BLUE BOOK

Magazine January 15 cents

JANUARY 1936 THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE VOL. 62 No. 3

PAINTED BY HERBERT MORTON STOOPS TO ILLUSTRATE "CANNON OVER EUROPE"

H. Bedford-Jones, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Harvey Fergusson, Robert Mill, William Makin, Leland Jamieson, Bigelow Neal

But Pete is soon pimple-free and "out stepping"

Don't let adolescent pimples make a hermit out of YOU!

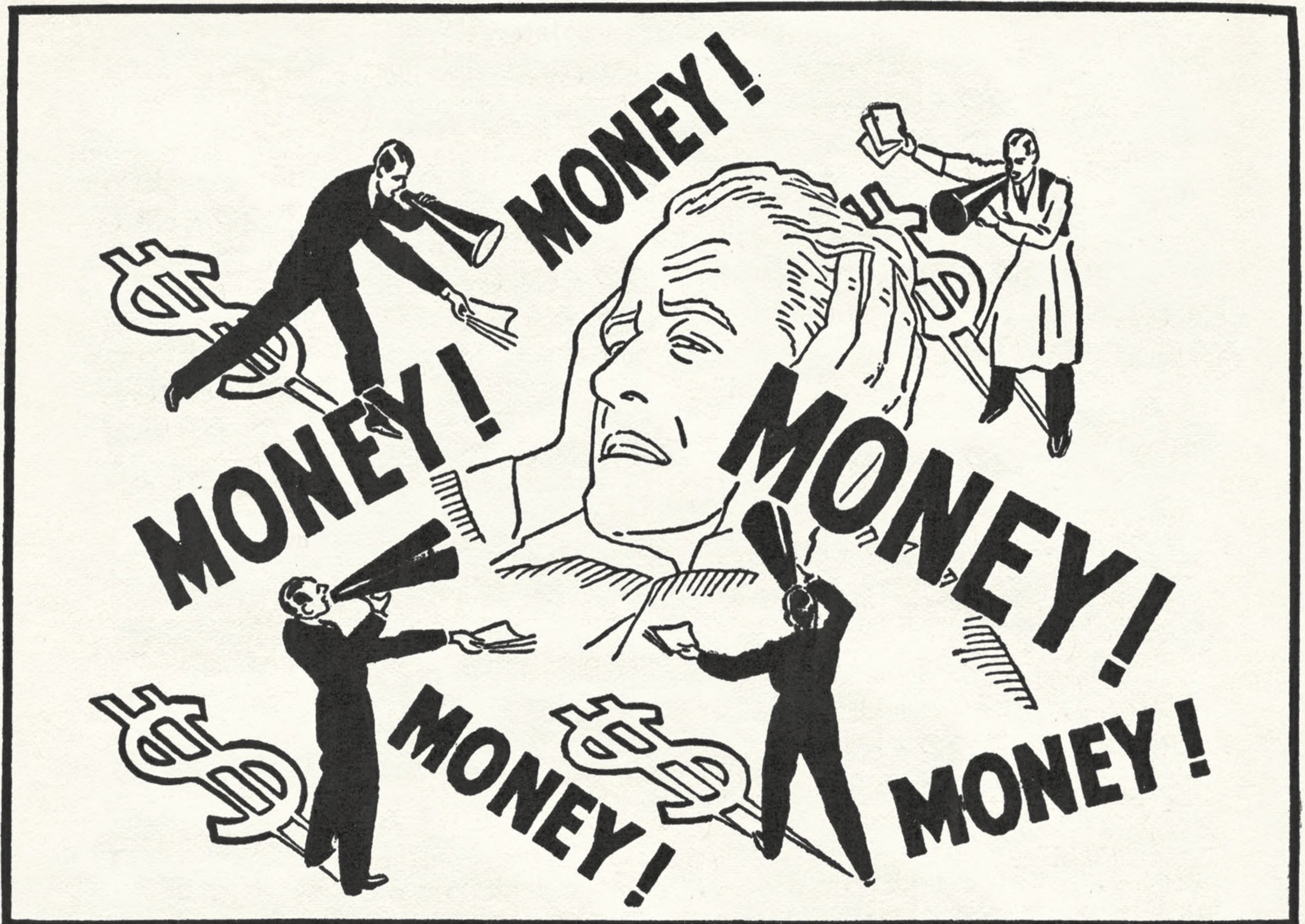
Between the ages of 13 and 25, important glands develop. This causes disturbances throughout the body. Waste poisons get into the blood and irritate the skin, making it break out in pimples.

But you can clear skin irritants out of your blood—with Fleischmann's Yeast. Then the pimples disappear! Eat 3 cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast a day, before meals, until skin clears.

—clears the skin

by clearing skin irritants out of the blood

Copyright, 1935, Standard Brands Incorporated



You hear it on all sides, this eternal demand for money. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker—*money, money, money!*

When the bills pour in and you stack them alongside your pay envelope—honestly, don't you have a sense of futility? Don't you wish you had a job that paid more money?

Well, the only way to get *that* job is to fit yourself for it—to acquire *training* that you can convert into cash.

And you can do it! Thousands have done it. They have found the answer to their problems in spare-time study of International Correspondence Schools Courses. Perhaps modern training is the thing you need most. This coupon will bring you complete information—free.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

BOX 2499-C, SCRANTON, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject *before* which I have marked X:

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Architect
☐ Architectural Draftsman
☐ Building Estimating
☐ Contractor and Builder
☐ Structural Draftsman
☐ Structural Engineer
☐ How to Invent and Patent
☐ Electrical Engineer
☐ Electric Lighting
☐ Welding, Electric and Gas
☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
☐ Boilermaker

☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
☐ Sheet Metal Worker
☐ Telegraph Engineer
☐ Telephone Work ☐ Radio
☐ Mechanical Engineering
☐ Mechanical Draftsman
☐ Machinist ☐ Toolmaker
☐ Patternmaker
☐ Gas Engines ☐ Diesel Engines
☐ Aviation Engines
☐ Automobile Mechanic
☐ Refrigeration

☐ Plumbing ☐ Steam Fitting
☐ Heating ☐ Ventilation
☐ Air Conditioning
☐ Steam Engineer
☐ Steam Electric Engineer
☐ Marine Engineer
☐ R. R. Locomotives
☐ R. R. Section Foreman
☐ Air Brakes ☐ R. R. Signalmen
☐ Highway Engineering
☐ Civil Engineering
☐ Surveying and Mapping

☐ Bridge Engineer
☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
☐ Chemistry
☐ Pharmacy
☐ Coal Mining
☐ Mine Foreman
☐ Navigation
☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Woolen Manufacturing
☐ Agriculture
☐ Fruit Growing
☐ Poultry Farming

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

☐ Business Management
☐ Office Management
☐ Industrial Management
☐ Traffic Management
☐ Accountancy
☐ Cost Accountant

☐ C. P. Accountant
☐ Bookkeeping
☐ Secretarial Work
☐ Spanish ☐ French
☐ Salesmanship
☐ Advertising

☐ Service Station Salesmanship
☐ First Year College
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Lettering Show Cards ☐ Signs
☐ Stenography and Typing
☐ Civil Service ☐ Mail Carrier

☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ Grade School Subjects
☐ High School Subjects
☐ College Preparatory
☐ Illustrating
☐ Cartooning

Name...*Age*....................*Address*..

City...*State*....................*Present Position*..

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

BLUE BOOK

JANUARY, 1936 — MAGAZINE — VOL. 62, NO. 3

Two Memorable Serials

Proud Rider — By Harvey Fergusson — 28
The fine climax of this novel of the old Southwest, by the author of "Wolf Song."

Tarzan and the Immortal Men — By Edgar Rice Burroughs — 108
Specially exciting episodes in this latest story of our premier fiction hero.

Stirring Short Stories

Monkey Business — By Robert R. Mill — 19
A spirited tale of Tiny David and the State Police.

High Wind — By Leland Jamieson — 56
The ultra-hazardous rescue flight of a Coast Guard plane in hurricane weather.

Cyrano to You, Gentlemen! — By Fulton T. Grant — 67
It happened in Paris—and will cause you to watch for the next story by this new author.

Crocodile Gold — By James E. Baum — 76
An ivory-hunter's curious adventure in the wild highland of Abyssinia.

Arms and Men — By H. Bedford-Jones — 86
XII—Cannon Over Europe.

The Ghost of Old Missouri — By Bigelow Neal — 96
A poignant story of the Bad-lands in winter-time.

The Corpse in the Stocks — By William J. Makin — 100
The gypsy detective Isaac Heron handles a crime strange indeed.

An Unusual Novelette

The Man with the Platinum Rib — By Ray Cummings — 6
This fascinating story of the near future is by the author of "The Robot Rebellion."

Prize Stories of Real Experience

To the Pole with Peary — By Matthew A. Henson — 130
The only living man to have set foot on the North Pole tells of that terrific journey.

The Revenge of Black Jack — By S. E. Kiser — 134
A noted writer describes boyhood adventures in the Pennsylvania oil-fields.

Refugees — By Ivan Bezizvestieff — 136
Caught between bolsheviks and bandits, they fled to the Turks.

Ethiopian Trails — By Alfred M. Bailey — 141
Abyssinia and its people are vividly depicted in this explorer's experience.

The Fatal Feast — By Tom McGrath — 143
A former police lieutenant records his strangest experience.

The Sailor's Scrapbook — By Coulton Waugh — 5

Cover Design — Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

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.

THE McCALL COMPANY,

William B. Warner, ***President and Treasurer***
John C. Sterling, ***Vice-President***
Francis Hutter, ***Secretary***

Publisher, The Blue Book Magazine

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

Published monthly, at McCall St., Dayton, Ohio. Subscription Offices—Dayton, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices—230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE—January, 1936. Vol. LXII, No. 3. Copyright, 1935, by The McCall Company in the United States and Great Britain. Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription Price, $1.50 per year. Canadian postage 50c; foreign postage $1.00. For change of address, give us four weeks notice and send old address as well as new. Special Note: Each issue of The Blue Book Magazine is copyrighted. Any republication of the matter appearing in the magazine, either wholly or in part, is not permitted except by special authorization.
Special Notice to Writers and Artists: Manuscripts and art material submitted for publication in the Blue Book Magazine will be received only on the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury thereto while such manuscripts or art material are in the publisher's possession or in transit.

Prize Offer for Real Experiences

THERE is material for a novel in every person's life, it has been said. Whether this is true or not, we do believe that in the lives of most of us some experience has occurred sufficiently exciting to merit description in print. With this idea in mind we shall be pleased to receive and to print true stories of real experience, running from one thousand to four thousand words each. For each of the five best of these received each month we will pay, according to our appraisal of its length and strength, $50 or more.

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 lefthand 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.

HOME-STUDY BUSINESS TRAINING

Your opportunity can never be bigger than your preparation. Prepare now and reap the rewards in earlier and larger success. *Free 64-Page Books Tell How.* Write *now* for book you want, or mail coupon with your name and address in margin *today.*

O Higher Accountancy
O Mod. Salesmanship
O Traffic Management
O Law: Degree of LL.B.
O Commercial Law
O Industrial Mgm't
O Banking and Finance
O Stenotypy
O Rail. Station Mgm't
O Paper Salesmanship
O Business Mgm't
O Business Corres.
O Credit and Collection Correspondence
O Modern Foremanship
O Personnel Mgm't
O Expert Bookkeeping
O C. P. A. Coaching
O Business English
O Effective Speaking

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
Dept. 1369-R Chicago

BE A DETECTIVE

Work home or travel. Experience unnecessary. DETECTIVE Particulars FREE. Write NOW to GEORGE BOB. WAGNER, 2640 Broadway, N.Y.

CIVIL SERVICE

Start $1260 to $2100 year

MEN—WOMEN. Common Education usually sufficient. Short hours. Write immediately for free 32-page book, with list of positions we train you for and full particulars telling how to get them.

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE
Dept. D292, Rochester, N.Y.

Ad Man and Author at 22

"Took the N.I.A. course at the unripe age of eighteen. Today at the slightly riper age of twenty-two am editor of Ad-vents, monthly newspaper of the Association of Advertising Men of New York and have just sold a story to Famous Detective Cases for $185. So as an ad man and author permit me to say, 'If you want to write ad copy or fiction, try N.I.A.' "

Joseph G. Csida, Jr.
3063 Williamsbridge Road
Bronx, New York, N. Y.

"How do I get my Start as a Writer?"

Here's the Answer

First, don't stop believing you can write; there is no reason to think you can't write until you have tried. Don't be discouraged if your first attempts are rejected. That happens to the best authors, even to those who have "arrived." Remember, too, there is no age limit in the writing profession. Conspicuous success has come to both young and old writers.

Where to begin, then? There is no surer way than to get busy and write.

Gain experience, the "know how." Understand how to use words. Then you can construct the word-buildings that now are vague, misty shapes in your mind.

O. Henry, Mark Twain, Kipling, Ring Lardner, just to mention a few, all first learned to use words at a newspaper copy-desk. And the Newspaper Institute Copy-Desk Method is today helping men and women of all ages to develop their writing talent . . . helping them gain their first little checks of $25, $50, $100.

Learn to Write by WRITING

The Newspaper Institute of America is a training school for writers. Here your talent grows under the supervision of seasoned critics . . . newspaper men and women. Emphasis is placed on teaching you by experience. We don't tell you to read this author and that author or to study his style. We don't give you rules and theories to absorb. The N. I. A. aims to teach you to express yourself in your own natural style. You work in your own home on your own time.

Each week you receive actual newspaper-type assignments as though you worked on a large metropolitan daily. Your stories are then returned to us and we put them under the microscope, so to speak. Faults are pointed out. Suggestions are made. Soon you discover you are getting the "feel" of it, that professional touch. You acquire a natural, easy approach. You can see where you are going.

When a magazine returns a story, one never knows the real reason for the rejection; they have no time to waste giving constructive criticism.

The N. I. A. tells you where you are wrong and why, and shows you what to do about it.

A Chance to Test Yourself

We have prepared a unique Writing Aptitude Test which tells you whether you possess the fundamental qualities necessary to successful writing—acute observation, dramatic instinct, imagination, etc. You'll enjoy taking this test. It's free. Just mail the coupon below and see what our Editors think about you. Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York.

NEWSPAPER INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit as promised in the Blue Book, January.

Name ....

Address ....
(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call.) 68A566

At Best it's a gamble

WHEN YOU BUY THE *unknown*

● Why take chances with unknown blades! Shave with Probak Jr.—product of the world's largest blade maker. This blade is made to whisk off dense, wiry whiskers without irritation. Probak Jr. sells at 4 for 10¢! Buy a package today from your nearest dealer.

4 BLADES FOR 10¢

PROBAK JUNIOR

Learn ADVERTISING at Home

Greater opportunities now in advertising. Learn quickly in spare time. Practical work. No text books. Old established school. Low tuition—Easy terms. *Send for free booklet.*
Page-Davis School of Advertising
3601 Mich., Dept. 2411, Chicago

ACCOUNTING
the profession that pays

Accountants command big income. Thousands needed. About 12,000 Certified Public Accountants in U. S. Many earn $3,000 to $20,000. We train you thoroughly at home in your spare time for C. P. A. examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous bookkeeping knowledge unnecessary — we prepare you from ground up. Our training is supervised by Wm. B. Castenholz, A. M., C. P. A., assisted by staff of C. P. A.'s. Low cost—easy terms. Write now for valuable 64-page book, "Accountancy, the Profession that Pays," free.

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
The school that has trained over 1,200 C. P. A.'s
Dept. 1369-H Chicago, Ill.

Old Money and stamps WANTED

POST YOURSELF! It pays! I paid J. D. Martin, Virginia, $200 for a single copper cent. Mr. Manning, New York, $2,500 for one silver dollar. Mrs. G. F. Adams $740 for a few old coins. I want all kinds of old coins, medals, bills and stamps. I pay big cash premiums.

I WILL PAY $100 FOR A DIME

1894 S. Mint; $50 for 1913 Liberty Head Nickel (not buffalo) and hundreds of other amazing prices for coins. Get in touch with me. Send 4c for Large Illustrated Coin Folder and further particulars. It may mean much profit to you. Write today to

B. MAX MEHL, 109 Mehl Bldg., FORT WORTH, TEXAS
(Largest Rare Coin Establishment in U. S.)

Write and Speak *MASTERLY ENGLISH*

Learn correct English with Sherwin Cody's new invention. No rules to memorize. Like a fascinating game. Spare-time study, 15 minutes each day, quickly gives you command of English. Send for free book "How You Can Master Good English in 15 Minutes a Day." Write today.
SHERWIN CODY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH,
961 Searle Bldg. Rochester, N. Y.

Next Month!

"Shock Troops of Justice"

A specially fine story in this series about the G-Men, by Robert Mill.

Compare!

SMOOTHEST WHISKEY AT THE PRICE!

MINIMUM AGE *15 months*

TRY A BOTTLE OF

WINDSOR

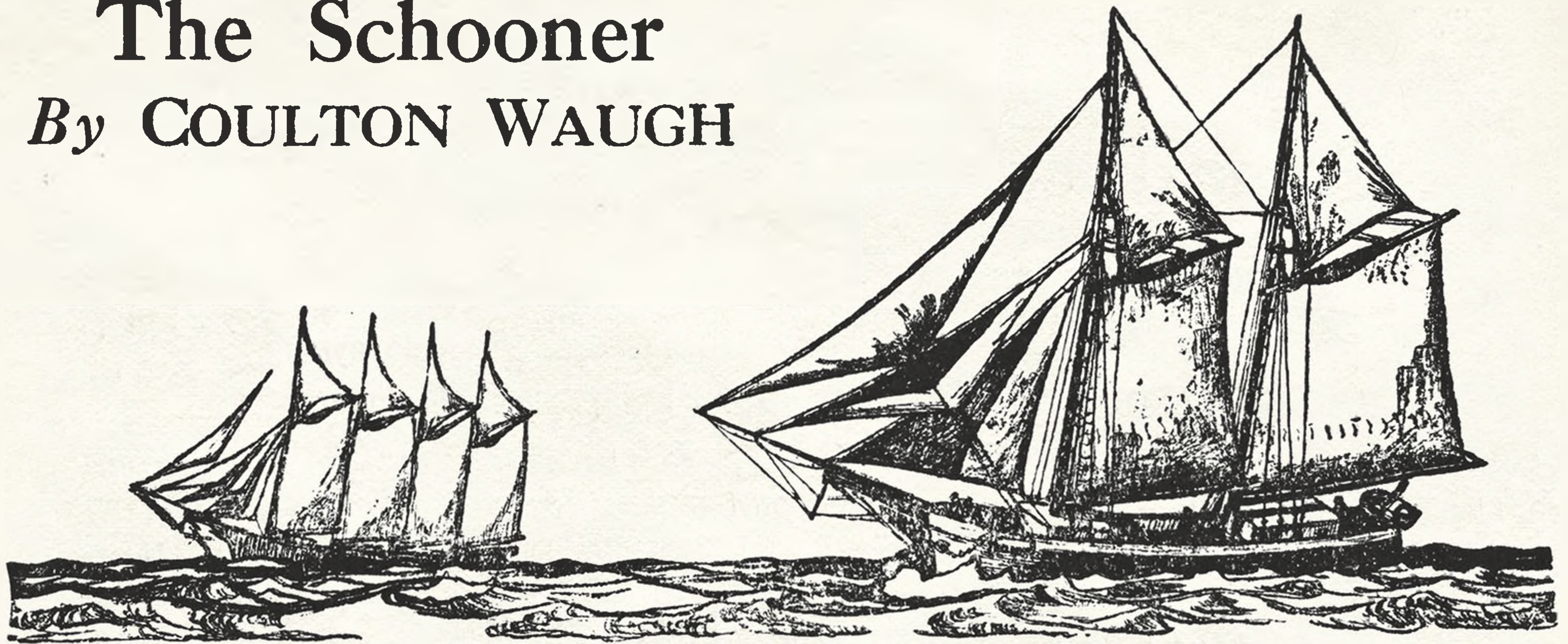
STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

Penn-Maryland Corp., *A Division of* National Distillers, N. Y. C.

This advertisement is not intended to offer alcoholic beverages for sale or delivery in any state or community wherein the advertising, sale or use thereof is unlawful.

The Schooner

By COULTON WAUGH



The Sailor's Scrapbook

A SCHOONER is a vessel carrying two or more masts rigged fore and aft. The masts are in two sections and the sails are attached to them by hoops. The upper edge of the lower sails are attached to a spar called the gaff, the lower to the boom. The upper sails are attached to the topmast and gaff and called gaff topsails. Forward of the foremast is the fore topmast stays'l, then the inner jib, outer jib, and flying jib.

This rig, like the clipper-ship, is a Yankee notion. Away back in the early days of the Eighteenth Century the first true schooner was launched in Gloucester. "Oh, how she scoons!" a bystander cried out.

"Very well," replied her owner, "a schooner let her be!" Thus the name was invented.

The coasting schooner is now the only large sailing-ship found off our coasts in any numbers. These fine vessels have from two to six or even seven masts, as in the case of the *Thomas W. Lawson,* lost in 1907. Usually heavily loaded and without motors, coasting schooners frequently have difficulty weathering such places as Cape Cod and Cape Hatteras in heavy weather. Many cases of the heroism of simple men have been furnished by the famous wrecks of schooners along our shores.

On April 4, 1881, the schooner *A. B. Goodman* struck heavily on the inner shoal of Cape Hatteras. Soon her hull was under water, and huddled in her rigging the crew eagerly watched for help. The wind had backed completely around and was now howling savagely out to sea. Finally they were sighted by the lookout in a life-saving station. On shore a little group of surfmen gathered to make their wills before entering their boat, for because of the direction of the wind there was great danger that they would be swept out to sea in their attempt to return. The keeper afterward said in his testimony: "They knew it was their duty, and they did it."

After two hours of the most exhausting work the boat was brought up to the vessel; the keeper threw his boat-hook, with a line attached, into the schooner's shrouds and pulled up to her. The rescued men were so unnerved by the danger of the moment that it was necessary to pull them bodily off the shrouds. They ran up them like frightened monkeys. Then began the terrible battle to reach shore. The lighthouse-keeper gave them up for lost, but after hours of exhausting toil they finally made the beach. Of these men the United States Life-saving Service said in its official report, "They reached the full stature of heroism."

Besides the coasting type of schooner, this rig is famous for being that of the Gloucester fisherman, celebrated by Kipling in his "Captains Courageous" and by James B. Connolly in "The Crested Seas" and other stories of fishing life. No vessels that ever sailed the seas have contributed more to the glory of sail or had more part in the formation of a race of real seamen. In these handy little ships New England and Nova Scotia fishermen have for generations met the worst winter weather the Atlantic had to offer—met it on its own terms, and conquered. They are the present-day representatives of the old tradition of gallant struggle with the sea, that struggle that perfects ships, breeds men, and constitutes romance.

The Man with

A fascinating story of exciting events in a near future that some of us may live to see—by the able author of "The Robot Rebellion."

Illustrated by
Austin Briggs

THE murdered body of Willard Mackenzie lay on the floor of one of the testing laboratory rooms of the Frane Radium Corporation. The small burned hole through the back gave mute evidence of the murder weapon—a Banning heat-gun. And the small projector of the heat-flash—the murder weapon itself—lay on the stone floor beside the body.

John Gregg, young Federal Agent of the U. S. Emergency Secret Service Squad, arrived at the Frane Laboratories about eight-thirty P. M.—half an hour after the murder was discovered. Young Robert Frane, son of the head of the Frane Company, met him at the guarded doorway.

"I want you in on this, John," young Frane said hurriedly. He had sent for Gregg, whose duties ordinarily were not concerned with an affair like this. "Father is devilishly worried. Mackenzie was trying to warn us of something."

They pushed through the cordon of New York city police who were guarding the building, passed along a dim vaulted corridor and entered the laboratory room where the body lay. It was a small room, with chemical apparatus littering a work-table, and shelves with a variety of mechanisms for the testing of refined radium lining its walls. On the stone floor the body of Willard Mackenzie still lay sprawled, face down with arms outstretched. The small room was crowded with company officials, and with the city detective-police who were making their routine investigation.

Gregg and young Frane stood aside, watching. Bob Frane murmured: "They claimed at first it was suicide—the heat stab could have entered the chest as well as the back—"

Gregg nodded. "Wait a minute—let's see what they're doing."

The tube-lit room was a flood of blue radiance, and a babble of voices. They were arguing that the heat-gun had yielded no fingerprints. A man committing suicide wouldn't wear a glove. Or if he did, where was the glove?

"Any child could figure that out!" young Frane exclaimed disgustedly. "Of course it was murder. That's why I want you, John. If anything is going to be accomplished—"

But Gregg himself had no contempt for the routine city detectives. He knew too well their scientific resources, and their trained skill. They were bringing in a high-powered scent-detector now. They rolled it on its little truck; applied the prehensile tentacles of its vacuum intake to the murder weapon. Sniffing mechanical bloodhound! Amazing development of modern science, this machine to measure and classify the scent of the human hand which had wielded this murder weapon!

Gregg leaned forward, watching and listening with keen interest. But the dials of the detector remained motionless. Like a bloodhound at bay, the throbbing machine was balked.

The Controlling Police Investigator exclaimed: "Insulated glove! No ordinary murderer this! He came prepared."

"We can try sound-recapture," a police lieutenant suggested. "Rolf! You Rolf, connect the ultra-microphone."

The murder sounds, still echoing here, to be caught and magnified back to audibility!

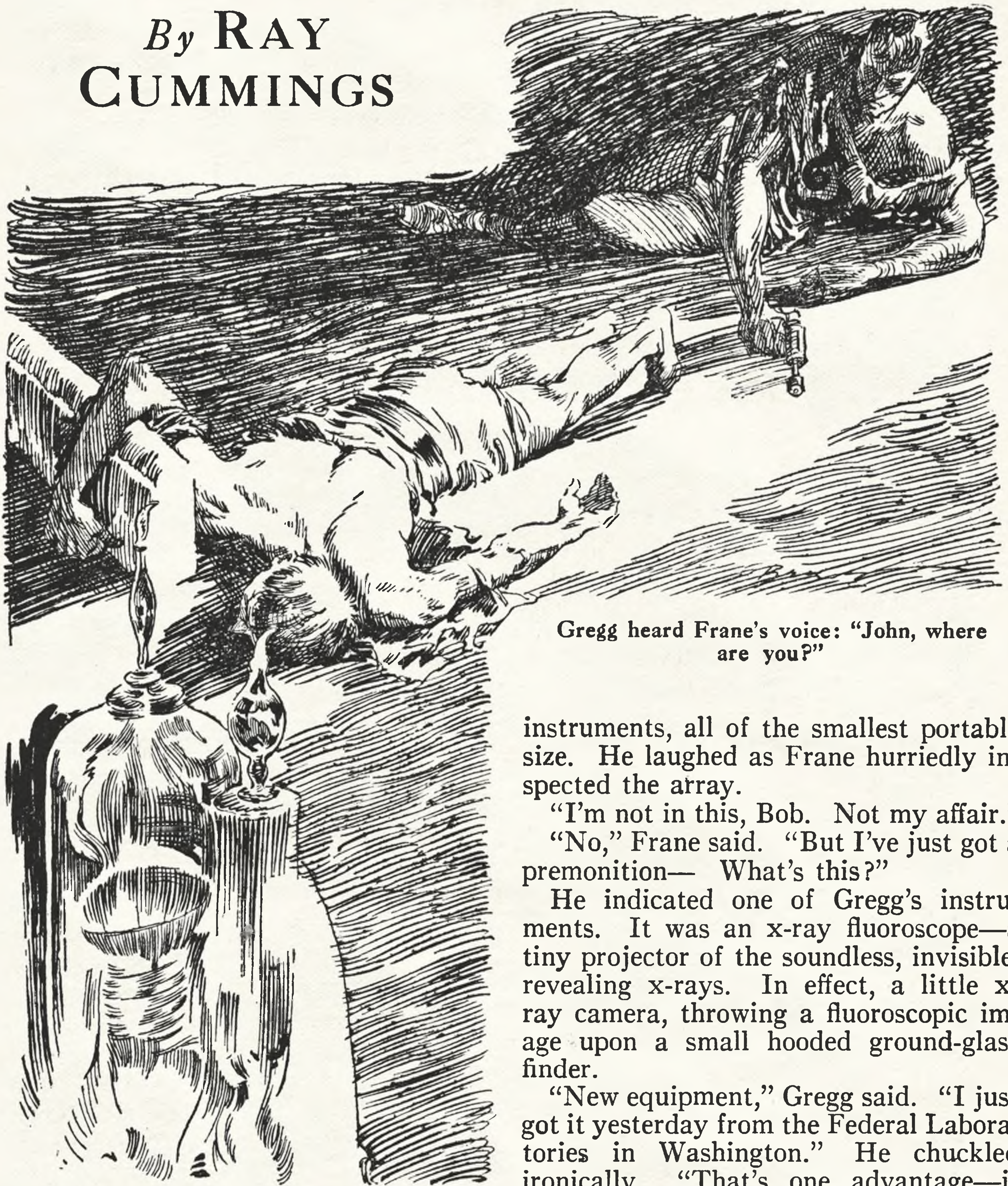
Gregg murmured: "Can't do it. Too much noise been in here."

The official physician consulted his watch and his notes. He said dubiously: "The blood tests show he's been dead, ranging thirty-five to fifty minutes. The condition of the nodal tissue of the heart shows it stopped beating forty-two minutes ago. That's a long time, Lieutenant. Magnification forty-two, for the death-time. With all this babble since, you'll get nothing."

But they were setting up their instru-

the Platinum Rib

By RAY CUMMINGS



Gregg heard Frane's voice: "John, where are you?"

ments to try it. The room was ordered into silence. Young Frane pulled at Gregg.

"Come on—let's get out of here. I want to talk to you."

Gregg followed him into the corridor.

"You brought your instruments with you?" Frane said.

"Some of them."

"What you got?"

Fastened to the sides of his broad leather belt, dangling from little clips, Gregg had a weapon or two, and several instruments, all of the smallest portable size. He laughed as Frane hurriedly inspected the array.

"I'm not in this, Bob. Not my affair."

"No," Frane said. "But I've just got a premonition— What's this?"

He indicated one of Gregg's instruments. It was an x-ray fluoroscope—a tiny projector of the soundless, invisible, revealing x-rays. In effect, a little x-ray camera, throwing a fluoroscopic image upon a small hooded ground-glass finder.

"New equipment," Gregg said. "I just got it yesterday from the Federal Laboratories in Washington." He chuckled ironically. "That's one advantage—it ought to be a while yet before the criminals have them to use against us. A week maybe, before every crook knows about it. . . . Who is this Willard Mackenzie who just got murdered?"

"He was a technician of the Frane Radium Company, one of its most trusted employees. He had tried to warn Frane Senior of something. And now he was murdered."

"Warn your father of what?" Gregg demanded.

"We don't know. He had no chance to be alone with Father. He murmured

something—some danger. And he was to meet Father in that laboratory room. But there must have been an electrical eavesdropper—somebody heard what he whispered to Father, and killed him before he could tell anything else."

IN the dim corridor Gregg stood gazing at young Frane. He was a big fellow, this John Gregg of the Federal Service—a blond young giant. Twenty-six years old. Six feet two inches, lean and powerful. His voice usually was slow and drawling. But it was alert now, with interest captured. He demanded:

"Some impending danger? To whom?"

Frane shook his head. "We don't know. But John, we've a big contract under way. It's all been absolutely secret, of course—but if news of it has leaked out—some gang of bandits planning to attack us now—certainly it's a huge stake—three million dollars—"

Frane explained swiftly. The Frane Radium Company here in New York had received an order from the Argentine Government to supply it with a considerable quantity of semi-refined radium of a certain radio-active strength. New medical discoveries and new Argentine laws for the universal vaccination had created the sudden demand. Three million dollars' worth of radium, in thirty small insulated tubes—each tube valued at a hundred thousand dollars. The shipment was ready now. The last tube was in the vault, here in this building.

"Three million dollars in radium, stored here tonight!" Gregg exclaimed.

"Yes. Most of it's been in the vaults for some days. We've been adding completed tubes each day. It will go by armed and convoyed airplane to Buenos Aires tomorrow. All absolutely secret. We're guarded here—our own trusted guards. A representative of the Argentine Government is here—Dr. José Lopez. He's in there with Father now—" Young Frane gestured toward the room they had just left, where behind closed doors the police investigation was proceeding. "Dr. Lopez will accompany the shipment tomorrow."

The door of the laboratory room opened and immediately closed. Two men had come out.

"Bob—I wondered where you were." It was Deltus Frane, head of the Company, a small, thin, gray-haired man of sixty-odd. His face was pale, harassed. He added: "You stay close, Bob. This murder—here in our guarded building—"

To Gregg came the realization of his fear. Three million dollars in radium, here in this building which was guarded day and night by company guards. But Mackenzie had been murdered. Were unseen murderers lurking here now? Ready to kill anyone who seemed warned of their plot? Daring criminals, armed with all the myriad devices of science, plotting to get at this vault—

Young Frane was saying: "I sent for John Gregg, Father. These city police—what good are they?"

Frane Senior put a hand to Gregg's powerful shoulder. "Hello, John. Glad to have you, of course. I'm worried—frightened, if you like. A murder here in my plant—we never had such a thing as this—not in all the twenty years—"

He broke off, and turned to introduce his companion—Dr. José Lopez, the Argentine Government representative. Gregg shook hands with him—a small man of perhaps fifty. Swarthy face, with a neat black mustache and iron-gray hair above. He was immaculately dressed, with an air of distinction about him—a South American dandy. He said in perfect English, but with the clipped intonation of a Latin:

"This is mos' unfortunate. You, Meester Gregg—if you can help to trail this murderer—the police in there seemed balked."

Frane Senior said: "I'm worried about Frank Mackenzie and Allen Roberts. They were both supposed to meet us here tonight."

"Who are they?" Gregg demanded.

"Frank Mackenzie is the murdered Willard's older brother—also an employee of the Frane Company. And Allen Roberts for five years has been Chief Chemist. If they had got wind of the plot, they too might be killed to keep them silent."

Frane Senior was visibly shaken. But Gregg said: "They'll turn up! I suggest that you double your guards for tonight. With complete city protection—"

HE was interrupted by the opening of the laboratory door again. The investigation in there evidently was finished. And evidently it had yielded nothing. Frane Senior and Dr. Lopez were drawn aside for consultation with the departing officials. Gregg again was alone with young Frane.

Gregg said: "Suppose you show me the vault where the radium is stored. How many guards—"

An armed man in the uniform of the Frane Company rushed up to them. "Televized call for Mr. Frane!"

"Which one?" Bob Frane demanded. "Me, or Father?"

"Didn't say, sir. But it's a rush-call from Mr. Frank Mackenzie."

Gregg followed into a cubby room, where on a desk the televizor stood open with the incoming call. The guard closed the door and departed. The room here was dim, unoccupied save for Gregg and young Frane. And it was silent, with insulation excluding all outside sounds.

FRANE sat at the instrument. Gregg stood on the padded floor behind him. And Gregg found his heart pounding. A call from Frank Mackenzie? Would it be another warning?

Frane was saying tensely: "You, Mac? . . . Operator, demand visible connection."

"Bob, listen—" In the silence, Gregg heard Mackenzie's microphonic voice. "Bob, listen—I just got the flash news of Willard's death—"

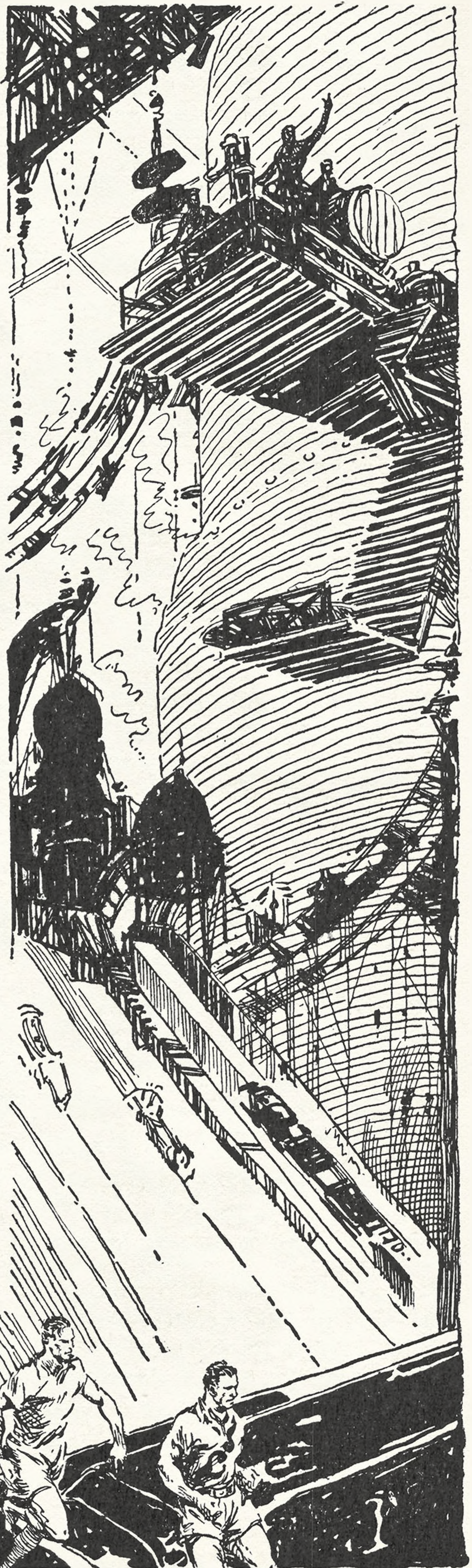
The little mirror-grid on the desk suddenly glowed as visible connection was established. The image showed Frank Mackenzie's head and shoulders; a portion of a library table at which he was sitting, and perhaps half of the dim room behind him.

Mackenzie's voice went on hurriedly, tensely: "Killed because of what he learned today. Poor Will! I'm coming right down—got to see you. Will called me hardly an hour ago. Told me in code—"

Frane gasped, "You know what he—"

"Some of it—yes. Can't put it on the air, Bob. Allen Roberts and I—we're coming down. He's supposed to meet me here. You tell your father— Well, I can tell you this much. You remember, six or seven years ago, a famous escaped criminal—fellow with a lot of scientific training named Patrick Boyd? Famous wanted man—Federal reward, dead or

As the car departed, Gregg murmured: "Don't speak to anyone of this killing!"



The phone clicked off, but for a moment the television held clear. . . . Gregg and Frane saw a hand extended—

alive, fifty thousand dollars. The newscasters used to call him the man with the platinum rib—he had an accident or something—part of a rib fixed up with a platinum plate. He's never been caught. He's—"

Mackenzie's swift voice suddenly stopped. The watching and listening Gregg held his breath. What was this? The image of Mackenzie's face suddenly showed an expression of wonderment—then terror. To Gregg, it was as though Mackenzie might be facing a wall mirror, and had seen something behind him. Gregg searched the little image of the room. Across it—behind Mackenzie—was what appeared to be a doorway shrouded by heavy portières. Did the portières move slightly?

Young Frane exclaimed sharply: "What's the matter, Mac?"

Mackenzie barely gasped: "Why—good God—"

The phone clicked as he broke connection, but for a moment the television held clear. The staring, stricken Gregg and Frane saw Mackenzie leap to his feet. The portières across the room had parted. An arm and hand were extended—then in the hand appeared a small black cylinder, a Banning heat-gun. The stabbing dull-violet flash of heat leaped across the room.

Mackenzie staggered, with legs bending under him, and arms flailing. For an instant he seemed still trying to walk. Then he crumpled, fell forward, and lay motionless.

The television image faded. Gregg seized his companion.

"Where was he? That room—where—"

"The living-room of his home. Not far from here. We can—"

"You take us! Hurry it! We'll get a hot trail this time."

They dashed from the room. In the corridor Frane led the way to an interior incline. They hastened up to a roof exit of the Frane Laboratory building. Two guards there stopped them; but one was an employee. He recognized Frane and passed them.

This building which housed the Frane Radium Company was one of the older New York structures. A concrete affair, four stories high, with a flat-topped roof. It was almost square in shape; originally it had occupied a full square city block, with surface-level streets bounding it. The city had grown up around it now, engulfing it.

Frane led the way across the roof at a run. At a roof corner, a catwalk with a flight of iron steps led upward some thirty feet to one of the main vehicular levels where traffic was roaring past.

They hailed a tiny public car. Gregg murmured: "Swift as possible, Bob."

The small aluminum car rolled up and stopped. Frane gave the address. They leaped in. The car rolled into the stream of traffic.

It was hardly a mile to the bachelor residence of the Mackenzie brothers. In a moment Frane pointed it out—a towering hotel structure dotted with lights, with wide iron balconies at each of its floors—balconies like little roof gardens, banked with flowers. The viaduct passed a quarter of a mile to the left of it, with a public sunken plaza between, around which the traffic levels flowed in huge circles.

The driver spoke into his audiphone: "Shall I fly it? They got a landing-stage on the roof. You can walk down the three stories. If ye're in a hurry—"

"Dammit, yes!" Gregg exploded. He was no longer the dawdling spectator of a routine police crime. This was a hot trail. Every moment counted. No one knew better than Gregg how intervening time always hampers the trailing instruments of science.

The driver pulled the little car's flight levers. He turned into a neighboring take-off ramp as the wings slid out and the air propellers began roaring. They lifted; soared in an ascending spiral over the tree-tops and colored lights of the sunken plaza. Gregg gazed down. A radiophone concert was going on down there this summer evening. But some of the crowd was drifting away from it, to one side, where a big public news-mirror doubtless was picturing the murder of Willard Mackenzie in the Frane Laboratories. . . .

Within a minute they landed upon the roof of Mackenzie's hotel building.

The car which had brought them departed. A hotel attendant approached. Gregg murmured: "Don't speak to anyone of this killing!"

"No, of course not."

THE building attendant challenged them as they started down the outside spider incline which led to Mackenzie balcony. They stopped while Frane showed the identifying signature tattooed on his forearm, and the attendant verified, in Frane's credential book, that Mackenzie's signature certified this was a friend. It was a modern, high-class residence, with modern protection for its guests. Yet in spite of that, a murderer had got into Mackenzie's apartment just a few moments ago!

The attendant-guard passed them within a few seconds. They descended the outside incline to Mackenzie's balcony level. Gregg was alert, heat-gun in hand. The murderer had got in—but had he got out?

The wide balcony, fifty stories above the lights and drone of the city, was dim with starlight and the reflected city glare. The plants and potted flowers were shadowed. Gregg made a swift search—no one here.

The French windows to the library were open. Frane went through them, with Gregg after him.

The scene had not changed from the television image. Mackenzie lay on the floor. They bent over him. Not quite dead. But obviously he was dying. The Banning heat-flash had bored its pencil-hole through his right lung. Blood was gushing from his mouth with each gasping breath.

"No use," Gregg murmured. "He's dying. But we'll call a doctor—"

SUDDENLY Gregg leaped to his feet. Under his shirt, against the flesh of his chest, he was wearing a detector-grid for warning against electric-eavesdropping rays. It was part of his regulation equipment, as familiar to him as his shirt itself, and he had forgotten it. But now it was glowing. Its heat was tingling and prickling his skin.

An eavesdropper here! The warning was violent. Somewhere near here, the murderer was still lingering, electrically listening to determine what clues his crime would yield!

Gregg caught Frane's eyes; gesturing for silence, he crossed the padded room, jerked aside the portières. Mackenzie's little hallway was disclosed, dim, with rooms opening from it.

Gregg moved silently along the hallway. The detector's increasing heat showed him that this was the right direction. He came to a doorway into a dining-room. No—no one here.

Gregg stood motionless, with Banning gun half raised. From his cap he slid a tiny microphone to his left ear. It yielded nothing save the roar of the city and hotel noises. He started again along the dim hall. He came to a door, closed;

and as he softly turned its lever, he found it was locked.

Was the eavesdropper behind it? The detector was tingling more sharply than ever. It was an interior door, of thick wooden fabric, cork-padded to dull ordinary noises. His x-ray could penetrate it! The thought suddenly came to him, and he whipped out the little instrument, connected it, and stood with a hand shielding the finder from the hall light. The finder glowed phosphorescent. Weird light and shadow of the bone and metal things behind this barred door!

A crouching human skeleton! Gregg could see it plainly. The skeleton of a man ten feet away, perhaps. Gregg reached again for his gun. The heat-flash would burn through this door, melt away its lock, so that he could burst it open.

But he must have made a little noise. On the fluoroscope finder he saw the skeleton rise up erect, turn and run. And as it turned, he saw the ribs clearly. One of them was unnaturally bent! A broken place, mended with a metal plate! The man with the platinum rib! The image of the skeleton dwindled for a second or two, as the man ran. Then he must have turned a corner. His image vanished.

"John! What the devil—" Frane was behind him. Gregg whirled.

"He went this way! Where does it lead?"

"Out to the public corridor. Main exit for this floor. But there's an armed attendant there! John, Mac's still alive! Come back—he's trying to talk to us!"

Gregg ran back. He saw from the library doorway that Mackenzie had recovered consciousness. With a last dying strength, he was up on one elbow. And his lips were moving. He had been gasping faint words while they were out of the room.

BUT it was too late now. The faint words were inaudible; and before Gregg could reach him, Mackenzie's head dropped to the floor. He drew a last convulsive breath, choked by the gushing blood. Then he lay still. Dead. Forever beyond the reach, even of science. But not his words! They were not lost! Gone from human ears—but the faint gasping sounds were still here, echoing back and forth across the room, each time growing fainter, but still intact, like the widening ripples from a pebble tossed into a pond.

Frane stared silently as Gregg knelt and connected the tiny intricate apparatus of audio-tubes. Simple enough, this magnification! The little speaker crackled and spat its dissonance of sounds. Then Gregg caught the tuning.

Words from the dead! They came now into audibility—blurred, distorted, but still in a measure distinguishable.

"Bob—you watch out—you and your father . . . And the vault—the radium tubes are not—" A blur. Then:

"Patrick Boyd—man with the platinum rib—killed me. The radium—4210 Rivington third sub-level city cellar—an old garage—but under it a secret—" Another blur. Then: *"Patrick Boyd, he is—"*

The end of it. Death had come. Gregg persisted with his tuning, but there was no more. The words echoed in Gregg's brain. 4210 Rivington! An old garage in the city cellar. Something about the radium in connection with this address! And something about the man with the platinum rib! "Patrick Boyd, he is—" Was Mackenzie trying to say. "He is here"? Or was it something else?

GREGG leaped up. "Bob, call your father! Warn him of danger. And the vault—have it opened at once. Mackenzie was trying to tell us something about the radium tubes. Something queer about that radium treasure! You wait here. I'm going after Boyd. He can't get out of this building—"

Could he not? From outside the apartment came the sound now of a wild turmoil. Shouts and running footsteps—and over it all the whining drone of the hotel alarm siren. Gregg dashed for the nearest exit door, with Frane after him. The hotel corridor was filled with running people—guests and hotel attendants.

Gregg gripped one of the attendants. "I'm John Gregg—Federal Service." He showed his credentials. "What's the trouble here? What happened?"

"Fool switched on the alarm siren. Damn' fool! Starting a panic here." The excited attendant shouted: "No danger! Keep calm, everybody—it's all a mistake."

The siren was suddenly stilled. The attendant would have rushed off, but Gregg held him.

"A murder," said the attendant in a swift undertone. "Somebody from inside drilled our guard—northwest balcony exit—fifty-second level. This here level—opposite side the building."

The man with the platinum rib had escaped! The guard was saying some-

thing about maybe the escaping murderer had mingled with a crowd of guests on the outside public ramp of the building. At any rate, he was gone.

Gregg said swiftly: "Well, he killed Frank Mackenzie first! The body's in there—in Mackenzie's library. Get the city police here. Send out a general call for Patrick Boyd. . . . No, I realize you don't know him, you idiot! But the police have his record. Register the murder discovered by Robert Frane, and John Gregg, Federal Service 8817 Washington 2. We're going to the Frane Laboratories now—we'll answer all questions from there."

They hurried from the stricken attendant; went down to the hotel ground level and hastily called a public air-car. It was a moment or two in arriving; and Frane, from a booth, called his father. The Frane Laboratories had quieted now. Frane Senior was there with Dr. Lopez, going over the Argentine contracts, and arranging for the shipment tomorrow. The guards at the plant had been doubled.

Gregg was standing in the door of the booth. "No more, Bob. Here's our car."

"We're coming right back, Father," Frane said.

Gregg heard the microphonic voice: "Allen Roberts hasn't come. Have you seen him?"

Allen Roberts, the Company's head chemist—would he be the next one murdered?

Frane hung up. As he and Gregg turned from the booth, a man came darting out of the crowd which was milling at the hotel entrance.

"You, Bob! Hello there! What's going on here? I can't get into this damned hotel. I'm supposed to meet Frank—he's waiting for me—"

IT was Allen Roberts—a man of forty, square-jawed, smooth-shaven.

"Mac's just been murdered," Frane said swiftly. "Don't ask me now. . . . Come on—we're in a rush for the plant—this is John Gregg, Federal Officer—"

"Murdered?" Roberts gasped. "But just a little while ago I called him from uptown. Who—"

Gregg unceremoniously shoved them into the waiting car. It rolled away across the wide curving ramp, and in a double-banked line rose with a score of others into the ascending air-traffic.

A brief trip back to the Frane Laboratories. Gregg sat silent, listening to Allen Roberts excitedly questioning young Frane. But there was hardly time for explanations. Frane had only told of that scene over the television, and that Mackenzie was dead, the murderer escaping by killing a hotel attendant.

"But how did he get in?" Roberts demanded. "The hotel guards won't let anybody in without showing credentials. Yet he didn't kill a guard getting in."

THERE was no answer to that. "If I had arrived earlier," Roberts said, "I would have been killed with him."

Gregg said suddenly: "Do you know anything of a plot against the Frane Company?"

Roberts stared. "Good Lord, no. What does that mean?"

"Nothing," said Gregg. "It isn't anything that should be discussed." His elbow warned Frane. To Gregg it seemed that even here in the public air-car, listening ears might be upon them. Criminals, using all the resources of science.

The little car landed on a surface street and rolled up to the door of the Frane building. A cordon of police were here. They passed Gregg, young Frane and Allen Roberts. An employee-guard said,

"All quiet, Mr. Frane. Your father and Dr. Lopez are in your father's office."

The stone corridors and empty laboratory rooms and offices were dark with a gloomy ominous silence. There were only occasional corridor lights. At the head of the second-floor staircase a watchman sat at a little table smoking, and reading by a small hooded light. He looked up at the arriving party of three, and passed them.

In Frane's office, Gregg stood aside while young Frane and Roberts told of the murder of Frank Mackenzie. Dr. Lopez and Frane Senior gasped their horror. And they began to question; but Gregg said abruptly, with a warning glance at young Frane:

"The air has ears. You know that, gentlemen. I suggest we talk as little as possible."

The implication struck them all with a new terror. Were murderers lurking here inside this guarded building? To Gregg, certainly it seemed possible. Dr. Lopez gasped:

"But what are we to do now?" They were all suddenly regarding Gregg for his answer.

"I'd like to see the vault room where the radium is stored," Gregg said quietly.

Their footfalls echoed through the gloomy corridors as Frane Senior led them to the main storage vaults in a room here on the second floor. There were two company guards in the vault room, augmented now by two of the city police. Allen Roberts knelt before the huge vault inner-door, working the intricate combination. A minute. Two minutes. To Gregg it was an eternity.

Then the vault-door swung. The thirty tubes of radium were here. Gregg saw them ranged in a little stack, each tube no bigger than a man's finger. Frane Senior lifted one. The tiny meter-dial at its end was registering the correct radio-activity. He put it back; closed the vault. The tension which had been on everyone relaxed.

"You frightened us," Frane senior said to Gregg. "What a relief!"

The treasure was safe. It had adequate guards. The police were investigating the two murders. There seemed nothing more to be done. Old Mr. Frane said:

"Suppose we go back and finish our delivery contracts, Dr. Lopez. And then—I imagine we should go home—nothing wrong here—"

Allen Roberts said: "There are some technical points in the contracts I want to straighten out with you."

THEY went back to the office, along a fifty-foot corridor and around an angle. Gregg and young Frane followed after them. Halfway back, Gregg whispered:

"Want to see you alone, Bob." He drew Frane into a doorway near by. The other three went on.

Gregg said: "Can you open that vault?"

"Yes. Roberts, Father and myself. No one else. Why—"

"Let's take another look."

The dying words of Frank Mackenzie still were echoing in Gregg's head. *"The vault—the radium tubes are not—"*

Not what? Not there? But Gregg had just seen them. . . . Frane swiftly opened the vault. They took one of the tubes along the dim corridor to a testing-room near by. By a small hooded light, with the shadows and silence of the big room crowding them, Frane opened the tube. And what the dying Mackenzie had tried to say was in a moment made apparent.

Not authentic! The meter-dial on the end of the tube was registering its correct radio-activity only because of a clever tiny mechanism inside. The tube was spurious! A counterfeit, cleverly manufactured by these scientific criminals!

Gregg understood it now. The treasure was already gone! Within each tube here in the vault was a scant thousand dollars' worth of radium—just enough to operate the meter for a limited time. These were not even the original Frane tubes! Thirty counterfeits, placed in the vault when the treasure was stolen. Counterfeits which the criminals figured would be shipped to South America, so that it would be some days before the theft would be discovered!

FRANE stood gaping. Gregg murmured swiftly:

"Clearer now, isn't it? That address in the City Cellar—that's the laboratory perhaps where they made these counterfeit tubes. Wouldn't you say so?"

And where the treasure still might be hidden! The thought occurred to Gregg. And the address which the dying Frank Mackenzie had gasped out was still clear in Gregg's memory: 4210 Rivington, Third Sub-level. An old garage, but under it—

Frane and Gregg were in the room doorway, staring back along the silent corridor. The vault with its guards was around an angle behind them. Ahead, around another angle, was the office of Frane Senior, where he, Dr. Lopez and Allen Roberts were reading the delivery contracts. They started toward it.

Young Frane carried the counterfeit radium tube. They turned the corridor corner. Very strange! The door of the distant office showed no light. Or had it been closed?

Frane murmured: "Good Lord—you don't suppose they finished and went home?"

A sudden sense of danger leaped upon Gregg. He drew his heat-gun. He shoved young Frane behind him.

They advanced to the office door. No light, no voices. And the door was open. A little light straggled in from the hall. Gregg saw the dark outlines of the furniture—desk, chairs, and several big metal cabinets, tall as a man.

The three men who had been here, had vanished.

Gregg murmured: "Stand still! Something queer about this! I'll listen—"

They stood in the center of the dark room. Gregg reached for his microphonic ear-grid. But before he had it adjusted, he heard a sharp click, in the room, near

A crouching human skeleton! Gregg could see it plainly.

at hand! One of the upright six-foot filing-cases. He saw, in the gloom, the door of the case swing open. Something falling forward!

"Bob—look out—" He shoved Frane sidewise; his heat-gun leveled. But he did not fire. From the filing-case a limp crumpled body fell forward to the floor. A body, stuffed in here, and by its own weight opening the door and falling out. A dead man with a knife buried in his chest. Gregg caught a glimpse of the face. It was Frane Senior!

And in that stricken instant Gregg heard another sound. A footstep at the corridor door. He heard Frane's gasp:

"John! Why, it's Father—*dead*—"

Gregg half whirled. There came a stabbing violet flash. He felt the sizz of it past his face, blinding him. Then something hit Gregg's head. The world went into soundless blackness. . . .

But it seemed he was unconscious only for a moment. Dimly he was aware of being on the floor. Footsteps around him. A dim scuffle as though Frane were silently struggling. And then, like a dream, he seemed to feel some one bending over him, deciding he was dead, departing with a contemptuous kick.

Then there were dim retreating footsteps. Gregg in another minute had recovered full consciousness. He got to his feet, swaying dizzily. But he was unhurt, save for a lump on the back of his head, and blood matting his hair. The blindness from the Banning flash was passing. On the floor, the body of Frane Senior lay where it had fallen. But young Frane was gone. And Allen Roberts and Dr. Lopez were gone also. Murdered perhaps, with their bodies hidden somewhere here, as Frane Senior had been hidden?

Gregg wavered into the corridor. And with the dizziness passing, he snapped into alertness. There was no alarm from the distant guards in the building. The murderers had been here no more than a minute or so ago. Gregg seemed to recall a vague impression that young Frane had been captured, not killed. They had him now, somewhere here in these dark silent rooms. They would kill him at once if they were cornered.

In the empty corridor, Gregg adjusted his ear-phone. No definite sounds—only the murmur of the city, the blended murmur of the guards at the vault, on the roof and the police outside the building downstairs. Nothing definite. Then it seemed to Gregg that in the blurred, magnified babble, he heard swift footsteps, then a few sudden faint words:

"—kill you if you don't—"

The blurred voice was barely distinguishable. Words addressed to the captured Frane? It seemed so. . . . Gregg examined the tiny direction-finder of the microphone—a dial thumb-nail size, its swinging needle phosphorescent so that it glowed here in the darkness. The sounds seemed coming from above.

The criminals were mounting toward the roof. Cautiously, Gregg followed—up dark stone stairways, along one of the upper corridors. Then he came to the roof exit. The growing upper noises of the city had drenched his microphone with a torrent of sound, but it seemed that the criminals had come this way.

AT the roof kiosk, Gregg expected to be challenged by the guards. But no challenge came. And here was a new horror: the bodies of the two guards were lying here in the starlight! . . . Gregg hardly stopped to bend over them. He reached the roof. Across its starlit top, far in the shadows of the opposite corner, figures were running. He could barely see the little blobs—three or four of them, and it seemed that one was a prisoner, being shoved by the others. They were close to the catwalk ladder that led to the overhead traffic viaduct. Then they reached it, climbed swiftly.

Gregg ran forward. The mounting figures were beyond range of his heat-gun. From near the foot of the ladder he saw them leap into a car. It rolled into the traffic.

But there was an alarm. Pedestrians at the viaduct had seen the prisoner. They shouted. A traffic-man set off his siren, splitting the night with its whining scream. And another switched on the local city alarm-lights. The whole vicinity of the viaduct up there was bathed in a brilliant actinic glare.

But the nondescript little car had lost itself in the maze of ramps and rolling, flying traffic. . . .

For a moment the panting Gregg stood on the roof undecided. He was convinced that the fleeing criminals had taken Bob Frane with them—for what purpose Gregg could not fathom. Where would they take him?

That address Frank Mackenzie had given! A secret laboratory, where even now the stolen radium might be stored! . . . Gregg reached a sudden decision. He went swiftly down an outside staircase from the roof to the ground. He showed his credentials to the police; and gruffly refusing to answer questions, he broke away from them.

A moment later, losing himself in the gathering milling pedestrians, he turned into a kiosk and descended into the tunnel-streets of the City Cellar.

THIRD Sub-level, 4210 Rivington—this must be it. Gregg stood in a shadow of the tunnel street, furtively surveying the shabby broken front of what had once been a truck-garage, here in this rabbit-warren of the underground city. There was almost no traffic through this now largely abandoned street. Only an occasional truck rumbled past and there were few pedestrians.

The houses here, little dark underground cubbies, were shabby and disreputable. A shaded street light fell upon the front of the old garage. The ancient sign was corroded and hanging askew. A battered door had an old rusty chain fastening it.

Watching his chance, Gregg crossed the street unobserved. His heat-gun, with flash concentrated as a torch, melted the lock of a small side door. Within a moment Gregg was in the building. Dark here: but there was enough light so that Gregg could see the battered rusting wrecks of old-fashioned surface automobiles standing about.

Quietly he moved among them. Nobody here? Gregg was tense now, Banning gun in hand. Somewhere here must be a way downstairs. A secret lair of these criminals. Perhaps it had some other entrance than this. Some of the men doubtless would be down there now.

For a moment he stood in the darkness, straining his senses. He had never been

more alert, more cautious—well aware that discovery would mean death for him.

He moved on again. He decided to chance using his hand searchlight. Its eerie darting white beam presently showed him a broken wooden doorway. All this inner structure was of old-fashioned wood, the floor, the walls, all broken and rotting now.

The stairway showed as a narrow broken flight descending steeply into a musty cellar. Gregg cautiously descended. The city noises were dulling in his microphone now, and ahead lay only silence, broken occasionally by the scratching scurry of tiny feet and eerie squeaks—distant rats, perhaps, alarmed by his cautious tread.

No humans down here? It seemed not. Surely their voices would be audible to his instrument.

The stairway led to a littered cellar-space. Its wooden ceiling hung dangling in places. Then Gregg saw that a near-by corner of the cellar was newly boarded off into a room. A wooden door was closed and locked. Gregg stood close by the door. The windowless room within would be some twenty feet square.

The microphone yielded nothing. Gregg put his fluoroscope to the door. The x-ray image was weird with the skeletons of machinery—nothing human.

Gregg took a chance. He melted through the door lock, drew the broken door cautiously outward. It was a small modern laboratory workshop! Here the spurious radium tubes had been manufactured, undoubtedly.

Then suddenly Gregg was aware that his eavesdropping detector was glowing! He stiffened. Some one listening to him, here in this dilapidated building? But when he consulted the small detector dial, its needle was swinging crazily. Not a normal eavesdropping ray; some other radiating disturbance?

He moved across the room. The dial needle jumped and swung. . . . Radioactivity! The treasure!

He found it presently. The thirty small tubes were piled in a corner under an old rusted metal box.

BUT Gregg suddenly went tense, snapped off his searchlight and stood against the wall in the blank darkness. The microphone grid at his ear was yielding sounds: approaching footsteps, the dim distant murmur of voices.

The approaching criminals! Overhead, in the garage! They were coming down here; and suddenly Gregg realized that he was trapped. The tread of several men: the murmur of several voices. Already they were in the garage. They would come down the narrow staircase; they would see the melted door lock—

NO use for Gregg to hide. He moved out into the center of the cellar near the foot of the narrow stairs. They would have to come down one by one. From the darkness here his heat-flash could pick them off.

They were coming slowly. Gregg aimed his x-ray upward. Its silent invisible vibrations streamed through the rotting wooden ceiling. The image of the skeletons overhead became visible. Tiny and blurred, but, it seemed, three men. They had stopped—they were standing up there, murmuring together. Then one of them moved a little aside. Gregg enlarged his image on the finder—the skeleton of his torso—his ribs.

The man with the platinum rib! Gregg saw plainly the bent rib and the mended place! The other two skeletons were smaller. One seemed holding the other. Gregg could see the skeleton outlines of the metal weapon in his hand.

Now they were coming forward again. They had almost reached the head of the stairs. . . . And Gregg was hearing the microphonic sound of their voices. Familiar voices, all three of them! Just a few sentences, but they were amazing, enlightening—all in a moment Gregg fully understood this strange affair.

The man with the platinum rib was Allen Roberts, an escaped murderer! For five years, now, he had been Chief Chemist of the Frane Company!

The prisoner here at the head of the stairs was Bob Frane. And the man holding him was Dr. Lopez, representative of the South American Government! These two criminals, Roberts and Lopez! No marauding band of crooks—just these two, who had alone conceived and executed this murderous plot for the theft of three million dollars in radium!

Gregg's mind was whirling with instant thoughts. He understood it all now. During all the manufacture of the radium, Roberts had been entrusted with the storing of the tubes in the Frane vaults. Each day he had stolen a few of the genuine tubes, substituting his counterfeits which by night he had manufactured here in this underground workshop.

The job was finished today. But the Mackenzie brothers—by some means

which was never to be disclosed—had got wind of the plot. They must be silenced. Dr. Lopez had killed Willard Mackenzie in the Frane Laboratory room. And Roberts had killed Frank Mackenzie in the hotel.

Daring murderers, equipped scientifically to fight the science of their trackers! At the time of the murders of the Mackenzie brothers Lopez and Roberts were separated. They wanted to get together, and to abduct Frane Senior. Then they would force him to order the postponement of the shipment. They were going to vanish tonight. Before it was discovered that they were not victims of the bandits, they would be well out of the way. And, through their secret channels, the stolen radium would be marketed before its theft was discovered. But the old man—in the darkness of that laboratory room an hour ago when they seized him—had fought them. They killed him and stuffed his body into the filing-cabinet.

Then by chance they had been able to seize Bob Frane. He had been more clever. He pretended to acquiesce. They were bringing him here now. They would retrieve the radium—get away with it. And doubtless, when Frane had issued orders to his company, he would be left here imprisoned. Or killed outright. . . .

THEY were coming down the stairs. Gregg abandoned his instruments. With leveled heat-gun he crouched in the blackness just to one side of the foot of the stairs. A tiny flashlight beam preceded the descending men. Gregg could see their legs. Then, by the reflected glow of the flashlight, he saw that Frane was coming first. Lopez with a weapon on him, was shoving him down. In the rear was Roberts.

And Roberts' low voice floated down: "Damned city alarm—took us a long time to avoid it and get here."

But they were unsuspecting that their hide-out had been discovered! Frane had been clever enough to tell them nothing!

Frane and Lopez reached the cellar level. Gregg would be discovered in another second. He knew it. Roberts' flashlight was sweeping the cellar. It touched the broken door of the workshop.

In that second the crouching Gregg saw that Lopez' gun had wavered from direct aim at Frane. Gregg stabbed his heat-flash, and his hurtling body followed hardly a second after it. He struck between Lopez and Frane, knocking them apart. He was aware that a flash had leaped from Lopez' gun. But his own stab had found its mark. Lopez' body fell away into the darkness.

Frane had been knocked sidewise. He stumbled and fell. Gregg shouted:

"Stay down, Bob!"

He turned and whirled on Roberts. The chemist's bulk loomed before him. He flung his flashlight at Gregg's head, but missed. And as Gregg, off balance, leveled his gun, Roberts leaped and seized his wrist. They fought in the blackness, swaying on the littered cellar floor from the darkness of which came Frane's voice, "Where are you, John?"

They stumbled over Frane. His hands gripped them, trying to feel which was Gregg. Then in a moment the three were rolling on the cellar floor. Roberts had wrenched away Gregg's gun. He flailed it—struck Frane's head. He sank away, and there was only Roberts and Gregg. The gun was gone. Incredible strength of this burly antagonist! He was shorter, but heavier than Gregg. As they rolled, Roberts came on top. Gregg felt hands at his throat. His panting breath was shut off. His head began roaring. He heard Roberts' voice, triumphant:

"Got you now—"

Gregg's strength was going; his kicks and lunges futile. His flailing hands struck the cellar floor. He felt something heavy. His fingers closed on it—an old chunk of iron, here among the litter. With a last despairing strength he lifted it, and crashed it down upon Roberts' head.

The crack, here in this black panting turmoil, was gruesome. Gregg felt the fingers at his throat loosen. Blessed air! He drew a gasping breath. His head cleared. The body of Roberts lay inert on top of him. He heaved it off.

OVERHEAD now was the sound of heavy feet, the scream of a police siren—the city police coming to investigate this turmoil. And Gregg heard Frane's confused voice:

"John, where are you? What happened—"

Gregg found him, drew him erect. He was stunned, but not greatly injured. The radium treasure was safe. The bodies of Roberts and Lopez lay at their feet.

Gregg and Frane stood together in the darkness until in a moment the police came and found them.

Monkey Business

This latest exploit of Tiny David and the State police started out in fun but ended in deadly earnest.

By ROBERT R. MILL

Illustrated by Monte Crews

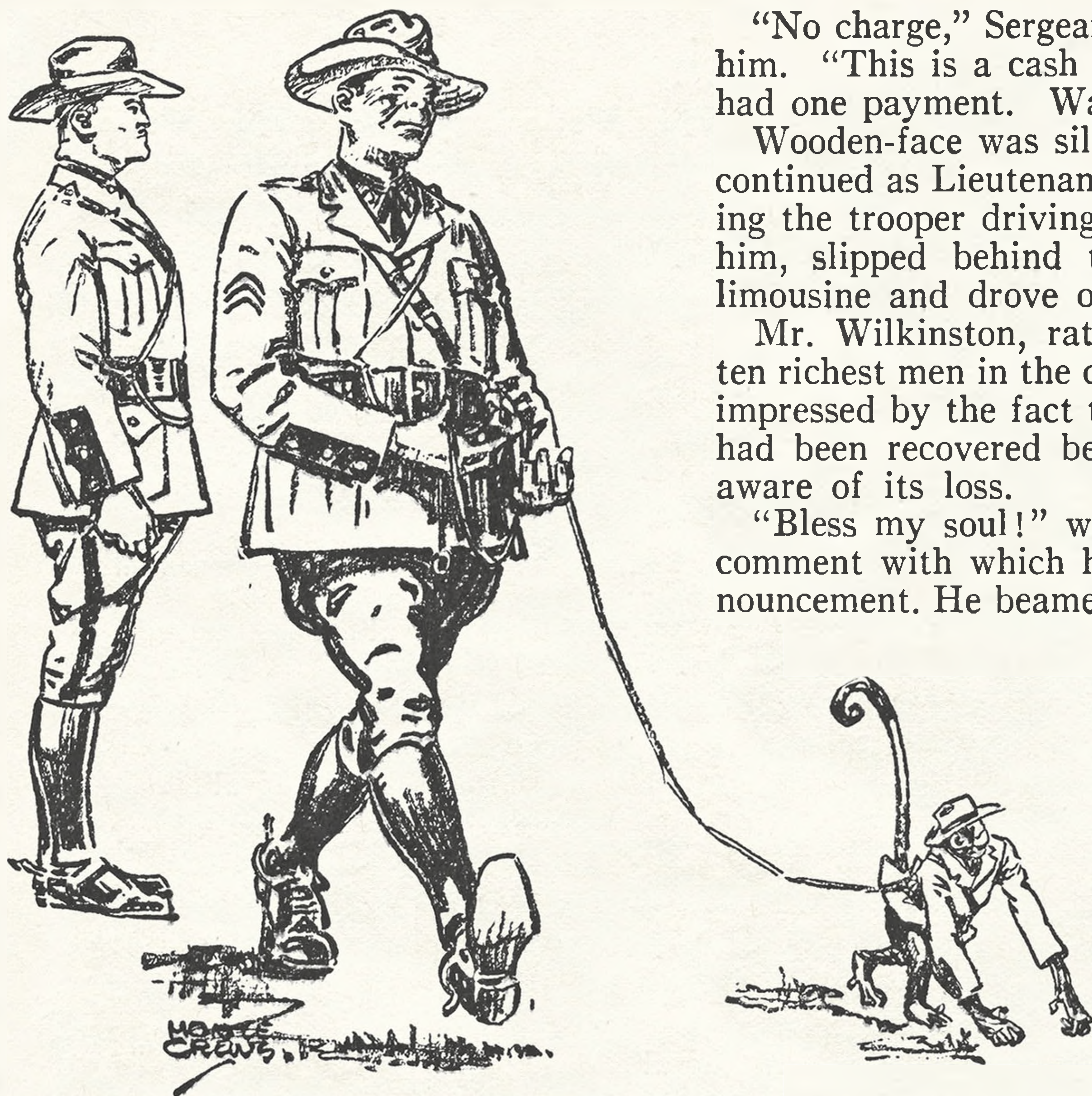
FATE, working with tongue in cheek, set the stage. . . . Mr. Wooden-face Clafty shared the openly expressed belief of the district attorney that the City of New York would be better without him, and departed, bound for Canada. It was a long journey, and it was not lightened by the fact that Mr. Clafty was without funds or means of transportation. So it came to pass that Mr. Clafty was an uninvited guest at the palatial Adirondack camp of Harlow Wilkinston.

Mr. Clafty, not bothering to have his arrival announced, tarried in the garage, which was deserted for the moment. There his envious glance fell upon the largest and newest limousine. The car represented both transportation and a cash profit in the Canadian hot-car market. Mr. Clafty drove away with joy in his heart. . . .

At about the same time Sergeant James Crosby, on a roving patrol, and with five large counties to do his rambling about, decided to use the highway on which Mr. Wilkinston's camp was located. Sergeant Crosby needed miles on his speedometer. He also needed postmarks, which were given him by obliging postmasters in the towns through which he passed. The miles and the postmarks were designed to convince Captain Charles Field, commanding officer of the Black Horse Troop of the New York State Police, that a certain sergeant was at least covering a lot of ground. Of course, if the said sergeant could turn up some business while covering the miles, so much the better.

The limousine and the troop-car met about three miles north of the camp. Mr. Wooden-face Clafty looked like business to Sergeant Crosby. Sergeant Crosby looked like disaster to Mr. Clafty, who at once proceeded to put distance between the two cars.

That decided Sergeant Crosby; he gave chase. That annoyed Mr. Clafty; he showed his annoyance by taking a pot-shot at Sergeant Crosby. That was Mr. Clafty's big mistake, for as Sergeant Crosby had often pointed out, nothing annoyed him more than being shot at.



Proudly Jupe wore the outfit. He paraded before the entire troop one noon, and every man saluted gravely.

When the chase ended abruptly, Sergeant Crosby eased his annoyance by engaging in fistic combat with Mr. Clafty. This did not last long. It ended with Sergeant Crosby in possession of two automobiles, undamaged, and one prisoner, the latter item badly in need of a complete overhauling, and in such a state that only an optimistic repair-man would have guaranteed to restore Wooden-face to his original shape.

That was the state of affairs when Lieutenant Edward David, otherwise known as Tiny, appeared on the scene in answer to a telephone-call. The officer draped his huge form on the running-board of the limousine and surveyed the scene calmly and judicially.

"Looks as if he had distemper," was his verdict. "Better take him to a veterinary."

Sergeant Crosby nodded.

"Right." He jerked a thumb at the limousine. "That kiddie-car belongs to old man Wilkinston, the banker. His place is about six miles down the road. How about running it back to him? He might need it. I'll drop this stray at the pound, and then report in at the barracks."

By this time Mr. Clafty was beginning to take interest in the proceedings.

"What's the charge?" he demanded.

"No charge," Sergeant Crosby assured him. "This is a cash transaction. You had one payment. Want another?"

Wooden-face was silent. That silence continued as Lieutenant David after telling the trooper driving his car to follow him, slipped behind the wheel of the limousine and drove off.

Mr. Wilkinston, rated as one of the ten richest men in the country, was much impressed by the fact that his stolen car had been recovered before he had been aware of its loss.

"Bless my soul!" was the inadequate comment with which he greeted the announcement. He beamed upon the bearer of the tidings, whose weight was imposing a severe strain on a chair in the living-room of the camp.

They got along well, these two men from totally different walks of life. No, Lieutenant David explained, Sergeant Crosby would not be allowed to accept a reward. But if Mr. Wilkinston cared to make a contribution to the pension fund of the troop—

Mr. Wilkinston, apparently, did. He noted the manner in which the check was to be made out. But he was not satisfied.

"Stuff and nonsense!" he sputtered. "First policeman I ever encountered who was really on the job and used his head. Need more men like him. Now you tell me I can't do anything for him."

He glared at Tiny David. The Lieutenant maintained a discreet silence.

"I have it," the banker declared. "Men like pets. No reason why your organization can't accept a mascot, is there? My daughter has just the thing. Cost a pretty penny. She won't relish giving it up, but I maintain a home is no place for—"

He halted.

"Any objection to my giving a mascot to your organization?"

Tiny David's smile was bland.

"I hardly think so, sir," he admitted.

"Very good. And will I be breaking any laws if I have this mascot delivered to Sergeant Crosby?"

Tiny David, who had seen an animal not common to the Adirondacks chained to a post near the house, hoped for the best as he declared he could find no objection. Then he obligingly furnished Sergeant Crosby's initials and departed.

CAPTAIN FIELD'S mail the following morning contained a check, the size of which caused that official to gasp. Two hours later an expressman arrived at the barracks. Lieutenant David, by some strange chance, met him when he entered the rear door.

"Crate for Sergeant Crosby," said the expressman. He grinned.

Tiny David inspected the crate. He also grinned.

"Wait about five minutes," he ordered. "Then bring it in the living-room."

It was a simple task to round up an audience. Max Payton, the top-sergeant, led in the office force. The gangs from the stables and the garage swelled the numbers. Every man on reserve was present. Captain Field, attracted by the crowd, entered the room. Sergeant Crosby was the last to arrive. The expressman and the crate followed him.

"Package for you, sir."

"Yeah?" Crosby eyed the man coldly. The presence of the crowd warned him something was afoot. One glance at Tiny David's face confirmed his suspicions and prepared him for the worst. "How much is due on it?"

"Prepaid," said the expressman. "Sign here, please."

Sergeant Crosby attempted to be nonchalant.

"I'll sign if it doesn't cost anything."

He wrote his name on the bill of lading. The expressman extended the crate. Crosby took one look at it, and allowed his outstretched hand to drop.

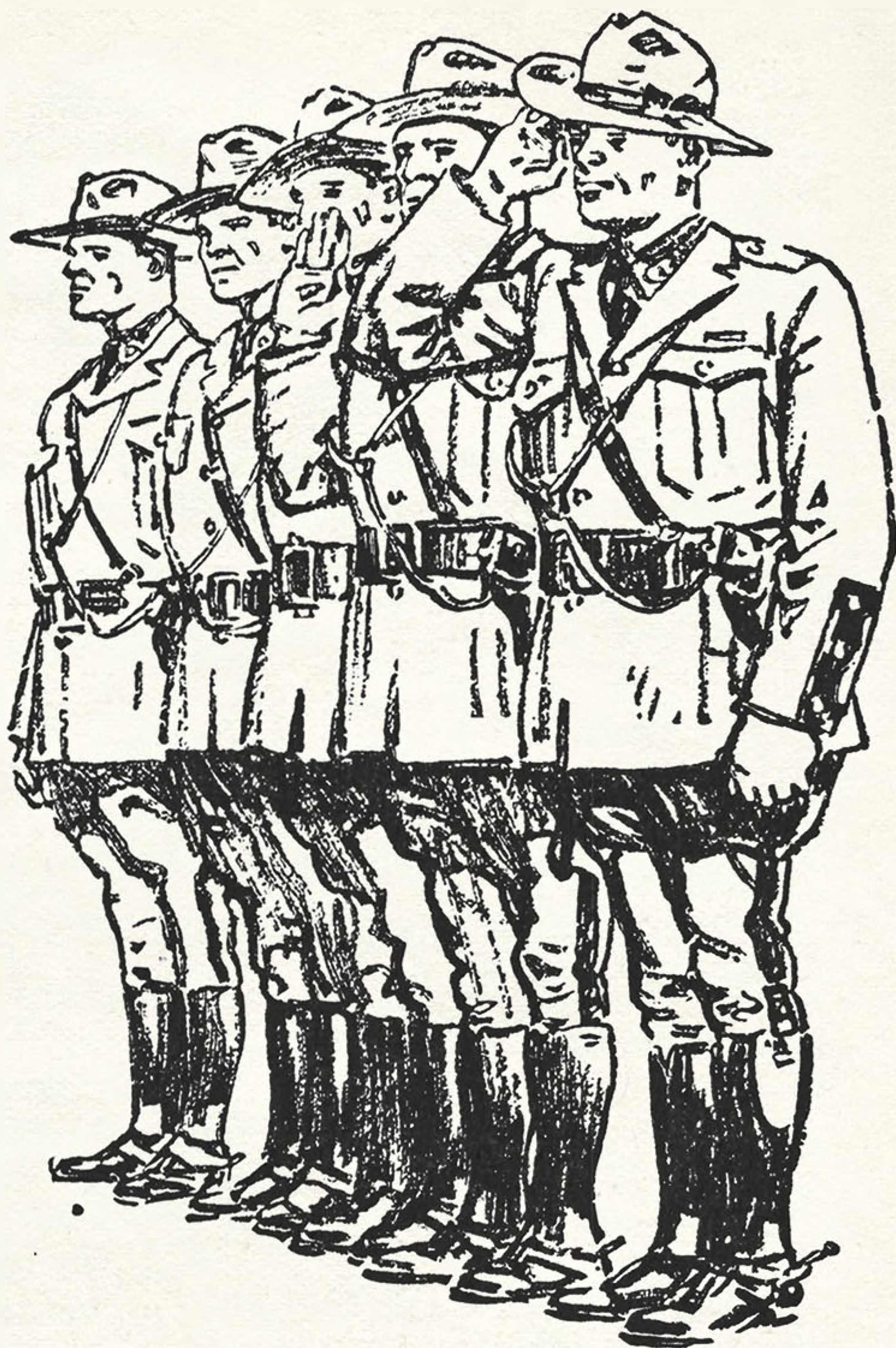
"What the—" he began.

A guffaw from the crowd interrupted him. The deep voice of Sergeant Payton carried above the noise:

"Ashamed of his family, now that he is a sergeant."

Crosby thought fast, and decided upon a brave show of force. He glanced at Sergeant Payton with scorn, unlocked a door in the crate, and drew forth an under-sized monkey. The guffaw increased in volume.

"Marked family resemblance," commented Sergeant Henry Linton.



"Why embarrass the monk?" demanded Sergeant John King.

The monkey, in fact, was far from at ease. His paws sought the collar of Crosby's shirt. There was a look of fright upon his small wrinkled face. The unrest of the animal was shared by the man holding him, but Crosby attempted to turn the tables:

"Take it easy, pal. Lot of ugly faces for any decent monk to walk in on all of a sudden. But you'll get used to them. All but that one guy who calls himself a lieut—"

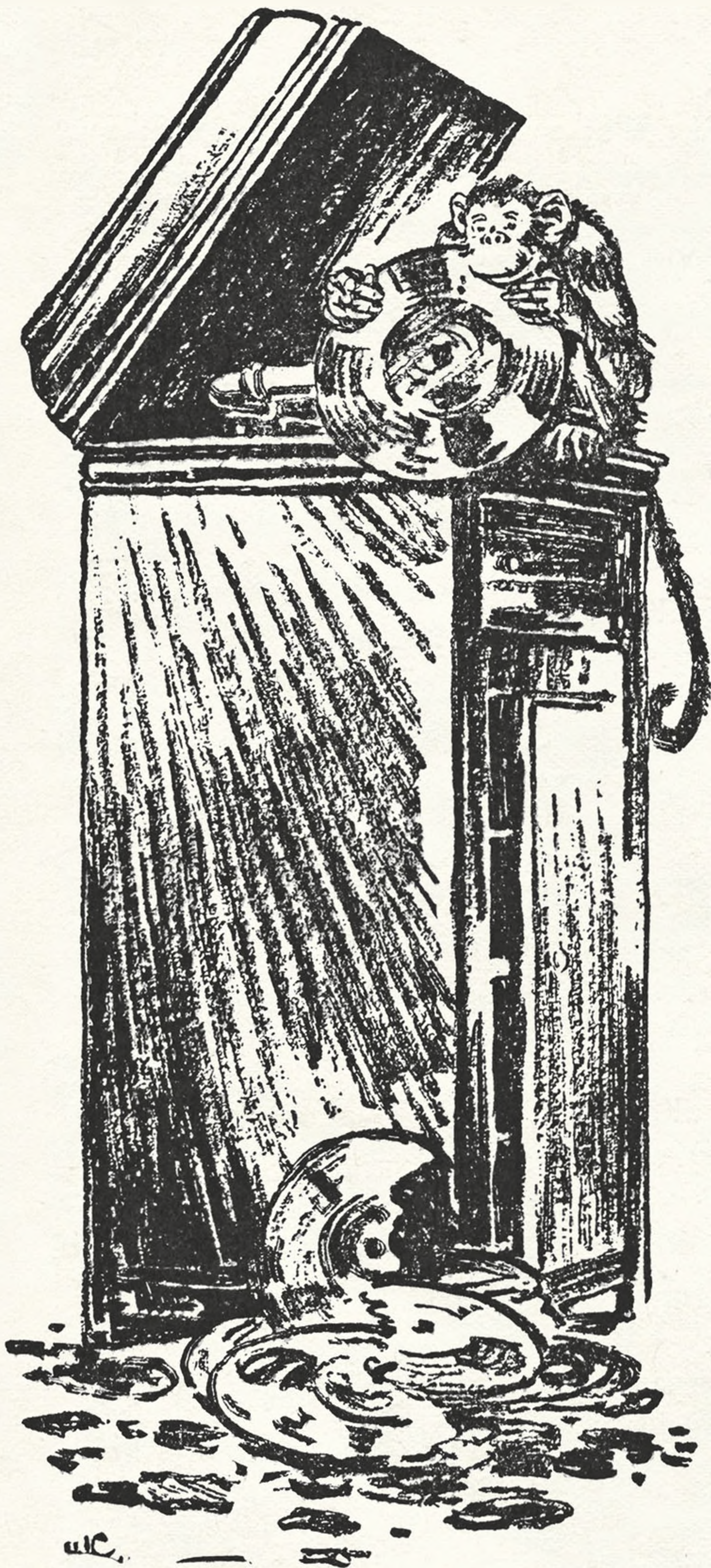
Sergeant Payton, who was examining the crate, provided a diversion by reading aloud the lettering on a tag in a high falsetto:

"'Sergeant James Crosby:

"'As a small return for your clever, courageous and efficient work yesterday, please accept this mascot for your organization. I regret that regulations make it impossible for me to express my gratitude in more substantial—"

The reading was interrupted by groans from Sergeant Linton—who, apparently, was very ill.

"Jealousy," was the diagnosis of Sergeant Payton. "He couldn't catch a cold, and nobody ever gave him a monkey." He bent over the tag again. "His name is Jupe." He glared at Sergeant Crosby. "Aren't you gentleman enough to introduce your brother?"



The monkey soon learned how to place records on the phonograph; but he found the thrill of breaking them even greater.

The flush on Crosby's face deepened. Then relief came from an unexpected quarter.

"Very thoughtful of Mr. Wilkinston." Captain Field was the speaker. "And most appropriate. But it's against regulations for Crosby to claim the monkey as personal property." He beamed upon the group. "Turn him over to Lieutenant David.

"Lieutenant David conducted the negotiations that resulted in this transaction. Only fair he should have the monkey. He is personally responsible for him. Turn the monkey over to him, Sergeant."

A grin of relief crossed Crosby's face as he placed the monkey in Tiny David's arms.

"Blood calls to blood," was his *sotto-voce* comment.

The guffaw was now a titter, but it did not lack volume or enthusiasm. Tiny David knew when discretion was the better part of valor. He remained silent. He also made a mental vow that if he managed to get out of this he would be involved in no more practical jokes.

The monkey, meanwhile, fumbled with the silver bar on the big man's collar. Soon the bar came loose and the monkey held it aloft in triumph.

Captain Field watched the proceedings with satisfaction.

"That," he declared, "is a sensible suggestion. That monk is going to fit in around here first-rate."

Tiny David attempted to regain the pin. He was rewarded by a savage bite. He cuffed the monkey's ears. Again sharp teeth made their mark on his hand.

Crosby made a ritual of turning his back on the scene.

"Not good form to stand around during a family quarrel," he pointed out. "And if we took sides with one of them, they both would jump us. Let's get out of here so the David family can have a real reunion."

They acted on his suggestion, leaving Captain Field with Tiny David and the monkey, between whom peace had been restored only by leaving the monkey in firm possession of the silver bar that denoted the rank of the man.

"From now on," declared the commanding officer, "that monkey is the troop mascot. Nothing is to happen to him. We can't afford to offend a man who gives a thousand dollars to the pension fund. Do you get that?"

"Yes, sir," said Tiny David. Then he was alone in the room, watching the monkey throw the silver bar aside and enthusiastically tackle the task of removing a spur from the huge boot of the man who was now his master.

JUPE slept in the stables that night. In the morning Tiny David made no effort to remove his charge. Captain Field, however, attended to that detail.

"Bring the monkey in," he ordered Sergeant Payton. "Turn him over to Lieutenant David."

Tiny David, busy at his desk with reports, glanced up to find Jupe at his side. He controlled his anger as he saw Captain Field standing in the doorway.

"Hello, Jupe," he muttered.

The monkey greeted him with signs of joy.

"Real friends," was the verdict of Captain Field as he returned to his private office.

Tiny David fastened the chain on the monkey's collar to the leg of his desk. He glared at the other two occupants of the room, Lieutenants Charles McMann and Walter Merrick. Their backs were turned, but those backs were shaking.

SOON Tiny David was called to the outer office. Jupe at once climbed on the desk, seized a pen, dipped it in an inkwell and proceeded to splash ink on the wall. Lieutenant McMann attempted to take the pen away from him.

"Don't do that," Captain Field ordered, as he appeared in the doorway. "Let him play. Lieutenant David will clean up after him."

He entered the room, unfastened the chain, and gave the monkey his liberty.

Jupe ran to the hall. There his progress was slow, as he paused at every electric light.

Captain Field and the two lieutenants were interested but silent spectators as the monkey climbed up, removed a bulb, examined it carefully and then hurled it against the wall. The resulting explosion delighted Jupe. He covered his ears with his paws, then chattered with delight.

Bulb after bulb received the same treatment.

Soon a distracted Filipino house-boy appeared.

"What I do, Captain?" he demanded.

"Put new ones in," Captain Field ordered. "Keep track of them. Lieutenant David will pay for them."

Jupe then turned his attention to the telephones. Every unguarded instrument offered a fertile field. He carefully removed the receiver from the hook and waited. The clicking sound that denoted attempts on the part of the operator to obtain attention filled the heart of one small monkey with delight.

Sergeant Linton found him before a telephone and carried him to the living-room, where he was at once the center of an admiring group. The monkey soon learned how to place records on the phonograph. But he found the thrill of breaking them even greater.

Lieutenant David entered the room just as one record crashed to the floor.

"Bit clumsy," was the verdict of Sergeant King. "Family trait." He looked up. Then he jumped to his feet and saluted. "Are you looking for your bro—er, monkey, Lieutenant?"

Tiny David and Jupe departed, bound for the stable. Then the huge man sought Captain Field in an effort to make peace.

"A joke is a joke, Captain, but they get tiresome."

"So you have learned that at last?" asked Captain Field.

"Yes sir. There is a little bill of about six dollars for light bulbs. How about keeping him in the stables, Captain?"

Captain Field pondered.

"It will take you about six months to live this down," was his verdict. "You rate that. Put the monk in the stables."

"Thank you, Captain."

"Just a minute. All this is good, clean fun, but there is no reason why the monkey should suffer. Have the stable watch feed him regularly, and play with him now and then. I read somewhere that they get lonely. And it is up to you to take the monk along now and then when you go out on the road."

He watched a grin cross Tiny David's face.

"No, I am not kidding. The monkey has to get out of those stables now and then, and it will be good for a humorist like you. Remember that, Tiny."

"Yes, sir," said Tiny David. "And thank you, Captain."

CAPTAIN FIELD proved to be a true prophet:

Jupe did not like the stables. He was lonely, as desperately lonely as only one small monkey in strange and unpleasant quarters could be. He scorned the advances of the stable watch, even though food accompanied them. He was pathetically happy when Tiny David visited him. For some reason he had formed a firm attachment to the big man.

All the while, Tiny David was paying for his unsuccessful attempt to bring grief to Crosby. The gibes continued. Every meal Captain Field would ask in a voice that carried over the entire room:

"Alone, Lieutenant?"

Crosby, aided by a girl of his acquaintance who was handy with the needle, provided Jupe with a coat and hat that was an exact duplicate of that worn by Tiny David, except for size.

Jupe wore the outfit proudly. At one end of a chain held by Sergeant Payton, he paraded before the entire troop one noon, and every man saluted gravely.

Tiny David was weakening under the constant fire, and he was heartily sick of the whole deal. But his sense of justice caused him to visit the stables frequently. Jupe was not to blame for all this. The big man, despite the ridicule that the monkey brought him, was really beginning to like the little fellow.

It was no hardship to take Jupe along on short patrols. The monkey enjoyed the rides.

But he missed his former home, where a girl had given him more attention than these men ever would. Tiny David soon realized that. Every feminine visitor to the barracks caused Jupe to go into a flurry of excitement. That excitement ended abruptly as he realized this girl was not the one he was looking for.

"Too bad, Jupe," Tiny David soothed him one Sunday afternoon. "Maybe we can do something about it."

He entered the barracks and called Wilkinston on the telephone.

"The monkey is homesick," he informed the banker. "I think he misses your daughter."

The banker snorted.

"You aren't tired of him, are you?"

Tiny David, mindful of Captain Field, made haste to answer:

"No, indeed!"

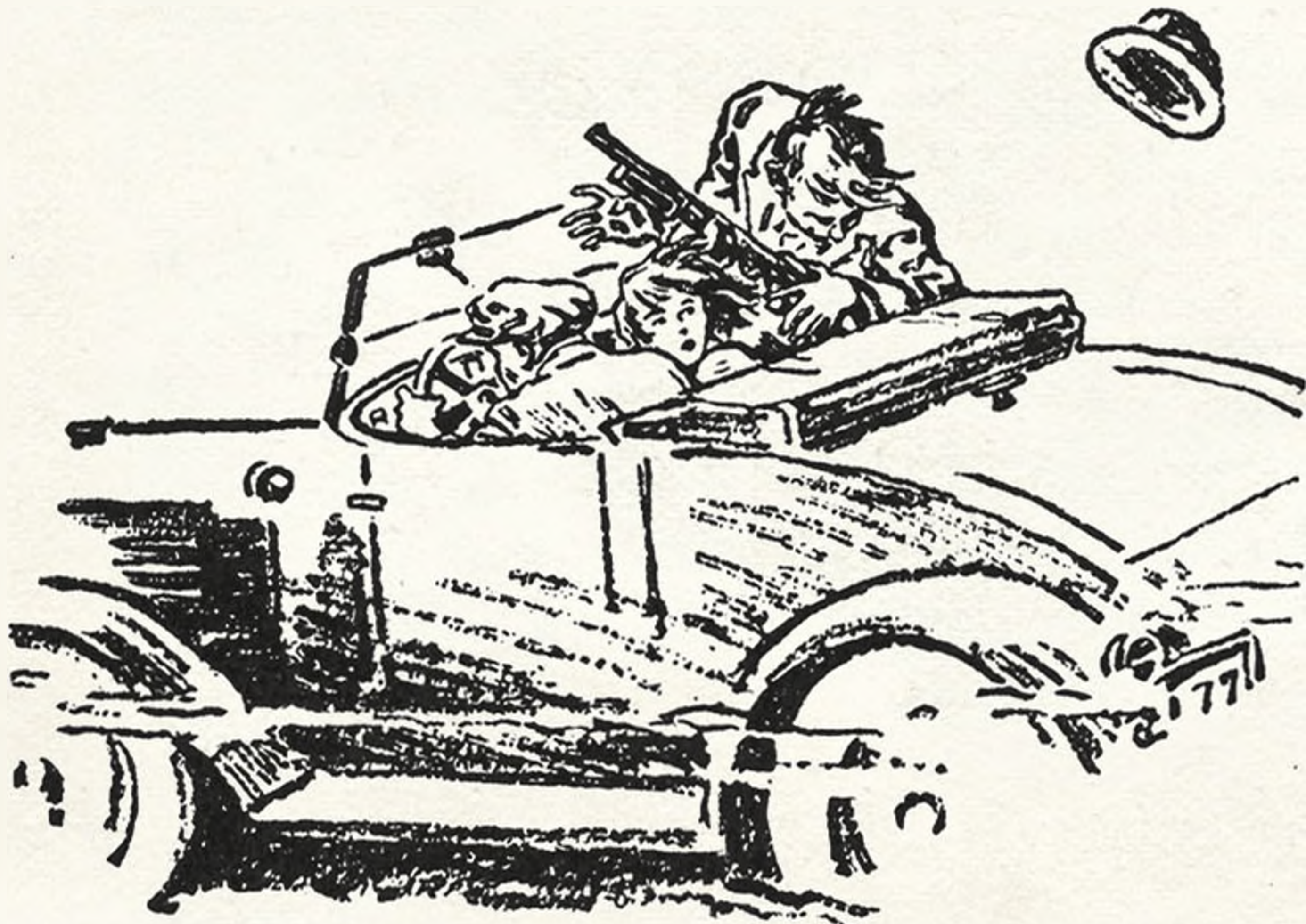
"Then you keep him," came the order. "Lucy made the place hideous when he left. But she got over it, and so will the monkey. Besides, I am not an Indian giver."

"Yes, sir," said Tiny David.

That was that.

THE summer wore on. Jupe became a fixture in the barracks of the Black Horse Troop. Tiny David still was the butt of occasional jokes, but the humor slackened as one by one the other men of the outfit accepted the monkey.

More and more Jupe accompanied Tiny David on patrol. The residents of the section, who at first had chuckled at the sight, ceased to find it a novelty.



Jupe was happier now. Only one cloud darkened his horizon. He still missed the girl who had taken him when he first left his mother. He never ceased his search for her. And always he was doomed to disappointment.

The men in barracks worked their way through the noon meal listlessly. The day was sultry. Parched ground reflected the heat. Off to the north, storm clouds were massed above the St. Lawrence Valley, but so far they had failed to yield the cooling rain.

JIM CROSBY and Tiny David were sprawled on the plot of grass before the garage. A stunted pine tree threw off a small area of shade, and their only movements were designed to keep them within that area.

Crosby made a slight movement.

"Pete!" he called.

"Yes," came the answer from the nearby stables.

"Send Jupe out."

"Right."

Soon the monkey appeared before them, chattering away in an effort to show his pleasure. He shook hands with Tiny David, and then repeated the process with Crosby, but with less enthusiasm.

A short distance away there was a hose, from which a stream of water was pouring on the grass. Jupe soon spied it. He inspected the nozzle gravely, and then took it in his paws. The next process was the discovery that by moving the nozzle he could direct the stream of water. That had possibilities.

The two men chuckled quietly as they watched the monkey glance at them, then look at the hose and later move the nozzle slowly in their direction.

"Cut that out, Jupe!" called Tiny David.

The monkey, with the air of a guilty boy, dropped the hose.

Tiny David chuckled.

"Cute little beggar," he muttered. "Funny how we—"

"Lieutenant David!" The head of Sergeant Payton appeared in a window in the barracks. "Telephone!" His excitement was reflected in his gruff voice. "Urgent!"

Tiny David leaped to his feet, and raced toward the barracks. This was important. The manner of the top-sergeant told him that. The quietness of the office emphasized it. He felt a tingle

of excitement as he picked up the receiver.

"Lieutenant David speaking."

He heard a gasp of relief.

"This is Wilkinston. For God's sake, Lieutenant, come over here right away! And bring that sergeant—Crosby, I believe the name was—with you. Only hurry."

Tiny David shot a quick question:

"What is the matter, Mr. Wilkinston?"

The banker gave an exclamation of impatience and despair.

"I can't tell you over the telephone. Perhaps I am doing something terrible by calling you. But I returned several hours before I was expected. There may be time. But for God's sake, hurry!"

"Right!"

Tiny David turned away from the telephone. He raced from the room.

"Get the car," he called to Crosby, as he ran toward the garage.

The troop-car pulled from the building as he reached it. He jumped in beside Crosby. The car was moving toward the main road as he began his explanation:

"Wilkinston is in serious trouble. Said he couldn't tell me about it over the telephone. But he begged me to hurry."

Crosby merely nodded. He stepped on the gas.

They were weaving their way in and out of the traffic in the village when they became aware of a third passenger. Jupe, who had climbed to the floor of the rear compartment of the car when Crosby had entered the garage, decided the place had been reached from which it would be impossible to dispense with the presence of a monkey. He acted upon this belief by jumping on Tiny David's shoulder, and then climbing down to the seat between the two men.

"Stowaway, eh?" said Tiny David. He grinned. "All right, Jupe. But sit down and keep quiet."

Jupe chattered out what might or might not have been a promise to behave.

A SHORT distance out of the village Crosby turned off on an unpaved road.

"Short-cut," he explained. "Dirt, but good going all the way. Cuts off four miles to Wilkinston's camp."

Tiny David chuckled.

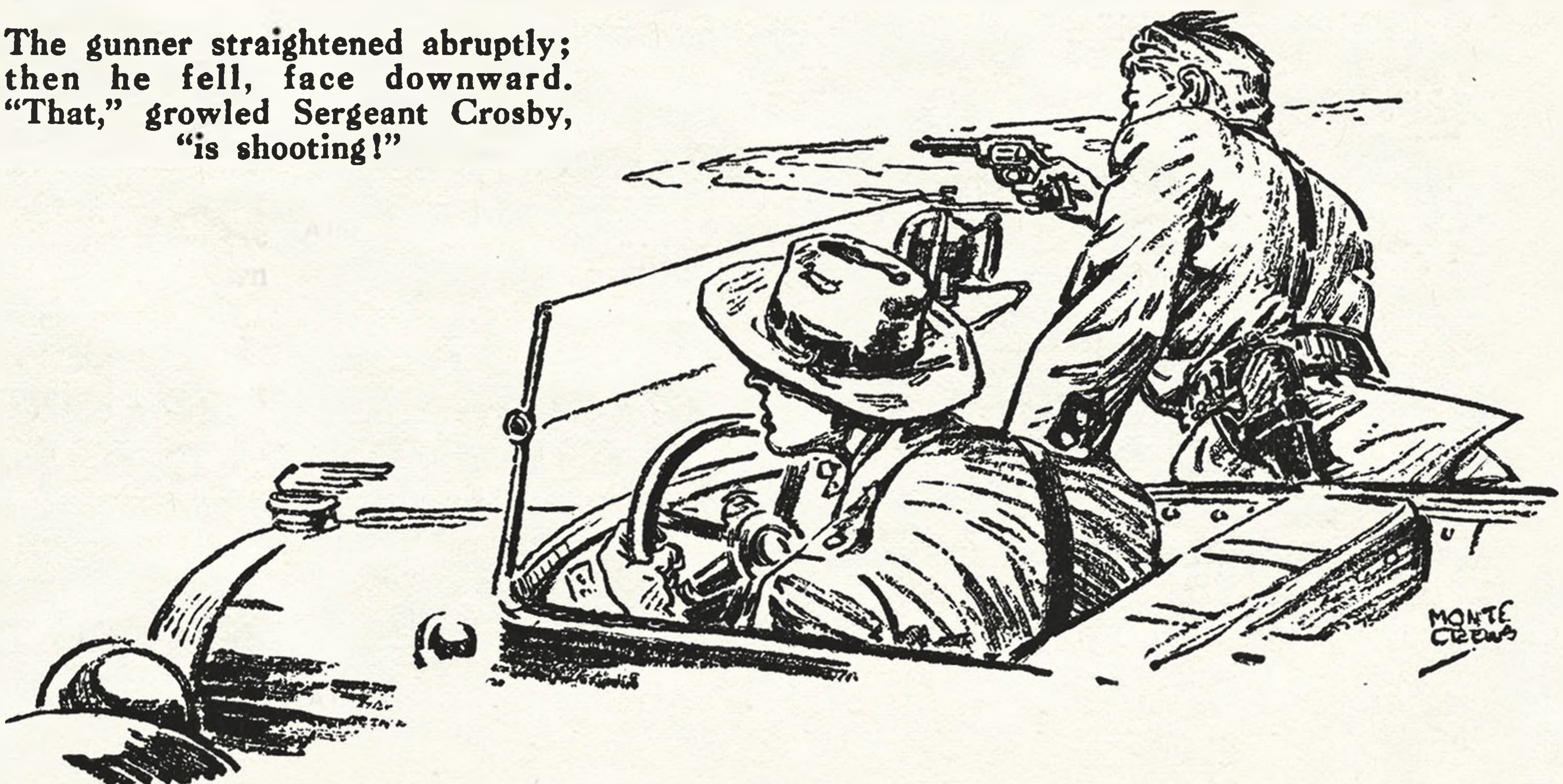
"Don't I know this road! It has other advantages. Head north on it, and you get into Canada without being annoyed by customs houses. Many a chase I've had on it."

The troop-car had reeled off about five miles when they sighted an open roadster, headed north, and parked at the side of the road. They raced toward it, Crosby peering ahead, and Tiny David turning a casual glance toward the car.

A man was at the wheel of the roadster. A girl, rather white of face, sat beside him. A second man was climbing into the car on the other side of the girl. Tools scattered on the ground, and a discarded shoe, proved that the occupants of the roadster had completed changing a tire. But as the troop-car rushed toward them Tiny David saw that the driver was preparing to get under way, disregarding the tools.

"That's funny," muttered Tiny David. "Slow down."

The troop-car lost speed rapidly, and as the two cars were abreast Jupe went



The gunner straightened abruptly; then he fell, face downward. "That," growled Sergeant Crosby, "is shooting!"

into action. He chattered furiously, giving every evidence of delight. His tiny paws were outstretched toward the girl in the roadster.

TINY DAVID saw the starkly hopeless look upon the face of the girl replaced by recognition and hope. Then, as the cars swung close, Jupe jumped and landed in the lap of the girl. And at the same instant the roadster got under way, headed north.

"Turn around, and get after them!" Tiny David growled the order. "That's Lucy Wilkinston! It's a snatch job!"

"You're telling me!" The exclamation came from the corner of Crosby's grimly set mouth.

The troop-car halted, shot backward, and then roared off toward the north and the speeding roadster. Crosby bent low over the wheel. Tiny David, muscles tense, sat beside him, his face hard.

The roadster was fast, and the man at its wheel knew how to drive it. But the troop-car gained steadily.

"That's driving, Jim," muttered Tiny David.

The man sitting on the right of the roadster glanced back and saw his pursuers narrowing the gap between the two cars. He shouted something at the driver. His shoulders moved, he turned around and the troopers saw the barrel of a submachine-gun pointing toward them.

Crosby growled hoarsely, but the speed of the troop-car did not slacken. Tiny David vaulted to the running-board. He worked feverishly, but deliberately. This was a race against time, a race which would be decided in split seconds.

Certain death would be sprayed from the roadster when the machine-gun went into action. It could be halted only by a quick, lucky shot. That shot, unless perfectly aimed, might kill the girl huddled between the two gangsters. And the car from which the shot must be fired was going at a speed of more than seventy miles an hour over a bumpy dirt road.

The gunner in the roadster took deliberate aim. Tiny David, having found a secure perch on the running-board, reached for his revolver. Icy fingers clutching at his heart told him he was too late.

Then, before the gunner fired, his elbow brushed against the monkey, cowering in the arms of the girl. The man swore, reached out a hand and attempted to knock the monkey aside. Jupe resented that. He showed his resentment by sinking his teeth in the hand that brushed against him.

They heard the cry of pain from the gunner. They saw the barrel that had meant certain death a minute before, waver uncertainly. Tiny David's right hand went up.

"Please, God!" he prayed.

The bark of the revolver sounded above the roar of the laboring cars. Tiny David hung on and averted his gaze.

The gunner straightened abruptly. His head slipped to one side. Then he fell face downward, on the lowered top of the roadster.

"That," growled Sergeant Crosby, "is shooting!"

Tiny David lifted his head. He saw the man with the gun sprawled in grotesque fashion over the back of the seat. He saw the girl sitting erect, and looking back. There was fierce joy in his voice as he cried:

"Pull me beside them, Jim!"

"Right!" The clipped word of affirmative was accompanied by a jolt as the troop-car leaped forward.

The distance between the two cars narrowed. The radiator of the troop-car pulled abreast of the rumble of the roadster. Tiny David, sure-footed as a great cat, was making his way forward along the running-board.

A shrill whine arose from the laboring motor of the troop-car as mistreated bearings set up a cry of distress. A look of dismay crossed Crosby's face.

"Can't—" he began.

HE checked the statement as he saw Tiny David go into action. The big gray-clad body straightened, then threw itself across the narrow gap between the two cars. One groping hand found the wheel of the roadster. The other grasped the back of the seat. The two hands swung the body into the car, and there it landed full on the driver.

There was a sharp struggle in which the two men, the girl and one small monkey were almost hopelessly tangled. The car plunged from the road and came to a halt against the walls of a sand-pit. There was the sound of shattered glass and broken metal. The struggle went on.

Crosby, who had halted the troop-car, joined the mêlée. Then it ceased abruptly.

Tiny David bent over the unconscious girl.

"Fainted," was his verdict. "Get some water."

He pulled the driver to his feet. A pair of handcuffs clicked. The chain of the cuffs was attached to the post of the wrecked steering-wheel.

"That will hold you," muttered Tiny David, as his hands played over the body of the man and found a revolver.

He turned over the limp form of the gunner. There was a round hole in the center of the man's forehead. A shadow crossed the face of the trooper.

"It had to be one of us," he murmured, as if explaining the matter to himself.

As he turned around, his foot touched something soft and yielding, and a shrill squeak of protest went up.

"Jupe!"

Tiny David bent over and picked up a bruised and battered monkey. There was another shrill squeak as a hand touched a limp paw.

"That's tough," said the big man. He spoke as if he were addressing a companion. "It's broken, Jupe. But don't you worry. We will have you fixed up in no time."

He looked up to see Sergeant Crosby.

"House around the corner," said Crosby. "I telephoned. Doctors and relief coming."

He bent over the girl, dipping his hand in a basin he carried, and splashing drops of water in her face. Tiny David stood near by, holding Jupe.

The girl's eyelids fluttered and she stirred slightly.

"Take it easy, Miss Wilkinston," advised Crosby. "You are all right."

The girl sat up. "How did—"

Tiny David grinned.

"I'll explain, Miss Wilkinston. Your father telephoned us. He said something terrible had happened. We were on our way—"

"My father?" the girl repeated. "I don't understand. He wasn't expected home for four hours. They knew that." She shuddered slightly as she indicated the gunner. "That man was our butler. Right after Father left the house they took me and forced me into this car. They said they would kill me if I opened my mouth. They knew Father wouldn't be back for hours, and they left a note telling him he had to pay them a lot of money or I would be killed. They also threatened that they would kill me if he notified the police."

"Your father returned unexpectedly," Tiny David explained. "He evidently found the note, and called us right away. We didn't know what the trouble was, but we knew something pretty bad had happened."

A crooked grin played over his broad face.

"Jupe did the rest. He has missed you for weeks. He has been looking for you all the time. He recognized you in the car and went to you. When the car pulled away we knew about what had happened. They had a gun pressed against you, didn't they?"

The girl nodded.

"Yes." There was a trace of hysteria in her voice. "They saw you coming, and they told me if I said one word they would kill me." She saw the monkey in Tiny David's arms and stretched out her hands. "Oh, Jupe!"

"Easy," came the quiet voice of the big man. "Jupe has a broken paw, or arm, or whatever you want to call it." He made a soothing gesture as the girl gave a cry of alarm. "We will have that fixed up soon."

His blunt fingers stroked the head of the monkey.

"We both owe Jupe a lot, Miss Wilkinston. That machine-gun was right on us and I wasn't ready to shoot—when Jupe stepped in."

The dry voice of Sergeant Crosby sounded:

"Yes, you surely owe a lot to your brother, Lieutenant."

Just a few minutes before they had been in deadly peril. Even now, the body of a dead man was only a few feet away. Another man glared at them and muttered threats. But this was anticlimax. They laughed aloud in relief.

"Yes," Tiny David admitted, and his voice was a drawl, "I do owe a lot to this little fellow. And I can stand for the brother part—if Jupe can."

The girl glanced at him from beneath lowered lashes. The eternal feminine caused her hand to stray to her hair.

"I think it is fine," she declared. "Father always teased me that Jupe and I must belong to the same family. That means you and I are related, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Tiny David. His glance rested upon what was a very attractive picture. His big hand stroked the head of the monkey. "That's one more thing I owe Jupe."

Another spirited story by Robert R. Mill is scheduled for an early issue.

The moving story of a slave-boy who became a man —and, for a time, a bandit—is told in this brilliant novel of the old wild days in New Mexico.

PROUD

By HARVEY

The Story Thus Far:

ONE day the old man who had charge of Don Pascual's stables came and told him that one of the stableboys, a Navajo slave called Juan, had been secretly riding the wild black stallion.

"I think the boy should be whipped at the post," he told the Don. "In the first place, the stallion might have been injured. In the second place, the slave could easily have been killed, and he's a strong boy of nineteen, worth five hundred dollars of anybody's money."

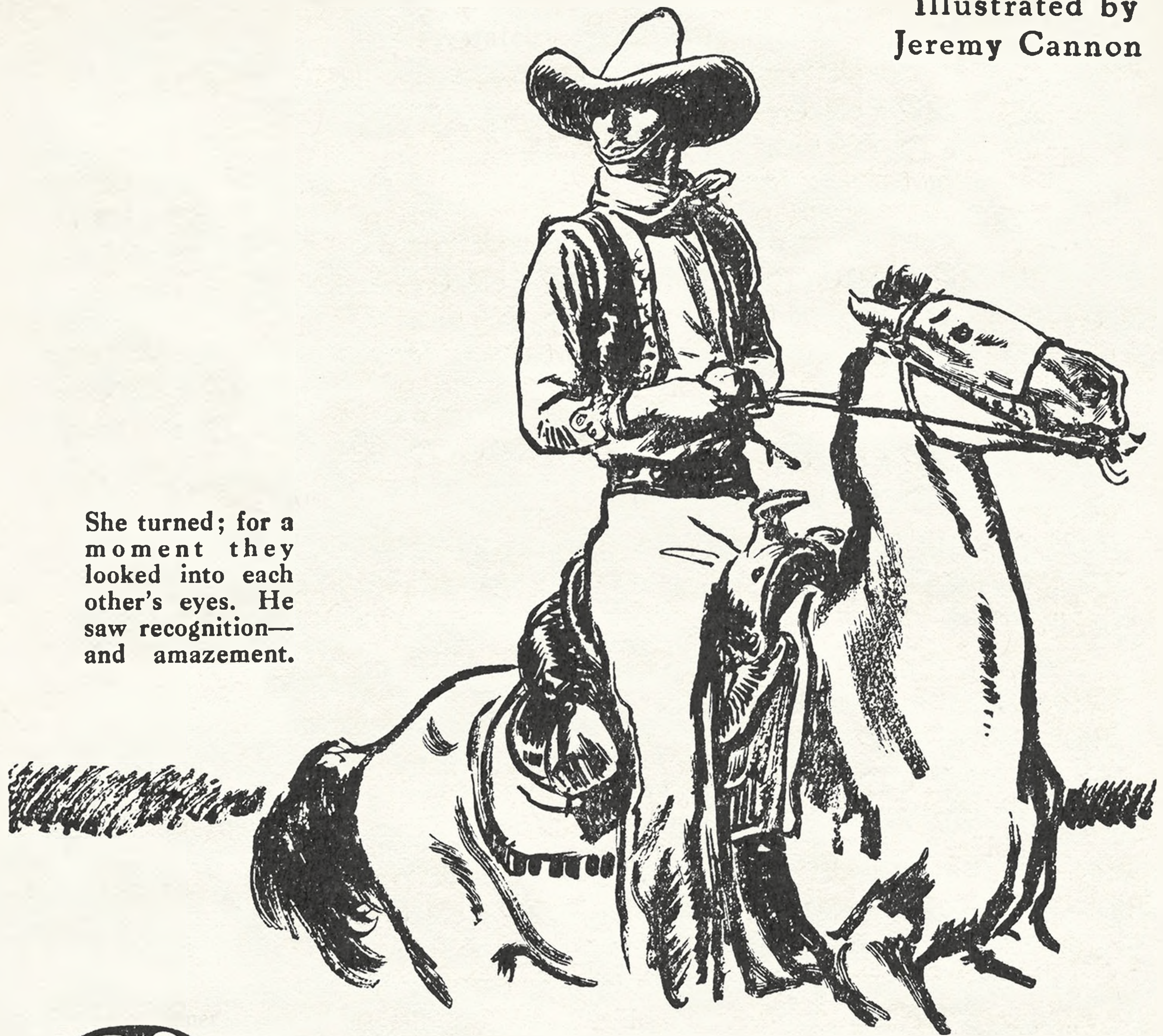
The boy was not whipped—not then. For the Don, like the other aristocrats who lived in the northern Rio Grande valley when it was a part of the young republic of Mexico, was an ardent horseman; and he was eager to see the wild stallion ridden.

Juan rode the stallion that no other man had ever ridden, and even won an important race with him. Perhaps the captive creature felt in Juan a kindred soul. . . . For Juan also was of good blood, and untamed—the son of a white woman taken captive by the Navajos, and raised as a Navajo until at the age of ten he had been taken in a raid by the Mexicans, and sold as an Indian slave to Don Pascual.

Later, however, the youth was whipped —tied to a post and beaten within an inch of his life. For Adelita, the spirited young second wife of Don Pascual, had smiled upon him. . . . Perhaps she too was untamed, and saw in Juan a kindred soul.

A few nights later, when Juan recovered strength enough, he slipped out, mounted the wild black, and rode away—rode until he was exhausted, then hobbled

Illustrated by
Jeremy Cannon



She turned; for a moment they looked into each other's eyes. He saw recognition—and amazement.

RIDER

FERGUSSON

the horse and fell asleep behind a boulder. . . . He was awakened by a hand on his shoulder—the hand of the bandit Lopez. *(The story continues in detail:)*

"I AM Adolfo Lopez," he said quietly, "and you are my prisoner. Who are you, and where do you come from?"

Juan stood silent.

"Oh—you have no tongue perhaps! Well, I will make you talk later. . . . *Vamos!"* he added, addressing the others.

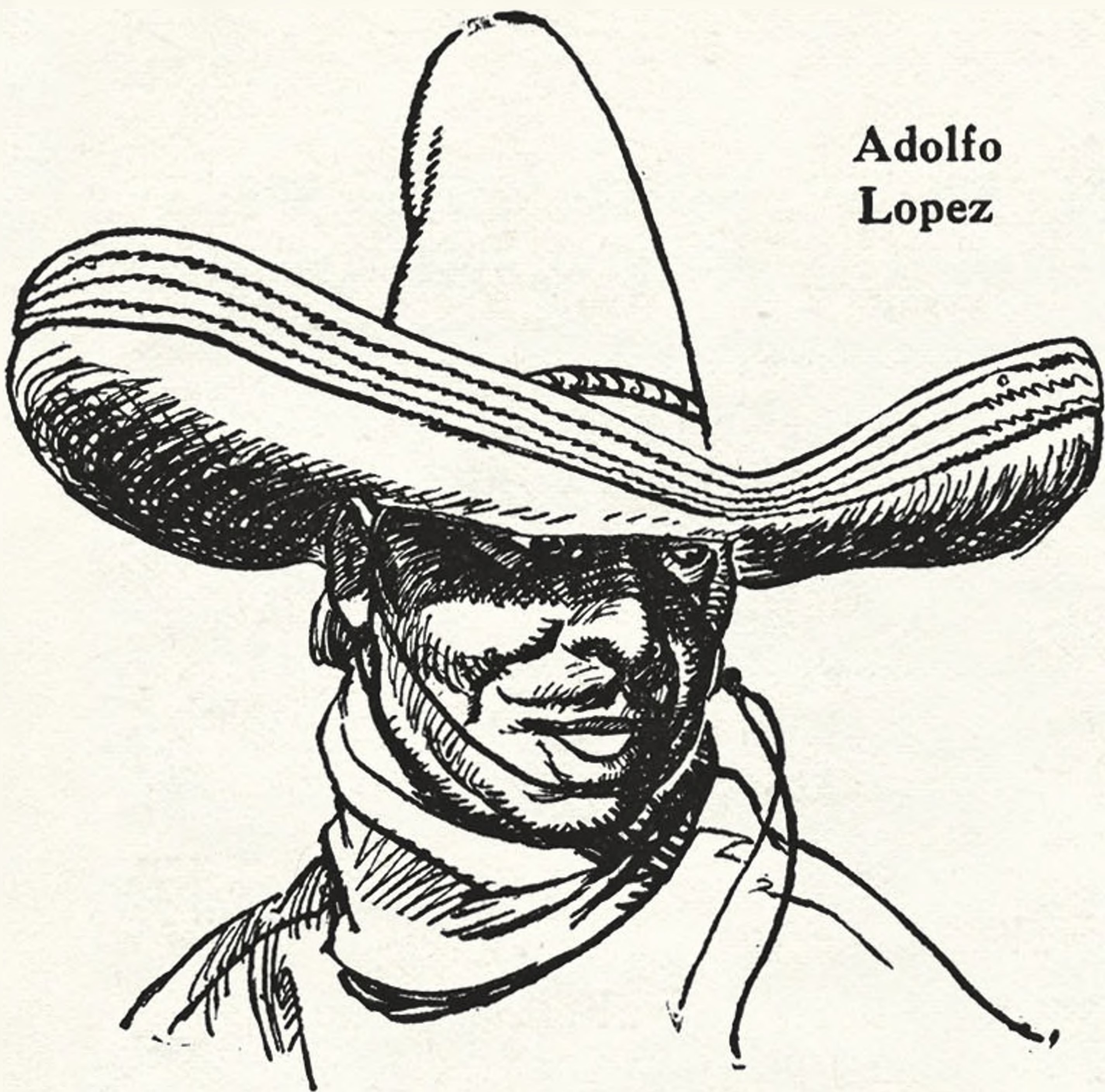
He turned to Juan and smiled, showing his teeth. "If you try to run away, I will have to shoot you," he said pleasantly.

All of the men had good horses, large and fat. Juan mounted one of them, and they all rode up the cañon.

Juan felt little fright but a great disgust. He had been a fool to stay near the water. A mile up-cañon they came to a house, or what was left of one. It had evidently been deserted for many years, and one end of it had fallen down, but there were two rooms intact, and a heavy door made of cedar posts had been recently built into one of these. On the ground in front of the house was a rock fireplace, blackened by much use.

It was near sunset when they reached the place, for Juan had slept most of a day. The men unsaddled their horses and hobbled them. One of them unwrapped a quarter of beef, which he had strapped on behind his saddle, and another produced a sack full of tortillas and some cones of the brown sugar called *peloncillo*. A great fire was built.

A handsome young man, dressed like Lopez, came and stared at Juan, laughing. He turned to Lopez.


Adolfo Lopez

"Shall we feed this boy before we shoot him?" he asked. "What do you say? Christ had a last supper. Why not this fellow? In the prison in Mexico City, where I once spent a month, they always feed a man before they shoot him."

Lopez laughed.

"Sure," he said. "We will feed him so he will be fat for the coyotes."

Juan grinned at him but said nothing. He did not think they would shoot him. Moreover, when he leaned back, full-fed, warmed and almost numb from the power of the tequila, he did not care much what happened next.

CHAPTER IX

IN the morning Juan squatted on his heels with his back against the wall and watched the bandits lead the stallion into camp and prepare to put a saddle on him. One of the peons held him by the rope while Lopez put a bridle on him; Juan could not but admire the immense strength of the man, and the quick adroit movement with which he forced the horse's jaw. Then three of them held him while the fourth put on the leader's great Mexican saddle.

Lopez was not afraid of the horse. He was not afraid of any horse. He swung easily into the saddle, and the others loosed the stallion's head. The horse made three mighty plunges, squealing and snorting every time he hit the ground, putting all his fury into every jump. He had not fought like that since the time when Juan rode him secretly at night.

Lopez never fully gained his seat, and at the third jump he lost it, turning over in the air and coming down heavily with a thump that could be clearly heard, while the stallion made a few more jumps and then ran.

The two peons stood with grave faces, but the young man laughed with delight.

"What a devil horse!" he shouted.

Lopez sat where he was a full minute, regaining his wind, then turned and looked at Juan, as though he had for the first time recalled the boy's existence.

"By God!" he said. "How does this boy ride him?"

"Perhaps he knows how to ride," suggested the irreverent one.

"Boy," Lopez ordered, "go and catch that horse and ride him. And if you try to run away, we will have a rifle ready."

Diablo had stopped not far away; and giving the low whistle he had taught the horse to know, Juan walked up to him, mounted him easily and rode him to the camp in a gentle canter. There he dismounted, dropped the reins on the ground and returned to his former seat.

Lopez looked from the boy to the horse. Then he nodded to Juan.

"Come with me," he ordered.

He walked a little way from the camp, and squatted on his heels in the position a Mexican can hold all day. Juan squatted opposite him, while Lopez took out corn-husks and tobacco, rolled two cigarettes and offered one to Juan. The youth inhaled luxuriously, waiting. He understood that he was being treated with great respect.

"Again I ask you," Lopez said: "who are you and how do you come here?"

For answer Juan pulled up his shirt and showed his back, striped with red wounds barely healed. He turned back to face his captor.

"I was a slave and they whipped me," he said.

He could see by the other's expression that he was greatly pleased.

"You are Indian?" he said.

"I was born Navajo," Juan replied.

"And your *patron?*"

"Don Pascual Montoya."

Lopez nodded deeply.

"Ha! That old son of a goat! May his liver rot! And why did he beat you that way? It must have been a woman."

Juan took a deep puff and blew smoke.

"It is not a thing I like to talk about," he said. "I think she had me beaten to save her face. Anyway, you know why I am here. You can see that I was beaten. The rest makes no difference."

"Where are you going?" Lopez asked.

"Back to the Navajos," Juan said.

Lopez was silent a moment.

"I have nothing against you," he said at last. "You can go if you want to. You cannot take that horse. I need him in my business. But I will give you another horse—a pretty good horse. You can go to the Navajos if you want to. They will not only take your horse; they will also take your hair and hang it on a pole and dance a dance around it."

He paused. Juan said nothing.

"Or you can stay with me," said Lopez. "I need good horsemen. I like men who hate the Ricos and will not take the lash. I will give you work to do; and when I make money I will give you money."

Juan sat silent a long time, his face expressionless.

"Come," Lopez demanded. "What do you say?"

"All you say is right," said Juan. "I will go with you."

They shook hands and walked back to the campfire.

"Compañeros," said Lopez, "this man is an Indian who was beaten and ran away. He hates all Ricos. He is one of us."

ADOLFO LOPEZ was one of the hundreds of bandit leaders who have always ranged Mexico, where banditry is a profession.

Lopez had been a horse-breaker on one of the great estates in Oaxaca, held in peonage by debt. While still a youth, he had fallen in love with a pretty brown girl who worked about the estate of his *patron.* Because of her good looks, she was taken into the house and became the personal maid of the great man's wife. For the same reason she was taken as a mistress by one of his sons.

Lopez should have accepted this with resignation but instead he went on a prolonged drunk. Meeting the young Rico who had taken his girl, he stood before him and called him by every insulting name in his vocabulary. The man of gentle birth drew a silver-mounted horse-pistol; the peon sprang like a panther. The pistol went off in the air, and a fourteen-inch blade severed the jugular of the proud one. The blood of the aristocracy made a great dark blot upon the ground; and Lopez reached the mountains, riding bareback on a stolen horse. He lived like a wild animal in the wilderness for months, then joined with other outcasts in banditry and soon became their leader.

RIDING southward with his new-found friends, Juan felt happy. True, he had dreamed of being free and he was not free. He had only changed one master for another. He had to do what Lopez said, and he knew that Lopez would shoot him if he tried to run. Nevertheless his spirits rose as the world widened before his eyes; and what he left behind, though never forgotten, became remote.

They made forty miles a day and kept it up. Once they killed a deer at a water-hole where they camped, and again an antelope. There was no coffee and only a little salt, but they always managed to find meat, if it was only a prairie dog or a rabbit.

Juan was seeing a new country where the mountains dwindled to arid hills, the levels widened and mesquite grew tall as a man . . . . In the evenings, when they sat beside their fire, he was also learning of new and almost incredible worlds, from the young José Padilla.

Padilla was a rebel by profession, almost by heredity. His father had been a follower of the inspired priest Hidalgo, who led the Mexican peasants in their first great uprising against the Spanish power. Independence from Spain had come, and with it an even worse tyranny. Young José, filled with the doctrines of freedom and equality preached by Hidalgo and taught to him by his father, had been engaged in revolutionary intrigues since the age of eighteen.

Like all zealots, José Padilla yearned for disciples, and in Juan he found one. José began by telling Juan about the revolutions that had been, and about the great revolution that was to come and destroy forever the tyranny of man over man. Juan, struggling with ideas wholly new, asked questions, and José's answers threw him into confusion worse than before. He learned for the first time of cities that covered leagues, of oceans and ships, of a whole vast world beyond the reach of his imagination.

PADILLA laid new worlds at his feet; but more than that, he offered Juan a new conception of himself.

"You are no slave," he told Juan. "The Mexican congress long ago passed a law against slavery. All the Ricos break it. They hold captives and sell them, and a peon might as well be a slave. But if you go away to the south, you are free. No one can take you back."

All this was hard for Juan to grasp. He had seen life only as a hierarchy in

which some were born to high places and some to low. Yet he began to think of himself in a new way—not as a slave or a refugee, not as an Indian or a half-breed, but as a man who would be whatever his skill and courage made him.

IN the south this nascent idea found nourishment. Lopez sent Padilla and Juan to the town of Casas Grandes. They were to locate good stock that might be stolen; and above all, they were to buy guns and powder. These things were hard to get, and of great value, not only to use but even more to trade with the Apaches.

Lopez would not have dared to enter the town himself, and it would have been useless to send any of his half-wild followers; but in Juan and Padilla he had two young men of good appearance, wholly unknown in that part of the country. They could pose as stock-buyers from El Paso—adventurous young men bent on making money by a bold ride across the Indian country. They had to look their parts, and went dressed in good shoes and leggings, in buckskin vests with fancy foxing and wide sombreros. They traveled at night and camped one morning at a water-hole outside the settlement to shave and wash themselves and put on clean shirts. Padillo was gay and delighted, for this was the kind of trick he loved. He slapped Juan on the back, spun him around and looked at him.

"Compañero," he said, "remember, you are a Rico now. As God is my witness, you look like one—proud and solemn as an alcalde sentencing a peon to forty lashes. Keep your mouth shut and leave women alone, and you will go far."

THEY came first to a good-sized hacienda some miles from the settlement, and Padilla decided they should approach it. They rode up to a long house, washed white after the fashion of the south, with a row of pepper trees before its door, where mocking-birds sang, and women worked over *petates* in the shade. A young man came out of the door, greeted them and asked them to dismount. He listened gravely to Padilla's long and facile story of who they were and what they wanted.

"For all you know, señor," Padilla said, "we may be bandits. We do not ask you to trust us or give us your hospitality. We only ask you to sell us a cheese, some honey and a few tortillas; and if you have a horse to sell for not too much, we can pay for him in silver."

While he was speaking, the whole of the household came, one way or another, to get a peep at the strangers. Three more men came out and stood listening, one of them an elderly white-haired fellow of great dignity. An older woman appeared in the doorway; two younger ones stood behind her, and several small children peered from behind the women's skirts, their large brown eyes filled with shy interest. Meanwhile a hurried, whispered conference was going on in the background. It was not hard to guess that the men were suspicious of the strangers, but that the women, full of curiosity and eager for new voices, wanted to ask them in. Finally the old man stepped forward, shook hands, and presented them to the whole family.

"Caballeros," he said, using the invariable formula of hospitality, "enter! My house is yours!"

The two of them spent the night at the hacienda and rode away in the morning well-fed and rested, cheered by kindly voices bidding them return, wishing them good luck. They had learned, moreover, of an old man in the town who had guns to sell, and they had been told just how to reach his house.

PADILLA was impressed, and he was excited over their success.

"We are a good team," he said. "One to talk and one to listen. And you are a devil with the girls—or might be if you were not afraid of them. You could stay around here, marry some girl and get your foot on the land. But what are women to us? A baggage that we cannot carry. We are dedicated to the liberation of man!"

Juan and Padilla found the man who had guns to sell, and succeeded in buying several rusty army muskets, a keg of powder, some lead in bars, and one fine Hawkins rifle—a great prize. In the evening they camped on the edge of the town, but they only waited until it was dark and the town was asleep. Then they started back.

They traveled only at night, for they feared a meeting with either Apaches or soldiers. Just before dark they would build a small fire, cook and eat. And one evening beside their fire Padilla gave Juan his most complete confidence and broached to him a plan. He told Juan that he would not ride north again with Lopez. That he told Juan this, was the measure of his trust in him, for it would

never do for Lopez to know he was going.

Padilla would simply disappear some day. He was going back to the State of Sinaloa, where his father and his four brothers were all small owners of land and cattle. They were men of humble birth who had freed themselves from debt, gone to the wild country, and built their houses with their own hands. They had acquired cattle as all poor men did, by putting a brand on a calf or yearling when and where they could. They were in constant danger from the Yaquis, but held their own because they were a large group, nearly all related.

Padilla wanted Juan to go back with him. Juan too could build a house and file a claim to land. As for livestock, they would gather it on the way.

"You will be a free man, a *ranchero,*" Padilla told him. "Perhaps some day a Rico. There is silver in those hills, and you and I will find it. Everyone there will welcome you. Good fighting men are what we need. As long as you can sit a bronco and shoot a gun, nobody there cares where you came from or who you are. And we have pretty girls, spoiling for marriage. You will not be lonely, *amigo*. . . . And when the day comes, you and I will ride out together to fight for liberty!"

As Juan listened, he was aware of a conflict within him so intense that he felt it as a physical pain in his chest and throat, and it was hard for him to speak. He wanted to go, and he knew that he could not go—yet.

"Compañero," he said, "I will come if I live. But not this spring. I have business first in the north."

Padilla was half angry and much excited, as always when he talked.

"I know what you mean," he said. "It is that girl. You will say it is also the Don. You will say that you want revenge. And so you do. But you are in love, my friend. You can't fool me. When a man wants to kiss a girl, he is in love a little; but when he feels as though he would like to choke her or beat her, then he is very badly in love. Then he has a sickness which is more dangerous than smallpox. The sure way to forget one woman, my friend, is to find another. Come with me, and I will promise to find you one of any shape or size you like."

Juan was in misery because he could not argue, and could not convince his friend that he must go back to the north. He sat silent and unhappy; and for all of one long night ride, the friends said little to each other. Then tentatively Juan tried to persuade Padilla to go north with him. José would have none of it, but he relented toward Juan. He drew a map in the sand, showing him just how to reach the settlement on the Rio Balsas. Then he gave Juan a knife he carried—a Mexican knife with a fourteen-inch blade in a carved leather scabbard. Etched upon one side of the blade was a motto which read, *"Do not draw me without cause nor sheath me without honor,"* and on the other side was the name of José Padilla.

"This knife will be like a letter to all who know me," he said. "I may not be there when you come, but I will tell them all that you are coming and they will treat you as a brother."

Juan put the knife into his belt and gave José his own.

"I will come if I live," he said.

CHAPTER X

With Padilla gone, the stealing of the mule-herd from the leading Rico of Casas Grandes became an enterprise depending wholly upon Juan. He knew that Lopez only half trusted him; but in this case the chief had everything to gain and nothing to lose by sending him.

To Juan, this was a great business opportunity. In the Mexico of that day the stealing of livestock was a profession by which a man might rise to power and wealth—even become a figure of legend.

It was Juan who led five men south, placing two of them one-third of the distance to Casas Grandes, and another pair two-thirds of the way. Alone he rode on to make the capture and the first dangerous drive.

For two days and nights he hid in the hills, waiting for the dark of the moon, hoping for storm. On the third night he got it, and rather more of it than he needed. The first heavy downpour of the spring came riding out of the north on huge black clouds that were split wide open by chain lightning and sent down water in torrents. It was an outlaw's night—a night when no other would be abroad. As he rounded up the nimble half-wild mules, the rain changed to hail that pelted straight in his face. The mules refused to travel against it, turning back upon him again and again. He was drenched and almost frozen. A

serape was no protection against such a storm as this.

His horse was exhausted by the struggle with the floundering herd. He roped a range horse, changed his saddle and returned to the attack. . . . When the storm abated, and he finally had fifty mules headed north, he was a nearly beaten man. His hands were so numb with cold that he could barely hold a bridle-rein, and another horse was weakening between his knees. Again he roped a loose mount and shifted his saddle. This time the strange horse bucked, and he lost his seat, too stiff and weary to ride his best. But he held to the bridle, remounted and pushed on. The temptation was almost irresistible to dismount, build a fire and rest; but that would have been defeat. He must get the mules to his first relay by dawn.

EVERY man periodically must face a decisive trial, and Juan knew this was one for him. Drenched and frozen, covered with mud and bruised, he clung to his saddle, resolved to ride as long as he could sit and see. The storm was ebbing now, but broad flashes of lightning still came to gleam upon the wet backs of his running herd, to show the greening hills livid as a dead man's face, and streaked with shining waters.

Once started, the mules held to the trail. There were leaders in the herd that had come from the north; and this was fortunate, for they knew where they were going. Just before dawn Juan saw the gleam of a fire which he knew was the camp of his men. He tried to shout, but had no more voice than a fish. He drew his pistol and fired a shot. Within ten minutes the two Sanchez brothers came to meet him and took over the herd, to rush it on northward as long as the mules could trot. No mounted pursuer could travel as far or as fast as these loose animals driven by relays.

Juan rode to the deserted camp, fell off his horse, ravenously devoured the beans and mutton he found on the fire, then rode into the hills to hide and sleep until another night, when he would follow north.

When Juan reached the ranch near the village again, the mules were there, and Lopez came forward to congratulate him.

"We will go back to Tomé as soon as these mules can travel again," he said. "You will help me sell them through the Pueblos; half of what we get is yours."

Juan put no great faith in the word of Lopez. This man inspired no such confidence as Padilla did. Yet he felt sure he would get his money if the mules were successfully sold. Lopez needed him now. Moreover, he had a pistol of his own upon the horn of his saddle, and a smooth-bore gun in the boot under his stirrup.

The mules were footsore and half-starved and needed a week upon the spring grass, but their going north was hastened by an unexpected event:

On the fourth day a man rode into camp. He was dressed like a peon and armed only with a knife. He told a plausible story of having run away from a hacienda far to the south because he had stolen a silver dish and they had found him out. He begged for food, and he was genuinely famished. Lopez welcomed him, fed him and asked him a few questions, but not enough to alarm him. Meanwhile he sent the eldest of the Sanchez brothers to pick up the man's back-track. This Sanchez was a gifted tracker, one who could trail a deer over dry ground. He was gone all one day and part of a night. Then he came back and reported to Lopez. He also told his brother what he had found, and soon all the seven bandits then in the band were in on the secret. The trail had led to a camp where three armed men waited. The stranger was a spy.

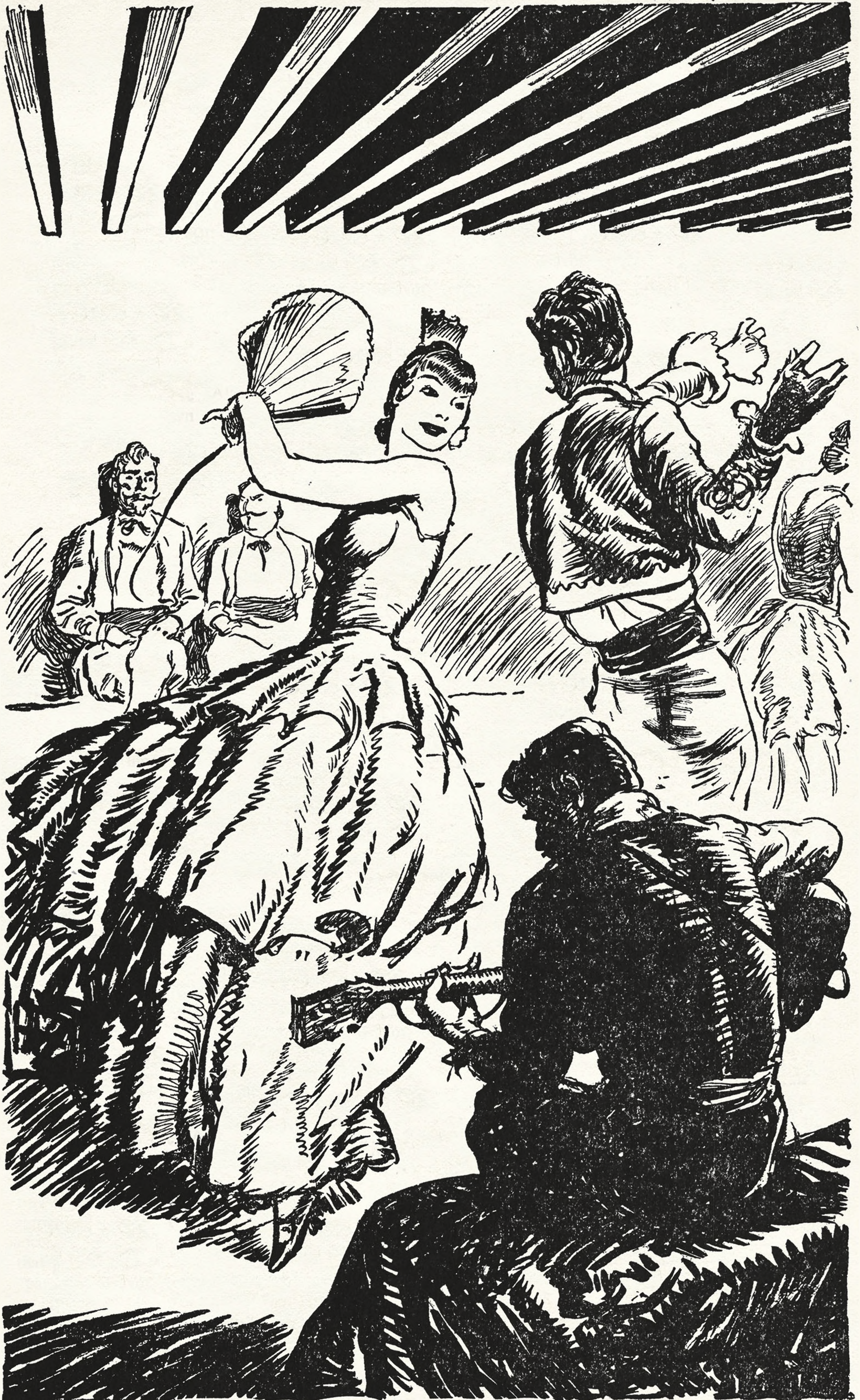
Juan now looked to see the man shot in his tracks, but that was not the way of Lopez. That night one man was started north with the mules, moving slowly. The rest of them sat about the camp-fire for a while without speaking. Lopez wore a gloomy, preoccupied look.

THE stranger felt a subtle change in the atmosphere. He tried to talk; he tried to tell stories. No one responded. Fear became visible in his eyes. Fear made his fingers restless. Fear finally stopped his tongue, and he sat looking at the fire with the expression of a man who sees the vision of his doom.

Once he rose and walked into the dark a little way. A man with a rifle in his hand silently followed him. Presently he came back and sat down again. His eyes roamed the group, looking for succor, looking for mercy. No one met his look. Lopez after a little while glanced at him and uttered a short harsh laugh. He sprang to his feet.

"Vamos!" he shouted.

They all swung into their saddles and rode at a hard gallop toward the town of



Adelita danced with abandon, reducing young Chaves to a state of hopeless infatuation.

Ascension, the stranger in the middle of the group.

In Ascension was a saloon kept by an old woman. The saloon was one room in a large adobe house built about a courtyard. The rest of that house kept secrets.

It was this saloon and its proprietress, more than anything else, that bound Lopez to the town. There he went for his periodical sprees. Every once in so often he must get very drunk, for only in drunkenness did he escape the tension of fear and suspicion that ached in his nerves, and only in this house did he dare get drunk.

IN the saloon all lined up before the bar and drank tequila from earthen cups.

Juan watched the face of Lopez. It was undergoing a transformation. A heavy scowl deepened between his eyes; and these, when he glanced up briefly from his drink, were narrow and wicked as the eyes of a fighting wolf.

Juan watched him in amazement. Sober, Lopez was usually quiet, rather good-humored, always a little worried. He seldom shouted orders or tried to bully his men. He would endure with apparent good-humor much raillery from a man such as Padilla. Yet Juan knew that he had once when drunk drawn a knife on Padilla for little cause or none. He knew that all of his men dreaded to go on a spree with him.

It was plain that Lopez was drinking himself into a killing mood. He drank cups of tequila one after another; and as he drank, all human expression seemed to drain out of his face. His eyes now were the eyes of a fighting animal, and his mouth worked strangely under his heavy mustache.

Suddenly he walked up to the stranger, seized him by the shoulder and spun him around.

"So you are a peon who stole a silver dish!" he said. "How is it that you came with three others, all armed, who wait at the Rio Puerco for you to return?"

The stranger was no coward. He knew his time had come. He took three quick paces backward so that he stood alone, facing the men lined up at the bar. His right hand fell to the hilt of his knife. With the other he swiftly crossed himself, and his lips formed a silent prayer.

Lopez sprang at him suddenly. Two knives flashed from their sheaths. Lopez was incredibly quick. Some feeling long repressed seemed to burst forth in that savage leap. It was a single movement that drew his knife and drove it into the man's body with a deadly upward sweep of the right arm, while his left, thrown up as a guard, stopped the other's stroke in mid-air. As the man fell, some one knocked over the candle that lit the room. The darkness was filled with the rasp and thud of feet as all rushed for the door. In another moment they were all mounted and riding hard on the trail of the herd. . . .

For six weeks after his return Juan was a busy man. He rode as far north as the pueblo of Santa Domingo, only forty miles from Santa Fe, and as far west as Laguna, using the Ladrone mountain as a base. On each trip he drove from three to five mules before him. He traveled at night across the mesas, avoiding the valley and all roads and trails. At each pueblo he was instructed to ask for a certain Indian by name. This man would come forward and take the mules. Sometimes Juan was instructed to ask for a certain amount of money, and when he did, he always received it and put it in a money-belt he wore under his shirt. At other places he merely delivered the mules, and nothing was said about payment.

Only in the pueblo of San Felipe did he make a friend. Here Juan delivered his mules to a young man who smiled at him and spoke good Spanish. This man, who called himself Pablo Guiterrez, was probably of mixed descent. At any rate he wanted to talk. When Juan had been given a room, he came climbing down the ladder with a jar of red wine in his hand and a broad smile of hospitality upon his face. The two young men sat talking and drinking for hours. They did not confide in each other, but chatted in the Mexican fashion of weather and women, of horses and hunting and food and wine. Nevertheless each was intuitively assessing the other. Both knew that they were making an alliance that might have many uses. When Pablo rose to go, he held out his hand.

"You are my brother," he said in the Indian fashion. "My house is yours when you want it."

He gave Juan an uncut but perfect turquoise, and Juan gave him a cupful of powder and a bar of lead.

THAT night when the moon rose, Juan rode to the top of the western mesa and headed north, riding without a trail across a barren country. He was filled with the sense of confident well-being

which belongs to a man whose course in the world is upward. A little less than a year ago he had been a ragged hatless Indian, running away on a stolen horse, with a sore back and a bitter spirit. Now he sat upon a good saddle which he owned. About his middle he wore a belt heavy with silver, and half of it was his. There was a pistol beside his saddle-horn, and a gun under his leg. He wore a good buckskin suit dyed black, heavy silver spurs upon his heels, and a sombrero with a silver band. His serape was new and would turn a heavy shower. He was a man of substance—an armed and formidable man.

For him hope lived anywhere but in this country where he had been a captive Indian, a beaten slave. And yet he could not leave it yet. His next night's ride would bring him to Tomé, within a few miles of the hacienda where he had lived. He knew that day was a feast day in honor of the patron saint of the old Tomé church. He was almost sure the Don's carriage would be there, and Adelita would be in it. The place where she was, drew him as though by a physical magnetism, though whether he hated or loved her, he did not know.

As he rode toward the town next morning, he pulled his hat low over his face. He knew that he looked a different man, that his mustache was an effectual disguise; but he also knew that he was taking a great and unnecessary risk. He drew a pistol from his saddle holster and put it in the band of his trousers where it would not show.

In the dusty plaza, mingling with many other horsemen, he felt a growing confidence that none would know him; but he tingled with the alert aliveness of those who go into danger. He stopped a moment to watch a game of *gallo*. He stooped from his saddle to buy a bunch of grapes, and whenever anyone looked straight at him, he would raise the grapes to his face and bite off a few. Both men and women he saw whom he had known, but none of them looked him in the eye.

Soon he had ridden all over the plaza, seen everything there was to see—everything but what he was looking for. He was about to turn away in disappointment, when he saw a cloud of dust far down the road. Watching it narrowly, he discerned the lines of a coach, and knew it must be the Montoya coach.

Juan pulled up beside the road and watched the approaching coach. As it drew nearer, he could see that it contained only women, save for the driver, and one man riding beside it as an escort. The women at first were only a bright pattern of color in the sun. Then he could distinguish faces; and finally one face emerged brightly for him.

Adelita passed within ten feet of him. She was turned toward him, laughing and chattering with a girl who sat beside her. The sight of her sent a pang through his body, as sharp and physical as the thrust of a blade. After she had passed, he sat his horse for a moment bewildered. Well, he had seen her—and now what? There she was, and as much beyond his reach as if she had been in those countries across waters a month wide that Padilla talked about.

He turned his horse and followed, not knowing exactly why, but with a vague hope that by looking at her he might free himself of the spell that bound him. She was after all just one girl like a thousand others, he told himself. For all her money and her silks and the coach she rode in, and the thick walls that surrounded her life, she was not different from other women.

He pulled up beside the coach, only a few yards away. Her back was toward him at first, and he sat saying to himself that when she turned, he would look at her once and ride away. He had dreamed of a meeting. He had believed it must happen. This would be it! This would be the end!

She turned at last. Her eyes roved the plaza; they came to him. He knew she was looking at his horse—a fine roan mare he had brought from the south. And then she stared curiously at the rider.

For a moment they looked into each other's eyes. Unmistakably he saw recognition, and amazement. Her lips parted; her eyes widened. She looked just as she had that day when he had laid his hand upon her, and he remembered the feel of her arm, the fragrance of her hair. . . . Suddenly he wheeled his horse, glancing back just once, and rode away. As soon as he was out of the crowd, he spurred into a run and never spared his blowing horse until he was clear of the valley and riding up an arroyo toward the mesa. Like a wild animal he felt safe only on high ground, where he could see far, and away from roads.

He jogged slowly, shaking his head, cursing softly to himself. What a fool she made him! This was a thing which

affected his head as well as his body. He was like a horse that has eaten loco weed. He might have ridden back into bondage just for a look at her. . . . Well, but for her he would never have ridden out!

The thought struck him with sudden force. She had made him what he was —had given his destiny its decisive push. And he knew that she ruled it still.

It was after dark when he reached the camp on Ladrone Mountain. A man lying by the fire sleepily asked, *"Quien es?"* and he spoke his name, then picked up his blanket and buffalo-robe and walked away in the dark to lie down. Like Lopez, he preferred to sleep alone and in the open.

CHAPTER XI

IN dusty dignity the coach of Don Pascual Montoya rolled along the valley road toward Sante Fe. Much of his household goods and many of his servants had already gone ahead of him. He was going to the ancient capital of his province to accept a position under the new government which had recently taken power, and his going was a momentous and significant thing. Not that his position was an important one, but it was a matter of great importance that a man of his standing had chosen to identify himself with a government which was secretly opposed by so many of his fellow-Ricos and by almost all of the poorer people in the upper valley.

The Don had taken this step only after prolonged meditation and earnest prayer. He did not like the new government much better than did his fellows. Neither did he like the governor, Albino Perez, who had been sent from Mexico City to administer the province, and he doubted very much the wisdom of the new system of excise taxes that had been imposed upon the people. They were accustomed to pay only a tariff on the goods they imported from Chihuahua; and although this was a robbery, it was at least one of a familiar kind. Now the whole

The door opened and Adelita came in. "Who are you, and what do you want?" she asked. Lopez laughed. "Señora," he said, "do not be afraid. I will take care of you!"

country was filled with threats and whispers of rebellion, and they were the more alarming because it was so hard to trace them to any one source.

There was a tradition among the Pueblos that some day they would drive the Spaniards out of the valley, and that they would be aided by an invasion from the East. The Yankee trappers and traders who came in growing numbers every year to Santa Fe had given new life to that savage hope. If ever the Pueblos made common cause with the peons and the small landowners, and then called upon the Yankees and the Texans for help, the best people would be doomed.

This journey to the capital of his province was for Don Pascual a sad one. For one thing, it was a dry year, and drought meant suffering and discontent. If revolution came, it would come with drought such as this. . . .

At Isleta the Pueblos were dancing the corn-dance, which is a pagan prayer for rain. Half-naked brown men with fox skins and bells of horn at their girdles, barelegged women with sprays of evergreen in their hands, they danced in two long lines to the heavy rhythm of drums and chanting. In such perfect time they danced that their feet shook the earth. Their sweating bodies gleamed in the merciless sun, while they chanted to gods of thunder, lightning and rain. They were a splendid sight, but they did not please the Don. Dancing half naked in the sun, calling upon their savage gods in deep chanting voices, they made the Don feel anew that he lived in a world of terrible and hostile forces.

All along the road, too, he heard of the ravages of the Navajos. They were becoming bolder every year. They had boasted that they could take every sheep in the province if they chose, but that they would rather leave a few for seed. It was lucky that both Pueblos and Mexicans hated and feared them.

The Don rode grimly. More than once he looked to his pistols. Sitting at home in his great house, he could feel secure. There was nothing like a good

house, well stored with food, well filled with arms, to give a man a sense of power. But here on the road everything that he saw filled him with a sense of doom impending.

The days of travel were long, hot and dusty, but the nights a social ovation. Hospitality was a sacred rite among the Ricos. Even men who differed with him in politics were proud to entertain the Don and his charming young wife. Each night the Don's carriage rolled up to one of the great houses, and he was received by his peers and treated as though he had been a royal personage. Most notable was his visit at the house of Don Leandro Perea of Bernalillo, the only man in the lower valley who might have been accounted wealthier than the Montoyas.

Three of Don Leandro's grown sons rode to meet the Montoya carriage and escorted it to the door of his house, where he was received by fifteen or twenty members of the family, while as many peons and Indians took charge of his horses and his baggage. That night there was a feast, and afterward dancing, with many of the Chaveses of Corrales, and the Romeros of Alameda, present.

Adelita was bright-eyed with excitement. For her the whole journey was a lark, and a welcome break in the boredom of her life. She danced with abandon.

THE Don was intensely jealous of Adelita, but except for the almost forgotten incident of the Navajo boy who ran away, his suspicions had never found any nourishment. Now he watched his wife for an hour or two reducing young Severino Chaves to a state of hopeless infatuation. The young man's eyes followed her about the room; he lived only to dance with her—and all because Adelita incessantly laughed at him. The Don grew tired of watching, and went to sit over many cups of brandy with Don Leandro, to discuss the corruption of the state, the decay of morals, the menace of Indian warfare and rebellion. These two agreed perfectly about everything. Mellowed by good grape brandy, they sat long after the dancing had stopped and most of the household had subsided into silence.

When Adelita had gone alone to her room, she heard the rattle of a handful of gravel thrown against the shutter. She opened the shutter and looked down into the imploring eyes of young Severino Chaves, who stood just outside her window. He was a handsome fellow with an especially fine nose, and a very pleasing voice. Like nearly all the young Ricos of his day, he devoted his life to cock-fighting, hunting and the girls. He was a lover famous for his daring.

FOR him to come to her window this way was a daring thing, though he had carefully noted where the Don was, and had posted a trusted peon to watch him. After all his careful planning there was still a great deal between them—a wall three feet thick, and a window set with heavy wooden bars. They might have touched hands if she had been willing, but that was all. The privilege of speaking to her alone was all he gained, and all, on this occasion, that he sought.

"Señora," he said, "since I laid eyes upon you, I have seen nothing else. I will think of nothing else until I see you again."

"That is a nice speech," said Adelita, smiling. "How many times have you made it?"

Severino was irritated. That was no way for a girl to talk. Like all Mexicans, he was a romantic lover. Love-making was an art that he respected.

"Señora," he started again, "it is only my misfortune that I must creep to your window like a thief and beg for a smile. If you were free, I would offer you my hand, my all. I would devote my life to your wishes."

"But I have been married now for over two years," said Adelita, "and I am so bored that I bite my finger-nails and weep at night."

"What would you like, señora?" asked the bewildered youth.

"I would like to go somewhere," said Adelita, and she spoke for the first time without mockery, with passion. "I would like to see something, do something—I don't care what. I would like to ride a horse and feel the wind in my hair as I did when I was a child. I think that was what spoiled me for being a lady. They let me run when I was a child, and now they expect me to sit still for the rest of my life. Can you wonder that I am bored? I wish I had been born a man, to ride and wander."

Severino was shocked, but he was also impressed. He had never heard a girl talk as this one did. To be sure, the lives of women were stupid enough, but few of them seemed to know it.

"Señora," he said almost apologetically, as one who offers what he can, knowing

it is not much, "if you are bored with marriage, how would you like to have a lover?"

Adelita again considered, and again she smiled with a lift of the eyebrow.

"That might help," she admitted. "But I would always be afraid my husband might shoot him, and then I would feel badly."

"I would gladly risk my life to touch your hand," said Severino, who felt that he was getting back to familiar ground.

"Thank you," said Adelita. "But a lover would be after all only one more man to wait for; and that he came through a window instead of a door, would perhaps not make much difference."

Severino felt that his approach was countered again. He was gathering breath for a new start, when his faithful body-servant whistled from the corner of the house. At the same time Adelita very gently replaced the shutter in the window, for she heard a firm familiar step in the hallway.

CHAPTER XII

IN the dusk of an August evening Juan, Lopez and three others were sitting by a fire at the camp on Ladrone mountain when the messenger of rebellion came.

He was not unexpected. In primitive countries news travels fast and quietly to those whom it concerns. For months it had been known to every bandit, to every restless and discontented man who could use a weapon and keep his mouth shut, that forces of rebellion were astir. It was known that war captains from all the northern Pueblos were going secretly to Taos, and that drums were rumbling and councils were being held in the black secrecy of the khiva. It was known that some sort of agreement had been reached between the northern Pueblos and the poor *rancheros* of the northern valleys—the owners of a few acres each, who nearly all hated the Ricos even more than their own peons did.

The clink of a shod hoof on rocks far down the cañon announced that some one was coming. The rocky trail never failed to warn. The bandits all moved back from their fire into the shadow, and Lopez cocked a rifle. A man rode into view, and as he came near lifted his right hand, palm forward, which is the sign of peace. Lopez went forward to meet him. He dismounted, and they squatted on the ground, rolled cigarettes and conferred long and earnestly. After half an hour they both came to the fire, and the stranger ate beans and tortillas and talked of indifferent matters with all of them. His name was never given. He was a small dark man with narrow eyes which gave him a look of cunning, and a great black mustache which concealed his mouth. When he had finished eating, he remounted his horse and saluted them all with a grand gesture.

"Compañeros," he said, "good-by until we meet again to fight for God and liberty!"

"God and liberty!" Lopez echoed.

AND the man spurred away. Almost before he was out of sight, Lopez burst into a great guffaw.

"God and liberty!" he repeated, and laughed again. "He invites us to fight for God and liberty! All these revolutionists are alike. I have listened to them before, in the south, where they have a revolution every year. All revolutions are for God and liberty; and those who win get money, mules and women. Revolution—bah! I am a revolution all by myself. I also take money, mules and women, and without hiding behind long words."

"What did you tell him?" asked Juan, trying to conceal his eagerness.

Lopez jerked his thumb.

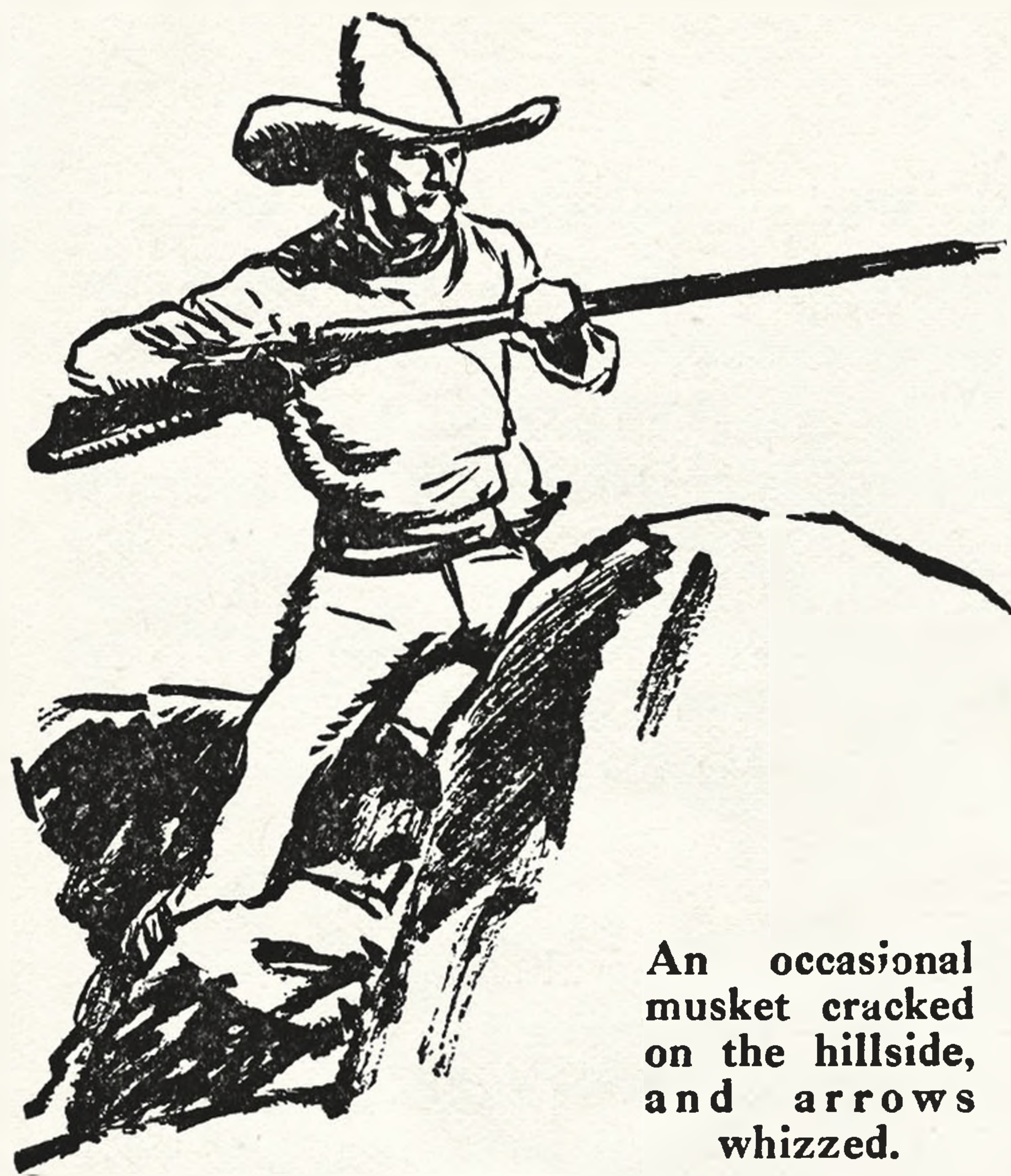
"Come, *compañero,*" he said, "we must talk of this."

The two walked away and squatted alone. It was a conference of leaders, for Juan was now the acknowledged lieutenant, second in command.

"Listen, *compañero,*" said Lopez "I told him sure, we are all ready to fight for God and liberty. We are ready to die for God and liberty; but what we need is guns and powder. I told him if he will send me ten guns, then when I am called, I will come with twenty armed men, and all of them will be men who have nothing to lose but their lives. . . . They need us, *compañero,* much more than we need them. They can find many men, but most of these *rancheros* cannot fight any more than a cow."

"What did he say?" asked Juan.

"He said that they are going to gather at Santa Cruz, north of Santa Fe, and then they are going to march on Santa Fe and take it. They are going to kill the governor and everyone else connected with the government, take their houses and their money and everything else



An occasional musket cracked on the hillside, and arrows whizzed.

they have; and then, after they have gathered up everything in sight, they will proclaim a new government in the name of God and liberty."

"What did you say to that?" asked Juan.

Lopez laughed, delighted with himself.

"I did a little piece of private business for us," he said. "You know that Don Pascual Montoya has gone to Santa Fe. He is part of the government. I said to this man that I will come with twenty men, and we will all fight to the last drop of our blood for God and liberty; and I said that our reward must be that we can sack the house of Don Pascual Montoya, because he is the man we all hate, the man who has wronged us, the man who laid a lash on your back."

Juan could feel the blood pounding in his temples, but he spoke quietly:

"Do you trust this man to keep his word?" he asked.

Lopez snorted.

"Trust him? That fellow? I trust them all as I would trust a coyote with a chicken. But do not fear. If we have twenty men and twenty guns we will not have to trust any but ourselves. We will take what is ours!"

They rose and walked back toward the fire. Juan had another question to ask, and he brought it out with some difficulty.

"And if his wife is there?"

Lopez clapped him on the back and chuckled.

"You still have that woman on the brain? You are young. If any women are in the house, they are ours too, just like the silver and the blankets."

CHAPTER XIII

REBELLION broke out suddenly, long after those in power had ceased to believe in danger. A poor man in Taos was jailed for debt. A muttering crowd gathered around the jail, and grew. Indians from the Pueblos joined it, and peons from neighboring ranches, and poor men who owned a little land of their own. They gathered apparently without any purpose; but purpose grew out of their strength. Suddenly they smashed the door of the jail, set the man free and came pouring out into the plaza, yelling, waving clubs, lifting blades into the air, firing a few old horse-pistols and flintlock guns. A pushing, heavy-footed, shouting mob, they began going about the *cantinas,* drinking native wine and brandy, buying at first, then smashing doors and taking what they wanted.

All the time the crowd was growing. Men came riding into the plaza from all the little settlements up and down the valley. All of the fighting men in Taos Pueblo came in a body on horseback. At their head rode a big Indian named Tomas Gonzales, a buffalo-hunter by trade. Every year he led a troop of Indians to the eastern plains to hunt, and so he led them now, three hundred of them, all with the black paint of battle on their faces, all waving the lances with ten-inch blades they used for buffalo-hunting, all with bows and full quivers on their backs, a few with long flint-lock guns.

Now the mob had a leader. Gonzales climbed onto a platform in the plaza and harangued them. He shouted that long enough all of them had starved and suffered and paid taxes, that the earth belonged to her children, that in the name of God and liberty they would march on Santa Fe and destroy the government. Nearly a thousand heard him. Half of them were Pueblo Indians, and the other half were men of mixed blood who hated their masters.

"All who love God and liberty and are not afraid to die will follow me!" Gonzales shouted. "On to Santa Fe!"

They answered with a yell that broke from every throat at once, and the savage volume of their voices filled them with a conviction of their power. . . .

Word of their coming reached the Governor at the palace in Santa Fe the same day. He was sitting in council with four of his colleagues when a man came in to tell him that more than a thousand

rebels were camped at Santa Cruz, twenty-five miles from the city, that they were all getting drunk, that they might descend on the capital any time.

Albino Perez, the Governor, was a man of pure Spanish blood and of the old Spanish tradition—a man of fifty with a skin of delicate yellow, high, thin features and a bald head. When he heard of the first threats of rebellion, he had sent to Mexico City an urgent request for troops. A hundred dragoons were supposed to be on their way, but no news of their coming had reached him. His personal forces consisted of about twenty-five men, armed with muskets, who composed the palace guard.

There was supposed to be a militia which could be summoned through the alcaldes in time of need, but this had long since been disbanded because the provincial treasury was always empty. Perez was not a fighting man; but neither was he a coward. He turned to his Secretary of State, Don Pascual Montoya, who knew the country as he did not.

"What can we do?" he asked quietly.

"We can hire Indians and arm them, and go fight these people," Don Pascual replied. "The longer we wait, the stronger they get. If once they reach the town, not a house or a woman is safe. We must go."

"But what Indians can we trust?" asked Perez. They both took pride in speaking quietly, as though this had been only a matter of routine; but both of them knew it was a matter of life and death.

"The Indians of Isleta would be the best," Don Pascual said. "They have always been faithful. But they are too far away. We must try in Santo Domingo. I will go there now, while you raise what men you can here in town, and throw a guard across the road."

UNDER a blazing August sun the forces of the Governor rode out of Santa Fe and across the barren reddish hills, dotted with sparse cedar and piñon, which lie between the capital and the cañon of Santa Cruz. At the head of the column rode the Governor, his Secretary of State, and two younger men who had come with Perez from Mexico City. They all rode fine large horses that shone in the sun. Their saddles were mounted in silver and set upon brightly patterned Navajo blankets. They wore swords, and horse-pistols in long holsters hung beside their pommels. They were followed by about

half the palace guard—ragged peons with their flapping pants and wide hats, carrying muskets across their saddle bows.

Behind these straggled about two hundred Indians from Santo Domingo, all armed with bows and lances, jogging on their small horses with stolid unrevealing faces. Each of them had been given a little money and a few presents, and had been promised a great deal more if they fought faithfully and well. Don Pascual himself had dealt with them. They had agreed to everything, promised everything. Yet every time he turned his back, a few of them would be missing. His temper had finally got the best of him. He had one man flogged, and threatened to shoot the next one who left the lines. Then he assigned half the palace guard to bring up the rear with muskets under the command of a man he trusted.

Don Pascual rode with his mouth set in a hard line. He knew that this was a desperate adventure. He knew the rebel force must heavily outnumber his own, and he did not trust the men behind him much more than those he was going to fight. He went without hesitation because there was nothing else to do. The only alternative was a panic flight to the south, and the Don was not a man to run. Whatever they might have lost in initiative, in resourcefulness, through the long years of ease, the Ricos had retained uncompromisingly their feudal code of honor.

The heat was terrific. It poured down from a pallid cloudless sky to shimmer like a dance of hostile blades upon the arid contours of a baking land. The Don

had worked hard gathering his forces. He had grown angry, and the blood had gone to his head. Sweat poured down his face and gathered in his eyes, so that the landscape blurred before them, and the heat-waves wove a crazy pattern in his sight.

The Don felt no fear and no excitement. What pressed upon his spirit was a sense of doom. He had prayed to God; he had invoked the aid of his favorite saint. He had no doubt the will of God would now be done.

Heat and thirst create a sort of madness that begins when the tongue grows dry and increases until it may become a delirium filled with visions. The Don thought of the day, thirty years ago, when he had ridden to battle for the first time. He remembered then how fear had gone prickling up and down his spine and had grasped at his vitals like a great hand. He had been filled with fear, but also with hope. Now he knew neither.

It was the heat he couldn't stand. This was the hour of his siesta, and suddenly it seemed to him he was lying again in that long cool room where for so many years he had daily taken his ease, blowing rings of blue smoke toward the heavy rafters. Dim and cool, the room was, with walls three feet thick. Within those walls it never grew hot, never grew cold. Within those walls was peace and safety. The Don wished he had never left those walls his grandfather had built, his father had defended. . . . He remembered his first wife, seeing her image with such a sudden and long-lost clarity that it was almost as though the dead had returned. He saw himself too, a slim young man, and he remembered the joy they had known together in those first years. . . . Her image became bewilderingly confused with that of Adelita, and for the first time he recognized some likeness between them, and he saw rather than thought that it was his own youth he had tried to marry when he took Adelita to wife. . . . He had tried to go back, and he had failed; and that mocking lift of her eyebrows had told him so. "Age and death are foes no man can outride." It was one of the sayings all Mexicans love. "Only the earth lasts forever!"that was another.

THEY were approaching a place where the road to Santa Cruz crossed a wide shallow arroyo which lay, a strip of white sand strewn with boulders between the hills. To the left, as the road descended, was a high and barren hill. Beyond the arroyo was a long ridge with a scattering of piñon and cedar along its crest, and many large rocks showing in rugged outline against the sky. As the cavalcade rode down into the arroyo, Don Pascual concentrated his gaze upon the crest of the ridge beyond him. The light was almost blinding, and the dance of the heat waves made the horizon seem alive. He fancied first that the boulders themselves were moving among the bushes, and then that he saw moving figures among the rocks. Suddenly he threw up his right hand, and shouted a command that brought the whole troop to a stop in the middle of the arroyo. Half blinded though he was by sweat and glare, and weakened by the heat, he knew that he had seen the unmistakable glint of sunlight on a gun-barrel.

IN the midst of that stretch of sand, which slowed their horses and left them far from cover, they were helpless. He whirled his horse and shouted an order for all to ride back toward higher ground. Then the top of the hill came suddenly to life in a roar of fire from half a dozen muskets. No man showed, but only pale red flashes and a gust of blue smoke; one of the palace guards clutched his stomach with both hands, groaned and pitched forward. The horse of another gave a start, shivered and fell.

"They are on both sides of us," the Don shouted. "Up the arroyo!"

He led the way, and the guard wheeled their horses to follow him. The Indians were milling about like a herd of cattle struck by a storm, and were shouting to each other in their own language.

The retreat did not go far. Half a mile up the arroyo a line of horsemen came riding down from the ridge to form a barrier across it.

As they pulled up, the Don turned and met the eye of Governor Perez. The Governor's face wore a look of helpless bewilderment; he was not a man of war.

"What shall we do?" he asked.

"They have us surrounded," Don Pascual replied. "There is nothing for it but to get off and fight."

On the crest of the hill behind them he could now see the figures of thirty or forty Indians outlined against the sky, brandishing lances, bows and guns, and shouting. One of them in front was waving a red scarf, evidently signaling.

Suddenly a great hoarse shout went up from the hired Indians in the arroyo.

Almost as a man they wheeled their horses and galloped toward the hill, lashing their scrawny mounts into a plunging run through the heavy sand. Up the hill and over it they went, and disappeared. The Mexicans stared after them for a moment before the full import of the situation came home to them: It was not a charge; it was a desertion. The Santo Domingo Indians had gone to join their fellows from the north.

In the middle of their wide sandy isolation the twenty-odd Mexicans huddled together like a covey of hunted birds. Only Don Pascual had any idea what to do. He ordered the men all to dismount and form a circle, standing behind their horses. It was the invariable way of meeting an Indian charge.

An occasional musket cracked on the hillside, and arrows whizzed, but the hidden men were too far away to be effective, and they had no need to hurry.

"They are going to kill us all!" said Governor Perez, and his voice expressed not fear, but a great astonishment, as though for the first time he realized that battle is a serious business.

"Of course they are," said Don Pascual quietly.

The others cocked their muskets across their saddles and said nothing. Like all Mexicans, they faced death well.

Now they could see men on both sides of the arroyo running from bush to bush and from rock to rock, kneeling to shoot. A man dropped with an arrow in his throat, and a horse fell upon the man behind him.

"Don't shoot!" the Don shouted. It would be impossible to hit those darting half-hidden figures. Every shot must be saved to meet the inevitable charge.

SUDDENLY it came. From three directions five hundred yelling, shooting horsemen dashed at the little band. Muskets and horse-pistols roared. Charging horses fell, and others piled on top of them; but not more than a dozen of the enemy were stopped. The rest came yelling down upon the defenders like a pack of hounds upon cornered game. The little group was crushed and obliterated by sheer weight of numbers. Yelling Indians with uplifted lances fought and jostled to get their blades into the fallen men. Gonzales, the leader, rode through them on a great bay stallion he had stolen from one of the looted ranches. He towered above his men on their ponies. His great bull voice roared for order.

Presently the head of the Governor rose above the milling mob. It was impaled on the point of an Indian's lance, the eyes staring, the mouth open, the tongue grotesquely protruding as though in an imbecile defiance. Another Indian suddenly placed the cocked hat of the Governor, with its plume, rakishly on one side of the head. A great shout of laughter went up from the whole band.

"God and liberty!" some one yelled, and a thousand voices echoed the words as the rebels turned and rode back toward Santa Cruz with the head of the Governor borne before them—a savage symbol of authority repudiated.

The dust of their going disappeared over the hills. In the sandy arroyo lay some twenty bodies, stripped and scalped.

The sun went low; the shadows lengthened, softening the face of the land. The peace of desert evening fell upon the quiet dead.

CHAPTER XIV

RIDING hard, straight up the valley went twenty men, driving their extra horses before them. These men were bandits who ordinarily would have ridden across the mesas and through the hills, sticking to the high ground and the byways, moving by night like wolves. But this was a time when rebellion held the highways, and authority took flight or went into hiding.

Word had come to Lopez that the Governor and most of his colleagues had been killed near Santa Cruz, that the forces of Gonzales were marching on Santa Fe to proclaim a new government in the name of God and liberty, and incidentally to loot the palace, the homes of all government officers and of every one else who did not give formal submission.

The whole of the lower valley, stronghold of the Ricos, was in a panic. All of them believed that unless help came quickly from Mexico City, the rebels would march south and loot all the great estates. Lopez and his followers rode past houses that were dark, where barking dogs were the only sign of life. On the road they met no travelers. Lights showed only here and there in humble houses, and in the little roadside *cantinas* where peons and other common folk met to drink and dance. These were more than ever lively. Even after midnight they came upon lighted *cantinas*. Men

Lopez whirled, drawing his knife with a swift movement that was almost a reflex. . . . Juan shoved his drawn pistol into the man's stomach. For a desperate moment they stood staring at each other. Then— "Drop it!" Juan said. "And keep quiet!"

and women crowded to the doors when they heard the rumble of galloping horses, and stared at the armed riders and sometimes shouted a greeting.

They had started about noon, and they would ride all night. About two o'clock in the morning Lopez called a halt at a roadside saloon near Bernalillo. In this little wine-room were gathered half a hundred peons and servants, to discuss the confused and exciting reports of rebellion that had reached them.

The bandits crowded up to the bar and ordered drinks while everyone else fell back respectfully and watched them. Lopez drank three brandies in rapid succession, tossing off each one in a single gulp. He threw a handful of pesos on the bar, and turned to face the room. Everyone looked at him respectfully, expectantly. He was the recognized leader, and he looked his part—a big man with two pistols and a knife at his belt, a splendid red and black serape over his shoulder, a great sombrero pushed back from his brow, heavy silver spurs on his heels.

"Amigos," he said, "do not fear us. You are all poor men. Your cause is ours. We are riding to Santa Fe to destroy tyranny in the name of God and liberty. Never again will a man be tied to the post and lashed in this province. Never again will he be taxed for the benefit of a government that robs him. Never again will any starve who can work. We will take the land away from the rich. We will take power into our own hands. In the name of liberty, with the help of God, we will triumph!"

JUAN listened to his chief in amazement. Only two days before, Lopez had ridiculed revolution in general, and the leaders of this revolution in particular. Moreover, Juan knew that he had waited cannily until news of the battle had reached him, and he was sure that the rebellion was a success, at least for the time being. He was riding like the devil now, in the hope of reaching Santa Fe before the looting was over.

The crowd gave him strong encouragement. They cheered his speech, and the women stared at him and whispered to each other. When he walked up to a pretty girl and chucked her under the chin, she giggled with delight. He roared a good-humored laugh, walked to the door, and paused dramatically with his right hand upraised.

"Amigos, a Dios!"

But before he could leave the room, a young man came rushing forward with a knife in his belt and an old musket in his hand.

"Señor, señor," he pleaded breathlessly. "Let me go with you! I have a good horse."

Lopez nodded a careless assent, and before they were mounted, three other recruits had joined them.

AFTER that Lopez ordered a halt at every lighted wayside saloon, and in each one he made his speech, sometimes to half a dozen, sometimes to thirty or forty.

Increasingly his speech became more eloquent, his swagger more grandiose. Always he drank straight brandies, tossing them off with a quick lift of his head. Almost always he added two or three recruits to his company, so that soon he was riding at the head of a small unorganized army.

Juan rode quiet and alert. In the bars he stood uneasily, eager to be on his way again. He drank nothing. His whole being was tense with a feeling of impending climax. He was ready for battle. He yearned for action. Excitement pounded in his blood.

It was Lopez that worried him most. Lopez sober was a cautious fellow, who would generally keep his word because it was good business. He trusted no one, but he could be trusted, within limits. . . . Drunk, he was treacherous and deadly. When he drank, hatred rose to the surface of his being, and trouble was in sight for some one. He killed only when he was drunk, and he drank only when he wanted to kill. . . . Juan knew it well.

They made their last stop at La Bajada, only twenty miles from Santa Fe, and here all lined up for a last drink. They were so many now that the room would hardly hold them, and the barkeeper, pop-eyed with fright, could not serve them. Laughing young men vaulted over the bar, broke in the head of the barrel of wine, passed it out in cups and gourds. Lopez stood in the middle of the group, leaning back against the bar, lifting a gourd of wine high in the air.

"God and liberty!" he shouted his toast. "Death to the Ricos!"

A great shout went up from all of them, and they lifted their hats and drank.

Lopez turned suddenly upon Juan, who stood at his elbow. Juan was just setting down a gourd of wine untouched.

"Drink!" Lopez ordered him. "What ails you?"

Juan stood staring at him.

With a movement so quick and adroit that perhaps no other saw it, Lopez drew a pistol from his belt and shoved it against Juan's stomach. His narrow eyes had a glitter that Juan had seen before—the same deadly look they had worn when he killed the man at Ascension.

"Drink!" Lopez repeated.

Juan laughed, picked up his gourd, drained it and set it down again. Lopez already had turned away and was shoving his pistol back into his belt.

"Vamos!" he shouted, and led the way to the door, followed by his laughing drunken army.

CHAPTER XV

IN Santa Fe the plaza was filled with a drunken crowd of Mexicans and Pueblo Indians, going from bar to bar, drinking and shouting. Every saloon was filled, and in every gambling-hall the roulette- and monte-tables were crowded. The houses of the rich were dark, and not an aristocrat was to be seen in all that gathering. It was as though the population of the little capital had suddenly turned dark and turbulent; the primitive had risen to destroy its masters.

Every man was armed. The red light from doorways flashed on the long blades of lances. Almost every man had a knife at his belt; many carried bows, some long muskets, others shotguns and short heavy rifles of the kind used for buffalo-hunting. Taos Pueblos, in the white robes peculiar to their kind, looked ghostly in the dark, and showed faces painted black and red when they poured through the doors of saloons and gathered in stolid ranks about gaming-tables. Wide-hatted peons in flapping pants and cotton shirts, with heavy spurs clinking at the heels of moccasins, made up most of the rest of the crowd. Here and there were men better dressed and armed, with pistols in their belts, wearing long leather leggings, and most of these were bandits.

A confused excitement ran through the crowd in a guttural rumble of talk and laughter, in the scrape of restless feet, as it milled round and round, restless with a sense of sudden release, of impending climax. Here and there the rumble of voices exploded suddenly into a shrill laugh, a yell, a curse. Knots of men gathered about brief fights that were generally smothered and broken up by the weight of the crowd. Now and then a musket roared, and a long red flash leaped skyward.

Lopez halted his band before the largest gambling-hall in town, a long narrow room lit by hundreds of candles, filled now like a cattle pen with shuffling shouting men.

Juan stuck close behind Lopez as they pushed their way into the place. Why was the man coming here? If ever they were going to the house, now was the time. . . . Juan was filled with a straining anxiety that seemed to sharpen his senses. He looked not at all at the crowd about him. He watched Lopez only.

He saw the man signal to the older of the Sanchez brothers, who was never far from him, and then whisper a word in the man's ear. Sanchez nodded, and shouldered his way out of the crowd, followed by two other men he touched on the shoulder as he went.

Juan suddenly saw light: Lopez would never ride to the Montoya house with all the rabble he had gathered at his heels. They would get out of control and take the looting into their own hands. . . . Here Lopez intended to lose most of his army of liberty. A chosen band would slip out by one and go to claim their prey.

Lopez shouldered his way to the bar and ordered brandy. Juan stood close beside him. His hand rested upon a pistol which he had put inside the band of his pants where it did not show. He studied the face of Lopez as the man stood staring at his cup. Sweat streamed down Lopez' cheeks, and his eyes had a fixed look. He was still steady on his legs; and when he lifted his drink, his hand did not tremble; but nevertheless he was visibly drunk—drunker than Juan had ever seen him before.

Suddenly Lopez turned and looked at him. It was the same look Juan had seen before—as unmistakably deadly as the lifted head of a rattlesnake.

"For the love of God!" Lopez exclaimed. "Why are you always right beside me? Are you my shadow?"

Juan silently cocked his pistol without showing it. He smiled at Lopez. "These are dangerous times, *patron,*" he said. "Something might happen to you."

LOPEZ snorted at him, and turned to hammer on the bar for another drink. As soon as his back was turned, Juan wriggled his way to a point near the door where he was concealed by a group about

a table. He studied the room. He saw that several men of the band were missing, and he saw several others slip out one by one. Then he too went out and made his way to where their horses were tied at a long hitch-rack a little way up the street. As he had expected, eight men stood beside their horses, ready to mount. He walked up to his own horse and stood there. No one paid any attention to him. It was too dark to recognize a man at more than a few feet.

They all stood in silence for perhaps fifteen minutes. Then Lopez appeared unexpectedly from around a corner. Juan knew he had gone out the back door of the hall so as to give the rest of his followers the slip. Lopez was not too drunk to be cunning. He mounted his horse, and Juan noticed the slight forward lurch with which he settled into his saddle. Without saying anything, he rode up the street at a jog, and the others followed. As soon as he was clear of the plaza, he spurred his horse; and they all went up the narrow street that led toward the mountains in a thundering gallop. This was the street, leading straight to the Governor's palace, along which most of the richest families lived. It was quiet now, and every house was dark.

CHAPTER XVI

THE house where the Montoyas lived stood back from the road in the black shadow of thick-leaved cottonwood trees. It was a solid earthen mass, blankly resistant as a rock or a hill. No light showed, and there was no sound of life. It looked dead. High narrow windows were barred and shuttered, and the heavy double door was of oak and iron.

Silent soft-footed men gathered before the door. Lopez whispered an order, and four went behind the house and came back with a long pine beam of the kind that were brought from the mountains to be used for rafters and pillars. All took hold, backed away and charged against the door three times. The third time it crashed and burst inward.

"Look out!" Lopez shouted. They all leaped back on either side of the door—and got what they expected, for there was a long flash, and the roar of a musket. Then all rushed in. There was a groping struggle in the dark, and a thud of blows. Some one struck fire and lit a torch of fat pine. Its flare showed an old man lying dead beside a musket. He was the doorkeeper. Somewhere in the depths of the house running feet and voices could be faintly heard, and one shrill scream. Then it was quiet again.

They stood in the narrow hallway which pierced the front of the house and opened on the courtyard. Lopez pushed open a door to their left, and they all crowded into a long room where the red light of torches showed mirrors hung on a whitewashed wall, low red couches, a great fireplace banked with evergreen boughs, and in a corner niche the wooden figure of a female saint with hands folded and eyes up-rolled, as though demurely, grotesquely, she deplored this intrusion.

CANDLES were lit; the bandits stood silent, a little confused, staring about them at the magnificence they had invaded. They had come to ravage the house of a Rico, but several of them took off their hats, moved by a long habit of respect in the presence of anything that bespoke wealth and authority.

This was the great reception-hall of the house. There was another door at the other end of it. Presently behind this Juan heard low voices, women's voices, as though in altercation.

Then the door opened, and Adelita came in. She stood before the doorway. Her black hair framed her chalk-white face; and her eyes, with pupils deep and wide, looked enormous. Her breast rose and fell beneath a loose white bodice. The bandits stared, open-mouthed.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" Her voice was thin with fright, but it did not tremble.

Plainly all the others were taken aback, but not Lopez. He came forward, making a profound bow.

"Señora," he said, "we are the agents of a new government which has this day taken the capital in the name of God and liberty. It is our duty to take charge of your house."

He moved nearer to her, and she shrank back against the side of the door.

Lopez laughed.

"Señora," he said with unction, "do not be afraid. I will take care of you. You will be my charge as long as these troubles last, and no other shall come near you. . . . Señora, if you will step into the other room, I would like to speak with you alone!"

He made a gesture with his hat, inviting her to pass, but she only shrank back against the doorway, her eyes roaming the room in desperation.

Lopez and his followers met no travelers.

Juan had stepped quietly forward while Lopez was speaking. He stood behind Lopez, and between him and the others. His hand was upon his hidden pistol. He had been trying for more than a minute to catch her eye, and now at last he succeeded. She was looking over the shoulder of Lopez, straight into Juan's eyes, and he saw her lips part, her eyes widen, in an expression of amazement. With his hand low and hidden from the others, he signaled her back through the door.

FOR a long painful moment she hesitated, then backed through the door, Lopez following. The instant they were both across the sill, Juan leaped after them, closing the door behind him and leaning against it. Lopez whirled, drawing his knife with a swift movement that was almost a reflex. Juan shoved his drawn pistol into the man's stomach.

For a desperate moment they stood staring at each other in silence.

"Drop it!" he said. "And keep quiet!"

A shot now would bring the whole crew. It was only a matter of seconds until one of the Sanchez brothers came anyway. Juan stepped close to Lopez, pressing the pistol against the man's stomach with one hand, while with the other fist he struck upward at his jaw, rising on his toes, putting every ounce of his weight and strength into the blow. Lopez went over backward, like a chopped tree, the loose thud of his fall telling that he was senseless. Instantly Juan turned and dropped the long wooden bar of the door. He stooped and snatched the pistol out of Lopez' belt. Then he turned to the girl.

"Quick!" he said. "You know the way—"

She did not hesitate this time, but ran before him to the door at the other end of the room. He followed her, stopping only to bar another door behind him.

The house, like all of its type, was simply a long single row of rooms about four sides of a courtyard, each side pierced by a hall, and most of the rooms connected. She led him through several rooms dark as caves, taking his hand to guide him, and out through another hallway. He saw that they were in the high-walled enclosure behind the house.

"We must get to the street!" he said.

There was no way out but the great carriage gate, barred with a heavy oaken timber resting in iron slots. He lifted the timber with difficulty, opened the gate, and they emerged upon a narrow

alley. Juan was breathing hard. So far, so good; but now what?

Running to the mouth of the alley, he looked up and down the road. Across it, a band of young fellows with their arms about each other's shoulders were strolling drunkenly and singing. There was a single other figure coming toward him—that of a peon woman with her great black cotton shawl hooded over her head, on which she carried a large white bundle, balancing it easily.

Juan stuffed his guns into the band of his pants and ran to meet her.

"Señora, señora," he said breathlessly. "Excuse me." He dug into his pocket, pulled out a handful of silver pesos, took her hand and put the money into it. Then he lifted the bundle off her head, while she stared at him amazed.

"Señora, I must have your *rebozo* too," he explained. He snatched it off her head. Then he showed her one of his pistols.

"Walk on," he said. "And do not look back."

He ran back to the alley and gave Adelita the shawl and the bundle.

"Put it on!" he ordered. "Carry the bundle on your head and walk behind me!"

He took off his spurs and his hat and threw them away. Then put his serape over his shoulders the way a farmer did on a cool night.

The common people always walked in single file, men first, then women, and then children if there were any. Walking thus, these two looked like any pair of country people except that Adelita could not balance the bundle without putting her hand to it.

THEY had not gone a hundred yards before three horsemen came charging down the road, but did not even glance at the fugitives. Juan felt a little better, knowing that the pursuit had passed them; but he was afraid to enter the plaza where the light of torches and lanterns would fall upon their faces. He circled it warily until he found a place to hide the girl in the shadow of a wall.

"Don't move until I come back," he said.

"But what if you don't come back—" she started a protest in a small voice.

"Then you will have to look out for yourself," he said, and turned quickly away. There was no time to argue. He looked back once, and saw that she had stayed hidden.

What he needed now was horses, and he needed them quickly. The plaza was crowded with horses, but also with people. It would be impossible to take one without risk of being seen. . . . He finally returned by back ways to the house, and watched it from the shadows across the street. It was blazing with light now, and he could hear men shouting and talking. Most of the horses still were there. He crept toward them under the trees from shadow to shadow. No one was outside. He swung into his own saddle and took the bridle of the horse nearest. He rode away at a walk, for a clatter of hooves would surely bring pursuit. It took all of his self-control to go slowly, watching over his shoulder, until he was a hundred yards away. Then he quickened to a trot and soon reached the place he had left Adelita.

SHE needed no instructions now, but climbed onto the other horse and followed him as he led the way out of town by dark and little-frequented roads. As soon as he was clear of the last house, he shouted to her and spurred into a run down the road to a little village which lay a few miles west of the capital. After the long suspense there was infinite relief in this burst of speed.

The village was strung out along the road for several miles. Juan studied each house as they rode past. He was aware only of the immediate need to hide until the first pursuit and search were over. He also needed food. He knew that many must have deserted their houses when the revolutionists came, and that many others had gone to the plaza in Santa Fe. It was a deserted house he sought now.

He rode up to one that showed no light, and rapped on the door. A frightened woman opened it a crack and asked him what he wanted. Juan inquired his way to Santa Fe and rode on. He tried another door and no one answered. He got off his horse, forced the door with his shoulder, struck a light, and found himself in a typical peon home, almost bare of furniture, with a corner fireplace, a blanket-covered pallet rolled against the wall, a string of chile hanging from a rafter, a chest for clothing. He brought Adelita inside, hid the horses behind the house, closed the door and barred the window so that the light of a single candle would not show.

Then he turned to face her. For a long moment they stood staring at each other. Juan could find no words. Until then he

had been carried along in a swift rush of action. Now for the first time he felt the full surprise of this incredible moment.

At first her own face reflected a bewilderment like his. . . . But she was quick to recover. She drew herself up proudly, composed her features. One hand fluttered about her hair; another smoothed her rumpled dress. She was recreating herself in the image of haughty dignity—the image of her proud kind. As she did so, she seemed to recede from him, to set herself apart; all at once, she was a Rico looking down upon him from the heights of her self-assurance.

"You have brought me here, I don't know why," she said. "I thank you at least for getting me out of that house. What do you want?" As she spoke, she pulled a little buckskin bag out of the bosom of her dress, and made as though to open it. "I have a little money here—and some jewelry."

What did he want? She was going to pay him, with pesos or a ring! He could feel hot anger pouring into his blood, driving him toward action. . . . She, the woman who had sent him to the whipping-post—she would pay him off! She was the Rico again, patronizing, proud—and he was the beaten slave, the one who had run away and found his power.

He moved toward her, his hands clenching, his breath coming hard. The look of assurance in her eyes gave way before him, as she did, step by step, until she leaned against the wall, her breast heaving, her eyes wide.

HE seized her, as he had once before, by both arms. She neither spoke nor moved, but stood staring into his eyes. Suddenly he crushed her against him, his lips pouncing upon hers. . . . Had she struggled, had she cried— But she did neither. She hung limp in his embrace.

He released her slowly. He stepped back a pace, like a fighter staggered by an unexpected blow. All the rage was gone out of him, all the violence. His knees trembled, and his muscles went soft. By simple submission she had repelled him more effectively than by any resistance. The touch of her yielding body left him helpless.

Again it was she who first recovered poise. She smoothed her hair and smiled at him, faintly, but with that same mocking lift of the brow.

"I wondered if you had the courage," she said.

Juan shook his head in bewilderment.

"I have the courage," he said, "but you have killed the wish. For a year I have dreamed of revenge. And now—"

"And why of revenge?" she asked.

"Because you had me beaten, you sent me to the post!"

"I?" The surprise in her voice was unmistakable. "I had no power to have anyone beaten—no more than you! And I told nothing! You don't think I would have told!"

Her voice broke off upon a note of rising indignation. Her eyes blazed.

JUAN said nothing. He could not doubt her. It was suddenly clear to him that she had been too proud to talk, just as he had been. All this time he had blamed her—for what?

"After all," he said at last, speaking humbly and with difficulty, "I have nothing against you."

"It is kind of you to say so." There was a sort of weary sarcasm in her voice.

"You know your husband was killed the day before we came?"

She dropped her eyes, and nodded.

"He was a good man," she said. "But I never loved him, and I do not pretend to mourn him."

Juan stood looking at her, not knowing what to do or say. There she stood, within his reach and wholly at his mercy, yet as far away as ever. She was still a Rico, and he was a hunted bandit. His hatred was dead, if it had ever been real. He felt nothing but sympathy now—and a desire without hope.

"Where do you want to go?" he asked. "What can I do with you?"

"What you wish," she said. "You may leave me here if you want to. Some one will find me."

"Yes," he said, "but God knows who. I cannot leave you here."

"And you?" she asked. "Where are you going?"

Juan laughed, a little grimly.

"I am meat for buzzards if either side catches me now," he said. He saw something like pity in her eyes. Her pity was one thing he did not want; he was filled with a sudden desire to boast, to justify himself, to make her understand that he was now a person in his own right.

"I am bound for the south," he said. He shifted his money belt into view. "I have as many pesos as I have miles to go. In Sinaloa I have friends waiting. I will take up land and build a house!"

He stood taller, and his eyes shone as he spoke. He believed in his future.

"You had better be on your way," she said.

"I cannot leave you here. Listen—I will take you to the Pueblos. I have a friend in San Felipe. You will be safe there. A woman is always safe with the southern Pueblos. Then you can go back."

"Yes," she said wearily, "I can go back! I can go back, and sit on the floor, and drink chocolate, and wait. And if I wait long enough, maybe some other man will marry me. And then I can sit somewhere else, and wait—for him!"

Juan listened to this speech open-mouthed with amazement. He had thought of her so long as a person of high and enviable place, surrounded by luxury and privilege, it had never occurred to him that she could despise her destiny.

Before he could say anything, there was a roar, and drum of hooves outside the door.

The sound transformed him suddenly into a man tense and alert. For twenty minutes he had forgotten everything but Adelita. Now he was instantly brought back to the realities of the situation.

He held up a hand to keep her silent and listened. Four horsemen in a run! They swept past the house, and the drum of hooves died in the distance. Some of the Lopez gang sent to look for him!

"We must get out of here," he said, "and lose no time."

"But you—" she started to protest, but he stopped her.

"Keep quiet," he said. "I will not leave you here, but you must do what I say."

He began rummaging the room, raiding a wooden chest of the kind in which all Mexicans keep clothing. He dug out a pair of stained and greasy buckskin pantaloons, an old serape, a battered straw sombrero. He tossed them to her.

"You must put them on," he said.

She stood staring at the garments, holding them gingerly.

"Hurry!" he commanded. "You cannot ride far in the clothes you wear, and you must look like a man."

SHE went obediently into the next room and he began to rummage for food. A white cheese made of goat's milk, a handful of dried beef, a few tortillas, a skin of wine—it was not much, but better than nothing.

Adelita reappeared, looking like a slim boy dressed in his father's cast-off clothing. She smiled at him.

"Now I know I am safe," she said. "I never looked worse in my life."

The woman had courage, Juan thought. Thank God for that!

"Listen!" he commanded. "You must ride behind me, and you must keep quiet so I can hear. If I hear horses coming, I will leave the road at once, and you must follow. You understand? Then let's go!"

IT was a light night, with half a moon riding low in the sky, and a heavy cloudbank rolling up in the east. They rode at a jog. Juan was living in his ears, and every few minutes he stopped, the better to listen. They had traveled perhaps five miles when he heard the faint distant rumble of hooves, coming from the south, and what surprised him was the volume of the noise. It sounded at first like the running of a great herd of driven horses.

He wheeled his horse and spurred away among the juniper bushes until he was two hundred yards from the road. Adelita was close behind him. In a clump of brush he pulled up, hid the horses, bade her dismount and neither move nor speak until he returned. Then he crept back to a point where he could see the road.

The rumble of hooves came closer, grew in volume. Then over a rise they came, a cavalcade of horsemen such as he had never seen before. In front rode an enormous fellow on a great pacing mule, wearing a cocked hat with a plume. Another man, not clearly visible, rode on the off side of him, and behind them in a column of fours came no less than a hundred others. Juan had never seen any men like them, but he knew by their plumed helmets and the perfect order in which they rode what they must be—Mexican dragoons!

The army of the Republic had come to put down the rebellion!

Juan watched them out of sight. Then he crept back through the bushes to where he had hidden the girl.

"It is the soldiers!" he told her. "Your side has won."

"My side?" she said. "I have no side, no more than you. I am only a woman."

"Anyway, you will be safe. They will drive the rebels out of Santa Fe. You can go back there tomorrow."

"And you?" she asked.

"I will be safe when I cross the Rio Grande below El Paso," he said. It was true. But how would he ever get there? Every man who had taken part in the rebellion would be a hunted man from now

on—every man caught under arms who could not explain himself.

He said no more, but rode on, more alert than ever.

Clouds were piling higher. They covered the moon. The night grew darker, still and sultry. If he could get to San Felipe with the girl before daylight, leave her there, and get into the hills to hide until another night! That, he knew, was the one safe course.

It was a question whether they could make it, but what was worse, he had something to struggle with besides distance and weather. He did not want to leave her—at San Felipe or anywhere else. Her one kiss still burned his mouth. And yet what else could he do?

The storm struck them on the windswept top of a mesa. It was a pelting rain at first, and then a wind-driven hailstorm that stopped and turned their horses, drenched and chilled them. When the worst of it was over, and they rode on again, splashing through puddles, with chattering teeth, he knew that the storm had decided the issue as far as getting to San Felipe was concerned. They would have to hunt shelter and hide until another night. To go forward now, would be for daylight to catch them on the road.

His one great advantage was that he knew every foot of his ground. He knew that five miles north of the road at the foot of the mesa was a deserted ranch with two buildings that still had roofs intact. It could be reached now only by a deserted trail. There he could hide the horses as well as themselves. They could build a fire, eat and get warm. When daylight came, he could climb up the mesa and watch until another night.

THIS was his second night without sleep. Excitement had sustained him until now. The chilling downpour had made him aware of a great weariness. All at once he knew that he must find shelter, rest—quick! He felt like a hunted animal ready to go to earth.

When they had left the highway, they rode side by side; presently their eyes met. Two bedraggled and hollow-eyed creatures, they looked at each other and smiled. She put out an icy hand and touched his own. Her fingers trembled; her teeth chattered—but she smiled.

"I am sorry, *amigo,*" she said. "You chose a heavy burden."

He smiled back at her, shaking his head. He could find nothing to say, but he was grateful for her words. Friends now they were in misery—two human wretches, drenched and frozen, worn out, hunting shelter and a moment of rest.

With the horses hidden behind walls, he pushed open the door of a little adobe hut fast going to ruin. More than once he had camped there. The roof leaked, but the rain was nearly over now and there was a corner fireplace. It was better than camping in the open, because the walls hid the flame, and smoke does not show at night. He kindled a fire, laboriously, with stiff fingers, gathered wood and piled it on the flame to dry. Adelita helped him as best she could, scratching her hands on the sticks.

The leaping warming flames were inexpressibly welcome. They stood steaming before the fire, feeling the blood creep tingling back into their frozen hands. Juan uncorked his skin of wine, and they drank deeply; and wine and fire filled them with new life. He opened his precious package of food and spread it on the floor.

"Wait!" she commanded. "Keep your back turned. I cannot eat in these rags."

HE saw that she had sheltered the bundle of her own clothing beneath her serape. . . .

"Now you may turn!"

She was a lady again, slightly rumpled, but wholly dignified. She rolled up the sleeves of her bodice and turned it in at the neck. She smiled at him.

"Now I am dressed for dinner," she announced with a laugh.

Juan grinned back at her. He worshiped her courage.

"You make life hard for me," he said.

She looked at him curiously but said nothing. She cut the cheese and served him with a touch of formality.

"Señor, allow me."

But neither of them ate much. A great and terrible weariness was falling upon him like a heavy hand, and he could see it in her eyes too. Moreover dawn was fading the sky.

Reluctantly he killed the flame. He spread saddle-blankets on the earthen floor. He motioned toward them.

"You must rest," he said. "And I must watch."

"But you are tired."

"Better be tired than dead." He laughed shortly and went out, closing the door behind him.

He climbed to a point from which he could see almost to the highway. It was a safe place—if only he could keep his

eyes open. But, as the sun came up and warmed him, this became more and more a struggle. It became finally impossible. Again and again he dozed off and shook himeslf awake, by a desperate effort.

Finally he knew there was but one thing to do: He must make her watch while he slept, at least for a few hours.

He went to the hut and shook her awake with some difficulty. But presently she pulled herself together.

"Listen," he said. "You must watch for a while. Come with me."

He led her to the point he had chosen, made her sit down behind a rock.

"If anything moves between here and the road, you must come and wake me at once," he said. "And when the sun is straight overhead, when there is no shadow of the rock, then you must wake me anyway. You understand?"

She nodded.

He stood looking at her a moment.

"I put my life in your hands," he said.

"You saved mine," she replied. "I will not fail you."

He went down to the hut, stumbling a little in sheer weariness, flung himself down upon the floor and was asleep almost instantly. . . .

Her voice seemed to come at first from a great distance.

"Juan, Juan!" she was crying. "Get up, you lazy peon! The soldiers are here! We are going home!"

When he looked up, she was standing over him, nudging him with her foot. It was half a minute before he fully recovered his senses. Then he saw men standing in the door—helmeted men with carbines in their hands. He scrambled to his feet and walked out into the glare of the sunlight, blinking, shaking his head. Adelita followed him.

There were three of the men—an officer and two privates of the dragoons.

The officer seized him by the shoulder.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "How do you come to be here, under arms and with this woman?"

ADELITA gave him no chance to reply. She stood tall and haughty, the image of high-born self-assurance.

"I have told you who he is!" she said sharply. "He is my slave. My husband bought him for three hundred pesos many years ago in Taos. Now he is worth a thousand. You have no more right to him than you have to my horse. Shoot him if you want to. But you will have to pay what he is worth!"

The officer was polite, apologetic. He turned to her with a bow.

"Señora," he said, "your identity requires no proof. I can see that you are a lady. But this man: Señora, I do not like to question your word, but my orders are to shoot all men found under arms. This man is heavily armed, and he has all the look of a bandit."

SHE stamped her foot on the ground. Her face blazed indignation.

"I have told you that I made him take me away from my house in Santa Fe when the rebels came. Do you think I would let him come unarmed? Certainly he is armed. I armed him. I am going back to Santa Fe with him now."

The young officer was plainly puzzled.

"If I could go with you—" he said. "But I must keep on down the valley."

Adelita suddenly changed her tone; she smiled upon the young officer charmingly.

"I am not asking you to go with me, Señor Capitan," she said. "Your company would be a great privilege, but you have more important things to do. I only ask you to trust me. I will take this man back to Santa Fe. There, I hope you will call on me. And I hope you will not come merely to see that I have not lied."

The officer smiled. It would after all be a serious mistake to shoot a valuable piece of property.

"Señora," he said, "I ask only that you show me some proof which I can repeat to my superiors. Is there, perhaps, some mark upon the man that you know?"

She thought a moment.

"Certainly," she said. "I once had him beaten, and he bears the stripes."

She turned to Juan.

"Kneel down!" she ordered.

Juan knelt.

"Pull up his shirt and look!" she commanded.

One of the men pulled Juan's shirt up over his head, showing the long welted scars that striped his back from neck to waist.

"Is not that the mark of a slave?" she asked.

The officer hesitated a moment. Doubt was written all over his face, as well it might be. He knew only that he had found a heavily armed refugee hiding with a young woman who wore the clothing and jewelry of a Rico. It was a hard enough situation to understand on any terms. But he could not turn back with them now, and he could not bring him-

self to shoot the man before the woman's eyes. In spite of himself, he longed to please her.

He laughed, a little ruefully. He bowed to Adelita.

"Señora," he said, "I will hope to see you in Santa Fe. On your way there, ride carefully. Not all soldiers are as easily moved by beauty as I am."

He bowed again. Then he shouted an order to his men, and they all mounted and clattered down the trail in a gallop.

Neither Juan nor Adelita moved until the soldiers were out of sight. Then they turned to each other in a natural impulse. All the haughty self-assurance and all the bravado were gone from her face now. She held out her hands to him in the sudden weakness of reaction. She would almost have fallen if he had not caught her.

"If they had shot you, I would never have looked at my own face again," she said. "They came so suddenly, there was no time to warn you—"

Juan said nothing. Danger past was danger forgotten, to him. He was wholly absorbed now in the momentous, the overwhelming fact that she had come to his arms of her own wish, that for a moment at least, he possessed her.

At last with an effort he held her away from him, looking gravely into her eyes.

"I owe you everything," he said. "But for you, I would never have run away. You have made me what I am. . . . What can I do for you? Where do you want to go?"

"Can you still ask?" she demanded. "I want to go with you—wherever you go. I will be your woman; I will help you build your house. I want to be useful for something! I want to work with my hands!"

For a long moment Juan stared at her, incredulous, struggling with confusion. He had thought of her so long as a being of another kind, from another world. . . . That she belonged to him was a fact he could hardly grasp.

"But I have been a bandit," he began. "I am a hunted man. And you—"

"I am a woman," she said. "And to a woman, when she loves, a man is nothing but a man. My mother married a bandit. The blood of a bandit is in me, and the love of a bandit too."

Juan drew her to him again. His surprise was gone. This, after all, was the vision come true.

"I saw it long ago," he said. "But I never dared believe it until now."

THE END

High

Only a man who has himself flown a plane through a hurricane could have written this thrill-crammed story of the Coast Guard air service.

LIEUTENANT ROBERT HURLEY rested elbows heavily upon the desk, a red pencil poised in strong, blunt fingers. His blue eyes were fixed upon the chart in front of him with a stare of absorbed speculation. I rocked back in my chair, alternating my attention between the chart and the changing mutter of the wind outside.

The door from the hangar opened suddenly, admitting a blast of damp air and the faint tang of salt and seaweed. A tall man with beads of water on his face, wearing a wet slicker and khaki Coast Guard cap, came in, with difficulty closed the door against the wind, and, his garments rasping with each step, moved quickly to the desk. Bob Hurley looked up thoughtfully, his straight mouth softening a little.

"Commander Newsom," he said in his resonant voice, "meet Mr. Morrison. He's an air-line pilot—an old friend of mine. He's visiting in Miami for the next few days on his vacation, and I'm taking him with me to the keys."

Commander Newsom crushed my hand with a quick thoughtlessness and dropped it. He had the intense concentrated look of a man peering deeply at a troubled future. His eyes were a hard gray, squeezed tight by the lids, giving them an appearance of bright smallness that made them seem to pierce one at a glance.

"Come on, come on," he said sharply to Lieutenant Hurley. "Don't you know a hurricane is making up? An SOS just came in—the *Dixie* is aground on French Reef, and I'll have to take a look at her. It's up to you to handle the keys job alone after all."

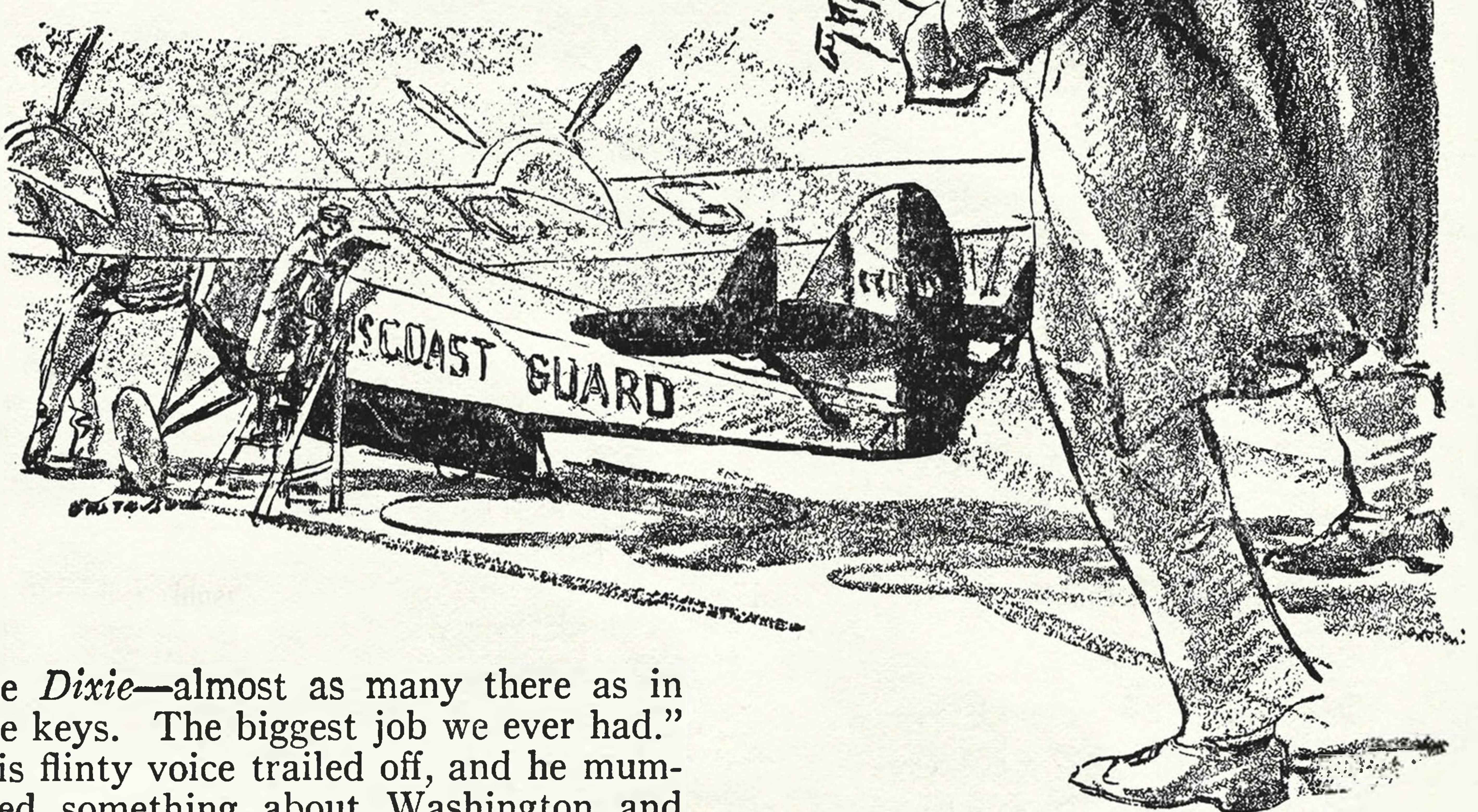
Bob Hurley, frowning, said: "It will be physically impossible to warn all the people in the isolated keys, alone—"

"Do the best you can," Commander Newsom interrupted, his voice impatient, almost tart. "There are four hundred on

Wind

By LELAND JAMIESON

Illustrated by
L. R. Gustavson



the *Dixie*—almost as many there as in the keys. The biggest job we ever had." His flinty voice trailed off, and he mumbled something about Washington and lack of planes and men. Looking at me suddenly, his little eyes were inquisitive and cold. "What's your business down here at this time of morning, Morrison?"

"He's in the Reserves," Bob came to my defense. "Rated pilot. He's always wanted to go out with us on a job, and I thought this would be an opportunity."

"Opportunity to break your neck!" Newsom glowered at me. Then his lips lost a trifle of their thin severity. He made a grunting sound. "Want to see us work, eh?" He turned to stare out the window at the tossing, wind-whipped breadth of Biscayne Bay.

"Yes sir," I said uncomfortably.

"Think it's going to be a lark? But it won't be. For thirty years rescuing people has been my job. It's work, man! Sooner or later it will break your heart. You understand what you may be getting into, starting out with Hurley to the keys?"

"I think so, sir," I said uneasily. He must have known from looking at me that I didn't.

"Ever seen a hurricane?" he barked.

"No, sir. But Lieutenant Hurley says we'll be back before it strikes the keys." I liked this crotchety old man.

"Maybe you will and maybe you won't." He turned severely to Hurley. "You've got a double job," he said. "Warn everybody down there to get out. As soon as possible after the storm passes, take off again to survey the damage and start evacuation of the injured."

"Yes, sir," Bob said soberly. "Then you think there will be a lot of damage, down there? I was looking at this chart—"

"Forget the chart. Who knows what a hurricane will do? We've got to plan for the worst and hope it doesn't happen." He strode vigorously toward the door, to turn and add in that salty, nasal

voice of his: "Keep out of trouble, and don't scare that tenderfoot too badly." With that parting shot, he went out into the wind.

WE heard him take off in the *Arcturus* soon after, while Bob was rolling up his charts. Rain pelted at our faces as we crossed the ramp to the *Antares,* a big bi-motored, sturdy-looking seaplane, a high-winged crate with its engines nacelled into the leading edges on each side of the hull. When I had driven to the Coast Guard base at Dinner Key at dawn, the wind was strong; but now it was a howling gale, stinging with spray whipped off the water. The *Antares,* ready on the ramp, bobbed and teetered restlessly against the gusts. I climbed up through the cabin to the cockpit, grateful for the protection from those spitting blasts.

Jones, the radio operator, was already in his cubby-hole behind the pilot's seat, his wizened face wrinkled in a sleepy grin. I had known Jones for three years, had listened to his random, sometimes disconnected tales more times than I could count. "Postman's holiday?" he asked. "It ought to be a novelty to you, co-piloting for the Coast Guard!"

"I came along to drop the warning messages," I said. "Just to see what I could see. Is it going to blow a good one down there?"

He fiddled with a dial of his receiver for a moment, thoughtfully. "You know," he said, his voice a little querulous, "you get kind of tired of this business after while. There's never any fun—we never get to fly in decent weather, or just for the enjoyment. Always something's happened, or it's going to happen. Take like now—we'll probably get the hell knocked out of us down there, in this wind—"

Red-haired machinist's mate Baxter came into the cabin, and I spoke to him; and then Bob Hurley, stooping to avoid a member overhead, came into the cockpit and sat down, eyes squinting coolly in a survey of the white-capped bay. "Fifty miles an hour right here, in the gusts," he said. "Getting stronger all the time. Sure you want to go along, Morry?"

"If it's safe for you," I said with a trace of bravado I didn't altogether feel, "I guess it's safe enough for me."

"This is my business," he answered, his mouth grim; he shouted through the cockpit window at the launching crew, "Let's go!"

While the crew was launching us, Bob got the engines started, explaining that they had been warmed up already, that he was going to gun them for the take-off when we slid down and touched the water.

"But how're you going to land, in such a mess?" I asked.

"We'll worry about that when it comes time to land," he said. The motors bellowed at the wind as he eased the throttles open for the run-up. The propellers flung out a deep-throated ruffled sound as the tips vibrated. I snapped the switches in the mag check, watching the tachometers and the oil-pressure gauges on the instrument panel. Bob said, "Hang on!" and motioned to the crew outside.

We slipped down into the churning water, and instantly I saw the wisdom of Bob's plan. We touched the water, and the nose lifted to the surge of energy behind those waves—and then the enshrouding thunder of the engines filled my ears and the plane seemed literally to leap out across the bay. I felt a dozen savage shocks as speed was gathered, and then, the shocks continuing in lesser form, I realized we were off the water, in the air, the wind buffeting the craft almost as violently as the waves had done. Only then, seeing that we scarcely moved ahead, I realized that the surface wind must be more than forty miles an hour.

AT two hundred feet, turning gradually from northeast through east to south, heading for the keys, the bottom of the ragged, leaden clouds whipped past our wings in tendrils, momentarily obscuring sight repeatedly. Great caverns were torn in the clouds by wind, it seemed from here. Below, a white spume was whipped up from the churning water, looking almost like a fog, through which all objects appeared indefinite and ghostly. A steady fine white rain fell from the clouds like haze, smearing the windshield with particles of water that were all but invisible as they struck the glass.

I shot quick glances at Bob Hurley as he flew dispassionately through all that welter; I tried to imagine how he could render aid to any boat that might be swamped down there on such a sea. Then, suddenly, I saw a dark low line appear ahead, and I realized we were upon a key. Down there, leaning in the gale, palm trees thrashed and swayed, their fronds outflung. The thought struck me that they looked like rows of praying women, long hair flying in the wind.

Bob yelled:

"Drop a bottle at that fishing-camp. I'll slow down—you open your window and time it like a bomb. Don't miss!"

As yet I saw no fishing-camp. The clutching fingers of the clouds were in my eyes, and down there the spume and spindrift were mixed into a shroud across the sea. Bob eased his throttles back, pulled the nose up, walking rudder against the pounding of the gusts. I held the bottle in my hand, straining to see downward through the windshield, trying futilely to find the place he meant.

THE gush of sound against my ears changed suddenly to a hollow note. From the corner of my eye, I saw that Bob had snatched his cockpit window open, on the side. A moment later, while I still had seen no camp, he reached across and tore the bottle from my hand, turned and flung it out and down, while he thrust his head outside to watch it fall. A look of grim satisfaction crossed his lips and he pulled the window closed, turning the plane gently to the right.

"You're a big help!" he said a moment later. "Can't you use your eyes at all?"

"I guess I was looking too far ahead," I answered, feeling pretty useless. "Next time I'll hang my head outside."

"Do something with it," he said acidly.

We came to a cabin cruiser a mile offshore near the south end of Elliotts Key, and that time I put a bottle within ten feet of where I aimed. An instant later the boat was lost behind, and we couldn't tell whether the bottle was picked up, for we hadn't time to circle. We'd done all we could; we'd warned them that a hurricane was coming. Seeing a Coast Guard plane flash overhead and drop a bottle to them, they should know enough to try to fish it out and read the message. There were dozens of other boats and camps in the vicinity that must be warned, and we hadn't much time left.

I think I sensed that the time was growing short even before Bob Hurley did. I of course noticed that the wind was getting stronger with each mile we progressed southward, and I noticed definitely, when we swooped low above a Key Largo fishing-camp, that the wind had swung from the northeast into the east. But the thing that startled me was that the altimeter—the Kollsman instrument that measures altitude within a foot or two—was showing seven hundred feet when we were flying almost on the water.

Naturally, Bob had no time to worry with such things as that right now. His hands were full and more than full, just fighting the controls to keep the seaplane flying against the vicious battering of the gale. I reached down and turned the knob to bring the needle back to zero, as we pulled up and around to go on to the next camp farther down the key. And when I did that, I saw the barometric reading clearly on the dial. My heart took up a queer accelerated pounding in my ears.

The barometric pressure here was already down to 28.88—and it had been 29.70 on the ground at Dinner Key.

The meaning was as clear as anything could be. The lowest reported pressure in the center of the hurricane the night before had been somewhere in the neighborhood of 28.60. The best I could, I kept excitement from my voice.

"Bob," I yelled, "where is the center of the storm, the last report?"

"Off the northern coast of Cuba, headed west-northwest. It must be a man-sized cone of wind, to blow this hard so far away!"

"How old was that report?" I yelled, my voice a rasp, while a queer prickling sensation crawled from the back of my neck up into my scalp.

"Six or seven hours. The weather bureau thought there was no danger, but they had no way of checking the position of the center. There were no ships in that vicinity, last night. But from the direction of the winds around it, they finally figured it had changed its course and headed northwest. I know one thing—it's going to rip hell out of anything it strikes, if it's this strong so far away."

MY mouth felt lined with cotton, and my tongue was thick. I was not conscious of fear yet, but subconsciously the fear was there, stimulating all my senses to an acute excitement, warning me through every nerve. Sometimes I have been able to feel things before my mind had actual knowledge of them. It was like that now. I realized for the first time how dark it was. The sky was filled with rain and spray and the thundering march of clouds and wind. It was a half light, an eerie twilight, sinister and somehow almost stifling.

"The center of it can't be off the coast of Cuba!" I said tensely, and explained about the Kollsman reading and the fall of the barometer. "The wind has changed two points in the last forty miles. The center of that hurricane is dead ahead—

and not more than fifty miles away—regardless of the weather bureau. You better turn the hell back out of here and start for home—before you get spattered on a key!"

I KNEW before I spoke that it wasn't any use to say a thing like that. Bob Hurley is one of the few men of his breed. The Coast Guard doesn't pay him much, and there isn't a great future in the job, and certainly no glory. His branch is a step-child, neglected by the larger Services and sometimes called, in derision, the Hooligan Navy. But Bob doesn't seem to care. He never bothers to point to the thousands of lives saved by the Coast Guard every year. He goes on quietly doing his job with a sense of duty that should put most other men to shame.

He didn't answer now. The trend of the storm was as clear to him as to me. Already the wind was a little in the southeast, and blasting at us, slithering us sidewise across the foaming sea. He knew as well as I did that the hurricane had somehow escaped observation through the night and had moved across the Straits and was now miles closer to the tip of Florida than anyone had thought.

Fighting the controls with all his strength, his face showed first a quick concern and then a puzzlement and finally a hard determination. He leaned to me, keeping his gaze level at the thickening expanse of sky ahead.

"There'll be several hundred people in there who don't know what to expect, people down there in the isolated keys." He gave me a quick, hard, direct look. "Are you game to try to sneak in and finish the job? You say the word, and I'll head back."

Without the least embarrassment, I admit that I was frightened to my depths. I yearned to head that seaplane north, and Bob Hurley must have known it. If he had flown on into the hurricane without a word to me, I might even have pled with him to turn around. But now pride forced the words reluctantly:

"Okay. We're in this mess together. You're the skipper, Bob."

He nodded, lips tight against his teeth, and turned his head a moment to instruct Jones to radio Miami the barometer and the wind, and the warning that the hurricane was very near. Then, with face impassive, he fought the plane ahead.

Outside, the sky and clouds seemed to engulf us now. The plane seemed buried in the rain and mist. The wind, jarring us with each repeated gust, sent tremors through the wings. Looking out my window, I could see ripples pass out through the all-metal surface of the right one, could see the tip leap up and down in irregular vibration, flexing the whole structure, taxing it. Fear crept into me, stippling my skin with hot and cold sensations. I thought of the structural safety-factor of this craft, wondering how long any plane could stand such treatment. As a violent bump came, the engines' pounding roar was broken suddenly, and silence flooded awfully into the cockpit, to be dispelled at last. The carburetor floats had been slammed up inside their bowls, shutting off the needle valves for a second and a half—it was that rough! The belts were necessary now; we were tight against them half the time.

How Bob Hurley could locate fishing-camps and boats in such a smother—how the camps and boats existed, even—I don't know. I'm sure he had only a vague idea of where they were, beforehand. I think probably it was partly luck and partly Providence. We bored endlessly through a curtain of white haze, and every few minutes there would be a boat anchored in a windswept cove, or a shack or two set beneath some thrashing palms; and then always he would yell:

"Give 'em a bottle! Dead ahead!"

THIS, I thought ironically, was what he meant by "work." I don't think he entertained a moment's consideration of the danger to himself. He sat at the controls as calmly as if we had been on a prosaic flight across a corner of the Caribbean to pick up an injured seaman from a freighter, methodically throwing his weight against the rudder pedals as the wind slapped the tail wildly from one side to the other.

But I, frankly, was having to fight myself to keep a numbing fear from filling me with nausea. Considering the odds, as I cupped my fingers to light a cigarette, my hands were trembling almost uncontrollably. If a motor developed any kind of trouble and we sank into that ragged sea below us, we'd last only long enough to drown. If Bob misjudged his gusts a little, and one slapped us to the ground when he swooped low to throw a bottle out, we'd crash. Such thoughts scrubbed my nerves raw, until I thought I couldn't stand it any longer. Pilots don't make good passengers anyhow;

Jones and Baxter were paying out the line until it trailed back with the jolting wind.

they know too much about what's going on. I finally yelled:

"Let me fly this crock awhile!"

"You heave the bottles," Bob said curtly. "You don't know the keys as well as I do."

I started to protest, but my mouth only opened and no words came, as a downdraft sucked us to within a hundred feet of a group of trees. Taking pity on me suddenly, Bob gave me the controls a little after that.

Flying, I could realize better what was happening. It was amazing how the gusts blasted into us. The ailerons snatched at the wheel, almost tearing off my thumbs, before I took a firmer grip. The rudder pedals set up a tattoo on my shoe soles, flexing my knees against my straining muscles. Yet being more aware than ever of the awful force that wind possessed, I was not now so much afraid. The concentration on this physical activity took my mind away from what might happen later on.

We lurched across Barnes Sound. The highway and then the railroad viaducts flashed beneath, half buried in the spindrift that was whipped up by the wind. There was a car stalled on the highway, with two people huddled on its leeward side. They waved frantically, but we could not tell what they meant. Bob Hurley flung a bottle at them, and it and they were lost behind.

More and more we were bucking the wind now as it became more southerly. Our speed in relation to the ground was much less than we expected it to be. With such a wind, how could people we were warning hope to evacuate these keys? I didn't know. I didn't believe, until that moment, that such a wind could blow; certainly I would have sworn that no type of aircraft could have stayed aloft in it. Yet here we were aloft, careening sickeningly, smashed from every angle, inching with terrific effort down the keys. Soon we must turn back—or there would be no turning back. I was positive of that. I glanced at Bob to read his thoughts, but he was staring through the windshield at the smother, his face inscrutable. . . .

Leaves and small branches were flying through the air at the south end of Key Largo. Sand was being whipped up by the wind and drifted as easily as snow across the highway. We passed Rock Harbor, and were above the north tip of Plantation Key at last, moving no more than fifteen or twenty miles an hour,

sometimes seeming to stand still or slide a little backward. The engines sawed in and out of synchronization constantly against the gusts, snarling at the lulls; the air-speed needle leaped from sixty miles an hour to three times that, while side blasts threw us hard against the cockpit walls.

In a backward glance, I saw that little Jones was bent double in his seat, his face a greenish white. Beyond him, Baxter was sitting with face pressed to a window, mumbling something to himself. He looked at me, shaking his head, a touch of terror in his eyes.

One after another we sighted fishing-camps and hurled them warnings, most of which could not have been retrieved even if they had been seen. The wind, I estimated now, must have been blowing almost a hundred miles an hour. In these few minutes at the controls I had worn myself almost to exhaustion. With that exhaustion the keen edge of my apprehension seemed now a little dulled.

The details of the earth's destruction are etched deeply in my mind, yet at the time, flying there two hundred feet above it, I sat numb and speechless, refusing in the beginning to believe what I actually saw taking place. The air was gradually becoming full of flying objects, parts of trees and buildings. Water was high on the island, covering the highway in its lower places. The railroad was awash. Palms, one at a time, two at a time, were being snapped off at the water level, picked up and hurled away into the murky froth of wind and rain. Mangrove swamps were being torn up by the roots, leaves and branches littering the air.

We came to a small settlement, a cluster of houses on the east side of the key. Bob Hurley opened his window to throw a bottle out; I eased my throttles back to slow the plane. Just then the roof came off the largest house, so easily, so cleanly that we could see it, unreal but actual, lift on one side, fold itself and then seem to burst and sail away, the fragments spewing to the ground. Inside the house were at least a score of people; we could see them huddled there against a wall. Bob threw a bottle out.

BUT it wasn't any use throwing bottles now. Both of us had come to realize that. The wind was shrieking at us in the gusts, louder than the thunder of the engines. The danger of our being flung into the earth or water was increasing momentarily. If the hurricane, the center of it, was not immediately ahead, and very close, it was a new kind of tropical disturbance. Even if we did go on, and managed to survive the wind ourselves—which seemed impossible—the people whom we warned down there could not flee now. We were hours late.

Bob shouted suddenly, "Do you realize the center of the storm is past the line of keys already? The wind is getting a little to the south-southwest!"

I hadn't noticed, carefully, the changing direction of the wind. It was too rough to give attention. The visibility was too choked by clouds and rain and stuff that hurtled through the air; my hands were much too full of airplane. But I saw now that what Bob said was true. And then, close ahead of us, I saw a scene which forced the significance of wind direction to one side.

Plantation Key curves gently westward, a low, narrow coral ridge between the Atlantic and the Bay of Florida. It is connected to Windlys Key, below it, by a railroad bridge and highway viaduct across a strait known locally as Snake Creek. The railroad bridge across this creek is built of giant reinforced concrete abutments, backed on both sides by high sturdy fills of coral rock constructed years ago with Flagler thoroughness. The highway viaduct is made of piling, a thousand or more feet in length.

THE thing I saw there now was unbelievable: the railroad had vanished in the shrieking wind—rails, ties and piling all obliterated, gone, leaving only the two stark abutments in a milky blue-green torrent. The highway link between the keys was utterly destroyed, every floor plank, every girder torn out clean. A great deal of the piling was knocked down; the remainder had been smashed awry like matchwood in the raging flood that sought to equalize the tides.

A fear of desperation seized me suddenly, realizing the destructive power of that wind. We couldn't help anybody now, by penetrating farther. The way the seaplane was being tossed about, I knew we would be slammed into the ground at any moment. I wasn't flying, now, it seemed to me; I was simply hanging on to the controls the best I could, fighting the weariness in arms and legs, doing my best to keep each wing in turn from canting vertical against the gusts, hoping every time the nose went down that I could get it up in time.

"For God's sake, Bob," I yelled, as the

horror of Windlys Key came into view, "let's get out of here before we crash! We can't stand this much longer. The ship can't stand it! Something's going to break!"

He said, "Let me relieve you," and grabbed onto the controls, his muscles jerking in opposition to the shocking blows of wind on the tail section. I let my arms fall to my sides, meanwhile straining to see through the windshield.

I COULD see enough to make me ill, in the first look. Forms were floating in a shallow bay behind Upper Matecumbe Key, dozens of them, mingled with a litter of splintered boards and timbers from a construction camp across the highway. The camp was flat. There had been almost three hundred people there, I knew, the night before. Now I could see only a handful of survivors who, bending to the gale, were making their way backward toward that shattered link of highway at the creek.

As he flew the plane, now, Bob Hurley yelled instructions to Jones, behind him, to radio advices of this holocaust back to Dinner Key. All lines were down, of course, within the stricken area. The extent of the storm's death and destruction could not be ascertained from here, but it was dreadful.

The propellers flailed the air with a sudden high-pitched snarl as a down gust caught us. I left my seat, feeling the belt pinch hard against my thighs. The plane fell sickeningly, dragging us down with it in our cockpit. The bleary visage of a key rose up as if to strike us in the face.

I thought we were gone, and a catalepsy seemed to turn me into ice. I couldn't move, although I tried desperately to lift my hands to the control wheel to help Bob Hurley pull the nose up. It would not have helped, had I been able to, but I was acting without conscious thought. There were objects seeming to float in the cockpit beyond the reach of gravity; a Very pistol leaped out of its rack and dangled there before Bob's face and I saw him brush it to one side. The earth came up until mangrove and tamarind and palmettos seemed to grate against the hull. I tried to brace myself to take the crash, my arm before my face.

But the downdraft let us go, and we fought to regain altitude. I was filled with a vast gratitude, a disbelief that we had yet escaped; and I turned quickly to voice a phrase of admiration to Bob for the superb job of flying he had done. Something in his expression restrained me, however.

I had never seen him pale before; now he was definitely white underneath his tan. Beads of perspiration were breaking one by one upon his upper lip as he started a slow, an infinitely cautious left turn.

"Look at the left wing," he said, in a voice hollow, almost croaking.

His very expression had accentuated my own apprehensions powerfully; his voice now shocked me, sending a painful electrical sensation through every nerve. I turned and looked, impelled by a sinister foreknowledge of what must have happened. I did not want to look, but an awful curiosity drew my eyes. At what I saw, my muscles actually went slack with fear.

The left wing had buckled just outside the engine mounting!

It seemed in that instant incredible, utterly impossible, that we could still be here in the air, still turning to go back. I hung there in my seat expecting momentarily to feel the plane lurch down in one last dive. The wing was all of metal, built on a principle of construction known as "multi-cellular," and the break had not caused the wing tip to tear away. The failure was, however, definite, and there was no doubt whatever that the buckling process would continue—gradually or suddenly, depending on the violence of subsequent upthrusts of the air. When it was weakened sufficiently, the wing would drop away—

MY feelings in the next few moments are not entirely clear, in retrospect. I had none of the swift reliving of life's continuity so commonly attributed to the tense minutes just preceding death. I remember thinking that Bob Hurley showed good judgment turning to the left, into the wind, even though he let the broken wing be on the bottom of the turn. Oddly, I remember the glimpse I got, once more, of those bodies down there in the water, the swift pang of regret and pity for them—although I fully and honestly expected to be there among them in an instant. Then the turn was finished, and we were heading back along the key of Islamorada, coming once more to Windlys Key and Snake Creek.

Somehow, through bumps that made me cringe, the injured wing did not let go. Every mile of distance we put between ourselves and the center of the storm increased our chances of survival.

"Fly just off the water!" I shouted in Bob's ear. "Low as possible. Then if the wing folds up you can cut everything—and maybe we can get away with it—with luck."

"Too rough," he answered, and I knew he was correct. The air near the surface was much rougher than at two hundred feet, and would subject the wing to greater stress. I sat there numbly, my breath catching in my throat. How could that wing hold out?

My thoughts were interrupted when Bob pointed to Snake Creek, ahead. We were flying almost above the débris of the highway, a lumpy ridge awash in a dozen places. Almost below, now, I could see a cluster of people on the south side of the creek, leaning stubbornly against the wind, some of them pointing to the middle of the swirl of water, some gesturing to us, vigorously but without apparent meaning. On the far side of the creek, on the south end of Plantation Key, another group fought to remain upright. One of them flung something out into the stream, a rope, I saw, which struck the water and was carried away quickly by the torrent.

WE flew out of the rain momentarily just then, and the windshield cleared. With my improved vision I saw what was transpiring below.

Some one, perhaps trying to take information back from Windlys to Plantation Key of the devastation of the former, was boldly attempting to swim across Snake Creek. Evidently he had ventured from a point above the washed-out railroad bridge, where the creek was narrowest; but the rush of water had carried him rapidly past the abutments and now was sweeping him along, while he swam valiantly, toward the splintered remainder of the piling of the highway viaduct.

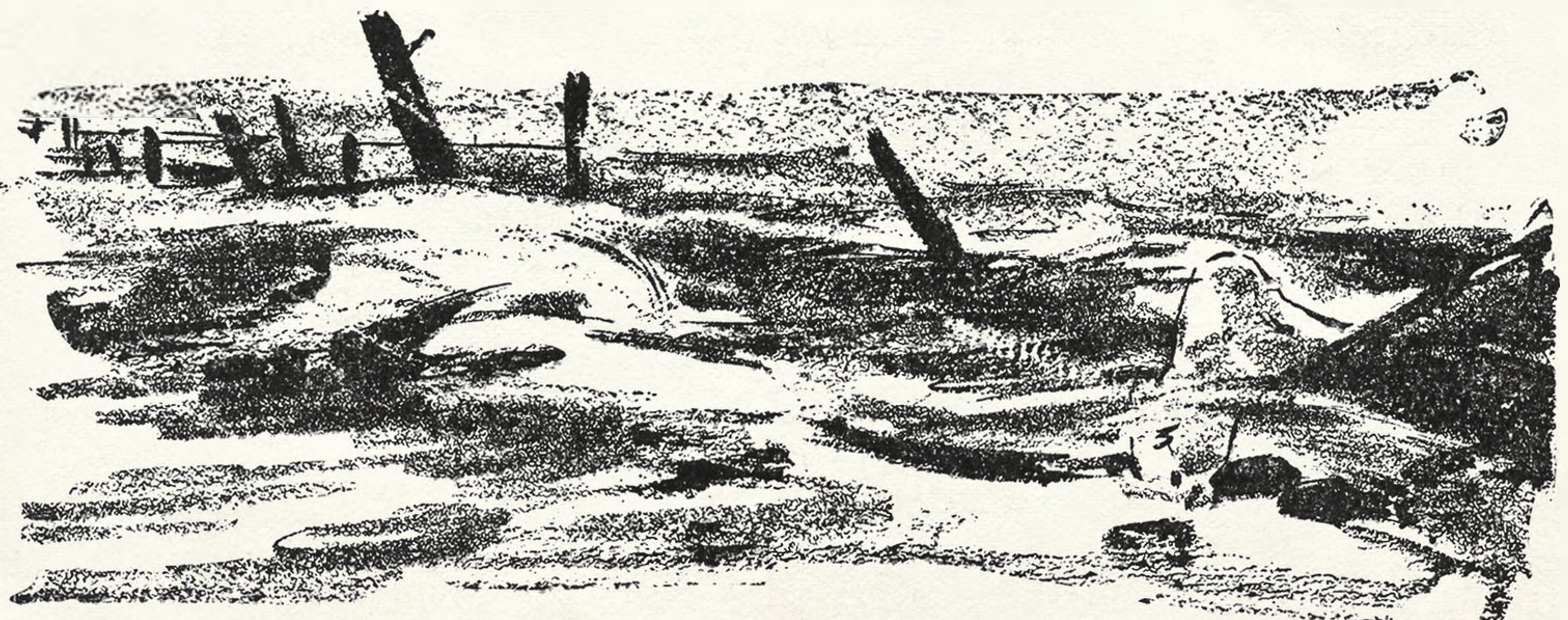
I think Bob Hurley and I both realized at the same time the hopelessness of the man's struggle. He had been swimming with a strong crawl stroke when we first saw him, but now he seemed too tired to go on, and was attempting to tread water. He was still two hundred feet above the highway viaduct wreckage, drifting rapidly. Seeing him and knowing he was doomed, I forgot my own predicament momentarily while, almost in actual anguish, I watched the chalky blue turmoil of waters conceal his bobbing head repeatedly.

Then, just before the seaplane's nose blotted out the scene, when it appeared that he was lost, he started swimming vigorously again, and reached an isolated slanting pile and dragged himself half out of water on its top.

I drew a quick breath of relief, and looked at Bob. He was looking at me, with a queer worried expression. He said: "That poor devil can't last long there. The piling will go down. They can't throw him a line from shore. It's six hundred feet to either side."

"He had a lot of guts to start to swim that gap," I said, adding quickly, nervously; "but we can't do much. We're not safe on the ground ourselves—that wing may come off!"

"I know." He stared thoughtfully at the wind-whipped water. "But maybe we can do something. That's what we're down here for. The man deserves to live." He banked the plane carefully, to the right this time, back into the wind. I sucked at a dead cigarette in harried anxiety, wanting to protest. We seemed to skate across the flooded width of Plantation Key, sidewise. Bob yelled at Baxter, in the rear, and the red-haired machinist's mate came forward, clutching with both hands to hold his footing. "Open the side hatch," Bob said, eyes level, very cool. "Take Jones back to



help you. Bend the small line to the anchor and pay out a hundred feet. You and Jones stand by to haul it in when the man down there gets hold of it. All clear?"

"Aye, sir," Baxter said, and moved away. Jones wordlessly followed him.

I demanded in a quick self-protective anger, "Think of that wing, Bob! We've got to get back—before it cracks. Nobody can grab a line from an airplane that's moving a hundred miles an hour!"

His direct, estimating glance held a reproach. But he only said, "What were we sent here for? Maybe you could help Jones and Baxter with the line. One of us will do, up here."

Whether he was giving me something to occupy my mind, or whether he was thus avoiding argument, I do not know. There wasn't room in the cabin for three men at the hatchway. Angry with myself for my impulsive outburst, distinctly uncomfortable, I got up and went aft. No matter how futile this attempt seemed to me, I wouldn't say another word, not if silence killed me.

I could see the man below work himself around the pile to grab the line.

We wheeled around, and from the cabin everything looked different. I couldn't see everything that went on, but I could see enough. I could see Jones and Baxter paying out the line, until it trailed back with the jolting wind, swaying a good deal despite the steadying weight of the anchor. I could see that we were almost standing still now, fighting the gale. The bumps kept banging at us, making it difficult for Bob to hold a course or keep his altitude.

I held my breath the first time he swung back across Snake Creek. Danger, quick destruction, lay in all directions. The hurricane might blast us to the earth; the wing might fail and send us crashing; the anchor might foul against débris and drag us down in front of it. Yet despite the danger, I somehow forgot everything but the man down there whose life depended utterly upon Bob Hurley's nerve and skill. I could see him, clinging with pitiable insecurity to the slanting pile—a pile that swayed precariously with the rush of water, threatening to tear loose and be engulfed.

Foot by foot we moved up to a position for the contact. The anchor, held as close as possible to the water, sometimes touching, swung behind us, held there by the wind. I could see the man work himself around the pile to grab the line, could see his features, strained and desperate, see him poise himself to make the supreme effort now.

It wrenched something in my heart when the anchor swung too wide, and his frantic outstretched hand clasped nothing. For a moment all motion seemed to stop within me, as it appeared that he had lost his hold and was at the mercy of the flood. Then I saw that he was safe again, at least momentarily. I shouted to Bob Hurley urgently:

"Come around! He can't last long! The pile will go!"

As we came around, quickly, without regard for our own safety this time, I could see what was happening out there on that wing. The tip of it was moving almost a foot each time a hard gust struck the plane. I knew it couldn't last forever, but I somehow couldn't feel particularly concerned about that knowledge now. If Bob could only help the poor soul in the water there—

He circled back, coming low again, battling the updrafts. The advance took an agonizing length of time. Rain and wind stung my cheek as in a flood of thankfulness I saw the man reach out and touch the rope and hold it in his hand!

Then I heard Baxter curse wholeheartedly, and looked again, and saw that the rope was dangling empty. . . . We'd never make the contact. The man was lost, and we would be if we delayed much longer. I wondered, feeling almost sick, what Bob Hurley would do now.

I saw, a moment later. He came around once more, with dogged, cool persistence. From his expression, the struggle might go on indefinitely, or until the man was swept away. That was typical, I realized suddenly, of both Hurley and the Coast Guard. There was nothing spectacular—but they never left a job undone. . . . I turned a moment to watch his deft, shrewd maneuvering of the plane.

It was then that a joyous shout from Jones told me that they had made the contact, finally. Incredulous, I moved to help them with the line. A moment later we pulled into the cabin a pitiably bedraggled and exhausted youth who gasped his gratitude in a dry, racked voice that broke into a choking sob.

When we were beyond the violent gusts, coming up Barnes Sound to Biscayne Bay, I began to have confidence that the wing would last until we landed. I began more than ever to appreciate the thing Bob Hurley had just done. I tried to tell him so.

"Stow it," he said gruffly. "Of course I wanted to save the kid, but do you think I'd risk all of us to save one man, unless I had to?"

"I didn't understand. But you didn't have to—"

"Sure I did. Orders were to survey the keys following the storm. We'd failed to penetrate the lower keys, where the storm was worst. This boy just came from there and knew the damage. I knew if we could pick him up we might get an idea of what had happened—save hours getting medicine and doctors started for the stricken area. Maybe save a lot of lives. You thought I was crazy—thought I was betting four lives against this kid's—yours among 'em. I was betting four lives—but against a hundred, maybe more." He paused, looking through the milky haze for the low shoreline. Then his tone grew biting as he added: "You thought I was crazy, but you don't know what I thought of you. This kind of stuff is my job, but you—the Old Man told you what might happen and you still *asked* to go along!"

Cyrano to You, Gentlemen!

A gifted writer new to these pages gives us the brilliant story of a newspaper man's wild night in Paris.

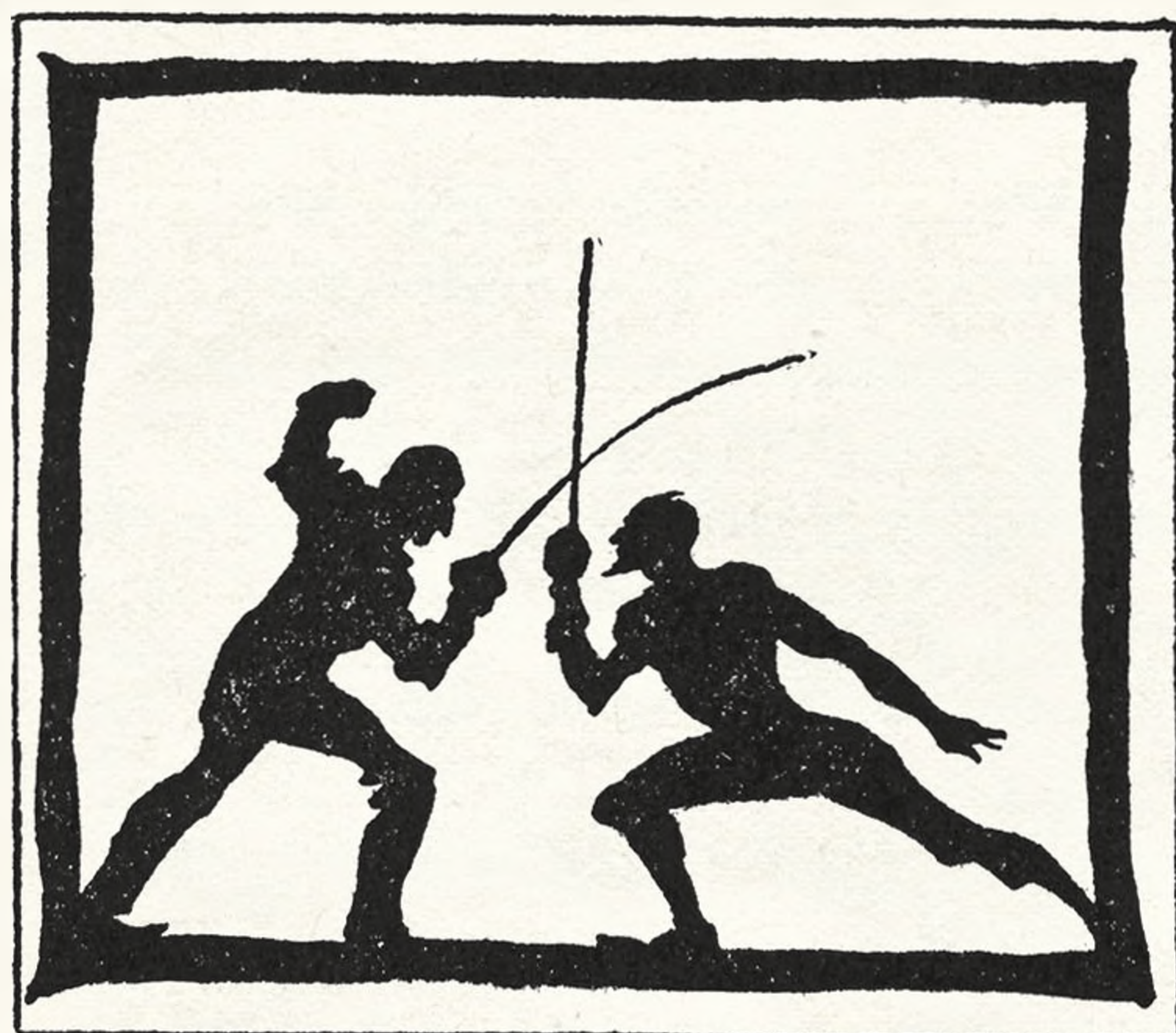
By FULTON T. GRANT

Illustrated by Austin Briggs

"Drink, my friend, to ourselves; and especially to me—for I am Cyrano de Bergerac, poet, philosopher, soldier."

HE was long and gaunt and seedy and rather obviously drunk. . . . He came in that day, did what he did, and departed. We never saw him again. We believe he was an American; old Louis de Salignac said it was possible. But we know nothing about him, nothing at all. However and whatever, he has become a legend among all the newspaper men of Paris; the legend of Cyrano.

Just before the deadline, at quarter to three in the afternoon, he came into the front office. He blew smoke from his pipe into the pretty face of Germaine, our little telephone-girl, and asked for Emmett Marsh. When Germaine told him that, "Meestaire Marsh, 'ee ees veree beesy, an' will M'sieur geeve 'ees name, plis?" he knocked the ashes out of his pipe onto the floor, winked at her, and walked right through the gate toward



the city room. Little Germaine takes her job seriously. She was indignant. She called out after him, *"Mais, monsieur!"* But he only winked again, and walked right in.

The city room was a madhouse. The Old Man was running wild, which is a daily occurrence at the deadline. Tony Blash was slow with the baseball stuff, a matter of faking a column story out of three or four lines of radiogram. The Old Man yelled some unpleasant things about Tony's ancestors. Edna Barnes had pulled a boner. She had gone to the boat-train to meet Mary McLaughlin, the American soprano, and she had written a story that credited Mary with the wrong prince as a prospective husband. The Old Man tore up her copy, jumped up and down, bleating at Edna and cursing her in two languages. Emmett Marsh had just come up from the composing-room. He was shy some shorts and cap heads, and about half of the lead story —with only fifteen minutes to go. The Old Man let out an unintelligible roar. He waved his arms about like a rather sweaty fat butterfly, and complimented Marsh in four-letter words. What the hell was the make-up dummy for, anyhow? Who in blazes ever told Marsh he was a city editor, hey? And the Old Man wheezed, perspired, yelled, pounded his desk, swore, and put on his usual daily act in the best of tradition. He had been Commodore Bennett's right-hand man in the old days; that explains him.

It was just at this choice minute the lanky specimen walked in. He couldn't have made a more unfortunate entrance if he had timed it on purpose. He rolled in with his hands in his pockets, his pipe dangling, his greasy hat on the back of his head. He shuffled up to the Old Man just as that explosive and apoplectic dignitary was in the last throes of hysterics, and tapped him on his heaving chest.

"Hi, Skipper! Say, when you get your breath, tell me which one of these lads is called Marsh, will you?" he said.

Well, it was funny, but it was tragic too. We were afraid for the Old Man; he might have a stroke. He didn't have one, though. He whirled on the stranger. His eyes opened to the size of inkwells. His jaw dropped and his mouth gaped helplessly. Then the veins stood out on his forehead, and he yelled—yelled for half a minute steady, waving his arms.

Was the seedy stranger disconcerted? He was not. He sat down coolly, grinned, and when the Old Man had run down, he said:

"That isn't what I asked you, Skipper. I'm looking for a bird named Marsh."

Just then Emmett Marsh came over and came to the rescue before the Old Man should commit mayhem.

"I'm Marsh," he said. "What do you want? We're busy."

"Noticed that," said the lanky one, rising disjointedly. "Go ahead; I can wait."

Marsh looked at him, dryly. "All right," he said, without much enthusiasm. "Sit down somewhere. See you when we get to press. But for God's sake, don't bother anybody."

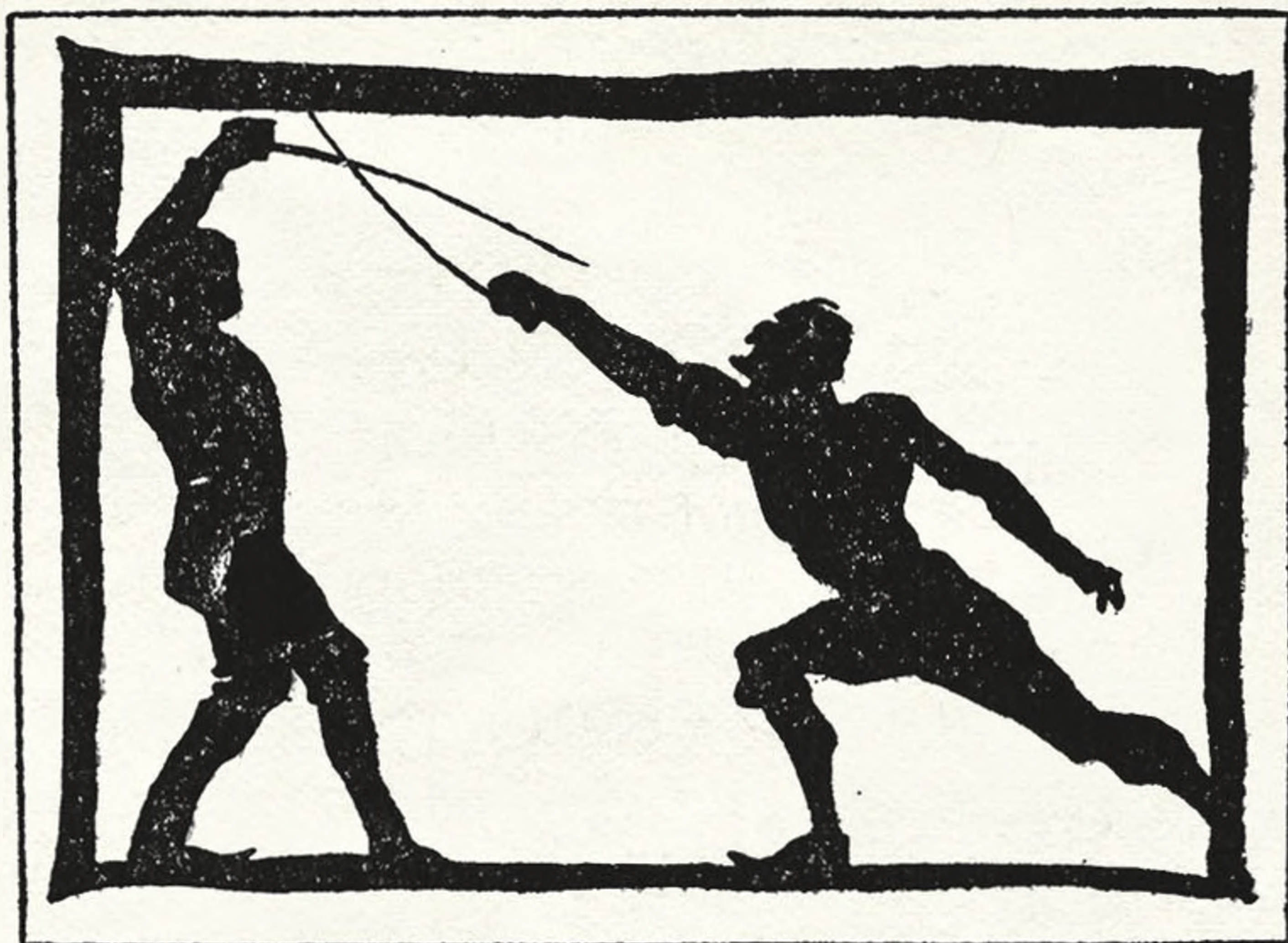
THE man grinned in that ironical way and sat on the corner of a desk. He lighted his pipe again and watched the scramble. He looked a little like a laughing skull—except for his nose. His nose was perhaps the most remarkable part of him. I'm almost prepared to say that it was four inches long, and it came to a flat point like a chisel. And for the rest of his face, it was fantastically ugly, so ugly that it was almost attractive. He had bright, puckery little eyes, and a huge full-lipped mouth, but his cheeks were emaciated and drawn like a mummy's. His English was perfect and rather American, but there was something about him that was not American at all, in spite of his shiny frayed tweeds and his look of a derelict newspaper man.

Luckily the Old Man's attention was taken up by some other minor tragedy, and the violent scene we all anticipated didn't come off. In half an hour we were rolling the edition. We would be on the stands at five o'clock. So, about three-thirty, we all quit. Most of us went across the street to the dirty little

bistrot ambitiously called the Café du Commerce for a drink and to read our new-born "rag." Pretty soon Emmett Marsh came in, leading this queer stranger.

"Meet David Jude," said Marsh. "He's a newspaper man from Tokio. Bill Newell told him to look me up."

Most of us remembered Newell. He had worked for the Associated Press in Paris for a few years, then got himself transferred to Japan. The last we had heard of him he was working on an English-language daily in Tokio, published by the Japs. A typical wandering newspaper job-man, Newell was.



It almost seemed Faldi had met his match.

I'VE mentioned that David Jude was drunk when he came in. He was, too, but not in any spectacular way. He didn't stagger nor "shush" nor give any evidence of it. He merely looked it. His eyes showed it, especially, and his hands trembled a little. He stepped up to the Commerce bar with us and started drinking *pernods*. He turned out to be pretty good company, and was very amusing in a dry, casual way. No, he wasn't looking for a job. No, he wasn't staying on in Paris. He hadn't any plans. He was just looking around, so he said.

Just before I got away for dinner, Emmett Marsh asked me if I would cover a story that evening. It wasn't an important story. It was a fencing match at the Cercle des Maîtres-Escrimeurs. Nikko Faldi, the great Italian master, was to meet the French champion, Larenaudie. I don't know anything about fencing; but with Faldi on the bill it made it almost an international event, and I was glad of the chance to go. Faldi, you know, is reputed to be one of the most remarkable swordsmen who ever lived. He has not been defeated in seven years, and ever since he routed the great Frenchman Gaudin a few years ago, he has symbolized a sort of revival of the dying art of fencing. I understand that he has turned professional now, and that he has set up a school for the young Italian blackshirts and is Mussolini's *maître-d'armes*.

So I said I'd be glad to do the story, and Marsh gave me a pass.

David Jude turned on me just then and said:

"Like to have company?"

I didn't care, and the pass was for two people, but Emmett Marsh cut in with:

"You'll have to wear soup and fish, Jude. Fencing is a very dressy business in Paris. Maybe you wouldn't care to dress."

I caught on. Marsh wasn't keen to have this drunk tagging along with me in the press-box. The man certainly didn't look as though he owned a dinner jacket, much less full evening dress. But Jude fooled us.

"Fair enough," he said. "I'll get my things out of moth-balls."

That was that. Short of practically insulting the man, there seemed to be no other way of putting him off. Besides, he was a rather likable fellow, all in all. So I agreed to meet him at the Crillon Bar at nine o'clock, and I proceeded to go home for dinner and to dress.

My first shock came at the Crillon.

ARRIVING first, I was alone there for ten minutes or so. I fortified myself with a stinger and tried to recall what I had heard about Nikko Faldi, preliminary to building my story for next morning. Suddenly a voice broke in upon my revery:

"What ho, my gay blade! Art thou ready? Is thine eye without falter and thy sinews steel? Barman, haste thee and bring us a bottle of Ayala. Let us warm our blood in the goodly wine of Yvetot!"

And there stood an apparition.

I recognized David Jude, but with difficulty. He was wearing a gorgeous opera cape of black velvet. A tall silk hat graced his head, albeit favoring his left eye a little. A monocle gleamed and glistened in the light of the candelabra, accentuating the absurd length of his nose. He was standing in a grotesque, swaggering position, saluting me with a black stick, as though preliminary to a duel on the field of honor. And he was, quite evidently, drunker than ever.

One thing was certain: there was nothing seedy about the man now. He looked rather magnificent, standing there in the bright light, but like nothing at all of this century. He tossed a hundred-franc note on the bar to pay for the champagne. He lifted his glass high, and watched the bubbles dancing over the rim against the light, and babbled along:

"Drink, my friend, drink to the night! Drink to ourselves. Drink to poetry and song. Drink to history and to glorious deeds. And especially, drink to me, my friend, for I am Cyrano de Bergerac: poet, philosopher and soldier."

Or some such rot.

I drank with him, but I was pretty uneasy. He was just drunk enough to be noisy and difficult. I began to have misgivings about taking him to the Cercle. After all, nobody likes to have a drunk making unfortunate remarks, and I felt I had to keep up a certain dignity for the sake of my paper. Furthermore, I had been in Paris so long that I was pretty well known, by sight at least, and I'll admit I didn't want to be associated with this bird if he was going to be obnoxious. I told him so, too. I was fairly blunt about it. But he only gave me one of those exaggerated winks and said with drunken dignity:

"Now, now, now, my friend. Never fear. Drunk but not disorderly, you know. Been drunk for twenty years, but always a gentleman. Practically extinct gentleman of the old school. Very few of us left. But don't worry about Cyrano."

So I chanced it, but I wasn't very happy about the evening.

THE Cercle des Maîtres-Escrimeurs was crowded; it was one of those magnificent cosmopolite crowds that only Paris can produce. François Dutry, a member of the French Cabinet and a great sportsman and swordsman himself, was the master of ceremonies. Dukes, princes, ministers, royal and noble ladies, the Maharaja of Lahpur, ambassadors, military moguls, stars of the stage and screen—it was an elite audience, full of color and brilliance like a human kaleidoscope. Really, they were splendid, and the whole aspect of the place was exciting.

We had to wait until one of the preliminary matches, already begun, was over before we could go to our seats. When the two white-jacketed figures, who looked like mechanical toys in the distance, had finished whacking each other's foils, and a feeble applause was fluttering over the crowd, the guards let us go down to the press-box.

All in all, the preliminaries were pretty bad; or at least, I knew so little of the fine points of *éscrime* that they didn't amuse me. But strange to say, they did interest David Jude. He was aquiver. He was leaning half forward in his seat, his mouth agape, his lips moist, watching every thrust, every feint. His eyes were burning. It grew upon me that he knew this sport well. Sometimes he would murmur *"Ha!"* just as though he, and not one of the canvas-clad puppets on the platform, had turned a point or made a touch. Frankly, I was glad to see him interested. It would keep him quiet.

Then, the grand event.

FIRST the French champion, Larenaudie, was introduced by François Dutry. "The only blade in France which has not crossed and been beaten by that of the great Faldi," he was saying. "France breathes a prayer for him. May St. Martin, the soldier saint, give strength to his wrist!"

It was all rather bombastic—typically French, of course. The applause was earnest but brief.

Then came Nikko Faldi, and the crowd roared.

He wore the black shirt of Fascism. Instead of the tight-fitting canvas breeches of Larenaudie and the other French swordsmen, he wore loose, flapping black bloomers. And he was thin and frail and spindling. His legs were like pipestems. To look at him, his great swordsmanship seemed incredible—except for his face. Nikko Faldi's face was remarkable. Everything about it pointed. He looked very much like the devil, or perhaps like Voltaire at thirty. He had an arched, pointed eagle's nose, pointed heavy black eyebrows, pointed little ears, pointed eyes and nose, pointed modeling over his cheekbones, and a pointed, satyr-like mouth which exposed two rows of pointed little teeth, like a rat's, that gleamed as he smiled.

He came running. He bounded down the aisle from the dressing-room, turned and made the Fascist salute to the crowd, kissed his hand here and there, bowed and smirked and showed off. He bounded to the box of the beautiful Princesse de Treveuille (*née* Murphy), and kissed her extended hand with a

When the Old Man had run down, the seedy stranger grinned. "That isn't what I asked you, Skipper! I'm looking for a bird named Marsh."

ridiculous gesture of overdone gallantry. The crowd roared and clapped and stamped, especially the women. The women's voices shrilled above everybody's, for Faldi was the idol of the fair sex. But personally I was disgusted with all this posing and acting. However—

Then right next to me I heard a voice say, loudly, in English:

"The damned jackass!"

It was David Jude. He was half out of his seat, and his face was sneering. I kicked him under the bench and whispered:

"Shut up. Everybody here speaks English!"

He turned on me with a curious droll twisted grin— and winked.

Just then Faldi went over to Larenaudie and held out his arms as if to embrace him. He kissed the big blond Frenchman on both cheeks, slapped him patronizingly on the back, felt of his huge wrists, patted them approvingly. Then he kissed his fingers at the audience, and took his *épée* from the referee.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried my irrepressible drunken friend Jude, at the top of his lungs. But the din of applause covered it up.

The referee was putting them through the formalities. He announced that the match would be in ten touches—a world's championship. Then he cried:

"En garde!"

And their blades clashed together. The crowd was hushed. Every soul was tense, breathless, including myself, ignorant as I was of fencing.

ONE thing became apparent in a flash. Larenaudie was no fool with the *épée*—far from it. It seemed almost as though Faldi had met his match in this big rawboned blond youth. They were sharply in contrast, one with the other. The stiff blade of Faldi's sword, held after the fashion of the Italian school—stiff-armed, hilt along the wrist, and always pointing at the heart of his opponent—was like a magnetic wand around which whirled and played the lithe blade of Larenaudie, held only with the tips of the fingers on the hilt. At least this is the way they seemed to me, although I have no technical knowledge of the game. But the needle-like blade of the French-

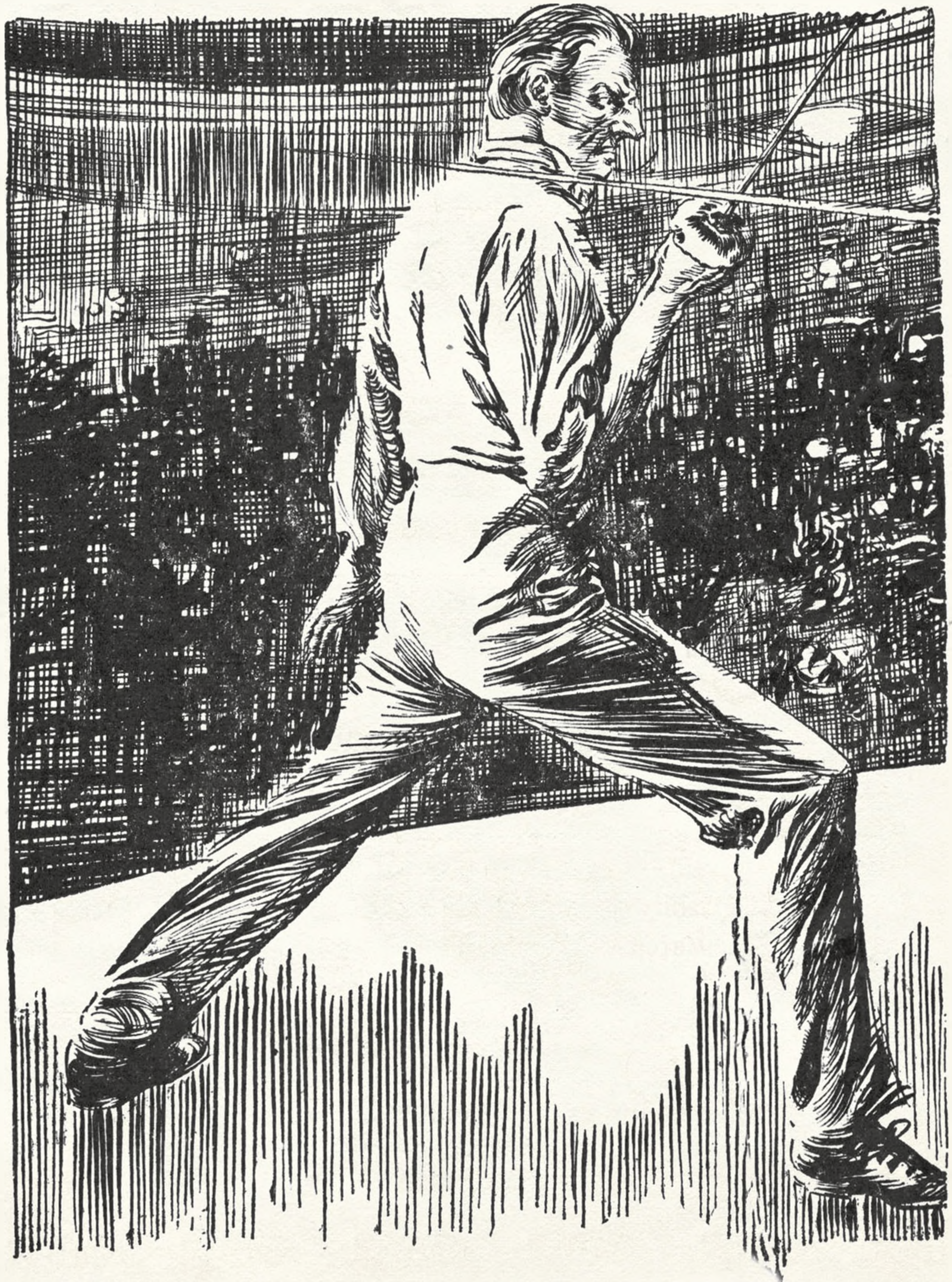
man sang its song, darted, wove, played and embraced the Italian steel . . . Then, *tac!* The canvas figure of Larenaudie was in and out and in. *Touché!* The crowd screamed, cheered, stamped, and banged the benches. First touch for France!

"Bravo! Bravo!" bellowed David Jude in my ear. He was terribly excited. He grasped me by the shoulder and babbled technical language at me to prove how clever the young French giant was. "This Italian lady-killer will learn something tonight," he confided; and I must say it seemed so to me.

As for Faldi, he stepped back after losing the touch, bowed slightly to his opponent, shrugged his shoulders, flashed a conceited smirk at the audience as though being archly indulgent about that touch—and then they closed again.

It was beautiful. Dub as I am about the game, it was certainly beautiful and thrilling to watch those two men. They were liquid. They flowed behind their blades. They were smooth, perfectly oiled, perfectly balanced machines. They swayed, leaned, gave, attacked, moving together as though their steel were drawn together by an electric flux. . . . Then, *Tac! Tac!* Something happened, so rapidly that my untrained and inexpert eye missed the finesse of it. It seemed to me that Larenaudie had touched. . . . But no. There was Faldi's blade bent in a half-circle, the point full upon the *plastron* of the big Frenchman, an ironical smile smeared over his face.

The referee indicated Faldi for the touch. The crowd howled. Larenaudie stepped back, bewildered and angry. He flung his arms about, in protest to the



referee. He was saying something. There was a brief pantomime of the referee turning his back upon him. The audience raved. Babel reigned, confusion. Larenaudie withdrew to the corner of the platform. The touch was evidently, disputed.

"*Voleur!* Robber! Foul!" bellowed David Jude, beside me, so loud that his voice lifted above the roar of the audience. "Disqualify the Italian! Throw him out!" He called this out in French —French of a sort. It was shocking, not only because of what he said, but because of the abominable accent. People stared; people frowned. This was not

Faldi's every thrust met a steel wall.

the sort of thing that was done in that sporting group. I was embarrassed, for him and for myself.

"Shut up," I hissed at him.

"It's a damned shame," he cried at me heatedly. "That was the Frenchman's point."

Then Faldi turned to the referee and shrugged his shoulders. He made a great gesture of surrendering the point. He did it in the grandstand manner. It was one of those smirking, patronizing, depreciating, overdone mannerisms of false sportsmanship. But the crowd bellowed its approval.

Then they were on again.

It came over me at once that Larenaudie was in a fool's rage. He was trying too hard. His sword might have been a club. He had lost his grace and poise, and contrariwise, the Italian seemed to dominate. He was lightning. He was electric, unreal, quicksilver. It was Larenaudie's futile, mad, headlong fury that played into the clever Italian's hands. Their blades crossed at the hilt. Faldi caught every thrust, parried every lunge, turned the Frenchman's point and at each parry, tossed his furious opponent a sneering little smile. Then *Tac! Tac! Tac!* He was in and out in a flash. Three lightning touches. *Tac!* Another. His living blade was like a piston. And from that moment Larenaudie never had a chance. The Italian won the match, ten touches to two, even conceding the disputed point.

IT was over. The audience beat their chairs and stamped their feet. Faldi raised his blade and kissed its hilt to the crowd. Then he made the Fascist salute, and danced across the platform to Larenaudie, holding out his arms. But the big Frenchman, dark in the face with anger, turned his back and walked away, handing his sword to the referee. He climbed down from the platform and hurried up the aisle to the dressing-room. It was not a pretty show of sportsmanship, but the man was really beside himself.

A little baffled but still maintaining his poise for the gallery, Faldi turned to his audience, lifted his shoulders, and kissed his fingers in farewell. And right then came calamity.

"Farceur! Faker! *Poseur!* False sportsman!"

The voice of David Jude filled the arena. Scandalized, all eyes turned toward our seats.

"Where did you learn to fence, you pretentious faker?" he cried in that awful French of his. "Disqualify him. He won on a foul. He cheated!"

HORRIBLE it was—and embarrassing. I tried to stop him, but he kept on screaming out insults at the dazed black-shirted figure on the platform. But Nikko Faldi had poise. He lifted his hand to the crowd and the din let up for a second. His rapid staccato voice called out:

"Mesdames, messieurs: It is regrettable that there is one present who has forgotten himself," he said. It was well dome. It made good theater. A burst of clapping acknowledged his cleverness. But David Jude was standing up in his seat and roaring, holding his hands like a megaphone.

"Menteur! Liar!" he shouted. "Every sportsman who hears my voice knows that you are a trickster. You do not fence—you trick!"

"Heu! Heu! Heu!" cried the crowd, now angry. A French reporter near us tried to pull Jude down into his seat. I thought for a moment that there would be a mob scene. But Faldi's voice was heard again.

"Mesdames, messieurs," he was saying, "it is unfortunate that such language should be heard in this place of impeccable sportsmanship, but I am glad to remark that the gentleman who has been so offensive is not a Frenchman." (Cheers greeted this.) "And perhaps he will oblige us by giving us his name?"

It was superbly done. The crowd loved it. And Faldi flashed his pointed, toothy smile.

"Ton nom, bravache! Ton nom, bretteur! Give your name, your name, swaggerer!" they cried.

And then David Jude, my drunken, derelict newspaper man, drew himself up to his great gaunt height; his long nose lifted, his eyes glowing, his great black velvet cape flowing. He stood there and contemplated them. He swayed a little, drunkenly. He suddenly winked at them. And then he spoke out, loudly and clearly and fantastically:

"Mesdames, messieurs, this Italian has asked my name. I will tell it. I am Cyrano de Bergerac, poet, philosopher and soldier!"

Then the house shook. They went wild.

Your Frenchman has a very special sense of humor. He is amused at the

ridiculous. He is also indulgent to drunkards and rather amused by them. And when our drunken friend spoke the magic name of Cyrano, the very absurdity of it swept away their indignation. They howled.

"Au Cyrano! Au Cyrano! Au Gascon! Bravo, Cyrano!"

But David Jude had not finished. He stood there posing and pretending to twist a long mustache and swaggering as if he really were the famous duelist of the play.

Suddenly he leaped over the stall-rail and ran quickly to the platform. He clambered up, seized the *épée* which Larenaudie had left in the hand of the referee, and saluted Nikko Faldi with the blade.

At this the crowd went delirious.

"Au combat! Let them fight!" somebody cried, and the entire audience took up the cry.

Jude, looking a little mad, screwed his monocle into his eye, unbuttoned the frog of his cape and let the black velvet slide to the floor. He flexed his blade and stood facing the astonished Italian in the position of defense.

"En garde!" he cried.

The house took up the call. *"En garde! Attention, Faldi!"*

And Nikko Faldi, being a man of the gallery, being a man of innate stage presence, knew that he must accept this absurd challenge and make this drunken man appear ridiculous, or lose his popularity with the crowd.

He saluted. The referee, like an automaton, took his position. Jude stood there, motionless, waiting, holding his *épée* after the manner of the French school. The crowd was laughing now, and good humor was born again. They cheered. *"Allez, Cyrano!"* they cried. "Go to it, Cyrano. Let's see you disarm him."

OF course nobody believed that such a match would last more than a few passes. Faldi *was* the great champion and he had proven himself a score of times in that very arena. But the idea of the thing had captured the crowd. Personally, I was disgusted.

Then, they crossed their steel. Blade whipped blade. Faldi, agile, lithe as a black panther, masterful and perfectly at his ease, wove, darted, bent, caught the American's blade in tierce, spun it round, feinted, lunged. But he made no touch. Jude's point moved easily just a fraction of an inch, and turned the thrust. It was beautiful. Even a dub like myself was spellbound. Every man and woman in that audience suddenly quieted as they became suddenly conscious that this drunken foreigner who absurdly claimed to be Cyrano de Bergerac was, at least, a competent swordsman.

Faldi became more tense. He attacked like lightning, slipped in with the terrible stiff-arm thrust of the Italian school—but his blade was turned again.

SUDDENLY David Jude turned his head slightly toward the crowd, and winked—a farcical, mocking, overdone wink, and the murmur that went over the crowd showed its effect. He winked and suddenly he attacked. He was a flame, a spark. His *épée* seemed to flow over the body of Faldi. *Tac! Tac! Tac!* Three lightning thrusts in series. . . . But Faldi turned each thrust. Then they went at it, hammer and tongs. I doubt if such an encounter has been seen since the glorious old days of dueling.

Faldi was pale, waxlike. Beads of perspiration clustered on his narrow, sharp forehead. His blade danced and wove in and out like a shuttle. But every thrust met a steel wall. The incredible American turned aside even his most desperate attempts. They both leaped to the attack. Their blades hummed like hornets, locked, separated, entwined about each other, fell apart, embraced, wrestled, whirred. But not a touch was made on either side. It was—and my opinion is confirmed by those who know the game—the most remarkable exhibition of two perfect, master-swordsmen that a present-day audience has ever had the pleasure of witnessing. For fully fifteen minutes they fenced, crossing and recrossing the platform, giving or taking advantage, lunging, retreating, lunging and thrusting again. But neither could pass the impenetrable barrier of the other's steel.

Then, abruptly and entirely unexpectedly, the American jumped back and clear, holding up his hand. He bowed low to Faldi. He took his *épée* across his knee and broke the blade, tossing the chinking pieces to the floor. And while Faldi, astounded, gaped at him, he spoke to the crowd.

"Mesdames, messieurs," he said in his slow, rasping, nasal American-French, "permit me to withdraw and to apologize. I, Cyrano de Bergerac, salute Nik-

ko Faldi, a great swordsman and a gentleman. I was mistaken. He won his contest without trickery."

And while the people were trying to catch their breath, he leaped down from the platform, seized his silk hat from my box, and ran down the aisle, his velvet cape flapping under his arm.

Then bedlam broke loose. Howling, the crowd rushed from their seats to follow him. Everyone shouted and yelled and called out. They demanded his name. They pursued him. They trampled each other in the aisles. But when they got into the street outside, David Jude had vanished.

I never saw him again. Neither did anyone else. He never appeared again at the office. No word came from him to Emmett Marsh. He simply disappeared.

Naturally, we made every effort to locate the man. Was he an American? Could it be possible? It is no secret that America does not supply the world's great swordsmen. These came from France, Italy and from Hungary. Who was this fellow?

At the American consulate, they had no record of a passport in the name of David Jude. None was to be found in Washington, although we seriously investigated.

SOME six months later when Emmett Marsh got an answer to his letter written to his friend in Japan and inquiring about the mysterious Cyrano, this is all we learned:

"This man Jude," said the letter, "is a queer fish. He worked on several English-language papers in the East. He was a pleasant drunkard and everybody liked him. But we don't know anything about him. About his fencing, all we can say is that he was employed for a few months as fencing-master to the Mikado's family. We always supposed it was just a racket."

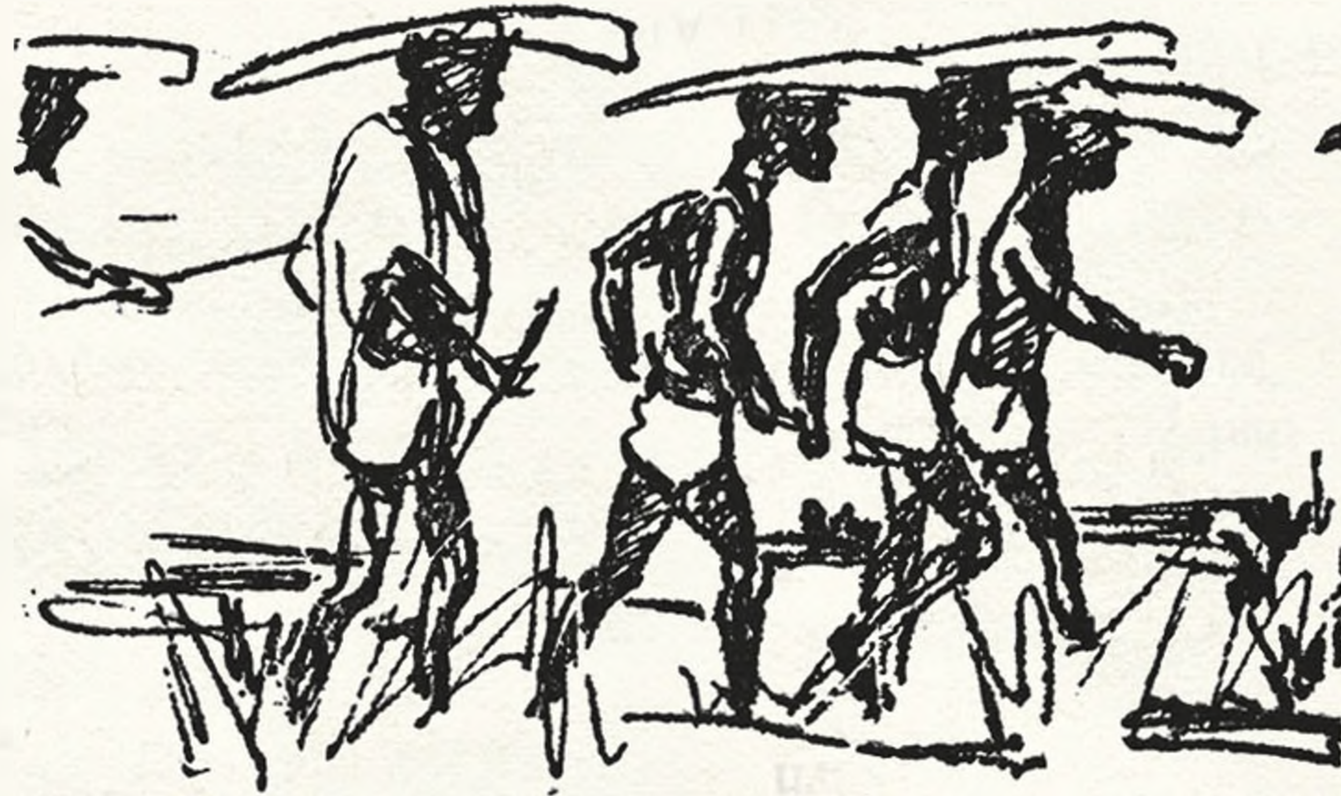
I personally interviewed old Louis de Salignac, the great *maître-d'armes*, asking him if he could help solve the mystery.

The aged master shook his head.

"H'mm!" he said. "I don't know. It seems to me that there was once an American who lived in France—ah, but that was so long ago. No, monsieur, I cannot help you."

And that is the legend of Cyrano.

Another colorful story by Fulton Grant will appear in an early issue.



In Abyssinia they have queer wild ways—as witness this unusual story by one of the few Americans who knows the country well—the author of "Spears in the Sun."

ALLAN BAKER'S caravan of twenty Manyumwezi porters marched boldly across the Kenya line into Abyssinia in single file behind him, and approached the village of Banji. The heavy curving tusks, carried easily on cloth head-pads, gleamed in the bright African sunlight. A savage chorus in time to shuffling bare feet, and the resounding whacks of safari-sticks, customary when approaching a village, was in full swing.

Camp was pitched a half-mile outside the ring of grass *tukuls,* or huts, in the shade of a magnificent grove of wild-fig trees. The tusks were laid in a neat row in the center of camp; Allan's green insect-proof tent and the flimsy cotton shelters of the porters went up in quick time. He called his interpreter, Ahmed Assan, a Somali boy, who spoke the Galla language well enough, and set out to call upon the local chief. He would do this without delay, explaining that he was trekking to Addis Ababa to find a market for his ivory.

The Abyssinian capital is one of the few places in Africa today where poached ivory may be disposed of without the usual embarrassing questions. Allan had taken these tusks from under the very nose of a strong detachment of the King's African Rifles near Lake Rudolph in British territory. But that little irregularity was no business of the Abyssinians, and Allan did not anticipate complications.

He was ushered into the *tukul* of the chief. Fitaurari (Colonel) Araboo reclined upon a couch of kudu skins. Allan

Crocodile Gold

By JAMES E. BAUM

had heard that Araboo was a powerful chief with many hundreds of *zebanias,* or spearmen, at his call. And he knew, of course, that the Galla Fitaurari had been advised by runners the moment his small caravan had crossed the border. He had had much experience with the native tribes of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, but this was his first safari into Abyssinia. He had heard enough of the country, however, to know that neither Abyssinian nor Galla chiefs are to be treated with that careless superiority acceptable in other parts of Africa. His ivory was too valuable to be risked, and he had schooled himself to avoid giving offense.

Valuable! It meant life or death almost. Not to Allan Baker, but to three or four fine people back home who had run into a mighty tough spot: Allan's father, with cataracts growing on his eyes, and a year to wait helpless until an operation should decide his future. Allan's mother, facing want with the family breadwinner an invalid; and an older sister widowed by an automobile accident, with a year-old girl to look after.

Allan hadn't been such a howling success in his father's shoes at home. Jobs were hard to get; and jobs that paid real money to a young man of his type had proved impossible. For Allan was a grand outdoors man with an engineer's training, but something of a dub in an office. Finally, he had sold a car and some other possessions for enough to keep the folks a few months, and had fled from America and the depression, determined somehow to wring money out of some other place.

Strangely enough, considering the probabilities of such a venture, he had thus far put it over. If the remittances to the folks in Ohio hadn't been regular, they had been ample. And considering the circumstances, his conscience didn't trouble him too much about breaking British law or destroying beasts that themselves wrought such havoc with the crops of the native villagers.

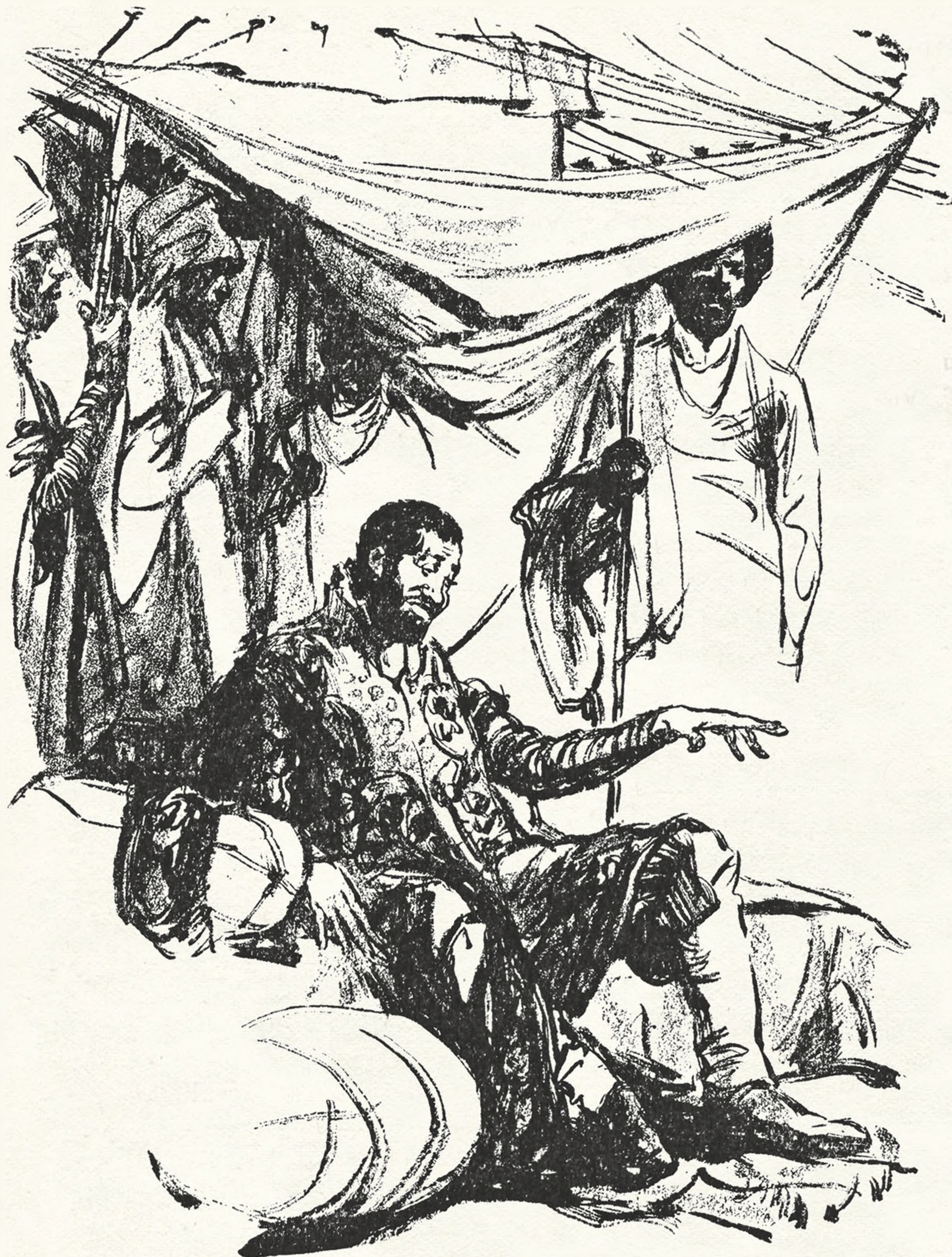
BEHIND the skin couch of Araboo stood six stalwart barefooted underchiefs, the white turbans and clean *shammas* in startling contrast to the jet black beards. A Galla spear with its twenty-inch blade was held in the right hand of each, the butt resting upon the dirt floor. Allan bowed ceremoniously to the Fitaurari and received in return an affable nod and smile that pleasantly surprised him. Through the interpreter he informed Araboo that he wished to pass through the Ogaden country on his way to Addis to dispose of his ivory.

"Ah, and have you been lucky? How many teeth and what is the value in Maria Theresa thalers?" The questions were put with a smile and in an offhand tone signifying only slight interest.

Allan thought: "He probably knows already how many tusks there are, and is doubtless as well able to estimate their value as I am." But he said:

"Fourteen tusks. Yes, I was lucky. I am not very familiar with your Abyssinian money, but I should guess the value around two thousand thalers."

Araboo stroked his bearded chin, still smiling genially.



"You understand, of course, I must confiscate the ivory? . . . . I hope the little formality will not cause you inconvenience," said the Fitaurari.

"That is indeed much ivory—considering the well-known activity of the English *askaris* across the border. When do you plan to continue your journey?"

"Tomorrow."

"Ah, but that is too bad. I hoped you would stay here with me at least a few days. We do not see men from the outside world in this part of Abyssinia. I would like to have you stay longer."

Allan had heard that the Ogaden country was not too safe for white men. He knew that the people of the province were Gallas, not Abyssinians, and he had heard it rumored that here, four hundred rough and weary miles from the central authority at Addis Ababa, the local chiefs did pretty much as they pleased. He had not expected real trouble; but on the other hand, he had certainly not expected this hospitable and hearty welcome.

"I should enjoy that," he returned sincerely, "if I had more time. But I must be getting on before my men become homesick."

"Yes," agreed Araboo sympathetically, "those black children from the lower country are superstitiously afraid of *jujus* in our high and rugged mountains. They fear us, the Gallas, too; but that is foolishness—that is, if they stay near their camps. Perhaps sometime you will come back and make a longer stay with me? Now I will send slaves to your camp with *tef*-meal for your men, two fat goats and gourds of *tej;* my honey-beer is of good age."

The Fitaurari's generous gifts were a kindness that Allan had certainly not expected. Having heard that brass cartridges are as popular in Abyssinia as jewelry with white men, he thanked Araboo and extracted six shining cartridges from a pocket of his shorts, and with a bow presented them, remarking:

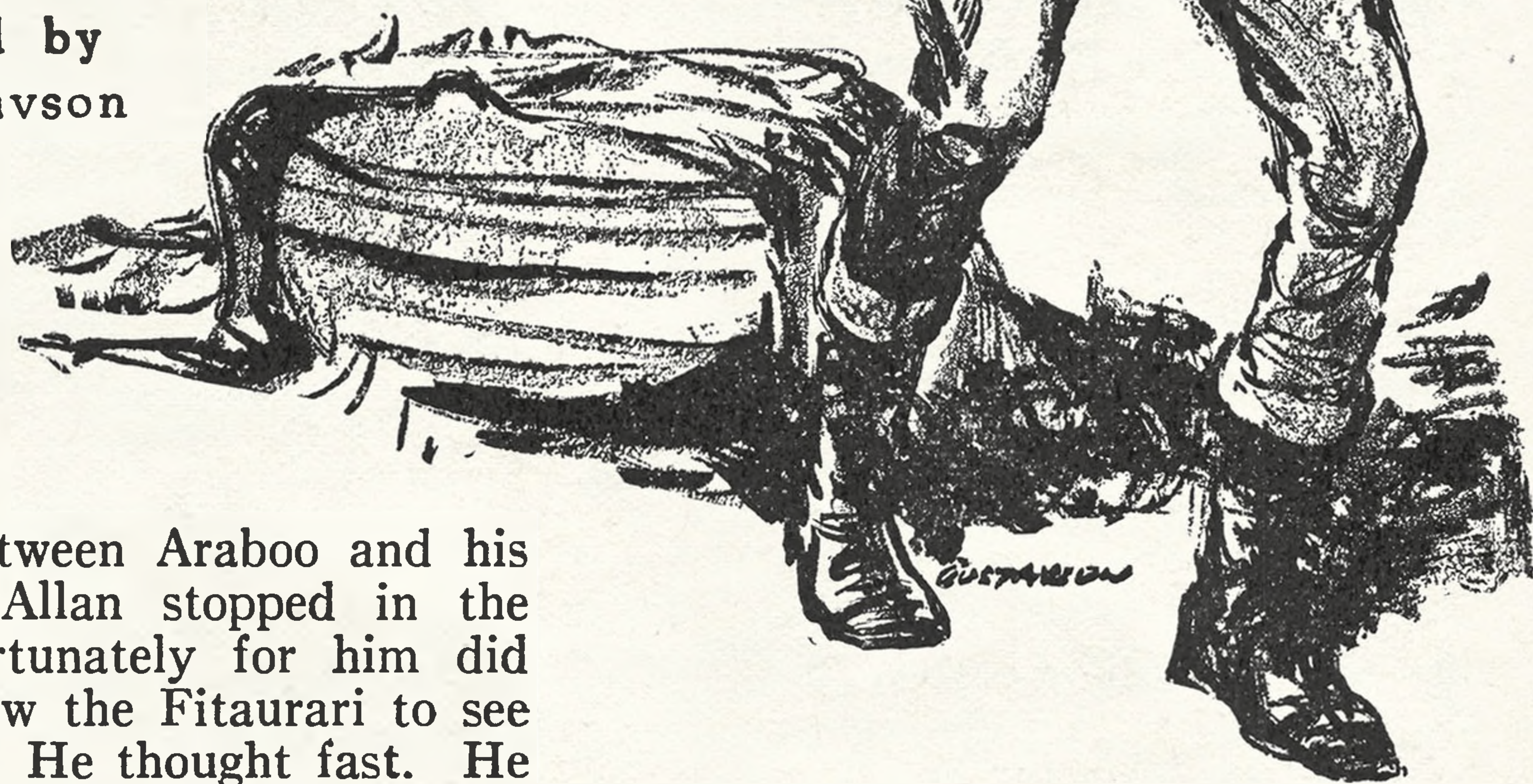
"They gleam bravely when worn in the belt."

Allan was aware that Araboo could have no rifle which those cartridges would fit. But in any case their chief value would be decorative, so this fact would not detract from the desirability of his gift. Allan bowed again ceremoniously before the smiling Araboo, and turning, strode to the doorway. As his visitor reached the opening, closely followed by the interpreter, the Fitaurari remarked absent-mindedly, as if he had forgotten to mention it until now:

"You understand, of course, that I must confiscate the ivory? My chief, the Dejasmatch Maryam, wishes to remain friendly with the English. I hope the little formality will not cause you inconvenience."

Allan's blood boiled. The thing came so suddenly, so entirely unexpectedly after his pleasant reception, that the force of the blow was doubled. He knew perfectly well that the poached ivory would never see Kenya, but later would be sent to Addis to be sold, and the proceeds split between Araboo and his precious chief. Allan stopped in the doorway, but fortunately for him did not turn and allow the Fitaurari to see his enraged face. He thought fast. He had heard rumors of Maryam's antipathy to wandering white men. He knew also that the smiling Araboo would never have taken this step unless he had been sure of his chief's approval. No; it would be useless to appeal to the man higher up. It was but one more instance of the smooth-working squeeze-play practiced by most African chiefs, and there was not one solitary thing he could do about it!

Illustrated by
L. R. Gustavson



ALLAN had risked his life repeatedly to collect that ivory; and the proceeds thereof were of vital importance. In a sudden flash of memory he saw himself facing enraged bulls, bulls with ears spreading wide as twin barn-doors, trunks extended before them, screaming in that nerve-freezing falsetto as they charged. He could almost hear again the thundering rush of giant feet shaking the earth about him as the herd stampeded at his shot. He remembered the bouts of fever, the endless days, and nights, of almost unendurable heat in the low country along the equator; the mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers that burrow under the toenails and must be gouged out by a native with a bone awl. He had taken his chances in *tsetse* country. He had lost one porter and very nearly his own life from the sudden rush of a bull-headed rhino when the caravan was straggling on the march. A detachment of the K.A.R. had clung to his trail for weeks, to be shaken off at last only by taking a two-to-one chance in crossing a great marsh which local natives had sworn no caravan could go through and live. In fact, he would not have minded so much if the K.A.R. detachment had caught him and confiscated

his ivory. The subaltern in charge would have grinned and said;

"Sorry, old top, but it's in the line of duty. You ivory-poachers have a jolly rough time of it, though, don't you? My word!" There would have been no hard feelings on either side, for the young white officers of the K.A.R. were good eggs—they understood the risks an ivory-hunter took, and at heart they sympathized with him. And most of them had a profound respect for experience.

But this was different. It was almost more than Allan could bear, to be robbed of that dearly bought ivory now, when all danger was past, and by a smiling Galla reclining on a soft couch of skins, a bland hypocrite who observed casually:

"I hope the little formality will not cause you inconvenience."

ALLAN regained his self-control; his mind worked more smoothly now. Some possible way out might be discovered later. Above all, he must not throw away this chance and risk his own freedom by speaking what was in his mind. He faced Araboo and managed a smile of his own. He would fight this modern robber-baron with his own weapons.

"After all," he said, as casually as he could make it, "I think I will stay with you for a time, now that you have saved me the long trip to Addis. The ivory? Oh, that is a small matter. You and the Dejasmatch, I see, are more zealous than I had expected in upholding the laws of your neighbors. But"—and now Allan was able to make his smile positively genial as he shook an admonitory finger at the Fitaurari and added jocularly—"but next time, I warn you, I shall take my ivory west to the French or Belgian posts at Lake Tchad, or on the Congo. But I thoroughly understand your position, and assure you that I shall not miss the ivory too much. You have been very kind in offering to send food to my camp."

Allan was grinning as widely as Araboo himself. He left the Fitaurari in high good humor, and as he walked slowly toward his camp, he was genuinely surprised and pleased at his success in the difficult task of compelling his face and his tongue to conceal the burning resentment in his heart.

In the privacy of his tent he berated himself soundly for entering Abyssinia with his valuable loads. "Any ass would have had better sense!" he exclaimed to the walls of green cloth.

The more he thought of the lost fruits of his grueling and risky six months in the steaming and unhealthful elephant-country, the deeper became his resentment. He untied a small waterproof sack and counted what little money he had left. There was nothing for it now but to return to the fever, the mosquitoes, the flies, of that dangerous country, with perhaps four or five porters, and depend for subsistence upon game alone, to "dog it" like a Swahili, until he could make another stake.

"Well," he muttered, clapping his battered helmet on his head, "better men than I am, Gunga Din, have had to do it!" He pushed through the tent door, determined to do his best to walk off his bitterness.

At the end of two hours he came to the summit of a low divide. On the other side a wide and sluggish stream, a small river which he judged would be a branch of the Omo, meandered through a brushy valley. He was ready to turn back when he saw below, along the banks of the stream, a number of black dots, apparently men, busy at the water's edge, working singly or in twos and threes. He watched them idly for a time until it dawned upon him that they were panning gold. Yes, it was well known that in parts of Abyssinia the natives washed placer gold. Undoubtedly that was what these men were doing. Eagerly he pushed forward and approached the river.

At the unusual sight of a lone white man coming toward them, several of the nearest, naked except for a loin-cloth each, whom Allan could make out to be of a more negroid type than either Abyssinians or Gallas, dropped their pans and took to their heels, shouting loudly in a strange language.

TWO turbaned Gallas, with the curved Abyssinian scimitars swinging from their hips, approached. By their air of authority he took them to be bossing the job. They eyed him suspiciously and asked a question. Allan spoke the name Araboo, pointed in the direction of the village, tapped himself importantly on the chest, and by further signs at last convinced them that he was a close friend of the chief. He realized that the coal-black negroes panning the gold were slaves, either of the Fitaurari or of his chief, the Dejasmatch Maryam.

The bosses soon had their men back on the job, and Allan watched with intense interest as the slaves rocked their

pans at the water's edge, swinging the pan in a peculiar circular motion, washing away the larger stones first, then the smaller bits of gravel, and concentrating the remainder in a small deposit of black sand along the bottom edge of the pan. More washing, and at length the tiny flakes of gleaming yellow gold appeared as if by magic, lying in little riffles upon the bottom of the pan. When most of the black sand had been washed away, the slave took from his loin-cloth a large quill, which might have been cut from the wing-feather of a buzzard, scooped up the golden flakes carefully with a miniature wooden spoon, and sifted the gold-dust into the hollow quill. He plugged the open end of the quill with a bit of cloth, and replaced the precious partly filled quill in a fold of his loin-cloth.

Allan had read somewhere that the ancient Egyptians had used quills in which to keep gold-dust; and now, three thousand years later, these men used the same method. He saw that some quills, those of the more skillful slaves, contained a substantial amount of gold-dust. Allan thought of the enormous values that might be taken from this river-bed with a modern dredge. Vague schemes for exploiting this rich placer-deposit flashed into his mind. But he soon desisted from such unprofitable dreaming; Araboo and Maryam would want no partners, and any agreement he might conceivably make with that high-handed pair, to supply modern machinery for a percentage, could result only in confiscation of the machinery as the ivory had been confiscated....

The slaves, again at work, were scattered along the shore. From time to time one or another waded knee-deep into the muddy river to dip a panful of sand, but Allen noticed that he always returned to the shore quickly, almost at a run. It was not long before the reason for this curious dislike of the deeper water became apparent.

A scream, high, agonizing and at the same time forlornly hopeless, echoed through the valley, so startling in its sudden contrast to the quiet lap of little waves, that a flock of cranes basking on a sandy island in mid-stream took off in squawking flight. Allan saw a black woolly head and a single up-flung arm disappearing, slowly but with a steady relentlessness that was more terrible than a sudden jerk would have been; an unseen but irresistible power languidly pulled that unfortunate slave beneath the

The head and arm disappeared with a steady relentlessness more terrible than a sudden jerk.

dark and murky waters. A tremendous swirl followed. The kinky head appeared again for an instant, and another scream was cut short in the middle by choking water as the head disappeared—to be seen no more.

"Crocodile!" Allan shouted. Almost in the winking of an eye, a man's life had come to its end. A rather hopeless life, Allan thought, but none the less a human life. He felt a distinct sense of shock as he watched the slow-moving water again become calm over the sinister spot, the sluggish current resume its casual flow, the circling cranes return again to their sandy island, as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened in the world. Life, in some parts of Africa, was a cheap commodity.

The dull faces of two or three slaves near by had turned a sickly greenish-gray, and Allan saw their burly frames shake with an icy shiver that touched his heart with pity. He knew their thought: how soon would their turns come? In a moment the Galla bosses shouted an order in a stern and threatening tone, and again the slaves resumed their work, but now with a halting, fear-bitten reluctance pitiful in its helplessness.

Allan sat down upon a convenient rock, a safe distance from the shore. With a rifle, he thought, and cartridges beside him, he could cut down the crocodile population of that river enormously in a couple of weeks. He wondered idly how soon that vicious reptile would have its victim completely devoured. He surmised that perhaps one croc might eat a dozen slaves in a few months. He speculated on the amount of gold in the quill

Allan had shot the instant the brute hurled himself on shore, and the big saurian never lived to regain his muddy element.

of the victim he had seen pulled under; and it flashed upon Allan that gold, in a stout quill composed of indigestible cellulose, might remain in a crocodile's stomach for days. A fantastic idea came to his mind; the crocodile-shooting concession at this particular spot would be worth something. A good shot should be able to make a small stake with a man or two to search and pan the stomach contents of the victims of his skill.

A moment of reflection, however, convinced him that the thing would hardly be practical from a gold standpoint; crocodiles sank immediately when shot, and those that could be recovered in shallow water would be few and far between, and would probably contain little gold-dust. But the gruesome end of the slave before his eyes had already roused in him a firm determination to do something about those croc's, gold or no gold! His only chance to recover even a part of his stolen ivory would be to remain here and try to talk the Fitaurari into returning a portion of it on one plea or another. . . . Allan became deeply speculative; he returned to his camp in a quietly thoughtful mood. At midnight he was still wide awake, thinking.

IN the morning he called upon the Fitaurari Araboo. Allan was genial; his sleepless night had been highly productive. Araboo had removed the valuable tusks to his own compound, and he too was geniality itself. ("Why shouldn't he be?" Allan muttered to himself as the Fitaurari greeted him jovially.) In their pleasant conversation the ivory was not mentioned. Allan proposed that while here, "resting up," as he put it, he might employ his time to his own and Araboo's advantage, shooting man-eating crocodiles at the placer stream.

"I saw a slave dragged under yesterday," he explained, "and it occurred to me that besides losing a valuable slave and a good gold-producer, you also lost a quill partly filled with gold-dust which that man had in his loin-cloth. If you will allow me to keep what gold I find in

the stomachs of the man-eaters I shoot, I can make a little money for myself, and at the same time make it so hot for the croc's that your losses in slaves and gold hereafter will be very much cut down—killing two birds with one stone, as we Americans say." (And he added under his breath: "Perhaps a third too, a buzzard.")

Araboo considered a moment. His eyes became veiled beneath half-closed lids. (Allan thought: "Oh yes, I know what you're planning, you hyena! You'll let me kill off the croc's for you, and secure some gold from them; then you'll confiscate that gold as you did the ivory. You must think I'm simple-minded. But by the time you get around to stealing that gold, I'll have another proposition to offer that will change your crooked mind.")

Araboo straightened on the couch. "Why, certainly," the interpreter translated. "Go right ahead, my friend. You have been sensible about the ivory, and I hope you shoot many crocodiles and find much gold. You are not to pan gold from the sand, however. Only what you find in the crocodiles is to be yours."

"Oh, I won't bother with the sand."

DURING the next week Allan Baker might have been seen every day perched upon a small promontory that jutted into the stream. Ali Eisa, his Somali gun-bearer, and two fearless and husky Manyumwezi porters, crouched behind him, a strong tent-rope coiled beside them. Allan shot two croc's the first day; one was too far out to be recovered, but the other had made a rush for a slave working a few feet from the water's edge, a lightning rush, clumsy but unbelievably fast, which carried him ten feet up the sloping bank. Allan had shot the instant the brute hurled himself on shore, and the big saurian never lived to regain his muddy element. The terrified slave avoided that swift rush by a hair's breadth.

Led by Ali, the Manyumwezis swooped down upon the giant reptile, and watching their chance, slipped a noosed end of the rope around the dangerous and powerful tail. They dragged him higher on the sand in a tremendous flurry of sand and mud thrown by the monster in his death-struggles. Allan was fairly sure that this was not the croc he had seen take the man the day before; he knew that a crocodile prefers its meat "high," burying its victim in the mud of the river-bottom for a few days, and remaining there to guard it from his saurian brothers. There was, however, a quill—now soft and mushy but containing a little gold-dust—in the reptile's stomach, together with other ghoulish relics: bits of a loin-cloth and a few partially digested bones.

The next day Allan wounded two and killed a third which his men succeeded in dragging ashore. The first two, although badly wounded, managed to reach deep water before the porters, dashing into the dark water to their waists, could noose the threshing tails. . . . In the first week Allan shot fifteen crocodiles in all, but less than half were recovered. The two Gallas in charge of the slaves, although they invariably appeared promptly on the scene when a croc was dragged to shore, were unable to estimate the amount of gold netted by the operations. Allan was most secretive about this part of his work. Ali Eisa crouched so low above a dead crocodile, as his deft fingers searched the saurian's slit stomach, that the Gallas could never quite see what he found and handed to his master. They assumed it to be a quill, and their covetous imaginations pictured the quill as filled with gold-dust. They became certain, as they talked together about it in the evenings after the slaves were bedded-down for the night in their straw *tukuls,* that the white man had found a bonanza in those crocodile stomachs.

As they had been ordered to do, they reported regularly to the Fitaurari. They enlarged upon the amount of gold their imaginations told them that Allan was recovering, and they added that they had seen him shoot two buzzards and take the large wing-feathers. Why should he want those feathered quills, they argued, if he had not found much loose gold in the crocodiles, in addition to the golden quills which Ali apparently gave to his master after exploring the insides of each dead croc? What were quills good for if not to contain gold-dust?

ALLAN himself made a point of dropping in upon the Fitaurari every evening. He had become quite free and confidential, and felt safe in using a little irony now when addressing the chief.

"Today," he would remark casually, "I got three big ones. Two reached deep water and were lost, but the third was worth a week of any man's time. I am doing very well, Araboo, and soon I shall not miss my ivory, lost because of your

saintly passion for enforcing the laws of your English neighbors whom you have never seen. Crocodile-shooting here beats ivory-poaching in the hot country any time; there is no risk, and the returns are much greater."

"Ah, the ivory. That is a little thing, anyway. It is the policy of my chief Woldo Maryam. I am glad that you realize that I am your friend. And I am glad that you are successful with the crocodiles." But Allan could detect just the ghost of a smile in the black beard.

UPON his last two visits, Allan had described what he called a new invention, a wonderful gold-washing machine, a "rocker." He had heard a prospector in Rhodesia, years ago, mention such a crude home-made machine. He was certain that Araboo never could have heard of the device; so in his imagination he constructed the ideal piece of mining machinery. He did not bother to take into consideration the laws of gravity and a few other little items, but dwelt chiefly upon its enormous output. Allan had a good imagination. He obligingly drew a rough diagram of his ideal machine, which he assured the Fitaurari had just been adopted and put into operation with fabulous results in the finest placer mines of Europe, including those of London and the big gold-deposits of Paris. Araboo had heard of London and Paris vaguely, and now he thought he understood why they were such large cities.

When the Fitaurari was sufficiently impressed by the marvelous "rocker," Allan changed the subject. Araboo, his eyes gleaming avariciously, led the conversation back to the mining machine. At last Allan said:

"I know where such a machine can be bought. If you will allow me a share of the proceeds, which will be more than you or any man could use, I will return to the outside world, send to Europe for the machine, bring it here and operate it for you. I will even buy the machine with my own money, which is in a bank in London. The profits will be far beyond your dreams! Think it over tonight, and I'll call upon you again tomorrow."

That evening Ali Eisa, who had carried Allan's second gun through dangerous moments, and who therefore was a privileged character, came to his master's tent with a serious and lugubrious face. He spoke in the Swahili patois.

"Bwana, I have heard from Ahmed Assan, who spoke the Galla language for you today at the house of the chief, that you will spend all your money for a machine to mine the gold from the crocodile stream. He says the Fitaurari will agree to give you a part of the gold if you will bring this machine. Is Ahmed telling the truth, Bwana?"

"That is what I suggested to Araboo today. Why?"

"Bwana!" The slim Somali became greatly excited. "Do not do this thing, Bwana! I have never left your side in the face of a charging bull. I have been afraid in my stomach many times, but I have always stayed, with the second gun. I have never lied to you, Bwana. You have never lied to me. We are as one. Bwana—will you believe me when I say that I know these Gallas? The Fitaurari lays a trap for you, a trap as smooth-working and hidden as the snares my people use to take the guinea-fowl. He talks softly, but when you bring that machine which eats the gold from the river, he will take it away with his *askaris,* of which he has many hundreds as you know. He will seize it as he has taken our ivory. Do not bring that machine, Bwana!"

Allan smiled, and yawned at the same time, a difficult thing to do, but he could not help it. With an amused twinkle in his eye, he asked;

"Do you really think Araboo would do me a dirty trick like that, Ali?"

"Bwana, I know it! Remember what he has done with our ivory. That is the way of Araboo. A man cannot change his way, any more than the lion can change his food, from blood to grass. Do not do this thing, Bwana!"

Allan rose from his chair and clapped the worried Somali on the shoulder.

"You are a good boy, Ali, and I appreciate your interest. It is time for sleep now. Go to your bed, and remember that no bull elephant has ever yet beaten us, you and me. And see if you can remember any man who has ever done it. It is hardly likely that a Galla Fitaurari is man enough to get the best of us."

IN the morning Allan Baker and the Fitaurari Araboo held a long *shauri,* a palaver that lasted two hours. In the end they appeared to be upon the most friendly and confidential terms. It was understood that Allan would proceed to Addis Ababa and from there to the coast on his way to Europe to purchase, at his own expense, the wonderful gold-mining machine. When this arrangement had

been completed, and both were in a particularly expansive mood, Allan thought it just possible that Araboo would forget that he had blamed the seizure of the ivory on his superior, Woldo Maryam, and in the enthusiasm of the moment return the tusks to the man who had endured so many hardships to collect them. But the Fitaurari said merely:

"If I had my way, the ivory would be returned to you instantly. In fact, it should never have been taken. But I must account for it to my chief. I know you understand that it is not my doing."

"Oh, yes," replied Allan, knowing well enough that unless Woldo Maryam learned of the seizure by chance, he would never receive a portion of the proceeds. Allan knew Africa and African chiefs. Idly taking from his pocket six large quills filled with shining yellow dust he weighed these speculatively in his hand.

"Well, Araboo," he observed with a satisfied smile, "I have done well enough, anyway. I should say the gold in these and my other quills is worth about two thousand Maria Theresa thalers, the value of the ivory, perhaps a little more."

ARABOO'S jet black eyes glistened, and his lips parted slightly. He leaned forward eagerly. This man had more quills than many slaves could fill in many weeks. His first impulse was to summon his soldiers and confiscate at least half with the excuse that they belonged to his chief as half-owner in the placer-stream. But he remembered the marvelous gold-washing device, and he must be careful to do nothing that might discourage this gullible white man from returning with that fabulous machine. Even a man who did not learn from one severe lesson in confiscation, might well learn from a second. Araboo controlled himself and smiled. Allan spoke;

"It may take me four months to make the trip, maybe five, before I can return with the machine in sections. The sooner I start, the sooner I will return. I have ordered my men to break camp." He shook hands with the Fitaurari and turned as though to leave. Then, as if the thought occurred to him at the last moment, he turned and came back;

"Why, look here, Araboo! Why didn't I think of it before? Your chief, Woldo Maryam, doesn't care about that ivory itself. What he wants is the value in gold. And here I have the value in my pockets. If you give me back the tusks, take this gold and send it to Woldo Maryam and he will be saved the trouble of transporting the ivory. I am off to Addis anyway, and my porters might as well have loads."

"Certainly, if you wish, my friend," said Araboo, who had estimated the value of the shining quills at considerably above two thousand thalers and was more than satisfied with the transaction.

Allan handed him the gleaming yellow quills. They shook hands, and Allan left. He sent the Manyumwezi porters to Araboo's compound for the ivory, and in a half-hour the small column was on the march. Again safari-sticks thumped the curving tusks in resounding whacks in time to the shuffle of bare feet as the porters chanted their savage marching-song. Before sunset Allan selected a camping place, and pointed to a level piece of ground for his green tent. While the porters were busy driving tent-pegs, Ali Eisa came and stood beside his master with the second gun in his hand. He watched his master's face as he asked diffidently:

"By what miracle, Bwana, did we get back our tusks from the Galla thief?"

"I bought 'em back," returned Allan cheerfully. "Bought 'em back with the —the gold-dust we mined from the stomachs of the crocodiles."

"But Bwana!" Ali was completely mystified. "We took but one very small quill with only a little gold in it from all the crocodiles! Surely these big tusks are worth many times that much gold!"

Ahmed Assan rushed forward breathlessly holding in his hand two pairs of ancient pistols that Allan had picked up as curiosities from an Arab trading caravan, and had carried with his baggage. The interpreter cried excitedly:

"Something has eaten part of the little guns, Bwana! They are ruined!"

TAKING the curious old horse-pistols Allan examined them with an exaggerated show of concern. The brass trigger-guards and the brass cylinders had been deeply gouged as though with a rough file.

"Well—well," Allan observed in the Swahili patois, affecting great surprise, "it looks as if some one had been using these pistols to make brass-filings—and plenty of 'em!" Whereupon the astute Ali promptly squatted upon his hunkers and rocked back and forth with strange gurgling cries, as a Somali does when something strikes him as very funny.

Arms and Men

This story of Bohemia in the Fifteenth Century, and of the first mobile artillery, is one of the most dramatic of this whole fine series.

I WALKED into Martin Burnside's study with, I confess, a flutter of the heart. My friend Burnside spent his time, money and brains in collecting arms and armor. He was crabbed, sarcastic—and when you got to know him, wholly lovable. And now, for once, I felt that I was going to put something over on him. I was right.

"Martin," I said, after depositing my heavy burden on his desk, "you were talking about the first cannon in Europe. What about the first artillery in Europe?"

He laid down his spectacles, reached for his pipe, and began to fill it.

"Now you're talking," he observed. "You're fully aware, of course, that cannon were at first merely laid in heavy cradles, and used to batter down fortress walls. They could be roughly aimed, but were not mobile. They were monstrously heavy tubes of bronze or iron; and until the Germans invented granular powder, no two charges ever had the same strength. The first field artillery are said to have been used in the Hussite wars, but I know little about them; nobody does."

"I do," I said. And I unwrapped one of my packages to display a bit of iron. "The early bronze wouldn't stand the strength of granular powder; iron was tougher. Here's a letter that came to me with these packages. Read it. Our stories in Blue Book seem to have stirred up a lot of interest."

Martin Burnside donned his spectacles, grunted, and read the letter.

> *Gentlemen: I take the liberty of sending you piece of a cannon used under the Bohemian hero, John Zizka, in 1422. It has been handed down in my family as a relic, and I wish to add it to your collection. With it I am sending you the story about it, just as I heard it from the lips of my grandfather, but omitting the element of religious dispute. If you find it of interest, I shall be more than repaid.*

The signature was a perfectly unpronounceable Bohemian name. Martin Burnside gave me a skeptical look, and grunted again.

"I dunno," he observed, and held a match to his pipe. "The fact is, changes in warfare used to happen in darned queer chancy ways. People didn't sit down to plan things out, as they do now in war colleges. Innovations just grew, like *Topsy.* No one knows, for example, how the change came from matchlocks to flintlocks. Where's his story?"

"Here." I opened the larger and heavier package. Martin Burnside exclaimed.

"Phonograph records! Home made, and numbered—are they in English or Bohemian?"

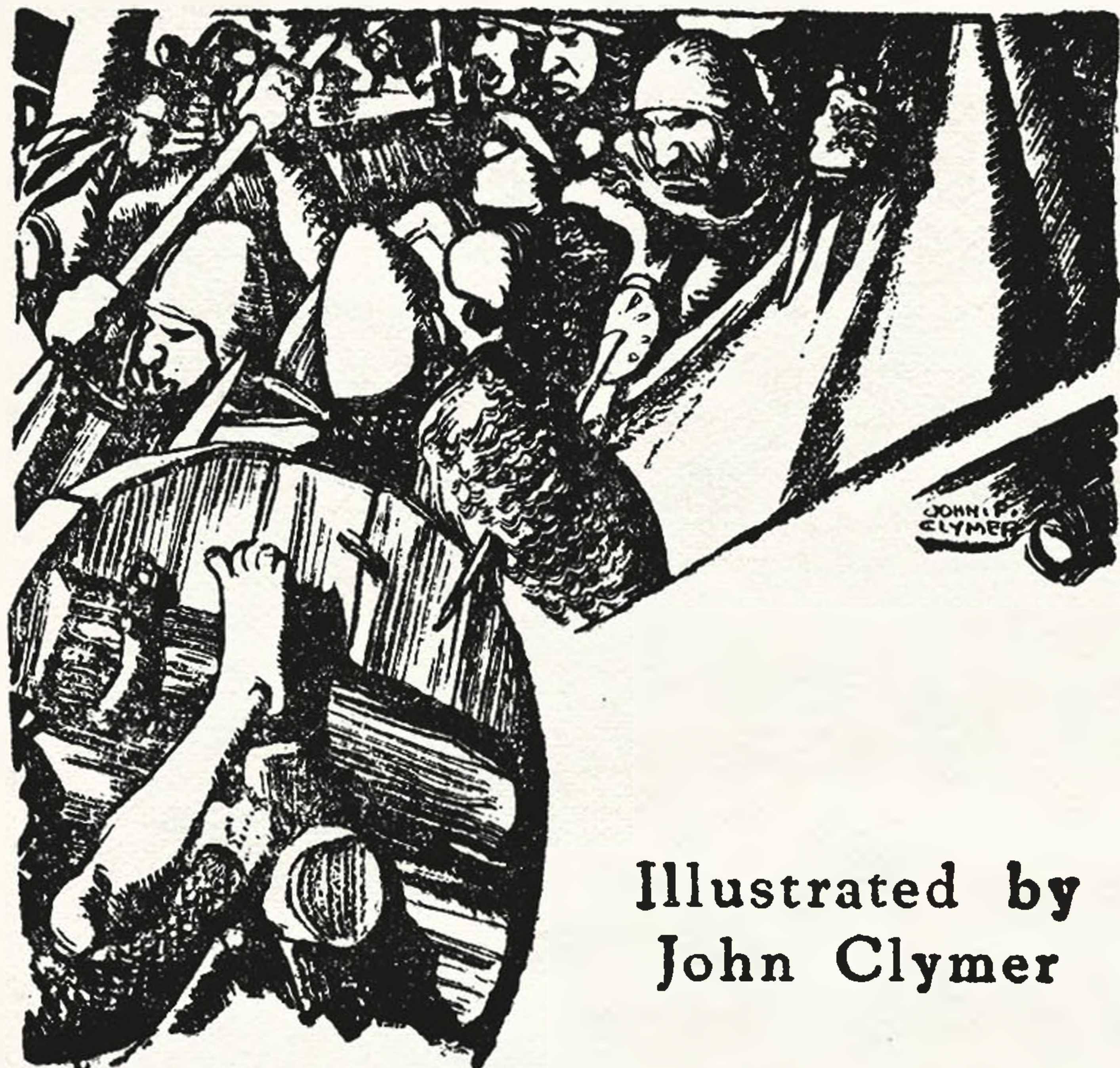
"Search me," I rejoined. "You have a phonograph here, haven't you?"

With a grunt, he rose and produced an antiquated machine from a closet. He found some needles, and cranked up the thing.

We settled down to listen. The voice that came to us was tinny and wheezy, but it held a hearty, jovial quality that hinted at good Bohemian beer and an appreciation of life's best. It spoke in English, with a faint but delectable accent which I shall not try to reproduce;

XIII—Cannon Over Europe

By H. BEDFORD-JONES



Illustrated by John Clymer

and I can, of necessity, give the names only by hearsay.

The odd part of it was that the story seemed to have nothing about cannon in it—at least, in the first record or two. It had a terrible lot of stuff about Bohemia at that period, and yet it carried over with us. That fat rascal Borek would have carried anything over, after we got acquainted with him. However—here is the story, as we had it out of the tinny horn:

GENTLEMEN! There was a man who came to the town of Kolin, which is not so far from the city of Kuttenberg, and despite the trouble and war, and the terrible fire and sword which swept over all the world in that day, he paid no heed to anything around. When he whispered into the ear of anyone, he had his will. Some said this was by his wits, but most folk held that it was a magic charm bestowed on him by his master Satan.

He gave out that his name was the Lord Baron Borek, and that by birth he was a Swede, but had spent most of his life in military service, among Christians and Turks alike. It is true that he could speak all languages. He was an enormous fat man, of such girth that people came a day's journey merely to look upon his belly and his great jowl, in which were set little blue eyes that twinkled like stars. He had some yellow hair, but for the most part was bald.

He came to Kolin with a wagon filled with loot of all kinds, and took a room in the house of the burgomaster, who was also the master brewer of Kolin. The Lord Baron spent money freely, but he was a very great rascal all the same.

"Here I live; here I die!" he was wont to say. "Never have I tasted beer so good as the beer of Kolin; therefore I shall remain here. Not to mention the food, which is of the best."

Gentlemen! In a week's time the Lord Baron Borek had the whole town by the ears. All night long he would sit in the taverns relating marvelous tales of his adventures in the wars or among the fair sex; and when he was well drunk, his mind would be set on women, so that he became a scandal. When he ate, it was enough for ten that went to fill him, and he was very violent in his ways.

Yet, for all the trouble that befell him, he had ever one way out: a whisper in the ear. The council carried complaint of his scandalous ways to his landlord, and the burgomaster summoned him to the town hall and berated him soundly.

"Let me whisper in your ear, good burgomaster," said he, and put his great fat face to the head of the burgomaster, and whispered for a moment. The burgomaster's eyes opened, and his jaw fell.

"Say you so?" quoth he. "I'll put that to the test, Lord Baron!"

What the secret was, none knew; but shortly afterward the brewery began to turn out beer of a new kind that was a perfect marvel, so that Duke Wenceslas came from Kuttenberg to test it, and ordered a month's brewing for his castle alone.

THEN there was the case of Tante Margot, a woman no better than she should be, in whose house befell a great fight wherein the Lord Baron Borek hurt and crushed a number of men. A heavy fine was laid upon her, and she complained bitterly to the Lord Baron that since it was his fault, he should reimburse the fine.

"Say you so?" he said, and his enormous paunch shook with laughter. "I'll do better than that, my dear! Let me whisper a word in your ear—"

So he murmured at her ear, and she fell into eager hearty laughter and clapped him on the arm, and went her ways, chuckling.

Or when Lord Ulrich of Rosenberg came through the town, and the Lord Baron fell into a dispute with one of his knights, who was an evil and harsh man, and smote him senseless. Other knights haled the Lord Baron before Ulrich with intent to slay him, Ulrich being deaf, and injured in one leg by a duel years back with a Polish knight.

"Ho!" The Lord Baron puffed out his cheeks and laughed. "Borek is my name, Lord Ulrich. It is the same as Borak, which among the Turks signifies 'lightning,' and in their camp I cured the Grand Vizier of a lameness and deafness worse than yours, so that he honored me in spite of my having slain thirty of his janizaries. Let me have a word in your ear—"

He whispered awhile in the ear of Lord Ulrich, who brightened visibly and even smiled, and dismissed him without scathe. And men came later from Rosenberg with word that Ulrich limped no longer and carried himself nobly, and could hear well.

"The secret?" said Borek, when one asked him what charm he possessed. "It is the secret of knowing all secrets, my friend! That, and drowning the devil in the good beer of Kolin, the best in the world!"

Gentlemen! You must understand that a terrible war existed in those days. All Bohemia and Moravia had united to win freedom; but King Sigismund of Hungary and of Germany had sworn to reduce Bohemia under his hand. The Hussite reformers, who had a provisional government, were led by John Zizka. Time and again had Zizka hammered and smashed both Germans and Hungarians; but one eye was riven from him, then the other, so that he was now blind.

THIS winter at the end of 1421 was very mild and open. Geese could swim in the ponds and wagons traverse the roads. So it happened that King Sigismund could transport artillery of great size. He flung his host suddenly into the country and came as far as Kuttenberg, where Zizka with a small force tried to check his advance.

Now you might see on all hands men fighting and raiding, burning and destroying, killing without mercy. The Hungarian hussars spread over the countryside, and the German regiments were worse. Where they passed, nothing was left alive, man or child or beast, and everything of wood was burned; and the women who perished under the sword were lucky.

Great panic came upon the town of Kolin. Many of the men were gone to the war; fugitives streamed through on all the roads; and if Kuttenberg fell, the enemy would quickly devastate Kolin and all its district. Rumors ran rife. The Bohemian armies were gathering, but they had no heavy cannon, only small guns; while King Sigismund had huge artillery to throw stone balls of twenty inches, weighing six hundred pounds. Greater aid to him were squadrons of Hungarian cavalry, against whom the masses of Bohemian peasants could do little.

Amid all this tumult and bloody confusion, Lord Baron Borek drank more heartily than ever and commandeered the best of food to be found, and stinted not in any wise. When men spoke to him of

"I'll do better than that my dear! Let me whisper a word in your ear."

knightly deeds and glory, he laughed until the rafters rang, and slapped that mighty paunch of his with both hands.

"Show me the horse to carry me, and I'll bring in the spurs of a hundred German knights in thirty days!" he declaimed grandly. "But have a care. The Grand Seigneur offered me the finest horses in his stables, and the backs of a dozen were broken one after another. And the King of France—ho, ho! His Flemish chargers could not carry this noble belly a league without foundering!"

Gentlemen! In those days was great talk of electing a Polish prince to be king of Bohemia. Therefore many Poles had come into the country. One of them came to Kolin in search of John Zizka, but could get no farther, and so he stayed. He had a servant who was a Tatar, three good horses, an excellent suit of armor, and money.

His name was Peter, or Pan Peter, which in his language signifies a knight. He was a very brisk and merry man, with high mustaches, a proud neck, and such great skill with the saber that he had become famous in duels, winning much booty. Lord Baron Borek encountered him at the town tavern, and straightway they fell in each other's arms, for it seems they had met ere this in France.

Now began such carousing and scandalous conduct as had never been seen in Kolin. Those two men had things their own way, for the burgomaster had sent his family away to safety, and was helpless to oppose them. In fact, he shared in their shameless orgies, and certain of the council with him.

With rumors flying, and every day word coming that Kuttenberg had fallen and the host of King Sigismund advancing, it seemed that the devil had taken over all the world and the end of things earthly was at hand. One day there happened wild rioting and confusion. The brewery workers would have marched out and taken to flight, but the Lord Baron stood before the gates with a huge iron spit from the tavern, and brained two of those men, and drove the rest back to work.

"What! Shall we have no good beer of Kolin, merely from fear of the Germans?" he bellowed. Then he fell into laughter, and waddled back to the tavern, and eased his girth through the narrow doorway again. Whereat the burgomaster was well pleased.

It was the next day after this that all came to a head, as things seem to do.

There was a mighty tumult, fugitives streaming through Kolin in swarms, broken bands of men, and wailing women. With early afternoon, Pan Peter and Lord Baron Borek sallied forth, the brisk little man and the great paunch together, their servants following. They drummed up some girls upon whom fate sat heavily, and returned to the tavern, and summoned the burgomaster to join them.

"As God lives, what you say is incredible. Where learned you such a thing?"

Gentlemen! There was such wassail and carousing as even in this time was never seen. In the midst thereof, came a wagon and two French knights with their servants, seeking King Sigismund and the French ambassador. They had safe-conducts and passports from Prague, so that no man of the Hussite following would do them harm. But Borek came and stood in the tavern door, filling it with his great bulk, and Pan Peter peering forth under his arm.

"Those French knights, brother, have beautiful armor and excellent horses," said Lord Baron Borek, and licked his lips.

"That is true," said Pan Peter, and his mustache moved eagerly. "Shall I bid them join us?"

"Do so, in God's name!" —and Borek waddled back to rejoin the party.

The two French knights, who were very honorable and valiant gentlemen, came in and accepted the invitation right gladly. Fat geese were on the spit, and when they beheld how Lord Baron Borek took unto himself an entire goose, and then bellowed for the quarter of beef following, they marveled. But they, it seemed, declared for wine and turned a sour eye on the good beer of Kolin, at which Borek waxed wroth.

Now one thing led to another. And presently you would see those girls fleeing with shrieks as tables were overturned and pewter went crashing to the floor, and the sunset flashed upon steel laid bare. The burgomaster cried a halt.

"This brawl is not seemly!" he called out. "Gentlemen, act properly!"

"By all means," said Pan Peter, and turned to the two French knights. "While there is light, shall we not adjourn to the courtyard? Sabers against swords; armor and weapons and goods to the victors. Do you say yes?"

"Yes!" shouted the French knights together. The burgomaster intervened.

"But these foreign knights have safe-conducts—"

"We waive them!" said one of the knights very gladly. "To the courtyard!"

"One moment!" roared out Lord Baron Borek. "Wait until I finish my beer! Do our servants fight, or we alone?"

"We alone," said Pan Peter; and so it was arranged.

All this while, the streets of the town had been surging with carts and horses and women and broken men, fugitives from the battles around Kuttenberg; but no one paid them heed.

Gentlemen! There was such wassail and carousing as even in this time had never before been seen.

As the four knights came out into the courtyard, a great bowed man on a foam-white horse entered. There was blood on his garments, and his reins were held by two peasants who rode beside him. They helped him off and seated him on a bench by the courtyard door, and it was evident that he was blind. He sat bowed over, his face in his hands, but when he heard the clash of weapons he straightened up, and it was seen that his blind face was dreadfully scarred.

"What is the clash of steel?" he said. The burgomaster, quaffing good beer, gave him to drink and sat beside him, explaining the matter, somewhat drunkenly.

For now there was fighting. Gentlemen! I tell you so noble a sight was seldom beheld. Two good men could scarce lift the enormous hauberk and helm that girded Lord Baron Borek; the French knight opposing him wore beautiful plate mail of Milan work. Pan Peter wore a light chain coat, nothing more. In his hand, the saber moved like a flash of lightning in the sunset.

Sword met saber. Steel clashed on steel; the stamp of feet on the cold stones filled the courtyard; the breaths of men hung sharp in the frosty air. And to the amazement of those two French knights, the Lord Baron was wondrous swift with his blade and his feet, for all his girth. So occupied were the four with the work in hand, that none of them were aware of armed men in the gateway and in the street, of steel helms glittering redly around, of knights who stood watching with eyes aglitter.

Death smote, and smote quickly. The French knight facing Pan Peter gave a great shrill cry, *"Jesu!"* And as the word rang, he toppled forward with the life cut from him. Pan Peter turned and watched, panting a little, how the other fight went.

Lord Baron Borek had hewed breast- and shoulder-plate from his opponent, when the French sword smote him full upon the helm. That blow would have riven another man, but the Lord Baron roared forth a mighty oath, and struck swiftly, again and again. So furious was his onset that the Frenchman backed, and they came into a pool of mud.

The French knight slipped and fell prostrate. Lord Baron Borek checked his blow and would have stepped aside, but he too slipped and fell, and his enormous weight came upon that hapless French knight, who was struck senseless.

Now one thing led to another. And presently you would see those girls fleeing with shrieks as tables were overturned and pewter went crashing and the sunset flashed upon steel laid bare.

SUDDENLY a tumult of voices filled the whole place. There were shouts, cries of eager greeting, of welcome. To the blind man on the bench came running knights who knelt to grip his hands. But he lifted a loud voice like thunder:

"Seize those men! Bring them before me!"

Pan Peter and Lord Baron Borek were seized and stood before him. They wondered, until they heard the voices, and understood that this was John Zizka himself, escaped almost alone from Kuttenberg. The city had fallen. And here, to meet him, were come the Bohemian hosts, too late to save the city.

Now, however, was a matter of justice to be done. The hero was bitter wroth, and his anger was a terrible thing.

"You have slain a French knight under safe-conduct, and disgraced us, and shamed me!" he cried out. "You have given the day and night to wassail and wenching. Where is that burgomaster? Stand him with these other two. It is in my mind to have them flayed alive this night. They have turned this town into a den of iniquity; they have made a scandal of themselves."

Gentlemen! You must understand that the hero was a very godly man, who reverenced the Precious Blood above all other things, and who knew no compromise with evil actions and drunkenness and wicked ways. So also were these captains of his, and the host who had come up to join him; they were earnest in good works, holding not with wantonness and carousing and such matters.

Well, the French knight who had got his breath back, came and saluted John Zizka, and in very honest knightly fashion told how the safe-conduct had been waived, and how his armor and goods, and those of his companion, were forfeit.

"Peace!" cried out John Zizka in his terrible voice of anger, and the hair about his blind eyes seemed to quiver and lift with fury. "These three deserve death, for the devil is in their hearts. Speak, one of you! Have you the cowardice to deny my accusation?"

Lord Baron Borek clapped both hands about his paunch, and bellowed lustily.

"Aye, Lord Zizka! I deny not your words, but your intention. That is to say, I deny that we deserve death, or shall taste death at your hands, or shall have anything to do with so foul a thing—except the death of other men."

Dread silence clamped down. John Zizka spoke in a voice of controlled fury.

"Drunken swine, do you jest at such a moment?"

"Not I," said the Lord Baron stoutly. "But, I pray you, let me have a word in your ear—"

Waiting not permission, he waddled forward and put his huge face against the blind head, and the mutter of his voice came faintly.

The hero Zizka stared out, so that the sunset glare reddened the empty sockets of his eyes, and bathed his gray lion's head in radiance. Utter astonishment crept into his face as he listened. Then he spoke, his voice calm and deep.

"As God lives, what you say is incredible! Where learned you such a thing?"

"In all modesty, Lord, as becomes me," said Borek, puffing out his cheeks, "the thought came to me while watching the hosts of the infidel Turk on parade. I said as much to the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, but he would not hearken to me, and his array perished because of this. I say unto you, that even through the good beer of Kolin, which you despise, may come the salvation of you and your host."

FOR a little John Zizka sat in thought. Then he called to his captains and heard reports of the army they had gathered; it was no great array. Meantime, horsemen had arrived with word that King Sigismund and most of his forces, chiefly his squadrons of horse, were in hot pursuit, hoping to capture Zizka. With morning, they would arrive.

"My friends," said the hero, "we must fight or run. We are far outnumbered—"

"Zizka!" roared the captains in the courtyard, clashing their weapons. "You alone are a host!"

"Then we fight!" And Zizka threw back his head. "So be it! Give this man and his comrades all that they ask, all that they desire; keep them well guarded, but do their bidding, for upon them may rest our salvation. What seek you first, you who spoke to me of this matter?"

"Beer!" cried Lord Baron Borek in huge relief. "A good sound keg of beer in a wagon to go with us, and a gallon or two to drink here and now."

There was laughter, but the beer was brought. For a little while the Lord Baron spoke low-voiced with Pan Peter and the burgomaster.

"Praised be the Lord!" cried the Polish knight suddenly. "It is a wonderful thing; let us go to work, to work!"

"And let us take one or two of those girls with us," said Borek; but all the girls had fled long since.

GENTLEMEN! Amid all the peasant host, amid the flare of torches and cressets, those two knights and the burgomaster labored right lustily. All the artillery of the army, which numbered some thirty small cannon, were brought to them, with the massive, heavy wagons of the countryside.

Into each of these wagons were put three of the cannon, with men to load and work them, and store of powder and ball, and six stout horses to draw each wagon. High and sturdy stood these vehicles; but about them Lord Baron Borek ordered hides fastened on the outside, fresh raw hides with the bloody side out, and other hides piled about the cannon for breastworks inside.

In the dawn you might see those ten wagons brought forth from Kolin to join the army. The hero Zizka had moved out somewhat from the city, toward the village of Nebovid, where he took up position to meet the array of King Sigismund. And already the king was at hand and very eager to crush the rebellious Bohemians.

The sunrise glinted upon mounted German infantry, who now dismounted and stood ready in serried phalanx. Rank upon rank of hussars drifted up to await the charge-beat of the tambors. Some of those squadrons wore Turkish dress and arms; others were clad in the skins of beasts, while the regiment of the King was all in silvered armor and most beautiful to see in the sunlight.

About the standard of Sigismund himself fluttered mantles worn over armor by the Knights of the Cross from Marienburg in the east of Prussia, and the pennons of French knights in full mail, while the armor of the King and his nobles shone like a great mass of steel as they moved forward.

Against these, stood the Bohemian peasants, ill-armed, ill-trained, but stout of heart, with a few squadrons of cavalry; and John Zizka upon his horse in the foremost line, two men holding his reins. His captains had their orders.

Trumpets shrilled high. Drums beat the command. The whole mass of the royal army bore down to overwhelm and trample into the earth these dark masses of peasants. Arrows flitted in air; hand guns roared forth; but for the most part it was a charge with the cold steel, the weight of horse and armor, the serried ranks of sabers.

Then, to right and left, wagons broke forth of the Bohemian lines and started toward the enemy. They joined and came into a wedge-shaped array, and if the horses were slain, that was a small matter. And from this wedge, erupted smoke and flame as the cannon began to speak into the thundering ranks of cavalry that swallowed them up

In vain men tried to climb those slippery hides. Archers and swordsmen were in the wagons, with the guns. The Bohemian ranks rushed forward, and the battle was joined. Such of the wagons as had horses remaining, pulled out of the wedge and roamed to and fro until their beasts were killed, pouring cannon-shot through the royal ranks.

Gentlemen! There you might have seen great slaughter, such as was hardly known of men before this day. Each of those wagons was a fortress, a *"wagonberg"* as the word was coined, a wagon-mount that could move about, take the enemy in flank, send shot hurtling through his massed ranks and break them asunder.

Into those breaks rushed the Bohemians, with sword and scythe and lance at work, poniarding horses, pulling down mailed men, spreading death near and far. This new manner of using cannon broke the hearts of the Hungarian squadrons, even as their charges were broken. True, some few of those wagons were overcome and their crews slain, but most of them rained death upon the crowds below.

Then struck the Hussite cavalry, very cunningly upon order from the hero Ziz-

ka. Most of the knights about the standard of Sigismund were down and dead. The King himself turned about and spurred with loose rein and the fear of death in his heart. He, and some few of his Hungarian squadrons, lived to escape the Bohemian steel; but his army perished there by the thousand, heaping all the plain with dead men, for no prisoners were taken.

This was the first of the famed *"Wagonberg"* fightings, which for long after carried everything before them in battle.

As the day drew on, a small, light wagon with an escort of cavalry came back from the battle to the town of Kolin, where wild rejoicing held forth. In the wagon were seated Pan Peter and the burgomaster, with tears on their cheeks; and stretched out on cushioned hides lay the vast bulk of Lord Baron Borek.

In his incredible paunch was embedded iron. A cannon had burst, and a portion of it had flown into him. It could not be moved; the captains said that to pluck it forth would mean a rush of blood and quick death.

"Then let me die slowly," said the Lord Baron, rolling his little twinkling eyes at the burgomaster. "At least, let me live until we reach Kolin and the gates of the brew-house, where one last draft of the best beer in all the world awaits me!"

Whimsy or not, this was his desire, and they granted it.

That he had no great while to last, was clear enough when the wagon halted in the gateway of the brew-house. A vast throng had gathered about, filling all the street; word had spread that Lord Baron Borek had saved the army with his whisper in the ear; and whether it were the work of Satan or no, it had come to a right good end. So, also, had he; and when they were done cheering him, and knew he was near death, the people fell silent, and there you might hear the weeping of women and the sound of prayers ascending. A little pitiful smile came to the lips of the Lord Baron.

"Many folk have cursed me," said he, "and now they pray for me. That's something new; and it has a peculiar fancy to my ear. Where is the beer?"

Pan Peter held up his head, and the burgomaster took a great measure of beer that was handed up. Lord Baron Borek clasped it in both hands and set it to his lips, with his barrel of a chest all aheave for the gulp. But at a taste, he put it away and made a wry face.

"Traitor!" he said, rolling his eyes at the burgomaster. "You've gone back to your old tricks—it's over-bitter with hops, as I warned you it would be—"

The color drained out of his red cheeks, and they knew he was dying. Sobs burst from the crowded throng, and folk went to their knees. The Lord Baron clasped the hand of Pan Peter.

"My possessions are yours," he said faintly, "though it's not my fault." His head turned, and his eyes fell upon the blubbering features of the burgomaster. "To you, friend, I leave the iron in my belly. Hand it down to your children, that they may heed my instructions and —and mind about the hops—"

His eyelids fluttered and closed. But his lips moved once more.

"Praised be Jesus Christ!" he said, and died.

"In sæcula sæculorum," responded Pan Peter devoutly, then broke into sobs, and clasped his friend's head in his arms.

Gentlemen! That is the story of the *Wagonberg* that changed the history of war.

The last record ran off into scratching, and was silenced. I looked at Martin Burnside, and he at me, for a long staring moment.

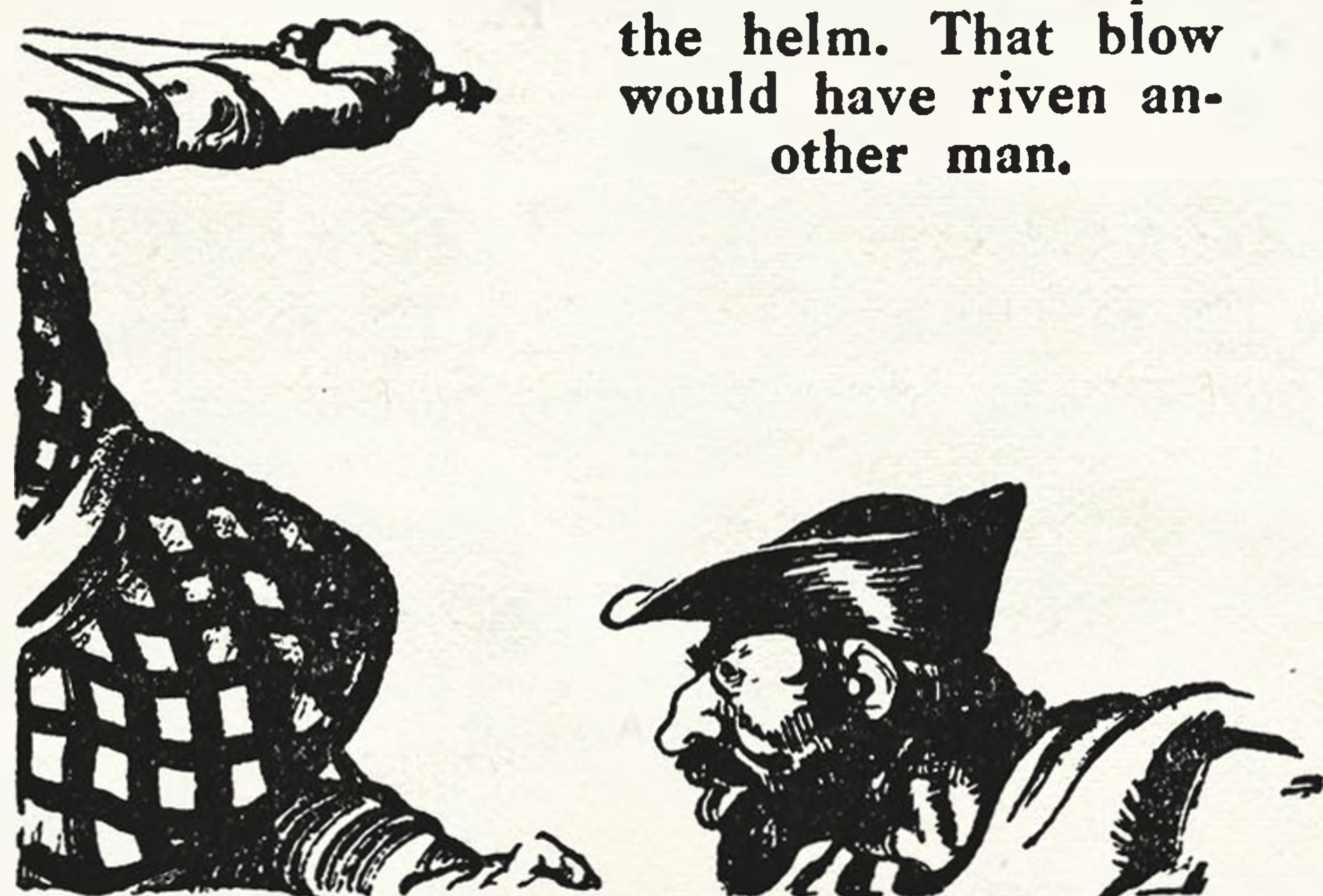
"Well!" he exclaimed, reaching out for the iron fragment and peering curiously at it. "Do you really think—"

"Do you?" I asked in turn. He grunted, and frowned at the jagged bit of iron.

"I dunno," he growled. "But if it's all the same to you, this is going to be one of the jewels of my collection!"

"It's yours," I said, and repented too late. He had put it over on me, after all. Nothing like knowing when to catch a man off his guard!

Another colorful story of "Arms and Men" will appear in our next issue.



The French sword smote him full upon the helm. That blow would have riven another man.

The Ghost of Old

By BIGELOW NEAL

Illustrated by Peter Kuhlhoff

"BOSS says you gotta die, Missouri!" At the sound of the foreman's voice, the white gelding opened his eyes, cocked one ear ahead and gravely regarded the man who had raised him on a bottle, broken him to the saddle, fed him and cared for him more than twenty years.

"After all these years you've been his favorite saddle-horse, he says you gotta be taken out an' shot, just because you aint much good, an' because we're going to be short o' hay and oats."

At the last word, Missouri opened the other eye. Turning both ears to the fore, he put his nose in the feed-box. Evidently he had misunderstood. Then swinging his head, he sniffed at Chuck McArthur's pockets. Often such explorations brought to light ears of corn. He found nothing, and the foreman slipped an arm around his neck.

"Doggone shame! Old Bill Dailey aint got much of a memory, an' he's so dodgasted stubborn he's proud of bein' bull-headed. But I aint done yet. After supper the boss and me's goin' to have another set-to. If I've been good enough to take care of you all these years, and good enough to be the only other man allowed to ride you, danged if I don't believe I'm good enough to have something to say about this."

With a final pat, the foreman turned away. Missouri heard the barn door open and shut. Then listening to the wind beyond the thick log wall, the old horse closed his eyes again and slept.

DOWN in the office of the ranch-house, Bill Dailey and Chuck McArthur faced each other across the desk. Dailey leaned back, his boots across a corner of the desk and his hat-brim pulled level with his eyes. The foreman straddled a chair, rested his elbows on the back and began:

"What's this I been hearin' about killin' Missouri?"

The hat tipped forward until nothing was visible but a part of a wind-carved cheek and a patch of gray hair on the side of the older man's head.

"Glad you mentioned it, Chuck. It's got to be done, and I want you to take over the job."

"No use arguin', I suppose?"

"None at all, Chuck. Missouri's too old to be any good; we're short of feed; and he'll die in a few years anyway."

"Did you ever think how many thousand miles the old horse has packed you?"

"Yes, but—"

"Remember the time he fell down in front of that prairie fire, and then, when he might have left you to roast, he came back and let you climb on?"

"Sure I do, Chuck; but that was pretty much in the day's work; and anyway, he had been trained to—"

"Who trained him?"

"Well—I guess you did."

"Aint I got nothin' to say now?"

"Sure you have, Chuck. We've been friends a good many years, and we're going to stick it out a good while to come. But this is a case where I've got to save hay and feed by cleaning out everything we don't need. I've thought it all over, and my mind is made up, and—"

"You're proud of your reputation as the most bull-headed son-of-a-gun in fifteen States. What'll you take for Missouri? Name your price an' take it out of my pay."

"No, Chuck, that would be foolish. You'd be throwing away your money, and we'd have to feed him just the same. And now I'm going to ask you a favor, Chuck: I'm going to ask you to take Missouri over to that coulee that leads into the bad-lands under the edge of Coyote Butte below where those big caves are—and shoot him."

"Why don't you shoot him yourself, if you're so doggone anxious to get rid of him?"

"I can't, Chuck; I haven't the nerve. And while we've lots of men around here who'd like to use a live horse for a target,

Missouri

A drama of the bad-lands in winter, by the author of "The Last of the Thundering Herd."

I want you to do it, because I know you'll not let the old horse suffer."

For a time neither spoke. Dailey's forefinger toyed with the rowel of a spur, and Chuck McArthur gazed out of the window, seemingly intent on a patch of stars above the Dakota prairie. Then an idea struck the foreman.

"Why pack him clean over to that coulee? If I've got to do it, I can dig a hole just as easy down back of the barn."

"Chuck," replied Bill Dailey, and his voice was milder now, "up on the west side of that coulee, there's an open place under the trees. I always figured it was kind of a quiet place, sunny and pretty. Did you ever think it might be a good place to sleep?"

"Sure," acknowledged the foreman; "tried it once last summer. Lay down there in the sun doubled up like a jack-knife. Hornet drilled a hole in the seat o' my trousers, an' I—"

"I mean the long sleep, son. Fact is, I kind of planned on fencing off a place there and fixing it up for myself, and maybe some of the boys and neighbors would like to go along. You know we all got to cash in sometime, Chuck. I thought it would be kind of nice—kind of nice to know old Missouri would be sort of close."

"Doggone!" muttered the foreman.

"Now I think you understand why I want him buried there. I don't want to talk about it any more. I'm leaving it to you. Take him over there tomorrow, and I'll have the satisfaction of knowing he went with a friend."

Chuck McArthur got to his feet.

"Nothin' I could say would make you change your mind?"

"Nothing."

The foreman turned and left the room; but the set of his jaw was that of a rebellious and undefeated man. . . .

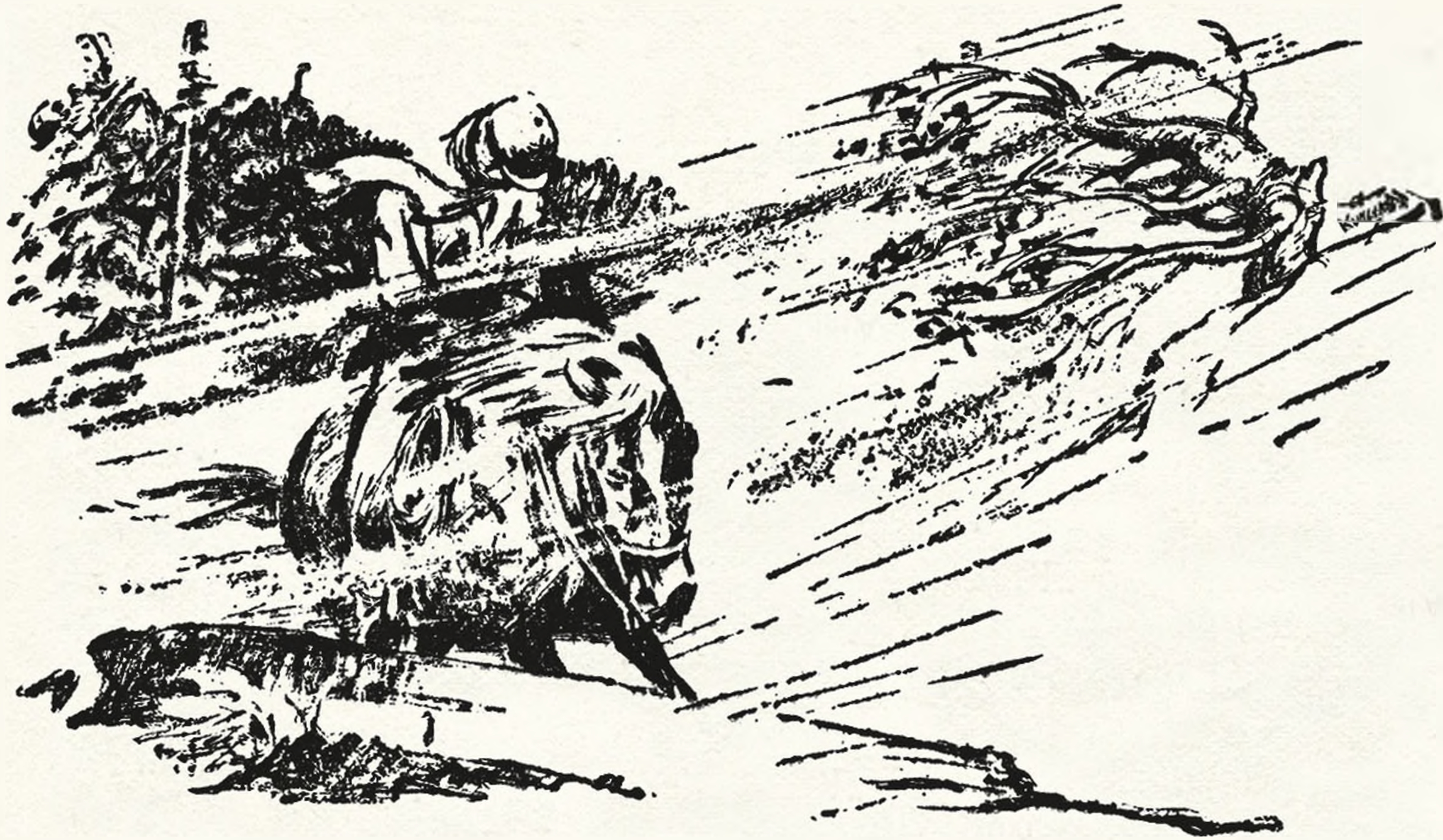
Bill Dailey slept late that next morning. That was unusual, for ordinarily he was astir with daylight, regardless of the season. When he did appear, he went to the barn. Chuck McArthur was gone, and Missouri's stall was empty. Coming back across the snow-covered yard, Dailey saw the tracks of two horses traveling in single file. They led across the floor of the valley, and farther on, were visible in a zigzag line on the face of the opposite bluff.

Dailey returned to the office. For a long while he sat alone and silent, his hat-brim again shading his eyes. Then he stirred. He needed action, and he remembered an errand in the bad-lands. A mire-hole and marsh must be fenced, and it might be as well to make an estimate before the ground froze and made fencing impracticable.

LATER, avoiding the tracks of McArthur's horse and Missouri, although their course was roughly his own, he rode away from the buildings. He found it tough going. A series of early storms had left drifts on the eastern slopes; and the night before, snow had covered the whole with a fluffy blanket a foot or more in depth. His horse, though long and rangy and powerful, was young and inexperienced. Because Dailey had purchased him from a neighbor and had ridden him but a few times, the big bay did not understand his master, nor had he developed any home ties for the headquarters of the 4X.

Late in the afternoon Dailey finished his observations and started home. He was in a hurry because his errand had delayed him. Unwilling to battle snowdrifts at night, he urged the bay from the fast walk, which was better adapted to deep snow, to a floundering trot.

Halfway home, Dailey showed some hesitation; he kept wondering if Missouri slept in the little glade, or if Chuck



There came a blast so strong that Missouri staggered and was nearly swept from his feet.

McArthur had not fully understood. Then a thought struck him: Supposing Chuck had forgotten to cover Missouri's grave with rocks, and coyotes should—

The bay felt a line tighten on his neck. They turned and their course headed straight for the valley.

The brilliance of the morning had promised a fair and warmer day. But while the sun shone brightly, the temperature had fallen. Hourly it grew colder, and Dailey was glad he had exchanged his broad felt hat for a less comfortable but more useful cap. He wished now he had worn his shoes and overshoes instead of boots.

IN taking a short-cut over a high divide, he caught a glimpse of the western sky, and his lips puckered in a soundless whistle. There, from north to south, from horizon to horizon, stretched a blue-gray curtain. One glance was enough. He knew that phenomenon of old. It meant wind sweeping in from Montana and Saskatchewan. With the prairies and bad-lands covered deep with loose snow, it meant a blizzard; and he held no delusions regarding a blizzard.

From the threat in the sky, he looked down at the chaotic land through which he must pass, and at the bluff far in the distance that marked the end of the bad-lands and the beginning of the prairie. He knew he was in a tight place.

Properly equipped, he might bury himself in the snow, but he had nothing more than his saddle-blanket. Warmly dressed, he might pit his strength against the duration of a blizzard, but his clothes were inadequate. There wasn't a house nearer than his own. To reach home, he must first win his way out of the bad-lands, a feat which taxed the resources of the average man in clear weather. Then would come the battle with the wind where it swept unbroken over the open prairie.

He judged the temperature around zero now, and it would be much colder when the wind struck. Cursing himself for carelessness did no good. He knew there was little chance of winning through, and yet there was nothing to do but try. Urging the bay to a reckless lope, reckless because of snow and ice and precipitous slopes, he began the battle for his life.

Already there was a noticeable change in the light. Streamers of mist, like leaping color bands from the Northern Lights, reached up out of the west and raced across the sun. The yellow light of afternoon changed to a sickly green. Under its alternately increasing and waning brightness, shadows of hills and peaks lengthened and deepened and paled. Clumps of gnarled sage, mushrooms of clay and rock, petrified trees, advanced and retreated, grew and shrank, before his eyes. It was unreal, ghostly, unearthly. The bad-lands seemed to have sprung into some hellish form of life.

Unused to the bad-lands and sensing the approaching storm, the bay became confused. He weaved badly, changing his course so often that Dailey dared not loosen the reins to pound his chilled fingers against the pommel of the saddle.

Uphill where the slopes were covered with ice, Dailey struggled on foot, pulling the reluctant horse in his wake. Going down, they scrambled and slid, to end in a burst of flying snow. Along the cañons they struggled, between boulders and petrified stumps, into washouts and out again. . . . They had covered two-thirds of the distance to the edge of the bad-lands, when suddenly the shadows deepened, the green turned to blue, and

a chill struck down out of the sky as the cloud in the west rolled up abruptly and crossed the sun.

Bill Dailey had not ridden the prairies forty years without knowing the power of a blizzard. Coming once in many years, they left indelible imprints on the memories of the cattle-men. He had no fear of cold in itself, and no fear of snow-storms; but this awful thing sweeping out of the northwest, rushing with hurricane speed across the face of the land, carried fear even to a heart as stanch as his. Urging his horse on desperately, he pushed ahead, only to see snow-devils playing above the buttes, whirlwinds lifting the snow in twisting spirals, carrying it above the cañons and dropping it in misty showers down into the still air. Drifts on the higher crests were beginning to smoke, while overhead, long arrow-shaped clouds were darting across the sky. Then he heard the dreaded sound—between a moan and a roar—the warning voice of the blizzard.

He was almost out of the bad-lands. Ahead the cañon made a sharp turn and widened into the valley where he would pass Missouri's grave. He smiled a trifle grimly. That morning he had steeled himself to send the gallant horse to his death. Now it was the turn of the master to follow the same trail. He thought of the open place there under the trees. He remembered it in summer, when wild flax turned the northern slopes to waves of blue, and the southern slopes were crimson with tiger lilies. He was thinking how butterflies danced above the thorn-apples, and bees droned lazily from flower to flower. Then a wall of rushing icy air struck him in the face. His horse staggered, stopped and tried to turn. The roar rose to a shriek, and the air was filled with flying snow. The crest of the blizzard rolled above his head.

THROUGH the power of quirt and spur he forced the head of the bay into the wind, but the horse was frightened and confused. They were moving slowly forward again, but Dailey knew it was hopeless, knew he was beaten.

Fighting on, simply because it was better to fight than to die without an effort, he came to the comparatively open valley. Here the wind had a better sweep, and their progress fell almost to zero. Recognizing defeat, Dailey was about to abandon the horse and struggle on until exhaustion and cold ended the battle, when an eddy in the wind cleared a tiny space ahead, and a shuddering cry escaped the lips of the man. There, on a little rise directly in their path, head up, ears forward, mane and tail and a broken halter-rope streaming in the wind, stood a great white horse.

The vision lasted only a moment. A shift in the wind blotted it out. But the bay would not go on. Frightened by the storm and the scent of the strange animal ahead, he refused to move. . . . Dailey had reached the end of the trail.

SUDDENLY out of the storm something brushed against him. Deafened by the roar of the wind, he heard nothing, but he clearly felt the trembling of a horse's nicker. This was no ghost: this was a thing of living flesh and blood. It was Missouri, and alive! Vaguely he realized that McArthur had hidden the horse somewhere instead of shooting him, and that Missouri had broken away to come home. But at this moment he gave that matter no thought. In a new upsurge of hope the man became a child. Tears rushed to his eyes, and his arm clutched tightly about the neck of the horse he had condemned to death.

In a moment he was out of the saddle. With the loss of nothing more than the blanket, whipped away by the wind, both saddle and bridle were transferred to Missouri. Climbing stiffly to the back of the old horse, Dailey patted him.

"I don't deserve it, boy," he muttered; "but if you'll take me home this once, I'll furnish the oats, and you can die when you get doggone good and ready!" But Missouri had already swung about and was heading into the wind.

Although Dailey could see nothing, he knew they were following the winding and rising course of the valley toward its head and the open prairie. That the horse was guided by some sense other than sight was also evident, for he stumbled often over boulders, and frequently floundered into deep snow. Then came a change. The wind no longer whipped from side to side but steadied and rapidly increased in force. That meant they were climbing above the rim of the bad-lands. There came a blast so strong that Missouri staggered and was nearly swept from his feet. A rush of snow so blinding that Dailey could not see the head of his horse, and a cold wind which seared like white-hot metal. The roar rose to a high shrill whine. They were out on the prairie, meeting the full force of the blizzard.

Now came the supreme test. If Missouri's strength were equal to the battle, if that wonderful sixth sense of the horse did not fail him—but Bill Dailey felt there was really no chance.

The force of the wind all but tore Missouri from the ground, and the man could not raise his head against it. He rode bent far over, clutching the pommel of the saddle with both hands, and it seemed as if he were floating through a world somehow dissociated from the earth. He could see neither horse nor ground.

A stinging pain shot through his foot. It was freezing, but he dared not dismount nor withdraw his foot from the stirrup. Grimly he clutched at the saddle. Now one of his hands was going, and he loosened his hold to pound it desperately against his leg. The pain in his foot dulled, and a feeling of numbness followed. The other foot was beginning to hurt, and the knee too. How long could he hold to the saddle?

He lost all sense of time. He knew when they were in motion; he knew when they were halted while the gallant horse fought to hold his ground against the blizzard; and once when he felt Missouri shaking his head, he reached forward and rubbed the ice from the horse's frozen eyelids.

Both feet were numb now, both hands as well. He was clinging by his knees and his elbows. He knew it had been hours since they started. Still the high shrill scream of the blizzard beat on and on; still the scorching wind tore at his body; still the fine snow filled the air to suffocation, and particles of ice from older crusts cut like tiny knives across his cheeks.

Missouri struck a deeper drift, and staggered. Dailey caught himself falling, and regained the saddle by a narrow margin. He couldn't go on. He was tired and very sleepy, and it seemed that nothing mattered. Most of all, he wanted to lie in the soft snow and rest. Sagging forward, he tried to clutch the neck of his horse, only to find his arms had lost all sense of feeling, and he was slipping to the ground. . . .

But even as he felt himself falling, the wind stilled and a rosy glow loomed ahead. He could still hear the roar of the storm, but it was muffled and far away. Instead of the cutting wind, there came light and warmth and the sound of voices. He felt strong arms lifting him gently to the ground, and he realized that Missouri had brought him—home.

The Corpse

By WILLIAM J. MAKIN

CONSTABLE HARRIS yawned and shivered. It was five o'clock of an autumn morning; and he had just emerged from his cottage on the outskirts of the village of Lunn. Mist flooded with a deep gray sea the channels of the Sussex Downs. The first rays of a watery sun were heralding another day of unseasonable chill. Harris shivered again.

A mug of cocoa, two biscuits and a sleepy morning kiss from his tucked-up wife were usually sufficient to start the village constable upon his morning beat. But they were hardly sufficient to help him sustain the shock that came so suddenly as he thudded across the village green.

Some one was sitting in the stocks. That well-worn wooden structure of the Seventeenth Century, of which Lunn and occasional tourists were so proud, was occupied. Police-constable Harris approached it. In the trailing wisps of mist it had the sinister shape of a guillotine. But definitely some one was sitting in the stocks. The policeman could discern the outline of a human figure.

Stolidly, Harris circled to face the stocks.

"What's all this—" he began in his official manner.

But the words faltered. This was no overnight drunk whom hilarious customers of the Blue Boar had pushed into the stocks to get sober. He was staring at a corpse.

The wax-like head, flayed with an ugly bruise, looked at him with sightless eyes. Waxy hands, once plump, dangled from the arm-holes. The policeman noticed vividly a gold signet ring encircling a finger. And legs, shod in patent leather and revealing silk socks, stuck out incongruously from the bottom of the stocks.

"Gorm'! It be the missing Mr. Dobson," ejaculated the policeman, lapsing into the neighborhood dialect.

The missing Dobson was dead. That was obvious. Distraught, and shud-

in the Stocks

One of the strangest murder mysteries that ever confronted Scotland Yard is solved by the gypsy detective Isaac Heron.

Illustrated by
John Richard
Flanagan

"Placing the body in the stocks gives us the only real clue," said Heron.

dering at the shock, Constable Harris gazed about him uneasily. He saw the closed, varnished door of the Blue Boar a few yards away. Without hesitation he began to run, ungainly, through the frosty grass.

As Harris thumped on the door, he glanced back over his shoulder. That squatting dead man in the stocks seemed to be watching him, a grin on the bruised face. The policeman turned again to the door and thumped even more vigorously.

"What be the matter?"

The surly-faced landlord, nightshirt tucked into his trousers, had suddenly materialized behind the open door.

"Murder!" gasped Harris.

The landlord's face gaped. He thrust forth his head to follow the pointing finger of the policeman. Blinking, he visualized the squatting figure in the stocks.

"What durned foolery—" he began.

"I tell you it's murder," said the policeman. "That be Dobson sitting there —dead'r'n a doornail."

"What! Mr. Julius Dobson? He who they say has been missing?"

The village constable nodded. "Got some whisky?"

"Happen I have."

As though in a dream, the landlord tapped a glass of liquor. Harris seized it and drained it at a gulp.

"But who put him there?" asked the landlord. "He weren't there last night, 'cause I took my dog past them stocks after midnight."

"That's what we've got to find out," said Harris, importantly. He was recovering himself. "I'll trouble you to keep an eye on that there body while I go for the doctor."

"Seems to me a doctor's no use," muttered the landlord, staring through the open door at that macabre vision on the village green.

"Regulations!" snapped Constable Harris, and with a jerk at his belt stepped into the mist-laden air.

Cautiously the landlord shuffled from behind the bar and peered fearfully through the open door. Without removing his gaze he called loudly:

"Aggie! . . . Aggie! Get thee up and come down and see something!"

INTO the West End "tent" of the wealthy gypsy Isaac Heron, strolled the man from Scotland Yard. Detective Inspector Graves was puzzled. He betrayed it in the manner with which he accepted a chair, declined a cigar and fumbled for his pipe and pouch.

Stretched at ease on the divan and clad in a heavy yellow silk dressing-gown, Isaac Heron was an exotic figure. His fine brown features, his strongly arched nose and jet black hair had a perfect background in this Jermyn Street flat. Bokharan rugs covered the floor. A flamboyant gypsy painting by Goya commanded the wall nearest to him. Gaudy hangings smothered doorways. It was a room of luxury without much furniture.

"What's the trouble, Graves?" asked the gypsy bluntly.

The detective inspector sighed.

"It's this Dobson murder. You've read about it in the newspapers, of course?"

"Yes," agreed the gypsy. "It's sensational enough for the newspapers to excite themselves about. It's not every day that a well-known missing financier is found dead in the Seventeenth Century stocks of a Sussex village."

"It almost suggested that the villagers themselves were responsible for the murder," nodded Graves, sucking noisily at his pipe. "You see, they had every reason to hate Julius Dobson in Lunn. Although he'd bought a house in that quiet part of Sussex as a sort of retreat from the City, the money-making itch of the man couldn't be stifled. He'd begun to buy land in the vicinity, and several farmers had received notice to quit. You can imagine the hatred they had for him."

"When did he disappear?"

"Last week."

"Were you notified?"

The Scotland Yard man nodded.

"Yes, two days afterward. His lawyer, Hedley Bennett, came round to Scotland Yard to make a statement. He said that two days previously Julius Dobson had called upon him in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Certain legal matters were discussed. Dobson had intended returning early to his country-house outside Lunn that afternoon, but the legal business caused him to miss his train. But it so happened that the lawyer, Hedley Bennett, was motoring to Eastbourne that afternoon to see his daughter who was at school there. He offered to give Dobson a lift in his car as far as Lunn. Dobson accepted."

"Hand me that road-map lying just behind you," said the gypsy lazily.

The Scotland Yard man threw it to the figure on the divan. Heron consulted it.

"The village of Lunn lies well away from the main roads," he pointed out.

"That is so," agreed Graves. "It's well away from a railway station too, as I discovered when I went down."

A thin brown hand waved away the grumble.

"Anyhow, the lawyer motored Dobson to this Sussex hamlet?"

"But not actually to the country-house," said Graves. "Within two miles of his place, Julius Dobson insisted upon stopping the car and walking the rest of the way. He pleaded the need of exercise. He was putting on weight."

"And so the lawyer and the financier parted?"

"Yes, in a quiet country lane near a crossroad. Hedley Bennett did not argue the point. As you will see by your map, he had already motored some distance from his direct route, and he was anxious to get on his way. He turned the car round, and with a final suggestion that Dobson should telephone him the next day on an urgent legal matter, the lawyer left him. That was the last occasion on which Julius Dobson was seen alive."

"Until he was discovered dead in the stocks at Lunn?"

"Exactly. Bennett proceeded to Eastbourne—I've checked his stay for the night there—and motored back to the City the following morning. He waited vainly all day for that telephone call from the financier. Toward evening, being anxious to have the business settled, he telephoned Mrs. Dobson at the country-house."

"Ah, so our financier was married."

THE detective ignored the interruption.

"Mrs. Dobson said she had not seen her husband since he went to the City the previous morning. He had said that he would be home that evening, but when he did not return she was not worried. Business affairs often kept Dobson in town for days and nights at a time. When she heard that the lawyer had dropped her husband within two miles of the house the previous evening, however, his non-appearance seemed strange."

"Were they happy?" asked the gypsy bluntly.

The detective smiled.

"Indifferently comfortable, I should say," was his reply. "But Dobson must have appreciated her. He left her very well provided for in his will."

"Then there was no question of financial worries?"

"Not the slightest. I've had a summary of the financial position from Hedley Bennett, and it shows that Dobson had acquired a considerable fortune. The lawyer, after talking with Mrs. Dobson, waited another twenty-four hours on the assumption that the financier had gone off on a business deal. Then as no further news had come through about Dobson, he came round himself to Scotland Yard and reported the disappearance."

"Did you take the matter up from the beginning?"

GRAVES shook his head.

"No, it was a case for the Missing Persons Department. They began the usual routine inquiries. I only came on the scene when the body was discovered in the stocks."

"How long had Dobson been dead?"

"Impossible to say exactly; the doctor thought about three days.

"And he had been murdered?"

"By a blow across the temple. In fact, sitting there in the stocks, it almost seemed that a mob had adopted the old custom of throwing things at the hated financier. His clothes were smeared with mud and bits of cabbage stalks. And something like a stone had hit him full on the temple and killed him."

"Yet he must have been murdered after parting from the lawyer?"

Graves nodded.

"Probably in his walk across the fields to his home. He was certainly alive that evening, for Bennett stopped his car at a garage in Lunn to take in petrol, and Dobson talked casually with the mechanic."

"And that is as far as you've got?"

The Scotland Yard man made the admission with a sigh.

"I've spent a couple of days interrogating people. The villagers are frankly hostile. They hated the man, and they're not sorry he's dead. The baffling thing is what induced the murderer or murderers to place the body in the stocks. It looks like a savage desire to pillory the dead man. That's what makes me suspect the Sussex yokels."

Isaac Heron let a rare smile cross his brown face.

"There I think you are wrong, Graves," he said. "Placing the body in the stocks gives us the only real clue to the motive of the murderer—or murderers."

"I don't see it."

"What is the greatest problem confronting a murderer?"

"Disposal of the body, I suppose."

"Exactly. Well, here we have the reverse. It is agreed that Julius Dobson, the financier, had been dead for several days when his body was found. Supposing, for reasons we can't understand, the murderer wished the body to be discovered. The financier was murdered in a lonely spot. In the usual casual search for him, the Sussex police fail to find the body, which was lying under a heap of cabbage stalks, or in a ditch. I think you said that the body in the stocks was smeared with mud and vegetable matter?"

"Go on!" said Graves, his eyes narrowing with interest.

"The murderer becomes alarmed at the failure of the police to find the body," droned the figure in the yellow dressing-gown. "He dare not write and tell the police where to find it. He therefore attempts a most unorthodox procedure for a murderer. He goes back to the scene of the crime, and in the middle of the night removes the body and places it in the most public spot he can think of—the stocks."

"By Jove, Heron! That's an idea," exclaimed the detective excitedly.

"But only an idea," smiled the gypsy. "Still, it's worth thinking about."

RISING, the detective puffed his pipe in silence for some time. Then he turned and faced the reclining figure on the divan.

"I don't suppose you would like to motor down to Sussex tomorrow?" he blurted out.

A soft laugh was the response.

"Maybe I will. I would like to have a look at those stocks, anyhow. Seventeenth Century, you said?"

"And the day after tomorrow," went on the detective, "the lawyer Hedley Bennett is to read the will before the family."

The yellow-gowned figure stretched himself.

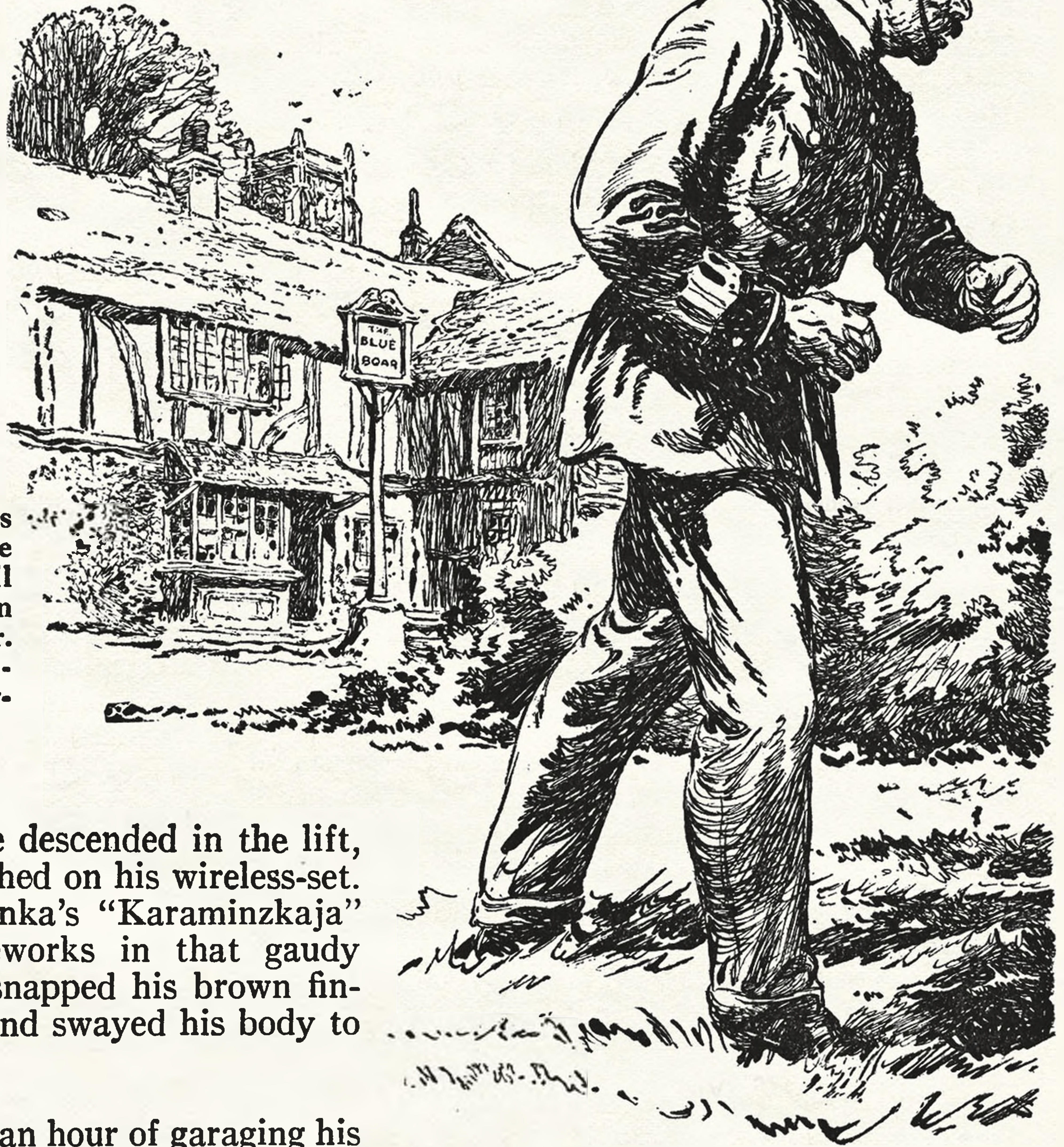
"That's a party which I really would like to attend," he said. "Can you arrange it, Graves?"

"Of course I can. I'll be there myself."

"Then that's all we need worry about," said Isaac Heron, lazily. "And now I'm going to switch on the radio and listen to a gypsy orchestra. Are you interested?"

"No, thanks," said the detective hastily, reaching for his hat. "I can't say that I appreciate that caterwauling."

"You've the soul of a fish," smiled the gypsy. "Get along home to your wife. And by the way, my best regards to Mrs. Graves."



Constable Harris circled to face the stocks. "What's all this—" he began in his official manner. But the words faltered; he was staring at a corpse!

As the detective descended in the lift, Isaac Heron switched on his wireless-set. The music of Glinka's "Karaminzkaja" sparkled like fireworks in that gaudy flat. The gypsy snapped his brown fingers delightedly, and swayed his body to the dance.

WITHIN half an hour of garaging his car in the little village of Lunn, Heron had learned a good deal. For some time he had stood, gazing intently at those wooden stocks which recently had provided the village with such a grim spectacle. Then he had wandered into the Blue Boar, and with his usual irresistible charm secured a room for the night.

"We don't usually put up folks," the landlord had apologized, "but I dare say my wife Aggie, can fix you."

Actually Aggie had done wonders. Content that a peaceful time was before him, Isaac Heron sat in the bar gossiping with the landlord. He was lazily listening to some heated views on the tithes question, when a woman suddenly materialized in the bar.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Bradley," nodded the landlord. "We don't often see you here."

"That's so," smiled the woman. "But a little matter of business brings me here. I want you to change me a check. I haven't time to go into the town to the bank."

"I'll do my best," said the landlord. "Is it much?"

"Ten pounds."

From his lounging position at the bar, the gypsy eyed the woman curiously. Middle-aged, with dark hair and a strong if sallow face, she could not be described as beautiful. And she was dressed in a careless, haphazard manner.

Yet despite these drawbacks, there was something undeniably attractive about her. It might have been a masculine individuality garbed in an old brown skirt. Or it might have been her eyes,

dark brown and deep-set, that flashed in his direction. A woman who made her presence felt, despite her commonplace clothes.

"Maybe I can manage ten pounds," said the landlord, fumbling in the till.

The woman produced a bag, opened it, and took out a slip of paper. She handed the check to the landlord, who glanced at it, nodded, and counted ten pound-notes into her hand. Carefully she checked the number, and snapped them into her bag.

"Thank you. You're a great help."

"Always willing to oblige, Mrs. Bradley," smiled the landlord. "I hope business is good?"

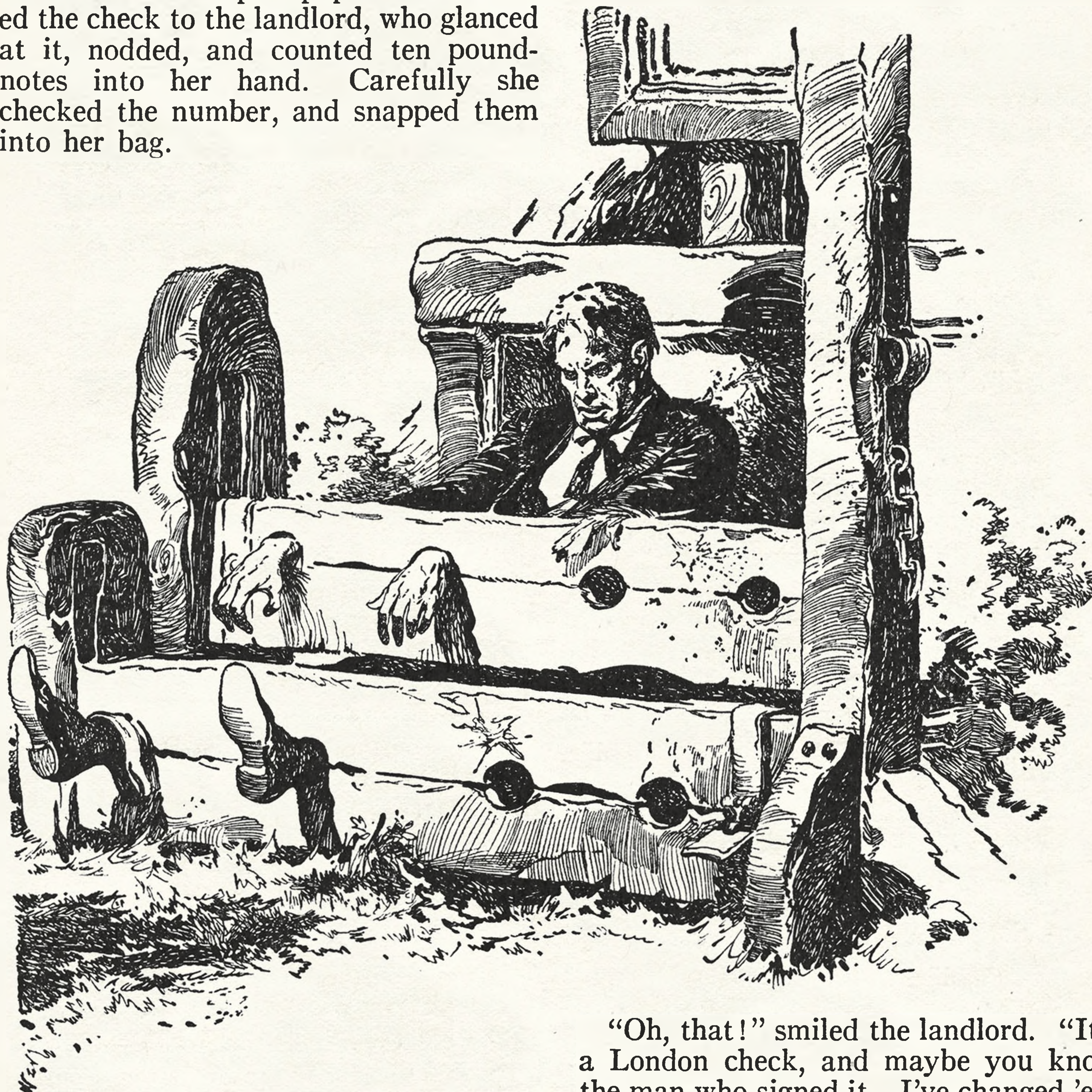
"Can't grumble," replied the woman. "Good afternoon."

A moment later she was outside. Isaac Heron saw her squeezing herself into a small car and roaring away in a thoroughly competent manner.

"SHE seems a very self-possessed woman," remarked the gypsy.

"Mrs. Bradley? Oh, I reckon she knows how to take care of herself. She has a tea-and-cake place for motorists about three miles along the road. Colored umbrellas in the garden, and all that sort of thing. Some motorists seem to like 'em."

"And yet," mused Isaac Heron, lying glibly, "her face seemed familiar to me. So also did the signature on that check, which I couldn't avoid seeing as she handed it over to you."



"Oh, that!" smiled the landlord. "It's a London check, and maybe you know the man who signed it. I've changed 'em more than once for her. No mistaking the handwriting."

And he flicked the check toward the gypsy.

Isaac Heron gave it one glance. Truly there was no mistaking the copybook signature. It was signed: *"Hedley Bennett."*

"Yes, I thought so," nodded the gypsy. "Hedley Bennett. A most remarkable man."

"And sound?"

"Very sound. . . . And now I think I'll take a walk about this pleasant countryside. It attracts me."

"Will you be back for tea, sir?"

"No, I think I will take tea at some wayside place."

An hour later he lounged into a wayside tea-house which displayed colored sunshades to the passing motorist.

NEXT morning at eleven o'clock Isaac Heron sat uncomfortably in the opulently furnished dining-room of the dead financier's country-house, outside Lunn. The widow, Mrs. Dobson, was a pretty but pathetic figure in black. Two wondering daughters of fourteen and sixteen sat close to their mother. A brother of the dead man, seedy and contemptuous of the whole proceedings, insisted upon standing. Detective Inspector Graves took a chair in the background with Isaac Heron.

"I don't think we need wait any longer, Bennett," sneered the seedy brother. "We're all present and ready to hear the reading of the will."

Hedley Bennett, dapper and reserved, adjusted his *pince-nez* and began with an apologetic smile.

"I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen, but all the beneficiaries in the will are not yet present. I'm waiting for—er—a lady whom I instructed to be present on this —er—sad occasion."

"A lady?"

The seedy brother seemed frankly offensive. Even Graves looked up, surprised.

"Yes," nodded the lawyer, unperturbedly. "She will be here any moment now."

At that instant the door opened, and the maid announced: "Mrs. Bradley."

"Mrs. Bradley!" The widow rose in astonishment.

"Who is Mrs. Bradley?" asked the brother.

The lawyer, with a strange smile, turned to the masculine-looking woman who had entered the room.

"Please be seated, Mrs. Bradley. The occasion is a sad one, but I hope I shall not take up too much of your time."

Indifferent to the curious and hostile stares, Mrs. Bradley seated herself, crossing her legs beneath the shapeless brown skirt. With a professional cough, the lawyer took a document from his brief-case and began to read.

"This is the last will and testament, 'I, Julius Dobson, being in sound health and mind—' "

His voice droned on. Seated in the shadows of the room, Isaac Heron regarded him:

Nearly bald, with teeth yellow from cigarette-smoking, his complexion parchment-like, he was a typical figure such as worked in the brief-strewn offices of Lincoln's Inn Fields. The voice apologetic, the hands soft and feminine. A singular contrast to that vital woman with the deep-set eyes unconcernedly swinging her leg as his voice proceeded with the details of the will.

" 'To my brother, Maxwell Dobson, who frankly does not deserve it, the sum of one hundred pounds.' "

"I don't want the damned money," spluttered the seedy brother.

" 'And to my wife, Norah Ethel Dobson, the whole of my property and possessions, to be managed at her discretion during her lifetime and subsequently to be divided equally between my two children, Edna and Dorothy, upon their mother's death.' "

"But what about Mrs. Bradley?" interrupted the impatient brother.

"I was coming to that lady," said the lawyer quietly. "There is a brief addendum to the will by which two insurance policies, valued at ten thousand pounds each, are made out in favor of Mrs. Theodora Bradley."

"Twenty thousand pounds for her!" expostulated the brother. "But who is she?"

"It is not for me to explain the relations which existed between this lady and the late Mr. Dobson," said the lawyer. "It was the wish of your brother that the lady should be provided for."

"I was his mistress," said the vibrant voice of the masculine woman in the chair. She spoke with no sense of shame. She seemed almost indifferent at the dramatic bombshell she was exploding.

The widow of the murdered man gazed at this strong, masculine face. Her own pretty features hardened.

"It is necessary for me to say that the two insurance policies in favor of Mrs. Bradley would have lapsed yesterday. Mr. Dobson had decided to discontinue them. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, Mrs. Bradley; but such were the instructions he gave me. It so happened, however, that Mr. Dobson was murdered and his death proved four days before the policies lapsed. There can be no question, therefore, that the twenty thousand pounds will be paid to you."

ISAAC HERON leaned toward the Scotland Yard man.

"Well, my dear Graves," he whispered, "do your duty!"

Graves stared blankly at him.

"What do you mean?"

"You want the murderer of Julius Dobson?"

"That's what I'm here for."

"Well, the murderer is in this room."

Graves' face betrayed amazement.

"Do you mean the woman?"

Isaac Heron shook his head.

"Don't be a fool. She's only the woman in the case. The murderer is that bald-headed lawyer Hedley Bennett."

"But what's your proof?"

"He's in love, deadly in love, with Mrs. Bradley. He murdered Dobson so that she could have that twenty thousand pounds, and he could share it with her. He was determined to marry her."

"Have you any proof?" asked the detective.

"Take a chance and arrest him," murmured the gypsy.

THE whispered conversation had not been heard by the excited family, who were discussing the will, with the seedy brother dominating. As self-possessed as ever, Mrs. Bradley was rising and carelessly walking to the door. Hedley Bennett was replacing the *pince-nez* in his case and preparing to leave.

It was then that Detective Inspector Graves took the greatest gamble of his career. Boldly he strode toward the lawyer and took him by the arm.

"Hedley Bennett," he said clearly, "I arrest you for the willful murder of Julius Dobson on the night of—"

The little parchment-faced lawyer gasped and slumped to the floor. . . .

"Yes, he confessed," nodded the Scotland Yard man, an hour later. "And believe me, I was more than grateful. I had no evidence—only your damned instinct! It appears that he stopped the car in a lonely lane two miles away from this house, and pretended something was wrong with the carburetor. Dobson got out to have a look at it. While he was bending over the engine, Bennett seized a stone. At that instant, Dobson looked up. But it was too late. The stone crashed into his temple and killed him.

"Bennett dragged the body into a ditch. He wanted a few hours' start, and then the corpse to be discovered. When the police failed to find the body, even though he had started the search himself by coming to Scotland Yard, he became panic-stricken. The insurance companies would demand a body. So he motored down at night, brought the body in his car, pushed it into the stocks, and went back to London."

"It was true, then, that Dobson had determined to let those two ten-thousand-pound policies lapse?" asked Isaac Heron.

The detective nodded.

"Yes, the financier had quarreled with Mrs. Bradley, and had determined to end the *liaison*. He had gone down to London to instruct Bennett to settle with the woman for some small sum. The lawyer had known of the affair all along. He had paid several sums on different occasions to the woman."

"Ah, that is how he met her and fell in love with her himself," said Isaac Heron. "You know, there is an extraordinary fascination for some men about plain women of that type."

"I would never have imagined it but for your uncanny instinct," said the detective.

Isaac Heron smiled.

"As a Scotland Yard man, you ought to know that crimes of passion don't always concern handsome men and beautiful girls. On the contrary—"

"What made you suspect Bennett?" asked the detective.

"Seeing a check signed by him payable to a woman," explained the gypsy. "Also the fact that only a lawyer would think of stocks as a public pillory. Then a quiet study of the woman herself over a cup of badly made tea. Finally, the expression on the lawyer's face as she entered the dining-room this morning."

"I never noticed any expression," protested Graves.

The gypsy sighed.

"I'm afraid you ignore the ordinary people, my dear Graves. And it is the ordinary-looking people who are invariably the most cunning of murderers."

And he bent down to sniff with appreciation a late rose in the garden.

AT the same time a dowdily dressed woman in a brown skirt, an inscrutable smile on her face, walked past.

"I wonder if she was really behind the murder, planned it and urged the lawyer on," murmured the detective, regarding her disappearing figure.

"That, my dear fellow, you will never know," said Isaac Heron. "She is just the woman in the case."

Another of Isaac Heron's exploits in detection will be described by Mr. Makin in our next issue.

TARZAN and

The world's premier fiction adventurer strives to rescue his jungle protégés from a sinister race said to achieve eternal youth by means of human sacrifice.

Illustrated by Frank Hoban

If Tarzan had guessed the message that fluttered from the end of the cleft stick he would not have laughed and let Nkima go.

The Story Thus Far:

THERE came to Tarzan in the heart of the African jungle a group of his native friends the Waziri, begging help: their young girls were mysteriously disappearing, and they suspected that the unfortunates were being carried away by the Kavuru, a strange race of men said to be white, who lived in the farther fastnesses of the jungle. Buira, daughter of Muviro the chief, had been the latest victim. And Tarzan took up the trail. . . .

To Jane, Lady Greystoke—Tarzan's beautiful young wife—in London, came a wealthy woman friend who had married a titled foreigner much younger than herself, Prince Sborov. The new Princess Sborov brought a curious story: their pilot Neal Brown, who had adventured in many remote places, had told them of a weird white race in the African Hinterland who possessed the secret of eternal youth. The aging Princess was determined to fly thither and learn this precious secret; Lady Greystoke decided to accompany them, the rest of the party to comprise the Prince and Princess, Tibbs the valet, Annette the maid, and the pilot Brown. Buffeted by a storm over a trackless African forest, however, their plane ran out of gas; luckily, they landed unharmed in the treetops.

Copyright, 1935, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

the Immortal Men

By Edgar Rice Burroughs

Tarzan also ran into dire peril; for inquiring of a Bukena chief concerning the direction in which the Kavuru lived, he was himself suspected of being of that dread race; he was overpowered, bound hand and foot, and imprisoned to await execution. But under cover of night, he was set free by the witch-doctor Gupingu, who hoped thereby to gain favor with the Kavuru for the protection of himself and family. By shrewd questioning Tarzan elicited information as to the location of the Kavuru country, and set forth thence. Two days later he chanced to scent a lion stalking a man evidently unaware of danger; Tarzan, leaping from the trees overhead, slew the beast. The white savage, it developed, was one of the almost legendary Kavuru; his name was Ydeni. Though grateful, Ydeni refused to lead Tarzan to the Kavuru stronghold, hinting that it would mean the ape-man's death. They separated—but secretly Tarzan circled about, following the other, who went directly to the village of the Bukena. Here, uttering a weird crooning call, Ydeni hypnotized a young girl and induced her to follow him. That night, Tarzan rescued the girl while Ydeni slept; and calming her terror, started back with her toward Bukena.

Meanwhile the Sborov party had, with the exception of Jane and the pilot Brown, found their situation terrifying indeed. An attempt to shoot an attacking lion disclosed that there was no ammunition. Jane shaped a crude bow and arrows and a spear from branches, with a hand-ax and Brown's big clasp-knife; and succeeded in felling a bush-buck for their food. That evening a quarrel arose between the selfish and arrogant Alexis and his wealthy wife, and she openly declared her intention of changing her will to cut Alexis off without a cent. At midnight, when Tibbs awoke Brown, he had been on guard but a few minutes when the maid Annette joined him, declaring she could not sleep in the flimsy boma. She had, she said, heard strange subdued noises.

When morning came, the horrifying discovery was made that the Princess Sborov had been killed during the night—her skull split open. Suspicion rested upon Alexis, for the partly burned sleeve of the coat he had been wearing was espied in the embers of the campfire—though the blood-stained hand-ax was found concealed in Brown's bed of leaves. After burying the unfortunate Princess, the party—taking only the barest essentials—started through the jungle. Jane left a note telling of their plight pinned to the boma wall.

Farther to the east, Muviro with ten of his Waziri neared the Bukena village hoping there to meet Tarzan. They were received with false cordiality by the native chief, and under guise of refreshments were given drugged beer. Unconscious, they were bound and imprisoned to await execution on the night of the next full moon.

Tarzan, after returning to her home the Bukena maid rescued from Ydeni, came upon his own pet monkey Nkima—and learning from him of the capture of the Waziri, freed them. The ape-man's apparent invincibility won him the awed respect of the Bukena chieftain Udalo; and when a Waziri warrior later arrived with a message Jane had sent her husband before the airplane take-off, the runner was treated with grudging hospitality and sent unharmed upon his way. While Tarzan considered the message Nkima bounded off into the forest, gleefully waving an envelope in the cleft stick.

The castaways from the plane meanwhile plodded wearily toward what they hoped was civilization. Ill-feeling toward Alexis ran high, though Jane tried to maintain an impartial attitude. Their scanty food added to their discomfort, though fortunately they could not foresee the very real dangers and terrors that lay ahead of them on the trail. *(The story continues in detail:)*

IT was with feelings of relief that the five left the scene of the tragedy that had cast a pall of gloom and horror over them; and while the future held out

little of encouragement to them, the very fact of being on the move raised their spirits to some extent.

Brown had insisted upon marching at the head of the little column; and Jane had acceded to his request. Annette stayed as close to Brown as she could. Tibbs plodded on behind Annette. Jane brought up the rear, and Alexis walked with her.

EITHER because he tired more quickly than the others, or because he wanted to get out of earshot of those whom he considered servants and beneath him, Alexis lagged.

"We shouldn't fall so far behind the others," said Jane. "We must not become separated. You will have to walk a bit faster, Alexis." Her tone was just a little impatient.

"I thought it would be nice for us to be alone together, Jane," he said. "You see, you and I have nothing in common with those others; and it must be as much of a relief to you as to me to have the companionship of one of your own class."

"You will have to get over that," said Jane. "There are no class distinctions here."

"I am afraid you do not like me, dear lady."

"You have been very annoying at times, Alexis."

"I have been terribly upset," he replied; "and most of all, by you."

"By me? What have I done?"

"It is not that you have done anything; it is just that you are you. Can't you understand, Jane? Haven't you noticed?"

"Noticed what?"

"From the first, you attracted me strangely. There seemed to be no hope, though, and I was desperately blue; but now I am free, Jane." He seized her hand. "Oh, Jane, can't you like me a little?"

She jerked her hand from his. "You fool!" she exclaimed.

His eyes narrowed menacingly. "You are going to regret that," he said. "I tell you I'm in love with you, madly in love. I'm desperate, and I won't stand idly by and see an illiterate airplane pilot get the woman I want."

"Just what do you mean by that?" The girl's eyes and voice were level and cold.

"It's too obvious to need explanation. Anyone can see that you are in love with Brown."

"Alexis, did you ever hear a man referred to as an unspeakable cad? I have; but until this minute I never knew what it meant. I never could have conceived the sort of man it describes until now. Move on now. Get away from me. Get up there with Tibbs."

Instantly his manner changed. "Oh, Jane," he pleaded, "please don't send me away. I don't know why I ever said that; I was just mad with jealousy. Can't you understand that it is because I love you so? Can't you understand and forgive me?"

She made no reply, but started ahead, increasing her gait to overtake the others.

"Wait!" he exclaimed huskily. "You've got to listen to me. I'm not going to give you up." He seized her by the arm and pulled her toward him, endeavoring to throw his arms about her. Then she struck him; and jumping back, leveled her spear to hold him off.

For a moment they stood there facing one another in silence; and in that moment she saw something in his eyes, in the expression on his face, that for the first time made her fear him. She knew then how really dangerous he was, and it was no longer difficult for her to believe that he had murdered his wife.

"Go up there now as I told you," she said, "or I will kill you. There is no law here but the law of the jungle."

Perhaps he too read something in her narrowed lids and icy tone, for he did as she bade, and went on ahead in silence.

BY mid-afternoon Tibbs and Alexis and Annette were almost exhausted; and when the party reached a favorable spot, Jane called a halt.

The trail by which they had come had followed the meanderings of the stream upon which they had been camped, and thus the water problem had been solved for them.

"What now, miss?" demanded Brown. "Hadn't we better rustle some grub?"

"Yes," she replied. "I'll go out and see what I can bring in."

"I'm going to have a look-see myself," said Brown. "We can go in different directions, and maybe one of us will find something."

"All right. You go on up the trail, and I'll take to the trees and follow the river. I may run across a drinking-hole." She turned to the others. "And while we are gone, the rest of you can be building a boma and gathering firewood. —All right, Brown, let's get going."

The three who remained in camp

"Go up there now as I told you," she said, "or I will kill you."

seemed physically unable to drag themselves to their feet, but Alexis was resourceful.

"Tibbs," he said, "go out and gather material for the boma and get some firewood."

Motivated by years of servile obedience, the Englishman rose painfully to his feet and started away.

"I'll help you, Tibbs," said Annette, and started to rise.

Alexis laid a restraining hand on her arm. "Wait," he said, "I want to talk with you."

"But we must help Tibbs."

"He can do very nicely by himself. You wait here."

"What do you want, Prince Sborov? I've got to go and help Tibbs."

"Listen, my dear," said Alexis: "how would you like to have a hundred thousand francs?"

The girl shrugged. "Who would not like to have a hundred thousand francs?" she demanded.

"Very well; you can earn them—and very easily."

"And how?" Her tone was skeptical.

"You have something that I wish. I will pay you one hundred thousand francs for it; you know what it is."

"You mean the burned sleeve of your coat, Prince Alexis?"

"You won't let them frame me, Annette? You won't let them send me to the guillotine for something I didn't do, when everybody in this party hates me! They will all lie about me, and when they bring that piece of burned cloth into court, I shall be convicted in spite of my innocence. Give it to me. No one need ever know—you can say that you lost it. And as soon as we get back to civilization, I will give you one hundred thousand francs."

The girl shook her head. "No, I could not do that. It may be all that will save Mr. Brown."

"You are wasting your time on Brown," he said. "You think he loves you, but he doesn't."

The girl flushed. "I have not said that he loves me."

"Well, you think so; and he's trying to make you think so. But if you knew what I know, you wouldn't be so anxious to save his worthless head."

"I do not know what you mean. I do not care to talk about it any more. I will not give you the piece of cloth."

"Well, I'll tell you what I mean, you little fool!" snapped Alexis. "Brown's in love with Lady Greystoke, and she's in love with him. What do you suppose they've gone off into the jungle for? Why, to meet each other, of course."

"I do not believe it," said Annette. "I will not listen any more."

She started to rise; and as she did so, he leaped to his feet and seized her.

"Give me that piece of cloth," he demanded in a hoarse whisper. The fingers of one hand encircled her throat. "Give it to me, or I'll kill you, you little fool."

Quick as a cat, and with surprising strength, she tore herself away from him and screamed.

"Help, Tibbs! *Help!*" she cried.

THE Englishman had not gone far, and he came running back.

"If you tell on me," said Sborov in a low whisper, "I'll kill you. I'll kill you as I killed her."

Annette looked into his eyes, as Jane had, and was frightened.

"What's wrong, sir?" demanded Tibbs.

"It wasn't anything," said Alexis with a laugh. "Annette thought she saw a snake."

"I did see a snake," she said.

"Well, it's all right now, Tibbs," said Alexis. "You can go back to your work."

"I shall need a little help, sir," said the Englishman. "I cannot do it all alone."

"I'll come with you, Tibbs," said Annette.

Alexis followed them. He walked very close to Annette and whispered: "Remember—if you tell them—"

"I don't fawncy having a snake around camp," said Tibbs. "The nawsty beggars! I don't like 'em."

"Neither do I," said Annette; "but I won't be afraid when Mr. Brown comes back. If a snake tries to harm me then, he will kill it." She did not look at Tibbs as she spoke, though she seemed to be addressing him, but at Alexis.

"I think I would not tell the others about the snake," said Sborov; "it might frighten Lady Greystoke."

"My word, sir, I don't believe she's afraid of anything, sir."

"Nevertheless, see that you don't mention it," cautioned Alexis.

"Why, here's Mr. Brown now," cried Tibbs. "He's running. Something must have happened."

"What's wrong?" demanded Brown. "I heard some one scream. Was that you, Annette?"

"Annette saw a snake," said Alexis. "Did you not, Annette?"

"Where is it?" asked Brown. "Did you kill it?"

"No," replied the girl; "I had nothing to kill it with. But if it frightens me again, you will kill it."

"You bet your life I will, girlie. Where is it now?"

"It got away," said Alexis.

Annette looked straight into his eyes. "Next time it will not get away," she said.

Brown's pockets were bulging with fruit, which he took out and laid on the ground.

"I hope this aint poison," he said. "I had a heck of a time getting it. Lady Greystoke will know whether or not we can eat it."

"Here she comes now," said Annette.

"What luck, Jane?" asked Alexis.

"Not so good," she replied; "just a little fruit. I didn't see any game." Her eyes fell on the fruit that Brown had gathered. "Oh, you found the same thing," she said. "Well, it won't taste very good; but it's safe, and it's food. I thought I heard a scream a few moments ago. Did any of you hear it?"

"It was Annette," said Brown; "she seen a snake."

Jane laughed. "Oh, before Annette gets out of Africa, she'll be used to snakes."

"Not this one," said the girl.

A puzzled expression crossed Brown's face. He started to speak, and then evidently thinking better of it, remained silent.

Not much had been accomplished toward the building of the boma and collecting the firewood; so Jane and Brown lent a hand in the work, which moved much more rapidly with the aid of the hand-ax.

It was dark before the work was completed, and then they felt that they could take their ease around the fire.

Jane showed them how they might make the fruit that constituted their sole food-supply more palatable by roasting it on the end of a stick. So hungry were they that even Sborov ate without complaining. . . . And as they ate, a pair of eyes watched them from behind the concealing foliage of a tree nearby.

BROWN had insisted that the men assume the duty of guarding camp; and though Jane and Annette insisted upon doing their share, the pilot was firm in respect to this matter, and would not be moved.

"Two hours on and four off won't hurt nobody," he insisted; "and you girls are going to need all the sleep you can get, if you're going to keep up with us."

The statement made Jane smile, for she knew that she could endure more than any of them, not excepting Brown; but she appreciated the spirit that ani-

mated him; and knowing how jealous men are of their protective prerogative, she bowed to his will rather than offend him.

The three men matched coins to determine the order in which they should stand guard.

"I wish you'd let me be a sentry," said Annette.

"No, that aint no work for a girl," said Brown.

"Oh, please, Neal, just once," she begged. "Oh, please!"

"Nothing doing."

"Oh, just one hour. You are on from two to four, Neal. Wake me at four, and let me stand guard until five. Then I will wake the Prince. It will be almost morning, anyway."

"Let her do it, if she wants to," said Jane.

"All right," said Brown; "but it aint goin' to be the regular thing."

ALL were stretched out around the fire, apparently sleeping, when Tibbs woke Brown for his first tour of duty at eight o'clock.

Tibbs was so exhausted that he was asleep almost as soon as he lay down. Then Annette raised on one elbow and looked around. A moment later she came over and sat down beside Brown.

"You better get back to bed, kid," he said.

"I just wanted to talk with you for a minute, Neal," she said.

"What's on your mind, girlie?"

She was silent for a moment. "Oh, nothing in particular," she replied. "I like to be alone with you; that is all."

He put an arm about her and pressed her closer, and thus they sat in silence for a moment before Brown spoke again.

"You know, I've been thinking a lot about that snake business, Annette," he said. "It sounded sort of fishy to me. You sure you wasn't stringin' me?"

"Stringing? I don't know what *stringing* is."

"Well, skip it. I seen funny looks pass between you and the Grand Duke when you was handing me that line about snakes. On the level now, kiddo, give me the low-down."

"The low-down?"

"The facts—truth. What was it all about?"

"I am so afraid of him, Neal. Promise me that you won't tell him that I told you. I think of what he did to her. . . . He would do the same to me; he said so."

"What? He said he'd kill you?"

"If I told."

"If you told what?"

"That he had tried to take that piece of coat-sleeve away from me."

"That was when you screamed?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I'll get him for that," said Brown.

"Please don't say anything about it; please promise me," she begged. "Only—don't leave me alone with him again."

"All right, then," he promised; "but if he ever makes another break like that, I'll sure get him. You needn't be afraid of him."

"I am not afraid when you are with me. I do not know what I should do if it were not for you."

"You like me a little, kid?"

"I like you a great deal, Neal."

He pressed her closer to him. "I guess I like you a lot, too—more than I ever liked anyone else."

She nestled closer to him. "Tell me how much that is," she whispered.

"I'm not much good at saying things like that. I—I—well, you know what I mean."

"I want to hear you say it."

He cleared his throat. "Well—I love you, kid."

"And you don't love Lady Greystoke?"

"Eh? What!" he exclaimed. "What put that into your head?"

"He said so; he said that you loved her, and that she loved you."

"The dirty rat! Imagine that dame, the wife of an English lord, falling for me. That is to laugh."

"But you might—what you call it—fall for her."

"Not on your life, kid; not while I've got you."

SHE put her arms around his neck and drew him down toward her. "I love you, Neal," she murmured, before their lips met.

They felt that they had the night and the world to themselves; but that was because they were not aware of the silent watcher in the tree above them. They sat together until he awoke Sborov. . . .

The camp was sleeping soundly when Tibbs finished his tour of duty at two in the morning and called Brown again. At four Brown hesitated to awaken Annette; but he had given his word that she might stand guard for an hour; so he shook her gently.

"It's four o'clock, and all's well," he

Farther and farther away from camp they scampered happily.

whispered. Then he kissed her ear. "And now it's better."

She raised herself to an elbow, laughing. "Now you lie down and sleep," she said; "and I'll stand guard."

"I'll sit along with you for a while," he said.

"No, that was not in the bargain," she insisted. "I want to watch alone. I shall feel very important. Go on, and go to sleep."

Then quiet fell upon the camp—a quiet that was unbroken until Jane awoke after daylight. She sat up and looked about her. No one was on guard. Alexis, who should have been, was fast asleep.

"Come on, sleepy-heads," she cried; "it's time to get up."

Brown sat up sleepily and looked around. He saw Alexis just awakening.

"I thought the Grand Duke was on guard," said Brown. "Did you take his place?"

"There wasn't anyone on guard when I woke up," said Jane; and then she noticed. "Where is Annette?"

Brown sprang to his feet. "Annette!" he cried. There was no answer. Annette was gone.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Bit of Paper

WHEN morning broke, Nkima, had he been a man, would have said that he had not slept a wink all night; but that was because when he was awake he was so worried and frightened that the time had dragged interminably. During the night he regretted that he had not stayed with Tarzan, and determined to return to the camp the first thing in the morning; but when morning came, dispelling the gloom with brilliant sunshine, his little monkey mind forgot its good resolution, and concerned itself only with the moment and his new playmate.

Off they went, racing through the jungle, swinging from limb to limb, scampering high aloft, dropping again to lower levels.

Nkima was very happy. The sun was shining. It would always shine. He could not vision that another night of cold and dread was coming quickly.

Farther and farther toward the west they scampered, farther and farther away from camp; and in one paw Nkima clutched the little stick with the split end, topped by the soiled and crumpled envelope. Through all the playing and the love-making and the long night, little Nkima had clung to his sole treasure.

The little she who was Nkima's playmate was mischievous. She was also covetous. For long had she looked upon the stick and the envelope with envy; but once she had been cuffed for trying to take them, and so she was wary; yet the more she saw them, the more she wished for them.

Nkima was running along a branch holding the envelope on high. The little she was following in his wake, when she saw her chance—just ahead, a limb beneath which Nkima would have to pass. Quickly she sprang upward and raced ahead along this limb; and as Nkima passed beneath her, she reached down and seized the envelope. She was disappointed because she did not get the stick too; but even a part of this wonderful thing was better than nothing.

Having achieved her design, she scampered on ahead as fast as she could go.

Nkima witnessed the theft, and his heart was filled with righteous anger and indignation. He pursued her, but fear lent her a new speed.

On they raced; but the little she always seemed to have the advantage, for she steadily outdistanced Nkima, until she was lost to his sight; and then his indignation and sorrow at the loss of his treasure was submerged in a fear that he had lost the little she also.

But he had not. He came upon her perched innocently in a high-flung crotch, contentedly eating a piece of fruit. As Nkima approached her, he looked for the envelope. It was gone. He wanted to pound her, but he also wanted to hug her; so he compromised by hugging her.

He asked for his bit of paper. Of course, he had no name for it; but he made her understand. It seemed that she had thrown it away.

Nkima went back a little way to look for it, but he became interested in some fuzzy caterpillars that he passed on the way; and when he had eaten all that he could find, he had temporarily forgotten the paper.

A little river flowed beneath them. Rivers always intrigued Nkima. He liked to follow them; so he followed this one.

PRESENTLY he espied something that brought him to a sudden stop. In a small, natural clearing on the bank of the river was a flimsy man-made hut.

Nkima thought that there must be Gomangani around, and he was wary; but he was also very curious. He watched and listened. The place seemed deserted. Finally he mustered sufficient courage to drop to the ground and investigate.

Followed by the little she, he crept toward the entrance to the hut. Cautiously he peeked around a corner of the doorframe and peered within. There was no one there. Nkima entered. Luggage and clothing were strewn about the floor. He looked things over, seeking what he might appropriate. Then his eyes fell upon a piece of paper fastened to the wall with a sliver of wood. With a yelp of delight, Nkima leaped for it. Then he scampered out of the hut with his prize, raced across the clearing, and swarmed up to the topmost branches of a giant tree. Behind him came the little she.

By the time Nkima had succeeded in inserting the piece of paper in the notch at the end of the stick, his interest in the other things that he had seen in the hut had, monkey-like, waned.

Now he recalled the tall warrior who had brought the piece of paper in the end of the stick to Tarzan. Nkima decided that he would do likewise. He felt very important, and was only sorry that he did not have a white plume to wave above his head.

Holding to this single idea for an unusually long time, Nkima raced back in the direction of the camp where he had left Tarzan and the Waziri. It was late in the afternoon when he got there, and his little heart leaped into his throat when he discovered his friends were gone.

He was very sad and a little frightened, although it was not yet dark; but when his lady friend came and sat close beside him, he felt better. Unfortunately, this respite from despair was all too brief. The little band of monkeys to which his playmate belonged came trooping through the trees. They saw Nkima and the shameless young creature who had run away with him.

Jabbering, chattering, scolding, several of the males of the clan came swinging through the trees toward Nkima and his light-of-love. For a moment, just a fleeting moment, Nkima had visions of standing his ground and doing battle; but the leading male was an old fellow, very large and strong. His fangs were bared in a most disconcerting manner; and he voiced terrifying threats that made Nkima's heart quail, so that on second thought he determined to go elsewhere and go quickly; but his lady friend clung to him tightly, hampering his movements, for she too was frightened. Perhaps she did not want to lose Nkima, who, after all, had a way with him.

The terrifying old monkey was approaching rapidly, and then Nkima did a most ungallant thing: he struggled to free himself from the lady's embrace, and when she only clung more tightly, he tore at her arms to disengage himself, and then struck her in the face until she finally released him.

BY now Nkima was screaming in terror. The little she was screaming, and so were all the other monkeys. Bedlam reigned in the jungle; and to the accompaniment of this din of rage and terror, little Nkima broke away and fled; but through it all he had clung to his stick with its fluttering bit of paper; and now toward the north he bore it away like a banner, but scarcely triumphantly.

Some of the males pursued him for a short distance; but when terror im-

pelled little Nkima, only a bird on the wing might hope to overtake him; and so his pursuers soon gave up the chase.

For some time thereafter, Nkima did not reduce his speed; he continued to flee, screaming at the top of his voice. It was only after he had almost reached the point of exhaustion that he slowed down and looked back, listening. In his mind's eye was the picture of the snarling visage of the old male; but he was nowhere to be seen, nor was there any sound of pursuit; so little Nkima took heart, and his courage commenced to return. He even swaggered a little, as though he were returning triumphant from a well-earned victory. Had he had a wife, he would have gone home to her and bragged of his exploits.... There are men like that; so who may censure little Nkima, who was only a monkey?

Presently he found the trail of Tarzan and the Waziri. He knew that they had been traveling north, and so he came down and sniffed the earth in the game-trail that they had been following. Clear in his nostrils was the scent-spoor of his friends. This heartened him, and he hurried on again.

Little Nkima moved through the trees many times faster than a man on foot. His fear of the coming jungle night held him to his purpose, so that he did not stop along the way to chase butterflies and birds. That night he perched high among the smaller branches, where Sheeta the panther cannot go.

CHAPTER XIX

Another Disappears

THE discovery that Annette was missing from the camp momentarily stunned the remaining members of the ill-fated expedition.

"What could possibly have become of her?" demanded Jane. "I know that she wouldn't just have wandered off into the jungle. She was too much afraid of it."

Brown advanced slowly upon Sborov. There was murder in his heart, and it was reflected in his eyes. "You know where she is, you rat," he said. "Tell me what you've done with her."

Sborov fell back, instinctively raising his hands in defense. "I know nothing about her," he said; "I was asleep."

"You lie," said Brown, still advancing.

"Keep away!" cried Sborov. "Don't let him get me, Jane; he'll kill me."

"You're right I'm going to kill you," growled Brown. It was then that Sborov turned and ran.

Brown sprang forward. In a dozen steps he had overtaken the terrified man and seized him by the shoulder. Screaming, Sborov wheeled to fight with all the mad ferocity of a cornered rat fighting for its life. He pounded and scratched and bit, but the American bore him to the ground and closed his fingers upon his throat.

"Where is she?" demanded Brown.

"I don't know," gasped Sborov. "As God is my judge, I don't know."

"If you don't know, you might as well be killed anyway, for you aint no good for anything then, nohow."

Brown's fingers tightened upon the throat of the terrified Sborov, who still struggled furiously to free himself.

JANE, the instant she realized that Brown was really intent upon destroying Sborov, had seized her spear and run toward them.

"Stop it, Brown," she commanded. "Let the Prince up."

"Not till I've given him what's coming to him," cried the pilot. "And he's going to get it, even if I hang for it."

Jane placed the point of her spear beneath Brown's left shoulder-blade and pushed until he felt the sharp point against his flesh.

"Drop him, Brown," demanded Jane, "or I'll run this spear straight through your heart."

"What do you want to kill me for, miss?" asked Brown. "You need me."

"I don't want to kill you, Brown," she said. "But that fact won't do you any good unless you obey my command and remember that I am leader of this expedition. You are doing a foolish thing, Brown; you haven't any evidence to uphold your judgment. Remember, we haven't made the slightest investigation. We should do that first, to determine the direction in which Annette left camp, and whether she left alone or was accompanied by another. We can also tell by examining the spoor if she went willingly or was taken by force."

Slowly Brown's fingers relaxed upon the throat of the struggling, gasping Prince; then he released him, and rose slowly to his feet.

"I guess you're right, miss," he said; "you're always right; but poor little Annette—what she told me yesterday about that rat made me see red."

"What did she tell you?" asked Jane.

"He waylaid her yesterday and tried to take that piece of coat-sleeve away from her, and then he threatened to kill her if she told. It wasn't no snake that made her scream yesterday, miss—leastways not an honest-to-God respectable snake; it was him. She was terribly afraid of him, miss."

Alexis was gasping his breath back slowly. He was trembling from head to foot from terror.

"Is this true, Alexis?" demanded Jane.

"No," he gasped. "I just asked her for the coat-sleeve, so that I could see if it was really mine; and she commenced to scream just to get me in trouble."

"Well," said Jane, "we're not accomplishing anything this way. The rest of you stay where you are, while I look for some kind of tracks. If we all wander around looking for them, we'll obliterate any there may be."

She started to circle the camp slowly, examining the ground carefully. "Here they are," she said presently; "she walked out this way, and she went alone."

Jane walked slowly for a few yards, following the footprints of the missing girl; then she stopped. "They end here," she said, "right under this tree. There is no indication of a struggle, no sign that she was forced. As a matter of fact, she walked very slowly. There are no other footprints near hers."

She stood for a moment, looking first at the footprints that ended so mysteriously, and then up into the branches of the tree above.

Suddenly she sprang upward, seized a branch and drew herself up into the tree.

BROWN came running forward and halted beside her. "Have you found anything, miss?" he asked.

"There's only one explanation," she replied. "People do not vanish into thin air. Annette walked from the camp to the spot where her footprints ended beneath this tree; she did not return to the camp. There is only one place that she could have gone, and that is up in the tree."

"But she couldn't have jumped up there the way you did," protested Brown. "She just couldn't have done it."

"She didn't jump," said Jane. "Her tracks would have shown it, if she had jumped. She was lifted up."

"Lifted up! My God, miss, by what?" Brown's voice was trembling with emotion.

"It might have been a snake, miss, if you'll pardon me for suggesting it," said Tibbs. "It could have reached down and wound itself around her and pulled her up into the tree."

"She'd have screamed," said Brown; "we'd have heard her."

"Snakes charm their victims so that they are helpless," said Tibbs.

"That is all poppycock, Tibbs," said Jane impatiently. "I don't believe snakes do anything of the sort; and it wasn't a snake that got her, anyway. There has been a man up here. He has been in this tree for a long time—or if not a man, some sort of a man-like creature."

"How can you tell that?" demanded Brown.

"I can see where he squatted on this big branch," she replied. "The bark is scuffed a little, so he must have remained in the same position for a long time; and then in a line between where his eyes would have been and the camp, some small twigs have been cut away with a knife, giving a less obstructed view of the camp. Whatever it was, sat here for a long time watching us."

SBOROV and Tibbs had approached and were standing near by. "I told you I had nothing to do with it," said the former.

"I can't figure it out," said Brown; "I just can't figure it out. If she had been frightened, she would have screamed for help, and some of us would have heard her."

"I don't know," said Tibbs; "but I saw something like it once before, sir. His Grace had a castle on the east coast up in Lincoln. It was a most lonely place, overlooking the North Sea. We only went there once a year for about six weeks; but that was enough, and what happened there the last time was why I gave notice. I couldn't stand the place any longer. Her Grace, the Duchess, was murdered there one night; and that was 'arrowing enough; but what 'appened three days later was, to my way of thinking, even worse.

"Her Grace had had a maid she was very fond of; and three nights after the Duchess was murdered, the maid disappeared. She just vanished in thin air, as it were, sir. There was never a trace found of her from then until now, and the countryfolk round said that Her Grace had come back for her—that it had 'appened before in the castle of the Duke of Doningham. So I was thinking—"

"For Pete's sake, shut up!" cried Brown. "You'll have us all nuts."

"Horrible!" Alexis muttered.

"Well, whatever it was, it wasn't a ghost," said Jane. She dropped to the ground beside Brown and laid a hand on his arm. "I'm sorry, Brown," she said. "I know you were very fond of her. But I don't believe that there is anything we can do, except to try to reach some outpost of civilization and report the matter. Then a search will be made."

"It will be too late then," said Brown. "I reckon it's too late now. She was so little and delicate. She couldn't have stood very much. She probably is dead by this time." He stopped speaking and turned away. "Perhaps she's better off dead," he added.

IN silence the four ate of what little they had to eat, and again set out on their seemingly hopeless journey.

There were few attempts at conversation. The four seemed stunned by the series of calamities that had overtaken them. Suspicion, fear and distrust dogged their footsteps; and beside them stalked the shadow of the nameless menace that had snatched Annette away.

Brown suffered more than the others; so much so, that his mind was numb even to his hatred of Alexis. So completely did he ignore him, that it was as though the man did not exist.

Jane walked at the rear of the column. Her tread was firm and light; but Alexis, who was directly in front of her, was footsore and weary. He was, however, no worse off than Tibbs, for whose soft muscles this was torture.

"Jane," said Sborov, after they had walked a long way in silence, "haven't you any idea what it was took Annette away?"

Jane shook her head. "All I know is that I don't believe in ghosts, and that no animal could have done it; therefore it must have been a man. But what sort of man, I have no idea. Whatever it was must have been as agile as a monkey; and for that reason I cannot bring myself to believe that it was a member of any native tribe—they are, as a rule, far from being excellent climbers. And I never heard of one who traveled through the trees as this—this creature must have, to reach our camp and depart again with Annette without leaving any spoor on the ground."

"But you are willing to believe now, that it was not I?" queried Sborov.

"There is no reason to believe that you did it," replied Jane.

"Then why not give me the benefit of the doubt in the other matter? You must know that I couldn't have killed Kitty."

"What does it matter what I think?" asked Jane. "That is a matter for the court to decide."

"Your opinion matters a lot to me, Jane. You have no idea how much."

She looked at him shortly. "I have no desire to know."

The note of finality in her tone was lost on Sborov. "But I want you to know," he persisted. "I've never known anyone like you; I'm mad about you, Jane."

The girl shook her head impatiently. "That will be about enough of that, Alexis," she said. "Our situation is sufficiently difficult without your making it any worse."

"Does it make it any worse for you to know that some one is with you who loves you very much?" he demanded. "Oh, Jane," he went on, "I could make you very happy." Then he seized her arm and tried to draw her to him.

Once again she wrenched herself free; once again she struck him heavily in the face with her open palm. Instantly his expression changed. His face became contorted with rage.

"I'll get you for this, you little—"

"You'll do what?" demanded a man's voice angrily.

The two looked up. Brown was striding toward them, followed by Tibbs. The hand-ax swung handily at the pilot's side. Sborov cowered and backed away.

"I'm going to finish you now, once and for all," said Brown.

Jane stepped between the two men. "No, Brown," she said. "We can't take the law into our own hands."

"But you're not safe as long as he's alive; none of us is."

"I can take care of myself," replied Jane; "and if I can, I guess the rest of you can."

Brown hesitated, but finally he acquiesced. "Very well," he said. "I can wait." There seemed a world of meaning in those few words; nor was it lost on Sborov.

THAT night they camped again near the little river whose windings the trail followed.

The instant that they stopped, Sborov and Tibbs threw themselves upon the ground, thoroughly exhausted.

"If I may say so, milady," said the latter, "I fawncy I couldn't carry on for another half-hour if my life depended upon it. Tomorrow you had better go on without me; I'm afraid I can't keep up, and I'm only delaying the rest of you."

"You're doing splendidly, Tibbs," said Jane encouragingly. "I know it's hard on you now; but you'll be surprised how quickly your muscles will toughen as they get accustomed to the work, and then you'll be able to keep up with any of us."

"I 'ope so, milady; but the way I feel now, I don't believe I'll be able to go on."

"Don't worry, Tibbsy; we'll stick by you."

"It's mighty good of you, Mr. Brown, but—"

"But, nothing," said Brown. "We could get along with one less member in this outfit, but it aint you, Tibbsy." And as he spoke, he stared straight at Sborov.

"Now," said Jane. "I'm going out to look for meat. I want you men to promise me that you will not quarrel while I'm gone. We have already had too much bloodshed and disaster."

"Tibbsy don't never fight with no one," said Brown, "and I won't be here; so you won't have to worry."

"You won't be here?" demanded Jane. "Where are you going?"

"I'm going with you, miss."

"But you can't. I can't hunt with you along."

"Then you won't do no hunting," said Brown; "because I'm going with you. You may be boss, but there's one thing you aint going to do no more."

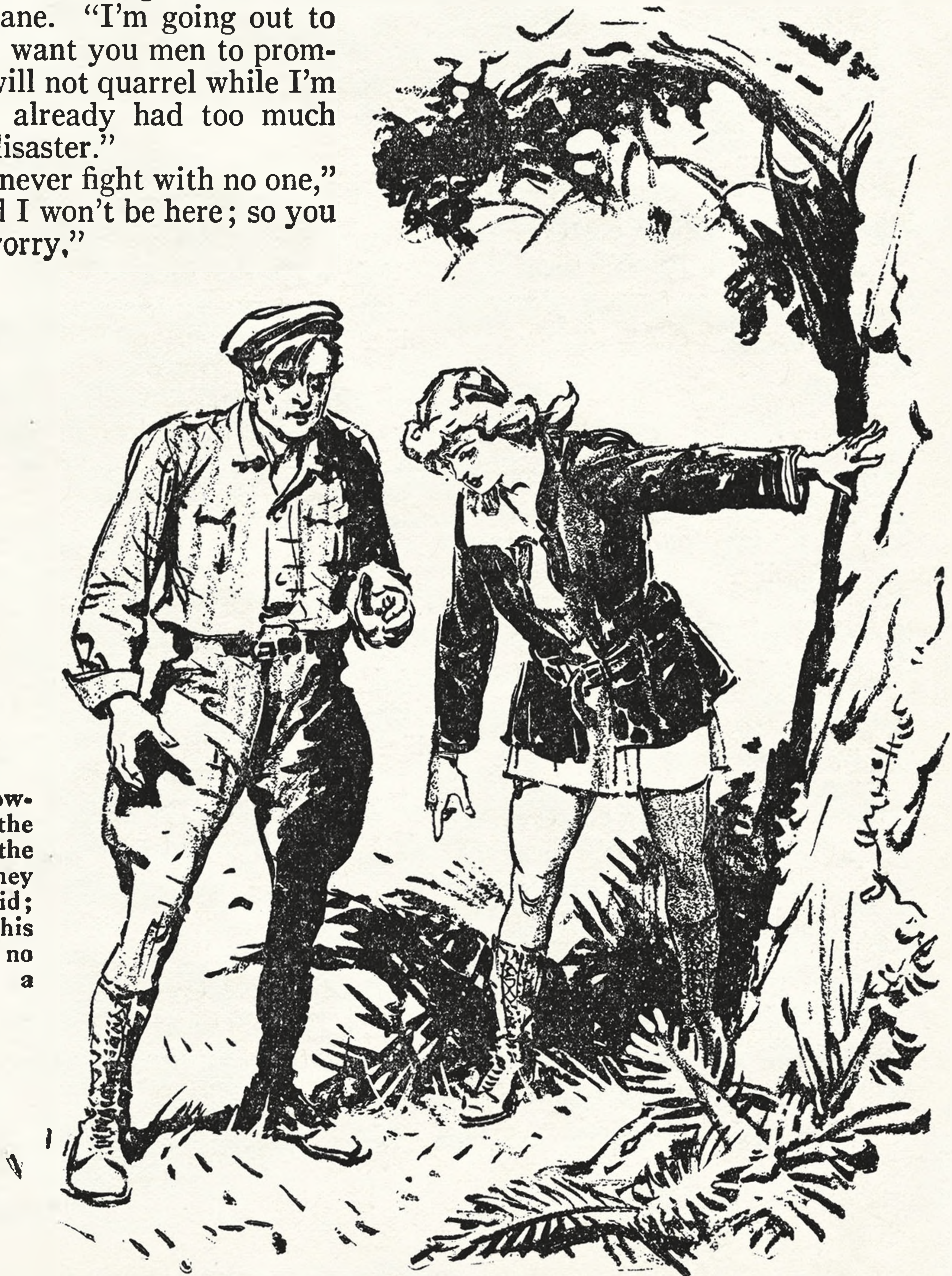
"What is that?" asked the girl.

"You aint going off alone by yourself, again, after what happened to Annette."

"If I may say so, milady, I think Mr. Brown is quite right. We can't take any chance of losing you, milady."

Jane shrugged. "Perhaps you're right," she said, "from your point of view; but really, I'm much better able to take care of myself in the jungle than any of the rest of you."

"That aint neither here nor there," said



Jane walked slowly, following the footprints of the missing girl. "They end here," she said; "right under this tree. There is no indication of a struggle."

Brown. "You just aint going into the jungle alone; and that's that."

"All right," said Jane with a laugh. "I suppose I'll have to give in. Come ahead then, Brown; we'll see what we can find."

Tibbs and Alexis watched them depart, and then the Englishman turned to the Prince. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but hadn't we better start building a boma and gathering firewood?"

"Yes, you had," said Alexis; "and you'd better hurry up about it, as it will soon be dark."

"You're not going to help me, sir?" demanded Tibbs.

"Certainly not, my man. I'm far too tired."

"And 'ow about me, sir? I'm tired too."

"You've no business to be tired. I'm not paying you to be tired. I'm paying you to work. Come, get busy; and don't be impudent. You seem to be forgetting yourself, Tibbs."

"If I may make so bold as to say so, Your 'Ighness, if you're not careful, I shall."

"What do you mean, you impertinent puppy?" demanded Alexis.

Tibbs sat down on the ground and leaned his back against the tree. "I mean, sir, that if you don't help and do your share, there won't be any boma, and there won't be any firewood when Lady Greystoke and Brown return to camp," he said, with no trace of his usual accent. "I dare say they'll both be very angry, especially Brown. If I were you, sir, I wouldn't antagonize him any more. I suspect that he does not like you; and out here in the jungle, sir, where there aint no laws nor no bobbies, he wouldn't need much more of an excuse to kill you."

For a minute or two Alexis sat in silent thought; then he rose painfully.

"Come on, my man," he said; "and I'll give you a hand with the boma."

IT was almost sunset when Jane and Brown returned with a small antelope, slices of which Tibbs was soon grilling before a cooking-fire.

There was little conversation as they ate their slender meal. It was an ill-assorted company, with little in common among them other than the grim disasters that had befallen them, and which made such depressing conversation that they were taboo as though by a tacit understanding. The girl and Brown each found the other the most congenial member of the party; and what little talk there was passed between these two; but very soon even they were silent; and presently all slept, except Tibbs, who had the first watch.

The long night wore on, to the accompaniment of savage jungle sounds, usually remote, but sometimes so close as to arouse the sleepers—stealthy sounds, weird sounds; fierce and savage sounds, sometimes whispering, sometimes thundering, then softly dying into nothingness, or reverberating through the jungle until the earth trembled.

EACH in his turn, the men stood guard. At four o'clock Tibbs completed his second tour and awoke Alexis, who was to follow him.

Shivering in the chill of early morning, Sborov piled more wood upon the fire. Then he stood with his back toward it gazing out into the night.

Just beyond the farthest reaches of the firelight rose a black, impenetrable wall of darkness—a mysterious world filled with nameless terrors; when a tongue of flame leaped higher in the air than its fellows, its light glanced momentarily from the bole of a tree or from a cluster of leaves giving the impression of movement out there beyond the rim of his little world.

There were noises, too, sounds that he could not interpret. His fear and his imagination put strange interpretations upon the things that he saw and heard. A moaning woman floated at the border line of reality. Sborov recalled the ghost of the murdered woman that came back for her maid, and cursed Tibbs. A beast screamed, and Sborov shuddered.

He turned away from the forest and sought to concentrate his mind upon other things. His eyes wandered over the figures of his sleeping comrades. They fell upon the hand-ax lying close beside Brown. Sborov breathed an imprecation, and tore his gaze away. It fell on Jane and rested there. How beautiful she was! Why did she spurn him? Usually he fascinated women, he knew. He could not understand why Jane repulsed him; and so he blamed Brown, whom he hated, assuring himself that the fellow had talked against him and embittered Jane's mind.

His eyes wandered back to Brown and the hand-ax. How he hated the man and feared him! The fellow would kill him; he had threatened it more than once.

Alexis felt that if the man were dead, his own life would be safer, and—there would be no one to stand between him and Jane.

He arose and walked nervously to and fro. Every once in a while he shot a glance at Brown and the ax.

He walked closer to Tibbs and listened. Yes, the fellow was already asleep, sound asleep. He must have been asleep almost at the instant he touched the ground. Jane was asleep too, and so was Brown. Sborov assured himself of both of these facts.

If Brown were only dead! The thought repeated itself monotonously, drumming on his tired brain. If Brown were only dead! Presently Alexis Sborov seemed galvanized by a sudden determination. He moved directly though stealthily toward the sleeping Brown. He paused beside him and knelt upon one knee. Listening intently, he remained there silent, motionless; then cautiously one hand crept out toward the ax.

Brown moved and turned in his sleep, and Sborov froze with terror; then the pilot resumed the regular breathing of slumber. Sborov reached out and seized the ax-handle. His mad eyes fixed upon the forehead of the sleeping man, he raised the weapon aloft to strike.

CHAPTER XX

Nkima Plays a Game

TARZAN and the Waziri moved on in search of the village of the Kavuru. It was yet early in the morning; the dawn mists still defied the efforts of a low-swinging sun to dispel them. The spirits of the searchers were low, for they were many long marches from their homeland; and with each passing day a sense of the futility of their quest had been increasingly impressed upon them, for not once since they started had they seen any sign or clue to suggest that they were on the right track. Only vague rumors based upon tribal legend had suggested the fate of Buira, the daughter of Muviro.

Several of the warriors felt that they were chasing a myth; and only great courage and loyalty kept them, uncomplaining, on the trail.

It was true that Tarzan had met Ydeni, the Kavuru, and that he had rescued Naika, the daughter of Gupingu, and heard her story; yet these things had occurred at such a remote distance from the land of the Waziri that even Muviro was commencing to doubt that it had been a Kavuru who had been responsible for the disappearance of Buira; for why should these strange men go so far afield when they could find young girls much closer to their mysterious village?

But upon this chill and misty morning, it was not the Waziri alone who were depressed and discouraged. Upon the trail behind them, a damp and bedraggled little monkey swung through the trees. In one hand he carried a stick in the end of which fluttered a bit of paper; that he still clung to it was a miracle, for Nkima was not particularly tenacious of purpose. Perhaps it had become a fixed idea, for the stick was often an encumbrance to him; yet it never occurred to him to discard it.

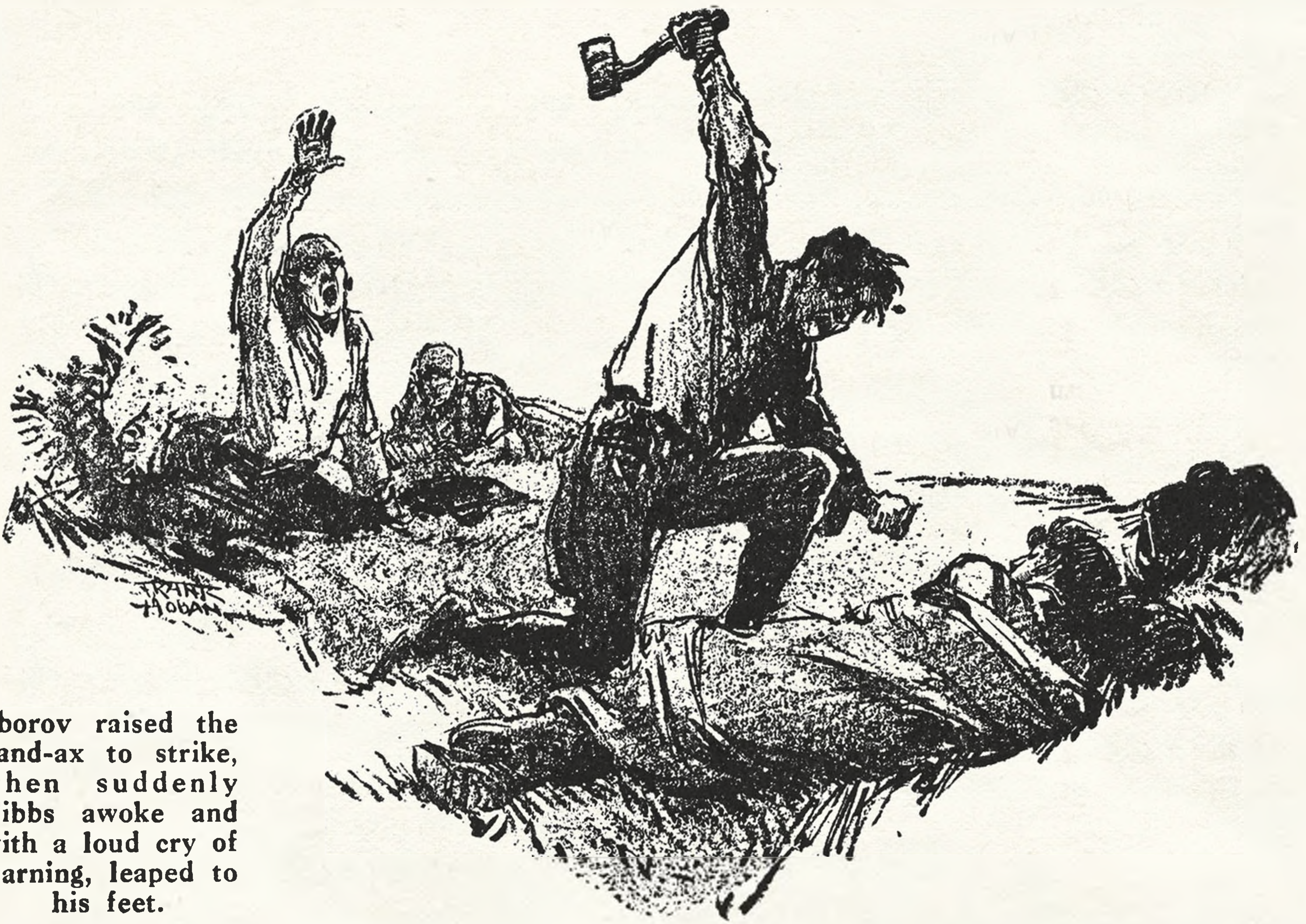
HOWEVER, there was another thought forming in his mind—it was the thought that he was very far from his own country, that he had lost Tarzan and could never find him again, and that he was very much afraid. It made him wish to turn around and start for home. He was almost upon the verge of turning about, when he recollected the grimacing visage of the disagreeable old male whom Nkima was certain thirsted for his life-blood somewhere upon the back trail; and then there were Sheeta, and Hista the snake, and the bad Gomangani. All these lay behind him; and until he encountered some of their like upon the trail he was following, his little mind so functioned that he could not anticipate their presence there—what little Nkima did not know did not bother him. And so he continued on his way into a land that seemed free from inhospitable monkeys and bloodthirsty beasts and men.

As the ascending sun warmed him, his spirits rose; and after he had discovered and robbed a bird's nest, sucking the eggs, he felt equal to any adventure.

Then came the crowning moment of happiness. In the trail ahead of him he saw a file of ten ebon warriors led by the giant white man who was his god. With a loud scream of joy that attracted the attention of the men below him, Nkima fairly flew through the trees to drop upon one of Tarzan's broad shoulders.

"Where has Nkima been?" asked the ape-man. "Tarzan thought that at last Sheeta had caught him."

"Little Nkima has been fighting with all the Manus in the forest," replied the monkey. "They tried to stop little Nkima from coming through their trees, but he scratched them and bit them and hit them with a stick; then he chased them into the country where Kudu the sun



Sborov raised the hand-ax to strike, when suddenly Tibbs awoke and with a loud cry of warning, leaped to his feet.

lies down at night. That is where little Nkima has been; that is what he has been doing; that is why he has been away from Tarzan."

The ape-man smiled. "Little Nkima is very brave," he said, as he stroked the little head nestled in the hollow of his neck.

Tarzan noticed that Nkima still carried the message-stick, and was surprised that his little friend should have been constant to one idea for so long a time; and then he noticed that the paper in the end of the stick was not the same as that which Nkima had taken away with him. The ape-man's curiosity was aroused.

"What is that in the end of your stick, Nkima?" he asked. "Where did you get it? It is not the thing that Tarzan gave you. Let me see it." And he reached for it.

Now, Nkima had forgotten just why he had clung to the stick. He had forgotten that he had been mimicking the Waziri warrior who had carried the message to Tarzan. Also, he was very happy and wanted to play; so when Tarzan tried to take the paper from the end of the stick, Nkima saw therein a challenge and an invitation to a new game; and so he leaped nimbly from Tarzan's shoulder and scampered away, waving the stick with its bit of fluttering paper above him.

The ape-man called to him to come back; but Nkima's thoughts were wholly centered upon play; and he only climbed the higher, grimacing and chattering in great good humor.

Perhaps if Tarzan had guessed the message that fluttered from the end of the cleft stick and all that it meant to him and one dear to him, he would not have laughed so lightly and let Nkima go his way unrebuked; but he did not know. Upon such trivial things may hinge the lives and happiness of men.

Seeing that Tarzan did not pursue him, nor even pay any further attention to him, Nkima soon lost interest in the game and started to descend again to his master. But once more fate intervened, this time in the form of a fledgling bird trying its wings for the first time in short uncertain flights.

Little Nkima espied it, and forthwith forgot all else in the excitement of the chase. When the bird rested upon a twig, he crept toward it; but when he would have seized it, it flew away, just eluding his grasp. Again and again was this repeated, and as long as the bird remained in sight, the excitement of the chase held Nkima enthralled.

Farther and farther north he followed the fledgling, bearing with him the message that would have meant so much to Tarzan of the Apes; but at length, in a flight much longer sustained than any it had previously attained, the bird disappeared; that was the last Nkima saw it.

For no good reason he had pursued it, for thus his little monkey mind func-

tioned. He had wasted his time, he had missed an opportunity to accomplish something worth while; and he had nothing to show for his pains. But then, we have seen men do likewise. We have all chased chimeras.

FOR some time Nkima continued on toward the north, impelled by the rapidly fading vestiges of the urge that had been driving him; but presently he noticed the paper in the end of the stick that he had been carrying mechanically because he had been carrying it for so long. This recalled Tarzan to his mind, and the fact that he was again alone in a strange land. He decided to return to the ape-man and the Waziri, but even as the determination was forming, he heard something to the north of him that aroused his curiosity, demanding investigation. It was the voice of a human being.

Now, by nature Nkima is curious; and in addition, Tarzan has trained him to investigate unusual occurrences; so it was not at all strange that he swung on through the trees in the direction of the voice that had attracted his attention.

From a lofty height he at last looked down upon the objects of his interest: two Tarmangani, a he and a she. And when Nkima saw the he-Tarmangani, he was glad that he was perching safely out of reach, for here was indeed a terrifying Tarmangani. Nkima had never before seen a white man like this one. He had seen the Gomangani, the black men, thus arrayed, but never a white man.

The fellow was large and powerful, with a fierce, evil face, the ferocity of which was surely not lessened by the straight piece of bone or ivory six or eight inches long that pierced the septum of his nose, nor by the feathers in his headdress, nor the paint of his face, the rings in his ears, and the necklace of human teeth lying against his massive chest.

Nkima noted all these things and more —the loin-cloth of gorilla skin, the armlets, wristlets and anklets, the fiber rope wound many times about the waist, the dagger and the spear.

This was indeed a Tarmangani to avoid. He filled little Nkima with fear. The she-Tarmangani, however, was of a far different mold—small, dainty, and with no indications of barbaric ornamentation. Had Nkima been accustomed to making intelligent deductions from his perceptions, he would have guessed immediately that the she was not of the same tribe, perhaps not of the same race as the man; but he could not have guessed that she was a French girl named Annette. No more could he know that the man was her captor, nor that he was a Kavuru.

However, his curiosity was once more aroused. For this reason and another, he followed them. The other reason presupposes imagination, a characteristic that little Nkima possessed, as must all creatures that know how to play; for play is often make-believe, and make-believe requires imagination of no mean order.

So now little Nkima pretended that he was stalking the two Tarmangani; he pretended that they were afraid of him, and that presently he would leap upon them and destroy them. It was great fun for Nkima, of whom almost nothing in the whole jungle was afraid—little Nkima who could destroy so few creatures in his teeming world, from whom nothing more important than a fledgling bird might seek to escape. It gave him a fleeting sense of superiority. There are men like that. Often one sees them strutting, clothed in a shred of tenuous and evanescent authority. . . .

Pursuing this exciting game, Nkima lost all sense of time, of which, at best, he had little conception. Presently night would come; and then he would know that time had passed, but while it was passing he gave it no thought.

THE afternoon waned. The quarry passed out of the forest into an open plain at the foot of a tall mountain. The distance from the forest to the mountain was not great. Nkima could see across the plain, cut with little ravines, cluttered with huge boulders, to a village that lay at the foot of a perpendicular cliff.

A little river wound down toward the forest from the village, as though it rose in the village itself and flowed out beneath the gates of the lofty palisade. These things Nkima saw. He also saw the two he had been stalking cross the plain toward the village, but he did not follow them. After all a game is a game; there is no use carrying one too far.

He saw the gates open to admit the couple. He saw them close behind them. Then for the first time he realized that night was falling; and suddenly he became very lonely and afraid.

He thought of Tarzan and the safety of that bronzed shoulder; then he turned and scampered through the trees back

into the south, clutching the forked stick tightly in his little fist, whimpering as he went.

CHAPTER XXI

Only Two Left

TIBBS awoke suddenly out of a sound sleep, and as he opened his eyes, he saw Sborov with upraised hatchet kneeling by Brown. With a loud warning cry, he leaped to his feet. Sborov hesitated an instant and looked quickly toward Tibbs. It was that momentary hesitation that saved Brown's life.

Tibbs' cry awakened him, and almost instinctively he recoiled and rolled to one side; perhaps it was a natural reaction to the note of warning and the terror in the voice of the Englishman.

Sborov struck, but the sharp blade missed Brown by a fraction of an inch and was buried in the earth where his head had lain but a brief instant before.

At Tibbs' cry, Jane leaped to her feet, fully awake on the instant. Sborov, on one knee, got to his feet before Brown, and clinging to the hatchet, fled into the jungle.

Brown started in pursuit, but Jane called him back. "Don't follow him," she said. "What's the use? We are well rid of him; he won't dare come back now. If you followed him, he might lie in wait for you and kill you. We can't spare any more; we are all too few now."

Brown turned back. "I hate to let him get away with anything like that. But I suppose you're right. He could hide and get me in that mess of trees and undergrowth before I knew what it was all about." He shook his head ruefully. "But he ought to get what's coming to him."

"He will—out there alone," prophesied Jane.

"H'i 'opes 'e does before h'ever H'i lays eyes on 'im again, the bounder, if you'll pardon me, milady!" said Tibbs excitedly.

"I think you're quite right, Tibbs; we all feel the same about the man. But now we are only three—though he never was much good to us."

"'Much good!'" exploded Brown. "Migawd, miss, he wasn't *no* good. He never done a thing except make trouble. If I don't never see the sight of him again, that will be twenty years too soon. . . . Prince!" There was a world of contempt and irony in the American's tones. "If they was all like him, I don't wonder they been kickin' 'em out."

Jane smiled. "There have been some pretty good ones, Brown; and there still are. Princes like Sborov are not really princes at all—it is often just a courtesy title, as meaningless as a colonelcy in Kentucky. They don't rate very high in their own countries."

Brown grinned. "They sure are the fair-haired boys in America, though. It was that title the poor old lady fell for, and look what it cost her! American women are fools, the way they go for titles."

Jane smiled good-naturedly. "I'm an American, you know, Brown."

The pilot flushed. "Heck, no, miss, I didn't know it. I'm sorry."

"You needn't be, because you're right about some American women—the climbers. It's not as bad as it used to be; but Americans still buy titles, and they don't often get very much for their money besides the titles. Oftentimes even the titles are as spurious as their owners.

"I recall reading a book written a number of years ago by a French count who had married a daughter of one of America's richest families. He openly ridiculed his wife's people, their poor taste, their love of money. Yet nothing that they were accused of could have been in such rotten taste as this book; nor was their love of money any greater than his by his own admission; for he bragged of having sold his title for their money. In the same breath he spoke of the honor of his house and his ancient lineage!

"I grow more and more to agree with my husband's appraisal of beasts and men—he prefers the beasts."

BROWN shook his head dubiously. "I aint got much use for men myself," he admitted; "leastwise some men; but if your husband was in our fix, I reckon he'd be doggone glad to get out of this jungle back where there were plenty of men and no beasts."

"You don't know my husband."

"Well, perhaps he'd rather be here than in good old Chi; but I wouldn't."

"Then we'd better start getting out," suggested Jane. "There's nothing to keep us here any longer."

"Quite right, milady, if you'll pardon my saying so," agreed Tibbs.

"I'm for hopping off right away," said Brown. "Perhaps—well, perhaps—"

"Perhaps what?" asked Jane.

"I was just thinking of Annette. I know there aint no chance of running across her, but I can't help hoping."

"We're all hoping, Brown. That's about all we can do, I'm afraid." Jane laid a sympathetic hand on the man's arm.

As the three set out once more upon the trail toward the east, a pair of eyes watched them from the foliage of a tree near by—sinister, unblinking eyes that appraised the two men casually but were most often centered upon Jane.

SETTING a pace that would not be too hard on Tibbs, Brown took the lead; he had learned that whatever pace he set, the girl was equal to it; perhaps even more. He wondered at her strength, her endurance, and nerve. She was not at all the sort of person that he had imagined a titled Englishwoman would be. He had always thought of women of her class as pampered helpless creatures. It seemed strange to him now that he should look up to one as a trusted, dependable leader; that is, it seemed strange when he gave the matter any thought; otherwise, it appeared perfectly natural. He had never followed a man in whom he had greater confidence, or for whom he had more respect, than this slender, beautiful lady of quality. . . .

Behind Brown came Tibbs. The night's rest had refreshed him. His muscles were already becoming inured to the hardships of the trail. He swung along this morning like a veteran.

"H'it's a grand day, milady," he remarked, "if you don't mind my saying so. H'i feels as 'ow things was goin' to be a little bit of all right, from now on."

"I hope so, Tibbs. Perhaps the worst is over. If we only knew just where we were, it would make things so much easier. We may be headed straight for some friendly village where we can get guides, or we may be headed into a wilderness. That is what troubles me most. If we only *knew!*"

"The Duke of Doningham used to say that what we don't know won't never harm us, milady."

"It won't do us any good, either," laughed Jane.

"But maybe 'e wasn't ever lost in Africa," suggested Tibbs. "H'i never 'ad no idea Africa was such a large place."

"It covers quite a lot of territory, Tibbs. It's no place to be lost."

"H'i'd 'ate to be lost in it all alone, milady—like 'Is 'Ighness. My word, milady, but 'e must be frightened back there all alone—nothin' only his thoughts to keep 'im company."

"And such terrible thoughts, Tibbs. I shudder to think what they must be; but I'm not worrying about him—it's poor little Annette."

Tibbs fell silent; he too was thinking of Annette.

Gliding silently through the trees behind them followed a tireless stalker. Seldom now were those cruel eyes allowed to wander from the slender figure of the girl swinging along behind the two men.

As the hours passed, Tibbs commenced to tire again. He lagged a little and dropped farther behind Brown. He no longer sought to converse with Jane. He was too tired to talk. The last couple of times that he had glanced back to see if the girl were coming, he had stumbled because his muscles were so weary and his feet seemed so heavy; so he gave it up, and set his mind wholly upon plodding steadily ahead.

He thought that Brown would never stop. What was the man made of, anyway—iron? His own legs and feet seemed mechanical things that must go on and on, forever. They no longer seemed a part of him. Yet he realized that he had done better today, that he had tired less quickly than on previous days. That was something; but—sitting down would be heaven. Would Brown never stop?

AT last Brown did stop. "This looks like as good a place as any to stop for the night," he said. "Tired, Tibbsy?"

The Englishman staggered up and threw himself to the ground. "Tired!" he echoed. "Mr. Brown, there aint no word in the whole bloomin' H'oxford H'inglish Dictionary that's as tired as H'i am."

Brown laughed. "Well, I don't feel so chipper myself," he admitted. "I'll bet the lady's the freshest one of us all. Say, where is she?"

Tibbs looked back along the trail. "She was right behind me the last time I looked. Doubtless she'll be along in a second."

"She shouldn't get so far behind," grumbled Brown. It was evident that he was becoming apprehensive. Then he called aloud: "Hi, there! Lady Greystoke!"

There was no answering call. The two men stared expectantly along the trail. Tibbs rose wearily to his feet. Brown called again. There was only silence. Brown looked at Tibbs. There was an expression on the American's face that

Tibbs had never seen there before. It was fear; but it was not fear for himself.

At a run Brown started along the back trail. Tibbs staggered after him. Occasionally Brown would stop and call the missing girl's name aloud, but there was never any answer. They kept on until darkness overtook them.

TIBBS was exhausted; he could go no farther. Brown, too, was almost at the limit of his powers. They threw themselves to the ground.

"It aint no use," said Brown wearily. "She's gone—just like Annette—and I think in the same way. Why didn't she let me kill him? Why didn't I kill him anyway? I knew I should of."

"You think it was the Prince?"

"Sure it was, the dirty— Oh, what's the use? It's all my fault for lettin' a woman tell me what to do. She's a grand woman; but women are all alike, when it comes to a job like that; they're too soft-hearted. I ought to of killed him when I first wanted to. We'd of had Lady Greystoke and Annette both with us now if I had."

"H'it aint your fault, Mr. Brown," said Tibbs soothingly. "You only done what any man would 'ave done. We h'all of us promised to h'obey Lady Greystoke, h'and she told you not to kill 'im. Though, if you'll pardon my saying so, H'i think the blighter ought to have been killed long ago."

The rumble of a lion's roar echoed through the darkening forest awakening the men to the dangers of the coming night. Brown groaned.

"If I only knew where they are! If I just knew they was alive. If he hasn't killed 'em; just think of 'em back there somewheres in the dark with only that—that pansy to look after 'em."

"You don't really think 'e'd kill Lady Greystoke, do you?" demanded Tibbs, horrified. It was quite one thing to kill a lady's maid, but another, an unthinkable thing, to kill a titled lady. Tibbs' viewpoint on such matters was largely a matter of heredity—his people had been serving-people as far back as any of them knew—and training, and habit of thought. His snobbishness was the snobbishness of the serving-class, ingrained and ineradicable.

"No, I don't think he'd kill her, unless she resisted him; and there aint no question about that. But he did have good reason to want to kill poor little Annette. If it was him that got her, she's dead all right. God, if I could only lay my hands on him! What say we back-track tomorrow and keep on huntin' 'til we find him? We may never find them, but it would be some satisfaction to find him. What do you say, Tibbsy? I'll let you help me kill him."

"H'i've never been one that believed in bloodshed, Mr. Brown; but H'i do say, h'and H'i'm not ashamed of it, that h'if 'e killed Lady Greystoke and Annette, H'i'd like nothing better than to do 'im in all by my bloomin' self; but Mr. Brown, H'i don't think we ought to turn back. H'i think we should carry on just like milady told us to, h'and get 'elp to come back 'ere h'and search for them—some one that knows the country."

"I suppose you're right, Tibbsy. We couldn't find the Empire State Building if it was wandering around in this man's jungle, let alone a couple of girls."

A lion roared again—nearer, this time.

"I reckon we'd better climb a tree, Tibbsy, and wait for daylight. It don't look like sleepin' on the ground was goin' to be very healthy."

"My father always said it was most un'ealthy. 'E got rheumatism something terrible sleeping on the ground in the Crimea."

"Then let's climb," said Brown. "I don't want to get rheumatism."

CHAPTER XXII

Stalked by Numa

NKIMA spent a night of terror. Sheeta, the leopard, prowled on the ground, climbed through the trees. Nkima clung to the loftiest branch that would support his weight and shivered from cold and terror throughout the long night. But at last day dawned, and with the first lessening of the terrifying darkness he swung off through the trees in search of Tarzan and the Waziri. And still he clung to the little cleft stick with the bit of paper fluttering from its tip.

He had not gone far when he heard the voices of men. His little heart beat wildly as he sped in the direction of the sound. So anxious was he to find Tarzan that he had no place in his mind for any doubt that the voices he heard might be those of others than his friends.

Nor were they.

Chattering and screaming, Nkima dropped plummetlike from high branches to alight upon the shoulder of his friend.

One arm encircled Tarzan's neck, and

An angry growl sounded behind Sborov; it seemed very close. The man threw a glance back over his shoulder—and voiced a piercing scream of terror.

from the little clenched paw the cleft stick brought the fluttering bit of paper directly in front of the ape-man's eyes. He saw writing upon it, handwriting that even in a brief glance he recognized. Yet he could not believe. It was incredible, preposterous, even to imagine that little Nkima bore a message penned by Jane. The remarkable similarity between this handwriting and hers could be nothing more than a fantastic coincidence.

Before Nkima could again escape him Tarzan slipped the message from the stick; and, while the monkey chattered and scolded, scanned it hurriedly. The Waziri, watched him, saw sudden concern mirrored in his expression.

"Where did you get this, Nkima?" demanded the ape-man. "Who gave it to you?"

Nkima stopped scolding and scratched his head. Where did he get it? He could not recall. Many things had happened since then. His memory was a long, dim corridor; and this event a tiny thing at the far end.

"Something is wrong, Bwana?" asked Muviro. "Nkima has brought you bad news?"

"It is a message from Lady Greystoke. She and a party of friends were forced down in an airplane. They are lost somewhere without provisions or weapons."

He turned his attention again to Nkima. "Who gave you this?" he demanded. "Was it a she?—a Tarmangani?"

Slowly Nkima was recollecting. "It was not a Tarmangani," he said.

"A Gomangani?"

"It was not a Gomangani."

"Who did give it to you, then?"

Now Nkima recalled. "No one gave it to Nkima," he said. "Nkima found it in a wala."

"What does he say, Bwana?" asked Muviro; for Nkima had spoken in the language of his people, which only Tarzan, among men, understands.

"He says he found it in a 'nest'," explained the Lord of the Jungle. "That might mean a house, or a hut, or a shelter, the lair of a wild beast, or the nest of a bird. I will find out.

"Nkima, what built the nest in which you found this?"

"Tarmangani. The Gomangani do not build a wala like it."

"Where is it? Try to recall. You must take me to it. Where was it?"

Nkima waved a paw loosely in the general direction of the west.

"You will take Tarzan to this nest," said the ape-man.

Instantly Nkima was all excitement. He felt quite important. He hopped to the ground at once and pulled on Tarzan's leg.

"Lead your warriors toward the north until you find the village of the Kavuru," Tarzan directed Muviro. "If they are unfriendly, and you cannot enter their village to recover Buira, wait for me there. If you find her and take her away, leave some sign that will tell me so. You understand?"

"Yes, Bwana."

"Then Nkima and I go to search for Lady Greystoke."

It was not by a direct route that Nkima led Tarzan toward the shelter in which he had found the message, but a circuitous one that retraced his wanderings. Each of his mischances and adventures of the preceding days was a landmark on the back trail, and thus slowly he found his way back toward the shelter.

At one point he told Tarzan he had seen a strange Tarmangani with a she-Tarmangani; and Tarzan was almost convinced that it might have been Jane, the captive of a Kavuru. He was tempted to give up the search for the shelter where the message had been found and attempt to trail the man and the woman; but Nkima could not tell him in which direction they had gone, the spoor had disappeared, and Tarzan's judgment told him that the place to start his search for Jane was at some point at which he might be positive she had been.

IT required infinite patience to endure the vagaries of Nkima's memory and his inability to hold for long to a fixed continuity of thought; but most beasts are patient, and in this respect Tarzan was like his fellows of the jungle. His reward came eventually when Nkima proudly led him down through the trees to the flimsy shelter that the marooned air-voyagers had made.

Here Tarzan found indisputable evidence that Jane had indeed been a member of the ill-starred company, and plain before him lay the trail that they had taken toward the east. No longer was he dependent upon Nkima, and with renewed hope the ape-man swung swiftly off into the unknown country that had swallowed up his mate.

RETRIBUTION is seldom swift or well directed, yet perhaps in his terror Alexis Sborov was tasting the immediate fruits of his misdeeds through a punishment scarcely less drastic than death itself; for Sborov was an arrant coward, and he was suffering as only a coward might as he trembled alone in the menacing silence of the mysterious jungle.

And he was torn between two terrors, one of which almost canceled the other. He was afraid of the denizens of the jungle and the thought of facing a jungle night alone, and it was this fear that almost submerged another—his fear of Brown. But not quite. As much as he longed to return to the companionship of those he had persistently sought to offend or injure, the knowledge that Brown would kill him if he did, exiled him irrevocably to the torture of his terror-stricken loneliness.

When he had finally been forced to definitely abandon any thought of returning to the others, he determined to follow the plan that he had originally suggested to them, the plan that had been voted down in favor of Jane's suggestion that they search toward the east for friendly tribes; and so he set his face toward the west in the hope that he might stumble upon a white settlement in the Belgian Congo.

One ordeal that he dreaded lay ahead of him on this route, for in retracing his steps he must pass the grave of his murdered wife. He had no regrets for his deed; but his superstitious mind was terror-ridden by imaginings induced by Tibbs' story of the murdered Duchess of Doningham, who returned from the grave to carry away her maid.

As Tibbs had, so did Sborov see a parallel in the mysterious disappearance of Annette, a disappearance he could not account for logically in any other way.

But there was no alternative. He must pass close to the grave and the scene of the murder. Once again he would wield the hand-ax in the fulness of his imagi-

nation, and once again the warm blood of his victim would spatter upon his hand and his clothing.

The first night he spent among the branches of a tree, too terrified to sleep. He heard the hunting beasts prowl beneath him. He heard the screams of stricken prey. The earth trembled to the roar of the king of beasts; and there were other sounds, stealthy, mysterious sounds that were even more terrifying because he could not identify them.

But at last the night passed and dawn came to look down upon a haggard, unkempt creature that started at its own shadow, a creature exhausted by fright, by sleeplessness, and by hunger, a very different creature from the Prince Sborov of the Paris boulevards.

His hands and arms, his unshaven face, his matted hair were caked with dirt and dried sweat, cut down his shrunken cheeks by muddy rivulets of tears. His mind was tottering. He talked to himself, and then cautioned himself to silence lest his voice might attract the attention of some beast of prey.

Thus he stumbled on through the day, without food and without water—hopeless victim of his own avarice, a sorry contrast to the proud beasts he feared.

It was midafternoon when the thing that he had dreaded occurred. He was walking a broad and, for a short distance, straight trail. As he had been constantly doing, he glanced behind him. His knees trembled so that he thought he must fall. For a moment he was paralyzed.

WHERE the trail turned to disappear among the underbrush stood a great lion. He was eying Sborov appraisingly. What he was doing abroad at that hour of the day when he should have been lying up waiting for evening and the hunting hours is a matter of his own concern, but there he was. He merely stood and contemplated Sborov.

Presently the man regained control of his muscles. He started to move slowly along the trail. He had heard that if one ran, almost any beast of prey would pursue—and overtake; for man is of the slowest of animals.

As Sborov moved away, the lion moved after him. It came slowly, just keeping pace with the man. It was stalking him. When it was ready to do so, it would charge; and that would be the end.

Sborov knew little of the habits of lions; but he had gleaned this much from yarns spun around the campfires, to which he had listened, even though he had never been encouraged to take part.

He wondered how long it would be before the lion would rush at him and drag him down. He wanted to run. It was with difficulty that he restrained the impulse. He looked longingly at the trees that he was too weak to climb.

A turn in the trail hid the lion from him, and then Sborov broke into a run. An instant later an angry growl sounded behind him. It seemed very close. The man threw a hasty glance back over a shoulder. The lion was advancing at a trot. Its eyes were blazing, terrible yellow-green eyes that shriveled the last vestige of his self-control. Sborov voiced a piercing scream of terror.

CHAPTER XXIII

Captive

TARZAN swung through the trees not far from a jungle trail that led toward the east. Nkima scampered sometimes ahead, sometimes above his master. He was very brave and truculent, for the sanctuary of a bronzed shoulder was always near.

Usha the wind was blowing in Tarzan's face. To his nostrils it brought messages from the jungle ahead. It spoke of Hista the snake, of Wappi the antelope, and of Sheeta the leopard. Faintly from a great distance, it told of water it had passed upon its journey. Thus could Tarzan direct his course and select his camp-sites far ahead when he passed through country that was unfamiliar to him.

Now there came also upon the breath of Usha the pungent odor of Numa the lion; and a moment later Tarzan heard the angry growl of the king of beasts. Almost simultaneously he caught the scent-spoor of a man—and recognized it for that of a lone Tarmangani.

Tarzan could almost picture the scene being enacted somewhere along that trail ahead of him, and he increased his speed; for a white man in this particular district might well be a member of the party that Jane had accompanied; he might know where she was or what fate had befallen her. It would not do to let Numa destroy him.

Be sure to read the next thrill-crammed installment—in which Tarzan learns of Lady Jane's peril and hurries to the rescue.

ON a bitter, brilliant day in April, 1909, Commander Peary, U.S.N., a negro, and four Eskimos stood side by side at the apex of the earth. Engaged in a common cause,—the discovery of the North Pole,—they had shared the hardest kind of work, and no little danger. There was not one who had not fallen into the icy water between Grant Land and the Pole. Their faces—white, black, or brown—were cracked and frost-bitten; their eyes blinded by the glare from the scintillating sea of ice. Peary himself was thin and worn; he had taken his belt up three notches since leaving his shore base, 413 nautical miles to the southward. Open water had halted their progress for days at a time; even now, it might cut them off from shore. But they had won through; they had gained for the United States the coveted honor for which European nations had been striving for three centuries.

Since that time Peary has died; a world war has been fought; a new generation has grown up. Of the six men who stood at the geographical Pole, only the faithful Matt Henson remains—at least, in civilization. For years after the return of the expedition, Peary was asked why he took a negro to the North Pole, instead of a white man. Peary's reply was characteristic. Said he, as nearly as I can recall:

"I choose my men as carefully as an engraver or a carpenter would pick out tools with which to accomplish certain results. As for Henson, the color of his skin had nothing whatever to do with his selection. He has accompanied me on all my Arctic expeditions since 1891, and he was chosen for the dash to the Pole because of his adaptability and fitness for the work in hand; also because of his loyalty."

The last time I saw Matt, he was the guest of honor at a dinner given by Vilhjalmur Stefansson to a number of explorers and their wives. He was the same modest, self-effacing person he has always been. The only way to get Matt to talk was to remind him that a British author had recently questioned Peary's attainment of the Pole; that was like waving a red flag in front of the traditional bull.

"How about it, Matt?" I asked. "Let's begin at the beginning."

And here is his story:

THERE has been criticism and doubt about Peary—from people who did not know him; from this arm-chair explorer who never saw an iceberg in his life, for example. Many people have asked how Peary could succeed where others failed.

In the first place, we drove the *Roosevelt* through the ice as far north as possible—to Cape Sheridan; farther north than any ship had ever steamed before. This put us within ninety-three miles of Cape Columbia, the point of departure on the north shore of Grant Land.

Before the Peary era, it was the custom of Arctic explorers to hibernate during the winter months. Peary changed all that; his schedule called for hunting, travel by dog team, the building of igloos, making sledges, and moving supplies and equipment to the advance base. This taught the younger members of the party how to avoid unnecessary hardships; how to travel over rough ice, endure head winds and drifting snow, and take care of themselves under difficult conditions. We ate only two meals a day, and built our own igloos at the end of each journey. Our travel rations consisted of pemmican, biscuits, tea, and condensed milk; each of us drank a pint of steaming hot tea before starting out

REAL EX-

To the Pole with Peary

In the belief that every man has had at least one adventure so exciting or unusual as to deserve record, we print each month five stories of remarkable real experience. (For details of our prize contest, see Page 3.) First we have the record of the only living man who has stood at the North Pole, the gallant negro who accompanied Peary, told to Burt M. McConnell—

By MATTHEW A. HENSON

in the morning, and it usually lasted us all day. We wore practically the same clothing as the Eskimos; we traveled, slept, and ate with the native hunters.

One reason for the Commander's success was that he was not afraid to adopt the manner of life, the food, the dogs, the snow-houses, the sledges (with certain improvements), and the clothing of the Eskimos. We kept the party in good health with fresh meat; there was never any scurvy on any of Peary's expeditions. The Commander had the confidence of the entire Eskimo population of Greenland. He was a good picker of men; not one ever failed him. We had good dogs and sledges.

We transported to our point of departure enough food, fuel, clothing, and equipment to take the main party to the Pole and back to shore. We had support parties to accompany us out on the ice to a certain point, carrying provisions, and then return to shore. We had an advance party to go ahead and pick out the trail, always keeping twelve hours ahead, and building snow-houses at each stop for the main party to occupy when it came along. Three Eskimos can build one of these igloos in an hour.

At the time of our last expedition, Peary was past the zenith of his strength; he was fifty-three, and I was forty-three. We knew that this was our final game on the great Arctic chess-board. The Commander was six feet tall, and well built, especially about the chest and shoulders. He had thick, reddish-brown hair that was beginning to turn gray, bushy eyebrows, steel-gray eyes, a flowing mustache, and a loud, clear voice. He felt that all his former expeditions were merely preparations for this last and supreme effort.

PERIENCES

The sledge divisions began to leave the ship for Cape Columbia on February 15th, and the last one left on the 22nd, bringing the Commander. The temperature was thirty-one degrees below zero. By March 1, the entire ice party—the Commander, and twenty-four other members of the expedition, (including seventeen Eskimos,)—over a hundred dogs, and nineteen sledges, were assembled at the point of departure. At that season, we had about twelve hours of twilight a day.

WE had rough going for several miles, once we got into the pressure ridges; as soon as we struck old ice, the going was much better. The snow was only a few inches deep, and this had been packed down by the winter winds. Much of the time we had to use pick-axes to make a trail over the ridges, which were sometimes forty or fifty feet high.

The advance party set the pace; they traveled in all sorts of weather. Those who followed were saved the bother of looking for a trail, and of smoothing a roadway over pressure ridges. We were usually saved the trouble of building more than one igloo. The support parties kept the trail open for the return of the main party from the Pole. We were able to return over the beaten trail, using for sleeping purposes the same igloos that we had built on the way northward. The journey from Cape Columbia to the Pole required thirty-seven days, during which twenty-seven marches were made, while the return was accomplished in sixteen days. This was accounted for by good weather and favorable ice conditions, no delays at open water, an open trail all the way, and no time spent in building igloos.

We started from shore on March 1st in a biting wind. Our hoods froze to our growing beards, and when we halted we had to break away the ice that had formed from perspiration and the congealing of our breath on the fur trim-

ming. On March 4th the sky became overcast, and the wind swung completely around to the west during the night. A broad band of "water sky"—a reflection from open water—could be seen about fifteen miles to the northward. This was a sure indication of an open lead ahead, and when we arrived at the spot we found one that was a quarter of a mile wide; it had opened directly through floes a hundred feet in thickness. The open water extended east and west as far as we could see.

Three—four—five days passed, and each day the lead continued to grow wider. There was nothing we could do. Behind us lay the civilized world; ahead lay a trackless waste. Two of the Eskimos feigned illness; they had had enough of exploring. The Commander promptly sent them back to shore. At the end of a week there came a cold snap, and overnight the lead was covered with young ice. We crossed over, and made about twelve miles that day.

PEARY now sent me ahead to pioneer the way for the next five days. On the 14th he sent back the first support party—the leader, two Eskimos, one sledge and twelve dogs. The weather was now very cold, ranging from 40° to 59° below zero. On the 15th the Commander sent back another support party, consisting of the leader, two Eskimos, two sledges, and fourteen dogs. When we came to open water next day, we ferried dogs and sledges across on small broken floes. Three of the sledges were broken in the rough ice on the opposite side, one of them being completely wrecked. We were thus forced to make camp, and to build two good sledges out of the material at our disposal.

On the 19th one of the sledges broke through the ice, and its load of clothing and equipment got thoroughly soaked. On this day we toiled over pressure ridges that were sixty feet high, hacking a trail with picks over these mountains of ice, then coming back for the sledges. Straining every muscle, urging on the dogs with whip and voice, we finally got to the summit—only to let one of the sledges get away on the other side, and go crashing to the bottom.

At the end of the day, the Commander had me pick out the best dogs, to be sent back with the next support party. This party left on the 20th—the leader, three Eskimos, one sledge and sixteen dogs. There were ten good sledges left, and I rearranged the loads. Then I started out with an advance party consisting of the Captain of the ship, two Eskimos, three sledges, and twenty-four dogs. Peary and his assistant, with four Eskimos, five sledges, and forty dogs, remained in camp twelve hours, in order to give us one march the start of them. Peary was thus able to make contact with the rest of the party every twenty-four hours. The advance party made its northing, camped, built its igloos, and turned in for a sleep. The main party managed to arrive just as we were getting under way. After a short conference with the Commander, we would go on, while they remained behind for a sleep in our igloos.

We kept up this schedule until the 25th. Sometimes the sky would be overcast; sometimes the weather would be clear and calm, with the fields of ice and snow glistening in the sun. On one of these clear days (the 23rd) Peary had one of his assistants take an observation—the first of the trip. This gave our position as 85° 23′ N. At this point we saw a seal swimming about in a lead, and the fresh tracks of a polar bear—over two hundred miles from the nearest land.

On the 25th we made another realignment of sledges, Eskimos, and loads, and the next day the Commander sent back another support party, with the leader, two Eskimos, one sledge, and seventeen dogs. The party now consisted of the Commander, the Captain of the *Roosevelt*, and myself, with six Eskimos, seven fully loaded sledges, and sixty dogs. The first day we made fifteen miles, traveling in overcast weather.

IT was forty degrees below zero when we started on the 28th, and the snow was like coarse granulated sugar. We had a narrow escape that day when a lead opened between the two parties, then camped together. The break had occurred within a foot of the picket rope of one dog team, and another team just escaped being buried under a pressure ridge. Then we were stopped by a lead, and spent the day mending sledges and dog harness—in a temperature of thirty-five below zero. Later in the day the lead froze over, and we went on.

On April 1st Peary sent back his last support party, consisting of the Captain of the ship, two Eskimos, one sledge, and eighteen dogs. We were then 87° 48′, according to the Captain's observation. The party now consisted of the Com-

mander, myself, four Eskimos, five sledges, and forty dogs—the pick of the survivors among those that came out on the ice. The time had come for Peary to make his supreme effort—a dash of 133 nautical miles in five marches. We were all in good physical condition; the equipment was in good repair; the food supplies were adequate, and the dogs in fair shape. The Eskimos did not know the meaning or the importance of it all, but they were keen about this last dash, for they had been promised rewards beyond the wildest dream of any Greenland native.

THE Commander now took up another hole in his belt—his third in thirty-two days. He had lost the toes of both feet (with the exception of one) and was unable to travel at a fast pace. So I now took the lead, and the Commander was carried on one of the sledges most of the way to the Pole and back. In a temperature of twenty-five degrees below zero, with good going and the sun shining brilliantly, we traveled ten hours without stopping. This put us above the 88th parallel—a region where no human being had ever been before. Pressure ridges delayed us somewhat that day and the next, but we made up for lost time when we struck the level spots.

We traveled ten hours, slept for a few hours, and hit the trail again. The next day both Peary and I fell into the water, and had to beat the icicles out of our bear-skin trousers and change our boots and socks in a temperature of forty below. To make our situation still more precarious, a runner of one of the sledges cut through the ice. We were tired that night, but satisfied with our progress. The average march from the land to the Pole was less than sixteen miles; our average for those last five days was more than twenty-five miles. Three more days of good weather would see us at the Pole!

The memory of those last five days is one of toil, fatigue, and exhaustion. We marched and marched, actually falling down in our tracks until it was impossible to go on. If the Commander did stop to give us a rest, it seemed that no sooner did we fall asleep than he was routing us out again. The bitter wind burned our faces, so that they cracked; it was as keen and bitter as frozen steel.

Peary himself admits in his book that we were all "pretty well played out" on the 5th of April. An observation, taken by the Commander on that date, gave our position as 89° 25′—thirty-five miles from the Pole.

Before midnight of the 5th, we were again on the trail, as the Commander wanted to arrive at the earth's axis at ten o'clock the following morning, in time to get an observation at noon. We traveled in a gray and shadowless world, but the going was good. When we had covered fifteen miles, we halted and had tea, ate lunch, and rested the dogs. In eighteen hours we made, in all, thirty-five miles, and arrived on schedule. At noon on the 7th, the Commander took his observation, lying on his stomach on the ice; it showed that we were 89° 57′ 11″ N., on the Cape Columbia meridian. He placed a record at the spot, together with an American flag.

There was no land at the Pole, or in the vicinity. The ice conditions were about the same as those we had encountered the previous few days—rough ice, smooth new ice, and pressure ridges.

The Commander tried to take a nap. But he was too excited about it all to sleep; perhaps he was too weary. In fact, none of us could close our eyes, even though we needed rest badly. I was very happy. Peary had spent twelve years out of the last twenty-three in the Arctic. The conquest of the Pole had become such an obsession with him that he had long ago ceased to think of himself, save as an instrument for the attainment of that end. The long grind was over.

OUR return from the Pole was accomplished, not without adventures, in sixteen marches. The entire journey from Cape Columbia to the Pole and return required fifty-three days, during which forty-three marches were made. The dogs and the Eskimos were as eager to get back to *terra firma* as we were. The loads were light; the trail lay broken before us; no time need be spent in building igloos at each camping spot; the sun now shone throughout the entire twenty-four hours. Everything was in our favor on the return journey; the only lead we saw formed a few minutes after we had crossed the spot. We all had our explanation for this good fortune, but perhaps that of one of the Eskimos is as good as any other. On our arrival at Cape Columbia, he sat down wearily on his sledge, and observed:

"Tornarsuk" (the devil) "is asleep or having trouble with his wife, or we should never have come back so easily!"

The Revenge

By SAMUEL E. KISER

THE wildest West in its wildest days was never more wild than the oil region of western Pennsylvania at the height of its boom. Farmers who happened to own land on which oil was struck became rich, and in many instances crazy, overnight. Mushroom towns with the tumultuous characteristics of mining-camps sprawled where peaceful orchards, pastures, and grain-fields had been.

People from everywhere flocked into them. Young men and girls from the surrounding country were attracted by the prospect of finding work at high wages. The habitual followers of oil-developments — speculators, sharpers, gamblers, cut-throats, and adventurers of every kind crowded one another on the wooden sidewalks. Saloons and dance-halls were wedged between stores and machine-shops. Street fights were so numerous that sometimes it was hard for the spectators to decide which brawl they preferred to attend.

My grandfather owned a farm about halfway between Oil City and Pittsburgh, and supposedly outside the "oil belt." A wildcat well was drilled on it, however, and the result was a gusher. News of the strike brought a magical transformation of the scene. A town with its center at a point where two country roads had crossed, rose so rapidly that a few acres on which my father had built a house was embraced within the town before we could escape. A derrick went up in our back yard. A billiard- and dance-hall, with extensive drinking facilities, was established beside us. Across the street a big "opera house" was built.

A cousin of mine, Bradford Evans, who had been engaged in the drilling business around Oil City, came to our town with his partner, Black Jack Harris, and they leased a site for a well from my father. Like most of the other wells in the vicinity, it proved to be highly productive.

Black Jack had a liking for liquor, and instead of doing his share incident to the drilling of the well, indulged in a protracted spree. Also he neglected to supply any of the money that was needed for prosecution of the enterprise. His only claim to an interest in the property was an understanding that had been agreed upon when the lease was obtained. My cousin was compelled to borrow cash as the drilling proceeded, and he announced then that Harris was out of it.

When oil was struck and it became evident that the well was going to be profitable, Black Jack put in a claim for partnership rights. He was told that he had forfeited all such rights, and ordered to keep away from the well.

ONE day while I was in the small engine-house containing the machinery by which the pumps were operated, Harris came in. He was fighting mad, and announced to my cousin, who was about to leave me in charge of things while he went to lunch, that he had come to claim his "rights," and that he was going to get them, even if he had to do so over a dead body.

The two men, probably in their early thirties, and neither having much of an advantage in size, argued briefly but forcibly, going from that into a rough-and-tumble fight. I was the only spectator, but my privilege in that respect brought me no joy. It was necessary for me to be scrambling constantly out of the way of the fighting men. My sympathies were naturally with my cousin, who was one of my boyhood heroes; but I don't know how he might have fared if I had not intervened.

The fight had gone on for what seemed a long time to me; both men were bleeding and disheveled; each was trying to get at the other's throat; they exhibited the killer instincts of ferocious animals. In my efforts to avoid being kicked or trampled underfoot, I backed into a corner, where there was a sheaf loaded with tools. I picked off a machinist's hammer which must have weighed a couple

# of Black Jack

He's been a "columnist," the editor of a big-city paper, and well-known writer; here he tells of his leading part in a fight and a boiler-explosion.

of pounds, and a moment later the scuffling men swerved in toward me, Harris with his back in my direction.

The look of horror in my cousin's eyes when I raised the hammer did not interfere with the impulse that possessed me. Black Jack crumpled under the blow I let fall upon the back of his head; and as he sprawled upon the floor, Evans exclaimed:

"My God! You've killed him!"

I didn't know that my youth, and my innocence of any intention to commit murder, would make it improbable that I should have to go to the gallows. My first thought was of my mother. I wanted to flee to her for protection, but my feet would not move. Everything seemed to close in around me, shutting off my breath. The blowing of a steam whistle sounded my doom to all the world. My lips stiffened; a dizzy sickness came upon me; and I sat down, with the deadly hammer still in my clutch.

After his terrifying announcement of what I had done, my cousin hastened to a pipe just outside the engine-house, drew a basinful of cold water and dashed it into the unconscious man's face. Black Jack opened his eyes presently, and groaned. When he was able to get unsteadily upon his feet, he left us, threatening that he would have revenge.

IN the criminal action which followed, I was summoned, not as a defendant, but as a witness. Evans was acquitted, doubtless because I was able to testify that Harris had come to the engine-house threatening to get what he was after, even if he had to get it over a dead body. Lord, how I quaked when the judge, looking sternly at me, asked:

"Are you sure he said 'over a dead body,' sonny?"

I was sure, all right enough; and I said so, perhaps a bit squeakily, but with sufficient positiveness to make it stick.

After the trial, Black Jack disappeared for a time, and it was supposed that he had gone elsewhere in pursuit of fortune. His vengeful threat was forgotten, and peace prevailed around the well. I had shown some precocity in operating a stationary engine, which wasn't much of a trick; but it was generally considered too great a responsibility to be imposed upon a twelve-year-old boy. Nevertheless, Evans offered me a job as night engineer, and I got permission from my parents to accept it for the summer.

The pump was kept going twenty-four hours a day. I had to go on duty at seven o'clock in the evening, and remain until seven in the morning, getting my sleep during the day. My duty really amounted to little more than watching, so that if the engine stopped for any reason, I would start it, or failing in that, report it. Natural gas from the well was burned in the boiler that supplied steam. There was no coal to be shoveled, and no ashes had to be removed.

Everything was coördinated exactly. The flow of gas into the firebox was regulated to produce the degree of heat necessary to create the steam-pressure that was needed to drive the engine at the rate of speed required to keep the pumps going at the correct velocity. The engine also operated the pump which supplied water to the boiler; and this, too, was gauged to keep the water at just the right level. As long as this balance was maintained, the operation of the well proceeded automatically; but if the engine stopped, increased steam-pressure would immediately occur.

Any excess pressure was supposed to be taken care of by a safety-valve on top of the boiler. Theoretically, this valve would open when the pressure rose above the right degree, permitting excessive steam to escape. Sometimes, however, valves stuck or failed for other reasons to function. This was likely to happen where the supply of steam was so regular that the valve was seldom forced open. It was not infrequently the cause of a boiler-explosion, and such explosions

usually were terrible in their effects. Buildings were wrecked, and people were killed. Accidents with nitro-glycerine, the ignition of sudden blasts of natural gas, and boiler-explosions, were the most dreaded calamities in that region.

For several weeks I got along very well as engineer. The early summer evenings were delightful; the doors and windows of the engine-house were kept open, and I had a proud feeling of manly importance. My cousin, who had a knack at carpentry, had built a combination chair and bench on which it was comfortable to stretch at full length. I had fairly good light from a couple of natural gas jets, and a supply of books which included "Robinson Crusoe," "Gulliver's Travels" and certain yellow-backed novels I was careful to keep under cover.

Perhaps I failed to do as much sleeping as I should have done while off duty, for occasionally in the lesser hours of the morning, I found it mighty hard to be interested in *R. Crusoe, Lemuel Gulliver,* or even *Saddlebag Sam,* the Slim Scout of the Dakotas. I awoke from many a forbidden hour of slumber, to find with sweet relief that the engine was working with faithful regularity, and invariably I resolved after such experiences that there would be no repetition of them.

I was a growing boy, however; and my resolutions were more effective in soothing my conscience than in shielding me from the influence of Morpheus. One morning—it was around three o'clock, as I learned later—I awoke, not with a guilty start, but with a conviction that the world had come to an end. The boiler had exploded; burning gas from a twisted pipe flared high; and with part of a doorframe on my chest, I was lying forty feet from where the engine-house had been.

My escape from death was considered miraculous. There was a cut on the lobe of my left ear, and one of my thumbs was nearly severed, but otherwise I was unhurt, except in the immediate loss of my job.

It was supposed that Black Jack Harris had slipped in while I was asleep, stopped the engine, and weighted the safety-valve on the boiler so that it would not open. He had been seen around town several days before the explosion, and never returned after it. There would have been no chance to prove his guilt, if he had been found; but if any advantage has come to me as a result of the change that ensued in my career, I feel sure that I have him to thank for it.

Refugees

By IVAN BEZIZVESTIEFF

THROUGHOUT the summer of 1918 roving bands of Armenians in the neighborhood about Mount Ararat systematically ambushed little groups of Kurd shepherds, murdering the men and driving the flocks away to the towns and villages, where mutton brought famine prices. Scattered over a wide grazing area, two or three men to each flock of sheep, the Kurds fell easy victims to the robbers.

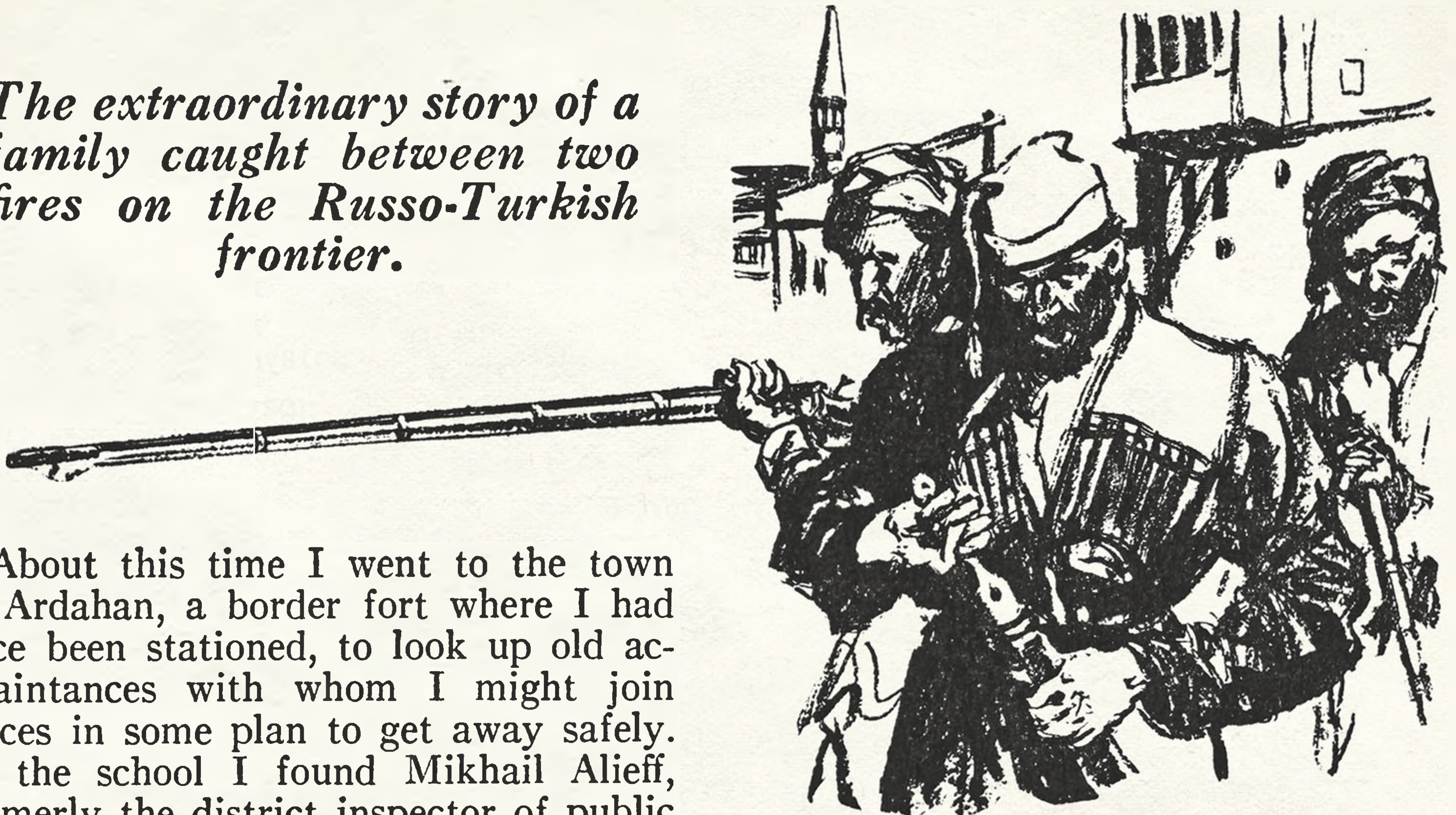
As winter approached, however, the Kurds came down from the hills to merge their flocks and move southward in the wake of the receding pasturage. The clans gathered; noses were counted, sheep and shepherds; and as the roster of absentees increased, so did the anger of the surviving Kurds. By October there were strong rumors of a Kurdish uprising, and the Armenians were frantic with fear.

The Russians, who had occupied this territory for almost a hundred years, had withdrawn in disorder following the revolution in their own country. In their place were a few scanty garrisons of Turkish regulars who ruled more by virtue of the Sultan's reputation than by force of their own numbers.

Here and there were a few remaining Russian civil officials—village judges, priests, tax-collectors, postmasters, schoolteachers and stranded Czarist officers from the disorganized Russian army. Many of the latter, like myself, had gone down to meet the incoming Turkish army on one military mission or another, and remained indefinitely when it became obvious that return to Russia could result only in arrest and a quick shooting-party at the hands of bolshevik revolutionaries.

The Turks were reluctant to antagonize a hundred and fifty million Russians, and as a measure of safety, a general order was issued to collect all former Russian officials and convoy them out of the danger-zone before things cracked.

The extraordinary story of a family caught between two fires on the Russo-Turkish frontier.



About this time I went to the town of Ardahan, a border fort where I had once been stationed, to look up old acquaintances with whom I might join forces in some plan to get away safely. In the school I found Mikhail Alieff, formerly the district inspector of public schools under the Russian régime. He was the sole remaining Russian official in Ardahan, and was genuinely delighted to see me. With him were his wife, their three small children, and Alieff's sister, a strikingly beautiful black-haired girl of about sixteen.

"Will the Kurds rise?" I asked Alieff.

"There is no longer any doubt," he assured me sadly. "Already the Kurdish women who visit the bazaars are threatening the people. Moustafa Beg, they say, is gathering the clans from far and wide. It is only a matter of days, now. The Armenians have gone too far, and the Kurds will not be cheated of their vengeance."

ARDAHAN was on the main route followed by the Turks with their caravans of refugees, most of whom were being evacuated to Batum on the Black Sea through the high mountain pass at Artvin. That night Alieff and I decided to join the very next wagon-train passing through.

I slept that night in the school building and awoke the following morning to pandemonium. The streets outside my window were seething with excitement—dogs barked; women shrieked; and there was a mighty din as the frightened merchants put up the heavy iron shutters before their shops and dropped home the strong steel bars with padlocks as big as teapots.

I threw up a window and leaned out into the street. "What now?" I shouted at a small group of people below.

"It is Moustafa Beg; he is camped outside the village," a man informed me in frightened tones.

Beside him a woman stood wringing her hands and wailing dolefully after the fashion of her kind. "It is Anti-Christ himself," she cried. "It is God's adversary and all his imps come to murder us all."

The door opened behind me, and Alieff came into the room. He was calm, but pale.

"I'm afraid we waited too long," he told me. "Moustafa is already here, and I must go out to meet him."

"Meet him?" I exclaimed in amazement. "And why should you put your head in this wolf's mouth?"

"I am the only remaining official here," he reminded me, and I noticed for the first time that he was buttoned up in his long-skirted uniform coat and wore his broad-crowned, visored cap, with its little metal badge that proclaimed him an inspector of schools.

"You can't go alone; I'll go with you," I told him.

I reached for my own uniform jacket and side arms, but he snatched them out of my hands.

"These will never do," he warned me. "You must wear one of my old uniforms; as a teacher there is less risk of harm coming to you.

A sudden lull came in the turmoil outside, and we surmised that Moustafa had made his entrance into the town.

WE hurried downstairs and were joined at the door by Alieff's wife and sister. Mme. Alieff handed her husband a small bundle knotted in a napkin, and together we hastened down to the village square to meet the Kurd.

Already a large number of villagers stood huddled into one corner of the tiny open space, and as we entered from one side, Moustafa Beg rode in from the other, accompanied by a group of mounted henchmen. These latter held long rifles cradled in their arms and kept a wary eye on the housetops for snipers, ready at an instant's notice to open fire.

AS we joined the waiting throng, Moustafa dismounted, and leaving his pony standing, strode toward us. He was all that could have been expected of a Kurdish chieftain as far as appearances went. Tall, hawk-beaked, broad of shoulder and narrow at the hips, he was dressed in a rich blue *tcherkeska,* the long-skirted coat mistakenly called "Cossack" costume. Across his chest were the traditional bandoliers or ornamental cartridges mounted with gold and ivory. About his waist was tightly drawn a narrow leather thong, and from this at the front swung a gold mounted *kindjal* with a blade at least sixteen inches in length.

Coming to a halt a few paces from the frightened crowd, he grasped this knife, haft in one hand and scabbard in the other, and spreading his feet far apart, began insolently to scan the faces before him. The people shrank back, leaving several of their number in the forefront. Alieff moved forward to join this select group, his womenfolk and I following close behind.

An old man, obviously a Greek, stepped gingerly toward Moustafa and extended a plate on which were a small loaf of bread and a tiny heap of salt. The hand that held the ceremonial offering in token of hospitality shook pitifully, and the old man's voice trembled as he bowed and said: "Greetings in peace."

The Kurd scarcely glanced at him, but touching the plate with his right hand, he replied: "Peace, old one."

Back in the crowd I heard the whisper with which the people greeted this evidence of the Kurd's intent to keep hands off the Greeks, at least a hundred of whom lived in Ardahan and vicinity.

Next to come forward was a fat Armenian merchant, representing his people. On a heavy silver platter he also tendered the time-honored formula of hospitality. He might not have been there, for all the notice he elicited from the Kurd. Over and over he murmured his salutations, his eyes rolling in his swarthy face with the agony of fear and suspense. At long last the chieftain allowed his roving glance to rest on the supplicant.

"Are you not an Armenian?" he asked in tones deceitfully soft.

"Your humble servant, Beg," the Armenian responded with deep bows.

"Then begone to your sty, pig!" the Kurd shouted in a terrible voice, and with a violent blow of his hand he sent the silver platter rattling across the cobbles of the square, its contents scattered to the four winds.

A moan of terror arose from the waiting crowd, and then they turned and fled madly, disappearing into the narrow winding streets that led from the square. Only the Alieffs and I remained.

His features drawn with apprehension, Mikhail Alieff unwrapped the napkin from his offering, and holding out a little plate of bread and salt toward Moustafa, he said: "Bread and salt."

The Kurd eyed him for a moment, and said: "You are Alieff, the teacher?"

"Yes, Beg," replied Alieff.

"And these?" asked Moustafa, indicating the two women and me.

"My family and my assistant, Beg," Alieff told him.

"Why have you remained?" the Kurd inquired. "Could not a man of your wisdom see that trouble is brewing?"

"We have done no wrong, Beg," Alieff assured him. "We had no reason to run away; but we did think yesterday of going down to Batum with the next convoy of the Sultan."

"I have heard nothing but good of you from my people," Moustafa said, but added with what was almost a smile: "I have a better memory than my soldiers. There is a Turkish convoy passing here at noon; my riders have already sighted it. I advise you to join it and leave Ardahan at once. I hope you are not here when I return to this village tonight."

"I will do as you suggest, Beg," Alieff replied, relief evident in his voice.

"Then go in peace," the Kurd bade him, and touched the plate of bread and salt as a seal on his spoken words.

WITH a careless salute, Moustafa turned on his heel and mounting his pony, galloped out of the square, the long tails of his peaked hood flying out in the breeze behind him, and his troopers clattering noisily after.

We started back toward the school, and as we left the square a small boy darted out of a crooked lane, snatched up the silver plate the Kurd had knocked from the Armenian's hand, and scuttled back out of sight. . . .

At their quarters in the school, the Alieffs prepared several small bags of food, clothing and household valuables. I changed back into military uniform, taking the precaution to cover my tunic with a loose linen blouse. Everyone put on as many items of clothing as possible, and in less than half an hour after Moustafa had issued his warning, we were sitting on the roadside beyond the village watching for the expected convoy.

PRESENTLY it appeared, at first only a moving cloud of dust. As it drew nearer, we discerned eighteen or twenty ox-carts heaped high with baggage and flanked on either side by files of people afoot. One man rode a pony at the head of the column; and as it drew abreast, we saw he was a *tchaus*, or sergeant, of the Turkish regular army.

The *tchaus* halted his caravan with raised hand in response to a call from Alieff, and while the two parleyed, I took stock of the sergeant and his charges. The leader was dressed in a shabby uniform which he had apparently inherited from a German ally. His horny feet, thrust deep in the stirrups, were bare, but a pair of boots hung at the cantle of his saddle, along with other items of personal equipment he had lashed there for greater ease.

The people in his train were largely womenfolk and children, with here and there an older man—families, it was easily seen, of Russian officials or of local Russian landowners and wealthier merchants. They were a bedraggled lot.

Alieff had no difficulty in joining the troop. Our uniform coats and cap badges were apparently sufficient identification for the sergeant, and the women and children he took on faith.

"Put your things on a cart—the children too," he told us. "You are welcome to come with us, but you must obey orders."

We reassured him on the matter of obedience, and with a wave of his hand, the *tchaus* set the caravan on its creaking way. Grabbing a strap on the sergeant's saddle, I trudged alongside and engaged him in conversation. For all I knew, we might be jumping from the frying-pan into the fire.

"Those mountains ahead might conceal anything—or anybody," I remarked, indicating the shadowy peaks into which our road was leading.

"Only Adjars," replied the sergeant, naming one of the larger nations inhabiting the border marches of western Trans-Caucasia and Turkey. "They would never trouble a convoy under a guard of the Sultan's soldiers."

"The Sultan was never their ruler," I reminded him. "They came under the Czar of Russia."

"In a manner of speaking," the sergeant smiled. "But after all, they are Moslems. The Sultan is the head of their church."

Just before nightfall, the *tchaus* halted the march near a noisy little mountain brook and we set about making camp. The refugees congregated in little groups, each huddled about a brushwood fire, for the evening was chilly at this height. Soon water was boiling and when glasses of steaming tea had been handed around, our spirits were revived.

I sat with the Alieffs and shared their meager rations. The fire made me drowsy and I was nodding pleasantly when Alieff plucked my sleeve and pointed to a spur of the wooded slopes above us. In the gathering darkness I could barely discern the outlines of a rider, and even as I strained my eyes toward the spot, he wheeled his horse and disappeared into the trees.

"An Adjar!" I exclaimed.

"Merely some curious native," Alieff reassured me.

Nevertheless, I was about to suggest he report what we had seen to the sergeant, when a rifle cracked sharply, to be followed by the whine of a bullet as it ricocheted from a rock near by. The camp was in a sudden uproar. Half a hundred more shots came in quick succession, and then the firing ceased as suddenly as it had begun. The refugees cowered about the fires, prepared for instant death; and then from the darkness a voice hailed our camp.

"Let us speak in peace," came the shout, in Turkish.

The sergeant stepped into the light of one of the fires and answered: "Come in peace."

THERE was a clatter of hoofs, and a moment later a man rode up to the sergeant. With him were half a dozen or more riders, but they halted beyond the firelight. The leader was little

more than a boy, I could see. He was mounted on a wiry little mountain pony, and enveloped in the folds of a black felt *bourka,* or cape, that covered him from the neck down and flowed out over the pony's haunches. Without ceremony, he addressed the sergeant.

"You have here the Alieff family?" he asked insolently; and I heard my friend Alieff draw in his breath with surprise.

"This can be no concern of yours," the sergeant replied with dignity. "Go in peace; we are on the Sultan's business."

"Bring me the girl Koudrette Alieff, and I will go," the youth retorted impudently.

I glanced sideways at the girl, and saw she was staring at the speaker as though at some loathsome sort of snake. Mme. Alieff had placed an arm around the girl, and even the little children seemed to understand that in some way this trouble centered on our little group.

"You cannot do this thing," the sergeant remonstrated. "These people are under the protection of the Sultan. As you do with them, so will he do with you—and more."

"Bring the girl," the youth insisted. "I have a hundred men here; and if I must, I shall take her by force."

Before the sergeant could offer another refusal, however, one of his *askirs* approached and whispered in his ear.

"Bring him here," I heard the sergeant order the soldier; and as the latter disappeared into the shadows, the sergeant spoke sternly to the boy on horseback. "It is already too late; you have gone too far."

THERE was no doubt what he meant; as he spoke, two Turkish soldiers staggered into the firelight, the still figure of a third in their arms. Depositing their burden at the feet of the sergeant, they stood and regarded the Adjar with bitter scowls.

The third *askir* was apparently dead. His face was literally covered with blood, large quantities of which had flowed down onto the breast of his ragged tunic. The Adjar stared with fascinated horror at this gory spectacle as the sergeant took up the offensive.

"You have killed a soldier of the Sultan," he shouted in a great voice.

"No, no!" screamed the other. "Before Allah, I gave the order to fire over your heads."

"However, here is something the Sultan will not doubt," the sergeant pointed to the still figure on the ground. "His vengeance will pursue you from this day; no mountain in Adjaristan will be so tall, no valley so hidden, but what his long arm shall reach you."

"Wai, wai!" wailed the boy, now thoroughly terrified, and wheeling his horse, he sent him stumbling at a crazy gallop up the slope. The dimly seen horsemen followed with equal speed, and the night hid them all.

"Who was that madman?" I asked Alieff.

"That was Zia Beg Abashidze," he told me. "For two years he attended school in Ardahan. He is wealthy, spoiled and used to getting everything he wants. Two weeks ago he came to Ardahan and asked to marry Koudrette, although he has already divorced one wife and is now married to another. I sent him away, and this was the sequel."

PEACE restored in the camp, the refugees turned to sleep. I too rolled myself in a blanket; but even as I dozed, my attention was caught by a rosy flush in the sky. It must have been the burning houses of Ardahan, where Moustafa was exacting payment from the Armenians for his men and his flocks. . . .

The camp was up with the sun, and after a quick meal the sergeant gave the word to march. I moved to the front and found the sergeant also on foot.

"Where is your horse?" I asked.

"He lost so much blood, he is too weak to ride," said the sergeant.

"Then we had two casualties last night," I said.

"No; only one," said the sergeant, and he pointed back to the first ox-cart.

On top of the baggage, very much alive and smoking a funnel-shaped cigarette of coarse tobacco, was the dead *askir* of the night before. His grinning face was washed clean of the blood, but ample traces of it remained on the front of his jacket.

"It was the horse that was hit," the sergeant explained. "But Raschid, there, is getting a free ride all the way to Batum for his clever idea. It was he who thought of smearing the horse's blood on his own face and playing dead."

The sergeant and his *askir* laughed heartily; but the full humor of it all failed to reach me until three grueling days later when we all had reached the safety of Batum.

Ethiopian Trails

An explorer tells us of Abyssinia and of its courageous primitive people.

By ALFRED M. BAILEY

ETHIOPIA is front-page news at present, and there seem to be many mistaken views of the country. This morning I overheard a conversation in which one man assured the other that the Italians would not get far because the tsetse fly would kill all the stock. He added that the mosquitoes would give all the Italians malaria, and the terrible heat would cause prostration.

If there are any tsetse flies to bother the Italians, it is interesting news. Insect pests are unusually few. In two thousand miles of mule-back travel, through the country, over all sorts of trails, we of the Field Museum Expedition found fewer mosquitoes during the entire time than I have in my back yard.

Ethiopia is the official name for this mountainous country, formerly known as Abyssinia. But the natives still call themselves by their old name and I rarely heard "Ethiopia" used. This rugged region, a high tableland with towering mountains and deep cañons, has a wonderful climate during the dry season, and is ideal for the naturalist desiring to make an overland journey. As a member of a Field Museum Expedition, it was my good fortune to visit out of the way places, to call upon feudal chieftains, and to cross many of the gorges which will be a distinct aid to the Ethiopians. I like to think of our camp in the beautiful primeval forests untouched by man, high up on the sides of the Arrusi Mountains in southeastern Ethiopia. There in heavy cover dwelt the giant bushbucks, which we dubbed the Queen of Sheba antelope, wonderful fellows with large lyre-shaped horns. To the south and east extended the great valley of the Webbi Shebeli river, the several-thousand-foot cañon cutting through the Arrusi plateau. It was somewhere along the walls of this gorge that we believed the Abyssinians would make a stand in case their country was invaded from Italian Somaliland, for the entrance to the highlands seemed more feasible than from Eritrea to the north.

Trekking overland is a constant delight. There are no roads. The pack-mules go single file along tortuous trails, while the white men precede the caravan, in order that they may search for game. Jack Baum, who has written so many interesting articles for *Blue Book;* Suydam Cutting, sportsman and photographer, and I worked the Webbi River region, while our companions, Dr. W. H. Osgood and Louis Fuertes, traveled a westward route.

Ashagri, our diminutive headman, delighted in toting a shotgun, that he might knock over some of the little dik-diks—antelope scarcely larger than jack-rabbits. One evening, at dusk, when the dog-faced baboons had started their trek from their drinking place at the river's edge, to their resting grounds high up in the cliffs, Ashagri was sitting with his back against a tree when a leopard came within a few feet as it stalked a baboon family—a mother with a youngster on her back. Our bold hunter let drive with a charge of small shot, knocked the leopard over, grabbed the stunned animal by the tail, and attempted to drag it from the thicket. Old Spots came to life in a few seconds, with a much embarrassed Abyssinian not knowing whether to let go or hang on. Having a wounded leopard by the tail is not good form—but the animal solved the problem by jerking loose and disappearing into cover, leaving our dusky helper several shades lighter.

A couple of days later, while we were at breakfast, my tent-boy Waldo apologetically explained that he had set my

only Number Four trap, without permission, and that a *"Jib,"* a hyena, had carried it off. If I would give him my rifle, he would get it back. Without thinking, I turned the gun over, and the boy disappeared. A few minutes later the camp men began to yell *"Neber—neber!"* (leopard) and I realized that my servant was in heavy brush, trying to take that little trap off a foot of a leopard!

I tore after the boy and finally caught him, out of breath, when we were in the midst of the thicket. We had followed a little game-trail among the "wait-a-bit" thorns, and it was not at all the sort of cover to poke around for leopards. Our trail forked with a little coulee ahead, and I stood still searching the shadows, thinking it a beautiful place for the cat to lie, while Waldo stepped about ten feet to the left. There was a roar, and a growl that came from deep down—my hair must have lifted my hat right off my head, for I found it on the ground later—and I looked around to see the old fellow with all four feet off the ground as he leaped on Waldo—the little trap on the right foot not hindering in the least. He cuffed the boy in the head, landed on him amidships, and then when I yelled, used the boy as a springboard to jump in my direction. I shot the leopard in the chest and knocked it to the ground; and as it whirled, shot again directly through the heart. And still the beast ran thirty feet through the brush before falling.

Waldo got to his feet, rubbed the blood out of his eyes, grabbed a revolver from another camp man who had arrived, and plunged into the brush after the cat. . . . That is the type of man that the invader will have to fight. The majority of the Abyssinians are children; but they are absolutely fearless when it comes to combat, and are natural soldiers.

IT was at this same camp that my gun-bearer showed that his kind can take as well as deal out punishment. The Abyssinians cure their pack-mules by fire. Because of the nature of the trails and the crude pack equipment, many of the mules received frightful wounds, so it was impossible to pack them. The natives resorted, in spite of our protests, to red-hot irons, the implements being applied about the sores until deep holes were burned into the flesh of the groaning animals.

On one occasion Allamayu and I had been hiking down the thorn-clad slopes searching for an especially nice lesser kudu, when he was so unfortunate as to knock the end off his big toe. His feet had been calloused by hundreds of miles of rocky trails, so when he bumped the heavy hide from place, it left an ugly wound, especially for one who of necessity had to go many more miles. Consequently, on our return, I started first-aid treatment with iodine, adhesive plaster and bandages. But just as I was getting well started, our head man Ashagri—still white from his leopard experience—came sauntering along. He paused for a moment, a wide grin splitting his dusky face, and then without any more ado, grabbed Allamayu by the shoulder, and jerked him toward the fire, muttering at the same time: "You a white man, huh?"

He pushed the boy to the ground, with the raw bleeding toe stuck in the air, and then reached into the fire, plucked out an ember, and placed it sizzling upon the wound. There was a sputtering and burning of flesh, but Allamayu gave no sign of pain other than a glow of perspiration upon his forehead. Half an hour later, when I started hunting again, the boy refused to allow my tent-boy to carry the rifle. He insisted he was all right, and did not seem to favor his injured foot.

Months later we trekked across the northern part of the plateau, crossing the Gorge of the Blue Nile in two different places. This great river, upon which the people of Egypt are dependent, has cut a cañon thousands of feet in depth, so that even our excellent caravan could not cross in less than three days. The mules descend such steep places it seemed their heavy packs would topple them over. I should dislike being in any army attempting to cross such rivers in the face of objecting natives. Especially if they had machine-guns! We crossed the fertile fields of Shoa, Gojjam and Amhara, and raveled along the shore of Lake Tsana, to Gondar, the largest city in northern Abyssinia. The Italians had a consulate there, but we found only one Italian at home, a young fellow, very homesick. He found I was interested in photography, and showed his pictures. It was evident that the Italians had photographed the entire region. He even had a large picture of the battlefield of Addowa, with the peaks named, and places marked where various groups of Italians had been stationed. The whole region has been mapped, and it was clear that an invasion would be based on more knowledge than was the ill-fated attempt in 1896, which ended in the massacre of Addowa.

By TOM McGRATH

A former police lieutenant describes one of the strangest episodes of his career.

The Fatal Feast

DAN and Kittie Murphy (not their real name, though their own was equally Irish) were husband and wife, and were just past middle-age when I knew them best. Dan's bar was known all over the city; and the grandest clique of good spenders in all the town headquartered there.

As an added attraction, Kittie could cook. To see her hobble, despite her three hundred pounds, from her second-floor landing to the rear of Dan's drink emporium, was a sight. However, there was no one with the temerity ever to say a word she might construe as derision. Kittie could fight, and not alone with a sharp tongue. She had to; those were the days of self-protection: the best battler stayed in the saloon business; the weakling got a job at the quarry.

Dan had called up and invited me to one of the big mid-day dinners he sometimes staged. Would I be over? I wouldn't miss it for the world—I had been at other dinners sponsored by Dan. And he had procured some quail as a special feature this time.

There were twelve neighborhood men and women present at the appointed time. After we all were seated, Dan breezed in, his bass voice sounding like the rumble inside a huge water-tank, as he bellowed: "Now lads, an' those cheatin' on their husbands, let's have one grand dhrink before ye attack this foine food."

After the fourth or fifth drink we didn't care if Kittie's quail ever arrived, but suddenly she appeared, standing majestically on the landing to the second floor. Kittie was mad.

"Danny dear," she cooed, a reverse English in her tone, her small blue eyes snapping fire, "the dinner is ready, sor."

"Yes, Ma," he answered. "We'll be ready in a minute."

I saw Kittie hesitate, then turn and walk laboriously up the stairs to her flat. Presently she stood there on the landing again, a frown on her face.

"Misther Murphy," she half hissed, "the dinner is getting cowld, sor—if ye understand me?"

"Are ye gettin' dafe?" he snapped. "I told you we weren't ready for it."

"I'm not," shouted Kittie, "gonna stand here all day waitin' fer ye. Are ye, or are ye not, comin' to get that food? Big Irish omadhaun!"

Danny looked up at her. "Now, Kittie, dear," he answered, his voice coolly modulated, "what the hell is the mather with my little gairl?" Then, thinking that his actions wouldn't be understood by the rest of us, he pointed to the cash register.

"To hell with you an' the cash register," shouted Kittie. "Don't be tryin' to put that stuff over me. I'm tired of cookin' over a stove fer you an' yer gang. I'm goin' away—back to Archey Road. I'm through doin' yer dirty work." And she departed again.

"Let nothing shtop ye," said Dan, his voice not too convincing.

" 'Attaboy, Danny," piped one of the women; "give the old girl the air. I'll be your sweetie."

"You'll need the air," shouted Dan, "if I ever hear another word outa ye about that foine woman."

Without saying another word to anyone, he walked behind the bar and presently emerged with four bottles of champagne. Leaving the champagne on the table, he hurriedly departed in the direction of the landing that led to his living quarters.

Five minutes later Dan appeared on the landing, a smile on his broad face, and in his outstretched arms a steaming tray of quail with all the trimmings. He beamed as he came toward us. Before he laid the tray on the table, he halted to let us take a peek at the food.

"I guess the ol' gairl aint there, eh!" he chortled.

A vision in white was on the landing. It was Kittie. No day-old bride could have looked half so demure. She was smiling down at her Danny. He ambled toward her, and when he got near her, she held out both arms. They slid ponderously into an embrace. . . .

With champagne and quail, we wined and dined. In the middle of the afternoon the ladies departed. Several of the men stayed on, trying our best to see how many champagne-corks we could make hit the ceiling, and Dan occasionally trying one of his rough practical jokes on some willing victim. At seven P. M., the side door to the saloon opened. Dan arose unsteadily and walked through the door toward the bar.

"What'll you have?" we heard him say.

"The dough in the register," we heard a rough voice answer.

"The hell ye say," replied Dan.

"He's putting on an act for us," laughed one of the diners. We all nodded assent; we knew Dan's penchant for joking.

"Don't be a fool," we heard a strange voice say. "Don't get yourself shot. Give us that dough."

"Try an' get it," growled Dan.

We in the back room smiled. We thought we were listening in on a good show, and were anxious for the *dénouement.*

"Shoot an' be damned," we heard Dan shout.

Then the shots came—five of them in quick succession. We heard the scuffling of feet, and what sounded like the falling of a body on the floor. We didn't move. We knew that he wanted us to run in while he stood back laughing. We were going to fool him; we intended to stay right there until he came in to us; then when he did come, we were going to pretend we hadn't heard any shots. . . .

We waited for minutes, and no Dan came. An ominous silence persisted in front. Surely, we thought, Dan could never remain quiet that long. And at last we slowly tiptoed toward the bar—to see Dan lying flat on his back. As we neared him, we saw blood on his white shirt above his vest.

It was only then that I dashed out of the side door; but I could see no one. The street was deserted. I now remembered hearing an auto start up after the shots had been fired.

I hurried back into the saloon in time to see Kittie, her face ashen white, leaning over the body of her Danny boy. She tried to open her mouth, but the shock had been too great for her. She fell face downward over the body of her Danny.

A doctor came—so did an ambulance. The former wasn't needed. The medico, after examining the two old pals, shook his head.

There they lay on the saloon floor, side by side, a smile on their faces, facing the Great Adventure together, just as they, despite their many quarrels, would have wished.

It must be good to be
AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR RYE!
OK'd BY MILLIONS!
TOWN TAVERN Straight Rye Whiskey
NATIONAL DISTILLERS
TOWN TAVERN
STRAIGHT RYE WHISKEY
Penn-Maryland Corp., *A Division of* National Distillers, N. Y. C.
This advertisement is not intended to offer alcoholic beverages for sale or delivery in any state or community wherein the advertising, sale or use thereof is unlawful.

"That's What I Call Real News!"

REDBOOK'S

DOUBLE FEATURE PROGRAM

Every Month a Complete Full-Length Novel - - - - - - and NOW a Complete Short Novel!

For over two years Redbook Magazine has been adding a complete book-length novel of over 50,000 words to its regular contents. And now, still in addition to the regular contents of the magazine, it is presenting a short novel as an extra feature every month. What value! In the January issue, for example, you get "Anything for Excitement," a book-length novel by Courtney Ryley Cooper, and "Travel Without Fear," a 15,000 word short novel by Margaret Culkin Banning, plus all of Redbook's fascinating regular contents. Nothing has been taken out—an extra value has been added! Don't miss Redbook—out December 5th.

LUCKY STRIKE
"IT'S TOASTED"
CIGARETTES
20
LUCKY STRIKE
"Luckies are easy on my throat"
There are no finer tobaccos than those used in
Luckies, and Luckies' exclusive process is your
throat protection against irritation...against cough