sick baby if he had to train like that. It was colder than an Eskimo's back yard. It was wetter than a shark's belly. We lived in freezing mud. Wood for fires was scarcer than generals with wound-stripes. Old Rip broke us out of our billets every morning at reveille in that god-awful cold. Hand it to him: We had a big hot breakfast to gulp. We needed it for what was ahead.

In full packs he marched us out in that rain and mud. Extended order drill until our tongues hung out. Hiking until our feet were worn off to bleeding stumps at the ankles. Always the hike ended at the rifle range we had built with our own lily-white little hands near Bourmont. There we fired more ammunition than they used at the battle of Gettysburg. Then we hiked into a system of practise trenches we had built with our own little paddy-paws, too, and we slipped and slid down and climbed up, until all of us knew the front lines would seem like a vacation if we ever got there.

The galleys rolled with us wherever we went, like Mary's little lamb following Mary. Wherever we were, noon meant another big hot meal, and coffee hot enough to raise a blister on an elephant, and strong enough to pole-vault all by itself. Fish-eye was right. Old Rip Randall fed his men. And always around three o'clock in the afternoon we were back in Damblain with a chance to stretch out in front of the first fire we'd seen since taps the night before. Man, did that big "Y" shack look good!

We came out of that grind snarling like bulldogs and hard as railroad spikes. I saw two guys one night each get the same idea he would sleep on top of a pile of sacked potatoes in one of the billets. They climbed up opposite sides and met at the top. Neither would give up to the other. On the level, they slugged it out like they was fighting for a title and a million dollars, until they both dropped with their faces bleeding, each of them too weak to lift a hand.

That's what that kind of training under old Ripsaw Randall did to a guy. But it never even ruffled Sergeant Tatum. It took old Rip himself to do that.

IT was cuckoo stuff. It showed me every guy in the world has got some one spot where you can reach him. Rip pulled a surprise inspection, one morning. He was hell on a rusty rifle. Reckon he could have forgiven a guy for murder, easier. And in that rain, no foolin', you near had to keep a gun buttered with cosmoline to keep it from rusting. Rip found two rifles in Sergeant Tatum's section with rust-specks on 'em. He was in bad humor that morning, anyway.

Don't get me wrong. He never cussed and damned a man. He didn't have to. He was an artist, that old-timer. Polite cold poison that squirted on a hair-trigger. It was over right now. It always got through a guy's guard and sank home right where he lived. And all Rip's hogs were loose, that day.

"WHAT was your occupation in civil life?" he asked Sergeant Tatum. He knew mighty well. He knew everything about us, by now.

"Dry-goods-store clerk, sir," said old Taters.

"Oh," said Rip. It was the way he said it! Then there was one of those three-second silences when you feel your belly wrinkle up like a washboard.

"It *is* easier to cut a couple of yards of cheesecloth than it is to make a couple of yards of United States Marine out of it," said Rip Randall.

That was absolutely all. Rip went on down the line.

I could see the red climb up the back of Sergeant Tatum's neck. I knew, from our first days in training as boots, that Taters could have told old Rip that his father had gone out of a dry-goods store to end up a captain of Confederate cavalry under old Nathan Bedford Forrest. That his grandfather had gone out of one to be a lieutenant of infantry under Winfield Scott and climb the walls of Chapultepec under fire. Two other Tatums had laid down their yardstick and scissors to go out and fight: one under Andy Jackson at New Orleans, with Hind's Mississippi Dragoons; one with old General Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, in the Revolution. But sergeants don't talk back to majors—not in the United States Marines.

I remembered that minute how old Taters had said to me one night in barracks, before we went to France: "We folks always made some money in dry-goods stores and then lost it in something else. Plantations, or steamboats, or stocks, or something. Why, fella, I was doggone near born in a dry-goods store." He was sorta quiet and proud about it, if you get me.

Looking back on it now, it's funnier than ever. I can see how we were all hopped up there in Damblain, from old Rip himself down to the last buck private in the rear rank. Nerves stretched like fiddle-strings just before they snap. Everybody all set to show the cockeyed world he was tougher than the toughest guy anybody shoved at him, and the bigger they are, the harder they fall. And when men get the kind of mad Sergeant Tatum got, it hits them funny ways.

"Ye picked the wrong outfit if ye expected him to tuck ye in bed and kiss ye good night."

From that minute, he was a wild man. He didn't sulk: he just growled and snarled and out-cursed the best cussers the outfit had, and we had some good ones. Where he'd kept all that vocabulary bottled up all those years I never knew. He taught me combinations I never heard of, and I've skinned mules. Twice husky guys invited him to come out in back and take his chevrons off, and he did, and what I mean, he gave the battalion surgeon two of the finest jobs of patching up you ever saw outside a front-line dressing-station.

He was the Number One maniac in an outfit full of bull-meat and horsing for action. All he wanted in this world was to show up old Ripsaw Randall as the major with the lousiest judgment in the United States Marine Corps. You'd 'a' thought the eyes of all the world was focused right on our section, and everybody woke up each morning saying: "Say, whaddya think of that, hey? A section like that under a sergeant who was a dry-goods-store clerk in Mississippi! You can't make a United States Marine out o' no two yards of cheesecloth!"

Sergeant Tatum had just two ideas in his head:

"I'll show that old son of a buck!"

"Wait till this war's over and I get a crack at that guy back home!"

You know, it's funny, but I reckon them was the two best-sellers in the A. E. F.

AND then Gunner Gallagher kicked the apple-cart upside down. That morning we lay in position to start our attack on that patch of woods, he walked along back of the line. He comes to our section. I think that Mick leatherneck had cat's eyes, the way he could see in the dark.

Anyway, he speaks up right behind where Sergeant Tatum and me, we're laying stretched out.

The front line would seem like a vacation—if we ever got there.

"The big bargain-sale rush is about to starrt," says old Fish-eye, "but the counter up ahead is f'r min only. Let's see arre ye man enough to cut off a coupla yarrds av *that* for the Major, Sergeant Tatum."

And in the dark, somebody laughed.

THE woods was behind us. There we lay in our fox-holes, and what I mean, we lay. If you wanted to stretch yourself, you did it horizontal. It was kinda up-and-down country over there in Germany, so to speak, with little clumps of trees here and there, and it looked like all the machine-guns the Kaiser had were right there. The minute anybody stood up so any movement could be spotted by some Kraut with a pair of field-glasses, some machine-gun went, *"Brrrrrrrrp!"* Bullets spattered all around you. They'd been there long enough to have their ranges down to inches.

One nest acted like they'd decided to make it personal between them and our section. Those boys were artists. It got so you could 'a' held up your tin hat and they'd 'a' made a colander out o' it for you. We stood it all day, waiting for the counter-attack that never came. We got kinda tired of it.

"Time to change the act," says Sergeant Tatum to me, just as it was getting dark. "Want to come on over into Germany with me and worry 'em a little?"

"Sure, Sarge," I says. I never had got so tired of anything in my life as I was getting of that fox-hole.

Some ammunition and some chow had come up, but no reinforcements. Taters and I ate a bellyful of monkey-meat, and filled our canteens, and stuffed our belts and bandoliers with fresh clips. It was black dark now, and we started crawling down into Germany.

Say, Taters might 'a' been born in a dry-goods store, but he'd played Indian plenty when he wasn't selling Mississippi women blue baby-ribbon to run through their corset-covers. He didn't make no more noise than a blacksnake crawling down a dusty road. I crawled right behind him, and like we'd agreed, we stopped every count of fifty, and reached around until we touched each other. Then we'd crawl some more. We'd had all day to study that terrain. We knew where we were headed. Somewhere past midnight we made it. We flanked that machine-gun nest, and got on a little rise where we would be looking right down into it at daybreak. That was when the Jerries always changed machine-gun crews, we'd been told back in training area.

It was the right dope. When it got light, we were all set: flat on our bellies, arms braced in our rifle-slings. I counted twenty-six men as the two crews stood bunched.

"You take 'em from left to right," whispered Taters, "and I'll take 'em from right to left. Waste fewer shots."

"Okay, Sarge," I whispers back. I lined my sights on a big boy in a coal-scuttle helmet.

"Cut loose," says Taters.

We both squeezed and kept on squeezing. It was point-blank stuff. A boot couldn't miss. Fella, the way them two Springfields worked, you'd 'a' thought we was a machine-gun nest our own selves. I counted nine of those babies who dropped and stayed dropped. The rest stampeded, us fanning their tails

and getting four more on the wing, so to speak.

Then a German signal-rocket shoots up from one of those clumps of trees. Right now a German barrage comes showering down between us and our piece of woods. A cockroach couldn't 'a' crawled through it without losing some of his feelers. They kept on keeping it up.

WE lay there all that day between a shiver and a sweat; no telling what minute a gang in coal-hod hats would be prodding our pants with saw-edged bayonets. But their infantry was letting their artillery get some exercise. They tossed shells over our heads like a Marine tossing coin over a bar on payday night. It was dark before they knocked off.

"Now we crawl out o' here and get that machine-gun," says Sergeant Tatum.

"Why?" I says. "We got plenty machine-guns back home."

"So's we can shove it down old Rip's tonsils," says the Sarge; "and what's left over we can wrap around Fish-eye's neck."

"Oh, well," says I, "if you feel *that* way about it."

We made it. We got back to our piece of woods with it, looking and feeling like a couple o' Army mules after a rainy-day drag with an escort wagon, but we made it. We felt pretty good, at that. We'd got away with something.

We found a new lieutenant from some other company in the outfit was in command of the platoon. Major Randall had made an inspection of his front line while we was taking the day off over in Germany. He'd tried to equalize it a little. He'd had to spread out damned thin. That looey's voice didn't sound like he was welcoming back any wandering heroes, either.

"Major Randall left orders you two were to report at his P. C. if you got back," he says.

"Aye-aye, sir," says Taters. He starts to pick up that machine-gun.

"You may need it, at that," says the looey; "but if I were you, Sergeant, I'd leave that souvenir right where it is."

We started back through the woods.

"Now I wonder what he meant by that?" says Taters.

"Search me," I says. . . .

Battalion P. C. was a dugout in a clay bank, with blankets over the opening. Inside sat old Rip Randall, scribbling a message. He hands it to a runner and says: "Brigade P. C.—and show some speed." He looked like the last minutes of a misspent life. He hadn't shaved for two days. His eyes was red around the rims like a bull-terrier's. He was wearing a sleeveless leather jerkin and a tin hat, and he was plastered with dirt like a ditch-digger.

"Well," he says, when Sergeant Tatum reported, "what have you got to say for yourself?"

"Sir," says Taters, "there was a German machine-gun was going to cost the Major a platoon if it wasn't silenced, so we went out and silenced it and brought it back."

Old Rip was fit to be tied. He could of kissed a tarantula and it would 'a' dropped dead. I thought that German barrage was something, but that was before I heard old Rip Randall really cut loose. He knew combinations they never teach in college. I've had a lotta respect for the English language ever since. Rip could burn his way through barbed wire with it.

"So you spend your day thinking with what I suppose you call your brain," he finishes. "You go out without orders to take a machine-gun and save a platoon and get a medal, I suppose. And you bring on a German barrage that could have cost me a battalion, with what's left of this outfit holding on by its toenails and hollering for reinforcements we don't get, and living only because some damned fool in Germany hasn't got the brains to counter-attack. Now you two get the hell back to your outfit, and you thank whatever you pray to in Corinth, Mississippi, that you're not in the brig waiting for a court."

Taters don't say a word all the way back through those woods. All he does is grind his teeth.

BUT we get a little sleep that night, and need it: for next day the Germans start a counter-attack. It aint on our immediate front; but the lieutenant who is getting it in the nose hollers for reinforcements; and Sergeant Tatum and about twenty of us are ordered over there, and it's a hot party.

We manage to shove the visitors back, and there we are hanging on by teeth and toenails on the edge of a gulch the gang christen Death Valley. And another of those German machine-guns out in the little clump of trees across an open space starts giving us hell. It's camouflaged so well it's just wasting cartridges to

shoot at it from where we are, and it gets three of our gang before we get wise to where the bullets are coming from.

This time the lieutenant calls for volunteers to rush it and put it out of business. The whole outfit hollers, "Here, sir," but Sergeant Tatum is a split second ahead.

"Okay, Suicide Club," grins the looey. "Sergeant, take ten men. Automatic rifles and hand-grenades. You've got to hit 'em smack in the snoot. No chance to flank 'em. We'll do our best to cover you from here. Spread out and sprint, and give 'em hell the minute you get close enough."

TATERS picks ten of the huskiest gyrenes in the gang, all unwounded. We spread out about fifteen feet apart, Taters yells "Let's *go!*"—and we start a sprint they don't have in any track meet I ever saw. About four hundred yards, with a spitting machine-gun muzzle at the tape. We're crouching and running fast as we can, and some of the boys are shooting from the hip as they run, but it was just a plain miracle to me that the whole eleven of us made it all the way on our feet. No kiddin'—they didn't hit one of us.

There we were right on top of 'em, and before you could pull a grenade-pin, their hands was up in the air and they were yelling, *"Kamerad!"*

"Don't shoot, gang!" yells Taters, to us. Then to the Germans, just like they could understand Mississippi English, he yells: "Pick up that machine-gun and head that way and get the hell outa here!" And he points to the gun and then back at our woods. And one of 'em says, "Ogay, Sarge," and spatters German at the others, and we all start back. And another of those damned German barrages comes smashing down all over the place.

We swung around in a kinda wide circle, heading back to our woods, running hard. It was another time that war just didn't make sense. That barrage oughta made hamburger out o' every last one of us, but all it does is get two of the Germans. We get back into our woods with twenty-six of the twenty-eight Germans we started with, and not one of us Marines even scratched. It was funny.

"If there was a crap-shooting session on anywhere around here," says the lieutenant, "you boys could win the pants off the guy invented the game. I don't know what you'll be tomorrow; but you're hot cats today; and your claws rattle when you walk. I counted fourteen machine-guns firing at you when you came back through that barrage."

We held onto those woods two days and nights more, and then the Army comes up and relieves us. We march out of that hell-hole looking like hoboes crossed with scarecrows. We'd gone in, a battalion better than nine hundred strong. We came out with less than four hundred men and six officers. We'd forgotten when we last had a cup of hot coffee or a bite of hot food.

They took us by truck-train to a little dump named Mery, on the Marne. That's where the looey who'd asked for volunteers to take that machine-gun came around and looked us up.

"I put in for you for anything they had from the Congressional Medal of Honor down," he told us. "For all eleven of you. But the word came back that was too many to decorate. Looks like you'd have to call it all in the day's work."

"Thank you, sir," was all Sergeant Tatum said.

"Tough luck, Sergeant, though," said the looey. "I just wanted you to know that most of us feel what you and those ten men did was up to anything that ever won a decoration, and topped a lot of 'em. How would you feel if I sent in a supplemental report, citing you to the battalion commander as the first volunteer and the leader?"

That's where old Taters showed the kind of stuff he had down at bedrock.

"I'd feel lousy—begging the lieutenant's pardon," he said. "There wasn't a man in that outfit did more or less than any other."

SO that was the end of that, I thought. But it wasn't. Fish-eye Gallagher pulled a hard-boiled crack about glory-grabbers and grandstanders, when he was feeling tough, a few days later, so you could see he meant Taters to hear it.

"If it wasn't for your age," said Taters, "I'd ask you to pull off your gunner's insignia and come out back with me. But if I did and you did, I'd kill you."

It was the only time I ever knew old Fish-eye to get caught without a comeback. There was something in that slow Mississippi drawl that was cold poison.

I didn't need a blueprint to know that Taters figured Major Randall had turned thumbs down on the looey's report of

how we took that machine-gun nest. I didn't believe anybody could get tougher than Taters after he first began to hate old Rip's guts. But he did.

Then we went into the battle of Soissons. That was where Taters wrote one in the book for the United States Marines.

He was leading our section through a German barrage that nobody but a bunch of lunatics would 'a' tried to pass. He caught part of a shrapnel burst in his right shoulder and right side. It took him kinda slanting, or it would have torn his whole side off. He stopped and looked where his torn blouse was getting dark and wet. He swung his right arm to see if any bones were broken. They weren't. He laid down his rifle and fished in his left pants pocket and brought out one of those jack-knives a country boy always carries.

"Hey, fella," he says to the nearest Marine. "Dig this birdshot out."

I'm a cockeyed liar if that guy didn't dig four shrapnel balls out o' old Taters. He took 'em in his left hand, one by one, as they came out.

"*Souvenir de la guerre,* Sarge?" grins the guy.

"Naw," snarls Taters. "I'm gonna get me a Kraut and make him swallow his own pills before the day's out."

They soaked the wounds with iodine and put on some first-aid bandages, and Taters picks up his gun and goes on with the gang. It was a coupla days later infection set in. They sent him back to a hospital in Paris, and then I heard they shifted him to another at Vichy. And in September he was back with us again.

We were getting set for the big Champagne sector shove-off. Plenty new faces in the outfit. Replacements. Soissons had near finished what Bois de Belleau started, with our battalion. Major Randall was a colonel and had the regiment now. Gunner Gallagher was somewhere getting his commission as second lieutenant. Our company commander had been our junior second looey when we landed at St. Nazaire.

We shoved off October first. That first day our company went three miles through the German line. Then they came back mad and started pulling hair when they played. We only made a mile a day the next two days.

When it got daylight the fourth day, our outfit was so far into the German line that we were getting shot up in front and on both sides. It was rolling country, and there ahead of us was Blanc Mont Ridge. It looked about as high as a five- or six-story building to me. It was crawling with Germans. All we were supposed to do was fight our way up it.

"It is easier to cut a couple of yards of cheesecloth than it is to make a couple of yards of Marine out of it."

Our platoon had shoved off fifty strong the first day. We were down to thirty, now. We went down a little dip, and up a little rise, and a German machine-gun on the rise ahead started pouring it into us. We threw ourselves down flat just back of the top of our rise. Those babies started combing our hair for us.

"Lay low, men," called the looey. "Who'll volunteer to rush that nest?"

It was a grand gang. They yelped for it like a chorus.

"Give me ten men and I'll do the job, sir," called Sergeant Tatum.

"Pick 'em, and good luck, Sergeant," says the looey. He was in a hot spot, and plenty sore he couldn't go himself. But he had his orders just what to do in a case like that.

Taters picks his men by name. Just like before, we loaded up on hand-grenades and took those French automatic rifles they called Sho-Shos.

"Spread out. Fifteen feet apart. Crouch and run like hell when I give the word," calls Taters. "All set?"

The gang yelps like a pack of wolves.

"Let's *go!*" he yells, just like that day in the woods.

The next minute we was running through scrub growth near three feet high. It makes hard sprinting. The Sarge was out in front, yelling like a lunatic. We were almost there. I could see the fire spitting out of that muzzle ahead of us.

Then that machine-gunner traversed like he was spraying along a garden with a hose. It was like pins going down in a bowling-alley. War's funny, the way they miss you one time and hit you the next. I'm down with a couple of slugs in me, but the way I fall, I can see Sergeant Tatum. He's standing there on one leg like one of those long-legged birds you see down in the tropics. The other leg is dangling, funny-like. He's reaching into a bag of hand-grenades. He pulls one out and pulls the pin, and throws it, and then he sprawls out flat as a pancake.

That war is all over for Taters and me.

I MUST 'a' done a pass-out; for I remember waking up and hurting like hell and starting to get up and finding out I can't. But I catch a look at old Taters. He's stretched out too.

"Hit bad, Sarge?" I call out.

"Smashed the bone in my left leg," he calls back. "I rigged up a tourniquet for it, though. But they must 'a' got me somewhere else, too. Looks like I'm paralyzed from the waist down."

The scrap has gone on ahead of us. We lay there, feeling all washed up. Then up comes an Austrian lieutenant with a drawn Luger in his hand, leading about twenty Austrian soldiers with a machine-gun—and I'm damned if he aint coming up from behind us! That Champagne shove was one mixed-up mess. The American advance had rolled clean over him and his gang and missed 'em.

He looks down at Sergeant Tatum and spatters something at him in German.

"No compre," says Taters, which is damned near all any language he knows outside Mississippi English.

"Ah," says the Austrian looey, *"vous parlez Francais! Soldat Amèricain?"*

Even Taters could get that.

"Oui, oui," he says.

The Austrian looey shoves the muzzle of his Luger smack into Taters' face. It must 'a' looked big as a tunnel.

"Combien des soldats Amèricains se trouvent dans la France?" he said, and you didn't need no illustrated lecture to know he was going to get an answer or shoot. It didn't take no professor of French to get that, either.

"Five million!" says Taters.

"Oooh-la-la!" says the Austrian looey. He barks something at his men, holsters his Luger, and they beat it back toward Germany.

THEN those Austrian eighty-eights began to burst around us. I swear, it didn't look like there was twenty feet between shell-holes, after a while.

We lay there until about six o'clock that night, when another American attack wave went over us. Then some hospital boys with stretchers came along. The guy picked me up had a face like a gorilla, but I could 'a' kissed him—but when he dropped me a couple o' times, as he and his buddy tried to duck shell-bursts on the way back, I could 'a' killed him and got more fun outa it.

After a million years, Taters and I were laying side by side, and a surgeon was looking over Taters' leg. I heard him say, "I guess this leg had better come off," to somebody, and I heard Taters yell: "For God's sake, Doc, don't cut it off!" And then I didn't hear nothing for a while. . . .

We're in the same ward in the hospital at Neuilly when I begin to take an interest in life again. Taters still has both legs, but he tells me one is going to be a coupla inches shorter than the other. That German machine-gun burst had splintered his thigh bone just above his knee with one bullet, and another had cracked his knee joint.

We swap around and get beds side by side. And that's how-come I get a ringside seat to the best show I saw in France.

The Armistice is all over, and the Allies aint started making faces at each other yet, when into the ward comes Colonel Randall—old Ripsaw himself. And with him a French general, complete with whiskers. Aides and an interpreter, too. The whole shebang pulls up right by Sergeant Tatum's bed.

The French general don't speak any English, but he makes a speech in French, and the interpreter translates it. All he is doing is handing the Médaille Militaire to old Taters, and that's a decoration nobody wins with jawbone over a desk. What I mean, you gotta be where they're shooting at you, to get that one. The Croix de Guerre was a dime a dozen alongside it.

It seems old Taters' last hand-grenade was a home-run—the one he flung standing on one leg, the other dangling. It cleaned out that machine-gun nest, and the platoon went on, and the looey lived to make a report on it, and some French *liaison* officer heard about it, and France was feeling like Santa Claus with the war just over.

You'd figure Sergeant Tatum all proud and happy. But when the French general bent forward to pin it on, old Taters waved him back.

And if I live a million years, I'll remember what he said:

"Thanks, General. But I wasn't good enough for a decoration from my own outfit, and I'm damned if I'll take this. You'd oblige me if you'd shove it down Colonel Randall's tonsils ahead of a couple of yards of cheesecloth."

The nurse stepped forward right now. What a gal!

"You mustn't mind, sir," she said. "He goes clean out of his head every once in a while."

The French general's eyebrows rose. He couldn't make it out, though he knew something had gone haywire. And the interpreter qualified for the Big League right alongside that nurse. One of the college guys in that ward who spoke French told me about it a little later.

"My general," he says, "the Sergeant so courageous begs you to excuse him, because so many of his fellow-Marines who are dead were braver men, he says, than he."

The general spouted French. The interpreter says: "Sergeant Tatum, my General begs me to present his compliments, and inform you that you have the nobility of soul of a gallant gentleman. He accedes to your wishes, and he salutes you."

AND I'm damned if that French general don't stand at the foot of old Taters' bed and salute him like he was the President of France.

Then they go out, Colonel Randall never saying a word. Taters lies there, his eyes shut, and then he begins to grin. I didn't blame him. I grinned too. He'd got his chance, and he had smacked one out that even Ripsaw Randall couldn't field. He'd been tougher than old Rip Randall himself! That was worth more to him than all the medals in France. He'd pulled one nobody in the Old Marine Corps ever had the guts to pull!

But the best of it came more than a year later.

It was way over in 1919 before Taters was able to get out of the hospital, after they'd shipped him home on a hospital ship. I wasn't there when this happened. I get it from one of the old gang who was, though.

RIPSAW RANDALL is a brigadier-general then. . . . He shows up at Taters' hospital the week they're going to turn him loose, with one leg two inches shorter than the other.

"Tatum," says old Rip, "I've kept in touch with your case. I never was strong on apologies. I'm not apologizing now. Rougher things were done in France than rawhide a man about what he was in civilian life. Rougher things were necessary. But I want you to know that my recommendations and citations were turned back at division because of a personal difficulty with an officer higher in rank, and now out of the service."

Sergeant Tatum, like I told you, was all there when it came to bedrock.

"If the General will pardon me," says Taters, "the war's over and it was a good show while it lasted."

Old Rip Randall grinned.

"That's only part of what I came to say to you," he said. "Sometime ago I talked with the Major-General Commandant about your case. If you would care to remain in the Corps certified as physically unfit for active duty, but as a sergeant-major in the recruiting service—well, there is only one other non-commissioned officer in the Corps to share that honor with you."

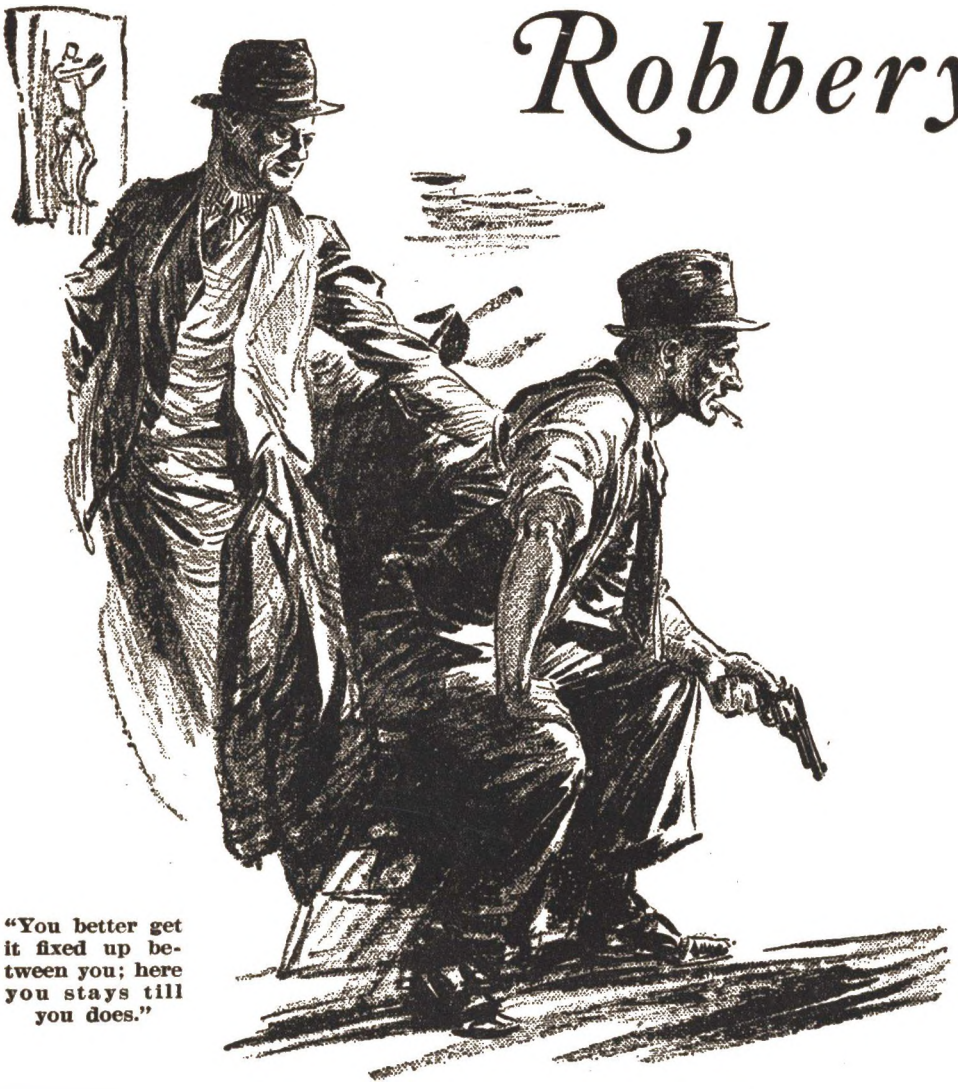
"Thanks, sir," said Taters. "I'd be proud to."

There was no French speeches nor salutes. They shook hands.

And six months later old Ripsaw Randall had to use all the wire-pull he had in the Corps to keep Sergeant-Major Tatum from getting a court-martial.

All Taters did was bust a chair over the head of a wise guy he heard question old Rip's ancestry!

Robbery



"You better get it fixed up between you; here you stays till you does."

THERE are bank bandits," declared Special Agent James Ashby, "and there are bank bandits."

Carl Sherman, clad in a white smock, and toiling at his desk in the great laboratory of crime maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, glanced up at the speaker, his keen eyes twinkling behind his heavy glasses.

"Just what prompts that sage observation?" he asked.

Ashby waved a strip of paper torn from a teletype machine.

"These lads," he asserted, "are scholars and gentlemen, as well as bank-robbers. They wanted to rob a bank. They had all the banks in the country to choose from. They chose the Traders' National Bank, of Syrport. That earns them my gratitude—if it is worth anything."

Sherman put aside the cards he had been studying. The twinkle in his eyes was more pronounced as he asked:

"What has the Traders' National Bank done to you?"

Ashby's gesture was airy, one of the little mannerisms which, together with his distinguished appearance, his courtly manner and his love of the finer things of life, had won for him the nickname of "Duke."

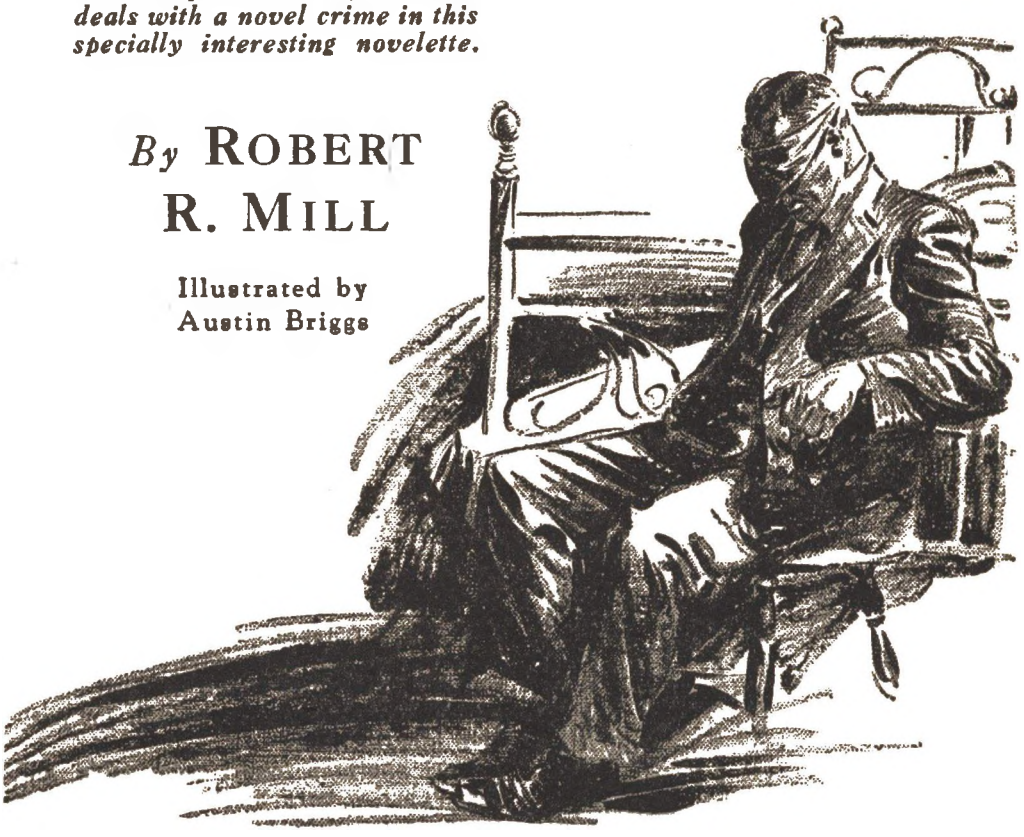
"Rumor had it," he explained, "that all was not well with the Traders' National. That rumor was so persistent that one of our bright young men was ordered to visit there, do some high-grade accounting, and count the cash." He sighed. "I was that young man. I never did like figures." He brightened visibly. "Apparently the bandits scooped up all the cash. Therefore there is no cash to count; whereby they have earned

# of Convenience

The Department of Justice deals with a novel crime in this specially interesting novelette.

By ROBERT R. MILL

Illustrated by Austin Briggs



my gratitude, for now I do not have to go to—"

"Wrong again!"

They looked up, to find the Director standing beside them. He was smiling, but his face became grim as he added:

"Your assignment to Syrport holds good. Instead of motoring, you will go by airplane. Report to Johnson, the agent-in-charge. We want this outfit badly." His smile reappeared as he extended his hand. "Good luck, Duke."

All the boredom was gone from Ashby's face.

"Under these circumstances, I know I'll enjoy Syrport," he said.

WHEN he was gone, and the Director had made his way to his own office, Carl Sherman went to work. He worked slowly, methodically and with precision. He had at his beck and call the greatest crime-combatant agency in the world. His to make use of were all the arts and sciences that play a part in the detection of crime, and each of the scientists working under him was the recognized master in his own field.

These things made Sherman, as head of the laboratory, the greatest detective in the world. Yet he bore not the slightest resemblance to the conventional picture of the professional man-hunter.

He was quiet, soft-spoken and modest. He would have been the first to point out that his claim to the title as the greatest detective in the world rested solely upon the resources at his command. Yet he radiated deadly efficiency as he went about his task.

News of the bank-robbery was coming over the teletype now, and Sherman examined the "takes" torn from the machine and placed on his desk. The rob-

bery had been the work of five men—four men had entered the bank, and one remained at the wheel of the get-away car.

Sherman consulted the file of *modus operandi* cards, first locating the heading, *"Bank Robberies,"* and then consulting the sub-index, *"Bands of Five."* Three known outfits were composed of five men. Sherman placed those three cards before him. . . .

The robbery had taken place shortly after the bank opened for the day. The cards showed two of the bands frequently employed that method. The card of the third, which did not, was pushed aside.

The bandits had herded the bank employees into the vault. Incoming patrons had lined up against the wall. The thieves had scooped up coin and currency, scorning checks and various kinds of securities.

One by one, Sherman checked these facts against the cards. Even before the descriptions of the men were received, he had made a tentative selection. The card covering the methods of a gang headed by one Joseph ("Foxy") Grabort was directly before him.

This was no black magic, no master-minding. Every man in almost every art, craft and calling brings into it something that is peculiarly his own. One painter has the secret of a deep blue that makes his work stand out from all others. A musician is known by his faultless touch. An architect has his own peculiar style that marks his work.

In more humble fields, a woodsman fells a tree so that the stump is equivalent to his signature. One bricklayer, working among a score, is entrusted with all the exacting corners. So it is in the world of crime: Every lawbreaker has his own technique. The Department of Justice is the first law-enforcement agency to attempt a general listing of those peculiarities, and to break down that master-list into almost countless sub-headings, so that it is readily available as a deadly weapon against crime.

THE descriptions, when they did come through, were of little value. They came from persons who had been under a great strain, and who, even under normal conditions, would be hard put to describe a man clearly enough for positive identification.

Carl Sherman tossed them aside, and dispatched a wire to the special agents working on the case:

"Check on Joseph (Foxy) Grabort."

That done, he turned to the cards on Grabort and the known members of his gang. They were more than revealing, these cards. They thoroughly covered

Technical men spotted footprints, traced their outlines and photographed them. "And take some of the sand," ordered Jepson.

the subject, his ways and his associates. They recorded his preferences in dress, food, drink, recreation, methods of transportation and a host of other things. Apparently nothing was too trivial or too intimate to be listed.

After an extended study of the cards, Sherman had compiled a list of cities in which Mr. Grabort and his associates were at home. To the offices of the F. B. I. in those cities went telegrams instructing them to check on the present whereabouts of Mr. Grabort and his pals, and also to check their recent activities.

Whereupon, in those various cities, clean-cut young men sallied forth into the underworld. They made no secret of their identity, or the object of their search. They made it evident that Mr. Grabort, to quote the underworld, was very hot. They threatened dire things to those who "cooled him off" by furnishing a hiding-place. By the same token, they hinted regarding rewards that would come to those who furnished information. That done, they sat back and waited.

Carl Sherman was waiting too.

Ashby, according to the teletype, had reached Syrport, and was taking charge of the search. The State police had the roads blocked. The local police reported the get-away car had been abandoned on the outskirts of the town.

Carl Sherman suppressed a smile as he made an invisible check against an item on the *modus operandi* card. Grabort invariably used two, and sometimes three, cars in his get-away.

The laboratory chief leaned back in his chair. The routine work on the case at this end was done, but he was not satisfied. A worried frown appeared on his face. It was like putting a puzzle together, apparently finishing it, and then discovering one piece left over.

Sherman's thoughts returned to Ashby, a fast friend of many years. He recalled their conversation before the Director entered. Then something clicked into place in his mind.

He pressed a button.

"Compile a list of every bank-robbery in the United States in the last three years," he ordered the clerk who responded to the summons.

He picked up the telephone.

Soon the official in direct charge of all cases involving bank-frauds appeared in his office.

"Grady," said Sherman, "I want a list of every known bank fraud, on the part of bank officials, for the last three years."

Grady nodded. "That's easy. There aren't so many of them."

"Grady," Sherman continued, "you must get lots of tips, some good, others worthless."

The official grinned. "Too many."

"Do you keep a record of them?"

"Certainly. We investigate them all. Even if our first check doesn't pan out, we drop back sometime later."

"Good," said Sherman. "Let me have a list of those tips for the last three years. Include the names of all banks against which you and your men had any reason to raise a question."

"Right," said Grady.

Sherman relaxed. He had found the place for the missing piece. . . . Mentally he studied the completed picture. It was perfect—outwardly. But it wasn't the picture he wanted.

He sighed softly. Only one thing to do: Scramble the pieces and begin again. It was late; he snapped on the lights. Two lists were placed on his desk. He took them up; this was the place to begin.

SPECIAL agents in the field picked up the trail at the get-away car abandoned in the outskirts of Syrport. Ashby, who had arrived by airplane an hour before, was among the first at the scene.

They found a young policeman, calm and capable, in charge. He was of the new school, the type who enter police work because they regard it as a profession. He watched interestedly as the Federal men went to work.

They went over every inch of the surfaces of the car. Every now and then powder was dusted on some spot. The fingerprint that appeared was photographed with a camera so small it could be hidden in the palm of the hand, but which had a powerful lens. That done, the print was covered with wax.

"Take them all," ordered one of the technical men. "Most of them will belong to local talent who have climbed over the bus, but we may get something."

The young policeman turned to Ashby. There was something about the tall, quiet special agent that attracted him.

"I think everything you get will help," the policeman said. "I was here almost as soon as the car was found. Nobody has been near it since. I saw to that."

Ashby shot an appraising glance at him, and liked what he saw.

"Fine business," he said quietly. "If we ran into that everywhere—well, I suppose it would make things too easy."

He turned to the technical man, and a tinge of acid crept into his voice.

"Concentrate on spotting all of them," he ordered. "You know, Jepson, you haven't a monopoly on all knowledge."

Then Ashby faced the policeman, his hand extended.

"My name is Ashby."

The man in blue was almost boyish in his pleasure and excitement.

"I—I've heard of you. Gosh! My name is Hammond."

Now special agents and technical men were on their hands and knees about a patch of sand surrounding one side of the car. They spotted footprints, traced their outlines, photographed them, and then preserved them in wax.

"And take some of the sand," ordered Jepson.

A puzzled look showed on Hammond's face.

Ashby hastened to explain:

"At least one of the bandits passed through that sand. He must have picked up some of it in the cuffs of his trousers. Assuming we get him, we will take the dirt from his clothing, analyze it, and compare it with the sample we have taken. If they check, it will help us to establish the fact that the suspect was in the car at this point."

Hammond nodded.

"I certainly would like to be in your outfit," he declared.

Ashby studied him intently. "Stranger things have happened," he commented.

Meanwhile, special agents were questioning near-by residents. Their quest was rewarded in the discovery of a small boy who had seen five men flee from the car and enter another automobile, which had been parked close at hand.

He was an intelligent lad. He sensed what they wanted, and at once began to describe the five men.

It was Duke Ashby who interrupted: "Never mind that, son. Tell us what the car looked like. I mean the one they had parked here."

"It was a black Speedway sedan," said the boy. "Say, are you G-men?"

Ashby was grinning. "They call us that. You didn't happen to notice the license-number, did you?"

The boy shook his head regretfully.

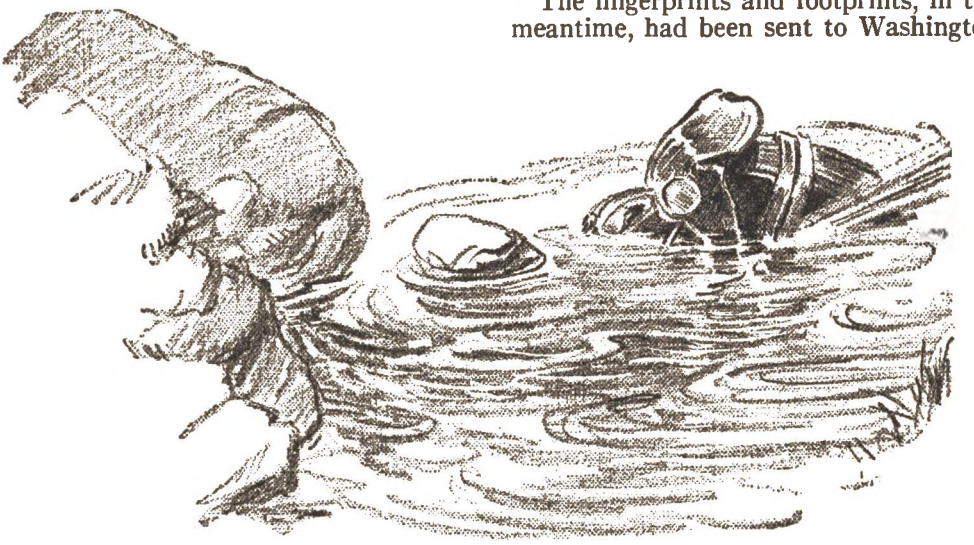
"Nope. All I can remember is that it began with, '7S—' "

Ashby's smile was approving.

"Good work, son. That's more than we get in most cases." He pointed at another special agent. "You tell that chap all about it. I have to be getting along."

He glanced at the telephone-wires running over his head, followed them with his eyes until a twisted pair entered a house, and then made his way there. Five minutes later State police patrols all over the State had the description of the second get-away car.

The fingerprints and footprints, in the meantime, had been sent to Washington by airplane. There they were deposited on the desk of Carl Sherman.



Back in Syrport, Ashby and the men with him marked time. Other special agents questioned the officials of the bank, and the customers who had entered while the robbery was in progress.

Then word came from Washington:

Two sets of fingerprints had been obtained from the car. One of them was the property of one "Porky" Leekar, so-called because of his resemblance to the

The farmer halted operations; he was a little afraid of what he might find.

animal with flesh which bears that name. The second set had been identified as the calling-card of one "Parson" Klend. Mr. Klend had not earned his name because of his religious tendencies. But he had a face so solemn and sad that the underworld could not resist calling him Parson. Both were followers of Foxy Grabort.

But all this was merely a duplication of pieces in the puzzle. It was the correct disposition of the original pieces that worried Carl Sherman. He took his troubles to the Director.

"Here," he explained, "is a bank where we had reason to believe there had been funny business. It is a relatively small bank, where only a few persons handle the cash. Before we have a chance to check for fraud, that bank is robbed. Assuming there has been fraud, this is a very convenient robbery. The shortage is merely added to the amount of the loot, as given out by the bank officials."

The Director nodded.

"Almost foolproof, from the standpoint of the crooked banker, isn't it?" he remarked. "Even if the bandits are caught, and the loot recovered, we get nowhere, as far as the bank officials are concerned. If the job was staged, the bandits merely say nothing regarding the discrepancy between the announced amount of the loot and the amount recovered. If the bandits insist the amount recovered is all they obtained, it is their word against supposedly honest bank officials. I wouldn't care to take that case into court." He leaned forward.

"We are up against something new here, Carl. It is something dangerous, and something we must stamp out before it gets fairly started. While we want the bandits, we—"

CARL SHERMAN thrust the two lists forward.

"Maybe this racket isn't so new," he interrupted. "Both these lists cover a period of three years. One of them is a list of all the bank-robberies in that period. The other lists all institutions where we had reason to believe fraud had been perpetrated."

He indicated check-marks on both lists.

"Four of the banks suspected were robbed. They were robbed before we had a chance to begin our check-ups. We were short of men at that time, and we were concentrating on other crimes. We

FOXY GRABORT

didn't take our jurisdiction in bank-fraud cases quite as seriously then."

The Director's face was grave.

"Apparently we still aren't taking it quite seriously enough. But go on, Carl."

"These four banks," Sherman continued, "were small institutions, in which only a few persons have access to the cash. Assuming there were actual shortages in only two of them, the fact that they had a convenient robbery is too much of a coincidence for me to swallow."

"Far too much," the Director agreed.

Sherman went on with his recital:

"Three of these four robberies are known to be the work of the Grabort mob. The fourth is a borderline case, with identification not positive, so we will not consider it here. But we are certain about the Syrport job, and that brings the total to four—four shaky banks, scattered all over the country, all conveniently robbed by the same mob. Again, much too much of a coincidence."

"Yes, Carl; and here we have the gravest phase of the whole situation: Assume these robberies were staged—how did Grabort get in touch with these bankers? How did he know they were prospects? How did these people get together?"

Carl Sherman nodded. His keen eyes were blinking behind his heavy glasses.

"Exactly, sir. That is the aspect of the puzzle that worries me. None of the rules seem to apply. We have—"

But the Director was thinking aloud:

"The average banker is a decent, law-abiding citizen. Defalcations are the unusual exception, and certainly not the rule. You can't convince me that it is common knowledge in the banking profession that the way to cover a shortage is to employ Mr. Grabort and his mob. If that knowledge came to even one law-abiding banker, we, or some other law-enforcement agency, would hear about it."

He made notes on a pad.

"It narrows down to this: If Grabort makes the first advances, how does he know which bankers to approach? If the suggestion comes from the banker, how does he know Grabort is his man? And how does he know where to make contact with him?" A wry smile appeared on the face of the Director. "Our bright young men haven't had much success along that line."

Sherman tempered his statement with all the caution of the man of science:

"This is merely a guess—but I believe Grabort makes the contact."

"Very well!" snapped the Director. "How does he do it?"

Sherman's eyes twinkled.

"Tiny David, the New York State trooper with the picturesque vocabulary we told you about, probably would say that he must use an ouija board." The twinkle vanished. "Outside of that, I have no explanation to offer."

Once more the Director was thinking aloud:

"We want Grabort and his mob. We want the gentleman in the Syrport bank who did business with him. We want the other bankers who were in cahoots with him. We want watertight cases against them all. But more than all that, we want to know just how this racket was worked, and we want to know every detail."

He struck the desk with his fist.

"Until we know that, we can't hope to stamp it out. We can dispose of this entire outfit, and the game will be played by new players. We have to learn just what that game is, and end it for all time. How about it, Carl?"

Carl Sherman nodded.

WHEN he was alone, he spread his hands over the desk and scattered the papers there; again the pieces fitted, but once more the completed picture was not satisfactory.

Carl Sherman scribbled five telegrams to five different field offices of the Fed-

eral Bureau of Investigation. The telegrams requested complete reports on five different bankers.

TWO days later the cold trail of Grabort and his associates became warm again, and it led the special agents three hundred miles to the west, and into an adjoining State. A farmer, preparing to fish in his favorite stream, noticed that the surface of the water was covered with an oily scum. Angered at this pollution of his fishing-grounds, he investigated.

He was thorough and efficient, this farmer. A sapling on the bank became a long pole, with which he prodded about on the bottom of the river. In a very short time he located a large metallic object which refused to budge. By this time his curiosity had conquered his desire to fish, and he returned to his house. A short time later he reappeared with a crudely fashioned but rather effective grappling-iron, to which he had attached a heavy line. After repeated efforts he succeeded in hooking the object; finding it unyielding, however, he harnessed a team of horses, and attached them to the line. Soon the front part of an automobile appeared above the water.

The farmer halted operations at that point. He was a little afraid of what he might find. But his natural curiosity prompted him to probe this mystery.

The river, at this point, was spanned by a rather frail wooden bridge. Glancing up at it, he saw that the guard-rails were intact. But the banks on both sides of the stream were so heavily wooded that it would have been impossible for a car to reach the water thence.

Therefore, reasoned the farmer, the car must have plunged from the bridge. A hasty examination of the structure made it apparent that the guard-rail had been removed, and then hastily replaced.

That was beyond the farmer, so he telephoned the sheriff, who promised to dispatch a deputy to the scene; the deputy, in turn, took one look at the partially submerged car, and announced:

"Speedway radiator. That's the getaway car those bank bandits used."

They had the car completely out of water, and had searched it several times, when Ashby and other special agents arrived by airplane. The search of the Federal men revealed a secret compartment, and from it Ashby, with a little cry of triumph, pulled a road-map, the sort furnished motorists by the gasoline companies.

A crowd of deputies and interested residents milled about the special agent as he prepared to unfold the map. He hastily refolded it, and with a look of disappointment announced:

"This isn't exactly what I would call a big help. It covers five States."

But later, when they were alone, the Federal men examined the map. A route was traced in pencil. It began in the heart of Syrport, and extended to the outskirts, where the second car had been parked. Water had somewhat damaged the paper, but penciled notations were visible. A large *"X"* denoted the second car. Beside it was the notation, *"20."*

Ashby was frankly excited.

"That means twenty minutes from the bank to where the second car was hidden. Grabort is a hound for thoroughness; he always rehearses his jobs."

Ashby's pencil followed the penciled line. It extended west, and where the wooden bridge crossed the river a second *"X"* had been placed. Also the notation: *"5:45."*

Ashby translated:

"The third car was parked here. Carl Sherman told us this baby believes in plenty of changes in cars." He examined the notation. "Five hours and forty-five minutes for about three hundred miles. That's averaging about fifty-five miles per hour. Not bad. Moving right along, but not fast enough to attract undue attention." He did some figuring. "Yes, that brought them here in the dark. Made it convenient to ditch the second car in the river. Let's see where we go from here."

FOR more than a hundred miles on the map the penciled line was drawn westward. It crossed the line into another State and ended near a town called Easemount. There a black square had been drawn. The square included the entire town and a bit of the surrounding territory, as revealed on the map.

"Journey's end," murmured Duke Ashby. "I wonder?"

He was deep in thought for a moment.

"Who knows Easemount?" he asked.

A young special agent spoke up:

"I do, Duke. Resort town. Cottages and camps. Several large resort hotels. One commercial one. Plenty of transients, particularly at this time of the year. Ideal place for a hide-out."

Ashby nodded.

"It looks as if Foxy's cleverness has caught up with him this time." He

hastened to correct himself: "Not that the actual mistake was his. He drew the map, all right; but it is a safe bet one of his little helpers was detailed to transfer that map from car to car. I wouldn't care to be in that boy's shoes when it is missed." He shrugged his shoulders. "But those are Mr. Grabort's troubles, and we have enough of our own."

Ashby glanced over the men grouped about him.

"Easemount is a small place. If any army descends on it,—no matter how careful we are,—Grabort and his mob will be off. Blake, you take three men and register at the commercial hotel. You are a circulation crew for *Freedom,* the monthly magazine that should be in every home. You are appointing local agents. Put in the next day or two interviewing applicants. The old stuff, but it will account for you for the next three days. Do you have the blanks and stuff with you?"

Special Agent Blake nodded.

"Good," said Ashby. "The rest of you scatter yourself around the small towns near Easemount. Don't bunch up. As soon as you are located, report to Blake by telephone. You are parts of his crew. After you report, stick close to the telephones, so he can get you in a hurry."

He surveyed the group.

"Everybody understand?"

CARL SHERMAN had five different reports, concerning five different bankers, before him. His face wore a worried frown as he studied them. He was hardly aware that the Director had entered the room and stood at his side.

"How goes it, Carl?"

The man in the white smock shook his head sadly.

"Not a chance," he lamented. "They have done a fine job on these reports. They are complete and accurate. Despite that, the five subjects are as alike as peas in the same pod."

He waved a finely formed hand.

"After all, these men are small-town bankers, and the small-town banker does run rather true to type. I had hoped to use the reports to spot one who might be vulnerable. We could pick him up, tell him what little we do know, intimate that we know a great deal more, and perhaps force a full confession from him."

Sherman pushed the cards aside.

"It might work with the average man, but not here. These men have tasted years of power, due to their positions. They have been the lords of their own little domains. They have held in their hands the power of life and death over most of the establishments lining the main streets of their towns. They have won that position, and held the power it entails, largely because they have been able to outguess and outbluff these other men."

He smiled bitterly.

"I would back Duke Ashby in a battle of wits against almost any man, but not a small-town banker. And here the cards would be stacked against him from the start, because we have so very little to work with. No, we have to find another road."

The Director, who had been examining the cards, pushed them aside.

"Where do we go from here, Carl?" he asked.

Sherman made a gesture of defeat. "Frankly, I am not sure." An idea came to him suddenly. "How well do you know George Costan?"

"Costan, of the Integrity Bond and Surety Company?" asked the Director.

"Yes," said Sherman.

The Director smiled.

"Well enough to call him George, and to know that he plays a terrible game of bridge."

"Think he would run over from Baltimore, if you invited him?"

"Certainly," said the Director. "Want him?"

Carl Sherman nodded assent.

"I want to talk with him. His firm bonds almost every bank employee in the country. He must know the inside story of ever so many honest men who have gone wrong. I want to talk with him about the mental processes they go through. I want to discuss the first false steps they take, and what inevitably follows."

He smiled.

"It may not mean a thing—I admit that. But it is about the only opening I can see right now."

DUKE ASHBY drove slowly along the main street of Easemount, until a small sign attracted his attention:

"Easemount Weekly *Argus.*"

Then he parked his car and entered a doorway beneath the sign.

Seated behind a railing, with his back to the visitor, was a young man pounding a typewriter. He turned slowly as Ashby entered, and the special agent had ample time to study his features.

"Shut up!" came the terse command. "Climb into the bus!"

He was young, apparently in his middle twenties. His face reflected keen good humor. His manner was alert. Ashby liked him on sight.

"Something for you?" he asked.

The special agent smiled. "Are you the editor?"

The young man returned the smile.

"Just at present—yes. However, if you have an ad for us, I am also the advertising manager. If it is a subscription, I am the circulation manager. Stick around an hour, and you'll find me functioning as the composing-room force. Call tomorrow, which is publication day, and you'll see me in action as the press gang. In other words, you see before you the staff of the Easemount Weekly *Argus*."

Ashby regarded him sternly.

"You haven't mentioned deliveries. I did that too, when I ran a weekly."

The young man extended his hand across the counter.

"Brother!" he said.

Then he brightened visibly.

"Don't tell me you are interested in buying another weekly! An up and coming weekly, in a thriving and prosperous town. Please don't tell me that. I can't stand shocks."

Ashby shook his head. "I am not buying a weekly, but I want to make use of yours."

The young man studied him intently.

"Is it a real-estate promotion? Possibly some stock that will double in value the minute it is listed on the Big Board? Or have you a sister who will put Joan Crawford in a far corner—if only given the chance?"

Ashby's eyes were twinkling.

"All my old callers have been around to see you, evidently! By the way, are you the correspondent for some of the city papers?"

"All of 'em, including the news services."

"Good. How would you like a story that will hit Page One in every paper in the country?"

The newspaper man sighed.

"I have it now: Your Aunt Eva is entertaining the—"

Duke Ashby unbuttoned his coat, and held it back until the tiny gold shield of the Department of Justice was visible.

The young man whistled softly.

"A cop! You? I give up. Well, we live and learn." He walked around the counter. "By the way, the clown act is over. What can I do for you?"

Ashby's mood matched his.

"Maybe we can do business. I am taking a long chance by coming in here. It may undo all the work many men have done in long hours. We don't go in for melodrama, but this visit can cost some of our men their lives. We need somebody who knows Easemount. Having been a newspaper man myself, I decided to gamble on another one."

AGAIN the young man extended his hand.

"I like to think you came to the right place, Mr.—"

"Ashby," said the special agent.

"Paul Dudley," came the answer. "What can I do for you, Mr. Ashby?"

"We are looking for the mob that robbed a bank in Syrport. We have reason to believe that they have a hideout here. They probably have rented a cottage or a camp, and have been living here for some time. Maybe there is a woman or two in the party. But that is just a guess.

"You probably keep an eye out for new arrivals. I wish you would run over the crop for the last few months in your mind. Eliminate all those you have definite previous information on—I mean information about them before they came here; but if there is any doubt, keep them among the eligibles. Can you do that?"

The young man nodded.

"Yes. Take a bit of time. But our *Coming and Going* columns will help refresh my memory. I'll check over them. Why don't you make yourself comfortable in the next room? You'll be out of sight from the street there."

Ashby nodded. "By the way," he said, pausing in the doorway, "we try to pay our debts. When, and if, this breaks, it falls into your lap, as an exclusive."

Dudley smiled. "Fair enough—but not necessary. I hate rats. By the same token, I never have outgrown a kid habit of building up heroes—if you get what I mean."

As Duke Ashby stepped out of sight, the back of his neck was a dull red.

CARL SHERMAN and George Costan sat on opposite sides of a desk in the laboratory of the F. B. I.

"It's a very old story," the surety company official explained, "and a very sad one. I expect you know it as well as I do. Very few men deliberately intend to be dishonest. Some emergency arises: An extravagant wife—perhaps merely keeping up with the Smiths. Gambling—drink—even blackmail. Yes, any one of a hundred things.

"Then comes the first false step. He almost invariably lulls his conscience by pretending that this is merely a loan, to be repaid at a later date. In some cases, the payment is made. In more, I imagine, the original 'loan' is followed by others, and soon the total is so large there is no hope."

Costan paused. "Is that about what you want?" he asked.

Carl Sherman nodded.

"We are getting there," he declared. "Now, if you will, consider the case of a small-town banker, sorely pressed for money beyond his income, regardless of what the reason may be. What would be the usual procedure?"

Costan pondered.

"Offhand, I would say there would be quite a preliminary period before the start of actual dishonest transactions. The average banker would be almost certain to have a number of personal investments that he could realize on. There probably would be bonds in certain civic projects—bonds that he had almost been forced to buy. There would be other things of that sort. My guess would be that he would dispose of all that sort of thing before yielding to temptation. Of course, if the yield from that was not sufficient to meet the demands, or if the demands continued, he would be no different than any other man. But I suppose you are interested in him only if he yields to temptation?"

"Not at all," Sherman declared. "You have started a new train of thought. Wouldn't the mere fact that a banker started to dispose of holdings of that sort be an admission that he was hard-pressed for cash?"

"It might," Costan admitted, "if the transactions became known generally. But there are quite a few ways of getting around that."

"How?" Sherman demanded.

Costan's expression was quizzical.

"We have one or two investment houses in this country that might—note the use of that word '*might*'—might not be above making an extra penny. Let's assume our banker friend goes to them. He offers to sell a perfectly good security, but requests privacy, and asks that the security be kept off the open market for a certain period of time. The investment house agrees, and charges a price for that service."

"Just as a fence would do with stolen jewels or securities?"

"Exactly. Only here the chances are that the transaction is perfectly legal."

"Admitted. But wouldn't the officials of that investment-house be fairly certain that our banker friend was in a tight place?"

"They certainly would suspect that," Costan agreed. "But as the banker is their client, and their profit comes from him, I suspect they would protect him."

Carl Sherman was mentally re-sorting the pieces of his puzzle.

George Costan noted the lack of attention, and stood up.

"I am afraid I haven't been much help, Mr. Sherman. The best I had to offer was vague generalities. It is rather difficult—"

Sherman's up-raised hand halted him.

"Forgive my rudeness, Mr. Costan. You have given me so much that you have me reeling. We must dine together—in Baltimore, and soon. Over our cigars, you shall have the whole story."

Then Carl Sherman was off, heading for the office of the Director. The pieces of the puzzle were falling into place. The pattern that they began to form was a satisfactory one at last.

DUKE ASHBY and Special Agent Ralph Blake sat in Blake's room in the Central House, Easemount's commercial hotel, poring over a list.

"It's a long chance," Ashby admitted, "but we may save a lot of time by eliminating these first. Dudley, the chap at the paper, put a lot of thought in this. These eight families are all comparatively new arrivals. Dudley knows where they said they came from, but as he aptly pointed out, for all he knows they may be from Timbuctoo."

"Has he talked with any of them, and had a chance to size them up?" Blake asked.

"Virtually all of them," Ashby said. "But as he pointed out, again very aptly, in this Year of Grace 1937 it is getting increasingly difficult to tell a gang moll from a society girl, and almost impossible to differentiate between a top-flight gangster and a successful dealer in wholesale produce. Particularly in their lighter moments."

Blake grinned. He walked to a door connecting with the adjoining room and opened it.

"Come in, Howard," he directed.

Special Agent Victor Howard entered. He was young, almost boyish. His smile was frank, disarming and attractive.

"Here you are." Blake handed him the list. "Get to work on them." He hesitated a moment. "And watch your step, youngster."

Howard's blue eyes were dancing.

"I don't quite get your meaning, suh." His Southern accent had the perfection that came from years of residence in that section. "Even these Yankee folks act right nice to a boy trying to get through college."

THEY were waiting for him when he returned later. He had eight magazines, each of which had been thrust into the hands of a prospective subscriber at one of the houses on the list. The magazines were numbered. The list also bore like numbers, showing which magazine had been used at each address.

Duke Ashby and Blake, both wearing rubber gloves, began to tear the front and back covers from the magazines and dust their surfaces with powder. The fingerprints that appeared were given a protective coating of wax.

Next they placed a card containing enlargements of Howard's prints at their side. Then they produced pocket microscopes and began a count of the various prints that appeared on the covers. They drew circles around those that were identified as belonging to Howard.

When the covers had been wrapped in a package, they left the hotel, entered their automobile, and drove to a town thirty miles away. There they sent the package via air-mail to their laboratory in Washington.

Then they sat back to wait. They might have something, or they might have nothing. Ahead of them, in event of the former supposition being correct,

was a battle in which it was reasonably certain that some of them might die. Meanwhile, Easemount knew them as the members of a magazine circulation crew. Ashby, if he was noticed at all, was merely a newspaper man out of work, who had stopped off to call on an old friend Paul Dudley, of the *Argus*.

Their waiting came to an abrupt end with word from Washington. Prints on the magazine-cover marked *"Exhibit Number 7,"* had been matched with one of the cards among the collection of more than seven millions. That card bore the name of Dolly ("Big-Hips") Dorfer.

"Package for you," said the driver. . . . Then his careless manner vanished. "Department of Justice! Stand away from that door!"

Big-Hips, according to the information received, was a member of the gang headed by Foxy Grabort. More, quoting underworld rumor, she was the current object of Mr. Grabort's frequently roving affections.

Both Dudley and Howard remembered the lady. The newspaper editor supplied the most vivid description:

"She looks like a passée chorus girl, or a society girl who has been out for five seasons and is trying to look like a chorus girl."

Then word came from the Director:

The house where Big-Hips held forth was to be kept under constant surveillance. But there must be no attempt to close in and capture the occupants. Furthermore, Special Agent Ashby was to report in Washington forthwith. Even now a plane was winging its way to an airport near Easemount. Ashby was to hasten there, and board it. . . .

"I don't like it," ruled the Director, with an air of finality. "It's"—he hesitated, groping for the proper word—"it's extra-legal."

Carl Sherman sighed gently.

"I don't like it, either," he admitted. "But here," he went on, "we are bagging difficult game. We have a supposedly upright man who betrays his trust. I have less sympathy for him than the professional criminal. This same man, in

order to keep his false cloak of respectability, does not hesitate to call upon the professional criminal."

The Director nodded.

Sherman warmed to his task:

"We must fight him with his own weapons. Simple reasoning tells us that fear must be his driving motive. Fear drove him to steal. Fear of exposure drove him to Foxy Grabort and his gang. Naturally, he must fear the law. But far more, he must fear these forces he has been trading with. We must stamp this out; and to do so, we must capitalize on the greatest fear."

The Director hesitated, then said:

"It isn't only this case. It isn't only the other cases like it in the past. We are up against a new racket, and one that is almost fool-proof. It must be broken up. Even so, I hesitate to step over the boundary we have established."

Sherman remained silent, shrewdly allowing the other man to arrive at his own decision. But before that decision was reached, a messenger entered.

"Mr. Ashby has arrived, sir."

"Show him in," the Director ordered. He turned to the man at his side, and nodded. Carl Sherman relaxed. As far as he was concerned, the case was virtually ended.

HERMAN CANDLOP, president of the Traders' National Bank, of Syrport, studied his reflection in the glass with smug satisfaction as he washed his hands in the private washroom off his office, preparatory to departing for the day. Mr. Candlop was very pleased with himself, and with the world. Just a few days before, that condition had not prevailed.

Even now he shuddered slightly as he recalled what he had escaped:

It all had started with that damned convention. Not that he was opposed to conventions. They gave a man a chance to relax, a chance to let down the barriers imposed by his position in a small town. Even now, amid the bitter realization of what he had walked into, he tempered that humiliation with pride in the masterful conquest he had made. Things like that made you realize you were still in the prime of life, and not an old has-been.

Violet had been wonderful—at the start. Even later, when her demands were for greater sums, and were delivered with more force, she had been the victim of circumstances. First it had been a sick sister. Then a brother who had made a mistake, and who needed money to make restitution, and escape prison.

Goaded on by her threats,—but even more by her flattery,—Candlop had satisfied her demands. It was just fate that things had been bad at the bank at that time. Fate again that after the first false step, other emergencies had arisen. Fate once more, and with a streak of luck, when things really looked desperate, that had placed him in touch with that man Grabort—and a solution.

CANDLOP combed his thin hair as he recalled with satisfaction how complete that solution was. The shortages—many shortages—were included in the sum that had been announced as the loot of the bank-robbers. The bank was insured against robbery. The insurance company had not raised a question.

Now let them come! Let them go over his books. Let them count the cash—everything checked, to the penny.

Candlop hummed a little tune as he left the building, carefully locking the door behind him. He was the last to leave—also the first to arrive in the mornings. He had stressed this habit in many of the little talks he had given to schoolboys, outlining for them some of the qualities that had brought him success, and modestly pointing out how great that success had been.

He walked north on the main street for a few blocks, then turned to the east. This was his custom. He never used his automobile in going to and from work. He needed the exercise. Furthermore, the friends and acquaintances he passed on the street could not fail to notice the democratic spirit he displayed. He frequently had imagined conversations, all of which ran along about like this:

"Nothing high-hat about Candlop. Walks along the streets just like the rest of us. After all, that is the test of greatness: retaining the common touch."

Bevins, the grocer, watched him turn the corner this particular evening, and said to his wife: "There is Candlop, hoofing it home again. Saving gas. Probably has it all figured out to the last farthing. The old skinflint!"

Fortunately for Candlop's peace of mind, he did not hear this as he entered the side street. And a short way along that street, he had other things to occupy his mind.

A car was parked under the trees; a man was seated behind the wheel and two other men slouched beside the car.

A sudden chill passed over the banker. His impulse was to retrace his steps, but his natural arrogance drove him onward mechanically. He fought back his fears as he approached the car. He had nothing to fear. The deal had been satisfactory to both parties.

Candlop drew abreast of the car. The two men on the sidewalk closed in beside him. He felt a hard object pressed against his side.

"Shut up!" came the terse command. "Climb into the bus!"

Candlop's knees sagged. The man on either side supported him. The door of the car opened. He was bundled in, rather unceremoniously. The door closed. The car sped away.

THE DIRECTOR and Carl Sherman sat before a flat-top desk, upon which a map was spread. Two telephones were on the desk. In a room near by, a special agent sat before a telephone switchboard.

The bell of one of the telephones buzzed. The Director answered it.

"Keep in touch," was his final order. He placed a pin on the map.

"Blake and his men have the Grabort hide-out surrounded," said the Director. "They are ready to close in."

There were more telephone calls. More pins were placed on the map. After each call, the Director repeated his order:

"Keep in touch!"

Carl Sherman studied the map. Various pins had been put in place. Each pin represented a banker whose institution had been robbed by Foxy Grabort and his gang, and at a time when that bank was believed to be in difficulties. The fact that the pin was in position indicated that special agents had picked up that banker, and were beginning to question him.

Sherman looked up from the map: "No word from Ashby?"

The Director glanced at a clock. "Not yet," he snapped.

CANDLOP sat in a chair in a corner of a poorly furnished room, blindfolded. The adhesive tape that had sealed his mouth had been torn away, and not gently. He was afraid, but he fell back on his favorite weapon—bluster.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" he spluttered.

One of the three men guarding him spoke from the corner of his mouth:

"You can see de chief about dat."

"What do you mean—the chief?"

The spokesman for his captors hesitated, then said:

"Don't play dumb. Did you ever hear of a guy called Foxy?"

Icy pains stabbed at Candlop's heart. He moistened his lips with his tongue.

"What—what does he want with me?"

The laugh that followed was not pleasant.

"You gets t'ree guesses."

Candlop swallowed hastily. Then he proceeded cautiously:

"If the gentleman you refer to is the one I have in mind, we—er—we transacted some business." He was secretly afraid. He had the feeling his life was at stake, or, in any event, exposure was very near. But he remained pompous. His voice was unctuous. He employed the manner he might use before a board of servile directors.

"That business was mutually satisfactory. We made an agreement. I lived up to my part of it. The other—other gentleman did the same. There is nothing further to discuss."

Again came the unpleasant laugh.

"Foxy aint kickin'. It's de guy what made de contact. He says he got to have his. Foxy says that it aint comin' out of his, on account of you shavin' him down to solid rock. So de guy gets nasty. We got to keep him quiet. You can see dat."

Candlop sparred for time.

"You mean Aspord?"

The gangster's voice became harsh.

"Dere aint no use tossin' names around. But you's put it down, so let it lay."

Righteous indignation surged over Candlop.

"The ingrate! He is deeply indebted to me for—as a result of other transactions. He gets nothing from me—not another penny. I'll take good care—"

"Pipe down!" came the terse command. "Maybe dis bird is just stallin'. He knows nothing aint coming from Foxy. Maybe soon as he knows you aint no fall-guy, maybe he lays off."

Candlop put all his strength in the assertion:

"Not another penny!"

"Okay. It aint no skin offen my elbow. Dat is between you and him. But you better get it fixed up between you. Here you stays until you does."

A faint ray of hope appeared to Candlop.

"How am I going to get anything fixed, if I am detained here?"

"Dat's easy," came the response. "You writes dis guy a letter, tellin' him what

is what. We sees how he reacts. If it is okay, you goes about your business."

Candlop staked everything on a final appeal.

"You can't do this to me. This is kidnaping. You know the penalty for that. As soon as I am missed, the search will begin. Furthermore, if I am released, I will be in a far better position to transact the business you mentioned."

"Nuttin' doing," was the verdict. "Does you t'ink we's saps? The sooner dat letter is on its way, de sooner you gets out."

Candlop went through an inward struggle. He recognized determination in that voice. He conquered his dislike of putting anything in writing, by resolving to word the letter so it might mean anything.

"How can I write?" he demanded.

The blindfold was removed from his eyes. He blinked for a moment. His captors were standing with their faces averted. Before him was a table. Upon it was paper and an envelope. A pen was thrust into his hand.

"Address dat envelope!" came the grim order.

Candlop's fingers were shaking as he wrote:

"Mr. Homer Aspord, Reliable Security Company, Program City."

His captors stood behind him, reading over his shoulder. As he finished the address, one of the men left the room.

IN Washington, the Director fairly shouted into the telephone:

"Good work! When you get anything else, send it along." He replaced the receiver. A pin was jabbed on the map. Carl Sherman smiled with relief. That was Ashby.

The Director called an order to the special agent on the switchboard:

"Get the field offices on the hook-up. Tell them we believe the contact was made through Homer Aspord, of the Reliable Security Company, Program City.

"Get the Program City field office. Have them pick up Jepson."

The Director turned to Sherman, a smile of triumph on his face.

Carl Sherman sat back in his chair. The drama went on. . . .

In Easemount, a closed delivery-van drew up before the house in which Foxy Grabort and his gang had taken refuge.

The driver, clad in rough working-clothes, and carrying a package, approached the front door.

A plump and blondined woman opened the door in answer to his summons.

"Yeah?" she demanded.

"Package for you," said the driver.

She bent to examine the address.

The face of the driver underwent a change. His careless manner vanished. He issued the order with clipped words:

"Department of Justice! Stand away from that door!"

He moved toward her at the same time. But he was not in time to stifle her scream. So Special Agent Wood tossed the package so it would block the door.

At the same time Special Agent Blake blew his whistle. The shrubbery near by yielded men carrying sub-machine-guns, who charged toward the house.

WOOD struggled with the woman. Windows were being slammed shut. The main rush of special agents reached the house in time to encounter a closed fortress. And upon the exposed step of that fortress stood Wood and the woman, the latter fighting like a frenzied animal.

The muzzle of a gun poked through a half-closed shutter. The man behind the gun squeezed his finger. Special Agent Blake fired at the same time.

Wood fell, a bullet in his shoulder. Inside the house, Porky Leekar fell away from the window, a bullet between his eyes.

A special agent raised a gun, aimed at a window, and a shell of some sort entered the house. There was the sound of an explosion. The special agents fell back a trifle, carrying Wood with them. Taking refuge behind trees, they waited. The woman had fallen on the steps. They left her there, screaming.

From inside the house, came screams, oaths and volleys of obscenity. The special agents waited.

Then the back door was thrown open. Led by Grabort, men came charging toward the fresh air, tears streaming from their eyes, and coughing violently. The gas from the house followed them out the opened door.

The agents massed on that side of the house were waiting for them. There was no struggle; for now Grabort and his men, gasping and coughing, were well aware that the game was lost for them.

Soon Blake was on the telephone, with a matter-of-fact report of what had happened. He briefly described the capture. He told of Wood's wound, making haste to explain that it was not serious. He told of the passing of Porky Leekar.

Mentally, Carl Sherman made a note to have Mr. Leekar's card removed from the "active" file.

Other reports were coming in. The information was telephoned to the various fronts. One by one, the suspected bankers, confronted with facts they could not deny, made full confessions. Grabort saw a chance to escape a few years of a long sentence, and made a confession. Aspord proved stubborn at first. Then he added his bit to the full picture.

The telephone reported it all. Then Duke Ashby was on the line.

"Candlop broke down, sir, and told the whole story. We got what we needed most while in the capacity of gangsters. When we had it, we did a quick change, and became special agents. The change was too much for Candlop. He came clean. How about Blake, sir?"

The Director told him. He added words of congratulation.

"It was rather a neat bit of kidnaping, sir," Duke Ashby admitted. "It should be. The old master-mind planned it. Is Carl there, sir?"

Sherman found the receiver thrust into his hand.

"Hello, Duke. Splendid work." He brushed aside some pointed remarks from the special agent. "Just tried not to let you down at this end. Think we have covered everything."

An afterthought came to him.

"When the newspapers get on this, we will refer all inquiries to you at Easemount. That will give you a chance to pay your debt." He laughed softly. "That reporter has something coming to him. Not everybody will give us information that leads us to a Foxy Grabort, and then turn over his own camp to us for a kidnaping. . . . What? . . . Oh, my part was nothing, Duke. Just routine work. Hurry home!"

He replaced the receiver.

The Director had risen and was smiling.

"No more routine tonight, Carl. Go home."

He paused in the doorway.

"Another triumph. Success is heady business. There are times when it almost gets me. Then I think of my men: Ashby, and his rather neat bit of kidnaping. You and your routine work—your routine work which this time was a bit extra-legal. Then I become humble."

His voice was gruff.

"Good night, Carl."

Another fine story by Robert Mill will appear in an early issue.

Flowers of the Sea

In this department readers and writers meet to tell true stories of their own most memorable hours. (For details of our Real Experience contest, see page 3.) First the famous author of "My Life at Sea" describes another episode of his apprentice days.

By BILL ADAMS

SOMETHING has brought to my mind the park gates. You know how it is, over in England? Lord So-and-So has a park, and at the entrance are gates. By the gates is the gate-keeper's lodge. Well, at the park gates of which I speak there was no gate-keeper's lodge. There were no trees near by, no flowers. No crows passed cawing overhead at evening. No bird nested in any tree or bush near by. How we apprentices of the old four-masted bark in which I served my four-year apprenticeship used to hate those park gates!

And now, for some reason or other, thinking of the park gates has brought to my mind the old Chinaman. I see his wrinkled yellow face plainly as though I had but just passed him by. It gives me a guilty feeling.

If the ship had not had a bridge, there would have been, probably, no park gates; and no old Chinaman to give me a guilty feeling. The bridge ran forward from the poop, and ended in a T between the two quarterboats. It had brass rails which were at all times kept dazzlingly bright. We apprentices who did the polishing were very glad when the Old Man decided to have them painted white. The

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bridge deck, of pine, was always kept spotlessly white. When the after-hold was being discharged, the bridge was hoisted, the T part remaining stationary close to the mizzenmast.

It was at Steveston, the dismal little fishing village at the mouth of the Fraser River, where we went to load salmon for Liverpool, that the park gates came into being. At the outskirts of the village was a little wooden Presbyterian church, close to which was the little wooden house in which lived the old minister. One afternoon the old minister's wife called on our Old Man's wife. The Old Man's wife returned the call. And when the Old Man's wife saw the minister's wife's flower garden, she decided that she must have a garden too.

Chips, the carpenter, was called upon to construct upon the T part of the bridge a strong, deep wooden box. It stood on four short, strong legs, some six inches above the bridge deck. When it was completed, we apprentices were ordered ashore, each carrying a gunny-sack which was to be filled with soil wherewith to fill the box. It was directly after breakfast one hot morning that we went ashore, and it was on our day ashore that we met the old Chinaman. We were not familiar with Chinamen. They were curiosities. And in those days they still wore pigtails. This old fellow had a very long pigtail; and by his very long pigtail we tied him to the rail that ran along one end of the narrow wharf at one end of the cannery beside which the ship lay. First-voyage apprentices were apt to be very proud of their knot tying, and we tied him very securely. No one ever used that piece of wharf, save an occasional Chinaman, or Siwash Indian, who came there to fish. The old fellow remained there in the hot sun all morning while we came and went. Each time that we passed, he pleaded with us to untie him. It is his eyes that disturb me today. I fear that the old chap developed a very bad headache. And to his shade,—for he must long ago be dead, —I freely admit that I was and am a foreign devil.

WHEN the box was full of earth, the Old Man's wife planted a number of little rows of seeds; at the end of each a stake, and a label bearing the name of the seed in the row: columbine, Canterbury bell, larkspur, sweet William, primroses. It was a few weeks before we went to sea that the garden was completed; and thenceforth, each morning, after breakfast, the mate would blow his whistle for an apprentice. Aft would go an apprentice to the bridge, where the Old Man's wife awaited him. Morning by morning an apprentice would take from her hand a watering-can, walk ashore, fill it with water, return, and hand it to her, that she might water her seeds. Apparently she judged the water in the ship's tanks not good enough for her seeds. Morning by morning, noon by noon, evening by evening, the Old Man's wife would visit her garden, and peering at the soil, search for signs of growth. There was still no sign of any growth when we went to sea.

On the first day at sea, Chips was very busy in his shop. When the dog-watch came, the mate blew his whistle for an apprentice. "Two of you boys go to the carpenter's shop," he ordered. And to the carpenter's shop we went, to carry thence to the bridge a heavy glass cover for the Old Woman's garden. Morning by morning, noon by noon, evening by evening, the Old Woman peered at her garden, hoping that, with glass above them, her seeds would sprout. Nothing sprouted, and at last she gave up hope for flowers. But if flowers would not grow, perhaps something else would. On the

top of the midship deck-house was a hen-coop with some hens in it. And in the lazarette were some sacks of wheat for the hens. One morning an apprentice was called to the bridge. With the Old Woman for overseer, he dug up the soil in the garden. Then the Old Woman planted wheat in place of her flower-seeds.

ONE morning after we had left astern the chill mists of the North Pacific, and were rolling down a sunny tradewind sea, the mate blew his whistle for an apprentice. "Go to the bridge. The Old Woman wants you," said the mate; and to the bridge I went.

"Open the park gates!" ordered the Old Woman; and not at first catching her meaning, I stared at her perplexedly. She repeated the order; and understanding, I raised the glass cover of her garden, that the sun might shine direct upon the little rows of pale green wheat that had sprouted during the night.

Morning by morning after that, just when a hungry apprentice was ready to hasten to the half-deck the moment eight bells struck, the mate's whistle would blow for the opening of the park gates. Evening by evening, just when a tired apprentice had put away his deck-broom after the regular sweeping of the long decks, and was ready to hasten to his supper, it would blow for their closing. Added to the countless little jobs that fall to the lot of an apprentice,—the greasing of the royalmasts, the overhauling of buntlines, the coiling of ropes, the taking a pull on this rope or on that which was not quite tight enough to please the Old Man's fancy,—the park gates became a by-word, and were hated with the hate that none but a sea apprentice knows. And as her park gates were hated, so also did we come to hate the Old Woman. The Old Woman and her garden were the cause of more bad language in the half-deck than were all the buntlines put together, all the brasswork that must be polished, all the little annoying jobs that, falling to the lot of an apprentice just when he thinks he is entitled to be free to go below and have a peaceful pipe, or a cheery sing-song out on the main hatch, rile his youthful soul. Yes, an apprentice had plenty to do besides being nursemaid to a few straggling stalks of pale green wheat! But all the way down the Pacific we opened and we closed the park gates, and the wheat grew taller and taller, and the Old Woman came and went with her watering-can. And one evening, passing by where she stood with the Old Man, I overheard her say: "Well, wheat's better than nothing at all. It's not much, but at least it's something green and growing." I repeated her words when I came to the half-deck, and the eight of us jeered at her.

And then one evening not long after we had passed Pitcairn Island, the mate's whistle blew, and we ran out to the deck to see a great cloud coming up, black and threatening from the west. We were losing the southeast tradewinds and picking up the westerlies. And the westerlies came with a rush and a roar. We braced the yards, and taking the wind upon our starboard quarter, ran away at a grand clip for the Horn. And now, because the air was full of little sprays flying, the park gates were very seldom opened. The wheat was grown high, so high that its tops touched the glass. And one morning when at the mate's whistle I went to the bridge to lift the glass for the Old Woman, she had a pair of scissors in her hand. She was going to cut some of the wheat and set it in a vase in the saloon!

She smiled at me that morning. And smiling at me, she said: "I've followed the sea for nearly thirty years. I've never had any flowers." And when I went forward to the half-deck, I repeated that to my young comrades, and we all laughed and jeered. Young lads we were, hot-headed; without much understanding of, or caring for, the strange deep things of life. Full bellies and as little work as possible were the things we cared most about. And God knows well that our young bellies were seldom full enough in those hard days, and that the tall four-master with her great spread of sail, with her braces, halyards, lifts, vangs, leech-lines, downhauls and brails, with her decks to be holystoned and her kicking wheel to be fought, gave us more than plenty of work for our young muscles.

DAY by day the Old Woman had the park gates opened after that, that she might cut a few stalks of the wheat to set in a vase in the saloon. And soon most of the wheat was gone and the earth in the box was bare. The Old Woman wore a sad look that day. "It would be nice to have some flowers," she said to me. And that day, somehow, something in her face, in her tones, kept me from making fun of her when I joined my young comrades in the half-deck.

It was a night or two after the last of the wheat was gone, and the vase taken

from the saloon table, that the west grew black as thunder and the moon went out, lost behind a mass of fast-advancing cloud. And just as the moon went out and a deep gloom fell upon the ship, hiding her arching sails, hiding the length of her long white decks, the mate's whistle shrilled. "All hands shorten sail!" came the order. And out ran the watch below, to join the watch on deck.

Blacker grew the night, and blacker, till sail and spar were hidden, and we were hauling on the ropes in utter darkness. And before we had time to take the topgallant sails off the flying ship, the squall struck her. The Old Man's voice sounded from the poop: "Look alive there!" Sails crashed, flapping high in the darkness far above us. Ropes skirled through their straining blocks. "Watch out!" came the voice of the mate as the ship braced herself to take the blow of a great sea rushing upon her in the utter blackness. And in that utter blackness men and apprentices laid hold tight to stanchions, to hand-rails, to shrouds; lest when the grayback broke aboard, it would sweep them to their doom.

IT burst with a thundering roar, coming over the bulwarks all the way from just before the mizzen rigging to the crossjack brace belaying-pins. The quarterdeck was filled with invisible raging white water. And for a little space no man gave thought to aught save his own life, for to do aught else was impossible. But presently the decks cleared, and without having lost a sail, we at length got the old ship shortened down to six topsails and a foresail. Away she went, running like a stag with the hounds at its heels, for Cape Horn. And not till the cold dawn broke, did anyone know that that great sea, sweeping over the ship in the midnight's darkness, had carried the Old Woman's garden over the side. It was gone completely, not a trace left. So we eight young apprentice lads laughed and were merry. "You'll never have any flowers now," we said mockingly. . . .

Some fifteen years had passed by since we had loaded the old four-master with salmon at Steveston. I was living ashore, nigh four hundred miles from the sea. And by the sea, nigh four hundred miles away, were living the Old Man and the Old Woman, long since retired. And one day word came to me that the Old Woman was gone to her last long watch below. And then I remembered the days when I was a young sea apprentice, full of the devil, caring for little save a full belly and to avoid work whenever possible. I remembered the old ship, how she looked with her thirty sails all set and drawing to a fine fair wind. I remembered the park gates, and how at morning, noon and evening the Old Woman used to stand by them. I remembered how sometimes I'd see the Old Man and the Old Woman standing side by side; and how, as I passed them, they would sometimes look at me: no expression in their faces, save one of infinite patience —that infinite patience which is to be seen in the eyes of all such as, having long served the sea, know that of all qualities needed by the sea's servitors, patience is the one most essential.

For me, a reckless young apprentice filled with youth's devilments, there was neither judgment nor anger. It was as though those two minds were unaware of me. That Old Man and that Old Woman were grown gray in the service of the sea. Little ease had been theirs ever. The joys of such as dwell in security upon the shore were unknown to them. No gay songbird had ever whistled for them at dawning from any leafy perch, nor at evening from any breeze-swayed treetop. No lark for them had ever winged upward in the noontime, pouring out its soul in ecstasy of song. Only for them had been the gray gulls, the petrels, the sea pigeons, the mollymauks, the albatross, the marline-spike bird; birds of hoarse voice, homeless wanderers upon the great deep sea.

For that Old Man and that Old Woman had never been any flowers. Never had rose bloomed at their bedroom window, never pansy nor peony, primrose, forget-me-not, larkspur, nor any other bright blossom by their doorstep. For them had been only the white flowers that, when the rolling sea curls and breaks, fall ever from its broken ridges. And thinking of those days, it came to my mind how the Old Woman had said to me that day: "I've never had any flowers."

SO then I went out into my garden, where grew flowers in great profusion. And for the Old Woman, for the dead wife of that Old Man of mine, I gathered an armful, and with light twine bound them together in the form of a great white anchor. All white flowers they were; and when the anchor was ready, I started for the place, four hundred miles away, where the Old Man was alone now.

It was long past dark when I came to his door. He was sitting as if alone, in a room in which were several people: a lonely look in his eyes surrounded by wrinkles. Friends of his and of his Old Woman's sat all about him there: friends who held him and the Old Woman in high regard, and were come to try to comfort him now that the Old Woman was gone to her last long watch below. As I entered that room, he looked up, and in a moment saw me. Then, instantly, there passed from his face that look of loneliness, and there came to his aged eyes a look as I had often seen upon it in the old days at sea. He rose and he stretched out a hand, and took in his hand my hand. And then, with my hand in his, he looked round upon those people in the room and spoke; and in his words was a something of the old bold proud murmur of the great salt sea. I saw sails arching to a brave wind as he spoke. I saw the bow-wash breaking from a good ship's swift advance; I was once more a young apprentice boy, and he my skipper.

To those people who were come to cheer him, he said: "Here's one of my old boys, come four hundred miles to stand by me now." And in his voice there was gladness and surprise. Though I was a man, in the prime of my manhood, he called me "one of my old boys," and I was proud to have him so call me. And soon the room was empty, save for him and for me. We sat silent for a long time, two seafaring men together. Let such as dwell upon the shore talk; we had no need of it. And next day the Old Woman was borne away from the spacious room in which she had lain, all surrounded by flowers. That spacious room, and the wide hall without it, were filled entirely with flowers; for the Old Man and the Old Woman had many shore friends and were held in high repute. But of all the flowers, there left the house but one garland, and upon it was a little card on which I had written: *"From the boys of the old ship."* And as, with the Old Man leaning on my arm, I followed the Old Woman to her last long watch below, I seemed to hear, faint, from far away, the shrill of the mate's whistle. And again, from down the long years, there came to me the mate's voice: "The Old Woman wants you."

I would that a tall ship were heaving up anchor, homeward-bound, with me aboard her. . . . But that is quite all right. Nothing can rob one of one's memories.

Spy Scare

THERE is such a thing as having too good a memory for faces, and mine cost me at least one embarrassing moment. It began back in the war-days when young men were fighting in the trenches while old men were stirring up national mob-hysteria in order to help sell the Liberty Bonds. War is like that.

Hysteria, that was it. And a part of it was the spy-scare, the espionage panic. There were, no doubt about it, German spies at work here. Hundreds of them. But there was a period during 1918 when some communities saw a "spy" in every German delicatessen store, a U-boat in every lake.

For instance, I know a Bohemian-born American chap who was naturalized in 1914 and who has a sense of humor. He had also a certain calm, detached point of view, and a flair for writing good English. In 1917, when things were most hysterical and we were getting yarns about babies spitted on Boche bayonets, he wrote a poem, kidding the public a little about all this propaganda. They printed his poem, and at once the authorities clapped him into an internment camp, charging German espionage and propaganda. Incidentally, he's here today, a good American citizen, and none the worse for it.

Another sample,—and I could give hundreds,—was a man in my home town whose name was something like Von Lippelmann. Local pressure got so bad that the poor devil changed his name to Scott, and even then, by 1918, he had been dropped from every group, club and church in town. They trailed him on the streets; they listened in on his party line. They peeked in his windows at night. They kicked his three American-born daughters out of school. They browbeat and humiliated the poor old fellow until it broke him down. And finally when his employers fired him on the grounds that his presence was "prejudicial," he cracked—and committed suicide.

But the one I remember most vividly happened to me. I joined the Marines in 1917, went through Paris Island and was sent to Norfolk for my first duty —doing a running guard at the navy yard.

A favorite writer tells of a curious training-camp experience.

By FULTON GRANT

We had spy scares and U-boat scares weekly. Most of us were "boots," all trying to be heroes, and it made us jittery. Scary, in a way. Hardly a day went by without somebody "seeing" a U-boat in the James River.

I went out to Virginia Beach to the rifle-range for a three-day match. While there, somebody telephoned in to our barracks that somebody was signaling in code, flashing lights out to an unseen U-boat at sea. Considering the tension we were all at, officers and men, that did the trick.

A detail was formed, and I was part of it. A young lieutenant whose name I withhold took charge of us. He took us along the beach, crawling—on our bellies! We deployed and went through every trick and formation that shavetail imagined they used in No Man's Land during a raid. The thing got eerie. We saw Germans in every clump of seaweed, periscopes in every floating branch. After a mile of this crawling we were in a dither, all of us. Not physically afraid, but morally scared blue.

AND then we came to our objective, a nice little cottage down the beach, decent and respectable. But the porch-light *was* going on and off and on and off irregularly!

We surrounded the place, put a man at each window and three at the rear. The Marines had the situation well in hand, you can be sure. Then our lieutenant took two of us (I was one), crawled up on the porch, rang the bell and pounded on the door. It opened quickly enough, and there was a nice-looking young chap in pajamas with a screw-driver in his hand and a puzzled expression on his face, and a deep, rich Virginia accent. Back of him was his half-frightened little blonde wife, in a kimono, the very quintessence of all pretty Southern belles—aristocratic, even slightly aquiline features and a low contralto Southern voice.

"Why—what in the world—what you fellahs want?"

My officer told him—plenty.

He stared; then he grinned. He had a nice grin. He had a tiny scar on his left cheek that showed when he grinned and looked like a small dimple. He grinned at us again, then turned to his wife and said: "Good Lawd! Marylee, d'you heah that? Mistah Officer, that's too funny! . . . Look!"

And he showed us where he had taken apart the electric push-button that lit the porch light from inside; it had fused and sparked and scared his newly-wed wife, and he had been trying to repair it.

His name, he volunteered, was Gerald Timberlake of Keyneville, and he was on his honeymoon, and wouldn't the lieutenant have a drink on him? But the lieutenant's face was much too red.

WELL, the next scene was ten years later in Paris, France.

I was sitting on the terrace of the Cafe de la Paix, talking with another newspaper man over a couple of Pernods. My friend was the sort who gets around and knows everybody. I was used to his breaking into our conversation by waving his hand and saying "Hi, there!" every ten minutes or so; but when suddenly he jumped to his feet, snatched off his hat, and saluted somebody or other with unusual gallantry, I had to look up and see.

It was a young couple. He was tall, about thirty, terribly Continental, wore a monocle, had a waxed mustache, very straight and military and poised. She was blonde and very swanky and a little haughty.

At my friend's salute, he snapped to attention, clicked his heels and raised his bowler, giving a quick little smile. But when he smiled, I saw the tiny scar on his cheek that looked like a dimple, and I remembered that night at Virginia Beach.

When they had gone in, I said to my friend:

"Small world and all that, eh? How come you know the Gerald Timberlakes of Virginia?"

"Timberlakes my eye, son," he said. "That's Count Rupprecht Von H. and his Countess. You wouldn't believe it, but that mere kid is one of Germany's cleverest unofficial observers at the League of Nations. Remarkable young fellow, really. And his wife's quite something, too."

"Oh," said I, and it was my turn to have a pink face.

P. S. I hope my ex-lieutenant reads this.

The Wise Cat

THE Ward Road jail at Shanghai —the largest in the world, containing six thousand prisoners—was bombed by the Japanese recently and nine men of a party of ten exercising in the yard were killed by the first shell. Press reports went on that the tenth was the renowned Liau Tsi Amau, perhaps the most fabulous prisoner ever confined in a Chinese penal institution.

Cable charges being what they are, American readers were not given the details of his fame; but mention of his name, which translates *"Wise Small Cat"* took me back to the first time I saw him, as thrilling an experience as a man can have, and one I have no desire to repeat.

It was after his first arrest in a long career, and the scene was the Provisional Court where Chinese captured within the Settlement were tried before Chinese judges with foreign consular representatives sitting in to see justice done.

The small room was jammed. Towering, turbaned Sikh police, British and Chinese plain-clothes-men, uniformed natives of the force and the plain curious. The last numbered scores, for Liau was undisputed king of the *bong piau,* the most successful and feared kidnaper in a country where this racket is looked upon as a legitimate business venture that pays high returns.

He was a short man, scarcely five feet two, dressed in a foreign-style suit of khaki that blended with the olive-yellow of his cheeks and brought out his snapping ebony eyes in high relief. The Palace and Astor hotels knew him as a prince of spenders; the most dainty of cinema stars were his constant companions. *Taipans* of extensive means cultivated him if only to be let alone. Informers he had by the score, ever anxious to tip him off to the arrival of a rich merchant from the interior, a foreigner with more money than sense in succumbing to the lure of almond eyes, or a government official laden with "squeeze" and ripe for the taking. Similarly he had a bodyguard of daring, fanatically devoted men to whom he was little less than a god.

But when I saw him he had suffered his first bad joss after a long if dishonorable career; and the Settlement police were anxious to tie him in a web from which there could be no escape. Mr. R. T. Bryan, Shanghai Municipal Council prosecutor, was handling the case personally, and a half-dozen witness were waiting to testify.

But Liau surprised everyone by blandly pleading guilty midway during the reading of the charge against him, and the room gasped. Under Chinese law the penalty for kidnaping is death, and when the only possible sentence was passed upon him, he took it with a perfect nonchalance. Several years of experience covering the court for a newspaper in the Settlement had taught me to be prepared for anything, but I had thought that Liau with his wide acquaintance and considerable backing would have put up a desperate fight.

Of a sudden I thought I could read more in his impassive face than appeared on the surface. So, also, must have Bryan, for he left the room hurriedly.

Soon the "Black Maria" was on hand to take Liau to Kiangsu, nine miles away, where executions were carried out. I crowded in beside him when he left the room, and my heart pounded when I saw Bryan had waiting four machine-gun crews in motorcycle side-cars. He was taking no chances of attempted rescue.

LIAU accepted it with a nonchalant shrug, but before stepping in he turned to me and said in good English: "You want to see me die, come along."

Fortunately, no other reporters had heard him or showed any interest after the trial, and I had visions of a scoop. But my hopes dropped with each turn of the wheels as we rolled through Shanghai, out into Chinese territory and the gates of Kiangsu opened to admit us. A large crowd was waiting. Liau did

A Shanghai correspondent's weird story of a bandit who thrice beat the executioner.

# of China

By ALFRED BATSON

not disappoint them. He strolled across the field with complete disinterest.

The preliminaries were gone through, and the executioner looked to his pistol. Then Liau's arms were bound behind him. He walked forward and knelt at a command. The executioner stepped up, placed the muzzle close to the back of his head and fired.

There was a groan, and Shanghai's kidnaper king slid forward on his face. A police official tested his heart. We all saw the gaping, blood-clotted hole. His eyes were closed, and his knees had drawn up in the manner most men die.

I was disappointed. My scoop had proved a dud, and when the crowd dispersed and the police went back to Shanghai, I lingered on invitation of the warden to write up his model prison. It would be a good Sunday feature. Liau was left behind on the execution-field. He would be buried by prisoners later in the afternoon.

WELL, I got the prison story, and was having a cup of tea with the warden, when an aide rushed in, his face white and his eyes staring. Liau had disappeared! We tore out to the spot where we had last seen him, a forgotten, grotesque blot of khaki-clad flesh. Sure enough, he was gone! Yet no one had been near him after the gates had clanged behind the departing curious. I knew that for a certainty.

The only possibility was the twelve-foot wall, and we examined it. There was a red splotch halfway up that told the story. He had gone over, whether by the help of a rope thrown from the outside, or by his own ability alone, no one could say.

The story spread like wildfire. To the superstitious Chinese, the "Wise Small Cat" became a spirit in league with the powers of darkness. To the Shanghai police, he became something else again, and the Settlement underwent a man-hunt such as it had never experienced.

The prison warden was fired and disgraced; yet he insisted on his innocence. The executioner wailed that he had had no part in it, but was similarly fired. The police official who had pronounced Liau dead was a Britisher beyond reproach.

There the trail vanished in the air for a long two years. Meanwhile kidnapings had been on the increase. The height of audacity was reached when the garrison commander of the Woosung forts disappeared and was released only on payment of one hundred thousand dollars. He had a strange story to tell. His abductor had been Liau Tsi Amau, but that wasn't all.

Liau had come to him a year before and for one thousand dollars bought a commission. The army would be a good place to hide from the British police. The general couldn't see that he was anything but a smart man for taking the thousand. But Liau had repaid his kindness soon after by kidnaping him. He had been held aboard a junk on the Whangpoo, and every morning the sunrise gun of the fort had awakened him. Now he wanted the police to catch Liau and retrieve his thousand dollars.

The capture was not difficult with the clews provided, though the money was never located.

So again Liau was in the Provisional Court, and again I was covering the trial. He saved considerable time by blandly admitting he was the "dead man" come to life. He showed the healed wound in the back of his head, and a foreign doctor said after examining him that the bullet was imbedded deep in his skull. But when the prosecutor asked how he had escaped, he retreated within his shell. They couldn't get it out of him and after a half hour gave up trying.

AGAIN Liau pleaded guilty. The same sentence was passed and when he heard it he chanced to be looking directly at me. This time he smiled.

Well, I smiled with him, a little grimly, perhaps, for I knew the police would permit no slip such as had caused them a loss of "face" on the previous occasion. But Liau was counting upon something they had not taken into account.

They took him out to Kiangsu again and stood him up against the wall. Now under the Rendition Agreement then in force the killing had to be done by a

Chinese, yet when the police motioned the executioner to go forward he flatly refused, shouting and cringing, more scared than I had ever thought a man could be.

Liau, he said, was an elf, a spirit, protected by an unseen hand and if he should try to kill him his family and himself would be visited by horrors worse than death. The police could do nothing. Several other executioners were tried with the same result.

No man wanted the stain of Liau's blood on his hands.

AFTER much wrangling that took the best part of the afternoon a compromise was reached: A half-dozen quaking prison attaches were lined up and given rifles. The police explained that some held bullets, some blanks. Thus no man would know whose trigger-finger should bring about Liau's demise.

Even then they protested, begged to be excused, pleaded bad eyesight, anything, everything.

But the police were adamant. Finally the rifles roared. Yet Liau did not fall. Rock chipped off the wall behind him but he stood there a frail, smiling figure that defied the foreigner's ingenuity.

When the Chinese saw that, they were done. Some of them ran from the scene and hid. Others fell sobbing to the ground. One asked the police to shoot him. They'd have to shoot him, he said, for he would not raise a hand against the fabulous Liau Tsi Amau again.

Eventually the police gave up. The prisoner was brought back to the Settlement and lodged in jail under the eye of a British turnkey. . . .

Months passed, and Liau's hold over the superstitious Chinese grew with each passing day. Stories of his divine protection encompassed the whole of ancient Chinese folklore.

Yet the police were not to be outdone. The man who had cheated death on two previous occasions would not escape again. So a foreign-style scaffold was erected in the prison yard, and six men from the deep interior, strangers to Shanghai and unacquainted with Liau's background, had been imported for the occasion. To make sure nothing would go wrong they were kept secluded until the day of hanging.

I got the tip when it was to be, and I was out there, much to the annoyance of the police, though they could not bar me as it was Chinese territory. Liau was not so unfriendly. He brushed against me as he went up the steps and again he smiled, that puzzling, brief smile that said nothing yet hinted at volumes.

"Hello," he said casually. "Perhaps you will see this time."

The method of execution to be used was highly ingenious. Six cords leading to the scaffold trap were stretched across a board. One was good, the others false. At a signal the six men were to draw sharp knives across the board, severing the cords.

A police official tested the rope. It had been brought out from the Settlement. The hood was placed over Liau's head and his arms tied behind him. After a final check that everything was ready the signal was given.

The knives cut. The trap fell. The rope straightened, hung a split second, then broke with a loud snap! Liau tumbled eight or ten feet to the ground below.

The scene that followed was a maelstrom of confusion. The police ranted and raved. The Chinese prison attachés frowned, shook and turned away. I couldn't blame them. My heart had ceased beating suddenly and a cold sweat broke out over me. A feeling swept over me suddenly that there was more to Chinese superstitions than was within the power of foreign infidels to understand.

It was discovered that Liau had broken both legs in the fall. The police could do nothing but return with him to the Settlement. But those legs took a long time in healing and there were other complications.

Meanwhile the Rendition Agreement had been rescinded, and under the new law the "Wise Small Cat" was sentenced to life in the Ward Road jail, a commutation that I thought was deserving.

I returned to the States shortly after that, and Liau was forgotten until I read of the shelling and the deaths of nine men, with Liau being spared again.

LOOKING back over those three occasions when I had seen him face death and come away victor, I was not surprised he had again escaped. I am an American, with no time for the nonsense of superstition and black magic; yet I have a feeling that regardless of what happens to the jail during the fighting around Shanghai, the Cat will come out alive and bland-faced. After all, he still has five lives ahead of him.

Spanish Battle-fronts

A vivid picture of this bitter civil war as seen through the eyes of a young Spanish noblewoman serving as a war-correspondent with Franco's armies.

By MARQUESA NENA de BELMONTE

FOR five years I had lived in the United States—a life of fun, gayety. The possibility of ever finding myself mixed up in a war never crossed my mind.

And then came July 18th, 1936; General Franco began the Nationalist Movement from Morocco. Civil war in Spain: blood, horror, destruction—war!

A short time later I became an eye-witness of this warfare,—as a feature war-correspondent for an American newspaper syndicate,—and covered the war with my own people, the Nationalists.

Pictures of moments never to be forgotten. It was at the Madrid front. . . .

"Tanks! Tanks!" some one shouted. We saw one coming toward us, followed by a group of Red militiamen wearing civilian clothes. The small anti-tank gun began firing at once. Soon all around a very hell of fire—machine-guns, rifle-shots, heavy artillery shells. The tank kept its steady advance. Our small anti-tank gun kept on shooting at it. Soldiers fell, hit by the tank's machine-gun fire. For a moment I believed nothing in the world would stop the steel monster from reaching us. And then, all of a sudden, it stopped and shook as if in agony. An anti-tank bullet had finally hit a vital spot—a small hole on one of its sides, through which smoke came out.

A man rushed out of the tank into the road. His clothes were on fire. He didn't get far. Flames enveloped him as he fell on the ground. Quickly the anti-tank gun resumed its fire against other steel monsters already approaching while Red Cross stretchers removed the wounded. And as the battle raged on, I took a last look at the "dead" tank—the corpses of four militiamen around it, two more inside; and, on the road near by, the legs of that man who had tried to escape death—only the legs, the rest had been consumed by fire.

I HAD driven to the Madrid front from Salamanca, General Franco's general headquarters. And although I had started the trip alone, now I had a companion, a pup police dog. Going through Torrijos, a village heavily damaged by war, I had found a house burned down—only the bare walls standing. Before the closed door a huge police dog stood watch. Next to her, the little pup. As I tried to approach the house, the police dog barked furiously. "Better not get too near," one of the nurses at the near-by hospital told me. "That dog is bound to bite you if you do."

We went away. Later, as I was having lunch with the nurses on the open court-yard, the police dog approached the table. She was amiable now—wagging her tail with pleasure as I gave her a piece of meat.

"Why this change?" I inquired.

"Her masters were killed by the Reds," I was told. "The house was set afire.

Ever since, she stands watch before the door. She won't let anyone get near the ruins; but every day at meal-time she comes here, and we feed her. While she's eating, the pup—her son—stands the watch. You'll see—when she's through eating, she'll return to her post, and the pup will come to eat."

I was keenly interested in the story. Such loyalty was really moving. And sure enough—a few moments later, her hunger satisfied, the police dog went back to her post, and the pup then joined us. "Take the little thing with you," some one suggested. "He'll be good company and a swell guard!" I thought it a brilliant idea. Taking the pup along, I returned to the demolished house. The police dog looked up. "May I take him with me?" I asked, pointing at the pup. "I'll be terribly nice to him." The pup jumped around in excitement, seeming to understand and like the idea. The police dog regarded me with keen eyes —then her tail wagged friendlily, she approached the pup, licked him with affection, and then returned to the door to resume her watch. A few minutes later I was on my way again, accompanied by a most excited and thrilled companion—the pup police dog.

OUR next stop was a first-line artillery position. Its commander was an old friend of mine. He was wounded while I was there; I saw him fall. Two bullets in his right arm. Yet he didn't utter a word of complaint. His soldiers were deeply moved. They all adored him, and felt his wound more than if they had been hurt themselves.

Later in the afternoon we witnessed an even more moving incident. A sergeant was brought back from the first-line trenches badly wounded. When his captain asked him about his injuries, the sergeant replied: "Don't bother about me, Captain—but I want to make a report on my soldier Juan Perez. He's a brave fellow—he deserves a reward, Please don't forget his name, Captain." I saw that man die a few moments later —a smile on his lips, his last feeble words being: "Long live Spain!"

In the evening I visited the position of the Foreign Legion's First Company, or as it's called in Spanish, *Bandera*. Men, powerful and strong. Always at the first line, they are one of the best shock troops General Franco has. There was plenty of shelling and shooting. At a tent some of the Legionnaires were dancing. They were gay and happy. Suddenly one of them stopped and looked in surprise at his chest. A little hole, and from it oozing a tiny stream of blood. A flying bullet got him. "Isn't it too bad!" was his only comment. "I was having so much fun!" The others laughed. They joked about it. The wounded Legionnaire himself thought it rather funny. Then he went off to have the wound dressed. The other Legionnaires resumed their clowning.

DURING the campaign to conquer Bilbao, I went to the Northern Front.

An advanced position was at Peña Orduna. I reached it at five-thirty A.M. A strong fog made visibility extremely difficult. Utter silence. It was hard to believe the enemy was only a few hundred yards away from us. The statue of the Virgin of Orduña stood there on its huge pedestal. Soldiers were lying flat on their stomachs. Cannon were hidden all along. Suddenly a voice coming from somewhere in the fog gave the command: *"Fire!"* Cannon, machine-guns, rifles, all began shooting at once. The enemy replied immediately. We could hear the piercing whistle of their shells and bullets flying all around us. The thick fog enveloping us didn't even let us see each other. Suddenly a whistle even more piercing than the others. An officer yelling: "Down to the ground, everybody! *Quickly!"* We obeyed the order without arguing. A dreadful roar—a terrific shaking of the ground. Dust and stones falling all over us. An enemy shell had exploded twelve yards from us! Why no one was hurt, I still don't know. A guardian angel watching over us?

The fog didn't lift. It was ghastly, this fighting against something that couldn't be seen, and yet we knew to be right near us. At eight, amidst the continuous roar of the shots, a truck arrived, and in it the regiment's band. The musicians got out and stood at the border of the trench, their instruments ready. Both sides stopped shooting as if waiting, no one knew what for! A few seconds of deep silence. And then, all of a sudden, obeying a voice of command, the band started playing the National anthem; the cannon, rifles and machine-guns added their sound of thunder, and we all stood, arms raised in the National salute, hardly visible in the thick fog, listening to the anthem of the New Spain! Moving and magnificent! A knot formed in our throats.

At first the enemy kept quiet. Then they began shooting again, and amidst the roar of the battle, I could hear their voices shouting—enraged, furiously.

A great stage director could never have thought of a more impressive spectacle: Fog, distant sun, mountains, rocks, the Virgin of Orduña standing on her pedestal, cannon being fired, soldiers firing their guns, and we visitors, standing there saluting, while the band played the National anthem. At ten, a mass was said right there in the trench. The enemy now kept on firing steadily, but no one moved. Officers, soldiers, everyone kneeling devoutly. Bullets flying all around, yet not a muscle twitching on any face.

IT was a few weeks later that the Nationalist armies conquered Bilbao. I reached the liberated city with the victorious soldiers. And what a spectacle! People coming back to life and freedom after months of hunger, thirst, torture. . . . I saw those people kneeling on the ground, arms raised in the National salute, tears filling their eyes, cheering the soldiers of Spain, as they attended the Holy Mass in the public square. Men, women, children—old and young, all deeply moved. While the bands played and the priest addressed them, and the people and soldiers cheered, my legs trembled, and my eyes watered.

Late in the afternoon I was walking alone, the pup police dog my only companion, through an almost deserted square. A man walked toward me—a Basque warrior, a *Gudari,* as they're called in their native language. He was a magnificent specimen of manhood—tall, strong, broad-shouldered. He carried a grenade in his hands and kept it close to his body. The look in his eyes was something never to be forgotten. Despair at defeat, hate at the sight of an enemy. Frankly, I was quite scared. I'd had bombs explode near me; I had heard bullets flying over my head, but to have a man walking toward me, a grenade in his hands, was something new and much more terrifying.

Luckily a soldier came along. Realizing the situation, he stood still, and I could see his hand slowly going to his revolver. The Gudari saw that movement too. For a second the three of us kept absolutely quiet. Then, before the soldier could pull his gun out, a deafening roar! I covered my eyes as I threw myself to the ground. When the noise died down, I looked up. And there was the Gudari, both hands blown off, a ghastly hole in his stomach. Rather than to surrender or to kill us, he had killed himself. Poor man—a true, courageous fighter. The soldier saluted, and as people began to gather around, I went on.

But it isn't at the front only that a war-correspondent meets with adventure. Sometimes the peaceful, normal life of the rearguard will be upset by some unexpected happening. And such was the case when once I found myself at Seville enjoying a few days of fun, on my way from one front to the other.

I happened to be out that evening with a young officer friend of mine, on leave. We had gone to Antequera for dinner, and on the way back the car broke down. While the driver fixed it, we went ahead, walking. A beautiful night. No moon, but a sky full of stars. Suddenly we saw a man lying at the roadside. He wore a torn shirt, had a long beard, and looked rather drunk. We talked to him, and his vague replies to our questions aroused our suspicions. We then asked for his documentation. He replied he had none—had lost it somewhere. My friend got his revolver ready, just in case.

And he wasn't any too soon. The apparent drunkard pulled a knife from his belt and jumped at us. The officer fired one shot, not at the man, but at the ground near him. The other stopped. My companion demanded that he surrender his knife. Looking at the officer's revolver, he did as told. Then we marched him down the road to the artillery barracks near by. It was there that we found he was a Red, held for murder in the local prison. He had escaped in the afternoon, and guards had been looking for him ever since.

We finally reached my hotel. We parted at the elevator door. The officer was returning to the front the next day, I myself was going back to work. "Good luck," I said, "until we meet again!" My friend didn't reply. He took my hand and kissed it affectionately. Then: "Yes, until we meet again, either here—or in heaven!" And he went off.

WAR—in all its horror and all its beauty. Moments of anguish, fear, despair—moments of happiness, of victory, of emotion. As I dance and amuse myself in New York, I dream of the moment—very near now—when I shall go back to the Spanish battle-front and resume my work as a war-correspondent at my country's service.

A Wanderer's Scrapbook

(Continued from page 5)

Higher postage and snarling frontier officials make it impossible to do such a thing today. This is a suspicious world in which we are living now. The youngster who wishes to wander cannot do so. When I was a kid, the world was wide and ports were open. I have stepped ashore at a hundred ports in pre-war days without any person asking a question, but those days are no more.

Recently, at each little town in the French African colonies before I could go ashore I must produce a letter of credit showing I possessed five thousand francs, a necessary "caution" demanded by the Government, fearful that any new arrival would have to be deported. The Walls of Carcassonne over which scrambled the swordsmen of the Black Prince are nothing to the walls of hate that ring the countries of the world. I find on my own *Carte d'Identite,* which gives me permission to reside on my own property in France, the maiden name of my mother —dead some thirty years ago!

ONCE I traveled with a man of bright wits. With neither food nor money, we came to a large Chinese market garden. My friend climbed the fence, took out a notebook that he carried and began to fire questions at the yellow gardeners. How many of them worked there? How many slept in one room? What were facilities for washing themselves, and so on.

The boss gardener, hearing of the catechism, came at a run. He brought five shillings, two dozen peaches, and a beautiful watermelon.

"It's strange how guilty people re-act," said my friend blandly, as we ate the melon in a shady spot along the road. "Those yellow devils thought I was an inspector of nuisances or of hygiene, just because I asked them a few simple questions about how they lived." . . .

I arrived in Havana just before the Johnson-Willard fight for the championship of the world. As the steamer from Key West docked, I was the first to go down the gangplank. At the foot was a large negro in a check suit and a Panama hat, who was screaming out questions to the purser. "Ah wantah know if Mistah Willard ees aboord?" he yelled.

I didn't know who he was and I was in a temper. I told him to get out of the way and let a white man pass.

He seemed surprised.

"Ah aint a-stoppin' you, suh!" he said, looking at me with astonishment.

Still in ignorance, I snapped at him: "What the devil do you mean by blocking the gangplank and bellowing out about a friend on the boat?"

"He aint no fren'," said the darky. "Ah'm goin' to fight heem!"

The laughter of the dock hands followed me as I made for the carriage ranks. Without knowing it I had been baiting the champion of the world. . . .

I have seen a number of fighters in their early debuts who, later, became famous. When young I received a hiding from a youth who the day before had beaten Griffo, and I saw Peter Jackson before the big black had beaten anything tougher than a dinner.

Editing a sporting paper once, I got acquainted with a featherweight who contracted tuberculosis. I visited him a few days before he passed out, and he told me of his response to a parson who had stepped in to tell him about the other world. The parson was one of those hell-fire-and-brimstone chaps and he tried to frighten the little fellow.

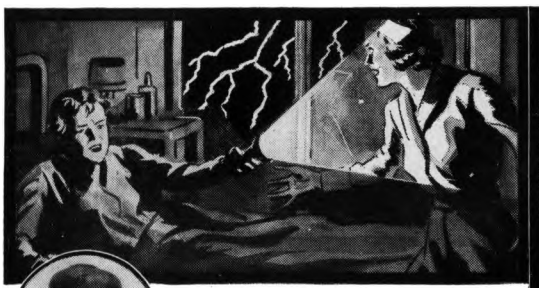
"I ses to him," said the fighter: "I ses, look a' here, I'm jest a fedderweight clippin' 'em at unner nine stone, an' you say the Lord can smash anyone. Well, I'm goner pull off de gloves an' lie down. He won't take a smack at me when He knows I'm jest a fedderweight wid cronk bellers."

IN the old days there was a fighter in Sydney called "Cocker" Tweedie. Tweedie couldn't read or write, and he didn't know his name when it was up in six-foot letters. He had a philosophy of his own, also a style of fighting that had won many combats for him. He "smothered" in a most artistic fashion and never wasted a blow, taking terrible punishment and following his man around the ring till an opportunity arrived for a deadly uppercut.

One day I interviewed Tweedie and complimented him on his coldness, courage, and control.

"That's all right," he said, "but one of dese days some guy is goin' to solve my smudder, an' den I'm on de dirt heap like all de udder guys whose smudder has been solved—Napoleon, an' all dem."

Lightning Betrays Men-in-White!



But Doctors Win Race With Death In Dark Operating Room

"Unable to sleep, I lay on my hospital bed at midnight reading by the light of my tiny bedlamp," writes Mrs. Mabel E. Harper, Box 468, Moultrie, Ga. "Presently, brilliant lights came on in a wing of the building outside my window. There in the operating room...some poor soul lay suspended between life and death, while men-in-white sought to take him from the dark angel of death!

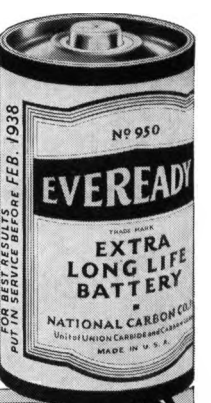
"Minutes later there was a lightning flash and the lights went out. As I wondered what they would do in the dark operating room, a nurse groped her way to my room. 'Let me have your flashlight, quick! Where is it?...They had started to operate when the lights went out...they've *got* to continue...and a lamp is likely to cause an ether explosion!...Quick!'

"I handed her the flashlight that had lain beside me on the table and she rushed out.

"What happened? You can be sure I checked up. Those DATED 'Eveready' batteries, batteries that were *fresh* when the light was given to me, saved a precious human life.

(Signed)

Mabel E. Harper"



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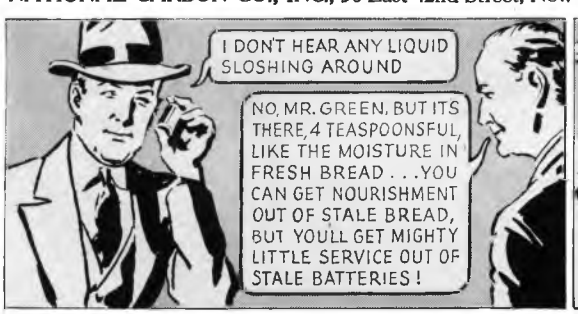

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Camels are the Largest-Selling cigarette in America!

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SIR HUBERT WILKINS: "Where I go, Camels go with me. Camels help make my monotonous explorer's diet digest more smoothly."

Camels have given more people more pleasure than any other cigarette!

AND this didn't happen by chance. Camels are the largest-selling cigarette in America... and in the *world*... because people *can* and *do* appreciate finer, costlier tobaccos.

Millions of men and women have given Camels the severest test — they have smoked them steadily. And have learned to trust those finer tobaccos to give them more of the pleasure they want in smoking. If you are not a Camel smoker, try them. See if you, too, don't find more enjoyment in *Camel's finer, costlier tobaccos.*

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JOSELYN LIBBY, private secretary: "When I feel fatigued, I take time out for a Camel and get a quick 'lift.'"

SHIP'S ENGINEER, G. Buckingham: "I've smoked Camels for years. I never tire of them."

Camels are a matchless blend of finer, **MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS** —Turkish and Domestic.