May

15 cents

BLUE BOOK

Magazine

Achmed Abdullah, H. Bedford-Jones, George Worts, William Chester, Beatrice Grimshaw.

"My Ten Years in the Foreign Legion"

MAY 1935

THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

VOL. 61 No. 1

Our Hall of Fame

ACHMED ABDULLAH

Photograph by Nickolas Muray

Achmed Abdullah, whose "Pell Street Blues" attracted much attention in April and whose splendid "The King's Highway" begins on page 6, was born at Yalta, Russia, but returned to spend his very early years in Afghanistan. His first schooling was at Page's in Darjeeling. From there he went to Eton, and thence to French and German schools.

After that he joined the British army and spent many adventurous years seeing service in Asia and Africa. He came first to America with a British polo team. During the second Balkan war he fought on the side of the Turks and was severely wounded.

For the past seventeen years he has made his home continuously in America, where he has become well-known as a writer of short stories and novels.

JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

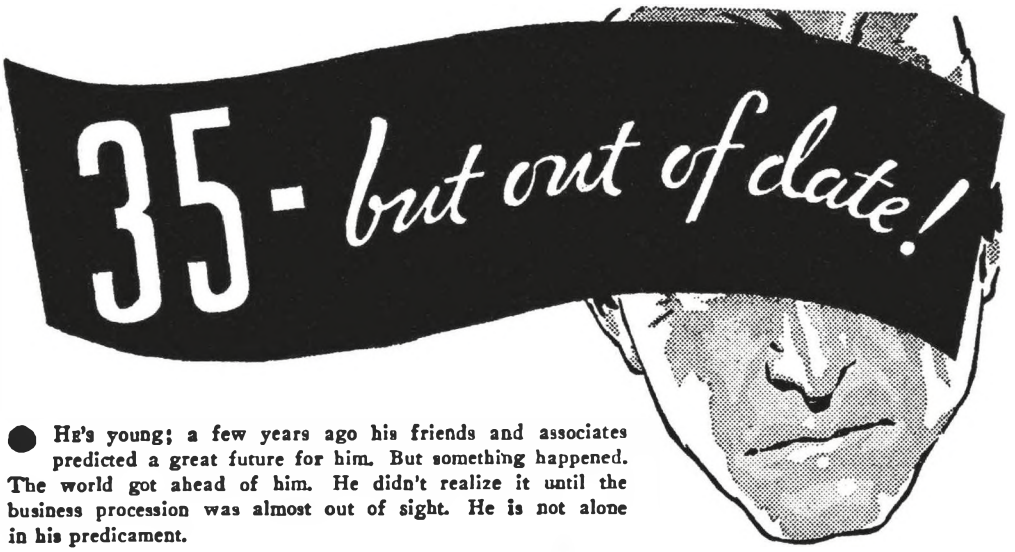
James Francis Dwyer is an Australian who lived and worked in America for many years, but who for a long time now has spent his time in travel—with occasional halts to write the fascinating stories that have long been a feature of Blue Book. Just now he is completing a specially interesting trip across the Sahara. A remarkable story has come from him during this journey—"The Thousand Eyes of Fire." And two letters, one from Timbuktu and one from a little town on the Niger, promise more fine and authentic fiction for us.

JOHN ABERNATHY

Photograph by P. O. Valentine

"Catch 'em Alive Jack," he has been called. For he has caught over a thousand wolves alive with his bare hands. And as a U S. marshal he has sent over seven hundred Southwestern outlaws to the penitentiary.

You may have read of him before in one of the books of Theodore Roosevelt—who was his warm friend, and devoted a chapter of the book to him. His adventurous story is a memorable record of Real Experience—and will appear in our next issue.



● He's young; a few years ago his friends and associates predicted a great future for him. But something happened. The world got ahead of him. He didn't realize it until the business procession was almost out of sight. He is not alone in his predicament.

Things are happening today, men. Faster than they ever happened before. Old standards are passing. Success has a new order of requirements.

Yesterday a man was merely required to do his job well.

Today he must do that same job well—but he must also know the fundamentals of all other jobs associated with his work. *Specialization relates to business—not to the jobs in that business.*

What does this mean to you? Just this: The men who succeed hereafter are going to be exclusively those who combine study with their labors. They must capitalize their spare time.

Not only study of a particular job but other subjects directly or indirectly related to that job and the promotions which should grow from it.

Realization of this fact is causing thousands of successful men, in many lines of endeavor, to enroll with the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton for home-study courses. The value of these courses is established. The individual who applies himself can get inestimable benefit from them. He can head himself toward promotion and more money—that's a great benefit these days! *And arrangements can be made for him to pay as he studies.* Mail the coupon today!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

★ *"The Universal University"* BOX 2491-C, SCRANTON, PENNA. ★

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

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Architect
☐ Architectural Draftsman
☐ Building Estimating
☐ Wood Millworking
☐ Contractor and Builder
☐ Structural Draftsman
☐ Structural Engineer
☐ Development and Protection of New Products
☐ Electrical Engineer
☐ Electric Lighting
☐ Welding, Electric and Gas
☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
☐ Telegraph Engineer
☐ Telephone Work
☐ Mechanical Engineer
☐ Mechanical Draftsman
☐ Machinist ☐ Toolmaker
☐ Patternmaker
☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
☐ Bridge Engineer
☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
☐ Gas Engines ☐ Diesel Engines
☐ Aviation Engines
☐ Automobile Mechanic
☐ Plumbing ☐ Steam Fitting
☐ Heating ☐ Ventilation
☐ Sheet Metal Worker
☐ Steam Engineer ☐ Civil Engineer
☐ Steam Electric Engineer
☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ Refrigeration
☐ R. R. Locomotives
☐ R. R. Section Foreman
☐ R. R. Bridge and Building Foreman
☐ Air Brakes ☐ R. R. Signalman
☐ Highway Engineering
☐ Chemistry ☐ Pharmacy
☐ Coal Mining Engineer
☐ Navigation ☐ Air Conditioning
☐ Boilermaker
☐ Textile Overseer or Supt.
☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Woolen Manufacturing
☐ Agriculture ☐ Fruit Growing
☐ Poultry Farming ☐ Radio
☐ Marine Engineer

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

☐ Business Management
☐ Office Management
☐ Industrial Management
☐ Traffic Management
☐ Accountancy
☐ Cost Accountant
☐ C. P. Accountant
☐ Bookkeeping
☐ Secretarial Work
☐ Spanish ☐ French
☐ Salesmanship
☐ Advertising
☐ Service Station Salesmanship
☐ First Year College
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Lettering Show Cards ☐ Signs
☐ Stenography and Typing
☐ Civil Service ☐ Mail Carrier
☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ Grade School Subjects
☐ High School Subjects
☐ College Preparatory
☐ Illustrating
☐ Cartooning

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

City.....*State*.....*Occupation*.....

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

BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

MAY, 1935 VOL. 61, NO. 1

Exceptional Short Stories

A Noteworthy Novel

An Engrossing Novelette

Prize Stories of Real Experience

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

THE McCALL COMPANY,

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

Publisher, The Blue Book Magazine

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

Published monthly, at McCall St., Dayton, Ohio. Subscription Offices—Dayton, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices—230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE—May, 1935, Vol. LXI, No. 1.

Copyright, 1935, by The McCall Company, in the United States and Great Britain.

Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription Price, $1.50 per year. Canadian postage 50c; foreign postage $1.00. For change of address, give us four weeks notice and send old address as well as new. Special Note: Each issue of The Blue Book Magazine is copyrighted. Any re-publication of the matter appearing in the magazine, either wholly or in part, is not permitted except by special authorization.
Special Notice to Writers and Artists: Manuscripts and art material submitted for publication in the Blue Book Magazine will be received only on the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury thereto while such manuscripts or art material are in the publisher's possession or in transit.

Prize Offer

for stories of

Real Experience

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

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

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

ACCOUNTING

the profession that pays

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

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

The school that has trained over 1,200 C. P. A.'s

Dept. 5369-H Chicago, Ill.

SELLS TO SATURDAY EVENING POST

"I know you will be glad to learn that I sold an article to The Saturday Evening Post. Today I received their check for $300.00. It is quite unnecessary to say that your training has made this possible."

Mrs. Florence H. Linder
147 Tompkins Square, East
New York City

What makes WRITING ability GROW?

For a number of years, the Newspaper Institute of America has been giving free Writing Aptitude Tests to men and women with literary ambitions.

Sometimes it seems half the people in America who are fired with the desire to write have taken advantage of this offer to measure their ability.

What the tests show

Up to date, no one that could be called a "born writer" has filled out our Writing Aptitude Test. We have not yet discovered a single individual miraculously endowed by nature with *all* the qualities that go to make up a successful author.

One aspirant has interesting ideas—and a dull, uninteresting style. Another has great creative imagination but is wofully weak on structure and technique. A third has a natural knack for stringing words together—yet lacks judgment and knowledge of human behavior. In each case, success can come only after the *missing links* have been forged in.

Here, then, is the principal reason why so many promising writers fail to go ahead. Their talent is one-sided—incomplete. It needs rounding out.

Learn to write by writing

NEWSPAPER Institute training is based on journalism—continuous writing—the sort of training that turns out more successful writers than any other experience. Many of the authors of today's "best sellers," are newspaper-trained men and women.

One advantage of our New York Copy-Desk Method is that it starts you writing and keeps you writing in your own home, on your own time. Week by week, you receive actual assignments, just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily.

All your writing is individually corrected and criticized by veteran New York newspaper men—editors who have had years of experience "breaking in" new writers. They will point out those faults of style, structure or viewpoint that keep you from progressing. At the same time, they will give you constructive suggestions for *building up* and developing your natural aptitudes.

In fact, so stimulating is this association that student members often begin to sell their work *before* they finish the course. We do not mean to insinuate that they sky-rocket into the "big money," or become prominent overnight. Most beginnings are with earnings of $25, $50, $100, or more, for material that takes little time to write—stories, articles on business, fads, travels, sports, recipes, etc.—things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

For those who want to know

If you really *want* to know the truth about your writing ambitions, send for our interesting Writing Aptitude Test. This searching test of your native abilities is free—entirely without obligation. Fill in and send the coupon. Newspaper Institute of America, 1776 Broadway, New York.

Newspaper Institute of America **68E435**
1776 Broadway, New York

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

Mr.
Mrs.
Miss .....

Address .....

(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.)

SPARE TIME TRAINING THAT HELPS YOU

SPEED UP PROSPERITY!

Do you want to speed up prosperity—insure your early and large participation in the new jobs, promotions and salary increases—get fullest benefits from business pick-up? You can do it. For months, individual competition will be tremendous. Employers—up against new problems, fighting for survival and profits—will be able to pick and choose. Naturally they will prefer trained men—men who have special ability to offer. If you wish this advantage, simply check the field of business in which you are interested. We will send full information about the opportunities in that field, tell how our complete success-building program helps you plan your future, trains you in your spare time, and works with you all through your career. Send the coupon NOW.

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY **Dept. 5369-R, CHICAGO**

Please tell me—without cost or obligation—about your plan to help me insure and speed up my prosperity, in the business field I have checked.

☐ Business Management	☐ Industrial Management	☐ Modern Salesmanship
☐ Higher Accountancy	☐ Modern Foremanship	☐ Business English
☐ Traffic Management	☐ Personnel Management	☐ Effective Speaking
☐ Law: Degree of LL.B.	☐ Modern Business Correspondence	☐ C. P. A. Coaching
☐ Commercial Law	☐ Expert Bookkeeping	

*Name*_____

*Address*_____ *Town*_____ *State*_____

From an Aviator's Scrapbook .... Lightning

By LELAND JAMIESON

FOR a long time I had a theory that lightning wouldn't strike an airplane, and when I went to the field at Jacksonville that night, bound for Atlanta with the night air mail, I still believed firmly that a thunderstorm contained no unusual danger.

The plane with my mail showed presently in the inky south, at least twenty degrees off the usual course. At the loading ramp the pilot climbed out and stood looking back into the sky he had just left. His voice was just a trifle blurred with strain, it seemed to me. "More fire in that baby," he said tersely, "than I ever saw before. I thought it hit me, once."

"You'll never feel the one that hits you," I grinned, and climbed into the cockpit as soon as the mechanics had finished gassing up. The dispatcher came out with my pouch and papers, and I gunned the plane out on the runway, ran it up, and took off into the dark.

This thunderstorm extended for fifty miles on either side of a black and lonely course. Beneath were pine trees, unbroken by clearings of any size; to the left a dozen miles away was that great and dangerous swamp, the Okefenokee; on the right were more pine trees, and broad salt marshes, and the Atlantic. Ahead, the storm swooped almost to the earth, and in the flashes I could see the rain that fell in slanting columns, giving the appearance of holding up the clouds.

We plunged suddenly into the wall of storm, and it was like being hurled from a cannon. It was impossible to read the instruments as rapidly as they reacted. All I could do was to hold the ship in a fairly level position and to try to keep it on its course. Streaks of fire threw the interior of the clouds into a whiteness that was like the concentrated focus of a searchlight. Yet oddly, I saw no actual

Learn

ELECTRICITY

IN 12 WEEKS AT COYNE

The great Coyne Shops in Chicago have a world-wide reputation for training men in this big-pay field in only 12 weeks. Then they help you to success by giving you lifetime employment service. By my new plan YOU can take advantage of their wonderful method of learning by doing NOW—no need to lose time and money while you strive and save to raise the necessary tuition.

I WILL FINANCE YOUR TRAINING

You can get your training first—then I'll give you over a year to pay me back, in small monthly payments starting 60 days after your required training period is over. If you will write to me at once I will send you complete details of this sensational new plan, together with the BIG FREE Illustrated BOOK telling all about COYNE. It tells how many earn while learning and about the training you get there without book study or useless theory.

H. C. Lewis

COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL

500 S. Paulina Street, Dept. 55-17, Chicago, Illinois

MR. H. C. LEWIS, President
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 55-17, Chicago, Ill.

Tell me how you will finance my training at COYNE and send me the BIG FREE Illustrated Book on ELECTRICITY.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....

U. S. GOVERNMENT JOBS

Start $1260 to $2100 year

MEN—WOMEN 18 to 50. Common Education usually sufficient. Many early examinations expected. Qualify now. Write immediately for free 32-page book, with list of positions and full particulars telling how to get them.

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

Dept. P286 Rochester, N. Y.

REMINGTON

ONLY 10¢ A DAY PORTABLE

FREE TYPING COURSE

10 DAY FREE TRIAL OFFER

Buy this beautiful brand new Remington Portable No. 5 direct from the factory for only 10c a day! Standard 4-row keyboard, standard width carriage, margin release on keyboard, back spacer, automatic ribbon reverse—*every essential feature found in standard typewriters!* Carrying case and typing course *free*. Special *10-day free trial offer*. You don't risk a cent! Write Remington Rand Inc., Dept. 109-5, 205 E. 42nd St., N. Y. C. Don't delay. Act NOW!

lightning in the clouds themselves; this blinding light was only the reflection of it.

Suddenly, after thirty minutes of terrific struggle to keep the airplane in the air, I broke out underneath a shelf-like projection of the clouds, into heavy rain. Here was lightning! Streaks of it burned themselves from cloud to ground, leaping not once along the same zigzagging path, but jetting often half a dozen times. A bolt of it, seeming at least a yard in diameter, burned itself vertically so close that it seemed to pass between my wing-tip and the tail group. Another crashed through the rain in front, and an instant later I got a strong odor of ozone in the cockpit. I ducked involuntarily, but of course by that time I had missed the danger. And I told myself, perhaps in reassurance: "There's no danger—this stuff won't hit you." And it didn't. The rain ceased suddenly. Ten minutes later the sky was bright with stars.

I landed a little later in Atlanta. Sometime after that, Dan O'Connor (I have given him a different name) came in from the north, carrying southbound mail. He landed erratically, and the ship stopped rolling in the center of the field—and didn't move. We sensed that something had gone wrong.

When we reached the plane, Dan was sitting there, his head lying on the cockpit cowl, conscious, but badly dazed. To our excited queries, he could make no answer then; and it was the next day before we found out what had happened. But when we lifted him from the cockpit, we found an electrical burn on his left hand, and later another on his thigh.

"Lightning hit him!" a mechanic exclaimed in awe. "Can you imagine that!"

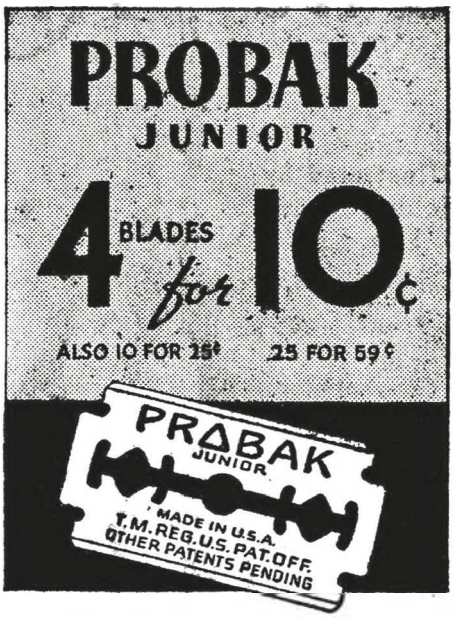
"Naw," I said. "Lightning never hit a ship."

But it developed that lightning *had* struck Dan O'Connor's ship. It had knocked him out, and the plane had gone into a dive. When Dan came to enough to realize what was happening, he was powerless to move; for three thousand feet he'd sat there, knowing he was going to crash. Then somehow he moved his hand, and pulled the stick back and stopped the shrieking of those wires.

A kind of prickly heat came over me, as I listened to his halting description of that flight. That same thing might easily have happened to me when I was "busting through" that storm the night before.

So now I go around these violent thunderstorms, if possible. If I can't go around, I wait until they pass. And if I get caught up there inside of one, despite my caution, I can't quite suppress a shudder every time a bolt goes close enough for me to hear the thunder—though I know I'll neither hear nor feel the one that brings me down.

Don't miss Mr. Jamieson's fine story "Overboard"—in our next issue.



SHAVING COMFORT

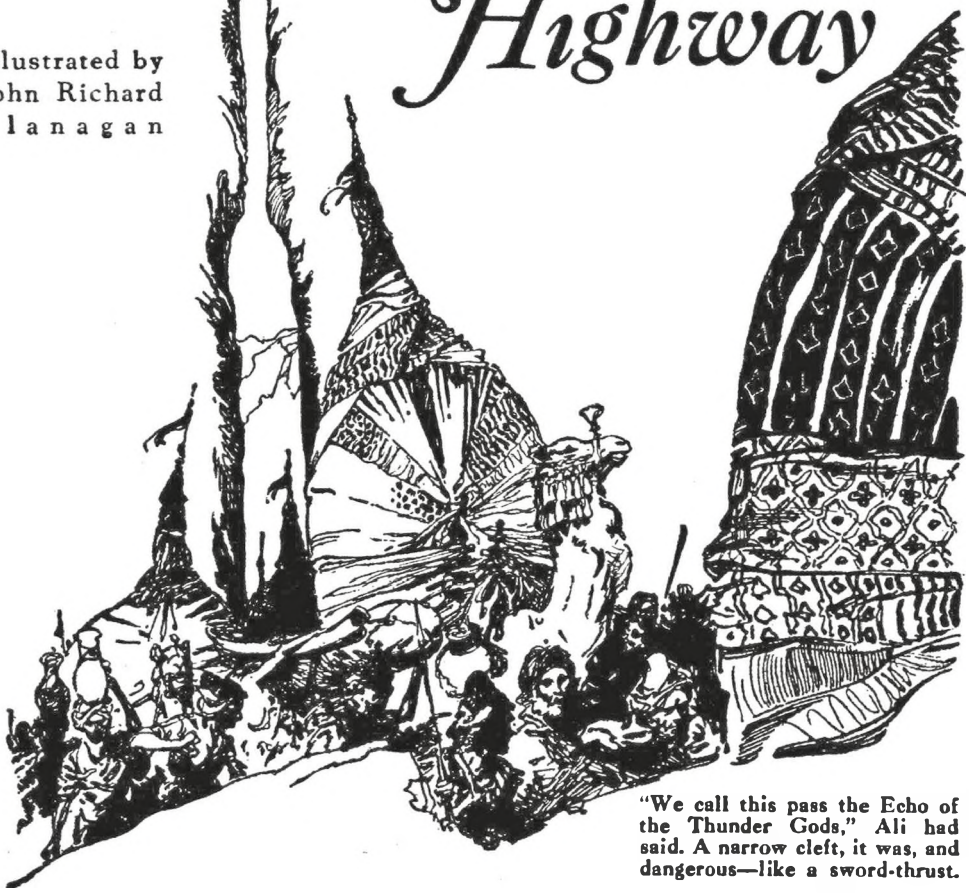
—*hits all-time low in price*

• You'll rub your finger-tips across your chin and smile with pleasure after your first shave with Probak Jr. For here's a razor blade that's made for easy work on tough beards—brings true shaving comfort down to the lowest price level. This record-breaking double-edge blade is ground, honed and stropped automatically—assuring unvarying high quality. Save money and shave with ease. Ask your dealer for Probak Jr.

PROBAK JUNIOR BLADES

The King's Highway

Illustrated by John Richard Flanagan



"We call this pass the Echo of the Thunder Gods," Ali had said. A narrow cleft, it was, and dangerous—like a sword-thrust.

JAZZ—seven negroes tossing their instruments in gleaming circles, swaying in their chairs, bobbing frantically up and down. Jazz—Harlem's sardonic gift to civilization, filtered through Tin Pan Alley across the Atlantic, to help along an Americanization begun by dry Martinis, modern plumbing, plus-fours, tractors, Woodrow Wilson, Charlie Chaplin and Henry Ford. Jazz—stammering profanely in the solemn shadow of the Vatican, peaking out into the evening that vaulted a purple dome above the Piazza di Siena. Jazz and high-pitched laughter and clinking glasses: the raffish midnight symphony of the Campodoglio, which suddenly had become the fad of the Italian season.

For no especial reason. Rome knew a dozen cabarets where the food was better, the wines older, the dancing-floors more smoothly waxed. But here it was: a caprice, yet a sensation, and people paying exorbitant prices for inferior German champagne, Bourbon whisky that had never even heard of Kentucky's blue grass, and French sauces martyrized by Greek chefs still odorous with the classic if slightly goatish aroma of their ancestral hills.

Pinchbeck, the whole place. Nothing genuine there except the negro musicians, the Seven Alabam' Chocolate Drops, and their leader Honeyboy Jackson, whose deep voice, booming through a megaphone, topped the saxophones' wail and the clarinets' simpering squeal:

I's gwine back to Memphis,
To git mah biscuits brown.
Dem yaller Harlem wenches,
Done turn mah lovin' down—

By ACHMED ABDULLAH

The fascinating story of an American mining engineer's tremendous adventure in Africa, by the famous author of "Steel and Jade," "Pell Street Blues" and "The Swinging Caravan."

"Bravo!" exclaimed a dwarfish man whose wrinkled monkey face, flushed with paint, belied his historic name.

"Encore!" cried Mrs. Van Rensselaer, the famous expatriate who has solved the trick of speaking English with an Italian accent and Italian with a French.

"Hot-cha!" shouted Tom Gray, who, with the syncopated rhythm echoing in his head, felt at home almost for the first time since he had left Chicago five weeks earlier.

He had come to Italy with all the enthusiasm and the cocksureness of his twenty-five years. But underneath his

Ali Mohammed, King of Fulahistan.

frankly red hair was a brain that was keen; he had his engineering degree from M. I. T. and had also studied jurisprudence for a year, specializing in mining law; for he was stubborn and optimistic—"too darned optimistic," according to his father, Josiah W. Gray, president of Gray Bowditch & Co., Mining Machinery.

"YOU'RE the sort," the older man had said, "who'd try and sell safety razors at a barbers' convention."

"Why not? I guess barbers shave themselves. Listen, Dad—"

"I've listened plenty. Tell you what I'll do. I'll stake you to your passage, five hundred dollars for incidentals, and not another cent."

"Oke with me. Watch me sell those Italians!"

"For long-term credit? That's easy! But I demand cash—f.o.b., Chicago."

"Cash it'll be. Why,"—impatiently; the older generation was *so* hide-bound, —"those Italians've got to have mining machinery. Simply got to. Their North African colonies are crying for development."

"They'll cry more when you ask them for cash. Well,—I repeat,—I pay your transportation both ways, and—"

"Suits me. What'll you do if I come back with a fat check?"

"I'll ask to have it certified," had been the unfeeling rejoinder.

And it appeared that Josiah W. Gray's judgment had been sound. Oh, yes, the Italian business men had assured Tom, they were eager to develop certain mining prospects in Tripoli. They agreed that the machinery manufactured by Gray Bowditch & Co. was the best in the world. But cash? *Per Bacco, molt' illustre signor,* cash was out of the question, since America had cornered one half of the available gold supply and France the other. Therefore—with an eloquent spreading of hairy high-veined hands—credit, *amico amatissimo!* A year's credit, or even better, two years'.

So Tom had cabled to his father, and had received a laconic reply:

NOTHING DOING. COME HOME. LOVE.

Tomorrow he was off for New York; and putting aside thirty dollars to tip the stewards, he had just enough money left for one final spree. He needed it, he decided, to wash the taste of failure out of his mouth. Thus this last evening at the Campodoglio, the bottle in front of him, the jazz coiling in his brain with nostalgic memories of Chicago's Loop. "Hotcha!" he shouted again, then cut off his boisterous acclaim as he noticed that the man at the next table—young, not bad-looking with his dead-white skin, his beak of a nose strongly marked at the roots, his mustache cropped cavalry style—instead of applauding, was shielding a wide yawn with his hand.

Somehow, unreasonably, Tom interpreted the yawn as a slight on his native land. He leaned over.

"Don't you like jazz?" he demanded with sudden amazing directness.

The other turned.

"Oh, yes," he said in perfect English. "But"—with a little sigh—"I have the blues."

"Forgive me." Tom was contrite. "What about a little drink to show there are no hard feelings?"

The stranger rose and joined him.

"I'd be delighted, Mr.—"

"Tom Gray's the name."

"I am Ali Mohammed."

"Aha—the Terrible Turk in person!"

"I'm an Arab."

"I knew a couple of Arab boys in Chicago. Rugs was their line. You in the rug business?"

"No!"—with a slow smile. "I'm a King."

"Eh?"

"I'm the King of Fulahistan."

"Pleased to know you." Tom winked. "I'm the Emperor of Illinois."

"You mean,"—the same slow smile,—"you don't believe me?"

"That's putting it mildly. I mean you're either plain nuts or blotto."

"Pardon. I didn't quite catch—"

"American for you're either crazy or stewed to the gills."

"I'm serious, I assure you."

"Oh, yeah?" drawled Tom.

But a moment later he reconsidered. For, obsequiously piloted by the head-waiter, a tall, brown-bearded, monocled man entered the cabaret. He saw Ali Mohammed and bowed deeply.

"Good evening, Your Royal Highness," he said. "Shall I be granted the honor of an audience tomorrow morning, before you—"

"Useless, Count!" Ali interrupted curtly. "My mind is made up."

The other shrugged his shoulders and sat down at a near-by table, while Tom laughed and said:

"You win. You're a sure-enough king. First I ever met."

"I hope I'll pass muster."

"Sure. Say—you speak mighty good English for a foreigner."

"Eton and Oxford," was the explanation.

They drank. They talked about this and that and the other thing. And—perhaps it was the second bottle of champagne, perhaps the swift sympathy between youth and youth—presently they were like old friends. They exchanged confidences; and they discovered that they were more or less in the same boat; both with a grudge against Europe, both doomed to go home in the morning—defeated, blue.

Tom's tale was quickly told. Ali's took more time.

IT seemed that Fulahistan—the kingdom which, centuries earlier, his forefathers had carved out of Central Africa with the swing of the red sword—was pinched in on all sides by French and Italian colonies. A poor country, Ali described it—a wilderness of barren sands and bare towering hills and steamy jungles, with less than a million inhabitants. Still, heretofore he had lived very well, with a house in London's Mayfair, a palace in Cairo, a yacht, and a villa on the Riviera.

"You ought to be ashamed." Tom was shocked. "Wallowing in luxury while your miserable subjects—"

"They aren't miserable."

"You told me yourself that—"

"That they're poor. But they're happy. They pay no taxes. And I've built schools, hospitals, water reservoirs, all sorts of things. You see, I used to have a large income."

"Private fortune—and somebody gave you a red-hot tip, and—"

"I never had a private fortune."

"Well, then—what's your racket?"

"Racket?"

"Graft."

"No graft," smiled the other. "But a road."

"Railroad, I guess?"

"Caravan road. The *Darb-i-Sultani*—the King's Highway, we call it in the Arabic."

A road, Ali went on, that, crossing Fulahistan, was the only direct link between East and West Africa north of the Gulf of Guinea; that in consequence controlled the overland trade from coast to coast, being cheaper and shorter than the long ocean haul. A road built hundreds—no, thousands—of years ago; perhaps by Pharaoh, perhaps by Hannibal of Carthage. A road so old that, in parts, through the eternities of come and go, of men and horses and camels and bullocks and crunching wagon-wheels, the trail had sunk sixty and seventy feet below the original level. A road that was a monument to the dead centuries of barter and trade.

"Down this road," he added, "all caravans must go, and pay tribute. For in the European colonies north and south, the mountains are so high and steep that construction of a rival highway is impossible. At least, it would never pay for itself. My road had the only pass through the hills. There is no room for another across the wilderness of towering peaks. We call this pass the Echo of the Thunder Gods."

"Poetic name," suggested Tom.

"Poetic in name alone. It is narrow and dangerous. It is—oh, like a sword-thrust. But it makes my road what it is."

"A sort of monopoly?"

"Yes. *My* road!" Ali repeated excitedly, raising his voice, while at the next table the brown-bearded man looked up and smiled.

A gleam had come into Ali's eyes. Arab and Semite in his lust for money, he was Arab and Semite too in his love for ancient traditions, ancient culture, ancient glories.

THUS it was not only financial returns which mattered to him. There was also in his soul—and on his lips as he gave to the American a fantastic, motley panorama of the *Darb-i-Sultani*—the overwhelming pride of the thought that he, he alone, was heir to all who had gone before; all those who had traveled up and down the road to trade—and to

make war for the sake of trade—and, unwittingly, to make history. . . .

"Ah," he exclaimed, "this road—what has it not seen!"

Phoenicians it had seen—languid, supercilious men with braided beards, selling their very gods for cash. And hook-nosed African folk whose civilization, forgotten today, antedated the Ark of the Covenant. And the cavalcade of the Queen of Sheba, carrying spices and peacocks and lithe golden women out of the farther South. And angry Egyptians who complained that—by Osiris!—Moses, the barbarous Hebrew, had made black magic, smiting the land with seven plagues and miraculously crossing the Red Sea with all his people and half Pharaoh's wealth.

Romans the road had seen, marching in clash of armor, ruthless men who did heroic things so that their degenerate emperors might heap more jewels upon jewels. And suave Philistines who related how life, back home at Gaza, had flowed smoothly before Samson, the blind, truculent giant, had shivered their temple with the strength of his arms. And bronzed Saracens—so queer, with their hard faces and their scarlet womanish lips. And men from Damascus, the mother of cities; from Jerusalem, the saint of cities; from Bagdad, the harlot of cities. And cunning men of Hindustan who put their goods as well as their daughters up for barter. And warriors of the Sahara, bringing the riot of galloping horses and thundering kettledrums and silver blades a-flash. And Syrian hucksters, sipping sherbet at a wayside stall, whispering the terrible glorious tale of a new Prophet crucified at Golgotha. . . .

"Allah—what has not the road seen! My road!"

Men it had seen. Small men who sinned meanly; great men who sinned splendidly. Men fighting, killing, trading. Aye, trading.

WESTWARD going wheat and barley, cotton and silk and frankincense. And eastward going apricots and saffron and ivory. And both eastward and westward, these last few years, going sewing-machines and cloth and canned food and steel and boots—men trafficking in things made in Yorkshire, Belgium, Pennsylvania, where once they had trafficked in things made in Babylon and Nineveh. And still, today as throughout the centuries, a hearty company of merchant-adventurers stepping up and down the road. A kaleidoscope, that road—a clanking, immense epic of commerce.

"*My* road!" Ali said again, and was silent.

Tom had been carried away by the sheer romance of the tale. Now he remarked, once more the practical American:

"Why all the kicking? Seems to me you're sitting pretty."

"No longer," replied Ali; and he explained that formerly, with France and Italy envying him control of the *Darb-i-Sultani*, but envying each other more, he had been safe. Then recently they had reached an agreement: France, in payment for the cession of a large slice of Tripoli, had guaranteed not to interfere in whatever action Italy decided to take in Fulahistan.

"What'll happen?" demanded Tom.

"The Italians will—"

"Annex your country?"

"Nothing as crude as all that. But they'll establish a protectorate. They'll begin by sending a peaceful mission. Oh, yes,"—with bitter irony,—"peaceful! Experts to advise me—*advise*, that's the correct diplomatic term—on matters of finance. And then, presently, the end of Fulahistan independence."

TOM was young enough, perhaps American enough, to have kept a few ideals.

"What'll the rest of the world say?" he demanded.

"Nothing. Of course if another power—England, for instance, or America—had direct commercial interests at stake, there would be a row. But other powers aren't affected, are therefore indifferent. That's why I was told to come to Rome, to talk matters over. Italy wanted to buy me out. I refused."

"Didn't offer enough?"

"Ten million pounds sterling."

"That's a pot of dough. Aren't you just a mite hoggish?"

"It isn't a question of money—though, unless I give in, I'll be poor; and I fear poverty. But I can't sell out my people. I love them—and am afraid for them. The Italians, you see, will bring civilization."

"What's wrong with it?"

"Civilization means development; and development means unhappiness for the simple, more backward races. Petroleum will be found, perhaps gold, all sorts of things. Then there'll come bankers, land-

speculators, prospectors, all kinds of hangers-on. They'll come like vultures to the reek of carrion. They'll bring progress—but they'll also bring whisky, strife, disease. And before long, my people will call nothing their own except—"

"Their souls and their dandruff?"

"A jest which speaks the truth. And I'm helpless."

Tom's indignation grew.

"I believe in earning money, not swiping it," he announced. "They get my goat, all those—oh, those international sneak-thieves who prate about empire-building!" He was deeply in earnest. "A bunch of three-card-monte artists: that's what they are—taking it away from the rubes."

Just then the bearded, monocled man at the next table rose and came over. He addressed the American curtly:

"I object to your insulting language."

"Well, let me tell you,"—Tom should not have said it, but he did,—"personally, I object to your whiskers."

"Oh,"—the other was enraged,—"do you know to whom you're talking?"

"Spoken like the villain in a melodrama!"

Ali gave a little laugh. He interrupted:

"May I make the introductions? Mr. Gray—Count Rocca."

Tom was familiar with the name: Rocca, the powerful Roman banker. He was impressed, but decided not to show it.

"Tickled to meet you, Count." He bowed. "But the King and I are throwing a private party. No outsider allowed to crash the gate."

"Sir!" exclaimed Rocca, still more enraged.

"Sir yourself! And between you and me, I'm for the King, strong. And"—rashly, youthfully bragging—"if I can throw a monkey-wrench into your imperialistic pickpocket machinery—by God, I'll do it." He turned to his friend: "Let's split another quart."

PERHAPS it was this other quart which, ultimately, was responsible for the whole affair, down to its last international ramification. Tom denied it. He insisted that he was perfectly sober when, arm in arm with Ali, he left the cabaret. But this does not explain why, twenty-four hours later, he found himself aboard the *Corsair*, the Arab's yacht, bound for Tunis, whence the latter was returning to Fulahistan via railway and caravan. Nor does it explain why his first words, on opening his eyes in a luxurious cabin, were:

"What a headache!"

Black coffee, administered by Ali, revived him somewhat.

"It was nice of you to accept my invitation," said the Arab.

"What invitation?"

"To be my guest in Fulahistan. Last night — remember? — you cabled your father."

"Gee," sighed Tom, "what did I tell him?"

"That you were off to Africa to carve out your own way."

"Gee," Tom sighed again, "here's where I go back to bed."

BUT he was unable to sleep. He thought of his father. Oh, the cutting remarks the old man would make! "Pah!" he would say. "Africa! Carving your own way! Romantic young jackass!"

Tom shrugged his shoulders. Why *not* be romantic, he told himself defiantly. Wasn't he an American? And was there anything more romantic in the world than a typical American, descendant of that tough, careless race who, hundreds of years earlier, when James the First was King and Cape Cod the Ultima Thule, had made the terrible journey across an unknown Atlantic toward an unknown shore; whose blood, since *Mayflower* days, had mulched the ground from Maine to Texas; who, rifle in hand and knife in boot, had ever followed the shifting frontier, to see what was going on beyond the ranges, to listen to the pipe calls of the wilderness gods, to pioneer and fight and build—and always to toss dice with fate, staking their money and their lives? Why, those tobacco-chewing, red-liquor-bibbing old sinners could have taught Europe's crusaders a few things!

"Brian Boru," he thought, for he had read some books in school,—"or Richard Lion-heart? Geoffrey de Bouillon? The Chevalier Bayard? Poppycock!" he concluded. "Give me the real article. Give me Jack Brown out of San Francisco; or"—immodestly—"myself: Tom Gray out of Chicago!"

He'd tell Ali about it. He went to his cabin. But the Arab was asleep. So Tom took a turn about the yacht; finally entered the small salon, saw library shelves, picked a book at random.

It was hand-written, English and

Arabic pages facing each other; and the title page said:

A Code of Mining Laws for the Kingdom of Fulahistan by Malcolm M'Gregor, M.A., Cantab.

He read a few paragraphs. He became interested.

"Who's this Malcolm M'Gregor?" he asked when Ali entered.

"A Scot who came to Fulahistan during my father's reign. Looked for coal. Found none. But persuaded my father to pass certain laws. Same, I believe, as obtain in some British colonies."

"Are these laws still in force?"

"Oh, yes. What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"You're smiling like the cat that has swallowed the canary."

"No. Like the cat that sees the canary within reach." He slipped the book into his pocket. "You and I, my lad, are going to pull a fast one!"

"Sez who?" rejoined the Arab, who rapidly was acquiring American diction.

Twenty-four hours later Tom walked down the gangplank at Goletta, the port of Tunis, preceded by Ali, to find the pier a racial cross-section of Africa—Arabs, Jews, negroes of a dozen tribes, surging about them like the waves of the sea, offering their services in every proper and improper capacity.

"Come with me!" a fat Moor whined in Tom's ear. "I get you native dancing girl. Hoochie-koochie,"—lifting his burnous and tripping a shameless, mincing step—"swell, tip-top girl."

Another vowed that he loved Tom like a brother—"That is why I seek the protection of your shadow, O elegant Mister!" while a tattooed Sudanese, kissing Ali's hand with explosive smacks, declared: "Whatever I have is yours, O English lord! Is it my life you want? Here is the dagger! Is it my neck you want? Here is the cord! And by Allah, only sixty francs a month!"

Then Rocca heard a drawling American voice: "You're trespassing, Count Rocca!" "American bluff," the other rejoined brusquely.

Ali smiled at the thought that these people could not recognize the Arab in him beneath his tweeds tailored in Savile Row. Now he spoke in their native language, suddenly and vituperatively:

"Away, O eaters of dirt! Away, O creatures with pigs' ears!"

Came gasps of astonishment, changing quickly into the high-pitched, exaggerated laughter of the Orient—interrupted by a burly sergeant of gendarmes who walked up to Tom.

"Mr. Gray?" he asked.

"That's me."

"You're under arrest."

"Eh?" stammered Tom, utterly taken aback.

"Under arrest. Come along."

"Look here," demanded Ali, "what do you mean by—"

"Orders, Your Royal Highness."

And the sergeant motioned to two policemen, who hustled Tom into an automobile; and an hour later the American faced M. Laplace, the examining magistrate, a short man who sat behind a desk in all the pomp and puffery so dear to the heart of French bureaucracy.

He stared at Tom disapprovingly.

"*Criminel!*" he exclaimed.

It sounded suspiciously like "*criminal*" to Tom. Well, he wasn't; and he inquired heatedly: "What's the idea?"

"*Monsieur,*" — sonorously, — "*parlez Français, s'il vous plaît!*"

"Don't know a word of French except *chartreuse.*"

M. Laplace did not appreciate Tom's type of humor.

"Monsieur," he announced, "one does not jest in our courts of law. This, monsieur, is not the land of—ah—cowboys and Charlie Chaplin and revolvers. Furthermore, monsieur—"

"Stop monsooring me and tell me why I'm pinched."

"Because you have no passport entitling you to enter Tunis."

"I left sort of suddenly." Tom grinned. "O.K. I'll get me one."

"Too late. You will be deported. Ah," —again,—"*criminel!*"

"Pipe down on that *criminel* stuff. I don't care for it."

"And who are you to teach me my business?"

"Not business. Manners."

"You're impudent, monsieur!"

"Same to you—and many of them!" Tom was getting annoyed. "I guess you can't help it. Must have been the way your parents brought you up—although, if I'd been your papa, I'd have paddled the more southerly exposure of your B.V.D.'s until—"

"Nom d'un nom de Dieu!" cried M. Laplace. "Contempt of court! Thirty days!" He summoned the bailiff. "Duhamel," he ordered, "take this person to jail!"

So Tom found himself behind iron bars.

SHOULD he send a cable to his father? Josiah Gray would pull wires and get him out of this. But how the old man would laugh, chiefly after the other cable in which Tom had boasted of making his own way! No, he wouldn't let him know. Nor did he have to. For there was Ali—bound to have influence with the French. Better write him what had happened. And Tom had taken a scrap of paper and a pencil stub from his pocket when a tall man entered, who introduced himself as M. Doderet, aide-de-camp to the governor of Tunis.

He spoke a decidedly American brand of English—afterward he explained it as the result of eighteen months spent as liaison officer with the A.E.F.

"In the soup, aren't you?" he began.

"I don't know about that. My friend Ali—"

"Can't help you. I can. I'll arrange for a suspended sentence if you leave without a row—for instance, appealing to your consul."

"I was on the point of writing to him," said Tom—and lied.

"The publicity would be unwelcome."

"How can you avoid it? Imagine the headlines: *'Prominent Young American'* —that's me—*'Deported!'*"

"We won't call it that. Take tonight's boat for Marseilles, and the next steamer —it sails Saturday—from there to New York." He spoke politely; but beneath the politeness, Tom was acutely conscious of a rather sardonic menace. "Finest stateroom. The bridal suite, if you prefer. We'll foot the bill. And maybe a sum of money—"

"Anything to get me out of Africa?"

"Right."

"Suppose I refuse, appeal to my consul? You know, you mentioned the unwelcome publicity which—"

"The jail sentence would stand. And our prisons are harsh. So many regulations, so easy to break. Each infraction would mean an additional month or two. You might even lose your temper and—no witnesses being present—assault a warden with intent to kill. And then: you have heard of our penal colonies—Guiana, Devil's Island?"

"Am I as important as all that?"

"Don't play the innocent."

"I mean it."

"What about the scene you had in Rome with Count Rocca? Warned him —didn't you?—you'd throw a monkey-wrench into—"

"Oh, yes."

Tom paused. He thought of the germs of the plot to help Ali which he had formed aboard the yacht, when he had come upon Malcolm M'Gregor's law code. This plan fell by the wayside unless he got to Fulahistan. There was, too, a second idea: he might be able to enlist Doderet's aid—provided he played his cards well. He began with the truth:

"Why, I was only bluffing."

"Bluffing?" the other echoed incredulously.

"Sure. I didn't know until three days ago that such a country as Fulahistan existed. I happened to run across Ali. We lifted a couple, chewed the rag. He told me about his road—the agreement between Italy and France. I thought—still think—he's getting a lousy deal. I said so. Rocca butted in. We had words. Ali and I lifted a few more; and somehow"—Tom flushed—"I found myself on his yacht. And say,"—as Doderet laughed suddenly,—what's so comic?"

"Rocca took you seriously. Long-distanced to Paris. Warned us—"

"About the monkey-wrench?"

"Yes. Oh, it's priceless!"

"Except for the fact that I'm in the hoosegow."

"Easily remedied. I repeat, take the next boat—"

"Wait a moment." Tom lowered his voice. "How do you feel about Fulahistan—the right and wrong of it?"

THE Frenchman stared at him considerингly.

"What's on your mind?"

"Tell me first."

"Well—unofficially, I agree with you. Ali's getting a raw deal."

"What's the advantage to France—unofficially?"

"France—still unofficially—would prefer an independent Fulahistan. But there were diplomatic reasons—"

"Sure. The slice of Tripoli you got as your end of the bargain." Tom smiled. "Suppose I trade you a flivver for a piece of real estate, and the next day some other guy's car bumps into this flivver and wrecks it—would that affect the transaction?"

"Not," was the measured reply, "if the deal has been completed—and the title to the real estate is O. K."

"How's *your* title—to the Tripoli real estate?"

"Perfect. We've already taken possession."

"Wouldn't have to give it up—though an outsider should bump into the Fulahistan flivver and—"

"France,"—with a wink,—"would be grateful to this outsider."

"Very well. I return to America tonight."

"Eh?" Doderet was startled.

"Via Fulahistan. Don't tell Rocca. And—awhile back you tried to bribe me. I guess I'll have some of that jack."

"What for?" Again the other was startled. "And how much?"

"Let's see." Tom took a small catalogue from his pocket, jotting down items and figures, added them up. "Twenty-four thousand, three hundred and two dollars," he announced finally. "Make it a round twenty-five."

He showed what he had written, to Doderet, who shook his head.

"I don't understand."

"Must I draw a chart? Listen, baby!"

Tom explained in detail. Doderet laughed loud and long. And next day, in Chicago, Josiah W. Gray opened a cablegram which began:

PLEASE FORWARD IMMEDIATELY TO GOLETTA PORT OF TUNIS ONE CORLISS HOISTING-ENGINE NO. 33 ONE WEAVER-MORGAN DRILL NO. 17 ONE THOUSAND LOCKED-COIL ROPE—

It mentioned several other things, and ended:

MAILING CERTIFIED CHECK STOP LOVE TO MOTHER AND YOU (signed) CENTRAL AFRICAN TRADING CORPORATION
THOMAS J. GRAY, PRESIDENT.

During the following week, certain clerks in the employ of Gray Bowditch & Co. were busy assembling and shipping Tom's order, while Tom and Ali were on their way to Fulahistan. By railroad

Tom Gray

first, through the neat checkerboard fields and orchards of Tunis. Reaching, on the second day, the end of the line: Kaba Tlata, a small outpost that consisted of a chaotic whirlwind of stabbing, minute quartz-grains, a platoon of the Foreign Légion, seven red-necked vultures squatting on a low wall and making unseemly noises, and a caravan—half a hundred Arabs and negroes, men of Fulahistan, come here to meet their ruler and escort him home, welcoming him joyously.

They salaamed deeply to Tom when Ali introduced him, adding:

"Twin-brother he is to me, rocked in the same cradle. Serve him well!"

"Listen is obey!" was the full-throated chorus.

A change from train to camels. Hamdi, Tom's driver, vaulting into the saddle behind him, cursing and admonishing the animal:

"Begone, *yah bint*—O daughter! Begone and hurry—O uncouth wart—O grandmother of a bad smell!"

Thwack, thwack! went the rawhide whips. The beasts broke into the *jambaz*, the pacing, rolling gait which looks so slow and clumsy, but can in the long run outdistance anything else on four feet; and an hour beyond Kaba Tlata, the Fulahistan wilderness came to them.

It came with a tangle of low undergrowth, tamarack and drin and carob, twisted, leafless shrubs, and here and there a clump of palm-trees, each like a distinct island, single and solid amidst the waste. It came with a carved aridity, an enormous sterile monotony flowing on

vague horizons. It came with a harsh, insolent nakedness; and when, occasionally, there was a sign of life—a jackal loping across the sands like an evil gray thought, or a lonely cameleer passing with never a word of greeting—it seemed an intrusion, a puerile challenge to the infinite Sahara.

They rode in silence,—it was too hot to speak,—skirting a miasmic jungle; again striking the desert's spawning, golden eternities; making camp in a small valley filled with the ghosts of forgotten caravans; listening to the night noises of the wilderness—like the rhythmic, insistent pounding of a far surf, and slashing through, fervently, dramatically, the muffled pulse of nomad signal-drums that whispered the gossip of Africa from oasis to oasis.

Late on the fourth day Fulabad, the capital of Fulahistan, jumped into the focus: a smudge of copper and mauve against the scarlet of the evening sky.

And a fascinating little town it was: Shadowy, crowded alleys. Bazaars where artisans were busy at Old World crafts. A mosque that stabbed up with its sword-like minaret. A dark square where the flicker of a torch showed a strange medley: an aged man smoking a peaceful pipe; a beggar whining for alms; a dreamy-eyed youth twanging a one-stringed guitar and warbling a nasal love-song to some black-haired Fatima; a buffalo calf wallowing in a puddle; a green-turbaned Moslem priest clicking his rosary beads.

AT the palace a telegram awaited Ali. "From Rocca," he said. "He'll be here in December—with his mission."

"Doesn't let the grass grow under his feet!"

"If death must come," sighed Ali, "let it be quick!"

"Oh, you're as big a crape-hanger as my dad. Why, if I succeed—"

"How can you?"—hopelessly.

"By using the old bean for something besides a barber's playground. I leave tomorrow for that famous road of yours."

"I'll go with you."

"Not on your life! You stick around here and entertain Rocca and his gang. Show them a swell time—and sit tight till you hear from me."

"You can't go alone."

"Hamdi, my camel-driver, is coming with me. Nice lad. Speaks fair English. And he's recruiting some of his pals. By the way, you spoke of a pass through the mountains. The only pass, you said—"

"The Echo of the Thunder Gods. It's far to the east, near the border."

"That's where I'll be."

"But it's the worst part of the whole road. Dangerous and—"

"I'm an American he-man who loves his discomforts."

"You might tell me your plans."

"The less I tell you, the fewer lies you'll have to tell Rocca. You're a good egg. But as a liar, you're not worth your salt. I repeat, sit tight till you hear from me. And if some heavy freight comes for me from Chicago, hurry it along all you can."

EARLY in the morning Tom set out with Hamdi and seven men the latter had recruited—had introduced as:

"Seven rogues. Seven scoundrels. They would cut anybody's throat for the sake of a chipped silver coin—and a good many throats, even, for the sport of it. But,"—with a crooked grin—"you can trust them, Tom *sahib*."

"How come?"

"Because they know me—and fear me." And, turning to the seven: "Am I not right, O pimples on the nose of the world?"

"Give salaam!" was the rumbling assent.

They rode fast. They reached, on the second afternoon, the *Darb-i-Sultani*, stretching its deep-cut groove across the land; a panorama—oh, yes, Ali had been right—of African commerce.

People on foot, on horseback, astride camels or in lumbering carts. Negroes ranging in color from the pale yellow of the littoral to the ebony of the Great Lakes. Swarthy Moroccans with aquiline profiles. Arabs from the Atlas, with hint of Goth or Vandal in their blue eyes and the shimmering gold of their beards. Furtive, nervous Armenians and Levantines. Bare-legged, vulpine Bedouins, in folds of earth-brown wool, swaggering with the beggars' insolence of their breed.

Passing on, bartering, bickering, each intent on his own profit, with hardly a look at Tom and his followers. Only another merchant, they thought, come to cause two rupees to grow where one had grown before. And it was proper and right. Trade was the essence of Africa—had been the quintessence of this ancient road since the days, centuries earlier, when slick jobbers from

the isles of Greece had smuggled here their ivory and copper and tin under the very noses of Pharaoh's captains.

And Tom's caravan keeping on ever eastward; finally, on Saturday, getting to the Echo of the Thunder Gods.

NARROW, this cleft was—just enough room for three camels abreast. Perhaps half a mile long, and flanked on the left by an abyss tumbling to a turbulent river a thousand feet below, on the right by huge cliffs that tore the sky with ragged granite pinnacles. The pass itself was steep and made of rubble and stones, slippery with the oozy wetness that dripped continuously from the rain-forests above; and the going so hard that the animals grunted protestingly, often fell, and that the natives made slow work, using hands and sticks and ropes to steady themselves. A place, Hamdi explained, where, many a time in the past, a few bandits had held up great caravans escorted by armed men.

Here Tom made camp in a small valley a little to the south. Here he waited, doing nothing at all except to listen, at night, to the signal drums—with Hamdi, his ear pressed to the ground, interpreting their muffled cadences, thump for thump and pause for pause.

Rub-rub-rumbeddy-rub—a breathless, shivering silence, then a hollow *bonng!* —the song of the wooden African drums droning up; spanning jungles and streams and mountains; picking up rumor and gossip from negro villages and Arab oases. . . .

Rub-rumbeddy-rub—the Morse code of all Africa, fraught with the news of all Africa. Traveling northward with word of tribal feud, of rinderpest striking the long-horned cattle of the Masai. Traveling southward with the tale of a M'pongwe medicine-man brewing dread voodoo, of a trading-station wiped out by blackwater fever. Traveling westward with the hearsay of a spicy scandal at the Khedive's court in Cairo. Traveling eastward, to the camp below the Echo of the Thunder Gods, with tidings that foreigners had arrived at Fulabad. . . .

Proud foreigners. Also a regiment of soldiers. And what, sobbed the drums, will Ali our king do, with the foreigners so mighty and shrewd?

Rub-rumbeddy-rub,—the nasal plaint of the drums,—here is our kindly good land no longer free; will soon be beneath Europe's spurred heel, like the rest of Africa! O Allah, curse these foreigners! Curse them root and branch!

Rub-rub-rumbeddy-rub—other news from Fulabad. News—speed them on, O drums—for Tom *sahib!* Pass along word that great crates, heavy enough to break a dromedary's back, have come for him from his home beyond the seas! Being sent down the road in haste! So clear the way, traders all! By order of Ali our king—*still* our king. . . .

Rub-rumbeddy-rub! Tomorrow the freight arrives.

"And high time," said Tom to Hamdi. "We've got our work cut out."

Hard work it was—while the drums continued their evening chant. East boomed the drums—north, south. West boomed the drums, to Fulabad, bringing a strange tale:

A tale that was whispered in coffee-house and in mosque and in caravanserai; that was filtered through flopping, scented harem curtains; that finally reached the palace where Ali—who, that morning, had received a letter by runner from Tom—turned to Rocca:

"Trouble on the *Darb-i-Sultani.*"

"Oh?"

"The caravans complain that the pass near the border is blocked. Bandits, I suppose."

Rocca smiled, well pleased. Here, he thought, was the very excuse he had been wishing for, the entering wedge for foreign domination: bandits who interfered with commerce, progress, civilization. He replied:

"We'll show them short shrift. Lucky I brought soldiers."

SO, the next day, it was boots and saddles. Troopers it was, galloping eastward, and trumpets and the grim staccato rumble of the guns. A column on the march, cutting through the traffic on the ancient road as a knife cuts through cheese. And a week later, the Echo of the Thunder Gods stabbing up toward the ragged, bitter peaks of the higher mountains.

Cloaked by mists, both pass and peaks. Cloaked by mists, though vaguely glimpsed, the outlines of great mechanical shapes. Cloaked, somehow, by these same mists, a queer noise: a hissing and puffing and grunting—like the roar of some huge prehistoric beast. Rocca wondered what it was.

He was a fearless man. *"Per Bacco,"* he thought, "I'll talk to these bandits!" And he rode ahead, entered the pass

itself, then heard a drawling American voice:

"You're trespassing, Count Rocca!"

TOM stepped from behind a rock. Rocca stared at him, confused.

"What," he stammered, "what are you doing here?"

"Right back at you: What are *you* doing here? You're on my claim."

"What claim?"

"Mining claim." Tom pointed at a stake driven into the ground. "Take a look."

And Rocca read:

Notice is hereby given that I, Thomas J. Gray, on this 23rd day of November 1932, located on public, unsurveyed land in the province of Mabarak in the Kingdom of Fulahistan a mining claim described as follows: beginning at stake upon which is this notice of location, running thence north 660 feet to post marked No. 2, thence east 1320 feet to post marked No. 3, thence south 660 feet to post marked No. 4, thence west 1320 feet to post of location. This location is in the pass known as the Echo of the Thunder Gods. The name of the claimant is

Thomas J. Gray, locator,
President of Central African Trading Corporation.

"An American corporation," said Tom.

"American bluff," rejoined the other brusquely. "Of course,"—and he meant it, rather liked the younger man at this moment,—"I admire your nerve. But you—"

"Can't get away with it? Sure I can. This is Fulahistan territory. You haven't annexed it yet. Maybe you won't—ever."

Rocca waved a hand at the troopers.

"Aren't you forgetting—"

"Your bluff this time—and I call it. Aren't you familiar with the mining laws of this country? All right. Let me show you something—" And he took Malcolm M'Gregor's little book from his pocket and picked out certain passages.

The first said:

All mineral deposits, in land belonging to the Kingdom of Fulahistan, both surveyed and unsurveyed, and the lands in which they are found, are free and open to exploration, occupation, and purchase. . . .

The second said:

The essential elements in locating lode or placer claims are: marking of the boundaries, posting the notice of location and the registering thereof. . . .

And the third:

The discovery of minerals of actual present commercial value is not necessary. The claim is legal if it justifies a person of ordinary prudence in making expenditure of labor and money with reasonable prospect of success in developing a paying mine. . . .

"All shipshape," Tom went on. "I've posted the notice. I've purchased the land from my pal Ali. I'm a person of ordinary prudence. And I—"

"What about the expenditure of labor and money?" demanded Rocca. "And what about the reasonable prospect of success?"

"As to the latter—well, I'm not easily discouraged; I stick to anything I start . . . May take me to my dying day before I give up hope of discovering a new bonanza hereabouts. And as to the expenditure of labor and money, wait till you see—"

He preceded the other toward the great mechanical shapes that loomed through the mist; that presently were seen to be solid, massive machinery bearing, on brass plates, the name of Gray Bowditch & Co. Hamdi and seven other natives were hard at work—hammers thudding, cranes hoisting away, gas engines hissing and stuttering, gudgeons sliding smoothly into shafts, pilers biting and wrenching and tearing.

Tom's voice rose above the roar:

"I repeat—it's an American corporation."

Rocca was a business man. His answer was quick and to the point:

"Americans have been known to sell out—at a profit."

"There isn't a profit big enough to tempt me. I'm one of those idealistic guys. Warned you, back in Rome, I'd throw a monkey-wrench, didn't I? Some monkey-wrench, eh?"

"But—"

"It's no use. Here's the best I can do: I'll blow you to a bottle of champagne—out of Ali's cellar—the moment we get back to Fulabad, to celebrate your return to your native land."

IT must be mentioned in Rocca's favor that on the following Saturday he drank the bottle of champagne with Ali and Tom, and said to the latter:

"Any time you need a job—"

"Not yet awhile," laughed Tom. "First I'm going to take a look at the rest of Africa."

An Ear Well Lost

By FRANCIS COCKRELL

Pictures by Henry Thiede

The story of One who fought not wisely but too well.

"Take them back," Cuthbert said. "Speak sharply to the man."

AS he walked along Fifth Street this Monday morning, even before he turned into Market, Mr. Luke Bartle was annoyed. It was Cuthbert Hylton who did it. Cuthbert was Mrs. Bartle's brother, and Mr. Bartle certainly did deplore it. Cuthbert's real name was Adam Guggle, but he had changed it, he said, because if he decided to be an actor Cuthbert Hylton would be a better name for one.

The lazy, no-good bum, he'd been living with them eight months now! All he had done so far was get out of bed every morning in time to open the window, and standing in front of it taking deep breaths and working an exerciser thing with springs in it, let the cold air rush in and go under the door to freeze Mr. Bartle's ankles, in the next room.

And at breakfast this morning! Telling *him,* Mr. Bartle, that those last cigars he brought home weren't so hot.

"Take them back," Cuthbert had said. "Speak sharply to the man. Really, they're atrocious."

Mr. Bartle choked a little, thinking of it, and wished he were the kind of man who would have told Cuthbert where to get off, in no uncertain terms, and if Cuthbert had opened his silly head again, would have gone around the table and stuffed the cigars, in packages of three, down his throat. But Mr. Bartle wasn't that kind of man; and it annoyed him.

And now, as he turned onto Market Street and came in sight of his little fruit-and-vegetable store, tucked against the north side of the big warehouse, his irritation increased. Here it was after eight o'clock, and the sidewalk stands weren't even out yet, let alone any vegetables on them.

That Eddy! He shouldn't have hired him in the first place, even for a dollar a week. He shouldn't have been softhearted and listened to his hard-luck story about how broke he was, and how he would work for anything—just let him sleep in the store, and he could live on the fruit and vegetables that wouldn't keep until the next day. He was a little guy and had looked kind of pathetic; and Mr. Bartle had said all right, and that he'd give him a dollar a week besides. All he had to do was sweep out after the store was closed, and get up and set the stuff out in the mornings. Only a week he'd been working, and already three times he didn't have the stuff out, and twice he wasn't even up!

When Mr. Bartle got to the store and found the doors were still locked, he began to seethe and mutter. Inside, he strode angrily toward the back room. The floor wasn't even very clean, with cigarette-butts lying around; and the store smelled sort of stale and musty, like mothballs or something. And in the back room he found Eddy still asleep on the little bunk that had been fixed for him against the south wall. Still asleep! Mr. Bartle boiled.

HE reached down and yanked the covers back. Eddy was sleeping fully clothed, though Mr. Bartle was too vexed to wonder about that at the moment. He put his hand in Eddy's face and rubbed it around. He was pretty rough. Eddy stirred and opened his eyes. Mr. Bartle rubbed harder.

"Get up out o' there, you bum!" He rubbed again for luck.

"Hey, qui' tha'!" Eddy demanded in muffled tones.

"Get out o' there!" Mr. Bartle gave a final push, then grabbed Eddy's coat-collar and yanked him out onto the floor.

EDDY just lay looking up at Mr. Bartle a second. His upper lip curled back from his teeth; his eyes got bright and kind of crazy-looking; his face twisted with queer little jerks. "You can't get by with that on me, pal," he said, his voice soft and cold; and his right hand went beneath his left armpit and came out with a gun.

It was a mean-looking gun, and as a matter of fact would shoot just swell; but Mr. Bartle didn't pause to consider that at all. When he saw this little punk he had given a job, and him not even earning his old vegetables either—when he saw him actually pull a gun, all Mr. Bartle felt was *mad*.

So, at the first glimpse of it, before Eddy could aim it, Mr. Bartle cried, "Why, you dirty little rat!" and without further ado jumped onto Eddy's stomach.

This was tough on Eddie's stomach, because Mr. Bartle was rather fat, and jumped as if he meant it; and it also made the gun go off through the ceiling instead of through Mr. Bartle.

Too, it hampered Eddy to have Mr. Bartle standing there in the middle of his stomach; so before he could recover, Mr. Bartle had reached down and twisted the gun out of his hand, tossing it to one side.

"An' after all I've done for you!" Mr. Bartle said, yanking Eddy to his feet. "That's gratitude for you! Why, you might've shot me if I hadn't been here to stop you." He slapped Eddy a couple of times and pushed him contemptuously back onto the bunk. "You're fired," he said.

Eddy said nothing, but now his face was livid and the crazy light in his eyes even crazier as he rebounded from the couch, bringing forth this time a long and evil-looking knife which he evidently intended for Mr. Bartle's innards.

That truly infuriated Mr. Bartle.

"That burns me up!" he shouted with righteous indignation; and hopping to one side to avoid Eddy's insane lunge, he kicked him very hard on the shinbone as he went by, and then very hard again, in another place, after he had gone by. Then he grabbed him from behind, and reached under his arm and began trying to break the wrist of the hand which held the knife. Eddy dropped the knife.

Mr. Bartle didn't cool quickly this time. He spun Eddy around and shook him until his teeth sounded like castanets, and then he gripped him by the collar with one hand and slapped him enthusiastically with the other.

"By rights," Mr. Bartle said, "I ought to slam you around some more." So he slammed Eddy around some more. Eddy had been snarling and resisting, but he was too far gone for that now, and was only whining as Rafferty came in.

"What's going on? Beating up a little guy like that!" Rafferty was the cop on the beat.

"When a rat like this tries to shoot me and stab me," Mr. Bartle said, "am I supposed to kiss him?"

"Shoot you, huh? I thought I heard a shot." He was looking at Eddy curiously. "Sa-y-y," he said, eying Eddy intently, "sa-y-y, aint you— Well, I'm a son-of-a-gun!" He snapped handcuffs on Eddy. "I'm a son-of-a-gun!" he repeated. "Little Hoppy Blake! Well, what do you know?"

"You mean—you mean little Hoppy Blake, the gangster?" Mr. Bartle asked, blinking rapidly.

"Little Hoppy Blake the ex-gangster," Rafferty said with heavy humor, and called Headquarters.

IT was quite a party before it was over. When Mr. Bartle told the Inspector how Hoppy happened to be there, the Inspector had his men look around; and it wasn't any time before they found the little tunnel that came out under Hoppy's bunk on this side of the wall and in a closet in the warehouse on the other. No wonder Hoppy was sleepy all the time, Mr. Bartle thought. Sitting up nights digging tunnels and stealing furs! They must have just finished it, Inspector Grimes said, and meant to come back for another load that night, because only twenty thousand dollars' worth were gone.

"We'll get 'em back, all right," he said, looking at Hoppy meaningly. "I'm sure Hoppy'll tell us all."

Hoppy looked nervous, and shivered.

"I want to congratulate you," the Inspector told Mr. Bartle. "A brave man! Not many men would even try to take a gun and knife away from one of the toughest mugs in town. No sir!"

And there was something about maybe the warehouse would give him a reward. Mr. Bartle began to feel pretty good. When Rafferty went by, later, after it was all over, he eyed him speculatively. What was the use of being a brave man and having a cop lift your best oranges?

"About those oranges—" Mr. Bartle said, "One now and then I don't mind. But no more filling sacks and taking them home. And lay off the big ones. Those others are good enough for you. Understand?"

"Uh—" Rafferty said, "I—I, yeah. Yes sir. I—I just sort of filled the sacks careless-like, you know. Wasn't thinkin'. But I'll remember, Mr. Bartle. I'll—"

BUT Mr. Bartle wasn't listening; a beautiful thought had come to Mr. Bartle. It was all so simple: The very first thing, when he went home tonight he'd light an expensive cigar and not offer Cuthbert one. Then he'd pick a fight with Cuthbert and beat him to a pulp. That's what. And if that didn't work, he'd do it every day until it did work. Lucy wouldn't like it, probably; but that was too bad. Lucy was a fine wife; but, Mr. Bartle decided sternly, she'd just have to take it, in this case. He was a firm man. He was also pretty tough. . . .

Mr. Bartle stood before the mirror in the bathroom, that night, and wondered where people ever got the idea gangsters were so tough. . . .

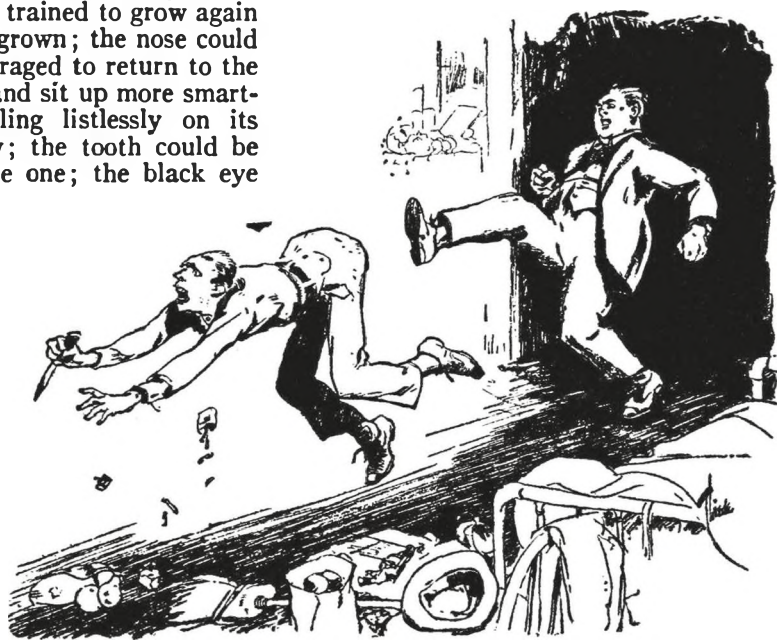
Well, the lip which now dangled, he supposed, could be trained to grow again where it once had grown; the nose could doubtless be encouraged to return to the center of his face and sit up more smartly, instead of lolling listlessly on its side as it did now; the tooth could be replaced by a false one; the black eye would eventually go away. But, he wondered gloomily, could anything keep the ear from becoming a cauliflower?

He'd had no trouble picking a fight with Cuthbert. It was after he picked it, that things were so difficult. Perhaps, Mr. Bartle thought, he should have shown Cuthbert the papers with his pictures and write-ups, before he picked the fight.

Lucy had been out when he got home. But she came in and stopped the fight. Maybe that was a good thing. Just to make everything swell, Lucy had taken one look at Mr. Bartle and then followed Cuthbert out to his own room. Mr. Bartle had come in here then. He sighed. He heard some movement in the living-room. He might as well go on out, he guessed. He'd have to sometime. It was all very sad.

Lucy was slamming the front door as he came into the room. She turned and crossed to him. "The big brute!" she said tenderly, putting her hands on his shoulders. "I could stand the rest, all right; but when he picks a fight with you, that's just too much. Even if he *is* my brother. He won't be back, either," she said with finality, putting her head against Mr. Bartle's chest and slipping her arms up around his neck.

Looking over her shoulder, Mr. Bartle could see the tattered remnants of his face in the mirror over the mantlepiece, and he smiled happily with them. It was well worth it; who wouldn't rather have a cauliflower ear, than Cuthbert?



Avoiding Eddy's insane lunge, Mr. Bartle kicked him very hard on the shinbone and then very hard in another place.

HAWK of the

IN a strange, wild land, peopled by savage men who may have been the progenitors of the American Indian, a white boy fights for his life.

Snow Hawk had not long to wait before the scourges of the plains swept into view—forty mounted warriors.

Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon

The Story Thus Far:

THE earliest threads of the narrative go back, roughly, to the turn of the century. In unraveling them we find ourselves almost at once aboard a stanch little vessel, the *Cherokee,* cruising, according to latitudes given in her log, in the mild waters of the North Pacific.

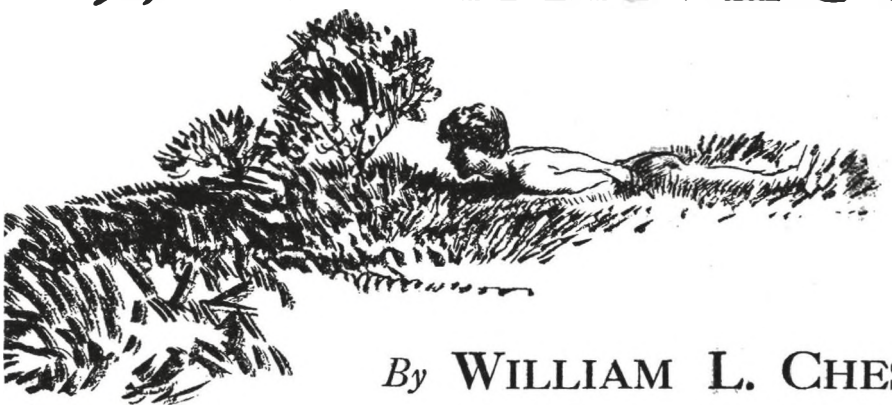
The *Cherokee* was no ordinary vessel, for her owner and navigator, Doctor Lincoln Rand, had equipped her as a kind of floating infirmary in which he hoped to accomplish for the natives of the north Pacific coasts something of what another knight of medicine has done in Labrador on the Atlantic side. With him were his young wife Helena, and his educated Indian aid and friend Mokuyi.

Noble in purpose and aspect, the trim vessel nosed her graceful way through shipping in San Francisco Harbor one autumn day. She was last spoken by a whaler standing north into the Bering Sea, where she was swallowed up in a dense fog—and never again seen by the eye of civilized man. . . .

A succession of storms drove her off her course, and dismasted her. And for days thereafter she drifted blindly through fog, apparently northward. It grew increasingly cold. For many days they floated thus, blindly, in their groaning, creaking craft.

Copyright, 1935, by The McCall Company (Blue Book Magazine). All rights reserved.

WILDERNESS



By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

Yet the long-expected complete freeze-up did not materialize. The *Cherokee* actually began shaking off her weight of ice, and floated freely once more. Then one day they saw a branch drift past, with leaves still green upon it. Finally they came in sight of shoals; and dimly through the hanging mists, they detected a distant headland.

By what benevolence of the Almighty they never knew, the ship passed somehow through the roaring invisible maelstrom of the combers. When they finally and unmistakably grounded, all three believed the end had come. But early dawn of a day which would last but an hour or two revealed instead that most beautiful sight of all to sea-weary eyes—land!

A strange and savage land it proved—an oasis of the Arctic somewhere north of Siberia, they concluded, somehow warmed by unknown ocean currents and by the fires of a great volcanic region that flamed beyond the horizon. A land thickly wooded with evergreens, for the most part, and supporting many and varied wild animals. Stranger still was its human population.

For almost immediately upon landing, Rand and Helena and Mokuyi were beset by a band of painted savages, and would have been killed had not Mokuyi addressed them in his native tongue. *And they understood him!*

In the long talk which followed, Rand learned that these people were unquestionably of the same stock as the American Indian, though they had never so much as heard of the outside world. And Rand found much evidence for his growing conviction that here was the birthplace of the Indian race, whence our First Americans came in prehistoric times.

A few months the newcomers lived among these primitive people; and here Helena's baby was born.

But only six weeks afterward tragedy wrote an end. Native enemies from the plain to the north raided the village; and both Rand and Helena were killed before the attack was beaten off. Thereupon Mokuyi adopted the little white boy as his own; and Mokuyi's native wife Awena cared for him.

Kioga, he was named—the Snow Hawk. And the child throve amazingly in his early years. Yet the other children of the village were jealous of his superior powers, and finally when he was six, stoned him out of the village. Yet little Kioga had one stanch friend—Aki, a bear-cub Mokuyi had given him some time before, now half-grown and powerful. And somehow, with Aki and the good-natured bear-clan, Kioga managed to survive and to recover from his hurts. . . . When at length he returned to the village, he was received with open arms by Mokuyi, but there were many who scoffed at his wild tale; and Yellow Weasel the witch-doctor, who hated him, sought to plan his destruction. *(The story continues in detail:)*

KIOGA knew that Yellow Weasel hated him—had always hated him—without understanding why. Puzzled, he began to haunt the shaman's lodge by night, and spy upon his doings from the smoke-hole. And he learned to reciprocate the witch-doctor's feeling cordially.

YELLOW WEASEL

A master of primitive magic, the crafty Yellow Weasel would sometimes, to the wonder of the Indians, let himself be pierced with a spear, and command his wounds to heal without bleeding—which they apparently did.

One day, shortly after such an exhibition of magic power, Yellow Weasel heard roars of laughter proceeding from one corner of the village. By nature curious and suspicious, he made his way through a crowd of women and children who surrounded a small figure seated cross-legged on the ground. It was Kioga, the youthful magician.

A too-large cap of painted feathers sat precariously upon his head. One by one, to the delight of everybody, he imitated Yellow Weasel's sleight-of-hand tricks. At last, not omitting a single gesture, he sent the women into hysterics by solemnly duplicating the shaman's pet feat with the spear, the while he muttered the appropriate mumbo-jumbo accompaniment, for theatrical effect. At sight of the furious medicine-man, he scampered off, leaving behind the prepared spear, thus exposing Yellow Weasel for the trickster and impostor he was.

SO Kioga took up village life again, and thanks to his vastly increased strength, he soon won anew a healthy respect for himself, as well as a growing number of friends among those who once had avoided him, and also, in particular, among the older warriors.

Once Mokuyi found him banging away at a piece of copper, with a round stone. This metal, in small quantities of almost pure ore, found its way into Hopeka from the northerly mountains, to be laboriously cold-hammered and hand-fashioned into ornaments, knives and weapon points by the Shoni. Hawk was attempting to work it in imitation of a brave he had watched. But the process was crude. He hit his fingers as often as he did the copper; as is the nature of copper, it grew harder and less malleable as he hammered; and the resulting creation defied description.

"What do you make, my son?" asked Mokuyi.

"An arrow-head," replied Hawk, showing his handiwork with pride.

"Ah, a fine one too!" exclaimed Mokuyi, with never a smile. "But there is a better way." Whereupon he showed him how to heat the metal from time to time to make it more malleable, a method unknown to the Shoni. As Mokuyi beat it into a serviceable point, he also spoke of iron, and dropped a few casual remarks as to its hardness and manufacture by civilized men.

"He whose weapons were tipped with iron would be the most envied warrior in the Seven Tribes," he said in conclusion. He would have added more, but he did not wish to burden the boy's mind with useless information or create in it desires for things little Snow Hawk could never hope to possess. But that little seed of knowledge fell on fertile soil. Hawk smiled with an inward sense of superiority when he saw grown warriors beating copper in the old way.

And there came a time, long afterward, when Hawk's arrowheads were observed to be better made than those of practiced men-at-arms. But much to Mokuyi's amusement, he guarded his secret knowledge so jealously that no inducement could wheedle it out of him.

Despite Snow Hawk's good resolution to remain at home, the wilderness was in his blood. The naked freedom of the village, which to a civilized boy would have seemed the ultimate in liberty, no longer satisfied him. By contrast with the life he had led, with the bears, the village seemed a cage. He would never be quite the same again.

Yanu had retired to hibernate, as she did only when she was to bring forth young. The cubs still roamed the nearby forest, self-supporting in their third year. Kioga divided his time between

village and wilderness; and before he knew it, it was almost winter again.

Only a fierce flush remained of the sun in the southern skies. Up rose the red-yellow moon, ringed by an enormous golden circle, to flood the wilds with a brilliant pallor; and then the moon also waned, sinking its pointed crescent into the sun's vanishing refulgent path. It was a moon strange as only the Arctic moon is strange; for on touching the horizon, a bright field of light formed at its point, about which faint rainbows arched. As if this were not bewildering enough, mock moons appeared on either side, lending an eerie supernaturalness to a sky already weirdly beautiful in its mantle of vivid colors.

Then at last, came the wondrous Arctic night. The silver banners of the northern lights waved across the vault. Masses of living fire hung from the zenith, and snakes of writhing colors twisted across a sky ablaze with vivid light. As winter set in, this color play increased; multiplied tongues of crystalline flame darted across the heavens—and all in the dead, unspeakable stillness of a land gripped as by an enchantment.

It was the season of *Wani-tula,* of famine and the long dark, when children heard tales of evil *Yei,* bloodthirsty *Tchindis,* and bloodless *Weendigoes,* evil spirits said to hunger for human flesh. Now a warm fire and a comfortable lodge were welcome, as was the plenteous store of food laid by during the summer hunts of the previous year. Companionship, conversation with other human beings, softened the overpowering physical isolation which came on the land with the going of the sun; but when winter grew long, the Indians prayed for that vast red glare on the horizon, that blood-red band of light which heralded the return of their solar deity.

OUT in the wilderness fierce beasts grew fiercer, killing in closer to human habitation. Spectral wolf-packs tore ravening along the warm blood-trail which must be held to the bitter end. Survival itself depended upon surpassing vigor in attack and lightning quickness in escape.

The young Kioga was a part of all this, and well deserved his name of Snow Hawk. He sensed the quickening savagery of the creatures of the wild, heard distant stags fighting with clashing antlers, and from a distant swamp a continuous fusillade, as of troops in battle —the cracking of the mud, riven by the bursting action of the frost.

Impatiently he had awaited the snowfall. When it came, he was gone into the wilds again on winged webbed feet—shod in the snow-shoes Mokuyi had made for him and taught him how to use.

Big for his age, he was dwarfed beside the powerful Aki, who was ever at his heels. But he was scarcely less shaggy, for he wore a suit of white fox-furs, and when he drew close about his face the fur cap attached to his collar, he became almost as well concealed by art as the animals were by nature.

Wandering in the snow with Aki was a fascinating pastime. Far ahead of him that wraith, which seemed pure fancy, was a white wolf vanishing over a hillock. That ghostly, almost invisible presence was a lynx, seeking prey invisible as itself. That voice without a body was a white owl speaking into the silence, and those two small red sparks glowing upon a tree-trunk became, on straining the gaze, the eyes of a hungry weasel, also white—for many of the killers had changed into their winter coats, to go unseen in the snow.

FRESH from a writing lesson beside the warm fire of Mokuyi's lodge, the young lad translated the most ancient writing in the world, a script imprinted by the feet of wild creatures long before man even inhabited the earth, a connected writing that told of fierce battles and swift pursuits, ending in bold escapes or quick and merciless death.

The rug of the snow was interwoven with a thousand such tales; and unraveling the warp and the weft of wild life often led him many miles from the village. If his wanderings took him too far to return in time, he slept when Aki did, close against the bear's warm body. When he was not with this stanch companion, he sought some hidden thicket or cave, dug into the snow, rolled up in his furs and dreamed of the hunt.

He had learned much forest lore in his life with the bears during the summers; but he mastered the reading of trail in the book of snows. Here the broad pillows of a lynx's furry feet had supported it atop the soft snow in which a fox's paws would have sunk deeply. In and out among the thickets the cat had prowled, quartering every spot which held promise of a feast—and as always, a bloodstain in the snow and bits of scattered rabbit-fur told of its success.

Suddenly the tracks came to an end. Could the lynx have vanished into thin air? Precisely, for two widely spaced grooves in the snow meant that some giant bird of prey, perhaps the Thunder Bird itself, had swooped and borne off the struggling lynx to its own death—and another trail was ended.

There the broad pads of a prowling panther reached out in a long stride beside the old twelve-foot bounds of a white-tailed deer. Farther along the deer had paused, gone back to confuse its trail and darted on again. Suddenly the even, regular stride of the panther-tracks stretched out, the hind prints falling into those made by the fore. The stalk had begun.

A few seconds later the boy froze in his tracks as, from a windswept rock, the long gray shape of the killer suddenly soared out and down upon a deer crouching in the snow. Then Tagu, the cougar, buried his fangs in the spine, wrenched once, and it was all over.

Later that night Snow Hawk saw what he thought were more cougar tracks, but knew he was wrong when a second pair joined them in the deep snow—for Tagu hunts usually alone. They belonged instead to T'yone the wolf and his hungry mate, and along the border of a stream Kioga verified this by detecting the claw-marks which are always absent in feline prints.

Blood in the wolf-tracks aroused his curiosity, and by back-trailing he read the story; the two wolves had attacked an elk-herd, and had been repelled by the sharp antlers of the mighty bulls.

Peculiarities of arrangement and spacing told the little trailer much about the marauder which had passed this way. If the forepaws lay parallel, the animal was probably a tree-climber—might even be above him, waiting to spring. If placed one behind the other, it was probably a beast confined to the ground. In the bounding creatures the hind-feet always tracked ahead of the forefeet; and Saki the otter often left the print of his entire body for all to see.

Here, again, are other tracks—mere deep holes in the snow, partially filled in. Whose? Perhaps a wolf's—but no: no wolf could make such a mighty leap as appears here; therefore a puma has but recently passed. Again Kioga sees what appear to be wolf-tracks, but which on closer examination prove to be the flatter, heavier sole-marks of a wolverine—identified by the fifth inner-toe mark, shorter stride, and a side-trip into a tree.

Was this mark made by coyote or fox? Both nearly of a size—but in the fox the tail-touch occurs regularly, in the coyote infrequently, in the wolf's trail never. Further, if an animal were trotting, the track would be in perfect register, the hind-foot falling exactly upon the fore-print; but if galloping, the tracks would be bunched together.

SO the Snow Hawk learned the vital statistics of the wilds. These and a thousand other details he must master if he were later to be a successful reader of the trail, able to follow the chain of tracks, link by link, to meat.

Kioga lived these stories in the snow, oftentimes saw them enacted, and so learned more about stalking and killing than would otherwise have been possible. Moreover, he himself was one of the hunted and legitimate prey for anything which ate flesh—and those who trail, must expect to be trailed.

He looked down a thousand times into the hungry yellow eyes of T'yone and his bristling pack-mates, heard the long sharp fangs click, saw the red tongues lolling, watched the panting breath rising in foggy jets from dripping jaws, and breathed in the dread smell of the killers. But old Yanu's teachings had endured. He never roamed far from cliff or from evergreen whose ledges or branches afforded greater safety.

And so he survived, learning as he grew. Despite these many other activities, Mokuyi continued his instruction in the language and manners of a race from which he was almost as remote as is one pole from another. So the long winters passed rapidly by.

Experience had not yet taught him to judge the age of a set of tracks, when one spring day he was following close upon the pugs of Guna, through a thick-

eted ravine. Several times he sprang to safety on some projecting rock to let pass T'yone or Tagu or others who would willingly have laid him low, and now in a tree overhanging the deep gorge, Jidamo the squirrel scolded him whose agile jumps all but equaled his own.

None of the wild folk pay much heed to the squirrels ordinarily; and little Snow Hawk, preoccupied with his trail-reading, paid even less. But when of a sudden Jidamo shrieked a warning, so attuned were the boy's senses to every note of danger that he never paused to look behind, but flung himself up and away to a farther ledge, with a quickness that proved him master of the finesse of balance and control. He was not a second too soon.

Beneath him came the hollow chop of clashing jaws, and a snarl, mingling bafflement with anger and disappointment. The great tiger whose trail he had been following too closely had charged, missed him by an inch and bounded past, a streak of orange and black.

Taut of nerve and quivering with excitement, the boy gazed down upon the animal now prowling beneath his ledge, enveloped in a cloud of vapor generated by those deep lungs, and with a growl snoring in that dark red gullet.

Now fear, with Kioga, was not all-pervading. Though it had been one of the first things taught him, his life was a constant series of alarms which but roused every nerve and fiber to escape, or to meet and repel danger if escape were cut off. Thus he feared Guna, but had not been terrified by the tiger's charge; he was excited, but not panic-stricken by the sudden attack; he reacted not with the timorous shrinking fright of a deer, but rather with the prudent respect and wise caution which are the due of superiorly armed foes. Unfailingly he returned to examine the source of his alarm. Now, true to form, as the great long-hair paced furiously below, the lad pelted him with sharp stones.

Fuming, Guna leaped twice toward that ledge, but was met, each time, with a hail of well-timed missiles. So, snarling in impotent fury, he padded away to seek other and less elusive prey.

Snow Hawk did not at once descend from his rocky barbican. He owed his closest escape from extinction as much to good luck as to a comprehension of the warning of Jidamo. He was well

aware of that. But the experience at once reopened in his mind the question: How did others in his forests make their miraculous escapes?

Skento the deer could evade peril long before it came upon him. Without having seen the tiger, a hunted buffalo would often gallop off before Guna was yet within half a mile of charging distance. Again T'yone might stalk an elk one day and never get near the prey; and the next day, by some caprice of chance, would hamstring the fat stag and bring him down. Kioga, watching the wolf at his bloody business, would wonder why the elk had not escaped this time, as he had a hundred times before.

Quite by accident the answer came to him this day as he made his way out of the ravine. He had almost grasped it, when he thought of the wolves whom he had evaded; and now the pungent odor of a skunk sent him circling far to one side.

Then, presto, he had stumbled on the wonder of scent!

TO us, of course, there is nothing startling in the knowledge that animals are nose-keen. Little Snow Hawk, however, was but a child when he discovered it. Quick as any other wild thing in matters concerning survival, he realized that mastery of his sense of smell would double his chances of continued existence. And so the little savage began to strive to sharpen his nostrils.

It was no feat to know the penetrant reek of a skunk; but with this as a starting point he soon mastered others, beginning with the strongest scents of all, those of the flesh-eaters. More elusive were the delicate odors of the deer-family; most undetectable were the high-flung smells of the squirrels and the hunters who prowled the upper branches. But he could soon sniff and recognize

Over Aki he exercised a tyrant's sway. Yet Aki could walk upright like a man, all but think like one.

them all, whether hours old or newly passed this way.

Many moons passed ere he could distinguish the fear-taint sent forth by frightened elk herds or beaver bands; but once having learned to do this, he had gone as far as human nostrils may go. Not even the wild animals seem to recognize the fear-taint of any species but their own.

From Yanu, whose nose was of a wonderful keenness, Snow Hawk learned how to wait at the higher end of ravine, where the air-currents carried up the scent of man or beast below. Thus times without number the boy's highly evolved sense of smell saved him from danger which he could not see.

No longer did he wander the tangled trails aimlessly, as of old, relying on Yanu to grunt of peril. The direction of the breeze played an ever-increasing part in all his movements, as day by day the fine primeval adjustment of his nose developed.

So was added another factor to those which heretofore had enabled him to preserve his sleek hide against the grim forces of nature round about him. From now on he was on more equal terms with the creatures of the wild.

Game was abundant; and Snow Hawk fed well as a rule, for his hunting skill was now great. But frequently he fasted, starving his body weak and his brain into a feverish disorder, the better to obtain the medicine-dream or vision by which primitive man often regulated his every-day life.

In one such dream a white falcon—his namesake—appeared before him and talked, assuring him of its aid in the hunt. When he awoke, a hawk was winging its way up into the blue—a white hawk from whose wing a feather fell. Hawk carried that feather in his pouch for years as a talisman of good fortune. It was his lucky piece.

Sometimes obedience to these visions led him to do strange things. He might abstain from eating off a new kill. Or again, he would seem to court death by taking risks with the animals of his forests which ordinarily he would have avoided. Thus, apparently without cause he often multiplied his perils to test the power of his "medicine"—his guiding spirit. Luck, and a cool audacious nerve in an emergency, preserved him. How much of this he owed to the confidence thus derived from outside of himself, remains unknown.

FOR a time he worshiped the heavenly bodies, and the elements. He painted himself carefully, and prayed with outreaching arms from some high bluff:

"Hear me, O Holy Sun, hear my prayer! Make me brave. Make me strong. Make me tall. Protect me. It is Kioga the Snow Hawk who asks this —Kioga, son of Mokuyi. I dwell at Hopeka, in the fourth lodge, in the second section off the dance-ground." Repeating his name to make certain the deity would know who prayed, he concluded: "Rain, water me. Earth-mother, feed me. Moon, light my way. Behold my scars! By them ye may know me. It is Kioga who asks it—Kioga, son of Mokuyi. Hear me. Hear me!"

Poor little pagan! It was thus he first groped toward an understanding of the Mystery of Whom the Indians spoke so reverently. In time he came to feel that these lesser gods were not all, but merely evidences of a greater Power. We

know it as the Almighty, and approach through love and faith. He knew it only as the Mystery, and approached through sacrifice and self-denial.

CHAPTER VIII

NO happier boy than Kioga the Snow Hawk ever ran wild amid the tangled windfalls of down-timber and the labyrinths of lairs, run-ways and ambushes that choked the forest floor near Hopeka.

Nature was doing her best to give him the stature Awena had predicted for him. Already at eleven he was a strong young animal, with sinews of rawhide and wire beneath that sleek brown hide, already scarred in twenty places by the fangs and talons of his enemies. He had the quick strength of a jaguar. His jumping powers were a study in elevation and altitude. In cliff or tree he was as keen-sensed and acrobatic as any lynx, flitting from perch to perch like a body without weight.

Rarely did he now follow the bears along the trail. He preferred to swing rapidly along by the strength of hand and wrist, just under the overhang above the streams, where he could glance down and see his reflection in the water. Thus, long ago, he had learned to avoid the grim underworld of the thickets, and the assassins who inhabited it.

The boy had an owl's hearing, the nose of a wolf, a fox's cunning; he combined the streak-like agility of a mink with the noiseless tread of Tagu himself. A tireless runner and climber, the lad had made a place for himself amid the animal legions, had joined the renders of flesh, and his life was packed with thrills and excitement. The shaggy bears tolerated him with more patience than he deserved. But they were not above snapping viciously an inch from his throat when he tweaked an ear or yanked their fur once too often. Even Yanu was no exception to this.

But over Aki he exercised a tyrant's sway. No act of his was wrong to Aki, no other allurement so pressing that the giant bear would not yield to the boy's wishes, worshipfully submissive, yet never abject. Aki could walk upright like a man, and all but think like one. He was an animal of many characters:

King of the wilds, yet slave of a boy; a swashbuckling hooligan ever in search of diversion and fun, but a murderous fighter if need arose; regal and dignified one minute, care-free and clowning the next, but in loyalty constant as the sun —a fit companion and defender for the little man-cub. In his company Kioga waxed ever bolder.

He had slain his second wolf, and an old panther from a cliff-ledge over a well-traveled trail. Of late he wearied an aging tiger in a near-by ravine with his futile efforts to impale the huge beast upon his little spear from some lofty vantage point. In his seventh year he had seen his first bear concourse, whereat all the bears for miles around gathered. Many a hunter's skin had crawled when peals of treble childish laughter, or the sweet plaintive piping of his little flute echoed eerily from some wild dark glen, mingled with the hoarse snarling of the Bear People.

Ordinarily the boy was seldom beyond striking distance of the Indian village; rarely was he absent more than a week at a time. But there came a time when Yanu, tired of her present territory, craved a change. At the head of her little family she forged through stream, lake and swamp, nor paused until she saw the open prairies stretching out before her.

After some indecision Kioga had followed the bears, and finding himself in the vicinity, decided to have a look at the Great Plain. He had always felt a keen desire to look upon the dreaded plains warriors who sometimes raided and pillaged the villages of his people.

The old bear immediately set about stalking a bison; and the cubs accompanied her, all anticipation. But Kioga having fed to repletion on the nuts and fruits he found, left the bears and climbed to a commanding ridge overlooking the plains.

HERE for hours he lay at ease, his blood athrill to innumerable herds of buffalo that moved in the hazy distance. A pair of hunting eagles circled high above, no more wild, free and questing than this naked brown boy whose vivid eyes swept every hollow and bluff for a sight of the hated Wa-Kanek. At last, far in the distance, he saw what looked like smoke. He set out toward it, and in two hours he was close enough to that smudge to look down upon a Wa-Kanek horse-hunting camp.

It consisted of several semi-transparent tents of new white buffalo-hide already beginning to glow red from the

This was the instant for which Kioga had planned. He had plunged his knife deep before the warrior realized he was attacked.

fires within. A small band of horses were tethered at one side of the tents, within a wall of high-piled thorny brush. Horizontal pole-racks were heavy laden with strips of buffalo-meat drying in the autumn sun, already beginning to lower behind the southern mountains. From time to time one or another of the Indians would turn the dry meat.

Before the largest tent stood a rack upon which a battle-shield hung, reflecting the dying light of the setting sun; and on a tall pole near by dangled a dozen human scalps, grim trophies of a battle and a killing, perhaps a few hours before.

Bloodthirsty savages? Perhaps. But the wars of the Indians were little more than a series of skirmishes and individual encounters—a savage game conducted almost solely for glory and prestige. Eighteen or twenty warriors had died under tomahawk and scalp-knife in this battle, that their names and deeds might become glorified in song and in tribal story.

On the other side of the earth that same night, uncounted thousands of men lay dying in agony beyond description on the battlefield that was France, as poison-gas and chemical devoured flesh and bone. Numberless women, children and aged perished under missiles hurled from engines high up in God's sky, by so-called Christian men; and unnumbered others were torn into shocking, grisly things destined to haunt the earth and the eyes of men until they died—and to be all but forgotten afterward. Such were the works of Kioga's own race—civilized men. . . .

Over the Wa-Kanek camp hung the haze of the campfire-smoke, lending a disarming, sleepy air to the scene. But suddenly one of the Indians spoke to a companion, and pointed to a faint whirl of dust out on the plain, which soon enlarged to a great moving cloud.

Snow Hawk had not long to wait after that before the scourges of the plains swept into view—a band of forty mounted warriors, hot on the trail of a galloping herd of wild horses. The Indians of the camp leaped into the saddles, and yelling and waving their gaudy blankets, dashed out to head the herd off.

These were such mounts as might have borne the Indians of America had not the parent species become extinct long before they had evolved to the size of their surviving relatives, or the Spaniards had brought these relatives to graze upon the plains of a New World.

They were a breed differing from any horse known to modern natural science. In shagginess of coat they seemed akin to the wild Tarpans of Tartary; but no Mongolian wild horse had ever the flowing mane, nor the splendid height and temper of these swift coursers of Nato'wa, bounding along lightly as deer, as if unconscious of ground under hoof.

The small heads, widely flaring nostrils and sharp ears lent them a closer resemblance to the Barb, or the noble Arabian. Short-backed, long-haunched, deep and powerful in the shoulders, with tails carried high as plumes when in motion, they raced with high-stepping strides behind their regal stallion leader.

And now, fast behind them, with lazily spinning lariats, came the Indian horse-hunters. Between these and the blanket-wavers, the herd was quickly ringed and tired down by the relentless hunters on fresh mounts. After this selected animals were roped out, hobbled, blindfolded and then broken to the uses of barbaric men. . . .

All that day and the next, the fascinated Kioga watched these proceedings from his eyrie high above the plain. Most of all he marveled at the amazing feats performed by the Indians with those snaking ropes, into which their lean hands seemed to put intelligence. He noticed that some of the ropes were taken into a certain tent, and when darkness approached again, he had made up his mind to rearrange matters of ownership so that one of those remarkable weapons should become his own.

The sun would remain below the horizon for but a few hours, three at most. He had, then, two hours of dusk, and about an hour of semi-darkness in which to work. Descending to the plain, he slipped without mishap into the camp, wriggling on his belly like a snake, and keeping in the shadow cast by the brush wall wherever possible.

His heart came up into his throat when a horse nickered, but the sound gave no alarm to the weary hunters cooking their meat over the fire not fifty steps away. He had another bad scare when a warrior came near; but he escaped discovery by slipping beneath a long shield that lay where it had fallen from the saddle-hook. The Indian picked up a rope within reach of Kioga's own arm and returned with it to the fire.

Thereafter, if that shield moved very slowly toward the tent where much of

the hunting-gear was kept, no one noticed its extraordinary animation. In a little while Kioga had worked his way to a point where the tent was between him and the fire, hiding him from view of the diners.

A moment he listened to the heavy snoring of some exhausted Wa-Kanek within, then lifted one side of the tent and slipped under and in. Suddenly he stiffened as the sleeper moved and ceased snoring. Though the man did not wake, he had turned facing the alarmed intruder; and thus for another precious half-hour they lay, the Wa-Kanek at rest, Kioga tense as drawn wire and with hatchet raised, ready to deal death if the need arose. At last the sleeper turned once more and was soon snoring; and the boy drew a deep breath of relief.

Quick as lightning now, he grabbed up two hair ropes and a leather one; then another object came under his seeking hand, and he seized that too. Casting a sharp glance at the sleeper, he now withdrew as he had entered, and began inching his way back to safety beneath the shield, with one anxious eye ever on the figures around the fire.

He caught a whiff of savory broiling meat, and realized suddenly that he was famished. Only a slight change of course brought him near the meat-racks. Awaiting a favorable moment, he reached up, snatched one of the hanging buffalo strips, and in the wink of an eye was back under the shield and taking his first nourishment for more than twenty-four hours.

AS he edged toward the brush wall, he could hear the hunters laughing as they ate; another minute or two would have seen him safe and away. But at that moment the Indian who had passed before returned to hang up the rope which he had knotted into a sort of hackamore—when his glance chanced to fall upon the long shield, which on his previous visit had lain twenty feet nearer the wall.

Amid the perils of nomad life, no man can afford to overlook the slightest departure from the commonplace. Doubtless the shield had been moved by the sleeper in the tent; but already the savage's eyes had narrowed, his hand gone to his tomahawk.

Kioga, watching with beating heart from under the shield's rim, knew that discovery was now unavoidable; but though dismayed, he retained his presence of mind. As the Indian drew nearer, he tossed a stick some distance beyond him, and at the noise of its fall the warrior wheeled in swift alarm.

Kioga was up like a cat; twice he had plunged his flint knife deep into the enemy's body, before the warrior realized he was attacked. Then, tripping upon the falling man, Kioga hurled himself headlong over the barrier of brush and was gone. Behind him he heard the yells of his victim, and then pandemonium as the knifed brave was discovered, with other evidences of Snow Hawk's lone raid.

WITH early dawn, Kioga found himself beyond immediate pursuit—and the owner of three ropes, two of light horsehair and a heavier one of leather, strong enough to stop a wild stallion in full gallop.

His first thought was to vitalize the noose and keep it spinning after it had expanded into a loop, just as the Indians had done. Knowing nothing of centrifugal force, and even less of the principles of roping, he found this difficult. But he persisted day after day in his practice, until he could cast a noose with some accuracy over a dead stump.

The other object he had acquired was a plaited leather pony-whip, some six feet long, with a stout leather stock. For this he could perceive little use unless one owned a horse; he tucked it into his quiver as a trophy of his raid, to be shown to Mokuyi on his return.

Having acquired a certain dexterity with the rope, he finally decided to try his skill, and waited on a ledge over a trail until a deer appeared. By good luck he had roped it successfully, but in his excitement forgot to retain hold of the free end of the lariat. With a wild bound Skento cleared a six-foot fallen tree-trunk and vanished, taking the rope with him.

Snow Hawk was after him in a hurry, but he had not yet reached the point where he could match strides with Skento. Chagrined and disappointed, he returned to where he had hung the other two ropes, and tucking these under his belt, returned to the Shedo-wa, determined to capture a horse to go with the pony whip, and mayhap even a buffalo. But though he crept upon the herds for hours, the fickle plains breezes always betrayed him to the buffalo, and they galloped off.

On his return, he did succeed in ambushing a calf on its way out of the hills, and dropped the noose over its head. Now his victim would not so easily escape, for he had tied the other end to his waist.

One long moment the calf shook its head, reared and kicked at the strand that threatened its liberty, and then pounded bawling away. Confidently Kioga braced himself against the shock as the rope paid out. But he had overestimated his own strength. He was jerked from his feet with a suddenness that almost cut him in two, then dragged a hundred feet before he could free himself of the strand tied about his waist. Bruised and bleeding, he returned disconsolate into the forest minus his second rope, the longest of the three.

When Snow Hawk located Yanu and the cubs again, they were in favor of eating the remaining lariat, for a bear loves to worry at anything tough, and sharpen its teeth upon leather like a dog with an old shoe; but this Kioga would not allow. He had grander schemes in which the rope was to play a vital part. One of them was to rope from his canoe and drown Yellow Weasel at the edge of the river some dark night.

And so he returned to the village, bearing the trophies of his raid to parade before Mokuyi and Awena, and to flaunt before the envious eyes of the other boys who belittled his unquestionable feat by asking one another:

"Why, if he overpowered a Wa-Kanek warrior and raided enemy's camp, did he not bring home scalp in proof? What good is rope?"

"Think you that with scalp I could stop enemy—thus?" demanded Kioga, as he deftly looped his noose about the ankle of a running boy and brought him crashing to the ground. "Or stripe him like Guna, thus!"—applying the lash with whistling force upon the shoulders of some one-time persecutor. *"Hoh!* Scalps for ye, my brown children! But know ye not that I am no man-child? *Kyi,* I am of the Bear People, and we of forest leave scalps for children of village—and for vultures!"

SUCH words struck awe into the hearts of his younger listeners. They were beginning to believe the strange tales that were told concerning Snow Hawk around the lodge-fires at night, to believe that he was bewitched and half-animal, half-man, as the day is part light and part darkness. He must have the power to change his character, once in the forest—else how account for the rumors about him and the bears? So they ascribed to witchcraft what they could not otherwise understand.

Nevertheless, what with his new possessions, Kioga became a more welcome playmate.

"Come, run and shoot with us," urged the older boys, one eye on his rope and lash; while those younger than himself, to whom he now was something of a hero, pressed him: "Be on our side! Be on our side!"

Kioga read the minds of the former, and for a time basked in the warmth of his new popularity among the latter, allowing his heart to expand to the influences of friendship among the other children; but even this novel and delightful status soon palled, and ere long he heard the voice of the forest, with all its denizens, calling again to him.

CHAPTER IX

TOO long among humans, Kioga the Snow Hawk now wended his way toward the palisade. When no one was near, he sprang like a cat into the branches of a tall tree near by, and with a single swing was over and gone. Dropping lightly to the ground outside, he headed toward a spot where he had watched a spider construct its web a week earlier.

As he went, he played with his rope, tossing it over every stump or boulder within reach of its thirty-foot strand.

In a dark and forbidding grotto, surrounded by protecting thorns, he found the web, and for an hour lay belly down, watching the spider's every move, pondering the strange ways of a world which equipped a mere spider so well, but left man at the mercy of his own carelessness.

"Like Su'kashe," he mused aloud, "I am also great climber. But when I fall —*ai!*—I fall! When he falls, his thread catches him, and he climbs back to spot he fell from. I scrape my bones. Su'kashe is not even hurt."

Suddenly the handsome lips ceased moving. A curious intentness came into the fine eyes, and a furrow of concentration appeared between the black brows; his thoughts were darting from the premise to the conclusion of an arresting thought.

Never had he moved in the tanglewood, thought Kioga, without his being followed by something. Even now a squirrel peered down from overhead, scolding; in yonder thicket a fox spied with bright eyes, and he knew that there were many others he did not see.

Hoh! It would be different now, for he had had an idea. With a toss, he managed to get a small noose up over a dead branch. Then he swarmed up the strand, hand over hand, disappearing in the enveloping foliage.

Now, like Su'kashe, he would fall, and by holding tight to his rope, reach the ground unhurt. But he reckoned without friction; and after the first slide his hands were burned raw, precluding further experiment for the time. But he was soon at it again, having provided himself with little leather pads which enabled him to brake his swift slide downward, and alight without jar.

In the process of this new game he learned that an initial push would set him swinging back and forth, an exhilarating experience which he quickly made more so by increasing the arc of his swing. Slowly he mastered the laws of swinging and falling bodies. Before the month was old, he could toss the noose from cliff to limb, swing, and alight high up among the branches of some other tree beyond.

Once, while playing near the top of a cañon, he threw the loop from his ledge clear over the stump of a stunted tree forty feet to one side. It was a fine cast, of which he was instantly proud—so much so that he never noticed a beautiful marbled shape that came slinking around a trail and froze to rigidity at sight of him. It was a great female snow-leopard, glowering up at him with fierce cruel eyes above fangs long and sharp as daggers, a killer to be dreaded little less than the tiger himself.

USUALLY she would not have assailed one who was known to travel among the bears; but here he was alone, a welcome dainty ripe for her talons. Gently the muscles glided under the perfect black-rosetted hide, as the heavy hindquarters edged up under her like compressing springs. In two jumps she would be at his throat.

Then, quick as the flash of lighted gunpowder, she sprang.

Kioga glimpsed her as she launched into the second and decisive bound. A quarter of a mile lay sheer between him and the bottom of the cañon; it was eighty feet to the nearest hand-hold—and the leopard was streaking up the very trail he had used. But in his hand was the rope, in his mind instant decision. As she flashed up over one end of the ledge, Kioga took flight from the other, described a sickening giant swing under the stunted tree to which his rope was still fastened, and dropped, scared but safe, upon the distant shelf. He still clutched the rope, and was no less astonished than the big leopard who had counted him easy prey, only to see him slip from her clutch like some wild bird.

THIS almost miraculous escape seared into his mind the conclusion that a rope had many possibilities, and focused his attention upon it with new interest. Throwing a noose upward was always a difficult feat. Moreover, any loop was more suited to horizontal throwing in open spaces than in the tree-crowded forest or from a narrow ledge. Already his noose was wearing thin, and might one day drop him unexpectedly to earth.

But he could not abandon the idea of soaring in great gyres, like a wingless bird; and at last he devised something superior—a three-pronged hook, made of horn bound with deer tendons, reinforced with stout hickory and curved like the claws of a tree-sloth. This was affixed to a handle, one end of which carried a stout bone eyelet, through which he passed the rope, tying it securely.

When he tossed this grapnel-like object up into a tree, the rope followed like the line behind a hurled harpoon. No amount of tugging would release it from the branch into which it bit, so long as the rope remained taut; but by sending an undulation along the slack, the bone points could be made to release their hold and the hook to fall at his feet.

This grapnel gave him independence of dead or rotting limbs, and made every branch or ledge an anchorage under which to make long dizzy swings to neighboring ledges or trees, either from the ground or from other starting-points. It was, he soon found, a thrilling sport, but entailing certain hazards.

He who would climb must learn to fall, and Kioga had early acquired the knack of twisting in midair to roll out of a dangerous fall, as a gymnast does—though no gymnast could lay claim to the agility of this supple brown boy.

The rope now vastly enlarged the sphere of his activities; and he learned to coil it as he climbed, in order to have it all ready for another throw. The grapnel hung at his belt when not in use, a formidable substitute for a war-club.

Great accomplishments often have lowly beginnings. It is unlikely that man ever before put a piece of rope to such manifold uses as did this Ariel of the forest midway. From the spider he had taken the original idea. Now, adding the ingenuity of a keen imagination, he found himself owner of a device whose uses multiplied with practice.

Up his new creation he could mount into tall trees which hitherto had defied climbing. He could swing silently across lofty space between the forest giants like some adept on the flying-trapeze. Scarce a cliff upon whose face the grapnel could not find some hold, enabling him to perform hitherto impossible feats of scaling. In time he learned to place as much reliance upon grapnel and leather as the Alpine mountain-climber does upon alpenstock and rope.

Much later he discovered another sport. Over a deep pool of which he knew, a great branch thrust out at a good height. From this he often suspended the rope, allowing its end to touch the surface of the water below. Between swims he climbed the rope to varying heights and then dropped off into the pool. He picked up other tricks. Best of these was to take the hanging end of the rope to a high rock bordering the pool, swing away out, and at the top of the swing let go, entering the water head- or feet-first. So he learned many an athletic feat of dexterity and agility—which civilized boys learn at the community gym and swimming-pool; and some besides which they never learn.

SOON he plaited another and longer rope to match his growing skill in the giant swing. The bears never knew when he would plummet suddenly into their midst out of nowhere, or swoop shouting past overhead and as suddenly vanish; and in Snow Hawk's terrific velocity inhered another possibility which, unsuspected at this time, was to be a mighty fighting asset in years to come.

When not with the bears he spent much of his time far from the forest floor. True, even in the cliffs he was exposed to a certain peril, for leopards

and pumas are good climbers, and the dread wolverine is a fearful antagonist. But he distanced them all when he climbed to the remote heights of the giant redwoods, where, four hundred feet above the forest cellars, he was comparatively secure. The interlacing tops of the giants formed a swaying billowing canopy over the lower levels, offering haven at all hours.

Much to Kioga's regret, Aki, with his growth, showed less inclination to climb, though he was always to be found near where the boy had left the ground, and always responded to a whistled summons.

But for a discovery which Kioga made in the high cliffs, his sojourns up there must have been lonely ones. In a deep cañon he came upon the body of an old female puma. Frequent contact with dead creatures had schooled him in an uncommon knowledge of wilderness necrology. To his practiced eye it was plain that she was dead of a long fall. He also noted with interest that she had not long ago suckled cubs.

He was some time locating the high den from which she had fallen, but he reached it finally by lowering himself down his rope from a jutting rock along the face of the cliff bordering the cañon. Entering the den all caution, he found a cub newly dead, probably from starvation, for bones littered the den, gnawed clean and white. But all was not death in that rocky cave: from its dark recesses life, hatred, fear and unconquerable savagery burned forth out of a pair of circular greenish orbs that never left his own, while a muttering snarl purred up a high unbroken challenge. And as

his eyes accustomed themselves to the gloomy interior, he saw the bared needle-like teeth of a cub, which was emaciated by hunger, lean as a rail and too weak even to sink its fangs into his hand.

Moved to pity by this spectacle of impotent ferocity, the boy went out, returning with a rabbit he killed with an arrow. Piece by piece he allayed that ravenous bundle of hunger, and soon the little cat showed gratitude by biting and clawing at his wrist.

Twenty pounds of unwilling young panther was not to be forcibly borne up a rope at an altitude which had made the slight misstep of its mother fatal. Nor could he let the creature starve to death. So he brought it meat, and in a few days the little demon received him with a sullenness that was cordiality itself compared to that first reception.

AFTER two weeks it tolerated a hand-stroke, and in a month it showed a grudging affection, actually purring over a kill he brought in. Thereafter the successful wooing of Mika the puma-cub was assured; and soon it rolled gamboling about the cave, all lithe kittenish grace.

Daily its weight and strength increased. Foreseeing greater trouble if he waited longer, Kioga made a cage of branches lashed together with thongs, lured Mika into it with a piece of fresh meat, and hoisted cage and cub to the top of the cliff.

About Mika's neck he put a woven collar to which, after the cat had bitten through a rope leash, he attached a wooden handle as long as a walking stick. These precautions were hardly necessary, for the cub was still dependent on him for food, which it had not yet learned to kill.

This ignorance remedied itself after Kioga slipped him free at a rabbit which the young puma crushed with a pounce. Thereafter the boy unleashed him daily, and Mika got his girth on the fruits of his own killing.

But a habit had been formed. He followed Kioga everywhere with the extraordinary tireless vigor of his kind, a welcome companion—but not to the bears, who repulsed him regularly. Gone now was Mika's pitiful thinness. His forequarters developed the thick and massive muscularity necessary to all climbing hunters. The dusky body-spots and dark tail-bars of cubhood gave way to a rare and richly beautiful coat of silver-gray, pure white on the under parts. His tail thickened to a restless cylindrical club; later indeed, at full maturity, he was to weigh nearly two hundred pounds, at a length of ten feet.

One glimpse of the laughing black-haired boy striding into the village, braced back against the straining, ferocious panther, threw Hopeka into a wild excitement. But the Council forbade Kioga to bring his savage pet in again, a command whose emphatic terms left no room for appeal. He obeyed.

Unlike the more docile Aki, the panther-cub answered only to a hiss or to the broken screaming cry so like its own, by which Kioga learned to summon it. Of all the various wild pets he had during those eventful years, the inscrutable self-contained puma showed him the least affection, once its inherently feral nature had gained the ascendancy. But deep-buried in the enigmatic dark soul of that wilderness sphinx, far back in the brain behind the molten glimmer of those fiery pupils, there was something—who can say what?—which recognized the boy's kinship to itself, and ringed him in the magic circle of feline attachment.

Mika was naturally a hunter by vision and stealth; and by observing the panther, Kioga earned his own letter in hunt-craft. When Mika stalked a doe in the thickets, he followed well overhead. He remembered the hunted creature's every stratagem, shifty trick and subterfuge in distancing her foe. He noted each cunning wile by which Mika came at last to a meal.

And then one night, by the chameleon flicker of the aurora, an exciting and dramatic scene was enacted upon a mountainside near Hopeka. A terrified and bewildered stag, hard-driven by a big collared puma, impaled itself upon the sharp spear of a shadowy human figure which rose as from out of the ground in the path before it. Thus the oddly assorted two combined forces to hunt in unison, to the advantage of both. Thereafter no animal was proof against this deadly alliance of man and beast.

THERE were other pets too: A fierce wild falcon Kioga had taught to harry wild ducks and had cast at many an unfortunate hare, and who perched on his shoulder between chases. A young wolf that he had often slipped at big deer, until one day in a reversion to savagery the animal made a treacherous snap at him that would have chopped his

hand off—whereafter he had to get rid of him.

Then there had been Seela, a moose-calf whom he had loved for all its gangling ungainliness, but which had become unmanageable at the mating season and gone trumpeting away, never to return. And Ikwala, a skunk-kitten—but not for very long! And Kakko, an albino crow whose cursing was something to hear, but whose thieving ways had earned its banishment from the village. These, and others, many more, were the wild friends of his boyhood.

BETWEEN hunts, Kioga formed the habit of taking journeys of exploration above the myriad streams in his territory. Along their banks, wherever the branchy overhang was thick, he could outrace a fast canoe by swinging hand over hand from limb to limb. Higher up, in the midway, more open spaces and widely separated limbs made possible long consecutive swings at rope's end—a thrilling sport in which he indulged often.

He learned by sad experience the narrow margin between safety and disaster, inherent in the use of the flying-rope. Once as he entrusted his weight to it in what was to be a long, low swing, the limb to which the grapnel was affixed suddenly cracked, giving way beneath the multiplied strain. Down went Kioga, like a stone, fifty feet through space, to crash upon the overhang and tumble into the river below. The branches somewhat broke his fall, and he entered the water a spinning ball, like a diver in a somersault dive. Nevertheless the contact was stunning, numbing every nerve and muscle; and for weeks he was sore all over.

Had he been over solid earth, he knew he would now lie crushed and broken in the thickets, waiting for some prowling beast to finish him off. Thereafter he used the rope mainly as an avenue into the canopy or as a method of lowering himself from far above whenever he wished to spy on his jungle enemies.

Would you too live in an environment cut by ravines, slashed by fissures, gouged deep by bottomless crevasse and rocky gorge, overlaid by fallen timber choked with brush, and frowned upon by precipitous cliff and rocky peak? Then you too must become the combination of gibbon and leopard which Kioga was.

Danger and peril drove him back to the cliffs and trees from which earliest man descended in the dawn of history, to walk where he had once climbed, to run upright where once he had bounded on all fours from crag to crag. And in this reversion to the primitive, hunger also played a major rôle. Would you eat where the spoils fall to the most powerful, the great animals of the lower jungle? Then you too must climb for tree-mushrooms, honey and fruit as the young Kioga did; for the human stomach will tolerate but little of the carrion leavings of the greater beasts on which lesser animals thrive and sustain life.

Climbing and scaling continually, by the time Kioga was thirteen he was indisputably lord of the high canopy and familiar with nearly every hand- and foothold on all the cliffs in his range. So, in his limited way, he conquered space. His familiar active form became known to wilderness denizens from the Painted Cliffs of Ga-Hu-Ti to the Swamp-Lands of Unega, and from the borders of the Great Plain to the salt-marshes of the Northern Ocean.

CHAPTER X

OCCASIONALLY the wanderings of Yanu and Aki and Kioga carried them northward toward a stretch of desolate and mountainous country into which neither of the bears would ever venture. That Yanu the bold should know fear or uncertainty, challenged the boy's imagination, rousing his curiosity as to the source of her fears; and some moons later he returned by himself, and scaled several naked and forbidding acclivities to a certain peak beyond which he descended only a little way.

Within the range of his vision lay a scene of awful desolation, yet awe-inspiring in its colorful beauty. He stood on the lip of an inactive volcano whose slumbers were interrupted by an occasional rumble from the bowels of the earth, producing tremors of the ground which had warned Yanu and Aki away.

The entire sloping area on his side of the crater was pitted and scarred as by some terrific bombardment of Martian shell-fire. At its base, glimpsed only occasionally through an overhanging sulphurous haze, was a smoking cone, glowing fiery red within its molten belly, whence black and bubbling ejecta welled up to run slowly down its sides as liquid lava.

Waves of hardened mud in layers of

chocolate brown, red, blue and pale green seemed arrested in full flow toward the bottom of the crater. North of the cone lay a boiling blue-green lake patched by great spots of bright yellow sulphur. About the edges of the bubbling lake jets of steam roared up, one of which, a thick snowy plume, rose half a mile high.

Chilled by exposure on the heights, Kioga tried warming his body at the fumaroles steaming on every side about him, but was finally driven off by the foulness of their vapors—like rotting eggs mingled with the stench of organic decay—resulting from the exhalation of sulphur dioxide and hydrogen sulphide.

Stricken mute by the unworldly atmosphere of the crater, the boy retraced his steps, suffering a violent illness that left him sick and weak, probably from inhaling some asphyxiating gas rising from the countless fumaroles.

So he returned as from a visit to the infernal regions into the singing paradise of his home wilderness, having looked upon one of the deadly elements which by strange paradox helped make his world habitable by diffusing heat from the earth's blazing interior which lies everywhere so near the surface crust.

But Kioga swiftly learned that Yanu and her mighty offspring feared nothing in all the wilderness, other than these craters. . . .

One day, resentful of a puma's persistent stalking, he lured the hungry animal straight into Yanu's clutches. The quicker cat avoided that savage assault by an undignified whirl. For a time Kioga hovered over her, shrieking down scurrilities which, no doubt, he had learned direct from those masters of revilement, the jays. Thereafter he prepared many a grim surprise for T'yone and Tagu, who all too often pursued him for food, and were themselves eaten. Ah, what sport to call for aid and then watch that magnificent she-bear smash an enemy into a bloody pulp!

When not in the company of his huge protectors, Kioga kept to the branches or the cliffs, for every other level was too thick with hunters. Hawk, eagle and owl were ever on the wing; lynx, wolf and snow-leopard constantly sought their prey. Guna the merciless, a striped gold-and-black symphony of animal power, patrolled alone a regular beat and

The panther threw Hopeka into wild excitement. But the Council forbade Kioga to bring his savage pet in again.

threw the world of hunted things into a vast panic of apprehension and terror with every roar; Tagu lay draped upon a limb with deceptively drooping paws and swinging round tail, only the cruel moon-like eyes betraying his savage nature.

A host of lesser killers was everywhere. Weasels raided birds' nests and slew squirrels in the tree-tops. The dextrous marten scattered swift death in the rabbit-warrens and in turn was pursued and slain by his own implacable enemy, the ferocious pekan. Life was of paltry value, death frequent and sudden.

By close observation, Kioga the Snow Hawk learned, lesson by lesson, the craft of the wild creatures about him. Alert vigilance personified, he never disdained the eternal wariness which was the price of his own existence. For well aware was Kioga, little jungle realist, of the treachery lurking everywhere about him, the endless warfare under the green roof which sheltered him.

None knew better than he the codeless perfidy of a hungry snow-leopard who takes every advantage; the insidious wile of the rock-serpent who lurks and strikes without warning; the astounding metamorphosis of Skento the deer, who becomes overnight a murderer of his own doe—even the deceitful affection of vegetable things, for does not the tree-vine first caress and later drag down the mighty monarch of the forest?

Because he knew how frequent were the victories of treachery and wile, he continued to live, adding constantly to his knowledge of the stalk, the attack, most of all the escape. In concentrating on the last, he neglected neither of the former. Daily he lay in wait for his own prey above the trail, or hidden among the ferny fronds like some keen little animal couchant, with a sharp barb waiting against a taut string.

Strangely enough, spying on the larger killers brought with it sharp discontent.

Kioga was becoming sadly disappointed with his own growth. Compared to the cubs' growth, it was exasperatingly slow.

True, he was splendidly muscled for one of his age, perhaps almost as strong as a young warrior. True, the desire to emulate Yanu had long burned in his breast—mighty, irresistible Yanu, whose blow of the paw was death. But it seemed that he never would.

He was brooding over this one time, as he lay stretched on his back along a high ledge, basking in the sun. Lulled by the warmth and the profound quiet in the valley below, he fell asleep. For a time he slept lightly, before he became aware subconsciously of a sound, like the wind before a storm. His sleepy eyes opened.

It had grown darker. A cloud must have covered the sun. But what was that? He had glimpsed a swirl of whiteness eddying down the cliffs. Snow—in this warm valley, in midsummer? It could not be. A few flakes fell near. He saw they were not snow, but feathers. Wide-awake now, he looked aloft.

The sun was fairly eclipsed by incalculable millions of birds, pouring in dense flocks over the cliffs, to settle upon the trees in the lower valley. The air was drumming to the beat of countless wings, black with birds. Hour after hour the arrival continued. Now, up from the valley came a soft sighing sound—the unbroken cooing of the feathery hordes.

In the *Cherokee's* log-book there is a reference to a flock of birds which passed above the Indian village. Beside the reference are these words: *"Pass. Pigeon? Imposs. Extinct."*

But had Rand been standing beside his son Snow Hawk, he would have seen repeated a thrilling phenomenon which America knows no more—La Nuée, the Swarm of the old historians, a migration of passenger pigeons.

LIKE many other species slaughtered to extinction by greedy man, of the countless billions of these birds who once blackened American skies, not one lone survivor exists here today. But by the providence of nature they are perpetuated in that last natural game- and bird-preserve, the unknown land-mass of Nato'wa, at the top of the world.

To Hawk this was merely an unusual sight, interesting as such.

Now came something more interesting. On the tails of the pigeons came a swarm of natural enemies; the red-eyed goshawks, the pale-eyed rough-legs, the black gyrfalcons. For a while Kioga watched the slaughter as the broad-winged killers swept in with clutching talons, killing almost under his nose, whizzing past in dazzling pursuit, or dropping on his ledge to devour the prey struggling under beating pinions.

Hitherto he had often watched that feathered tyrant Pita the eagle strike from above like a spearhead and heave upward with the prey. He had seen Neetka the marsh-hawk pitch downward on a duck twice its size, and marveled at the swift efficiency of the killing blow.

All the best killers, he noticed, struck from on high, overcoming the prey aided by some force which pulled them so swiftly earthward. If they missed, they wheeled up to try anew.

ONE day accident and circumstance combined to teach Kioga how he too might attack and kill, or if his strike fell short, miss and escape to tell of it.

He had been idly swinging on his rope some twenty feet above a game-trail. Suddenly, out of the shadow of the forest dashed a fat wapiti, its massive branching antlers dripping blood. The rush of the elk happened to coincide with the arc of Kioga's swing, so that his speed matched the animal's. Thus for a second, like some sharp-taloned hunter of the air, he hung soaring directly above the heaving brown barrel. In a flash the instinct to strike flared full-born in his wild little heart. Down he dropped through the intervening space like a bronze thunderbolt, to land squarely and heavily upon the animal's withers. Before the startled elk could scrape back with those deadly antlers, or rise from the knees to which the attack had crushed him, the man-cub struck again.

Reaching swiftly round and under the elk's long muzzle, he seized the off-horn. With a mighty surge, utilizing the last ounce of his powers, he snapped the vertebra as he had seen Mika do it, dozens of times. Wildly exultant, he felt the great animal crumple beneath him.

In that exciting moment he learned why Yanu loved to kill, having himself tasted the primeval thrill of bodily contact with the prey as it fell helpless beneath the inertia of his pounce.

So he learned to take his quarry running. All in an instant he had discovered an advantage which was to advance him to the front rank of wilderness killers;

and the rope dangling just above his head was the agency responsible.

His discovery came near ending in tragedy, however, for the blood on the elk's horns was that of one of a pair of wolves in hot pursuit of their royal quarry. They came upon him at speed.

Only Kioga's dazzling quickness enabled him to spring, seize his hanging rope and get his feet high, before a double snap echoed below and a hot breath fanned his flanks. Climbing like a spider, he did not look back until well above the leaping-range of any forest hunter. Then he glanced over his shoulder.

A pair of gaunt gray wolves, one badly wounded, were burying fangs into the choice meat which they had chased for miles only to see it fall victim to the hated man-cub.

Gladly would Kioga have sped a few arrows at the thieves, but in all the excitement he had dropped his bow. A tomahawk blow was out of the question. There remained only the horse-whip which, when he snapped it downward, proved too short by several feet. The wolves departed at their own good pleasure, appetites sated.

Had the lash been but a trifle longer, Kioga thought angrily, the wolves would have paid dearly for that theft. Suddenly he noticed that the lash was braided in the same manner as his leather rope. It proved simple to add a piece of the rope to the lash. The first experiment, however, was not successful, for the resulting longer thong did not taper properly, but it did present possibilities he was quick to exploit. After a while he made a lash closely resembling an Eskimo dog-whip, only heavier. It was about a dozen feet long, had a stout handle of resilient bone, and a thong to pass over his wrist.

HIS first stroke with it brought the lash recoiling against his cheek, and many were the severe cuts about legs and loins he sustained before acquiring any definite mastery over this fascinating new implement. But soon he could hit any object larger than an acorn with the stinging tip; and knocking fruit from the stem was no feat for his growing skill.

Best of all was the gratifying loud report—like a beaver's tail on pond-water —that echoed through the glades when he cracked. Now let T'yone dispute possession of another kill!

Fortune favored his vengeance. For sometime later Kioga came upon the very wolves against whom he nursed his grievance; one of them with its savage head buried in the body of a great wild bull that lay wedged in a narrow gorge, tearing out the tender inner organs.

The wolf had its first intimation of Kioga's presence when a thunder-clap exploded between his back-laid ears.

Ten feet up, on the lip of the gorge, stood the Snow Hawk. Seven of those feet T'yone covered in one savage jump, only to have that educated lash twine about his throat and upset him into a thicket of lacerating devil's-club.

Then Kioga had his revenge. Again and again the searing lash bit and cut into T'yone as he rolled madly about, snapping ineffectually. The boy plied the lash until his arm was weary before the raging, ravening animal gave up the futile fight, and with a murderous snarl at his grinning brown foe, slunk into the thickets.

FROM then on the Snow Hawk played a new game, ever lurking over the trails and fairly lifting wolf or puma out of its skin with a sweep of the ready lash. Many small animals fell to this quick-striking thong. Even cruel, ruthless Guna the tiger came to know its bitter bite. So Hawk's life gained a new spice, for the beasts which had once hunted him for his flesh alone, now pursued him in hatred.

Hitherto the tigers, aware of the bears' might, had shunned their territory. But one day, with the fresh weals of Hawk's daring lash a burning agony on flanks and sides, a pair of the striped killers forgot caution and pursued him straight to Yanu's lair.

Alone the savage mother pitted her grand and supple strength against odds which she would never have braved voluntarily. Her deafening roar thundered through the cave, muffling as her huge jaws closed upon Guna's muscular neck. Then, in the dark confinement of that stuffy cave, began a struggle of wilderness Titans, never to be forgotten by the man-child, flattened against the wall behind the shaggy bruin. Again and again Yanu might have gained advantage by charging her savage foes, but to do so would have left Hawk uncovered.

Biting, snapping and rending whatever her jaws closed upon, she repulsed the great male tiger with smashes of her vast forepaws. But the tigress, if small-

Snow Hawk tiptoed in. He saw the skeleton of a man, to which strange garments still clung.

er, was more cunning, and waited her chance. When Yanu's heavy neck arched in fending off the male's repeated assaults, the tigress suddenly sprang. Her fangs went in deep and locked by the massive jaw-muscles in the unbreakable throat-hold.

In the frenzy of desperation Yanu dealt the male a crippling blow which hurled him sprawling out of the cave. Then she concentrated upon the snarling fury whose churning, doubled-up hind legs were clawing her to shreds. Twice she raked the tigress, half disemboweling her with each stroke, but almost in the moment of victory those dreadful fangs cut into Yanu's jugular. Great spouts of blood spattered Hawk, whose spear had at last found the tigress' heart—too late, however, to save Yanu, who with glazed eyes was already breathing her last.

So passed Yanu, faithful to the end to one who had unwittingly brought her doom in with him. Hawk wept unashamed tears upon that silent shaggy form, tears of a lonely boy who had lost a beloved friend. Then, unable to spring the dead tigress' jaws from their grip, he cut off her claws. Finally, that none might violate the remains of Yanu, he

piled great stones across the cave's entrance and set out upon the bloody trail of the male tiger.

Hawk was no fool. He realized that his puny strength was unequal to subduing a beast which could strike down a buffalo with one blow. Climbing a tree through the trees above Guna, whom he found licking his wounds in a gully, he loosed his small store of barbs down upon the great beast. But these, along with the spear which he hurled after them, were only pin-pricks to the tiger. This further incensed Hawk, impotent to do more than send back glare for glare and shrill yell for hoarse roar. But in that moment was born the determination never to rest until by hook or crook he had pulled down that killing-machine.

The power in those thickly muscled shoulders, the strength in the cable-like thews disguised beneath the soft gorgeous coat, the terrible quickness of Guna's catlike spring, the rending power of those shearing jaws and lacerating white teeth—that entire organism, capable of exploding into action like chain-lightning incarnate—all were to be a constant challenge to the boy, leading him to cherish an ambition which otherwise must have seemed all but impossible of fulfillment.

Hawk had not come scatheless through the battle in the closeness of the cave. One shoulder-blade was exposed, and he was covered with blood when he reached Hopeka with the tigress' claws dangling in one hand, a spectacle to startle and awe more than one full-grown warrior.

Proudly Mokuyi boasted of his son's courage and prowess to the other chiefs and head-men. Tenderly Awena pressed the torn flesh into place and laid upon it healing poultices. New respect for the former pariah became evident when for the first time he wore about his neck the strung claws of the conquered foe.

All of which, being undeserved, made him the more anxious to lay Guna by the heels at the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER XI

WOUNDS heal quickly in a healthy body. The little roaming Bedouin was soon abroad again, more self-confident than ever, and beginning to feel himself a match for many of the beasts who once had so awed him.

The old pastime of watching the game-trails still remained one of his chiefest delights. Having summoned Mika, who was seldom far afield, he sought, one day, an overhanging ledge, whence he could listen to the quickening of life about him as the hunters began to foray forth.

The dense thickets, seemingly so silent, were full of the whisper of life and hidden activity. Oguku the owl floated past on velvet wings, intent on possible prey below. Two wolves, eyes corn-yellow in the dusk, met a squat bearlike creature and broke ground before it—for none cares to cross Musta, the fiendish wolverine. Incessantly the parade of wild creatures continued, the pulsing of the forest accented now and then by the hoot of Oguku making a capture, or by the violent squalling of an angry lynx in a neighboring tree.

BUT suddenly all sound died away. The procession ceased, and silence reigned. Then below him, lean, puissant, head swinging low, and baleful incandescent eyes aflame, came a tigress with slow strolling gait, hunting on behalf of her new cubs on vast but soundless paws. Ah, the sinister beauty of that great beast with her handsome gold and sable markings, and her huge tail ringed with black, emerging ghost-like from the dusk!

Hawk had little eye for her beauty. His mind was full of the memory of Yanu, who had died beneath such fangs as glistened beneath him when the tigress yawned. And so the tigress received the shock of her life as the Snow Hawk's speeding shadow came rocketing past overhead like some fierce swooping falcon, indeed.

A quick movement of the wrist sent the whip stinging against the silken flank. When the animal ripped out a throaty snarl and struck at the air in her surprise, a boyish yell of triumph rang through the silenced glades and brought the burning red eyes aloft to the shelf on which he hung, muttering dire threats through set teeth.

Yet when she leaped, fast as thought for all her majestic bulk, her killing paw struck only the warm spot on which her brown-skinned tormentor had rested. For Hawk was already swinging back to his starting-point, whence he described a swinging half-circle to still another ledge. Thus for a moment back and forth leaped the tigress, like some great cat pursuing an erratic shuttlecock. But at last she clawed her way back to earth, and after a few more ear-splitting roars went on her way.

"I will yet sleep on thy flat pelt, O Painted-Sides," vowed Kioga with a final defiant crack of the long whip.

He might have pursued to torment her further, but now, mingled with the fearsome snarling of the animal and the crisp clear report of the lash, came the distant growl of thunder. Suspense filled the thickening air. The tigress felt it, and slunk away to her home lair, foaming at the jaws. Every living thing hid away to escape the torrent that was already moaning down the mountain. Even Mika, after waiting in vain for Hawk to seek shelter, denned up for the storm.

KIOGA, however, hung at the length of his rope, thinking thoughts of revenge—strange little primitive creature, into whom neither wild beast nor wilder elements could stamp the mark of terror. And Mokuyi, miles away, smoked his sacred pipe and wondered what unfathomable instinct led his foster-son to remain at large at such times as these.

Under the somber bulk of the gathering storm-clouds an occasional flicker of lightning illumined the lower forest vaguely. At last Hawk descended to seek shelter, but found all his favorite hide-aways occupied by others whose bared fangs and wrinkling snouts warned him savagely away.

When next an electric flash flooded the wilderness with lurid pallor, it played upon the leaping figure of a boy racing headlong at breakneck speed down the slopes, in a mad exhilarating effort to outrun the storm. At the hiss of the oncoming rain, he accelerated his pace with such a wild zest as primitive man must have known when the earth was still young, his brown muscular body already glistening with the first great splashing drops.

Now swinging hand over hand along some ravine-spanning grape-vine, now plummeting thirty feet into blackness, to check swaying upon a madly waving limb, only to spring away again like a thing of India rubber; now teetering along a slanting broken limb between two prone forest giants, adroitly swerving to dodge a falling branch ere racing onward and downward; dropping and catching, leaping and seizing, slipping but recovering and flying on, ever on, like a wind-blown leaf—this is activity carried to the point of wizardry, breath triumphant over weight.

But swift as was this arrowy flight, the storm came faster still, and like a great black cat pounced heavily. It was a drenched and shivering Hawk who, hours later, crept into a shelter he had long ago constructed for himself and forgotten with the passing moons. Here, hungry and weary, he spent the night, falling asleep at last upon a bed of dry leaves and branches, undisturbed by the booming of thunder and crackling lightning without.

Dawn found him rested and with appetite keen. After a breakfast of wild duck which he killed with the deadly hunting-whip, he swung lazily along through the warm golden sun-rays slanting down into the dripping middle tiers upon his naked back. Refreshed and happy, he was heading toward the seacoast—as he invariably did after a heavy storm, to pick over the storm-drift and rubbish which the angry sea carried in from open water beyond.

Near the channel through which the ill-starred *Cherokee* had brought his white parents, he observed floating wreckage eddying about the little bay. Closer in, the water-logged half of a broken lifeboat slowly turned. Under a seat a human skull and several loose bones rattled about. Farther out, in deeper water, the shapeless form of a nondescript vessel slowly turned turtle, exposing a great hole in her hull from which there issued so nauseating a stench that Hawk abandoned all thought of attempting to go aboard.

But several white-bellied sharks were less fastidious, and having torn a hole in the rotting planking, entered, where he could hear them ravenously consuming what lay lifeless within. Hawk turned away, but he glanced back time and again, speculating as had his father before him on the mystery of the waste which floated into this coastal graveyard on the full tide, and out with the ebb.

FOR hours he searched about amid the débris for something of value which showed the craft of recent human construction, but everything was coated with inches of that green slime which bespeak years of drifting about at sea. Finally he decided to hunt toward the northward bay, which was deeper and more spacious in every way than this one. If he found nothing there, he would almost cease to believe that there was an outer world, peopled with strange races, of which Mokuyi so often spoke, and he would come here no more.

He sent an arrow in parting at one of the hated sharks, and had the satisfaction of seeing it sink to the feathers into the violently thrashing body. Then he made his way northward.

Kioga had gone two quick steps into the open beyond the cliff wall before he checked in open-mouthed wonder at what he saw in the bay and darted back into the shadow of the cliffs, his heart hammering in excitement. For though he had always hoped to find just some such object in the bay, realization of that hope stunned him momentarily.

TO a modern civilized child, the rusty old iron tramp ship which wallowed ponderously with every surge of the sea, would have evoked a superior smile. Her superstructure was torn away, her stack broken off short; there were gaping holes in her deck; and in that part of her bottom which had rolled up out of water yawned a jagged rent which her crew had erroneously supposed her deathblow when they abandoned her in a sinking condition. Matted seaweed hung from her sides in great greenish festoons; and she looked exactly what she was, a bearded old derelict, unwanted by sea or man.

But to Snow Hawk she was beautiful, magnificent, awesome. Greatly impressed, he watched her settle wearily over upon her side. Here at last was concrete evidence of an outer world and of the greatness of civilized men. Dancing excitedly back and forth along the shore, he impatiently awaited the receding of the tide, at the same time drumming up courage enough to board her. For though he feared few things, the presence of this hulk exercised over him an influence akin to fear—fear of the unknown.

When the waters had receded leaving the old ruin careened high and dry upon its side, he came nearer. Step by step, sometimes retreating, sometimes only pretending retreat, but always drawn back by his fascinated curiosity, he soon stood in the shadow of the hulk. Water still spouted from her parted seams, but Kioga could not wait for her to empty.

Throwing his grapnel across her bow and tugging at it to make sure it had taken hold somewhere above, he went hand over hand up her rusty side. Not for many a moon had human foot pressed the sadly crumpled decks of the vessel, and the boy crept from place to place, peering suspiciously down into the black interior through her broken stack and ventilators, peopling her with a thousand imaginary evil *Geebis* and hobgoblins.

At the broken stump of her derrick he paused, marveling that a tree should have grown out of her deck. He stood tense near the twisted ladder leading within the hull, alert to defend himself against the monsters of his fancy which he expected momentarily to burst forth. When nothing happened, he ventured cautiously below, rung by rung, starting at every shadow, yet steadily gaining in boldness.

What part of her cargo—probably wheat—had not been jettisoned, was now a pasty mass of decayed substance. Sneaking back into the daylight, he now roamed the sloping decks, treading as if on eggs, fingering rusty cables and dangling bits of cordage. Hanging by his rope in order to get near them, he peered squinting into the rows of ports along the side, fruitlessly seeking to fathom the intriguing mystery of that interior blackness.

Finally he arrived at the tightly closed door leading to the master's cabin. He had never seen a doorknob before. It never occurred to him that it turned. Instead he wrenched, with such force that it broke off, which of course only made matters worse, but redoubled his desire to gain entrance.

WITH a bar of rusty iron he found near some rickety machinery on deck, he attacked the door. Eventually, by hammering and prying, he broke a hinge. This took him a good hour, and time was precious because the swift tides waited for no man. But suddenly the door creaked open before him.

A moment Snow Hawk paused warily, then tiptoed in, his eager sparkling eyes stabbing every corner. He noted with a thrill of pleasure that though the contents of the cabin were in disarray, due to the rolling of the ship, water had not penetrated here.

Suddenly his gaze became fixed, and he went forward to a chair which faced a desk. Between the two he saw the skeleton of a man to which strange garments still clung.

And upon the desk lay an ancient logbook, which on investigation proved to be written in English that Kioga, with some trouble, could read.

What new discoveries will this derelict from the world outside bring to young Kioga? This vivid story continues in the next, the June, issue.

The Long Jump

By LELAND JAMIESON

CHARLEY VANCE called me on the telephone the night the whole thing started. Charley was a transport pilot with nine hundred hours —which isn't enough, these days, to get a job. He was a loud, red-haired, vitriolic young man whose sole interest in life was airplanes and engines, with perhaps a side-glance now and then at a legacy that one day would be his. We all thought the legacy was simply Charley's talk, but it turned out that it wasn't.

I was sitting in the front room of the Ramseys', telling Judy that some day I'd work up to a fine position, and we'd have a house in the country, and setter dogs, and at least two cars. I'd just told her that, and she had said, "A job at thirty-five a week right now would suit me, Michael. Who would want to eat setter dogs?"

And then the phone rang, and her kid brother answered it and yelled, "Mike! For you." I said, "Thanks, kid. . . . I wonder how they found me here?" And he said quickly, grinning, "I suppose they looked in the directory," and then ducked.

I picked up the receiver. "Mike?" It was Charley Vance, and he was excited. He knows better than to call at Judy's house for me, because it wakes the old man up. "Mike, we've got a tumble, finally! Remember the hundred-grand purse old Wattles put up for the first non-stop flight to Buenos Aires, last year?"

"Yeah," I said. "But it's for a flight —not a walkathon."

"Nuts!" he yelled; and I wondered how much he had taken on to get like that. I had never seen him quite as wild. He bellowed: "I came into my legacy this afternoon! The court released it unexpectedly!"

"How much was it?" I inquired. "About thirty-seven dollars?"

"Listen, you tall drink of water—I've got twenty grand! There's a plane at Roosevelt Field some gal had built to fly to Moscow, and then she lost her nerve, or something, and I can get it for twelve grand, and we can fly it to B. A. and collect that purse! Let Judy have a breathing-spell and you get over here and we'll have a talk about it. Clarence Conway's here. I figure three of us will be just right, and if you'll go, I'll give you a cut of twenty thousand smackers on the purse, and—"

"Wait a minute," I cut in. "Let's get this straight. Are you drunk again, or have you really *got* some dough?"

"If I'm stuttering this time," he shouted, "it's because I'm so excited. I've really got the money, Mike, and this is one chance in a lifetime!"

Well, it looked that way to me too. But I said: "You've got all of nine hundred hours, and I have about seven hundred, and Clarence Conway has had a night-school course in celestial navigation and hasn't had ten hours' solo yet. How far do you think we'd get with such a crew? Don't get screwy quite so fast!"

"But we can do it!" he boomed confidently; I was afraid old man Ramsey could hear his voice upstairs. "Between us we've got more than sixteen hundred hours, and if I can get that ship—"

"Between us?" I cried. "You can't add up experience! Between us, we'll probably end up in the drink somewhere." And I added: "Remember Redfern, buddy."

HIS voice evinced exasperation. "Dammit, Mike, that was years ago. This is right now. If you don't want to take the chance of making twenty grand without putting up a dime of capital, that's your business. There's plenty others who will grab at this. I'm offering it to you because we're pals, and that's the only reason. I could get pilots with five thousand hours if I wanted to. If you don't want to take it, you can go to hell!"

I said, trying to be cool about it, "If I try to take it, that's probably where I will go. You and Clarence too. But

A pilot's success is apt to depend on whether he regards his job as a profession or an adventure —as witness this fine story by a pilot writer.

Illustrated by L. R. Gustavson

we can talk it over without getting in a fight, I guess. I'll be over pretty soon."

So I hung up, and turned back to Judy, who was curled up before the fireplace upon the davenport. The thing had struck me like some kind of drug, and I was so excited I could scarcely think at all. It left me groggy, thinking about making twenty thousand dollars, and becoming famous overnight. I said, and I suppose my voice trembled a little from the strain, "Judy, that was Charley Vance, and he's just inherited a lot of money, and we're going to fly to B. A. in a ship he's going to buy. I'll get twenty thousand dollars out of it. You won't have to eat the setter dogs after all."

She smiled, a little whimsically, it seemed to me; and I could see she didn't like it very well. I can always tell when Judy thinks I've got another of the schemes she insists on calling "harebrained." Her lips seem to flatten just a little. The change is startling. Just then, when I tried to tell her about Charley Vance, she smoothed her honey-colored hair, and stared into the fire for a moment; and I saw that look. Irrelevantly she said:

"Michael, Peter Sykes is going to be promoted Monday. Mildred was telling me about it. Peter said he'd try to get his old job for you, if you'd come down. Only twenty a week, but that's something—and maybe, with what I'm making, it would be enough." She looked at me with a kind of tender hope.

But I was impatient. She had broken up a chain of glowing speculation. Charley's idea was growing on me by the minute. It was dangerous, but it was intriguing; and I guess all my gang was pretty crazy then. The depression had been dragging out, and aviation—in which we all had started just too late—was going away from us on a greased runway, so it seemed. I was in love with Judy—tremendously in love—and desperate to get a foothold in the industry. I spent all my time around the

I fought my way out into the tearing wind. Frankly, I have no recollection of getting off into thin space.

airport, going in no less than twice a week to every transport office, trying to get a job as pilot. They wouldn't have me. Being desperate, this non-stop record flight was a sudden, flashing hope.

YET I realized well enough our inexperience. Charley's flying skill—his ability, in fact—I considered doubtful, even though he had more hours in the air than I. But my instructor had told me half a dozen times that I was "as natural as a bird," and would some day get somewhere. Of course, I felt, I was more capable than Charley; I believed if anything went wrong, I'd know enough to handle it. A lot of people thought I was pretty cocky in those days; and I suppose, perhaps, I was.

I said: "Who ever gets anywhere starting in a shipping department of a wholesale drug company? Judy,"—and I spoke firmly and perhaps a little irritably,—"I've spent three thousand dollars learning how to fly, and I'm going to fly."

Judy looked into the fire. She was lovely, with a fair white skin and a smooth profile, and the sweetest lips I ever saw. I tried to pull her over to me, but her shoulder was rigid and resisting to my arm. So I let her sit there, and I sat forward, waiting for her answer.

"Do you know anybody who has be-

come substantial, racing around trying to fly faster, or farther, or—or anything —than everybody else?" she challenged.

"Yes." My tone was vindictive. "Look at Lindbergh. He started at the bottom. He didn't have a thing but an airplane and a lot of—I'm going to use the term—a lot of guts, when he checked out across the North Atlantic."

"But Lindbergh," Judy pointed out, "wasn't twenty-two. He'd held a job as a mail pilot for a long time, and he was in the Army before that; and he knew what he was doing, Michael."

"And I don't, I suppose," I returned a little bitterly.

"But Michael, darling!" Judy said, and turned and looked at me, her brown eyes troubled. "You've tried and tried to get a flying job."

"Go ahead," I said, bristling; "go ahead and remind me that I've never earned a hundred dollars flying, and have spent three thousand my dad put into it to teach me how, and that pilots' pay is coming down right along, and that if I keep on like this I'll be a bum."

"I won't remind you of it," she said slowly, and her little fist was clenched and unconsciously she was beating it against the fabric of the davenport. She snatched her eyes away from mine, and looked into the fire, and suddenly she went on a little brokenly: "I—I try not to think of that myself."

Before I knew it, she was crying. I took her in my arms, clumsily, holding her lovely head against my shoulder; and I was pretty miserable. If I hadn't loved her, and hadn't known how much she loved me and how much she was counting on me for the future, nothing would have mattered but Charley's proposition. But I did know all that, and I realized I was almost twenty-three years old, and that I hadn't started to get anywhere. It broke me up to hear her sob, and I kept patting her shoulder and her hair, and saying:

"SWEETHEART, don't do that, please don't! Don't you see—if I can fly to B. A. with Charley Vance, I'll have a reputation when I get back home, and then I'll get a good job as a pilot. Then we'll be married, and everything will be just swell! This is the first time any really important opportunity has come my way. Besides the job, I'll have twenty thousand dollars, too." And I added facetiously: "For that country place, and all those dogs!"

But she didn't laugh. She didn't even stop crying. Through her sobs, I heard the words: "And what g-good would it do, if you were k-k-killed?"

Somehow, I had known that that was coming. No woman ever sees a man she loves take off on something dangerous without a tremendous emotional strain within herself. But that was something Judy had to face, and I thought the best way to help her was to decry the hazard of the thing. "Aw," I said, "it's simple! The take-off is the only danger, and that's right here—and nothing's going to happen, anyway. When we're in the air, we just sit up there and let the miles slide under us. Charley and I will take turns flying, and Clarence will take care of navigation over water. Nothing to it, with the ship that Charley's going to get!"

She was silent for a long time, staring at the fire. And then she asked, "What will your mother think of all this, Michael?"

THE telephone rang, so I didn't have to answer that one. It was Charley. "Listen, guy," he snapped, "are you coming over here tonight at all?"

"Yeah," I returned sarcastically, angered by his tone, worried by the way Judy was letting this upset her. "Be sure you don't take off until I get there."

Then, back before the fire, I said as gently as I could: "Now, Judy, just remember that a million mothers and a million sweethearts have gone through this same sort of thing—and not for as important an undertaking as this is, either. All of us are twenty-one, and Charley's money was some his granddad left him, so he can use it as he wants. We're going out to make our names—to make you proud of us. You see?" I thought that sounded pretty good, but she didn't seem convinced. So, dismally, I added, "Well, in any case, don't get worried till we're ready to take off. Charley hasn't even bought the ship yet, darling."

But Charley did buy the plane, and the three of us made preparations to hop off. There were a lot of obstacles, but once we had that ship, there were no obstacles large enough to stop us. It was a sweet job, a high-wing monoplane that cruised a hundred and thirty miles an hour, and had gas enough for almost seven thousand miles. Realizing our inexperience, we hopped it around the field day after day, getting used to it, adding

more and more weight each take-off. We would go out and fly up and down the coast, and soap the windows over so we could practice blind flying—just Charley and myself.

Clarence Conway was to be the navigator, and Charley and I argued about taking his additional weight along. Clarence was a stocky, curly-haired chap about my age, who wore horn-rimmed glasses even in the air. While Charley and I were out experimenting with the ship, Clarence was at home, with maps and rules and slip-sticks, figuring out his navigation. We decided, finally, that he was a necessity. There was to be a lot of over-water flying on the jump.

IT was March when we got the ship; by April we were ready. I guess I talked of little else for that entire month. My parents, to my mild astonishment, made little objection to my going. Dad said my life was my own, and other people had done things just as idiotic (I didn't like the way he said that word) at my age; and he knew I was bound to go so there wasn't any use in trying to stop me. Mother didn't say much. I saw her weeping silently several times, and looking at me with a strange glint in her eyes; but she was fine. . . .

As the time drew near for us to go, I was more and more upset by Judy. I hadn't, naturally, applied for that clerk's job in the shipping department; and she was awfully disappointed about that. I saw her as often as I could, but I was busy, and somehow, I wanted to spend more time at home than I'd been doing. But when I did see her, I told her of my plans, and how great I was going to be when I got back, and how rich, and how happy I would make her.

The weather turned just right, with a high-pressure area over Bermuda, so we'd have tail winds for the first fifteen hundred miles, at least; and we decided, in a wild excitement, to take off the next day. I was trembling all through dinner, and none of us could talk much. It gave me a kind of awful feeling when Mother and Dad, sitting there with me, said the Lord's Prayer together. I didn't say it; I just sat there listening, with a sort of cold chill running up and down my back. After dinner we sat around, but everybody seemed so silent that I couldn't stand it. I went over to see Judy.

She was quiet, too. It was a cold evening, and we had a fire in the fireplace; and we sat down together on the davenport in front of it. I kissed her, and her kisses never were so sweet; and for a while I almost wished I were not going. She clung to me, and Judy never had done that before.

She said: "Michael, I don't—want you to go." I saw something in her eyes that frightened me.

I said, feeling a peculiar melancholy in utter contradiction to my enthusiasm for the flight, "Judy, just think—in less than forty-five hours after we take off, we'll be in B. A.! And then, in a week or two, we'll be back home."

She gave me a searching look, but didn't answer. It seemed, that night, that she couldn't take her eyes from mine. And I went on, the melancholy displaced by a warm, excited glow, "Judy, I love you, darling. Judy, you know the one thing in my life I want to do is make you happy. You know that."

Still looking at me, she returned, "Do you, Michael?" And I said quickly: "Sure. That's more important than this flight, even—but of course I have to make the flight to do it, see?"

I walked over to the folks and said, "We're on our way." Then I ran, because I didn't want to hear their sobs.

She said, "Michael," slowly, and then hesitated. "Michael, I don't—want you to go. I've tried to keep from saying it. I wouldn't have mentioned it at all, except last night I had a dream—an awful dream, about you."

I blurted, "Wait a minute!" but it wasn't any good. I saw, suddenly, the strain and worry in her face that I hadn't seen before because I'd been excited. But I went ahead: "Dreams don't mean anything—but don't tell me this one, because that would be bad luck. . . . Judy, I love you—and I think I'd better get down to Charley's house." I had to leave. I saw something in her eyes that frightened me as only one thing ever has done since. So I kissed her a long time, and for once the ecstasy of her lips was lost upon me; and then I tore myself away.

I didn't go to Charley's. I walked the streets, for I had seen a woman's premonition there in Judy's eyes. It was three that morning when I finally got to bed, and I had fought the whole thing out again—and I was going just the same.

It was a long jump from New York to Buenos Aires—5300 miles airline; and farther by the way we planned to go. We worked all morning pouring gas into the tanks of that sleek white monoplane. My folks came out, and Judy was with them; all of Charley's people came; Clarence had no mother; but his father, proud and quiet, came and stood around and watched.

I know now that we were pretty cruel. We joked about sharks, and the engine quitting, and the jungles of Brazil—right there before their ears. Mechanics made the last check, while the plane was standing on the hangar ramp, and then we hauled it up to one end of the runway, and for a moment everything was silent as a grave. Charley said, "Well, you mugs, we're shoving off!"

Stiff-legged, a little bit light-headedly, I walked over to where the folks were standing and said, "We're on our way." And I kissed Mother, and kissed Judy, and gripped Dad's hand for a long minute. Then, because I was choking up, I turned and ran—I ran because I didn't want to hear their sobs behind me, and I didn't want to show them that I was almost crying too.

We put on our parachutes. Charley crawled into the cockpit, and I took the little seat just back of it, in front of the main gas tank. Clarence was behind the tank. We put our belts on, and Charley fumbled around checking everything. Then the motor barked and roared, and Charley held the stick back and rode the brakes and gunned the throttle out, slowly and very carefully. He clicked the switches, watching the tachometer. The engine's roar was a

palpable violence against our ears. And then he eased off on the brakes—and we were rolling.

We got off, and it wasn't easy, even in that ship. Charley picked the tail up after the first hundred yards, and we streaked across the field, bumping gently, swaying a little before the weight grew light upon the wheels. My heart was in my mouth, and I was cursing Charley to help him in that critical, hazardous ordeal. Here was the danger of the flight; here was where we must succeed or perhaps die. It seemed like an eternity, but we got into the air.

After that, I was too busy to think much of those I'd left behind. Charley climbed slowly, inch by inch, lifting tons of gasoline into the sky. We turned southwest, to skirt the coast to Wilmington, and from there we were heading out across a corner of the sea straight toward Miami.

IT is strange that I should remember details of those early hours. Clarence, horn-rimmed eyes visible above the gas tank, chewing on a pencil end as he made computations. . The gentle swinging of the hammock that was stretched above the tank, and filled, now, with a queer assortment of thermos bottles, paper bags and cigarettes. Charley, tense hands on stick and throttle, staring through the windshield. He looked around, and a trickle of perspiration was runing down across his forehead, through his eyebrow and across his cheek. I recall the crooked grin he gave me then.

The sky was overcast, and the wind was on our tail, blowing thirty miles an hour. It was three o'clock when we got off, and for three hours we bored on, making record speed. All of my uneasiness was gone. The engine's ear-paralyzing drum was steady, bringing confidence. At Wilmington Charley got up from the controls, and I eased past him and sat down at them, and he went back and lay in the hammock for some rest.

Night was coming on, and I'd never flown much after dark. But neither had Charley, and we'd taught ourselves to fly by instruments; so when nightfall came, I wasn't worried. Holding the compass on the course that Clarence said would bring us off the coast of Florida near Miami shortly before midnight, I edged out across the tossing gray Atlantic.

There was something awe-inspiring, almost frightening, in that sight. At two thousand feet dark clouds were scudding past our wing above, so close it seemed that I could almost touch them. Below was water on both sides as far as I could see, white-capped with foam and whipped by wind. The horizon was wiped out, and water and sky merged somewhere, indefinitely, beyond the nose. The grayness of the air turned slowly into blackness, and I clicked on the board lights, got on my turn-and-bank and rate-of-climb instruments, switched on the radio and put the headphones on my ears, and settled back for six hours of this steady grind.

It was remarkable how time slipped past. The ceiling came down steadily, until I was flying over water at five hundred feet, and in the inky darkness I couldn't even see the phosphorescence of the waves. So I pulled up, sure that I would break out of the stuff if I went high enough, sure, from weather reports, that I'd find broken clouds and moonlight by the time we crossed the Gulf Stream. At this time, we were flying more than a hundred miles from land. Charley was trying to sleep, lying in the swaying hammock; Clarence was still in his little cubby-hole working at his calculations.

After some tinkering with the radio, I heard the Charleston station, heard the steady whining of the beam. Of course, that didn't help me get above the clouds, and yet it brought me a peculiar kind of comfort. Black night, riding through the soup a hundred miles from land, and the steady squealing of the earphones. I held my course, thinking of the men who fly this coast with mail at night; and somehow being out here made me feel that I was just as capable as they. Funny how your mind keeps working, in the air.

THE beam grew weaker, then broke suddenly; and in its place a voice cut through. I listened, out of curiosity. No matter what the weather was on shore, it could not affect us, flying here. Charleston had a hundred feet, with misting rain; and Savannah had dense fog; and Jacksonville was reporting two hundred feet, a quarter of a mile of visibility, with squalls.

"Pretty bad," I thought. "And here I sit, plowing through it all!"

Just then I felt a jar behind me, and jerked around to look back into the cabin. I saw the pale round shape of Charley's face, and then he was shouting in my ear:

"Mike, do you smell gasoline?"

A thousand needles pricked my skin as apprehension seized me. I had not smelled gasoline. But now I did! A strong, raw smell. The thought of fire beat at me. Out here, more than a hundred miles from shore—and no place we could go. Even if we reached shore, we'd not get down, because of weather. I sat there thinking of it, hot and cold waves going over me, for the smell was strong all right, and constant now. The ship got off its even keel, for as I climbed, the air was rougher; it started vibrating, and I concentrated on the bank-and-turn and leveled out again.

FOR a minute we were in a quandary. Turning west toward shore was little good, if the leaking gasoline should fire. Going back—I knew a little of what this weather was, and knew the coast would soup up all the way behind us—and we would have a headwind, going back. So I shouted: "See if you can find the leak! The only thing to do is keep on going till we find better weather farther on!"

"You head toward shore!" Charley bellowed. "It will take us fifty minutes to get over land. We may have to jump out of this thing!"

I knew that, without his telling me. And I knew we were in a tight place, sure enough. The flight was ended, for with one tank leaking, we couldn't risk continuing, even if there was no fire later on.

Continually the air grew rougher, so that the heavy ship wallowed through it, first one wing down and then the other. I turned westward. And gradually I noticed something else. The right wing, when it went down, tried each time to stay down! It took all my strength to pull it up. Still I was on the instruments, flying blind—and over the Atlantic.

Charley had gone back to find the trouble, if he could. I had gunned the throttle almost wide, to get more speed. Holding that wing up became a frightful task, and I was almost paralyzed with fear. My face—my entire body—was soaked in perspiration, and the cockpit was filled with a stifling reek of gasoline, with suffocating heat that whipped back from the engine to my lungs, making me dizzy and a little faint.

Time did not pass quickly now. It dragged, each minute ages long. With that wing fast becoming impossible to manage, all thoughts of getting down were gone. The only thing we wanted was to cross the beam somewhere, so we'd know that solid ground was under us—and then bail out. It mattered little that the ship would hurtle down and crash; even Charley, cursing back there in the cabin, didn't seem to think of that. Our lives were hanging on the element of time, and each of us was frantic with that knowledge.

Try as I would, I could not climb enough to get above the clouds, out into moonlight, where I could perhaps have flown the plane more easily, where perhaps we might have seen where the gas leak had developed. The altimeter registered six thousand feet, and the navigation lights still glowed with a constant, ghostly pallor in the mist; and above us, through the hatch, there was no light spot yet.

Clarence, in his cubby-hole, could not get forward. Charley told him what was happening, and then came up to me, and shouted: "This is my ship, and if it's lost, I'm going to lose it. Get up and get back here."

I yelled: "It's so wing-heavy it'll whip off in a spin if I let go the stick! We can't change places! See what it will do?" And for an instant I let the stick jerk back toward neutral, and the wing's descent was recorded on the steel ball as it slid down in its fluid through the tube.

Charley's face, grim already, went chalk-white. My nerves were raw with a crazy, insane fear that the plane would get away from me and start down, spinning, before we reached the land. That would be the last spin I would ever ride, I knew. I had to get above the clouds, where I could see; my eyes were playing tricks on me, and I couldn't always tell how far the wing was down. The stick was over almost as far as it would go.

"Climb!" Charley shrieked, and disappeared behind; and I went on fighting with that stick. It was minutes against miles; seconds against miles. The beam was faint against my ears, a constantly repeated N, broken by the characteristic.

WE were still a long, long way from shore, I knew. Fear made my hands into steel claws, my muscles into corded bands.

It couldn't last much longer, and I knew that well enough. Pretty soon the combined action of the ailerons and rudder wouldn't hold the wing up, and then—well, then, that would be all. Sitting there, my face must have been a mask to hide my terror. Oddly, I didn't want

Charley Vance or Clarence Conway to understand that terror was there.

I thought of Judy, and her strange, translucent premonition that this was going to happen. That was a wrenching agony. Vividly I recalled her tense and worried eyes when she had said so haltingly that she had had a dream. And I could picture her; against my will I saw her standing in her doorway, picking up tomorrow morning's paper.

BUT I couldn't help that, now. I knew nothing but a miracle would get me down from here alive. So I sat there at the controls, feeling that wing's constantly increasing weight, looking upward now and then to catch a straining glimpse of the halo of the moon. Charley came stumbling forward, panting, his face wet and shining from perspiration.

"Listen, Mike," he yelled. "Apparently the right wing tank's busted. The gauge reads empty. Apparently the gas has run out to the wing tip each time it went down in a bump. That's a plywood wing. The compression members must be holding it out there, and each time the wing goes down, the gas runs farther out. Try to roll the ship up on the left wing and let the gas drain back toward the center."

I tried, but it was useless. Frantically I tried, cursing, praying, panting in my effort. The fumes from the gas were stifling, and the motor heat was filling me with nausea. But I forgot all that, and put the last ounce of my strength against that stick. It went over one more inch, and the wing came up a very little—it came up on an even keel. But a violent gust of air took hold of it just then and slammed it down again.

Behind me I heard Charley sob in desperation. And then, above my head I caught a faint glimpse of the moon. A halo formed through the topmost film of cloud. The ship struggled up another hundred feet, and we were practically on top, just breaking through the piles of mist occasionally.

It was rough up here, but I could do better at fighting with that wing. Yet in spite of every effort I put forth, it went down every time the plane ran through a bump. Each time it went down, it got a little heavier. And the time came presently when I knew the next bump would make it too heavy to hold up at all. The delicate balance would be finally broken—and when that happened—

Desperately I realized we were still over water. The beam still came squealing in, the constant N. There was no trace yet of an on-course signal. We had been flying west almost forty minutes now. The awful thought went through my mind that up here—up where we had flown the last half hour—there might be a strong wind from the west. But there came an end to such terrifying speculation. We hit a vicious bump, and the wing went down.

And that time it stayed down. That time, with the stick over to the blocks, it kept on going down.

I must have been hysterical when I turned my head and sobbed: "She's going! God—she's going!"

Charley roared: "Where are we? What's under us?"

I shrieked: "Water! We're not near the land, from the way the beam sounds! But she's going to spin! And when she starts, none of us can get away!"

Just then I had the frantic thought that if some one could get out on the left wing, to balance it, we still might have a chance. Jumping over the Atlantic— But I knew that was impossible. This ship was not built so anyone could get out there. The wing was clean, without a thing to grasp; and the wind would whip a man off in an instant.

So it was jump—and jump this instant—and pray the east wind might drift us westward far enough to reach the beach.

Behind me I felt the pressure of the hatch above Clarence as he opened it, but that was like a dream within a dream. I felt him go, and thought again about the broad Atlantic down there. Across my shoulder, in the dimness of the cabin light, I saw Charley Vance kick the door off and dive away. And I was here alone in the cockpit of a plane that could not be controlled, that was swinging downward toward the silvery plateau of the clouds, soon to disappear, soon to tighten up from this deadly spiral to a much more deadly spin.

IT was a nightmare. Somehow I reached up with one hand, fighting all the time to hold that wing up just as long as possible. I got the hatch release and sprang it; the hatch whipped up and back, and down upon the wooden fuselage with a crack like an army rifle in my ear.

I scrambled up, forgetting the controls, and fought my way out into the tearing shriek of wind. It seemed to

strike, to blast at me. Frankly, I have no clear recollection of getting off into thin space. One instant I was scrambling out, and the next was falling free, clutching at the rip cord. The 'chute thudded open, and I felt a riser burn and whip across my face.

After that was the most unearthly stillness I have ever strained my ears against. The plane was gone, plunging to the sea. I had no life-preserver—the rubber life-raft was in the ship—and I knew, if I plunged into the water, that I couldn't last for thirty minutes.

That thought was horrifying. As I sank into that floor of shining mist, eight thousand feet above the earth, I think I must have tried to grasp the clouds as something of some substance, to try to uphold myself from the terror of the ocean. But the mist was wet and cold, clammy to my hands. I sank deep in it, and the halo of the moon was shadowed out, and blackness crowded in around me.

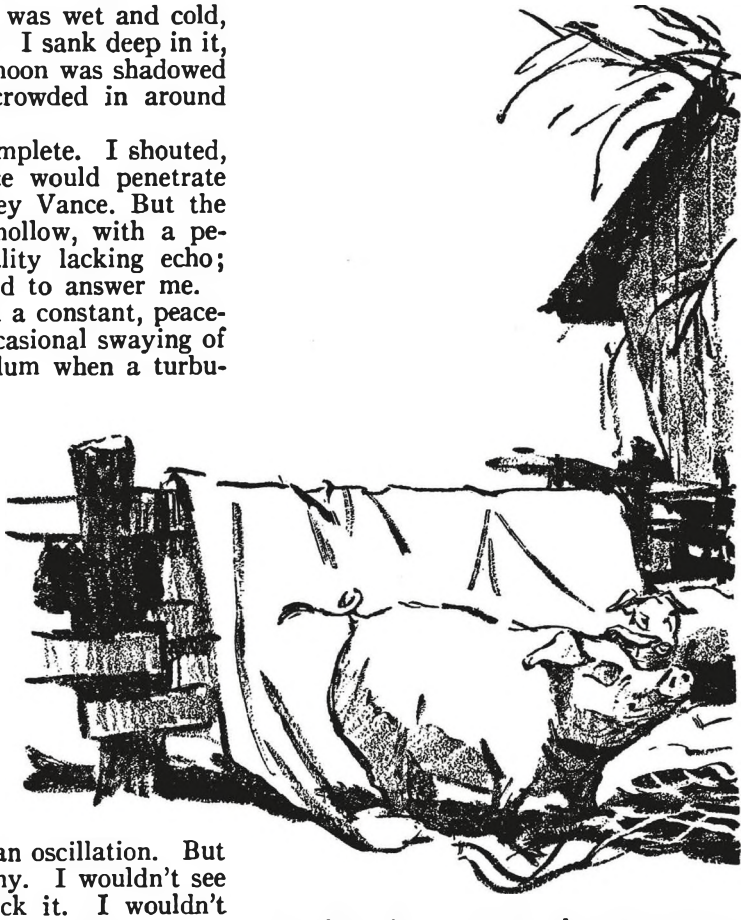
The silence was complete. I shouted, hoping that my voice would penetrate this shroud to Charley Vance. But the words were empty, hollow, with a peculiar death-like quality lacking echo; and no shout returned to answer me.

The descent was at a constant, peaceful speed, with an occasional swaying of my body as a pendulum when a turbulence of wind set up an oscillation. But in my mind was agony. I wouldn't see the water till I struck it. I wouldn't know, until the last split second, whether this long jump would save my life, or simply drown me in the sea.

Tension and suspense built up until I could not bear them. I thought of Judy half a dozen times, but always every thought returned to the pleading hope that I would reach the shore. I prayed. I think I must have wept unknowingly. How low was I, now? I had no way of knowing that. Where were the others? God—if I could only land in shallow water, on a bar, where the breaking of the seas at high tide wouldn't wash me off! I think, in the last minutes, waiting, straining my ears to hear the hiss of waves or the silence of a countryside, I must have gone a little mad. . . .

And then, somewhere close below, I heard a rooster crow.

Almost instantly my feet sank into some soft substance, and all about me rose a most unearthly din. I sat down hard, and my parachute settled in a white and shapeless mass; and then all over me were pigs, grunting and fighting, squealing in a terror that was more than mine. They ran in all directions, panic-stricken, breaking down the pen; and for five minutes after that I could still hear sporadic startled honks and grunts as several disappeared into the night. For a long time I sat there where I was, the parachute torn to ribbons by



I sat down hard, and my parachute settled in a white and shapeless mass. Then pigs, squealing in terror, ran in all directions.

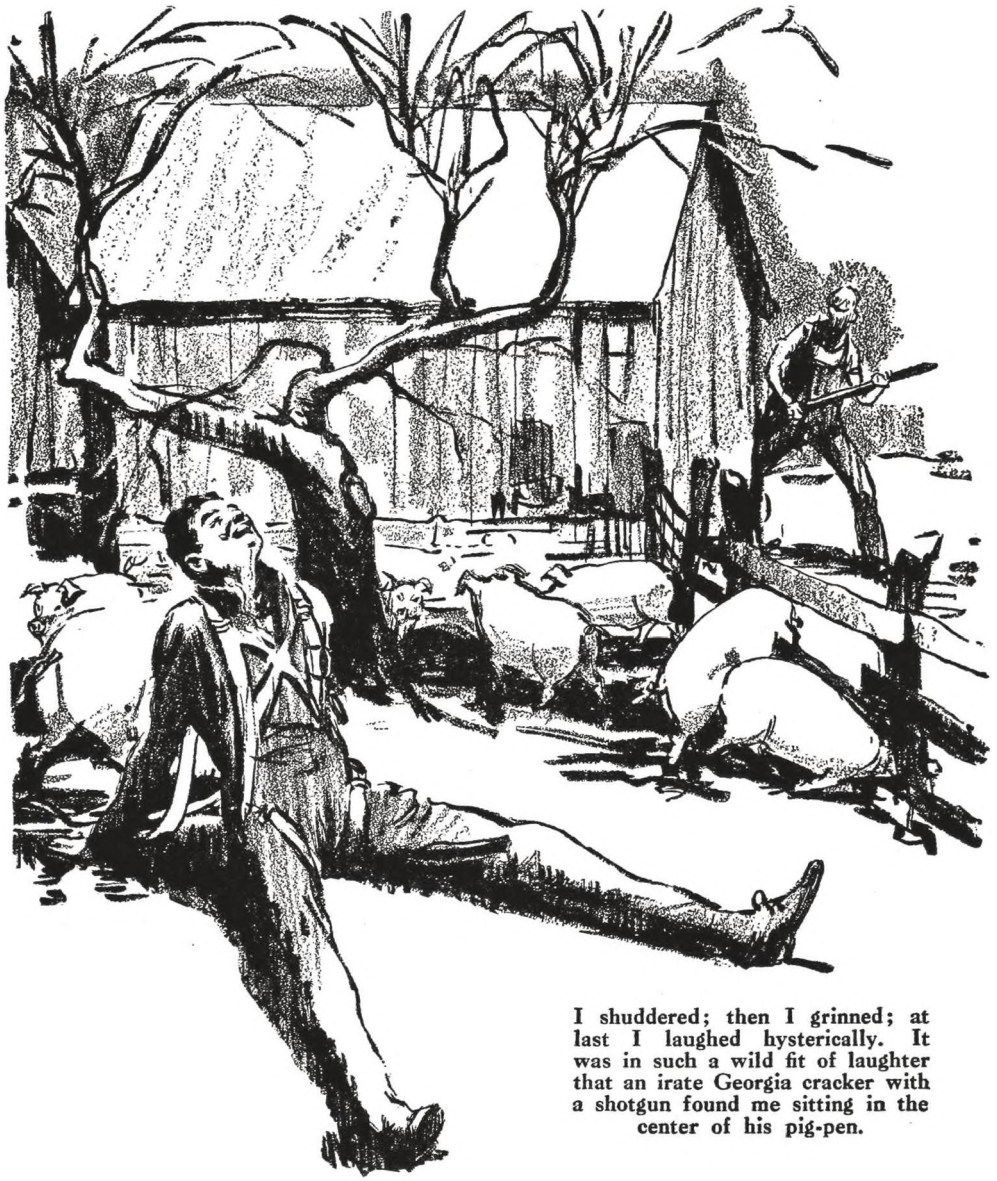
those hoofs. At first I shuddered; then finally I grinned; I chuckled; I laughed, at last, hysterically. It was in such a wild fit of laughter that an irate Georgia cracker, with a shotgun, found me sitting in the center of his pig-pen just as I had landed from the sky.

Charley Vance came down in a marsh near by, and Clarence a quarter of a mile away. But I didn't know that until the next day about noon. Woefully we caught a night train back to Newark; and throughout that long ride we were a silent, thoughtful crew. Charley kept muttering: "Fifteen grand! And we—*we* were going to fly to Buenos Aires!"

Judy met me at the station, all alone; and we went out to my house and stayed a while. Mother cried a little, and Dad shook hands with me four separate times. We read the papers they had saved, and then Judy and I went riding. . . .

So I'm working in the shipping department of a wholesale drug company; and it isn't bad, because Judy works upstairs. We haven't any country place, or any dogs—but give us time.

I thought for a month or two I'd never get inside another airplane. But now I have a chance as a co-pilot with a transport company, and perhaps I'll take it. A strange thing, to me, is that Judy says I should—that I can get somewhere in aviation, if I'll go at it as I would go at any other job. And that's a thing I think I've learned to do.



I shuddered; then I grinned; at last I laughed hysterically. It was in such a wild fit of laughter that an irate Georgia cracker with a shotgun found me sitting in the center of his pig-pen.

The Damnation of

By GEORGE F. WORTS

Our friend Horseface Maud the prospector's wife could be plenty hard-boiled when danger threatened—as witness this fine story by the author of "The Phantom President."

WITH a pocket knife, the Sheriff of Bradford County, Michigan, cut six narrow strips of paper from an old envelope. The other five men watched him. Near the end of one of the six strips he made a mark with a pencil.

He placed the slips in his derby, and the derby on the mantel. One at a time, the six men walked to the mantel and drew out a slip, each examining it with frantic eyes as he removed it.

Harry Hinkman, the former city treasurer, was the fourth. A heavy-set, dark-jawed man of forty, he was known to his intimates as Beefsteak Harry because it was said that he ate beefsteak three times a day.

"I got it," said Beefsteak Harry.

There were haggard grins of relief and some nervous laughter. No one was sorry that Harry Hinkman had got the job. He had, as city treasurer of Merchant City, accumulated a larger personal fortune than any of the rest of them. There was a certain artistic justice in his having acquired the job.

Even Harry Hinkman himself did not seem to be especially sorry. He said crisply:

"I've got it all doped out. Sheriff, have you issued a warrant for Billings?"

"No, Harry."

"Is he going to waive extradition?"

"So I understand."

"Then issue a warrant now. And at the same time deputize me to go out there and bring him back for his trial."

The Sheriff looked at him. The other four men looked at him. And as they grasped his meaning, they began to grin in grudging admiration. . . .

It was no larger than a man's fist, this piece of rock that Tony Billings' last stick of dynamite had uncovered in his shaft, but across one face of it ran a lovely streak of yellow metal in spots like rivet heads. Good raw gold! High-grade ore!

"A piece o' rock with some gold in it," Horseface Maud Tackaberry tartly declared, "don't mean you've struck a gold-mine."

"It means," her husband Tellurium firmly stated, "that there's a good rich body of ore."

"If you had your way," the lady raucously retorted, "you'd rush in like a bull in a glass house, and broadcast it in every gamblin' saloon in Las Vegas. It's lucky we're so far away, where a rumor can stay corked up. We don't want no more phony booms."

THE prospecting camp at Gold Valley was, indeed, remote. Tucked away in a great basin in the high mountains of southern Nevada, the camp was eighty miles by wheel-tracks from the nearest highway—and one hundred and twenty-five miles from the nearest town. No one was in camp at present but the two Tackaberrys and Tony Billings.

Beefsteak Harry

Illustrated by Monte Crews

Nevada was going through the well-defined phases of a girl deeply in love. She gave Tony Billings a slave-like devotion.

"You'll learn, son," Mrs. Tackaberry said, "that gold is spooky. Here today and gone tomorrow. Your shaft is only down fifteen feet. Keep diggin'! Foller your values! Even if you have to dig a hole that looks like a pretzel-mold—foller your values!"

LEAN, tall, black-haired, gimlet-eyed and fifty-eight, Horseface Maud Tackaberry was a remarkable woman, blessed with a powerful personality and a rashness that once or twice had almost landed her in jail. For thirty-two years she had been a boom-camp cook, earning enough to grubstake her prospector-husband Tellurium, who had yet to find gold in paying quantities.

Just now there were no booms; but if this sample of ore meant anything, there might be a real boom. Neither an optimist nor a pessimist, but a realist, Horseface Maud held to a sane middle course.

"And don't let this old coot git you hysterical," she added.

Her gimlet eyes on the young man's face were kindly. She had the deepest sympathy for him, and had suffered almost as much as he had over the narrow squeak he had had because of the political bully he had accidentally killed in Merchant City, Michigan.

Insulted, ridiculed and finally manhandled by this drunken political big shot, Tony had punched him—and the man had crashed through a window and fallen twenty stories, to his death. Knowing what his fate would be at the hands of the local political gang, Tony had fled to Nevada; and there Horseface Maud had taken him under her wing and transformed him almost overnight into a Nevada prospector, to fool any sheriff who might happen into camp.

Then this remarkable woman had gone storming into the radio broadcasting station in Las Vegas, and broadcast her opinion of the ruthless nation-wide search for Tony—had, as a result, set the sovereign State of Michigan on its ear, with the upshot that Merchant City had cleaned house.

Tony had been employed as a law clerk in the legal office of Nick Murlow,

the political boss whom he had killed, and had in his possession enough information to send up this political gang for years. He would have to stand trial—a perfunctory business—for the accidental killing of Murlow, and at that time he would be called on to give his damaging testimony against the surviving six of the one-time powerful political gang.

Tony would go to Merchant City when they sent for him or came for him. He wasn't worrying about it. He loved this remote spot in the high, parched mountains. He loved the desert, the simple rugged life. He intended to return after the trial and remain in the West for the rest of his life.

Looking at Tony, Horseface Maud was proud of her handiwork. He was a fine-looking young fellow, straight and strong, and his city softness and pallor had given way swiftly to hard muscles and the leather-brown of the desert dweller. And as he was the hardest-working man she had ever known, she knew he would follow her advice.

"Tellurium'll help you put in a collar-set and a windlass," she said. "When you've sunk a little depth, crosscut both ways—and then let's see whether it's a mine or a hole in the ground." With a glance at Tellurium, she added: "Let's do our thinkin' with our heads instead of our stummicks."

SO Tony went back to his diggings, and Tellurium began grumblingly to assemble pieces of lumber for the collar-set. Thus it chanced Tony was absent from camp when the Tackaberrys' child arrived, driving a noisy fifth-hand roadster with a boiling radiator, honking the horn and uttering cowboy yells as she came.

This was the Tackaberrys' daughter Nevada, a slim, tousle-headed girl of eighteen, the apple of her mother's eye and the source of infinite worry. Nevada, with her tan-and-rose coloring, her eyes which were the bright deep blue of cobalt crystals, and the happy arrangement of her features, was vitally pretty, but she was a desert rat. At least, Horseface Maud thought so. She didn't think it was right for a good-lookin' eighteen-year-old girl to prefer diggin' prospect-holes when she ought to be thinking of young men and feminine fripperies.

About two months previously, Horseface Maud had executed a somewhat shady deal by which she had acquired enough wealth to buy a small chicken ranch in Indian Springs Basin, adjoining the large and flourishing alfalfa ranch of Walt Jernigen, who was young, hard-working, and would make an excellent husband for the girl. Nevada had been left to run the chicken ranch, aided by an old Piute Indian woman. . . . In the intervening time Horseface Maud had seen her daughter but once and briefly, so that she was ignorant of the status of the romance she had tried so hard to promote.

As the pretty girl bounced out of the old roadster and flung her arms, with a squeal, about her mother's leathery neck and kissed her, Horseface Maud began to entertain doubts.

THE gimlet-eyed lady pushed the girl away with firmness.

"Where is he?" Nevada squealed.

"Who?" her mother inquired.

"The young man you made the broadcast about! The one who killed that ruffian in Michigan! As if you didn't know who!"

"Mr. Billings is workin' in his prospect hole." With a hunch that disaster was looming, Mrs. Tackaberry asked her daughter how Walt was.

"Oh, I guess he's all right," the girl said. "I want to see Tony Billings!"

The black eyes regarded the flushed young face moodily. "Decided you aint gonna marry Walt?"

"Oh, Mom, I couldn't stand him."

"So," her mother said with grimness, "you busted it off."

"Mom, will you listen?"

"Why the hell should I listen?" the lady roared. "You said you loved him. You said he was your ideal. Why else do you reckon I worked my fingers to the bone gettin' you that ranch? Why do you reckon I fixed it for you to be near him with all them pretty clothes and that ten-dollar permanent?"

The cobalt-blue eyes became stormy.

"Did you," Horseface Maud barked, "drive up here all this way alone just to tell me that?"

"No, Mom," the girl said tremulously. "I got homesick for you and Tellurium."

"Bologny! What's wrong with Walt? He's a fine, clean-cut young feller, hard-workin' and ambitious. He'll be the richest man in southern Nevada one o' these days."

"I can't help it," the girl whimpered. "I—I just couldn't stand him, Mom. He—he just doesn't understand girls. And

he—he never will. He acts like a slave or something."

"You don't say!" her mother cried. "Since when did girls get disgusted with a man for waiting on them hand and foot?"

Nevada was trying hard not to cry. "Why do you suppose his mother left his father?" she wailed. "She couldn't stand it, either! Walt's worse. He—he's like a sick calf or a dying duck. He tells me all the time how he just worships me. He acts like a dog who's been whipped. He always does. A girl hates a man who acts like that. Oh, Mom!"

Mrs. Tackaberry needed no further explanation. She understood perfectly. She gathered her sobbing daughter into her arms and consoled her. When Nevada was calmed to an occasional sniffle, her mother asked her what she wanted to do.

"I just want to prospect around and be with you and Tellurium."

"All right, hon. You suit yourself."

But Nevada did not get immediately into her prospecting togs. Until after the noon dinner, she remained in the smart little green-and-white dress she had worn to camp. And when Horseface Maud observed Nevada's manner when introduced to Tony Billings, she knew that a fresh cloud of worries was just over the horizon.

Mrs. Tackaberry had, of course, realized that Tony Billings was an attractive young fellow. She had wondered why, at times, he had reminded her vaguely of Clark Gable and of Gary Cooper and of other manly young men she had seen on the screen, but it suddenly became clear when she saw him through Nevada's alert young eyes.

In addition to which, Tony Billings was, in a way, a national hero. He had, in his mad two-thousand-mile drive from Michigan, outwitted the police of many States. He was romantic.

AND it didn't take Mrs. Tackaberry long to discover how Nevada felt about it. The girl may have had her doubts before meeting the tall browned broad-shouldered young man, but there were no doubts afterward. In all her life Mrs. Tackaberry had never seen such a shameless display. Nevada did everything a girl can do. She promptly offered to help Mr. Billings at his job. She was an expert with pick and shovel, and she could work a windlass.

Tony accepted her services gratefully. He really needed help. Promptly after lunch, Nevada changed into her prospecting clothes—old khaki shirt, overall pants and miner's shoes—and accompanied Tony to his diggings. Horseface Maud watched them over the hill. Nevada was babbling and walking very close to Tony, lifting her pretty flushed face to his. Tony seemed a little bewildered.

He still seemed somewhat dazed that evening when Nevada dressed for supper, keeping everyone waiting while she applied vivid lipstick, rouge and powder. She was radiant in a gay little blue frock, more suitable for country-club verandas than prospecting camp cook-shacks. She was terribly gay and charming all evening. It was, Horseface Maud told her daughter later, when Tony had gone to his shack for the night, a sickening and revolting performance.

"You ought to be good and ashamed of yourself, a nice girl like you, being so wanton around a man. And doggone it, Nevada, he didn't even notice you."

"He will!"

BUT he didn't. Tony apparently remained quite unimpressed. He liked Nevada. He told Horseface he thought Nevada was a swell kid. But it was very obvious that the magic pollen which had touched the girl with such violent results had failed to find a fertile subject in Tony Billings.

"It serves you right," her mother told her when days had passed. "You wanted indifference. I only hope you're good and thankful for the nice big load of it you're gettin'."

Nevada was going through the well-defined phases of a girl deeply in love. She lost weight, appetite and the ability to sleep. She was, by turns, moody and terribly gay. Through it all, she gave to Tony Billings a slavelike devotion that was, when one considered Nevada's nature and her upbringing, amazing and touching.

Sometimes it made Horseface sad, and at other times it made her furious. She accused Nevada of completely lacking self-respect; and Nevada said it didn't matter—she was willing to lack everything if only Tony would stop treating her like a nice, healthy child and would realize that she was a woman, with a woman's tender passions.

Every day she worked with him in the diggings. Every evening she tricked herself out in cute feminine clothes, and

Beefsteak Harry had been trying to skin the steer. He was covered with blood and hair and white with excitement.

made up her face. Tony continued to like her. Tony continued to think she was a great kid.

She insisted that she and Tony were going to make the always-perilous trip into town for supplies. On that eighty miles of desolation to the Tonopah-Las Vegas highway, you never could tell what might happen. The truck might break down. You might get caught in a cloudburst on one of the dry lakes and be marooned for days. . . . Nevada didn't care what happened.

But the necessary trip was postponed and postponed again, largely because that isolated little group was waiting for the authorities to come and take Tony to Michigan for the perfunctory business of his trial, and the taking of his testimony against the corrupt political ring in Merchant City.

The suspense of it was getting on everyone's nerves, in fact, when, late one afternoon a man in a rented roadster drove into camp.

Horseface Maud was in the cook-shack, preparing to serve up their meager supper, when the roadster came grinding up the wash and into view. Nevada was in the room back of the cook-shack, softly singing a Bing Crosby song while she bathed and changed to gala evening attire. Tellurium hadn't yet come in. And Tony was in front of his shack, stripped to the waist, scrubbing himself up for supper.

The man who got out of the car had a cartridge-belt about his waist supporting a holstered automatic pistol. He was thick-set, dark-jawed, with a city man's pallor.

He said curtly: "Well, there, Billings!"

Charley Reed said in a cold, steely tone: "Do you know whose steer that is you're butcherin', Mister?"

Tony mopped suds out of his eyes with a bath-towel, straightened up and stared. Horseface Maud saw him stiffen up and become a statue.

"Beefsteak Harry!" Tony gasped, as if he were astonished. "What are you doing here?"

The dark-jawed man grinned. He needed a shave and a bath. Mrs. Tackaberry's heart was thumping unpleasantly. She didn't like this fellow's looks worth a dime.

"I've been deputized to take you back to Merchant City for the trial."

Tony stared at him. "Where's the warrant?"

"Right here."

"Who deputized you to come after me?" Tony asked, in a voice growing harder and harder.

"Sheriff Cooper."

"Cooper's been kicked out!" Tony said angrily.

Beefsteak Harry nodded, and smiled thinly. "Yeah. But he attended to this first."

Tony stared at him with a mixture of suspicion and anger for a little longer; then Mrs. Tackaberry joined them. Her gimlet eyes, meeting the stranger's, were neutral. Tony introduced the newcomer.

"This is Harry Hinkman—Mrs. Tackaberry," Tony said. "He's come to take me back."

Horseface Maud liked the visitor even less on closer inspection. He was a type she did not understand—the inscrutable city-man type. The silent and inscrutable desert-man type she understood perfectly; she could read his thoughts in eyes and gestures. But a man trained to devious city ways always baffled her.

It was as if an inner eyelid, like the inner eyelid of a cat, were screening his eyes. She knew from the utter immobility of his expression that he was dangerous. His face was a poker face. It was not a vicious face, but somehow it was dangerous. All she could read in it was self-indulgence and greed, but Maud knew that he was one of the six crooks whose plundering activities Tony intended to expose in court.

All these impressions were swiftly registered in the instant before she spoke. A master of guile herself, she heartily protested: "You certainly aint gonna start back tonight, Mr. Hinkman. That's a mighty mean drive."

And from the brief smile he gave her, she knew that he took her for a dumb back-country woman; that he had nothing but derisive contempt for her.

He said: "I never saw such desolation. I don't see how people can live in such country." And the way he said it confirmed his brief smile. No one but a dumb-bell would live in such country. "Since I left that filling-station eighty miles back, I haven't passed a house or seen a human being. Nothing but lizards and rattlesnakes and a few wild cows."

"We can fix up a bunk for you with Tony," Maud said cheerfully. "And I'm just dishin' up supper."

SHE noticed a pair of handcuffs dangling at the cartridge-belt and added: "I guess you won't have to use them on Tony. He's been my prisoner for a couple of weeks, and he hasn't tried to make a break yet. Truth is, I reckon he don't have to. I guess that trial will be just a directed verdict, won't it?"

Beefsteak Harry nodded. "Of course." He looked at Mrs. Tackaberry with sudden interest. "You must be the lady who made that famous broadcast."

"I am."

"You certainly stirred things up in Michigan."

"I aimed to."

He looked at her speculatively, obviously trying to see behind those black gimlet eyes the courage and intelligence which had prompted that bold use of a broadcasting station. Quite as obviously, he failed.

He said: "What do you mean—Billings is your prisoner?"

"Sheriff Johnston, of Tonopah, made me a deputy to ride herd on Tony till the warrant came from Michigan."

Beefsteak Harry said, with decision: "O.K. We'll start in the morning. But I insist on paying for my board and lodging."

"That's jake with me, Mr. Hinkman. I aint sensitive about money matters."

THE man from Michigan grinned. It was a rather patronizing grin. "They told me down at the filling-station that you're the best cook in Nevada."

"I am," she said complacently.

Beefsteak Harry rubbed his hands. "Well, I'm certainly anxious to tie into some of your good food. I haven't had a bite since breakfast. I don't suppose you've got such a thing as a good thick steak in the icebox."

The gimlet eyes twinkled. "It's plain you aint been in the desert long. We're a hundred and twenty-five miles from the nearest town. We haul every ounce of our supplies. And it's tough, too, that we're just about out of victuals. All we have left is beans and bread."

"Beans!" the former treasurer of Merchant City exclaimed.

"Ayop. Don't you like beans?"

"No," said Mr. Hinkman. "I do not like beans."

"You'll like these," Tony said. "She can make a bean taste like caviar."

"I don't like beans, no matter how they taste."

"I reckon you'll have to make out on bread, then. While you're cleanin' up, Mister, I want you should draw some water, Tony."

Tony accompanied her to the cook-shack. Within its walls, she said in a sharp whisper: "Well, son?"

"He's one of them," the boy answered.

"Sure! I knew that."

"There's something mighty funny about it, Mrs. Tackaberry."

"Funny!" she panted. "My God, Tony, it's just about as plain as the nose on your face! You're goin' back there to stand trial for that accidental killin'. You're gonna be asked a thousand questions by the new city council about these six rats. You're gonna testify them plumb into prison. Nachally, they want you bumped off. This feller takes you back alone."

"I can demand that they get a warrant of extradition."

"Wouldn't do you no good, son. Somewhere along the way, this buzzard'll find a chance to shoot you while you're 'tryin' to escape.' It's a cinch! They picked him to do the dirty work!"

Beefsteak Harry was coming down the road from Tony's shack, his holstered automatic slapping his thick thigh. When he entered the cook-shack, Maud was setting the table.

It was a constrained and unpleasant meal to which the five sat down. Tellurium, with his simple nature, hated the Michigan man without knowing anything about him. Nevada, sensing that something was wrong, was tensely silent, dividing her cobalt-blue glances between the pale and suddenly haggard face of Tony Billings, and the poker face of Mr. Hinkman.

The visitor tasted the beans, then impolitely pushed them aside. He ate unbuttered bread and drank black coffee.

He continued to run true to form. He asked Tellurium about his prospecting, burlesquing the old man's Western drawl.

"Waal, stranger," he said, "do you reckon thar's gold in them thar hills?"

"We manage to git along," Tellurium said stiffly.

After supper, Hinkman took Tony to the shack they would share overnight. The moment they were gone, Horseface Maud told Tellurium he was to spend the night in that shack too.

"Why, Maud?"

"I don't trust him. Just set there and watch him."

"All night?"

"Ayop."

"But Maud—"

"Do as I tell you!" his wife snapped.

Tellurium went out, mumbling.

WHEN he had gone, she washed the dishes, feeling very low. She did not see how she could save Tony from the danger that threatened him. The more she thought about it, the more discouraged she felt. And when life got this remarkable woman down, she felt better if she burst into song.

In her raucous voice, she sang:

"From this valley they say you are goin',
We will miss yore bright face and
yore smile—"

Nevada cried: "Oh, Mom, don't!"

Horseface Maud turned around, glowering. "Listen, Nevada: You know why this Hinkman's come after Tony?" And she told her.

The truth about Mr. Hinkman's visit reduced the girl to a limp, forlorn heap. "Mom! Can't you think of something?"

Her mother stopped midway in the act of washing a plate. She gripped her hands in the lukewarm dishwater. Her black eyes, which until a moment ago had resembled those of a cornered bear, began to gleam with excitement.

She had a plan—one of her usual reckless, heaven-sent plans. It might work, or it mightn't.

"Hon," she said to her daughter, "you finish the dishes. I'm goin' for a walk."

"You've got to help Tony!" Nevada wailed.

"Well, mebby I will," Horseface Maud said grimly, and went out.

She slipped quietly out to where Beefsteak Harry's little rented roadster was parked. She knew a great deal about machinery. In the stillness of the Nevada night she busied herself at the engine, enabled to work without fear of being overheard because of the mumble and hum of men's voices in the shack.

NEXT morning, at breakfast, she was as hearty as usual. When her new boarder again refused beans, she said cheerily: "You either like beans or you don't like beans."

"I never cared for them," Mr. Hinkman said flatly.

Shortly after that, he arose and said curtly: "All right, Billings. Let's travel."

The boy followed him out to the roadster, with Horseface, Nevada and Tellurium trailing along. Nevada was trying not to cry, but she looked desolated. The tip of her nose was pink; her chin was trembling.

She whispered to Maud: "You promised you'd do someth—"

"Hush up!"

When the two men had got into the roadster, Mrs. Tackaberry said heartily, "Well, Tony, good luck. Hurry back!"

"You bet!" Tony was pale, jumpy.

Tellurium shook hands with him. Then Maud saw Tony reach out and take Nevada's hand and hold it. Nevada, her mother thought, was being pretty darned spunky about it, seein' how bad the poor kid felt. And Tony was seeing it too. He was holding Nevada's hand and patting it comfortingly. They were both such nice kids that Maud felt a little damp about the eyes herself.

The beefsteak-lover said: "Well, let's mooch. So long, everybody—and thanks for the beans!"

He stepped on the starter. Nothing happened.

Tellurium said: "Must be a short circuit. I'll fix it for you. Probably won't take a minute."

He lifted the hood and looked. He announced presently: "I reckon something's wrong with the ignition. May take a little time. Most o' the day, I should think likely."

Ungraciously the visitor said: "Oh, hell! That long?"

"Can't tell till I take a good look."

The two men got out of the roadster. Beefsteak Harry watched him fumble about among the wires for a while; then Horseface Maud said: "Nevada, you got to run an errand. You'd better start. Take that loaf of fresh bread to Mrs. Reed's and ask her if she'll come over tomorrow sure to help me start that quilt. Here, I'll wrap up that bread for you."

She took Nevada into the cook-shack and curtly told her what was in the wind. Then: "Now, drive like hell, hon."

She swiftly wrapped the loaf, marched the somewhat bewildered girl out the door. Nevada got in and drove off. Maud returned to the three men. She said, with a sigh: "Gosh, I know just how you feel, Mr. Hinkman. It's bad enough to have that eighty miles to drive on a practically empty stummick without havin' your car go haywire."

MR. HINKMAN remained impolitely silent.

Horseface Maud sighed again and said: "Ayop. I know just how you feel! I feel kinda that way myself. My golly, wouldn't a nice thick steak, all brown and crisp on the outside and just oozin' juice inside, and so tender a knife just fell through it—wouldn't that taste fine?"

Beefsteak Harry ran his tongue over his lips and looked at her with unveiled eyes. In the same dreamy voice, Mrs. Tackaberry went on to describe the imaginary steak in greater detail, mentioning the ease with which it would melt in the mouth and the fine aroma it would emit when it was broiled to a turn over a bed of glowing coals.

As if suddenly inspired, she cried: "By golly, if you really want a steak, Mr. Hinkman, why don't you?"

"Why don't I what?"

"Git yourself one?"

"How?"

"All you have to do is kill a wild cow. And heaven knows there's enough wild cows around. And they don't belong to anybody. They're just free and wild. And kinda tame, at that. Didn't you see any comin' in last night?"

"I saw a herd of cattle about thirty miles back."

"Oh, not them. They belong to somebody. These up here are just wild. There's a handful of them, aint they, Tellurium, in the little basin?"

"There was yesterday," her husband uneasily affirmed.

"That's only about a mile," Mrs. Tackaberry said. "You just go down the road, but take the left fork instead of goin' down the cañon. It goes into the little basin. All you need is your gun and a knife, and mebby a hatchet."

BEEFSTEAK HARRY'S eyes were gleaming with interest, but he seemed dubious. "Is that kind of meat fit to eat right away?" he asked.

"Fit to eat!" she cried. "You mean to say you never threw a tooth into fresh-killed beef?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then all you've ever et's been cold-storage stuff. You ought to taste fresh-killed beef, Mr. Hinkman! You just ought to taste that tangy, tender, juicy meat, Mr. Hinkman! Why don't you? While Tellurium's gettin' that car fixed, go down there and shoot yourself a nice young cow. You won't have to stalk 'em much."

"Hadn't somebody better go with me?"

"We've all got our work to do. I got some chores I want Tony to do, if you don't mind. Know where the steaks are in a cow?"

Mr. Hinkman had to confess that, in spite of his lifelong fondness for porterhouse steaks, he hadn't the slightest idea which part of the animal they came from. She told him where to shoot the animal, and how to skin it, and where to take the steaks. She even drew a diagram with a twig in the dust to show him just where, behind the ribs, porterhouse and sirloin steaks and other cuts originated.

"Bring back a big hunk," she said, "and we'll have a regular steak banquet. Tellurium should've shot us some meat days ago, but he's lazy. You know what we call these wild mountain cows up here, Mr. Hinkman? We call 'em desert elk!"

She laughed. Beefsteak Harry grinned. He confessed that he had never shot anything larger than a duck in his life.

Equipped with his automatic pistol, a dangerous-looking carving-knife and a small, sharp hatchet, he started down the road. Tellurium stopped fussing with the ignition-system to watch him go.

Tony had gone into action himself. With driving fists, he met Beefsteak Harry considerably more than halfway.

Tony was looking at Maud with suspicion. "I can see by the look in your eyes," he said slowly, "that another beautiful big idea has blossomed. What are you up to? Going to snatch me away from the lions again?"

Mrs. Tackaberry looked embarrassed. "You're kiddin' me, Tony."

Tellurium growled: "What the hell is goin' on, Maud? What did you do to this car? What's all this damned foolishness about desert elk?"

"What," Maud barked, "do you think I sent Nevada over to Charley Reed's for? Use your head, you old coot!"

"Maud Tackaberry," Tony said in a tone of reverence, "you are a wonderful woman!"

"Bologny!" the lady roared.

"Yeah," Tellurium agreed, "bologny! I've told you before, Maud Tackaberry, and I'll tell you ag'in, one o' these ideas o' yours is gonna land us all in jail."

"If you ever got an idea good enough to land us in jail," she retorted, "I'd pickle it in champagne! Now, go git your six-gun."

With reluctance, Tellurium secured that venerable arm. They waited. Perhaps an hour passed. Then, distant but sharp, occurred the sound of a shot. It was followed by a rattling of shots.

Horseface Maud ran to her truck. Tony cranked it and sprang into the seat beside her. Tellurium leaped on behind as they started off.

Horseface Maud had been telling the truth when she said that the little basin was no farther than a mile from camp. She drove the old Model-T at its best speed all the way, arriving in time to see the man from Michigan working on the carcass of a dead steer. A group of cattle stood not far away, morosely watching him.

But these were not the only eyes fixed upon the busy city man. As Horseface Maud drove up, two cars came winding down a wash from a near-by cañon. This was the road to the Reed ranch.

In the first car were Nevada and Charley Reed, the local representative of the Nevada Cattle Company. In the following car were three cowboys, with rifles.

Beefsteak Harry looked up from his work as the assemblage arrived. He had been trying to skin the dead steer. He was covered with blood and hair, and was white with excitement.

Charley Reed watched him a moment in silence. With his drooping black mustache, his small brown eyes, Charley Reed looked like a Mexican villain in a

movie. He was a very quiet man, kindly, and in Horseface Maud's phrase, as big-hearted as the whole outdoors. But in the affairs of his company, he was a man of flint.

He said, in a cold, steely tone: "Do you know whose steer that is you're butcherin', Mister?"

BEEFSTEAK HARRY looked sharply at him, then at Horseface Maud, but he made no answer.

"Mrs. Tackaberry," the cattle-man went on, "aint it true you're a deputy sheriff?"

"That's right, Mr. Reed," Horseface Maud solemnly affirmed. "When Sheriff Johnston was over the other day from Tonopah, he appointed me a full-fledged deputy sheriff, badge and all."

The nickeled ornament twinkled on her flat bosom.

"I want you," said Mr. Reed, "to arrest this feller, whoever he is, for willfully shootin' and stealin' a Nevada Cattle Company steer."

Beefsteak Harry looked quickly at the three cowboys with rifles. His thick lips had become thinner and thinner.

"Mebby," one of the cowboys said, "he thought it was jest a wild cow that didn't belong to nobody."

"Aint no excuse," Mr. Reed said. "In Nevada, cattle-stealin' is a felony."

"O.K.," Horseface Maud said heartily. "Tony, snap them handcuffs on my prisoner."

Tony with a grin stepped forward.

"Wait a minute," Hinkman said; his face was white, and his eyes looked deadly. "This was your idea, you punk!"

He sprang at Tony, swinging both fists as he came. Nevada shrieked. Tellurium uttered a moan. Charley Reed quietly folded his arms.

Two of the cowboys raised their rifles, but when Horseface Maud roared, "Leave 'em be!" they lowered them.

In all her life in the rough and tumble of mining-camps, Maud had never seen a man go into action so swiftly. One moment, Harry Hinkman had been a statue of hatred. Next moment, he was a slashing, slugging, socking madman.

But he did not wipe away or batter off or in any other way remove the grin from Tony's lips; for Tony had, in the same split-second, gone into action himself. With driving fists, he met Beefsteak Harry considerably more than halfway. He wasn't any taller than Hinkman, but he had one important advantage. For almost a month he had been swinging a pick and shovel.

Beefsteak Harry had been swinging neither pick nor shovel. At his fifth punch, he was gasping. He fought with fury, but he was no match now for this man he had come West to kill. Tony battered him back with slashing swings, and presently knocked him down so hard that the very fall knocked the wind out of him.

Hardly panting, Tony, still with that small grin, turned back to Maud and said: "Mrs. Tackaberry, I've never had a chance to show you that I've got brains. But thanks to you, I've got brawn. I got more of a kick beating up this louse than I did out of finding high-grade!"

Starry-eyed, Nevada said: "Oh, Tony, you were grand!"

Beefsteak Harry was staggering to his feet, gory and wrathful. Maud approached him with the handcuffs.

"You double-crossing, old—" he began savagely.

"If you resist me," she said calmly, "I'll shoot you."

He did not resist her. When she had clicked the handcuffs on his wrists, she said: "Mr. Reed, I'll turn this rustler over to Sheriff Johnston. Tellurium'll let you know when his hearing comes up."

"Thank you, Mrs. Tackaberry," said Charley Reed. For a moment, his small dark eyes gravely held hers. His expression did not change. Another man might have winked—but not Charley Reed.

HE and his cowboys started back to the ranch. The others returned to camp, where Maud said to Tony: "We'll start for Tonopah after lunch. We'll leave this cattle-thief with Sheriff Johnston, and catch the first train for Michigan. I guess Nevada and her pa can hold down camp till we git back. I'm gonna deliver you to the Judge in person, Tony. Then we're comin' back here and find that mine."

She and Tellurium took her prisoner into the cook-shack, leaving Tony alone with Nevada.

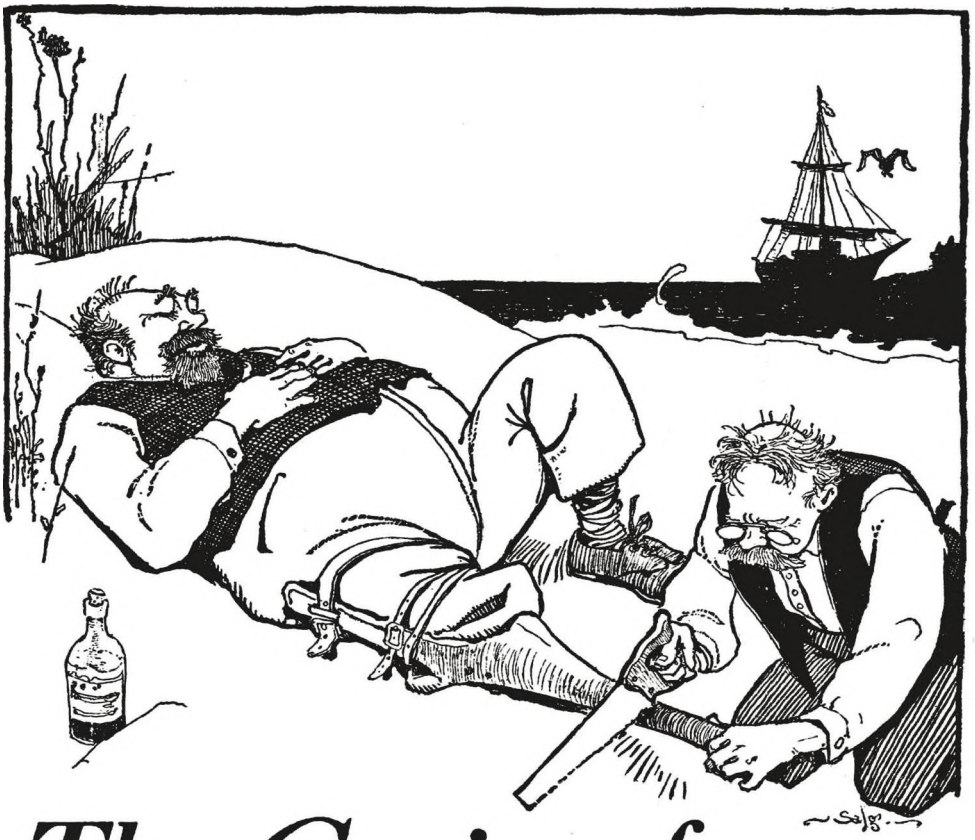
He said: "I'll hurry back, Nevada."

She blushed.

"So we can finish that shaft," Tony said.

The starry look left her eyes; the blush faded. "Sure," she said. "We've got to start driving those crosscuts."

Tony continued to look at her. "Nevada," he said unsteadily, "I'm going to kiss you."



The Cruise of The Nancy Bell

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Illustrated by Bert Salg

THE first decision Cap'n Ashdod Clute made when he was elected president of the Little Cove Temperance Society was that he would reform Cap'n Obed Hutt, who was a shameful drinker and a disgrace to Little Cove. Old Cap'n Obed used to take a bottle of raw liquor and go down to the sandy beach, and lie in the sun and drink until he was practically dead to the world—lying snoring, hour after hour.

There was no reasoning with Cap'n Obed; so Cap'n Ashdod taught him a lesson in another way. He sneaked up on Cap'n Obed when he was inert and snoring, and sawed off Cap'n Obed's wooden leg between the ankle and the knee. This was to show Cap'n Obed what a fool a man was to drink too much. And it almost worked. When Cap'n Obed had slept off his load of liquor, he tried to stand up, but with his wooden leg shortened, he fell on his face and clawed in the sand like a crab.

NATURALLY Cap'n Obed was mad as a hornet, and swore he would beat to a pulp the rascal who had sawed his leg off; but Cap'n Ashdod said nothing. He kept an eye on Cap'n Obed, and he was pleased with what he had done, because for a full month Cap'n Obed

hardly tasted liquor at all. He got out his draw-knife and made himself a new and better wooden leg of white maple.

But along about the ninth of August old Cap'n Obed fell again. He began taking a bottle of harsh liquor down to the Little Cove beach once more, getting himself as stupefied as ever; and Cap'n Ashdod saw he would have to give Cap'n Obed another scare. He waited until Cap'n Obed was apparently dead to the world, and with his saw in his hand, he crept toward Cap'n Obed on his hands and knees. He was just about to lay the edge of his saw on Cap'n Obed's new wooden leg, when Cap'n Obed stopped snoring and sat up suddenly. He grabbed Cap'n Ashdod by the collar and drew forth a stout hickory club on which he had been lying.

"Now, dang ye, I've got ye!" Cap'n Obed shouted, waving the club in the air. "Goin' to saw my leg off, was ye? I'll beat ye to a pulp, blast ye!"

Cap'n Ashdod saw instantly that his life was in danger, and he had to think quickly; and he did.

"Why, Obed," he said as soothingly as he could, "I wouldn't cut your leg off. Hadn't no such thought in mind. I just come down here to see if I could borrow five dollars off ye, Obed."

This was reasonable enough, because Cap'n Ashdod was always borrowing here and there early in the month, because his pension was not due until the fifteenth. His son Elbert pensioned him. So probably Cap'n Obed might have let it go at that if he had not seen the saw Cap'n Ashdod had in his hand. The saw looked suspicious.

"Come down to borrow, did ye?" demanded Cap'n Obed. "What did ye fetch that saw for, I'd like to know?"

That was a poser, and again Cap'n Ashdod had to do some quick thinking, because Cap'n Obed was taking a tighter grip on his club. But when Cap'n Ashdod had to think quick, he could always do it.

"Pshaw!" he said. "I always carry a hand-saw with me, Obed."

"I aint never seen ye with one," said Cap'n Obed.

"Down my leg, inside my pants," said Cap'n Ashdod. "Hangin' from my pants-belt. Yes, indeedy—never go nowheres without my hand-saw. Wouldn't risk it, not noways."

"Mean to tell!" ejaculated Cap'n Obed, hefting his club in an unpleasant way. "Ye don't say!"

"Not since that time on the *Nancy Bell*," said Cap'n Ashdod quickly. "Always have a saw by me since that terrible voyage, ready for what comes up if need be."

HE saw Cap'n Obed's grip loosen a little on the club, for no old salt can withstand a sea story. He listens to them because he tells them, as one banker lends to another—or did.

"Yes sir," said Cap'n Ashdod hastily, "that voyage taught me to be prepared and have a hand-saw handy at all times. The *Nancy Bell* was a three-masted schooner, and I was mate. Young feller, I was then, and we put into Leghorn for a cargo of sponges."

"Cargo of what?" asked Cap'n Obed.

"Sponges," replied Cap'n Ashdod. "I said *sponges*. We filled the hold plumb full and packed them in tight and set sail for Boston. 'We'll make good time, Ashdod,' the Cap'n says to me, 'for the cargo

is light and that's how the *Nancy Jane* sails best.'"

"I thought you said it was the *Nancy Ann,*" said Cap'n Obed.

"She was named *Nancy Ann,* but the Cap'n mostly called her the *Nancy Jane* by mistake," explained Cap'n Ashdod, "on account of his daughter Nancy Jane being aboard, that voyage. So the Cap'n says—and if you want to hear the yarn, don't interrupt—he says, the skipper does, 'And get home to Boston quick is what I want to do,' he says, 'because the sooner we get there, the sooner my daughter Nancy Jane marries Caleb Strutt, which she is engaged to.'"

"AND there come a storm," said Cap'n Obed sneeringly, "and the hold got flooded, and the sponges swelled."

"How'd you know that?" demanded Cap'n Ashdod.

"Any fool would know it. I knowed it as soon as ye loaded up with sponges. What in tunket else would ye load with sponges for? I remember when I was second mate on the *Elly May,* and we took on a cargo of ice at Greenland, bound for Ceylon— Oh, shucks! Go on with your yarn."

"So a storm come up, a terrible gale," said Uncle Ashdod, "and I was in my cabin in my hammock along toward morning, and I woke up and says to myself, 'Tarnation, if this aint the hardest hammock I ever slept in—feels like a board!' And I felt under me, and cuss me if it *wasn't* a board."

"Hull sprung a leak," said Cap'n Obed. "Water come in and swelled the sponges and pushed the deck up under ye."

"Are you tellin' this, or am I?" demanded Cap'n Ashdod.

"Go on and tell it, then," said Cap'n Obed. "There you was betwixt one deck and t'other, and the floor crowdin' up and goin' to squeeze you to death against the ceiling—"

"And fortunately," said Cap'n Ashdod, "most fortunately, I had my saw with me—"

"So you cut a hole in the ceiling," said Cap'n Obed, "and run and cut holes and let out this Nancy What-You-Call-Her—"

"And the Cap'n," said Cap'n Ashdod, "and the crew. And full time it was I did so, or the whole lot would have been crushed between the decks."

"And the sponges kept on swellin'," said Cap'n Obed, "and pushed the decks right on up the masts till the sails was all shoved up to the topmasts, and the *Nancy Sue*—"

"Nancy Bell," said Cap'n Ashdod. "And there we lay becalmed until all hands set to work squeezin' sponges—"

"And rammed the decks down again—"

"And the long and short of it was," said Cap'n Ashdod, "that since that time, I've never gone anywheres without my hand-saw along with me."

"And you married the girl," said Cap'n Obed. "Go on and say the girl and the Cap'n was so grateful to you that the girl flang herself into your arms. Go on and say it, why don't you?"

"I do say it," said Cap'n Ashdod brazenly.

"What you say her name was?" asked Cap'n Obed.

"Nancy—" said Cap'n Ashdod, trying to remember what name he had given the schooner and which name he had given the girl. "Nancy Ann," he said at last. "That was her name. I'd ought to know."

"You'd ought to," said Cap'n Obed, tightening his grip on his club again, "but you don't. Your wife's name is Elvira, and you know it."

"She's my second wife," said Cap'n Ashdod; but Cap'n Obed drew back his club for a full-arm swing.

"Saws!" he shouted. "Wives! Sponges! I'll teach ye to come sawin' off my legs!"

THE club came down, but already Cap'n Ashdod was scrambling away on hands and knees faster than any crab ever scrambled. He leaped to his feet as the club struck the saw he had left behind. The saw leaped and gave off a clear ringing note. Cap'n Ashdod did not stop. He paused not until he reached the headquarters of the Little Cove Temperance Society. There he slipped six small folders—one being "The Curse of Drink"—into an envelope which he addressed to "Captain Obed Hutt, Little Cove, N. Y." It was safer than sawing off wooden legs.

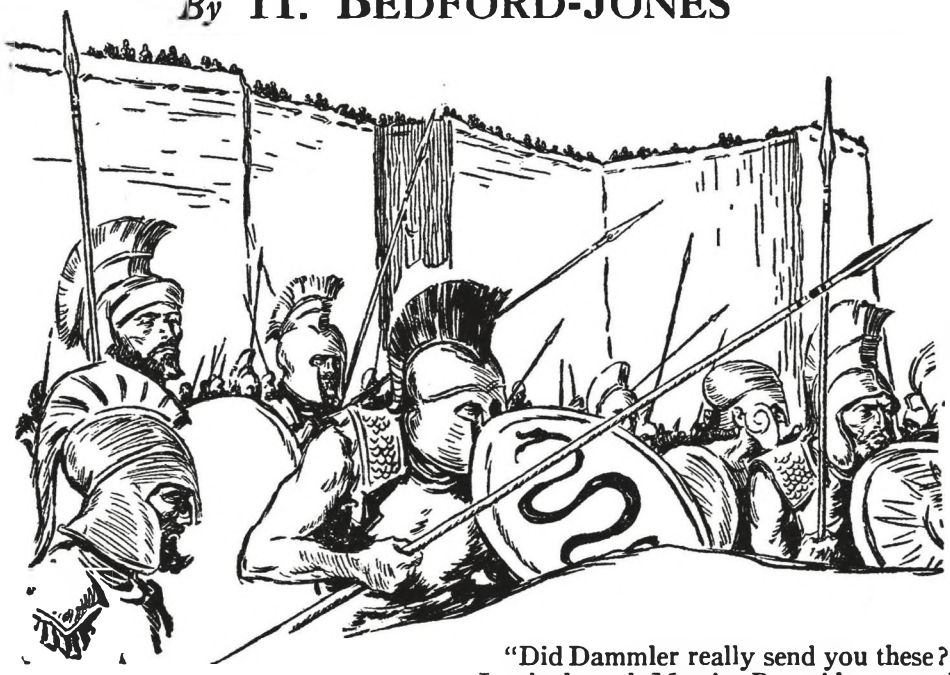
Watch for "Shark of the South Seas," a stirring story of adventure in the Pacific by Albert Richard Wetjen—in an early issue.

ARMS and MEN

IV—The Bow of Ulysses

From flint knife to machine-gun, all down the ages, our weapons have saved our lives or doomed them—have therefore partnered our most exciting moments. . . . So in this fine series, one of America's ablest authors follows man's development as reflected in these tools of battle.

By H. BEDFORD-JONES



MY friend old Martin Burnside, whose hobby was the collection of queer weapons and arms, and queerer stories about them, blinked at me over his spectacles. He pointed to a package on his desk, bearing Greek stamps and a *"Non Dutiable"* customs' notice.

"Know what that is?" he growled. "Look at it."

I obeyed, scenting something queer. I was not disappointed. From the package I drew three objects, most carefully wrapped, with certificates or depositions as to their finding, in Greek and in English, for use of the customs people. Three objects, and nothing else. On the wrapper of the package was the name of Cecil P. Dammler, the movie director.

"Did Dammler really send you these?" I asked, and Martin Burnside snorted.

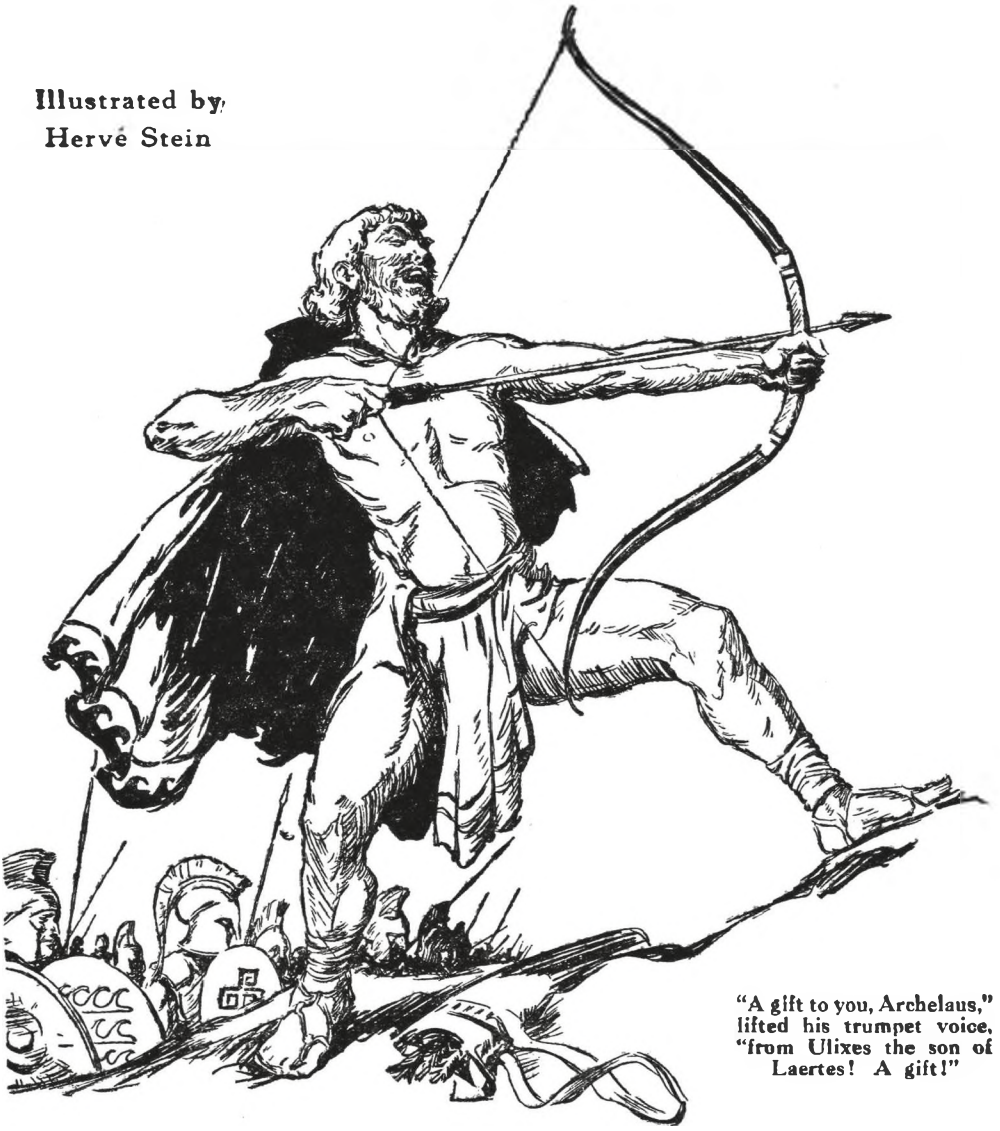
"Yes. He's over in Greece now, digging around there for relics and things. I supplied him with authentic information on arms and armor for his two big Roman spectacle films. Get back to the point. Do you know what those things are?"

I could well imagine. They were of heavy, solid bronze. Two were curved tips for a bow; the third was the central grip. In all three of them were fragments of the bow itself; not wood, but heavy black horn, as a magnifying glass showed me.

"Dammler got these out of a grave he excavated on the island of Leucas, the home of Odysseus or Ulysses."

"What?" I exclaimed. "But that was the island of Ithaca."

Illustrated by
Hervé Stein



"A gift to you, Archelaus," lifted his trumpet voice, "from Ulixes the son of Laertes! A gift!"

"Your rope's dragging, me lad," cut in Burnside testily. "Scholars have identified the Homeric Ithaca with this island of Leucas, the name having been carried later to the present-day Ithaca. Look it up for yourself. The thing is, Dammler swears the grave was that of Ulysses himself, and that this is the famous Bow of Ulysses, the bow no other man could bend. These bits of bronze! The man's gone daft. He has sent me a long script about it; a lot of balderdash he got from some clairvoyant in Athens who fumbled around with those bits of bronze and then dictated the story."

I CHUCKLED. "Must be a queer yarn, then. One can't imagine any Greek clairvoyant in Athens who would turn out a good job with that sort of thing. No wonder you're out of patience."

"I am—with you." Martin Burnside glared at me, made strange noises in his throat, then slammed his fist down on the desk. "Didn't I say the same thing? But the blasted yarn hasn't a thing wrong with it! Ethnologically it's correct. In every way I can test it, correct! Take the blasted manuscript and read it. You'd swear it was written by some doddering old scholar who knew his business—or by an eyewitness."

I thumbed over the pages, frowned, and then looked up with a grin.

"Martin, I've got you right here, first off. Seems to be about the city of Cyrene in northern Africa. Well, as I recall, that wasn't founded until about 650 B.C. And our hero Ulysses is supposed to have lived a couple of hundred years earlier."

"Oh, yeah? Look it up," grunted

Martin Burnside. "I thought the same thing. Latest researches have shown that Cyrene was founded a good deal earlier than was supposed. It's one of those confounded twisted arguments that no one knows the right of!"

"Very well; what about this, then! The hero isn't called Ulysses at all, not even Odysseus, but *Ulixes*."

"And you call yourself an educated man!" said Burnside in scorn. "Go look in the Britannica or anywhere else. You'll see that *Ulixes* is correct, *Ulysses* is not, according to the Latin usage. If you're so damned smart, go home and study the thing. Lord knows I have some queer objects in my house, but this—well, it's the limit!"

He threw up his hands as though utterly baffled.

I COULD understand why, as I went over the sheets of typed paper. They fascinated me from the very start, with their picture of the man, their vivid, natural dialogue. A short, thick-set man with grizzled curly hair and beard, toiling up that long hillside road in the afternoon sunlight. He stooped a little with the weight of the long oar resting across his shoulder on a leathern pad. His gray eyes were very quick and sharp, a whimsical friendliness lay in his face. Yet the face was worn, deeply lined, brown with salt winds and spray. From his waist depended a sword and a long bundle in tarred cloth that knocked against his thigh as he strode. His clothing was ragged.

The hills and coastal forest behind had completely shut the glittering sea from sight, though it lay only ten miles away. To right and left was the desolate scrub of the upper benches, where no trees grew. Over the rise ahead showed grateful green, waving cypress and myrtle, the promise of water. To the right could be seen the beginning of a long green valley where sheep and goats were grazing. Far off to the left the westering sunlight struck upon a white city, half built, with an Acropolis crowning the rock above. There lay Cyrene, though the fishing craft which had landed the wanderer at the cove below did not know its name.

The road opened before him, the trees beside their ditches of water broke apart and showed a low stone house there at the head of the fields, where the spring of water gushed out. An old and a young woman appeared, washing and tending a lamb that was hurt. The wanderer stared at them in surprise.

"Now, by the gods, has the sun struck me or do I see Grecian dress?" he muttered, and turned in toward the scene. The two women looked up. One called sharply, and a young man appeared in the doorway and strode out to meet the newcomer.

"Greetings and welcome, if you are a friend," he said abruptly. "Speak out, for these are troublous times and if you are a spy of the Egyptians we'll know it."

"Grecian speech! May the gods reward you," answered the wanderer, and set down his long oar. It was far from his mind to reveal himself. The name of Ulixes was too well known in these later years; and he was a wary man. "Epheidas is my name, the son of Aias of Dorion, and I follow the sea for a trade. Also, I am a minstrel."

"The sea!" repeated the young man, with an expression of wonder. "And what is the sea? And what is this thing you carry, which looks like a flail, or a winnowing beam?"

For a moment Ulixes stood there staring, and his jaw dropped. Then a great cry burst from him, and with one surging thrust he drove the oar into the ground so that it stood upright, and a glorious light came into his face.

"Blessings upon you, gray-eyed Athene, and all other gods!" he cried out joyfully. "Whether or no these folk be mad, my journey is ended. To you, Poseidon, god of the sea, will I sacrifice in this spot; I give you thanks."

NOW the older woman beckoned the young man. They, in turn, thought the stranger out of his head, and small blame to them.

"Mad or not, he is no ordinary man," said the older woman. "He may be some god come to visit us; one never knows. Welcome him fittingly and prepare a meal."

They bustled about. The young man brought wine to Ulixes, then led him to the gushing spring, rubbing his arms and back with oil, and whistling softly at sight of the white scars and the muscles like corded bronze.

"You have led no peaceful life, good Epheidas."

"True for you," and Ulixes laughed in his gray-shot beard. "Heard you never of the siege of Troy, my friend?"

"Aye, but that was twenty years and more ago. Were you there? I've heard

great tales about it. Old Jason the minstrel was there, and so was Archelaus." His face darkened at the name. "May Apollo blast him! He rules Cyrene now."

Ulixes stared in puzzled wonder. "Tell me, where am I? What place is this?"

"The city of Cyrene, good sir. It was founded ten years ago by Aristoteles, who brought a colony here from Thera at the command of the Delphic oracle. We are under the protection of Apollo—and we are like to need it," he added under his breath.

The women called them to the meal. When the libation to the gods was poured, Ulixes pitched into the dates and milk and flesh with a will. He caught the curious looks of his hosts, and their glances at the oar in the ground outside; his first hunger appeased, he eyed them with his friendly, winning smile.

"Upon my word, each of us thought the other a bit daffy, eh?" he said, chuckling. "Come, I'll be frank, though I don't understand the situation. Long ago, the prophet Tiresias told me that for my sins I would never appease the gods until I bore an oar into a land where people had never heard of the sea. When a stranger should ask if the oar were a flail, I was to plant the oar and make sacrifice to Poseidon, god of the sea. So, young man, when I met you my travels were ended. But how, in the name of all that's wonderful, does it happen that you never heard of the sea? It's only ten miles away."

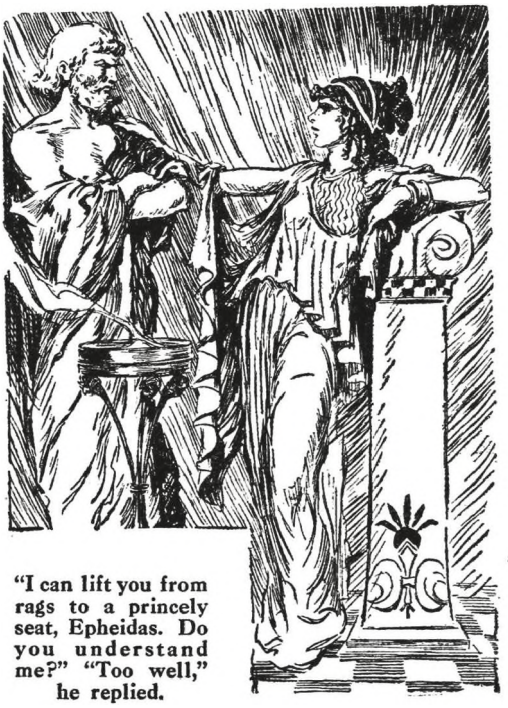
The simple folk exchanged uneasy glances, then the older woman made reply.

"Lord, when our people first settled here, they did not like the country. Many fled away home again. So Aristoteles destroyed all the ships and boats, forbade any of us to go within sight of the sea, and ordered that the word itself should never be uttered, that the younger generation might forget its very name."

At this Ulixes frowned, then broke into a laugh.

"Well, I should not quarrel with the situation!" he said cheerfully. From his pouch he produced some coins. "Here is money; in the morning, give me a sheep that I may make fitting sacrifice to Poseidon. At the moment, I'm worn out. Did you say that one Archelaus rules in this land?"

"Aye, lord. He married Semele, the daughter of Aristoteles who is now old and blind. An evil woman is she, though



"I can lift you from rags to a princely seat, Epheidas. Do you understand me?" "Too well," he replied.

beautiful. She flung her brother Battus in prison, and it is said that he is dead, so that Archelaus might inherit the rule with her. And now the Egyptians have come upon us, and there is war, and only the gods know what will come of it all."

"So?" queried Ulixes. "Well, it is not my affair. Can you give me a sleeping place?"

He was shown to a bed, and in five minutes the wanderer was asleep; but he slept with that tarred bundle beneath his head, for a pillow. It was long, very long and hard, battered, and so black with tar and pitch as to be repulsive.

When he wakened, daylight was at hand, and a rush of voices, loud harsh tones and the quick, eager cries of women. He lay quiet, warily listening, and heard himself spoken of, and a burst of laughter. Presently armed men broke into the room and haled him forth with his bundle; he made no resistance.

His hosts had been packed off in the train of other folk, toward the city. Men were hastily gathering the flocks in the valley. Near by stood a chariot, a beautiful woman in light armor at the reins. Ulixes comprehended that all the settlers and their flocks were being hastily gathered at the city itself; the Egyptians must be close. Now to him strode a proudly angry man in armor, a tall, dark-browed man with hot eyes, who halted and surveyed him with a sneer.

Even after many years, Ulixes knew him at once.

"A spy of the Egyptians, eh?" he cried. "Confess, fool! I am Archelaus, captain of the host. Your sorry tale does you no credit. Who hired you to spy upon us?"

Ulixes gave the name he had chosen and repeated his story. He remembered this Archelaus for a youth at Troy, whom he had ordered whipped out of the army as a thief. In the midst of his speaking, the other broke in fiercely.

"Liar! You are a Greek serving the Egyptians, a traitor. What's more, you have the crafty, hangdog look of a rascal I once knew too well, one Ulixes. He's long since dead and gone, but for the resemblance you bear him, you'll suffer. What's in that bundle, eh?"

"Bones, lord," replied Ulixes craftily. "The bones of my father, which I have sworn to bear home to Greece where they may be burned and buried. No, the story is a true one, Archelaus. I beseech you, give me a sheep or a ram from these flocks, that I may fulfil my penance and offer sacrifice to Poseidon—"

Archelaus broke into angry laughter. "A fine story! Here, guards. Tie that bundle about his neck before you slay him."

Suddenly the woman called from the chariot, for she had been looking hard at the wanderer with her great blue eyes. Archelaus went to her, and Ulixes understood that she was Semele, his wife. Then the captain turned.

"Do not slay the man! Bring him along as a prisoner, to the palace. Make haste!"

He mounted into the chariot, and was borne away with a rush of hoofs.

ULIXES was driven along, with many a jest from his captors. Presently the half-built city rose into plain sight ahead, with its long eminence, its groves and gushing streams, its unfinished palace fortress crowning all. Below it the plain sloped gradually to the southward in billowy fields of grain broken only by new defenses.

The prisoner was led up to the citadel, eying all he saw in great curiosity. The people were laboring hard at the walls. Here were companies of Greek spearmen and slingers, other bands of black men and hired mercenaries from the country roundabout; blue-eyed, fair-haired Berbers, who carried short bows and heavy spears. Out on the plain pits were dug and a trench was thrown up, like the trenches at Troy. The heart of Ulixes went out to these, his own folk, but he held his peace. He knew too well what fate awaited him at the hands of Archelaus were he recognized.

At the palace, he was flung into a courtyard with other prisoners who had just been brought in—men cut off from the advancing Egyptian force. They were black men, powerful, who carried long bows nearly the length of the men themselves. Long, but not of great power, were these bows, and a smile touched the lips of Ulixes as he eyed them. When he saw the Numidians fingering their shorter bows, and shooting at marks, he smiled again, for they shot like children—fast enough, true enough, yet pulling back the arrow between their fingers, gripping it and not the string, and drawing to the chest as they shot.

LATER in the morning came the captain of the host, and the old blind Aristoteles who had founded this colony, and with them others, to view the prisoners. Sick and blind as he was, there was wisdom and power in the features of the old founder; and when the Egyptians had been tortured and slain, he demanded to speak with the spy.

"Stand up, dog!" and Archelaus stirred the wanderer with his foot. Ulixes gave his assumed name, denied that he was a spy, and once more demanded freedom to make his sacrifice to Poseidon.

"I am a minstrel and a guest, and no spy," he concluded. "See to it!"

Old Aristoteles shook his white head.

"Evidently your tale is a lie, Epheidas, for the prophet Tiresias has long been dead, a generation ago, and assuredly you've not spoken with him in hell."

A great laugh arose at this. Ulixes said nothing; he had, indeed, spoken with the ghost of Tiresias, but dared not say so. He would not be credited.

"So you are a minstrel?" sneered Archelaus, and smote him across the face. "Well, we may put that to the test later, rascal. Eh? What's the tumult about?"

A sound of shouting, and wild cries came wailing up through the city. A guard ran hastily and saluted, with words that the Egyptians were in sight. Archelaus went off in haste, and trumpets sounded; but one of the visitors came and sat near Ulixes and gazed upon him. An old man, this, evidently of some position.

"I have been sent to take you to the Lady Semele on the towers," he said, "but first I desire a word with you. I am the minstrel, Jason. It is in my mind that I have heard your voice in other days, Epheidas. Your name is strange to me, but I never forget a voice. Were you not at Troy?"

"Aye," said Ulixes. "And in those days I was something like the great Ulixes in voice and accent. Often I was mistaken for him."

"He would have few friends in this place," said the minstrel. " When I sing of battles on the windy plain of Troy, Archelaus would lay whips upon me did I mention the name of Ulixes."

"As, perhaps, Ulixes once laid whips upon him," and the wanderer laughed softly. "What does the Lady Semele want with me?"

"How should I know?" said the minstrel, and slipped something into the hand of Ulixes. It was a little knife, very sharp. "Take this, and may the gods protect you! Now come. Guards! Two of you bring this man to the Lady Semele."

Ulixes was led after the old minstrel, concealing the little knife under his torn garments. By this gift, he understood that Jason must have indeed recognized him.

Semele, very beautiful in her light armor, stood with her women and old Aristoteles on the walls. She had no time for the wanderer now, however, and motioned Jason away. Outspread below was the plain, and Archelaus was leading out the companies to meet the advancing force of Egyptians—leading them out, far beyond the trench line. A dozen chariots, and the mounted Numidian archers, and the fighting line behind.

Ulixes looked out at the Egyptian array. Perhaps two thousand men in all, he thought; small, compact companies spread out in a half-moon, and behind was their baggage train of camels and horses and asses. They had brought only a few chariots across the desert from the Nile. Thinner and farther spread their line, and Archelaus hurled his chariots and cavalry straight at the midst to cut it asunder.

He never reached it.

A GLITTER of arrows in the sunlight, gust upon gust of them. The horses plunged down, the chariots sprawled and tumbled, the ranks of mounted archers were broken and shattered. Watching with fierce eyes aglimmer, Ulixes saw the truth. Those feeble Berber and Numidian bows were far outranged by the longer bows of the Egyptians, who now advanced to catch the whole array of Cyrene within its outflung line.

Archelaus, escaping from that hideous wreckage, drew back his Greeks to the trench line, dismounted his archers. Behind a shield-wall, the Greeks stood firm. Once the Egyptians charged in, but once only; they were beaten back with terrible loss, the sling and light arrows piercing them, the heavy spears smashing them down. They drew back, and beyond range of the slings and bows, arrayed their line of camp. The sun was setting; men came forward from each side, and a truce was made until dawn.

SEMELE bore down upon the wanderer and his guards, fury and dismay in her lovely face, and waved impatiently.

"Take him away, away," she cried out. "Tonight, bring him to the banquet hall. See to it, Jason. Until then, thrust him into a dungeon, anywhere."

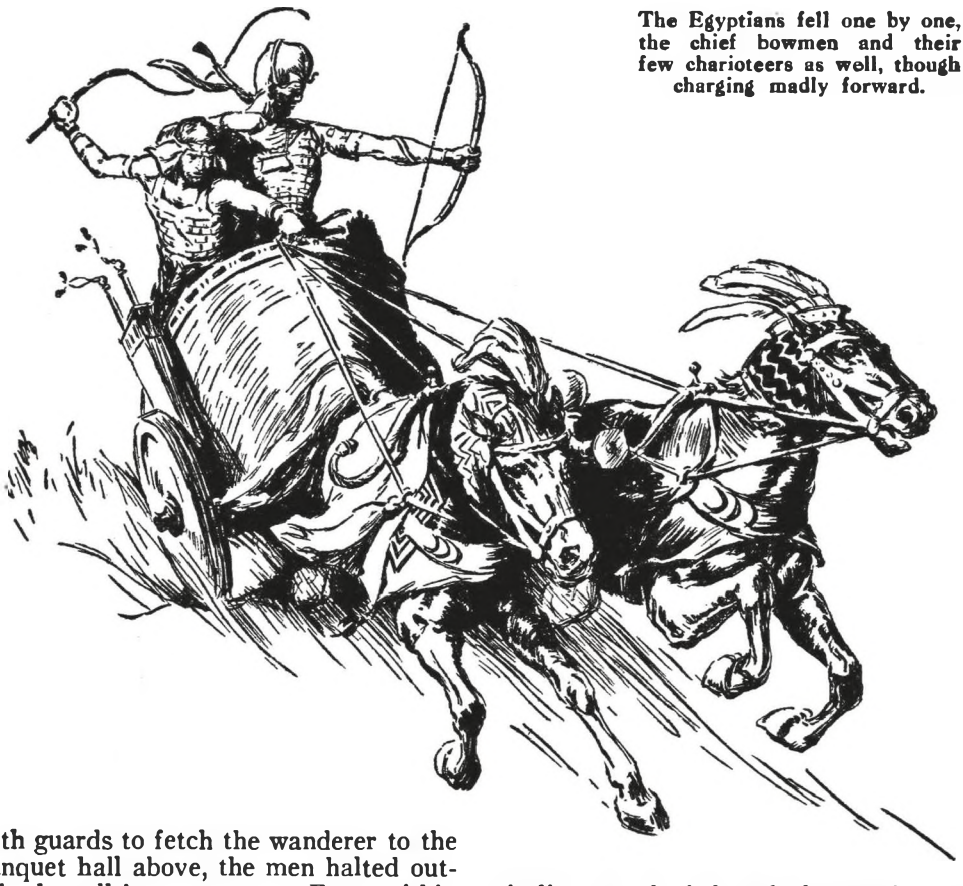
She hastened away, to join with other women in a long procession to the shrine of Apollo on the west face of the eminence, where the priests were sacrificing. A procession of grief and tears, since all knew the army was doomed. The hapless, sullen Archelaus withdrew all but his guards from the trenches.

Into the sunset rose the campfires of the Egyptians like smoke ascending from funeral pyres among the trees. Their front lines were out in the plain, but their main camp was made about the pleasant fountains of Theste and the groves around the place.

As for Ulixes, he found himself imprisoned in a dungeon where a hapless criminal lay chained to the wall and forgotten save by the jailers, who drew money for the keep of their captives. In the darkness, the two men fell into talk, and astonishment came upon the wanderer. For this wretch was Battus, the son of Aristoteles, supposedly dead long since. Only that evil woman, his sister, knew he was yet alive.

The two of them talked a long while in the darkness. Craftiest and most skilled in stratagem of all men was Ulixes, and while he knew not what would take place on the morrow, he knew the gods had not given this secret into his hand for nothing.

They talked and talked in the darkness. When Jason the minstrel came



The Egyptians fell one by one, the chief bowmen and their few charioteers as well, though charging madly forward.

with guards to fetch the wanderer to the banquet hall above, the men halted outside the cell in amazement. From within came voices, and one was that of the dead prince Battus.

"Battus!" murmured the Berbers. In their language the word meant *king*. "Does this stranger talk with the ghost of Battus, indeed?"

But when they went into the cell only the wanderer was there, and a shaggy, bearded criminal chained to the wall, his very name unknown. So Jason led Ulixes out of that place and to the great hall above.

No joyous gathering was there. Old Aristoteles had been stricken by the disaster and lay helpless and dying in his own room. In the king's seat was Archelaus, drinking moodily. Beside him was the lovely Semele, whose eyes rested strangely upon Ulixes as the latter was led in. A hollow laugh broke from Archelaus, and he ordered a lyre given the wanderer.

"Sing, rogue, sing!" he ordered, and emptied his wine-cup. "Sing, for tomorrow we perish, and the gods have deserted us."

Ulixes took the lyre and touched it.

"Glorious Apollo, hearken to me!" rose his voice. "The sacred laws of hospitality are denied and shattered. Yet the gods desert no man unless first he deserts them. Hear me, Apollo, god of this city! Hear me, and avenge all wronged men!"

As though by accident, part of his tattered garment fell over his face. Even so, he touched the lyre and began to sing; and upon the hall rose the voice of the dead Prince Battus, which was well remembered for its sweet clarity. Cries of amazement went up on all sides, and the Lady Semele turned deathly pale, but when Ulixes uncovered his face to show the sturdy features and the curly grizzled beard, the listeners sank back, deeming they had made some error.

Now in his own voice he sang the glories of the Greeks before Troy, and the great deeds of Achilles, and the fierce trench-fighting. It was a rousing, noble song of their own race and its greatness, so that men broke into wild shouts of applause and women joined in, and the hearts of those Greeks were kindled and lighted with hope and courage. But Archelaus drank the more deeply. Despair was upon him, for he saw only death facing him on the morrow; and in this he was right.

When the song was done, Semele made a signal to the captain of the guards, who understood. Ulixes was led from the hall into a corner of the guard-room. There, after a while, the Lady Semele came and stood before him in her beauty, and all the guards drew back to the other end of the place, beyond earshot of the two.

"You have a silver tongue indeed, Epheidas," she said, and her blue eyes were warm and glowing upon him. "Seldom have I beheld so godlike a man beneath such rags. Spy or not, it is in my power to save you from death."

ULIXES looked in her eyes and knew well her hot evil heart. He gripped the little knife under his rags, for it was in his mind to kill her. But he conquered his gusty anger; after all, to lay hand upon a woman was a shameful thing.

"The gods give power as they will, not as we decide," he said curtly.

She laughed. "So you think, eh? Come; I can lift you from rags to a princely seat, Epheidas. Well I know that you are no ordinary man. Do you not understand me?"

"Too well," he replied. "Death comes to all men; better it should come soon upon a clean heart, than late upon vile lust and crime."

She took a step backward, her lovely face darkening.

"What? So virtuous?" she sneered. "Have you never lain in a woman's arms?"

"Perchance," said Ulixes, and looked up with a sudden smile. "Hearken, Semele! If you wish to bargain, very well. Loosen your brother from his chains, restore him to his place, undo the crimes you have done—"

In a burst of fury, she smote him across the mouth, and whirled.

"Guards! Guards! Quickly!"

"Aye, quickly!" lifted the voice of Ulixes. "Quickly, before I tell you where lies the Prince Battus—listen!"

He spoke now in the voice of Battus, but at the order of Semele guards hurled themselves upon him and gagged him.

"Into a cell with him," she ordered. "In the morning early, take him out and plant a stake before the trenches. Tie him to it by a rope—him and this reeking bag he bears about his neck. Let the Egyptian arrows smite him first of all!"

A fitting doom for a spy, said the guards. They hustled the gagged man into a cell and left him there. Not the same dungeon this time, but another cell, closer to hand and easier to reach in the morning.

There, as Ulixes slept, came one who bribed the guards with money, then stole quietly into the cell and wakened him. It was old Jason the minstrel, who wept and pitied him, yet could give him no help. He took away the gag.

"When I heard you sing," he said, "I knew well that you were truly Ulixes the son of Laertes, as I had thought. You are the most crafty of all men. Why will you not let me whisper your name and save you from the doom laid upon you?"

Ulixes laughed a little, and touched the old minstrel's hand.

"Not so, friend Jason. I thank you for your honest heart. Tell me, if the prince Battus were alive, how would he stand with the people of this city?"

"They loved him, all of them," said the old minstrel sadly. "Were he alive at this hour, he might yet save us from the Egyptians, for he was skilled in war and of great heart. But that evil woman, his sister, and Archelaus with her, entrapped him with lies and tricks so that he was put into prison and died there."

"Perhaps he is not dead," said Ulixes cunningly. "Now listen, my friend. Death and destruction are close upon Cyrene; yet as you say, the gods have given me sharp wits and there may be a way out. Listen to me."

So they talked there for a long while, and when the old minstrel at last departed, he was like a man intoxicated with some great vision.

IN the morning early, Ulixes was dragged from his cell, and the guards led him out of the city to the trenches. There opposite the camp of the Egyptians he was made fast by a rope about his neck to a great stake planted in the ground. The Greeks and Numidians jeered at him for a spy, as they came flooding out to take position for the battle, and the wakening camp of the Egyptians looked at the scene in wonder.

Yet the Egyptians formed their ranks with laughter and shouted threats of how they would sack this city before the sun fell. As they knew well, their bows would carry a good two hundred paces. The slings of the Greeks would reach a scant fifty, and their bows barely a hundred. It was a meeting of weapons, not of men, this day. The trumpets and

cymbals blared and sounded as the sun rose, and groans went up from the women on the walls above, as the Egyptian archers came forth and their leader with them, well beyond shot of the Greek weapons.

Then Ulixes, taking out the little sharp knife that had been given him, cut the rope that was about his neck, and cut the tarred bundle beside him. Out upon the sand fell, not bones, but two great curving lengths of black horn, girded and tipped with bronze. He set the heavy bronze shanks together, twisted them so that they locked tightly—and there in his hand was a Cretan bow, a bow such as few men had ever seen. From the bundle he swiftly drew wrapped strings, and strung the bow, and tumbled forth black shafts upon the sand at his feet. Then, casting aside his rags, he uprose.

"Apollo! Hearken!" rose his voice, in a thunderous lift of sound that reached the citied walls above and the Egyptian ranks. "Hearken, Apollo! And to you, Poseidon, do I make sacrifice this day, in this place!"

The bow-string twanged in his hand as he tested it, and set an arrow to it, and drew the black shaft to his ear, gripping the string and not the shaft, as was the cunning wont of the Cretan archers. Before the Egyptian ranks stood their leader and his chief man; a splendid figure he was in the newborn sunlight, with glinting armor and splendid weapons. Full three hundred paces distant was the group, and Ulixes laughed as he loosed the shaft.

To the hum and twang of the bow, the shaft sped up the sunlight, flashed beyond the quickness of eye to follow it. A very ray of sunlight, it evaded sight. But the Egyptian captain uttered a loud cry, caught at his breast, and fell, with the black shaft transfixing him.

Now, suddenly, a wild yell broke from the Greeks and from the women ranging the walls, and from their allies.

"Apollo!" it rose. "Apollo! The god himself has come to aid us! Apollo!"

TWICE more did Ulixes bend the terrible bow of black horn, and twice more the black shafts soared and sang in the morning light, and two more of the Egyptian leaders plunged down to death. Then, abruptly, Ulixes whirled about and seized a shaft from the sand, and looked at where Archelaus the captain stood on the wall of the trench above.

"A gift to you, Archelaus!" lifted his trumpet voice. "A gift to you from Ulixes, the son of Laertes, to whom you denied the hospitality of the gods! A gift!"

The bow twanged, and Archelaus fell forward from the wall with the shaft through his throat, and lay dead on the mound of earth outside the wall. To him leaped Ulixes, and with deft hands stripped the splendid armor from his body, and donned it himself.

BUT none regarded him. For in the Greek camp, while the Egyptian array hung in wild indecision and without orders, had risen a tumult. It came from the city gates, out among the assembled companies, and engulfed even the men on the trench wall. A tumult of wild voices, of frantic cheering, with one name ever rising higher.

"Battus! Battus the king! Battus returned to life, our leader!"

Battus indeed, freed from his dungeon by the old minstrel, washed and shaven, garbed and armored, a javelin in his hand as he strode out. A tall, handsome man, his eyes glittering, who lifted his voice and shouted, so that the crowding soldiers fell silent. And now Ulixes, in the armor of Archelaus, climbed over the trench wall and came swiftly to him.

"Quickly, quickly!" said Ulixes. "As I bade you!"

No time to waste, indeed. Already the Egyptian advance was beginning. Battus gained silence anew and shouted swift, sharp orders. The Greeks obeyed him without question; the mercenaries, with yelps of eager delight.

But from the city and the towering walls, arose great wails of despair and fear, since none there knew what was happening, and all had seen Archelaus slain. And, when the Berber and Numidian companies mounted their waiting horses and went dashing away to right and left, not attacking the Egyptians but in wild flight, the shrieks of the women redoubled.

Only the Greeks remained, the slingers and heavy-armed men, guarding the trench, with Battus and Ulixes to lead them. A wild, joyous yell went up.

"Battus! King Battus! Ulixes, son of Laertes—fight for us, Apollo!"

Then their line lowered. The shields went up in air, the men crouched and waited, sinking down behind the parapet. Ulixes, going to the parapet, laughed softly to himself at the success of his

stratagem. No time to think, no time to act—they had been forced to accept Battus in their surprise. The moment of danger had passed.

Refreshed by their night's repose about the fountains of Theste, confident now in the disorder among the Greeks and the flight of the Berber cavalry, the Egyptians moved forward despite the loss of their leaders. Their bowmen halted, well within range but too far for the Greek slingers to reach them, and poured a rain of glistening shafts upon the trenches and the Greeks poised there. Two figures alone remained upright on the parapet—that of Ulixes, bow in hand, and beside him Battus with a shield. Men stood ready to hand up spare shafts.

NOW the son of Laertes plucked his bow, and above the clangor and whistle of shafts rose the deep thrum of its loosing. The black shafts were soon gone, but others took their place, and the captains of the Egyptian array fell one by one; the chief bowmen and their few charioteers as well, though charging madly forward, went down before that deadly archer, and there was no escaping his shafts. So, while their archers covered their advance, and they had but one man to fear, the Egyptian spearmen came forward in a wild charge, company after company. As they ran forward, their officers dropped, but they came on yelling for vengeance, on until they were at the very base of the trench parapet.

Then, at the voice of Battus, the slingers uprose and loosed their slings, and the front ranks of the Egyptians were blasted. The Greeks came to their feet, and as the rushing tide of men swept over the trench only to meet a line of planted spears, stones and javelins swept into them. Ulixes, sword in hand, ravened among them like a very god, and beside him Battus swung an ax. Suddenly Ulixes halted, shouting:

"Look, Egyptians, at your camp!"

Some turned. A frightful yell of terror and dismay arose from them all, for dark smoke was pouring up from their camp and baggage, the Berber cavalry were rushing out from the trees and charging their archers. In this moment the Greeks swept forward and smote the serried ranks, palsied by this unexpected assault in the rear.

The rest was slaughter. . . .

An hour later Ulixes and Battus, with guards about them, passed through the frantically cheering people to the palace, and came into the great hall. They halted and looked at the figure of Semele.

"Greetings to you," she lifted her voice in bitter accents. "Greetings, Battus my brother, and you, who now must be called Ulixes—you who murdered Archelaus! You have conquered, with lies and treachery—"

"Silence, you she-devil!" roared out Battus. "For you there is but one fate. Loose your shafts upon her, friend Ulixes, as she deserves."

"Not I," said Ulixes stoutly. "And if you lift hand upon your sister, beware the gods! Slay her not."

"Seize her then, guards," assented Battus. "Seize her and put her into the dark cell I know only too well."

The guards moved forward. But Semele, with a low laugh, lifted a cup and drained it, and flung the cup down.

"Too late!" she said. "Farewell, Ulixes, who with your black bow overcame the Egyptian host—farewell!"

She sank down and died, having drunk poison from that cup. And there ends the story, as some echoes of it may be found in the pages of Herodotus the Greek; and the later echoes of it swept down through the centuries in the Numidian cavalry, armed with heavy Cretan bows, and on into the days when the Roman legions were dead, and the Byzantine archers destroyed armies with the weapon that Ulixes had used long before in northern Africa.

WITH this sentence ended the typed manuscript forwarded from Greece by Dammler. However, I had found the link of falsity, the weak place in the whole story, and I hastened to Martin Burnside. He was at work in his study when I came in.

"Well, I've got it," I said, laughing. "This clairvoyant slipped up badly in one place. The story says that the bow of Ulixes fitted together and came apart in the center, as might well be—only the bronze grip was a solid piece. That is, the one sent on with the bronze tips."

Martin Burnside gave me a queer look.

"Yes," he said, "it was a solid piece, and no mistake. But when I had cleaned off the patina and encrusted dirt, what do you think I found? That it was in two sections which locked together with a half turn. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, will you?"

I had nothing to say.

"Wet Fire," the next of this unique series, will appear in the forthcoming June issue.

MAJOR JOHN HARNER, superintendent of the New York State Police, walked back and forth across the floor in his office in Albany. There was a frown upon his face. That frown deepened as he glanced at the newspaper on his desk.

"Baker Acquitted!" read the banner that carried across the front page. A smaller headline, covering three columns, contained the message: *"Jury Believes Story of Brutal Third Degree in Police Barracks."*

Major Harner stabbed a push-button with his thumb.

"Take a general order to all troop captains," he directed the trooper-clerk, who answered the summons. "Put it on the teletype at once."

The clerk recorded the dictation in shorthand:

"'Subject: Obtaining statements from prisoners.

"'All troop captains will be held directly responsible for any and all charges of brutality or use of intimidation or duress that may be brought against any of their men. This applies particularly to charges brought in connection with obtaining statements of admission of guilt, or confessions, from persons charged with serious crimes. While this department realizes that a counter-charge of duress is the only possible move on the part of the defense when a signed confession is produced by the prosecution, every captain is hereby instructed to obtain such statements, or confessions, only under conditions that will make it possible completely to disprove the claim of duress to the satisfaction of any jury. Only a stupid policeman makes use of what the public calls the "third degree." This department has no place for men who need it in order to prepare their cases.'"

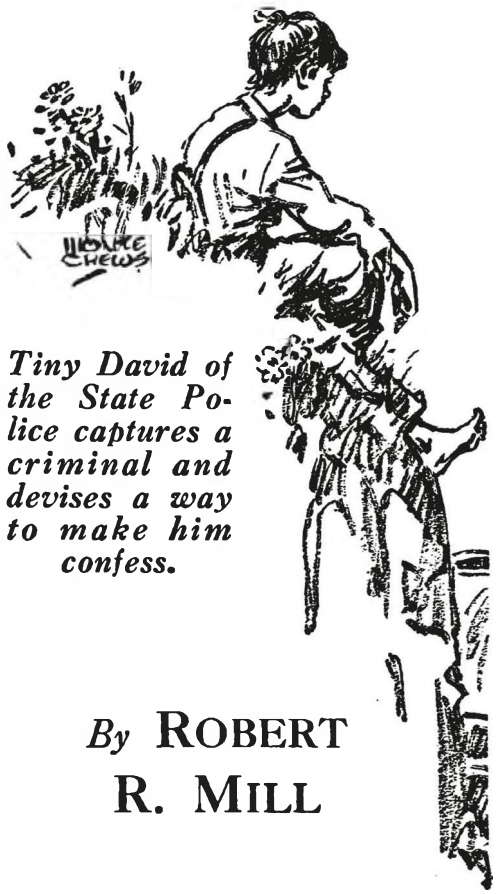
The message went clicking over the wires. It carried to the barracks of the Black Horse Troop, where a clerk tore the paper from the machine and placed it before Lieutenant Edward David, who was in charge during the absence of Captain Charles Field.

LIEUTENANT DAVID grinned as he read the order.

"Jim!" he called.

In due time Sergeant James Crosby appeared in the doorway, used the framework as a support while he gazed at the huge man sitting before the desk, and asked:

"What is it, Tiny?"



Tiny David of the State Police captures a criminal and devises a way to make him confess.

By **ROBERT R. MILL**

Lieutenant David ignored the familiarity.

"You brought in a drunk this morning, didn't you?"

"Yup," Sergeant Crosby admitted. "One of the drunkest drunks it has been my pleasure to handle. He was as helpless as a lieutenant. What about it?"

Tiny David's face was grave.

"For your sake, I hope the drunk has no complaint regarding the way you handled him."

Crosby considered.

"Well, when we went by the hotel, he saw that dizzy in the beauty-parlor and wanted to stop for a manicure. I told him we didn't have time, and that she wasn't interested in anything below the rank of lieutenant. Outside of that, we got along fine. But why do you ask?"

Tiny David handed him the general order.

"Read that. If there are any words you can't understand, I'll explain them to you."

Sergeant Crosby glanced through the message.

"Doesn't apply to me," was his verdict.

Fourth Degree

Illustrated by Monte Crews

"He got that bar for not missing dinner for three weeks straight. He's the best eater in the troop."

"The only statement the drunk made was that he had been appointed chief drinker-upper for three breweries, and I didn't bother to reduce that to writing. But if Albany lives up to that, we are going to have a lot of new captains. Every guy who makes a confession decides he made it under duress, as soon as he talks with his lawyer. The cop says he didn't. Then the jury decides. And any guy who can tell what juries will decide needs a ouija-board, a crystal and a qualified expert on telling fortunes with tea-leaves."

"That's about it," Tiny David admitted. "It puts us on a tough spot. But that's what cops have—"

The entrance of Max Payton, the top-sergeant, interrupted him.

"Teletype message you might be interested in."

Tiny David and Crosby bent over the paper. The Saranac Lake sub-station reported that an unidentified woman had been killed by a hit-and-run driver. They promised more later.

The promise was soon fulfilled. The hit-and-run car was a sedan, which was either green or black. It contained two men. There was no description of the men. This meager information, it was explained, had been obtained from a boy of twelve, who was the only witness of the accident.

TINY DAVID stood at the shoulder of the operator as the routine order to be on the lookout for the sedan went out to all patrols. Then the bell on the machine tinkled again as Saranac Lake obtained more data.

The woman, the keys clicked out, had been identified as Mrs. Cora Livingston.

Tiny David gave an exclamation of surprise and anger.

"Mother Livingston! The dirty rats!"

He turned to Sergeant Crosby.

"Lived at her house when I was a rookie on my first patrol. We didn't have any sub-stations then. Never was a night when we got in late that there wasn't coffee and pie, or something, waiting for us."

Sergeant Crosby nodded grimly.

"Reminds me of the time I landed in the hospital over there after that automobile crack-up. Didn't care whether I lived or died, right then. But Mother Livingston showed up with a jar of her chicken broth. Said she didn't know me, but that every man in the troop was one of her boys."

Tiny David motioned the operator aside, and his heavy fingers pounded out a command to Saranac Lake to obtain more information, and to obtain it quick. They stood waiting, and soon their wait was rewarded.

The two men, it was learned, had stopped at a lunch-cart before the accident. They were flashily dressed, and appeared to have come from some large city. They had inquired the road to Canada, and had decided on the route that led through Malone and Trout River. The place of the accident proved they had taken that route.

Sergeant Crosby hastily tightened his gun-belt.

"I'm going," he announced.

Tiny David nodded.

"Good luck. Wish I could go with you, but with the Skipper away I belong here."

Crosby stood in the doorway of the living-room long enough to motion to Sergeant Henry Linton, who was bent over a book.

"Come on, Linny. We roll."

AND they rolled. Linton asked no questions, but when the car skidded around a corner on two wheels he ventured a mild protest. Then Crosby volunteered an explanation.

"Why didn't you say so?" Linton demanded. "And what are you poking along for? Step on it!"

They stepped on it, and in a very short time arrived at a sharp turn in the road at the hamlet of Duane. There they parked their car, and took their stand in the road at a point where cars would ordinarily be running slow to negotiate the turn.

The first northbound car contained three girls, and they waved it on. The driver of a gasoline truck stopped to chat with them. Other cars, obviously not the one they sought, went by. An admiring audience, consisting of one small boy, perched on the bank near them.

"I am going to be a trooper when I grow up," he volunteered.

"That's fine," Sergeant Linton assured him. "We need some bright young fellows." He shot a dirty look at his companion. "When we get them, we can clean out some of the dead-wood."

The boy discovered a cloth-covered bar upon the breast of Linton's coat.

"What's that?" he asked.

Linton blushed. Crosby grinned.

"He got that bar for not missing dinner for three weeks straight. He's the best eater in the troop. He can eat—"

CROSBY'S explanation ceased abruptly as around the curve in the road came a green sedan. A quick glance showed that the car bore a New York City license plate. The occupants were two men, flashily dressed.

"Halt! State Police!"

Sergeant Linton shouted the command.

But the car, instead of stopping, picked up speed. It headed directly toward the two men and the boy.

Crosby and Linton, fumbling for their guns, leaned their weight upon their toes, prepared to jump. The boy, who had slid down the bank to examine Linton's decoration, stood a few feet in front of the troopers, gazing spellbound at the oncoming car.

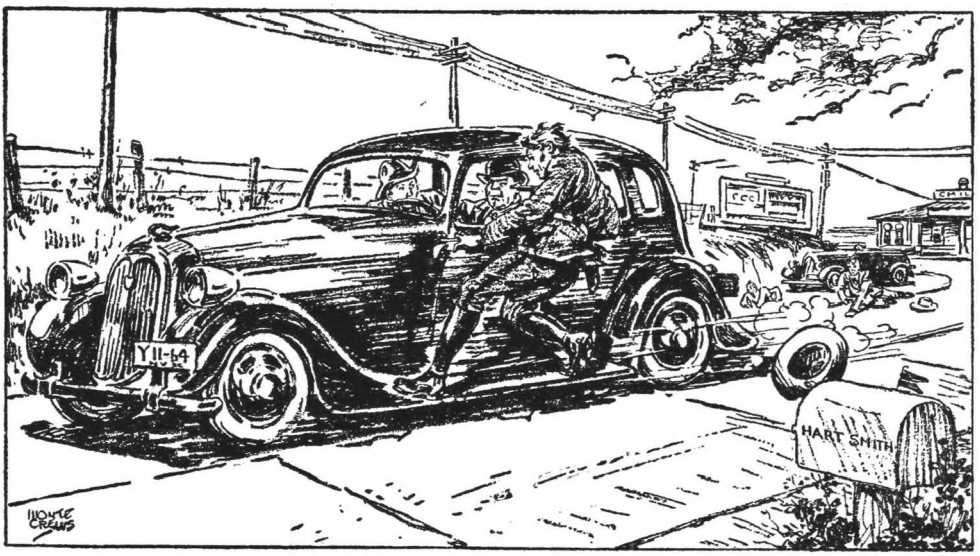
Just as the car was upon them, Crosby seized the boy, tossed him to safety at the side of the road, and tried vainly to regain his balance. He slipped against the side of the car, and was thrown violently to the ground.

Linton, however, vaulted to the running-board. He held on with his left hand. In his right hand there was a revolver, which was pointed at the driver.

"Pull over to the side!" he barked. "Pull over to the side and stop! If you don't, I'll drill you!"

The car pulled to a groaning halt. Out of the corner of his eye Linton saw Crosby climb painfully to his feet and walk slowly toward the car.

"Climb out!" he ordered the occupants unceremoniously.



Linton vaulted to the running-board. "Pull over to the side!" he barked. "Pull over to the side and stop! If you don't, I'll drill you!"

The two men lined up alongside the car as Sergeant Crosby approached. The driver's face contracted in a sneer as he faced the troopers.

"What's the big idea?" he demanded.

Linton studied the sneering face. There seemed to him something vaguely familiar about it.

"Nothing much," came his easy reply. "We saw that swell suit you are wearing, and we stopped you to get the name of your tailor."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Oh, yeah!" answered Linton.

The driver's companion stepped forward. He was small, oily, and with a face that spoke eloquently of back-room dives.

"Say," he began, "I guess you birds don't know who this big-shot is."

"Has he a card?" asked Linton.

The little man ignored the question.

"You boys look like smart coppers. Smart coppers, as a rule, don't care to tangle with Monk Loremus."

THE vague picture in Linton's mind cleared up. Monk Loremus was the alias of one of the most powerful gang leaders in New York. The Sergeant recalled a newspaper story concerning him, which had concluded with a laconic account of his eighteen arrests and the disposition of the various cases, dispositions in which "discharged" and "placed on probation" figured prominently.

"Isn't that nice?" asked Sergeant Crosby. "Stand still, Monk Loremus."

His practiced hands played over the form of the man. Linton performed a like service on the little man.

"What does this mean?" sputtered Loremus.

"Contractor lost a steam-roller," Crosby informed him. "Thought maybe you boys might have it. . . . Hello, what's this?"

He extracted a revolver from a shoulder holster.

"I got a permit," snarled Loremus. He produced it. Crosby examined it with interest.

"Issued by Judge Bernard Breem, in the Bronx. Of course, Judge Breem knew nothing about your reputation. Poor guy, he never sees the newspapers. We'll just send it along to the Appellate Division. They might be interested."

Loremus' face was not a pretty sight. His voice was low and ominous as he asked:

"Do you two smart guys know Honest Mike Casseldy?"

Sergeant Linton appeared to be deep in thought.

"Casseldy? No, don't prompt me. I have it. Mr. Casseldy is the gent who tells all the saps how to vote and how often to do it."

A self-satisfied smirk appeared upon the face of the gang leader.

"You are wise, copper. And what would you say if I was to tell you Casseldy and I are particular friends?"

Once more Linton appeared to be deep in thought.

"In that case," came his verdict, "I would say Casseldy is even more of a louse than I thought he was, and I always thought he was one of our very lousiest lice. Does that answer your question, sweetheart?"

Apparently it did. There was silence.

"Climb back into that car," ordered Crosby. "I'll ride the back seat, and tell you where to drive. Don't make any mistakes, because I have a very nasty temper. Sergeant Linton will follow in the other car—just in case." He settled himself comfortably on the rear seat. "To the barracks, James."

AT the barracks, Crosby ushered the two men into the captain's office, while Linton drove the car into the garage, where troop mechanics began to give it a careful going-over.

"This," said Sergeant Crosby to Tiny David, "is Monk Loremus. I don't know the name the other gentleman travels under, but I don't like his face."

Tiny David studied the two men.

"Can't say I like it, either," he admitted. He waved toward two chairs. "Sit down."

Monk Loremus leaned forward.

"I want to use the telephone."

The statement went unanswered.

"I have a legal right to make a call. I know my rights."

"Max!" called Tiny David. The top-sergeant appeared. "This gentleman wants to use the telephone."

Sergeant Payton turned to Loremus.

"What number do you want to call?"

"Circle—two, four, seven, eight, six."

The top-sergeant shook his head regretfully.

"That number doesn't answer."

"Wise guy!" snarled the gangster. "All right—I want to send a telegram."

Tiny David put paper and pencil before him.

"Write it on that," he directed. "I'll send it the first time I go by a telegraph office. That probably will be next Wednesday."

The voice of Monk Loremus rose to shrill crescendo.

"I know my rights! You can't lock me up without letting me use the telephone or telegraph."

"What could you be locked up for?" demanded Tiny David.

"I don't— How am I to know what a cop gets a brainstorm about?"

"And what makes you think you are locked up?"

"I can't walk out, can I?"

Tiny David hesitated before he replied.

"Well, hardly," he admitted. "You are here as our guests. It wouldn't be polite if you walked out on us."

"Listen, head-copper," snarled Loremus. "Ever hear of Sam Leibmar?"

"The jury-fixer?" asked Tiny David. "I've heard of him, but I never heard anything good about him."

"All right, cowboy-cop. But Sam is my mouthpiece. He hears from me every evening by six, or he starts looking for me. He comes looking with writs, and he knows where to look. You guys ever hear of habeas corpus?"

"Corpus?" Sergeant Crosby repeated the name. "Seems to me a family by that name lived on the Brushton Road, but they moved away some time ago."

"You'll meet them again tomorrow morning when Sam gets here," snarled the gangster.

"That leaves the night open," said Tiny David.

"The night," hummed Crosby, "was made for love."

"Listen!" There was slight uneasiness in the tones of the gangster. "You guys put a finger on Moxie or me, and you'll pay for it. Sam will have your blood."

Tiny David ignored the outburst as he called to the top-sergeant.

"Telephone Saranac Lake," he ordered. "Have them round up the kid who saw the accident and the men who saw the two birds at the lunch-cart, and rush them over here right away."

LOREMUS shifted in his chair. "What am I supposed to have done?" he demanded.

Tiny David stared at him a full moment before he replied:

"You aren't supposed to have done anything, Loremus. But I'll tell you what you did do." His voice grew stern. "You ran down a defenseless woman, and killed her. You left her in the road when you didn't know or care if she was dead or alive. A real man wouldn't do that to a dog."

"Prove it." Loremus spoke out of the corner of his mouth. "Prove it so a jury will believe it." His smile became a complacent leer. "And remember, Sam will have a few words to say to that jury."

Lieutenant David wheeled upon him.

"You let me worry about that. You concentrate on keeping out of jail. And

"This guy makes the crack that Mae West is his favorite actress. The other guy says Claudette Colbert. Then they goes to it."

while you are concentrating, keep that big mouth of yours shut. It happens we knew the woman you killed. We thought a lot of her. All we want is an excuse to start pushing you around. If I could get a good smack at you, I wouldn't care what a jury did to you."

There was silence, a silence broken only when Sergeant Linton appeared in the doorway and beckoned Tiny David into the outer office.

"No luck," he reported. "Lieutenant McMann went over the bus with a microscope. Slight dent on the right running-board. We know that did it, but we can't prove it. He will have witnesses to swear it was caused when he hit a truck on Third Avenue. There was about a pin-point of some fluid on the right front wheel. But not enough to get a smear for a blood-test. Guess we are out of luck on the car."

Tiny David nodded gloomily.

"It all depends on the kid," he admitted.

They went back to the inner office to await the arrival of the witnesses from Saranac Lake.

"How long do I have to sit here and keep up this clown act?" demanded Loremus.

"Get up any time you feel like it," Tiny David told him. "It will be a pleasure to knock you down."

"Like to say that if we met on the street and you didn't have that trick coat on?" asked Loremus.

"Like to walk out in back and have me take the coat off?" asked Tiny David.

Again there was silence, which was broken by the arrival of Sergeant John King with the witnesses from Saranac Lake. Tiny David met them in the outer office.

"This," said Sergeant King, "is Billy Wilson."

Tiny David grinned as he shook hands with the boy. He was a bright youngster of about twelve.

"Hello, Billy. Going to try to help us out?"

The boy nodded.

"Good. But don't tell us anything that isn't the truth. Just how much of the accident did you see, Billy?"

"Gosh, Mister," the boy began, "it was just a flash. There was the woman. A car came by. Then it was gone. But there was the woman in the street. I didn't know what to do."

Tiny David nodded.

"Did you see the two men in the car, Billy?"

"Just a flash, Mister," the boy persisted.

Tiny David's shoulders sagged in resignation.

"Good enough, Billy. All you can do is tell the truth. There are some men in this other office. I want you to tell me if you ever saw any of them before."

The boy stood in the doorway. He gazed at Loremus and his companion without any sign of recognition; but when he saw Sergeant Crosby, his face lighted up.

"I know that man," he said. "He came around to my house with some sort of a paper. My pop had been sick for two years, and when the man heard that, he told Pop to forget he had been there, because he hadn't been able to find the house. After he was gone, my pop said that he was a swell—"

Tiny David placed his arm about the boy's shoulder and led him away.

"All right, Billy. Thanks a lot."

BACK in the inner office, Loremus laughed hoarsely.

"Put the finger on you instead of me, didn't he, Santa Claus?" he demanded. "Sam will tell that to the jury."

Crosby's fists were clenched.

"One more crack, Monk, and you get a handful of fingers in your teeth."

Two attendants from the lunch-cart appeared in the office and identified Loremus and his companion as the two men who had inquired the way to Canada.

"So what?" demanded the gangster.

"Not so much," Tiny David admitted. "It just puts you on the road at the right time and makes you eligible."

"A lot of other guys are just as eligible," retorted Loremus.

"Think so?" asked Tiny David. He led the lunch-cart men to the outer office. There he thanked them, instructed Sergeant King to drive them and the boy back to Saranac Lake, and then he returned to the inner office.

The minutes ticked on.

"How long do I sit here?" asked Loremus.

"Want to make a statement?" countered Tiny David.

"Sure," said the gangster. "I think the Yanks will cop the pennant."

Tiny David turned to Crosby and Linton. He pointed at the companion of Loremus.

"Take him below. Mug him and get his prints." His left eyelid dropped slightly. "Then see if he doesn't care to make a statement. You can persuade him, but don't use violence, duress or intimidation." He gestured toward the gang leader. "I'll try to keep Mr. Loremus occupied."

Crosby and Linton departed with their prisoner, who had grown somewhat pale. Tiny David picked up a pen and began to write.

Loremus fidgeted in his chair.

"What's the big idea?" he demanded.

"We are all alone. Cozy, isn't it?"

"So what?"

Tiny David put the pen aside. He rubbed his huge hands as if in anticipation.

"Lots of things can happen when two men are alone, Monk. Then it is the word of one man against the other. I doubt if any twelve men would believe you under oath. And I promise you one thing: there won't be any marks for you to show them."

Tiny David went back to his writing.

"That," said Loremus, "is talk. It is cop-talk."

He produced a cigarette and lighted it with a flourish.

"Talk," he continued, "is cheap. You can get all the talk you—"

He checked himself abruptly. From somewhere in the depths of the building, apparently directly beneath the office, came the confused sounds of a struggle. It must have been a mighty struggle, for the walls of the building shook, and an ornamental paper-weight upon the desk danced about violently.

Loremus became two shades whiter. From beneath puckered eyebrows he regarded Tiny David with apprehension. That gentleman looked up from his writing with mild exasperation.

"I wish the boys wouldn't be quite so enthusiastic about it," he remonstrated.

"Say—" began Loremus.

Again there was an interruption. Some heavy object struck the outer wall of the barracks with terrific force. The windows rattled. There was a hollow, sickening thud as the object apparently fell from the wall to the hard floor of the basement. A heart-rending groan, slightly muffled, but very realistic, carried up to the office. Then came an intense, ominous silence.

LIEUTENANT DAVID sighed with resignation and pushed his pen aside.

"If the boys are going to play as rough as that, I'll never get these reports made out." He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I can't say that I blame them."

The face of the gangster was a study. His fingers, resting upon the arms of the chair, were twitching at a furious rate. His glance was fastened upon Tiny David, and there was an unspoken question and a plea for mercy in his eyes.

Tiny David resumed his writing.

"Maybe I can get on with this," he ventured, "but I doubt it."

He was a true prophet. Interruption came in the form of swishing noises, each one of which was followed by a thud as a moving object struck some solid mass, and each one of which was accompanied by a hollow groan.

Tiny David, apparently, felt explanation and defense were necessary.

"A layman might call that brutality. But we know police work, don't we, Monk? We know that guys who run over a woman, leave her to die like a dog, and then laugh at the cops, don't deserve much mercy. That's right, isn't it, Monk?"

Monk Loremus moistened his lips with his tongue. He was spared the necessity of making a reply, for once more the muffled voice, throbbing with agony, carried up to the office:

"Stop! For God's sake—"

The voice trailed away into silence.

THERE was a knock upon the door. Sergeant Payton entered.

"Sergeant Crosby is ready for the stenographer, sir."

"Very well," Tiny David said. "Send one down to them." He jabbed at a blotter with his pen. "Are the boys tired, Max?"

The top-sergeant hesitated before he replied.

"Not particularly." His voice was deep and gruff. "They really didn't get much of a work-out." Payton stretched his heavy arms. "Besides, I told them the Lieutenant and I would give them a hand on the last half of their job."

Tiny David nodded.

"How soon will they be ready?"

"About half an hour."

"Tell them not to hurry." Tiny David picked up the pen. "I have a lot of writing to do."

The scratching of the pen was the only sound in the office. It continued for a full three minutes.

"Say—" began Loremus.

Tiny David glanced up.

"What?"

"Suppose—this is just suppose—a guy was to kill a dame with a car, accidental-like, but didn't stop; what would they hang on him?"

"Manslaughter."

"What's the rap?"

"Up to twenty years. Why?"

"Aw, nothing."

Again the scratching of the pen was the only sound..

"Suppose a guy was to cop a plea, and save you birds a lot of trouble, would you go light on him?"

Tiny David halted his work.

"Not in this case. We don't need it. We have a signed confession from his accomplice."

Once more the pen began to scratch. Above it sounded footsteps approaching the office. Monk Loremus sagged in his chair.

"I'll make a statement," he muttered sullenly. . . .

Forty minutes later Tiny David blotted the signature Monk Loremus placed on the last page of a typewritten statement and watched the gangster put his initials on each page of the document.

That document told the story of the death of Mrs. Livingston. In it Loremus said he was making the statement voluntarily. He declared he had not been made any promises. He emphasized the fact that he had not been abused, and that he had not been threatened. But in the doorway he could not resist a final taunt.

"That's all true, but wait until Sam shows up in court with what's left of Moxie."

Tiny David grinned.

"Sam and I will worry about that." He turned to Sergeant Payton. "Take him to a room upstairs and let him go to bed, if he wants to. Stay with him."

He picked up the signed confession. Then he made his way to the basement, where, following the commotion and turmoil, everything was strangely calm.

SHORTLY after ten o'clock the next morning a deputy sheriff, somewhat abashed because of the nature of his errand, appeared at the barracks. Tiny David greeted him with a grin.

"Valentine Day?" he asked, as he accepted two legal documents.

The papers, stripped of legal phraseology, ordered the commanding officer of the Black Horse Troop to produce one Louis (Monk) Loremus and one Joseph (Moxie) Tobiart at the chambers of Justice Ernest Cunninghast immediately, and also to show cause why the same Justice Cunninghast should not issue an order restraining the same commanding officer and his men from applying physical force and mental duress to the said Loremus and Tobiart.

"Mr. Leibmar is on the job," was

Tiny David's comment. "Tell Judge Cunninghast we will comply with the order at once."

Less than fifteen minutes later Tiny David and Monk Loremus entered the Judge's chambers, where the attorney was in conference with the jurist.

After Leibmar and Loremus had held a whispered conference, the lawyer addressed Judge Cunninghast.

"If it pleases the court, my clients, Loremus and Tobiart, have been illegally detained at the barracks of the State Police."

"When were they arrested?" asked Judge Cunninghast.

"They were detained for questioning at three o'clock yesterday afternoon," said Tiny David. "The code provides they must be arraigned or be released within twenty-four hours. They will be arraigned well within the limit."

Judge Cunninghast nodded.

"Proceed, Mr. Leibmar."

The lawyer ignored the set-back.

"If it please the court, my client, Loremus, was forced to sign a false admission of guilt, in which he confessed commission of a crime of which he was not guilty."

"What form did the force take?"

"Severe mental duress."

"How was the mental duress applied?"

"By administering a cruel and inhuman beating to my client Tobiart, and intimating, by obvious inference if not by actual words, that the same fate was in store for my client Loremus, if he refused to sign the false confession."

Judge Cunninghast frowned, and his eyebrows were raised.

"Was the alleged beating administered to the defendant Tobiart in the presence of the defendant Loremus?" he asked.

"No, Your Honor; they were too clever for that."

A SLIGHT note of irritation crept into the voice of the Judge.

"Then how can the defendant Loremus testify regarding the alleged beating?" he demanded.

"He has ears," retorted Leibmar.

"The defendant Tobiart also has a tongue," countered Judge Cunninghast, and there was an acid note to his voice. "Furthermore, you are putting the cart before the horse when you attempt to establish what is alleged to have happened to the defendant Tobiart through the testimony of the defendant Loremus. The defendant Tobiart is best qualified to testify as to what is alleged to have happened to him. Where is he?"

Leibmar's smile was bland.

"That is just what we are wondering, Your Honor. Perhaps our friends the State Police can enlighten us."

"The defendant Tobiart should be here any minute," Tiny David asserted.

"Why the delay?" snapped Judge Cunninghast.

Leibmar's smile became still more bland.

"This is just a suggestion," he purred, "but the thought came to me that the troopers may have deemed it advisable to take Tobiart to a doctor before producing him before Your Honor."

JUDGE CUNNINGHAST pounded upon a book on his desk.

"I am determined to get to the bottom of this incident," he asserted. "This is an informal procedure, and we are less bound by legal rules of evidence than the sole desire to see justice done. For that reason, the court will question the defendant Tobiart, when he appears, without suggestions or interruptions from either Lieutenant David or defense counsel. Is that plain, gentlemen?"

Tiny David smiled and bowed. Leibmar nodded assent. And just then the door opened, and Tobiart appeared in the custody of Sergeant Crosby.

Neither scars nor bandages were visible upon the prisoner. He walked with no trace of stiffness or lameness. His clothing was neatly pressed, and his linen was spotless. And between him and his captor, judging by their expressions and attitude toward each other, there existed at least a state of tolerance. The only untoward incident took place when the two prisoners came face to face for a moment.

Then Mr. Tobiart's look of complacency vanished, and in its place came a grimace of hatred and contempt.

"Hello, rat!" His whispered greeting to his erstwhile chief was plainly audible.

"Tobiart," said Judge Cunninghast, "you signed a statement admitting that you were a passenger in an automobile which struck and killed a woman yesterday afternoon."

"That's right, Judge."

"Why did you sign it?"

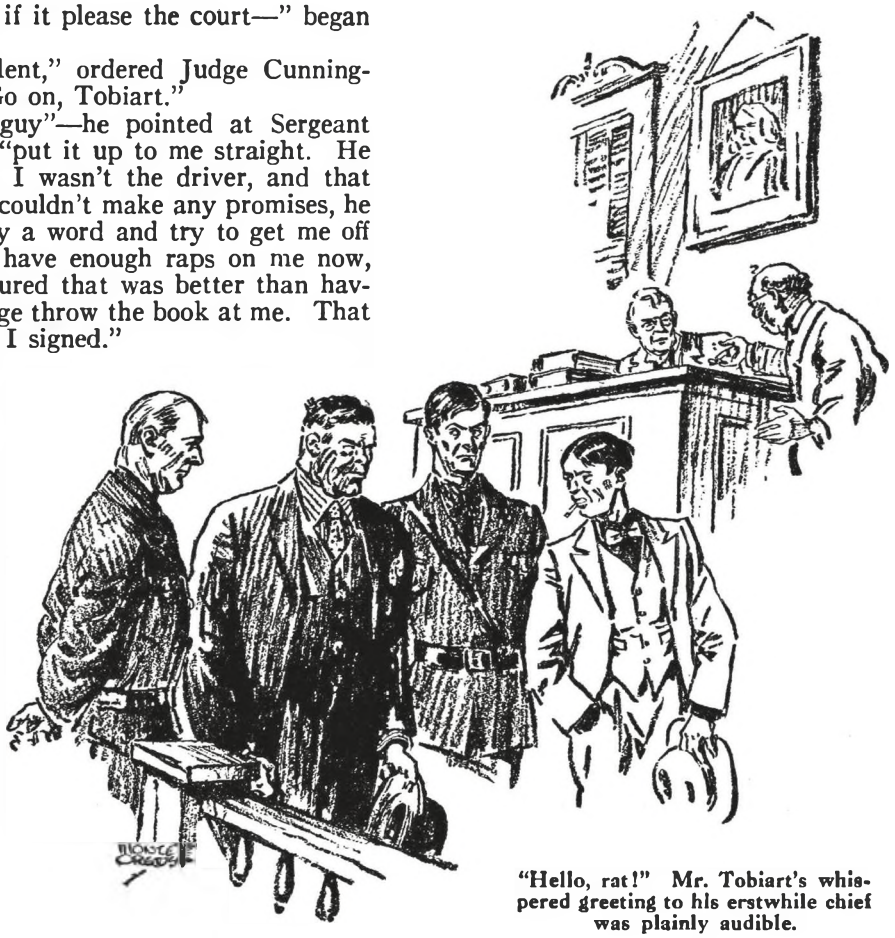
Tobiart shifted from foot to foot.

"It was an accident," he muttered. "The smart thing would have been to stop. I told that to Monk at the time, but he said—"

"Now, if it please the court—" began Leibmar.

"Be silent," ordered Judge Cunninghast. "Go on, Tobiart."

"This guy"—he pointed at Sergeant Crosby—"put it up to me straight. He said that I wasn't the driver, and that while he couldn't make any promises, he would say a word and try to get me off light. I have enough raps on me now, and I figured that was better than having a judge throw the book at me. That was why I signed."



"Hello, rat!" Mr. Tobiart's whispered greeting to his erstwhile chief was plainly audible.

He paused for a moment, and then tried to recover some of the prestige this admission of weakness had cost him.

"But I didn't sign until they showed me the statement my dear pal had put his John Henry to. Trust Monk to try to be first under the wire, and pad his own fall. Me, I just climbed on the wagon."

There was a puzzled frown upon the face of Judge Cunninghast. Intense hatred colored the features of Monk Loremus. The face of Leibmar was a study in complete bewilderment. Tiny David and Crosby were smiling.

"Did any of the officers strike you?" demanded Judge Cunninghast.

"Strike me?" Tobiart shared the bewilderment of his companion in crime and their attorney. "No, they treated me swell." A ray of light penetrated his not overbright intellect. "There was a bit of a shindig, but it was between the two guys that took me down in the basement, and I guess they was just clowning.

"This guy makes the crack that Mae West is his favorite actress. The other guy says Claudette Colbert has it over her like a tent. Then they goes to it, real serious-like. They like to wrecked the building. This guy gets the other guy down, and makes him yell for mercy like a stuck pig. Then he lets him up, and we all sat there, real friendly-like, until the Lieutenant comes down with the statement my dear pal has signed. Then I signed. I wanted to, anyway. After that, I went to bed. That's all there was to it, Judge. And if you can do anything to get me off with—"

Judge Cunninghast raised his hand. His eyes were twinkling.

"Your motion," he informed Leibmar, "is denied." The twinkle in his eyes became more pronounced. "There seems to have been a slight misunderstanding here. The defendant Loremus apparently was laboring under a delusion."

Leibmar gave an exclamation of disgust.

"Delusion is right!"

"While from some standpoints it might be termed regrettable that the defendant Loremus placed the interpretation he did upon the noise of struggle he heard, the court feels that is not a matter within its province. Neither can it feel that the State Police are to blame. And speaking in an unofficial capacity, the thought intrudes that a plain recital of what happened will hardly benefit the chances of the defendant Loremus with any jury."

Leibmar glared at Loremus.

"This is not a case for a jury, Your Honor. I am advising my client to take a plea. We will attempt to negotiate with the district attorney." The unwillingness of the lawyer to be associated with what he knew was a losing cause was apparent in his next statement. "Pressure of business compels me to return to New York at once. But one of my associates will arrive and take care of it."

He wheeled upon Loremus. His disgust at what had happened was blended with his sorrow at losing what once had been a profitable client, but now a client that would yield small returns during long years in prison.

"My God, Monk, what were you thinking of? They've given you the real works a dozen times in the city, and you never broke. And those boys know their third degree. Then you come up here in the cow-pastures and fall for a trick that shouldn't have fooled a kid up for petty larceny. What the—"

Tiny David stepped between the two men.

"Easy, Sam," he counseled. "We knew Monk wouldn't fall for the third degree. Besides, we never use it. So we gave him the fourth."

His voice became stern.

"A woman had been killed. They left her to die like a dog. We knew these men were guilty, but we couldn't prove it legally." The faint trace of a smile appeared upon his broad face. "Good old fourth degree!"

He glanced at Crosby, who was grinning.

"Wipe that smile off your face, Sergeant. You have a bad session ahead of you when the Skipper puts you on the carpet for some more of your clowning."

Another lively adventure of Tiny David of the State Police will be published in an early issue.

The Maid

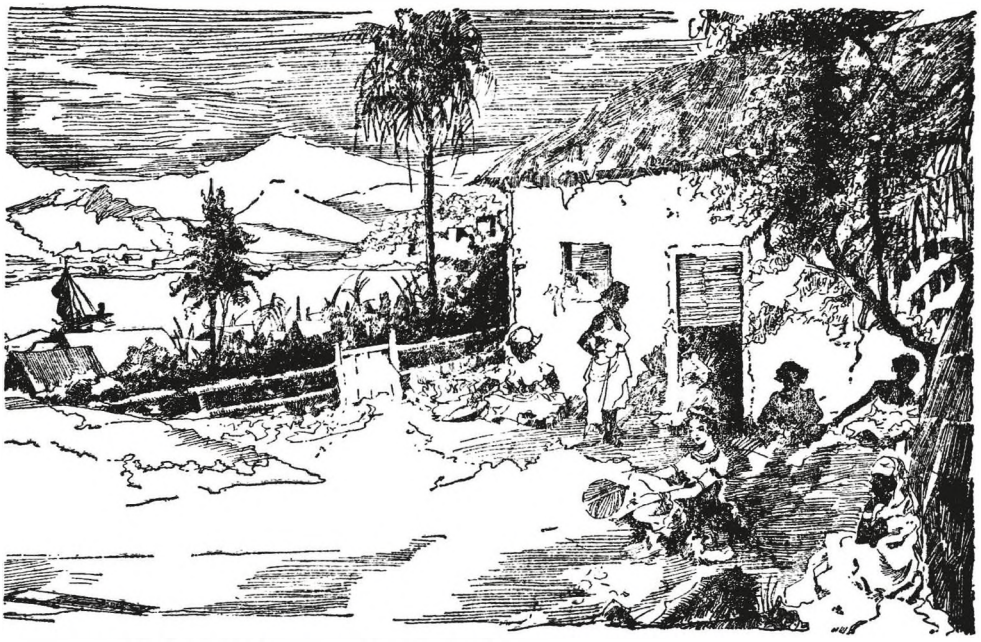
By BEATRICE

JAMES COOPER had left the island of Niu-Niu in the year of King Edward's coronation. . . . Now it was thirty years after, and he was coming back again.

At the end of a South Sea tour, with his son Harry, who had been on the 'Varsity, and knew everything. Cooper had been to no university save that of life. Mate on an Island schooner, he might have stayed in the Islands, lived and worked with companions who were (he would have told you) twice the men their successors were—tough, careless, pull-the-devil-by-the-tail sort of fellows. There lived no more such, now.

He had not stayed. He had gone into steam; had married, rather unexpectedly, an owner's daughter; had left steam and gone into a shipping office, pushed always by Gladys and her people—kept, by them, with his nose to the desk and his eyes well blinkered. He had helped to build up a big ship-broking business, carrying it on ably; retired, after Gladys' death. Successful man, James Cooper. Made good, done well. Yes.

And here, off the remote unprofitable island of Niu-Niu, where ships seldom came—and where nothing, he supposed,



# of Niu-Niu

A moving drama of the South Seas by the distinguished author of "The Forest of Lost Men" and "Eyes of Pearl."

GRIMSHAW

Illustrated by Alexander de Leslie

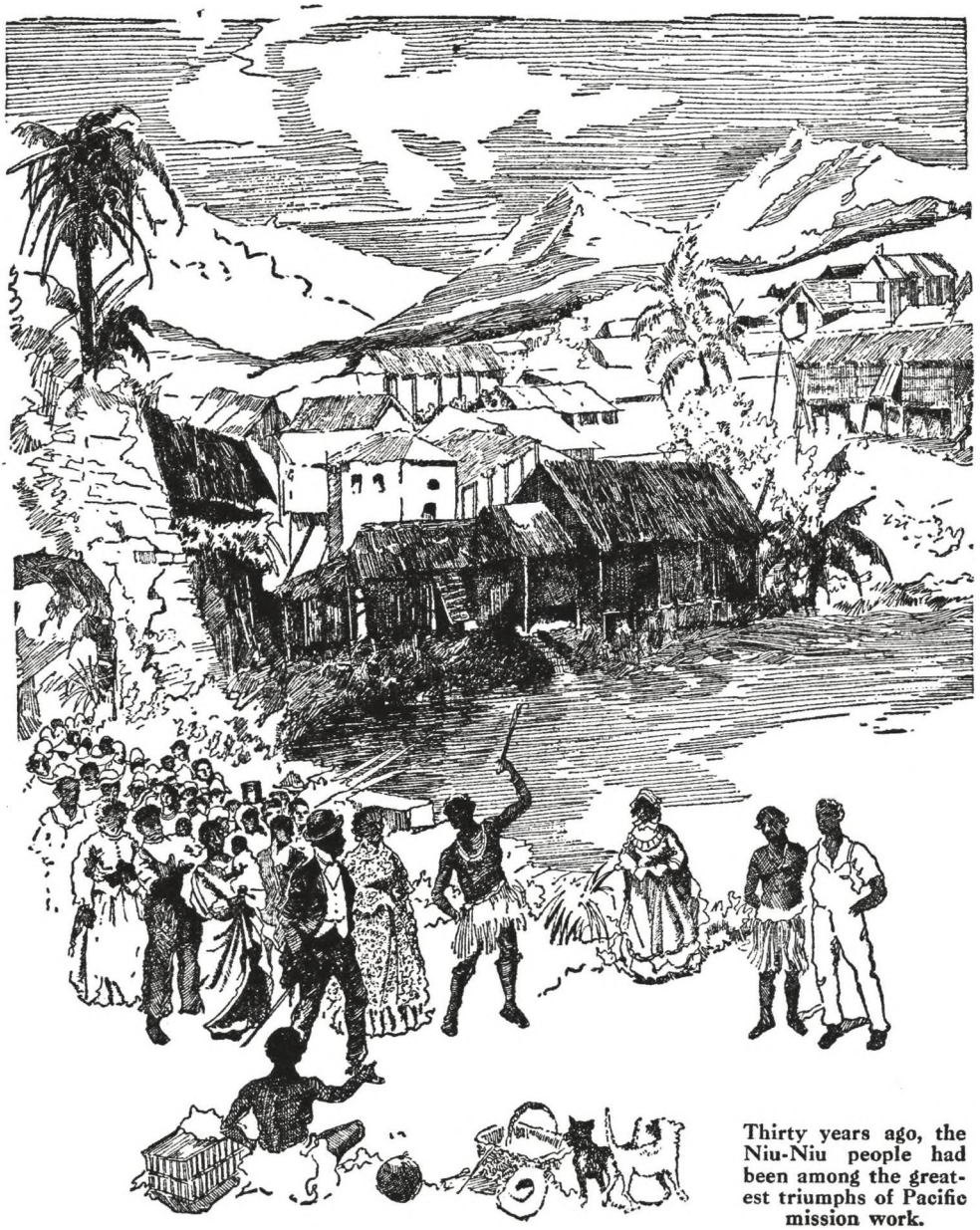
could have altered since he sailed away in 1901—he found himself wishing that he had never gone at all; had never stepped into the waiting whaleboat, that clear night of stars, unclasped a girl's soft hands from about his arm, kissed her and kissed her, and turned away to sea. . . .

Lily Greenlees was her name; a mission girl, prettier than most mission women, and quite as good. If she hadn't been so good, he might not have remembered her, gone on wanting her, for thirty years. He had wanted her badly then, but he didn't wish to marry, at one-and-twenty; and there was nothing but marriage to be thought of, where she was concerned. So he had left her; left the lily on its stem, and like a thousand thousand other sailor-men, had sailed away.

To what? Sea first, then ship-broking, marriage. The E. C. district. Villa in Putney; Gladys and Gladys' parties. Life that somehow wasn't exactly life, but just an excellent imitation.

Even his son Harry, who had been such a jolly little chap in the nursery—Harry, more or less, escaped him. Cooper, in spite of Gladys, had remained rough and tough. He could hardly understand this fine gentleman whom he had sired; this Harry, who knew so much that he didn't, was so kind and patient and uncomprehending with his bear of a father; who had agreed without murmur to go on a world-tour with Cooper, and "see a bit of things in general," as the older man phrased it, before settling down to London and marriage. He was engaged to a "swell;" a girl with a courtesy title, that deeply impressed and unspeakably worried Cooper, even as the aspect of the Honorable Elizabeth Lockhart, slim and boyish and shingled, worried him. Not his idea at all of the sort of girl a man ought to want for a wife; she was like all the rest of it—she wasn't real, quite. . . .

Well, here was Niu-Niu, that he had longed to see again, and was seeing; Niu-Niu, that couldn't have changed a bit, whatever else had changed. The high, lone island, nine hundred miles from anywhere; the tall coconuts that plumed the top of it; the boat-landing, blasted out of sheer coral rock. Somewhere out in the living green of the lagoon a log canoe, and a native in it, fishing. Ah! Nineteen hundred, and



Thirty years ago, the Niu-Niu people had been among the greatest triumphs of Pacific mission work.

the stars bright in the water, and the young, young schooner mate without a care in the world!

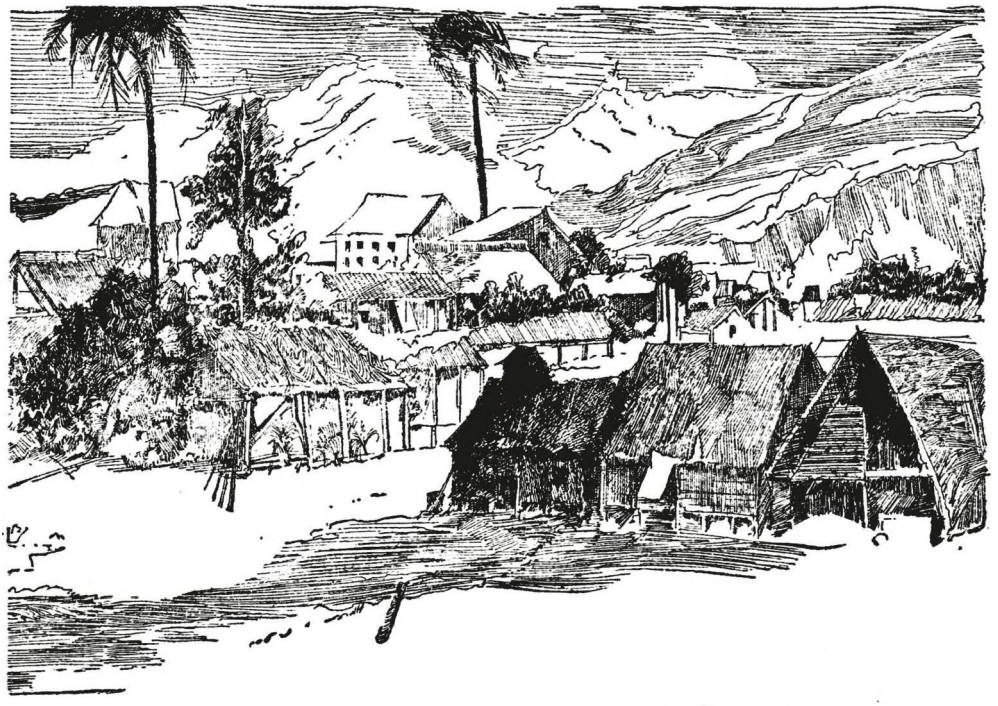
"You going ashore?" asked Harry, cigarette in mouth. He seemed a fine figure, standing there by the ship's rail, inches taller than his tough shellbacked father, fair-haired like Gladys; like her, regular of feature; well-trained and exercised as any race-horse; fit and complete—and somehow miles away.

"Of course we're going," Cooper answered. Did the lad think he had paid through the nose for this side trip, not to take advantage of it? Other places had been disappointing; other islands tourist-haunted, civilized out of all recognition. Niu-Niu would be different; there, things never changed.

"We'll trot along up to the mission," he said cheerfully. "Have a look round, and send for our suitcases later. Stop maybe till the *Donald Cameron* calls; she's due on her annual trip in a few weeks, I understand."

"Yes sir," Harry dutifully agreed. . . . "I suppose this is one of the local celebrities?"

A small dried-up old man, who had come out to pilot the ship, seemed to be



listening to the conversation with intelligent interest. "I Orao," he introduced himself. "I talk Engliss." He stared very hard at Harry.

"Bring our baggage by and by, if we don't come back," Cooper directed. "We're going ashore." And to the purser: "Likely we'll put up at the mission for a while."

The purser nodded. "Old man says we may have to get away in a hurry," he warned. This trip was a novelty, and not an agreeable one, to the trading steamer.

Harry, accompanying his father up the stairway that led to the top of the island, watched him with increasing wonder. What an evergreen the Dad was! He never seemed to tire; he always wanted to see everything. He was breasting the steep climb now like a two-year-old. Harry remembered a girl in Samoa, a pretty one, who had run after the Dad, thrown a wreath of flowers around his neck, and called him, "Big man, big chief!" She was ready to throw herself after the flowers, Harry thought; but the Dad had said something to her in island Maori that had sent her skipping away.

As for Jim Cooper, on the top of Niu-Niu, treading once more the enchanted ways of youth, after thirty years, he had, for the moment, forgotten Harry's existence. Yes, it was all the same: Here were the enormous palms, naked white, swinging their crests up eighty feet in the blue. Here was the coral roadway, with the thatched coral-concrete cottages along one side, and the high plain of sea on the other. And the beach-lilies, Lily's name-flower, heavy, sweet and pale, trailing among the flat-palmed castor-oil plants and the wine-colored coleus leaves. And the—

He stopped, staring down the roadway. "Gee!" he said.

"My sacred aunt!" ejaculated Harry.

Along the road, in the full sun, was approaching a procession that Harry mentally described as something like the Bacchic rout in "Endymion," and that Cooper, seeing, classified as a "proper old Ratcliffe Highway sort of spree." In any part of the world, it would have been an amazing sight; but *here!*

Thirty years ago, this big isolated island with the bad approach had been famed for its almost blatant type of Christianity. The Niu-Niu people had been among the greatest triumphs of Pacific mission work. In one generation they turned from savagery to a strict brand of Protestantism. The women wore long Mother Hubbard frocks; the men confronted the blazing sun in heavy dungarees. Pious they were, even to excess; they knew few pleasures save Sunday-school picnics, few entertainments save the singing of hymns. Under the hand of a famous and masterful missionary, they had become the shining light

of the South Sea world. They may have been happy; certainly they were good.

Cooper, young and pleasure-loving, had sometimes found the mission rule oppressive. But he had never seriously questioned its rightness, and he hadn't supposed it could ever come to an end, any more than the long trade-winds of the southeast season, the blustering gales of the northwest. Always, in after years, he had pictured Niu-Niu and the coral-stone church, the coral concrete mission house, standing forever in these lonely seas unchanged.

WELL, there was the church—gutted, turned into a sort of savage palace, one big room, with a dais at the end, and carved ceremonial chairs; and there was the mission house, empty, with the sea-wind blowing through its eyeglass windows, and the forest vines creeping over it. And here, here, coming down the roadway, were the children of the old pious folk of his day, with a few of the old folk themselves coming after.

First came a crowd of young men, respectably but not excessively dressed in a bunch of leaves apiece. They carried old-time clubs in their hands, lovely clubs set with sawfish teeth and swordfish beaks; they danced, and whirled the clubs round their heads, and sang. After them came drummers, beating drums that, like the clubs, had been museum antiques in Cooper's day. Girls with food-baskets followed, doing a kind of shuffle, and shaking their short grass skirts. They had beautiful figures, carefully oiled to bring up all the highlights; their gold-bronze bodies, naked to the waist, flashed back the sun as they went. Boys came behind, carrying woody roots, for the brewing of kava drink; some of them bore huge bowls of orange beer, and some had bamboos, corked with a twist of palm-leaf, and full of new palm wine. . . . In Niu-Niu of old days, a man who brewed or tasted drink had six months' work upon the roads handed out to him, as punishment. Cooper remembered that.

Last came a band of gray old men, their faces smeared with ashes. It seemed that they, and the women, were mourning somebody, for every now and then they broke forth into a howling lament, which ended with a dancing step or two, and then began again. Obviously they took note of the newcomers, but the dance and the singing held them; they passed by without pause.

"Gee!" said Cooper again, watching the rout go by. "They'd've told you, thirty years ago, that you was—were—dreamin', if you'd have prophesied the like of this happening."

Harry, who looked suddenly brighter (for really, this was interesting, this was something like) replied: "No great mystery about it, sir." He stared hard at the retreating forms of the girls. "One hears that the war hit the missions pretty hard. Some of them have closed down. This must have been a costly place to run, so far from anywhere; I'd imagine it may have gone back quite a long while ago."

Cooper said, dreamily: "The old chaps used to say, those who remembered fighting days, that if the Lord was to think maybe that he wanted the good missionaries somewhere else, and was to take 'em away, there'd be all the old doin's again in two shakes of a lizard's tail. You see, they remembered the days, before I came, when it was nothing but fighting and feasting, and the king was a real king, and they had 'taupos'—sort of sacred maids, like them in Samoa; and they fair worshiped them too, I heard tell. I never saw one myself, they were gone before I came; but—"

He stopped, speechless, and pointed with one rugged hand to the last, the very last figure in the long procession: A girl, walking sedately by herself—a girl dressed like the others in swinging grass skirts, but robed as well in a tabard and train of creamy tapa cloth. She wore a white shell round her neck. Her hair fell down her back a long way; and it was yellow hair; and her skin, though kissed by the sun to a golden color, was clearly the skin of a white woman.

"Son," said Cooper, swearing a long sea oath, "if that's not Lily Greenlees, it's the devil!"

Harry said, looking appreciatively at the girl as she passed by, eyes fixed ahead (but she seemed to see him and Cooper, all the same): "Who is Lily Greenlees?"

"She was a mission lassie," answered Cooper. "Thirty years ago. And none the better—nor the worse—for me." He sighed, and Harry wondered, irreverently, which part of the Dad's sentence was answerable for the sigh.

BUT Cooper, volunteering nothing further, followed the procession in silence, to the door of the great hall that once had been a church. The people were massing themselves inside the build-

ing now, joining their voices together in a fierce, wailing song. "It'll be the old king they're crying for," Cooper said. "The purser told me he'd died some days ago. I reckon he's buried, and they're having the funeral spree."

"That would be it," agreed Harry. But he was not listening closely; his eyes, deserting the crowd of armed young men and dancing, shuffling girls, had strayed to the far end of the hall, whither the elders, slowly pacing, now led the girl in the tapa robe.

"Look, Dad!" he said. "Look—they're putting her into that big carved chair!"

"She's a taupo, by that frock of hers," answered Cooper. "A sacred sort of virgin. They used almost to worship 'em, in old times, I've heard say." He too stared hard at the girl, who was sitting easily on the thronelike chair. Her knees were crossed, one bare foot swinging—a beautiful foot, bronzed on the instep, white beneath the toes. Her thigh, where the tapa tunic fell aside, showed flower-pale, contrasting vividly with the sun-bronze of face and arms. Yes, she was white; white as tall Harry, staring his heart out at her; white as Harry's stocky, sturdy father with the sea-blue eyes, and the red stain of the sea on his cheeks.

And certainly she was Lily Greenlees, or the devil. Yet—how could it be, after all these years?

COOPER had never been one to balk his fences. He left Harry, standing at gaze, and marched alone right up to the carved chair. To the gold-and-white girl who sat in it, he said curtly: "I'm James Cooper; who in God's name are you?"

"I am Lily," she answered, fixing him hard, with the eyes of a stranger—Lily's very eyes, that didn't know him.

"Not Lily Greenlees!" he said, with growing certainty, as he saw, at close quarters, the flawless beauty, the untouched, unworn youth of her. . . . Miracles were past.

"Lily Greenlees was my mother. She died a great many years ago. When the mission left, she stayed here, because she had married my father."

"And who was your father?" he asked uncomfortably, conscious of a certain cold hostility in her manner.

She did not immediately reply. The shuffling and dancing had ceased; the singers were silent. The hall full of people hardly seemed to breathe, watching the pair. Now and then the heads of the old men turned from Lily to the tall form of Harry Cooper—to Lily, back again.

"William Johnston," Lily said at last.

"The trader? Is he alive?"

"He died last year."

"And left you—alone—among the—"

"Among my friends," she answered proudly. "They have made me their Maid. They will make me their Queen."

SHE spoke with a certain clipped accent, but her English was good. Johnston, Cooper thought, must have educated her. Lord, how like Lily she was—save for the flash of savagery, or something like it, that shot out now and then from her deep-lidded eyes, showed in her full, cruelly scarlet mouth! Not in her blood, that, not in her upbringing. Where? Cooper couldn't say. Harry the highly educated might have given the word he wanted—*environment*.

If he had more to ask, Lily did not give him time. "Why did you leave my mother, break her heart?" she demanded. "I have had no mother, because of you." That was pretty thick, Cooper thought; why, she had married the trader chap. . . . Well, maybe she had to live; maybe, like the little girl in the book by Stevenson, she "couldn't make out to live," after all. Anyhow, she hadn't.

He answered, meekly: "Because I wanted to go and make my fortune."

"Did you make it?"

"Yes."

"Did you marry some one?"

"Yes. That's my son."

She threw a swift glance at Harry. About him, the young warriors were beginning to gather, to mass themselves, as if by accident. Harry didn't notice; he was looking at her.

"So you have got all you wanted," the girl said, a little more softly. "So you have been very happy!"

"By God, *no!*" burst out Cooper. He knew now that he hadn't. That he had left the happiness that was meant for him, the life he should have had, behind him, the night he kissed Lily Greenlees, and sailed away. Gladys and her people had held him fast; Harry was keeping him now, holding him half-awake, half asleep, in the long dream that had been his life.

The girl was softening; she looked at him almost kindly; but now, there was something strange in her glance. Excitement? Fear?

"They were never bad folk," he reminded himself. "They wouldn't do you in." But he turned from Lily, stared about the hall.

The young men had surrounded Harry. They were edging him away from Lily. Something was going to happen. . . .

Lily said, suddenly, "You should not have come back," slipped out of her carved chair, and melted into the crowd of girls, vanishing he didn't know where.

Frightened she was, yet laughing too—grinning, you might almost have called it, if she hadn't been so pretty. What did it mean?

The answer to that came immediately, with a blaring blast from the steamer. One long call, three short. She was going! And right on the sound, as if it had been the signal for which they were waiting, the young men, armed, closed about Cooper and his son, sweeping them together, and barring their way. At the same instant all the doors were closed.

"Shanghaied, by God!" cried Cooper.

IT was late in the afternoon. Long since, the steamer must have seen the last of Niu-Niu, glad to be clear of the reefs and shoals of that notorious island. Westering, through lemon-green leaves of palm, the sun shone low upon the white walls of the cottage assigned by the old men's council to Cooper and his son. They had been escorted there as soon as the steamer was safe out of signaling distance. The old man Orao had made things quite clear; and if he was feeble, if he resembled a Japanese bronze monkey more than anything else, his following of a hundred youths armed with clubs and spears gave weight to his orders.

These were, that the white men should keep to their cottage, and to the roadway immediately before it, and that they should refrain from putting up signals for ships. Food would be given them; beds had been provided. They would be well treated, and if they made no trouble of any kind, Cooper would be allowed to leave by the *Donald Cameron* trading-boat, when she called in a few weeks' time.

"What about me?" demanded Harry, fairly smoking with wrath. He had disregarded his father's advice—"Take things quiet; you can't fight a hundred to one!"—and had, in consequence, been somewhat knocked about on the way. The youths had refrained from touching his face, but his ribs were sore with the pokes of spear-butts and the smacks of wooden club-heads; and on some of the noses of Orao's young men there were marks of a good British fist.

If Orao heard the question, he did not answer it. Instead he beckoned Cooper with one withered finger, and half in broken English, half in Island Maori, began to make a speech. As he spoke, he turned from one white man to the other, pointing his remarks with further pokes of the finger, now on Cooper's arm, and now against Harry's chest. That Harry glared at him, only restrained from violence by the councilor's feebleness and age, did not seem to trouble Orao in the least.

The king, he said, was just dead. An old, old man, too old to govern well, of recent years. Johnston the trader had largely taken his place; and after Johnston's death, the council. The council, Orao suggested, had done very well; but it was necessary to have a permanent head. Niu-Niu never, in the memory of man, had been without its king—or queen.

"Or queen," he repeated, shoving his finger-end against Harry's shirt. "Like Makea Takau of the Cook Islands, or Saloti of Tonga. Queens were very well. Better than kings in some ways," Orao explained. "In others, they were—troublesome."

He went on to explain further. The girl Lily was their Maid. True, she was not of Island blood, but in everything else she was a real Niu-Niu girl. To see her dance! To see her swim the breakers! To see her spear fish, and kill sharks! Not afraid to dive under, give the swift fatal stab! Oh, she was Island at heart.

They had made her Maid of Niu-Niu, given her the Maid's dress, the Maid's chaperons and hangers-on. Almost a goddess she was, after the fashion of the Islands.

BUT in the Islands—as Cooper doubtless knew—a Maid was not always a Maid. It was the custom, when she grew rather old, as Lily was growing—Lily was twenty-two—to have her married. With marriage, her power, almost divine, left her. No longer was she sacred, a thing to be worshiped. Another Maid took her place, and she stepped down.

Now, Lily had been very troublesome about this. She would not marry. They had brought her all the finest young men of the island—and Cooper could judge

how fine they were; just look at them! —and told her she could have her choice of any one; of any two or three, if she liked. But the girl was obstinate, went so far as to say that she'd throw herself over the cliffs, if they persisted. Then they said, thinking that she did not wish to lose her glory, that they would make her Queen; it was quite in the order of things for a Maid to take that place, after she married. Of course, an unmarried sovereign was a thing unheard of. Still she held out.

Then the wisest of the old men—of whom he, Orao, was one—had consulted together, and they had come and told her that they would find her a white man. She had said: "A white man broke my mother's heart; I am Niu-Niu in everything but color; I will not marry a white man, any more than a brown man. I will not marry at all." But she blushed, and looked sidewise when she said it, so the old men, who were very wise—especially himself, Orao—made magic, to cause a ship to come. And behold, a ship did come; and as soon as they saw Harry—

At this point Harry broke in, violently addressing his father:

"Damn it all, does the old monkey think I'm going to be married to any girl by force? Or to any girl anyhow, except Elizabeth?"

Cooper said: "Hold your horses, son. A lot of things may happen before the *Donald Cameron* comes."

"Only one thing's going to happen that I know of, and that is that I'm going back to Elizabeth. She and I are going to stand up in St. Margaret's in exactly four months' time, if I have to knock off Orao's head and blow up the island to do it."

"Take things easy," said Cooper pacifically. "You've got me with you, and I know the Islands. There's ways," he said. And he added—inconsequently, as it seemed: "A lot better than it used to be, Niu-Niu is. Ah, a grand place! I'd never 'a' left it, if—" He broke off short.

Harry, staring indignantly at Orao, at the youths, at the little white cottage before which they stood, the cottage that, it seemed, was to be his prison—Harry didn't listen. He was not in the habit of listening to James Cooper. It was quite enough to be kind to your father, without that. And after all, it was the Dad, with his absurd romantic fancies—romance at fifty!—who had let him in for all this. But Orao was going on; he

Down the coral roadway, where the wind swept up from the anchorage below,—where now the angry whistling of the *Donald Cameron* demanded attention,—he went hotfoot.

must listen. Pity the Dad had to translate most of it. Harry would have preferred to listen and answer, unhelped.

Orao, it seemed, had not much more to say. The white men were to keep within bounds, and all would be well. If stray ships came,—though that was not likely,—and if, or when, the *Donald Cameron* called, the doors would be shut upon the two, and guards put outside. Unless, of course, the Maid gave orders otherwise. And she would only give such orders—advised by her council—after the title of Maid was hers no longer, after she had been wedded to Harry, by all the ceremonies of the Islands.

For years, no white man like Harry, young and handsome and unwedded, had been seen in lonely Niu-Niu. It might be years before such a one was seen again. The council, in the person of Orao, gave it as its opinion that Harry might as well consent at once, to save trouble. There would be no opposition from the girl; she knew better. And he, Orao, couldn't imagine a young man with blood in his body—an unmarried young man too—doing anything at all but to accept his luck, and sing over it. Or words to that effect.

"Tell him," said Harry, rather white about the lips, "that I'm as good as married. To—to the finest girl in the world. A very great chief's daughter. A—a girl I love. Tell him—" He paused, swallowed, and abruptly ended: "Tell him to go to blazes!"

James Cooper, in the Island Maori that came back so easily to his tongue, explained that the young chief wished to thank Orao and the council, and above all, the Maid, for their kind offer, but regretted that he did not see his way to consent.

Orao, with a good deal of dignity for one so small and naked, bowed his head, collected his young men and disappeared.

And the two white men, seeing nothing else for it, went into the cottage.

LILY was sitting on the coral pathway, outside the cottage door. She sat cross-legged, "taupo" fashion, her limbs folded as a man folds his arms, a pose impossible to most Europeans. She had a fan in her hand, and fanned herself with it, gracefully, while she made conversation, discoursing exactly like a society woman paying a call. Behind her six old women, sleepily chewing betel-nut, kept guard, as they were bound to keep guard over the sacred person of the Maid, day and night, until her wedding.

In the past ten days she had called three times, each time taking her place outside the cottage, and talking pleasantly, noncommittally, about the weather, and the fishing, and the prospects of the island crop of yams. It seemed that, in the politest manner, she was showing off the goods to a possible buyer. No importunity and no sales-pressure; simply a shop-window display. Neither Harry nor his father could help admiring her perfect command of a somewhat difficult situation. It was impossible to guess, from her manner, what she herself might feel.

AS for the two men, they enjoyed her company, uneasily in the one case, whole-heartedly in the other. Cooper found himself, more than once, wishing that Elizabeth, "that two yards of pump-water" (for so he described her much-admired slim figure), had been drowned, before she came along and captured Harry, and Harry's prospective fortune. This was the sort of daughter-in-law he'd have liked; this creature of white and tan and burning gold, with the cool self-contained way of speech, and the hot flash that, now and then, showed up so intriguingly in her blue-green brilliant eyes.

"Cripes, Harry," he said, when for the third time Lily came pacing down the road, before her women, "that's a girl that *is* a girl. She's pepper, she's ginger, for all her hair is gold."

Harry looked hard at her, and for a minute kept silence. Then he said with something of an effort: "All one to me if she's garlic and onions, and if her hair's brass or pewter, or anything you like. She's—she's not a patch on Elizabeth."

"Son," said Cooper suddenly (they had talked much during those days of semi-imprisonment, but manlike, shirked certain vital issues), "son, do you want the Honorable Elizabeth or not?"

Harry forbore to wince at the use of the title. "Dad," he said, "when I'm in my right senses, I do. But—who does keep his senses in the Islands? There's something gets hold of you, makes you wonder what all the rest of it's about anyhow, why people can't just live, instead of scratching about for money, doing things they don't want to, all the time. I think like that sometimes, and then I look at—her—"

Lily was within hearing now, and perforce he ceased. His mind was a battleground. He could almost see Elizabeth —Elizabeth, cool as a primrose, shining-pale as the last snows of spring; tall, distinguished, calm, with something in her character that met and matched with the conventional spirit of his own; Elizabeth, who'd run his house, himself, his children, exactly as houses, husbands and children ought to be run. Elizabeth, of whom one was sure.

And Lily, now offered to him as a sweet is offered to a child. Lily, with the tang of savagery in her burning loveliness; daring as any of Orao's wild young men. Lily, incalculable, wonderful, a consecrated Maid, a queen, whom to love would be the maddest adventure a man could conceive. His—if he chose.

Something in Harry, that was all of his father, cried out, "Yes!" But something, cooler and harder, inherited from Gladys, bade him hold back. He was almost visibly trembling when the girl, who had taken her seat as usual, and as usual began to talk, turned and addressed herself directly to him. Had she seen his emotion? Did she perhaps misinterpret it? He did not know, could not guess just how Lily regarded him—and that was half her charm.

What was she saying now? What was the meaning of the impish light that glittered in her eyes? She was rising to her feet. She was going. And before she went, she looked straight at James and Harry, and said, with a graceful bow: "I invite you to my party!"

"What party? When?" asked Cooper.

"The day before the *Donald Cameron* comes; that will be in four more days. The party," she said, "for the wedding." And on that she went, with the six old women scuttling crab-wise behind her.

Cooper swore a strange sea-oath. "The cutty!" he ended. "The cutty! So she'd take an unwilling husband, soon as not. I told you there was ginger in Lily."

FIRES seemed to be dancing before the eyes of Harry Cooper. "Dad," he said in a voice not like his own, "what can I do? What can a fellow do against a hundred men?"

"Depends," Cooper told him, "on what the fellow wants to do. Son, you shall have what you want, whatever—" He broke off and corrected himself: "Whichever it is."

Harry did not answer.

"They done me out of it," said Cooper darkly. Not to Gladys' son could he tell how he had been jockeyed into marrying Gladys, held to her apron-strings for half his life. It was his own fault; it had all followed, logically, from that night on which he had deserted Lily's mother, and left the island world.

"No one," he went on, "is going to do you out of what you want—if you know," he added hastily, "what it is."

There was silence, for so long as it might take three waves to tumble, creaming, on the coral beach below. Then Harry, with an effort, jerked out the one word: "Elizabeth!" Cooper said nothing in reply; he waited. Harry went on, collecting himself: "They're taking my honor from me, if they don't let me go. They're making me feel a swine."

Briskly Cooper spoke.

"We can't let you feel like a swine, son. Leave it to me."

Harry said, "The days of miracles are past," and turned away to the cottage. Cooper could not see his face.

IN the days that followed, no miracle seemed imminent; nothing was done. The Dad went off walking by himself now and then—occasionally vanished for some few hours after dark, eluding the guards with an ingenuity that would have been quite beyond Harry. Harry wondered, occasionally, whether it was possible that, in the sudden outflare of youth that comes to most men at fifty, the Dad mightn't have gone chasing after native girls. They were attractive enough, heaven knew. As for himself, haunted as he was by the double images of Lily and Elizabeth, superimposed like a twice-exposed negative, he had no thought to spare for any of the handsome young hussies who from time to time passed his door, laughing and looking. They did not look so much or so often as they had at first. Anxiety and strain were beginning to tell upon Harry; his face was pale, his shoulders stooped. He was not now the splendid youth who had landed so light-heartedly on Niu-Niu, only a few weeks back.

As for James Cooper, worry had left no mark on him. You might have taken him for a model ready to stand for the jolly sea-god Neptune, beside a somewhat weary, over-traveled Mercury. To use Cooper's own expression, Harry seemed a bit under the weather, while he himself was, and intended to remain, as fit as a flea.

What an evergreen the Dad was!

The visits of Lily had ceased. Once or twice, moodily lounging by the cottage door, Harry Cooper thought to have seen her white trailing robes flash through the neighboring groves of banana and palm; but that one couldn't be sure of; it might have been a party of girls carrying flowers. Miracle or no miracle, the wedding preparations went on. Dances were being practiced, pigs and fowls collected for the killing, breadfruit baked, prawns, pigeons, oysters, turtle-steaks prepared. There was no count of kumaras, yams and taro, of mangoes, oranges, custard apples, pineapples, "wi" apples, coconuts.

Days before the wedding the feast would begin, continuing for days after. There'd be dancing and dancing, feasting and dancing, and dancing and drinking, and dancing again. Kava and pineapple and orange beer would run free for all; and there would be, for the chiefs, strong ti root spirit, and palm wine as well. The nights were moonlight. Day and night, until it wore itself and everyone else to an end, the festival would go on. After that the whole island, tired, would rest, as only in the Islands one could rest, for idle days and days. There'd be no dragon

called "business" waiting, claws outstretched, at the end of the fun; no desks and ledgers over which tired heads would have to bend; no death-traps set in roaring streets, for hands a little unsure upon the steering-wheel, eyes not swift to follow flashing signals.

Instead, there would be the cool, undisturbed twilight of the coral houses, with the sea-wind blowing through; the day sleep that restored; the singing of the reef that soothed and healed.

Savage? Yes—as London and New York are savage too. Surely, if Nature needs an outbreak now and then; if enough is not indeed a feast, and too much sometimes good, as certain wise men say—then, the way of Niu-Niu is the best.

COOPER and Harry, outside it all, watched the preparations. Pleasant enough it was in the coral cottage, on the top of the cliff, if one had had one's mind free; if quite untouched by trouble, one could have seen the processions of dancers and food-gatherers go by; with heart at ease could have watched the splendid pageant of the tides, the dawn, the blossoming and fruiting of Niu-Niu's eternal summer. To see, and delight in the picture of a perfect star painted in shadow about the foot of every palm-tree at high noon; to listen to the mourning sound of the casuarina trees, like the sad sleepy voices of sea-shells; to mark, each day, the marvel of the Aaron's rods of emerald transformed among the bananas into flaunting banners of huge leaf—this would have delighted the sensitive soul of Harry, if only he had felt free to look and wonder.

As it was, he could feel, like a flood-tide flowing in, the charm of the island softly invading his mind. Life here was simple as spring water, and as sweet. In England, "the world was so full of a number of things," important and unimportant, that a man, if not as happy, was at all events as busy as a king. A man, it seemed, was too busy with the mere mechanics of living, simply to live.

Sometimes one wondered, almost, what all these complications really and truly were for. Hadn't one, on Niu-Niu, at the stretching of a hand, everything for which men toiled and toiled, in the gray countries, till they themselves were gray?

So he would think; then suddenly the picture of London would unroll itself before his eyes: London gray and cold, stinging, stimulating. London, and the sight of it, the thick-piled houses, the pavements, thronged and glassy-wet. The smell of it, tar and petrol and a million meals of food. The streets—Bond Street, where Elizabeth went shopping; Elizabeth coming down that narrow haughty thoroughfare, her small hat swept aside over her gray eyes, her waist, so long, so neat, clipped in a furred coat. Elizabeth, who was competence, capability, charm; who was sure of everything in the world; who knew for a certainty that England was life, and that the South Seas—if anyone ever spared a thought to that wild place—were death-in-life; Elizabeth, who was even now buying her wedding clothes, in Bond Street—and in vain!

For the Dad, after all, had done nothing; the miracle hadn't taken place. Questioned, he merely advised Harry, as before, to hold his horses, and to keep his hair on. Once he had declared, in a burst of confidence, that what you didn't know wouldn't do you any harm, nor yet anyone else. Harry paid small attention; the Dad, in his opinion, loved cheap mysteries. And nothing could alter the hard facts, as they stood.

Now at last the feast began in all its fury; the island went dancing, drumming, eating, drinking and kissing mad; the great hall was decorated; the old men, too old for dancing and kissing, were gathering together to watch the rest. A small but formidable group they made, a handful of human dust and ashes, even such as would suffice to represent, in the end, all the flame and the splendor of the island's burning youth today.

LILY, among her tire-women, was decking herself for the wedding. That misnamed handful of audacity and mischief, that spice-blossom, that hot ginger-flower, was giving trouble to the old ladies whose task was so nearly done. She had slapped several of them severely; she had refused to wear most of the robes they brought her, and had thrown away the wreaths they made for her hair, capriciously demanding others. She had made faces at them when they hung the taupo's white shell about her neck on a new light string, and had fidgeted till they could hardly comb her amazing yellow hair and set the comb in it, ready for her lover to raise the long locks and secure them on the top of her head. Only the maidens wore

their hair loose; the upraising of the hair, the snatching and throwing away of the white shell, and the drinking of a ceremonial cup of kava, half by the bridegroom and half by the bride, constituted a Niu-Niu marriage ceremony.

To quiet her, the old women began their eternal gossip; for gossip was their joy, their chief excitement. "The young chief looks pale," they said. "He is terribly in love with you, so terribly that he is nearly ill of it." And they added remarks such as can be found, by the curious, in the earlier scenes of "Romeo and Juliet."

Lily tossed her head, giggled, and seemed to have some private joke of her own.

"He will be a good husband for the Queen," they said. "He won't anger the old men. Young men are beautiful; old men are wise. His time for wisdom has not come."

Lily looked at herself in a hand-glass. "I am very beautiful," she observed. "I am beautiful enough for two."

"Yes, yes," they said uncomprehendingly, and combed away at the sparkling hair. Lily was anxious, they could see, upset almost. Well, it was enough to upset any girl, to have a bridegroom given her, who didn't know whether he wanted her or not. (For that, the old women, who were wise, well knew.) But Lily would handle him. She was a little devil. He would know his master, before long, and she'd like that.

Did the old women, who were so wise, for this once make a mistake? Did they forget the fact that all women, at bottom, are alike? It seems they did; for no one, not the oldest and ugliest, and thereby the wisest of the lot, seems to have guessed at what was coming.

THE wedding was not on time; there had been a matter of pigs, a perplexity about turtles, that had halted the ceremony for days, brought it, as things happened, right on to the time of the arrival of the *Donald Cameron*. In fact, she was signaled that very morning. But the council, with Orao at their heads, remained unperturbed. A hundred armed young men could keep the white men away from the ship people, as long as might be necessary. And after all, it would be handy to have the boat there on the spot, to take away Cooper, Senior, prevent his making trouble. He knew too much about the Islands; he was too strong in character; he'd have a finger in everybody's pie, if they didn't get him away. The Island wedding, for Island folk, was irrevocable. Once the bridegroom had cast away the shell, raised the bride's tresses of hair and drunk the kava cup, he was hers and she was his, for as long as their lives might last. And Orao had planned, later on, to have a white man's wedding as well, down at Suva or Nukuluofa. Just to drive the last nail safely home.

NOW the festivity was nearing its crown and climax; the feast was spread ready; the bucks and belles were gathered in the great hall. Frizzed they were, and painted, decked with beads and shells, with necklaces of scarlet berries, with striped grass crinolettes and loin-cloths of painted tapa. They were plump, oiled and shining, they had eaten nobly, and meant to eat again. They giggled, pinched and slapped one another, and kicked with bare brown toes. A wedding was fun.

The bridegroom! The white man who was to marry their white queen! Here he came, slowly walking with his father. The girls looked knowingly at James Cooper, and whispered to each other. That day he seemed ageless; his fifty years were neither here nor there; he held himself as nobly as any of the young bucks whose heads had never bent to the desk and pen. There wasn't a strand of gray in his black hair; his neck, in the loose collar, showed thick and sturdy as a three-year bull's. Gayly he was dressed, coatless, silk-shirted, with crimson cummerbund and white trousers and a gardenia at his breast-pocket. You might have taken him for the bridegroom, if there had been no Harry walking beside—Harry, very tall and slim and pale, in white tailored suit and perfect boots. Harry, anxious-looking, uncertain, and wondering what on earth the Dad had meant by telling him, ten minutes ago, to keep up his nerve; he'd get him through all right. . . .

All right? When he saw Lily come into the hall, a dream in snowy tapa cloth and flower crown, floods of sparkling hair adrift down her back, a light of mischief, excitement, heaven knew what, in her blue-green eyes, he wondered what was all right, and what, at the bottom of his soul, he really wanted. The *Donald Cameron* had whistled, down below, a quarter of an hour ago. If by some miracle the way was opened, if he could go this minute—what then?

There was to be no miracle, it seemed. Lily was slowly pacing with the dignity of a Maid, the majesty of a Queen, up to the dais where he and James Cooper stood. The old men and the warriors waited below. On a table stood the carved coconut cup of kava. Let him remember what Orao had said. . . . He had to lift that mass of hair, twist it and fasten it on the top of Lily's head with Lily's own pearl-shell comb. He had to break the string that held the white shell, and throw the shell onto the floor. He had to take the cup, drink half of it at a draft (he hoped to heaven it wouldn't make him sick) and hand the rest to Lily.

If he didn't do all this, there would be the father and mother of a row, and the Dad would never be allowed to go back home, whatever might happen to him.

And the *Donald Cameron,* the trading steamer bound for Sydney town, had whistled, down below. She'd go without her passenger—unless he did his job at once, without fumbling. After all, one must stand by one's father, even if he had got into the mess.

Lily was between the two, so close that one could scent the perfume of her delightful hair, see the dilated pupils of her deep-sea-colored eyes. She was clearly very much excited. And she was looking—by gad!—not at him, but at James Cooper.

Harry, half dreaming, stretched forth an uncertain hand toward her hair. She kicked him away. And instantly Cooper's hands were in her hair, had twisted it, swept it up and fastened it; had snapped the cord of the shell and flung it down. Quicker than a man might tell, Cooper had seized the kava cup, tossed half of it down his throat, and given the cup to Lily, who almost choked upon it, as she gulped the rest.

ORAO, who had seemed, for the moment, petrified with astonishment, now sprang forward screaming, a shrill old man's scream. But the girls unconsciously barred his way. Shrieking with laughter, they flung themselves in one solid mass upon the shell, and fought each other for its possession. There were auguries to be gleaned from that shell, strange secrets to be read from the manner of its fall. . . . And he had seen no hesitancy in Lily's drinking her share of the kava.

And Orao, in one bitter moment, saw himself defeated. It was too late. Cooper, the sailor, the strong man, had married the Maid; Cooper would lead her tonight to the flower-decked bridal house. No undeveloped youth, easy to influence, would sit on the prince consort's throne of Niu-Niu. The island and the Maid would know a master.

"Here," said Cooper, giving Harry an enormous dig in the ribs, "wake up and scoot, son, scoot! Kiss your stepmother and be off, before any of these jokers with the spears quit laughing." (For the young men, aware now of the enormous jest that had been played, were roaring like jackasses.) "You can reckon on an Islander for just five minutes at a time, and no longer. Your hand, boy—don't forget your old Dad. Be off!"

There were tears in his eyes as he grasped the white hand of Harry, and crushed it in his own brown paw. A son was a son. Even if, by and by—

HARRY, recovering his wits, smacked a hurried, stepsonly kiss on the cheek of Lily (not thus had he thought to kiss her!), and edging through the crowd almost unnoticed, fled. Down the coral roadway, where the wind swept up from the anchorage below, where now the angry whistling of the *Donald Cameron* demanded, for the second time, attention, he went hotfoot. One couldn't think of refusing the Dad's fine sacrifice, so cleverly managed as it had been; so ably as that young puss Lily had played her part! How Lily and his father could have planned it was beyond his imagination.

Sacrifice? Was it anything of the kind? Was it not, for James Cooper, something quite other: a coming-home, at last, to the life that he had missed and wanted all the time? Harry, little accustomed to think of James Cooper save as a mere background to his own hopes and plans, accepted the idea with amazement. Yes; the Dad had never been really happy. He'd always had a sort of hunger in his eyes. As if he were looking at something that he wanted, a long, long, long way off. . . .

And with that came the recollection of Elizabeth, a long way off, whom—Harry was quite sure about it now—he wanted.

The Niu-Niu lilies, heavy-headed, swept past his face as he went down the stairs. He thought he would remember the scent of them always.

Another fascinating story by Beatrice Grimshaw will appear in an early issue.

A swift-moving novelette of mystery and adventure by the author of "The Alibi" and other noted stories.

By GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

Illustrated by Austin Briggs

The Head of

SHARP, insistent, the trilling of the door-bell startled Dr. Roderick Haviland. The hour, well on to midnight, betokened an emergency-call. And sitting there with his pipe and the *Surgical Review* in the bachelor apartment where he also had his office, he had just begun to grow pleasantly drowsy! Devil take it all, couldn't a man ever get a moment's rest?

An imperative knocking sounded on his door; a voice, speaking in excellent English—though with a queer foreign twist of accent—exclaimed:

"Doctor! Are you there? For God's sake, open!"

Unlocking his door, he swung it wide.

He found himself confronted by three men, two of whom were supporting between them a third, who looked to be almost in the very article of death itself.

Along with a whiff of some very subtle and exotic perfume, Haviland caught swift impressions that the two sound men were in full evening-dress, crush-hats and all. The long overcoat of one, half-unbuttoned, showed a purple silk ribbon diagonally drawn across an expansive shirt-front.

As for the third man, the patient—visible in the dimmish hall-light—he was lagging weakly between the other two, held up by their grip on his elbows. The garb of this one was only that of an ordinary business man. A tremendous bulk of a fellow he seemed, stocky and powerful, but now almost ready to collapse.

These impressions had had barely time to register, when the pair lunged forward, thrust the Doctor aside, and dragged their wounded companion into the apartment. One of them immediately closed the door, locked it and slid the bolt. Even while thus engaged, he began in a low, tense voice:

"Our friend, here, is badly hurt." The Doctor saw him as a tall, wiry fellow with a hard-set jaw and a pair of smoldering, ink-black eyes. The ribbon across his shirt-bosom merely added a highlight to his innate air of aloof distinction. "We have been held up. There was shooting. And now—"

"Gangsters, eh?" queried the surgeon, his gaze narrowing. Devil fly away with all this! "Well, why didn't you go to the Memorial Hospital, then? I'm not prepared to handle a case at this

Iskander

time of night! These aren't my office-hours, and—"

"Pardon me, my dear doctor," cut in the other man who had the patient by an elbow. A short, muscular type, this one, with a close-cropped, curly beard and mustache. His foreign accent was more marked than that of the tall fellow. "Pardon me, but this is no time for argument, or we may have one dead man on our hands—and yours." Cold steel of menace grew plain through silk of courtesy. "Your office, sir—in there?"

A moment, Dr. Haviland faced them with some vague thought of defiance, of trying to summon the police. But there he stood, one unarmed man in bathrobe and slippers, against two determined fellows, both of whom obviously were packing guns. He gestured toward his office door.

"That way, gentlemen!"

"Thank you," crisply answered the taller man. With a few words in an unknown tongue that Dr. Haviland had already half-heard through the panels, he and his companion partly carried and partly dragged the patient into the office, eased him down into a chair.

Haviland switched on an incandescent and drew down the shades. As he faced round at his unwelcome visitors, once more he caught that hint of feminine perfume. The visitors were already divesting themselves of hats, coats, gloves—one pair blood-stained.

Grimly Dr. Haviland surveyed the patient. A tremendous bulk of a man he appeared, as he sagged there with heavy-lidded, half-closed eyes and with a trickle of blood seeping down from a corner of his full-lipped mouth.

"Shot?" demanded Haviland, peeling off his bathrobe.

"Yes," the black-bearded man assented. "Through the chest."

"All right, undress him! Strip him right down to the waist. Get him up on that operating-table, there! I'll do my best."

"And it had better be a very good best, allow me to inform you," put in the taller man, already at work with his companion undressing the patient.

"Threatening me, are you?" the surgeon retorted angrily. "I'm under compulsion, and I'll do my best, but I can't work miracles. I can't guarantee anything, or do magic!"

Over that table, the doctor switched on a flood-light. He covered the table with a clean, sterile sheet and wheeled up his instrument-stand. His visitors stripped the patient to the waist and laid him on the table. Blood, the Doctor saw, was oozing from a small bluish wound in the mid-thoracic region of a peculiarly massive torso.

"Bear a hand, to roll him part way over," directed the surgeon. "I want to see if the bullet's come out."

They obeyed. On the man's powerful back, no other wound was visible.

"Still in there, all right," judged Haviland, after a span of tense silence. "Hmph! That makes this case much more serious. This is an exceedingly grave wound. Infection has almost certainly been carried into the pleural cavity. I tell you, gentlemen, I must positively decline to guarantee anything. As I told you before, I'm no miracle-worker."

Turning to his washstand, he began to scrub up.

IN an atmosphere a-reek with ether-fumes, some minutes later, a bullet dropped from Dr. Haviland's forceps into a basin.

"And that's that!" growled the sur-

geon. "Now if we can only control the internal hemorrhage!"

"Our friend has bled much?" queried the tall, purple-ribboned man, who had been a most keenly interested observer. "A great deal, internally?"

"A very great deal, indeed. So much, in fact, that—"

"He may die?"

"It's not at all unlikely."

"He needs blood? Take mine!"

"Yours?"

"By transfusion!"

"Yes, yes, of course, I understand. But things aren't as simple as all that," explained the Doctor, still busily at work. "Human blood is divided into four classes, probably representing the four original anthropoid stocks from which the human race has evolved. The various classes have different agglutinating substances, so that if different kinds of blood are mixed, the red corpuscles will sometimes clump together, with results highly dangerous, and at times, even fatal. Rigid tests of the donor's blood are therefore necessary. So you see, transfusion is eminently a hospital procedure. Take your friend to a hospital! He may live long enough to get there. And after that, with immediate transfusion—"

"No!" exclaimed Blackbeard. "A hospital is impossible!"

"Why?" The Doctor's steely eyes squinted over his sterile mask. "Why impossible? What the devil kind of a case is this, anyhow?"

"Never mind!" from the other alien. His voice was sheer acid. "Make the transfusion here and now!"

"But without the proper tests—"

"Not necessary. It so happens that my blood has already been tested—and it appeared that I am what is called a universal donor. My blood may with safety be given to anyone. Quick, now, to the blood-transfusion, and—"

THE sudden ringing of the Doctor's phone interrupted Blackbeard.

"Answer that, please?" Haviland requested.

"I regret, sir, but it is impossible. No calls are valid now. You are engaged on more important business."

"Well, I'll be damned!" the surgeon exploded. "You're going pretty far."

"We are, indeed," smiled the tall man. "Farther, perhaps, than you suspect. But necessity knows no law. Proceed with the transfusion!"

"I see! All right—you win. Transfusion it is. Take your coat off. Roll up your shirt-sleeve!"

"At your service, sir," smiled Blackbeard.

"But remember this," the other cut in, "I realize the transfusion is going to weaken my associate. So I shall take no chances—as you see."

From his pocket he withdrew a very businesslike automatic.

"Just another blood-letting instrument," he grimly smiled. "A most efficient one. Highly scientific, eh? Now then, shall we get to work?"

HALF an hour later the patient lay on the operating-table wrapped in soft warm blankets. Still alive and with much better color.

On the Doctor's leather couch, the black-bearded donor of blood was stretched out with a blanket drawn over him. Though pale and a bit weak, no danger menaced him. Near the door, gun in hand, sat he of the purple ribbon. His onyx eye departed not one instant from the surgeon, tensely standing beside the operating-table as he kept watch on the progress of the patient.

"So far, so good," judged Haviland, now divested of mask and cap and rubber gloves, and once more fully dressed. He bent over the prone figure. "Coming out of it, eh?"

The wounded man nodded, gazed upward under heavy lids. His pale lips soundlessly framed half-incoherent words.

"Yes—thanks to you!"

"To be perfectly frank with all of you," said the Doctor, turning, "the best thanks you three gentlemen can possibly give me will be to leave my office at the earliest feasible moment."

"And so we shall, indeed," nodded the armed man. "How soon can our friend be moved?"

"Your friend, eh?" remarked the surgeon. "Well, he *oughtn't* to be moved at all, for several days. If he were in a hospital, where he belongs, I'd keep him flat on his back for quite a while. But I don't suppose you gentlemen intend to remain here, upsetting my entire practice, for even twenty-four hours."

"Hardly! We must be away from here before daybreak."

"Suits *me!*" the surgeon approved. "But it must be at your own risk. I positively decline to be responsible for anything that may happen after you leave this office. Take the patient away—at your own risk."

"You have some kind of stretcher we can carry him on?" asked the armed man, getting up—a very impressive figure.

"Stretcher? Well, yes." Haviland's relief was all too plain in his voice. "But meantime, I've got to clean up here, a bit."

"You have an assistant, of course?" the purple-ribboned guard asked. "A nurse, or something of the kind?"

"Of course. Why?"

"She must positively know nothing of this operation. All this débris must be immediately destroyed. Your office must be left exactly as if nothing whatever had happened here. Wrap everything up in a parcel, and we will carry it away with us."

"As you wish. I'll get some paper and string, and make up a souvenir package for you gentlemen. And now I've done your work and made a good job of it. It's in order for you to pay me my fee and remove your patient!"

"Your fee shall be paid, all in good time. And you shall have no cause to complain of its size. But our business with you is far from completed yet."

"What are you driving at?" demanded the surgeon.

"What else," poisonously smiled the man with the purple ribbon, "what else than that you must accompany us? We are employing you as our private physician, to attend this case until cured."

"But my God, man! That's impossible! My patients, my practice—"

"This one patient alone, if you succeed, will prove vastly more profitable."

"Damn the profits! I'm not concerned with profits, now!" cried Haviland, his lean face burning with a flush of sudden anger. "There's something infernally fishy about all this, and I'm not going to be a partner to it. You can keep your fee. Take your patient, and clear out!"

"YOU certainly speak with characteristic American force," smiled the tall man mockingly, while the other—the blood-donor—sat up a bit weakly on the leather couch. "But for all that, sir, we cannot comply with your invitation. *Au contraire,* you must comply with ours."

"No!" exclaimed the surgeon, his nostrils white with anger. "No, I tell you!"

"Ah, then you most regrettably force us to resort to compulsion?" The tall man suggestively patted the pocket where now lay his gun. "I am sorry—I deeply regret—"

Something in the gleam of that onyx-black eye told Haviland his life depended on obedience. But still he protested—

"My other patients? What about them?"

"Leave a note directing your nurse to refer them to some colleague. And after all, how do your other patients concern us? When elephants tread, who hears the footsteps of ants? Come, come—up, and out of here!"

For a fateful moment, Haviland confronted them with eyes of defiant hatred. But life, at thirty-nine, still tasted sweet.

"All right," the Doctor nodded. "You win."

A few minutes later, the two aliens read Dr. Haviland's communication to his office-assistant:

Miss Baxter—I have suddenly been called away to operate on a colleague in New York. May be gone several days. Have Dr. Roth take care of practice till my return. —*R.H.*

"Very good," approved the tall man. "But to avoid every suspicion, you must have an address though which—under our supervision—communications may reach you, and from which you may answer. Put down 735½ West 72nd Street, Apartment 36."

Haviland wrote as directed, laid the note on his desk.

"Now then, pack whatever medical and surgical kit you will require."

"And some personal effects? I suppose you'll allow me those?"

"Never mind the personal effects. Everything you can possibly need will be provided. Make haste, Doctor. Night is passing, and we have far to go!"

PRESENTLY a strange little exodus took place from the Doctor's office, and in silence made its way to the rear exit of the building and thence to his garage.

Dr. Haviland and the tall alien were bearing a stretcher whereon—wrapped in many blankets and with face covered—lay an inert form, also the two parcels. Behind them, gun in hand, came Blackbeard. They reached the garage, opened it with the Doctor's key, switched on the light, carried the stretcher in and set it down.

"How can I outplay them?" Haviland was thinking. "What can I do—and how?" But no solution offered itself.

"Now then, Doctor," Blackbeard murmured, "now for you!" From his

"Nearly there now," thought Haviland. "And let the fireworks begin!"

overcoat pocket he produced a broad roll of adhesive-tape—probably stolen from the Doctor's own office.

"No, by God!" Haviland exclaimed. "None of that, on *me!*"

He backed away; he struck out savagely. But lightning-swift the tall man gripped him, pinioned his arms. Haviland was a man of rather more than average strength, but in the savage clutch of this alien his muscles availed no more than a boy's. He found himself vised as by steel.

With great dexterity Blackbeard cast a loop of the adhesive-tape—sticky side out, thank heaven!—round the Doctor's head, over and over, hauling tight and securely clamping the jaws. Now dumb as a fish, the surgeon could utter no slightest sound.

Another strip about the eyes, and Haviland was blinded. His hands were wrenched behind his back and tape cuttingly bound his wrists, his ankles.

"We deeply regret this necessity," said the tall man, releasing him.

With madness whirling in his brain, the Doctor felt himself lifted and shoved into the rear of the machine, on the floor. The legs of the wounded man were stowed on top of him, so that Haviland formed part of a mattress on which the patient might rest.

And there the eminent surgeon lay, trussed up like a fowl for roasting, helpless and outraged to the marrow of every bone. In that instant, gladly would he have dissected—alive and shrieking—both his assailants!

With the sense of direction that tells us whenever we make a turn, Haviland felt his machine swing to the left along the alley; then right, and right again, into his own street.

In half a moment it stopped. The Doctor knew it was standing now in front of his office, near the long black car that all this time had remained

parked there. He heard the crank of his front window turn, felt a breath of raw November night-air, and knew the window was being lowered. And now he caught the low-toned voice of Blackbeard, speaking in that queer foreign lingo to another man who—the Doctor sensed—must be in the long, waiting car.

And now, what? The Doctor's nostrils caught the faintest possible hint of that subtle perfume he had already scented when his assailants had entered his office. Perfume! So then, a woman in that other car?

The murmured conversation lasted but a moment. Then the window closed, the car once more growled ahead. Behind it, Haviland heard the starting of the other, which followed closely. The machines picked up velocity.

BY counting his respirations—twenty to the minute, the Doctor tried to make some estimate of time.

These had run up to just a little more than twelve hundred when suddenly the car slackened, turned sharply, hauled to a stop. One of the men got out. Haviland heard the creak of iron hinges. The machine moved slowly forward, stopped again. Behind it sounded another car. Once more the hinges gritted.

Now the car rolled onward, up a slope, at fairish speed. Gravel crunched and flew from beneath its wheels. He figured the car was clipping up a long driveway with many curves in it. Faint echoes indicated trees alongside this drive.

"Nearly there, now," thought Haviland. "Nearly there now—and let the fireworks begin!"

"Well, my dear Doctor, here we are at last!"

Dr. Haviland felt cold air gush in, as the car door opened. He heard still another voice—a wholly new one—exchanging rapid-fire questions and answers with his brace of captors. The wounded man's legs were hoisted from the Doctor's cramped body. Feet shuffled, then faded away.

Presently footsteps once more approached. He felt himself dragged out. Tuggings at his ankles told him the bandages there were being ripped off.

Now he was lifted to his feet. Numb, cramped, he swayed there. Somebody on either side gripped his elbows. Unsteadily, dumb and blinded, he staggered along.

"Up some steps, sir," he heard Blackbeard's voice. "Up a dozen steps, now!"

His uncertain feet found and ascended them. Half-borne by his captors, he climbed. They crossed what he recognized as a porch. Then a different quality of wood under his soles, a warmer atmosphere, told him he was entering a house.

"Kindly be seated now, and remain quiet. Nothing shall happen to you, if you show discretion."

The words came from the purple-ribboned magnifico. A powerful hand shoved him down into an exceedingly soft and luxurious chair. Boiling with renascent anger though he was, he could do nothing but remain there, passive and inert.

From somewhere above sounded heavy and uncertain footfalls, as of men carrying a heavy burden. Avidly the doctor listened. He sensed that the wounded man was being borne upstairs, was probably being transported to a bedroom.

Now—what was this?—other footsteps grew audible, as if somebody were carrying a considerable weight. Once more Haviland scented that baffling ghost of perfume; but quickly this faded, and he found himself apparently alone, helpless and a prisoner.

A new voice reached him, a voice deep-toned, suave and half-mocking, with a marked foreign accent, yet modulated in perfect rhythms. Haviland had heard no one approach. Had somebody crept up on him, or been standing guard over him all the time?

"If monsieur will have just a little more patience, he will soon be released. We regret infinitely what we have done, but necessity knows no law."

AT once deft hands commenced removing his bandages. As soon as his hands were freed, he brought them round in front, fell to rubbing his numb, ridged flesh. The bonds holding his jaws came loose, then those covering his eyes. He blinked, half-blinded, even in the subdued light filling a spacious room.

There in front of him he saw a burly fellow, apparently some kind of menial, in an odd, belted, foreign-looking jacket. Then his glance fell on Blackbeard, sitting near by in an easy-chair.

"Who the devil is this?" mumbled the Doctor, his mouth still half-paralyzed. "Servant?"

"Yes. We have several, here in this sanitarium."

"This *what?*"

"You are now in a private hospital,

my dear Doctor. But for the present, never mind about details. I hope you have not suffered too much, from your unavoidable restraint?"

"A lot *you* care!" growled Haviland, chafing his jaws and stretching them. Dimly some details of the room impressed themselves on his rather confused senses. Tiered-up bookcases proclaimed it a library, its furnishings heavy and old-fashioned. All curtains were closely drawn. Before a brisk blaze in a fireplace with a carved marble mantelpiece, the tall man was standing, hands thrust deep into trousers pockets, an inordinately long cigarette a-smolder in his mocking lips.

AGAINST a desk littered with books and magazines another man was lounging—a presence so Olympian, ugly and overpowering, yet not devoid of a singular attractiveness, that the surgeon left off grumbling, and fixed on him a gaze of mingled astonishment and repulsion.

"Greetings, monsieur!" murmured this personage, in whom the Doctor instantly recognized the master of the group. "We hope to make monsieur eminently comfortable here."

Huge-shouldered and dressed in tweeds, with a great head thickly clustered with curling red hair, this dominant figure was now analytically surveying the prisoner—studying him with a single Cyclopean eye wherein amusement, interest and a hint of cold, implacable ferocity all seemed to glower.

Across this man's left cheek three angry scars were slashed—probably souvenirs of German university duels. That this huge Cyclops had won higher distinction than that of mere cicatrices was evidenced by the empty left eye-socket, not even protected by a patch. What a *Meisterschlag* it must have been, to rip out an eye from this giant!

At fuller sight of the formidable creature, Haviland stiffened with rebellion. For there, if anywhere now, was the real enemy. Yet Cyclops' manner was amicable enough as he slid his vast bulk off the desk and advanced toward Haviland, his immense and red-haired hand extended.

Instinctively the surgeon stood up. But his hand did not advance to meet the other's.

"Monsieur is still resentful, eh?" And the man smiled. "Not to be blamed, after all. Our treatment has been a trifle summary? Admitted! But at all events, monsieur should try to cultivate a spirit of philosophy. For here, as the Spanish proverb says, monsieur is in his own house."

"Never mind diplomatic phrases! What's all this about, and why?"

"All in good time, my dear Doctor. First, let us become acquainted. As monsieur may be with us for some time, we must reach a *modus vivendi*. The gentleman by the fireplace is Lumo Dzhuvani. This,"—indicating Blackbeard, who stood up,—"is my excellent friend Djafer Noli. As for myself, I bear the name of Gurakuchi Bogdani. Odd names to monsieur's ears, I dare say. But after all, what is in a name?"

As Cyclops made the introductions, both the other men bowed very formally, as if now for the first time they were meeting Haviland. He, smiling satirically, answered:

"By contrast with such verbal magnificence, my own simple name of Haviland must seem very commonplace, I'm sure. But then, I'm just a plain, ordinary, every-day American. And you—may I ask what nationality yours is?"

"One that has been little heard of, in this country," Bogdani countered. "After all, it matters little in our present situation, where so harsh a necessity drives us."

"Confound your situation! What I want to know is where I am, and why?"

"Unfortunately, we cannot inform monsieur as to the where. The why is merely to cure our friend. Monsieur shall be made most comfortable and shall be liberally compensated. Even though this may be hell for monsieur, remember that Satan himself is a gentleman, and that he richly rewards all who faithfully serve him. So then—shall we have a look at our patient? The so very important patient, who absolutely must not die? Will monsieur accompany us, to him?"

"Yes, since I must."

UP a broad curving stair in a richly furnished hallway the huge man led his involuntary guest. Followed by Dzhuvani and Noli, the surgeon mounted toward the upper hall. Two doors along this corridor they all entered a big old-fashioned bedroom, quite in the Victorian tradition, its windows protected by venetiennes. The bed stood in a sort of alcove, not far from the entrance-door; and on the outside of this bed lay the wounded man, still wrapped in

blankets. Haviland's medical-kit bag had been placed on a table near at hand.

BY the light of a shaded incandescent, the Doctor surveyed his patient. Though still waxen-pale and greatly prostrated, he seemed no worse. His respiration, though painful and a little hurried, was satisfactory enough. So too was his temperature, when Haviland had taken it; pulse by no means alarming.

"Everything favorable?" queried Bogdani, his one eye anxious.

"Not bad."

"And your prognosis?"

"I shouldn't care to make any, just yet. It all depends on several factors—whether the internal hemorrhage has been stopped, whether or not septicemia develops, and so on. A dozen things might or might not happen."

"But on the whole, you would judge—"

"An even chance, anyhow."

"Thank God! The importance of this man's life, monsieur cannot understand!"

"I might, if you'd be so kind as to enlighten me! Whatever your game is, gentlemen, I dare say the clean-up will be tremendous. Not so nice for me, though, is it? Having to aid and abet your crime?"

"Crime?" echoed Dzhuvani, his sloe-black eyes a-gleam, thin face twitching. "You are assuming much!"

"Am I? Well, don't you call a gang-raid a crime? A raid in which one of your men is shot?"

"How far from the truth!" murmured Blackbeard Noli, soft-spoken as ever. "Why cannot you believe us, sir, when we assure you this is no mere vulgar robbery or kidnaping?"

"If monsieur assumes that we are profiting financially by it," Cyclops added, "monsieur is greatly in error. *Au contraire,* this affair is costing us a fortune. And as for this wounded man here—he is certainly not one of us. Not even of our race, or speech."

"Well, in heaven's name, who is he?"

"Ah, that we cannot divulge, for the present. Sometime, monsieur shall know—and justify us!"

"It would take a devil of a lot of explaining to justify bloodshed and kidnaping—especially the kidnaping of a woman!"

"Of a woman?" And Cyclops' huge fist knotted. "Monsieur knows—*that?*"

"Certainly I know it!"

"But how?"

"Ah, there's a little mystery of my own, for you gentlemen to mull over," laughed the surgeon. "But now, enough of mysteries. The patient demands all our attention. Out of those blankets with him, and into some pajamas—and into bed!"

Cyclops, turning, clapped his huge hands thrice, to summon servants.

"Monsieur the Doctor has but to command, and we obey. For at whatever cost in money, time or labor, *this man must live!*"

THUS commenced for Dr. Roderick Haviland the strangest chapter in his life—his captivity on an almost baronial old country estate, somewhere among the woods and hills perhaps half a hundred miles to westward of the city.

His first night in this prison had almost worn itself thin to morning before he had quite finished caring for the wounded man. Only when fairly certain the patient was at least holding his own, had the Doctor sought any rest for himself.

"And be sure to call me at once," he directed Bogdani—the Cyclops—"if you note any change in his condition."

"Monsieur can count on me. My friend Dzhuvani here will show monsieur his quarters. Sleep well!"

Haviland followed the tall, hawk-nosed man to a room adjoining that of the wounded alien. And despite fevered nerves, anger at being held prisoner, wonder about the mysterious unseen woman who seemed to be sharing his captivity, exhaustion soon conquered him. Soothed by a bed that was a sheer miracle of comfort, he very soon drifted out upon the sea of sleep. . . .

When he woke, confused and for the moment at a loss to recognize his environment, he found a little ormolu clock on a bureau marking nine-forty-five. The surgeon blinked, stretched, yawned. Then, with tensing memories a-rush back over him, he sat up, swung his pajamed legs out of bed—to find himself confronted by Blackbeard Noli, who was sitting in a huge wicker chair by a window, drawing at an extremely fragrant cigar.

"Good morning, sir," Noli greeted, in his suave and soft voice. "I hope you slept well?"

"Like a log! And the patient?"

"A bit restless, for a while. But later, more quiet. Just now, asleep. Nothing to report."

"Good!" Then, resentment welling

"We have been held up," explained the man with the ribbon across his shirt-front. "A shooting—"

up, he demanded: "But let me ask you —what's the idea, your invading my bedroom?"

Noli made rather a failure of a smile:

"Ten thousand apologies, my dear sir. But I regret to inform you that we have decided against your having any real privacy at all, while honoring us with your presence."

"No privacy? What the devil?"

"So sorry, but—" And Noli sketched a gesture with his cigar. "You must understand how it is, yourself. Suppose you should be so ill-advised as to attempt escape, during the night? Not that it would carry you far. We have arranged all *that*. But—"

"But what, damn it?"

"But we cannot—how do you say?—take a chance. You might be injured, even killed, during the attempt. And that might be fatal for us. So you understand? No, Doctor. All we want, and must have, is your peaceful and continued assistance. So?"

Haviland glowered at him. Stood up, kicked his feet into slippers awaiting him—new slippers, to match a new and very complete layout of all other necessities. "I dare say you'll even supervise my morning bath?"

"Oh, as for your shower, and so on," conceded Noli, "we can trust you that far. Gentlemen do not escape naked from bathrooms—not in an American November!"

And with a wave of the hand toward the bathroom door, he smiled in his black beard.

LIFE continued, as the days passed, under inexorable surveillance.

Whether caring for his patient, at meals—of the best—in a gloomy old-fashioned dining-room on the ground floor, walking out for exercise in the immense grounds, reading in the extremely well-stocked library, playing chess with Cyclops Bogdani, amusing himself at the grand piano, or sleeping in his bed, vigilance was never relaxed. At least one of this mysterious triumvirate was ever on guard over him.

According to promise, mail was delivered to him: letters that had been sent to the New York address arranged, and then—by means unknown to him—sent or brought to this hiding-place.

He was allowed to answer whatever he chose, dating each letter from the same Manhattan address. These letters were taken away each day, and (he felt sure) posted in New York—after being carefully censored. For the rest, though, he might have been having only a rather luxurious vacation, with prospects of a whacking big fee.

The wounded man, known to him only as "Mr. Osman," also remained under close guard, watched night and day by one of the menservants. This guarding, the Doctor concluded, must be to prevent any attempt at suicide, since Osman was manifestly unable to escape. But why should Osman want to kill himself?

Barring accident, the wounded man seemed reasonably certain to get well. His only set-backs were a touch of fever and a hint of infection that soon cleared up under vigorous treatment. Never at any time was Haviland allowed to enter into any speech with the patient, beyond just the bare questions and answers necessary for treatment.

Even this limited conversation, though, conclusively proved that Osman was of some different race than the others. His pronunciation of certain consonants was quite unlike that of the Triumvirate. Though he spoke perfect English, like all the three, it was a different kind—softer, more liquid.

"Turkish?" Haviland wondered. "Armenian, Syrian, or what the devil?"

And the kidnaped woman? She seemed to have totally vanished. No sign of her now was evident, no sound, not even that elusive fragrance. Had she been released? Was she still a prisoner in some other part of the huge, rambling old country-house?

Out walking every day with one or another of the Triumvirate, he took occasion to observe with considering eyes the construction of the house, to study it from various angles. An immense and inchoate old structure it was, with a vast ell at its western end, high-pitched roofs and weather-beaten chimney-stacks that seemed to have defied the batterings of a hundred winters.

"If the girl is here, she's certainly being kept in that ell, far away from the rest of us," decided Haviland. "Probably locked up and guarded in some rooms there—and I think I know which rooms, at that!"

The place he decided on was the corner of the ell, on the third floor; for here three windows had been barred, and the Venetian blinds were closed. Whether this closing was only during his outdoor exercise, he could not tell. But at all events, he never saw those windows otherwise than shuttered.

THE diabolical intelligence of his captors showed itself in the way they mutilated every newspaper they let him read. Every morning at breakfast, he found his favorite paper, the *Globe*, beside his plate. He was free to read it then, or talk with his jailers and defer the reading till later. But invariably he found every issue had been carefully censored with the shears.

At first, large sections and headlines were clipped from the front page and from inside pages. As days passed, the extent of these deletions shrank, until after a week or so only a column or less was removed.

"And all this cut-out matter deals with the disappearance of the woman, the girl, whoever she may be," the surgeon shrewdly guessed. Elsewise, why the importance of the prohibited news? Surely it could not refer to the patient, a man of apparently too slight moment to warrant so much space.

As for the prohibited news dealing with the Doctor's own absence, a very little analysis put that theory out of court. Thought Haviland:

"I'm only supposed to be in New York—and beside, I'm not important enough for all this to-do. No, it must be the woman. And to judge by the amount of space, she must be pretty damned prominent!"

BUT the first definite clue of any value Haviland was able to lay hands on came to him the 19th of November—a rainy, windy day when heavy cloud-banks huddled low, when fretworks of black wet branches swayed against the leaden sky, and all Nature seemed weeping for the death of autumn.

As the rain lulled, toward noon, Haviland proposed a little walk. Bogdani that morning accompanied him, ostensibly as companion, really as guard. Right well Haviland sensed the presence of a gun in Cyclops' ulster pocket! Their jaunt led them far through winding paths toward the rear of the vast grounds, where a stone wall topped by a sharp-spiked iron fence bounded the estate.

Striding along with the inscrutable Bogdani, Dr. Haviland sighted a wet, torn scrap of newspaper lying beside the path; a bit that had probably blown in from the road.

And a needle of thought pierced his brain:

"Oh, Lord! If I could only get hold of that, some way!"

The scar-slashed Bogdani seemed to pay the thing no heed. He was forcibly condemning Japan's Manchurian aggression. Nothing else seemed in his mind. As he and Haviland came nearly abreast of the paper, the Doctor glanced up, paused, pointed at a gnarled and secular old giant of a tree.

"Pardon me, but that's something strange, eh?" he exclaimed.

"What is strange?" the giant redhead asked.

"Have you ever seen a live-oak growing so far north?"

"Live-oak?" And Bogdani squinted with his one eye at the tree-tops, over which wind-driven clouds fled smoking. "Monsieur means—"

"It's a Southern species. But just look at those dead leaves still clinging up there, will you? Can't you see the difference between those and an ordinary oak?"

The tree in question was only an ordinary white-oak, no more a live-oak than it was a pine. But never mind; for the moment Cyclops' interest was diverted, his attention fixed aloft.

In that moment, Haviland stepped behind him, swiftly caught up the half-sheet of rain-soaked newspaper. He instantly crumpled it into a ball, plunged it into his pocket. Already Bogdani was shaking his huge red head in denial.

"Pardon, but monsieur must be mistaken. This is merely a *quercus alba,* by no means a *quercus agrifolia,* as monsieur seems to think."

"So? Well, perhaps." And Haviland once more ranged up alongside the huge alien. "I thought, for a minute—but I see I'm wrong. What's a mere species of oak, between friends?"

He managed a laugh, to mask his agitation. But his heart was pounding more than a trifle, his nerves taut and jangling, as they resumed their walk.

IN a fever of impatience, hard to dissemble, he regained the rambling old mansion-house. Nothing seemed to have been noticed.

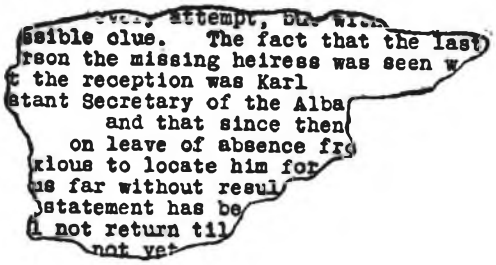
In the hallway, he managed to transfer the paper to his house-coat pocket.

The paper, wet though it was, seemed to burn in his pocket all that evening. He made shift, at bedtime, to slip it into his bathrobe pocket; and so, next morning, to smuggle it into the bathroom.

The spraying of his shower made good camouflage. With feverish eagerness he smoothed out the paper, found it to be somewhat less than half a page of the *Globe,* for November 17th. His eyes fairly devoured it.

Nothing of any importance at first seemed evident. With a sickening sense of frustration he realized that he had already seen all this news. All? No—what was this, now? Ah! Here was something important!

The surgeon's heart began to pound as he discovered part of a column that—in the paper which had been given to him, of that date—had been clipped out. With the most intense concentration he read this forbidden matter, though it was only a few imperfect and broken lines:



"Damnation!" growled the surgeon. "If I only had the rest of this page!"

"Missing heiress—Karl—stant Secretary of the Alba—leave of absence—"

Well, now?

"Stant Secretary!" That could only mean *"assistant secretary."* But secretary of what? And *Karl* was a common enough name. And *"leave of absence?"* Yes, that made sense. But what could *"Alba"* mean?

"By gad, I've got something to go on now, anyway!" he exulted, as he tore the paper to shreds and summarily disposed of it. Emerging from the bathroom, he continued his usual routine.

His regular morning visit to the patient took place, this morning, under the surveillance of Blackbeard Noli. The wounded man, now able to sit up in bed with plenty of pillows at his back, seemed coming on famously.

"Condition quite satisfactory, sir?" Noli purred.

"Couldn't be better. I'll soon have the drainage out, and finish closing the wound."

"Excellent, sir. The sooner the better, eh?"

Haviland nodded.

"Rather! I'm anxious to get back to my practice."

"All in good time," smiled Noli.

LEAVING the patient under guard of a servant—a fellow the Triumvirate always called Charliro—the Doctor and Noli went down to the library. Dzhuvani and Cyclops were there; conversation knit itself pleasantly enough, in that comfortable room made all the more cozy by bleak November outside.

From this to that, talk drifted to crime-detection. The Doctor pricked up his ears. Readily he lent himself to answering, when hawk-nosed Dzhuvani plumped out the question:

"By the way, Doctor, how much is there in the statement that certain drugs may force a man to tell the truth, even against his own will?"

"There's a good deal in it, according to what I've heard. Many a crook has been trapped, that way."

"I know, of course," put in Bogdani, with an arrow-like glance from his Cyclopean eye, "that during the World War both the Germans and the Allies sometimes etherized prisoners, to gather information from them while coming out of the anesthetic. And other drugs may act similarly?"

"Why, yes," Haviland answered. ("What the devil, now?" he was thinking. "Let's give them plenty of rope, this time. May well be they'll hang themselves!") Aloud: "Yes, indeed; there's scopolamin, for instance."

"Which acts how?"

"Well, it's a soporific drug, a sleep-producer. A person going under its effects grows drowsy. He can hear and understand everything that's said to him, but he's too damn' sleepy to think up lies. He can't imagine anything but just the simple, unvarnished truth—and there you are."

"By Jove, how entertaining!" exclaimed Noli. "Marvelous science, medicine!"

"Quite so—especially when practised under compulsion."

"Now, my dear sir," smiled Blackbeard, "surely you are not still holding that against us?"

"Who said I was?" And so the matter died.

THAT morning, Haviland found only half a column clipped from his paper; and this half-column, moreover, was on an inside page. The case, he saw—whatever it might be—was losing public interest.

His paper finished, once more he fell a-thinking of what *"Alba"* might mean. Smoking, pacing up and down the library, he paused before a bookcase containing an encyclopedia. As though acting only with indifferent interest, he took down Volume One—"A-Asher."

With this he returned to his easy-chair. Idly thumbing the book, he glanced through some of the topics: Aard-vark, Abiogenesis, Acoustics, Admiralty, Aëronautics, Agate, Albacore, Albadara—

Ah, here was something, now! *Albania!*

Eagerly he glanced at the map, fell to devouring the text:

> Albania; an independent kingdom lying on the west coast of the Balkan Peninsula, along the Adriatic Sea, between Greece and Yugoslavia. It has an area of 27,500 square kilometers, and a population of about 1,000,000. . . . The language is practically unknown beyond the borders. Some 70% of the people are Mohammedan.

Hastily the Doctor read, trying to absorb all he possibly could before any interruption.

> The Turks captured Yannina in 1431. This united all the Albanian clans under the leadership of Gjerji (George) Castrioti. Centuries of turmoil and warfare were unable to deprive the Albanians of nationalistic spirit and pride. In 1912 they won autonomy from Turkey. . . .
>
> George Castrioti is the national hero. During his lifetime, 1404-1468, he overwhelmed the Turks in 23 battles. Called "Iskander Bey," meaning "Alexander Bey," his name was shortened to Skanderbeg, or Iskander. The head of this great military leader—

Nervously the Doctor started, as Bogdani's voice interrupted him:

"A thousand pardons, but we have a little business to transact this morning. May we ask monsieur's assistance?"

Haviland closed the book, his finger still marking the place. Bogdani, having approached on noiseless foot, was standing at his shoulder.

"My help? Why, certainly," the Doctor answered. "I have no alternative, when you need anything of me."

"Monsieur is exceedingly kind," murmured Cyclops with a mocking little crack of laughter. He tossed his cigarette into the fire. "So then, shall we go upstairs?"

Haviland laid his book on the table, with all the indifference he could muster. How much had Cyclops spied on him? How much did he know?

UP in the sick-room, Blackbeard and Dzhuvani were waiting. A tense atmosphere seemed to grip the place.

"Here is the Doctor to see you again," smiled Bogdani to the wounded man. "I hope," Bogdani went on, "you are feeling well enough to indulge in a little friendly discussion?"

Osman, the patient, made no answer. His swarthy, big-jowled face bore an Oriental mask of noncommittal blankness. Noli, tugging at his black beard, cast a glance at the clinical chart hanging beside the bed.

"No fever," he commented. "Everything seems quite normal?"

"Yes," nodded the surgeon. "If our patient holds this gain, he will be able to leave in a few days now."

"As soon as he pleases," Dzhuvani put in. "Do you think, Doctor, our friend here is able to stand a little amicable questioning?"

"Yes, provided the discussion is not too long."

"It need not be long, at all. Just a few words will suffice—if they are the right words. And after that, Mr. Osman can leave here as soon as he pleases. He well understands the terms on which he can depart."

"Terms?" repeated the Doctor.

"No need to go into all this again," the patient spoke up. His lips drew taut with stubbornness. "My answer today is absolutely the same as it was yesterday. The same as it has been all along. The same as it will always be!"

"Ah, indeed?" dangerously smiled Cyclops. "My dear fellow, for heaven's sake why not be a trifle reasonable?"

"That is for *me* to decide! And you can do nothing to make me change my mind. Nothing, you hear? Nothing! Your keeping me a prisoner here cannot be of any possible advantage to you. The longer you keep me, the worse for you. Sooner or later this hell's corner is bound to be smoked out, and then—"

His words frayed off to nothing, finished with a gesture of contempt. Under heavy lids, he blinked defiantly.

"My dear friend, how very distressing a picture you paint!" murmured Blackbeard. "And how lightly you view your position!"

"Why not lightly? Allah knows best!" The wounded man's eyes burned defiantly in his swarthy-yellow mask of a face. "You are all absolutely helpless in my hands. Not even killing me would serve any purpose. On the contrary, that would ruin you, because my death would put a permanent end to all hopes of your ever—"

"What gives you this absurd idea of killing?" demanded Bogdani. "That is farthest from our thoughts."

"Naturally! Since your only possible chance is keeping me alive, and probably—when I get strong enough—subjecting me to torture. Well, gentlemen, let me assure you that torture will accomplish nothing. Men of my race have long been schooled against it. Nothing you can do will—"

"Very well, my friend," smiled Cyclops. "Why stroke a thistle? Until tomorrow, then?"

HE turned away from the bed, and beckoned Haviland, and with him left the room.

"Extraordinary fellow, that," he murmured, as together they descended the stairway. "His obstinacy is perfectly amazing. He has already refused an offer in cold cash, for—for a certain service—which would have turned the head of all but one man in a million. Our patient is that one man."

"So I should judge," assented the Doctor. "I dare say you could smash every bone in his skin, and be none the wiser."

"True, true. And now he faces—well, some extremely unpleasant consequences. Admirable, in a way; but how foolish, how short-sighted!"

"My dear sir," the Doctor exclaimed, as they came to the bottom of the stairs, "why not explain what's going on here? I know perfectly well a woman—a girl—of great wealth is being detained in this house. And yet you claim this isn't a kidnaping racket. Then, for heaven's sake what *is* it?"

"Far from what you Americans call a racket," nodded Cyclops. "Tremendous issues are at stake. There are binding oaths, oaths of blood, that hold us silent."

Cyclops stood aside to let Haviland precede him into the library. There the one-eyed man of mystery strolled over to a tall window, and stood gazing out at the bleak November morning.

The Doctor, once more picking up Volume One of the encyclopedia, turned again to the article on Albania.

To his unspeakable astonishment, that article had now completely disappeared.

Amazed, the Doctor stared, his wits moon-raking with incredulity: The pages had been cut away, cleanly, as by a razor-blade.

THAT afternoon, when the Doctor went up for his routine visit to the patient, he took with him a package of cigarettes—a package the label of which he had covertly managed to prepare with his fountain-pen, in furtherance of a new-hatched scheme.

Blackbeard Noli accompanied him, stood at the foot of the bed while Haviland asked the usual questions, took the wounded man's pulse and temperature, changed the dressings. Haviland passed judgment:

"Well, now, my friend, you're coming on so well that I'm going to relax a little of the discipline."

"That will be fine, Doctor," smiled the sick man. "Am I to sit up in a chair, like a human being?"

"Well, hardly that, as yet. However, if you were to have a cigarette or two daily, they wouldn't hurt you—provided you didn't inhale."

"Wonderful!" The patient's dark face lighted with a smile that revealed strong, white teeth. "You don't know what a deprivation of tobacco means to a man who has always been a heavy smoker!" His big chest expanded with a deep breath.

"I can imagine." Haviland drew out the packet, loosened a cigarette, and extended the packet, which had borne —among other printing—the words:

FINEST TURKISH TOBACCO

But Haviland had so "doctored" these three words that only the four letters *TURK* remained, with a penned question-mark just below. As the patient took a cigarette, his glance rested on this query. A second's glint of comprehension flickered in his glance. He veiled it under heavy lids, nodded almost imperceptibly.

That nod must have seemed to Noli just a part of his, "Thank you, so much." But perfectly well Haviland understood.

"It won't hurt you," the surgeon casually remarked. "It's a very friendly smoke.

"If friendly, then extremely welcome," smiled the patient—and lo, communication, though but the slenderest thread, had been established!

With a sense of tremendous progress made, Haviland shoved the cigarette-box back into his pocket. From this point on, though, what next?

The next step, of course, must be to establish some safe and undiscoverable means of communication with the Turk. . . . And, when next morning he visited his patient and drew from his thermometer-case the fragile glass cylinder, he palmed this cylinder. He held it hidden so that Dzhuvani, the hawk-nosed—watching like a hawk indeed from the other side of the bed—could not see it.

The patient, though, saw it plainly enough. With quick intelligence he comprehended, as he perceived a narrow strip of paper wound closely round the tube. Only a glimpse he had of it, for Haviland immediately popped the thermometer into the Turk's mouth.

"Hold it very carefully under your tongue, please," he directed. "As usual."

There the thermometer remained, about three minutes. When Haviland drew it out again, and read it, the tube was bare. Right well the Doctor knew he had been understood.

A few moments later, he and Bogdani departed, and only a servant known as

Haviland swung himself over the sill . . . . clambered down.

Ahmed was left on guard in the sick-room.

Cautiously, then, the patient brought to his lips a thin wisp of paper, coughed it into his hand, let it lie there a while. Then with infinite precautions against being observed, he unrolled it.

On the paper was penciled in tiny characters:

Friend! Two contractions of your wrist-muscles mean yes. One means no. Swallow this paper!

Twice "Mr. Osman" read this message. Then, unsuspected, he palmed the paper strip into his mouth. A slight chewing, a draft of water from the bedside carafe, and the communication was gone.

Next morning, during the usual medical inspection, Dr. Haviland by the same means conveyed this question:

Are you being held for ransom?

That afternoon, while taking Osman's pulse, he felt one distinct muscular contraction of the wrist: *"No!"*

The following day, this question was secretly asked:

Is the woman held for ransom?

Again the answer was negative.

"So far, great!" exulted the surgeon. "It's like a game of twenty questions."

On the third day of this queer game, Haviland conveyed the question:

Are you being held because you have something they want?

The answer had come back, hours later, a most emphatic *"Yes!"*

AND then it was, when the Doctor felt himself just on the edge of discovering something really vital, that Fate willed an arbitrary interruption.

For that evening, with the Triumvirate assembled in the library, Cyclops Bogdani suddenly remarked:

"Well, monsieur, our patient is gaining fast, now?"

"Reasonably fast," the Doctor answered, sensing trouble, hoping to delay it. "But still, he's far from a well man."

"Naturally. However, he will soon be up again?"

"Yes," Haviland admitted, while the others listened in tense silence. "If no relapse takes place."

"None must! Or the results may be unfortunate, for monsieur. In monsieur's opinion, will our friend soon be strong enough to undergo a certain little experiment?"

"Experiment? What experiment?"

"If monsieur will favor us now with his undivided attention, we shall soon make perfectly clear this most important matter! Monsieur remembers a conversation we had, some days ago, concerning the drug scopolamin, and its use in extracting the truth from a man?"

"Before I answer that, let me ask if you're referring to the wounded man upstairs?"

"Plain words are best," nodded Bogdani. "We are."

"Nothing doing, gentlemen!"

"What do you mean, nothing doing?" demanded the hard-jawed Lumo Dzhuvani, his black eyes a-glitter. "You refuse to administer such a drug, for such a purpose?"

"Absolutely!"

"But consider the case, monsieur," argued Cyclops. "Liberal offers have been made to this man—almost fabulous offers, I may say. And yet, he still resists them. So—"

"Offers, in exchange for what?"

"For information of high international importance. Of infinite value, to us!"

"Ah, so? And one of you shot the Turk, in the course of your—researches?"

"Turk?" exclaimed Blackbeard. "How do you know that?"

"How do I know many things?" the Doctor smiled. "Believe me, gentlemen, I am aware of far more than you suspect, and—"

"And you refuse to help us?"

"I refuse to violate my ethical code, as a physician."

"Refuse, eh?" laughed Dzhuvani, his lean, saturnine face positively wolfish.

"As your own Scripture says," observed Cyclops, grimly, "all that a man hath will he give for his life."

"That may not apply to a conscientious physician."

"Perhaps not. But let monsieur remember that certain contingencies may be far more painful than even death."

"Why resist?" put in Djafer Noli, with his most silken tone. "It can do no good. If you refuse, and thereby undergo—well, certain disagreeable consequences, we can easily enough get some other physician to administer a drug. So how will your elimination help your Turkish friend?"

"And again, how do you know he is right, and we are wrong?" asked Dzhuvani. "Maybe the information we require is useful to the world, to the cause of peace and international goodwill. Who knows?"

"*I* don't!" the physician answered, facing them all. "But this I do know: that you shot and kidnaped him. You kidnaped a girl, too, a very rich and socially prominent girl. And—no matter what your motive—that's a beastly, criminal way of doing business! And I do know this wounded Turk has the courage and the manhood to defy you all. I only hope to God I shall continue to have as much."

"Ah, well," purred Blackbeard, "tomorrow is another day. And tomorrow may yet change your mind."

BEFORE tomorrow dawned, however, the picture changed: Just after midnight Haviland awoke from an uneasy slumber. And a cautious glance brought him astonishment—for he saw his guard was sleeping! Cyclops Bogdani himself, it was. And for once the red-headed giant's inhuman alertness had relaxed.

With infinite precautions, noiselessly as a wraith, Haviland slid out of bed. Half a dozen steps in naked feet brought him to the hall-door. Locked, of course! And to search Cyclops for the key would be too risky.

The bathroom offered possibilities. Slipping on his robe, he stole into that little adjoining room, closed the door, switched on the incandescent. Were Cyclops to wake, he would see light fingering out under the bathroom door, would think nothing amiss. And with luck, Cyclops might not waken.

SILENTLY Haviland raised the window and peered out. A thin, anemic little butt-end of a moon wandered aimless among the leaden clouds. Silence reigned. Noiselessly he swung himself up on the sill, and over it. Some two feet to the left, a water-pipe hugged the wall. Haviland leaned over, gripped it, swung clear. Bracing his naked feet on the wall, he half-slid, half-clambered down. A moment, and there he stood on frosty dead grass.

Acutely listening, he crouched. Still no sound or hint of danger. Above him, his bathroom window gleamed, but all else was dark. Hope quickening his pulses, he stole along the house, in deep shadow.

He reached the ell, paused, made his way along it and turned its corner. Above, on the third story, he perceived a vague light in the barred window which he had already determined as belonging to the prison of the kidnaped girl.

He stooped, gathered a handful of pebbles from the driveway. Across the drive he scuttled, into the shelter of tall, ragged boxwood bushes. From this lair, with accurate aim he flung a pebble at the barred window, heard it go *"tink!"* on the glass.

A second pebble, a third. Alert, tense, Haviland waited, listening. Nothing. A fourth pebble missed its aim, but a fifth and sixth registered.

He was about to throw another, when the light in that barred window suddenly blacked out. Then Haviland heard a tiny sound, as of something that slid. The window had been partly raised. He could dimly make out a whitish aura, the faintest possible hint of a human figure, ghostly in that pallid moonlight.

Who might it be? One of the Triumvirate? A servant? The kidnaped girl? Grasping at bare chance, Haviland exclaimed in a carrying whisper:

"I am the doctor! And you—are you the woman prisoner?"

"Yes!" drifted the answer.

"Can you get out?"

"No! My door is locked. A woman guard is asleep, outside it. Hopeless—"

"Nothing is hopeless! I'll get you out, some way. They're not holding you for ransom?"

"No!"

"Same reason as the Turk, then? Because they hope to find out something, from you?"

"That's it! They—"

"What is it they want to know?"

"Where the Head of Iskander is!"

"The Head of Iskander?"

"Yes—they're bound to have it. They'd kill us, if that would help them any—but it won't. With us dead, they'll *never* find it, and—"

"For God's sake, girl! What *is* the Head of Iskander?"

"Why, it's—"

The answer was never completed. For suddenly the Doctor heard a stifled cry. The dim figure at the window vanished. The window itself was banged down. Suddenly light flared in the room, throwing the bars into strong relief. A shade was violently pulled.

Cursing, Haviland whipped across the driveway and into the shadow of the ell, then along this to the main body of the house, and so regained the water-pipe.

Some of his athletic prowess when he'd been a medical student flared back into his muscles as he went up, hand over hand, feet gripping the wall.

He reached the level of his bathroom window, clung with tense legs to the pipe, leaned over and gripped the sill.

Swinging free, he hauled himself up and with a supreme effort dragged in over the sill. Into the bathroom he lunged, picked himself up, panting.

THE door was jerked open.

"Monsieur is indeed an athlete!" sounded Cyclops' mocking voice. His scarred face darkening, he bored at his captive with that one Polyphemus eye. "But just what does monsieur expect to accomplish by clambering up and down walls at such extremely inopportune hours?"

"That's for you to guess!"

"Ah, pardon—no, not for me. I never waste time in fruitless speculation. All that monsieur has gained is that a certain young lady—most charming, I assure you—will henceforth remain under much more strict surveillance. Like monsieur himself. And now, if monsieur will be so kind as to return to bed—"

"Why should I?"

"Ah, why?" The Albanian's smile was

cryptic. "Remember, monsieur, sleep builds up nerve-energy. And who knows but what the thing which monsieur may see, tomorrow, may require much nerve-energy on monsieur's part?"

THAT morning, when Haviland paid his routine visit to the sick-room and to the patient—now sitting in a wheel-chair—a tiny slip of paper on the thermometer bore this message:

They intend drugging you for information re head of Iskander. Resist. Understand?

And that afternoon, when the Doctor took "Mr. Osman's" pulse, the answer "Yes" came with a look so eloquent of gratitude and of powerful determination, that Haviland's heart quivered with the sheer joy of battle.

But another hour put quite a different face on matters. For toward half-past three, Bogdani invited Haviland out for a walk through the stark grounds. And on the way back, nearly at the house, Cyclops suddenly queried:

"Perhaps monsieur has been so intelligent as to change his mind, about co-operating with us?"

"No!" retorted Haviland.

"Ah, but monsieur might change it, if he knew the alternative."

"What's in prospect?" Haviland asked.

Bogdani unlocked the garage.

"This way, monsieur, *s'il vous plaît.*"

And Cyclops led his prisoner past the two cars there—the Doctor's own, and the long black sedan. He opened a door to another room at the right. The dim light of a single incandescent vaguely illuminated this room, which—singularly enough, it seemed to Haviland—was warmed to almost tropical heat by an oil-stove.

A peculiar odor, apart from that of the stove, pervaded the close-shuttered place; a scent animal-like, repellent. The suggestion of an animal of some kind was heightened by the fact that nearly half the space was divided off by a cage.

This cage, provided with a door, was constructed of strong steel bars, lined all the way from floor to ceiling with very small-meshed galvanized-wire netting.

"Cage, eh?" mocked Haviland. "Well, at all events you've got it nice and warm out here."

"Ah, monsieur mistakes," explained Cyclops, his one eye crowfooted with sinister wrinkles. "This temperature is not for the comfort of the subject. Monsieur has only to observe."

Fascinated, horror-stricken, Haviland approached the cage. Now, by that dim light, his widened eyes beheld a wooden box in the corner of the cage; and through a door cut in that box—what was this? A coil, a sinuous and lithe curve of clear bright yellow, of speckled black and pink.

As he watched, with breath suspended, the coil slowly rippled. Staring, Haviland beheld a slithering motion, a cold and repulsive creeping. And into view slid a triangular head with two lidless eyes, with slit-like pupils orange-hued and crimson-glowing, like charcoal that burns; eyes of deadly, implacable malignancy.

"A snake!" gasped Haviland, knowing it a deadly species.

"Oui, monsieur," Bogdani assented. "A snake, indeed. A serpent, of the most venomous. And how difficult, how costly in this climate, to feed it properly, to maintain it in health and vigor! For it is a native of far-away tropical lands. A fer-de-lance. Monsieur has heard of this so remarkable reptile?"

"Who hasn't! But—"

"Well said, monsieur. Now, let us imagine a case, merely hypothetical: Suppose a man were given his choice between doing something to which he greatly objected, or else being stripped stark naked and locked into a cage with an active fer-de-lance? Well, what does monsieur think that man would do?"

"I only wish I could answer you with a prescription of a few grammes of lead, administered from any suitable firearm!"

"No doubt," laughed the red-haired giant. "But since that is manifestly impossible, perhaps *this* may be of some slight interest to monsieur?"

Speaking, he drew from his pocket a page that had been neatly cut from a book, and handed it to the surgeon—"Two Years in the French West Indies."

He read:

> "When you are bitten, then you will need help, and most quickly; for within the span of a few heart-beats the wounded flesh chills, tumefies, softens. Soon it changes color. . . . Even if life is saved, the danger is not over. Necrosis of the tissues is likely to set in; the flesh corrupts . . . . the Death of the Woods is upon him!

Aghast, the Doctor finished, stood a moment quivering with repulsion and nausea, then crumpled the page into a ball and flung it down.

"Out!" he choked. "Out of here!"

"And tomorrow's experiment, of administering the truth-drug to our patient? What of that, monsieur?"

Making no reply, Haviland jerked open the door of the horror-room, stumbled through it into the garage and outside. Cyclops followed him, smiling in mockery, toward the house.

Now the hour for temporizing was past; the struggle just for life was on Haviland.

A plan? No. A forlorn hope? Yes.

Toward evening he remarked to Djafer Noli that Osman's temperature had been a bit up, that afternoon, and asked to see the patient again. This request excited no suspicion, and the examination served to transmit this brief message:

Keep awake be ready escape 2 A.M.

The Doctor could of course receive no answer, but well enough he knew Mr. Osman would obey. Of just how much physical exertion the Turk might be capable, however, was problematical.

That evening, with now a steady drench of rain whipping the tall windows, with November wind soughing among the immemorial trees, Dr. Haviland passed a couple of hours at chess with the lean, black-eyed Lumo Dzhuvani. Though Hawk-nose mated, the battle was severe.

"Excellent, my dear Doctor," Dzhuvani approved, while huge red-haired Polyphemus looked on, and from the broad divan in front of the crackling fire Blackbeard surveyed the group through perfumed cigarette-smoke. "You are quite a fighter, eh?"

"Not much of a one, I'm afraid," disclaimed Haviland, sweeping the pieces all back into their box. "If I really were—"

"You would not be here?"

"Exactly!"

"Monsieur need not let that thought trouble him," put in Cyclops, with one of his robust laughs. "No man living could combat the elements here opposed to monsieur. Why stand against us? Why not coöperate—win freedom, wealth?"

"I won't discuss that, any further!"

"Too bad; for tomorrow we really must get to work. Tomorrow, monsieur will write a prescription so that we can procure the necessary drugs—which monsieur will then administer to our Turkish friend."

"Tomorrow?" smiled the Doctor.

"Tomorrow—why, tomorrow I may be Myself with Yesterday's seven thousand years."

The mirror struck behind the giant's right ear. Cyclops gasped, staggered —collapsed at Haviland's feet.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Djafer Noli, stroking his black beard. "That, sir, is truly a most philosophical attitude. Who knows how much philosophy you may not need—tomorrow?"

IT was close on midnight when Haviland finally settled himself as if to sleep. Cyclops himself kept guard—sat in his accustomed chair with a book, on which a pool of light lay quiet from his shaded reading-lamp. For something like half an hour the Doctor lay still, listening to the driving rain-storm's ruffles of drums. Then he turned over, grumbled, turned again. About one-thirty in the morning he sat up in bed, with a curse.

"I say there, Bogdani! Can't sleep—"

"Is monsieur possibly nervous about the impending experiment?" mocked Cyclops, laying down his book. "He need

not be. Only provided he will be reasonable, all can be so amicably arranged for him."

"You be damned! All I want is some sleep! I've simply got to have a sedative, Bogdani!" Now the Doctor swung his legs out of bed, kicked his feet into slippers. "Get me my medical-kit bag, will you?"

"Ah? Monsieur wishes to take some drug?" Cyclops' tone betrayed suspicion. "Surely, we cannot allow that!"

"You think I'm going to commit suicide?"

"Everything is possible."

"Oh, hell, don't be a complete idiot! And besides, you can see everything I take. Get me my bag. Let me have a few hours' rest!"

"Well—as monsieur wishes," Bogdani unwillingly agreed. "But while I am gone, no indiscretions, please!"

CYCLOPS unlocked the door communicating with the sick-room, and in a minute or so fetched back the bag, again locking the door.

Haviland opened the bag on his bureau, and switched on a light over it. He got out his hypodermic needle, brought water from the bathroom.

"Morphine, eh?" queried Bogdani, squinting his sole optic as he watched Haviland crush a tablet and aspirate the solution up into the glass barrel. "I was not aware that monsieur had this engaging habit."

"Lots of things you're not aware of, Bogdani," growled the surgeon. "But never mind. Bear a hand now, will you?"

"Monsieur is asking if I will assist him?"

"That's right. Help me take this hypo."

"Rather heroic measures, I should judge, for a trifle of insomnia?"

"Perhaps. But I find that nothing else quite does the work of a shot in the arm. Ever use the stuff?"

Cyclops shook his massive red poll.

"Non, Dieu merci!"

("Don't thank God too soon," the Doctor thought. "Because you're going to use some right away, now—if nothing slips!")

Saturating a wad of cotton with alcohol, he pulled up the left sleeve of his pajama-jacket and scrubbed a bit of skin on his forearm.

"Just pinch up the skin here, will you?" he asked, his glance resting a second on a heavy shaving-mirror that lay upon the bureau. "It's a bit hard to insert the needle, unless the skin is held taut."

"At monsieur's service," mocked Cyclops. "Our little fer-de-lance friend out in the garage has a pair of natural hypodermic needles that require no assistance, and that work unfailingly. How superior is Nature, over man's clumsy inventions, eh?"

With clumsy strength, Cyclops took hold. Now all his attention was concentrated on the Doctor's left arm. Haviland extended his right hand, as if to pick up the hypodermic, but instead he grasped the shaving-mirror.

Crash!

It struck like a blue jag of lightning, on the giant's mastoid-process, behind the right ear.

Cyclops gasped, staggered, clutched at empty air—collapsed like an empty sack on the rug at Haviland's slippered feet.

In a twinkling instant of blood-red exultation, the surgeon was on him. He rammed the hypo into Bogdani's wrist, let him have the whole shot—emptied an almost lethal dose of morphine right into his blood-stream.

Haviland laid the needle on the bureau, ran to the bed and stripped off a sheet. Three seconds, and that sheet was torn in strong, good strips.

"Hold even *you*, I reckon!" he jeered, kneeling beside the fallen Hercules.

QUICKLY he wrenched Cyclops' red-fuzzed and powerful hands behind his back. Sheeting strips, quickly and firmly knotted, secured them. Haviland made "surgeon's-knots," guaranteed not to work loose.

Panting a little, he lashed the ankles and securely "hog-tied" him, then bound up the jaws with another strip. Then from Bogdani's pocket he hauled the gun he knew he would find there—a flat, ugly .38. The pocket also yielded a bunch of keys. Haviland laid keys and gun on the bureau.

"And that's *that*," he growled, straightening up and smearing sweat from his forehead. "And this war has only just begun!"

Whereupon he hauled his unconscious victim to the clothes-closet, dragged him inside and closing the door, noted a fairish crack at the bottom.

"Air enough, through that, to keep the animal alive, anyhow. He'll last, till this show is over!"

Haviland locked the closet-door, dropped the key into his coat-pocket and hastily dressed himself. "One down, anyhow," thought he. A glance at the clock showed him the hour was 1:52. "Time's almost up," he realized, thinking of his promise to the wounded "Mr. Osman," for two o'clock.

Quickly he arranged the bed so that the absence of one sheet might not be apparent. Then he switched on the light in the bathroom, closed the door and locked it from the outside, removing the key.

"On a pinch, anybody might think I was locked in there, and waste a bit of time trying to get me out."

He reloaded his hypodermic with a full shot of morphine, and put it into his left-hand coat pocket.

Now, with keys, and with the loaded gun, he turned toward the sick-room door.

Quietly Haviland opened that door. His glance swept the room. Dzhuvani was sitting on guard there, smoking. In the bed lay "Mr. Osman," apparently asleep. But well enough Haviland knew keen wakefulness possessed the sick man.

Dzhuvani, hook-nosed and keen, glanced up. At sight of the Doctor, dressed and gun in hand, he sprang to his feet, hand swinging to his coat-pocket.

"None o' that!" Crisply the surgeon's order crackled. "Up with 'em—high!"

Dzhuvani snatched out his gun, but Haviland's spoke first. In that quiet room, the concussion was stunning. Dzhuvani crumpled.

Panther-like, Haviland leaped on him Blood was guttering down the Albanian's right cheek from a crease on the temple. "*He* won't die!" the Doctor decided.

ALREADY "Mr. Osman" was struggling up in bed. He slid out of it, stood up—weak and shaking, yet with determination writ large on his massive face.

"He—is dead?" rumbled Osman, in that deep bass of his. "This son of hell is dead?"

"No, but *we* may be, if we don't get a move on! There's still Noli and all those servants to deal with. Pull yourself together—grab that gun!" He pointed at Dzhuvani's revolver, lying on the rug. "If anybody tries to get in here, let 'em have it!"

The Turk stood there, now armed, as Haviland rammed a full charge of morphine into Hawk-nose, then ripped up a sheet from Osman's bed, and triced the second member of the Triumvirate.

"And where," asked the Turk, "shall I find clothes, shoes? Where is Bogdani? Dead?"

"No! Only out. In my room."

"Not dead?" Osman's voice echoed infinite regrets. "What a pity! For he is the son of Satan who shot me."

"Can't say I'm really sorry either," Haviland admitted. "Just yesterday he showed me a deadly snake he was going to kill me with, if I didn't drug you, so you'd tell about that—what the devil is it? The Head of Iskander, or something?"

"The Head of Iskander! Yes, indeed!" gulped Osman. "And you refused—"

BUT a clatter of running feet along the corridor interrupted him. Haviland sprang to the door, locked it. Gun in hand, he retreated to the prone, half-bound figure of Dzhuvani. He tossed his bunch of keys to Osman.

"Lock that other door, into my room!" he commanded. "Quick!"

As Osman obeyed, the hall-door knob rattled. A heavy fist banged the panels. Then a shout:

"*Hape deru!*" It was Djafer Noli's voice, silken no longer. "*Dzhuvani, shpote?*"

"Understand that, do you?" whispered the Doctor. Gun hard-gripped, he faced the door. "What's he saying?"

"He's saying: 'Open this door! Dzhuvani, what's the matter, here?'"

"Wants to know what the matter is, eh?" laughed Haviland. "All right—let's show him!"

Point-blank at the panels, Haviland fired. Splinters flew. A yell echoed, out there in the hallway. Something heavy thudded down.

Came a dragging sound, a muttering. Then a key rattled and was turned. The door clashed back. Near the sill, Haviland and the Turk saw one of the servants lying—the chauffeur.

Osman's eyes goggled at him. Gun held taut, he retreated across the room. Djafer Noli—where might he be?

Suddenly, from close to the floor, an ugly gun-muzzle was poked round the door-jamb. That gun spat fire; a bullet slapped into the wall, close behind Haviland. Another, and glass splinters flew from a shattered mirror. Osman's gun blazed, and at once Noli's weapon vanished from sight.

Haviland leaped to the door, kicked it shut again. A chair, jammed under the knob, made a "Dutch lock" that would stand a lot of punishment.

"Out of here!" commanded the surgeon. With the word, he gestured at his own door. "Out, through my quarters!" Already more footsteps, louder shouts, were ringing down the hallway.

A gasping groan from Osman. The Turk, gray-faced, stood leaning heavily against a table, clutching at his old wound.

"I—I—" he gasped. "Leave me—save yourself, Doctor! My hour—has struck. Get away—while you can!"

"Not by a damned sight! Buck up, man! Let's go!"

Crash! Crash! sounded ferocious, shivering blows on the braced door. A medley of cries woke the night. Haviland gripped the Turk's elbow, half-steered and half-dragged him to the bedroom the Doctor had just left.

"And now, where?" panted the half-fainting Turk. "A window?"

"No! All barred, here. Out through the hall!"

"*They* are out there—Noli and the servants. It is suicide!"

"That's the way we're going, though! Remember there's a girl upstairs—we've got to get her!"

FROM the hallway, batterings against the sick-room door mingled with curses. Suddenly the door-panels crashed. The door disintegrated into flying fragments, and into the room tumbled, stormed, catapulted the attackers.

"Now!" whispered Haviland.

Unlocking the door from his bedroom into the hall, he cautiously peered out. For the moment, the hallway was deserted. All the attacking forces had swirled into the sick room. Haviland grabbed the wounded Turk, hauled him along the dim-lit corridor toward the door communicating with the stairs that led up to the third story of the ell.

In the just-vacated sick-room, shouts and oaths told of the attackers' rage at having found the place deserted, with Lumo Dzhuvani lying wounded and unconscious on the floor. A few seconds, and the enemy would be out again, hotter than bloodhounds on the trail.

The fugitives had reached the ell door and Haviland snatched the door open. Osman staggered through, then the Doctor. With the door locked from inside, Haviland ordered:

"Upstairs, now! Lean on me. Buck up, man—you can make it!"

Before they were halfway to the top, heavy feet came pelting along the hall. Blows began to crash against the door.

Turning, the surgeon let drive a couple of crackling shots through the door. A yelp of pain on the other side cheered him. "Tag!" he shouted. "You're it!"

Now he and "Mr. Osman" were at the stairhead. Along the third-floor corridor they scouted. A dim figure scuttled away—a woman, one of the servants, chattering unintelligible words.

A second, and Haviland seized her by the shoulder.

"Where's the room?" he snarled, and shook her. "The girl's room?"

"Skopeto Anglish!"

"Oh, to hell with you!" snapped Haviland, sensing that she meant, "I don't speak English."

But Osman intervened, addressing her in her own tongue. And with his gun threatening her, she pointed to a door and fumbled a key from a pocket of her voluminous peasant skirt.

The Doctor snatched it, unlocked and flung the door open. Neck-and-crop he hurled the servant through. The Turk tottered after her, and Haviland followed—just as the stairway door below crashed in. And as the Doctor slammed and locked the door, a fusillade from the attackers, now pelting madly up the stairs, swept the hall.

"It's *you,* Doctor?"

The voice, a bit uncertain in tone, came from behind him and turning, Roderick Haviland saw the girl of his puzzled speculations.

HER voice shook a little, as she faced him—an appealing figure, in pajamas with a gold-embroidered Chinese robe belted over them. Haviland caught impressions of tousled dark hair, of a lovely face, of eyes frightened yet brave.

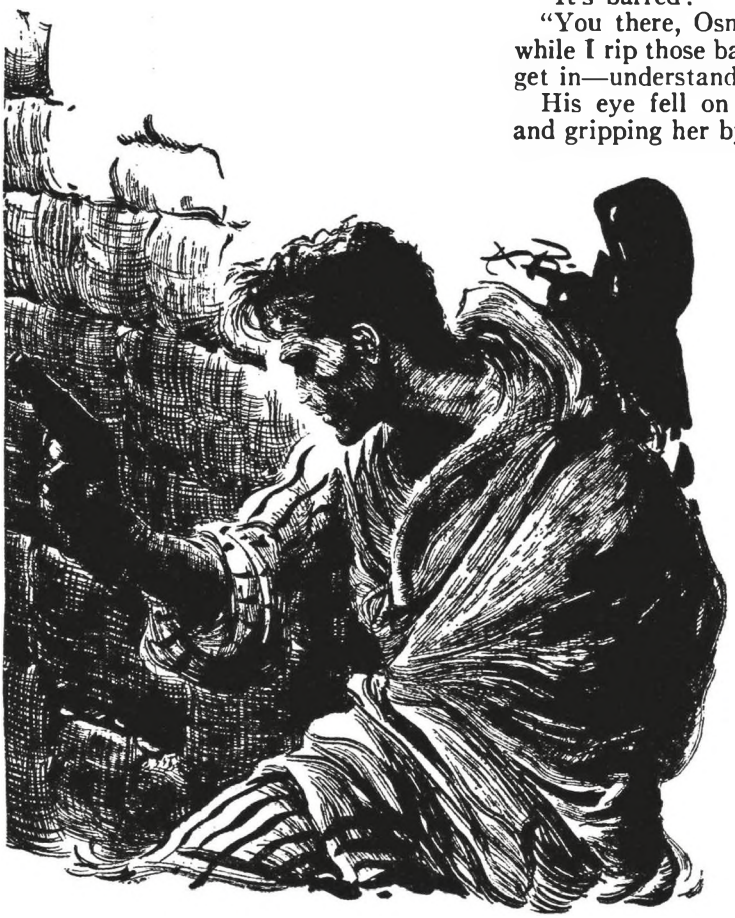
"Here at last!" she whispered. "I knew you'd come! Oh, I—I—"

"Never mind, no hysterics, now!" he grimly retorted. "Get busy tearing up your sheets—for ropes. We're going out that window!"

"It's barred!"

"You there, Osman! Guard the door while I rip those bars out. Nobody must get in—understand?"

His eye fell on the cringing servant, and gripping her by one rawboned wrist,



Haviland had looped the noose about her, under the shoulders. "Up now, and out with you! Down you go!" He swung her up and over the sill—down to where the wounded Turk stood guard with the pistol.

he dragged her to a clothes-closet. "In you go, there!"

The door, slammed and locked, removed her from any possibility of treason.

"Now, then!" And he pocketed his gun.

The floor-lamp seemed his one best bet. He snatched it up and wrenched the top fixtures off. This gave him a very formidable metal bar, more than four feet long.

"If you're not using that gun, let me have it?"

The girl, even as she ripped sheets, seemed to have warlike yearnings.

"Never you mind the gun! Your job is rope!"

HAVILAND ripped away the window-shade, flung up the window and thrust his lever between the sill and the lowest bar. He put all his strength into a wrenching twist. His lever bent—but the iron bar started in its wooden embedding.

As he took a fresh purchase, Djafer Noli's hoarse and raging voice drifted in through the door:

"Surrender, in there! Your only chance for life!"

"Mr. Osman," now unable even to stand, had sat down in a chair. Most unheroic he looked, huge and bandaged and short of wind; but from his chair he blasted away at the door. And silence fell, out there in the hallway.

Obviously, till the defenders of that room should have exhausted all their ammunition, direct attack was unwise.

Already straining at the next iron bar, Haviland dodged back as a jet of fire leaped from the shrubbery down there below, and sharp gunfire echoed. Jangles of shattered glass flew. A splinter caught the Doctor's cheek. Blood began to trickle down his jaw.

At least one of the enemy had got the range, from sheltering bushes whipped with rain and wind.

Haviland swung round away from the window, and with a sweep of his metal lever dashed out the one still-burning incandescent. Velvet dark swallowed the room. In that dark he turned back to the window, once more attacked the bars.

"Here's your rope, Doctor!" said the girl.

With furious strength he labored. Irons twisted, wrenched clear. Haviland seized them, hauled them inward.

"All right, now!" he whispered. "Rope, here!"

Gale-driven rain drenched him as he stood there. The girl put the sheet-rope into his hands. Strongly he knotted it to the bars; and down his cheek rain and blood, intermingled, trickled to his neck.

Haviland drew the gun from his pocket, thrust it into the girl's hands.

"Here you are, at last," he whispered. "I don't know how many shots are left in it, so go easy. But stand here by the window. If anybody shows, let him have it. . . .

"You there, Osman!"

"I am coming, sir."

"He can't go out in just those pajamas!" the girl exclaimed. "In that storm? He'll die! Here!"

She ran to the bed, caught up a blanket, flung it round him. Another dash to the bureau yielded safety-pins. Swiftly she worked; and now the Turk was very unheroically bundled up, with woman's most effective implements.

"Out you go, now!" growled Haviland. "You're the advance-guard!" He was noosing the sheet-rope under Osman's blanket-swaddled arms. "When you get down there, cast loose. And shoot at anything that moves!"

Half climbing, half boosted, Osman struggled through the ragged opening. A moment, his blanket caught. Haviland ripped it clear, slid Osman over the rain-whipped sill, and down. Hard-holding, the Doctor paid out rope, easing the wounded man down. . . . Lord, but the Turk was a ponderous lump of a man! Haviland let him run fast. Suddenly the cord went slack. The Doctor twitched, and up the rope sprangled.

DOWN in the garden, a shot that crackled was answered by another in reply. Osman had been heard from! The party was getting good. Getting interesting, this Head of Iskander business!

He turned to the girl, looped the noose about her, under the shoulders. She had slipped on a thick, warm coat, over her gold-embroidered robe and her pajamas. Something like an electric charge thrilled through him, from head to heel.

"Up now, and out with you—but wait—my gun!"

"Let me keep it! I'm a good shot."

"All right! Down you go."

He swung her up and over the sill, out through the broken bars, into that night of gale and slashing rain to where

the wounded Turk stood guard with a pistol. Down spun the rope, burning his hands. It slackened.

Instantly Haviland scrambled out, went down by the run. More palm-scorching, but what the devil!

The ground seemed leaping upward to his feet. He landed with a terrific impact, plunged forward on hands and knees; scrambled up, and for a second or so stood there with the other two, crouching in the rain-drenched lee of the ell.

Silence. Disconcerting silence. Where might the enemy be lurking?

Whang!

Gunfire plunging from almost directly above shattered his thoughts. A bullet spudded the frozen grass. Attack was beginning from the room adjoining the girl's.

"To the garage!" cried Haviland.

Crouching, they fled across the gravel of the driveway, Haviland dragging the blanket-swathed Turk along. Osman panted hard, but suppressed groans.

THE dark was cleft by spitting fire from the boxwood hedge. Haviland felt a sort of heavy thrust on the left shoulder, a shock as if a frozen snowball had struck his flesh.

"My gun, quick!" he commanded the girl. Already they were at the garage door.

With a hand that quivered with shock, he jammed his gun-muzzle into the padlock, twisted it off. Now they were inside. The deadly snake—where might it be? No time now even to think of that! Haviland felt a queer numb paralysis in his right leg, something hot trickling down into his shoes.

"God's sake!" thought he. "When did they shoot me in the leg too? Damned if *I* ever felt it!"

He turned to his car, fumbled the doors open, and the girl climbed into the front seat. Then he grabbed the Turk, boosted him blanket and all into the rear, slammed the door.

Groping for the Albanians' long black machine, he yanked up its hood, felt for the distributor.

A crashing, point-blank shot into this, and the enemies' car was temporarily junk. Then he leaped back to his own car, scrambled in, grabbed the wheel, jammed his foot on the starter.

Infinitely welcome was the sound of its churning, as the engine caught. He flung on the lights.

The car leaped ahead, catapulted out of the garage, full-tilt.

"Get him!" yelled Haviland, at sight of a figure in the headlight-beams—a figure that crouched by the corner of the house.

A shot crashed right past his ear, as Osman fired through the windshield. Darkness swallowed the figure; the car surged past.

From upstairs, and from the bushes and the surrounding trees, rattled volleys. A slug caromed off the body of the car, another from a mudguard. Thank heaven, no tire had been winged!

Already the machine was far down the winding driveway. Ghost-like trees fled backward at dizzying speed, sweeping shadows through the rain-drenched night. Suddenly, through the headlight glares, swiftly cross-hatched by falling lances of water, loomed tall iron gates.

"Hold on!" the girl cried. "Stop while I open them."

Dazed though Haviland was, and weaving in his seat, he understood. Brakes clamped. The machine slid on rain-drenched gravel. Before it had stopped, the girl was out, was running to the gates.

Full glare of the lights revealed her with wet, tousled hair, eyes dancing with excitement, as she flung off chains, hauled the gates open, ran back and scrambled into the car beside him.

Once more the machine leaped ahead, swinging sharp left. A white concrete road began spinning by. Rain whipped the shattered windshield, flurried in through the bullet-break.

Dizziness grappled the Doctor. He swayed at the wheel. What was this roaring in his ears? He had just strength enough to brake to a halt.

"Sorry," he gasped. "But you—you'll have to take hold. I'm—all in—"

Black floods rose up about him; a humming dark, vaster than any night, wrapped him with Stygian mists. Nirvana itself received him as he dropped through infinite abysses.

SOME vague consciousness of life dimly told Haviland he was lying on his back in a most untidy place that stank of gasoline and oil. Beside him he dimly perceived a figure on silk-pajamaed knees, with a gold-embroidered robe over which a loose coat hung. From tremendous distances he heard:

"He's coming out of it!"

Then he felt cold water dashed in his

face, and sensed the burning of strong liquor in throat and mouth.

"Gee, I was gettin' scared he wouldn't never make the grade, an'—"

It was another voice that spoke, a strange one.

"But where are those officers?" the girl impatiently demanded. The Doctor sensed that she was working over him, as he lay on a blanket. He felt strong pressure as from a tourniquet on his leg. His coat was off, shirt and underclothing torn away. And now the girl was bandaging his shoulder. "Oh, dear, why *don't* they come?"

"Listen!" exclaimed the strange man. Now Haviland perceived him as a tall, gangling young fellow in greasy filling-station uniform. "Get an earful o' that, eh?"

He held up an amazingly dirty hand, in signal for them to listen. Afar in the rain-swept night wailed the faint *wooooo-wooooo-oooooo!* of sirens madly rushing. Swiftly that tumult swept nearer, grew ear-crashing, then sagged to silence as a brace of cars swooped up and hauled to a stand.

Men in blue, with leather leggings, jumped out. They stormed into the filling-station. A pale, spare man with a black bag knelt beside Haviland.

A PRIVATE room at St. Mark's Hospital. Shaded light from a broad window showed Dr. Haviland's face as white, almost, as the pillow where rested his head. Wan and spent he lay there, with bandaged arm, shoulder, face.

Flowers were everywhere; flowers that mocked the bleak November desolation outside. Behind the bed a nurse was holding a thermometer that she ought to have been using, but with which she was really only stalling. Too much was being said for her to lose anything by undue haste.

Another woman beside the nurse was in that sick-room; an opulent-haired girl with broad brows, steady dark eyes, and a sensitive mouth to which smiling and laughter were no strangers. About her there clung like an aura, a subtle, exotic perfume. And at the bed's foot stood a ruddy-faced man with thick, grizzled hair and a jovial smile.

"So you see, after all," he was saying, "even the greatest apparent mystery can all be cleared up, when you hold the key!"

A head-nurse popped in, briskly impersonal.

"Sorry, Mr. Fletcher, but your time is up."

"Hang the time! Give us five minutes more, or I'll withdraw my annual contribution to St. Mark's Hospital—so help me!"

"Oh, well—" the head-nurse weakly temporized.

"YOUNG man," went on old Oliver Fletcher, "as sure as I'm a banker, you're one consummate idiot!"

"Thank you," the Doctor faintly smiled. "I've often suspected that, myself."

"Risking your life, sir, and nearly losing it, just to buck a gang like that! Of all outrageous, quixotic nonsense!"

"I dare say," admitted Haviland, while the head-nurse laid down a five-minute-more limit on the interview, and not a minute longer. "But after all, till I'd found out what the Head of Iskander really was, how could I quit?"

"Yes, that Iskander business—interesting, I'll admit. Iskander, with his head engraved on the great national seal. A racial talisman, that great seal—the *Toorah*, they call it."

"Kind of a fetich?"

"Exactly, sir. A symbol to every Albanian, from king to peasant, that so long as the Head remained in their keeping, the nation could never be permanently defeated or enslaved."

"Isn't it just too exciting?" exclaimed the girl. "To think of that wonderful great cameo disappearing from the capital of Albania, during the World War, and then turning up unrecognized in a Constantinople pawnshop, God knows how! And to think of Dad just happening to buy it for me for a pendant on a neck-chain—"

"And then I, like an idiot," said the banker, "showing it to some people on the *Ile de France*, a couple of months ago, when Diana and I were coming home!"

"Strange enough," Haviland agreed, "that it could have lain hidden all that time in Constantinople. But after the people on the steamer saw it, how did news of it reach Albania?"

"You can search me," shrugged the banker. "Some kind of subterranean service. Naturally, Albanians must have boiled over, right away. Imagine if *our* U. S. great seal were stolen and lost! No wonder some of the most astute and cultured of their people took a blood-oath to recover it. But instead of ex-

plaining to me its national significance and allowing me to restore it to its rightful owners, they must needs assume I was a conscienceless malefactor of great wealth, and undertake to steal it back again. Wires were pulled to get three Albanians invited to Diana's big blow-out that night, and—"

"And then they staged the kidnaping?"

"Precisely," the girl laughed. "There I was, wearing the Head of Iskander. And away they whisked me from the party, cameo and all. If they'd just snatched it, and left *me* behind, of course it would have raised a hue-and-cry. So I was elected to go along and stay till they could get it safely carried by special courier back to Albania. They had that country-place all ready as a hide-out. Of course, after the Head was back in Albania, they were going to turn me loose. But—"

"But now comes the queerest part of it!" exclaimed old Fletcher. "You see, I'd taken the cameo to a Turkish jeweler on Maiden Lane, to be set. Took it to Mr. Osman. And when he returned it to me, I saw at once—"

"He gave back only a replica?"

"Good guess! *He* recognized the Toorah, all right enough. Figured he might clean up a million or two, with it. But—"

"But the Albanians saw the substitution, and went gunning for the Turk?"

"Did they! Rather!" exclaimed Diana.

HER dark eyes glinted with diamond flecks, as the excitement of that adventure swept over her again. "What a night of it, when they found out, and made me tell who the Turk was, and went after him! He wouldn't tell where he had the genuine Toorah hidden, and in the mix-up one of them shot him. And after that—"

"Of course they simply had to keep him alive," the Doctor said, "or they'd *never* find out where the Head of Iskander had gone to. Has Osman given it up?"

"He has, I've seen to *that!*" And into the banker's eye crept a fighting gleam. "I'll say he's given it up—to dodge a pretty stretch in the pen. Want to see it?"

"See it? You mean—the Toorah itself?"

"No, the replica. The real heirloom is in safe-deposit."

Smiling, while Diana watched him, and the Doctor felt his pulses quicken, Oliver Fletcher drew from his pocket a jeweler's box, snapped it open, exposed a velvet bed on which reposed a magnificent cameo.

This gem, as Fletcher handed over the box, the Doctor saw was oval, and some two inches on its longest axis. Soft milky lights welled up from its depths, gleams almost mystic in their other-worldly soft splendor.

Boldly cut in relief on this magnificent object outstood a majestic face in profile: a face with deep-set eyes and a prominent nose, sweeping mustachios and beard, ringleted hair. The face of a master, a fighter, a leader of men, did one ever live!

FOR a long minute, the Doctor studied this extraordinary gem. The girl, her skin the color of cream and roses, watched him with a softening light in her dark eyes.

"Beg pardon," the head-nurse sharply cut in. "You really must go, now. The patient will be running a temperature, if you stay any longer."

"All right, *all* right," the banker assented, getting up. He took the jewel-box from Haviland, snapped it shut, slid it into his pocket. "Come along, Diana. Tomorrow's another day."

"A long way off, though," the girl regretfully murmured.

"And till then I'll be on hot grids," protested the Doctor. His bandaged face was drawn with anxiety. "Hot grids, sir, for you haven't told me yet what you're going to do with the Head of Iskander, now you've got it back. I'll run a temperature, sure enough, if I don't know that!"

"Young man," answered the banker, "are you too scientifically unimaginative to picture a transatlantic and Mediterranean cruise, on my yacht, for the purpose of restoring a national treasure, personally, to a grateful government? A number of less entertaining contingencies might possibly be thought of."

"By gad, what a trip for you two! And do I envy you—both of you!"

"Why envy us, when it's to be a threesome?" the banker laughed. "I'm the doctor now, and I prescribe a long sea-voyage, with plenty of fireworks at the end, over there in Albania. So now, young Hotspur, go to sleep! The quicker you get well, the better. Eh, Diana?"

THE END

My Ten Years

As told to

CHARLES J. DUTTON

FOREWORD

THIS is the story of an Iowa farm boy who spent almost ten years in the Foreign Légion. He enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1917 at Camp Dodge, and found himself in Co. B, of the 168th. It was part of the famous Rainbow division. He went to France, and was wounded and gassed on the 28th of July, 1918. Discharged in France in 1919, he worked in the American Grave Registration Service for over a year. Then for months he was in a French steel mill, later working upon the railroads for twenty months. His last work in France was in a little paper-mill twelve miles from Bar-le-Duc.

Late in the year 1923 he joined the Foreign Légion. He had served almost ten years.

I know of no other term of service in the Légion—by an American—which covers the time Chenevoeth spent in the French service. A quiet, unemotional individual, it was very difficult to drag from him the narrative of his adventures. The story is told in his short, jerky speech. So far as I can discover, it is true in every particular. He may be a little mixed in regard to names of small desert villages, but as he puts it, "They don't have any." The story is his own, a faithful picture of almost ten years of the actual life of the Foreign Légion. I have set down only what he told. Have seen all his records, his military papers. Here you find the real Foreign Légion.

Charles J. Dutton

IT was raining in Lisle Rigault. Four days of it now—I doubted if it would ever stop. From the door of the tavern I glanced soberly at the muddy lane which passed as a street. There were seven hundred people in the town; after working seven months at the paper factory I knew them all, by sight—it was the only way I wanted to know them. There was nothing to do, nowhere to go, not a thing to read. I had paid that morning my board-bill of seventy-five francs. Thirty were left in my pocket.

It was August 27th, 1923. I must be the last American soldier left in France. It was six years since I had enlisted in the Rainbow. Two years in the army, wounded, gassed, then the hospital. . . . Why under heaven had I ever signed up in the American Grave Registration service? A year of that—digging graves, picking up bodies ready to fall to bits! That over, the decision to remain in France. Fairly easy to get work in 1920. I had tried the steel-mills at Rochecourt Marne. Eighteen francs a day for firing furnaces, and seven months of it. Then a job on the French railroad as an electrician. What did I know about electricity? Nothing. But neither did those who paid me twenty-five francs a day. That job done, the paper factory—in this dreary, out-of-the-way town. The time had come to move on. But where, with thirty francs?

Voices floated in from the bar. Loud voices, whose owners seemed a little drunk. The sound of men arguing, laughing, shouting. I crossed the floor and went into the other room. It had a zinc bar and five tables. At one, three young men, their clothes sodden with rain, argued over two bottles of wine. Their voices were loud, their gestures animated; a strange phrase leaped out at me: "Légion Etrangère" — followed

REAL EX-

in the Foreign Légion

By ORVAL CHENEVOETH

IN nearly everyone's life there has been at least one experience so exciting as to deserve record in print. We offer each month prizes for the best five stories of this type submitted, and publish them in this department. (For details of this prize contest, see page 3.) First comes this extraordinary story of an American soldier who served ten years in the Foreign Légion.

by loud laughs and vigorous nods. I became interested.

One fact about my last ten years no one has ever believed. I was two years with the Rainbow, four years in France; but not until I heard the phrase—"*Légion Etrangère*"—thrown across a little table in the dingy bar, had I ever heard of the Foreign Légion. . . . I listened for a few moments, decided to join them. Dropping down at the table, I ordered another bottle of wine. No better introduction was needed.

My companions were young, not over twenty-one. At the moment work was difficult to find in France. There were many young men walking the roads. Over the wine we plunged into a discussion. After a time, happily intoxicated, friendly with the world, I rose to my feet:

"Let's go and join the Légion!"

It was as if I had given a command. They pulled themselves to their feet, and we stepped out into the muddy street.

The Bureau des Engagements Volontaires was in Bar-le-Duc, twelve miles away. To get there we had to walk. With the rain pelting across our faces we started—four fools off to join the Légion.

There was a depot of the Légion in Bar-le-Duc. A large stone building, with barracks and offices, enclosed a great courtyard paved with stones. In a small office we found a corporal, who asked us what we wanted. I was the spokesman:

"Do we join the Légion Etrangère here?"

"*Mais oui, messieurs,*" was the reply, as he rose to his feet. Glancing at my three companions, he murmured something about French citizens not being accepted by the Légion. (It was true at that time—but in reality a polite fiction.) My friends replied they were Italian. The corporal nodded at the self-evident lie, and soberly took down the fictitious names they gave. In fact, he had to suggest several before the paper was filled out. He turned to me. I gave him my real name—"Orval Chenevoeth, American." He listened, put it down, then ordered us out in the courtyard. I have been told that I am the only American since the war who enlisted in the Légion under his own name.

WE stayed two hours in that courtyard; then we were escorted to the second floor. In a large room, behind a great desk, sat a French major.

He was sixty, with a little pointed mustache, and beautifully uniformed. As he rose from his seat, his eyes passed over my friends and came to rest on my tall frame. I was thin, six feet seven inches tall. There was an amused look in his eyes as he asked why I wished to join the Légion. "Because my friends are going," was the reply. He shook his head. We were sent into another room for a medical examination.

I assume it was the medical examination. I have read, lately, of the rigid tests one must pass to join the Légion. We had none. We were told to strip, and when my naked frame came before the eyes of the one I assume was the doctor, he laughed and punched me in the chest. The same thing happened to my friends. Then the doctor told us to put on our clothes. We were accepted.

Back again before the major. There were papers to sign, but none to show. (They never did ask for them.) We were told we could give assumed names. My friends did, enlisting as Italians. Then an oath of allegiance to the French flag and the motto of the Légion—*"Honneur et Fidélité; Valeur et Discipline."* We were told our enlistment was for five years, and were handed five francs. Our pay would be a little over a cent a day. Sent downstairs to see a sergeant, we were left waiting in a sort of office.

There was a girl there, petite and pretty. Her eyes opened wide as we came in. Evidently I was what interested her. From the desk behind which she had been working, she came to my side. To my surprise she spoke English:

"You poor fool!" she said. "Why did you join the Légion?"

I made no reply. There was none to make. Ten minutes had passed, and already I was asking the same question. I asked it daily for ten years afterward.

AT seven that night we were placed on a train for Marseilles. When we got out of the the train, stiff and hungry, though it was the 24th of August, it was snowing. It was the last snow I saw for some time.

A grizzled sergeant was waiting when the train pulled in. He was wearing gold stripes. I discovered later that the backbone of the Légion is the sergeants. They are tough; of every nationality but French, sticklers for discipline and form. With their own mess and orderlies, they live apart from the privates. They consider themselves—and they are—officers.

This sergeant was German. A fellow with a voice like a bull. Bringing us to attention, he started us out on a five-mile march to Fort St. Jean, once defender of the northern entrance to the old harbor of Marseilles. Through the old town we marched, and on, until we came to the stone bulwarks of the fortress. There was a moat to cross, then a long, dark, stone alley. It was guarded by colored soldiers. We climbed what seemed to be a never-ending flight of stone steps. Soldiers on guard, to give us sardonic grins as we passed into a small office, where the sergeants turned us over to a lieutenant.

It was eight o'clock. We had not eaten since noon. We did not that night. A tattered old blanket was given us, and we were taken to a stone room that had two windows, a few bunks, each with an old mattress. On one of them, with only one blanket, I passed my first night in the Légion. I did not sleep. The night was cold, the mattress very much alive.

At five-thirty the next morning we were ordered out. Then came breakfast; it was never to change greatly during the ten years. Coffee—weak, unlike anything else I had ever tasted—and bread. Again we were brought before a sergeant. This one was harder than the one who had met us—a Russian, tall, with a deep gash across his cheek. He gave us our duties. We were to clean up the yard. As we started for the door, he called us back. There was a scowl on his face.

"Don't get tough," he said. "We are tougher than you."

The duty of cleaning up the yard was not heavy. We were given the tasks to keep us from thinking. As soon as there was a larger consignment, we were to be sent to Africa. Until then—the barracks. I stayed at Fort St. Jean six days. The wait was for more men. Some came in daily—Italians, Germans, Spaniards. Only one recruit seemed to be of the upper class.

I saw him the second day I was in the Fort. He wore the uniform of the French naval officer. As I came near, he said: "Can you speak French?"

"Oui," I said.

He wanted to talk. A young chap, maybe thirty, with a fine face. Pulling a picture out of his pocket, he thrust it into my hand. It was of a young woman, good-looking—fairly—but with a hard look.

"My wife," he said proudly.

"Why did you join the Légion?" I queried. Everyone asks that question.

"I was married two days. We had a difference. I was angry. I went out and joined the Légion. Now I am in for five years. I can't get out. Once I was in the navy."

I met others in those six days who wished they were out. A big German, whose name I never knew, told us he had killed a man, and then enlisted.

I HAD been at the Fort only one night when I heard the story of the nephew of the German Kaiser. He had been a private soldier of the Légion, they said. Stupid, and disliked by everyone. They sent him to Africa. In three months he died. One day a German battleship put in the port of Oran, and several high German military authorities went to Sidi-bel-Abbès, and asked for the body. He

was taken back to his country with high honors. I presume the story is true. I don't know. I heard it almost every week for the next ten years. The Légion believed it, anyway.

On the sixth day, fifteen of us were marched down to a ship bound for Oran. I was still wearing the suit I had enlisted in, and I was far better dressed than the other fourteen. Some were in rags.

It took thirty-six hours to get to Oran. The city is on a high plateau above the harbor. It is a pretty large city—bigger than Des Moines, where I once lived. It was just after sunrise when we anchored. Everything looked rather nice. The houses were white, and I could see above me the towers and turrets.

At a dock, when we landed, a corporal met us. He was German. He gave one look at my nearly seven feet of height, and yelled *"Slim."* I bore the name for the next ten years.

THE Légion quarters at Oran are a clearing house for the men going into and coming out of Africa. They took us into a small room where a big Frenchman asked for our papers. One look at mine, and he let out a yell.

"Phillips!"

About two minutes later a great big negro came into the room. He was well built, and wearing a uniform.

"Phillips, a fellow-countryman!" said the officer, waving a hand at me.

Across the black face broke a startled grin. He crossed the floor.

"You sure tall white man. What the hell you doing here?"

Phillips told me he was from Georgia. He took me round to the Petit Dépôt at Oran—a fine building, clean, well-cared-for. All the buildings of the Légion are clean, always. He showed me where I was to sleep, in a room with twenty-eight cots. Each cot had a mattress, a pillow and a blanket. Every morning you make your bed—and woe betide the man who does not have the blanket smooth at morning inspection. Once in the room, Phillips began to finger my suit. Then:

"White boy, you can't wear this suit when you get to Sidi-bel-Abbès. They give you uniform then. I buy it from you. Give you good price."

His price was thirty francs. The suit had cost me a thousand, and it was new. I said I would not sell. For several days he kept after me, then suddenly got sore at my refusal and left me alone.

Phillips was the only American negro I ever saw in the Légion. Everybody who passed through Oran knew him. He was a bit of a thief, but mostly a buyer of clothes. One had to be shrewd to escape his clutches.

WITH the other recruits at Oran, I had my head shaved and got a uniform, handed me with no thought of size or fit. My arms stuck out of the sleeves for inches. The shoes were worse. Rough, hard, made of leather like cast iron. It took me two days to find a man to swap shoes with me. The uniform was blue, much worn. I was told I would not have to wear it long. As soon as I reached Sidi-bel-Abbès, I would get my clothes. I never did get my blue suit. What happened to it I do not know. It is my idea a sergeant took it and sold it. I would have been better off to have let Phillips have it.

I stayed in Oran three days. Then fifty of us took the train to Sidi-bel-Abbès. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the town.

They put us into barracks that night. At five the next morning the bugle blew reveille. We had to turn out, though we had not been assigned to companies, so we stood in line with the others; and after we fell out, a lieutenant came up to me.

"What the hell are you doing in the Légion?" he asked.

He was an American, the only American officer I ever met. Hamilton was his name; he was from somewhere in New York State. We talked a few minutes; then he left as I was sent in with others for medical examination.

This was more than the one at Bar-le-Duc. We stripped, waited about thirty minutes, then had to bend and twist while a bewhiskered doctor examined our hearts and lungs. No one spoke above a whisper, for we had been ordered to be silent. I had a shot of vaccine, the typhus and typhoid variety. There was no formality. You held out your arm; the doctor took the syringe and plunged it home. If you winced, he swore. We were sent next to the quartermaster's for our uniforms.

They were better than I was wearing, though the manner of giving them was the same. An orderly threw an outfit at you. There were three suits of underwear, two shirts, a blue strip of wool cloth, ten feet or so long, that you wrapped around your waist, three flannel

shirts, a pair of leggings, a knapsack, a leather belt and a few odds and ends, a pair of shoes and a *bidon*. This last was a water-bottle holding two quarts. With this was a musette bag, to carry personal things. Képi and overcoat completed the outfit. The only trouble is the uniform didn't fit. Doty, in his book, speaks of my never getting clothes big enough to cover me. He said the company tailor sewed extra strips onto my sleeves. It took me a day to swap my things around before I was properly clothed. Even then the uniform was too small in places.

I HAD nothing else to do the first day. I was forced to answer one persistent question:

"Why did you join the Légion?"

"For the same reason you did."

"That's a hell of a reason."

A hundred times the question was asked, the same answer given. No one ever told the truth. My fellow-soldiers were Italians, Germans, Russians, and a few Americans—three, I think. There was a big chap from Texas, who had served in the regular American army, and he played in the band. There was one serving his second enlistment. These told me of others scattered over Africa; but I never saw many. Doty was in my own company, but it was many months later.

For some reason I got detailed as an orderly in the guard-house. Why, I do not know. Anyway, I escaped the famous Légion training, given each new recruit. I got it later. It's hard enough. They load the new ones on a train in full equipment, rifle and overcoat, and after riding all day, disentrain, and march all night. This keeps up for three days. You march fifty minutes, rest ten, march fifty, and so on. And at first you wear your capote. Nobody pays any attention to the way you feel. If you drop out, they let you lie there. It's up to you if you get up and rejoin your company. Once in a while some one does not rise. . . .

I was in the guard-house fifteen days as an orderly, not a prisoner. I managed for ten years to keep out of guard-houses as a prisoner. I got an idea in this one of the severity of the Légion. The slightest fault was punished. . . . Légionnaires are not allowed to speak first to an officer. If you do, you get the guardhouse. A dirty gun, dust under your bed, soiled clothing, mean from eight to ten days. For more serious offenses the punishment is longer. The Légion was rarely sober at night, but woe betide the man not sober in the morning. Guardhouse for him. And I saw for the first time the time-honored punishment they call "the *Plut*."

The men receiving this march around the stone courtyard, carrying on their backs seventy-five- to a hundred-pound sacks. The sack is filled, sometimes with rocks, sometimes with sand. They march from seven to eleven, from one to five or six. They march ten minutes, then put the sack down for two minutes, pick it up and march again. Round and round the courtyard, with the rocks on their backs. Once in a while a man does this for as long as two weeks.

The work was not hard. The guard-house was stone, fairly cool. But the cells were damp and the confinement strict. I was the only English-speaking person in the place. The other guards were mostly Russian. My duties were not difficult, and there was one good thing—on the third day a carton of cigarettes came. I was told that Lieutenant Hamilton was going to Syria, and had sent it to me. I never saw or heard of him again.

FIFTEEN days as orderly. Then I was called one day into the major's office. He said:

"American, you had service in your army?"

"In the Rainbow, *mon Capitaine*."

"*Bon*. There is fighting in Syria—with the Druses. We are sending experienced men. You will receive your orders tomorrow."

The next day I was on my way back to France. It was the beginning of three and a half years in Syria.

They sent me back to Marseilles—to Fort St. Jean. I found it was crowded. There was trouble in Syria. What about I did not know, nor was any information given us. We were going to Syria—that was all we knew.

I was at Fort St. Jean about a month. I had no drilling at bel-Abbès, but there was enough now. At six-thirty, on the field. For an hour we did exercises, and then drilled. Nothing in the American army is like this drilling. Every movement must be correct, done with a particular smartness, the Légion's bid for fame.

On Saturday afternoons the captain had individual soldiers brought before

him. He sent for me the first Saturday I was at the Fort.

"Chenevoeth, you are an American?"

"Oui, mon Capitaine," I replied.

"My God, you are thin! What did you do after you were discharged from the American army?"

"I dug graves, sir."

The answer must have startled him. He was a little man, hair white, pointed black mustache. His eyes opened at my reply; evidently he thought I had misunderstood him.

"What did you do after your discharge. *Avez-vous compris?"*

I replied in French. To my surprise he answered in English. He dismissed me with these words.

"Dug graves! You find all sorts of occupations in the Légion."

THERE were twenty-six in my room. They were an odd group. The corporal was called Peter. He was a small, hard-looking Frenchman. We heard he had fled to the Légion after stabbing his mistress. When he was drunk, he was good-natured—not at any other time. There was an Englishman who called himself Street. He was short, thin, with the worst temper I have ever seen. I never knew why he was in the Légion. The rest were Germans, Russians, one Italian, and a Turk. The Turk was the most decent of them all. He talked little, obeyed every order, kept much to himself. All the others looked like crooks and no doubt were.

We stayed in Marseilles about a month. Then one day we were formed into companies and marched to a dock. Drums, bugles, fifes, trumpets, all shrilling. There is nothing in the world like the shrill rapid-fire playing of the Légion bands. As we marched through the streets, people waved their hands, small boys walked behind us. At the quay, the band played the March of the Légion and we went on board.

The boat was small and crowded. Besides us it was carrying soldiers, tirailleurs, spahis. They kept us apart. The different divisions don't get along well together. We were sent down into the hold. The boat on its last trip had evidently carried horses. It was not a pleasant trip. Most of the men were seasick. As the trip lasted eight days, time got on everyone's nerves. Fights broke out. Not the street type, but deadly ones, where knives flashed and boots were used. One night a soldier was murdered. He was found in the morning with his throat cut. Nothing was done. No one knew who did it.

Somehow the rumor got out that we were going to put in at Alexandria. Men began to gather in little groups. Talk spread. A few were going to desert. I was asked to join a group. It was the first time, but not the last.

I had made up my mind to one thing: I had come into the Légion; I would do as I was told, ask no questions and make no complaints. I could not see any chance of getting out. As for deserting, it looked foolish. Desertion when a company is going to war, or in face of the enemy, means death.

Eleven made the attempt, though. The officers got wind of what was up and kept us in the hold while the boat was in the port. Guards were stationed around the quay, with orders to shoot to kill. Eleven tried to get off the boat. We heards guns being fired, a few yells and shrieks through the portholes. Exactly what happened we never knew. It was said the next day that two had been killed, three wounded and that six managed to escape. Anyway, we never saw the eleven again.

After we left Alexandria they allowed us on deck. By the time we had reached Beirut the sea was calm. We landed the next morning. We marched through the streets to the outskirts of the city, and at a camp, formed into companies. A company is a hundred and twenty men. Perhaps a hundred men were old-time Légionaires; twenty were new recruits—*"bleus."* They gave us a hundred and twenty rounds of ammunition and our guns.

AFTER we had been in camp several days we were called out one morning at four. A few moments later we were marching to the train. It was a slow train; and we were crowded into the compartments. We had all our equipment. The tracks were guarded by soldiers and as we came into the mountains we could see wire entanglements, and here and there a stone fort.

At Damascus, embarking on a new train, we started out again. At early dawn we were ordered to get ready to march. The train came to a stop, and a company of a hundred and twenty got off. We had been dropped by the side of a mountain. Where we were we did not know. The train whistled, vanished around a curve; the order came to fall in.

We marched all that day—a terrible march, following trails in the mountains, and coming at night to a clearing where we were ordered to make camp. That is not easy. Tents were put up—they hold six men. Then came the command, "*Aux murailles.*" Some devil must have thought out this command. Yet it is done every night when the Légion camps. A wall had to be built around the tents. It encircled them. A few men are chosen as masons; the rest of the company brings in the stones. It took an hour to build a wall breast-high and left with five openings. Before these must be built another wall. Often, after that, comes wire. But we did not place wire that night.

The wall finished, we marched inside and made the loop-holes. There is one for each man, and he makes it himself. It is his own loophole, and in case of an attack no one but himself can use it. Then came supper.

Fixed sentinels are posted at night. They are about twenty-five feet apart. The fixed sentinel cannot move. His duty is to watch and listen. Other sentinels pace between them, linking them all together. As you approach a man on a fixed post, he asks you if you have heard anything. The report goes around the wall. All night you can hear the sentinels calling.

THAT night I gained a *copain*—a buddy. Sylvestre was not the most imposing member of the company. He was French. What was more, he had been a *marquereau* in Lyons. Some trouble over women had caused him to flee to the Légion. I always thought it was my height that made him pick me out. Sylvestre was barely five feet, rather fat, and with as evil a face as I ever saw. His morals—well, he had none, save a certain doglike affection for those he liked. He was the best stealer of wine in the company. He came to me:

"Slim, I be your *copain?*"

I agreed. After all, one man was as good as another.

Later that night, one of the sergeants, Schmidt, told us of the Jebel Druses, how they had risen in rebellion. With long oaths he said we must never fall into their hands. The women were worse than the men. After a battle they went over the field and killed the wounded. The deaths were not pleasant. Some were buried alive, their heads left sticking out of the sand, and honey smeared over their faces. The ants did the rest. Others were disemboweled, and otherwise mutilated, their stomachs filled with rocks.

IN the morning, just as dawn came over the hills, came an attack. There was the sharp report of a rifle, a loud command—"*Aux armes!*" and we awoke and rushed to our loopholes. Dawn had come, and we could see the hills. Down them, rushing as if it were a landslide, were coming a mass of shouting men. Though they were too far away to do us any damage, they were firing their guns. A long way behind them was a group that moved more slowly: women. Their women always followed them into battle.

It seemed more like a dream than anything else. The onrushing human tide, the shots, the cracking of the guns and the shouting. They looked to be many thousands—(later we heard there were about a thousand). They came on like waves breaking on a shore; seemingly they had no fear.

"Fire!" came the command, and with it oaths and yells.

Our three machine-guns had opened fire. Their noise was a steady clatter above the sharp reports of our rifles. Closer and closer to the wall came the rushing tribesmen. They were falling by the score, but they kept on. Then I saw them hesitate, turn—run.

"*Foutre!*" yelled the sergeant.

They did not re-attack. We saw them rush up the mountain-side, watched them mount horses and ride away. We took stock. We had withstood near ten times our numbers. There had been casualties. We lost seven men. Fifteen were wounded.

Details were sent out, and then we buried our dead—without ceremony, inside the camp. There were a lot of silent figures lying outside the wall. We had killed almost seventy of the Druses. We were allowed to go out and search their bodies. Anything of value was taken. My share was a silver dagger, a purse with a few gold coins. Sylvestre was more fortunate. He told me that night he had found over a hundred francs. We did not bury the enemy. There was not time, and it was not the custom. When we marched away, we left behind their silent figures on the ground. They were brave men.

Further exciting episodes in this authentic story of an American Legionnaire will be described next month.

The Last Second

A hydrophone expert goes to sleep —and barely escapes with his life.

By E. P. KAMPF

OUR vessel was laid up in Norfolk for repairs, and as I was attached to the Radio Department, it was my duty to renew the "hydrophones" used in the sonic depth-finding machines. These water-proof telephone transmitters are located next to the skin of the ship, and usually placed in the fresh-water tanks. If these tanks are not readily accessible, the hydrophones are placed in tanks specially built for them. In our case, the port and starboard fresh-water tanks, located in the forward hold, could be entered with little difficulty.

It was the last day of our stay in shipyard, and we were to sail early the following morning. I had worked until late the preceding night on the depth-finding machines, and had had only four hours' sleep when the messman woke me:

"Hey, Sparks, how do you want your eggs—fried? Or fried?"

After breakfast I went down into the starboard tank, completing the installation by lunch-time, and in the afternoon entered the port tank.

These tanks were roughly eight feet on a side by five feet high, although no strict measurements could be taken because of their irregular contour. They sloped with the side of the ship; the high side was that nearest the skin of the ship. The fill pipe came up through the bottom of the tank, while an overflow was located somewhere in the top. There was also a manhole eighteen inches square that was fastened securely, when closed, by a number of winged nuts.

After lunch, I had been working perhaps an hour when an unaccountable feeling of drowsiness came over me. My lack of sleep upon the preceding night may have been to blame, or perhaps the warm air and reek of bilge-water had an anesthetic effect on me.

Anyhow, I fell asleep in the darkness of the tank. I had been working by what little light filtered through the manhole, and my electric torch was at my side unlit. Whether I slept seconds or minutes or an hour I don't know. . . .

I awakened with a splitting headache and a drowsy, stupid feeling. It was some moments before the drowsiness departed. Slowly I realized where I was. Snapping on my torch, I explored the manhole and found it closely battened down! Even this did not strike a chord of fear in me. I lay back and vaguely considered my predicament, in a rather offhand manner.

I believe the thing that brought me to my senses finally was a faint gurgling sound rising to a roar as a swift spurt of water came up through the fill pipe in the bottom of the tank. I played my light on it and realized the meaning of it all. The tank was being filled, and—I was trapped inside!

My first impulse was to yell for help and pound on the manhole cover. This I did until I was hoarse and my hands torn and bleeding from contact with the rough iron bolt-heads. The water was gaining rapidly; already it was to my knees. It does not take long to fill a small tank with water gushing in through a two-inch inlet.

And then occurred the worst misfortune that can happen to a person in the position I was in: I dropped my torch light in the water! It flickered dismally under the water for a few seconds, then went out. Nothing I could do, after hastily retrieving it, would bring it back to working condition again. Now complete panic settled on me. That light had been a solace to me, even though it did no material good. It had kept up my morale. Now a period of utter dejection took hold of me. I returned to an animate state, however, and resumed my screaming and pounding on the manhole-cover, still with no response.

Evidently they had decided to fill the tanks in the afternoon instead of delaying for that purpose in the morning. Perhaps no one had even thought to look for me in the tank, or perhaps they had called and receiving no response had concluded that I had finished my work and returned to the radio-room. In any event, here I was, entrapped, entombed! The cold bubbling water was now to my waist. . . .

I remembered that story of Poe's, "The Pit and the Pendulum," wherein the central character is hemmed in by red-hot iron walls that slowly converge to crush him in their burning embrace. I almost envied that poor unfortunate at the moment. Anything would be better than drowning like a rat in the water! Suddenly it occurred to me that the fellow in the story had been saved miraculously at the last moment. I grasped at this straw of hope, and I am sure that in the ensuing moments, the ultimate rescue of the hero of that story was the only thing that kept me from going stark mad. The water was now to my chest. I had been forced to back toward the top end of the tank in order to keep even that far out of the water.

I tried once more to summon aid by pounding on the iron walls. The manhole itself was now well covered with water. I couldn't, however, summon up enough strength to make any appreciable sound. I tried kicking the side of the tank but found this also ineffective. You have no doubt tried kicking in water!

The water was now to my neck. I realized that death was close. Only the top corner of the tank was left to me.

MY brain seemed clearing somewhat now, perhaps because of my immersion in the cold water, and rational thought was coming back. I considered the compressing effect of the rising water on the air in the tank. I noticed that I had not felt the compression in the least. Sudden hope penetrated my brain. I had forgotten the overflow-pipe! But where was it? I quickly thought of the plan of the tank, which I had previously studied, and remembered that the pipe was in the aft port corner of the tank. That was the outlet for the air, of course. Why hadn't I thought of it before?

I was then in the forward port corner of the tank, and I realized that I would have to pass under the intervening water to get at the opposite corner. And I could not be sure that the corner would have any air in it! It might be lower than the corner I was then in. Taking a fresh hold on my courage, and a deep breath, I ducked my head under the water and waded over to the other corner of the tank. Abruptly my head rose above the surface of the water, and I took a deep breath. I was safe for the moment! Groping feverishly in the corner, I found the pipe. Daylight failed to penetrate it, but I knew that it turned and twisted before finally emerging at a point above the water line on the side of the vessel.

I placed my mouth to the pipe and howled loudly for help, praying that some one would be standing on the dock near the outlet and hear me. My voice sounded like the roar of a lion in the confined space.

THE water was gaining rapidly now. I knew that when the tank overflowed through the pipe in front of me, my life would flow out with it—and that would happen in a very few seconds! What tense, hope-filled, heart-rending seconds they were!

Suddenly a voice answered me.

"Hello—what's the trouble?"

"For God's sake, shut off the pumps," I yelled. "I'm trapped in the tank!"

There was no answer. Again my heart sank. Only by wedging my face into the corner could I now keep the water out of my nostrils. But now I realized that the water was coming no farther. . . . Slowly, ever so slowly, it began to recede! My words had been heard, and I was saved—or was this delirium? My question was answered, for soon my head was above the surface again. Groping, I located the manhole once more. Encouraging knocks sounded on the tank walls and I could hear muffled voices shouting to me, then soon the welcome sound of iron on iron, as the wrenches were applied to the wing nuts.

Another moment, and I was out, thoroughly shaken, but uninjured. I later learned that the carpenter, who was in charge of taking on fresh water, and had entombed me in the tank, had been standing right alongside the overflow pipe, waiting for it to overflow, so that he could give the order to stop pumping and screw the cover down tight. How fortunate it was, that he was there! When he understood the meaning of my words, he hadn't even stopped to answer, but had run, bawling orders to the engineers to drain the tank—saving me!

A Leap in the Dark

Desperate Russian prisoners in the old fortress at Tiflis risk a strange method of escape.

By
DMITRI SORDNOFF

IN the late summer of 1925 I was confined—as a spy and counter-revolutionary—with some fifteen hundred other prisoners in the citadel of Mitekha in the Caucasus. This stronghold of the ancient Georgian kings perches high up on a weather-worn peak of granite jutting steeply up like a giant sugar loaf in the midst of the city of Tiflis. The summit of the rock is well over a hundred feet above the swiftly flowing Koura River, whose muddy torrent almost entirely surrounds its base; and massive walls of brick and stone add another fifty feet to its stature.

A single narrow road, so steep it can scarcely be climbed afoot, corkscrews up from the landward side, and a solid, well-garrisoned tower straddles the sole entrance into the citadel. It is fitted with a triple set of heavily timbered doors studded with iron, and an iron-spiked portcullis hangs before it. The pathway up ends abruptly just before reaching the gate in a deep trench that gaps from one side to the other. There is a wooden drawbridge spanning this trench, but it is seldom raised.

Such is the Mitekha; and to the most desperate prisoner it was soon apparent that escape was next to the impossible. There was actually only one avenue open—over the top of the walls on one of the river sides, and a sheer plunge into the raging whirlpools of the river a hundred and fifty feet below. If the one leaping missed the numerous submerged rocks that clustered about the base of the cliffs, he still had but a slender chance of surviving the treacherous eddies.

Two prisoners tried it the first week I was in the Mitekha, and lost their lives in the attempt. Their mangled, half-naked bodies were recovered by the Soviet secret police, brought back into the Mitekha and thrown down on the stones of the courtyard, where they lay for two days, horrible reminders of the price of failure.

I couldn't swim a hundred yards at that time—and can't now, for that matter; so when I dreamed of escape, it was always by some other means. Rumor had it that there were subterranean passages in the old citadel reaching down into the solid rock of its foundation, and leading out into the river at water-level, where there was an open channel through the rocks. Another version was that a tunnel led out on the shore side, and ended with a hidden door inside the small Chapel of St. Nina.

It was only after a third man risked his life by the river road and failed, that I turned to serious thoughts of escape that way. This man had managed to steal several prison brooms, the long handles of which were made of bamboo sticks. These sticks he had carefully cut into short lengths and tied together with bits of string and strips of cloth, until he had a sort of life-belt. His contraption must not have had sufficient buoyancy, however; or perhaps he struck one of the hidden rocks when he leaped; for the next day he lay dead on the courtyard stones, with little on his battered body save the splintered remnants of his bamboo life-belt. While it was a gruesome sight it gave me at least an idea.

A little chapel stood in the middle of the courtyard, one wing of which had caved in. The roof of the ruins, within easy reach, was of copper sheeting, which I now proceeded to rip off, a fragment at a time, and hide in a safe place. During the day the prisoners were allowed full freedom within the walls, for the guards considered the place proof against escape.

Bending the soft copper sheets into slender cylinders, I soldered them tightly together with bits of lead. The lead

I got in part from the few remaining fragments of stained glass windows in the same chapel. Some of the masonry around the yard was strengthened with iron tie-bars imbedded in lead. From this source I scraped more lead; and using tallow saved from food rations as a soldering flux, I was soon able to complete a fairly workmanlike life-belt composed of a number of water-tight copper tubes. It was at once light and strong.

At this point, however, misfortune overtook me—or perhaps, in the light of later events, it was good fortune. I slipped and fell on the steps one day, severely wrenching my right shoulder, and spraining my left wrist. In such a condition there could be no further thought of escape for the present. Of the two fellow-prisoners I had taken into my confidence, one superstitiously suggested that my accident was a "warning," and I had better give up my plans.

My other friend made light of this, but reminded me that even with the lax watch maintained within the walls, the copper tubes would be discovered sooner or later.

"Why not try, yourself?" I asked him.

"Why not, indeed!" he answered. And two nights later he took the leap.

Next day I forgot the pain of my injured wrist and shoulder in my anxiety for the fugitive. Evening came, and there was great excitement among our guards. We were shuffled back and forth, counted and recounted, but no soldiers arrived with a grisly burden as they had following previous jumps.

TWO weeks passed; one day I saw a squad of soldiers feverishly dismantling the remaining portions of the copper roof from which I had stolen material for my life-belt. They worked with such a will that it was easily seen this was no ordinary fatigue party, but a special job. I had an uncomfortable feeling that all was not well—that my friend had somehow been caught. That the guards had discovered the secret of the copper through finding the discarded life-belt, I doubted, for it had been agreed that when no longer needed, it was to be pounded flat and thrown back into the river. But I had a premonition of disaster, and that night the worst came to light.

We were in the common room sipping our evening ration of hot water, which was issued in lieu of tea, when the door slammed open, and two burly guards flung my fugitive friend into our midst. He appeared more dead than alive, his body a mass of fresh bruises. His mustache and beard were stiff with dried blood that had poured from mouth and nose; and from one ear a thin trickle of blood still flowed.

The excitement subsided when the other prisoners decided he would be unable to talk; and they stretched out presently on the floor to sleep. I kept watch beside my poor battered friend, who lay groaning on a pile of rags in one corner, where I had dragged him.

SOON after daylight he regained consciousness and bit by bit, I heard the story of his escape and recapture.

"You have nothing to fear," he reassured me. "I had to tell them about the copper tubes, or they would have thought friends outside had helped and so caused trouble for innocent people. They beat me painfully; I had to talk; but I let them believe I made the belt."

"Then it did work!" I exclaimed.

"It worked perfectly," he told me. "I landed safely, and got to the shore. Some friends at the edge of town gave me shoes and some clothing; in less than a week I was fifty miles inside the Turkish border. . . . But I had to come back and give myself up—they arrested my wife and baby daughter and held them for hostages," he explained. "I thought my wife was safe abroad, but she must have returned to be near me. News reached me in Turkey by the underground route, and I turned back at once. It was too big a price to pay for freedom."

"Of course," I assented. "But you know what they will do with you now?"

"They'll stand me against the wall, now," he said hopelessly. "But surely they will let my wife and baby go. They promised they would if I returned."

He was still unable to stand alone when the guards came two nights later and carried him away to be shot.

As for me, I dreamed no more of escape, for my wife and two children were still in Russia, so far as I then knew. Fear of what the secret police would do to them if I ever attempted escape did far more to hold me in the Mitekha than all its iron bars, high wall and regiment of guards combined.

Almost two more years passed before I too finally escaped; and it was only then that I learned the final chapter of my unfortunate fellow-prisoner's story—they had shot his wife and baby too.

The Green Lights Lie

What it's like to be riding on a locomotive tender in a collision.

By DUANE HOPKINS

IN August, 1922, railway shop employees staged a nation-wide strike. I walked out with the rest of the brothers. Like many of them, I never went back. The strike was broken on most roads, and the shops were closed against us. When I saw the old job was gone for good, I began to ramble, and I rambled right into the narrowest escape from death I've ever had.

That autumn my ramblings found me in Montana, and flat broke. Montana is a poor place to spend a winter if you can't keep the coal-bin full, so I decided to strike for Texas. For a time the trip went fine. I had my old shop union card, and generally it was good for a free ride in a caboose. Then suddenly I ran into trouble in the form of a tough freight conductor on a sheep train. . . .

It was frosty that night. When I saw the sheep drag standing in the yard ready to run, I noticed with pleasure a feather of smoke floating above the caboose roof. That meant a fire in the heating-stove, and a warm car looked good to me. I strode boldly in and greeted the conductor, a burly and rather dour fellow.

"Here's my ticket, skipper," I announced brightly, flashing my service pasteboard at him. "How's chances of holding down your caboose for a division?"

The con didn't look up from checking waybills on his sheep. "Cards don't pass for transportation," he replied gruffly. "If you want to ride my hot-shot, you can bed down with the woollies ahead."

There's no use arguing with a conductor. I didn't try. I merely cursed him until he heaved a lantern at me. Then I fled forward and joined the bleating woollies. When the sheep redball pulled out, I was seated atop a stock car, just behind the cinder fall from the engine.

It was plenty cold out on the roofs. The frosty wind cut through my clothing like a thousand icy needles. Riding the whirlwind deck of a stock dispatch is a summer pastime only. I was convinced of that, and ready to give up, when we made our first stop for water.

As luck would have it, there was no town there—just a water tower standing alone like a giant mushroom on the bare prairie. Nevertheless, I was too nearly frozen to hug the tops any farther. I got stiffly off, and when the train departed, warmed myself by blistering the ears of the unfriendly conductor until the red marker lights of his cozy caboose faded from sight in the night. Then I kindled a little fire under the water-tank and huddled shivering over it.

AFTER a while a headlight appeared in the north. It seemed too soon for another freight to overtake me, so I decided the approaching train was a passenger and probably wouldn't stop at my lonely water-spout. I was wrong on both counts: the train did stop, for a quick drink, and it wasn't a passenger but a fast mail. And I couldn't resist the temptation—the engine tender looked too inviting.

"Aha!" I chuckled. "Here's where I tank-bust me a varnished streak."

Water taken, the mail shot highballed. I swung aboard the tender and crawled up on the tank, to sit with my back against the rear flange of the coal bunker. This, while not as comfortable as a

caboose chair, was much better than a car roof. I was in luck—so I thought, mistakenly.

The sheep train I had abandoned had a considerable start on us. It took us a long time to overtake the stocker, which was strictly "rush" itself.

Finally the mail engineer blasted my eardrums loose with a station whistle. I got to my feet on the tender for a look ahead. There was no town in evidence, but there was a siding before us. And on the siding stood the sheep string, cleared for the rocketing mail. The gleaming caboose markers now showed green instead of red, the two-colored lamps having been turned sideways on their brackets for our meet.

I say the sheep were clear for us on that siding, but perhaps I shouldn't be so positive. I don't know what the official investigation later revealed. I don't know what caused such a thing to happen. All I know are these facts:

We did *not* clear. We approached the meet at full speed. The mail runner did not touch his brake-valve or ease a throttle. He had his head thrust out the window of the engine cab, while I stood looking forward over his shoulder from my position on the tender tank. I saw exactly what the engine-man must have seen in his headlight glare—a siding switch blinking a green eye, switch points lined through for the main, and just beyond the switch, a sidetracked caboose with markers turned green. Those are the facts as I know them. By every rule of railroading we had a clear track. And yet we failed to clear that switch.

Instead, we headed into the switch, into the siding, into the standing caboose and the sheep. With an appalling crash, the fast mail hurtled into collision.

The first terrific impact buckled the tender under me. The sudden buckling shot me high in the air as if from a spring-board. Up I went, and forward, flung through the night at express speed. I was hurled over the coal-pile, over the cab roof, over the entire engine, over smashing cars ahead.

OF that remarkable and terrible flight above exploding hell I know practically nothing. I describe it from the course I must have taken to land where I did. My senses at the time failed me completely. I was conscious of only one thing—that I was in the process of dying a violent death. My only thought was that instant and horrible doom awaited me when I struck, either against the roof of a stock-car, or on the ground.

Happily, I landed on neither. Miracle if you will, I came down with a splash—in *water!* There was a full creek, and a railroad bridge; I lit alongside the trestle in midstream. Well do I remember *that* shock. At the touch of water, I naturally thought it a solid object to smash me. I almost died of fright then and there. When I awoke to the truth, surprise paralyzed me to the point that I nearly died by drowning anyway. However, I managed to collect my senses and drag myself ashore in a pretty dazed condition.

FURTHER amazement was in store for me there. Stunned by the fact that I was still alive, I made the added discovery that I was apparently uninjured. Yet I was not to come off scot free. Later examination showed I had a couple of cracked ribs. No doubt I had been struck by a piece of flying wreckage while I sailed over the shambles, although I hadn't been aware of it at the time.

The wreck? It was a nightmare. The mail engine was overturned and buried beneath splintered wreckage. Steam was roaring from broken pipes, and debris was catching on fire from the scattered grates. The terrified bleating of sheep made confusion worse confounded. And blood—the track ran red with it. It seemed as if a million sheep had been slaughtered on the spot. Worse, four railroaders had signed the last register—two in the cab of the mail, two in the caboose of the stock extra. Other men were injured, chiefly post-office boys aboard the flyer; but none of them died, because you can't kill a railway mail clerk.

The first mail car had sheared off its leading truck and climbed the tender. I found it sitting astraddle the tank where I had been riding. You can bet I thanked my stars for getting out of that spot in a hurry. Mostly, though, I was thankful for having found a freight conductor in an ugly temper that night. That was the twist of fate that really saved my life. If the skipper of the sheep-train had let me ride his caboose when I asked, I would have been sitting in it when the mail hog smashed through the car like a boot-heel through an egg-shell; I would have been literally torn to pieces—as the men of the unfortunate caboose crew were.

New Zealand Pig

From the Antipodes comes this lively story of a sheep-rancher's knife-to-tusk battle.

By H. F. WILLIAMS

ALL that broken country drained by the Clarence River, in the Province of Marlbourough, New Zealand, is—or was during the years of 1927 and '28—overrun by wild pigs.

Periodic hunts by hired men with packs of trained dogs kept the pest somewhat under control, but even this method did not meet the situation adequately.

One old razor-back was giving me a great deal of trouble. For two years he had taken toll of the lambing range, killing and devouring new-born lambs whilst they were still too wabbly to escape him. On several occasions one or two of my shepherds had caught him in the act; but so far, bullets had only "nearly got him." Poisoned bait he spurned, and dogs had never managed to hold him.

One morning late in summer I had drafted out a small mob of dry ewes to be fattened on good pasture. I took with me Bob, a venerable Scotch "beardy," as lead dog, and Guinea, a foxy little black-and-tan Smithfield collie, as general roustabout. As I was leaving, Mac—a year-old collie—gave such pitiful yelps and whines that I hadn't the heart to leave him. Besides, the work would be good training for him. So Mac trailed along.

Everything went smoothly until, within half a mile of the pasture, I missed Mac. Almost at the same moment excited yelps and barks sounded from the hill above us. Mac had found his first pig. I whistled and called the pup, but he took not the slightest notice. I caught Bob in the act of sneaking off to lend a hand, and whilst I was whistling him back to attend to his job, Guinea streaked away through the brush. That settled things altogether. As soon as his ear-splitting bark joined with the pup's yelping, my lead dog forgot all about sheep, his duty, and the retribution that was sure to follow desertion. With no dog to hold them, the sheep immediately scattered. There was nothing for me to do but try to recover my dogs before any was hurt.

I started up the hill; brush tore my clothes; the growth of ti-tree and flax was so thick as to be well-nigh impenetrable. At last, hot, disheveled, and in a very bad temper, I reached the spur on which the dogs had roused their game.

From here on, even had the barking not been audible, a plain trail was there for me to follow.

I began to realize that the dogs were pitted against a fighting boar. To go to the ranch and return with a rifle would take over an hour, time enough for the boar to maim one or two of the dogs and get away. On the other hand, were I to follow them up right away, I could probably get my sheep-dogs away without them being harmed, return to the ranch and get a rifle and three trained pig dogs that would soon find the boar and bait him whilst I got a shot.

I had killed hundreds of pigs up to this time, and had never been tackled, so felt

that the danger was negligible, though I was unarmed save for a hunting-knife.

Deciding to follow them up, I started round the face of the hill and came out on to the leading spur where the fight was in progress. Here I did a foolish thing and had a narrow escape. Instead of keeping on the uphill side of the boar, I went below him, thinking he would be less likely to bolt and take the dogs with him. He must have winded me, for as I rounded a clump of brush he came, headed toward me, and traveling like a bullet.

I jumped just as he reached me. One chisel-edged tusk caught me just below the knee, slicing through stout cow-hide legging and barely missing the bone. The impact of his shoulder threw me a dozen feet. Luckily, he did not stop to finish me, but continued on to bail up once more a hundred yards down the hill.

Scrambling to my feet, and finding that I was not really injured, I decided that after all, the pig was too tough for me, and that the situation called for a rifle. Starting for the ranch, I had not gone more than fifty yards when yelps of pain told me that one of the dogs had been ripped. Turning back, I ran down the spur, and met Mac crawling up, his entrails hanging through a gash in his belly.

Catching him, I turned him on his back, poked everything back inside, punched holes in his hide with the leather punch on my pocket knife, and sewed him up with a strip of flax. Then, taking off my shirt, I made a pad, placing it over the wound, and keeping it in place with strips of flax wound round his body. Through all this rough surgery he only whimpered and licked my hands.

WITH one of his enemies out of the way, it was certain the boar would rip the other two and get away unless I did something, and that soon. Loosening my knife in its sheath, I started down to where the battle was still raging. Mac crawled after me, so I threw my hat on the ground and told him to watch it. I knew he would stay with it.

When I finally came upon the pig, I found him in a position unfavorable to me, half hidden in a bunch of flax, with no trees handy in case he attacked again. I proceeded to pelt him with stones. He didn't like it, and broke away for a patch of timber lower down, with the dogs in hot pursuit.

Here he turned at bay, his hind end protected from the dogs by a fallen broad-leaf tree. Nothing could have suited me better. Climbing onto the trunk, I walked along it, forcing my way through the dead branches until I reached a position immediately above the boar. Then I got the surprise of my life. On top of the shoulders and on one side, the hair was brown, the rest being black. It was the killer that had given us so much trouble at lambing-time! He was bigger even than I had imagined—stood nearly three feet high at the shoulder and must have weighed seven hundred pounds.

I WAS doubly determined to get him; drawing my knife, I crawled out on a branch above him and tried to stab him in the heart. Each blow either struck a rib or failed to penetrate the leathery hide. He then moved farther along the tree, ignoring me altogether, but striking at the dogs, who kept out of reach. I followed along, climbed out on another branch, struck again and missed altogether. The jerk broke the branch, and I fell squarely on top of the pig!

Scarcely knowing what I did, I grabbed one flap-like ear and wrapped my legs around his body. Luckily, I had not dropped my knife. Squealing with rage, he whirled round and round in dizzying circles, trying to dislodge me. The dogs jumped in to help, Guinea getting a hold on one hind leg, Bob seizing the other. The boar was mad with rage and pain, scraping himself against trees, charging through brush; and all the time that deadly, worrying, gnawing sound went on behind me. I felt my strength ebbing fast; to let go would mean a particularly sticky finish from those sharp tusks.

Suddenly his hindquarters sank under my weight; the dogs had hamstrung him. He stood perfectly still; his hind end dropped, bloody froth dripping from his jaws. Summoning the last of my strength I buried my knife to the hilt just behind his shoulder.

With a roar, he reared his head in the air, dashed dripping tusks back and forth, then collapsed.

After getting my wind back, I took stock of the damage. Beyond some deep scratches and the gash in my leg, the pain in which I was just beginning to feel, I was unhurt; the dog Bob had an ugly shoulder rip. I carried Mac home, and such is the vitality of a young dog that he got over his wound, and was working again within a month.

The boar's tusks are now mounted as a desk ornament, memento of a lively half-hour.

Enjoy this great new COMPLETE NOVEL

Here's an event—a new novel by Octavus Roy Cohen, whose "With Benefit of Clergy" scored such a tremendous success last year! "There's Always a Next Time" is his newest, and it appears complete in the May issue of Redbook, prior to its publication in book form. It is a vivid, fascinating drama of the New South—the South of living men and women. You will enjoy reading this action-packed book-length novel. And remember, you get the full regular contents of Redbook along with it. Don't miss it!


LUCKY STRIKE
"IT'S TOASTED"
CIGARETTES
LUCKY STRIKE
Luckies
LUCKIES USE ONLY THE CENTER LEAVES
—THE CENTER LEAVES GIVE YOU
THE MILDEST SMOKE.
They Taste Better
Copyright 1941
The American Tobacco Company