MARCH 1932

BLUE BOOK

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An American's Great Adventure in Russia

George Worts • Bertram Atkey • Seven Anderton
Edgar Rice Burroughs • Arthur Akers *and many others*

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THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE
VOL.54 No.5

The Banquet of Time

IMAGINE yourself sitting at a great banquet-board with some sixty-odd other men. At your right sits your father; beyond or opposite him his father, and so on back (in one genealogical line, of course) for some sixty generations.... At the foot of the long table opposite you would sit a man who lived in the time of Christ.

If you were to lengthen this banquet-board a bit and increase the company somewhat, — double it, perhaps, — the man at the foot of the table would be a citizen of some primitive community beyond history's record. Sixty or a hundred is a small company, relatively; you could shake hands and talk with each in the course of one evening. And yet—

We have beaten Space, of course, in some measure: steel rails and concrete roads have bound the earth together; ships venture the utmost seas; airplanes wing us fast and far. We can journey, if leisure and money permit, all over this round world. But Time has *us* beaten; in actuality, at least, we are tied tight to the immediate instant of *now*—always here, eternally gone. And yet—

One escape there is, one key that will unlock even the strait handcuffs of implacable Time: the *printed page*. History, biography or fiction can take us back along that banquet-board to talk with any of the fascinating company gathered about it.

So it comes about that after all, the past is very close to us, and deeply interesting for its own sake as well as for the illumination it may shed on the future. To imaginative writers as well as to historians, it offers a splendid opportunity; to readers it grants an escape from an unhappy or tedious *now* that no ship or airplane can ever provide. . . .

JAY LUCAS, known to you as a writer of vivid and authentic Western stories like "Apache," in our December issue, sprung a surprise on us the other day—sent in a novelette of adventure in prehistoric times that brought those forefathers of ours beyond the hundredth generation very close and vivid to the reader indeed. They are tremendously interesting folk, of course; they are, moreover, a pleasant and amiable people in many ways; for Mr. Lucas' keen and sympathetic imagination has given him to understand that people suffering danger and hardship together are united by their common difficulties. For it is the poor who really help the poor, always; the man who has himself lived through peril who springs most quickly to the help of another in danger. . . .

You will find Mr. Lucas' primordial tribesmen well worth knowing; their adventures a delight to share. Watch for "Warriors All," in our forthcoming April issue. And remember that each of the many other stories appearing with it will also offer you escape—if not from the limitations of time or place, at least from the irking shackles of humdrum things.

—*The Editor.*

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Chicago, Ill.

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As I walked up to the mail box, Joe nudged Ed and winked broadly for my benefit.

"Sh!" he hissed in a loud stage-whisper. "This is going to be the big turning point in Frank Parker's life! He's writing for a book that tells how to get into salesmanship. Pretty soon he'll be earning so much that he'll make the rest of us look like pikers!"

Ed snickered.

"Won't it be grand!" he grinned. "Now he can quit punching time-clocks and eating 40-cent lunches." He raised his voice. "Drop me a postal some time when you get out into big business and start making $10,000 a year, will you, Frank?"

They both laughed uproariously. And probably it DID seem like a joke to them that a $30 a week clerk would have the nerve to think he could ever get anywhere or make real money without some special "gift" or "pull."

But they laughed too soon. They never dreamed that their prophecies spoken in jest would ever come true. Yet stranger things happen in real life than in all the fiction ever written. Just yesterday I sat down and wrote to Ed, who is still at the shop, dragging along at the same old job.

"Dear Ed"—I wrote. "Perhaps you remember the 'run-around' you and Joe Gibson gave me one day not so long ago. You asked me to send you a card when I got into big business and started making $10,000 a year. Well, here's your card. Yesterday I was promoted to the job of Assistant Sales Manager of the Western Metal Works, at a salary that goes with it. So laugh THAT off! If you are ever over this way, drop in and see me! I'll loan you my copy of that book on salesmanship you used to think was such a joke."

Only a book! Just seven ounces of paper and printers' ink—but it contains one of the most vivid and inspiring messages that any ambitious man can read. Between its covers are disclosed hundreds of surprising facts about the highest paid profession in the world. It reveals the real truth about the art of selling. It blasts dozens of old theories, explains the science of selling in simple terms, and tells exactly how the great sales records of nationally-known star salesmen are achieved. And not only that—it outlines a simple plan that will enable almost any man to master scientific salesmanship without spending a moment on the road—without losing a day or a dollar from his present position.

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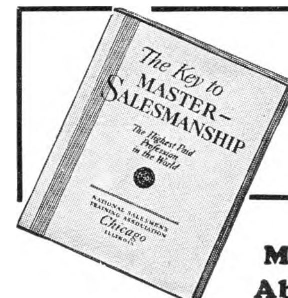

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The BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

MARCH, 1932 — Vol. 54, No. 5

Three Important Novels

Comrades of Chaos — By S. Andrew Wood — 6
The story of an American's desperate adventures in Soviet Russia.

The Phantom President — By George F. Worts — 42
A crisis in this extraordinary and much-talked-about novel.

The Triumph of Tarzan — By Edgar Rice Burroughs — 112
Our premier fiction adventurer drives the enemy from his beloved jungle.

Spirited Short Stories

The Call of the Wildwater — By Bertram Atkey — 23
A sprightly extravaganza by a confessed nature-faker.

Gentleman in Black — By Francis M. Cockrell, 3rd — 28
A writer new to these pages contributes a notably attractive sports story.

The Private War — By Henry La Cossitt — 36
Two embattled friends invade a peaceful Wyoming ranch.

Free Lances in Diplomacy — By Clarence Herbert New — 56
"A Manchurian Adventure" takes us to the near-war in the Far East.

A Shame to Take the Money — By Arthur K. Akers — 80
This Darktown comedy is one of the most amusing yet.

All the Valiant Liars — By Warren Hastings Miller — 86
An achievement in mendacity by Americans in the Foreign Legion.

In the Shadow of Sinn Fein — By Valentine Williams — 105
The British Secret Service again locks horns with the Man with the Clubfoot.

The Bear Woke Up — By Charles G. D. Roberts — 108
The famous author of "The Kindred of the Wild" at his best.

Without Capital — By Edward Mott Woolley — 124
A timely business drama by the man who wrote "The Junior Partner."

An Unusual Detective Novelette

Murder in the News-Room — By Seven Anderton — 92
No lover of detective stories should miss this fascinating mystery.

Stories of Extraordinary Real Experience

My Arctic Outpost — By Charles D. Brower — 64
The Grand Old Man of the North continues his memorable autobiography.

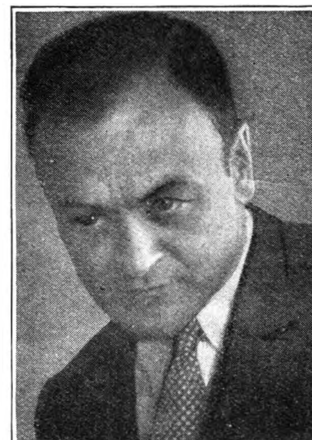
Mutiny — By Captain Henderson — 128
A South Seas skipper is put on the spot by his native crew.

A Bombing Flight — By F. E. Rechnitzer — 130
An attack on Mexican rebels—and bombs stuck in the racks threaten disaster.

Lady Luck — By Arthur Mason — 132
A noted writer here tells of his ups and downs in the mining-camps.

Captured by Chinese Bandits — By Lloyd Lehrbas — 134
Taken captive, this foreign correspondent escaped under fire to tell of it.

The Cyclone — By Ernestine Brannen — 136
Real literary quality distinguishes this story of a freak storm.



FRANK KNOX HOCKMAN

HE started his career as an engineer; and he knows a lot about building bridges and drilling oil-wells—and about the two-fisted male men who work at that sort of thing. Of late he's taken to writing stories about them—stories of conspicuous force and understanding. The first of these will appear in an early issue under the title—

"The Mud Gang"

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DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

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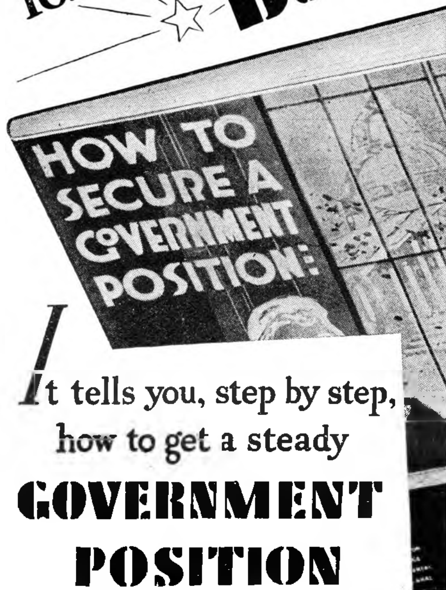

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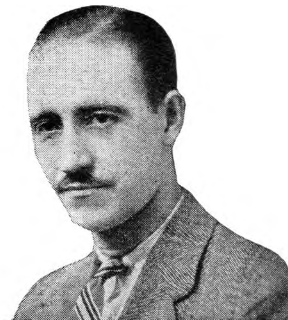

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BY A. L. Cummin

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A letter about

SOVIET RUSSIA

By

S. ANDREW WOOD

Author of

"Comrades of Chaos"

Beginning in this issue

I was born a Scotchman, in the year 1890, and consider myself privileged in this. (The date, I mean. A Scotchman never boasts of his ancestry.) Had it been 1790, I might have only been born into a world that hardly knew it was alive, except for that little fellow Napoleon kicking up a dust now and again. Then I might have carried a rifle and bayonet against the French in 1815, instead of against the Germans in 1915, which would have been safer but less important, really. In 1917, the Germans got me with an enteric germ (I caught it in one of their old dug-outs), a gas bomb, and shrapnel in the leg, all in the same hour, somewhere near Arras. But I owe them no grudge; I would rather go to Germany than France, nowadays, and think that, with a bit of luck and looking-after, Germany is likely to be the chief bulwark in Europe against the trumpets of Mussolini and the undying hatreds of France on the one hand, and the bats-in-the-belfry dreams of Communism on the other.

When I was in Russia, I was treated splendidly. With Bernard Shaw, who was a distinguished visitor to Moscow the other day, I could say, after luncheon, with my hand on a full heart, "If you make Russia as happy as you have made us, then indeed, Russia will be a happy place." But I think old man Bernard's tongue was in his cheek. At seventy-five, you have to keep in the Soviet Rolls-Royce. I'm not seventy-five, and I didn't.

It is certain that, about Russia, the truths of today are not the truths of tomorrow. If you ask me if the Five-Year Plan is to succeed, I answer, "I don't know." You are dealing with an Oriental race whose skin-pigment happens to be white instead of yellow. They have reached about the sixteenth century in the calendar of civilization, except for the airplanes and things they play about with. And, at their head are a number of white-hot enthusiasts whose ideas project, perhaps, a century ahead of now. Add to that a police system (inherited and hotted-up from the old Czarist days) of which Torquemada might have been proud to be the head - and something worth writing a story about is bound to happen.

S. Andrew Wood

$500 IN CASH PRIZES

IT has been remarked that there is at least one good novel in every person's life. Whether this is an exaggeration or not, we do believe that nearly everyone's experience includes at least one episode so unusual and dramatic as to deserve description in print. With this idea in mind, we each month offer five prizes of one hundred dollars each for the five best stories of real experience submitted to us. In theme the stories may deal with adventure, mystery, sport, humor,—especially humor!—war or business. Sex is barred. In length the stories should run about two thousand words and they should be addressed to the Real Experience Editor, the Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Preferably but not necessarily they should be typewritten and should be accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope for use in case the story is unavailable. A pen name may be used if desired, but in all cases the writer's real name and permanent address should accompany the manuscript. Be sure to write your name and correct address in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of your story, and keep a copy as insurance against loss of the original; for while we handle manuscripts with great care, we cannot accept responsibility for their return. It is our hope that the new readers of the enlarged magazine will also offer their most interesting experiences to this department.

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If the latter course is the one of your choosing, you probably *never will write.* Lawyers must be law clerks. Doctors must be internes. Engineers must be draftsmen. We all know that, in our times, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

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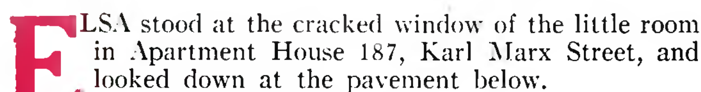
Comrades

An American's desperate adventure in present-day Russia—the Russia of the anti-God posters, the fire-signs and the propaganda loud-speakers; of free marriage and of free divorce; of the Five Year Plan and of—the Secret Police. The author has spent some time in this amazing Muscovite Utopia, and knows whereof he writes.

By

S. ANDREW WOOD



ELSA stood at the cracked window of the little room in Apartment House 187, Karl Marx Street, and looked down at the pavement below.

It was pandemonium-hour in Moscow. A thin rain had begun to drizzle down, and the street-cars were rumbling along with fountains of mud spouting at their wheels. Little scurrying figures stormed each one as it stopped, sweeping aside the policemen who tried to control the crowd with the butts of their revolvers. There was something nightmarish about the spectacle of men and women, fighting robot-like yet tigerishly to get to their homes from the factories and the state ration-shops, while the electric fire-signs crackled above them and the loud-speakers blared the news.

"When the snow comes, there will be more fun than that," spoke a sardonic voice by Elsa's side. "Everybody will run for the tramcars to keep their feet warm, then. No new boots for anybody. I hear they've all been exported by the Government, who forget that their own people have big toes to drop off with frostbite, like anybody else. Yah, what a noise that loud-speaker makes! Always propaganda! Propaganda doesn't fill empty stomachs, does it, Comrade Elsa?"

Elsa turned away from the window. The gaunt figure and pasty smile of Ivan Petropkin, the concierge's son, always filled her with something approaching repulsion. He was a loose and shambling creature, who moved with a slight limp; for, it was said, he had been ridden down by horsemen in the street-fighting during the years of the Terror. He and the lissome chestnut-haired girl made a strange contrast in the little room.

"One would think you dispensed with boots on purpose, Ivan Petropkin," Elsa said coldly. "You come so quietly into the rooms of other people."

"It is cold as death in my room," answered Petropkin, with a fawning look, "and so warm and cozy here. The best room in the house! I'm not complaining of that." He gave a high-pitched, nervous laugh. "That's quite as it should be, when the whole grand place once belonged to you and your brother and your dear father and mother. I remember it plainly, though I was a tiny boy, and only a servant's son. The house of Mr. Peterson, the English scientist, and the beautiful Countess Nikolai, his wife. And now—why, it's like a cheese that teems with maggots—eh, Comrade Elsa?"

Elsa shook her head, and smiled with a clear contemptuous glance.

"It's no use, Comrade Petropkin," she said. "You can't put words into my mouth. I should be careful, if I were you. Even you might find yourself in the hands of the Gay-pay-oo, if you're not. Now, go. My brother will be here before long. He doesn't like you."

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# of Chaos

Illustrated by Joseph Franké

The sharp rap of knuckles sounded . . . . A dry voice: "The officers of the Gay-pay-oo, comrade. We want Martin Peterson. In the name of the Government."

"No." The young man sighed. "He kicked me, though I'm not strong. You're beautiful, Comrade Elsa. But your brother is too rough. Some day he'll be sorry."

Elsa closed the door behind his shambling figure. To-night the sense of foreboding which had hung like a thundercloud for days was heavier. She did not trust Ivan Petropkin, the son of the concierge. Nobody in Apartment House 187 did. One trusted no fellow-creature in Soviet Russia, and suspicion became more than second nature. Petropkin slunk about the mud-trodden stair-cases and into every crowded room like a family cat—one of the myriad clumsy creatures of the police, helping to "cleanse" Russia of what was left of the bourgeoisie and the aristocrats. . . .

Elsa was a little whiter than before when she turned to look out of the window again. Her brother Martin was late home this evening. She was always seized by a nameless terror when that happened, in spite of her courage.

It was rather terrible to be only half-Russian in the Red Republic. Worse still, when the Russian half came from the hated aristocrat blood, even though Elsa and Martin were citizens of the Soviet—even though Comrade Elsa slaved in the dispensary of the Lenin Hospital, at

work which had made her at first shudder and faint—even though Martin was a mechanic in one of the great aëro factories, and had received his *cheestka* card as a loyal citizen of the state only a few days before.

"You're rather a coward tonight," whispered Elsa to herself.

Ivan Petropkin's words about the old house had brought a momentary mist to her eyes and blurred the blazing news-signs which had sprung into fire below. She made a little gesture of misery and rebellion, then laughed mirthlessly at herself for it.

Nitchevo! What did it matter? It had been a lovely house, and she had had a lovely mother and a fine father; but they were dead, and the Government had taken the house, turned it into a barracks, and filled it with five hundred people. It was now Apartment House 187.

Things were so in the seething, brutal country which was now Russia, and she must forget the other part of her. She and Martin had been able to hold on to a few pitiful relics of furniture, and by contrast with the rest of the squalid rooms, theirs was comfortable, though it caused the other people in the building to hate and envy them.

The fire-signs below were crackling:

A GREAT COTTON STRIKE HAS BROKEN OUT IN ENGLAND, AND THE REVOLUTION IS MOMENTARILY EXPECTED. IN AMERICA, THE FINANCIAL CRASH OF WALL STREET HAS LED TO RIOTS AND SHOOTINGS OUTSIDE THE BANKS. MIGHTY RUSSIA IS RISING ON WINGS FROM THE BLOOD AND ASHES. THE FIVE YEARS' PLAN IS SUCCEEDING. COURAGE AND ENDURANCE, COMRADES ALL!

Elsa turned to the stove to put on the coffee-pot. As she did so, a footstep sounded outside the door, and she looked up in momentary dread, still haunted by the loose-lipped face of the concierge's son. But it was Martin.

"How you frightened me!" She laughed, and kissed him. "You're so late. And that creature Petropkin—"

"I caught him on the stairs," said Martin, with a grin, "hanging over the rail spying, tryng to see, through the sky-light, what that old ex-ballet girl and her cat were doing. I threw him over. Sorry if I'm late, old girl."

He was flushed, and there was a light in his gray eyes which he seemed to wish to hide from Elsa. Martin was red-headed and a little snub-nosed—as un-Russian, in body and soul, as man could be. Something had happened to excite him, but he concealed it from her. Martin carried some secret, nowadays, and it was that which filled her with the nameless dread. Secrets were so dangerous in Soviet Russia.

"Two little lambs, caged in the great bolshy zoo!" he said, rubbing his cheek against hers and plumping down exhaustedly at the table. "I always feel that way when I come home, Elsa. I wonder if—ah, well!"

"If what, Martinovitch?"

He grimaced. "Don't call me that, for Mike's sake. Not when we're alone, kid. Wonder if we'll ever get out?"

"Some day we shall."

THERE was silence between them. The lamplight and the glow of the stove shone upon Elsa's clear skin, making a little full shadow beneath her red underlip as she served the supper.

Usually, Martin ate with the animal hunger of one who saves his appetite for a single meal. After standing in an icy wind outside the rationing-shop for an hour, Elsa had managed to buy sausages to eat with their blackish-gray bread. But tonight Martin's appetite flagged. He put his sinewy hands on the table, pushing away his chair.

"Can't eat the damned stuff. I've been dreaming of that year we spent in England with the old folks. That old house in Sussex and the clotted cream, and the nice, slow people, not like these half-crazed brutes—"

"You mustn't, Martin," said Elsa in a low voice. "The house has ears."

"You little Trojan! It drives me crazy to think what might become of you, if anything happened to me."

"I'd manage. But nothing will."

Martin stared into his coffee-cup. Usually they whipped up any jokes, or some light-hearted happening which the day yielded, to talk about in that poor sanctuary of theirs. Martin, by habit, still had a happy grin. But it was not there tonight. Instead there was that disturbing brightness about his eyes, almost as though he were slightly intoxicated. He said suddenly, looking down at his cigarette:

"I wonder if John Worden ever thinks of us, now."

A little tinge of color surged over Elsa's thin cheeks. Her glance was startled.

"Why should he? He's safe in America, and he's rich and—happy, I expect. A bloated capitalist, Martin."

"Old John Worden a bloated capitalist!" Martin laughed softly and shook his head. "No fear. He's the old hell-for-leather John, for a certainty. You've got his photograph somewhere, haven't you, kid?"

"Yes." Elsa's newly awakened color deepened, but she spoke carelessly.

"Um. Better tear it up, for safety."

SOMEHOW the name of John Worden lightened the dingy apartment. Yet tragedy lay in memory of him. John Worden had been their demi-god six years before. They were children in their 'teens, and he was a great, clean-limbed giant of twenty, with blue eyes that laughed at the lean years and the lean people about him. It was a precious bit of the sane old U. S. A. in the middle of the blood and phantasmagoria of those days, that the Wordens, father, mother and giant son, brought to the old house.

Till, one snowy night, in the days of the Tcheka, the blow fell. The secret police came very swiftly and silently, as they always did. John Worden's father and mother were pistoled as they walked through the dark garden to the waiting prison-van.

While the suave explanations of an "accident" were being made at the Embassy, David Peterson and his Russian wife were sent to the Siberian timber-camps. They had both died on the way, peacefully, it was said, and in each other's arms.

Somehow, John Worden had got out of the very teeth of the Tcheka, escaped from Russia, reached England and then America to become a rich and prosperous man in that dear, sane country which seemed to belong to another planet. And Elsa and Martin Peterson were left behind in the chaos.

"What if John Worden turned up, suddenly, and got us out of the Zoo, Elsa?"

"He won't. He hates Russia."

"A good reason to come—for him. He's a kind of lion, Elsa. A lion wouldn't forget a pack of mangy wolves who did—who did what they did to him and us. A man like John Worden wouldn't forget you, dear kid."

"He seems to have. I was only just eighteen, Martinovitch—sorry!" Elsa's smile was wistful. She was disturbed to see that Martin was trembling a little with suppressed excitement. "How could he get us out, supposing he came? It's madness, Martin. Let's talk about something else."

"He might be in Moscow now, for all you know, you

darned little pessimist," said Martin. In spite of the careless grin he sent across to his sister, there was a touch of tension in his voice, and he came to his feet with an excited movement that made the lamp jump on the table.

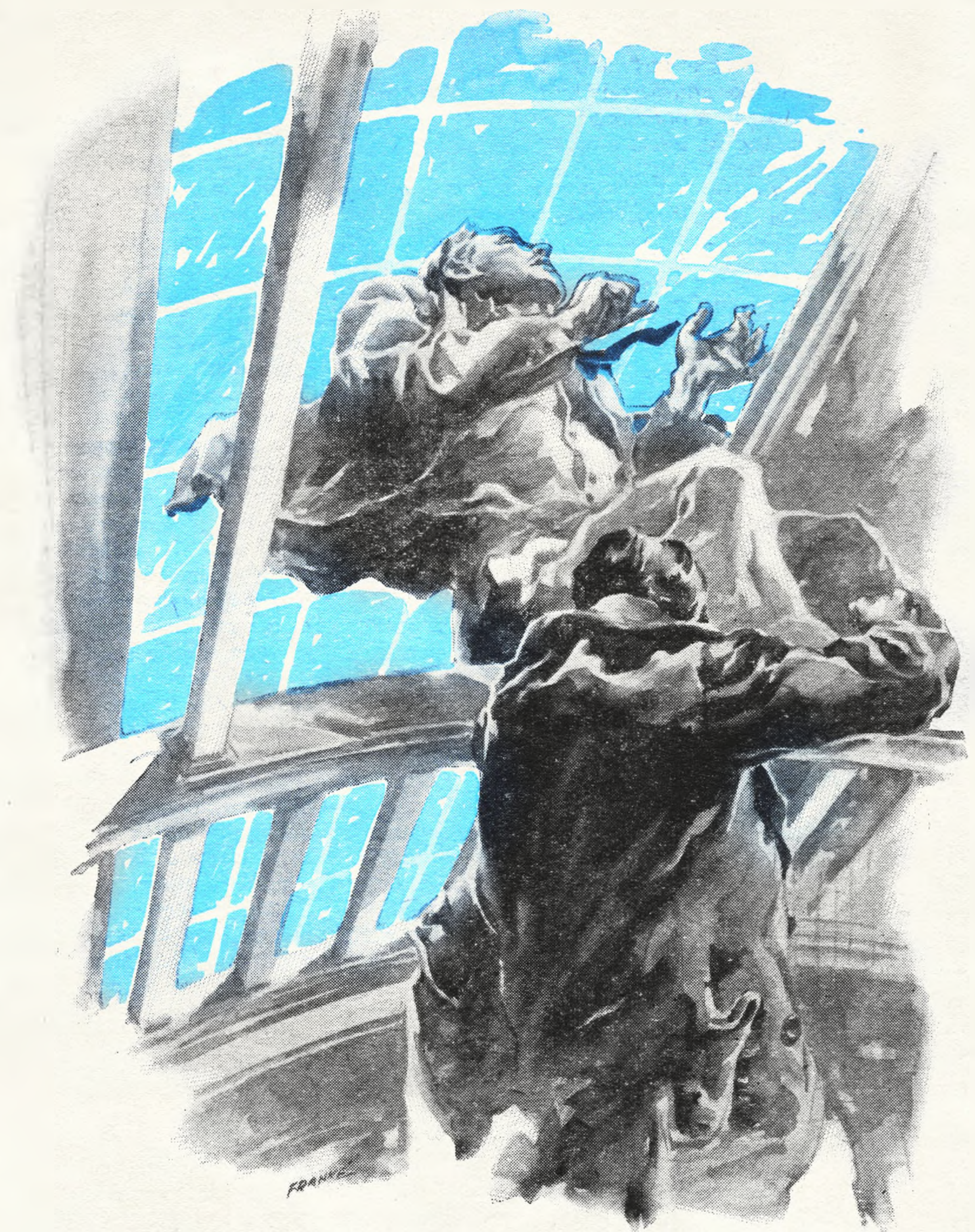
"Martin, you mustn't think about it too much," said Elsa, her low voice shaking a little. "Or talk about it."

To Elsa, the old house, turned now into a squalid slum, seemed to laugh back at them, pityingly. There was a meeting of some communist committee at the end of the corridor, and the drone of voices came with the hawking cough of Comrade Cuprin, who always expectorated before he spoke. Children in wooden shoes, and babies cradled in soap-boxes, made noises overhead. The loud-speaker outside bellowed relentlessly.

"Look!" whispered Elsa.

The door was slightly ajar. The lanky body and too-innocent face of Comrade Ivan Petropkin came sidling through the opening.

"A little milk for the love of God, Comrade Elsa! It is for Maria Yakovitch's baby, who has the croup. Did I say for the love of God? Well you believe in God yet, being half-English. Here is the jug."



"I caught him hanging over the railing, spying, and I threw him over."

Martin made an infuriated spring, but Elsa murmured a warning: "Don't!" She half-filled the jug and waited until Petropkin glided out. A feeling of fatalism came upon her, a kind of frozen acceptance of fate which was common to most of the other men and women who filled that rabbit-warren which had once been a beautiful mansion.

She was sure, now, that the man had been spying. In Soviet Russia, everybody spied, to save their own skins. Freedom ran in letters of fire across the land, but the Ogpu was everywhere, and death and the prison-gate behind everything. The Workers' Paradise was not far away. If one dared to doubt it, the Gay-pay-oo and certain Mongol torturers and executioners in the cellars of the Butyrka prison inquired the reason.

"Did the slimy hound hear it—John Worden's name, I mean?" There was a touch of rather pitiful bravado in Martin's question.

"I don't think so," Elsa lied, though inwardly she quaked. "But you must be more careful, Martin dear."

They smiled a little hollowly at each other. Martin put his arm about her, and they looked for a moment like two people standing upon the edge of an unseen precipice. Elsa's brown eyes searched the boy's closely. They guarded their secret. She guessed that, whatever the perilous thing was, he would continue to guard it from her, for her own sake.

"I'm going to dream about him tonight."

"Yes. Perhaps I shall. But I shall keep it to dreams."

She took out John Worden's photograph from its drawer in the rickety dressing-chest and looked at the lean, quizzical face. Elsa knew she ought to hold it over the lamp and burn it to ashes. But it was like burning hope, burning John Worden. Instead, she thrust it half-ashamedly into a tiny crack between the wall and the skirting-board, and moved the dressing-chest to cover it. . . .

The loud-speaker, having long since finished its dreary cadence, had died away. The two comrades from the arsenal who, it was said, made poison-gas for the coming

war upon Poland and France, and must get drunk every night to save the linings of their stomachs, had stumped and sung their way upstairs. Apartment House 187, once the Nikolai mansion, was wrapped in its breathing, uneasy sleep.

"This is the door," a low voice said on the landing outside.

Elsa heard it—heard the long silence which followed. She came with stiff limbs from behind the curtains of her little bed and sat holding her breath, watching the door, praying a little.

"Martin, dear!" she breathed across the room.

There was the whisper of a motorcar engine in the quiet street below—waiting. Long since, the ordinary traffic had ceased. At that hour, only the Black Crows, the prison-vans of the Gay-pay-oo, were abroad. By night, the Gay-pay-oo swooped. It was a Black Crow that waited below.

Martin came out of his little alcove. He was almost dressed, as though he had perhaps expected something like this. A small revolver was in his hand. Elsa had not known that he possessed such a weapon. She reached out to take it.

"No, oh, no, Martin!"

"No, perhaps not." He put it back in his pocket. "They'd slaughter us both. I ought to have known that. You've the wiser head, Elsa."

"What is it, Martin? Tell me."

"Nothing." His eyes turned blank, masked. "I'm as innocent as a child. Another comb-out of the bourgeoisie, I expect. But they mustn't take you, kid. By God, they mustn't—"

The door rattled. The sharp rap of knuckles sounded. Elsa rose slowly, flitted forward, turned back the key in the fragile lock.

There was a dry, authoritative voice:

"The officers of the Gay-pay-oo, comrade. We want Martin Peterson. In the name of the Government."

The landing was lighted by one dim electric bulb. Ivan Petropkin lurked at the stairhead, the hair of his scalp standing up in involuntary terror, but his crafty face alight with malice and delight.

A flashlamp shone in the hand of the foremost officer. His other hand rested upon his revolver-holster. He was an elderly man whose furrowed and mud-colored face came out of the collar of a green-faced tunic like something stamped out of parchment, as dry and as cold.

BUT it was not at him that Elsa stared as she slowly retreated before the entry of the dread visitants. As he held the door open, there pushed past him in the van of the officials a woman, slim and erect in a neat-fitting uniform, breeched and top-booted like the men.

She wore no cap, and her bright gold hair was clipped in close curls about her shapely head. The face was beautiful in a cold, perfect way, marred only by the arrogant little smile that chiseled the lips as she strolled nonchalantly into the room. In her small white hand she swung a pistol, the lanyard of which encircled her neck, and her eyes were amusedly curious as they dwelt on the shrinking form of Elsa.

This was the Bright Angel. The Russian people, though they had burned their ikons and had free-love and instantaneous divorce, and equality for women, could still find sinister names for sinister things. The Bright Angel of the Gay-pay-oo!

There were women in the Flying Force, and women who had mutilated themselves like the Amazons of old and lived in barracks as soldiers. There were women in the Ogpu, too, beautiful and seductive *agentes-provocateuses* for the undoing of men. But there were few quite like the Bright Angel.

The woman continued her nonchalant progress and dropping onto a couch, eyed the brother and sister calmly. Then, leisurely, she spoke.

"Have you ever heard of one John Worden, comrade?" she asked quietly.

Martin's temper suddenly flared.

"Who's John Worden, you damned wolves? I know nothing about him. Nothing, I tell you."

THE Bright Angel turned coolly to Elsa. "Can you tell us anything about this American, John Worden, citizen?"

Elsa answered. She looked back at the Bright Angel.

"We knew him when he lived in Moscow six years ago. He went to England. We have heard nothing of him since. My brother is innocent of anything, madame. He is a good citizen. They will vouch for him at his factory."

"Was John Worden your lover?" A flicker of golden eyelashes. A snowy smile.

"I was just eighteen, madame."

"Stop that!" said Martin sharply. The elderly officer struck him over the mouth with his fist. Another younger officer grinned, lit a cigarette, and maliciously pressed its glowing end on the back of Martin's clenched hand.

"Women are women in Russia at just eighteen," said the Bright Angel negligently. "And you would be pretty enough. Bring the boy. He must be interrogated about this plot to get out of Russia, and it grows late."

She rose with a little creak of her leather jack-boots. She was very beautiful, but there was a frigid deviltry, a deliberate terror about her, frightening to men as well as to women. She brought something barbaric and vivid which belonged to another era of Russian history into that thronged tenement where communists discussed the theories of Karl Marx against those of Frederick Engels, and workers of the Industrial Revolution herded like cattle.

It was the younger officer who clubbed Martin as he began to fight blindly. It was the elderly officer who swung Elsa aside as she ran forward with a cry at the sight of the blood on the boy's temple. But it was the Bright Angel who smiled and led the way with easy grace down the staircase.

There was more noise in Apartment House 187, now. It grew steadily. Elsa Peterson, swaying at the head of the staircase with a loneliness that seemed to coffin her heart, heard it as in a dream. Till then, the building had been quietly dead, save for the little cooing noise of compassion Madame Lydia, the ex-ballet dancer, made as she stroked Elsa's arm. But doors opened and lights came forth as the prison-van below started.

A ring of staring faces surrounded Elsa. Among them was a half-naked girl-child still sleepy and clutching some colored book from the Children's Propaganda Library which she had tied in the middle for a doll, and taken to bed with her. An old woman in nightcap and colored kerchief crossed herself.

"The Bright Angel!"

A rustle went round, a kind of communal shudder. Against the wall, his hair still electrified and his fingers at his mouth, Ivan Petropkin looked like one who had invoked the devil and regretted it.

"She lets no man escape. Good-by, little Martinovitch, the aristocrat!"

There was a giggle. But most of the inhabitants of Apartment House 187 crept silently back, and closed their doors.

"Pigs!" spat Madame Lydia, careless of who heard or who reported the indiscretion.

"Stop and talk to me, Elsa. For heaven's sake, show no surprise."

The decayed actress, old and worn in everything save human compassion, put her arm about Elsa and took her gently down to her room. . . .

After a long-dreaded blow has fallen, if it does not destroy, there follows a period of languor, the convalescence of the soul. Elsa knew, when she awoke from a few fitful snatches of sleep to the red and bitter dawn of Moscow, that to her the Gay-pay-oo had always been vultures waiting in the shadows, preening their high-shouldered wings for a quick swoop, some day.

But Elsa was permitted no period of languor, half-stunned as she was. She was an indentured woman-laborer of the Soviet. She had to go to her work at the Lenin Hospital, as usual.

If she had not done so, she would have been accused of "sabotage" against the state, and imprisonment would have followed. Besides that, the anesthetics at the Lenin Hospital had given out long ago, and Litvin, the grizzled head-dispenser, asserted that she was the only one who could compound the opium substitute.

"It is life, Comrade Elsa," said Litvin with a sigh, squeezing her hand in sympathy. He was bourgeois himself, and but for his skill, would have been under the knout of the labor-camps long before.

Nobody held out any hope for Martin. One did not hope about people the Ogpu took, but only wept with joy if, by a miracle, they came back to the living world again.

In the white and sanitary dispensary Elsa got through her work mechanically. Usually she liked the dispensary, for it was the cleanest place she knew in Moscow. But its tiled walls seemed to close upon her now. Why had they taken Martin? What was his secret? The questions beat like hammers through her numbed brain. And then, how could she help him? Despair whispered: "In no way!" So the long day dragged.

"There is a message for you, Comrade Elsa," said Litvin late in the afternoon. "A letter from somebody. I hope it is good news."

She tore open the envelope without hope. There was a blue card inside it, and she stared at it uncomprehendingly for a moment. In neat letters, some words were written across the card.

Admit Comrade Elsa Peterson by the Moscowa gate of the Kremlin to see Comrade Boris Vladimir, People's Commissar.

That was all. Elsa sat on a chair with the color stirring in her drawn cheeks and a wild hope beating through her.

"It is good, child?"

"Yes, I think it is good."

Boris Vladimir! She had forgotten him, the only man in Russia who could help her. Her mind flew back. Once, two years before, Boris had asked her to marry him. It was before he became a communist, before he had risen with lightning rapidity to a high place in the Kremlin, that great fortress where Stalin and his commissars had their stronghold.

Boris had known the Wordens and her father and mother. He had been handsome and laughing, like the old Russians, but she had never loved him, never even liked him, perhaps. . . . But Elsa's heart lifted high in gratitude now, and the first tears blurred her eyes.

"Go now, child," said Litvin, patting her shoulder gently.

The old man watched her a little wistfully as she went. . . .

There was a blue sky, and the Kremlin towers showed gray and gilded against it. The giant walls and buttresses were red-brown in the afternoon sunlight; the uniforms of the Red Guards in the gateway made a splash of color. A Gay-pay-oo man in black service coat strolled from nowhere, with his hand on the revolver in his pocket, to close upon Elsa from behind.

"I come to see Comrade Vladimir." Elsa could not control the momentary tremor of her voice.

"Your card?"

The great gates closed upon her. A woman-officer with eyes like agates and as cold, ran her hands deftly over her for hidden weapons. The Gay-pay-oo man stood negligently still with his hand in his pocket, watching her. This was the Kremlin, that mighty dynamo, triple-bound in steel, which worked the mightiest experiment upon humanity the world has ever known.

"Comrade Vladimir's rooms are near the Big Palace."

ELSA went swiftly across the great square. Outside its walls lay the tomb of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, savior of Russia, prophet of the new world, for the faithful to visit like a shrine. Inside was the dynamo he had set in motion for the good or evil of mankind. But Elsa was too absorbed to think of these things. Her heart was beating in her throat with hope and eagerness; and when a gray-haired, square-faced man with the eyes of a hawk came from one of the magnificent doorways, followed at a distance by a Gay-pay-oo agent, she did not guess it was the great Stalin, that recluse of the Kremlin, himself.

"In here, comrade." The disembodied voice made her jump. An agent had trodden in her footsteps all the time.

But she was alone when she reached Boris Vladimir's room. It was a splendid chamber, where czars and grand dukes had lived and died bloodily, though it was plain and austere enough now. The only bizarre object in it was a huge Mongol, in blue robe and slippers, who padded out by some door as Elsa entered.

The People's Commissar came quickly to his feet from a bureau in the corner.

"Elsa—Comrade Elsa!"

He was young for a commissar, barely thirty. A lean, square Asiatic face, with eyes that smoked and dreamed to themselves in dark crescents. His high cheekbones and flawless white skin told of his mingled Circassian and Mongol ancestry, a dreamer of Oriental dreams. An aristocrat—once.

But Boris Vladimir had washed out that sinister stain when he had watched a certain white-haired old man, who bore his name, smile into the rifle muzzles of the firing-squad. He was cleansed. The pure fire of the communist burned in him.

Certain ignorant peasants called him the Man who Slew his Father. But the State Inquisition had given him a clean *cheestka,* found him full of the divine flame, and lifted him into the councils of the Kremlin.

"The news of poor Martin reached me," he said gravely. "I thought you might wish to see me. Perhaps I can do something—for old times' sake. Sit down."

"It was good of you—so good of you," Elsa said in a low voice. Her eyes shone gratefully. "The Gay-pay-oo took him away last night. And he's innocent, quite innocent of anything, Boris."

SHE called him by name, timidly, out of the sudden warmth of gratitude she felt. He looked up.

"He is accused of plotting to get out of the country," he said slowly. "He has communicated with a man named Worden, in London. His letters were intercepted. I remember Worden. A mad fool of an American. Why do two good citizens wish to get out of Russia, Comrade Elsa?"

Elsa felt herself grow very white. With a sickness, she realized that here, in the heart of the Kremlin, she had learned Martin's secret. Fate was sinister and ironical, like that, in Moscow.

"He's only a boy," she murmured, "only a boy, Boris. If I had known, I should have stopped it. I should have known that it was useless—"

Vladimir smiled back gravely. He had always been an epicure. That was the Oriental part of him. Elsa Peterson, daughter of the English metallurgist Peterson, and the Russian Countess Nikolai—both dead. Born in Russia, but with no Russian instincts. Eyes warm and brown. Head small and arrogant. Body supple and strong, in spite of semi-starvation. Soul unconquerable—till now.

Boris Vladimir laughed to himself. That was the card-index habit of the People's Commissar coming out.

Once, her velvety eyes and firm red mouth had driven him almost mad with love, but she had always turned him away. So he had changed it into cold desire, and waited. Love, Vladimir told himself with a mock sigh, had turned to that, in Russia. With Russian women, nowadays, the epicure had a poor time.

Thus Comrade Boris Vladimir, People's Commissar.

"The claws of the Gay-pay-oo hold very tight, Comrade Elsa," he said. "Even we Commissars cannot always loosen them. But perhaps I could, for a friend, a dear friend."

"Oh, if you could!" She saw that Vladimir had come to his feet, and stood near her. Slim-hipped and broad-shouldered, he took her hand. It made her sway toward him with a loneliness she had scarcely realized until then.

"He is in the Butyrka prison. People call Madam Feodora, the woman-officer who arrested him, the Bright Angel, or sometimes the Bright Angel of Death, Elsa. We can still be grim poets in Russia, where the Gay-pay-oo is concerned."

"But you—you say—"

"You're a strange Russian woman. Have you nothing to offer to a man who loves you, who has always loved you?"

Elsa took a step back. A slow color crept into her face.

"You mean, if I'll marry you, you'll get Martin his freedom?"

"Marriage? A very temporary institution, nowadays, Elsa. We shall abolish it, in time."

"I see," said Elsa.

She felt no scorn, no bourgeois horror. A woman of the Soviet got beyond that. This was the Red Republic, where everything that was fine between man and woman had got twisted and mauled. Perhaps it was only because she was not really Russian that she—held out.

"I love you, Elsa. I worship you." His eyes were burning. Boris Vladimir found his passion a more piercing and urgent thing than he had thought it.

"I do not love you, Comrade Vladimir."

Her firm mouth twitched. It was laughter in the face of despair and death. Boris Vladimir looked down at her. He smiled with his eyes, but not with his mouth.

"Is that my *congé?* I thought of taking you to see your brother. It is a privilege the relatives of few political prisoners enjoy."

"He's in the cage. I'm afraid he's been questioned rather severely."

FOR a wild minute of hope, as she stepped into one of the Rolls-Royces that were parked in the Kremlin square, Elsa thought that, perhaps, Boris Vladimir had relented. His face was calm and without expression, as he settled by her side. The chauffeur was the Mongol she had glimpsed for a moment, and he sent the car dashing like a bright shell out of the gateway.

The Butyrka! Moscow only whispered the name of the dread dungeon. It chilled Elsa with horror.

Yet when the car slid through a black-mouthed archway which shut out the Moscow sunset, Elsa was calm again. There was a bottom to all terror, and one reached it in the Butyrka. The gates clanged behind her and Vladimir; the effluvia of cells where hundreds of people, men and women, were herded like cattle, reached her. It was like the scent from some burial-ground. . . .

"Not that way, Comrade Elsa." Vladimir drew her aside from a long, dimly lighted corridor. "That is where the execution-squad walks, now and then. Do you see the tiny red light over some of the barred alcoves? Presently—but when we're gone—there will be a pistol thrust into each one. Silenced. They do it very quietly, and humanely. The only trouble is that the people inside know it is coming. With the less serious condemned cases, —citizens who foolishly plot to get out of the country without permission, say,—if they're condemned to death, they are shot from behind as they walk out to exercise. Again, however, silently."

"Tell me—what will they do with Martin?" She forced herself to speak steadily.

"Siberia—or perhaps not."

"Where is he?"

"He's in the cage. I'm afraid he's been questioned rather severely. If it hurts you to see him, remember that I love you, Comrade Elsa."

In the dim electric light, something inhuman passed across Vladimir's face. It was not the blaze of the fanatic communist, looking at the grim thumbscrews of his faith, but something deeper—from his Asiatic blood.

The jailer switched on a light. Inside one of the cages something stirred—knelt there, pressing the cold iron with burned and swollen palms, moving a white young face to peer through.

"Elsa! What are you doing here with Vladimir? You're not—not a prisoner?"

"No, Martin. He brought me to see you."

"Kind of him!" With an effort, the boy was grinning defiance at Vladimir. A knout-weal on his cheek opened and bled. His quick breath fanned Elsa's face. "He's high panjandrum now, is Borisky Vladimirovitch, Esquire. He was behind the Bright Angel. They want to know how I proposed to get out. Oh, the Angel questioned me"—Martin's red eyelids shut for a moment—"about John Worden. They seem to think Worden was trying to help me, some way. How can he when he's not in the country?"

There was a cunning note in Martin's low laugh. He fondled Elsa's face for an instant from between the bars.

"Stick it, kid!" he whispered. "Stick everything. There's hope for you."

"And you, Martin?"

"And for me." A shudder went through the boy's frame. "Me too, of course. I'll get out."

The jailer clicked the light out. Darkness fell inside the cage, leaving the ghost of a sob and then silence. Vladimir's hand touched the sleeve of Elsa's coat, and she felt herself moving back along steps and corridors that seemed slippery with something more than ordinary ooze. It had been a brief, vivid glimpse of Martin in the depths of the Butyrka prison that Boris Vladimir had given her, but she felt that it would be seared on her soul forever.

White electric arc-lights had spluttered into being outside the great prison gateway. They stood in the wind.

"You're very brave," Vladimir said. "I love brave women. Have you changed your mind, Comrade Elsa?"

"No," she answered.

One of the black prison-vans swooped up to the gateway, and he drew her aside.

"If you do so within a reasonable time," he said, "send to me the little blue card again. You still have it? I must get back to the Kremlin. Can I give you a lift?"

She shook her head; the Rolls-Royce started noiselessly and hurtled out of the archway, carrying Comrade Boris Vladimir, People's Commissar, back to the Kremlin upon urgent state business.

The side-streets were dark and unlighted yet. A few fine flakes of snow had begun to fall, but Moscow was not sheeted up, for winter had hardly come.

Elsa trod through the slush without looking at the propaganda fire-signs, which gave the only light there was, so far. There was no hope in her soul, but only a few crumbs of courage, which were going quickly.

Somebody was following her. An Ogpu agent, probably. He was dressed in workman's clothes, and lurched carelessly along in the dark shadow of the wall, quickening his footsteps to hers.

"Whither away at that speed, comrade?" He was abreast of her, grinning with his grimy face; and then in a low voice: "Stop and talk to me, Elsa. For heaven's sake, show no surprise."

Elsa swayed ever so little. The fair, square-jawed face and big slouching figure swam before her. It was John Worden at whom she looked. Older, harder, and disguised as a Moscow workman. But John Worden.

"Walk backward into the house, and if you open your mouth, I shall blow you into the next world."

"Hungry, eh? We'll eat. It's my holiday." He gave a guffaw of laughter. A few passers-by turned to look at them in amusement. The young man put his arm about her waist and swept her across the street to a little underground café which blazed its portals there.

"I'm Mitka Ivanovitch, a mechanic. I followed you from prison. I know all about Martin, poor boy. I've been in Moscow two months, trying to get you and him out of this rat-hole. I'll do it yet. Have you got it, Elsa dear, and can you act a bit—when we get inside the café?"

"Yes." She sent him a quivering smile in which there were tears. It was a long time since Elsa Peterson had felt tears of joy in her eyes.

The café was half full of workmen and young girls, some showing much stockinged leg, others nursing babies and smoking cigarettes. The walls were plastered with anti-God posters for decoration; and in a corner alcove stood a figure of the Virgin and Child, upside down.

"Cigarette?" John Worden leaned over; his eyes kindled gently. "You're not altered much, Elsa dear. I was afraid this damned nightmare might have broken you. We can't talk much here. We'll have a drink and go our separate ways. I'm going to get you out. I know a man at Minsk who will get you a visa to take you over the Polish frontier. It'll be hard, but not impossible."

"And Martin?" she breathed.

John Worden was silent.

"I can't go without Martin."

"Don't be shy, comrade!" roared a voice through the tobacco-smoke. "We all make love here!"

There was a squeal of laughter, and Worden waved his hand, and put his arm about Elsa's waist.

"You don't mind?" A flush came to his tanned face. "I'll make a try for Martin. God knows how—yet. But things happen in this country."

He waited until the red-capped waitress set down the cheap wine, still holding Elsa. She could feel her heart beating in heavy content.

"You'll come too?" she said.

Worden's blue eyes fell to the bare deal table.

"I'm here to square an account. I've saved up for it in New York, grown rich for it. It was Vladimir who pistoled my father and mother in cold blood, Elsa. He was the young officer of the Tcheka who did it. I stay till I've paid off."

When John Worden lifted his face, it was like granite for a moment; and then he grinned across at the man who had bidden him not to be shy.

"Too crowded, comrade!" he called, with a grimace.

He pulled Elsa to her feet with a rough humor. A grubby child toddled to him, and he swung it aloft with laughing Russian baby-talk. Then they were up the narrow stairs and in the street again.

"Even this is dangerous. That café was too patriotically anti-God to be free of the Gay-pay-oo. We'll have to be like ships that pass in the night this time, Elsa."

"This time!" Elsa chilled with premonition. "Will there be any other time?"

"Sure," said John Worden simply. "Unless I'm dead. I came to Russia for you, Elsa. I'm—watching over you. Go home and wait."

He was gone. It was the old John Worden who said nothing, but did things; grimmer, older, and with a relentless strength behind the disguise he had assumed. He had come and gone like a dream into the dark chaos which held prisoner Martin and herself. Eyes shining, Elsa went home through the snow-flakes. . . .

But the days passed. No word came from John Worden. The snow came down silently, mockingly, and sheeted Moscow. No word of John Worden, dead or alive. But one day word came from Butyrka prison.

That evening Elsa left the dispensary late. She fought doggedly to keep hope burning within her, but it was a losing fight, for the deadly fatigue of unremitting work lay upon her.

The street-car jolted its way slowly. The crowd in the car was rough and bad-tempered. The woman by Elsa's side was crying bitterly. They were sending her to a factory fifty miles away and putting her baby into a crêche with babies from prison, the babies of prisoners and woman-bandits. The Government looked after that sort of folk, she wailed, rocking herself, because they were psychological cases, though God knew what that meant. One could only be comfortable nowadays if one was a murderess or a wicked woman.

The lamp was lighted in the barrack-like entrance of Apartment House 187. Elsa saw Madame Lydia, slatternly and chalk-faced, standing on the landing, waiting.

"There is a police-agent in your room, God help you, child! A Chinaman. Go away from here."

IT was Boris Vladimir's Mongol servant. Elsa saw him as she opened the door slowly.

"The young man in the Butyrka sends this to you. My master said I could bring it to you."

The huge yellow face, above its glazed chauffeur's collar, was expressionless. Elsa took the tiny piece of paper. The writing was just decipherable. What it was Martin had used to write with, she did not try to guess. It was not ink.

"I can't stand it, Elsa."

A long shudder passed through Elsa. She dropped the paper to the floor.

"Tell your master I will bring the blue card to him," she said.

"He sent the automobile. The business, if it was to be transacted, the Commissar said, was urgent."

"Wait for me below, then."

The door closed softly behind the Mongol. Elsa went to the dressing-chest, moved it, took the photograph of John Worden from its hiding-place. With a colorless smile, she tore it up into small pieces and thrust the fragments into the stove.

ONE last long glance at the snowy street she gave as the impassive Yogatai started the car. There was no John Worden in sight. Perhaps he too was in the Butyrka at that moment, with the red bulb burning over his alcove. . . . It was no use thinking of that now.

The hoary old walls of the Kremlin rose above the glare against a patch of dying sunset. The Moscowa gate was stark and white under its arcs. By night and day the work of the Brotherhood of Man went on.

The Commissar's car slid between the opened gates. They clanged-to again behind it.

Within Moscow's Kremlin, in the quiet and spacious room of the Old Palace which was occupied by Comrade Boris Vladimir, People's Commissar, one Koregorvsky, secretary to the State Prosecutor, drew his chair to the table and took forth a *dossier* of yellow papers from his case. He deposited them before him with an amiable grunt.

"A trifling matter, Comrade Boris," he said. "But you appear not to be greatly occupied at the moment. The matter of the young man Martin Peterson, at present in the Butyrka. His interrogation was conducted by Madame Feodora. She seems interested in the young man's case, which is unfortunate for him." A gleam of dull amusement came into Koregorvsky's eyes, which were black and sunken and bright as those of a monkey. "It appears that there was a regular plot to get him and his sister out of Russia. Some harebrained American is concerned in it."

"So?" Vladimir leaned back in his chair and smiled rather incredulously. His glance stole to the clock. He had no enthusiastic liking for Comrade Koregorvsky, who was a malicious little ape, of unpleasant personal habits and a bloodthirsty enthusiasm for his work. In the Kremlin were many austere men whose veins ran with fire for the Cause and who lived like monks. But Koregorvsky was not one of them. Under czarism or bolshevism, he would have been a hunter of men.

"He has confessed it—under pressure. The prison presidium sit upon his case this evening."

"Have they got the American?" inquired Vladimir lazily.

"No, the rat is well disguised, it seems."

Vladimir laughed. "Always that mythical American!" he jeered gently. "That boy invented him because he knew the police were haunted by him. The commissars have decided to give him his release, Koregorvsky."

"What!" Koregorvsky's blue jaw dropped with an almost comic dismay. "But I came for your signature, on behalf of the Council sanctioning his execution."

"Before the presidium has convicted him?" asked Vladimir dryly.

"Pouf!" spat the secretary. He sat looking like a robbed wolf at his papers with one eye, while the other searched his companion wickedly and inquisitively. It was dark outside, now, and the blazing windows of the

ancient palaces which had been turned into offices and commissariats, bureaus and board-rooms, shone golden upon the heaped-up snow.

"Madame Feodora will be annoyed," said Koregorvsky, recovering himself with a chuckle. "Women are the devil in police-work. They are either too tender or too savage. She is too beautiful to be human. But there, I know nothing about women. I've forsworn them. A patriot must, if he is to do his work honestly. They lay siege to me in vain—quite in vain."

Koregorvsky shook his head with an adamantine expression on his wizened, ugly little face. He was rolling a cigarette and smoothing it leisurely in his crack-nailed fingers, without showing any sign of taking his departure. Vladimir cursed him inwardly, though he spoke with outward lightness.

"Ah, I thought the women-comrades of Moscow seemed sad, of late."

"When I go before the Examiners of Faith, I want to say with truth, that I have never indulged in loose living," said Koregorvsky unctuously.

"Or drinking," murmured Vladimir with a languid glance at his companion, who was a secret but inveterate vodka-tippler. "Have you any other papers for me to sign, Comrade Koregorvsky?"

HE rose to his slim height with another glance at the clock; and as he did so, the whisper of a car came at the door of the building below. Vladimir touched the bell-button at his desk to summon his woman-secretary, then realized his blunder. He had told the woman that, should he ring once, Elsa was to be admitted immediately. The poisonous little secretary was watching him with unmitigated curiosity; and as the door opened, the black beads of his eyes swung towards it.

"Ah!" said Koregorvsky, rubbing his hands.

Elsa moved towards Boris Vladimir as the door closed. She spoke very quietly.

"I've come," she said.

She stood, pale and slender in the furs she wore, looking at Vladimir with the pride that had always intoxicated him shining all about her. Not until Koregorvsky gave a little dry cough behind her, did she see that another person was there. The little secretary was on his feet, ducking a polite but very ironical bow.

"I will go, Comrade Vladimir," he said. "State business calls me."

For a moment, Vladimir would have followed him with his boot. Then he realized that the *contretemps* was more serious than appeared on the surface. Koregorvsky was magpie as well as monkey. Members of the Council were supposed to be pure and without reproach in their personal lives. The holy zeal which was to rebuild the world admitted of no looseness, save in the matter of marriage and divorce.

"A moment, comrade," Vladimir called with a whimsical grimace. "The secret is out: This is my wife. Pray meet Comrade Koregorvsky, the St. Anthony of the Kremlin, Elsa."

Elsa turned slowly to look at the little secretary. She had told herself, as Yogatai the Mongol chauffeur carried her in the car to the Kremlin, that she was not Elsa Peterson for the time being. She was somebody else, some other woman she was using. Without conscious acting, she was able to grasp the import of Vladimir's words while not asking herself their reason. With that desperate scrawl from Martin in her mind, her wits were sharpened to anything.

"Delighted!" croaked Koregorvsky.

He was baffled, yet unbelieving, as he bowed over Elsa's hand and then glanced through his sparse eyelashes into her face. Without hurry, and carelessly, as he did so, Vladimir moved the alabaster lamp which stood on the table, and thus threw Elsa's features into shadow. This little hound-on-the-trail was famous for his photographic memory, and it was said that, let him look only once at the camera-picture of a political prisoner, and he would know his grandfather at sight.

"Quite recently married, I'm sure." Koregorvsky was gathering up his papers. "You will be the youngest of the commissars' wives, madame, and certainly the most beautiful. It makes an old curmudgeon like myself envious. Have you found a nice residence?"

Vladimir answered. "In the Petrovka. No. 17, the Place. A little house with a scarlet door. Very pretty. You must come to dine with us soon, Koregorvsky." Vladimir turned to Elsa. His eyes pierced her with warning, though they smiled at her with rueful apology. "I'm desolated, my dear, but you can't stay now. You must go home to No. 17 and wait for me there. I shall be an hour or so."

He was sending her some urgent warning against the wizened creature who was in the room with them, scanning her like a lynx as he fumbled with his *dossier*. Elsa understood it, and knew that though he might be utterly relentless, though underneath, Boris Vladimir was Oriental to the core and would never be anything else, he was letting her know that he meant to keep his part of the bargain with all the resource at his command.

"Shall I walk?" she asked; and because she could feel Koregorvsky's eyes like a basilisk's, she managed a pout.

"Alas, the state needs the car," answered Vladimir, kissing her lightly. "Wait behind the scarlet door for me."

He did not even accompany her to the landing. There were secretaries and messengers there, and a horde of peasant commissioners from the far provinces, wandering the Kremlin with awed and stupid faces. Instead, Vladimir turned back again, into the room, only to collide with a suddenly galvanized and hurrying Koregorvsky.

"What! Going so suddenly, comrade?"

"I've the devil's business to transact, Vladimir," said the secretary in some confusion. Vladimir, with a cold hope that some day his fingers would meet round the man's scraggy throat, guessed his purpose, which was to set one of the invisible G.P.U. agents below, to follow Elsa.

"You always have," Vladimir laughed. "Can't the devil wait for a moment? I have some red wine just up from a collectivist vineyard in the Urals—they call it the Stalin vintage. It has a kick like a horse's hind-leg. Will you toast my pretty wife in it?"

IF, long afterward, Elsa was to think of Koregorvsky, the bloodthirsty secretary to the State Prosecutor, with a strange mingling of terror and gratitude, she had no inkling of it as she passed through the triple line of Red Guards at the Moscowa Gate of the Kremlin. She was to walk to the Petrovka, find a house with a scarlet door, and wait for Boris Vladimir in the house behind it—wait for him, till he came with Martin's freedom. His wife!

The touch of his kiss had been nothing more to her than the cold brush of one of the snowflakes that were falling, no more than a kiss on stone would have been. And all that was to follow would be neither more nor less. As she walked, Elsa passed a beautiful statue which she knew and loved by sunlight. The state had carefully preserved it, but underneath there was an inscription: "*Nicholas erected this statue, but Nicholas is dead. Therefore, the Russian people live.*" It was weighted with snow, but the beauty and the pride of it still lived beneath. She, Elsa Peterson, would be like that.

It was not far to the Petrovsky. The streets were almost deserted. There was a single droshky tinkling along the dirty snow, the driver cracking his whip at the decrepit horse. It was drawing alongside Elsa, as she walked to the house with the scarlet door.

"Get inside, comrade!" called the driver's hoarse voice. "Quick! She wants you, the old dame. She is of the old-fashioned sort, your mother. She won't have her daughter gallivanting anywhere by night. The Government crêches are too full already."

ELSA stepped back involuntarily. There were few lamps there, but she could see a torn mantilla fluttering in the wind, and two hands that gestured agitatedly.

"Inside, child, for God's sake! There's no time to waste!" came a sharp whisper.

The two hands caught her as she peered into the dark interior, and pulled her inside, so that she almost fell. A shrill but low voice bade the driver whip up his horse. Elsa saw the black-rimmed eyes of Madame Lydia, of Apartment House 187, burning at her.

"A kidnaping, eh?" The old woman was laughing, but her voice shook. "Once, they tried to kidnap me. The boys of the Probiansky Regiment. It was after the first performance of 'Eugene Onegin' at the St. Petersburg Opera in 1887. Long ago. I've had no such luck since. . . . So you went in that Commissar's car to the Kremlin, little one? When the gates closed after you, I wept. I thought I was too late. But you came out again. They say that God is only a tipple, like vodka. We drank deep of Him tonight, you and I, I think."

"You don't understand, madame," said Elsa in a low voice. "You must let me get down again. I'm going to get Martin, my brother, out of the Butyrka—"

"Will you whip up that fly-blown hulk of horseflesh of yours, little monkey-on-the-box, or shall my daughter drive? She is hussy enough," shrilled Madame Lydia to the driver, lifting her ravaged old face and then turning a look, which transfigured it, to Elsa. "Ah, I ran down the stairs after you. But the Commissar's car had carried you away. I followed. I tried to get past the Guards, and one of them dropped the butt of his rifle on my foot, the pig! It is so long since I did anything useful. I was an old cabbage under frost, praying only that my cat, Sasha, and I should die at the same time; and now—ah, we are here! Go into my room, child, not your own. Turn the door-handle and enter."

It had all happened so quickly that Elsa was bewildered. Something in the warm touch of Madame Lydia's shriveled hand alone gave it reality, as the old woman thrust her up the stairs and passed along to the communal kitchen alone, leaving Elsa at her door, with a pulse that began to throb suffocatingly. She tapped on its panels, opened it feeling like a drowning person who comes up to succoring hands. There stood John Worden.

"I waited," she said faintly, "I waited a long time, till Martin sent word that he couldn't last—"

It was very hard to believe that it was John Worden in the flesh. He caught her, and made her sit down on the little bed. Elsa looked into his face and saw that it was masked, cold.

"Vladimir?" He spoke the single word.

"Yes. But it's all right. All right for the moment. He was busy at the Kremlin," she told him slowly, clearly, with no surge of color into her cheeks, but her brown eyes resting on his unflickering blue ones. It was as though she had just called there to tell him, before going back to Boris Vladimir.

"The Ogpu has been watching you," Worden said, "and for all I know, me too. You don't know when you'll tread on them. I was afraid to come. Then, this morning, I trailed Madame Lydia here after she had left one of the ration-queues. I carried her basket home. She's an old trump. I'm her nephew, who works in the motor-factory at Nijni-novgorod. I came an hour before you left, but the house-spy was hanging round."

"Ivan Petropkin. I know."

There was silence. Elsa's glance went to Madame Lydia's cheap alarm-clock.

"I have to go and get the order for Martin's release from Boris Vladimir."

Worden lifted his fair head, which he had been resting on his hands. He took her face between his palms in the odd, sudden way that had been his in the old days. Six long years of grim struggle for Elsa, of saving up for vengeance for John Worden, fell away between them.

"I have a plan—a beastly plan."

"It would be, if it was yours," said Elsa. Laughter flicked her like the tip of an unfamiliar wing, but Worden gave no answering smile, so that she breathed: "What is it?"

Apartment House 187 crepitated its squalid life about them. Some peasant, recently come to Moscow, had brought his balalaika, and was twanging it in the room above. A sick old bourgeois, who had no ration-card, could not work and must therefore starve, moaned softly in the next kennel.

"Beastly—and dangerous for you."

"I'm going to Boris Vladimir in ten minutes," Elsa said, looking at the grimy, clean-cut features by her side. "That's pretty beastly. But it's fated. Will you still help to get Martin and me out of the country, John—afterward? Martin, anyway. It won't matter much about me, perhaps. I shall be a thoroughbred communist woman in morals and everything else."

"Don't!" said Worden sharply. And then, slowly, with something in his blue eyes that was like the heart of a glacier, he outlined his plan.

THE house with the scarlet door was small, but comfortable. Comrade Vladimir had furnished it with silks and rugs from his native Caucasus, and a little brazier of scented smoke burned in one of the rooms. The note of *orientale* which Comrade Vladimir brought to Moscow was approved by the Kremlin, despite its suggestion of luxury and wealth. It was in Asiatic Russia, where the hordes took but a languid interest in the Five-Year Plan and did not clamor to be enslaved in factories, that the Soviet hoped to make Comrade Vladimir useful.

"Yogatai is still at the Kremlin," said Vladimir. "One gladly lends one's servant to the state. But he will come with us to the Caucasus when the Kremlin sends me."

His smile at Elsa was limpid as he took her hands in his. "How cold you are, little wife!" he laughed. "We hoodwinked that sly old fox Koregorvsky, didn't we? Warm your hands at the stove."

He made no movement toward her, but watched her lissome outline against the faint glow of the stove. He was so completely sure of her now. The plain frock of poor material which she wore was of this damned poverty-stricken Moscow, but she was like a goddess in it. If he took her with him to Tiflis, which was all scented sunlight and guilded domes, even nowadays, she would blossom indeed, there.

"Elsa!"

She turned in his arms. A cold resolution, which had something of cruelty in it, that she should offer the first kiss, made Vladimir hold her loosely. But she shook her head.

"There's Martin," she said slowly. "Even you can't

make me forget him, Boris. Oh, don't you understand? I'm not driving the bargain. But I can't be happy for one moment till I know he's going to be set free."

Elsa tried to make her smile wretched and apologetic. But she was afraid Vladimir would hear the desperate beating of her heart. The house with the scarlet door was so very quiet. She saw the black line of his eyebrows, and then he laughed.

"You don't trust me?"

"I do. Did I ever strike you as I'm the kind of woman a man wants to play dishonorable tricks upon, Boris? But if there's an order of release—"

"There is."

"I want it in my hands. If you'd let me take it to the prison and get Martin out, now, I would come back. But I don't expect you would trust me."

"No, I wouldn't," said Vladimir. He took an envelope out of his pocket, stung by the tiny glint of scorn Elsa could not keep out of her voice. "But you shall have it at midnight. By God, you shall have it at midnight, I promise you, Elsa—and bring him here if you wish, my beloved. You proud woman, do you still bargain? Am I one of these rat-faced comrades of Moscow with nothing but ice and cold water at their hearts?"

"No." He was holding both her arms, drawing her closer; and despair crept into Elsa. "But I want the order. And I'm cold and hungry, Boris. Perhaps I shall feel less—less doubtful when we've eaten something."

Involuntarily her gaze went across Vladimir's shoulder to the little window of the house. It was heavily curtained, but Boris Vladimir swung round to follow the direction of her eyes. Almost at the same moment there sounded a knock at the scarlet door.

Vladimir strode into the little passage. In Moscow even a People's Commissar abandoned whatever he was engaged upon to answer a knock at the door. . . . Against the darkness of the street a man in the garb of a workman stood.

"Gay-pay-oo, comrade. Kremlin section. Koregorvsky, secretary to the State Prosecutor, sends me with a private message."

A picture of the little ape-man as he had last seen him, maudlin with many glasses of the Stalin vintage, made Vladimir's voice curt.

"Deliver it, then."

"There are listening ears," said the messenger coolly, "and it blows infernally cold here. Walk backward into the house, Comrade Vladimir, and if you should so much as open your mouth till we're inside, I shall blow you into the next world and make a mess of your scarlet door."

WITH a dry mouth Vladimir looked down. There was no need, because he could feel the muzzle of the pistol that jarred against his side. The man who held it was thrusting gently but steadily, and kicked the door behind him with his foot, yet without noise. They went together into the room where Elsa stood leaning back against a chair, and Vladimir raised his strained eyes to look at the man's features. But as yet he did not recognize them.

Something crashed into his face like a piece of ironstone, and felled him to the floor. A hand went into his inside pocket.

"Primitive, that," said John Worden. "I did without a permit from the Kremlin. That would have spoiled it. Here's the order of release, Elsa. . . . Sit up, Vladimir."

Worden sat on a chair with the pistol in his hand. When Vladimir, with a trickle of blood at his chin and his face like a pallid Satan, found his feet and spoke his name, he nodded, but remained silent, gesturing the still-dazed man to a chair. His movements then were very quick, but still silent. From his pocket he took a thick strap of woven camel's-hair and pinioned Vladimir with it, working with strong, swift fingers. With a handkerchief he had wet with snow, Worden gagged the cut and bleeding mouth, using neither pity nor gentleness. Watching his bleak young face, Elsa was conscious of an odd chill. He seemed so remote, so engrossed—as though there were no other people in the world but Boris Vladimir and himslf. . . .

"We're going to go, now, aren't we?" she said, touching his shoulder.

Worden looked at her. He passed his hand across his forehead, which was wet.

"You are, Elsa. You're going to the Butyrka for Martin. I shall meet you both in Madame Lydia's room. We arranged it, didn't we? You'd better go now. I want to put out the light and lock the door."

"What do you mean to do?"

Worden made no answer. Nor did he meet Elsa's straight, clear gaze. His plan was chipped out of ice, and it was quite simple. To himself, Worden called it a private execution. It was the sort of thing that happened in a Russian novel, and beneath the overlay of savage idealism which the teachings of the sainted Lenin had given it, this was still Russia. His purpose was to shoot Boris Vladimir through the back, as Vladimir had shot his father and mother, six years before. Into very few men's hands fell vengeance so quickly and satisfactorily, after long waiting. His chance of escape was good: to slip out into the street among what people—if any—gathered at the sound of the shot, and then vanish. It would be easy.

THEN Worden, through a slightly red mist that would not go from his sight, saw that Elsa had caught his arm. She was shaking her head, and spoke without horror, but as one who made a simple statement.

"We can't kill him, John. Not in cold blood. We can't."

"Not *'we.'* I. An execution, Elsa. Instead of Martin's."

"No. You're not an executioner."

She was not even pleading. But something burned in her eyes. It was not pity for Vladimir. It was concern for Worden, for his soul, perhaps. In all that blood and mire he had come to fetch her out of, she wanted him to keep clean, as she had kept clean herself. He looked at Vladimir's chalky face. If he lived, the man would hunt them with every pack of hounds in Russia, unless they got out in time. Some day, one of them must kill the other. John Worden knew, then, that if it was to be in cold blood, the killer would be Vladimir. . . .

"It's madness, Elsa." Worden lowered his pistol slowly. "We shall have to truss him up properly, and put him somewhere. If only you had some drug and a hypodermic syringe from that dispensary of yours—"

"I have," said Elsa simply. "It was sabotage and theft—Siberia. But old M. Litvin, the head-dispenser, gave it to me. He said that every bourgeois and aristocrat left alive ought to be able to—to cheat them, if necessary."

A feeling of awe came over John Worden. He took the hypodermic syringe and a small vial from Elsa's steady fingers. She spoke of death as calmly as the women he had known spoke of any slight illness that might come to them. It humbled him strangely, and made him feel, for the moment, that his vengeance was a poor thing. God willing, she and her brother would be over the frontier in two days. . . .

The scarlet door closed softly behind them. It was a dark street, and no one saw their exit, for there was a funeral procession on the Tverskaya. Olyenin, of the Moscow executives, was going in his red hearse to lie in

state, followed by children and red banners, and bands. Worden turned the key in the door, though he guessed Yogatai had instructions not to return that night. Worden had flung Vladimir upon his bed for the morphia injection, and found it all clean, scented linen. . . . But Boris Vladimir lay in an old-fashioned cupboard at that moment, in a deep sleep that would last far on into the next day.

Their plans had changed in one respect. Some fear for which she could not account had made Elsa afraid of Madame Lydia's room in Apartment House No. 187, as a rendezvous. The danger, on the other hand, was that Martin, at the sight of John Worden as he came forth from the darkness of the Butyrka, might make some sign that would betray them all. But time pressed perilously now. There was a train for Minsk somewhere about midnight. Only when they were out of Moscow would they be able to breathe a little freely.

Worden's plan was simple, and he had laid it all beforehand. In a certain house in Minsk, which was on the Polish frontier, lived old Sasha Voronov, an old friend of his dead father's and mother's. Old Sasha had forged passports all ready stamped and signed with the visa of the Soviet, and waiting to be filled in with whatever names they choose to travel under.

"I've money, too," said Worden, touching Elsa's hand for an instant, "sewn into the lining of these confounded workman's clothes. A hoard that would get Mitka Ivanovitch, the mechanic, sent to the timber-camps if they ever stripped him. Courage, Elsa! We're all right, once clear of Moscow."

"And the Butyrka," she said with an involuntary shiver.

The order of release was a sheet of parchment, bearing the seal and signature of the President of the Council. As they came within sight of the dark hulk of the prison, Elsa found herself holding the document tightly in her fingers and fighting against the sickness of memory. What if it was too late? What if the red light had burned over Martin's cage and been extinguished again?

Boris Vladimir lay in a dead sleep that would last far into the next day.

But in the low and cavernous archway which Moscow called the Throat of Death she discovered fresh strength again.

The Ogpu guards closed upon her and Worden. Behind one of the gates a small grille was opened. The gateway of the Butyrka which, for the moment seemed to sleep like a gorged animal, yawned into saturnine life.

"Order of release?" The Ogpu officer stared at it as though at a curiosity. "Enter!"

Inside some anteroom a light sprang, and then others. The Ogpu officer gestured them into the little chamber, and Elsa and Worden found themselves illuminated by a searching glare that showed every facial expression. Presently one of the walls, which was no more than a series of sliding shutters, folded open, and they saw a gray and grizzled man who sat at a desk and lifted his head like a bear that looked out of its lair: Drishkin, governor of the Butyrka.

"His sister? And you?"

"She is my friend," answered Worden, shuffling from one foot to the other. "She was a little nervous. And so—I came."

"Who gave you the order of release?"

"Comrade Boris Vladimir, People's Commissar."

"The Butyrka does not like to part with its little children, comrade," said the governor, fixing Elsa with heavy-lidded eyes. "Bad babies, all of them, and better kept indoors, for the safety of the state. But this seems in order. Wait."

He came with a lurch to his feet and passed through a door which opened behind him. Elsa and Worden were left alone in the brilliantly lit room. Neither spoke. Each knew that unseen eyes were watching them and quick ears listening. But Worden screwed his cap nervously in his hands, grinning at Elsa with a clumsy word of comfort. A clock ticked over the governor's empty desk; a clang of steel came dully from the distance; and then, in the archway outside, the purr of one of the Black Crows, the prison-vans of the Gay-pay-oo out early. . . .

Five minutes. Elsa could feel the tumult of her pulse beating in her throat.

"Cheer up, little one," said Mitka Ivanovitch, the mechanic, patting her shoulder. "They're fetching him."

A stupor began to creep over Elsa. The silence and the brutal brightness of the room caused it. She might have slept or screamed—either—there and then, but for a sudden sound which came. It was the rasp of the big gates as the Black Crow delivered more children to the Butyrka. There was a muffled scream; and then, like a laugh in a death-chamber, a snatch of song delivered in a shrill treble:

Fal-lal-lal, love and wine
Is better than bread and vodka—

The song was cut off by a blow, but the singer tottered into the flagged hall, drawing a soiled but gayly-colored kerchief about her neck and putting straight a few wisps of gray hair. She was dressed in some sort of flared skirt which had once been flame-color, and a low velvet bodice half-showed her shriveled bosom. Even the Ogpu agents who accompanied the cowed knot of prisoners fell back as she began to pirouette upon the cracked and torn dancing-shoes she wore.

It was Madame Lydia of Apartment House 187.

Elsa stood with a dry throat. She saw the lined old eyes look at her and flare a warning. Then the crazed voice went on:

"Lydia, of the Opera. Good evening, Butyrka! I love the dark and handsome men, the strong and silent ones. So they kidnap me and bring me to you, eh? I put on my dancing-clothes while they waited for me. Well, I shall love you, I think, Butyrka. A woman must always give way to strength and a close embrace. They call me bourgeois—me, Lydia! They suspect me of God knows what, dear Butyrka. You'll prove to them that I am innocent—at least as innocent as I have ever been in my life. The Commissars pursued me—oh, yes, those who drink milk and water in public—"

"Silence the drunken beldame!" said a harsh voice.

Elsa looked away as the blow fell. Worden, too, was white, under his grime. . . .

They divined the old ballet-dancer's purpose. Whatever the reason for her arrest, she invited the revolver-butt with set purpose. Whether they were the cause of it, and the gates of the Butyrka had closed upon them in earnest indeed, or whether it was no more than another old and useless bourgeoise dragged away to make room for a worker and citizen, Madame Lydia, at the sight of them, meant there to be no confrontation. Even the Butyrka could not confront a senseless old woman with anybody.

Two of the guards picked up the limp, stunned figure, and as they carried her away, a little brocaded shoe fell to the floor. The episode had lasted only a matter of seconds. Lydia of the Opera had gone to the arms of her last lover with a brave and unselfish gesture which two people would remember all their lives.

A dry voice spoke. "Your brother is here."

IN after days, Elsa Peterson always remembered that joyful yet terrible moment, too. It battered against her courage and almost broke it. Martin stood unguarded, his shoulders bent a little, the pupils of his eyes half-closed in the strong light. He walked to Elsa unsteadily, and stood by her side, quite silently, holding the sleeve of her coat with timid fingers.

"You are free to take him away, comrades." Drishkin, governor of the Butyrka, watched them out of his expressionless bear's face, and pulled his mustache.

"My hat," said Martin. If he saw John Worden, he made no sign. When the governor threw him his hat. he cringed a little as he caught it. "I'm ready, Elsa."

And so Martin Peterson came out of the Butyrka.

THE streets were crowded. The cinemas and the State Opera, where a workman could hear Tschaikovsky for twopence, upon production of his communist card, were just ended. The loud-speakers bellowed news of five great factories newly opened at Nijni-novgorod under the Five-Year Plan which was to send the social fabric of other nations crashing into ruins and make Russia under the Soviet the greatest industrial country in the world. The half-starved Russian crowd pressed forward through the snow as though it did not hear.

John Worden looked down at Martin. The boy had said "Hullo, Worden!" and given him a strange, half-scared smile. That was all.

Worden sent a swift look behind. There was no agent following them, that he could see. He was glad of that thrusting, slightly odoriferous crowd. No other way of reaching Minsk was possible, save by rail. Transport in Russia was chaos. And since a number of locomotive-men had been executed for carelessness, the trains were slow, if sure. The midnight express might not start till daylight. Worden's jaw tightened, but he smiled at Martin again.

"All right, Mart?"

"Oh, quite. Quite." That was all again. A little chill passed through Worden. The boy reeled, now and again. But his pace was good enough.

Worden breathed more freely when they reached the thronged station. Here, as in every railway-station in Russia, there was a permanent population of residents infesting the platforms and waiting-rooms. A motley horde had solved the housing problem that way. Others merely made themselves comfortable while waiting for their trains. If one wanted to hide for a little while, there were worse places than "Ivan's Palace," Worden knew, should they chance to be unlucky with their train.

They were unlucky. The Minsk express left at six in the morning.

"It means seven at the earliest." Worden looked at Elsa. "Time enough. Vladimir won't waken till well after that. And the boy needs rest."

"He needs a lot of things," Elsa said in a voice strained by anxiety. "The brute-beasts—"

"Steady!" whispered Worden.

He left them, and his giant frame shouldered its way through the surging crowd to the buffet; his good-humored grin disarmed everyone. He emerged with an armful of provisions, coarse, but good.

"Now to camp," he said.

It was supper-time in the big waiting-room. As the three entered, a rich odor of cooking and unwashed humanity greeted them. Kettles bubbled on the two great stoves; and everywhere little groups were encamped, eating their gray or black bread, fish and cucumber. Here and there, on the straw mattresses, the weary ones had already turned in. But it was the social hour before sleep.

"The boy is ill," said a motherly-looking red-faced woman, drinking tea from a small samovar. "Is he hungry, then?"

"No. Sleep—I want sleep." Martin's head dropped. There was an empty mattress behind him. Worden lifted him upon it.

"He works so hard. And he was hurt in an accident in the factory."

"So! Poor boy! You travel without a kettle? There is tea here for your pretty wife."

The woman chattered on to John Worden.

"That little ginger-haired pussy there,"—she pointed

and chuckled,—"she hopes to catch a train for Leningrad today or tomorrow, with the boy by her side who has no chin. He is her new husband—though they are not married yet."

Elsa's head nodded. The lights were going low. She lay down on the mattress by Martin's side, and the motherly woman's voice blurred and died away. . . .

It was still dark when she awoke. The lights of the station-platform came murkily through the dirty windows, but all the lamps of the waiting-room were out. The sound of people sleeping was all about her. Martin lay like a dead man. But something had awakened her.

A little pencil of light moved near the doorway of the waiting-room—an electric torch. It snapped out. The door opened gently, and two figures passed forth. The platform lights shone upon two glazed caps. Ogpu officers! And the clipped, golden hair and lithe figure of one of them stood clear for an instant before it disappeared. It was the woman of the Gay-pay-oo who was named the Bright Angel. . . .

Elsa lay upon the mattress without moving, after the door of the waiting-room had closed behind the cropped-gold head of the Bright Angel. With her wits keyed taut to danger, she realized that the quiet disappearance of the woman of the Ogpu was as sinister as her stealthy visit to those huddled sleepers in the waiting-room had been.

ELSA spoke Worden's name, scarcely audibly, and stretched her hand out to him. The answering touch of his fingers was wide awake, full of nervous strength.

"All right, Elsa. I saw them. It's serious, I'm afraid. They shone their lamp on the faces of the three of us. Nobody else. Don't talk for the moment, my dear. Pretend to sleep again. We can't move yet, anyway."

"It was the Bright Angel—the woman who arrested Martin."

"That her name?"

Worden cautiously sat up. The windows, running with steam-heat and the exhalation of many breaths, were opaque. It was impossible to see outside. That imparted a rather ghastly sense of being trapped with other cattle in some butcher's pen—waiting. Yet if the Ogpu meant to take them, why had its officers quietly gone away again? Certain it was that they were watched; their plan must be abandoned, and another one thought of, with the additional handicap of a People's Commissar awake and full of a tiger's anger. But they could not move yet. Men and women in every posture snored about them.

The minutes crawled slowly. Worden watched the door, but no uniformed Ogpu officers, male or female, came back. Whether any of their agents lay in the slumbering mass of humanity about them, it was impossible to tell. Presently, the chinless bridegroom began to mumble to his bride-to-be in the corner, and there was the sound of a kiss. In the station, a locomotive let off steam, and the whole happy-go-lucky dormitory came sleepily astir. People were picking their way to the stoves, with kettles in their hands. The lights went on suddenly; the whole frowsy, fetid place stood revealed.

"The devil!" murmured John Worden. "And I've slept in the Ritz, in my time. Any livestock, Elsa?"

He smiled whimsically at Elsa, and she smiled back, giving him courage for courage, in that moment of rather terrible suspense. "Shall I wake Martin?"

"Yes."

Martin came awake with a momentary convulsion of his features. Terror fled over him, and then he smiled twistedly at Elsa and Worden, hid his face in his hands for an instant, but looked up with composure.

"I could eat something," he said.

"Not here, old chap." Worden leaned over. "We're going to my room, the room of Mitka Ivanovitch. That's me. Understand? We'll have a feed there."

"Back into Moscow?" The question was accompanied by a deep shudder; then, almost fawningly: "Sorry, Worden—Mitka, I mean. O.K. for me. Like to see your room, awfully."

The door of the waiting-room was open, letting in a rush of icy air. People with their impedimenta slung in packs were moving out to take their places in the ticket-queue. Elsa was conscious of a shiver down her spine as they went forth; and despite her resolution, she found herself looking for that lithe golden-haired figure in man's uniform. Then she perceived that a white frost-fog almost filled the station. It came drifting in sluggish clouds through the station-gates, and Worden muttered, "Luck!" Yet even so, the place might be alive with eyes hidden.

"Stick close!" said Worden.

There was a great queue, unwashed and yawning, trailing toward the ticket-office for the Leningrad train. Worden drew his companions into it. Two spick and span Ogpu officers stood at the barrier, and it seemed to Worden that the cold-blooded gleam in their eyes deepened as it alighted upon them. They were marked and docketed in an instant. . . . Then the rolling vapor hid the black leather and jack-boots. At the very opening of the fog-shrouded ticket-office the people heard the giant young mechanic who was piloting a girl and a sick boy, give a growl of consternation:

"Ten thousand devils, the box—the box of onions! We left it in the waiting-room."

To guffaws of laughter, he herded his companions clumsily out of the queue and vanished. One of the side-gates of the station was open, with the fog smoking beneath its single lamp, and they were through it and out in the muddy, cobbled street, almost before Elsa realized it.

Moscow, smoking in the frost-fog, with its lighted propaganda-signs glittering unseen by the early workers who groped shivering to their factories, received them back again sardonically.

HIGH up in a new concrete building in the Volkanskaya lay the room of John Worden, who called himself Mitka Ivanovitch the mechanic—a tiny apartment no bigger than a cell, and barely more comfortably furnished.

"The whole building's a haunt of pure communists," said Worden, with a grim laugh. "Pure in heart, if in no other way. Though that's wrong. They're pure all through according to their ideas. All young and all fanatics. But their ideas are damned impure."

Daylight had come, gray and clear, outside, as the cold blade of the wind shredded the mist away. Worden sat drumming the table softly. In his gray blouse and broad leather belt, he seemed a powerful and vital figure. Only a pucker about his lips betrayed a certain tension.

"I had the idea before I came that everybody in this country is either communist or bolshevik." He laughed. He talked gently, carelessly, to take away the strained look from Elsa. "I never knew that it was a political faith that a million or so of people had imposed on about a hundred and fifty million others, pretty much like Mussolini has put his on Italy. But we swim in it, in this building. Everybody's young—the new generation. We gave a bouquet of flowers to a girl who handed her father and mother over to the Gay-pay-oo, the other day."

He rose to his feet, and looked at the new dressings he had put on Martin's hands. "Not hurting, now?"

"Not at all," answered Martin, shrinking. "Not at all."

Worden thought it time to disclose his plan. He looked at Elsa, and felt the tightening within him which had

come more than once during the past twenty-four hours. She was so magnificently clean and sweet that she awed him. She had bivouacked by the gate of hell, and none of the smoke had touched her.

"We're going to disguise ourselves in here," he said simply. "There's no chance of getting to Minsk without it. That's why we came. I've got the stuff. I've been a quick-change artist now and again since I came to Moscow, as Martin knows. We're going to leave here as three entirely different people."

"Yes?" Elsa's brown eyes rested on his face and saw it flush unaccountably.

"After that—we'll act according to circumstances. If I should suddenly spring a plan,—a confoundedly Russian plan I have in my mind,—will you agree, Elsa?"

"To anything."

To get out of Moscow! That tiny apartment felt like some lath-and-plaster shelter beneath a bombardment. They had stolen into it under cover of the mist; but the building, with its raw newness, with the Red Flag illuminated by electric lights in its doorway, with its flaring anti-God posters on every landing, its ikons, with the Christ beheaded, nailed upon almost every door in the cheap and blasphemous way of Young Russia—it seemed, and was, unsafe.

John Worden paced the narrow room a little. He had no illusions regarding their peril. Perhaps the Ogpu officers who were watching them thought they had gone to Leningrad. Perhaps they did not. Had Vladimir been found yet? Had that Mongol servant of his discovered him? Deep in his heart, Worden felt bitter remorse that he had not killed the Commissar, quickly and cleanly.

Nine o'clock. Martin looked better, but there were blue shadows under his eyes, as though great thumbs had pressed bruises there. A little contortion came and went at the corner of the boy's mouth now and then; but he always passed it away with a smile. His hands were burned to the bone.

"Here's my little cache," Worden said.

He knelt and turned back the carpet. He was pulling at one of the flooring-boards which lay revealed, when without warning there came a sharp tap at the door. Worden sprang to his feet, his hand momentarily at his hip.

"So, Mitka Ivanovitch," a voice said with a short silvery laugh, "you're lounging at home, when you should be at the factory!"

A girl with glossy black bobbed hair thrust herself coolly into the room. Cuddling a book and a sheaf of papers under her arm, she walked to the table and mounted it, to sit there and swing her legs. Calmly, she surveyed Elsa and Martin.

"Friends?" she inquired. "*Bourjoi,* by the look of them. What do you mean by making friends with rifle-dodgers, Mitka Ivanovitch? But it doesn't matter. They'll come to it, sooner or later. We of the Party exterminate all traitors and drones. I called to ask why you were not at the factory committee-meeting last night."

"I was at the Politbureau library, Comrade Nadeshka," answered Mitka Ivanovitch sheepishly. "And Comrade Elsa and Comrade Martin are good workers. Not *bourjoi,* if you please. Comrade Martin works at the aëro factory, and the electric switchboard burned his hands."

IT was to Elsa that the girl turned her hard green eyes. She was pretty, but there was something almost terribly inhuman, about her. She was Young Russia under the Soviet, emancipated,, de-sentimentalized, "free."

"Are you what is called 'in love' with Mitka?" she asked carelessly.

"He is my friend," answered Elsa quietly.

"Because," said Comrade Nadeshka, with a virulent glance, "I am—the biological equivalent, at least. I came to tell him so this morning. I am of the University, you see, and also a stenographer under the Government, making very good money." The green eyes went sidewise to Worden. "I have a room in this apartment house. I don't want a husband particularly, though Mitka is a good fellow enough. But I want a baby to carry on the banner when I'm too old. A boy who will take part in the Brotherhood of the World. Do I shock you?"

The tremor of a smile came about Elsa's lips. She had met the Nadeshkas of Moscow before, and felt a strange compassion for them.

The girl caught sight of it, and curled her painted lip. "I see you are. You're probably aristocrat, in spite of what Mitka, who is a bit stupid, says. Love and tears, and 'You're tired of me already!' when the man wants to go, eh? That's not my ideology, comrade. We of the Party have risen above all that. If Mitka feels the biological urge for another woman, I shall invite her to share my room with me—that is, after my baby has come."

"Mitka's baby would be a good one, whoever was its mother, I'm sure, comrade," Elsa said calmly.

Nadeshka's eyes became narrow and viperous, but she could find no answer. Worden stood with his big arms hanging, acting admirably the embarrassed clown. Evidently he had some reputation for horseplay, for he caught Nadeshka by the shoulder, and pushed her with clumsy humor through the doorway.

"She is from my mother in Nijni, brazen one!" he said in a whisper. "Shall I see you at the Unit meeting tonight, *matushka?* I will be there, never fear."

WHEN he had closed the door, John Worden said, "My God!" and wiped his brow. Between him and Elsa flashed a smile which somehow set her heart soaring. In the midst of death there was a smile somewhere, if one looked for it. Worden listened for Nadeshka's footsteps as they descended the stairs on her way to work near the Lubianka, and then took up the flooring-board.

The waterproof sheet he lifted forth held a variety of clothing and disguise, for his adventures in Moscow had been many and vivid. A sheepskin coat, top-boots and black-brimmed hat for Martin, the *bravura* of a typical young communist—black leather jacket, breeches and jack-boots with spurs—for himself. Elsa was a more difficult case. With a sharp smile Worden vanished, and returned carrying a fur-lined leopard-skin coat. He explained almost curtly:

"Nadeshka's. Leave your fur one in exchange." . . . He stared at Elsa. "Wow! You clever girl!"

Lipstick, rouge and powder had transformed Elsa. She was doing something to her hair before the glass, and presently it stood out like a frizzy aureole around her head, and she became a painted, stony-eyed, emancipated woman of the Soviet *intelligentsia.*

Worden surveyed his two companions in silence.

"When we at last reach the train for Minsk, everybody's going to know everything about who and what we are," he said slowly. "We're going to make sure of that. You know what long-distance trains are in this country. They're a kind of family *conversazione.* We've about half an hour to get our parts perfect for a little play. A Russian play. The scene will be,"—Worden hesitated and flushed,—"an office for Marriages, Deaths and Divorce in the Bolshevik city of Moscow. I'll explain." . . .

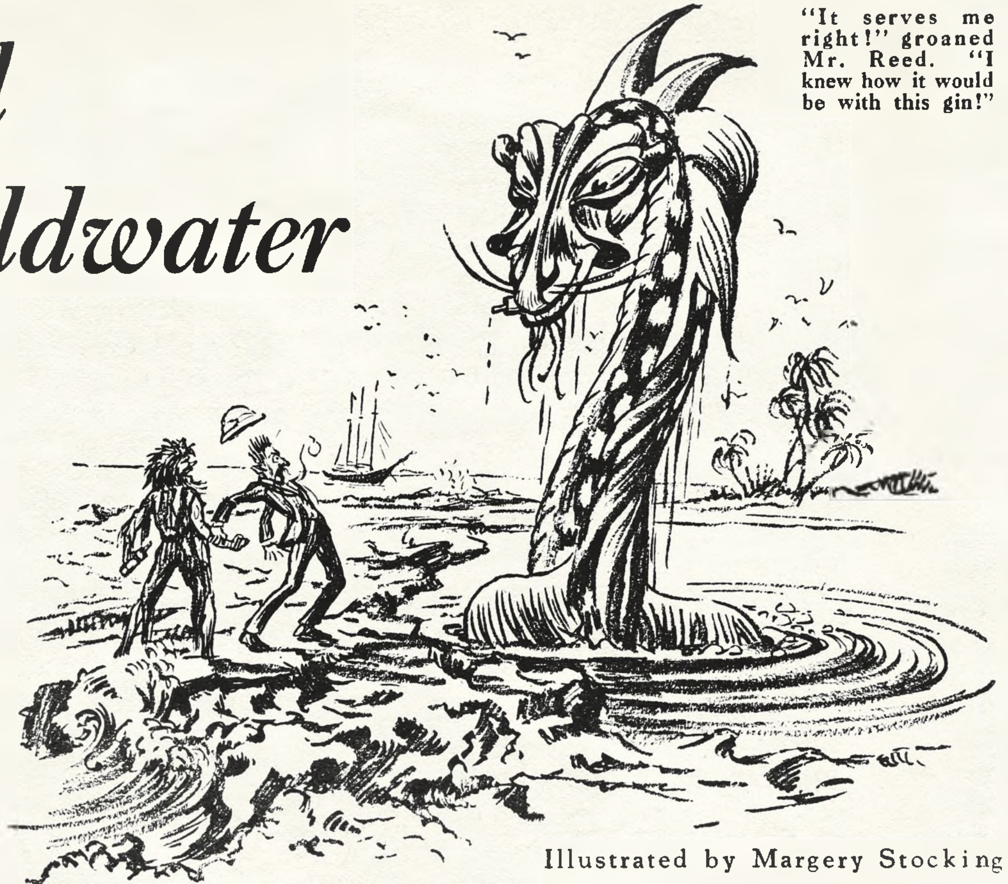
At about the same time, behind a scarlet door on the Petrovka, Boris Vladimir recovered consciousness.

This tense story of present-day Russia moves with breath-taking speed in the next, the April, issue.

The Call of the Wildwater

The author of "The Golden Goat" and "Fintail the Merman" here gives us another sprightly adventure in nature-faking.

By
BERTRAM ATKEY



"It serves me right!" groaned Mr. Reed. "I knew how it would be with this gin!"

Illustrated by Margery Stocking

THE waters of the lagoon encircled the coral island like a garter of pale green silk round the—er—that is to say, the waters of the lagoon stretched like a sheet of pale green silk. Round the island, naturally.

In that vast expanse of sea there was nothing visible to the naked eye except millions of tons of water and coral, myriads of leaping fishes that flashed in the brilliant sun-fire like jewels falling in silver spray, hosts of tropical birds, their offspring and relatives, thousands of albatrosses, a quantity of frigate birds, a few coveys of Mother Carey's chickens, the remains of a wrecked schooner on the reef, and the coral island itself, some five miles by twelve in extent. Beyond these things nothing was visible.

Nor was there an echo of sound to be heard in that lonely and bitterly desolate spot except the everlasting thunder of the surf on the outer reef, the organ-like drone of the trade-wind, the loud dry rustling of the foliage of the palm trees, the deafening din of the birds and the splashing of the leaping fishes. Save for these sounds the place was numbly silent.

And then he came—silently, as was his way. At one moment he was *not* there. One could have sworn to it with absolute certainty—he was definitely and decidedly not there. Next moment he *was* there. Thus: he wasn't—then he was. It was like that. He always moved like that. First in one place—then in another. How he did it is more than I can tell you; it is one of the secrets of the wild.

But, sure enough he was there—staring out to sea with an expression which can only be described as wistfulness upon what, for lack of a better word, might be termed his face. There was in his greenish-gray eyes something of the look which a famished jackass bestows upon a bed of thistles growing halfway up a perfectly perpendicular cliff—a yearning.

For fully ten minutes he stared, motionless, at the mighty expanse of sea beyond the outer reef—so motionless that he might have been carved out of granite by a sculptor, a lunatic sculptor with a cheap chisel.

Then, turning abruptly, he went prowling along the lagoon, his gaze ever turned to the sea. Thus tigers prowl, though in a somewhat more abbreviated manner, along the bars of their cages.

The smaller denizens of the lagoons fell fearfully back from him as he approached them, for they knew him of old in these moods.

In this they exhibited a singular degree of common sense. It does not appear to be conclusively proved whether fishes actually think or whether we only think they think. I will now settle this matter. They think. This statement requires proof. I will provide it. The fishes of the lagoon fell back from the green-eyed prowler because he was what he was. And what he was, was a forty-five-foot spotted sea-serpent, in a villainous temper and at war with all the world—except one man, his master.

He was traveling slowly, with perhaps twenty feet of him out of water. His utmost speed, with only twenty-five feet in the water to propel him, was not more than, say, forty miles an hour.

Occasionally he stopped, stretched his head out over the reef and whined piteously, pawing the sharp coral with some of his foremost fins—gingerly, because he was soft-skinned and the coral edges were like saws.

As he came to the place from which he had started his circuit he laid his gigantic flat head down upon the surface of the water, and gave vent to a howl that was like the howling of a pack of wolves.

But the howling stopped swiftly as a man issued from a palmetto shack built under a clump of coconut palms and, clothed only in a ragged shirt and trousers, came racing down the beach, shouting, and shaking a dog-whip at the mighty beast.

Evidently he was furiously angry.

He was staring out to sea with an expression of wistfulness—something of the look which a famished jackass bestows upon a bed of thistles growing halfway up a cliff.

"Shut up—shut up!" he bawled, as he cracked the whip with the report of a pistol-shot. "How many more times have I got to tell you about—"

Here he broke off abruptly, turning to stare seaward where, suddenly, on the outer side of the reef, the head of another gigantic sea-serpent rose dripping from the sea—that of a female.

She lifted at least twenty feet of herself out of the sea, and staring toward the lagoon, began to moo plaintively.

Instantly the head of the big male in the lagoon towered aloft and he softly returned the love-note of the new arrival.

For some time the man on the beach watched them with sympathetic eyes. He was quite an ordinary person,—obviously a shipwrecked sailor, very ragged, and profusely hairy. His whiskers and hair and beard were like a red cascade falling over his head, face and shoulders.

His anger died out as he watched the two sea-serpents, and he shook his head slowly.

"You can howl, Spot, old man, howl till you're black in the face—and your lady friend can moo till her tonsils are swollen—but, as far as I can see, you're a prisoner in this lagoon for life—same as me. The only way you'll ever get to the open sea is by crawling across the coral, and you'll cut yourself to ribbons if you try it—you being so soft-skinned, son!"

He was right. The facts in the case of "Spot," as the man had named the huge beast, were briefly as follows:

Some ten years before, when Spot had been practically a baby sea-serpent, no more than perhaps twenty feet long and no bigger round anywhere than a nine-gallon cask, he had swum through the narrow channel through the reef dividing the lagoon from the outer sea. He had found huge masses of his favorite seaweed there, and he had lived luxuriously in the lagoon for nearly eighteen months before he felt the call of the wildwater. Then he had headed for the channel with the intention of going out to sea—and it was then that he had received the shock of his life.

The channel was too small!

While the young sea-serpent, feeding heavily upon the succulent and nourishing seaweed, had been steadily growing huger, the industrious coral insects had been working with extraordinary diligence. They had reduced the size of the channel by half, while Spot had increased his bulk by fully a quarter.

Had he been a thick-skinned sea-serpent this would not have mattered—it would have been merely a matter of a minute or so to come out of the lagoon, writhe across the belt of coral and so into the sea. But, like the sperm whale, his skin was astonishingly thin and tender, and, unlike the whale, he did not possess an armor plating of protective blubber under the skin. The soft-skinned sea-serpent loathes and dreads contact with rock or coral or anything sharp; thus, since his every instinct revolted against the inevitable dozens of wounds and bleeding to death which any attempt to crawl across the reef would bring him, the unhappy reptile was, indeed, as his master told him, condemned to live his life out in the lagoon—or, at any rate, until such time as the channel became wider or the tide rose sufficiently high on the reef to enable him to swim for it. Neither was a very probable contingency.

And what made this little tragedy of the wild more painful for the unfortunate serpent to endure, and more distressing for his owner—for so the shipwrecked mariner chose to describe himself—to witness, was the fact that recently a feminine sea-serpent had appeared off the reef, and, the two creatures clearly possessing an affinity, she came daily to call plaintively for the imprisoned Spot. The mating time for sea-serpents was long past, but so strong was the mutual attraction of the two that now never a day passed without the interchange of, so to speak, vows and protestations of everlasting fidelity.

"It's tough—it's very tough!" said Abner Clarke, as he pushed the hair out of his eyes and watched the movements of the two sea-serpents. "For it aint as if sea-serpents was anyways plentiful. There they are, only a few yards apart, but they might as well be miles. They're fair crazy for each other. But she's free and he aint. She's got all the seas of the world afore her and he's only got this measly lagoon. Why, damme, it's jest like me and Mrs. Lilygreen. There *she* is, back in Cardiff, free to roam the whole earth and the waters thereof, and here's me locked up in this everlasting island!"

He thought hard.

"Of course, the difference is that Spot aint got much to fear from no competitors. Sea-serpents is undeniable scarce, and mebbe old Spot is the only gentleman serpent of her own class and size she's ever met. More'n likely he's the only one in the world. Whereas in my case, there's no doubt thousands of sharps always scrounging into Mrs. Lilygreen's homey little pub, for her to pick and choose from. It's easy enough for *her*"—he jerked his tousled head seaward—"to be true to Spot—the only one of his kind in the world. But how about me? After all, all he needs is a drop of deep water over the reef and he'll be free. Or else the tide might tear down a slab of coral in

the channel. It's only a question of time, with him! But how about me? That's what I want to know!"

He was gradually working himself up.

"What *I* want is a ship at least to take me off. And it might be a million years before any ship comes near here! But I don't go mooing and bawling about the place day in and day out, waking folk up and making a reg'lar damn' nuisance of myself. There's no sense in it. It's ridic'lous and selfish. And it's ungrateful, coming from Spot—what I brought up, you might say, by hand, from the time he was no more than a mite twenty foot long! It's ridic'lous and selfish, and I'm damned if I'll stand any more of it!"

He concluded his soliloquy with a shout that startled the sea-serpent.

"Shut that row, you Spot, d'ye hear?" shouted Mr. Clarke, and Spot obediently fell silent. Receiving no further reply to her callings, the female sea-serpent presently relapsed yard by yard into the sea, and with a final bellow of love disappeared, while Spot turned and swam slowly back to his master.

There was nothing novel or unusual in this—it was merely the regular program enacted at every dawn for the past six months.

The well-trained, and in many respects, affectionate creature knew that what Mr. Clarke wanted was a fish for breakfast, and a lobster for lunch. Long ago Spot had been trained to select meals from among the denizens of the lagoon for the sustenance of his master.

This he proceeded to do at once, and having speedily placed a fine fat fish and a vast lobster on the beach at his master's feet, and received an affectionate pat upon his huge, ham-shaped head, he turned away to attend to the matter of his own breakfast.

Mr. Clarke watched him go.

"That there animal aint by any means the animal he was," said Mr. Clarke, shaking his head sadly. "Not by no means whatever he aint so. He's fretting. . . . There was a time when that there little snake was quite willin' and content to play about in the lagoon, as merry and innocent as a little eel, in a manner of speakin', but now he's dull and changed. He's a good serpent, and a honest, hard-workin' serpent—dunno as anybody could want a better sea-snake than what old Spot is—but he's losing flesh, and his heart aint in his work. He's pining and his heart is breaking."

Then with one of those swift changes of feeling to which ten years of loneliness on the desert island had rendered him so liable, Mr. Clarke switched round again.

"But, blast him, he aint the only one! Why can't he bear up—the same as me? Aint I pining, and aint my heart breakin'? Milly Lilygreen never comes off the reef and calls out to me and paws at the coral with her fins, do she? Well, then—I reckon that there three-starred old selfish water-worm's got the laugh on *me*, aint he?" muttered the mariner as he strode up to his hut of wreckage and palm leaves.

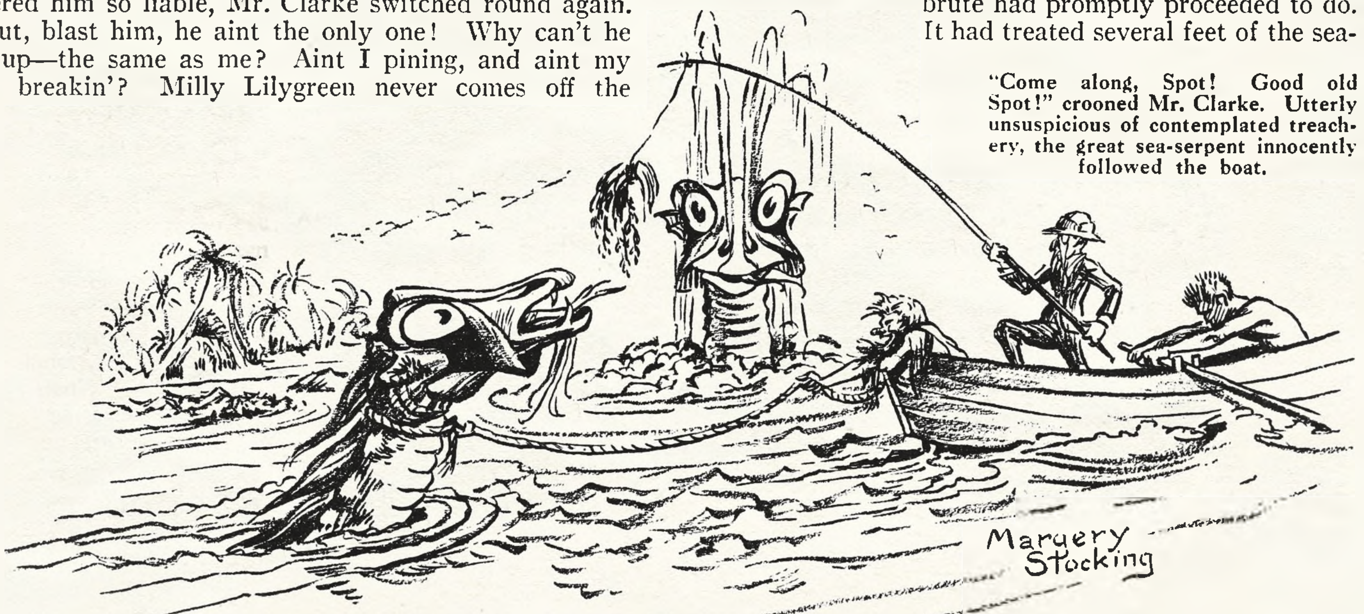
"Parading up and down the reef, bawling as though *he* was the only one with troubles in the world! There's others, I s'pose," he concluded, administering a back-handed clip to an aged monkey (salved from the wreck) in the hut, whom he caught with its hand groping in a chest (also salved from the wreck), a slap which convinced the ape that there were indeed others with troubles to bear in the world.

But this is not, strictly, the story of Mr. Clarke and his other friend and companion, Cæsar, the ship's monkey, and the only other survivor from the wreck. It is instead the story of the call of the wildwater—for so, in an unnatural nature story naturally the sea should be called—to the captive sea-serpent; the story of how this inhabitant of the wildwater instinctively went back to its own place, deserting in that great call all its man-taught habits and customs, returning again to its grand heritage the sea, to roam in company with its mighty mate the lady sea-serpent those huge jungles of seaweed, and those trackless, illimitable deserts of slimy ooze deep down upon the ocean floors. . . . .

Let us return to him where, having fed, he lies on the bed of the lagoon, watching with the expressionless, patient eyes of a captive beast, the all-too-narrow passage or channel between the sharp coral rocks, which, were it only three or four times as large, would be large enough to permit of his escape from the lagoon-prison.

He was restless. At times he would be lying perfectly still, staring at the gap; then he would start into convulsive motion so that the green water boiled under the lashing of his great tail; then he would go nosing feverishly at the coral barrier, only to relapse again into quietude and his eternal watching. The serpentess had gone away for a space. . .

There had been a time when he was forever trying to squeeze through the gap—the sides of his head were covered with old scars of the wounds which were all he had gained from those efforts, and both his ears were permanently thickened. But he had never tried to get through since the day when, endeavoring to squirm out tail first, he had practically invited a prowling shark outside to help himself, which that intelligent brute had promptly proceeded to do. It had treated several feet of the sea-



"Come along, Spot! Good old Spot!" crooned Mr. Clarke. Utterly unsuspicious of contemplated treachery, the great sea-serpent innocently followed the boat.

serpent's tail precisely as most humans treat a stick of celery—and it had not gone empty away. Indeed, it had abbreviated Spot by at least four feet, and was hanging about just outside the gap on the following day hoping for a further selection of the sea-serpent, when it had fallen a prey to the she who happened to arrive off the island that day.

But even in the slackwater of lagoons, not to mention the wildwater of the sea, the law of Nature is as inexorable as it is in cities. Sea-serpents must eat, as must humans from millionaires down to actors or artists—or even, incredible though it may seem, short-story writers.

And presently Spot abandoned for a space his vigil and instead opened his cavernous mouth across the gap. For an hour fish, under the mistaken impression that they were swimming into the lagoon, swam steadily into the sea-serpent's mouth.

IT was during this hour that a ship appeared on the horizon and driving steadily before the trade-wind, presently cast anchor off the island.

Observing from the well-nigh maniacal gyrations and signalings of Mr. Clarke that the island was not wholly deserted, those on board put out a boat.

Driven across the water by its crew of muscular Kanakas the boat presently touched the reef, and its passenger, warned by Mr. Clarke that there was practically no passage through to the lagoon, stepped out on the reef.

He was a tall European, very thin and wiry, with a red mustache and a scarlet nose. Otherwise he was colorless. He seemed very shaky.

"How do?" he said, and explained his shakiness and the bottle of gin in his hand by the brief remark: "Fever, what?"

"Same here," said Mr. Clarke enthusiastically—and they took one each for the fever. Mr. Clarke briefly explained his position and the newcomer readily agreed to take him off the island and deliver him safely at Honolulu.

They took one each to seal the bargain.

"I've been ten years on this lump of coral and I'll be glad to leave it!"

"Sure," said the newcomer, who said his name was Reed and his business that of a collector for the world-famous firm of naturalists, Messrs. Horne, Hyde & Head, Ltd., of London.

"I'd like to drink to their health," said the happy Mr. Clarke.

"Would you? So would I!"

They had one each to Horne, Hyde & Head, Ltd.

Then they had one to Mr. Clarke, followed by one to Mr. Reed.

And then, just as Mr. Reed threw the empty bottle into the lagoon, Spot emerged foot by foot, fathom by fathom, from the water.

MR. REED turned white, and his trembling hand closed upon the arm of Mr. Clarke.

"It serves me right!" he groaned. "I knew how it would be with this gin. I ought to have stuck to good honest whisky!"

But the sailor reassured him. It was no dream-serpent that the collector was gazing upon, said Mr. Clarke, but a genuine, thin-skinned, spotted sea-serpent—and to prove it, he called Spot to him.

Obediently the great creature paddled across, to be fondled by his master. For a moment the collector was speechless; then he pulled himself together.

"Is—is he yours?"

Mr. Clarke nodded.

"Is he for sale?" inquired Mr. Reed excitedly.

Mr. Clarke pondered. He did not particularly wish to sell the companion of his solitude, but he reflected that in any case he could not take him away and even if he could have taken him away he could not get him out of the lagoon. He would land in Honolulu penniless, if he refused to sell.

"Well, I dunno—he's a good faithful old sea-serpent. And he's been a good friend to me," he said.

"Will you take five thousand pounds for him as he stands and accept the job of keeper to him at ten pounds a week until he gets used to *me?*" said Mr. Reed hoarsely, his eyes bulging with excitement.

"Yes," shouted Mr. Clarke in furious haste, "**I will!**" He had not expected even five thousand pence.

"Shake hands on that!"

Both equally pleased, they shook hands.

"You'll have to enlarge the channel to get him out," said Mr. Clarke.

"Bah! A stick of dynamite will do that. Man, I'd enlarge Hades to get him out!" cried Reed, stroking the huge spotted head.

"But can you get him home?"

"I've got a tank on board with twenty thousand pounds worth of specimens in it. It's big enough to hold him, too! And d'ye know what I'm going to do? I'm going to chuck that twenty-thousand-pounds'-worth of specimens overboard to make room for this chap, Clarke. For he's priceless. He's settled you for life already, and if he don't settle me—and a few others—for life too, you can call me Temperance Joe! . . . Where is this channel—let's have a look at it!"

And they lapsed into technicalities relating to tides and explosives and so forth.

FOUR days later there was observable an unusual stir at the mouth of the gap.

Mr. Reed was there in a small boat, together with Mr. Clarke, keeping close to the channel, on the seaward side. Spot was there, but he, of course, was in the lagoon. A thick length of whale-line was fastened round his neck and passed to Mr. Clarke, who held the rope. Farther out to sea was the big whaleboat, manned with a heavy crew of Kanakas, and it was to this boat that the end of the whale-line, passing through Mr. Clarke's hand, led. In a tub in the bow of the whaleboat were many fathoms of brand new line. Mr. Reed's idea was to use kindness, if possible, to lure Spot to the tank floating by the ship in readiness for him, and it was Mr. Clarke who, by gentle suasion on the line, was to do the luring.

But if Mr. Clarke failed, the line was to be flung clear of the small boat and the big whaleboat's crew was to come into action, treating Spot precisely as a whale—until he was tired out and half-choked and ready, even anxious, to give in.

A naked Kanaka was waiting at the narrowest part of the channel ready to dive and place the explosive in the gap upon receiving the word of command.

And though there was no sign of the she sea-serpent Mr. Reed had not overlooked her. He had little hope of capturing her alive, but he was prepared to accept her dead, if necessary. A second fully equipped whaleboat was hovering close in, with the harpooner waiting in the bows, ready to harpoon her the instant she appeared.

All was in readiness.

Mr. Reed glanced round at his preparations and nodded. He took a little stimulant, passed the bottle to Mr. Clarke, and shouted to the Kanaka at the end of the channel to "carry on."

Nothing loath, the lad grinned, and dived.

Spot was watching the operations with an interest so

intent that one might almost have believed that the intelligent reptile knew the object of the work. The rope round his neck seemed to fret him a little, but not more than was to be expected in so soft-skinned a creature.

The head of the Kanaka bobbed to the surface and leaving the water, the sagacious native rapidly caused fifty yards to intervene between himself and the gap.

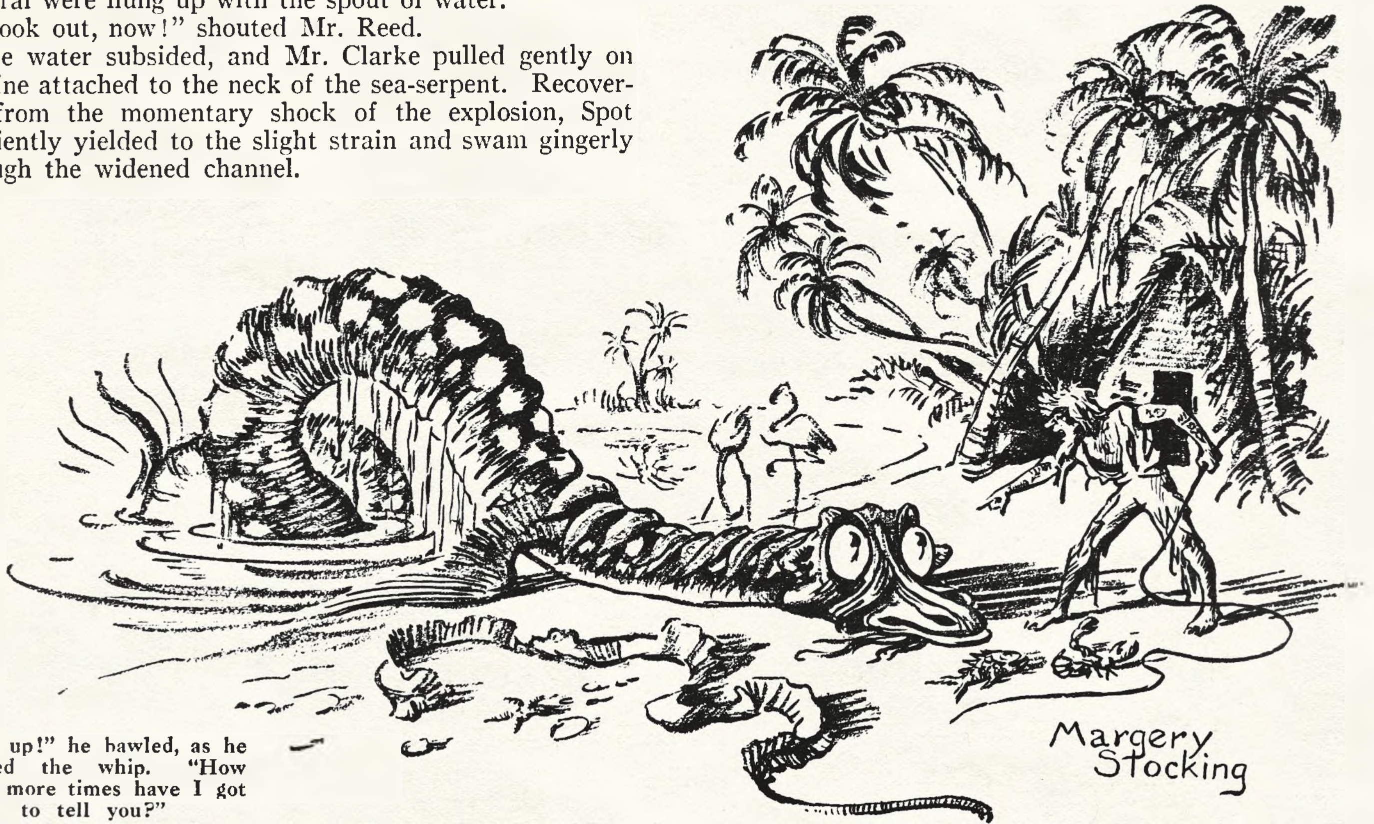
Almost immediately there was a muffled roar at the gap, a sudden spurting geyser, and a number of big lumps of coral were flung up with the spout of water.

"Look out, now!" shouted Mr. Reed.

The water subsided, and Mr. Clarke pulled gently on the line attached to the neck of the sea-serpent. Recovering from the momentary shock of the explosion, Spot obediently yielded to the slight strain and swam gingerly through the widened channel.

"Look out, Clarke! The rope!" yelled Reed, for it was evident that the seaweed had gone completely out of what may somewhat flatteringly be described as Spot's mind.

But, realizing this, Mr. Clarke had already released his grip of the rope, leaving it to the crew of the first whaleboat, and was leaning over, vainly endeavoring to coax the sea-serpent into ignoring the new arrival.



"Shut up!" he bawled, as he cracked the whip. "How many more times have I got to tell you?"

"Here he comes—great work!" said Mr. Reed enthusiastically and seized a long pole with a large bale of fresh sea-weed tied to the end. This ingenious device he pushed out over the stern of the boat, waggling it to attract the attention of the sea-serpent.

"Here he comes—row, you black divils!" said Mr. Reed to the two men resting on their oars. The boat began to edge quietly toward the ship and the fateful tank, attended at a cautious distance by the big whaleboat.

Mr. Clarke, to make assurance doubly sure, set up a croon, intended to soothe and fascinate the big sea-serpent.

"Come along then, Spot! Come along! Come along! Poor old feller, then! Good old Spot!"

Blindly trusting to the good faith of the man for whom he had caught so many fish and who had been his fellow-prisoner so long, and utterly unsuspicious of any contemplated treachery, the great sea-serpent innocently followed the boat, his huge soup-plate-size eyes fixed on the bale of seaweed.

And then, just at the moment when the success of the enterprise seemed to be assured, when another two minutes would have seen the deluded Spot safely immured in the semi-submerged tank, with a big grating clamped down above him, the she sea-serpent appeared.

Her gigantic head shot up through a boiling circle of water and towered, streaming, twenty clear feet above the boat.

With a bellow of delight she hurled herself at the excited Spot, and the two huge heads rubbed together.

By this time the second whaleboat had rowed up. The harpooner, interested only in the sea she-serpent, cast his weapon.

It passed through her ear—and with a grunt of pain and rage, she shot her head down and seized Mr. Clarke, whom she had never liked and to whose agency she had always appeared to attribute the captivity of Spot.

The last manifestation of life shown by Mr. Clarke in this world was in the form of a large bulge sliding down the throat of the she sea-serpent. With a savage swirl of her tail she upset the whaleboat to splinters, very completely putting the harpooner and his sable colleagues out of action.

Evidently inspired by her example, and intensely excited by his unaccustomed freedom, Spot himself suddenly lost the veneer of tameness which hitherto had always characterized him, and reverted to the wild—to the wild-water.

With a blood-curdling bellow he reached for Mr. Reed and hastily bolted him. Then the great beasts gazed for a brief moment into each other's eyes, exulting in the prospect of freedom which now lay before them.

For a moment they remained so. Then, with a final bellow, they dived together *en route* for the very floors of the sea and the attractions of the wildwater which, with no more serious mishap than a slight indigestion attributable to Messrs. Reed and Clarke, they were destined to enjoy for many a long year.

(Another of Bertram Atkey's intrepid ventures in nature-faking will appear in an early issue.)

Gentleman in Black

A writer new to these pages here offers a sports story written with notable charm and power.

By FRANCIS M. COCKRELL, 3rd.

Illustrated by George Avison

UNEASINESS stirred K. O. Jones. He just couldn't seem to get going against this white boy—he couldn't get his mind on business. Vague scenes kept floating through his mind and distracting him—flat acres of cotton, the lane that led to the big white house in the elms, the row of shacks back of the house, with all the kids playing in the dust, their black skins gleaming in the sunlight.

It worried K. O. He wished he could get going. He wished he would quit thinking about the plantation. He wished he would quit thinking at all, and just go on and fight. . . . It wasn't because this was a white boy, that he wasn't going good. He had fought plenty of white boys before. Why, just three weeks ago he had made a sucker out of Bat Mulligan. And Mulligan had been a tough, thick-necked, mean-looking guy that had come up out of the steel mills, too. Not sort of fragile-looking, and handsome, like this boy. But he had polished Mulligan off in the sixth. Mulligan hadn't come around until they had got him in the dressing-room.

But then, looking at Mulligan hadn't made K. O. think of nutty things like the plantation, and eating yams. . . .

When the tenth round ended, the referee came over and held K. O.'s arm up. He had got the decision. But K. O. knew that he should have leveled this Young Jackson out about the middle of the third—or fourth, at the outside.

Mr. Jack didn't scold him. Mr. Jack had never scolded him, in all their twelve years together. They went on down to the dressing-rooms. K. O. sat on the rubbing-table and Mr. Jack unlaced his gloves for him.

"Gee, Mr. Jack," K. O. voiced his musings, "I aint et no yams, or drinked no corn for thirteen years. That's a awful long while, aint it, Mr. Jack?"

Jack Fitzsimmons glanced up at K. O. curiously then, but went on removing the bandages from his hands without answering. Presently, though, he said: "What made you think of that, George?" He always called K. O. by his right name.

"I don't know, Mr. Jack," K. O. said. "Aint it funny, I was thinkin' like that while I was fightin' tonight. Seem like I couldn't get goin', 'count of thinkin' 'bout them things. Aint it funny?" he repeated.

"Well, yes," Mr. Jack said, "but don't you worry, George. You got to have an off night once in a while. You don't have many. Don't feel bad about it."

It was funny, K. O. mused, as the warm water of the shower beat pleasantly on his shoulders, how Mr. Jack made him think of the master, down home. Surely his bald, pudgy manager looked nothing like the straight, lean man who lived in the big white house. Just the same, they were alike, some way.

Mr. Jack stuck his head in at the door of the shower-room. "You get a good sleep, George, and I'll see you at the gym tomorrow. I'm going on now. Good night."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Jack," K. O. said. "I be there."

Mr. Jack left, and K. O. went on with his shower, humming something about a *"Chicken in a tree, and aint nobody here but me."* . . .

After gazing for more than an hour from his apartment window at the haze of light to the southeast which indicated Times Square, Jack Fitzsimmons called down to the desk and had a boy bring up the morning papers.

He read about the fight, though he knew well enough beforehand how the stories would run. *"K. O. Jones. . . . crafty ring-general of old . . . disappointing against Young Jackson. . . . should have stopped him quickly. . . . many openings for his right. . . . one has been enough in the past. . . . getting old, for a fighter."*

In a little Do You Know box on one of the sports pages, Jack noticed: *"—That Young Jackson's real name is Marshall Payne Randolph, that he is from an old Virginia family, and that he is a graduate of the University of Virginia?"*

Something had been wrong with K. O. tonight. Jack didn't think he had been stale—and certainly Jack should be able to tell. If he couldn't tell in twelve years of managing K. O., it was about time he quit trying.

His mind ran back to the time he had first seen K. O., and his fight-manager's eyes had automatically taken in the boy's wide shoulders, and the lithe grace of his movements as he snapped his shine-rag back and forth. He had been so courteous, so eager to please, that Jack had talked to him as he had his shoes polished.

That had been twelve years ago—some of them mighty lean years, too. Years of barnstorming—too good to get some fights, not good enough to demand important bouts. But Jack had believed doggedly in K. O.'s possibilities, and K. O. had believed anything Jack said. So they had gone on, and K. O. had always had enough food, and of the right sort, though Jack himself should miss a meal now and then.

THAT was over now; if they should never fight again, it would not matter about money. K. O. had become the perfect fighting-machine Jack had believed he would, the recognized class of his division. And for the last four years, though the champion had dodged them persistently, they had fought often, and for good money. Jack had persuaded K. O. to let him fix a trust fund for him. Jack had even arranged one for himself. They are safe and sure—trust funds—no matter what happens.

Perhaps K. O. was simply through, Jack thought. He had fought a long time. Maybe they'd just better quit. He could go back to K. C., and buy that partnership with Johnny Wright, the one Johnny had been urging on him so long. Johnny had a big recreation-hall. K. O. could go home, or wherever he wished.

Still, Jack had always wanted to manage a champion. It was getting close, now. With one more win,—against

this Kid Wallace,—the present champion would practically have to give them a bout. The papers and boxing commissions were pestering him more and more about it.

For nearly an hour he continued to sit and think. Then he undressed slowly. Something was certainly wrong, and if K. O. was homesick that might be the something. In any event, it wouldn't hurt the fighter to take a little lay-off, Jack decided. Perhaps a trip back to the plantation would fix everything up. Queer, though, to wait thirteen years to get homesick!

Jack came into Murphy's gym the next afternoon. K. O. was there, already changed, ready for a little limbering-up and a rub-down.

"You needn't come tomorrow, George," Jack told him. "We're not going to work tomorrow, nor the next day. You've got a vacation coming. You go back down home for a visit—for two weeks.

"Eat yams; eat all the yams you want. I think maybe you're a little stale. Just lie around and eat yams. Won't hurt you to put on a little weight. Make you feel better when we start work again. Have a good time. Don't think about fighting. While you're gone, I'll fix it up for the Wallace go. When you dust him off, the champ can't get away from us. Just two more fights, George, and we're champs." He patted K. O. on the shoulder. "Have a good time, kid, and don't forget to catch up on your yam-eating. Only remember, don't drink any corn. So long. Let me know when you're back."

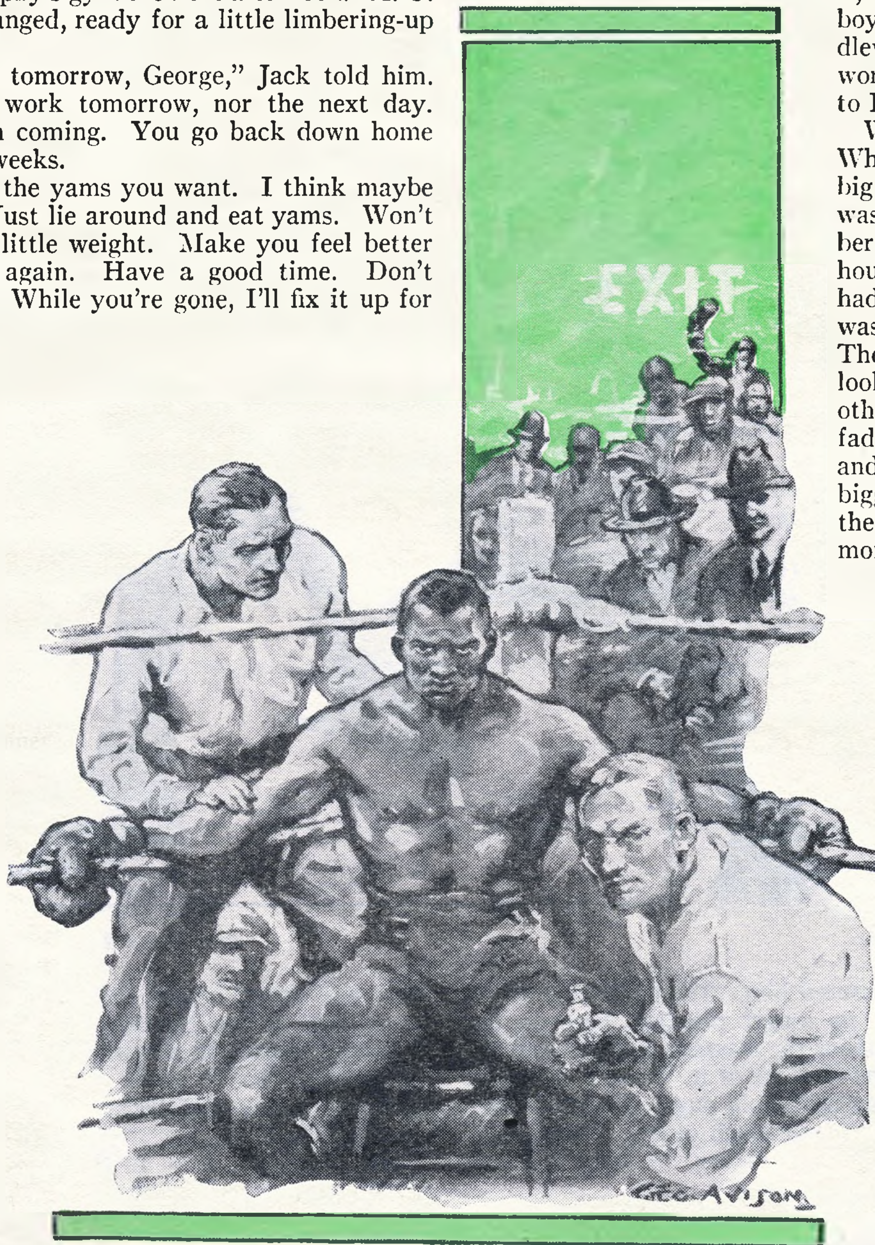
"Yes sir, Mr. Jack," K. O. grinned. "Yes sir. I let you know. Sure will. Sure be grand, eatin' all them yams, and corn-pone, and maybe some 'possum. Sure will. Good-by, Mr. Jack. Take good care of yourself, whilst I'm gone!" . . . .

K. O. felt that he didn't resent it as much as he should have when they crossed the line and he had to get back into the Jim Crow car. He didn't tell anyone there who he was. He was proud of his fighting, and he knew his fight the other night had not been a good one.

But pretty soon a porter came through and recognized him, and from then on he was surrounded by admirers, who hung on his every word with great respect. That was fun; K. O. had a good time all the way to Clarksville, Louisiana.

When he first got off the train it didn't occur to K. O. to hire a car for the four-mile journey out to the plantation. After he had walked a mile he thought of it, and decided that he should have. Not that he was tired; but it would have made so much more of a splash to arrive in a car. Well,—he glanced down at his checked suit,—he guessed his clothes would show these jigaboos what kind of boy he was! And his ring, too—a real diamond, and worth over four hundred dollars in cash money. He bet they sure would be surprised. He hadn't written home in all the thirteen years since he had left.

Eventually he turned in at the lane and shuffled along through the warm dust. He had a sudden desire to feel that warm dust between his bare toes, but he suppressed it, as being unworthy of a boy who was colored middleweight champion of the world—and a firm convert to Harlem standards.



"George, get in there, boy! You're doing fine—you got him going!"

Was that the house? Why, it wasn't nearly so big as he had thought it was—as he had remembered it! Compared to houses and buildings he had seen since he left, it wasn't anything at all. Then, for a moment, as he looked at this house, the other houses and buildings faded from his memory, and this was once again the biggest and finest house in the world—but only for a moment.

K. O. went around to the back of the house. There was his father at the ice-box, on the back porch. K. O. watched him briefly, as he packed finely chipped ice into the tall glass.

"Hello, old man," K. O. said, and his father turned. K. O. grinned broadly as he watched recognition write itself on the older man's face.

His father came to the screen door, peered through a moment, opened it, and came down the steps. "Geo'ge?" K. O.'s grin widened. "Geo'ge, whah-at you come by them clothes, son?"

K. O. swelled with pride. "I bought 'em," he announced. "I got lots of 'em. I got money, too."

His old father grinned, too, now.

"Is you home fo' to stay, son?"

"Nope," K. O. said decisively; "jus' for a little piece. Only—well, maybe I'll come back later on." K. O. didn't know why he had added that, for he had no intention of coming back again, except possibly for a short visit like this.

"Lawsy," said his father, turning abruptly, "lemme go, heah! I 'mos' fo'got—I's fixin' the julep." He hurried in and finished his task. "I tell Massa you heah," he said, as he went in. "I 'spec' he want to see you. I 'spec' he

be surprised, how big you is, an' all them fine clothes."

In a moment he had returned. "Massa, he say fo' you to come in. An' heah, boy," as K. O. came up on the porch, "bresh off them shoes, an' look good, now."

K. O. followed then, through kitchen, dining-room, and long hall, to the dignity of the cool living-room.

"Heah he is, Missa Williams," said K. O.'s father.

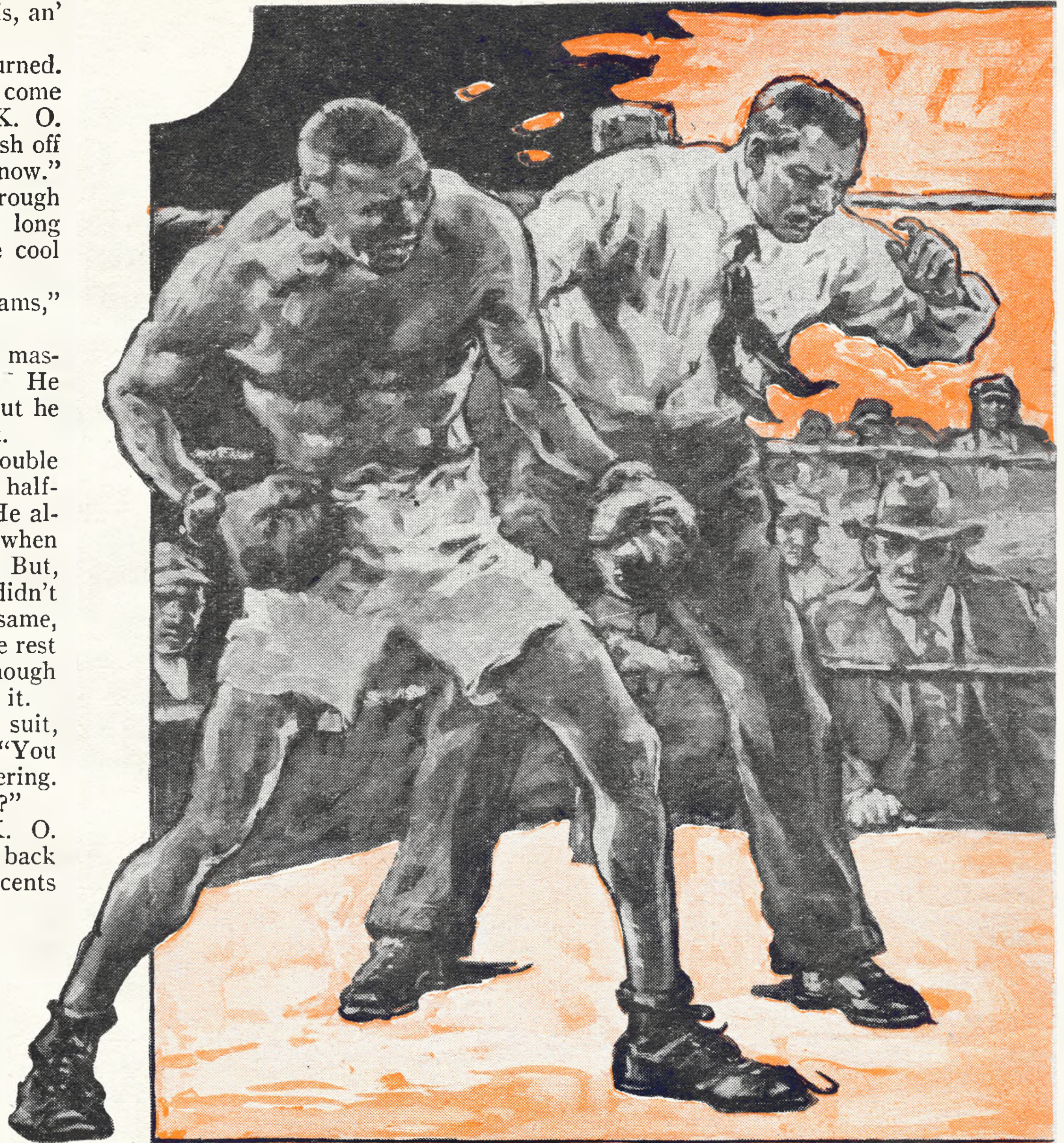
"Hello, George." The master's hair was whitening. He looked much older, too. But he was still lean, still straight.

K. O. stood in the big double doorway and grinned, half-proudly, half-arrogantly. He almost neglected to say "sir" when he answered Mr. Williams. But, K. O. assured himself, he didn't *have* to say "sir." Just the same, he did say it, throughout the rest of their conversation, although he felt a little guilty about it.

"That's a handsome suit, George," the master said. "You seem to have been prospering. What have you been doing?"

"Been fightin', suh," K. O. said, unconsciously slipping back into the soft, shiftless accents which were native to him. "You know, suh, prize-fightin'. I's cullud middleweight champeen of the wo'ld," he added proudly.

"Oh!" Mr. Williams was silent for a moment. "You made a lot of money, I suppose? One can, I understand, if he's good?"



Just before the bell, Hominy connected. Shakily

"Oh, yassuh," K. O. assured him. Then suddenly K. O. sensed that money was no longer plentiful here on the plantation. Something about the master's tone— And the outbuildings, now that he thought of it, weren't as spruce and neat as they had been in the old days. Probably that was why the master looked so much older. "Well, anyhow," K. O. heard himself deprecating, "it looks like lots o' dough to me."

K. O. felt then that it would be nice to offer the master a loan, in a sort of grand, offhand way, like money didn't mean anything to him. But somehow, he couldn't do it. Why not? Wasn't he just as good as the master? And probably had a lot more money, too. Certainly!

Nevertheless, he couldn't offer the master a loan. He even found himself wishing the diamond in the ring on his left hand wasn't so big. He wished it was just glass, instead of a real one, and wondered if he'd like it as well. He thought he would. He had no reason to feel that way, but before he could think about it longer he had discovered himself continuing: "Co'se, that kind o' money'd be small pickin's fo' you-all, but she look big to me. —Missa Rogeh," he changed the subject, referring to the young master, "he aint to home now?"

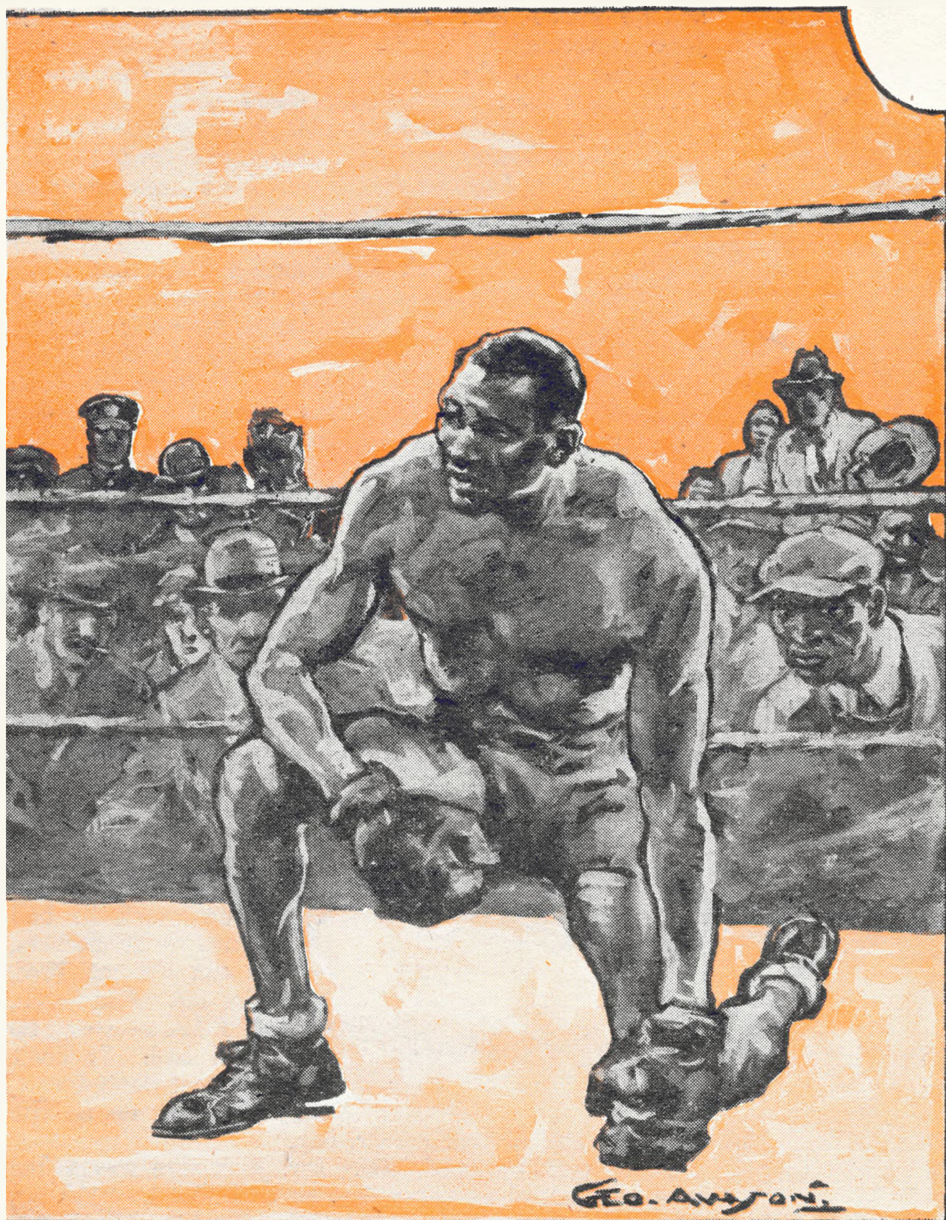
The master regarded the glass in his hand for a moment, and sipped from it, before answering. "No," slowly, "he's—he's in the North. We hope he'll be back with us soon, though—in a few more months."

"Yassuh," K. O. said; and he didn't ask any more questions about that because the master didn't seem to care to talk of it.

Mrs. Williams came in then, and talked to K. O. for a little while, and K. O. beamed, and felt very happy to be home.

K. O. stayed two weeks, and had a good time. He wore all the clothes he had brought with him, and wished he had brought more. He strutted about, and spoke in a casual and lordly way of large sums of money. He told glowingly of his fighting, and of the fact that he was colored champion of the world. And more than that, he boasted, in just two more fights he would be full champion of the world. He would make a monkey out of this Kid Wallace, he told them, and then he would take charge of the present champ in jig-time.

K. O. knew he irritated the boys on the plantation. They resented his money, and his clothes, and the fact that the girls made much of him. They thought he was uppity, the boys did. Well, maybe he was. But he guessed he had a right to be uppity.



K. O. dragged himself to his feet at "eight!"

Only with the children did he make a really big hit. He told them tales of New York, which pleased them, though he could see they didn't believe him. It was obvious they thought he was making everything up for their amusement—which was partly right.

He brushed casually from his realization the fact that he had not been more cocky and Harlemish with the master himself, consoling himself with the fact that he had more money than the master did. For the plantation was in a very bad way, what with cotton down so far, and the crops poor besides. In fact, K. O. learned from his father, if the young master—who was in the North now—didn't make a lot of money in a hurry, the plantation would have to go. At the thought of the plantation changing hands K. O. experienced a peculiar sensation in his stomach, and thought again of offering the master a loan. But he couldn't rid himself of the feeling that this would be presumptuous, "fresh." Not enjoying this feeling, he simply ceased to think about the situation at all.

He ate corn-pone and yams, and once, 'possum. Several times it was something of a strain to keep from taking off his shoes, so he could feel the soft warm dust between his bare toes. But that would not have been fitting for the colored middleweight champion of the world, who lived in New York, so he managed to overcome the urge.

Two weeks passed, and he started home, feeling as though he could whip anybody. Well, two more fights and he would be champion.

The realization left him strangely cold. He didn't, K. O. realized then, really love fighting. It kept you so *busy*. No yams, no corn liquor, no smooth hot dust between your bare toes, no delicious naps sneaked in the shade, when you were supposed to be hoeing cotton. . . .

He arrived in New York to find that Mr. Jack had signed for the Kid Wallace fight, to take place in six weeks. He went into training.

Two days before the fight he felt great—as good as he had ever felt. Mr. Jack had got good sparring partners for him—but K. O. had been able to use only one hand, and still toy with them. Why, this Kid Wallace would be a lead-pipe cinch!

"And we get a shot at the champ if we win this," Mr. Jack had told him. Well, they would win this, all right—easy!

Mr. Jack was taping his hands. "Now he's not good, George, but he can punch, see? Don't forget that," said Mr. Jack. "Greenburg forgot it—and he hung one on Greenburg's chin. That was all, just one. Greenburg was out clear over the week-end. Remember, he can punch."

K. O. was full of confidence. "I'll take two rounds," he said, "to see what he's got. Then I'll give him the works." And he held up the well-known Jones' right hand. "I'll hook it to his body for a couple of rounds. Then, if he aint smart, like you say, he'll drop his left to catch it—and—*by-by*—I'll lower the boom on him!"

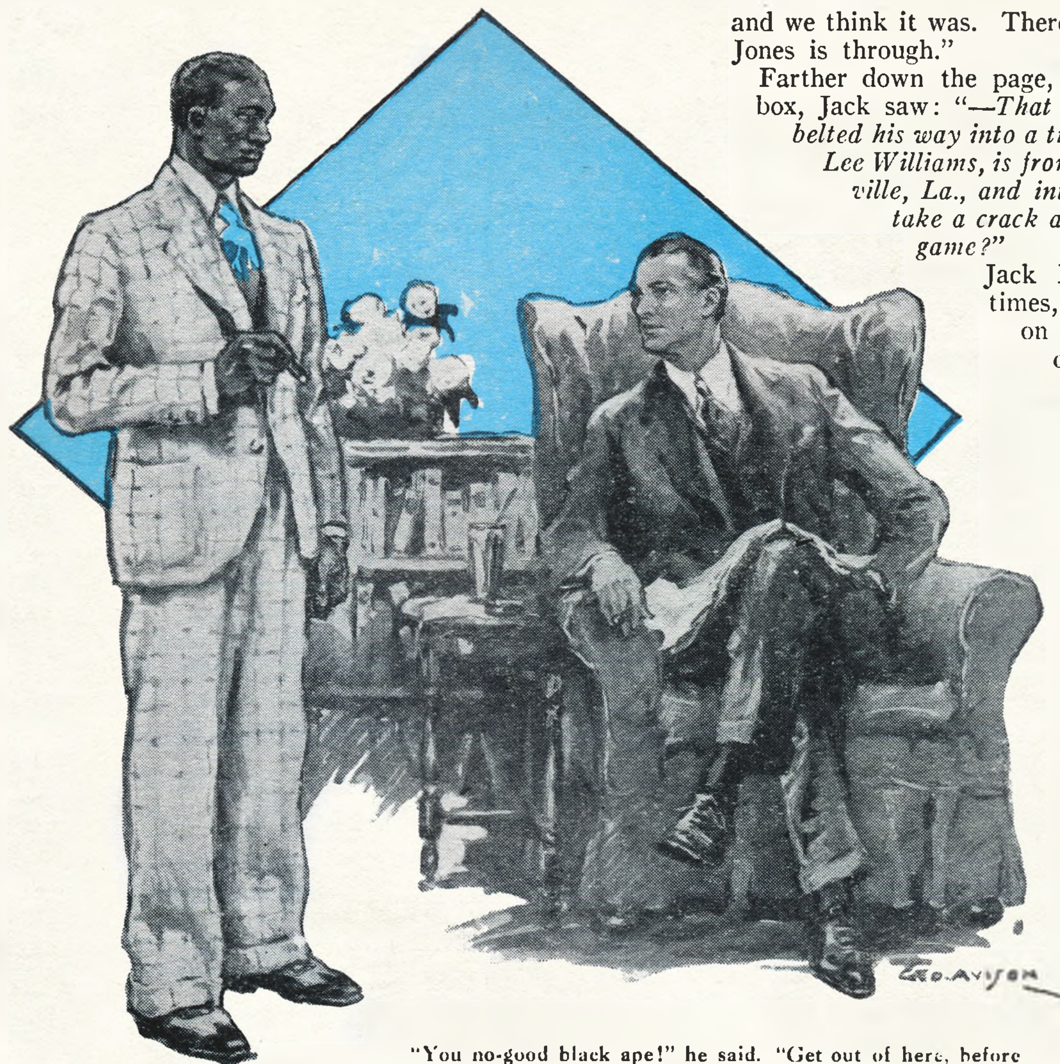
"That's right, George," Mr. Jack said. "But watch that left, boy. He generally pulls his chin in a little and crouches some when he means to let go. Remember that and you can beat him to the punch. But don't get careless, George, or he'll tear your head off. Remember Greenburg."

Some one stuck a face in the door then, and said the last prelim' was over and they were due in the ring. Mr. Jack had just finished with the taping. "All right, kid; let's go on up." They followed the water-boys out the door.

Kid Wallace wasn't in the ring yet. That didn't matter; K. O. was too old at the game to be made nervous by a little waiting. He had waited on them before—and then seen them carried out.

"Old stuff," Mr. Jack was telling him. "Got all night. Here he comes. Don't even look at him—don't let him know you know he exists. Be contemptuous."

K. O. grinned, wondering what "contemptuous" meant. Kid Wallace was in the ring, he guessed from the sounds, as he looked at his own feet. Got a nice hand. Well, he was a white boy; he ought to.



"You no-good black ape!" he said. "Get out of here, before I chuck something at you!"

and we think it was. There is but one conclusion—K. O. Jones is through."

Farther down the page, in the little Do You Know box, Jack saw: "*—That Kid Wallace, who last night belted his way into a title shot, is really named Roger Lee Williams, is from a plantation down in Clarksville, La., and interrupted his college career to take a crack at the quick money in the fight game?*"

Jack Fitzsimmons read that three times, slowly. He chewed very hard on his cigar as he made the rest of his way to Murphy's gym.

K. O. was there, sitting in a corner. He looked disconsolate.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Jack," he said shamefacedly.

Jack Fitzsimmons didn't answer him immediately. He was still thinking.

Finally, though, he said: "Forget it, George. I understand, see? Let's just call it a day, huh? What's a title anyhow? *I* know I've handled a champion, even if it's not in the books. Other people don't, but I do. I guess I'll go back to K. C. If you ever want me,"—and he handed K. O. a card on which he had been penciling an address,—"you can get me here. Just wire me. And listen, George, I know—see? So don't feel bad. It don't matter. And don't forget, all you got to do is wire me. I'm still in your corner, boy."

K. O. took the card. Gee, Mr. Jack sure was a fine man. It helped to know that he understood. "Yes sir, Mr. Jack," he said, "I won't forget. Good-by, Mr. Jack."

K. O. went back to living in Harlem. Everything was very mixed up, and had been, since the moment he had looked up and seen Mr. Roger, the young master, there in the ring with him. That had stunned him so at the moment that it had been no trouble for Mr. Roger to connect with that left of his. Mr. Roger sure could sock!

Everything was very mixed up. He was the better fighter, he knew. He should have knocked Mr. Roger kicking. Still, no matter how often he assured himself of this, he simply could not visualize himself doing it.

K. O. was ashamed of being knocked out in the second round. Why, he had never been knocked out but three times before in his life, and those had been at the ends of long, hard fights, early in his career. Gee, he hadn't even lost a decision in the last three years!

Still, he couldn't make it seem out-of-the-way that Mr. Roger should win from him—though this was foolish!

He didn't want to fight any more, even if he could. He wanted to go home, though he didn't know why.

But he couldn't do that; he was in disgrace now—he had been knocked out. After the way he had bragged about what he would do to Kid Wallace—

For they didn't know, down home, that Mr. Roger was Kid Wallace. K. O. couldn't see why that should make any difference, but it did. He knew, too, that for some reason, *he* would never tell them. Golly, even if he should

"Don't look up," Mr. Jack was whispering. "Watch his feet. Maybe worry him a little. All right, let's go get some instructions now."

K. O. was in the center of the ring. Small feet this boy had. Something about those feet— And nice legs, lean and powerful. Slim waist. Flat belly. Looked hard, too. The referee was droning on with his instructions. K. O. had heard it a thousand times. "*—no rabbit punches. . . . one hand free. . . . clean and quick.*" Good shoulders this boy had—wide, with smooth muscles. He *could* hit, with those shoulders! Mr. Jack was always right. The referee finished: "All right, boys, keep 'em up, and let's make it fast."

K. O. glanced up through his eyebrows for just one peek at this boy's chin. . . . Thirteen days or thirteen years—some things are not forgotten. An expression around the eyes, say—

JACK FITZSIMMONS did not read the papers that night. He didn't feel like it.

In the morning, riding up to Murphy's gym, on the subway, he bought one. "*K. O. Jones stopped in second round. . . . Kid Wallace. . . . sensational Southerner. . . . K. O. appears to be through. . . . Kid Wallace to be matched with champ. . . . bout should be a natural.*" And down at the end of the column: "If K. O. Jones and his manager, Jack Fitzsimmons, hadn't spotless records this correspondent would hold the opinion that the fight was not strictly on the up and up—but we can't overlook twelve years with no black marks. . . . Bout was fought on merits,

tell them, after the way he had talked, and the Harlem theories he had expounded, it would be no excuse for being knocked cold in the second round!

Losers are quickly forgotten; in Harlem, quicker than elsewhere. K. O. started haunting speak-easies. With a couple of drinks you didn't lie awake at night so long, trying to figure things out.

Eventually K. O. ceased to think about the whole puzzling thing, and just drifted. For he found that if you kept enough drinks in you you didn't think at all. He would go to movies and a lot of different speak-easies, and some night-clubs, and to a fight now and then.

THAT is how he chanced to see Joe Hominy. "The Detroit Destroyer," the papers called him, and this time, K. O. saw, they were right. This yellow boy was good. Instinctively K. O. disliked him—K. O. himself was ebony black. Hominy had wide, sloping shoulders, and no waist. He had spindly legs, and a huge, hard chest. He had long arms, from which dangled hands like soup-plates. He *fought,* and he was good. He was so good that K. O. wondered idly if he himself had ever seen the day he could have whipped him.

K. O. read the lines under Hominy's picture in a paper, one morning.

"A fighter—fast, and with dynamite in both hands. Oddly reminiscent of Joe Walcott, the famous 'Barbados Demon,' is this boy from Detroit." K. O. wondered what "reminiscent" meant, as he worked his way down the page. "He fights with a cold and grim ferocity, arrogant in his invulnerability." Probably that meant Hominy was good.

K. O. met him a few nights later, in a speak-easy. Hominy wasn't drinking. K. O. was.

"You was pretty good in your day, wasn't you, feller?" Hominy said condescendingly.

K. O. didn't answer.

"You was pretty good," Hominy went on, "but you wasn't good enough. You watch me, when *I* fight this Kid Wallace! I'll kill him! You want to see that show, feller. It'll be good."

"What?" K. O. asked incredulously. "You gonna fight Kid Wallace?"

"Sure," Hominy told him. "Aint you heard? The champ broke his hand, so their bout's off, till fall. He's gonna fight me this summer, soon's I get me a coupla more wins under my belt. Yeah. It's all fixed."

"Oh," was all K. O. said.

Later he went out and walked around. Hominy was right about one thing: he *would* kill Kid Wallace—Mr. Roger. Well, what of it? Should he fret about Hominy's bout with Kid Wallace? Certainly not.

But it was all so mixed up. K. O. kept walking and thinking about it, but it only got worse.

About three o'clock he passed a telegraph-station which was still open. K. O. stopped; then, abruptly, he went in.

"I want to send a telegraph to this man here." And he produced Jack's card. "Say, 'I want to see you quick on important business,' and sign it 'George Washington Jones'."

K. O. went home then, and to bed. He knew now what he was going to do. He had no idea *why,* but he knew *what.* He feared perhaps he wasn't good enough. . . . Just the same, he knew what Hominy would do to Mr. Roger, if they ever got in a ring together.

K. O. did not lie awake long that night, even though he hadn't had his many drinks. But just before he went to sleep, it was suddenly clear to him why he hadn't been able to get going against that Young Jackson boy—and why nothing had held him back against Bat Mulligan.

Young Jackson was white folks. Bat Mulligan was poor white trash. K. O. didn't try to reason out why that should make a difference, any more than he would have tried to formulate some system for distinguishing more between white folks and poor white trash. They either were or they weren't. It was just like you wouldn't try to figure out a way to tell a watermelon from a cataloupe—you didn't have to.

That night K. O. looked for Hominy. He found him eventually, in a speak-easy.

K. O. nodded to him, as he came in, and Hominy recognized him patronizingly. Presently, when there was a lull in the general conversation, K. O. asked:

"Who you gonna fight them two fights with, 'fore you fight Kid Wallace?"

"We got Greenburg for the first one," Hominy told him, "but we aint got no one for the second yet. Why? Do you want the other one, old man Jones?" he finished jocosely. Laughter rippled down the bar at this, and K. O. hung his head. Once all these fellows—

"I was thinkin'," he said, "how it would help your build-up, did you win my title. So's they could bill you as the cullud champ. I'm still cullud champ, you know. And I need the money. I could make it a pretty fair go, for a few rounds," he added wistfully.

"Suits me fine," Hominy told him, with a heavy wink at the line along the bar. "Course, it might hurt you some, but you could pick up a few dimes. I'll tell my manager to fix it up. Who'll I tell him to see?"

"Tell him to see Jack Fitzsimmons, at Murphy's gym, Wednesday mornin'," K. O. said. "I telegraphed him I was gonna try a come-back."

"O. K., Brother Jones—only you sure aint gonna come back far. Just to *there,"*—and he held up a large fist.

"But I gotta have the money," K. O. lied, looking at the floor. "You see what you can do for me."

Two mornings later K. O. told Mr. Jack: "I want to fight Joe Hominy. It's all right with him. And his manager is gonna see you, Mr. Jack. You fix it for me, will you?"

"How come, George?" Mr. Jack asked him.

"Well, if he win two more he's gonna fight Massa—Kid Wallace," said K. O. "I jus' thought maybe I'd like to fight him."

"Is Hominy good, like they say?"

"Jus' watch him work out," K. O. replied. "Only it don't make no difference. I wanta fight him, just the same, Mr. Jack."

Jack Fitzsimmons chewed his cigar. Finally he said: "All right, George. I'll see what we can do."

Jack Fitzsimmons arranged the fight; then he watched Hominy work.

He went to his hotel room and sat down to think.

WHY, Hominy was a tan reincarnation of Stanley Ketchell! Jack couldn't even remember seeing anyone he thought might go fifteen rounds with him. Three years ago, he thought, on a ten-round bout, it would have been an even bet as to whether K. O. would outpoint him, or would get put away. Now—well, why think of now? The fight was arranged. There was nothing to do but to get K. O. in as good shape as he could.

And so he began. Grueling days were those for K. O. Jones. Sweating and steaming and drying; in bed early every night, and up early each morning for five miles in the park; then breakfast and a rest, and the afternoon in the gym. The light bag, the heavy bag, the rope, and the sparring-partners.

Jack, knowing K. O. would fight his best for ten rounds if drawn a bit too fine, worked him almost to death. Pun-

ishing and drastic were the training methods he used on K. O. this time.

Funny, he thought, that K. O. didn't complain. Before, even though the training had been much less cruel, K. O. had often wanted to ease up some. Now he simply did exactly as he was told. Nothing more, nothing less.

But he came around. At the end of the six weeks Jack realized that K. O. was as physically fit for this fight as he could possibly be. And realizing this, Jack Fitzsimmons felt suddenly hopeless and futile—for no amount of regard for K. O. and no amount of optimism could make him feel that this was enough.

K. O. was scared and nervous. For the first time in his life he was scared before a fight. Mr. Jack, winding tape on his hands, as he had so many times before, didn't seem scared. Mr. Jack seemed kind of quiet, though, and that helped make K. O. scared. K. O. asked questions, and advice—about things he knew by heart.

He felt all right. But it didn't make any difference whether he felt all right or not—he couldn't feel good enough. If it hadn't been some one like Hominy he would have been laughing and joking with Mr. Jack. But there wasn't anyone like Hominy.

THEY went up to the ring, presently, and Hominy came up about the same time. The fight was at the Crescent Athletic Club and was a sell-out.

K. O. noticed this with no interest.

He had never felt like this before. Not even in his first fight of all. He felt as if it was somebody else fighting Hominy—and he was sorry for the fellow. He was outside the ring, watching, and thinking that there wasn't any way Hominy could lose. And that then Hominy would get a bout with this Kid Wallace.

"It's in the bag, boy," Mr. Jack was telling him; "you can't lose." But K. O. realized that Mr. Jack didn't believe what he was saying. K. O. knew Mr. Jack too well. "Don't get careless, though. Keep your left in his face. Keep out of corners. Watch his feet. Keep your elbows in. Only ten rounds. Got all night, no hurry. All set? Here's the bell."

K. O. went on out. He was cold all over. He had never been that way before. Take it easy now. Don't hurry.

Right away he saw this boy was smart. Hard to hit, with his head pulled down there between his shoulders. Like a turtle. And fast—faster than anyone K. O. had ever fought—faster than lightweight sparring-partners he had had. K. O. caught some punches on his elbows and shoulders, and he knew the crunching power behind those gloves. He slipped several and wondered how long he could go on slipping them. He wondered if failing to slip, or catch, one punch would end the fight.

Mr. Jack talked to him between rounds, but all K. O. heard was "cross your right."

Then he was out there again. Keep the left in his face. He did. But Hominy didn't seem to mind. And it didn't seem to slow him down any. What had Mr. Jack said? Oh, cross the right. He watched for a chance.

There it was, the hole. Let him have it. K. O. put all he had in that right. Ah! He had tagged him. He stepped back, watchfully, expecting him to fall.

A heavy left thudded in his ribs. K. O. grunted and went into a clinch. What could you do? Hominy didn't even mind the right—the right that used to put them to sleep in one treatment.

K. O. knew his left had Hominy looking bad, but that didn't matter. He kept coming. And even the right didn't bother him, so what could you do?

Rounds went by. Hunched down between those pale yellow shoulders, ridges of muscle rippling on them, Hominy kept boring in. Hominy cut K. O.'s eye. It was under the lid, though, so it didn't matter—the blood couldn't run down and blind him.

Once, in the fifth, Hominy connected. Just before the bell. Shakily K. O. dragged himself to his feet at "eight" and fell into a clinch, wondering how he had done it.

He had crossed rights, landing solidly. But Hominy kept boring in.

"What roun's it?" he asked. He couldn't talk good, because his lips were becoming swollen.

"Sixth, coming up," he heard Mr. Jack reply.

"Can't do it," he mumbled. "Can't. Too tough. Can't do—" And then he was out there again, and it was all the same again, like a dream.

He heard the bell, finally. He came to his corner. They worked on him. But it didn't seem to help much. Then there was slapping on his back, and tugging at his arm.

Like it was far away, he heard a voice say: "George! George!" Then: "Hey, *boy!*"

K. O. looked around. He blinked. He tried to lean closer, to see better, but he hit his head on the post. But this couldn't be Mr. Roger!

"George, get in there, boy—get in there! I didn't know who you were. Mr. Jack just told me. You're doing fine. Stay in there, George, you got him going now—" Then the bell, and hands lifted him to his feet.

But it *was* Mr. Roger. And he'd said K. O. was—said he was—oh—"doing fine."

Mr. Roger, in his corner—helped Mr. Jack work on him, too. The young master, in his corner!

But Hominy bored in. You made him look like a monkey with your left. And he bored in. You clipped him, with the right, square on the button. And still he bored in. What could you do?

K. O. no longer differentiated between the rounds and the rest periods. The rest periods didn't seem to be any relief. They didn't make him feel any better. They didn't clear up the haze over everything.

Dimly he knew Mr. Jack worked on him frantically—and Mr. Roger. The young master, working on him, trying to get him to feel better! But he couldn't feel the hands that slapped his muscles, the water that dripped from his face, the salts that should sting his nose but didn't.

SITTING on the stool. . . . He'd like to sit there forever. The radio announcer's voice coming to him from nowhere, like the words were hanging in the air, out in the center of the ring.

"Kid Wallace is now in Jones' corner, along with Jack Fitzsimmons. Kid Wallace will probably fight Hominy, if Hominy wins this go—and it looks like he will, folks, it looks like he will. But what a fight! The best I've ever seen, and I mean that. But something has to pop, and it looks like Jones. He's cut Hominy to shreds; but Hominy doesn't care. He's too young. He doesn't care."

Kid Wallace— Kid Wallace was Mr. Roger. K. O. was in the center again. Mr. Roger would fight this guy, this pale-yellow Hominy. And Hominy would murder Mr. Roger. This Hominy didn't know any better; he didn't know about white folks.

Then K. O. was on the stool again, though he would just as soon have been in the ring. It was all the same now.

Without trying, he listened to Mr. Jack. "You've hurt him some. Now slap that right to his heart. He aint got a defense for it. Shoot the right to his body, quick, after a one-two. That's where you got to get him. Sock it to his heart. Leave his iron pan be. Lay it on his heart—he aint all concrete."

As if he was watching somebody else do it, K. O. saw his right land three times in the next nightmare round—

land clean, and hard, over the heart. The third time he heard Hominy grunt. But it was the ninth round. Or he thought it was.

K. O. was whipped, he guessed. Mr. Jack had said he hurt Hominy, but he guessed Hominy was just too tough. And he had lost the decision, of course. . . . He was dead on the stool. He would only try to last out this next round, keep Hominy from getting a knock-out.

The ten-second whistle. Then he felt a vicious slap on his face, and jerked upright to look into Mr. Jack's eyes, close to his own. Mr. Jack's voice sounded funny, and he looked as though he was seeing ghosts, or something.

"Listen," he said, and K. O. heard each word with an unreal clarity: *"this is the time!* Go out and stall a couple of minutes. Fire one to his heart again. Then lead your left, twice, quick. Then let him have the right. *Only,* don't cross it to his body. Cross it *six inches behind* his chin. He'll figure it's for his guts again, and he's too tired to get his hands up quick. He'll pull back. He aint looking for you to try the jaw again. Get your hips in that punch, George Washington!"

The bell, and as it clanged, K. O. heard from behind him: "All right, George. Just one more now—one from the ankles, George. Make it *whistle!"* And that was not Mr. Jack's voice. That was Mr. Roger—Kid Wallace.

AND he was out there again, with Hominy boring in. But was he coming as fast as before? K. O. couldn't tell. What had Mr. Jack said?

Oh, yeah. One to the heart. Well, there it was. He heard Hominy grunt. Then what? K. O. didn't know. He should do something, and he couldn't remember what. He wriggled into a clinch. He hung his head over Hominy's shoulder and held on and tried to think, to remember. There were Mr. Jack and Mr. Roger over in the corner. What was it he was to do?

Mr. Roger was shadow boxing. Oh, K. O. saw—*that* was what he must do. He watched. Yes, that was it. He remembered now.

Left twice, shift, then the right. He yielded to the referee's prying. They broke. He shot the left, twice, quick, like Mr. Jack had said.

Mr. Jack was right. Mr. Jack was always right. It seemed to K. O. that everything happened like in those slow-motion pictures.

Over went the one-two. The guard came down. One from the ankles? All right. Here it was. It was the last punch he would ever throw; he'd make it a good one! Six inches behind the chin, Mr. Jack had said—K. O. remembered that just in time.

Pain shot far up his wrist.

Hominy folded forward, then pitched on his face.

K. O. stared stupidly as the referee raised his arm. The fight was over.

Jack Fitzsimmons and Roger Williams were gazing at George Washington Jones with a sort of awe. They couldn't believe it.

"He whipped a better man than he is," Jack said softly.

Williams shook his head. "There isn't a better man," he said. And Jack nodded slowly. . . .

K. O. gazed at brilliant sunlight from the kitchen window of this fine apartment, and tried to remember the night before. After the fifth round, though, he couldn't remember. He didn't care. He was a little sore, but he didn't mind that either. That Hominy guy would never get a bout with Kid Wallace now, after being knocked out by a man Kid Wallace had stopped in the second round.

"—And get the money to put the plantation in shape," Mr. Roger was saying in the other room. "Then introduce some modern methods and make the thing pay. I *like* planting," he added, as though it might be an admission of weakness. "So," he finished, "if you want to manage me on that understanding, I'd certainly like to have you do it."

"It's done," Mr. Jack said. "With what I can teach you, and George to help you train, you can handle anything in your division, easy—except Hominy, and you won't have to fight him now. And you can't retire too soon after you're champ to make me mad. Only," he added, softly and happily, "I *do* want to manage a champ."

"George!"

K. O. appeared. "Yassuh, Missa Rogeh."

"Get that bottle out of my trunk, and a pair of glasses. I guess our manager won't mind one nip to seal the agreement."

"Yassuh!" And K. O. scurried into the next room, to rummage in the trunk. In a moment he was back with the bottle and glasses, which he set before them.

With gestures and flourishes of the bottle and cork, that made it seem a great event, he poured their drinks and handed one to each. He lit a match for Mr. Jack's cigar, which had gone dead. He pulled down a shade so the sun no longer struck Mr. Roger in the face.

"Is they anything else, Missa Rogeh?" he asked.

Mr. Roger regarded him silently for a moment. "You no-good, grinning black ape!" he said. "Get out of here, before I chuck something at you!" And he reached toward a brass book-end on the table.

"Yassuh," said K. O., scooting from the room. It was kind of like a game.

"You know good and well," Roger Williams called after him, "that you've got a glass in the kitchen. So go on and have your drink, and quit fussing around trying to act like you're worth something."

"Yassuh," floated back happily to them.

"And you can keep that bottle, George," Roger Williams added, "only don't let me catch you getting corned up on it. Hear? Or I'll smack your no-'count ears down."

A deep, hearty chuckle came in to them from the other room. Then: "Yassuh, Missa Rogeh. Yassuh. I won't get co'ned up. Nossuh, I won't. N-n-o-o-o *suh!"*

Jack Fitzsimmons looked at his new charge for a moment. "Son," he said, "I don't understand it. I'm not from the South. But I'm glad, because that boy is happy now. Tickled to death. He deserves it."

After a long silence Roger Williams said: "You don't try to understand it. It's just there."

In the kitchen K. O. hastily grabbed his glass from its place on the sink and poured into it a generous slug from the bottle. He quaffed it. Corn liquor from down home!

K. O. glanced about him delightedly. Gee, this sure was a fine apartment. The fact that it was Mr. Roger's—and that he worked for Mr. Roger, and had a tiny bedroom at the back was what made the whole place so swell.

Mr. Roger sure was a grand young man. Why, just as soon as Mr. Roger had learned this morning that he didn't want to fight any more, and didn't have anything to do, he had offered to hire him.

HE could go back home, now. A few more fights and he could go home with Mr. Roger—could go home grandly, and the boys down there couldn't razz him—because he was personal bodyservant to Mr. Roger, permanently. He rolled the words over his tongue. Personal bodyservant to Mr. Roger Lee Williams, of Clarksville, Louisiana. He guessed *that* would make them take notice!

He sure felt good. He felt so good he thought maybe he would have another snort; but then decided he wouldn't, because if he got corned up Mr. Roger might scold him and mean it. That would be terrible!

The Private War

By HENRY LA COSSITT

A joyous tale wherein two embattled buddies show the wild West what real tough guys are like.

Illustrated by Henry Thiede

I'M foreman of the Q. C. H., which is thirty miles from Watergap up in the the Laramie Range over the Cold Springs trail. Q. C. H. stands for Quarter Circle Heart, and as a spread, it aint much. It's a little outfit, and you don't have to take a couple of days' chuck if you want to ride out to look it over, like you do when you're on some of the big outfits. But it's a pretty good place to be, and I like it. It's the last spread before you get to the open range, and I was raised near by. I guess I'll die pretty near by.

I come near dyin' when I was in France, and got a hole in my chest, and a Croix de Guerre I didn't buy, to show for it; but that's not here or any other place. Anyway, with the discharge, the Croix de Guerre and the hole, I shipped on a fast freight in the spring of '19 and come back to Watergap as fast as I could make it. And from Watergap I come to the Q. C. H., where old man Gast was still tryin' to squeeze a livin' out o' them twelve thousand acres o' his up on La Prele Creek.

Our meetin' was mighty touchin'.

"Art," says old man Gast, grabbin' my hand and pumpin' it, "I'm dern glad to see you. . . . Take Joe, there,"—pointin' to a cockeyed kid from Nebraska—"and Arch,"—another kid from Nebraska, but not cockeyed,—"and go up to Lamb's Rock and fix that drift-fence. It aint been repaired since you left."

So I took Joe and Arch and went up and fixed that drift-fence. Which shows you pretty much how old man Gast and I was.

Well, one evenin' I was sittin' on the corral fence lookin' at the mighty handsome stand o' alfalfa the old man had in the creek-bed, the best I ever see, and I was wonderin' just what we was goin' to do about it, when the old man come along.

"You got a handsome stand o' alfalfa," I says, "aint you?"

"Uh-huh," he says.

"Well," says I, "we gotta git at it pretty soon. An' I was thinkin'," says I, "that it might be all right if we got a couple o' hands or so to give me an' Arch an' Joe a little elbow-relief when we git goin'. Joe's about to strain his eyes."

Well, I thought sure he'd have somethin' to say about that, for old man Gast aint the most generous fella in the world at times. He even keeps his money at home so it'll be close to him. He had all his savin's somewhere around that shack o' his; and now, with old lady Gast visitin' folks back in Iowa, we had to cook our own chuck. But all he says was, "All right—git 'em."

So I harnessed up a team to a wagon next day, told Joe and Arch to get goin' with the mower, and hauled off to Watergap. We had to get supplies, anyway.

It aint the best o' roads from the Q. C. H. to Watergap. Just about halfway you cross a worn place on the hill and a granite monument. The monument and the worn place they say is where the Oregon trail crossed, and there's some who say you can't tell the Watergap road from the trail; but anyway, the road aint much account. I got there, though, just the same. I come a-rattlin' into Watergap about noon with all the kinks out o' my bones, and enough dust in my throat to plant a field o' potatoes in. But just as I was comin' into town, I pulled up short and yelled to a fella just comin' out along the road:

"Hello there, Ed!"

This fella pulls up a pinto he's forkin', and says: "How are you, Art? You hear about the robbery?"

"What robbery?"

"The bank-robbery. Two fellers stuck up the Watergap Bank."

"Nope," says I, but I aint concerned much. I never did have a bank-account.

"Well," says this fella Ed, "glad to see you back, Art. Where you goin' now?"

"To town, you dang' fool," says I, gettin' tired o' his questions, and not carin' in particular for him, anyway. "I'm after hands."

"Hands?"

"Yep, hands. We're gonna put up hay pretty soon."

"Well," says Ed, "they's a throng o' fellers in Watergap, all right. They're hittin' up toward Casper and Lusk. They say there's a lot o' work up there in the oil-fields."

"Any of 'em want to work in the hay-fields?"

"Can't say as to that. You might ask 'em."

"I'm gonna ask 'em."

Well, this Ed, he looked at me sort o' queer, and laughed. Then he says, "Good luck, Art," and give that pinto the spurs.

I didn't know what he was drivin' at, but I drove on, and when I come to the main drag, then I see what this Ed was drivin' at. The street, I'll swear, was full o' the derndest collection o' fellas I ever see. They was throngin' the sidewalks, and quarrelin' and shootin' craps right on the pavement. I says to myself: "Well, there oughta be a couple o' hands in that layout."

So I moved along slow toward the livery-stable, lookin' at the saloons and the sidewalk, when all of a sudden them horses I was drivin' just stopped stock-still. I turned around, and there in the middle of the street, right in front o' the horses, was the doggonedest scrap I see since I left France.

There was a couple o' fellas, big and long and rangy, and they was tradin' punches in the middle o' the street, and they both had on O. D. pants and wrapped puttees and khaki shirts.

Well, I kind o' like a good scrap, so I got down from the seat and stood admirin' while they batted each other around. One of 'em, a fella with a lantern jaw and a pair o' the hardest eyes I ever see, give the other'n a clout that knocked him pants over appetite right at my feet, and I thought that'd be all o' that, but this fella up and jumps right back and smacks the fella with the lantern jaw down. This second fella, I noticed then, was just as hard

a customer as the first, only he was a little bald and had a scar runnin' down his face from his eye to his jawbone. They was both over six feet, and I says to myself, "Such a pair o' fellas would make good hay-hands," so I jumps in between 'em before the guy that's down has a chance to come back and yells: "Hey!"

They just looked at me a minute, and then around me at each other.

"So what!" says the fella with the lantern jaw.

"So how'd you guys like a job?" says I, mighty quick.

"A job!" they both say.

"Sure," says I, mighty quick, "a job."

Well, they both look at me like I was off in the head, and then, snarlin', they start for each other again. But I stepped in between 'em again, even if it was a risk o' life and limb. It aint often I see such a pair o' hands.

"Wait a minute," says I. "I see you fellers 'a' been in the army, an' I been in the army too." Well, that stopped 'em for a minute, and I went on: "Now, I like a good fight's well's anybody, an I can guarantee that every evenin', if you like it, you can have a hell-roarer right out in the corral, an' I'll cheer. But le's get this settled: We're hayin'. We need a couple o' hands. It's four an' found a day while it lasts, an' then you can get goin' again. How's that?"

I half expected 'em to take a crack at me, maybe, but they didn't. They looked at each other and at me, thinkin' over what I'd said, and then they just looked at their shoes. Finally one of 'em, the fella with the scar, says: "That sounds O. K., Mister; but where-at's this here outfit o' yours?"

"Thirty miles," says I, "over the dangdest road in Wyomin' out thataway." I was pointin' towards the west at a string o' hills that're pretty bare, and this hard gent looks doubtful.

But the other'n' speaks up: "That's O. K. with me. It's O. K. with him, too."

"Oh, yeah?" says the guy with the scar.

"Yeah!" says the guy with the lantern jaw.

"You givin' me orders?" says the guy with the scar.

"What you think I'm doin'?" asks the gent with the lantern jaw, at which the other fella tears into him again.

Well, it took me a minute or so to get in between 'em and get 'em apart, and I got socked once, but I finally got 'em listenin' again and says: "You're the dangdest fellas I ever see, fightin' thisaway. . . . What's this here ruction about?"

They didn't say nothin' for a minute, and then the fella with the lantern jaw says: "Him an' me, we was in the army together, an' I was his sargint, an' he didn't like it. He didn't like no orders I give him, an' one day he says: 'You big ham, you couldn't do this to me if we was out o' this war.' An' I says to him: 'No?' An' he says: 'No!' So I says: 'O. K.; when this war is over, I'll give you a chance to see whether I can't!' An' he says that was O. K. with him, so I'm givin' him a chance. It's been six months now an' it aint settled yet."

"No," says the gent with the scar, "but, by heck, it's gonna be!"

"Well," says I, "that aint none o' my never-mind, but how about this hayin' business?"

I don't know how it come about, but them two fellas said it was all right with them because they was broke, so we went and had a drink, me thinkin' that after all maybe I'd made a mistake. The way them fellas sort o' quieted down after such hard fightin' was more than I could figure.

But as I said, their fightin' wasn't none o' my business, and I let it go at that. I figured they'd maybe be hard to handle, but old man Gast and me, and them two Nebraska kids, maybe we could do the job. Anyway, all the time we was havin' the drink, they was eyin' each other and makin' dire threats as to what they was gonna do to each other.

Slim—that's what the guy with the lantern jaw and hard eyes answered to—says: "We'll make him do an honest day's work, Mister. We'll discipline him, 'cause he needs it. He never had no disciplinin' in the army like he should of, for I never reported him. But he won't git away with loafin', he won't. I'll see to that!"

That was mighty nice o' Slim, but I never see nobody get away with loafin' on a twenty-four by eighteen haystack with the hay comin' a half a ton a minute when the stacker's workin' right, if he wants to stay on the stack; but I just nod when Jack—that's what the fella with the bald head and the scar turned around to—says: "Oh, yeh? *You'll* see! What you mean, you'll see?"

"What I said!" barks this fella Slim.

Well, as for me, I never see such a pair o' gents and such dirty looks as they give each other, and I'm wonderin' how old man Gast's gonna take it; but there's nothin' to do about it, so we go and get the wagon and dump the supplies in it and start out for the Q. C. H. like three pals, only we aint.

All the way out they was makin' remarks about each other and each other's personal habits, and all the way out I was ready to dodge, but nothin' happened.

Slim says: "That slob an' me, we was in the reg'lar army

It took me a minute or so to get 'em apart, and I got socked once, but finally I got 'em listenin'.

an' went over first thing. We was at Shattoh Theery, an' we was chargin' when we got to the top o' the hill an' I see he was in trouble. So I—"

"Trouble, hell!" says Jack, his scar gettin' red.

"Yeh, trouble," remarks Slim. "What the hell you think a hard-boiled bosh with a bay'net aimed at your guts when you're flat on your back is—a fancy dress ball? Anyway, I see he was in trouble, an' I run up an' stuck that bosh. An' this slug gits up an' says: 'What you mean by shovin' your mug in my business?' Now can you tie that?"

I couldn't, I says, but made no other remark.

"Yeah," says this fella Jack. "Well, maybe I was in trouble, but was in the Argonne one night, an' they was a counter-attack, an' this ham gets caught with about ten bosh aroun' him an' is havin' a hard time, so I run up and run 'em off. I—"

"*You* run 'em off?" says Slim.

"Yeah, *I* run 'em off," says Jack, stickin' his jaw around like he was askin' this fella Slim to sock it. But Slim only cussed a little. "As I was sayin'," says Jack, "I run 'em off, an' then this guy turns to me an' says: 'What the hell you mean by desertin' your post? I told you where to stay, didn't I?' So I bust him, an' we have a fight. Can you tie *that?*"

"I can't," says I. "I swear I can't." But I was thinkin' to myself that I never see such a pair o' liars as these two fellas I got with me, and I was wonderin' if maybe they wasn't tryin' to run some game on me, but I didn't say nothin'. Anyway, we was nearly home, and I was wonderin' what old man Gast was gonna say.

We got home, and them two fellas helped me unharness the team and put up the horses and feed 'em, and helped me feed the hogs and did more'n they was supposed to do; and I was wonderin' again. I couldn't figure 'em out; they didn't mind workin' at all.

After supper—it was late, and old man Gast wasn't on hand, nor was them two kids from Nebraska—I took 'em into the bunkhouse and says: "This is where you flop. Them two kids sleepin' there is all right, an' we need 'em, so don't break none o' their arms or legs. One of 'em's cockeyed, as it is."

Slim and Jack, they said they wouldn't harm nobody, and that I shouldn't get so wise. I was about to ask 'em, because I can't help gettin' riled myself around so much fightin' and carryin' on, why in blazes I shouldn't get so wise, when they laugh and say I'm a good scout and not to mind them, that they only got a private war on and that they aint gonna hurt nobody else. Then Slim says for Jack to get the hell to bed, and Jack says for Slim to go to hell, and I have to say for God's sake not to wake up them kids, that we need their strength. Then they go to bed, and I come around to my room feelin' like I'd had a hard day at the front, and thinkin' that maybe I'm a fool for bringin' such a pair o' loco gents to the old Q. C. H. But it don't interfere with my sleep none.

I wasn't at breakfast next mornin', with old man Gast and them Nebraska kids and them two lovebirds, havin' to see about some machinery in the barn, but I hear about it soon enough.

Old man Gast come runnin' out with his face as white as the Continental Divide, and yellin' for me. I knew right away that my pals Slim and Jack was tryin' to assassinate each other, and I wasn't wrong. Right after old man Gast come Arch and Cockeyed Joe, and I never see two kids so scared. It seems that them two army fellas had started a argument at the table, and Slim had slammed Jack on his bald spot with a flapjack. The flapjack was covered with sorghum, so it made Jack pretty sore, and they was havin' a fight.

"Art," yells old man Gast, "take Joe and Arch, there, and go—"

"I know," says I, "them two sissies is tryin' to cut each other's throats again." So I run in, and find 'em on the porch battin' each other around.

Well, I got 'em stopped somehow, and we all got out to the field, where Joe and Arch have mowed quite a passel of hay that is waitin' to be stacked. Old man Gast, he gets on the mower: and Joe and Arch, they get on the rakes; and me, I work the stacker, leavin' my two pals to do the stackin'.

"These," says I, givin' 'em a couple o' pitchforks, "is for hay only."

So we start.

Well, I never see the stacker work quite so good as it worked that day and them two fellas hadn't a chance to do anything but heave and tamp. They begin sweatin' in about a minute, and pretty soon they was so pacified they forgot to cuss each other when they bumped into each other. The hay was fallin' over 'em and buryin' 'em, and after

The next thing I know, there, stickin' through his arm, an' pinnin' it to the wall, is a pitchfork.

each load they both come up gaspin' like they'd just dived into a tank o' water. But of a sudden this gent Slim, just after a extra big load o' hay has buried him, comes up a-yellin' like a wildcat, and the next minute he's off the stack like the devil was after him. And right after him comes that guy Jack. Well, this fella Jack, he makes a bee-line to where Slim is performin' a dance and yellin' to beat hell, and grabs somethin' off o' each o' Slim's shoulders and throws 'em in the hay stubble; after which he takes his fork and lays about him like a Tartar on them things he threw in the stubble. I come a-runnin' up, and there in the stubble lays the dangdest pair o' rattlesnakes I ever see. They was as long as a hoe-handle and as big around their middles as a fence-rail; they'd been nestlin' in the hay for a nap when they got heaved up on the stack. Anyway, they'd fell on Slim's shoulders, and now Jack was dissectin' 'em with that fork.

Ed looks at them two fellas on the stack and says: "Them two bank-robbers is known to be in these here hills."

"Well, I'll be derned," says I. "Rattlers!"

Slim, he looks at me right queer, and says: "No!"

"Yeah," says this guy Jack, who has now made jelly out o' them varmints, and then lookin' at Slim, says: "How you feel, feller?"

Well, Slim throws down on Jack with a tough look and says: "I feel damn' fine—see?"

"Yeah," says Jack, "but you looked sort o' peaked there for a minute. In fact, you looked right bilious. If it hadn't 'a' been for me, you'd—"

"I'd of what!" says Slim, stickin' his face close to Jack's. "If it hadn't of been for you, I'd-of taken both them snakes by the tail an' snapped their heads off. . . . You gotta stick your mug in my business all the time."

Well, I could see it comin', so I busts in between 'em and says: "Well, them snakes is sure dead, an' it's plenty o' killin' for the time bein'. Maybe you fellers would like to git back on that stack an' git goin' again. . . . Them two Nebraska kids, they has got quite a lot o' hay raked an' ready."

Jack looks at me sort of ominous and is about to say somethin' when Slim says: "You heard him! Git back on that stack!"

At which Jack looks at Slim and says: "Maybe you'd like to make me, you big slug!"

At which Slim pulls back, and I cuts in: "Listen! I said to git back on that there stack, an' I mean it. I aint carin' a damn for none o' this war o' yours, but I'm a' gonna mix in it if you fellers don't git on that stack in a split second!"

Anyway, I was standin' there with my jaw stuck out, lookin' pretty tough, I guess, and them two fellas was lookin' at me the same way, when we heard hoofs comin' across the field; and I looked around, and there was Ed on his pinto.

"Hello, Art," says Ed. "Git your hands?"

"These," says I, sweepin' my hand at them two tough fellas, "is the hands."

"Hmmm," says Ed, and busts out laughin'.

"Who you laughin' at?" asks that fella Slim.

"I'm laughin' at Art," says Ed, sort of mysterious. "I hope everything's all right, Art."

"Everything," says I, "is hunky-dory. Have you any more remarks?"

At which Ed busts out laughin' again.

I don't know if that was the reason, but them two fellas didn't say no other word, but just turned around and got up on the stack, and Jack yells: "Let 'er flicker."

So I looks at Ed, who aint laughin' so much now, and says: "Well, have you any more news, Ed?"

Ed looks at them two fellas on the stack and then at me, and says sort o' low: "Yeah, I got news, Art. Them two bank-robbers"—he looks sort o' meanin' at Slim and Jack—"is known to be in these here hills. They cut 'em off over at Elk Cañon, and they're headed this way, they say. . . . Where'd you git them hands, Art?"

Well, then it was me who bust out laughin'. "You had better not let them two fellers hear you talkin' thataway, Ed," says I.

Ed sort o' bristles and says: "Oh, no? Why?"

"Because," says I, "they are about the thin-skinnedest fellers I ever see, an' don't take kindly to remarks about their honesty. . . . Besides, it wasn't ten minutes after I see you yesterday, Ed, that I come across them two fellers. . . . Stay for supper?"

Ed looks sort o' sulky at me and then at them two tough fellas and says: "Nope, I gotta be travelin'! . . . I just thought I'd tell you about them bank-robbers, Art. It aint none o' my carin', you know."

"Thanks," says I, and begin workin' the stacker. Ed, he loped off on that pinto, pretty riled, I guess.

Well, the stacker worked perfect that day; and old man Gast, he mowed a lot o' hay, and them kids from Nebraska, they raked a lot o' hay, and Slim and Jack, they stacked and sweat like gun-barrels in a fog. And nothin' happened much, except a porcupine got cut up in the hay and fell on Jack, and he got a quill in his neck, but not deep; and Slim pulled it out by main strength and awkwardness. But generally speakin', it was a fair to middlin' day, and peaceful as you'd expect with such a pair o' fellas around; and when it come evenin', we all climbed on the wagon and drove home, Jack tellin' on the way how he'd saved Slim's life once in the Argonne, but it was the same thing he'd told before, so I cut in and told it for him. That didn't feaze him none, though, for he started off on another'n' and told a brand-new yarn about savin' Slim's life once at St. Mihiel when Slim had been stood up against a wall to be shot.

"I waited," says Jack, "until they'd drawed down on him, an' then started shootin' with a Thompson. An' when it was over, he turns to me an' says—"

"I know," says I. "He says: 'What do you mean by hornin' in on my business? Didn't I tell you where to stay?' An' I can't tie that!"

At which Jack looks at me sort o' ominous and says: "Well, he did say that, but how'd you know it?"

"Oh," I says, kind o' careless, "I catch on pretty quick sometimes," and let it go at that.

But Slim, he hauled off and told another'n' about the time he'd saved Jack's life in Paris when some thug was gonna slug him while drunk. And Jack had done somethin' or other when it was finished, and I couldn't tie that, either, but I thinks that these fellas are the dernedest liars ever come to the Q. C. H.

WELL, things went along for about a week, and we was nigh through hayin'. Them pals had been pretty quiet, considerin', and the only real excitin' thing had been a sick cow. So on the last day, when the hay was pretty near up, old man Gast says to me:

"Art, I'll run this-here stacker for the rest of the time. You go up and see about that sick critter."

So I got on old man Gast's sorrel and rode up to the ranch. I was thinkin' that maybe them two tough fellas Slim and Jack would be goin' to breeze in a few days and that I wouldn't like it, they havin' furnished more entertainment than I ever see at the old Q. C. H., but I guessed it couldn't be helped. I was thinkin', too, that even if they was the biggest liars this side o' the divide, they was pretty good fellas, after all. All that stuff, thinks I, about them life-savin's is a lot o' horse-feathers, and that stuff about that sargint business is a lot o' buffalo-chips; but still and all, thinks I, they aint so bad. Which they aint.

Anyway, I got to the ranch buildin's and found the cow had died, so there wasn't no more to see about that, and I come into the house to brew a pot o' coffee. I was standin' by the stove, thinkin' about Slim and Jack, when of a sudden somethin' jabbed me hard in the ribs; and as I'm a pretty careful gent, I raised 'em high.

Then somebody padded around me and says, "He aint got nothin' on him," and I turned around.

Well, in my time, I see a good many tough fellas; but standin' before me there was a pair o' the hardest guys I ever see. One of 'em was a long, tall, skinny guy as ugly as a loco steer; and the other, he was a burly fella with a busted nose and one eye. Both of 'em had big six-guns throwed down on me, and both of 'em looked as if they'd rather use 'em than not.

One of 'em, the long one, he says: "Who're you, fella?"

"I," says I, "am the foreman o' this spread."

"The hell!" says the burly fella.

"Maybe," says I, "but that's a fact."

I see, then, that they been eatin', from the amount o' grub that's scattered on the dinin'-room table.

"What," ask I, "is the big idea?"

At which they both laugh, kind o' unpleasant, and the long one, he says: "That aint much o' your business, fella, but we'll tell you. We been hidin' in the barn for near a a week, an' yesterday our pervisions run out, an' we're hungry. I guess you know who we are."

"Well," says I, "I can't say for sure, but I think so."

"Yeah?" says the long one, stickin' that gun o' his in my belly. "Well, *you* aint gonna collect no reward for no bank-robbers."

"I'll say I aint!" says I.

"Well," says the long one, who looks like he runs this team, "we aint gonna do nothin' to you if you act like you was sensible. Now we are headin' back towards Watergap, because the law is so dumb they'll never think o' lookin' for us there; an' from Watergap it aint nobody's business where we go. Anyway, we know old man Gast, who runs this spread, has quite a lot o' boodle stashed somewhere, an' we want to know where it is."

At which I looks thoughtful and up at the ceilin'. "Well," I says, and I'm tellin' gospel, "I don't know where it is."

"Oh, no?" says the fella with the bashed nose and one eye. "Maybe we can help you remember."

At which he and the long one shove me toward the stove and open the boiler which is at one end of the stove, and in where they have been heatin' some water to do their cookin'. The water's boilin' right merry.

"Well," says the fella with the bashed nose, "how'd you like to have your hand stuck into that?"

"I wouldn't care for it none," says I, beginnin' to feel like I would like it better if them two fellas didn't have them guns.

"All right," says the long one, "then come across. You, bein' foreman, oughta know where the boodle is."

"Yeah," says I, "but I don't. I never hear old man Gast say where he stashed his savin's."

Well, they both laugh at that, and shove me toward the boiler. I begin to fight, but one o' them fellas socks me in the jaw and sort o' dazes me, and I feel the hot water on my hand, when of a sudden it was like a pack o' wildcats had bust loose in that kitchen. I just get time to see Jack come down on them two fellas and sock the long one on the jaw so hard it must 'a' sprained his ankle, when I turn on the burly one. But the burly fella, he has throwed down on me with a gun and has Jack covered. By now the long fella has picked himself up and is reelin' around like a souse, but he has his gun and looks plenty mean.

They both start cussin' and snarlin', and then the long one says to Jack: "You aint sensible, fella, hornin' in this-away. It's gonna cost you plenty!" Whereat, he says to the burly fella: "See if your shootin' 's as good as ever."

So the burly fella, he backs up against the wall and draws down on Jack; and I'm about to go loco, I'm that sore, but of a sudden I hear somethin' like the wind in a pine tree, and the next thing I know, this burly fella has let out a screech that is worse'n a panther's, and I'm starin' at him goggle-eyed. Because there, stickin' through his arm and pinnin' it fast to the wall, is a pitchfork, and he has dropped his gun and is yellin' bloody murder.

THE long fella, he looks scared, but before he has a chance to do a thing, a-flyin' fast through the door comes Slim and lands on him. Well, they go down, and I never see such a beatin' as Slim hands him after takin' away his gun. Meanwhile, Jack has gone and pulled that pitchfork from the arm o' the burly fella, who is quite out o' this fracas, and Jack is glarin' at Slim and the long one.

Down the road I see Slim runnin' after him. And I hear Slim yell: "Hey, where you goin'?"

And then through the door I see old man Gast lookin' kind o' sick, and them two kids from Nebraska whose teeth are makin' a lot o' noise. . . .

Well, by evenin' the sheriff has come and has taken away them two bank-robbers with that fella Ed, who I find is a deputy; and they have congratulated Slim and Jack and me, and Slim and Jack have been paid off by old man Gast, and we are at the supper-table, where old man Gast has spread out a feed to celebrate and has broke out a quart o' Cascade, which he was savin' for the next world's fair which he was meanin' to attend. I never see old man Gast so generous.

"Boys," says old man Gast, who is feelin' that Cascade, "I'm cert'nly obliged to you. If it hadn't been for you—"

"Hold on," says I, lookin' at my hand, which is pretty red from that hot water, "I got somethin' to say first. I wanta say if it hadn't 'a' been for them two,"—lookin' at Slim and Jack,—"I'd 'a'—"

"Yeah," says Slim, grinnin' and lookin' at Jack, "but if it hadn't of been for me, you'd of been feelin' dirt in your face by now, feller." And he laughs pretty loud.

Jack eyes him sort of ominous. "Yeah," he says, "an' you horned in on my business as usual. I never asked you."

"You can't ask me nothin'," says Slim, who is feelin' that Cascade too. "I'm tellin' you everythin' you do."

"Oh, yeah?" says Jack, who is also feelin' that Cascade. "You aint tellin' me nothin'—you aint!"

Slim says, "The hell I aint!" and he slams down on Jack's bald spot with a handful o' mashed potatoes.

Well, I never see such a room when those two tough fellas are through with it. And I never see old man Gast like that. I thought he was gonna have a stroke, a-lookin' at the damage bein' done. He's hoppin' around and yellin': "Art, take Joe an' Arch, there, an' do somethin'."

But I'm kind o' riled myself, so I wades in and pulls them two soldiers apart. They stand back glarin' at each other and at me, and I'm about to take a pass at both of 'em, for I'm feelin' that Cascade too, when old man Gast bawls: "One o' you fellas has got to clear out!"

Old man Gast feels pretty grateful, I guess, but that wrecked dinin'-room was gonna cost him money. Besides, the bottle o' Cascade had got broke in the ruction.

"They aint enough room," says old man Gast, his face kind o' purple, "on this spread, for both of you!" He stands there lookin' mighty sore, but lookin', also, like he hoped they wouldn't take it personal.

"You heard what he says!" says Slim to Jack. "Git goin'!"

"The hell!" says Jack. "You—"

"I aint carin' which!" says old man Gast. "But—"

"Git out, I said!" says Slim, like a sargint.

Old man Gast heard Slim talk like that, and he must of thought Jack ought to go, for he says:

"Well, git goin'!"

So Jack looks at old man Gast, and then at me, and then at Slim, and says, "O. K.," and starts for the door. When he gets to the door, though, he turns and says: "I'm a-goin', but it aint none o' your doin'!"

At which Slim says: "No? Well I told you to go, an' you're goin' aint you?"

But Jack doesn't do nothin' but laugh and then walks out. After which we got down to cleanin' up that dinin'-room. Them two Nebraska kids, they look sort o' relieved, and so does old man Gast, when I look up and see that Slim starin' at the door. Pretty soon he hitches his belt and starts out the door, when I yelled: "Hey, where you goin'?"

He don't stop none, only he says: "I'm a-goin' after that guy. I believe he thinks I couldn't of made him git out!" And off he goes.

Well, we just look at each other a minute. Old man Gast looks at me and them two Nebraska kids. I look at him and them two Nebraska kids. Arch looks at Joe, and old man Gast and me; and Cockeyed Joe looks at us all at once. But we can't make nothin' out of it. Finally old man Gast says: "Art, take Joe an' Arch, there, an'—"

But I don't hear no more, for I'm on my way outside. I high-tail it around the house and look down the Watergap road, where I see Jack walkin' along and Slim runnin' after him. And then I hear Slim yell:

"Hey, where you goin'?"

At which Jack turns around and sees Slim and waits for him. Slim, he catches up with him, and I expect to see 'em begin over again, but they don't. They just go on, and I watch 'em for a while, thinkin' that they mightn't be such liars, after all, but wonderin' when they was gonna get that discipline business settled, when I hear old man Gast call and I go back inside.

The Phantom President

By GEORGE F. WORTS

Illustrated by Joseph Franké

Two men elected President of these troubled United States! One, the real one, is an austere executive genius; the other is a fascinating fellow who resembles him and who is hired by the powers of politics to make the speeches and win the votes.

The Story Thus Far:

"WE know you are a business genius, Blair," said Ronkton, boss of the Prosperity Party. "We are fully aware what your brain in the White House would do for this country. But that is not the point—the point is, Blair, that never has a man, woman or child called you Ted or Teddy. We could never elect you."

Senator Pitcairn suggested that Blair could be built up. "Look what a few Indian feathers and a couple of cowboy hats did for Calvin Coolidge! And remember how the people warmed to Hoover when he brought that kid to Washington—the one who saved the children in that Colorado blizzard."

"We can't dress Blair in Indian garb or have him suddenly begin entertaining heroes," Ronkton objected. "He's not the type for that—he's the aloof mental type."

That very night the fascinating rogue came upon the scene—Peter Varney, who had discovered that he bore a remarkable resemblance to Theodore Blair and had capitalized that resemblance by cashing a check signed supposedly by Blair. And out of this chance meeting grew a fantastic and daring scheme: why not run Blair for the Presidency, employing his double—a man of exceptional warmth and personal magnetism—to make the necessary public appearances?

They knew that Blair could never win the votes of personal popularity—he had not even been able to win the love of the one woman he'd ever cared for: beautiful Felicia Hamilton, who indeed liked and admired him, but somehow held aloof. They knew that Varney was a rascal—there was the check episode, and his association with another shady character, Jimmy Carlyle. They did not know then, however, that only that day Varney had

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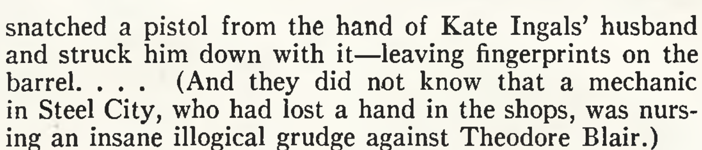


Blair slugged Varney on the point of the chin. It was the first time that Theodore Blair had ever hit a man. The results were astounding.

snatched a pistol from the hand of Kate Ingals' husband and struck him down with it—leaving fingerprints on the barrel. . . . (And they did not know that a mechanic in Steel City, who had lost a hand in the shops, was nursing an insane illogical grudge against Theodore Blair.)

They did learn of some of these things later, but only after they were committed to the venture. For Detective Murchison of the homicide squad found several people who thought they had seen Blair at the Ingals' house on the night of the murder. Of course Blair could easily prove an alibi. Indeed at his request his fingerprints were compared with those on the fatal pistol-barrel, and found wholly different. And Kate Ingals steadfastly maintained, under questioning, that the murder had been committed by a client crazed by stock-market losses, a man who in no way resembled Blair.

The plan proceeded. Varney claimed to have disposed of Carlyle. (Had he killed him too?) And he persuaded Kate Ingals to go abroad for six months—supplying her with money and promising to marry her after he became President! He then went to work and memorized names and faces and relationships of Blair's friends, so carefully that he carried off chance meetings without causing suspicion. More, he called on Felicia; and she noticed in him only a change for the better—a new warmth and magnetism and charm that quite won her.

Blair won the nomination. And Varney the rogue continued to make the needful public appearances. But Varney was not deceived. He knew how convenient it would be for Blair and the Big Four to have him out of the way before or immediately after the election. Since the conspiracy began, he had wondered how it would work out the other way round. If he could safely, quietly kill Blair immediately after the election, Peter Varney would be the next President of the United States.

But first he must make sure that he was not put out of the way himself. And by dint of starving himself Varney so altered his appearance that he forced Blair to remain in seclusion to prevent discovery of the deception. . . . And when the returns came in electing Theodore Blair to the Presidency, it was this gaunt but triumphant impostor who acknowledged the plaudits of the crowd. *(The story continues in detail:)*

FEW statistics are available on the cost of electing Presidents. How much was paid to acquire a Full Dinner Pail with McKinley? To Put Down the Trusts with Roosevelt? To Keep Out of War with Wilson? To Go Back to Normalcy with Harding? Or, back in those innocent times, to remember, say Tippecanoe and Tyler Too with Harrison?

There can be no question that Big Business, rallying desperately to the banner of its biggest brain, broke all records when it spent seventy million dollars to climb Out of the Bog with Blair. Every agent known to propaganda had been exploited to the limit, regardless of the cost: Newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements,

billboard advertisements. Advertisements in trains, street-cars, subway and elevated coaches, busses, even in taxi-cabs and airplanes. Public speakers, publicity experts, special writers. Leaflets, books. Parades, bands, mass-meetings, torchlight processions. Sky-writing, the radio, the talking pictures. A tremendous wave piled up and up and up by the energy of seventy million dollars.

Money, as Julius Blair had been so fond of remarking, is power. His son, washed up on to the White House steps by the seventy-million-dollar wave, became, the instant his election was a certainty, the most powerful man in the world.

Ronkton was still a boss, but he was no longer the Big Boss. Yet Blair would be bound, for at least part of his term, by chains of Ronkton's forging.

Important posts had been traded for influence. Embassies had been given away. The Blair cabinet would consist, not of men whom Blair would have selected on their merits, but largely of men whom Ronkton had had to accept.

And there was Peter Varney. By refusing to eat enough and to sleep enough, he had become the real boss of the party. Blair remained a political prisoner. He dared not appear in public.

ONE night, about a month after the election, a conference was called in Blair's library to determine what was to be done.

Harvey Ronkton, with Vice-President-elect Thaddeus Pitcairn, Burton Melrose and Niles De Kay were there. The rogue was attending a ball.

"You can't force him to eat, and you can't force him to sleep," Ronkton summed it up. "You can't buy him, and you can't bluff him. He knows he has us by the short hair. What are we going to do? Gentlemen, for God's sake, haven't any of you some ideas?"

"He'll crack under the strain," the boss of the Middle West predicted. "He can't stay on a Hollywood diet forever."

"He has the constitution of a horse," Senator Pitcairn dissented. "Suppose he keeps this up until after inauguration?"

The four politicians looked at the President-elect, who was seated at his desk with fingertips pressed tightly together.

Blair said quietly: "Ronkton, you'd better have your Washington house remodeled, so that I can live there secretly while Varney continues to double for me."

"As President?" Pitcairn cried.

"If this situation continues, we will have no alternative."

"But that's impossible, Blair. The President never goes to people. People always go to him. What would Washington think if the President were constantly seen going to Ronkton's house?"

"They'd think," De Kay growled, "that the President was running to Papa for orders."

"Harding," Ronkton mentioned, "went to see people."

"That was different," Pitcairn said.

"Coolidge," Melrose murmured, "used to take long walks."

"Where did he walk?" the Cleveland man asked.

"I suppose he just went walking."

"Varney and I," Blair said, "will move into your house, Ronkton, some time before inauguration. We will hope that this situation is in hand before inauguration."

"How about the Washington correspondents?" Pitcairn asked. "Every reporter in the city would want to know why the President was constantly running to Ronkton's house. The Fusion press would jump on it."

"Unless the President were having a scandal," Blair said dryly. "Only biographers mention Presidential scandals."

"Or a flirtation with my niece," Ronkton suggested. "She's a lovely girl, Blair, and she'd love to keep house for me."

"No more women," Pitcairn snapped.

"But, Senator," Blair said, "this would be nothing but a beautiful friendship."

"How can you joke," the Senator indignantly demanded, "at a time like this? Our reputations are at stake. The reputation of the Party is at stake. The very security of the country is at stake!"

"Blair hasn't been out of these rooms," Ronkton reminded him, "in four or five months. He may be a prisoner indefinitely. If it wasn't for his sense of humor, where would he be?"

"Where would I have been during the oil scandal," Senator Melrose asked, "if it hadn't been for my sense of humor?"

Niles De Kay looked at him sourly. "I remember," he said. "You almost laughed your way into Atlanta. At the height of the investigation, you were laughing so hard you had to take morphine to sleep nights."

"That's a lie!"

"Why! You dirty little—"

"Gentlemen!" Pitcairn exclaimed.

"No Pennsylvania horse-doctor is going to call me a liar!"

"For God's sake," Ronkton burst out in a thin, gritty voice, "stop this bickering! We're all in a state of nerves. We mustn't let it demoralize us. Keep your heads, and let's finish this."

"How about the Secret Service?" Pitcairn asked. "How about the special detail that guards the President? They cover every move he makes, whether he likes it or not. They have the opportunity to pry into everything."

"And how they pry!" De Kay growled. "They'll be all over your house, Ronkton."

"They will like hell. They're all around this house, aren't they? They don't get in here, do they?"

"Let's leave this to the Chief," De Kay said.

"If Varney," Blair said, "isn't out of the way by March fourth, we will need a close-knit group to control the situation. Senator Melrose, you used to practice medicine. Will you take the post, temporarily, if the necessity arises, of White House physician?"

"Yes, Mr. President!"

"De Kay, will you become the President's secretary?"

"Yes, Mr. President."

"I can't see anything coming out of this, if we have to go through with it," said Vice-President-elect Pitcairn morosely, "but another White House scandal."

THE orchestra was playing a German waltz—"Two Hearts in Waltz Time." The music, sifting through the soft roar of many voices, had a romantic quality that Felicia had sensed vividly when she had first heard it sung, some months ago, in Vienna. A slim dark man and a slim pale girl with platinum hair had sung it in a night club. There had been a sense of aching in the man's rich, beautiful voice. All through the song she had thought of Theodore Blair—had wanted him sitting beside her, until tears filled her eyes. Why was it, when you were in love, that any romantic music, any romantic scene, any romantic fragrance, made you think of the man with whom you were in love?

It wasn't fair. Love wasn't fair. It made you so helpless. It robbed you of your rights as a free being.

Far below her, the lights of Steel City twinkled through the trees. She recalled some of the words of the song:

"Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel Takt,
Die hat der Mai zusammen gebracht.
Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel—"

The man beside Felicia said: "I can't help myself. I've tried, and it doesn't make any difference. I can't sleep nor eat; I can't even think. Nothing matters any more."

"Ein Viertel Frühling und ein Viertel Wein,
Ein Viertel Liebe, verliebt muss man sein.
Zwei Herzen im—"

Her heart wasn't, and hadn't been for many months, beating in waltz time. It was hammering out discords.

"You've got to forget those idiotic things I said that night. I was so horribly upset. You know I didn't mean them. All that matters to me and all that ever mattered was our love. My darling!"

She was sure she heard the pounding of rage under the passion in his voice.

"Say you've forgiven me!"

He was squeezing her hand. The balcony on which they were standing was twenty-eight floors above the street. He was trying to see her eyes in the pale glow of the distant lights.

Felicia didn't want emotion now. Love was not the question. Love was something that couldn't be doubted. The question was one requiring detachment and intelligence, not emotion. When one made a practice of eluding unhappiness, one's first precaution was to avoid mistakes. Reason told her that marrying Theodore Blair, as things had developed over the past ten months, would be a deliberate mistake.

If only he hadn't changed! If only he hadn't acquired this bewildering new personality—the thinker with the heart of a child.

She thought: "As surly, as selfish as a spoiled child."

She said: "I want to talk about your new job."

"I don't," Varney said petulantly. "I want to know what you're going to do about us."

"I want to know what you're going to do about prohibition. I'm terribly interested—and as safe as the Federal Reserve Bank."

"Felicia, for God's sake, will you—"

"And how you're going to tackle the unemployment situation."

"Damn politics! Felicia, will you please—"

"T. K., will you answer a question?"

"What is it?"

"When did big business begin to dominate the Government?"

"Felicia, you aren't being fair. I asked you—"

"When did it?"

He said irritably, "When did what?"

"When did big business begin to run the Government?"

"Oh, back in the 'Eighties. Now, look here. I want to know—"

"The 'Eighties? At the time of the empire-builders?"

"Yes. But darling—"

"Wasn't there a definite time?"

"Who cares? I'm fed up with politics. You're going to listen to me. Felicia, for months—"

"How did it start?"

"How did it start? Oh, good Lord, it just happened. Will you please drop it and tell me—"

"You mean, there were dozens and dozens of contributing factors?"

"Yes!" he snapped. "Dozens and dozens and dozens. I won't talk politics tonight! I want this straightened out! I must know definitely—"

"I want to know what makes the wheels go round."

"Love," he snarled. "Love makes everything go round, unless people get stubborn. Then it's like this. You and I love each other. I want to know what you're going to do about it."

"I'm going to leave if you don't switch to your other personality — the one that thinks."

"Damn my other personality!"

Felicia jerked her hand free and walked away. She did not want to talk to him any more. She didn't want to see him any more. She decided she would go home. . . .

"I watched them dance. No man learns to dance so well in a few months. That man is not Blair."

Her eyes were dazzled by the sudden brightness as she entered the perfumed warmth of the ballroom. A voice said, "Felicia. Oh, Felicia!"

It was John Bigelow, the department-store owner. With him was a slim, attractive stranger. He looked, with his little black mustache, foreign. His dark eyes discreetly appreciated her loveliness.

"Mr. Zarinov insists on meeting you."

It sounded as if John Bigelow were making the introduction against his wishes. Mr. Zarinov was bending over her hand.

"He's a Russian," Mr. Bigelow said, and failed to smile. "I'm not vouching for him."

That was frank enough. Mr. Zarinov was laughing. The least Felicia could say for him at the moment was that he was charming.

"Miss Hamilton thinks, of course," Zarinov said, "that every man from Moscow has heavy black whiskers that bristle, and a bomb in the hand behind his back. But look! My hands are quite empty!"

Mr. Bigelow remarked sardonically: "He may be a Soviet spy."

"But I am a Soviet spy!"

Felicia was finding Mr. Zarinov entertaining. "I'm sure," she said, smiling at him, "that you're concealing

an infernal machine, to throw at the first contented capitalist."

"Show me one contented capitalist!"

Mr. Bigelow, a discontented capitalist, making dark murmurs about radicalism, left them. Felicia asked the Russian if he was red.

"A lurid vermilion," he said.

"You must have crashed this party. They're very finicky about letting dangerous characters so near our Presidents."

"I am surrounded by Secret Service men from the War Department, the Navy Department, the Treasury Department and the Department of Justice."

"It must make you feel awfully important."

"It makes me feel like a boy who is supposed to be on his best behavior and therefore wants to throw rocks through windows."

"You're dangerous!"

"I'm sinister!"

Felicia laughed. "Are you going to tell me the truth about the Red Terror?"

"Watch out!" he cried. "I'm a propagandist too."

"You're trying to disarm me, so you can pry State secrets out of me."

"I worship America," he said. "When I heard that a direct descendant of the great Alexander Hamilton was here, I said to myself: 'Leon,' I said, 'you must meet her. You must talk to the descendant of that illustrious man.' Or would you rather dance?"

"Don't you want to talk communism?"

"Where can we go, out of this mob?"

IT seemed to Felicia that Mr. Zarinov was a bit overeager. She had known, in Washington and elsewhere, a great many men of his type, or, if you please, his profession. His profession was ax-grinding. Just what ax, she wondered, was Mr. Zarinov grinding tonight? He knew, of course, that she was close to the President-elect. But what could he learn from her that wasn't common knowledge?

She suggested the balcony, on the other side of the ballroom. They went there, joining a dozen young couples adoring an angry crescent of moon which burned mystically in factory smoke.

Mr. Zarinov obligingly gave Felicia his views.

"The word *communism* has taken the place, in America, of your bogey-man. 'Be a good little country, or the Bolsheviks will get you!' But after all, isn't communism only another form of government? Is the world alarmed because certain republics have adopted, almost word for word, the Constitution of the United States?"

"I've heard those arguments. America wants to be let alone to work out her problems."

"But can she?"

"Don't you really mean, is she competent?"

Zarinov laughed. "Miss Hamilton, years ago, capitalism said, in effect: 'Here, we'll take hold of this world and run it.' So it took hold of the world and ran it. And lo, the world is in a tragic state. It was like a woman who gave herself to a man, and the man proved to be a selfish, savage brute. The brute was always stupid. He has grown flabby. The world finds itself disillusioned and looking for happiness. Isn't communism worth looking into, at least?"

"As the new lover who will treat the world even more shabbily?"

"The world has no alternative. You must accept communism as a fact, as you accept that moon. There it is! It's rising. Can you stop it?"

Felicia, gazing at the smoldering moon, reflected that Mr. Zarinov dealt in very effective metaphors. Was it a communistic ax that Mr. Zarinov had come to grind?

"No," she said.

"I understand," the Russian said, "that there is no truth in the superstition that ostriches bury their heads in the sand, to ignore danger. But the world does."

"I think the world is pretty helpless. It needs a sturdy oak."

"Hasn't it found one in Theodore K. Blair? He is the most brilliant thinker in America. How we could use a brain like his in our movement!"

"He hasn't communistic leanings."

"How do you define communism, Miss Hamilton?"

"As a movement to overthrow capitalism."

"I beg to differ. Communism is government by government, instead of government by business. What is Mr. Blair's opinion? My point is that he sees the whole picture, whereas most of us see only a little segment. Mr. Blair will be your most intelligent president since Thomas Jefferson. More intelligent than Wilson or Cleveland. Did you know that Jefferson once said that a democracy needs a revolution every twenty-five years? I think Mr. Blair is his mental equal, at least."

"And as democratic?"

"I don't know. Mr. Blair puzzles me. He is very attractive. Most of your Presidents have been such stodgy men. I watched you dancing. He dances beautifully. But I do not understand the amazing contradiction of his two personalities. Before this campaign, he was cold and remote. Presto! He became, as if by a miracle, a creature of warmth and magnetism. I understand he never danced before this new personality blossomed."

"He didn't care for dancing."

"But he dances as well as a gigolo."

"He may have had some intensive training."

"It doesn't seem credible."

"It might have been a case of self-repression."

"Ah! You've been puzzled, too!"

"Yes."

"Amazed?"

"Yes. And quite shocked." Was Mr. Zarinov trying to pump her?

"Didn't it actually take place, so to speak, overnight?"

"It seemed to."

"Was there a logical explanation for it? It's almost as if there were two of him, two men of identical appearance, one the thinker, the other the attractive personality. What do you make of it?"

"A sudden release from inhibitions."

"But mature men don't change their natures."

"There might have been enough provocation. People might have ridiculed his dignity."

Zarinov shook his head. "No, no, no. Mr. Blair is too well-balanced. Would it strike you as fantastic if I said there might be two men—Mr. Blair and another who is his image?"

"Utterly fantastic—absurd—impossible."

"Fantastic, yes. But not impossible. I've heard there is a certain criminal, a man wanted for murder, who is Mr. Blair's double. A man named Peter Varney."

"Doesn't that answer your question? Can you conceive of Mr. Blair going into any kind of partnership with that sort of man?"

"I don't know," the Russian murmured. "I don't know how badly Mr. Blair wanted the Presidency. But I agree with you. It does seem utterly fantastic."

THEODORE K. BLAIR was sleeping so heavily that Jerrido had to shake him vigorously by the shoulder to awaken him.

The President-elect, looking up from his pillow, saw a pair of dark eyes, wet with anguish, only a few inches away. There was no light at the windows. The bedside table lamp was lit. In its rays, Jerrido's white bud of a nose was twitching, his lips were quivering.

"Mr. Blair, I hated to disturb you," he said in a choking voice, "but two of the Secret Service detail have just brought that — that man into the house. They say they had to take him out of a speak-easy by force."

Blair sat up. "What time is it?"

"One-thirty."

"Get rid of the men and bring him into the library. Is he so drunk he can't walk?"

"No sir. He can walk. But please be careful, Mr. Blair. He's having one of those tantrums."

Blair slipped into slippers and a dressing-gown and waited at the door until he saw Varney, with Jerrido behind him, stagger through the doorway at the other end of the room.

When Jerrido had shut the door, Blair went into the library. The rogue stopped and stood, with feet planted wide apart, staring down the room at him. His tie was undone. His hair was rumpled. His shirt front was wet and stained. His face was luminously white. His eyes were glassy. His under lip was thrust out.

"There you are!" he yelled. "Damn you!"

Blair walked slowly toward him. Still under the spell of sleep, he was seeing this man, so drunk he could hardly stand, as himself. Blair had never been drunk. He wondered how it felt to be drunk. As much as he sometimes wanted to escape reality, he had never wanted to get drunk.

And as much as he envied Peter Varney's personal magnetism, he didn't envy him his drunkenness.

"Oh, you fixed it, all right," Varney shouted, in a blur of words. "She won't have anything to do with me. She hates me. She never wants to see me again. You fixed that. And I'll fix *you!*"

He started toward Blair, but his sense of balance failed to coöperate. He lurched into a small table with a lamp on it. The lamp fell over. As he straightened up, the table fell over. He staggered back, reeled into a chair and knocked it down. Flinging up his hands, he stumbled sidewise and fell.

He sat up and glared at Blair.

"Who's President?" he cried. "I'm President! I'm gonna stay President! Try to make me eat! Try to make me sleep! Try to make me look like you, you—"

"Jerrido," Blair said quietly, "you might help Mr. Varney to bed."

"Jerrido, you might," the rogue said, mocking him, "bring Mr. Varney a pot of coffee. Mr. Varney isn't gonna bed. Mr. Varney has the brainy Mr. Blair on a spot, now—and he's gonna keep him there!" . . . .

Blair went to the door. "To the White House!"

Leon Zarinov entered his room in the Beacon Hotel. All the lights were on, and a man was lying stretched out on his bed asleep, snoring, with his hands behind his head.

The Russian went to the closet and hung up his coat and hat. He lit a cigarette, sat down on the edge of the bed and began to blow smoke through his teeth at the sleeping man.

"Wake up," he said.

Dan Murchison opened his eyes, sat up and swung his feet to the floor. He ran stiff, hooked fingers through his hair and squinted at Zarinov.

"Well," he yawned, "what did she say?"

"Nothing. She may know; she may not suspect. She is clever."

"Was she friendly?"

"She was charming."

The detective grunted. "I'm not so sure, myself."

"But I watched them dance. He dances like a gigolo. No man learns to dance so well in a few months. That man is not Blair."

Murchison nodded slowly. . . .

Senator Melrose squinted carefully through the glass of iced amber liquid in his hand at the flames in the fireplace of the Pitcairn study, as though the highball were a test-tube.

"I can throw a scare into him," he suggested. "I can tell him his eyes, his skin, show that his heart is going back on him."

"You can't scare that man," Senator Pitcairn said. "Our only hope is to make him eat and sleep."

"You can drive a horse to water," Melrose said profoundly, "but you can't make him drink."

"There must be some sedative Jerrido can put in his coffee to make him sleep, and some drug to make him ravenously hungry!"

"Veronal or chloral hydrate would make him sleep.

Nux vomica would give him an appetite, but it's hard to kill the taste of strychnine. I'll look it up. But can we trust Jerrido? Jerrido hates him enough to kill him."

"Jerrido and I," the Vice President-elect said coldly, "share that weakness."

CHAPTER XXVI

IT has been established by popular parable and by practical experience that one bad apple in a barrel will, if not removed in time, spoil all the good apples. There was a bad apple in the Prosperity barrel, and the name of the apple was Peter Varney.

While only five men—the party leaders—knew that Peter Varney was not Theodore K. Blair, the feeling found its way into the ranks that all was not well at headquarters. There were rumors of dissension, of actual quarrels, and though these could not be verified, the belief grew that trouble was brewing.

The leaders were worried. The question was, what were they worried about? They had carried the election. They had the political situation sewed up very neatly for at least the next four years. No scandal loomed on any horizon. The business depression was bound, in the natural order of events, to cure itself. Whether or not Theodore K. Blair hastened the cure, he would receive the credit, and could therefore safely count on a second term. The second-term slogan was ready-made: Blair Brought Business Back! Vote for Blair!

All this being so, why did the President-elect look so haggard and hollow-eyed? Why did the Vice President-elect act so much haughtier than usual? Why did Harvey Ronkton fail to recognize his best friends? Why had Niles De Kay lost his heavy good nature? And how had Senator Melrose acquired that black eye?

Individually and in chorus, they declared that nothing was wrong. Everything was serene. But those closest to them in the party knew they were lying. There was trouble—mysterious trouble.

Washington newspaper correspondents, concealed behind pen-names, placed their ears to the ground and listened to the humming of the Washington grapevine, then hinted to their readers, in syndicated news letters, that the President-elect was furious at the political bargains Ronkton had had to make to secure his nomination; that Pitcairn and the President-elect were quarreling over matters of national policy; that De Kay and Melrose had had a fist-fight over a red-headed stenographer in the Treasury Department.

All these rumors were as misleading as most rumors are. The truth was, of course, that the bad apple in the barrel refused to be cured of badness. Every attempt at forcing Peter Varney to gain weight and recover his resemblance to Blair was unavailing.

The one effective method, the one which Pitcairn insisted on using, could not be used. They couldn't lock Varney up in a room until he regained his weight and looks. His daily appearance in public was necessary. They did, however, exhaust all other possibilities.

Under Senator Melrose's direction, Jerrido placed sedatives and tonics in the rogue's coffee. Overpowered by the sedative, he slept from ten to twelve hours a night for several nights. His appetite became ravenous. But though he may have hungered for thick, juicy steaks, quantities of potatoes, and rich, fattening desserts, he confined himself to a Spartan diet: half a grapefruit, or an orange, a cup of tea, and a half slice of toast for breakfast; a green salad and coffee for lunch; a lamb chop, a fragment of potato, and a half slice of bread for dinner.

Varney quickly discovered that his food or coffee was doped. After that, he bought his meals outside. He grew thinner and more haggard. Ronkton, Pitcairn, De Kay and Melrose took turns reasoning with him. They tried bullying, bribing, cajoling; they threatened and pleaded and stormed. They appealed to his patriotism, his honor, his sportsmanship. They tried to frighten him.

Melrose, employing his most professional manner, pointed out the harm he was doing his heart. He might drop dead! But the rogue was immovable. He knew that his vitality was inexhaustible.

Ronkton proposed that he split the Presidency fifty-fifty with Blair.

"Get back your looks," he said, "and you can live in the White House half the time."

The rogue was amused. "Why should I? I'm going to be President on a full-time basis. I'm the man the people elected. I'm the President of the United States morally. I'm going to be President actually!"

They had moved to Washington, were established in Ronkton's house on Sixteenth Street. Three times a day the rogue was going to a near-by hotel for his meals. Inauguration was six weeks away.

Vice President-elect Pitcairn went, as a last resort, to see Felicia in Steel City.

He told Felicia that Theodore Blair was really a sick man.

"The truth is, Felicia, he is pining away for you. If you'd only be kind to him, if you'd only take sufficient interest in him to urge him to eat and sleep—"

"Did T.K. send you, Senator?"

"No. I'm doing this of my own volition. We're desperate, Felicia."

"I told T.K. months ago that I would not be a political sacrifice. I meant it."

"But you don't have to marry him. All I'm asking is that you take an interest in him. If I were a girl and a man was breaking his heart over me, I think I'd feel I owed him something. Especially if the man was the next president of the United States."

"I'm not convinced that he's gone to pieces because of me."

"But he has, my dear!"

"I know him better than that, Senator. It may be political worries or overwork, but it isn't love."

"Won't you even see him?"

"I'll see him if he suppresses himself. The last few times I've seen him, he was simply too rude. I prefer not to see him at all."

"But don't you see that the very future of your country may depend on you?"

"No, Senator. I won't be taken in by flag-waving. He tried that himself."

"When are you and your parents opening your Washington house?"

"A week before inauguration."

"Will you see him then? Can I tell him you will?"

"If he can be his old self, yes. I will not see him if he can't be his old self."

The Vice President-elect could not promise that Blair would be his old self. Varney had, as he lost more and more weight, become more and more temperamental.

IN the large room on the ground floor of Ronkton's house, which corresponded, with its adjoining living quarters, to Blair's library, Pitcairn gave his report. It was received gloomily. As matters now stood, it would be impossible to keep Peter Varney out of the White House. Every means to avert the disaster had been exhausted.

Even Blair had lost hope. He had, until very recently,

been too busy with affairs of State to pay much attention to the problem of Varney. Melrose and Pitcairn had assured him that they would bring Varney to his senses by March fourth. They had failed. Ronkton and Niles De Kay, with all their vigor and all their vehemence, had failed.

Blair now tried to reason with him. He abandoned affairs of State for one entire day and most of the ensuing night, trying to reason with him. Varney was not antagonistic. He was, except for occasional bursts of irritability, genial and calm. It was the genial calm of a man who knows he is the master.

"I realized, long ago," Varney said, "that it was a case of you or me. I knew that the moment you got elected, you would either have me killed or sent off to the end of the world. You didn't want me around. I happened to beat you to it. I am going to be the President. I will let you make suggestions, but I will be the one to decide whether or not they are to go into effect. I will, of course, appreciate it if you will continue writing my speeches. They are much better speeches than I could write.

"I'm not trying to upset the apple-cart. You've noticed how I've dealt with all these job-hunters and all the rest. I've followed instructions. I've been discreet, careful. I haven't been drunk in months. What I'm doing isn't impulsive or mischievous. I'm thinking straight. I want to be President, and I'm going to be President."

"It must have occurred to you," Blair argued, "that, with so many angry men sharing the secret, it may leak out."

"And precipitate the worst scandal in American history?"

"Not only that, Mr. Varney, but your arrest and conviction on that murder charge."

"That doesn't worry me. The scandal would break first, and I'm betting there won't be a scandal."

Blair, being the son of his father, ended by making the rogue a proposition: a guarantee of immunity and one million dollars if he would restore their resemblance by March fourth.

The rogue amiably refused the offer. He would, he said, make fifty million dollars out of the Presidency.

It was nearly daylight when the two men retired to their respective bedrooms. Blair was sick with worry. If only he could lock Varney up and force him to recover his appearance! But Varney's daily appearance in public was necessary—increasingly necessary.

Lying awake until after the sun had come up, Theodore K. Blair saw life as a black treacherous torrent, sweeping him to destruction. There was no hope. Thus was the last and biggest apple in the barrel contaminated.

He ran to the open window. He heard the thumping of Jerrido's feet behind him.

In the next room, the man who had once borne Blair such a remarkable resemblance, saw, in the rising of the sun, a shining symbol. What was more glorious than the rising sun? What more glorious than life's golden flood?

CHAPTER XXVII

SEVENTY-FIVE thousand people on the sunny fourth of March saw Peter Varney inaugurated President of the United States.

The man who had been elected President, sitting beside the radio in the large gray room in the house on Sixteenth Street, heard the bands, the cheering, the speeches, the fulsome descriptions by the announcers.

He heard the Chief Justice say: "Theodore Kelvin Blair, do you solemnly swear that you will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and will, to the best of your ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, so help you God?"

And he heard Peter Varney answer, in his rich, deep voice:

"I do."

Blair had been through it all so many times, word for word, picture for picture. He saw himself and the retiring president escorted from the White House down

Martin Drum was just leaving the train; he was wearing his new steel hand.

Pennsylvania Avenue by troops of cavalry. He saw the Justices, the ambassadors and ministers in ceremonial uniforms; the members of the new Cabinet and the old; the Senators and the Representatives; the governors and the highest ranking officers of the military and naval services, all passing in dignified procession to take their places. He saw the squadron of cavalry galloping into the plaza and halting, facing the platform. He saw the wreath of laurel lowered until it rested above the Great Seal of the United States, which adorned the front of the stand. And he heard, over the radio, the Marine Band play, "Hail to the Chief."

Since, as a young man, his imagination had seized upon the Presidency as his ultimate goal, he had been over all this in his mind so often.

Peter Varney was kissing the Bible. Now the ex-President was shaking hands with him and congratulating him. And now Peter Varney was turning to face the crowd and deliver the inaugural address which Blair had written.

Blair, listening to the familiar words which he had written months ago with such sincerity, such honesty of purpose, sat beside the radio in the large gray room with his forehead resting on his clasped hands.

That was what he believed he was doing—until he found he had, without being aware of having done it, left the chair by the radio. And now he was standing in the middle of the gray room, not knowing how he had got there. At the far end, standing with the erectness of a soldier at attention, Jerrido watched him anxiously.

Some novel emotion held Blair in its spell. It was as if some supernatural power had actually taken possession of him. A rational corner of his brain told him that he must be cracking at last under the strain. But he was unable to control himself. And he no longer cared.

Standing in the middle of the large room, he saw, behind the ex-corporal, a sea of faces. The gray wall dissolved and vanished. Bright yellow sunlight fell upon the seventy-five thousand uplifted faces, flashed on rifle-barrels and bayonets, gleamed on epaulets.

At first in a crackling whisper, then in a voice that grew louder and surer, Blair picked up Varney's words as they came from the loud-speaker. The dullness of despair left his eyes. As his voice gained strength, his eyes glowed and flashed. He smiled. He made gestures. His voice, matching Varney's, became stern, now solemn. It rose to exclamatory heights.

The hero-worshiper looked at him, not with amazement or even pity. Jerrido understood.

The voice stopped. The loud-speaker roared as seventy-five thousand people began to cheer.

Jerrido said, with shining eyes: "Mr. President, it is an honor to be the first to congratulate you."

"Thank you, Jerrido."

But there was no President. For the first time in United States history, since the election of George Washington, there was, legally, no President.

Blair told Jerrido to bring him some coffee, and when the coffee came he asked to be left alone. He did not want even Jerrido in the room with him. He was afraid. If he could not control himself, if he broke down, he wanted to be alone. He would try to think. He would get his thoughts in order and try once more. But he could not think.

He kept seeing pictures. The ex-President going to the Union Station. Varney with Vice-president Pitcairn and Mrs. Pitcairn riding to the White House with an escort of cavalry.

They were in the White House now. How Varney was

enjoying all this! Now they were under the silver chandelier, at luncheon. Blair, sipping cold black coffee, began to pace the gray room with the cup in his hand. His heart felt queer. His forehead was clammy. This couldn't go on. It simply couldn't go on.

He felt weak. He had to sit down. He sat down and tried to balance the half-empty cup on one knee. The cup would not remain on the knee, it was trembling so. It became absolutely necessary for him to balance the cup on his knee. He tried again. He took his hand away. The cup careened. It fell. Coffee was spilled down his suit. Some of it went through the cloth to his leg.

He stood up again. The cup hadn't broken. He wanted to kick the cup. Kicking the cup would have relieved his nerves, but he couldn't let himself go. So he left it lying on the rug.

Martial music came to him faintly, not from the radio, for he had switched that off, but through a window. Listening, he heard the droning of many motors. Fleets of planes and blimps were flying over the city. Varney and the Pitcairns were now reviewing the most elaborate military and civic parade that Washington had ever seen on inaugural day.

When the parade was over, Niles De Kay, the Presidential secretary, would show Varney messages of congratulations from kings, princes, and presidents. . . .

Darkness came. Blair did not turn on the lights until after ten o'clock. He had kept himself in hand. He hadn't cracked. But he was on the verge of it. His brain wouldn't stay under control. It kept straying off. Of course, he was not the President. He had no more right than Varney to spend tonight in the White House. Yet he had looked forward to that. It would have been worth all the struggle, to be alone at last in the White House. He had wanted, late at night, to walk downstairs and to go out onto the South Portico.

He knew now that he would never occupy the White House. His straying thoughts centered on that. He had lost his chance. He had been cheated out of that by a rascal. A venomous hatred for Peter Varney suddenly possessed him. That cheap crook! That ungrateful rat!

"I've let him trample on me! I've whipped myself, trying to be fair! I've been a fool! I've made myself ridiculous, I've made a martyr out of myself, trying to play fair with a crocodile!"

IT came to Blair, cursing his folly, that he had let, not clear reason, but self-repression trample upon the justice of his emotions.

He was a martyr. He had let himself be made a martyr. For months, nearly a year, he had been a prisoner. He had not once been out of doors except for the furtive drive through the night from Steel City to Washington, while Peter Varney was going by train, being met at every station by bands and cheering mobs.

Time and time again, he had given in to Ronkton's always ready argument: "It's politics, Blair, it's politics." He had been too fair, too decent with them all. Because he had wanted to show them that he was a good sport!

Their stupidity and Varney's cupidity had made a martyr of him.

There was no whimsical attitude to leaven this. He was a martyr. And, for the first time, the bitter taste of martyrdom was on his lips. His eyes were wet with tears. He had been betrayed by his own code of honor, his sense of fairness. He was a martyr.

He kicked the coffee-cup. It smashed against the wall. He kicked the pieces. But that did not relieve him.

He heard a key in the lock. The door opened. Peter Varney came in, followed by Melrose, De Kay and Jerrido. Jerrido shut the door.

Blair, with his arms folded on his chest, his head held down and forward, looked at Varney's flushed face, his glowing eyes. The rogue did not look so haggard. He had acquired a new air of assurance. Even his gray felt hat, which he had not removed, looked arrogant.

"I dropped in," he said, "to discuss tomorrow's work. I'm going to be at my desk at nine sharp. There are some questions I want your opinion on. But I'm warning you, Blair, I'll use or not use your ideas, just as I see fit."

BLAIR, walking toward him, unfolded his arms. With his right fist he slugged Varney on the point of the chin. It was the first time in his life that Theodore K. Blair had ever hit a man.

The results were astounding. The rogue's head snapped back. His hat flew off. His knees gave way. He would have dropped to the floor if Jerrido, standing just behind him, had not caught him by the armpits. His chin was bleeding. He was making faint, gurgling sounds in his throat. His eyes were half-closed and swimming. His face was shockingly white.

Jerrido was laughing softly. Niles De Kay and Burton Melrose were staring incredulously at Blair.

"Christ!" De Kay whispered.

Melrose, unable to cope with it, made a whimpering sound.

Blair picked up the fallen hat and put it on. "Jerrido," he said, "take off his coat and scarf."

"Yes sir." Lowering the unconscious man to the floor, Jerrido stripped off the coat and removed the scarf.

"Carry that man into his room. Keep him there. If necessary, use force."

"Yes sir."

Blair wrapped the black silk scarf about his neck, adjusting a fold of it to cover his chin. He put on the coat. He pulled the hat down over his eyes. He went to the door.

"Blair," De Kay breathed, "where're you going?"

"To the White House!"

"You can't! You can't get away with it!"

"You can't do it!" Melrose thinly echoed.

Blair opened the door. Two men were standing just outside the door. One of them said explosively: "What's wrong, sir?"

"Nothing," Blair said. He walked to the front door. It opened. Two men were standing on the steps. Two cars were at the curb. With a man preceding him, a man on either side of him, and a fourth following, he went to the car in front and got in. The Secret Service men got into the car behind.

Melrose and De Kay were just behind Blair. Their faces were white and gleaming with sweat. They looked ghastly. When they were seated, the car started. The President's secretary was making soft whistling sounds. The White House physician groaned several times: *"Oh,* my God! *Oh,* my God!"

"We're ruined," De Kay said. "This is the end."

"The end of everything," Melrose embroidered.

"Oh, no, gentlemen," Blair said, with a soft laugh.

"Don't tell us you see a way out of this. There isn't a way out."

"The President must have a two or three weeks' rest."

His companions moaned.

"You can't," De Kay weakly declared, "get away with it."

"No, Blair, you ought to know you can't."

"You've made a great mistake."

"A horrible mistake!"

Blair laughed. He knew how a convict, released at last from prison, feels.

The two men frantically advanced arguments. A sick President meant a consultation of physicians, many consultations. How could you fool specialists? It meant bulletins for an anxious nation. The conspiracy would be exposed. They would all be ruined.

"For God's sake, Blair, go back."

"You can notify the press," Blair said, "that the President must have a rest. He must have a rest to avert a nervous breakdown. Oh, it isn't serious, but he must rest. He must see no one. Not even nurses. Not even the White House servants. No one but his loyal secretary and his devoted doctor. Figure it out between you. Consult Ronkton. He's clever."

"He'll have a stroke!"

"I'M only obeying the President's orders," Jerrido said. "He told me you were to stay in this room. If you try to leave, I am to use force."

Peter Varney sat up. He had been unprepared for that punch in the chin. It hadn't, as punches go, been either savage or scientific. But it had, because of the rogue's weakened condition, been sufficient. It had knocked him out. His poorly insulated nervous system had distributed the shock to every fiber in his body. He felt sick and weak. He was trembling. But some of this was fury. Blair had double-crossed him. Blair had unwarrantedly assaulted him. Blair had cheated him.

He feebly stood up. To maintain his balance against the swooning impulse of his brain took all the effort he could command.

"Get me my hat and coat."

"The President took your hat and coat."

"Then get me another hat and coat."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Varney."

"You damned hypocrite! Get out of my way!"

On unsteady feet, he ventured into the large gray room. He started for the door which gave upon the hall.

"No, Mr. Varney," Jerrido said firmly: "you can't go out."

The rogue looked at him and measured him. He was fully a head taller than the valet, but he was weak. One push would send him over. And Jerrido was very alert. Jerrido hated him. Jerrido would relish an opportunity to attack him.

"Get me some coffee."

"I'm sorry, sir; but I can't leave you."

Varney went to the desk in the corner and sat down. He reached for the telephone.

"No, Mr. Varney. You can't telephone. Don't you remember? When one of you is out, the other mustn't telephone or go out."

The rogue held his breath and slowly expelled it. "That's so," he said. He remained seated until some of the weakness went away. He didn't have to ask where Blair had gone. He thought:

"I'll break out somehow. I'll go to the White House and start the biggest scandal America has ever seen."

HE pretended to be thinking. He put his elbows on the desk and pressed his fingertips together. He waited. Jerrido waited.

But Varney wasn't thinking. He had done his thinking. His only possible way of escape was through his bedroom window. It was open. He could, if he moved fast enough, be through that window and in the court before Jerrido recovered from his surprise.

When he was sure he was strong enough for the effort, the rogue jumped up. He ran down the room to the door of the living quarters. He ran into his room and to the open window. He heard the thumping of Jerrido's feet behind him, the panting of Jerrido's breath.

A bony fist smashed into his face from the side.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THEODORE K. BLAIR was seated on the edge of the bed in the Presidential bedchamber. He was alone. The White House physician had gone. The President's secretary had gone. They had doubtless gone to consult with Harvey Ronkton and Vice-president Pitcairn. There would be a conference. Harvey Ronkton would find a rug with a border that he could pace. He would chew an inch-long cigar-butt, clasp his hands behind him, and pace up and down the border. In the end, they would all come up to the White House to plead with Blair. They would call him a traitor to the party, a traitor to his country.

But they would not, he reflected with a mysterious smile, dislodge him from the White House. It had been a rocky, tortuous and fantastic road to the realization of his dreams. He had, with a punch in the chin, attained his goal. He was happy. He was happier than he had ever been. Not, he realized, because he had attained his goal, but because he had attained it by punching that scoundrel in the jaw.

That sudden upsetting of tradition, that conquering, for just once in his life, of the citadel of his repressions, had given him a glow of romantic feeling. He had, he supposed, lost that sensation forever when he was twenty-four or -five. It had never come back. But it was back now. Life was glamorously aglow with wonderful possibilities.

He had acted, he complimented himself, in accord with the most colorful of historic traditions. People had called him the most colorless of men, the thinking machine, the human iceberg. Yet what man who had ever occupied the White House had entered it in such a colorful manner? What mysteries, lost forever upon the wood and plaster of this distinguished mansion, could equal in fantastic design, in dramatic flavor, the methods which he had used to arrive here?

FOR perhaps only this one night—before the romantic glow died away—he would see, in the White House, a richly glamorous edifice. His predecessors took on a roseate glory, just for tonight.

Famous ghosts paraded before him: stern men, fighting men, misunderstood men, great men; some in powdered wigs and velvet breeches. Ah! What richly adventurous times those had been! Thomas Jefferson! James Madison! Andrew Jackson! The melancholy Lincoln!

In this very room, Wilson, stricken with paralysis, had lain, when his heart was broken by word that Congress had repudiated his Treaty of Versailles, his League of Nations. . . .

Blair was going to satisfy a youthful impulse: he was going down to the South Portico and revel in his victory over self-repression. Oh, yes, it was risky. The Theodore K. Blair of a few hours ago would not have dreamed of taking such risks. Servants might see him. A White House guard might see him. A Secret Service operative might see him. Yet wouldn't they realize that any normal man, on his first night in the White House, would feel exuberant? He would, of course, take every precaution.

He had not removed his coat or touched his hat and scarf. He glanced into a mirror, to make sure that little of his face was exposed. He slipped out of the room. He went down the stairs and into the Green Room without seeing anyone. Men might have been crouching behind

pillars, or lurking in doorways, but he saw no one. It was dark in the Green Room. He walked the length of it cautiously, avoiding furniture, until he reached a door opening on the South Portico. He went out and into a moonlit night which his memory must always cherish. The lawn fell away in a misty dark wave. There was a promise of spring in the air. The cherry trees along the Potomac would soon be in bloom.

He inhaled deep breaths of the crisp March night and lifted his eyes to the glowing tip of the Washington monument, with the ruby lights, a warning, he had heard, to careless aviators, gleaming in the tiny windows where the shaft sloped up to a point.

Through bare branches he saw, on his right, portions of the State, War and Navy building, and, on his left, the Treasury Building. He could not quite see the Potomac, which, he recalled, Captain John Smith had described in 1620, as the Patawomeke—"*navigable 140 myles, and fed with many sweet rivers and springs which fall from the bordering hills.*"

Varney. Ronkton, declared, was really ludicrous. "Napoleon, swilling milk—and how he hates it!"

This very lawn had once been part of a tobacco plantation owned by a Scotchman named Burns, who would not give it up until George Washington had coaxed and bullied him to sell. It was, Blair felt, delightfully ironical that the man who had been called so colorless should be standing here as the result of a chain of events as bright, as exciting, as any Presidential episode out of the much more colorful past.

A punch in the jaw!

He was, he cheerfully reflected, an anachronism. A colorful man in a colorless epoch; a reckless, daring individual in a day of drab, huge, interlocked organizations. He was arm in arm with men whose lives, like his own, were as colorful as mosaic patterns composed of bits of colored glass. They peopled the South Portico, these shades from the swashbuckling past, all gravely modest, as was he, over personal conduct which set them apart from ordinary men.

Cameos, two figures stood out: Thomas Jefferson, with his pugilistic jaw, his heavy-lidded eyes; Andrew Jackson, with his skull-like face, his white hair gushing up from his forehead and falling in long waves on either side. These two had always been Blair's political favorites.

"I've often pictured, Mr. Jefferson, the fun you had installing that den in the yard—for those grizzlies Lewis and Clarke brought back to you. Ah, yes. And you, Mr. Jackson! It seems to me that your duels give us something in common. There is no satisfaction equal to that of dealing physically with a personal enemy, is there, eh, Mr. Jackson?

"I've always admired your warlike spirit. Your duel with Dickinson over the race-horse Plowboy has always given me so much pleasure. I liked your calling him a base poltroon and cowardly talebearer. I liked the way you stood there, unflinching, after he'd shot you in the chest, then shot him down. You bluffed him cleverly. And you got away with it, Mr. Jackson!"

"But can you," Andrew Jackson asked, peering at him with his melancholy eyes, "get away with this?"

Blair felt that he had become a part of the deathless stream into which flows the past, the present, and the future. He would make his name stand for the deliverance of a troubled nation, a perplexed world. He knew the way—he was sure he knew the way. He gazed up at the glowing tip of the Washington Monument, seeing in it, as had so many men, a symbol of lofty aspiration.

"The end, Mr. Jackson," he replied, "forgives the means."

"But you are not a President. You are an impostor, Mr. Blair."

"I am astounded, Mr. Jackson, that a man of your warlike nature, which was so often at the disposal of the right and the just, should criticize my methods, when my intentions are so honorable. I will give such a splendid account of myself that the country will want me again. Won't that answer?"

"The answer," Abraham Lincoln said mystically, "lies within your unborn deeds."

"That puts it squarely up to me," Blair said.

"Squarely," several of the ghosts agreed. They were gentlemen.

The wind whispered in dry, black branches. The moon had set. With his hands on the railing, Blair looked obliquely across the yard at a pair of lighted windows in the State, War and Navy Building. His face felt hot. He was perspiring. He shivered.

What was to be done about the rogue? Pitcairn and Ronkton would want him killed. But he must not be

killed. Communion with the shadowy great had given Blair tolerance.

"After all, he is partly responsible for my being here. I don't hate him any more. I'm not bitter any more."

He was, in fact, very sorry for Peter Varney. "I know how it feels to have power snatched out of your hands." He would pay him handsomely and help him to escape from the country. He would not let him be murdered.

His eyes went back to the glowing tip of the monument.

"I'LL get out of here!" the man on the bed panted. "I'll smash doors and windows. I'll raise hell!"

Harvey Ronkton arose. "I won't talk to a crazy man."

"What have you to say?"

"Plenty. You got yourself into this jam by being such a hog. I don't blame Blair for punching you. You drove him to it. Your future usefulness is up to you. You know how I feel. Blair needs you, but it'll take time for him to realize it. Get your looks back. Get it through your head that Blair is the President of the United States."

"He'll want me killed."

"Let me handle him. He doesn't grasp politics. He doesn't understand that the people demand a colorful President, not a thinking machine. He'll come to his senses. Give him a little time. Think it over. Let me know in a day or two if you want to play ball."

"I've thought it over. I'll play ball. I'm licked. I'll do anything you say."

Ronkton's eyes were half-lidded. "You're too quick on the uptake, Varney. You've had us worried sick. If you double-cross me again, so help me God, I'll kill you."

"I know it."

"Melrose!" Ronkton called.

When the White House physician came into the bedroom, Ronkton said: "Varney wants to be good. What's the quickest way to get his looks back?"

"Staying in bed on a milk diet. Seven or eight quarts of raw milk a day."

"How long will it take?"

"Two or three weeks. He'll gain a pound a day."

The rogue groaned. "I hate milk."

"You can have six prunes every night."

CHAPTER XXIX

PRESIDENT BLAIR remained in seclusion for two weeks. Dreadful rumors, which swept the country on the announcement of his enforced rest, were checked by the mild and amiable bulletins which Blair composed for Doctor Melrose's signature. His nerves were improving wonderfully, the bulletins said. He was gaining weight. He was beginning to look like a new man.

He quietly and secretly did a great deal of work. When the Washington correspondents learned that he was daily seeing not only Dr. Melrose and Secretary De Kay, but Harvey Ronkton and the Vice President, they were mystified. Why weren't other doctors being called in? The mystery remained.

Pitcairn had been delighted with Blair's *coup de force*. He had himself frequently suggested violence, and been voted down. The White House bedchamber now became the scene of heated arguments. Pitcairn insisted that Varney, having proved conclusively that he was a reptile, should be exterminated. Ronkton endeavored to twist the rogue's ruthless seizure of authority into side-splitting farce.

He declared that Varney was really a ludicrous spectacle. Looking back, his Hollywood diet had been excruciatingly funny. His present frantic attempts at recovering his lost weight and appearance were even funnier. Lying in bed, dreaming dreams of lost grandeur!

"There lies Napoleon," Ronkton epitomized it, "swilling milk. Two gallons of it a day. And how he hates milk! How he looks forward to those six prunes every night!"

"There's a snake in Mexico," the Vice President said acidly, "that sucks milk from cows. I can't treat this scheming crook as a joke."

"You don't realize," Ronkton said, "that his fangs are extracted."

"He is a menace as long as he lives."

"Oh, no, he's really pathetic. He's learned his lesson. T. K., the way he admires you would bring tears to your eyes. He's getting his looks back wonderfully. He could almost pass for you right now."

"He never will," Blair closed the discussion.

"Oh, well, let me handle the poor devil. Say, T.K., what do you think of starting up the old informal noon receptions in the Executive Office?"

"Theodore," Pitcairn said, "will be too busy."

"Too busy to shake hands?" Ronkton murmured wistfully. "Thad, what are you going to do about that doggoned old pussy-cat of a Senator Marlinson?"

In this way, Ronkton managed to sow seeds and to keep the issue beclouded. At the end of two weeks, Varney was still in his house, his fate still undecided.

THE President's official return to health was a signal for tearful jubilation on the part of those reverent romantics, the Washington correspondents. He looked better, they declared, than he had at any time since his nomination. With his faint smile—as if he were amused by the absurdity of all serious conversations—the President answered the correspondents' questions in the Executive Office, then posed for the photographers.

A wave of gladness swept the land. In Wall Street, the leading stocks scored an average of seven-eighths of a point, and the new President went to work. Cabinet meetings. Personal interviews. Visits by delegations. Visits by committees. Appointments. Speeches.

Hard work was made harder by the brains with which Ronkton had been compelled, for reasons of political expediency, to surround him. Inured as he was to long hours of the most strenuous thinking, Blair was, when night came, a very tired man. Issues which had once seemed so clean-cut were already lost in a thick haze of politics.

In one dark hour, less than a month after his term began, he went so far as to wonder if a democratic form of government was adaptable, let alone suitable, to a people who so obviously didn't care a damn about politics.

His previous glimpses, as one of America's industrial kings, as a frequent member of White House conferences, had given him an insight into national politics and a profound contempt for the nation's leaders. As President, the more he saw of them, the more depressed he became: Clowns, mountebanks, liars, grafters, crooks. Fighting this gang was going to be a very hard job.

It became a ritual with Blair, late at night, to go out on the South Portico and rest his eyes on the cool shaft of the Monument, with its whitely glowing peak. But he never again held communion with the spirits of his predecessors; and never again did he reach the heights of exaltation which had made his first night in the White House so joyous a memory. . . .

It had become vitally necessary for President Blair to see Felicia Hamilton. He did not want to see her about anything in particular. He only wanted to see her, to be near her, to look at her. The social secretary spent two entire days, under the President's orders, trying to

get her on the telephone. She was always out or indisposed.

Blair wrote her a note, saying simply that he wanted very much to see her. He followed that with a telephone call. It worked.

"I suppose I ought to be thrown under a steam-roller for lese majesty," Felicia's cool voice said, "but I don't want to see you. I'm sure you understand."

"But it's been so long, Felicia." He hadn't seen her or talked to her since they had sat in his roadster on a hill-top and watched the sun come up. "Can't I," he pleaded, "stop in between four and five this afternoon?"

Her answer was delayed. "Will you promise not to bring up that old subject?" she said at last.

"I won't mention it!"

BLAIR was hurt at realizing, as he did immediately on entering the room, that Felicia had changed. Her face, as brown as ever, was thinner. Her mouth was sober.

She had become, possibly, more grown up. He hated to see that. He hated to see any change in her. She had certainly lost some of her vivacity. Her eyes, particularly, had lost their spring-time quality. They held, as he crossed the room, that strange, dark, haunting look which women save for men who have made them unhappy.

She was delighted, she said, to see him again, and her smile made him feel that she meant it. But it wasn't her old, carefree smile. It wasn't a particularly happy smile. It was, like the rest of her, reserved. And it was hard to think of Felicia not being mischievous, blithe, jaunty. He had never seen her sit so quietly.

She asked him if he would have a highball.

"Or don't Presidents drink?"

"This one doesn't."

"I'm glad you're back on the wagon, T.K."

"I feel better," he said. He'd forgotten Peter Varney.

"You're more like yourself again. I like you today. How do you like your job? Your eyes look tired."

She told him, a little later, that she liked him better this afternoon than she ever had. That gave him a warm, hopeful glow. Then he realized that there had never been any question of her liking him. But it wasn't, and never would be, love. She would, possibly, always like him, but she would never love him. He remembered very clearly what she had said on the night when they had first discussed his Presidential possibilities.

"I admire and respect you more than any man alive. But I'm not in love with you."

He had gone home, he recalled, heartbroken and furious and met for the first time, Peter Varney.

He asked her about flying. She had bought a new ship, she said. An amphibian which was kept in a hangar at the Arlington field.

"I don't have time to fly much. I only go up when I get that earthbound feeling." She changed the subject. Her mind was full of the problems of his administration. Hadn't he been flattered at the way business had perked up on the news of his election?

"I'd like to ask a million questions. I'm terribly dumb. If I trespass on any tabus, will you just say so?"

"Felicia, you're getting serious-minded."

"Yes," she said. Her slender dark eyebrows, arching, reminded him of wings. She was looking down at her hands. They were quiet. Once, they had never been quiet. He wondered if she was suffering from self-repression. Her voice was so much gentler. Her flashes of humor were so infrequent. She had acquired a remarkable knowledge of politics. Her mind seemed saturated with politics.

"Have fifty years of capitalistic rule been enough to convince the people that they ought to have a chance, once more, of governing themselves?" she asked.

"It's been more than fifty years," Blair said.

"Oh! But if it began in the 'Eighties—"

"No. The 'Sixties. Just after the Civil War." This subject was one which had always interested Blair.

"What brought it about, T.K.?"

"A great many things. Coal- and iron-mines were being developed. Banks were bursting with war profiteers' profits. The railroads were merging and reaching out in all directions. The West was being settled. Little businesses were growing into big businesses. The period corresponds to our post-war period, with industry booming and grafters plundering under Grant just as they did under Harding."

"You must," Felicia said, "have been reading up."

"No," he said, drawing out the vowel. "My father and I used to talk these things over by the hour. His father, you know, was a colonel in the Army of the Potomac, under General McClellan. It was a wonderfully organized army. After the war these principles of organization went into business. Colonels and majors became superintendents; captains became foremen; sergeants and corporals were the gang bosses." He stopped abruptly.

Felicia's eyes were again haunted by that strange, dark look. Their largeness startled him.

She had sunk back in her chair, with her fingertips against her chin, her hands, with touching thumb-tips, forming an A. Her eyes alarmed him. He had never seen eyes so large, so dark with woe. She opened and closed her mouth several times. Her lips, he suddenly realized, were quivering. Then they smiled, and this smile was, curiously, like that of a child who, moved by opposite impulses to smile and to cry, tremulously smiles.

"It's so nice to see you again, T.K.," she said. "Isn't it time for you to go?"

He looked at his watch and got up. He felt uneasy. Something had happened. Possibly, while he had been talking, a wave of the bitterness which had changed her so had passed.

"May I come again?"

"As often as they'll let you."

AT the door, as the Secret Service men grouped themselves about him, he wondered why she had phrased it in just those words.

The sky, the President observed, was darkening with thunder-clouds. The air was hot and oppressive. Washington needed a shower. . . .

Rear Admiral Staunton Vining, in his gloomy old house on Maryland Avenue, selected that moment to die peacefully in his bed at the ripe old age of ninety-one. . . .

Kate Ingals had spent a strenuous day, supervising a half-dozen servants, and was finally settled in her charming apartment on Massachusetts Avenue. Reclining in black-and-silver lounging pajamas on a *chaise-longue* of orchid taffeta, she began, at that moment, to sip a dry Martini. . . .

Martin Drum was just leaving the train which had taken him to Washington. He was wearing his new steel hand. Its flesh-colored enamel and its wonderful workmanship made of it an almost exact duplicate—in appearance—of the hand he had lost in the cylinder-boring machine. It was not much thicker than his left hand. The automatic pistol was cleverly embedded in the space which, in a living hand, is occupied by flesh and blood, tendons and bones.

This powerful story, which has evoked nation-wide comment, comes to its unexpected and dramatic climax in the next, the April, issue.

Free Lances in Diplomacy

In "A Manchurian Adventure" you follow the Free Lances to the Far East and share in the present crisis.

By CLARENCE HERBERT NEW

Illustrated by A. E. Briggs

UPON the previous night the girl Amy Garner and her pilot, Lin Farnsworth, had come down on the flying-field outside the big brick wall of Mukden, after a flight from Shanghai. She had arranged by wire for the Chinese agent of a business friend of hers on the Bund to meet them with a fresh supply of gas. For a small sum the agent had remained near the plane until morning to see that nobody came nosing around to interfere. Shortly after sunrise they had taken off without any difficulty and before ten o'clock were over the Nonni River district near Tsitsihar.

Flying along the line of the Chinese Eastern, halfway to Manchouli, they saw below them temporary intrenchments of what they assumed to be a Chinese force of possibly forty thousand, with several machine-gun batteries. Farther back toward Anganchi, they made out through their glasses a much smaller Japanese force.

The weather was bitterly cold. A blizzard was brewing on the bleak plains of Siberia, up north, and an icy Arctic wind, bucking the plane, was making every wire sing—even penetrating the flyers' padded leather jackets and helmets.

Heading west again, they dropped lower for a better look at the Chinese soldiers—and discovered another detachment of five or six thousand circling around under cover of rolling ground, presumably to make a flank attack on the Japs. Presently the girl spoke into the small microphone connected with a receiver inside Farnsworth's helmet:

"We're not drawing any anti-aircraft fire—they don't seem to be worrying much about us!"

"Ground-fire's not much use—we're too fast for it," Farnsworth replied. "Still, we'd better go up a bit. —Take a close look at that flanking force; it looks to me like a lot of whiskers under those tin hats! Chinks don't run to whiskers—I'm betting they're Russian communists in Chinese uniforms. And they're going to wallop those Japs pretty soon—outnumber 'em three to one! By Jove! . . . 'Nother bus up yonder—coming hell-bent! We better get some altitude—*pronto!*"

Amy Garner thought the other plane must be from the Japanese flying corps; then she noticed, from a slightly vaporized streak of exhaust, that it must have banked around from the Chinese army farther west, to head them off.

Farnsworth opened his throttle and hit up all he could get out of the bus—but the oncoming plane gained enough, while they were banking and climbing, to open fire with a machine-gun. Just by pure fluke, before they could get out of range, one of the bullets hit the blade of their propeller—leaving them no alternative but a prompt jump. When the 'chutes fetched them safely down on the ground there were too many of the Chinese soldiers running toward them to consider resistance. As they came up, Lin asked quickly:

"Is that automatic of yours pretty well hidden, Miss Garner?"

"Strapped against me, in a buckskin holster."

"Don't make a motion toward it—it may come in handy later on!"

"Frightfully sorry I got you into this, Lin!"

"You didn't. . . . I couldn't see a nervy girl attempt any such scouting as this on her own—news-service or not. Everything depends upon whether these Chinks are soldiers or bandits. If they're communist-bandits—well, it isn't so good! But if either of us gets out, he or she gets the dope to the Associated Press, remember!"

The soldiers went over Farnsworth in a methodical way which promptly produced his pistol and keen-edged hunting-knife. They ran their hands perfunctorily over the girl, without discovering her weapon or the money she had concealed upon her. Several were smiling and joking among themselves—but smiling good-nature among one's captors isn't always reassuring.

They were taken before the General commanding without delay—but, considerably to their surprise, were not questioned as to what they were doing in the plane over that part of Manchuria, or who they might be. Before they were separated, Farnsworth quietly remarked:

"That's General Fu, a pretty able military strategist—had a course at St. Cyr and then two years with the Jap army. It isn't like what I've heard of him to order us shot as spies—but he'll do what he pleases with us, regardless. Any message we can get through to the Astor House in Shanghai'll be held until one of us calls for it."

WHEN they were taken before General Fu, they saw one of the soldiers pull a scrap of thin rice-paper from inside his tunic—a scrap covered with Chinese ideographs—and hand it to Fu with a low bow. After glancing at this, the commander nodded, said a few words which sounded to them like guttural machine-gun fire, and motioned back over his shoulder to where the bomber which had brought them down was now resting upon the ground. Then some of the soldiers took Farnsworth over to their fire under a tree—squatted comfortably on the ground and motioned for him to do the same. Evidently he was to be disposed of later. He lighted his pipe and tried to keep his hand from trembling as he saw three other soldiers lift Amy Garner into the bomber, climb in after her, and lock the cabin door. A moment later the big plane was bumping over the uneven ground; then it rose into the air and disappeared in a direction a little west of south. . . .

After about five hours the bomber came down at the

tip of a long peninsula and landed on a flying-field outside a port which looked to Amy like Port Arthur, although she hadn't thought the plane was doing much better than eighty as they flew along. When they took her out, the sergeant in command of her escort said to her slowly:

"You not likee be shooted, you come 'long lis side—not makee bobbery. Keepee mouth shut. Allee same on bloat; allee same when go off bloat. Yaes? Can do?"

"I guess so—can do. I don't care about getting shot any more than you do—and I know when I'm up against it. This is a place where diplomatic notes and inquiries don't go! Sorry—afraid all that is a bit involved for you!"

Much to her surprise, they calmly walked her aboard one of the familiar Shanghai steamers as if she were merely a tourist with a military escort; but she was convinced that if she let out just one scream for help—or spoke to some Englishman or American aboard—the Sergeant would send a bullet through her and calmly toss her body overboard. The steamer was Chinese-owned, though it had an English master and purser.

Amy was given a comfortable stateroom, and a Chinese steward fetched in a very decent meal—but she made no attempt to leave the room until after breakfast in the morning, when the Sergeant knocked upon the door and said she could come up on deck with them.

The vast expanse of swirling yellow water was by this time familiar to her. She recognized the deep-sea liners anchored off Woo-sung as the smaller boat headed up the Whangpoo without stopping. As they approached the Chow Chow Water opposite the British concession in Shanghai—a deep hole gouged out of the river-bed at the sharp bend, producing a magnified Hell Gate at certain turns of the tide—she noticed a big amphibian plane resting on the water just below the Jardine Mathieson godown on the opposite bank—a plane of dull horizon-blue throughout, with such perfect streamlining and general construction that it would have held the eye of anyone with a knowledge of flying.

"I saw him here in Shanghai one evening last week, going into an old house on Seymour Road. He looked all around to see if anyone was noticing him."

Touching the Sergeant's elbow, she asked:

"Do you know to whom that beautiful plane belongs, Sergeant?"

"No can tell, plopelly. Mebbeso English Malkess—come lis side sometime—makee planes like lat, English side. Fly long way—velly fast—*chop-chop.*"

"English Marquess—" Amy mused. "M-m-m—now what have I heard about an English Marquess who's a wonderful aviator; he designs planes—"

To her surprise, the Sergeant made no move to go across in the launch with the other passengers to the Bund landing. At ten that evening, a small power-boat came alongside and took them off, entering the canal which bounds the French concession, and running up to where Bubbling Well Road crosses on the new bridge. Here they left the boat—got into a couple of 'rickshas, waiting for them, and proceeded out along the famous road to within a mile of the cemetery, finally stopping before a solid gate in a high and thick concrete wall that enclosed a small estate—the gate being reinforced with steel on the back, and sliding on ball-bearings along a track set in granite.

Inside, Amy's captors led her down a winding path between the box-hedges of a beautiful garden to where she could make out, in the brilliant starlight, a well-designed

"I now render unto my ancestors atonement for what I did. . . . The debt is paid in full."

Chinese villa which seemed to be nowhere more than two stories in height but had many ramifications in the rear. The Sergeant rang no bell nor gave any other notice of his arrival—yet a heavy door presently swung open to admit them, and a man in the garb of a *comprador* led the way back—a long way back, it seemed to the girl—then up a flight of onyx stairs with a carved ebony rail to a room about twelve by fifteen feet, furnished in carved teak, even to the wall-paneling, and hung with brocaded silks. It had a single good-sized window, screened with a teak grille. Here, the *comprador* counted out several gold taels into the Sergeant's hand and silver dollars into those of his detail, after which they bowed very low and left the house. The *comprador* bowed and went out, locking the door on the other side.

Generally speaking, all this looked as though no bodily harm was intended the girl—yet there were certain features about it which caused her a good deal of apprehension. In Hongkong, Amoy or Shanghai the women of the English concessions had been disposed to make light of risks run by white women in the Orient on the ground that if they minded their own business and very carefully kept away from places they weren't supposed to go, they had little to fear. But of course, things did happen, now and then. So Miss Garner was wondering nervously what her next experience might be. This was a case where an American Ambassador was of absolutely no protection. China isn't the sort of place where much attention is paid to diplomatic threats—it never has been, and is less so, today, than in the time of the old Empress. Altogether, it seemed to Amy that the sooner she got out of these quite attractive quarters, in any way she could manage it, the better for her.

When the sound of footsteps outside died away, she switched off the light and went over to examine the window. In her breeches pocket she had one of those handy jack-knives with two blades, a curved hook, a corkscrew and a screwdriver—but she could find no screws in the frame of the teak grille. Presently, however, she discovered notches all the way up the sides and wondered if projections from the frame itself sank into them. After an exertion of considerable lifting-strength, she felt the grille moving upward, and was nearly knocked down by the heavy thing when it tipped inward on her head. She managed to ease it down without noise; then she leaned it against the wall and examined the window—which opened in two halves like shutters, with small square panes of glass. Pushing these open, she looked down into a pretty little court with a large basin of water set in the center pavement, and a trickling fountain. Around the walls, with large pearl-shells set in the concrete, there were sweet-smelling Oriental shrubs. Heavy silk curtains masked an archway on her side and another one opposite. Immediately below her own window was a larger one, through which she could make out a faint streak of light. The tiled floor of the court seemed to be about eight feet below the level of the compound surrounding the villa. She knew she could get down to the sill of the other window by using the silk counterpane of the bed as a rope—below which there would be an eight-foot drop into shrubbery.

Without wasting any time, she knotted one corner of the counterpane to a leg of the bed and lowered the remainder out of the window—then slid down until her feet rested on the sill below. The halves of that window were unfastened and stood slightly open for ventilation. Inside, it was screened by heavy rose-pink curtains of velvet almost meeting in the middle. She could hear a man speaking, evidently to a house-coolie, and, thinking this might be the easiest way out when both had left the room, she silently stepped inside behind the velvet curtains, pulling the window-leaves back into their original position. As there happened to be no wind outside, no draft had moved the curtains when she got in. Finding the farther edge of one in shadow, she cautiously peered around it.

The room was a blend of soft rose tints against a background of powder-blue, with carved teak furniture. Bits of old Tartar chain-mail and weapons were displayed on the Persian silk rugs which hung as wall-panels, and rugs of thicker pile lay on the polished floor. At a table-desk in one corner sat a Mandarin of high rank, judging by the richness of his costume and the emerald button on the top of his silk cap. Apparently he had been interrupted in the examination of several documents—some in English and some in ideographs—for he was sitting placidly smoking his silver water-pipe, with his eyes fixed upon the only door into the big room. Through this in another moment, there came, with the free swinging stride of a

much younger man, an erect and handsome personage in boots and riding-clothes.

As soon as he recognized his visitor, the Mandarin rose from his chair, and met him halfway, exclaiming in English: "Is it indeed thou, my old friend? *Aie*—this is a most fortunate moment! Come! Sit by my side near the fire—and let us talk of many things!"

"That's what I've flown all these miles for, Wu-H'sien-Li! We don't get unduly nervous over a bit of fighting in China, d'ye see—but with the sums we've invested here we like to be sure there are enough of you left to hold the country—in a show-down!"

The Mandarin chuckled.

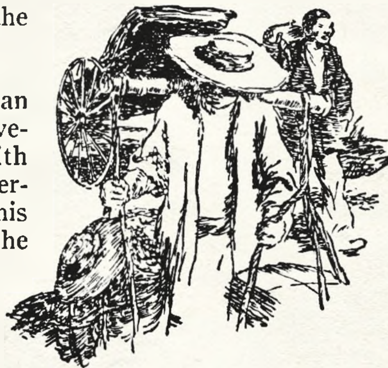
"It does strike us Asiatics as odd, you know—even amusing—that Europeans so often forget our population of four hundred and thirty millions. Not all of intelligence, of course—yet with terrific massed weight if we have occasion to use them."

"Why not get these railway and intervention questions settled permanently—so that if any serious war does crop out here, the outside world can understand what the situation really is?"

"Well, I feel, as do most of the older families, that the time is not quite ripe for that—and we gain a bit each time we set Japan and Russia at loggerheads. Still, there's something to be said for defining the issues here in a more clear-cut way so that we shall not be so often misunderstood. Doubtless it seems like a mess to the outside world. Day after day, representatives of the great press syndicates come to me and other Tuchans with requests for explanations which their news-sheets may publish—but, I ask you, my friend, how is that possible to give? It is not the Oriental way! Look you! . . . . Only three days ago a young, handsome, well-educated woman, acting for one of the syndicates, left here—despite the bitter cold, and total absence of food or shelter in emergency—with a former army pilot in a small plane, to fly over the ground where hostilities are in progress and report what she saw. General Fu—a friend of my youth—would not harm her nor her pilot. I doubt if the Nipponese would do more than hold them prisoners for a bit. But there are hordes of brutal and unscrupulous bandits hanging about the flanks of the fighting forces, a little way back—sometimes joining one side or the other, temporarily. I telephoned one of my agents in a town thirty miles northwest of Anganchi to get hold of some of Fu's soldiers—have them capture the girl and her pilot—send them back here to me, uninjured. I knew that Fu would do this if he could—even if just to rid himself of the responsibility for a white woman's life."

"Did he do it?"

"Oh, yes—though at more risk to them than I wished or expected. Sent her here this evening. I put her in the room over this, with the impression that she might use the counterpane for a rope and get down as far as this window—then rather funk the drop into the court." (There was a faintly audible gasp from behind the curtains.) "Perhaps we'd better bring her out—relieve her anxiety, eh?"



The visitor nodded, and Wu said a few words in a low tone. An arm reached out of the shadows to seize Miss Garner's wrist before she could draw a weapon—then gently pushed her out into the room. That arm was all she saw of the Mandarin's coolie who had been guarding her from the moment she stepped through the window. She hadn't dreamed that anyone was near her!

"Sit down and join us, Miss Garner," said Wu cordially. "Let Wun Ling fetch you a glass of wine and cigarettes. In case you don't recognize him from the gazette halftones, this is my very dear friend, the Right Honorable, the Marquess of Lyonesse. I trust you were not too uncomfortable on the way back?"

"Why, no, I was treated far more considerately than I expected—admitting that I might have been shot as a spy! Will you please tell me what has been done with Mr. Farnsworth?"

"He's probably waiting for you at the Astor House. He was sent down in another plane, without stopping, and turned loose on the Bund before sunrise this morning. You ran little risk of being shot by any of the fighting forces—but if those communist-bandits had captured you—well, you'd not be here, that's all! The trouble with you news-correspondents, Miss Garner, is that you go at an Asiatic proposition in the same way you'd cover fighting in Europe—and that's all wrong in the Orient. We arrive at objectives in a vastly different, more oblique way. One infers that your syndicate editors have been sending you radiograms to get at exactly what is going on here—what it's all about—eh?"

"Exactly! . . . . And I'm just as much fogged up with what I've sent them as they are! There seems to be no head or tail to it! You are actually fighting—killing a lot of men—and yet all three combatants deny that a state of warfare exists! In all of your coast cities, business and social affairs are going on as usual. Japanese editors, and Japanese business-men, are lunching in the restaurants and clubs with Chinese and Russians. Occasional heated arguments over politics—but no more so than in any other country or city. If that fight came off yesterday, up along the Nonni River, the Japs must have been cleaned out with a heavy loss of men—yet you've not been even discussing it with your friend, sir!"

"Why should I? Tomorrow or some other day, Nipponese forces will take an even heavier toll of Chinese, or communists masking as Chinese. You can get at more facts about present conditions right here in Shanghai and Nanking, Miss Garner, than anywhere else in China—that was one of my reasons for having you fetched to this house. I'll tell you a good bit to go upon—and the spots in which you may dig for more—especially as my good friend the Marquess also is interested. Shall I do this—or would you prefer to get the facts on your own?"

"I'm certainly under obligations to Your Excellency now—and quite willing to be more so!"

"Go ahead, old chap. I know some of it, of course—but there are pretty big gaps," observed the Marquess.

"To begin with, then—you're inclined to visualize Chinese and Nipponese as two Oriental races—with Russians as white interlopers, pushing in where they've no business to be. Isn't that so?"

The girl nodded.

The Mandarin continued:

"That's an entire misconception. Prior to the Christian era we had the great imperial dynasties of the Hans, Hsias, Shangs, Chus, Suis, and others—with more or less mixture from northern or Siberian races. In 1215, Genghis Khan came down from Urga in Mongolia, conquering Peking and all northern China. His grandson, Kublai Khan, extended the empire. Their followers, grafted on a much older Manchurian stock, founded the Manchu dynasty which really governs China to this day. Between 1370 and 1398, Tamerlane—born a Tartar in Samarkand and descended from one of Genghis Khan's

generals—conquered the whole of Central Asia and was invading China when he died in 1405. From his leaders and armies are descended the lower-class Siberians and Russians of today—the bolsheviki, anarchists and communists. From the Mongol-Manchurian stock with mixtures of Melanesian and Malay, here and there, are descended the present Nipponese—all coming down together through twenty thousand years at least. Manchurians are possibly the purer stock, with the fewest plebeian strains. So you see China and Manchuria have been an inter-relationship of Mongol-Russian, Sino-Manchurian, and Nipponese—the Mikado dynasties dating from 700 B.C. —far beyond the memory of man. Catch it?"

"WHY, yes," Amy Garner acknowledged. "But one doesn't think of Russians as primarily Asiatics—"

"There are outcrops of Tartar cruelty and brutality which indicate that plainly enough, just as the origin of the Huns and Vandals shows through. Very good! We come now to the next point. The three hundred and eighty-two thousand square miles of Manchuria—twice the size of Japan—is the richest territory in the Chinese Empire, and has the largest soy-bean and millet crops in the world. It has expanded its trade fifteen-fold in the last twenty-three years; it is the natural, logical market for Japanese goods and an equally logical outlet for her surplus population. The Nipponese do not thrive in the Philippines. During the China-Japan War of 1894 Russia began pushing railways into this rich territory. Japan followed suit—China beat them both. The Russo-Japanese War of 1905 gave Japan a protectorate over South Manchuria—Russia, a sphere of influence in the north. Subsequent treaties with China prohibited the building of Chinese railways parallel to existing Japanese ones—but China has held that those treaties were obtained under duress and does not intend to abide by them. Today there are twenty-nine millions of Chinese in Manchuria—eight hundred thousand Russians—a quarter of a million Nipponese. While willing to share a reasonable amount of Manchurian trade with her two neighbors, China is acutely conscious of the fact that it is a part of the Chinese Empire—not Japanese, and not Russian. Sooner or later, she means to see that armed forces of both are withdrawn, and run the country herself. Of course it is only fair that Japan's railway interests and investment should be protected, in a peaceable way. But whether Chinese forces are fighting with Russians against Nipponese, or with Nipponese against the Soviet—the underlying object of China is to play one against the other and get them both out—so far as control of the country goes."

"I fancy we grasp all this, so far—eh, Miss Garner?" interjected the Marquess.

The girl nodded again.

"Why—I'm beginning to. But there's something which I still get but faintly—the impression of a vast network of wheels and wires all moving toward some definite object under the surface."

The Mandarin smiled.

"I'm coming to a glimpse of that. Some of it is too obscure for the Western mind to grasp—but I can give you a few outstanding points. Albert William Lung, a sailor on a United States navy boat in 1880, settled in one of the Southern States and was converted to Christianity there. A patron saw him through college. He married a Chinese graduate of Smith, and returned to Shanghai as a missionary. He had three sons and three daughters. One son, B. V. Lung, is now Minister of Finance—his brother, F. M. Lung, is managing director of a large bank and several corporations. The youngest brother heads the Salt Administration—all three are very rich. The eldest daughter married the most prominent and wealthy Christian leader here, and now has a wide-spread social influence. The second daughter married the new Government leader in Canton, Doctor Qu'en, and became our greatest woman-suffragist, respected and loved all over the country. The youngest and prettiest, Lung-Lei-Ming, married General Tiang-Li-Mek, now head of the Government. This Lung family represent the modern trend and influence, with a good deal of opposition from conservative families who stick to the old ideas, but still, on top, running the China of today."

"But—you'd hardly call China really modernized?"

"Very far from it, basically—and yet drifting toward a workable modernization. At the head of the old conservative side—the active head which is permitted to be seen—is a young and handsome widow, Mein-Pue-Fei, whose social prestige and political influence are wider than any of the Lungs, individually. And some of us Tuchans know a secret concerning her birth which I'm quite certain she doesn't know herself. Among the Russians living here in Shanghai is a Madame Luchenov, wife of a Russian imperial exile who has done very well in a commercial way. The outstanding feature about her is a striking resemblance to Madame Mein-Pue-Fei. The secret is this: Her father, Sergius Bolenski, one of the officers of the old Russian Secret Police, was stationed some years in the Chinese border cities and arranged himself in quite the Oriental way. He had one establishment in Tientsin, with two wives—and another here in Shanghai, with but one, for the sake of appearances. Mein-Pue-Fei's mother was one of the Tientsin wives, and Madame Luchenov is the daughter of the Shanghai wife—born just a short time after her step-sister. Without knowing of their relationship—for the man went back to Europe for twenty years—both women thoroughly hate the Sergius Bolenski who is occasionally seen here now, appearing and disappearing just in time to save his skin. For he is the most treacherous scoundrel at present mixed up in this Russo-Chinese-Nipponese intrigue—setting one side against the other, loyal to nobody, many times a murderer, and a thief in forty ways. The sooner somebody does kill him, the better for China—I'd have my own people do it if I knew where to get my hands upon him!"

MISS GARNER'S interest had plainly quickened when she heard the names *Mein-Pue-Fei*, and *Bolenski*.

"Will Your Excellency please describe that man?"

"H-m-m—I think your first impression would be of careless untidiness—dull black hair and beard, seldom washed or brushed—clothes of expensive material, well cut, but stained and wrinkled—a rather pleasing, good-natured voice with an underlying brutality which flashes through when least expected. An adventurer of wide experience. Do you think, Miss Garner, that you have seen such a man?"

"Three or four weeks ago in Nagasaki, in a small restaurant on a side street, a man of that description, and a Japanese officer, were talking confidentially at a table in a corner. I happened to be the only other person in the room at the time. Of course they knew I couldn't understand a word of what they said. The man had a Japanese newspaper in his pocket. After a while he pulled it out and sketched something roughly on the margin. They seemed to reach some agreement. The officer passed over to him several Imperial Japanese bank-notes of large denominations. When they went out the man—I'd have said he was unmistakably Russian—forgot his newspaper—left it on the table. I got it before the waiter saw me. On the margin there were small outlines of six tri-motored mono-

There were too many of the Chinese soldiers running toward them for the two to consider resistance.

planes which conveyed an impression of Japanese design. Below them there were a few words in Russian script. I tore off that edge of the paper and put it in my pocket. —Here it is. If either of you gentlemen understand Russian, you may be able to make something of it."

After one look, both heads nodded.

"Aye—it says: *'To be delivered without fail by first of month—Safkaia.'* Ever hear of such a place, Wu?"

"Yes. It is a very small, level valley in the mountains near the coast and the Russian border—possibly fifty miles from Point Bruce southwest of Vladivostok. I do not think there is a village nearer than fifteen miles—in fact it is one of the few places where planes could be delivered to any particular agent and taken over by him without being seen by anybody."

"H-m-m—let's get this proposition straight, if we can. Miss Garner sees this renegade Russian hobnobbing with a Jap officer in an obscure place. The Jap gives Bolenski a considerable sum of money. Bolenski's sketches an' memoranda indicate pretty clearly that six Jap bombing-planes are going to be turned over to some agent of his in an isolated spot next week Tuesday—six days from now —an' that he's going to spend a good bit of money on crews an' munitions for 'em. Not much argum'nt as to how they'll be used, I fancy—that appears to be rather obvious. The evident intention is to paint those buses with some other color an' flying-insignia, and then bomb Chinese forces—or towns, or property—leaving the Chinese to speculate as they please upon who is responsible. That about the way you get it, Wu?"

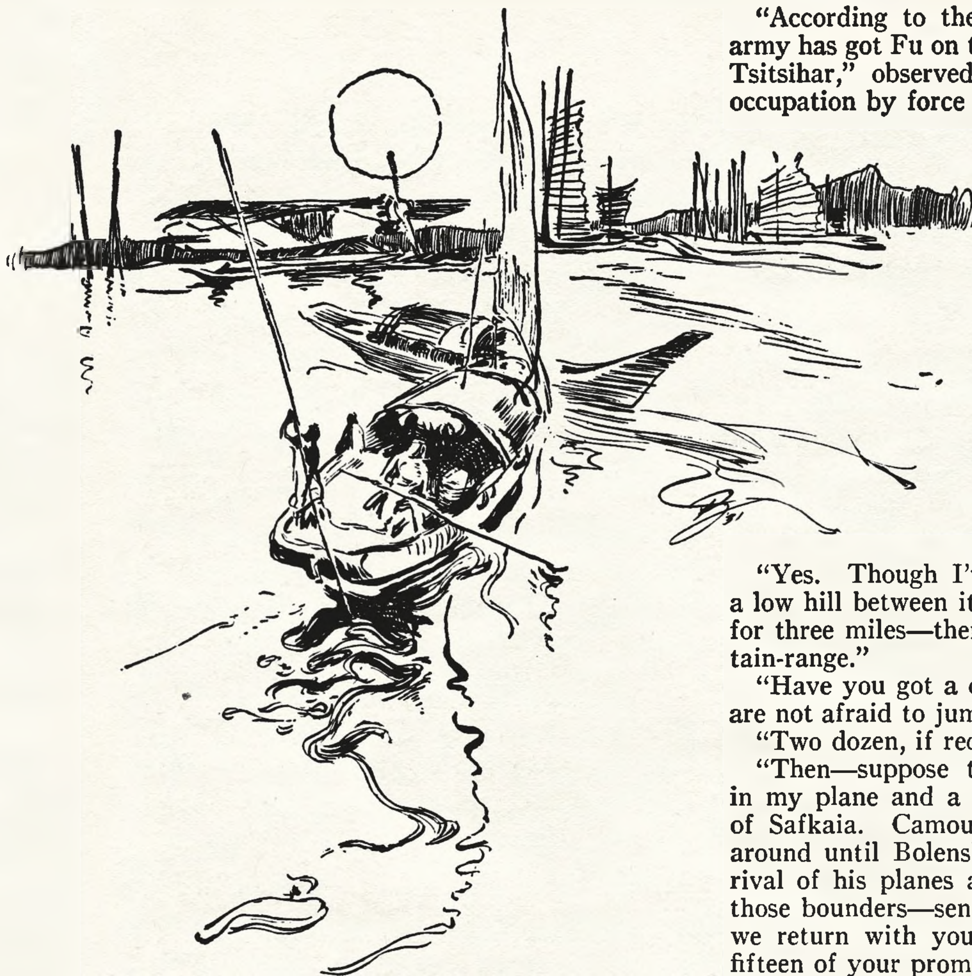
"Unquestionably. Of course it'll be only one incident out of many—but I'm wondering if it cannot be magnified somewhat—made a possibly outstanding *casus-belli?* Eh?"

"Just what I was thinkin' myself, y'know! Aye —we'll go into that, presently. Er—I suppose that was the only time you ever saw this bounder, Miss Garner?"

"No, I saw him here in Shanghai last week—one evening just about dark—going into an old house on Seymour Road in a rather sneaking way. He looked all around to see if anyone was noticing him. I was standing in the next doorway until the rain let up a little."

"Seymour Road, you say, Miss Garner? About where?" Wu inquired. She gave the names of the nearest streets. "Now that's a curious coincidence!" he said. "On the very next block are a number of modern houses—some are quite luxuriously furnished. In one of them lives the youngest Lung daughter, Lung-Lei-Ming—and a few doors up the block from her lives Madame Mein-Pue-Fei—this scoundrel's daughter by his Tientsin wife, who so remarkably resembles the one born here in Shanghai. The latter, Madame Luchenov, has a beautiful house where she lives with her husband, out on Connaught Road in the British concession. Both mothers died when the girls were about five. Bolenski had been recalled to Petrograd when they were about two, so neither has any recollection of him. As it was a clear case of desertion and he made no provision for the children, that barred him from getting any of the marriage settlements. Fortunately the mothers both came from wealthy Manchu families, and the girls inherited enough to live very well—and both married rich men.

"Madame Mein-Pue-Fei, while a Manchu of the Manchus, is by no means averse to using such modern conveniences as electricity, telephones or motorcars. Yet her costumes, house-furnishings and the older courteous observances which we certainly miss in the modern generation, give her home an atmosphere which the Lungs, with all their wealth, fail to get. Now, what I have in mind for you is this: In the morning we will all three go in my car to call upon Mein-Pue-Fei. *En route,* you will kindly



"According to the morning's news, old chap, the Jap army has got Fu on the run for the moment, and has taken Tsitsihar," observed His Lordship. "Looks like a Jap occupation by force of strategic points in Manchuria. In fact, you may have something of a war on in a week or two. But if we can get the Japs angry against the Soviet it will be a diversion which might easily bear fruit. Now—Fu and your other generals must have some rather prominent Russian prisoners whom they're holding either for advantageous exchange or for eventual execution. What?"

"Oh, yes—scores—most of the lot in the army prison at Peking."

"An' if I recall, the Japs have a big munitions-magazine near Ming Tang on the Korean Railway."

"Yes. Though I've not seen it, I understand there is a low hill between it and the city—level ground around it for three miles—then considerable elevation in the mountain-range."

"Have you got a dozen or more first-chop aviators who are not afraid to jump with a parachute?"

"Two dozen, if required."

"Then—suppose those men are transported at night, in my plane and a couple of yours, to that little valley of Safkaia. Camouflage the planes in some way—stick around until Bolenski's men show up to wait for the arrival of his planes an' take 'em over. Our men capture those bounders—send 'em back here in the planes. Then we return with your pilots, mechanics, and fourteen or fifteen of your prominent Russians. We await the arrival of the Jap planes—take 'em over as Bolenski's agents, receipting for 'em in his name. Japs presumably go home on extra planes of their own."

"And then, my friend, what do we do with the planes and the Russians—our own pilots and mechanics?"

The Marquess outlined what he had in mind. . . .

On Sunday night, a dozen Soviet pilots and mechanics—three or four armed with automatics, the rest of them not—were let out of a bomber in the little valley of Safkaia, where they set up a tent, camp-stove and fire, and prepared to wait thirty or forty hours for the expected Jap planes—the bomber returning to Vladivostok. There seemed to be no reason for posting a sentry in that isolated spot. But at two in the morning, when all were soundly sleeping, the tent was surrounded; flashlights in their eyes waked them up—and they looked into the muzzles of several automatics. Half an hour later they were being flown to a Chinese detention camp, their wrists bound.

On Tuesday night the Jap planes came down with an escort of two large bombers in which the pilots and mechanics returned after getting the receipt of a certain Ivan Stefanovitch, who signed as agent for Sergius Bolenski.

During the previous morning, the Marquess of Lyonesse had called in the Mandarin's car at the house in Seymour Road and asked Amy Garner to accompany him for a short drive. When they started, he said:

"I'm going to give you a chance for a big scoop, girl, if you obey orders and keep your mouth shut about getting the tip from me. Telephone Lin Farnsworth to meet you out at the army flying-field as soon as he can make it. Here's an order on the Commandant for a fast plane—but Farnsworth mustn't know what wire you pulled to get it. You two will be flown across to Antung on the Korean Railway, where you take the first train down to Ming Tang an' go to the best hotel for the night. Here

point out to me the house you saw Bolenski enter—but make no mention to her that he is in the city or her neighborhood. I will tell her of your recent adventures—your seeing Bolenski in Nagasaki—and my wish that you should see something of the inside, here in China, agreeing not to publish anything we do not wish you to. She is quite certain to invite you to visit her for an indefinite stay—and she'll introduce you where you'll pick up a good bit. Will such a program seem attractive?"

"Immensely so! I really can't thank Your Excellency enough for giving me such an opportunity!"

"Then, probably, you will not object to the one stipulation. You will see or hear a number of things which would do harm if published now. You may have something more than suspicion that my Lord Marquess and I are cooking up some little political *coup* of our own. But you are to make no mention of what we forbid—or of His Lordship's name, or mine—in any way or by any reference. Have we your word for that?"

"Well, that's asking a lot from a news-correspondent, Your Excellency. But perhaps sometime in the future you'll permit me to tell more. Yes—I'll promise!"

WHEN they reached the house in Seymour Road the next day, Amy was captivated by its lovely hostess, Mein-Pue-Fei, who heard of her adventures—particularly of the one with Bolenski—with evident interest. Without even a suggestion from Wu-H'sien-Li, the charming Manchu widow insisted that the American girl remain as her guest as long as she pleased to stay.

After the Marquess and his old friend returned to the Mandarin's secluded villa, they sat down in his big rose-tinted room for a game of chess—while they discussed Bolenski's six Japanese airplanes.

are special passports, properly viséd. Don't let anybody imagine you're down there for any other reason than to interview some high official, who is expected. But *stick around until something happens!* When it does happen you get all the facts—*all* of them. Then get up to Antung fast as you can—there'll be a plane waiting for you there—and fly back with your news."

At two o'clock Wednesday morning the six Jap planes —with Chinese pilots and mechanics, and accompanied by several Russians, very well known in Vladivostok and Moscow—flew over the neck of Korea, followed by the great Trevor plane of the Marquess, and two roomy Chinese bombers. The Russian prisoners in the Jap planes were seated on the floor near the bomb-releasing levers going down to the cradles underneath. They hadn't the slightest idea where they were going or what was likely to be done with them—but at all events it seemed much better than the firing-squad they'd been expecting.

When the planes were almost over the munitions-magazines at Ming Tang, the mechanics ordered the Russians in understandable *patois* to pull the levers and drop half the bombs they were carrying. This was promptly done. As the planes flew on beyond, there was a flash on the ground—then two, three, a dozen flashes—a thousand feet below them. Then came a great billow of orange flame—two larger ones near by—and a roar that shook the earth for twenty miles, making the disappearing planes stagger as they flew, like drunken gulls. Banking in a wide circle to the eastward, they were again headed straight toward the magazines and the town over the hill. The sticks were shoved for a nose-dive, the backward-swinging traps in the floor dropped open, and the pilots rapidly eased themselves through, followed by the mechanics, all pulling at their 'chute-cords as they dropped.

With but one exception, they came safely to the ground —made a bundle of their 'chutes—and were picked up by the two following planes which had figured very closely and came down less than a quarter-mile from them. When sure that all were aboard except the one unlucky chap whose nervous fingers had fumbled his cord into a hard knot, the planes were up again, heading back to Shanghai before anyone on the ground saw them come down or go up again. The six planes they had abandoned struck the ground just beyond the still exploding magazines—on top of the little hill—and two of them in the town itself. It was supposed that the back-draft of the explosions had sent them out of control after they had bombed the magazines. When the Japs and Koreans pulled the Russians out of the wrecks—or what they could get of them—two were still alive, but bled to death before they could speak. The incident was apparently complete; it spoke for itself without argument. At least half of those well-known Russians were known to have been expert aviators. One of the Soviet agents had obtained the planes from the Nipponese army to be used in raids upon the Chinese armies and cities—and then the Russians had treacherously attacked the Japs themselves with their own planes, destroying munitions and other property which ran into millions. The Japs couldn't suppress what had happened, for Amy Garner had it on the wires before they themselves knew the full details or extent of damage. There was no definite proof that they had given the planes to Russian agents—she had been told to suppress *that*. So it seemed very close to a declaration of war between Moscow and Tokio. The next few months will show if it was avoided or not.

When Miss Garner returned to the house in Seymour Road she found that things had been happening. The Mandarin had rather hoped to get hold of Bolenski before Madame Mein-Pue-Fei knew the man was in her immediate vicinity, but the fates ordered it despite him. She saw and recognized the man from the car in which she was passing one evening as he came out of the house on the block below her. Without the slightest hesitation, Mein-Pue-Fei sent four of her own Shantung coolies to loiter about in near-by doorways until the fellow came out, later in the evening. And they got him—took him to her house, where he was handcuffed, and a man ordered to guard him while she telephoned Wu-H'sien-Li, who drove in at once. He wished to take the scoundrel off her hands for prompt execution—but she refused.

"But, Mein-Pue, my dear little friend, there is a reason, of which you know nothing, why you should not take this matter into your own hands!"

"And there is a stronger reason, my dear Lord Li, why I *should!* I had a friend—a dear child of only fifteen. This brute took her from her beautiful home—from the family who loved her, and the friends—and he—"

With Manchu frankness she told the Mandarin just what had been done. As he regretfully drove home, hoping she might never learn the truth about the fellow, Amy Garner returned. Seeing that her hostess was preoccupied, she asked what the trouble was.

"I have ugly disgusting work to do, my dear! My men caught Bolenski—he is about to pay the penalty. Come with me to the window overlooking the court, in the rear. It will be unpleasant, but one should school her nerves to look calmly upon anything that happens. Come!"

Amy followed her hostess to the window. In the court below, a slovenly fellow with tousled hair stood, his wrists bound, between two powerfully built coolies in Madame's livery. They forced him to his knees and, grasping his hair, pulled his head forward in a rigid position. A third coolie lifted a long and heavy Samurai sword, keen-edged as a razor, slowly into the air—poised it at arm's-length for a second or two—then brought it down with a clean swishing blow. There was a sick gasp from the American girl. Then the calm voice of the Manchu:

"Death was practically instantaneous."

There came a low knock at the door and one of the coolies who had been in the court came in with a wallet taken from the body—and laid it on the table, shaking out the contents in order that his mistress might poke them over with a paper-cutter without touching any. There were some old letters, yellowed with age, and a few amateur snapshots, marked upon the backs:

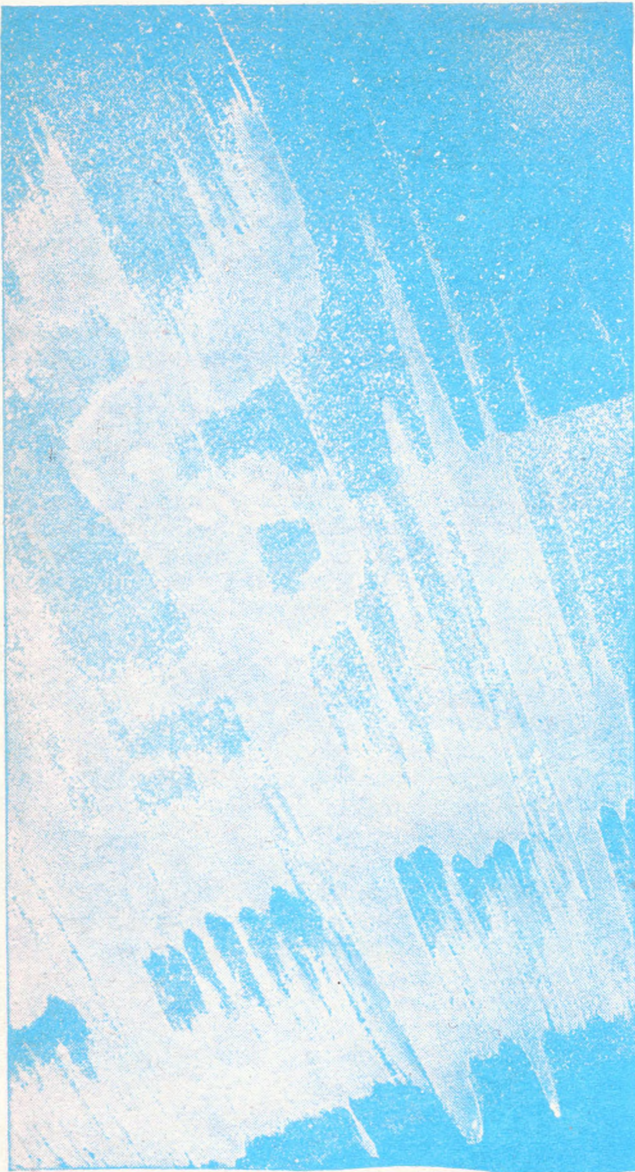
Mein-Fo-Kuen—with Mein-Pue, two years old.
Tung-Sei-Ming—with Tung-Ling, two years old.
Me—with my Tientsin and with my Shanghai wives.

Thoughtfully, Mein-Pue-Fei re-read the letters and inscriptions for several minutes. Subsequently she gave considerable thought to a letter which she wrote at her desk to Madame Luchenov. Then she opened a drawer of the desk and took from it a carved teak box filled with dull brown pellets about the size of peas. Pouring twenty of these into the palm of her hand, she considered for a moment the size of the dose—then nodded, put them into her mouth and swallowed them.

A surge of horror ran through Amy. *"Oh, Mein-Pue!"* she cried incredulously.

The beautiful Manchu smiled faintly.

"Why—yes, my dear; it was the only way. The brute I have just executed happens to have been my father! I have rendered unto my ancestors atonement for Bolenski's many crimes. I now render unto them atonement for what *I* did. Thou wilt give Tung-Ling her sister's love and say to her the debt is paid in full—she is under no further obligation as a Manchu. Ah-h-h—thy face grows dim, my dear. Do not—forget—Mein-Pue-Fei."



My Arctic

By CHARLES

Who for nearly a half-century has been America's most northerly pioneer. He has told you of his first year in the Arctic; of his share in the hunt for the great bowhead whale, and

THE Pacific Steam Whaling Company bought the old coastguard cutter *Rush*. It was remodeled, changed into a whaler, and renamed the *Grampus*. Henry Dexter, who had been mate in the *Baleana* when I "came out" in the fall of 1885, was to be master of her. I had agreed to go north again and went with him.

We sailed on March ninth. Ten days out of Frisco, we ran into a school of sperm whales. Our boats were rigged for whaling, so all we had to do was lower away. We chased those whales all afternoon; finally our third mate, Dugan, struck one and bombed another. The bombed one was killed instantly, while the other ran several miles before Dugan had a chance to haul up close enough to kill it.

About the third of April, we arrived at Unalaska, and on leaving, we sailed north until we made the ice in the Bering Sea, and then coasted along the edge to the westward until we were in sight of Cape Naverin on the Siberian coast. The latter part of May, we finally worked out of the ice, almost abreast of Plover Bay. We started north along the coast, and stopped for several days at Indian Point, hoping a run of whales would come along.

It was now June. We saw no more whales, which was disheartening for us. As we were not expected to meet our tender from San Francisco until July sixth, our captain thought it would be a good idea to cruise along the Siberian shore and at the same time get the fresh water which we needed. We cruised as far as Cape Serdze, along the ice-pack, but never saw a spout. At Cape Serdze the ice-pack made clear to the beach, so we could go no farther. Turning, we came south along the ice, speaking a number of ships, mostly sailing-vessels. They had seen nothing except walrus. Whales were scarce this year; no doubt, they had all gone north sometime before this. Some of the whalers were walrusing for oil and ivory. Off the north coast of Siberia, the walrus congregate in immense herds, sometimes several thousand in one band. They are mostly bulls, as the cows with their young pass along the American side and join the males later in the season.

When the whale-ships were after walrus, they sailed as near as possible to a herd on the ice. The boats were lowered and pulled in where the animals were sleeping, with only one or two old bulls as sentinels. The shooting was all done by an expert marksman. His plan was to shoot the ones on watch; if they were killed instantly, the rest seemed to take no notice, evidently thinking that as long as the sentinel was still, everything was all right. Sometimes the whole herd was slaughtered in this way.

When the shooting was over, the ship hauled alongside the ice; the walrus were then skinned and the blubber taken aboard and tried out. The heads of the animals were cut off with an ax just behind the tusks, taken on the ship, and later, when there was a little spare time, the ivory was chopped out, cleaned and stowed away. In cutting and skinning the walrus, a ripper was used, made from some old razor-blade, set in a handle eighteen inches long. With these, the men ripped the hides into pieces a foot square, all over the body; others peeled these off, and still others threw them aboard ship and into the blubber-room, where they remained until they were tried out. Walrus averages a barrel of oil to each bull; cows did not make that amount, being considerably smaller.

It was getting time for all the ships to go to Port Clarence, where we were to meet our tender from Frisco. So, leaving the ice, we started for the rendezvous, where we arrived July fourth. Our tender was there,—a big sailing-ship the *America*,—and so were most of the steam whalers belonging to the Company. Leavitt came up on the tender, bringing along with him a cook for the station we were to establish. He also had all our stores and whaling outfit with him. This was all transferred to the ships.

Each ship had to take turns going alongside the *America* to get coal. We soon had all we could take—our quota

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Outpost

D. BROWER

of his return to San Francisco. Now comes the story of his voyage back to Alaska, of further adventures there and of his decision to make his home in this Land of the Long Night.

was one hundred and twenty tons, and this had to last the rest of the season, unless we could later get some driftwood along the beach. There were many steamers and other sailing vessels of various companies in Port Clarence, awaiting supplies—over fifty vessels.

We left Port Clarence about July eighth, going directly through Bering Strait. We stopped an hour or two at Cape Prince of Wales, where we did not remain long, as we had nothing to buy. Our mate was hated by these natives, so took no chances of things happening. A number of years before, he had been captain of a schooner, trading and whaling. Coming in to Cape Prince of Wales, he anchored for the night, and in the evening a party of Eskimo came aboard. They had a lot of fox-skins which they traded for whisky—although against the law, this was frequently done when the cutter was not around.

Going ashore, the natives got drunk and raised Cain all night; in the morning all their booze was gone, but not their desire for more; so, early in the day, a crowd came off for more liquor, but with nothing to trade for it. When refused, they got ugly and shoved the Kanaka crew around. The crew stood this for a time, all the while trying to get their anchor up and get away from the drunken Eskimos. At last the ship's mate struck one of them; another at once drew his knife, stabbing the mate and killing him instantly.

Then the crew went crazy, and with axes, spades or anything they could lay their hands on, they started for the drunken natives, driving those that were still uninjured and wounded forward under the forecastle head. They pulled them out with boathooks, knocked them over the head with anything they could get their hands on, then threw the bodies into the oomiak alongside, and turned the boat adrift. There were sixteen men and one woman in the oomiak when they came off; the woman never came aboard, and when the row started, she covered herself up with a piece of canvas which they had in the boat, and she was the only one left alive of the lot. So it was no wonder that the natives did not like white men. For years thereafter no one ever went ashore there. A number of whites were killed by this tribe several years later.

When we left Kingegan, the Eskimo name for the settlement at the Cape, we made a bee-line for Point Hope, though several of the fleet arrived there ahead of us, and as usual they secured what little trade there was. My old friends were all glad to see me, and when I told them I was going to stay at Utkiavie and whale, some wanted to go with me and work for the station. I could not take them, as I knew that they, with all their superstitions, would never get along with a lot of white men.

The *Grampus* stayed two days at Tigera, then proceeded on her journey north; off Cape Lisburne we met the ice, which was only scattering, and did not stop us any, as we worked our way into the old station near the coal mine, where we anchored for a day. All the merchandise, tools, and whatever there was left from the winter was taken aboard the steamers for use at Point Barrow. We tried to get some coal from the veins just above the house, with no success. They were still covered with snow, clear to the top of the bluffs; so, staying just long enough to take a look, we continued on up the coast to Point Lay, where the ice was fast on the beach. We could go no farther until the northeast wind came and cleared the coast.

UPON the sandspit where we lay at anchor, there were a number of tents, and it was not long before the Eskimos were coming to the ship. I had seen many of them before, and all remembered me, as I had been the only white man who had, up to that time, ever visited them in the winter. All had plenty of fox-skins and were eager to trade, and I was soon buying for Dexter, who let me go ahead, as I was able to talk a little of their language. The natives liked that. The women seemed to have as much

Photographs by Ewing Galloway

Gay life on Bering Sea—Drum made from walrus stomach and a barrel hoop.

We anchored close in to the beach. All up and down the shore, there was nothing but empty oil-casks. They had been there for years. In 1871 several ships had been caught in the ice near where we were anchored, and after waiting as long as they dared, the crews had abandoned them. Taking to their boats, they sailed away and pulled south, past the Blossom Shoals, just before the freeze-up. They were taken aboard several ships near Icy Cape and carried to Honolulu. Some of the old Eskimos told me that if the ships had not been abandoned, they could have sailed away later in the fall, for the ice all left the beach at that time. While anchored at Belcher, Captain Dexter thought it would be a good chance to get wood to help out with his coal, and all the hands were sent ashore with the boats, each boat carrying axes to chop the wood short enough to go in the furnace. The casks which were lying around looked pretty good to the boys, so they knocked a lot of them down and loaded their boats with the shucks. These casks had been used for oil and made ideal fuel to help keep up steam in the boilers.

It was early in August before we were able to get by the Sea Horses, and then it was a close shave, for the ice was very heavy and did not seem to want to move off. The ships had to shove and work ice for two days before we did get through. First one would be in the lead for a while; then he would be relieved by some one else. I don't think there was any sleep aboard the ships; what with all the excitement, no one wanted to turn in. Those old whaleships were certainly well built, to stand what they were put to. It seemed, sometimes, as if they would be stove, the way they ran into the ice, forcing their way through and around the large ice-fields.

When we did finally work our way through, we were way down in Peard Bay, close inshore; the ice seemed to get heavier, the farther we came north, and all along the ridge, which parallels the shore three-fourths of a mile from the beach, the ground ice was piled high. We came in around the southern end of it; and inside, where the ice had been thinner, it was all clear water. We had to make our way up the coast in this narrow lead, which was all right for the *Grampus;* but some of the others did not fare so well, for they were larger and drew more water than we; so every once in a while some one would run aground. Then those that drew the least water would have the job of hauling the unfortunate fellow out of the mud.

Late in the afternoon we finally arrived at the station where I had met Captain Herendeen during the winter of 1884. As soon as we arrived, Leavitt went ashore, and Herendeen, with his men, left at once, seemingly glad to get away. Our crowd numbered ten; besides those previously named, we had picked up two Finns, Gus Lief and Charley Ice. We had also found Ed Black in one of the ships. He had been with us at Cape Lisburne the previous year. In addition to Black, there was another man, called Jack Mauri, who said he was a New Zealander.

The ships landed all our stores as fast as they could. The ice was clear from the shore around Point Barrow, and they were anxious to go after whales. The *Orca,* which had a lot of our supplies, landed all of her cargo at Berinak, six miles north of the house, as she was unable to

to say about the disposal of the furs as the men, and if there was any doubt about what was most needed, the women always won, especially after the men had all the ammunition they required.

I went ashore several times. Once I asked Shoofly—an Eskimo we had taken into our crew at Indian Point—to go along with me, but he declined, saying that these Innuit were bad, and would kill him if they got him ashore. I told him that I did not think so, but nothing could change his opinion. So I asked what reason he had for his belief, and he told me that several boatloads of hunters from the American side had been carried off during the hunting season and blown out to sea; they managed to get on the ice-pack, drifting over to the Siberian coast, where they landed. Instead of feeding them and giving them a chance to work their way home across the Bering Strait, the Siberians killed off the men, keeping the women for wives. Shoofly said the Innuit were informed about this, and some one who had lost a relative would surely get him.

After a few days we had our desired northeast wind; it opened the ice as far as Icy Cape, and we moved on to this point, where we had to wait again until the ice moved away from Blossom Shoals, which extend twelve miles from the coast. The shoals are a great feeding-ground for walrus, which stay there all summer, feeding on the clams in the shallow water. We finally got through the lead, a day later, skirting the ice which was aground on the shoals. We hurried northward, passing Wainwright, where I could see the remains of the two barks that were wrecked the year before; their spars were all down, and they had been shoved up nearer the beach by the ice. At Point Belcher we had to stop; here we were again held by the ice. Just north of there the Sea Horse Islands form a long point, and offshore is a shallow place where ice piles high during the southwest gales of winter; it is a hard place to get by.

come inside the ridge. The *Orca* also had our whaleboats, and they were landed along with the other freight. Some one had to go there to look out for the outfit, so Leavitt sent Pat, Fred and myself to take charge, until there was a chance of boating it to the house.

We managed to get a native with his oomiak to take us, with a camping outfit, to where our freight had been landed. I was not sorry to say good-by to the *Grampus*. There was nothing in the life of a sailor for me. Here we expected to get rich in a year or two at the very least!

We were no sooner settled in our quarters than we fitted up our boats for whaling. Billy Moggs was one boat-header, and John Shuman the other. Black was to be Moggs' boat-steerer, and I was to steer John. We had only five men for each boat, but that made no difference to us. All we wanted was to get started.

As soon as our boats were ready, we loaded up with provisions and camping outfit, to start for the east along the sandspits, expecting to follow the coast as far as Cape Halkett, if the ice would let us. The first day we got around Point Barrow. There, as the wind was dead ahead, we towed our boats to the east two miles and a half, where we came to the first entrance to the lagoon, which was one-fourth of a mile wide. We pulled the boats across the entrance and made our camp on the end of the island, which the sailors call Dead Man's Island.

We had to stay there three days. During the night a storm came on, with thick foggy weather. It was no use for us to go east; our boats were so loaded that everything would have been spoiled with salt water. When the blow was over, we started away, with a nice fair wind, and made good time to Point Tangent, thirty miles from Point Barrow. The ice was quite close in, and thinking this might be a good place to try our luck, we camped, going off to the ice as soon as we had our tent up and all the gear landed.

We cruised all that night and part of the next day, seeing nothing except plenty of seal of all kinds, large and small. The ice was in large fields, much of it old fresh-water ice, just the kind of place any decent whale ought to like, but there were no whales for us. Tired out, and a little disheartened, we came ashore to our camp and had something to eat, and went to sleep.

The ice looked so good that we tried our luck three times, but with no better success than the first venture. Then we gave it up, sailing east as far as Cape Simpson, where the ice came almost to the beach. We camped two days, trying our luck. As at Tangent, we saw nothing the first day. The second, the weather was stormy and too bad to try whaling, even had we known there were any around. Not wanting to sleep all day, Pat and I started to walk inland a short distance from the camp, to what seemed to be a hill. Thinking we might jump some game, we took along our rifles. When we reached the top of the rise, we were surprised to see what looked like a small lake, the water of which was very dark; we found that instead of water, we were looking at a lake of oil. It was liquid in the center, but near the edges the oil had turned hard, looking like asphalt. I did not want to take any chance by going out to where the liquid part was, so I tried to see if the hard part would burn. It certainly did, making an intense heat, and a lot of greasy smoke.

We started along the ridge, and in about a half a mile or so we found another lake of the same stuff. This one was some longer, and in the middle were the carcasses of four caribou. They had been dead some time and had partly decayed. Just beyond them were a number of spectacled eider ducks. These were still alive; evidently they had taken the oil lake for water, and settled. They were caught, just as flies are on fly-paper, and no doubt would soon die, as their breasts and wings were soaked with oil.

That was in August, 1886; and I think it was the first time any white men had ever seen these oil lakes; but since then they have been "discovered" many times. Every time some one sees them, they are rediscovered. The ice starting to come in to the beach, we cruised back toward Tangent, but saw no whales. At Point Tangent the ice made offshore a long way, and we pitched tent at our old camping-ground, working offshore next day, seeing nothing but seals and ducks.

We were getting short of provisions; so instead of camping, we started for home, with a fair wind and clear weather. When we reached Cooper's Island, the fog shut down, and we camped. Next morning it was clear. Offshore a few miles we saw two sailing-ships in the ice, one fairly near. We hurried up, to get coffee ready, intending to go

Point Barrow Eskimo boys fishing through the ice.

aboard the first one and try to get some provisions; then we could stay a day or so longer.

It was Con's turn to cook. Con was one of our crew —a good man in a boat, but nervous at the best of times. Now he was rattled. When the coffee was ready, I was the first to reach the pot; pouring out a cupful, I swallowed two mouthfuls and then quit cold. We had a bag of black tobacco cut—a canvas bag, the same as the coffee bag; and in the rush, Con had used the tobacco to make coffee. I was the only one that got a dose, and in about a minute I was the sickest man one ever saw. I thought I was going to die, but had no such luck.

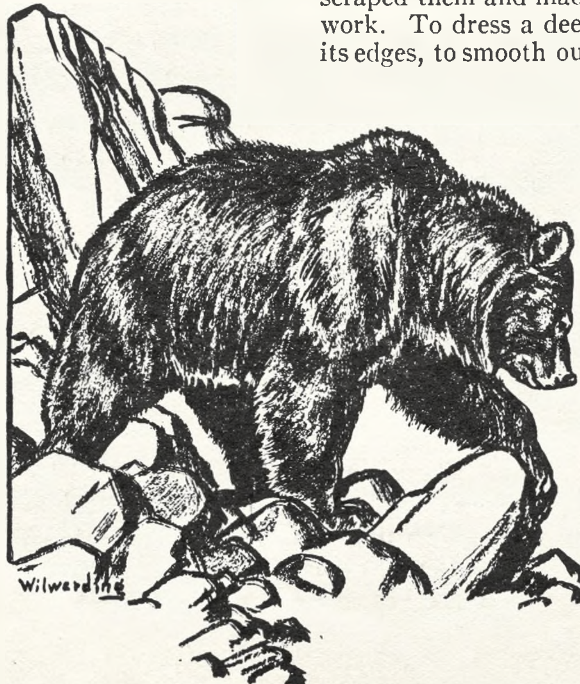
The boys were anxious to make the ship, so did not stop to make more coffee, but started away, leaving me lying on the sand. They were gone for several hours; and when they returned, I found out that they had been unable to overtake the ship, as she was heading for Point Barrow with too much speed. When they came back, I was still in the same place, but feeling some better.

As we had only one day's provisions left, we headed for home; and that night, as we came to the end of Cooper's Island, in the dark, we passed through the entrance into the lagoon, never finding out until daylight, when we came to the mainland, and then we had to go all the way back. We arrived at the station that evening.

It was September now; sailing-ships were leaving for the west. A few whales were taken off Tangent, but most of the ships had nothing. The steamers would not be back from the east until about the twentieth; then they would go west along the pack ice, looking for whales, leaving the Arctic not later than October tenth, by which time it would be so cold that everything would freeze and ice up, so that it would be impossible to lower a boat.

We wanted to start out again, but George would not let us, as there was a lot of work to do before winter. The first thing was to find a place where we could get water. There were no ponds around the house that were deep enough to cut ice, and ice we had to have for drinking water. The water we had been using we had to haul in barrels nearly a quarter of a mile; then it was full of grass and all kinds of wigglers, and looked more like a thin brand of chocolate, or an aquarium, than it did drinking water. We finally found a place, nearly a mile from the house, where the water was four feet deep and fairly clean, and when the ice was six inches thick, we cut enough to last all winter, hauling it as we needed it, once every two weeks. The cook had a large boiler where he melted ice every morning.

During August and September the Eskimos camp at Berinak, a narrow place on the sandspit between the ocean and the lagoon, for the duck-hunting. The ducks, flying south, come down the lagoon; they touch all the points, and then, coming to the bight at the end of the lagoon, circle the bight close to the beach. When they reach the narrow place, they cross over the spit to the ocean and continue their journey south. They are mostly king eider, and at times they fly in enormous numbers. The birds fly with a northeast wind; flock after flock will pass, the flight often lasting for two and three days at a time. Such flights are still common.



Not many of the Eskimos had shotguns at that time; the ones they did have were old single-barreled, muzzle-loading guns bought from the ships. The majority used a *Ka-lum-ik-toun.* This was made with seven small pieces of bone or ivory, the size of a man's thumb from the end to the first joint; they were attached to braided sinew nearly three feet long, and the other ends of the sinew were all fastened together. A very small bunch of feathers was fastened here, apparently to make them fly straight. In using these Kalumiktoun, the ivory balls were held in the left hand, the right grasping the end of the sinew. Stretching the sinew to its full length, they would then let go of the ivory weights, which were swung around the head once and then thrown at the flock. The ivory balls spread in all directions, and on coming in contact with a bird, they would wrap around the body, holding the wings.

The natives using these all congregated at the place of crossing; the ones with the guns stayed farther down in the bight. As they fired, the ducks would swing away from the land until they came to the narrow place and then cross. When no one was shooting, the Eskimos rigged up a driftwood post, putting black moss on top. This kept the ducks from crossing at any other place. We wanted eider for the winter, but we had to go where the Eskimos were shooting, and they objected to our spoiling their hunting. So many were shooting at once there, that we could never tell who had shot the ducks. We eventually compromised by buying all we wanted for the winter for less than it would have cost us to shoot them.

On September twenty-fifth the last of the steamers left, and we settled down for the winter; snow was covering the ground, and most of the smaller ponds were frozen.

The Eskimos that had been away hunting and trading to the east were coming into the village; I'd had no idea it was such a large settlement. I think, between the village and the one at Point Barrow, there must have been at least eight hundred people, at that time. The returning hunters had many deer-skins; caribou had been plentiful that summer. The natives that had been trading at the Coleville River brought back quantities of fur, mostly fox-skins, although they had others as well, including beaver, martin, mink, black bear and lynx.

The Eskimo women had been tanning deerskins and making clothes all September. Dressing these skins for clothing could hardly be called tanning, for they simply scraped them and made them soft. The women did all the work. To dress a deerskin, it was first scraped all around its edges, to smooth out any places that had curled up in the drying. Then the skin was hung up over a native lamp and dried until it would crack on the hair side. They liked to do this part of the performance in the station around the stove, as it was much quicker. After drying, the skin was wet on the fleshy side, folded together several times, rolled up and left in a cool place for half a day. When unrolled, the skin was soft and wet; women then used their scrapers. Using a blunt flint, the skin was scraped and stretched until it was perfectly dry; and then a sharp flint was substituted, and finally, the skin was carefully gone over with fine sandstone and all the flesh and some of the skin was carefully removed, leaving the finished hide white, and as soft as chamois.

While all the women were making clothes, we had ours prepared. Leavitt bought a lot of skins from the hunters, and we could have all we wanted, so each of us had an old woman tan skins and make two attigas, two pairs of pants and socks, and two pairs of boots, as a starter.

The men were all busy getting ready for the fall deer-hunting, expecting to leave sometime after the first of October. They had to fix their ice houses for the winter; all the whale-meat, blubber and walrus-meat they had saved in the spring and summer had to be taken from their summer ice cellars and put in houses built from cakes of ice, cut from the lakes and ponds close to the village. If not, all the meat would freeze in a solid mass, and every time any was wanted, it would have to be chopped out. In making the ice houses, ice was cut in squares about four feet across and then hauled on sleds to the desired site. The cakes were placed on edge and cemented together with slush; each man made a house large enough to hold the meat he had put away for the winter.

There were two headmen in the village of Utkiavie, Mungie and Ang-a-roo. There was hardly anything happened that they were not consulted on; each had a dance-house *(A-kuz-izhe)* that he called his, and they were the meeting-places for the village.

One day as I was in Mungie's house, he asked me how I would like to go hunting with him that fall. I wanted to go, but was afraid I would not have my clothes finished in time. Mungie said that he would hurry matters, so I made up my mind that as there was nothing to do around the station, I would go along. All Mungie wanted me to take was some white man's food, saying that if I had to live as he did, I might get sick.

We had several dogs at the station, so I fixed up a sled to carry my own outfit. Just before time for starting arrived, Ed Black wanted to go along, and as Mungie was willing, we made a team of it. Black and I loaded our sled with hard bread, tea, coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, cartridges, and our clothing and sleeping-bags. Mungie and his brother-in-law Ap-pi-yow took the tent and all camping gear, also the whale-oil and dog-feed. We were all ready to start early in October. Our party, besides Black and myself, were Mungie and his wife Cog-go-na, two boys he had adopted, and Ap-pi-yow and his wife Coo-nan. Mungie was also taking along Polly Woolfe, to help the women in case there was much sledding to do.

We made good time on our first day from the village; starting early by moonlight, we traveled southeast all day and camped at Pol-ly-ah, where the Koo-loog-a-rua River and the Koo-gar-roo join, about five miles from where they empty into the big lagoon at the head of Admiralty Bay. We traveled all day over a level country, crossing a number of lakes and one small river, where several flocks of ducks were seen. It was pretty late for ducks, as everything was frozen on the land. Mungie told me that to the east, sometimes, there was water along the shore much later than at Point Barrow.

Pol-ly-ah was a fishing-camp and several Eskimo families were camped there when our party arrived, and we at once put up our tent. There was no need to cook supper, for the people had plenty of fish, which they cooked for us. This was a permanent winter camp, and the people built strong igloos, which were partly underground. It was not hard work to make the houses, as the banks of the river were sand and perfectly dry. The natives excavated a hole as large as they wanted for their home to be, three feet deep; then long willow poles were stuck in the ground, not more than two feet apart, all the way around, and bent over and tied at the top. When all were in place, the top was almost an oval, and would hold considerable weight. This was covered with the heavy deerskins, the edges of which were held down with sod or stones, if any could be found. The door was usually a piece of brown bearskin hung in the entrance. Windows were made of walrus or seal intestines, which had been dried and sewed together. They were about eighteen inches square. The entrance was cut lower than the main body of the house and continued all the way across, which left a high place on each side. That was where all the sleeping and working was done, but meals were prepared outside.

As we were only going to camp one night, we did not go to the trouble of digging out one of these places, but made our tent the same as theirs, only higher and larger, as we were a large party. Instead of six deerskins to cover the framework, it took twelve. When it was dark, our tent was lighted with a small stone lamp, which the women always carried when traveling. They were all experts at tending it, getting up at all hours of the night to fill it with seal oil and trim the wick. The latter was made of dried moss, chopped fine, and was always carried wherever they went. Many of the natives still used flint and steel, but we were more fortunate, as we had plenty of matches. Wherever we went, some one was always begging matches, for it was a cold job trying to make a fire with their old rig. Their tinder was a species of thistledown that grew all over parts of the country. It was collected in the fall, mixed with gunpowder to make it catch a light quickly, and was always kept in a water-tight package. If their tinder happened to get wet, the poor devils had no way of making a fire. Only a few of the oldest natives had ever made a fire with their fire-drills.

In the morning we started for the next camp. Mungie said it was not as far as our first day's travel. It was blowing quite hard, and the women did not want to start; the men, however, thought it would be all right. They knew the way, so as soon as we had our breakfast, we hitched the dogs and were off.

For a while it was not so bad. The women took the lead, keeping ahead of the dogs for several miles; but all the time, the weather was getting worse. Finally they lost the trail, and so Ap-pi-yow took the lead and kept it all day. How he found the way, I don't know; all I wanted to do was hold on to the handle-bars of my sled. Black did the

same. I don't think he spoke all day, but just held on and kept one foot going in front of the other. We were traveling along the Koo-loog-a-rua River; the banks were all fine sand, and soon the wind was so strong that the sand was mixed with the drifting snow. We were warm, dragging along after the sleds; the snow melted on our faces, and I doubt if there was any place it did not reach.

Mungie kept telling me that it was all right—that we would soon be there, and that Ap-pi-yow was just like a fox and never got lost. I am glad to say that he was telling the truth, for when we were almost all in, we came to our stopping-place which is called Cao-ca-rak by the natives.

Two families were camped there, living in the same kind of houses as at the place before. No one stopped to build a tent. We piled into the houses as soon as we could get our dogs unharnessed, and fed, the people helping us. Black and the women pulled the sleeping-gear in, while the rest of us put the sleds where the dogs could not get at them. The natives had plenty of fish, so while the women were cooking some, the rest of us sat on the bedding and ate fish raw. Black and I had done this before at Lisburne. I like them, and think that anyone who can get used to the thought will like raw frozen fish, if they are fresh. All that is necessary to do is to split the skin down the back, pull the skin and scales all off at once, and then cut the fish in fine slices. They taste something like fresh cucumbers.

Mungie wanted to stay at least two days, looking for deer, and I was glad he did, as I wanted a chance to get some of the sand off myself. In the morning Mungie and Ap-pi-yow got up before the rest of us and did not call us; when we woke, they had been gone a long time: so after cleaning up the best I could, I had a look at the fishing camp. The weather was fine again, but a lot colder.

Down on the river I saw two men at work. They were drawing their nets, which were seventy to ninety feet long, with meshes two and one-half inches square. They were a little over five feet deep. In setting these nets under the ice, a large hole was made three feet or more in diameter; and others were cut every ten feet, large enough to drop a weight through. When the required number of holes were cut, a weight was attached to the end of a line and let down through the large hole. At the next hole, a man with a long stick with a hook on one end reached through, under the ice, and caught the line, drawing it on through until the last hole was reached; then the net was made fast and pulled under the ice. Care was always taken to see that the water was deep enough so the net would hang well below the ice, for if the floats touched, they would soon freeze fast, and then the ice would have to be cut the full length of the net. The nets were made of sinew from deer, although the sinew of the beluga were sometimes used when the deer was not plentiful. Seal-hide lines were used; the floats were made of soft wood, or if they could find it, the bark of cottonwood logs, which when dried is very light. Sinkers were cut from deer-horns or pieces of bone.

We stayed two days, and no deer were seen, so we started east and traveled four more days, with no sign of caribou. The second day from Caviarah, we crossed a very long lake. About halfway down this lake, on the northern bank, was a long point projecting into the water a quarter of a mile. All over the point were thousands of deer-horns. Mungie told me that in the summer-time the Eskimos killed many deer from their kayaks after driving them into the lake. The fourth day we were nearly to the Ic-pic-puk, still without any deer signs. Mungie and Ap-pi-yow thought it peculiar; there had been plenty of deer all summer. Ptarmigan were abundant, and wherever we went, there were fox tracks. Sometimes we would see several white foxes during the day. I asked Mungie why he did not try to catch them, and he replied that we wanted deer, and had no time to trap. In the spring we could catch foxes when the fur was better.

The fifth day from Caviarah, we started southwest, and came to a place on a small river called It-kil-lik, where we made a permanent camp, for the river was deep and had plenty of fish. The third morning afterward, when we got up, there were several caribou in sight. Mungie and Ap-pi-yow did not wait to get anything to eat, but were off at once. Later I tried my luck, taking one of the boys with me; Coccy, as we called Mungie's wife, did not want me to go alone, being afraid I would get lost.

I named the boy Pinkerton, as he was a good guide; he had no rifle, so all he had to do was to watch our direction. I hunted all day. Deer were all around me, but I did not know how to get near them. I always tried to sneak up on the herd, but it was no use, for they heard me before I could get near enough to shoot. Just before dark, on our way home, I became reckless, and instead of hiding, I tried to walk up close enough to get a shot. This time the deer waited until I was within a hundred yards; then they started running, but instead of running away, they circled me, coming closer as they ran.

This was not what I expected. I fired all the cartridges there were in my rifle, and with the last shot I killed a fawn. It was purely accident. Pinkerton helped skin it, and then as I did not want to leave it, we packed the critter to camp, where everyone laughed at me, saying I might have left it lie till morning, and the women would have brought it in. The other men had done well, both being good hunters, and had killed seven deer. In the morning the women would go for them with their sleds. We had fresh deer-meat that night, the women cooking most of the fawn I had shot.

The great fall hunt for the winter's supply of venison.

Next morning everyone was up before daylight; we all had something to eat and were off. This day I went along with Mungie, who was going to show me how to hunt caribou. By the time we were a few miles from camp, it was getting daylight; there were deer everywhere we looked, and all were traveling, coming from the northeast and going southwest. I hunted all day with my instructor, and though I learned something about how to hunt, I did not have any more luck than the day before. Every time we got close to deer, Mungie did not want me to shoot. He said it would have a bad effect, as he would not be able to get any, these being deer intended for the Eskimos, and the Toond-rah (devil) would be angry. At last I did get a shot and killed another fawn.

Mungie had killed six before this. I noticed that he only skinned the heads and legs, and asked him why he did not skin the whole animal. He replied that it would take too long, and as the head and feet were the only parts that would freeze during the night, the women could skin the rest in the morning when they went after them.

I skinned my fawn, and while doing it, Mungie went away and left me. I was not over a mile from the tent, and Pinkerton was watching us. When he saw Mungie leave me, he came out to see if I would find the way home.

Talking, that night, I was telling the rest how Mungie did not want me to shoot. His wife scolded him, saying he was always that way. He was jealous if anyone got more game than he did, and she advised me not to go out with him any more, but take one of the boys, so as not to get lost.

Now that Black was out with us, he did not want to hunt, but went out with the women, helping to bring in the meat. Next day I took Coccy's advice, staying around after the hunters had gone. Pinkerton and I went along with the sled; the women were first going to pick up the deer I had

shot. When we arrived at the carcass, they took a piece of blubber and greased the hoofs of the deer. I wanted to know why, and was told that this always had to be done, because they were land animals, and needed oil. This was an old superstition handed down from way in the past; if they omitted the ceremony, the hunters would not be successful!

Leaving the women, my guide and I went off by ourselves. I had better luck. Doing as Mungie had told me, I found that if I showed myself, the deer became inquisitive; in most cases they would start away, but would stop and watch us. If we were where they could not smell us, they would usually start to circle us on the run. When they got our wind, away they would go. After trying three times, I finally had a bunch come quite close, and managed to get two out of the herd before they were too far off. I certainly was pleased with myself, and so was Pinkie.

It took us some time to skin them; then I started back to camp. Mungie and Ap-pi-yow were just getting home after another good day's haul. The women came in with a load of meat, after we all arrived, and at once cooked a big pot of deer ribs, with which we all gorged ourselves. Polly, instead of helping to haul the meat, was delegated to skirmish fuel for cooking, as there were no willows near here. Next day Polly started by herself, with two dogs; when she returned the sled was piled high with a black moss, looking something like hair used to stuff a mattress, only coarser and stiffer. They called it *ting-ow-ra;* it burned quickly, making an intense heat, but one woman had to feed the fire all the time. Another thing used as fuel was a species of dwarf evergreen, only found in certain places. This also made a hot fire, and besides was very fragrant.

The deer seemed to be without number, traveling to the southwest. I supposed it was a migration south for the winter, but Mungie told me that they sometimes went another way, farther east; then they were gone for a whole winter; but when they traveled the way they were now, they only went a little way, stopping this side of Cape Lisburne, where they split up into smaller bands. They worked through all the valleys of the mountains, and in the spring, when the sun came back, they would return this way again, going just east of the Coleville River, where the fawns would be born in May.

I hunted one day with Ap-pi-yow. I liked him better as a companion than Mungie, as he always tried to show me the best ways to get deer, even though he lost chances to kill them himself. I got no deer that day, but I did learn a lot about stalking. Ap-pi-yow shot two along in the evening. He skinned them, showing me the best way to cut the hide and take it off. I noticed that both he and Mungie used a small flint set in a handle four inches long for ripping the skins; the flint was heart-shaped, one and a half inches long, and chipped very sharp. Ap-pi-yow said they were better than a knife to rip and skin with, as when he had slit the skin, and was using his hands to work the skin from the deer, he could put the flint in his mouth without freezing his lips. With subzero weather, such as we had daily, he could not do this with a knife. The knife was too large, also, and the blood froze to it whenever one laid it down. I could see he was probably right, though I could never use a flint.

Sixty-four caribou are taken from the migrating herd.

We hunted nine days, and then the deer had all passed. Our party killed sixty-four during the days we hunted, and everyone was pleased. I had shot six, which was not so bad for a greenhorn. We next turned to and built a large house of ice-cakes which we cut from the river; all the meat we could not carry we placed in the house, along with all the winter skins, as Mungie said he intended coming back when the sun returned. Then all the skins would be dried in the sun and sledded to the village. Although there were fish where we were, we did not try to catch any after the first two days; our nets were frozen and were left in the cache.

As soon as things were shipshape, we started for home. The days were getting short, so we had to travel from early morning, starting before daylight and camping before it was dark. It is always inconvenient to pitch camp after dark. Traveling was slow. The sleds were heavy, and no one seemed in a hurry. The second day on the road Mungie spotted a deer some distance away; it did not seem to be going anywhere, but was jumping around in a peculiar manner two miles away. The Eskimo started over to see if it was a wounded deer; when he came closer, he saw it was a big male, attacked by a wolf. By careful work, he managed to reach within a hundred yards of the pair, and shot the wolf first, and then the buck. The wolf was a large male, with a fine mane. Coccy was much elated, saying what a fine lot of trimming they would have for their attigas that winter, and she promised Black and myself each a piece for ours. I asked Mungie why he did not let the deer go, but he could not see it that way, saying it was just as good to eat as any other deer. We saw several small bands of wolves on the way home. They were following the deer south.

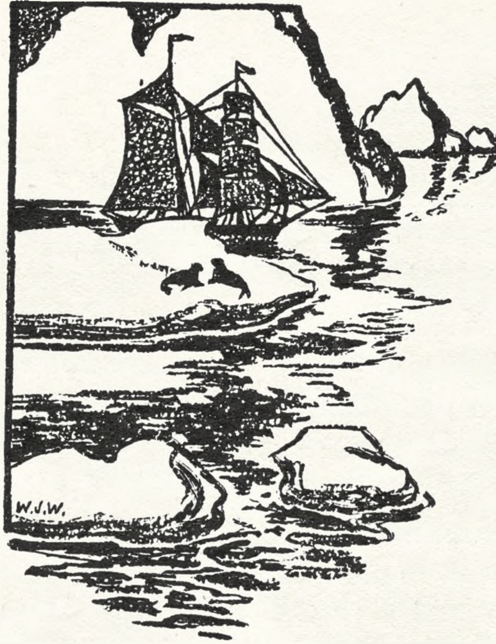
The return. . . . How an Eskimo finds his way in a blizzard. Wolves.

Our last camp was on the Koo-gar-roo River. Two old people were camped there, fishing. They were waiting for their son, who was to come for them with a sled; as they had plenty of fish, we exchanged some deer meat for some.

From here it was thirty miles to the station. We started early in the morning, planning to keep on traveling until we reached home. The weather was nice, so we made fair time, but it was dark two hours before we arrived. On the road I asked Mungie how he could find his way so well; he told me there were several ways and that the best one was to watch the snow-drifts, because the prevailing winds were from the northeast and therefore the most of the drift would be from that direction; also they would be harder. In bad weather he could go anywhere he wanted just by watching these drifts, crossing them at any angle, and so keeping his course. In the night, if it was blowing, he said he could feel these drifts with his feet, even when wearing snowshoes. He was a wonderful traveler. He also told me that when the wind was northeast the ice pack would usually be away from the flaw ice. Over open water there was almost always a dark cloud; this could be seen for at least thirty miles inland, if the weather was clear, day or night. As the night was fine, we could see this cloud all the afternoon and evening, and at seven o'clock, we reached the village. Mungie and his crowd stayed there. The station was a mile north, and Pinkerton came along with Black and myself, helping us with the sled through the village, where all the loose dogs were just spoiling for a fight. Everyone was surprised to see us blow in at that time. Leavitt was glad to know we had done so well, as the station needed meat.

From now on there was nothing to do, as far as we were concerned, except amuse ourselves. All the hunters were in the village by the first of December; Mungie and Ang-a-roo had their dance-houses cleaned out, and there was dancing all the dark days, and story-telling day and night. As the village was only a short distance from us, we were there most of the time. There were always one or two older men with their *ke-louns* in the *a-kuz-izhe,* as they called their dance-houses; I think some of these people never did go home. Several times a day some woman would bring in a large platter of food of some kind; then

there was a rush to see who would get there first. The platters were large wooden ones, made out of the roots of drift found along the beaches, which were chopped out with their adzes and whittled to the required thickness. They were all sizes, from six inches across, to more than two feet, and shaped according to the form of the piece of root.



The younger men hunted seal and bear all the time, getting many seals in the lead when the ice opened. They shot them mostly; then with their spears attached to long lines, they attempted to save them; more often they were lost, as with a northeast wind, the seals floated away.

During the dark days there were several polar bears killed near the village, one by a young boy, Av-you-run-na. I was coming home from the village, and met him as he was coming off the ice, just after making his kill. He told me that this was his first bear, and that he would have to give it to all the old people as a present, according to custom. He was then on his way for a sled to bring the bear to the village. It was not far to where the bear lay, so I went with him; when he returned to the village, everyone was waiting for him; his bear-skin was cut in many pieces, and divided among the old women. The meat was also portioned out as far as it would go, his family getting only a very small piece. This is done with the first game of any kind killed by a boy.

One night I was invited to come to the village to see the head devil-doctor drive their evil spirit away from the village. This was done every winter, I was informed. The first part of the performance was in the doctor's house; he said I could come inside before he started his incantations, but when he was working his spell, I had to go outside with all the others. Inside the igloo he had hung up a wolf skull, a dried raven-skin, and his particular charm, which in this case was a sea-gull's head. All around the house was a red stripe, which he told me was blood; what kind he did not say. The window was darkened, and when we left, he said he would put out the lighted lamps, so the devil could not see him. When I had seen all that he would show me, I was asked to leave. He wanted to start immediately, saying it would take some time to get the Toond-rah on the run and make him leave the house. When the devil left the house, two other devil-doctors would chase him out of the village, and if they got close enough, they would spear him.

Eskimo devil-doctor at work. A bear-hunt. . . . The captured fox.

O-wai-na, the head devil-doctor, commenced his performance as soon as we had left. By the noises he made, he could have started a number of devils. He shouted, sang, and made the most unearthly sounds I ever heard, keeping it up for an hour or more; then some one said he saw the devil come up through the opening to the hall. Most all the people, old and young, were there. As soon as one saw it, they all said the same; this was the cue for the two doctors outside. They immediately yelled that they also saw the Toond-rah, and started to chase it, running all around the village, every once in a while stabbing with their spears. After chasing to the south end of the village, they returned, saying they had killed the devil. They showed their spears, which were covered with blood. Everyone seemed satisfied, and O-wai-na gained great prestige for getting the devil. There was no great amount of sickness that winter, and in the spring there was a good catch of deer.

As the holidays neared, we all prepared for a good time. All the boys were going to the Point to a big native dance, and I was expecting to go along. Two days before it was to happen, Po-ka, an Eskimo from the village, came to me, saying there had been a number of bear coming in thirty miles south of the village. He was going there to try and get some, and asked if I would like to go along. I did not want to miss that, so I went bear-hunting instead. We took Fred with us, and the three of us started south along the coast to a place called Sin-rau. We made the distance in a day, although the days were short.

There was another family camping in the same place, and that night we slept in their snow-house. Next day we built one of our own. After finishing the snow-house, Po-ka suggested we set some traps a mile or so from where we were camped; he had been hunting there in the summer and had a lot of seal buried in the sand. He only had ten traps, but we set them around the carcasses in the sand. There were many fresh fox-tracks, and we fully expected to get at least a couple.

Next morning we started for the bear-hunt; the animals had been around that night, but our dogs made so much noise they were frightened away. Harnessing our team, we headed southwest across some level ice; we traveled two hours before it was light enough to see, and then we found fresh tracks, which we followed a short distance, until we found a place where a bear had caught a seal through the ice. The bear had waited until the seal came to breathe, and then crushed it with one blow. The hole was not large enough to haul the seal out, so he had enlarged it and pulled the seal to some heavier ice, where he had eaten most of the blubber from the carcass.

Po-ka said he was not far away, that we would have to tie the dogs and try to overtake him. He would, no doubt, sleep somewhere near the seal, coming back later to finish it. We tied the dogs and started to follow the bear-tracks. Sure enough, the bear had not gone far—and neither did we, for as soon as we left, the dogs started to fight. The bear heard them, and away he went. We followed for a while, but soon found it no use, as he could travel two miles to our one. Coming back to the dogs, Po-ka whipped them, just to ease his anger; then picking up what remained of the seal, we returned to camp. On visiting our traps, we found, not one or two foxes, as we expected, but instead was a fox in each.

After the first of January the days commenced to lengthen. I set some traps inland from the station, catching a fox every few days; once on my way in, I had a fox that was just caught. Using a piece of line, I tied its jaws so that he could not bite, and then slung it over my shoulders, taking it alive to the station. The house was full of Eskimos at the time. When they saw the fox was alive, there was a great scramble for the door. They could not get out fast enough. It was not long before one of the devil-drivers was over from the village. He wanted to see Leavitt at once, but he would not come into the house. George went out and talked with him. Nag-a-roo told George that the worst thing anyone could do was to take a live fox in the house; that we were due for all kinds of misfortune,

and no doubt we would not catch any whales in the spring; maybe also the Innuit would have bad luck in their whaling. Nag-a-roo wanted the fox taken outside, killed and skinned, and he would do it if we would let him. He was so earnest about it that George asked me to humor him. Nag-a-roo returned the fox, skinned, as well as the body; the head had been severed from the body, with but a piece of flesh holding it. The Eskimo said that whenever a fox was skinned, the head must be cut off at once, as all foxes wanted a knife. That was a new one on me, and I have since noticed that after a fox is skinned, the head is invariably severed.

Nag-a-roo said again that he would see what he could do about changing our bad luck, which he firmly believed was sure to come.

On one trapping trip I made this January, I fell in with a herd of deer a few miles from the house; it was nighttime; the moon was full, and it was almost like day. There was enough light so I could shoot, and I was fortunate enough to get two deer. Never after did we see caribou so near the village.

During this full moon we saw one of the most wonderful sights I have ever witnessed. Around the moon was a complete circle, and cutting it were a number of other circles not quite complete. Wherever these circles touched one another, there was the reflection of another moon. As I remember, there were five distinct circles, and at each contact, a moon. These circles were all colors, the same as a rainbow. Since then I have seen several, but none as fine as that.

The sun returned on January twenty-first; it was a nice clear day, and everyone was out to see it. All the Eskimo children were on top of the snow-banks, and as the sun showed itself for the first time, the youngsters greeted it with a short song, and then made a lot of noise. They were as glad to see the sun again as we, knowing that we would have more and more light.

Just after the sun came back, Mungie informed me that he would soon be starting inland for the spring deer-hunting, and wanted to know if I cared to go along. George and I talked it over; as there was nothing much to do about getting ready for the spring whaling, he decided I might just as well go. Besides the party we had before, Mungie was taking another man and his wife, for there would be a lot of work drying skins and bringing in the meat.

Everything ready, we started early in February. The first day, we saw deer not more than ten miles from the village. Mungie, Ap-pi-yow and I went after them and chased them on snowshoes. We killed three. The sleds were traveling slow and were never out of sight. Before it got dark, Too-tuc, the extra man, started to build camp, and as our party was large, it took some time to build a snowhouse large enough to hold us all.

We finished skinning the deer—that is, the legs and heads, then started for the camp. Too-tuc had nearly finished the house by the time we arrived. We had to cut some snow-blocks to put our sleds up high enough so that the dogs could not get at them, and doing this, my feet got cold. After a while they did not bother me, and thinking that working had warmed them up, I let it go at that.

When everything was fixed for the night, we each cleaned the frost and snow from our fur clothing, taking off our outside attigas, to keep them dry. As I was knocking the snow from my boots, I noticed that I had no feeling in my heels. Striking them a good hard blow, I still felt nothing. Then I knew they were frozen. Going quickly into the house, I removed my boots and socks; sure enough, both heels were frozen badly. I had been wearing wool socks inside my deerskin stockings. Traveling all day, my feet had perspired, and when we stopped, instead of drying, as the skin socks will do, the woolen ones had held the dampness, which turned to frost.

Frozen heels. . . . Rescue of a woman left walled in to die.

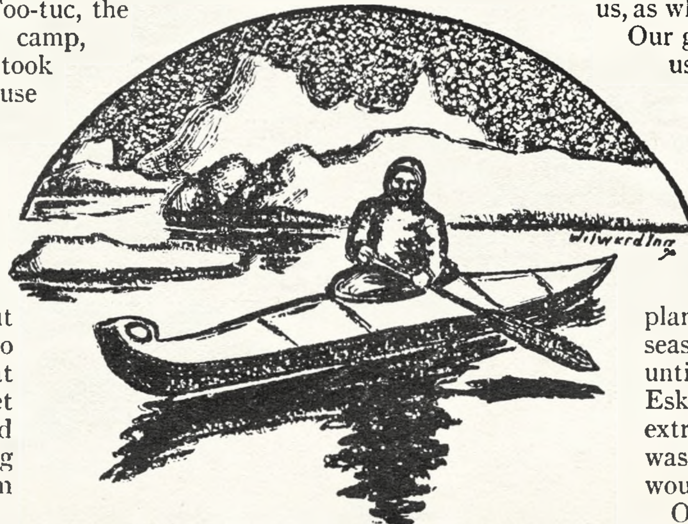
Everyone was troubled, thinking I would be unable to go along, and so was I, as there seemed nothing for me to do except to go back to the station.

I wanted to thaw my heel as I had heard of its being done when I was a boy. Mungie would not hear of that, but said the only way to do was to keep them in a warm place; then the frost would come out more quickly. As the warmest place he knew was the skin of another person, he made two women in the party each take a foot, placing it against their stomachs, and covering them with their attigas. It was warm enough. In a short time the heels commenced to thaw. At first there was no pain, but after entirely thawing, they pained a great deal. Before morning I had a large blister on each heel. Too-tuc and his wife were delegated to take me home.

Packing my outfit on my sled, and crawling in a sleeping-sack, I was soon on my way, arriving at the station a little after dark. When I arrived, Too-tuc told Leavitt he had me on a sled—that I could not walk. There was great commotion for a while. I was taken into the house and put in bed, where I stayed for a month and a half.

The rest of the boys were now getting things ready for whaling; there were tents to make, guns to overhaul and spades to grind; irons had to be sharpened and bombs looked over, besides a thousand and one things that we thought we might need. Every day we talked of what we expected to do in the spring, of the whales we should catch; it got so at last that in our imaginations we had them dead and along the ice. We would let the Eskimos cut them for us! All we wanted was the bone; we would give the natives the blubber for working for us. I think, at times, we had as many as ten or twelve tied up at once, in our minds!

The Eskimos found fault with everything we did, saying if we did thus and so, the whales would never come along the ice. First they objected to our hammering, after the sun came; the whales would hear us, as whales could hear a long distance. Our gear was wrong; they had never used that kind. It was *pe-li-lak* —forbidden by the old-time medicine men. Tents were out of the question; and as for cooking on the ice, that was not to be thought of! We of course could not do as they wanted us to do. Our boats were wooden, and we planned to stay with them all the season, maybe not coming in at all until whaling was over. When the Eskimos found out we were getting extra footgear to take with us, that was the limit. Then they knew we would never get a whale.



Old Nag-a-roo, who seemed to take

a great shine to me after my fox episode, used to talk to me a lot, telling me these things. He even went so far as to give me a very powerful charm, made of obsidian and shaped like a whale. It belonged to his father, who had been a great whaleman in his time; he had always worn it sewn to his attiga. Nag-a-roo thought that if I would do the same, it would help some. He was much interested in my feet, wanting me to let him drive the evil spirit away. If I would, he knew that my feet would get better before whaling. I told him one day, he could if he wanted to, but he would have to do it in the village. This he promised. When I saw him the next time, he informed me everything was all right, and he wanted a small piece of tobacco for the work. As my feet healed very slowly, I could not put them on the floor, and Nag-a-roo made two pieces of wood to fit under them, keeping the heels from touching; they worked fine, and were a great help in getting around.

In the latter part of February, some one told Leavitt that an old woman had been walled up in a snow-house in the village. As she had no relatives, and no one wanted her, she was to be left to freeze. This was an old custom, it seemed. When Eskimos became old and a detriment to those that looked after them, there was nothing to do except get rid of them. To them, this was the right way. The old people did not suffer, just going to sleep, and that was the end. This was customary everywhere in the North. The natives living inland did the same; they said that when the deer were scarce, they would travel and keep up with the deer. If they had to carry the old folks along on their sleds, they would be unable to do this, and if they were left behind they would die—so why wait? The old folks expected it and took it quite as a matter of course.

George did not think it was the right thing for us to let her die that way; so after talking it over with us, he went to the village, broke up the snow-house and brought the old woman back with him. We christened her "Granny," and kept her until the next spring, when she died of pneumonia. Granny never showed the least gratitude, but took it all as a matter of course. She sewed clothing for anyone that needed it, as long as she was able.

The spring hunt for the bowhead whale. A bomb-gun kicks.

During the month of March the boys were employed in building a road to the water, or where we thought the edge was going to be. This was a long job, as none of the Eskimos would help.

Later on they would make a road, they asserted, if it became necessary; now was too early; besides, Mungie and several others of the men that ran boats were hunting. Anyway, their boats were light and they did not need a road, unless the ice was very rough. Our road was not level, but it was rather an easy matter to drag the boats over it on sleds, which we had to make out of solid oak, shod with iron runners.

Our work all done, we waited from the middle of March for some one to report whales. We asked everyone who went hunting on the ice, if whales had been seen. They only laughed at us, saying that it was not the whaling moon until sometime in April, when the ice would open with a northeast wind, and a few whales might come. They added that the deer-hunters would all be home in time to fix their boats before the arrival of Ak-a-wuk, the bowhead whale.

Some one reported seeing a whale at Point Barrow on March twenty-ninth. That was enough; all were anxious to be off, so the next morning the boys started sledding the boats out to the end of their road. I could not go, as my feet were not healed.

The second day they were gone, the ice opened a small lead. The boys put the boats into the water at once and sailed south eight miles. Then they came to the end of the lead, and instead of coming back while they had the chance, they waited; the lead closed, and they were forced to haul their boats on the ice. Fortunately for them, there was no pressure.

After waiting several hours, expecting the ice to open again, they started to haul the boats north along the young ice at the edge of the flaw. This was a man-killing job and took them all that day and night, before they arrived at their camp. That little trip took most of the cockiness out of the crowd; they were willing to go home until something happened to the ice.

Those that kept watch had a good time. There were plenty of sleeping-skins in the tent, plenty of food, and a stove to keep the tent warm. This watch-and-watch we kept up for another fifteen days. From the fifth to the fifteenth, the hunters were returning, and some party would arrive at the village every day, their sleds loaded with meat and skins.

I was able to get around by this time, so I spent a great deal of time in the village, watching whatever was going on. When Mungie's crowd came, they had twelve sleds all loaded. The low sleds—*com-mo-tin,* they called them—were loaded with six deer each. The runners of the sleds had been fixed with ice. Pieces of ice were cut from the ponds just as long as the sleds and ten inches square; a score was cut in the ice, six inches deep and two inches wide, the full length. Then moss was laid all along the bottom of the cut, the sled runners were placed in the score and water was poured along the runners, so they froze solidly. The moss kept the ice from breaking away from the wood. It took two or three days to fix the runners properly. When the ice was frozen all the way to the top of the runner, the sled was turned upside down and the ice smoothed and rounded off. Very heavy loads could be hauled on sleds fixed in this manner.

The hunters were soon busy fixing their boats for whaling. I had no chance to watch, for on the sixteenth whales were again reported, this time by our own men, and we decided to try it again. I went along with the crew, and was boat-steerer to John Shuman. The others in our boat were Pat Grey, Charley Ice, Con Siem and Fred Hopson. We had hardly hauled the boats to the lead of water, when I saw the first whale that season. The lead was small and was blocked with pieces of ice, leaving only patches of water. The whales were rising in these holes, and as it was impossible to get to them with the boats, we took our shoulder guns to the edges of these places, hoping for a chance to shoot.

John stationed me near a hole, advising me to aim just back of the head, so as not to strike a bone. I don't think I had been there more than half an hour before a whale came up and lay just in front of me. Taking aim at him as near as possible where I had been told, I let go at him. I never knew if I hit the whale or not. I do know that we never saw it again. I had tried to shoot the same as if I had been handling a shotgun. The bomb-gun kicked, went over my shoulder; I went over backward and alongside the gun. My leg was all skinned where I hit a piece of ice, and my shoulder and arm was black and blue. It was my first experience with a whaling bomb-gun. After that I was more careful how I held the thing. John said I did not hit the whale, and I guess he was right.

That was the last whale we saw for a long time. The lead again closed, and we went back to the watch-and-watch system.

One morning Fred and I were on watch. He was getting upon a high piece of ice and saw a bear coming toward our tent; I was down the track, talking to two Eskimos who had been out sealing. Leaving them, I started to walk to the tent, and I saw Fred coming on the run, with his rifle. All I could hear him gasp was, "Bear!" so I went for mine.

Fred ran past the two Eskimos on the sled; they had a long-haired dog with them, and when he had passed the sled a short way, the bear changed his course, coming out where the two men were. It walked close to the sled and did not seem to be afraid, only curious. The dog saw the bear and was so scared that every hair stood up; he could not even bark! The Eskimos noticed the dog watching something behind them and looked around. The bear was not more than two feet from them. Their rifles lay beside them on the sled, but never stopping for guns or anything else, they started to run toward me, giving Fred a clear shot. When Fred started to shoot, the three of us took cover behind large pieces of ice for safety. Fred got the bear—only a small one, but it looked big at the time. I don't think I will ever forget the way the dog looked; he was sure a sight. Mungie, coming out from the village later, gave the two fellows a tongue-lashing for allowing a *tan-ning*, as they called the whites, to get a bear while they were around.

A devil-driver changes the wind! Two whales struck—and lost.

The ice remained shut for so long that the Eskimos were getting anxious; all their boats were out, up on their ice-racks, and some one from the village was always watching the ice to see if there was any movement. There was none, not even a hole where we could go to hunt seal. The wind, all this time, was west or southwest, holding the ice in.

In the first part of May the Eskimos had one of their devil-drivers see if he could change the wind; Oo-mig-a-loo was a noted wind-doctor. He said he would change the wind, if the rest of the boat-headers would pay him. They all promised him bone if any whales were caught, and all the blackskin, blubber and meat he wanted. The first thing Oo-mig-a-loo required was that every person should come ashore. Then when he was ready, Oo-mig-a-loo built a small tent about three feet high on the sand, using willow sticks for the frame. These he lashed firmly together with seal-thong, covering the frame with some early summer deer-skins—skins taken just before the new hair had started to grow. He allowed no one to help him but his wife, and when all was finished, he sent her away. Then, taking his *ke-loun* and dried raven-skin, he went inside. After a short time he began to sing and kept on for a very long time; occasionally he would make some outlandish noise and then go on with his singing. After being in there for about ten hours, he gave a shout and the tent flew apart; Oo-mig-a-loo came out from under with his drum and raven-skin and all the Eskimos were certain they had seen a large black bird fly off to the east, for that was what he had told them would happen. How he had managed to untie all the lashings on the tent-poles, I could not fathom; no doubt he had some way of tying them so that they would come apart without trouble.

Oo-mig-a-loo promised a northeast wind before long, and our party all went back on the ice that morning, as soon as the circus was over. Hardly were we out to the boats than a light air from the northeast started. This gradually increased a little at a time, and by the middle of the day, it was blowing strong!

That evening, the ice broke off two miles outside of the end of our road. We immediately started building a road, to get our boats over; hardly had the ice gone off than every oomiak was on its way to the water, using the road we were trying to build. As they reached us, we tried to get them to help. Nothing doing! They needed no road—their boats were light, and had nothing in them except whaling gear.

We were all that night and some part of the morning getting our road cut; then we had to get the boats out, and when we did, a large run of whales was over. The Eskimos had taken four (three quite large and one small). We watched them for a while. They cut their whales, much the same as it was done at Point Hope, except these people were using whaling spades, and most of them had harpoons they had bought from ships. A number were using shoulder guns and bombs, the same as we. A few still used their old-fashioned whaling harpoons and lines, but there were no stone knives. Some of their old customs were being laid aside, even then.

The season was more than half over before our boats struck; then Billy Moggs struck a large whale, but the iron drew when it ran under the ice. Billy looked for his whale to the south, but instead of running that way, his whale swam north, coming from under the ice near our boat. It dived before we could reach it, and came up near old Nag-a-roo, who killed it. We did not know it was Billy's whale. Nag-a-roo, with two other boats, cut the whale, and the bone was all divided and ashore before we knew that it was our whale. Then we heard from some other Eskimos that the whale was a wounded one and that the marks of Billy's line were around its flukes, where it had been tangled. When the whale had kicked, the iron drew.

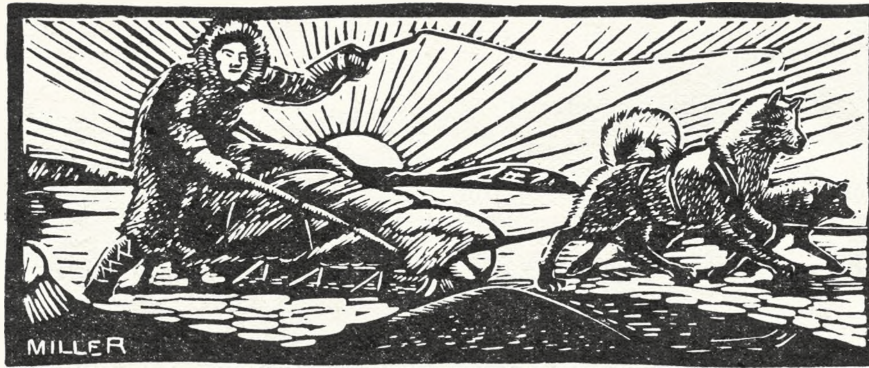
We wanted to get the bone back; if it had been the Eskimos' whale, we would have had to return the bone, or some part of it. Leavitt would not hear of this, saying that as we could not keep run of our own whales, the finder could keep it.

A little while after we had lost the whale, a young Point Barrow Eskimo, named Ser-a-vun-na, caught a small whale, the first one he had ever killed. Every boat within reach rushed in. The whale was divided, and Ser-a-vun-na had not a word to say. He did nothing except walk around with the dried skin of an eagle hung around his neck and a string of turquoise beads about his head. As was customary when a man killed his first whale, he received nothing except his small share of meat and blubber. His crew, however, got their share of the bone, as well as their meat.

Just at the end of the season Billy struck another whale. This time the whale ran offshore in the pack; we knew that it was badly wounded and would not run very far, but before our boat could reach Billy's, to bend on our line, he had to let go, and the whale took all his line. We hunted the pack all that afternoon, finding no traces of the whale, and that evening the pack came in, leaving no sign of water. We were disgusted with ourselves. The season was about over; of all the whales we had killed alongside our camp stove, we had not been able to save one on the ice!

As we hauled back our boats, Leavitt decided that all could go ashore for the night, leaving only one on watch. I was chosen, and after all had gone, I turned in, thinking to get a good sleep before morning. Most all the Eskimo boats were hauled back, but many of the young men did not go ashore, staying out hunting in the pack. While skirmishing around, some of them found Billy's whale, and without saying anything to me about it, they sent a man ashore to get the Eskimos out to cut it; they had all arrived and were busy getting out the whalebone, when they called me to come and help them. The whale was fast in the ice; they were unable to roll it, and so could only get at one side of the bone. According to the superstitions, one could not chop or pound on any part of the whale; if a man did, he would never again catch a whale, so they consulted their *annetkok*. He thought it would be all right for a *tan-ning* to chop the head off. So I was awakened and asked if I would do this for them—if so, to bring an ax with me, as they never kept one in their boats. I was ready at once and went two miles out in the pack to where the whale lay. It seemed as though every man and woman

Cutting up a whale under difficulties. . . . An Arctic summer.



from the village was there, waiting, for no one had a sled, and no boats had been hauled out; the pack was not moving north, but was crushing in to the flaw.

As soon as I arrived, the devil-driver had a short session with his friend, back in the ice. We could hear him, but could not see what he was doing. He did not take long, and when he came back, he said it was all right for this time, and I could go ahead and chop.

All the bone had been removed from the side of the head that was up, and all the blubber had been cut from the neck where I was supposed to chop. Also they had succeeded in raising the head partly out of the water. They had cut a score in the ice like a jug handle, and made a slit through the gristle and blubber just forward of the spout-hole. Through these holes had been rove a piece of large walrus line. The edge of the ice near the head was solid; this was the place chosen for raising the head. To give more lift, a large piece of ice had been placed near the edge, over which the walrus line was led. Then, by the simple method of twisting these turns together, the head was lifted high enough so I could cut without having to chop under the water. A short piece of hard wood was used to twist the rope; I think it was a part of a harpoon pole belonging to us.

When the head was high enough, I cut it off, and it took me some time. I had seen it done aboard ship, where it did not seem a hard task, but before I was through, I was covered with oil and blood. I received six large slabs of bone for my share. The devil-driver got the same, and all the others had five slabs each. Smaller pieces were given to the women.

Just as soon as the bone was divided, everyone started for the solid flaw; each one had to pack his bone that far before any road for a sled was available, and all were in a hurry, thinking the ice might start moving any time. Packing through that rough ice was a man-killing job; it took me at least three hours, for besides my six slabs of bone, I had the ax to take home with me. Sometimes it was a help, as I could cut steps in the rough ice, but usually it was an added burden.

As we reached our camp, everyone rested and waited for those behind; I thought it would be a good idea to have some coffee and hard bread, and one of the women volunteered to start the fire for me. I thought it queer, for up to this time, we had never been able to have them do any cooking on the ice. Neither would they eat any of our white man's grub, always saying it was forbidden. After starting the fire, some one else brought water, and soon there was a large pot of coffee boiling. I offered coffee and bread to some of the men, but they all refused, saying it was all right for me, but not for them. To my great surprise, the woman who had started my fire for me said she would have some if I would put plenty of sugar in it for her. She also wanted hard bread, and the others looked on with great concern for some time; then, as nothing happened, several others did the same thing. That was the first time I ever saw Eskimos do anything to break their taboo regarding their whaling customs.

Some of the natives carried their bone all the way in. One old woman, Pa-me-la, her husband and two sons were at the whale; each had packed his share through the rough ice, and as they were ready to start for our camp, the old man hung his bone on the woman, first lashing the butts so the tips of the bone were sticking out six feet or more on each side. The old woman took it as a matter of course, and had hardly started before the sons had their share on her back as well. They packed only their rifles, and eventually these grew too much of a burden, and they piled them on their mother also. It was a sight to see those husky men following the loaded-down woman as they sauntered along with their hands behind their backs, at peace with the world. Nowadays women have their place in the sun.

As usual, the natives were right; the whaling was over for the spring. The wind was west and the current was strong from the south, so the pack remained solid against the flaw. A few days after the cutting of the dead whale, all the oomiaks were hauled ashore, and we followed suit two days after. We were not feeling as chipper as when we started. The Eskimos had killed eighteen whales, many of them large; and we had nothing. There was no more boasting of what we were going to do, and any time one of our outfit began talking about what we would do in the future, he was promptly crowned!

After all the boats were in, many of the Eskimos were out sealing at the holes in the moving pack. The seals, mostly small ones, were coming north in large numbers. These small ones are best for making water boots; they are thinner and lighter in color and very much softer when dried and cleaned. Many are laid away in the spring, to be used later. The larger skins are taken from the seal entire, being skinned through an incision around the head. The skin is drawn back over the body, the vents or any cuts are sewn up, and the resulting bags are used for oil-sacks. Many of the hunters took their women out with them; as the seal were shot, the women skinned and cleaned the blubber from them, putting the latter in the skin sack, or ***hav-tuk-puk,*** as the finished bag is called. When these ***hav-tuk-puk*** are used for oil, the hair is inside; when used for floats, the hair is out.

A few days after all the boats were home, the ***nel-a-ka-tuk*** started; they were the same as those described at Point Hope. Every man that caught a whale gave a dance. The same kind of a walrus-hide is used, it is prepared in the same way, and all the young men and girls have a good time. Our men, who had never seen this dance, enjoyed themselves. They were tossed in the air as often as anyone else, and the Eskimos seemed to like to have them, they having as much fun as we watching the antics. The white men usually lost their balance and were sent sprawling.

We were surprised, about that time, to have our old friend Baby arrive; he had been at Icy Cape all winter, and as they had caught no whales, Baby was not very well off. He wanted to stay with us and work for the station, as he had before. Leavitt kept him, as well as his wife and sister Toc-too, who were with him. He brought us word that Kea-wak, the chief at Belcher, had a large whale, and as he owed George some bone, he wanted George to send for it. So Black and I took two sleds, and the Baby went along as guide and helper. It was not bad going down, and we made it in two days; on the way back, both sleds were loaded with bone and we had a hard time. Both of us were snow-

blind the first day; we had to camp at the Sea Horse Islands for two days until we were able to see again. There were plenty of ducks, Arctic tern and gulls nesting on bare patches on these islands, and we picked up all the eggs we could eat. Some were not so fresh, so we boiled them hard; the ones we did not eat, we traded to Baby. He would trade a fresh egg for one with feathers in it, and consider it a good bargain.

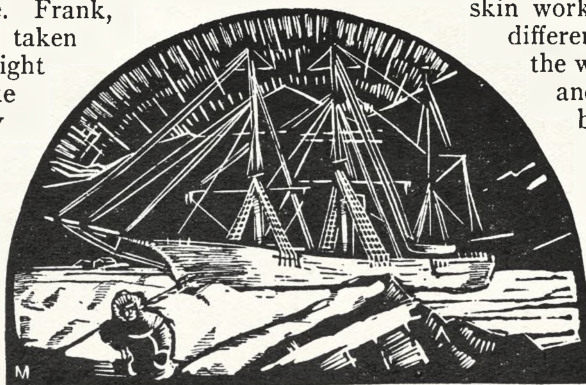
The trail was getting bad; the snow on the ice had all melted, leaving ponds on top of the ice. While these were not very deep, they made bad sledding. The dogs would not pull their best through the ponds. Then too, the ice was like sharp cinders, cutting the dogs' feet badly. Often we had to stop and bandage their paws and let them rest. Finally, when their feet got too bad, the poor dogs did not want to return to the ice. When we did get started again, the dogs were so sore that we had to do most of the work. We were three days from the Sea Horse Islands.

The ice was now full of holes inside the ridges, while outside it was solid; the inside ice was fairly level, and this was where the seals were coming up to blow. The Eskimos were getting them by the hundreds. Their nets were fifteen feet square, with ten-inch meshes, and they were set the same as fish-nets, except that the lines used were much heavier. When the seals were running, almost any hole was good, but the smaller ones were the best for the nets, which were stretched out flat on top of the water. The seals, coming up to breathe, put their heads through the meshes, not being able to see the nets. When they felt the nets, instead of sinking away from them and clearing themselves, they tried to turn quickly, thus tangling themselves and wrapping the net around them. Men were always watching, especially if the sealing was good, and as soon as the seal was caught, the watcher hauled in the net, the seal's neck was dislocated, and the net replaced. I have seen more than eighty seals taken in one run.

A steamer which belonged to the Company arrived on the first of August. She had some stores, and wanted to land them on the ice and have us carry them to the open water inside the ridge, but we refused to do this, as it would be like trying to pack over a mountain with a deep stream every fifty yards or so. We expected the ridge would break through in a day or so, and then we would be able to boat everything ashore. We were told that the Company was sending in a small sloop of seventeen tons for the station, and we were supposed to hang two boats on her and try whaling off the bays to the east of us.

There were no regular hours for sleeping, as it still was daylight all the time, but the sun was getting near the horizon; some of us were about at all hours, watching for the ridge to go out. Two days later, it broke; the ice cleared away, and all the steamers arrived, the *Orca* towing our schooner, the *Spy*. Mr. Haverside, who had come to Lisburne with us, was in command, and with him was Ned Avery, who was to stay at the station. Haverside delivered the sloop to Leavitt, going aboard the *Orca* to finish the voyage and return home. Frank, our cook and Gus Lief were also taken aboard. Only the ships that had freight for us stopped, and it did not take long to get that ashore; then they were off for Point Barrow and the east, looking for the whales.

We at once cleared the *Spy*, getting ready to go whaling; we rigged up a place to hang our boats, and as she was not large, the boats just cleared the water, but this did not matter to us, nor did a place to sleep—all wanted to be off. Just as we were ready to start, the *Grampus* arrived. She had been whaling in Peard Bay, and after the other ships had gone, Dexter found a body of still whales and had taken four. His mate, Mr. Lyon, had broken his leg, and Dexter did not want to take him east, so they carried him to the station and left him in charge of another of the crew. George decided that I had to stay at the house, as he did not want to leave the place to strangers; I did not like the arrangements as I wanted to go along with the crowd and try my luck, but off they went and left me with the cripple and nothing much to do.



On the tenth of September the *Spy* returned; there had been some trouble between Black and Jack Mauri during the spring, and Black wanted to quit, but George refused, thinking the trouble would blow over. While they were whaling from the sloop off Harrison's Bay, they fell in with a large body of whales, and both boats lowered. Billy went alongside a large one, but Black did not strike for some reason; at any rate, the whales were gallied, and the boats went aboard, Black again asking to be released. A few days after, whales were found again; then the same thing happened once more, and that was enough for George. He brought the sloop home, disgusted.

When he arrived at the station, George said if anyone was tired of his job, he could leave and go out on the steamers when they returned from the east. Black was the only one that wanted to go. Only a few days after this, the *Grampus* came in to get her mate, Lyon, who was able to get around quite well and soon would be able to lower for whales.

Captain Dexter had another man aboard, Joe Tuckfield, an old sailor, who had been with him several years. Joe wanted to come ashore for the winter, and as we had to have some one to replace Black, and as Joe had been whaling a number of seasons, Leavitt took him.

Soon after the *Grampus* left, the other steamers arrived; none had been very successful, and all were in a hurry to get to the western grounds. The *Narwhal* came to the station to get any mail that might be going out, and from her we got another man, Billy Star. He had a long nose and was always known as "Billy the Jib."

All the ships were gone by the twenty-fifth, and we had the whole winter ahead of us. Our first job was taking care of the *Spy*, and we soon had her hauled out on the beach, where she lay on her bilge all winter. The ice for drinking-water was soon cut; the whaling gear was put away, and then we had to see what we were going to do to amuse ourselves. I made up my mind that I would go hunting again with Mungie, if he was willing, and as he was agreeable, that was settled. My clothes were all made, for while the others had been away in the sloop, I had three old women tanning skins for me. I had more deer-skin clothes that winter than I ever have had since, and the women took special pride in making them fancy, so when they were through with me, I was the envy of the whole village. Dexter had brought me some fancy deer-skin work from Siberia, which was entirely different from any made on this side, and the women used it all on my boots, pants and attigas. My old dog Mark had been brought up the coast to me. I took him along, and many times in after years Mark brought me home when I could not find my own way. Besides Mungie, his wife and boys, Ap-pi-yow and his wife, we had another man and wife, Koong-i-suk and Al-li-bru-na. Fred also wanted to come with us, and as the rest

were willing, Fred and I drove our own team and all our own outfit; this relieved the others of our load, and everyone was happy.

We left some time early in October and traveled slowly to the first river, where we camped at E-vick-shu. During the first day we had seen what looked as though some one had dragged a bag along the snow; every little while there was a print as if something had been forced into the snow. As soon as we saw them, Mungie told me that they were made by seal that had been caught in the river by the freeze-up, and that they were taking the shortest route to open water in the ocean. We wanted to go after them, but Mungie said no, they might be a long distance off. Ap-pi-yow and I started trailing them, and we had not gone more than a mile before we saw a black speck ahead in the snow. It was a spotted or leopard seal, quite large, six feet long at the least. It was not nearly as bulky as the common hair seal, but longer; the background color was a light yellow, with a silvery sheen, and the spots were quite regular, a dark brown or black. Ap-pi-yow killed and skinned it, rolling the hide in a small bundle for packing. We left the meat for the women to bring in, in the morning, as we were going to stay at E-vick-shu several days.

I went up the stream a few miles, where there was good fishing with hook and line, as a small creek came in from the west and made an eddy where it joined the larger river. It was a great place for grayling. The hooks used were small pieces of colored ivory, cut to resemble a water-bug; the hook part was a piece of copper wire or metal of some kind, without a barb. The leader generally was made from the long quills of a goose, and sometimes the whole line was fashioned from it, but more often it was of whalebone scraped to the smallest size and knotted together. A bone line was easily cleared of ice in the cold weather as it formed on the line. All one had to do was scrape it on the edge of the ice as we jigged through the fishing-hole.

Talking it over, the Eskimos decided that we would go to the northeast a few days. Mungie said that the deer would be on the move all the time, with so many wolves to keep them stirred up, and that we would not have as good hunting this fall as last. We camped that night on the banks of a small lake, and in the morning we were off long before daylight. Ap-pi-yow took the lead, and we had not traveled many miles before we saw fresh deer-tracks; at daylight we saw many deer, all traveling, some one way, and some the other. All were on the alert.

Leaving the women and Fred with the sleds, the rest of us went after the deer. I was with Ap-pi-yow in the afternoon, and we were quite close to a large band of caribou traveling slowly west; while we were trying to get near enough to shoot, a large pack of wolves came over a hill, starting the deer toward us. They came rather close before we shot at them; the wolves ran to one side, and when we started firing, they disappeared almost immediately. We dropped seven deer between us, besides two wounded ones, which Ap-pi-yow said we would get next day. Skinning the heads and legs, we started for the camp. Before I left, I tried to see if I could count the wolf-tracks, but it was impossible, for there must have been over a hundred; I wondered if they would not come back and eat our deer-meat, but my guide said not, that the shooting would scare them away for a time.

We arrived at the camp after dark. No one else had shot anything, but we had carried some meat and the tongues along with us, and so we had plenty to eat. In the morning Ap-pi-yow and I went with the women after our deer; we wanted to use one of the dogs to run down the wounded animals if they had not died during the night; on arriving at the carcasses, Ap-pi-yow and I took a dog on a leash to see if we could find them. The caribou had gone in the same direction as the main herd, but it was easy to follow their trail from the blood. We found one dead within a mile, and only a short distance away, lying down, was the other; as we approached closer, he started to run on three legs, and could go faster than we, so the dog was turned loose. It was quite a chase, but the dog finally succeeded in pulling the deer down. He acted like a wolf, tearing the throat of the dead animal, and when we reached him, he was busily engaged tearing the skin all to pieces, trying to get the back fat.

Mr. Brower adopts the North and its people for his own.

We went back to where the women were, and taking one sled, we returned for our two deer; on the way we ran into a small herd, which were traveling fast, and our dogs spotted them as soon as we did. They started for the deer, and Ap-pi-yow yelled at me to get on the sled and hold on, or we would lose the team, for the dogs would never stop until played out. That was a ride! The dogs had seemed tired and hardly able to pull the two deer, but when they got after the herd, they just flew, the sled scarcely seeming to touch the ground.

Ap-pi-yow sat on the front of his sled, and thinking he might shoot one of the deer and stop the team, he got out his rifle. At the first crack he stopped the team, all right, for he shot the head dog, and the rest all tumbled over him. I still think he made a good shot, or we would have been going yet. When we got back, the women said some pretty caustic things to us, and to Ap-pi-yow especially. The dog was one of their best, and as the women have to raise and take care of the dogs, as well as do most of the hauling, I did not blame them. . . .

Although there were many wolves around, they did not bother any of the deer we killed; apparently they prefer to do their own hunting.

After a few days the wolves left our part of the country; then the caribou were more quiet. Mungie said that our shooting had caused them to leave; at any rate the hunting improved, although we did not do as well as the year before. I think our kill for the season was forty-two.

Every once in a while Coccy would gather a lot of deer leg bones and hang them in her tent to thaw for a day or so; then all hands would crack them and eat the frozen marrow. I got so fond of it that I could always eat my share. All the deer bones were saved, and were kept in a place made of ice. Just before we started home, a large fire was made outdoors and all the bones were put in a large kettle and boiled several hours; after boiling they were left standing all night, and in the morning a cake of fat covered the top of the water three inches thick. Coccy packed this to take home, and eventually it was made up with deer meat, which was chopped fine. *Ac-co-tak,* it was called, and was much relished by everyone. This fall there were more foxes around than last, and every time we killed a deer, the foxes ate part of it before morning. By making a snow-house around it, leaving it open at the top, the foxes never bothered it; but if the house was closed, they would most always dig in and destroy our meat. Sometimes a small piece of willow stuck upright in the snow was sufficient to keep them away, but a piece of rag on a stick was still better.

Along in the last part of November we built our ice cache and started for the village, where, as usual, there was a great deal of dancing going on.

The sun was soon to return; I was getting restless and wanted to be off somewhere, and as I did not want to go out with the hunters in the spring, I thought I would like to take a trip to Tigera. I decided to take no one with me except the Baby, and he was glad to go south, as he wanted to see some of his relatives. After a little

preparation we had all our clothes ready, and we planned to start sometime the last of January in the year of 1888.

Just before we started on the trail Toctoo, Baby's sister, told me that she wanted to go along. She said that as she was now matured, the Eskimos here all wanted her to take one of their young men for a husband. If she would not do this, she would belong to anyone that wanted her, that being the custom. She said she did not want any of these men here; I was the only one she wanted. For a long time I thought it over, and decided that as I liked the North better than any other place I had lived, I would be content to live here. So we were married the next summer, when the ships arrived. . . .

Our trip down the coast was uneventful; the weather was fine, and the natives all welcomed me; as usual they would overfeed my dogs when they wanted me to stay longer at any place. The summer before, Captain Smith of the *Balcana* told me he had grubstaked a man, John W. Kelley, who was wintering at the old house we used at Lisburne, and was expected to travel inland looking for gold. Upon reaching the old house, we found no one except Nook and his wife. Kelley was at Point Hope, for his grub was almost gone, and he had gone there to visit a man who had established a whaling-station the past summer. (We will call this man Smith, because that was not his name.)

I was taking some deer-skins to Kelley, thinking they would be handy, clothing being harder to get here than they were farther north. I gave Nook a fine wolverine trimming for his wife's attiga, and they were greatly pleased, doing all they could for me. Nook's mother-in-law also made me a fine squirrel-skin shirt, having it ready for me when I was on my way north. We remained several days at the old house, and I would have liked to stay longer, for the whole country seemed alive with deer.

My time was limited, if I was to stay at all at Point Hope, so I packed up, ready for an early start. Just after getting ready, Kelley returned. I wanted to go anyway, but Kelley persuaded me to wait over another day, saying he wanted to go back to Tigera and would hurry his work and go with me if I waited.

We started with a nice breeze behind me, making fine time for several miles. Kelley was ahead of the dogs, traveling fast, the dogs keeping right behind him. Halfway from the old station house to Cape Lisburne, there is a lagoon with a low sandspit between it and the sea. For some reason or other the sea ice had moved away from the beach about a hundred yards, and the young ice that had made over the lead was hardly strong enough to bear our weight, unless we kept moving. None of us noticed the new ice until we were well out on it; then we had to keep traveling or go through. The Baby was the first to notice that the ice was bending; he let go the handle-bars on the sled, telling me to do the same; in other words, he wanted us to spread out; Toctoo also ran off to one side, but we all had to keep going. Kelley, looking back over his shoulder saw what was up and he gradually swung in to the beach, where we were on solid ice once more. As the sled passed over the ice, the rear end was cutting through, and if Baby had not noticed the danger, it is probable we would all have had our last sleigh-ride. Salt-water ice will bend a whole lot before it breaks; and in this it is entirely different from that of fresh water, which breaks without warning.

We reached the village at Lisburne early in the afternoon; staying only one night, we got to the Cape just before daylight. This time I rounded it in fine weather; traveling was good and the road fine for about ten miles; then we came to the end of the trail. The ice had gone off clear to the beach, and we were lucky that there was a small gully which came down to the edge of the water, leaving a place where we could get ashore. We camped where we were for the night, and in the morning Baby had climbed out of his bag early and packed some of our outfit on his back. We were all day getting to the shore, where we built a snow-house, and then went back and picked up some of our clothes and sleeping-skins which we had dropped along the road.

We had come about six miles, as near as I could judge, and I think I never traveled a worse six in all my life. We repaired the sled with pieces of driftwood, and were all ready to start again in the morning. Just before dark we arrived at "Smith's" place.

Smith was a strange man. He treated me well while I was there, but he made some queer propositions to me; he was running a whaling-station for people in San Francisco, and there were eight white men in the party. The third day I stayed with him, I told him I was going to the village in the morning, which was six miles away, as I wanted to see the old chief, Attungowrah, in whose house I had lived during the time I stayed at Point Hope two years before. As soon as I mentioned the Chief, Smith began to curse, saying that he would have to kill him some day, and he told me all kinds of things that were happening that winter. He and the old Chief could not agree about anything. It seemed that Attungowrah was jealous of Smith, for there had never been anyone before at the point who had a stock of merchandise except himself. Now Smith was getting most all of the trade, selling for less than the Chief wanted to, and every time the two came together, they had a scrap.

Feud between an Eskimo strong-man and a half-crazed white.

Finally they hooked; when Smith got clear, he pulled a gun on the Chief, but instead of shooting, he hit him over the head so hard he broke the revolver. Attungowrah was a powerful man, and grabbing Smith he threw him down and sat on him for a while. Smith never forgave him for that. Now he wanted me to kill the Chief for him.

I had to go to the village, and did not want to go alone after what Smith had asked me to do. So I told Kelley of it. Kelley laughed heartily; then he said he would go along. He also told me Smith had made the same proposition to him when he was there before, and added that all hands thought Smith was crazy.

Next morning Kelley and I went to the village, and the Chief and all his harem turned out to greet us, making me welcome, as they always had; they feasted us with the best there was in the place. I carried a message to Attungowrah from Ounalena, the headman at Point Barrow village, who wanted Attungowrah to meet him at Icy Cape the coming summer so they might have a wrestling match. Ounalena had heard he was a very strong man but thought himself just as strong, and maybe the better wrestler! I certainly started something. Attungowrah just got up and declared himself, saying there was no one on the whole coast who could throw him, nor anyone who could kick as high with both feet. Immediately, he started to show his ability as a kicker, and standing in the center of his igloo, he kicked the window frame in the top of the house, nearly eight feet, with both feet at once. This was something I had never seen done before, and I believed all he said; but when he asked me to carry a large rock all the way back to Nubook, just to show Ounalena what he could lift with one hand, it was too much, and I had to decline! I only stayed a couple of hours with him, but during that time most everyone living in Tigera came in to see me. This was the last time I saw Attungowrah, for he was killed two years after in a feud that lasted the best part of two years and cost the lives of thirteen people. I will tell of it later.

These absorbing and authentic phases of life in the Far North continue in the next, the April, issue.

A Shame to Take the Money

By ARTHUR K. AKERS

Illustrated by Everett Lowry

Deep plots and high finance make Darktown a specially exciting and joyous place in this story.

"SKINNIN' a friend," stated the dusky Mr. Atlas Alexander, "is ticklish business."

"Down in Mobile," virtuously agreed an out-of-town expert in such matters, Mr. Cephas Jones, "us aint never skin ouah friends. Always gits somebody else to do it for us. Dat's how come you needs me in dis case so bad."

"Aint hit so! Dat huccome I sends fo' you. Whut is yo' reg'lar percentage fo' he'pin' me git three hundred dollars away from dat little runtified boy, 'Half-po'tion' Williams yander?"

The overstuffed and underscrupulous Mr. Jones loosened a tight button on his blue-and-orange striped vest, and followed Mr. Alexander's gaze to a disappointment. It began to seem a shame to take the money. For the cigar-colored "Half-portion" in question didn't look like three hundred dollars. He looked more like three cents. Architecturally, he appeared to have been stunted at the age of eleven, while arrested mental development seemed to have set in even sooner. Sartorially he was no fashion-plate, save as an example of what the much larger well-dressed man *had* worn back in the pre-Crash days, while as to facial expression, some years of recently terminated business association with the loud-mouthed Atlas had given him the wary and downtrodden look of a tomcat rooming with a wolfhound.

"How'd *he* git no three hundred dollars?" Cephas voiced the naturally resulting question.

"He aint got it yit—he jest 'property-poor,' make him look dat way," returned Mr. Alexander. "Done busted hisse'f payin' taxes. But, dumb as he look, he gwine have three hundred dollars—soon as de Gov'ment pay off de soldiers' bonus now."

"Sho wuz funny-lookin' boys in de waw," commented Mr. Jones interestedly.

"It do look like a shame to take de money off him," contributed Atlas judicially. "But if us aint, somebody else will. Liable make hisse'f a bad buy in real 'state or somep'n. He so dumb he aint know *nothin'*."

Cephas seemed to think of something. But Atlas was still talking:

"Me, now," he ran on, "I's diff'ent! Kind of business investment whut *I's* all time lookin' for is one whar at I can pleasure myse'f at same time I workin' at it."

"Whut about de size of my commission in dis deal?" Mr. Jones interrupted. "Fifty-fifty is my idea of de reg'lar rate."

"Sounds like you's fixin' to play hawg," countered Mr. Alexander irritatedly. "Jest fixin' offer you fifty bucks—or skin him myse'f. He so ign'ant it's easy."

"Fifty bucks?" Pain was written on Cephas' countenance.

"Uh-huh."

"A boy cain't even be honest on a commission dat small!" squawked Cephas. "Wuzn't fo' de gallopers gwine against me so much heah lately, I wouldn't tetch it."

"Hmph! Boy whut's gwine be watched like you is by me, is *'bleeged* to be honest."

"Yeah? Keep on 'pearin' too prominent in de deal, Atlas, and you gwine gum it all up, too. Remember, it's yo' friend—not mine—us is skinnin'. S'pose he see yo' tracks too thick around de trap. Whut you say den?"

Atlas saw the point. "Whut de best way to op'rate, den?" he retired gracefully.

Cephas gazed meditatively at the far end of his cigar. "Gin'rally," he reached a conclusion, "in case like dis, de best bet is to sell your prospect somep'n whut you aint own. Dat widen out his choice and increase up yo' profits."

Admiration came reluctantly into the froglike eyes of Mr. Alexander. These town boys knew their stuff, as well as how to sling a mean vocabulary!

"Whut kind of bait dis Half-po'tion boy liable grab de quickest?" Cephas further inquired into the habits and weaknesses of their quarry.

"Aint see much of him lately, count of him gittin' mad about a mule I sells him. Us had de mule all jazzed up fo' de sale, but he die de next day. Ha'f-po'tion blame me. Dat how come I needs a go-between to sell him nothin' now. Heap of boys, now, is all time cravin' to buy deyse'f a loud-runnin' car—"

"Cars is out," interjected Cephas brusquely. "Half de time, you aint no more'n git to dem'stratin' one good, when de owner of it see you and mess up yo' sale hollerin' for de cops."

Atlas' face fell. Something was all the time coming up!

"Whut you say 'bout dat Half-po'tion boy buying real 'state jest now?" Cephas harked back.

"Three hundred dollars—less fifty bucks to you—aint 'nough," objected Atlas.

"'Nough fo' de down payment," corrected Cephas; "—notes fo' de rest. Old real 'state always sound good. And heaps of times dat gives you chance to git out of town befo' de sucker find out he aint bought nothin' after all."

"I can show you some good places—" began Atlas, hope rendering him newly vocal. But:

"You aint show me nothin'," Mr. Jones cut off his conversation in its prime. "When I brokers a deal, I brokers it. And not no principals messin' around in it, gummin' it up. 'Sides dat, I has to git a micr'scope to see whether you skinnin' me or de sucker, way you figures my commission so small. How you 'spect nobody be honest fo' jest fifty bucks in deal dis big?"

"Wuz you honest, you wouldn't even be here," reminded Mr. Alexander cuttingly. . . .

"Whut is yo' percentage fo' he'pin' me git three hundred dollars away from dat runtified Half-po'tion Williams, yander?"

In front of a fish-stand with a clear view in both directions, Half-portion Williams gnawed warily upon a fried perch, and watched both ways. Ever since the bonus stories had got in the newspapers, Mr. Williams had been besieged. Everybody wanted to sell a boy everything. But Half-portion wasn't biting. White folks had said buy real estate: couldn't anybody gyp you out of *that*. So Mr. Williams ate fish and declined propositions.

Now he looked up over the fast-appearing framework of his latest fish, and put his free hand hastily over his pocketbook. For Cephas Jones was approaching, and, while Half-portion didn't know him, Cephas looked exactly like the original early bird on his way to the worm-fields.

"Mawnin'! How de fish today?" he saluted the diner cheerily.

" 'Bout nine bones to de bite," rejoined Mr. Williams cautiously.

"I risks it, den," chirped the impressively vested and voiced Mr. Jones. "Takes more'n a few bones to skeer off a real-'state boy."

"Somebody say dem boys aint eatin' none dis yeah, nohow."

"De good ones is," Mr. Jones slung a significant accent. "Has to keep me on a diet to keep me from bustin' myse'f wid eatin'-vittles, I's doin' so well."

"Huccome?"

"Gits off de beaten track, dat's how. Whut de *first* thing eve'ybody give up when hard times comes? Bread and meat, dat whut! And whut de *last* thing dey cuts out? Answers you, frolickin' and joy-ridin' around."

"You says somep'n, but whut?" Half-portion looked more puzzled than usual. "Way real 'state movin' around heah now, I cain't git shet of whut I owns, noway. Aint been nobody buyin' nothin'."

"But, 'ply *my* idea to it," pursued Cephas, "and whar is you? You's at de answer, dat's whut! Meanin' dey's one kind of prop'ty whut always in demand if it's located right."

Mr. Williams kept on eating fish, but his eyes gave encouragement.

"And dat," continued Cephas, in full cry now, "is place whut's situated right fo' a fillin'-station or a road-house. You know yo' ownse'f anybody round heah whut's busted will buy groc'ries on credit, sell 'em fo' cash to buy gas wid, and make whoopee in de road-house on de change."

Mr. Williams' look indicated registry of a bull's-eye.

"Now," continued Mr. Jones more loudly as he saw this, "I's got a big bargain in dat kind of real 'state—de joy kind. But I's not at lib'ty to tell 'bout it yit: savin' it back fo' a special buyer dat I jest heahs about. Dat all dat keep me from offerin' it to you. Dey tells me he de brightest boy in de head anywhars around heah. And de prop'ty I's savin' fo' him is *right;* it got a road-house on it, and de whoopee bears me out in whut I jest says—hard times hits de joy business last."

"Who—who you gwine sell it to?" Half-portion's interest became vocal.

"Reg'lar brain-hound, name' Half-po'tion Williams—"

Half-portion suddenly swelled until his clothes fitted him.

"Heah me!" he admitted lustily.

Mr. Jones' surprise was touching—also wordy. "—And I jest stumble right spang into you, too!" he concluded it.

"How 'bout us gwine see it den? I can take de fish wid me," Half-portion met the seller seven-eighths of the way.

This reminded Cephas in time that he didn't even know where there *was* a road-house. Right when he had a buyer lined up for one, too! So:

"Shows prop'ty by 'pointment only," he stalled. "How 'bout meetin' me heah to go look at it, in about two houahs?"

With his suddenly warm prospect shaken off, Cephas hotfooted it for a taxi. Uniontown was new territory for him, but he knew a darky road-house when he saw one. The thing was to see one—any one. And no need to be particular when Atlas, for whom he was selling it, didn't own one anyhow! Here was brokerage at its best: Demand all lined up, and nothing left to locate but Supply! It was all but perfect!

"Whar at dey no nigger road-house round heah, boy?" he tackled a taxi-driver.

"Demop'lis road," responded that worthy satisfactorily. " 'Bout three miles out; it gwine strawng twel de Sheriff git it."

"Drive me past—and don't stop. Jest turn round and

come back, den," were the enigmatic instructions from Cephas. No profit in being seen too visibly around the scene of a coming profit, was the idea. Besides, it wasn't a real profit; it was only fifty dollars. Dissatisfaction grew; dim thoughts of getting even mingled in the mind of Cephas, as he rode. If one rock *should* bring down two birds—

An hour before his engagement with the easy-mark Half-portion, Cephas again met his principal and oppressor.

"How you gittin' along in de deal by now?" wheezed the portly Atlas.

"Done got him staked out," admitted Cephas without admitting too much.

"For whut?"

Cephas thought swiftly. The more Atlas knew, the more chances there were he would make trouble for a broker. Besides, too many cooks would spoil the stew.

"WHUT you keer?" he countered. "You aint own whut you sellin', nohow."

"Suit yo'se'f—but don't lose no time bringin' me de mazuma when you gits him skunt," retorted Atlas tartly. "And don't fo'git I's watchin' you, neither!"

"Talk to yo' ownse'f from now on," returned Mr. Jones. "I got to 'tend to my prospect—takin' him to piece prop'ty whut you aint own and sellin' it to him fo' you."

"Attaboy! It's a shame to take de money—but be sho an' git it!" encouraged Atlas.

With the arrival of Cephas and his prospect in front of the road-house Cephas had selected to sell Mr. Williams, something unusual seemed at first to be happening to the latter. Evidently, thought Mr. Jones, this Half-portion boy was not used to big deals. Indeed, it reminded him fleetingly of the time he had *almost* closed a trade in Vicksburg once—the time when the wood alcohol in the genuine uncut tiger perspiration with which he had been plying his prospect had suddenly complicated the sale by causing the prospect to begin climbing trees without shirt or warning. Yet Half-portion's present trouble seemed different: mental rather than physical, signalized by a startled expression that Mr. Jones was unable to account for.

Fearing it meant a hitch in the sale, Cephas plunged headlong into his selling talk. He sensed a hidden and disturbing element, that called for fast work on the realtor's part. Moreover, he had a standard remedy for slow buyers, whatever the cause of their delay. "Fact is," he launched into this quickly, as he saw the look on Half-portion's face. "I got a prospect whut's crazy to buy a good goin' road-house. But I done owed it to you to show it to you first. Gives you fust shot at it. Now, soon as you buys it, I can re-sell it fo' you for mo', and—"

A gratifying change came over the area used by Half-portion as a face. Clearly Cephas had hit him just right with this last remark. "You sells it *to* me? And den sells it again *for* me—dat hit?" Mr. Williams seemed trying to wrap an inadequate mind around a proposition that was too big for it.

"Ex-act-ly!" confirmed Cephas. This was going to be a cinch after all: the hitch had been merely momentary. "You pays three hundred bucks down fo' dis road-house and de rest in notes. I re-sells it immediate fo' you, fo' five hundred bucks, and 'sumes de notes. Dat way, you makes yo'se'f two hundred smackers in a couple of houahs, less de hundred bucks you pays me commission fo' makin' de sale fo' you."

Half-portion's four-cylinder mind went into second-gear on the financial hill.

"You sells it to *who* fo' me, after I buys hit?" he questioned thickly. "I aint been able sell nothin'—"

Cephas had a choking spell. Atlas had said this Half-portion boy was dumb, but every once in a while he worked too fast for Cephas, at that—like asking to whom the re-sale would be. Cephas didn't know; he himself hadn't gotten that far in the deal!

"First rule of de big broker," he stalled accordingly, "is not to give away too soon de name of yo' princ'pal. Is you even whisper hit, some other high-class real-'state boy liable be listenin' at de keyhole, and beat you to hit. Detectives works wid brass bands, alongside a real-'state boy whut gum-shoein' on a deal."

Half-portion looked suitably impressed. "And you is actin' fo' de owner now, is you?" he questioned—respectfully, it seemed.

"And how!" answered Cephas enthusiastically. "I makes de deal—delivers de prop'ty to you, and de money to him. Den I turns round and re-sells de road-house *for* you, and you cleans up a hundred after payin' me my commission, widout ever you doin' a lick of work! Dat de way de white folks gits rich."

Half-portion looked around some more, with that queer look on his face, like he couldn't get rid of it. But Half-portion was dumb; Atlas, Cephas recalled, had said that Half-portion was a total loss without insurance above the adenoids—that you could put over anything on him, except another mule. Whereupon, speaking of putting things over, reminded Cephas unpleasantly of the smallness of his commission from Atlas for selling Half-portion this road-house. There ought to be some way to augment it, if he was to remain strictly honest and ethical. Besides, the sale wasn't completed yet: it wasn't consummated until he dug up the promised re-buyer for five hundred. In his rash haste to close the deal with Half-portion he had over-promised himself—

In the midst of which ruminations Half-portion reached an audible decision:

"I takes you up, den," he announced, "providin' you re-sells it fo' me fo' five hundred, like you says."

CEPHAS all but swallowed his tongue wrong end first. He knew he was a fast worker, but he didn't know he was *this* fast! And, after all, let tomorrow take care of tomorrow's troubles—prominent among them this re-sale business, with the fictitious five-hundred-dollar buyer.

"You done bought it, den," he therefore struck while the iron was hot three hundred dollars' worth. "When you gwine have de three hundred down payment?"

"Gits de Gov'ment bonus check in de mawnin', dey says."

Cephas' brain raced some more. His name—or Atlas'—anywhere on that kind of check would be but a passport to Big Trouble or the Big House.

"My princ'pal pow'ful partic'lar," he interjected accordingly. "He aint take nothin' but cash money. When you git *dat?*"

"Tomorrer mawnin' noon-time," Half-portion continued to give complete satisfaction as a buyer. "Sho is glad you got buyer fo' it, too. I aint been—"

"Meet me at de fish-stand, den," interrupted Cephas, "at noon-time, wid de dough. Us close de deal den and dar, so I can make you some fast money, re-sellin' it. Have de notes wid me, both ways, too, fo' signin'."

"Sho is," confirmed Mr. Williams, still with that odd look.

But Cephas didn't have time to bother about how pint-sized boys looked; he was confronting the increasingly worrisome fact that he had sold some stranger's road-house for three hundred dollars. It would take him a couple of hours to construct a valid-looking deed of conveyance for it, too. But that was not the real bother: the difficulty was going to come in making good on his state-

ment that he had a buyer waiting to take it off Half-portion's hands at a two-hundred-dollar advance in price.

This disturbing factor gradually interwove once more with another: that Atlas was getting too much for his money. Fifty dollars was no commission. It should be augmented, honorably but handsomely. But how?—a question in the solution of which Cephas was not the first broker who had lain awake until dawn. Yet, after all, such realtors were not men of Cephas' resource—for to him a solution came! Suddenly, dazzlingly! A plan for which there were already foundations in. One upon which an earnest realtor could labor not only lovingly but rapidly in the shape that things were in! Here was where two commissions would grow, too, where but one had grown before. Evening could not come too soon *now!*

"Jest how dumb *is* dis Half-po'tion boy, noway?" questioned Cephas of Mr. Alexander early that evening, as they forgathered at a pool-parlor. "One time today he looked pow'ful funny to me—like maybe he might have good sense."

"Not him!" scoffed Atlas. "He pract'cally swaller dat mule whole when I offer hit to him. He still sore at me 'bout hit, but he aint got sense 'nough to do nothin' 'bout hit. Since den, I keeps 'way from him: I aint know much 'bout his business no mo', on dat account. But, all in all, I'd say, is dat li'l Half-po'tion got jest a *little* mo' sense, he'd be 'bout half as dumb as a hawg. Dat why *us* might as well skin him out dat three hundred as somebody else. He bound to lose it, nohow."

Cephas seemed satisfied; but actually, he wasn't listening. He was too busy re-checking his road-house sale in the light of his latest inspiration. Based on an already half-forgotten remark, his scheme looked better every time he went over it. Meantime:

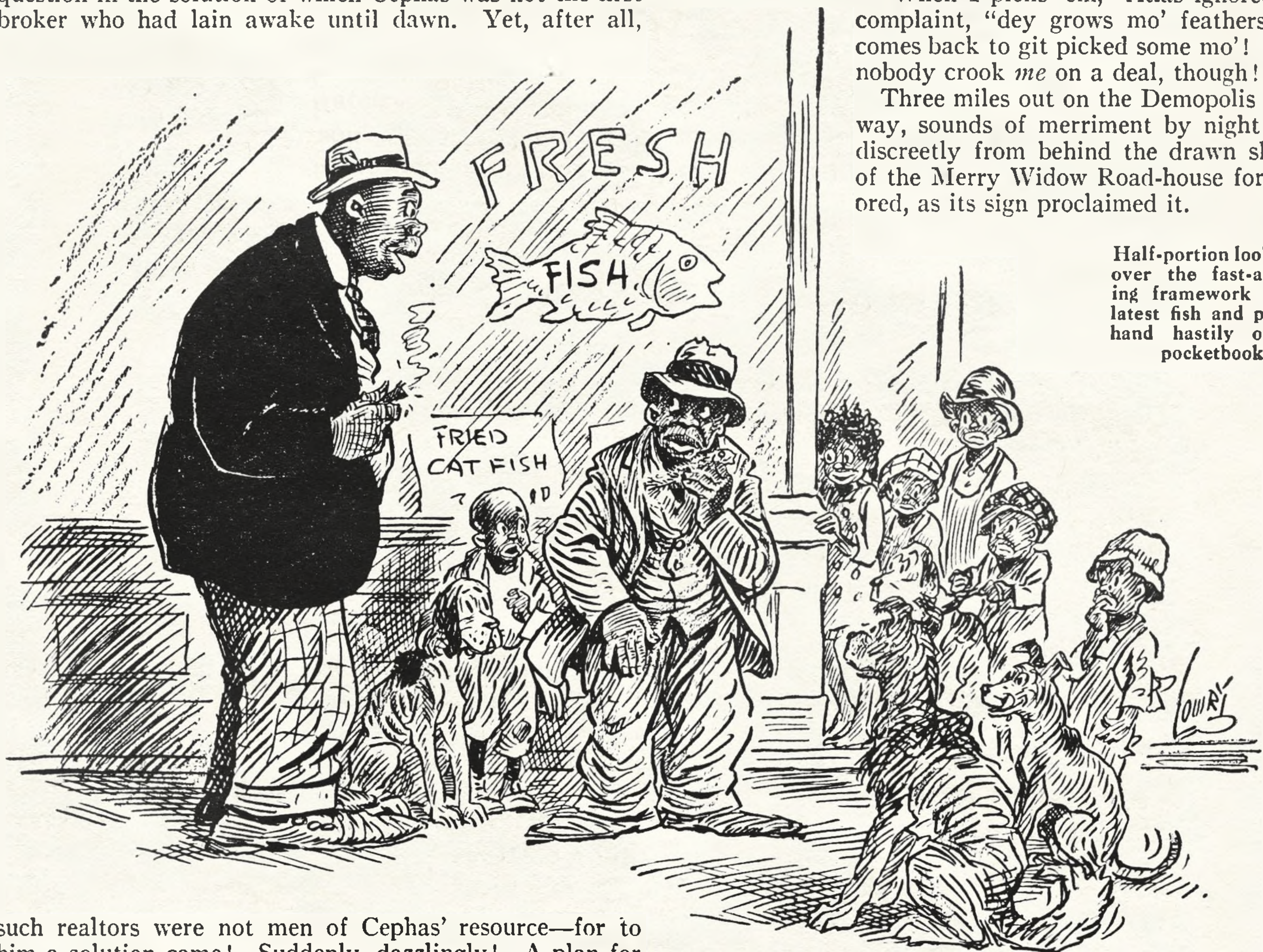
"Whut me and you needs—us tired business-men," he broached to Atlas, "is somep'n git ouah minds off de big deals us is pullin'. How about us tacklin' a road-house and git de cobwebs off ouah tonsils?"

"Needs do somep'n while I's waitin' around for you to finish pickin' dat Half-po'tion boy," agreed Mr. Alexander.

"Let's us git on out dar, den. Keep me from thinkin' how you skinnin' me on my commission."

"When I picks 'em," Atlas ignored the complaint, "dey grows mo' feathers and comes back to git picked some mo'! Aint nobody crook *me* on a deal, though!"

Three miles out on the Demopolis highway, sounds of merriment by night rang discreetly from behind the drawn shades of the Merry Widow Road-house for Colored, as its sign proclaimed it.



Half-portion looked up over the fast-appearing framework of his latest fish and put his hand hastily on his pocketbook.

Professor Dinghouse's one-man band was contorting successfully therein in the midst of some six assorted instruments, while dancers crowded the floor and drinkers crowded the tables. Cash money was in evidence all over the place—bearing out conclusively the theory put forth previously by Cephas to Half-portion that there was still plenty of money in the country for non-essentials.

At one of the tables, in the gleaming dickey which he attached to his shirt front when serving as waiter at the white folks' hotel, Mr. Atlas Alexander, guest of his aggrieved broker, Mr. Cephas Jones, shortly grew as prominent as a stocking-run on a summer hotel veranda. Eagerly he took in everything: the crowd, the merriment, the inbound money, the busy manager skillfully stimulating all three to greater and ever greater volume. Whoever owned this road-house had a gold mine! Which thought, coupled with a heavy consumption of mule-kick brand local gin, induced in the mind of Mr. Alexander a most pleasing glow.

"How hit look to you, big boy?" chuckled Cephas.

"Like a million dollars wid de bark off!" Atlas and the gin together mixed metaphors. "Who own dis place, nohow?"

"You does," Cephas startled him, "—if you makes de right offer."

"*I* does?"

"Sho do. It wuz jest placed in my hands by de new owner today to sell fo' him. As is. Make me a offer, is you so in'sted."

The rose-mists of the gin swept over the intellect of Mr. Alexander entrancingly. So did the idea of owning this busy road-house. Pleasuring himself while he attended to business—just like his old dream had run! And here it was being *offered* to him—

"Gives three hundred dollars down on hit—notes fo' de balance," he hazarded an amount he vaguely recalled somebody was going to pay him shortly for something.

"Dey been thinkin' about trying out Pro'bition up in Bummin'ham next month." Cephas seemed unable to get his mind on small figures.

"Four hundred!" Atlas attracted Cephas' attention only slightly. "Five hundred—and not another nickel down," he finally hit his high spot.

"Sho is hard fo' you to git yo'se'f above two-bits when you talks money, aint hit?" Cephas showed himself still thinking of the former inadequacies of his commission from Atlas. "But I sees whut I can do fo' you. Warns you right now, though, I aint 'sponsible fo' coats, hats, and consequences, after de way you done me 'bout de commission fo' skinnin' yo' friend Half-portion fo' you."

"You aint even skun him yit!" reminded the swaying Mr. Alexander witheringly.

THE sun had to hurry to beat the busy Cephas up next morning. When a broker played both ends against the middle in a small strange town, he *had* to get up early, to keep out of jails and hospitals. Everything was heading up now for a fast finish. Juggler-boy who kept three plates, a fork, and four spoons in the air at once didn't have anything on Cephas—selling Half-portion Williams a road-house for Atlas that Atlas didn't own: in fact, Cephas didn't know who *did* own it. And then selling it right back to Atlas for two hundred dollars' profit—with commissions both ways for himself. And both sides profitably ignorant of real ownership until after Cephas got out of town. A Wall Street financial house couldn't pull so complicated a deal, and get away with it!

In face of all this, *which* deal was concluded first was no longer important—just so they were consummated fast and close together. And both were ripe now.

Accident—or fate—made Atlas first. Cephas came upon him in the lunchroom, at his breakfast.

"Somebody must've slip' li'l melted dynamite in dat drinkin'-gin last night," complained Atlas peevishly, as Cephas seated himself at the same table. "Sho is hand me a kick in de slats."

"Aint nothin' but a overdose," sympathized Cephas. "I seen you when you done hit. You got to watch dat when *you* owns a road-house."

At this statement Atlas' expression brightened immoderately. "Dat somep'n else been pesterin' me all mawnin'," he confessed. "Is I buy hit, or wuz I jest drunk?"

"Both," summarized Mr. Jones succinctly. "But you sho is bought it. For five hundred smackers, down payment. Notes fo' de balance, all fixed to sign. Possession immediate' you pays out de down payment to me."

Mr. Alexander looked relieved and ate a griddle-cake. "Pleasures myse'f while I manages," he recited happily to himself. "Aint Half-po'tion's eyes stick out when he see me ownin' a road-house—and him jest got a dead mule and some real 'state whut liable be dead too!"

Cephas looked relieved also. There was a lot of nervous tension about this double-barreled type of selling with both principals kept strictly in the dark. But when a client like Atlas got too stingy with his commissions there was no other honorable way to augment them. And Cephas had ever been a stickler for honor.

"Gimme de five hundred, and I goes bind de trade wid hit while you's checkin' over dese notes fo' de balance," he instructed Atlas over their final coffees. "Dat road-house a gold-mine: two mo' buyers after hit now."

"Dey'll never git hit!" proclaimed Atlas in noisy proof that the subterfuge had worked. Anything that Cephas proposed went now—just so he didn't miss out on this Merry Widow place! "Dey's buckin' a *business*-man now!"

"Dat whut de brick wall say to de goat," muttered Cephas to himself.

"Mumbles which?"

"Says I done heard plumb to Mobile how good you is."

"All I goes in fo' is big op'rations," Atlas continued to expand. "Comes to a li'l job of sucker-skinnin' for a boy's own good, like gittin' dat three hundred away from Half-po'tion, sellin' him somep'n whut I aint even own, I hires me a small-time boy like you to 'tend to hit. De big deals is onliest ones I handles myse'f."

"*One* big deal gwine git away from you," Cephas skillfully egged him on, "is you aint make haste and git dat five hundred put up!"

"On my way to de bank to git it now. Sho craves git myse'f set in dat road-house." Atlas was rising from the table. "—And how 'bout dat Half-po'tion business? You gwine hang fire on dat all week?"

"Brings you his money today—soon's de Gov'ment pay off. He got to cash de check."

"Dat right: us aint want no checks in *dis* deal," agreed Atlas. "Somebody all time trackin' you back to whar you wuz wid dem."

"And now," purred Cephas shortly after, as he pocketed Atlas' five hundred, "all you got do is go out and take possession de Merry Widder Road-house you is done bought

Half-portion reached for the money. "Who you sell my road-house to for me, nohow?" he questioned.

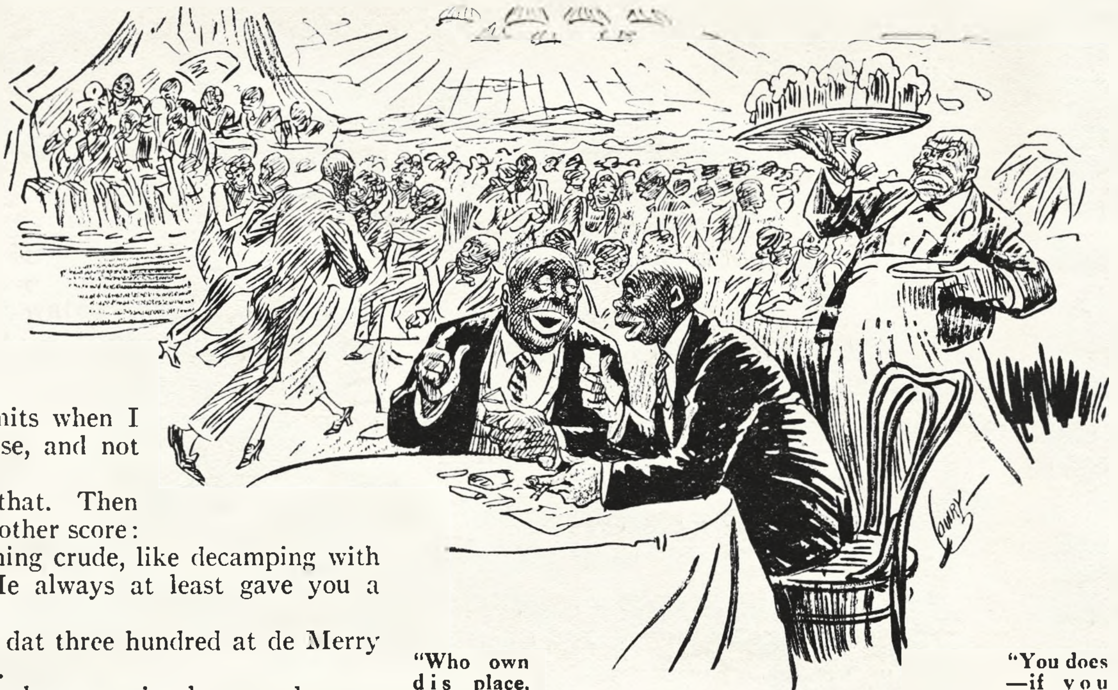
yo'se'f wid dis. I be out dar wid Half-po'tion's money,—less my fifty,—quick as I can git hit away from him. He r'arin' to buy whut I sells him fo' you."

Atlas thought of something. "Whut *is* you sell him fo' me?" he asked.

"Nemmind dat. Might sound better sometime, is you say you aint know—dat you wuz plumb outside de city limits when I pulled hit—at a road-house, and not know nothin' 'bout hit."

Atlas saw the force of that. Then he reassured himself on another score: Cephas never pulled anything crude, like decamping with other people's money. He always at least gave you a paper for it first. So:

"Be waitin' fo' you and dat three hundred at de Merry Widder," he acceded. . . .



"Who own dis place, nohow?" inquired Atlas. "You does—if you makes de right offer."

In front of the fish-stand, as previously agreed upon, Cephas found Half-portion: visibly nervous and visibly in funds—like something was fixing to pop.

"Let's us git on over to my room at de hotel, whar at us can do business widout bein' pestered wid witnesses," suggested Mr. Jones, wiping his perspiring brow.

For, right along about here in a deal, he couldn't help remembering, was where all the well-known slips between cup and lip were most liable to take place. And when a boy got this close to important money it worked on him. Cephas preferred being honest, too; difficult as it became when one principal was trying to squeeze him on his commission, and the other principal had become necessary on that very account. Anyhow, he reminded himself, he had Atlas' five hundred now; and he was on the very verge of getting Half-portion's three hundred. Total commissions for himself one hundred and fifty dollars—part of it honest, if a boy wasn't too squeamish. With one thing sure: it had been a noble idea, thinking up selling that same road-house both for and to Atlas, as a means of getting both a second commission and getting even on the part of the broker Cephas!

Yet, until he actually *got* the three hundred now, his situation remained as skittish as a mule that has just seen a hornet sit down on his rump. Things might happen—and they might not.

"I done got de down payment heah now fo' de road-house you sells me," Half-portion broke the suspense pleasantly as they journeyed hotelward.

"Come on in wid me, den," urged Cephas in a renewed sweat. "Cain't do big business right on de street."

Once in his room, he nervously took off his coat, and fumbled in his traveling-bag for a railway time-table. "Always likes to know when de trains leaves," he explained to the blank-faced Half-portion.

Mr. Williams said nothing to this—just had that queer look in the back of his eye that kept a broker puzzled.

Cephas sweated afresh, for no particular reason. There was something about that look of Half-portion's; something in the air now that a boy couldn't ignore, yet couldn't put his finger on—made the more obscure in its significance when Half-portion volunteered: "Jes' brang de money in fifty-dollar bills fo' dat road-house."

Backed up by a generous glint of green in his hand as he said it. A noble glint!

"Suits me!" Cephas found himself talking with a dry mouth. "Now, let's us git down to business, Mist' Williams," he proposed as briskly as his condition would permit. In fact, the time-table had indicated that briskness was in order. He was going to have to work fast from now on until he got a State-line behind him. For in some things he had stepped slightly over the line already—Cephas, who preferred honor where honor was convenient. Both ends against the middle bothered a boy if there were any slip-ups.

"—Now," he continued, "heah de five hundred down money, Mist' Williams, whut I sells de road-house whut you is buyin' for—"

Cephas began peeling off bills from Atlas' wad, counting aloud as he did so. Until he paused at "—and four hundred fo' you," with the last one. "Keeps de remainin' hundred bucks fo' my commission fo' sellin' it fo' you. Eve'ything open and above-boa'd—dat's me. Y'understand eve'ything now?"

"Sho is," Half-portion reached for the money, adding it to his own roll of fifties. And:

"Who you sell my road-house to for me, nohow?" he questioned as he pocketed the entire lot.

"Ax me no questions, and I tells you no lies," bantered Cephas through his nervousness. This Half-portion boy momentarily had all the money. And in a minute Cephas needed to be gone with his share of it and Atlas' part. "—But you done sold somep'n you aint even own, Mist' Williams—until you kicks in to me yo' three hundred dollars now fo' me to pay de owner fo' it wid. Way you keeps holdin' on to dat three hundred dollars' bonus money of yourn, you liable be in de fix fo' a minute of sellin' dat road-house befo' you bought hit. Aint right sell somep'n you aint own."

But, "Not me," returned Half-portion enigmatically. And, later, Cephas recalled a peculiarity about Half-portion's look and accent that should have warned him.

Again, however, Half-portion was reaching into his pocket, the one where all the money was. Cephas' eyes never left it. He was breathing jerkily. Old trade wasn't finished until Half-portion paid off his three hundred now; and he, Cephas, had to hustle over to the road-house and hand over two hundred and fifty dollars, net, of Half-portion's money to Atlas before it was. Besides getting

out of town with his own two commissions, totaling one hundred and fifty dollars, before his two principals discovered that each had sold to the other what the other did not own.

Again Half-portion hesitated. "Jest wants to know," he let Cephas' heart beat again, however, "*who* you sells my road-house to, befo' I puts my money out on it."

"W-e-l-l, you liable know sometime, so might as well tell you now," capitulated Cephas. " 'Specially wid you feelin' like you do about dat mule. You is done got even fo' dat *now,* so I trusts you wid de facts—dat you is jes' sold yo' road-house whut you buys from me fo' three hundred, to *Atlas Alexander,* fo' five. Only Atlas aint know yit he's buyin' hit from *you.*"

Cephas was prepared for some drop in Half-portion's jaw here; but not for the head-on collision that the news all but precipitated between it and his instep. Nor for the way Mr. Brown's eyes began to resemble inverted teacups in area and protuberance. As though there was something important—even vital—here that had not yet met the light of day.

"Sold hit to Atlas!" Half-portion almost whispered. And the put-upon expression of Mr. Williams was merging into one of amazed and understandable triumph—complicated, however, with something else.

Then sharply, suddenly—as though another and quite different idea had also penetrated the brain of Mr. Half-portion Williams: "I sells hit *to* Atlas?" he repeated thickly, clutching tightly at his seven hundred dollars. "—But *who sells it to me?*"

Cephas considered. But, after all, he had nothing to fear from a boy with a grudge against Atlas, one for whom he was on the eve of making a hundred dollars, clear, as well as giving him the joy of putting over a fast one on Atlas of mule-selling memory. So:

"*You* buys hit *from* Atlas," he elucidated triumphantly. "Dat way, he jes' buy he own road-house back from you fo' mo' dan you paid him fo' hit. And gits even wid him 'bout de mule on de side. So gimme de three hundred and lemme finish de deal wid Atlas, and cotch dat train. He liable be li'l hard to hold fo' a while aft'wards, too—twel he calm down."

But Half-portion's astonishment seemed but multiplied by ten at the news. Until again it stole disturbingly over Cephas that there must be some yet-undetected compatriot still in the wood-pile here.

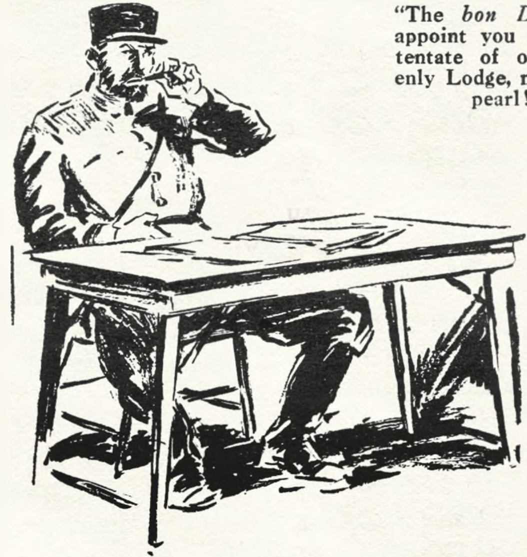
"You sell *me* dat road-house fo' Atlas?" was the burden of Half-portion's new song. "But how Atlas gwine sell it to *me* when he aint even own hit?"

There came times when a boy had to bluff, and bluff hard. Therefore: "Who say Atlas aint own it?" barked Cephas. Time was getting short. And he had yet to turn over two hundred and fifty dollars and the mythical title to a road-house to Atlas before train-time, in order to keep his transactions on the high ethical plane that would justify commissions, not jail, in his own case. "Co'se he own hit!"

But again that inexplicable look on Half-portion's face at this—the same look that had been there, Cephas recalled uneasily, when he had first showed Half-portion the road-house.

Then the bomb-shell, making everything—including a hundred-dollar commission to Cephas—unimpeachably if unexpectedly legal after all; even as he kissed good-by a fifty-dollar one that had never been attractive anyhow. For: "Gives you nothin'! I knows all time Atlas aint own hit," crowed Half-portion in a cackle of that last laughter that is ever the best laughter; "beca'ze *I* owns it—same as I did all de time you wuz buzzin' about tryin' to sell *my own road-house* to me!"

All the



"The *bon Dieu* will appoint you Liar Potentate of our heavenly Lodge, my Texas pearl!"

THE battalion was having a work-out to the tune of "The Smoke Goes Up the Chimney Just the Same." Lustily they roared the jeering words—indignant soldiery telling the world what they thought of the iniquities of the Government.

Oh, the Légion and the black boys build the roads!
Build the roads!
Build the roads!
Oh, the Légion and the black boys build the roads!

Sergeant Texas Ike thought it a fine marching song. The battalion had picked it up easily from Hell's Angels squad, who were mostly Anglo-Saxons, and it was a lot more inspiring than that old favorite, "*Voilà le budin!*" which simply means "Behold the sausage!"—though filled with uncomplimentary references to the kind of sausage. The new song gave voice to the Foreign Légion's special "grouse"—being detailed to build roads by the French Government at twenty-five centimes a day. It was self-starting, too, for all that some one in the ranks had to do was to pipe up: "*Build the roads!*" and the whole battalion would come crashing in.

It was an ironic yell. A battalion of those darling mamma-boys, the Sixth Tirailleurs, was within hearing, lined up like a khaki domino out on the broiling Hammada du Guir, and the song was informing those young conscripts with exasperation and defiance that it was for them that the veteran Légion was marching out from Poste Erfoud to build a road and a fort. The Tirailleurs were waiting for them. They were to do none of the hard and dirty work, but to stand guard and attend to the fighting, if any.

A bald insult, Sergeant Ike thought. Who were those beardless babes, to be looking after the wily Aït Hammou while the war-wise Légion passed heavy stones all day long, picked a trench forty meters on the square, and mixed concrete? He roared out: "*Build the roads!*" and Hell's Angels answered, with bared teeth and grim irony, "*Build the roads!*"

"*Oh, the Légion and the black boys build the roads!*" yelled the battalion, all facing Tirailleur-ward.

There was a stir in their gleaming ranks of bayonets. Their officers shouted: "*Houp! Gardez vous!*" as the

Valiant Liars

First in war, first in the gentle art of prevarication and first in the heart of his commander, Sergeant Ike of Texas and the Foreign Legion leads an exciting life.

By WARREN HASTINGS MILLER

Légion marched past in column of fours, Lébel rifles on right shoulders, left wrists swinging mechanically.

Slam! Slam! Slam! In silence the battalion column passed. Ike was flanking his pet squad—Corporal Criswell, the giant Michigander; Anzac Bill, soldier of fortune; the Honorable Geoffrey Royde-Austen, who had joined the Légion to get him a wound and now had a collection of them; Di Piatti, the Italian count; Mora, the dark Spanish bull; and Calamity Cyclops, the little one-eyed, bullet-headed sharpshooter whom Commandant Knecht had wangled from the Third Légion by a procedure entirely non-regulation.

Scuff! Scuff! Scuff! The Count Di Piatti, who never could forgo a practical joke if there was one within reach, raised his voice in a silvery bray: *"Build the roads!"* right in the very faces of the esteemed Tirailleurs.

"Silence!" That gruff and furious order from old Lieutenant Hortet shut him up. But it had served to call attention to Hell's Angels squad. An officer of the Tirailleurs was scanning them closely as they passed. Then his eyes widened with surprise and an involuntary hail came from him:

"*Hé*—Gough! Is it you, *alors?*"

Calamity swore luridly as they marched on. "Damn you, Piatti, I'll kill you for that!" he raved under his breath from the file behind the Italian. "You *would* pop off your head!"

"How come, C'lamity?" asked Ike, *sotto voce* and edging in. "You, Piatti, sixty hours' *plut* for raising that yawp when we'd oughta be polite—but why the ruckus, C'lamity?"

"That officer recognized me, that's what," said Calamity sullenly. "He used to be in the Third Légion. Can you beat the brand of luck I run into! That's my name, Gough. But didn't I tell you *Calamity* is right?"

"My Gawd!" rumbled Ike, aghast. The Third thought Calamity was dead. They had crossed him off the rolls and given him a military funeral, along with the rest of their picket line that got massacred to the last man up in the passes of the Grand Atlas. Only he wasn't dead. Ike and Hell's Angels had found him the sole survivor, guarding two German *disciplinaire* prisoners in a barbed-wire cage far out on the left flank of that lost picket line. He and the two Germans had distinguished themselves in some pretty work getting out of there and back to the Second Légion at Erfoud. Calamity had been lonely in the Third; he was about the only American in it. Like a ray of hope to him was the prospect of having Hell's Angels for buddies, a squad who spoke his lingo, thought his thoughts. And Knecht, who saw how it stood between him and the famous squad—and moreover never parted with a sharpshooter if he could help it—had let him reënlist in the Second. As the Third operated in the Grand Atlas hundreds of miles away, there was not one chance in a thousand of any of them ever spotting him in the Second. But who could have foreseen this officer of the Third being transferred to the Sixth Tirailleurs—and then just naturally being ordered to the battalion of that regiment that had been sent down here from Bel Abbès?

"You poor blinkin' bloke, what sort of officer is this mug?" Anzac Bill asked the morose Calamity, as the column slammed along with the Tirailleurs now following behind them.

"That dude? He give me four days guard-house, once, for having a speck on me rifle-barrel," said Calamity lugubriously. "The skipper tacked on two more, just to make sure he hadn't made no mistake."

"I want to know!" exclaimed Sergeant Ike sympathetically. There was no such type of officer in this battalion of the Légion, for old Hortet had been for many years a soldier in the Zouaves before being promoted to lieutenant, and Ressot, Commandant Knecht's other aide, had been graduated out of that hardest of all schools, the Camel Corps, after being sent down here as a shavetail from St. Cyr. But St. Cyr, like West Point, produces its share of little martinets, dudish little whippets who will never learn that the buck private is a man, not a thing—that he is the heart and soul and backbone of the army. This one would take a malicious pleasure in calling on Knecht and pointing out that he had a private of the Third in his command, who must, of course, be returned to his own unit. What their fine "Old Man" could do about it Ike could not imagine—receive the information with frigid politeness and inward rage, most likely. But there would be nothing left him *to* do but take the usual steps. And Calamity, who spoke eight languages and could run a typewriter, had been slated for office duty at the Third's headquarters in Meknès, when Hell's Angels had come upon him guarding those prisoners and had rescued him from that dreary fate.

The squad marched on, mentally scratching thick heads to dig up an idea on how to rescue Calamity out of this new predicament. They were having no luck with it. On the skyline ahead were now visible three small hillocks of stony rubble and the ragged irregularities of two dry creeks that forked. There was high, level ground between those forks, with an Arab well, called Atchana, sunk to subterranean water near the point of the fork. The humped backs and red fezzes of those happy-go-lucky black warriors, the Twelfth Senegalese, could be seen rising and falling as they labored with pick and shovel, for it was at Atchana that the General Staff had decreed that a *poste* should be built. Ike chewed solemnly as he hiked along, puzzling over Calamity. But the military part of his mind was criticizing that *poste* layout with disapproval. Politically it was a good site, for it included the well. As the caravans had to have water they had to be nice to the French about it and keep on being nice. It also furnished a base halfway between Erfoud and Bou Denib that would be a nuisance to those enterprising *harkas* of raiders who were continually erupting from the Tafilelt oasis to strike hard and swiftly across the Hammada du Guir upon the

busy Saoura Valley. Ike was wondering what Sultan Belkacem of the Tafilelt was going to do about this new *poste* being built on his favorite raiding-ground. From a military viewpoint the *poste* was a frost, for those three little hills commanded its site perfectly. Elegant places for sniping parties! If Belkacem was shrewd, they would not get far with the fort before bullets would be singing.

The battalion arrived on the ground, broke ranks, stacked its rifles in *faisceaux* of four Lébels strung along the foundation trench already opened by the sweating Senegalese. The Tirailleurs marched on, split into three detachments, and proceeded to occupy those three little hills. Hell's Angels viewed the maneuver with caustic comment as they dug out their working khaki from the packs.

"Maybe the books says so, but you wouldn't ketch *me* on no hill in this country!" Criswell declared sagely. "Them Frenchies never will learn nothin', Ike. 'Taint three weeks since them Aït Hammou got Dubois' people up a hill down at Djihani and cut 'em up proper. Now they's on three hills, three li'l detachments on each! Can you beat it?"

A grim laugh from the squad. As guards, those youthful Tirailleurs would take a deal of rescuing if there were any Aït Hammou about. Neither detachment could reinforce the other without coming under a murderous fire; on their hills they would be potted like cats by tribesmen lying prone in the desert below.

"Rather a snug billet, what?" said Jeff with sarcasm. "I mean, chap can't dig himself in, y'know. Blackamoor pops off, and there y'are; either his bullet gets you or the flying stones do it, what?" And the young Englishman shrugged his shoulders, serene in the knowledge that neither Ressot nor Hortet, let alone the Commandant, would be capable of any such military blunder with the men *they* were responsible for. The squad moved on to a concrete mixer set up at one corner of the foundation wall. Ike, busy at organizing gangs of mortar-men and stone-passers, presently stopped in his tracks with hand to visor at salute; here came Commandant Knecht himself, crossing the busy rectangle of men at work. The genial and bearded huge *chef de battalion* looked worried and gloomy as he bore down on Ike with all sails set. Ike knew that it was about Calamity, but this time his invention was asleep and he could think up no scheme that seemed helpful in the emergency.

"*Holà*, my Buffalo Bill!" the Commandant greeted him. "One minute of your valuable time, please!"

HE drew Ike aside and they faced each other, the Commandant with twinkling eyes in which lurked appeal, Ike tall and lean and leathery, wooden of face and expressionless of eye. Knecht knew that wooden look, knew that behind it Ike's brain was taking some exercise.

"*Hélas*, he has been recognized, that sharpshooter recruit of ours, my Sergeant!" Knecht opened up. "Calamity Cyclops—O divine *nom de plume* for a Légionnaire!—he has been officially reported to me as a private of the Third Légion. . . *Pah!* That meddlesome young whippersnapper of a Lieutenant Davost!" the Commandant burst out angrily and with a vast regret. "You would not like to lose our Calamity, my Sergeant—no?"

"Not on yore handsome tintype, Colonel!" said Ike with vigor. "Yeah, Di Piatti *had* to sing, when we was passin' them Tirailleurs! And this bird spots Calamity. Calls out his real name—Gough, 'twas."

"Precisely. I have thanked the officious gentleman!" Knecht said grimly. "What is there left me to do, I demand of you, but to direct that the papers be made out and this man Gough sent back to Erfoud? *Alors*—" He paused and winked, did the Commandant.

Ike thought he saw what Knecht was driving at and shrugged his shoulders hardily. "Shore, sir! You kin send this man Gough back to Erfoud for all of me, Commandant! *I* don't know any such pusson in my platoon! 'Pears like this Davost gent will have to prove we *got* sich a man as Gough with us afore he gits our C'lamity." Ike wagged his head.

"My treasure!" Knecht whooped, pouncing on him. "*Oui*, the proof! Me, I am puzzled, disturbed. There is no Gough on our battalion-rolls. Yet such a man has been reported to me as a private of the Third unlawfully with us. Is it that Lieutenant Davost can be mistaken? . . . *Alors*, you will report at once to Davost, Sergeant, taking Calamity with you. 'Is this the man?' you demand. . . . Also you will need a few liars at your back. . . Take the Hell's Angels, my Sergeant. *Ouff!*

That poor Davost! I leave the rest to you, my Texas pearl!"

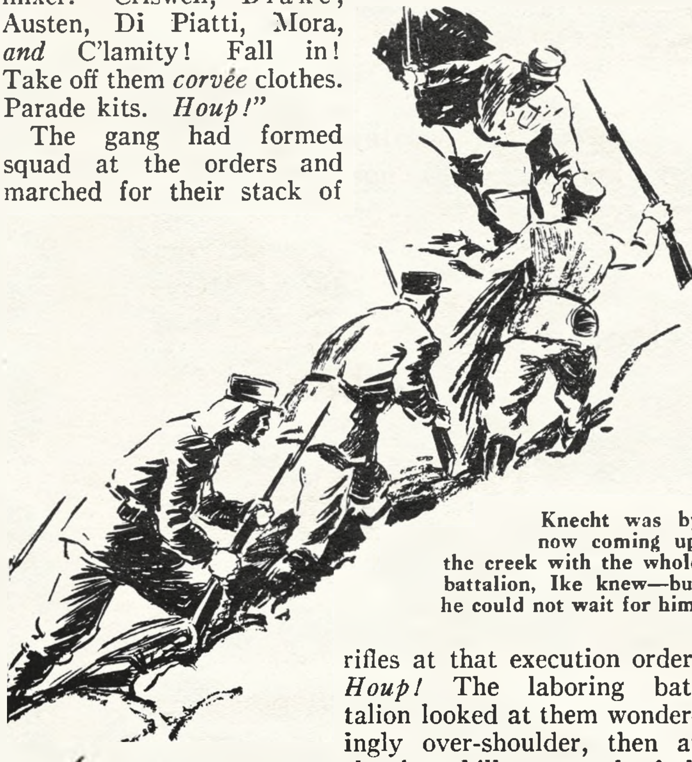
The Commandant went off chuckling, vastly relieved. He had Calamity for keeps if it came to a question of proving identity with Hell's Angels to back up whatever invention Ike might cook up. He wished Davost joy of them! To prove off-hand that Calamity was the man Gough, late of the Third Regiment, Foreign Légion. . . . God help him!

Ike went to collect the gang with equal joy. Of course this guy Davost would be cocksure he knew Calamity—or Gough—well and unfavorably. Hadn't he given him several days' *plut* for no greater offense than a speck of dust on his rifle-barrel? That speck of dust kept grav-

eling Ike with its utter injustice. They ought to do more than get Calamity free of this dude; get back at him, somehow, for that speck of dust. There was a score—and many more like it—to be paid with this bird!

"Come on, gang!" Ike called them off work from the mixer. "Criswell, Blake, Austen, Di Piatti, Mora, *and* C'lamity! Fall in! Take off them *corvée* clothes. Parade kits. *Houp!*"

The gang had formed squad at the orders and marched for their stack of rifles at that execution order, *Houp!* The laboring battalion looked at them wonderingly over-shoulder, then at the three hills across the fork of the dry creek. Had these military maneuvers anything to do with an attack, their glances were asking. Didn't look that way. The hills swarmed with khaki, with the bright glint of bayonets, three companies of youthful Tirailleurs crowded up there and ostentatiously watching the desert wastes of the Hammada du Guir beyond.



Knecht was by now coming up the creek with the whole battalion, Ike knew—but he could not wait for him.

The squad filled its canteens at the well Atchana and then plunged into the ravine directly below the point. As Davost had that detachment of Tirailleurs occupying the farthest hill on the left flank, Ike proposed to walk up the creek-bed till below that hill and then climb up and report with Calamity. As they stumbled along they were constructing a plausible lie to tell the Lieutenant.

"How long you known this bird C'lamity, Bill?" Ike asked gravely.

"Seven years, blarst him!" said the Australian with his iron grin. "Didn't I hide him in a dugout that Fourth of July in '17 when the M.P.'s were looking for a lot of escaped Yanks, so he could go over the top with us Anzacs that day? He and a lot more, who were itching to get into it—without orders, if you don't mind!"

It seemed a good line to take, for the Third's records had Calamity on a ship during the war.

"How about you, Jim?" Ike asked Criswell.

"Sure. I was one of those A.W.O.L. Yanks myself. They wouldn't let us Americans fight,—not trained enough or something,—so a lot of us ducked over into the Australians' trench that Fourth, knowing they was going over after Fritz. As Bill here says, he hid us all in a dugout when the M.P.'s came looking for us. An' then we had a fine party with the Anzacs."

"Priceless, my word!" whooped Jeff. "Did you really, Bill? That yarn ought to melt the heart of any officer with any fighting blood in him! I say, I was there too that day, y'know. Seventh London regiment, on your right. This little one-eyed blighter"—indicating Calamity—"came to me to ask if he could celebrate the American Independence Day by joining our show, when up comes a husky Yank M.P. and *boppo!* he's gone like a cat into a woodpile. 'Officer,' says the M.P., forgetting to salute, 'a lot of our boys went A.W.O.L. this morning. Y'aint seen any Yanks over here, has yer?' 'Not one balmy Yank, my good man,' I told him, sereno as you please. 'You might try that canteen over Vimy way. Fritz was lobbing it last night, but there may be a few bottles left.' And I closed the flap of the dugout and stood on it, for our friend had popped down there, quite likely—"

IT was a strong tale and getting stronger. But just then—*Wop!—Wop!*—like some one hitting ice with a stone. The squad stopped and listened to that distant sound far out in the hammada. There was movement, agitation, among the Tirailleurs. They could see a couple of the pickets coming in and reporting. But Ike took no stock in it.

"We stays in the ravine, boys. If it's them Aït Hammou, we-all don't want to be on no hill."

Wop! Wop! Wop! There was more of it developing. The Tirailleurs were standing up and looking excitedly eastward, with rifles poised, but there was nothing to shoot at and the range was too great. As for the Légion, it was tending to the mason business. When those boys got into serious trouble it would be time to drop trowels and go fish 'em out of it. Ike saw that what Knecht would do would be to push out a flank movement along this creek, enveloping the hostiles, sight unseen, when he did move. And there was no reason why this squad shouldn't carry out that military enterprise right now. They might come in useful when the Aït Hammou got to working on those Tirailleurs on their hills.

"Shove along, fellers," Ike ordered. "We don't do no reportin' with C'lamity jist yet! Not till we finds out more about this here."

They passed under the third hill, moving swiftly up the bed of the dry ravine. It meandered in a vast curve around the base, and began somewhere out in the rocky terrain of the Hammada du Guir. Meanwhile the firing was growing heavier and nearer. The Tirailleurs had got the order to lie prone and dig in. They no longer blanketed the hilltops in a khaki fringe. But it was pretty crowded up there at that, their red fezzes and brown shoulders freckling the stones so a bullet could hardly miss one of them. Ike and the squad could see casualties crawling in the rocks as they hastened along.

They were well to the eastward when he halted Hell's Angels and crept up to the rim for a look. Criswell and Bill were with him. The three stopped simultaneously with that one cautious raising of their kepis.

"Gosh-all!" Ike breathed, eying them. "Ef there's one, there's six hundred of them hosstyles out thar, fellers! We done bit off the whale's tail this trip!"

Criswell gazed hard-eyed at the prospect. According to their sinful custom, the Aït Hammou—those Ironsides troops of Belkacem's who never got enough fighting—had come on foot. They were scattered advantageously all over the rocky hammada out there, nice brown burnouses that looked exactly like rocks, only more so. They had Lébels and Mausers that sold at two thousand francs apiece in the Tafilelt, but had cost them nothing but a bit of pillage in the Saoura Valley. And they proposed a rush in force on those three hills packed with Tirailleurs. They were worming unseen, like weasels, through the rocks at that very moment. Ike could see that without a further risk of his kepi above the creek rim. A desert-full of hostiles was snaking forward out there. Up under the hills some rifles were popping, just a few, enough to keep the Tirailleurs occupied. And, meanwhile—

"Lordee, boys, I git elected giner'l of a major engagement ev'y time we starts out to do somethin' simple, like takin' C'lamity up to prove he aint Gough!" Ike complained whimsically. "Knecht, he oughta be here, with the hull battalion, if they's goin' to be anything left of them Tirailleurs! Only, aint no time for a messenger!"

Ike pulled perplexedly at the black forelock straying down under his kepi visor—a gesture that indicated mental distress. The pull failed to drag out an idea, save that they were in a precarious sort of place here in any event. One little party of the Aït Hammou working over his way for a flank attack down the creek—

Bill chuckled, a grim Australian chuckle. "Save a lot of trouble over Calamity if that Davost gets wiped out!" he contributed. "I hate to tell a lie, myself."

Ike shook his head and made his decision. "We got to do it, boys," he told the squad, which had by now crept up. "Unmask our attack, just as we is, afore them Aït Hammou gets goin' on the kids. What say we tear loose and bust this game right now, afore they gits further?"

It was more than playing with the whiskers of Death—it was inviting utter annihilation, for this squad of six to let go into the flank of that attack out there. But the squad considered: there was a fighting chance. No one could foretell what effect a sudden, galling rifle-fire poured in unexpectedly on their flank would have on the Aït Hammou.

"Cheerio!" said Jeff ruggedly. "The ayes have it, Sergeant!" They lined up for the sacrifice. At six paces along the rim their long, rapier-bladed bayonets leveled low over the stony gravel. Ike felt justified, tactically; that firebrand Hortet would have ordered this diversion on the enemy flank to save those companies on the hill without an instant's hesitation. It would unmask the Aït Hammou's attack, show the Tirailleurs their danger, if it did nothing else. "Let 'em have it, boys!" he said.

Prr-rang-rang-rang—whang! Off went the six Lébels' rapid fire, continued in a sustained chatter as fast as bolts could be worked. They sounded like a whole section, did Hell's Angels. But the results were astonishing and unforeseen by any of them. With shouts, yells, war-cries, the whole *harka* of Aït Hammou jumped to their feet and charged the three hillocks as fast as they could run. The crowded lines up there sputtered the rapid fire of desperation, for it was only a matter of seconds with them before this mob that had suddenly risen out of the earth would be at hand-to-hand with them. The field was a drove of burnouses rushing forward at top speed, of bearded warriors who fired snap-shots from the shoulder as they ran, like big-game hunters. They could not miss, with those swarming hillocks for a target!

IKE was astounded to find himself and his squad ignored—indeed, and fast being left out of it altogether. There were enemy casualties out there, and more of them as the charge leaped suddenly into action. A gust of bullets swept the creek as the Aït Hammou on their side whirled to fire at them, then ran on with the main body. Instead of turning on and annihilating Ike's six valiants, that sheik of the Aït Hammou had been quick to see that to order his charge at once was the answer.

"Cease firin'! —That guy aint taking no stock in this handful, boys," Ike told them with chagrin. "We beats it back up the creek." They could see an ominous development at the base of all three hills. The tribesmen had reached there by now; burnouses were clustering thickly, moving up in a fringe under the haze of smoke. When they got near enough for a last and final rush—

"Come on, gang! 'Pears like we's reportin' with you after all, C'lamity," said Ike. *"Pas double!"*

They sprinted down the creek-bed. Their objective was Davost's hill on the right flank. It was being hard pressed when they had last looked at it, the Aït Hammou filtering up its slopes everywhere, a solid ring of them sniping from around the base.

MORE and more savage grew the firing as they raced back until nearly under the hill, but on the desert side of it. They climbed out into a bellowing thunder of musketry, a gale of it, that smote the ears with violently increased intensity directly they had left the shelter of the creek. An appalling sight greeted their eyes. The hill was being stormed. Its crest was covered with struggling masses of men, with red Tirailleur fezzes and white tribesman turbans milling in swirls of glinting steel, with brief charges by squads and sections of Tirailleurs hastily flung on the tenacious masses of attackers, only to recoil and disintegrate. About half the company up there had either fled or become casualties, the pace being too hot for their young inexperience. The rest resisted desperately, one group in particular being conspicuous by its solidity, its ordered rushes, its air of cohesion and direction. Ike knew that Knecht was by now coming up the creek with the whole battalion on the double, but he could not wait for him. His six would have to pile in and do what they could to break this attack, right now, at its climax.

"Go git 'em, hellions!" roared Ike. "That platoon up thar! Easy, now—open order!"

It was like a charge in the Argonne, a steady advance in extended skirmish-line order. They fired with care as they crossed the bare, broiling swale. Then they were ascending the hill, that core and heart of the Tirailleurs' defense their objective. Bust the hostiles around that, and you could do something that might turn the scale—at least till Knecht came up. Those were Ike's tactics in his own words.

Preep! Ike's whistle shrilled sharply through the din of battle. Like a practiced team each member of Hell's Angels sought cover where he was. Bullets had been smashing their way with increasing vindictiveness. And the canny Sergeant, having attained a good position halfway up the hill, saw no point in exposing his men further.

"Lam it into 'em, boys—rapid fire!"

Their Lébels raved at that order from Ike. Burnouses melted away in that mob surging around Davost's group of Tirailleurs at bay above. It was a dog-fight up there. But, as with the spray from a fire-hose, Hell's Angels was putting out whole sections of it on their side. Some one running the Aït Hammou saw that, for there came a rush of reinforcements swinging around the hill, a valiant band of ruffians, who advanced shooting and yelling madly.

"Control left, you birds!" said Ike. The squad fire crashed into them. It kept on and on, in a spattering punch of steel-jacketed bullets, and the attack withered, died. And then they heard a high, thin yell over the tumult: *"Chargez, mes enfants! A la baïonnette!"*

The group up above broke through in leveled ranks of steel. They forced the Aït Hammou before them downhill in disorder. Hell's Angels, cheering in encouragement, abolished groups and knots of tribesmen dashing to the rescue. There was a retrograde movement—retreat—then a scampering of skinny black legs for cover out of that neighborhood—an end to that fierce hand-to-hand attack on the hill. Davost's men dug in quickly with the respite. They had position down the hill-flank now; the Aït Hammou could have the crest if they wanted it!

"'Pears that guy has some sense after all," observed Ike as he stopped to shove in a fresh clip. "And it's all over, boys. Thar comes Knecht!"

He swept an arm out toward the plain below. The bat-

talion was out there, pouring up out of the creek-bed and extending in a long line out and out to cut the rear of the Aït Hammou storming the three hills. You could hear the fire diminishing in volume everywhere as man after man of them saw the danger and made himself invisible, to escape on his own as best he could. On their own hill there were less and less of burnouses to shoot at, sporadic shots coming from cover in the rocks, then no more from that particular location. The Aït Hammou left on this hill were draining out, vanishing mysteriously.

Came a rustling in the dry bushes near by and a young officer, pale, wounded, shaking still with the terrors of that fierce hand-to-hand engagement, crawled into the nest occupied by Hell's Angels. *"Mon Dieu!* Twenty-eight killed and nine wounded in my company alone! *C'est terrible!"* his blue lips were muttering. His eyes stared vacantly, still appalled with the carnage that had beset him on all sides not ten minutes before. The affair had lasted just forty-five minutes—but what a forty-five! Then he collected himself and a warm light of appreciation leapt into his eyes as he spied Ike's chevrons. "My *félicitations,* my Sergeant! It was a timely help! . . . Davost is my name. *Oui!* I hope I can do as much for you sometime!"

He extended a bleeding hand, dripping from a yataghan slash. Ike said: " 'Twarn't nothin', sir. We-all hed orders to report to you when this ruckus busts loose. So we horns in an' does what we kin."

"But yes! It was admirable, my Sergeant! You handled your men with a discretion most remarkable. Let me congratulate you! . . . And this report?"

HELL'S Angels were eying him fixedly, with bated breath. This was the guy who had recognized Calamity and had made it his business to report him to Knecht. But he had been through something since.

Said Ike: " 'Twas about a man you called Gough, sir, when we passed your battalion awhile back. *Him."* He pointed at Calamity, who was leaning over a boulder and scanning all the hillsides with poised rifle.

Davost looked again at the man Gough, and then at the hard eyes staring fixedly at him. Something told him he had better step light and carefully with this squad, who had just saved his entire command from annihilation. He shrugged his shoulders and smiled at them. "We had a sharpshooter extraordinary by that name in the Third in my time," he said. "He had only one eye; but *mon Dieu,* what an eye! Quicker than the lightning-flash!"

"The Commandant, he says *we* aint got no man Gough on our rolls, sir," said Ike with significance. "He hed a notion that you might hev been mistook. He says to report with our man to Lieutenant Davost an' let him look him over ag'in, to make sure. 'Tenshun, Calamity!"

Calamity faced about. He was no ornament. A waspish, alert little devil who even now seemed to have eyes in the back of his head for any lurking hostiles. His rifle was still poised for his characteristic instantaneous swing and flash. It was his timely bullet that had drilled that very tribesman whose yataghan slash still bled across Davost's knuckles—had the officer known it.

Davost laughed uneasily. *"Peste!* Can there be *two* men in the world who are at the same time one-eyed yet possessed of an uncanny skill with the Lebel rifle? . . . Gough joined off a ship in Oran." He hesitated before pronouncing the final words of identification, for these men seemed obdurate about something.

"Mebbe, sir," said Ike firmly. "But Calamity, here, he's our buddy. He's been with us since the Western Front. . . An' he aint no sharpshooter; he couldn't hit a cow with a plank if the cow was only a yard off. Bill, here, has known him seven years. Jeff kin tell you how he went A.W.O.L. to git inter the scrap with the Anzacs on July Fourth, '17, up Vimy way. I was there too, sir," Ike lied hardily. "Bill hid us all in the Anzac dug-outs when our M.P.'s come lookin' for us—"

THE tale was breezing along merrily, as one after the other of Hell's Angels took it up and embroidered it with more details. Davost was grinning indulgently. It was an obvious fabrication, for he knew Gough as well as any officer can know a man in his command—but a bold lie has its appeal to any manly soul, if well told. But just then Calamity himself kicked over the whole alibi, for he suddenly whirled about and fired. It was the quickest sort of snap-shooting anybody ever dreamed of—the flashing rifle-barrel, the ringing report—and over a hundred yards away a distant brown burnouse on the hillside suddenly sprawled forward over a boulder and a rifle glinted in the sun as it clattered among the rocks. At the same time the buzzing rip of a bullet tearing the air to shreds right through the center of the squad had passed by and was gone. Davost was leaning up against Ike with his hand involuntarily held to one ear, where a bullet had missed him by a scant inch.

Tableau! Calamity was blowing smoke out of his barrel, with that care that is instinct with sharpshooters; then he snapped his bolt, his eyes still watching his hostile narrowly. Hell's Angels gasped, blinked at the sudden death that had ripped through their midst; then Bill hooted his Australian chuckle and they all laughed, howled, roared with guffaws. What was the use of telling any plausible whopper, with a man like Calamity around!

Davost recovered. His laugh joined with theirs. His hand left the ear and went to salute at his kepi visor: "To you, Monsieur G— er, Calamity! My thanks! That Aït Hammou had intended to get me, only for your quickness of eye, and—er, shooting!" He winked at Hell's Angels. *"Mes braves!* You will tell your Commandant that I do not know your man Calamity. Positively not! *Pas du tout!* I comprehend that he is your buddy, and has been for many years. Enough! Though one might mistake him at a distance for our man Gough, *hein?"* Davost added with just the ghost of a smile.

Calamity turned from his sentinel duty and said, simply: "Thanks, Lieutenant!" There was no pretense in their eyes that they did not know each other, and Hell's Angels laughed anew, especially Bill.

"Alors," said Davost, "it is a gentleman's agreement that Gough perished, once and for all, with the Third's lamented picket line. I owe it you, *mes enfants! Adieu,* my Sergeant! I must get back to my own men now. Congratulations, and *félicitations!"*

He was gone, and Hell's Angels took it out in hammering Calamity. "You *would* show off, jist when we had him comin' nice!" Ike growled affectionately. "Durn ye! He hed to lie like a thief, too, to save yore ornery hide, C'lamity! But he warn't so bad, that Davost—eh, fellers?"

Hell's Angels agreed. Later they reported to Knecht, after the battalion had got through mopping up what was left of the Affaire Atchana.

The big man whooped joyously when he heard the tale. "Ah, *bah!* The Davost lied too? You are a contagion, a disease, my Buffalo Bill! But we shall start a special heaven for discreet prevaricators, you and I, when the bullets marked with our names finally find us. Eh, my facile humbug?" He dug Ike facetiously in the ribs. "This Davost, he too shall qualify! And the *bon Dieu,* who is a discerning Person, will appoint you Liar Potentate of our heavenly lodge, my Texas pearl!"

Murder in the

By SEVEN ANDERTON

Illustrated by A. E. Briggs

Martin's eye fell on the letter clutched in the dead hand. He thrust it into a pocket, then rose and glared around the room.

IT was nine o'clock on Saturday morning, and there were but fifteen persons in the big news-room of the *Record*. (So called in this story because the real name of the paper was something quite different.) Johnny Dowling, city editor, had sent most of the reporters on assignments, and the men and women with regular beats were out on their rounds. The copy-readers had not yet put in an appearance, nor had the workers in the society department. The place was unusually quiet.

Agnes Borden, queen of the sob-sisters, remarked upon this fact to Whitey Larson, police reporter. The two were sitting at adjoining desks placed against one of the long walls.

"Yes," agreed Larson, "but it's the lull before the storm. Bernard is due to pop in here any minute, and then—blooie! That's why I'm sticking around instead of beating it back to the job. I may learn some new bad words to use on those flat-feet over at Headquarters."

"Do you think Bernard will bawl Johnny Dowling out again?" asked the sob-sister.

"Think?" growled Whitey. "I know it. The old devil will peel the hide— Here he comes!"

There was warning in the last three words, uttered in a lowered voice. A door had been flung open, and a big man had burst into the news-room. He was J. G. Bernard, managing editor of the paper. Whitey and the young woman began to fuss busily with their typewriters.

Anger was written on Bernard's flushed face and gleamed from his steely eyes as he strode across to where the city editor was scanning the assignment-book. A copy of the Morning *Herald* was gripped in the managing editor's big hand. There was a story—a big story—spread on the front page of the *Herald*. It was a story that had "broken" in time to have been carried in the late Friday editions of the *Record*, but the *Record* had missed it. Now, like Whitey Larson and Agnes Borden, the other workers in the big news-room all became very busy, keeping their eyes away from the city desk and their ears keyed for the explosion. Johnny Dowling was going to catch hell.

All his fellow-workers felt sorry for Johnny. He was perhaps the best-liked member of the *Record* staff. And anyhow, it wasn't Johnny's fault that the *Record* had slipped up on the story. But that wouldn't keep him from being the goat, as usual.

The managing editor halted beside the city desk, glaring down at the back of Johnny's neck. The city editor kept right on with his work.

"Dowling!" The word resounded through the big room, carrying above the rattle of typewriters and the clatter of the machines over in the corner by the State editor's desk.

Johnny Dowling, his face wooden, turned his swivel chair and looked up into Bernard's florid and wrathful visage. Dowling had weathered many a storm such as Bernard's bellow told him was about to break. He was now hoping that J. G. would make it fierce and short, so that he, Johnny, could get back to his work.

"Yes?" said Dowling flatly.

A few of the bolder ones in the room turned to watch the tableau at the city desk. The rest kept their eyes averted and listened hard.

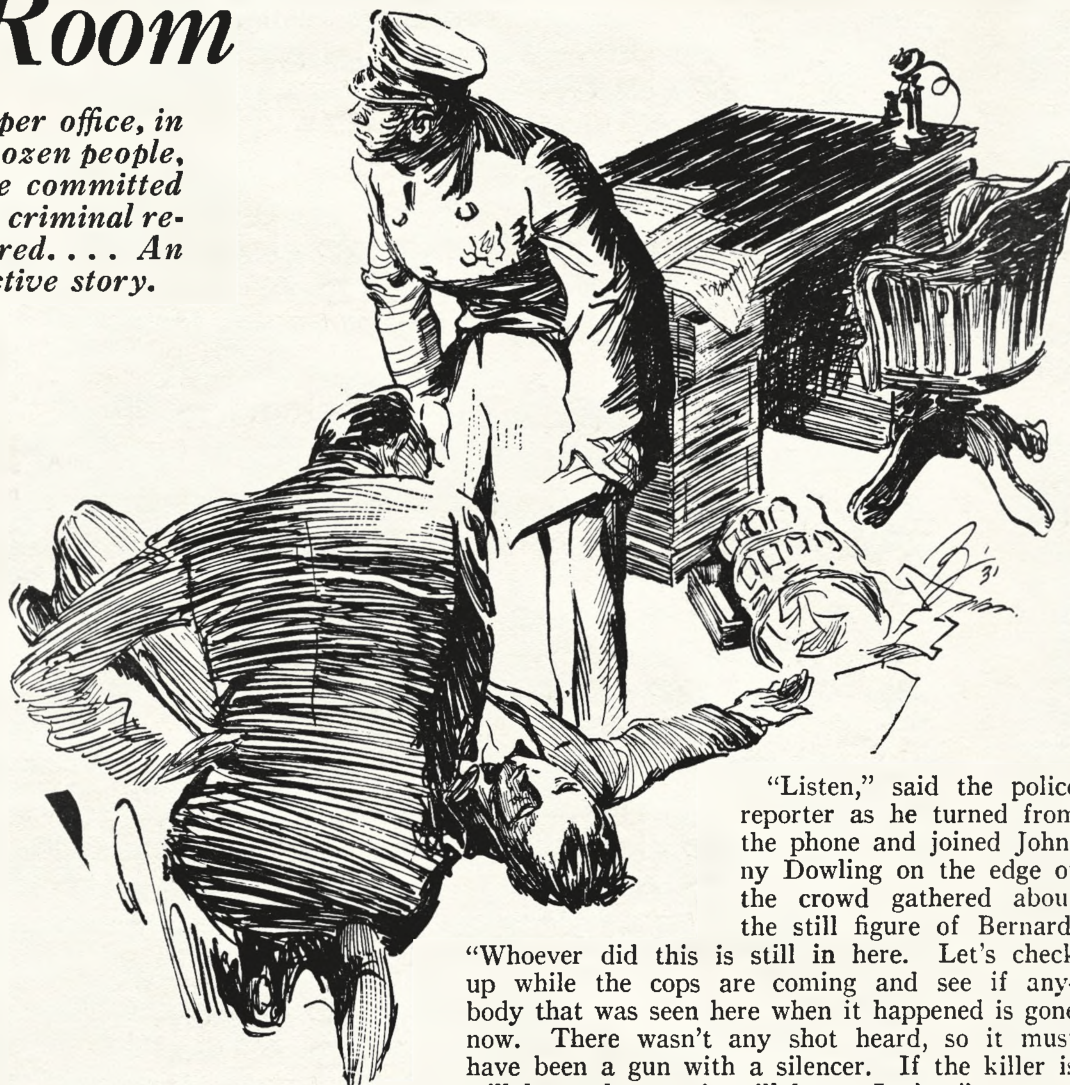
The managing editor opened his mouth, but the first word of the expected tirade was never uttered. The thing that prevented the outburst caused Johnny Dowling's eyes, fixed on Bernard's face, to open wide in mingled surprise and horror. There was a sharp *thwack*, as if some one had thumped the managing editor on the forehead with a fingernail. With the sound a small round spot appeared just above Bernard's right eyebrow. The spot reddened swiftly.

Bernard was a big man. Now his huge form rocked gently forward and back several times. His mouth fell open wide, and a faint gurgle sounded in his throat. His hand opened, and the tightly rolled copy of the Morning *Herald* dropped to the floor. Then the stricken man pitched forward across Johnny Dowling's lap. Johnny's chair went over backward with a clatter. The slender city editor struggled from under Bernard's limp body, gained his feet and stood looking down at Bernard as though fascinated.

Chairs were pushed back and there was a thudding of feet and a babble of excited voices as the others in the room rushed toward where the managing editor had fallen.

News-Room

In a busy newspaper office, in the presence of a dozen people, two murders were committed —and for days the criminal remained undiscovered. . . . An engrossing detective story.



Joe McHale, from the rewrite desk, reached the inert body first, and made an effort to lift it.

"He got poison mad once too many times," grunted McHale. "I always said apoplexy would get him."

"No," came Johnny Dowling's voice, huskily. "Let him alone, Joe. Don't move him. He's shot! Dead!"

"He's *what?*" cried Joe McHale, straightening up.

"He's shot," repeated Johnny Dowling. "I saw the bullet hit him in the forehead."

"You saw a bullet?" asked the rewrite man, staring at the city editor's ashen face. "Say, what are you talking about?"

"Well, I mean," explained Dowling, "I saw a bullet-hole open up in his forehead just as he started to bawl me out. It was the damnedest thing. He looked sort of surprised. His mouth fell open. Then he tumbled into my lap."

"Look! There's blood!" The cry came from Agnes Borden. She was pointing a rigid finger.

All eyes sought the spot to which the sob-sister was pointing. Bernard lay face downward beside the overturned swivel chair, and directly below his head a small pool was widening rapidly.

Whitey Larson grasped Johnny Dowling's arm. "Watch the doors," he snapped. "Has anybody left since—"

"That's right," cried Dowling, snapping out of his daze. "Pangborn! Miss Franz! Get to your doors and don't let anybody come in or go out until I tell you to. Larson, call the police. Don't tell them what has happened. Just tell Captain Martin to bring a couple of men and come over here on the jump. Miss Sanborn, call Mr. Goodreault."

Lila Franz and "Dad" Pangborn occupied desks placed squarely before the only two entrances to the news-room. Their function was to stop visitors, give them information and keep them from bothering the members of the staff unless they had cause. Now each of them went to the door which was his particular charge.

Miss Sanborn, secretary to F. P. Goodreault, the publisher, went to a phone to call her employer. Whitey Larson was calling Headquarters.

"Listen," said the police reporter as he turned from the phone and joined Johnny Dowling on the edge of the crowd gathered about the still figure of Bernard. "Whoever did this is still in here. Let's check up while the cops are coming and see if anybody that was seen here when it happened is gone now. There wasn't any shot heard, so it must have been a gun with a silencer. If the killer is still here, the gun is still here. Let's—"

"You listen," interrupted Johnny Dowling. "We'll hold everybody here, but this is a newspaper, not the detective bureau. Bernard has been murdered. Are we going to let the opposition beat us to a story that happens in our own office? Everybody snap out of it! We're getting out an extra. Porter—"

The instinct that had made Johnny Dowling the best city editor west of New York had asserted itself. For several minutes he barked orders at this and that member of the staff. The machinery began to hum. With the exception of the two guarding the exits from the news-room, everybody was exceedingly busy. Johnny Dowling had worked short-handed before. He was capable of getting the maximum of work with the minimum of effort.

Into the midst of the scene of industry and tragedy walked F. P. Goodreault, the publisher. He was a pompous little man of about fifty. He dressed in garments of fine material, but of cut and pattern far too youthful for his years. He affected spats and carried a cane. His reputation was unsavory, but he had amassed millions during the score of years since he had published the first issue of the *Record,* and he knew how to exert the full power of those millions, plus the power of his newspaper, to his own advantage. Nevertheless he was a physical coward. For years he had never moved outside of his home or office without a bodyguard.

Goodreault looked at the body of the managing editor and shuddered. Then he crossed to where Johnny Dowling was working. Johnny sat at the end of his desk,—away from the dead man lying in front of it,—and carried on with the task of getting out the extra.

"How—did it happen?" asked the publisher. "Who—"

"Wait a little while," snapped Johnny. "Police are coming. Got to get this extra out quick."

Goodreault looked down again at the body, then turned and walked across the room to a vacant desk, where he sat down. He tried to keep his eyes away from that limp form, but they kept straying back.

THE police arrived, to find a staff busily polishing off a story, to be on the street in ten minutes more, while the still warm body of the story's central character lay sprawled in the midst of the activity. As hard-boiled Joe McHale remarked, this was one story Bernard wouldn't burn Johnny Dowling up for missing.

Captain Robert Martin replaced Miss Franz and Dad Pangborn at the doors with his two assistants, Officers Dickerson and Leigh. Martin then strode over and looked at the body but did not touch it. He granted Johnny Dowling's request to delay action a few minutes until the extra had been closed up.

F. P. Goodreault rose and started toward the detective captain, then paused and after a moment went back and sat down. He did not move again until the staff had finished its work and Johnny called all the workers to him beside the city desk. Goodreault joined the group.

"All right, Dowling," said Captain Martin, "let's have your story first."

While a police stenographer took down his words, Johnny Dowling told Captain Martin his version of what had happened.

"So," nodded Martin when the city editor had finished. "Now I want all of you who were looking at Bernard when he fell into Dowling's lap, to step over here to my left. The rest of you stand to my right."

Five men and two women took their places on Martin's left. The detective proceeded to question them one by one. All corroborated the story Johnny had told.

"Now," said Martin, "I want everybody to go to the exact place where he was when Bernard was shot. Take those places and keep them until I tell you to move."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Martin," spoke up Goodreault, "but I was not here. Where shall I go?"

"Where were you?" demanded the detective.

"I was at home, just finishing breakfast," replied the publisher. "I was notified of the—ah—tragedy by telephone. I hurried right down here."

"I see," said Martin. "Then get outside that door until I'm ready for you to come back in. Who else was not here when the killing happened?"

Goodreault, rather incensed at being ordered out of his own establishment, moved toward the exit which Martin had indicated. Evidently he was the only one except Martin and his two assistants who had not been in the room at the time of the murder.

Martin stood for a moment in silence, surveying the room, about which the staff members had now placed themselves.

"If there is anybody not in the exact place where he or she was when Bernard was shot," called Martin in a loud voice, "speak up and get in the right spot. I'm going to check up in a minute."

"I was sitting in the chair that he—Bernard—is lying beside," said Johnny Dowling, from his position at the end of the city desk.

"Yeh," grunted Martin. "Well, wait a minute." He faced the officer, who was on guard at one door. "Dickerson, where is Doc Kerr?"

"I don't know," answered the assistant. "He'd ought to be here soon."

"Let him in the minute he shows," growled Martin. "All of you stay right where you are until we can move the body. Is there a photographer around here?" Martin addressed the question to Johnny Dowling.

"I'm a photographer." The answer came before Dowling could reply. It came from a small young man who stood some distance from Martin's post of observation.

"What's your name?" demanded Martin.

"Harold Post."

"Were you standing where you are now when Bernard was killed?"

"As nearly as I can remember," replied Post. "You see, I had just come out of the dark-room with some wet prints of pictures taken at the scene of the Simms robbery. I was on my way to the art department with them."

"You were one of the seven who saw Bernard fall?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good," grunted Martin. "I want you to take a bunch of photographs of this room for me. Get your camera ready. I'll have somebody stand in your place for the pictures."

The photographer moved away in the direction of the dark-room, and Martin turned toward one of the door guards.

"Dickerson," said the detective captain, "call Mr. Goodreault in here. I'll have him sub for the photographer."

The publisher was called back and instructed by Martin to stand on the spot where the photographer had stood. Then the door was pushed open, and the medical examiner entered the room. Harold Post came out of the dark-room with his camera and flashlight apparatus.

"Hello, Doc," Captain Martin greeted the medical examiner. "Where the devil have you been hiding? Now you can wait another minute while this photographer takes a couple of pictures of the body. Then you can do your stuff. How quick can you take him out of here?"

"Right away," answered the doctor. "The morgue-wagon is downstairs."

Harold Post took two pictures of the body from angles suggested by Martin, and then the doctor knelt to his task. In a few moments he rose and announced that a bullet had entered Bernard's brain through the forehead, causing almost instant death. Then the body was removed.

"Now," said Captain Martin, "all of you keep your places. Dowling, you pick up your chair and sit as you were, and show me where Bernard stood when he was shot. I'm going to take his place in the pictures."

The city editor righted the chair and seated himself in it. The others of the staff, from the places they had taken, were watching with keen interest. Martin, with Johnny's help, placed himself in the position Bernard had occupied when the bullet entered his brain.

"Now," Martin ordered the photographer, "take half a dozen pictures of this room from different angles, and get as much of the place into each picture as you can."

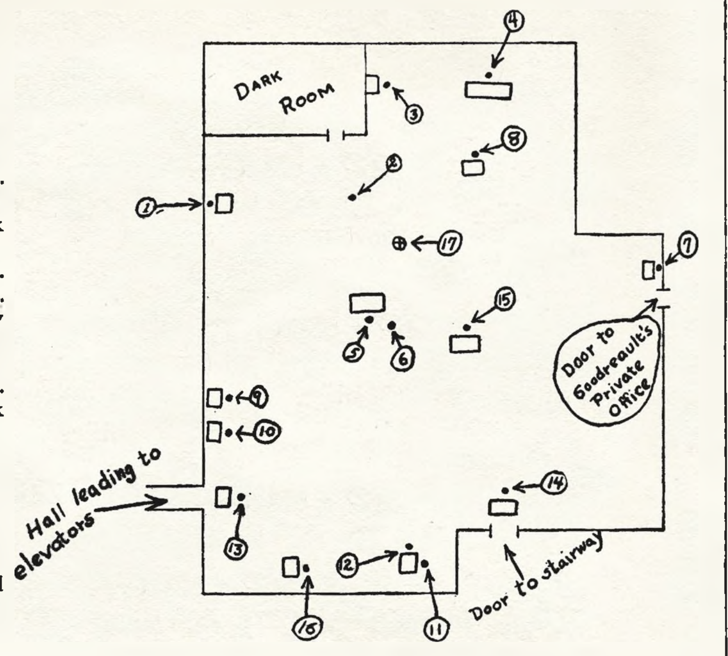
Post took the pictures. From them the plan was later made which is here reproduced.

IT will be noted that the huge room was without windows, the reason being that it was located in the center of the building and completely surrounded by corridors off which opened all the outside rooms—which were rented as offices. The Goodreault building was owned by the publisher of the *Record*, and he had a notorious eye for revenue. Hence the arrangement that made the news-

Key to Plan of Record News-Room

(1) Troy Halliday, State editor, seated at his desk.
(2) Harold Post, photographer.
(3) Betty Mott, librarian, seated at her desk.
(4) Ralph Specht, reporter, at file desk in library. Standing up.
(5) Johnny Dowling, city editor, seated at city desk.
(6) J. G. Bernard, managing editor, standing near city desk and facing toward library in rear of room.
(7) Miss Sanborn, private secretary to publisher, seated at her desk.
(8) Arthur Hadley, crippled exchange editor, seated at his desk.
(9) Agnes Borden, sob-sister, seated at desk talking to Whitey Larson.
(10) Whitey Larson, police reporter, seated at desk.
(11) Lon Hawks, seated at his desk in art department. Cartoonist.
(12) Martha Moore, feature writer, standing beside Hawks' desk talking to the cartoonist.
(13) "Dad" Pangborn at information desk.
(14) Miss Franz at other information desk.
(15) Joe McHale, rewrite man, seated at his desk.
(16) Another artist, not mentioned in story.
(17) Water-cooler.

Note: In order to clarify the picture only desks that were occupied are shown in plan.



room the poorly lighted and ill-ventilated place that it was. The only ventilation was through skylights of leaded glass in the high ceiling. Artificial lights were necessary all the time. The only exits were a door opening on a stairway to the street, and another through a narrow hall leading to the elevators. The ceiling with its skylight ventilators was some sixteen feet above the floor, and those openings were covered with heavy steel screens fixed in place. With the two lone exits guarded, there seemed no doubt that the murderer of J. G. Bernard was trapped in the news-room.

When the pictures had been taken, Martin ordered the photographer to put away his camera and take the position where Goodreault had substituted for him, and Goodreault was placed in the position of the murdered man. Martin then telephoned Headquarters and asked for four men and a police matron to be sent over at once. He then prowled about the room questioning each person in turn and making notes from time to time on a pad he had taken from the city desk. The men from Headquarters came and were told to wait on the landing outside the stairway door. The police matron was with them.

"Say, Martin," protested Dowling, after half an hour had passed, "we've got to get out the paper, you know."

"Yeh?" answered the detective. "I've got to catch a murderer, too. You can forget about the paper. I let you get out your extra. That'll be all the paper today, unless I get through in time."

The detective circled the room again, asked a few more questions and then walked over to a position beside the big horseshoe-shaped copy-desk.

"Listen, everybody," Martin addressed the room. "Here's how things stand: A man was murdered in this room with fifteen of you present and seven of you admittedly looking at him when the bullet hit him. Nobody who was here then has been out of the room since. That means that the murderer is here—either one of you fifteen, or another who is hidden somewhere. In a few minutes we will know if there is anybody hidden, and we will find the gun and silencer. In the meantime I want all of you to get over in this art-department corner and stay there while the rest of the place is being searched. Officer Dickerson will keep an eye on you while the rest of us frisk the joint."

During the next hour the place was literally turned upside down by the searching officers. Every nook and cranny was searched, and every inch of wall and floor inspected for a secret hiding-place, but no gun was discovered. Nor was any person found in hiding. It was a sorely puzzled Captain Martin who finally brought the hunt to an end with a fruitless search of the person of each of the fifteen *Record* employees. As a final gesture, the publisher was also searched.

"That gun is in this room somewhere," declared Martin when the staff members were again assembled about the big copy-desk. "We didn't find it, but we will. And somebody in this bunch used it to murder Bernard. We'll find out which one of you it was, too. Until we do, it is going to be unpleasant for all of you—so if any of you have an idea that will help us nab the guilty party, now is the time to speak up."

Nobody spoke. Martin waited while a thickly silent minute passed. Then he grunted in disgust and lighted a cigar.

"Does anybody know anybody else in this crowd who didn't like Bernard?" was the next question the detective snapped out.

For a moment there was silence. Then:

"Don't be funny, Martin," said a crisp feminine voice. "Everybody hated Bernard—and you know it."

Martin's eyes sought the speaker. She was Martha Moore, a woman of forty-and-a-few-years and one of the oldest employees of the *Record*. Her red hair was streaked with gray, and time had etched her face with fine lines. She had sharp eyes, bright blue in color, a wide, firm mouth and a spunky chin. Her friends and fellow workers called her "Ginger."

"Humph," grunted Martin. "Did you hate him?"

"Heartily," retorted Martha Moore flatly.

"Why?"

"Because he was a skunk."

The silence in the room was heavy. The pompous little publisher was looking at Martha Moore with a most peculiar expression in his small, pale-blue eyes. Finally he licked his lips and broke the silence.

"Mr. Bernard is dead, Mar—Miss Moore," said Goodreault in a voice intended to be reverent and reproving at the same time.

"A dead skunk is still a skunk," asserted the woman. "And I'm not a hypocrite." She put a peculiar emphasis on *"I'm,"* and her eyes met Goodreault's unwaveringly. The publisher's face flushed, and he looked away.

Captain Martin glanced quickly at the note-pad in his hand, and then leveled his gaze at Martha Moore.

"Lucky you were standing in a place where you could not possibly have shot Bernard in the forehead," said the detective.

Martha had been standing beside Lon Hawks' desk in the art department, talking to Hawks when the shot was fired. Hawks, the *Record's* cartoonist, and Martha Moore had both been looking at Bernard when he fell.

Now Miss Moore shrugged her shoulders and made no reply. Martin again gave his attention to his notes.

"As this thing shapes up," he said presently, "there are only five of you who could have fired the shot. Of course, any of the rest of you may be accomplices. However, Troy Halliday, for one, could have done the shooting."

"Say, brother—" began the man Martin had named. He was the State editor and had been sitting at his desk near the telegraph-machines when the murder took place.

"Keep cool," interrupted Martin. "I didn't say you did it. I said you could have. A number of the others agree that you were at your desk when the shot was fired —but nobody was looking directly at you at the moment. You are one suspect. Harold Post is another. He was standing in a spot where he could have done the shooting, and nobody was looking at him."

"But I had my hands full of wet prints," protested the photographer. "I laid them on the city desk right after Bernard fell over. They are still there, and—"

"Be quiet," Martin cut him off. "You are on the list. So is Betty Mott."

The face of the young woman mentioned paled a bit. She gave a barely audible gasp, but said nothing. Betty Mott was the librarian of the *Record,* and her desk stood against the dark-room wall at one end of the library. She had been seated at it when the bullet ended Bernard's life.

"Next," went on Captain Martin, "is Ralph Specht. He says he was back in the library at the file-desk, looking at last week's file."

"I was—" began the tall, dark reporter whose name was Ralph Specht.

"You were in a position to have fired the shot," Martin interrupted. "So be quiet until I get through. The fifth one on the list is Arthur Hadley."

"But, Captain," cried Hadley. "I—"

"You'll have a chance to talk later," snapped Martin.

Hadley scowled and subsided. He was exchange editor of the *Record,* and he was a cripple. He now sat on the edge of the big copy-desk with his crutches between his knees. He had, so he said, been reading exchanges at his desk when the managing editor entered the news-room. He had looked up from his work at the first sound of Bernard's angry voice, and had seen the victim crumple and fall into Johnny Dowling's lap.

"And," continued Martin, "that completes the list of those who might have fired the shot. One of the five I have named did fire it. There is no question about that. My check-up proves that all the others were in positions from which the bullet that killed Bernard could not possibly have come."

"How about Johnny Dowling?" asked Troy Halliday.

"Seven people," answered Martin, giving Halliday a sharp glance, "were looking at Dowling and Bernard when the bullet hit Bernard. That lets Dowling out. There are no two ways about it. One of the five I named killed Bernard. Some of the rest of you may know a lot about it, but— Oh, thunder! That gat is in this room, and it's got to be found."

"For Pete's sake, Martin," begged Johnny Dowling, "can't you let us get to work and get out a paper? There is a crowd of my help waiting to get in here with their stories, and the advertising department and composing-room are on their ears. It will set us back a big bundle of cash if we miss—"

"Tell you what," cut in Martin; "if you can get out your paper without anybody coming into this room or going out of it, go ahead. But we'll keep right on frisking the joint until we turn up that gun."

"I think we can manage that," said Johnny after a moment of thought. "We can use the telephones, and our copy goes to the composing-room through the air-tubes. I've got one camera man outside. If you'll let him hand in his camera, Post can develop the pictures. The reporters who are outside can use advertising-department typewriters to bang out their stories, and the copy can be handed in to one of your men at the door and given to me."

"Okay," nodded Martin. "Go ahead. I'll leave a guard on each door, and the rest of us will go over this place again."

Johnny Dowling glanced at the clock. It was ten minutes past eleven. He began to issue orders to those in the room, and in a few minutes they were busy at the task of getting out the Saturday paper under difficulties. Johnny announced that only the home edition would be issued. Lou Jackson, the photographer who had been outside, passed in his camera, and Harold Post was ordered to the dark-room to rush out prints.

"We'll have to give that dark-room another frisk," declared Captain Martin.

"How soon can you have things in such shape that the officers can get in?" Johnny asked Harold Post.

"Thirty minutes—maybe forty," replied Post after a moment of study.

Martin nodded, and Post went to the dark-room. The officers, led by Martin, began a second fine-comb search of the place. The police matron, whom Martin had ordered to remain, also aided in the search. The publisher went to the city desk and said a few words to Johnny Dowling. Then he turned and spoke to Martha Moore, who had seated herself at her desk.

"Miss Moore," said Goodreault, "please come into my office." Without waiting for an answer, the dapper little man started across the room toward a door marked *"Publisher, Private."*

As Goodreault was in the act of inserting a key into the lock of that door, Captain Martin came to his side.

"Has this door been locked all the time?" demanded Martin.

"Yes," replied the publisher. "It is always locked, except when I am in it."

"You have the only key?"

"Yes."

"What about the janitor?"

"He cleans while I am here. I usually call him and sit at my secretary's desk outside the door while he does his work."

"I see," nodded Martin. "I guess you can go in there if you want to, but don't call anybody else in."

"I—why—" hesitated Goodreault. Then, turning to Martha Moore, who stood at his elbow: "Never mind, Miss Moore. I'll talk with you later."

Martha, without a word, turned back toward her desk.

"Does your—ah—order apply to my secretary also?" asked Goodreault.

"It applies to everybody," declared Martin.

"I see," said the publisher. Then, to the young woman who sat at the desk to the left of his office door: "Miss Sanborn, my mail, please."

The secretary handed him a packet of letters, and the publisher opened the door and stepped into his large and luxurious private office. There were windows in that office, Captain Martin noted, but they were heavily barred, despite the fact that they were on the second floor.

The door closed behind Goodreault; and Martin, with a shrug of his heavy shoulders, returned to the supervision of the search for the murder weapon. Johnny Dowling and his short crew were working with efficient and furious speed.

"This bunch sure feels awful bad about their boss being bumped off," one searcher growled jeeringly to another.

"I aint noticed tears running down anybody's cheeks," answered the other.

Ten minutes passed, and then Goodreault came out of his office. The little publisher held a letter in his hand. His face was pale, and he wore a frightened, hunted look. For a moment he stood looking over the busy room where the men and women were working like beavers at their tasks, and trying not to show their annoyance at being disturbed by Martin's diligent searchers. Then Goodreault moved quickly across the room to where Captain Martin was examining one of the desks.

"Captain," said the publisher, touching Martin's arm, "I—something grave has come up. I wish—it is necessary that I leave the building. Since I was not here when the —ah—tragedy occurred, I take it that you will permit me to go?"

"Well—" said Martin slowly, noticing Goodreault's excitement—or was it fright? "I guess I can let you out—if you'll stand for another search before you go. That gun is in this place—and it aint going out until it goes in my possession."

"I—why, certainly," agreed Goodreault. "Only please search me at once. It is urgent th—"

The publisher's slight form suddenly jerked taut. His speech died in a sound that was half gurgle and half gasp. His eyes opened wide and then closed tightly. The taut body relaxed with a shiver. The knees buckled, and the next moment Martin's big arms had caught the falling man. Blood was gushing from a wound just under Goodreault's right ear.

"Stay right where you are, everybody," bellowed Martin. "Don't move! Boys, watch everybody sharp!"

All sound in the news-room ceased suddenly, except for the clatter of automatic machines. Nobody moved. Captain Martin's roared command seemed to have momentarily frozen the occupants of the room. After a moment the tension relaxed. The police officers scattered about the room were watching sharply to see that nobody left the spot where he had been when Martin's command was given. Several of the officers drew their guns.

In a few moments the doctor announced that a bullet had entered Bernard's brain, causing almost instant death.

Captain Martin lowered the limp form of the publisher to the floor. Blood continued to spurt from the wound in the neck. Goodreault opened his eyes, and a shudder ran over him. His lips moved, and he struggled to lift his head. He was trying to speak. Martin bent close above the dying man.

"*Salerno—must—*" the publisher murmured. Then blood welled from his lips, and any other words he had intended to say died in a gurgle. The stricken body yielded to death.

Martin's eyes fell on the letter clutched in the dead hand. He took it and thrust it into a side pocket of his

coat. Then he rose and glared around the room. All eyes were upon the tragic tableau.

"By the living God," barked the big officer, drawing his service revolver, "this is enough! You men cover everybody and keep your eyes open. There's a killer in this room, and the gun is on him or near him! Don't let a soul move until I say so."

Telephones were jangling. Martin picked up an instrument and ordered the switchboard operator not to ring the news-room again until further notice. He then had the girl connect him with Headquarters, and gave orders that the medical examiner be sent back to the *Record* news-room at once. That done, he stepped back to the side of the body and again surveyed the room.

"The bullet," declared Martin, "came from the back end of this room. That lets most of you out. But don't any of you move, anyhow. I want some more pictures of this place before we—"

The detective ceased speaking abruptly and strode to the door of the dark-room. He pounded on the panel.

"Yes?" came Harold Post's voice from within.

"This is Martin," barked the Captain. "Come out here."

"I can't open the door for about five minutes without spoiling my negatives," called back the photographer.

"To hell with your negatives," retorted Martin. "Come out here right now."

The door opened, and the photographer emerged with a puzzled look on his face.

"What's the—" he began. Then his eyes fell upon the body of the publisher lying beside the spreading pool of blood, and he stood gaping in silence.

"Stand right where you are," growled Martin as he began to examine the dark-room door.

It was a solid door, and it fastened with a spring lock on the inside. At about the height of a man's face a small pane of red glass was set in one panel. Martin examined this glass and satisfied himself that it was immovable. He opened the door wide, stepped inside and closed it behind him. In a moment he came back out.

"All right," snapped the detective at Post. "Get your camera and take several pictures of this room, the same as you did before. Move fast—make it snappy!"

Within fifteen minutes the pictures had been taken. The camera was put away, and Martin pocketed the pad upon which he had been making more notes.

"Now," said the detective, "there are just four of you, counting Harold Post, who could have fired this last shot. That probably means only three, because Post was locked in that dark-room, and there is no hole that he could have shot through. So I want Betty Mott, Ralph Specht and Arthur Hadley to step out here with their hands up. No talking."

The three named lifted their hands and approached Martin, where he stood beside the body. Their faces were a study. Betty Mott, the librarian, had been sitting at her desk in the library. Paul Specht, the tall, dark reporter, had again been back at the file-desk. Arthur Hadley had been reading exchanges at his desk. Captain Martin made a mental note of the fact that all three had been in exactly the same positions when both shots were fired.

"Mrs. Derstine," said Martin to the police matron, "you take this girl to the wash-room and search her for a gun. Watch her. Jones, you frisk these two birds."

No weapon of any sort was found on either of the men. The matron came back with Betty Mott and reported no find.

"Huh," grunted Martin. "Post, you step over here. Jones, frisk him."

The photographer joined the other four suspects and was searched. No gun.

"One of you four is the one we want," snapped Martin, glaring at the group of suspects. "Jones, you and Thomas take the bunch of them over and lock them up. We'll have no more loose shooting in this joint. Now, the rest of you, let's find that damned gun. It will be pretty close to where one of these people stood or sat—or else in that dark-room."

"What about the paper?" inquired Johnny Dowling.

"Blast the paper!" answered Martin. "Go ahead and get it out if you can still do it with these four gone and us working; but nobody goes out or comes in until I say so."

"Come on, folks," said Johnny. "An extra in a hurry. Just the front page. We'll make the rest of it out of whatever is handy."

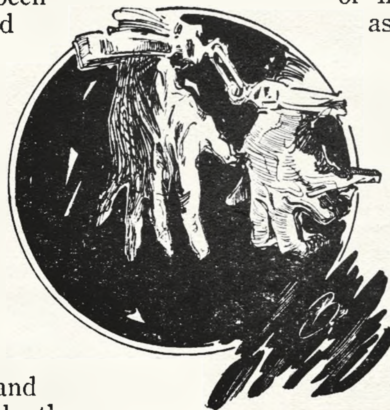
The medical examiner arrived a few moments later, after the four suspects had been taken away by the two officers. Goodreault's body was removed in the midst of the hubbub of the search for the weapon, and the getting out of the extra that was to tell the city of his death. The final sheet of copy and the last cut for the extra was shot to the composing-room at last, and then Johnny Dowling walked over to Captain Martin. It was a few minutes past one o'clock. The murder weapon had not been found, and the officers were still turning the place upside down in their search.

"These people have got to have something to eat," said the city editor.

"By thunder!" snorted Martin. "You are sure one sympathetic bunch."

Martha Moore spoke up from her desk near-by. "We have just furnished this town with the best news it has read in many a day. We have earned food."

"Say," said Martin, after scowling at Martha Moore in silence for a moment, "you stick around here. I want to chin with you a little." Then, speaking to Johnny Dowling: "The rest of you can clear out and eat—or hold a celebration. You'll all be searched as you leave. And don't any of you come back. This place is closed for the day. We are going to find that gat. It may give us the low-down on which of those four I've had locked up did the killing. If not, I'll try some other things."



Johnny turned away to tell the other *Record* employees what Martin had said. The detective captain again faced Martha Moore, who sat at her desk and met his eyes with a hint of derision in her own.

"I suppose Goodreault was a skunk too," growled Martin.

"I imagine any self-respecting skunk would admit it with reluctance," answered Martha succinctly.

"And everybody hated him?"

"Not everybody," retorted Martha. "There are probably some persons who never knew him or heard of him. Be your age, Martin. You know that Goodreault was a blackmailer, a crook, a liar and everything but a white man. I'm not saying anything about either Goodreault or Bernard that I haven't told both of them to their faces while they were able to hear it."

"And you've kept your job on the *Record* for how long?"

"Twenty years," replied Martha. "Since it was started."

"How come?"

"That's *my* business."

"Yeh?" snorted Martin. "Maybe you had today's bit of work done."

"I didn't," snapped Martha. "I've always known it would happen. I'll admit that it has been longer in coming than I expected. But I did nothing to hurry it up."

"Do you know any motive that any of those four over in the jug might have had for bumping off Bernard and Goodreault?" asked Martin, changing his tack.

"No," answered Martha. "And if I did, I wouldn't tell you. I know roughly seven thousand reasons why both of them deserved what they got today."

"What are they?"

"They have been putting out the *Record* for twenty years," replied the woman. "Three hundred and sixty-five times twenty is—"

"If you think it is such a lousy paper," demanded Martin, "why did you stay on it?"

"Waiting for today," was the calm reply. "And because I've drawn a salary at least four times as large as I could have drawn any place else. I've bought stock in the *Record* until I own more than a third of it. Shortly I'll own control, now that Goodreault and Bernard are gone. Then I mean to bathe and delouse the yellow rag and make it respectable. That is why I have stayed and waited."

"And you hope the killer who did today's work gets away with it, don't you?" asked Martin.

"I certainly do."

"Humph," grunted Martin. "I've got a notion to send you over to keep those other four company."

"Try it," snapped Martha. "You won't unless you are dumber than I think you are. You've known me a long time. Now, if you are through asking me questions, I want to go and eat."

"Go ahead," growled Martin after glaring blackly at her for a moment. "But you stand a frisk before you leave."

"Call Derstine," shrugged Martha, as she rose and picked up a book and a package from her desk. "I'm hungry."

Martin stood frowning after the two women as they disappeared in the direction of the wash-room. His big hand slid into the pocket of his coat and came in contact with the letter he had taken from Goodreault's lifeless fingers. He drew the letter out and fished the enclosure from the envelope.

It was an odd letter. The words, some whole and others made up of mismatched letters, had been cut from a newspaper and pasted on the sheet of paper from an ordinary school tablet such as might be purchased at half the stationery shops in America. The message read:

> Goodreault
> The time has come. I warned you that you had but a short time to live. You no doubt remember. Soon after you get this or perhaps before you get it, Bernard will be dead. You will not be long in joining him in hell. Remember Anton Salerno in the short while you have to remember anything.

There was no signature. Martin examined the envelope. It was a regular government-printed one such as are sold daily by hundreds in any large post office. The address was typewritten, and the postmark showed that the letter had been mailed late Friday night. Martin surmised that there would be no fingerprints on it that would lead anywhere. Just as he was putting the letter back into his pocket, the officer guarding the stairway door raised his voice in argument with somebody at that portal.

Martin raised his eyes and saw Whitey Larson, the *Record* police reporter, trying to get past the guard.

"Hey, Martin," called Larson, "let me come in. I want to talk to you—I may be able to help you."

"Let him in," said Martin to the officer. Although he would never admit it to the reporter, Martin had considerable respect for Whitey Larson's ability as a detective.

Arthur Hadley, exchange editor.

Larson entered and came across the room to where Martin waited. His eyes had flicked over the office and taken in the fact that the searchers were still diligently at work.

"Haven't found the gun?" inquired Whitey.

"No," answered Martin shortly. "What's on your mind?"

"The gat," replied the reporter.

"What about it?"

"There was a silencer on it."

"No?" retorted Martin sarcastically. "Pretty soon you'll figure out that it wasn't loaded with blanks."

"What I mean is that, silencer and all, the gun must have been a fair-sized object. You're just wasting time looking for it any longer—as an ordinary pistol with a silencer on it. That weapon is disguised as something else—a trick gun. Can't you see that? The ransacking you have given this place would have turned up the other sort long ago."

"Huh," grunted the detective thoughtfully. "Just the same, you're wrong. It wasn't a trap gun set to do the job, because it killed two men in different places, and—"

"I didn't say a trap gun," interrupted Whitey. "I said a trick gun. Somebody aimed it, sure enough. But it didn't look like a gun—and I've got a hunch it is no longer in this place."

"What do you mean?" snapped Martin.

"I mean that your men and Mrs. Derstine only searched the people who left for a *gun*. Suppose it was a gun that looked like something else?"

"By thunder!" snorted Martin. "I get you. We've got to check up on what was carried out of here by everybody that—"

"Say," spoke up Mrs. Derstine, who had approached and was listening to the conversation. "Martha Moore had a pair of fancy silver candlesticks. We talked about them when I searched her. She said they were a gift from the Doane department-store, sent over this morning by a delivery-boy."

"We gotta catch that red-headed spitfire quick!" cried Martin. "A fancy candlestick could be a trick gun, all right. And she—"

"I'd go easy, Martin," cut in Whitey. "Ginger Moore won't run away. And she's poison if you rub her hair the wrong way. You know she couldn't have done either of the shootings from where she was when they happened. And you can check up on those candle—"

"She couldn't have fired the shots," admitted Martin, interrupting, "but she could have carried the tool out of this dump for the one who did fire it. I'm going to check up on those candlesticks just as quick as I can—and to hell with which way it rubs that dame's hair! I wish I knew where she went."

"She said she was going around to the Virginia coffee-shop," spoke up Mrs. Derstine.

"We'll see," declared Martin. "Hawley, you come here and go with Mrs. Derstine to the Virginia coffee-shop. Get that red-headed Moore woman if she's there, and bring her and a pair of candlesticks back here. If she aint there, find her."

"Bad business," declared Whitey Larson as the officer and the matron departed. "You'd better have checked up on the ones who could have fired the shots before you monkeyed with Ginger. Don't say I didn't warn you."

"The ones who could have fired those two shots are all over in the jug," retorted Martin. "They are safe enough."

"I meant," came back the police reporter, "check up on what they took over there with them."

"They didn't take anything with them."

"No?" inquired Whitey. "Did Hadley go without his crutches?"

Captain Martin stood for a moment like a stunned man. The reporter grinned at him and waited.

"You figure one of that bird's crutches was the trick gun?" demanded Martin, presently.

"A crutch would be a handy thing to make into such a weapon, it seems to me," answered Whitey. "And Hadley sat in a swell spot to have done the shooting in both cases."

"We can't find a sign of a gat," said an officer who stepped up to Martin. "We've searched this place like nobody's business."

"Drop it for a while," grunted Martin, "but all of you stick around." The detective captain strode to the nearest telephone and called headquarters. He ordered Arthur Hadley's crutches brought over to the news-room at once.

"Do you know any reason Hadley might have had for bumping off Bernard and Goodreault?" Martin asked the police reporter as he turned away from the telephone.

"No," answered Whitey. "But he might easily have had one. So many people did. There have been lots of times when I could have enjoyed the job myself."

"Humph," sniffed Martin. "They were sure a couple of popular guys. Ought to be a big crowd at their funerals."

"There may be, at that," grinned the reporter sourly. "There's lots of people who will want to be sure they are under six feet of earth at last."

"Well," said the detective, "if your hunch about the crutches turns out right, my troubles will soon be over as far as this case is concerned."

"No, they won't," demurred Whitey.

"They won't?"

"By no means," declared the reporter. "You've sent a cop out to pick up Ginger Moore."

MARTIN'S face darkened. He pondered a moment and then went again to the phone. He got the Virginia coffee-shop on the wire and was told that Martha Moore had not been there, and that the matron and the officer had left a few minutes before he called. As he set down the phone, an officer arrived with Arthur Hadley's crutches.

Martin snatched the crutches savagely from the wondering officer. Two minutes later both crutches were fit for nothing but kindling—and they had contained no hidden deadly weapon. The Captain looked decidedly chagrined and ordered the officer to take the pieces out and match them at once and deliver the new crutches to Hadley at the jail.

"Well," growled Martin as he turned to face Whitey, "that was a flop. Looks like the candlesticks. That red-head lied about going to the Virginia. I hope—"

HE fell silent as the matron and officer entered the room, escorting an indignant Martha Moore. There was a package under her arm.

"Say, you," demanded Martha as she approached Martin, her eyes flashing, "what in blue hell is the matter with you?"

"Why didn't you go to the Virginia coffee-shop?" countered Martin.

"That's none of your blistered business," snapped the woman. "I—"

"Shut up!" barked Martin. Then to Officer Hawley, as astonishment and anger silenced Martha for a moment: "Where did you find her?"

"Coming along Pine Street," answered the officer.

"Let's see those candlesticks," demanded Martin, jerking the package from under Martha's arm.

In amazed and indignant silence the woman watched while the detective tore away the wrapping and closely inspected the two tall and ornately carved candlesticks.

"Aint neither one of these a trick gun," admitted Martin presently. "But you could have ditched the trick one and—"

"Your head could have been a balloon, if hair and a face hadn't grown on it and the middle filled up with bone," burst out Ginger Moore. "So you are looking for a trick gun? I'll bet you never had that idea yourself. Sounds like Whitey Larson to me. I knew a trick gun was the answer as soon as the first search didn't turn up a regular one, but I didn't say anything."

The detective winced, but stuck to the job. "Where were you since you left this office to get something to eat?" he demanded.

"Getting something to eat."

"Where?"

"At the Columbia grill," replied Martha. "Not that that's any of your business, either. I started to the Virginia and ran into a friend who took me to the Columbia. I had just left there when these people of yours came along and picked me up. And now I'm going to tell you something else: I'm leaving here—and I don't want to be bothered any more. I've got a few busy hours ahead. Before I go to bed, I'm going to be owner and publisher of the *Record*. And if you don't lay off me, I'll make it the *Record's* business to see that there's a radical change in the detective and police departments of this town. Give me those candlesticks."

She snatched the articles in question from Martin's hands and strode toward the door. The officer on guard stepped aside and let her pass. There had been a look in Ginger Moore's eye as she walked straight toward him that gave the officer the feeling that the irate woman would walk not around, but over or through him if he did not clear out of her path.

Martin stared with a black frown at the door through which Martha had whisked. Mrs. Derstine turned away to hide a smile that twitched at her lips.

"In your place," remarked Whitey Larson, "I'd be sending out some feelers for a new job."

"You're not in my place," snorted Martin.

"Thank God!" retorted Whitey.

Martin's hand, thrust into his pocket again, reminded him of the letter he had taken from the dead publisher. He drew it out, and looked at it again and handed it to Whitey.

"Make anything out of that?" he asked. "Just before Goodreault kicked off, he tried to tell me something. All he was able to say was: '*Salerno must—*'"

The police reporter was scanning the letter. Presently he shrugged his shoulders and handed it back to Martin.

"Tell you anything?" queried the detective.

"Tells me why Bernard and Goodreault were killed, and that it was done by a friend or relative of Anton Salerno," nodded Whitey. "You remember what Goodreault did to Salerno, don't you?"

"Yeh," said Martin. "Dug up a bunch of dirt on him and put him out of the running for mayor."

"And if you don't know it," declared Whitey, "that dirt was ninety per cent lie, but Goodreault and Bernard had fixed it so that Salerno couldn't prove it. Salerno was a darned fine chap. He made one little slip down South when he was a youngster. Nothing to get excited about, but Goodreault and Bernard built it up, and when they couldn't make him lie down, they printed the filthy stuff they had concocted around a grain of truth in the *Record*. Salerno's wife was high-strung and proud. She read the paper, and when Salerno came home that night, she met him with a gat. You remember how we found the two of them on the floor in the library."

"Yeh," nodded Martin.

"And Salerno's mother was ill at the time," went on the reporter. "She died two days later—from the shock."

"Yeh."

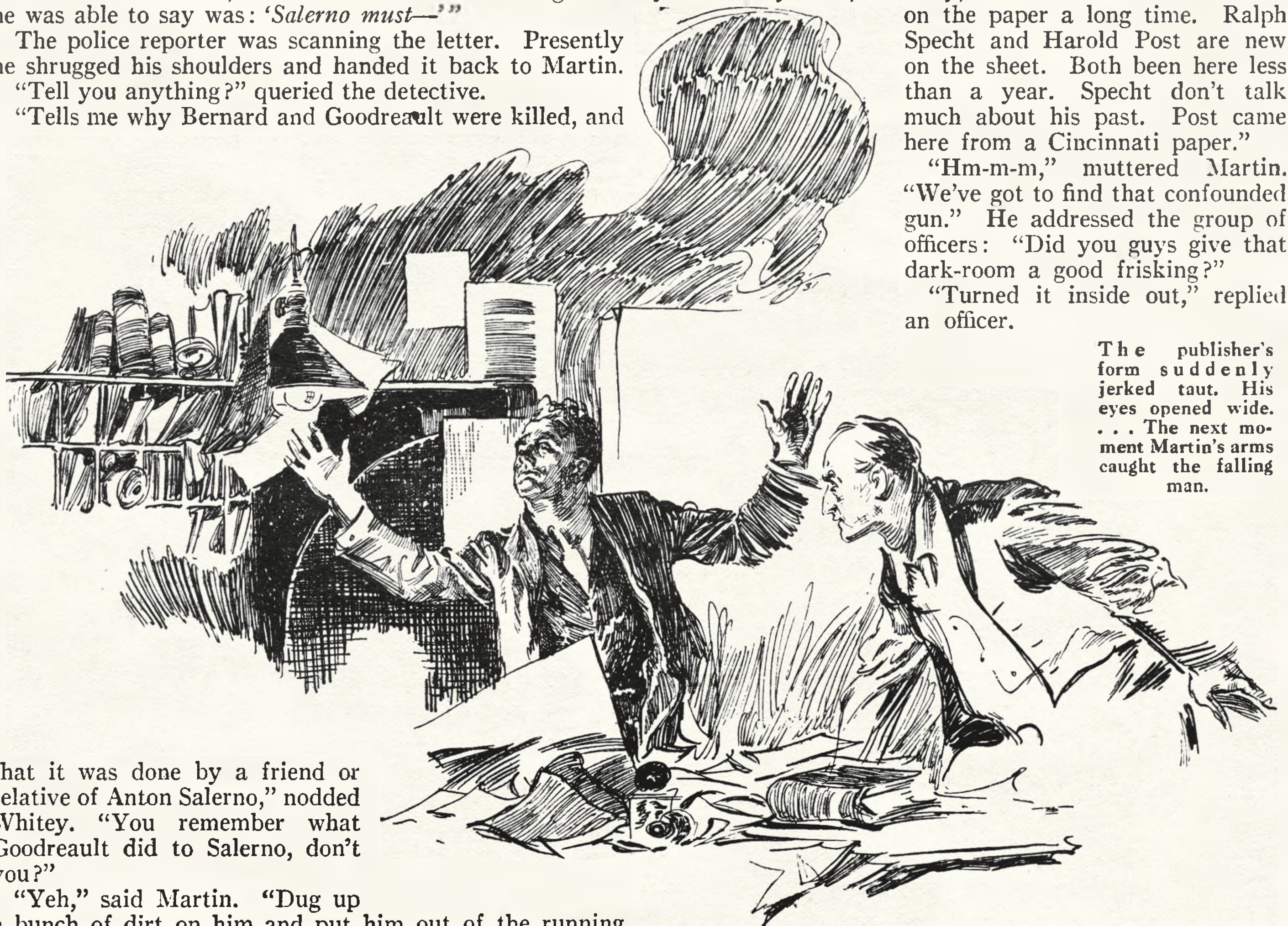
"And there was a son, somewhere," continued Whitey, "the result of that affair of Salerno's youth. But he was never located. It was said that Salerno had been keeping him in school somewhere under another name. It wouldn't surprise me that the son was behind the little party today. Again, it might have been instigated by Salerno's daughter by his wife. She went to California after the blow-up, you know. Is living out there yet. Inherited quite a wad of dough from her father and mother. I wouldn't blame her if she hired somebody to perforate Goodreault and Bernard."

"Huh," grunted Martin. "You think one of those birds we've got locked up might be this son of Salerno's?"

"Hadley isn't," replied Whitey. "He's a native. His folks live here, and he's been on the paper about four years. Betty Mott, naturally, is not the son—and she's been on the paper a long time. Ralph Specht and Harold Post are new on the sheet. Both been here less than a year. Specht don't talk much about his past. Post came here from a Cincinnati paper."

"Hm-m-m," muttered Martin. "We've got to find that confounded gun." He addressed the group of officers: "Did you guys give that dark-room a good frisking?"

"Turned it inside out," replied an officer.



The publisher's form suddenly jerked taut. His eyes opened wide. . . . The next moment Martin's arms caught the falling man.

"My hunch, as I told you," said Whitey Larson, "is that the trick gun was carried out of here by one of those people who left after the extra went to press."

Martin grunted and turned to question Mrs. Derstine and the two officers who had searched the outgoing *Record* employees. The three questioned admitted that most everybody who went out had been carrying something. They could not say definitely what the carried articles were.

"Damn!" swore Martin. "And that bunch has been gone an hour. Plenty of time for whoever had it to ditch the funny gat."

The stairway door opened, and Martha Moore marched into the room. Without a word to anyone she went to her desk and removed a packet of papers from a lower drawer. Then she turned and faced Martin.

"Have you any suspicion," she asked acidly, "that there is a machine-gun concealed in one of these envelopes?"

"No," snarled Martin. "I've got a suspicion that beats that all to hell."

"I'd hate to have such a suspicious nature," remarked Martha Moore. "Well, I'll be on my way shortly. I just want to tell you again that I will be the publisher of the *Record* tomorrow—and I want a full staff on the job. Are you going to turn loose those people you have in jail—or must I get my lawyer on the job with habeas corpus and such things?"

Martin's gaze clashed with the woman's for a minute.

"I'll treat you to a surprise," said the detective then. "I'm going over to Headquarters pretty soon—and I'll turn your help loose. I had decided to do that before you came in. You see, I'm going to arrest the real killer before very long—and I won't need those four. So trot along and enjoy yourself—while you can."

Martin watched while she crossed the room and departed via the stairway door. Then he turned to address the waiting officers.

"Jones and Collins," said Martin, "you two mount guard at these doors. Don't let a soul come into this place tonight—not even a janitor or a scrubwoman. You'll be relieved at midnight. Everybody else get out of here."

Captain Martin arrived at Headquarters in an almost happy mood. Half an hour after he arrived at his own office the four members of the *Record* staff who had been locked up by his order were brought into his presence.

"I'm going to let you people go," Martin told them. "But first I want your home addresses and telephone-numbers. You first, Miss Mott."

When the door had closed behind the erstwhile suspects, Martin chuckled grimly and put a finger on a button on the rim of his desk. An assistant entered the office.

"Did you spot the men like I told you to around the Moore woman's place?" inquired Martin.

"Yes," replied the assistant. "Daugherty and Samuels started up there fifteen minutes ago."

"Good," nodded Martin. "I'm going out and grab some chow. If anything hot pops up, you can reach me over at Capri's."

But the Captain was not called at the restaurant. He ate a leisurely and hearty meal and went back to his office. It was just past seven o'clock when the phone on his desk claimed his attention.

"Hello," he growled into the transmitter.

"Hello," came the voice over the wire. "This is Martha Moore. Listen, you imitation detective: what's the idea of having two of your dumb flat-feet watching my house?"

"My own little idea," answered Martin, grinning but keeping the chuckle out of his voice. "I didn't get it from Whitey Larson."

"Is the fool notion that I had anything to do with what happened to Bernard and Goodreault still eating on you?" demanded Martha.

"You'll find out what's eating on me soon enough," replied Martin flatly. "Don't let it spoil your sleep."

There was a moment of silence. Then Martha's voice: "I guess you'd better come up here. I'll show you and tell you a few things that even your thick noodle may be able to soak up. Make it snappy, though. I'm going out after a while, and I don't want a couple of flat-feet pounding along on my trail."

The click of the severed connection sounded in Martin's ear before he could reply. He chuckled and rose slowly. Lighting a fresh cigar, he crossed the office and took his hat from a rack beside the door.

WHEN the maid showed Martin into the living-room of the cozy cottage that was Martha Moore's home, Martha was sitting on a davenport before the fireplace. Although it was a warm evening and all the windows of the room were open, there was a fire dying in the grate. A table behind the davenport was littered with papers and legal-looking documents.

"Sit down, *Sherlock*," invited Martha Moore.

Martin placed his hat on the table and sat down. His eyes, inquiring, rested on the woman, but he said nothing.

"That fire," said Martha, jerking a hand toward the embers in the grate, "has just consumed a considerable bulk of paper—and some other things—things that I no longer need. Things that were the reason why I stayed on the *Record* for twenty years at a salary no human could have earned. I've kept them safely hidden, and Goodreault has known that they would be promptly turned over to the right people in case anything happened to me. He had to dance to my music. That was a much better way of evening things up than the way somebody else took today. I destroyed the things I mention just as soon as I finished my business this afternoon and was sure that more than eighty per cent of the *Record* now belongs to me."

"Yeh?" grunted Martin. "Why tell me about it?"

"Because," was the answer, "I want you to get it through your ivory skull that I did not have any hand in the killing of the two crooks who died today in the news-room. Because I want you to understand that you'll either lay off me, or soon learn what the *Record* can do to you."

"Yeh?" inquired the detective. "Is that all?"

"NO," snapped Martha, "that isn't all. Why don't you drop the whole thing? You'll just make a nuisance and a fool of yourself."

"You don't think I know much, do you?" inquired Martin. His voice was lazy, but his eyes watched her sharply.

"I've met lots of people who knew more," she replied.

"You may get a surprise. I'm going to pinch the killer—and that before I'm very much older."

"I don't think you will," said Martha slowly. "And I don't know why you want to. You've been a dick in this town a long time. You grew up here. You know that those two rats have had a killing coming to them for years. They have corrupted and intimidated this city and even the State, continuously. They have bled honest people, and made and supported crooked politicians and grafters. They have had a finger in every filthy deal pulled off. Why, both of them have for years been living in palatial homes taken from wealthy citizens—whose names you know as well as I do—by plain blackmail. You know all that and a lot more—and you can't deny it."

"Yeh," nodded Martin, "I know. But do you think *I'm* crooked?"

"No," answered the woman slowly, "you're too dumb to be a good detective, even—let alone a good crook."

"And," retorted the detective, flushing but ignoring all except the answer to his question, "it's my job to catch crooks and murderers. Not being crooked, that's what I'm going to do."

Martha set her lips firmly and said nothing. Martin rose and picked up his hat.

"Up until now you never thought I was such a bad guy," he observed. "Mebby I aint too dumb to figure out the reason."

Still Martha kept silent. Martin stepped into the hall and a moment later the door closed behind him. The woman sat still for another five minutes, her gaze upon the almost dead embers in the grate. Then she rose and went to the telephone.

"Whitey?" she asked when a voice answered over the wire. "Come over to my place right away, will you?"

The *Record* printed its Sunday paper on Saturday nights, putting the final edition to bed at two A. M. There was no Sunday edition on the day following the murder of its publisher and managing editor. During Sunday, Martha Moore got in touch with the staff members and department heads by telephone.

The result was the early arrival of the greater part of the *Record* employees on Monday morning. The word that Ginger Moore was the new boss had circulated thoroughly, and there was considerable speculation among the gathering workers.

The news-room was under double guard at each entrance, and nobody was allowed to leave the room without being thoroughly searched by the officers or the two matrons whom Martin had placed on duty. Martin's watchdogs had kept an eye on Martha Moore continually, much to her indignation and disgust. At nine o'clock, when the staff was well assigned to its tasks and the routine of getting out the paper was well under way, Captain Martin appeared and drew Martha Moore aside.

"Got anything to report?" inquired the detective.

"Report," sniffed Martha. "Say, what do you think I am—one of your spies? Why should I report anything to you? I'm not the least bit interested in your affairs. And I'm a busy woman. Speak your piece and let me get on with my work."

"That's all—just now," said Martin, eying her. "I just thought you might have something to tell me. I'll be back later on."

"How long are you going to keep those men at the doors?" demanded Martha as he turned away. "They are an awful nuisance."

"Too bad," grunted the detective, pausing. "But they'll be there and doing their job until I get the gun that killed Bernard and Goodreault. Cute trick, by the way, that injunction to keep us from searching any more except after business hours."

He turned and walked to the stairway door, where he talked for a moment with the officers on guard. Then he left the building.

The day passed, and the home edition of the paper went to press at four o'clock. The members of the editorial staff, one after another, closed up their desks, submitted to the final search of the day and went home. Finally there was no one left in the big news-room except the guards at the doors, Martha Moore and Whitey Larson.

Beckoning the polcie reporter to follow her, the new publisher led the way back to the library, where they could talk in low tones without being overheard.

"Martin has me guessing, Whitey," declared Martha when they were seated side by side on the file table. "Have you found out what he's up to?"

"Nope," replied Whitey. "There's some funny business going on, but news-hounds are not getting anywhere around Headquarters."

They were silent for a minute or so, both thinking.

"You think he cleared out Saturday?" asked Martha.

"Uh-huh," nodded Whitey. "I went to his room again yesterday morning. The landlady said he left about nine o'clock Saturday night. Said he was going fishing with some of the boys and stay over Sunday. I got the woman to let me into the room. Told her I thought I had left my pipe there. He didn't take many clothes, if any. His car hasn't been back to the garage since Saturday morning."

"You know where that gun is?" muttered Martha, after another brief silence.

"I think so," nodded Whitey. "I haven't been able to make sure, but I'll bet a week's pay I've got it spotted."

"Well, we've got to see what Martin finds, and get these darned guards off the doors," said Martha. "They're pests. And he's had plenty of time to be across the Mexican border. I wonder if Martin has missed him—or if he is so satisfied I'm his meat that he slipped up on—"

"Speak of the devil," cut in Whitey in a warning murmur. "Here comes Martin and his searching party."

THE Captain and half a dozen men had entered the news-room. Martin spotted the two in the library and advanced toward them. The others waited in a group just inside the big room.

"Put him wise," said Martha hurriedly. "We can't have this place turned upside down again."

"Hello," growled Martin, confronting the two. "Miss Moore, did every member of your staff show up today?"

"No," answered Martha. "Harold Post didn't."

"Huh," grunted the detective. "Why didn't you let me know before?"

"You never asked me."

"Yeh?" retorted Martin. "Did you ever hear of an accessory after the fact?"

"Bosh!" said Martha. "I thought you had cleared Post as a suspect and centered your attention on me. By the way, Whitey thinks he has spotted the trick gun for you. We were just talking about it when you came in."

"Yeh?" Then to the police reporter: "How come you to find it, and where is it?"

"Not sure I have found it," replied Whitey. "But I've noticed something that will bear looking into. After Post failed to turn up on the job, I poked around the dark-room a little. If you look in there, you'll see a half dozen old curtain-rollers standing between a table and the cabinet where the print paper is kept. What is the need of curtain-rollers in a dark-room or this room—where there isn't a solitary window?"

MARTIN sniffed, looked sharply at Whitey and Martha, then strode to the dark-room and entered it. Ina few moments he emerged, carrying several wooden rollers such as window shades are hung on. They were regulation length, and two of them had worn and cracked green shades rolled about them. Martin dumped them onto the file-table.

"Heft them," suggested the police reporter. "I miss my guess if you don't find one that is a lot heavier than the others."

Martin did as Whitey had suggested, and in a moment was facing Martha and the reporter with one of the bare rollers in his hand. It was to all appearances an ordinary specimen of its kind. Made of soft, white wood, it had the regular brass caps and pegs on the ends for fastening it into the catches on a window casing. But it was several pounds heavier than any of the other rollers.

The big detective began to examine it; and at a twisting pull, one of the brass caps on the end came away in his hand. The muzzle of the murder weapon was exposed. Martin sniffed at it and smelled burned powder. (Later the roller was taken apart and the mechanism which fired the disguised and silenced weapon was exposed. Two small holes in the wood showed where the murderer had inserted sights which enabled him to aim the thing and place his bullets accurately.)

"But how in blazes did he do the shooting?" demanded Martin. "I examined the dark-room carefully. There wasn't any hole that he could have used. Besides, when Bernard was shot, this Post was standing out in the open where somebody would surely have seen him pointing a thing like this. And even a silenced gun makes a little sound—you know that."

"I don't think," observed Whitey slowly, "that you'll find anybody that will swear they saw Post standing where he said he was when that first shot was fired. If you remember, each one was either looking at his work and pretending to be very busy, or else had his eyes on Bernard—who had just started to give Johnny Dowling a bawling out. I'd say that Post picked a psychological moment—and knew it. So he lied about where he was, for the sake of diverting suspicion. My bet is that he was in the dark-room and—"

"But there is no hole that he could shoot through," protested Martin.

"Wrong again," said Whitey. "I was poking around in there some a bit ago. You'll find that the stout-looking nail that holds that red glass in place in the door will pull quite easily with the fingers. Then the glass can be slid up in the frame that holds the sides and bottom."

"I aint through with you two," said Martin when Whitey ceased speaking. "But I've got some other business to do right now. Don't either of you go to bed until I get in touch with you again. And stay at your homes where I can reach you. We're going to see who is dumb!"

"You don't have to show us all that again," snapped Martha Moore, "but if you insist, we'll stand for it. When will we hear from you?"

"Sometime before midnight," growled Martin.

"Then I think," said Martha, "I'll take Whitey out to my place for dinner. We'll both be there when you want us."

"Good enough," grunted Martin, turning away.

"Will you take your mob out of my workhouse now?" Martha called after him.

Martin did not answer her; but he spoke a few words to his officers and the matrons, and a few minutes later the new publisher and Whitey had the place all to themselves. They looked at each other in silence while the sound of official feet died away on the stairs.

"That fellow has something up his sleeve, I'm afraid," said Martha. "He didn't react properly. Do you suppose—" Her voice died away, and she continued to look at the reporter.

"He *didn't* seem as surprised and excited as I thought he would," declared Larson thoughtfully. "Maybe you shouldn't have prodded the old boy quite so much."

"I had to do what I—" began the woman. Then she broke off. "Oh, thunder! Let's go out to my place and eat. We'll know what he's up to when he tells us."

IT was after ten o'clock when the door-bell rang, and a few moments later Martha Moore opened the door to face Captain Martin, who held a prisoner by the arm. The prisoner was Harold Post, the young photographer who had not come to work that morning.

"Damn!" said Martha under her breath as she beheld her callers. Then she stepped back with lips tight and face expressionless. Martin and his prisoner stepped inside; she closed the door and led the way into the living-room where Whitey waited.

"I'm a dumb dick that couldn't catch flies with molasses, eh?" asked Martin as he faced them with a look of triumph. He still gripped the prisoner's arm with his big left hand. His right was in his coat pocket. "I've had this bird since he tried to jump town Saturday night. I've got some darned good under-cover men that you don't know about. In fact, I know a lot more about my job than some folks think. The four I had locked up never got out of sight of my men a minute after they were turned loose. The fellow who was trailing Post let him get as far as Rockville. We've been keeping him in the Rockville calaboose. I have just brought him from there in my car. He wouldn't talk after we nabbed him, but he decided to open up after I showed him the funny gun tonight and told him how it came to be found, and how the red glass slid up after the nail was pulled. I want you two to hear his confession."

The faces of both Martha Moore and Whitey Larson were grim, and there was something akin to hatred in their eyes as they faced the detective. Harold Post said nothing. His thin and not unhandsome face was pale, but he stood erect and his dark eyes smoldered defiantly as he looked at Martha and Whitey.

"Go on, Post," prompted Martin. "Speak your piece."

"What's the use?" answered Post in a flat voice. "I killed Bernard and Goodreault. I am Harold Salerno. I killed them for what they did to my father, sister and grandmother—because they made a business of blackmail. I've only a little while longer to live, anyhow. . . . I was at school, studying photography, when they printed the stories that caused all the trouble. I was working part time on a Cincinnati paper. My sister wrote me about what had happened and why. She sent me money and told me half of what she inherited would be mine. I warned both men that I meant to kill them. Then I changed my name, came here and got a job on the *Record*. You know the rest—how I did it and all. I have money in—in another place. I meant to go there and never come back to this country. I thought I could wait a few days and get rid of the gun—but it didn't work out that way. That's all there is to it."

"And," said Martin slowly, his eyes holding Martha Moore's, "the dumb detective has caught his killer, in spite of all that the smart newspaper people could do to hinder."

"I hope you choke!" snapped Martha, with a compassionate glance at the white-faced young prisoner.

Martin shrugged. "Well, so long," he said. "I've got to get this killer in a cell and get some rest."

"You'll save yourself trouble," spoke up Post, "if you take me directly to the morgue. I'll be dead enough by the time you get there. I swallowed a capsule of poison just before we came into this house. It can't be but a few more minutes now."

Martin whirled to glare in anger and astonishment at his prisoner. The expression in Post's smoldering eyes told him that the youngster had spoken the truth. Before anybody could say another word the defiant expression on Post's face changed to one of pain. The prisoner swayed on his feet and clutched at the back of a chair.

"Call an ambulance!" snapped the big detective as he caught Post's reeling form. . . . But the vehicle which took away what was left of Harold Post some twenty minutes later was not an ambulance—and it did not head for a hospital.

"A CONFOUNDED shame!" growled Larson. "That kid should have been turned loose and given a medal."

"Right," nodded Martha.

"If it's any of my business," said Whitey, "when did you first tumble to the fact that it was Post who used the gun?"

"Not until he failed to show up for work this morning," answered Martha. "When did you?"

"I knew it was Post," answered Whitey, "as soon as he told Martin that he had been out in the news-room on his way to the art department with wet prints when Bernard was shot."

"How come?" inquired Martha.

"Because," replied the police reporter, "when Bernard fell I jumped up and ran over to where he lay, as fast as I could make it. Only Joe McHale got there before me. And I just happened to see Post as he came out of the dark-room—a couple of minutes *after* Bernard dropped."

"Speaking of accessories after the fact,"—Martha smiled wanly,—"well, I guess we both did all we could to give the poor kid a chance. And as for Martin—well, I'm running the *Record* now."

"Aw, hell," growled Whitey, "be a sport, Martha! Martin is a darned good dick. Riding him off the job won't help Post any now—and we might get a bum in Martin's place."

"There's something to that," nodded Martha thoughtfully. "I'll sleep on it."

In the Shadow of Sinn Fein

By VALENTINE WILLIAMS

Illustrated by Edward Ryan

At the head of the stair stood a young man, wan and unshaven. "I'm Regan," said he. "You can l'ave her out of this!"

A specially exciting exploit of the British secret service in combat with that sinister enemy figure—the Man with the Clubfoot.

I HAD not been in the room a minute, I suppose, when the disaster happened. One of the windows was open at the bottom and the breeze must have slammed the door. The clatter of some metal object bouncing on the floor followed the bang. The door-handle, decayed with age like everything else in that gloomy house, had come apart. One knob lay on the carpet within the room; the other, together with the lever controlling the bolt, had dropped out on the other side.

I was locked in.

Frantically I pawed the flat surface of the door. In vain, with fingers thrust into the hole where the handle had been, I tugged. The lock held fast. The door, like the doors in most of these old Dublin mansions which have not been raided by the antique dealers, was of solid mahogany and opened inward—no chance, therefore, of breaking it down.

I turned to the window. But I had reached the second floor in my stealthy reconnaissance of the premises, and the bedroom in which I found myself—the girl's bedroom, obviously, by its furnishings—faced the Square. Even had I been willing to risk escape by the window in full view of the street, there was no rain-pipe or other convenient foothold to facilitate my descent. I was in a nice fix. The fact that, so far as I had been able to ascertain, the house was empty simply postponed the moment of release—and of exposure. What explanation was I going to give of my presence there? Unpleasantly mindful of the area window gaping below, I cursed the insensate vanity which always prompted me to play a lone hand. Of course, I should have reported to Intelligence Headquarters at the Castle on my arrival in Dublin an hour before and begged the loan of a brace of plainclothes-men to accompany me. Here I was, trapped in the heart of the Dublin slums, where I could have my throat cut and no one a ha'porth the wiser—a British Secret Service man, I realized, would get little mercy from the summary justice of Sinn Fein.

The hum of the city mounted to me out of the warm September evening as I sat on the bed and cast my mind back over the circumstances of my mission. Out of the blare of bands, the shouting of crowds, the turmoil of the recruiting-stations, that marked the early days of the war, a whisper,—a sheerly incredible whisper,—had drifted into a certain carefully segregated Whitehall office.

To you who read these random recollections of mine, the Man with the Clubfoot is today no more than a name. He is but another phantom—a symbol, if you will—of that dead and vanished Europe that plunged the world into war. To us of the British Secret Service, however, the shadowy, elusive figure of the German master spy was a real and constant menace. Dragging that misshapen foot of his after him, Dr. Adolf Grundt, to give him his real name, hobbled from capital to capital at will, his appearance almost invariably presaging dark and inscrutable happenings.

"*Clubfoot is in Ireland*"—the rumor found its way like a chill breath into the little room where, behind blinds

drawn against the September sunshine, the Chief, stolid and impenetrable, pored over his files. At that time only three of us had ever met Grundt face to face; of these, Francis Okewood was somewhere in Germany, swallowed up in the fog of war, and the other, Philip Brewster, was away in invaded Belgium.

I was the third. To me, accordingly, the Chief showed the report from Intelligence, Ireland. It was vague enough —merely three links in an intriguing and disconnected chain. Voices speaking in German after dark on a Kerry beach and the sinister silhouette of a submarine off the shore—link the first; as the second, the appearance in Dublin of a burly, lame individual of foreign stamp in company of well-known "strong arm" Sinn Feiners; and, link the third, a passing glimpse caught by a British informer in Dublin on a rainy night of one Larry Forde, a notorious gunman, the same limping stranger at his side, standing irresolute on the front steps of the selfsame house in which I now found myself.

We were fighting the Germans, not the Irish, I reflected; but from my recollections of my soldiering days in Ireland I was not sure that the Castle would take that point of view. Clubfoot was my quarry; Intelligence, Ireland, could look after their Larry Fordes. In giving me *carte blanche* to handle the investigation, the Chief had stressed the danger of scaring Grundt away before we ascertained his business in Ireland. Rather than trust my old antagonist to the official net, I resolved to start in on my own from the only point of departure we possessed, the house in Mountjoy Square, once the aristocratic quarter of Dublin, but now given over to tenements. Against the tenant—a certain Mrs. Meehan, the aged widow of a Dublin solicitor, who occupied the house with her granddaughter—nothing apparently was known

A light step on the landing brought me instantly to my feet. I heard a muttered exclamation, then the sound of the broken lever being refitted in the door. I glanced wildly round for a hiding-place, saw only the bed and, as an alternative, some garments hung on hooks against the wall. But I was too late. Before I could move the door had swung back and a girl stepped quickly into the room.

Ireland is full of lovely girls, whose natural charm is enhanced by the spontaneity and modesty of their air. The girl who confronted me had the beauty and freshness of a rain-washed flower, with eyes so blue and deeply fringed as to make a man's heart miss a beat, the complexion of a roseleaf, and a milky white skin that set off the raven sheen of her hair. She was neatly dressed, though the serge frock she wore was neither fashionable nor new. But she carried herself with a proud little air that made you forget her clothes.

She was not frightened—many of the Irish have no sense of fear—though her face wore an anxious look as she said quickly, with an Irish lilt to her voice: "And what may you be doing there?"

She was of the better class of Irish and in those days the bulk of enlightened opinion in Ireland was still with us in the war. I made up my mind to take this girl into my confidence.

"I'm an Intelligence officer from London," I told her, "and I'm looking for a man who, the night before last, was seen ringing the doorbell of this house."

Her eyes were suddenly apprehensive. "But how did you get in?"

"I must apologize for the intrusion," I said. "But I couldn't get an answer to my ring. So, as the kitchen window was open—" Then, as she flushed with anger, I added: "This man's a dangerous German spy."

"There's none of his sort in this house," she cried. "I live here alone with my grandmother. What would Gran and I be wanting with German spies? You'd best be taking yourself off!"

"Do you know anyone called Larry Forde?" I questioned.

"And what if I do?"

"It was he who brought this man to your house two nights ago."

At that she blenched. "Two nights ago I wasn't here," she faltered. "Who is this man?"

"His name is Grundt—he has a clubfoot."

Now fear, naked and unashamed, overcame her. She was white to the lips. "You know him?" I persisted.

She laughed uneasily. "Faith, and how would I be knowing him at all? On Wednesday night, you say it was?" She shook her head firmly. "On Wednesday night the house was shut up."

"And your grandmother?"

"Gran's in the hospital—" She broke off abruptly. Her *"Listen!"* was a staccato whisper. A man's voice, calling, floated up the stairs. "Sheila, are you up there?"

She flashed me a rapid glance, then, quick as the thought itself, lifted one of the garments that hung on the wall. "Behind here," she bade me. "And for your life don't stir!"

A hurried footstep rang hollow on the stairs as I flattened myself in the alcove, spreading out a wrapper suspended on its hook to cover me. A man's voice cried with a rich brogue: "Sheila, where the blazes have you been hidin' yourself?" The speaker was in the room now, his voice lowered. "Did you see Tirence yet?" The question was barely audible.

"Terence?" she repeated in the same tone. "Yes, he's back," was the excited rejoinder. "D'you mane you didn't hear?" And then my ear caught a ponderous, halting step mounting the stairs.

In a raucous, hurried whisper the brogue rustled on: "There's one lookin' for the boy. They came over t'gither but got separated in the dark. I made sure Tirence would be here. The other I put away under cover, the way he'd be safe till we could meet up with you—twice we've been to see you, but we couldn't make any one hear. If the kitchen window hadn't been open just now—"

"Goot efening!" a guttural voice cut across the hurried undertone.

I heard the tap of a stick, the clump of a dragging foot, and realized that Grundt—*Grundt*—was there in the room, within but a yard of my hiding-place. "Well," he snarled, "where is he?" A pause. "You told me we should find him with the young lady."

"He's not here," said the girl.

"Gott im Himmel—I risk capture, death, even, to bring him to Ireland, and no sooner do we land than he deserts! Is this your Irish good faith?"

Pressed back against the wall, with the wrapper clutched tight about me, I had been drinking in every word of this conversation. Unconsciously I must have pulled too hard upon the flimsy fabric of the kimono: at any rate, at that moment, with a loud rending noise, the wrapper split on its hook and fell in a bundle about my arms so that I stood disclosed. *"Herr Gott!"* cried Clubfoot. I had a pistol,

but his automatic already had me covered.

His companion had swung about. "Who the devil's this?" he demanded, with a waspish look at the girl.

Her eyes, blue as the Kerry hills, implored me. "Troth, and you may well ask that, Larry," she declared. "I never clapped eyes on him before."

But now Clubfoot chipped in. "You'd trap me, would you, you Irish scum?" he roared. "Turn about and face the wall, the lot of you, and put your hands above your heads!"

"I declare to God, Docthor—" Larry began. Then he rounded on me. "Who are you?" he snapped.

"His name's Clavering, an old acquaintance of mine," the cripple said. And with sudden ferocity he added, "A British secret agent."

"A British—" The youth came at me. "A trap, is it?" he vociferated. "I'll let the daylight into that one if it's the last thing I do—"

The wrapper split, and I stood disclosed. *"Herr Gott!"* cried Clubfoot. . . . His automatic already had me covered.

At that instant a thunderous knocking resounded from the hall below. "Secret Service men," Clubfoot whispered hoarsely. "I might have known!"

Larry's pistol was pressed against my chest. "You can say your prayers, me bucko!" he muttered.

But Sheila pulled his arm away. "Is it crazy ye are?" she cried. "Can't you hear them? They're in the house!"

Feet were tramping on the lower floors. "Lord save us, I forgot that open window!" Larry exclaimed.

"Out through the back—you know the way!" the girl urged him. "And take him with you!" With that she fairly bundled them out of the room and, withdrawing the broken door-handle behind her, imprisoned me again.

A minute or two later two plainclothes-men, gun in hand, released me. The girl, Grundt and Larry had disappeared. To a dapper individual in mufti who was on the landing, I showed my credentials. He was one of the Dublin Intelligence staff and told me he was looking for a certain Terence Regan, believed to have been landed a few nights before by a German submarine.

"To blazes with Regan," I cried. "The man who brought him from Germany—the head of the Kaiser's secret police—left this house by the rear not three minutes ago. He can't be far away. Come on!"

My colleague told off two of his men to remain behind and search the house; then, in a pack, we streamed out, five of us, through a neglected yard and over a wall into a labyrinth of mean streets and courts and alleys.

The party spread in all directions and presently I found myself alone. It occurred to me that my friend Larry, no doubt knowing the neighborhood like his pocket, had secured all the start he required. I made my way back to the house.

One of the detectives who had been left behind greeted me at the yard entrance. "There's ne'er a living sowl in the place, sorr," he told me. "The other chap, he's guardin' the front an' I'm waitin' here for the Major. . . . ."

I had left my hat in the bedroom, and went upstairs for it. Unconsciously, I suppose, I trod softly and in the silence, as I gained the upper landing, I heard a door creak. I drew back behind the balustrade and waited.

It was Sheila. I stepped out and confronted her. Her dismay was pathetic. But she faced the situation bravely. "Listen," she said, "back there, but for me Larry would have had your life. Show your gratitude now by going away and forgetting that you've ever seen me."

"And Regan?" I questioned. "He's in hiding here, isn't he?"

"No, no!" She wrung her hands.

"I'm sorry," I said; "but I'm going to see for myself."

I made as if to pass her, but she sprang back and barred the way.

I shrugged my shoulders. "The police are still downstairs," I warned her.

Then a husky voice called "Stop!" A pitiful object stood at the head of the attic stair, a young man in mud-stained clothes, wan and unshaven, one arm in a sling.

"Oh, Terry, Terry," the girl wailed. "Why did you do it?"

"I'm Regan," said the young man. "You can l'ave her out of this—d'you hear?"

"He meant no harm," the girl broke in. "He only wanted to come home to be with me!"

"I was in Berlin on an engineerin' job," Regan explained. "When the war came, the Germans interned me. Then they asked round the camps for an Irishman to go to Ireland on a special mission and I sent up my name. God knows, I want Ireland to be free, like anny other dacent man does, but sure a blind man could see the Germans care divil a bit about the Irish. If I volunteered to go, 'twas only I couldn't bear the thought of bein' separated for months, for years, maybe, from Sheila here—"

"And why wouldn't you be telling him the truth, Terry?" the girl struck in. "Isn't it my husband he is?" she said to me, coloring hotly. "And soon there'll be a baby. We were married secretly on his last leave, because Gran wouldn't hear of my marriage, she being old and afraid of being left. Oh, for the love of God, won't you believe it's the truth I'm after telling you?"

"How did you get here?" I demanded of Regan.

"I fell over a rock in the dark and broke my arm," he answered. "A farmer took me in and sent word to Sheila, and she came up with a car and fetched me down to Dublin. What are you going to do?"

"That depends on you," I said. "Grundt's the man I'm after. Tell me where I can lay hands on him and I think I can promise that nothing will happen to you."

"And what kind of a dirty tike do you take me for?" the young man cried. "I mayn't have much use for the Germans, but if you think I'd turn informer—"

I was about to speak when I became aware that the girl was making secret signs to me. So I told the fugitive I must think the matter over, and bade him return to his hiding-place under the rafters. I went into the bedroom. Here, presently, Sheila joined me. "What will they do to him if you hand him over?" she questioned tensely.

"Hang him, or shoot him, without a doubt."

"To hell with you and your wars!" she burst out passionately. "He's my man, and I'm going to save him. But you must promise he'll never know."

"I think I can promise that," I said.

"And you'll give me your solemn word that no harm shall come to my Terry?"

"Yes. On the Bible, if you like."

"Then listen!" Her voice sank to a whisper. . . .

But Clubfoot was one too many for us. Let Mr. Packy Myers, the herculean ex-pugilist who kept a newspaper shop behind the North Wall, tell the tale of our discomfiture. His story was that, a few days previously, a stranger—whose description tallied with Larry Forde's—had called at the shop and, displaying a fifty-pound note, had explained to the astonished Mr. Myers that the same would be his in return for a trifling service. All that was required of him was to lodge for a few days in a house in Rathmines, a suburb of Dublin, and run errands for a gentleman staying there. The shopkeeper promptly accepted the offer and in the upshot found himself at the beck and call of an eccentric, clubfooted foreigner, running errands and answering the front door.

Part of the terms of his agreement was that he should not show himself in public save with his hat pulled down over his eyes and the lower part of his face muffled in a scarf, even when opening to visitors—with the result that, at about nine o'clock on the evening of my adventure, on opening the street door in answer to a ring, he was pounced upon by three stalwart individuals and, his cries stifled by a hand pressed to his mouth, he was dragged to a car and driven swiftly and silently to the Castle. There the discovery of the trick that had been played upon us sent us racing back to Rathmines. But, needless to say, the man we were in search of was gone.

The girl, whom my Intelligence colleague and I took along as hostage to the rendezvous, was as bewildered as we. But she had fulfilled her part of the bargain and her Terry was duly left unmolested in her waiting arms. For Clubfoot had actually been in the house when we reached it the first time. Always an excellent psychologist, however, he knew the value of the *idée fixe* in planting an identity, and had laid his plans accordingly.

The point was that Packy Myers, in consequence of an injury sustained in the ring, was compelled to wear a heavy surgical boot.

The Bear

By Charles G. D. Roberts

Illustrated by W. J. Wilwerding

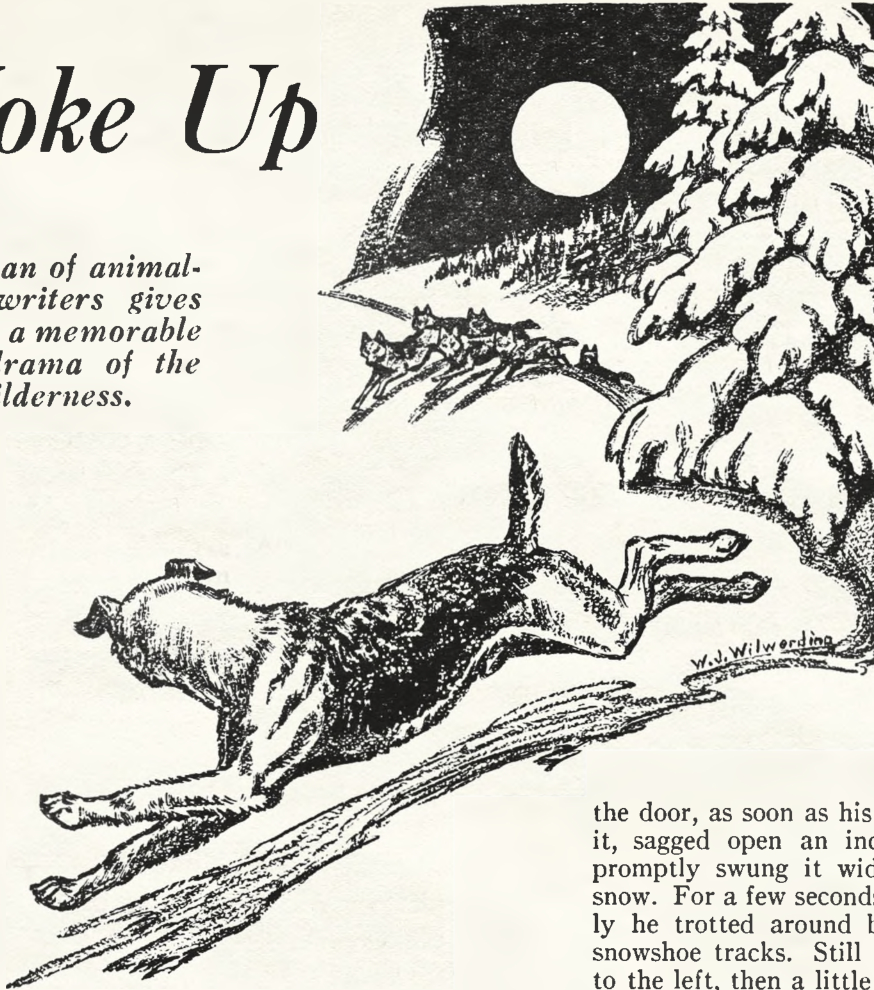
Already, though December was yet young, the snow was gathering deep in the wooded vales and ridges of the north Ontario wilderness. In the center of an open and steeply sloping glade, darkly conspicuous against the surrounding whiteness, a huge black bear stood with nose uplifted, sniffing disinterestedly. The clear icy air bore to her nostrils no scent save of spruce and pine and hemlock—no savor that concerned her in the least. Her shaggy legs planted wide apart, she swayed lazily from side to side, and her little twinkling eyes, more from force of habit than from any lively interest in what they might discover, searched the motionless fir thickets which enclosed the glade. Presently she slumped back upon her haunches, scratched her ear with one great paw, and yawned prodigiously. She was not in the least hungry. She was rolling in fat, for the blueberries had been richly abundant that year, and ever since the close of the berry season the woods had been swarming with mice, rabbits, and partridges. She felt a pervading sense of satisfaction, of comfort, for deep within her she carried the first stirrings of something which, in the spring to come, would mean a little glossy black cub to nuzzle her and whimper.

Suddenly she realized that what she wanted was sleep. Her thoughts turned to a desirable hole which she had discovered some weeks back, in the base of a steep rock a mile or so along the gentle slope of the ridge. She had occupied it one blustery night, and had found it warm and dry. The uptorn roots of a fallen pine sheltered the entrance from all winds, and the spreading branches of a squat juniper bush hid it from casual eyes. Growing more and more drowsy at thought of this snug refuge, she set out for it immediately, lumbering along without haste or heed, indifferent to the occasional rabbit which would bounce wildly from under a fir bush as she brushed past and go leaping over the snow like a fragment of the dead whiteness startled into sudden life. Pushing aside the branches of the juniper, she crept into the warm gloom of the den with a soft *woof* of satisfaction. A musky scent greeted her nostrils; a furry reddish-yellow shape darted forth between her very legs. She made a half-hearted pass at it, barely ruffling the tip of its bushy tail as it flashed away indignantly through the juniper. But she was too drowsy to feel any resentment even against an impudent red fox. Her nose wrinkled at the distasteful scent of him—but what matter? She lay down, turned herself around three times to gather the twigs and dead leaves comfortably about her, and settled down to her long winter's sleep. . . .

The shortening days, the bitter, lengthening nights, crawled by. Savage storms, roaring down out of the north and northeast, lashed the straining forest and tore clean the hard-packed white covering from the high rock-ridges. The storms died away, and more snow came silently sifting down from the black sky, swathing the thickets and the glades to a depth of six or seven feet. Then a great

Woke Up

The dean of animal-story writers gives us here a memorable little drama of the wilderness.



answered to the name of Jock—conceived the hope of freedom. His long lethargy of grief dropped from him. He must go and seek his mistress. He would seek till he found her. Rising on his hind legs, he sniffed carefully at each of the windows, pushing at them with investigating nose. He had an impulse to try to break through them, but the hard glass daunted him. Then he moved to the door, sniffed along the bottom of it and up the sides. It fitted none too snugly, and an icy air drew in around the edges. He reared his long form again and pawed tentatively at the latch; he had noticed that the men always pawed at the latch before the door came open. The latch rattled, but the door did not open. He tried again and again, and then stood back to study the perplexing situation. But he had pawed the rod over the tip of the catch; and the door, as soon as his weight was removed from against it, sagged open an inch or two. His insinuating nose promptly swung it wide—and he stepped out upon the snow. For a few seconds he stood considering. Hesitatingly he trotted around behind the cabin, away from the snowshoe tracks. Still hesitating, he trotted a little way to the left, then a little way to the right. Then certainty came to him, by that instinct or sixth sense of which we humans have lost the comprehension, and he knew just the direction in which lay the place where he had last felt the touch of his mistress' hand. With a little, suppressed yelp of delight, he dashed away directly south at a long lope.

The snow was packed so firm that he found it easy going. His big tan-yellow pads sank not more than an inch or two as he ran. The darkness and stillness of the forest, so utterly strange to him, troubled him not at all, nor the sharp white spears of moonlight piercing through the branches and filling the narrow empty spaces with black shadows that shifted, as if they were live things, in the speed of his passing. A big white rabbit went bounding across his path, and his ears twitched. He would have liked to chase it if he had not had important matters on his mind. The lithe shape of a weasel darted past, turned upon him a vicious little pointed face with eyes of hate, and whipped under a bush. He noticed it not at all. He had got his second wind by now, and was racing on with a long, easy, shambling stride which steadily ate up the snowy miles. He was going so fast that he felt he must be nearing his destination, and his heart swelled with hope.

And now he came to more open country, dotted with clumps of young fir and tall, solitary, ghostly rampikes. Directly in his path he saw a huge white owl, tearing savagely at the carcass of a rabbit on the bloodied snow. The great bird turned its big round head, glared at him with its pale moons of eyes; it hissed fiercely, and snapped its dripping beak at him. Not till he was almost upon it did it give way, lifting itself into the air on wide, soundless wings. He jumped over the slain rabbit without even pausing to sniff at it, and hastened on his way.

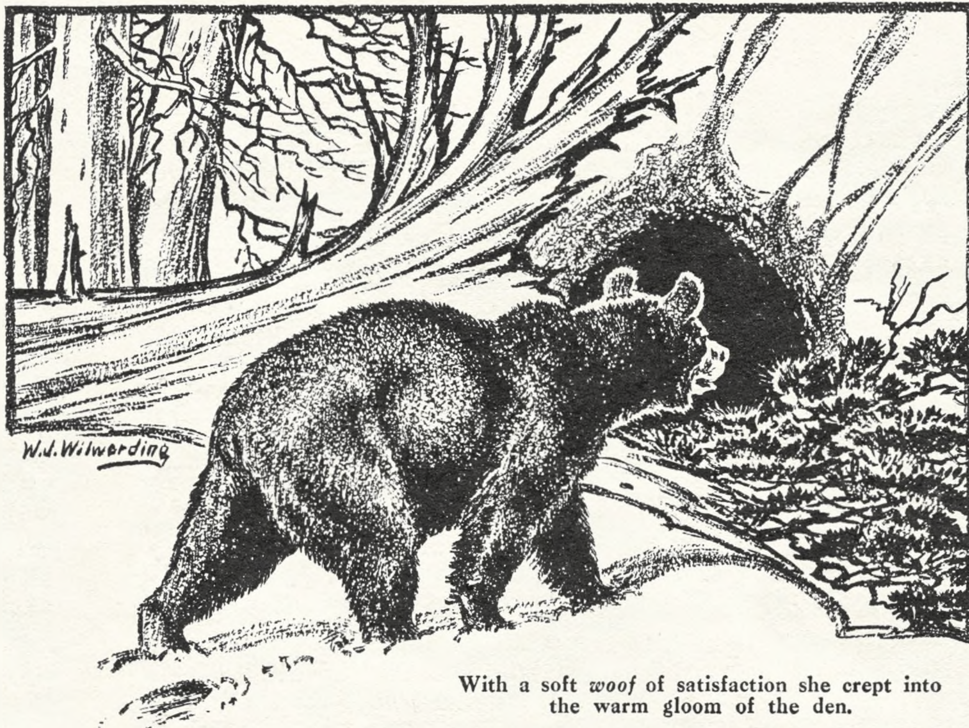
Soon after he crossed the rocky ridge and started down

calm, with a still cold out of the Arctic spaces that made the trees snap like pistol-shots; the stars glittered with brittle sharpness in the hard, blue-black sky, and the cohorts of the Northern Lights, ghostly spears erect in rigid array, spectral gold and rose and green, hurtled across with eerie whisperings from horizon to empty horizon. But all this wonder and terror and beauty concerned the great black bear not at all. Curled up in her den like a cat, with both mighty paws over her nose, she slept away the desolate days in immeasurable content, now and then stirring and mumbling softly in her sleep as she dreamed of sun-drenched berry-patches, and bee-trees brimming with honey, and of furry black cubs romping about her feet.

OFF to the north beyond the ridge, perhaps a dozen miles from the den behind the juniper bush, in a large cabin a big, homesick, somewhat bewildered Airedale was prowling restlessly. He was a young dog, barely full-grown, with the lankiness of puppyhood still clinging to him; but the deep eyes beneath his stiff-haired, capacious forehead, though troubled now, were grave and considering.

City-born and -bred, until but a few days back he had had a beloved mistress, and was happy. He could not understand that she had died. He could not understand that he had been carried—comfortably enough, in a big warm sleigh, but on leash so that there was no chance of escape—far north, where he was to be handed over to a new master in one of the wilderness mining-camps. This cabin wherein he was now so snugly housed, but wherein he felt himself imprisoned, was a stopping-place on the way; the two prospectors who were conveying him had gone out with their rifles to try and bag a timber wolf.

Now, with his guardians gone, the big Airedale—who



With a soft *woof* of satisfaction she crept into the warm gloom of the den.

the long slope toward the next valley, he became aware of a sound which had been in his ears for some time without definitely attracting his attention. Now that he noticed it he pricked up his ears and the thick blue-gray hair on the back of his neck bristled angrily. He had heard that sound the night before, when wolves had come howling around the camp. He had dashed to the window then, growling, and had caught sight of several sinister gray forms gliding into the cover of the woods. One of the men had snatched up his rifle and slipped out noiselessly, to return a moment later and put down his weapon with muttered curses. So Jock knew that his instinctive hatred was well grounded. The beasts which uttered those detestable sounds were undoubtedly enemies, and dangerous.

Now the dreadful voices, from directly behind him, were growing nearer. Could they be on his trail? He hastened his pace, not so much alarmed for himself as troubled lest he should be delayed in his journey by having to stop and fight.

The voices grew swiftly louder, and presently, glancing backward as he ran, he saw no fewer than six of those grim gray figures, running close together, just galloping over the crest of the ridge. Rage, rather than fear,—for he was of a breed that willingly fights to the death,—wrinkled back his thin lips from his long white fangs in a soundless snarl. But six of them! That was too many. And here in the open he would be surrounded. Perhaps he could outrun them yet.

He put on a desperate burst of speed. But his valiant young heart was pumping madly with the strain of the pace—and yet those deadly voices were drawing nearer. Closer and yet closer they came; now they were almost upon him.

He was just about to turn and leap madly at the nearest throat, when—the snow fell away from under his feet, and he went flying through the air with a yelp of amazement. In the next fraction of a second he crashed through a lot of prickly branches, and landed unhurt in front of a dark hole in the rock. Into this he plunged headlong, expecting to feel his pursuers grabbing at his tail.

But the wolves had halted abruptly at the top of the steep slope. Six heads, eyes flaming, were peering over, puzzled and furious at their quarry's disappearance. The tumbled snow, however, presently showed them where he had gone. Well, if he did not soon emerge they would dig him out. A little to one side they found a more gradual descent, and then, bunched together a few feet from that tumbled patch,—which they eyed with the crafty suspicion of their tribe, ever on the alert for traps,—they sat up on their haunches, with tongues hanging out, and waited.

As Jock plunged headlong into this providential refuge his nostrils were greeted by a pungent, terrifying scent which was like a slap in the face. He tried desperately to check himself, but could not avoid stumbling against a great warm furry body which grumbled softly as he touched it. Horrified, he backed off to the entrance, gripped for a moment by the panic terror of the unknown. But the wolves, he knew, were just outside, waiting to leap upon him. He stood and stared trembling into the darkness. That scent, as every instinct assured him, had a dreadful menace. On the other hand, that soft grumble carried no note of hostility; and his rough contact with the furry bulk had provoked no sign of resentment.

In a moment or two his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom,—for a measure of moonlight filtered down through the snow,—and he made out the huge form, sunk in deepest slumber, breathing slowly, one great paw folded childishly over its nose. At that moment the bear, in a dream of spring sunshine and playful cubs, gave a contented little whimper. To Jock it was a most reassuring sound. His panic slipped from him; but his caution remained. Creeping forward again, he turned around and lay down, a little behind that massive black rump, to recover his breath and his equanimity. But he kept watchful eyes on the doorway. He knew nothing about bears; but he felt confident that if his enemies should venture to enter the den he and this great beast together would make short work of them.

THE expectant wolves, meanwhile, were growing impatient. The gaunt leader stepped forward gingerly and sniffed at the place where his quarry had disappeared. There was no scent except the familiar one of dog. He began to dig furiously. He was joined at once by the other five. The snow flew in clouds from their practiced paws. As the sound of their digging reached his ears Jock rose up, bristling with rage, and on stiffened legs, tense for action, moved close up to the entrance. He conceived himself now the guardian of his mighty ally's slumber. He would give warning at the proper moment and call her to his aid.

When the foremost of the wolves got down to the branches of the juniper he crashed through them, and landed, somewhat startled, facing the mouth of the cave. He was confronted by the savage, slavering mask of Jock, who snarled defiantly in his face and broke into a fury of deep-throated, resonant barking, intended to rouse the bear from her slumbers.

The gray wolf is no coward, but he is wary and sagacious. The fierce confidence of the dog's defiance meant there was some good ground for that confidence. Instead of hurling himself instantly upon his fearless challenger, the wolf peered past him into the darkness of the den. His gaze re-

vealed nothing—but his nose told him enough. The warm reek that puffed forth from the gloom was bear—live bear; and the bear and the dog were together! He hesitated a moment, his eyes slitting green with rage.

He glanced around him, and saw that the other wolves were at his back. He knew that a bear which "holed up" at this season was hibernating, drunk with sleep, and should fall an easy prey to the pack before she could wake up. And the dog confronting him was only a dog. He had had no experience of Airedales. What he did not know was that Jock's precipitate entrance had already half-awakened the bear, and that now, with his fierce barking in her ears, she was gathering herself up, alert and angry. She had sensed the warning, the summons, the appeal, in that insistent barking. Her eyes, suddenly clear, saw the gray beasts whom she hated and despised, crowding into the mouth of her den. And she saw the dog (how had *he* got there?) whose voice had warned her, fling himself savagely upon the foremost wolf, to be borne backward into the cave by the fury of the charge, but with his teeth firmly clamped upon the base of his adversary's lower jaw. She brought down one great paw upon the middle of the wolf's back, crushing it like an eggshell, then lunged forward to meet the rest of the pack.

Her appearance was so sudden that she caught three of the wolves crowded together in the entrance, while the remaining two hung behind, awaiting their chance to get into the battle. A natural boxer, she dealt the foremost a lightning blow which crippled without quite disabling him; he rolled over, yelping and dazed, just inside the cave. The second, as he slipped under her guard and slashed upward at her throat, she clutched under her huge forearms and crushed slowly to death. The third, leaping up and over the collapsing body of the second, sank his long fangs deep into her shoulder; but without relaxing her clutch upon the other, she reached around with her great jaws, and seizing the upper part of his foreleg, crunched it to a jelly. Then she tore him from his hold, and dropped him, yelping with agony.

In the meantime Jock, delivered of his first adversary, had silently launched himself upon the wolf which his ally had so lightly tossed aside for him to finish. The wolf had had the breath pretty well knocked out of him by that blow, and several of his ribs stove in, but he was struggling to his feet to resume the battle when Jock's charge rolled him over again, flat on his back. Before he could recover Jock had him by the throat, choking him. In his desperation he doubled up like a cat, and the long powerful claws of his hind feet raked the dog murderously; had they caught him in the belly they would have disemboweled him. But Jock had swung his body aside and they merely caught him on the flank, glancingly, laying bare his ribs in a gaping but not a deep wound.

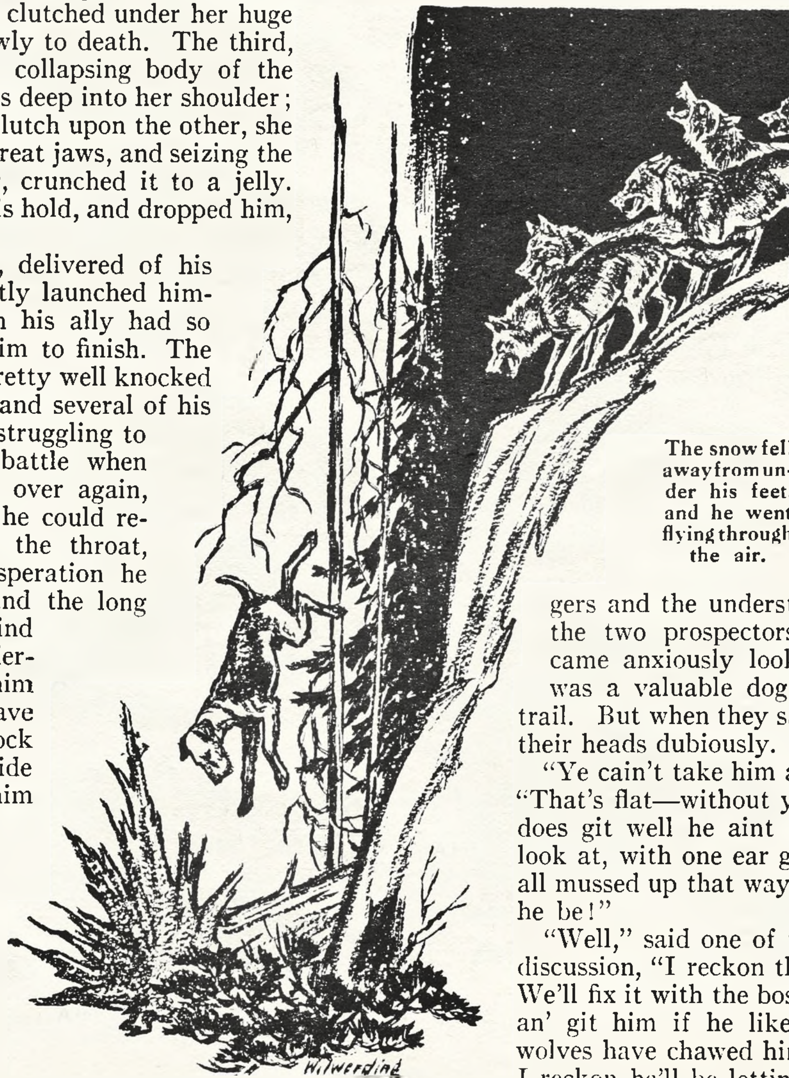
The remaining two wolves, deceived by the darkness of the cave, had hurled themselves upon the bear. But as they perceived the way the fight was turning out, they hurriedly changed their minds.

For one of them it was too late. Just as he doubled to escape, the bear caught him with both forepaws and with her furious jaws as well.

The other wolf was almost clear when Jock sprang for him, missed his hind legs, but snapped onto the root of his tail. Curving back like a bow, the wolf freed himself with one desperate slash which laid open the side of Jock's face, just missing his eyes. Blinded and half-stunned for the moment, Jock let go with a yelp. The wolf went scrabbling frantically up out of the hole and ran for the dense timber as if he thought both bear and dog were at his heels.

When Jock's head cleared, and he had shaken the blood from his eyes, he found himself just outside the den. He glanced inside, and saw the bear still furiously mauling the bodies of her victims. She had certainly proved herself a most redoubtable ally; but it might be imprudent to trespass any longer upon her hospitality. She might forget their late alliance! Stiffly he clambered out of the hole, and continued his journey southward, down the slope, stopping every little while to lie down and lick at his gashed side as well as his hideously wounded face would let him.

His progress was agonizingly slow, but with the break of wintry dawn he came to a lone settler's cabin at the bottom of the valley. The settler was just emerging from his cabin door, on the way to the little log barn to feed his horse and cow. He stopped in amazement as Jock, with tail wagging feebly but hopefully, sank exhausted at his feet. The settler bent over him and with tender fingers examined his wounds.



The snow fell away from under his feet, and he went flying through the air.

"That's the work of them damn' wolves," he growled. "Come in here, pup, an' lay by the fire, an' after I've fed the critters I'll fix ye up."

Later in the morning, lying by the kitchen stove with his wounds washed and dressed, and his belly comfortably full of fried pork and flapjacks, Jock thought to himself that perhaps he would stay with this man of the kindly fingers and the understanding voice. About noon the two prospectors, traveling on snowshoes, came anxiously looking for him. Because he was a valuable dog they had followed up his trail. But when they saw his condition they shook their heads dubiously.

"Ye cain't take him away now," said the settler. "That's flat—without ye carry him. An' when he does git well he aint never goin' to be much to look at, with one ear gone an' the side o' his face all mussed up that way. Better let him stop where he be!"

"Well," said one of the men finally, after some discussion, "I reckon that's the best way out of it. We'll fix it with the boss all right, an' he can come an' git him if he likes. But we'll tell him the wolves have chawed him up something awful—an' I reckon he'll be letting you keep him."

The Triumph of Tarzan

The brilliant creative imagination that has made Tarzan famous throughout the world here again thrills you with new and extraordinary exploits.

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

Illustrated by Frank Hoban

"I was captured myself," said Tarzan. "But everything has worked out well; and if you have no immediate plans, I hope you will accompany me back to my home."

The Story So Far:

BEFORE Tarzan of the Apes,—imploring his aid against the raiding bands of slavers,—knelt Kabariga, chief of the Bangalo people, many marches to the south of the Ghenzi Mountains.

Alone in the cold wet clouds, far above an unknown African mountain range, Lady Barbara Collis found her petrol almost exhausted and her Cape-to-Cairo flight hopeless. She breathed a little prayer as she bailed out, and counted ten before jerking the rip-cord of her 'chute.

In Moscow, Leon Stabutch entered the office of the dictator of Red Russia.

Ignorant of the very existence of the black Bangalo chief, or of Leon Stabutch, or of Lady Barbara Collis, one Lafayette Smith, A.M., Ph.D., Sc.D., twenty-six years old, professor of geology at a military academy, boarded a steamship in the harbor of New York.

Far apart, these people! Yet Fate was weaving a web that brought them into close and dramatic conflict.

Weeks rolled by. Trains rattled and chugged. Three ships plowed. Black feet padded well-worn trails. Three safaris, headed by white men from far-separated parts of the earth, moved slowly along different trails that led toward the wild fastnesses of the Ghenzies. From the west came Lafayette Smith and Gunner Patrick; from the south an English big-game hunter, Lord Passmore; from the east, Leon Stabutch.

Stabutch had a definite mission to carry out for his Red employers—to kill Tarzan of the Apes, who had courageously thwarted Russia's attempt to embroil the other European nations in their African colonies. But a crew of raiding *shiftas* or bandits under white leadership frightened off the Russian's safari, made Stabutch prisoner and carried him off to a guarded village beneath a rocky cliff, where he was confronted by a cruel-faced white leader, who called himself Capietro. Stabutch divulged his mission against Tarzan, whereupon Capietro promised to aid Stabutch.

Lafayette Smith had undertaken certain geological explorations in Africa; and on the steamer he had made the acquaintance of an amiable young racketeer known as Gunner Danny Patrick, who was taking a vacation from warfare with enemy gangsters. Patrick invited himself to accompany Smith and the scientist found him an amusing companion. Arrived in the wild country of Africa, Smith undertook some independent exploration of this terrain so fascinating to a scientist—and promptly became lost. He emerged from a deep fissure in the cliffs to find himself overlooking an uncharted valley. In the distance he saw firelight and figures of human beings, and approaching them, came upon a horrifying sight.

For Lady Barbara, who had landed safely by means of her parachute, had found herself the captive of a queer degenerate people who for nearly two thousand years had lived, shut off from the rest of the world, in this valley of Midian. In the awed wonder induced by her mode of arrival, she was at first hailed as a goddess; but soon she incurred the enmity of the fanatical high priest, who sentenced her to death—and with her the golden-haired village girl Jezebel, when the latter protested at the fate of the young aviatrix. The two girls were seized and each was bound to a stake, while brush was heaped at their feet.

As torches were applied to the fagots, however, Lafayette Smith opportunely arrived. He liberated the girls, and in the ensuing fight with the villagers the three escaped into the darkness. . . .

Tarzan of the Apes had more than once encountered the sadly inexperienced young travelers, Smith and Patrick. On the first occasion, he had rescued them from the charge of an infuriated lion; the second time, Danny, armed with his "tommy-gun" and searching for the lost Smith, had observed the ape-man sorely beset by *shiftas*, and intervening, had saved his life. Then when the Gunner's camp was raided by men headed by Stabutch and Capietro, and Danny was taken prisoner, Tarzan came to him in the night and aided him to escape. Together the ape-man and the young gangster set out to trail the lost Lafayette Smith.

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Meanwhile Smith, fleeing with Lady Barbara and Jezebel from the South Midianites, had been captured by denizens of North Midian. Once they escaped, agreeing to scatter, the better to evade their pursuers. Jezebel disappeared but Smith and the English girl were overtaken, seized, and marched to the village of Elija, the chief of the North Midians. Smith was about to be buried alive when Elija, curiously examining Smith's .32 pistol, shot himself through the head. In the consequent excitement Tarzan appeared before their astonished eyes, and was successful in rescuing Smith and Lady Barbara and spiriting them away.

Danny Patrick, who had failed to keep up with Tarzan on Smith's trail, was mistakenly following some animal-tracks, when he came by chance upon the golden-haired Jezebel. They took an instant fancy to each other, and Danny led the girl through the cleft in the rocks to view a world about the existence of which she had often speculated. But this strange new world held mishap as well as charm—for the raiding *shiftas* came upon the two, and felling Danny by a savage blow upon the head, dashed away with Jezebel as a captive. Her arrival at the village of Capietro speedily caused a quarrel between Capietro and Stabutch, for both men desired the girl. The Russian slew his host; then, obtaining horses from the unsuspecting blacks, he rode away with Jezebel beside him.

But he was not totally unobserved, for the Gunner, regaining consciousness after the *shiftas* had left, started painfully out to follow them. To his joyful surprise, as he reached a spot above the raiders' village, he saw Stabutch emerge from a hut, escorting Jezebel, and further observed the two ride off, shortly thereafter.

Danny rose to his feet and ran along the ridge parallel to the course they were taking. The sun was already setting; soon it would be dark. If he could only keep them in sight until he knew in what direction they finally went! ***(The story continues in detail:)***

EXHAUSTION was forgotten as he ran through the approaching night. Dimly now he could see them. They rode for a short distance upward toward the cliffs, and then, just before the darkness swallowed them, he saw them turn and gallop away toward the northwest and the great forest that lay in that direction.

Reckless of life and limb, the Gunner half stumbled, half fell down the cliffs, which here had crumbled away and spilled their fragments out upon the slope below.

"I gotta catch 'em—I gotta catch 'em," he kept repeating to himself. "The poor kid! The poor little kid!"

On through the night he stumbled, falling time and again, only to pick himself up and continue his frantic and hopeless search for the little golden-haired Jezebel who had come into his life for a few brief hours, to leave a mark upon his heart that might never be erased.

Gradually this realization came upon Danny as he groped blindly into the unknown, and it gave him strength to go on in the face of such physical exhaustion as he had never known before.

"Geeze," he muttered, awe-stricken, "I sure must of fell hard for that kid!"

CHAPTER XXIII

By a Lonely Pool

NIGHT had fallen, and Tarzan of the Apes, leading Lady Barbara Collis and Lafayette Smith from the valley of the land of Midian, did not see the spoor of Jezebel and the Gunner.

His two charges were upon the verge of exhaustion, but the ape-man led them on through the night in accordance with a plan upon which he had decided. He knew that two more whites were missing—Jezebel and the Gunner—and he wanted to get Lady Barbara and Smith to a place of safety, that he might be free to pursue his search for these others.

To Lady Barbara and Smith the journey seemed interminable; yet they made no complaint, for the ape-man had explained the purpose of this forced march to them and they were even more anxious than he concerning the fate of their friends.

Smith supported the girl as best he could, but his own strength was almost spent and sometimes his desire to assist her tended more to impede than to aid her. Finally she stumbled and fell, and when Tarzan, striding in advance, heard the sound and returned to them he found Smith vainly endeavoring to lift Lady Barbara to her feet.

This was the first intimation the ape-man had received that his charges were upon the verge of exhaustion, for neither had voiced a complaint. When he realized it, he

lifted Lady Barbara in his arms and carried her, while Smith, relieved at least of further anxiety concerning her, was able to keep going, though he moved like an automaton, apparently without conscious volition. Nor may this be wondered at, when one considers what he had passed through during the preceding three days.

With Lady Barbara, he marveled at the strength and endurance of the ape-man, which, because of his own weakened condition, seemed unbelievable even though he witnessed it.

"It is not much farther," said Tarzan, guessing that the man needed encouragement.

"You are sure the hunter you told us of has not moved his camp?" asked Lady Barbara.

"He was there day before yesterday," replied the ape-man. "I think we shall find him there tonight."

"He will take us in?" Smith asked anxiously.

"Certainly—just as you would, under similar circumstances, take in anyone who needed assistance," replied the Lord of the Jungle. "He is an Englishman," he added, as though that fact in itself was sufficient answer to their doubts.

They were in a dense forest now, following an ancient game trail. Presently they saw lights flickering ahead.

"That must be the camp," exclaimed Lady Barbara.

"Yes," replied Tarzan, and a moment later he called out in a native dialect.

Instantly came an answering voice and a moment later Tarzan halted upon the edge of the camp, just outside the circle of beast-fires.

Several of the *askari* were on guard and with them Tarzan conversed for a few moments; then he advanced and lowered Lady Barbara to her feet.

"I have told them not to disturb their bwana," the ape-man explained. "There is another tent that Lady Barbara may occupy and the head-man will arrange to have a shelter thrown up for Smith. You will be perfectly safe here. The men tell me their bwana is Lord Passmore. He will doubtless arrange to get you out to rail-head. In the meantime I shall try to locate your friends."

That was all—the ape-man turned and melted into the black night, before they could voice a word of thanks.

"Why, he's gone!" exclaimed the girl. "I didn't even thank him."

"I thought he would remain here until morning," said Smith. "He must be tired."

"He seems tireless," replied Lady Barbara. "He is a super-man, if ever there was one."

"Come," said the head-man, "your tent is over here. The boys are arranging a shelter for the bwana."

"Good night, Mr. Smith," said the girl. "I hope you sleep well."

"Good night, Lady Barbara," replied Smith. "I hope we wake up sometime!"

AND as they prepared for this welcome rest, Stabutch and Jezebel were riding through the night, the man completely confused and lost.

Toward morning they drew rein at the edge of a great forest, after riding in wide circles during the greater part of the night. Stabutch was almost exhausted. Jezebel was but little better off, but she had youth and health to give her the reserve strength which the man had undermined and wasted in dissipation.

"I've got to get some sleep," he said, as he dismounted.

Jezebel needed no invitation to slip from her saddle, for she was stiff and sore from this unusual experience. Stabutch led the animals inside the forest and tied them to a tree. Then he threw himself upon the ground and was almost immediately asleep.

Jezebel sat in silence listening to the regular breathing of the man. "Now would be the time to escape," she thought. She rose quietly to her feet. How dark it was! Perhaps it would be better to wait until it became light enough to see. She was sure the man would sleep a long time, for it was evident that he was very tired.

She sat down again, listening to the noises of the jungle. They frightened her. Yes, she would wait until it was light; then she would untie the horses, ride one and lead the other away so that the man could not pursue her.

Slowly the minutes crept by. The sky became lighter in the east, over the distant mountains. The horses became restless. She noticed that they stood with ears pricked up, and that they looked deeper into the forest, and trembled.

Suddenly there was the sound of crashing in the underbrush. The horses snorted and surged back upon their ropes, both of which broke. The noise awakened Stabutch, who sat up just as the two terrified animals wheeled and bolted. An instant later a lion leaped past the girl and the man, in pursuit of the two fleeing horses.

Stabutch sprang to his feet, his rifle in his hands. "God!" he exclaimed. "This is no place to sleep!"

Jezebel's opportunity to escape had passed.

THE sun was topping the eastern mountains. The day had come. Soon the searchers would be out. Now that he was afoot, Stabutch knew he must not loiter. However, they must eat, or they could not proceed.

"Climb into that tree, little one," he said to Jezebel. "You will be safe there while I go and shoot something for our breakfast. Watch for the lion and if you see him returning this way, shout a warning. I am going farther into the forest to look for game."

Jezebel climbed into the tree and Stabutch departed upon the hunt for breakfast. The girl watched for the lion, hoping it would return, for she had determined that she would give no warning to the man if it did.

She was afraid of the Russian because of things he had said to her during that long night ride. Much that he had said she had not understood at all, but she understood enough to know that he was a bad man. But the lion did not return; presently Jezebel dozed, and nearly fell out of the tree. . . .

Stabutch, hunting in the forest, found a water-hole not far from where he had left Jezebel, and here he hid behind bushes waiting for some animal to come down to drink. Nor had he long to wait before he saw a creature appear suddenly upon the opposite side of the pool. So quietly had it come that the Russian had not dreamed that a creature stirred within a mile of his post. The most surprising feature of the occurrence, however, was that the animal thus suddenly to step into view was a man.

Stabutch's evil eyes narrowed. It was *the* man—the man he had traveled all the way from Moscow to kill. What an opportunity! Fate was indeed kind to him. He would fulfill his mission without danger to himself and then he would escape with the girl—that wondrous girl! Stabutch had never seen so beautiful a woman in his life, and now he was to possess her—she was to be his.

But first he must attend to the business of the moment. What a pleasant business it was, too! He raised his rifle cautiously, and aimed. Tarzan had halted and turned his head to one side. He could not see the rifle-barrel of his enemy because of the bush behind which Stabutch hid and the fact that his eyes were centered on something in another direction.

The Russian realized that he was trembling and he cursed himself under his breath. The nervous strain was

too great. He tensed his muscles in an effort to hold his hands firm, and the rifle steady and immovable upon the target. The front sight of the rifle was describing a tiny circle instead of remaining fixed upon that great chest which offered such a splendid target.

But he must fire! The man would not stand thus forever. The thought hurried Stabutch, and as the sight passed again across the body of the ape-man, the Russian squeezed the trigger.

At sound of the shot Jezebel's eyes snapped open. "Perhaps the lion returned," she soliloquized, "or maybe the man has found food. If it was the lion, I hope he missed it."

As the rifle spoke at the water-hole, the target leaped into the air, seized a low-hung branch and disappeared amidst the foliage of the trees above. Stabutch had missed—he should have relaxed his muscles rather than tensed them.

The Russian was terrified. He felt as must one who stands upon the drop, with the noose already about his neck. He turned and fled. His cunning mind suggested that he had better not return where the girl was. She was already lost to him, for he could not be burdened with her now in this flight, upon the success of which hung his very life. Accordingly, he ran toward the south.

As he rushed headlong through the forest he was already out of breath when he felt a sudden sickening pain in his arm and at the same instant saw the feathered tip of an arrow waving beside him as he ran. The shaft had pierced his forearm, its tip projecting from the opposite side. Sick with terror, Stabutch increased his speed. Somewhere above him was his Nemesis, but he could neither see nor hear him. It was as though a ghostly assassin pursued him on silent wings.

Again an arrow struck him, sinking deep into the triceps of his other arm. With a scream of pain and horror Stabutch halted, and dropping upon his knees raised his hands in supplication. "Spare me!" he cried. "Spare me! I have never wronged you. If you will spare—"

An arrow, speeding straight, drove through the Russian's throat. He screamed, clutched at the missile, and fell forward on his face.

Jezebel, listening in the tree, heard the agonized shriek of the stricken man, and she shuddered.

"The lion got him," she murmured to herself. "He was wicked. It is the will of Jehovah!"

The ape-man, realizing their exhaustion, lifted Lady Barbara and carried her.

Tarzan of the Apes dropped lightly from a tree and warily approached the dying man. Stabutch, writhing in agony and terror, rolled over on his side. He saw the ape-man approaching, bow and arrow in hand—and Stabutch, dying, reached for the revolver at his hip to complete the work he had come so far to achieve and for which he was to give his life.

No more had his hand reached the grip of his weapon than the Lord of the Jungle loosed another shaft that drove deep through the chest of the Russian, right through his heart. Without a sound Leon Stabutch collapsed; a moment later there rang through the jungle and out across the foothills the fierce, uncanny victory-cry of the bull ape.

As the savage notes reverberated through the forest Jezebel slid to the ground and fled in terror. She knew not where nor to what fate her flying feet led her.

She was obsessed by but a single idea—to escape from the terrors of that lonely spot.

CHAPTER XXIV

Captured!

WITH the coming of day the Gunner found himself near a forest. He had heard no sound of horses all during the night and now that day had come, and he could see to a distance, he scanned the landscape for some sign of Stabutch and Jezebel, but without success.

"Geeze," he muttered, "there aint no use, I gotta rest. The poor little kid! If I only knew where the rat took her—but I don't, and I gotta rest." He surveyed the forest. "That looks like a swell hide-out. I'll lay up there and grab off a little sleep. Geeze, I'm all in."

As he walked toward the forest his attention was attracted to something moving a couple of miles to the north of him. He stopped short and looked more closely as two horses, racing from the forest, dashed madly toward the foothills, pursued by a lion.

"Geeze!" exclaimed the Gunner, "those must be their horses. What if the lion got her!"

Instantly his fatigue was forgotten and he started at a run toward the north. But he could not keep this pace up for long; soon he was walking again, his brain a turmoil of conjecture and apprehension.

He saw the lion give up the chase and turn away almost immediately, cutting up the slope in a northeasterly direc-

tion. The Gunner was glad to see him go, not for his own sake so much as for Jezebel, whom, he reasoned, the lion might not have killed after all. There was a possibility, he thought, that she might have had time to climb a tree. He was positive the lion must otherwise have killed her.

His knowledge of lions was slight. In common with most people, he believed that lions wandered about killing everything so unfortunate as to fall into their pathways—unless they were bluffed out as he had bluffed the panther the day before. But of course, he reasoned, Jezebel wouldn't have been able to bluff a lion.

HE was walking close to the edge of the forest, making the best time he could, when he heard a shot in the distance. It was the report of Stabutch's rifle as he fired at Tarzan. The Gunner tried to increase his speed. There was too much doing up there, where he thought Jezebel might be, to permit of loafing.

Then, a few minutes later, the Russian's scream of agony was wafted to his ears and again he was goaded on. This was followed by the uncanny cry of the ape-man, which for some reason Danny did not recognize, though he had heard it twice before. Perhaps the distance and the intervening trees muffled and changed it.

On he plodded, trying occasionally to run, but his overtaxed muscles had reached their limit and he had to give up the attempt, for already he was staggering and stumbling, even at a walk.

"I aint no good," he muttered; "nothing but a lousy punk! Here's a guy beatin' it with my girl, and I aint even got the stren'th to work my dogs. Geeze, I'm a flop!"

A little farther on he entered the forest so that he could approach the spot whence he had seen the horses emerge, without being seen, if Stabutch was still there.

Suddenly he stopped. Something was crashing through the brush toward him. He recalled the lion and drew his pocket-knife. Then he hid behind a bush and waited. Nor did he have long to wait before the author of the disturbance broke into view.

"Jezebel!" he cried, stepping into her path.

With a startled scream the girl halted. Then she recognized him. "Danny!" she cried. It was the last straw—her overwrought nerves went to pieces and she sank to the ground, sobbing hysterically.

The Gunner took a step or two toward her. He staggered; his knees gave beneath him and he sat down heavily a few yards from her. Then a strange thing happened. Tears welled to the eyes of Danny Gunner Patrick; he threw himself face down on the ground and he too sobbed.

For several minutes they lay thus. Then Jezebel gained control of herself and sat up. "Oh, Danny," she cried, "are you hurt? Oh, your head! Don't die, Danny!"

He was roughly wiping his eyes on his shirt sleeve. "I aint dyin'," he said, "but I oughta. Some one oughta bump me off—a great big stiff like me, cryin'!"

"It's because you've been hurt, Danny," said Jezebel.

"Naw, it aint that. I been hurt before, but I aint bawled since I was a little kid—when my mother died. It was something else, kid. I just blew up when I seen you, and knew that you were O.K. My nerves went blooey—just like that!" he snapped his fingers. "You see," he added, hesitantly, "I guess I like you an awful lot, kid."

"I like *you,* Danny," she told him. "You're top-hole."

"I'm what? What does that mean?"

"I don't know," Jezebel admitted. "It's English, and you don't understand English, do you?"

He crawled over closer to her and took her hand in his. "Geeze," he said, "I thought I wasn't never goin' to see you again! Say," he burst out violently, "did that bum hurt you any, kid?"

"The man who took me away from the black men in the village, you mean?"

"Yes."

"No, Danny. After he killed his friend we rode all night. He was afraid the black men would catch him."

"What became of the rat? How did you make your get-away?"

She told him all that she knew, but they were unable to account for the sounds both had heard or to guess whether or not they had portended the death of Stabutch.

"I wouldn't be much good, if he showed up again," said Danny. "I gotta get my stren'th back some way."

"You must rest," she told him.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said. "We'll lay around here until we are rested up a bit, then we'll beat it back up toward the hills, where I know where they's water and something to eat. It aint very good food," he added, "but it's better than none. Say, I got some of it in my pocket. We'll just have a feed now." He extracted some dirty scraps of half-burned pork from one of his pockets and surveyed it ruefully.

"What is it?" asked Jezebel.

"It's pig, kid," he explained. "It don't look so hot, does it? Well, it don't taste no better than it looks, but it's food, and that's what we're needin' bad right now. Here, hop to it." He extended a handful of the scraps toward her. "Shut your eyes and hold your nose and it aint so bad," he assured her. "Just imagine you're in the old College Inn."

Jezebel smiled and took a piece of the meat. "United States is a funny language, isn't it, Danny?"

"Why, I don't know. Is it?"

"Yes, I think so. Sometimes it sounds just like English and yet I can't understand it at all."

"That's because you aint used to it," he told her; "but I'll learn you if you want me to. Do you?"

"Oke, kid," replied Jezebel.

"You're learnin', all right," said Danny admiringly.

IN the growing heat of the day they talked together of many things, as they rested. Jezebel told him the story of the land of Midian, of her childhood, of the eventful coming of Lady Barbara and its strange effect upon her life. Danny told Jezebel of Chicago, but there were many things in his own life that he did not tell her—things of which, that, for the first time, he was ashamed. And he wondered why he was ashamed.

As they talked Tarzan of the Apes quitted the forest and set out upon his search for them, going upward toward the hills, intending to start his search for their spoor at the mouth of the fissure. If he did not find it there he would know that they were still in the valley; if he did find it, he would follow it until he located them.

At break of day a hundred *shiftas* rode out of their village. They had discovered the body of Capietro and now they knew that the Russian had tricked them and fled, after killing their chief. They wanted the girl for ransom, and they wanted the life of Stabutch.

They had not ridden far when they met two riderless horses galloping back toward the village. The *shiftas* recognized them at once and knowing that Stabutch and the girl were now afoot, they anticipated little difficulty in overhauling them.

The rolling foothills were cut by swales and cañons, so that at times the vision of the riders was limited. They had been following downward along the bottom of a shallow cañon for some time, where they could neither see to a great distance nor be seen; then their leader turned

Stabutch sprang to his feet. "God!" he exclaimed. "This is no place to sleep!"

his mount toward higher ground and as he topped the summit of a low ridge he saw a man approaching from the direction of the forest.

Simultaneously Tarzan saw the *shifta* and changed his direction obliquely to the left, breaking into a trot. He knew that if that lone rider signified a force of mounted *shiftas* he would be no match for them and, guided by the instinct of the wild beast, he sought ground where the advantage would be with him—the rough, rocky ground leading to the cliffs, where no horse could follow him.

With a yell to his followers, the *shifta* chieftain put spurs to his horse and rode at top speed to intercept the ape-man, while close behind him came his yelling, savage horde.

Tarzan quickly saw that he could not reach the cliffs ahead of them, but he maintained his steady, tireless trot so that he might be that much nearer the goal when the attack came. Perhaps he could hold them off until he reached the sanctuary of the cliffs, but certainly he had no intention of giving up without exerting every effort to escape the unequal battle that must follow if they overtook him.

With savage yells the *shiftas* approached, their loose cotton garments fluttering in the wind, their rifles waving above their heads. The chief rode in the lead, and when he was near enough the ape-man, who had been casting occasional glances rearward across a brown shoulder, stopped, wheeled and let an arrow drive at his foe; then he was away again as the shaft sank into the breast of the *shifta* chieftain.

With a scream the fellow rolled from his saddle, and for a moment the others drew rein; but only for a moment. Here was but a single enemy, poorly armed with primitive weapons—he was no real menace to mounted riflemen.

Shouting angry threats of vengeance, they spurred forward again in pursuit, but Tarzan had gained now, and the rocky ground was not far away.

Spreading in a great half-circle, the *shiftas* sought to surround and head off their quarry, whose strategy they had guessed the moment they saw the course of his flight. Now another rider ventured too near and for a brief instant Tarzan paused to loose another arrow. As this second enemy fell, mortally wounded, the ape-man continued his flight to the accompaniment of a rattle of musketry fire. But soon he was forced to halt again as several of the horsemen passed him and cut off his line of retreat.

The hail of slugs screaming past him or kicking up the dirt around him gave him slight concern, so traditionally poor was the marksmanship of those roving bands of robbers, ill-equipped with ancient firearms with which, because of habitual shortage of ammunition, they had little opportunity to practice.

Now they pressed closer, in a rough circle of which he was the center. Firing from all sides as they were, it seemed impossible that they should miss him—but miss him they did, though their bullets found targets among their own men and horses, until one, who had supplanted the slain chief, took command and ordered them to cease firing.

Turning again in the direction of his flight, Tarzan tried to shoot his way through the cordon of horsemen shutting off his retreat; but, though each arrow sped true to its mark, the yelling horde closed in upon him until, his last shaft spent, he was the center of a closely milling mass of shrieking enemies.

Shrilly above the pandemonium of battle rose the cries of the new leader. "Do not kill! Do not kill!" he screamed. "It is Tarzan of the Apes—and he is worth the ransom of a ras!"

Suddenly a giant black threw himself from his horse full upon the Lord of the Jungle, but Tarzan seized the fellow and hurled him back among the horsemen. Yet closer and closer they pressed; several fell upon him from their saddles, bearing him down beneath the feet of the now frantic horses.

Battling for life and liberty, the ape-man struggled against overpowering odds that were being constantly augmented by new recruits who hurled themselves from

Stabutch, dying, reached for the revolver at his hip.

their mounts upon the growing pile that overwhelmed him. Once he managed to struggle to his feet, shaking most of his opponents from him, but they seized him about the legs and dragged him down again, and presently succeeded in slipping nooses about his wrists and ankles, thus effectually subduing him.

Now that he was harmless, many of them reviled and struck him, but there were others who lay upon the ground, some never to rise again. The *shiftas* had captured the great Tarzan, but it had cost them dear.

Quickly some of them rounded up the riderless horses, while others stripped the dead of their weapons, ammunition and any other valuables the living coveted. Tarzan was lifted to an empty saddle, where he was securely bound, and four men were detailed to conduct him and the horses of the dead to the village, the wounded accompanying them, while the main body of the blacks continued the search for Stabutch and Jezebel.

CHAPTER XXV

The Long Night

THE sun was high in the heavens when Lady Barbara, refreshed by a long, undisturbed sleep, stepped from her tent in the camp of Lord Passmore. A smiling, handsome black boy came running toward her. "Breakfast soon be ready," he told her. "Lord Passmore very sorry. He have to go hunt."

She asked about Lafayette Smith and was told that he had just awakened; nor was it long before he joined her, and soon they were breakfasting together.

"If Jezebel and your friend were here," she said, "I should be very happy. I am praying that Tarzan finds them."

"I am sure he will," Smith assured her, "though I am only worried about Jezebel. Danny can take care of himself."

"Doesn't it seem heavenly to eat a meal again?" the girl remarked. "Do you know it has been months since I have eaten anything that even vaguely approximated a civilized meal! Lord Passmore was fortunate to get such a cook for his safari."

"Have you noticed what splendid-looking fellows all his men are?" asked Smith. "They would make that aggregation of mine resemble fourth-rate roustabouts."

"There is another very noticeable thing about them," said Lady Barbara.

"What is that?"

"There is not a single piece of cast-off European finery among them—their garb is native, pure and simple, and while I'll still have to admit there isn't much to it, it lends a dignity to them that European clothing would change to the absurd."

"I quite agree with you," said Smith. "I wonder why I didn't get a safari like this."

"Lord Passmore is evidently an African traveler and hunter of long experience. No amateur could hope to attract such men as these."

"I shall hate to go back to my own camp, if I stay here very long," said Smith, "but I suppose I'll have to, and that suggests another unpleasant feature of the change."

"And what is that?" she asked.

"I sha'n't see you any more," he said with a simple directness that vouched for the sincerity of his regret.

The girl was silent for a moment, as if the suggestion had aroused a train of thought she had not before considered. "That is true, isn't it?" she remarked presently. "But I'm sure you'll stop and visit me in London. Isn't it odd what old friends we seem? And yet we only met two days ago. Or maybe it doesn't seem that way to you. You see I was so long without seeing a human being of my own world that you were quite like a long-lost brother, when you came along so unexpectedly."

"I have the same feeling," he said, "—as though I had known you forever—and,"—he hesitated,—"as though I could never get along without you in the future." He flushed a little as he spoke the last words.

The girl looked up at him with a quick smile—a sympathetic, understanding smile. "It was nice of you to say that," she said. "Why, it sounded almost like a declaration," she added, with a gay laugh.

He reached across the little camp table and laid a hand upon hers.

"Accept it as such," he said. "I'm not very good at saying things—like that."

"Let's not be serious," she begged. "Really, we scarcely know each other, after all."

"I have known you always," he replied. "I think we were amœbas together before the first Cambrian dawn."

"Now you've compromised me," she cried laughingly, "for I'm sure there were no chaperons way back there. I hope that you were a proper amœba. You didn't kiss me, did you?"

"Unfortunately for me, amœbas have no mouths," he said, "but I've been profiting by several millions of years of evolution just to remedy that defect."

"Let's be amœbas again," she suggested.

"No," he said, "for then I couldn't tell you that I—I—"

"Please! Please don't tell me," she cried. "We're such ripping friends—don't spoil it."

"Would my telling you spoil it?" asked Lafayette Smith.

"I don't know. It might. I am afraid."

"Can't I ever tell you?" he asked.

"Perhaps, some day," she said.

A sudden burst of distant rifle-fire interrupted them. The blacks in the camp were instantly alert. Many of them sprang to their feet and all listened intently to the sounds of this mysterious engagement between armed men.

The man and the girl heard the head-man speaking to his fellows in some African dialect. His manner showed no excitement, his tones were low but clear. It was evident that he was issuing instructions. The men went quickly to their shelters and a moment later Lady Barbara saw the peaceful camp transformed. Every man was armed now. As by magic a modern rifle and a bandolier of cartridges were in the possession of each black. White feathered headdresses were being adjusted, and war paint applied to glossy hides.

Smith approached the head-man. "What is the matter?" he asked. "Is something wrong?"

"I do not know, bwana," replied the black, "but we prepare."

"Is there any danger?" Smith inquired.

The head-man straightened to his full, impressive height. "Are we not here?" he asked. . . .

Jezebel and the Gunner were walking slowly in the direction of the distant water-hole and the cached boar-meat, following the bottom of a dip that was the mouth of a small cañon leading up into the hills.

They were stiff and lame and very tired, and the wound on the Gunner's head pained him, but notwithstanding this they were happy, as hand in hand they dragged wearily along toward water and food.

"Geeze, kid," said Danny, "it sure is a funny world. Just think, if I hadn't met old Smithy on board that ship, me and you wouldn't never have met up. It all started from that."

Jezebel nodded happily.

"I got a few grand salted away, kid, and when we get out of this mess we'll go somewhere where nobody doesn't know me and I'll start all over again," Danny added. "I'll get myself a garage or a filling-station, and we'll have a little flat. Geeze, it's goin' to be great, showin' you things! You don't know what you aint seen—movies and railroads and boats! Geeze! You aint seen nothin'—and nobody aint goin' to show you nothin', only me."

"Yes, Danny," said Jezebel, "it's going to be ripping," and she squeezed his hand.

Just then they were startled by the sound of rifle-fire ahead.

"What was that?" asked Jezebel.

"It sounded like the St. Valentine's Day massacree," said Danny, "but I guess it's them tough smokes from the village. We'd better hide, kid." He drew Jezebel toward some low bushes and there they lay down, listening to the shouts and shots that came down to them from where Tarzan fought for his life and liberty, with the odds a hundred to one against him.

After awhile the din ceased and a little later the two heard the thudding of many galloping hoofs. The sound increased in volume as it drew nearer and Danny and Jezebel tried to make themselves as small as possible beneath the little bush in the inadequate concealment of which they were hiding.

At a thundering gallop the *shiftas* crossed the swale just above them and all but a few had passed, when one of the stragglers discovered the fugitives. His shout, which attracted the attention of others, was carried forward until it reached the new chief, and presently the entire band had circled back to learn what their fellow had discovered.

Poor Gunner! Poor Jezebel! Their freedom had been short-lived. Their recapture was effected with humiliating ease, and broken and dejected, they were soon on their way to the village under escort of two black ruffians.

Bound, hands and feet, they were thrown into the hut formerly occupied by Capietro and there they were left, without food or water, upon the pile of dirty rugs and clothing that littered the floor.

Beside them lay the corpse of the Italian—which his followers, in their haste to overtake his slayer, had not taken the time to remove.

Never before in his life had the spirits of Danny Patrick sunk so low—for the reason, perhaps, that never in his life had they risen so high as during the brief interlude of happiness he had enjoyed following his reunion with Jezebel. Now he saw no hope ahead, for with the two white men eliminated, he feared that he might not even be able to dicker with these ignorant black men for the ransom he would gladly pay to free Jezebel and himself.

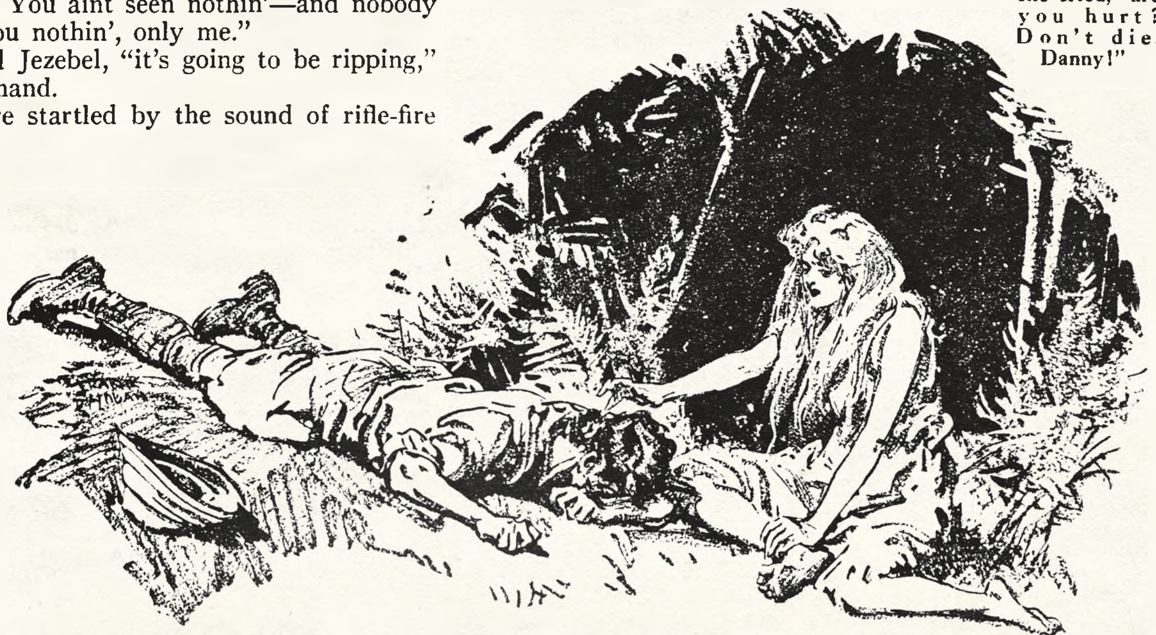
"There goes the garage, the filling-station and the flat," he said lugubriously.

"Where?" asked Jezebel.

"Flooey," explained Danny.

"But you are here with me," said the golden one. "So I do not care what else there is."

"That's nice, kid, but I aint much help, all tied up like a Christmas present. They sure picked out a swell bed for me—feels like I was lyin' on a piece of the kitchen stove." He rolled himself to one side and nearer Jezebel. "That's better," he said, "but I wonder what was that thing I was parked on."



"Oh, Danny," she cried, "are you hurt? Don't die, Danny!"

"Maybe your friend will come and take us away," suggested Jezebel.

"Who—Smithy? What would he take us with—that dinky toy pistol of his?"

Jezebel shook her head.

"I was thinking of the other that you told me about."

"Oh, that Tarzan guy! Say, kid, if he knew we was here he'd walk in and push all these nutty dumps over with one mitt and kick the smokes over the back fence. Geeze, you bet I wish he was here."

IN a hut on the edge of the village was the answer to the Gunner's wish, bound hand and foot, as was the Gunner, and apparently equally helpless. But constantly the ape-man was working on the thongs that confined his wrists—twisting, tugging, pulling.

The long day wore on; never did the giant captive cease his efforts to escape, but the thongs were heavy and securely tied—yet little by little he felt that they were loosening.

Toward evening the new chief returned with the party that had been searching for Stabutch. They had not found him, but scouts had located the camp of Lord Passmore and now the *shiftas* were discussing plans for attacking it on the morrow.

They had not come sufficiently close to it to note the number of armed natives it contained, but they had glimpsed Smith and Lady Barbara, and being sure that there were not more than two white men they felt little hesitation in attempting the raid, since they were planning to start back for Abyssinia on the morrow.

"We will kill the white man we now have," said the chief, "and carry the two girls and Tarzan with us. Tarzan should bring a good ransom, and the two girls a good price."

"Why not keep the girls for ourselves?" suggested another.

"We shall sell them," said the chief.

"Who are you, to say what we shall do?" demanded the other. "You are no chief."

"No," growled a villainous-looking black squatting beside the first objector.

He who would be chief leaped, catlike, upon the first speaker, before any was aware of his purpose. A sword gleamed for an instant in the light of the newly made cookfires, and fell with terrific force upon the skull of the victim.

"Who am I?" repeated the killer, as he wiped the bloody blade upon the garment of the slain man. "I am chief!" He looked around upon the scowling faces about him. "Is there any who says I am not chief?" There was no demur—Ntale was chief of the *shifta* band. . . .

Inside the dark interior of the hut where he had lain bound all day without food or water, the ape-man tugged and pulled until the sweat stood in beads upon his body. Gradually a hand slipped through the stretched thong and he was free. Or at least his hands were free; it took him but a moment to loosen the bonds that secured his ankles.

WITH a low, inaudible growl he rose to his feet and stepped to the doorway. Before him lay the village compound. He saw the *shiftas* squatting about while slaves prepared the evening meal. Near by was the palisade. They must see him as he crossed to it, but what matter?

He would be gone before they could gather their wits. Perhaps a few stray shots would be fired, but had they not fired many shots at him this morning, not one of which had touched him?

He stepped out into the open—and at the same instant a burly black stepped from the next hut and saw him. With a shout of warning to his fellows the man leaped upon the escaping prisoner. Those at the fires sprang to their feet and came running toward the two.

Within their prison hut Jezebel and Danny heard the commotion and wondered.

The ape-man seized the black who would have stopped him and wheeling him about to form a shield for himself, backed quickly toward the palisade.

"Stay where you are," he called to the advancing *shiftas,* in their own dialect. "Stay where you are, or I will kill this man."

"Let him kill him, then," growled Ntale. "He is not worth the ransom we are losing!"—and with a shout of encouragement to his followers he leaped quickly forward to intercept the ape-man.

Tarzan was already near the palisade as Ntale charged. He raised the struggling black above his head and hurled him upon the advancing chief; then as the two went down he wheeled and ran for the palisade.

Like Manu the monkey he scaled the high barrier. A few scattered shots followed him, but he dropped to the ground outside unscathed and disappeared in the growing gloom of the advancing night.

THE long night of their captivity dragged on, and still the Gunner and Jezebel lay as they had been left, without food or drink, while the silent corpse of Capietro stared at the ceiling.

"I wouldn't treat nobody like this," said the Gunner, "not even a rat."

Jezebel raised herself to one elbow. "Why not try it?" she whispered.

"Try what?" demanded Danny eagerly. "I'd try anything once."

"What you said about a rat made me think of it," said Jezebel. "We have lots of rats in the land of Midian. Sometimes we catch them—they are very good to eat. We make traps, but if we do not kill the rats soon after they are caught they gnaw their way to freedom—they gnaw the cords which bind the traps together."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Danny. "We aint got no rats and if we had—well, I won't say I wouldn't eat 'em, kid, but I don't see what it's got to do with the mess we're in."

"We're like the rats, Danny," she said. "Don't you see? We're like the rats—and we can gnaw our way to freedom!"

"Well, kid," said Danny, "if you want to gnaw your way through the side of this hut, hop to it, but if I get a chance to duck I'm goin' through the door."

"You do not understand, Danny," insisted Jezebel. "You are an egg that cannot talk. I mean that I can gnaw the cords that fasten your wrists together."

"Geeze, kid!" exclaimed Danny. "Dumb aint no name for it—and here I always thought I was the bright little boy! You sure got a bean on you, girl—and I don't mean maybe."

"I wish I knew what you are talking about, Danny," said Jezebel, "and I wish you would let me try to gnaw the cords from your wrist. Can't you understand what I'm talking about?"

"Sure, kid, but I'll do the gnawing—my jaws are tougher. Roll over, and I'll get busy. When you're free you can untie me."

Jezebel rolled over on her stomach and Danny wriggled into position where he could reach the thongs at her wrists with his teeth. He fell to work with a will, but it was soon evident to him that the job was going to be much more difficult than he had anticipated.

Now that he was harmless, many of them reviled and struck him. . . . The *shiftas* had captured the great Tarzan!

He found, too, that he was very weak and soon tired, but though often he was forced to stop temporarily through exhaustion, he doggedly persisted. Once, when he paused to rest, he kissed the little hands that he was trying to liberate. It was a gentle, reverent kiss, quite unlike the Gunner—but love is a strange force.

Dawn was lifting the darkness within the hut, and still the Gunner gnawed upon the thongs that seemingly would never part.

The *shiftas* were stirring in the village, for this was to be a busy day. Slaves were preparing the loads of camp equipment and plunder that they were to carry toward the north. The fighting men were hastening their breakfasts that they might look to their weapons and their horse gear before riding out on their last raid from this village, against the camp of the English hunter.

Ntale the chief was eating beside the fire of his favorite wife. "Make haste, woman," he said. "I have work to do before we ride."

"You are chief now," she reminded him. "Let others work."

"This thing I do myself," replied the black man.

"What do you that is so important that I must hasten the preparation of the morning meal?" she demanded.

"I go to kill the white man and get the girl ready for the journey," he replied. "Have food prepared for her. She must eat or she will die."

"Let her die," replied the woman. "I do not want her around. Kill them both."

"Shut thy mouth!" snapped the man. "I am chief."

"If you do not kill her, I shall," said the woman. "I shall not cook for any white woman."

The man rose. "I go to kill the man," he said. "Have breakfast for the girl when I return with her."

CHAPTER XXVI

The Waziri

"THERE!" gasped the Gunner, as the thongs parted.

"I am free!" exclaimed Jezebel.

"And my jaws is wore out," said Danny.

Quickly Jezebel turned and worked upon the thongs that confined the Gunner's wrists, before taking the time to loose her ankles. Her fingers were numb, for the cords had partially cut off the circulation from her hands, and she was slow and bungling at the work. It seemed to them both that she would never be done. Had they known that Ntale had already arisen from his breakfast-fire with the announcement that he was going to kill the Gunner, they would have been frantic, but they did not know it and perhaps that was better, since to Jezebel's other handicaps was not added the nervous tension that surely would have accompanied a knowledge of the truth.

But at last the Gunner's hands were free; then both fell to work upon the cords that secured their ankles, which were less tightly fastened.

At last the Gunner arose. "The first thing I do," he said, "is to find out what I was lyin' on yesterday. It had a familiar feel to it, and if I'm right—boy!"

He rummaged among the filthy rags at the end of the hut and a moment later straightened up with a Thompson submachine-gun in one hand and his revolver, belt and holster in the other hand. A delighted grin was on his face.

"This is the first break I've had in a long time," he said. "Everything's jake now, sister."

"What are those things?" asked Jezebel.

"Them's the other half of Gunner Patrick," replied Danny. "Now, bring on your tough smokes!"

As he spoke, Ntale the chief drew aside the rug at the doorway and looked in. The interior of the hut was rather dark and at first glance he could not make out the figures of the girl and the man standing at the far side, but, silhouetted as he was against the growing morning light beyond the doorway, he was plainly visible to his intended victim and Danny saw that the man carried a pistol ready in his hand.

The Gunner had already buckled his belt about him. Now he transferred the machine-gun to his left hand and drew his revolver from its holster—so quickly that, as he fired, Ntale had not yet realized that his prisoners were free of their bonds—a thing he never knew, as he never heard the report of the shot that killed him.

At the same instant that the Gunner fired, the report of his revolver was drowned by yells and a shot from a sentry at the gate, to whom the coming day had revealed a hostile force creeping upon the village.

As Danny Patrick stepped over the dead body of the chief and looked out into the village he realized something of what had occurred. He saw men running hastily toward the village gates and scrambling to the banquette. He heard a fusillade of shots that spattered against the palisade, splintering the wood and tearing through, to fill the mob in the village with terror.

His knowledge of such things told him that only high-power rifles could send their projectiles through the heavy wood of the palisade. He saw the *shiftas* on the banquette returning the fire with their antiquated muskets. He saw the slaves and prisoners cowering in a corner of the village that was more free from the fire of the attackers than other portions.

He wondered who the enemies of the *shiftas* might be, and past experience suggested only two possibilities—either a rival "gang" or the police.

"I never thought I'd come to it, kid," he said.

"Come to what, Danny?"

"I hate to tell you what I been hopin'," he admitted.

"Tell me, Danny," she said. "I won't be angry."

"I been hopin' them guys out there was cops. Just think o' that, kid! Me, Gunner Patrick, a-hopin' the cops would come!"

"What are cops, Danny?"

"John Laws, harness bulls! Geeze, kid, why do you ask so many questions? Cops is cops. And I'll tell you why I hope it's them. If it aint cops it's a rival mob, and we'd get just as tough a break with them as with these guys."

He stepped out into the village street. "Well," he said, "here goes Danny Patrick, smearin' up with the police. You stay here, kid, and lie down on your bread-basket, so none of them slugs'll find you, while I go out and push the smokes around."

BEFORE the gate was a great crowd of *shiftas* firing through the openings at the enemy beyond. The Gunner knelt and raised the machine-gun to his shoulder. There was a vicious *b-r-r-r* as of some titanic rattlesnake, and a dozen of the massed *shiftas* collapsed, screaming or dead, to the ground.

The others turned and, seeing the Gunner, realized that they were caught between two fires, for they remembered the recent occasion upon which they had witnessed the deadly effects of this terrifying weapon.

The Gunner spied Ogonyo among the prisoners and slaves huddled not far from where he stood, and sight of the black suggested an idea to Patrick.

"Hey! Big Smoke, you!" He waved his hand as Ogonyo looked in his direction. "Come here! Bring all them guys with you. Tell 'em to grab anything they can fight with, if they want to make their get-away."

Whether or not Ogonyo understood even a small part of what the Gunner said, he seemed at least to grasp the main idea, and presently the whole mob of prisoners and slaves, except the women, had placed themselves behind Danny.

The firing from the attacking force had subsided somewhat since Danny's "typewriter" had spoken, as though the leader of that other party had recognized its voice and guessed that white prisoners within the village might be menaced by his rifle-fire. Only an occasional shot, aimed at some specific target, was coming into the village.

The *shiftas* had regained their composure to some extent, and were preparing their horses and mounting, with the evident intention of executing a sortie. They were leaderless and confused, half a dozen shouting advice and instructions at the same time.

IT was at this moment that Danny advanced upon them with his motley horde armed with sticks and stones, an occasional knife and a few swords hastily stolen from the huts of their captors.

As the *shiftas* realized that they were menaced thus seriously from the rear the Gunner opened fire upon them for the second time, and the confusion that followed in the village compound gave the attackers both within and without a new advantage.

The *shiftas* fought among themselves for the loose horses that were now stampeding in terror about the village and as a number of them succeeded in mounting they rode for the village gates, overthrowing those who had remained to defend them. Some among them forced the portals open, but as the horsemen dashed out they were met by a band of black warriors, above whose heads waved white plumes, and in whose hands were modern high-power rifles.

The attacking force had been lying partially concealed behind a low ridge and as it rose to meet the escaping *shiftas* the savage war-cry of the Waziri rang above the tumult of cracking rifles and shouting, cursing men.

First to the gates was Tarzan, war-chief of the Waziri, and while Muviro and a small detachment accounted for all but a few of the horsemen who had succeeded in leaving the village, the ape-man, at the head of the balance of his force, charged the demoralized remnants of Capietro's band that remained within the palisade.

Surrounded by enemies, the *shiftas* threw down their rifles and begged for mercy. Soon they were herded into a corner of the village under guard of a detachment of the Waziri.

Tarzan greeted the Gunner and Jezebel and expressed his deep relief at finding them unharmed.

"You sure come at the right time," Danny told him. "This old typewriter certainly chews up the ammunition, and that last burst just about emptied the drum. But say, who are your friends? Where did you raise this mob?"

"They are my people," replied Tarzan.

"Some gang!" ejaculated the Gunner admiringly. "Have you seen anything of old Smithy?"

"He is safe at camp."

"And Barbara," asked Jezebel; "where is she?"

"She is with Smith," replied Tarzan. "You will see them both in a few hours. We start back as soon as I arrange for the disposal of these people." He turned away and commenced to make inquiries among the prisoners of the *shiftas*.

"Is he not beautiful?" exclaimed Jezebel.

"Hey, sister, can that '*beautiful*' stuff!" warned the Gunner. "From now on remember that I'm the only 'beautiful' guy you know—no matter what my pan really looks like."

Quickly Tarzan separated the prisoners according to their tribes and villages, appointed head-men to lead them back to their homes, and issued instructions to them as he explained his plans.

The weapons, ammunition, loot and belongings of the *shiftas* were divided among the prisoners, after the Waziri had been allowed to select such trifles as they desired. The captured *shiftas* were placed in charge of a large band of Gallas with orders to return them to Abyssinia and turn them over to the nearest ras.

"Why not hang them here?" asked the Galla head-man. "We shall then save all the food they would eat on the long march back to our country, besides saving us much trouble and worry in guarding them—for the ras will certainly hang them when he gets his hands on them."

"Take them back, as I tell you," replied Tarzan. "But if they give you trouble, do with them as you see fit."

It took little more than an hour to evacuate the village. All of Smith's loads were recovered, including Danny's precious ammunition and extra drums for his beloved tommy-gun, and these were assigned to Smith's porters, who were once again assembled under Ogonyo.

When the village was emptied it was fired in a dozen places and, as the black smoke curled up toward the blue heavens, the various parties took their respective ways from the scene of their captivity—but not before the several head-men had come and knelt before the Lord of the Jungle and thanked him for the deliverance of their people.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Last Knot is Tied

LAFAYETTE SMITH and Lady Barbara had been mystified witnesses to the sudden transformation of the peaceful scene in the camp of Lord Passmore. All day the warriors had remained in readiness, as though expecting a summons, and when night fell they still waited.

Evidences of restlessness were apparent and there was no singing and little laughter in the camp, as there had been before. The last that the two whites saw as they retired for the night were the little groups of plumed warriors squatting about their fires, their rifles ready to their hands. Smith and the girl were asleep when the summons came and the sleek black fighting men melted silently into the dark shadows of the forest, leaving only four of their number to guard the camp and the two guests.

When Lady Barbara emerged from her tent in the morning she was astonished to find the camp all but deserted. The boy who acted in the capacity of personal servant and cook for her and Smith was still there, with three other blacks. All were constantly armed, but their attitude toward her had not changed and she felt only curiosity relative to the other altered conditions—so obvious at first glance—rather than apprehension.

When Smith joined her a few minutes later he was equally at a loss to understand the strange metamorphosis that had transformed the laughing, joking porters and *askari* into painted warriors, and sent them out into the night so surreptitiously; nor could they glean the slightest information from their "boy," who, by some strange trick of fate, seemed suddenly to have forgotten the very fair command of English that he had exhibited with evident pride on the previous day.

The long day dragged on until mid-afternoon without sign of any change. Neither Lord Passmore nor the missing blacks returned, and the enigma was as baffling as before. The two whites, however, seemed to find pleasure in one another's company and the day passed more rapidly for them than it did for the four blacks, waiting and listening through the hot, drowsy hours.

But suddenly there was a change. Lady Barbara saw her boy rise and stand in an attitude of eager listening. "They come!" he said, in his own tongue, to his companions. Now they all stood and, though they may have expected only friends, their rifles were in readiness.

Gradually the sound of voices and of marching men became distinctly audible to the untrained ears of the two whites and a little later they saw the head of a column filing through the forest toward them.

"Why there's the Gunner!" exclaimed Lafayette Smith. "And Jezebel, too. How odd that they should be together!"

"With Tarzan of the Apes!" cried Lady Barbara. "He has saved them both."

A SMILE touched the lips of the ape-man as he witnessed the reunion of Lady Barbara and Jezebel and that between Smith and the Gunner; and it broadened when, after the first burst of greetings and explanations, Lady Barbara said: "It is unfortunate that our host Lord Passmore isn't here."

"He is," said the ape-man.

"Where?" demanded Lafayette Smith, looking about the camp.

"I am 'Lord Passmore'," said Tarzan.

"*You?*" exclaimed Lady Barbara.

"Yes. I assumed this rôle when I came north to investigate the rumors I had heard concerning Capietro and his band, believing that they not only would suspect no danger, but hoping, also, that they would seek to attack and plunder my safari as they have those of others."

"Geeze," said the Gunner. "What a jolt they would've got!"

"That is why we never saw Lord Passmore," said Lady Barbara, laughing. "I thought him a most elusive host."

"The first night I left you here," explained Tarzan, "I walked into the jungle until I was out of sight, then I came back from another direction and entered my tent from the rear. I slept there all night. The next morning, early, I left in search of your friends—and was captured myself. But everything has worked out well and if you have no other immediate plans I hope that you will accompany me back to my home and remain for a while as my guests, while you recover from the rather rough experiences Africa has afforded you. Or, perhaps," he added, "Professor Smith and his friend wish to continue their geological investigations."

"I—ah—well, you see," stammered Lafayette Smith, "I have about decided to abandon my work in Africa and devote my life to the geology of England. We, or—er—you see, Lady Barbara—"

"I am going to take him back to England and teach him to shoot before I let him return to Africa," laughed Lady Barbara. "Possibly we shall come back later, though."

"And you, Patrick," Tarzan asked, "are you remaining to hunt, perhaps?"

"Nix, Mister," said Danny emphatically. "We're goin' to California and buy a garage and filling-station."

"*We?*" queried Lady Barbara.

"Sure," said the Gunner; "me and Jez."

"Really?" exclaimed Lady Barbara. "Is he in earnest, Jezebel?"

"Oke, kid! Isn't it ripping?" replied the golden one.

The End.

Without Capital

A drama of the business world, wherein Youth does battle with the fell giant Depression—by the author of "The Art of Selling Goods," "Romances of Small Business," and others.

By EDWARD MOTT WOOLLEY

Illustrated by Arthur Lytle

ON the day after Skidder lost his job with the Interwelded Ornamental Iron Company he dropped in at the William Watson Ornamental Iron Works and asked to see Watson.

"If it's a position you wish, really there isn't anything at all," the blonde at the desk informed him—with ruefulness in her dulcet tones, because Skidder was good-looking. Moreover he was a young man of poise and height, though somewhat skinny.

"So many people have been here for jobs," she added, "that Mr. Watson has asked me to say he is sorry—there isn't any use seeing him."

She lifted her hazel eyes toward the ceiling in order to meet Skidder's. She liked his necktie, too, which had an orange pattern that melted into his well-pressed gray suit.

"No, it's not a job," he guaranteed, his eyes and lips whimsical. "It's rather confidential business, but I don't mind telling *you.* My name is Tom Skidder, and I'm the man who's thinking of taking a partnership in this business."

"Oh!" He caught her note of surprise. "I'll announce you, of course."

And plugging in, she said to William Watson, after some delay: "Mr. Tom Skidder wishes to see you about that partnership matter."

So Skidder found himself in the rather stuffy sanctum of Bill Watson, who owned the Watson Ornamental Iron Company and up to the time of the stock-market blow-up had been making inroads on the business of the Interwelded Company. This too, despite the fact that the Watson Company was nowhere near as big as the Interwelded corporation. From that exciting occasion, both concerns had been traveling downhill rapidly, each successive month doing a smaller and smaller business. Grilles and ornamental iron things were not having a good sale.

"Pernickety" and aggressive, Watson had won the reputation of being the hottest wire in the ornamental iron trade, but now, with sales at the vanishing-point and all his efforts futile, he was worn down to a state of fatigue and megrims; and the truth was that he had been asleep in his pivot chair when the girl disturbed him on the house phone. A trace of mud on the pad of his empty flat-top desk hinted that his feet had rested there.

"You don't know me; but I'm Tom Skidder," said his visitor, looking down upon him from the heights.

Around forty, Watson was short and roly-poly, with a pugnacious cast of countenance, though his lineaments were now scarred with the marks of woe. His eyes were squinty as he looked up from his chair and met the young man's smile. Skidder was twenty-nine.

"What's this I hear about partnership?" he demanded. One foot was still asleep, and he kicked his desk. "Partnership—in what?"

Skidder's forced smile faded. A quizzical expression, however, lighted his physiognomy as he remembered his resolve to cut through obstacles.

"Partnership in this business, Mr. Watson."

The ornamental-iron chief's jaw loosened, and for a few seconds his mouth stood open.

"You've got your wires crossed," he said. "Young man, I guess you mean the Interwelded Company. They're over in the Canal section."

"Not at all, Mr. Watson. I know the Interwelded people very well; in fact, I've been working there for seven years. I—ah, would you mind if I sit in this chair? It's quite a story."

Watson's eyes had lost their squint and were poppy.

"Go ahead and sit. What's all this, anyhow? You say you're with the Interwelded? What do they want of me?"

Skidder's heart was hammering, but he crossed his legs and tried to seem nonchalant. The straight-backed chair was uncomfortable, and now that he was here in Watson's office, the whole scheme seemed grotesque, impossible. When he and Anne had cooked it up, they told themselves it was feasible.

In fact, he and Anne had worked out this approach brilliantly, they had thought. There must be no long, weak, deadly preamble, no dull and silly blah. They had heard much about Bill Watson, and to get his interest, Tom would have to work upon his curiosity, Anne was sure. That was the way to handle Bill.

Indeed, Anne Skidder boasted of her ability to handle men. She had been in the personnel department of the Giant Trading Corporation after leaving college. She had captured Tom by clever handling, she bragged. So to get and hold one's interest sufficiently, and to set desired forces in motion, the element of curiosity must be played with, and not thoroughly satisfied until the psychological moment came.

Tom agreed. He had great confidence in Anne; and after all, wasn't she the originator of the whole idea? Hadn't she been trying for two years to get Tom into some business of his own—without any capital? They had no capital. Of course, there was a house, plastered with three mortgages, a car that was still so new that they owed six hundred dollars on it, a squirrel coat and some rings and things. But Tom said those were really liabilities.

So too was little Natalie, aged three. From the cold-blooded financial viewpoint she was certainly on the debit side; and now that Tom had lost his job, the time had come to strike out boldly for something *big.* Surely, not all the big things had been killed by this diabolical thing people called a depression. Was it really so satanic as people thought, even if it had cost Tom his job?

Anyhow, Anne had the whole plot up her sleeve. Out of an insignificant circumstance it had grown in her mind

within six months to be an obsession. Her wits had worked upon it, looking to the fateful hour when Tom might indeed be thrown out of the Interwelded Corporation. . . .

These were thoughts that flashed through Skidder's head as he sat in the straight-back chair and lighted a cigarette, after offering the pack to Watson without effect. This was no servile rôle he was playing, and Watson must know that he meant to smoke if he wished. Yes, Skidder had the upper hand, he knew, so long as Watson's question remained unanswered.

"You say you're with the Interwelded. What do they want of me?" Watson repeated.

"I fear I have been precipitate." Skidder deposited his cigarette on a tray. "In the first place, I'm no longer with the Interwelded Company. I quit there last night."

He felt a burning in his cheeks. Anne had always said that every time Tom lied, a sunrise on his face proclaimed the fact. Now this thought struck at him.

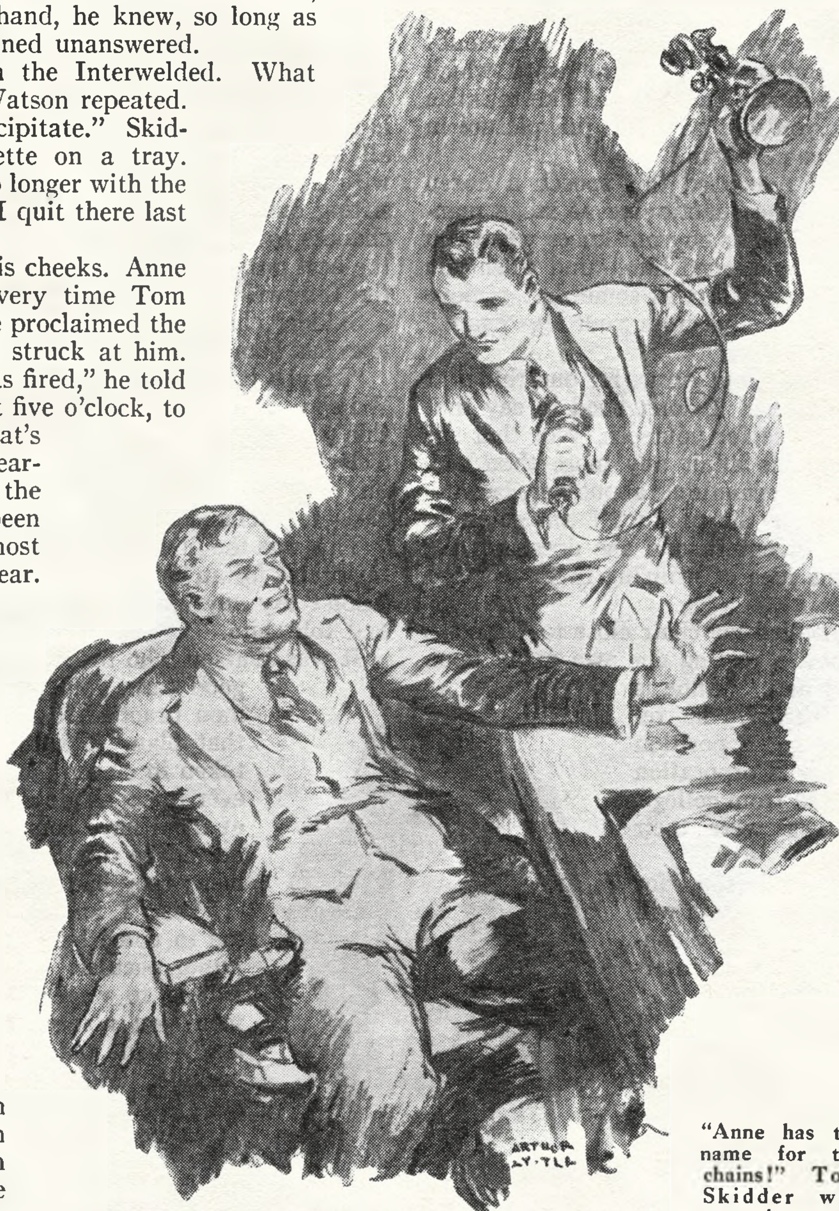
"The truth is that I was fired," he told Watson. "Kicked out at five o'clock, to take effect at five. That's the modern technique. Nearly all the fellows over at the Interwelded plant have been dropped. You've let most of your people out, I hear. Sales gone dead, and all that. I was in the sales department—sort of understudy to the assistant sales-manager. To tell the truth, not much more than an office clerk, so you never even heard of me. But I've had a chance to learn things, and I've got a big idea.

"Mr. Watson, you ask what the Interwelded Company wants of *you.* Nothing. I'm here on my own account, to dicker with you for a partnership in your business. No mere job, you understand, except that I should expect a reasonable drawing account and a position—executive, of course—while the plan is working out."

Watson's visage relaxed, and the corrugations on his brow seemed to soften. He smiled.

"I'd advise you to keep your capital, Skidder. I couldn't use it. There isn't any ornamental-iron business now, and I don't think you could scare up any. How much capital have you got?"

"Ah!" said Skidder, and lighted another cigarette. The crucial moment had arrived, and Watson had lighted a cigarette himself. He seemed interested. "Ah, now we are getting down to details, and possibly these may surprise you, just at the start. The fact is that I haven't any capital, so far as cash goes; and besides, my proposition hasn't anything to do with ornamental iron, or with any other sort of iron, Mr. Watson."



"Anne has the name for the chains!" Tom Skidder was exuberant.

The two men sat looking into each other's eyes. Watson's optics held question-marks, and Skidder's were serious and self-confident, nevertheless radiating a touch of humor. Anne had coached him to keep up his ego, but this warning was scarcely necessary now. The exhilaration of playing this game of wits—an honest game—thrilled him. Already, he was out on his own account, master of his own career, and no matter what happened in this affair with Watson, he would do the thing he had set out to do; somewhere and somehow, he would do it!

"You seem to be a rather keen young chap," said Watson. "I am listening."

"Then here goes: I can make it short. Your own business is close to the rocks, as I happen to know, and there is no immediate hope of a pick-up in ornamental iron. You still have something of an organization left, with offices in various cities, and salesmen available, even if they are off your payroll. You know the selling game; you know advertising."

"Yes," agreed Watson.

"If I can put you in touch with a product which you will not have to manufacture, but can take over as a selling proposition during these hard times in ornamental iron, will you set aside a fair share of the profits as my partnership interest in your firm?"

"Assuming that the product you mention is one that we can handle and produce a net profit on—yes," said Watson sharply. "Look here, Skidder! You touch a sore spot when you tell me I am close to the rocks—but you speak the truth. This business is on the brink of a complete shut-down, and possible abandonment. I have tried to conjure up some line of goods that we could market successfully in such times as this, but to make such a flop suddenly is difficult—at least to a man over forty whose mind has run for twenty years on ornamental iron only. I suppose it will take a young man, with an intellect that isn't yet geared to one set of cogs, to do the thing."

Watson was showing undoubted signs of agitation; his excitation sparkled in his fat-rimmed eyes.

"Now tell me what this magic product is," he said,

leaning forward with his arms upon his desk. There was a note of doubt in his voice. "Skidder, I promise to be square with you."

Skidder uncrossed his legs, straightened his back, and placed his large bony hands upon his knees. His voice quavered under the tension.

"I like what you say, Mr. Watson. If there had been any question in my mind about your being square I shouldn't have come here in the hope of associating myself with you. In a few minutes I am going to tell you all about this magic product, as you call it. I have no doubt that it will be magic, for this is just the word which stands for my confidence in it. But first I'd like to finish my explanation, so that you will have the full picture in your mind as to how it came about."

Skidder and Anne had rehearsed this speech a dozen times, the night before, Anne functioning as stage manager. "You will have your hands on your knees when you reach this point," she had reminded him, "and when you come to the word *picture,* you will relax somewhat, remove your hands from your knees, and cross your legs again."

Skidder did this, and went on:

"I want to explain to you about Anne, for one thing. I beg pardon—Anne is my wife. I don't need to say that she is clever, for you will see for yourself. Not that she means to mix herself in this affair any more than necessary, but I must tell you something about her, because she is really responsible for the product I am going to show you. Anne didn't invent it, and she doesn't make it; she just conceived the idea of utilizing it for a whirlwind sales-campaign."

Here Skidder got up, pulled his chair close to Watson's desk, and sat down opposite, resting one arm easily upon the edge of the polished oak. "Anne is fond of that word *whirlwind,*" he resumed. "You see, Anne got a position with the Giant Trading Corporation shortly after she graduated from college, and 'whirlwind campaigns' were their favorite pastime."

Skidder beamed upon Watson, for Anne had said: "At this point you will smile broadly, which will help carry conviction, and at the same time will entertain Mr. Watson."

Watson was certainly interested. "I grant that your wife is extraordinarily clever," he observed. "And the Giant Trading Corporation—that concern has had a marvelous success!"

"Anne gave up a promising career in business when she left it, to marry me," returned Skidder. "That was four years ago, and ever since then, I've had rather big ambitions in a business way. I've been determined to get into something for myself. Anne has been with me in this resolve. We have planned different things—but we have moved cautiously and done a lot of studying and investigating."

Skidder leaned back in his chair.

"And of course we didn't have any capital," added Skidder, after a moment's pause. They had planned it that way—he and Anne. A pause, a moment's silence, would emphasize that particular sentence and make it stand out by itself. "And of course we didn't have any capital!"

Skidder smiled again, as if to hint that lack of capital was not so much of a handicap as people thought.

"It was rather funny, Mr. Watson, that Anne knew more about capital and such things than I did. I had been through college, too, and taken my dose of economics; but Anne was in with those clever chaps at the Giant Trading Corporation, where brains were reckoned ahead of cash in hand. They were working pretty much on other people's capital, using their own gray matter. That is, they sold goods so fast that they got their money in, or most of it, before their discount periods expired; and they used all those rapid-fire expedients that substitute for topheavy capital. You understand all that!"

"Sure," agreed Watson; "within certain limitations, brains are worth more than money, any day."

"Ah!" Skidder exclaimed. "We agree on that point. That's the exact idea that brought me here. Anne and I have been banking a lot of faith on that axiom. And after all, it may have been just as well that I stayed for a time with the Interwelded Company, for Anne and I have been sifting out the possibilities meanwhile. There have been chances to get into business *without capital,* but I wanted the best possible chance. That was why I remained with the Interwelded people until they fired me."

Skidder chuckled. Getting fired wasn't so bad, when a man had something better lined up in his head.

"Maybe it was their funeral, when they let me go, Mr. Watson. Anne and I had talked about letting them in on this very proposition, but when a fellow is let out at five o'clock, to quit then and there, with no fault to find with his work, he is pretty sure to take his brains somewhere else—to exchange for a junior partnership!"

This was the place to pause again, Anne had said. Trading brains for an interest in the business was worth a pause. "Don't say anything more for thirty seconds, Tom," she had told him.

It was Watson who broke the silence. "You put up a good case, young man. It is of course common practice to take in able young men on that plan. I know of one concern that has taken in eleven partners, no one of whom has ever put a single dollar into the business. All of them have come out millionaires. Ah, but here's the rub, Skidder: these were all proved men; they had been with the company."

"Yes; I know it seems presumptuous for me to come here and offer myself to you as junior partner. At first thought— But I am willing to wager that not one of the eleven men you mention put into the business a ready-made plan and product such as I shall provide. Moreover—"

Skidder took from his inside coat pocket a typewritten list.

"Anne and I have been gathering this information for some months," he said. "Here are the names of fifty men who obtained partnership interests purely on the strength of their peculiar abilities, experience or inventions. Not one of them had ever been connected with these companies before. They went in *without* capital! I gathered this information just to strengthen my own case when the time came to ask for a partnership."

"Natalie is a financial liability."

Watson took the list and scanned it. He looked across the desk at Skidder.

"I want to meet Anne," he said. "Skidder, you are a good salesman for both yourself and her. But don't forget that I haven't seen this miraculous product that is going to buy you an interest in my business. What is it?"

Skidder was standing now, leaning on the desk with both hands.

"There is a manufacturing plant over on the other side of town that makes, among other items, small metal chains that are used for decorative purposes—chains the size girls might wear about their necks. The metal—well, for the moment I'll call it an alloy—is devised especially for art purposes. The chain itself is quite exclusive, a combination of tiny links and beads, extraordinarily pleasing. For ornamentation of pottery and other objects of art, sections of chain are coated and colored by a patented process that gives them peculiar luster and beauty.

"Six months ago Anne happened to come across some piece of art ware that had these chains, and there flashed across her mind an inspiration. I have told you, Mr. Watson, something of her experience with the Giant Trading Corporation—which, among other things, had engaged in whirlwind sales campaigns built around—*necklaces!*"

Skidder paused again, for dramatic effect. "Necklaces!" he repeated.

WATSON'S features had contracted. He was looking up at Skidder with a new light in his eyes.

"Anne can tell you how many millions of necklaces have been marketed by the Giant Trading Corporation," the younger man went on, pursuing his advantage. "She can tell you how fast they have been sold. Anne said to me, on the evening of the day she discovered those decorative chains: 'Tom, I'm going to find out whether anybody ever thought of making neck-chains out of them!'

"She did find out. The owners had not thought of it; nor did the idea interest them especially. Jason Bopp, who owned most of the business, was absorbed in art goods of a different sort. That was the path he traveled—it was the one he wanted to travel. His plant was small, and he had no selling organization, so how could he take on such a silly product as necklaces? All his goods were taken by a few purchasers, who relieved him of the salesmanship burden. Necklaces! No, not for Bopp!"

Watson was looking up with a glint in his eyes.

"What then?" he asked.

"He signed an option, giving Anne the right to place the selling of the chains, made up as necklaces, if she could. He got up some samples for her. They are exquisite. There is nothing else that approaches them. Of all the millions of necklaces and strings of beads marketed through the Giant Trading Corporation, not one can even touch these Bopp chains for delicacy of pattern and perfection of coloring. Bopp is an artist first of all. He is no commercial distributor. Neck-chains antagonize him; but for the sake of money, he will make them if anybody can sell them. And manufacturing facilities could be increased quickly.

"Ah, the Giant Trading Company could sell them!" Skidder added craftily. He and Anne had planned that, too. "Don't forget to tell him *that*," she had said.

"You have told the Giant Trading Corporation?" demanded Watson. He was showing excitement.

"No, not yet. We have talked about it, but it didn't seem just the best thing to do. You see, I was determined to use the Bopp chains to get me into business for myself, or to get a partnership worth while. The Giant Trading Corporation was too big, too involved in general merchandise. The chances were that it would not turn over to me a stock interest in the business, but would merely take on the chains as a selling product, at a price.

"We held off, Mr. Watson, looking for the best chance. The option was made for six months. Anne was clever there, and Bopp was indifferent and easy, having no faith in necklaces. To him, they were a joke."

Watson too was on his feet, almost a dwarf as he stood there facing Skidder on the other side of his desk.

"'Bopp' is an impossible name for necklaces!" he exclaimed. "You must get a name. Have you the samples with you?"

Skidder took from a pocket in his coat a neck-chain of sunset blue, then one of afterglow orange, still another of midnight black. He named each shade as he put the necklaces on Watson's desk.

"Anne named the colors, and there are others too. There is one that our baby wears sometimes. She is three years old, and her chain is 'little-girl' pink. And of course Anne is struggling for a general name. She discarded 'Bopp' at the start. She has a list of four thousand words—all discarded.

"But Anne will get a name—one with an easy swing, and sentiment. She thinks that next to the chain itself, the name will do the most to carry it. . . . Look! Could any neckpiece within the popular price be more lovely!"

Watson bent over the necklaces, his attitude tense, discriminating.

"Anne knows what the girls will buy," Skidder observed, as Watson fingered the samples. "Her woman's intuition and knowledge tells her that, aside from what she saw at the Giant Trading Corporation."

"The chains are very beautiful," assented Watson, standing erect. "You are right about the girls. The country may be deep down in what we call hard times, but everywhere there is magic money hiding, waiting for something the women and children want. Yes, the men and boys too, Skidder; but more, the women and girls.

"The girls! Ah—what a market are these girls! The little girls, the big girls, the girls between—the women. Do you know, I never would have been in ornamental iron except for the feminine love for its beauty. The men? Yes, they buy to please the women. Except for the feminine, I would be selling meat, maybe. Anyhow, not fancy things. And what do men care for necklaces, except that they love the girls!

"The men! Ah, Skidder, I know they will buy these neck-chains—for the girls. 'Little-girl pink'! Your Anne has a lovely imagination, Skidder. Now look here—"

The telephone interrupted with its imperative summons. Watson was speaking to his girl at the information desk. He did not like the interruption. "What do you say? Who is it wants to talk with me? I am too busy. He must wait. I told you not to interrupt me—I didn't care who called. A woman, you say. Who? . . . Mrs. Tom Skidder! Oh—she wishes to talk to Mr. Skidder. Here, Skidder; here's Anne on the wire, and it isn't me she wants. Take this phone—the girl will put her on."

SKIDDER sat down to reach the receiver. This was not part of the plot, and Skidder was surprised.

"Oh, yes—the name! You say you have it? . . . What's that about Natalie? . . . Do I think so? I don't just get you, Anne. The connection isn't good. Natalie? . . . Well, say, if that isn't great! Tremendous! . . . No need of a second choice. It's bully—the best yet! I want to pass it on to Mr. Watson. . . . Yes—good-by."

"Anne has the name for the chains!" Tom Skidder was exuberant. "After mulling over thousands of words, collected from the dictionary, thesaurus, and all the advertisements she could get her eyes on, she's found the name right at home. It's been there all the time. Our little girl, who wears the 'little-girl pink,' is Natalie. Anne is sure that Natalie Necklaces might be worth—well, let us say a fortune. Only last evening we were speaking of Natalie as a financial liability. We wouldn't take all the millions in the world for her, but financially we figured she would be a sober obligation which we must plan to meet, somehow. And with my job gone at the Interwelded, and

the house slathered with mortgages, the car not paid for—good heavens, can this thing be true? Are you going to take on these neck-chains, sir? Am I your junior partner?"

"Don't lose your head, Skidder. Sit down, and we'll see about it." And Watson got out a box of panatelas.

"This is not altogether a case of neck-chains, Skidder; and we must look beyond, to the time when ornamental iron will come back, as no doubt it will. Beyond question, it will come back. For twenty years, ornamental iron has been my vocation, and it may be for twenty years longer.

"On the other hand, who can say but that this will be the turning-point for me, and for you. It is not impossible that neck-chains and things of that sort may be our vocation—a twist of fortune which last evening I had never even contemplated.

"These markets of ours in America loom upon us suddenly, and disappear sometimes as quickly. I lose all my business in ornamental iron, and lo, neck-chains are thrust upon me as a life-saver! Out of total obscurity, so far as I am concerned, you bring me this market—for I feel it, in my inmost conviction, to be a market—a great one, for a time. It is not a vogue which we must create and substitute for existing traditions, though even if it were, I should believe in it, and do it. Your Natalie Neck-chains have an inherent market in the female mind, and since this form of merchandise is a fast mover, it should run up quick results.

"Skidder, I agree that when you find an article which women and girls will buy, from a resistless spending impulse, and which the men will buy because of resistless adoration of the female, you are on the right track in selling things. That is one part of the game; the other part is to market this article with successful technique, and to go on repeating this operation.

"Skidder, you have had the temerity, fortunately, to come here and propose a plan which a year ago I would have regarded as impossibly ridiculous. You have suggested to me that I turn this manufacturing company into a purely selling organization, for neck-chains! And I am going to undertake it—why?

"Because—and I say this with due humiliation—I have been derelict in providing my business with offshoot products or facilities for weathering storms. I hadn't been able to think of anything except ornamental iron to sell. If you hadn't got fired over at the Interwelded— Good heavens, Skidder, I'd have shut up this plant, cold and flat, and turned out all the rest of my people!

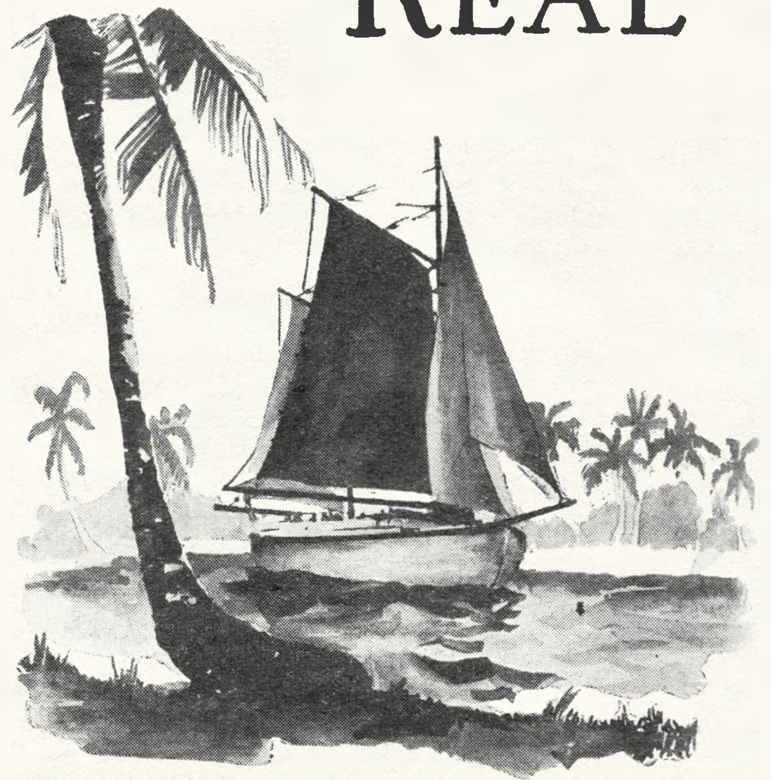
"Now, I don't mind telling you this: In taking you into my business, I am actuated by a variety of motives. First and immediate, the need for a product with a market predicated upon the elements I see in Natalie neck-chains. Next your knowledge of ornamental iron and your seven years in that business. We are going to lay wires for future sales in that direction too, Skidder, and you have given me a demonstration this afternoon of your salesmanship. No matter if Anne did put you up to this, you're well trained, and I believe it's part of you, as well.

"And next, Skidder,—and no doubt I should have put this first, so I'll switch it up there at the top,—I'm taking you in because you've got Anne, and I'll wager that she'll find things we can sell, even if you and I don't discover them. We're going ahead from now on, and if a drawing-account of fifty dollars a week for a while will take care of Anne and Natalie, why—"

"It will," broke in Skidder.

"Then we'll get things straightened out within a few days and get up a contract for your stock interest in the William Watson Ornamental Iron Works, to be paid for out of profits."

REAL



I HAD been laid up with a dose of malaria and was taking things easy at Port Moresby, British New Guinea. I had sent my schooner the *Trix* on business to Woodlark Island, and after three weeks ashore, the itch to get moving got hold of me.

One day I met Captain Russell, who offered me his schooner *Mauri Maid* to go to Woodlark. In return for this I was to go on from there to the island of Biti, seventy-two miles farther on, and pick up sixteen Malaysians. They were a semi-savage lot, and Russell was too old to handle them. He had signed them up for labor, and their time was up. From Biti I was to return to Woodlark, transfer them to the *Trix* and bring them back to Moresby. The *Mauri Maid* was to return to Biti for trading purposes in charge of the supercargo, Harris. This seemed good business to me as I not only could join my schooner but get five pounds a head for each native passenger.

The *Mauri Maid* was a twenty-ton ketch, built in New Zealand, and a fast sailor. All went well until I anchored off Biti. There were six Malaysians in the crew; they were mission boys and well—too well—educated.

My first impression on coming ashore was that the island was deserted, for not a soul came down the beach, and as the one boat on the *Maid* was bottom-up on the hatch, I did not want to go to the trouble of hoisting it. So I fired three shots from my revolver to draw attention. After a few minutes I repeated and fired the last three in my gun. Then—the trouble started.

Before I had a chance to reload, the six boys of the crew were on me. They had been waiting for me to empty my gun. I knew then that they were all too civilized! But I had been leaning against the companionway to the cabin, and as I saw the rush coming, ducked down it, slamming the hood. I had been careless about firing the last shots in my gun, for all the rest of my ammunition was in a suitcase I had not bothered to open when I came aboard, and now I found it too late.

Experiences

What was the most exciting hour of your life? In this department five of your fellow-readers each tells of his most thrilling experience—in accordance with our prize offer, described on page 5. First, a one-time South Seas ship-captain describes an uprising of the native sailors under his command.

Mutiny

By **Captain Henderson**

I heard the hood give under the blows of the galley ax, and knew that if I wanted to get out of the fix alive, I had to have ammunition. So I grabbed the suitcase and ran to the forward end of the cabin, where there was an opening down into the main hold.

I managed to get through it, close the small door and brace myself against it. Then I got the case open, found the shells, and lost no time in reloading the gun. At once I fired three shots through the door. A yell told me I had scored a hit, so I fired three more, and loaded again.

For a few minutes I heard nothing. Then a noise forward in the hold drew my attention, and I crept forward over the trade-goods that filled it. Under the hatch I could hear them removing the tarpaulin, and even as I watched, I saw daylight through the spaces between the hatches and waited until they lifted one off, at the same time straining my ears to hear if they had left others in the cabin to come at me in that direction. While I waited, the hatch was raised, and I saw brown legs. I fired, and the hatch dropped back in place.

I was beginning to feel better, when a roar came that nearly deafened me and I felt the sting of bird-shot as it sprayed my neck and shoulders. They had found the firearms in the cabin and were coming at me from behind. I scrambled forward over the cargo, and through another hole in the bulkhead in the chain-locker, which is the peak of the vessel. From there I could go no farther, and crouched behind the anchor-chain waiting for the end.

When we had anchored, I had let go the starboard anchor; but there was left sixty-five fathoms of the chain to hide behind. It was not long before shots started to splinter the bulkhead and bullets started to smash against the chain. They had by now taken the hatches off and had light to shoot by.

Every schooner in those days—even as now—carried a small arsenal to be used for defense from shore natives who might attack a vessel, or for fear a native crew might rise against the white man in charge.

Several shots slammed into the side of the vessel above my head, and I dared not return a shot, for I had no cartridges to spare, as I had only taken a handful in my hurry and left the rest in my case back aft.

At last there came a lull in the firing; I ventured to look through a crack in the bulkhead; and as I saw no one, I crept out a little and held my coat out the door on the end of a chain hook, waving it to and fro. But I could not draw their fire. I was afraid to leave my post and decided to wait and trust to darkness, which was not far away. I sat hoping that they would get hold of some of the cases of trade gin; and that is just what happened, for their voices soon grew loud, and I heard snatches of song.

They had forgotten me, in their cups, and I grew bolder and crept out finally to have a look. They had got the lifeboat overboard and were filling it; and several dugouts come from shore, with trade goods and gin. Hiding behind the deck-house, I saw case after case passed over the side, and when they were loaded they shoved off.

My hopes rose when I saw that all the crew were leaving. The night was falling with true tropical quickness. I crawled to the rail, watching the longboat leave, with those who couldn't get in holding on to the sides and propelling it with their feet.

Now was my chance!

When they were well inshore, I set to work. Crouching in the shadow of the rail, I ran for a cold-chisel and hammer and loosened the pin in the shackle of the anchor-chain at the fifteen fathom, ready to slip my cable. I hauled the main sheet to port, lashed the wheel hard to starboard. Fortunately I had left the fore- and mainsail standing, not intending to be at anchor for more than two hours. The jibs were down, of course. From the land blew the steady southeast trades, increasing in strength as night fell.

I knew time was short. The natives would return with the longboat after landing the cargo on the beach, and fetch me back as a guest to their blow-out. I have heard of some of those "long-pig" feasts, and did not want to be the main course to this dinner, for even today the Malaysians are known to eat human flesh. But I did not waste time thinking about this.

I watched the wind fill the foresail and slipped my cable with a loud rattle that started things moving ashore. Immediately the place was in an uproar. I heard the sound of oars and the cries of the natives as they splashed along in their canoes. I hoisted my jib, and even with all the noise of the hanks on the stays I could hear the yelling.

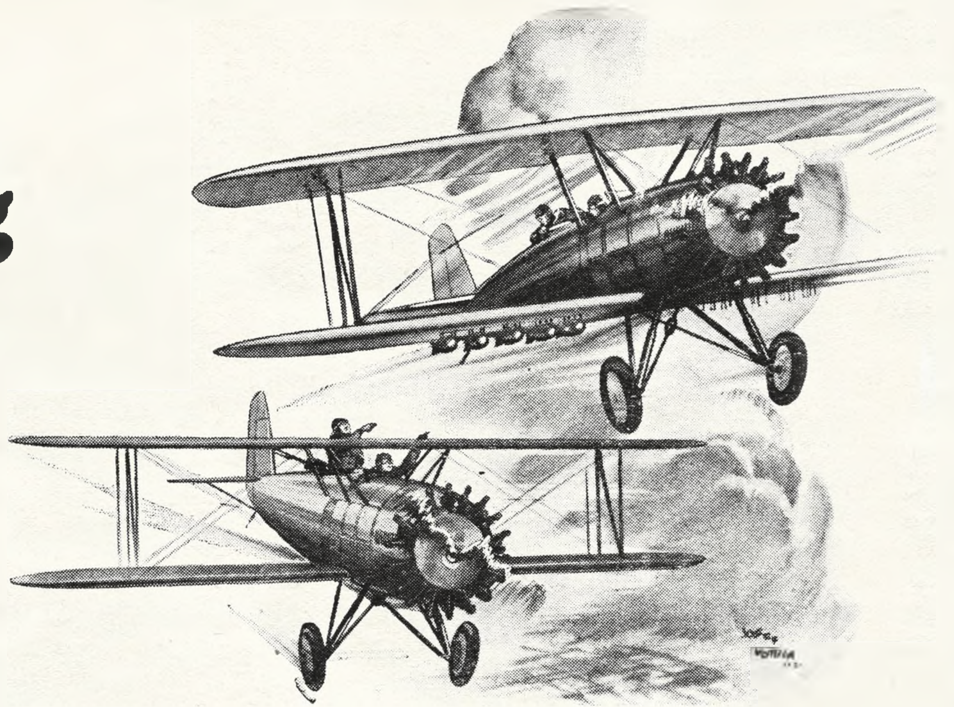
I rushed to the wheel and threw off the becket and headed for sea just as a few scattering shots came spattering near by. I didn't bother to return them.

I sailed the seventy miles to Woodlark in eleven hours; and as soon as I got there, I boarded my own schooner with some twenty-odd Solomon Islanders and my mate Walker and headed back for Biti, fully intent on giving the natives as good as they had given me and a little added. Also I was anxious to find out what had happened to Harris, Russell's supercargo, the lone white man I was to have picked up at Biti. We heard that he had narrowly escaped from the mutinous islanders in an outrigger canoe the night before my arrival. By the time I got there with a rescuing party, Harris had returned in the Commissioner's cutter and quelled the uprising. It was lucky for the natives that they hadn't killed me. As it was, I decided not to report the matter, as it would involve a lot of red tape and months and months of delay.

A Bombing Flight

A war-correspondent who accompanied a Federal Mexican bombing raid came close to being hoist with his host's petard.

By **F. E. Rechnitzer**



IT happened during the last revolution in Mexico, when Escobar was having his little spat with the Mexican Government. I was aviation editor for one of the New York evening papers, and had been sent down to cover the fracas from the air and wire back first-hand reports of the work being done by the Federal flyers.

I was fortunate in securing from Federal headquarters permission to fly with the pilots. Every day I made flights as an observer from Torreon, which was the Federal flying base, up to Jiménez, a distance of about one hundred thirty-five miles. It was at Jiménez that Escobar had his headquarters and main supply depot. On each flight we dropped here ten twenty-five-pound fragmentation bombs. These did little material damage, but they were one of the main factors in bringing the revolution to a speedy end.

The flights, naturally, were very interesting and gave me material for some good copy. The last flight, however, was a corker and one I'll remember for years to come.

Two planes were scheduled to take off before dawn, to fly up to Jiménez and give Escobar and his men an early-morning surprise. The first plane slated to take off was to be piloted by Colonel Léon; I was to ride in the rear cockpit as observer.

On all the flights in which I had participated I had made it a practice to dismount the Lewis guns from the rear cockpit mounting. I did this so that in the event of our being forced down in rebel country, I could put up a claim that I was a newspaper correspondent and a noncombatant—that is, if any of the rebels could understand English.

The night before we were to hop off, I was discussing the flight with Colonel Léon, and when the subject of the possibility of a forced landing was brought up, he informed me that if we fell into the hands of the rebels, I would be lucky. "They'll only shoot you," he said with a grin; "but I shall be burned, they hate flyers so."

We arrived at the track that morning about three A.M. and found the two "Corsairs" loaded with gas, and the bomb-racks full. Temporary riding lights had been fitted up on the wing-tips to enable the pilots to keep track of each other in the dark. To supply the current for these lights, two storage batteries had been installed in the rear cockpit of each ship.

Léon crawled into his place, and the motor was soon started. While he was warming up the engine, I went down to the other end of the race-track, from which we were to hop off, to help the other pilot place an automobile with the headlights shining across the extreme end of the infield.

As the field was unlighted, it was necessary to have the automobile placed in this position, owing to the fact that at that end of the track there was a row of one-story adobe huts, which would be rather uncomfortable to hit on the take-off, especially with both racks loaded with bombs. The headlights of the machine were to act as boundary lights and let us know how near we were to the huts.

I returned to Léon, who by this time had the motor purring nicely. I squeezed myself into the rear cockpit, where I found just enough room to get my knees under the board on which the two storage batteries rested.

Four soldiers held the bus while Léon revved her up. Everything was set. . . . He raised his hand, and the men at the wing-tips let go. The plane lurched forward.

As we rattled over the dusty track, I had one object in mind—that car and its headlights. Sticking my head out over the side, I watched the two beams of light as they drew nearer and nearer. The wheels of the heavily laden bus had not left the ground yet. The lack of wind, the high altitude and the heavy load made the take-off hazardous.

Once the ship bounced and the wheels left the ground, only to drop right back again. By this time I was getting a little worried; to be truthful, I was mighty worried, and I could see that Léon was feeling the same way. He tried to jockey the plane in order to get it bouncing. One bounce—two—three—and then we passed the headlights. Again we bounced. I set myself for the crash—but the plane stopped bouncing. We were in the air.

Léon kept his head, and instead of trying to pull her up then, and take a chance of stalling, held the nose of the ship dead on the front door of one of the huts. The ship gained flying speed, and just when it seemed certain that we were going to pile right through that door without the formality of knocking, he yanked the stick hard back and we zoomed over, clearing the hut by inches. I relaxed with a sigh, and although the air was quite cool, I was surprised to find drops of perspiration oozing from under my helmet.

We circled the track twice, while the other plane took off. I could just make it out by the red and green riding-

lights, and from the look of things, the pilot was having the same difficulty that we had had. He got off, however, and joined us in a few minutes.

Following the single-track railroad, we were soon past Escolan and well over rebel territory. Here and there along the tracks I could see the glowing embers of rebel campfires. Now and then there would be small sparks resembling the flashes of a firefly; this was rifle-fire from the wrecking parties tearing up the rails to hinder the Federal pursuit. There was very little to fear from these occasional bursts of rifle-fire, for the rebels fired directly at the plane instead of ahead to allow for the speed of the target. The day before, however, Captain Farrel, one of the Federal pilots, had been shot through both legs while on a bombing raid; but that was just a chance shot.

It was still dark when we reached our objective. The pilot in the other plane switched off his lights and went to work, while we cruised above with our lights on to draw the rebel rifle- and machine-gun-fire.

I leaned over the side and watched the flash of his bombs as they landed among the freight-cars on the rail siding. Two by two they went off, each with a flash in the dark.

In a few minutes he was through. He climbed up to our level and turned his lights on. Our lights blinked out, and down we went. We were to lay our eggs from a twelve-hundred-foot altitude. It was my business to check up, if possible, any damage our bombs might do. When we were over the dark mass which designated the railroad, I saw Léon reach down and pull the plug releasing the first two bombs. They flashed, almost together, as they exploded.

Five times we went over the yards; each time we were to drop a pair of twenty-five-pounders. The last two times I failed to see any flash at all. I thought perhaps the bombs had gone through the roof of a building and exploded inside, so thought nothing more of it. Our morning's work was over, and we started for home.

The sun was coming up over the rugged mountains. I sat back to watch the gorgeous display of colors and enjoy the scenery in general. For some reason or other the other ship had disappeared, and we found ourselves flying alone.

ABOUT halfway between Jiménez and Escolan, Léon spotted a rebel working-party tearing up track. Their method was quite interesting. They ran a heavy chain under the track and then fastened it to a flatcar. The locomotive would then start backing slowly away, and up would come a length or two of track. As soon as the chain slipped off, the engine would stop and the process would be repeated.

Léon decided to go closer and have a look at their work. He cut the gun and glided down. They immediately stopped work and took up target-practice. The rifle-fire I did not mind, but one chap was quite annoying. He had a machine-gun mounted on top of a freight-car and was blazing away at us for dear life. I wished with all my heart that he were using tracer so that I could tell whether his aim was any good. Perhaps it was just as well he did not. I might have died of fright.

We were down to one hundred feet when Léon, thinking things were getting a little too warm, pushed the throttle ahead. There was no response. In gliding, the motor had sucked in so much raw gas that it had become choked.

The motor sputtered and popped, but it would not take hold. We dropped lower and lower. I watched the men on the ground while Léon fussed with the carburetor-adjustment. By this time the rebels were awake to what had happened, and started down the track toward the spot where it looked as if we would land. I finished unhooking my parachute, so that I could leave the ship in a hurry when we landed. As I unsnapped the safety-belt, I looked up in time to see Léon turn around, grin and shrug his shoulders. What he had to grin about I don't know, but that was your Mexican pilot, all over! I was busy trying to decide whether it would be better to try and duck along the track, or take to the desert and dodge both bullets and cactus.

Just as the bus was about to set down, Léon got the motor cleared. The roar of an airplane engine never sounded any better to me than it did then. We were off again, and once more I gave a sigh of relief, while Léon leaned over the side and thumbed his nose at the disappointed rebels.

EVERYTHING went along nicely, and we both sat back in ignorant bliss, thinking that all the excitement was over for the day, and wondering what we would have for breakfast when we reached Torreon.

About ten miles from our home field we fell in with the other plane. The Mexican pilots were fond of circus flying and close-formation work. Léon, to get a little practice, flew over and took a position directly over the other plane. Just a little too close for comfort, I thought, when he almost rolled his wheels on the top wing of the other Corsair. I looked down in time to see the other observer waving both hands frantically. Léon had also seen it. He turned to me with a puzzled look on his face, as the pilot below hurriedly banked his ship away from under us. I was slightly perplexed myself, as I had never seen a Mexican pilot turn down an opportunity to fly close formation.

Léon flew over the plane again, and once more both the pilot and observer got all hot and bothered. After some maneuvering he finally managed to bring his plane close to the other job long enough for the observer to make motions which gave us the first inkling of what it was all about: we still had another bomb or some bombs in the rack.

If the bombs were fastened securely, there would be very little danger in landing. There was a possibility, however, that there was only one bomb, and that might be what is known as a "hanger"—a bomb that is still caught in the rack by the tail. In hanging in this position, the spinner which releases the detonator comes off, and the bomb is ready to go off on contact. Landing a ship with a hanger usually means that the live bomb drops off and blows the ship and its crew to kingdom come.

We had no way of telling which we had. Finally we decided to let the other plane land first. If everybody on the track got excited and waved us away, we would know that the bomb or bombs were hangers. In that case we would have to go out over the desert a ways, while one of us crawled out on the wing and tried to poke it loose with the extra joy-stick. In the event that it would not release, there was only one alternative and that would be bail out with our chutes and let the ship crash.

We reached the track and circled slowly while the other pilot landed. We watched anxiously while he taxied up to the line. . . . Would their actions mean bad news for us?

They crawled out of their ship, walked over, spoke to some of the crowd and pointed at us. Nobody seemed to be particularly worried—except us.

Léon decided to land. We came around into the wind and glided in. In his efforts to land the bus as gently as possible, he stalled just a second too long, and we pancaked from a height of about four feet. The undercarriage hit with a crash. For a second I thought the bomb or bombs had let go. I actually ducked my head.

The plane came to a stop. We both sat there a moment and then hopped out and looked under. There under the lower right hand wing sat five fat little bombs, with their load of one hundred and twenty-five pounds of high explosive, tight in their racks. Léon looked at the bombs and then at me. We both grinned.

Lady Luck

The distinguished author of "Ocean Echoes" and "The Flying Bosun" has himself had many adventures as sailor and frontiersman—a series of which he here vividly describes.

By **Arthur Mason**

I BELIEVE in Luck. Ever since I can remember Luck has taken a hand in my affairs. Luck is like a whale—it blows, but never out of the same hole in the sea. That was what I said to myself when I was mining for gold in Nevada twenty-five years ago.

I had located three claims that lay back in the hills from the tent town of Manhattan, Nevada, and I was working one of the claims. I was half sick, just recovering from a third relapse of typhoid fever, and an hour or two a day was all I could work, but I did manage to cross-cut a ledge on one of the claims. I panned some of the quartz to see if there might be a speck of gold in the ledge, but I could find none in the pan.

Then along came a prospector on a burro and stopped at my tent. "Young fellow, do you know how this boom started in Nevada?" he said.

And I said no, I didn't.

"Well, I'll tell you. Some old prospector died in these hills—died of starvation. He had gold fillings in his teeth, and some one found them. That started the boom. There aint a speck of gold in Nevada. Good-by. I'm leaving the Sagebrush State."

I thought to myself, "He's had worse luck than I have, for I *have* found gold in the White Mountain Range." But that claim was now in litigation with a man named Brady, and I had no money to fight for my rights.

I was depressed as I rolled into my pine-bough bed and tried to figure how to get out of the sagebrush. When the plow-stars took a sheer toward the horizon I fell asleep and slept until the bluejays woke me up in the morning.

I got up and soused myself in a bucket of mountain water. I felt better and my spirits had risen. That afternoon a mining promoter rode out from Manhattan and offered me five hundred dollars for my three claims.

"Five hundred dollars means nothing to me," I said to him. "Make it a thousand and take the three claims."

"You're like all the rest of the sourdoughs," he said. "You want something for nothing. You'd like to get rich quick, wouldn't you?" And he rode away without even saying "so long." But I didn't call him back as he expected I would, to say, "Well, give me the five hundred."

Two days later Sunday came and I went out to work as usual. I had picked for barely a half hour when I was suddenly seized with a desire to go to the tent town of Manhattan. I tried to argue myself out of it. Sixteen miles through the mountains with not even a dime in my pockets! Yet the urge to go was too strong for my reasoning, and at nine o'clock I slung a canteen of water across my shoulder and struck out across the mountains. At four that afternoon I arrived in town. I was tired from my hike, and I walked into a gambling-house and sat down.

I had been seated only a few minutes when a man walked up to me who had property adjoining mine in the White Mountains.

"Hello," he said. "Glad to see you! Heard you had died and then heard you were living again."

"Well," I answered, "in this case it's not a resurrection." Then, as I was about to ask him to lend me a few dollars, he said: "Brady and his lawyer are here in Manhattan. They are anxious to make a settlement with you for that White Mountain property."

"That's good news," I said. "Where are they?"

"They're over in Dutch John's saloon," he answered. "If I were you, I'd make a settlement. You can't buck Brady and his money. I know he's given you a dirty deal—but that's life."

"Why are you so interested?" I asked.

"Well, I'm working for Brady now, and I've been hunting for you ever since you left Goldfield. I heard you were over here. I was just about to set out to find you. Now, don't you get into any argument with Brady."

"No, I won't—but I'd like to shoot the crooked brains out of his head!" I said.

Together we walked over to Dutch John's saloon. Brady and his lawyer were sitting at a table, drinking whisky.

Brady was a large, paunchy man with graying hair. He talked out of the corner of his mouth. His eyes were as shifty as mica in sunlight as he looked at the lawyer, who cleared his throat and said to me:

"Through the generosity of Mr. Brady, he is willing to make a settlement with you for your White Mountain property." He pulled a paper out of his inside pocket.

"Sign here," he said, "and there's three thousand in it for you."

"All right," I said. "Where's the money?"

Brady opened his wallet and laid out six five-hundred-dollar bills. I signed and took the money.

As I walked out of the saloon I met the promoter who had offered me the five hundred dollars for the three claims I had just left. I was feeling rich and rare now, so I said to him:

"Oh, it's you! Well, if you still want those three claims, they're yours for a thousand dollars."

He said, "Come with me to my office and make out a quitclaim deed for your three claims."

As we walked to the Horseshoe gambling-house later, I felt like a wild goose, full of farmer's wheat and ready for flight again.

Behind the bar of the Horseshoe gambling-house six bartenders were pulling and pouring drinks. The bar was lined with all types of men. Lawyers, engineers, hotel-clerks, butchers, bakers, farmers—here the quest for gold made them all of the same level. There was only one topic of talk—the gold that lay in the near-by hills. And at the gambling-tables quivering jaw-muscles told of the play of Luck that came and went like the tide's ebb and flood.

The promoter and I called for drinks. While they were being served, a man walked up to the bar with a small black dog in his arms. He called for a drink of whisky and sat the dog on top of the bar. The man next to him, who had his back to me, said angrily:

"Take that dog off the bar!"

The owner of the dog replied, "You take him off!" His hand went to his hip pocket.

But before he could reach it the man who had spoken first pulled his revolver and fired. The bullet missed the dog's owner, and hit a faro-bank dealer at a near-by table, shattering the end of his elbow. Everyone scattered except the deputy sheriff, who happened to be standing at the bar. He was a tall lean man, whose words when he spoke were as cold as the lead bullets in his revolver. "Drop that shooting-iron," he said, "or I'll kill you!"

The fellow laid his revolver on top of the bar. The small black dog, sitting there between them, sniffed at it. The deputy sheriff picked up the revolver, saying as he did so: "It's Sunday, and there aint any jail in town yet, but there will be. I'll make a jail for you."

Outside the gambling-house stood a Joshua tree. The deputy sheriff marched his man to it and handcuffed him around the tree. It was then that I had a good look at him. I recognized him and in a flash came the memory of our last meeting. Four years back, I had just staked my first claim; sugar-loaf quartz, with a sparkling mineral showing. "This looks good to me," I said to myself, and I began digging a hole on the ledge. But my digging didn't last long on that claim. The second morning as I was swinging my pick into the seams of the ledge and singing to myself, I heard a voice behind me saying:

"Are you digging your grave?"

I turned, and there stood a man—the man who was now handcuffed to the tree. He was a big, burly brute with a businesslike rifle in his hands.

"No," I answered, "I'm not digging any grave—not if I know it."

"Well, then," said he, "if you aint digging any grave for yourself, what are you doing on my property?"

"Why, there wasn't a sign of a monument on this claim when I staked it," said I.

He made no answer to that. "Go over there where your location-notice is," he said as he fingered his rifle, "and tear it up. I have half a mind to make you eat it."

He was pointing the rifle at my head now, and there was nothing to do but tear up my location-notice. "So," I thought, "this is what they call a claim-jumper!"

As I looked at him now, handcuffed to the tree, a crestfallen bully, I thought to myself, "Well, every dog has his day—and this seems to be mine."

Then I started out to find a place to eat. I ate four dollars' worth of food, and no meal ever tasted better. When I walked out of that restaurant I felt light-hearted enough to conquer the universe.

I was tempted to try my luck at a gaming-table. I fought against the impulse, however, until twelve o'clock that night—when I finally succumbed to the impulse urging me toward a roulette-table. I dropped into a chair beside an elderly man in khaki. His face was harrowed and he seemed to be unnerved.

"Old-timer," I said, "what's gone wrong with you?"

The look he gave me showed stark despair. "Well," he said, "I guess I'm about done for. I am an old-timer and there is a big gap in time that I have spanned—but I'm down and out now. I've lost my last dollar on the wheel over there. I'm thinking about going out and putting a bullet through my head."

"How much did you lose?" I asked.

"Oh, why talk about it?" he answered. "Enough—a chunk—all I had. I'm a fool, but the loneliness of the hills gets a man, and when I come into these dives I go to pieces. Yes, I lost six hundred dollars." He got up from the chair. "Well, good night."

I got up too, and said: "Have a night-cap before you go."

"I'm not a drinker," he replied. "I wish I were. It would be an escape just now." He felt of his revolver.

I said, "Here's ten dollars. Luck may be with you again. It may lie in the lee of a boulder."

He thanked me, took the goldpiece and walked out. I strolled over to the roulette-table. I bought ten dollars in white chips and began to play the wheel. The dealer spun the little ivory ball and said, "There she goes! Where she stops, nobody knows."

It stopped on Number Seven, and I was on it. I said to the dealer, "Pay me in cash."

He did: seventeen dollars and a half.

I went on playing—three dollars straight up on a number; three dollars was the limit in that gambling-house. A crowd gathered round the table as I continued to win, until I was the only one playing. I became conscious of whisperings around me: "Did you ever see such luck?" Dealers were changed, in hope of bringing the luck back to the house, but money had to be brought from other tables to pay me.

At five o'clock that morning the dealer said to me, "I'll have to stop the wheel. You have all the money in the house, except what's in the cash register behind the bar."

I walked out, literally loaded with money. My pockets were bulging with gold, silver and bills. I made my way to the Horseshoe bar. I had a drink and changed most of my silver into bills and gold. I made my way over to the faro-table and to my surprise saw the old-timer to whom I had given the ten dollars only a few hours ago, and he was winning. I backed away and headed for the open door again. Outside was an automobile; its driver was tinkering with the engine.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

He looked up and said, "I'm bound for Tonopah—when I get a load."

"What will you drive me to Tonopah for, right now?"

"Sixty-five dollars," he answered. "A dollar a mile for a lone passenger."

"When will you be ready to start?" I inquired.

"I'm ready now."

I jumped into the automobile and away we went across the desert. I slept during most of the journey.

About eight-thirty we arrived in Tonopah. I had breakfast and after that I again strolled into a gambling-house, unable to keep away. I laid two twenty-dollar goldpieces on the middle column and when the ball stopped, it slid into Number Two. The dealer paid me eighty dollars. I pocketed the money and walked away; I had tested my luck—it was still with me.

In the morning I dressed quickly and went outside. As I stepped into the street again a shabby-looking man spoke to me.

"Are you leaving the sagebrush?" he asked.

"I am," I answered.

"Do you want to go to San Francisco?"

"I don't care if I do."

"Well, here's a railroad pass. I'm a telegraph-operator from San Francisco, here to try my luck. You can have this here pass for five dollars."

So I headed for San Francisco. The following morning I reached Sacramento. I got off the train there and bought myself a new serge suit, shoes, hat, a "boiled" shirt and a walking-stick. Yes, and a money-belt. I rented a room at a hotel for the purpose of counting my money and stowing it away in the money-belt around my bare waist. I had seventy-five hundred dollars. Although it was both bulky and heavy, I said to myself: "I'll take damned good care of this money! Who knows when I'll have such a streak of luck again?"

That afternoon I took the train for San Francisco, arriving there in the evening. I knew the city well, for I had often sailed into that port in former years. I visited old haunts and wound up the evening in a variety theater.

About midnight I took a room at the Winchester Hotel—a large room on the second floor. The money-belt had chafed the skin around my waist until it was red, so I unbuckled the belt and placed it under my pillow. After making sure the door was both locked and bolted, I partially undressed, turned out the light and went to bed.

When I awoke it seemed as if the world were coming to an end. The bed was rolling; then the ceiling began to fall. It was pitch dark. I jumped out of bed to turn on the light—but there was no light. There was a crashing roar outside, mingled with screams and cries of terror. I felt my way toward the door. It wouldn't open; the door-jambs had warped. I staggered around the room looking for a chair. Again came a great heaving and lurching. My hand found a chair and I battered out the door panels. I turned again toward the bed; my money-belt, under the pillow! But the bed had moved—slid away to the other end of the room. I groped around trying to reach it. Then more of the ceiling fell on me as the entire building seemed to jump up and come down with a thud. I was choking with lime-dust. Coughing and sneezing, I was down on my hands and knees now. Nothing mattered but to get out of that place! I crept to the broken door, squeezed myself out through the slivered panels, and picked my way to the street.

There terror-stricken people were running about, not knowing where to go. An earthquake! Unimaginable horror!

I drew in a breath of fresh air. After all, I was safe and sound; luck was still with me. As for my sudden wealth that now lay buried in the ruined hotel, I gave it but a passing thought. "Come easy, go easy," I said with a shrug, and I turned to help those who were less fortunate than myself in this catastrophe which had overtaken us all.

Captured by Chinese Bandits

This newspaper correspondent was haled from a wrecked train by Chinese bandits—and escaped under fire.

By **Lloyd Lehrbas**

IN the pitch blackness just after midnight of a chilly May morning the Blue Express—the crack passenger train between Shanghai and Tientsin—without warning suddenly hit a gaping wound in the track where bandits had removed three rails, and careened into the ditch. I, with other American and European passengers, was asleep in the first-class sleepers at the end of the train; these whipped loose from the engine and second- and third-class coaches and jumped the tracks, but did not turn over.

At the moment the engine and leading coaches hurtled into the ditch, wild Shantung bandits stretched out in the *kao-liang* stubble on both sides of the track opened fire.

Bullets spat against the steel sides of the coaches, shattered every window and rained like hail through the length of the wrecked train. And then, drowning out the terrified shrieks of the passengers, the bandits, with fierce, exultant yells and screams swooped down on the wrecked train. Swarming into the coaches from both sides, the bandits—big, rangy Shantungese—looted the coaches of baggage, clothing, window-curtains, bedclothes, carpets, mattresses—everything loose or that could be torn up.

Then, driving the Chinese and foreign passengers—all in their night-clothes—before them like cattle, the bandits took prisoner every white man, woman and child, and most of the Chinese travelers on the train.

I, a newspaper correspondent *en route* to cover the opening of the great Yellow River dam near Tsinanfu, was asleep near the rear of the train. I was awakened by the noise; half-asleep, I raised my window and stuck my head out to see what was going on. A shot, crashing the window-glass down around my ears, caused me to pull in my head faster than I had ever executed that movement before!

I had a quick realization that we were being held up by bandits. Even then, however, nothing was farther from my thoughts than that we should all be taken captive from the train, marched through the Shantung hills, and held for ransom in an old temple high on a mountain crag.

At the moment I thought we would be robbed, and since there was nothing to do about it, and the chance that if I stirred from my compartment I would be shot, accidentally or otherwise, I sat down on the bed and waited, with jumpy nerves and racing heart, for the bandits to reach my compartment. During all this time there came to me the explosion of guns, the terrified shrieks of the passengers ahead of me and the wild cries of the bandits.

A fresh outburst of firing again sent several bullets crashing through the windows of my compartment, and fearing

that I would be struck by one of the bullets, I lay down on the floor and rolled under the berth. The screaming horde of bandits, going through the train systematically, came nearer and nearer, and finally I heard a gun-butt crash against the windows of my compartment leading to the aisle. A moment later a bandit jumped in. From my position under the bed I could see his big bare feet moving around the compartment as he picked up everything loose that he could carry. Then he was gone.

In the next few minutes, to the accompaniment of shooting, breaking glass, cries and shrieks from the coach, I lay beneath the bed and saw five more bandits, in turn, come in to search for more loot! They cleaned the compartment out as though it had been swept by a visitation of locusts; and the last bandit, still hopeful of finding loot, reached under the dark bed! Suddenly his groping fingers touched me, and he let out a startled yell. Then the end of his long rifle was prodding me, and I rolled out from under the bed.

For a moment that seemed like a year he leaned over me as I stretched out on the floor, prodding me madly with the barrel of his cocked gun. Later I realized that it was only a miracle that kept that trigger from releasing the hammer. Then, swearing and yelling, he grabbed me by my pajama coat, pulled me to my feet, and giving me a blow with his gun-butt, drove me out into the corridor.

The corridor was a river of broken glass, and as I was barefooted, my feet were cut and bleeding by the time we reached the vestibule, and then jumped off into the cindered right-of-way that added fresh agonies to my cut feet. Another minute, and he had shoved and prodded me to the field of *kao-liang* stubble alongside the right-of-way, where several other foreign prisoners had been gathered.

With me, for three or four minutes, were Chevalier Musso, a well-known Italian attorney, of Shanghai; Miss Corrali, an Italian lady; and two foreign men I did not know. Several of the bandits suddenly seized Musso and Miss Corrali and began taking them in opposite directions. Musso knew me, and yelled for me to watch out for Miss Corrali. I made two or three steps toward her, and was suddenly knocked down by one of the bandits swinging his gun at me. When I got up, they had all been rushed away. My hiding under the berth had made me the last prisoner captured; and I was therefore the last to be taken away from the scene of the wreck. Five or six bandits were looking after me, but two of them seemed to be assigned to the special job of guarding me and they indicated that I was to march across the fields where, somewhat ahead, I saw other white-clothed figures I knew were fellow-captives, being rushed toward the hills.

Into the *kao-liang* we double-timed, the bandits prodding me with their rifles whenever I, because of my cut and bleeding feet, lagged. One of the bandits trotted alongside me and another directly behind. The bandit behind carried a great pile of loot done up in a sheet slung over his shoulders.

As we neared the first foothills, the bundle-carrying bandit behind me suddenly stopped. A knot had become untied; his entire harvest of loot had dropped to the ground; and he was stooped over, picking up the collection of shoes, shirts, pocketbooks, bedding and other articles. The bandit ahead of me continued, unnoticing, and I suddenly realized that I had about twenty-five yards start if I made a run for it.

At that moment the sound of rifle-firing up ahead decided me. Into my mind came the idea that the bandits were shooting the foreign captives down; and I decided that if I were to be shot, it would be on the wing. Suddenly I made a dive into the *kao-liang* alongside the path we were moving along, then jumped up and sprinted across the field. Under Coach Tom Jones' instruction at the University of Wisconsin I had been a fair quarter-miler; and I made good time now, spurred on as I was by the high excitement of the moment. A rifle cracked as the leading bandit discovered me getting into my stride; then the bandit in the rear opened up. My running and the notoriously poor aim of Chinese bandits or soldiers saved me. To make sure, however, I made a headlong dive behind a convenient grave-mound, circled it, and sprinted off in another direction.

While the bandits searched for me, and once more fired at me, I dodged from grave-mound to grave-mound (fortunately, there were a number of big round grave-mounds such as are found only in North China, scattered about in the fields), and soon outdistanced my pursuers.

Still cautious, and still taking advantage of grave-mounds and other cover, I made a big circle through the fields, and after more than a hour came back to the railroad track. I had no idea where I was, but using the high roadbed as cover against surprise attack by any stray bandits, I made my way along for another hour—and then suddenly before me loomed the wrecked train!

Within a short time I had surveyed the wreck, discovered from a badly frightened Chinese train-boy that the town of Lincheng was three miles distant, and had sent off telegrams to the American minister and my newspaper syndicate telling of the wreck and raid.

Some of the other prisoners were held a month before being released, and during that month I was with the rescue party at Tsaochuang, the nearest railway point to where they were held; there is, of course, a great more to the story than what I have related. That, however, was excitement enough for any one day!

The Cyclone

An extraordinary experience with a freak storm, told with exceptional charm and power.

By **Ernestine Brannen**

SOME say there is no individual omniscient power which watches over man. I cannot answer their arguments; I only know that this story is true.

The sun rose in a clear April sky. The roosters and turkey-gobblers that usually wakened us with their boisterous, defiant squawkings as if to challenge the new day, gave only timid warnings that it was time to begin the farm tasks. Not a leaf stirred on the stately cottonwoods standing in front of the small white farmhouse like a row of stalwart soldiers protecting it from outside danger. The very air was charged with an omnious stillness.

"It is so still and peaceful," Little Aunt said, her great brown eyes gazing out the window. "On such a day one would like to go out and meet Death."

For three years the only view she had had of the world outside had been through that window. For three years she had lain suffering—never complaining; this was the first time we had ever heard her speak of death. . . .

At about ten o'clock we began to sense a sharp change in the air; the chickens and guineas, the first to notice it, rivaled each other in piercing the oppressing lethargy with their shrill cries; the horses which had been kept in their stalls because the day was not conducive to work pricked up their sensitive ears and neighed shrilly amid the clamor of the fowls.

"Well, folks, it looks as if we are in for a sandstorm," said Granddad, surveying the sky.

As we watched, the sky grew darker. A keen wind, suddenly chilling, blew up, and some one pointed to a cloud in the southwest.

"What a funny-looking cloud! I wish it would come closer so we could see it!"

Even as we watched, the cloud seemed to be moving slowly in our direction.

The sudden wind gradually subsided; the air was charged with electricity; hot, heavy waves of air engulfed us. Nervously, not wishing to voice our fears, we stared with strained and stinging eyes toward the southwest. The strange cloud, like a great serpent, was creeping menacingly toward us. In each other's eyes we read our danger—a cyclone was coming!

Faster and faster the monster came, sweeping lower as he approached. Great clouds of sand were blowing in whirlwinds; chickens, turkeys, and guineas ran, frightened into noisy confusion, their feathers blowing about in the gusts of wind; cattle and horses added their cries of terror, and the sultry heat was turned now into a biting chill that reached the marrow of one's bones.

It was time to act—but what could we do? The nearest storm-cellar was a mile up the road. We able-bodied ones might run to it—but Little Aunt could not be moved from her bed without the greatest care.

"Ethel, go to the back door; Iva, hold the west window down; help me push the chest against this door!" Granddad shouted orders until we all had found places at a door or window, holding it close with all our strength.

I looked from the window which I was guarding, and saw the great funnel sweep its spout down and draw into itself the house of our closest neighbor. I saw it dangle the house about as an insane child might play with a toy, then angrily scatter it into a thousand pieces. I saw furniture, wagons, fences, and animals grasped and tossed into an inextricable mass.

I saw it sweeping straight at the cottonwoods, and I turned and saw Little Aunt's great brown eyes staring fixedly toward the window. I heard Granddad roughly order my small cousin to hush his terrified whimpers. I heard the frantic prayers of my uncles and aunts, and I felt sand stinging my eyes and smothering my breath.

Then, so gently that we sensed rather than felt it, we found ourselves being lifted into the air, lightly swerved, and carefully placed again. Not a dish fell from the china rail. Only our breathing was audible—so intensely still was it.

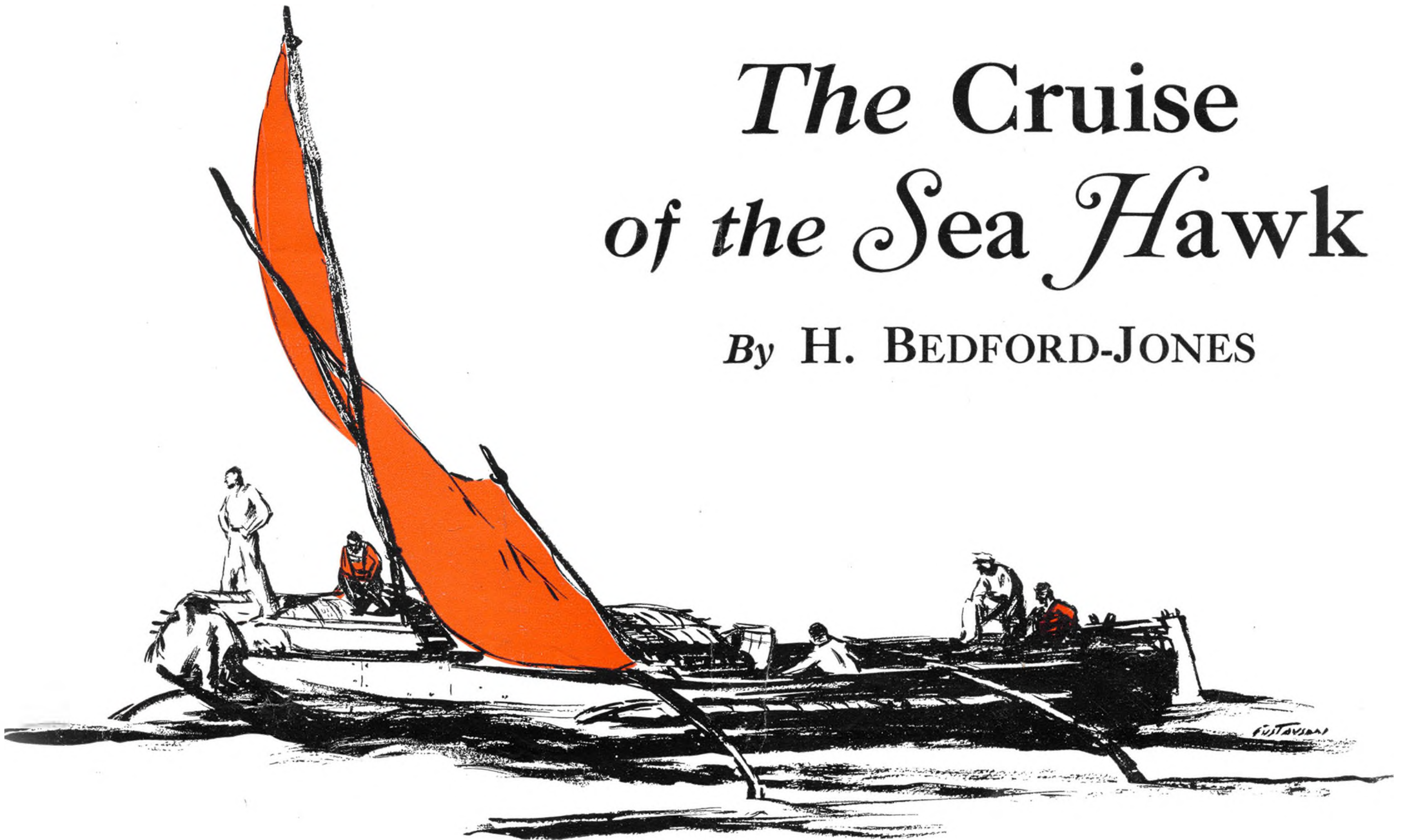
I opened my eyes, and whereas before I had been looking from a south window, my view now was to the north. The front door was now where the back had been! Still paralyzed with fear, I watched the monster move in his terrifying path to our next neighbor, swoop upon it and shatter it. For only an instant he had swerved; of the three houses in a direct line, he had altered his course for us!

An hour later, except for our tense nerves, our altered situation, and a view of the tragic remains of our neighbors, the furious monster might have been but a dreadful dream.

Outside, one of the stately cottonwoods lay stricken to the ground. Inside—now in the opposite corner—lay Little Aunt. Her face was to the window, as always—but her great brown eyes were forever closed.

The Cruise *of the Sea Hawk*

By H. BEDFORD-JONES



STRANGE smuggled treasure, lying hidden in a wreck sunk deep in shark-infested waters. . . . A crew of hard adventurers determined to find and salvage the loot. . . . One honest man waging a sturdy fight against deadly odds aboard the *Sea Hawk* off a lonely lovely island. . . . Be sure to read this swift-moving and colorful novelette of South Seas adventure by the able author of "Madagascar Gold," "King's Passport," "The Duel in the Depths" and other noted stories.

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All in the next, the April, issue of—

The BLUE BOOK *Magazine*

The McCall Company, Publisher, 230 Park Avenue, New York

"Now I use LUCKIES only"

POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL

Sue Carol's wealth was a hindrance rather than a help. Hollywood thought she was ritzy, but Sue soon proved she was a "regular guy"... she made 14 pictures her very first year . . . her latest is UNIVERSAL'S "GRAFT." She has reached for a LUCKY for two years. Not a farthing was paid for those kind words. That's white of you, Sue Carol.

I have had to smoke various brands of cigarettes in pictures, but it was not until I smoked Luckies that I discovered the only cigarettes that did not irritate my throat. Now I use Luckies only. The added convenience of your improved Cellophane wrapper that opens so easily is grand."

Sue Carol

"It's toasted"

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And Moisture-Proof Cellophane Keeps that "Toasted" Flavor Ever Fresh

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