

BLUE BOOK

Magazine of Adventure in Fact and Fiction ★ October ★ 25c



Men of America... **WILL ROGERS**
Painted by Maurice Bower

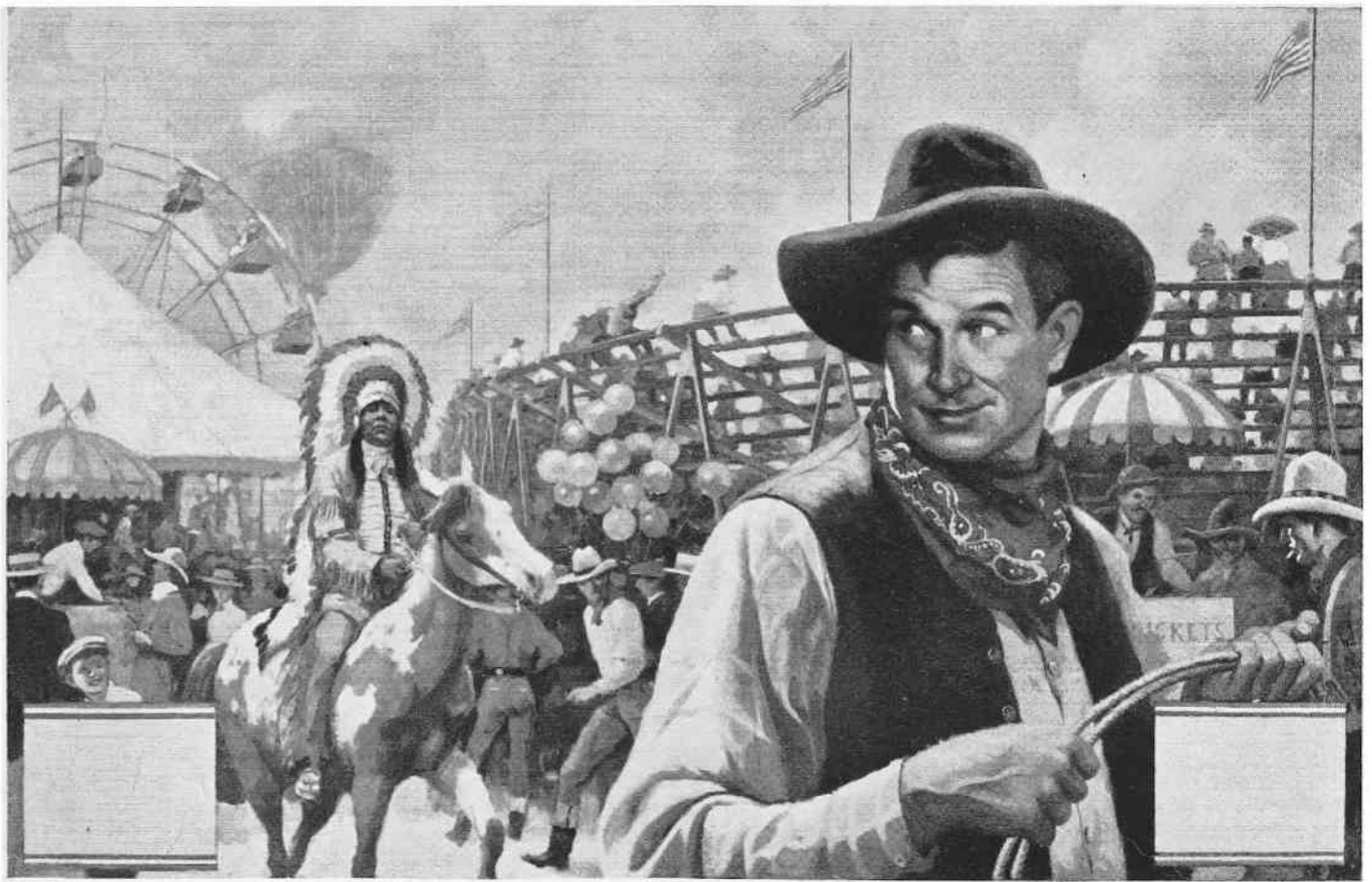
THE LINE GOES FORWARD
by William Glasgow

(Illustrated at the front in Korea by Hamilton Greene)

FISHING, WITH MUSIC
by Arthur H. Carhart

HERMAN HICKMAN, BIG BOY BLUE
by Ted Shane

10 short stories; many special features



MEN OF AMERICA WILL ROGERS

Beloved Cowboy Humorist

TO a generation now growing older, the decade of the Nineteen-twenties is seen through a golden mist of memory as the Terrific Twenties, the Great Sleigh Ride, or the Era of Wonderful Nonsense. To a present-day generation of Americans it is known, through the movies, as a somewhat naïve period when college boys and girls wore coonskin coats, toted bathtub gin, used slang that was strictly "square," and employed a primitive form of transportation known as the Stutz Bearcat.

Naïve it was, and splendid. It was the Golden Age of America. We had just won a war proving that nobody could win a war without America; and Russia was just a name, a great vacant space on the map. Communists, known as Bolsheviks, were pictured as comic-strip characters with whiskers and home-made bombs, and the only problem of our diplomats abroad was to try to collect the war debts—the money we had lent to England and France.

Despite the tinsel with which the era was hung, the American people and American enterprise, as Herbert Hoover later was to remark, were fundamentally sound. The enthusiasm and the expansion of the Twenties produced the eighty-story skyscrapers of New York, the modern motor industry, Hollywood, the radio, better standards of living, better public health and an outlook on life that was boundlessly "American."

There was talk, of course, of "The Lost Generation," typified by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and postwar disillusionment, but most Americans didn't notice it, and the Lost Generation seemed to enjoy it. The American people still believed literally and firmly in the dignity of the individual and the rewards of effort. That they re-established Calvin Coolidge, epitome of all the homely virtues, in the White House, was a tip-off as to what they were really like underneath all the hullabaloo. . . .

No other man quite so typified the basic American credo of the Twenties

as Will Rogers, the beloved cowboy humorist and deflater of stuffed shirts whose place in the Hall of Fame as a spokesman of America is as secure as that of Walt Whitman or Mark Twain. Since his death in a plane crash with Wiley Post at Point Barrow, Alaska, August 15, 1935, Rogers' fame is undimmed; it will go on forever, as long as his sayings are on the lips of his fellow-countrymen.

For Rogers came close to fulfilling the ideal of every American. He was the country boy who made good, not only in the big city, but in the whole world. He made more money than he could count, but he remained always himself, a plain Joe who was sought after by kings and queens, with whom he exchanged good-natured wisecracks and made them like it. He was also the man who had the politicians' number, the man who saw through every sham and fraud and good-naturedly demolished them with his wit. ("The Will Rogers Story" is told in more detail, beginning on page 34, by D. C. O'Flaherty.)

Readers' Comment

Illustrators Take Notice!

I HAVE been a reader of BLUE BOOK for quite some time now and as I recall, plenty of praise has been given the fine authors in the "Book" but not much, if any, mention has been made of the illustrators.

Most stories could hold their own on the pages but when men like Brendan Lynch, Ham Greene, MacPherson, Gustavson and a long list of others add their work to the writers', it so enriches and amplifies the stories that they, in many cases, better those in the slick magazines.

The type of drawing the magazine uses is so free in most instances and so vigorous that BLUE BOOK puts its big-brother publications to shame in that field.

Frank Horvath

A Soldier's Reading

AFTER fifty years in the ministry, which included a part in the First World War as chaplain and Y.M.C.A. secretary, I have had an opportunity to study the reading values of the soldier in the Army. The right kind of magazine is always popular and the one that seemed to appeal to the varied tastes of the soldier was BLUE BOOK.

The reason for this is threefold. First: The soldier likes history, but it must be served to him as easy reading. In this, BLUE BOOK has done a fine job, by coordinating facts through fiction and giving the reader a picture of events that he can understand and enjoy. Second: The soldier likes real fiction, written by men who know their locale and who are masters of their art. Third: The soldier likes sketches of human interest, that will bring him a little nearer to the old home place. All of these make your magazine a mighty influence in the life of the reader by guiding him to the best in literature.

If I have a suggestion to make, it would be for you to publish a little poetry, now and then, for men who appreciate such writers as Robert Service, Bud Cornish and others.

Talmage M. Patterson

*The Editors of BLUE BOOK are glad to receive letters of constructive criticism and suggestions; and for the ones we publish each month we will pay the writers ten dollars each.

Letters should not be longer than two hundred words; no letters can be returned and all will become property of McCall Corporation. They should be addressed: Editor of Letters, Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York 17, New York.

BLUE BOOK

October, 1951

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Men of America—Will Rogers

Painted by Maurice Bower.

The short stories and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

PHILLIPS WYMAN, Publisher

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

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For to Achieve Your

A glutton for punishment, Sir Dinadan departs far from King Arthur's Round Table to succor a damosel in distress—and only to discover that the aforesaid damosel could be false as well as fair.

When he overtook the damosel, anon she said, "What doest thou here? Thou stinkest all of the kitchen. Thy clothes be bawdy of the grease and tallow that thou gainest in King Arthur's kitchen. Therefore turn again, bawdy kitchen page, for I know thee well. . . . What art thou but a luske and a turner of broches and a ladle-washer?"

"Damosel," said Beaumains, "say to me what ye will, I will not go from you whatsoever ye say, for I have undertaken to King Arthur for to achieve your adventure; and so shall I finish it to the end, else die thereof."

—Sir Thomas Malory.



ONE of King Arthur's amiable if eccentric customs was, upon certain feast days, to delay his dinner until he had witnessed or received word of some fresh marvel or curious new adventure. Now it was on a Whit Sunday, and the hour of noon (which was dinner-time), that a hungry gentleman of the court looked from a window and beheld the approach of three men on big horses and a little dwarf on foot. He saw the riders dismount at the front door and observed that one of them topped the others by a head and a half, though all were taller than ordinary.

"This promises well!" he exclaimed; and so he hastened to the King and said with assurance, "Sir, you may sit down to dinner with an easy conscience, for an extraordinary adventure is nigh to hand or I have lost my erstwhile keen sense of such matters."

"I'll take your word for it, my friend," said the King, who was peckish himself, having breakfasted early; and with that he led the company to the Hall of the Round Table, this being one of the days especially ordained for the assembly of the knights of that high fellowship.

Of the one hundred and fifty chairs at the table, all but a third were quickly occupied. Of the fifty absentees, some were questing private adventures which brooked no respite, some skirmishing with the King's enemies far afield, some in prison,



some abed of wounds or fevers; and probably some occupied new graves or lay dead at the mercy of foxes and crows.

Now the three strange horsemen and the yet stranger dwarf entered the hall. Two supported the third between them, and the dwarf strutted behind. The supporters were in silk and fine half-armor, but the one between them was garbed all in country wool and leather, as a herd- or plowman. But in his garments alone did his appearance suggest a low fellow. In the words of an ancient chronicler, "He was large and long and broad at the shoulders, and nobly visaged, and the fairest and largest-handed ever

was seen." Yet he leaned and hung upon the squires as if his length and weight were too much for his own strength. But when he halted with only the table between himself and the King, he straightened his back and knees to his full height, bowed low and then stood upright again.

"What will you?" said Arthur, with a gracious gesture of the right hand. "Speak up and fear nought."

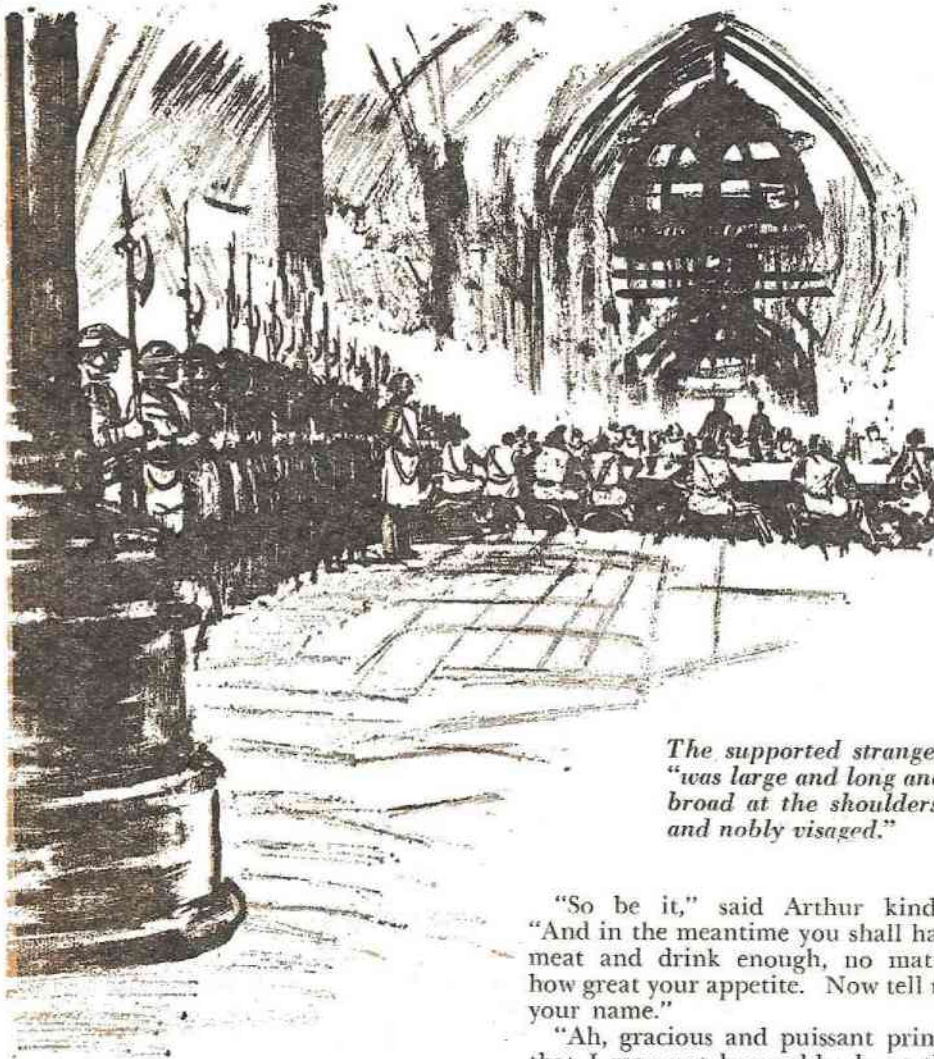
"God bless Your Majesty and all your noble fellowship," said the stranger.

"Gramercy," said the King. "Say on."

"I am come, puissant prince, to ask three favors," said the stranger.

Adventure

by THEODORE
GOODRIDGE
ROBERTS



*The supported stranger
"was large and long and
broad at the shoulders,
and nobly visaged."*

"So be it," said Arthur kindly. "And in the meantime you shall have meat and drink enough, no matter how great your appetite. Now tell me your name."

"Ah, gracious and puissant prince, that I may not honorably do at this time!" cried the other apologetically.

"Quite," said the King; but he looked disappointed.

Then he turned to Sir Kay, who was High Seneschal of all his castles and strongholds, and bade him supply the young man generously with all he might require daily throughout the next twelvemonth. Whereupon the stranger followed Sir Kay from the hall; and those who had come with him, including the little dwarf, retired to their horses and galloped off.

This Sir Kay was a lord of great authority, but of no popularity with either his peers or his inferiors. His temper and manners were such as did not endear him to any honest person, gentle or simple. Now he mocked and insulted the young stranger.

"The King is as romantic and gullible as any old wife or skyraking

knight-errant, but I am of different stuff," he sneered. "He may think you of worshipful blood, but I can see that you are a low fellow by birth, even as you have proved yourself a lout in spirit. Any gentleman would have asked for a horse and arms and a perilous adventure: but such as a beggar is, so he begs. So, since marrowbones, dumplings and ale aplenty are the height of your ambition, you shall have your fill of them till you bulge with fat like the pig you are. And since you lack a name, I give you one now—'Beaumains'—in derision of your monstrous uncouth hands. Ha-ha!"

THE youth listened to all this in silence, but with a blanched face and a strained look about his beardless lips; and still he made no protest even when he was set down at meat with potscrapers and turnspits and the like in the greasy scullery. But Sir Kay's behavior toward the uncomplaining stranger displeased, and was protested by, certain good knights who chanced to get wind of it; and one day the great Sir Launcelot himself rebuked Sir Kay for it.

"If the youth is in truth what you say, then you are taking an ungentle advantage of his lowly station," quoth the peerless knight, but in his habitual mild voice. "And should he prove himself, or accident prove him, a person of high merit in himself or of high blood, then you will have a red face for your bullying and bad manners. You call him Beaumains, and with cause—but you bestow the name in petty derision, like a jealous scullion. Have done, I pray you, for the credit of the order of knighthood."

Hard words, though softly spoken: but Sir Kay made to smile them off, though with nothing of mirth in his grimace, for he would sooner have jumped into the moat in full armor than come to blows with Sir Launcelot.

"Just so," said Sir Dinadan, who happened to be of the company, in a cheerful tone of voice. "And your memory is equally at fault with your manners, Sir Seneschal, if you have forgotten that other young man upon

Arthur nodded.

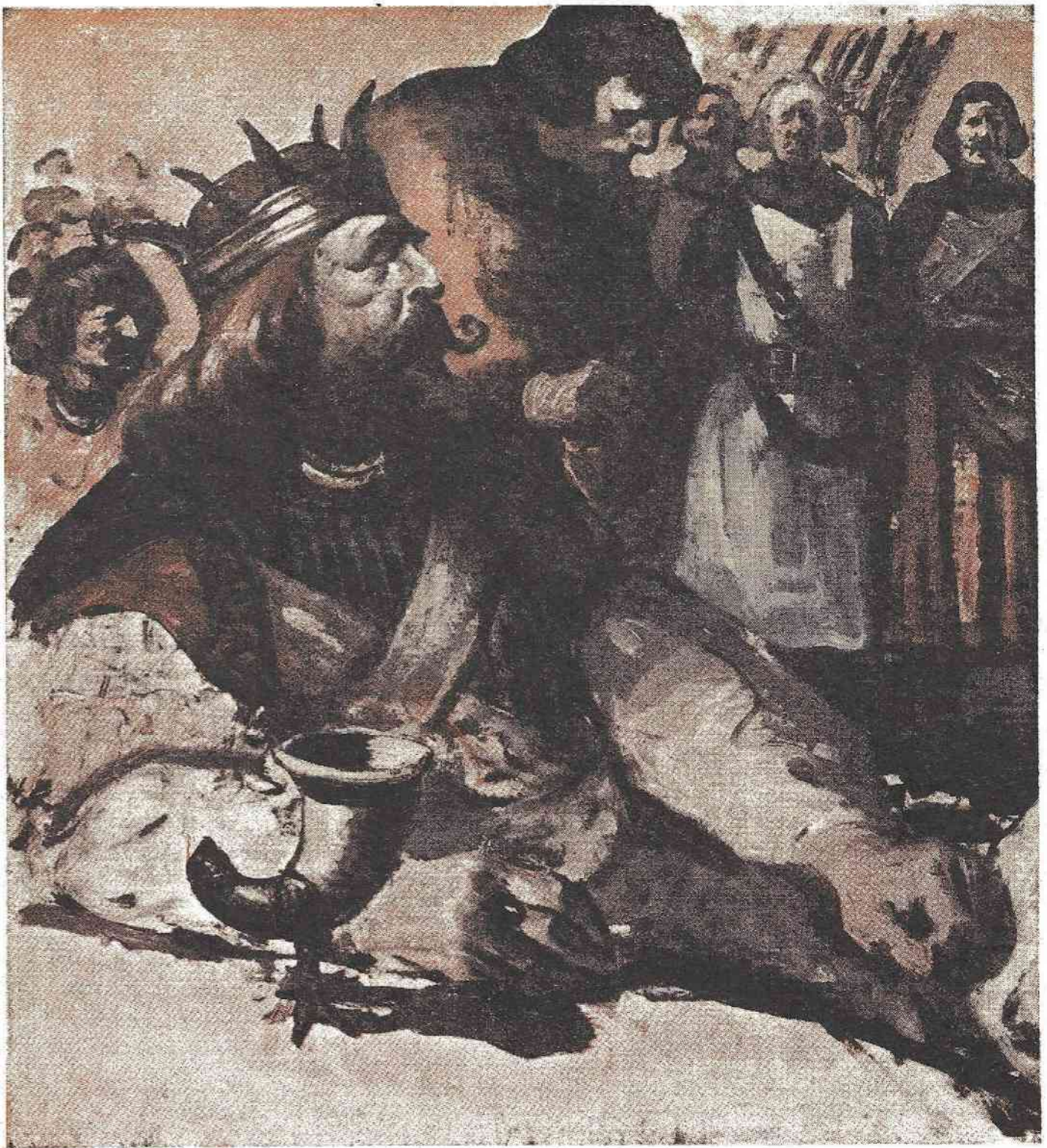
"But I promise there shall be no shrewd nor unreasonable asking," the other continued, "but only of such favors as may be granted easily in royal charity and knightly honor."

"Fair enough," said the King. "Name them."

"First, Your Grace, I humbly crave of your bounty sufficient meat and drink daily for my needs throughout the coming year."

"Granted. Any lost dog is welcome to as much. What next, young man? Speak up now and ask for something worthy a Christian prince's bestowal."

The stranger thanked the King warmly, then humbly begged to be excused from making further requests until another Whit Sunday a year hence.



whom you once exercised your spleen in the bestowal of a name. You dubbed that one 'La Cote Mal Taile,' because he was rustically attired and you believed him poor and friendless. And who did he turn out to be but an honest gentleman's seventh son, who is now Sir Brewnor of the Round Table, and would as lief demean his quality by tilting at the chief cook in a contest of skewers as by breaking a spear on the chief seneschal."

That was a nasty dose for the important foster-brother of King Arthur to

swallow, but he downed it in two wry-faced gulps, for Sir Dinadan, though young and even a better poet than a knight-at-arms, was no pushover.

So Sir Kay went about his business of stewardship, which was safer than disputing a question of chivalrous behavior with such forthright and heavy-handed arguers as Sir Launcelot and Sir Dinadan.

Now these two knights and several others would have welcomed Beau-mains to their own tables and society, like a young kinsman or friend, but

"Sir, with God's help and your permission I shall prove a match for the ruffian Red Boar."

he refused their courtesy with the same meekness as he accepted the discourtesies of Sir Kay. And thus he served out that humiliating apprenticeship a full twelvemonth.

So the Feast of Whitsuntide came again, and with it as many of the Knights of the Round Table as could keep the rendezvous, and again King



Arthur refused to go into the dining-hall without a promise, or at least a hint, of some imminent marvel or adventure. But the delay was short, for the word came soon of the arrival of a damosel urgently demanding audience with the King. So Arthur and all the knightly company entered the Hall of the Round Table and took their appointed seats; and then the damosel was brought before the King, with due ceremony, and a little gilt chair was brought to her, upon which she sat with a high air.

"Now what is your petition, young lady?" the King asked kindly.

"I am here in behalf of a noble dame who is so besieged by a vile tyrant that she cannot win forth from her castle but in peril of her life or her honor; and because it is known that many of the best knights of the world are with you, I have come a long and hazardous way to pray Your Grace to deliver this noble lady from this ignoble duress," said the damosel, but with a voice and an air more suggestive of a demand than a petition.

But she was as comely a damosel, and as richly bedight, as any at any court in Christendom; so Arthur, being only human, refrained from telling her to mind her manners. Instead, he requested the noble lady's name and that of her besieger, but in a somewhat constrained tone of voice.

"My lady's name you shall not know at this time, but as for her tormentor, he is called the Red Boar," replied the damosel.

"Just so," said Arthur, glancing to his right and left. "The Red Boar? Never heard of him. But he sounds a common scurvy fellow to me. And to say sooth, this whole affair rings shrewdly and uncouthly in my ears, and saucily too; and I tell you honestly, young lady, that were I a private knight instead of a responsible king I'd liefer seek honor championing the League of Swineherds against the Guild of Charcoal Burners than in this ambiguous knightly adventure of yours."

"Do I hear aright?" cried the damosel, in a high voice and with a red face. "Is this the vaunted chivalry of King Arthur and his fellowship of the Round Table?"

And she shot a defiant and scornful glance at the King, who avoided it, then around at the knights who, taking their cue from their liege lord, followed his example of detachment. Even Sir Dinadan, though again in need of a profitable adventure, sat mum.

"Fie upon you, one and all!" she cried. "And you call this table of yours the seat and center of chivalry! Bah and pah to you! I've seen your equals in valor and courtesy—and belike your betters—chomping bacon and guzzling cider round the buttery hatches of beggar-beset monasteries!"

THE shocked stillness and silence which followed upon that tirade was broken by a disturbance at the door which drew all eyes, including the King's; and all saw the youth surnamed Beaumains pushing to enter the hall and two porters pushing and whacking to keep him out.

"What now?" cried Arthur, grateful for a diversion. "It is our petitioner of a year ago. Admit him, varlets!"

But Beaumains was already in, having cracked the porters' heads together, and was kneeling, cap in hand.

"Sir, grant me speech now!" he cried eagerly.

"Right civilly asked," said Arthur. "Speak, young man."

"Gramercy, Lord! 'Tis the full year now since Your Grace granted me one request and permission to make two more."

"I remember it well. What would you now?"

"What's that?" screamed Sir Brun. "Blubbery? You lie! You fear to meet me!"

"Sir, I would essay this adventure of the distressed lady and the Red Boar."

At this, some smiled and a few frowned, and Sir Kay whispered "Good riddance!" and the damosel cried in sneering derision that the poor oaf must be as mad as insolent, for the Red Boar was a match for fifty such base-born louts.

"Peace!" said Arthur to the damosel; and to Beaumains he said, in a different voice, "Think again, young man. Would you have me grant you certain death?"

Beaumains stood up then and said, earnestly yet humbly, "Sir, I have received nought but gracious favor at your hands, and so now pray your further kindness in all good faith. . . . Sir, that with God's help and your permission I shall prove a match for the ruffian Red Boar, I do not doubt."

Now Sir Kay leaned to the King and whispered, "The lout may be right, at that, for he has shown monstrous strength in the handling of caldrons in the kitchen, and he has been fed like a prize porker."

Arthur scratched an ear reflectively. "Be it on your own head then," he said. "The adventure is yours, my young friend. And so I must find you arms and a horse."

"Gramercy, generous prince!" cried Beaumains joyously. "But as to arms and horse, these are in the forecourt even now—my humble thanks to Your Grace just the same. I saw them from a window."

At that moment a squire came in and announced a dwarf on a horse much too big for him, and another great charger hung all about with arms and armor, at the front door. At that, Arthur and most of the knights present quit their seats and hastened from the Hall of the Round Table to see this marvel at first hand; and in the consequent jostle, Sir Launcelot and Sir Kay were jammed cheek by jowl.

"What of your base-born scullion now?" asked Launcelot, in a soft voice but with a hard elbow in the seneschal's ribs.

"That was my little joke," gasped Sir Kay. "I knew it all the while—or why did I recommend him for this adventure? If you doubt it, ask the King."

Every champion present was eager to take part in the buckling and latching of Beaumains into his bright harness, which was of as fine plate and chain as any they had ever seen; but in this case, what with arguments and



the snatching back and forth of this piece and that, many hands made heavy work. But Beaumains was all rightly and tightly harnessed at last, and up in his high saddle, with a great shield before him and a great spear in his right hand. And so he and his dwarf rode forth and over the drawbridge.

In the meantime, the damosel had ridden off on her jennet. But the dwarf had observed her going and what way she went; and so he followed, and Beaumains with him. And Arthur and his noble company returned to their dinner; and on the way between courtyard and hall, the King exclaimed, "But what of his third request? He must have forgotten it in the excitement."

"Yes, Sire," said Dinadan, who happened to be at the royal elbow. "And

by your leave, I will follow him and learn it of him."

"Well thought on," said Arthur. "And I should like to hear also how he fares with that saucy damosel and the outcome of his encounter with the Red Boar."

So Dinadan withdrew on an empty stomach and, as soon as might be, took the road in pursuit of Beaumains and the dwarf, even as they pursued the damosel.

The damosel went a league swiftly, then another at a softer pace, and thereafter let her jennet amble or even stop now and then to pluck a tidbit of tender herbage.

"He will overtake me at his peril," she said. "I'll put him in his place, the froward varlet!"

It was midafternoon when Beaumains and all his weight of horses and



iron came heavily abreast of the jennet, with a thumping of great hoofs and a clanking of arms, and saluted the damosel with a toss of his spear.

"Who is this?" she cried in mock surprise.

"Your appointed champion, fair damosel, at your service—to the death even," replied Beaumains, stammering in his eagerness.

"Champion?" she jeered. "Fie upon you, fellow! D'y'e think I have no eyes and cannot see your greasy kitchen rags behind that false show of steel? And to the death, d'y'e say? You may die in the service you were born to, at the hands of a master-cook or mayhap of tumbling into a caldron of soup, but never will you die like a gentleman nor in my service; and were I bigger, I'd whip you for your insolence."

He said nothing to that, but only showed abashed eyes and a red face in his open helmet.

"Champion, quotha!" she railed on. "Back to your pots an' pans, rogue!—before some errant-knight happens by and drubs you with the flat of his sword, at my bidding."

"Nay, that I may not do, for I was given this adventure, and charged with it, by my liege-lord King Arthur!" he protested.

"Is it his adventure or mine then?" cried the damosel. "A fig for your liege lord! But since I must suffer your company until some happy chance rids me of it (I'm praying that you tumble from your unaccustomed seat and break your neck) ride at my other side, I beg you, for I've a nose as well as eyes and would as lief

have a kitchen midden as you 'twixt it and the wind."

So he drew rein till she had passed ahead, then rode up on her other side, and the dwarf with him.

"Fall back, scullion!" she cried. "Your place is twice the length of your spavined plowhorse behind me—but you'd be all the way back to where you started from if I had my wish, Heaven knows!"

Again Beaumains and his attendant checked their chargers and let the damosel pass ahead.

"Sir," said the dwarf, "I beg you to take the flat of your hand to her, for she is the veriest shrew I ever had the misfortune to meet, and but for fear of your displeasure I'd tell her so myself."

"Peace, good Gligger," said Beaumains.

"Peace? Dear sir, that's something we'll know little of in this company!"

"We must bear with it, however, in the way of duty," sighed Beaumains.

So they went forward another league without haste, and in silence save for the mutterings of the dwarf Gligger.

Anon, a shout in their rear caused all three to look back; and there was a full-armed knight on a tall dapple-gray approaching at a gallop that shook the ground; and he came to a jouncing stop only when he was fairly knee-to-knee with Beaumains.

"Well met, my young friend!" he cried. "The King sent me after you with a question."

Now Beaumains knew him by voice and shield for Sir Dinadan, and so replied warmly, "I am His Majesty's beholden humble servant, sir, and Your Honor's too. What is the question?"

"Why, my friend, you told the King you would ask three favors of him, one at that time a year ago and the others today. The first was for a year's board and bed, which was granted and has been honestly discharged; and the second was asked and granted this very day; but what of the third request? You rode off without naming it. Name it now, I pray you, that His Majesty's curiosity may be set at rest."

"The third request? It clean slipt my mind. . . . It is important, too, by my halidom! But in the excitement of arming and spurring on this adventure my wits flew away in every direction like a covey of partridges."

"I can understand that, my friend," said Dinadan kindly, with a shoot of an eye at the damosel, who had urged her jennet close to the war-horses and was listening with a glint in her fine eyes and a curl of soft bright lips that was more a sneer than a pout. "But name it even now, I beg you."



"That was my father," she said. "A false knight, forsworn and outlawed—leader of robbers and murderers."

"Why, sir, it was to have been for the company of a good knight to witness my behavior in this adventure, and possibly to dub me knight at the end of it, should I prove myself worthy of that high honor by overcoming all obstacles in the achievement of it."

"Fair enough! King Arthur would grant you that reasonable request blithely, I doubt not. What knight had you in mind to observe and pass judgment on you?"

"Why, sir, any one of the first fifteen would have contented me: but now, alas, 'tis too late to obtain the King's consent," sighed Beaumains.

"Not so fast!" exclaimed Dinadan. "Of the first fifteen, d'ye say? Why not seventeen? For the heralds have raised me from the nineteenth to the seventeenth place on their list in the past month."

"Seventeenth? They be fools then, or knaves; for of all the champions in this realm there be only ten too able for you with horse and spear, and no more than fifteen to match you afoot and slashing, mauger my head!" Beaumains protested, with spirit.

"D'ye tell me so?" cried Dinadan. "Gramercy! Gramercy! I fear you overrate my prowess; but I'll not dispute your rating, for by it I qualify to serve you: and as I am as sure of the King's approval as if I had heard him grant your third request, and in

the mood for a change of scene and occupation, I pray you to press forward to your adventure."

Beaumains was delighted, but not so the damosel.

"Do you call yourself a knight, yet pray to serve a scullion?" sneered the damosel.

"Even so," said Dinadan.

"Fie upon you then!" she railed. "You are a disgrace to your goldy spurs, else you would take this adventure of mine upon yourself and order this greasy lout back to the scouring of his skillet."

"Which God forbid!" cried the knight. "Never another damosel's adventure for me, can I avoid it with honor. I have risked limb and life for many damosels, only to be made a fool of in every case for my pains."

She looked him up and down and up again at that, and then straight in the eyes, and said coldly and with a horrid curl of her red lips, "That I can well believe."

"Even so," replied Dinadan, outwardly calm but sadly pricked in his vanity, "let me tell you, young lady, that never have I met with a damosel, nor any dame either, of so shrewish a tongue and such villainous manners as yourself."

At that, the damosel stared at him with round eyes and a round mouth while the color drained from her

cheeks and brow; then her eyes filled with tears and she set whip to her jennet and rode off at a gallop. Gligger, the dwarf, chuckled gleefully and doffed his cap to the knight, but Beaumains looked distressed.

"A dose of her own medicine," said Dinadan, but with a note of uncertainty in his voice and a flicker of it in his eyes. "But 'twill do her no harm, and mayhap some good even. Let us hope so, anyway."

Beaumains sighed and murmured, "It hurt her, I fear."

"God shield your tender heart!" laughed Gligger. "Hurt her, d'ye say? Ay, in her vanity, maybe. But the medicine I'd give her, were I bigger, and a cavalier instead of a humble servant, would hurt her more—and not in her vanity only!"

"Peace, good Gligger! And God defend us all from such humility as yours!" chided Beaumains.

So they pressed on after the damosel. The hoofprints of the jennet were plain enough on the soft earth and tender herbage of the forest track. And they soon came upon a wider track, and by sunset upon a wayside tavern; and there they drew rein and the taverner came out to them.

"Has a damosel passed this way?" asked Dinadan.

"Nay, she has not passed," said the taverner, in a low yet desperate voice.

"She is here, sir—here again, even as she was last night. Then she was for Camelot, to get Sir Launcelot or maybe King Arthur himself for a champion—and now she's back in a higher temper than before, and bids me look out for two rogues in stolen arms and an ugly jackanapes with a feather in his cap, and all up on stolen horses—craving Your Nobility's pardon! And she bids me refuse Your Honors the front door an' keep Your Lordships to the stables an' the scullery. God help me—for I can discern Your Worship's high stations at a glance, and the small master's gentility too—but so high and hot is her temper, I'd liefer cross King Arthur himself than her, as I hope for salvation!"

"I believe you, my good fellow," said Dinadan, and thereupon dismounted.

"Think nothing of it, good taverner," said Beaumains. "It is the damosel's humor. She plays a part, on a wager, that's all."

And he too got down from his high saddle.

"Then 'tis a pity her humor doesn't match her person," gibed the dwarf.

So they went to the stables, where they found the jennet in the best stall; but, with the help of a man in a sheepskin jerkin, they housed the three chargers well enough and watered and fed all four beasts, but without any help from the taverner, who had excused himself apologetically and hurried back to his post within easy earshot of the unpredictable demands of the damosel. Then Sir Dinadan and Beaumains got out of their harness. A wench brought them a great jack of ale, from which the knight drank first, Beaumains next, then Gligger and, last, the man in sheepskin all that remained. Then the taverner reappeared, carrying a lantern, and led them back across the yard to the scullery, walking softly and with finger on lip.

"She supped right yeomanly and now sleeps," he whispered.

So they entered the scullery, and from that stole on tiptoe to the kitchen, where the mistress and the wench went about the business of the hearth furtively and three or four children sat mum and motionless, all as if in terror of their lives. With whispers and guiding shoves, the three travelers were set at a narrow table and served each with a bowl of rich broth and a horn spoon.

"Not so loud, dear good lords!" beseeched the taverner fearfully. "Quieter splashing an' sucking, I humbly beg ye!"

The dwarf cast aside his spoon, lifted the bowl to his lips with both hands and gulped down the contents to the last drop; and all the others

could hear of the process was the convulsive laboring of his gullet. Dinadan and Beaumains made to follow his example—but the knight's esophagus proved unequal to it and he choked on a goblet of fat and might have strangled of it but for the mighty back-thumps dealt him by Beaumains. So Dinadan was saved, but at the price of peace; for the offending morsel was ejected with an explosion like the snort of a wild bull and the great bowl was knocked from his hands to shatter on the stone-flagged floor. The stunned silence which followed was almost instantly broken by indignant shrill screams from an inner room, ordering the taverner to clear his house of rogues and scullions on pain of having it pulled down about his ears.

"Now who would do that pulling for her?" jeered Gligger.

"Her father's archers," gibbered the taverner. "She's a duke's daughter. She told me so. Back to the stable, dear lords, or I'm utterly undone!"

THE three travelers returned to the stable; and in a little while they were served there with bread and bacon and more ale. And there they slept in their cloaks, on clean straw. They slept soundly. Dinadan was the first to wake; he sat up instantly and looked about him sharply, like the good campaigner he was. He saw Beaumains and Gligger in the straw beside him, and his Garry and the other two chargers in their stalls. Then, at the sight of an empty stall, he leaped to his feet with a shout. His companions sprang up, dazed but with knives in their hands.

"The jennet's gone—saddle and all!" he cried.

Beaumains uttered a stricken moan, but Gligger grinned and sheathed his knife. Now the taverner came cringing in at the open door.

"Lords, dear lords, be merciful!" he whined. "The lady would have it so, and I be a poor man with but the one life—not a noble knight an' adventurous—an' a poor wife an' five poor children. And she left a script for Your Nobilities."

He extended a scrap of parchment, which Dinadan snatched and from which he read aloud, but haltingly, for it was unclarkly penned, as follows:

"Fools dont ye know when ye be not wanted. I dont need yer company nor like it God wot. Go seek sum Damosel in sorer stress than Me an of stronger stummick. If ye be good knights or only honest simple men let be I pray ye in Christ Hys name for I crave a Champion no more than a beard. Follow me not."

Dinadan repeated it, then asked, "What d'ye make of it?"

The taverner wagged his head and knocked on it with a knuckle. Beaumains sighed. Only Gligger found his tongue.

"She'd liefer our room than our company, seemingly," he said, and took the script from the knight's hand and bent his brows upon it. "Here she says we're not wanted nor loved—which I've suspected from the first. She charges us to let be, for she desires a champion no more than a beard on her chin. Is she mad then? Nay, like a fox! If she has no need of a champion, why did she come bawling to King Arthur demanding the best knight in the world to rid a castle of a red boar?"

BEAUMAINS shook his head, and sighed. "Nay, methinks she plays a part."

"Ha—a part?" exclaimed Dinadan. "Maybe you have something there. A part, quotha! Play-acting! She requests a champion, but belike against her will, so she asks in so villainous a voice and manner that Arthur and all his knights are offended and only you, my friend—a youth unknown and unarmed—accepts her adventure; and she flees away even from you. She does not desire a champion, that's certain!"

"Nay, sir, she prayed you to drive me off and take the adventure upon yourself," Beaumains protested.

"Ha, so she did! But come to think of it, that's no proof she truly craves a champion. She was for choosing the lesser of two inconveniences then—the would-be champion she could most easily rid herself of at pleasure—and so chose me."

"But why, sir? She knows you for a proven knight."

"The terrible intuition of her kind. She had but to look in my eyes to know me for fair game, even as every other damosel I've ever had ado with has known and proved me to be. But this one will find herself mistaken, mauger my head! We shall follow her and solve the mystery, but softly and secretly."

So they baited the horses, broke their fast hastily with cold victuals and drink, armed and saddled and then went after the damosel as fast as they could follow the jennet's tracks, which were plain enough in the soft ground. After riding an hour and more at a round pace, they issued from the forest into the valley of a little river; and here were meadows level though narrow, and a stone bridge of two arches, and a big knight on a big horse at the hither end of the bridge. So they rode his way softly, but were no nearer than five lengths of a horse of him when he laid his spear in rest and bade them halt; whereupon they drew rein.



"Why kneel you there?" she cried. "D'ye think I'll dub you knight?"

"Sir, did you see a damosel on a white jennet pass this way?" inquired Dinadan, politely.

"I did, and spoke with her too," answered the stranger in a jeering voice. And then he asked, and even more jeeringly, "Which one of you is the scullion?"

"I am the one she dubs scullion," said Beaumains. "Why do you ask, sir?"

"That you will be glad to hear, for she bade me spare the poor pot-wal-loper."

"That you may not do, sir, if you be an honest cavalier, for this adventure is mine, of King Arthur's granting."

"Fiddle-de-dee, knave! Not for your Arthur nor any other prince does Sir Brun of the Bridge have ado with low fellows, save with stick or whip or the toe of his boot."

At that, Dinadan whispered aside to Beaumains: "Are you a match for him, lad—on your word of honor?"

"Ay, sir, horse or afoot, by my halidom!" Beaumains whispered back.

"So be it," said Dinadan; and he turned back to Sir Brun and said: "This gentleman is of high blood and great prowess at arms, and he has passed a year in King Arthur's scullery on a wager, and has taken on that damosel's adventure on a wager also, and is now impatient to deal with you and get forward to something nearer his match than a blubbery rustic bridgekeeper."

"What's that?" screamed Sir Brun. "Blubbery? You lie! You fear to meet me yourself!"

Dinadan sighed and said to Beaumains, "You see how it is, lad. I have no choice in the matter. But the next shall be yours, I promise."

And he laid his spear and dressed his shield and rode at Sir Brun, who was already in motion to meet him: but the ride was so short that there was not enough force in the clash to break either spear or jounce either knight in his saddle. Then Dinadan loosed his spear and let it go and so came pushing knee to knee with his antagonist; he leaned and gripped him by the top of the casque with his right hand and spoke a quick word, whereupon his dapple-gray Garry swung and backed with a skip and a twist, and Sir Brun came out of his saddle like a hooked carp out of a pond and thudded to earth. Dinadan followed and set a mailed foot on Sir Brun's breastplate quicker than the telling.

The bridgekeeper begged for mercy with what breath was left in him after that thump.

"Take my arms and horse—but spare my life!"

So Dinadan and Gligger disarmed him from top to toe, and hung all the pieces, along with his sword and spear and shield, to the saddle of his big horse; then the three went their way, leaving Sir Brun in a low state of mind and little else.

"Sir, that was something I have never seen done before," said Beaumains, in an awed voice.

"What was that?" asked Dinadan. "Your method of unhorsing that big knight, sir."

"Oh, that! Effective, I grant you, but not quite the sort of feat of arms for commemoration in song and story. A trick, in fact; and to succeed in it your horse must be as tricky as you. But it has saved both Garry and me from a lot of unnecessary effort and bumps and slashes."

At noon they came up with the damosel, where she sat on a mossy stone with a plum-tart in her hand and a little basket of more such kick-shaws on her knee. At sight of them, she sprang to her feet with an inarticulate cry, overturning the basket.

"Sorry to upset you," said Dinadan smoothly, with a glance at the spilled pastries. "We received your penned admonitions and charges, but ventured to follow our line of duty nevertheless."

She cried "God defend me!" And then, "How did you cross the river?"

"Even by the bridge," said Dinadan; and with a gesture he called her attention to the fourth charger and its burden of arms and harness, which she had overlooked in her excitement.

She looked and understood.

"Oh! The rogue!" she gasped.

"The big vile braggart! He swore that Launcelot nor Tristram was no match for him; and he would stop you for a month, or forever if you pressed him; and as for the scullion and the manikin, he would chase them halfway back to Camelot. So I gave him a purse of gold—the villainous fat liar!"

"So?" queried the knight, slanting an eye at the dwarf.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Gligger. "I slipt it into my wallet for safe-keeping, sir, and it clean slipt my mind."

"You should have mentioned it," reproved Dinadan mildly. "Had I known of a full purse, I'd have left the rogue his horse and arms. But no, on second thoughts, you did well, my boy! Now return the purse to the damosel; and let us hope this will show her the unwisdom of paying in advance for that sort of service."

THE dwarf got down from his high horse, pulled the fat purse from his wallet and, louting and smirking innocently, proffered it to the damosel.

"Nay, not that!" she cried and struck it from his fingers, then clapt both hands to her face and wept and sobbed.

So Dinadan and Beaumains dismounted, the knight muttering the while, but Beaumains hardly breathing; and when Dinadan stooped to pick up and pouch the purse, Beaumains went near to the weeping damosel and down on one iron knee before her.

"I'll act as Your Ladyship's treasurer," said Sir Dinadan.

She heeded him not, though her sobs subsided, but turned a disdainful glance upon Beaumains.

"Why kneel you there?" she cried. "D'ye think I'll dub you knight? Out upon you for a fool!"

"I kneel to beg a boon of you," he answered humbly. "I pray you to charge your hirelings to set upon me instead of upon Sir Dinadan in future, for how else am I to perform a feat of arms for his judgment?"

"To horse! Here's treachery!" screamed Gligger, climbing to his own high saddle even as he screamed.

"An ambush!" bawled Dinadan; and he was no more than up and spear in hand when three knights came hurtling from cover and at him, and two more close on their heels.

First, he picked the nearest of the leading three out of the saddle like a wrinkle out of its shell; then, discarding his spear, he crowded in between the remaining two of the van and knocked on their helmets with a short war-hammer that was his favorite weapon for mounted in-fighting. He drew his sword then, ready to apply other tactics to his next opponent or opponents. But now there were none; the remaining two lay sodded.

"Sir, you left but two for me," complained Beaumains, who stood nearby on his own feet, leaning lightly on his sword.

"Your own fault, my dear lad," said Dinadan, in a voice of mild reproof. "If you hadn't been down on your knees you'd been the sooner mounted and spurring."

"I admit that, Sir Dinadan. The fact is, I hadn't time to mount, let alone to spur."

"Not mounted, d'ye say? And yet you brought 'em both to earth! How did you do it? For no proved champion could do better, by my halidom!"

"Why, sir, I slashed an' grabbed an' pulled an' slashed again to right an' left, for all I was able."

"Able enough!" cried Dinadan, dropping his sword and dismounting, and embracing Beaumains with a clanging of breastplates. "I'll bestow the accolade even now, and right gladly; then back to Camelot to show your goldy spurs and change our winnings—four horses and sets of arms are mine and two are yours, but I'll call it fifty-fifty—for coin of the realm, before that deadly damosel leads us into another and fatal trap."

"Gramercy, sir," said Beaumains; and he sank to one knee and bowed his plumed head.

Then Sir Dinadan took Beaumains' own sword and struck him on the left shoulder, and the right, and the left again with the flat of it, and chanted in a reverent voice, "In the names of the Holy Trinity I do hereby dub you knight. Arise, Sir—Sir—"

"Gareth," murmured Beaumains.

"Gareth, d'ye say?"

"Gareth of Orkney, sir."

"Arise, Sir Gareth!"

And the new knight obeyed, and thanked Dinadan again, and glanced about him.

"I know the King of Orkney," said Dinadan. "That's to say, I've met him three times, in the very best company—at royal joustings, in fact—for two tumbles and one draw. Truly, a doughty jousting."

Gareth murmured modestly, "My own father, sir."

"Hal" cried Dinadan. "Will Kay have a red face when he hears that!"

"Where is the damosel?" asked Gareth.

"Sir, at the first clash she went headfirst into that thicket, like a fox to earth," said Gligger, pointing a finger. "But here she comes out," he added.

THE damosel issued from the tangled hawthorns on her hands and knees. Her tall headdress now was crooked, her tear-smudged face was scratched and her fine gown was ripped and bedraggled. Still on all-fours, she stared blankly at the two knights and then around at the five motionless figures on the greensward.

"All sped," said Dinadan harshly.

"Dead?" she gasped incredulously.

The knights exchanged significant glances.

"It was not an occasion for chivalrous courtesies," said Dinadan sternly.

She stood up then and pointed a trembling finger at the most richly armed of the corpses.

"That was my father," she said; and though her voice was low and clear it chilled her hearers to the marrow. "A false knight, forsworn and outlawed—leader of robbers and murderers. He sent me to bring some great and rich knight of King Arthur's court to him—Arthur himself even, or else Lancelot or Tristram or Lamorak or another of great fame and wealth—to be held for ransom. He forced me to swear on my dead mother's rosary to make my plea to Arthur, and to bring the victim to the trysting-place, mauler my immortal soul! I made my plea, but in so unmannerly a fashion that no great champion, but only this youth, would undertake my adventure. And then you came, and would not stop or be driven off—neither of you. So I gave all my gold to the great braggart at the bridge to stop you both: for without any champion, I'd be free of my vow to keep that tryst. He didn't stop you. But I would have turned you somehow—even warned you at the price of eternal damnation—but they shifted the ambush full two leagues this side of the trysting-place."

And then she laughed; and the two knights stared at her in amazement and even Gligger looked dazed. And her laughter grew higher and wilder, and she pointed again and screamed exultantly, "And look at them now!" Then she swayed and fell and lay twitching.

The knights brought her out of that fit, or swoon, or whatever it was, with splashes of cold water from a near-by spring and sips of liquor from a leather bottle. She sat up at last, a pitiful figure, and hid her face with her hands.

"An astounding tale, if true," said Dinadan. "I am inclined to believe it, and doubtless Sir Gareth is too, but we must take you back to King Arthur, that he may hear it from your own lips."

She bowed her head yet lower in meek acquiescence. Then he took the purse of gold from his wallet and gave it to Sir Gareth.

"It is your adventure," he said. "I'm but an onlooker."

So Gareth helped the bedraggled damosel to her feet, and to where her jennet stood patiently, and up into the saddle. She looked down at him and whispered, "Will the King punish me?"

"Nay, for what?" he answered. "He is a just but merciful prince. At the very worst, he may place you in a convent, for the good of your immortal soul."

"Shall I need money in a convent?" she whispered.

"Nay, you would lack nothing. But you have money. Here, take back your purse now, for fear I might lose it on the way."

DINADAN then called Gareth for help in rounding up the newly acquired horses from the surrounding thickets. The knights and Gligger worked afoot, and the knights right heavily and hotly in their suits of mail; but the task was accomplished at last.

"We'll leave the five dead rogues as they are," said Dinadan. "We have enough hardware now without adding that junk to it. But the damosel! Where is she?"

She wasn't there: neither she nor the jennet. They shouted, but got no answer. They shouted again and yet again, but all to no purpose.

"Stolen away," said Dinadan. "A guilty conscience, I fear. Ay, guilty indeed—to go without her purse!"

"She—had her purse," stammered Gareth. "I—she—I didn't think she'd run away."

Dinadan smiled cynically, but his hand on the new knight's shoulder was kind.

"Live and learn, dear lad," he said. "Even I am still learning!"

Fishing, with Music

Izaak Walton would probably turn over in his grave at the idea—but this kind of fishing is fun too.

by ARTHUR CARHART

ASINGING breeze romped through royal palm fronds, creating a sound like applause from gloved hands. Wind tickled the surface of the Panuco River until little waves danced. Under the palms the Mexican band struck up the national anthem. The

honor guard saluted. Mexicans, Colombians, Cubans, Britishers and those from the States snapped to attention. The red, white and green of the Mexican flag rose to the top of the flagpole.

The band concluded the Mexican hymn and whipped into "The Star Spangled Banner." Then, in the pause that followed, the Captain of the Port, clad in crisp white uniform, stepped forward and raised his hand. He represented Lic. Miguel Aleman, president of Mexico.

"I now declare," he said solemnly, "that the Ninth International Tampico Tarpon Rodeo is opened."

Confusion broke.

Fishermen raced to the tangle of river craft moored at the docks of Las Palmas, headquarters of the fishing tourney. The band jumped into a galloping Mexican march.

Brightly garbed ladies waved encouragement to contestants as spinning propellers kicked boats away from the dock. Drumming motors

partially drowned shouts, laughter and the brassy voices of the band. A lattice-work of foamy, wedge-shaped wakes spread over the river as entrants in the rodeo raced toward favored fishing spots.

For three days there would be intense fishing on the Panuco, angling garnished with laughter, fellowship and music. . . .

The bougainvillea and hibiscus blooms were splashes of intense color in cloistered patios and beside thatched houses in the spring of 1942 when the first international fishing contest opened at Tampico. Credit for that beginning belongs to two ladies: Señora Maria Bueron de Barcena and Señorita Angelita Borrado. Sportsmen of the city had asked them to look after correspondence and details preliminary to the contest. This first of five major angling events now held off Mexico's coast had a modest beginning. At the last moment, there was some question of whether the event should even be held.

"We're going through with this," declared Señora Barcena. "There are fifteen from the United States ready to enter, and we Mexicans can fish too."

"How do we go about it?" The Mexican sportsmen were willing, but this was uncharted territory.

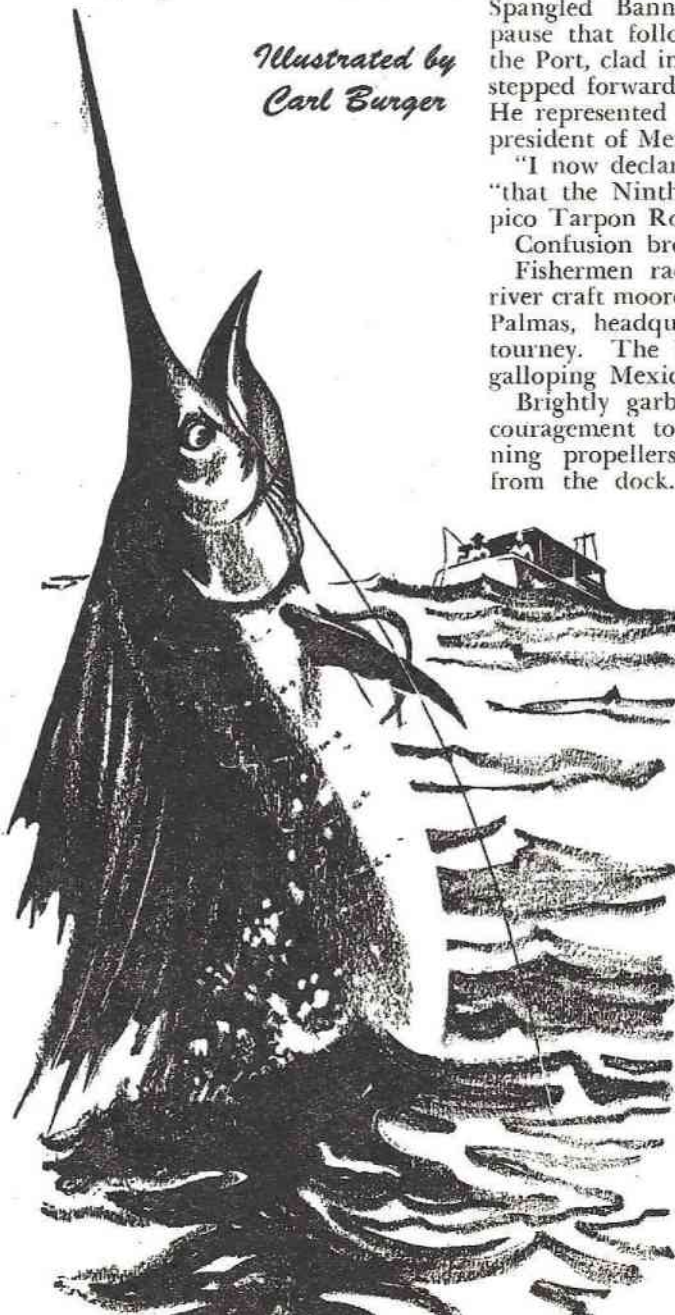
LEROY H. DORSEY of Chicago was in Tampico. He had been fishing there for tarpon for several seasons; maybe he would assist.

"Surely; I'll help," said Dorsey. "Allen Wright will lend a hand. So will the others from the States."

They needed prizes. *El Mundo*, the newspaper, supplied one trophy. The Mercantile Bank, two leading hotels and the Club Corona provided other prizes. It was a meager prize list compared to later awards but the main goal was the sport, anyway.

An old pine table placed under a tarpaulin spread between poles near famous Tarpon Bend, became "headquarters." The secretary, Señor Bar-

*Illustrated by
Carl Burger*



SAILFISH



renechea, sat on a wooden packing crate as fifteen anglers from the States, ten from Mexico, signed up for the contest.

"There should be some sort of official opening to this affair," declared Captain Joaquín Cicero of the Mexican Army. He was on the committee and sensed the need of fitting ceremony. "Let's at least raise the flag."

"No flagpole," countered Fred Armstrong, acting as an honorary chairman along with Señor Lic. Luis Carrera Alomía.

Manuel Guzman Willis, presiding judge, now Mayor of Tampico, supplied the answer to that problem. He had lengths of three-inch pipe at his highway construction camp a few miles away. The pipe was trucked to Tarpon Bend, rigged, planted, and the flag was raised with gusto and proper form.

THE first big tarpon was being dragged up the river bank for weighing and registering, when Rudolpho Peralta, general chairman, collided with another problem. No scales!

A truck ran to Tampico; a co-operating butcher loaned a set of scales; and as the big fish were weighed, Joaquín Cicero, weighmaster

of that first tournament, called the tally to where it was entered on sheets of paper spread on the pine table. The largest of all, the winner, was brought in by Ray Jones of San Antonio, Texas.

Now Tampico's tarpon rodeo has a permanent headquarters at Las Palmas, with a white building snug-gled under the palms, river docks, big scales and weighing platform. Club de Regatas Corona, a member of the International Game Fish Association, sponsors the tourney. With all the music, the excitement, the laughter and fierce-but-friendly competition, the program now runs as smooth as whipping cream.

The opening event is the "get-acquainted" dinner. There are short speeches of welcome, brief responses from visitors. The food is typically Mexican. It is served with the rich garnishment of music. A marimba band thumps tropical rhythms. A swirl of dancers spin in the open space between tables. A second orchestra, playing violins and guitars, moves in, plays, sings, and a sultry-voiced girl steps into the spotlight to pick up a haunting melody.

At Las Palmas the next morning, after the fishermen have raced up or

down river, there is a lull. The gallery loaf in the shade. At noon, some boats return. There is a café in the headquarters building, and there is angler chat around the tables. Or hampers filled with picnic food are opened. Then the excitement begins to build as lucky anglers return.

As catches are registered, the score is chalked up on a big board beside the scales. The crowd around the board thickens. It is not unlike those watching a score-board reporting of an important ball game.

Before the first rodeo, many Mexicans never had fished with rod and reel. They had used stout hand lines. The rodeos introduced them to the sporting type of angling.

The Mexicans have taken to sport fishing with all their keen appreciation of contest, what is right in form, in tradition, in ethics. International Game Fish Association rules govern; some special, even more exacting rules to meet local conditions have been added. A contestant who fudges ever so slightly, disregards those rules, still will receive all courtesy, but he may be disqualified, and just a bit of an outsider among fellow sportsmen.

The 1950 entry list at Tampico totaled 328. By a fair margin, with 185

registered, the United States had the most representatives. Others entered were representing Colombia, Cuba, and England, with six Mexican states and the District Federal showing entrants.

It was thought the group from Colombia had traveled the greatest distance to the event. A check-up showed that Mr. and Mrs. Albert Little from Fall River, Massachusetts, held that honor.

The Mexican anglers almost swept the tourney. Hurculano Piñero of San Luis Potosí won the President's Trophy, a beautiful heavy sterling silver platter. Piñero's tarpon measured 6 feet 7½ inches, was 36 inches in girth and weighed 148.2 pounds. Only two from the States were in the first ten among winners: Ruben W. Kaplan, Jr., from Owatonna, Minnesota, placed seventh; Bob Balsell, Brownsville, Texas, was tenth.

THE Tampico tournament closes with another fiesta, at the Club Corona. There is spicy Mexican food, a flood of chat and laughter tinged with touches of regret that this is the close of the meet, and there is dancing and music. As the prizes are awarded, the ever-present Mexican band beats out "applause music."

At all the rodeos there are these prizes. The most sought is the President's Trophy; the champion's award; always that heavy, beautifully worked, solid silver. There are other gorgeous silver pieces donated by federal, state and municipal officials, by individuals, by business firms. Parallel to these are prizes of finest fishing tackle, contributed by manufacturers in the States, in appreciation of the quality and spirit of these rodeos.

There are now five of these annual fishing events, always paced by music,

that are held off Mexico's coasts. The team-play that sparks them is by the Mexicans, but their coach in all cases has been Le Roy H. Dorsey.

As he watched the first fishing rodeo at Tampico, Dorsey saw something significant beyond the beginning of an outstanding sporting event. No barriers of boundary, national territory or distance persisted when anglers got together. A contractor from Tulsa and a businessman from Mexico City launched into angler talk as though they were neighbors in St. Louis. They traded lures, they compared reels, they talked techniques of tarpon fishing. They might fish from the same boat. There was kinship between those fishermen as they threw all skill and effort into competition. They became friends.

Mexico's President, and other high officials, recognized the neighboring in those angling contests. When additional international fishing rodeos were organized at Acapulco, then at Veracruz, Mexico's President asked Dorsey to help launch these events. United States officials gave endorsement to the idea. Acapulco held its first tourney in 1944, Veracruz in 1947.

Three years ago Guaymas held its first rodeo; last year was the first rodeo at Mazatlan.

In recognition of aid given, Le Roy Dorsey occupies the unique position of being accredited honorary representative in the United States of the Federal Fishing Commission of the Navy Department of the Republic of Mexico. He is an honorary representative of the Mexican Federal Tourist Bureau; of the Minister of Interior of Mexico.

In December 1949, he was awarded the highest honor our sister republic can convey to a citizen of another country; the Aztec Eagle. It has been

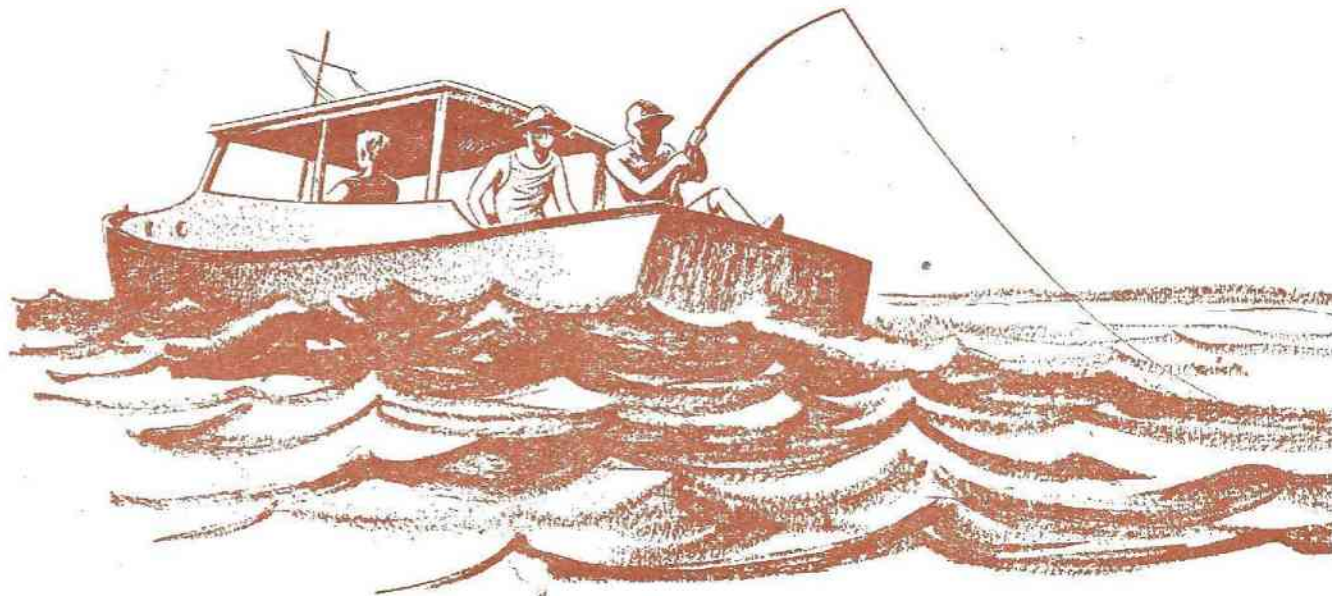
conferred on a limited number of persons. While this recognition was officially confirmed by an act of the Mexican Congress, it was the insistent requests of many citizens which led to this act of recognition.

All of the tourneys follow the general pattern of the Tampico Tarpon Rodeo. But each has its individual character—including the accompaniments of music.

As the boats return to the waterfront at Acapulco, swinging in across the azure bay from the "blue water" out in the Pacific, two or three bands vie in pouring out melody. A lithe girl, in typical native costume, whirls into an open space, stepping traditional cadences. A few moments later, in another costume, she is there again, performing another Mexican dance.

FISHING at Acapulco is for sailfish and marlin. The mad-bull strike of the tarpon is replaced by the gingerly approach of the wary sailfish. The first touch of the fish, sliding up to the bait with sail showing above the blue water, snaps tension into all on the boat. Then, when the real strike comes, the hook sets, there is explosion in the sea. The marine brute shears into the air, tail-walks, greyhounds, and finally, after long tiring moments, as the steady drag of line, rod and muscle brings the catch to the boat, the big fish digs deep. Sheer labor pumps the fish to where a boatman can grasp the long, needle-shaped bill and with the help of the gaff, if the fish is large enough to be registered, the catch is hoisted over the side.

The highlight of the 1950 rodeo at Acapulco was the victory of Vincente de Dominicus. The first day Vincente brought in a sailfish weighing 84



pounds; the second day his fish was 88½ pounds. The third day his catch pulled the beam down to 111 pounds. It was no fluke that he swept the tournament; he is a fisherman.

As the blaze of spotlights spread over the judges of the tournament, Pedro De Lille, top radio announcer of Mexico, called the champion's name. Vincente marched past the banquet tables. The marimba band beat out "applause music." A raffle of talk spread through the dusky roof-garden. Then handclapping broke in waves. Into the spotlight stepped a little, dark-eyed fellow, weighing less than any of the fishes he had caught, and his eager arms cradled the coveted prize, the President's Trophy.

Vincente, eleven-year-old schoolboy, had topped the tournament, outfishing over eighty adult anglers, old hands at salt-water fishing.

At Veracruz another record was chalked up. On the last day, almost in the last moments for registry, Dr. Alfredo Lenz del Rio brought in a tarpon 7 feet, 4 inches long, weighing 187 pounds; a tourney record.

There are prizes for the fishermen too. The 1950 lady champion at Tampico was Mrs. Joe Stead of that city. At Acapulco, Doris Trader of Elizabeth, Illinois, took top honors. Señora Anna Ma. B. de Araujo boated a 6-foot, 2-inch, 112-pound tarpon to win at Veracruz. And at Mazatlan, Miss Sarah Bright of Greenville, Indiana, was lady champ, as she has been at a number of these international meets.

Other classes in which prizes are awarded include one for juvenile fishermen and there are divisions by the rating of tackle used; for the heavier 24-thread, for the 18-thread line, for the extremely light tackle of 12-line or 9-line class.

The Tampico rodeo is held near the first of April. The Acapulco tourney follows, about the middle of the month. The Veracruz event dates near May first. The newer rodeos, at Guaymas and Mazatlan, are in the autumn, staged early in September.

As a top-level sporting event, there are no others which combine more in the fierce contest and high sportsmanship than these international fishing rodeos. The winner has two opponents: One is the wild, lunging fish on the hook, the other the able anglers who are determined to land the biggest catch.

There is a lot of holidaying wrapped up in becoming a participant in one of these rodeos. There is that in any trip to Mexico; the fiesta and fishing of the rodeo are added interest and enjoyment. Always there is the chance that a lucky contestant may tote home one of those thick, heavy, sterling prizes or some of the fine tackle.

With the rate of exchange standing at over \$8.50 Mexican to one dollar U. S., the angler seeking something different, plus a colorful holiday, can join in the rodeos at little or no more cost than a trip to some less distant waters in the States.

Tampico is one long day, or an easy day and a half over paved roads from Laredo or Brownsville, Texas. The paved highway extends on to Mexico City, on through the vacation city of Cuernavaca, through quaint Taxco, to Acapulco and that superlative blue harbor in its circlet of brown hills. Or from Mexico City, a paved, scenic highway winds to the city of glistening pottery and ancient churches, Puebla. From there on to the smashing scenic climax of the "Orizaba Drop" where a safe but thrilling high-

way winds from uplands to tropical valleys below. A few miles more, and gardenia-garlanded Fortin is passed, and then the road levels to old Veracruz.

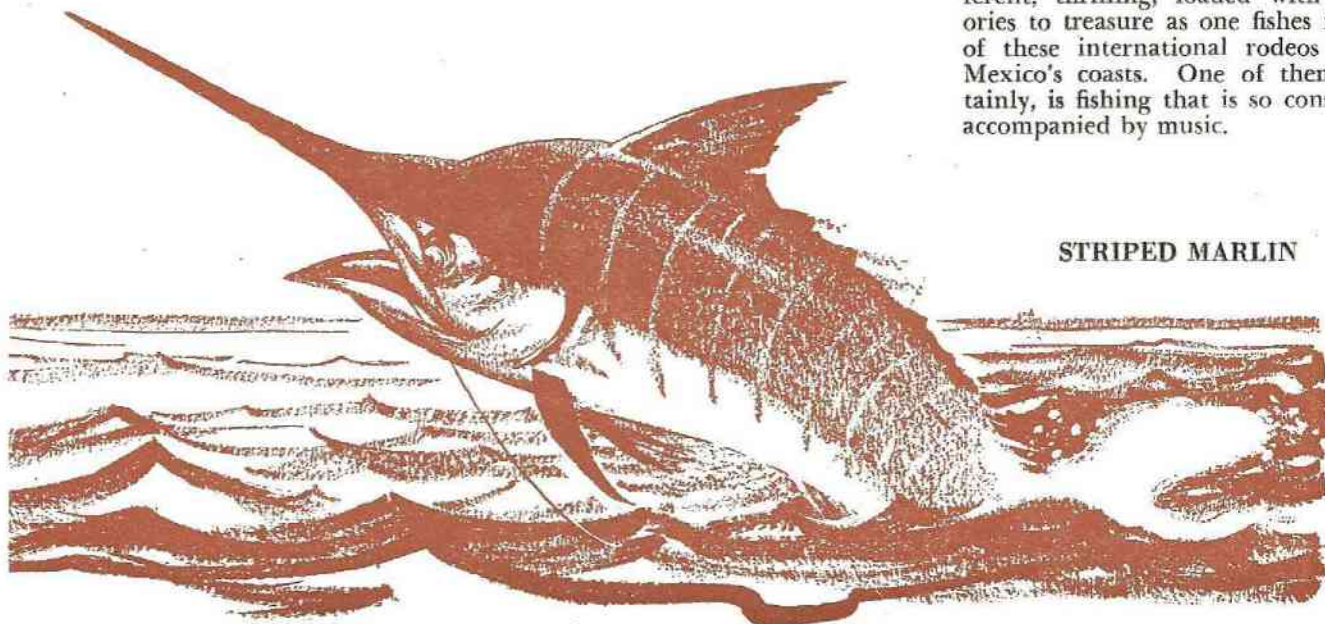
For those who must limit time, air service reaches all of these points. On the west coast the autumn rodeos are reached by highway through Nogales, Arizona, or by air.

Beyond the wealth of holidaying that may be gathered on any trip to Mexico, there are three additional types of memory treasure which one may bring-home from one of Mexico's international fishing rodeos. Certainly one is the fishing itself; the tense, tearing moments when tarpons leap, when sailfish or giant marlin thrash and battle. A hundred-pound sailfish, a tarpon fifty or more pounds heavier, the brutish bulk of a three-hundred-pound marlin on the line, never will be forgotten. Any such fish stands a chance of winning rich silver.

THEN there is a paramount quality of friendship that flows all through the meeting of anglers from far places. It is the compelling, dominant theme as sportsmen from Bogotá, Boston, Havana and all compass points, mingle with those from many states of Mexico. No pompous gathering of official nature can equal the chance for understanding, fellowship, deep friendships formed, that develops as fellow anglers fish together and vie in contest.

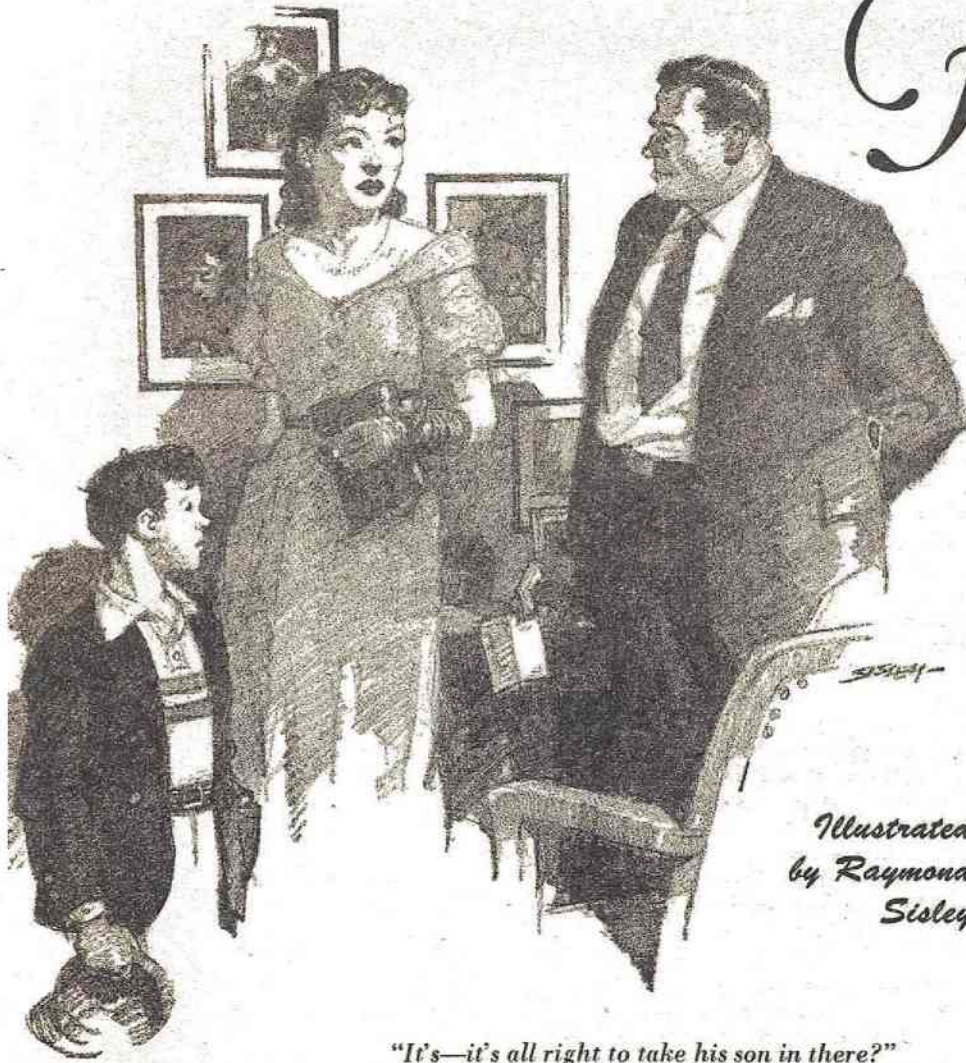
Finally, there is this: Probably, if you fish at all, you never have gone fishing with the high beat of pulse-drumming music giving you a send-off from the docks. Nor had your return greeted with the rhythm of a marimba band while a graceful girl spins in exciting native dances.

There are a number of things different, thrilling, loaded with memories to treasure as one fishes in one of these international rodeos along Mexico's coasts. One of them, certainly, is fishing that is so constantly accompanied by music.



STRIPED MARLIN

Fighter's



Illustrated
by Raymond
Sisley

"It's—it's all right to take his son in there?"

SHE had never missed a fight when it was possible to attend. Even when she had been carrying Buzzy, she had gone to see Matt beat Morgan for the championship; seven years ago, that was, seven long years, and a little over. He was strong and durable, she kept telling herself, hugging the soft mink about her, keeping her head high and proud for all to see. He was quick and strong and always in charge of the fight, moving gracefully, like a dancer.

The arc lights were harsh in her eyes. She always sat behind his corner, in the first row, and the lights fanned down strong upon her. This was the Garden; this was the fight with Firozza, who had met Matt before, and she never took her eyes from the action, from what she feared to see.

Firozza was young, and some day he might be very good. He kept coming in with an elusive, weaving style all his own. His fists seemed busier than upon the other occasions, and perhaps it was true that Firozza was ready, was a man to fear. He held his right

high, dropped a left fist against Matt's body, tried to get at close quarters.

Matt Gaffney, champion of all the light heavyweights, slid one foot, bent his rangy, lean body out of range. As Firozza pounded, Matt countered against his jaw, moved away, gliding in rhythm. Firozza plodded in, swinging, and an unexpectedly swift right clopped against Matt's jaw; a left connected again with Matt's ribs.

Matt moved easily, boxing. He seemed very slender, with sloping shoulders and no hips. His face was long and almost ascetic, and he wore few scars of the profession. Gray eyes were set wide apart, and he seemed always to smile a little as he fought.

Candide caught her breath a little at the look of him, the way he stood, head cocked, maneuvering his long left arm so that his glove caught Firozza's face and seemed to lead the shorter man about like a bull on a nose-ring. There were twenty seconds left in the eighth round, and Matt knew it and increased the pace with a veteran's skill, pouring it on, slam-

ming Firozza right and left with light but telling punches.

The bell rang, and Candide exhaled, feeling an ache in her lungs. Her hands were clammy against the fur. He was thirty-two years old, she repeated. He was the champion, but he was thirty-two. And he was her husband, that almost naked man in there with red gloves upon his hands, the hands which were tender and kind with her; he was the father of Buzzy, that nice kid. Firozza was young; the newcomer, Potty Potter, was a boy. Matt was thirty-two.

Sim Simeon, the foxlike long-time manager of Matt Gaffney, was leaning over, whispering in the champion's ear. Across the ring Firozza was fresh and eager, scowling at his inability to land a telling punch, but happy too, because he was doing better than on the previous occasions. Firozza was going ahead in his profession. Or, Candide thought again, was Matt going back, away back?

Potter, the sensation from California, was seated nearby. She heard his distinct, Western voice say: "I'll knock that old, tired champ into the Atlantic. Then I'll meet him in L.A. and knock him into the Pacific. Why don't he quit, the has-been?"

That was for the newspaper men; that was fight talk that she had heard since before her marriage to Matt. She had laughed at it many times. In the early days it had been fun, listening to such bravado and laughing at it. Matt had always taken care of the braggarts later on.

In the early days it had been wonderful. Matt was twenty-four and invincible in his class. The war had interrupted his career, but she had borne Buzzy as compensation for his absence, and that had been new and distracting; and then Matt was back, a champion, knocking off aspirants to his throne and collecting generous purses. They built the house in Bucks County, and Matt bought her the mink coat and some jewelry she didn't really want; and the years had run away; and now Buzzy was seven—and Matt was thirty-two.

The bell clamored for action. Candide, ring-wise, tensed her small, slim body again. She was smooth-skinned, with a tip-tilted nose and a distracting

Wife

Men, she thought, are foolish—and wonderful. Matt wouldn't let her worry about finances; he would just let her worry about his life, his reason, lest he be maimed!

by JOEL REEVE

mouth and brown hair beneath a *cloche* hat which perched in a manner to flatter her full, wide brow. She had married, against all advice, when she was eighteen. . . .

She concentrated her full attention upon Matt. He was walking about in that springy, confident manner of his, stabbing at Firozza's head. He seemed to move easily, without strain. He always was calm and unruffled, and few hard blows had ever reached him.

Then Firozza moved up the pace. The younger man was bulky, sturdy, quick. His style was slam-bang, but he was acquiring subtlety not apparent to the uninitiated. Candide gasped as red leather sank into Matt's middle, slashed at his head, driving him back as she had never seen him driven before.

Matt's elbows went in, his gloves came up. He moved crabwise, dancing, pirouetting. Firozza hit him on the jaw and almost dropped him in his own corner, directly above Candide. She came half off the chair, one hand going to her cheek.

Matt's gray eyes shifted to the clock above the ring. There were thirty seconds left in the ninth. He bounced off the ropes. Blood dripped from his nose, but he went in like a panther. The left fist straightened out in a slight variation of his previous jab. It became heavier and went against Firozza's chin. He shoved it back again, and again.

Firozza bobbed his head and tried to fight back. Matt clubbed him and hooked the left. Firozza went off balance. Candide sighed.

Matt was not a heavy puncher; he was a boxer. But when he had a man off balance, he knew what to do. Candide sat back. Matt hit Firozza on the jaw and knocked him flat.

The younger man rolled over, furious, more amazed than hurt, Candide thought grimly. He came to one knee and pondered, looking at his corner for advice. He took a nine count. . . . The round ended.

She could relax, for now, she knew. There was yet the tenth, but Matt had regained control of it. He had found enough in him to bully the challenger, to stay on top. He was good at that; it was his business.

Yet there was no peace in her. Even as the final round went on and Matt

continued to win, she sat brooding, knowing that at last she would have to speak. It had been brewing within her for a long time, and now it would have to come out.

It ended, and she heard Potter's voice: "Sure, Gaffney win. But didn't I kayo Firozza in four? I've got news for you boys: Gaffney's slowed to a walk. I'll get to him. And *I can hit.*"

A shiver went through the listening girl. The last assertion of the young fighter had not been bragging. It was a prideful statement by a youth who knew he spoke the truth. Potter was a hitter.

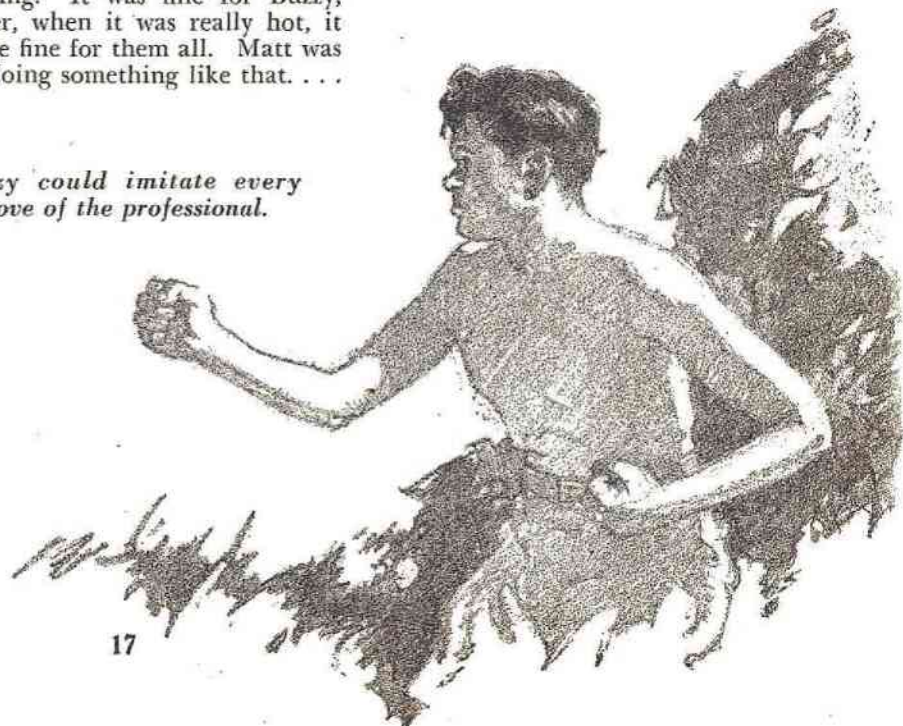
MATT said: "What a day this has been! You know something, baby? You know something wonderful? You're cute. You're cute as a bug's ear."

"Bugs don't have ears."

"That's how cute you are. Out of this world." He stretched his brown body on the inflated cushion and looked across the grass at the small swimming pool. It was early summer; the air was warm in Bucks County.

Buzzy came running, all legs and arms like a colt. He looked comically like his father, Candide thought, small and thin as he was. The pool was nothing elaborate; there was a brook, and Matt had trained for the Firozza fight by building the dam and pouring concrete, and hauling and lifting and hammering. It was fine for Buzzy, and later, when it was really hot, it would be fine for them all. Matt was always doing something like that. . . .

Buzzy could imitate every move of the professional.



Buzzy's gray eyes—Matt's eyes—were bright. He said: "Look. A frog."

"A toad," said Matt. "A small toad."

"A hop-frog," said Buzzy sturdily. "My hop-frog." He put the toad down and it leaped straight at Candide. She caught it and gently returned it to her son.

"Okay. Hop-frog," she said. "Play with it, but don't torture it. Be gentle, will you, Buzzy?"

"I like it," he announced and went trotting back to the pool.

Matt said: "That's my girl. Never afraid of anything. Not hop-frogs nor mice nor snakes."

"Only Potty Potter," she filled in.

The gray eyes clouded. He said: "I thought we were not going to discuss it. The fight is made, baby. Let's not talk about it."

She said: "While I have my strength, I'll ask you not to fight him. I saw Firozza get to you. Matt, I tell you I know. You've been the greatest. But time takes its toll. You haven't a mark now. This boy and others like him will mark you, hammer you until you— Matt, you've got to see it."

He said: "All day we didn't talk about it. Now you start."

It hurt her to see him unhappy, but she also sensed the deep stubbornness in him. His way was not to quarrel. She had made him fight her, not once but several times since the Firozza fight, and he hated it. He wanted

peace. He was the most agreeable of men, and one of the most rigid in his ways, she thought helplessly.

She had never seen him quite like this. There was something wrong, and he would not tell her. He had signed for the Potter fight, he was going through with it. That was against her wishes and he should have been contrite. But he was not. He was almost sullen in his defiance.

She said: "You won't discuss it. You're like a stranger, sometimes. Matt, I don't want you punchy. I want you as you are."

"I'm a prizefighter," he said suddenly. He arose and stared down at her tanned, shapely body. "I was a fighter when you married me. Until the end I will be a fighter."

"You can't mean that! You can retire undefeated—make some excuse—call off this bout—"

The sun dipped; it would go down in a moment. She called past her husband: "Buzzy! Time to come in now."

Matt turned from her, and she knew he was through talking. He went to meet the running boy. She watched them, the good, obedient child of whom she was so proud without adulation, and the tall, muscular father. Buzzy was grinning expectantly, showing the space where he had recently lost a tooth.

Matt said: "All right, champ. Let's see that hook."

The little boy fell into a practiced stance. She could smile then, watching this small replica of the father, this little boxing wizard who like a monkey could imitate every move of the professional, but who never fought with other little boys because it would not be fair—a thing she had inculcated in him with care. Buzzy went solemnly through the time-honored motions of shadow-boxing.

Matt said: "Shorten it a little. Swing your shoulders—get some power into it."

The fretfulness ran away, and Candide laughed: "You're no hooker yourself, Mister; face it!"

"No," said Matt. His voice was oddly quiet, and he did not look at her. "No. I never was. But I want him to be a hitter."

"A professional?"

"You know better. It's just good to be a hitter."

SHE hugged Buzzy, pointed him toward the house and sent him running. She straightened and said: "What is it, Matt? I won't quarrel with you any more. . . . What is it?"

"Nothing," he said. "I'm sold on that no-squabble deal." His smile was quick, warm as fresh toast. "You are cute, you know." He made a grab for her, and she sprinted away from him toward the house. He followed,

but he never caught her, just followed her closely. It was a game they played which always left her breathless, thinking: "This time he'll do it. This time. He'll grab me and—" She never finished the thought, because that would have spoiled the little game.

Later, putting Buzzy to sleep, she thought how good Matt had always been, how kind and generous. Good about the baby, good to her, good about money, always thoughtful, considerate of her desires. After eight years of marriage, she knew, with a sudden flush of feeling, she still loved him, as a man, as a sweetheart. He could render her breathless by merely chasing her, running easily behind her, never touching her. . . .

He had managed well, she thought, with everything. He had a factory in Newark where they manufactured gadgets. They had the house, two cars. Matt had a fair education and was an inveterate bookworm; he was not a common pugilist. She should be proud. Her own family no longer apologized for Matt Gaffney; he was a man.

There was something deep within him, she knew, something electric, compelling. Other women saw it at once; she was well aware of the Broadway cuties, the women of café society who looked upon him with quick approval, of his unfailing politeness to them all, his easy admiration of their beauty or cleverness; yet she believed him to be faithful. There was a steadiness in Matt.

It all made the thing worse, she walked silently in the dark nursery. Why couldn't he see it, see that he was treading a dangerous path? He knew about concussion, about deaths in the ring. Why did he deliberately walk into danger?

She heard a car and looked out of the window. It was Sim Simeon in his long low convertible, hauling a package, coming with his schemes and his palaver. She hated him.

The early twilight made a soft mystery of the pasture which sloped across an acre to the road. She sat very still, staring at nothing, knowing that she did not hate Sim Simeon. She disliked the aging manager for his slickness, but she did not hate him. He had been a good manager for Matt. . . .

Buzzy slept. She went into her own room and donned a linen dress and made up her face. She went down the stairs; Sim, too skinny, too dapper, wrinkled, balding, stood and bowed in a fashion too stogy.

She said: "Hello, Master Mind. How are the grandchildren?"

Sim winced. "Very good, thank yuh, Candy."

So they were even, she thought, a trifle wearily. Sim hated to be re-

minded of his age—women kept him broke; and she detested being called "Candy." She dropped into a chair, and Matt grinned at her, amused at the byplay.

"Sim dug up some movies of Potter. Got them from the Coast. You want to see them?"

"Of course," she said. She got out the projector and the screen. Matt never could run the thing, so she adjusted the film. She turned off the lights and they sat watching Potty Potter in his youth and strength destroying three good boxers. One of these was Firozza.

Matt said mildly: "I'll be running them over a few times. Want to quit, Candide?"

Again it was in his voice, the thing she had sensed. She said: "I've seen enough. He's a hitter. He's fast, and he's too strong for you to handle him inside. He's got a hook, and you can't boss him."

Sim cackled: "Candy sure knows the angles. Oughta be a manager, Candy."

"If I *was* a manager, I wouldn't overmatch my man," she said coldly.

Sim choked. Matt was stony-faced. She said: "I'll be in the den."

She sat with a good detective novel but could not read. Something was wrong with Matt, and she could not reason it out. She had always understood him pretty well, she thought. But this was different.

At first she was hurt that he had put her aside. She could hear Sim's voice, talking about Potter's style, giving advice, but Matt did not seem to reply. Style, she thought—it was not a matter of style. It was youth and speed and strength. The boy had it.

Matt knew it. She came to that decision, finally. Matt knew. And then she thought at once that if Matt knew, he should not have made the match, and she had been right all along.

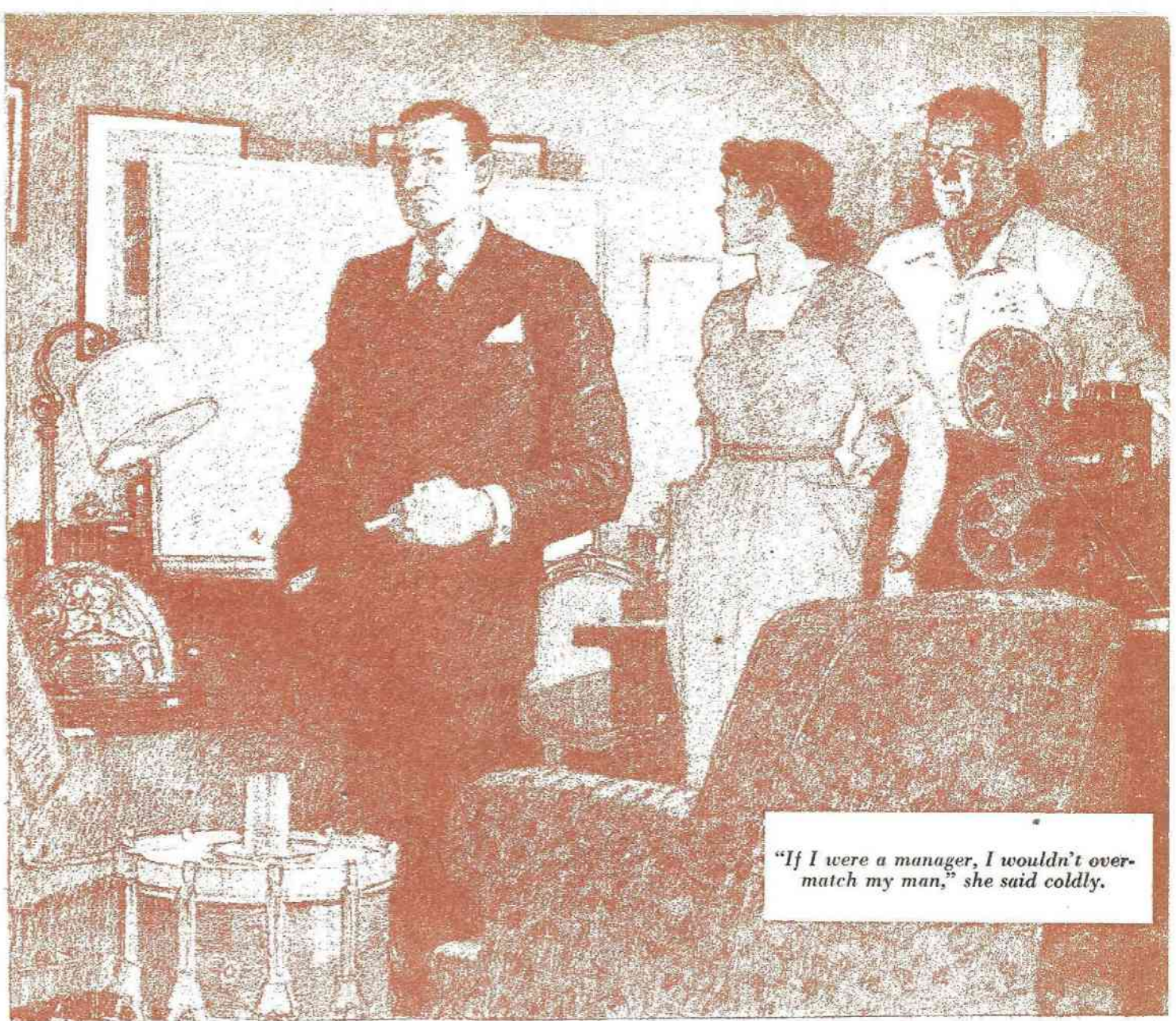
But why had he made the fight? Out of sheer stubbornness, out of a desire to go down fighting? That was not like Matt. If his reflexes were dimmed, his speed diminished by years, why should he not admit it? He was surely not that stubborn about his profession.

She sat and turned it over and over in her mind. Sim left. Matt moved about, putting away the projector and screen. He came to the door of the den and said: "Okay, baby?"

"Okay," she made herself say. "I'm not arguing now."

"I know," he said. "I know. Let's go to bed."

"Yes, Matt. Let's go to bed." She had said that she would not see it. Matt had been training for three weeks in New York State, and her



"If I were a manager, I wouldn't overmatch my man," she said coldly.

only contact had been on the telephone. Even at that distance she could sense the difference, the trouble in him which he had tried so hard to conceal. She had never known frustration; they had always been able sooner or later to resolve their differences. She tried to refrain from nagging now that the die was cast, but the tension within her was mounting by the hour.

She had said that she would not see it, but there was a hotel on East 45th where they always had met after a fight, where a small suite could be had far from the fight crowd and its hangers-on. There she would be, she knew, and there he would seek her. She admitted to him that this was true; and his voice was husky, the day of the bout, thanking her.

That he should thank her was too much. She gathered Buzzy into the car and drove across Jersey and into the city. She had dinner sent up and

put the boy to bed. She walked between the two rooms, smoking too many cigarettes.

At nine-thirty she called the desk. At nine-thirty-five Buzzy was saying sleepily: "We drivin' home, Mamma?"

"I thought you might like to see your father," she said.

Buzzy said: "Sure—always wanta see Pop. Where's he at?"

"Uptown," she said. She was trembling when they got into the taxicab. The ride uptown seemed interminable. Her mind was not clear now; she only knew that Matt was in trouble, that she loved him, that fighting him had done no good. She only knew that she had to see it, after all.

At the gate they sent her to the office, and a man said: "You got a ticket here, Miz Gaffney. He left one for you."

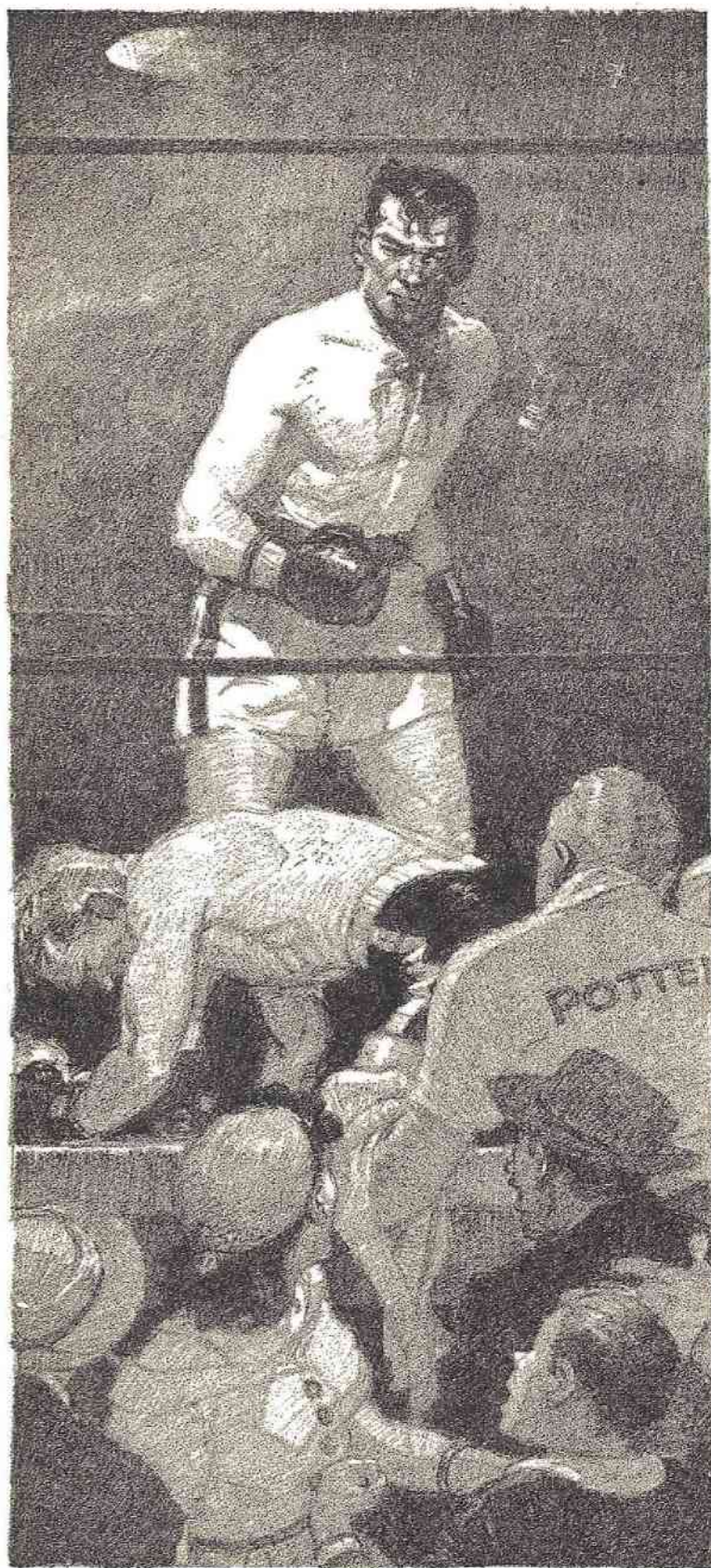
She took a deep breath. She said: "It's—it's all right to take his son in there?"

The man said: "That Matt's boy? I shoulda known. Spittin' image of the schmo!"

She said: "Is it—is it ten o'clock?" The man grinned. "You'll see it all, Miz Gaffney. C'mon."

There were thousands and thousands of people in the ball park. Matt always drew them through the gate, and Potty Potter was the swashbuckling sort who never hurt a show. The man was a magician, wafting them down to the seat, in her appointed place behind Matt's corner. Her neighbor beamed upon Buzzy and insisted upon perching him between them. The working press all knew her; she thought she saw pity in the faces of some of the older reporters.

And then she settled down, her mind ceased to whirl. Matt was already in the ring, surrounded by his handlers. Sim Simeon was showing his false teeth and taking bows. They were introducing the celebrities. In



Buzzy yelled gleefully: "Attaboy, Pop! You got 'im!"

utter amazement Buzzy said: "There he is! There's Pop!"

The ring cleared as she fought for complete control. She had acted hastily, through emotional impetus, she realized. She had brought Matt's boy to see him beaten. It could be a terrible mistake. Yet she had instinctively brought the boy in an attempt to have the family together; if it must go down, she wanted all to go down, now.

The instructions to the fighters ended. Potty Potter was rangy and clean-cut and young—very young. . . . Matt was grasping the ropes, his gray eyes indrawn. He glanced expressionlessly at the seat where he did not expect to see Candide.

Buzzy squirmed to the dirt. There was space between the first row ring-side and the working press, and Buzzy found it, bouncing. He cried: "Sock 'im, Pop! Use that ol' hook!"

For an instant Matt stood staring. His eyes swept to Candide. She sat as always, head high, looking back at him. He lifted one hand, waved it.

The bell rang.

She clutched Buzzy, holding him within the circle of her arms. She knew what Potter would do. He came like a lion, stalking, speeding. He had some of the grace which had once been Matt's, the movement that only youth possesses. But he struck with more authority than Matt had ever used. He came in, set himself, hit hard, and got away on springy legs.

Matt boxed. Matt's long arm still had the canny skill. He put it in Potter's face. It was a rapier. Potter laughed, shook it off and ducked in close before Matt could slip away.

The gloves pounded at Matt's body. That would be it, she knew. Potter would work on Matt's wind, slow him down. Then, when Matt was an easy target, the kid would strike at the face, at the jaw. The numbing head blows would cut him down, cut down the champion whose day was done. That was the obvious strategy.

Matt soaked up the punishment, and again she cried in her mind: "Why, oh, why? He needn't. For what does he do it?"

Matt took it. He moved, tying up one arm, but Potter was too strong to be denied. Matt wheeled around, spinning him off. Potter laughed and sped in again, sinking those blows to the body. Matt's elbows came in, but Potter pounded away.

The round ended. Buzzy said: "Pop's winnin', huh?"

"Yes, darling," she said.

"Pop'll kill 'im," said Buzzy. Yet there was no firmness, no fire in the boy. Did he realize? She was shocked to think the child might also feel it.

She looked at Sim Simeon. She hated the old man, leaning to whisper in Matt's ear, calm in the face of dis-

aster. Come what may, Sim got his cut, she thought angrily. If he loved Matt, how could he permit this?

The whistle sent Sim and the handlers down. Matt looked calm enough, but then he was always brave. She bit at a knuckle. The bell sent them out again.

Matt moved a little faster, as though he had caught a second wind. His left was straight as a string. He beat Potter about the nose, and the young man scowled and charged. Matt sidestepped. Potter threw the first of his vicious hooks, following, always following Matt's course. Matt pegged the hook on his right and lanced with the straight left.

POTTER SWUNG a right faster than light. Candide gasped: she had never seen a faster or more vicious puncher. The glove caught Matt high. His cheek split, and the blood ran.

She almost shut her eyes. Never had Matt been cut like that. His worst injuries had been a nose bleed, a mouse over an eye, a swollen ear where he had slipped the punches. Now the cut was patently deep. The gore formed a mask on one side of his face. . . . Still his head was high, his eyes clear and level. He boxed, moving with almost stately skill. Potter snorted and plunged. Matt kept the left straight out, maneuvering, seldom opening up with his right. The bell clamored, and Candide heard Buzzy's voice from what seemed a great distance:

"Pop got hit."

She said: "He'll be all right, Buzzy."

"I don't like him to get hit." Buzzy was scowling. He was not tearful: he was angry, she realized at once. His fists were doubled; he scowled at Potter across the width of the ring. "I betcha I'd use the hook on him, I betcha."

Thank God, she thought, little boys are savages. She had not done wrong in bringing Buzzy. . . . She prayed a little then, for Matt. She hoped he would get knocked out quick, that there would not be worse scars, that Potter would have the strength to end it fast.

Sim Simeon said a final word. Matt nodded. The bell sounded.

Sim crouched, leaning over the apron now. She wrenched her attention from the thin, ancient manager. Matt was advancing, Potter was prowling. Potter was aiming for the cut which the handlers had repaired. She saw him eye it, recognized the approach, the feint to be followed by a swinging blow.

Matt's left hand went out. Potter, disdainful of the jab which had not yet hurt his youthful toughness, slid past it.

Matt danced away. Potter followed. Matt made him miss, ducked the swing, caught a hook upon the peg. Potter came faster, his fists moving like pistons, moving into Matt's terrain. Matt danced like Astaire, and Potter again charged.

Matt foxed him past, slapped him, moved around, jabbing. Potter came closer and closer, trying for the body again. Matt moved away.

Potter swung from left to right, feinting. Matt stood straight, the left hand out. There was something different in the pattern, and Candide's arms tightened on Buzzy.

Then Potter was rushing, and Matt was not dancing. He was not trying to avoid the charge. Candide cried: "Matt! He'll kill you!"

Matt's heels were seeking the canvas. Potter's punches clouted against him. He lowered his head within his hunched shoulders. Matt ducked; he actually crouched, something she had never seen before.

Potter was close now, defiantly throwing the hook. But Matt was meeting hook with hook! Matt's left, no longer a rapier, was suddenly, amazingly, curling like a snake. It was rattling against Potter's jaw.

Buzzy broke away. In the little space where the aisle ended he was poised, his thin face bright and hard. His hands were up, he was screaming: "Hook 'im, Pop! Kill 'im with 'at hook!"

Buzzy, that small replica of Matt Gaffney, was throwing the hook at the night air. Up in the ring Matt was throwing it too. Potty Potter's knees sagged.

Candide said faintly: "Buzzy! . . . Matt!"

Potter's eyes were glazed. Matt struck again with the new weapon he had certainly perfected during the training and after viewing the motion pictures. Candide sat weak, breathless.

Matt leveled a right hand down the middle. Potter fell forward and lay on his face, all his youth and strength unavailing now.

Buzzy yelled gleefully: "Attaboy, Pop! You got 'im!"

She thought weakly: *Where did the boy learn it all?* Then she remembered the movies, the long talks with Matt, the seriousness with which Buzzy listened to anything his father told him. He was a smart little boy, she thought, a good, smart little boy.

She picked him up and hugged him; and Matt, leaning on the ropes while they counted out Potty Potter, looked down and smiled. The blood had started again from the cut, but he was gay, laughing at Buzzy, waving his arm at them.

Then she was gone through the crowd, making for an exit ahead of the

crush, calling a taxi, demanding to be taken back to Forty-fifth Street.

Buzzy said excitedly: "I tol' him, didn't I, Mamma? I tol' him to use 'at ol' hook!"

"You were wonderful, Buzzy," she said, "and now we'll go wait for him and explain how you knew."

"Sure," said Buzzy complacently. "Okay. Sure."

But the boy was asleep when Matt came in. The patch on Matt's face was ugly, but his smile was wonderful to behold. He said: "Well, it worked. I had to let him come awhile. Sim and me worked it out, but it was nip and tuck. Potter's awful good."

She said: "Matt—oh, Matt, why did you risk it?"

He held her very close. He said: "Well—you know me. I hate to bother you with finances. . . . Hey, you know what? You're cute."

She said: "Finances? Matt—we have everything—"

"The factory in Newark," he said. Even then he was diffident, telling her about it. "We overexpanded, got into the bank, and there has been a little slump. I needed the cash, baby. I couldn't tell you, worry you about it. It just isn't in me. . . . I dunno. Gee, you *are* cute!" He rumbled her hair-do.

She said: "Oh, Matt—you fool. . . . And I brought Buzzy, thinking it was the fight that worried you, that seeing him— I was a sentimental fool, wasn't I, Matt?"

He said: "No. It was a wonderful idea, baby. For reasons."

"It was the first time he ever saw you. And Matt—the last."

"That's the reason," he nodded. "I needed fifty thousand. I made it to-night. The business will be all right now, and it needs more attention. Okay, baby?"

She said: "Buzzy—he kept telling you to throw the hook. He stood out there and showed them all how to do it. He actually did, Matt. He wasn't frightened; he just wanted you to throw the hook."

Matt said: "Well, you see I talked to him about the hook."

She said: "I've decided. Men are wonderful. Oh, Matt!"

"Let's go to bed."

"Yes, Matt. Let's go to bed."

BUT she thought, lying in his arms, how foolish yet wonderful they are. He would not worry her about finances. Not good, thoughtful Matt. . . . He would just let her worry about his life, his reason, lest he be maimed or killed in the ring. He would talk to Buzzy about the hook—and Buzzy seven; but he neglected to inform her that he had such plans. . . . Wonderful, she repeated, holding him close, wonderful men!

The Whole Line



As the Third Platoon moved over the crest I relaxed and thought the hill was ours, but I quickly discovered

IT was the 14th of September, 1950. To us, the men of Company B, 23rd Infantry Regiment, this was just another hot dry day that was to be spent fighting in Korea. We were to discover that the day was to see plenty of excitement.

Late in the afternoon, we received orders that the following day was to

see us attacking at dawn. The whole line was going forward. This was good news to us, as we did not want to see any more patrol actions that would involve risks, but with a definite lack of any compensation in the form of enemy ground held.

Sergeant Blain Mackrell, one of our non-commissioned officers, once ex-

pressed the sentiments of all of us in regard to patrol action. He was asked if he desired to volunteer for a patrol that was to go to the opposite or enemy bank of the Naktong River. He said: "Lieutenant, if you order me, I'll go. But otherwise, I'll stay here. When I go forward, I want the whole line going with me."

Goes Forward

A colorful and authentic chronicle of Korean battle, by a man who took part in it.

by 1st LT. WILLIAM M. GLASGOW

Illustrated by BLUE BOOK'S combat artist in Korea, HAMILTON GREENE



that I had relaxed too soon.

Now, after many days of retreats and defensive fighting, the whole U.N. force in South Korea had received its orders to advance and attack the enemy on his ground.

In conjunction with the attack of the troops who had been defending the southern perimeter an amphibious landing was to take place at

Inchon. That this action was to take place had been a rumor among the troops for a long time. The rumors concerning the amphibious landing and other operations had sustained the morale of the men who were fighting the long hard battle in an effort to save Pusan from the enemy. The news of the attack was welcome to the ears of everyone. I, for one, thought that this was our opportunity to end the war in Korea. I knew that the only way that the war could be successfully terminated was by our offensive action. We would have to seek out and destroy the enemy. That was the job of the infantry, and at last, we were going to get the opportunity of performing our real mission.

Excitement ran high. The Republic of Korea soldiers, who were in our ranks, were especially joyous. They talked among themselves of being in Seoul before too long. To most of them, Seoul was home. The GIs thoughts were of an ultimate victory that would allow them to go back to their more peaceful pursuits.

The news of the attack necessitated planning by the officers as to how "B" Company would seize its initial objective. Art Steele, the commander of my company, called a conference of his officers. He showed us our objective: It was a twin-hill mass about fifteen hundred yards to the front of our present positions.

These hills were held in force by the enemy. That much, we knew. During the past few days, we had sent patrols to the general area. They had received enemy fire. We had also seen many other signs of enemy activity despite the clever camouflage employed by the North Korean soldiers.

After making a study of the terrain, Art issued his orders for the attack. The third platoon and my platoon, the second, were to be the assault force. We were to lead the company in the attack, which was to take place at dawn.

The plan called for us to move out in a company column and attempt to move to the left flank of the hills held

by the enemy. The assault platoons were then going to change their direction of movement and their formation, and then attack the left-most hill in a skirmish line.

After the left-hand hill was seized by the joint action of the two platoons, the third platoon was to assault the right-hand hill. At this time, my platoon would provide a base of fire to cover the assault of the third platoon.

In this attack we were to have a great deal of support. This was welcome news to us, for in previous actions we had been limited on artillery and mortar ammunition. The ammunition had been saved and stored for use in this one big push. We received especially welcome news when we were informed that the Air Force was to pull an air strike on our objective. We knew that the "fly-boys" would be in a position above the enemy where they could really play hell.

LATE in the afternoon, in the hour just prior to dark, the Air Force was on target. They came in one after the other, letting their napalm and bullets fly at the enemy. Pass after pass was made. It was a big show to watch, even if only three planes participated. As the napalm bombs struck and splattered over the enemy position, I could tell by the large roaring flames that there would be some burned corpses on our objective. To some small extent, I felt sorry for the enemy. There they were with nothing but their foxholes for protection. The best that they could do was to sit and take it. But my sorrow for the enemy did not last too long. I was too pleased by the sight, and I was glad to know that it was the enemy who was getting it and not us. I figured that every one of the enemy that the Air Force accounted for would be one less that we would have to kill tomorrow.

That night I awaited the attack with a great deal of nervous tension. I could not help but wonder what the attack would be like. How would I

do? What would I do when I had to run that last few yards and come to close quarters with the enemy who would be dug in and protected in their holes?

These were the questions. The answers would have to wait until tomorrow.

As I heard the sounds of battle that drifted to my ears, I could tell that "C" Company, which occupied a position about two thousand yards to our left flank, was catching hell. This created another doubt in my mind. "C" Company held the dominating terrain. What if the enemy took these positions? Would our attack become a false alarm?

I could not help but think that the enemy was strong. I knew that they were prepared to stand and fight. How much longer could they hold? Were they eventually going to destroy us, or were we going to destroy them?

With the dawn I saw Lieutenant Colonel Claire Hutchin, my battalion commander. He told me that "C" Company had suffered many casualties and that all of the company officers were gone, but the company had held. This was both good and bad news. All of the officers in "C" Company had been my personal friends. They were battle-hardened soldiers of World War II, and this caused me to stop and think: *What chance have I when such a man as Lieutenant Carl Johnson got it?* "Johnny" was one of the finest officers it has been my privilege to know. He had been awarded

a battlefield commission during World War II. He was not only a fine officer, but he was also a personal friend, and I felt his loss very deeply.

The sound of our artillery as it swooshed overhead awoke me from my thoughts. It was a welcome sound. I knew that those outgoing shells would make our job that much easier. I hoped that they would account for a great many of the enemy.

As the morning light became stronger, we moved out in a company column as planned. As we moved from the hill that we had held for eleven days against many enemy attacks, I felt that I was leaving home. It was like sailing from a safe harbor onto an uncharted sea, for I knew not what the future held.

Our path carried us from the hill and down through the flat rice paddies that separated us from our objective. As we moved through the stinking mud of the rice paddies, I began to fear that the enemy would let fly at us with his mortars. The North Koreans were noted for their accuracy with this weapon, and I did not like to think of the possibility that they would fire at us while we were in these open fields, which offered so little protection from flying shell fragments.

As we moved along, I knew that my men would do the job. I had no fear that the squads of my platoon would become entangled and stray. They had been too well trained in the school that was combat. I had an excellent platoon sergeant in Benjamin



After my platoon was set,

Rubio, a California boy who was a combat veteran of World War II. His post was in rear of the platoon column, and I knew that he would see that everything was straight. In combat, it is a great comfort to have a man like Rubio on whom you can rest so much of faith. On previous moves, especially some of those that we had made at night, we had been tangled at the start, but Rubio always

As we moved through the stinking mud of the rice paddies, I began to fear that the enemy would let fly at us with his accurate mortars.





I called to "Skippy" Barrett, the platoon leader of the Third. I said: "Take off. We'll cover you."

straightened things out and kept the men moving.

At last we reached the place whence we would launch our assault. I could not help but wonder why the enemy had not fired their mortars and artillery at us. They had these weapons, and I could not see why they hadn't used them.

In the rice paddies to my left, I

could see our tanks. They were a reassuring sight. I knew that we could depend on them to help us with the fire from their guns. I wondered how the tanks had got up the draw over the wet marshy land. I thought that the terrain would bar the attack of the tanks, but Lieutenant Donald Jersey, the tank platoon leader, had spent the entire night in jockeying his hulks of steel through the mire. I will always be grateful to Jersey for this action, because his sweat saved the lives of some of my men.

As the column closed up, I prepared my platoon for the assault. When everything was in readiness, we jumped off. Up the hill we went at a dogtrot. This job had to be done fast. The men realized this, and they moved out in a brisk fashion despite the fatigue that had been slowly wearing on them during the days of trying combat.

As we went up the hill, I expected to be confronted at any minute by enemy rifles firing at us. But after a long hard pull, we made the top of the left-most hill, and not a shot had been fired. I was surprised, but it was no time to stop and wonder about our good fortune. We had to get the right-hand hill quickly. Now, we had the initiative, and we had to take advantage of it before the enemy overcame his surprise.

I set my platoon in a hasty defense position. They were now prepared to support the attack of the Third Platoon.

After my platoon was set, I called to "Skippy" Barrett, the platoon leader of the Third.

I said: "Take off. We'll cover you."

At a signal from Barrett, his platoon jumped up and ran down the small saddle that separated the two hills. The din was terrific. Our mortars and the twin .40-mm. guns of the ack-ack were firing at the Third Platoon's objective. My platoon had joined the fire, delivering it over the heads of the friendly troops as they advanced.

We could see none of the enemy. I hoped they had fled; but time was to prove that we would have no recurrence of the situation that had been in our favor during the assault on the first hill. The enemy had fled that first hill out of fear of our tanks.

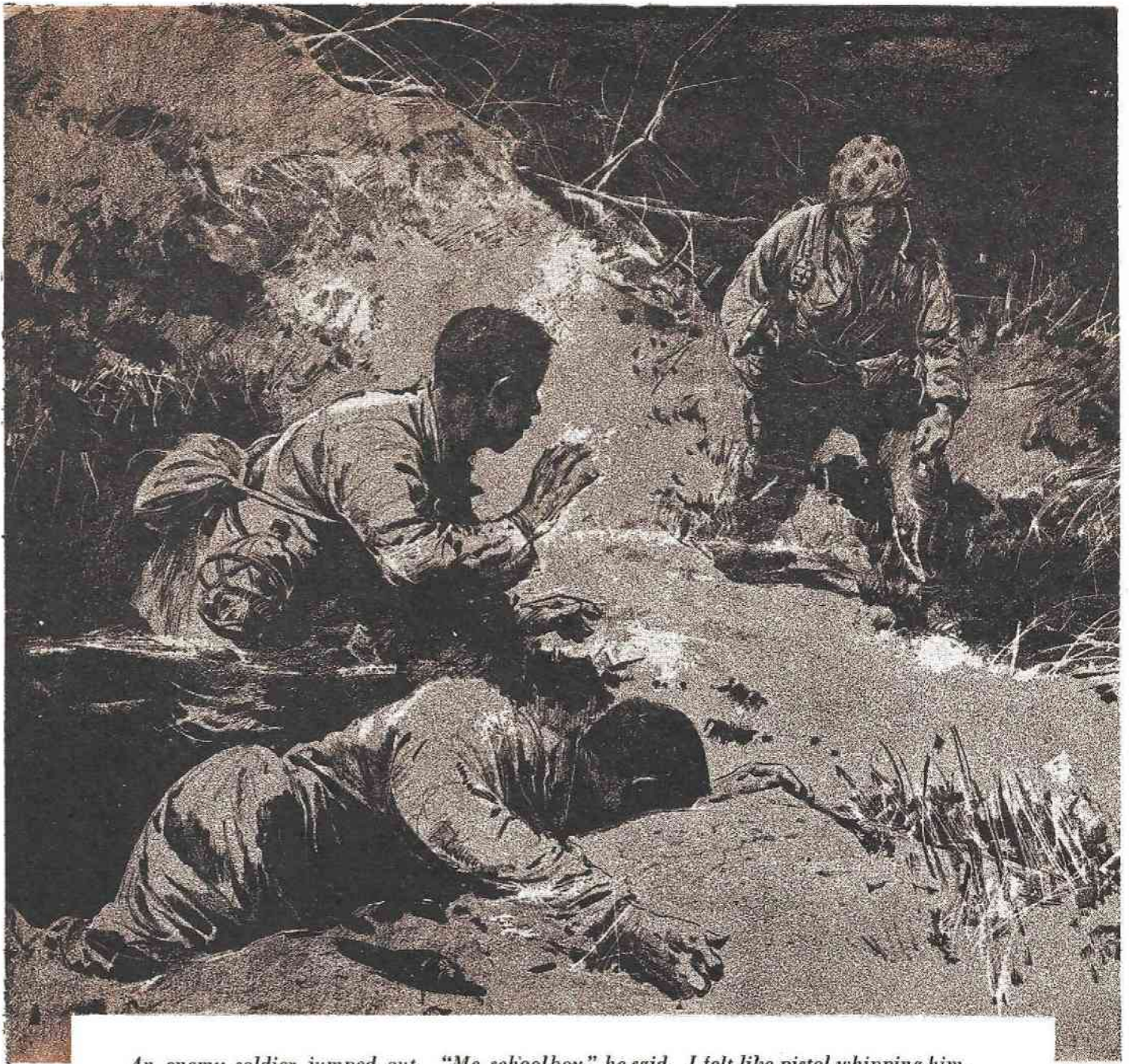
As the Third Platoon reached the top of the hill, I ordered my men to cease fire. I also called this information to the guns which were supporting us.

Never before have I seen infantry advance so close to their own supporting fire as the Third Platoon did on this occasion. They moved up to a point where they were less than fifty yards from the burst of their own shells. The contour of the ground gave them protection from the flying shell-fragments, while the friendly fire protected them from the enemy fire.

As the fire lifted, the Third Platoon moved over the crest of the hill. I relaxed and thought that the hill was ours, but I quickly discovered that I had relaxed too soon, for we were met by a barrage of hand grenades from the defending enemy.

As the grenades exploded, I felt sure that the Third was going to receive a large number of casualties, but





An enemy soldier jumped out. "Me schoolboy," he said. I felt like pistol-whipping him.

when the smoke of the explosions cleared, I could see a great deal of life was left in our men. Their advance was stopped, and they had fallen back from the crest, but they had suffered few injuries; and soon they were hurling grenades back at the enemy. It began to look like a game of catch, except for the deadly explosions that followed each toss.

BARRETT called me by radio. He said: "The gooks are trying to flank me on the right. Can you help me?" I said: "I'll take care of your right. Try and get the top of the hill."

I sent my support squad to the right of the Third Platoon. They were promptly engaged by the enemy, and

during the ensuing action the squad leader was wounded—another very valuable man was lost. In fact, he made the sixth squad leader that my platoon had lost since we were committed to action in the Korean conflict. I could not see how I could continue to replace my key men who became casualties, but help usually comes. In this case, a man by the name of Black jumped to the front and took command. Many times, I have thanked God for men such as Black, who have risen to emergencies.

In the action Barrett was wounded. He stuck to the hill as long as he could, but he was soon forced to leave for the aid station. On learning of the danger to Barrett's flank, Art had

committed the First Platoon. As they arrived on the scene, they engaged the enemy. The leader of this platoon soon became a casualty too.

I turned my platoon over to Sergeant Rubio, for I felt that an officer's presence was needed by the two platoons who were so heavily engaged. As I ran over to join the First and Third, I could not help but think that I was a fool for not staying in my relatively safe position. To this day I do not understand my desire to join them. Maybe it was a sense of duty, but in no sense was I trying to become a hero.

I believe that my thought at the time was one of safety. We were all in this together. The safety of my



platoon and of every man in the company depended on our getting that hill, but at the same time I could not help but think that I might be the third platoon leader to become a casualty in this day's action.

When I reached the hill, I found Sergeant Deal who was now the platoon leader of the First Platoon. A bullet had torn into his ankle, making a very painful wound. Deal told me as much of the situation as he knew. The enemy was firmly dug in on the reverse slope of this hill. I knew that as soon as we started to cross the hill, we would be excellent targets for the entrenched enemy riflemen; but I knew that we would have to assault and take this hill for our present posi-

tion was untenable and at night it would be more so.

Fortunately, the enemy made the decision for me. They started to throw everything but the kitchen sink at us. It was one round of self-propelled and then five rounds of mortar. The fire was sporadic; it rained on our position at intervals. To assault now would mean certain death for many of the members of my company.

I could only wait, shake, and pray as I huddled close to a Korean grave-mound in order to avoid the flying fragments. I hoped that the advance of the Third Battalion on our right would be successful. The guns firing at us were located in their area, and I hoped that they would soon get them. My one consolation was the fact that the enemy was catching this same fire, for they were still dug in on this hill.

I called Art and told him of the situation. He told me that he was displacing his command group toward the front. I was thankful for this; I figured that if the enemy did not stop firing before long, then he would be up here, and he could make the necessary decisions. At the time, I did not care to assume the responsibility.

The time had passed rapidly. It was now six hours since we had jumped off in the attack.

Before Art arrived at the objective, the enemy fire lifted. As he climbed the hill, followed by his radio operator, I went to meet him. I said: "It seems as if the hill is ours for the asking. I think we should wait to see if the enemy guns are silenced, then go over and clean up what is left." I did not think that the enemy had much fight left in him.

We waited. After a short while, we ventured to the enemy's side of the hill. Many enemy soldiers were still alive in their holes, but they offered little resistance, and they would not leave their holes. It was now up to us to blast them from their holes and kill them off. This can be a dirty job.

At one hole I observed a great deal of wire. I knew that this was an enemy command post, so I went to investigate. I found two enemy soldiers huddled face down in the dug-out. I called: "*Eni Wa.*" I had been told that this meant "Come here," in Korean. One of the enemy moved, but he did not come out. I took a hand grenade, pulled the pin and threw it for the entrance to the hole. The grenade took a bad bounce and did not enter the hole. As I ran up the hill to get away from the explosion, I thought: *Well, now you have done it. You're going to blow yourself to hell with your own grenade.*

After running about six yards, I hit

the ground. No sooner had I done this than an explosion went off behind me. Fragments of the grenade filled the air, but all of them missed me.

Following the explosion, I returned to the hole, pulled another pin from a grenade and threw it for the hole. This time I hit my mark.

After the explosion, I got up from the ground, where I had thrown myself for protection, and looked into the hole. One of the enemy was still moving. I fired several rounds into the moving enemy, then I threw another grenade into the hole.

This time, the explosion of my grenade was followed by another smaller explosion and the dug-out began to belch smoke. Something was on fire. I figured that I would let it burn for a while to make sure that the occupants were dead and thus harmless to us.

No sooner had I turned my back on this hole and started to walk down the position than I saw a movement about five yards from me. I turned and fired my revolver. From a small, well-camouflaged hole, an enemy soldier jumped to his feet.

"Me schoolboy," he said.

At this time, I felt like grabbing the enemy soldier and pistol-whipping him. Here he had been sitting in this position throwing grenades at us, and now that we had him in a spot, he wanted mercy. I could not help but feel that he had practiced his few English words for this occasion.

I had wounded this enemy soldier in the leg. After a thorough searching, we sent our prisoner to the rear.

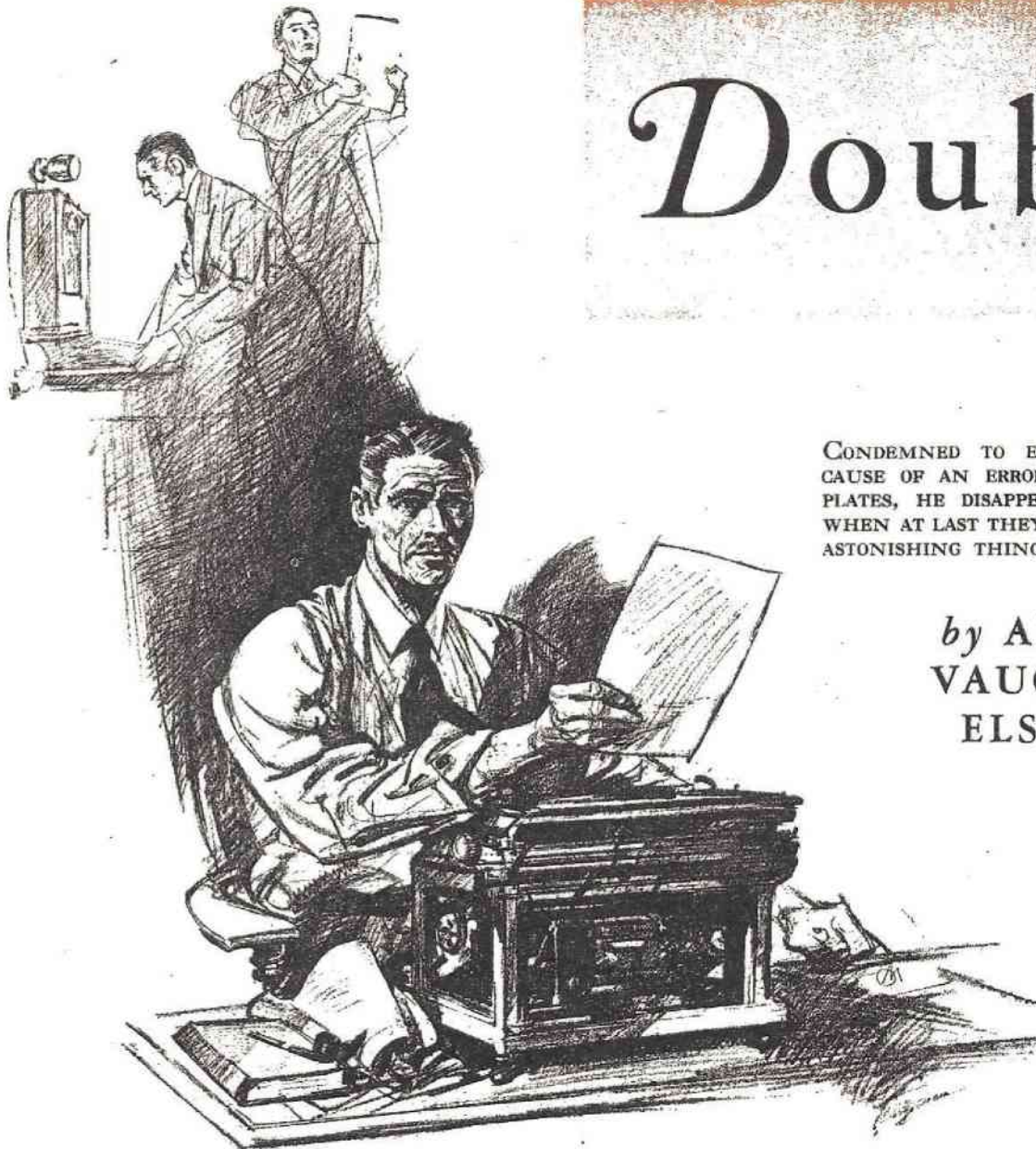
Small patrols were sent out to cover the position. More holes were cleared of the enemy. Some of the enemy did throw grenades, and we received one minor casualty. After the position was consolidated, we collected the enemy arms and counted their dead.

We had captured a great deal of enemy equipment. Included in this were machine guns, mortars, rifles, carbines and "burp" guns (a Russian-made sub-machine gun). In addition to the captured equipment, we had captured three of the enemy and killed over sixty of them.

I was feeling great. We had received very few casualties and most of them had been minor wounds. We had hit it lucky. We had made our attack and seized our objective. It had been hard work, but we won.

I knew that there would be other hills and more enemy soldiers to kill, but I knew that at last we were on the offensive. Eventually, I believed that we would destroy the North Korean army.

At last the whole line was moving forward.



Double

CONDEMNED TO EARLY DEATH BECAUSE OF AN ERROR IN THE X-RAY PLATES, HE DISAPPEARED . . . AND WHEN AT LAST THEY FOUND HIM, AN ASTONISHING THING HAD HAPPENED.

by ALLAN
VAUGHAN
ELSTON

Perhaps three months to live, at a maximum six, the note said.

DOCTOR EMORY HALSTEAD drew his car to a stop reluctantly, in front of 1224 North Birch. This was to be an unpleasant errand. The verdict of the X rays was clear. Now he must pass it along to the patient, Henry Ross.

Emory Halstead was a deeply sensitive man, and he went slowly to the door, rebelling at his duty. It wasn't easy to tell a man that he only had about three months to live. Yet nothing could be gained by hiding the truth. Doctor Halstead was much too conscientious and forthright for that. He'd shown the X rays to two consulting specialists, and each had concurred in his conclusion. An *hepatic epithelioma*, with the malig-

nancy now too far advanced to permit hope of successful surgery. "If he's lucky, he'll last six months," one consultant had said. And the other: "He's on borrowed time. Two to four months, I'd say."

Mrs. Breelon answered Halstead's knock. An elderly widow, she owned the house and occupied the first floor. Her tenant, Henry Ross, had a furnished suite upstairs. The Doctor knew Ross only as a middle-aged man who'd come to him in an extremely run-down condition, haggard, nervous and underweight, requesting a complete physical check-up.

"May I see Mr. Ross, please?"

"He's not in, Doctor. He went downtown on some errand."

"When will he be back?"

"He didn't say."

"Do you know where I could find him?"

She didn't, and Halstead went back to his car. He felt faintly relieved. It was a brief respite, at least. This was Friday. Could he put off seeing Ross till Tuesday? He'd have to, unless he found the man within the next hour, for Doctor Halstead was engaged to go on a weekend cruise due to leave at noon today. It was a professional commitment, the yachtman's wife needing to be under medical observation during the cruise.

Halstead drove downtown, circled the streets looking for Henry Ross but failed to find him. He went to his rather shabby office, up over the Commercial Bank, and telephoned the

Reprieve

Breelon house. Henry Ross, he was told, hadn't come home yet.

Putting it off till Tuesday, Halstead decided, would be both cowardly and unprofessional. More than that, he'd promised Ross a report before leaving on the cruise. Why not send it by mail? It would be delivered in a few hours. That way he'd be keeping his promise to a patient. And that way he'd be spared the ordeal of delivering the blow in person. Truth was truth, whether written or spoken; and certainly a doomful truth, literally a death sentence, would be easier to write than to speak.

Emory Halstead sat down at his old battered typewriter. He kept no office girl. Modern practitioners called him old-fashioned, and smiled, sometimes, at what they called his horse-and-buggy methods and equipment. He put one of his letterheads in the machine. The note he typed on it was brief but precise. It gave his own diagnosis as based on a complete set of X rays. It mentioned that two specialists had been consulted, each separately examining the X rays and arriving at the same conclusion. Perhaps three months to live, at a maximum six, the note said.

Halstead took one of his professional envelopes and typed the address.

Mr. Henry Ross
1224 N. Birch
Citrus City, California

He sealed the note within it and a few minutes later dropped it into a mailbox. By noon he was boarding the client's yacht at the harbor.

It was late Monday evening when Halstead returned to his bachelor apartment on North Elm. His telephone was ringing. Answering it, he heard the agitated voice of Paul Edwards, superintendent at the Municipal Hospital.

"We've been paging you for two days, Emory. Where the devil have you been? Hell's to pay. You better get right over here, and fast."

Halstead drove at once to the hospital and found Edwards pacing his

office. The man's face was red as he produced a set of X rays. "Now don't start bawling us out, Emory. It was a mistake. Spilled milk, and no use crying over it. Two sets got mixed up, some way. This is the set we should have given you on your patient Henry Ross." Edwards mopped his handkerchief over a moist brow.

Halstead gaped at him. "What set did you give me?"

"An old set," Edwards confessed. "From a case that died two weeks ago. The Harvey Ross case. Look, Emory, I hope you haven't—"

"I have," Halstead cut in bitterly. He took the correct set and hurried to a laboratory.

There he examined the photos carefully. They gave him a clear and true verdict on Henry Ross. No hepatic enlargement. Nothing wrong at all, he found, except minor ulcers of the stomach. A condition not in any way doomful. It could be eliminated, he knew, by proper diet, peace of mind and plenty of sleep.

Peace of mind! Doctor Halstead looked bleakly at the evidence. For three days and nights, now, he'd put Henry Ross under mental torment. He'd made the man think he was doomed when he wasn't. He, a physician with a mission to heal, had tortured. A stupid, tragic mistake, and no use making a goat out of some careless nurse or lab. clerk. This was his own case, and he alone must take the blame.

Rushing out to his car, Emory Halstead drove swiftly to 1224 North Birch. Self-recrimination made deep lines across his small, sensitive face. How had Henry Ross stood up under the shock of these last three days and nights? How cruelly had he been wounded? And what could he, Halstead, do now to reassure, comfort and restore?

Mrs. Breelon answered his knock. "I must see Mr. Ross at once."

"Mr. Ross," she told him, "has been gone since Saturday morning."

"Gone where?"

"I don't know, Doctor."

"Did he go," Halstead inquired anxiously, "before the mail was delivered Saturday morning?"

The woman reflected a moment. "No, I remember the postman came about ten. There was one letter for Mr. Ross, and I took it up to his rooms. He was there at that hour. Then I went shopping and didn't get back till past noon. He was gone, and I haven't seen him since."

"Didn't he leave a note, or something?"

"No. When he didn't come home Saturday night, I thought maybe he'd gone to visit a nephew at Dos Robles. But today the nephew phoned, asking for him. Roy Ross is the nephew's name. He's Henry's only living relative. And Roy said his uncle hadn't been in Dos Robles."

"May I have a look at his rooms?"

They went up to Ross' quarters and looked around. A closet exposed a traveling bag. "I think he had two," Mrs. Breelon said. "So maybe he packed one and took it with him." Her brow furrowed. "But I wonder where?"

"I made an incorrect diagnosis," Halstead said wretchedly. "It must be corrected at once. Please call me when he comes home—or when you find out where he is."

DOCTOR HALSTEAD drove to his apartment. Sleep eluded him that night. Several possibilities came to him, and one of them was frightful: Convinced that he had only a short time to live, Henry Ross might have gone away to commit suicide.

He might jump off a bridge, or drown himself in the sea.

Emory Halstead spent the next day making frantic inquiries. They were fruitless. Nor did Mrs. Breelon receive any word from her tenant. Henry Ross had disappeared without leaving a trace.

In the end Halstead consulted the Missing Persons Department at the local police station. The police report, a day later, relieved him a little. It seemed to lessen the probability of suicide.

"We found a taxi driver, Doc, who picked Ross up at eleven Saturday morning and drove him to the Citrus City Bank. Ross had a traveling bag. He wouldn't need a bag if he meant to bump himself off. And he wouldn't need to go to a bank."

"Did he draw out money?"

"No. But the bank records show he went to his safety box there. No way of knowing what he took out of it. He left the bank, and someone saw him board an interurban toward L. A."

"Could you have the Los Angeles police check the hotels there?"

"Yeh. But there's a lot of places besides hotels. Know what I think, Doc?"

"What?"

"You say he thinks he has only three months to live. My guess is he went off to have himself a good time. Maybe to the bright lights of Broadway. Or to some Florida beach. We found out he's pretty well fixed. Not rich, but maybe thirty or forty grand salted away in gilt-edge stock. And no one to leave it to except a nephew at Dos Robles he doesn't think much of. So why wouldn't he just go off and blow his dough in while he has time?"

Halstead put it down as a possibility. Another occurred to him: Maybe Ross, unwilling to accept the diagnosis as final, had gone away to some famous clinic to be re-examined. Perhaps to a sanatorium of nationwide renown in the East or Middle West.

At considerable expense Halstead began making long-distance calls—to the great Bronson clinic in St. Louis; to the Mason Brothers in Minnesota. To equally popular clinics all over the country. He covered a wide field. If a patient named Henry Ross presented himself, he was to be informed that the Citrus City opinion was admittedly in error.

The last-spreed theory Halstead left to the police. They assured him that they were getting in contact with various night-clubs, racetracks and pleasure spots, and that Henry Ross was being paged at them. Halstead himself inserted ads in many metropolitan papers and medical journals.

Neither campaign of inquiry brought result. Days dragged into weeks. At the end of two unhappy months Henry Ross still hadn't been heard from. He'd vanished like a bubble in rain.

And back came the suicide theory to the sensitive mind of Emory Halstead, to plague and accuse and rob him of sleep. Maybe Ross lay unidentified in some morgue, or at the bottom of a bay. If so, the blood was on Halstead's head.

His practice suffered. He lost weight and vigor. His once plump face grew haggard and gray. "Look, Doc. You need a doctor yourself." This from the janitor of his office building. Many others told him the same. Emory Halstead was a sick man, inconsolably depressed, haunted day and night by remorse for his own ghastly blunder.

HENRY ROSS emerged from a cheap hotel, where for two months, he'd been registered as "J. Dawson." It was in a shabby district on the West Side of Chicago.

These had been a busy two months. They had to be, if he was to accomplish his mission. Three months to live, the letter said. And now only one remained.

Henry Ross threaded his way among slum tenements, turning to the left on Halsted Street. A street of derelicts, this, where a great and kind woman had once established a place called Hull House to relieve human distress. To Henry Ross, it meant something else. To Ross, it was a district where a certain forty-three families lived, or had lived, and from whom, ten years ago, he'd collected tenement rents.

He continued up Halsted Street, a thin pale man of fifty, yet strangely not quite so thin and pale as he'd been two months ago. The task of forty-three errands; forty-one of which were now accomplished, had acted like a magic tonic on Henry Ross.

He stopped and took a letter from his coat pocket. He read it again, smiling grimly. Three months to live, it said. Which meant only one month now. He remembered his shock at receiving it that Friday morning in his rooms at the Breelon house. The old-fashioned letterhead of a family doctor, with envelope to match. On each the name, EMORY N. P. HALSTEAD, M.D.

Halstead! A name that had never been far from Ross' mind. Subconsciously the similarity of the name to that of Halsted Street must have guided him to Dr. Emory Halstead instead of to some other physician, with that mental bravado which makes one try to stare down his own guilt, to win mastery over a symbol of fear by boldly facing its namesake.

And back the name had come to him, in a merciless judgment, on a letterhead telling him he must die.

IN that moment of shock the name had jerked his mind, not subconsciously but consciously, back to Halsted Street in Chicago. To the scene of his own crime!

Shocking him to a decision. Since he only had three months to live, why not use them in undoing that crime? How better could he spend his last respite of life?

But he must do it in secret. If he told where he was going, and why, he'd never get there at all. He'd find himself in jail, his purpose shackled.

Henry Ross put the letter back in his pocket and brought out an old collector's account book. In it forty-three families were listed, and now all but two of the names were crossed off, the Hurwitzes and the Hallohans. It had been easy to find some of the families, because they still lived in the same old Gianini tenements where they'd lived ten years ago. Others had moved. Some had moved many times, from stum to slum, often by eviction for failure to pay rent. These Henry Ross had traced from address to address, after innumerable in-

quiries, until finally he'd found them all except the Hurwitzes and the Hallohans.

And late yesterday he'd got wind of the Hurwitzes. Abe Hurwitz' widow, they'd told him, had two rooms in a basement on Joseph Street. You went in from an alley, they said.

Henry Ross found Joseph Street and then located the alley. It was trash-littered. Ragged children were at play there. At Ross' question, one of them pointed to steps leading down to a door.

THE woman who answered his knock had bony, stooped shoulders, gray straggly hair and a harried, work-lined face. Her sleeves were rolled up, and a stain of suds on her skirt meant she'd been bending over a tub. "I buy nothing today," she said tartly.

Ross smiled. "And I sell nothing, Mrs. Hurwitz. You *are* Mrs. Abraham Hurwitz, aren't you, who used to live in the old Gianini Flats over on Halsted?"

She peered at him suspiciously, then nodded.

"My name's Dawson. I've some good news for you, Mrs. Hurwitz."

Suspicion still leaked from her eyes. "I haf see you before, don't I?" she inquired.

"I'm sure you haven't," Ross said. But he kept his hat on when he went into the room. She must not definitely recognize him as a man who'd collected rent from her ten years ago.

The room was threadbare. There was no ventilation except from a small high window giving to the alley. Through an open inner door Ross could see a kitchen where a young boy was taking clothes from a wash-tub and running them through a wringer.

The story he launched into, although false in detail, had on forty-one similar calls proved adequate for his purpose.

"Those old flats," he said, "were part of the Gianini estate. You paid forty dollars a month rent." He checked the fact, as well as dates, by looking into his rental collection book. "Mr. Gianini, about twelve years ago, retired to Italy. While there, he mellowed and acquired what some people call a social conscience."

The Hurwitz woman stared. "What is you say? Society conscience? I do not understand."

"It means he grew to feel sorry for people less fortunate than himself. So he dictated a letter. The letter gave instructions that all rents on his Chicago tenement property were to be reduced twenty per cent. During the next twenty months he thought the instruction was being obeyed. Then he sold his Chicago property.

Years later, just a few months ago, the letter was found unmailed among papers at his Italian villa. This made the old man mad. He fired the secretary who'd neglected to mail the letter. Then he gave orders that the reduction should still be made, by retroactive refund, with interest, for the last twenty months he'd owned the property."

Mrs. Hurwitz sat gaping. Most of the words were too big for her, and the ones she understood seemed incredible. The boy came from the kitchen with a basket of wet wash, passing on out into the alley. He'd take it up a fire escape to the roof, Ross supposed, hanging it to dry there.

"I," Henry Ross announced, "have been appointed to make the refund. In your case it comes to—let's see—" He consulted the book again. "Mr. Gianini insists that the twenty per cent be double, to cover interest for ten years. So he owes you twenty times sixteen, or \$320.00."

He brought out sixteen crisp twenty-dollar bills. The block of oil stock he'd taken from his Citrus City bank box had been exchanged for many such bills, most of which were now disbursed. "Here you are, Mrs. Hurwitz."

SHE took the money, fingered it with awe. It was more than she'd ever had at any one time in her life. "You mean—this gifts for me? To keep? So much, I cannot believe!"

"It simply means," Henry Ross explained, "that you paid forty a month rent when the landlord only meant for you to pay thirty-two. So he doubles the refund to cover the interest on the overpayment."

"Oil!" She hugged the money, her eyes moist and shining.

"One other thing," Ross cautioned. "Don't say anything about this, please—for three good reasons: first, it would embarrass Mr. Gianini if it got in the papers and people found out he'd made a mistake like that. Second, for your own protection. Otherwise you'll have a pack of salesmen and gypers swarming in on you. Third, if it gets out I'm passing money around, there'll be a lot of fake claims from people claiming they used to live in those Halsted Street flats. I'd have a hard time brushing them off."

"I tell nothing," Reba Hurwitz promised. Her young son came in from the alley with an empty wash basket. Exulting, she held out the money toward him. "Look, Jakie! All at once we are rich! Now we can haf it—the violin you want so much at Isaac Goldstein's secondhand store. Seventeen dollars, is it not? Here. Run fast for it, Jakie."



After innumerable inquiries, he had finally found them all.

She peeled off one of the bills, and was passing it to the boy when Henry Ross intervened.

"No, Mrs. Hurwitz. Mr. Gianini would want you to have it all, velvet, for yourself. For the violin, we spend this, Jakie." Henry Ross produced another twenty-dollar bill and handed it to the boy. "Compliments of Mr. Gianini."

Then he passed into the alley and was gone.

Turning into Joseph Street, he brought out the old collection book and crossed off the name Hurwitz. Only one name left now, Michael Hallohan.

When he found Hallohan, or Hallohan's heirs, he wouldn't need to re-

peat the false scene he'd staged forty-two times. To Hallohan, he could, and would, tell the exact truth.

Truth to any of the first forty-two tenants might have halted his errands short of completion. Only to the forty-third could he tell what had really happened ten years ago. After that it wouldn't matter. The slate would be clean.

Henry Ross went back to the cheap hotel where he was known as J. Dawson. That night he slept soundly, peacefully, not at all like a man doomed soon to die. . . .

Tracing the Hallohan family took another three days. They were all dead, he at last learned, except a son named Terence who was now in his

Illustrated by
ORISON MACPHERSON



"Look, Jakie! All at once we are rich! Now we can haf the violin you want."

early twenties. That checked, because Ross vaguely recalled a skinny, freckled boy of about thirteen in the offing when he'd collected rents from the Hallohans, ten years ago.

"Terry had a paper route along here," a Halsted Street shopkeeper said. "Smart kid, Terry. Know what he's doin' now? He's workin' his way through a medical college up in the north end. Washes windows and tends furnaces on the side. Figures to be a big doctor some day, Terry does."

Finding the right medical school wasn't too difficult. In a laboratory there, Ross was directed to a tall young man whose Irish blue eyes were concentrating on the contents of a test tube.

"You're the son of Michael Hallohan, who used to live in the old Gianini flats?"

"That's right." The young student looked up curiously.

Ross handed him two hundred and eighty dollars. "I owed this to your

father," he said bluntly. Then he opened his collection book and crossed off the name *Hallohan*.

Terry Hallohan stared. "You wouldn't kid me, would you?"

Henry Ross smiled grimly. "I've been kidding a lot of people lately. But not any more. The truth is this: I was Chicago agent for a non-resident landlord. He wrote me from Italy to reduce all rents twenty per cent. But I continued to collect the full rentals, salting away twenty per cent in my jeans and sending him the rest minus my commission. Your father paid thirty-five a month for twenty months when he should have paid only twenty-eight. Figure it out and you'll find I've doubled the refund to cover ten years' interest. I've made the same refund to all defrauded tenants. . . . So now you know. You'll call the police, I suppose."

The young man stared for a moment longer, then slowly shook his head. "Call the cops? Like heck I will! You say you've squared up everything. So it ends right here, far's I'm concerned. What the heck made you do this, Mr.—"

"Ross is the name. For one thing, because I've nothing to lose. Doctors tell me I've less than a month to live. Hepatic epithelioma in an advanced stage."

Terry cocked a professional eye. Instantly he was all doctor. He looked Henry Ross over from head to foot. "Nuts!" he said. "I don't believe it."

Henry Ross produced the proof from his coat pocket. It was a letter written him more than two months ago by Emory Halstead.

The senior medical student read it incredulously. "Nuts!" he said again.

"If you'd had an advanced liver cancer two months ago, by now you'd either be dead or completely bedridden. Look, Mr. Ross: I've got the run of this lab. And I need practice. Let's do some checking."

He took Ross' arm and hustled him toward an X-ray room.



Later that day he faced Henry Ross across a lab table. A set of X-ray photos lay between them. "Old Doc Jones is a good egg," Terry said, "and I got him to help me check 'em. The hepatic area is normal. Stomach area shows a few minor ulcers, but they look as if they've about disappeared." Terry's bright young face creased to a grin. "Whatever treatment you've been taking these last two months, Mr. Ross, it's the McCoy. My advice, and it won't cost you a dime, is that you'd better keep it up."

Ross' mood of relief lasted till he got back to his hotel. Then another mood set in: resentment—a burning resentment against Emory Halstead, M.D.

Halstead, who'd thrust him into the equivalent of a death cell for two long months! He damned Halstead. *The clumsy quack! Putting me through all this! I'll go back there and give him a piece of my mind.*

A man like that oughtn't be allowed to practice. He ought to be sued! Arrows of bitterness formed in Ross' mind, all directed at Doctor Emory Halstead. And that night, for the first time in weeks, he failed to sleep.

In the morning he lost no time catching a train for California. He was impatient to face and to denounce Halstead. If he couldn't sue the man, he could at least expose him for blundering malpractice. As the train sped westward, Ross' resentment in turn smoldered and flamed. Not because he'd tossed away some twelve thousand dollars in refunds. For that he had no regrets. Those people had had it coming to them. But Halstead's misdiagnosis was something else. Two months in a death cell! *And he calls himself a doctor! I'll make that guy hard to catch!*

It preyed on Henry Ross and kept him awake through two nights in a berth. Shaving on the second morning, his face looked haggard and gray, just as it had when he'd first gone for a check-up to Emory Halstead.

Arriving at Citrus City, he took a taxi. "The Commercial Bank Building," he said.

At the bank building he rushed up to a musty second-floor corridor. A frosted glass door said, EMORY N. P. HALSTEAD, M.D. Ross opened it and went in. No one was there. He sat down impatiently to wait. No doubt the Doctor was out on some call. Ross took the letter from his pocket. It was still in the envelope in which it had been mailed. *I'll ram it down his throat! I'll make him eat it! For two months he had me thinking I was—*

The door opened, and an elderly janitor entered. He had broom and pan and began sweeping the floor.

"When will the Doctor be in?" Ross inquired irritably.

"No tellin'," the janitor said. "He's been all shot to pieces lately, the Doc has. If you ask me, he needs a doctor himself."

"What's the matter with him?" Ross asked coldly.

The janitor leaned on his broom. "Well, seems like he balled up a case, coupla months ago. Wasn't his fault, really. Somebody switched some X rays on him. But he's stuck with it. And it's got him down. He ain't hardly been able to sleep since it happened. All shot to pieces, he is." The man peered at Henry Ross, adding: "Say, Mister, you look purty sick yerself. Maybe you hadn't better wait any longer. They's another doc right across the hall."

The janitor finished his chore and went out.

A mirror on the opposite wall showed Ross his own face. It was

taut, gray, haggard. His eyes had a dull, unhealthy look. Suddenly the warm young voice of Terry Hallohan came back to him. "Whatever treatment you've been taking, Mr. Ross, it's the McCoy. My advice is you'd better keep it up."

But he hadn't kept it up! He'd reversed it. The reversal now came starkly clear to Henry Ross. As long as he'd gone about bringing brightness into lives, he'd built himself up. Now he'd come to bring bleakness, and it was dragging him down.

As for Emory Halstead— "Needs a doctor himself," the janitor said. Henry Ross brooded over it. *I came here to give him a piece of my mind. But suppose I gave him peace of mind, instead! It would fix him up; and it would fix me up too.*

The thing could be done, Ross saw at once, by a single stroke of his hand. He took the letter out of its envelope. An envelope postmarked two months ago and addressed to 1224 N. Birch. Henry Ross picked up an eraser and erased the capital N. He put the envelope in Halstead's typewriter and substituted a capital S. The address now said: 1224 S. Birch.

Hoping that 1224 S. Birch wouldn't turn out to be a vacant lot, Henry Ross hurried out and caught a streetcar to the south side.

He found a house there—a big rambling house. A big house meant lots of people. And lots of people meant lots of carelessness. Plenty of things mislaid and forgotten.

No. 1224 S. Birch's front yard was deserted. The porch had an old-fashioned swing with cushions. Henry Ross, of 1224 N. Birch, reached furtively over the railing and slipped the letter under a swing cushion. An opened letter, but still in its post-marked envelope.

Henry Ross faded from the premises. No one had seen him. He must disappear again. But only for a week this time.

EMORY HALSTEAD in deep dejection sat at his office desk. A woman came in, one he'd never seen before.

"I'm Amy Stewart of 1224 South Birch." She laid a letter on the desk. "It was delivered to my house, I suppose, because it's addressed there, and someone opened it by mistake. We just found it this morning."

The woman went out. Emory Halstead picked up the letter and saw that it was his own. To Henry Ross. Addressed to *South Birch* instead of *North*. He must have typed an S instead of an N. So the patient, thank heaven, had never received it at all! Doctor Halstead looked at it, and his shoulders straightened. His eyes brightened. Warm, tingling blood chased the shadows from his face.

The Will Rogers

by D. C. O'FLAHERTY

WILL ROGERS was the eternal Yankee at King Arthur's Court, smart as a New England Yankee and as unreconstructed as a Southern rebel. He was a real cowboy, and all Americans love them. Though he was a shining star of Hollywood, he remained married to the same wife for twenty-eight years, and his idea of relaxation was to chat with the boys down at the bunkhouse, though Senators and Presidents were waiting for his advice.

That his place in the pantheon of American folk gods is secure is due to the fact that in the case of Will Rogers all these things were true. But the main reason that the American people loved Will Rogers was that there wasn't a mean hair in his head, despite all his barbed wit. He said that he never met a man he didn't like, and even those whose hides he nailed to the barn held no resentment against him, because he had the gift of taking the sting out of his criticisms. He once said at a dinner that he wanted his epitaph to be that he never hit a feller when he was down, and that too is ingrained in the American character.

Will Rogers was not born on the Fourth of July, like George M. Cohan, another great American, but he did the next best thing. He was born on Election Day in November, 1879, at Oologah, near Claremore, Oklahoma. His parents were Clem and Mary Schrimpsler Rogers, both of whom had Cherokee blood in their ancestry and were descendants of pioneer stock in Oklahoma Territory.

"I am the only child in history," Rogers says in his autobiography, "who claims November fourth as my birthday—that is, Election Day. Women couldn't vote in those days, so my mother thought she would do something, and she stayed home and gave birth to me. The men were all away. I decided to get even with the Government. That is why I have always had it in for the politicians."

Will was nine-thirty-seconds Cherokee, and proud of it. One of his most famous gags was that he had a better claim to being a hundred per cent

American than those whose forefathers had come over in the *Mayflower*.

"My ancestors didn't come over in the *Mayflower*," he said. "They met the boat."

In the old Commercial Bank at Boonville, Missouri, where Will attended Kemper Military School at the age of seventeen, there hung a copy of "Custer's Last Fight." Will remarked that he always liked that picture because it showed his race getting the better of it. He also made a passionate speech at Kemper when a schoolmate described an Indian chief as a "thoroughbred." The proper term, he pointed out, was "fullblood."

WILL's father was of Scottish and Irish descent, and his mother's maiden name was Teutonic, so that there is no doubt that in him ran a truly American blood-strain. His father had fought in the Confederate army, which rounds out the historical picture of his all-American lineage.

In later years many people thought that his cowboy routine on the stage was just an act, but the fact is that Will Rogers, like many another Oklahoma kid, grew up in the saddle. At five his father lifted him onto a cowpony, and from then on he remained there as much as he could. Handling a lariat also came as naturally to him as bow legs, and at fourteen he won a riding and roping contest over veteran contestants, which may have been the early turning point in his career. From then on the lariat would never be out of his hands until he had snared Fame and Fortune with it.

Since school obviously would not appeal much to a cowpunch' of seven who had been riding the range since he was five, it was with great difficulty that his parents got Will into school, or kept him there. He was sent home frequently for "arguing" with his teachers, though he delighted his fellow pupils with his imitations and his cowboy accomplishments.

One school followed another for the next ten years without making a dent in Will's rugged individuality. At seventeen his father, as many a juvenile hellion's dad has done before

and since, decided to send him to military school in the hope that the strict discipline would be good for him. So Willie, as he was called, entered the Kemper Military Academy at Boonville.

In one of his many syndicated articles, Will wrote: "Boonville (Kemper) was one of the finest military schools anywhere. I was there two years, one year in the guardhouse and the other in the Fourth McGuffey Reader. One was as bad as the other."

Will was immensely popular, in fact something of a hero, among his classmates, and even managed to stay on good terms with Col. T. A. Johnston, the commandant, despite his erratic grades and unmilitary behavior. When Colonel Johnston visited California in 1930, the Old Boys of Kemper School threw a banquet, and Will Rogers was the life of the party, as always. "Boys," he said, "this is my old schoolteacher. He and I couldn't agree on how to run the school, so I quit."

All those who remember him at Kemper agree, however, that Will was far from being backward in school. He just didn't cherish a good grade any better than a poor one. His wit also enlivened the dull routine of the classroom. One day the instructor asked him if he knew what H-2-0 was.

"There's plenty of it in town on circus day," said Will.

"How's that?" asked the instructor. "Red lemonade," Will answered.

SHORTLY after Will's death Kemper School rounded up a set of reminiscences of the Old Boys in a memorial pamphlet concerning Will's school-days. Of Will as a wit it says: "Many cadets remember Will as the school clown. Some say he was notoriously witty, continually setting his crowd or his table or the class in an uproar. Others can't remember this about him at all. That his remarks were not always appreciated is indicated by Mrs. J. A. Kieselhorst, who says her husband, now deceased, would frequently remark when listening to Will over the radio: 'Just think of it! There's Will Rogers getting big

Story

WE MUST NEVER FORGET HIM, FOR HIS STATURE GROWS IN RECOLLECTION, AND WE REALIZE THAT HE BELONGS WITH MARK TWAIN AND A FEW OTHERS IN THE SELECT COMPANY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN IMMORTALS.



Will slipped ashore anyway, and got a job breaking horses for a British remount station.

money for saying the same things over the radio that he got demerits for saying in the Mess Hall at Kemper.'

"Ben Johnson, a special friend of Will's,* says he had an extremely keen sense of humor, and as he looks back at it now, a very penetrating and understanding mind. He could see through any subject quicker than anybody I was ever associated with. He seemed to possess two minds, one to see ahead and the other to see behind."

The same set of reminiscences also recalls that, "While some remember Will for one thing and some for another, all remember Will and his lariat. Probably no cadet ever had as great a skill in anything as Will had with the lariat. If it wasn't convenient to impose on some new boy

*In his autobiography Will says: "Me and Ben Johnson, down at Chickasha, Oklahoma, were buddies together at Kemper, just a couple of poor ornery Indian boys. But the fact is we were sent to the Missouri State Reformatory, which is located near the same town, and through somebody's mistake they enrolled us at Kemper Military Academy instead."

to 'stoop over, run down the hall and beller like a calf,' so Will could lasso him, he would pay some cadet a quarter to do this during his holiday afternoon."

"With marvelous skill Will would lasso his right foot or his left foot or both feet or either arm, or pin his arms to his body. In the words of one of his admirers: 'Will would hold the cadets in a trance putting on a one-man act with the lasso, twirling it vertically and horizontally, stepping in and out, and then lassoing cadets, doorknobs or any object in sight.'"

Though his disregard of military attire earned him many a penalty tour, Will is remembered at Kemper as a snappy civilian dresser. On the day of his arrival he was wearing a ten-gallon hat with braided horsehair cord, flannel shirt and red bandanna handkerchief with a loud high-colored vest and high-heeled red top boots with spurs. His trouser legs were tucked into his top boots and his baggage was tied with a lariat. At other times he affected a derby hat, set way back on his head, a vest of many colors, a white wing collar and

an enormous bow tie. This was an outfit he had purchased on a holiday in Kansas City, and a photograph showing him in this dude finery also reveals that by now he was an extremely handsome youth.

In the spring of his second year at Kemper (1898) Will could stand school no longer. The warm zephyrs from the Gulf were scented with spring, and the open road was calling. Will wrote his father he was going to Texas to "help some fellers dig an oil well." The elder Rogers, intent on seeing his son complete his education, refused to finance the project, but Will got ten dollars apiece from his married sisters in Claremore and set out for Texas. It was his farewell to higher education, though for the next thirty-seven years he was to be a shrewd student of the world in which he lived.

Will had not been in Texas long when he decided that oil digging was not for him. (Mark Twain, in "Roughing It," tells of a similar experience with silver mining.) It was back-breaking work, and in Will's case, unrewarding. He was flat broke

and wired for money to come home. After letting him stew in his own juices for a while, to teach him a lesson, his father sent the money, and Will went back to the family ranch.

Clem Rogers, who was known as "Uncle Clem" throughout the ranch country, now decided that Will should learn responsibility through actually having some of it unloaded on his shoulders. The best way, he thought, would be to leave Will in charge of the ranch for a while, with full power of attorney to draw on the family bank account, and see how he made out. This he did, and went off on a vacation.

"I didn't exactly run it to suit him," Will says.

THE Shawnee, Oklahoma, Morning News, later described the result:

"In effect, the father said to the son: 'My boy, your schooling days are now over. You have reached the age of accountability. I am going away on a vacation, and will not return soon. I leave you in charge of my affairs. This homestead, these prairie lands and herds and cowhands are under your care. Here is my checkbook, and there is ample money in the bank. Draw money and spend it according to your wisdom.'

"A few days later the father departed, leaving his son with great power and prestige.

"The old-timers relate that the prodigal son made the time of his father's absence a golden age for his friends. Feasts, rodeos, dances followed one another in rapid succession. The air was filled with shouting and song, and the homestead was made bright and gay with the presence of young men and maidens. The best pony riders from all about were in evidence, dressed in the picturesque attire of those free and fine days.

"Gayest of all, the son and heir rode about on his pony Comanche, wisecracking and looping the loop with his lariat. When his father returned, it was to find that there was a hole in his bank account big enough to bury a horse, and not much to show for the expenditure."

As a result of this dude-ranch fling, which cost Clem Rogers about one

thousand dollars, young Will found himself without a power of attorney and, in fact, without a dime. Being in bad at home for the moment, he got a job on a neighboring ranch owned by a Col. W. P. Ewing. Although there were three thousand steers roaming the place, unroped and un-dehorned, Will did not seem to be in any hurry to get to work, although he was a first-class cowhand.

Seeing him chatting and wisecracking, seated on a fence, another cowhand asked Colonel Ewing why he kept him. The Colonel replied in effect that he was keeping him on for laughs, and added that he was afraid to let him go because he didn't think he'd amount to anything anywhere else.

The rift with his family did not last long, as it never did, and Will soon rejoined his father's outfit, where he amazed his parent by deciding to stop fooling around, all of a sudden, and go to work. He acquired a herd of cattle from his father and built it into a fine investment. It netted Will twelve thousand dollars of his own, and right here another youngster might have decided to settle down and become a cattle baron. Not young Will. Distant pastures again were calling, and they were distant indeed, since he and another young cowpuncher, Dick Paris, wound up eventually in the Argentine, whither they had gone, *via* New Orleans and England, to become Gauchos.

Will soon developed a profound admiration for the Argentine cowboy. He admitted that he was "sorter itchin'" to show these Gauchos how he could rope and tie down a steer, so in his first job on the pampas—he was getting \$4.20 a month—he offered one day to give a demonstration.

"Well," said Will later, "I hadn't even got close enough to start swinging my rope, when I heard something go whizzing over my head. A guy running about twenty feet behind me had thrown clear over my head and caught the steer. Why, he could rope a steer better'n I could shoot a guy with a Winchester."

Meanwhile, Rogers' companion had become homesick, but there was now only enough money left between them

to pay for one passage home. They flipped a coin, and Rogers lost.

Restless as ever, and fed up with the Argentine, Will shipped on a mule boat for Capetown. This little "perfumed luxury jaunt" as he called it, took thirty-one days, and then the British authorities refused to admit him because he didn't have one hundred pounds as required by law. Will slipped ashore anyway and got a job breaking horses for a British remount station at Ladysmith. The Boer armies under "Oom Paul" (Uncle Paul) Kruger were nearing the end of their rope just as Will arrived with his, and he did not get to see any of the action he had undoubtedly hoped for.

Will had a poor opinion of British army horsemanship, as seen at Ladysmith. He said that most of the British cavalrymen "couldn't ride in a box car with the door sealed up," and when he heard that there was a Wild West show at Johannesburg, he went to investigate.

This was his introduction to show business. The show was owned by a character named Texas Jack. Will wandered into the crowd as Texas Jack was doing a simple rope trick. The showman was offering one hundred dollars to anyone who could duplicate the stunt. This was duck soup for Rogers, who immediately stepped up.

With the grin that was to become familiar to audiences all over the world, he performed the trick with a flourish, following it with a number of tricks of his own. The crowd applauded, and Will Rogers, the showman, was born.

He didn't get the hundred dollars, however. Texas Jack was stony, and so was the show. Will, with characteristic good nature, made no fuss about it, but accepted a job with the show instead. Will credits Texas Jack, who he says was one of the smartest showmen he ever met, with giving him the idea for his original stage act with a pony. He billed himself now as "The Cherokee Kid," and also occasionally went on in clown costume or blackface, taking tumbles in a red-spotted costume or singing what then were called "coon songs."

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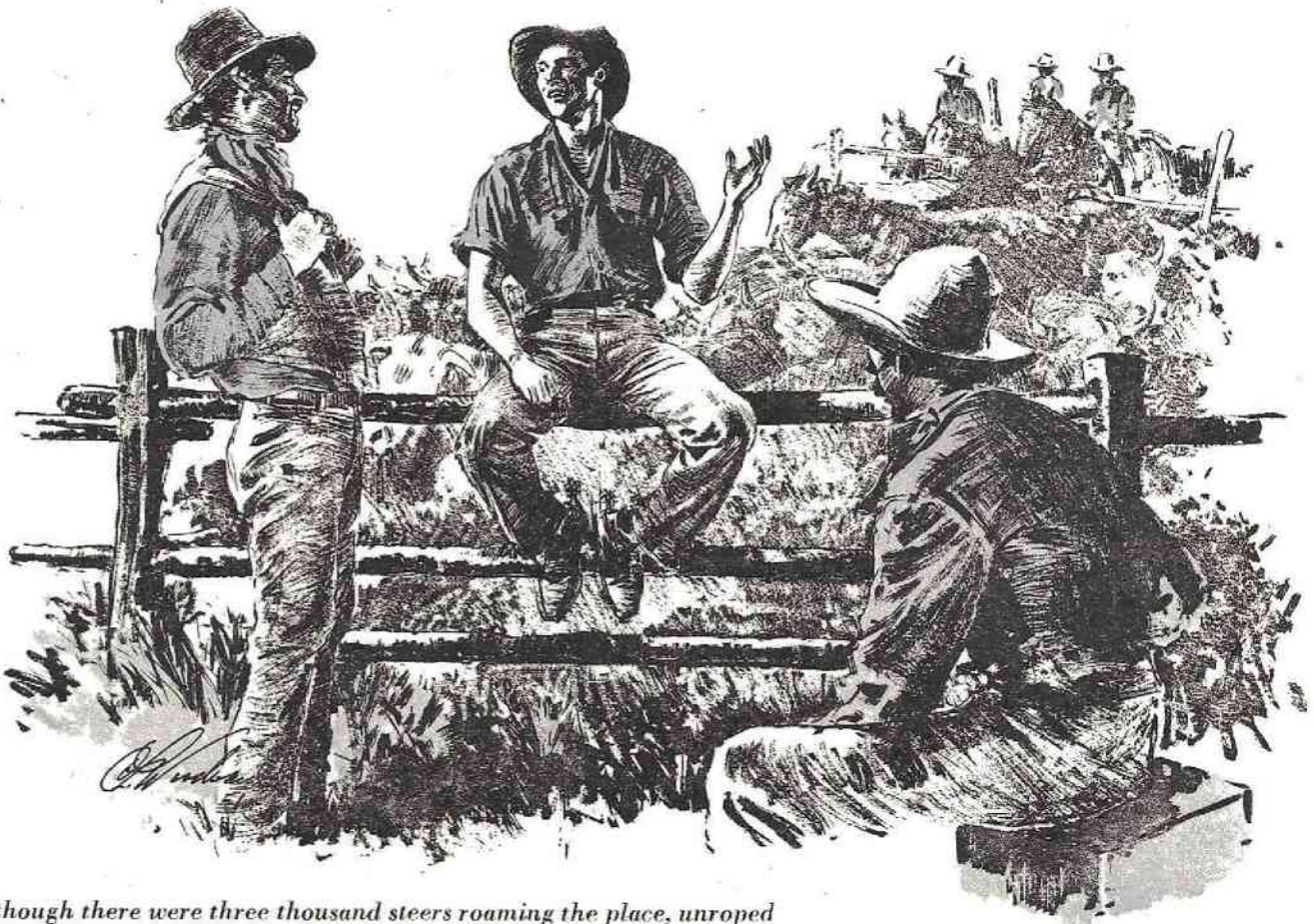
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Although there were three thousand steers roaming the place, unroped and unhorned, Will did not seem to be in any hurry to get to work.

These extra-curricular activities were just for the purpose of letting off youthful exuberance, however, for Rogers never seriously considered any rôle other than that of the ropewircling cowboy. He remained with Texas Jack for several years, touring New Zealand, Australia, Japan and China. Three years after he had left Oklahoma, he landed back in San Francisco, dead broke.

FROM SAN FRANCISCO he bummed his way back to the family ranch at Oologah, and rested up a spell. Since he had returned home broke, wearing overalls for drawers, as he said, the community was not much impressed by his adventures in foreign lands.

Will didn't care whether they were impressed or not. He was much more interested—in fact, desperately interested—in making an impression on a visiting belle, Betty Blake, the girl he was later to marry. The best way to do this, he reasoned, as men have reasoned for countless ages, was to let his lady fair see him in the performance of some remarkable exploit.

This took the form of essaying a bicycle trick which he had seen carnival cyclists perform. Betty Blake was seated on her porch one day when Will rode up on a magnificent

two-wheeler—the kind that needed handlebar mustaches to go with it—and proceeded to go into his act. He went into it, but he did not come out of it. The treacherous old-fashioned bicycle, which really needed a Houdini to keep it upright, was too much for Will, who could subdue a steer with his bare hands. Will did a brodie into the dust, bleeding from a gash on his head.

"I guess I'd better stick to cow ponies," he told Betty sadly when she ran out into the street and helped to stanch the flow of blood from what proved to be, after all, not a serious cut.

The romance that began with the busted bicycle did not culminate in marriage until three years later. Will needed employment, but ranch life was now too dull, and he joined another Wild West show; Zach Mulhall's, which played whistle stops all over the Southwest and wound up at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904. This was the first taste of the Big Time for Rogers, and he was never to leave it again. From St. Louis the show moved on to New York, playing in Old Madison Square Garden at Twenty-third Street. Will was now twenty-six and a star of the show.

At Madison Square Garden, Will made the front pages of the New York

papers with an act that was strictly unrehearsed. One night as the Garden was jammed, a steer broke through a railing and headed, berserk, in the direction of the audience. As panic broke out, Will snaked his lariat over the animal's head and brought it down, then subdued it and shoved it back into its corral. The newspapers played the story big.

Like many another hero for a day, however, Will found, when the show closed, that front-page publicity is not always a guarantee of eating. Although he was determined now to stay in New York amid the bright lights, or at least go on tour, he made a fruitless round of the vaudeville agencies. A cowboy roping act, conducted in grinning silence, struck the theatrical agents as being one rung lower than Japanese wrestlers, and they would have none of him.

WILL was so low in funds by this time that he was willing to take a booking at the Union Square Theater as a "supper show" performer. "The supper show," Rogers explained, "meant that the big acts did only two shows a day and the little ones an 'extra' at supper time between six and eight, when nobody that had a home or somewhere to eat would be in the theater."

By sheer persistence, Will eventually managed to catch on with the Klaw and Erlanger Circuit, but his act was still a dumb act, and always reserved for the worst spots on the program, either an opening or close. His only props were his gum, or rubber bands (which he preferred to chew), his rope, and his horse. He had a rider, Buck McKee. By now Will realized that his show needed a monologue to go with it, but because of his innate shyness, it was a long time before he developed the breezy line of ad lib patter which was to carry him to the heights.

Buck McKee was among those who helped him eventually overcome this shyness. Buck used to stand in the wings and make wisecracks about the act while Rogers was on the stage, and sometimes McKee's stage whippers could be heard out front, to the delight of the audience. The manager noticed that McKee was getting laughs for the pair of them, and urged them to try for more. Gradually Will gained confidence to lengthen his monologue, and eventually his act ran to forty-five minutes of wisecracks and rope-spinning that "brought down the house."

MANY stories are told of how and where Will was first persuaded to talk on the stage, but the truth is that the need for the monologue was so insistent that Will experimented with it many times, at the beginning, so that no one performance can be said to have been the first. Will himself said: "It took all of my friends to drive me to it."

Will was now earning a good living, and his thoughts turned once more to Betty Blake, the lovely hometown girl he had met on his return from the Orient. He had been exposed to some of the most beautiful girls in show business, but from the day Will laid eyes on Betty Blake, no other girl had existed for him. Now, in 1908, feeling that he had financial security to offer, he hurried down to Arkansas, where she was teaching school and asked her to marry him.

It was the horse-and-buggy age, and Will says he wore out three sets of rubber tires before he could persuade Betty to say yes.

"When I roped her, that was the star performance of my life," Rogers said. On their wedding trip to New York, they heard Caruso sing and visited Grant's Tomb, since those were the two things that Betty wanted most. Their marriage was a lifelong idyl. Will never did anything without consulting Betty, and though she never obtruded into his professional life, he would not sign a contract without reading it to her for approval. Will was above all a family

man, and it was with Betty and the children that he always preferred to spend his leisure hours.

A symbol of Will's devotion to Betty arrived in their California home three days after his death. Three days after the fatal plane crash Mrs. Rogers received a gift he had sent her from Juneau, a red fox fur. His last thoughts had been of her.

Once when Will had been invited to perform at the home of some wealthy people, he sent a bill for his services. The host protested, saying that he thought Will was present as a guest. Will commented that if he had really been invited as a guest, Betty would have been invited too.

In 1915, Will began his association with Florenz Ziegfeld, at the Midnight Show on the roof of the old Amsterdam Theater. It was the first of its kind—the kind, Will says in his autobiography, which has "since degenerated into a drunken orgy of off-colored songs and close formation dancing." The Midnight Frolic at the Amsterdam was nothing like that. It featured Ziegfeld's glorious girls and such performers as Will Rogers and Eddie Cantor, and was for "folks with lots of money," although the cover charge in those days was only five dollars. Will says that since he wanted "only fresh-laid jokes" for the midnight show, he took to reading the early editions of the morning papers for material. This was the genesis of his famous line, "Well, all I know is what I read in the newspapers," and resulted eventually in the syndicated daily newspaper column by which he became known to millions of Americans who never saw him on the stage.

His association with Flo Ziegfeld resulted in one of the closest friendships of his life. He appeared in the "Follies" from 1914 to 1924, during which time his star shot from the national over the international horizon. Ziegfeld regarded him as a son, and called Rogers, W. C. Fields, and Eddie Cantor his "Three Musketeers." There was also a firm and lasting friendship between this trio, unmarred by professional jealousy, which is one of the most remarkable in the history of the theater, considering that Cantor and Fields were uninhibited extroverts who had come up in the rough-and-tumble of show business during its free-for-all infancy.

WILL struck up a warm friendship with Cantor, as he did later with W. C. Fields—a man who could take fantastic revenges on his fellow players, whom he disliked almost to a man; but like everyone else, he was a sucker for the Rogers charm and loved Will like a brother. The Three Musketeers of the Follies swapped

suggestions on their material, and were inseparable on-stage and off. As Cantor said, they were willing to lay down their laughs for one another, although giving a gag to Rogers was "like bringing a can of oil to Rockefeller."

When Ziegfeld died, Rogers and Cantor made the funeral arrangements. Rogers tried to tell the preacher what Ziegfeld's friends would like him to say, but broke down and wept. He was inconsolable over the loss of the man who had been like a father to him.

Will Rogers made his first movie in 1919 and his first political speech in 1922. In both media, the movies and politics, he was soon to be at home, although the silent pictures did not offer full range for his talents. In 1922, also, he began writing for the newspapers, a weekly comment which was to be expanded into his daily column in 1926. His first moving picture was "Laughing Bill Hyde," long since forgotten, and his first political speech was on behalf of Ogden Mills, then a candidate for Congress.

Will, a lifelong Democrat, said that he favored sending Mills, a Republican, to Congress because he was already wealthy and not in politics from necessity. "This is my first political speech and I hope it flops," Will said, "I don't want to have it go over and then have to go into politics, because up to now I've tried to live honest." Of Ogden Mills' opponent, Rogers commented that he did not know him but was sure he was a scoundrel and a tool of the interests, because "every opponent is." He wound up by saying that he favored sending Mills to Congress because he would be the only Congressman who could get into a Fifth Avenue home without delivering something.

The richly bred Mr. Mills was not amused, but Will had found a new avocation in which he excelled—lampooning the foibles of politics.

Will attended political conventions and disarmament conferences, and from his association with world and national politics came some of his most pungent observations. The ability to "see through" any subject which his ornery school friend Ben Johnson had detected at Kemper stood him in good stead. Will had an unerring instinct of arriving at the truth, and he communicated it daily to the American public through his syndicated column in a manner that made millions of Americans swear by him. It had the advantage of pithiness, too; it was not a column at all, but a "box" on the front page of the newspapers in which he capsuled, with wry and understanding humor, his observations on everything under the sun.

Aside from his newspaper work, Rogers found time to turn out books and magazine articles. His first book was called, simply, "Rogersisms," and was published in 1919, before he began newspaper work. The same year he turned out "The Cowboy Philosopher on the Peace Conference" and the "Cowboy Philosopher on Prohibition." He also edited a motion picture weekly feature called "The Illiterate Digest," which was later published in book form.

By the time he went to Europe in 1926, his magazine series, "Letters of a Self-made Diplomat to His President" had spread his literary fame abroad, and he was fêted in England, where his good friend Lady Astor acted as his hostess and guide. Will also visited Russia that year and wrote a book about it, entitled "There's Not a Bathing Suit in Russia." He took some good-natured jabs at the Russian leaders but for once there

was no squawk from the Soviet mouthpiece press on either side of the water, which is probably a record.

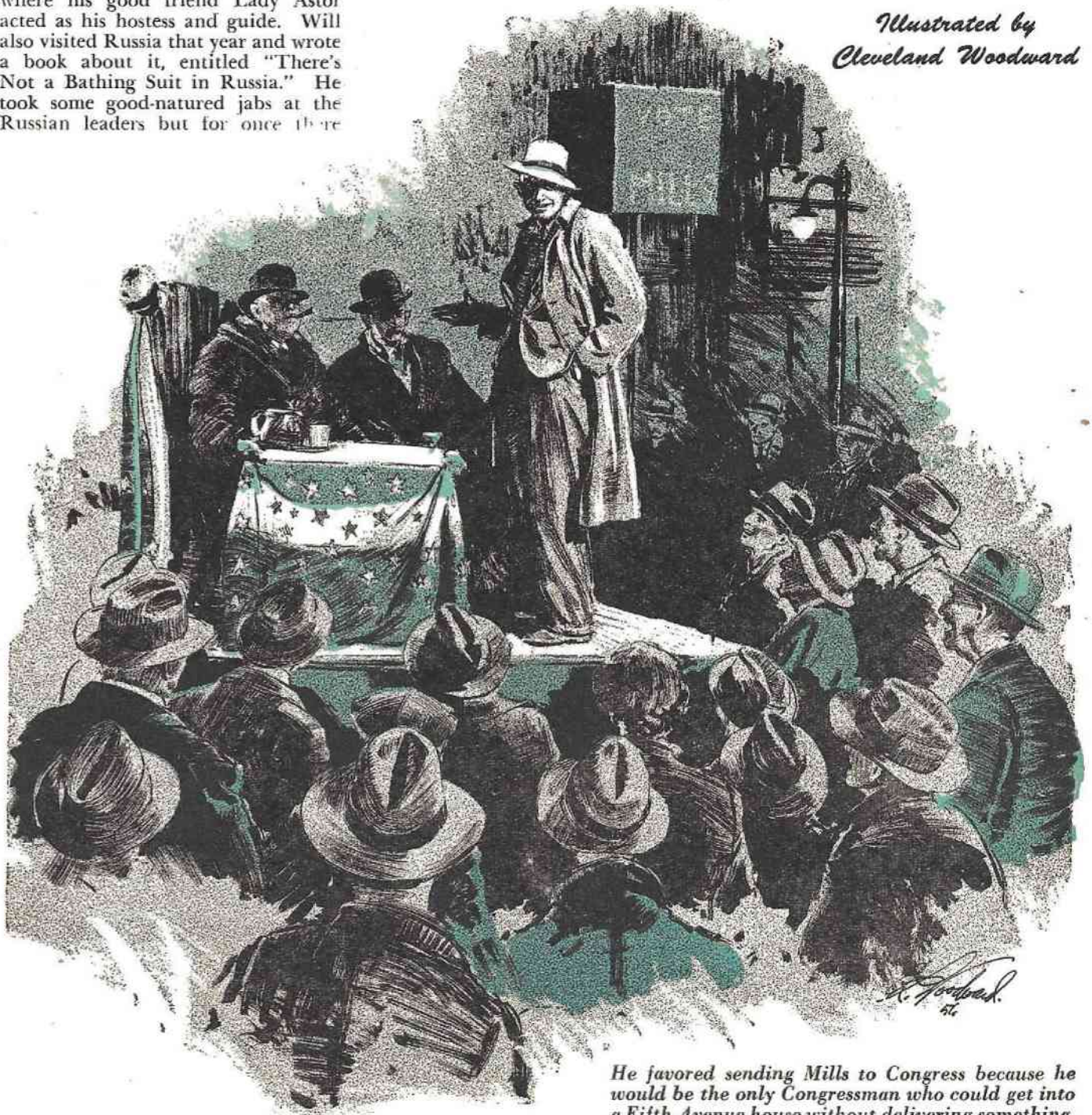
In fact, Will was now on terms of friendship with kings, queens, presidents, mayors, senators and governors, and with "big shots" everywhere. He had met the Prince of Wales on Long Island, during the Prince's triumphant visit to the United States, and pronounced him not only a regular fellow but had defended him against those who said his horsemanship was terrible. Rogers found it not as bad as reported.

When he was introduced to Calvin Coolidge, a friend had bet him that

he could not make the Sphinxlike Coolidge smile. Coolidge was notorious for getting the best of those who tried to break through his reserve, usually embarrassing them in the bargain. But he met his match in Will Rogers. When Will was presented to the President, he said in a stage aside: "Pardon me, I didn't get the name." Coolidge broke into a smile.

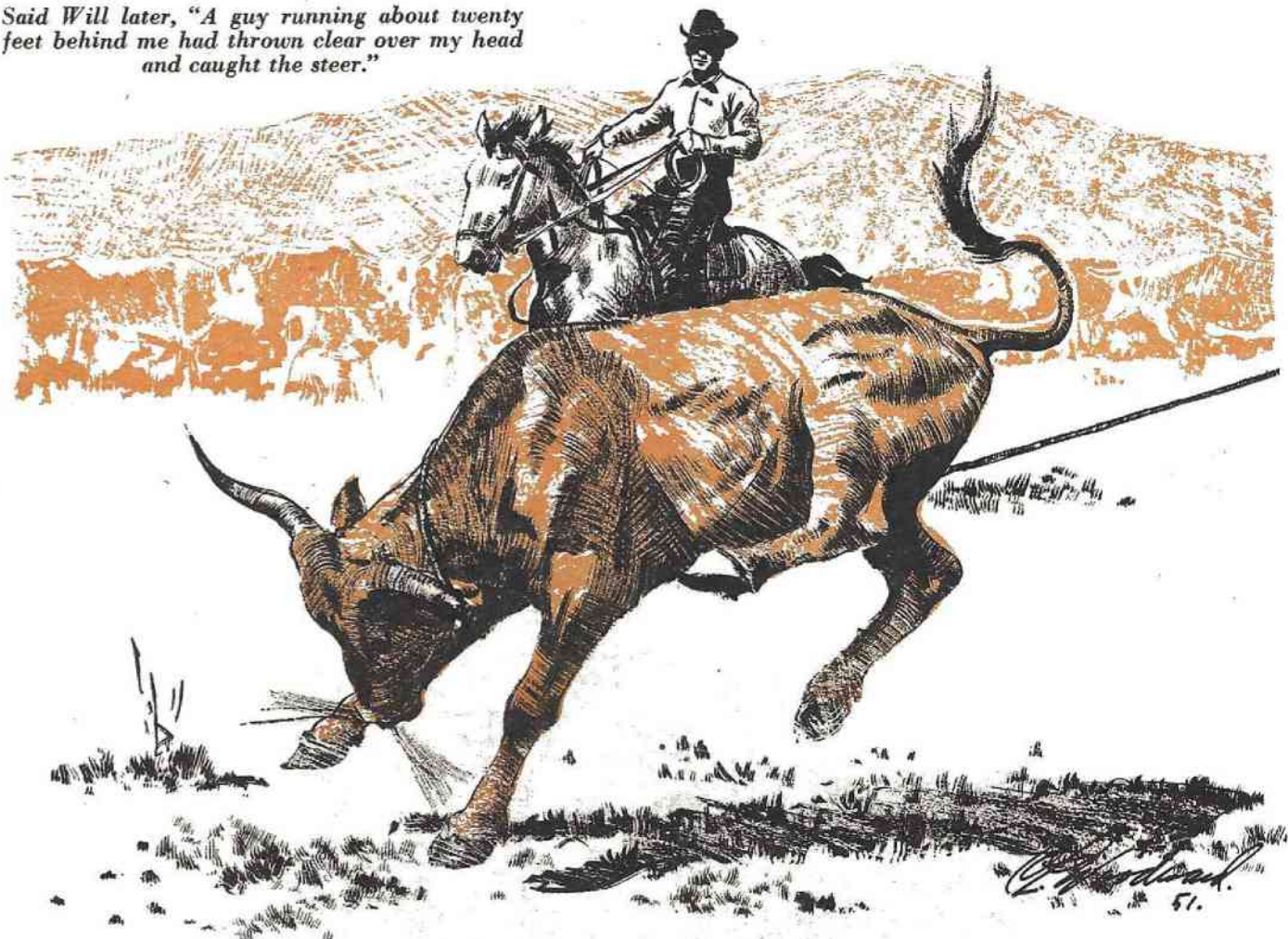
For the benefit of those who saw Rogers as only a superficial wisecracker in his writings, it should be noted that his batting average of prophecy was practically a hundred per cent.

*Illustrated by
Cleveland Woodward*



He favored sending Mills to Congress because he would be the only Congressman who could get into a Fifth Avenue house without delivering something.

Said Will later, "A guy running about twenty feet behind me had thrown clear over my head and caught the steer."



He foresaw the depression clearly in May, 1928, when the "economists" of the boom era were proclaiming paper prosperity as the real thing, and a normal condition of American life.

Will addressed himself thus to the President: "You know, Cal, you been President at a mighty fortunate time in our lives. The Lord has sure been good to us. Now what are we doing to warrant that good luck more than any other nation? Now just how long is this going to last? It just ain't in the book for us to have the best of everything all the time. A lot of these nations are mighty poor, and things kinder equal up in the long run. If you got more money, the other fellow mebber got better health; and if another's got something, why some other will have everything else. But we got too big an overbalance of everything and we better kinder start looking ahead and seeing where we are headed for."

He foresaw the split among the Democrats in 1928 on the issues of Prohibition and Al Smith's Catholicism. The South would vote dry, he said, as long as "they could stagger to the polls."

On the possibility of another World War he wrote: "We are at peace because the world is waiting to get another gun and get it loaded."

Of the evils of Child Labor he said: "I see a lot in the papers about this 20th or Child Labor Amendment, and I have been asked how I stand on that. If Congress would just pass one law, as follows, they wouldn't need the 20th Amendment: 'Every child, regardless of age, shall receive the same wage as a grown person.' That will stop your child labor. They only hire them because they pay them less for the same work than they would have to pay a man."

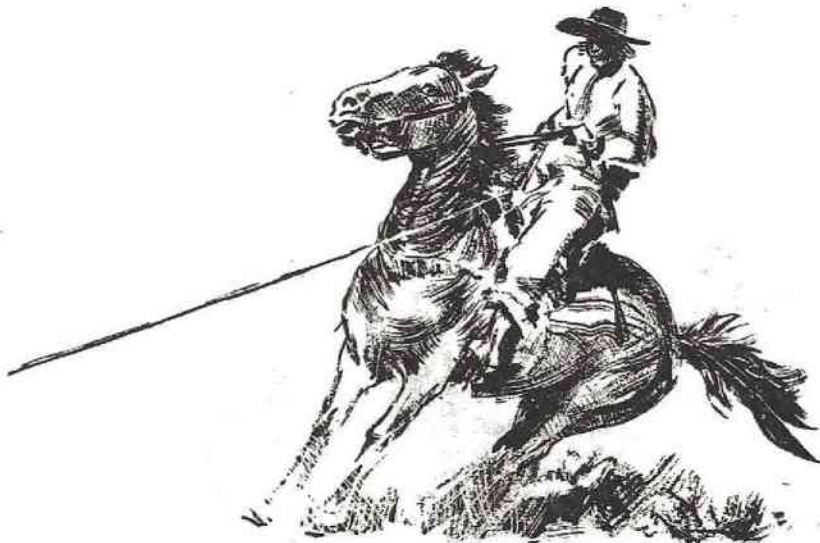
THE depression depressed him, as so much misery was bound to, and on reading, after the crash, overly optimistic reports that this or that stock was "strong" despite the knockout blow, he wrote: "The American public's head is strong but his heart is weak." This was not a characteristic Will Rogers statement, and it is canceled out by another declaration of his that he was sick and tired of hearing what this country needs. "This country is too damn big," he said, "to need anything."

Will also had the gift of "ticking off" a person or a situation with a phrase. Among his best were a description of H. L. Mencken as "the Undesirable Element of Literature" and the city of San Francisco as "the Greta Garbo of Cities."

The advent of the talking movies and the development of the radio gave Will new opportunities to exercise his influence on the American people. He had as good a natural radio voice as Franklin Roosevelt, and his drolleries rapidly made him a top star on the air waves (at \$350 a minute). Though he had made fourteen silent pictures, and a lot of money, for Samuel Goldwyn, it remained for the "talkies" to let him be seen (and heard) in such heart-warming pictures as "Steamboat Round the Bend" and "Judge Priest."

His influence on Hollywood was plainly discernible. Since he would make only wholesome pictures—which in turn made millions at the box office—he did much to persuade the movie producers that smut and sensationalism were not necessary to make money.

The last and one of the greatest contributions he made to American life was his enthusiasm for the cause



of aviation. That he met his death in an airplane accident does not lessen his contribution. As far back as 1925 he had been indignant over the dismissal of General "Billy" Mitchell for insisting on American supremacy in the air. He was himself an indefatigable flyer, and could not be dissuaded from taking a plane even for short hops. He made twenty-five trans-continental trips safely. His last flight was to have been a leisurely ramble through Alaska with his friend Wiley Post, with no particular destination. Will Rogers wanted to see Alaska.

ON the day that the plane crashed at Point Barrow, he wrote his last newspaper article, which was syndicated in 350 dailies. It was not one of his sparkling efforts; merely a plea for better housing for emigrants to Alaska. After he had filed his daily stint, Will took off with Post for Fairbanks, and was never seen alive again except by an Eskimo.

A smashed watch in Will's pocket indicated that the plane crashed near Point Barrow at three-thirty A.M. on August 15, 1935, in a heavy Arctic fog. An Eskimo discovered the wrecked plane and reported it, after a three-hour trek into the settlement.

The radio operator at Point Barrow radioed this account to the War Department in Washington:

At 10 P.M. last night attracted by a group of excited natives on the beach. Walking down discovered one native all out of breath gasping in pidgin English a strange tale of "airplane she blow up." After repeated questioning learned this native witnessed crash of airplane at his sealing camp some fifteen miles south of Barrow and had run the entire distance to summon aid.

Native claimed plane flying very low suddenly appeared from the south and apparently sighted tent. Plane then circled several times, and finally settled upon small river near camp. Two men climbed out, one wearing "rag on sore eye" (Post was blind in one eye and wore a patch) and other "big man with boots." The big man then called native to water's edge and asked distance and direction to Point Barrow. Direction given, men then climbed back into plane and taxied off to far side of river for take-off into wind. After short run plane slowly lifted from water to height of about fifty feet, banking slightly to the right when evidently motor stalled. Plane slipped off on right wing and nosed down into water, turning completely over. Native claimed dull explosion occurred and most of right wing dropped off and a film of gasoline and oil soon covered the water.

Native frightened by explosion, turned and ran, but soon controlled fright and returned, calling loudly to men in plane. Receiving no answer, then made decision to come to Barrow for help.

With completion of the story, we knew plane to be that of Post and Rogers and quickly assembled a crew of fourteen Eskimos and departed in an open whaleboat powered with a small gas motor. Hampered by recent ice floes and strong, adverse current, took nearly three hours to reach destination. Dense fog with semidarkness gave upturned plane most ghostly appearance, and our hearts chilled at the thought of what we might find there. As we approached nearer the plane, we realized that no human being could possibly survive the terrific crash. The plane was but a huge mass of twisted and broken wood and metal.

The natives by this time had managed to cut into the cabin and extricate the body of Rogers, who apparently had been well back when the plane struck, and was more or less protected by the baggage carried therein. We soon learned that we would have a difficult job freeing Post from the wreckage, as the plane had struck with such terrific speed that it had forced the engine back into the cabin, pinning the body of Post securely. With some difficulty we managed to tear the plane apart and eventually release the body of Post. Both bodies were then carefully wrapped with eiderdown sleeping bags found in the wreckage and then placed in the boat.

It is believed that the natives felt the loss of these two great men as keenly as we. As we started back to Barrow, one of the Eskimo boys began to sing a hymn in Eskimo, and soon all voices joined in this singing and continued it until our arrival at Barrow, where we silently bore the bodies from the beach to the hospital, where they were turned over to Dr. Harry Greist, who with the kindly help of Charles D. Brower prepared and dressed the bodies.

It is doubtful if a person in this little village slept that night; all sat around the hospital with bowed heads and with little or no talking.

THE man in the street could scarcely comprehend that Will Rogers was dead. The newspaper headlines stunned the nation as nothing short of an unexpected war, or the assassination of the President, could have done. Will Rogers, dead at fifty-six, at the height of his fame and at the peak of his popularity, was America's best friend—and the nation sat by its radios, with its newspapers in its lap, unable at first to take it in. Condolences poured in to the Rogers home in Beverly Hills from the White House, from all the great of the world, but it was in the shocked, wordless grief of the American people that the greatest tribute to Will Rogers was paid. All in all, they would not see his like again.

He was laid in a temporary resting place at Glendale, California, after a brief private ceremony, as the family desired. In 1944 his body was reinterred in a tomb before the Will Rogers Memorial Museum at Claremore, Oklahoma, overlooking a wide sweep of the valley where he was born and where he rode the range in his youth.

It was the spot he had picked for his retirement, and the property was his before becoming the site of the Will Rogers Memorial Museum. So in death Will Rogers rests among the people he loved best.

Just the Necessary Violence



Costello saw that look on Charley's face. "Sit tight," he said in an undertone, "we have no status here."

WITH less than an hour left of the run, Mike Costello turned the squad car toward the waterfront—less than an hour until he and Charley'd check in at the station.

Their vacation started in the morning, but they'd be on their own from midnight on, and they'd be heading for the fishing at Lake Henshaw before the sun was up.

"Should be nice at Henshaw, Mike," Charley Swanson said.

Mike Costello smiled. Henshaw, Otay, Elsinore, what difference did it make? They'd have two long-needed weeks without so much as mention of police work. And the back of his hand to that guff he'd heard from the smart guys at the station.

"Isn't riding with him bad enough?" Berry'd wanted to know.

"You take the rap for the jams he gets you into," the desk sergeant had

cut in. "I'd think you'd want to get away from a hard-luck cop like him, for at least a week or two."

Hard-luck cop? There are no hard-luck cops. But let those meatheads think that, if they wanted to. You don't tell them that Charley has a weakness. In fact, you don't tell anybody, and you don't let Charley tell 'em, either.

"The jams he gets you into!" The meatheads! In memory of them Costello made a rude noise with his lips.

"What did you say, Mike?"

"Nothing, Charley," Mike Costello said. Jams. There'd been only two

all year, a big improvement on the year before. Yet cruising San Diego's darkened streets, Costello reluctantly admitted to himself that two were still too many.

But he'd do better, a whole lot better. This one weird quirk of Charley's was beyond his comprehension, out of character in a man who could take in a stickup with never more than just the necessary violence, accept a physical attack upon himself as something entirely impersonal, and smile off a needling from a hood.

A weird streak in Charley Swanson's make-up caused some of his friends to call him a hard-luck cop. Consider, for instance, what happened when he took a vacation!

by PHIL MAGEE



A dozen times Costello had been sure he knew just what to look for. Then somehow he'd miss one, fail to recognize the storm before it broke, give too late the crisp command that would bring Charley back to earth. For that he blamed nobody but himself. Charley was easy enough to handle if you stopped him before he started.

"Think we ought to take a look at Nick's and Benny's, Mike?"

Grinning broadly, Costello pulled in to the curb. Neither Berry nor that meathead on the desk would so much as throw a spotlight if they were on the last hour of their last tour before vacation. And most cops, when they're riding with a senior officer, just ride.

But that was Charley for you; and though he topped Mike's trim one-eighty by nearly sixty pounds, he was on the sidewalk before Costello had stepped into the street, and that despite a noticeable limp.

That no one had ever called his partner "Gimpy" seemed to Costello a truly touching thing. And it did not occur to him that this charming reticence had been influenced by his own sweeping offer to bend the beak of any man so tempted.

The look at Nick's was uneventful. They got the customary quota of dirty looks from both sides of the bar, and from Nick himself the usual open insult. "Costello, can't you and this big slob find some way to make an honest living?"

"Nick," Costello said, "line yourself up a good dental surgeon, and then ask me that sometime when I'm off duty."

"Now, Mike!" Charley said.

BUMBOAT BENNY'S place was quiet, but so crowded their entrance passed unnoticed.

Costello turned to go, his last official act behind him, his mind on smallmouthed bass. "That about does it, Charley. We can check in now," he said.

And then it happened. A simple thing requiring no more than elementary police work, but the sort of thing that made for an extra occupational hazard when you rode with Charley Swanson.

A citizen had tossed a twenty on Bumboat Benny's bar. As might have been expected, he got back change for ten. And citizens run heavier in the lung than in the judgment.

Costello whirled about, saw the situation for exactly what it was, and acted in accordance.

Driving through the crowd, well ahead of Charley, Costello grabbed the bartender as he cleared the bar and pinned him up against the wall. Protection, that's what the citizen was entitled to, and that's what he was getting. That of course was routine. The real trick in a case like this was preventing complication by beating Charley to the grab.

Funny how in spots like this Charley never seemed to notice that the citizen was almost always a loud-mouthed yuk, with the manners of a mule, and the reasoning of an ape.

All Charley ever saw was the big fist lifted up to still the outcry of the swindled. And when he saw that, he'd forget for one wild moment that a copper's only function was to bring before, not mete out, justice.

A strange failing for a cop, especially one with Charley's tolerance for those who had no claim to mercy.

Yet a quick yell would snap him out of it, though it would need to be a quick one; for Charley, while not as fast as Mike Costello, was much faster than he looked. Or if you were as fast as Mike Costello, you could beat Charley to the grab. And this time Costello thought he'd done it very neatly.

But vanity and vigilance do not walk hand in hand, and he didn't see the bouncer who bore down on the citizen from the far end of the bar.

THE howl he heard came too late as a warning. He turned in time to catch a glimpse of Charley's face, and Charley's face was no longer round and smooth and smiling.

Costello yelled, but the punch that Charley'd started was already on its way. It landed lustily, and Costello shut his eyes. Right on the bouncer's kisser. Police brutality, the press would call it, while their camera hounds went mad. Thank God, the Chief was out of town.

"Mike," Charley said, "I—I'm—"

"Shut up," Costello said, "and go call the wagon."

"Shut up," he said, an hour later, when they were waiting anxiously outside Lieutenant Hagen's office.

Through the panels he could hear the shrill complaint of Bumboat Benny's shyster. Anger churned inside Costello—anger that included Hagen himself, and of course the loud-mouthed citizen. But somehow Charley was excluded, and in that Costello saw not the slightest inconsistency. All this hoop-de-do over a hired strongarm!

"But Mike," Charley insisted, "it's all my fault. I'll tell Hagen—"

"You'll tell him nothing. You'll keep your fat face closed." Tell Hagen? What could Charley tell him? The lying this would take required an imagination not possessed by simple souls like Charley. Besides, Costello was the senior officer. It was his run, his responsibility, for every action on it.

Let's see—"The officer's action was necessitated by the imminent danger of great bodily harm being visited upon the person of a defenseless citizen." That sounded good. The Chief would never go for it, but Hagen was a reasonably considerate man.

He was, but he gagged a bit on that one, and his oratory far surpassed Costello's.

"It's a good thing it's me and not the Chief," he roared.

It was, for Hagen could be mollified by a listener who convincingly pretended to be frightfully impressed, and Costello really strained. Through the long harangue, his brow was

bathed with sweat, but not once did he hear the dreaded word, *suspended*.

There was caustic comment on his overdue promotion, promises a man would long remember, and penalties that hurt. The fishing trip was definitely off, not by Hagen's orders, but on his good advice.

"I'd forget about the fishing," Lieutenant Hagen said. "The Chief's due back on Tuesday, and until he simmers down a bit, you'd better not be any place where he can find you."

Bitterly Costello accepted Hagen's judgment, for even in his anger he could not deny the truth.

The Chief, an ardent fisherman himself, knew every spot a man could wet a line, and in his early wrath he'd have them on the mat if he could reach them by wire, phone or word of mouth. And that, Costello saw quite clearly, would be no trick at all for a man who had the Chief's connections.

Withdrawing from the presence of authority, relief replaced Costello's anger long enough for him to get a cup of coffee and an hour or two of sleep.

By morning it returned to plague him, this time directed only at himself. Last night could be attributed to carelessness, but how about the other times when he hadn't seen a thing until too late?

The mood held through the short walk to the bus terminal, was only half forgotten in a lengthy interrogation of the terminal agent, and did not disperse entirely until he saw Charley coming toward him. After all, this was the vacation they'd been looking forward to.

"I'm sorry about the fishing, Mike," Charley Swanson said.

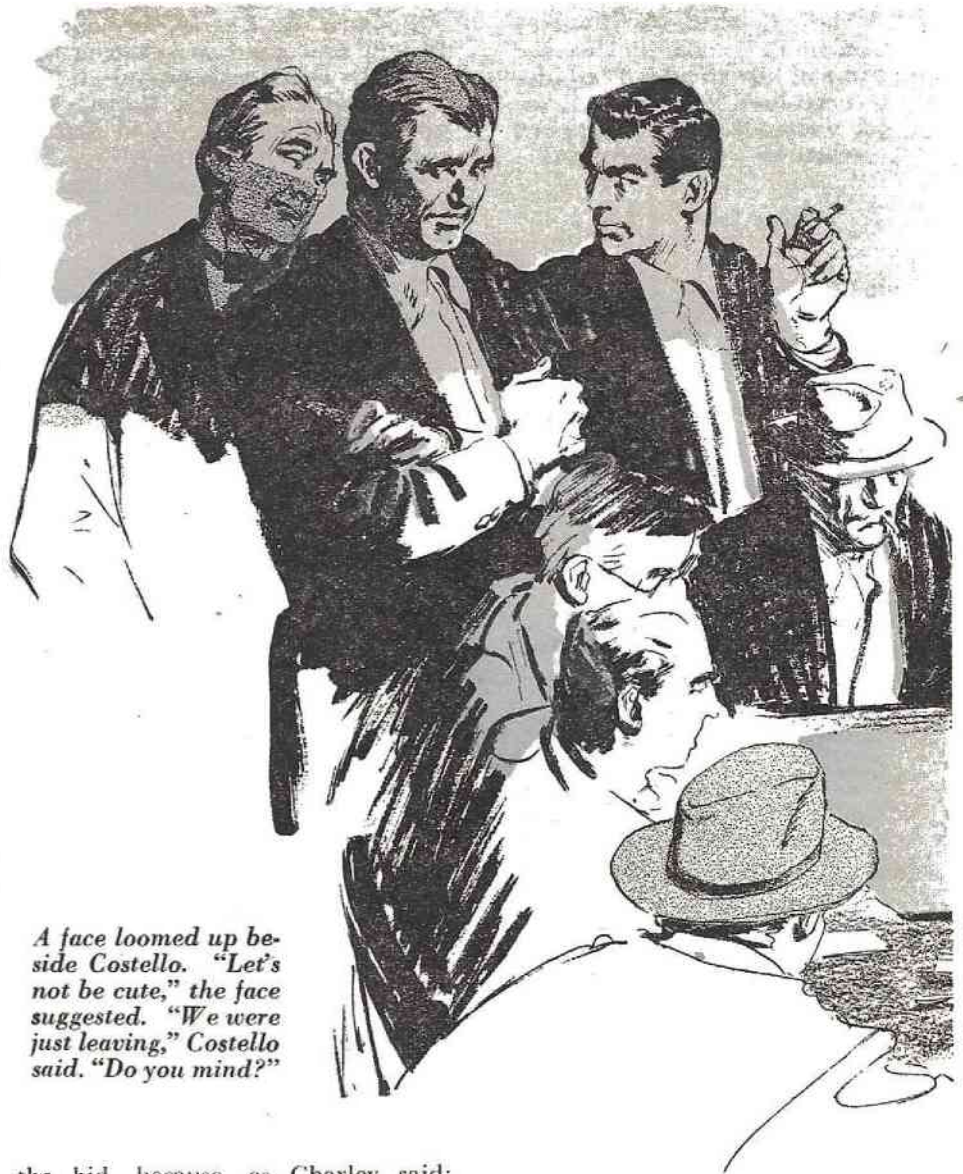
"Forget it. We've been to all those lakes."

Feet propped up on his suitcase, Costello rode in peace, and the bus was past La Jolla before Charley asked where they were going.

"The first place the agent mentioned that I figured no one ever heard of. A place called San Felipe. It's way out in the boondocks fifty miles from Capistrano."

At Del Mar a woman climbed on board, burdened by a bulky child. And of course Charley held the child so she'd ride easy all the way to Ocean-side.

Costello smiled. If she knew Charley was a cop, she'd probably write the Chief. And the Chief would tell it to the press. Only, the way he'd tell it, you'd think he'd held the kid himself. Kids, that was part of Charley's weakness. A big one had given him that gimp. A big one, scared and dangerous, a gun held in his fist. Charley'd rushed right in and grabbed



A face loomed up beside Costello. "Let's not be cute," the face suggested. "We were just leaving," Costello said. "Do you mind?"

the kid, because, as Charley said: "You can't just shoot a kid."

Swinging off the coastal bus at Capistrano, they walked toward a smaller vehicle marked plainly "*San Felipe*." The driver nodded cordially, but Costello thought he detected a lessening of this amiability when he asked for passage, and it was certain that the other passengers regarded them with some hostility.

A steeply rising mountain road gave him no time to ponder on the driver's manner. And at the top he held his breath when he saw the drop that was before them. Level country lay below, and not until they reached it, did Costello risk a vocal effort, inquiring of places they might stay in San Felipe.

"Y'mean you boys ain't heading for the Grove?"

"The Grove?" Costello said. "We're just looking for a place where we can lay around a week or two."

Fellow passengers relaxed their sternly held aloofness. The driver's amiability returned. "Should have

known it, you coming out this early. The Grove don't get going until eleven o'clock. Dad Bentley'll put you up."

"This Grove," Charley asked, "what is it?"

"A rat's nest, sons," a neighbor volunteered. "Brings in riffraff from all over."

"Must be quite a drum," Costello said, for the amenities must always be observed. And it was nice to be segregated from the riffraff by the solid citizens one met. Townsfolk, by their look, but men who'd helped to make a desert bloom with citrus.

ORANGE trees at last gave way to eucalyptus. Passing a Union High School, they entered San Felipe's major street. One side of its length was lined with shops, ending with a two-storied public building. Scattered dwellings below the bluff that rose up from the other side did not appear to



Costello to justify so much commercial enterprise.

Charley was better versed in rural living, though only partly right. "Feeder town," he said; "takes care of all this area."

The driver pointed to a stairway clinging to the bluff. "Up there," he said. "The climb won't hurt you none."

A reasonably accurate statement if addressed to vigorous men. And for those who wanted rest and quiet, the climb was well worth while. They saw four cottages aligned against a larger building, and on the high ground farther up, a small resort hotel.

"Not bad," Costello said. "Not bad at all."

As they stepped inside the larger building, a gray-haired man stared at them. "The Grove," he said, "is down the road a mile. Road's right behind my cottages."

Again the frank hostility they'd encountered on the bus. Yet as before, a simple thing to cope with.

"Sorry I flew off like that," Dad Bentley said, when Costello had explained. "Figured you were just some more young hellions heading for the Grove."

A natural host, he put them at their ease. Sprawled in a rustic armchair, Costello watched with pleased anticipation a fine performance with a skillet. This would be at least as good as anything they'd planned, and safely far from San Diego.

Dad talked freely as he worked, and Costello listened cynically to a tale that might be new in San Felipe, but was as old as man's first groupings in communities.

Every town has one Al Hurlock—a citizen who wants a faster dollar than legitimate activity will bring. And vice, once initiated, thrives mightily when nurtured by indifference. Prospering from farm trade, and health-seeking tourists, the townsmen had failed to take the early action needed. When they realized that Hurlock's clientele had driven more desirable

visitors away, they also found him powerfully entrenched.

So now the Inn above Dad's place was empty, and tourists no longer thronged the shops of San Felipe.

That elected officers of the town could now be recognized as members of the Hurlock organization seemed to Costello a natural product of their own indifference. "Should be easy enough to vote them out," he said.

"It will be, after tomorrow night. The farmers carry about two-thirds of the vote, and one thing they don't hold with, and that's the corrupting of officials. Election's just a month away, and tomorrow night there's a meeting of the Grange."

"Farming men," Dad said, "are slow to anger. They condemn no one on say-so. Proof's what they want, and proof is what we're going to give 'em."

THREE men came through the door—men one might expect to meet in Bumboat Benny's, but hardly in a setting such as this.

"Okay, Pop," the leader said, "where is he?"

Dad ignored the question.

The man came closer. "I could slap it out of you," he said. But to do so, he would have to go around or over Mike Costello's legs, and Costello made no effort to remove them.

"See anybody here?" the man demanded.

"I did not," Costello said, "but what's it to you if I did?"

"Now, Mike," Charley Swanson said. And again Costello wondered how in off-duty hours Charley could so calmly take lip from a hood.

Waving his companions to the door, the man turned on his heel. "Be seeing you," he said.

"This Hurlock must have quite a payroll, Mike. Those are imported hoods."

"And very uncouth characters they are," Costello said.

Dad put hot food before them. "Thanks, son," he said to Mike. "Bring you some coffee, soon's I take a snack to Irv."

"Who?"

"My partner. Irv Fisher. Got him hid out at the Inn."

And on Dad's return, he gave it to them quickly:

It was Irv who'd noticed that Al Hurlock's periodic trips to San Diego always coincided with the similar departure of their leading law-enforcer. Trailing one had been to find the other, and the place of rendezvous established, Irv had, for an amateur, displayed considerable astuteness.

To attribute the inertia of the law to bribery is one thing; to prove it quite another. And Irv had obtained the services of a practitioner in matrimonial problems.



"Transom technician." Costello nodded his approval.

"Take pictures round a post," Dad said. "Been all right if Irv hadn't got ambitious. He went down again, and they dang' near caught him. Didn't know what he had at first, but I guess they got to the feller Irv hired, cause they sure been hunting Irv."

Dad stretched his arms. "Think I'll turn in now," he said. "You boys take any cottage that you fancy."

Making a selection, they lazed on neatly made-up beds, weary from the bus trip, and the short sleep of the night before. How long he'd dozed, Costello didn't know. He heard the snap of a light switch, and saw Charley yawning hugely.

"This Hurlock, Mike, you think they'll take him?"

"Why not? He can't stand any real challenge from the town, no matter how many low-comedy hoods he hustles in. Want to move around a bit?"

"Sure, Mike, but where?"

"We'll give his drum a look-see."

A mile, Dad had said, though it's hard to tell what country men are thinking of when they speak in terms of miles.

Ringed by trees, the Grove was aptly named, and larger than they had expected. The inside, at first, held nothing to surprise them. Dice tables, a battery of wheels, and a row of blackjack spreads. But there was one incongruity.

Charley grinned. "You'd need a program to tell the house-men from the guests," he said. "Look at those two blubbers."

Costello looked about him. Riff-raff, he'd heard these people called. No wonder tourists fled from San Felipe if this crowd even on occasion trod its streets.

No program was needed to identify the men who shuffled toward them. The dinner jacket advertised his present occupation, but Al Hurlock's shoulder stoop had been acquired at more honest labor.

"Sent some of my boys out to Dad Bentley's place," he said. "Don't like the story they brought back. Ain't sure whether you were covering up, or trying to be funny."

"When you find out, let me know," Costello said.

"Now, Mike," Charley intervened.

"I'm telling you," Al Hurlock said. "Step easy while you're here."

"My, my," Costello said, and with one last look, Al Hurlock turned away.

Amused, Costello watched the play, the fast play to be expected when each punter is secure in his belief that his perception is too great to permit anything but the odds to run against him.

Surely Al Hurlock's house, like any other, would pander to this bright illusion by letting all smart punters win their opening bets.

"We could pick up a modest buck," he said.

"Why not?" Charley said. "We won't be here again, and even if we are, from what Dad says, they'll be growing mushrooms in this trap."

Smiling at a dealer he was sure could go down as far as necessary for any card he needed, Costello placed five dollars on the closest board. Picking up his winnings, he repeated the maneuver at the second blackjack spread.

But at the third it was apparent that while the dealers followed standardized instructions, the lookouts had authority to determine who required come-on treatment. A face loomed up beside him. Two other men rose from a nearby table.

"Let's not be cute," the face suggested.

"We were just leaving," Costello said. "Do you mind, or do you?"

They walked in moonlight clear enough to read by.

Charley shook his head. "A trap like that in a place like this! Hard to believe, isn't it?"

It was, and even harder in the morning when the scent of frying bacon lured them to the kitchen. As they pulled up to the table, a tall wide-shouldered man looked in.

"Morning, Charles," Dad called, "how about some coffee?"

"Can't stay, Dad. The Old Man told me to drop by and tell you that if you've got what he hears you've got, there'll be changes made, come next month's election."

"We've got it, Charles."

The tall man smiled. "Almost wish you hadn't. 'Cause if you have, the Old Man's figuring on me and Tom for peace officers."

"Old Man Grumble's head of the Grange," Dad explained. "That's one of his boys. Long Tom Grumble is the other."

"The law could do much worse," Costello said.

Dad brought a thermos jug, and two wax-papered packages. "Lunches. You boys'll want to look around."

They tramped the high ground until wearied, and then backs to trees, they ate the lunches, and lingered on until the sun dipped down behind the mountains.

"Boys," Dad greeted them, "meet up with Irv."

Just what he had expected, Costello didn't know; but surely not the short fat man that Dad presented. These were solid men, unlike the silly citizens who crowded traps like Bumboat Benny's; but it was a great relief to

know that behind them, if not yet convinced of need for action, were those whose strength came from the land.

"Got the stuff right here," Dad said, patting the pocket of his shirt. "They get Irv now, they get nothing but his hide."

Though approving the transfer of the evidence, Costello thought Irv needlessly exposed, and with marked respect he looked at this fat citizen who so cheerfully assumed the rôle of decoy.

"They'll probably try to head Irv off," Dad said. "That's when— Irv, your hat. You must have left it at the Inn. Sit still, I'll get it for you."

WATCHING Dad go out the back, they didn't see the front door open, or the two men with badges on their shirts. One tapped a paper in his hand; the other cleared his throat.

"Gotta take you in, Irv. Al Hurlock swore to a complaint of theft."

A cheap dodge, Costello thought contemptuously, and yet a break for Irv. Taken in, he'd be out of trouble's way. And it was not dissatisfaction with Irv's portrayal of the badgered citizen that made Costello's mouth go dry.

The truly honest are at best indifferent actors, but why should two officers of the law shift nervously when about to put the arm on such a harmless man as Irv?

Before he heard the movements from outside, Costello knew the answer. These badge-wearing schmooks were also putting on an act, an act they hadn't dreamed up by themselves. A cheap dodge? No, somewhat on the cute side. If arrest stampeded Irv, he had the evidence on him; if not—

Al Hurlock and the three who'd called the day before came in; behind them the lookouts from the Grove.

"Wants to get juggled, does he?" Hurlock snapped.

"Now, Al," the taller officer began, "maybe we can—"

"We can, all right. Dave," Hurlock singled out a lookout, "think he'll tell you where he's got those pictures?"

Costello saw that look on Charley's face, that look he'd seen before. "Sit tight," he said in an undertone; "we have no status here."

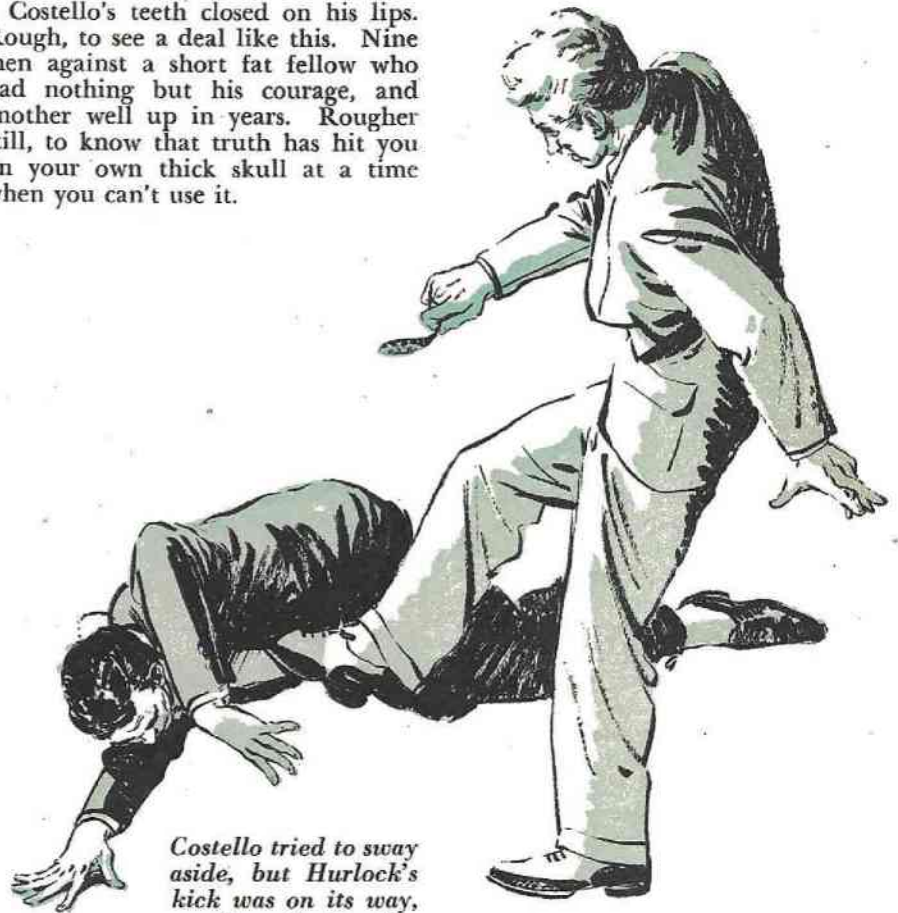
Dave yanked Irv from his chair, and shook him until his teeth snapped in his head.

"Mind moving him a bit?" Costello said. "You're making dust fall on my plate."

Hostile eyes were turned in his direction. "This is a pretty smart boy, Al," one of the other lookouts said.

"If he wants trouble, he can get it," Hurlock said.

Costello's teeth closed on his lips. Rough, to see a deal like this. Nine men against a short fat fellow who had nothing but his courage, and another well up in years. Rougher still, to know that truth has hit you on your own thick skull at a time when you can't use it.



Costello tried to sway aside, but Hurlock's kick was on its way, and neatly timed.

He who'd had the gall to think that Charley had a weakness, could see at last what Charley had always seen: Not just some loud-mouthed yuck, who was going to get what the beef he'd raised would bring him, but a citizen who dared intimidation's heavy hand, and stood up to be counted.

Time at least was running in Irv's favor, and if Dad would only grasp this opportunity to get away! But Dad came running to Irv's aid. A hoodlum grabbed him by an arm, and his free hand flew to his pocket.

Softly Mike Costello cursed. What good now were the two tall sons of Old Man Grimble, and the solid men who waited for the proof they'd never see?

Dad tried to pull away, and the hoodlum's palm smacked heavily across the old man's face.

A PROPERLY CONTRIVED diversion might spring Dad, get him to that meeting. But in their position, only the rankest sucker would attempt it. For until next month's election, Al Hurlock was the law in San Felipe.

"You were the best I ever rode with, Charley," Mike Costello said, and then was sorry that he'd said it. Rising quickly, Charley moved out from the table, and Costello should have known he'd do exactly that.

"Leaving, are you?" Hurlock said. "Believe me, that's right smart."

"We're not going anywhere," Costello said. "Y'see, we're not that smart."

"Look, you," Hurlock challenged, "in this town I'm—"

"You," Costello stated flatly, "are a sad example of unplanned parenthood."

Men like Mike Costello do not wait on fighting words. A shoulder driving into Hurlock, Costello's arms shot out, one hand closing on Dave's shirt, the other on the collar of the hood who held to Dad.

"Run, Dad!" he yelled. "Get going, Irv!"

Behind him, Charley cleared the entrance with a flying body block. Letting go of Dave, Costello slashed a fist into the hoodlum's stomach, then chopped a right at Dave, and knew that neither would again this night be problems to contend with.

A hurried jab at Hurlock landed nicely, but was perhaps a trifle high. Missing an off-balance swing at the taller of the two peace officers, Costello turned far enough around to see Charley scramble from the floor, drop the other officer, and hooking with both hands, stop the rush to follow Dad and Irv.

But the advantage of surprise was passing swiftly. Blackjacks rose and

fell. A heavy blow forced Costello to his knees. Charley went down, came winging up again.

Driving upward at an angle, Costello's head disappeared up to the ears in the taller officer's middle. The rebound put him back upon his knees. Too late he saw that Hurlock was no longer on the floor. He tried to sway aside, but Hurlock's kick was on its way, and neatly timed.

Through the ringing in his ears, Costello heard the staccato breathing that accompanied every pitch that Charley made. And just before the nausea blacked him out, he thought he saw Al Hurlock crumple.

He heard hoarse shouts, the tramp of feet. Men he couldn't see half carried him through the door, down the stairway, and across the street.

He touched the iron cot they placed him on. Vision clearing, he saw a badge pinned to a shirt, and bars that ran from floor to ceiling. He'd have sworn that neither of those officers would be walking quite so soon, but the bars he had expected.

And if and when they got back home from this, there'd be no story he could hope to sell the Chief. Of course there were other ways a man could make a living, but none that a career cop could look upon with pleasure.

Fighting down his bitterness, it must have been a minute before Costello realized that the bars were on the far side of the room, and that the badge he saw was on Long Tom Grimble's shirt.

Surrounded by a group of grinning farmers, Irv was fairly beaming, while Dad pounded merrily on the one man in this gathering who was not entirely at ease.

"His Honor," Dad announced, "the Mayor. The boys, here, prevailed on him to make some pretty sudden changes."

Charley sat down beside Costello on the cot. "And Mike," he said, "the Mayor's going to write a letter to the Chief."

A letter to the Chief? Why, that meathead would run right to the press, and to hear him tell it—any way he told it would get them off the hook, and from here on in, things would be different.

THE things that Charley'd always seen had been a long time coming to Costello. But he saw no need to look back on his failings. Smiling through his swollen lips, he took pride and comfort in the knowledge that he'd always been a faster man than Charley.

It was a warming thing to know, for if they were to survive, it was certain that he'd always have to be.

—THE END

Military Mascots

by FAIRFAX DOWNEY

THIS is the story of an owl which even after death remained the mascot of the heroine of military nursing, Florence Nightingale.

As a wild fledgling, a small female owl nested in a sculptured frieze of the Parthenon on the Acropolis of Athens. Her home above those classic marble columns, glorious still, though partly ruined in a modern war, was most appropriate, for they housed the shrine of the goddess Athena. In Greek myth an owl was the familiar of the goddess, and like her, a symbol of wisdom. Yet it was unwise of this little bird, not old enough to fly, to move so close to the edge of her nest. Toppling over, wings fluttering only enough to break her fall, she struck the ground.

Boys had picked her up when a young Englishwoman, climbing the hill, came on the scene. The bright face of Florence Nightingale, her life already dedicated to nursing the sick, shone with pity for the feathered creature, which she promptly persuaded the Greek lads to sell her. Cradled in her hands, the owl, brown and mottled with white spots, stared up at her out of eyes ringed with oval markings which looked comically like spectacles.

Southern European owls usually are tamed with ease, but this one was fierce and unruly. Her mistress, strong-willed also, gentled her by hypnotizing her. Named Athena in honor of her patron, the owl became Miss Nightingale's devoted pet and accompanied her everywhere, traveling happily in her pocket. For a time two tortoises and a cicada named Plato were the bird's rivals, but at

Prague, Athena disposed of Plato by dining on him.

Athena was her mistress' constant companion through the remainder of the tour to study the work of the religious sisterhoods in caring for sick people. Home again in England, Florence Nightingale, more determined than ever to abandon the idle, sheltered life of a lady, set about raising nursing from the menial task it was rated in her country, to a profession of mercy and of skill. While she toiled, Athena was content in the family's country estate at Embley Park in Hampshire, and always the owlet was comfort and distraction for Florence when, weary from her work in hospitals and cottages, she came home to rest.

AT the outbreak of a conflict with Russia in the Crimea, the head of the War Office, aware of Florence Nightingale's ability, asked her to organize a nurse corps and take them to the front. Here was her great opportunity. Joyfully she flung herself into the rush of preparations, but while she was absent from Embley, a sad event occurred. Her family, in the flurry of leaving to see her off, forgot to feed Athena, and the poor thing starved to death. They made what amends they could, having the owl's body embalmed and taking it to Florence. "The only tears its mistress shed during that tremendous week," said her sister, "was when I put the little body in her hands."

Florence, as she wept, sighed softly: "Poor little beastie, it was odd how much I loved you."



Drawn by Frederick Chapman

ONE OF THE STRANGEST OF ALL MILITARY MASCOTS WAS ATHENA, THE LITTLE OWL TAKEN FROM ITS NEST IN THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON, AND CHERISHED BY THE FAMOUS ENGLISH NURSE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Miss Nightingale sailed with her nurses to end the chaos and dreadful neglect in the hospital at Scutari—to give British soldiers, wounded in their country's battles, tender and devoted care, to become their adored "Lady of the Lamp," who watched over them through the long nights and relieved their suffering.

Hampered by officials high and low, by jealousies and graft, Florence, never yielding, fought a stubborn fight. Though she was worn to the point of exhaustion, she insisted on going to Balaclava to inspect the hospital.

Overwhelmed here by the dreadful scenes, by the stench of the battlefield where the Light Brigade had charged and died, she collapsed. The litter which bore her to a hospital ship was followed by a long column of soldiers, many of them openly weeping.

It was during Miss Nightingale's serious illness that Athena, unforgettable, haunted her mistress' dreams.

With the image of her owlet in her fevered mind, fixed on hastening back to duty, Florence told her doctor: "I have been greatly harassed lately by seeing my poor owl, without her head, without her life, without her talons, lying in the cage, and your canary pecking at her. Now, that's me. I am lying without my head, without my claws, and you all peck at me."

Twice more during her convalescence, tokens of Athena came to Florence Nightingale. Her friend Lady Margaret Verney wrote and illustrated a charming manuscript booklet, "*Life and Death of Athena, an Owlet from the Parthenon*," and sent it from England "to try to make Flo laugh when recovering from her fever." Most cherished was the live owl which wounded men, knowing her fond memories of her pet, presented to "The Soldier's Friend."

A silver statue of the owl Athena, the gift of a duke, was Florence Nightingale's talisman for the remainder of her long and noble career.

The FACTS of LIFE.... About Baseball

by JOHN DUNLAVY

THE origins of baseball are lost in the annals of time. Ball games of a sort were played by the Egyptians as early as 5000 B.C. Actual references to "baseball" have been found in Eighteenth Century English writings.

FOR a long time it was believed that baseball was invented by Abner Doubleday at Cooperstown, New York, in 1839. Although there is enough evidence now to disprove this, Doubleday did make one of the most important contributions of all time to the game by drawing the first known diagram of a baseball diamond. He designed his diamond so that a hit on the ground to the deepest position in the infield, the shortstop, when fielded quickly and thrown accurately to first base, will beat the fastest runner by a step. It is this split-second relationship that has made baseball such a thrilling sport.

THERE are fifty-nine recognized professional baseball leagues in the United States.

COUNTING practice balls lost, fouls, home runs, etc., a major league baseball club figures it will use an average of forty baseballs per nine-inning regulation game.

MAJOR LEAGUE players have an average of three or four gloves apiece. Virtually all of them, however, have one favorite which is given constant special attention.

DURING a regular season a major league club will average four dozen bats per player.

MAJOR LEAGUE ball players usually have two uniforms for home games and two uniforms for games away

from home. The Detroit Tigers, however, have four home and four away uniforms as they are the only major league club which dons clean uniforms every day.

THERE are literally hundreds of superstitions that are observed by major league ball players but almost no charms such as a rabbit's foot, are commonly employed. Some of the most prevalent of these superstitions are: no haircuts when in a streak; never speak to a pitcher who has a no-hitter going; pick up the glove with the same hand; always step on a base when passing; never change shoes, socks or shirt when in a streak—change everything when in a slump.

THERE are almost as many big league scouts as big league players. The majors are limited to a total of four hundred players, and there are just under four hundred major league scouts.

SINCE 1948 less than one hundred players have come into the majors.

ROOMMATES are selected deliberately by the team's manager with the prime purpose in mind of helping the team. Temperamental players are paired with easy-going types, young pitchers with experienced catchers, small-town boys with players of similar backgrounds, etc.

WIVES do not travel with major league ball clubs. Only one player in recent years is known to have had such permission written into his contract.

CURFEW for big league ball players is established ordinarily at twelve midnight preceding day games. It is pushed up to two hours after a night game to allow the players to eat. Most will not eat after three P.M. before a night game.

UMPIRES are not permitted to mingle socially with ball players or managers. They travel on different trains, stay in different hotels, have their own clubhouse.

THE record of which Babe Ruth was most proud had nothing to do with his home run feats. Rather it was a string of 29 2/3 scoreless innings of world series play which he wrote into the record of 1918 as a pitcher.

BILL TERRY pitched two no-hit games for—of all clubs—Brooklyn! This was William J. Terry and it occurred on July 24, 1886 and on May 27, 1888. He was no relation to William H. (Bill) Terry of Giant fame, who once asked: "Is Brooklyn still in the league?"

UNTIL 1884 all baseball pitching was underhand.

BEFORE 1881 the pitching distance was only 45 feet. It was then made 50 feet and remained until 1893 when it was finally established at 60½ feet.

TWELVE men hit .400 or better in 1887! Leading the pack was Tip O'Neill with an astounding .492. However, during this season walks were counted as hits and, further, the National League had a four-strikes rule.

THE word "fan," appropriately enough, is simply a shortened form of the word "fanatic."

THE first fully professional baseball club was the Cincinnati Red Stockings, organized in 1869. It had a record of 124 won, six lost, one tied, yet it lasted only one season.

TY COBB stole second, third, and home in succession on three separate occasions.

IN 1879 a batter was entitled to base after nine called balls. This was reduced to eight in 1880, to seven in 1882, to six in 1884, to five in 1887, to four in 1889.

FOUR pitchers have struck out four men in an inning.

IN 1904 Jack Chesbro won forty-one games for the New York Highlanders. But with one wild pitch in the final game he lost the pennant.

ED ROMMEL of the 1932 Philadelphia Athletics gave up twenty-nine hits to the Cleveland Indians—yet won the ball game, 18 to 17.

THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX could have played an entire game against the St. Louis Browns on September 27, 1930, without a first baseman. Bud Clancy played the entire nine innings without once making an assist or a put out.

BASEBALL does not operate as a business. Legally, it is considered a spectator sport, thus it is not subject to antitrust laws nor to interstate commerce regulations. This was established in a Supreme Court ruling of May 29, 1922, in an opinion that was written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes.

EXCEPT that the printing on the covers differ, the baseballs of the American league are absolutely identical to the balls of the National league. THE END



Fire

With the 1st Marine Division in Korea. (Delayed).

THE war of maneuver in Korea in the spring of 1951 gave birth to an operation which has been informally called the "Hole-Pluggger" by men of one Marine infantry unit—the First Battalion of the First Regiment.

The operation was recognized by everyone from the very beginning as a desperate measure—a "Horatio-holding-the-bridge" kind of deal that officers of the First Marine Division would have avoided if there had been any other way to do it.

But there wasn't. The long-expected spring offensive of the Chinese Communist forces had sprung a leak in the United Nations' line which had to be filled. The penetration by the Chinese, unchallenged, might have become a disaster.

The riflemen of that battalion will long remember "Hole-Pluggger" because of the casualties they suffered—and inflicted—in the twenty-hour fire-fight. It all began on the night of April 22, just north of the 38th parallel near Sapyong-ni.

For a while the Chinese attackers came slowly, almost ceremoniously, in wave after wave through the dark



Fight

"Operation Hole-plugger" was the name given to this bitter Horatio-at-the-Bridge battle fought by the First Battalion of the First Marines.

by TCH. SGT. GEORGE S. CHAPPARS

Illustrated by Hamilton Greene

valley and up against the disciplined wall of fire of the Leathernecks along a ridge, almost like summer moths beating frantically against a row of street lamps. To the men of the First Marine Division who had fought in the Chosin Reservoir campaign of North Korea, in November and December, 1950, that wasn't new. Some of them came out of Operation Hole-Plugger describing it as "another Koto-ri, without snow."

But you never get accustomed to seeing these Chinese suicide assaults; our military principles don't call for extravagant waste of human life that way. . . .

It isn't customary—and therefore memorable—for a battalion to be completely cut off from its parent regiment. This battalion deliberately put itself in a hole because there was no other way to plug it, and thereby divorced itself from the main Marine force for a bitterly exciting day and a half.

ACTUALLY the whole affair began quietly. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robley F. West, of Harbor Springs, Mich., led his men through the central Korean mountains into position—a horseshoe-shaped perimeter on high ridges, with the bat-

talion command post in a valley between. Across the mouth of the horseshoe stood four tanks, their 90-mm. gun muzzles pointed threateningly at the ridges on either flank. Along one curve of the horseshoe, Colonel West and his staff concentrated some of the machine guns, because that segment of the perimeter faced what appeared to be the most likely direction of attack. (Actually the Leatherneck riflemen, as they moved into position, could see Chinese troops silently watching from the hills and from one dominant hill a few hundred yards away.)

The Chinese did not attack, as perhaps they could have, while the Marines were digging in. About ninety-three that evening—several hours after the Leathernecks had moved in and begun preparing to defend the position—it was so quiet someone said it wasn't natural.

A few seconds later "the stuff hit the fan." Mortar shells began dropping into the horseshoe perimeter and into the valley command post, and rifle fire crackled in the evening moonlight. The sharp pounding of machine guns interlaced the higher crackling sounds of the rifles. Within minutes the Chinese were throwing grenades up the ridge into the horseshoe perimeter

where the Marine machine gunners and riflemen lay.

This first attack struck at the very part of the horseshoe on which Colonel West and his staff had emplaced their heaviest concentration of rifles and automatic weapons—a remarkable, though accidental tribute on the part of the Chinese to the Marine officers' accurate evaluation of the fighting to come. As a result the Chinese were thoroughly clobbered, and the attack failed.

NOT altogether, though. Some of the fanatically charging Communists reached machine-gun positions and destroyed them or forced the Marine gunners to destroy the weapons rather than have them captured. Holding the horseshoe intact was costly; the battalion aid station, in a little grove of trees in the valley near the command post, soon began filling up, and the Navy doctors and hospital corpsmen had their hands full from then on.

The Chinese paid a high price for the privilege of charging the Marine positions; as the night wore on, and their attacks began coming from all three sides of the horseshoe, Red casualties piled high on the slopes and in the valleys beneath.



When ground troops attempted to rush them, the tank gunners fired point-blank along the valleys.

At midnight or thereabouts, the Marines recalled later, it seemed that every usable weapon in the battalion was busy and smoking.

The tank gunners in the horseshoe mouth were firing steadily at the enemy mortar and machine-gun positions on the flanking hills; and when ground troops attempted to rush them, the gunners coolly depressed the muzzles of their big 90's and fired point-blank along the valleys, smashing the would-be attackers before they could get close enough for grenade charges.

Daylight and then noon brought no respite for the tight little defense ring, and casualties mounted. A mortar shell—one of many that dropped into the command-post valley—shredded Colonel West's tent.

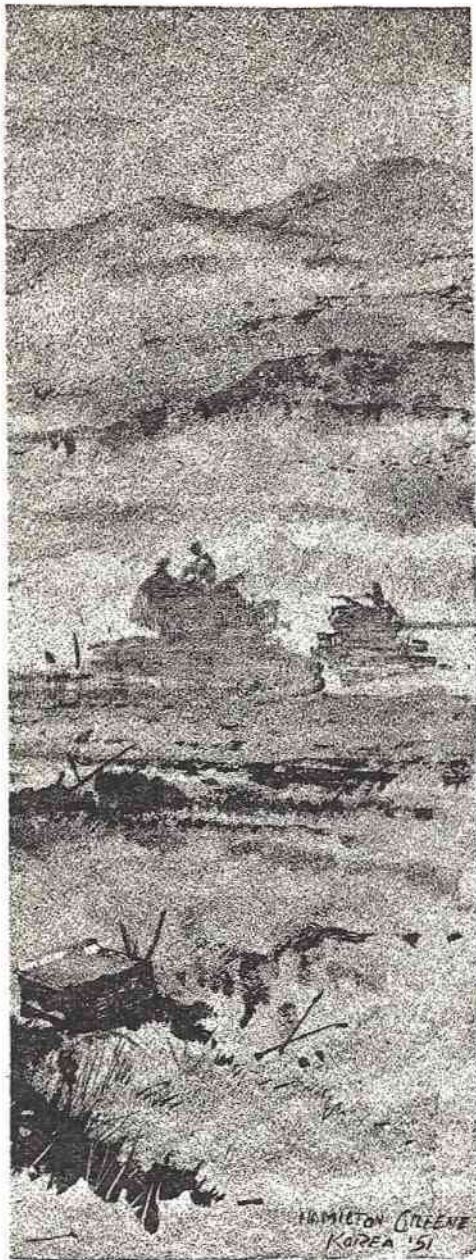
Two helicopter pilots who attempted to evacuate casualties will remember Operation Hole-Plugging for a long time, too. First Lieutenant Robert E. Mathewson, of Hiawatha, Kan., had it quiet all the way from VMO-6 (the Marine Observation Squadron operating with the First Marine Division)—except for the last few feet.

As Lt. Mathewson hovered over the air-panel markings for his landing, the Chinese opened up, and machine-gun bullets tore through the unarmored egg beater. Lt. Mathewson brought the craft down, but the tail rotor was chewed up by the enemy fire, and it was impossible to land evenly. The rotor dug into the ground. Later, when the battalion left the position,

its mission completed, the craft was stripped of all useable parts, and explosion-wise Pioneers blew up the carcass so as to leave nothing but twisted metal for the Chinese to admire.

A few minutes after Lt. Mathewson made his landing, a second 'copter hove into view. Lt. Mathewson tried to wave him off, but it was too late to warn the pilot away. He was already hovering to land when the Chinese tried for a second kill. Bullets ripped the frame and plexiglas bubble, but Captain Harold G. McRay, of Kansas City, Mo., managed to zoom off and escape with the craft.

THE mission of plugging the hole was now completed, but the operation was far from over. The Chinese



Daylight brought no respite.

fought frantically to block the withdrawal, smashing into the flanks of the column as it formed, and blocking the road with intense fire. The Marine mortarmen, who had been busy all night and through the early hours of the day, now went to work to pin down enemy machine gunners on the surrounding hills so that the wounded and dead could be evacuated from the aid station in the grove, and moved by ambulance and jeep along the withdrawal route. Machine gunners kept up their withering fire on enemy positions, and riflemen stalked the flanks to prevent infiltration of small groups of Red attackers. As the withdrawal progressed, Marine mortarmen set up and lobbed shells into the ridges along the route, firing a

few rounds before moving along to a new point down the road.

Planes swept in to rocket, strafe and napalm the enemy positions.

At one point the Marine column stopped for rest and to prepare to break through the road block which the Reds had set up just ahead. A rifleman, Pfc. Joe Donnelly, of Rockford, Ill., saw some of his brother's rifle-squad buddies and called out:

"Hey, have you seen my brother Dick?"

"Sure," they called back, "he's O.K. Back there with one of the stretchers."

After a bad moment Joe saw his brother was not on a stretcher but only on one handle—helping to carry a wounded Marine through a rice paddy along the road.

Pfc. Frank M. Saraceno, of Buffalo, N. Y., might testify to the bitterness of Hole-Pluggers. He was the only survivor of his machine-gun section, and he was wounded.

The combined firepower of the Marine riflemen, machine gunners, mortarmen and dive-bombing pilots proved too much for the would-be road-blockers; and after a sharp, deadly clash, the road was cleared and the column moved on.

FIGHTING flared from time to time from then on, through the remainder of the day, but it was plain the Chinese attempt to massacre the valiant battalion of Marines had been thwarted—and at deadly cost to the Reds. The Leathernecks had chewed 'em up with their traditional efficiency; they had suffered wound casualties that topped one hundred, and fourteen of the Marines had paid the last final price in beating off the Chinese attackers. Hundreds of Chinese fell to the accuracy of Marine small-arms and pin-pointed artillery fire.

Many of the Marines who walked wearily out of Operation Hole-Pluggers speak, today, of the platoon leader who stood defiantly on the horseshoe perimeter when the enemy mortars were bursting all around. He turned to his men and shouted:

"Stay in your holes and give 'em hell! We're not leaving this ridge!"

And they all remember the shrill, eerie blasts of the Chinese signal whistles, and the way the moon-bathed night glared in fiery splendor as the illuminating flares arched and hung in the sky over the valleys and ridges. That's not new to anyone in Marine dungarees in Korea; the Chinese like to attack at night, and the Leathernecks are glad to accommodate them any time. Operation Hole-Pluggers was not new that way; nor was it the first time in Marine history that the Leathernecks had stepped into a fight against big odds, prepared to give more than they took.

THEY PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART

by JOHN W. SNYDER

Secretary of the Treasury

IT is most illogical to consider that a physical handicap in anyone implies lack of ability to contribute to the world's daily work and of ability to earn a living. Neither inference is warranted.

Handicapped persons play an important part in the production of goods and services in this country. We could not spare them as workers.

Handicapped persons should be considered for employment on the basis of what they can do, not of what some misfortune has rendered them unable to do. That is at once sound philosophy and the sound economics of the problem.

This approach to the question is important always from the viewpoint of the handicapped individual. And it is particularly important right now from the viewpoint of the national welfare, because of the present pressing need for skilled hands and alert minds in almost every field of daily toil.

The experience of the Treasury Department in the employment of the physically handicapped has been akin to that of the remainder of the Government. Handicapped persons fill many Government positions, and fill them well. During the calendar years 1949 and 1950, the Treasury added 180 handicapped persons to its staff. Of these, sixty-nine were non-veterans. In some instances special dispensations have been obtained from the Civil Service Commission to permit retention of handicapped employees.

It is almost unfailingly the case that office heads praise these employees for good performance of duty and as sources of inspiration to all their co-workers.

by VICTOR
JOHNSON

A Voice in

THERE is talk of old seamen's superstitions, and a sense of impending disaster, and the ability of certain old seadogs to foretell trouble for a ship. What landsmen forget when they talk about such things is that some of these old men have traveled in many lands, that they have felt the monastic communion of the sea, and not only talked with the Infinite in the night on a lonely ocean, but have observed a Great Something reach so naturally into the affairs of men and ships that even the pompous admiralty lawyers have not dared exclaim: "It was an act of God."

That is the way it was on the *S. T. Rolling Hills*, a sleek American turbo-electric tanker, 16,613 deadweight tons, Captain Russell, bound in ballast from Hamburg, Germany, to Dover, England, for orders. Uncle Louie Savron, the Chief Engineer, was one of these old men; and at 2:42 A.M. when he heard the telegraph ring and the main turbine sharply cut speed, he eased his feet into slippers ready for an emergency.

His bunk light had not been turned off, and he had dozed in clean dungarees and singlet, enough clothes to answer a call to his warm engine-room. Since midnight, when he made his last round below, he had lain like this, neither awake nor asleep, but suspended between a need of rest and an awareness of danger.

There was no call on the office phone in the next cabin, nor on the shiny speaking-tube beside his bunk. The engine-room had received no "Stand by" from the bridge, and this increased his sense of uneasiness. Almost painful was the thought, coming with full awakening, that Captain Nelson was not on the bridge, but instead a captain followed by bad luck since the day he came aboard.

EVEN as Uncle Louie picked up his glasses from bunk-side, he was conscious that the emergency on deck was great. The Typhon was screaming out a mess of incoherent signals, differing alarmedly from the periodic blasting with which the great whistle had assaulted the fog; he heard the safety-valves lift with the roar of five hundred pounds of steam escaping, and knew for a certainty that Mr.



"Goddam it, shove off, I said!" roared Captain Russell's voice.

Landers, the Third Engineer, had had no previous warning from the bridge.

Uncle Louie opened his cabin door and started for the engine-room. A thick murkiness that he could feel swirled into the alley door. Momentarily he glimpsed the 'midship lights; they glowed in the watery mists like blue jack-o'-lanterns. He heard the turbine begin to gain speed again, and as the ship began to tremble, he knew she was going astern.

From out of the murk came a sound that sent a shiver along his spine: The fog-muffled scream of another ship!

He went into the engine-room as rapidly as his sixty-two-year-old legs could carry him. Mr. Landers would be frightened by an astern bell without warning; there was danger, Uncle Louie knew; but the engine-room was where he belonged.

On the ladders below him he saw a woolly head and stout bare black

shoulders. Their owner, clothed only in the lower part of a pair of striped pajamas, was hurling himself down the ladders, sliding along the rails on his hands, in the way of an old black-gang hand. Uncle Louie noted this fact with inner satisfaction; Captain Russell had bitterly opposed his accepting a Negro as First Assistant Engineer. It was a beautiful sight to see the dark muscles of a man who had been taut with fear of rejection when he first boarded the *Rolling Hills* flow down the ladders when the *Rolling Hills* was endangered.

The hurrying dark figure paused before the gauge-board, then glanced swiftly at the Eye-hye. And before he himself had gained the operating platform, Uncle Louie knew the steam and water were all right: For after a quick word with Mr. Landers at the throttle, the First continued around the main turbine and began to open more nozzles.

the North Sea Fog



"Shove off before she turns turtle and sucks us all down!"

Fine, thought Uncle Louie. The First knew what he was doing, all right. If they did get a jingle asking for all available power, the plant would be prepared.

Co-existent with this thought was another of great inner comfort to the old Chief: When a man was no longer young (say, not young enough to get to valves as quickly as he should), but had lived in peace and harmony with the universe, the Great Something sent him help in time of need. Marshal, the Negro, had come to the ship as a problem; he had no business being a problem, but he was. Uncle Louie, much as he knew hiring him would upset the ship, had stood by what he thought was right. And now he saw in the capable and prompt response of the First a valuable asset to the ship—a blessing to an old man.

The safety-valves, under the ministrations of the fireman and the de-

mand of the turbine, had reseated; Mr. Landers held his throttle to normal astern maneuvering speed, but his ears and eyes were cocked to the telegraph. Mr. Marshal, after he had opened the nozzles, went swiftly to the fire-room. Uncle Louie knew he had gone there to help the fireman back up with steam the order that might come.

The telegraph jangled, then swung sharply back on "Full Astern." Three times this was done, and each time the oiler answered the sweep. Mr. Landers, with his eyes on the water, revolutions, steam and electrical meters, pulled back the throttle until the coffee cups in the tin tray by the log desk began to dance. Uncle Louie watched the needle on the revolution counter swing over, over. "Hold her there, Mr. Landers," he said. "We can't run any risk of kicking her out."

"Okay, Chief."

The *Rolling Hills* had sounded three short blasts, indicating she was going Full Astern. Again three sharp whistles broke from the Typhon. And this second sounding of the signal was filled with desperation, as if the forces above deck had paid no heed.

Husky and loud, and gasping as if choked by the wet vapors, came the scream of the other ship close on the starboard.

A red bell over the control platform began to jangle; and it seemed that its nerve-racking cry would never cease.

Sweat poured from the forehead of Mr. Landers; the oiler, standing at the log desk to record the bells, looked nervously and appraisingly at the starboard side of the engine-room. Transformers, steam-lines and generators were in their place, but through them could come tons of killing steel, followed by tons of drowning green ocean.

"Brace yourself, Mr. Landers," said Uncle Louie. "That fellow must be coming aboard us—or we're going aboard him."

But the blow was not loud nor too severe as it was felt in the engine-room. There was a good jar, a lifting of the ship, a long grinding sound. Then the other ship slipped clear, and the *Rolling Hills* began to rock from side to side, stabilizing herself from the blow.

The telegraph rang "Stop!" and Mr. Landers closed the throttle. He was wiping the sweat from his forehead. "Not so bad, Chief," he said nervously. "It could not have been so bad."

Uncle Louie had noticed an almost imperceptible list to starboard.

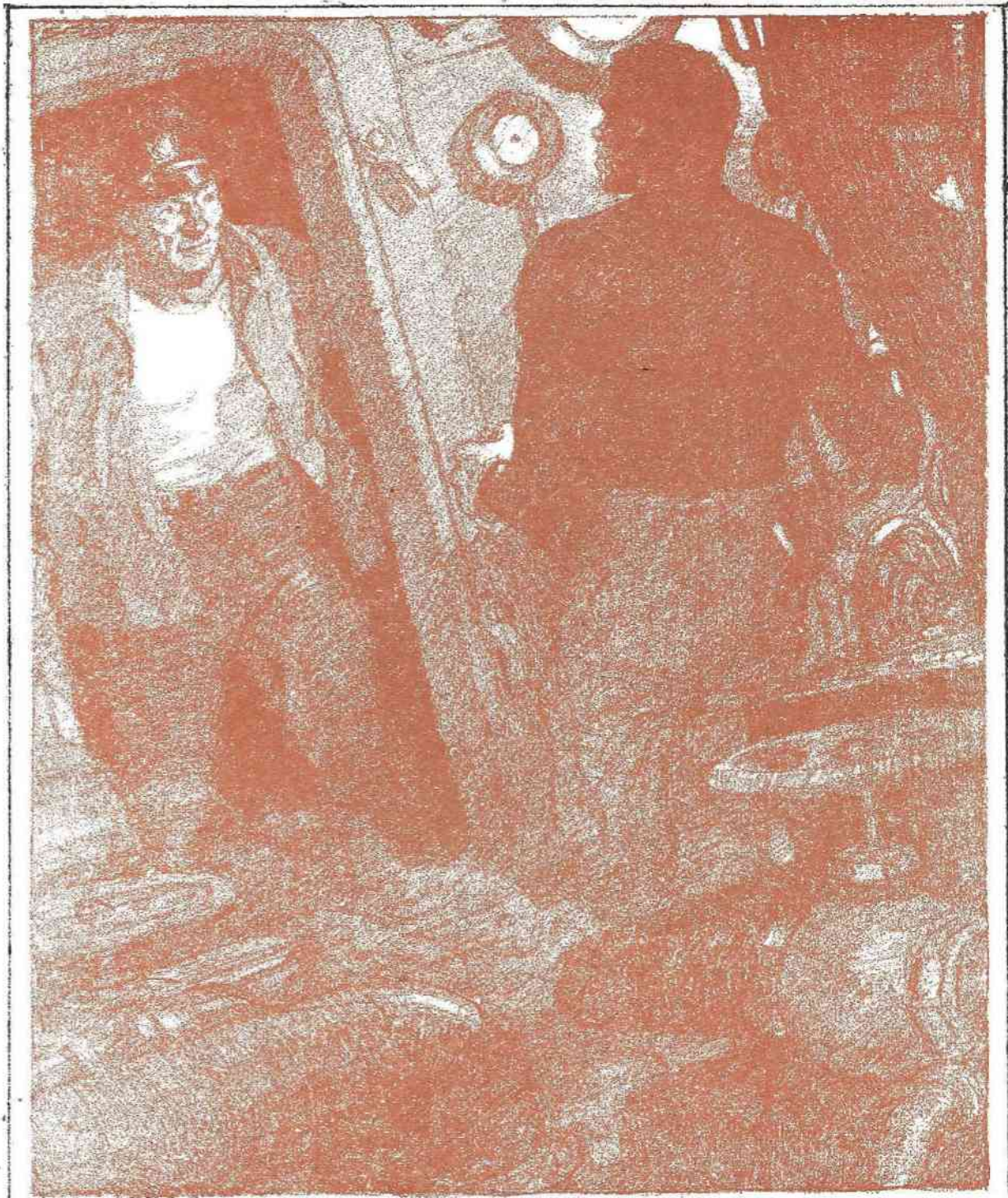
"Can't tell yet," he said.

The phone rang; and Uncle Louie, recording the time of the collision in the log, picked it up. "Engine-room," he announced.

"Chief?"

"Chief."

"Chief!" said a voice trembling with excitement at the other end. "The Captain, Chief. Prepare to abandon ship! I don't know if we'll have to, but it looks like it. Nearly the whole starboard side has been carried away around 'midships!"



"Mr. Marshal, I presume?" Uncle Louie said. "Yes, Doctor. I was interested in your experiment."

"Prepare to abandon ship," Uncle Louie answered mechanically. "You won't be needing the main engine right away, Captain?"

"No!" Captain Russell snapped. "What the hell good will the main engine be if she's sinking?"

Uncle Louie hung up the phone. He had little faith in the opinion of Captain Russell. The man had gone off half-cocked too many times before.

It was only important to Uncle Louie that he had got a commitment that the main engine would not be needed. He had no inclination to explain why he had asked, as he would have with Captain Nelson.

Marshal had come from the fire-room, and the Second and Junior Engineer, awakened by the general alarm and crash, had come down the ladders.

"The Captain says to prepare to abandon ship," Uncle Louie said as his officers clustered hastily around him. He went on:

"But instead of knocking out the boilers and putting her on the Diesel, I want cargo-pumping tips put in and the plant set to hold on automatic. Mr. Marshal, will you do that? And Mr. Barlow, you can give him a hand. Try to get it done as soon as you can,

but pull out if a 'Stand by the boats' goes."

Marshal repeated the order, and he and Mr. Barlow, the Second, swung off for the fire-room.

A compact, composed young Finnish-American stood waiting for word of what he could do to help. This was Mr. Soini, the Junior Third. "Mr. Soini," said Uncle Louie, "you go topside and tell the Chief Pumpman I want him down here in a hurry, please."

As the Junior took the ladder, Uncle Louie turned back to the Third. "Mr. Landers, line up your main unit for port pumping, and bring your turbine up to speed, so they can set the Bailey Board in the fire-room. Have your cargo pumps lined up on Variable Frequency, all but the starting switches."

The Third was a little confused at first. He did not know what had transpired between the Chief and Captain on the phone.

"Port pumping you want, Chief?" he asked.

"Port pumping," explained Uncle Louie. "The Captain says he won't be needing the engine."

"Oh."

The list to starboard had now grown pronounced. A door slammed above, and a youngster of twenty with brown curly hair sticking from under his black steaming cap came sliding down the rails on his hands, and lit with a thud at the bottom.

"Did the Mate or Captain give you any orders on the pumps, Pumps?" inquired Uncle Louie.

"No sir. It's a madhouse, topside. Just everybody running about and nobody thinking, it looks like. And she's taking water like a bugger over starboard."

"What tanks is she taking water in?"

"Two, three, four and five, I'm sure of. Maybe some in one and six—can't say about them for sure."

"Are the bulkheads damaged between the center and wing tanks?"

"Oh, no! The bulkheads of the center tanks are not damaged. The other ship just skum us along the side and laid it open."

Uncle Louie made some rapid engineering calculations. The most effective thing to do would be to shoot ballast from the undamaged tanks starboard to the empty tanks port. But he wanted a simple, quickly executed operation involving a minimum opening of valves. It must be an operation that could not get out of hand if there was no one to watch it.

"Line up No. 1 and No. 2 main cargo pumps to discharge ballast from seven and nine starboard wings, Pumps. Call the engine-room as soon as you're ready. But pull out of that

pump-room—you hear me?—pull out, if you hear a 'Stand by the boats' go."

"Okay, Chief!" the Pumps answered, and bounded up the ladder. Uncle Louie made mental note of where he had sent the Pumps. He would have to go drag him out of the pump-room if the signal sounded before he got his pumps squared away, because Pumps would never leave of his own volition until he got his pumps going.

Uncle Louie was still trying to write up the log; he had the engineer's trained awareness of time and order; were a main steam-line to have burst, he would have instinctively noted the time as he closed off the stop.

The Junior had followed the pumpman down the ladder. Mr. Marshal and the Second returned from the fire-room.

"She is all right, Chief," Marshal said.

Uncle Louie glanced at his engineers. He was aware that all were bent over foolishly, holding their balance against the slanting decks. The Second, a huge overgrown farmer from the Midwest, was viciously anti-Negro. Mr. Soini, the young Finnish Junior, had no prejudice. Mr. Landers, the one King's Pointer, accepted the Negro officer with a taught show of grace. That was in normal times, but now with the decks slanting under them and all frightened and sweating together, they had lost awareness of Marshal as a Negro, and only a First Engineer stood with and among them.

The red bell over the platform sounded again, and with it a raucous scream of the Typhon above. They listened with cocked, rapt faces. It was that dreaded signal of the sea: "Stand by the boats!"

"All right," Uncle Louie said resignedly. Then he spoke to the Second. "Mr. Barlow, get the fireman out of the fire-room." He turned to the First. "Mr. Marshal, call the pumpman out of the pump-room. Make him come out, and stand by until he does. The others of you get to the boats."

UNCLE LOUIE bent over his log, writing with his slow, aged scribble. The bell from the pump-room rang. From force of habit, Mr. Landers, the engineer on watch, started toward the tube.

"I'll get it," said the Chief. "Your orders, Mr. Landers, are to go to your boat!"

"This is the Pumps," said the man on the other end of the tube. "Nos. 1 and 2 are ready to roll!"

"Fine, Pumps! Fine!" cried Uncle Louie. "Get to your boat, Pumps."

Uncle Louie threw the switch on No. 1, waited for it to settle down

after grabbing the load. He was conscious that above him the other engineers were hanging at the top of the ladders. "Get to your boats!" he shouted. "It will only take me a minute to do what I want to do."

He did not look up again, but he heard the door above open, and knew that they had gone. He threw on No. 2 pump. Water was going out of the *Rolling Hills* now, and he could tell by the response of the Bailey Board to the turbine that it would carry the pumping load for a while at least.

He had been ordered to abandon ship. He tucked the log and bell-books under his arm and climbed wearily up the canted ladders. She was listing dangerously, no mistake about that.

HE went into his cabin. Boiler-water samples had slid against the glass of the cabinet, and his work clothes hung cockeyed across the bulkhead. He hurriedly pulled on a heavy undershirt, then put on his denim jacket. The cabin was very quiet. Before he took the life-jacket from the rack, he knelt a long, quiet minute by the settee. There, with his body bent to offset the list of the deck and with his face turned upward and eyes closed, he asked the guidance of his God. . . .

Uncle Louie did not wear a life-jacket when he went on deck. The ship was listed so they could not use the port boats, but fore and aft on the starboard side was the murmur of voices, the tramp of feet, and now and then a sharp panic-stricken order. Because it was his duty, Uncle Louie set off up the catwalk to inform Captain Russell he was staying with the ship.

The Captain's boat was down, and this was the Chief's boat, too. With the list, Uncle Louie was close above the boat when he made the midship deck. He was out of the beam of the floodlight above, but he could see with fair clarity the men turned blue by the fog and light, and hear the louder voices.

The scrambled-eggs of the Captain's cap was easily discernible. Uncle Louie cupped his hands to call down to him. But he heard a voice at the idling motor call out: "Cap'n, the Chief Engineer is not here!" It was the young pumpman.

"Goddam it, shove off, I said!" roared Captain Russell's voice. "Shove off before she turns turtle and sucks us all down!"

The boat pushed away and headed out in the murk, toward the ringing bell and sounding whistle of the other ship.

Uncle Louie climbed down on the well-deck. He flashed his light along

the side, following the rough edges of the wound aft. There was no time to inspect forward—he must get back to the engine-room. But as he flashed his light, trying to estimate from the damage above water what was the damage beneath, he became convinced that No. 6 was intact. That would be another tank for his pumps.

He eased himself down the engine-room ladders. The pumps were going, and the steam was holding. It was holding a little too well. He hurried to the fire-room to see what reserve he had left on the Bailey Board before cutting in another pump.

As he stepped through the fire-room door, he saw the mystery of the perfect steam. A woolly-headed figure with a wiping-rag in his hand and black shoulders gleaming with sweat was standing before the boilers.

THE sense of desertion of the ship had been appalling. Uncle Louie had never felt more lonely and deserted than when he heard Captain Russell's voice speak out and saw the boat pull away, leaving him alone with the water and fog.

Now, at sight of this figure, a great sense of relief swept over him, and he thought of a very odd thing: the meeting of Stanley and Livingstone in Africa.

"Mr. Marshal, I presume?" he said.

Marshal caught the humor and he flung back, "Yes, Doctor. I was interested in your pumping experiment."

"We still have No. 3 main and the two strippers," Uncle Louie said. "There is a tank of ballast in No. 6 starboard wing, and the tank is not damaged."

"Good!" Marshal said. "I'll line up the other pumps."

There was little time to think of danger with the big valves for Marshal to open, the calls to the engine-room to turn on another pump, and Uncle Louie's nursing of the boilers and plant. Almost simultaneously, after every pump was going, when Marshal could spare a minute forward, it was discovered that No. 1 starboard wing was not damaged and that the *Rolling Hills* was settling no further starboard.

To put her squarely on her feet was thereafter but a matter of pumps and time.

Before dawn broke, a signal rang out across the murky waters. It carried to the ship which had inflicted the wound and was standing by for morning and perhaps a clearing of the fog. The two ships spoke with whistles, and when the stand-by ship had felt her way close, the motor of Captain Russell's lifeboat sounded in the mists. . . .

At the Captain's bidding, Uncle Louie and his First Assistant walked up the catwalk to 'midships and climbed the ladder to the Captain's cabin. In three hours the *Rolling Hills*, limping along under greatly reduced speed to ease the strain on her maimed hull, would be off Dover. There her owners would have orders on drydocking and repairs.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL had ground out his cigarette at their knock. He felt guilty of chain smoking and instinctively he had put out his cigarette. But as soon as they were in and seated, he lit another.

"Washed up," he said. "I'm washed up."

Uncle Louie made no reply. Because the Captain's face was pitiful to behold, he instinctively gazed away from it. He was conscious that Russell looked much older than his thirty-six years, and that this aging had come in the short time between the collision and making of port.

"They'll probably take me off here," the Captain said. "I doubt if they'll even let me ride her back to the States."

Uncle Louie didn't affirm or deny. He could not do either truthfully. He was lost in a deeper study, a fitting together of experiences and observations drawn over the years.

Here before him was a failure, possibly the permanent end of a captain. Only a line divided him from a success. Russell was a good seaman, a good navigator, a man of sobriety. Yet hard luck had dogged him as relentlessly as a bloodhound tracking down his prey. Why?

Uncle Louie saw it quite clearly: Russell made his own hard luck. The sailor who fell down the ladder and broke his arm in Corpus Christi—would this have happened if Russell had not gone out of his way to make the Mate put out a ladder instead of the usual gangway, merely to show his authority? The pumpman who fell from the deck to the oil barge in Philadelphia, to be carted off broken and unconscious—would this have happened if Russell had not been personally directing hooking-up, again merely to belittle the Mate? The grounding on the mud-bank in the Elbe this very trip—it would not have happened if Russell had not insultingly overruled the German pilot on waiting for the tide, charging the old German with trying to delay the ship so he could get more meals aboard.

Piling up in the office were costly insurance cases and mishaps marking Russell as an unlucky skipper before his panic-stricken flight from his ship two nights ago. Even that panic had been partly of his own making: He had driven off the decent deck officers

by his attitude, and of seamen nothing but winos and derelicts would sail his decks. They were not the type of men to remember pumps if a captain forgot.

Russell's cabin stank. It was the smoke and foul air, the scent of shame and failure. Looking at the red-eyed man burn out his lungs and nerves, Uncle Louie thought back to a successful captain—Nelson.

Nelson was not a brilliant man; he was not even particularly good with figures—almost any mate could beat him on working out a sight. But Nelson had that force and that good fortune which comes to certain men; in a crisis Nelson was at his best, quiet, solid, gaining his power and good fortune from some intangible source. Whatever it was, it had carried Nelson through all the fogs and storms, by all the reefs and islands, to retire clean and respected to his farm in the State of Washington. Nelson had come home to a quiet harbor—a place of animals, plants and trees, of pleasing views, and a stream for lulling companionship in his time of peace.

There it was, failure and success. Uncle Louie was sure he knew the answer: Nelson was a good man, Russell was not. With all his power and years of success, Nelson had never abused men under him, nor walked and strutted as if he himself were God. Command had gone to Russell's head; he took a cruel delight in hurting and grinding down those under him—mates, sailors, the lowly room-boy who cleaned his quarters. It had gone on from this, from belittling and hurting men, until his warped sense of power and self-importance had dared him to challenge the might of the elements on a foggy night with his ship full speed ahead.

MARSHAL sat stiffly perched on the edge of the settee. His dark face, which under working with Uncle Louie had learned to relax and sometimes even be gay, was as strained as that of a murderer on trial. Just entering the room of Captain Russell could do this to a human being. Never once since Marshal joined the ship had Russell addressed him as *Mr. Marshal*; it was Russell who had ordered a change in the established seating of the officers' mess so the Negro First would be at the far end of the table—and Uncle Louie along with him, for defying Russell in hiring a black officer.

"The collision was enough," said Captain Russell. "Full speed ahead—heavy fog. But on top of that, abandoning ship." He made a sweeping gesture with his hands, paced to the porthole, peered out. Then he returned to his table, ground out his



*Captain Russell raised eyes of hope.
"Would you say that, Chief—on
oath?"*

cigarette, picked up the pack and started to light another.

Midway he paused, turned toward the impassive-faced Negro. "You smoke, don't you—Mr. Marshal?" He said the last two words not in mockery, only as if he were trying them for the first time and would need more practice. Then to hide his difficulty: "I know the Chief doesn't."

He held out his pack of cigarettes as if the favor would be from Marshal to accept.

Marshal did not reach readily toward the pack, from which the Captain had drawn a cigarette so it protruded politely. This was the enemy with which Marshal was dealing; it was men like this who if they had their way would have his children hungry, his wife shoddy, while he was sent back from ship after ship as unqualified. Men like this robbed him of what he had studied and worked for, of the good things he had planned for his children. He had to overcome his instinctive aversion with a deliberate order to his hand to reach out to accept the token of a robber's offer of equality and friendship.

"Yes," Marshal said in his soft voice. "Thank you, Captain." He handled the cigarette very deliberately, stall-

ing; at last resorted to striking it against the back of his hand to delay placing it to his lips.

Captain Russell drew a lighter from his shirt pocket, held it politely. Only when Marshal saw that the Captain was waiting did he place the cigarette to his lips.

UNCLE LOUIE, who had not shown much interest in the plight of Captain Russell, looked at what was happening with wise, appraising eyes. It took no long song and dance to see that something big and powerful had had a session with Captain Russell during the past sleepless nights. Never, as long as he lived, would Russell forget that a man he had scorned, had by circumstances been elevated while Russell was cast down.

"Captain," said Uncle Louie with his Christian sympathy for any decent man in trouble, "about abandoning ship—I don't know. I don't see that that can be held too much against you. Who could say whether or not she would turn a flip-flop? On the spur of the moment nobody could. The Coast Guard can make calculations; they can prove. But the safe thing—that was the safe thing, to get the men off her."

Russell raised eyes of hope. The word of Uncle Louie, for reasons Russell did not exactly understand, seemed to carry a lot of weight wherever the old Chief was. He had seen it with the company, with Coast Guard inspectors. "Would you say that, Chief—on oath?"

Uncle Louie considered the question thoughtfully. He had seen men change before. Captain Russell was showing signs. The invitation to Marshal to come to his cabin, the lighting of his cigarette—all men did not have to come to death like mutilated Mussolini before the Milan mob, or cowering Hitler in a hole, before they learned that Providence pursues with relentless vengeance those who abuse their power over their fellow-men. Some men learned this knowledge early; others had to learn the hard way—like this Captain Russell.

"Yes," said Uncle Louie. He was not thinking of formal investigations and man-made inquisitions, but of the duty to help and encourage a man making his first feeble steps in a new direction. "I would say—I will say—under oath that, in my opinion, you did the safe and correct thing in ordering the ship abandoned."

Big Boy Blue

HERMAN HICKMAN IS SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL AS A FOOTBALL COACH—WITH SIDELINES AS POET AND COOK. AND THOUGH HE LOSES SOME GAMES, YALE RESPONDS BY RENEWING HIS CONTRACT FOR TEN YEARS.

A LARGE man shaped like a runda blew a whistle, and the Yale squad deployed into a circle wide enough to get around him. Herman Hickman, head coach, was making his first visit to Harvard's Soldiers' Field. The Yales were having final tune-up practice the day before the 1948 game.

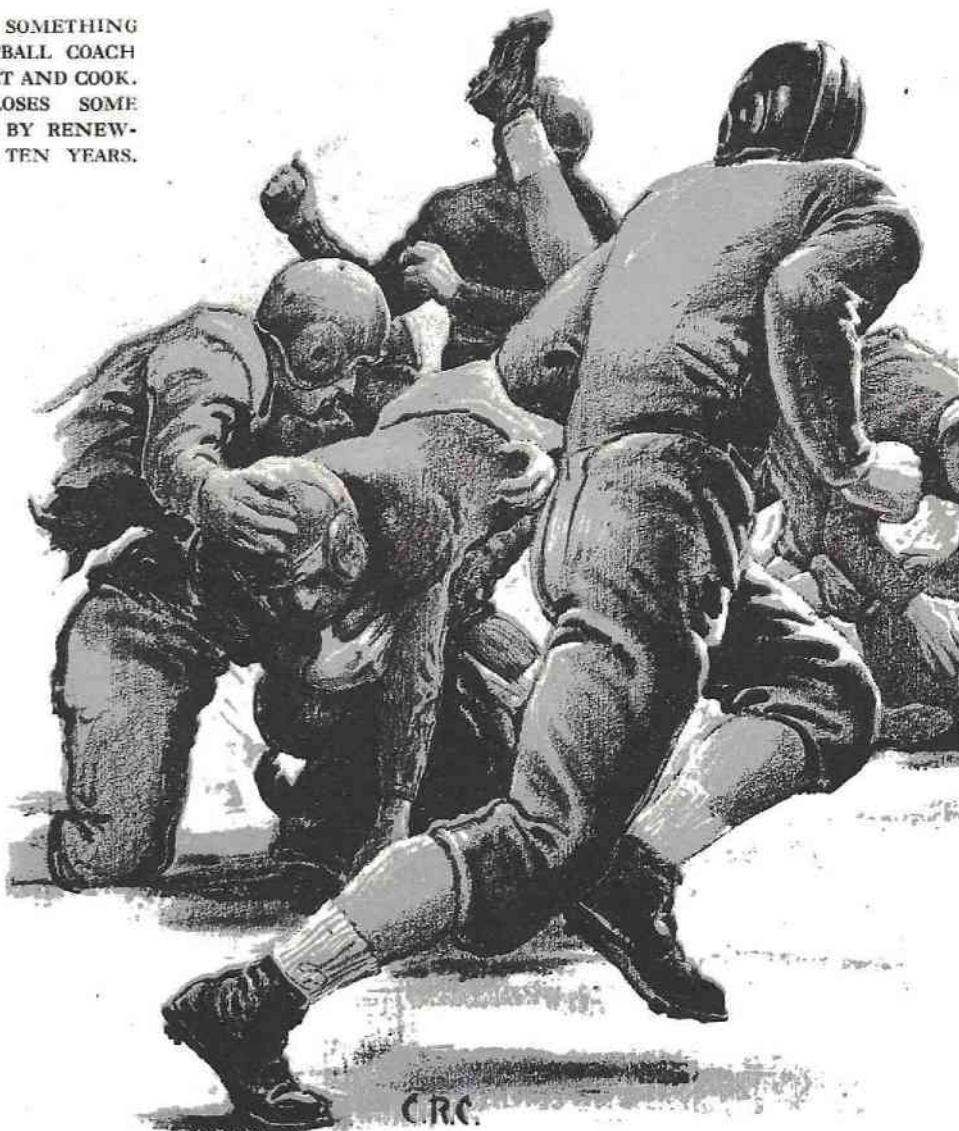
Tradition weighed every man down. A Yale-Harvard football game had long ceased to impress the world—but the players awaited a word of assurance, possibly a quip or a lift.

Herman Hickman's eyes swept the Roman colonnades that ringed the empty stadium high under the unfriendly sky. He inflated his fifty-five-inch barrel of a chest, and spoke:

"Ye call me Chief," he declaimed. "And ye do well to call him Chief who for twelve long years has met upon the arena every shape of man or beast Rome could furnish. . . . If there be one among you who dare say . . . my actions have belied my words, let him step forth and say it on the bloody sands . . ."

Possibly awed by the Hickman bulk, none stepped forth. He went on with the entire nine-hundred-word oration of "Spartacus to the Gladiators," ending: "O Comrades! Warriors! Thracians! . . . If we must die, let us die under the open sky . . . in noble, honorable battle."

His voice crescendoed to a stop; his short arms ceased flourishing. The squad gave him a hearty cheer, and filed to the dressing-rooms. Herman Hickman wasn't clowning. "I planned to give the kids a pep talk," he says, "but those colonnades did something to me. The place looked like the Colosseum. I got to feeling kind of Roman and scared, and when it came time to tell the boys something, that speech I learned in prep school just naturally oozed out. Not that it did much good—next day we got licked 20 to 7!"



It obviously would require a landslide of tradition to render the jumbo Hickman a mass of neuroses. Tipping the freight-house Fairbanks (he crushes ordinary bathroom scales) at 326, squat as a roundhouse, an All-America guard from the University of Tennessee, a hardened veteran of pro football and five hundred wrestling bouts, a nerveless lecturer and orator, the 5/10½ by 5/10½ Mr. Hickman could hardly be classed as the jittery type. Star of his own chatty radio show and a TV quiz panel, he is an athlete of the tongue as well as the body.

Not only can Hickman spout Spar-

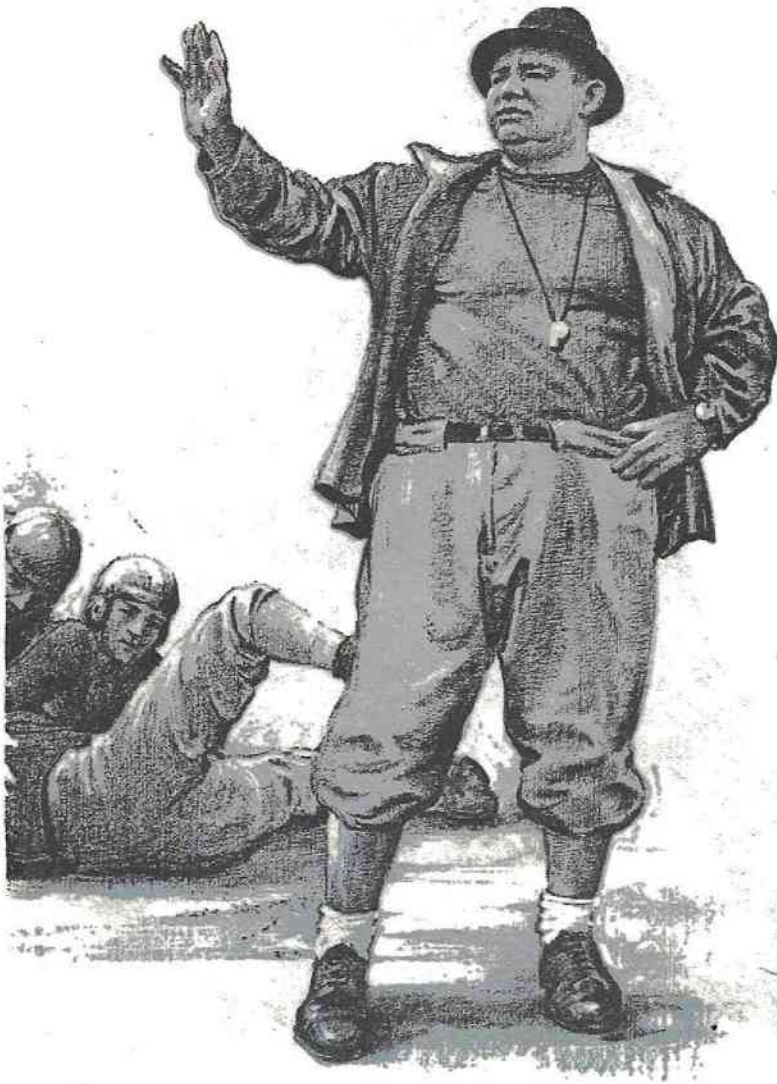
tacus, he can roll off miles of Kipling, Service, Arnold, Browning and others. He also rolls his own. When his first year at New Haven, 1948, netted only four wins out of nine games, Mr. H's own muse stirred within him:

O'er the fields the snowflakes hover,
Open season just beginning;
Losing coaches run for cover—
Never got around to winning.

However, Herman has not had to run for cover. The all-powerful Yale alumni—Old Blues—who have life-and-death power over the coach, have formed a curious affection for this Falstaff of the gridiron. "Darned if

by TED SHANE

Illustrated by CHARLES CHICKERING



want to set himself a standard too difficult to live up to. "Unbeaten seasons don't give alumni anything to look forward to. My aim is to lose just enough games to keep the alumni sullen, but not mutinous."

Herman Michael Hickman was launched in Johnson City on October 1, 1912, displacing a normal eight pounds. At fourteen he had swelled to 185 pounds, and showed talent for the three F's—Food, Football and Fine Arts. While other boys at Baylor Prep read comic books, Hickman absorbed poetry or the deeds of another eminent Yale prodigy—*Frank Merriwell*. Gifted with a microfilm memory, he won elocution prizes for his emotional rendition of Service's "Jean Desprez;" and copped a State oratorical crown from declaimers to whom he gave five years if not any weight.

Matriculating at the University of Tennessee at sixteen, Herman set out snagging scholastic honors, putting the shot into the next county, javelin-tossing, and crunching bones of grid-iron opponents.

IN December, 1931, New York's Mayor Jimmy Walker arranged a post-season charity game between Tennessee and New York University, the national champions, at the Polo Grounds. It was a bashing, bloody fray. Once NYU worked the ball down to the Tennessee five-yard line, and the Violet quarterback pointed menacingly at All-America Hickman, playing guard. "Hide, Fat Boy," he sneered. "We're coming through you." Four times NYU smashed at Fat Boy, and four times it rolled back. NYU lost the ball finally, back on the 23-yard stripe, and was never the same again. Fat Boy had a delightful afternoon: he stopped the NYU runners, blocked a kick for a score, and even won the oratorical contest in the line play. Tennessee prevailed, 13-0.

During his bright college years Herman courted and won Helen Smith, a beautiful Tennessee co-ed. Graduating in 1932, the year of the Great Depression, he cast about for a way to make a living and came up with pro wrestling. He was billed as the Tennessee Cannonball and was usually cast as the clean-cut college intellect forced to undergo indignities at the

they didn't tear up my three-year contract and write me a new one for five!" Hickman informed me with some amazement.

Hickman likes to give the impression that he was shaken out of a tree in the Ozarks and led by the nose into New Haven where he saw his first electric light. He will blandly inform a gathering that he was fifteen when Paw first piled him into the family wagon and muled him down to Johnson City to get him shod proper. Nothing could be farther from the facts. The Hickmans have been shoe-wearers for generations. Herman's father was a distinguished lawyer; his maternal grandfather was chief justice of the State Supreme Court; he numbers a Tennessee governor among his kinfolk; and he represents the fourth generation of college graduates in his family.

Yet this outsized pseudo-hillbilly

will rise to address an audience, his bulbous shape impeccably draped (he's been described as both a Well-Pressed Tub, and the Ten Best-Dressed Men in America), and spin endless tales of his nonexistent bare-foot kinfolk. For instance, Uncle Snazzy was sitting out the recent Army maneuvers in his Ozark cabin, flanked by a keg o' corn. The shells kept dropping closer and closer. Finally one *boinnnged* under his window. Loping to the door, Uncle Snazzy let loose a stream of terbakker juice and called: "Ah don't care what Robert E. Lee's goin' to do. I'm surrenderin'!"

Hickman never apologizes for defeats; and he never resorts to the coach's moss-hung explanation that he lost so many because he was busy building character. After his first year he explained that he might have won more games except that he didn't

meaty hands of the uncultured at from fifty dollars to five hundred dollars an evening. But he could also double in villainy should the script so require. He merely withdrew his neck into his shoulders and looked troglodytic. To this day, he refuses to lampoon his former vocation.

"Everybody had a good time but us wrestlers," he says. "I got beat up more than in football."

But Herman's first love was football. After playing three seasons with the Brooklyn Football Dodgers, he joined the football staff of Wake Forest College as line coach. It was 1935, and his immediate superior was Peahead Walker, one of the South's more outstanding philosopher-athletes, and tellers of tales of the Tobacco Road, and now Herman's assistant at Yale. After turning out some rugged lines at Wake Forest, Hickman tarried a short term at North Carolina State, then moved to the United States Military Academy in 1943 to serve under Red Blaik.

Herman fitted neatly into Army life. The highest-paid assistant coach in football, at ten thousand dollars a year, no alumni sought his scalp, he had Grade AAA beef with which to fashion his lines, and "Doc" Blanchard and Glenn Davis—Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside—were in the backfield. Eventually he turned out six All-America linemen. The Army had one complaint. "Hick," Colonel Blaik requested one day, "no more scrimmaging with the boys. You're hitting them too hard. I need them for Saturday."

IN 1947 Yale needed a head coach. Selecting a coach at Yale is like picking a new Dalai Lama. For seventy-five years, lest the players be contaminated by unorthodox indoctrination, most of the coaches had been Old Blues. But this time the Yale football committee decided to hire an infidel. Their choice fell on Hickman. "I was always partial to ivy and tradition," Herman testifies. "And my boyhood hero was a Yale man—Frank Merriwell. Besides I was thirty-seven and grown up. I had to strike out for myself."

Meeting the team for the first time was ticklish. Other changes had been made—the captain was Levi Jackson, a Negro whose father had been a college steward. The Hickmans had done a lot of damage to the North during the late unpleasantness between the States.

Hickman rolled majestically into the oak-paneled, history-heavy lounge of Westminsterish Payne Whitney Gym, where the team waited. He walked straight up to Jackson, stuck out a ham of a hand, and said: "Levi, Ah'm sure glad to see you!"



Jackson grinned. "How could you miss me, Coach?"

That began a beautiful relationship, marked by good-natured raillery. One day at practice things went poorly. "Boys," announced Hickman, "we're trying this play till we get it. I'll run you till you're black in the face."

Jackson raised a hand. "Can I go now, Coach?"

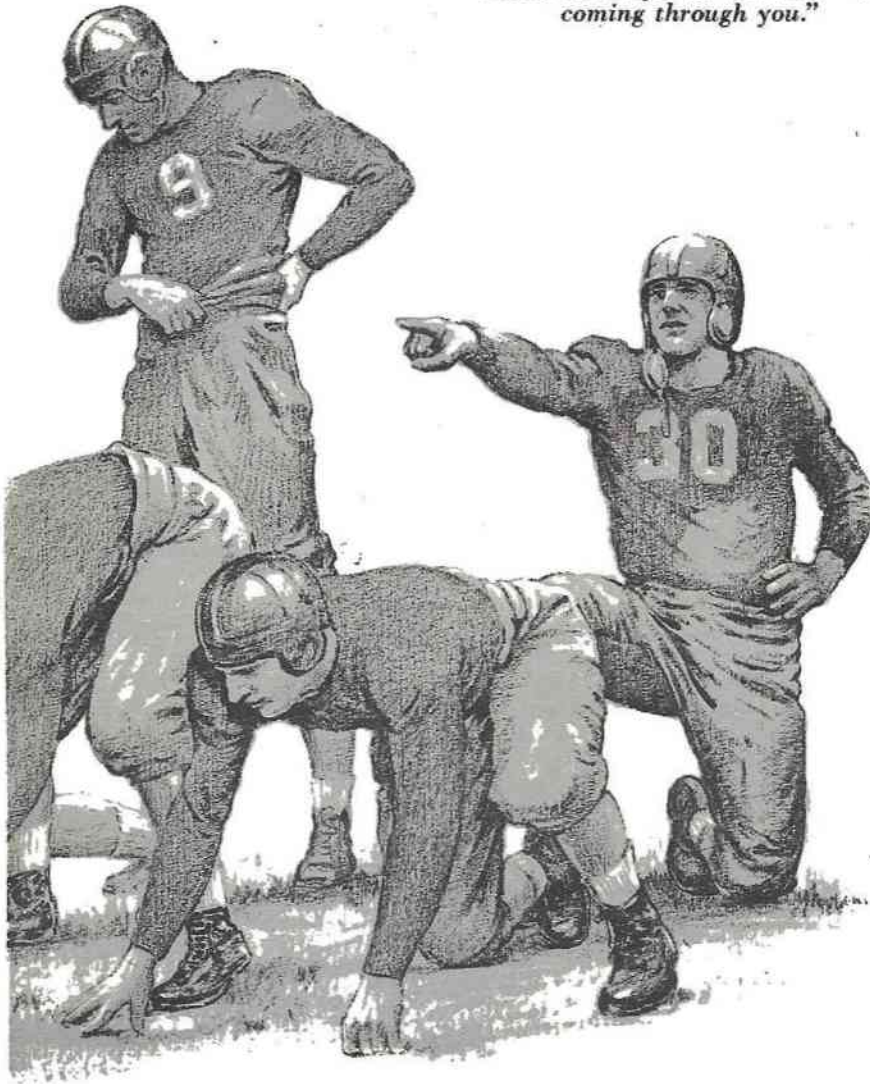
Hickman set to work instilling character and football know-how in the little bluebloods. "The secret of good football," he expounds, "is spirited drudgery. To fit constantly changing situations during play, you repeat and repeat till everything becomes instinctive. Even the pros practice the oldest plays over and over."

To sugar-coat the drudgery, Hickman would blow a whistle and halt everyone for a joke and a coke. Players in rotation supplemented a daily joke of their own. Practice soon

swarmed with eager beavers. The stars astonishingly arrived first; nobody wanted to miss the act. Some turned out just to gaze at the sheer spectacle of the leader, dressed in a small tent of a sweatshirt, surmounted by a tiny Tyrolean hat. You had only to look at him and feel better.

Yale probably had higher hopes than Hickman for the 1948 season. It had Levi Jackson, bulldog spirit, and an irrepressible leader. But Hickman's line averaged only 185—today a two-hundred-pounder is considered anemic. Notre Dame had had its Seven Mules, Fordham its Seven Blocks of Granite, so Hickman christened his line the Seven Dwarfs. When the line ran out for practice next day—with Dopey, Grumpy, Sneezy, Happy, Doc, Bashful and Sleepy painted on their chests—tears welled up in Hickman's eyes. "Boys," he cried, "if I could only give you a little of my thyroid!"

"Hide, Fat Boy," he sneered. "We're coming through you."



A coach has 100,001 tears to shed a season. When Hickman's star end sprained himself out for the year, and two others broke a hand and a knee, and a tackle went down with an appendectomy, while a back splashed acid in his eyes in chem. lab, Herman's tears reached flood heights. After Yale lost to Columbia, Vanderbilt and Dartmouth, the classics had to come to Hickman's rescue. "Now," quoth he, "I'll but lie down and bleed awhile, and then I'll rise and fight again." When Princeton and Harvard also walloped the Bulldog, he bled some more.

Shriveled to a shadowy 296 by the five losses, Hickman explained to the alumni that winter that Yale had entered the last quarters of the Princeton and Harvard games leading, but that he'd gathered the boys around and begged them to "lose this one for old Herman." The alumni countered by tearing up his three-year contract and rewriting it for five years.

In 1949 Yale beat Harvard 29 to 6. After the game, wrote Fred Russell, of

the *Nashville Banner*, the outstanding athletic feat of the year took place: "The Yale players formed a shoulder-cade and toted their coach off the field. No human agency had ever managed to perform this act of strength. Two of the players collapsed later."

Later that year, to prove what he could do with the proper ingredients, Hickman led the North to victory over the South in the Christmas Orange Bowl annual at Miami; and the next summer he coached the Eastern College All-Stars to an unheard-of win over the New York pro Giants in the *Herald-Tribune* Fresh-Air Fund game.

Last season, although Princeton slaughtered the Bulldog, 47 to 12, Joe Miller and the Hickman T-formation paid off with six wins and three losses. Yale tore up Hickman's five-year contract and handed him one for ten. "We wanted to show we were interested in the fun, not the sum, of football," says Bob Hall, Yale athletic chairman.

About to become indistinguishable from a campus elm, Hickman has settled in a new home in New Haven. To remind him of Harvard, it is painted firehouse red. "As long as we win that one, we can keep on living in it," he explains.

THE furniture is tested to bear weights up to one thousand pounds; tubs and beds can lave and sleep a small mastodon; the vegetable garden ("just large enough for Mrs. Hickman to weed") provides fresh provender for the Hickman hobby-cooking. "I'm not one of those week-end cooks," warns Hickman in his city-block-long kitchen. "I've done the cooking in my family for nineteen years. That way I get fed. Helen cleans up. I'm more the sloppy artistic type."

The Hickman meatball physique took building. "I've worked hard for years with knife and fork," he confides. "What do I eat? Put it this way: I eat anything I can lift!"

Favorite Hickman meal is breakfast, Southern fashion. Like T.R. he claims that "Good men eat breakfast!"; and he's planning a book with that title, hoping to restore breakfast as the traditional American meal. The Hickman matutinal mouthful opens with a quart of grapefruit juice (fresh squz, not fresh fruz), then moves to a variety of fruits in season, cereals and creams, and selections from a mixed grille of fried liver, pork chops, sausage, kidneys and ham covered with cream gravy. Side dishes include a small steak, hashed browns, hot biscuits and a quart of apple butter, a Herman specialty—all within easy reach of the shortish Hickman meat-grabbers.

How does one consume this snack? "I disregard the cereal and the jam, and get right down to the basic part—the food!"

Known as the largest single menace to the chicken in the country (he has been known to down two at a sitting), his Escoffiering is largely creative. A



menu he whipped up for me and the dainty Mrs. Hickman featured a balloon-sized Persian melon, a three-pound steak, a peck of Lyonnaises, salad in a horse trough, and some snapbeans engulfed in a delicious aromatic red sauce (containing, I gathered, tomato paste, ripe tomatoes, *oregano*, rosettes of garlic, brown sugar, cracklins and sheer artistry). "Brother," he cried lovingly as he dished out the beans, "you hain't never tasted anything like this before, because nothing like it has ever been made before. This is an original!"

Has Big Boy Blue ever been on a diet? "Yes," he replies. "I often go on a fourteen-dayer. Trouble is I finish it in two days."

Known as the Fat Man's Kieran, Hickman can identify almost every bit of verse in Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations"; and he likes to forget a Saturday debacle by reciting to friends something lengthy like "The *Mary Gloster*" or Browning's "My Last Duchess." ("Win, lose or draw, I always go home," he reveals.) Or he'll prop Bobby Burns against a side of beef and browse. He falls asleep with two books he's reading at once. Wide reading has made him a fixture on "Celebrity Time," the Sunday night TV quiz. "A lot of useless information can sure come in handy," he claims.

Most coaches spend their off-seasons in coal mines digging for talent, or beating the bush for stray gorillas. The Ivy League has strict rules against this. Athletic scholarships look for players at play-for-pay schools; the Ivy League looks for scholarly athletes—to walk in for admission. Coaches are forbidden to make any "contacts." Hickman spends his leisure off-season moments with a book of verse and a fishing line in the Virginia hills—dreaming. But not of sunsets, dryads or asphodel. "The most beautiful thing I can imagine," he sighs, "is a two-hundred-pound intellect!"

When he first met Bill Booe, his diminutive point-after-touchdown specialist, he asked him his weight. "One forty-two?" he repeated. "Heck, I had more than that for breakfast!"

One day Hickman was discovered sitting with eyes closed, fingers to

temples, repeating: "Come on, fellows, just drop a little ol' postcard to Herman Hickman, Yale University, stating age, weight but not salary desired. Communications given prompt attention." Results on telepathy were disappointing. A few two-hundred-pounders wrote in, but they weighed less on arrival. (All would-be college stars claim to run the hundred in ten flat and weigh over two twenty. "Must have shrunk in shipping," Herman commented.)

In the meantime Hickman feeds his precious charges double breakfasts in bed on road trips, and worries along with what he has. An Eisenhower for organization, he rises at six to answer mail—especially from muscle-bound prodigies. His coaching staff meets at seven for the day's briefing. Practice is usually called for four P.M., and Hickman tears his hair waiting for latecomers to straggle in from afternoon lab. When everyone is present and accounted for, he turns his watch back to four and gets going. "When do I show up, real or football time?" is a standard Eli gag. So also is: "Okay, fellows, two laps around the coach, and take your shower!"

Not that Hickman belittles Ivy football. "Our top four teams can hold their own with the top four of any conference in the country," he says.

Perhaps to give himself a sense of security, Hickman has surrounded himself with a solid staff. Last year chief scout Jack Lavelle traveled to Princeton to look the Tigers over. Hickman wired impatiently: "What do you advise to look good?" Lavelle wired a one-word reply: "Cancel!"

Last spring Peahead Walker gave up a lifelong head coachship at Wake Forest to assist at Yale. Peahead answered the clarion call from Hickman:

I call for volunteers to hold the goal at Yale.

I wanted the Horatius type, a breed that will not fail.

Up spoke brave old Peahead—the Tiber type was he:

"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand, and save the Elms for thee!"

"Yale will not lack for entertainment or good football," Grantland Rice insists. "Colleges pay boys to play for them. Yale boys should pay to play for Hickman and Walker."

"We'll start by de-emphasizing the faculty," Peahead has announced, as

his plan for defense of the embattled elms.

When he isn't needling his players to get on the Dean's list for scholarship, Hickman may be helping them compose themes. He likes to write whimsical letters on field trips, signing himself Dan'l Boone. One letter contained a picture of himself posing with an arm around a huge stuffed gorilla, inscribed "What could I do? He passed his exams!"

YALE probably pays Hickman about eleven thousand dollars a year. (Ivy League rules prohibit paying a coach more than the highest-paid professor.) He also picks up some odd change on TV and radio, and turns down about fifty thousand dollars' worth of speaking dates a year. His appearance on the alumni yakata wheel is for free; sometimes he fills two dates an evening.

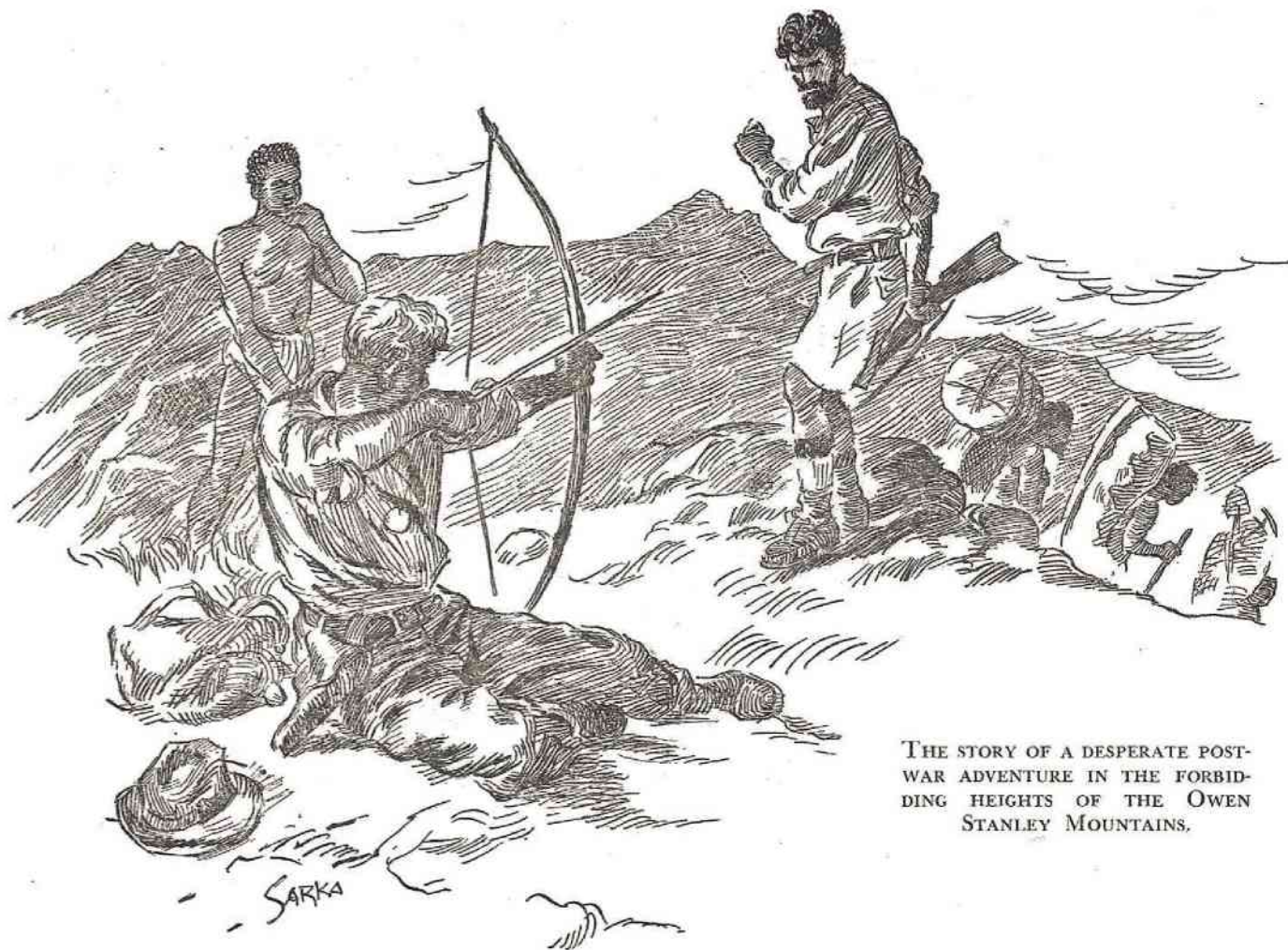
Hickman's appearance on TV is said to have rendered the ten-inch screen obsolete. But he is only remotely sensitive about his weight. "What difference does it make if an elephant weighs one ton or two?" he asks.

The Hickman strength has always been on the John Bunyanish side. A horseshoe straightener, phonebook confetti-iser, and steer lifter, he can also hoist you one-handed while hand-wrestling. He plays 85 golf, but has trouble seeing the ball. If the ball is placed where he can see it, he cannot hit it with his short arms. If it is placed where he can hit it, he can't see it. It's under his bay window. "I hit it from memory," he says.

Yale hopes for 1951 depend a lot on Uncle Sam, who has been busy on the campuses proselyting backs of his own. Last year, despite Hickman and masses of publicity, business at the Yale Bowl, which holds 70,896, was poor. Football, which used to pay the way for all Yale sports, lost \$150,000. Some blame it on TV; others say there is no substitute for a winning team at the box office. However, there is not the slightest pressure on Mr. Hickman. "We once won 60 in a row," Bob Hall told me. "It's not good for any team to win all the time. We'll fill that Bowl again, if only with Herman!"

Years ago another stout man waddled about the campus—Law Professor William Howard Taft. Double-sized chairs, benches, ballfield seats and stalls especially built to house the generous frame of the ex-President still festoon the campus. Hickman was not long in discovering them when he came to Yale. "Wasn't it nice of them to build these things for me," he cried. "Darned if they don't treat a boy from the hills fine in the North!"





THE STORY OF A DESPERATE POST-WAR ADVENTURE IN THE FORBIDDING HEIGHTS OF THE OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAINS.

New Guinea Manhunt

by HUGH CAVE

YOUNG for such a burden of responsibility, Roderick Carmody paced the weathered boards of the dark veranda and watched the path at the jungle's edge, behind the empty police barracks. Below the house, the flat waters of the Coral Sea etched a line of liquid opal on the beach. Inland, lightning played among New Guinea's torn mountains.

The night was half over. Still no word had come.

Rod Carmody's wife came quietly through the doorway to his side. "Why won't you go to bed, Roddy?" she pleaded. "We'll hear nothing to-night. It's too soon."

"I suppose so." *But it isn't*, he thought, glancing at her with concern and compassion. *It isn't too soon.*

His wife was nineteen, four years younger than he, and still aglow with the special radiance of their wedding day. Her self-control in the face of the present emergency filled Carmody with pride. She knew the dangers her father faced. She knew a little, even, about the man her father had gone after.

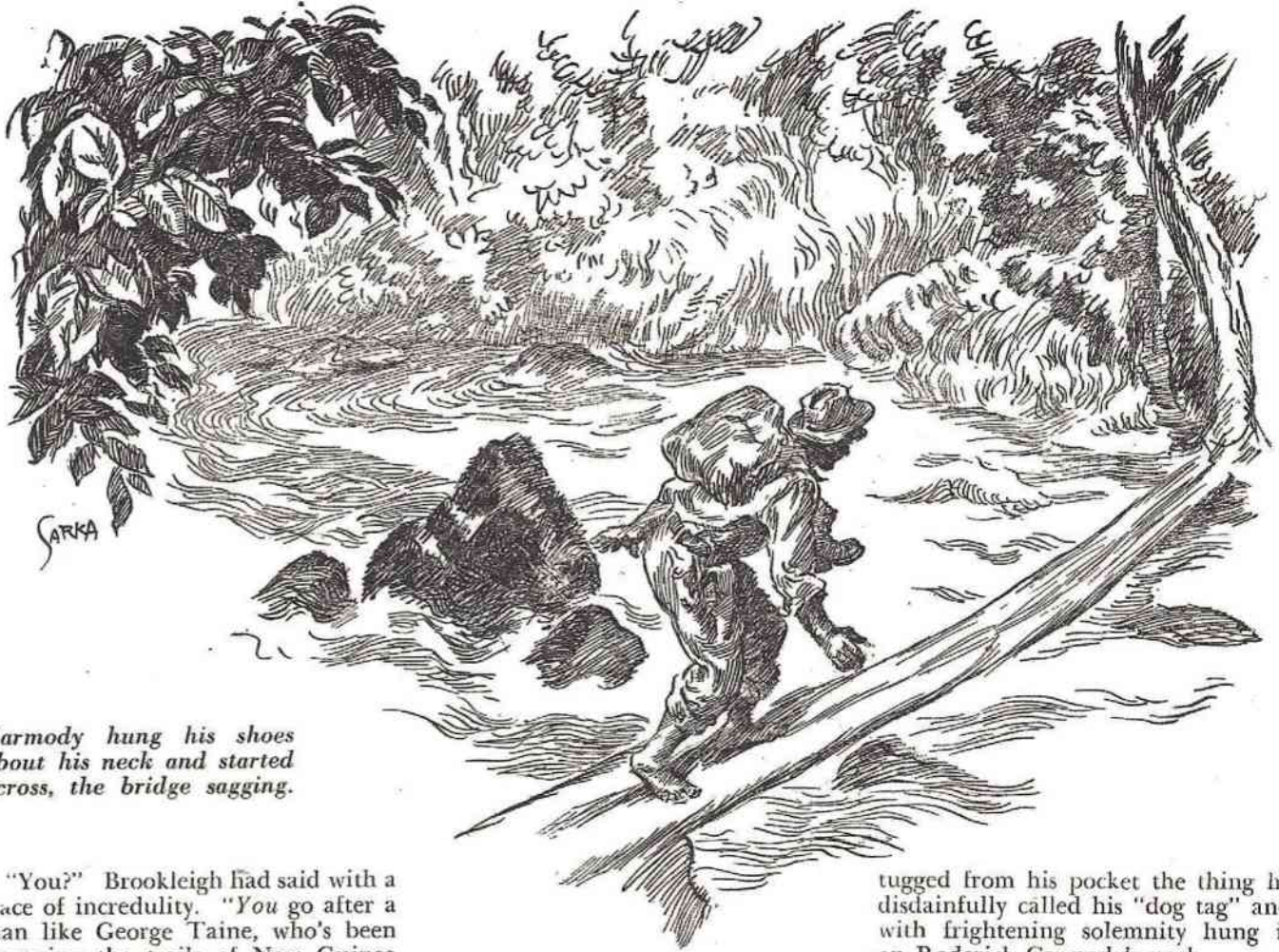
What a wedding gift! Over that gentle irony the gods of the South Pacific must have chuckled long. Only yesterday, after thirty years of Government service in New Guinea, John Brookleigh had announced his deter-

mination to include a letter of resignation with his forthcoming monthly report.

"But something will interfere," he'd predicted. "You'll see. This dark land never lets a man go."

He had been right—right with a vengeance. The predicted "something" had been murder.

Carmody frowned at the path again, his mouth dry. He was in Government service himself, but new to the game and only a visitor here in his father-in-law's district. Only a young man on a honeymoon. Tolerating no argument, the Resident Magistrate had flatly refused his offer of assistance.



Carmody hung his shoes about his neck and started across, the bridge sagging.

"You?" Brookleigh had said with a trace of incredulity. "You go after a man like George Taine, who's been tramping the trails of New Guinea for twenty years? Ah, no. Forgive me, Roddy, but you're a bit green. This is a job for an old hand."

"But you've no police boys here. You'll be alone."

"Taine will be, too," the Resident Magistrate said, strapping on his revolver belt. "Your place is here with Edith." And he had left. . . .

At Carmody's side the girl stirred. It might have been that she shivered, though the night was oven-warm.

"What sort of place is it, where Taine lives? Did Father tell you?"

"A shack on the river, upstream from Pendleton's mission."

"He lives there alone?"

"When he's not up in the mountains after gold." Carmody put a hand on her arm to reassure her, knowing how she felt. She wanted to be able to visualize the business: her father arriving at Taine's house, snapping the handcuffs shut, declaring with dignity, "You're being arrested, Taine, for shooting a native. We can't have that sort of thing, you know." Instead, she had only a vague notion of place and procedure, and the dim lines of the picture left room for fear.

"Go along to bed, Edith," Carmody said, pressing her hand. "I'll be in soon."

She left him. For a time he heard her moving about; then the house was still. Beset with forebodings, he envied her her fortitude.

She loved New Guinea; perhaps that was the secret of her courage. She loved the land as he did. Her father's bitterness at dinner last evening had only bewildered her.

Carmody had been bewildered, too. The words of the Resident Magistrate lay heavy in his mind as he waited.

"The Government?" Brookleigh had said with acid scorn. "Don't talk to me about the Government. You work yourself to a skeleton, striving to bring law and order here. As soon as you've shown a bit of progress, the papers at home praise you to high heaven and some idiot at a desk takes away your police boys—you're not supposed to need them any more. Then a native steals a pig. In reprisal, villages are burned and heads taken. The home press screams of a native uprising and you're drenched in a rain of accusations. Ah, no, it isn't worth it."

At this point the Resident Magistrate had pushed back his chair and wearily risen to his feet. "You believe in the Government? Here's a present for you, then. Wear it while you still have your illusions." He

tugged from his pocket the thing he disdainfully called his "dog tag" and with frightening solemnity hung it on Roderick Carmody's neck.

Carmody, on the dark veranda, touched the thing now with cold fingers. It was a disc about the size of an Australian penny, fashioned of many tiny shells, worn on a shoelace under his khaki shirt. Brookleigh had been proud of it once, when with elaborate ceremony it was draped on him by a delegation of Papuan headmen, to symbolize their loyalty. Now, his own faith sorely shaken, Carmody struggled to remove it.

A sound on the path halted him. He came to his feet quickly, voiced an exclamation, and hurried down the steps to meet a barefoot native trotting toward him from the jungle. The boy silently handed him a bit of paper.

Carmody read the message and went back into the house, but at the open door of the bedroom he hesitated. Edith was asleep, her face, free at last of tension, haloed in soft dark hair on the pillow. Dutifully she lay on her own half of the bed, one bare arm outstretched on his side. He could not bring himself to wake her. Standing at the desk in the sitting-room, he took pencil and paper and left a note.

"Darling—a boy has come from the mission with a request for me to go there. I don't know why. You had

better stay here, I think, until I return or send word. All my love." It was the truth: he did not know why Pendleton wanted him. But he could guess, and his hand shook as he took his flashlight from its peg and went out again.

THE Reverend Mr. Pendleton, a reed-thin man of unguessable age, gripped Carmody's hand in silence. Even when he had led the younger man up the mission-house steps and into the sitting-room, he said nothing. He could not know, of course, that Roderick Carmody, while tramping the four miles through the jungle, had prepared himself for the worst.

"Brookleigh's dead?" Rod Carmody asked quietly.

Mr. Pendleton nodded.

"Where is he?"

"My boys are bringing him down-river from Taine's place."

Carmody, gazing at the floor, said dully, "You'd better tell me how it happened."

The missionary sat down but rose again and stood by the table, leaning on his knuckles. "Mr. Brookleigh stopped here and asked for a canoe and some boys to take him to Taine's place. It was dark when they got there. They found Taine's canoe at the boat landing, packed for departure, and Brookleigh left the boys there while he went up the path to the house."

Carmody, shifting his gaze to the missionary's face, did not interrupt.

"Taine must have heard him coming," Mr. Pendleton went on tonelessly. "A moment or two after Brookleigh left them, the boys heard shooting. Then Taine came striding down the path to the river, with a rifle in his hand. They tried to halt him—give them credit for that—but they're only mission boys, and in the scuffle he got away. He did lose the rifle. I have it here."

"And Edith's father?" Carmody asked.

"He was on the path in front of the house. They carried him to Gasusu and will bring him back this morning. Two of the boys came down in the dark to tell me, and I sent word to you."

Thinking of the girl he had left asleep, Carmody pushed himself erect, aware that there was something he must do and that it would be difficult. His heart ached. He was very tired. But he was the Government now—all the Government there was in his father-in-law's district—and no one could do the thing for him.

"Do your boys know where Taine went?" he asked.

"He fled upstream in his canoe."

Carmody rose and stood before a map tacked to the wall. He studied

the serpentine line of the river, through the mangrove and nipa swamps to Taine's place, and on beyond to the mountains. Few men would dare attempt the nightmare journey across New Guinea to the north coast, with the Owen-Stanleys looming squarely athwart the path. But George Taine had a reputation for going where he pleased.

"I'll want a canoe and two boys," Carmody said. "And some rations."

The tall man looked at him in alarm. "You're not going after him! He knows this country like the palm of his hand!"

"And I don't?" Carmody rejoined. "True, but I'm armed and he isn't. I'd be obliged, Mr. Pendleton, if you'd tell Edith that I've simply gone to investigate. She'd worry, otherwise. Now let's be at it, shall we? There's only a little time till daylight."

ON his way upriver Carmody kept an eye out for the canoe coming down from Gasusu, bearing the body of his wife's father. But the stream in its lower reaches was a vast and gloomy mangrove swamp, and the natives in the other canoe were no doubt seeking out the very currents which Carmody's boys, with a thought for the long pull ahead, were doing their best to avoid. He failed to intercept the craft and, without stopping at Gasusu, went straight on to Taine's place.

Quiet, he thought, stepping out on the rude landing. *As if no one has been here in months.* The house stood as he had pictured it in his uneasy thoughts while talking to Edith: a seedy hut dwarfed by the dark and watchful jungle against which it huddled. Only a self-sufficient man would dwell in such solitude, he reflected.

He approached cautiously and entered, gazing about the single room in which were crowded bed, table, chair and bookcase. The inspection told him nothing of the fugitive's intentions. Returning to the river, he looked at his watch.

Still only nine o'clock, he thought. Taine left about eight last evening—thirteen hours ahead. Unscrewing the cap from a bottle of insect repellent, he smeared the oily stuff on face, neck and wrists, buttoned the cuffs and collar of his shirt and stepped into the boat.

"We'll go on to Miaki and make inquiries."

It was not a nice river. Even here, where the nipas still grew and the forest proper had scarcely begun, it was but a hundred feet wide, compressed to a dark, swift flow by towering ramparts of vegetation. Mosquitoes swarmed like dust motes in every shaft of sunlight.

The mission boys were willing workers, though. If they suffered as

Carmody did through the long, hot hours, they voiced no word of complaint. When he stepped ashore at Miaki Village, just at dark, he commended them. By their efforts they had saved him a night on the river.

And cut Taine's thirteen hours down to ten, at least, if he came this way, Carmody thought.

From an hour's talk with the village headman he gleaned a handful of facts. Taine was indeed ahead of him, not ten hours but six. At Miaki, Taine had turned inland.

The latter procedure was nothing new. For months Taine had used Miaki as a jumping-off place, a point of entry, so to speak, for his diggings in the cloud-topped mountains. Always, when he returned, he rewarded the headman for guarding his canoe during his absence.

From a ragged string-bag at his waist, Carmody's informant drew a mustard-colored pebble. "One time 'e stop, 'e bringum this 'long me."

Carmody looked and nodded. *Gold, he thought. He's gone in for his gold. He won't return this way. I've got to go after him.* Exhausted, he plodded toward the canoe where, under layers of netting, he would spend the night.

HE left Miaki at daybreak, in a rain which had inundated the village. He left alone. Mr. Pendleton's mission boys would be no good inland among bush natives even if willing to undertake the journey, which they were not. He could travel faster alone in any case—if his lack of experience did not thwart him.

Carmody traveled as light as he dared, the pack on his back containing food for but four days, his only other burdens a canteen and a revolver. Miaki was an hour behind him when he heard the drums. He stopped to listen.

Obviously it was a signal of some sort from the village he had just left. A warning, perhaps, that the Government was intruding. Miaki's headman had seemed friendly enough, but in Carmody's mind echoed words spoken lately by the man whose death he sought to avenge: "*You never understand these people. You only think you do.*"

He trudged on, battling the mosquitoes and small black flies, mechanically touching his cigarette to the leeches that appeared from time to time on his hands. Presently the drums were silent.

The forest, though, was not. It whispered. It talked to itself in low mutterings, like a flowing stream. Now and then, violently, it screeched. Whether or not the rain had ceased, Carmody couldn't know. He walked in a yard-wide tunnel the walls of which supported a tangled green roof

now ten feet above his head, now a hundred. The roof dripped incessantly. The air beneath it seared his lungs.

At noon, crossing a quarter mile of grassland, he found a swift, boulder-strewn stream barring his way and plunged his face in and drank deeply, smiling wryly at Government pamphlets which warned against quenching one's thirst with unboiled water from bush streams. The far shore, fifty feet distant, was a vertical green wall gaudy with scarlet blooms. The bridge spanning the flood consisted of three smooth logs lashed together, the largest but a foot in diameter. In the center white water licked over it.

He hung his shoes about his neck and started across, arms outstretched for balance. In midstream his weight put the logs under; the water boiled about his ankles. He fell to hands and knees and crept past the danger spot, straightened again, wiped the spray from his eyes and went on.

With a report like a rifle-shot, the bridge suddenly dropped from under him.

One hand for his pack, the other for himself, Carmody struggled to stay afloat in the angry water. The roar deafened him until the current sucked him under; then in a warm wet world of frightening pressures that turned him end over end he was borne downstream. He fought upward toward the light, reached it and lost it. Submerged rocks halted his progress. He worked his head above the flood a second time, took in air and feebly dragged himself to the overhanging wall of jungle ten feet distant.

When he had recovered somewhat, he took stock of his condition. Every part of him ached, yet nothing refused altogether to function. *No bones broken*, he thought. *Lucky*. But his revolver holster, dangling on a broken belt, was empty.

He waded back upstream to the bridge-end and sought for the path. There he halted, frowning. On this side of the stream the logs had been fastened in place with lashings of lawyer vine wrapped round an oak trunk. The vine-ends hung like broken hammock ropes.

Cut, Carmody decided, examining them. *The fellow's clever. Being unarmed; he'll try every trick in his repertory to halt me*. Apprehensively he glanced up the trail, half expecting to see Taine lurking there. But no—a man like Taine would let a trap or snare do the job for him. In physical contact there was risk of injury, even if the ambush were successful, and in this desolate region even a small injury could be disastrous.

But how does he know he's being followed? Carmody wondered.

His tired mind found an answer. *The drums. He told the natives at Miaki to sound the drums if I showed up there. Stay awake, Carmody. This man knows his way about. And you have no edge on him now. You, too, are weaponless.*

With eyes wide open he walked the track warily, and later crossed other streams without mishap. At day's end he was near the bush village of Ramaiu and drove himself, despite his weariness, to reach it before halting.

Ramaiu was a mere cluster of huts whose seemingly friendly occupants answered Carmody's questions without hesitation. Taine, they told him, had passed through in mid-afternoon.

But before the outskirt gardens were fairly behind him next morning, a drum in the village trophy-house began its warning to the man ahead. Carmody grimaced at the sound. *Watch yourself. Taine knows now the bridge didn't get you. He'll try again.*

He ached. Here in the foothills the nights were cool. He had slept on a mat, and the chill of the damp earth had crept like an infection into his bruised flesh. By mid-morning he shivered violently, and his lungs filled with small sharp pains when the uphill going made him breathe hard. The weight of his pack was torture.

But he had an answer to the torment. Every plodding step of the way, he held before him a mental picture of the girl he had left behind. He was not a hating man, but hatred walked after him, prodding him toward the distant mountains.

Ramaiu's warning drum had been still for hours. Carmody climbed a blowdown blocking the path, balanced himself erect on it and prepared to jump to the bed of leaves beyond. A scrap of paper, a notebook page among the mottled leaves, caught his eye. On it were penciled lines that appeared to be part of a map.

Wait, Carmody. Take care! Why should George Taine draw a map?

He descended, circled the blowdown and speared the paper on a stick from the trail's edge. It was not a map; only a scribble intended to look like one. With the same stick Carmody poked at the leaves, uncovering a pattern of sharpened bamboo stakes.

Had he jumped, eager to snatch the paper, one or more must have pierced each foot.

You're a man walking a minefield, Carmody. Sooner or later, inevitably, you'll make a mistake. You're green. George Taine knows every trick in the book.

He struggled on. An hour later the track began to climb in earnest. Swarms of small, swift flies went with him. Rockfalls ingeniously tested his

strength. Red clay, tenacious as glue, layered his legs and doubled the weight of his boots.

But if other traps had been set for him, he passed without awareness of them. At day's end, he reached Hari Wegeti, the last village marked on Mr. Pendleton's map.

At Hari Wegeti the line of Government influence and missionary penetration ended. Beyond lay territory designated as "uncontrolled" and "unexplored." Carmody was not surprised when the villagers kept their distance, eyeing him with suspicion. George Taine was perhaps the only other man of white skin whom they had seen.

He thought it best not to tell them he was the Government. Likely it would mean nothing to them. He was headman of a coastal village, he said, on his way to visit relatives in the mountains. They seemed to accept the tale, but he slept only a little that night, fearful of a surprise intrusion. When he did sleep, he dreamed of clean sheets and the touch of his wife's hand, and awoke trembling. What would she do if he failed to return?

If the drums speak tomorrow, Carmody, look out. Taine will not be far ahead. Here in the mountains he may try to turn the natives against you.

The drums did speak. Soon after, while advancing through a tunnel of twilight gloom, Carmody tripped over a length of vine drawn taut between tree trunks, inches above the path. Falling forward, he extended his stumble into a dive by thrusting desperately with his feet.

The ground gave way beneath him. But his outflung hands met solid earth, and the hole which Taine had dug for him stayed empty.

He looked into the pit before struggling erect. It was not deep. But he would have entered it head foremost, and it was lined with bits of shale as sharp as spear-points.

It took you an hour to dig this, Taine. I'm that much closer.

The track twisted upward through moss forest and elfin wood. A rock-face confronted him. He climbed with care, his feet feeling for crevices, hands sliding from hold to hold. The top was but a few yards above when a length of dangling vine gave way with suspicious quickness at his tug. He threw himself sideways as a boulder at the cliff's edge, bigger than himself, teetered and fell toward him.

The hurtling rock struck his outflung foot and he felt the impact like an electric shock speeding upward to his thigh. He could have touched the loop of vine about the missile as it passed him. Bounding high from a ledge just below, it went rushing down the wooded slope.

Atop the cliff he examined his foot. The heel of his boot was gone. Unharméd but limping, he continued the march.

The absence of native villages in this unmapped region did not surprise him. They existed, he knew, but here where inter-village warfare was common, the prime requisite for an enduring settlement was inaccessibility. For all he knew, he had passed several hidden communities since leaving Hari Wegeti. Small, they would be tucked away in the gorges or among the crags, and the track he followed was the link between them. It existed for no other reason.

Quite likely, for some time now, his presence had been known and his progress marked. There was nothing he could do about it.

MORE dangerous than the natives was the cold cunning of the man he sought to overtake. Carmody felt himself walking a tightrope above a bottomless gorge, momentarily expecting the rope to break. His eyes burned from their everlasting vigil. At times the sweat on his aching body turned cold and he shivered.

But now he was finding footprints where the ground was soft.

Early in the afternoon he emerged from a leafy tunnel into blinding sunlight, and a sudden flow of cool wind calmed his jumping nerves. He had climbed three thousand feet, he judged, since quitting the river, and stood now on a quarter-mile-long plateau spread like a doorstep to the torn barrier of peaks arrayed before him. It was inhospitable country. Gold country, too, if he knew the signs.

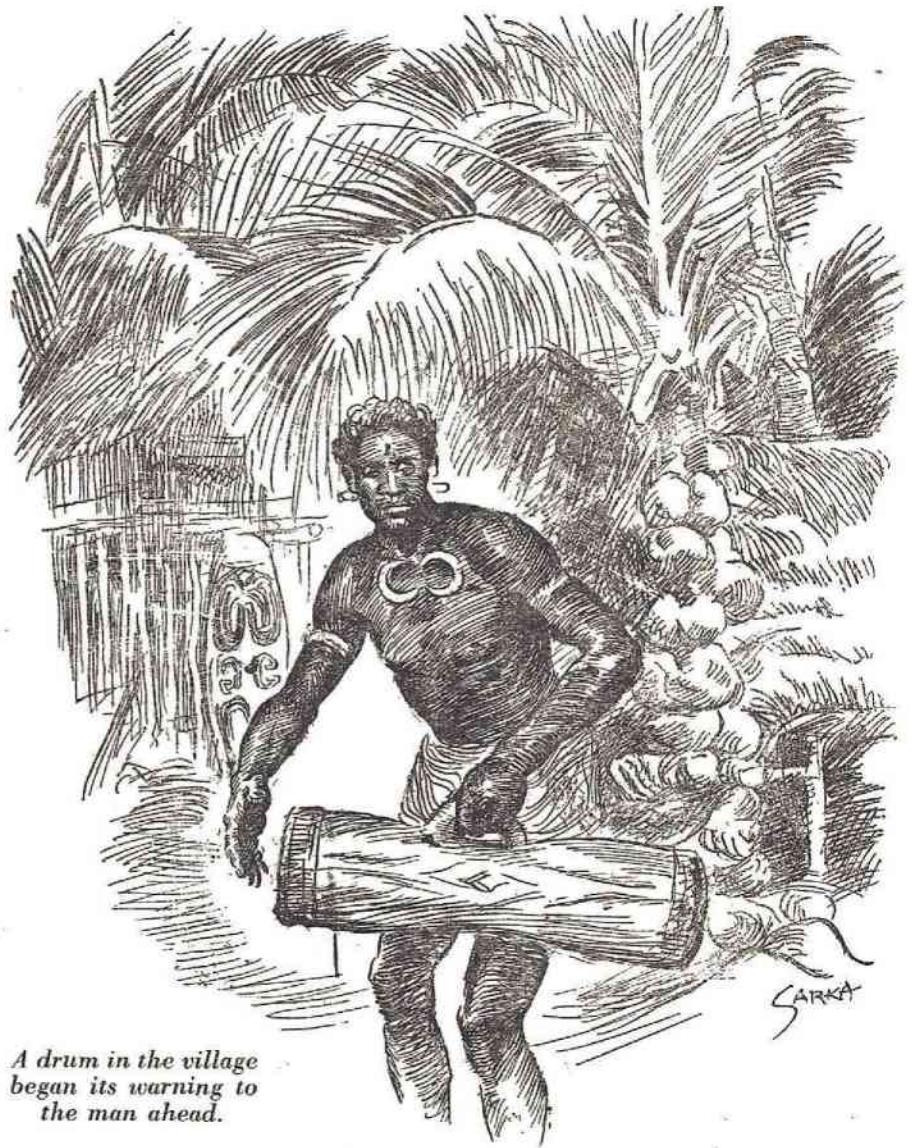
Over rocky ground he advanced, an unscalable wall of rubble on his left, an awesome chasm on his right. *Careful, Carmody. This is a place for ambush.*

A feathered wooden shaft whistled from the rocks, struck the ground squarely in his path and quivered there.

Carmody halted, realizing with a shudder that the arrow might have pierced his heart if its owner had so wished. A movement among the rocks caught his eye. He spoke to it in as steady a voice as he could manage, held out his empty hands and waited.

For three days, Carmody, George Taine has been trying to kill you. What irony, now, if an ignorant savage does it for him!

One savage? The rocks came to life suddenly and from them, with the wariness of hunters closing in on cornered prey, crept a dozen brown men armed with clubs, bows-and-arrows, spears. Carmody noted with resignation their almost complete nakedness. From reading the reports of patrol of-



A drum in the village began its warning to the man ahead.

ficers, he knew that one had to go far into uncontrolled territory to find natives who wore so little.

They surrounded him. Searching their bearded faces in vain for sign of friendship, he tried, one after another, the few Papuan dialects in which he knew a word or two. Then with moisture on his brow he pointed to the mountains, endeavoring with sign talk to convey that he wished to go there and his motives were peaceful.

You're wasting your time, Carmody. You're finished.

Experimentally he stepped forward. His arms were seized. A scowling warrior squarely in front of him put arrow to bowstring and drew a bead on Carmody's heart.

Carmody did not struggle. What use? He had seen pigs slaughtered by bow-and-arrow at ceremonial functions, the squealing animals held between two men as he was held here, the arrow launched full-strength from but a yard away. He saw a flicker of excitement in the eyes of his execu-

tioner and watched the muscles quiver in the man's arm.

You were right, Brookleigh. Only a fool would dream of civilizing this God-forgotten country. You were right and I was wrong. So ends the tale. So, too, ends the Government, until the next idiot comes along with his illusions.

Aloud he said defiantly: "Go ahead! Or do you want to paint a bull's-eye on me?"

More likely they wanted his clothes intact. The one-man firing squad had relaxed his bow-string and was gesturing. Another of the group stepped up and fumbled with the buttons on Carmody's sweat-soaked shirt.

The shirt came open. With a grunt the fellow drew back, pointing at Carmody's chest. The rest of them, chattering like birds, crowded closer for a look.

Carmody caught a word or two of their dialect—one of those he had tried on them earlier, without success. He wet his lips to try again. But now

suddenly his arms were free and his captors were peering at him as if he had dropped from the moon.

"Guv'men'?"

Astounded, Carmody found his tongue. "That's right, I'm the Government. Of course I am!" But how in the name of all things holy did they know there *was* a Government?

His gaze fell to the shell bauble dangling on his chest. Dimly he understood that somehow they knew its meaning; they respected it. While they poked and pawed at him, he was too awed to speak.

When he did speak, asking questions, they answered without hesitation. Kill him? No, no, they were not going to kill him. The Guv'men' was a good thing. They had thought him an enemy, come to make trouble. The white man, Taine, had told them so.

"This Taine, where is he now?" Carmody demanded.

HE got his answer promptly. A rifle spoke with thunder-clap violence among the crags. With a bullet in his hip, Carmody stumbled, spun slowly and fell to his knees.

He saw George Taine rise from the rocks ahead on his left and stride toward him. Nothing could be done to halt the man's advance. The natives fell back, silent with fright; some even abandoned the weapons they had dropped. Carmody, swaying on his knees, knew that this time, for certain, his luck had run its course.

Taine halted before him, a gaunt man in ragged, mud-caked clothing, hair and beard untrimmed, looking a little like an Old Testament prophet. In his moment of triumph he was amused.

"For a green hand, you're a tenacious chap, Carmody."

Carmody clutched his hip and wondered how much sharper the pain would get before he succumbed to it. He felt a deep, all-shattering disappointment and wanted to cry.

"But you were a fool to follow me," Taine said. "You should have known I'd have weapons hidden away up here at my diggings. Why'd you try it?"

"I'm paid to do my job."

"Your job? Brookleigh's, you mean. And he hated it. Told me so himself."

"He didn't know then that even here—way back in here—the Government was known and respected."

George Taine reached down to take Carmody's revolver, and seemed surprised to find his victim wearing none. It was apparently not worth comment, however. "Government?" he said. "Don't fool yourself. It's Brookleigh himself they respect. Nothing so impersonal as the Government would do it."

"That's what I mean," Carmody said.

Taine's shrug was a gesture of indifference. "Well, you're here. That's more than you deserve, Carmody. If I'd known you were fool enough to come after me unarmed, you wouldn't have got so far. Get yourself back now, if you can." He turned from the kneeling man and barked orders at the knot of silent natives. The Papuans, eyeing his rifle with respect, made haste to obey.

"Taine," Carmody called.

The man glanced toward him.

"I'm curious. What will you do now?"

Taine pointed with his rifle to the tangled gorge at Carmody's back. "Nine or ten miles across there is a tributary of the Lakemu. Davidson has a launch at his Lakemu plantation which this"—he tapped the rifle—"is going to buy for me. These boys will lug my gear that far."

"I see. You came here to pick up your gear."

"Mining equipment is hard to come by in New Guinea," Taine said.

"Taine—these boys won't go with you."

Taine laughed aloud.

"You can't do it," Carmody insisted.

His voice shook; he was trembling. "If you abuse them, every white man who comes in here from now on will suffer!"

"I'll be digging for gold elsewhere," Taine said. "What happens here is the Government's worry."

Taine turned away again. This time Carmody did not call him back. Brandishing the rifle, Taine herded the natives before him toward the rocks. A moment later his voice and the last footfall had died away and Carmody was alone in the midst of emptiness. He turned his head slowly to look about. The loneliness was unbearable.

He had been left to die on a plateau of rock, bare and bleak as a slab of the moon's crust, midway between earth and sky. The wind sighed. A brown lizard, flecked with gold, walked toward him in the sunlight, halted, studied him and retreated. In a couple of hours darkness would fall on the ledge, drawing its stored heat. The night would be bitter cold.

Carmody tried to stand. His legs buckled. He fell and lay still.

After a time he heard voices.

The natives had reappeared, on their way back from Taine's diggings. Single file, bent now under heavy burdens, they plodded into the open. Taine stood tall in the sunlight, his back to Carmody, directing them.

Carmody gripped the ledge with his hands and pulled himself forward. Taine did not turn.

Suddenly his captors were peering at him as if he had dropped from the moon.

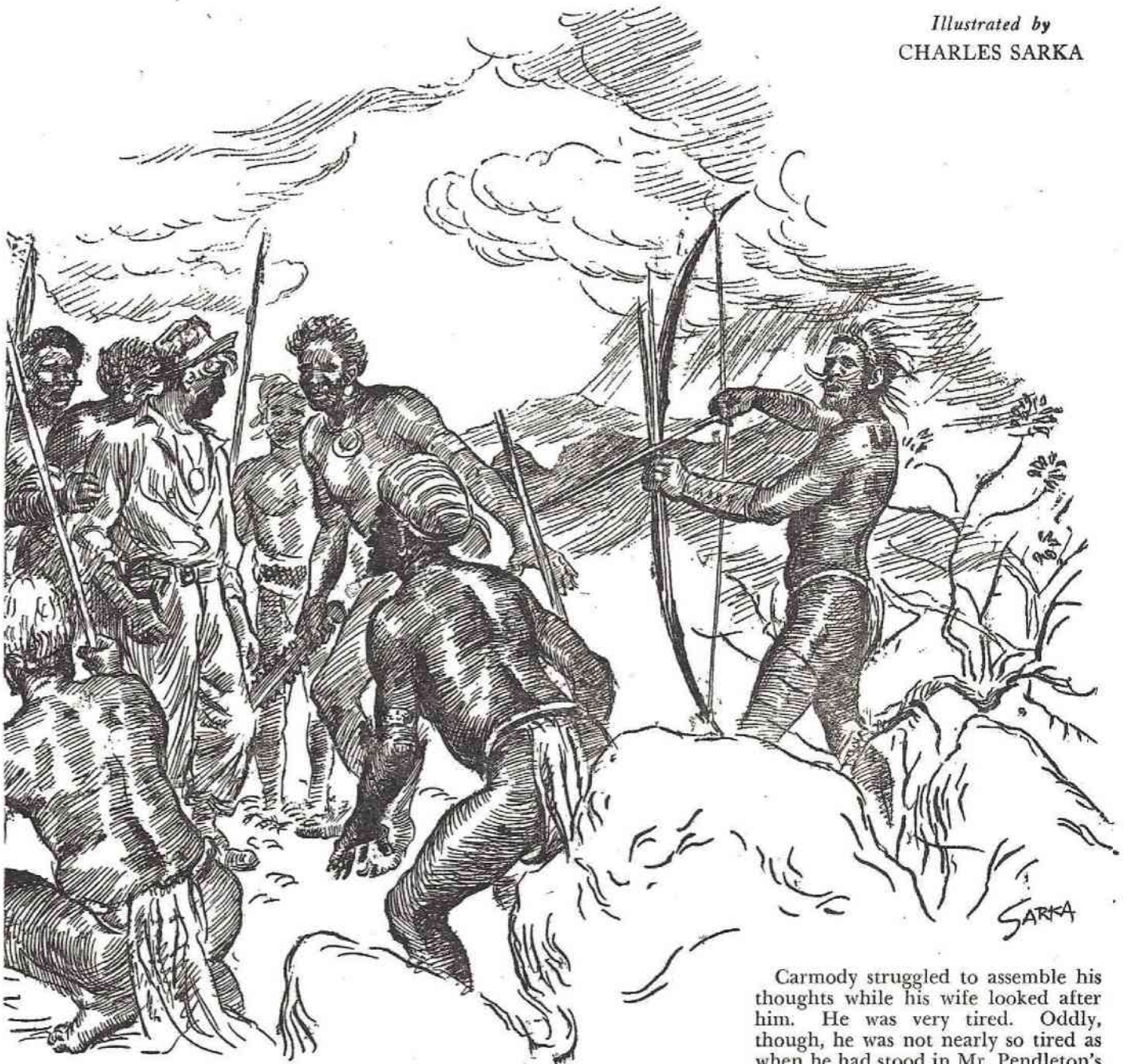


Three times Carmody dragged himself the length of his outthrust arms. His right hand closed then on a Papuan bow, his left on an arrow. He sat up, enduring his pain without a twitch, careful to make no sudden move. His gaze, on Taine's back, was as bleak as the rock beneath him.

Strangely, he was not then thinking of the dark-haired girl he had left asleep at Brookleigh's house, or of her father.

You, Carmody, you're the Government. You're the hope of this lost land. You've a job to do.

When he had fitted arrow to bow and taken aim, he hesitated. One arrow was all he had. One was all he would be allowed to use anyway, though he had a hundred, for if this one missed, Taine would turn with the rifle. . . .



"Taine."

The man ignored him.

"Taine—turn around."

Taine swung with a gesture of annoyance. The arrow, aimed at his heart, swooped upward in flight and struck him squarely in the throat.

CARMODY knew little about his return to the mission. The really remarkable thing was not that he was delivered alive to Mr. Pendleton but that people of many villages, normally not on friendly terms with one another, had a hand in it. He was passed along, literally, like a brittle and precious piece of property.

To be sure, these same people had earlier nearly been the death of him, by sounding the drums to warn George Taine of his pursuit. But they had not known why they beat

the drums. They did know why they fussed over Carmody and rattled charms in his behalf while he babbled in delirium.

The fussing helped. Perhaps the charms did, too. By the time he reached the mission, the babbling had ceased and he even managed to negotiate the last hundred feet, from boat landing to mission house, in a vertical position.

A surprise awaited him. His wife was at the mission, and she was not in mourning. Brookleigh, his father-in-law, lay abed with a bandaged head, neither dead nor dying.

Mr. Pendleton, trying to explain, was apologetic. "My boys thought the Magistrate was done for," he said, "but later, at Gasusu, he revived. Taine's bullet laid open his scalp. It looked worse than it was."

Carmody struggled to assemble his thoughts while his wife looked after him. He was very tired. Oddly, though, he was not nearly so tired as when he had stood in Mr. Pendleton's sitting-room before, studying the map of the district. *If I had to*, he thought, *I could do it again. Of course I could!*

MR. PENDLETON shook a frowning face at him. "I'm afraid you went a long way for nothing. I did try to dissuade you, you know."

"It wasn't for nothing," Carmody replied with feeling. "I learned a good deal about the country, Mr. Pendleton, that isn't on the map. And a lot about the Government"—he almost called it the *Guo'men'*—"that the Resident Magistrate himself isn't aware of."

Carmody turned then to his wife. "When I've written my report, we'll read it to your father," he concluded, holding her hands. "It will do him more good than all the medicine in New Guinea."

Justice on Honey

A Tale of Whippoorwill Valley

THIS is the story of a lawsuit. It was listed on the records of our court as *Smuck versus Hodge*. It was begun in the county courthouse and finished on the summit of Honey Mountain. There was a lady in the case. Her name was Lou, and she was the sweetest hound that ever yodeled at the heels of a red fox.

Judge Cates, Dick Sloan and I first met her one night when we were out for a chase on Honey Mountain. Our hounds were having a hard time striking a trail, so we built a fire and edged the coffee pot against it while waiting. Suddenly, we heard the cry of a running hound coming straight toward us from the direction of the

new moon. We listened silently for a few moments and knew that the dog was not one of our pack. Her running voice was a series of high-pitched chops followed by a double yodel which scattered echoes all around the mountain.

When she was still half a mile away, our pack heard her and fell in. For the next three hours that mountain was alive with sound as a score of hounds sang at the heels of the fox. He had evidently reached home territory, because round and round he went, sometimes passing within less than a hundred yards of us. Our coffee boiled over and our fire died to embers while we listened.

The outstanding hound in that three hours of running was the stranger

who had brought the fox in from the west. We wondered how far she had come and to whom she belonged. We had heard the voices of most fox-hounds in our section of the county, and were sure she was not one of them. It was the middle of December, which is near the usual mating season of red fox. At that season the males travel for miles in search of a mate. The one the stranger had brought in was probably a local boy who had gone far away in search of a lady who would share his den. Somewhere the hound had crossed his trail and brought him hurrying to Honey Mountain.

He holed up in Hooter's Hollow, and we sounded our horns. The hounds came, and among them was the



"Until you gentlemen come to some kind of an agreement," said the Judge, "the hound stays with me."

Mountain

by EWART A. AUTRY

stranger. She was young, medium-sized, trimly built and solid white except for a little tan on her ears. We had hoped she would have a collar bearing the name plate of the owner, but there was none.

We debated whether to take her with us or leave her to seek the way back home. We finally decided it would be best to carry her and make inquiry about her owner. We noted that she was the very image of a hound which Judge Cates had raised and kept until her death. He had called her Lady Lou, so there on the mountain we bestowed that name on the stranger.

The Judge put her in his kennels. The next day we began to make inquiry among the fox-hunters we knew. None had lost a hound, nor did they know of anyone who had. Several came to see her and hear her run. Though they admired her, and wished they could call her their own, not a one could do so. It seemed for a while that Lady Lou had dropped in on us from some distant No Man's Land. We thought of the possibility that she might have been whelped in the woods, and was as much a part of it as a red fox. I must admit that we hoped no one would claim her, for she sang the sweetest music we had ever heard on the trails, and in speed and endurance she surpassed any hound we had ever owned.

AFTER a month of fruitless inquiry we decided the proper thing to do was to put an ad in the classified section of our county paper. The Judge wrote it, giving a complete description of Lady Lou and the date she had come to us. The description was a mistake. Two men showed up on the same day claiming her.

I was over at the Judge's helping him repair his kennel fence when they came. The first one was a short fat fellow with a benign expression and plenty of gab. He waddled up and stuck out a hand to the Judge. "Howdy, Judge," he said. "You remember me, don't you?"

"Yes," replied the Judge, but he didn't sound too pleased at the remembrance, and his handshake wasn't

the kind one would give to an old friend.

He introduced the fellow to me as Clint Hodge. "Lives in the northern part of the county," he explained. "Has had several cases in my court."

"Hundingers, eh, Judge?" laughed Hodge, clapping the Judge on the back.

"I guess that's what you would call them," said the Judge dryly.

"I've come after my hound," said Hodge. "It seems from the paper that you have her." He stuck a pudgy finger through the kennel fence and pointed to Lady Lou. "That's her all right. Name's Madge. Best hound I ever bought."

His identification didn't prove a thing. There was no other hound in the kennels of similar coloring. Any fool could have picked her from the description in the paper.

"Well, there's nothing I can do," said the Judge slowly, "except to tell you to take her. If she belongs to you, you are welcome to her."

Hodge went inside the kennel fence. "Come here, Madge, old girl," he said, snapping his fingers. She backed into her house and had to be dragged out. He snapped a chain around her neck and started toward his car. Just then another car turned into the Judge's driveway. A tall, dark, hook-nosed fellow got out.

Completely ignoring the Judge and me this second man spoke to Hodge. "What are you doing with my hound?" he demanded.

"Your hound?" said Hodge mockingly. "Saul Smuck, you never owned a hound that looked half this good."

"She's mine, and I'm aiming to have her," said Smuck, advancing toward Hodge.

"Try taking her," said Hodge, dropping the chain and squaring off to meet Smuck.

"Gentlemen," put in the Judge, "this is my property. Either behave, or get off."

"But Judge," said Smuck, appearing to notice us for the first time, "she's mine. Name's Mary. Best hound I ever owned."

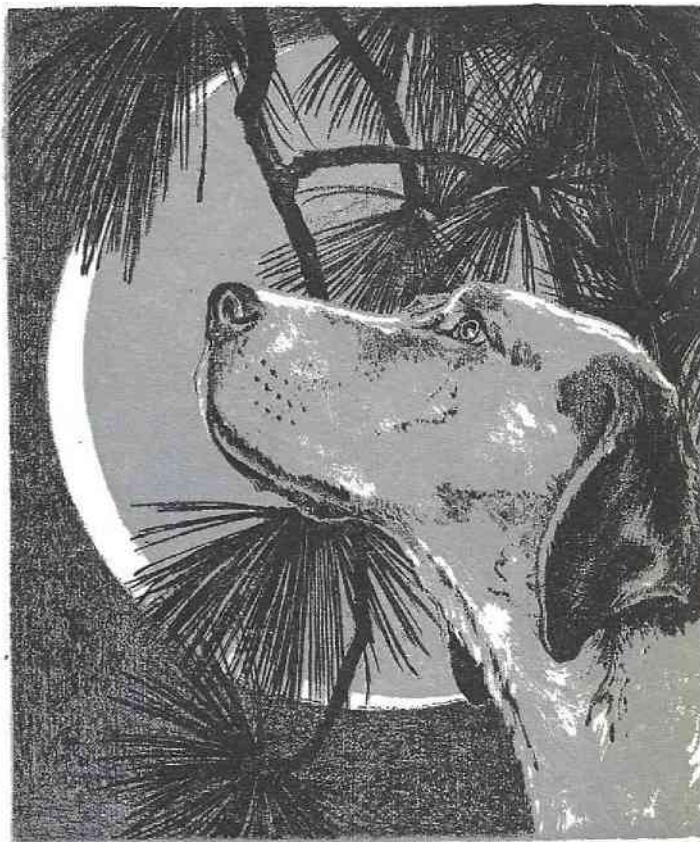
"Mr. Smuck," said the Judge, "I don't know to whom she belongs. Mr. Hodge claimed her first, and I delivered her into his hands. Now you have come claiming her."

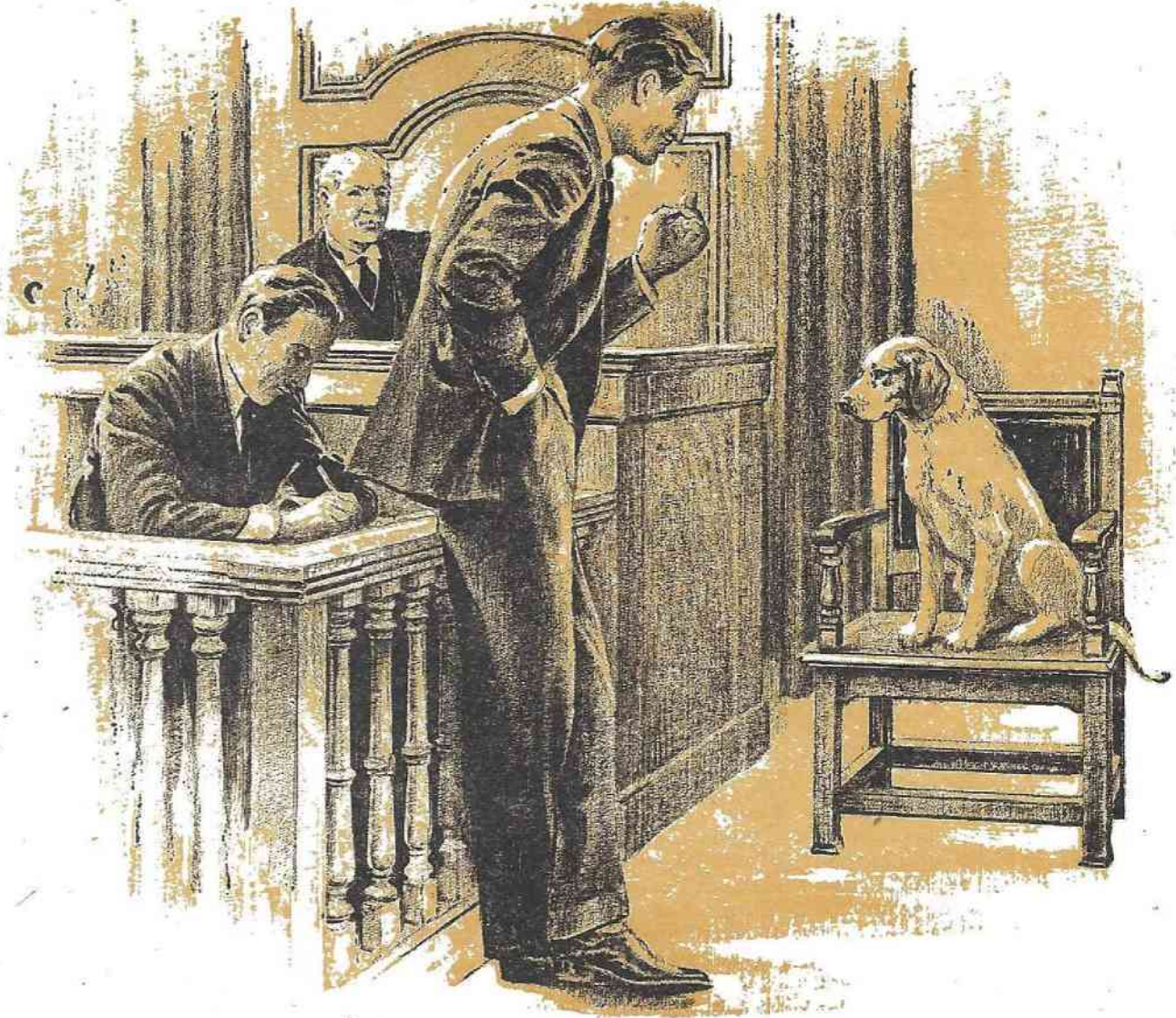
"Yes, and I'll sue the pants off him and get her," said Smuck.

"Do as you like," said the Judge shortly, "but until you gentlemen come to some kind of an agreement, the hound stays with me." He took the chain off Lady Lou and put her back in the kennels.

Fuming and sputtering, Smuck and Hodge drove away. "The pot and the kettle," muttered the Judge. "They're bitter rivals in the dog business. Buy and sell dogs for a living. Been suing one another in my court for the past ten years. Hate to see a nice dog like Lou fall into the hands of either of them."

"What do you suppose they'll do about her?" I asked.





"Come here, Mary," Smuck coaxed, over and over. She looked at him solemnly.

"Since I had already given Lady Lou to Hodge, Smuck will sue him."

"But she probably doesn't belong to either of them," I reasoned.

"That doesn't matter," said the Judge. "Those two fellows have spent a lot of money suing one another over things more trivial than a stray hound."

THAT was in July. The case of Smuck *versus* Hodge came up at the regular term of County Court in September. On the day set for the trial, I drove by and picked up Dick, then the Judge and Lady Lou. A crowd had already assembled in the courtroom when we arrived. I noted that there were fox-hunters of all ages present. There were grizzled old men who had followed the hounds since they were big enough to toot a horn. There were youngsters who were just beginning to know the love of trail music and the beauty of a high-headed pack running close to the tail of a red fox. They were not there because of

Smuck or Hodge, but because they were interested in Lady Lou.

In a singsong voice, a deputy announced the judge's arrival. The audience arose. Disturbed by the commotion, Lady Lou hesitated at the door. The Judge patted her on the head, and she walked with him down the aisle like a well-bred lady. Many necks were craned to catch a glimpse of her as she mounted the bench with the Judge. Her head was high and with her nose she was searching the courtroom air for the presence of friends. She located Dick and me, and gently wagged her tail in recognition.

Both Smuck and Hodge had lawyers from out of the county. Judge Cates asked if they wanted the bench to render the decision in the case or preferred a trial by jury. The attorneys conferred with their clients, who glared at each other for a few seconds, then agreed on a jury trial. After much wrangling, the jury box was filled. The foreman was Charlie Shaw, a well known fox-hunter. Six

of the other eleven were also ardent followers of the sport. At least, Lady Lou had friends on the jury, but it was hard for me to see how they could possibly aid her by rendering a decision for either Smuck or Hodge.

EVIDENCE offered by both sides in the case followed the same pattern. Smuck's attorney produced witnesses who swore they recognized the hound as being one named Mary, belonging to Saul Smuck. Smuck, himself, swore that he had purchased the hound the previous winter from a traveling dog-peddler whose name and address he didn't remember. He did remember that the fellow was elderly and traveled in a light pick-up. Cross-examination seemed to irritate him considerably. At one point Hodge's attorney asked: "Do you love hounds, Mr. Smuck?"

"No," he replied shortly. "I just buy and sell them."

Hodge's attorney produced witnesses who swore that the hound's

name was Madge and that she belonged to Clint Hodge. Hodge also swore that he had purchased her the previous winter from a traveling dog-peddler. Like Smuck he could not remember the peddler's name or address. He did recall that the fellow was youngish and traveled in a station wagon. During cross-examination, he grinned at the jury and shot a sly wink in the direction of his attorney.

When he had left the witness stand there was whispering among the jurors. Judge Cates looked at them inquiringly. Charlie Shaw arose. "Your Honor," he said, "the jury feels that the hound should be given a chance to aid in the identification of her owner. Of course, we won't base our decision on that alone, but it might help to have that along with the other evidence."

Both attorneys were on their feet at once, babbling strenuous objections.

"I can see no harm in it," ruled the Judge, "especially since the hound has been with neither man during the past several weeks. . . . Lead her to the witness chair," he ordered a deputy.

LADY LOU hopped into the chair much to the delight of the audience. Smuck was the first to come before her. He snapped his fingers and whistled through his teeth. "Come here, Mary," he coaxed over and over. She sat still and looked at him solemnly. He turned away angrily. "She's forgotten me," he muttered.

"You know me, Madge, old girl," said Hodge as he weaved and twisted before her, as if about to go into some kind of a dance. She paid him no more attention than she had Smuck. "She's confused by the crowd," he said, as he returned to his seat.

Lady Lou was led back to the Judge, and the attorneys presented their arguments. When they had finished, the Judge briefly summarized the evidence for the jury. "Now, gentlemen," he concluded, "before you retire to consider the case, is there anything else this court can do to aid you in reaching a fair verdict?"

There was more whispering in the jury box, then Charley Shaw arose again. "Your Honor," he said. "I'm just as confused as I was when this case began, and so are the other jurors." Several nodded their heads vigorously. "As the matter now stands I am not capable of rendering any verdict at all, but I have a suggestion to make if you will permit it."

"Certainly," said the Judge. "I am always ready to listen to any suggestion which will help a jury to perform its duty."

"As I see it," said Charley slowly, "all of the evidence in a case like this cannot be produced within the four walls of a courtroom. I feel that it

can only be completed out on the fox trails where a hound like this one really belongs. I suggest that court be recessed now, to reassemble on the summit of Honey Mountain at eight tonight. Out there we can make some tests which will surely aid us in reaching a decision."

"I object," shouted both attorneys, leaping to their feet.

"It's irregular," said Hodge's attorney.

"Never heard of such a thing," said Smuck's attorney.

The Judge pounded with his gavel. "Sit down, gentlemen," he commanded sternly. "We sometimes do things in this court which have never been heard of before, and we're more interested in justice than in regularity." Still sputtering, they sat down. "Now, Mr. Shaw," said the Judge quietly, "please explain your proposed tests."

"Well," said Charley, "there is the horn test. A foxhound never forgets the voice of his master's horn. If either of these gentlemen owned the hound for a few months as both claim, he must surely have carried her hunting several times, in order to be able to recommend her to a possible buyer. On those hunts she would surely have become familiar with his horn. We can hold the hound on leash, and let the claimants go in opposite directions and blow their horns. We can then unsnap the leash and see which way she goes."

"That's a logical test," said the Judge. "Every fox-hunter in this courtroom is aware of the fact that a good hound never forgets the voice of its master's horn." He then addressed Smuck and Hodge.

"Do you gentlemen agree that the test is a fair one?" he asked.

"Yes," said Smuck gruffly. "I wouldn't own a hound that wouldn't come to my horn."

"Sure," said Hodge. Then glancing meaningfully at Smuck, he added, "I'd be ashamed to offer one for sale that didn't have sense enough to recognize my horn."

I realized that Smuck and Hodge could not have afforded to give negative answers. They were dog-dealers, and there were possible clients in the courtroom—men who believed that any good foxhound would quickly become acquainted with his master's horn and answer it in preference to any other. To have opposed the horn test would have been almost an admission by Smuck and Hodge that they either didn't hunt the hounds they advertised, or that the hounds were not up to the standards required by most fox-hunters.

"Did you have any other test in mind, Mr. Shaw?" asked the Judge.

"One other, Your Honor," said Charley. "Any foxhound worthy of

the name will fall in with a running pack and give mouth." He turned toward Smuck and Hodge. "Gentlemen," he asked, "do you agree that this hound will go to any running pack and give mouth?"

"I'd make Hodge a present of her if she didn't," replied Smuck.

"And I wouldn't have her if she didn't," said Hodge.

"Good," said Charley. "One of the biggest assets of a running hound is a good mouth. I am sure these gentlemen highly advertise that feature of any hound they sell. In that case, they must surely study the voice of each hound they purchase. Any foxhunter can recognize the voice of his hound as surely as he can that of his child. These gentlemen who claim to have owned this hound for several months should be able to do likewise. I suggest that we loose a pack on the mountain and let it run a fox. Then give each of these men a chance to pick the voice of this hound."

Charley sat down amid a nodding of heads and a murmur of approval in the courtroom. Smuck and Hodge squirmed uneasily. Charley's insistence that the jury have more evidence, and his suggestion of the manner in which it could be obtained, had certainly maneuvered them into a tight spot. To refuse the test would be a bad advertisement for their business. To accept might bring embarrassment. Neither seemed pleased at the prospect.

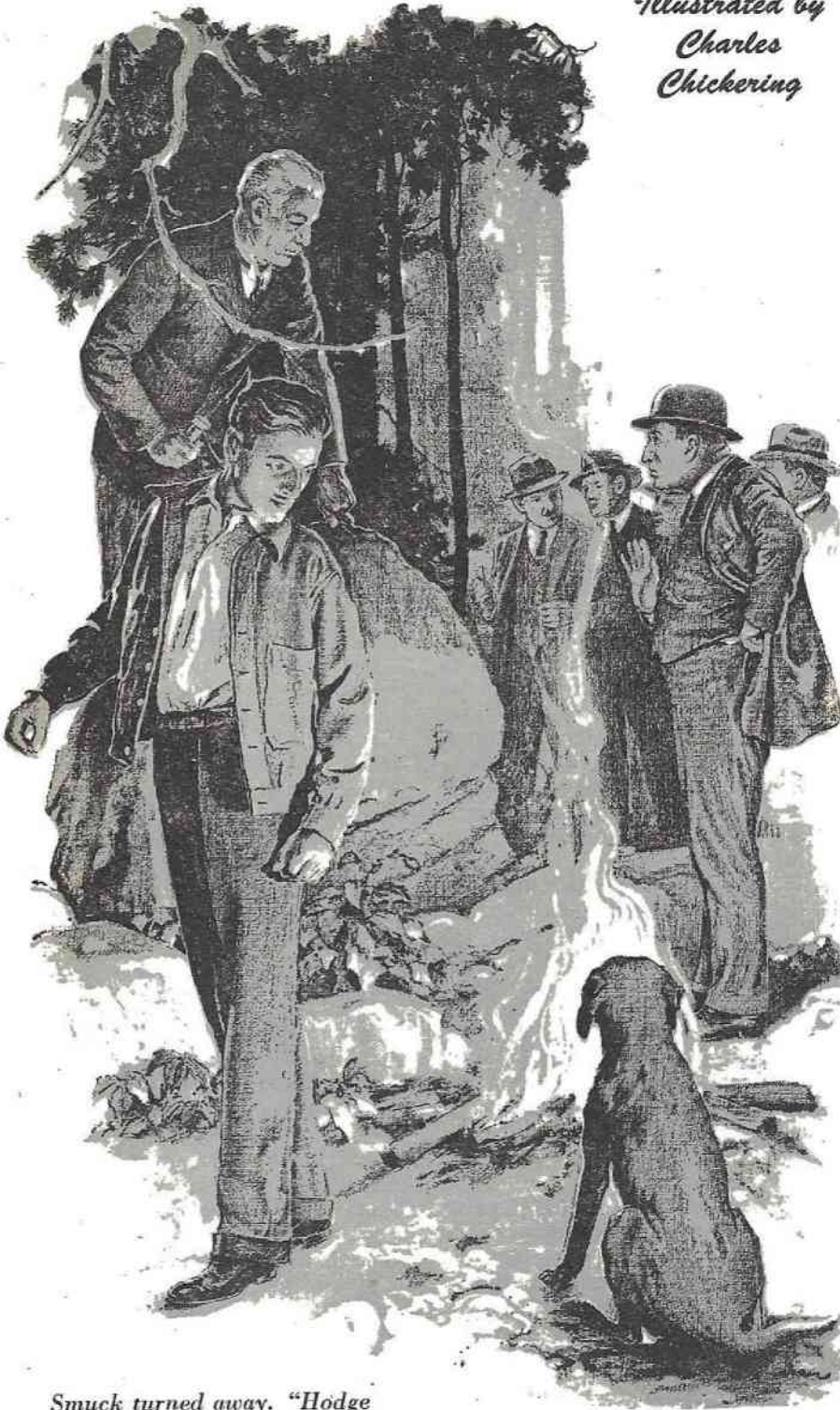
Judge Cates cleared his throat. "Gentlemen, do you agree that this test is also fair?" he asked.

Smuck stared morosely at his attorney for a moment, then nodded. Hodge swallowed hard a couple of times and grunted, "Okay with me." The attorneys said nothing. Knowing nothing of hounds or of foxhunting, the case had gone beyond their depth. There had been nothing in their books about practicing law beneath the stars on Honey Mountain.

"Court will now be recessed," said the Judge, "to be reconvened on the summit of Honey Mountain at eight tonight. Gentlemen of the jury, you will be in charge of a deputy who will see that you have supper and a conveyance to the mountain. I shall personally see that the hounds are there." He patted Lady Lou on the head. She acknowledged it by thumping the floor with her tail.

ON the way home Judge Cates seemed troubled. "Boys," he said to Dick and me, "in most cases which have come before me I feel that I have been able to assist in seeing that justice was served. In this one I have been able to do exactly nothing. Charley Shaw was right when he said the jury had nothing to go on. It

Illustrated by
Charles
Chickering



Smuck turned away. "Hodge can have her," he growled.

may not be able to deliver justice after the tests tonight. There is a chance that this hound might go to the wrong horn. There is also a chance that one of those fellows might accidentally pick her voice." He stroked Lady Lou's head and looked thoughtfully out the window.

"You don't believe she belongs to either of them?" I asked.

"I can't render my decisions out of court," he replied with a grin. "It

always bothers me, though, to see a miscarriage of justice. By the way, I want you boys to carry your hounds to the mountain tonight."

THE Judge was in better spirits when we picked him up after supper. He chatted gayly about hounds and hunting, but never once mentioned the case of Smuck *versus* Hodge. Lady Lou was the most solemn one of the crowd. She sat beside the Judge and

looked out at the scenery. Dick spoke to her once, but she never even looked at him.

"Acts like she knows her fate is hanging in the balance," he said.

There was a crowd on the mountain when we arrived. Someone had built a roaring pine-knot fire which sent black smoke boiling upward, and cast its light on the pines, the rocks and the crowd. We left our hounds in the trailer, but led Lady Lou within the circle of the firelight. I noted Smuck and Hodge, accompanied by their attorneys, were seated on opposite sides of the fire. Both lawyers and clients were staring glumly into the flames. The deputy had herded the jury to the top of a low flat rock. Court was opened promptly at eight. Judge Cates took his seat on a rock and immediately ordered the horn test. He sent a deputy to station Smuck two hundred yards north of the fire, and another to see that Hodge was approximately the same distance in the opposite direction. When all was ready, Smuck was to begin blowing his horn, and continue for five minutes if he so desired. When he had finished, Hodge would be given the same length of time in which to do his blowing.

Lady Lou was led to a place directly in front of the jury. There was a stir in the crowd as everyone sought a position from which he could see her. She sat down and looked at the fire. Being on familiar ground, she was completely at ease.

SUDDENLY, Smuck's horn began to sing. Whatever else could be said about the fellow, I had to admit that he certainly knew how to handle a horn. Its voice arose, and soared across the valleys until the hills flung back its echoes. The hounds in my trailer began to howl, and I expected Lady Lou to stir and tug at her chain. Instead, she sat very still and looked at the fire as if dreaming of other nights and other fires and other horns which had sung in the darkness.

When the last echoes had died, Hodge began. He was not quite as good as Smuck, but at that, it should have been enough to make a dying hound lift his nose and howl. The hounds in the trailer began to howl again as if the horn reminded them of long-lost friends. Lady Lou remained seated, and turned her head neither to the right nor to the left.

When Hodge had finished, a deputy pulled her to her feet and unsnapped the chain. There was complete silence except for the sizzling of the pine knots. Lady Lou stood still for a moment, then shook herself and sat back down. A man next to me expelled his breath as if he had been holding it, and there was a low hum of voices in the crowd.

Both Smuck and Hodge seemed relieved when they returned and saw the hound still sitting by the fire. Their relief was short-lived, because the Judge ordered the next test immediately. He asked me to take Lady Lou to the trailer and let her go away with the other hounds. When I opened the trailer door, the hounds leaped out and scattered in search of a fox. Lady Lou disappeared with them. I went back to the fire and found silence in that strange courtroom, as the crowd listened for the cry of the pack.

Within ten minutes one of Dick's hounds struck a hot trail. Ten minutes later, the fox was on the run and the hounds in full cry. Judge Cates called Dick and me before him. "Gentlemen," he said, "you are well acquainted with the voice of the hound named in this controversy. I want you to listen carefully as each claimant chooses the voice he thinks belongs to the hound in question. Then I want you to tell this court which, if either, is correct. Will the plaintiff and defendant please come around and stand near these gentlemen."

By the time Smuck and Hodge were beside us, the pack was swinging around the mountain not more than three hundred yards below us. The strange part about it was that I hadn't heard Lady Lou at all.

"Have you heard her?" I whispered to Dick.

The pack made a slight louse. A single hound bawled eagerly as he picked up the trail. "That's her," said Smuck quickly.

"He's wrong, Your Honor," I said. "The pick-up hound was Old Willy Dilly, one of my own."

"Do you agree, Mr. Sloan?" asked the Judge.

"I do," replied Dick.

The fox made another circle before Hodge would make his choice. As they drew near again, a hound with a high-pitched chop surged into the lead. "That's the one," said Hodge.

"He is also wrong, Your Honor," said Dick. "That was Susie Q., one of my pack."

Just at that moment a burst of laughter went up from the crowd as Lady Lou trotted into the firelight. Dick and I stared at her in amazement. Never before had we known her to fail to go to a running pack. She had certainly chosen an opportune time to bring complete disgrace on herself.

Smuck turned away in disgust. "Hodge can have her," he growled.

"I wouldn't haul her home as a gift," said Hodge quickly.

The crowd was in an uproar. For lack of a gavel, Judge Cates clapped his hands until he finally managed to

restore order. "It seems," he said dryly, "that the hound has brought this case of Smuck *versus* Hodge to an abrupt conclusion. The jury is hereby dismissed, and it is ordered that the plaintiff and defendant share the court costs equally."

The crowd disappeared quickly, and soon there was no one left except the Judge, Dick and me. The other hounds were running across the valley, so we decided to leave them and return the next morning. We unhooked the trailer and loaded Lady Lou into the back seat with the Judge. Dick and I were silent as we thought of the shame which had descended upon her. It hurts any fox-hunter to see a good hound tumble down in disgrace. As we drove along, I noted, though, that the Judge was whistling a tune as he gently stroked Lady Lou's head.

It was Dick who spoke my mind. "I wonder what on earth was the matter with her tonight," he said.

"I haven't the least idea," I replied.

"I do," said the Judge. "Sometimes a judge has to do unusual things to see that justice is served. I have done them many times for the sake of my fellow man. This time it was for this four-legged creature who could not speak for herself. In a few months of good running she will wipe out the disgrace of tonight, and be the dream girl of every fox-hunter. In the hands of Smuck or Hodge she would have known neither love nor respect, and her future would have been bartered

for such paltry things as dollars and cents."

He paused and peeped through the back window toward the spot where the firelight still glowed on Honey Mountain. "Boys," he said finally, "no hound can hear a running pack with her ears stuffed full of cotton. I've got to take it out when I get home."

Thus ended the last phase of the case of Smuck *versus* Hodge. . . .

Perhaps this story would not be complete, though, without the final chapter in our experience with Lady Lou. No one else ever claimed her, so she remained in the Judge's kennels and ran well for the rest of the days that we knew her. By and by, Time placed a heavy hand upon her. It stiffened her legs and dulled her hearing. One night we returned to Honey Mountain. The rest of the pack was soon running, but Lady Lou's ears could not catch the sound. She stood around our fire for a while, then wandered away. We soon heard her giving mouth on a hot trail. Time had not taken away the music of her voice. Straight westward she went, into the path of a new moon which was rimming the pines. Soon we could only hear her echoes, and then they died.

We never saw nor heard her again. Perhaps her stout heart was stilled as she galloped the lonely trails. Or perhaps she found her way back to the place from which she had come along that moonlit path of long ago.

SPORT SPURTS

Honus Wagner batted over .300 for seventeen consecutive years.

In the Olympics when two wrestlers tie in a match, they weigh them both and the one who weighs the least is declared the winner.

Walter Johnson wound up with the highest batting average of any major-league pitcher when, in 1925, he batted .433.

The world's largest sports stadium is in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It seats 150,000 and has a nine-foot moat around the playing-field to protect the soccer players from riotous fans.

When Jimmy Dykes was player-manager of the White Sox he announced any player picked off second base would be fined. The first one to be caught napping was Jimmy Dykes.

Probably the most famous home run in baseball is the one that Babe Ruth "called" in the 1932 world series—but Charley Root, the Chicago Cub pitcher, and some of Ruth's teammates say that the Babe never actually meant to call any shot when he pointed at the right-field stands, but was merely waving an angry finger at Root for having quick-pitched him.

Superstitiously, John L. Sullivan never stepped into the ring before his opponent—until he met James J. Corbett, who had the same superstition and won his argument that Sullivan enter first . . . and Corbett also won the crown.

George Vico, the Detroit Tigers' rookie first baseman, hit a home run on the first pitch served him in his first major-league game.

—by Harold Heljer

The old Pennsylvania farmers felt that to waste the surplus food they raised was a sin, and contrived the Conestoga wagon to beat the bad roads to market in Philadelphia.

The Wagon



THE big Pennsylvania Dutchman's tanned face was grave, and his brown eyes were deceptively calm. His voice was a gentle rumble. He spoke English slowly, as if it were a chore, something to which he was unaccustomed.

"Let me tell you, my friend, nothing has yet been like the Conestoga wagon! Nothin'! And our Conestoga horses are special like, strong, smart and willin'. I will show you a thing,

my friend." He paused and raised his voice. "William, William Schofuss, come oncet, a-runnin'!"

An apple-cheeked boy, sturdy and husky, tow-headed and grinning, ambled forward from behind the big Conestoga wagon and stood respectfully before his father.

Rapidly the older man spoke in Pennsylvania Dutch; and the boy, barely in his teens, grinned wider and wider. Then he whirled and

trotted toward the wagon and the six handsome horses hitched to it. He stopped before the lead team, and they nuzzled him affectionately. He spoke to them in a low tone, then ran into the field and lay down on his back.

Schofuss laid a hamlike hand on the visitor's shoulder. "This you must watch!" he said quietly. "I ask oncet that you do not speak."

The boy shouted something; the horses tightened the traces, and the

Conceived in Sin

by HARRY BOTSFORD



big wagon rolled smoothly toward him. The running-gear was a brilliant and arrogant red, the wagon bed a Prussian blue, the arched top was of gleaming white duck. The visitor gasped at what he witnessed. The wagon-wheels passed within inches of the recumbent youth whose low voice was directing the horses across the shimmering grass. At a command, the horses halted. Another command, and they backed up, the wagon pass-

ing over the youth's body with plenty of room to spare. Then the wagon went ahead, again passing smoothly over the lad's body. He shouted a series of commands; the horses broke into a smart trot, swung the wagon around the field in a wide circle. The three-ton vehicle swayed lightly; it was a thing of cumbersome beauty. The wagon returned; again the big wheels passed within inches of the youth. He gave a final command; the wagon stopped; the horses stood docile, alert. The boy scrambled to his feet, went to the lead horses, patted them, gave each an apple.

Schofuss chuckled, dropped his hand from the visitor's shoulder. "Good, ain't?" he questioned.

The visitor was almost incoherent in his admiration. "By gad, sir," he said, "I've never seen the likes of it! I would like to buy ten wagons and sixty of your Conestoga horses, and I've good British gold to pay for them, too!"

Schofuss turned a grave face to the man. He smiled sadly, fingered his beard.

"The wagons, yet, we can make," he asserted. "Already we got seven near done. The horses are somesing else again. We can't go into the woods and cut down trees and make horses. Only time, a good stallion, some good brood mares, a lot of patience—that's what makes the Conestoga horse. Of horses, I can get you only twenty. More there will be next year. These horses are four years old, trained from the time they are colts, fed special, treated decent-like. They must be four years old before we sell them. Next year comes another crop ready for sale."

IT was nearly two hundred years ago this happened, in the Conestoga Valley, in Pennsylvania. What was witnessed briefly is wholly factual; in essence, a sales demonstration of the vehicle and its engine. The Conestoga wagon, and the Conestoga horses that pulled it, represented the most perfect transportation unit the people of the colonies had ever known; it

dominated the inland transportation picture until the development of the railroad a century later.

What Schofuss said and did was actually what a truck salesman of today does: he gave a dramatic demonstration of what the wagon and horses could do. For over nearly a hundred years the demand for the Conestoga wagon and horses was greater than the supply. The price, curiously enough, was comparable to what is asked for a modern truck. The team of six horses sold for approximately eighteen hundred dollars; the wagon sold for two hundred and fifty dollars, the harness at about three hundred.

OVER one hundred thousand Conestoga wagons were manually constructed and sold in the Conestoga Valley—and probably fifty to seventy-five still survive and are in excellent condition, usually housed in museums. Not many of our present-day trucks will survive in 2151 A.D.

For a wagon conceived in sin, the Conestoga brought great prosperity to the Valley and its people through an eventful century.

The quality of sin surrounding the birth of the Conestoga wagon bears a little retrospective examination. William Penn had for the Pennsylvania Dutch a hearty admiration and a genuine affection. He knew them as a people who had been persecuted, who had come to his colony seeking freedom of worship, freedom of political beliefs. He knew them to have been good farmers in the Old Country, honest artisans, hard workers; a gentle, tolerant folk who adhered strictly to their own peculiar religious tenets. He gave them an abundance of land, about seventy-five miles from Philadelphia, the colonial metropolis; it was an area of low hills and gracious valleys, rich and productive, once the acres were cleared.

The Pennsylvania Dutch cleared the acres. Every member of the family labored from daybreak to dusk. Then the ground was tilled and planted. Soon the area produced lushly, more than could be consumed. This es-



*Between them,
they planned
the wagon, and
never did men
plan more
wisely.*

established a surplus, encouraged a waste of good food. Therein was the sin. "Food is something near holy"—this is still a Pennsylvania Dutch precept. They tried to eat up the surplus, served Gargantuan meals, with seven sweets and seven sour, with assorted meats, with vegetables galore, with fine breads and pastries, with fruit preserved in many ways. It was a losing battle, but the brethren grew fat on the fare. To this day, one never sees a Pennsylvania Dutch citizen who is not well nourished.

But food did go to waste. Sin, black sin, a sin shared by the entire population—that was their firm belief.

SEVENTY-FIVE miles away was Philadelphia, the biggest city in the colonies, inhabited by wealthy Quakers, a rich trading center. But between Conestoga Valley and Philadelphia there existed an almost impassable road that was deeply rutted, narrow and twisting. It crossed streams and rivers; it climbed tediously up hill and down dale. It was impossible for an ordinary farm wagon, of which the Dutch had but a few, to carry what we today would call a "pay load."

In counsel, the troubled Pennsylvania Dutch, beset and bedeviled by

the sin of waste, weighed the problem prayerfully. There were three possible solutions to the problem. They could raise less, but this meant that much of the land they had so laboriously cleared would naturally revert to the wilderness. They could build a good road from the Valley to Philadelphia—but that would mean a vast expenditure of money, and they had but little. Further, it meant that the road would traverse the property of others. The Pennsylvania Dutch then, as now, have never believed in imposing their will on others not of their faith.

The third answer to the problem was to build a wagon that could profitably carry their surplus to Philadelphia and an eager market.

Among the men of the Valley were those who had been wheelwrights in the Old Country; there were those who had been skilled carpenters, and there were many blacksmiths who could fashion all manner of things from iron. In the Valley there was an abundance of hickory, gum, poplar and white oak, the very woods needed to build the wagon that would carry their crops profitably to Philadelphia.

Between them, they planned the wagon, and never did men plan more

wisely. The bed of the wagon was to be seventeen feet long, suitably wide. It was to be shaped something like a boat, so that when a wagon wheel dropped in a deep rut, the load would not shift and topple the overbalanced wagon into the ditch. As they planned it, the bed would be so shaped that the load, regardless of how it was jolted, would simply hug the middle of the wagon-bed. The bed would be comfortably able to carry thirty-five barrels of flour, a pay load of approximately thirty-five hundred pounds. Further, when a river was forded, the wagon would float, the cargo remain dry.

INTO the wagons, from start until finish, through a century, went the artisanship and skill of the strong, bearded men of the Valley. Roughly, all of the wagons were alike, but they were made in a score of separate places. Modern engineers examine the faded blue and red of a surviving Conestoga wagon and say it is perfectly engineered, that the weight distribution is ideal. There were no engineers among the Pennsylvania Dutch, but they were blessed with elementary practicality; perhaps the fact that they were seeking riddance



of what they believed to be sin, spurred them on, encouraged them to build honestly and well.

Tremendous work was involved. Hickory, gum, poplar and white oak trees were felled, sawed mostly by hand into suitable planks. A few water sawmills were busy night and day. The lumber had to be seasoned for a minimum of four years. Great stumps were sawed and fashioned into wheel hubs; spokes were split and adroitly fashioned and properly dished. Tires and ironwork were fashioned, and the forges of the Valley resounded to the sound of hammers and sledges. The toolbox was elaborately ironed in graceful straps and curlicues. In that toolbox was a set of accessories comparable to that of the tool-kit of the modern truck. There would be a tar-pot, an axe, a water bucket, a wagon jack, fifth chain, rough-lock chains, an ice-cutter, pincers, open chain links, horseshoe nails, and extras including a shovel.

The doubletree pin was cunningly fashioned in the form of a hammer, serving a double purpose. Emergency stuff! It would be needed in case of an accident.

The wagon bodies were painted a gallant and gleaming Prussian blue; the running gear was a proud and glistening vermilion red; the bowed top was covered with white duck. The big wagon looked cumbersome, but it had the grace of some great sailing vessel.

THEY loaded the first wagons with their produce: firkins of butter and lard, big country-cured hams and slabs of aromatic bacon, potatoes, squash, beets and onions, dried haunches of beef, with cheese that was old and rich, with bags of corn and wheat, with barrels of water-ground flour, maple sugar, apple butter—dark and sweet—woolen yarn and other oddments.

The wagons performed magnificently on the trip to Philadelphia. The road was rough and rugged, but the teams were willing. A wheel would drop into a rut; the driver would shout, crack his whip, and they would lean into their collars, pull the heavy wagon smoothly out of the rut. On the hills the driver, standing on a precarious perch, a white oak sliding board, used the long brake lever with great skill to control the speed of the heavily laden wagon.

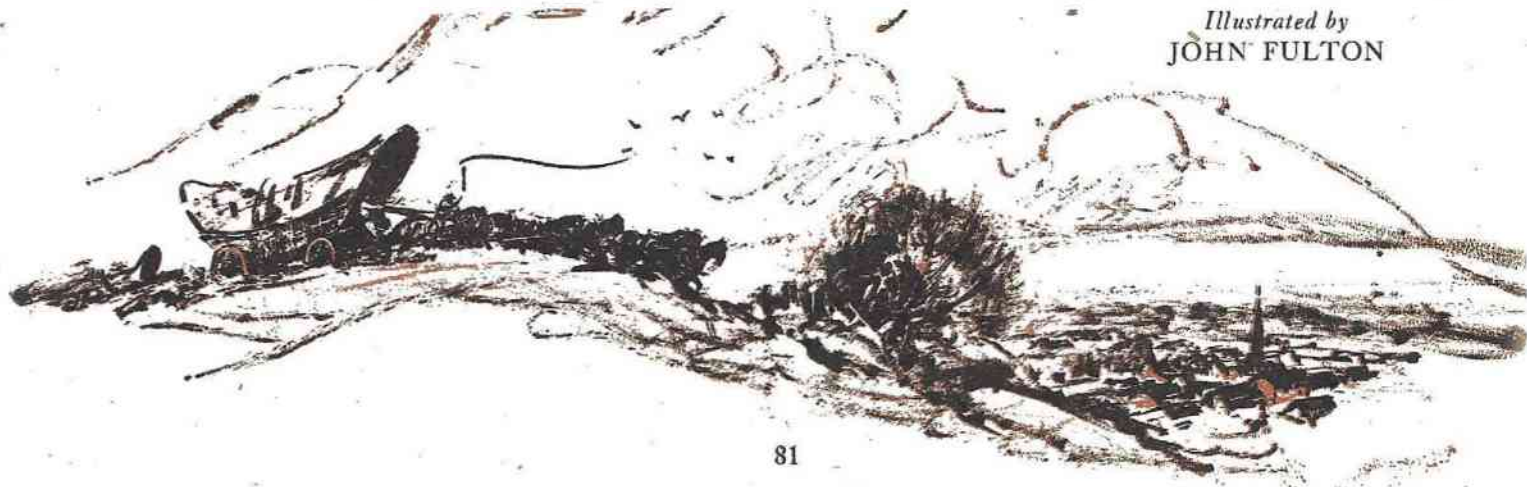
In Philadelphia the Quaker women virtually mobbed the red-white-and-blue wagons, marveled at their monstrous size and the variety of the cargo. They bought, paid for their purchases with British coinage, walked away laden with calories and vitamins, smiling and very happy. The drivers counted their newly found wealth and their faces lighted with joy. Their return cargo was paid for in cash: powder, calico, skillets, iron pots and dishes, leathern boots and shoes, all manner of things they did not grow or process back in the Valley. After their purchases were made, their purses were still heavy with gold. On the way back, the teamsters sang Old World hymns.

It was thus that sin was driven from the Conestoga Valley. . . .

Merchants saw the great wagons, saw them in answer to many of their problems. They came to the Conestoga Valley, found some groups willing to build wagons for them and departed optimistically. From the stallions given to the Pennsylvania Dutch by William Penn came colts, and as their mares produced, they started to train the colts, to give them special feed. In a word, they produced an engine for the Conestoga wagon—a smart, willing, strong engine. The horses were trained patiently, with a minimum of whip, to handle the heavy wagons on the level, up- and downhill. It took four years before a horse was properly trained—and such horses commanded a premium.

PHILADELPHIA merchants loaded the wagons with the things that were needed in Pittsburgh, a full pay load. It was a long trip. The drivers had to be honest; they had to be kind to the horses. The trail was a tough one; it wound along the side of the high mountains beyond Carlisle; the trail ran deviously over a rough and stony terrain. The drivers had to know how to use the brakes, when to use a rough-lock on a very steep grade, and there were many of them where the rear wheels had to be chained. They crossed dozens of brawling streams which the horses calmly swam; the wagon floated on the current, came safely to shore. They stopped at little inns, ate hugely, slept like logs, were up and were caring for their horses before daybreak. Day after day they progressed. Once in a while they passed a clearing where a log cabin smoldered in a welter of ashes and where still forms lay quietly on the grass or snow. The Indians were not friends. Many times a wagon train was attacked, but the men of the train were armed, took good care of themselves and guarded the precious cargo entrusted to them. If a horse pulled a shoe, the train stopped, the driver got out the implements of a blacksmith, put on a new shoe—and away

Illustrated by
JOHN FULTON



the train rumbled. The men sang as they drove. They prayed before going to sleep. They awakened with a grin on their tanned and bearded faces. Life was a glorious adventure; this was the farthest many of them had ever been from home, and each mile and each backwoods village was an adventure.

At long last they pulled into Pittsburgh's twisting, narrow streets. It was a river town, populated by unscrupulous traders, ironworkers, trappers and honest people of all trades and businesses. The citizens of Pittsburgh bargained shrewdly for salt, gunpowder, bullets, lard and salt pork. They gave the Conestoga wagons a royal welcome. They presented the drivers with cheap, roughly wrapped cigars, and the drivers liked them. For years these cigars were known as "Conestogas," then the name was shortened to "Stogies"—as it still remains.

They rested, made their return cargo purchases of iron, raw skins, coal and tobacco and other things. They returned, singing hymns, and the blue smoke of their "Conestogas" mingled with the gray dust raised by their teams and wagons.

What the Conestoga wagon accomplished in establishing trade between the two largest cities of the colony can only be compared to what the railroads and trucks accomplished in another day. They changed the buying habits of the two large cities, narrowed the frontier limits, made life easier for all concerned, stimulated trade and commerce.

When General Braddock ventured into the wilderness to meet his epochal disastrous defeat, one man knew what the great military project needed: Conestoga wagons. That man was Benjamin Franklin. Acting as an agent of General Braddock, he came to the Pennsylvania Dutch country, advertised for 150 wagons, the biggest single order the Pennsylvania Dutch had enjoyed up to this time. When the wagons were delivered, the British gazed on them with awe, expressed an opinion that they would not perform on a cross-country expedition. But when they saw the load the wagons would carry, when they saw them blithely cover rutted roads, saw them surmount big rocks with ease, saw them float safely across streams, their awe turned to praise.

THE Conestoga Valley became a beehive of activity. Men worked far into the night forming parts and assembling Conestoga wagons. Yet there was no stinting; the wagon tongues were almost wholly sheathed in iron; the feed boxes were properly made, rimmed with iron to keep the horses from biting them. The blacksmiths, a hard-driven crew, worked by

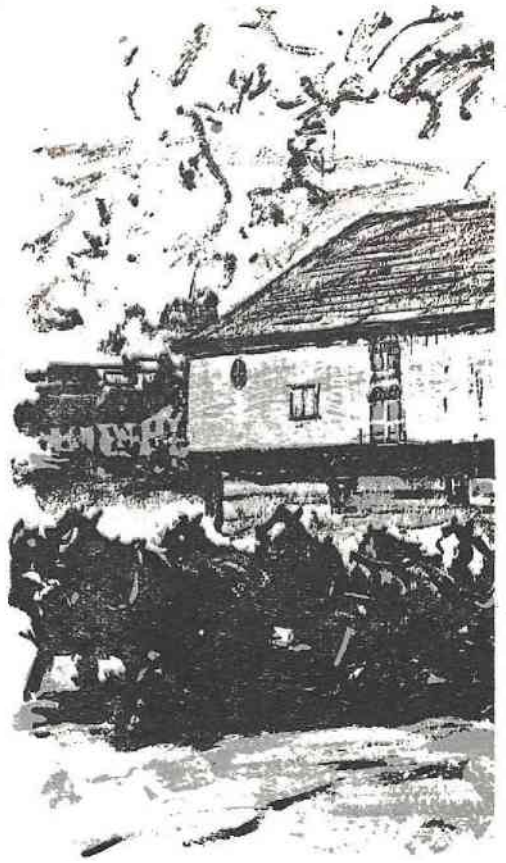
torchlight, heating and hammering iron into a desired form, and the sparks cascaded into the darkness of the Conestoga Valley nights. On Sundays all work ceased and people went to church, listened to long sermons, prayed loudly, sang Germanic hymns with all their might, ate mightily.

A NEW Conestoga Valley, this was! There were tanneries, where the leather needed for the harnesses was cured and tanned. There were hundreds of bearded men and of boys who fashioned that leather into strong harnesses for the Conestoga horses. The mining of iron ore became a major industry, and the blacksmiths welcomed a convenient supply of good iron. There was charcoal to be made, tools to be fashioned. The grazing fields were filled with lusty short-coupled Conestoga colts and horses. Inns were established for the convenience of buyers—and they came from every quarter, their purses filled with jingling golden coins.

The Pennsylvania Dutch accepted their prosperity in stride. They built large and comfortable houses of brick and stone on the side-hills. Their huge barns started with stone, ended with wood. Yards were deeply walled with stone. Prosperity made the land gracious and comfortable. Prosperity didn't spoil the Pennsylvania Dutch. They lived graciously and ate in abundance, but they still dressed soberly, never lost their heads, kept their own peculiar language, a curious and almost humorous English. Above all, their piety never waned. They worshiped as their fathers did. Even to this day, they worship in this manner, adhering closely to the tenets of 1750.

Came the Revolution, and the Conestoga wagon went to war, served valiantly and well. The Pennsylvania Dutch, inherently against war and violence, did not take sides. They impartially fed and nursed the sick and wounded men of both sides. But they never stopped making Conestoga wagons. At Valley Forge their bounty helped to keep the Continental Army fed in the darkest days of our fight for freedom. At Ephrata Cloisters, the wounded men of both armies received intelligent and gentle treatment, without any partiality, and without charge.

After the Revolution, America emerged a raw, sturdy, somewhat incoherent nation. One thing was clear and unmistakable: people wanted to migrate, to reach new lands, to settle, to wrest from the soil a new living, to start new villages. For these inland settlers, the Conestoga wagon performed a service equivalent to that performed by the ships that sailed the rivers, entered the sea harbors, delivered the goods the settlers needed.



The demand for Conestoga wagons grew and grew.

When the Mexican War was fought, the Conestoga wagon carried our provisions, greatly to the amazement of the Mexicans. When the War of 1812 came along, with its bitterly contested land engagements, an endless array of military disasters, it was the Conestoga wagon that eventually saved the day. From Philadelphia to Erie is about the longest stretch in the State, but the wagon trains were loaded with powder, cannon, Army and Navy food. They made the trip, provided Admiral Perry with what he needed to arm and fight his ships successfully against the enemy. Never did the Conestoga wagons render greater service to the nation.

In the Civil War the Conestoga wagons again delivered the goods, made it possible for the Union armies to be well-fed, provided with powder, guns, clothing and ordnance at all times. In the field they were perfection, a transportation unit that could carry a heavy load over any type of road—and deliver it undamaged at a given terminal.

Eventually and inevitably, the railroad gave the wagons some real competition, but it was a long time before the people of Conestoga Valley realized it. There was a vast flood of Western migration, hundreds of thousands of families headed for the prairie country. To them, the Cones-



toga wagon was the only answer. It came long before the famed prairie schooner, a lighter vehicle. Into the wagons went not only the worldly goods of the family, but the family itself. The wagons crossed the mountains, took up the level-land routes, floated serenely across the rivers, brought the freight and passengers safely to their eventual haven. Once established, the wagons were turned to other utilitarian pursuits; they became farm wagons. Not too many years ago it was still possible to find the sun-bleached remains of a once sturdy Conestoga wagon rotting on the farms of the Dakotas, in Wisconsin, Wyoming and elsewhere. The wagons, the truth was, were not worn out—they had simply been displaced by lighter, more suitable farm wagons.

Not all the wagons reached their destination. Often a train formed in a circle at night, and the Indians attacked successfully, burned the wagons, scalped the settlers, took their stock. As a fortress the Conestoga wagon was good, but it was not perfection by any means. . . .

The Conestoga Valley is still gracious and serene. It is still inhabited by Pennsylvania Dutch; they farm as did their ancestors, according to an almost ageless tradition. They plant

and reap their crops when "the sign of the moon is right," and while the scientists of the agricultural colleges say they are dead wrong, they can't refute the fact that their crops are invariably bumper harvests. If they wait for a certain time to put in their fence posts, to shingle a barn or house, the college boys may snicker, but their posts remain firm, their shingles never curl. Their religion remains unchanged, their dress somber and queer-looking. But they still have a capacity to smile; their inherent gentleness has remained unchanged through two centuries. The worst thing that can possibly be said about a woman is that her dumplings are not as good as some.

Today's generation has forgotten how to build a Conestoga wagon. But its forefathers knew the secrets. When they put away their saws and axes, their drawshaves, their black-

smith tools, they did it cheerfully. Sin had been expunged from the Conestoga Valley, and that's what they had started out to do in the first place. They saw the first hard-surfaced roads built in the New World, to run between Lancaster and Philadelphia, a toll road in which a man named G. Washington owned a share. Their tussle with transportation had proven the need, the economic necessity for such roads.

They went back to farming. They have been at it ever since. In evidence that they have done a superlative job, farm land in Lancaster County is the most productive in the United States, commands the highest price.

A great people, the Pennsylvania Dutch. They always do a good job, in spite of difficulties.

One of their best jobs was the Conestoga wagon, even if it was conceived in sin.

One man knew what the military project needed: Conestoga wagons. That man was Benjamin Franklin.

IN THE AIR, BARNEY ADMITTED, SHE WAS EFFICIENCY PLUS; BUT ON THE GROUND SHE WAS SOMETHING OF A FEMALE HELLION.

CAPTAIN BARNEY PROSPER ran his gray eyes over the galaxy of instruments that told the story on the Constellation *Paris Comet*, sighed and muttered: "Morgan! One more trip with Morgan, and I'm calling it a deal."

"He's a Line captain with seven thousand hours," Hub Brannon the co-pilot explained to the dial of the No. 4 fuel gauge. "He puts in about eighty-five hours a month just flying the Atlantic. He makes more dough than a Congressman—and he wants out!"

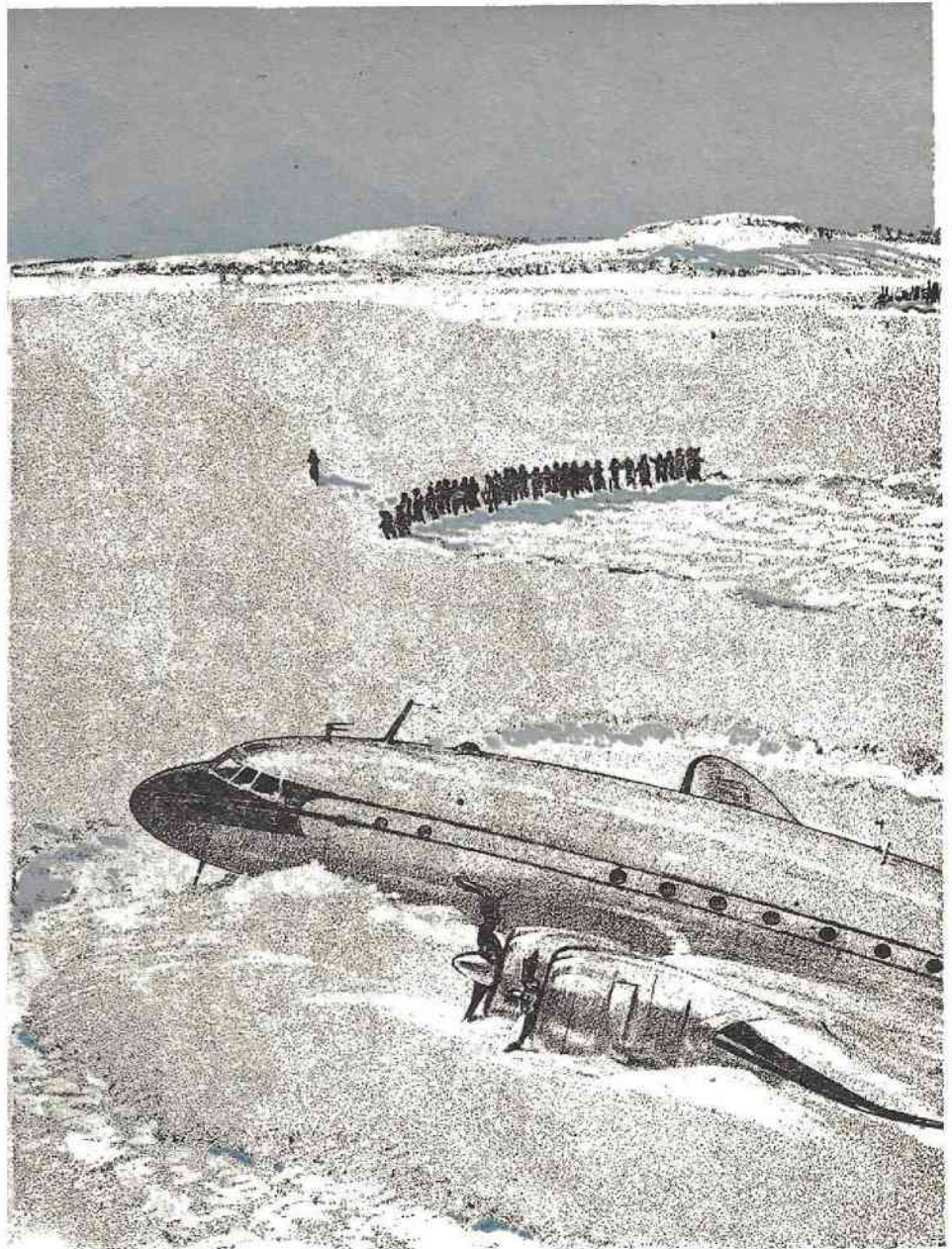
Prosper squirmed his uniformed bulk into a more comfortable position and jabbed a hydraulic line leakage complaint on the Gripe Sheet. "Airplanes are wonderful," he growled. "When you get back to La Guardia, they give you seven days to sell your house, rearrange your domestic life and start out fresh in Miami. You'll drop about three grand on the deal; your kids will miss half a grade when they change schools, and your missus will start figuring how she can get a quick and easy divorce. Airplanes!"

"You should worry," Brannon said after some consideration. "You just pack a bag, change your postal address and figure you like Florida climate and Southern hospitality. You even get rid of Morgan—maybe."

Prosper tried to close his mind against the memory of Morgan. Morgan was bad weather, fuel leakage, electrical disturbance and engine failure all in one. She came wrapped in a pastel blue uniform, a voice as gay as a madrigal. She had hair the color of new cordage, and eyes like early spring violets. Three nights a week Barney Prosper had a wonderful dream. He pulled a sweet ditching somewhere in the North Atlantic. It always ended the same. Adele Morgan the hostess went floating away into the wintry mists aboard a rubber dinghy that leaked.

"I'll never get rid of Morgan—not even if we hit a stuffed cloud," Barney whispered. "She'll be there, halo perfectly adjusted, her harp tuned and her wings folded according to the technical data book."

According to Barney, Adele Morgan was a dual personality who would have made *Jekyll* and *Hyde* no more troublesome than the Bobbsie Twins. Aboard the *Paris Comet* she was efficiency-plus. In the air she was a paragon. The passengers worshiped her. She could tame a line squall and



Getting Rid

produce the impression they were enjoying a night on a Venetian balcony. She could sing, tell yarns, diaper babies, play canasta and make a guy with thrombosis feel like unloading the baggage at Orly Field.

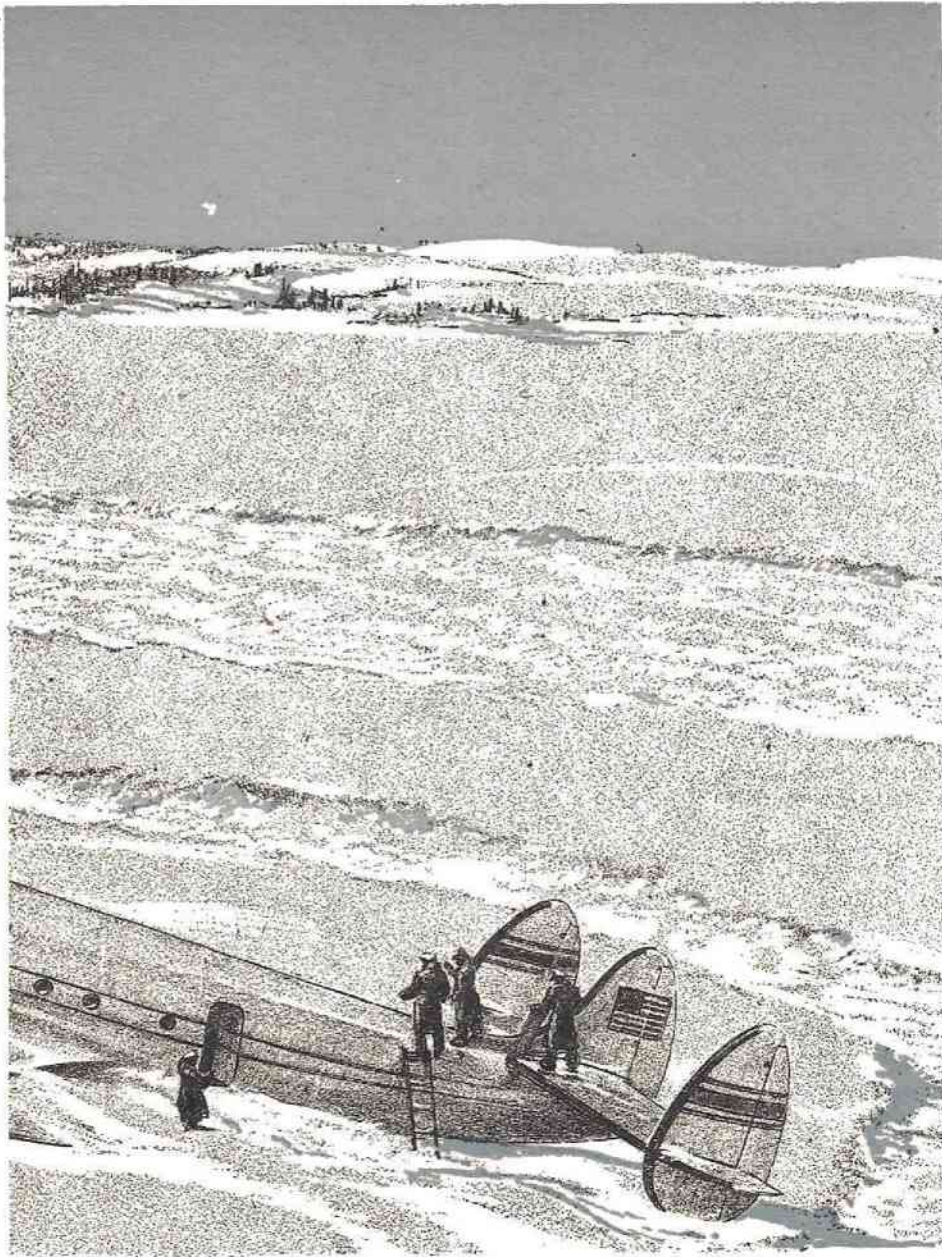
But once on the ground, Morgan became a female hellion. She usually misplaced her flight bag. She forgot to bring her money. She screwed up the take-off time, and every gendarme in Paris cringed at the prospect of an encounter with Morgan. But what was worse, she had long ago decided

Captain Barney Prosper had been created for her own particular exploitations.

"Why doesn't someone marry the chit?" Prosper appealed to his first officer.

Hub Brannon laughed. "Why, Morgan wouldn't marry a Morgan from Wall Street. She just wants to Prosper. . . . Heh!"

At that point the compartment door opened, and the subject of discussion framed her slim form in the doorway. "I have your lunch ready, Captain,"



by ARCH
WHITEHOUSE

kidded me into swiping a French sailor's hat, a Paris taxi horn and three ash-trays from the Café de Trianon. One wasn't enough—it had to be three!"

"Nothing like that—this time."

"No taxi horns, no policemen's bicycles, no regimental badges from an Alpine Chasseur?"

"Absolutely nothing like that, pet," Adele wheedled sweetly. "First," she enumerated on a long slender finger, "I want to go straight from the airport—shopping. That means you can take my bag through Customs."

BARNEY snatched at her wrist. "That's out. Two trips back they thought you were trying to smuggle in nitro-glycerine, or something."

"Just two jars of honey. Eat your soup—it's getting cold."

"You try to pull anything, and I'll heave the stuff all over the floor or donate it to French relief."

"Just my few personal effects," Morgan assured and carried on. "Next, I want you to take me to the Opera tonight. We've never been, together."

Prosper stared into space and tried to figure the pitch.

"Next," Miss Morgan tallied, "I want you to put in for me to go to Miami with you."

Prosper's laugh was a beaut. It clanked like the gong on a paddy wagon. "Not a chance," he said, and gloried in this sudden power output. "I wouldn't have you if—"

"Barney! You can't leave me in New York. All you have to say is that we're engaged. That you love me, and want me with you."

Barney defied her eyes. "This is all news to me." He rubbed his hands with glee. "I've had you for two long years, baby."

"But Barney, I thought you requested me for every run. I just assumed you—"

"Me? I figured you had a cousin in Crew Assignment!"

"Oh!" Miss Morgan gasped, and then took up the battle again. "You'll be sorry, Barney Prosper."

"Don't forget to check with Flight Control before you leave the field. We may have to go on to Rome or Cairo," Barney threw through the door after her. . . .

Flight 917-NC532 was on time, and for the rest of the trip in, Barney was absorbed in his paper work as well as the business of flying forty passengers into Paris. There was the Customs

of Morgan

Hostess Morgan announced sweetly. "It's in the Nav. compartment. You can eat in comfort there."

Prosper sighed, and gave Brannon a weary take-over sign.

Adele had soup, fried chicken, potatoes, a salad, ice cream and coffee set out on the navigation desk. She even had the stool drawn up. "How's that?" she demanded, and pressed the dimple in her cheek. That could have been a hurricane warning.

"Buzz off," Barney muttered. "You got passengers."

"They're all fed. Three bridge games going, and the galley cleared."

"What's the gag this time?" he demanded.

The girl ignored that, and lightly kissed the lobe of his ear. "Barney," she began again, "will you do me a couple of favors?"

He slammed down his tools: "Not even one!"

"Three, to be exact."

"What is it this time? I got you Follies programs. I stashed two bottles of perfume for you last time. You

sheet on his crew, the Gripe sheet on the aircraft, the detailed Flight Log and radio contacts with Orly checking on any new traffic regulations, and a runway assignment.

By the time he had arranged for a check on the hydraulic leak with Maintenance, and said good-by to several regular customers, he was ready to take his bag through Customs; then he remembered Morgan, because her bag had been left alongside his under the canopy.

It was an inoffensive-looking little bag covered with gay airplane cloth, neatly bound with good leather and gleaming with bright hardware. He hurried out to the Duane counter and tossed both bags before a weary-eyed official who had a wart on the side of his nose.

"Ha, Monsieur Prosper," he greeted and suspicion flickered in his black eyes. "Back again, eh?" His great hands spread over the locks of the bags like the talons of a hawk. "We have two bags this time, eh?"

"Let's go. I'm ready to hit the sack, Pierre."

"Ha, you are in a great hurry, no?"

Pierre opened Morgan's bag and started back in surprise. He swiveled his eyes, and Prosper did a triple-take. This was a situation in which Pierre gloried. His fingers riffled through the billowing layers of lacy lingerie. He turned sidewise and glared at Barney. The shadow of suspicion darkened to an ominous cloud.

"You—you understand, of course," Barney gargled. "They're not—"

"But they are beautiful, Monsieur! Very beautiful. I must admire your taste, in what you say—nightgowns? You should sleep well and—smooth. Such garments must feel exquisite to the—eh—flesh? We heet the sack, eh? A very expensive sack. Explanations, please!"

Barney was speechless, and fascinated with the articles the customs man displayed on the splintered counter. He wondered how one gal could find use for so much clothing of that particular category.

"You have very strange and luxurious tastes, Monsieur Prosper," the Frenchman continued. "You have of course declared these—these articles."

Barney was getting his breath. He had experienced easier moments on an instrument landing. "They're not mine!" he finally exploded with a high-pitched gargle. "They're not mine. I mean—they belong to the hostess, Miss Morgan!"

The name stabbed Pierre with the directness of a rapier. It was apparent the name carried weight and influence. First he emitted a high twanging exclamation that might have come from a falling harp. Then followed a gasp

of volcanic intensity. Finally the Customs man whimpered: "Morgan? Mademoiselle Morgan?"

Captain Prosper simply nodded.

Pierre carefully replaced every item, making certain each layer of tissue was returned neat and smooth. Once he looked up with sad reproach in his watery eyes. "From you, Monsieur Prosper, that was unkind." He replaced a filmy dinner dress and cornered a pair of stadium boots with infinite care and closed the bag with studied tenderness. "This world—she give us Messieurs Wright and Bleriot. America, she give us Capitaine Lindbergh. Today the skies are full of beautiful airliners, Monsieur—but what do they bring? I ask you, Monsieur Prosper. What do they bring?"

Barney leaned over and patted Pierre's shoulder. "I know, pal. I quite understand. They bring Morgan."

The Customs man initialed both bags with a trembling hand. "Morgan," he repeated, and pointed a heavy taloned finger toward the Exit door.

MORGAN was on hand in the lobby of the Normandy Hotel, and there was no out for Barney. She fluttered up as light and capricious as feathers on stirred air. "You were wonderful, darling," she cooed. "My bag came through beautifully."

"All I had to do was mention the name of Morgan," Barney said and blotted out the memory of that pile of lingerie as best as he could. Morgan wore the filmy dress. She also carried a short fur cape, and he wondered what wiles she'd employ getting it out of La Guardia Field. However, she was groomed, polished and creamed to perfection.

"Let's go," he muttered. "Where do we eat?"

Morgan pouted, pressed her fingertips to her lips and came up with: "Let's try the Bal Tabarin."

Barney sighed. "From the Bal Tabarin to the Opera will be quite a jump. But remember now—no ashtrays!"

"I'm very pretty tonight, don't you think?" Miss Morgan inquired as Barney held her cape before they were devoured by the twirling doors. She offered a neat profile over her shoulder to prove it.

"One of your great assets," he admitted; "but if you only knew what a she-devil you can be—on the ground. In the air you're smart, efficient and comfortable to have aboard; but sister—the minute you hit the runway!"

"Then why do you always ask me to go out with you?" Morgan twittered, and almost tore the door off the waiting taxi.

"Well, I'll be—" Barney gasped as he collapsed on the seat beside her.

"I've a darned good mind to cry—makeup or no makeup," Miss Morgan wailed, and huddled into her cape.

"That, I would like to see."

But Adele held the tears defiantly. Just before they reached the restaurant, she came up with: "A transfer to Miami is a demotion in any book. From Constellations to two-engined DC-3s is nothing to brag about. Maybe the Chief Pilot figures you're not capable of handling a Constellation."

There was plenty of time to consider that while he paid the Jehu, elbowed Morgan into the Bal Tabarin and bribed his way to a table near the show floor. He ordered cocktails and snarled: "See what I mean about your ground personality? You couldn't think of a thing like that upstairs."

"Well, take me to Miami with you and you'll have plenty of chance to see me at my best."

"Listen, my sweet," Barney said confidentially, "I'm not even going to Miami myself. I'm chucking this racket, getting sane again. I'm seriously thinking of going back into architecture. Things are opening up in the building business."

"That, I want to see," Morgan taunted.

"I can buy in with a guy in New Rochelle. Ranch-type houses and remodeling old farms. A decent, quiet life. I figure I could join some church men's club, and meet real people again. Maybe I'll latch on to some nice gal who would go for that sort of thing."

"I was a member of an Altar Guild once," Morgan broke in, "only the choir-master was too—encroaching."

THE band broke it up with a crash of cymbals, and they sat watching long-legged beauties strut and posture while the waiter set out their trough. Suddenly Morgan blazed out: "I don't like the way that chorine on the end is looking at you. I think I'll take her a sandwich. She looks hungry."

Prosper grabbed her wrist—just in time. Morgan smiled, patted the back of his broad hand and said: "Darling, you're always so nice to me."

"You pull anything like that, and I'll break your neck!"

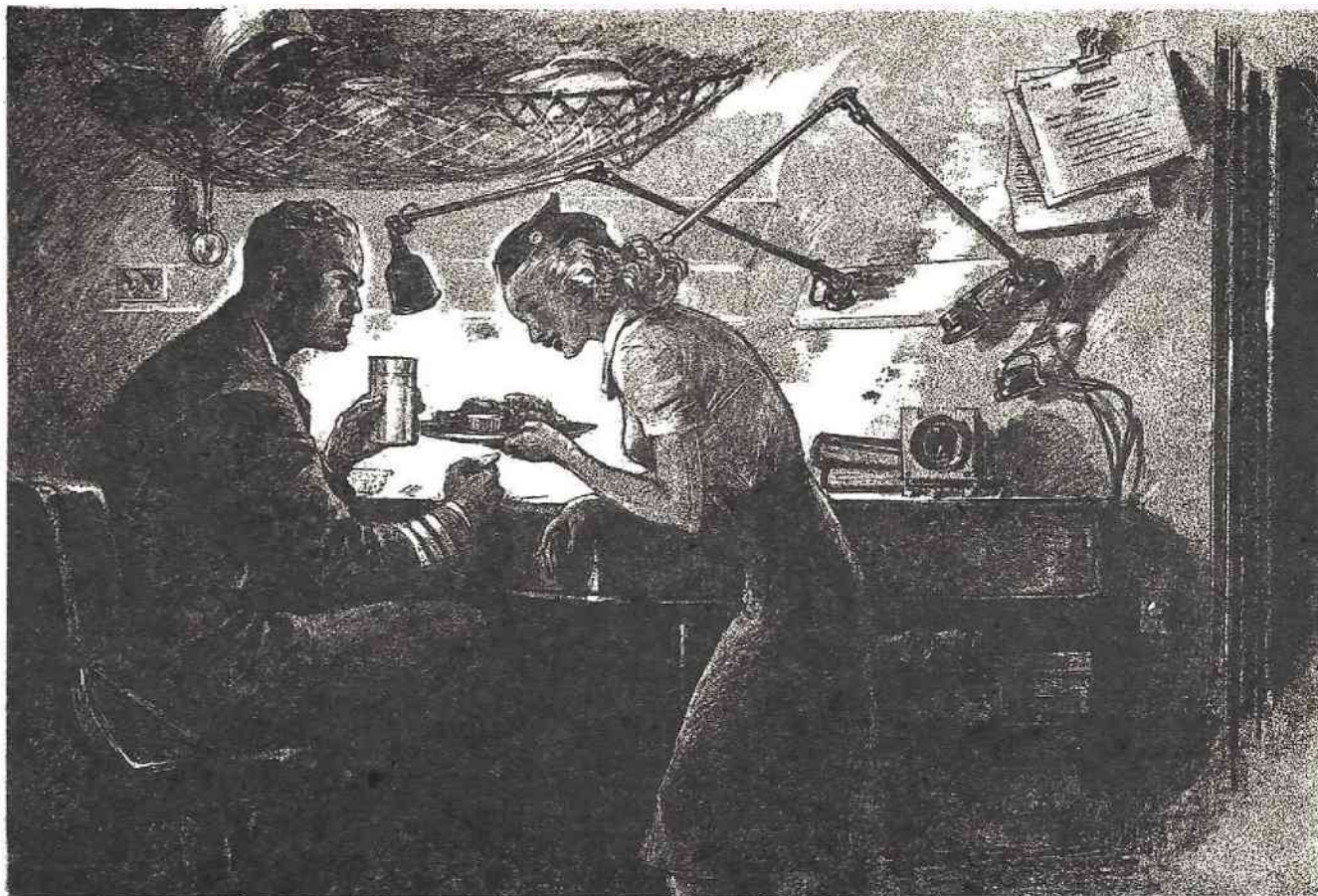
"Always so thoughtful about my welfare," she added with a smile that would have taken the edge off a chunk of chrome.

"We'd better get you out of here. Hurry up and gobble this mess."

Morgan winked. "It will be nice and dark at the Opera."

"If you're looking for that sort of thing, you should have stayed in the Altar Guild."

Suddenly Morgan announced: "I'd like living in a ranch-type house, having a bicycle and going shopping with



"Barney," she began, "will you do me a couple of favors?" Barney growled: "Not even one!"

a basket on the handlebars. It would be just like Bermuda, Barney."

"To live with you, a guy would have to rent a kite balloon and set up house-keeping in the basket at five thousand feet," Barney said. "Get those trick ideas out of your head. I wouldn't have you at sea-level."

"Let's quit fighting. It's all settled," she agreed.

"Fine! By the way: What is the opera tonight?"

"Madame Butterfly," Morgan said sweetly. . . .

Throughout the next day Barney Prosper had time to review the situation, and by the time all precincts were in, he couldn't figure whether he was mad at airplanes or seeking an out with Morgan. The later cables hinted that the architecture gag was a secondary escape route.

He headed for the assignment board and found they were booked for the return flight next day. Same old routine. Paris, Shannon, Gander and La Guardia. Same old battle through the paper work. Customs, manifest, weather and flight plan. When the paper work equals the mileage, they give you a clearance on No. 1 runway.

All routine and ordinary, but the business should have been welcome to keep from fretting about Morgan. And where was Morgan? He went back to Weather and studied the pres-

sure areas, temperatures, dispositions of fronts and final forecasts. It all read as if Morgan had a hand in it.

"What's wrong with all this mess?" Hub Brannon said as they sat trying to fit the conditions at one level with the meteorological prospects of another. From Paris to Shannon it would be fair, but the way the chart read now, they would be flying a route across the North Atlantic that would look like a graph taken on a berserk roller coaster.

"We've had worse," Barney said, and looked for another secondary front.

"We can always sit it out at Shannon."

"By the way, where is Morgan?"

"Who knows? She'll stagger in, bustling and beautiful."

For once the hostess turned up reasonably on time. Her hair was sleek, and so were her hips. She beamed joy and enthusiasm and radiated confidence. A group of bewildered but smiling D.P.'s, who made up the bulk of their list were already worshiping her as though she were Miss Liberty's younger and much prettier sister. Numb with joy, they nodded when she checked their names and listened intently when she went into her uplift act.

"In a few minutes we'll be taking off for America. We shall make one

stop in Shannon, Ireland, and another in Newfoundland. You will see some very beautiful country, and maybe a lot of snow later on, but there's nothing to be afraid of, because the weather will be good the way we go, and we have the best pilots on the run. Within seventeen hours you will be with your friends. If there is anything you want, just ask me."

The faces of the D.P.'s lit up as if they were wired for neon tubes. They went aboard, heavy shoes, monstrous overcoats and greasy paper bundles.

"See what I mean—about you on the ground?" Barney confided huskily. "Actually, we're in for one hell of a trip. We got all sorts of weather coming up. Why didn't you wait and let me talk to them once we were in the air?"

"They're my passengers, and I'm responsible for them," Morgan stormed back. "Let them have a little pleasure. All they've known is prison camps, marching and hunger."

"Okay. If we sock into weather, maybe you'd like the job of explaining it to them. Get aboard!"

"I'll take care of them—whatever happens," the girl said proudly.

The take-off was routine, and the forty-five-ton load swept into the skies with the ease and grace of a falcon, but the same dull concern gnawed and knifed at Captain Prosper as they

roared on at nine thousand feet for the channel and the vague outline of southern England. There was nothing he could put his finger on. The needles trembled on the green segments. The check points came in as smooth as silk. Only a haunting suspicion of a veering wind could explain what he feared.

He worried Rawlins for weather reports. The flight engineer had to produce immediate details on fuel consumption, pressures and temperatures. He was building up apprehension the way the navigator was racking up their mileage.

"So far, so good," Brannon muttered when they dropped down at Shannon.

Morgan herded her passengers into the restaurant and saw them fed while Prosper and his navigator went over to the weather office and checked again. It still wasn't good, but there was nothing immediate on which they could base an argument for take-off delay. After all, there were thirty-four other airliners somewhere over the North Atlantic, and no one else was complaining.

"Let's go!" Prosper decided after a final check. "Maybe it's only Morgan, anyway."

THEY buttoned up and roared into the blustery winter gales that suddenly whipped out of the west. Prosper climbed her, seeking the steady air they'd forecast at twelve thousand feet, but the steady air lasted less than an hour, and then they ran into icing conditions that dipped as low as four thousand feet. The de-icers pulsed and broke it off, but already it was gathering on the unprotected areas. There was half an inch of ice on the lower half of the windshield, and the wiper just skated over it. It took more power to climb and the flight engineer came through with a complaint that they were using too much juice—and what about it?

Prosper nodded and studied his flight chart again. He decided to go back to a lower level, figuring they could ease up on the cabin pressure equipment and maybe find warm air to wipe off the ice. All they found was an occluded front that was not listed in the forecast. The ice stayed, and a heavy cross-wind demanded even more power.

"You got two hours to make up your mind," Bixby the navigator said, and handed him a position. "You get there," he added, pointing to a red check on the sheet, "and you're just flipping nickels."

"Okay. Give me another position in half an hour."

From then on it took real physical effort to stay on course. Barney sought a lane that would enable him

to cut down on fuel consumption. He begged the flight engineer to bleed her until she began bopping back and ran the cylinder-head temperatures up. The navigator came up with a new fix, and said they were still getting nowhere.

Suddenly they came out into the clear, and for ninety minutes enjoyed an inverted bowl of sunshine and only a whisper of a headwind. Barney switched on the auto-pilot, relaxed and realized he was drenched with sweat. For diversion he started to make out the bunk schedule so the crew could take advantage of the two cots available, a minor relaxation a Line captain seldom enjoys.

"This can be murder," Brannon said, and looked out at the sunshine after filling in the Howgazit sheet. "If it doesn't last—"

Barney leaned over and checked the sheet. He could still flip a nickel and decide whether to turn back. The red cross marking their point of no return was only one hour's flight away. If they were enjoying a center with more of that weather grief on the other side, there wouldn't be any turning back.

"I wonder what it's like in Greenland this time of the year," Hub Brannon mooned. "We may have to try that, if—"

Rawlins shot a message form through. It was no better, and on top of that static was playing tricks with the receiver, and he wasn't sure where the weather reports were coming from.

"You heading for Goose Bay or Gander?" the navigator inquired, showing another position. "We're way up here!"

"Take over a minute," Prosper said to Hub. "I'd better talk to Morgan."

The hostess was getting an earful from a little rabbi who stared into space while he talked. Prosper went down the aisle smiling and gripping shoulders in his friendly fashion. When he got to Morgan, he poked her gently and continued on to the galley.

"My cabin's getting cold," she complained.

"We're cutting down on everything," he said quietly. "Can't seem to find a level that doesn't frappé everything. We may have to try for Goose Bay."

"Labrador? What are we doing that far north?"

"I'm telling you. Looking for a level."

Morgan set her chin and said: "Don't worry. I'll take care of them. They never had it so good. They'll do anything I say."

"Good! Keep alert for the belt signal, and hold back on the grub until I tell you to dish it out." He listened to a new throb of vibration.

"They're keeping their feet warm," Morgan explained.

"Give out the blankets. Keep them quiet and relaxed. They may need that energy later on. I'm relying on you."

She winked at him. "I'll be good if we have to ditch, too."

The radioman stopped him in the alley. "Air France and B.O.A.C. flights have turned back to Gander," he said. "Now I'm getting periods of silence, as if we're way north."

"We are. Think nothing of it," Prosper said, and slipped into the Nav. compartment. At that instant the sunlight died on the chart table, and they were in the murk and turbulence again.

Bixby pointed at the chart. "There we are. You can flip whether you head for Greenland or Goose Bay—same difference; if you want to walk away from it."

"Give me a heading on Goose Bay. If we get a break, maybe we can still make Gander."

UP front, Brannon was wrestling with the wheel again. Outside, the murk was piling up and they were floundering through crazy turbulence that placed a large cold pebble at the pits of their stomachs. Hub flicked his thumb toward the side window and said: "We're getting ice again."

Prosper took over, while Hub switched in the de-icers and tried again for a lower level seeking warmer air. He went all the way down to five thousand feet, but the stuff continued to pile up. "This is one for the book," the captain muttered, and spoke on the inter-phone to the flight engineer.

"I'm doing all I can, but the cylinder-head temperature is a mile high," the engineer explained. "I'm keeping them lean, but we can burn a few valves or get carburetor fire."

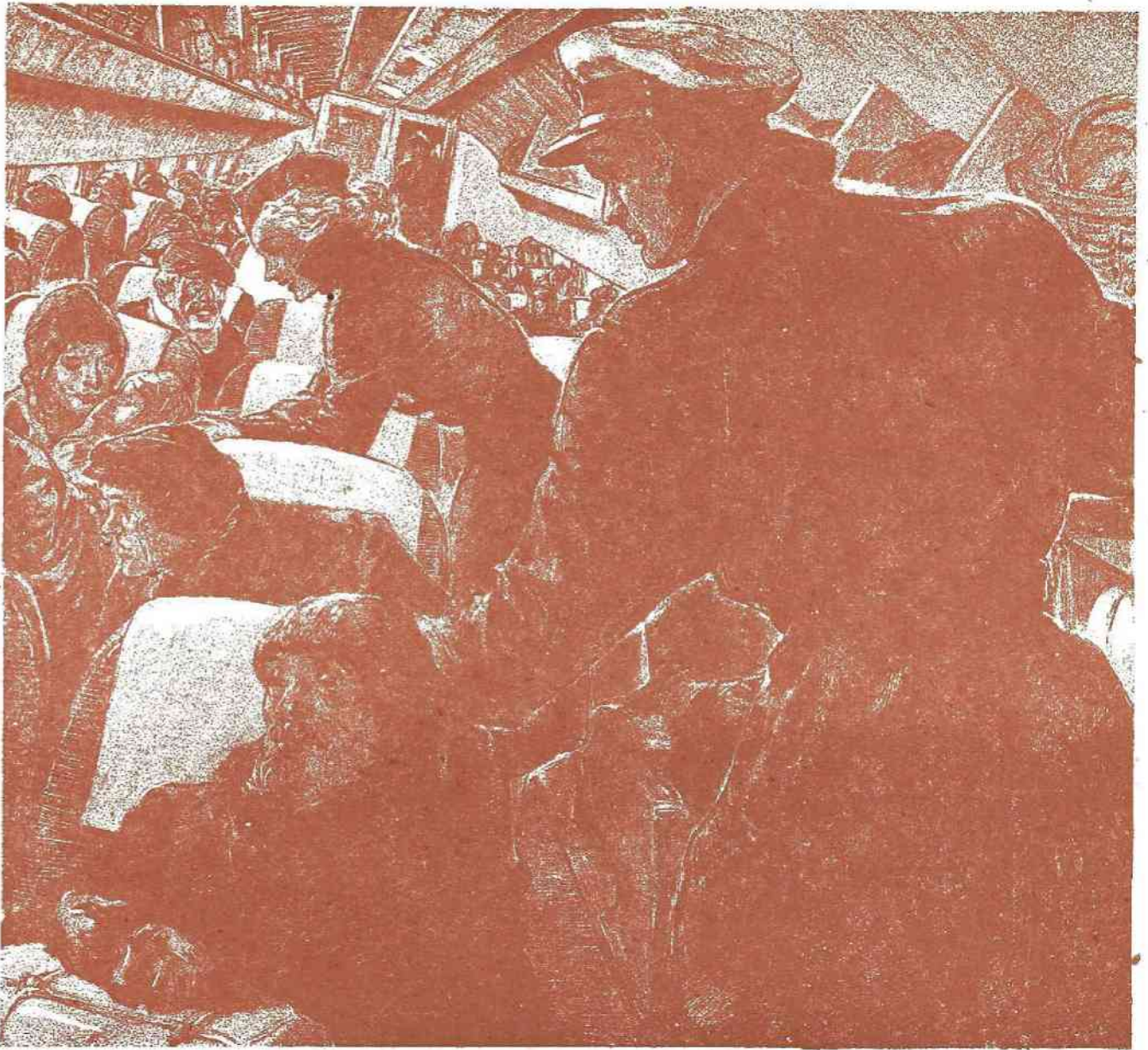
Prosper looked out and saw the cowls were wide open. "What we got to lose?" he answered.

They plunged on, fighting ice and fuel consumption, blindly seeking a lane that would give them a break. The long night hung on while the vulture winds volleyed and boomed off the metal wings and cabin. Aft, Miss Morgan had her hands full caring for airsick passengers but she never ceased her vigil.

With the first faint peek of morning light, Prosper requested a position and tankage details. None of it was good. Bixby could only offer a probable fix, and Rawlins admitted he hadn't caught a readable signal in hours.

"Nothing from Goose Bay or Gander?" Prosper demanded.

The navigator said: "We've called them all night asking for a key signal



Miss Morgan had her hands full caring for airsick passengers, but she never ceased her vigil.

in hopes we could triangulate, but no soap."

"You have no idea where we are?"

"We could be over Montreal—but we're probably not. We could be two hundred miles east of Belle Isle, but I wouldn't bet on it. We might be smack over Goose Bay, but who knows?"

Barney called the flight engineer: "What we got left?"

"Thirty-five minutes—maybe. Thirty-five minutes and a prayer, if you ever went to Sunday School."

Prosper nodded to the navigator. "Go back and tell Morgan to wrap 'em up tight. Keep calling Goose Bay."

The murk inked up again and blotted out what might have been the first fingering of sunlight. Nothing ahead but a dank snow-flecked carpet.

They watched the clock, and the big hand moved inexorably to sever their thin thread of lifeline.

Prosper eased back on the throttles and put her into an easy descent. He was twanging like a bowstring with anxiety. As they held the long throbbing glide, the snow pattern became more distinct, and he exchanged a lightning-fast glance with Hub. If there was anything below, they'd never see it. Old Man Weather had really mixed a brew.

HE reflected that for fifty trips nothing ever happens, and then No. 51 comes up with everything no one believes can take place. This one could be a beaut, and they'd sell a lot of newspapers. They'd make the most out of a cabin-load of D.P.'s heading for the Land of the Free, only

to wind up in a tub of blood or like puppies in a sack dumped in the North Atlantic. No dictator could figure one like this.

"We'll make it," Prosper said hollowly. "We'll get down. I can't get rid of Morgan this easy," he added under his breath.

They watched the altimeter now as they waited for the hole. The needle was well below the three-thousand-foot mark. No. 2 engine was popping and they knew the juice was failing. Prosper held her off as long as he dared and then nosed down some more and kept heading her into the west. There had to be an opening somewhere.

Then it broke and the opaque curtain frizzled and became dead white. They saw small black spikes which became more defined until they saw a

sparse distribution of wind-combed spruce. There was snow, and drifts and easy swellings of blanketed topography, and they greeted it with a choked cry. No. 1 engine added a fusillade of backfire—and quit cold.

"Get 'em in the Nav. office or in the bunks," Prosper yelled. "Rawlins and the rest of them. Climb in too, if you like. I'll put her down somehow."

There was nothing ahead that offered much hope. He sat promoting an idea of using a couple of spruces to act as snubbers on the wings, when he suddenly saw a wider space of slaty white that seemed to be elevated higher than the rest of the area. But he knew the illusion came from his own level. He was down to almost five hundred feet.

"That could be a lake," he said, and saw Hub was back. "Give me all the flap we got," he ordered. "Leave the wheels up. We'll belly in—and hope."

THE Constellation reared with the pressure of the flaps and then lurched forward and tangoed into a glide.

"I hope that ice is right," Hub said, and pressed his palms against the instrument panel.

"I hope it's a hundred miles long," Prosper said as he began easing her over the fringe of some tufted spruce. "It better had be."

They swished over the brush, and Barney held her there and they sat it out. She dabbed down once, porpoised off and threw some prop blades into the murk. She tried to drag her tail, but still had enough flying speed to bring some response to the elevators. Her nose eased down again, and she went *Bop!* and threw a double spume of snow back and blotted out the engines. The flaps dragged, and she nosed in hard, piling the white stuff up ahead until she had a bank high enough to scramble over. The horizon, such as it was, dropped, and the Connie dipped her starboard wing and crunched around hard, bouncing over the uneven pathway she'd scooped out with her engines.

That was all. There wasn't any more. She lay tilting gently on top of the snow pile, and then with a long metallic sigh slid off and squatted like a weary duck.

Prosper shoved his cap back, produced a sickly grin and unsnapped his belt. "We made it!" he said, utterly exhausted.

"I'll be damned!" Hub said, and stared out at the bladeless props. "I'll never fear a forced landing again."

"I've read about such things," the captain said and got to his feet, "but I never believed that they really could happen."

He went back to Rawlins' panel. "You guys all right?" he demanded. "What we got left to work with?"

"Not much. I'll have to check the batteries. Something must have gone wrong somewhere."

"Do your best. We may be here a long time."

The passengers took no notice of Prosper's attempt at an explanation. They simply sat there, bundled like cocoons. A few stared out the ports at the snow which was already drifting up to the window levels. A few turned and appealed with their eyes to Morgan, who by now was making an inspection of their bundles and commandeering all the food they had brought along. They accepted that with the same lack-luster resignation they had shown in the ghettos and concentration camps of Europe.

"What's the idea?" Prosper asked and then caught it before the girl could reply.

"We may be here for days. We'll have to ration what we have or they'll gobble up everything within the next hour."

He gave her a sidelong glance and denied her the deserved approbation. He went to the galley window. Already their plowed-up pathway was beginning to fill in. The icy particles scraped across the metal skin of the air liner looked like wide sheets of emery paper. The wings were now under cover.

"Your job is to keep these people comfortable," he said over his shoulder. "Make them understand they have to sit this out. That they must keep calm and warm. We'll do the best we can to get them out as soon as the blizzard lets up."

"You have no idea where we are?" she demanded.

"We hope we're in Labrador, near Goose Bay, but we don't know for certain until the sun comes out and gives Bixie something to work on. Meanwhile, don't try anything giddy. I don't trust you—not even in a blizzard."

Morgan laughed. "Don't worry. I'll stay with you."

There was no fuel to run the auxiliary engine for power. Rawlins reported there was some battery left but he was still getting no response to any signal.

"Don't waste it. Check both sets from battery to aerial. We had a break getting down like this. Let's not clobber it by losing all radio contact."

"Sure! Sure!"

That was all they could do. Sit it out and wait for the storm to ease off and hope there would be enough showing for any search plane to spot. The situation was new to all of them. They were down and safe—as far as they knew; but they had forty others they were responsible for. If they once got out of hand it could be serious.

"Get some sleep," Prosper said to his co-pilot. "Take the upper bunk, and I'll make Morgan sack up in the other. That's about all we can do until this mess eases off."

Hub was glad to. Morgan was moving up and down the tilted aisle, checking with each passenger and making certain none of them was concealing any injuries. Each had to get out of his seat and walk up and down the aisle. Then she made certain they wrapped up again and were reasonably comfortable. All that with her reassuring smile and gay assurance appeared to give them the impression that once the snow stopped the pilot would start the engines again and take off for New York—and America.

Even Barney Prosper was impressed. "Good work," he muttered. "Now get some rest yourself. Take the lower bunk. I'll watch 'em."

"You take it," Morgan said. "I'll curl up in the women's rest-room. I can check on them from there."

"I'm captain of this ship. You do as I say," he growled. "I don't trust you—on the ground."

"While we're on the ground, I'm responsible for them," the girl flamed back. "I know what I'm doing."

"I'd give three bucks to know what you're thinking. I don't like that glint in your eye, Morgan."

"It's the light of love, my sweet," she said, and skewered him with one of her V-8 smiles.

"Look! We have about forty bewildered immigrants aboard. They have no idea how lucky they are, but if they ever figure we're in a tough spot, they may go wild. We've got to put up a front—just as if this was routine. You fold up, flop on your face, and they'll figure the worst and start piling out. They'll want to start walking to New York."

"Unless you and Rawlins do something about it they may have to. You leave the passengers to me."

MUMBLING a hopeless response, Barney went forward again. The navigator was asleep on top of his chart table. The flight engineers were corking off in a couple of empty cabin seats. There was nothing they could do. Rawlins was still checking the radio and his assistant maintained a watch with the earphones.

"We'll punch out an S.O.S. signal every half-hour," the radio man explained. "I don't know whether our signal is going out and we're getting nothing readable from the outside. It's one of those things, I guess."

"Okay. Maintain that schedule and try to get some rest."

Prosper was pooped and he rolled into the lower bunk, but no sleep rewarded him. Every fifteen minutes he crawled out and wandered down

the cabin aisle and stared out through the ports at the weather. On his third trip down the windows were covered over and the hissing across the roof was confined to a strip only a few inches wide.

"Brother! We're really socked in," he mooned and went back to his bunk. "Now it *can* be tough."

Fatigue took over and when he pulled out of it the storm-scratching had ceased. He crawled up to the control pit and twirled the wiper. All he could see outside was a blinding sea of sun-gilded snow. Miles ahead a few puny spikes of spruce poked through the great blanket and overhead the sky was a gigantic blue bowl. He tried to figure the time by the long Arctic shadows but gave up and looked at the clock. It could be noon where they were—but where were they?

Outside it was twenty-two below zero.

HE figured the worst. If they did get out he would be asked how it happened and how he got them all into this mess. It wouldn't even be Miami and he could wind up wiping props on some cut-rate air line. Maybe he'd have to get back to a drawing board and work on ranch-type bungalows.

He went aft again and found Rawlins asleep, but the assistant radioman was still huddled over the set.

"What about it?"

"I read Goose Bay," the operator said wearily. "They're alerted and readying a search. They think we're down about eighty miles northwest of Goose. We could be on Seal Lake. How the hell they gonna find us, Captain?"

"Don't ask me. Keep up the good work, pal."

The navigator was staring up at the snow-covered astradome, trying to figure how he could shoot the sun. The engineers were still asleep and then Prosper took another look and let out a yell.

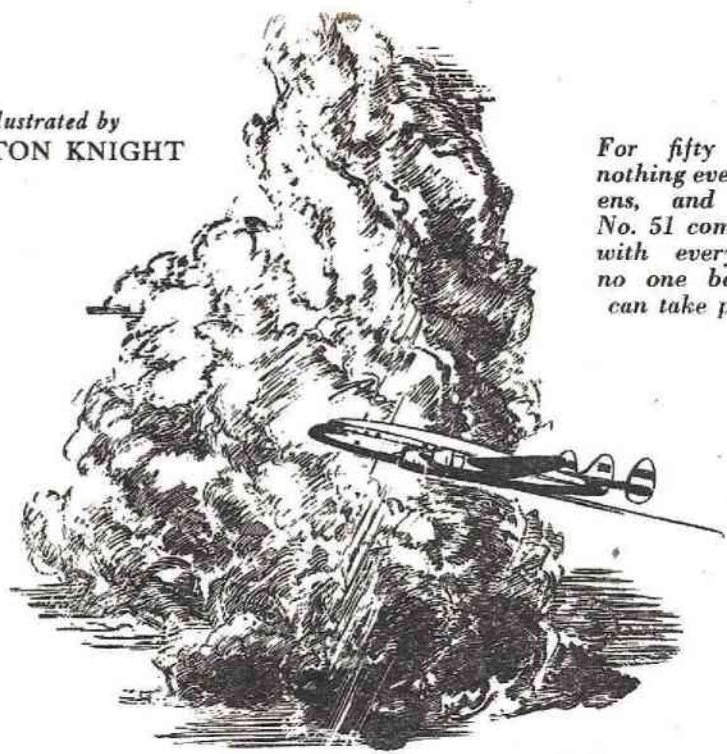
The passenger cabin was practically empty!

"Morgan took 'em for a walk," the navigator said and pointed to the cabin door.

"Damn her eyes!" Prosper cried and hurried down the aisle. He twirled the handle and pushed. Outside he could see where a young army had scrambled out and left a beaten path around to the snow-covered tail assembly. He buttoned up, dropped down and followed. Morgan had the men passengers bundled up and lined up in company order. They were marking time like mechanical soldiers.

"Now then," Morgan was yelling like a sergeant-major. "For half an hour we march—and march. I want you to pack down a wide circle around

Illustrated by
CLAYTON KNIGHT



*For fifty trips
nothing ever hap-
pens, and then
No. 51 comes up
with everything
no one believes
can take place.*

the ship. The exercise will do us good, and it will help the search planes to find us. Quick, march!"

"For cripes sake, what are you doing?" Barney pleaded when he could reach the bundled-up air hostess. "These people will freeze to death out here. It's more than twenty below."

"They're freezing to death in there. What's the difference?"

"I get them down safe, and you're trying to knock them off!"

"They're sending search ships out from Goose Bay, aren't they? They'll never find us under the snow. We have to pound out a pattern for them to work on. You're in the way, Captain."

"Holy smoke!" Prosper wheezed, and hurried back to the shelter of the cabin. "Holy jumping smoke!"

"What's Morgan doing?" Hub Brannon asked, coming along sleepy-eyed. "What gives?"

"I don't know whether she's crazy or inspired. I can't figure whether she's sensible or nuts," Barney said, and shut the door. "She has those poor D.P's. doing pack-drill out there. She says she can pound out an area for the search planes to work on. If I had tried that, they would have clubbed me to death with their baggage. But for Morgan—"

Brannon looked out and rubbed his bristly chin. "Maybe she's got an idea, at that. It is an idea, Barney!"

"Maybe we should chip in," Prosper said and looked sheepish. "We got any flight boots or galoshes aboard?"

"Morgan saves galoshes. She has half a dozen pairs in the men's room. Let's go."

They wrapped up, tore the doors off the rest-rooms and went outside. They ordered the navigator and the engineers to help them. Outside, they

climbed on the wings and began to shove the powdery covering from the wings and roof of the cabin. Within an hour the Constellation sat out bright and gleaming in the center of a wide packed-down circle. The sunlight picked her out the way candlelight puts glints on a new engagement ring.

For their reward Morgan marched her troops back inside and served cold chicken sandwiches. They ate with the joy and eagerness of famished men, but the spirit had been instilled. Half an hour later she had them outside again and heading across the lake, thirty-men wide, pounding out another strip.

"Now what?" Brannon said from the tail-plane.

"I get it," Prosper said and rubbed his scarlet nose. "That's a landing strip for the rescue ships. She figures some of those crazy Canadian bush pilots will be in here with ski-jobs. Morgan thinks of everything. Quite a gal—on the ground."

By late afternoon enough planes were overhead to stage an air epic. The sky was dotted with colored parachutes dropping tents, warm clothing and food supplies. They had enough hot coffee to thaw out an icehouse, but Morgan was too tired to serve it. She curled up on the lower bunk.

"Hey!" Prosper came in and scotched on the side of the bunk. "I take it all back, sweetheart. I think I'll take you down to Miami—on your terms. It will be interesting to see what you'll think up if we ever go down in the jungle. You're quite a girl."

He leaned over and kissed her, and Miss Morgan smiled—and fitted off to the land of wonderful dreams.

OLD DAYS IN FLORIDA, WHEN A SEMINOLE
BOY IN TOWN TO SELL ALLIGATOR HIDES
MIGHT BE SHANGHAIED ABOARD SHIP.

by
ZACHARY BALL

Fox Boy

YOU can hear them still, when a winter moon is over the Everglades and the silence is so deep that the shadows moving across the river make the sounds that shadows always make on black water. The whisper of their canoe paddles will come echoing back across the emptiness of time, and you can hear the soft, gay shuffle of their moccasins in the dust of the compound as they dance the *hokti-bungau*, the wedding dance. . . .

The Seminole youth had paddled three days to get to this place where the river broke out of the Everglades and found the sea. It was the place of the white man's settlement. And here too was the fort where you could see the white-man soldiers in their bright-colored uniforms parading in long columns at sunrise and sunset. The Indian increased the tempo of his paddling. It would be his first time to view these wonders.

His name was Fox Boy. He was twenty years old, tall of frame and broad of shoulder. At this early age he ranked among the foremost hunters of his clan. But he was more; he had a poet's heart, and his innermost thoughts, the ones he gave expression to only when he was alone, were things of beauty.

A day like this, he was thinking now as his eyes searched the river ahead for his first glimpse of the sea, is one to remember for always. A day born of the high blue, pouring its molten gold over all the earth, is truly a good one on which to view the great waters.

Illustrated by
Clinton Shepherd

The forest fell suddenly away and it lay before him, the white man's settlement, the fort with its gayly-clad soldiers, and the sky-blue waters stretching away to infinity. He rested his paddle and stared, his lips parted in a smile of complete absorption.

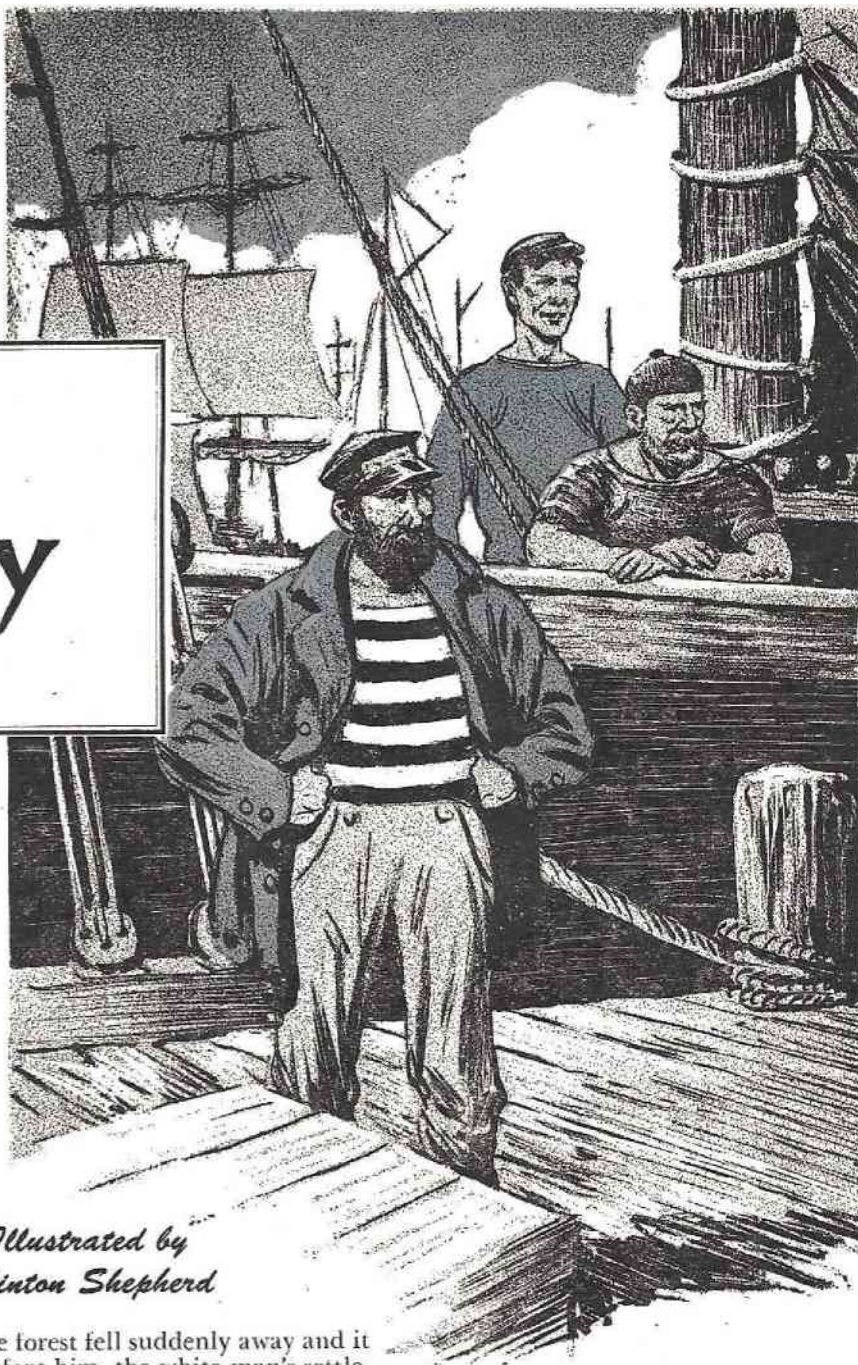
A few minutes later he pulled his canoe up onto the river bank not far from the fort and hid it well in bank growth. He covered his rifle with bear skin and blanket and took up his big bundle of alligator skins. For these skins he would be paid white man's money, money with which he was going to buy more things of value than he ever possessed in his life. Most important among them would be the new rifle.

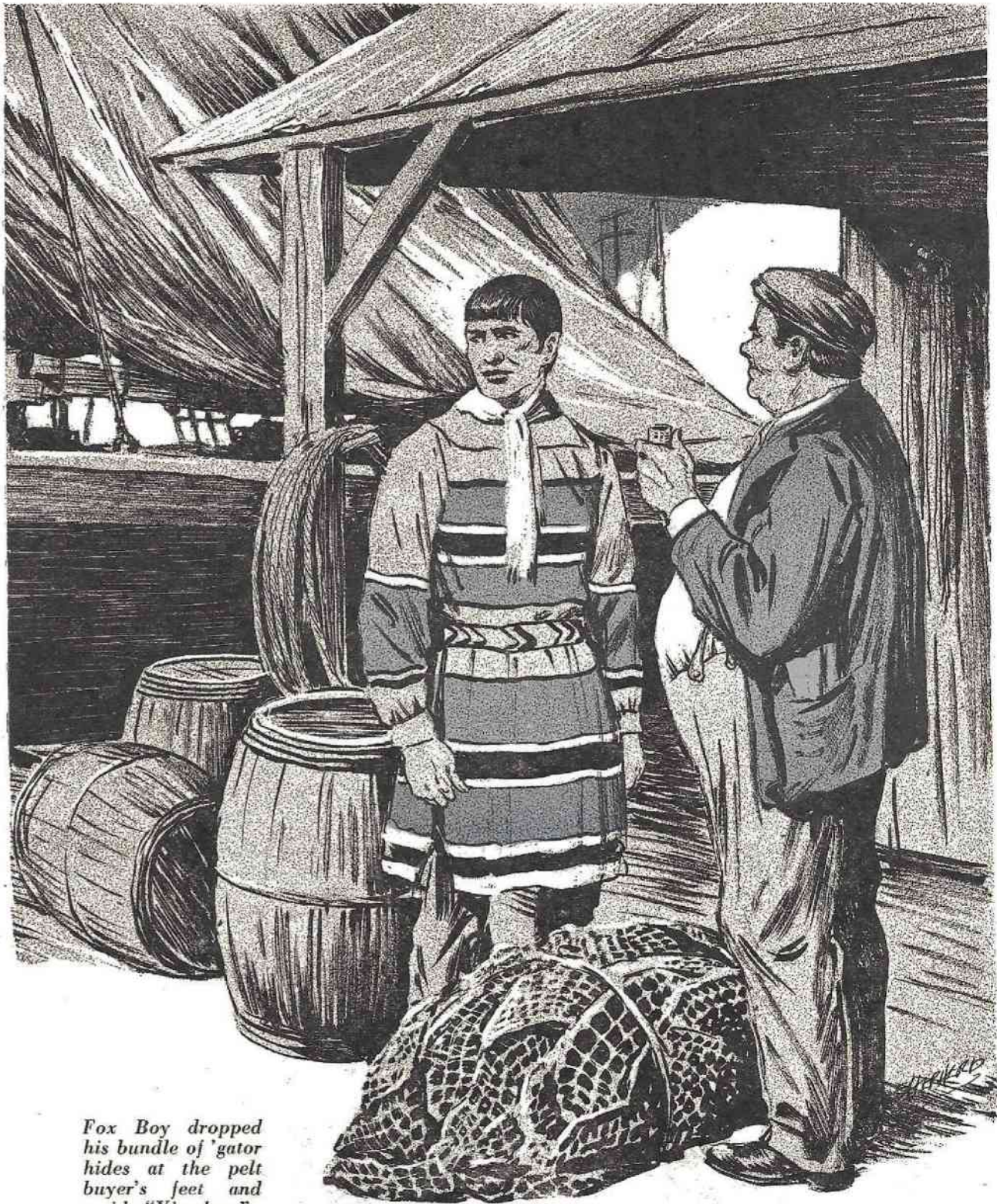
He stood a moment, tall against the sky, an arrow-straight figure in buckskin pants and varicolored *fokshigi*, then started walking toward the settle-

ment, his bundle high on his shoulder. He knew where to find the places that bought skins, and he even knew the white-man words necessary for dealing with the buyers. For his clan leaders didn't send their young men out to trade in the white man's world without some knowledge of it.

He came to the bay and stood to watch the sea birds, how they would climb high and dive for their fish. Then he let his gaze roam the settlement. This was *Tampa*, the land of *Hirrigua*, that noble warrior who fought so long and valiantly against the Spanish many years ago, because they had made slaves of some of his people.

Fox Boy walked along the rutted, sandy street, walked down the middle





Fox Boy dropped his bundle of 'gator hides at the pelt buyer's feet and said: "Yieschay."

of it where he could view the wonders of the stores that lined both sides of the thoroughfare. And they were a thing to see, those store buildings, painted white like he'd heard they were, and each one with a display of merchandise hanging from pegs and in boxes and barrels along the plank walk in front of it. There were items of clothing such as the white man wore, harness for his horses and yokes

for his oxen, and Fox Boy had had no idea there were so many varieties of foods and fruits in all the world.

He passed the Spanish Dollar Inn, the place where men of his clan who had been here had told him you could buy the food of the white man already prepared for eating. And you could even sleep in a white-man bed with four legs on it if you wanted to pay for the privilege. And there

were dozens of places in the settlement where you could buy the white man's drink of fire that made you crazy. Fox Boy thought he might try some of the prepared food at the Spanish Dollar, just to taste the strangeness of it, but he would sleep in his canoe as always. And he wanted none of the fire-drink that made you crazy.

He came to the pelt shed and lowered his bundle of alligator skins and

waited for the man who ran the place to look them over and make his price. The man was arguing with the owner of a team of oxen about the price of the animals, and when Fox Boy had waited a half hour he again shouldered his bundle and went on toward the pelt shed down by the river wharf.

He walked along the wharf gazing in wonder at the tall-masted ships warped along the docks and anchored out in the stream. It was almost unbelievable that there were canoes of such a size.

He came to the pelt shed and put down his bundle. Just across the wharf from the shed lay one of the largest of the ships, and the Seminole's eyes took in every foot of her from stern to bowsprit and from water line to mast top. The vessel's name and home port were across her counter in gold letters. He studied them, wishing he knew what they meant.

A big man with a black beard and a long hooked nose stood near the ship's rail directing other men in the loading of cargo from the wharf onto her broad deck. And when all the cargo was put aboard he came down onto the wharf and stood near the pelt shed. Across his cap were gold letters, the same as those on the ship's counter.

FINALLY the pelt buyer motioned to Fox Boy, who walked over and dropped his bundle at the man's feet and said: "Yieschay."

The buyer nodded. He was a thick-bellied man, and he breathed with a loud hiss when he bent down to inspect the skins. He took out a knife and, with a quick motion, cut the thong of the bundle, spread the 'gator hides, and examined each one closely. Then he straightened up and said, puffing, "Give you fifty dollars."

Fox Boy waited for him to make finger sign of the amount, and when he did, Fox Boy nodded agreement.

The man from the ship had been leaning against the shed; now he pushed away from it, tilted his gold-lettered cap against the sun glare, and came over and stood watching while the thick-bellied man counted out the gold coins into Fox Boy's hand. And when the payment was made, he said to the buyer, "I'll take the lot of them aboard at seventy-five."

The buyer sent a dark stream of tobacco juice over the edge of the wharf and said, "They're yourn, Cap'n."

The Captain called two heavy-chested men down from the deck.

Fox Boy put his gold coins into a small buckskin bag, tied the bag shut, and tucked it inside his *fokshigi*. When he looked up, the captain and his two crewmen were eyeing him, their faces somber and their eyes sharp. Then, at a low-spoken word from the Captain, one of the men came over to Fox Boy. He too had a heavy beard, and his nose was wide and flat and lay to one side of his ugly face. He grinned at Fox Boy, showing long, tobacco-stained teeth, and put out a hand and felt the youth's biceps. Then he bent down and felt his leg muscles. When he straightened up, he gave the Captain a quick nod.

The Captain spoke a word to his two crewmen and they gathered up the 'gator skins and lugged them aboard.

"A passel of alligator hides I'm glad to add to my cargo," the Captain told Fox Boy. "I wish you had more of them."

Fox Boy smiled, not knowing what the man had said.

"Most of 'em don't un'erstand more'n a few words," the pelt buyer

told the Captain in his wheezy voice. He turned to Fox Boy. "Iwoxchee *allapataw*?"

Fox Boy smiled and shook his head. "Munkachay."

"That's all the skins he's got," the buyer told the Captain.

"Well, tell him to come aboard and I'll give him a drink of rum," the Captain said.

The buyer turned to Fox Boy. "Hitlitsnaeschay. *Eatahadkee*."

Fox Boy shook his head in refusal. He had not seen many white men in his life, but this one with the gold letters on his cap he did not trust. He swiveled his head and looked up at the deck of the ship. The two men who had taken the skins aboard were standing at the rail, their forearms on it, staring down at him. They shifted their glances to their Captain and there was question in their eyes. The Captain did not look at them.

INSTINCT told Fox Boy to go away from there. He turned abruptly, stepped down from the wharf, and went back toward the street where all the stores were. Once he looked back and saw the Captain and his two huskies still watching him. A flutter of fear came into his stomach and he quickened his step.

He walked the plank sidewalks looking into the stores and at the merchandise stacked before them, until the sun was down and blue-gray twilight was gathering down along the river. He decided he would go and eat of the white-man food, then go to his canoe. And in the morning, according to the custom of his people when buying the goods of the white man, he would purchase his new rifle and the other things the moment the stores opened, then start the three-day trip back to his village in the deep swamp. He touched the money pouch



Fox Boy jerked free, and the next moment was running as he had never run before.

inside his *fokshigi*, and the feel of it was pleasant. Besides what he had got for the skins, there were past savings in the little bag. Yes, he would be a wealthy man among his people when he returned to his village.

He turned into the Spanish Dollar and stood in a lamp-lighted room that had a plank desk in one corner and hide-bottom chairs along the walls. Behind the desk was a long-jawed man with untrimmed gray hair that hung down over his collar. Fox Boy could see into another room where many people sat at tables, eating. While he stood there looking about, not quite sure of the next move to make, two men came in from the street and went over to the old man at the desk.

"What's on the supper board this evenin', Nate?" one of them asked as they dug out their money sacks.

"Fish," the old man said.

"Good God, again!" one of the men said. But they both paid their money and went on into the room where the people were eating.

Fox Boy, though not knowing what had been said, understood the procedure now, and he went over and laid a coin on the counter in front of the man called Nate.

"Eat?" Nate asked him.

Fox Boy nodded.

Nate pocketed the coin and laid some change on the counter and said, "Go on in." He jerked his head toward the dining-room. "*Humkinmiesiepit.*"

Fox Boy grinned and turned and tramped into the dining-room and sat at a small table against the wall. In a few minutes a pair of slender brown hands began putting food before him, and he looked up and saw with surprise that the girl who had brought it was a full-blooded Indian. Her calm, wide-apart eyes were like pools of swamp water. They made a long low sweep up to Fox Boy's face, and he knew she was the loveliest thing he had ever seen.

He said: "*Motto.*"

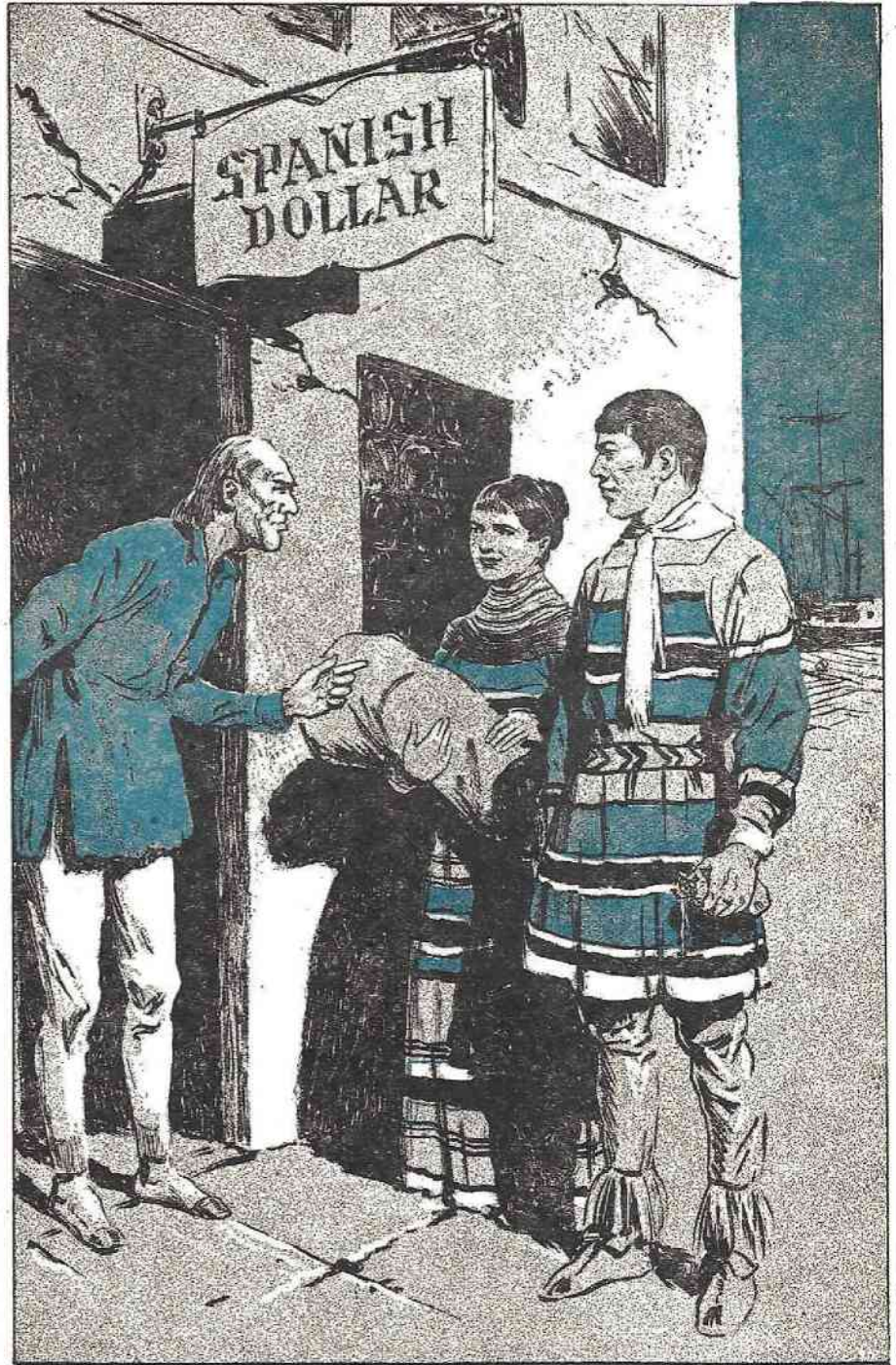
A smile touched her full, soft lips.

He said: "*Estachattee Seminole?*"

She made a quick little nod, her lips still smiling, and hurried away.

WHILE Fox Boy ate, he watched her go from table to table. She was slender and straight of back, and her hair was parted in the middle, smoothed down shiny, and tied in a club at the back of her head. He found himself liking the brisk, pert way she went about her work.

For the most part, he found the food disappointing. And handling the white man's eating tools was almost an impossibility. He thought of his people back at the village who would be gathered in the cook *chikee* at this moment, eating *sofkee* and



"I leaving," Oshotcochee said. "I go back with him."

pumpkin bread and roasted venison, their pleasure unencumbered by anything more than a wooden spoon. And thinking those things he was suddenly filled with loneliness, a thing he had never before experienced.

When he stood up to leave, the girl was there at his table again, starting to gather up the dishes. "What clan are you from?" she asked him.

"Narcoossee."

She was smiling and her soft dark eyes were on him. "I am Apopka."

Yes, it was true that there was not a maiden in his clan as pretty as this

girl. Nor in any other clan that he knew of. He said, "How long have you lived here?"

She started to reply but at that moment she glanced past him, then began hurriedly gathering up the dishes again.

"Why ain't you gittin' your work done?" a harsh voice said.

Fox Boy turned, and old Nate was standing just inside the dining room door. Beside him, his lettered cap in his hand, was the ship captain.

The girl answered Nate in faltering white-man words and turned and



The girl turned her head to listen to her man telling Great Spirit in Beyond of his love for her, his hoketee.

crossed the room and disappeared into the kitchen. Fox Boy walked past old Nate and the Captain and went out into the soft night. He stood a moment, then headed toward the river.

A light breeze was moving up from the bay now, and he breathed deeply of the salt air and did not like it. A few hours ago he had been highly excited at his first scent of the salt water. But loneliness was upon him now, and he wished for the smell of the night fire of his own village and for the good sense of security he could feel in the presence of his own kind. He wished that tomorrow was here so he could make his purchases and be on his homeward trip.

The saloons were the only places along the street that were open now. He passed one door after another that emitted the odors of stale whisky and tobacco-smoke, and the raucous laughter of coarse men.

Of a sudden he heard three men coming up behind him. He stepped

aside to let them pass. When they came abreast of him, he saw that it was the ship captain and those same two thick-chested crewmen.

"Well," the Captain said, "if it ain't our Indian friend!"

Fox Boy smiled, thankful that the men could not know of the chill of apprehension that ran through him.

At the first saloon they came to the Captain said, "What d'you say we all wet our throats a mite? You have one with us, Indian." He indicated the long counter in there where men were lined up with bottles and glasses before them.

Fox Boy shook his head and started to walk on.

"Come on, red man," the Captain said, and took his arm.

The man with the flat nose stood close on the other side of Fox Boy and the third man, who was not an old man but who had only one front tooth, planted himself behind him. It was plain they intended for him to

go into the saloon whether he wanted to or not. He made a quick decision to go with them. They stepped inside, the Captain still holding his arm.

They made their way to the whisky counter through a crowd of men who were plainly from the seagoing ships. In answer to the jingle of the Captain's money the man behind the counter put out a bottle and four glasses. The Captain did the pouring.

Fox Boy lifted his glass when the others did, and when he swallowed the stuff it was as if someone had tightened a hot chain around his throat. He let his chin fall to his chest, and when he again lifted his head his eyes were swimming. It was moments before he could breathe normally again.

His companions laughed at his discomfort, and the Captain slapped him on the back and said: "Looks like you ain't a drinkin' man, Indian!" Then he and his crewmen downed their second whisky at a gulp. "That's the way a sailor handles his liquor, son," he said. "You'll catch on." The three laughed some more and the captain refilled the glasses. The man behind the counter put his forearms on the planking and waited to see the Indian youth take another drink.

The Captain slapped Fox Boy on the back again and said: "What's your name, Indian?"

Fox Boy shook his head to indicate that he didn't understand.

"I know some of their words," the counter man told the Captain. He turned to Fox Boy. "*Nocatee honon-waw?*"

"Fox Boy," the Seminole told him, speaking his name in the white-man's tongue.

"Fox Boy, eh?" the Captain said. "Mine's Slade." He put out his hand. Fox Boy took it.

"Have another drink, Fox Boy," the Captain said with a sly glance at Crooked-nose and One-tooth.

Fox Boy shook his head, smiling apologetically. "*Hie-uschay*," he said, then translated the word himself. "I go." It was one of the few phrases he knew in white-man talk. He started to turn away, but Crooked-nose was in front of him, grinning his ugly grin.

The Captain put out a big hand and swung Fox Boy back to the counter. "No hurry, Foxy," he said. "I'm buyin' the firewater. And when I buy a man a drink it pleasures me to see him drink it. Right, Sandy?" he said to the counter man.

Fox Boy shook his head and said again, "I go."

"All right," the Captain said; then to the counter man: "We don't like your whisky, Sandy. We're goin' to another saloon. Come on, lads. Our

friend Foxy don't like Sandy's brand of heat, so we'll try another place."

They went out, the Captain walking on one side of Fox Boy and Crooked-nose on the other, his hand gripping the Seminole's arm. One-tooth walked behind them.

As they started down the street, the Captain took Fox Boy's other arm. "I got better liquor on the ship than they got in these places," he said. "We'll go down to my cabin and have a good drink. What do you say?"

Crooked-nose said, "Hell, Slade, he don't know what you're talkin' about. It takes a little time and a good many lashes to make these redskins understand anything. I've had experience with shanghaied foreigners of all kinds."

"He'll catch on in time," Slade said with a wet chuckle.

Sensing the meaning of what the men were saying, Fox Boy remembered a story he had often heard told around the council fires of his clan. It concerned a young man of the Narcoossee clan, and it had happened a long time ago. The youth had made a trip to this same white-man settlement, and he didn't return to his village for three years. When he finally did get back, he told of how he had been forced aboard a ship as a slave, of how he had been kept a prisoner by the ship's captain and compelled to work endless hours in the vermin-ridden hold, always beaten and starved if he refused to do the work. He was a man broken in health and spirit when he returned to his people, and lived but a short time thereafter. Fox Boy had never given the story much serious thought when it was talked among the older men, but thinking about it now, a hot lump came into his throat, for he knew for a certainty that the same thing was about to happen to him.

When they came into the light from the next saloon, Fox Boy stopped and told the men, by sign, that he wanted another drink.

"Hol!" the Captain shouted. "He wants some more saloon liquor. Well, that suits us, eh, laddies?"

They stepped through the open door of the saloon. And when they did, Fox Boy suddenly set his weight and jerked free of the Captain and Crooked-nose. He wheeled, shoved One-tooth so hard he fell into the crowd at a card table, and the next moment was outside, running as he had never run before. Then the others were out on the slab walk and in pursuit.

He leaped into the blackness between two buildings, ran to the rear of them, swung around the building on his left, and darted back toward the street again. He leaped the plank

walk when he came to it, and was in the middle of the street when he heard running feet cross the walk behind him and knew that he had failed to lose his pursuers. He headed down the street, and there in a patch of light from one of the saloons, Crooked-nose stood waiting for him. He ran full into the man, both fists swinging; he felt flesh and bone under his knuckles, then, a moment later, was on the other side of the street, where he again dived into an oblong of blackness between two buildings. The three men crossed the plank walk not fifty feet behind him.

Bent low, the Seminole was taking the darkness between the buildings at a full run when suddenly the ground hit him in the face. He struggled to his feet and pawed his way through the stacks of barrels he had fallen over. Once out of them, he again jumped into a run, and as he turned down the alley he could hear his pursuers plow into the clutter of barrels. After much clatter and stumbling and cursing, they came on.

On his left, Fox Boy could make out the humped shape of a building that was taller than the others. He was sure that it was the Spanish Dollar. As he came to it, another dark shape stepped out in front of him.

He slid to a stop, his fist cocked for the swing, when a voice said: "*Thooos-chay!*"

It was the girl who had served him his supper.

"*Hoketichée!*" he panted.

"Come with me!" she whispered frantically. Her hand found his, and together they darted across the alley to another building.

The girl put out her hand and swung back a loose upright weather-board and said, "In here!" Then she ducked in. Fox Boy squeezed through the opening after her, her hand still in his. The board swung back into place and they stood close together in the darkness.

Running steps came down the alley and stopped not a dozen feet from where they stood. The panting men out there exchanged low curses, then started running again.

It was only when the sound of their feet was gone that Fox Boy realized he was still holding the girl's hand. He let go of it. They waited for minutes but the men did not return.

"I think they're gone for good," Fox Boy said.

The girl's hand crept into his again and she whispered, "It is not safe yet. They'll search for you all night. I've seen it happen before. When I saw that ship captain with Nate there at supper, I knew by the way they were looking at you that this was going to happen. I wanted to warn you then but I had no chance."

"They wanted to take me aboard the ship and make a slave of me," Fox Boy said.

"Yes. Nate oftens helps captains get men for their ships."

"What is this building we're in?" Fox Boy asked.

"A storage house," she told him. They found a stack of hemp and sat down on it. In a few minutes they heard voices in the alley again. The girl slipped across to where they had entered the building and looked out a crack.

"There's a man on the back stairs of the Spanish Dollar watching for you," she whispered when she came back.

Fox Boy said: "What's your name?" "Oshotcochee."

He smiled in the darkness. He had never heard the name "little white heron" applied to a girl before.

"That's a nice name," he told her. "How long have you worked for this white man?"

"Five years. Since I was twelve." She lay back on the pile of hemp and told him of how her mother had died when she was a girl, and of how her father, committed a wrong and was banished by his clan. "My father brought me here and sold me to old Nate and his wife," she said, "and then he disappeared. I've never heard anything of him since."

As she talked, Fox Boy heard the weariness in her tone and knew that she must have to work very hard here. Then, to his surprise, he found himself taking that low, calm voice into his soul and cherishing it. And it came to him with a suddenness that choked him that he was in love with her. She talked on, telling him all about herself, and he sensed that it was things she had been needing to tell someone for a very long time.

"Is it not lonesome for you here, Oshotcochee?" he asked at last.

"Yes. Nate and his wife have never mistreated me, but always I have longed to be back with my own people."

Fox Boy's hand sought hers in the darkness. It was small and firm and warm. And holding it, he thought how lucky he was to have people of his own to go back to, and a place where he had never known the kind of loneliness that had been this girl's life.

He never knew where his thinking quit off and his whispered words began, but he told her all about his village and his people, about the Green Corn Dance festival in mid-summer and how much fun it was. Then, without knowing he was going to say it, he told her was going to take her back to his village tomorrow, and they would be married and she would never know sorrow and loneliness

again. "Only three days by canoe," he told her, "and we will be at my village." And when he stopped speaking he knew by her breathing that she had heard nothing he said, for she was sound asleep. He sat there, her hand in his, the nearness of her giving him a strange tightness of chest and weakness of shoulder. He sat like that until the cracks between the siding boards of the building began to show leaden.

Then he got up and went and looked out. He saw One-tooth just leaving the back stairs of the Spanish Dollar. He stayed there watching for the man's return until full daylight. And when he turned to wake up the girl, she was standing beside him, smiling her quiet smile.

There was bluntness in his tone to cover the emotion he was feeling when he asked her if she would let him take her back with him to his people. And in his heart he was begging, *Don't refuse me. Don't say you will not go.*

She looked down at her moccasined feet, and the way she did it was a gesture of sweetest delicacy. Then she brought her eyes to his in that long, slow sweep. "I want very much to go with you, my *nakumi*." And her voice was steady and sweetly soft.

FIFTEEN minutes later they stood before the closed door of the Spanish Dollar. Oshotcochee held a blanket-wrapped bundle in her hands. Fox Boy's money pouch inside his *fokshigi* was empty. All the wealth he had in the world, the money that was to buy his new rifle and all the other things was gripped in one hand.

He turned his head and smiled at Oshotcochee. "You'll have to tell him," he said. "I cannot speak the language."

She nodded.

Nate, sleep blearing his eyes, yanked the door open and stood there in the dawn in shirttail and underdrawers. A suspicious glitter pushed the sleep dullness from his rheumy old eyes when he saw who it was.

"What do you want?" he snarled.

"I leaving," Oshotcochee said. She glanced up at Fox Boy, then back to the old man. "I go with my *nakumi*, my man. I go back with him to his people—to my people."

"Ha!" the old man screamed. "I'll have something to say about that. I paid good money for you—you *ifa*!"

At the sound of that word, Fox Boy's hands tightened into fists, the one with the gold coins gripping so hard they cut into his palm. The girl's fingers touched his arm. Slowly he brought his anger under control. He opened his hand and held out the coins. Nate looked at them, then moved his eyes up to Fox Boy's face. And anyone could have seen that it

was not the amount of money that decided him, but what he saw in the black depths of the young Seminole's eyes. From within the room there came the squeaking of a bed, and a woman's sleepy voice demanded to know what all the fuss was. Without answering his wife's query, Nate held out his scrawny clawlike hand and Fox Boy put the money into it. Then he took Oshotcochee's arm and they walked away. The old man banged the door shut.

THEY walked down the middle of the street toward the dawn, Fox Boy carrying his woman's bundle. He carried it close against him, and gripped in his right hand, between the bundle and his chest, was a long knife the girl had brought from the kitchen. They walked straight-backed all the way to the river, eyes alert, but there was no sign of the men from the ship.

Fox Boy got his canoe out of the brush and slid it into the water, helped her in, and took up his paddle. And as he sent the slim craft out into the middle of the ebony stream she put her hand over the side and let her slim fingers trail in the water, that calm smile on her soft mouth. When she looked at him her eyes were like midsummer darkness. And Fox Boy had to swallow hard against the tightness that just looking at her made in his throat. . . .

And it was the happiest day he had ever lived, that first day on the river with her. At noon they had the food she had brought wrapped in the bundle with her belongings, and in the evening they ate of the wild turkey that he shot at sundown. When the moon was up, he made a bed in the canoe for her and he slept ashore.

But when they started out at dawn, he was quick to see that something had happened to her. There was no soft smile now. She had no tender glances for him. His eyes studied her every minute, and it was a strange and hurting thing, this change that had come over her. Her little face, set in a kind of sad patience, sorrowed him. But he spoke no word of it. He asked no questions. He knew that somehow he had caused her pain, and he didn't want her to know pain, not ever. And though it was not the Indian way at this stage of their relationship, he wanted to take her in his arms, to feel the sweet warmth of her, to beg her forgiveness for whatever he had done that had caused her hurt. But he could only wait.

And that was their second day on the river, with her sad, unsmiling and somehow proud along with her sadness, and him aching with love for her. At sundown, when he pointed out the grassy spot where they would

camp this night, she brought her gaze to his face in that slow way she had and forced herself to smile. He would never forget that smile, with her face broken into soft lights reflected from the river and shadows from the forest all around.

When they had eaten and she had left the campfire to go to her bed in the canoe, he sat long by his bank fire, his forearms on his knees and his hands hanging down in front of him. And sitting thus, staring into the dying fire-bed, he began to smile. For it had come to him what was wrong with his woman. And it was a thing to treasure, her wanting that.

When the moon was well above the treetops he stood up. He glanced toward the canoe, now a long shadow smuggled against the river bank, then walked away from his fire and stood in a patch of yellow light. He lifted his hands high, palms down, and whispered, "*Hisakitamisi*." Three times he whispered it. Then he raised his voice into the swamp night. "*Estachatee. Hoketee. Eekkee*." He called the words into the jungle stillness four times, each time facing a different cardinal point.

And the night took his words and gave them back to the girl in the canoe. She turned her head to listen to her man telling Great Spirit in Beyond of his love for her, his *hoketee*. There was poetry in the sound of his voice, and true love in his heart for her. Her smiling lips trembled a little, and she closed her eyes against the tears of gladness that filled them.

The next morning they stood on the bank of the river, her hand in his, for a moment before stepping into the canoe. She glanced up at him. Then she laughed low, the corners of her dark eyes tipping up. And in the anguish of her happiness she gave her head a quick little shake then looked away toward the sunrise.

When they were in the canoe he said with the first dip of his paddle, "At the end of this sun we will be at my village." She was silent, her eyes bright and her teeth holding to her full lower lip. "And the night the winter moon goes out," he went on, "will be the time of our wedding."

She nodded and turned her head so he could not see her face. The sunlight, striking across the river's surface, lay deep in her eyes.

AND thus lives and breathes forever somewhere, the love of a man for his woman. And on nights when the winter moon is over the Everglades, the whisper of their canoe paddles comes echoing back over the emptiness of time, and you can hear the shuffle of their moccasins in the dust of the compound as they dance the *hokti-bungau*, the wedding dance.



The Caribou Mystery

THE ERRATIC MIGRATIONS OF THESE NORTHERN DEER HAVE LONG BEEN A PUZZLE TO THE NATIVES WHO SUBSIST UPON THEM, AS WELL AS TO THE SCIENTISTS.

by FARLEY MOWAT

IT was near the end of July in the year 1893. Three canoes, badly scarred by the rocks of a hundred portages and by the angry rapids of the mighty DuBawnt River, were entering yet another lake in an endless chain of wilderness lakes leading into the North. In the lead canoe a young white man was taking compass bearings and working anxiously on a sketch map; for this route into the heartland of the Arctic was being explored by white men for the first time in history.

The map-maker was J. B. Tyrrel, a young geologist employed by the Canadian Government to attempt the first south-north traverse of the tremendous interior Arctic plains called the Barrenlands—vast treeless areas that stretch northward in bleak desolation from timberline for nearly a thousand miles before they meet the Arctic sea.

In the expedition there were five Indians, one half-breed, and Tyrrel's younger brother James. The two young white men with their dour and sullen crew were attempting a canoe voyage of over fifteen hundred miles, in a single summer and through a land completely unknown and that even

today is considered almost impassable to white men!

The party had been traveling for two months and had come less than a quarter of the distance they would have to cover if they expected to escape alive from the bitter onslaught of the early Arctic winter. Their supplies were already dangerously low, yet almost the whole breadth of the rocky and inhospitable Barrenlands still stretched ahead of them.

There could be no turning back; yet to go on without fresh supplies meant almost certain death. J. B. Tyrrel, the leader, was beset by the insistent worry of the problem but went on with his map-making imperturbably, while the surly and frightened Indians pushed the canoes deeper into the moss-grown plains where only wolves and ravens seemed to live.

Now the lead canoe rounded a point in the lake; suddenly one of the Indians cried out hoarsely, and pointed his paddle at the northern shore. Tyrrel dropped his map-board and stared ahead in the direction the man was pointing—and for a long moment he hardly knew what manner of thing it was which his startled eyes beheld.

On the far shore of the lake, the whole gray landscape seemed to be in motion, as if a tremendous landslide were remorselessly oozing down upon the lake to overwhelm and obliterate it! Tyrrel snatched his field-glasses, and through the lenses he watched the moving gray tide resolve itself into countless thousands of animals, packed so closely that the rocky tundra could not be seen between them.

Now Louis, the half-breed, cried out words that brought a half-insane excitement into the hearts and bellies of the native canoeemen.

"*Les caribou!*" he shouted. "*C'est la foule!*" ("It is the Throng!")

The Barrens is a place of contrasts. For weeks the land had been as empty as a desert. Now, in the space of a single moment, the dead land had come alive.

The men jabbered excitedly in four languages. They stared with awe—and perhaps even with a little fear—at what is probably the most impressive animal phenomenon still to be seen in our world. It is a sight that has been seen in its full awe-inspiring magnitude, by only a few white men; and the first of these were the old French explorers who named the spectacle

"La Foule"—"the Throng." There is no better name!

Caribou! The reindeer of the American Arctic, gathered together in such tremendous herds that they not only defy the eye to comprehend their magnitude, but they defy the camera too! I have seen the photographs that J. B. Tyrrel took on that July day, and they might be no more than close-ups of a bit of sandy shore—enlarged to the point where each grain of sand became separate and distinct.

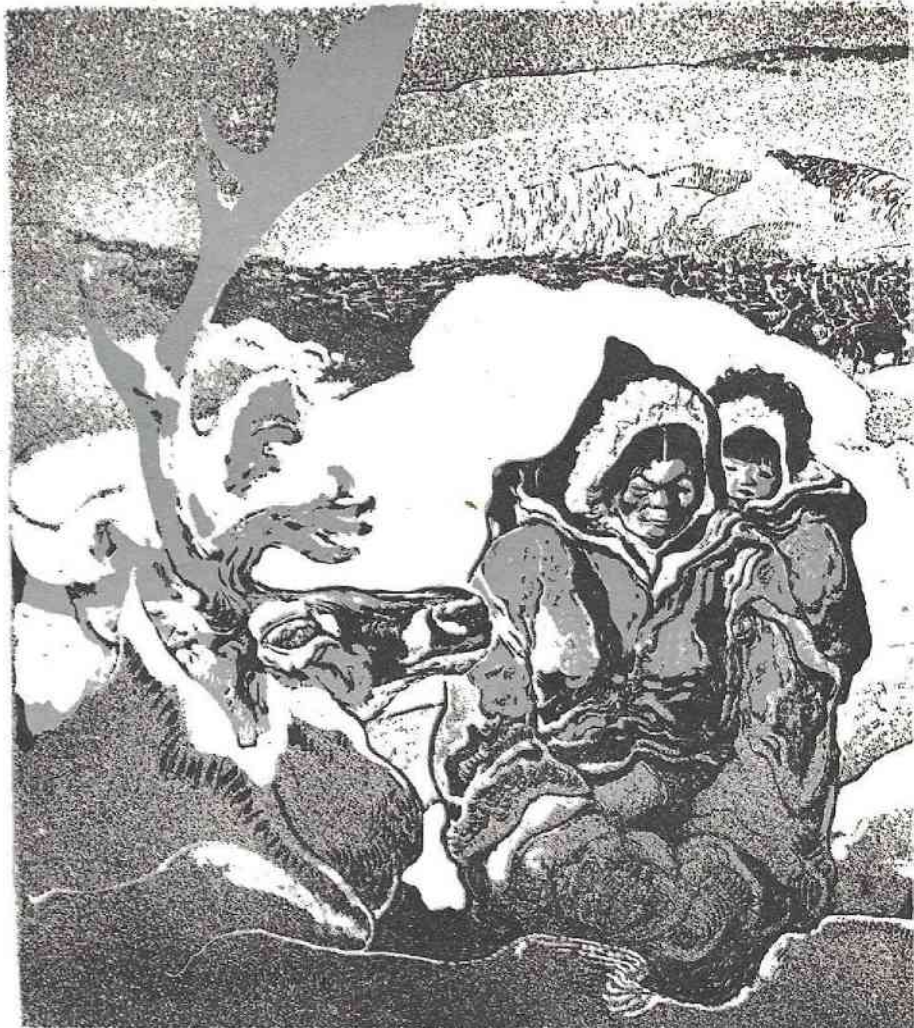
Tyrrel was a scientist—but he was also a hungry man. The three canoes streaked for the northern shore and landed near the edge of the great herds. Guns appeared from every canoe, and men with rifles, shotguns, revolvers, and even with axes, plunged into the midst of the living flood, driven by their lust for meat. The deer simply opened up narrow lanes a few feet wide as the men approached, and the lanes closed up at once as the men moved forward, half-stifled by the barnyard stench.

Two of the men found themselves marooned on a rock in the center of one herd that stretched to the horizon in all directions. And they were afraid to move—not because the inoffensive caribou might attack, but simply because that vast herd was so solidly compressed that the men would have been trampled if they had tried to move away!

TYRREL and his brother tried to count the numbers of caribou in that one fabulous herd, but soon they recognized the impossible. James Tyrrel gave up in disgust after remarking to his brother that the animals could be counted only "by the acre." And using just that unit of measure, it has been possible to make a fairly reliable estimate that *there were not less than half a million caribou* in the herds the Tyrrel Expedition encountered that July day in 1893. Truly, it was the Throng!

When the canoes were loaded to the gunwales with meat, the men pushed on into the north. With great difficulty they made their way at last to Hudson Bay, then south to safety through Arctic blizzards and floating ice. But it was the meat of the caribou which made the safe return possible; and the Tyrrels never forgot La Foule—for it was a vision that is not given to many men.

Consider that estimate of half a million beasts: The figure is almost meaningless. In the summer of 1947 I watched caribou passing me on a front of five miles, for two days without a serious break or interruption; and I estimated that I saw a total of *not more than 25,000 animals!* Half a million is simply too many to think



The primitive Barrens Eskimos are the complete deer people,

about. It baffles the mind as it blinds the eye of the camera.

Tyrrel met La Foule in 1893, and by that time the great buffalo herds of the southern prairies had all but vanished. Yet even during their prime, the much-remembered herds of buffalo never came close to duplicating the immensity of the caribou herds that make up the Throng. Now the buffalo herds are only a memory—and not a very savory one, from the point of view of our activities—but the caribou herds still exist. As late as 1936, Dr. C. H. D. Clarke, who was also a Government scientist, met the Throng on Hanbury River, not far from Tyrrel's old route. Clarke writes of having twenty thousand animals in sight at one time! And he estimates that he saw between a hundred thousand and two hundred thousand animals in that one mass movement of caribou beside the Hanbury!

It was in 1947 that I first read Tyrrel's concise report, and I was so fascinated by what he had to tell about the Throng that I packed up and went off to the Barrens in the spring of that year. I wanted to see if this incredible thing really did exist. Unlike Tyrrel, I traveled with only one companion, a

half-breed, but we covered nearly twelve hundred miles of the interior Barrens—some of it had never previously been explored.

We never saw La Foule in its overwhelming immensity, but we did see caribou. In fact we lived, ate and slept caribou for the best part of a year; yet when I returned to civilization I felt that I knew less about those mysterious beasts than I did when I first entered the land.

There was nothing for it but to go back again, so accompanied by Andrew Lawrie, a Toronto biologist, I spent another year seeking to penetrate some of the mysteries that surround the "deer"—as the caribou are universally called throughout the Arctic. But again I was doomed to disappointment. Those herds that surpass any animal aggregations in the world in sheer bulk, still present one of the greatest biological problems known to science. For the deer, like many birds, are migratory—and on a vast and incomprehensible scale. No one knows why this should be.

In the fall of the year, as we camped on the south plains of the Barrens and shivered in the first snowstorms, we watched the deer pass by us to the



for their entire way of life is indissolubly linked to the deer.

south. They came in a constant succession of hurrying groups, some consisting of a dozen animals, and some of hundreds. Bucks, does, yearlings and fawns plunged past our camp as if pursued by the malignant devils of the Barrens. Then suddenly they vanished, and the whole sweep of the Barrenlands—over a million square miles of it—was given over to silence and to the snow.

We followed the deer, and found them nearly four hundred miles to the south and well inside the sparse sub-Arctic forests. At Reindeer Lake in northern Manitoba, we found every pothole and lakelet harboring a herd of ten to a hundred deer. The caribou stayed timidly near the open ice by day and by night; only in the early mornings and late evenings did they venture into the alien confines of the forests, to feed on lichens and mosses which they dug out of the drifts with their big splayed hoofs.

At Reindeer Lake we settled down to study the deer—but it was like trying to study a will-o'-the-wisp. One morning I drove my dog team out to the wintering-grounds, but though I searched all day I did not find a single deer. Overnight the whole "yard"

of perhaps sixty thousand animals had vanished.

It was a month before I had definite news of them, from a wandering Chipewyan, and then they were two hundred miles to the west. A week later they were a hundred miles north—and then they simply vanished until the coming of spring.

In the spring we were again out on the open Barrens, waiting to intercept the missing herds. In early June when the ice was still thick and the winter drifts were just starting to melt, we awoke one morning to see hundreds of ravens passing overhead toward the north. An Eskimo was with us and when he saw the dark birds he grinned and told us that the deer would be along at any time, for the ravens act as an advance guard for the migrating herds.

The deer came the next morning. The inviolate surface of the lake beside our camp was shot with long rows of animals, looking like black periods upon a virgin-white page. In an hour the rows had grown continuous and had thickened. By noon the ice and snow on the lake had been packed by myriad hoofs to the consistency of stone and the deer almost

blanketed the ice. By nightfall there was a steady stream, four miles in width, flowing inexorably up from the forests into the northern plains.

These deer were all does, and all pregnant. They had come four hundred miles and would travel another five hundred at top speed before the restless urge left them, and the fawns were dropped somewhere in the treeless desolation near mysterious Tulemaliguak—the inland sea of the Barrens.

The bucks came later, more leisurely. In all, it took three weeks for the whole migration to pass our camp, and this great assemblage was only a minute part of the migrating wave of deer then moving north on a front that stretched from Hudson Bay westward a thousand miles to the valley of the Mackenzie.

Now at first glance, the reason for this annual migration may seem obvious—but one soon learns that nothing about the caribou is obvious. It looks as if the deer move south in search of better food, or of protection from the Arctic gales. But this is not the case, or at least it is not the major explanation for the mysterious trek. Away north, on the Arctic islands, there were once great herds of deer that lived the year through on the very edge of the eternally frozen sea; and they lived well, until they were exterminated by men. Even in the Barrens, the annual trek is not a hard-and-fast rule, and during some of the bitterest winters in history the entire Barrens caribou population has stopped short of timber and never entered the forests throughout the whole winter season. An even greater indication that the mystery lies very deep is found in midsummer—for then the deer make their greatest treks—and these bear no relation to the seasons, since they are all made in summer weather.

AFTER the fawns are born in spring, the herds break up into tiny groups which scatter out over the whole northern half of the interior plains. These little groups drift with apparent aimlessness, but there is a steady trend toward the south. Small groups graze southward, pick up other groups, and as the herds snowball in size, so does their southward momentum grow. By mid-July the movement has become a rout! The entire deer population of the Barrens pounds south again, and it is then that the mightiest herds of all—La Foule—are formed. Concentrated into one staggeringly huge mass the herds flee south as if driven by some terrible and unseen enemy. The flight continues until it reaches the very edge of forests—then it breaks and dissipates itself like a gigantic



*The Barrenland grizzly bear
owes its whole life to the deer.*

sea against a concrete wall. The Throng dissolves again into countless little groups, and these slowly begin to make their way northward again. By the time of the rut, in October, they have again reached the northern limits of their range. Then the snows come and once more they hurry to the south; this time they may continue five hundred miles deep into the forests.

So there are four clear-cut migrations every year. But why? Nobody knows. We only know that the deer are never still. They have no home; day in, day out, they are always on the move—restlessly swinging into the south, the north, the east or the west—unconsciously yet directly driven by some force we cannot name. It is one of the greatest mysteries of La Foule!

But this mystery is not simply an academic one, for the lives of all men in the Barrens depend upon the movements of the deer. Out in the central Barrens live the Caribou

Eskimos. A pagan tribe who have no contact with the sea, and almost no contact with white men, they live—or die—by the caribou. The Chipewyan Indians who live just inside the timberlands are called Idthen Eldeli, or Eaters of Deer—a name that is literally true. Even white men cannot exist in that land without the deer, as was grimly proven by the tragedy that overtook the Englishman, Hornby.

Hornby was an old Barrens man who had spent many seasons in the wilderness, and who decided to spend one more. He moved down Thelon River into the plains, in company with two schoolboys from England—and that year the deer did not come to Hornby's camp. In the spring there were three dead men upon the savage tundra of the Barrens. White man, Eskimo or Indian—no man can survive long in that land without the caribou.

In a sense it is a measure of the depth of the mystery surrounding the

deer, that neither Indians nor Eskimos of the deer people can explain the migrations, or can even predict, a few weeks in advance, by what route or in what direction the deer will move. After thousands of years of intimate experience with them, these people are still completely at the mercy of the unpredictable whim of the caribou. From year to year, the migrations are never the same. Routes that have been rigorously followed for decades are suddenly and inexplicably abandoned—and men die of starvation as a result. Winter or "yards" areas that have known deer for half a century may be empty when a certain autumn comes, and again, men die. Nothing is ever certain about the movements of La Foule.

THERE are other and lesser mysteries about the deer. Even now it is not known exactly where the fawning area is. The does go north with swollen bellies; they disappear, and in a few weeks reappear with fawns beside them. But no man has yet



seen the fawning of a big herd, or found a major fawning-ground.

Another intriguing oddity is the problem of the antlers. Amongst all the deer family, only the females of the caribou—and of the closely related reindeer—bear antlers. As for the bucks, their spreads are simply incredible! A big buck weighing two hundred pounds may carry antlers weighing thirty pounds, with a sweep of four feet, a breadth of four feet and a height of nearly that much! They are massive ornaments, yet, despite the terrific drain on the vitality of the animals which their production entails, they seem to serve no useful purpose.

The caribou do not use their towering tines to rake up moss from under snow, as some observers have insisted. Neither do they use their antlers as weapons of protection against wolves or other predators. Only when the rut is on, do the antlers come into use; then they serve almost solely for intimidation or "bluffing"—for they are too massive and cumbersome to inflict much damage, unless it hap-

pens that two bucks lock antlers; then both combatants starve to death.

Another curiosity about the deer is the so-called "hoof clicking." In the pastern joint of the foot there is a loose cartilage which emits a muted clicking sound every time the ankle joint is bent. A passing herd of deer sounds like all the castanets in the world being rattled in distant cadence. It is a startling and fascinating thing to hear. No other deer are so equipped and it has been impossible to find any useful purpose this clicking might serve. It is only another oddity about the caribou.

PERHAPS the deer are entitled to their anatomical absurdities for, taken all in all, they are amazingly well equipped for the life they lead. But they have been forced to sacrifice beauty to utility, and caribou are hardly the graceful, swift-limbed beasts suggested by the word *deer*. Particularly without their antlers (which are, of course, shed every year), the deer are awkward and ungainly brutes with huge, heavy heads, wedge-shaped bodies and long knobby legs terminating in immense, absurd feet. But the rangy legs are well adapted to covering the broken and rocky tundra; and those feet serve as excellent snowshoes in the soft drifts that lie in forest lands.

The fur of the deer is nothing short of a shaggy miracle. Nothing nature or man has ever invented can equal the fur of caribou as a coat for man or beast. It is incredibly warm, yet amazingly light. An Eskimo's full winter suit of caribou fur weighs about six pounds—and it is twice as warm as a white man's winter woolen garments that weigh up to thirty pounds!

This miracle is possible because each individual hair of the deer is hollow. The enclosed air space forms a perfect insulator, with the minimum of weight. But the hollow hair has another use, for it enables the deer to be phenomenally good swimmers—an essential attribute in a country like the Barrens that is nearly half water. I once followed a buck which deliberately set out to make a seven-mile swim across a lake; at the end of that endurance test in frigid waters, the beast was still floating as high as if it wore a life-preserver, and it was not even seriously winded!

Its long legs and shaggy hair make the mule-sized caribou look much bigger than it really is; so "green" hunters are sometimes sadly disappointed when they find that a deer hasn't much more meat on it than is on a good-sized sheep. Still the deer carry enough meat to support most of the other beasts—animal and human—that live in the Barrens.

To begin with, there is a horde of minute hangers-on who live within the bodies of the deer: An adult caribou may carry up to one hundred and fifty warble-fly larvae—each half as long as your thumb—encased in sacs just under the back skin. In nostrils and nasal passages a big buck may also carry up to one hundred twenty-five pencil-thick botfly larvae, each an inch in length. And these are just the beginning! Inside the body of the deer there are little nematode worms scattered thickly through all the body tissue, and jostling an equal number of small tapeworm cysts. Almost every organ in the body has a special quota of parasites. Fortunately none of these small horrors seem to thrive when eaten by a man.

Going up the scale, there are the flies. If the summer Barrens have one torment that is worse than the others, this is the plague of black flies, sandflies, mosquitoes, deer flies, bot and warble flies, that make summer life unbearable for both men and deer. There are few men in the Barrens, so the deer must act as filling-stations for the countless billions of flies—and there are records of deer being killed by flies from sheer loss of blood!

Going farther up the scale, there are the gulls and ravens—the vultures of the Arctic—and these find their main sustenance in the carcasses of dead or dying deer. Along the flanks of the great herds, the skies are often mottled black and white with gulls and ravens following the herds.

NEXT come the wolves, foxes, bears and wolverines. The gargantuan Barrenland grizzly bear—so rare that it has been seen alive by only a handful of men—owes its whole life to the deer. The lesser carnivores can subsist for a time on other foods, but they too depend mainly on caribou meat. Wolves do most of the killing for this group, but wolves kill remarkably few deer, in fact—not a tithe of the massive score so often attributed to them by hysterical huntsmen who find their game disappearing, but are loath to blame themselves for it. For the most part, the wolves kill the unfit deer, the cripples, the weaklings and the diseased—and in so doing the wolves do the deer a service.

At the top of the long list of deer-eaters—and I have mentioned only a few of them—stands man!

The primitive Barrens Eskimos are the complete deer people, for their entire way of life is indissolubly linked to the deer. These people live in the viciously unfriendly Barrens solely by use of the caribou.

In Tyrrel's time they probably numbered a thousand souls; and everything they had was a gift from



For the most part, the wolves kill the unfit deer, the cripples, the weaklings and the diseased.

tuktu, as they call the caribou. Their clothing, tents, ropes, bags, all came from the skin of *tuktu*. Their food consisted almost one hundred per cent of deer meat. Caribou fat supplied the only light they had in their winter igloos. Caribou bones gave them most of their tools and weapons. Nothing about the deer was useless to these men who made thread from the sinews, soup from the blood, and tools from the teeth of *tuktu*. This tribe of Eskimos—almost unknown to science and to the outside world—could no more live without the deer than they could live without air. And therein lay tragedy, for if the deer missed their camps of an autumn, then death was a certain visitor in the igloos before spring came.

Inside timberline, the story was the same. The Idthen Eldeli Indians—Eaters of Deer—had a culture that was as dependent on the caribou as that of the Barrens Eskimos. And to the Idthen Eldeli, *Idthen*—the deer—was literally the god they worshiped.

So the deer are, in truth, the very lifeblood of an area one-quarter the size of the Continental United States.

But this lifeblood is drying up.

After what I have said about the magnitude of the caribou throng, this may seem like a rather surprising thing to say. It is certain to be vehemently denied by those whose self-interest—or ignorance—leads them to believe the deer are indestructible.

And there are many men, some in high Government positions, who hold this view.

This is the last and most important mystery of La Foule. The deer are passing, very quickly—yet no one, certainly no one with authority to act, seems to be aware of it.

THE CORE of the mystery lies in the black uncertainty that has always surrounded the actual numbers of caribou which do, or did, exist. Such an eminent naturalist as Ernest Thompson Seton calculated that there were about thirty million caribou alive at the beginning of this century—and Seton was so interested in the mystery of the deer, that he was led to exaggerate their numbers by about twenty-five million. But whether there be thirty million, or three million, they do provide a basis for the fiction that the deer are still as numerous as they ever were.

For example, the herd of more than one hundred thousand animals which Clarke saw in 1936 has been accepted as irrefutable proof that the caribou were then as numerous as they had ever been. But the wishful thinking prompting this conclusion quite overlooked the fact that Clarke's herd probably contained every deer from an area covering nearly a quarter of the entire range open to the caribou. It was the fabulous concentration of the summer migration; he was not seeing

only a cross-section of a deer population that was evenly distributed across the entire Arctic plains.

But the fallacy goes deeper than this one example. When a trapper can still look out of his cabin window and watch ten thousand caribou cross the ice of his lake, he is not likely to believe that the deer are vanishing! I spoke to a trainman on the Hudson Bay Railway once and this man told me the train had recently been held up for six hours while a "million" deer crossed the tracks ahead! He hardly thought it likely that the deer were vanishing.

Because the deer were, and still are, so numerous that they can not be counted, there has been no valid basis of comparison to prove that they are racing toward extinction. But I think that I have found a measuring-stick independent of the deer—it is men's lives.

In 1894 there were nearly a thousand Caribou Eskimos who lived exclusively on deer, using primitive and antique weapons with which to hunt them. Today there are but thirty-seven survivors, though they use the best rifles money can buy!

In 1900 there were over two thousand members of the Idthen Eldeli Indians—the Deer Eaters—who killed their deer with muzzle-loaders or with spears. Today there are less than one hundred fifty of these, and they have .30/30 repeating rifles for hunting!

In 1918 there were several trading-posts and several dozen intrepid white trappers, all harvesting the white-fox crop along the southern reaches of the Barrens. Today there is not one white man, nor a single trading-post, in all this land.

In 1900 there were many wolves, many Eskimos, many Indians—and there were very many deer, so the lifeblood of the land was strong. In 1951 there are almost no Eskimos, the Indians are almost gone and even the wolves are shrinking in numbers. It was not plague that emptied the land of men. It was starvation, and diseases of starvation that followed when the land's lifeblood grew thin and weak!

There can be only one conclusion as to the cause of this era of starvation in a land that once gave meat to all who needed it. La Foule is passing—passing with headlong speed, and taking with it those who lived upon its bounty.

There is a direct cause for the disappearance of the deer—and it is not hard to find.

In 1949 a young white trapper, living below the Barrens, showed me his diary for the preceding year. In it he listed the killing of six hundred caribou! These animals were slaughtered to feed himself and his dogs, and to provide bait for his white-fox traps.

In 1949 a single Chipewyan Indian near Brochet killed sixty-five deer from one herd and left them lying on the ice where they had fallen, and all he took from them was their tongues! He is not the only one; nor is the white trapper I mentioned the only offender. The game warden at Brochet—a man who has spent his life among the caribou—insists that not less than fifty thousand deer are killed in his area every year! Indians, white trappers, mining-men, tractor-train men, and even sportsmen in airplanes, compete with one another to prove that the deer are immortal.

At a very conservative estimate, it is probable that something like one hundred fifty thousand of the Barrenland caribou are killed each year throughout their winter range.

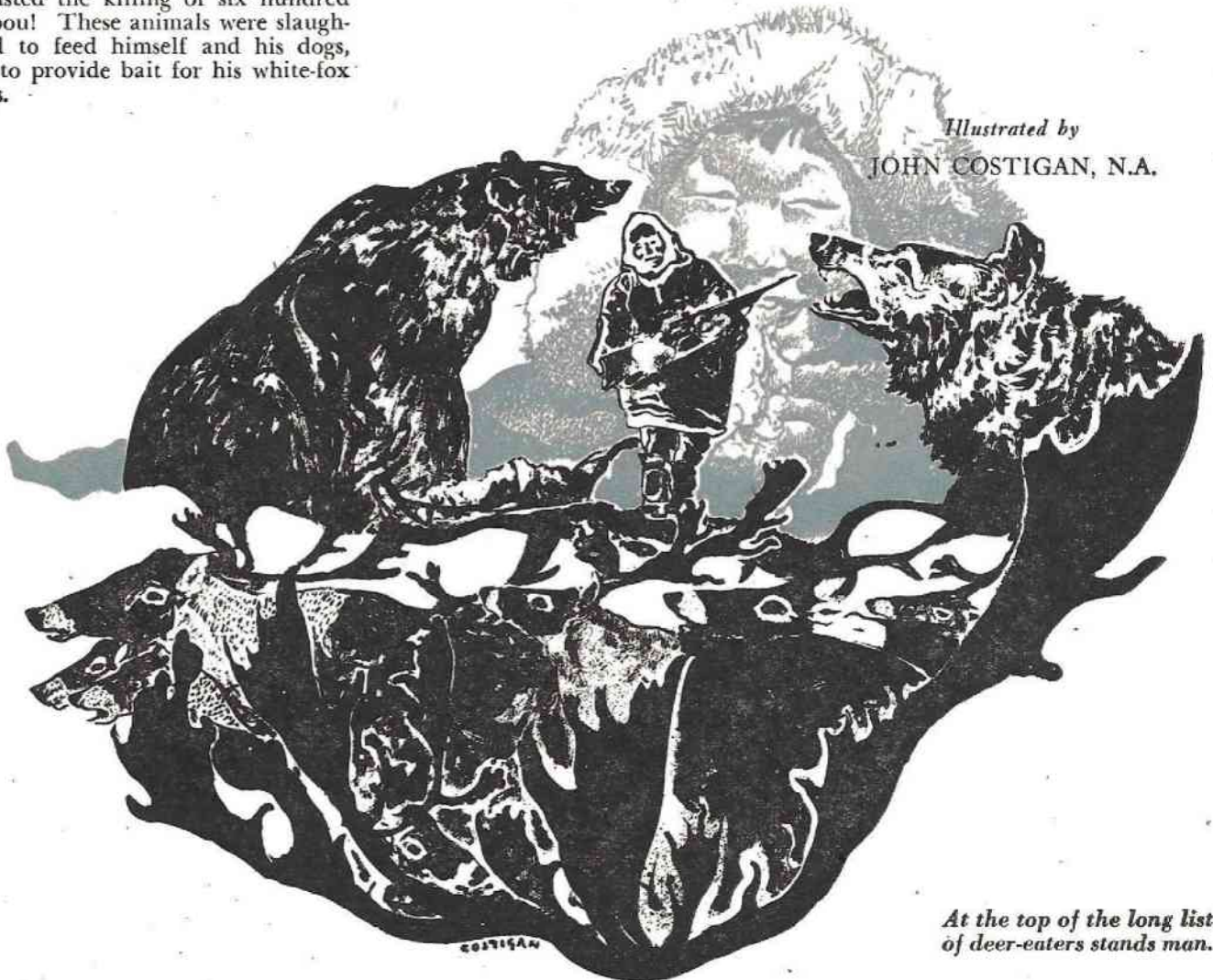
A key to the whole situation is to be found in the repeating rifle. Placed in the hands of native hunters who have been taught by bitter experience for countless generations that they must kill every deer they can, or starve, the rifle has become a scourge. We cannot blame the natives; we can blame only ourselves—our greed, our placid ignorance! We could do more than that: We could take some posi-

tive action before it is too late, by limiting the sales of ammunition even though it hurt the traders' purses. We could regulate the types of rifles, and we could forbid all white men to kill the caribou.

WE could do these things—but instead, we have found a better way: We have placed a bounty, and the blame, upon the wolf—and have conveniently forgotten that wolves lived in perfect balance with the deer for more centuries than our civilization can remember!

Probably no man will ever again see La Foule as it was in Tyrrel's day, or even as it was in 1936. More important, the time is not far off when the once happy and energetic peoples of the Barrens will be sought for in vain. The only races of mankind that could live in that bleak wilderness of moss and tundra will have vanished, leaving a human vacuum over a great section of the earth's surface. It is a vacuum which we can never fill even if we wished to do so. But willfully—or blindly—we have destroyed the peoples who once possessed it by destroying the bounty of La Foule!

Illustrated by
JOHN COSTIGAN, N.A.



At the top of the long list
of deer-eaters stands man.

THE AUTHOR OF "NORWAY RENDEZVOUS" AND "THE FLARE" GIVES US A MOVING TALE OF THE DARK AND BLOODY GROUND THAT WAS WILDERNESS KENTUCKY.

by JOHN CLAGETT

October's

THE river was clear green tinged with blue. Red and yellow leaves floated just above exact reproductions of themselves. The gold of gravel showed through shallow water. A kingfisher rattled across the river to perch on a stub of driftwood. A fly-up-the-creek came booming up from downstream. Sumach burned red along the banks. The trees on the bluff above the stream were red and yellow and purple, with the calm green of the cedars furnishing an unchanging somber contrast. A blue haze drifted over the brilliant forest. Red was the predominant color. It was October.

Barren River curved in a wide bend to the south. At the center of the bend on the outside a smaller stream emptied clear waters into it. The point between the two rivers rose high and steep into a bluff with sides of weathered sandstone. Colored leaves stood out against its yellow and gray. Cedars perched in precarious clefts in the rocks. Every flat space in the woods, every ledge on the bluff was covered deep with crisp leaves that rustled loudly to even the passage of a squirrel.

AT the top of the bluff overlooking the stage of river and forest like a balcony seat was a large sandstone rock. A big chestnut tree, leaves of clear yellow, stood just at its side. Two men reclined at ease on the rock, cracking and eating velvety chestnuts they had picked from bristling burrs among the rustling leaves. One was a large, broad-shouldered man, yellow-bearded, blond and green-eyed. His companion was a smallish man past middle age, with thin gray hair and a gray stubble on his brown face.

"Jabe Cox," said the smaller man suddenly, "ef ye don't stop that moon-in' around like a homesick calf and sing me a song or two, I'm a-goin' to start off to the Big Hole whar I kin hev some comp'ny. I've traveled a fur piece to hear a human voice, and I ain't aimin' to wait much longer."

"Ah hear'd ye, Whisky Jim Travers. An' when a old goat like you gits to talking about calves and sich, it's high time to do somethin' about it. Your frazzled old gray sculp ain't a-goin' to add much to my collection, but I

reckon I mought as well go ahead and collect it." He drew the knife from his belt and commenced whetting it on the sandstone.

Whisky chuckled, and crunched the firm sweet meat of a chestnut between tobacco-stained teeth. "Thar's many a man has had the same ambition, Jabe. The most on 'em died right sudden." Jabe made a sudden swift movement over his left shoulder, and the knife flew like a silver bolt, to quiver inches deep in the body of the chestnut tree. Whisky chuckled again. "Purty good shot, son. Come in handy some day if one of the red varmints is creepin' up on ye." Jabe arose with a grin, retrieved the knife and picked up a handful of chestnuts.

"This hyar's Injun kentry, Jim. Man sings out in the woods around hyar's likely to hev his song stopped right sudden."

"Mebbe so, but not when old Traveler hyar's around." He indicated a black-and-tan hound stretched out on the rock. "This dawg kin smell one o' the varmints a half-mile away." The dog rolled his amber eyes up at the old hunter, wagged his tail faintly, and resumed his study of the forest.

Jabe was silent for a minute, then without warning broke into song.

"Chicken's a-crowin' on Sourwood mountain

*Ho dee ing dong doodle allay day.
So many purty gals that I can't count 'em.
He dee ing dong doodle allay day."*

He had a pleasant clear-pitched voice. Whisky Jim's face lit up, and he patted a moccasined foot in time to the lilting tune. The hound rolled a disgusted eye.

*"My true love is a sunburnt daisy
Ho dee ing dong doodle allay day.
She won't work and I'm too lazy.
He dee ing dong doodle allay day."*

"Wagh! That's a song with truth to it!" announced Travers. "Ye always were a lazy varmint, Jabe."

"Maybe so. Never could see no sense to a feller working hisself like a mule day in and day out jest to git enough to eat. I've always had a plenty, and plenty of fun besides."

"You're right, dead right! Looky hyar now. Hyar's all the chestnuts a man kin eat, good as bread any day.

Thar's a hickory tree jest under the rock loaded with good ripe hickory nuts. Effen ye don't like hickory nuts, thar's a dozen black walnut trees within chunkin' distance. Thar's ripe persimmons on that bush yander, and plenty soft yaller pawpaws under the bluff. Feller kin git him a deer effen he wants to look fer it, an' thar ye are! Farmin'? Bah. Pack o' fools. No wonder the Injuns thinks whites is tetches. Most on 'em air."

The air was pleasantly crisp. Jabe stretched in the pool of warm sunlight like a tawny cat. "Shore suits me all right. Howsomever, it ain't so peaceful as it was. Lively times a-comin'. I kin smell 'em. Too many redskin tracks around. I don't never make a fire in daytime no more. Good thing winter's most hyar. Snow'll keep 'em quiet. But next summer, you mark my words! Things air goin' to be bad!"

"Shore air, Jabe. I've seen it a-comin' too. Reckon' when it's over, the Injuns is gonna be all druv out. Be kinda sorry, somehow. Always kinda liked Injuns. Leastways, when I wasn't fightin' 'em. Like 'em better 'n some o' them tarnation fools in the settlements, anyhow. Remember back last spring in Harrod's-town, that schoolteacher critter was a-talkin' to Lije Willets. Told him it was a sin fer anyone not to be able to read er write. Old Lije stiffed up right away. 'Perfesser,' he says, 'we-uns thet cain't read er write hev a heap o' time to think. That's the reason we know more than you-all.' Shore tickled me." They laughed softly together at the memory.

JABEZ leaped suddenly to his feet, rigidity evident in his new pose. "Speakin' o' Injuns, just looky thar! Right up the river!"

Whisky got to his feet.

"Shore enough, Jabe. Sharp eyes, boy. Ain't much smoke, but thar's somebody campin' thar. Any whites around?"

"Nope. None thet I knows of. Must be Injuns. I know jest whar they air. Little medder comes close to the river under a bluff. Thar's a fine spring, right down by the water. Good campin' spot."

"Thar'll be six or eight good boys at the Big Hole, Jabe. We made a

Red in Kentucky

rendezvous back in Harrod's-town. Effen thar's enough o' the varmints, maybe we oughter go git the boys. They got some good whisky, and would downright welcome a lively scrap jest before winter."

"Mebbe, Whisky. Tonight you and me'll jes take a little look and see what they're up to." He spoke harshly. His companion's repeated mention of Harrod's-town brought a sudden pang. He hadn't been back since the time last summer when Harri-man's Mary Anne had promised to marry him, and he'd run out like a scared buck before the next daylight. Still didn't know whether he'd been a tarnation fool or not. She was a fine gal, but he knew he couldn't do without the woods. Anyway, it was too late now. When he took his furs out to Boone's-borough, they'd told him there that Mary Anne was married. Good man, too. North Carolina man named John MacFergus, they'd said. One o' them red-haired Scotch fellers that hung a big basket-hilted sword over the fireplace along with his rifle. Must be a good man, or Mary Anne wouldn't had him. Well, it was all over now. He gave an internal sigh, and his face once more took on the bleak look that had so disturbed his companion. He turned and said: "Come on, Whisky. Let's us go git some vittles. Need 'em before mornin'."

Night on the river. Murmur of the water seemed louder now without the blanketing noises of daytime: chuckle over stones; mysterious splashings. There were occasional cracklings of twigs from the banks where animals moved. Fish jumped. There was no moon, but on the river the blackness was made transparent by the myriad of stars overhead. Jabe and Whisky stopped paddling at intervals to listen. The rhythmic dipping of the water from the paddle blades sounded loud in the stillness.

"Birchbark canoe, Jabe?" asked Jim in a low, conversational voice that had none of the sibilants of whispering.

"Nope. Ain't enough birch in these woods to make a teepee big enough fer a squirrel to chaw nuts in. Ellum."

"Ever been to the Big Hole, Jabe?"

"Yep."

"Spooky place, ain't it?"

"Shore is. I've been back in it a ways, but not far fer me. Feller git lost thar, he'd never see sun again. I took me a fish-line in and in one o' the pools back in the black, I ketched a fish. Queer critter. Plumb blind!

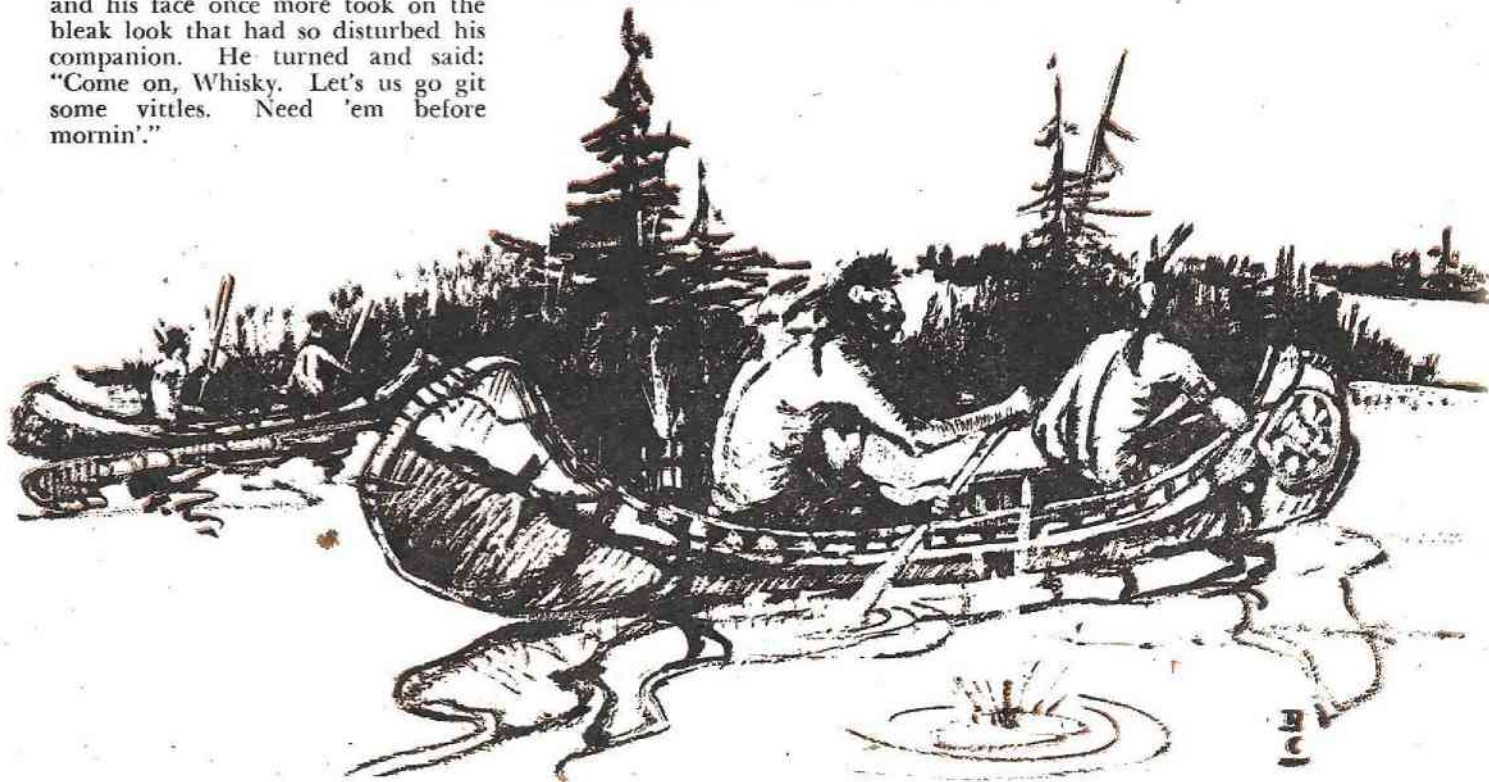
No place fer eyes a-tall. Give me the creeps."

"Ye don't say," breathed Jim. "Shore'll have to see thet. Air they lots of fish around here?"

"Plenty. I got me a clear little fork back up that river that runs up by the bluff where we was today. She's got the biggest old small-mouth trout* you ever see. Feller gits one o' them on the end of a cane pole, he's really got somethin' to do. We better hesh this gabbin'. Gittin' close."

Silence except for the gurgle of the paddle eddies and the soft drip of water from the blades. The canoe was edging closer to the bank. The black shadow of the trees was impenetrable to the eye. Jim flinched as a loop of grapevine brushed his neck. They stepped from the canoe onto soft clay cut-bank. They lifted the boat quietly from the water. Up on the bluff above them a small fire was lighting the intricate under-pattern of leaves on a big beech tree.

*Even today, on the clear streams where Jabe Cox roamed and fished, the Kentucky people call the small- and large-mouth black bass "trout."



Illustrated by
BENTON CLARK



Jabez leaped to his feet. "Speakin' o' Injuns, looky thar! Right up the river!"

Quietly, step by step, they moved. Each walked on his toes. If a thinny covered toe felt something brittle beneath it, the foot went down somewhere else. After each step they stopped to listen and look. An owl hooted suddenly from the bluff. They froze. There was a thin squeal from the meadow that showed where a fox had caught a rabbit. Down by the river-bank a big frog started a methodical chunking. Stars glinted in the round pool of the spring as they moved past it. On the last stretch up the bluff they went down flat and crawled over the stones like snakes. A fringe of cane grew on top of the bank. Side by side they parted the canes and looked through.

The small fire was dying. The first glance nearly missed the dark blanketed forms lying here and there. One warrior sat still by the coals, unmoving as a statue, while a small curl of smoke went up from his pipe. Jabez started suddenly, and his breath made an audible hiss. It seemed loud as

thunder to the instantly enraged Whisky Jim, but his indignation swerved as he saw what had caused the noise. One of the figures lay close to a small sycamore sapling. The firelight showed a strand of buckskin thongs running from the feet of the figure to around the tree. And there was no mistaking the curve of the body and the long hair. There was a white woman captive in the camp!

Jabez touched Jim's shoulder, and they wriggled backward away from the fire. Fifteen feet back they stopped. Jabez felt rather than heard the blistering profanity that Whisky was murmuring soundlessly. Jabez didn't curse, but his green eyes seemed almost to give a feral glow in the darkness. "I made out ten. How many you say?"

"Ye missed two back by the big beech. Twelve o' the varmints. What to do?"

"Wal, if we was as good as some fellers brags they is, we'd go back thar and whip the twelve o' them.

As is, I don't know. Looks purty heavy odds."

"Gotter do somethin'. Couldn't look myself in the face again ef we didn't."

"We'll do somethin'. We'll git her out. But we can't carry her all the way to the Big Hole. We'll climb back up thar. That sentry ain't fixin' to go to sleep. I'll crack down on him; you take the one nearest the gal. Then we'll whoop like hell and go in with our knives 'n' tomahawks. Jest git the ones that gits in the way. Don't bother with the others. I'll grab the gal, we'll git back into the canoe and paddle like hell to my shack. We kin hold 'em off there fer a while, and after the first flurry, you kin take out my back door and git them fellers from the Hole. Sound right to you?"

"Yep. Only thing to do. I'll have them jaybirds back by tomorrow night. Kin you hold 'em that long?"

"Hell, yes. You ain't seen my shack yet. Let's get busy. Better cock our pieces hyar whar thet varmint cain't hear us."

BACK they wriggled silently, hands over hammers to prevent the hair-trigger weapons from going off. The owl had ceased hooting; the frog stopped his hollow chunking. Even the hum of insects seemed to stop and the water to move more quietly. The world held its breath. Jabez put his elbow down on a thorn without knowing it. The ground felt cold. Whisky's shoulder was touching his. They were at the canes. Jabez slid his rifle barrel through, close against the ground. The brave by the fire seemed to sense something in the air. He stood up suddenly and lithely, a rifle in his hand. As he turned toward Jabez, the hunter dropped the ivory of his front sight into the notch, lined up on the Shawnee's head, said—"Now!" and squeezed the trigger.

A ringing crack, with Whisky's shot close after. The feather in the Indian's hair jerked, he whirled and fell with a crash across the fire. Jabez leaped toward the captive, rifle in his left hand, tomahawk in his right. A dark figure sprang from the earth before him. He heard his and Jim's roars mingling with the whoops of the Indians. He swung the tomahawk, and the Indian crumpled to the ground. He severed the thong around the tree with a blow, swept the blanketed figure into his arms, sprang across the clearing through the whirl of figures and the flash of a shot, and leaped over the edge of the bank. He landed, half lost his footing, regained it and ran for the canoe. Jim reached there just before him, picked up the light canoe, heaved it into the water and leaped in. Jabez dropped his burden amidships and pushed the

vessel from the shore. Three shots blazed up from the bank; the flames momentarily lighted up leaves and branches. Jabe whipped out his pistol and fired at the last flash. The woods were full of war-whoops and shots. The two hunters bent furiously to the paddles, and the light canoe drove swiftly upstream, keeping well within the shadows.

"THEY'VE got two canoes: they'll be after us," said a tear-filled, half-hysterical voice from between the two. Jabe nearly dropped his paddle—his voice wouldn't work at first. And then: "Mary Anne!" in a gasp.

"Jabe! Jabe Cox! Oh!"—and the sound of sobs.

"Listen, you half-witted, cockeyed son of a cross-eyed slew-footed ornery mud turtle! Pick up that gol-darned paddle and *paddle*. Do yer gol-darned courtin' later, if ever. Them varmints are after us! Git goin'!" rasped the voice of Whisky Jim.

Jabe resumed paddling with all his might, but his brain was whirling so that he hardly noticed the sound of shots from a bare two hundred paces down the river.

He pulled suddenly back to reality. "Across hyar, Jim. Head fer the big sycamore on the other side!" The little boat heeled beneath Jim's powerful stroke and headed for the mark. As it shot from the shadow into the translucence of the open river, a chorus of howls sounded from behind them, and gun flashes split the darkness. A bullet screamed over Jabe's head; another splashed just ahead of the canoe. Driven by the powerful strokes, the canoe surged half its length out on the gravel bank, and they leaped out. Jabe picked up Mary Anne and ran swiftly up the steep path. Jim stopped, poured powder roughly in his rifle muzzle, thumbed a pinch into the pan, spat a wet bullet from his mouth into the barrel, whammed the stock against the ground to settle the bullet, raised his rifle and fired at the leading canoe. There was a "*thwuck!*" of the bullet hitting something solid, a shot, a whoop, and the two canoes turned right-angled to their course into the nearest shadows of the bank.

"Thought it'd slow the varmints down a little," exulted Jim to himself as he ran up the dark trail. It ended beneath an overhanging bluff. "Now, whar in the hell is that jack-rabbit?" He heard footsteps padding swiftly up the trail. "Jabe! Whar in tunket be ye?"

"In hyar quick, ye old goat." Jabe leaped to his side, took his arm, hurried into a broad cleft in solid rock and pushed him through a doorway. It was pitch dark inside. "Take thet window thar!" gritted Jabe as he

barred the heavy door and turned to a loophole. Jim located the lighter dark of the window, and moved swiftly to it, reloading as he moved. He put his rifle muzzle just even with the small square hole and peered out.

The walls of the cleft in the rock were a light gray. Starlight reflected from them, and showed the ninety feet of space between the cabin and the dark wall of the forest to be empty. Jim chuckled.

"Purty cute, Jabe. Purty cute. They shore can't git at you from but one side hyar!" He was pleased and excited now. The firm log walls and surrounding bastions of rock felt as warm as velvet around him, with the memory of the dark woods and padding footsteps sharp in his mind.

"Watch sharp, Whisky," said Jabe. "I'm a-goin' to untie Mary Anne, hyar. Keep yore eyes peeled!" He moved to the dark bundle on the floor, drawing his knife as he did so. He heard her long, shuddering breath as he touched her. Suddenly clumsy, he cut the thongs. "Air you all right, Mary? Did them varmints hurt ye?"

"I'm all right, Jake. They didn't hurt me much. They hit and kicked me when I tried to hold back, and I'm tired to death and starved, but I'm all right. Are they going to get us, Jabe? Oh, don't let them get me, please don't!"

"Ain't nobody gonna hurt you now, Mary Anne. We kin hold 'em off hyar. Just you lie thar. I'll git ye some dried meat and corn and some water. Hyar, take a drink of this likker. Thet'll make ye feel better."

"Make *me* feel better, too, Jabe Cox, ye slab-sided varmint! Mind your manners and pass me thet jug. Howdy, Mary Anne. Pleased to meet with ye again."

"Look out!" came Jabe's voice, sharp and hard. "Seen somethin' move." He was back at the other small window now, rifle cocked and ready, pistol loaded and in his belt. Jabe had brought old Traveler up to his hut before they left on the expedition, and now the hound whined softly, then growled.

"Hear thet?" said Whisky proudly. "He smells 'em. They're creepin' in."

"He's a good dawg. Right glad to hev him with us. Sharp now!"

Jim cleared his throat as if he wanted to speak. He hesitated. "Jabe, hate to say this. I mought be mistook. Did you notice one o' them war-whoops back at the fire was wearin' a beard when he jumped up? White man! I'd 'a' shot the bastard, but my piece wuz empty."

Jabe snarled out a ringing curse. The green flame danced in his eyes. "Air ye sure, Jim?"

"Jim's right, Jabe," said Mary Anne. "It's Jake Lodge, that bully you

whipped back in Harrod's-town last summer. They grabbed me right out of our cabin in the middle of the morning within sight of the fort. John was away in the fields, and Jake Lodge seemed to be bossing the Indians around. I think he brought them after me."

There was silence in the cabin for a moment, but a silence so fraught with rage and icy hatred that the bristling dog felt it, and whined once more.

"Wal," drawled Whisky deliberately, "I knows one white Injun thet's gonna wish he warn't alive if we ever ketches him!"

"And we're gonna ketch him," added Jabe in the same drawl. Silence fell once more, while outside the cabin only the green lanterns of the lightning-bugs moved, and only the whispering of the night wind could be heard.

With hardly a preliminary rustle, the dark line of bushes in front of the cleft in the rock erupted dark figures. The uncertain light made instant recognition of intent impossible, and both hunters were foiled by the maneuver. Both rifles flashed, but the balls passed over the heads of the braves who had merely fallen straight forward from behind the screen of bush. There was a blinding answering volley, a chorus of gobbling war-whoops and a line of Indians burst from the bushes and into the cleft, confident that they faced empty guns. Jabe cursed with rage and humiliation, but dropped the leading brave with a shot from his pistol and drew his tomahawk. Mary seized Whisky's rifle and started to reload it, trying to shut her ears to the war-whoops.

"Gol-darned jackasses!" snarled Jim. "Always did hate a tomahawk! Hurry, gal!" Blows crashed against the door. A dark figure loomed before Whisky's window, a rifle barrel was thrust through. Jim shoved the barrel aside just as it belched flame, and swung his hatchet against the head of the warrior who crumpled against the sill and sagged from sight.

A hurled tomahawk caught Jim on the side of the head; he went down like a ninepin. A fog of smoke was in the cabin. Mary screamed. Jabe leaned from his window, swung his arm in a side sweep; the knife turned once in the air and buried itself under the arm of the Shawnee wielding an axe against the door.

A DARK shadow filled the window left unguarded by Whisky's fall. Mary swung Jim's heavy rifle to her shoulder, pointed it to the window and pulled the trigger. The flash was blinding, the roar loud in the little room, and when the smoke blew

aside, the window was empty again. Feet padded away from the door, Jabe's frantically reloaded pistol roared once more; then silence fell.

"Damned varmints is smart," growled Jabe. "Fooled me good. Wal, guess that's the end of Whisky Jim. Too bad!" There came a rapid and prolonged glugging from Jim's side of the cabin, and Jabe chuckled. "Nope, guess it ain't. I hears the jug talkin'."

"Jim," sobbed Mary Anne. "Jim! Are you hurt bad?"

"Nothin' 'cept a headache, gal, and this hyar jug'll cure that moughty quick. Jabe Cox, ye ox, ye! How many times hev I got to tell ye to never shoot when the varmints want ye to? Wonder to me ye've kept your hair this long!"

Jabe chuckled as he peered cautiously from his window. A dark figure still leaned against the long wall beneath Whisky's window; another lay against the door, and a third was huddled near the mouth of the cleft where Jabe's pistol shot downed him.

A rifle cracked from the woods and bark and wood splinters splashed Jabe's cheek as he dodged. He spat wood fragments from his mouth, and cursed. "Got three on them, Whisky. Three cold, and I reckon at least one more's hurt. That's six for shore."

"Good," grunted Whisky Jim. "Reckin' thet finishes the party fer a while. Daylight'll be hyar before long, and I reckon they'll try to starve us out, or smoke us out, one. 'Bout time fer me to git started. And speakin' o' thet, how in the tunket d'ye expect me to git out o' hyar? Bore through the rock?"

"Jest about, Whisky. I got me a back door. This crack in the rock runs back into the bluff for nigh two hundred yards. I'll let ye out back hyar, and you foller your nose till ye come out in a bunch o' cedars. The varmints ain't likely to be coverin' that far back. Hain't enough of 'em. Git goin' now. I know ye're an old man, but even an old man oughter be able to kiver twenty-five mile and back by tonight."

Whisky breathed hard. "Old man, eh? Why, ye lump, if thar warn't so many other varmints to fight around these parts, I'd take your years off for thet! Let me out o' hyar before I lose my temper!"

JABE unbarred a small door in the back of the cabin and Whisky slipped through, swearing at the thick darkness before him. "Don't ye worry, Mary. Even this hyar lummoxx oughter be able to hold 'em off in daylight, 'specially with you a-holpin' 'im. I'll be back with the boys right soon, an' we'll have you home in no time. Keep a-shinin'." And the old hunter

moved off into the cleft with Mary's tremulous "Good luck!" ringing in his ears. He took Traveler with him. The dog would be of little use to the two in the cabin, but to Jim crawling his way through a velvet-dark cave and hurrying afterward through miles of forest, the hound's keen nose might make the difference between success and failure. . . .

Alone now in the little cabin with death around them, Mary and Jabe were silent. Jabe felt a restraint and awkwardness whenever he thought of his headlong flight from this girl only a few short months before. True, this shame was somewhat lessened by the events of the night, but much remained. He prowled from loophole to window and back again, watching the clear space in front of the cabin for any suggestion of movement or life.

For her part, Mary was too weary, ill and frightened to think much of personalities. Painted faces seemed to leer at her from the darkness. She had loved Jabe. He left her, gave her up for the woods, and Mary Anne had found love again with lean, red-haired John. It still seemed somehow right that now in her time of fear and danger Jabe was with her. These were his woods, this life of shots and shouts, of trees and canoes and green rivers, this was his life.

Jabe turned to her. "Mary Anne, I'm a-goin' to get you home all right. We're snug as a bug hyar. Jim'll have the boys here by tonight, an' then we-un's'll take ye home. Back to your man. Reckon I'm a tarnation fool, or I'd be your man and takin' keer o' ye all the time, not jest when you git into trouble."

"You couldn't help leavin' me, Jabe. Pa said you had to do it. Said he liked you lots, but that you were right. He says you were born for the woods. And it's all right. There have to be men like you in the settlements. Look where I'd be right now if it weren't for you!"

Jabez peered again from the loophole. He hesitated. "Air ye happy, Mary Anne?" He ignored the present circumstances in his question, just as she did in her answer.

"Yes, Jabez, I'm happy. John's a good man, better than I deserve." She hesitated. "We're going to have a baby in the spring."

"Then I reckon it's all finished between us, Mary."

"Yes, Jabez. It's finished. I do want you to be our friend, though. Always."

"Ye don't need to worry about that, Mary. I'll be your friend, and John's friend too. I'll be proud to." There was silence. The darkness outside began to lessen, but the interior was still pitch dark. An owl hooted in

the distance. Through the tangle of leaves and branches Jabe saw a shooting star. As its trail faded, the other stars seemed to fade too. It was the dawn.

"Is there anything I can do, Jabe?" asked Mary Anne quietly.

"Yep. Take my pistol and stand at that loophole. Ef ye see anything a-tall, blaze away. They ain't likely to try anything right now, but we want to make 'em think thar's still two of us in hyar beside you. We done frosted this hyar bunch right heavy, and I think they'll be purty keerful."

THE rapidly growing light showed the interior of the cabin to be small and crude. The floor was of hard-packed sand. A mud-and-stone fireplace was in one corner. Halves of logs with four pegs for legs made seats before a hand-hewn plank table. A knife was imbedded by the point in the table's surface. A tallow-dipped candle was stuck into an empty bottle. Gourds hung from the walls. There was no loft. Some strings of smoked venison hung from the roof. It was all crude, but it was clean.

"Purty nice, eh, Mary?" asked Jabe proudly. "Not so fancy, but it's comfortable. See my spring over thar in that corner? Got my own runnin' water. Plenty to eat, plenty to drink and plenty o' water to pour down the walls when the varmints starts to shootin' burnin' arrers." With commendable foresight Jabe had built his cabin around a small spring. He had sunk a section of hollow sycamore log into it, making a clear, ever-running well.

It was broad daylight now; sharp eyes were in the brush, and now Jabe avoided the window. There were two narrow loopholes. He guarded one, Mary stood by the other. The light showed her face pale and weary, with the blue of a large bruise on her forehead. Jabe gritted his teeth when he saw it, and watched the section of woods with staring intensity.

A clump of sumach grew at one side of the mouth of the cleft. It's smoldering red stood brightly out against the dark gray stone. In the sumach Jabe sensed a movement, saw a flash of white. He was whipping his rifle to his shoulder for a snap shot when Mary's pistol cracked. There was a spurt of earth directly in front of the bushes, a white spot appeared on the rock and the ball whined with the high-pitched *peeng* of a ricochet through the sumach. The sound of the tearing of leaves was drowned in a pair of musket-shots. One thudded into the door, the other sang through the window and shattered Jabe's bottle candle-holder.

"Good eye, Mary!" cackled Jabez in delight. "Bet that made that varmint jump. Guess Jim was right when he said I could hold 'em off easy with you to help me!"

A powder smudge added its color now to the bruise on Mary Anne's face as she hurriedly reloaded the pistol. Sunlight shone golden on the tree-tops visible through the cleft. There was no movement from the screen of brush, but high up in the sunlight a column of blue smoke made layers of haze.

"Look, Jabez! They've made a fire! What are they going to do now?"

"Wal, Mary, I reckon first they're fixin' to cook them some breakfast. Injuns likes to eat, same as anybody else. Then the varmints'll wrap some dry moss around a few arrowheads, light 'em in the fire, an' plunk 'em into our front wall. Unfriendly critters, ain't they?"

Mary Anne's voice showed consternation, and shook with fear. "Fire, Jabe? Oh! They'll burn us out! What can we do? Oh, Jabe, you said you wouldn't let them get me!" Even as she spoke, there came a "twang" like a broken fiddle string, sharp in the distance, something whistled through the air and thunked into the log wall.

"Now, don't ye worry, Mary," said Jabe easily. "They don't know yit that our fire-puttin'-out department has a permanent water supply. Most on 'em'll go out, anyway. Them that don't we'll put out. Wup! Thar goes another. Watch sharp now, and don't ye shoot unless I tell ye to. I'm gonna take a crack at the war-whoop doin' the bow-pullin', and we don't want to empty everything like me and old Whisky done last night." His rifle muzzle was already in the loophole. Now he leaned up alongside it and peered through. There were sharp lines drawn from his big nose down to the corners of his thin-lipped mouth. In spite of his light talk to the girl, his green eyes were hard and his jaw was set.

ARROW after arrow was whistling through the air and thudding into the cabin wall. A definite smell of smoke began to seep through the interior. "Think I got him spotted, Mary. He's makin' the mistake o' stayin' put in one spot. Seen a bush move the same way with the last two arrers. Easy now, varmint. Give us another one. Plop. Thank'ee. Accommodatin' o' ye. Wagh! Thet spot o' red ain't no leaf. . . . Take it then, ye varmint!"

With the last words the rifle flowed to Jabe's shoulder and cracked, high and sharp and clear. A high-pitched cry echoed through the red woods. There was a roll of war-whoops, a



"Yes, Jabez, I'm happy. John's a good man."

half-dozen shots, and then silence. Jabe had his rifle reloaded almost before the last echo of the death-cry had died away. After the silence a thrush began to sing. A squirrel chattered from the top of the bluff. Jabe's face was dark. Mary Anne looked sick.

"Thet's one more gone, Mary. Now to put out them arrers. Watch sharp now." Jabe whirled from his loophole, and filled a large gourd at the spring. He lifted one of the rough stools to the front wall and mounted it. "BUILT the eave down over the top o' the wall on purpose, Mary, an' left a six-inch gap between the top log an' the roof. I kin look over an' spot the burnin' places, then pour water down the wall. Figgered I'd hev to stand off some Injuns sooner or later, but I never figgered to hev you with me. Hyar's one. Thar! Hand me another gourd o' water, quick." Rapidly and coolly he covered the entire front wall, pouring a half dozen cascades of water down its rough logs. "Thar! Thet does it. Shore am glad I put a clay roof on this hyar place." He picked up his rifle and resumed his place at the loophole with satisfaction.

Mary said in a surprised voice: "Jabe, I'm starved. Can we have something to eat?"

"Why, shore, Mary Anne. Ye go ahead an' make a fire. We kin hev some dried deer meat and some hot

coffee. Thet oughter show the varmints that they ain't got us worried." Shortly thereafter the smell of coffee and roasting meat filled the cabin.

OFF in the woods, miles away now, Whisky Jim was covering the ground at a dogtrot. Traveler ran before him. Every hour Jim stopped in utter relaxation for five minutes. His dark tanned leathery face turned red, and perspiration covered it, but the hours and the miles showed little other effect. Step after step, mile after mile, hour after hour.

In the cabin the hours passed slowly, streaked with the dull red of strain and tension, but lightened also by the clear white of comradeship and affection. There were no more arrows from the woods, no sound or sight of human life. Squirrels chattered from the beeches, and a bluejay answered mockingly from the bluff top. The air lost the chill of the night and became comfortably warm. A breeze swayed the smaller branches of the trees, and red leaves whirled sadly down. . . .

Running Fox lay still behind a clump of elderberry, black eyes fixed unwaveringly on the cabin window. His musket lay beside him. A vast, illimitable, endless patience filled him. There was no rage and little hate in his soul. There was, however, cold, stone-hard and deadly intention.

He intended to have the white men's scalps at his belt, and the white woman back to take in triumph to his village beyond the Ohio.

Jake Lodge crouched behind a large rock, using intermittently a bush-protected notch in its top as a loophole. His bearded jaws moved regularly on a chew of tobacco. He chewed and swallowed without tasting. The whisky that had directed his actions during the last few days was dead within him, and he felt a cold lump in his middle growing larger and colder as he thought of the irrevocable results of his act; he had renounced his race; he was from this time on fair game for any man's knife or rifle. His only hope lay in the death of those in the cabin. He rubbed the smooth stock of his rifle and cursed at the lack of target. Even the Indians had a shadowy look of contempt in their opaque eyes when they looked in his direction, and Jake writhed inwardly beneath it. Why the devil hadn't he stuck to the blonde wench in Tench's deadfall? Never did have no sense when he mixed women and whisky. Oughter know better. Here's another of the red buzzards coming up. Something up! No change of look or manner, but Jake could sense the excitement. He was close enough to the pair to see the cedar needles clinging to the oiled scalp-lock of the newcomer.

Running Fox felt a mixture of dismay and satisfaction. A hole in the ground in a clump of cedars. One set of man-tracks going away from it. New tracks. One of his intended trophies was lost. Gone for help. He looked at the sun, where it glistened from the breeze-made ripples on the surface of the placidly flowing river. Late afternoon. He didn't want to wait until dark: he wanted a scalp and his prisoner, and to be on his way. But he didn't want to be killed getting them—nor to lose any more warriors. Already seven lodges would be blackened, and the night loud with the wails of the mourning squaws. He'd wait until night.

BUT in the cabin Jabe was uneasy. Too derved quiet. Something up. They weren't likely at all to try to rush them in the daylight. Try to pot him at a loophole if they could, but most o' the varmints weren't good shots, and they were shootin' muskets anyhow. Had to watch out fer Lodge, though. That consarned renegade! Had a rifle, and could use it. Jabe turned to stare uneasily at the door in the back covering the escape cave. Not thick enough, really. Could be knocked off'n its buckskin-thong hinges if anybody brought a piece of log with 'em and swung it right. Maybe they'd oughter'd took

Mary Annie and took off fer the Big Hole. . . . Nope. He knew that was wrong. The Injuns would've rushed the cabin quick, or burned it, would've found out it was empty and been on the trail like a bunch of wolves. One look at Mary's white face and drooping shoulders told him she couldn't have traveled. In the open they'd ha' been cold meat by this time. Only thing to do was to hang on.

Jabe would have been even more uneasy could he have known that an additional half dozen Shawnees, attracted by the sound of rifles, had joined their besiegers, and that at that moment Running Fox and one of his braves were soundlessly exploring the narrow cave leading to that small barred door behind him. They advanced so far that the chief felt with one hand the door barring the narrow passage, tried it gently and found it firm. He retreated and re-joined his warriors by the river to plan the campaign.

THE sun was low. Nearly horizontal rays cast long shadows in the woods. Even Jabe felt his patience wearing thin, and noticed with interest that when he held his scarred and toughened hands out palm down, the long fingers quivered a bit at the ends. "Gittin' nervous" he mused. "Been in plenty o' tight spots before, but I reckon hit's different this time, with Mary Anne hyar. Feller gits used to the idea o' losin' his own scalp some day, but hit's different when yer gal's thar too."

As for Mary, she was near to collapse. Days and nights of terror and strain had left her nerves raw and shaking. She felt confidence in Jabe and Jim, but suppose the men weren't where they were supposed to be! Even though Jabez hadn't mentioned it, she knew the possibility was haunting him also. The long hunters moved from place to place as unpredictably as a pack of foxes. She felt she couldn't stand much more. For the thousandth time she focused tired eyes on the screen of bushes and trees across the mouth of the cleft. The sun was now long gone and a chill had crept into the air.

"Gitin' chilly, ain't it, Mary?" said Jabe casually. "Reckon hit's a-goin' to be an early winter. Hope it don't turn real cold before we fetch you home."

"Home, Jabe? Do you really think we'll get home?"

"Yes, Mary Anne. We'll get home. The boys must be nearly hyar by this time. I'm gittin' hungry again too. How about some more o' that meat?" He really had no appetite at all, but he felt the need to reassure Mary. His ruse worked. The simple accustomed act of cooking stopped the

quivering of her lips, and when the food was cooked, it felt warm and comforting within them both. By the time the snatched meal was finished, darkness had come within the woods. Whippoorwills called. A night hawk boomed hollowly in his search for insects. An owl hooted from back in the woods above the bluff. Another answered from in front of the cabin. Jabe snarled.

"Mary, them owls hev red skins, and any feathers they hev are stuck into their scalp locks. Git thet pistol ready, but don't shoot until I tell ye to. If we beat 'em off this time, we're safe. Buck up now!"

A streak of flame described a graceful curve from the woods, and a blazing arrow thudded into the cabin front. Another and another followed. Jabe whirled from his window and hurriedly piled the crude table and chairs against the back door. Mary paled at the sight. It was dark in the cabin, but she knew what Jabe was doing, and why. She had guessed the meaning of the owl hoot from the woods. Now muskets began piercing the night with flowers of orange fire. The number of the shots made Jabe curse in despair. Arrows and bullets rained against the front wall of the cabin. The smell of smoke grew strong. Bullets whined at intervals through the two windows. A chorus of gobbling war-whoops rose and fell in the woods like the croaking of a pond full of frogs.

Jabe and Mary held their fire, but Mary was sobbing, and without knowing anything of it, Jabe had bitten his lower lip half through, so hard was his jaw clamped. Rifle to shoulder, he stood at the loophole, snarling like a wolf. There came a thundering crash at the log door covering the escape hole that Jim had used. More whoops sounded. Jabe leaped in agony toward the splintering back door, and as he did so, the whoops from the river rose to a crescendo! Mary screamed. The pistol cracked. Jabe sprang back to the window, swung his rifle to his shoulder, covered the foremost dark figure and with fierce satisfaction saw it plunge to earth through the white glare of the powder flame. He slammed the shutter, and heard with pride another shot from Mary's pistol. That was a real gal fer ye! Stiff a-fightin', by thunder!

ALREADY the other window was shuttered; Mary was firing through the narrow loophole. Even as Jabe turned away, a shower of blows sounded against the front door and against the window. He reloaded by feel in the darkness, and sprawled on hands and knees before the sagging back door. It was giving slow-

ly, already inches ajar. He thrust the rifle muzzle through the crack and fired. There was a shout of pain and surprise. Jabe leaped to his feet and shrilled a high fierce yell. "Come on, ye red-skinned varmints!" he howled. "Come on! Thar's two Kentucky wildcats waitin' fer ye, and thar'll be screechin' on the Ohio River after ye've lifted our ha'r!" He dropped his rifle, and stood waiting, tomahawk and knife in hand. Wood splintered in the front of the cabin; a musket roared through the window, filling the cabin with powder smoke.

SUDDENLY there came a single piercing volley of high clear rifle shots, and a chorus of shouts and cheers! The whoops of triumph changed to cries of surprise and dismay. The blows on the doors ceased; footsteps padded swiftly away from the cabin, and Jabe was shouting his leathery lungs out, and Mary was screaming with joy, as they heard old Traveler baying from the cliff-top. Whisky Jim was back! The Shawnees melted swiftly through the dark woods; the three warriors in the cave, warned by the tumult, dragged their wounded tribesman through the darkness, and escaped into the thick cedars, and in a matter of minutes a half-dozen pairs of capable hands were helping Jabe extinguish the blazing front of the cabin.

"From now on," shouted Jabe, hoarse from shouting, "ye hain't Whisky Jim no longer, ye old buzzard! I'm a-goin' to call ye Mud Turkle Jim. What in hell took ye so damned long?" The boisterous hunters raised a shout of delight at this, and the jug went quickly around to celebrate the new name. Whisky's reply was unprintable, but in the tone could be distinguished the accent of pride in the nerve of his friend. Mary could hardly believe she was safe at last; she kissed Jim a dozen times, and wept incoherently. This embarrassed Jim far more than being dubbed "Mud Turkle" had done.

When the tumult had died down, Jabe spoke quietly. "Thank ye, boys. We-uns air mighty beholden to ye. We got a plenty o' meat and corn, so let's have some vittles, and talk over what to do next."

They made an occasion of it. They lit candles, and built a roaring fire. They roasted deer meat and made corn pone. They opened a jug one of the men had brought with him even in the haste of the rescue. It was decided that the next day they would pick up their belongings at the Big Hole and return in a body to Harrod's-town. This raid on the settlement looked ominous. In the words of Whisky Jim: "The ball's done opened boys. We-uns have



Gobbling war-whoops rose and fell; wood splintered in the log door.

gotta git home an' choose partners." This decided, they relaxed before the warm fire, and to take Mary Anne's mind off her happily ended days of nightmare, a song was started. It was a spirited marching chorus, well known to them all. Even Mary joined in on the refrain:

*Firm now stood our little force—none
wished it to be greater;
For every man was half a horse, and half
an alligator.*

*Oh, Kaintucky, you hunters of Kaintucky;
Oh, Kaintucky, you hunters of Kaintucky!*

Jabez pushed aside his battered and hacked front door and walked slowly down to the river. The moon was just coming up. Stars twinkled brightly. The whippoorwills could be heard even above the roaring chorus from the cabin. A man stepped to his side. It was Whisky Jim, with Traveler slouching at his heels. Jabe turned, and silently the two clasped hands. Jabe felt the wind cold on his face.

"Wind's changed, Jabe," said Jim. "Comin' smack out of the North. Cold weather comin'. Ye kin smell the frost."

"North wind," said Jabe. "Yep, Jim, she's a north wind, all right. Thar's a north wind a-comin' over all these settlements. Them redcoats and them redskins from north of the Ohio air a-comin' down. She's a-goin' to be almighty hot before she's finished, but she's a north wind, anyhow."

"We-uns kin stand it," replied Whisky.

"We-uns always hev, old hoss. Let's git back to the boys." As the two of them walked up the dim path the words of the song became strong again, strong, rough and loud:

*And now if danger ever annoys, remem-
ber what our trade is;
Jest send for us Kaintucky boys, and we'll
protect ye ladies.*

*Oh, Kaintucky, ye hunters of Kaintucky;
Oh, Kaintucky, ye hunters of Kaintucky!*

THE SPACE RAID WARNINGS SOUND, AND THE PEOPLES OF THE EMBATTLED PLANETS MAKE READY FOR COSMIC COMBAT—WHILE OUR YOUNG HERO FINDS HIMSELF WASHING DISHES IN A CHINESE RESTAURANT ON VENUS!

PLANETS

by ROBERT
A. HEINLEIN

A SUDDEN message had come to Don Harvey at his ranch school in New Mexico, bidding him fly at once to rejoin his parents, who were doing important archeological work on Mars. . . .

His father had been born on Earth; his mother was a second-generation Venus colonial. But neither planet was truly their home; they had met and married on Luna, and had pursued their researches in planetology in many sectors of the solar system. Don himself had been born out in space; and his birth certificate, issued by the Federation, had left the question of his nationality open. And he had been eleven years old before he had ever rested his eyes on the lovely hills of Earth.

Don Harvey's journey would take him first to New Chicago (built on the ruins of the older city); and the message asked him to call there on an old family friend, Dr. Jefferson. A robot taxicab took him to Dr. Jefferson's underground mansion; but while there, the Security Police arrested them. Harvey was allowed to go free, but he learned later that Dr. Jefferson had died—of a "heart attack." A mysteriously important plastic ring, however, which Dr. Jefferson had entrusted to Harvey for his parents on Mars, was in his pocket when he took space-ship for Circum-Terra.

Circum-Terra was a great mass in the sky built for a dozen different purposes—most importantly it was a freight and passenger transfer station in space, the place where short-range winged rockets from Earth met the space liners that plied between the planets.

But a terrific announcement came over the air-waves when Don Harvey reached Circum-Terra:

"This is Commodore Higgins, commanding Task Force Emancipation of the High Guard, Venus Republic. The High Guard has seized Earth's satellite station Circum-Terra. We now have all of Earth's cities utterly in our power. . . .

"Mercifully, we stay our hand. Earth's cities will not be bombed.



The soldier said: "Joe, keep an eye out for the lieutenant." Then, to Char-

The free citizens of Venus Republic have no wish to slaughter their cousins still on Terra. Our only purpose is to establish our own independence, and remove the threat of this military base in the sky."

Circum-Terra was to be destroyed at once by atom bomb. The travelers there could return by space ship to Earth, or go on by another to Venus. The space ship by which Don had intended to journey to Mars had been commandeered, and no communication was possible. Rather than go back to Earth, Don took ship in company with a Venerian dragon with whom he had struck up a friendship, for distant Venus. But when at long last he arrived, he found his Federation money valueless. And presently he found himself earning his board and lodging by washing dishes at Chinese Charley's restaurant.

NEXT morning Don had plenty of time to think as he coped with an unending stack of dirty dishes. The ring was on his mind. He was not wearing it; not only did he wish to avoid plunging it repeatedly into hot water but also was now reluctant to display it.

Could it be possible that the thief was after the ring rather than his money? It seemed impossible—a half-credit piece of souvenir counter junk! Or perhaps five credits, he corrected himself, here on Venus.

But he was beginning to wonder; too many people had taken an interest in it. He reviewed in his mind how he had come by it. On the face of it, Dr. Jefferson had risked death—had died—to make sure that the ring went to Mars. But that was preposterous and because it was Don had

in COMBAT



ley: "You scramble up a dozen eggs. We got to burn this place right away."

concluded by what seemed to be strict logic that it must have been the paper in which the ring was wrapped that must reach his parents on Mars. That conclusion had been confirmed when the I.B.I. had searched him and confiscated the wrapping paper.

Suppose he did assume the wild possibility that it was the ring itself that was important? Even so, how could anyone here on Venus be looking for that ring? He had just landed; he had not even known that he was coming to Venus.

But he had one quality in a high degree; he was stubborn. He swore a mighty oath into the dishwater that he and the ring, together, would travel to Mars and that he would deliver it to his father as Dr. Jefferson had asked him to.

Business slacked off a little in the middle of the afternoon; Don got

caught up. He dried his hands and said to Charley, "I want to go up town for a while."

"What's a matter? You lazy?"

"No. I work mornings and evenings—so I take a little time off in the afternoon. You've got enough clean dishes to last you for hours."

Charley shrugged and turned his back. Don left.

He picked his way through the mud and the crowd up the street to the I. T. & T. Building. Isobel Costello was back at the desk and did not seem too busy, although she was chatting with a soldier. Don went to the far end of the desk and waited.

PRESENTLY she brushed off the enterprising soldier and came to him. "Well, if it isn't my problem child! How are you making out, son? Get your money changed?"

"No, the bank wouldn't take it. I guess you had better give me back my gram."

"No hurry; Mars is still in conjunction. Maybe you'll strike it rich."

Don laughed ruefully. "Not likely!" He told her what he was doing and where.

She nodded. "You could do worse. Old Charley is all right. But that's a rough part of town, Don. Be careful, especially after dark."

"I will be. Isobel, would you do me a favor?"

"If it's not impossible, illegal, or scandalous—yes."

Don fished the ring out of his pocket. "Would you take care of this for me? Keep it safe until I want it back?"

She took it, held it up to look at it. "Careful!" Don urged. "Keep it out of sight."

"Huh?"

"I don't want anyone to know you have it. Get it out of sight."

"Well—" She turned away; when she turned back the ring was gone. "What's the mystery, Don?"

"I wish I knew."

"Huh?"

"I can't tell you any more than that. I just want to keep that ring safe. Somebody is trying to get it away from me."

"But— Does it belong to you?"

"Yes. That's all I can tell you."

She searched his face. "All right, Don. I'll take care of it."

"Thanks."

"No trouble—I hope. Look—stop in again soon. I want you to meet the manager."

"Okay, I will."

She turned away to take care of a customer. Don waited around until a phone booth was free, then reported his address to the security office at the spaceport. That done, he returned to his dishes.

AROUND midnight, hundreds of dishes later, Charley turned away the last customer and locked the front door. Together he and Don ate a meal there had been no time for earlier, one with chopsticks, one with fork. Don found himself almost too tired to eat.

"Charley," he asked, "how did you run this place with no help?"

"Had two helpers. Both joined up. Boys don't want to work these days; they think only of playing soldier."

"So I'm filling two jobs, eh? Better hire another boy, or I might join up too."

"Work is good for you."

"Maybe. You certainly take your own advice; I've never seen anybody work as hard as you do."

Charley leaned back and rolled a cigarette of the shaggy native "crazy weed." "While I work, I think about how some day I go home. A little garden with a wall around it. A little bird to sing to me." He waved his hand through choking smoke at the dreary walls of the restaurant. "While I cook, I don't see this. I see my little garden."

"Oh."

"I save money to go home." He puffed furiously. "I go home—or my bones will."

Don understood him; he had heard of "bone money" in his childhood. All the immigrant Chinese planned to go home; too often it was only a package of bones that made the trip. The younger Venus-born Chinese laughed at the idea; to them, Venus was home and China only an old tale.

He decided to tell Charley his own troubles and did so, omitting any mention of the ring and all connected with it. "So you see, I'm just as anxious to get to Mars as you are to go home to China."

"Mars is a long way off."

"Yes—but I've got to get there."

Charley finished his cigarette and stood up. "You stick with Charley. Work hard, and I cut you in on the profits. Some day this war nonsense will be over—then we both go." He turned to go. "G'night."

"Good night." This time Don checked personally to see that no move-overs had managed to sneak in, then retired to his cubbyhole. He was asleep almost at once, to dream of climbing endless mountain ranges of dishes, with Mars somewhere beyond.

DON was lucky to have a cubbyhole in a cheap restaurant as a place to sleep; the city was bursting at its seams. Even before the political crisis which had turned it into the capital of a new nation, New London had been a busy place, marketplace for a million square miles of back country, and principal spaceport of the planet. The *de facto* embargo on interplanetary shipping resulting from the outbreak of war with the mother planet might eventually starve the fat off the city; but as yet, the only effect had been to spill into the town grounded spacemen who prowled the streets and sampled what diversions the town offered.

The spacemen were hardly noticed; much more numerous were the politicians. On Governor's Island, separated from Main Island by a stagnant creek, the Estates General of the new republic was in session; nearby, in what had been the gubernatorial mansion, the Executive General, his Chief of State, and the departmental ministers bickered with each other over office space and clerical help.

Already a budding bureaucracy was spilling over onto Main Island, South Island, East Spit and Tombstone Island, vying with each other for buildings and sending rents sky high. In the wake of the statesmen and elected officials—and much more numerous—were the small fry and hangers-on of government, clerks who worked, and special assistants who did not, world-savers, men with Messages, lobbyists for and lobbyists against, men who claimed to speak for the native dragons but had never got around to learning whistle speech, and dragons who were quite capable of speaking on their own behalf—and did.

Nevertheless, Governor's Island did not sink under the load.

NORTH of the city on Buchanan Island another city was burgeoning—training camps for the Middle Guard and the Ground Forces. It was protested bitterly in the Estates that presence of training grounds at the national capital was an invitation to national suicide, for one H-bomb could wipe out both the government and most of the armed forces on Venus—nevertheless, nothing had been done about it. It was argued that the men had to have some place for recreation; if the training grounds were moved out into the trackless bush, the men would desert and go back to their farms and mines.

Many had deserted. In the meantime New London swarmed with soldiery. The Two Worlds Dining-room was jammed from morning until night. Old Charley left the range only to tend the cash register; Don's hands were raw from hot water and detergent. Between times he stoked the water-boiler back of the shack, using oily *chika* logs hauled in by a dragon known as "Daisy" (but male despite the chosen name). Electric water-heating would have been cheaper—electric power was an almost-costless by-product of the atomic pile west of the city—but the equipment to use electric power was very expensive, and almost unobtainable.

New London was full of such frontier contrasts. Its muddy unpaved streets were lighted, here and there, by atomic power. Rocket-powered sky shuttles connected it with other settlements, but inside its own boundaries transportation was limited to shank's ponies and to the gondolas that served in lieu of taxis and tubes—some of these were powered; more moved by human muscle.

New London was ugly, uncomfortable and unfinished, but it was stimulating. Don liked the gusty, brawling drive of the place, liked it much better than the hothouse lushness of New Chicago. It was as alive as a basketful of puppies, as vital as a punch in

the jaw. There was a feeling in the air of new things about to happen, new hopes, new problems—

After a week in the restaurant, Don felt almost as if he had been there all his life. Furthermore, he was not unhappy at it. Oh, to be sure, the work was hard, and he still was determined to get to Mars—eventually; but in the meantime he slept well, ate well, and had his hands busy. . . . And there were always the customers to talk and argue with—spacemen, guardsmen, small-time politicians who could not afford the better restaurants. The place was a political debating club, city news desk and rumor-mill; the gossip swapped over Charley's food was often tomorrow's headline in the *New London Times*. . . .

Don kept up the precedent of a midafternoon break, even when he had no business to transact. If Isobel was not too busy, he would take her across the street for a coke; she was, as yet, his only friend outside the restaurant. On one such occasion she said: "No—come on inside. I want you to meet the manager."

"Eh?"

"About your 'gram."

"Oh, yes—I'd been meaning to, Isobel, but there's no point in it yet. I haven't got the money. I'm going to wait another week and hit Old Charley for a loan. He can't replace me very easily; I think he'll come across to keep me in durance vile."

"That's no good—you ought to get a better job as soon as you can. Come on."

She opened the gate in the counter desk and led him into an office in the rear, where she introduced him to a worried-looking middle-aged man. "This is Don Harvey, the young man I was telling you about."

THE older man shook hands. "Oh, yes—something about a message to Mars, I think my daughter said."

Don turned to Isobel. "Daughter? You didn't tell me the manager was your father."

"You didn't ask me."

"But— Never mind. Glad to know you, sir."

"And you. Now, about that message—"

"I don't know why Isobel brought me in here. I can't pay for it. All I have is Federation money."

Mr. Costello examined his nails and looked troubled. "Mr. Harvey, under the rules I am supposed to require cash payment for interplanetary traffic. I'd like to accept your Federation notes. But I can't; it's against the law." He stared at the ceiling. "Of course, there is a black market in Federation money—"

Don grinned ruefully. "So I found out. But fifteen, or even twenty per

cent, is too low a rate. I still couldn't pay for my 'gram."

"Twenty per cent! The going rate is sixty per cent."

"It is? I guess I must have looked like a sucker."

"Never mind. I was not going to suggest that you go to the black market. In the first place—Mr. Harvey, I am in the odd position of representing a Federation corporation which has not been expropriated, but I am loyal to the Republic. If you walked out of here and returned shortly with money of the Republic instead of Federation notes, I would simply call the police."

"Oh, Daddy, you wouldn't!"

"Quiet, Isobel. In the second place, it's not good for a young man to have such dealings." He paused. "But perhaps we can work something out. Your father would pay for this message, would he not?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"But I can't send it collect. Very well; write a draft on your father for the amount; I'll accept it as payment."

Instead of answering at once, Don thought about it. It seemed to be the same thing as sending a message collect—which he was willing to do; but running up debts in his father's name and without his knowledge stuck in his craw. "See here, Mr. Costello, you couldn't cash such a draft any time soon in any case: why don't I just give you an I.O.U. and pay it back as quickly as possible? Isn't that better?"

"Yes, and no. Your personal note is simply a case of letting you have interplanetary service on credit—which is what the rules forbid. On the other hand, a draft on your father is commercial paper, equivalent to cash, even if I can't cash it right away. A space-lawyer's difference, granted—but it's the difference between what I can do and can't do with the corporation's affairs."

"Thanks," Don said slowly, "but I think I'll wait awhile. I may be able to borrow the money elsewhere."

Mr. Costello looked from Don to Isobel, shrugged helplessly. "Oh, give me your I.O.U.," he said snappishly. "Make it out to me, not to the company. You can pay me when you can." He looked again at his daughter, who was smiling approval.

Don made out the note. When Isobel and he were out of earshot of her father, Don said: "That was a mighty generous thing for your father to do."

"Pooh!" she answered. "It just goes to show how far a doting father will go not to crimp his daughter's chances."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

She grinned at him. "Nothing—nothing at all! Grandmother Isobel



Charlie had his cleaver, the one used for business and social purposes.

was pulling your leg. Don't take me seriously."

He grinned back. "Then where should I take you? Across to the Dutchman's for a coke?"

"You've talked me into it."

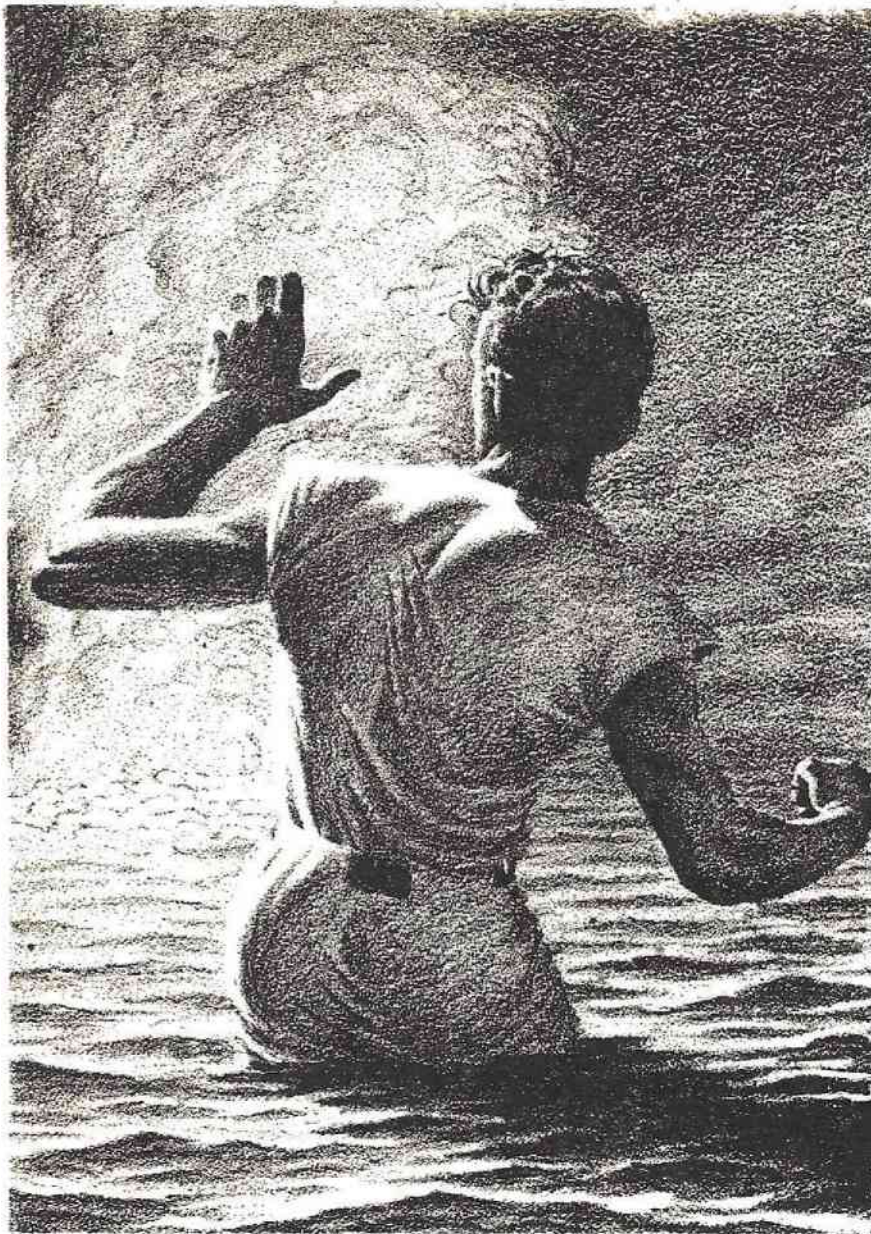
When Don got back to the restaurant, he found, in addition to the inevitable stack of dishes, a heated discussion about the draft bill pending in the Estates General. He pricked up his ears; if conscription came, he was sure fodder for it, and he wanted to beat them to it by enlisting in the High Guard. McMasters' advice about the "only way to get to Mars" stuck in his mind.

Most of the opinions seemed to favor a draft; nor could Don argue against it; it seemed reasonable to

him, even though he would be caught in it. One quiet little man heard the others out, then cleared his throat. "There will be no draft," he announced.

The last speaker, a co-pilot still wearing the triple globes on his collar, answered: "Huh? What do you know about it, Shorty?"

"Quite a bit. Let me introduce myself—Senator Ollendorf of CuiCui Province. In the first place, we don't need a draft; the nature of our dispute with the Federation is not such as to employ a large army. Secondly, our people are not of the temperament to put up with it. By the drastic process of selective immigration, we have here on Venus a nation of hardy individualists, almost anarchists, who



Ten feet away a cloud of steam lifted. He tried to dodge.

don't take kindly to forced service. Thirdly, the taxpayers will not support a mass army; we have more volunteers now than we can find money to pay for. Lastly, my colleagues and I are going to vote it down about three to one."

"Shorty," complained the co-pilot, "why did you bother with the first three reasons?"

"Just practicing the speech I mean to make tomorrow," apologized the Senator. "Now, sir, since you are so strong for the draft, pray tell me why you haven't joined the High Guard? You are obviously qualified."

"Well, I'll tell you, just as you told me: First or firstly, I'm not a colonial, so it's not my war. Secondly, this is my first vacation since the time they grounded the Comet-class ships. And thirdly, I joined up yesterday, and I'm drinking up my bounty money before reporting in. Does that satisfy you?"

"Completely, sir! May I buy you a drink?"

"Old Charley doesn't serve anything but coffee—you ought to know that. Here, have a mug and tell us what's cooking over on Governor's Island."

Don kept his ears open and his mouth (usually) shut. Among other things he learned why the "war" was producing no military action—other than the destruction of Circum-Terra. It was not alone that a distance varying from about thirty million to more than one hundred fifty million miles was, to say the least, awkwardly inconvenient for military communications; more important was the fear of retaliation, which seemed to have produced a stalemate.

A sergeant technician of the Middle Guard outlined it to anyone who would listen: "Now they want to keep everybody up half the night with space-raid alerts: Malarkey! Terra

won't attack—the big boys that run the Federation know better. The war's over."

"Why do you figure they won't attack?" Don asked. "Seems to me we're sitting ducks here."

"Sure we are. One bomb, and they blow this mudhole out of the swamp. Same for Buchanan. Same for Cui-Cui Town. What good does that do them?"

"I don't know, but I don't relish being A-bombed."

"You won't be! Use your head. They knock out a few shopkeepers and a lot of politicians—and they don't touch the back country. Venus Republic is as strong as ever—because those three spots are the only targets fit to bomb on this whole fogbound world. Then what happens?"

"It's your story; you tell me."

"A dose of reprisal, that's what—with all those bombs Commodore Higgins snagged out of Circum-Terra. We've got some of their fastest ships, and we'd have the juiciest targets in history to shoot at. Everything from Detroit to Bolivar—steel mills, power plants, factories. They won't risk pulling our nose when they know we're all set to kick them in the belly. Let's be logical!" The sergeant set down his cup and looked around triumphantly.

A quiet man at the end of the counter had been listening. Now he said softly: "Yes—but how do you know that the strong men in the Federation will use logic?"

The sergeant looked surprised. "Huh? Oh, come off it! The war's over, I tell you. We ought to go home. I've got forty acres of the best rice paddies on the planet; somebody's got to get the crop in. Instead, I'm sitting around here playing space-raid drill. The Government ought to do something."

Chapter Ten

"WHILE I WAS MUSING, THE FIRE BURNED." *Psalm XXXIX: 3*

THE government did do something: the draft act was passed next day. Don heard about it at noon; as soon as the lunch hour rush was over, he dried his hands and went uptown to the recruiting station. There was a queue in front of it; he joined it.

Over an hour later he found himself facing a harried-looking warrant officer seated at a table. He shoved a form at Don. "Print your name. Sign at the bottom and thumb it. Then hold up your right hand."

"Just a minute," Don answered. "I want to enlist in the High Guard. This form reads for the Ground Forces."

The officer swore mildly. "Everybody wants the High Guard. Listen, son, the quota for the High Guard was filled at nine o'clock this morning—now I'm not even accepting them for the waiting list."

"But I don't want the Ground Forces. I'm—I'm a spaceman."

The man swore again, not so mildly. "You don't look it. You last-minute patriots make me sick—trying to join the sky boys so you won't have to soldier in the mud. Go on home; when we want you, we'll send for you—and it won't be for the High Guard."

"But—"

"Get out, I said."

Don got. When he reached the restaurant, old Charley looked at the clock, then at him. "You soldier boy now?"

"They wouldn't have me."

"Good thing. Get me up some cups."

He had time to think about it while bending over suds. Although not inclined to grieve over spilled milk, Don could see now that Sergeant Mc-Masters' advice had been shrewd; he had missed what was probably his only chance (slim as it might have been) to get to Mars. It seemed a vacuum-tight certainty that he would spend the war (months? years?) as a duck-foot in the Ground Forces, getting no nearer to Mars than opposition distance—say sixty, seventy million miles. Hardly shouting distance!

He thought about the possibility of claiming exemption on the basis of Terran citizenship—but discarded it at once. He had already claimed the right to come here as a citizen of Venus; blowing hot and cold from the same mouth did not suit him. His sympathies lay with Venus anyhow, no matter what the lawyers eventually decided about his nationality.

More than that, even if he could stomach making such a claim, he could not see himself behind wire in an enemy alien camp. There was such a camp, he knew, over on East Spit. Sit out the war there and let Isobel bring him packages on Sunday afternoons?

Don't kid yourself, Don my boy—Isobel is fiercely patriotic; she'd drop you like a mud louse.

"What can't be cured must be endured"—Confucius or somebody. He was in it, and that was that—he didn't feel too upset about it; the Federation didn't have any business throwing its weight around on Venus anyhow. Whose planet was it?

He was most anxious to get in touch with his parents, and to let them know he had Dr. Jefferson's ring, even if he couldn't deliver it right away. He would have to get up to the I. T. & T. office and check—there might be some communication today.

Charley ought to have a phone in this dump.

He remembered that he had one possible resource that he had not exploited—Sir Isaac. He had sincerely intended to get in touch with his dragon friend as soon as he landed, but it had not proved to be easy. Sir Isaac had not landed at New London; nor had he been able to find out from the local office where he had landed. Probably at CuiCui Town or at Buchanan—or possibly, since Sir Isaac was a V.I.P., the Middle Guard might have accommodated him with a special landing. He might be anywhere on a planet with more land surface than Earth.

Of course, such an important personage could be traced down—but the first step would be to consult the Office of Aborigine Affairs over on Governor's Island. That meant a two-hour trip, what with a gondola ride both ways and the red tape he was sure to run into. He told himself that he just hadn't had time.

BUT now he must take time. Sir Isaac might be able to get him assigned, or transferred, to the High Guard, quotas or no. The Government was extremely anxious to keep the dragons happy and friendly to the new regime. Mankind remained on Venus at the sufferance of the dragons; the politicians knew that.

He felt a little bit sheepish about resorting to political influence—but there were times when nothing else would work.

"Charley!"

"Huh?"

"Go easy on the spoons; I've got to go uptown again."

Charley grunted grumpily; Don hung up his apron and left. Isobel was not on the desk at I. T. & T.; Don sent in his name *via* the clerk on duty and got into see her father. Mr. Costello looked up as he came in and said: "I'm glad you came in, Mr. Harvey. I wanted to see you."

"My message got through?"

"No, I wanted to give you back your note."

"Huh? What's the matter?"

"I haven't been able to send your message, and I don't know when I shall be able to send it. If it turns out later that it can be sent, I'll accept your note—or cash, if you have it."

Don had an unpleasant feeling that he was being given a polite brush-off. "Just a moment, sir. I understood that today was the earliest that communication could be expected. Won't conditions be better tomorrow—and still better the next day?"

"Yes, theoretically. But conditions were satisfactory today. There is no communication with Mars."

"But tomorrow?"

"I haven't made myself clear. We tried to signal Mars; we got no answer. So we used the radar check. The bounce came back right on schedule—two thousand, two hundred and thirty-eight seconds, no chance of a ghost blip. So we know that the channel was satisfactory and that our signal was getting through. But Schiaparelli Station fails to answer—no communication."

"Out of order, maybe?"

"Most unlikely. It's a dual station. They depend on it for astrogation, you know. No, I'm afraid the answer is obvious."

"Yes?"

"The Federation forces have taken the station over for their own uses. We won't be able to communicate with Mars until they let us."

Don left the manager's office looking as glum as he felt. He ran into Isobel just coming into the building. "Don!"

"Oh—hi, Grandma."

She was excited, and failed to notice his mood. "Don—I'm just back from Governor's Island. You know what? They're going to form a women's corps!"

"They are?"

"The bill is in committee now. I can't wait—I'll be in it, of course."

"You will be? Yes, I guess you would be." He thought about it and added: "I tried to join up this morning."

She threw her arms around his neck, much to the interest of customers in the lobby. "Don!" She untangled herself, to his blushing relief, and added: "Nobody really expected that of you, Don. After all, it's not your fight; your home is on Mars."

"Well, I don't know. Mars isn't exactly my home, either. But they didn't take me—they told me to wait for my draft call."

"Well—anyway, I'm proud of you."

He went on back to the restaurant, feeling ashamed that he had not had the courage to tell her why he had tried to enlist and why he had been turned down. By the time he reached Charley's place, he had about decided to go again to the recruiting office the next day and let them swear him in as a duckfoot. He told himself that the severance of communication with Mars had cut off his last connection with his old life; he might as well accept this new life with both arms. It was better to volunteer than to be dragged.

ON second thought he decided to go over to Governor's Island first and send some sort of message to Sir Isaac—no use staying in the Ground Forces if his friend could wangle a transfer to the High Guard. It was a dead cinch now that the High Guard would

eventually send an expedition to Mars; he might as well be in it. He'd get to Mars yet!

On third thought he decided that it might be well to wait a day or two to hear from Sir Isaac; it would certainly be easier to get assigned to the Guard in the first place than to get a transfer later. Yes, that was the sensible thing to do. Unfortunately it did not make him feel pleased with himself.

That night the Federation attacked.

THE attack should not have happened, of course. The rice-farmer sergeant had been perfectly right; the Federation could not afford to risk its own great cities to punish the villagers of Venus. He was right—from his viewpoint.

A rice farmer has one logic; men who live by and for power have another and entirely different logic. Their lives are built on tenuous assumptions, fragile as reputation; they cannot afford to ignore a challenge to their power—the Federation could not afford *not* to punish the insolent colonists.

The *Valkyrie*, orbiting Venus in free fall, flashed into radioactive gas without warning. The *Adonis*, in the same orbit a thousand miles astern, saw the explosion and reported it to PHQ at New London; then she too became an expanding ball of fire.

Don was awakened from work-drugged sleep by the ululation of sirens. He sat up in the dark, shook his head to clear it, and realized with leaping excitement what the sound was and what it meant. Then he told himself not to be silly; there had been talk lately of holding a night alert; that's what it was—practice.

But he got up and fumbled for the light switch, only to find that the power seemed to be off. He felt around for his clothes, got his right leg in his left trouser leg, tripped. Despite this he was practically dressed by the time a small flickering light came toward him. It was Charley, carrying a candle in one hand, and in the other his favorite cleaver, the one used both for business and social purposes.

The cyclic moan of the sirens continued. "What is it, Charley?" asked Don. "Do you suppose we've actually been attacked?"

"More likely some dumbhead leaned against the switch."

"Could be. Tell you what—I'm going uptown and find out what's happening."

"Better you stay home."

"I won't be gone long."

In leaving, Don had to push his way through a crowd of move-overs, all bleating with fright and trying to crowd inside to be close to their friend

Charley. He got through and groped his way to the street, closely escorted by two move-overs who seemed to want to climb into his pockets.

The nights of Venus make the darkest night on Earth feel like twilight. The power seemed to be off all over town; until Don had turned into Buchanan Street, he could not have counted his own fingers without feeling them. Along Buchanan Street there was an occasional flicker of a lighter, and a window or two with dim lights inside. Far up the street someone held a hand torch; Don set his sights on that.

The streets were crowded. He kept bumping into persons in the dark and hearing snatches of speech: "—completely destroyed." "It's a routine drill. I'm a space warden; I *know*." "Why turn off the lights? Their detectors can pick up the power pile in any case." "Hey—get off my feet!" Somewhere along the way he lost his escort; no doubt the gregarians found someone warmer to snuggle up to.

He stopped where the crowd was thickest, around the office of the *New London Times*. There were emergency lights inside by which it was possible to read the bulletins being pasted up in the window. At the top was:

FLASH BULLETIN (UNOFFICIAL): CRUISER VALKYRIE REPORTED BY CRUISER ADONIS TO HAVE EXPLODED TONITE. CAUSE NOT REPORTED. LOCAL AUTHORITIES DISCOUNT ATTACK POSSIBILITY. FAVOR INTERNAL EXPLOSION THEORY, ACCIDENT OR POSSIBLE SABOTAGE. FURTHER REPORT EXPECTED COMMANDING OFFICER ADONIS.

BERMUDA (INTERCEPTED) DISORDERS IN WEST AFRICA TERMED "MINOR INCIDENT" STIRRED UP BY RELIGIOUS AGITATORS. LOCAL POLICE ASSISTED BY FEDERATION PATROL HAVE SITUATION WELL IN HAND (IT IS CLAIMED).

BERMUDA (INTERCEPTED) A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS STATES THAT AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE VENUS INCIDENT IS EXPECTED. REPRESENTATIVES OF INSURGENT COLONISTS SAID TO BE CONFERRING WITH FEDERATION PLENIPOTENTIARIES SOMEWHERE ON LUNA IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF GOOD WILL AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. (NOTE: THIS REPORT HAS BEEN UNOFFICIALLY DENIED FROM GOVERNOR'S ISLAND.)

NEW LONDON (PHQ-OFFICIAL) CHIEF OF STAFF CONFIRMED DAMAGE TO VALKYRIE BUT STATES EXTENT GREATLY EXAGGERATED. LIST OF CASUALTIES WITHHELD PENDING NOTIFICATION OF NEXT OF KIN. FULL REPORT FROM COMMANDING OFFICER ADONIS EXPECTED MOMENTARILY.

FLASH BULLETIN (UNOFFICIAL) CUCUIT-UNIDENTIFIED SHIPS REPORTED RADAR-TRACKED TO LANDINGS NORTH AND NORTHWEST OF SETTLEMENT.

LOCAL GARRISON ALERTED. PHQ REFUSES COMMENT. NO THIRTY, MORE COMING.

Don crowded up, managed to read the bulletins and listened to the talk. A faceless voice said: "They wouldn't *land*—that's as obsolete as a bayonet charge. If they actually have blitzed our ships—which I doubt—they would simply hang in orbit and radio an ultimatum."

"But suppose they did?" someone objected.

"They won't. That bulletin—nerve warfare, that's all. There are traitors among us."

"That's no news."

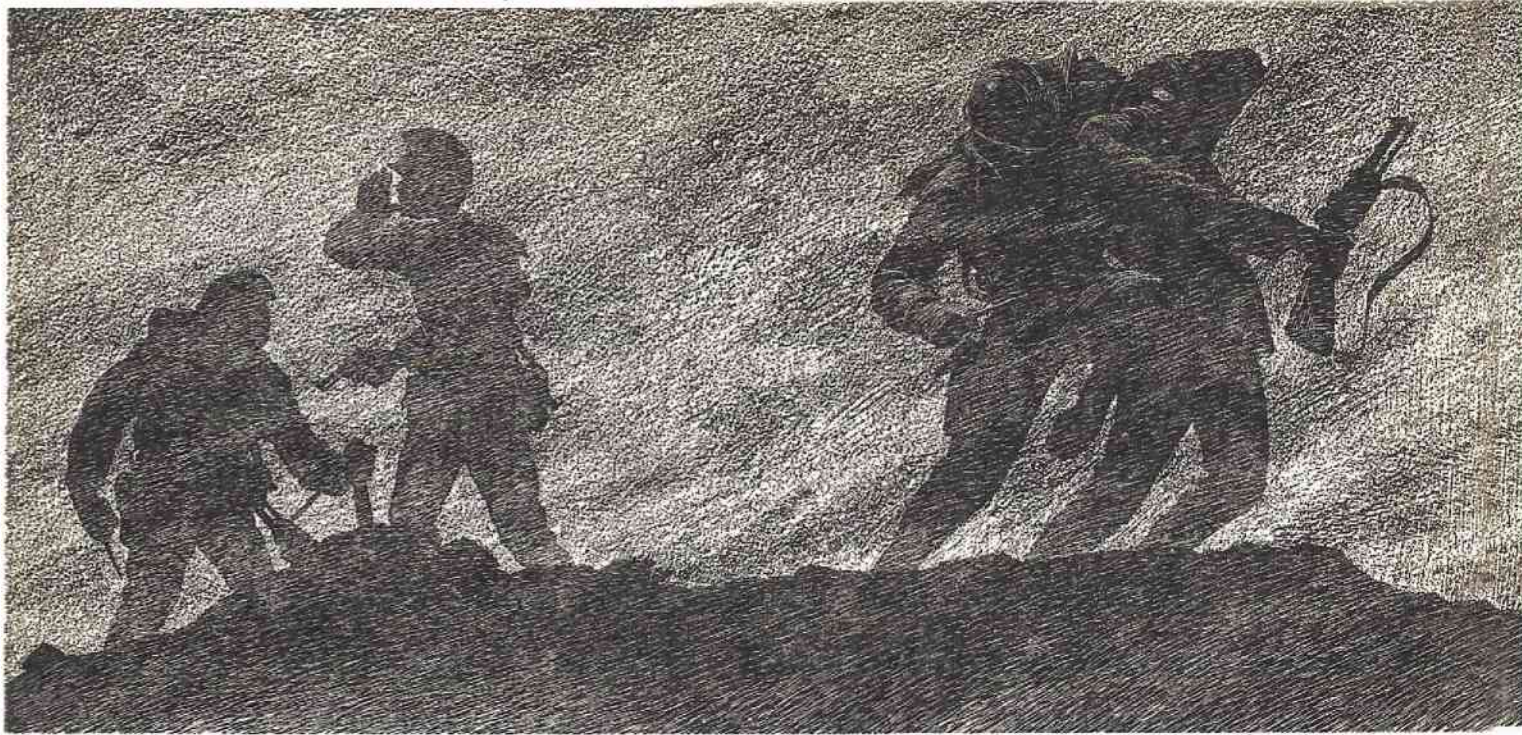
A shadowy shape inside was posting a new bulletin. Don used his elbows and forced his way closer. FLASH, it read:

PHQ (OFFICIAL) PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER GENERAL STAFF CONFIRMS REPORT THAT AN ATTACK HAS BEEN MADE ON SOME OF OUR SHIPS BY UNIDENTIFIED BUT PRESUMABLY FEDERATION FORCES. THE SITUATION IS FLUID BUT NOT CRITICAL. ALL CITIZENS ARE URGED TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES, AVOID PANIC AND LOOSE TALK, AND GIVE FULL CO-OPERATION TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES MORE DETAILS MAY BE EXPECTED LATER IN THE DAY. REPEAT—STAY HOME AND CO-OPERATE.

A self-appointed crier up front read the bulletin in a loud voice. The crowd took it in silence. While he was reading, the sirens died away and the street lights came on. The same voice which had complained of the blackout before now expostulated: "What do they want to turn on the lights for? That's simply inviting them to bomb us!"

NO more bulletins showed up; Don backed out, intending to go to the I. T. & T. Building, not with the expectation of finding Isobel there at that hour, but in hopes of picking up more news. He had not quite reached the building when he ran into a squad of M.P.'s, clearing the streets. They turned him back and dispersed the crowd at the newspaper office. As Don left, the only person there was a dragon with his eyestalks pointed in several directions; he appeared to be reading all the bulletins at once. Don wanted to stop and ask him if he knew Sir Isaac and, if so, where his friend might be found, but an M.P. hustled him along. The squad made no attempt to send the dragon about his business; he was left in undisputed possession of the street.

Old Charley was still up, seated at a table and smoking. His cleaver lay in front of him. Don told him what he had found out. "Charley, do you think they will land?"



Don learned to infiltrate without sound, to strike silently, and to fade back into the mist.

Charley got up, went to a drawer and got out a whetstone, came back and commenced gently stroking the blade of his cleaver. "Can happen."

"What had we ought to do?"

"Go to bed."

"I'm not sleepy. What are you sharpening that thing for?"

"This is my restaurant." He held up the tool, balanced it. "And this is my country." He threw the blade; it turned over twice and chunked into a wood post across the room.

"Be careful with that! You might hurt somebody."

"You go to bed."

"But—"

"Get some sleep. Tomorrow you wish you had." He turned away, and Don could get no more out of him. He gave up and went to his own cubbyhole, not intending to sleep, but simply to think things over. For a long time after he lay down he could hear the soft swishing of stone on steel.

The sirens awoke him again; it was already light. He went out into the front room; Charley was still there, standing over the range. "What's going on?"

"Breakfast." With one hand Charley scooped a fried egg out of a pan, placed it on a slice of bread, while with the other hand he broke another egg into the grease. He slapped a second slice of bread over the first egg and handed the sandwich to Don.

Don accepted it and took a large bite before replying: "Thanks. But what are they running the sirens for?"

"Fighting. Listen."

From somewhere in the distance came the muted *wha-hoom!* of an

explosion; cutting through the end of it and much nearer was the dry sibilance of a needle beam. Mixed with the fog, drifting in the window was a sharp smell of wood burning. "Say!" Don exclaimed, his voice high. "They really did it." Automatically, his mind no longer on food, his jaws clamped down on the sandwich.

Charley grunted. Don went on, "We ought to get out of here."

"And go where?"

Don had no answer for that. He finished the sandwich while still watching out the window. The smell of smoke grew stronger. A half squad of men showed up at the end of the alley, moving at a dog trot. "Look! Those aren't *our* uniforms!"

"Of course not."

The group paused at the foot of the street; then three men detached themselves and came down the alley, stopping at each door to pound on it. "Outside! Wake up in there—outside, everybody!" Two of them kicked on the door of the Two Worlds Dining room and it came open. "Outside! We're going to set fire to the place."

The soldier who had spoken was wearing a mottled green uniform with two chevrons; in his hands was a Reynolds one-man gun, and on his back the power pack that served it. He looked around. "Say, this is a break!" He turned to the other. "Joe, keep an eye out for the lieutenant." Then, to old Charley: "You, Jack—scramble up about a dozen eggs. Make it snappy—we got to burn this place right away."

Don was caught flat-footed, could think of nothing to do or say. A

Reynolds gun brooks no argument. Charley appeared to feel the same way, for he turned back to the range as if to comply.

Then he turned again toward the soldier, and in his hand was his cleaver. Don could hardly follow what happened—a flash of blue steel through the air, a meaty, butcher-shop sound, and the cleaver was buried almost to its handle in the soldier's breastbone.

He uttered no cry; he simply looked mildly surprised, then squatted slowly where he stood, his hands still clasping the gun. When he reached the floor, his head bowed forward, and the gun slipped from his grasp.

While this went on, the other soldier stood still, his own gun at the ready. When his petty officer dropped his gun, it seemed to act as a signal to him; he raised his own gun and shot Charley full in the face. He swung and trained his gun on Don, who found himself staring into the dark cavity of the projector.

Chapter Eleven

"YOU COULD GO BACK TO EARTH—"

THEY stayed that way for three heartbeats . . . then the soldier lowered his weapon about an inch and rapped out: "Outside! Fast!"

Don looked at the gun; the soldier gestured with it. Don went outside. His heart was raging; he wanted to kill this soldier who had killed old Charley. It meant nothing to him that his boss had been killed strictly in accordance with the usages of war-

fare; Don was in no frame of mind to juggle legalisms. But he was naked against an overpowering weapon, and he obeyed. Even as he left, the soldier was fanning out with the Reynolds gun; Don heard the hiss as the beam struck dry wood.

The soldier put the torch to the building wastefully; it seemed almost to explode. It was burning in a dozen places as soon as Don was out the door. The soldier jumped out behind him and prodded him in the seat with the hot projector. "Get moving. Up the street." Don broke into a trot, ran out the alley and into Buchanan Street.

The street was filled with people, and green-suited soldiers were herding them uptown. Buildings were burning on both sides of the street; the invaders were destroying the whole city but giving the inhabitants some chance to escape the holocaust. As a part of a faceless mob, Don found himself being pushed along, then forced into a side-street which was not yet burning. Presently they were beyond the town, but the road continued; Don had never been out in this direction, but he learned from the talk around him where they were headed—out East Spit.

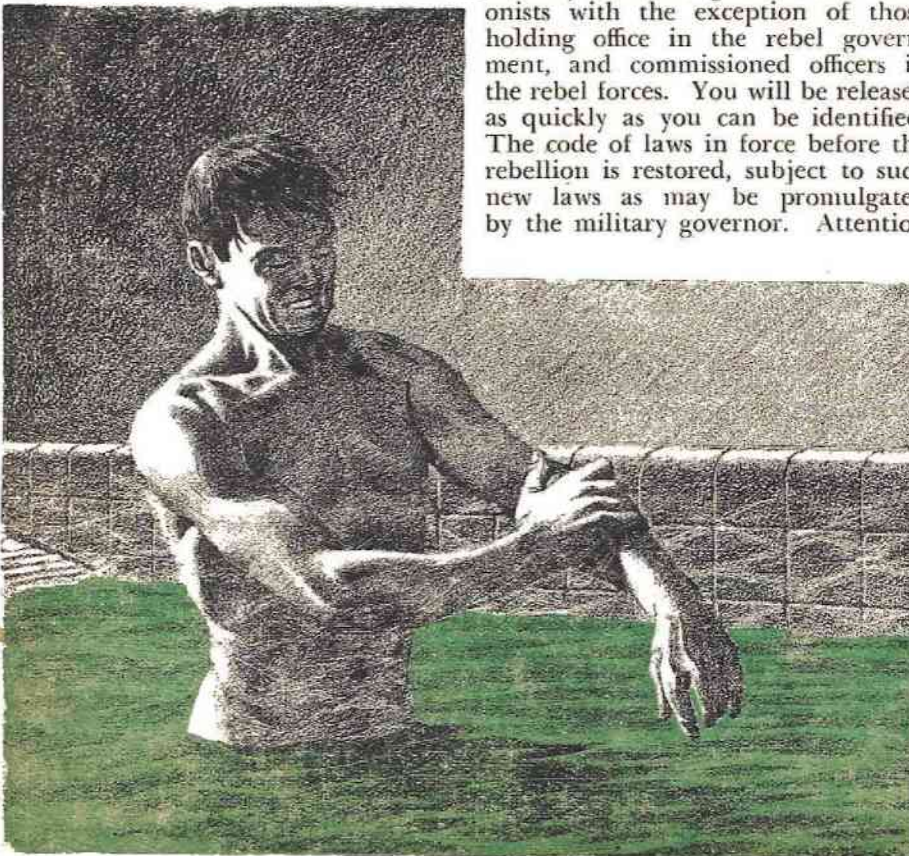
And into the fenced camp which the new government had used for enemy aliens! Most of the crowd seemed too stunned to care. Somewhere near Don a woman was scream-

ing, her voice rising and falling like a siren.

The camp was crowded to more than ten times its capacity. The camp buildings did not provide standing room; even outdoors the colonists were elbow to elbow. The guards simply shoved them inside and ignored them; they stood there or milled around, while the soft gray ashes of their former homes drifted down on them from the misty sky.

Don had regained a grip on himself during the march out to the camp. Once inside, he tried to find Isobel Costello. He threaded his way through the crowd, searching, asking, peering at faces. More than once he thought he had found her, only to be disappointed—nor did he find her father. Several times he talked to persons who thought they had seen her; each time the clue failed to lead him to her. He began to have waking nightmares of his impetuous young friend dead in the fire, or lying in an alley with a hole in her head.

He was stopped in his weary search by an iron voice bellowing out of the air and reaching all parts of the camp through the camp's announcing system. "Attention!" it called out. "Quiet! Attention to orders—this is Colonel Vanistart of the Federation Peace Forces, speaking for the Military Governor of Venus. Conditional amnesty has been granted to all colonists with the exception of those holding office in the rebel government, and commissioned officers in the rebel forces. You will be released as quickly as you can be identified. The code of laws in force before the rebellion is restored, subject to such new laws as may be promulgated by the military governor. Attention



This, he thought, was certainly the life.

to Emergency Law Number One! The cities of New London, Buchanan and CuiCui Town are abolished. Hereafter no community of more than one thousand population will be permitted. Not more than ten persons may assemble without license from the local provost. No military organization may be formed; nor may any colonist possess power weapons under penalty of death."

The voice paused. Don heard someone behind him say: "But what do they expect us to do? We've no place to go, no way to live—"

The rhetorical question was answered at once. The voice went on: "No assistance will be furnished to dispersed rebels by the Federation. Relief to refugees must be provided by colonists who have not been dispossessed. When you are liberated, you are advised to spread out into the surrounding countryside and seek temporary shelter with farmers and in the smaller villages."

A bitter voice said: "There's your answer, Clara—they don't give a hoot whether we live or die."

The first voice answered: "But how can we get away? We don't even own a gondola."

"Swim, I guess. Or walk on water."

Soldiers came inside and delivered them to the gate in groups of fifty, cutting them out like cowpunchers handling cattle. Don had pushed toward the gate, hoping to spot Isobel during the processing, and got picked up against his will in the second group. He produced his I.D.'s when demanded, and immediately ran into a hitch; his name was not on the city lists. He explained that he had come in on the last trip of the *Nautilus*.

"Why didn't you say so?" grumbled the soldier doing the checking. He turned and produced another list: "Hannegan . . . Hardecker . . . here it is. Harvey, Donald J. Yikes! Wait a minute—it's flagged. Hey, Sarge! This bird has a polit flag against his name."

"Inside with him," came the bored answer.

Don found himself shoved into the guardroom at the gate, along with a dozen other worried-looking citizens. Almost at once he was taken on into a little office at the rear. A man who would have seemed tall had he not been so fat stood up and said: "Donald James Harvey?"

"That's right."

The man came to him and looked him over, his face wreathed in a happy grin. "Welcome, my boy, welcome! Am I glad to see you!"

Don looked puzzled. The man went on: "I suppose I should introduce myself—Stanley Bankfield, at your service. Political Officer First Class, I.B.I., at the moment special

adviser to His Excellency, the Governor."

At the mention of the I.B.I., Don stiffened. The man noticed it—his little, fat-enclosed eyes seemed to notice everything. He said, "Easy, son! I mean you no harm; I'm simply delighted to see you. But I must say you have led me a merry chase—half around the system. At one point I thought you had been killed in the late lamented *Glory Road*, and I cried tears over your demise. Yes sir, real tears! But that's over with, and all's well that ends well. So let's have it."

"Have what?"

"Come, now! I know all about you—almost every word you've uttered back to your babyhood. I've even fed sugar to your stock pony, Lazy. So hand it over."

"Hand what over?"

"The ring, the ring!" Bankfield put out a pudgy hand.

"I don't know what you are talking about."

Bankfield shrugged mightily. "I am talking about a plastic ring, marked with an initial 'H,' given to you by the late Dr. Jefferson. You see, I know what I am talking about: I know you have it—and I mean to have it. An officer in my own service was so stupid as to let you walk out with it—and was broken for it. You wouldn't want that to happen to me, I'm sure. So give it to me."

"Now I know what ring you are talking about," Don answered, "but I don't have it."

"Eh? What's that you are saying? Where is it, then?"

Don's mind was racing ahead. It took him no time at all to decide not to set the I.B.I. to looking for Isobel—no, not if he had to bite his tongue out. "I suppose it's burned up," he answered.

BANKFIELD cocked his head to one side. "Donald, my boy, I believe you are fibbing to me—I do indeed! You hesitated just a teeny-weeny bit before you answered. No one but a suspicious old man like myself would have noticed it."

"It's true," Don insisted. "Or at least, I think it is. One of those monkeys you have working for you set fire to the building just as I left. I suppose the building burned down and the ring with it. But maybe it didn't."

Bankfield looked doubtful. "What building?"

"Two Worlds Dining-room, at the end of Paradise Alley, off the foot of Buchanan Street."

Bankfield moved rapidly to the door, gave orders. "Use as many men as needed," he concluded, "and sift every ounce of ash. Move!" He

turned back, sighing. "Mustn't neglect any possibilities," he said, "but now we will go back to the probability that you lied. Why should you have taken off your ring in a restaurant?"

"To wash dishes."

"Eh?"

"I was working for my meals, living there. I didn't like putting it in the hot water, so I kept it in my room."

Bankfield pursed his lips. "You almost convinced me. Your story holds together. And yet, let us both pray that you are deceiving me. If you are and can lead me to the ring, I would be very grateful. You could go back to Earth in style and comfort. I think I could even promise a moderate annuity; we have special funds for such purposes."

"I'm not likely to collect it—unless they find the ring in the restaurant."

"Dear me! In that case I don't suppose either one of us will go back to Earth. No sir, I think that in such a case I would find it better to stay right here—devoting my declining years to making your life miserable."

He smiled. "I was joking—I'm sure we'll find the ring, with your help. Now, Don, tell me what you did with it." He put an arm around Don's shoulders in a fatherly fashion.

Don tried to shrug the arm off, found that he could not. Bankfield went on: "We could settle it quickly if I had proper equipment at hand. Or I could do this—" The arm around Don's shoulders dropped suddenly; Bankfield seized Don's left little finger and bent it back sharply. Involuntarily Don grunted with pain.

"Sorry! I don't like such methods. The operator, in an excess of zeal, frequently damages the client so that no truth of any sort is forthcoming. No, Don, I think we will wait a few minutes while I get word to the medical department—sodium pentothal seems to be indicated. It will make you more cooperative, don't you think?" Bankfield stepped again to the door. "Orderly! Put this one on ice. And send in that Mathewson character."

Don was conducted outside the guardhouse and into a pen, a fenced enclosure used to receive prisoners. It was some thirty feet wide and a hundred feet long; one of its longer sides was common with the fence that ran around the entire camp, the other shut it off from the free world. The only entrance to it lay through the guardhouse.

There were several dozen prisoners in the receiving pen, most of them civilian men, although Don saw a number of women and quite a few officers of the Middle Guard and of

the Ground Forces—still in uniform but disarmed.

He at once checked the faces of the women; none was Isobel. He had not expected to find her; yet found himself vastly disappointed. His time was running out; he realized with panic that it was probably only minutes until he would be held down, a drug injected into his veins—and he be turned thereby into a babbling child with no will to resist their questioning. He had never been subjected to narco-interrogation, but he knew quite well what the drug would do. Even deep-hypnotic suggestion could not protect against it in the hands of a skilled operator.

Somehow he felt sure that Bankfield was skilled.

HE went to the far end of the pen, pointlessly, as a frightened animal will retreat to the back of a cage. He stood there, staring up at the top of the fence several feet above his head. The fence was tight and strong, proof against almost anything but a dragon, but one could get handholds in the mesh—it could be climbed. However, above the mesh were three single strands of wire; every ten feet or so on the lowest strand was a little red sign—a skull-and-cross bones and the words: HIGH VOLTAGE.

Don glanced back over his shoulder. The ever-present fog, reinforced by smoke from the burning city, almost obscured the guardhouse. The breeze had shifted, and the smoke was getting thicker; he felt reasonably sure that no one could see him but other prisoners.

He tried it, found that his shoes would not go into the mesh, kicked them off and tried again.

"Don't!" said a voice behind him.

Don looked back. A major of the Ground Forces, cap missing and one sleeve torn and bloody, stood behind him. "Don't try it," the major said reasonably. "It will kill you quickly. I know; I supervised its installation."

Don dropped to the ground. "Isn't there some way to switch it off?"

"Certainly—outside." The officer grinned wryly. "I took care of that. A locked switch in the guardhouse—and another at the main distribution board in the city. Nowhere else." He coughed. "Pardon me—the smoke."

Don looked toward the burning city. "The distribution board back in the powerhouse," he said softly. "I wonder—"

"Eh?" The major followed his look. "I don't know—I couldn't say. The powerhouse is fireproof."

A voice behind them in the mist shouted: "Harvey! Donald J. Harvey! Front and center!"

Don swarmed up the fence.

He hesitated just before touching the lowest of the three strands, flipped it with the back of his hand. Nothing happened—then he was over and falling. He lit badly, hurting a wrist, but scrambled to his feet and ran.

There were shouts behind him; without stopping, he risked a look over his shoulder. Someone else was at the top of the fence. Even as he looked, he heard the hiss of a beam. The figure jerked and contracted, like a fly touched by flame.

The figure raised its head. Don heard the major's voice in a clear triumphant baritone. "*Venus and Freedom!*" He fell back inside the fence.

Chapter Twelve

WET DESERT

DON plunged ahead, not knowing where he was going, not caring as long as it was away. Again he heard the angry, deadly hissing; he cut to the left and ran faster, then cut back again beyond a clump of witch's brooms. He pounded ahead, giving it all he had, with his breath like dry steam in his throat—then skidded to a stop at water's edge.

He stood still for a moment, looked and listened. Nothing to see but gray mist, nothing to hear but the throbbing of his own heart. No, not quite nothing—someone shouted in the distance, and he heard the sounds of booted feet crashing through the brush. It seemed to come from the right; he turned left and trotted along the waterfront, his eyes open for a gondola, a skiff, anything that would float.

The bank curved back to the left; he followed it, then stopped as he realized that it was leading him to the narrow neck of land that joined Main Island to East Spit. It was a cinch, he thought, that there would be a guard at the bottleneck; it seemed to him that there had been one there when he and the other dispossessed had been herded across it to the prison camp.

He listened—yes, they were still behind him—and flanking him. There was nothing in front of him but the bank curving back to certain capture.

For a moment his face was contorted in an agony of frustration; then his features suddenly relaxed to serenity and he stepped firmly into the water and walked away from the land.

Don could swim, in which respect he differed from most Venus colonials. On Venus no one ever swims; there is no water fit to swim in. Venus has no moon to pile up tides; the solar tide disturbs her waters but

little. The waters never freeze, never approach the critical 4° C, which causes terrestrial lakes and streams and ponds to turn over and "ventilate." The planet is almost free of weather in the boisterous sense. Her waters lie placid on their surface—and accumulate vileness underneath, by the year, by the generation, by the eon. Don walked straight out, trying not to think of the black and sulphurous muck he was treading in. The water was shallow; fifty yards out, with the shoreline dim behind him, he was still in only up to his knees. He glanced back and decided to go out farther; if he could not see the shore, then they could not see him. He reminded himself that he would have to keep his wits about him not to get turned around.

Presently the bottom suddenly dropped away a foot or more; he stepped off the edge; lost his balance and thrashed around, recovered himself and scrambled back up on the ledge, congratulating himself that he had not got his face and eyes into the stuff.

He heard a shout, and almost at once a sound as of water striking a hot stove, enormously amplified. Ten feet away from him a cloud of steam lifted from the water's surface, climbed lazily into the mist. He cringed and wanted to dodge, but there was no way to dodge. The shouting resumed, and the sounds carried clearly across the water, muffled by the fog but still plain: "Over here! Over here! He's taken to the water."

Much more distantly he heard the answer: "Coming!"

MOST cautiously Don moved forward, felt the edge of the drop-off, tried it and found that he could still stand beyond it, almost up to his armpits but still wading. He was moving forward slowly, trying to avoid noise and minding his precarious, half-floating balance, when he heard the sibilant sound of the beam.

The soldier back on the bank had imagination; instead of firing again at random into the drifting mist, he was fanning the flat surface of the water, doing his best to keep his beam horizontal and playing it like a hose. Don squatted down until his face alone was out of water.

The beam passed only inches over his head; he could hear it pass, smell the ozone.

The hissing stopped abruptly to be followed by the age-old, monotonous cursing of the barrack-room. "But Sergeant—" someone protested.

"I'll 'Sergeant' you! Alive—do you hear? You heard the orders. If you've killed him, I'll take you apart with a rusty knife. No, I won't; I'll

turn you over to Mr. Bankfield. You hopeless fool!"

"But Sergeant, he was escaping by water; I had to stop him."

"But Sergeant! 'But Sergeant!'—is that all you can say? Get a boat! Get a snooper! Get a two-station portable bounce rig. Call base and find out if they've got a 'copter down."

"Where would I get a boat?"

"Get one! He can't get away. We'll find him—or his body. If it's his body, you'd better cut your throat."

Don listened, then moved silently forward—or away from the direction the voices seemed to come from. He could no longer tell true direction; there was nothing but the black surface of water and a horizon of mist. For some distance the bottom continued fairly level; then he realized that it was again dropping away. He was forced to stop, able to wade no farther.

He thought it over, trying to avoid panic. He was still close to Main Island, with nothing but mist between himself and the shore. It was a certainty that with proper search gear—infra-red or any of the appropriate offspring of radar—they could pin him like a beetle to cork. It was merely a matter of waiting for the gear to be brought up.

Should he surrender now and get out of this poisonous swill? Surrender—go back and tell Bankfield to find Isobel Costello if he wanted the ring? Don let himself sink forward and struck out strongly, swimming breast stroke to try to keep his face out of the water.

Breast stroke was far from being his strongest stroke, and it was made worse by trying so hard to keep his face dry. His neck began to ache; presently the ache spread through his shoulder muscles and into his back. Indefinite time and endless gallons later he ached everywhere, even to his eyeballs—yet for all he could tell about it, he might have been swimming in a bathtub, one whose walls were gray mist. It did not seem possible that, in the archipelago which made up Buchanan Province, one could swim so far without running into *something*—a sandspit, a mudbar.

HE stopped to tread water, barely moving his tired legs and fluttering his palms. He thought he heard the rushing sound of a powered boat, but he could not be sure. At that moment he would not have cared; capture would have been relief. But the sound, or ghost of a sound, died away, and he was again in a gray and featureless wilderness.

He arched his back to shift again to swimming, and his toe struck bot-

tom. Gingerly he felt for it—yes, bottom—with his chin out of water. He stood for a moment or two and rested, then felt around. Bottom dropped away on one side, seemed level or even to rise a little in another direction.

Shortly his shoulders were out, with his feet still in the muck. Feeling his way like a blind man, his eyes useless save for balancing, he groped out the contour, finding bits that rose, then forced to retreat as the vein played out.

He was out of water to his waist when his eyes spotted a darker streak through the fog; he went toward it, was again up to his neck. Then the bottom rose rapidly; a few moments later he scrambled up on dry land.

He did not have the courage yet to do anything more than move inland a few feet and place between himself and the water a clump of *chika* trees. Screened thus from search operations conducted from boats, he looked himself over. Clinging to his legs were a dozen or more mud lice, each as large as a child's hand. With repugnance he brushed them off, then removed his shorts and shirt, found several more and disposed of them. He told himself that he was lucky not to have encountered anything worse—the dragons had many evolutionary cousins, bearing much the same relationship to them that gorillas do to men. Many of these creatures are amphibious—another reason why Venus colonials do not swim.

RELUCTANTLY Don put his wet, filthy clothes back on, sat down with his back to a tree trunk, and rested. He was still doing so when he again heard the sound of a power boat; this time there was no mistaking it. He sat still, depending on the trees to cover him and hoping that it would go away.

It came in close to shore and cruised along it to his right. He was beginning to feel relief when the turbine stopped. In the stillness he could hear voices. "We'll have to reconnoiter this hunk of mud. Okay, Curly—you and Joe."

"What does this guy look like, Corporal?"

"Now, I'll tell you—the Captain didn't say. He's a young fellow, though, about your age. You just arrest anything that walks. He's not armed."

"I wish I was back in Birmingham."

"Get going."

Don got going too—in the other direction, as fast and as silently as possible. The island was fairly well covered; he hoped that it was large as well—a precarious game of hide-and-

seek was all the tactics he could think of. He had covered perhaps a hundred yards when he was scared almost out of his wits by a movement up ahead; he realized with desperation that the boat party might have landed two patrols.

His panic died down when he discovered that what he was seeing were not men but gregarians. They spotted him too, and came dancing up, bleating welcome, and crowding up against him.

"Quiet!" he said in a sharp whisper. "You'll get me caught!"

The move-overs paid no attention to that; they wanted to play. He endeavored to pay no attention to them but moved forward again, closely accompanied by the whole group, some five. He was still wondering how to keep from being loved to death—or at least back into captivity—when they came out into a clearing.

Here was the rest of the herd, more than two hundred head, from babies that butted against his knees up to the gray-bearded old patriarch, fat in the belly and reaching as high as Don's shoulder. They all welcomed him and wanted him to stay awhile.

One thing that had worried him was now cleared up—he had not swum in a circle and blundered back onto Main Island. The only move-overs on Main Island were half-domesticated scavengers such as those which had hung around the restaurant; there were no herds.

It suddenly occurred to him that it was barely possible that he might turn the ubiquitous friendliness of the bipeds into an advantage rather than a sure give-away. They would not let him be; that was sure. If he left the herd, some of them were certain to trail along, bleating and snorting and making themselves and him conspicuous. On the other hand—

He moved straight out into the clearing, pushing his friends aside as he went. He shoved himself right into the center of the herd and sat down on the ground.

Three of the babies promptly climbed into his lap. He let them stay. Adults and half-grown bucks crowded around him, bleating and snuffing and trying to nuzzle the top of his head. He let them—he was now surrounded by a wall of flesh. From time to time one of the inner circle would be shouldered out of the way and would go back to grazing, but there were always enough around him to block out his view of his surroundings. He waited.

After a considerable time he heard more excited bleating from the fringe of the herd. For a moment he thought his personal guard would be seduced away by this new excitement, but the inner circle preferred to

keep their privileged positions; the wall held. Again he heard voices:

"For Pete's sake—it's a whole flock of those silly-billies!" Then—"Hey! Get down! Quit licking my face!"

Curly's voice replied: "I think he's fallen in love with you, Joe. Say—Soapy said to arrest anything that walks: shall we take this one back to him?"

"Stow it!" There were sounds of scuffling, then the high bleating of a move-over both surprised and hurt.

"Maybe we ought to burn one and take it back anyway," Curly went on. "I hear they are mighty tasty eating."

"You turn this into a hunting party, and Soapy will haul you up before the Old Man. Come on—we got work to do."

Don could follow their progress around the edge of the herd. He could even tell by the sounds when the two soldiers managed to cuff and kick the most persistent of the creatures off their trail. He continued to sit there long after they were gone, tickling the chin of a baby which had gone to sleep in his lap, and resting himself.

PRESENTLY it began to grow dark. The herd started to bed down for the night. By the time it was fully dark they were all lying down except the sentries around the edge. Because he was dead tired and completely lacking in any plan of action, Don bedded down with them, his head cradled on a soft and velvety back, and himself in turn half supporting a couple of youngsters.

For a while he thought about his predicament; then he thought about food and, even more urgently, water. Then he thought about nothing. . . .

The herd stirred, and he awakened. There was much snorting and stomping mixed with the whimpering complaints of the young, still not fully awake. Don got his bearings and got to his own feet; he knew vaguely what to expect—the herd was about to migrate. Gregarians rarely grazed the same island two days in a row. They slept the first part of the night, then moved out before dawn when their natural enemies were least active. They forded from one island to another, using paths through the water known—possibly by instinct—to the herd leaders. For that matter, a gregarian could swim, but they rarely did so.

Don thought: *Well, I'll soon be rid of them. Nice people—but too much is too much.* Then he thought better of it—if the move-overs were moving to another island, it was sure that it would not be Main Island, and it would almost certainly have to be farther away from Main Island than was this one. What could he lose?

He felt a bit light-headed, but the logic seemed right; when the herd moved out, he worked his way up near the van. The leader took them down the island about a quarter of a mile, then stepped off into the water. It was still so nearly pitch dark that Don was not aware of it until he too stepped into it. It was only up to his ankles and did not get much deeper. Don splashed along almost at a dogtrot, trying to stay inside the body of the herd so that he would run no chance of blundering into deeper water in the darkness. He hoped that this was not one of the migrations involving swimming.

It began to grow truly light, and the pace quickened: Don was hard put to keep up. At one point the old buck in the lead stopped, snorted, and made a sharp turn: Don could not guess why he had turned, for the morning mist was very thick, and one section of water looked exactly like another. Yet the way chosen turned out to be shallow. They followed it for another kilometer or more, twisting and turning at times; then at last the leader clambered up a bank, with Don on his heels.

Don threw himself down, exhausted. The old buck stopped, plainly puzzled, while the herd gained the land and crowded around them. The leader snorted and looked disgusted, then turned away and continued his duty of leading his people to good pasture. Don pulled himself together and followed them.

They were just coming out of the trees that hedged the shore when Don saw a fence off to the right. He felt like singing. "So long, folks!" he called out. "Here's where I get off." He headed for the fence, while the main herd moved on. When he reached the fence, he reluctantly slapped and swatted his attendants until he managed to shoo them off, then headed along the wire. Eventually, he told himself, *I will find a gate, and that will lead me to people.* It did not matter much who the people were: they would feed him and let him rest and help him to hide from the invaders.

The fog was very thick; it was good to have the fence to guide him. He stumbled along by it, feeling feverish and somewhat confused, but cheerful.

"Halt!"

Don froze automatically, shook his head and tried to remember where he was. "I've got you spotted," the voice went on. "Move forward slowly with your hands up."

Don strained his eyes to see through the fog, wondered if he dared to run for it. But with a feeling of utter and final defeat, he realized that he had run as far as he could.

Chapter Thirteen

FOG-EATERS

"SNAP out of it!" the voice said, "or I shoot."
"Okay," he answered dully, and moved forward with his hands over his head. A few paces' advance let him see a man's shape: a few more, and he made out a soldier with a hand gun trained on him. His eyes were covered by snooter goggles, making him look like some bug-eyed improbability from another planet.

The soldier halted Don again a few steps from him, made him turn around slowly. When Don turned back, he had shoved the snoopers up on his forehead, revealing pleasant blue eyes. He lowered his gun. "Jack, you're sure a mess," he commented. "What in the name of the Egg have you been doing?"

It was only then that Don realized that the soldier was wearing not the mottled green of the Federation, but the tan of the Ground Forces of Venus Republic. . . .

The soldier's commanding officer, a Lieutenant Busby, tried to question him in the kitchen of the farmhouse inside the fence, but he saw very quickly that the prisoner was in no shape to be questioned. He turned Don over to the farmer's wife for food, a hot bath, and emergency medical attention. It was late that afternoon that Don, much refreshed and with the patches left by the mud-lice covered with poultices, finally gave an account of himself.

Busby listened him out and nodded. "I'll take your word for it, mainly because it is almost inconceivable that a Federation spy could have been where you were, dressed the way you were, and in the shape you were in." He went on to question him closely about what he had seen in New London, how many soldiers there seemed to be, how they were armed, and so forth. Unfortunately, Don could not tell him much. He did recite "Emergency Law Number One" as closely as he could remember it.

Busby nodded. "We got it over Mr. Wong's radio." He hooked a thumb at the corner of the room. He thought for a moment. "They played it smart; they took a leaf from Commodore Higgins' book and played it real smart. They didn't bomb our cities; they just bombed our ships—then they moved in and burned us out."

"Have we got any ships left?" Don asked.

"I don't know. I doubt it—but it doesn't matter."

"Huh?"

"Because they played it too smart. There's nothing left they can do to

us; from here on, they're fighting the fog. And we fog-eaters know this planet better than they do."

Don was allowed to rest up the balance of that day and the following night. By listening to the gossip of the soldiers he came to the conclusion that Busby was not simply an optimist; the situation was not completely hopeless. It was admittedly very bad; so far as anyone knew, all the ships of the High Guard had been destroyed. The *Valkyrie*, the *Nautilus*, and the *Adonis* were reported bombed, and with them Commodore Higgins and most of his men. There was no word of the *Spring Tide*—which meant nothing; what little information they had was compounded of equal parts rumor and Federation official propaganda.

The Middle Guard might have saved some of their ships, might have them hidden in the bush, but their usefulness at this time of superstratospheric shuttles which required unmovable launching catapults was conjectural. As for the Ground Forces, a good half of them had been captured or killed at Buchanan Island Base and at lesser garrisons. While the enlisted survivors were being released, the only officers still free were such as Lieutenant Busby, those who had been on detached duty when the attack came. Busby's unit had been manning a radar station outside New London; he had saved his command by hastily abandoning the now-useless station.

The civil government of the baby republic was, of course, gone; almost every official had been captured. The command organization of the armed forces was equally out of action, captured in the initial attack. This raised a point that puzzled Don; Busby did not act as if his commanding generals were missing; he continued to behave as if he were a unit commander of an active military organization, with task and function clearly defined. *Esprit de corps* was high among his men; they seemed to expect months, perhaps years, of bush warfare, harrying and raiding the Federation forces, but eventual victory at the end.

As one of them put it to Don: "They can't catch us. We know these swamps; they don't. They won't be able to go ten miles from the city, even with boat radar and dead-reckoning bugs. We'll sneak in at night and cut their throats—and sneak out again for breakfast. We won't let them lift a ton of radioactives off this planet, nor an ounce of drugs. We'll make it so expensive in money and men that they'll get sick of it and go home."

Don nodded. "Sick of fighting the fog, as Lieutenant Busby puts it."

"Busby?"

"Huh? Why, Lieutenant Busby—he's your C. O."

"Is that his name? I didn't catch it." Don's face showed bewilderment. The soldier went on: "I've only been here since morning, you see. I was turned loose with the other duckfeet from the Base and was dragging my tail back home, feeling lower than swamp muck. I stopped off here, meaning to cadge a meal from Wong, and found the Lieutenant here—Busby, did you say?—with a going concern. He attached me and put me back on duty. I tell you, it put the heart back into me—haven't felt so good since my mother-in-law died. Got a light on you?"

BEFORE Don turned in that night—in Mr. Wong's barn, with two dozen soldiers—he had found that most of those present were not of Busby's original detail, which had consisted of only five men, all electronics technicians. The rest were stragglers, now formed into a guerrilla platoon. As yet few of them had arms, but they made up for that in restored morale.

Before Don went to sleep he had made up his mind. He would have looked up Lieutenant Busby at once, but decided that it would not do to disturb the officer so late at night. He woke up next morning to find the soldiers gone. He rushed out, found Mrs. Wong feeding her chickens, and was directed by her down to the waterfront. There Busby was superintending the moving out of his command. Don rushed up to him.

"Lieutenant! May I have a word with you?"

Busby turned impatiently. "I'm busy."

"Just a single moment—please!"

"Well, speak up."

"Just this—where can I go to enlist?" Busby frowned; Don raced on with his explanation, insisting that he had been trying to join up when the attack came.

"If you meant to enlist, I should think you would have done so long ago. Anyway, by your own story you've lived a major portion of your life on Earth. You're not one of us."

"Yes, I am!"

"I think you're a kid with your head stuffed with romantic notions. You're not old enough to vote."

"I'm old enough to fight."

"What can you do?"

"Uh, well, I'm a pretty good shot, with a hand gun, anyway."

"What else?"

Don thought rapidly; it had not occurred to him that soldiers were expected to have anything more than willingness. Ride horseback? It meant nothing here. "Uh, I talk 'true speech' fairly well."



*Phipps seemed to have trouble believing what he saw.
Don said: "Get away from me!"*

"That's useful—we need men who can palaver with the dragons. What else?"

Don thought about the fact that he had been able to make his escape through the bush without disaster—but the Lieutenant knew that; it simply proved that he was truly a fog-eater in spite of his mixed background. He decided that Busby would not be interested in the details of his ranch-school education. "Well, I can wash dishes."

Busby grudged a faint smile. "That is unquestionably a soldierly virtue. Nevertheless, Harvey, I doubt if you're suited. This won't be parade-ground soldiering. We'll live off the country and probably never get paid at all. It means going hungry, going dirty, always on the move. You not only risk being killed in action; if you are captured, you'll be burned for treason."

"Yes sir. I figured that out last night."

"And you still want to join?"

"Yes sir."

"Hold up your right hand."

Don did so.

Lieutenant Busby continued: "Do you solemnly swear to uphold and defend the Constitution of the Venus Republic against all enemies, domestic and foreign; and to serve faithfully in the armed forces of the Republic for the duration of this emergency unless sooner discharged by competent authority; and to obey the lawful orders of superior officers placed over you?"

Don took a deep breath.

"I do."

"Very well, soldier—get in the boat."

"Yes sir!"

MANY, many times there were thereafter that Don regretted having enlisted—but so has every man who ever volunteered for military service. More of the time he was reasonably content, though he would have denied this sincerely—he acquired considerable talent at the most common of soldiers' pastimes, griping about the war, the weather, the food, the mud, the stupidities of high command. The old soldier can substitute for recreation, or even for rest or food, this ancient, conventional and harmless form of literary art.

He learned the ways of the guerrilla—to infiltrate without a sound, to strike silently, and to fade back into the dark and the mist before the alarm can be raised. Those who learned it lived; those who did not, died. Don lived. He learned other things—to sleep for ten minutes when opportunity offered, to come fully and quietly awake at a touch or a sound, to do without sleep for a night, or two nights—or even three. He acquired deep lines around his mouth, lines beyond his years, and a white, puckered scar on his left forearm.

HE did not stay long with Busby but was transferred to a company of gondola infantry operating between CuiCui and New London. They called themselves proudly "Marsten's Raiders;" he was assigned as "true speech" interpreter for his outfit. While most colonials can whistle a few phrases of dragon talk—or, more usually, can understand a bit of pidgin sufficiently for buying and selling—few of them can converse freely in it. Don, for all his lack of practice during his years on Earth, had been taught it young and taught it well by a dragon who had taken an interest in him as a child. And both his parents used it as easily as they did Basic English: Don had been drilled in it by daily use at home until he was eleven.

The dragons were of great use to the resistance fighters; while not belligerents themselves, their sympathies lay with the colonials—more accurately, they despised the Federation soldiers. The colonials had managed to make a home on Venus through getting along with the dragons—an enlightened-self-interest policy instituted by Cyrus Buchanan himself. To a human born on Venus there was never any doubt that there existed another race—the dragons—as intelligent, as wealthy, and as civilized as their own. But to the great majority of the Federation soldiers, new to the planet, the dragons were merely ugly, uncouth animals, incapable of speech and giving themselves airs, arrogating to themselves privileges that no animal had a right to claim.

This orientation cut below the conscious level; no general order issued to the Federation troops, no amount of disciplinary action for violations, could cope with it. It was stronger and less reasoned than any analogous Earthly trouble—white versus black, Gentile versus Jew, Roman versus barbarian, or whatever—had ever been. The very officers issuing the orders could not feel the matter correctly; they were not Venus-born. Even the governor's prime political adviser, the shrewd and able Stanley Bankfield, could not really grasp that

one does not ingratiate oneself with a dragon by (so to speak) petting him on the head and talking down.

Two serious incidents had set the pattern on the very day of the original attack; in New London a dragon—the same one Don had seen reading the *Times'* bulletins—had been, not killed, but seriously damaged by a flame-thrower; he had been silent partner in the local bank, and lessor of many rich thorium pits. Still worse, in CuiCui a dragon had been killed—by a rocket; through mischance he had had his mouth open. And *this* dragon had been related collaterally to the descendants of the Great Egg.

It does not do to antagonize highly intelligent creatures, each of whom is physically equivalent to, say three rhinoceri or a medium tank. Nevertheless they were not themselves belligerents, as our convention of warfare is not part of their culture. They work in different ways toward their ends.

When in the course of his duties Don had to speak to dragons, he sometimes inquired whether or not this particular citizen of the dragon nation knew his friend Sir Isaac—using, of course, Sir Isaac's true name. He found that those who could not claim personal acquaintance at least knew of him; he found, too, that it raised his own prestige to claim acquaintanceship. But he did not attempt to send a message to Sir Isaac; there was no longer any occasion for it—no need to try to wangle a transfer to a High Guard that no longer existed.

BUT he did try, try repeatedly, to learn what had happened to Isobel Costello—through refugees, through dragons, and through the increasingly numerous clandestine resistance fighters who could move fairly freely from one side to the other. He never found her. He heard once that she was confined in the prison camp on East Spit; he heard again that she and her father had been deported to Earth—neither rumor could be confirmed. He suspected, with a dull, sick feeling inside, that she had been killed in the original attack.

He was grieved about Isobel herself—not about the ring that he had left with her. He had tried to guess what it could possibly be about the ring which would cause him to be chased from planet to planet. He could not think of an answer, and concluded that Bankfield, for all his superior airs, had been mistaken; the important thing must have been the wrapping paper, but the I.B.I. had been too stupid to figure it out. Then he quit thinking about it at all; the ring was gone, and that was that.

As for his parents and Mars—sure, sure, some day! Some day when the

war was over and ships were running again—in the meantime why let the worry mice gnaw at one's mind?

His company was at this time spread out through four islands south-southwest of New London; they had been camped there for three days, about the longest they ever stayed in one place. Don, being attached to headquarters, was on the same island as Captain Marsten, and was at the moment stretched out in his hammock, which he had slung between two trees in the midst of a clump of broom.

THE company headquarters runner sought him out and awakened him—by standing well clear and giving the hammock rope a sharp tap. Don came instantly awake, a knife in his hand. "Easy!" cautioned the runner. "The Old Man wants to see you."

Don made a rhetorical and most ungracious suggestion as to what the Captain could do about it, and slid silently to his feet. He stopped to roll up the hammock and stuff it into his pocket—it weighed only four ounces, and had cost the Federation a nice piece of change on cost-plus contract. Don was very careful of it: its former owner had not been careful, and now had no further need for it. He gathered up his weapons as well.

The company commander was sitting at a field desk under a screen of boughs.

Don slipped noiselessly into his presence and waited.

Marsten looked up and said:

"Got a special job for you, Harvey. You move out at once."

"Change in the plan?"

"No, you won't be on tonight's raid. A high muckamuck among the dragons wants palaver. You're to go to see him. At once."

Don thought it over. "Cripes, Skipper, I was looking forward to tonight's scramble. I'll go tomorrow—those people don't care about time; they're patient."

"That'll do, soldier." I'm putting you on leave status; according to the dispatch from HQ, you may be gone quite a while."

Don looked up sharply. "If I'm ordered to go, it's not leave; it's detached duty."

Marsten shrugged.

"You're a mess-hall lawyer at heart, Harvey."

"Yes sir."

"Turn in your weapons and take off your insignia; you'll make the first leg of the trip as a jolly farmer boy. Pick up some props from stores. Larsen will boat you. That's all."

"Yes sir." Don turned to go, adding: "Good hunting tonight, Skipper."

Marsten smiled for the first time. "Thanks, Don."

The first part of the trip was made through channels so narrow and devious that electronic seeing devices could reach no farther than could the sight of the bare eye.

Don slept through most of it, his head pillowed on a sack of sour-corn seed. He did not worry about the job ahead—no doubt the officer he was to interpret for, whoever he was, would rendezvous and let him know what he was to do.

Early the next afternoon they reached the brink of the Great South Sea, and Don was transferred to a crazy wagon, a designation which applied to both boat and crew—a flat, jet-propelled saucer fifteen feet across manned by two young extroverts who feared neither man, God nor mud. The upperworks of the boat were covered by a low, polished cone of sheet metal intended to reflect horizontal radar waves upward, or vice versa. It could not protect against that locus in the sky, cone-shaped like the reflector itself, where reflections would bounce straight back to originating stations—but the main dependence was on speed in any case.

Don lay flat on the bottom of the boat, clinging to handholds and reflecting on the superior advantages of rocket flight, while the crazy wagon skipped and slid over the surface of the sea. He tried not to think about what would happen if the speeding boat struck a floating log or one of the larger denizens of the water. They covered nearly three hundred kilometers in somewhat less than two hours; then the boat skidded and slewed to a stop. "End of the line," called out the downy-checked skipper. "Have your baggage checks ready. Women and children use the center escalator." The anti-radar lid lifted.

Don stood up on wobbly legs. "Where are we?"

"Dragonville-by-the-Mud. There's your welcoming committee. Mind your step."

As Don peered through the mist, he perceived several dragons waiting on the shore. He stepped over the side, went into mud to his boot tops, scrambled up to firmer soil. Behind him, the crazy wagon lowered its cover and gunned away at once, going out of sight while still gathering speed. "They might at least have waved," Don muttered, and turned back to the dragons. He was feeling considerably perplexed; there seemed to be no men around, and he had been given no instructions. He wondered if the officer he had expected to find—surely by this time!—had failed to run the gantlet safely.

There were seven of the dragons, now moving toward him. He looked them over and whistled a polite greet-

ing, while thinking how much one dragon looks like another. Then the center one of the seven spoke to him in an accent richly reminiscent of fish-and-chips.

"Donald, my dear boy! How very happy I am to see you! Shucks!"

Chapter Fourteen

"LET'S HAVE IT, THEN."

Don gulped and stared and almost lost track of his manners. "Sir Isaac! Sir Isaac!" He stumbled toward him.

It is not practical to shake hands with a dragon, kiss it, nor hug it. Don contented himself with beating Sir Isaac's armored sides with his fists while trying to regain control of himself. Long-suppressed emotions shook him, spoiling voice and vision. Sir Isaac waited patiently, then said: "Now, Donald, if I may present my family—"

Don pulled himself together, cleared his throat, and wet his whistle. None of the others had voder; it was possible that they did not even understand Basic. "*May they all die beautifully!*"

"We thank you."

A daughter, a son, a granddaughter, a grandson, a great granddaughter, a great grandson—counting Sir Isaac himself, a four-generation welcome, only one short of maximum dragon protocol; Don was overwhelmed. He knew that Sir Isaac was friendly to him, but he decided that this degree of ceremony must be a compliment to his parents.

"*My father and my mother thank you all for the kindness you do to their egg.*"

Sir Isaac responded graciously:

"*As the first egg, so the last. We are very happy to have you here, Donald.*"

A dragon visitor, honored by an escort, would have made a leisurely progress to the family seat, flanked by the family members. But a dragon's leisurely progress is about twice as fast as a brisk walk for a man. Sir Isaac settled himself down and said: "Suppose you borrow my legs, dear boy; we have considerable distance to go."

"Oh, I can walk!"

"Please—I insist."

"Well—"

"*'Upsy-daisy,' then—if I recall the idiom correctly.*"

Don climbed aboard and settled himself just abaft the last pair of eyestalks; they turned around and surveyed him. He found that Sir Isaac had thoughtfully had two rings riveted to his neck plates to let him hold on. "All set?"

"Yes, indeed."

The dragon reared himself up again, and they set out, with Don feeling like Toomai-of-the-Elephants.

They went up a crowded dragon path so old that it was impossible to tell whether it was an engineering feat or a natural conformation. The path paralleled the shore for a mile or so; they passed dragons at work in their watery fields; then the path swung inland. Shortly, in the dry uplands, his party turned out of the traffic into a tunnel. This was definitely art, not nature; it was one of the sort the floor of which slides quietly and rapidly away in the direction one walks (provided the walker is a dragon or weighs as much as a dragon); their ambling gait was multiplied by a considerable factor. Don could not judge the true speed nor the distance covered.

They came at last out into a great hall, large even for dragons; the flowing floor merged into the floor of the hall imperceptibly and stopped. Here were gathered the rest of the tribe symbolized by the seven who had met him. Don was not required then to rack his brain for compliments, but was taken, still in accordance with etiquette, at once to his own chambers, to rest and refresh himself.

The chambers were merely comfortable by Venetian standards; to Don, of course, they were huge. The wallowing trough in the center of the main room was less than six feet deep only at the ramp, and it was long enough for him to take several strokes—which he did very soon with great pleasure. The water was as pure as the sea he had just crossed was dirty, and it was, as nearly as he could tell, heated for him to exactly the 98.6° of a human's blood.

He turned over on his back and floated, staring up into the artificial mist that concealed the remote ceiling. This, he thought, was certainly the life! It was the best bath he had had since—well, since that dilly of a bath in the Caravansary back in New Chicago, how long ago? Don thought with a sudden twinge of nostalgia that his class in school had graduated long since.

GROWING tired even of such luxury, he climbed out, took his clothes and scrubbed out ancient dirt as best he could, while wishing for detergent, or even for the gray homemade soap the farmers used. He padded around in bare feet, looking for somewhere to hang his wash. In the "small" retiring-room he stopped suddenly.

Supper was ready. Someone had set a table for him, complete to fine napery—a card table, it was, with "Grand Rapids" spelled out in its lines. The chair drawn up to it actually did have the words "Grand



A task force of Federation ships was already on its way to attack Mars.

Rapids" stamped into its under side; Don turned it over and looked.

The table had been set in accordance with human customs. True, the soup was in the coffee cup and the soup plate contained coffee, but Don was in no mood to cavil about such details—they were both hot. So was the sour-bread toast and the scrambled eggs—shell eggs, if he was a judge.

He spread his wet clothes on the warm, tiled floor, hastily patting them smooth, and fell to. "As you say, Skipper," he muttered, "we never had it so good."

There was a foam mattress on the floor of another bay of the same room; Don did not need to look to see that

it was Greenie general issue (officers). There was no bedframe and no blankets, but neither was necessary. Knowing that he would not be disturbed nor expected to put in an appearance until it suited him, he spread himself out on it after dinner. He was very tired, he now realized, and he certainly had much to think about.

The reappearance of Sir Isaac caused buried memories to lift their heads, fresh and demanding. He thought again of his school, wondered where his roommate was. Had he joined up—on the other side? He hoped not—yet knew in his heart that Jack had. You did what you had to do, judging

it from where you were. Jack wasn't his enemy, couldn't be. Good old Jack! He hoped strongly that the wild chances of war would never bring them face to face.

He wondered if Lazy still remembered him.

He saw again old Charley's face, suddenly blasted out of human shape—and again his heart raged with the thought. Well, he had paid back for old Charley, with interest. He grieved again for Isobel.

Finally he wondered about the orders, all the way from HQ, that had sent him to Sir Isaac. Was there actually a military job here? Or had Sir Isaac simply found out where he was and sent for him? The last seemed more likely; HQ would regard a request from a prince of the Egg as a military "must," dragons being as important as they were to operations.

He scratched the scar on his left arm and fell asleep.

BREAKFAST was as satisfactory as supper. This time there was no mystery about its appearance; it was wheeled in by a young dragon—Don knew that she was young, as her rear pair of eyestalks were still buds; she could not have been more than a Venus century old.

Don whistled his thanks; she answered politely and left.

Don wondered if Sir Isaac employed human servants; the cooking puzzled him—dragons simply do not cook. They prefer their fodder fresh, with a little of the bottom mud still clinging to it, for flavor. He could imagine a dragon boiling an egg the proper length of time, the time having been stated, but his imagination boggled at anything more complicated. Human cookery is an esoteric and strictly racial art.

His puzzlement did not keep him from enjoying breakfast, however.

After breakfast, his self-confidence shored up by clean and reasonably neat clothes, he braced himself for the ordeal of meeting Sir Isaac's numerous family. Used as he was to acting as a "true speech" interpreter, the prospect of so much ceremoniousness in which he himself would be expected to play a central and imaginative part made him nervous. He hoped that he would be able to carry it off in a fashion that would reflect honor on his parents and not embarrass his sponsor.

He had shaved sketchily, having no mirror, and was ready to make his sortie, when he heard his name called. It surprised him, as he knew that he should not have been disturbed—being a guest freshly arrived—even if he chose to stay in his chambers for a week, or a month—or forever.

Sir Isaac lumbered in. "My dear boy, will you forgive an old man in a hurry for treating you with the informality ordinarily used only with one's own children?"

"Why, certainly, Sir Isaac." Don was still puzzled. If Sir Isaac were a dragon in a hurry, he was the first one in history.

"If you are refreshed, then please come with me." Don did so, reflecting that they must have had him under observation; Sir Isaac's entrance was too timely. The old dragon led him out of his chambers, down a passage, and into a room which might have been considered cozy by dragon standards; it was less than a hundred feet across.

Don decided that it must be Sir Isaac's study; there were roll upon roll of ribbon books racked on the walls, and the usual sort of rotating bench set at the height of his handling tentacles. Above the racks on one wall was what Don judged to be a mural, but it looked like meaningless daubs to him; the three colors in the infra-red which dragons see and we do not, produced the usual confusion. On second thought he decided that it might actually be meaningless; certainly a lot of human art did not seem to mean anything, either.

But the point which he noticed most and wondered about was that the room contained not one but two chairs meant for humans.

Sir Isaac invited him to sit down. Don did so and found that the chair was of the best powered furniture: it felt out his size and shape and conformed to it. He found out at once for whom the other terrestrial chair was intended: a man strode in—fiftyish, lean and hard in the belly, wiry gray hair around a bald pate. He had an abrupt manner and gave the impression that his orders were always obeyed.

"Morning, gentlemen!" he said. He turned to Don. "You're Don Harvey. My name's Phipps—Montgomery Phipps." He spoke as if that were sufficient explanation. "You've grown some. Last time I saw you, I walloped your britches for biting my thumb."

Don felt put off by the man's top-sergeant air. He supposed that it was some acquaintance of his parents whom he had met in the dim reaches of his childhood, but he could not place him.

"Did I have reason to bite it?" he asked.

"Eh?" The man suddenly gave a barking laugh. "I suppose that is a matter of opinion. But we are even; I spanked you properly." He turned to Sir Isaac. "Is Malath going to be here?"

"He told me that he would make the effort. He should be along shortly."

Phipps threw himself in the other chair and drummed on the arms of it. "Well, I suppose we must wait, though I don't see the need of his attending. There has been much too much delay now—we should have had this meeting last night."

SIR ISAAC managed to drag a shocked tone out of his voder. "Last night? With a guest newly arrived?"

Phipps shrugged. "Never mind." He turned back to Don. "How did you like your dinner, son?"

"Very much."

"My wife cooked it. She's busy in the lab now, but you'll meet her later. Top-flight chemist—in or out of the kitchen."

"I'd like to thank her," Don said sincerely. "Did you say 'lab'?"

"Eh? Yes, yes—quite a place. You'll see it later. Some of the best talent on Venus here. The Federation's loss is our gain."

The questions that immediately popped into Don's mind were held up; someone—something—was coming in. Don's eyes widened when he saw that it was a Martian's "pram"—the self-propelled personal environment without which a Martian cannot live either on Earth or Venus. The little car wheeled in and joined the circle; the figure inside raised itself to a sitting position with the aid of its powered artificial exoskeleton, tried feebly to spread its pseudo-wings and spoke, its thin, tired voice amplified through a speaking system. "Malath da Thon greets you, my friends."

Phipps stood up. "Malath, old boy, you should be back in your tank. You'll kill yourself exerting like this."

"I shall live as long as is necessary."

"Here's the Harvey kid. Looks like his old man, doesn't he?"

Sir Isaac, shocked by such casualness, intervened with a formal introduction. Don tried feverishly to recall more than two words of High Martian, gave up and let it go with: "I'm glad to know you, sir."

"The honor is mine," answered the tired voice. "A tall father casts a long shadow."

Don wondered what to answer while reflecting that the rowdy lack of manners of the move-overs had its points. Phipps broke in with: "Well, let's get down to business before Malath wears himself out. Sir Isaac?"

"Very well. Donald, you know that you are welcome in my house."

"Uh—why, yes, Sir Isaac, thank you."

"You know that I urged you to visit me before I knew aught of you but your parentage and your own good spirit."

"Yes sir, you asked me to look you up. And I tried to, I really did—but I didn't know where you had landed. I was just getting organized to do a little detective work on it when the Greenies landed. I'm sorry." Don felt vaguely uncomfortable, knowing that he had put the matter off until he had a favor to ask.

"And I tried to find you, Donald—and was caught by the same mischance. Most recently, by rumors that are carried on the mist, did I discover where you were and what you were doing." Sir Isaac paused as if he found the choice of words difficult. "Knowing that this house is yours, knowing that you were welcome in any case, can you forgive me when you discover you were summoned also for a most practical reason?"

Don decided that this called for "true speech." "*How can the eyes offend the tail? Or father offend son?* What can I do to help, Sir Isaac? I had already gathered that something was up."

"How shall I begin? Should I speak of your Cyrus Buchanan, who died far from his people, yet died happily, since he had made us his people too? Or should I speak of the strange and complicated customs of your own people, wherein you sometimes—or so it appears to us—cause the jaw to bite its own leg? Or should I discuss directly the events that have happened here since first you and I shared mud in the sky?"

Phipps stirred uneasily. "Let me handle it, Sir Isaac. Remember that this young man and I are of the same race. We won't have to beat around the bush: I can put it up to him in two words. It isn't complicated."

Sir Isaac lowered his massive head. "As you wish, my friend."

Phipps turned to Don. "Young fellow, you didn't know it, but when your parents called you home to Mars, you were a courier who was carrying a message."

Don looked at him sharply. "But I did know it." His mind raced ahead, adjusting himself to this new situation.

"You did? Well, that's fine! Let's have it, then."

"Have what?"

"The ring—the ring, of course; give it to us."

Chapter Fifteen

"JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE."
John VII:24

WAIT a minute," Don protested. "You're mixed up. I know what ring you mean, all right, but it wasn't the ring; it was the paper that it was wrapped in. And the I.B.I. got that."

Phipps looked perplexed; then he laughed. "They did, eh? Then they made the same mistake you did. But it's the ring itself that is important. Let's have it."

"You must be mistaken," Don answered slowly. "Or maybe we aren't talking about the same ring." He thought about it. "It's possible that the I.B.I. swapped rings before the package ever reached me. But it's a dead cinch that the ring that was delivered to me couldn't have contained a message. It was transparent plastic—styrene, probably—and there wasn't even a fly-speck in it. No message. No way to hide a message."

Now Phipps shrugged impatiently. "Don't quibble with me as to whether or not a message could be concealed in the ring—it's the right ring; be sure of that. The I.B.I. didn't switch rings—we know."

"How do you know?"

"Confound it, boy! Your function was to deliver the ring, that's all. You let us worry about the message in it."

Don was beginning to feel sure that when his younger self had bitten Phipps' thumb, he must have been justified. "Wait a minute! I was to deliver the ring, yes—that is what Dr. Jefferson—you know who he is?"

"I knew who he was. I've never met him."

"That's what Dr. Jefferson wanted. He's dead, or so they told me. In any case, I can't consult him. But he was very specific about *to whom* I was to deliver it—to my father. Not to you."

Phipps pounded the arm of the chair. "I know it, I know it! If things had gone properly, you would have delivered it to your father, and we would have been saved no end of trouble. But those eager lads in New London had to— Never mind. The rebellion, occurring when it did, caused you to wind up here instead of on Mars. I'm trying to pick up the pieces. You can't deliver it to your father, but you can get the same result by turning it over to me. Your father and I are working toward the same end."

Don hesitated before answering: "I don't wish to be rude—but you ought to give some proof of that."

Sir Isaac produced with his voder a sound exactly like a man clearing his throat. "Ahem!" They both turned their heads toward him. "Perhaps," he went on, "I should enter the discussion. I have known Donald, if I may say so, more recently, my dear Phipps."

"Well—go ahead."

Sir Isaac turned most of his eyes on Don. "My dear Donald, do you trust me?"

"Uh, I think so, Sir Isaac—but it seems to me that I am obligated to insist on proof. It isn't my ring."

"Yes, you have reason. Then let us consider what would be proof. If I say—"

Don interrupted, feeling that the whole matter was out of hand. "I'm sorry I let this grow into an argument. You see, it does not matter."

"Eh?"

"Well, you see, I don't have the ring any longer. It's gone."

There was a dead silence for a long minute. Then Phipps said: "I think Malath has fainted."

THERE WAS scurrying excitement while the Martian's cart was removed to his chambers, tension until it was reported that he was floating in his very special bed and resting comfortably. The conference resumed with three members. Phipps glowered at Don. "It's your fault, you know. What you said took the heart out of him."

"Me? I don't understand."

"He was a courier too—he was stranded here the same way you were. He has the other half of the message—of the message you lost. And you removed the last possible chance he has of getting home before high gravity kills him. He's a sick man—and you jerked the rug out from under him."

Donald said: "But—"

Sir Isaac interrupted: "Donald is not at fault. The young should be blamed only with just cause and after deliberation, lest the family sorrow."

Phipps glanced at the dragon, then back at Don. "I'm sorry. I'm tired and bad tempered. What's done is done. The important point is: what happened to the ring? Is there any possibility of locating it?"

Don looked unhappy. "I'm afraid not." He explained rapidly about the attempt to get the ring from him, and how he had had no proper place to protect it. "I didn't know that it was really important, but I was determined to carry out Dr. Jefferson's wishes—maybe I'm sort of stubborn at times. So I did the best I could think of to do; I turned it over to a friend for safekeeping. I figured that was best, because no one would think of looking for it in the hands of a person who wouldn't be expected to have it."

"Sound enough," agreed Phipps: "but to whom did you give it?"

"A young lady." Don's features contorted. "I think she was killed when the Greenies attacked."

"You don't know?"

"I'm fairly certain. I've been doing work that gives me opportunities to ask—and nobody has laid eyes on her since the attack. I'm sure she's dead."

"You could be wrong. What was her name?"

"Isobel Costello. Her father managed the I. T. & T. branch."

Phipps looked utterly astounded, then lay back in his chair and roared. Presently he wiped his eyes and said: "Did you hear that, Sir Isaac? Did you hear that? Talk about the bluebird in your own back yard! Talk about Grandma's spectacles!"

Don looked from one to the other. "What do you mean?" he asked in offended tones.

"What do I mean? Why, son, Jim Costello and his daughter have been right here since two days after the attack." He jumped out of his chair. "Don't move! Stay where you are—I'll be right back."

And he was back quickly. "I always have trouble with those funny house phones of yours, Sir Ike," he complained. "But they're coming." He sat down and heaved a sigh. "Some days I'm tempted to turn myself in as an idiot."

Then he shut up, save for a suppressed chuckle or two. Sir Isaac seemed to be contemplating his non-existent navel. Don was preoccupied with turbulent thoughts, relief too great to be pleasure. Isobel alive!

Presently, calm somewhat restored, he spoke up. "Look—isn't it about time somebody told me what this is all about?"

Sir Isaac lifted his head, and his tendrils played over the keys. "Your pardon, dear boy. I was thinking of something else. Long, long ago when my race was young and when your race had not yet—"

Phipps cut in. "Excuse me, old boy, but I can brief it, and you can fill him in on the details later." He assumed assent and turned to Don. "Harvey, there is an organization—a cabal, a conspiracy, a secret lodge, call it what you like—we just call it 'The Organization.' I'm a member; so is Sir Isaac; so is old Malath—and so are both of your parents. And so was Dr. Jefferson. It's made up mostly of scientists, but it is not limited to them: the one thing we all have in common is a belief in the dignity and natural worth of free intelligence. In many different ways we have fought—and fought unsuccessfully, I should add—against the historical imperative of the last two centuries, the withering away of individual freedom under larger and ever more pervasive organizations, both governmental and quasi-governmental.

"On Earth our group derives from dozens of sources, far back in history—associations of scientists fighting against secrecy and the straitjacketing of thought, artists fighting against censorship, legal-aid societies, many other organizations, most of them unsuccessful, and some downright stupid. About a century ago all such things

were pushed underground; the weak sisters dropped out, the talkative got themselves arrested and liquidated—and the remnants consolidated.

"Here on Venus our origins go clear back to the *rapprochement* between Cyrus Buchanan and the dominant natives. On Mars, in addition to many humans—more about them later—the organization is affiliated with what we call their 'priest class'—a bad translation, for they aren't priests; 'judges' would be closer."

Sir Isaac interrupted: "'Elder brothers'."

"Eh? Well, maybe that is a fair poetical rendering. Never mind. The point is, the whole organization, Martian, Venerian, Terrestrial, has been striving—"

"Just a minute," put in Don. "If you can answer me one question, it would clear up a whole lot. I'm a soldier of the Venus Republic, and we've got a war on. Tell me this: is this organization—here on Venus, I mean—helping in our fight to chuck the Greenies out?"

"Well, not precisely. You see—"

Don did not then find out what it was he was supposed to see; another voice cut through Phipps' words: "Don! Donald!"

He found himself swarmed over by a somewhat smaller, female member of his own race. Isobel seemed determined to break his neck. Don was embarrassed and upset and most happy. He gently removed her arms from his neck and tried to pretend that it had not happened—when he caught sight of her father looking at him quite oddly. "Uh, hello, Mr. Costello."

Costello advanced and shook hands with him.

"How do you do, Mr. Harvey? It's good to see you again."

"It's good to see you. I'm mighty glad to see you folks alive and in one piece. I thought you had had it."

"Not quite. But it was a near thing."

Isobel said: "Don, you look older—much older. And how thin you are!"

He grinned at her. "You look just the same, Grandma."

PHIPPS interrupted: "Much as I dislike breaking up Old Home Week, we have no time to waste. Miss Costello, we want the ring."

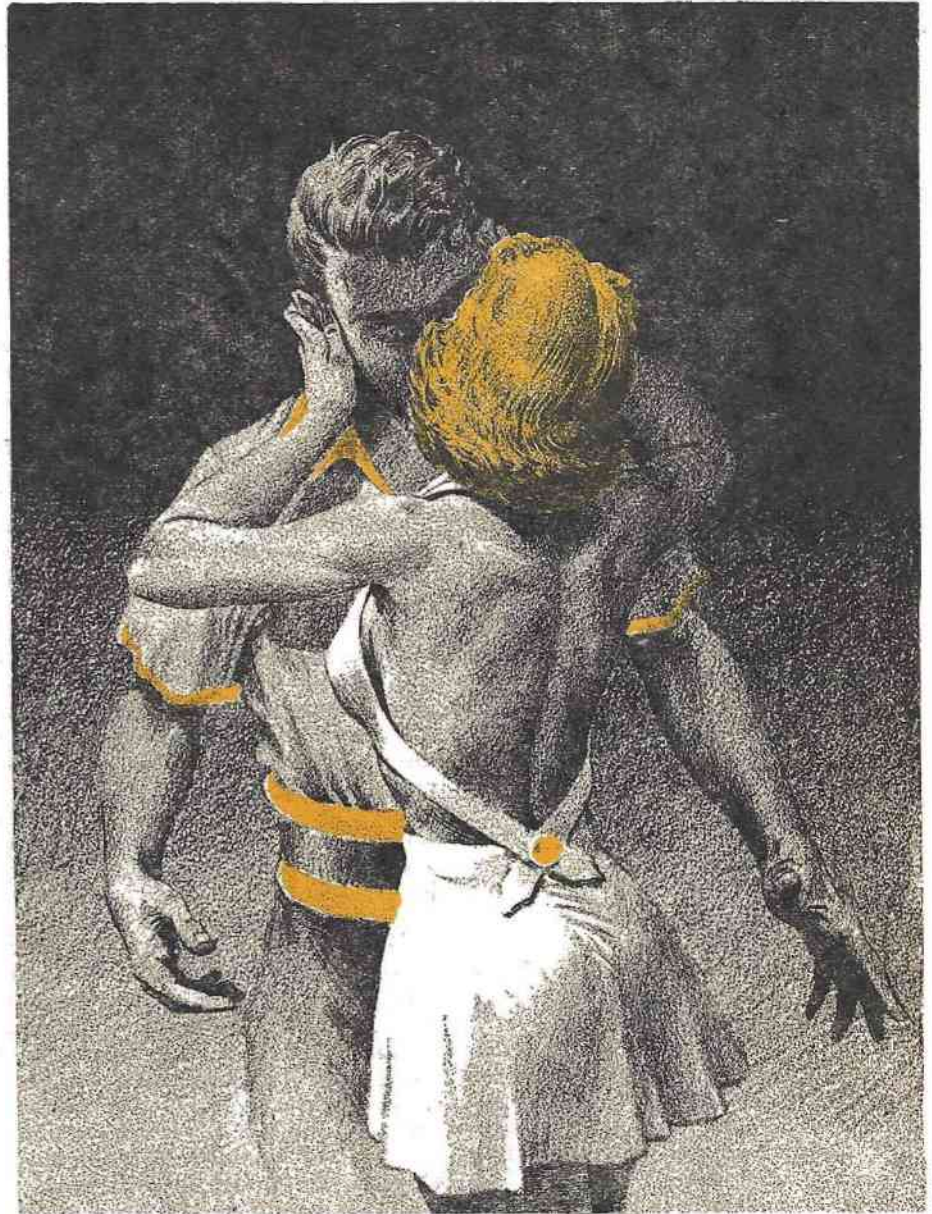
"The ring?"

"He means," explained Don, "the ring I left with you."

"Ring?" said Mr. Costello. "Mr. Harvey, did you give my daughter a ring?"

"Well, not exactly. You see—"

Phipps interrupted again. "It's the ring, Jim—the message ring. Harvey was the other courier—and it seems



"Don, you be sure to come back! Well— Open sky!"

he made your daughter a sort of deputy courier."

"Eh? I must say I'm confused." He looked at his daughter in evident puzzlement.

"You have it?" Don asked her. "You didn't lose it?"

"Lose your ring? Of course not, Don. But I had thought— Never mind; you want it back now." She glanced around at the eyes on her—fourteen, counting Sir Isaac's—then moved away and turned her back. She turned around again almost immediately, and held out her hand. "Here it is."

Phipps reached for it. Isobel drew her hand away and handed it to Don. Phipps opened his mouth, closed it again, then reopened it.

"Very well—and now let's have it, Harvey."

Don put it in a pocket. "You never did get around to explaining why I should turn it over to you."

"But—" Phipps turned quite red. "This is preposterous! Had we known it was here, we would never have bothered to send for you—we would have had it without your leave."

"Oh, no!" Isobel cried.

Phipps swung his eyes to Isobel. "What's that, young lady? And why not?"

"Because I wouldn't have given it to you—not ever. Don *told* me that someone was trying to get it away from him. I didn't know that you were the one!"

Phipps, already red-faced, got almost apoplectic. "I've had all this childish kidding around with serious matters that I can stand." He took two long strides to Don and grasped

him by the arm. "Cut out the nonsense and give us that message!"

Don shook him off and backed away half a step, all in one smooth motion—and Phipps looked down to see the point of a blade almost touching his waistband. Don held the knife with the relaxed thumb-and-two-finger grip of those who understand steel.

Phipps seemed to have trouble believing what he saw. Don said to him softly: "Get away from me!"

Phipps backed away. "Sir Isaac!" "Yes," agreed Don. "Sir Isaac—do I have to put up with this in your house?"

The dragon's tentacles struck the keys, but only confused squawking came out. He stopped and started again and said very slowly: "Donald—this is your house. You are always safe in it. Please—by the service you did me—put away your weapon."

Don glanced at Phipps, straightened up and caused his knife to disappear. Phipps relaxed and turned to the dragon.

"Well, Sir Isaac? What are you going to do about it?"

Sir Isaac did not bother with the voder. "Remove thyself!"

"Eh?"

"You have brought dissension into this house. Were you not both in my house and of my family? Yet you menaced him. Please go—before you cause more sorrow."

Phipps started to speak, thought better of it—left. Don said: "Sir Isaac, I am terribly sorry. I—"

"Let the waters close over it. Let the mud bury it. Donald, my dear boy, how can I assure that what we ask of you is what your honored parents would have you do, were they here to instruct you?"

Don considered this. "I think that's just the trouble, Sir Isaac—I'm not your 'dear boy.' I'm not anybody's 'dear boy.' My parents aren't here, and I'm not sure that I would let them instruct me if they were. I'm a grown man now—I'm not as old as you are, not by several centuries. I'm not very old even by human standards—Mr. Phipps still classes me as a boy, and that was what was wrong. But I'm not a boy, and I've got to know what's going on and make up my own mind. So far, I've heard a lot of sales-talk, and I've been subjected to a lot of verbal pushing around. That won't do; I've got to know the real facts."

BEFORE SIR ISAAC could reply they were interrupted by another sound—Isobel was applauding. Don said to her: "How about you, Isobel? What do you know about all this?"

"Me? Nothing. I couldn't be more in the dark if I were stuffed in a sack. I was just cheering your sentiments."

"My daughter," Mr. Costello put in crisply, "knows nothing at all of these things. But I do—and it appears you are entitled to answers."

"I could certainly use some!"

"By your leave, Sir Isaac?"

The dragon ponderously inclined his head; Costello went on: "Fire away. I'll try to give you straight answers."

"Okay—what's the message in the ring?"

"Well, I can't answer that exactly, or we wouldn't need the message ourselves. I know that it's a discussion of certain aspects of physics—gravitation and inertia and spin and things like that. Field theory. It's certainly very long and very complicated, and I probably wouldn't understand it if I knew exactly what was in it. I'm simply a somewhat rusty communications engineer, not a topflight theoretical physicist."

Don looked puzzled. "I don't get it. Somebody tucks a physics book into a ring—and then we play cops-and-robbers all around the system. It sounds silly. Furthermore, it sounds impossible." He took the ring out and looked at it; the light shone through it clearly. It was just a notions-counter trinket—how could a major work on physics be hidden in it?

SIR ISAAC said: "Donald, my dear boy— I beg your pardon. You mistake simple appearance for simplicity. Be assured; it is in there. It is theoretically possible to have a matrix in which each individual molecule has a meaning—as they do in the memory cells of your brain. If we had such subtlety, we could wrap your Encyclopedia Britannica into the head of a pin—it would be the head of that pin. But this is nothing so difficult."

Don looked again at the ring and put it back in his pocket. "Okay, if you say so. But I still don't see what all the shooting is about."

Mr. Costello answered: "We don't either—not exactly. This message was intended to go to Mars, where they are prepared to make the best use of it. I myself had not even heard about the project except in the most general terms until I was brought here. But the main idea is this: the equations that are included in this message tell how space is put together—and how to manipulate it. I can't even imagine all the implications of that—but we do know a couple of things that we expect from it: first, how to make a force field that will stop anything, even a fusion bomb; and second, how to hook up a space-drive that would make rocket travel look like walking. Don't ask me how—I'm out of my depth. Ask Sir Isaac."

"Ask me after I've studied the message," the dragon commented dryly.

Don made no comment. There was silence for some moments, which Costello broke by saying: "Well? Do you want to ask anything? I do not know quite what you do know; I hardly know what to volunteer."

"Mr. Costello, when I talked to you in New London, did you know about this message?"

COSTELLO shook his head. "I knew that our organization had great hopes from an investigation going on on Earth. I knew that it was intended to finish on Mars—you see, I was the key man, the 'drop box,' for communication to and from Venus, because I was in a position to handle interplanetary messages. I did not know that you were a courier—and I certainly did not know that you had entrusted an organization message to my only daughter." He smiled wryly. "I might add that I did not even identify you in my mind as the son of two members of our organization, else there would have been no question about handling your message, whether you could pay for it or not. There were means whereby I could spot organization messages—identifications that your message lacked. And Harvey is a fairly common name."

"You know," Don said slowly, "it seems to me that if Dr. Jefferson had told me what it was I was carrying—and if you had trusted Isobel here with some idea of what was going on, a lot of trouble could have been saved."

"Perhaps. But men have died for knowing too much. Conversely, what they don't know, they can't tell."

"Yes, I suppose so. But there ought to be some way of running things so that people don't have to go around loaded with secrets and afraid to speak!"

Both the dragon and the man inclined their heads. Mr. Costello added: "That's exactly what we're after—in the long run. That sort of world."

Don turned to his host. "Sir Isaac, when we met in the *Glory Road*, did you know that Dr. Jefferson was using me as a messenger?"

"No, Donald—though I should have suspected it when I learned who you were." He paused, then added: "Is there anything more you wish to know?"

"No, I just want to think." Too many things had happened too fast, too many new ideas. . . . Take what Mr. Costello had said about what was in the ring, now—he could see what that would mean—if Costello knew what he was talking about. A fast space-drive, one that would run rings around the Federation ships—a way

to guard against atom bombs, even fusion bombs—why, if the Republic had such things, they could tell the Federation to go fly a kite!

But that so-and-so Phipps had admitted that all this hanky-panky was not for the purpose of fighting the Greenies. They wanted to send the stuff to Mars, whatever it was. Why Mars? Mars didn't even have a permanent human settlement—just scientific commissions and expeditions, like the work his parents did. The place wasn't fit for humans, not really. So why Mars?

Whom could he trust? Isobel, of course—he had trusted her, and it had paid off. Her father? Isobel and her father were two different people, and Isobel didn't know anything about what her father was doing. He looked at her; she stared back with big, serious eyes. He looked at her father. He didn't know, he just didn't know.

Malath? A voice out of a tank! Phipps? Phipps might be kind to children and have a heart of gold, but Don had no reason to trust him.

To be sure, all these people knew about Dr. Jefferson, knew about the ring, seemed to know about his parents—but Bankfield had also known. He needed *proof*, not words: he knew enough now, enough had happened now, to prove to him that what he carried was of utmost importance.

It occurred to him that there was one possible way of checking: Phipps had told him that Malath carried the other half of the same message—that the ring carried only one half. If it turned out that his half fitted the part that Malath carried, it would pretty well prove that these people had a right to the message.

But confound it all—that test required him to break the egg to discover that it was bad. He had to know *before* he turned it over to them. He had met that two-piece message system before; it was a standard military dodge—but used, and used only, when it was so terribly, terribly important not to let a message be compromised that you would rather not have it delivered than take any risk at all of having it fall into the wrong hands.

He looked up at the dragon. "Sir Isaac?"

"Yes, Donald?"

"What would happen if I refused to give up the ring?"

Sir Isaac answered at once but with grave deliberation: "You are my own egg, no matter what. This is your house—where you may dwell in peace—or leave in peace, as is your will."

"Thank you, Sir Isaac." Don trilled it in dragon symbols and used Sir Isaac's true name.

Costello said urgently: "Mr. Harvey—"

"Yes?"

"Do you know *why* the speech of the dragon people is called 'true speech'?"

"Uh—why, no, not exactly."

"Because it *is* true speech. See here—I've studied comparative semantics, and the whistling talk does not even contain a symbol for the concept of falsehood. *And what a person does not have symbols, for he can't think about!* Ask him, Mr. Harvey! Ask him *in his own speech*. If he answers at all, you can believe him."

Donald looked at the old dragon. The thought went racing through his mind that Costello was right—there was no symbol in dragon speech for "lie." The dragons apparently never had arrived at the idea—or the need. Could Sir Isaac tell a lie? Or was he so far humanized that he could behave and think like a man? He stared at Sir Isaac and eight blank, oscillating eyes looked back at him. How could a man know what a dragon was thinking?

"Ask him!" insisted Costello.

He didn't trust Phipps; he couldn't logically trust Costello—he had no reason to. And Isobel didn't figure in it.

But a man had to trust somebody, sometime! A man couldn't go it alone—all right, let it be this dragon who had "shared mud" with him. "It isn't necessary," Don said suddenly. "Here." He reached into his pocket, took out the ring and slipped it over one of Sir Isaac's tentacles.

The tentacle curled through it and withdrew it into the slowly writhing mass.

"I thank you, *Mist-on-the-Waters*."

Chapter Sixteen

MULTUM IN PARVO

DONALD looked at Isobel and found her still solemn, unsmiling, but she seemed to show approval. Her father sat down heavily in the other chair. "Phew!" he sighed. "Mr. Harvey, you had me worried."

"I'm sorry. I had to think."

"No matter now." He turned to Sir Isaac. "I guess I had better dig up Phipps. Yes?"

"It won't be necessary." The voice came from behind them; they all turned—all but Sir Isaac, who did not need to turn his body. Phipps stood just inside the door. "I came in on the tail end of your remark, Jim. If you want me, I'm here."

"Well, yes."

"Just a moment, then. I came for another reason." He faced Don. "Mr. Harvey, I owe you an apology."

"Oh, that's all right."

"No, let me say my say. I had no business trying to bullyrag you into cooperating. Don't mistake me; we want that ring—we *must* have it. And I mean to argue until we get it. But I've been under great strain, and I went about it the wrong way. Very great strain—that's my only excuse."

"Well," said Don, "come to think about it, so have I. So let's forget it." He turned to his host. "Sir Isaac, may I?" He reached toward Sir Isaac's handling tentacles, putting out his palm. The ring dropped into it; he turned and handed it to Phipps.

PHIPPS stared at it stupidly for a moment. When he looked up, Don was surprised to see that the man's eyes were filled with tears. "I won't thank you," he said, "because when you see what will come of this it will mean more to you than any person's thanks. What is in this ring is of life-and-death importance to many, many people. You'll see."

Don was embarrassed by the man's naked emotion. "I can guess," he said gruffly. "Mr. Costello told me that it meant bomb protection and faster ships—and I bet on my hunch that you people and I are on the same side in the long run. I just hope I didn't guess wrong."

"Guess wrong? No, you haven't guessed wrong—and not just in the long run, as you put it, but *right now!* Now that we have this"—he held up the ring—"we stand a fighting chance to save our people on Mars."

"Mars?" repeated Don. "Hey, wait a minute—what's this about Mars? Who's going to be saved? And from what?"

Phipps looked just as puzzled. "Eh? But wasn't that what persuaded you to turn over the ring?"

"Wasn't *what* what persuaded me?"

"Didn't Jim Costello—" "Why, I thought of course you had—" And Sir Isaac's voder interrupted with: "Gentlemen, apparently it was assumed that—"

"*Quiet!*" Don shouted. As Phipps opened his mouth again, Don hurriedly added: "Things seem to have got mixed up again. Can somebody—just one of you—tell me what goes on?"

Costello could and did: The Organization had for many years been quietly building a research center on Mars. It was the one place in the system where the majority of humans were scientists. The Federation maintained merely an outpost there, with a skeleton garrison. Mars was not regarded as being of any real importance—just a place where harmless longhairs could dig among the ruins and study the customs of the ancient and dying race.

The security officers of the I.B.I. gave Mars little attention, for there seemed no need. The occasional agent who did show up could be led around and allowed to see research of no military importance.

The group on Mars did not have the giant facilities available on Earth—the mastodonic cybernetic machines, the unlimited sources of atomic power, the superpowerful particle accelerators, the enormous laboratories—but they did have freedom. The theoretical ground-work for new advances in physics had been worked out on Mars, spurred on by certain mystifying records of the First Empire—that almost mythical earlier epoch when the solar system had been one political unit.

Don had been highly pleased to hear that the researches of his own parents had contributed largely at this point in the problem. It was known—or so the ancient Martian records seemed to state—that the ships of the First Empire had traveled between the planets, not in journeys of weary months, or even weeks, but of *days*.

The descriptions of these ships and of their motive power were extensive, but differences in language, in concept, and in technology created obstacles enough to give comparative semanticists nervous breakdowns—had done so, in fact. A treatise on modern electronics written in Sanskrit poetry with half the thoughts taken for granted would have been lucid in comparison.

It had simply been impossible to make fully intelligible translations of the ancient records. What was missing had to be worked out by genius and sweat.

WHEN the theoretical work had been carried as far as it could be, the problem was sent to Earth *via* members of the Organization for *sub rosa* testing and for conversion of theory into present-day engineering. At first there was a steady traffic of information back and forth between planets, but as the secret grew, the members of the Organization were less and less inclined to travel for fear of compromising what they knew. By the time of the Venus crisis, it had been standard practice for some years to send critical information by couriers who knew nothing and therefore could not talk—such as Don—or by non-terrestrials who were physically immune to the interrogation methods of the security police—giving a Vennerian dragon the “third degree” was not only impractical, but ridiculous. For different but equally obvious reasons, Martians also were safe from the thought-police.

Don himself was a last-minute choice, a “channel of opportunity”—

the Venus crisis had rushed things. How badly it had rushed things no one knew until after Commodore Higgins' spectacular raid on Circum-Terra. The engineering data so urgently needed on Mars had gone to Venus instead, there to be lost (Don's half of it) in the confusion of rebellion and counterblow. The rebelling colonists, driving toward the same goal as the Organization, had unknowingly thwarted their best chance for overthrowing the Federation.

COMMUNICATION between the Organization members on Venus, on Earth, and on Mars had been precariously and imperfectly reestablished right under the noses of the Federation police. The Organization had members like Costello working for I. T. & T. on all three planets. Costello himself had been helped to make his escape, with Isobel, because he knew too much: they could not afford to have him questioned—but a new “drop box” had been set up at Governor's Island in the person of a Federation communications technical sergeant. The channel to the sergeant was a dragon who had the garbage-disposal contract for the “Greemie” base. The dragon had no voice: the sergeant knew no whistle talk—but a tentacle can pass a note to a human hand.

Communication, though difficult and dangerous, was possible: travel between planets for members of the Organization was now utterly impossible. The only commercial line as yet reestablished was the Earth-Moon run. The group on Venus was attempting the almost impossible task of completing a project all preliminary preparations for which had been made for Mars. The task was not quite impossible—provided they could find the missing half of the message, they might yet outfit a ship, send it to Mars, and finish the job.

So they hoped—and continued to hope until recently, when disastrous news had got through to them from Earth—the Organization had been penetrated on Earth; a very senior member, one who knew much too much, had been arrested and had not been able to commit suicide in time.

And a task force of Federation ships was already on its way to attack the group on Mars.

“Wait a minute!” Don interrupted. “I thought—Mr. Costello, didn't you tell me, back in New London, that the Federation had already moved in on Mars?”

“Not exactly. I told you that I had inferred that the Federation had taken over Schiaparelli Station, the I. T. & T. branch there. And so they had—to the extent of censoring all traffic and putting a stop to all traffic

with Venus. They could do that with a squad of soldiers from the pint-sized garrison they've always had there. But this is an attack in force. They mean to liquidate the Organization.”

Liquidate the Organization—Don translated the jawbreakers into real words: kill all the people who were against them. That meant his parents—

He shook his head to clear it. The thought did not mean anything to him inside. It had been too many years; he could not see their faces—and he could not imagine them dead. He wondered if he himself had become dead inside, unable to feel things. No matter—something had to be done.

“What do we do?” he asked. “How can we stop it?”

“We quit wasting time!” answered Phipps. “We've lost half a day already. Sir Isaac?”

“Yes, my friend. Let us hurry.”

The room was a laboratory shop, but of dragon proportions. It needed to be, for it held a round dozen of dragons as well as fifty-odd men and a sprinkling of women. Everyone who could manage it wanted to see the opening of the ring. Even Malath da Thon was there, sitting up in his cell with the aid of his power-driven corset and with the colors of emotion rippling gently across his frail body.

Don and Isobel had climbed to the top of the entrance ramp, where they could see without being in the way. Opposite them was a large stereo tank, lighted but with no picture growing in it. Below them was a micromanipulator, dragon style; other pieces of apparatus and power tools filled the rest of the room. They were strange to Don, not because they were of dragon construction and for dragon use, for many of them were not—they were strange in the way in which laboratory equipment is always exotic to the layman. He was used to dragon artifacts: the two technologies, human and dragon, had interpenetrated sufficiently so that a human, especially one living on Venus, found nothing odd in joints that were wrung instead of welded or bolted, nothing unusual in interlocking ovoids where a man would use screws.

SIR ISAAC was at the micromanipulator, his tendrils at the controls; down over his head fitted a frame with eight eyepieces. He touched the control rack; the tank rippled, and a picture built in it—the ring, in full color and three dimensions. It seemed to be about eight feet across. The boss of the ring faced out, displaying the enamel-filled initial cut into it—

a capital "H" framed with a simple circle of white enamel.

The picture flickered and changed. Only a portion of the initial was now visible, but so greatly magnified that the enamel rubbed into the shallow grooves of the letter looked like broken paving blocks. A shadowy pointed cylinder, out of focus save at its very end, moved across the picture; a great oily globe formed on the end of it, detached itself and settled on the enamel. The "paving blocks" started to break up.

MONTGOMERY PHIPPS climbed the ramp, saw Don and Isobel, and sat down on the edge beside them. He seemed to want to be friendly. "This will be something to tell your grandchildren about," he remarked. "Old Sir Ike at work. The best micro-technician in the system—can darn near pick out a single molecule, make it sit up and beg."

"It rather surprises me," Don admitted. "I hadn't known that Sir Isaac was a laboratory technician."

"He's more than that; he's a great physicist; hadn't the significance of his chosen name struck you?"

Don felt foolish. He knew how dragons went about picking vocalized names, but he took such names for granted, just as he took his own Venerian name for granted. "His whole tribe tends to be scientific," Phipps went on. "There's a grandson who calls himself 'Galileo Galilei'; have you met him? And there's a 'Doctor Einstein' and a 'Madame Curie' and there's an integrating chemist who calls herself—Egg alone knows why!—'Little Buttercup.' But old Sir Ike is the boss man, the top brain—he made a trip to Earth to help with some of the work on this project. But you knew that, didn't you?"

Donald admitted that he had not known why Sir Isaac was on Earth. Isobel put in: "Mr. Phipps, if Sir Isaac was working on this on Earth, why doesn't he know what is in the ring before he opens it?"

"Well, he does and he doesn't. He worked on the theoretical end. But what we will find—unless we get a terrific disappointment—will be detailed engineering instructions worked out for man-type tools and techniques. Very different."

Don thought about it. "Engineering" and "science" were more or less lumped together in his mind; he lacked the training to appreciate the enormous difference. He changed the subject. "You are a laboratory man yourself, Mr. Phipps?"

"Me? Heavens, no! My fingers are all thumbs. The dynamics of history is my game. Theoretical once—applied now. Well, that's a dry hole." His eyes were on the tank; the solvent,



Something was revealed under the paint.

sluiced in by what seemed to be hog-head amounts, had washed the enamel out of the groove that defined that part of the initial "H"; the floor of the groove could be seen, bare, amber and transparent.

Phipps stood up. "I can't sit still—I get nervous. Excuse me, please." "Surely."

A dragon was lumbering up the ramp. He stopped by them just as Phipps was turning away. "Howdy, Mr. Phipps. Mind if I park here?"

"Not at all. Know these people?" "I've met the lady."

DON acknowledged the introduction, giving both his names and receiving those of the dragon in turn—*Refreshing Rain* and Josephus ("Just call me Joe"). Joe was the first dragon, other than Sir Isaac, whom Don had met there who was voder-trained and -equipped; Don looked at him with interest. One thing was certain: Joe had learned English from some master other than the nameless Cockney who had taught Sir Isaac—a Texan, Don felt quite sure.

"I am honored to be in your house," Don said to him.

The dragon settled himself comfortably, letting his chin come about to their shoulders. "Not my house. These snobs wouldn't have me around if there wasn't a job I can do a little better than the next *hombre*. I just work here."

"Oh." Don wanted to defend Sir Isaac against the charge of snobbery but taking sides between dragons seemed unwise. He looked back at the tank. The scan had shifted to the circle of enamel which framed the "H"; fifteen or twenty degrees of it appeared in the tank. The magnification started to swell enormously until one tiny sector filled the huge picture. Again the solvent floated into the enamel; again it washed away.

"Now we are getting some place, maybe," commented Joe.

The enamel was dissolving like snow in spring rain, but instead of washing down to a bare floor, something dark was revealed under the paint—a bundle of steel pipes, it seemed to be, nested in the shallow groove.

There was dead silence—then somebody cheered. Don found that he had been holding his breath. "What is it?" he asked Joe.

"Wire. What would you expect?"

Sir Isaac stepped up the magnification and shifted to another sector. Slowly, as carefully as a mother bathing her first-born, he washed the covering off the upper layer of the coiled wire. Presently a microscopic claw reached in, felt around most delicately, and extracted one end.

Joe got to his feet. "Got to get to work," he declared. "That's my cue." He ambled down the ramp. Don noticed that he was growing a new starboard-midships leg and the process was not quite complete; it gave him a lopsided, one-flat-wheel gait.

Slowly, tenderly, the wire was cleaned and uncoiled. More than an hour later the tiny hands of the micro-manipulator stretched out their prize—four feet of steel wire so gossamer fine that it could not be seen at all by naked eye, even by a dragon.

Sir Isaac drew his head out of the eyepiece rack. "Is Malath's wire ready?" he inquired.

"All set."

"Very well, my friends. Let us commence."

They were fed into two ordinary microwire speakers, rigged in parallel. Seated at a control panel for synchronizing the fragmented message latent in the two wires was a worried-looking man wearing earphones—Mr. Costello. The steel spider-threads started through very slowly—and a high-pitched gabbling came out of the horn. There were very rapid momentary interruptions, like high frequency code.

"Not in synch," announced Mr. Costello. "Rewind."

An operator sitting in front of him said, "I hate to rewind, Jim. These wires would snap if you breathed on them."

"So you break a wire—Sir Isaac will splice it. Rewind!"

"Maybe you've got one in backward."

"Shut up and rewind."

PRESENTLY the gabbling resumed. To Don it sounded the same as before and utterly meaningless, but Mr. Costello nodded. "That's got it. Was it recorded from the beginning?"

Don heard Joe's Texas accents answering: "In the can!"

"Okay, keep it rolling and start playing back the recording. Try slow-

ing the composite twenty to one." Costello threw a switch; the gabbling stopped completely although the machines continued to unreel the invisible threads. Shortly a human voice came out of the loudspeaker horn; it was deep, muffled, dragging, and almost unintelligible. Joe stopped it and made an adjustment, started over. When the voice resumed it was a clear, pleasant, most carefully enunciated contralto.

"Title," the voice said, "'Some Notes on the Practical Applications of the Horst-Milne Equations. Table of Contents: Part One—On the Design of Generators to Accomplish Strain-Free Molar Translation. Part Two—The Generation of Space-Time Discontinuities, Closed, Open and Folded. Part Three—On the Generation of Temporary Pseudo-Acceleration Loci. Part One, Chapter One—Design Criteria for a Simple Generator and Control System. Referring to equation seventeen in Appendix A, it will be seen that—'"

The voice flowed on and on, apparently tireless. Don was interested, intensely so, but he did not understand it. He found himself growing sleepy when the voice suddenly rapped out: "Facsimile! Facsimile! Facsimile!"

Costello touched a switch, stopping the voice, and demanded: "Cameras ready?"

"Hot and rolling!"

"Shift!"

They watched the picture build up—a wiring diagram, Don decided it must be—or else a plate of spaghetti. When the picture was complete, the voice resumed.

After more than two hours of this, broken only by desultory conversation, Don turned to Isobel.

"I'm not doing any good here," he said in an undertone, "and I'm certainly not learning anything. What do you say we leave?"

"Suits."

THEY went down the ramp and headed for a tunnel that led toward living quarters. On the way they ran into Phipps, his face glowing with happiness. Don nodded and started to push on past; Phipps stopped him. "I was just going to hunt you up."

"Me?"

"Yes. I thought you might want this—for a souvenir." He held out the ring.

Don took it and examined it curiously. There was a very tiny break in one branch of the "H" where the enamel had been eaten away. The framing circle was an empty, slightly shadowed groove, a groove so narrow and shallow that Don could hardly catch his fingernail in it.

"You've no more use for it?"

"It's squeezed dry. Keep it. You'll be able to sell it to a museum some day, for a high price."

"No," said Don, "I reckon I'll deliver it to my father—eventually."

Chapter Seventeen

TO RESET THE CLOCK

DON moved out of the huge chambers he had been given and in with the other humans. Sir Isaac would have let him stay until the Sun grew cold, monopolizing an acre or so of living space, but to Don it seemed not only silly for one person to clutter up chambers built big enough for dragons but not entirely comfortable—so much open space made a man tuned to bush fighting uneasy.

The human guests occupied one dragon apartment with the great rooms partitioned off into cubicles. They shared its wallowing trough as a plunge bath and had a communal mess. Don roomed with Dr. Roger Conrad, a tall and shaggy young man with a perpetual grin. Don was a bit surprised to find that Conrad was held in high esteem by the other scientists.

He saw very little of his roommate, nor of any of the others—even Isobel was busy with clerical work. The team worked night and day with driving intensity. The ring had been opened, and they had engineering data to work from, true—but that task force was already swinging toward Mars. Nobody knew—nobody *could* know—whether or not they could finish in time to save their colleagues.

Conrad had tried to explain it to Don one night late as they were turning in.

"We don't have adequate facilities here. The instructions were conceived in terms of Earth- and Mars-type techniques. The dragons do things differently. We've got mighty little of our own stuff, and it's hard to jury-rig what we need from their stuff. The original notion was to install the gear in—you know those little jump-bug ships that people use to get around in on Mars?"

"Seen pictures of them."

"Never actually seen 'em myself. Useless as rocket-ships, of course, but they are pressurized and big enough. Now we've got to adapt for a shuttle." A superstratospheric shuttle "with its ears trimmed"—the spreading glider wings unshipped and carried away—waited in a covered bayou outside Sir Isaac's family seat. It would make the trip to Mars—if it could be prepared. "It's a headache," he added.

"Well, can we do it?"

"We'll *have* to do it. We can't possibly do the design calculations over again; we don't have the ma-

chines, even if we had time to re-engineer the job—which we haven't."

"That's what I meant. Will you finish in time?"

Conrad sighed. "I wish I knew."

The pressure of time sat heavily on all of them. In their mess hall they had set up a large chart showing Earth, Sun, Venus and Mars, each in its proper position. At lunch each day the markers were moved along the scribed orbits, the Earth by one degree, Venus a bit more, Mars by only half a degree and a trifle.

A long dotted line curved from a point on Earth's orbit to a rendezvous with Mars—their best estimate of the path and arrival date of the Federation task force. The departure date was all they knew with certainty; the trajectory itself and the arrival date were based on the relative positions of the two planets and what was believed to be the maximum performance of any Federation ship, assuming refueling in parking orbit around Earth.

For a rocket ship some orbits are possible, some are impossible. A military ship in a hurry would not, of course, use the economical doubly-tangent ellipse; such a trip, Earth to Mars, would require 258 Earth days. But even using hyperboloids and wasting fuel, there are severe limits to how quickly a reaction-driven ship can make an interplanetary voyage.

An Earth calendar hung beside the chart; near it was a clock showing Earth-Greenwich time. Posted near these was a figure, changed each time the clock read twenty-four hundred, the number of days till M-Day—by their best estimate, now only thirty-nine. . . .

Don was enjoying a combat soldier's paradise—hot food sharp on the hour, well cooked and plenty of it, all the sack time he cared to soak up, clean clothes, clean skin, no duties and no hazards. The only trouble was that he soon grew to hate it.

The intense activity around him shamed him into wanting to help, and try to help he did—until he found out that he was being given make-work to shut him up. Actually there was nothing he could do to help; the sweating specialists, trying their level best to haywire improbable circuits into working, had no time to waste on an untrained assistant. He gave up and went back to loafing, found that he could sleep all right in the afternoons, but that the practice kept him awake at night.

HE wondered why he could not enjoy so pleasant a leave. It was not that he was worried about his parents—

Yes, he was! Though they had grown dim in his memory his con-

science was biting him that he was doing nothing helpful for them. That was why he wanted to get out, away from here where he could do no good, back to his outfit, back to his trade—back to where there was nothing to worry about between scrambles—and plenty to worry about then. With the blackness around you and the sound of your mate's breathing on your right and the same for the man on your left; the slow move forward, trying to feel out what dirty tricks the Greenie techs had thought of this time to guard their sleep; the quick strike—and the pounding drive back to the boat with nothing to guide you through the dark but the supersonics in your head bones—

He wanted to go back.

FINALLY he went to see Phipps about it, sought him out in his office.

"You, eh? Have a cigarette."

"No, thanks."

"Real tobacco—none of your 'crazy weed'."

"No, thanks, I don't use 'em."

"Well, maybe you've got something. The way my mouth tastes these mornings—" Phipps lit up himself, sat back and waited.

Don said: "Look—you're the boss around here."

Phipps exhaled, then said carefully: "Let's say I'm the coördinator. I certainly don't try to boss the technical work."

Don brushed it aside. "You're the boss for my purposes. See here, Mr. Phipps, I feel useless around here. Can you arrange to get me back to my outfit?"

Phipps carefully made a smoke ring. "I'm sorry you feel that way. I could give you work to do. You could be an executive assistant to me."

Don shook his head. "I've had enough of 'pick up sticks and lay them straight.' I want real work—my own work. I'm a soldier, and there's a war going on—that's where I belong. Now when can I get transportation?"

"You can't."

"Huh?"

"Mr. Harvey, I can't let you go; you know too much. If you had turned over the ring without asking questions, you could have gone back to your outfit the next hour—but you had to know, you had to know everything. Now we don't dare risk your capture. You know the Greenies put every prisoner through full interrogation; we don't dare risk that—not yet."

"But— Dog take it, sir, I'll never be captured! I made up my mind about that a long time ago."

Phipps shrugged. "If you get yourself killed, that's all right. But we can't be sure of that, no matter how resolute you are. We can't risk it; there's too much at stake."

"You can't hold me here! You have no authority over me!"

"No. But you can't leave."

Don opened his mouth, closed it, and walked out.

He woke up the next morning determined to do something about it. But Dr. Conrad was up before he was and stopped to make a suggestion before he left.

"Don?" he began.

"Yeah, Rog?"

"If you can tear yourself out of that sack, you might come around to the power lab this morning. There will be something worth looking at—I think."

"Huh? What? What time?"

"Oh, say about nine o'clock."

Don showed up, along with apparently every human in the place and about half of Sir Isaac's numerous family. Roger Conrad was in charge of the demonstration. He was busy at a control console which told the uninstructed observer nothing. He busied himself with adjustments, looked up and said: "Just keep your eyes on the birdie, folks—right over that bench." He pressed a key.

There flicked into being over the bench, hanging in the air unsupported, a silvery ball some two feet across. It seemed to be a perfect sphere and a perfect reflector and, more than anything else in the world, it made Don think of a Christmas tree ornament. Conrad grinned triumphantly. "Okay, Tony—give it the axe!"

Tony Vincente, the most muscular of the laboratory crew, picked up a broad-bladed axe he had ready. "How would you like it split—up and down, or sideways?"

"Suit yourself."

Vincente swung the axe over his head and brought it down hard.

It bounced off.

The sphere did not quiver, nor was there any mar on its perfect mirror surface.

Roger Conrad's boyish grin grew even wider. "End of act one," he announced, and pressed another button. The sphere disappeared, left nothing to show where it had been.

CONRAD bent over his controls. "Act two," he announced. "We now cancel out half the locus. Stand clear of the bench." Shortly he looked up. "Ready! Aim! Fire!" Another shape took being—a perfect half sphere, otherwise like the last. Its curved outer surface was faced up. "Stick the props in, Tony."

"Just a sec, while I light up." Vincente lit a cigarette, puffed it vigorously, then propped it in an ash tray and slid it under the half globe. Conrad again manipulated his controls; the shape descended, rested on the bench, covering the burning cig-

arette on its tray. "Anybody want to try the axe on it, or anything else?" asked Conrad.

Nobody seemed anxious to tamper with the unknown. Conrad again operated his board and the silver bowl lifted. The cigarette still smoldered in the tray, unaffected. "How," he asked, "would you like to put a lid like that over the Federation's capital at Bermuda—and leave it in place until they decided to come to terms?"

The idea quite evidently met with unanimous approval. The members of the Organization present were all, or almost all, citizens of Venus, emotionally involved in the rebellion no matter what 'se they were doing. Phipps cut through the excited comment with a question. "Dr. Conrad!—would you give us a popular explanation of what we have seen? Why it works, I mean; we can guess at its enormous potentials."

Conrad's face got very serious. "Mmm . . . Chief, perhaps it would be clearest to say that the fasarta modulates the garbab in such a phase relationship that the thrimaleen is forced to bast—or, to put it another way, somebody loosed mice in the washroom. Seriously, there is no popular way to explain it. If you were willing to spend five hard years with me, working up through the math, I could probably bring you to the same level of ignorance and confusion that I enjoy. Some of the tensor equations involved are, to put it mildly, unique. But the instructions were clear enough and we did it."

Phipps nodded.

"Thanks—if that is the word I want. I'll ask Sir Isaac."

"Do, please," Roger Conrad urged. "I'd like to listen."

BUT despite proof that the lab crew had been able to jury-rig at least part of the equipment described by the message in the two wires, Don's jitters got no better. Each day the sign in the mess hall reminded him that time was running out—and that he was sucking his thumb while it did so. He thought no more about trying to get them to send him back to the war zone; instead he began to make plans to get there on his own.

He had seen maps of the Great South Sea and knew roughly where he was.

To the north there was a vast territory uninhabited even by dragons—but not uninhabited by their carnivorous cousins. It was considered impassable. The way to the south around the lower end of the sea was much farther, but it was dragon country all the way right up to outlying human farms. With whistle speech and food enough to last at least a week, he might get through to some

settler who could pass him along to the next. As for the rest he had his knife and he had his wits and he was much more swampwise than he had been when he had made his escape from Bankfield's men.

He began to sneak food out of the mess hall and cache it in his room.

HE was within a day and a night of attempting his break when Phipps sent for him. He considered not showing up, but decided that it would be less suspicion-arousing to comply with the request.

"Sit down," Phipps began. "Cigarette? No—I forgot. What have you been doing with yourself lately? Keeping busy?"

"Not a darn thing to do!"

"Sorry. Mr. Harvey, have you given any thought to what sort of a world we will have when this is over?"

"Well, no, not exactly." He had thought about it, but his own imaginings were too poorly worked out for him to care to express them. As for himself, some day the war would be over—he supposed—and then he would carry out his long-postponed intention of seeking out his parents. After that, well—

"What sort of a world would you like it to be?"

"Uh? Well, I don't know." Don pondered. "I guess I'm not what you call 'politically minded.' I don't much care how they run it—except, well, there ought to be a sort of *looseness* about it. You know—a man ought to be able to do what he wants to, if he can, and not be pushed around."

Phipps nodded. "You and I have more in common than you may have thought. I'm not a purist in political theory myself. Any government that gets to be too big and too successful gets to be a nuisance. The Federation got that way—it started out decently enough—and now it has to be trimmed down to size, so that the citizens can enjoy some 'looseness.'"

Don said, "Maybe the dragons have the right idea—no organization bigger than a family."

Phipps shook his head. "What's right for dragons is not right for us. Anyhow, families can be just as oppressive as government—take a look at the youngsters around here; five hundred years or so to look forward to before they can sneeze without permission. I asked your opinion because I don't know the answer myself—and I've studied the dynamics of history longer than you've been alive. All I know is that we are about to turn loose into the world forces the outcome of which I cannot guess."

Don looked startled. "We've got space travel now; I don't see what important difference it will make to

make it faster. As for the other gimmick, it seems to me a swell idea to be able to put a lid on a city so that it can't be atom-bombed."

"Granted. But that is just the beginning. I've been making a list of some of the things that will come about—I think. In the first place you vastly underestimate the importance of speeding up transportation. As for the other possibilities, I'm stumped. I'm too old, and my imagination needs greasing. But here's one for a starter: we might be able to move water, lots of water, significant amounts, from here to Mars." His brow wrinkled. "We might even be able to move planets themselves."

Don looked up suddenly. Somewhere he had heard almost those same words. . . . The memory evaded him.

"But never mind," Phipps went on. "I was just trying to get a younger, fresher viewpoint. You might think about it. Those laboratory laddies won't, that's sure. These physicists—they produce wonders but they never know what other wonders their wonders will beget." He paused and added: "We are resetting the clock, but we don't know what time it will be."

When he added nothing more, Don decided with relief that the interview was over and started to get up. "No, no, don't go," Phipps put in. "I had another matter on my mind. You've been getting ready to leave, haven't you?"

IN astonishment Don stammered: "What—what gave you that idea?"

"I'm right. Some morning we would wake up and find your bed empty. Then I'd be put to a lot of trouble when effort can't be spared to try to find you and bring you back."

Don relaxed. "Conrad snitched to you," he said bitterly.

"Conrad? No. I doubt if the good doctor ever notices anything larger than an electron. No, credit me with some sense. My business is people. True, I did badly with you when you first arrived—but I still plead that I was bone-weary. Tiredness is a mild insanity. The point is: you're leaving and I can't stop you. I know dragons well enough to know that Sir Isaac wouldn't let me if you wanted to go. You're 'his' confounded 'egg!' But I can't let you go; the reasons are just as compelling as before. So—rather than let you go, I'd have to try to kill you."

Don leaned forward, shifting his weight onto his feet. "Do you think you could?" he said very softly.

Phipps grinned. "No, I don't. That's why I've had to think up another scheme. You know that we are making up the ship's crew. How would you like to go along?"

Chapter Eighteen

LITTLE DAVID

DON let his mouth drop open and left it that way. To his credit, while he had thought about it, he had never given it the slightest serious consideration; he was not conceited enough to think that he would be allowed to hitch a ride, just to suit his personal wishes, on *this* trip.

Phipps went on, "Frankly, I'm doing it to get rid of you, to put you on ice, safe from the Federation's inquisitors, until it no longer matters. But I think I can justify it. We want to train as many as the *Little David* can carry on this trip as cadres for more ships. But my choice is limited—most of our group here are too old, or they are near-sighted, narrow-chested young geniuses suitable only for laboratories. You are young, you are healthy, your reflexes are fast—I know!—and you are space-wise from babyhood. True, you are not a qualified shiphandler, but that won't matter too much; these ships will be new to everyone. Mr. Harvey, how would you like to go to Mars—and return as 'Captain Harvey,' master of your own ship—a ship strong enough to strike at these Federation vermin orbiting around Venus?"

"Or executive officer, at least," Phipps qualified, reflecting that in a two-man ship, Don could hardly be less.

Like it? He'd love it! Don's tongue got twisted trying to accept too quickly. Then almost at once he was struck by a thought; Phipps saw by his expression something was wrong.

"What's the matter?" Phipps said sharply. "Are you afraid?"

"Afraid?" Don looked annoyed. "Of course I'll be afraid—I've been afraid so many times that I am no longer scared to be afraid again. That's not the trouble."

"What is it, then? Speak up!"

"It's just this— I'm still on active duty. I can't go gallivanting off a hundred million miles or so. Properly speaking, it would be desertion. Why, when they laid hands on me, they'd probably hang me first and ask questions afterward."

Phipps relaxed. "Oh. Perhaps that can be managed. You let me worry about it."

It could be managed. It was only three days later that Don received new orders, written this time, and delivered by devious means that he could only guess at. They read:

To: Harvey, Donald J., Sergeant-Specialist 1/c

Via: Channels

1. You are assigned to special temporary duty of indefinite duration.

2. You will travel as necessary to carry out this duty.

3. This assignment is deemed in the best interests of the Republic. When, in your opinion, your duties are completed, you will report to the nearest competent authority and request transportation to enable you to report in person to the Chief of Staff.

4. For the duration of this duty you are brevetted to the rank of sub-lieutenant.

J. S. Busby, Wing Colonel (brevet)
For the Commanding General
First Endorsement:

1. Delivered (via courier)

Henry Marsten, Captain (brevet)
Commanding 16th Gondola
Combat Team

Clipped to the orders was a scrawled note which read:

P.S. Dear "Lieutenant":

These are the silliest orders I have ever had to endorse. What the devil have you been up to? Did you marry one of the dragons? Or did you catch a Big Brass with his finger off his number? Anyway, have fun—and good hunting!

Marsten

Don tucked the orders and the note into his pocket. Every now and then he would reach in and touch them.

THE days trickled away; the dotted line got ever closer to Mars; and the whole group got more and more jumpy. Another date was posted on the mess-hall wall, a date by which the *Little David* must be ready—if they were to arrive in time.

The calendar marked that deadline date the day the ship was finally manned. At raise-ship-minus-twenty-minutes Don was still in Sir Isaac's study, his baggage (such as it was) already aboard. Saying good-bye to Sir Isaac, he discovered, was rather more difficult than he had expected it to be. His head was not cluttered with ideas about "father images" and the like; he was simply aware that this dragon was all the family he had, much more so than that remote pair on the planet where he was headed.

He was almost relieved when a glance at his watch told him that he was late. "Got to run," he said. "Nineteen minutes."

"Yes, my dear Donald. Your short-lived race must always live in frantic haste."

"Well—g'by."

"Farewell, Mist on the Waters."

He stopped outside Sir Isaac's study to blow his nose and pull himself together. Isobel stepped out from behind a massive pillar. "Don—I wanted to say good-bye to you."

"Huh? Sure, sure—but aren't you coming out to see 'raise ship'?"



"Just remember this—if you let go, everything goes!"

"No."

"Well, as you like, but I've got to hurry, Grandma."

"I told you to stop calling me 'Grandma'!"

"So you fibbed about your age. So you're stuck with it—Grandma."

"Don, you stubborn beast! Don—you be sure to come back. You understand me?"

"Why, sure! We'll be back in jig time."

"See that you do! You're not bright enough to take care of yourself. Well—Open sky!" She grabbed him by both ears and kissed him quickly, then ran away.

Don stared after her, rubbing his mouth. Girls, he reflected, were much odder than dragons. Probably another race entirely. He hurried on down to the take-off point. The entire colony seemed to be there and he was the last of the crew to arrive, winning thereby a dirty look from Captain Rhodes, skipper of the *Little David*. Rhodes, once of Interplanet and now of the Middle Guard, had appeared three days ago; he had not been inclined to talk and had spent the whole time with Conrad. Don touched his pocket and wondered if Rhodes carried orders that read as oddly as his.

The *Little David* had been dragged up on shore, where she rested in skids.

No catapult would be needed for her take-off, nor was any available; the three shuttle catapults on Venus were all in the hands of the Federation forces. The ship had been concealed by a screen of boughs; these were now cut back, giving her open sky.

Don looked at her, thinking that she looked more like an oversized and unusually ugly concrete mixer than a space-ship. The roots of her amputated wings stubbed out sadly to port and starboard. Her needle nose had been trimmed off and replaced by a bulbous special radar housing. She was scarred here and there by the marks of cutting torches where modifications had been done hastily and with no attempt to pretty up, smooth out, and make shipshape after the surgery.

Her rocket tubes were gone and the space formerly occupied by rocket fuel tanks now held an atomic power pile, while a major part of what had been her passenger space was now taken up by a massive bulkhead, the anti-radiation shield to protect the crew from the deadly emanations of the pile. All over her outer surface, disfiguring what had been sleek streamlines, were bulging discoids—"antennas" Conrad had called them, antennas used to strain the very shape of space. They did not look much like antennas to Don.

The *Little David* carried a crew of nine: Rhodes, Conrad, Harvey, and six others, all young and all on "makee-learnce"—except Roger Conrad who carried the undignified title of "Gadget Officer," that being shorter than "Officer in Charge of Special Appliances." She carried one passenger, old Malath. He was not in sight and Don did not look for him; the after part of the remaining cabin space had been sealed off for his use and air-conditioned thin, dry, and cold.

All were aboard, the lock was sealed, and Don sat down. Despite the space taken up by the new equipment enough passenger seats had been left in the little ship to accommodate them. Captain Rhodes settled himself in his control seat and barked, "Acceleration stations! Fasten belts!" Don did so.

Rhodes turned to Conrad who was still standing. Conrad said conversationally: "About two minutes, gentlemen. Since we had no time for a test run, this will be a very interesting experiment. Any of three things can happen." He paused.

Rhodes snapped, "Yes?—Go on!" "First, nothing might happen. We might bog down on a slight theoretical oversight. Second, it might work. And third—it might blow up." He grinned. "Anyone want to place a small bet?"

Nobody answered. He glanced down and said, "Okay, Captain—twist her tail!"

IT seemed to Don that it had suddenly become night and that they had gone immediately into free fall. His stomach, long used to the fairly high gravity of Venus, lurched and complained. Conrad not strapped down, was floating, anchored by one hand to his control board. "Sorry, gentlemen!" he said. "Slight oversight. Now let's adjust this locus to Mars normal, as an accommodation to our passenger." He fiddled with his dials.

Don's stomach went abruptly back into place as a quite satisfactory weight of more than one-third took over. Conrad said, "Very well, Captain, you can let them unstrap."

Someone behind Don said, "What's the matter? Didn't it work?"

Conrad said, "Oh, yes, it worked. In fact we have been accelerating at about"—he stopped to study his dials—"twenty gravities ever since we left the atmosphere."

The ship remained surrounded by darkness, cut off from the rest of the universe by what was inadequately described as a "discontinuity," save for a few minutes every other watch when Conrad cut the field to enable Captain Rhodes to see out and thereby take direct star sights. During these periods they were in free fall

and the stars shone sharp through the ports. Then the darkness again would close in and the *Little David* would revert to a little world of its own.

Captain Rhodes showed a persistent tendency to swear softly to himself after each fix and to work his calculations through at least three times.

In between-times Conrad conducted "gadget class" for as many hours each day as he could stand it. Don found most of the explanations as baffling as the one Conrad had given Phipps. "I just don't get it, Rog," he confessed after their instructor had been over the same point three times.

Conrad shrugged and grinned. "Don't let it throw you. By the time you have helped install the equipment in your own ship, you'll know it the way your foot knows your shoe. Meantime, let's run through it again."

ASIDE from instruction there was nothing to do and the ship was too small and too crowded in any case. A card game ran almost continuously. Don had very little money to start with; very soon he had none and was no longer part of the game. He slept and he thought.

Phipps had been right, he decided: travel at this speed would change things—people would go planet-jumping as casually as they now went from continent to continent on Earth. It would be like—well, like the change from sailing-ships to trans-ocean rockets, only the change would be overnight, instead of spread over three centuries.

Maybe he would go back to Earth some day; Earth had its points—horseback riding, for instance. He wondered if his pony Lazy still remembered him.

He'd like to teach Isobel to ride a horse. He'd like to see her face when she first laid eyes on a horse!

One thing he knew: he would not stay on Earth, even if he did go back. Nor would he stay on Venus—nor on Mars. He knew now where he belonged—in space, where he was born. Any planet was merely a hotel to him: space was his home.

Maybe he would go out in the *Pathfinder*, out to the stars. He had a sneaking hunch that, if they came through this stunt alive, a member of the original crew of the *Little David* would be able to wangle it to be chosen for the Long Trip. Of course, the *Pathfinder* was limited to married couples only, but that was not necessarily an insuperable obstacle. The *Pathfinder* would not leave right away in any case; they would wait to change over to the Horst-Milne-Conrad drive, once they knew about it.

In any event he meant to stir around a bit, do some traveling, once the war was over. They would sure-

ly have to transfer him to the High Guard when he got back; then High Guard experience would stand him in good stead when he was a discharged veteran. Come to think about it, maybe he was already in the High Guard, so to speak.

McMasters had certainly been right; there was just one way to get to Mars—in a space task force.

He looked around him. The inevitable card game was still in progress and two of his mates were shooting dice on the deckplates, the cubes spinning lazily in the low gravity field. Conrad had opened up his chair and was stretched out asleep, his mouth open. Don decided it certainly did not look like a world-saving task force; the place had more the air of an unmade bed.

They were due to "come out" on the eleventh day, within easy free fall of Mars, and—if all guesses had been right—close by the Federation task force, making almost a photo finish with those ships. "Gadget class" gave way to drill at battle stations. Rhodes picked Art Frankel, who had had some shiphandling experience, as his co-pilot; Conrad was assisted by Franklyn Chiang, a physicist like himself. Of the other four, two were on radio, two on radar. Don's battle station was a saddle amidships, back of the pilots' chairs—the "dead man's" seat. Here he guarded a spring-loaded demolition switch, a type of switch known through the centuries as a "dead-man" switch for the contrary reason that it operated only if its operator were dead.

At first drill Conrad got the others squared away, then came back to Don's station. "You savvy what you are to do, Don?"

"Sure. I throw this switch to arm the bomb, then I hang onto the dead-man switch."

"No, no. Grab the dead-man switch first—then close the arming switch."

"Yes, sure. I just said it backward."

"Be sure you don't do it backward! Just remember this, Lieutenant: if you let go, *everything* goes!"

"Okay. Say, Rog, this thing triggers an A-bomb—right?"

"Wrong. We should waste so much money! But the load of H.E. in there is plenty for a little can like this, I assure you. So, anxious as we are to blow up this packet rather than let it be captured, *don't* let go of that switch otherwise. If you feel a need to scratch, rise above it."

CAPTAIN RHODES came aft; with a motion of his head he sent Conrad forward. He spoke to Don in a low voice, such that his words did not reach the others. "Harvey, are you

satisfied with this assignment? You don't mind it?"

"No, I don't mind," Don answered. "I know the others all have more technical training than I have. This is my speed."

"That's not what I mean," the Captain corrected. "You could fill any of the other seats, except mine and Dr. Conrad's. I want to be sure you can do this job."

"I don't see why not. Grab onto this switch, and then close that one—and hang on for dear life. It sure doesn't take any higher mathematics to do that."

"That's still not what I mean. I don't know you, Harvey. I understand you have had combat experience. These others haven't—which is why you have this job. Those who do know you think you can do it. I'm not worried that you might forget to hang on; what I want to know is this: if it becomes necessary to let go of that switch, can you do it?"

Don answered almost at once—but not before there had been time for him to think of several things—Dr. Jefferson, who had certainly committed suicide, not simply died—old Charley with his mouth quivering but his cleaver hand steady and sure—and an undying voice ringing through the fog, "*Venus and Freedom!*"

"Guess I can if I have to."

"Good. I'm by no means sure that I could. I'm depending on you, sir, if worst comes to worst, not to let my ship be captured." He went forward.

TENSION mounted; tempers got edgy. They had no way to be sure that they would come out near the Federation task force; that force might be using something other than what was assumed to be the maximum-performance orbit. They could not even be certain that the Federation forces were not already on Mars, already in command and difficult to dislodge. The *Little David's* laboratory miracles were designed for ship-to-ship encounter in space, not for mopping up on the surface of a planet.

Conrad had another worry, one that he did not voice, that the ship's weapons might not work as planned. More than any of the rest he knew the weakness of depending on theoretical predictions. He knew how frequently the most brilliant computations were confounded by previously unsuspected natural laws. There was no substitute for test—and these weapons had not been tested. He lost his habitual grin and even got into a bad-tempered difference of opinion with Rhodes as to the calculated time of "coming out."

The difference of opinion was finally settled: a half hour later Rhodes

said quietly, "It's almost time, gentlemen. Battle stations." He went to his own seat, strapped himself in, and snapped, "Report!"

"Co-pilot."

"Radio!"

"Radar!"

"Special weapons ready."

"Dead man!" Don finished.

There was a long wait while the seconds oozed slowly away. Rhodes spoke quietly into a microphone, warning Malath to be ready for free fall, then called out, "Stand by!" Don took a tighter grip on the demolition switch.

SUDDENLY he was weightless; ahead of him and in the passenger ports on each side the stars burst into being. He could not see Mars and decided that it must be "under" the ship. The Sun was somewhere aft; it was not in his eyes. But his view ahead was excellent: the *Little David*, having begun life as a winged shuttle, had an airplane-type conning port in front of the piloting chairs. Don's position let him see as clearly as Rhodes and his co-pilot and much better than could the others.

"Radar?" inquired Rhodes.

"Take it easy, Skipper. Even the speed of light is— Oh, oh! *Blips!*"

"Co-ordinates and range!"

"Theta three five seven point two; phi minus zero point eight; range radius six eight oh—"

"I'm feeding it in automatically,"

Conrad cut in sharply.

"Tracking?"

"Not yet."

"In range?"

"No. I think we should sit tight and close range as much as possible. They may not have seen us."

They had slowed their headlong flight earlier to permit maneuvering; nevertheless they were closing with the "blips" at more than ninety miles a second. Don strained his eyes to try to make out the ships, if such the radar reflections were. No use—his protoplasmic scanners were no match for electronic ones.

They stayed that way, nerves on edge and stomachs tight, and range steadily closing, until it seemed that the blips must not be the task force, perhaps were even some wandering uncharted asteroid—when the radio alarm, sweeping automatically the communication frequencies, clangingly broke the silence. "Get it!" shouted Rhodes.

"Coming up." There was a short wait. "They demand that we identify. They're our babies, all right."

"Switch it over here." Rhodes turned to Conrad. "How about it?"

"I ought to be closer. Stall 'em!"

Conrad's face was gray and wet with sweat.

Rhodes touched a key and spoke into his mike. "What ship are you? Identify yourself."

The answer was amplified through the horn over the Captain's head. "Identify or be fired upon."

Rhodes glanced again at Conrad, who was too busy to look back. Rhodes spoke into the mike, "This is the destroyer *Little David*, commissioned privateer, Venus Republic. Surrender immediately."

Don strained his eyes again. It seemed to him that there were three new "stars" dead ahead.

The answer came back with hardly more than transmission delay. "Federation flagship *Peacemaker* to pirate ship *Little David*: surrender or be destroyed."

To Rhodes' inquiry Conrad turned a face contorted with uncertainty. "It's still pretty far. The track hunts on me. I might miss."

"No time! Go ahead!"

Don could see them now—ships, growing unbelievably. Then, most suddenly, one was a silver globe, then a second—and a third. A cluster of Christmas tree ornaments—incredible, Gargantuan—where had been three mighty warships, they continued to swell, drew to the left and flashed past the ship . . . the "battle" was over.

Conrad sighed shakily. "That's all, Captain." He turned and said: "Don, you'd make us all feel easier if you'd open that arming switch. We're not going to need it."

MARS swam below them—ruddy, beautiful. Schiaparelli Station, I. T. & T.'s powerful interplanetary radio, had already had a silvery "hat" placed on it to guard the secret of their strike; Captain Rhodes had spoken with a lesser station, warning of their arrival. In less than an hour they would ground near da Thon—Malath himself had come out of his icebox, no longer sick and weary but pert as a cricket, willing to risk the warm, thick, moist air of the cabin for a view of home.

Don climbed back into his battle-station saddle for a better view. The fabulous *canali* were already plain to the eye; he could see them cutting through the soft greens and the dominant orange and brick red. It was winter in the south; the planet wore its south-pole cap jauntily, like a chef's hat. The fancy reminded him of old Charley; Don thought of him with gentle melancholy, the memory softened by all that had gone between.

Mars at last . . . he'd be seeing his parents perhaps before the day was out—and give his father the ring. This was certainly not the way they had planned it.

Next time he would try not to take the long way round.



Cowboys of Campeachy Bay

Taken from "Mr. Dampier's Voyages to the Bay of Campeachy." Unorthodox Methods of providing Spanish Beef for English Stomachs off the coast of Mexico. Here illustrated by a starving sailor turned Artist, who hath of late forgot the verie taste of Beef-steak...

Peter Wells



In some places, especially in the West Creek of the West Lagune, they go a Hunting every Saturday to provide themselves with Beef for the Week following.

The Cattle in this Country are large and fat in February, March and April: At other times of the Year they are fleshy, but not fat, yet sweet enough. When they have killed a Beef, they cut it into four Quarters, and taking out all the Bones, each Man makes a hole in the middle of his Quarter, just big enough for his Head to go thro', then puts it on like a Frock, and trudgeth home; and if he chanches to tire, he cuts off some of it, and flings it away.

It is a Diversion pleasant enough, though not without some danger, to hunt in a Canoa; for then the Cattle having no other feeding Places than the Sides of the Savannahs, which are somewhat

higher Ground than the middle, they are forced sometimes to swim; so that we may easily come to shoot them, when they are thus in the Water.

The Beast, when she is so hard pursued that she cannot escape, turns about and comes full tilt at the Canoa and striking her head against the Prow, drives her back twenty or thirty Paces; then she scampers away again: But if she has received a Wound, she commonly pursues us till she is Knocked down. Our chiefest Care is to keep the Head of the Canoa towards her; for if she should strike against the Broad-side, it would endanger over-setting it, and consequently wetting our Arms and Ammunition. Besides, the Savannahs at this time swarm with Alligators, and therefore are the more dangerous on that account.





From Hamilton Greene
Our Combat Artist in Korea

WELL, I got what I came out for; the cease-fire talks began today, but for the past week I got my war. I had to move fast. The ship had made a rough crossing, too rough to draw except for a day or two. She fouled a propeller in a submarine net and was delayed getting in for many days. By the time I got to Tokyo, I was almost too late. But I nailed a plane out within a few days, and reached Seoul about the first of July. I didn't stop long enough to wash. I was with a reserve division twenty miles away before I could change shoes. I was up front by noon of the next day, and by night was up in the hills.

I guess I got in on the last battle of the war. I was not hurt, but I was shaken up some.

Am now collecting notes to make features on about seven articles or picture pieces. Tanks, artillery, artillery spotting, patrol, Korean civilians—but the big thing will be the story of taking Hill 717. I think of it as a three-part piece something like that "Close Combat" thing I did for Harvey Bliss in BLUE BOOK three years ago. Except that I have it all covered. Division and regimental command—air—artillery—and finally the assault platoon. Ought to be good reading anytime whatever.

Am now sitting down for the first time I can remember. I have a cot in a tent at regimental headquarters. Am all out of available film, but I have more in Seoul. I got shaved this A.M. first time in almost ten days, and my socks had rotted on my feet. They've made me a little desk out of artillery ammo boxes, and I can start work as soon as I can start thinking. They kind of like me here; they're trying to make sort of a legend out of me on that damn hill. It was pretty god-awful, but I stayed fairly detached, emotionally, at the time. Perceptively, I didn't miss a trick—and what is more important, the Chinks missed me.

(Later) Sent off illustrations to two Korean stories yesterday, rolled up in a 57-mm. shell container and routed by

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

Hugh Cave

A GOOD many magazines, including most of the big ones, have published my stories—I have been writing for quite a while. Right now the *Post* is using adventure stories of mine rather often. In addition I've done half a dozen books, of which the two that got the most attention were "Long Were the Nights," a factual account of PT boat activities in the Solomons, and "I Took the Sky Road," about the Navy's long-range search planes in the Pacific. As a correspondent I got to the Pacific myself—the Marshalls and Marianas, Iwo Jima, the Philippines, New Guinea and the Solomons, plus a Borneo invasion with the Australians—and since the war I've been using the Pacific a good deal as a background for fiction.

My hope is to get out there again for a spell, but since the Pacific is a long way off and I'm a married man with wife and two sons (aged 13 and 7), I've been using the West Indies as a substitute and spent the last two winters in Haiti, doing some stories with a Haitian background and gathering material for a book. We took a jeep with us on both trips and pretty thoroughly explored the island, investigating native life, voodoo, customs, etc.

I do a bit of fishing, nothing strenuous, and fool around with photography some, but have a restless foot, and my only real hobby is getting to out-of-the-way places, exploring them, and writing about them. When home I stick pretty close to the typewriter—keeping office hours—which is sometimes rugged going, because we live on a lake where the bass bite with enthusiasm and the swimming is excellent.

That about covers it, except that I hope my first appearance in BLUE BOOK won't be the last.

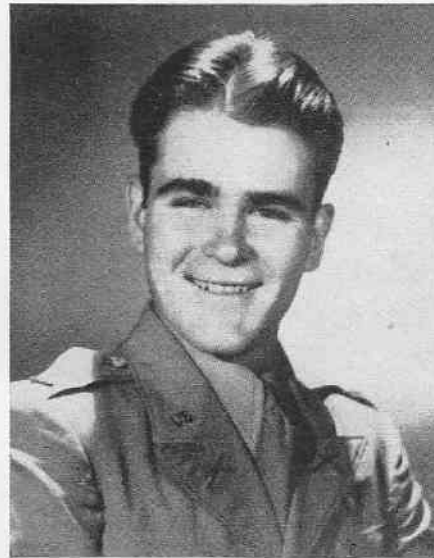
courier plane to Tokyo, where the package will have to be opened, processed, and repacked, and then routed to you by air mail. Am only nervous about the rolling and rerolling of the two scratchboard drawings by the censors in Tokyo. Out here in the mud, the scratchboard was so damp it rolled up like a piece of Kleenex, but by the time it gets to the U. S. if the weather is dry, the boards may crack when they are unrolled. I suggest you steam the inside of the container before attempting to remove and unroll the drawings. A teakettle could do it.

(McCall's Magazine test kitchens graciously provided the teakettle, and after steaming, the scratchboard unrolled with complete docility.—Ed.)

William M. Glasgow, Jr.

BORN: Alexandria, Va., August 31, 1926.

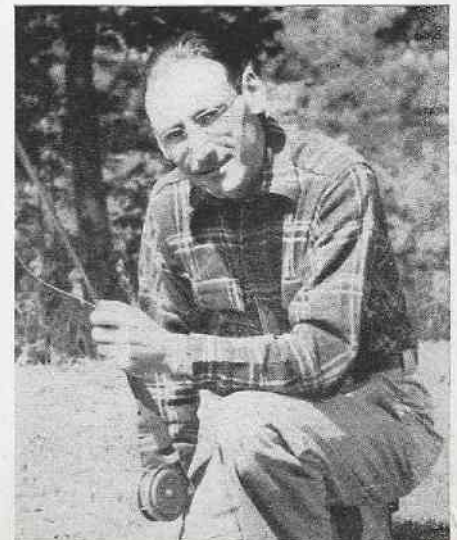
Educated: Public Schools of Alexandria and Fishburne Military School at Waynesboro, Va.



Army Service: Enlisted 10 August 1944, served at Camp Blanding, Fla. Commissioned 2nd Lt., Inf., at Fort Benning, Ga., 19 July 1945. Commissioned 1st Lt. Inf., 6 March 1947. Commissioned 2nd Lt. Regular Army 31 August 1947. Promoted to 1st Lt. Regular Army 31 August 1950. Served at in order: Camp Livingston, La., Ft. McPherson, Ga., Army Forces Western Pacific (Philippines), Ft. Lewis, Washington, Korea, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff G-3, Washington, D.C.

Hold Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, American Theater, World War II Victory, and Korean Campaign Medals. Two battle stars for Korean campaign ribbon.

Lieutenant Glasgow has recently married, and is at present writing a book on his Korean experiences.



BLUE BOOK

Magazine of Adventure in Fact and Fiction ★ October, 1951



FIGHTER'S WIFE by Joel Reeve; **THE CARIBOU MYSTERY** by Farley Mowat
TO ACHIEVE YOUR ADVENTURE by Theodore Goodridge Roberts; **NEW GUINEA MAN-HUNT** by Hugh Cave;
OCTOBER'S RED IN KENTUCKY by John Clagett; **DOUBLE REPRIEVE** by Allan Vaughan Elston; **JUST THE NECESSARY VIOLENCE** by Phil Magee