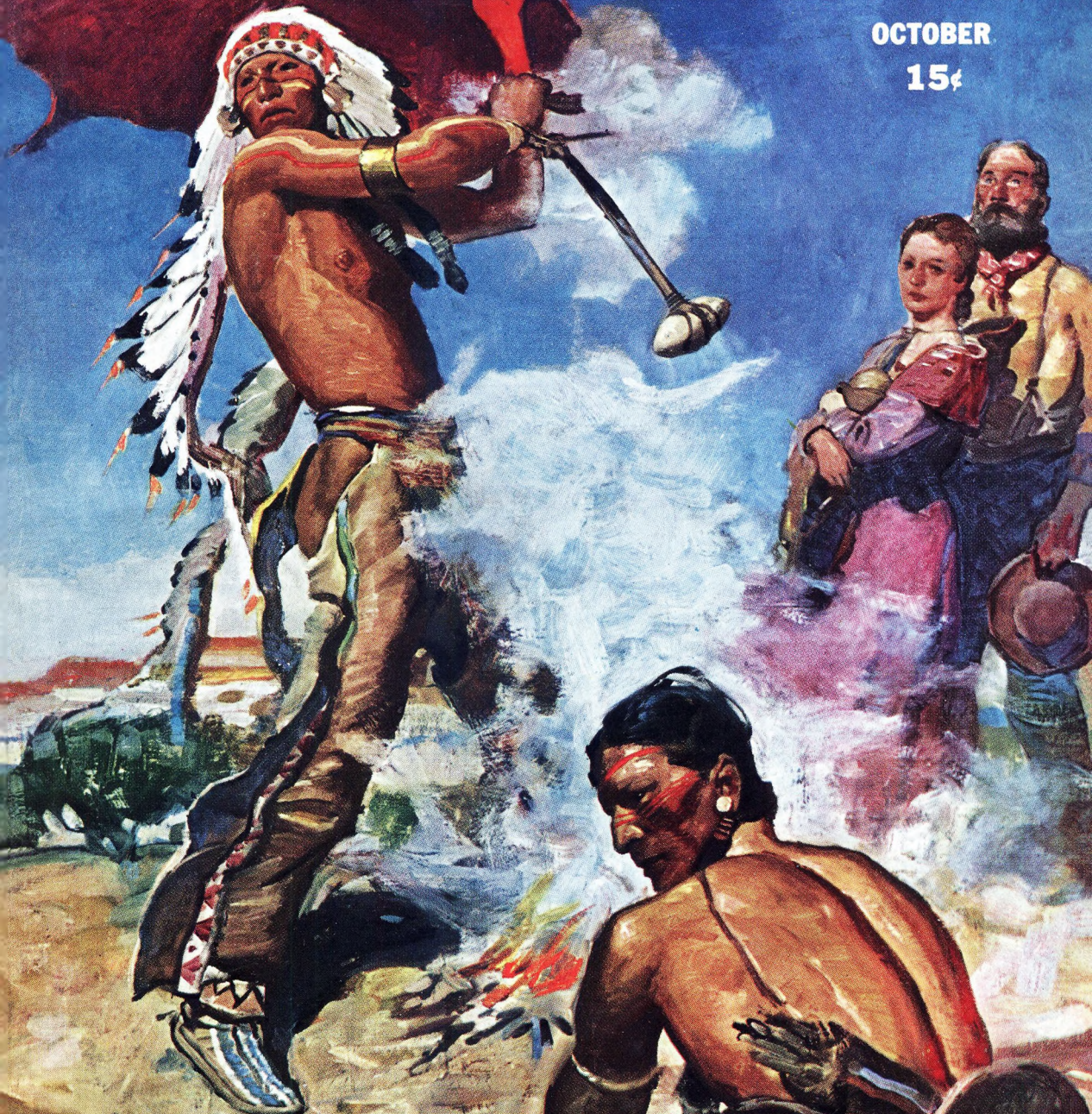


# BLUE BOOK

OF FICTION AND ADVENTURE

OCTOBER

15¢



THE SMOKE SIGNAL

Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

**MAX BRAND • H. BEDFORD-JONES • FREDERICK BECHDOLT  
FULTON GRANT • WILLIAM MCKEEVER • BIGELOW NEAL**

# Who's Who in Blue Book

## OUR COVER ARTIST

**H**ERBERT MORTON STOOPS was drawing the headings for Blue Book stories when he went to war in 1917: but though he suffered no facial disfigurement from his experience in action (indeed, the nice San Francisco girl he married thinks he's a pretty good-looking fellow), he's so incurably modest that we've never been able to wheedle a photograph out of him—and have to offer instead this little pen-drawing he sent us while he was at the artillery school in Saumur. One of the three figures, we were given to understand, is the artist himself; but as he's never told us which one, your guess is as good as ours.

Mr. Stoops is the son of a clergyman, grew up in Idaho, studied at the Utah State College and did newspaper work in San Francisco and Chicago before the war. Since that time he has become one of the most distinguished illustrators in the country; and the regard in which he is held by his fellow-craftsmen is shown by the fact that he is president of the New York Artists Guild. (A distinction he probably values even more highly is his honorary membership in the New York Association of Veterans of the French Foreign Legion.) He owns a country place on a Connecticut island, where he occasionally gets a chance to race his sailboat.



## MAX BRAND

**M**R. BRAND is another shy fellow when it comes to having his photograph published, and we have to offer you instead a word-picture of him written by Mr. Edward H. Dodd, Jr., for the March 26th, 1938, issue of *The Publisher's Weekly*. After telling of Mr. Brand's first conspicuous success with "The Untamed" in 1918, and estimating that in the years since then he has written nearly twenty-five million words for his many admirers in America and Europe, Mr. Dodd concludes:

"What manner of man do you conjure up with all these figures whirling around in your

head? Do you see a tall fellow, six feet two, with broad shoulders and a massive head? Do you hear a resonant, cultured voice, and sense the predilection of a gourmet for rare wines and fine victuals? Do you visualize him living in a villa in the Italian hills with a surpassingly beautiful wife, with two children of college age? Do you think of him as a dreamy talker of boundless imagination who could hold you spellbound by the hour as he discoursed on anything from Omar Khayyam to China Clippers? If you do, you're good. For that is just the sort of man Max Brand is!"

## L. R. GUSTAVSON

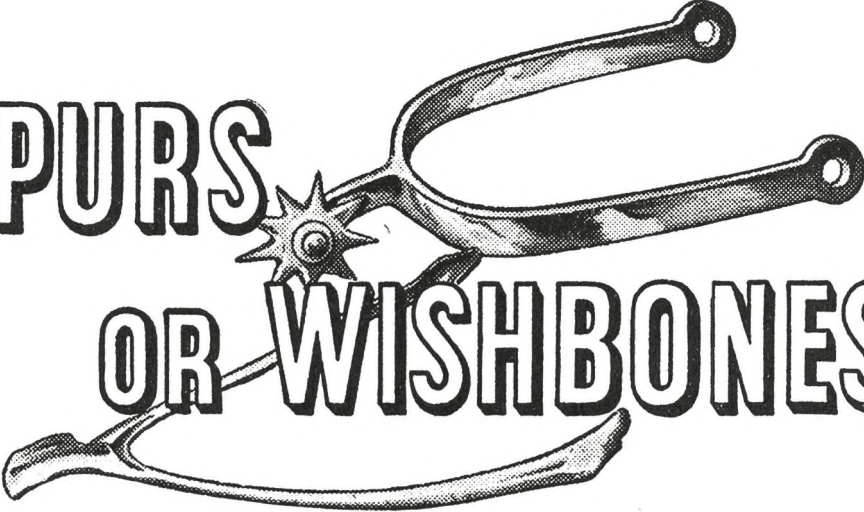


"**I**LLUSTRATORS have to be born somewhere," writes Mr. Gustavson in response to our inquiry, "and my parents chose the good Swedish community of Moline, Illinois. Proof of my lineage is that I'm blond and can do a fair job of cussing in Swedish.

"After years of night-school study at the Chicago Art Institute, and elsewhere, and working in printing houses, advertising agencies, art services and my own studio, I moved to Westport, Connecticut, about ten years ago. Here we occasionally get a laugh when some visitor who has heard of Westport as an artist colony asks us where the artists' colony is, apparently expecting to find us segregated as if we were on a monkey island. . . . I live in a quite normal manner, in a white house with green shutters, cutting grass, shoveling snow, trying to help my wife with the garden.

"This business of illustrating adventure stories should make the illustrator a very dangerous citizen. I think I have learned and pictured just about every fancy way of disposing of human life known to man. And adventure writers have thought of some pretty fancy ways. On the other hand, I have lost my interest in hunting, which I did a lot of before moving East, and have become a badminton enthusiast, touring the tournament circuit for about two months in late winter, managing to collect some titles and trophies."

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# BLUE BOOK



OCTOBER, 1938

MAGAZINE

VOL. 67, NO. 6

## Short Stories

- The Return of the Man Who Was Killed** By Max Brand 6  
*Illustrated by L. F. Grant*
- Cauliflowers Bloom in the Ring** By Edward L. English 44  
*Illustrated by Henry Thiede*
- Corsair of Canada** By H. Bedford-Jones and Captain L. B. Williams 70  
"Ships and Men"—No. XXII. *Illustrated by Yngve E. Soderberg and George Avison*
- The Revenge of Circling Hawk** By Bigelow Neal 83  
*Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon*
- A Swell Fix** By Robert Mill 92  
*Illustrated by Monte Crews*
- Warriors in Exile** By H. Bedford-Jones 126  
XVII—"A Devil in the Heart." *Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon*

## A Remarkable Novelette

- A Battle Is to Fight** By Fulton Grant 52  
*Illustrated by Austin Briggs*

## Two Spirited Serials

- The Revolt of the White One** By William McKeever 18  
*Illustrated by L. R. Gustavson*
- Nevada Gold** By Frederick Bechdolt 102  
*Illustrated by Peter Kuhlhoff*

## Prize Stories of Real Experience

- Palestine Policeman** By Roger Courtney 137  
A British adventurer tells of his share in strange warfare.
- Lost Under Water** By Wilmon Menard 141  
A hazardous South Seas landfall.
- An Officer's Face** By Armand Brigaud 143  
The French commander of a remote African post and an affair of honor with a buffalo.

Cover Design

Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

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

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

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## A Great New Series

*By*

H. BEDFORD-JONES

# *Palestine Policeman*

*A Briton's share in this strange 1938 warfare*

*By* ROGER COURTNEY

I ARRIVED in Jerusalem feeling that I had never known a place so sinister. And this was not because my life hitherto had not been variedly adventurous enough. As a matter of fact I had just made a lone journey in a rubber canoe down the thousands of miles of the Nile from its source to Lower Egypt, armed only with a spear.

But I was under an urgent necessity to get a job, for my long Nile journey had left me with only ten piastres in the world. A job in this place where all normal activities were at a standstill because of murder and terrorism! It seemed in the world's worst place for it.

Yet, I did get a job. In fact within twenty-four hours of my arrival, I was a policeman. On going to police-headquarters, off the Jaffa Road, to inquire what were any chances of joining the force, I found there three old friends from Africa, one of whom was the Inspector-General of Police himself, Mr. R. G. B. Spicer. They welcomed me; and on learning I had only ten piastres in the world, the Inspector-General offered to lend me a pound. Then it occurred to him that as I was so poor, I must be illegally in the country; among other things, every per-

son entering Palestine had either to have thirty pounds or be a person of some position.

I had, and was, neither; at the frontier I'd somehow managed to bluff the examining official that I was an important journalist, which bluff would have failed most lamentably but for the circumstance that the official was interviewing me from over a sort of counter which mercifully concealed the degraded condition of my only trousers and a poverty-stricken absence of socks. As to the absence of a Palestine visa on my passport, I contrived by a mixture of airiness and forthrightness to convince the official that I'd not had time to get it in the rush-and-dash-about of the journalistic life.

ALL this I now confessed to the Inspector-General, and added further that I didn't want to borrow a pound, but had come to ask for a job. Whereupon he said, chuckling, that a man who could bluff his way into the country like that might be exactly the sort of man to bluff the Johnny-Arabs who were giving the Administration trouble; and at once had me signed on as a member of the Palestine police. (*Please turn to page 137*)



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# The Return of the



**L**IFE, like curiously blended ten-year-old whiskies, had a fine flavor for Jimmy Gavgivan. In fact, he had been out in the world for just ten years; and though he was only twenty-four, he had heaped up at compounded interest a treasure of knowledge about Canadian brush, Central American jungles, Mexican deserts and the street life of a dozen American cities. He was an expert with either machine-gun or revolver; but above all he was a master of all means of transport, whether it meant power-diving a high-speed plane or riding the rods or blind baggage of a train, or bringing a rusted marine motor to life, or riding the hurricane deck of a mustang.

When men saw Jimmy Gavgivan, they put back their shoulders and wished they were in hard training. When women saw him, they straightened their hats and reached for their lipsticks. He was not exceedingly big; but as his friends and

all his enemies agreed, he was quite big enough.

At this moment he had nothing on his mind, five hundred poker dollars in his pocket, and a pleasant thirst which he nursed along with a gentle anticipation as he strolled through the old Latin Quarter of New Orleans. He was in no haste because he was in one of the most pleasant provinces of his empire. Those stuccoed walls were cool to the eye, and through the arched gateways he saw the parterres of inner courts and fountain bowls with silver shining fountains at play, and statues adrip with climbing vines. But above all, he enjoyed the balconies and jalousies, the gratings, the huge locks and hinges, the iron lattices with which the Creole shuts the world out and shuts virtue in. The last part of this thought was what lightened his step and kept him smiling; for no matter how Gavgivan found New Orleans, it always seemed to him that a carnival had just ended or was about to begin.

He was walking just a little faster than the crowd until he came up behind a tall, heavy man dressed in flawless white, with white gloves and a walking-stick idling in his hand. And when this gentleman paused at a corner to turn in his leisure and survey the amusing world, Gavgivan saw, in addition, the red flower in the buttonhole, the sun-darkened face, the softness of the expansive jowls, and the little black mustache which gave so much life and accent to the smile. He was not more than thirty; but high-living had given him a patina that made him seem older. Without knowing more of this man than his binding, so to speak, one would look to him for information about wine, good restaurants in Paris, international news, and what the well-dressed man should wear.

**H**E had with him a girl who looked as sleek and slim as a trick seal. She walked like a dancer, but the turning of her head toward the big man was so sensitive and almost shy, and her hands were so still, and her bearing was so full of the lady, that Gavgivan was moved.

He stepped up beside them and said: "Hai, Benvill!"

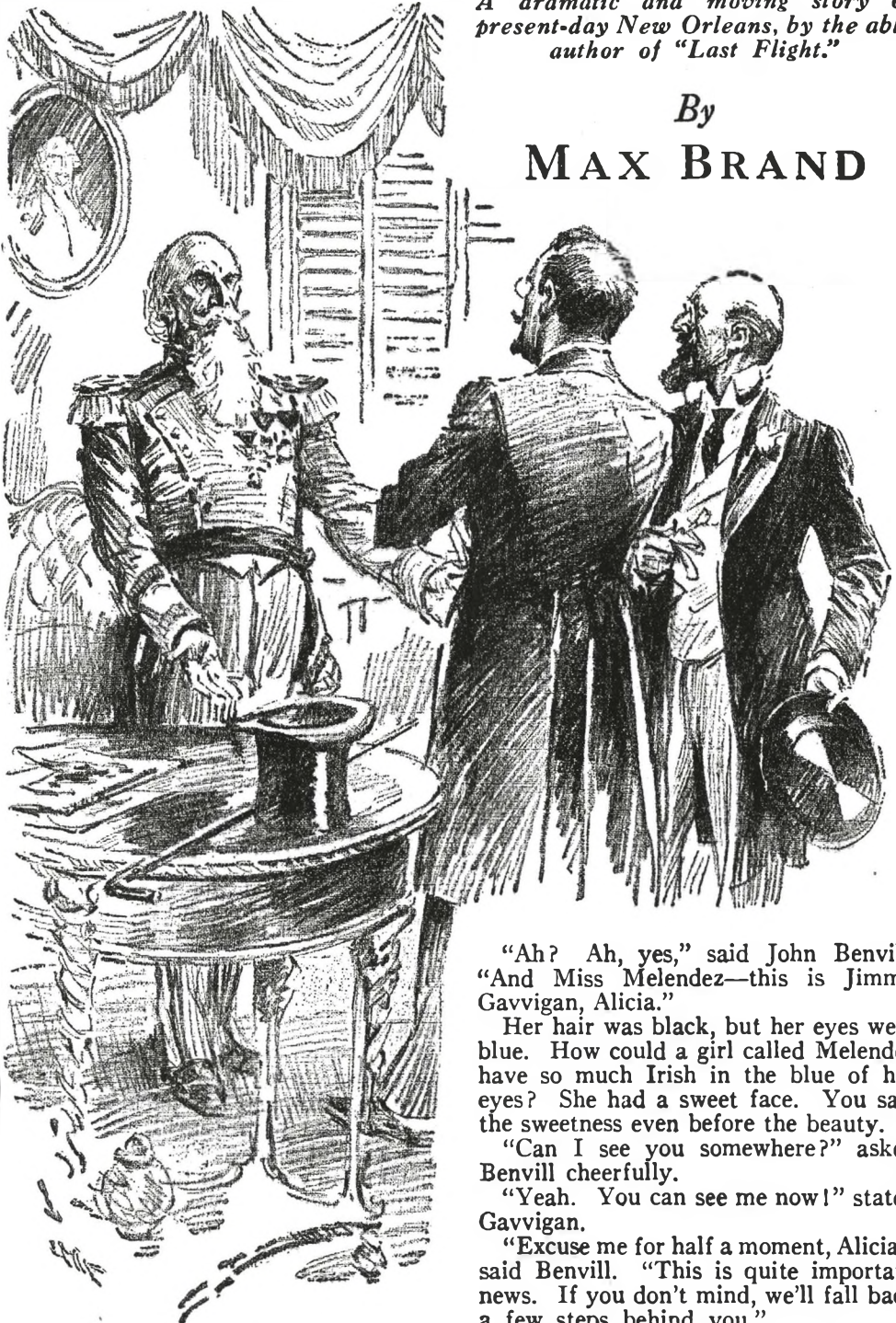


# Man Who Was Killed

A dramatic and moving story of present-day New Orleans, by the able author of "Last Flight."

By

MAX BRAND



"Estéban! Diego! Amigos de me alma!  
To my arms, my brothers!"

"Ah? Ah, yes," said John Benvill. "And Miss Melendez—this is Jimmy Gavgivan, Alicia."

Her hair was black, but her eyes were blue. How could a girl called Melendez have so much Irish in the blue of her eyes? She had a sweet face. You saw the sweetness even before the beauty.

"Can I see you somewhere?" asked Benvill cheerfully.

"Yeah. You can see me now!" stated Gavgivan.

"Excuse me for half a moment, Alicia," said Benvill. "This is quite important news. If you don't mind, we'll fall back a few steps behind you."

She lifted her big, happy, unsuspecting eyes to Gavgivan, and smiled in assent.

Gavvigan said, as they fell back: "You've put on ten pounds since I last saw you, Benvill."

The big man did not pause in his step as he answered: "Right you are, old fel-

low. It's the curse of Creole cooking that it likes me too well. The moment I come into a house, the cook feels a change in the air and puts extra butter in the sauce. . . . But we were John and Jimmy to one another before this, weren't we?"

"We were," stated Gavvigan; "and that's why you'd better walk dead slow, because when we come to the end of this block, I'm going to knock your damned ears off your head. The gal can admire 'em in the gutter."

"Can she?" murmured Benvill. "You know, Jimmy, if any other man in the



"Gentlemen," said the beggar, "you take away the last ray of light from an old, unhappy man!"

world spoke like that to me, I'd either have to knock him down or draw a gun on him."

"Why don't you do it now?"

"Because you're too strong for me in the first place, and too quick in the second," replied John Benvill. "I tell you this without shame, Jimmy. Let's say that I'm an inch or so taller and twenty pounds heavier than you; but who thinks of pounds and dimensions when it's a question of man versus panther. . . . There's one thing I beg you to tell me."

Gavvigan answered: "*Ruega de grande, fuerza es que te hace.*" He said it ironically for the meaning is: "A great man's entreaty is a command."

## THE RETURN OF THE MAN WHO WAS KILLED

"My dear old man, how you change when you speak Spanish!" said Benvill, who now was walking very slowly, as though overcome by thought. "The old culture slips onto your back like a well-tailored coat. What I beg is information about your bad temper, just now. Why are you hating me, Jimmy?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said Gavvigan: "I didn't mind the way you blew out of town with the money, but it kind of irritated me to be sent to keep that appointment with the three of those Mexicans, not knowing that you'd finished trimming them the day before."

"Do you know that I've often thought of that meeting?" nodded Benvill.

"I'll lay money you've thought of it," agreed Gavvigan. "You've even wondered where they dropped me in the Rio Grande, and what they used for weights in my pockets."

"Ah, Jimmy, not at all!" exclaimed Benvill. He held up a hand in polite protest. "I've only wondered if you had time to draw a gun, or if you had to take them on with your bare hands; that is to say, I've wondered if the greasers escaped with broken heads, merely, or if one or two of them had to die. What actually happened?"

"I dived at their feet," explained Gavvigan carelessly, "and it didn't last long. . . . And we're getting closer to the end of the block, Benvill—damn you!"

"You're really upset about that," remarked Benvill. "But even you must admit that all's fair in love or war."

"There wasn't any war, till you left town," answered Gavvigan.

"There was love, though."

"The hell there was!" snapped Gavvigan. "I was all over that town with a fine-toothed comb."

"You didn't find her, because she was resting in her room in the Grand Hotel," stated Benvill. "Small, blonde, lovely. Very lovely, Jimmy, and a thousand acres in Iowa corn and pork. When I saw her, I forgot everything else. I left town. I left you. I followed her, blindly. I thought I was rushing toward an eternal happiness, Jimmy, but there was an insuperable obstacle. A young Nebraskan ruined everything for me; an absolutely inconsiderable youth, but he had a football reputation even longer than his hair."

They were coming momentarily closer to the end of the block, and Benvill was walking slower and slower, when the girl turned and awaited them.

"Tell her to walk on!" directed Gavvigan softly. "I'm going to take her off your hands, Benvill."

But she came up to them before Benvill could speak, saying: "Did you see that old beggar at the mouth of the alley, back there?"

"The one with dark glasses? I saw you give him money," answered Benvill.

"He reminded me of some one out of my father's life," said the girl. "You were through those last frightful days of Oñate's revolution, and perhaps you can remember his face better than I can from photographs. Does he make you think of anyone?"

"He reminds me of any hungry old man," said Benvill. "I don't spot him."

"Think of our lost leader!" said the girl.

She said it in a softly impassioned voice that opened the heart of Gavvigan like a door.

"You don't mean Garcias himself?" said Benvill sharply.

"Garcias died in a marsh—he died in the black marsh at San Jacinto," remarked Gavvigan.

"Were *you* there, señor?" asked the girl, pouring more blue into her eyes.

"I was only fifteen," said Gavvigan, "but I was there. I was on the working end of a machine-gun, but it wasn't working for Garcias. I was taking money from that other crook, Oñate."

"Garcias—Garcias!" murmured Benvill. "Jimmy, there *is* just an angle, a glint, of Garcias about that old fellow."

THE name walked its way home into the mind of Gavvigan with separate steps.

"Gold-dust Pedro. . . . General Twenty-million-dollar Garcias. . . . El Liberador!" he said slowly. "He died at San Jacinto."

The girl, as though fascinated, was going back toward the beggar.

"The Liberator. . . . Maybe. There he stands, now, minus his three-ship navy and his Customhouse and his brass-trimmed army and his newspaper and his congress," said Benvill. "There he stands minus everything but dark glasses, holding out his hand for charity. Naked as a flag-pole without a flag. Pitiful. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true.'"

"Why pity?" asked Gavvigan, looking back through the shadows at the beggar. "El Liberador used to collect taxes with a bayonet. Still, it gives me a queer feeling to think of him all washed up."

"You say that he's washed up," said Benvill; "but many a mine has been closed for a generation, and then reopened and worked for a handsome profit with modern methods."

"What kind of a profit would you get out of that old relic?" demanded Gavvigan. "If he took a step, he'd crack at the joints. He's gone blind, and he's probably deaf too. What could you use him for?"

"For a trade-name," answered Benvill. "Suppose you found a trade-mark like 'Standard Oil,' would you throw it away? Well, there's three million people in Honduragua who haven't seen the Liberator for ten years. That means they remember his name, not his face. Stain his hair, grow him a beard, put some brass epaulets on his shoulders—and General Garcias, the Liberator, might take a great many tricks down there."

"They were fed up with him when they kicked him out," said Gavvigan. "And they'd kick him out if he went back again."

"My dear old Jimmy," smiled Benvill, "down there in Honduragua they never hate anybody except the fellow in power."

"Who's this Melendez child?" asked Gavvigan. "How does she hook in with old Pedro Garcias and Honduragua?"

"Her father was Pedro's treasurer. When Garcias got the boot, Melendez got the treasury; maybe the gal has a conscience, and wants to split up, since her father died. She floats in dough, Jimmy. That movement works on nothing but jewels. Why shouldn't you and I have some of them?"

"IT'S a great thing to watch a brain like yours working," declared Gavvigan. "It's better than watching a rattlesnake kill a rat behind plate glass. But what makes you think that I'd ever throw in with you again?"

"Ever since I left you," explained the big man, "I've been a brain without hands; and you've never had a piece of work big enough to suit you. We're made to work together, and we'll make a great show out of this. Dimly before me I see a glorious picture: It has a brass band in it. I hear twenty-one-gun salutes. I hear the soft and silken rustlings of the long green."

"Let's go back and take another look at him," said Gavvigan.

They went back, past Alicia Melendez. Gavvigan took off the dark glasses of the beggar.

"Gentlemen," said the beggar, "you take away the last ray of light from an old, unhappy man!"

"It's almost him," said Gavvigan. He took the beggar by the arm. "Come with us, brother," urged Gavvigan.

"What will you have with Barrientos?" asked the old man. He had a dry, gray old face, and there was no flesh in his cheeks. "I am a broken thing: a blinded, helpless, and very old man, gentlemen. Do you take me in the name of the law?"

"Barrientos," said Benvill, "we think we can use you. What will you be willing to do for all expenses and five dollars a day? Give him his glasses, Jimmy."

"Let the glasses be," said the beggar. "Wait till I take this bandage off my leg, and I can walk well enough; and I still can see the faces of friends without glasses."

"Forward, then," said Benvill, very heartily. "Toward the future!"

THEY went briskly down the street, Benvill with his arm through that of the revived old man, and Alicia Melendez hurrying beside Gavvigan, turning a little toward him as she looked up into his face with ardent questioning.

"And *can* it be that he's only pretending to be Barrientos? *Can* he really be Garcias?" she pleaded.

"Wait till Benvill gets through with him," answered Gavvigan. "He might be almost anything."

A moment later she was saying: "Shall I stop here at home? May I go on with you, please, please?"

Benvill, turning at the entrance of a big old house, answered: "You'd better stop here. But we'll let you know everything."

So she stepped into the shadows under the arch of the patio gate. Gavvigan hated the very shadow that tarnished her. He was lifting his hat to her. And then he was striding on after Benvill and Barrientos. . . .

The rooms of Benvill were just around the corner in a house with walls thick enough to make a fortress, and with iron gratings and lattice to keep the whole world out of the windows. There was plenty of honeysuckle and humming-birds and a drowsy, moldering sense of ease. Barrientos, when he was posted in a comfortable chair, stole glances to either side, as though he were assuring himself of the reality of this setting; he did not begin to smile until a glass of *fundador* was placed in his hand.

He said: "Gentlemen, five dollars a day is an honorable stipend, if the work is possible for this very old man."

Benvill, who had been studying Barrientos solemnly, now broke out: "Let that mustache grow for two weeks—use some black dye—fill out your face with good food—and we can give you a new name, my friend; a name that's worth hard cash and lots of it."

Barrientos stiffened in his chair. He regarded Benvill with large eyes which refused to swallow the idea.

"What name do you choose for me?" he broke out at last.

"Did you ever hear of Pedro Garcias, who was head-man in Honduragua ten years ago?" asked Gavvigan.

"Pedro Garcias? Pedro the tyrant?" echoed Barrientos. He laughed, his head nodding, his mouth foolishly wide. At that moment he looked terribly old. "Am I to be Garcias?" he asked. "If I can look like as great a man as that—but what will you use to stuff me out?"

He kept on laughing as he talked. Gavvigan watched with disgust. Afterward, when Barrientos had gone to get his clothes, Gavvigan said to Benvill: "You're a smooth fella, but you can't push over this phony. There's too many people that remember old Garcias."

"They're never going to get a close-up of Barrientos. You and I are going to be too foxy to let them see him," answered Benvill.

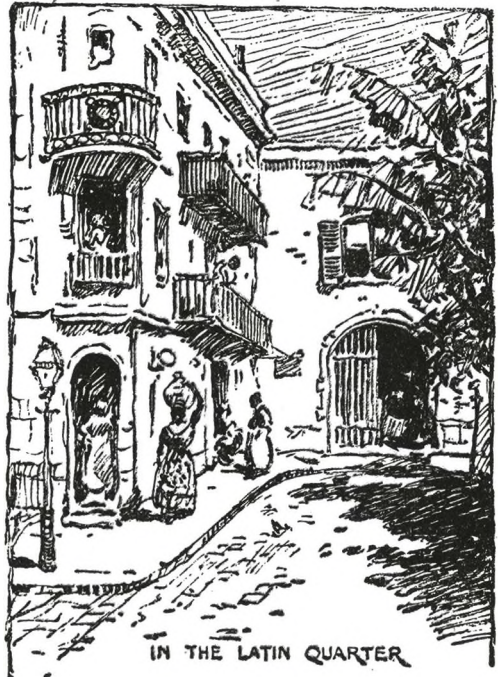
"You and me?" snapped Gavvigan. "What makes you think I'd ever throw in with you again, mug? All I get out of you I'll take with my hands."

"You're not fool enough to say no to your luck," insisted Benvill. "As a team, we're a natural, Jimmy. The doors I can't open with talk, you can kick in. Once I was a half-wit and let you down, but I've never been in the big money since that day."

"Neither have I," admitted Gavvigan thoughtfully.

"Of course you haven't," said Benvill. "Now you head for a bookstore and buy everything that ever was written about Pedro Garcias and about Oñate's revolution that turned him out. Barrientos will need to study his part."

ON a Thursday, that was; on a Sunday ten days later Gavvigan, in shorts, in the tropical warmth of New Orleans, took a swallow of cold rum punch and then leaned back in his chair with his hands folded behind his head. All of his



attitudes were unconscious, but this one lifted the bigness of his chest and set the muscles swelling and flowing down his arms. Benvill studied the picture but he studied it aside. His chief attention was fixed upon the front page of a newspaper which carried a three column headline, reading:

"LIBERTY SHALL RETURN TO HONDURAGUA," SAYS FAMOUS GENERAL PEDRO GARCIAS

With heavy financial backing, soon Garcias plans to return to native country.

EL LIBERADOR EXPECTS POPULAR UPRISING. CALLS PRESIDENT OÑATE A BLOOD-SEA-SONED TYRANT

Set under the big heading appeared a two-column cut which showed the uniformed figure of a man in the later prime of life, with medals weighing down the arch of his chest. His lifted head looked forth with an air of stern command.

"It's a funny thing," said Gavvigan, "how fast hair grows on that old face. His mustaches are the stuff. But how did you smooth up his cheeks?"

"He held something in his mouth," answered Benvill. "It prevented him from speaking; and silence is more than golden, particularly when you deal with a newspaper photographer. . . . This picture, my dear fellow, is his passport back to Honduragua; this picture and a few others I had taken at the same time."



"How did you know it was Jimmy?" he asked. "Who else is there, as crazy?" she answered. "Why have you come?"

He opened a package and passed to Gavvigan a number of photographs, some of which were identical with the news photo; but others showed the General reining in a prancing charger; again he shook hands with a gentleman who looked marvelously like the President of the United States; again he was seen walking down an official-looking flight of steps surrounded by dignitaries in high hats.

"This looks like a good set of gags," agreed Gavvigan; "but how are you going to raise the wind with them?"

"You'll be seeing before long," said Benvill. "A dozen people in New Orleans have a lot of hard cash and a hankering to get back to Honduragua. Garcias will seem like good news to them. We'll hear from some of them, Jimmy."

"They'll want to know why he waited ten years before showing his head," de-

clared Gavvigan. "They'll want to know how he came to life after being shot in that last battle."

"He crawled away from the battlefield, almost dead but not quite," suggested Benvill. "Love for his dear Honduragua kept him from death. And he's kept under cover ever since to avoid the knives of Oñate assassins."

"If he's afraid of Oñate's strong-arm boys," said Gavvigan, "why does he start a ruction now?"

"Because he's decided to free his country from the tyrant or die. He's decided that Honduragua will be free, or Garcias will be dead," declared Benvill with a magnificent gesture.

"Have you coached him in that?" asked Gavvigan.

"I've coached him in everything. He's getting letter-perfect," asserted Benvill. "We're going to make a great deal out of this, Jimmy!"

"We'd better," remarked Gavvigan, as he started to dress. "I'm running out of funds. . . . But there'll never be anything big in this job. Old Barrientos is too much of a half-wit. The look and the sound of him laughing makes me sour. What's he doing now in his room?"

"He's hand-writing some proclamations and signing some photographs for people who ought to be his friends," answered Benvill with a grin.

"You mean to say you're going to let the world see specimens of his hand-writing?" shouted Gavvigan.

"He does a pretty good job of it," declared Benvill. "There's a bit of a shake and a stagger in his hand, but it almost looks the way Garcias' hand might have been ten years after."

"He has brains in spots," agreed Gavvigan. "But what scares me is his confidence. He's either a champion or a first-round sucker. Has he memorized the whole history?"

"Try him, if you don't think so," answered Benvill.

They went in through Benvill's room to the door beyond, upon which Gavvigan knocked and then walked in.

"General Garcias" sat at a table before a big mirror, sometimes writing and sometimes lifting his head to study in the glass his thoughts and his own image. He no longer was the gray-faced old man of the dark glasses and the broad shoulders. The sleek of the black dye took years from him, and a white uniform coat braced him as erect in his chair as the youngest athlete. Now he discovered

the grinning face of Gavvigan in the farthest depths of the mirror.

"Ah, ha, Colonel!" he called. "Have you come to laugh at me again?"

"I was only a captain yesterday," said Gavvigan. "And I never laugh at you; I only laugh at the world when I think what we're going to do. . . . General, where were you the night of July 14th, 1927, at five-thirty in the afternoon?"

"In my cabinet at the presidential palace in Honduragua, interviewing Foreign Minister José Galvados," said "Garcias" blandly.

"That's good. That's right," nodded Gavvigan.

"What three men made the cabal against you in '23?" snapped Benvill.

"Estrados, Vicente and Mirando!" answered the "General."

"Right again," agreed Benvill. "It's wonderful! You've learned every one of those books by heart. You should have been a lawyer, old fellow!"

The General leaned back in his chair, linked his hands together, and smiled on them both with ineffable self-content. Absently he selected a slender brown Havana from the humidior that stood beside him; and still smiling, he bit off the end of it with the snowy whiteness of his false teeth. He recollected himself with a start to offer the cigars with a stately hand to his friends. They refused. Benvill bowed deeply as he lighted the presidential cigar.

"Thanks, General," murmured "Garcias."

"You're promoted today, too," grinned Gavvigan. "But look here, Garcias: who was with the reserve at the battle of San Jacinto?"

"GARCIAS" started from his chair with a groan, as though that name had wounded him to the heart; and with a hand against his breast and a face of pain he muttered: "Oh, my people, my people! My poor countrymen!"

"That's damned good!" applauded Gavvigan. "And who commanded the reserve?"

"Who commanded the soldiers who never marched?" cried "Garcias" in a changed voice. "Who let them wait on the hill while the rest of them—all my braves, all my heroes, and old Don Hernando with his white hair blowing, and all my noble fellows crushed back into the marsh, to drown, to die—who commanded the reserve that watched us perish there? Who commanded it except

that traitor to his God, his country and his president? Who commanded it but Francisco Diaz, that dog who fawned at my feet and kissed my hand! Give him to the grip of my fingers, God, and I still shall find a young and living strength to throttle!"

"Good, good, good!" shouted Gavvigan and Benvill together.

"But don't overdo it! It's perfect that way!" commented Benvill.

"Garcias" had sunk into his chair again and sheltered his eyes with his hand.

"If that were on the stage, it would knock 'em right out of their chairs," said Gavvigan.

THERE was a tap at the door of the apartment. The porter was there to say Señorita Melendez and her duenna were calling. He was told to usher them up. For almost every day Alicia Melendez walked or drove or dined with Benvill or Gavvigan, always to ask: "Is it he, do you think? Is it Pedro Garcias, really?"

What Benvill told her, Gavvigan could not tell; for his own part, he used every moment of his time with her in making love as well as he could; and the devil of it was that he did not know, in the end, whether he were a single step more forward with her; for all was friendship, and all was enthusiasm for "the cause."

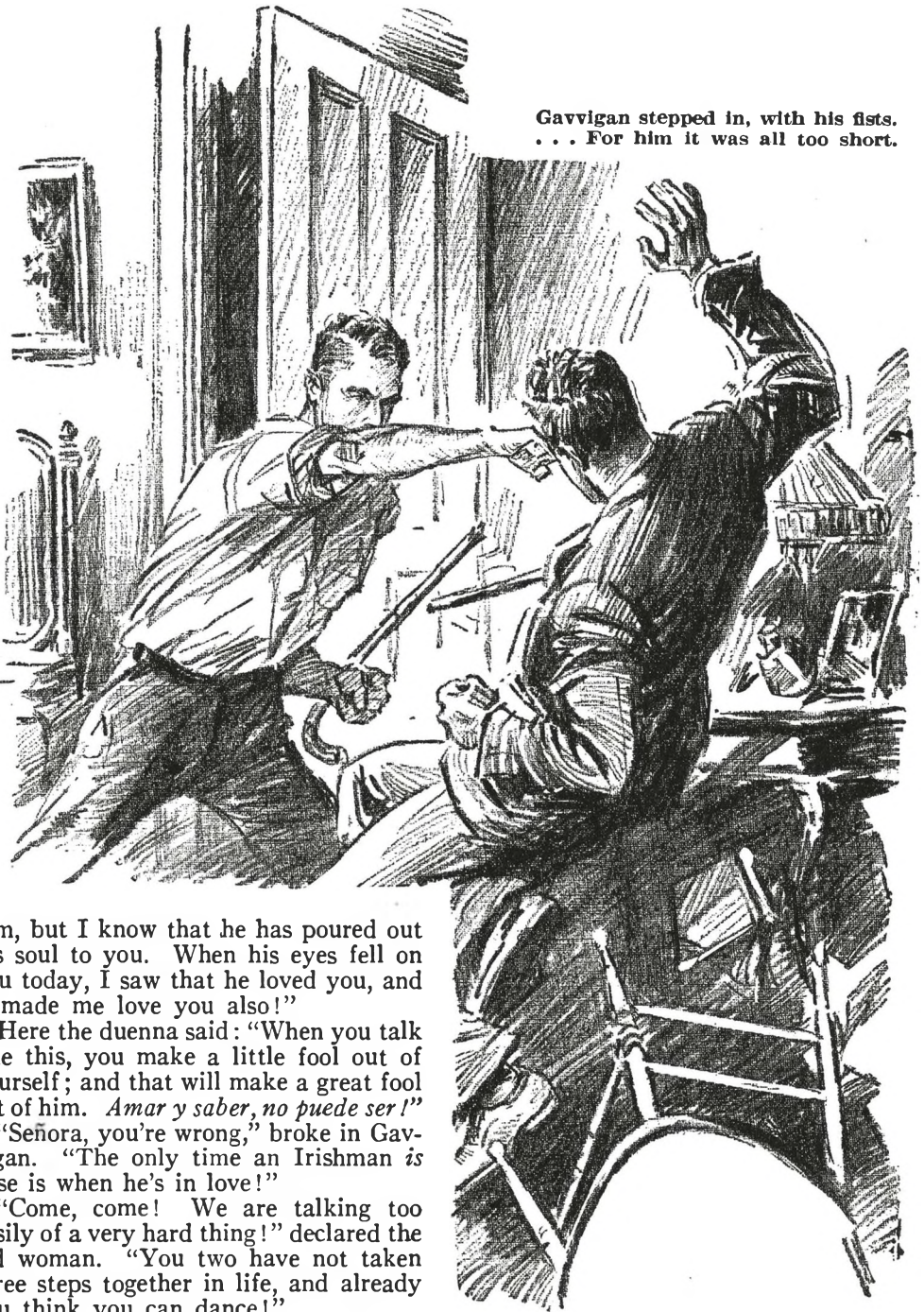
She came in, today, with a different look about her. She went straight up to Barrientos and said: "I've just come from my lawyer. There is two hundred thousand dollars in my estate. My General, will you take half of that for the cause?"

"Not one penny!" said the "General." "For Pedro Garcias, not one penny; but for my country, how can I refuse?"

At the thought of such a fortune, even that optimist Benvill changed color and gripped the back of a chair for support. . . . Gavvigan took the girl and her duenna not only to the street but all the way home across the Latin Quarter. Then they had tea in a little garden court, with the duenna looking out upon them from her years with a sort of contemptuous pleasure.

The girl, as usual, could talk of nothing but "Garcias." She never had seen a face so wise, so tragic and so good, as though all the sorrows of Honduragua were carried in his bosom. She kept turning to Gavvigan and saying: "Tell me more about him! You never talk of

Gavvigan stepped in, with his fists.  
... For him it was all too short.



him, but I know that he has poured out his soul to you. When his eyes fell on you today, I saw that he loved you, and it made me love you also!"

Here the duenna said: "When you talk like this, you make a little fool out of yourself; and that will make a great fool out of him. *Amar y saber, no puede ser!*"

"Señora, you're wrong," broke in Gavvigan. "The only time an Irishman is wise is when he's in love!"

"Come, come! We are talking too easily of a very hard thing!" declared the old woman. "You two have not taken three steps together in life, and already you think you can dance!"

The girl, at this word, jumped up and cried: "Yes, yes! And there is the music for us!"

The violin and guitar of two beggars had been coming down the street slowly; and now, as they struck into a waltz, they were quite close at hand. Gavvigan, in an instant, was spinning around the little court with the girl. It was wonderful that her entire body and soul could be so given over to laughter, and yet her feet perfectly keep the time. But the duenna was not smiling when the music grew faint, and the dance ended.

She said: "Alicia, you have been in a strange land so long that your blood has changed. You *are* a Yankee, now! . . . Señor, it is very late, and we take our leave of you with a thousand regrets."

Gavvigan went back with a fine madness spinning in his brain faster than the dance; but he felt that he still was a vast distance from the girl. If he had presumed in the least past the nonsense of the moment, he would have been in outer darkness on the instant. And this curious dilemma tortured him: her devotion to the false Garcias would cost her half her



fortune before many days; but it was that same devotion that had made her accept him like a brother in the great cause! The moment he warned her of the truth, that moment she was gone from him.

He found Benvill in a calm ecstasy, a dream of easy money. Gavvigan could not endure the face of the man, and went rushing out to fill his mind and his hands with other things. For three days he saw nothing of Benvill and "Garcias," but every morning he walked with Alicia Melendez, and every afternoon he sat in the dim fragrance of the little court for tea; and every morning he roused himself with a gigantic determination to tell her the truth about that imposture; and every day when he met her, her fiery eagerness in "the cause" locked up the confession behind his teeth.

Old Barrientos, on instructions from Benvill, expressed a desire to talk with her every day; and the sound of her gay voice tinkling through the door of the General's room used to ring ghostly bells in the brain of Gavvigan. She could not speak of "Garcias" without a new lift of her head and a new music in her throat that tortured Gavvigan; but still he did not dare to be open with her, for fear that the bond between them would be broken. Sometimes he felt that she was on the very verge of love, but always it was Garcias and "the cause" that was in her eyes and her voice.

**T**HERE was plenty to occupy him, in the meantime. Since the newspaper spread brought "Garcias" to the attention of the public, the American Government agents were extremely curious, naturally. Thundering telegrams of protest had come from President Onate of Honduras, to ask if a revolution aimed at the heart of his country and his own head was actually being cherished in a supposedly friendly land; and Washington wanted to find out all about the future plans of "Garcias." On that occasion he was magnificent, referring lightly to "the headstrong exaggerations of the public press."

But suspicion did not end, of course. Even more dangerous than Government inquiry, there appeared in New Orleans certain gentry who in the old days had been a part of the régime of Pedro Garcias in Honduras. Most of them were threadbare, but some of them had brought away their fortunes in jewels and cash when the old régime failed; and all were

hungry to see the former dictator face to face. When the two stanch old generals, Estéban Romero and Diego Montañez, appeared on the scene, Benvill was in a frenzy of excitement. He groaned to Gavvigan: "If I let them have a glimpse of Barrientos, we're ruined. But I can't have Barrientos disappear until I've given their pocketbooks a twist and a wring! Gavvigan, what shall I do? I'm getting fifty thousand from that sweet lamb, that Alicia Melendez, tomorrow. . . . But by God, Jimmy, there's a million in this if I can have time enough to play my cards!"

**I**T was well after dark when Gavvigan heard this, and he knew that after sun-fall Alicia was housed as securely as a bird in a darkened cage; but he went straight to her house. A warm wind was blowing in strongly from the gulf, with thin drenchings and volleys of rain; but he found his way up the side of the house to the iron lattice which fenced in her balcony from the world. When he whistled, the light went out suddenly in her room; then her voice bloomed softly in the darkness of the balcony, saying: "Jimmy, Jimmy! Where are you?"

"How did you know it was Jimmy?" he asked.

"Who else is there as crazy in the world as Jimmy?" she answered. "Why have you come? Is there trouble for General Garcias?"

"Alicia, I love you!" said Gavvigan.

"Of course, of course! And I love you, dear Jimmy!" she said. "But General Garcias?"

He reached a long arm through the bars. She made no attempt to avoid it. It was a simple gesture to bring her close.

"Alicia," he said, "I mean it's forever that I'm talking of."

She kissed him most willingly, finding his lips with a wonderful surety through the obscure splintering of the street lights; but even as she kissed him, she was saying: "Yes, yes! Forever! You and I—and the Cause, Jimmy!"

He wanted to damn the Cause with all his heart. But he dared not ask her if he meant more than the revolution. Besides, to tell the truth, his hand that kept hold on the bars was aching from the grip he was forced to keep.

And he said: "Tomorrow morning—at eleven—I'm coming for you, Alicia, and we're going to Garcias. Tomorrow I'm going to deal the cards!"

And then he was climbing down from slippery grip to grip along the wall.

He thought of telling Benvill what was coming; but after all, he decided that Benvill deserved worse than was to fall on him. So, exact to his promise, he took Alicia at eleven the next morning straight to Benvill's apartment. She asked no questions, but the grimness of his face silenced her happy chattering long before they reached the place.

WHEN they entered, they found Benvill himself talking with two elderly men with dark faces and Southern eyes; and were introduced to those two old Spartans of the Garcias régime, Diego Montañez and Estéban Romero. Then Romero was saying crisply: "But we cannot wait forever to see His Excellency the General!"

"My very dear friends," said Benvill, "General Garcias is struck to the heart because he cannot see you at this moment, but tomorrow—"

"Wait a minute, Benvill," broke in Gavvigan. "I've got to speak to you alone. . . . And you wait here for us, gentlemen," he added to the old revolutionaries. Then he took Benvill into the next room.

"They're cornering us!" muttered Benvill. "It's getting tough!" He walked up and down with rapid steps.

"Hell's to pay, Jimmy," went on Benvill, drawing him to one side. "These two damned old ravens want proof that the real Garcias didn't drown in the marsh at San Jacinto. I haven't told the old fool. What are we going to do about it?"

"Is the game worth playing? Did you get anything out of the girl?" asked Gavvigan.

"Fifty grand!" said Benvill, and forgot his troubles to laugh for a moment. "It's only a beginning!" he went on. "We can get every penny she has in the world if only we can shuffle those two damned old cronies out of the cards! Have you any ideas?"

"I've got a fine idea," said Gavvigan. "I'm going to take 'Garcias' out right now and let 'em have a look at him!"

"You're crazy!" breathed Benvill. "Jimmy, you're not double-crossing me—any more than yourself!"

"General!" called Gavvigan at the inner door, "I want you to step out and meet a couple of dear old friends of yours."

"Are you going to rat it after all?" sighed Benvill.

He was not foolish enough to try the strength of his hands on Gavvigan; but close by a stout walking-stick, a favorite of the General's, leaned against the wall. Benvill turned, caught it up, and smashed right at the head of Gavvigan. The blow landed. If that cane had been half as strong as its promise Gavvigan should have gone down with a cracked skull. Instead, the wood smashed like a breadstick, and Gavvigan stepped into Benvill with his fists. . . . For Gavvigan it was all too short. He had one exquisite moment of pleasure when big Benvill was plastered against the wall, hanging flat as a picture. After that, Benvill lay on the floor on his face and did not move.

Gavvigan jerked open the door of the inner room, unannounced. Barrientos, at his table as usual, hastily covered a paper he had been reading and exclaimed: "What's this, young man? What do you mean by—"

"Important visitors for you!" snapped Jimmy. "This way, Barrientos!"

The old fellow started as though that name were an affront; but he allowed Jimmy to take his arm and lead him through the next room. There Benvill was beginning to struggle to his feet.

Old Barrientos was perfectly calm and chipper about it. One could have thought that his carpet was littered every day with prostrate bodies.

"What shall I do about this?" he chuckled. "When my colonels thrash my generals, do I have to keep shifting the commissions?"

"This way!" said Jimmy through his teeth; and holding "Garcias" firmly by an arm, he threw open the door into the living-room and called out in a loud, ironical voice: "Gentlemen, you are in the presence of El Liberador!"

Then he stepped back to caress the bump that was rising along the side of his head. He wanted to keep an eye, also, on Benvill, as that "general" came to his feet. But the next moment he heard the voice of old Barrientos crying out: "Estéban! Diego! *Amigos de me alma!* To my arms, my brothers!"

FOR a dizzy moment it seemed to Gavvigan that the confidence of the old rascal would sweep everything before it. Old Romero had started forward with his hands outstretched; but that tall fellow Diego Montañez drew himself up with an extra yard of dignity and exclaimed: "Garcias,—if you are Garcias,—who was it that died in a general's uni-

form in the marshes of San Jacinto? Who rode the gray horse into the mud, and was covered and lost when the shell exploded?"

That old rascal Barrientos showed not the slightest annoyance. Alicia Melendez, in the meantime, was agape and agasp, with her hands clasped. But of course Gavvigan had known that it would be almost a mortal wound for her. It was Barrientos who interested him more, in this pinch. The old fellow walked slowly straight toward Montañez, as he said: "Diego, long, long ago, in the time of Ricardo Blanco, once we charged together up the face of a little muddy hill; and I stumbled and dropped in the mud. But it wasn't a stone I had stumbled over. Do you remember?"

Diego Montañez, with a sleep-walker's face of bewilderment, stared earnestly at Barrientos, holding him by both shoulders at arm's-length, with Barrientos still laughing and nodding very cheerfully, until Montañez cried out in a great voice: "It is true! I see the scar! My dear Pedro—my general—my president!"

And suddenly he had his long arms clasped around Pedro Garcias.

Gavvigan, his knees giving weakly beneath him, staggered back into the farther room. He saw Benvill, with a sagging jaw, staring agape at the wild little group which was beginning to sob and shout "*Viva Garcias!*"

"*Fundador!* I sure need a drink!" breathed Benvill, and went reeling into the General's bedroom, where a bottle of the thick sweet brandy was always at hand. Gavvigan, in need of equal support, followed him; and it was while Benvill was pouring the drink that Gavvigan drew out with an absent hand the stack of small blue note-paper which the General had covered hastily when Gavvigan looked in upon him a moment before.

The writing was stunningly familiar to Gavvigan. It was the hand of Alicia Melendez. The swift screeed said:

*"My dear General,*

*To me it seems perfectly obvious that Benvill is entirely dishonest. He has been pressing for money for some time. Tomorrow I give him a check, but payment already is stopped on it.*

*As for Gavvigan, I think he's a whole man and only a half thief. Ask him more questions.*

*Affectionately yours to command,  
Alicia Melendez."*

Another fine story by Max Brand will appear in an early issue.

Gavvigan turned without the drink which Benvill held out to him, and went with dreaming eyes into that room where Romero and the girl and old Montañez were still embracing that happy fellow Pedro Garcias. Alicia Melendez tried to draw Gavvigan into the circle to join the vivas, but he said to her, quietly: "Old dear, why do you people want a fellow who's at least half a thief?"

He saw recognition of her own words narrow her eyes for an instant; and then she was laughing again.

"So he can steal my country and give it back to my General!" she cried to him. "These hands—they are so big—they can take whatever they will, Jimmy."

"Beginning with you?" asked Gavvigan grimly.

**B**ENVILL, appearing seemingly from nowhere, was busily pouring glasses of the brandy.

"Of course beginning with me," said the girl; and she held up her face to him, still laughing.

"Will you be serious?" demanded Gavvigan.

She drew one of his arms around her, saying: "Of course I'm serious! The whole world can see!" But still she was laughing.

"You had spotted this fellow long before. You steered Benvill past him on purpose, that day. You wanted somebody to take up the Cause, even if you could get only a crooked gambler like Benvill!"

"Jimmy, Jimmy, when there are many corners to dodge around, who wants a very straight man?" she asked.

"Stop babying me with those damned blue eyes of yours," said Gavvigan. "You knew from the first that it was the real Garcias!"

"No, no," cried the girl, "I was not at all sure. How could I be? It was only ten minutes ago that I was sure. . . . But I made the dear *General* think that I was sure from the first."

"And you spied on Benvill and me?" She put a finger over his lips.

"*Viva, viva Garcias!*" shouted the chorus.

"Darling, is it true? Do you love me?" asked Gavvigan.

She could not stop laughing as she answered: "*Viva, viva Garcias!*"

And she lifted the little glass of brandy which Benvill had put into her hand.



# The *Revolt* of

By WILLIAM

**I**N the late '70's, San Francisco would have scoffed at any idea of bridging the bay. People on both sides struggled with the notion of crossing it in a boat, as travelers still do about a journey across the Atlantic. Business and residences huddled along Market Street east of Van Ness; and the Twin Peaks were far-away picnic grounds. Between the peaks and the ocean shore there were dunes; now and then a farm habitation; very little else.

But that little included for a time the most sinister industry that ever had footing within this great city's boundaries. I speak of that ten-acre enclosure walled with growing bamboo, nestled in a hollow, and containing a colony of a race I took for my own until one day I saw my face in a mirror.

My rational memory starts with the interior of that bamboo fort. But there is one other period that my imagination has played with: throughout all of my conscious life, and which has been the theme of a thousand dreams. It never varies:

I can see a spot of light upon the floor. I try to catch it. And there is a golden strand tapering up from the spot to a tiny golden star in the wall—a nail-hole through which the afternoon sun, well

down, is streaming. If I could just pull the beautiful string down to me I might have something extraordinary; but it dissolves in my grasp, and I am annoyed at the futility of trying further. Then I hear footsteps outside. I look up and see a face, a white, enchanting face that seems somehow to be everything which my world at that moment requires. I know it is a face that has developed out of dim pasts. I sense its maternal superiority over me.

Now she moves to let in people. They wear headgear like inverted bowls of matting. Slant-eyed, they are, and not white like the one who is dear to me. I see her beautiful face change into a shape that frightens me. She screams—and is then made to vanish by those monstrous slant-eyed beings who come without end into the cabin.

Strong hands gather me up, and the sensation is too fearful for me to survive, it seems. All terror is blotted out with the loss of consciousness. . . .

It is odd that this dream should picture those creatures as not of my world; for my rational memory, beginning at a far

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*A REALLY unusual novel of old California—of a white boy brought up in Chinatown, and the strange adventures which befell him when he had grown to manhood.*

# *the White One*

**MCKEEVER**

later period, records none but the slant-eyed beings to whom I so long thought myself related.

Sam Lee and Loo Chung were my boyhood playmates. If the three of us did not grow up blood-brothers, we at least formed an alliance truly as strong, and I am sure in a more active force. You see, I am still subject to adjustments in the complexities of the Occidental mind. My own in that hidden brewery of degradation was fashioned in its plastic state to the Oriental. Chinese decorum, philosophy and culture, such as may be acquired in a mixed colony of castes, made up the diet on which my groping child mind fed eagerly. Only a child from intelligent parents could prove so adept at mastering intricate matters prepared only for the intellectual; and for that lineage I give thanks. And because my foster-father recognized the fact and surreptitiously trained me in high thinking, I give him double thanks.

I can remember no instance of brutality from him, Sam Hing Chong, who was Sam Tai Lee's father. That man was a thorough scholar, a gentle, quietly

suffering soul with deep devotion toward his ancestors, celestial personalities who must have been outstanding patriots during countless dynasties.

In what is the age of adolescence, I met the first white person I had ever seen inside the enclosure; and apart from my dream, the first in my life. I had never been permitted outside those impenetrable bamboo walls too thick even to be seen through. But Sam Lee and Loo Chung enjoyed the privilege of exploring outside the double gates freely. It was this which first suggested that I could not be the same as they.

From Sam and Loo I learned of the vast hills, the forests, the blue ocean. I had fantastic mental pictures of what such a moaning, thumping, now angry, and now subdued, vastness must be like. Chinese literature had much to tell about the sea. Sam Chong had crossed it. He did not know whether I should ever be allowed to see it.

**T**HE white person I mention came apparently for my especial benefit, and shortly after a visit full of mystery by the Unseeable White Boss. Sam Chong told the three of us—we were the only children in the colony—that we were to learn another language and must pay



The one who is dear to me screams—and is then made to vanish by those monstrous slant-eyed beings. . . . Strong hands gather me up.

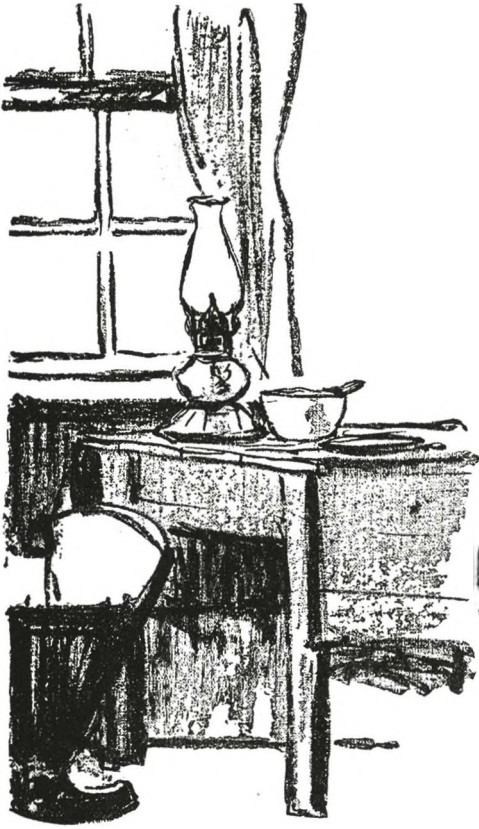
close attention to our instructor whenever he was in a teaching mood. It was English, of which Sam Chong could speak but a scant few words and phrases. The white teacher, Orrin Cole, had been a schoolmaster to his own race; but he had fallen from that exalted position from a kind of indulgence that seemed gradually destroying him, body and soul. I know Sam Chong secretly despised him.

Cole was given a hut in which he groveled in long periods of slumber after drawing for a time upon a reed pipe. But there were hours, too, pleasant ones for me, when he worked with us over our books, and the new language gradually lost its mystery.



And for all of his fallen estate, I felt at times more related to this derelict of the white race than to that which had fostered me. I had been named Lo Fan Toy, the White One. And I had compared all portions visible to myself of my skin with the peculiar tint of the colony members; yet I had never caught a glimpse of my features in clear reflection. Bright mirroring surfaces of any kind were absent from that habitation, whether by accident or design, I never learned.

My white teacher called me White Boy. Several months' study under him



having opened new possibilities in literature, I developed a thirst for English books, and a restlessness so unlike the natural fatalistic calm of my companions that I wondered at myself. . . .

By this time I was but partially cognizant of the nature of the industry worked at by the colony in the long rows of low, narrow buildings inside the fort. Out of gunpowder and gaudy paper they were presumably making fireworks; but that was not all. What the other commerce could be I was not to know until fully prepared for my "mission."

I did know of mysterious night work at infrequent intervals, and times when hundreds of bags of screechy-sounding stuff were hauled in by big teams from somewhere. Chinese dried vegetables, Sam Chong said; but he said it with fear and under-breath curses upon those same vegetables! Indeed, there was much of which I was skillfully kept ignorant, in that bamboo fort.

After two years of intensive instruction in our colony, our white teacher sickened and went to his ancestors. By then I had grown tall and broad, to the envy of Sam and Loo, who had to look up at me. I was becoming surer of the

racial difference now, but I did not speak of it, ever.

Then again the mysterious White Boss came at night, and my life was changed radically. Gee Wan Ging, middle-aged, a coolie who had adopted the dress and mannerisms of the land which supported him, became my instructor now in worldly matters. He looked somewhat the dandy as he showed up for the purpose of taking me forth into the world which, by a little at a time, I was to know.

First the colony barber cut my reddish-brown queue, and trimmed my mustache and beard, and then I was given clothes cut in the style of Wan Ging's. I found my excitement a hard thing to master. After eighteen years—I know the number now—I was to emerge into that great world outside those walled ten acres, and go far over a land of whose history and political status I had been kept ignorant. Was ever a maturing young man in a stranger situation?

Ecstasy began outside the very gates. My youthful companions envied me.

"As the illustrious White One travels far in strange places, may he cease not to remember his brothers who must languish here behind him in the undelightful task of virtuously doing nothing," implored Sam Lee.

"Your voyaging brother will break off choice bits of the great world and bring them back to you," I promised gayly.

Sam Chong was given then to one of his moods of sadness.

"The comings and goings of the White One have, I fear, been rigidly set down in a book of plans," he said guardedly. "The worldly bits designed for him to reap may have profit only for the highest designers. But he must neglect not to perform every chore, no matter how humbling or slight, with exceeding diligence, and as one having due respect for the exactments involved with gratitude."

**T**HIS was a crystal-clear day in the Month of Sprouting Seeds. Records show that I had passed my twenty-first birthday, but I was unaware of it at the time.

Off in the direction whence came the moaning and pounding, there appeared a deep-blue, white-capping turbulence of monstrous energy, bluer than the sky, its mighty activity suggesting the bedding-place of winter's storm-clouds after they have replenished the earth with rain. My first sensation was of awe; my second of worship. This, then, must

be the sea! I had the impulse to run down and kneel at the very edge of it in tribute.

"Come, no time fo' make eyes at watel," barked Wan Ging, impatiently holding the reins of his fast team while waiting for me to gaze my fill. "You see plenty of watel by-'m-by. You see big hills, mebbe. You come along."

I turned to him with a measure of dislike. I answered him in scholars' Chinese.

"Gee Wan Ging, the person whom you have just addressed is humble, but he is no dog. However, he has been sagely informed of the ignominious depths from which the deficient-minded Ging has assumed to rise, venerated with the gaudy vanities of a foreign race, nevertheless surrounded with effluvia of the miasmatic ooze wallowed in by his ancestors, who did have the rare grace to preserve their earthly form of pigs. I am white—yes; but I am no dog."

This speech was after the manner taught me by Sam Chong in dealing with presumptive coolies. Wan Ging bowed as one having been put in his place, and spoke in Chinese from then on.

Once in the journey he broke silence at my continued rapture with new and newer sights.

"Has it been long since the To-be-exalted One has looked upon the sea, and the high land?"

"Never until this day have I witnessed what such names have been fashioned for. . . . But of this exalted state which is said to be waiting me—tell me of that."

"That, O most illustrious, is not to be revealed except at propitious moments. It will be the easier to master each succeeding duty by mastering them one at a time."

SO I was left to feast silently upon the ever-changing vistas revealed by the breath-taking pace of the sleek, elegant team. Plowhorses were kept inside the bamboo enclosure for garden work. But these driven by Gee Wan Ging must have partaken of the swift storm-winds that hurled clouds at far horizons.

At noon we had passed the east ridge of solid hills, leaving the restless ocean behind us. No longer was my worship confined alone to the sea. And now a new something, all-pervading, seemed to steal into the atmosphere, difficult to define until I suddenly discovered that the sob and moan in my ears of a lifetime

had ceased! Silence now took its place, a silence that crashed against my eardrums, sharpening lesser sounds until they became unpleasant.

Now we were tallying city blocks instead of hilly miles. I saw San Francisco then as it huddled back of the marshland near the Ferry, before the era of ambitious building. I saw it when its expanding harbor was a forest of ship masts at the docks, and when proud mansions began to dominate a few precious residential promontories north of the roaring business center.

I SAW people of the white race now in great numbers in seemingly aimless promenade along the sidewalks of busier streets. Some vague stirring within me compelled my attention upon them. They looked beautiful to me, even the homely faces of the blue-coated, queerly helmeted stragglers, or of some others at their lowly task of cleaning the streets. But above all there were creatures that filled me with no end of wonderment. Dressed differently from men, their skin white to perfection, they seemed in a race by themselves.

I stared after these beings in awe and admiration, not realizing the rudeness of my conduct until I had been met with many forbidding frowns. Yet some of the creatures paused after journeying on a bit to look back at me!

And then it dawned; by all the philosophies of the Ancients, these must be women! Dangerous creatures, according to many of the Ancients, and it is so attested by certain characters in their art of writing. Dangerous because they were so lovely!

By night we arrived in the Chinese quarter, where we were graciously received by Hum Ko Fong, a merchant. Ko Fong's establishment was the most pretentious on the block; he seemed to enjoy a choice and extended custom. However, after a few minutes of his suave and extravagant deference, I decided he was even less endurable than Wan Ging—though in view of his generous hospitality, I do him injustice.

Our conversation on meeting was something like this, beginning with Ko Fong:

"White boy heap much velly tiahed, maybe."

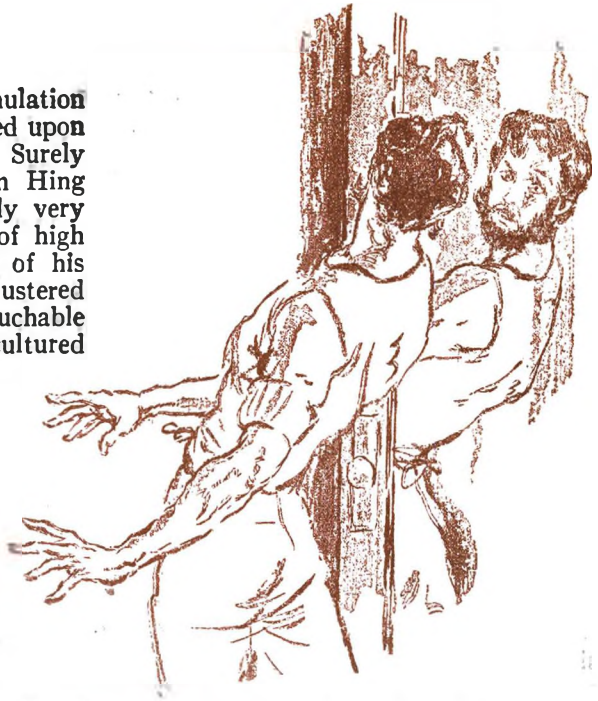
"If it will please my gracious and praiseworthy host to converse in the tongue with which he and his most unworthy guest are equally facile, it may serve much more to his purpose."



"Oh, indeed! May the accumulation of mortal ills of all ages be heaped upon this person's blundering head. Surely the thousand times exalted Sam Hing Chong has done by his evidently very apt pupil in the sacred matter of high instruction such visible marvels of his educating ability as to endear the lustered Chong to the council of his untouchable ancestors. . . . If the well-cultured

Illustrated by  
L. R. Gustavson

My peeping friend seemed to be as astonished as myself, halting with his face no more than a foot from mine.



White One will condescend to partake of such lowly fare as this thrice-forsaken household has the ill fortune to contain, he will multiply honors which his unworthy host can accept only to the chagrin of his own ancestors."

As so much of this sort of extravagance is considered in high taste among Orientals, I wished to excel; so I replied: "My extremely worthy host belittles his worldly importance by his display of modesty. It is the guest in this case who is presumptuous in attaining to the society of one whose greatness is outweighed only by his goodness."

"Then be rested. There are untasty matters of business to be considered in the morning, when the energetic and versatile brain of the White One has become refreshed with slumber. Eat, drink and repose."

## CHAPTER II

**Y**OU who have had mirrors to grow up by cannot imagine the effect of looking upon your own living form for the first time only when you have reached maturity, reproduced in a full-length glass. Such was my thrill next morning, to be remembered along with several others on my dying day.

In the room assigned to me the night before there was such a glass, which, in my fatigued state of mind, had simply impressed me as an opening into another apartment. I had been conscious of a movement in there as I passed it, but

my eyes being heavy with sleep, I was not inclined to investigate then.

But in the morning, with daylight streaming through a window, my brain rested and eager for further adventure, I jumped out of bed and discovered that the privacy which Fong had assured me profusely would be mine, had been violated. High-caste Orientals are accustomed to privacy. Coolies back in the bamboo enclosure had bunked several together in dormitories. For motives of race ostracism, I now believe, I had been raised to enjoy strictest privacy. In my room at Ko Fong's now, however, was an opening through which persons could inspect me while I dressed, and one seemed brazenly prepared to do so!

My first glimpse of him sent me back to my couch in alarm and anger. I could not see what entertainment I could possibly afford anyone addicted to watching adult persons at dressing. The more I studied the opening, the more mysterious it became, since the boor hiding there did not show himself again.

I saw that the oblong patch of light was faced with glass, a different quality of glass from the window-panes. The difference puzzled me.

Since the peeper did not show himself again, I arose and stealthily on tiptoe approached the wall to one side of the glazed panel. Then I made a quick side lunge, intent on doing some peeping myself. The results were startling.

My peeping friend did the same!

The queer part of it was he seemed to be every bit as astonished as myself,

halting with his face no more than a foot from mine. I put a hand out to inspect the intervening glass, and he did the same, but we proved mutually untouchable. Then, before I discovered the full secret, I flushed with anger at the fellow's brazen attempts at mimicry. He moved as I moved—even his lips, as I addressed him.

Finally I was possessed with newer suspicions, and after making a few tests of this great phenomenon, my peeper and I settled the matter then and there on amicable terms, and we have been the best of friends ever since.

But to stand there inspecting my own reflection as an adult person, making a discovery by myself after all these years, one that any four-year-old child must make in a bureau looking-glass, was a most stirring sensation, and it dispelled my last doubts as to the race I came from. I was white. I was tall above average, and straight of bearing; I imagined I looked distinguished.

**B**EFORE I could dress, there was a knock. When I opened the door, a coolie servant presented me with a fine suit of clothes, and stated that Ko Fong requested my presence below as soon as convenient.

Hastily dressing, yet careful to appear faultless,—what inherited instincts prompted such fastidiousness?—I was reluctant to part with my immaculately outfitted double.

"Ah!" said Ko Fong, surveying me shrewdly. "The qualities of gentility are indeed universal. The White One has become lustered. After you have eaten, we will proceed with the instructions in the mission which has been assigned to you."

"By whose will am I moved about in this manner?" I asked with more than casual curiosity.

Ko Fong's eyes became cold pools of passionless rebuke.

"That, White One, is a question full of great danger for you. You must put all such worries from your mind. Know this: now and always there is a will and a power to whom you must pay all homage, one whom you must obey to the letter; but you may never expect to see him or be honored with his society. Were it not for him, you might have perished while young. To those who condescend to lengthen our very lives for us when it is in their power to do otherwise, we owe everything. You owe him your life,

every thought in your head. In all forthcoming transactions of business which shall be imposed upon you, that fact is to be remembered. There will be dire penalties for disobedience."

**I** WAS duly impressed by these words, the more because of certain rebellious inclinations stirring along with the awakening of my Occidental mind. I was possessed at times, had been for months, with a desire for freedom, and to move henceforth by my own volition. It was the first time that I was ever told that I owed my life to another. The mere statement of it did not fill me with any sense of my moral debt. That I was to exert no will of my own, ever, was not pleasant to contemplate. Yet I merely nodded assent, and paid close attention to a lecture from Fong involving a list of instructions for immediate conduct. I had best relate their consequences in the order of occurrence.

After breakfast Ko Fong escorted me to an imposing structure in the business district bordering old Chinatown, the Crocker Bank, and introduced me to the manager of the Oriental department, a Mr. George Fadden. I was introduced as John Elwin.

"Mistel Fadden, Mistel Elwin heap sabby Chinaman belly well. Talkee good. I talkee him; he talkee you."

"I am pleased to meet you, Mr. Elwin," said Fadden, warmly pressing my hand. "My knowledge of Chinese is limited. We wish to expand this particular department, and you can assure Mr. Fong for me that his custom is deeply appreciated."

"I am to take over a large part of Mr. Fong's financial affairs," I told him by previous instruction. "I am acting as his agent throughout the State, and will have large sums of money at times to place on deposit. As there are others whose claim to this money are greater than mine, I wish to arrange their access to it upon their demand. Whatever may be necessary to insure a smooth working of this arrangement, I am here now to perform."

"That can be done very readily. You can simply reduce those instructions to writing, and leave them with us. The parties to whom this money is to be delivered can present a duplicate of the instructions and an order signed by you, and the transaction will be performed without a hitch, and in the strictest confidence."



He haggled over the bale of fireworks. In the end he counted out six hundred dollars into Wan Ging's hands.

I translated this to Ko Fong, who was very pleased. I wrote the instructions, also two orders on the Crocker Bank, payable to "bearer." I memorized the words and give them here:

*Give to bearer unlimited drawing power upon any and all funds which at any time may be deposited to the account of the undersigned.*

(Signed) John Elwin.

All of which was meaningless to me, but I can understand now what it must have meant to the mysterious forces ordering my everyday life.

**T**HAT day I was introduced to several persons, mostly Orientals, all of whom in society with Ko Fong seemed to enjoy speculations of sinister cast. However, I was treated with the greatest respect, even deference; I was indeed made to feel myself to be a personage of special importance. . . .

Wan Ging continued to instruct me in the bare mechanics of my future movements, one thing at a time. This consisted of procuring carriages, tickets for river transportation, and transactions necessary for the shipment of merchandise. He taught by example.

Ko Fong had a large shipment by river steamer going to Sacramento, and I helped in the work of transporting the stuff to and on board. Then Wan Ging and I took passage on the same leisurely flat-bottomed steamer.

To dwell upon the thrills every mile of that journey held for me would be-

come an unforgivable monotony. I can simply state there was no monotony for me. Enchantment claimed me for the two days it took steam to propel that boat upstream to the inland metropolis, stopping as it did to unload freight in exchange for produce along the banks.

At Sacramento, work began again for Wan Ging and me. I learned how to have Ko Fong's goods warehoused in his own branch store in Sacramento; how to negotiate with stablekeepers for fast freight teams, and so forth, and to obtain special transportation for certain specially marked bales in the shipment.

I recognized those bales; for they had been worked on by coolies inside the bamboo fort for the past month. Fireworks, supposedly; I did not know otherwise, then.

Sacramento at that time was a busy little settlement engaged in furnishing mining communities the necessities of life and industry; but with the development of agriculture, it was fast becoming a more permanent mart. Several foothill towns that had mushroomed into existence on mining alone were even now, as mushrooms, wilting after the passing of the gold-fever.

Chinese were taking over many of the mining camps abandoned by the whites, carefully gleaning streams of gravel for gold wasted by careless white prospectors who had been merely skimming the cream off the district. Every creek or river had its Chinese camps hovering around such distributing points as Folsom, Placerville, Auburn, Grass Valley,

Oroville, Marysville; and going south, Jackson, Mormon Bar, Angel's Camp, and dozens of others whose names are only a memory. The Chinese followed the whites all along the Mother Lode.

But mining was not all that supported the immense Oriental population of California, said at one time to equal the whites in numbers. Railroads under construction employed large gangs of Chinese laborers. And almost anybody who aspired to be somebody in the inland towns hired Chinese servants.

Ko Fong increased his fortunes by supplying wholesale to Chinese merchants in all such centers every necessity and luxury dear to the Oriental heart. I had to do with only one item of the luxuries, supposedly fireworks.

WITH all our goods safely stored in Ko Fong's branch on Front Street, Wan Ging got Fong's private freight team from the stables near by; we loaded aboard all we could of the marked bundles, and early in the morning we set out.

"You leahn dlive now," said Ging on reaching the outskirts, and gave me the lines. Eager enough, I took them, and found this next stage of my education quite exhilarating. The team was sleek and fast, and so well trained and docile that they gave even my unskilled hands little trouble. The long freighter, covered with canvas, had its bed suspended upon thoroughbraces; the four horses seemed to make nothing of the weight behind them.

Our first stop was at Long Tao Koy's, in Folsom. He received us as though we were emissaries direct from his departed ancestors with scrolls bearing their unanimous approval of all his earthly doings—and I know for a fact that many of his actions must have been excessively evil. He looked like a bandit, but he did not attempt to steal from us. He haggled over the bale of fireworks we left off—or rather over the long, mysterious container which he took out from the center of the bale and suspiciously weighed upon his own scales. In the end he counted out six hundred dollars into Wan Ging's hands, gold coin.

Ging put this in a canvas bag; and when we had said our last adieus after a sumptuous dinner at Tao Koy's, and had traveled some distance out of anyone's sight, he revealed to me a secret compartment in the wagon-bed where he hid the bag of coin, and from which

he took two pistols. One of these he gave to me.

"By-'m-by soon we lest team, and I show you shoot," he said.

That afternoon I had my first practice with firearms. He also gave me a long knife to wear in my belt.

"What are these for?" I demanded.

"Mebbe some time lobber tly fo' steal money. You shootum plenty."

At Placerville we made another disposal, and there put up for the night. We collected two thousand dollars from the merchant there.

In the morning we headed south upon our fascinating mission, except that at one camp we came upon seven dead Chinamen lying about, riddled with bullets. Not a live person was to be seen, although there must have been more than the seven originally.

"Lobber come here," said Wan grimly.

"Explain to me in Chinese."

"Surely the White One has been reared in blissful ignorance of the evil ways of man," he said. "White robber dogs have swept through this camp like a pack of wolves, and have sucked it dry of golden milk. There is no gold here to collect for our precious merchandise. We must keep to the road, and not sleep. The White One will do well to keep one eye busy watching to the sides of the road as well as the center."

We kept watch between us; but evidently the robbers had gone on to the hills east. I was to learn more later of the raids made on the Mother Lode Chinese camps by bandits of the Murieta and Velasquez type. Unscrupulous whites considered Orientals legitimate prey. The Chinamen brought new methods of making low-grade workings pay; the China-pump that revolved by the flow of the current, at the same time hoisting buckets of water into the air and dumping them into a hopper. This, drained by a flume, gave them sluicing water at no cost of upkeep beyond the initial expense of material and labor. White prospectors laughed at these methods, but many were seized with jealousy when they saw how much John Chinaman was gleaning from skimmed-over territory.

MANY instances came to my knowledge where jealous whites traded upon the reputation of known outlaws for raiding China camps; and "pig-sticking," as it was winkingly called, became a dark night sport. This was carried on

to a greater extent than the white population was willing to admit, and accounted appreciably for the dwindling of Orientals during that free-and-easy period.

But as I look back as an actor in my own part of the giant, haphazard play of exploiting the Far West, I cannot but admit that the traffic I helped to foster for a brief but intensively active period was many shades worse than anything else attempted against the Chinaman in America. And yet at the time I started out on that mission such names as United States and America, and the political set-ups of the communities I served, were but vague considerations. My white instructor had neglected—by orders, no doubt—to inform me of these matters. Gee Wan Ging took me over routes that led strictly to Chinese centers, and my object-lessons were such as to exclude all other considerations until I was thoroughly ready for the job to come.

After a week's circuit of foothill camps we landed in Stockton and there loaded on another supply we had shipped before leaving Sacramento. Every new move was an object-lesson for me; and I rapidly became proficient in all that I was taught, eager to learn more. We covered many camps south, then swung west and headed north. By the time we reached Sacramento again, I had twenty-seven thousand three hundred dollars to deposit in the bank there temporarily.

**A** THREE weeks' circuit of northern towns swelled the deposit to a total of sixty-four thousand dollars. We had enjoyed a complete sell-out of our wares. And seemingly we had spread a great deal of happiness. Always we had been met with an extravagant reception. We were emancipators, gods. We lived at the expense of our customers principally; and I enjoyed myself, whatever Wan Ging got out of it. For I was still ignorant of our merchandise.

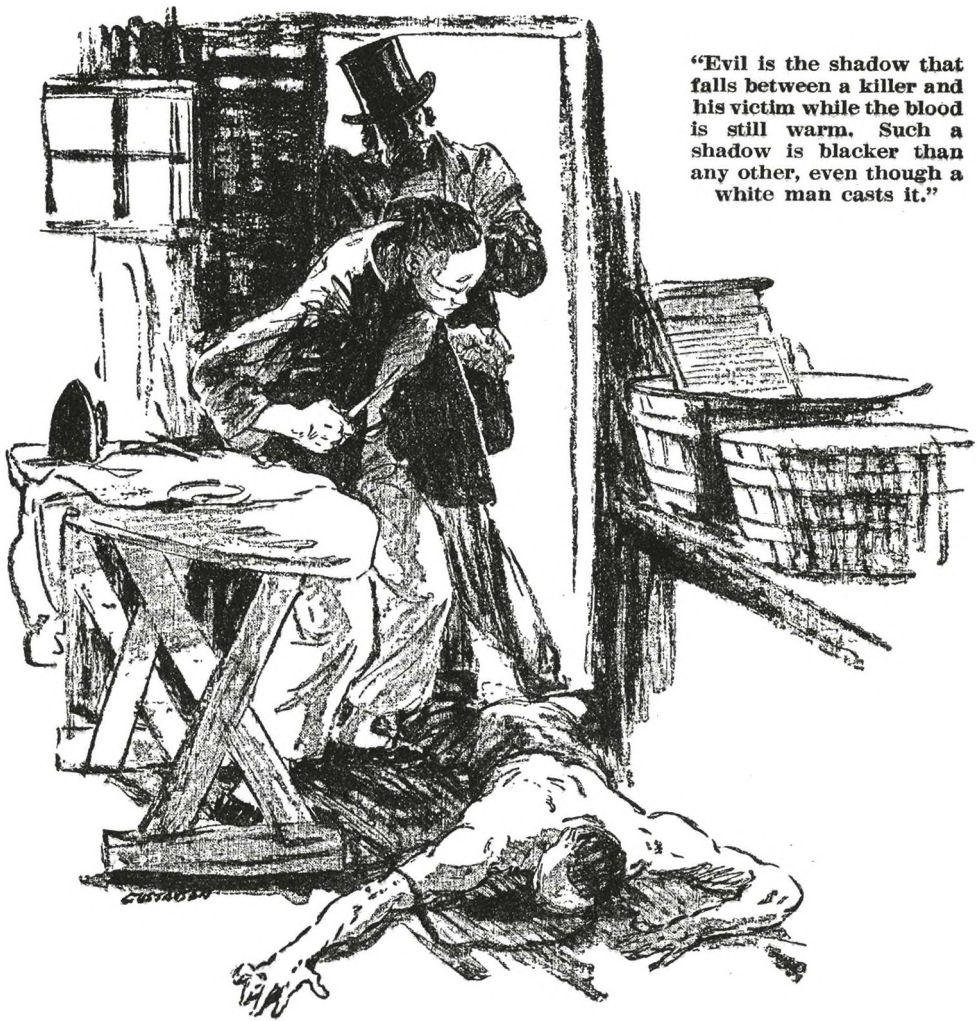
When at last we arrived by boat in San Francisco I immediately deposited a draft to the John Elwin account as previously instructed, proud of my achievements in the period of education, but with no more real understanding of what I had learned than a parrot has of the words it picks up among human languages. . . . Little did I dream of the dangers I was headed for, nor of the trouble I was unwittingly to precipitate along the course of my future travels.

**F**OR all of the praise and fawning deference paid me on all sides—which I know now was for psychological reasons—while I passed a week in idleness, my movements were arranged and timed for me, my very leisure directed out of a book of plans. I was walled in by freedom, and chained by flattery and easy living.

Then it ended abruptly as Ko Fong set aside my cup of sweet with which he had been rewarding my achievements, and placed before me a new course of endeavors. And this was generously seasoned with caustic advice upon my future department.

"There may come to the versatile brain of the illustrious White One certain annoying comparisons between himself and others of the white race. Banish them as one would banish thoughts of self-destruction. He may sometimes wonder at the commerce with which he has been so implicitly trusted. Such worries are not only without need but teem with danger. Banish them as a leprous blood-brother is banished. All such speculation is the property of one to whom even the spit of the White One belongs. The White One is not a mind but a tool. That he is intelligent is fortunate for himself; for it has won him the highest assignment in this commerce. He will do well by his intelligence to act strictly in obedience to all instructions written. His way, as well as can be, will be made easy for him; but certain contingencies may arise in which he must use his judgment. He may have to defend his life, more particularly the gold treasure which he gathers in place of the merchandise which he delivers. He may be set upon by thieves. He must guard his wares with his life—rather, with the life which he owes to another. For his obedience there will be fitting reward; for disobedience, also a reward. Has the White One been duly informed of the Island of Poppies?"

**P**OPPY Island! Indeed, I had heard mention of it at the colony. Sam Chong had told of it, second-hand knowledge from him, but he uttered the name with dread. This island was out in the sea somewhere, a place of isolation and terror. Some people who had displeased the White Boss had been taken there, never to return. Was this White Boss master of the world? In my ignorance,



"Evil is the shadow that falls between a killer and his victim while the blood is still warm. Such a shadow is blacker than any other, even though a white man casts it."

it began to appear so. I could not see then that my valuable ignorance was being preserved by subtle warnings for me not to seek knowledge. The threat of Poppy Island was a measure to that end; but had Ko Fong studied the Occidental mind more closely, he would have realized that it was false psychology.

I HADN'T as yet read the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible. I had never come across a parallel in Oriental legend. The Occidental believes essentially that the first parents were whites. The white person believes that he is inoculated with the virus of disobedience, and therefore must disobey on proper challenge. I am of the white race. I had not yet met my challenge.

The Oriental believes that obedience is essential to purification. Even if his master is a double-dyed demon, he must obey. Ko Fong, in mentioning Poppy Island, made a mistake. He did not know it at the moment; neither did I.

"I have heard of the island," I admitted. "Is it not another name for the Great-Chasm-that-has-no-Bottom? The pit into which the unpurified are thrown—to fall forever?"

"The Island of Poppies is a very real place for those who disobey the very least of prearranged mandates," said Fong severely. "I trust that the illustrious White One will so improve his intelligence as not to be guilty of transgressing ever so slightly against those mandates. He will find his life easy and pleasant to live if he obeys to the letter without question."

I was to go forth alone on the next campaign of exchanging merchandise for gold—and silver too; and my first act was to dispatch two shipments by vessel, one to Moss Landing and the other to Santa Barbara, to Chinese agents there. I was instructed to employ the greatest secrecy in various phases of transporting these goods, and to watch out for interference. No explanation was given. But

I was young and eager for adventure, any kind of adventure. I resented the fact that so much of my future actions had been planned out ahead, that not more confidence was taken in me. But then, of course, I did not know that only because of my ignorance was I of such value to the mysterious power directing me.

With the shipments off, I was given a fast six-horse team and a load of merchandise. Following a prepared map, I entered new and ever newer territory. I carried a mental memorandum of passwords, and of methods in approaching certain towns. I was never to ride boldly into camp with my wares in this territory, but to hide team and all in some convenient spot, and progress afoot to the address given. In some cases men were sent out from there to carry back the goods.

**S**UCH procedure seemed absurd to me, but it was one of the instructions I was to be most careful to obey. My direction was south. Along the coast there were many far-flung camps of Chinese wherever there was a market for cheap labor. I learned of new industries in my contacts with such camps, and picked up historical matter, for which I had an insatiable appetite.

Since days of Spanish rule, droves of cattle were raised, as much for hides and tallow as for meat. Harness-making required an enormous and steady supply of leather. There were times when the ranchers were hard put to dispose of the meat.

California Spanish worked the ranchos; China gangs cooked fat and tanned leather. Much of the product was loaded at such ports along the coast as the lighter ocean vessels dared put into, and money was distributed among the gangs; and my commerce being with the Chinese, my job was to collect as much of this money as they would part with.

Having no trouble at all in disposing of those bundles within bundles, I made a rich harvest in that journey down the coast. I visited San Jose, Los Gatos, Santa Cruz. Then I picked up a load waiting for me at Moss Landing, and headed for Salinas.

It was while driving south from Salinas that I met the first signs of trouble. From ditches at the side of the road two forms sprang up, one commanding me in poor English to stop. They were armed with clubs and knives. I had the

pistol Ko Fong provided me, a two-barrel derringer, but it was too dark to use it.

At the attackers' English, I hurled academic and philosophic Chinese in reply, calculated to make them think a little. One of them thought just long enough to stun me with a pitched stone; and in falling on the back of a wheeler, I missed being stabbed in the neck with a flying knife. Thus the stone defeated the knife.

By now the six horses were running away and rather liking it. I clung to the harness and saved myself from being pulled down beneath galloping hoofs; but I saw one of the assailants go down under a wheel, and the other was so dumbfounded that he failed to give chase.

In time I quieted the horses, but I drove for a good part of the night, gloomy between thoughts of what might be lying in wait and a desire to go back and give those ruffians a beating.

As my wagon was prepared with blankets to sleep under and lights to see by, I lighted my way off the road into a grove of oaks and slept until morning.

I was attacked again before I had gone far out of Santa Barbara with my next load. But I was better prepared, and saw one man go down with a shot from my pistol, gripping his shoulder; and missing the others, I cut loose with my long lash in a fashion that held them far at bay.

The speed of my team sufficed to save me again.

The rest of my route lay inland along the east slope of the Coast Range. The camps here were isolated and far apart, but they contributed handsomely to the John Elwin account. When I wound up at the Oriental exchange of the Crocker Bank, I had ninety thousand dollars in gold and silver to have "delivered to bearer." But I had only faint ideas yet of what such a fortune signified. And I was blissfully ignorant that my two skirmishes with parties of attackers were to precipitate over twenty years of *tong* wars on the Pacific Coast. I was proud to have accomplished so much.

**M**Y next assignment took me up-coast to Santa Rosa and Ukiah. I had a much harder trip, and it did not yield so much. Yet as I look back at the thirty-two thousand that I did take in, I must concede that it was a fair return for the time and effort expended.

As my return to the city kept me from passing through any banking center, I had twelve thousand dollars in cash on the wagon. I had banked twenty thousand in Santa Rosa on the up trip. But I arrived in the city a thorough rebel—all because I had given a limping white man a lift. In fact, he had been my companion from Santa Rosa to Ukiah. As I was never to meet him again, his name or description do not matter. But he was interesting, and gave me more real instruction on a score of matters than I had been able to gain in months from other sources.

He, taking me for a wagon-peddler and a white man, treated me as an equal. I thought it best not to undecieve him. He told me of having passed through Chinese camps ravished by an increasing influx of opium. He was being sent out by a society of anti-narcotic people to investigate the conditions. He told me more about my own commerce than Ko Fong ever meant I should learn. Even a few white men in places were taking to the drug, and that had begun to foment agitation.

**B**UT further than that, my passenger had given me a desire to know my own race—more important, who my parents were. . . . I must have had a father and mother somewhere; how did I know they were not still living?

I had now met the challenge which had caused the fall of Adam. I was tempted to disobey, and I was determined to disobey, to set out for myself and find my people. This was the United States, a wonderful and free country. I was entitled to freedom, and recognized no debt to any person, white or yellow. Moreover, I was sure that a great wrong had been done me, and I was determined to have it righted.

In my now-boiling wrath against the mysterious forces which had been using me, I failed to make any deposit at the Crocker Bank. I commandeered my six-horse team, the cash aboard, and put up at stables far distant from those patronized by Ko Fong. Following lines of disobedience still further, rash though it was, I set out for the bamboo fort. One man there could and must tell me of my earliest life. That dream I described in the first part of this chronicle seemed as much of a reality as the long, tedious years of my imprisonment. One man alone could tell me, and that man was Sam Chong.

As it happened, there were very few of the colony present, which may or may not have been fortunate for me. Doings in Chinatown had drawn them all away, save Sam Chong, who took his pleasure from ancient literature, and his son Sam Lee, whom he had not allowed to awaken to flavors of the outer world. In the absence of Loo Chow, Loo Chung had charge of the grounds. All industry had ceased. I believe now that it must have been providential. At any rate, after an extravaganza in the nature of a reunion, I lost no time speaking what was on my mind:

"Sam Chong, you have been as a father to me. But of course you are not my father. I have a white father whom you must have known, and a white mother. The time has come for you to tell me who they are."

Chong stroked his horse-tail mustaches for what seemed a tedious while before he answered:

"Does the Illustrious White One whom I have raised as a son tell me it is time for me to die?"

"How would entrusting me with the truth endanger the life of my worthy benefactor—the only one, in fact, who has been to such pains in teaching me ways that are just and proper? Is it just or proper that I should go on living a life at the bidding of another? Is it forgivable that I should engage in commerce that degrades and brings to ruin so many of your own race? I have peddled fortunes' worth of false dreams to your countrymen in this great, free country. I have helped enslave them to a stinking weed. Its lying stench rots the brains of all who inhale the smoke from it. You who are very wise must know this. Will you continue to have me, whom you have taught so much that is life-giving and sacred, dragging souls into the Chasm-without-Bottom for filthy profit? Can you face your ancestors, who would have you engaged in a worthier cause?"

**C**HONG had been studying the floor matting as I talked; but now he raised a hand and faced me, and there was intense emotion behind the calm, pallid mask of his saintly features. I know now that he was truly a saint.

"Stop! It is now perceptible that the White One has lost his value for the Unseeable White Boss. If he would save his neck, he must know the proper course to pursue; and that can be de-



terminated only in the possession of knowledge which will mean death to us both if the giving and receiving of it should become known. . . . Loo Chung, is there none but you within this stinking hole—besides ourselves?”

“A few low-born are at their pipe dreams,” stated Loo.

“It is well; it is ordered. The White One has begun his campaign of ill obedience on a night prearranged by powers greater than the puny wills of men. . . . But go yourself, Loo, and keep watch without. I trust your heart, but your mind is not to be burdened with so dangerous a load as this person has upon his own heart. —My son, you may stay. The poison that would kill a hundred we will share between the White One and ourselves—the three. Could the White One use this poison to his own advantage, he could purge the land of his race of a mighty evil before it reaches beyond any purging of it.”

Loo Chung obediently left us. Sam Chong's quarters were simply furnished, with a few draperies curtaining off his small bedchamber, but they bore unmistakable evidence of a cultured mind, of one previously accustomed to luxuries of habitation dear to the high-born of his race. By far his greatest material fortune were the great stacks of printed leaves, many of which I had pored over in my youth.

**A**CCCEPTING the supposition that he had been given shelter there simply through his offices in caring for me, I wondered what his usefulness could be to the White Boss. He must have read my thoughts, for he said:

“The White One must have the intelligence to be aware of my lost value, now that I have finished with the mission assigned to me. I have been looking to the disposal of this feeble person, which, being too old to labor in the fields of the Island of Poppies, is a problem easily solved on a dark night.”

“Does my worthy father mean that the Unseeable White Boss plans to kill him?” demanded Sam Lee agitatedly.

“Reading his mind from a distance in time, as I must in measurements of space, I am confident that such plans are in the making. An old man is an old shoe; and my flesh is wearing down until my miserable soul is showing through. I have not long to deprive a good man from occupying earthly space. I started life with a desire to do a great amount

of good. My youthful years were devoted to such desires. The last half of my life has been devoted to an equal amount of evil; the account is balanced; so I am nothing.

“When there is no wind to push the water, a puddle becomes stagnant. I am the puddle, sheltered from strong winds. Since such water gives up a stench, so will I release from my putrefying memory the knowledge which may save the White One to a more illustrious course of living than that of distributing deceitful pipe-dreams. No longer need he exploit the weak-willed ones who pay a price to become fools.

“I will tell of the evil-hallowed incidents that separated him from the side of his so-ill-designed-against mother. It became the unhappy lot of this weak person to participate in the workings of these designs. Yet, when I have related, I beg to be judged not too harshly. The White One surely could have fallen into worse hands. He might have suffered the great wrong of being kept in barbarous ignorance. Another jailer would never have posed as a cultured mentor.”

#### CHAPTER IV

**F**IRST,” continued Sam Chong, “there are a few pages of China's mournful history to be considered. Such is the course of life that the affairs of one individual are inextricably linked with matters that bear upon millions.

“One thousand years ago China was a thousand years to the front in matters of civilization. Youth, awake, sought enlightenment in the arts as well as the philosophies. It had achieved paper-making, then printing, and hurried on to gunpowder. It was a long and golden era for China. Historians insist that sleep and decay were ushered in by the Manchu. It would be presumptuous of this lowly person to argue with the historians. Yet his unfertile brain is chained to the opinion that the merchants of censored tradition were also dealers in poppy sap.

“Just when or where the first stream of poppy-sap began trickling into China is a question still of heated debate and little importance. But it has been undisputably verified that the trickle rapidly turned into a flood. The flower of China's youth yielded to the insidious wooing of the poppies. The gummy sap, cooked into vapors of great brain pene-

tration, flowed on through the intellects of young mechanics and philosophers until both alike wallowed in moral slime. China became drugged.

"In one period a Manchu implored the queen of a mighty country supposedly in the process of civilizing, to embargo her greedy merchants against landing poppy-gum on China's shores. There is no record that this plea was ever granted. But it is recorded that, having called a foreign government's attention to the profitable traffic, our Manchu succeeded in having it doubled.

"As the poppy streamed in, China's wealth poured out. Where once there had been a beggar to every one hundred citizens of means, there now appeared but one citizen of means to every hundred beggars. As a belated measure of defense large multitudes of China's hardier people, those who could resist the poppy, formed a society to defeat it. The methods adopted were of such drastic nature that utmost secrecy seemed advisable. The government itself had become lukewarm in its attacks upon the evil; so this zealous society took matters in its own hands, and its power became a force to conjure with.

"Its methods were relieved of all complications. A poppy-seller was allowed three warnings to remove the drug from his merchandise and dispense it no longer. If he were indiscreet beyond the third warning, his foolish head was divorced from his body and delivered as a third warning to some other offending merchant. The Third Warning became a byword and a household terror. It gave promise of being the needed weapon against the poppy.

**B**UT there rose, alas, the voice of young China crying for dreams. The taste of the poppy was in their brains, their demand a pathetic thing to contemplate. In the harbors were foreign vessels sagging to the hulls with nefarious cargo. The Society did not keep a record of the vessels destroyed, nor of the merchants they sent imploring mercy from their ancestors. Evidently the friends of the poppy, or to be exact the lovers of quick wealth, kept such records as a tally to their losses, and united in counter-attacks against the Society. The foreigners would force the drug on China, and China's traitorous merchants were ready to assist them.

"An era of reprisal against China's self-appointed protectors resulted; it was

a civil war amongst the citizenry with the government passive. The Society would have it so. But the war lasted through centuries. And the poppy became victor. It could pay its way, and the Society could not. The Society once boasted an unbroken chain of seaports under its control, a chain that stood for a century. The despoilers tried other gates of entry, and succeeded. At length the Society broke up into local defense organizations for individual ports and communities.

"My father, his father, and the fathers before them had battled the poppy. In Fuchau I was born, and at manhood was sworn to the oath of the Society. The Society at Fuchau was one of the strongest of the broken links. We were dreaded by evildoers of all kinds. So inspiring of terror was our reputation, that dealers in vice dealt in hidden cellars like worms of darkness, never in the open as flower-mongers. The Society kept the peace.

**I**N late manhood my fortunes proved sufficient that I took a wife. Sam Lee was born, our first child. Your narrator seemingly had attained the Seventh Realm of Earthly Happiness.

"Advanced in letters, distinguished in combat, ample of fortune and worldly goods, he would appear to be entering on the estate of a person now entitled to sitting in chairs and expanding his girth. But events were to happen depriving him of these boons. As you may perceive, he has not to this day acquired the girth of a leisurely person lacking in worries, and such matters as inevitably weigh heavy on the conscience at the end of life.

"Sam Lee had attained to two years and was looking forward to playing with his little brother when disaster laid waste the Seventh Realm. The Society of Traitors, drunk with triumph, concentrated forces one night upon Fuchau, catching us when we were resting supreme upon past invincibility. The rout was thorough and complete. Hundreds of our members were massacred in their homes.

"In the defense of his own home, your narrator, himself deteriorating in vigor and in combative powers, saw his wife and youngest-born yield their lifeblood under the descent of long swords. He saw flames leaping all round the couch on which lay the mite of his heart, Sam Lee. A sudden birth of cowardly in-

instincts prompted him to drop his sword and snatch up his child; and in passing from his establishment, he thrust a hand into his treasure-closet and stuffed his clothes with such loose wealth as he could run off with and not have to abandon his first-born. His heart had withered when he saw the flesh of his wife and her suckling shrink in the furnace that was taking the place of his home.

"Days of flight and nights of unceasing travel brought him to a port where he feared not to part with a great portion of his wealth for passage to far-

famed America, land of freedom, for himself and son. But alas, what is wealth in China is but a few months' subsistence in this free America. I found also that it was not the purest of my race who had preceded me here. They had found freedom for the play of their worst instincts and emotions. It was a topsy-turvy freedom. The low-born more often had money, and their superiors had been reduced to rendering them humble service.

"Your narrator was compelled to submit and humble himself with labor in a wash-laundry operated by the vile-born Ah Fat Sing. The pay barely secured shelter and rice for father and son, and occasionally tea. Besides the laundry, and I believe it was Ah Sing's chief source of free income, he sustained a lottery. The universal vice of gambling was just as free to a person in this great country as voting for his choice of ruler. There was great passion for gen-



A roar burst into the cramped hut. . . . A sound like "Van" broke from Sam's lips; then he pitched forward—and died.

eral voting on one or two days of the year, but a fondness for gambling every day. Ah Sing, whose ancestors would be ashamed to look in the faces of pigs, amassed wealth that would purchase him a small province in China.

"He employed one other worker, Lung Shooley, who gathered the washing and delivered it, and sometimes helped at the tubs and the irons. His free discourse at times warned me to be careful. In China he had belonged to the Society of Traitors, the demons who had driven me from my country. At a younger day my knife would have found his heart on my discovery of him; but with age comes a state of mind generally agreed upon as wisdom; but as one still advances, the certainty of that opinion wavers. For the sake of Sam Lee I buttoned my jacket tightly over my breast, and quietly laundered clothing.

**A** HOT, evil day fell upon the city in the Month of Smoking Skies, and Lung Shooley had removed his jacket. We were alone in the wash-house, and great heat has an effect upon tempers. It inflamed Lung Shooley to see my jacket still buttoned close about my throat.

"Will the proprietor of a thick head full of silly sentiments have the grace to remove his so-precious jacket?" he said to me. "The very sight of it clinging to him on this sweltering day wrings my body of its juices as we squeeze the water from the intimate garments of white dogs."

"And I said to him: 'If the spawn of unthinkable worms will but keep his eyes closely upon his labors, he can the better retain the sweat in his carcass. I see no reason in this day's heat to dispense with modesty to the extent of exhibiting one's wasted stamina, even to a worm.'

"He replied: 'The rivers of sweat down the thick one's jowls give the lie to his putrescent mouthings. They hint of reasons of modesty that this person deems it well to fathom. Off with that jacket!'

"He came at me with eyes full of killer-menace. He was an avowed hatchet-man of his society. He pulled suddenly at my coat lapels, springing the buttons. I was bare skin beneath; I had adopted my own measures of keeping cool. There was a long knife in my sheath under my belt, now disclosed. By oath of membership in my Society I had ample reason for employing it to his everlasting detriment. For on my chest in deft scars was

branded the Oath: '*Death to all who despoil by the poppy.*'

"It was not a brand-mark to be ashamed of; it was simply above being looked upon by the eyes of traitor-dogs. In a moment I became executioner of the guilty. It was Lung Shooley's throat that bled, not mine. A great red mouth appeared in his neck as his body fell shuddering to the floor. . . .

"Evil is the shadow that falls between a killer and his victim while the blood is still warm. Such a shadow is blacker than any other, even though a white man casts it.

"It was the chief white customer of Ah Sing's lottery who stepped in just as I pulled back my dripping knife. I am sure, also, that he lured moneyed sheep of his own race to a shearing in the lottery for a share of the golden fleece. It is a weakness of the white race that it permits its thinking to be written understandably in its features. I could understand but a few words of the language, but the situation was a very plain matter between us. The white gambler held the winning number.

"He quickly made known to me by eloquent signs that my neck was now food for the hungry hang-ropes of his country's law. He would save me for a price. Not having money to give him, my life would do. It was his wish that I dispose of the body quickly and join his enterprises. By careful use of the laundry wagon, the remains of Lung Shooley found eventual repose in the tangle of seaweed off the city's shore on the north. I accomplished all before the return of Ah Sing, including my escape. But it was merely an escape from freedom into this white gambler's power. He had gathered many persons into his power by the same sort of luck, catching them at lawless acts and forcing them later to become still more lawless. I was permitted but a small glimpse of that power. I had but one lawless act to perform—one that had an ending only on the day I let you ride forth in sublime ignorance, White One, to a gaining of bitter and poisonous knowledge.

**T**HIS hut is the refuge to which I came. Loo Chow, likewise in the White Boss' net of evil, and minding little about it, was master over the colony. The great wagon-cargoes of supposedly dried vegetables you have seen unloaded here frequently during your lifetime,

were bags of green poppy pods from which the sap is extracted. This White Boss, a man from other parts seeking fortune and power in the new-opening Western country, in sampling opportunity, saw the quick profits in opium, the ready market; and having little natural love for Orientals, made moves to gain the upper hand.

**B**EFORE he entered the field with lordly ambitions, there were three small companies operating under territorial agreements.

"Ko Fong, being the weakest in power at the time of drawing up the trade regulations, chose what appeared the weakest and poorest district, the mining country. But time shows that he had the rare vision of the future. When the agreement was made, white prospectors still ruled in the bonanza camps. Yet they were quick to desert an old camp for a new field; and the poor lost sheep from my country were just as quick to move in and gather up the crumbs of the golden feast. Ko Fong soon had the most profitable district, and has become, with the help of the White Boss investing with him, a deciding power in the traffic. He has been inspired to encroach upon other territories, violating the agreement; and you, White One, were made the innocent angel of that encroachment. Where Ko Fong feared to enter, you, a white man thoroughly educated as an Oriental, could cover at will without exciting too much suspicion. It was a grand *coup*, and there is a possibility that the two other companies will disband, now that the great prize has been snatched from under their noses. There is a greater probability that they will combine and fight.

"It will be a useless struggle, for the White Boss has expanded his investment to the Island of Poppies where the drug-flower is raised in vast fields. White brains have been applied to a method of extracting the drug which, though wasteful of sap, gains immensely in time, labor and quantity, factors which are peculiarly treasured by your white race. The White Boss is destined to have the entire market to himself. . . .

"As to that which more particularly interests yourself, and in which this person's services have been of undoubtable value to the White Boss, it was a simple case of robbing you from your mother's side. You were not in her arms, but you were reaching for them in childish fright

when I and several others entered your mother's abode and did the shameful bidding of the White Boss. What his reasons were I know not. What his relations were to your mother I cannot say. But I doubt if a husband could so treat his beautiful wife, or a father could so banish his son.

"My orders were to raise you with my own son. It was only when reports of your aptness as a pupil reached his attention that it was decided you should learn English. A white sot in the person of Orrin Cole was sent to teach you the language. As you progressed, the plot of using you as you have recently been used developed. I think you have more than proved a remarkable investment. . . . But you will no longer be of value. Indeed, you have become a person with a weapon. Even now there is agitation in this State for laws expelling the poppy drug. You have first-hand information. You hold defeat for the great ambitions of the self-exalted White Boss. He is a great political power in the State. He has built up a great chain of supporters engaged in nefarious enterprises. You have power to overthrow him—once you have learned how to use it. My prayer is that you devote your young life to his overthrow. It would ease my worries of facing my ancestors, to know that I put knowledge within your grasp out of which this power must be drawn. There may be a law in this land that can touch the unspeakable White Boss. It is for you to learn it, illustrious White One. Break his evil power, and you will have earned a place among saviors."

Sam Chong spoke this last with more feeling than usual for an Oriental. I was stirred; and Sam Lee had the look of a patriot.

**S**UDDENLY, however, I was reminded of that which was to me most important. I said slowly:

"My foster-father speaks of a weapon which I hold. It could be made sharper if I knew the name of this White Boss. Will you tell me his English name?"

Fear leaped for an instant into his eyes. Sam Lee hung as avidly as I upon the answer. Sam Lee was like a lost patriot, a zealot hungering for a worthy cause. I had some vague notions that moment of swearing him to mine. A son of such a father, rich with ancestral endowments of highest principles and sentiments, he would make an excellent soldier.



"The scholar has returned again," Sam Lee said, "but recognition is further away."

It was plain that his father suffered a momentary inward struggle, but in the end his intentions, I know, were toward complying. He opened his lips.

But at that instant, without warning of previous sounds, a roar burst into the cramped hut, deafening and sulphurous. My eyes, still fixed upon Sam, discerned a little black hole materializing as if by magic in his blouse front over his heart. A sound like "*Van*" broke from his lips; then, red oozing out of the hole, he pitched forward and died.

## CHAPTER V

THE action being instinctive with me, I reached for the gun in my own pocket, and dropped to the floor. My eyes searched the long black slit of night between the door-edge and the casing for a sight of the killer. Running footsteps toward the gates revealed his flight. Was he the Unseeable White Boss?

In my grasp and yet in flight! I lunged through the door and raced after him. He was just closing the small gate. I snapped a shot at him with my double-barreled pistol, but he rushed away unhit.

By the time I was through the same gate, he had reached a horse at the corner of the bamboo enclosure and was off at a gallop. I pulled the second trigger; and that shot went wild, as I believe now by providential design. My pursuit of happiness in the country guaranteeing it was not to be a short one.

And I would never be happy until I found out who were my people.

Since my own horse and carriage had been put up in a shed, it was vain to pursue the killer. Disgusted and angry, I returned to the hut. Sam Lee knelt in mourning and vow-taking. I joined him. Sam Chong had participated in my abduction, but being powerless to prevent it, he had determined that my lot should never be a hard one. May all the heavens unite in giving his soul peace!

I joined Sam in the oath to track the killer, which was given with more youthful vigor and confidence of success than ones so young have the right to expect. When we finished the chant, Loo Chung was standing over us.

"What did you see of my father's assassin, Loo Chung?" Sam demanded bluntly.

Loo Chung's eyes were fearful and pleading. They seemed to say that he knew more than honor permitted him to tell. He had a father also. There was a conflict with him in matters of loyalty.

"I saw him shoot, and I saw him run," he replied simply.

"Who was he? Is he the Unseeable White Boss?"

"He was white. He came to see my father. He was giving me a message to leave with my father, when he paused to listen while your father chanted of the White Boss and his evil ambitions. It may be that this white one who listened understood a little—enough that he swore an oath and fired a shot. More than this, I cannot tell you."

"But the message—tell us that, for it may identify the killer."

"Sam Lee, and you, Lo Fan Toy, are dearer to me than blood-brothers, and I owe you the loyalty of friendship. But to my father I owe the loyalty of a son. As a friend I must tell you both to seek hiding wherever you may; lose not another breath of time here. You must go before you are trapped."

"But I cannot leave my father. I must bury him."

"Then dig also a grave for yourself beside him. You will have need of it."

"I must, with my own eyes, see him laid to rest."

I offered a suggestion:

"My carriage is in the shed. We can take your father to a lone spot among the dunes."

And that was how Sam Chong came to his end. We marked his grave, for even Sam Lee hoped to return sometime to

his native land. Then, discreetly over a roundabout way, I headed the carriage through descending fog to San Francisco.

In several hours we arrived at the stables where I had put up my freight team, and the night man let us in. We slept under my wagon blankets.

The next morning I took the bag of money, mostly silver, from its secret compartment, wrapped it carefully in a blanket, and after arranging with the stable-keeper to board the team, Sam and I set out to locate lodgings that would hide us.

I HAD pondered the lodging question during the trip in. I applied to the problem some of the philosophy I had learned from Sam Chong's printed leaves. In one was a saying: "*Every city contains three cities, and every hamlet has three hamlets. The middle city and the middle hamlet are the body, and the other two are the head and feet.*"

Translated into people, this means the rich and the poor and the disorganized masses. It is queer philosophy to speak of the body being disorganized; but for one who is forced to hide among people, his best chances are to let the body swallow him up.

We certainly, Sam Lee and I, would be uncomfortable in the neighborhood of imposing mansions on certain hills overlooking the northeast quarter of the city. It used to be said that a shingle curling up and dropping off one of their roofs could drop slightly east of vertical and light upon the worst hell-dive on the Coast. And we could not seek refuge in the dives, for there every person is ready to sell his brother for a price, often wishing he had two brothers to sell. I knew enough to lead Sam Lee away from that district, having seen enough during my brief visits to Ko Fong's.

On Turk Street four blocks west from Market, we found a suite of excellent rooms in a middle-class lodging-house. Mrs. Harriman, the landlady, taking Sam Lee to be my valet, took me to be a distinguished somebody. I did not regard Sam as a servant, but I ignored her self-deception and took the suite.

Settled as to lodging, we gave over to the unsettled future, Sam and I, speculating upon it with the equality of comrades in arms.

"You will be recognized, Lo Fan Toy," he said. "Therefore I, who have seldom left the colony, must assume the task of supplying our wants."

"Would you make me a prisoner? I need sunshine, and air that is not filtered through doors and under windows. I mean to walk the streets freely at will."

"And become a target for knives and guns? The loss of a father has been too recent for me to withstand the loss of one who is more precious than a brother."

"But it is the beard they will recognize, Sam. I will have it cut."

"Such a marvelous beard cannot be removed without pain."

"Nonsense. There is no feeling in it."

Sam Lee resigned with a sigh, and said that he had better set out for certain things of immediate necessity. Sam was as well versed in English as I, his pronunciation perfect. He was nobody's fool, as they say in these later days.

He left with a pocketful of silver, and returned in a half-hour loaded down with packages, and a partial set of barber's tools.

"Since you have condemned so beautiful a beard, let me inflict its punishment," he said. "My hand is gentle."

And it was. First he sheared it, then clipped it; and between the two of us, a smooth shave left my skin the color and texture of a schoolboy's.

"Lo Fan Toy has returned!" he declared excitedly. "Lo Fan Toy of childhood games. The beard contained the man, but there has always been a boy lurking behind it."

"With my new suit I am sure no one will recognize the distinguished John Elwin, opium-peddler," said I. "It is time for dinner; so we had better look up a white man's eating-place."

"I bought one more thing to defeat searching eyes, White One. This! People seem to wear it to save their eyes from the glare of hard sidewalks."

Sam undid a package containing dark glasses. I tried them on.

"The scholar has returned again," he said, "but recognition is farther away. I wouldn't know you to be the illustrious White One who emerged from that bamboo prison like a colored moth from an ugly casing."

"I hope to forget it in time, Sam; and call me John. It may not be my name, but it is white, and I am white. I like it."

"As you wish—John. I like it also."

POOR Mrs. Harriman started with shock when she saw me emerge at midday, raw in my new transformation. She thought me a stranger at first. She

was raking leaves from young elms off her front lawn.

"Why—why, who are you? What are you doing in my house?"

"You cannot recognize me?" I inquired.

"Oh! It's Mr. Elwin."

There was a wealth of disappointment in her voice. Sam Lee had not been merely joking when he spoke of pain at the loss of my beard. Those were days in which people enjoyed well-trimmed beards and sideburns, enjoyed having them and looking at them.

"Yes ma'am. I hope I didn't frighten you."

"You—you look much younger—shaved."

"Do I? Then I am younger. The ancients say that it is far easier to grow old than to stay within proper age. It is unseemly to appear old when we are really young."

I am not quite sure that she liked that speech, and I wanted so much to improve my acquaintance with people of my race. She looked at me as if she thought me queer. Sam Lee joined me then, and we went off in search of a restaurant. . . .

I strolled alone that afternoon down Market Street to the Ferry, returning on the other side. I paused at every show-window to gaze at white man's articles of utility and comfort on display. From all parts of the world these things had come, and they seemed too many and too complicated for an ordinary person's needs. I couldn't know the uses for one tenth of them, and since their like have been changed, improved upon, or dispensed with in the generations since, a detailed description is useless here.

**T**HERE is a well-known saying: "Borrow from the Future and repent in an early Past."

The Chinese required less than the whites; they worked cheaper. One dollar a day to an Oriental bought him two bits' worth of rice and tea, upon which he could live a few days, and six bits' worth of poppy-gum, by which, in a brief space of time, he could live forever—in dreams! And while he was thus dreaming, he was neither earning nor spending money.

Market Street windows in 1889 offered for their main attractions sailing-trunks, saddles, harness, carriages, miners' hardware and clothing, sailors' hardware and clothing, farmers' hardware and cloth-

ing, and gamblers' hardware and clothing. But women's clothing had taken a dominant position, even then.

At frequent corners there were windows in name only, decorated with pictures of glass mugs with handles, and bubbles boiling up out of the mug. At the corners were swinging doors. I have seen them swing outward, and specimens of the white race come tumbling out, propelled by a confusion of power, to wind up ignominiously in the gutter, there to dream. So it soon became my knowledge that the white race worshiped a dream-drug of its own, represented by the bubbles that boiled up out of those painted mugs.

**O**N that late autumn afternoon in 1889, I learned more of the white race in that slow jaunt than I could have obtained from any other angle. Discovering a bookstore on the way back, I dropped in, feeling a call upon my own pocket surpluses. English literature! I could buy it here in neatly bound volumes by the armload.

The bookseller must have thought my literary taste a wide and indiscriminating one in the armload that I packed away with me, but books were simply books, and anything in English print was acceptable. A dictionary to go with them, and a bale of newspapers; I hurried back to Mrs. Harriman's with anticipation of a real banquet.

I have no idea what happened to that first collection of mine, but I distinctly recall among them a volume of Dickens, one of Balzac, a new edition by Darwin, a first-grade reader, a speller, "Innocents Abroad," a treatise on steam-propelled vehicles, Gray's Elogy, and another that had me completely stumped until my dictionary suggested that it might be written in Latin.

I was impressed greatly with the tragic episodes in Innocents Abroad. I laughed over numerous passages of Darwin, got a little confused with steam, also on Gray's Elogy. And I know there are narratives in Chinese beside which Balzac would pale. But with all this reading to consume my time, I know I did not get as tired as the spies must have, who were set at watching houses for me. Gradually I began to feel secure.

In the meantime I kept buying daily papers and read them thoroughly. This reading helped me to capture the knack of thinking as the age thought, and in



terms of the white race. It was very fascinating, and I got help at the bookstore in a manner so indirect as not to excite too much interest in myself.

In one of the classified advertisements I came one morning upon this one:

"WANTED: House Boy. Chinese. Well recommended. Apply 623 — Street."

I showed it to Sam Lee upon inspiration, and said to him, "Here is our chance, Sam. Suppose you apply for the job. This must be in a rich locality. You may learn something that will put us in touch with what we want to know. I want to learn who my people are and if they are still living. Will you take this job?"

"What does recommendation mean?"

"I know—and I can give one that will cover your whole life. . . . But I am sure we will learn something by it. We can find out nothing at all by lying around here, and the spies will soon give us up as gone entirely."

"What does a house-boy do?"

I stared at him blankly. A simple question, but an important item. What, indeed, did a house-boy do?

"I know!" I said suddenly. "We will go to the bookstore. The merchant there will help us, as he has helped me in many things. We will go at once."

I WROTE out on paper what I thought a suitable note of recommendation in the light by which I understood the matter; then Sam Lee and I headed for my friend, the bookseller. I explained what I wanted, confessing lack of a complete education, and was therefore a bit apprehensive of my choice of diction.

He looked at the note, and then at me, and I realized that it had been a happy inspiration which had sent me to him. With a sharpened pencil he scratched through a word here, substituted there, and in the end handed the correction back to me.

"Not that you had done too badly," he apologized, "but even rich folks do not diet upon dictionaries. Your praises of Sam Lee were rather more literary than convincing. After all, it is a simple matter, and this now will fill the bill."

"Thank you. I will send him with this as you have it—"

"Oh, but wait! My greatest criticism of it is upon your selection of newspaper. It is Oriental stock, I believe, and rather *passé* with the class of people you are addressing this to. Let me show

you some of our newly imported English linen—straight from Liverpool."

It mattered not where the paper was from when he showed me a box. I paid for it, had the note properly transferred to a sheet; and armed with this and valuable information as to the duties of a house-boy, Sam Lee set out. He landed the job.

BUT this move, destined to produce startling results, left me with problems of solitude, as I tired of reading in my room. More and more I promenaded the sidewalks, studying people through my dark glasses, hungering for association with others of my race, increasingly timid at starting acquaintances. That with my landlady had not improved. From her sidelong glances at me after some of my remarks I was aware that she thought me queer.

I noticed that on Sundays the city became quiet. Shops closed, and promenading seemed to be confined between houses and certain large edifices ornamented with spires. Some of these buildings had crosses of gold at their very peaks. From inside there would come booming music like the roll of the sea in a dream. Sometimes many voices sang to the wave like rises and falls.

I would stand outside and listen, wishing that I had the privilege of going inside. And one Sunday morning I summoned the courage to walk up the steps of such a building where a man in dark clothes stood just within the door. I offered him some money.

"C-could I—I buy admission here?" I stammered, feeling my face go red.

"Go along! This aint a theater," he told me. I pocketed my money and hurried away.

There was a church nearer my house, and I found myself greatly interested in some people I had noticed going there on three occasions. Rather, it was a girl who attracted me. She was usually accompanied by her coachman and an elderly lady; sometimes a second man who looked enough like the latter to be her brother. They always came in a fine coach with a gold monogram on the panel.

I had become used to the fact that there were women in my race; the first flush of wanting all the pretty creatures that I saw had vanished as my sense of proportion righted itself. This girl's face alone became the theme of many wonderful dreams.

From what part of town they came I did not know, but I would stand on the church corner and covertly watch her party go in. Then in an hour or so they would come out and drive down Eddy Street toward that part of town apparently vacated on Sundays, else everyone was asleep from late Saturday night activity. It was on the third occasion that I yielded to my curiosity as to their destination. I hailed a cab and followed.

Picture my surprise and alarm, if you can, to find myself being led back into the heart of Chinatown, stopping not two blocks from Hum Ko Fong's—but around a corner! I had determined to



"Spy!" I hissed at him. I flipped the knife from me.

stay away from that section of town until the power I unwittingly possessed, of which Sam Chong had spoken, had become a tangible thing.

Chinatown was not far from Barbary town. What this saintly-appearing girl and her people wanted in such evil surroundings was beyond conception. When I saw them leave their cab and disappear into a side door off a narrow, cobbled, all-but-deserted street, I determined to find out.

**I ORDERED** the cabby to drive a half-block beyond; then I boldly stepped down and walked back.

A few Chinese women in their quilted kimonos, hands tucked into sleeves, shuffled along. One was trailed by a tot not many inches high but fully as many thick, wabbling along.

"*Fì lo! Fì lo! Lo fì lo!*" came the mother's shrill command, her arm extended behind her.

White sun slanting over low roofs played upon a row of drab cubby-holes, closed until the night. A mother and a babe!

The picture is significant to me; if to no one else. No mother had ever stretched her hand to me, impatiently telling me to hurry. Was she—could she be doing so now in that symbol? My unknown mother calling me to find her?

I braced up and quickened my steps to the doorway of the building in which the party of white people had disappeared. I had no idea of entering until I had read the sign on one side of the door. "*Welcome,*" it said in English. Why, I had seen that on all the buildings



"I say, matey, that was quick and manly work, that," said the girl's escort. "Couldn't of done it better myself."

with spires! Who was this great person *Welcome*? I turned to the Chinese inscription alongside.

*All Persons with Great Weight of Trouble and Knowledge of Evil Deeds Wishing Peace from on High Enter and Find Rest.*

Translated into English, it meant "*Welcome*"—or so I reasoned at the time, and obeyed.

A room inside with a blackboard on the wall and a few pictures, otherwise bleak, save for a desk and some chairs before it, held a number of people standing with heads bowed while the girl spoke. I knew that universal gesture, and I too bowed my head until her prayer was over.

She turned to me with a quick, gracious smile and invited me to take a chair. There were several vacant. A few whites, including her chaperoning party, and a sailor who was alcoholically on the verge of slumber, sat at the back of the room. There were seven Chinese

seated before the desk, and a scholarly young Oriental stood to the other side of it, sharing the floor with the girl. A negro couple and a Mexican completed the audience.

AS I took a chair, the girl's eyes rested momentarily on me. I felt nervous, forgetting that she could not see through my dark glasses to my eyes, and unless you can see a person's eyes you never get to see the person. I thought she was looking straight into my soul.

Presently she began speaking. Frequently she would stop, and her interpreter repeated the substance of her story in Chinese, with flourishes added. Though I understood both equally well, the story was a strange one and, I confess, rather amusing. It was about a strong man killing people with an animal's jawbone. He had divine assistance in doing so, she said, and it was a symbol that the rest of us could obtain the same help with our own troubles.

I confess that her story was far less fascinating than herself, but as there seemed to be more to the story to be told on the following Sunday, I made my plans accordingly.

At the finish of her story she asked us all to repeat the Mizpah, and led the Chant herself.

There is a very pretty philosophy contained in that chant. One similar in Chinese runs: "*Keep watch that his anger and my anger remain within bounds.*"

Both she and her interpreter, Ng Chan, shook hands with the congregation as it filed out, only she held my hand longer than she did the others, and spoke in a voice full of kindness and sympathy, evidently for the affliction responsible for my glasses.

"You will come again? You *must* come again!"

Whatever it was I stammered must have been in Chinese, for Ng Chan stared at me. I turned and hastily departed.

I must come again!

All week I hummed those words in my mind, in her voice, as if they were a song. And Sunday I was back in my seat in her mission listening to another chapter in her story; I cannot remember a word of it. The music of her voice was sufficient.

Understand, my vision of her up until now, had been through dark glasses. Determined to see what she really looked like, I glanced about me at the Orientals in the chairs behind; then, wiping my glasses as an excuse, I took them off and looked full at her for a fleeting moment. Her eyes shifted to mine and held, and she seemed to lose the thread of her story. Thinking she had paused that he might translate, Ng Chan unwittingly covered her confusion by his singsong repetition. This gave the two of us a moment for mutual admiration, assuming that she found my face as pleasant for her eyes to rest upon as hers was for mine. I could only hope this.

**S**UDDENLY she reddened, and fell to studying a page in the pamphlet she held. I resumed hiding behind my glasses. Then came the Mizpah.

"I'm so glad you came back," she said to me at my departure. "We will have services again next Sunday."

More music for my heart to sing to, all the days between! On the third Sunday, a day threatening storm, only her gray-haired coachman-escort accom-

panied her. There were more Chinese in the congregation that day, a fact that seemed to give her considerable pleasure. But one of these seemed a little groggy after a session with his reed pipe. Still, I became impressed that his grogginess was not sincere. He cast several furtive glances my way in which I could detect a wide-awake brain. Covertly in turn I watched him.

**W**HEN the services were over, he still remained in his seat after the rest filed out. The girl spoke to him, then Ng Chan. He did not stir. I stepped inside and waited.

"Please, Mr. Chan, can't you say something that will arouse him, and make him understand that we want to close the mission?" she inquired with a trace of anxiety in her voice. Chan nodded, and did his best, but the fellow never moved. I had caught his eye, however, staring at me from under his lashes, and I developed alarming suspicions. I sensed danger. Here and now was a good time to discover if my disguise had been penetrated.

When Ng Chan gave up, and it looked a case of throwing the man out bodily, I made a suggestion.

"Perhaps I can stir him. If I do, we will have to prevent his going. I believe he is here for a purpose."

Then in Chinese I repeated the oath of Sam Chong's anti-opium society: "*Death to all who despoil by the poppy!*"

Only one white person in the world had any knowledge of that oath, or could recite it in pure Cathay. That was myself. It had the effect I desired.

The fellow shed his feigned slumber as though he had been shot at, and made a dive for the door. I shed my own apparent lethargy of movement, and catching him by the leg, flopped him on his back like a coolie handling a turtle.

"*Spy!*" I hissed at him, my free hand meeting his at the belt where he carried a knife. I flipped the knife from me, and it stuck in the wall beneath the blackboard. When he reached up his long talons for my throat, I balled my fist and caught him flush on the jaw. He did not feign the sleep which came upon him then!

"I say, matey, that was quick and manly work, that," said the girl's escort. "Couldn't of done it better myself in my balmier days. Shipshape, that was, and like a professional."

"Captain Binks!" cried the horrified young lady, favoring me with more than a suspicion of horror.

"Aye, ma'am, but didn't ye see the bloomin' pig-sticker go for his cutter? There's something queer here, though, mate. Perhaps ye can throw some light on it."

"Certainly—and gladly. After a word with Ng Chan." I turned to Chan. Rapidly I sketched for him all that he needed to know, and he responded with the assurance that he was no member of any order, much less one devoted to the degradation of his people. He was studying the Christian philosophy under the beautiful angel, the White Missionary, and had only the most profound hatred for evil traffic of all kinds.

I then apologized to the girl and her escort.

"I have made a grave mistake by coming here and bringing danger to you worthy people. I know not how much this spy has found out about me; but it is certain that he knows who I am. And all that may threaten me is sure to fall upon yourselves if it is suspected that you have become possessors of the deadly knowledge that is mine. I have brought you all into gravest danger, and I must act now to avert it. Let me tell you truly that you must abandon your mission here. This place will be watched from now on, and attacked by hatchet-men if you show yourselves back here."

"Oh, but I can't give up my mission work! Are you quite sure of this danger?"

"Let me speak for him, Miss Virginia," urged Captain Binks. "I believe every word he says, as a sailor and a master who has sailed every sea the sun shines on. This is no place for you. The lad gives my own heart's advice, ma'am."

THE young lady sighed. "Oh, I know you would side in with him. What do you say, Chan?"

"Miss Crowell, I very sorry. This illustrious White One has the misfortune to know too much of evil things. He knows like Chinaman the troubles of China people in this country. It come no better. I very sorry, but Ng Chan alive is more glory to great Christ I think than Ng Chan with throat cut. Because of what the White One tells me, I think I leave city and go many miles from here."

"If it is anything so terrible, sir, why don't you see my uncle?" suggested the girl. "He has some influence in the city, and has been fighting for laws to curb the vice in it—if that is what you have reference to."

"I—I would be afraid of endangering more people with what I know," I faltered, yet mightily tempted with the offer she held out to me. "And I fear talking here is dangerous delay. We must dispose of this spy. And you people must hurry before other spies are set to work."

"Why don't you hand him over to the police?"

"I know very little about the police, and that little is discouraging."

Captain Binks interjected:

"He is right, ma'am. The police hardly know which side their bread is buttered on these days, politics being what it is. The blighter should be shanghaied out of port."

"My poor mission—and we were doing so well! One more every Sunday. We were growing."

AND while you're savin' the soul of one Chink a week, which is doubtful, there's a dozen being dumped offshore every night," declared Captain Binks. "Maybe I should help this lad dispose of his spy."

"No indeed. If Ng Chan will call a closed carriage for me, I can manage quite well."

"You—don't mean you—you couldn't do *that!*" she declared, her angelic hazel eyes looking horrifiedly into mine.

"No; I will not have to kill him," I assured her. "But I am confident of one method of persuasion that will stop him from spying further until all of us are safely returned to paths of less danger."

"But will you not come to my uncle with your knowledge of things? Our address is—"

"Do not speak it; write it," I said quickly. "I may come."

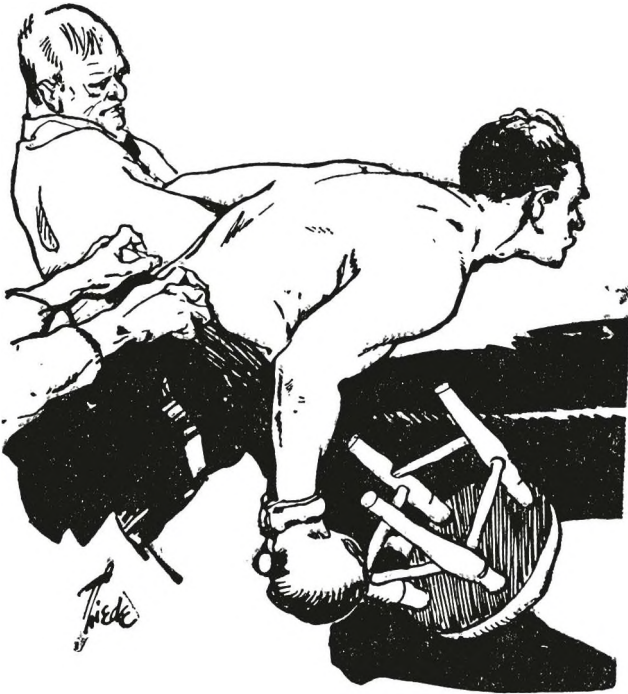
"But tell us your name, matey, so that we can tell him about you," suggested Captain Binks.

I responded to him in writing.

"Don't mention that name aloud until you are well quit of this neighborhood," I warned them urgently. "Believe me to speak the truth when I say that it means death, possibly, to all who may be heard uttering it."

Even more deeply interesting are the ensuing chapters of this exceptional novel—in our forthcoming November issue.

# Cauliflowers Bloom



*When Lou became known as Boiler-plate Bent the Boston Bopper, he helped to make ring history.*

By  
EDWARD  
L. ENGLISH

Illustrated by  
Henry Thiede

**W**HEN I was young, I was foolish. But I've changed. I aint young any more.

I mean I used to be very foolish for looking on all college boys as a lot of rah-rah cream-puffs. I didn't know that football makes guys high, wide and tough. Else I would have been slower to pick a fight with these two college dudes that handed me an argument about my taxicab meter.

"Four sixty-five, gents," I announced, opening the door—

"What?" the one exploded. "Why, that's ridiculous!"

"Yeah, but it's still four sixty-five," I insisted.

"Why, back home we can ride twice this far for half as much," the other guy put in. "There must be something wrong with your meter."

"It's not the meter; it's the passengers," I snapped. "Now, look, friend: if you've come to town with the idea of chumping somebody, it aint going to be me. How they run cabs in your town aint going to change my ideas. They can throw in a steak dinner and a minstrel show with every twenty-cent trip, but when you visit this slab and ride in my

crate as far as you've rode, the meter will always say four sixty-five."

"I insist that it's ridiculous, and we won't pay it," Number One announced.

"You'll pay it or take a sock on the nose!" I warned him.

I said he'd take it. . . . I got it!

That guy was quick enough to keep up with what's going on in Washington. Or maybe almost that fast.

The fall of Rome was just a gentle parachute-landing compared to the way I hit the gutter. As soon as the landscape quit leaping, I rushed him. I got in a right and a left and a right. He drove with a killing left at my head, but I ducked it, and he poked a tremendous hole in the fresh air. But his next one found me—and foundered me. Just the same I got up, caught him under the chin and put him out cold.

I didn't wait for Number Two to help Number One. I zowied him in the bicus-pids. He went down, but he bounced. He drove one into my breakfast nook, and it wrapped my stomach around my spinal column. But the lad was too groggy for any follow-through. I waited, and then whammed one to his chin that bent him over like a melting candle.

# in the Ring

This baby just wouldn't stay where you put him. Again he upped-and-atted at me, going into a clinch that held my arms tight to my torso. While we tussled, I noticed that Number One was coming to. Now, I don't think this guy meant to fight unfair. He didn't know exactly what he was doing. He struggled to his feet and came blindly at me so that I had the both of them on my hands. I managed to reach into the driving compartment of my cab and get a tire-tool that I always keep handy—and I don't mean for tires. I bent it over one guy's head and then the other's. That finished them—and me too, because I lost my balance and fell, plopped my head on the running-board as I went down, and then passed out as completely as last Tuesday's sunset.

When I groped my way out of the mists, I was lying on the back seat of my own cab and somebody else was jogging it. I shook my head—and it nearly fell off!—and took a blow at the party behind the wheel. I never saw him before. Whoever he was, he seemed to be pals with legal tender, to judge from his clothes. He was wearing a spiffy new hat on one side of his head, a dumpling-size diamond on one finger, and a suit into which the tailor had put his supreme ultra. He looked like he was forty-five or fifty.

"Hey, you!" I yelled. "Who are you?"

"Your manager," he answered, grinning into the rear-vision mirror.

"Where you taking me?" I asked, wondering what ailed him.

"To the land of milk and honey," the nut laughed.

"Aw, let's stop for *Alice* and all go to Wonderland," I grunted, thinking I maybe better humor him till I felt steady enough to wrench him out from behind the wheel.

"Say," the fellow put in, getting suddenly serious, "what were you fighting those two football-players for?" I told him. "What! You put up all that rumpus for only four dollars and sixty-five cents? Son, you do need a manager."

He pulled up to the curb and touched off a rope that I know from reliable hear-



say retails for two bits a copy. For a full half-minute this mad hatter studied me through squinty eyes.

"My boy," he began, "how would you like to give up driving this ash-wagon and yawn around in a banana-colored phaëton with a 146-inch wheelbase?"

"I'd rather have a scooter," I answered weakly.

"How would you like to feast on breast of guinea hen under glass?"

"Make mine ham on rye," I kidded.

"How would you like to give up beer," the good man raved on, "and shampoo your tonsils with champagne? And buy tailor-made uniforms a dozen at a time? And play around in Florida and have all the baby-faced dolls fighting over you?"

"Nothing stirring unless the offer includes glass slippers," I snorted.

"I know it sounds squirrely, pal," he argued, "but money talks. It's talking right now. What's your name?"

"Lou Bent," I answered.

"I'm Baldy Wright," he said, shoving out a mitt. "Know the name?"

"The fight-promoter?" I asked.

"In person," he chuckled.

"I don't need a fight-promoter," I spoke up. "I can promote my own fights."

"I saw that," Baldy agreed; "but what you need is somebody who can promote the dough that goes with a good fight.

You're what the fight game needs—a guy who can take it. There's plenty of slaphappies that can hit hard. But there's darned few of them that can stand being hit. You soaked up an awful lot of punishment from them two clients of yours. You've got a priceless possession, my boy—a fighting heart. With the right kind of handling, you can be developed into a champ. Look at the flock of stumblebums and pushovers they've been leading up for slaughtering! It's laughable! It's

ward-pass me. I was in luck. The both of them were sitting on a newspaper box, resting up and feeling their bruises.

"Gents," I said, "you owe me four sixty-five."

"That's ridiculous," mumbled Number One, still very groggy.

"Here's five—and keep the change," said Number Two.

I could hardly wait to tell Beulah about my good luck. Her and I had a date for that night. Beulah's been what



"The tough part about futures," Beulah snapped, "is that they turn into a past before you can blink. . . . We're washed up—and anybody that wants you can have you!"

tragic! It's even disgusting! Why, with what you've got, and me guiding you over the bumps, we'll be splitting gates of a couple of hundred thousand bucks in no time."

Baldy should have been on the Democratic National Committee. He talked about money as if it was something to be torn up and thrown on parades.

"Is it a deal?" he popped at me suddenly.

"Sure," I popped back.

I was just wondering if I ought to mention the four sixty-five that he drove me away from and who was going to pay same, when Baldy swabbed out his billfold and handed me five twenties.

"Get yourself a good suit of clothes for a front," he told me, "and rest up today. Be down at my office in the Midtown Gym at ten in the a.m. and I'll turn you over to Sailor Hoyt."

He explained that Sailor Hoyt was one of his trainers and handlers—a great fighter in his day, but now a little too old. He could still hit hard and still had plenty of fox under the scalp. Baldy said the Sailor would learn me a lot.

So after we had said wavy-wavy for the afternoon, I drove back to where I had left them two mutts that tried to for-

ward-pass me. I was in luck. The both of them were sitting on a newspaper box, resting up and feeling their bruises.

you might call the Heavy Love in my life for the last three years. We often think of getting married; but so far, we had never thought of it both at the same time.

Beulah's got just what it takes to make a successful wife—a well-developed critical attitude. The kid's well developed in other ways too. Beulah aint exactly littered up with glitter or gangling with glamour, but she can scribble her own ticket with me, and better guys than me. She's got bright violet eyes, wavy golden hair and a figure that would strain a glass eye. Beulah's got a good noodle, too—at times.

Then, like all dames, she's got another angle: I mean her way of giving me the raspberry regularly—with the accent on *rasp*. That's what she dished up when I told her about my tie-up with Baldy.

"My word!" she opened up. "It's not enough that you're a roughneck. You've got to turn professional roughneck."

"Them's pretty sizzling syllables, sister," I complained.

"You need a burning—about twice a day," Beulah rumbled on. "The idea! Getting all gonged up about such a blah offer. Baldy Wright's going to make you rich! Sure—and I'm going to make the Crown Prince of Scandahovia. Haven't you learned that the fellow who makes other people rich is dead—or hasn't been



born yet? I don't know which it is. I just know that nobody ever catches up with him. You remind me of a rattlesnake. Only, the rattlesnake rattles at the other end.

"This Baldy will just get fat off of you and feed you rosin. He'll sit back in a comfortable seat and smoke nice cigars while he watches cauliflowers grow where your ears grew before. And after you've been beaten soft, and the fight fans begin yapping for fresh meat, will Baldy always have room for you—in his heart? No! In the ash-barrel. Honestly, Lou, I sometimes think you have nothing in your head but marrow."

"You certainly think a lot of my future," I growled.

"That's more than you do—*think*," Beulah snapped. "The tough part about so many futures is that they turn into a past before you can blink. If your idea of a bright future is to make a stumble-bum of yourself, why stumble on, brother; but don't expect me to stumble, run, walk or creep after you."

"You mean we're washed up if I go through with this?" I gasped.

"I mean that we're washed up, scraped, dry-cleaned, sand-blasted, scrubbed and scoured," she added. "Do I make myself clear? We're just friends—and anybody that wants you can have you. Now go dunk a cruller."

"O. K.," I said, snatching up my hat. So I left her standing there. I was mad.

**W**HEN I reported to Baldy Wright next morning, he greeted me with a thump on the back and a smile that stretched from ear-lobe to ear-lobe.

"Here's Hoyt coming in now," he remarked. "Hey, Sailor—meet Lou Bent."

I almost stopped breathing when I looked at this Hoyt. He gave me a shake, and my hand felt like it had been fed to a watchdog. With a Government meat-inspection stamp on them, his hands would pass anywhere for hams. But the face! Oh, the face! His forehead was so narrow that it must have been painted on his face by a guy that striped automobile fenders. The Sailor thought he had eyebrows. I'd call them epaulets. That face was enough to kill anybody without any help from his hands. I expected him at any moment to start beating his chest and yelling for raw meat; but instead of that Hoyt just mumbled, "Pleasedtomeetyou," in a mild voice.

Baldy gave the Sailor quite a big build-up about how I could take it, and then

told us to slip into the leather and see what we could do.

Now, I had noticed that Sailor Hoyt had arms long enough to drag his hands in the mud, but I didn't realize until we mixed it how long they were. He put one glove on my chest, held me out where I couldn't touch him, and then popped me on the jaw twice.

That smacking made me mad—hoppin' mad. I ducked under this big chimpanzee's arms and righted him to the middle. It brought out a nice, loud "*Woof!*"—sort of like a kettledrum in a tin garage.

Hoyt might have been old, but he wasn't mellow—or slow. First he put one on my chin that made me discover I had a gong in my head. Then he pounded my nose back so far I felt I was breathing through the back of my neck.

**I** DON'T remember none too clearly what happened after that, except I wanted to kill the big ape, but I couldn't. Every time I poked, he held me off with them long arms and bopped my head. I was getting madder and madder.

Then I lost my head, I guess. I dimly saw some Indian clubs hanging on the wall. I snatched up one on account of I didn't have my faithful tire-tool handy. Just as I swung the club and started for the Sailor, somebody jumped me from behind, and we went down together. I put up an awful tussle, but when I was exhausted and quit somebody was holding my legs, Baldy was sitting on my chest, and the Sailor was pinning down my arms.

"Say," puffed Baldy, relighting his cigar while he still sat on me, "you aint very palsy-walsy! You don't want to get mad when you fight. You've been used to grudge-fights. This is something new—sport and skill and all like that."

"I can't see no sport in being on the taking end of a licking," I growled back. "My idea is to finish off the other guy."

"The right spirit, but you want to control it," Baldy argued. "Now, if I let you up, will you shake hands with the Sailor?"

"If I give him a hearty clasp, it'll be around the throat," I snarled.

So they kept on sitting on me, Baldy all the time puffing contented-like on his cigar. He kept on insisting that Sailor Hoyt didn't mean nothing personal by smacking me around.

"Cer'nly not; you got me all wrong," Sailor Hoyt put in. "I got nothing against you, kid. But I'm warnin' you

that if you ever bean me with one of them Indian clubs, I won't rest till I got you where I want you—holed-in at some nice quiet cemetery."

"Hoyt was tryin' to find your weak spots," Baldy said. "He wants to make a scientific fighter out of you. When you've got that science, nothing can stop you, with me managing you. Your biggest fight will be with the income-tax people. Now, don't lose your head again. Lots of folks have lost their hides along with their heads."

"I'm sorry, Sailor," I spoke up. "I got mad and didn't know what I was doing."

So they let me up.

I GOT to give the Sailor a cheer. He taught me lots of little fighting tricks I never knew. He was a patient dud, never getting mad when I made the same mistake over and over again. But I improved steadily. Hoyt was pleased and so was Baldy. . . .

A couple months went by. Baldy kept on paying my rent and feeding me, and he bought me some more burlap—better clothes than I ever had before. Often I wanted to go see Beulah, but I always remembered that burning, and was firm.

"I got a fight fixed up for you, Lou," Baldy announced one morning. "It's with Benny Simon in the Coliseum. He's rated a very good bum around here, but I'm expecting you to put him through the grinder with the greatest of ease. The purse is small—only fifty whips. But the publicity will be worth a thousand."

"Just because Baldy expects you to win," Sailor Hoyt warned me later, "don't think you're going to eat this Simon for a meal without any chewing. He was tough in Philly, where he come from. He was tough in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, too. He's still tough. It's his right."

The Sailor said most fighters misjudged Simon, because he dunced around slow and clumsy without doing much walloping. Simon waited patiently for an opening, Hoyt said, and then unchained that mighty right, usually ending the contest.

Now, I don't want to brag, but I believe what Baldy said—I can take it. In fact, my chin is so strong that you might think my head is what they make cueballs out of. So on the big night of my fight with Benny Simon I decided I would show how I could take it—in Round One.

You know that a bop on the jaw don't hurt near so much when you're braced and ready for it. If it catches you asleep it's a headache. Well, right after the bell in Round One, I gave Benny the opening he was always looking for. I mean I led with the chin—well braced. He wasn't expecting it so soon, so maybe he didn't put his usual oomph behind his clout. It spun me. It rocked me. But I stayed on my feet.

Benny Simon was five-sevenths surprised and thirteen-tenths astounded. He had thought the fight was over. He stood there with his hands down, wondering which way I'd fall. I fell into him—with both dukes pumping. He was floored twice.

In Round Two we sparred and took measurements, but Round Three was like Round One. I gave him an opening and waited. His right came along in a split second—and it almost split my head. Again he thought I was finished. Again I tore into him. Benny could dish it out, but he couldn't accept it. They counted him out before that round was half over. He left chin-prints all over the floor. I thought they'd have to scrape him off the canvas with putty knives.

Baldy was so excited when he reached my dressing-room that he had a lighted cigar in each hand and both his lungs full of words.

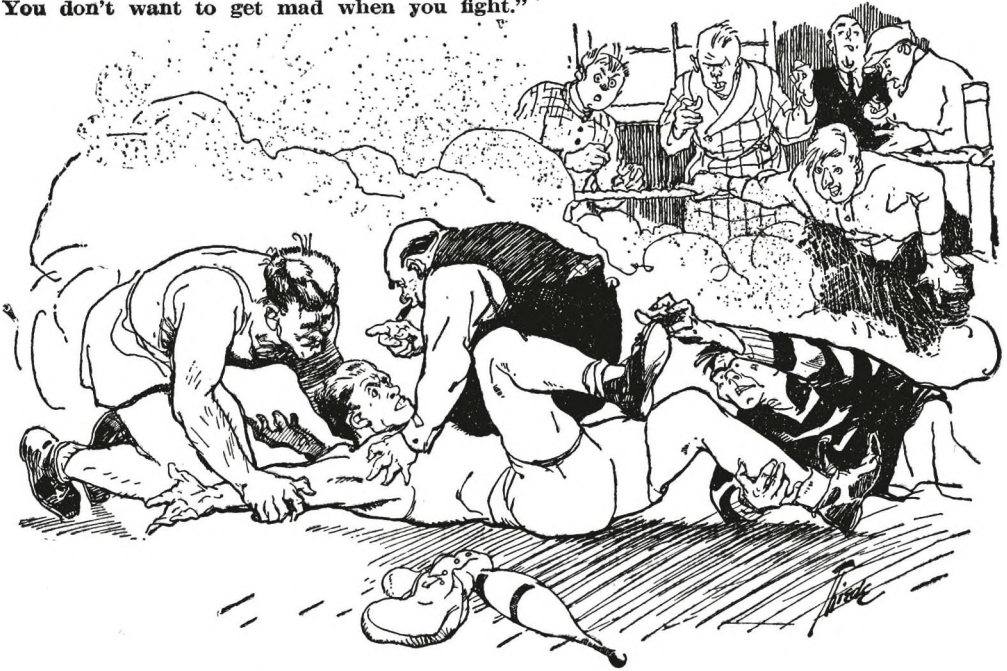
"What a slaughter!" he burped. "Simon knocked out for the first time in his life. Boy, the publicity you'll get! You ought to hear what the boys in the press-row were saying. At last—a guy who can take it!"

HE was right, too. The sports-writers came back to see me later and asked a thousand questions. One of them remarked that I had a boiler-plate chin and later they stated in the papers that I was known to my friends as Boiler-plate Bent, the Boston Bopper. I never been within two hundred miles of Boston. But I didn't mind. I figured Boston needed some publicity too.

"Oh, by the way," Baldy said absent-mindedly after I was dressed and ready to scram, "my sister-in-law's niece wants to meet you." Baldy stuck his head out of the door and yelled: "Oh, Arlene—you can come in now."

The minute this doll baby glorified the door-sill I felt like I'd started to get an anesthetic. I was all tip-toey. This dame had eagerness written all over her pan. Her mouth was open in a sort of

"Say," puffed Baldy, "you aint very palsy-walsy! You don't want to get mad when you fight."



one-half smile, and her eyes had the glisten of well-kept chromium. I don't know much about women's clothes, but I'll bet my bottom dollar and the ten just above it, that the rags she was wearing would outshark three Easters in Paris. And what she was wearing them on would make you look on a mermaid as just another fish.

"Oh, Mr. Bent!" she babbled—or maybe she cooed it. "Oh, Mr. Bent—you were wonderful! You were too divine! I think it was the most wonderful fight I've ever seen."

I managed to mumble something and look pleased, and before I knew it I had taken her to an up-and-uppity spot for a two-dollar supper that cost eleven bucks. I made the pitch for the waiter a buck, too; but instead of being grateful, he looked at the bill as though he might have it fumigated.

**T**HIS Arlene was a new kind of doll-baby to me. She talked different than Beulah. She seemed to be more—well, I didn't know how to put it. Maybe it was because I was used to listening to Beulah list my weaknesses just to prove she could count up to a thousand. We got to talking about hobbies.

"I'd like to travel all over the world," Arlene said, looking up at the lights with dreamy eyes. "I'd love to take an open car abroad with me and visit the show-places of Europe."

The more I listened, the more I figured this gal's thoughts were thickly festooned with \$\$\$\$\$. In the past, that would have been the signal for me to take a run-out, but this time I didn't worry, because Baldy had predicted that it wouldn't be many moons before I'd be creeping with currency. An expensive honeymoon in Europe is nothing to choke over if you can stand the expense.

Thinking about my future next day, I went back to work like a second gear in the mud. That purse of fifty bucks that I got for the Simon fight was spent in a couple of evenings. It sure takes a lot of the soft to entertain a gal like Arlene.

But in the next few months I won a half a dozen more fights. Anyway, let's skip them little details for the big stuff. I mean Eddie Ellis, the boy the wise money was picking to make ring history. Baldy surprised me one day by telling me he'd promoted a fight for me with Ellis.

"What a manager you've got!" Baldy beamed. "Boy, you're going places now. Look; this guy Ellis is good. He's had plenty of build-up. He's whipped everybody this side of 1929. He's in line for a go at the champ. He's got a wonderful record to justify it. Now he's going to flatten you—he thinks.

"I had a tussle with him and his managers, Lou. I sold them the idea that it would be wonderful publicity for Ellis to lick you before trying for a bout with the champ. In fact, I convinced them

that Ellis couldn't afford to even ask for a scrap with the champ until he had polished you off. They took it—hook, line and sinker. They almost swallowed the boat."

"And you think I can chill him?"

"Why, he's in your vest pocket right now, Lou. You're not afraid of nobody. Everybody that has gone up against Eddie Ellis has been afraid of him. He don't know what real fighting is as you know it. He can hit, but, like so many of them, he's got a very limited capacity for taking it. When you finish with Ellis, he'll be face-to-face with the ceiling. Then what happens to you? You—and not Ellis—are the man to take on the champion. Brother, we're made!"

So, I kept on training and training.

WELL, it sure did look like I was made when the night of the fight with Eddie Ellis rolled around. The arena was jammed to the lightning-rods. The brass hats of the State Boxing Commission were on hand. Sports-writers from the Eastern papers were in the press box. I wasn't kidding myself. They came to watch Ellis, the new hope, not me. Arlene had a AA-1 seat and she was waving at me and blowing me kisses. Flashlights flared and the broadcasting people got me and Ellis to promise to say a few words after the battle.

I didn't like this guy, Ellis, from the first time I looked at him. He seemed to be very amused over me thinking I could put a blemish on his pan or his future. He kept staring at me with a sarcastic grin. It made me still more optimistic, because I'm always best when I'm popping guys I don't like.

Mr. Ellis was sort of businesslike from the start. He leaped out with the bell in the first round and started to spread it on. So did I. We each made some nice contacts. We both took some punishment. The round was a draw. I was surprised. I had expected Ellis to show a lot more stuff, seeing as how he wanted to make a sock-date with the champion. We messed around that way for four rounds.

But in the fifth, Eddie decided to take charge. He had been holding himself down. The rush he gave me when the gong tapped made the rush of the forty-niners look like a limping derby. His gloves flew around my body and head so fast that I had the feeling you'd get from making a full mashie shot in a tile bathroom.

Before I could collect enough wits to make a vague idea, I was floored twice—not counting bounces. When I did get my wits herded together, they didn't seem to be very witty. I seemed to be doing a lot of pawing. I got to wondering why they built the arena on a turntable and why it kept sagging to the left. Every so often cobblestones, anvils and sashweights would hit my chin, nose or body. These valentines I supposed were coming from Ellis. I just had enough sense left to decide he wasn't the stumblebum I had thought he was.

The world suddenly done me dirty. It blew up in my face. I felt myself going. I was awfully confused, but I wasn't too confused to know which direction I was going. It was down.

Above the whining and buzzing in my head I could hear thousands of people screaming. Flashlights were going off like Roman candles. There were cheers for Eddie Ellis. My head cleared very slightly. I found I was on my stomach at the edge of the ring. My arms hung over and down like two lamp wicks. A voice whispered in my ear that I had just taken the worst licking of my life. Somebody yelled, "Eight!" I tried to get up. I was mad, through and through, over and over. I hated every one of Ellis' corpuscles—and he had millions of them! I wanted to kill him! How I longed for my faithful tire-tool!

But what really sent me up in sheets of flame was a foggy glance at Arlene. Do you know what that reptile in the alfalfa was doing? She was going palsy-walsy with a guy in the next seat—one of these rich-looking dark, handsome mugs. Oh, what a picture! This guy was half turned around in his seat so he faced her. He was leaning forward and grinning and slicing the bologna thick. She was looking at him with a smiling pan brimful of admiration. Me, her hero, was being ignored like a war-debt installment.

THEN, just as my handlers lifted me into my corner and shoved the little stool under me, I heard Ellis laugh. That was all I needed to touch me off. I grabbed up that heavy little wooden chair, wishing it was my steel tire-tool, and started across the ring after him. One of my seconds jumped me from behind and the referee grabbed me. I guess I must have been pretty goofy by then. I tried to bean them with the stool. We all went down together at one edge of the ring and wrestled and tussled.

## CAULIFLOWERS BLOOM IN THE RING

Somebody had their fingers in my hair and was pulling like a maniac. And I suddenly heard a very familiar voice in my ear at the same time I got a slap in the face. It was Beulah—Beulah at the ringside with one hand still wound in my hair and the other one ready to smack me again.

"Listen to me, you clown!" she snapped in her best snappy style. "You're never going to get anywhere in this game by slamming people over the head with blunt instruments."

"Where did you come from?" I gasped.

"I'm just a bundle from heaven," she said. Good old sarcastic Beulah! She suddenly grabbed my head in both her mitts and put a kiss on my swollen lips. It would have made a sheet of asbestos go *plffff!* "Lou," she said, "act like a man—not a child. Get in there and fight clean. Bring me that palooka's scalp. I hate the sight of him."

"Why do you hate him?" I mumbled.

"My seat is near his corner," the Heavy Love told me, "and between rounds he's been ogling me."

Ogling her? Just as the bell clanked, I made a note that I wanted to look up that word.

**E**LLIS came out of his lair a different man. He wasn't grinning any more. He wasn't sarcastic-looking. He was surprised, uneasy. I guess he thought he was facing a maniac—a madman that wanted blood. He was scared. I'm sure of it.

"Come on, you punk, and fight!" I snarled.

Ellis seesawed around with his arms. He was very worried and undecided about what would happen next. I fainted to his middle. He dropped his arms. I caught him on the chin. It had, by all odds, the most oomph I ever had put behind any punch. When Ellis hit the canvas, they should have given him credit for a stolen base. He made a beautiful slide. He started to get up at "six" and he managed to make it by "nine." But he didn't attack. He was all defense. Baldy was right. The guy couldn't take it. He had a chiffon jaw. I dipped into a crouch. He ducked and doubled to save his stomach. I straightened up and bore down from above—right on that jaw. Ellis went over on his right side, turned over three times and lay still. I guess he figured a front tire had blown out. First they put the adding-machine on him. Then they gave me the fight.

The rest of it's mostly a haze—camera-men, handshakes, yelps, yips, yaps, saps, me back in my dressing-room, Baldy making small talk about large sums, a bath, a rubdown. Finally I was dressed and ready to go.

"There's a lady outside to see you," somebody told me.

"It's Beulah," I said. "Show her in."

It wasn't Beulah. It wasn't a lady. It was Arlene.

"Oh, Lou, dear, you were wonderful!" she exploded, throwing her arms around me. "Honey, it was the most marvelous battle I've ever seen. Oh, how I was pulling for you!"

Yeah!

"Get your hat, darling, and let's go," Arlene said, tugging lovingly at my arm.

"You've already got your hat; you go."

That voice again!

Arlene swung around, faced Beulah and almost fainted. The Heavy Love was plenty mad and no make-believe.

"Who—who is this person?" Arlene asked me.

"This person is that person's personal fiancée," Beulah snapped, "and if there's anything makes me want to scream and leap it's having some bum tamper with my fiancé."

Beulah hooked her thumb over her shoulder a couple of times. Arlene stood there and stared.

"In any language, sister," Beulah warned, hooking the thumb again, "that means scram. Are you going to slither your hips through that door or do I have to give you a fingernail facial and tow you?"

"Lou!" Arlene pleaded.

"Blow!" I said—and my fair-weather friend faded.

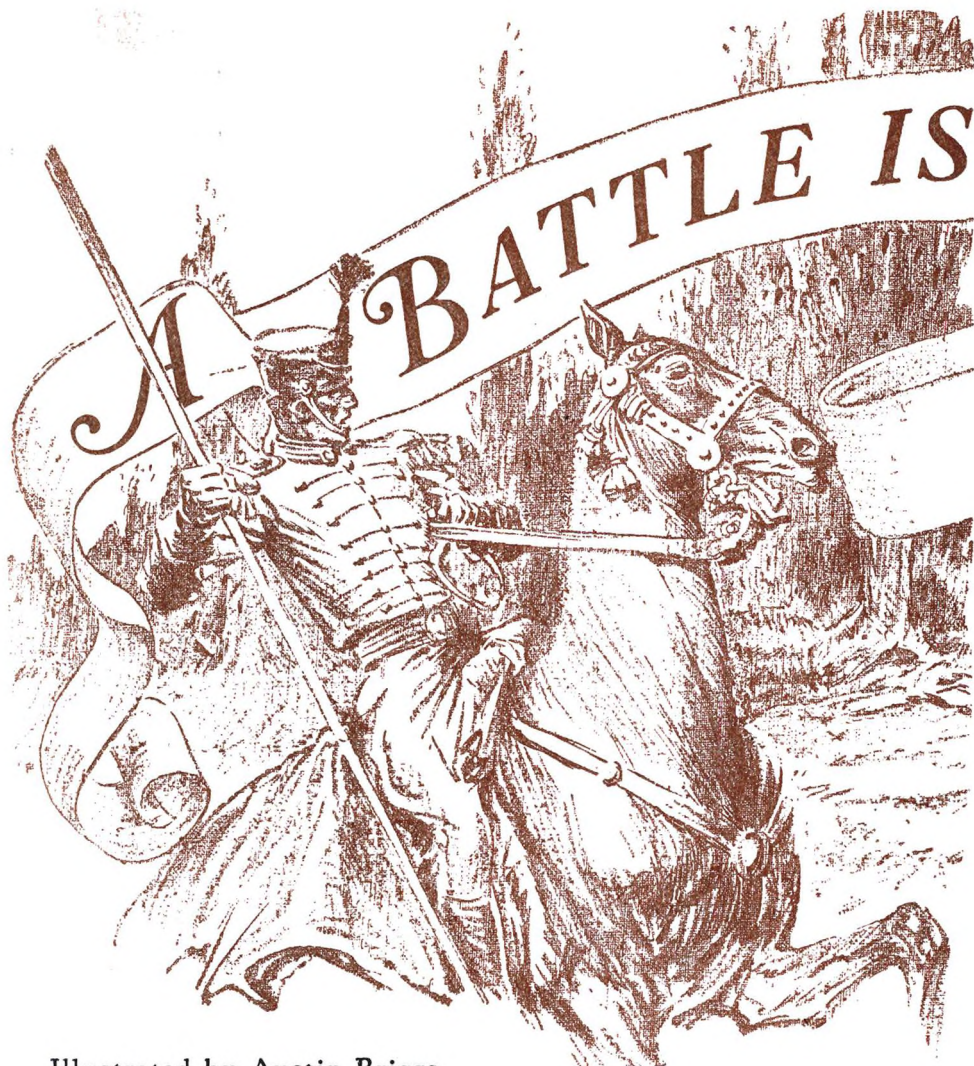
**D**RIVE us around the park," the Heavy Love told the cab-driver a little later. She was in my arms as we rode out from under some trees and past a park light.

"Just as I told you," Beulah complained, "you're going to have a cauliflower ear."

"I'll still be able to hear you," I answered. "Baldy said I needed a manager. I guess I've got one."

Beulah kissed me and then looked up into my eyes very lovingly. She seemed to be admiring me tremendously. I thought she was going to say, "What a man!"

But she sighed and said: "You're just a young, innocent youth."



Illustrated by Austin Briggs

**I**T takes, I may say with conviction, quite a man to be a king these days, even if it's only for a few hours. I ought to know, because I was a king's buddy—his partner, to be specific. Unless you want to call it that he was my partner. I mean a real king—a genuine, ball-and-scepter-bearing, ermine-robe-wearing king, with a flock of flunkies and yes-men to kiss his lily-white mitt, and a country willing to cheer for him. It didn't last long, but it was good while it lasted. For my part, you can have the job. It's yours—crown, yes-men, robes and all. I'll make you a present of poor old Karlspeth too, and his king-makers. King me no kings, friends; I've had enough. I'm checkmated.

This began in Paris, France, and it ended more or less in Dzaghata, Carbonia. Now don't tell me you've never heard of

Carbonia. Pretend you have. Pretend you know your political geography, and savvy enough to understand about all the little states which Mr. Wilson and the Versailles Treaty whittled out of the Austro-German combine at the end of the war. You read the papers, don't you? You know about the Balkans. You know, or you should, that there is a mix-up of races, creeds, politics and languages which has made out of the Balkans just a stew; and that the stew is constantly boiling; and that a good, first-class war can come out of that restless hodgepodge at the drop of a diplomat's hat, any day of any year. . . .

But about Carbonia and kings. That isn't the name of a beverage; it's the name of what used to be the smallest republic in the world. Yes, smaller than Andorra. The wisecracks of the Versailles Treaty named it Carbonia be-



*An American finds gun-men from home at work in the Balkans. The author of "We Rescue the Fair Y. L." is in fine form in this novelette.*

cause of coal. There is coal—tons and tons of coal. When all the other coal fields of the world are used up, and miners haven't anything more to strike about, then we will turn to Carbonia. Anthracite—good pit coal. Lignite—bituminous. Every shade, variety and type of coal known lies hidden under the rocky, picturesque mountains of Carbonia. And for all I care right now, they can keep it.

I said it began in Paris. You see, I was J. Harry Quick, of Quick-Tours, Inc. (*Société anonyme française au Capital mixté.*) It used to be a good racket, back in the old days before depression; but about the time Karlspeith came dripping into my office, it was just rotten. I hadn't seen a tourist in a week. I hadn't signed a contract in a month.

Then Karlspeith turned up.

He came dripping into my office out of the wet September rain of Paris. He was hungry and sick, and he fainted dead away on my brand-new Persian rug (made in U.S.A. and still not paid for). He dripped in, wavered a little in front of little Elsie's desk, started to say something, and fell flat on his face. Lit-

tle Elsie screamed. She's a good screamer. I call her "Little Elsie," because she looks like a character out of Louisa May Alcott, and because I can't pronounce her name, which is Polyeuctine, and God forbid I should try! Anyhow, she screamed, and I came running. I picked up this thin, tired-looking and very wet number, dragged him inside to my sanctum, and poured a dose of *fine-champagne* down my throat. It revived him. So I took another drink while he looked up at me for all the world like an emaciated Buster Keaton with flannel eyelids and a trick mustache, and fished a monocle out of his greasy pocket, and glommed me with it—from the floor where I had stretched him!

"Oh," he said, "I'm so ashamed!"

Poor devil! I knew how he felt. He must have gone for a week without food, the way he cut into the meal I bought him at the Namur Tavern. I had him out and dragged him down there because I have a conscience, and because I might need the same treatment any time. But what had me down was the way he ordered food—*hors d'oeuvres*, then snails, then truffles cooked in



Karlspeth wavered in front of Elsie, trying to speak, then fell to the floor.

sherry, then a *civet de lapin* (jugged hare, to you) and then a *marcassin*, or suckling wild-boar, tapering off with the famous *soufflet d'anis* for which the house is famous, and polishing off three bottles of good heavy Chateaufeuf du Pape. Maybe you gourmets and *gastromomes* will say it wasn't a decent man's dinner, and that it showed bad taste; but that's all right, brother: he was just that hungry.

And he talked. He never stopped.

His name, he said, was Karlspeth. He wasn't an American nor an Englishman nor anything I had ever heard of. He was a Carbonian—B. J. Karlspeth—Boriseu Jacathin von Karlspeth was his full moniker, he said, and I saw no reason to doubt it. He *looked* like that.

"This," he said, in a rich Oxonian drawl that he must have learned in Lon-

don drawing-rooms before he got seedy, "is most awfully decent of you, Quick. I don't quite see how I can repay it—unless—"

"You don't have to, feller," I said; but I asked: "Unless what?"

He blushed like a girl. The red came through his parchment-colored skin and tintured his Adam's apple. But he only said:

"No, no—nothing at all, really. Perhaps I'm a little mad."



And perhaps he was.

We talked some more. We talked until midnight.

"I wonder," said Karlspeth, after a long silence,—almost two minutes of silence,—"if I couldn't do something for you, at that. You say your tourist business is shabby. Why not specialize in the Balkans—Carbonia, for instance?"

"No reason," I said. "Only, where are the tourists?"

"I think," he said carefully, "I can arrange that."

Well, friends, it ended in my giving the poor old bird a job. Not a good job. A commission job, which we called a "partnership." All I had left in Paris was credit, and I had been wondering if I could make a touch from somebody

was. He had gathered himself a little table and had set it next to my desk, and was already working hard on the telephone. Little Elsie gave me her favorite scornful look. "Ah!" she was thinking. "*Ces Américains, ils sont tous jous!*" And maybe she was right.

NOTHING happened for a couple of weeks. Karlspeth came at nine and left at six in the evening. He worked hard. He did three hundred francs' worth of telephoning—I saw the bills. He sent a thousand francs' worth of

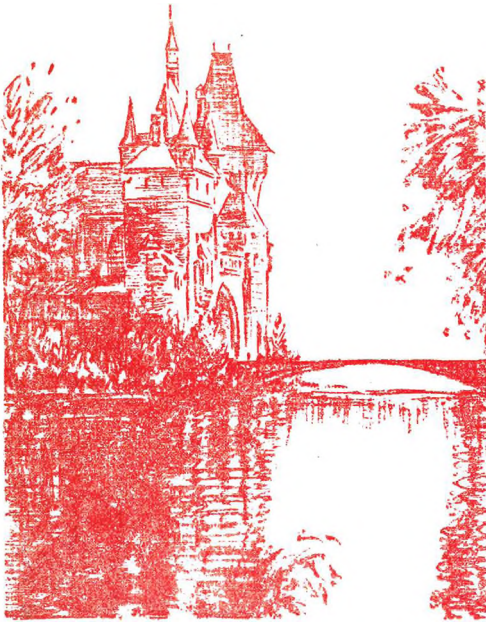


for enough money to catch a cheap freighter back to the States. So we ate and drank at the Namur on my credit; and in the morning, after shaking the hang-over out of my head, I remembered I had given Karlspeth a job. My laugh ran up and down my sleeve. I should give jobs! I, who hadn't made a nickel, honest or dishonest, in two months, and who was getting to be the best *huissier*-dodger in Paris!

Well, I went to the office, and there he

cables to America, all in some screwy code. And still nothing happened, which is what I expected. In the meantime I had loaned him a few hundred francs. I couldn't see the man starve, and I couldn't hurt his vanity by constantly *buying* him meals. And after a while I began to know that I liked this queer little fish. He was educated. He had that queer thing, culture. He knew places and things and paintings and music. He spoke every known language, and also Carbonian. He embarrassed me. But I liked him.

And then one day Neddo Francilni came into the office.



Did you ever hear of Neddo Francilni? No, of course not, because that wasn't his name. But in real life Mr. Francilni was what the newspapers like to refer to as a racketeer, a Public Enemy, a strong-arm and a lot of other names just as fitting. Mr. Neddo Francilni was visiting Paris because Uncle Sam didn't like his face. It seems there was something in the courts about Neddo's not paying his income-tax on income derived from dope, women, the laundry-racket, five or six "protection" rackets, and a dominant position in the Empire of Numbers, not to mention bundles of bindles. And Mr. Neddo Francilni had, very wisely, obeyed the suggestion of his lawyers and made a trip to Europe—for his health.

Well, I didn't know then how little Karlspeth had got to know a man like this Francilni, but I found out later. Anyhow, the fat little wop came into the office asking for Karlspeth, and when they got together, talking in a language that only God and the birds can understand, it was like an Old Home Week. They chattered away like a couple of magpies. They ignored me altogether, and finally I gave up and went out for a snort, because I couldn't even pretend to work with that going on. I didn't come back until late in the afternoon. Francilni had gone, but Karlspeth nearly kissed me, he was that excited.

"Quick," he said, "now I can repay you for your many kindnesses. We have real business."

"The hell," I said, "you say!"

"We are transporting one hundred gentlemen from America to Paris and through to Carbonia—first class, on best liners. Chartered airplanes. Best hotels, and all that. It means commissions on sixty thousand dollars, more or less."

Right then I didn't care if he did kiss me. But—

"I say, Quick," he went on, "I've been going under rather false colors, you know." I didn't know, but I didn't care. I just listened, to be polite. "You see, old man," he babbled, "I happen to be—that is—well, you see, I'm royalty. Oh, nothing great. Not the Prince of Wales, you know, but royalty just the same." He was almost apologetic. You'd think it was something to be ashamed of.

"Carbonia?" I guessed, and he nodded.

"The Versailles Treaty made us into a republic," he told me. "My father was prince, you see—Prince Michael Ruis von Karlspeth of the principality of Carbonia. Only they didn't call it Carbonia then."

"I know that," I commented. He went on:

"When the League and all of them took over, they confiscated my father's property as well as his title. It wasn't the people; it was certain Big Powers trying to chisel in on our coal fields and using the Treaty as a shield. It was terrible. I was in Oxford at the time, and I hurried home, because I felt it would just about kill my father. It didn't, though. He's a wonderful old man, my father—eighty years now. But they didn't want me in Carbonia. Nor in England, either. So I went to America—to find a job, or something. I guess I wasn't good for much. I drove taxicabs and played gigolo and things, and I ended up as a waiter in what you call a 'hot spot.' That's how I met Francilni. It was one of his places—"

He grinned a little.

"You see, I saved Francilni's life once. Oh, nothing brave. Just an accident. There was a gunman came into the place one night, and tried to shoot him under the table. I saw the gun, and I was so scared I dropped a hot plate of soup on him."

"KARLSPETH," I said, winking at him, "that sounds phony. It's a good yarn, but it don't go down. You want to give me a gag to explain how come you know that gangster. I know. But don't worry. I don't care if he's your

long-lost brother or something. It's none of my business, only don't kid me."

You should have seen his face turn red! But these Europeans are smooth articles. He didn't say another word about it. He just let it pass and went on.

"Anyhow," he said, "Francilni is backing me."

"He's what?"

"Backing me. He's going to help me get Carbonia back for my father. We're organizing a *Putsch*. We must come back again and rule. The people need us. They want us. They can't go on like this. If we don't come back, Carbonia will just grow to be an appendage to some big Power whose language we don't speak and whose politics we don't even understand. . . . I can't let that happen, Quick. I love my people. I owe it to my name—my family's name—to stand by them. I know I'm not much of a man, not a fighter. I'm what you call soft. But I can't think of myself now. My duty goes back five hundred years and more. It's bigger than a man's cowardice, or mere personal—discomfort. I can't avoid doing something now. My people are—well, frantic. Oh, don't you understand—a little?"

I DID understand—a little. There was a queer sort of agony in Karlspeth's gargoyle-like face. I understood that I was face to face with one of those things you read about in books, but never see in real life any more—if ever. I mean a real, passionate love and devotion for a mere anthill on a map called "My Country." Patriotism and patriarchy. It was like a play, only I was under the proscenium. This little Karlspeth was a weak sister; he even admitted it. He was a scared rabbit, so scared he would fight. I could just about picture that scene when he spilled soup on the yegg—scared, see? Not brave. Not meaning to. But when it was about his own little cabbage-patch called Carbonia—that was different. Centuries of tradition put a ramrod up his back. Made him fight. It was like *hara-kiri*. It was pathetic and picturesque, and mad and screwy—and somehow very fine. But then I caught another picture, and I shivered.

"Listen, feller," I said to him after a minute. "Don't tell me, let me guess. But I'll bet you've got a gag worked up with this Francilni to turn his hoods loose in Carbonia and start your revolution. Right?"

He nodded. He looked frightened and kiddish and almost sick.

"I know it sounds—almost indecent," he said; but that was an understatement. I could just picture a hundred tough mugs from New York and Chicago, using Tommy-guns and pineapples in that little molehill of a country called Carbonia, mowing down people who had never seen a gun newer than an Eighteenth Century blunderbuss. . . . Revolution? Good Lord!

"Karlspeth," I told him, "you can't do it. I won't let you. It would be cold murder. I'll have the French *Sûreté* pinch these mugs when they land. I have friends in the police."

BUT it was no go. He wept. *Wept*, mind you! Anglo-Saxons don't weep in public; they get mad and break things, mostly the Commandments. It takes a European to squirt a tear at a pal; and Karlspeth had what it took, because before he was through, he nearly had me sniveling.

"You don't," he wailed, "understand! You don't understand. The president and the people in power now are foreigners—put there by intrigue. Most of the army is a foreign legion, which means that a certain power has filtered soldiers into Carbonia ready to make a *Putsch* and take my people in the name of their country. The League of Nations has let us down with a few mere words. It is that this power wants our coal mines—those wonderful coal mines, Quick—to make them independent of the rest of the world. For years I have been hiding myself from the truth; and now my people have found me, and they look to me to do—something. I can't raise an army. Any little army we would raise would be wiped off the map. All I can do is to surprise them—a *coup d'état*. And you see—Francilni is a Carbonian—"

"Oh," I said, just as though that made it clear.

"He's a crook and a racketeer in America, but—he's a Carbonian. He *believes* in me."

"That," I said, "tears it. Sure, he believes in you. Believes you'll give him a chance to lift the crown jewels or whatever. He'll use you for a screen; feller; and when he gets through in Carbonia, they'll have to pry you out of a barrel of cement. Better pull your head out of that cloud."

But it was no go. The man was a fanatic. He had spent years thinking

about this thing. He had a picture in his head of bringing Francini's mob as a parcel of "industrial engineers" to look over the coal-mining possibilities of the country and then to just move in on the capital. He had friends waiting for him, intrigue all worked out, plans and plans and more plans, and you couldn't shake that picture with dynamite.

Well, putting it bluntly, it wasn't any of my business. What, after all, did I care? What was Karlspeth to me? Why should I go noble and stick my chin out?

We talked for two hours in the office; then we went to a café and talked until midnight. If you ever kept dogs or especially rabbits, you know how stubborn they can be in a mild way. You can get real tough with them; but after a while you just give up and let them eat up your new shoes or dig up your garden or whatever it is they want to do, and wash your hands of it all. That's what I did.

"Only," I said, "remember I warned you. It's your party. As far as I'm concerned, these hundred yeggs are just what they claim to be—tourists. I'll take the commissions and pretend I didn't know. But don't expect me to take any part in your little game. I'm just old Harry-Play'em-Safe Quick. To me, Carbonia is just a name on a set of stamps. I wouldn't go there if you gave it to me set in platinum."

That's what I thought, and what I said.

WELL, those "industrial engineers" came. They arrived in September, all of them sailing on the *Parthenia*, and making the old Saint Lazare Station look like a police line-up as they marched through with their heavy bags.

Those bags were special. I didn't dare to guess what was in them, but Karlspeth and I had gone down to the Customs Office and worked a gag to get them in without inspection. "These men have especially registered and sealed sensitive instruments for testing the coal deposits of Carbonia," I lied. "If your officials tamper with those bags, they'll be ruined. The whole point of this trip is coal. Now, messieurs, this thing can be arranged. We aren't smuggling matches or tobacco into France—you know me. Besides, they're only passing through. I'll guarantee you the bags won't be touched. You can keep them under seal if you like."

And it worked, too. They went through Customs like a breeze. They all checked their bags at the Gare Saint Lazare and piled into the busses I had waiting for them to take them to the hotel. If I had known really what was in those bags—oh, well, I didn't.

Well, they stayed a couple of days, did the town—mostly the Folies Bérgère and the Rue Blondel—and went their way, taking Karlspeth with them. Me, I stayed away. I didn't want to get mixed up in that mess. I went to the station and saw that mob come off the train—just curiosity; and then I went into hiding in my favorite bars until they had gone. Then I went back to the office and began collecting my commissions.

THEY had gone, all right. They flew from Le Bourget by chartered planes costing them about two hundred dollars a head; and when I got my check from the air-transport company, I was almost glad about Karlspeth and his revolution. Almost, but not quite. I liked that ugly weak-sister of a misfit. He was so entirely decent, so naïvely boyish. Anyhow, they were gone, and so was he, and I started to cross that short chapter out of my life.

And to read the papers.

Queer how you will worry over things that aren't any of your business. I watched the newspapers, reading every line about East-Central Europe and expecting to see blazing headlines and reports of an explosion in the Balkans every morning. But there was no such news. A week went by—nothing. Another week—ditto. And it was toward the middle of the third week that I got my big surprise.

Little Elsie came tripping into my private office looking round-eyed and a lot more respectful to me than she had ever been before.

"Oh, Monsieur Queek," she exuded, gasping a little, "please to hurry. There is a convention of messieurs—*such* gentlemen! With the hat of silk upon the head, and the manner of—ah, monsieur, one did not know that you had such distinguished friends."

Babble, babble, babble.

"What in thunder," I asked her, "are you talking about? Who's outside?"

Well, she managed to convey that there was a party of long graybeards—diplomats or ministers of state or something—all dancing attendance in the

## A BATTLE IS TO FIGHT

glass outer office of Quick Tours, Inc., and insistently demanding yours truly. I went out. There they were.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur,*" sneezed one of them through a bunch of white seaweed on his chin; and all five of them bowed low until their striped pants were endangered. "It is that you are the one, the Monsieur Josephus Harold Queek, minister-plenipotentiary-at-large of the incorporated principality of Carbonia? Yes?"

Now just imagine that! I couldn't. In the first place they named me "Josephus" when I was too young to protest, and I hate the name. It made me a little mad, hearing it like that. In the second place, this minister-plenipotentiary simply threw me. I caught the idea, fast enough. Something or other had happened in Carbonia, and friend Karlspeith was "in," and was doing what he thought was a nice way of paying me for a dinner at the Namur and for a little decent human kindness. But!

"Listen, gents," I said, "I'm J. H. Quick, all right—call me Harry; I like it. But I'm no Carbonian minister or anything like that. Now, I—"

The longest beard of all cut in on me:

"You weel a-pardona us-a, monsoor Queek, if-a we do not-a have-a the Engleech weeth weech to unerstan'-a wot you-a say. If now you weel spik the French-a—"

SO I spik the French-a. I told them again and I tried to be nice. I told them that I was unworthy of the honor, and so forth, and that furthermore, I had no intention of putting on a monkey suit and strutting anybody's ministerial dignity in Carbonia or any other place, and that they could paste that in their silk hats.

But did it stick? It did not. After a lot of head-wagging and bobbing and consultation in a language which must have been derived from the sneezing of an asthmatic waterfowl, the Chief Longbeard said:

"We have come, monsieur, nearly two thousand miles to bring you the decoration of the Carbonian Cross of Jet and the official dignities of your new office. We have come, monsieur, bringing you the deep gratitude of our people and our prince. We cannot understand it that you do not wish to accept. It is not possible to believe that you desire to affront our noble Prince Michael, nor the equally noble Prince Boriseu, whom you

befriended in his time of tribulation. That thing we are not able to believe, monsieur. So then, if you will come with us. . . . It is our instruction to bring you back to Dzaghat. The royal limousine is here. We have engaged a flying ship which will take us—"

NOW, it may seem as though it would be easy to tell them to go to hell, but it wasn't. The old ducks were so deadly in earnest. They pulled out a little black box which had a medal in it, and dangled it at me, bowing and bobbing. The old papa who did the talking tossed his arms around me and planted a loud kiss on each one of my cheeks. The other four grabbed me away from him, as if I were a prize twist, and did ditto. Even Little Elsie joined in the osculatory game and printed her signature in lipstick all over my neck. And before I knew it, friends, I was sitting in a car a quarter of a mile long, and was on my way to Le Bourget flying-field, still protesting and still telling them it was all a mistake and they wanted two other guys, not me.

But I went to Carbonia.

Now you can imagine my curiosity—that is, after I got used to being kidnapped and snatched off in the airplane. What, I wondered, had happened? There *couldn't* have been a revolution—not the rioting kind. How-come I hadn't seen something in the papers? Maybe Carbonia was no bigger than the State of Rhode Island, and one-hundredth as important, but any change of government in any part of the Balkans is news. And what about Neddo Francilni and his hundred Tommy-gunners? It was all a great big fat swell mystery.

Well, that was quite a ride. We crossed the German border at Saarbrücken and flew east over Austria. It was a big Breguet plane and pretty stable, although I got a trifle nervous when we went through the Alps in the Bohmerwald country, just about playing footy-footy with snow-capped peaks. I began to have a lot of admiration for the pilot, because there were moments I expected to find myself sitting in the hot coals of hell with an Alp in my lap. However, all was well, except that I was tired and bored with endeavoring to get some sense out of the old gentlemen, whose French wasn't much better than their English.

Our flying speed was about 140 miles, which should have brought us into Car-



The doors behind burst open . . .

bonia in about fifteen hours, and did. We flew over what used to be Bosnia, and I had a good view of that beautiful land, and remembered the pictures on the Bosnia-Herzegovina postage stamps. I also remembered about Sarajevo, where the shot was fired that set the world ablaze in 1914, and I wondered if Carbonian Dzaghat would be a second Sarajevo in 1934. I remember how I tried to shake off the comic-opera effect of the whole fantastic thing and to tell myself that this was real, that this red-head sitting in the plane with these old dodos was *me*, J. Harry Quick, sometime citizen of Maine, and that I wasn't looking at the flickers. I had a rush of thoughts to the head. I began to wonder about Karlspeth and Francilni; think of an ex-waiter from a New York hot

spot, and a fat little third-rate racketeer, setting hell to popping again in Europe, and maybe starting another war! And me in the cheering-section!

Well, it was nearly six o'clock in the evening when we were first over Carbonia. The old whitebeard—his name was Alish von Turpist, I gathered—started to babble again and pointed down at it. All I could see from the tenthousand-foot altitude was a molehill getting ready to become a mountain. But in just a minute it got pretty big, and we found ourselves snuggling in among peaks that were as big as the Tyrolean Alps, at least. It looked like a hard country from up there—black and rough and snowy at the top. But down in the valleys was a bright emerald green which looked especially fertile.

Then we dropped a few thousand feet, and I could see Dzaghat.

Have you ever been to Dzaghat? Probably not, but you should do. It makes you think of that little valley paradise in the Tibetan mountains in "Lost Horizons." You drop out of the black, bleak coal mountains into the Garden of Eden, and right in the middle of this green, there is a fairy city.

The place is built around a little lake which is decorated with hundreds of tiny sailboats, each with different colored sails. The palace—they call it the Marghat—rises up from a rock in the very center of the lake, and is tied to the two shores by a double arching bridge which is one of the most beautiful bits of engineering I've ever seen, and which lets a double stream of fantastic traffic go across it from one side of the city to the other. Fantastic! Goat-carts, dog-carts, horses and oxen and jackasses. Automobiles were strangely missing. I think I even saw a 'rickshaw, but I'm not certain. And the palace itself is a sort of Taj Mahal, with a cluster of thin, needlelike spires that bristle in the sun like tusks of ivory, tipped with blood where the light hits the red tiling.

**T**HERE is a series of terraced gardens on the rock, five, I think, rising up in tiers until their highest terrace merges with the bright green lawn which frames the palace proper. And the building—white limestone that gleams like marble from a distance—is pseudo-Byzantine in effect. Really Byzantine in history, old Turpist told me, because it was built first by Constantine the Great, sacked by Attila and his Huns, and finally

patched up by Charlemagne in the early days of European feudalism. Even the hordes of Genghis Khan had camped at Dzaghath, and used the palace as a hub for the wheel of their conquering armies on the near-by Danube. And so the very essence of the place is more Asiatic than European.

We dropped down into an enormous cow-pasture. I learned later that this was the first airplane ever seen in Carbonia except for that first flight of ten planes that brought Francilni and his mob, and that the people were so frightened then that they remained hidden in their homes for a week. But as we lost altitude and started circling for a landing, the green plain fairly bristled with curious, neck-craning people, all running toward where the pilot was trying to land, and risking their necks as well as our own—peasants, goat-herds, shepherds and parti-colored gypsies. Most of them wore queer tubular hats of leather, and colored Russian blouses stuffed into wide thin trousers, which in turn were stuffed into high boots. Many carried antique guns, and most every man carried a sword, which they brandished and waved at us until I wondered whether they were hostile or just excited.

I give you these things in fragments, the way they came to me while we were trying to make our landing.

Then we came down bumpily over the rough ground, taxied through scrambling people, nearly killing a few and missing them by inches. And then we were mobbed. Just mobbed! The old men got out and dragged me with them and started shouting at the people in that impossible language; and suddenly the mob was bowing and scraping and making weird gestures—at me!

Was my face red?

**W**ELL, an automobile came floundering onto the field, creating almost as much excitement as the plane did, and the driver of that car was nobody else than B. J. Karlspeth himself in person.

And what a change! He was wearing purple. A purple uniform, loaded down with gold braid and gadgets. He looked like something out of a masquerade—not real, understand. He got out and came running over, and held out his arms.

"Oh, I say, this is wonderful, Quick," he babbled, and then started spitting and gargling in his own language, while he grabbed me by the arm and dragged



Men with Tommy-guns stood there.

me off with him to the car. Me, I couldn't say much. I was too flabbergasted at the whole performance.

The old men kissed me all over again, and it seemed as though all those queer, bright-colored and rather dirty people wanted to do likewise. But I hid in the car and closed the door.

"Now, you listen here," I said to Karlspeth. "I don't quite know how I came. I didn't mean to. And I'm not going to be a flunky in your old principality of Carbonia even if you give me the keys to the royal cowshed. Where is your revolution and your hundred Francilni thugs, anyhow?"

He tried to answer, and couldn't.

"I—we—that is, my father—you see—" He started like that, throwing the car in gear and grinding off.

"All right," I said. "Catch your breath and begin at the beginning. I'm a curious spectator, but I can wait."

"There hasn't been any revolution—yet," he said.

"Then how come all this king business and the costume?"

"Well, that's part of the plan. You see—as I told you—the country has only been a republic in name. The president and the so-called representatives of the different cantons aren't even Carbonians at all. They're just a lot of outsiders put there by a certain big power who is going to absorb us anyhow as soon as they dare. But even though the government is *officially* a republic, my father is still ruler—in the hearts of the people. He has his court—sort of—in the little village of Zumin. That's where we're going."

"And Francilni?"

"He—well, you'll see. The time wasn't ripe to make the *Putsch*. In the meantime we're getting ready. I—I wanted you here, Mr. Quick. I'm not much of an organizer. I'm a weakling, and I know it—but I can do things if you'll help me."

"Not me, feller. Sorry."

"I'm afraid," he said, very gravely and positively, "that you will, just the same."

HE was right; I did, and this is the way it happened:

In the first place he told me the whole story. Carbonia, like parts of Transylvania and Montenegro and other Balkan states, had always been a shuttlecock to the battledores of three or four "major" powers. The Carbonians had never been truly "free" since the great Holy Roman Empire and the Austro-Spanish combine some centuries ago. Napoleon gave it to one of his cousins to rule. Italy owned it once. Germany discovered the coal resources in that big mountain just about the time the world ganged up on her in 1914. And all this while, Carbonia was ruled by a prince—never a king of their very own, generally a prince somebody else decided to give them. Not a warlike people, the Carbonians. Farmers, mostly—picturesque and very noble, but given to private feuds rather than national battles.

Then came the war and the Versailles treaty, and—again—somebody else made her into a republic, just because the republican style of government was getting popular right then. But all the while, in

the hearts and souls of the people, they were a tiny kingdom. The house of Karlspeth dated from way back before the Hapsburgs. Karlspeth—also spelled Karlspetti—is one hundred per cent Carbonian. And secretly, in spite of hell-fire and brimstone, the people of Carbonia had always considered themselves the feudal vassals of the Karlspeth house, whether the world recognized it or not.

PRINCE MICHAEL RUSIS, it seemed, was the only Carbonian who had a right to rule. After him, my queer, sal-low gargoylesque friend, B. J. At the Marghat, or palace, sat a figurehead called "President," a bunch of other figureheads called a "senate," all of whom had been "appointed" by a well-meaning League of Nations, but actually had been stuck there by a great Latin power which was taking no chances on another power—Teutonic—getting any hold on those coal fields. But did anybody consult the little Carbonian people? They did not. Did they make their own laws? Not by a houseful of diplomats, they didn't! Carbonians aren't political-minded. They just left things be, and went on pretending. They pretended history hadn't happened. They pretended they were still a kingdom with Prince Michael Rusis still ruling them. And it wasn't so much pretense, either; because—in spite of the League and the Big Powers—what Prince Michael Rusis said was law.

Prince Michael lived in a rambling collection of thatch-roofed sheds in Zumin, which was hardly more than a hamlet in the mountains. Down in Dzaghat, there was a little army which was called a "foreign legion," possibly because it was all foreign, the soldiers being supplied by the interested Latin power. But in Zumin there was a scattered, heterogeneous little army too, made up of a gang of young noblemen who called themselves Amchi Prinzmetcu, or "friends of the Prince." Altogether, the situation was fantastically like a kingdom within a republic; and the real reason why Karlspeth had not pulled his *coup d'état* was because he wanted to close the eyes of the supervisory Latin power and lull the "Foreign Legion" to sleep.

I met Prince Michael Rusis that evening. Believe me, friends, that old duck is the archetype of all glorious old patriarchs. Straight as a ramrod, in spite of his eighty years, and standing taller than my six feet three, he had a



face like Rodin's *Jean Batiste*. His hair was snow white; his eyes were blue steel; his voice was the bark of a gun. Don't tell me the days of true patricians are over, for that old geezer was just it. And he loved his people—loved them the way you and I go for the Little Woman. He was just short of being a god to them.

When Karlspeth brought me through the guards of the place where Michael held his "court," I remember trying to reconcile the Broadway-Second-Avenue faces of those gunmen and the slightly smart-aleck manner of that little tough Francilni with the beatified and entirely calm gentility of the young men who appeared out of the underbrush and saluted Karlspeth. It didn't fit. It was almost a sacrilege to bring people like Francilni and his henchmen into a place like that. And when I met the old man himself, I nearly blushed for being from the same neck of the woods as Francilni.

He said to me:

"This place, it is my country, monsieur. It is not big, no; but in the very sap of the trees flows my own blood. Every leaf, monsieur, and every soul is grateful to you that you were a friend to our Boriseu. I bid you welcome to the humble place I call home."

Home—that was it. In our country a "home" has four walls and perhaps a mother-in-law. In Carbonia, every blade of grass, every lump of loam spelled H-O-M-E. There was *home* in the lazy clouds and in the course of the swallows across the meadows below the mountain.

**W**E drank and we dined, both well. There was a group of young men and a few old ones, including Von Turpist and the others who had brought me from Paris. All were poorly dressed and looked like peasants or simple farmers. Even Turpist and his playmates had packed their striped pants and silk hats away in moth-balls somewhere. We did not talk of politics. We did not mention revolution.

And especially conspicuous for their absence were Francilni and his hundred thugs. Why? Where were they? Why no mention of them? I couldn't even guess.

It was high noon of the next day before I got going. A small boy waked me out of a log-like sleep, bringing a wash-bowl and water to the little cubicle under the thatched eaves. Nothing very royal about this place. But when I got downstairs, after drinking a pot of cof-



"I was ever a fighter, so—"

fee, also brought, I saw that the yard was filled with men on horses, and that the old Michael was standing on the running-board of the big car, talking to them in a low, piercing, penetrating voice, and in that crazy-quilt language of Carbonia. Karlspeth was waiting for me—kissed me on each cheek before I could stop him, and shouted something loud to the mob. They all cheered then.

"Remember," said B. J., "you're a minister of state. You must do a little play-acting here. These folk are simple."

Whatever that might mean!

Then he told me: "We're driving to Dzaghath—for a visit. So get ready."

I was all ready, and I got into the car. Karlspeth drove, and Michael sat stiffly beside me in the tonneau. A hundred or more young men on horseback escorted us across the grassy plain for five miles or so until we came to something you could, if pressed, call a road, where B. J. let the Mercedes out a notch, and we lost the escort in our dust. I felt uncanny. Something, I sensed, was about to happen—or was already happening. And suddenly, out of a clear sky, the old man relaxed, sat back in his seat, lighted a cigarette and began reciting English poetry at me—just like an old clubman telling a yarn to his mossy old pals.

"Ay, my young friend," he observed dreamily. "One of your English poets—

Browning, I mean—had a way of putting it, not so?"

I gulped a little and said:

"Why, I guess so, sir. . . . I don't go in for poetry much."

He never heard me. He began repeating:

*"Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,*

*The reward of it all.*

*I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,*

*The best and the last!*

*I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,*

*And bade me creep past.*

*No! Let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers*

*The heroes of old,*

*Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears*

*Of pain, darkness and cold.*

*For sudden the worst turns the best for the brave,*

*The black minute's at end. . . ."*

It happened that I did remember it.

"That's 'Prospice'?" I said; and he seemed pleased.

"Yes, that's it. A trite sentiment, in a way, but well put. Just now I am glad to have remembered it."

"Why is that, sir?"

"This is—the best and the last,' eh? For me, I know. It has been seven hundred years since a Karlspeth was actually a king. Puppet princes—ah, well—"

"You mean?"

"I mean this is the day. We strike."

"Good God!" I said, and meant it. Here I was, riding into the mess I had sworn to keep out of. I couldn't have stopped the car—even if Karlspeth would have stopped, which he wouldn't. I *couldn't* have let that white-haired old man "bear the brunt" of it, while I walked out on him. Not my fight. Not my country. Not my business. But somehow I knew that he expected me to stay with him. There was something that compelled me. And just imagine it—an American, fighting a comic-opera revolution to put a king on a tiny throne.

"Tell me, my friend," said the old fellow, softly. "This—ah—Francilni, you have known him, in America?"

"No," I said, "but I have read about him."

"Yes? How so?"

"In the newspapers. He has a—reputation." Suddenly I was sorry I made that crack.

The old man nodded.

"It is true, then: he is not quite what he should be, eh?"

"So they say," I told him, hedging a little.

"But—he is brave?"

"I wouldn't know." I wanted to say, "About as brave as any rat," but something held me back. "He is hard, anyhow."

"Hard—hard—ah, yes, hard," he said, as though trying to remember something. "Poor Ricci—always he was, like you say, hard."

"Huh? Ricci—who?" That rather scrambled me. The grand old man gave me a slow, tired nod, and a look which was almost pathetic.

"Yes," he said, "not Francilni, but Ricci—Riccuco Karlovi von Karlspeth—my natural son, Monsieur Quick. A sad thing, no?"

That tore it. This alias Neddo Francilni, alias this and that and the other, turning out to be royalty! America's Number One bindle-booster was a prince! I guess the way I felt must have shown in my face, because the old man said:

"Not quite easy to believe, eh? But it is true, what I say there. When I was young, a very young man, monsieur, there was a girl, a dancer. Very charming, very pretty. Alas, monsieur, the blood of youth, she is warm. The heart, she rules the head. This girl sang to me. I loved her. She was Italian. Her name it was Francilni. An idyl, monsieur, but she died when the boy was born."

THE shadow of that nameless girl's death crept across his face while he paused; and then:

"But my son Riccuco—Ricci—he was not the good boy, no. Wild, he was, and hard, as you say. Cruel—willful. He made much trouble. Then one day in Dzaghat, he killed a man—not *à la loyale*, which would be forgiven, perhaps—but with a knife in the back. So we sent him away, monsieur. The people of Carbonia do not love the coward. And for all these years we have known him only in the newspapers, the American dispatches. He is what you call it, the gangster, no? And then when Boriseu found him in New York—"

I grinned, to change the heavy air. I mentioned the story of the gunman and the hot soup, and the old prince smiled.

"Ah yes," he said. "It is a good story, no? But it is fiction, monsieur."

## A BATTLE IS TO FIGHT

My Boriseu, he could not at that time tell the truth. It is that I sent him to America to find Ricci. You understand? You comprehend?"

I didn't quite, but I had no chance to talk.

**S**UDDENLY two things happened. It seemed as though the old man was regretting that he had told me this, and he stopped—stopped short and stared out of the car window. I could hear, above the purr of the Mercedes, the far-away sound of another motor, and presently we all saw a tiny speck of an airplane, circling wide over the valley, then darting straight between two high, jagged mountain peaks and vanishing.

"*Saprestu!*" exclaimed the old Prince. "Now, what would a plane be doing here? There are no airplanes in Carbonia."

"It was a small Moth cruiser," I said. "Probably somebody just making a pleasure tour. Lots of people do, even women. There's that English family—man and wife—who fly all over the world in those low-powered Moth planes."

"Yes," said Michael Ruis, "it could be." But I noticed that we shot ahead much faster after that, and that the old man kept his silence.

It would be stupid of me to try to give you a word-picture of Dzaghut beyond what I tried to tell you of what I saw when I flew over it. Briefly, it has the musty beauty of antiquity which you can find in Budapest, the frothiness of Vienna, the exquisite Byzantine lacery of Ravenna, and the rich brightness of Avignon—all blended and amalgamated in a flux of something purely Oriental. If Vienna is called the gateway to the East, then Dzaghut should be the ante-room.

We went slowly now through the cluttered streets, stopping to avoid donkey carts and oxen lumbering along. People in the streets stopped and stared at the Mercedes as though it were a wonder; then, seeing the white uniform of Michael Ruis, they cheered and waved their hands and cut wild capers. On every street-corner was a uniformed soldier, somewhat lazy-looking but definitely on guard. These gave us a languid salute as we went past. The approach to the bridge which leads over the lake to the Marghat was cluttered with queer-looking vans drawn by ancient horses; and when we were amongst them, I could see that they were tourists of some kind,

being led about by an official-looking group of uniformed men.

And then, suddenly, I happened to stare directly into one of those vans, and I had a shock. Those tourists were none other than the hundred "industrial engineers" we had shipped out of Paris. In other words, Francilni's gangsters.

Did Karlspeth and his father give any sign of recognition? They did not. B. J. drove right through them and up onto the bridge. We crossed through a guarded gate. Spick and span soldiers greeted us there, made a half-hearted kind of salute to the old man, and motioned us on. I wondered how he was able to go through so openly, but he seemed to sense my puzzlement.

"The gentlemen who conduct the republic," he said, "are indulgent. They are amused at the little 'court' I have at Zumin. As long as I make no trouble, they let me be. Well, my friend, today we shall see what we shall see."

And we certainly did.

At the Marghat, we entered, were admitted by the guards and escorted into a long, chilly stone corridor. A fat officer saluted us and chatted with Michael Ruis in Carbonian, making a questioning gesture at me. But however he explained me, it seemed to work, for we were allowed to proceed up the great stone staircase to another enormous corridor, at the end of which was a great room with fifty or more people standing around waiting. I will never forget the figure Michael made, striding through that room and past the people, as though he never saw them. We went through the great door to an inner room where some men sat at a long table. They stood up when we came in. Very plainly these were not Carbonians.

**I**T was a slight pressure on my arm by the hand of B. J. Karlspeth that held me back as Michael strode forward to the table. He stood there, almost fiercely. He started speaking in that machine-gun language of his; and I could see astonishment growing on the faces of those men. Also anger. Also indignation. And then, suddenly, they were all talking, shouting, gesticulating, bellowing. Michael Ruis stood there, calm and firm, towering over them all, letting them shout. One man began yelling:

"*La guardia, la guardia!*" And I was pretty sure that this comic-opera gag would land us all in some nice hot jail-box or dungeon, because about ten sol-



Karlspeith fired a shot he might never

diers with rifles appeared and stood at rigid attention behind us.

Then, surprisingly, Michael Ruis began talking in an European language which even I could understand:

"It is not three minutes before twelve o'clock, messieurs," he said. "There is time still for you to withdraw. Do not think to scare me with your guards. All that is finished. The Carbonian worm has, at last, turned. There is not any more this farce of a republican government. You can go back to your dictator who is so busy taking land away from weaker peoples. You can give him my compliments. Let him send his soldiers and his airplanes. Let him destroy this

palace and this city. But in the mountains of Carbonia—hidden with the coal which he covets so much—are the free people of Carbonia, who have called me back to govern them. Your cannon and your airplanes cannot strike us there."

He looked at his watch.

"Two minutes, messieurs."

The more calm of the Europeans made a sign. The guards moved toward us, leveling their rifles.

Then Prince Michael Ruis of Carbonia turned and made a sign to his son. B. J. was trembling in his boots, and he had turned very white. If ever there was a scared rabbit in uniform, he was all of them. But he nodded, pulled



make again. Francilni slid to the floor.

a little whistle from his pocket—the kind you call hunting dogs with—and gave it a long, sharp, shrill blast.

**I**T was like magic. The doors behind us burst open, and men with Tommy-guns stood there, covering the guards. There were others behind them. Grim, cruel faces; hard, dope-crazed American thugs, altogether uncanny and out-of-place in this tinsel palace. And then it all came to me; I knew what had been in those suitcases. Not delicate instruments, but entirely indelicate machine-guns. Imagine the French *douane* protecting and securing and holding a collection of Tommy-guns as a favor!

“I regret this, gentlemen,” said Michael. “I must warn you that those peculiar machines in the hands of these gentlemen are able to spray death into this room—three hundred shots each in one little minute. This is a *coup d'état*, gentlemen. It has been carefully prepared. Do not cause me to commit an act which I should regret. I do not desire bloodshed. I beseech you to withdraw.”

Very fine, very noble, very effective. It would have worked, too. The “gentlemen” were deeply impressed and showed every sign of giving in. I saw well-executed shrugs. I saw those semi-comic gestures which only a Central European

can make, and which we Westerners can seldom even grow to understand. I saw the one who seemed to be in highest authority—maybe he was the toy president—get to his feet and make a deep bow of submission: ironical, but still a bow.

**T**HEN the pattering feet of a little fat gangster came down the thick carpet, and the sharp bark of his voice spoiled it all.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Hold on, gents. Don't forget me, now. Just take your time. I gotta lotta things to say, see?"

He said this in the Latin language of the men at the table, but he might just as well have said it in plain New York American, because that little tough was Riccuso Karlovi von Karlspeth, erstwhile and otherwise known as Neddo Francilni.

This, I guessed, wasn't in the program, and I guessed right. The nervous hands of my friend and partner, B. J. Karlspeth, were fumbling in his pocket, and there was frightened anger in his eyes; but the grand old man Michael Ruis merely turned his head and said quietly, as though talking to a small boy:

"Well, Ricci?" And turning to the table of dignitaries: "Pardon this intrusion, gentlemen. This is my son Riccuso, the Archduke Smetari. He appears to have something to say."

Habit got the best of Francilni then, because he broke into English.

"Yeah? You're damn' right I got somethin' to say. Now you listen, see? I wanna know where I come in on this deal. You gotta listen to me—you too, gents—on account this is gonna be my show."

"Ah," said Michael. "Still the same Ricci. Now just what is it you want, my son?"

"None of that 'son' stuff, now. You kicked me outa this country once, remember?"

"Quite well."

"Okay. And now I'm back, see?"

"That appears to be plain. Is it money you want, Ricci? You have been paid for your—ah—services."

"That's what you think. Now you listen here: me an' the boys is here to stay. We got plenty trouble back in the States. We like this dump. We're gonna stay."

"Possibly," said his father. "You have pictured yourself wearing a crown, Ricci?"

"Well, maybe."

"And how do you suppose the world will take that, little son?"

"Nuts."

"The powers would not quite refuse me, my son; but I doubt if an American gangster would be—ah—welcome here."

"Yeah? Well, you listen here—" He broke into the language of the astonished gentlemen at the table now: "This is my show, see? These boys will do like I say. So here's what you do, see? You take this joint, like we planned, and then you make me duke and prince and all that. You give these boys plenty money and plenty good jobs. We're gonna run things here, see? I don't wanna be a king, I wanna get what's comin', and that's what I'm gonna do—or else!"

"Or else?"

"These gents stay where they are, that's all. These Tommy-guns shoots both ways: don't forget that. I'm listening for a proposition. You better make it good. I don't care which side makes it, only it better be good, that's all."

The old man smiled.

"You don't quite mean that, Ricci. I—your own father—"

"A helluva father! You kicked me outa here, and now you want I should give you a hand, hey? Well, you don't see no green in my eye."

Prince Michael Ruis von Karlspeth drew himself up to his grand stiff height.

"I have no proposition for you, Ricci. I disown you. I hired you, not as my son, but as I might hire any commodity. I have nothing further to give. I warn these gentlemen that you are a treacherous, violent, cruel—"

"Take him, boys," said Ricci, alias Francilni. And right then it happened.

**I**T was B. J. Karlspeth who did it. His hand came from his pocket. An automatic spat point-blank. Very likely if he had tried the rest of his life, he could never have made such a shot again, for the bullet drilled a clean hole through the forehead of Neddo Francilni, and a tiny blue mark showed between the eyes just before he sagged, went limp and slid down to the floor.

It all happened in a fraction of a second. Things do. I went into action then. I hit the old gent with a flying tackle, and we both sprawled under the table just before the terrible chatter of the machine-guns began.

## A BATTLE IS TO FIGHT

For a full minute there was leaden death in that room. Those guns must have sprayed like a garden hose, not caring who got shot, because while we were under the table a woodpecker was tapping the mahogany just over my head, and the bodies that fell down and rolled near me—I could just barely see out of a corner of an eye—belonged to the Latin-European gentlemen who had been sitting at the table. I just hung onto the Prince. Didn't dare to look around. Just hung on, and kept his head down and prayed.

AND then, as suddenly as it started, the noise of gunfire stopped. The woodpecker had gone. I edged out of cover and peered through the table-legs. And got an eyeful.

Bodies. Nothing but. . . . The guard with their rifles, sprawling in heaps. The men who had been the "government" of Carbonia, dangling over the table and draped over the benches. And my poor friend B. J. Karlspeth barely crawling on his hands and knees, blood oozing from his mouth and streaming down his rich-colored uniform.

But the shooting had stopped, and I saw why.

The machine-guns had dropped out of the gunmen's hands, and behind each hoodlum stood young Carbonian men in their crazy uniforms—with long sharp knives in their hands, the points pressed into the backs of the gunmen. I saw it all then. Wheels within wheels. Karlspeth—or his father, or somebody—had not trusted Francilni after all. Plainly the fanatically shouting young men of Zumin who had ridden part way with us, had reached the palace and had taken care of the other gunmen—the rest of the hundred—in their own way.

But I didn't have any more time for speculation. The old Prince was struggling to his feet and reaching out to take his son Boriseu up in his arms. B. J. was badly wounded. He was alive and struggling against his pain, but badly hurt. And then, when his old father lifted him, I saw something else. . . . Prince Michael Ruis also had been shot. A great red stain was growing under his arm. I got them both to their feet and tried to lift B. J. over to the table, but the old man pushed me away. He held up his hand—his right hand, because the other was around his son's body. He shouted something in that Carbonian speech which sounded like:

"Kiwassa Karlspetti!"

A crowd of his young men was pouring into the room now, and all of them took up the shout. Then Michael waved for silence and began talking. It was a quiet, soft, gentle voice he used, but it had power. I learned the meaning of that speech later, and I want to print it here.

"My sons," he said, "I have betrayed you. Meaning well, I have betrayed you. I did not seek this bloodshed. I had hoped that the son whom I had lost was found again to me, but I was wrong. I leave you now; and dying, I ask you only one thing: If your King Boriseu lives, let him live among you, as one of you. It is clear to me now that the day of kings is done. The world has changed and is changing more. Had I lived, I would have become, not your king, but your first true president—had you wanted me. Let the foreign powers leave Carbonia. Fight jealously for your freedom. Make no alliances. Live in your mountains safe from the weapons of those powers who would steal your power and coal. Send your young men out into the world—to live and to learn. Carbonia must become, not a romantic beauty-spot, but a modern nation of active people. The Czechs and the Bulgars and the Serbs have done it, and you must do it. To remain as you are is slow suicide.

"NOW, my sons, good-by. Go back to your mountains, for I fear there may yet be more bloodshed here. May the blessing of God be upon you all. Good-by."

Then he saluted them, gravely, and drew B. J. to him and kissed him carefully on each cheek; and turning to me, he said in English:

". . . The best and the last, eh? The one fight more. Good-by, friend of my good son. When you tried to save my aged life, I learned a great deal. Never had I seen the work of these modern things, the machine-guns. It was then that I learned that there is no room in the world for a feudal state. We cannot, even if we try, resist the march of time. Good-by."

And then, quietly, he sat down and died. Died sitting. Died with his hand at his forehead in a final salute to his people. And a great moaning wail rose up among them—a wail which drowned, almost, the sobbing of Boriseu Jacathin von Karlspeth.

There isn't much more to this story, but what there is happened fast. My friend Karlspeth didn't die. He lived, and he is probably alive today—a shepherd or maybe something else in the mountains of Carbonia. I lifted him and carried him through the crowd and down to the Mercedes, and I drove him back the long trek to Zumin, following the only road in Carbonia. It sounds easy. It sounds as though everybody lived happily ever after; but they didn't.

There was a kingdom of Carbonia for the next three hours, and the King lay on a couch at Zumin, wondering if he would ever stop hurting, wondering if he could ever be a quarter of the man his father Michael Ruis was.

But over in Dzaghat, more things happened. The sky was dark with airplanes. That little Moth plane we had seen was nobody's pleasure-cruiser, but an observer who had observed the crowds of people and did something about it. Perhaps somebody—it might even have been that fellow called Francilni—had done some talking out of turn. Anyhow, the planes swooped down over Dzaghat and dropped a few bombs. The bombs did little material damage, but the planes did a great deal of moral damage, because they dropped something else beside bombs. They dropped men in parachutes—soldiers belonging to a Great Power which was not quite asleep, after all. And after three hours of rough "persuading," there was a deathly quiet in the little city of Dzaghat, and a new "president" was furnished, without benefit of election, and a new batch of hard-faced, keen-eyed gentlemen in the costume of European diplomats took their seats around the table from which the bodies of their predecessors had been removed. And business, in Dzaghat, went on as usual.

**B**UT there in Zumin, while I was waiting for an airplane to come from Paris to pick me up and take me back again into the world of reality, an entire nation walked behind a glorious old coach drawn by a dozen fine horses. The nation walked slowly, heads bowed. They circled around the little clutter of thatch-roofed huts where Prince Michael had lived and held court all those years, marching to the slow beat of drums.

That fine old coach was a hearse.

**You may look forward to another fine story by Fulton Grant in our next issue.**

# Gorsair

*The stirring tale of a to sea, and of the lady who twenty-second story of the*

**T**HE noon express out of New York for Washington usually affords a fascinating group of travelers, lobbyists, diplomats, earnest revolutionaries and whatnot. I was in the observation-car, comfortably planted in one of the swivel-chairs by the table at the extreme rear.

People do not usually fall into casual conversation on this run; it is not long enough. So I was mildly surprised when the other man, across the table from me, looked over and addressed me apologetically.

"Pardon me, sir, but is your name O'Brien?"

"It isn't," I said gratefully.

He looked puzzled. He was a massive fellow, elderly but with a spry and fantastic look in his eye. At my scrutiny, he sighed.

"Stung again! I see you're wearing a gold seal ring with the crest of the O'Brien family. I'd wager the motto reads, in Gaelic: '*Lamh laidir an uachtar.*'"

I broke into a laugh. "Meaning, '*The Strong Hand Above.*' Correct. You're Irish?"

"Oh, no!" he said. "My name's Smith."

"Well, I don't like the Irish, myself," I confided. "My people were Irish, and I inherited this ring from them, that's all."

"My family's Irish too. You're wrong not to like them, my friend," he contended. "I study the old histories and such. It's all very thrilling."

We had an argument, friendly and good-humored, and the steward fetched drinks.

Smith tapped a book which he had in his lap, fixed me with his alert, glittering eye, and asked a question which seemed to mean a lot to him.

"What ship was it that for three hundred years revictualled half Europe and changed the eating habits of the world?"

"What ship?" I repeated. "Rather, what fish? The codfish would answer your query."



# of Canada

*nobleman bond-slave escaped  
shared his flight. . . . The  
"Ships and Men" series.*

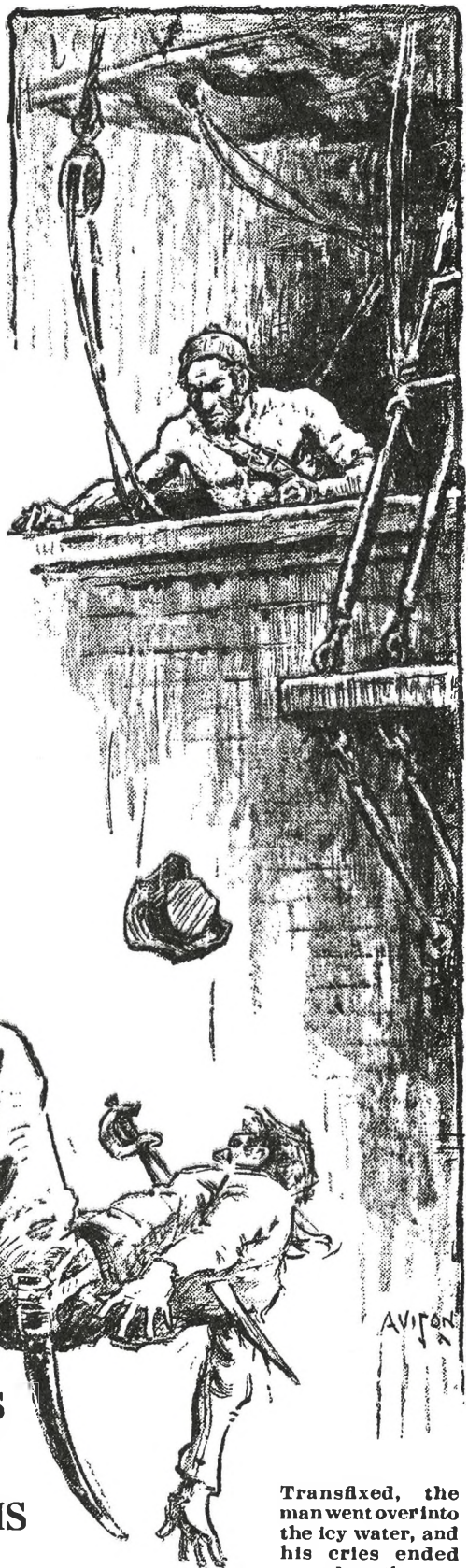
He positively beamed. "But to catch cod, you must have a ship, a thousand ships, fleets of 'em from France and Portugal and everywhere!"

"Granted!" And I laughed. "Now I'll give you one: Suppose you tell me when the inhabitants of Canada were first called Canadians!"

That would settle him, I thought. The Canada Club in our city had for the past year been trying to resolve this problem with the help of all the learned minds north and south of the border. All we could find was that the word *Canadian* had come into existence about the year 1800.

He beamed at me again and tapped his book, an ancient volume bound in brown calf.

"That's easy; about the year 1650," he said promptly. He became even more intent upon me, and his eyes gleamed. Tumultuous words rushed out of him.



By  
**H. BEDFORD-JONES**  
and  
**CAPT. L. B. WILLIAMS**

Transfixed, the man went over into the icy water, and his cries ended abruptly.



Etching by Yngve E. Soderberg.

"In fact, your question ties up with mine! By that same year, a new type of ship had come into use, evolved by the seamen of Brittany—a ship they called a *terra-nueva*, or Newfoundlander. And it's curious that both your question and mine tie up with Irishmen. The chain is complete. Codfish—ships—Canadians—Irishmen! You see?"

"No, hanged if I can see!" was my response. "It looks rather insane to me."

He laughed, his brown face aglow. I began to think that my friend Smith, like his words, might be a bit balmy. Then he showed me my mistake.

"Under Cromwell, the Irish royalists were shipped to the plantations abroad as slaves. Many of them were sent to Newfoundland. Wonderful things happened all up and down those coasts," he went on with enthusiasm, with a relish in his words. "Battle and murder and

sudden death were everywhere; pirates ravaged; broken men set themselves up as wilderness kings. Why, a town in Maine is named after Baron de St. Castine, who married an Indian princess and became a savage lord!"

"Which," I said, "has nothing to do with ships and codfish."

"It has everything to do with them! Let me give you a story out of La Potherie!" And he fondled the book in his lap. "Never been translated, almost unknown, yet Parkman called it the only source for certain portions of Canadian history. Documents, memoirs, and treaties otherwise lost to the world are preserved in these pages!"

True enough; I had heard of this book he had; it was, indeed, one of the curiosities of literature.

"Like Dumas, it has suffered from translation," I observed. "Do you remember how, in 'The Three Musketeers,' the word *canot* is translated to mean *canoe*? A canoe on the English Channel!"

"Do you want to hear my story or not?" demanded Smith.

"Not particularly," I said frankly. "There's nothing interesting in codfish or Newfoundlanders or Irish slaves."

He blazed up. "Nothing interesting! Romance, courage, indomitable spirits, blood on every page! Here, take a look at the bleak, savage coast of Newfoundland—the deep bays dotted with struggling, isolated settlements, the inner island unknown and savage; the hostile redskins, the intense privations, the day-and-night battle to keep alive! And set down in all this, branded and lashed and made a slave of the rude settlers, a man who had been a gentleman, who had talked with kings—"

**G**ENTLEMAN? There was nothing to tell of it, in the appearance of the man thus forcibly presented to me. Shaggy with long hair and beard, clad in rags and skins knotted around his body, thin hawk-nose, and untamed eyes shining, Sir Phelim Burke was now only a slave. The slave Burke, a beast of burden for his masters.

Only the fierce eyes told of the unbroken spirit within him, as he peered forth from the rocky shore at the battered ship lying in the little harbor. She must have come in for shelter from the storm, before day broke. Back at the settlement, around the crook of the bay, her presence was unknown and un-

guessed. Burke had discovered her just now, in his search for firewood.

His gaze devoured her with swift hope—here, perhaps, was escape! The hope died. She was a three-masted fishing craft, high of stern and bow, square sails on her fore and main, a lateen on her mizzen. Rigging riven and hull battered, she lay anchored while her crew made repairs; a small boat on her midships deck was being patched up for landing, and water-casks were being floated. The voices told Burke that she was French. French cod-fishers, then, they would be, coming ashore to water; he must give the news to the settlers, who might otherwise make discovery themselves and set muskets to work. He drew back from his covert, under the great trees. He tramped back to where the huddle of houses and the stockade stood beside the creek. Boats and nets and gear were being overhauled under the stockade; these settlers, too, were making ready for the spring runs of cod.

**T**HEY were rugged West of England men, these who broke off work to stare at Burke and hear his news; men made savage by their environment here, by their endless struggle.

"Ye dog, we sent ye for wood, not news," said one, and struck Burke heavily across the face. "News o' Frenchmen, above all! Snarl at me, and I'll have ye laid across a stump and given three-score lashes. I'm sick of your damned insolence. Ho, mates! Break out the powder and muskets!"

Gaunt-eyed women made haste with weapons; the stockade was closed; two scouts went forth to spy upon the harbor beyond the turn; muskets were loaded. Danger from the sea was a new peril. Inland were only trackless forests and brute savages. These outflung settlements existed for the sealing and fishing alone, which promised wealth. If the Frenchmen brought trouble from the sea, it would be a bad thing.

No trouble, however. The scouts brought in word of friendliness. The smallboat, towing roped casks behind, came toiling up the harbor reach; two Frenchmen landed, laughing and babbling broken English, with gifts of tobacco and cognac. The first ship out from France for the season, said they, only to reach the Banks with bitter storm, and run on here for shelter.

Arms were laid aside. Brandy flowed; tobacco burned; tongues ranted away.



"Lead on, now; my pistol's ready too,  
if ye show no gold!"

But the slave Burke, waiting on his masters, fetching and hauling, the butt of every abuse and oath, guarded careful silence. More of the French came ashore toward evening. There was music and dancing; wine and cognac flowed again. Their repairs completed, the French were sailing on the daylight tide. Now, for the evening, they were devoted to joyous gayety.

Through it all moved the slave Burke, buffeted and kicked, yet resenting nothing. Resentment, he knew sadly, meant a flogging; he was not a man but a beast. The only one of them all who spared a kindly word, a kindly look for him, was the young Priscilla. She was eldest daughter of Bentham, the chief settler here, and promised in marriage to the youngest of these dour men. Much against her will, as Burke well knew.

Caribou meat was roasted; the precious stores of provender were broken into recklessly, and Burke was kept sweating at work with the women, some of whom danced not at all. What began in gayety passed into riotous drunken uproar. Burke, dragging in a log for the fire, was met in the doorway by the girl Priscilla, panting and disheveled.

"I'm afraid!" she broke out, white-faced. "Help me, Burke, help me! I

can't stay here. Can we go out in a boat until they stop drinking?"

"No," said Burke. "They're roaring for you now. Give me a hand with this log, girl. Then wait and take things easy. We can slip away when the time comes."

"But they'll flog you tomorrow," she said, hesitating. "And—"

"There may be no tomorrow," Burke broke in grimly. "Lend a hand!"

She stooped to the weight. They bore in the log and cast it on the fire, where more meat was sizzling. The puncheon floor quivered to the stamp of sealskin boots and sea-boots. Breton bagpipes were skirling madly, and a maudlin chorus was being roared forth. Men and bedraggled women alike were excited, shouting and laughing, wrought to a high pitch.

A dozen fishermen—no, sixteen, as Burke counted them. Fourteen English settlers, and the women. These were rough, homely country folk, no more than brutes at the best except for their leader Bentham; they were fired now with unaccustomed liquor and the mad contagion of high spirits, of boisterous revelry let wild and loosed from all restraint. A spark amiss, Burke thought grimly as he crouched to one side of the fireplace; there would be the devil to pay. He looked at the unsheathed sword lying on the mantel-shelf, Bentham's sword, and his palm itched for the feel of the hilt.

**S**UDDENLY came the igniting spark: A wild dance began. The girl Priscilla was drawn into it, taken whirling about, passed from hand to hand. Flushed and terrified, she struggled to get free. Amid a roar of laughter, some one caught her into the whirl again.

A Frenchman seized her, held her close, and kissed her ravenously. Bentham, with a hot oath, plunged for the man and knocked him sprawling. A yell, a chorus of snarls, and a knife went smack into Bentham's heart.

Phelim Burke came out of his crouch, and with a leap had the sword and was to one side of the fireplace again. None noted him. The tumult swelled into a roar of fury.

Knives were out; fists were in; women were screaming or fighting, with wild shapes reeling or grappling. Some one found a musket and let fly. In the murk of powder-smoke, Burke found the girl Priscilla and drew her out of the riot.

A Frenchman, with reddened knife, hurled himself after her, and Burke ran him through the throat very neatly.

A louder yell, and two others were driving at him; his teeth flashed through his shaggy beard as he held their knives in play, lunged at them, sent them dancing and sliding.

"Out the back way, lass!" he called sharply, and the girl heard him.

One of the two Frenchmen was down. Another musket roared, and a hail of slugs flew through the room, and men screamed. Burke fought his way to the door, after the girl. One of the settlers plunged for him, with a sharp yelp at sight of his sword, and Burke killed that man deliberately. He owed him for a flogging at his first arrival.

TO the open now, the girl's hand dragging at his arm. Another musket banged away inside; the fighting and uproar had redoubled; men were struggling like wild beasts. Something was afire; a flicker of flame glinted redly. Then Burke swung the sobbing, terrified girl toward the shore below.

"The boats! Get to the boats!"

They ran panting down the slope and reached the lonely shore together. The first boat was heavy, but they tugged in unison, and ran her by degrees over the shingle. A stout lass was Priscilla Bentham, strong as any man. Burke scrambled in after her, shoved an oar into her hands, and took another himself.

"Now row," he commanded. She obeyed him in wild gasping panic, without question. The boat surged out, the tide being already on the ebb and helping them. The tumult of fighting lessened with the distance as they rowed on. They came to the turn of the bay, and a light glimmered ahead, where the ship lay at anchor.

Once near her, and Burke sent a hail aboard in French. A man answered him.

"Give us a hand!" cried Burke. "Is your ladder down? Good."

"What was the shooting about?" demanded a seaman at the rail.

"Fighting, between your comrades and the Englishmen. We got away from it."

Somehow, Burke forced the girl up the rope ladder, and followed her. The half dozen men on deck crowded around in wild excitement. It flamed up into hot flaring oaths; then of a sudden there was a rush. The Frenchmen were tumbling into the boat alongside, scrambling for the oars, frantic to be ashore and help-

ing their comrades; another musket-shot and another came faintly across the night.

The girl clung to Burke, trembling, and he soothed her. They were alone here on the dark deck.

"Come below," he said. "You're done up, poor lass. I'll put you in a warm bunk and leave you. All safe now."

She yielded dumbly to his will, all resistance stricken out of her. He picked up the lantern from the waist and led her below, aft, to the deserted cabins. In one of these he left her, gasping with dry sobs, and went back on deck.

She too had been plucked out of a living hell. He thought back across that winter of horror—of dirt and filth, of crowded humans worse than animals. This girl was far above all that; she had fine things in her. She too had been little better than a slave even to her own family. A pallid, unlovely thing, frightened of the present and the more terrible future—Burke pitied her profoundly. No fate could be worse than leaving her here among these people and their appalling living conditions.

"And now she's free," he said to the stars, and a laugh broke from him. "She's free. And I'm free—*free!*"

With this, he set about what he had to do. Few other men would have dared it, but Phelim Burke was past caring.

WHEN the girl came on deck again, the sun was shining warmly, the sea was glinting and sparkling; it was mid-morning. A queer little frightened sound escaped her lips, as she stared around. Blue crags to the west and the south, blocking the horizon; all the rest was ocean. The harbor was gone; the cliffs were gone—the ship was at sea!

She swung around, searching the decks, her lips white with swift panic. A single figure was visible by the tiller aft. A stranger, a tall, straight man smoking a pipe. He wore a somewhat frayed suit of brown velvet; he had a neatly pointed beard; his hair was clipped—

"You! Oh, what has happened, Burke!" She ran to him, in sudden recognition. "Where are we? Where is everyone?"

"In hell, I trust, my dear Priscilla." And Burke waved his pipe at the horizon. "French and English alike. I cut the cable last night, and here we are. D'ye like my new beard, lass? Faith, it hides the branding mark on my cheek, anyhow! But, my lass—Lord, what a

fright you look! Run down into the big cabin. You'll find an open chest there. I got these clothes from it, and there's some woman's gear in it—plunder, perhaps. A wash, and a comb in your hair, and—”

“But where are we?” she broke in with a frantic wail. “Where are we going?”

“Upon my word, I haven't the faintest idea,” said Burke, chuckling. “And I don't care a tinker's dam. And there's food on the cabin table, so help yourself. It'll put heart into you. You do look terrible, my dear.”

“Oh!” she cried out. “My father—I remember now—”

“He's dead; your past is dead. You've a new future; it's what you make it. Below!”

She stared wide-eyed at him, then turned and went below with a choked sob. Burke smiled at the glinting sea, cocked his eye at the square sail forward he had half loosed from its brails, and puffed at his pipe contentedly. She would get over it.

So, indeed, she did, for she had sense enough and to spare. Facts were facts; when she came on deck, later, she was in new garments, with her hair neat and tidied, with the salt sea air bringing the red blood to her cheeks.

“But you're a lovely thing!” cried Burke, taking her hands and looking into her face. “You were always a lovely kind thing in my eyes, Priscilla; now you've blossomed from the child that you were, into a sweet woman. To the devil with all dirt henceforth! The sea's clean and sweet like yourself; the sky's no bluer than your eyes—”

“Why, Burke! You talk like poetry,” she said, and blushed happily.

**W**ITH such a beginning, the day's end was sure. Sunset found them dining royally while the ship drifted before a light breeze, the shore a dozen miles distant. She was facing the future more calmly now, accepting the present gladly, unregretting the past; for her mother, poor thing, had died this past winter.

So night came down upon the quiet sea; and Phelim Burke made his bed on deck near the tiller and sent the girl below again. He must steer the ship, and her, and himself, he mused bitterly as he lay under the stars; and the gray that streaked his clipped hair and beard must keep him as a father to her.

In the dawn, came a voice up out of the sea, and other voices. Burke started

up and leaped to the bulwarks. At first he thought the crew had come again, for the voices were French that hailed, and in the night the ship had drifted near islands that lay off the mainland shore. A black mass lay in the water, and the voices came from this. He perceived it to be a shapeless sort of raft, and many persons upon it. He flung a line, and in the dawnlight a tall agile figure was first on deck, saluting him joyously. Priscilla, wakened by the voices and the stamp of feet, came hurriedly from below. Thus together they met these famished and weary men, who wore woolen garments and huge black hats. Their leader bowed gallantly upon seeing the girl.

“I am the Sieur de Montrouge,” said he. “And I thank you in God's name for this rescue. If you have food, give it to us. We've lived two weeks on shellfish and birds' eggs while this raft was building—”

**F**OOD there was, and to spare. Canadians, they called themselves, twenty of them in all; and Montrouge was a hearty, lean-jawed, laughing blade. Rovers, all of them, young woods-runners who had been down the St. Lawrence with a trading-sloop. Swept out to sea by a two-day gale, dismasted and wrecked on one of the islets off the Newfoundland shore, they had built a raft to reach the coast, and in this calm night had set forth, only to be carried off by tidal currents and then to sight the ship.

They feasted into the full daylight, scraped their faces clean, filled the ship with strange oaths and laughter and Mohawk words, for most of them had spent much time among the Indians. They listened to Burke's story, embraced him, promised him freedom and a future in Canada, and then, rather blankly, considered the present. None of them were seamen.

“I am,” said Burke. “Or was. Which way lies the St. Lawrence?”

“God knows, not I!” And Montrouge chuckled. “Bah! Follow the coast. We can't miss the river. And by the looks of the red sky, we'll not miss storm either.”

Burke glanced at the ominous morning, and nodded.

“With twenty of you to work ship, we'll weather anything in this craft. To the lines!”

They fell to the task, got sail on the ship, and surged westward under a moaning wind.

To Priscilla, these joyous, care-free Canadians were like beings from another world. They treated her like a great lady; they sang and laughed and brought the color to her cheeks; and when the wind swooped down and sent the ship staggering, they worked like devils. In Montrouge, Burke found a kindred soul, and took counsel with him as the gale drove them toward the iron coast.

"You played those French fishermen a scurvy trick, but they deserved it," Montrouge chuckled. "We who are Canadian-born don't think so much of the French. You shall have a home with us, my friend—but first to reach Canada! Why not make shelter along the coast yonder? If we can find an Indian or two, we'll learn where we are."

"And if we run afoul of some English ship?"

"The devil! We have muskets, tomahawks, knives—and tongues. What better?"

Burke shrugged and assented. As an escaped slave, he had little to expect if he fell into English hands again.

So they bore for the coast, scudding close-reefed, the stout little ship a marvel to them all. Even Burke, who knew the sea well, and had himself owned ships out of Galway in the old days, had never seen one of her build or rig.

From papers in the cabin, however, they learned that she was owned in St. Malo, and had been built by riggers there as an experiment for the Banks fisheries, designed in all ways for just that work, both by winter and summer. The *Hirondelle*, she was named.

With afternoon, the wind and currents took them past rugged cliffs and into a deeply indented bay. Whether it were the north of Newfoundland, or New Scotland, or some other land, Burke had not the faintest idea. With headsail spread to the wind, they forged down the apparently endless bay while the gale screeched overhead. The shores were rocky and savage; and having no smallboat and but one remaining anchor, Burke was minded to take no chances. Besides, most of the Canadians were seasick and helpless.

**T**HEN a little open cove beckoned and they made for it, surged into it, and down splashed the anchor in five fathom, and good holding-ground. Sunset was not far off and it was too late now to do any woods-running, so all hands stayed aboard to recover from the



A scream of fury came from the girl; she snatched a belaying-pin and hurled it.

tossing sea-sickness. Priscilla, who had suffered little, cooked a meal and Montrouge acted as cabin boy, with many a gay jest. Burke, regarding the two of them, smiled in his beard. . . .

With daylight, every man of them plunged overboard and swam ashore, regardless of the icy water. The powder-horns and muskets were floated ashore. Ten minutes later, the dark masses of trees had swallowed them all up. Burke, alone with Priscilla, stuffed his pipe and stretched out comfortably on the forward deck. The sky was a gray scud of cloud, but the cove, while open to the bay, was well sheltered.

"Strange happy men!" said the girl, her eyes ashine as she stared at the empty woods. "Will they come back?"

"Aye, and with fresh meat too," Burke replied lazily. "Will you like Canada?"

"I think so." She reddened a little. "Will it like me?"

"When you learn French, aye. Montrouge seems to be teaching you the language fast."

"And do you mind?" she said, looking at him.

Burke shrugged.

"I? Lass you've no master in me; a father, if you like, but what you do is your own concern. Life is opening to you, so make the most of it."

She looked at him again and turned away, a shadow in her eyes.

Mid-morning came, and no sign nor sound from the dark shrouded forests or the sandy beach of the cove. Burke did not expect to hear from Montrouge or the others until toward evening. He was unhurried, luxuriating in freedom and mastery. No hurry any more, ever, he told himself. Then, suddenly, he heard the girl's urgent voice.

"Burke! Look! Look!"

Burke sprang up. She was at the rail amidships, pointing. Out in the bay beyond the cove he saw a small, slatternly ship heading seaward; she must have been somewhere up at the head of the bay. As he looked, she swung about and pointed in for the cove. She had sighted the *Hirondelle* and was heading for her.

Priscilla came running forward, eagerly asking:

"Who is she, Burke? What is she?"

In dismay and consternation, his slitted eyes probed this apparition. A small ship, bluff-bowed, wallowing; two guns to a side. No fishermen. Her decks were thick with men.

"English," said Burke in a dull voice. "Or worse."

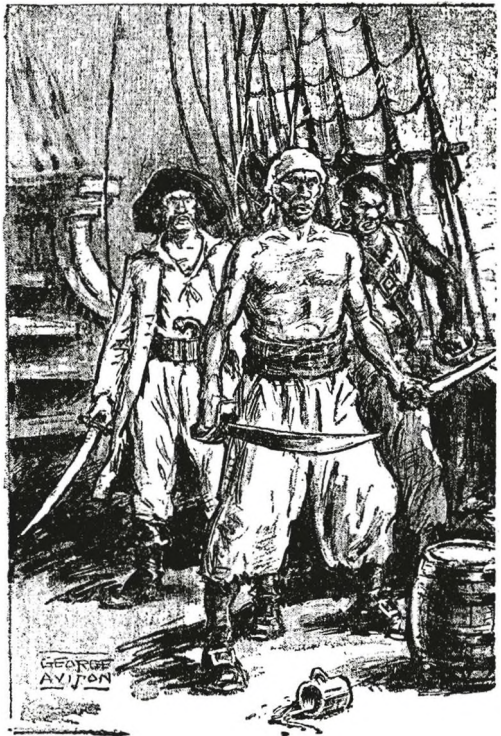
The heart was stricken out of him suddenly. Seek safety ashore? He could not swim. Hails came in English and French from the other ship, as she stood into the cove. The girl, in realization, stared blankly at him.

"Oh, Burke! For you it means—"

He smiled wryly. "Never mind. Pretend to be French; don't talk. Keep busy in the galley. These look to be more wolves than men."

**T**HE other craft dropped anchor and a boat. Hails came in English and French; Burke responded, and dropped the ladder. The men, their ship, their leader, told him all too much. Some French, mostly English; no pretense would go with these ruffians. The big black-bearded leader swung over the rail pistol in hand, swept the empty deck with his eye, and stared hard at Burke.

"Well, and you? My name's Hurd, o' Boston town."



"And mine is Burke, of St. Malo; you're welcome," said Burke. But he had heard of this fellow. The settlers talked of him in winter nights. The Bostonnais, he was called. A beast who ravaged pitilessly; fur-pirate and free-booter—no man, but a monster.

"Where are your men?"

"Ashore," said Burke. They had ringed him in, staring curiously, fingering weapons. "There's naught here to plunder, my friends."

"Friends be damned!" said the Bostonnais. "Truss him up, two of you. Where's that woman we saw aboard? We'll have her, and what provender ye have. . . . Off with the hatches, lads! Ashore, says he? A liar, then. There's no boat ashore. Just the two of 'em, unless more be hiding below-decks. Look for the brandy and wine, all of you."

Fight? As well might a cornered rat try to fight a dog-pack. Burke was tied up and made fast to the mainmast. The Bostonnais routed out Priscilla herself, kissed her most heartily, and set her to work in the galley with two of his men helping her. Half starved were all these sea-wolves. They had been at the head of the bay, watering, had found no fresh meat, and their stores had run out. They ravaged through the ship, broke out the liquor, and another boat brought the





“Over with you!”  
Burke exclaimed.  
“Over—and swim,  
if you want your  
lives! The captain  
is dead, and you  
follow him!”

rest of their crew aboard. Priscilla and her two lusty helpers got the salt meat and fish and bread to cooking, and at the dire threats of the Bostonnais, not a man dared so much as touch her. Of the silent, captive Burke they took no heed as they drank, waiting for the food to be ready; but presently the Bostonnais came swaggering up to him, and spat in his face with a laugh.

“There for you! What’s to prevent stringing you up and done with it, eh?”

“What I have to tell you,” said Burke in a low voice. “About the gold.”

The bloodshot eyes widened into his steady gaze.

“What’s this? Gold, did ye say?”

“Softly, softly,” cautioned Burke. “D’ye want these fools to hear? Give me my life, Master Hurd, and I’ll show you where the gold’s hid. There’s only a small box of it, not enough for all your men to share.”

The other’s eyes flamed with avidity.

“So that’s it, eh?” muttered the Bostonnais. He swung around suddenly, and let out a roar that swept down the deck. “All hands! No drinking and setting fire to the ship. Take the food and a keg ashore, and guzzle your bellies full if ye will! L’Etoile, you and five men stop aboard here for a bit. Ashore with you, ye dogs!”

The men yelled lusty assent to this order. L’Etoile was a Frenchman with one eye and a hideous scar where the other had been; he, Burke judged, was the mate of the rover, lieutenant to the Bostonnais. He swiftly picked five other men to remain aboard. A brandy-keg was slung over into one boat and it started ashore, crowded. The rest of the men, with the other boat, waited until the cooking food was nigh ready, then impatiently lowered it, kettle and all, into their craft. Await the bread they would not, but seized biscuit and tumbled down, and sent the boat ashore with a will.

The Bostonnais came up to Burke and flourished a knife, laughing.

“Gold and a wench and liquor—what’s more to be asked?” he growled out, as he cut Burke free. “Lead on, now; my pistol’s ready too, if ye show no gold, ye damned rogue! Ho, L’Etoile! Keep the deck. And if ye touch the wench, I’ll split your skull, d’ye mind?”

Burke, chafing his numbed wrists and hands, cowered in assumed fear.

“It’s below in the cabin, master,” he whimpered. “And remember, you promised me my life for showing you!”

“You’ll have it, craven,” snapped the Bostonnais, pistol in hand. “Lead the way!”

So Burke went to the after companion, and on down the ladder—and as he went glanced shoreward, hoping for some sign of Montrouge; but there was only the sand-beach, and halfway to the fringing dark forest the sprawling men, guzzling food and drink, some twenty-five of them spread over the place.

Phelim Burke's heart fell. Desperate, he went on, and turned from the passage below into one of the stern cabins which he remembered clearly. Despite the dirty stern window, the light here was dim, the cabin obscure. And behind him, as he went, the Bostonnais followed with heavy pistol leveled, heavy flint and hammer back-cocked.

Burke's eyes darted about frantically. He was staking everything on one flashing instant. If he failed to stop that pistol's explosion, he was lost, for the other six would be down at the sound of it. If he missed his plunging grasp—but he must not miss!

"Where is it?" growled the Bostonnais. Burke halted, swung around toward the dark corner, and then came to one knee before the black chest standing there.

"Here," he said. "It's hidden, a secret place—"

He threw up the lid. Hurd was close beside him now, craning forward. There under the lid of the chest were the knives Burke had seen—the big curved-bladed knives for cleaning cod. And on the instant, Burke flashed into motion.

His left hand went to the pistol-pan; his right swooped at a knife; and with the action he was rising. The cocked flint came down cruelly on his hand; but the knife drove up and thudded home; the game was won.

A bursting gasp escaped the Bostonnais. He staggered, loosed the pistol; clenched on Burke's hand, it hung pendulous. The stricken man put both huge paws to the knife-haft, then suddenly doubled up and pitched forward on his face.

Burke stepped nimbly aside. Agonized, he freed his hand from the pistol, and sucked at the torn flesh in relief. He frowned down at the heavy, clumsy weapons, shook his head, and stepped out of the cabin into the one adjoining. Here he had left the sword that he had fetched aboard. He secured it, and then went to the ladder and mounted.

**H**HEAD and shoulders protruding from the companion-way, he halted and called to the knot of men in the waist.

"L'Etoile! The cap'n says to come below."

The lithe one-eyed rascal came quickly enough, and Burke descended.

"What is it?" demanded L'Etoile from the head of the ladder.

"He's found something here; he wants you."

The Frenchman stumbled down, but came with a knife in his hand and his one eye probing ahead.

"Cap'n! Where are you?" he called sharply, and halted on the bottom step. A laugh broke from Phelim Burke as he lunged out of the obscurity, and his blade went home.

L'Etoile dived headlong, and his knife stabbed into the deck; but he did not pull it free. . . . His greasy knitted cap fell off.

**B**URKE picked up the cap, wiped his sword on it, then went up the ladder. On deck, he stood drinking in the clean crisp air. The sky was gray with storm-scud, but it was as yet little past mid-morning. In the waist, the five men stood at the rail, watching the swilling crew ashore with eager eyes, and bolting the food Priscilla had provided.

One look at the dark and silent forest; then Burke laid his sword and the cap on the after hatch, and sauntered forward. The men turned to eye him curiously, and he gave them an affable nod; two English, two French, and a negro with gold rings in his ears.

"Good news, lads," he said. "The Cap'n is plundering below with L'Etoile. He says you're free to drink, so fall to."

"Who says so?" growled one of the Englishmen. Burke laughed lightly.

"Oh, I'm one of you now," he said, and went on to the galley with careless air. The five men broke for a wine-keg that had been fetched on deck, and smashed into it.

Priscilla, her arms bare to the elbow, flushed with the fire-heat, regarded him with startled wonder and relief.

"Then it's all right?" she broke out. "You're free?"

"So far," said Burke cheerfully. "If trouble starts, go below forward; not to the cabins. The Bostonnais is done for, and his lieutenant; but I'm playing for time, until those Canadians show up."

He turned away and went aft. The men ashore were bawling forth a drunken tune; the five amidships were tight around the wine-keg. Burke reached

the after hatch, sat down, lit his pipe, and began to polish his sword-blade with the cap of L'Étoile. He kept an eye on the line of forest, but saw no indication of the Canadians returning. The two boats on the shore were being left high and dry by the ebbing tide.

Suddenly the party of carousing men fell silent and then scattered. Some went for their weapons; a number leaped up and dashed into the cover of the trees. They came back with one of the Canadians in their midst. Voices broke out; the Canadian tried to get away from the men around him; there was a swirl of figures, a flash of knives. The Canadian lay on the sand, still struggling, until other knives finished him.

From somewhere among the trees pealed up a sharp, shrill war-whoop. That Canadian, trusting these strangers too easily, had not been alone.

The two Englishmen at the wine-keg came staggering aft, as the men ashore broke into shouts for the captain; they came to where Burke sat, and halted.

"Where be Cap'n?" demanded one. Burke merely pointed below. The other man uttered a quick cry, his eyes dilating on the cloth.

"Why, that be L'Étoile's cap!"

"So it is, so it is," Burke assented cheerfully. "He has no more use for it, lads."

His words, his manner, bewildered their fuddled wits, as he went on polishing the sword. Fresh calls came from shore. The two men went to the companionway and started down the ladder. Burke rose and followed them, as far as the hatch.

There he heard oaths as they stumbled over the body of L'Étoile. Their voices were drowned as Burke slammed shut the storm-doors and shot the bolts. Then, sword in hand, he turned down the deck toward the two Frenchmen and the negro, who were gawking at the doings ashore. There a shot burst forth, yells were rising; but Burke looked only at the three around the wine-keg, by the shoreward rail.

"Over with you!" he exclaimed in French. "Over—and swim, if you want your lives! The captain is dead, and you follow him."

THEY swung around, gaped at him, heard the frantic hammering of the trapped pair, and broke into sudden savage motion. An oath and a yell, a flash of steel; the three of them spread out

and then drove at him. Burke evaded with one swift leap, and his point lunged in under the arm of the nearer Frenchman. That man dropped and lay kicking for a little while. But the negro flung a knife, and Burke felt his left arm pinned to his body by the blade as he staggered back against the rail.

The two were upon him like dogs on the kill, but this was the death of them both. The long steel slipped in over their knives, drove into the Frenchman's throat, and the hilt smashed the negro in the face. He fell back a pace, and this gave Burke time for a second lunge that slid home.

Meantime, tumult heightened ashore; but Burke, clinging to the rail, had no eyes for it. With a rush, Priscilla was coming across the deck, catching at him, supporting him, seizing the knife and wrenching it free of arm-flesh and ribs. She was no wench to flinch at the sight of blood.

"Off with your shirt—here, hold to the rail!" she cried. "Give me the shirt for a bandage; that's right. Oh, Burke, I thought you dead! But it's not so deep, not so bad. Steady, now—"

STRIPPED to the waist, he hung on the rail while she bandaged him, then fetched him a cup of the wine. This cleared his head, and just in time. For the negro was on one knee, shaking his head so that the gold ear-rings dangled and jumped, plunging up with a knife in hand. Burke kicked out at his face, caught up his sword again; and this time the black lay quiet with the others.

Ashore, wild whoops were rising from the trees; men were dying on the beach, muskets were pluming the wind with powder-smoke. Montrouge was avenging his murdered comrade in ghastly fashion,—tomahawk and scalping-knife at work,—and had cut off the raiders from their two boats, driving them to the shelter of the trees. Some of the Canadians were tugging one of the boats into the water, flinging in oars, scrambling aboard. It was a wild and furious mêlée; and in the midst, Burke heard a cry of alarm from the girl. He swung about.

The two Englishmen he had barricaded below were on the poop. They must have smashed through a stern window and climbed up over the quarter-rail. Now, with Hurd's pistols, they headed forward. Burke felt the girl tug at his wounded arm.

"This way—quickly!" she gasped. "Oh, don't stand there like a ninny—"

He laughed a little and stumbled after her, wondering at his own weakness; he must have lost much blood! He could scarce hold his sword. Yells and oaths of fury were coming from the two Englishmen as they ran forward to get at him. He could not reach the galley with Priscilla; he came to a dead halt as the strength went out of him. He swayed, caught himself, and went to one knee. There, leaning on the sword so hard the blade quivered, he stayed himself. It was the end. His eyes darkened. He was conscious of the rush and swoop of the gale overhead; then voices reached him.

"YE damned murdering rogue!" one of the two raiders brayed. They had stopped, had swung up the heavy pistols to bear on him. Burke's head jerked up, and a smile touched his lips.

Then something whirled in air. A scream of dismay and fury came from the girl. She had snatched a belaying-pin from the rack and hurled it; now she hurled a second, with true aim, at the two men. One pistol exploded, wild; but not the second. Its owner fired deliberately, and the girl crumpled.

Madness flamed in Burke; his brain afire, an access of spasmodic rage lending him strength, he was up and hurling himself at the two of them. An empty pistol hurtled at him. He met it with his wounded arm, and felt no pain, for his sword was plunging home and wrenching out again. One man down. The other turned, and with a scream of terror leaped for the rail, but Burke was upon him like a whirlwind, and the thirsty steel darted up. . . . Transfixed, twisting the blade from Burke's fingers, that man went screaming over into the icy water, and his cries ended abruptly.

"My poor lass, my poor lass!"

Burke staggered back across the deck. He dropped, and tears were on his bearded cheeks as he drew the girl's head into his lap, and wiped the blood from her brow. Her eyes came open. A quick delirium of joy seized upon him as he looked at the wound and saw that the ball had only furrowed her skull. She smiled up at him, and her hand crept to his with a firm, strong grasp.

They were still quiet, there, when a boat crashed alongside, and up over the rail flooded the Canadians. Not all of

them; and of these who came, some were sore hurt; but Montrouge headed them with a laugh and a wild oath at sight of the red decks.

"There's your man, my lass," muttered Burke. "On your feet, now, and welcome him! And a brave fellow he is."

"No, no," she said, coming to her knees and drawing at him to rise. "No, Burke! It's you, now and always; you and no other!"

He stared at her for a moment, while the Canadians came crowding around them; then he suddenly caught and held her close to him, and kissed her.

"Cut the cable!" His head came up, his orders flamed at Montrouge. "Out with the tide, out with the gale, lads—to sea! And when we reach Canada, we'll send this ship back to St. Malo with our thanks and our blessing. Have you found where we are?"

"North bay of Newfoundland," replied Montrouge. "And the way clear before us."

Thus, in the end, the *Hirondelle* came back to France again; and others were built in her likeness, and the "Newfoundlanders" came presently to the Grand Banks by the hundreds. So stout and well-suited for the work were they, that they came even in winter fleets to dare ice and storm, changing in rig and build down the centuries, but ever stout and hardy beyond all compare.

SO the story came to a close, with Washington's outskirts greeting us. I looked at my friend Smith, met his penetrating eye, and shook my head.

"All very well," I said, "but what about my question? The first Canadians?"

"I've told you," he replied, and tapped the little old book in his hand. "It's all here in La Potherie. The French settled Canada; their children, born there, called themselves Canadians. The first dated mention of the name, here in the book, goes back to 1697, but it was in use long before that. And here you can find about the Irish slaves, and how Burke helped Perrot discover the Sioux in the West, in 1660, and where the first white child was born in Newfoundland, and—"

The train squealed to a halt. We were in. Smith was cut short; we shook hands and parted. . . .

The noonday run to Washington is nearly always interesting.

Another spirited story in this famous series will appear in our next issue.

# The Revenge of Circling Hawk



*A stirring story  
of the old West  
by the noted author  
of "The Last  
of the Thunder-  
ing Herd."*

By **BIGELOW NEAL**

**O**N the driver's seat an old man peered through the heat-waves of a Dakota afternoon; the girl beside him held a baby across her lap. A team of scrawny horses pulled a decrepit wagon, the box covered with bows and canvas. The wheels rumbled, and the eveners whined; the hames and traces creaked, and dust overhung the lurching vehicle.

Out of the dust-fog ahead, the figure of a mounted man appeared, a figure in fringed buckskin with a broad-brimmed hat and cavalry boots.

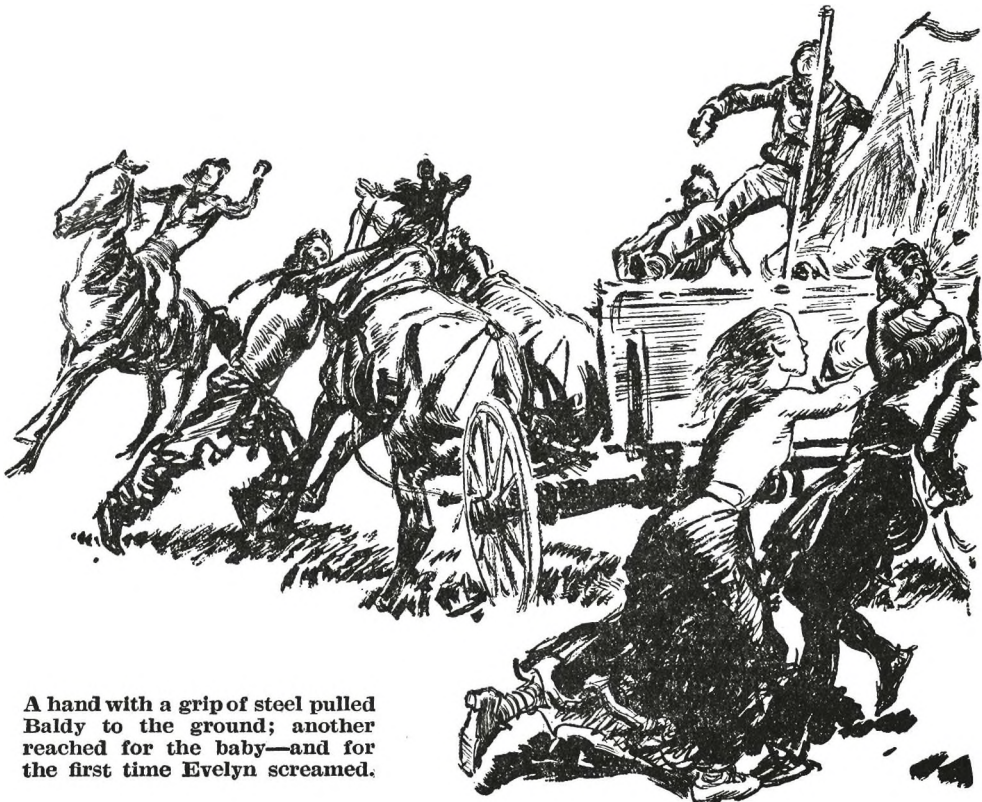
"Baldy, for the love of the Almighty, where you goin' with that outfit?"

"Whoa, Apache—whoa, Comanche! Mrs.—Doggone," exclaimed the driver, "if I aint forgot your name already."

The girl smiled. "For about the tenth time, it's Holterman, Evelyn Holterman."

"That's it," cackled Baldy. "Dang me, if I wasn't cracked in the head, I could remember it! Mrs. Holter—next to me, this feller, if I do say so myself, is the best Injun scout in the country. His name is—"

"Charley Reynolds," said the scout, lifting his hat. "Most of the time I'm Chief of Scouts for Colonel Custer; but in the fall and winter I scout and hunt



A hand with a grip of steel pulled Baldy to the ground; another reached for the baby—and for the first time Evelyn screamed.

for Fort Stevenson.” He pointed back along the trail to the flagstaff and stockade of the fort.

“But listen, you old loon!” The scout’s smile had gone. “What the devil are you doing on a trail blocked by Sitting Bull and near a thousand red Indians on the warpath? Don’t you know suicide when you stare it in the face?”

IT was the girl who answered: “My husband is a scout at Fort Buford. He has been wounded. The post surgeon wrote me. He says Tom will get well if he can have good care, but there isn’t a soul at Fort Buford to nurse him. So I had to come; and when I got to Fort Rice, I missed the last boat going up. The water is so low the others don’t dare risk the upper river. And so—”

“Doggone if she didn’t run smack into me,” broke in the old man. “Dang it, young lady, I says, if you got money enough to buy a secondhand wagon and a team o’ ponies, I’ll ride you right into Fort Buford. And Baldy—that’s me, you know, and the only name I remember since I got hurted in the head—Baldy is the one man in the West who aint afraid of Injuns. Even Sittin’ Bull is afraid of me, because the old son-of-a-gun owes me twenty dollars. And I kin talk to ’em, too—to hear me talk Sioux, you’d think I was a half-breed.”

“I had just enough to buy the wagon and horses and a little food,” supplemented the girl.

“Yes sir, and now we aint got no time to lose. Giddyap, Apache! Giddyap, Comanche! Doggone ol’ crowbaits, we gotta be movin’ before the Injun summer busts up in a snowstorm.”

“Whoa a minute, Baldy,” the scout’s voice checked the team. “Listen, young lady: Baldy’s a good old cuss, and wouldn’t hurt a flea; but if he weren’t crazier’n a bedbug, he wouldn’t think of going ahead. There are nearly a thousand Sioux around Fort Berthold, and that’s only seventeen miles up the trail. Today, right ahead here, I found where an immigrant family was wiped out. We don’t dare send the mail through even with a guard. I tell you, it’s—”

“Giddyap, Apache! Giddyap, Comanche! Don’t pay no attention to that young squirt, Mrs. Holterman. I fit Injuns before he was born, and I can go through ’em if there’s twice as many as he says.”

AS they rumbled on, and the young mother glanced back under the canvas top to the motionless figure of the scout, her face was troubled. She realized the risk was great; but if she didn’t reach Fort Buford in time, and Tom should die for lack of the care that only she



Illustrated by  
Jeremy Cannon

could give—well, she might as well be dead too. And somehow even though she had come to question the mental balance of her guide, she trusted him. Queer as he was, he knew the plains and their ways.

She watched the scout swing his horse and gallop toward the fort; then she turned to the scene ahead. Nothing appeared—nothing more forbidding than a band of timber hiding the river, a line of bluffs closing in to pinch out the bottomlands over which they moved, and a long file of prairie chickens trotting down the road. Her fears lessened. As she watched the heat-waves shimmering across the plain, curlew circling above the wagon but no sign of a human being, either red or white, her courage returned. Somehow, some way, God would lead them safely through.

The baby was awake now; his head was bumping her shoulder, and his tiny fists pounding against her cheek. Her ancient guide broke into cackling song. . . .

Late in the afternoon they reached the end of the flat. "Bad-lands ahead," announced Baldy, "doggondest country you ever see. But listen! Just to the other side is Fort Berthold, where the Arickara, Mandan and Gros Ventre Injuns live. They don't like a Sioux any better'n a white man does, and we won't see no Sioux until after we pass the Fort. If we see Injuns here, they'll be friends."

A butte jutting out from the north crowded the trail to the edge of the timber. The mother stared wide-eyed at the frowning heights. The trail dipped through a draw to the floor of a bad-lands cañon, and now they were surrounded by naked peaks, streaked with colored clays, splashed with the red of scoria and crossed with glittering bands where sheets of mica lay half imbedded in the clay. Here was a grassy amphitheater and a scene to bring back vividly the warning of the scout. Rounding a shoulder of the cañon wall, the horses shied and lunged ahead.

"Whoa, you sons-o'-guns!" shrilled the driver. "What the devil is in ye now?"

**S**OMETHING white lay in the grass by the trail, and from it feather-tipped arrows protruded like the quills of a porcupine. Beyond was the smoldering frame of a prairie schooner, and another huddled form bristling with arrows. Smoke still rose from the charred

remains of a wagon. Then the horrified gaze of the girl was called from the scene about her to trouble closer at hand. One of the horses, frantic at the sight and stench of death, leaped against his mate. With a splintering crash, the wagon-tongue gave way, to hang from the hounds and neck-yoke supported only by a handful of slivers.

"Cæsar's ghost!" exclaimed the driver. "We're in a mess now fer fair."

"Hurry, please hurry!" cried the girl—she had seen another naked form, a tiny one like that which she clutched against her breast. "Take us out of this awful place."

The driver scratched the shiny spot on his head. "Can't go nowheres with a busted tongue; gotta fix the danged thing first."

"But won't it hold just a little way? We can't stay in this horrible place!"

"Maybe it will," admitted the old man hopefully. "This coulee leads nowheres and gets there fast. I camped here once. But there's a spring and a mite o' grass around the bend. You take the lines, and I'll lead the ponies, an' maybe we can get off the trail far enough to be out o' sight."

Very slowly, the front wheels wobbling in every direction but straight ahead, they made their way along the cañon until the curving wall cut off the scene behind. There they found the spring and made camp.

Rummaging in the jockey-box, the old man grunted with satisfaction as he produced, one after another, an ax, a brace and bit.

"I'm half cracked in the head, all right, but not enough so I go wandering around this God-forsaken country without tools enough to build a wagon-tongue."

**A** MOMENT later, as the girl prepared a bed for her baby under the wagon, she heard a commotion and an outburst of cackling in the brush.

"Good Lord Almighty! Mrs. Holter—come here and see what I found in the bushes, just like a full-grown Moses in the weeds!"

Running to his side, the girl peered under the trees—and shuddered: There, half covered with ants and flies, lay the hideously painted form of an Indian warrior. Where the sun struck through the leaves the copper-colored skin shimmered like the coils of some giant serpent. The ferocious face surmounted by a headdress of porcupine quills and eagle

feathers, black with the paint of war and grotesque with the varicolored checks and signs of Indian secret societies, was a thing of terror. The eyes, half closed, seemed charged with hatred.

"By cracky," cried the excited guide, "here's where I gets me a scalp! I aint seen such a chance since the year of the big snow."

He swung the ax above his head.

**T**HE eyelids of the warrior trembled. Unmistakable hatred flared in their depths. To the girl, the expression on the Indian's face was dreadful, but the powerful arms merely twitched. He seemed unable to move.

"Don't," she cried, grasping the upraised arm. "That would be murder!"

As she cried out, she thought of the bloated forms back there in the grass, of the arrows quivering in the breeze, of the tiny body by the crimson flower on the alkali. For an instant hatred flamed in her as well. But she saw a wound over the Indian's temple, and a trickle of blood.

"No! *No!*" she cried again as Baldy tried to shake loose the upraised arm. "You can't do that."

"It aint half what he'd do to us if he had the chance. Look what he done to them folks back there on the trail."

"I know; but that doesn't make any difference. We're white people, not murderers. Get me a towel from under the seat, and a pail of water from the spring."

She knelt by the side of the stricken Indian. Repressing a shudder, she brushed away the flies and ants. Wondering at her own courage, she asked, as gently as she could: "Can you understand English?"

The warrior turned his head to show a cheek seamed and furrowed by a long scar. Evidently it was a memento of an old wound, but it added nothing to his beauty. Then his head rolled back again. The eyes focused on her, and she recoiled in spite of herself. He drew in his breath, and it escaped with a sound like the hiss of an angry snake. But he said nothing.

Baldy returned. He stood over them muttering, "Danged foolishness—chicken-hearted female," and, "Maybe he is the same red devil that cracked me on the head." Handing the pail and towel to the girl, the old man propped himself against a tree and gnawed off a chew of tobacco. "Son-of-a-gun's more'n six feet tall, so he's probably a Sioux."



The girl worked steadily. With deft hands, she bathed the warrior's head and face, removing the clay pigments with their grotesque markings, and wiping away the dried blood from the bruise beneath his temple.

"That's where he's hurted," announced Baldy. "He got it on the noddle, the same as I did. But I betcha his skull aint cracked, at that. If I'm any good at readin' signs and figgerin', here's what happened: He was one of the war-party what killed these people in the wagons. While they was still lootin' the outfit, along comes some Arickara Injuns and jumps astraddle of the Sioux. There's a running fight, and some Arickara catches up with this Sioux as he's tryin' to take cover in the brush, here, and cracks him one with his war-club. Prob'ly some Sioux got after the 'Rickara 'bout then, so this feller weren't scalped. He—"

"Get that buffalo robe to make him a bed, and a blanket to put under his head," commanded the girl. "I don't believe he was more than dazed, anyway. All he needs is water and food and rest."

"Maybe," said Baldy; "but I aint trustin' no Injun to lie still. Here's where I put his war-club and knife where he can't do no harm, an' if you won't let me finish him as he deserves, there's one thing certain: one of us has gotta stay awake all night, or we'll be like those people back there."

Later, while the old man stood by with the buffalo gun across his arm, the girl fed the Indian broth from a rabbit Baldy had shot along the road. She tried to talk with him again, but either he could not understand or he would not answer; nor was there the slightest sign of gratitude in his eyes.

"Scalp us both right now, if he had a chance," growled Baldy. "What you do for an Injun is throwed away."

**I**N the gathering dusk they left the warrior alone. When night had come, it was the girl who kept watch while the old man slept. His rest was more important than hers, for there was the wagon-tongue yet to be fashioned, and nearly two hundred miles of trail lay ahead; and she could sleep as they traveled.

Leaning against a folded buffalo robe, her baby in a bundle by her side, she began her watch. At first it was a nerve-racking ordeal. Strange creatures moved, or seemed to move, in the dark-



Chief  
Circling Hawk

ness about her. Fireflies hovered about the spring, their weird light often flashing without warning directly before her eyes. Once, when a pair of them glowed side by side, it was only when they died out simultaneously and a shadow formed silently across her field of vision that she recognized the presence of a great cat, a cougar surveying the camp.

The rising moon eased her nervous tension. Its light, slanting through the peaks and cañons, drew a vast pattern of brilliant lights and soft shadows, areas where barren clay and mica glared and sparkled, and others where the trees of the present rose in gloomy grandeur from the prostrate forms of their petrified ancestors. Here the mysterious moving shadows either faded out or were translated into less awesome creatures of the bad-lands. Jackrabbits moved with a degree of dignity before her eyes; cotton-tails scampered about; a file of antelope crossed phantom-like in the distance; a mother skunk came along the cañon floor followed by a rippling train of black and white, a half-grown brood in her wake.

The moon sailed clear of the hills, and something glittered in the grass behind the wagon. She recognized it as the long, curved blade of the warrior's knife lying where Baldy had tossed it. Be-

side it a bunch of feathers lay against a sage bush. These, she knew, were attached to the war-club where it lay across the barrel of the Indian's rifle. She turned and glanced at the brush where the Indian lay. There was nothing to arouse suspicion.

The hours were long; and toward dawn they dragged out interminably. A cloud floated across the moon. Her head drooped, and the cool breath of the dawn breeze carried her away to sleep. Then suddenly she was wide awake. Something moved by the pile of weapons. Her hand closed convulsively under the trigger guard of her rifle, and a tongue of flame leaped toward the moving object.

Instantly, Baldy was on his feet. "Gimme the gun!" he roared. "I'll fix that red son-of-a-gun this time so he'll stay fixed."

But the warrior leaped swiftly away toward the trees, carrying his recaptured weapons. As Baldy stood by the wagon, jamming a cartridge into the rifle, something came through the air with a gentle hiss and a dull thud. The knife had returned, to quiver half buried in the wagon-box by the old man's head. After it came a series of high-pitched words carrying a threat in every syllable. Evidently, Baldy understood enough of the Dakota language to comprehend. "So the sun won't come up on another day for us?" he mimicked. "Take *that* before it comes up this time," he yelled, sending a bullet crashing into the trees where the Indian had disappeared.

"Quick!" cried the girl. "Down here! Get down flat. He'll shoot now!"

"No, he won't," yelled the old man, firing again into the trees. "His shells fitted my gun, and before he shoots anybody, he'll have to dig up some more ammunition."

**D**AY broke over a scene as peaceful as if there were no such thing as death lurking among the hills. Baldy worked feverishly on the new wagon-tongue. By mid-forenoon he had it in place, rough and a trifle crooked, but strong.

"If that crowbait of a horse wants to get up and dance on that, let him dance," he said. "Here's where we take the road again."

Near noon, they passed Fort Berthold, Baldy giving the stockade a wide berth, and eying it as if he expected another scout or perhaps a party of soldiers to cut short their expedition.

On the flat north of the post, the trail passed through the Arickara pony herd, grazing quietly; and although the girl saw nothing to proclaim a stage of siege, the better-trained eyes of the old man traced a line of lookouts posted on the bluffs farther to the north.

Baldy was still grumbling. "Doggone lucky we got out o' that mess as well as we did. If you'd let me put an end to that red devil the way I should of, we wouldn't have had him out in the hills there plottin' revenge."

"Revenge for what?"

"Revenge for seein' his godermighty pride flat on its back, revenge for making him scurry into the brush like a skeered rabbit, revenge for everything an Injun wants revenge for! Whatever it is, you bet yer boots, he's out there somewhere makin' bad medicine for us!"

**S**UNDOWN found them on the crest of a divide where the trail dipped into a timber-choked coulee. Here the old man checked the team and pointed. "See the river windin' away over there north of where the sun's goin' down?"

The woman shaded her eyes and gazed earnestly into the northwest.

"How far can we see? Can we see Fort Buford?"

"You can see about sixty miles," replied Baldy, "and the Fort's as fer again. That's our trail winding along the river like a fish-line somebody dropped on the ground."

They drove down into the valley and camped by a spring among the trees.

Baldy turned the team loose to feed. As they lunched, a party of mounted warriors passed on the trail, but they were going west, and the old man said without hesitation that the travelers were Arickaras.

Later in the afternoon, gunshots sounded along the bluffs.

"Got a notion," he said, "this might be a good time to keep out o' sight until maybe about midnight."

With evening, more warriors came from the east. They came in small groups, scattering out through the hills as they advanced.

"Mostly they sleep all day and fight at night," commented Baldy. "Anyway, we're safe behind 'em, and we'll be clean through the outfit before daylight."

Near dusk, however, a fresh outburst of firing along the bluffs heralded something close to a major engagement, and the Arickara outpost fell back down-

When the chieftain removed the blanket, a puff of smoke leaped skyward. Presently, far above their heads, a series of puffs and dashes climbed on the morning air.



river, leaving the travelers in a sort of temporary no-man's-land.

Baldy brought a pail of water from the spring and doused the fire.

"Aint no time to point to ourselves with smoke," he said; and immediately he went to catch the horses, and tied them securely to the jockey-box.

"Now listen," he began, squatting beside the wagon and loading the buffalo gun: "as far as the Injuns ahead of us is concerned, they don't know we're here. An' what's more, Sioux Injuns don't like timber, because they're natural-born horsebackers. Between that and the fact that these bushes is liable to be full

o' Mandans, it aint likely no Sioux will be botherin' us except for that big murderer you went and turned loose to tell 'em about us."

"But still, I don't see why he should harm us after we were kind to him."

"Piffle," snorted Baldy. "That devil would be the first one to poke a knife through our ribs. Whoever ever heard of an Injun rememberin' anythin' good done for him? An' you can bet your bottom dollar that scar-faced scoundrel knows where we is. An' so while I crawl under the wagon and take a little snooze, you take this here gun, and don't let anybody get the jump on us. If they try it, and we can hold 'em off a minute, we'll have plenty o' help from our Injun friends on the top of the bluff."

Baldy rolled himself in a blanket. Stretching out under the wagon with his folded jacket for a pillow, he was asleep almost instantly.

Evelyn Holterman sat in the shadow of the wagon; beside her the baby lay wrapped in his blanket, like Baldy. Back of her a spring, and a bad-land mire-hole, precluded the approach of enemies from that direction; and the moon, now floating above the hills, made the scene ahead as light as day.

From somewhere in the trees a wild pigeon cooed, but aside from that, the bad-lands lay silent under the cold moonlight. She remembered something Baldy had said at their first camp out of Fort Rice: "When honest coyotes aint singin', there's probably two-legged coyotes around." And there was something in the strange silence which seemed to beat against the soul of the nervous girl like the roar of waves on rocks.

THE hours dragged on; still she saw nothing to fear. She felt easier as a cottontail hopped into the open, squatted in a gray ball and nibbled at stems of buckbrush. Surely the little fellow would know if danger were near. The thought quieted her nerves for the time being, but another thought—the rifle across her lap must be sighted directly at the rabbit, and he didn't know enough to be afraid—set her nerves again a-jitter.

The turtle-dove cooed on; the branches of a cottonwood stirred, and an owl soared over the wagon. She looked up to see orange eyes like those of a cat staring down at her; then the bird was gone into the night. . . . Suddenly a horrid scream broke sharply on the still air. It came from the south, a shrill quavering cry, long-drawn and nerve-racking. She never had heard a war-cry, but this could be nothing else. Then came the sound of running horses, a chorus of blood-curdling cries, and silence.

And now at last there came over her a full realization of the insane thing she was doing. She had listened to a well-meaning old lunatic. She had believed, because she was so anxious to get to her husband, what she wanted to believe. But now she knew that she was simply a woman alone with a harmless old man, facing dangers which, as the scout had said, were too serious even for soldiers. She had brought her baby onto a regular battlefield.

UNDECIDED, she sat still. Daylight must come soon. Already the moon hung in the west, and she moved the baby and herself back to keep within the shadow of the wagon.

The silence was more depressing than ever. It seemed as if the hills must be filled with stealthy enemies.

She watched the rabbit as he hopped across the clearing to the trunk of a fallen cottonwood. He paused there, lifted his ears, stood upright for an instant—leaped into the brush and disappeared. A slender thing of black and white bands rose slowly above the log. The girl sat rigid, every muscle tensed. She recognized it, even in the moonlight. It was a cluster of feathers apparently growing from the log. The base of the cluster appeared, broad and black, two glittering eyes, a hideously painted face lined on one side with the white of a jagged scar. She pressed the trigger. The rifle flared flame and a cloud of smoke. A shower of bark flew from the log. Then the smoke drifted aside. There was nothing to see, nothing to hear but the voice of Baldy on his knees beside her.

"Sufferin' cats, what was it?"

"Hush!" She hastily reloaded the rifle. "Hurry—hitch up the horses! That terrible Indian was behind the log."

Baldy grasped the rifle, cocked it and strode to the log. There was nothing in sight.

"Hurry," commanded the girl. "I know now, we must turn back. We can't go on in the face of certain death, not even for Tom. I've got to think of my baby too. Give me the rifle, and I'll watch while you hitch up."

The old man protested, but she cut him short. "No talking—we must get back to Fort Berthold."

The expedition had changed leaders. Baldy hitched up and climbed to the seat. Evelyn Holterman lifted the baby into the wagon and climbed over the

wheel, turning to watch the rear of the wagon, the rifle grasped firmly in her hands. Baldy muttered and swore, but the wagon lurched ahead; and as dawn broke over the valley, they reached the top of the bluff. But there they came to a sudden halt; for every coulee, every brush-patch and every knoll seemed to pour forth Indians. The air trembled with yells and cries. Feathers streaming, naked bodies glowing like polished copper in the dawn, with war-clubs whirling and dust rising in clouds, a horde of Sioux circled about them.

Arrows rattled against the canvas like hail. A war-club hissed through the air, sweeping Baldy's hat across the prairie. Then as the warriors realized the helplessness of their prey, they ceased their circling and gathered in a close-packed ring around the luckless travelers.

"Shoot 'em! Shoot 'em!" roared Baldy, standing up and shaking his old fist in the faces of the foe. But the girl had dropped the rifle to gather her baby in her arms. "Give me the rifle. I'll paste them myself." But a hand with a grip of steel pulled Baldy to the ground and held him helpless. Another reached for the baby, and for the first time, Evelyn screamed.

Suddenly something like an earthquake burst among the Indians. They staggered and parted under the impact of a heavy body cleaving their ranks. The warrior grasping the baby loosed his hold and fell sprawling. Evelyn Holterman had one glimpse of a scar-faced giant, arm upraised, brandishing a feathered war-club. Feeling that death had come, she closed her eyes. But the blow did not fall. When she looked again, the giant warrior stood with his back to her. He held her baby under one arm; the war-club swept in a semi-circle, forcing the Indians away. And she heard his voice high and commanding, driving warriors to their horses.

"My Gawd!" exclaimed Baldy at her elbow. "That Injun dropped me like a hot potato. And look at 'em now—they're worse skeered o' him than we was o' them!"

IT was true. The Indians were streaming away into the east—all but two. The giant had called one of their number, a young warrior, to his side. For a moment, they conversed, and then the younger man turned to the girl.

"Chief Circling Hawk says he is your friend. He says you were good to him."

"You speak English!" exclaimed the girl in amazement.

"I have been away to school among the white men," said the young man. "I am the brother of Circling Hawk. Now, our chief says you are to come with us to the top of the hill, and he will show you something of the red man's medicine."

With a single glance of hatred toward Baldy, Circling Hawk led the way toward the hilltop.

The girl, carrying the baby, followed the younger warrior.

ON the summit of the peak the chieftain stopped. The youth had broken off a dead buffalo-berry bush; now he knelt, breaking the dry wood into small pieces. The kindling ignited readily, and when the warrior covered the fire with sand grass, a column of dense white smoke climbed vertically into the still air.

The minutes crept by. Circling Hawk gazed steadily into the west. Finally the chief spoke. The younger man stood erect, and touching the arm of the girl, pointed silently. Far up the river valley another column of smoke climbed against the sky.

Stooping, the youth rolled a bunch of creeping cedar over the crackling flame. The column turned to oily blue, climbing up and up until finally, caught in an air-current, it swept away toward the rising sun.

The chieftain took a red blanket from his shoulder and spread it wide across the fire to cut the blue column sharply at its base. When he removed the blanket, a puff of smoke leaped skyward. Presently, far above their heads, a series of puffs and dashes climbed on the morning air.

Again the young man touched the arm of the girl and pointed. "Look now, and you can see the answer written on the sky."

"What does it mean?" the woman asked.

"It means," said the youth, "that Circling Hawk does not forget the kindness of a friend. It means the way to Fort Buford is open, and if you meet our people on the way, you will be among friends."

Later, as the wagon rumbled into the west, the girl looked back. The figures on the bluff had disappeared, but a blue serpent of smoke still hung against the sky.



LIEUTENANT EDWARD DAVID, lounging in the living-room of the barracks of the Black Horse Troop, New York State Police, emerged from the depths of a newspaper with a muttered: "Hurmph!"

Whereupon Lieutenant James Crosby looked up from a magazine long enough to inquire:

"Got the misery again?"

Mr. David, disregarding this interest in his health, folded the paper and handed it to Mr. Crosby.

"Recognize that man?"

Mr. Crosby, even before glancing at the picture, waved a hand airily.

"Certainly. That's Mr. Sims, of Seattle. If you would take that memory-course, you would be able to astound your friends, the way I do. I would give you my books, but I can't remember where I put them."

"Cut the clowning," came the command from Mr. David, who because he was about as large as it is possible for one man to be, bore the nickname of Tiny. "Take a look at that picture."

Mr. Crosby examined the picture of a tall, slender man, standing in what appeared to be a ballroom. The man in the picture was wearing conventional evening clothes, but a mask, which evidently had covered his eyes, had slipped, and he was endeavoring to replace it.

Mr. Crosby read the caption aloud:

"Masked Dance Wizard Unveils—Rolph Countain, the masked marvel of the dancing world, won the applause of society in an exhibition at the exclusive Surf Beach Club yesterday. Nothing unusual about that, for Countain's nimble feet have made him America's No. 1 dancing man. But the mask he insists upon wearing, and which has earned his title, slipped. Cameras clicked. And was Mr. Countain sore? We ask you!"

"I," declared Mr. Crosby, "can answer all questions. Judging from the picture, Mr. Countain was sore. Regarding your inquiry: the man in the picture is Rolph Countain, the masked marvel of the dance world. I am quick like that." He regarded the room at large. "Has anybody else any problems concerning af-

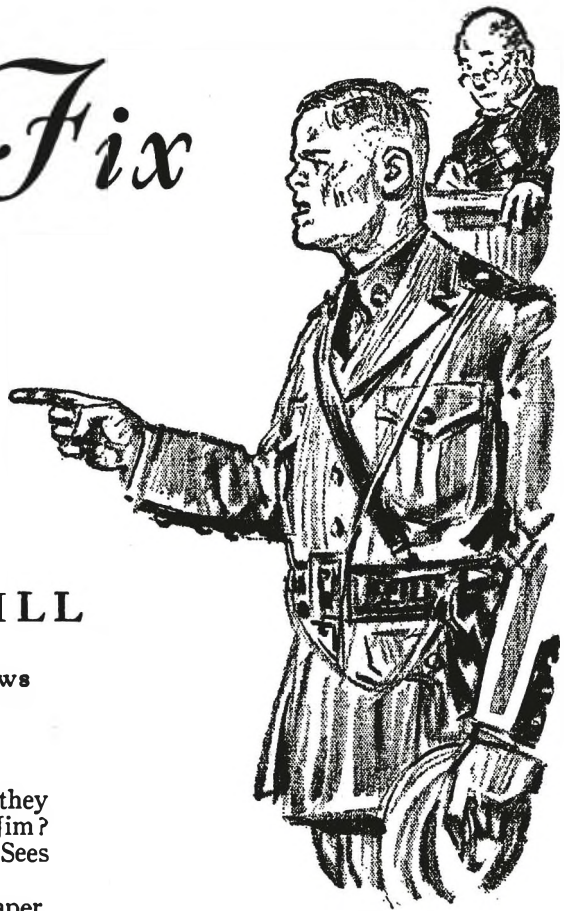
# Swell Fix

*Tiny David and the State police deal with a curious case after their own peculiar fashion.*

By

ROBERT R. MILL

Illustrated by Monte Crews



fairs of the heart, or otherwise, they would like to submit to old Uncle Jim? Seven years on the same corner. Sees all, knows all—and tells all.”

Mr. David recovered the newspaper, and brushed the persiflage aside.

“If it is of any interest to you, I have a hunch that Rolph Countain is a punk we once knew as Deke Hobay.”

Mr. Crosby gave a start of surprise, and his face colored.

“To save you the trouble of brushing up on your memory-course,” Tiny David continued, “I’ll point out that Mr. Hobay was one of the boys who staged a railroad station robbery here about five years ago. They made their get-away in two cars. Your Uncle Tiny chased one of them. It went out of control on Pine Hill, and the two boys in it did their explaining in another world.”

Mr. Crosby’s face was enlivened by a rather sickly grin.

“The other two boys,” Tiny David continued, “had the good fortune to do their explaining to old Uncle Jim, who stopped them some distance down the line. Uncle Jim’s powers must have been on the wane that night, because they—one of them was Deke Hobay—told Uncle Jim that they were nice, harmless boys, engaged in lawful business, and he waved them on. Later, when we found clothing and other junk in the wrecked car, that had Hobay’s name on it, Uncle Jim’s face was very red. Almost as red as it is

now. But it was too late, for Deke had vanished. This—if it is Deke—is the first trace—”

“All that,” interrupted Mr. Crosby, “is ancient history. Old Uncle Jim just had an off night. As I said in my last fireside chat, ‘Let us look to the future.’” He jerked a thumb toward the newspaper. “Gimme.”

He studied the picture.

“That might be Deke Hobay.” Then, after more study, “It is Deke Hobay! You are right!”

“Your Uncle Tiny,” said Mr. David, with some smugness, “is always right.”

Mr. Crosby’s morale had reached such a low ebb that he allowed this claim to go unchallenged.

“RIGHT about ten per cent of the time!” came the retort from an unexpected source.

They looked up to see Captain Charles Field, commanding officer of the troop, who was looking over their shoulders, and who had been an interested listener for several minutes.

“So you are both satisfied that Rolph Countain is Deke Hobay?” Captain Field seated himself, and lighted a cigar. “That’s fine. But assume this is Hobay.



Upon arrival in New York, Mr. Countain drew a gallery of reporters, photographers and autograph-seekers that would have delighted the heart of a moving-picture star. Mr. Countain was most gracious.

Assume you bring him back. Then what? What kind of a case are you boys prepared to offer?"

Tiny David accepted the challenge:

"Testimony of Crosby that Hobay was in an automobile near the scene of the crime on the night of the crime. Jim won't look so hot, but we can't help that.

"We nabbed Cornay, the guy with Hobay, about two months later. We went light on him because it was his first offense, and he isn't a bad chap. He finished his time several years ago. Last I heard of him he was in the Middle West somewhere. We can find him. He will swear Hobay was an accomplice, and will identify him. It is the testimony of an accomplice, and not enough alone, but we can tie it in.

"I'll testify about finding Hobay's clothes in the other car.

"The testimony of the victims won't mean much, because the robbers were masked. But Hobay's build is rather striking, and at the same time we can get home to the jury the fact that he specializes in masks—while robbing railroad-stations, and while dancing."

Tiny David pondered.

"Wait a minute. There will be no question of identity. We have Hobay's prints on file. He was mixed up in a petty-larceny job before the hotel deal." Tiny David leaned back with an air of triumph. "How about it, sir?"

**CAPTAIN FIELD** took his time about answering.

"In the first place," he began, "all this happened five years ago. Ancient history, as Crosby said. Since that time, the guy has made good, apparently, under an-



other name. To all intents and purposes, he has been on the level, giving a defense attorney a splendid chance to pull the old *Jean Valjean* gag, if some judge doesn't beat him to it.

"Furthermore," Captain Field continued, warming to his subject, "thanks to Crosby's off night, we hardly shine in this deal. That gives the defense a chance to make the jury forget the defendant and try a cop. There is nothing the average jury likes better than to try a cop."

Captain Field devoted his attention to his cigar for a moment.

"If you birds read the papers beyond the comics, you would know you have a lot more grief coming. This guy can dance just a little better than anybody else. He has made a lot of friends—society people, show people and others in the picture-cards. He has been in the right place for it—in Florida. They will go to the bat for him, particularly when it means publicity for the gent trying to help a poor boy who is being picked on by these mean cops. Think that over."

Captain Field cleared his throat.

"I have been following this guy in the papers. To begin with, he has the stuff. He went to the right place. Society's winter playground gave him a chance to get in with the right people. He was able to do it. The mask and the air of mystery only helped. Do you get the possibilities?"

Tiny David nodded assent.

"Other people have, too," Captain Field continued. "The other day I saw a paragraph that Steve Crulutz had signed up Countain and will manage him. Officially, Steve is a promoter, night-club proprietor and man-about-town. We know he is one of the leading gangsters, and as such, just the sort of bird Countain would tie up with. But even the Federal people never have been able to prove it. So that's out.

"But get this: Steve knows he has plenty of dough in Countain. If he beats this rap, the publicity will make him even more valuable. Steve probably will be glad to see it go to a showdown, because then he can bring Countain out in the open, throw away the mask and rake in money in a big way. With the mask gone, there are motion-pictures, stage shows, radio and other angles, in addition to exhibitions.

"And don't think Steve will content himself with praying while the trial is on. That guy owns politicians. He has strings on judges, and he pulls them. He

and his mob make a specialty of hostile witnesses. They buy them up, and they go sour on you on the stand, or they just disappear. Now what do you think of your chances?"

Tiny David grinned.

"Not so hot," he admitted. Then he brightened. "There is only one witness we have to be afraid of. That's Cornay, the accomplice. Before we make the pinch, we'll pick him up and put him away in some nice quiet jail as a material witness."

Captain Field snorted his disdain.

"What jail?" he demanded. "Know any turnkey that couldn't use a lot of money? If you do, put Cornay with him. Because Cornay's turnkey is going to have a chance to turn down a lot of jack for admitting a visitor. It won't be Countain, and it won't be Steve. But the visitor will carry Steve's money. Cornay will take it, and he will earn it. I can't say that I blame him. He will be told that he will take it—or else. He will know that Steve doesn't bluff."

Captain Field beamed upon his listeners. "Your chances don't look so good, do they?"

Mr. Crosby gave a wry nod. "Old Uncle Jim," he admitted, "is having another bad night. He has nothing to offer."

Mr. David, however, was deep in thought.

"The Captain," he declared, "has been doing some very high-grade thinking. Seems like a pity to let it go to waste. Much better use it to our own advantage. If it please the Captain, will he and old Uncle Jim join me in the office? Uncle Tiny has had his semi-annual thought."

THE stock-market was dull. The political situation was quiet. The unofficial wars of the world raged on, but the public was getting tired of them. That insured plenty of room on the front pages for the Countain case.

The case broke when Mr. Crosby, wearing conservative gray tweeds, arrived at a Florida resort bearing a warrant for the arrest of Deke Hobay, alias Rolph Countain.

His first call was at the police station.

A surprised desk sergeant referred Mr. Crosby to a lieutenant. That official, in turn, passed him on to a captain. The captain heard the story, examined the warrant, and then excused himself. After conferring with higher powers, he returned to announce the verdict.

"This bird is important people," the captain commented.

Mr. Crosby, resisting the impulse to make use of the bromide that the big ones fall harder, contented himself with a modest smile.

"He has even more important people behind him," continued the captain.

Mr. Crosby held in a snappy answer more worthy of himself, and allowed the modest smile to continue.

"You'll never make it stick," declared the captain.

"Perhaps not," Mr. Crosby admitted. "But it is our job to try."

"It is a cinch this guy won't waive extradition. His pals will turn the heat on the State officials, and you'll find it hard to get action. Then where will you be?"

"Right here," said Mr. Crosby.

The captain shrugged his massive shoulders.

"I'll go with you to serve the warrant. But it's your party. You might give me a break by pointing that out to the newspaper boys. They pay clowns big money in this man's town, but not if they are on the police force."

"It will be a pleasure," Mr. Crosby promised.

The warrant was served on the dancer. Mr. Countain, after the first shock wore off, gave an interview studded with references to "hick cops" and "clowns." He refused to waive extradition. His friends did turn the heat on, and there were delays in obtaining the necessary papers. Mr. Crosby marked time.

Came a night when two things happened. Mr. Crosby improved his time by visiting a supper-club, where he was recognized and hissed roundly. Mr. Countain reversed his stand. He admitted he was Deke Hobay, but declared he was innocent of the crime with which Hobay was charged. He also announced that he was willing to return with Crosby and establish his innocence.

**A** GOSSIP column in a local newspaper contained an item the next day: "Steve Crulotz, promoter and night-club owner, is in our midst. Howaryuh, Steve?"

That may, or may not, have explained the change in Mr. Countain.

The trip North passed without incident. Mr. Countain was an agreeable companion. It was coincidence, of course, that Steve Crulotz was on the same train, but occupying a compartment in a different car.

The Washington papers, which were taken aboard the train, carried an item to the effect that the New York State Police had arrested one Jud Cornay in a neighboring town. Mr. Cornay, according to the police, was wanted as a material witness in the now celebrated Countain case. Mr. Cornay, the story stated, had offered to return to New York State and identify Mr. Hobay, alias Mr. Countain, as his partner in crime. The troopers were quoted as saying that when they returned Mr. Cornay to New York State, he would be lodged safely, pending Mr. Countain's trial, in some nice strong jail. They refused to say which jail.

**U**PON arrival in New York, Mr. Countain drew a gallery of reporters, photographers and autograph-seekers that would have delighted the heart of a moving-picture star. Mr. Countain was most gracious as he protested his innocence. He made no references to "hick cops." He even went out of his way to point out that Mr. Crosby merely was doing his duty.

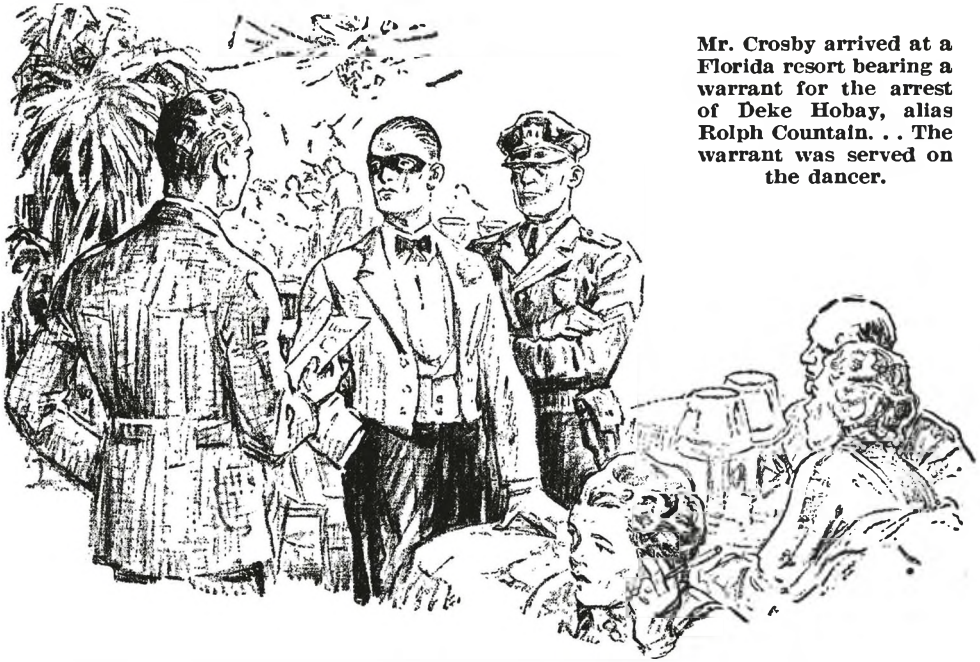
The boys and girls departed with the general feeling that Mr. Countain was a good guy, that he probably was guilty, but that much water had passed under the dam, and that he now was going straight, so what the hell?

That sentiment, which was transferred to type, was very evident in Deerville, when Mr. Countain was arraigned the following day. The judge verified Captain Field's prediction by referring to Mr. Countain as "a modern *Jean Valjean*." He addressed Mr. Countain as "sir." Surf Beach, he declared in eloquent tones, was "that distant clime in which this young man appears to have conducted himself admirably, and I may say, even with some distinction." What was more to the point, he set bail at a low figure, which was furnished promptly.

Mr. Countain was all smiles as he departed. He graciously signed autograph-books. He declared he wasn't quite sure where he would pass the time until he went to trial, five weeks later.

Then the Countain case disappeared from the front pages, pending that trial. City editors made a note in their "future" files. Various star reporters looked forward with pleasure to a week in the mountains. The public more or less forgot Mr. Countain. . . .

Mountdale is about two hundred miles from Deerville. Mountdale had a weekly newspaper, published by a youth who also



Mr. Crosby arrived at a Florida resort bearing a warrant for the arrest of Deke Hobay, alias Rolph Countain. . . The warrant was served on the dancer.

acted as correspondent for various city papers, and who lived in the hope that sooner or later the town would furnish a Page One sensation. On this particular morning the youth encountered Sergeant Henry Linton, an old friend, with whom he exchanged greetings.

"What do you know?" asked the youth.

"Less than that," countered Mr. Linton.

"What brings you here?" demanded the youth.

Mr. Linton hesitated. "This and that."  
"Such as?"

Again Mr. Linton hesitated.

"Brought you a boarder." His thumb indicated the county jail near by. The youth displayed added interest, whereupon Mr. Linton hastened to add, "Just routine stuff."

"What's his trouble?"

Mr. Linton appeared to reach a decision.

"If I tip you off to something, will you cover me up?"

The youth made fervent promises.

"The guy I just booked," continued Mr. Linton, "is Jud Cornay, the chief witness in the Countain case."

"Good *night!*" came the exclamation from the youth.

"The very best minds in the outfit," continued Mr. Linton, "have been making a lot of hocus-pocus over this guy. Deep secrecy, and all that bunk. Gives you a pain in the neck. He's in jail, isn't he? What's going to hurt him?"

The youth nodded eagerly.

"You have always played ball with us," Mr. Linton went on. "Maybe you can grab off a line or two of space on this. But cover me up. And cover the sheriff. Just say in the story that 'it has been reliably learned,' or something like that. Don't quote anybody. And if anybody wants to know where you got your dope, you tell 'em it came from a reporter on the World Almanac. Get me?"

"Right," the youth promised. "Thanks a lot."

Mr. Linton waved that aside, and after delivering a dissertation on the foolish ways of the best minds, so-called, he went on his way.

THREE days later there was a conference in the living-room of a luxurious hotel-suite. Steve Crulutz sat at the head of the table. The room was cool, but he had removed his coat, thereby displaying a tailored shirt, which bore an elaborate monogram just above the left cuff. Mr. Crulutz was very proud of his shirts.

Mr. Countain sat at Mr. Crulutz' right. He was thick-set, rather youthful in appearance.

The third occupant of the room was one Samuel Blatkin, whose diploma should have contained the notation, "*Courtesy of the carelessness of the Bar Association.*" Mr. Blatkin had large shoulders, and a small birdlike head, which darted from side to side.

Also present was one Terry Blootby, known to his associates as "the G-Man." Mr. Blootby, it should be explained, had no connection with Mr. Hoover's organization. In the underworld, a thousand dollars is a grand, or a G. Mr. Blootby spoke in large sums, and when acting for Mr. Crulotz, often dealt in them. Hence the name.

Mr. Crulotz had the floor:

"You got to be practical. If this was happening in our own backyard, we could have the right guy call on the judge, or the district attorney. But it aint. And them hick officials is hard to call on. They are so dumb they aint learned to play nice."

Mr. Crulotz heaved a deep sigh because of this sorry state of affairs.

"Another angle," he continued, "is the jury. But as soon as they is the jury, they is locked up. And until they is the jury, they's just a bunch of a hundred or more hicks. That is a lot of hicks to see. Some that you did see would do you no good. And being hicks, and not knowing how to play, every one of them is dangerous to see. So that's out."

Mr. Crulotz sighed again.

"The only angle left is the witnesses. And here we gets a break. The only guy that can hurt us is this so-and-so Cornay, and he is the only guy we can see. They had him on ice, but thanks to some hick newspaper guy, we knows where he can be had."

Mr. Crulotz turned to Mr. Countain.

"What sort of a guy is Cornay?" he demanded.

"Yellow," was Mr. Countain's verdict. "Big and yellow. Let me at that guy for ten minutes, and he'll sing the tune we want. I'll—"

Mr. Crulotz registered an emphatic objection.

"You aint going to get at him. You aint going to get near enough to him to tell is he white or black. That is where Blootby comes in."

MR. CRULOTZ addressed Mr. Blootby, who brightened at the thought of money to be distributed.

"You eases up to this here Moundale, and sees the sheriff, or a turnkey. You is a relative of this Cornay, and you wants to see him. You wants to see him five grand worth. If it came to a showdown, you might even be willing to go to ten grand to see him."

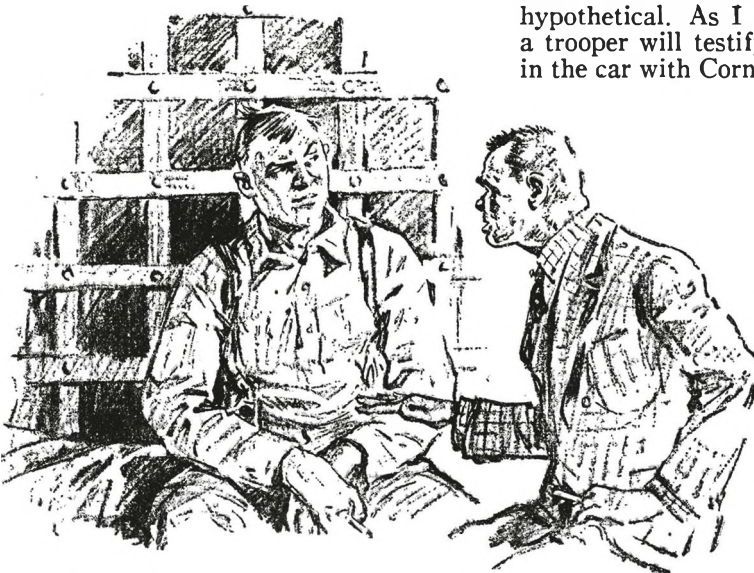
Mr. Blootby's interest increased with the figure.

"But that aint going to be necessary," Mr. Crulotz continued. "For five grand, the average hick sheriff would burn the jail. So get that pleased look off your pan. You aint going to knock down five grand on me."

Mr. Blootby wilted, and Mr. Crulotz turned to Mr. Blatkin.

"Here is where you earn some of that jack that has been flowing your way. What tune does we want this here Cornay to sing?"

Mr. Blatkin cleared his throat noisily. "Naturally, as a member of the bar, I cannot countenance the coaching of a witness." His head darted from side to side. "What I am about to say is purely hypothetical. As I understand the case, a trooper will testify that Countain was in the car with Cornay after the robbery.



"All right, punk. You got two chances. Here is five grand, and you got another five coming when Countain is sprung. Play wise, and what do you get? A one-way ride!"

Cornay admitted his part in the robbery, and served a relatively short term. He also implicated Countain."

Mr. Blatkin cleared his throat again.

"Mind you, I am not for a minute suggesting that Cornay be advised what he is to testify. I am merely stating that it would help our case greatly if Cornay should testify that Countain had no part in the robbery, and that he, Cornay, picked Countain up after the robbery took place, and that Countain had no knowledge of the robbery."

Mr. Blatkin closed his eyes, and appeared to be deep in thought.

"In that case," he continued, "my next question would be: 'That is not the testimony you gave previously?' Cornay would answer that it was not, and that previously he had implicated Countain. Then I would say, 'Why did you do that?' It is quite possible that he would answer: 'The troopers told me to tell that story.'"

Mr. Blatkin appeared deeply moved by peridy of this sort.

"My next question would be: 'Did you agree to tell the story they wished told?' It is within the realm of possibility that Cornay might answer: 'Not at first, but they told me they would get me a light sentence if I implicated Countain, and they threatened me if I didn't. At last I agreed, but it is a relief to be able to tell the truth.'"

Mr. Blatkin's head worked overtime.

"Naturally, all this is purely hypothetical."

Mr. Crulotz swung into action.

"Skip the hypos," he ordered. "You two birds get together," he ordered Messrs. Countain and Blootby. "Fix up just where Cornay picked up Countain with the car, and why. Then," he directed Blootby, "you ease up to this here Mountdale and contact Cornay. Slip him five grand. Tell him there is another five when Countain is sprung. The second five comes from me direct, and at that time I checks up to make sure he is got all of the first five."

**O**BVIOUSLY, this precaution pained Mr. Blootby.

"Supposing he don't proposition?" he demanded.

Mr. Crulotz, however, was equal to the occasion.

"He has two chances, ten grand or a one-way ride. Put it up to him cold turkey. On your way!"

Mr. Blootby departed. Three days later he returned.

"Everything is jake," he declared. "This guy says that he could use the jack, but that he is very tired of riding." Mr. Blootby chuckled. "He is sort of a comical cuss," he added.

**T**HE Countain trial got under way with the usual fanfare, and stopped just short of being a legal three-ring circus only because Judge Muth put his foot down firmly. Three full days were devoted to the selection of the jury. The prosecution opened with an outline of what the State would attempt to prove. Then District Attorney Sellers began the parade of his witnesses.

The station-agent and other employes established the fact of the robbery. They were far less potent when it came to identification.

"One of the robbers was of the same build as the defendant, but he wore a mask," was the best they could offer.

Mr. Blatkin, sitting beside Mr. Countain, smiled as he began a very mild cross-examination.

"Lieutenant James Crosby," called the district attorney.

Mr. Crosby took the stand. He was not at his best. He told of stopping a car on the night of the robbery. He said the occupants of that car were the defendant and one Jud Cornay. He admitted that he had questioned the two men, and allowed them to proceed.

Mr. Blatkin winked at Mr. Blootby, who was sitting beside the defense table, before he began the cross-examination.

"You say you allowed the defendant to proceed?" began Mr. Blatkin.

"Yes."

"This defendant didn't look like a criminal to you, did he?"

Mr. Sellers' objection halted the reply, but Mr. Blatkin smiled with triumph. The jury had seen the point. Juror Number Ten returned the smile.

"That's all!" said Mr. Blatkin. His tone and his manner indicated that Mr. Crosby was beneath his notice. Mr. Crosby thankfully made his escape.

The district attorney consulted his notes.

"Lieutenant Edward David."

There was a pause. Sergeant Henry Linton came from the back of the room, and took his stand in an aisle directly behind the defense table. Messrs. Countain, Blatkin and Blootby glanced at him uneasily. Mr. Linton rewarded them with a bland smile, and edged closer to Mr. Blootby.

Mr. Crulotz, who prudently had taken a seat near the door, had a hunch the fresh air would feel good. He always played his hunches. But a man in a blue suit, who stood near the door, apparently had the same idea. He and Mr. Crulotz left the courtroom together.

**T**INY DAVID appeared from the side and faced the clerk to be sworn. His back was toward the defense table. Only when he had seated himself in the witness chair and raised his head was his face visible.

Mr. Blootby gave a gasp of astonishment. The color faded from his face. He started to get up. He saw Mr. Linton beside him, and subsided in his seat.

"That's—" he gasped.

The district attorney turned.

"What did you say?" he demanded.

There was no answer, so he addressed himself to the witness.

Q—Your name?

A—Edward David.

Q—You are a lieutenant in the Black Horse Troop, New York State Police?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—Lieutenant, where have you resided for the last four weeks?

A—The County Jail in Mountdale.

(The spectators murmured with excitement, and Judge Muth pounded for order.)

Q—In what capacity?

A—As an inmate.

(The disturbance increased and Judge Muth threatened to clear the courtroom.)

Q—Under what name were you booked?

A—Jud Cornay.

Q—The Jud Cornay who is listed as a witness for the prosecution in this case?

A—Yes sir.

Mr. Blatkin, face flushed and obviously excited: "Your Honor, I object! This horseplay is irrelevant. This man might call himself Napoleon. He might have himself locked up in Alcatraz. But that has no bearing on the innocence or guilt of my client. I demand—"

Judge Muth, speaking sternly: "Be silent. Your objection is overruled. Proceed, Mr. District Attorney."

Q—Did anything unusual happen during your stay in the County Jail in Mountdale?

A—On the afternoon of May 5th, Sheriff Carson came to my cell and told me I had a visitor, a relative. I said that I would be glad to see him. Sheriff Carson returned with the man, locked

him in my cell, and left us alone, apparently.

Q—What do you mean by the term "apparently"?

A—The cell I occupied is used for observation purposes. It is possible for unseen persons to see and hear what goes on there.

Q—Very well. We will cover that with direct testimony later. Would it be possible for you to identify the man who visited you?

A—Yes sir.

Q—Do you see him in this courtroom?

A—Yes sir.

Q—Will you please point him out to the jury?

Mr. David stood up. Mr. Blootby cowered in his chair, and attempted to cover his face.

District Attorney Sellers: "I am afraid that the jury—"

Mr. Linton reached forward, seized Mr. Blootby by the collar, and yanked him to his feet.

"Here he is, sir."

D. A.—"Thank you, Sergeant."

**J**UDGE MUTH, pounding his gavel to still the laughter, and attempting to hide his own amusement: "That will do very nicely, Sergeant. Proceed, Mr. Sellers."

Q—Do you know the name of your visitor?

A—Terry Blootby. I understand he also is known as "the G-Man."

Q—I presume you had some conversation with Blootby. Tell what was said, in substance, to the jury.

A—We have a stenographic record of the conversation, which will be introduced in evidence by Sergeant Hale. However, I will give an outline: Blootby asked if we were alone. I asked him if he saw a crowd. He said not to get wise because he was Santa Claus. Then he placed a pile of bills on my bunk. Here they are.

Mr. Sellers: "We offer this money in evidence."

Mr. Blatkin: "Now, I object! This witness and this man Blootby may have bought and sold the Empire State Building, but that is not binding upon my client. The indictment we are trying charges robbery, not a Santa Claus act in a county—"

Mr. Sellers: "We will connect this later."

Judge Muth: "Objection is overruled. Proceed."

Q—How much money is in that package?

A—Five thousand dollars.

Q—Will you continue with the conversation?

A—Blootby told me the money was mine. He said all I had to do was to testify that Countain had no part in the robbery. He said I should swear that I met Countain at Springton, and picked him up in my car, and that later we were stopped by the troopers, who allowed us to proceed. He said I should explain my previous story, in which I accused Countain, by swearing the troopers forced me to implicate Countain.

Q—How did he tell you to explain that?

A—He said I should swear that the troopers promised to give me a light sentence if I implicated Countain, and threatened to give me a long term if I didn't.

Q—What did you do?

A—I pretended to hesitate.

Q—What did Blootby do or say?

A—His words, as near as I can remember, were: "All right, punk. You got two chances. Here is five grand, and you got another five coming when Countain is sprung. Play wise, and what do you get? A one-way ride!"

Q—What happened next?

A—I stalled. I asked Blootby why he was interested in this case. I said that I didn't know him, and I intimated that he was trying to get me in line for a charge of perjury. Then Blootby said, in substance: "All right, punk. Have I got to draw you a diagram? This dope came right from the stable. I am acting for Steve Crulotz. Ever hear of him, punk?" I said that I had. "Well," Blootby continued, "he and Countain and I is trailing together, see?"

Judge Muth: "Is this Steve Crulotz in the courtroom?"

Sergeant Linton: "He left hurriedly just as Lieutenant David began to testify."

Judge Muth: "It might be advisable to have him followed."

Lieutenant David: "That has been taken care of, sir. Lieutenant McMann has him on tap outside."

Judge Muth, his eyes twinkling: "You are thorough, Lieutenant. . . . Proceed."

A—(By Lieutenant David.) I pretended to be impressed, but then I raised an objection. I told Blootby that I was afraid the story he suggested wouldn't

stand up in court. I told him I wanted to talk it over with a lawyer. Blootby said, "Punk, you think of everything! Do you think Steve and us is dumb? Ever hear of Samuel Blatkin? Well, he is the guy who—"

Mr. Blatkin, leaping to his feet and running forward with his arms waving: "I object! My good name will not be dragged in the dust! This is an outrage. This is preposterous. This is—"

Judge Muth, sternly: "Silence, sir! This *is* preposterous. It is also damnable." (Lowering his voice.) "It makes me regret that I am a member of the Bar Association." (Glancing about the room.) "Sheriff Wilson! The jury will retire for a few minutes."

The twelve men filed out.

Judge Muth: "Despite the startling disclosures, we have kept within legal bounds. I see no reason to declare a mistrial, and will not entertain any motion to that effect. When the excitement has subsided a bit, this case will be carried on to its inevitable conclusion." (Turning to Mr. Sellers.) "The Grand Jury still is in session. I take it you are prepared to submit this evidence and obtain additional indictments?"

Mr. Sellers: "Yes, Your Honor."

Judge Muth: "The indictments should be handed down in short order. They will be tried at once."

Mr. Blatkin: "We demand—"

Judge Muth: "You demand nothing, sir. There is no reason for delay. You are entirely too familiar with this case."

MESSRS. David and Crosby slouched in chairs, while Captain Field, seated at his desk, read aloud from a letter:

"The Governor says:

"Dear Captain:

"Congratulations to you and the members of the Black Horse Troop. The conviction of Countain was a signal triumph for law and order. But even more of an achievement was the thorough roundup which resulted in the conviction of Countain's gangland associates and his truly criminal attorney. Lieutenant David, Lieutenant Crosby and their associates truly are public benefactors. Please convey to them my sincere congratulations and hearty best wishes."

Captain Field put the letter aside.

"The Governor, of course, knows you two only slightly."

Tiny David's smile was a benediction.

"Smart man, the Governor."

Another story by Robert Mill, one of his best, will appear in an early issue.

# NEVADA

Illustrated by  
Peter Kuhlhoff



"Stay where you are—  
and put 'em up!"

## *The Story Thus Far:*

ONE night in the camp in the Wild Rose Hills north of Golconda, as Red Murdoch skillfully whirled out the water and the ground-up quartz-specimen from the skillet, a fan of gold glowed against the iron in the lantern-light. They had found it—but they had yet to get it!

For these two young men had no money for development work; so they decided that Lawton should earn what they imperatively needed, by getting a job at the Rust Water Con, the one mine active in the district, while Murdoch held down the claims they had staked.

A spy in the employ of the gang of high-graders who were looting the Rust Water mine, was encamped in an old shaft just over the ridge; and correctly interpreting Lawton's departure, laid plans for a bit of claim-jumping.

And Lawton ran into even more serious danger. He was caught in a sudden mountain storm; and while waiting for the water to subside in a deep-flooded arroyo, he heard a faint cry for help. Wading and swimming, he came to an all-but-submerged car just in time to save the girl alone in it: Nancy Henry, daughter of the man who owned the Rust Water Con. When he had carried Nancy to his car, and had driven her to the shelter of an old freighter's shed, she confided in him that her father was in danger of losing the mine; his option was about to expire, and because the mine profits had mysteriously fallen off, he'd been unable to make the stipulated payments. . . . Shortly afterward, opening the rear door of the car in search of a blanket for Nancy, Lawton discovered a dead man huddled there. . . .

At daylight, however, when they made ready to drive back to town, the body

had disappeared. Neither could know, of course, that the corpse was that of a hoist-man murdered by the high-graders—and placed in Lawton's car in an attempt to shift the crime to him, when Lawton stopped for gas at Ball's Corral, an old stage-station. Or that it had been removed and buried by the crooked justice-of-the-peace Dolton, under orders from the gang leaders—Barclay the mine superintendent, and his lieutenant Sloan.

Lawton carried out his plan of getting a job at the mine, with the added motive of identifying the high-graders. Almost at once they began contriving "accidents" to get him out of the way. He escaped an explosion, but the next night Nancy heard that there had been a fall of rock in which Lawton and the shift-boss Hanley had been killed. Going to Barclay's office to inquire, she overheard talk between Sloan and Barclay which disclosed to her the plot and the criminals. She was caught before she could get away, however, and carried off by Sloan in his car. (*The story continues in detail:*)

THE sentence of death has been passed in many places, by various kinds of men: by black-gowned judges in crowded courtrooms where the words of the law's solemn formula were the only sound; by self-appointed executioners under the flare of torches and amid the yelling of vengeance-seeking mobs; by doctors in hushed sickrooms; by sleek-haired gangsters in speeding cars. But Lawton got his sentence in a cavern underground; he read it in a lump of gold.

When he went to work that afternoon, it was his belief that the men who had tried to erase him from the picture the day before would not make another attempt immediately. In all probability it would be a day or two, at the least, before the criminal element could arrange another so-called accident which would seem convincing to the rest of the shift. And Lawton only needed this next eight hours. If the hoist-man carried out his part of the agreement, he was going to have the opportunity to see the man who brought the high-grade to the sur-



# GOLD

*The climax of this notable novel by the able writer who gave us "The Hazardous Highway" and other well-remembered stories.*

By FREDERICK BECHDOLT

face tonight and to follow the latter until he turned the stuff over to its receiver. Learning the ultimate destination could be carried on above-ground.

When he arrived at the change-room that afternoon, no one seemed to take any notice of him, but when he stepped across the low barrier at the shaft-collar a few minutes later and took his place in the skip, uneasiness took possession of him. As they dropped from the bright afternoon sunlight into the darkness of the shaft, he felt sharply apprehensive.

Down at the station the tiny flames of carbide lamps cast wriggling shadows

on the walls of the rocky chamber as the miners gathered lengths of steel and freshly sharpened bits.

Hanley the shift-boss caught sight of Lawton and came over to him.

"Okay," he said. "We'll go in now. I'm giving you a machine in the stope off the north drift."

The drift was a tunnel which followed the slight twistings of the vein and the stope led off from it, two hundred yards or so beyond the station. Here the vein widened and the values increased; the miners had worked upward, taking out the ore. Thus they had gouged away a huge cavern, and as they went higher, they had filled the lower portions of this chamber with waste rock. But they had left a narrow hole by which to climb up to their work.

They called this hole a raise. It was almost perpendicular, for the ore body lay at a sharp angle; and it was a little



Red's hand had started for the weapon under his coat; but he realized that it would be futile. "No use," he mused. "I've got to take it now — and like it."

more than four feet wide. On three sides it was walled by the living rock. On the fourth side there was a barrier of heavy planks; this shut off the loose waste which filled the abandoned portion of the stope. On two sides thick timbers spanned the hole at intervals of ten feet or so; these were called stulls, and their purpose was to brace the living rock.

One climbed this raise by a steep ladder, which was no more than a plank with large cleats for footholds. At the bottom of the raise, where it entered the drift, there was a wooden chute—for the men in the stope above used this hole to dump ore into the cars.

By all the rules of safety, this was wrong. The passageway which the men traveled should be separated from the ore chute by a stout bulkhead. Lawton was not surprised when he saw the arrangement; it was not the first time he had found such evasion of the law in Western gold mines. But he took good care to keep close behind Hanley while the two of them were mounting the ladder, for a raise is a fine place for an accident.

At the head of the raise they entered the stope, and here the incline of the vein had lessened; its thickness had increased. They were standing in a cavern whose floor and roof slanted upward. The tiny flames of several carbide lamps made pools of yellow light, revealing the dim figures of the miners, the glinting metal of machine drills and huge timbers which supported the hanging wall.

"You'll rig up here," the foreman said. A round of holes had been started at the spot where he was pointing, and from one of these a short length of steel protruded. "She's stuck. It will take a four-foot lifter to break her out." He turned his back and departed in silence.

There were two other machines in the stope. A few moments later the runners had turned on the air and the uproar of steel beating on the living rock was like a battery of light artillery. A pair of muckers were getting out the broken rock, using a scraper-drag of thick planks which was hauled by a cable from a little drum. Lawton went to work setting up his jack-hammer.

IT was about an hour later when he shut off the air and twisted back the crank of his machine. The hole was finished. He tore down and departed for the station after the sticks of dynamite with which to load it. He had a bad

few moments while he was descending the raise, but nothing happened. When he returned Hanley was standing before the stuck drill, gazing at it, and it seemed to Lawton that there was a peculiar expression in the foreman's face; but perhaps the flickering of the carbide lamp had given the lean features that brief sardonic twist.

He remained there watching while Lawton loaded the hole, and when the latter had cut the fuse, he signaled to the others to shut down. And after he had given the order, "All out!" he nodded to Lawton. "You too. I'll light the fuse." And he added grimly: "Just to show there's no deception." One of the miners who was passing heard the words and grinned.

ABOUT ten minutes later the six of them climbed back again into the stope, where the air still held a slight reek of nitro gases from the shot. The hole had pulled clean. The steel lay among a slight litter of rock fragments. Lawton was gazing at one of these. Now he knew the reason why the drill had stuck. And, with the knowledge, came the realization that when the others went up the shaft at midnight, it was not meant that he should be among them.

He was staring at a three-cornered piece of rock. It was about twice the size of a man's hand; it was patterned with tracteries of green sulphides which ran through it like the strands of a spider's web. And the entire background was dull yellow. The imprint of a bitt was stamped upon it.

The foreman bent and picked it up. His voice broke the silence, and his words echoed from the sides of the stope.

"That's not company ore, boys." Then some one laughed.

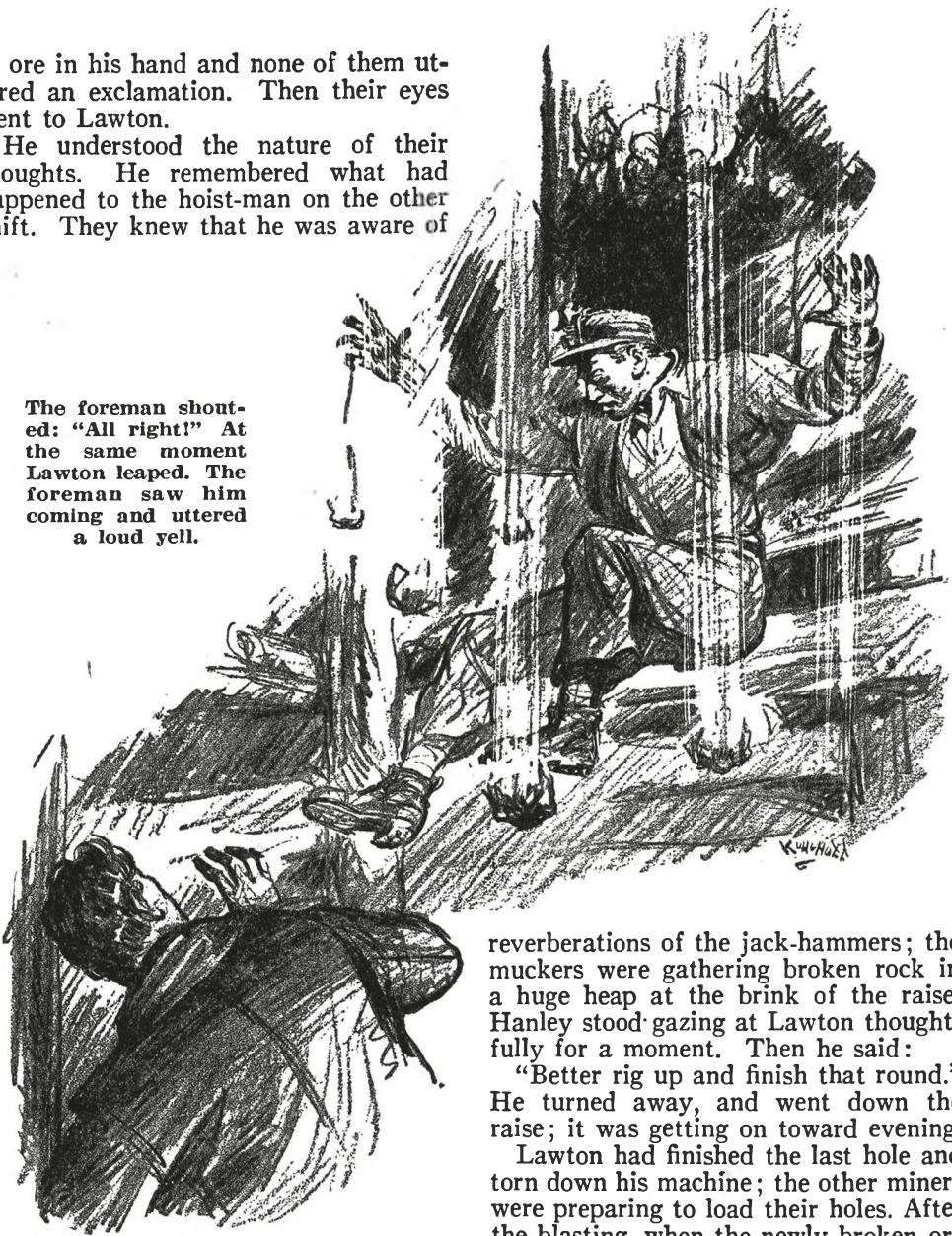
It was an old saying, as old as high-grading. The leaner ore belonged to the owners of the mine; the thieves took the rich stuff. Evidently all of these men were in on the looting. They were working in this place where the big values came in thin stringers; they were sorting out ore after every shot. No wonder Jim Henry was not getting returns!

It was probable that Hanley had no knowledge of what had stuck that drill; but there was little doubt that he had been doing some figuring; he was not taken by surprise. Nor were the others. They had stopped here on their way back to their tasks, held by the foreman's remark; they glanced at the chunk

of ore in his hand and none of them uttered an exclamation. Then their eyes went to Lawton.

He understood the nature of their thoughts. He remembered what had happened to the hoist-man on the other shift. They knew that he was aware of

The foreman shouted: "All right!" At the same moment Lawton leaped. The foreman saw him coming and uttered a loud yell.



what was awaiting him. The realization had a curious effect upon him. It made him oblivious to fear.

He took the ore from the foreman's hand, and weighed it in his own.

"Not company ore." He was looking Hanley in the eyes. "Well, you can have it. You fellows are doing the stealing, not me." With that, he thrust the rock back so abruptly that the other nearly dropped it, and he walked away to the other side of the stope, where he had carried his machine after completing the hole. He was still sitting there when Hanley came to him.

The two drillers had gone to work, and the air in the stope was shaking to the

reverberations of the jack-hammers; the muckers were gathering broken rock in a huge heap at the brink of the raise. Hanley stood gazing at Lawton thoughtfully for a moment. Then he said:

"Better rig up and finish that round." He turned away, and went down the raise; it was getting on toward evening.

Lawton had finished the last hole and torn down his machine; the other miners were preparing to load their holes. After the blasting, when the newly broken ore lay where the dynamite had thrown it, the high-grade would be mingled with the rock which carried smaller values, and the thieves would have to sort it out. And soon after this was finished, the shifts would change. He did not think they were going to let him remain to witness that sorting.

He heard his name called, and he looked around. Hanley was standing behind him. It was the foreman's first appearance since he had bidden Lawton to finish the round. The lines on his lean face seemed to have grown deeper and there was a queer light in his eyes. When he spoke, his voice was sharp, as if he felt some hidden excitement.

Barclay, watching the road, found his mind busy. It looked as if he was secure. But was he?



"Fetch that machine out to the station. We're going to send it up to the shop." He looked around as if seeking some one, and finding the others all engaged, he added: "I'll lend you a hand, to get it down the raise."

It was to be one of two things; Lawton understood that thoroughly; either they were getting him out of the stope while they were doing their stealing; or else they were getting him out of the way for all time to come. He picked up the jack-hammer, and followed the foreman to the edge of the raise.

He had been doing a good deal of thinking during these last few hours; and it had occurred to him, more than once, that it might be a good idea to try and slip away. There were any number of excuses which he could have made for leaving the stope. But if they were intending to kill him, they would be looking out for just such an attempt on his part, and they would be prepared for it. Better to wait until the play came up—so he had determined—and then try to outgame them.

**T**HE pair of muckers had gathered a large heap of broken rock at the edge of the raise. They had placed their heavy drag of planks beside this, so that, when one of them raised his hand, the other would throw the lever and set the drum in motion; the cable would tighten; the drag would pull upon the pile, and the whole mass would go crashing down the narrow hole into the ore-car in the drift, sixty feet below. Lawton had watched the process half a dozen times during the last two hours.

And Hanley was going to send him down the raise now. It was so evident that a raw hand could have perceived it; a boy would realize the danger. Once he was in that hole, all they had to do was to give the signal and send a ton of

ore crashing down upon him. He set down the machine. Better to make a fight of it and lose, than to die that way!

Hanley was bending over picking up a coil of rope; it would be an easy matter to leap upon him now; and after that, to catch the others while they were still unprepared. As if he had sensed Lawton's thought, the foreman turned and met his eyes. He took the rope and passed a hitch around the machine; he was smiling peculiarly.

"You lower away," he said. "I'll guide her down."

It was the same smile that he had worn when he announced that he was going to light the fuse, a few hours ago. It was as if he had said: "I know what you are thinking, how badly you're frightened. But you needn't be afraid." Then he started down the ladder.

Lawton bit his lip. He picked up the line and started lowering the jack-hammer.

As long as Hanley was in the raise and he was up here in the stope, there was no danger. But when the foreman reached the bottom, and Lawton started down alone—what then? He paid out the line slowly, holding the most of the weight, letting the other guide the heavy machine so it slid free of obstructions.

And all the time he watched the others narrowly from the side of his eye. The two drill-runners had shut off the air. The stope was silent. One of the muckers was standing near the heap of ore; the other was by the drum; and every man was gazing at him. Something was coming. It was coming soon.

"She's stuck," the foreman called. "Come down and help me free her."

For a bare instant Lawton hesitated; and then it came to him that here was the chance that he had been seeking. With the two of them in the raise, there could be no possibility of danger. Once



"You needn't be afraid," Sloan said; "we're not going to hurt you." But Nancy knew he lied.

he was down there, he would not return; he would pay out the line from the ladder, and he would descend as he did so, sticking close to the other.

It was about halfway down that the machine had stuck—or had it, actually? Was there something wrong here? He was on his way down, when the thought struck him; he had made half the distance. After the careless fashion of the underground men, he was not using the ladder most of the time; he was using the stulls; leaping downward from timber to timber, landing first on one side of the raise, then on the other.

Hanley was more than ten feet below. He was crouching on one of the thick timbers. And this timber was on the side where the bulkhead of planks held in the waste rock. There had been some sort of settling here, or a squeezing of the ground, perhaps; and it had caused the planks to sag inward; so that there was a niche just above the stull where Hanley waited. The nook was a good three feet deep at the innermost angle where the planks met. Within that space, a man would have good clearance.

A man thinks quickly in moments of large peril, and Lawton was a seasoned miner. He saw this little corner where a man could find safety. He saw Hanley start to raise himself from the stull where he was crouching and creep into the niche. As comprehension came to him, the foreman shouted:

"All right!"

At the same moment Lawton leaped.

## CHAPTER XV

SEVERAL things happened so closely together that there seemed no time between them, following Hanley's shout.

An instant of silence; a moment during which the sound of the revolving drum came from the stope above.

More than ten feet, Lawton was leaping, and the stull for which he sprang was a round length of pine, less than twelve inches through—poor footing even for a man who was standing still.

The foreman saw him coming, and uttered a loud yell. The sound was drowned by the crashing of broken rock as the cable in the stope tightened and the ore slid over the edge into the raise.

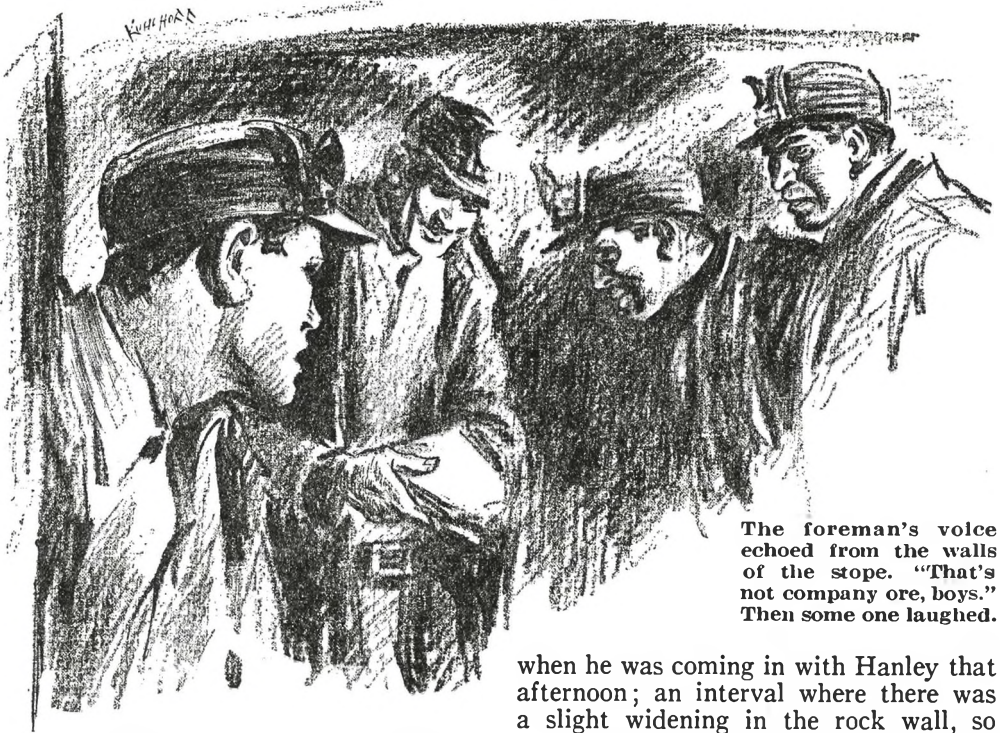
Hanley was on his feet when Lawton alighted beside him. But the foreman had been caught by surprise. He had risen so quickly that he was off his balance. He pitched forward; his feet left the rounded timber, and his scream was inaudible through the noise of the falling rock. His arms flew upward as he fell, and Lawton saw the fingers clutching at the empty air, before they vanished.

The thunder of the descending ore was in his ears; he felt the wind from it as it passed. It crashed into the car below. Dead silence followed.

Lawton's hat was gone, and his carbide lamp with it. He was in darkness, the blackness of the underground passages, compared to which the deepest night on the surface is as mere twilight. He was half lying, half leaning against the plank bulkhead, and the shock of alighting had knocked him breathless.

He could hear some one moving above him, and the sound of voices came down through the blackness. They were waiting up there for Hanley. One called:

"Hello, below!" The voice went booming through the narrow hole, and then a fleck of light showed just above the brink. He knew they would not wait for long, and if he remained here, they would be sure to discover him. It



The foreman's voice echoed from the walls of the slope. "That's not company ore, boys." Then some one laughed.

was not going to be a simple matter, finding his way in the darkness. To one not used to mines, it would have been impossible; but the gloom of the underground passages was no new story to him. He edged downward and lowered his body over the stull; it seemed a long time before his feet found the ladder.

There were four of those little flames above him now; they cast a wavering circle of light into the upper portion of the raise, showing the rock walls and the heavy timbers. He could hear the men talking as he crawled down the ladder and, as he drew near the bottom, the lamps were already coming swiftly, flickering with the draught created by their progress, all four of them, one above the other. And he must creep slowly, one foot at a time, feeling his way in blackness. A shout filled the narrow confines of the raise.

"Hanley!"

Lawton slipped then and the movement started a little avalanche of broken rock. Another voice announced: "I heard him, Bill."

A moment later Lawton dropped into the drift.

The light of the four lamps poured down out of the bottom of the raise. It fell upon the ore car, heaped high with broken rock, and from the summit of the heap a foot protruded.

There was no time to waste. Lawton started toward the station. He remembered something that he had noticed

when he was coming in with Hanley that afternoon; an interval where there was a slight widening in the rock wall, so that a little space lay between it and the timbers. That should be close by.

A bit of flame shot down into the drift. Another followed. Some one cried: "Hanley! Boys, that's his foot."

Lawton was feeling his way along the stulls, groping behind them as he went. All four lamps were shining in the drift now.

"But I tell you I heard him!" one of the men was saying.

"I know them boots," the first voice asserted. "I was with him when he bought 'em last week."

LAWTON found the space that he was looking for. He squeezed behind the stull; the interval was so narrow that he heard his shirt tearing against a corner of the rock.

The lamps around the ore car were close together. The voices were mingled now. They were arguing over something.

"Here's the new hand's hat, boys." A brief silence followed the announcement and then one of the miners swore.

"We got the two of 'em. Must've been a slide of rock you heard."

There was more talking which Lawton could not understand, and finally two of the lamps detached themselves from the group. A moment later the men passed the spot where Lawton was hiding. It was the pair of muckers. The other lamps had vanished in the raise.

"Gone back to fire the round," Lawton told himself. "They're not going to

pass up today's high-grade for a little thing like this." This made him remember that the time was drawing near when he was due at the station, according to last night's agreement with the hoist-man.

The muckers would be going to the surface to report the accident while the machine-runners remained behind to do the shooting and gather the rich ore. He stayed where he was until enough time had passed for the messengers to have departed in the skip. Then he came forth and started for the station.

It was less than two hundred yards from here and the lights above the platform beside the shaft would have been plainly visible if it were not for the turnings of the drift. For the passageway followed the vein and there were few intervals where this held an absolutely straight course for more than fifty feet. So he was in black darkness.

The reaction after his escape had left him weary; his whole body ached and his limbs were as heavy as if he had passed through hours of back-breaking toil. His mind was dull; to think was an effort, and to try and plan ahead was an ordeal from which he shrank. As yet he did not even feel relief.

HE was plodding through the darkness, feeling his way at every step, holding his hands before him like a blind man, his head bowed, when suddenly a light appeared ahead of him; a carbide lamp on the brow of a miner's hat, and the wearer was walking fast. Lawton could see the dark bulk of the man's body, the face was hidden in the shadow which the visor of the hat made. He halted and was about to dodge back behind the nearest stull when he realized that the other had caught sight of him.

The two of them had come to a stop. It was for an instant only; the lamp moved again. So for three paces; then it paused again. They were less than ten feet apart now; the light was bathing Lawton's form, his eyes blinked as he gazed into it. This was one of the pair who had passed him a little while ago on their way to the station. For some reason he had returned.

Lawton heard him suck in his breath.

Then he knew he had been recognized. They would be getting ready to load the holes in the stope by this time. At any moment some one was due here on his way to the station after powder and fuses. And if such a one were com-

ing now, a shout for help would bring him on the run. Lawton took two quick steps and lunged at the other, head foremost, arms wide.

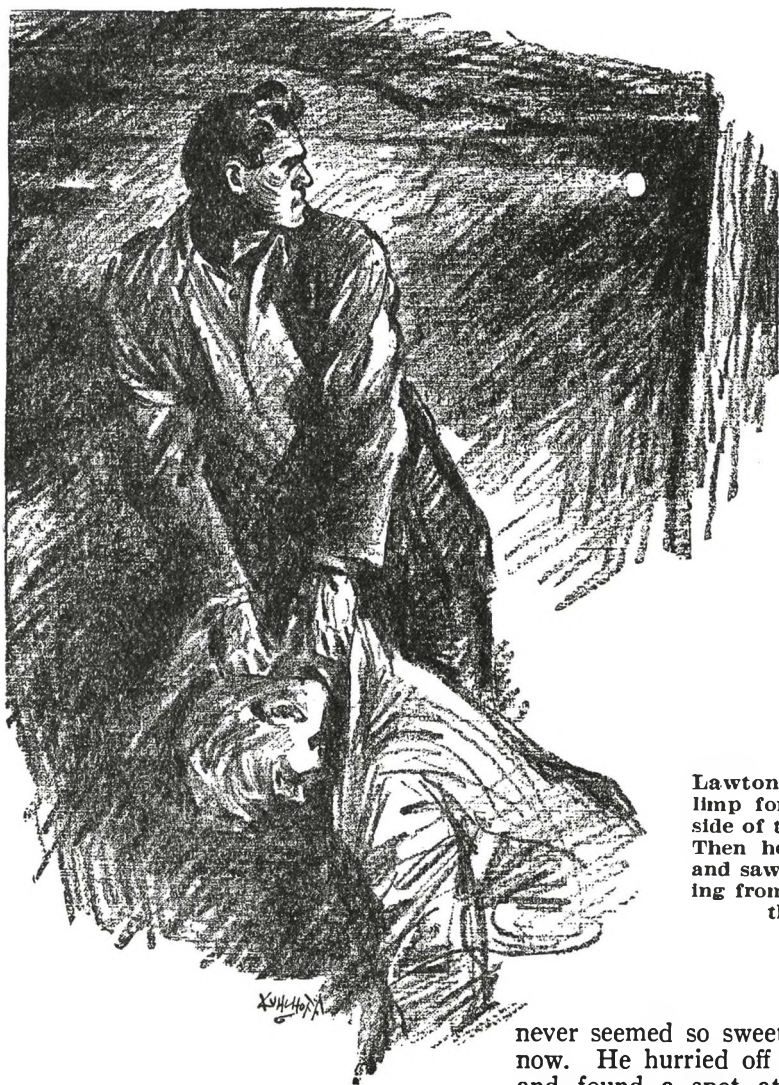
THE yell, which the man had started to utter, died as suddenly as candle flame in a gust of wind. Lawton's arms wrapped around his thighs and the two of them went down together. Their limbs were entwined; their bodies squirmed and bounded from the narrow car track. The sting of a blow, which left his lips bleeding and snapped his head back, made Lawton realize that his antagonist was not a novice in this game of rough-and-tumble fighting. He felt the dull jarring of another blow; his head was reeling now.

They were lying side by side and he was striving to get the uppermost. The heel of a heavy boot caught him on the thigh and left the leg numb. If that kick had gone a few inches higher he would have been helpless. His hands slid upward and found the man's throat; they clasped it and the fingers sank in. He bent his head, taking the blows that the other was raining, on his crown. The ugly noise of strangling breath filled the drift. The mucker's arms dropped to his sides.

Lawton rose and dragged the limp form over to the side of the passageway. The bruise on his face was throbbing madly, and the numb leg dragged; when he tried to rest his weight on it, he almost fell. He listened for a moment and the sound of the hoarse breathing brought to him a feeling of relief. Then he glanced back and saw a light emerging from the bottom of the raise.

That would be the man who was coming after the powder, and the chances were he would see the huddled form beside the stulls. Lawton hurried on, and when he rounded the turn in the drift he knew that luck was with him, for the skip was just coming down the shaft. It stopped beside the platform; the skip tender was riding the bail; he climbed out and vanished in the ore pocket under the planking.

Lawton tried to run, but the best he could was a sort of slow jog-trot, dragging the all-but-useless leg after him. At times it gave way beneath him and he staggered like a drunken man. It seemed to him as if he were in the middle of one of those bad dreams where a man is striving to outrace pursuers and his legs function as in a slow-motion pic-



Lawton dragged the limp form over to the side of the passageway. Then he glanced back and saw a light emerging from the bottom of the raise.

ture. At last he was crossing the platform, and when he climbed into the skip he had a glimpse of the light in the drift; the man who wore the lamp was coming on a run. Lawton heard him shout—and he jerked the bell-cord. In that moment of his extremity he was near to giving the regular signal from force of habit, two bells for the shaft-collar and three bells to show that a man was on the skip. At the final instant he remembered his agreement with the hoist-man and pulled the cord four times instead of three.

The skip shot upward.

**N**O one was near when he climbed over the railing at the shaft-collar. A little breeze was blowing down from the hills, and it carried the harsh perfume of the sagebrush. Lawton drew several deep breaths; the outside air had

never seemed so sweet to him as it did now. He hurried off into the darkness and found a spot at the foot of the dump where the shadow of the bin on the headframe made the night a little thicker. He sat down here to await developments.

There was the possibility that what had taken place down in the drift might bring a furor which would postpone the blasting and, in that case, his biding here was going to have no result beyond placing him in further danger. It all depended on how bad a case the mucker was in when they discovered him. Fifteen minutes passed, and the time seemed like an hour. Three blasts of the hoist-whistle sounded and the rasping of the ascending skip came to his ears. It stopped at the shaft-collar and a man got out. His battered face showed plainly in the light as he turned to speak to the old watchman who had hurried down the hill from the change-room when the whistle blew. Lawton sighed with relief. This was the mucker whom he had



so nearly strangled. And that meant the miners in the stope were intent on gathering their sack of high-grade ore; they had sent him up to supplement the tidings which his predecessor had brought.

The man started up the hill and vanished in the shadows beyond the hoist-house. A few minutes later the dull boom of a blast came from the mouth of the shaft; another report followed after a moment or two, and then several more at varying intervals. The time was drawing near when the first men on the graveyard shift would begin to straggle down the slope to gather around the shaft-collar. If the high-graders were intending to send out a sack of ore tonight they would have to work swiftly.

Another half-hour went by. Lawton was getting restless; he glanced up the hill toward the change-room and he saw the door open; a miner stood in the light on the threshold; then he vanished within and the door closed. The sound of the rising skip reached Lawton's ears.

There had been no whistle; and it was coming slowly as it always did when there was a man aboard. No one was in sight over there by the shaft-collar. The skip appeared; it was laden with ore; it stopped and Lawton saw a man riding the bail. He climbed over the railing; he turned and leaned across the barrier; he drew something from the top of the ore; then he jerked the bell-cord and the skip went on up to the head-frame. A moment later its load crashed into the bin. The man departed from the little space beneath the lights; he was carrying a sack of ore on his back.

**L**AWTON got to his feet and waited. The sound of heavy footsteps came through the night; then a dim form showed on the path which led along the foot of the dump. It vanished and Lawton started after it.

The man walked slowly, and the weight of the burden on his back made him stumble at times for the going was rough among the broken rock which had rolled down from the dump along the hillside. It was not difficult to follow him; no need to keep him in sight. So the two went down the winding trail.

The sound of footsteps ceased. Lawton halted. He barely made out the red glow of a tail-light. They were near the spot where the path met the road, the same place which Nancy had appointed for her rendezvous with him. The

thought made Lawton wonder where she was tonight; and what she was doing.

The thump of a heavy body; that would be the sack of high-grade landing in the car. The murmur of voices. Lawton dropped on his hands and knees and crept nearer. A few inches at a time and very slowly, for the dislodging of a single loose stone would be his undoing; he felt his way with his fingers and he slid his limbs over the broken ground as silently as if he were some night-prowling animal.

"—and it's going to be the last trip. For sometime anyhow." He caught that much. He could see the car now. It was a flat-bed truck. The man who had been speaking was climbing into the driver's seat.

**T**HE last trip! That meant the knowledge which he had gained so far was as good as nothing—unless he got more tonight. It was his final chance. The man who had brought the ore passed so close to Lawton the latter could have cast a pebble and struck him.

The man called:

"I'll tell the boys. They're going to be sore." Then he vanished and, as the sound of his footsteps receded up the path, a self-starter whined. The truck had evidently lost its muffler, for the motor made a terrific racket. Under cover of the uproar Lawton stumbled through the darkness and seized the tail-board; he dragged himself up and sat with his back against the sack of ore.

"If he doesn't go through town," he told himself, "I'm liable to make it yet."

The route did not lie through the camp, however, and later they turned off the gravel road into the track which the sheep-wagons had made in winter time—the route which he and Red had taken to the Wild Rose Hills. Apparently their destination was to be Ball's Corral.

It was an hour or so later when they reached the old ranch-house and Lawton saw a light in one of the windows. He dropped off as the truck was beginning to slow for the stop. Ball was coming out of the door; Dolton leaned from the cab and the murmur of the two voices came through the darkness. Suddenly Dolton threw in the gears; Ball was on his way back to the house; and Lawton had to run for it to catch the rear of the truck as it swung into the start of the steep grade. They crossed the summit and descended on the other side. Now they were traversing the sagebrush flat.

Lawton was turning, when a voice said: "Don't stir."



At last the truck began to climb the winding grade into the Wild Rose Hills. Midnight was long past now. It was after two in the morning when it crossed the ridge and started down the eastern slope. Suddenly it stopped. Lawton slid from his place and dropped into the dusty road. He crept off into the sagebrush. The driver came down from his seat and got the sack of ore. A moment later he was swallowed by the darkness and the sound of his footsteps as he mounted the hill was the only sign of his presence.

The beam of a flashlight appeared far above them near the crest of the ridge. Lawton got to his feet. He started up the hill. Then he was conscious of a sound behind him and he halted. He was turning when a voice said:

"Don't stir."

He felt the muzzle of a revolver pressing his back. It seemed to him that the voice was familiar.

## CHAPTER XVI

**H**ERE in the Wild Rose Hills another little drama, drawing toward its close, was about to tie in with the web of a more elaborate conspiracy.

Every morning when the harsh white sunlight was beginning to leak over the ridge and creep down the western slope, Red Murdoch came from his camp in

the gulch and started up the hill. Like all prospectors he loved his occupation for itself; its promises and rebuffs were always keeping him on edge; and now these hopes were leading him on toward fulfillment.

Now that the first stringer had been found the work was going faster, for the search had become easier with increased knowledge of the ground. Within forty-eight hours after Lawton had left, Red had discovered four more of the narrow veins, and the pannings from these showed higher values than the first. On the third day he started trenching where the most promising outcrop showed on the surface. That evening he took some samples to camp and, after supper, he crushed the ore in the little mortar; he made a careful panning of the powdered rock. He had been expecting something good, but when he saw the streak of gold in the bottom of the skillet he was incredulous.

He sat there on the edge of his army cot, gazing at the foxtail in the pan and wishing that Lawton were there. For the time had come when he needed help.

He had staked out four claims with a discovery monument and with corner posts to mark the boundaries; according to the law he had twenty days' leeway in which to record the location. But the exposure of this high-grade ore had left him uneasy. Supposing some one should happen along and learn his secret?

As a matter of fact, he was beginning to suspect that some one had been doing a little investigating up there on the hillside. Coming to work the last two mornings he had seen the traces of a prospector's pick in spots where he would have sworn that the ground had been undisturbed the night before. Probably it was that fellow who camped on the other side of the ridge, and perhaps if this one had paid a surreptitious visit, it would lead to nothing worse than the staking of other claims.

Nevertheless he wished that he could do the filing at once; then he would feel secure. But, if he went to town now, he would have to leave the ground unguarded, which did not appeal to him at all. He knew enough of the ways of claim-jumpers to be certain that possession was at least nine points of the law. Stories of long litigation, where the atmosphere of courtrooms reeked of perjury, came to his mind. He turned back the bedding on the cot and brought forth the revolver in its shoulder-holster.

"I'll pack this along when I go to work tomorrow," he told himself.

**I**T was about six hours later when Judge Dolton parked his car where the sheep-wagon road twined down the other side of the hill, and climbed the winding path to the old Mohawk tunnel with a sack of high-grade ore on his shoulder. Walter was waiting for him on the dump with the inevitable flashlight. He followed the justice of the peace into the narrow passageway, throwing the beam of the torch ahead of him. The latter dropped his burden at the end of the long row of fat canvas bags; he sighed, expectorated and swore gently.

"Two or three more trips and we're through, Walter." He shook his head. "I aint so sorry, either."

"Good money in it," Walter said, "for you."

"For me!" The other laughed unpleasantly. "For the big shots, you mean. Me, I'm wearing out my back and staying up nights; and all I get is wages, Walter, same as you. Mebbe a little more, but wages." He spat again. "Easy come, easy go. What with the price of drinks in Rust Water and gas a half a dollar a gallon, I'm a few hundred dollars in—and that's all."

"These big shots," Walter insinuated softly: "Rust Water men?"

The justice of the peace smiled sadly. "What you don't know won't hurt you.

And I'll be glad when I'm shut of them. Well, it won't be long now." He turned and started toward the portal.

"I got something to show you." There was a tightness in Walter's voice which halted his companion abruptly.

"Not more trouble?" he asked.

Walter made no reply but led the way along the narrow path which wound from the portal to the gulch where his tent stood. When he had lighted the lantern, Dolton stepped within. Walter was rummaging under the heap of bedding on the army cot; he brought out a little skillet and thrust this under the other's face. He grinned at the profane exclamation that greeted this exhibition.

"And," he announced complacently, "it's getting richer every day. The vein's widening and he's only six feet in."

"Who?" Dolton demanded sharply.

"One of them two prospectors you told me to watch. Remember? The other went away."

"He's in Rust Water," the justice of the peace said. "He won't come back. Tell me about this ore, Walter."

He listened to the story, and at length he spoke.

"This morning, I'll drive in to town and file. And tomorrow, when I come out here, I'll fetch a man along. I know the one we want; he done some work for me, driving a truck. Comes daylight, when this prospector shows up, you two can run him off the hill. We'll make it fifty-fifty, Walter." As the other started to remonstrate, he added quietly, "Remember I'm the law in Rust Water; that ought to be worth something. And," he added, "I'm furnishing the brains."

"How about our location-notice?" Walter asked.

"Wait till this time tomorrow. Then you slip across the ridge and change the notices. Make sure that you fetch the ones they posted away with you."

Shortly after that he departed and, although he was a man of small imagination, he was seeing golden visions during all the long drive to Rust Water.

**T**HE second daybreak after this conversation saw a thread of smoke winding from the stovepipe of Red Murdoch's tent. When he had finished breakfast and done the dishes, less than an hour later, he picked up his automatic in its holster and buckled this upon his shoulder. It happened to be one of those brisk mornings when the air in the Nevada hills is tingling, and he wore his coat.

He was whistling as he climbed the hill, for the steep grade had no more effect on him than it would on a mountain goat, and the possibilities of claim-jumping which had been worrying him were forgotten for the moment. Last night's panning had indicated, if anything, a slight increase in values; the vein continued to widen as he went down. He was wrapped in these thoughts, when a voice floated down the hillside:

"Stay where you are and put 'em up."

UP there, there were two of them, their heads visible above the trench which he had toiled so hard in gouging from the rocky outcrop. One of them was holding a revolver and the other had a rifle at his shoulder. Red's right hand had started for the weapon under his coat; now it continued the upward movement and the other hand followed it. At the moment he was cursing the weapon, which was so unattainable under his coat. But as he stood there he realized that, even if it were in his hand, it would be futile against the rifle at this distance.

"No use," he mused. "I've got to take it now—and like it."

Two heads up there above the edge of the trench: one of them was wearing a sun-helmet and the other head was bare. It was on this latter that his gaze was riveted; it seemed to him that there was something familiar in that sleek hair, brushed back, shining in the early sunlight. And now the two of them were emerging from the trench; they were coming down the hillside. That one in the soiled helmet was the one who was camping across the ridge. Red knew he had been correct then; those marks which he had discovered in the trench had not been made by his own pick. The other face was younger and the lips were coarse. It was the truck driver whom Lawton had thrown like a sack of meal into the clump of greasewood bushes beside the road that afternoon when they were driving out from Rust Water. Evidently the recognition was mutual, for the man was scowling as he drew closer. He said:

"Turn around and walk. Step fast."

Red turned. He was thinking of the automatic in his shoulder-holster. If only they would refrain from searching him—and perhaps they would; but only in case they carried the affair through without his showing any sign of resistance which might arouse their suspicions. He started down the hill.

When they reached the gulch he slackened his pace a little and he looked over his shoulder long enough to ask:

"You're going to let me take my blankets?"

"Keep on stepping, buddy," the truck-driver bade him.

"A canteen, anyhow," Red persisted.

"If you don't move faster, you aint ever going to want another drink of water," the voice reminded him.

The trail led down the gulch. He followed it without further protest, listening to the crunching of the rubble under the boots of his captors. Far below, the wide plain was beginning to shimmer under the first heat waves of the fervid sun. The morning had come on, after the fashion of mornings in these hills, without any gradations in temperature; half an hour before it had been cold; now the perspiration was running over his body.

It was a good two miles down the gulch and they were keeping up a stiff pace. Near the foot, the banks of the gully drew close together, holding thus for a distance of four hundred yards or so, before the wash came out on the plain. Here his captors halted him. The truck-driver said:

"All right, Walter. You tell him."

And the wearer of the sun-helmet spoke for the first time.

"Me, I staked them there claims, last month, and my pardner recorded 'em. You keep off from now on."

"Or else," the truck-driver added, "you'll get rubbed out. And now keep on going."

Red said nothing; he had been walking for a hundred feet when he became conscious of the fact that the footsteps behind had ceased. He glanced around. The pair were just vanishing at a turn of the gulch. When they were out of sight, he sat down.

A lizard came abruptly from the shadow beside a rock and stopped with the same suddenness, lowering its body and raising it as it breathed the tepid air. In the lack of any other confidant, Red addressed it.

"My turn next," he said.

## CHAPTER XVII

THE lizard stayed in the patch of sunshine for a long time; the man sat in the shade of the bank. Two miles further up the gulch, a rope of brown



"If this sort of thing keeps on," Walter growled, "we're going to run clear out of clothesline."

smoke climbed into the cloudless sky; the rope swelled into a dark pillar and this changed color as it thickened until it was a gray cloud. The steep rise of the bank shut it off from view in the bed of the gully; the segment of sky within Murdoch's range of vision here remained untarnished.

A fly alighted on a pebble near by; the lizard became a gray streak that spanned the interval; for a moment after it had gulped the fly it remained motionless; then it darted off. Red took his gun from its holster and pulled back the breech-block; when he had reassured himself that there was a cartridge in the chamber he replaced the weapon. He settled down again to wait.

The sun had slipped several notches higher, the smoke cloud had cleared away; the upper reaches of the gully held no sign of the thing which had taken place, when he climbed the bank. He found shelter behind a big clump of greasewood and, for a long while, he crouched there scanning the pale flank of the hill. At last he saw something moving; it was in a cleft of the lava dyke that spanned the ridge; and if it had not come against the skyline when

it stirred, his eyes would not have picked it out.

"All right," he said. "I can stick down here as long as you can stick up there."

He slid down into the gully and he sought the shade once more. Noontime came and passed; he was growing thirsty; he broke a dead twig from a poverty-stricken clump of willows which was making an uphill fight for sustenance in the sand, and chewed it while the sun slid slowly down along its long course toward the summit of the western hills.

OCCASIONALLY, during the dragging hours of the afternoon, he shifted position, seeking those spots which held the shade. At last the shadows, which had been creeping upward from the wide flats, reached the tip of the highest of the ragged peaks on the other side of the plain. The whole range had turned dark within the next few minutes and the heavens awakened to glory. Red climbed the bank once more. The niche in the lava dyke was empty now. Soon afterward he started up the gulch.

When he was drawing near the spring where he and Lawton had made their

camp, he halted, sniffing the dry air. And as he came on again the reek of dead smoke grew stronger; he rounded the last sharp turn between steep rocks and viewed the spot on which the tent had stood.

Those two had made a thorough job of destruction. The fire had climbed the flank of the hill, leaving half an acre or more of charred sage roots; a tiny filament of pale smoke rose from the middle of the blackened area; a gust of tepid air came down the cañon, stirring the loose ashes into a flaky mist. The metal handle of the little frying-pan protruded from a discolored heap, the remnants of his bed-roll.

Red stood there looking at the ruins of the camp, letting his eyes travel over the patch of desecration, picking out the spots where different articles had been when he had left the tent this morning. These things he had carried with him for several years; some of them had become so familiar that they had grown to be a part of his life. There was no change in expression as he gazed, but the hardness which had come into his face made him look like a different man.

After a while he went down to the spring and lay on his belly, with his lips in the cool little pool, drinking his fill. When he rose, the twilight was gathering. He returned to the patch of ashes and sat there while the dusk grew on to darkness, while the darkness deepened. The stars glowed overhead; the air was growing chilly; but he failed to feel the cold. It was midnight when he started up the hill.

**D**URING these weeks while he and Lawton had been prospecting this section of the Wild Rose range, their work had kept them on the western side; for the nature of the rock and the manner in which it lay had not given any promise of wealth beyond the ridge. So the ground over there was unfamiliar, but Red had seen the old Mohawk tunnel from a distance; and he had noted a clump of green willows at the head of a gully, less than a hundred yards from the portal. In this land where water is an all-important factor, locations for permanent camps are few and far between. He knew where he was going to find his men tonight. But he did not know that the activities which had kept one of the pair here, were partly nocturnal. If he had, things would have turned out differently than they did.

His eyes were becoming pretty well accustomed to the darkness and he was moving carefully when he crossed the ridge; he came on down the steep slope below the lava dyke at the summit as quietly as a night-traveling animal; he could see the tent below him, a blur of whiteness against the black background of the willow thicket; then, as he was passing the portal of the old tunnel, he heard something fluttering like a bird stirring in the branches before it utters its first call to greet the coming dawn. But there were no shrubs up here and the dawn was far away. The sound had ceased; he was about to go on when it reached his ears again. Something was moving in there; no doubt of it.

**H**IS gun was in his hand as he entered the trench, and his finger was on the trigger. At every step he was expecting to hear a voice upraised in challenge; but the only sounds were the faint whispering of the night wind in the arid bushes on the slope outside the cut and the curious dry fluttering in the blackness ahead of him. The darkness was deeper there; he could not see an arm's length; he was standing beside the army cot, where Walter spent his hours of daylight, before he discovered it. Then his eyes caught something white. He reached out with his left hand and picked up a magazine. It was from this that the sound came which had drawn him hither.

The sudden easing off of tension left a strong desire to laugh at himself. He slid the pistol back into its holster; he lighted a match and looked about him; during the half dozen seconds while he cupped the tiny flame between his palms he took in the cot, the pile of magazines beside it, the footprints in the dusty passageway. There were a good many of those footprints; some one had beaten down a trail that led into the tunnel. He stood there frowning after he had extinguished the match. If there had been any sign of work, he could have understood it, but there was none.

The camp in the willows was silent and the pair who had run him off from the claim that morning should be sound asleep within the tent. But this pathway into the tunnel made him uneasy.

"Nothing like making sure," he told himself. He plucked the weapon from its holster and went on into the tunnel. Within the portal the blackness was absolute; he shifted the pistol to his left

hand and he paused, every few steps, to scratch another match. And after he had followed the windings of the drift for what seemed to him a long distance, he halted, holding a dying flame above his head, staring at the ranks of ore sacks. The mystery of those tracks was solved now; he understood the reason for the travel on the road which should have been a pair of faint ruts, the reason for the presence of the lank man in the sun-helmet.

"High-grading!" As his lips moved forming the words, the match burned out. He dropped the stub. A footfall behind him, a glow of light that bathed the passageway; he was starting to shift the pistol to his right hand when a voice said:

"Drop it!" The click of a hammer coming to the full cock made him comply. The automatic clattered on the rock beside his foot. "Reach up." The voice was sharper. "Reach up and make it quick, or else—"

The rage which took possession of Red's being then was different than the anger which had overcome him on the hillside that morning and abided with him all through the intervening hours. His wrath then had been directed at the pair who were driving him from his possessions; now it was pointed at himself.

"I've got it coming to me," he told himself. The bitterness was succeeded by a feeling of utter hopelessness. He had blundered and he had lost; and now, he thought, "they'll kill me anyhow."

"Turn around." The voice interrupted his thoughts. He obeyed—and saw his captor. It was Walter; the soiled visor of the sun-helmet cast a deep shadow over his lean face as he went on. "Set down—over there facing the wall. And don't start anything."

Walter laid his flashlight upon a sack of ore, leaving its rays on the captive, and after he had picked up Red's pistol, he found a coil of small manila rope.

"If this sort of thing keeps on," he growled, "we're going to run clear out of clothesline." He laid his own pistol down close beside him and set to work binding his prisoner, hand and foot. Then he departed, taking both guns.

**M**ORE than once that day it had seemed to Red that time was passing slowly. As he sat there in the blackness, with his back arced tightly to the bending of his body, his wrists and

ankles lashed to one of the stulls beside the tunnel wall, he found how imperceptibly every second can pass to its completion. He had been here about an hour, but he had lived through more than twenty-four, when he heard foot-steps and the murmur of voices; a faint glow stole along the walls of the tunnel. Just as it was about to disclose his huddled form, it ceased moving; the voices stopped abruptly. After that the foot-steps began receding and the light oozed away. Another of those intervals where darkness and silence combined to settle down upon him like a weight beyond endurance. At last he caught the faint disturbance of footfalls once more; the glow of the flashlight reappeared.

**T**HERE were four men. He could distinguish them as dark forms and that was all, until the one who was carrying the torch shifted it and the light revealed them for an instant; the wearer of the sun-helmet and the truck-driver; the voices of these two he had already recognized. A short man with a full face and small eyes, whose heavy jaws were constantly moving ruminatively; he spat a thick yellow stream into the pathway of radiance. And the fourth man was Lawton.

"Tie him up and leave him here," the short man ordered. "We'll talk it over what to do with 'em."

Nothing more was said. The binding was accomplished and the four departed; when they reached the trench beyond the portal Judge Dolton spoke again.

"Me, I have got an idea. If we do this killing here, somebody finds 'em. Sooner or later, it's dead sure to happen. And by and by somebody else identifies 'em. Then it ties up with the claims. See the p'int I'm gettin' at?"

"And if you leave 'em live, you're runnin' chances," the truck-driver reminded him.

"Who said anybody was aiming to do that?" The voice of the justice of the peace was that of one who feels a grievance. "I aint a fool, am I? Well then, what I'm getting at—it's the high-grade. They ran onto that ore. We caught 'em. That's our story."

"So what?" Walter demanded.

"So I fetch 'em over to Ball's Corral. I can handle that part of it. You two stick here. You aint in this at all, as far as anybody else knows. Happens I'm hauling off the ore tonight. And there'll be others waiting for it. Let them tend

to these two. It lets us out—and locating the claims won't get mixed up with this, if anything comes up later."

## CHAPTER XVIII

THAT night the wind, which seldom rests in the Nevada hills, was droning down the cañon, and the tall cottonwoods at Ball's Corral were bowing before its assaults; they filled the space between the steep flanks of the ravine with their arid complaints. The sound was ever present, it swelled and receded, a harsh rustling. It was one of those nights when the air is laden with static and the most stolid of men is receptive to premonitions.

Ball was sitting in the dreary living-room, and the smell of the oil lamp was heavy in spite of the fact that the front door was open; at times the flame leaped to an erratic gust that came around the corner of the old house; then it sank low again. Ordinarily he was uncursed by imagination, for the simple reason that he owned but slight equipment with which to do any imagining—one of those men who can sit for hours without a single thought to mar the placid surface of his mind. But the dryness of the air and the persistence of the wind had gotten him, and the calm of mental turgidity had failed him for once.

As the evening had worn on his restlessness had increased; it was only the long habit of immobility that kept him from getting up and walking the floor as another would have done. Occasionally one of the dogs slunk into the room; then he rose to kick the intruder out, and when the yelps of the ejected one had died away, he returned to his chair feeling a little better. But the relief was always short lived; dissatisfaction assailed him once more.

This business had been going on several weeks and, from the beginning, he had not liked it. But times—with him—were tight, and such easy money as came his way in return for the simple procedure of remaining blind and deaf to what was going on about him would have made him forget his dislike—if it had not been for the ugly incident on his front porch the night of the cloudburst. It kept recurring to him now.

"*Make a slaughterhouse out of my place,*" he growled. And there was, he reflected, a liability of further killings. No telling what that crowd might do

next, nor what consequences might follow the things already done.

There was that mill machinery which they had hauled here with such secrecy. Only the other evening Dolton had driven over and bidden him to saddle up and leave the place until daybreak; and when he had returned the next morning the three truckloads of equipment—the little gasoline engine, the ball mill, the tables and the plates—were set up in the huge old barn, where the skinners used to feed the mules.

"What I ort to do," he told himself, "is to order 'em to take that junk and clear out! Yes sir. Get shut of 'em!"

But the trouble was, he couldn't do that. He was in this, as deep as they were; he had made himself accessory. It had begun so easily! That was when Dolton had first come to him; the justice of the peace—no reason to suspect anything wrong there. It had gone on without any evidence of wrongdoing beyond the secrecy of their visits and the occasional ten-dollar bills which Dolton handed him. All he had to do was sit there in the house and mind his own business when any of them showed up. He had been doing that the evening of the cloudburst; but when he heard the shot in front of the house he had hurried forth, to find them bending over a dead man on the porch. It was panic which had made him help carry the body to Dolton's sedan. And from then on, he was in their hands.

The harsh whispering of the cottonwoods was growing louder. He swore at the restless wind; it was, he reflected, a hell of a life here in this lonely spot with nothing but his thoughts for company. He wished that he could go to town and get drunk.

A CLAMOR of canine alarms broke in on his musings. He caught a deeper sound above the noise of the wind, the drumming of a big motor.

"Another of them trucks coming," he growled. The glare of the headlights swept the beaten earth before the house; he was making up his mind that he would remain here. "What I don't know aint going to hurt me," he muttered. Then the engine was shut off, and Dolton called his name.

The justice of the peace was leaning from the cab of a big red truck. His jaws were moving and he waited to expectorate before he spoke. Ball scowled, gazing at the ground before his feet.





She saw the change that had come over him. He started toward her, and she screamed.

"What is it now?" he demanded sullenly.

"I'm driving through," the other told him. "I'll be back in two or three hours. Some of the boys will show up before I come and you'd better clear out."

"Not me." Ball shook his head. "I'm getting sick of being drove off of my own place. Anyone would think—"

"Forget that!" Dolton reached forth his hand; it held a twenty-dollar bill. "You're making more money in one month than you ever saw before. And," he added, "this is the last night."

Ball regarded the greenback with covetous eyes, but his hands remained in his pockets.

"How about this mill machinery in the barn?" he asked. "I'm aiming to get in my hay right quick."

"We'll haul it away tomorrow," the other promised. "Come on, Ball. I'm crowded for time; I got to be shoving on."

"Drive a man away from his own house!" Ball shoved his hands deeper into his pockets. "Me, I got no more home than a shepherd."

"Okay, then. Suit yourself." The justice of the peace started to withdraw his hand.

"This once—" Ball interrupted the movement. He paused to scan the bill which he had plucked from the other's fingers. "Twenty bucks. You fellers must be making money somewheres. It's the last time, mind." He turned away and he was back in the house before the motor had resumed its drumming. . . .

An hour passed. The tortured branches of the cottonwoods were filling the air with their complaints; he was still sit-

ting in the chair within the door and the light of the smoky kerosene lamp showed the stubborn lines about his lip ends. One of the dogs had slunk into the room; his eyes narrowed as they settled on the animal; it was lying on its side and its forefeet were twitching as it dreamed that it was chasing after a jack-rabbit in the hills. Ball rose very quietly and he tiptoed across the floor; he raised one booted foot and swung it far back; the kick was half completed when the animal awakened and sprang to the door. Ball's toe barely reached its target. There was a yelp of anguish; the dog sped forth into the night. Ball had twisted his knee; he swore full-heartedly and gripped his leg with both hands. He limped back to his chair.

"That settles it!" He glared into the darkness beyond the threshold. "Me, I don't ride tonight. Not for any man."

SOMEWHAT later he took the smoking lamp and limped into his bedroom. There was a bottle of Triple X horse liniment on the rickety little washstand which served him as a bureau and general catch-all for odds and ends; he drew the cork and spent some time rubbing the twisted knee with the pungent stuff; but, what with the pain and his growing resentment against the recent trend of events here, sleep failed him. He was lying on his back staring up through the darkness when the sound of a car came up the road which led from the sagebrush flats.

"More trouble," he growled and added an oath by way of good measure. If he had known how correct the statement was, he might not have allowed curiosity

to take him from his bed. However, he cursed the pain in his wrenched limb and hobbled over to the window.

## CHAPTER XIX

**D**URING the entire drive from Rust Water to Ball's Corral, only one person spoke, and that was but a few words before the car was out of town. Barclay was at the wheel; Sloan and Nancy were in the rear seat; they were passing the largest of the tent saloons when she opened her eyes. The Blue Light was the name, painted in large letters on the canvas front and, to carry out the idea, the establishment boasted the largest lamp along the crooked street; it hung over the entrance, one of those gasoline torches which patent-medicine shows and small circuses still use, and its rays shone through the windows of the sedan; they fell on the girl's face.

Sloan said:

"You needn't be afraid. We're not going to hurt you. But we've got to take you with us. Understand?"

She did not answer. She saw his face for just a moment in the harsh glare; it stood out alone, surrounded by black shadows, and the blue rays played queer tricks with it; they discovered every tiny line which calculation had etched upon its smoothness; they brought forth all the coldness; and the evil that was lurking in the eyes was reflected at their touch. It was as if she were looking at a face which had been fashioned by some cunning sculptor out of ice; as if the carving were hung by invisible wires so that it seemed to be suspended in mid-air. And she knew that he had lied when he had said she need not fear; she knew that, if occasion should demand, he would not hesitate at murder.

In that moment when she returned to realization of things about her his face was the dominating impression. Then she realized she was in a car and that the car was moving—and a desire to scream was strong upon her. It brought the memory of another time when she had found herself in danger; she had called for help and her cry had been answered. But the man who had come to her that other night was dead. And her father was far away. If she called now, there would be no one to respond. She drew herself back into the corner of the seat, as far as possible from Sloan.

It was the only time in her life that she had ever entirely lost hope. Even in the bed of the gully that night when the flood cut her off and began to rise about the car, she had held off despair. She saw the last scattered lights of the camp flit by and vanish behind them. She caught a whiff of harsh wild perfume, the scent of the sage; and because she had grown up in the bare open reaches, the smell was as potent as strong liquor; it brought back the courage which has kept the women of the sagebrush country indomitable through the generations.

Lawton was dead; for some reason it did not seem possible. Yet she had heard the tidings twice. She told herself there was no doubt; it was the truth and she must face it. She had never dreamed that such news could bring her utter desolation. She had never longed for anything as she longed now for just a little time while she could be free from other things—alone with the grief which had come to her—able to weep.

But she was here in this car with these two who had robbed her father. And she was not done—not as long as she was living. She saw Barclay's back, very straight in the front seat; he was driving as he did everything, stiffly and with a sort of methodical efficiency. It was queer, now that she thought of it, that she had not suspected Barclay before. That was the reason she had never liked him—an instinct born of things too small to note had been trying to warn her and she had paid no heed to it. Lawton had suspected; probably he had known; he must have been in possession of some fact which he had not told her, the other afternoon when he spoke of the superintendent.

**F**OR some reason she was not afraid of Barclay; it was Sloan whom she feared. She had never seen much of him in Rust Water, but she had heard of him many times; a mining-man—so they said—come here to look for investments. It recurred to her then, the sudden paralysis which the revelation had brought when she heard those two voices coming through the closed door of Barclay's private office. It was some time before she got herself back in hand and began to think coherently once more.

The two of them had been at this business for weeks; and now when they were near the wind-up of the affair, the discovery of the missing mill machinery

had hastened their plans. By tomorrow morning the stolen high-grade would be crushed, the gold would be amalgamated, and the conspirators would be retorting off the quicksilver. And after that was done—

One thing was clear: they could not remain here. For she knew what was going on now. Not unless they got rid of her. And, in spite of the depth of her fear, she had a hope that they would not do this save as a last resort.

Three of them in the car, and all of them were silent, thinking their own thoughts. And if she had known what was in the minds of the other two she might not have been so brave.

BARCLAY was holding himself erect, watching the road, and all the time his mind was seeing other things. In spite of his growing dissatisfaction and the distrust which he had begun to feel toward Sloan; although he had been fearing just this crisis, dreading the collapse of the conspiracy, still he had never planned toward any course of action in case the eventuality should come.

The news that the theft of Ben Thomas' mill machinery was discovered had caught him unprepared. And the time in which he could make any preparations was short; it was growing less with every mile. There wasn't any doubt that Sloan was getting ready to hunt a safe way out; the chances were he had already found such a way. And Sloan was going to look out for himself—Barclay cherished no illusions whatever on that point.

What was it Sloan had said? Get that ore milled by daylight, and then Barclay was to do the retorting. And the two of them would depart together. That was it. And none save himself could handle these processes. It looked as if—up to that point—he was secure. But was he?

After the ore went through the mill they would make the cleanup. And that would leave several hundred pounds of amalgam; this would be sacked; and it would not be bulky. Supposing Sloan were thinking of getting away with those sacks as soon as the milling was done?

And Sloan would be figuring on something sudden. With this girl appearing on the scene, the way she had, it wasn't going to be safe to linger around Red Water very long. Jim Henry's daughter couldn't vanish from home without investigation.

He wondered what Sloan planned doing with her now. Whatever it was, trouble was going to result—"In a big way," he told himself. And he did not mean to be within reach when it began. To get his hands on the amalgam and to keep them on it. That was the idea. And at any cost. No matter what he had to do. It occurred to him then that in a mill, when the balls were roaring in the steel container, making such a thunder you could not hear yourself speak, there were plenty of chances for one who knew the ropes to slip up behind a greenhorn without danger of detection. The idea was intriguing. . . .

Sloan was leaning back in his corner of the seat and his big mouth was like a wide red slit. His eyes were half closed and he was weighing certain probabilities. If there is such a thing as cold-blooded panic, it describes his state of mind.

Not so many years before, he had listened to a bit of advice which appealed to him and henceforth he had always remembered it. At the time he was sojourning in a Federal penitentiary on a mail-fraud conviction, and he had managed by good behavior, to get a trusty's job. In this position he found himself in frequent contact with the aristocracy of the institution—the professional crooks who always knew on which side their bread was buttered. It was one of these, a forger serving sentence for the first time during a long career of law-breaking, who handed him the bit of wisdom.

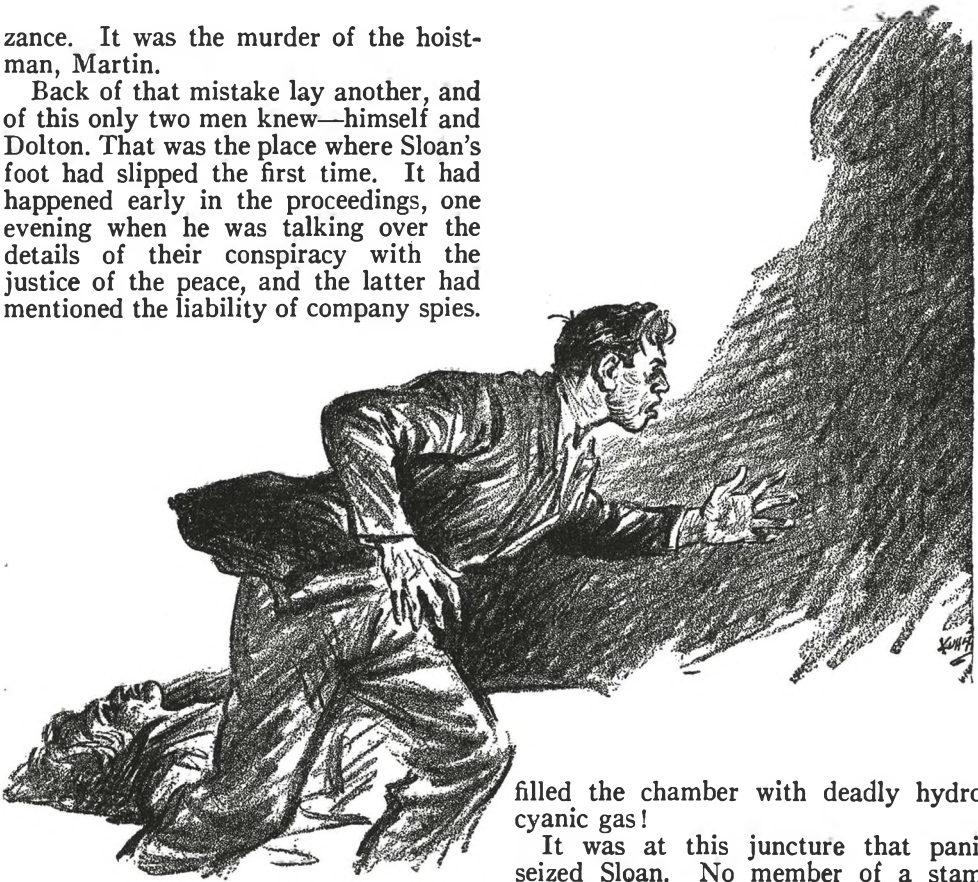
"When a painter is at work," the old crook said, "he is always climbing ladders. Sometimes his foot slips. Then he falls. It's the same with a grafter. Only they take the painter to the hospital and they send the grafter to stir. The idea is—watch your step."

EVER since then Sloan had watched his step. He had always tried to be sure of the spot where one foot was placed before he started to set the other down. Being by nature a man of careful calculation, this had been the easier for him.

During the last hour or so he had been looking back over the ground which he had been traveling since he came to Rust Water, searching for the spot where he had made the misstep. And so his thoughts had taken a wider range than Barclay's. He had discovered something of which the latter had not taken cogni-

zance. It was the murder of the hoistman, Martin.

Back of that mistake lay another, and of this only two men knew—himself and Dolton. That was the place where Sloan's foot had slipped the first time. It had happened early in the proceedings, one evening when he was talking over the details of their conspiracy with the justice of the peace, and the latter had mentioned the liability of company spies.



Then Sloan's lips had tightened and he had said:

"Only one thing to do with a rat. When you find him, kill him."

So he was sitting back in the corner now, reviewing the catastrophe which was in process. And he was looking ahead to examine all the possibilities. Things were beginning to break swiftly. Perhaps there were other events of which he had not learned. And, if accumulating disasters overwhelmed him, what was going to happen?

Sooner or later one thing was inevitable. Some one would dig up the body in the sand dunes. An accidental discovery, perhaps. Or perhaps—and this was more likely—one of his fellow prisoners was going to start talking. And when the murder came to light there was that bit of instructions which he had given Dolton, to connect him with it as an accessory before the fact.

The chance of doing a few years' time is one thing and the possibility of execution is another. What was it they did in Nevada? Took a man to a little room and bound him to a chair. Then they left him there and turned on a valve which

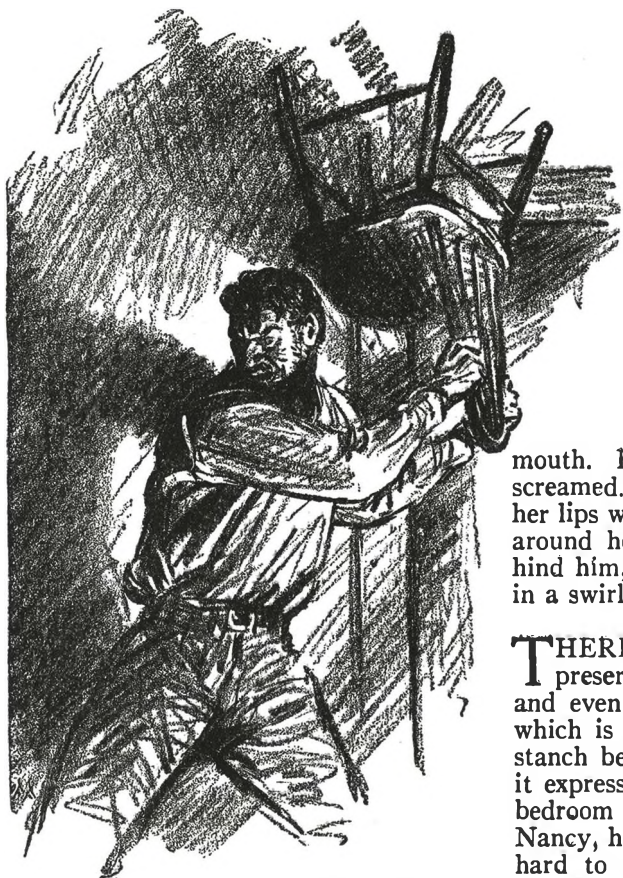
filled the chamber with deadly hydrocyanic gas!

It was at this juncture that panic seized Sloan. No member of a stampeded crowd was ever more ruthless in his blind efforts to escape danger than he was, as he sat there, letting his eyes go from the man in front of him to the girl on the seat beside him. Sometime before they arrived at Ball's Corral he arrived at his decision. Barclay must remain in the picture until the ore went through the mill. As for Nancy—

The car stopped before the old ranch-house. The cottonwoods were filling the space between the steep hills with their rustling when Sloan stepped out and spoke to Barclay for the first time since they had left the offices of the Rust Water Con.

"Ball's cleared out and left the place for us. I told Dolton to see to that. You go ahead and get things ready in the barn. I'll take this girl into the house and lock her up."

**B**UT the superintendent's answer was drowned by the clamor of the dogs. There were four of them, and since the days when they had first opened their eyes as puppies they had known only scanty food and rough treatment here. Why they should fancy that they owed any loyalty to their establishment is one



Sloan did not, until it was too late, see the chair. He started toward Ball, when the blow fell.

mouth. He started toward her, and she screamed. The sound had barely passed her lips when he was upon her, his hands around her throat. The door shut behind him, and the world went from her in a swirl of blackness.

of those mysteries which only a dog can explain; but if they were mistaken in their allegiance they at least showed hard sense in the bestowal of their suspicions. They surged into the yard and, when one of them was not darting in, striving to sink his teeth into Sloan's leg, he was proclaiming his opinion of this interloper to all the world. . . .

Cold-blooded murder is an ugly business but there is something awful about the nature of the crime, which surrounds it with an atmosphere of distinction. No killer ever conducted his victim to the spot which he had selected for the deed under circumstances so ignominious as these. As for Nancy, she walked ahead, ignoring the yelpings of the pack; if she felt any dread of them, her face betrayed no sign of it—while Sloan was shaking, the sweat was standing out in drops on his forehead and his flat face was white when he flung the door open and bade her enter.

The dogs had withdrawn now and she was within the sitting-room; in here it was quite dark, but where Sloan was standing on the threshold there was some light. She glanced around and saw the change that had come over him. There was no mistaking the coldness in his eyes, the cruel set of the shark

**T**HERE is an old saying about self-preservation and the laws of nature; and even if Ball had never heard it,—which is altogether possible,—he was a staunch believer in the philosophy which it expressed. When he stood before his bedroom window and caught sight of Nancy, her back was toward him. It is hard to say just what he might have done if he had recognized her then; as it was he made up his mind at once. The memory of that ugly affair on his front porch the night of the cloudburst helped him to his decision. He had gotten himself mixed up in one bad piece of business and that was enough for him. He turned away from the window and he proceeded to put on his clothes. No fireman, responding to an alarm, could have set about it more expeditiously, and in his case there was not much dressing to do; his pants and boots and wide-brimmed hat, that was all. The uproar of the dogs in front drowned the noise of the back door as he banged it shut behind him.

To get away, out of sight and out of hearing, and to remain away as long as they were here; that was the one purpose in his mind and he was losing no time in its accomplishment. He had put a good hundred feet between himself and the house when Nancy screamed. It was very brief, the mere fragment of a shriek, stifled in its beginning. The suddenness with which it ceased was more disquieting than the sound itself. He listened for a moment but he heard nothing save the rustling of the cottonwoods and the scuffling of the dogs. They had rushed around the house and were

clustered close about him in the darkness. He swore and started on again.

It was Dolton who had gotten him into these entanglements. He remembered the evening when the justice of the peace had come out to the ranch and told him that some unknown parties wanted to use one of his sheds to store a truckload of machinery, that all he had to do was say nothing about the matter and there would be good pay for him. He was cursing Dolton as he limped along the narrow lane that led through the cottonwoods and down the bank into the creek bottom. The wind was twisting the long branches and the air was filled with the dry whispering of the leaves over head. At times he could hear the pat-pat of the dogs behind him; every so often one of them paused and growled. There was something wrong back there in the house. And this time it was a woman.

Was it then another affair like that one whose climax he had witnessed on his front porch?

Ball did not own much chivalry—not as the term is generally understood, at any rate. Women were meant for bearing children and doing the hard work around the ranch-house, to his way of thinking. If a man happened to beat his wife a bit that was all in the way of domestic business, and if a man happened to stay away in town on a week's drunk, it was his perquisite. But killing a woman—

"Who's killing her?" he asked himself as he halted. "Jest because she let out a yelp—" By way of answer one of the dogs howled dismally.

That settled it. Ball turned back and, now that he had begun to retrace his footsteps, he forgot about his twisted knee; he made much better time on his return than he had on his retreat. He opened the rear door without a sound and, as he stepped across the threshold, he was conscious of a queer noise in the front room.

**S**LOAN was kneeling on the floor; he was bending over Nancy's prostrate form and his big hands were clamped down on her soft throat; the sweat was pouring over his face and he was wishing that the hoarse gasps would cease. His fingers sank in a little farther; he did not hear the foot upon the threshold of the doorway which led into the kitchen. Ball was almost to him when he raised his head; but the room was dark and Sloan did not, until it was too late, see

the chair which the other had swung above his shoulder. He had just gained his feet and started toward Ball when the blow fell.

Ball dropped the chair and bent over the man with the shark mouth. Only for a moment, that was all it needed to assure him that he need expect no more trouble from this source. Then he went into his room and lighted the kerosene lamp, and when he returned with it he nearly let it fall; his hand was shaking as he set it down on the long table.

"Jim Henry's girl!" He said it barely above his breath.

**H**E was thinking how near he had come to continuing his flight when he had stood under the cottonwoods, weighing his safety against a woman's. The knowledge that he had barely missed abandoning her filled him with rage. It was not against himself; it was the anger of suddenly awakened righteousness; he cursed the dead man on the floor and all the rest of them. The knowledge that they had dragged him so close to this crowning infamy fanned the rising flame of his newly born virtue.

Nancy's eyes were wide open but the only light there was that which fell upon them from the lamp; the noise of her breathing was not so terrible as it had been when he first came into the room. The color in her face was becoming more normal. As he looked on her he heard the drumming of a heavy motor on the road which wound down from the summit. He had listened to that engine once before, tonight. He blew out the lamp and his huge fingers were clenched.

The headlights threw a wide glare upon the beaten earth and the barking of the dogs was barely audible above the noise of the motor as the truck turned into the ranch-yard. The wide door of the stable opened and Barclay came forth; he stood there while the justice of the peace was busy with steering-wheel and gear lever, backing, pulling up, backing once more; until the rear of the truck was lined against the barn doorway. Then he shut off the ignition and got down from the cab.

The dogs had given it up as a bad job and retreated to the porch, where they lay growling intermittently. The voices of the two men out there were inaudible but, from their gestures, it was evident that they were discussing something earnestly; Barclay's face was white and drawn; and once when he pointed to

Lawton and Red who were lying on top of the load of sacked ore, the watcher in the front room saw that his hand was shaking. Then Dolton nodded as one who has made a decision, and started toward the door; the superintendent laid a hand on his shoulder as if to restrain him, but the justice of the peace shook him off.

Ball's big fingers were still clenched and he was standing close beside the threshold when Dolton started across the porch. There was a little lull in the wind just then and the breathing of the unconscious girl was the only sound in the darkened room. The justice of the peace halted; he stood there uncertainly; he shook his head and turned away.

He turned again when he heard Ball's step behind him—he uttered a hoarse shout as he saw the look in the other's face. Barclay beheld the huge figure leaping out of the doorway and his cry of alarm mingled with Dolton's. Then he ran to the sedan; he had the engine going and he got a glimpse of the two men as the lights fell on them when he was making the turn to the road. They were on the beaten earth before the porch steps and Ball's long arms were extended. His huge hands were clasping Dolton's neck, and he was shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat.

A few minutes later the red tail-light of the sedan was winking away in the darkness where the road wound down to the sagebrush flats. Ball got to his feet and stood beside the unconscious form in the ranch-yard, watching as the car disappeared; it was the last anyone saw of Barclay thereabouts—that fleck of red light, fading away into the night.

## CHAPTER XX

WHEN the sheriff and his deputy stopped in Rust Water the next afternoon on their quest for the stolen mill machinery, Dolton was in a worse way than Nancy Henry. She was suffering mainly from bruises and from shock, but the shock was not so bad as it might have been, for the discovery that Lawton was alive and unhurt had done much to take away the memory of the ordeal through which she had passed the night before. So she was able to tell her story, but neither Lawton nor Red Murdoch were available to give theirs; and

the first knowledge which the sheriff got about the angle of this case which had to do with the claim-jumping was gained at Ball's Corral. He and his deputy were busy taking inventory of the recovered loot when Lawton and Red arrived on their way back from the Wild Rose Hills with their two prisoners.

These latter had little to give by way of information, for Walter's knowledge of what had been going on was slight and the truck-driver was not doing any talking. The latter changed his mind a few days later when the body of the murdered hoist-man was discovered in the sand dunes. By that time giving State's evidence had become a sort of free-for-all race, in which every one of the implicated parties was a zealous contestant.

IT was Dolton who had fired the shot that killed Martin, and he was the only member of the gang who paid the extreme penalty in the little lethal chamber at the Carson penitentiary. As for Ball, he came out of the affair as a sort of local hero—to be, in a short while, forgotten in the rush of newcomers.

On the evening following the sheriff's call in Rust Water, Jim Henry arrived by plane from San Francisco in answer to Nancy's telegram, and he was with her when Lawton came up to the house on top of the hill an hour or so later. The recovery of the stolen ore had come in time to save his option on the Rust Water Con, and the cessation of high-grading materially increased the mill receipts of the mine from that time on. So Jim Henry was able to drive over to the claims in the Wild Rose Hills a few days afterward and give the two partners the assurance of proper backing for the development of the rich property which they had discovered. . . .

The road between Rust Water and the claims remained unimproved that summer. It was a rough road and the drive took quite a bit of time. Furthermore there was much work to do there in the hills during these weeks. But despite these things Lawton managed to get over to Jim Henry's house quite frequently. And long before the first snow flew that winter he was taken for granted by the camp as an essential factor in the lively growth of this new mining district and the prospective son-in-law of the man who had developed the Rust Water Con.

Here ends Mr. Bechdolt's novel "Nevada Gold." He is writing for us a novelette of the Civil War in the Far West, which we hope to offer you soon.



# Warriors in Exile

**T**HE hitch-hiker drew my attention, and I slowed down. . . . Danger? Out in the middle of the desert? Of course. Like all prudent people, I refuse to pick up hitch-hikers; but somehow this man was different. He had a magnificent figure, a proud air, and his gray beard was as massive as the man himself.

Besides, I had a revolver, an old navy cannon, hitched to the emergency-brake handle.

So I took him aboard. Winnemucca was behind, and I was headed for Salt Lake City. He, apparently, was headed for anywhere. After an hour or so we got talking; his name was Kolbar. An Alsatian by birth, he said, but he had been wandering over the West for the past thirty years. He was sixty-two.

"I love the desert," he said simply.

We had grub and beer aboard, and along in the heat of the day drew out of the highway and set about eating in comfort. Kolbar was a proud fellow, sure enough. He had some bread and cheese himself, and would have refused my food, but I pressed it on him.

Then came a trick of destiny. I wanted to use up the old loads in the gun, clean it and reload it, and I hauled it out. When he saw that antique cannon of mine, his eyes lit up, and his expression made me smile.

"Ever use one?" I said, inviting him.

He took the weapon, laughed in his beard, strode over to a clump of mesquite and hung on the bush the paper bag his cheese had been in. I can remember now how the bag was all smeared with grease-spots from the cheese. He came back to me and swung around.



Illustrated by  
Jeremy Cannon



*"A Devil in the Heart" brings you back to the Foreign Legion in its best-known field—the Sahara—in a story deeply vital and wholly unusual.*

## By H. BEDFORD-JONES

Without a word, he threw up the big revolver and let loose. Five shots; and every one of them touched that paper bag. Yet he shook his head sadly as he turned to me.

"Not so good," he observed. "Thirty-five years ago, I'd have put every bullet through the middle of the bag. Just as I did that day—"

His voice trailed off. He sat down on the car's running-board, took the cleaning-things I had ready, and set about cleaning the gun in a shipshape manner. Plainly, he knew how.

"What day was that?" I asked.

"September, the 2nd of September, 1903," he replied. "In a desert like this, rocky and empty, a desert of little hills and deep ravines, a desert like hell itself and as full of devils. Yet the worst devils are those in a man's heart."

The bitterness of his words warned me to be careful.

"In what part of the world was your desert, Kolbar?"

"The southern Sahara," he said.

I sat up suddenly.

"Hello! On that date? You don't, by any chance, refer to the fight put up by Captain Vauclain's detachment of the Foreign Legion against the Moroccan Arabs?"

His eyes rested on me in astonishment. "You've heard of the Foreign Legion? I thought nobody knew anything about it, in this country. The Sahara is on the other side of the world!"

"I was down there a couple of years ago, by motor," I told him.

"*Tiens, tiens!*" He was still openly astonished. He sighed a little and wagged his massive beard. "By motor,

imagine! Those terrific wastes where five kilometers meant agonies of marching—well, I suppose the world changes. Even the Legion changes.”

“Then you were in the Legion?” I said incautiously. He stiffened.

“No! Not at all. But I knew a man who was. Forster, a Swiss; a big man, like me. He was in the Legion, and he hated it. The Legion was brutal, in those days. Men deserted. They chose death rather than their seven years of hell. Forster was one who skipped out. He was in Vauclain’s mounted outfit—ninety men of the Legion and thirty Spahis, who were escorting some six hundred camels with ammunition and supplies to the post of El Aschad. Eleven groups of *sokhars*; exactly 572 camels, to be precise.”

I got out what remained of the beer. He took a bottle, drank, sighed again.

“It’s a queer story,” he said thoughtfully. “Forster hated the Legion and had made all arrangements to desert. He and a Pole named Zinken were going together. They had some money; with their mules, some water and grub, they counted on getting clear across to the Spanish colonies on the coast. They intended leaving on this night of September first. They knew that hostile Arabs were somewhere around, but no one suspected that a column of such strength would be attacked.”

Kolbar paused, lit a cigarette, and began to laugh.

“Two other men were with the column, and I wish you could have seen them!” he went on. “One was Père Simon, a bearded Franciscan in his brown robe; the other was a Protestant chaplain, Jalert, who was authorized by the Minister of War to go where he pleased. They were magnificent, those two! On Sundays, they held services on the opposite sides of whatever camp they were in. They did no proselyting; they were with the army to serve. But this night something funny had happened. You see, Jalert was all for prohibition, and would try to get the men to sign the pledge; he had quite a bit of luck, because no one wanted to displease him and it was easy to scrawl one’s name and make him happy—”

THE two of them were talking, low-voiced, when at eight o’clock Captain Vauclain ordered the fires out; the march was set for two in the morning, the last stage of the weary march to the

post of El Aschad. The men slept. The camels, at one side, grunted and stirred. Only the outposts watched and awaited the midnight relief.

Lines of burnouses by high saddles marked the sleeping Spahis, the wavy croups of their horses touched by the starlight. Beyond were the six-man tents of the Legion, their mules grouped to the rear. Here over their dying fire the two chaplains talked business.

PÈRE SIMON was gaunt, indefatigable, earnest. He wore only sandals, brown robe and a musette bag with his few personal belongings. Another bag, containing all his religious articles, was carried with the baggage. Jalert was thin also, but a rather jolly fellow, and quite a surgeon at times. Just now he was chuckling at Père Simon’s complaint.

“You signed up that rascal Forster,” the Franciscan was saying, “to drink nothing for fifteen days. But today, he got into my bag and drank all my communion wine. I’ve traced it to him.”

“And you’ll have him punished?”

“Don’t be absurd. You know me better,” snapped Père Simon.

“Ha! Well, I have a complaint to make, also,” said Jalert. “You were talking with that rogue of a Pole, Zinken, about your experiences along the Rio de Oro, to the west, and the Spanish colonies there.”

“Yes. Zinken was much interested in our work. In fact,” said Père Simon, “he studied for the church in his youth and he made some valuable suggestions.”

“His interest,” Jalert said dryly, “isn’t what you think. He and that rascal Forster are scheming to desert. Zinken was worming out of you information about the trails and water-holes in that country.”

“Impossible!” Père Simon growled in his beard. “Desert? On active service? It would be death, whether they were caught or they got away!”

“Little they care,” said Jalert. “I know the symptoms; so do you. Now, I have a certain sympathy for Forster. He has a good streak in him. It’s not apparent, but I’m convinced it’s there.”

“Hm!” grunted Père Simon. “I, at least, am much concerned in keeping Zinken from making a corpse of himself. Desertion! Why, it’s utter folly, at this moment! Where are those two rogues? We might have a word with them now.”

“Impossible.” Jalert jerked a thumb toward the rocky height above. “They’re



on outpost duty. Tomorrow, by all means, and before we end the march at El Aschad. I fancy they'll skip out from there. I did have a word with Forster about it, and he said it was none of my blasted business, but he didn't deny the intention of deserting. Both of us ought to go at them together."

"An excellent idea," said the Franciscan. "We must get the thought out of their minds before anyone else suspects it. Actually, it's a question of saving those two fools from themselves!"

They worked together perfectly, those two. They knew how to calm the stormy

"Desertion?" grunted Père Simon. "Why, it's utter folly! Where are those rogues?"

hearts of rancor or despair that beat under the Legion uniform. And when bullets were flying, their work was as much under fire as with the hospital unit.

In this case, they were a few hours too slow. Forster and Zinken were relieved at midnight, but did not show up in camp. When the whistle of Captain Vauclain sounded at two o'clock, they were far away. Not a difficult matter, since from midnight on, the camels had been loading and preparing for the



march, making plenty of disturbance. It was three o'clock when the Spahis filed out to scout ahead and on the flanks, and the march began.

The hundreds of camels were strung out over four kilometers; behind them swung along the column, in square. The captain had trouble with the guides, who were inefficient; the stars had been veiled by high fog and the night was pitch black. That two men were missing, the officers did not know.

**T**HE missing men were well away. At a distance from camp with the mules they had secured, they halted to confer. Forster, bearded and massive, was by nature the leader. The Pole, Zinken, was a shrewd, raw-boned fellow.

"As I see it," Forster said, "stick to our plan and head south, in advance of the column; they'll look for us everywhere else. We can skirt El Aschad, replenish our water at the wells there tonight, and head on. Agreed?"

"Agreed," said Zinken, a man of few words. "Lead."

Both of those men knew the Legion. They knew how to march, to fight, to conduct themselves in all emergencies; they knew how to suffer, and how to die. But, in the Legion, one moves always by order. Now they were in the desert, in starless night, where there was no road or track to follow. And neither of them knew the desert, or had a compass.

They went on and on. The eastern sky was graying, when Zinken halted, with an oath, and pointed.

"Look! There's the east. We've been heading west, not south!"

Forster, looked, cursed, and acquiesced. He swung to the south, now, but he knew that in four hours they might have gone horribly amiss. It was, perhaps, half an hour later that he halted, and in the grayness of dawn held up a hand.

"Listen!"

They were on a rocky rise. Somewhere, not far distant, and to their left,

lifted a dull murmurous confusion, felt rather than heard. Zinken lifted his head and sniffed.

"Ah!" he said, under his breath. "Camels! Below, and upwind from us."

A guttural, piercing voice came to them with three Arabic words: "*Allah i samah!*" followed by a low echo of laughter, a jingle of accoutrements. They stood frozen. Spahis, scouts! The murmurous sound was the sluff-sluff of camels by the hundreds. Here, almost within reach in the darkness, marched the column!

Forster echoed those Arabic words, an exclamation in common use.

"Allah will pardon! Well, Zinken, we've been fools; we've circled around. Those are the right-flank scouts who just went past, below us. We can still circle and come back into the line of march ahead of the column—"

"And be seen by those damned Spahis?" said Zinken. "Or by others? No. We've bungled it. Better lay a course southwest, and avoid El Aschad altogether. Hit away from the column on an angle."

They headed the mules back, and struck off at once.

"Those Spahi scouts are the ones to get after us," said Forster. The Pole grinned nastily and slapped his rifle. They both detested the Spahis.

By six o'clock the full daylight had arrived, and they could advance with no more apprehension of losing their direction. As they were going down a long slope, Zinken uttered a low exclamation and checked Forster.

"Look back at the skyline—I thought so!"

Forster obeyed. Two mounted figures appeared there for an instant, then came forward and were lost to sight. No others showed. Below, and ahead, broken country descended to the vast level plain of El Ascherak. Forster, who had carried a map tucked away for weeks past, nodded to the other.



"Two Spahis, eh? Very well. I want to have a look at this map anyhow. They're a mile behind us, at least. Here are rocks. Why not rest before we kill them?"

"Agreed," said Zinken.

They took the mules among high rocks, tethered them out of sight, and settled down to a cigarette and a wait, their rifles ready. Forster had spread out his map and was studying the broken ground far ahead, when a low word broke from him. He seemed frozen. The Pole looked, his eyes focused on the distance, and he jerked out a grunt.

Moving shapes were there, fifty, sixty, a hundred of them at least, flitting across their field of vision and disappearing.

"Arabs, and at the gallop!" muttered Forster. "Damned queer! If they—"

Suddenly he dived for his map, stared at it, looked up at Zinken, wide-eyed.

"Name of the devil—look at this! They can be going only to El Aschad, or else to cut the column's line of march. Eh? And—"

Excitement spewed color into the lean browned cheeks of the Pole.

"Right!" he exclaimed. "And spurring fast. Why? A hundred, at most."

"I get you." Forster nodded: "Not enough to attack the column—spurring, therefore, to join others and be in at the death. Suppose we don't kill those two Spahis after all, but send 'em back to warn Vauclain?"

"Vauclain be damned," spat the Pole. "I'd like to see the whole outfit wiped out. Why let those Spahis take in news of us?"

The two looked at each other; their whole natures clashed, in this one look.

FORSTER flushed under his bronze. "We'll have to warn the column," he said slowly. "It's but common decency. We've bunked with those men. It was just about here, three years ago, that a Legion convoy was attacked, ambushed, decimated. We must warn 'em."

"I'll be damned if I will!" said Zinken.

"You'll be damned if you won't," Forster rasped. "I mean it."

As always, when actually on the march and on campaign, the mounted companies of the Legion were given great latitude in equipment and uniform. Forster, for example, wore a *chechia*, known in the Occident alone as a "fez"; this Zinken disdained because, as he claimed, he was a good Christian and refused to wear headgear that all over the Orient pointed to its wearer as a believer in Allah. Zinken wore Arab footgear instead of shoes, as being more comfortable. Forster had replaced his shirt with a Saharan *seroual*, and under it had a revolver hidden. He was an expert with the weapon.

"Those two Spahis get stopped for good, here and now." Zinken walked toward the two rifles, thirty feet away.

"I say not," rejoined Forster, not moving, but getting out his revolver. "Zinken, for God's sake listen to me! I won't let you do it."

The Pole strode on and picked up his rifle. He swung around, his eyes on fire.

"You damned fool!" he blazed out. "It would spoil everything for us. My skin comes first. To hell with the Legion! I'd like nothing better than to see the column shot to pieces."

"I wouldn't," said Forster. "I say you sha'n't do it! Those Spahis must take in the warning to Vauclain! We can get away all right—"

"We can't, damn you!" snarled Zinken.

Neither of them took note, so absorbed were they in each other, that the two figures coming from the rear were now in plain sight among the rocks.

"I'll stop you if I must!" And Forster flew into a rage. "Do as I say, you damned Pole! I'm giving orders here—"

Zinken saw the revolver whip up. A scream of fury burst from him.

"Murder me, would you?" He flung up his rifle and fired.

Forster's revolver merged its voice with that of the rifle. Furious, the Swiss fired again and again; Zinken's one bullet had touched him, it was life or death



now. So rapidly did he pull trigger that the hammer clicked before he realized what he was doing. Zinken's rifle exploded again, the bullet going into the sky; then the Pole crumpled and fell in a heap. All five bullets had hit him in the forehead.

**F**ORSTER reloaded the revolver, and walked forward. He looked down at the dead Zinken; all the fire had gone out of his face, his eyes were dull and vacant. He still stood there, staring down, when the two riders approached. He glanced up at them listlessly, then surprise grew in his gaze.

Not Spahis after all! Instead, Père Simon and Jalert.

He reached down and covered the face of the Pole. The two men of religion, who had actually witnessed the shooting, dismounted and came up to him.

"Keep going," he said in a dead voice. "You must warn Vauclain. Arabs—"

"You killed him!" accused Jalert. "We saw you do it! But he fired first. Man! You're hurt! Then he hit you!"

Forster waved him away. Père Simon was gazing at him curiously, and now produced a canteen. He shoved it at Forster. "Drink," he ordered, and Forster obeyed. Cognac and water. "Better

than stolen wine, eh? Take off that *seroual*. Here, M'sieur Jalert! What do you think of it?"

Forster bared his torso. Jalert looked at the wound under the arm and laughed.

"Bah! A mere touch. Forster, what were you fighting about? Here, you fool; stand still till I get a bandage on!"

"We thought you were two Spahis—you're on horses," said Forster dully, while the pastor expertly applied a bandage. "We had seen the Arabs, a hundred of them; going to cut off the column, evidently. I wanted to warn Vauclain—and he didn't. That's all."

Suddenly he blinked, awakened. "Hello!" he went on. "What are you two doing here, anyway?"

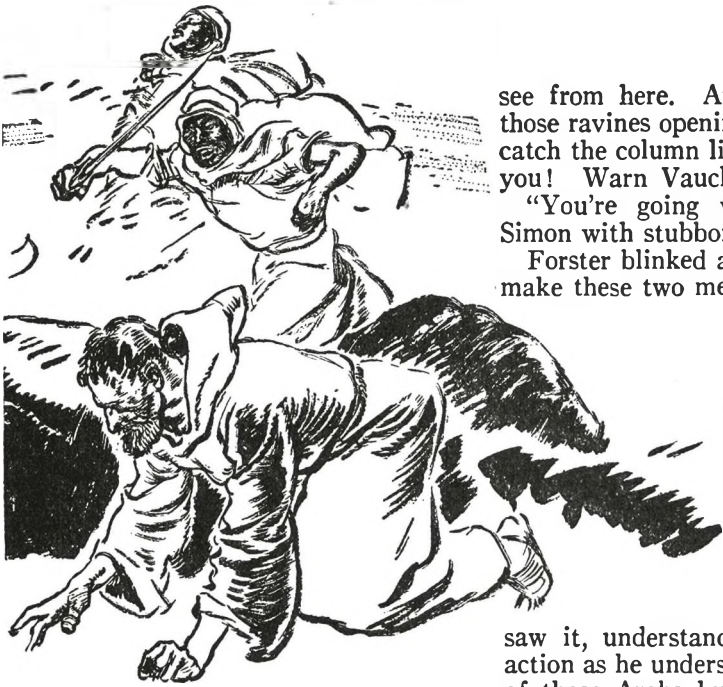
Père Simon rubbed his beard.

"Hm! Looking for you two deserters. We caught sight of you, and followed. It was only Providence that guided us."

"You're coming back to duty," said Jalert with authority.

"Go to hell," snapped Forster rudely. "I'm doing nothing of the sort. But someone must warn the column. Get off, do you hear? No more nonsense about me going back."

"Vauclain has scouts," Père Simon rejoined. "Let him look to his own business. Ours is with you. We're taking you back with us—to duty, Forster!"



The last Arab pitched down, rolled over, came up with his knife—and Forster gave him the last bullet, between the eyes.

Forster saw that he was quite serious about it, and went off into a bellow of laughter that held no mirth whatever.

"Back to duty, eh? Back, to be punished for desertion—punished for killing this swine at our feet! *Nom de Dieu*, what an optimist you are!"

"Come, be sensible," intervened Jalert sharply. "Your explanation of this matter is quite sufficient; besides, we saw Zinken fire first. As to desertion, I doubt whether it's known yet by any of the officers. And even that, perhaps, can be arranged. Your desire to warn the captain will atone for it. Not that there's any need of warning."

Forster sobered abruptly.

"Messieurs, there's acute need for warning," he said gravely. "Vauclain depends on the Spahis for warning of any ambush—ahead and on the flanks, quite as should be. But how do those Spahis scout? We've seen them along the march. We men in the ranks know more than the officers. Those Spahis act as though on campaign service around some little peaceful outpost of the Tell; they make a promenade, instead of making a careful inspection of the terrain. Why, they'd ride straight past any ambush without seeing it!"

HE left them and went back to the map he had been studying. Picking it up, he rejoined them, glanced at the sun-bright sky, and shook his head.

"Look." He pointed to the map. "Here's the column, marching south, straight on to the immense plain you can

see from here. An ambush in any of those ravines opening on the plain would catch the column like rats. Get off with you! Warn Vauclain!"

"You're going with us," said Père Simon with stubborn insistence.

Forster blinked at him. He could not make these two men see the thing as he

saw it, understand the urgent need of action as he understood it. The memory of those Arabs hurtling across the distance flickered in his brain; a groan escaped him.

"Come, my son," went on the Franciscan more gently. "You were guilty of a moment's rashness in deserting—"

"A moment carefully planned and long awaited," snapped Forster.

"No matter. Destiny has intervened; Providence, I should say." And Père Simon pointed to the dead man. "The circumstances will pardon you; I answer for it. You've served three years. There's good stuff in you. Forget this madness, come back and serve out the balance, face your duty like a man and not like a coward!"

"To hell with it," said Forster; and desperately, he faced them. "Look here, I know what I'm about. I can make the Río de Oro country, I can make it alone, and I'm going to do it. I'm built for it; I've thought it all out. Climb on your horses. I'll get our mules."

"What do you mean to do?" queried Jalert.

"Accompany you back within reach of the column and send you in with warning, or fire a couple of shots as warning," said Forster. "Then make my get-away. And no more of your blasted arguments!" he added savagely. "Move!"

He slung his own rifle over his back and, after thoughtfully taking the money and personal effects of the dead Zinken, he went to where the mules were hidden. With two mules, he reflected, his escape to Spanish territory was certain.

He mounted, pushed the mules hard, and the two horses followed. Despite

the peril, he headed down for the plain, there picked up the tracks of the Arabs he had seen, and swung off to the left on this trail. Here was sand instead of rock; vast dunes of sand glittering ahead in the level light of sunrise, the grim rock range rising abruptly to the left as they curved along its front. No Arabs were to be seen. These raiding tribesmen from across the Moroccan border knew their business.

**A**BRUPTLY, a rocky spur showed ahead. To the right, circling it, went the Arab trail. Forster eyed the rocks keenly. Not high; undoubtedly a mere jutting outpost of the hills. He decided to gamble, and turned to the other two.

"We'll go straight across there; the mules can make it," he said. "No back talk! Follow me. We'll save time and distance, if I'm right. If your horses can't keep at it, dismount and lead them."

He pushed his mules straight at the long rocky slope, following a faint ravine which came down from the saddle of the spur.

Except for this faintly defined wash, the mules could not have made it, but here was fair footing, even for the horses. It was a rush and a scramble, until at length Forster was up. The undulating crest beyond showed nothing, and he pressed ahead, to find the crest of the spur wider than he had believed. The frightful possibility that he had lost the gamble chilled his blood. If, after all, this were not a short cut—

Ah! He drew rein, as the other two slowly overtook him. Père Simon called: "Forster, I'm afraid this leads nowhere."

"No! I was right." Forster's voice held an urgent ring. "We can go a little farther, then we must leave the animals. Look!"

Straight ahead, he pointed to a faintly discernible tinge of yellow rising in air.

"Dust, fine sand," he explained. "It's from the camels. Come along! We'll cut into the very path of the column. Another ravine, no doubt."

A few hundred yards farther, not even the mules could cross the rocky expanse ahead. All four animals were tethered and left. It was not far now. Forster could even catch glimpses of a wide ravine that debouched at an angle into the plain.

This became more clear, as the nearest intervening rocks were passed. The

three men scrambled on. Forster, with a grunt of dismay, looked at his watch; nine o'clock. The sun was beating down hotly. Suddenly, almost as by magic, they rounded a pinnacle of rocks and found themselves at the head of a little ravine that broke down abruptly upon the scene. They were within five hundred yards of the column itself.

Exclamations burst from them—of surprise, from the other two, of abrupt dismay from Forster. However, he reflected swiftly, he was safe enough. He could make his way back out of sight, retrace his steps to the animals, and get off with horses and mules together, long before any pursuit could catch him up. . . . All this in the mental flash of an instant.

To the right was the draggling convoy of camels, trudging into the plain. Here ahead was the Legion, dismounted, in deployed line, getting its breakfast. The Spahis were ahead, moving slowly, negligently.

"You see," panted Jalert, "you were entirely wrong. There are no hostiles in sight anywhere. There's no place for any ambush—"

"Thunders of heaven! Look at that!" burst out Forster. He pointed at a deep gully which made a semi-circle across the mouth of the ravine, a hundred yards from the camp. "Look at that gully, at the heavy brush which fringes it! Those Spahis passed right by. But from here, from above—"

"Ah! Glints of metal!" exclaimed Père Simon. "Yes, yes! And some movement there, too. You were right! The gully is deep enough to hide horses and men alike. Come, Jalert! We'll get in with warning—"

"I'll give it first. No time to waste."

Forster unslung his rifle. He fired twice, in air.

**H**E was half a minute too late. As he was in the act, puffs of powder-smoke lifted from far beyond, where a group of the flanking Spahis must have come upon a number of hidden Arabs. The group went down in a scramble of men and horses. Two emerged, heading back at a gallop.

The alarm had been given. On the instant, the Legion broke into motion, caught up rifles, and fell into line. To the left, spurting figures came out of the gully; a gasp broke from Forster as he saw them. Men by the hundreds—three hundred, four hundred—opening a ter-



rific fire on the section of the line there. Ahead, the gully vomited up more robed figures, pouring in a fire on the other sections.

"It's an army!" cried Jalert, agony in his voice as he watched. "Look! Captain Vauclain is deploying his section behind the mules—he's down—"

Père Simon watched, with horror in his bearded face. Vauclain was down. Another and another officer was down—all of them were down. The men were falling. But they were firing, too. An incoherent word of dismay and consternation escaped Forster, a cry of sheer terror, as he pointed.

FROM behind the first sand-dune, eight hundred yards away, a second Arab line appeared at a gallop. Not three or four hundred of the enemy, but double that number!

"Sergeant-major Tissier is down," broke out Forster. "Look! There goes Sergeant Dannert. And Montes—and Lieutenant Hansen—all the officers are gone—"

The three watched, seized by a paralysis of futile despair. Everything was happening in a moment. Despite death striking into their ranks, the Legion was rallying upon two little rocky knolls which commanded all the ground around. The wounded were transported there. The third section was almost destroyed; some of them reached it. The fourth section fixed bayonets and charged the Arabs, but the charge was broken. The survivors opened a fire by volleys that had tremendous effect. The second section deployed and attacked the Arabs to the left.

All this, it seemed, in no time at all. One sergeant and two corporals remained to command the groups of the Legion, but these groups were now in action, in motion, with cool and precise attack and recession. One group, with the Spahis, seized the higher ground to the left. The others joined on the two little knolls where the rocks gave good shelter. The wounded were brought in. The position was consolidated, and the Arabs were unable to attack in the face of the say-age fire poured into them.

"And we are not there to help the poor souls!" muttered Père Simon.

"You can't get there," snapped Forster. "Look—we're cut off!"

The moving flood of Arabs had surged forward. Now some of them occupied the ground below the little ravine where

the three stood. Half a dozen of them came up the ravine itself. One of them looked up, saw the three. With a savage yell, the group came rushing forward, firing as they came.

"Give me your rifle," said Jalert calmly. "You have the revolver."

"True," said Forster, and laughed. "We'll have a share in this business after all, eh? Don't fire yet. Père Simon! Cover, man—take cover!"

He shoved the Franciscan to one side, behind a rock as the six wild Moroccan tribesmen came, knives out, guns waving, eyes rolling. Jalert fired, missed. He fired again and then staggered as a bullet hit him. The rifle escaped his hands, but he had dropped one of the six.

Forster whitened, stood firm, waited. He had six bullets in the revolver now, every chamber ready. They were not forty feet away, and rushing on. Thirty feet—the revolver exploded. Shot after shot, rapid, cool, unhurried. The last Arab pitched down ten feet away, rolled over, came up with his knife—and Forster gave him the last bullet, between the eyes. Six of them sprawled in a trail of death. Not one bullet had missed, except Jalert's first shot.

"Apparently your prayers have produced a miracle, Père Simon," said Forster ironically. "See if Jalert's dead."

LUCKILY, Jalert was only scraped by a bullet that had stunned him.

Forster brought in one good rifle from the scattered weapons of the dead Arabs, and gave it to the Franciscan. He took a poorer one for himself; good enough, however.

"Now, gentlemen, you're about to fight," he said gayly, cheerfully. "If we dislodge the Arabs below, you can go straight through to what's left of the force, yonder. I think you're badly needed. Apparently, this little side-issue of the fight has escaped the notice of those Arabs underneath us. Come along! Fire when I give the word. When they run, you make a break for it. Our men will cover you, depend on it, and you'll get to the position safely. A lot of men are dying over there who need you."

Jalert nodded, and tugged at the bandage about his head.

"Ready," he said. He clapped Forster on the shoulder, looking him in the eyes. "If I don't get through, I want you to know that I respect you."

"And," said Père Simon, lifting his hand, "my son, accept my blessing."

Forster looked from one to the other with a hard gaze.

"All right," he rejoined, "but just remember one thing; don't tell anyone what you know about me. Ready? Let's go."

He led the way down the little ravine.

The group of Arabs who had taken cover below, thirty or more in number, had opened a galling fire on the Legion position, which was fairly close. They had it in flank and were somewhat above.

When three rifles opened a sudden burst of fire on them from behind, panic swept them. Two of those rifles were deadly enough. Père Simon, if he could not shoot well, could at least shoot fast, and did. With yells of terror and surprise, the Arabs broke and ran for it. Bullets from the Legion position swept them as they ran.

Then came the surprising sight of a gaunt man in a brown habit, and a bare-headed man in whites, legging it for all they were worth. A sudden cheer rippled up from the men of the Legion, a cheer of recognition and wild applause. Their fire redoubled, and the two runners came through—puffing but safe enough.

Forster, sitting among the rocks, lit a cigarette, viewed the mouth of the ravine below, sighted an Arab stealing forward, and calmly dropped the man.

"And that," he said, coming erect and drawing back to cover, "is all I can do. It's enough, perhaps. Comrades, Private Forster salutes you—and goes about his own affairs."

HE did not neglect to despoil the six dead Arabs, before making his way back up the gully to the rocky elbow; there, he was beyond sight of the scene. He came safely to where the four animals had been left. There he packed everything on the mules, mounted one of the horses, and took his departure, with the three lead beasts trailing behind.

Descending the hillside to the sandy plain below, he drew rein. A crackling mutter of rifle-fire came over the rocky spur to his ears. Even now, hesitation took him. He knew what was happening there, what would happen. The Legion would defend itself all through the blazing day, until relief came from El Aschad. Every rifle would count. And he was turning his back upon that scene.

Next month H. Bedford-Jones begins a great new series in these pages.

He shrugged. "No. I'll never again have such a chance," he muttered. . . . "Serve out that seven years of hell? Not much!"

And, with a deep breath of decision, he put in his heels and rode away.

THE story was finished, the beer was finished, and the cigar I had given Kolbar was finished. We were back in the Nevada desert, and Kolbar was sadly wagging that great gray beard as he came to the end of the story.

"It's no very heroic tag to the yarn," I observed.

"Perhaps not," he assented mildly. "You see, it's real. Things aren't so very dramatic in real life, as a rule."

"How did you learn so much about it, anyhow?"

He hesitated, then made awkward response.

"I met Forster some years afterward and he told me the whole thing. He—well, he was unhappy about it. He said those two men of God were right; there was a little devil of remorse in his heart. He never forgave himself. I think he came to a bad end."

He rose abruptly. From the car, he took the little pack he had carried slung over his massive shoulders. I glanced at him in surprise.

"Where are you going?"

"Back." He jerked his thumb along the way we had come. "A trail branched off the highway, a quarter-mile back. I'm going to take it and strike off into the hills. I don't like these highways; too many cars. Thanks for everything, Mister. It's been fine. Maybe we'll get together again another time."

He nodded to me and went striding away.

At first, I did not realize why he had left so suddenly. I cleaned things up, had a smoke, and got the brakes adjusted a bit. Then, preparing to depart, I caught sight of something. It was the paper sack, still hanging on the mesquite clump, pierced by bullets. And it caught me up with a round turn.

He had noticed it, of course; he had gone, quickly, before I suspected anything. Now I remembered what he had said: "Thirty-five years ago, I'd have put every bullet through the middle of that bag. Just as I did that day—"

The day he had killed Zinken, of course, and turned his back on the Second Regiment Etranger.

**L**IFE'S high moments of adventure are described in these true stories contributed by our readers. (For details of our Real Experience contest, see Page 3.) First a Briton with a flair for trouble tells of his share in the strange bitter warfare still going on in sacred historic Palestine.



# Palestine Policeman

By ROGER COURTNEY

**I**T was July, 1936, in the middle of the Arab strike. Violence and tension were everywhere. On the way up from Egypt the train in which I traveled was attacked by Arab snipers; and on the line was found a bomb—ingeniously contrived from a piece of large iron piping, and filled with enough blasting gelignite to have wrecked the train most thoroughly. In Jerusalem the streets were deserted, the shops all shut; the only signs of life were an occasional armored car, and military pickets with fixed bayonets.

The same day I joined the Palestine police, I took up my quarters in the barracks at Mt. Scopus, on the side of a wadi, or gorge, on the outskirts of the town—and that night had my first experience of Arab sniping.

From somewhere on the slopes of the wadi the Arabs were firing right into the police barracks. There was something very sinister and mysterious about it all. The bullets seemed to come from nowhere. I was sent up the clock-tower with field-glasses to try and locate the flashes of the snipers' rifles. But there were no flashes. The Arabs, it appeared, were up to one of their cunning tricks.

Each had erected a wet sack on a frame a few inches from the muzzle of his rifle, and was firing through it. The wet sack effectively masked the flash.

Meanwhile all lights in the barracks had been doused, and the Lewis gun of a picket outside, on the edge of the wadi, was stuttering an uncertain reply. In the barracks square, the engines of a number of pick-ups were set running quietly. There were low-spoken orders,

and the quiet-moving, shadowy figures of the men as they climbed on board. Then one by one the pick-ups, their lights all out, glided out of the barracks and away; and presently there was the sound of their Lewis guns searching the wadi for the snipers.

Thus for maybe an hour this odd fighting in the dark went on; then the sniping died away, the Arabs evidently having slipped back to where they had come from; the pick-ups returned, and all was more-or-less peace and quietness once more.

Next morning a party of police under an inspector went out and searched the wadi for evidence that would incriminate our assailants. They found no bodies of Arabs; nor did they expect to find any, for even if some of the Arabs had been hit—which, in view of the darkness and the concealing of their rifle-flashes by the wet sacks, was highly doubtful—their friends would have removed the bodies and secretly buried them.

The police sought for such things as cartridge-cases, to be micro-photographed for peculiarities that might lead to the identification of the rifle from which they had been fired. At the C. I. D. Headquarters were hundreds of such cartridge-cases, all carefully tabulated, so that rifles found in Arab possession could be checked up for association with specific murders or attacks.

They sought also for anything that would provide a scent for some wonderful police dogs belonging to the Mt. Scopus barracks—and found a piece of rag that had been used to clean a rifle.

**REAL EXPERIENCES**

The dogs were at once sent for and put on the trail. These dogs were a pair of stoutly built black creatures with short tails, terrier-like features, and possessed of remarkable intelligence. At Mt. Scopos there were some half-dozen of them altogether, and they were kept in a place by themselves and never allowed to be touched or patted by anyone except the dog-masters, as they were called.

**S**HOWN the piece of rag in the wadi, the dogs sniffed about in a circle for a few moments. The two dog-masters, each with his dog on a lead that could be let out to fifty feet or more, stood waiting. Then the dogs looked round at their masters and gave two short barks, exactly as if they had said "Okay! We've found it!"

For found it they had. And then began a strenuous bit of work for all hands. Away down, across and up the wadi went the dogs, noses down to the scent, keeping the dog-masters, at the end of the long leads, at a quick jog-trot. The side of the wadi was exasperatingly steep and rocky; the sun was hot and glaring.

Behind the dog-masters trailed the rest of us police, panting, struggling, slipping, sweating—also cursing, as maybe only the hard-bitten members of the Palestine police *can* curse. One man—a fat Jewish sergeant—who was being left farther and farther in the rear, at length gave up altogether, not only because he was out of breath, but because the seam of the seat of his trousers had suddenly split wide open. It was the last straw. "Yeh—boy—yeh!" he quavered despairingly, and sat down wearily on a rock, from which, however, he sprang up again with great alacrity, the rock's great heat having found him sadly unprotected.

Right to the top of the wadi we panted after the dogs and their straining masters and across a rocky plain for a mile or more, and then came to a dusty and dirty Arab village surrounded by tired-looking olive trees. Here and there in the shade stood a depressed-looking donkey, and there were numbers of the most extraordinary young chickens I'd ever seen—chickens whose feathers had all been plucked clean away, leaving the poor little wretches naked; and in order that they might be identifiable by their individual owners, they had been painted various colors. There were pink chickens, and blue ones and green ones and chocolate ones. I have great appreciation of Arab qualities, and more than a

little sympathy with certain aspects of their case in the mighty Palestine quarrel. But one thing I cannot forgive them is their dreadful cruelty.

But of other signs of life in the village there were few. The young men were carefully keeping out of the way—a sure sign that they were expecting the police and their dogs. Incidentally, the Arabs everywhere feared the police dogs tremendously, and also detested them on religious grounds, as they detested all dogs. To be run down and caught by means of a dog was an utter degradation indeed.

Straight to a house in the center of the village the dogs led us, and in through the open door. It was a one-room affair, ill-ventilated, and odorous of unwashed humans and the presence of chickens and donkeys. For as in most of these poor Arab houses, the hens and donkey lived inside, in the front part of the place as one entered.

Into the room bounded the dogs, sniffing this way and that. There were two women, a child in a cot, and an old man in the room. The women shrank back from the possibility of the defiling touch of the dogs. The child began to cry; and the old man, to whom the police inspector was putting sharp questions, swore that he knew nothing about anyone such as we sought having entered his house. Then the dogs dashed to the back door and through it to a well at the rear; very soon afterward they lost the scent completely. What had happened was that the man had entered the house, gone through it to the well, had a drink of water, and then gone on to a place near by where numbers of sheep and goats were continually going to and fro. The scent of the animals effectively smothered his own. It was an old Arab trick to defeat the police dogs on their trail.

There was nothing more to do but leave the case to the Arab investigation officers, and set a party to search the village, while the dog party made its way back to Mt. Scopos.

**A**FTER a week or two I was appointed a member of a party of three British policemen sent to live in the midst of a group of Jewish agricultural settlements which were being constantly attacked by the Arabs.

I had thought that these Jews were one great united band, bound by the bonds of a single great ideal. But these people came from all over the world—Russia, China, India, the Yemen, Poland,

England, Central Europe, Abyssinia, to mention only some of the places. And all these were in addition—or superimposed upon, as it were—the old-type Palestinian orthodox Jews and their native-born offspring, who had been reared with the Arabs and spoke Arabic fluently, and were as much a part of the country as the Arabs themselves; and until the troubles following the great influx of Jewish immigration as a result of the Balfour Declaration, were quite friendly with them. Our job was to help organize the Jewish supernumerary police in time of attack, and keep an eye on things generally. Before leaving Jerusalem I had been given a hint from Police Headquarters that, if I wished, I could go about matters here in ways best suited to my own individual capacities—in other words, try out my own ideas.

**C**ERTAINLY it was time something was done. Nearly every night one settlement or another was fired on. The shooters were not large organized gangs, but small parties of young men of the neighboring villages who crept out after dark, and from such sheltered positions as there were fired into the settlements through the barbed-wire entanglement, on the chance of hitting anyone who might be about.

Only too often did their bullets find a mark—sometimes most unexpectedly, as when a pretty young Polish Jewess of seventeen was shot dead one night in the bullet-proof watch-tower. It was thousands to one against anyone being hit as she was, for the Arab bullet that killed her came in by way of a loophole through which she was peering.

There were of course daylight attacks, as upon Jewish buses traveling between one settlement and another; and men and women working in the orange groves of the settlements were often fired upon, through the surrounding barbed-wire entanglements, by Arabs in adjoining fields.

I shall never forget the first night I went out under the barbed wire into the Arab lands. I was not in uniform (the buttons of a uniform were apt to give a betraying twinkle) but in slacks, a hunting jacket, felt hat, and camel sandals. Camel sandals are exceedingly thin in the sole, so that one's feet are extremely sensitive to whatever may be under them, and one is able to avoid making noise.

Instead of a rifle I took with me a shotgun and buckshot cartridges—the kind I'd been accustomed to use in

Africa against big soft-skinned animals. Also I had blacked my face, for even in the dark a white man's face is apt to show up, as a dim white disk, especially on a starlit night as this was; I stuck some grass in my hat, so that my hat and head should look as little like a hat and head as possible. I went quietly down through the orange groves of the settlement to a spot in the barbed-wire where I'd previously made a hole under it in readiness. Getting down on hands and knees, I crawled through the hole out into the Arab lands. The night was full of sounds—chiefly the rustling of a hot dry wind—and while I knew that I was silent, the sounds were apt to mask movements made by others. Also the wind threw up dust in my face, causing me momentarily to slow up and wipe my eyes. But I reached the end of fifty yards safely; whereupon I threw myself down flat and again studied the country ahead, keeping utterly still.

In this manner I covered half a mile or more. My objective was the back of a certain low ridge, from the cover of a low copse at the top the Arabs were wont to fire into the settlement. My idea was to surprise them from the rear. Neither the military nor the supernumerary police knew I was out here. I was acting unofficially, and secretly.

**S**O, in this series of short, crouched runs, with long intervals of lying flat and studying the ground ahead, I reached my objective at last, the back of the ridge. My progress had not been straight, but in a series of long windings, whereby I'd covered the area between the barbed-wire entanglement and the ridge on a seven-hundred-yard frontage. In the whole of that area there wasn't a bush or grass-tussock I didn't know.

As I reached the ridge, there came a sudden sound of firing some distance away—Arab snipers firing into one of the other settlements, and the Jewish supernumeraries firing back at them—or what they thought were the flashes of their rifles. Actually, however, the Arabs were firing from quite another direction, and had adopted a very ingenious trick to draw the return-fire away from them. Some distance from where they were actually firing, they had set loose a number of small tortoises (these animals abound in Palestine) with a small electric torch on the back of each. It was at the gleams of these torches as the tortoises moved in and out through the bits

## REAL EXPERIENCES

of bushes that the supernumeraries were firing. Next day the bodies of several tortoises were found, shot dead, with the torches still fastened to their backs.

I knew nothing of all this. All I knew was that the firing—though not directed at me at all—had placed me in a new danger. I was in the midst of one of my crouched runs when it started—and I stopped dead. A searchlight had immediately flashed out, a mighty, swinging beam, lighting up everything in a blinding whiteness. Searchlights from posts further afield likewise flashed out, searching the countryside. The first searchlight's great beam swung over onto me. My position as I had stopped dead was an awkward one. It had chanced that not only was I crouched, with my shotgun in a near-ready position, but my head was turned to one side. With the passing of the seconds my neck ached terribly, and a cramp seized my body. But I dared not move—not a muscle, not an eyelash. My life depended on my remaining thus utterly still. For, while I kept still in this way, the men of the searchlights could not be sure anyone was here. But the least movement, and a battery of machine-guns would put an immediate end to me.

**F**OR what seemed an interminable time the great beam of light played on me, searchingly, questioningly. Then at last it moved farther up the ridge, to the copse—only after a moment to come back and have another look at me. But in that moment I had dropped flat, mercifully into the inky blackness of the shadows of some bushes, and the light passed on and away again.

I was safe from it for the time, but in that moment of its shining into the copse I knew I was not alone. How many there were I knew not. It was not so much that I had seen them as sensed them, for the corner of my eye had caught just a suggestion of movement into the copse as the searchlight swept up there.

I felt, however, that they hadn't seen me, and heartened by this, I crawled on toward the copse, which would afford at least a little cover from the searchlight; for having come so far and taken such risks, I didn't want to go back to the settlement without trying to complete what I'd come out to do. Further, there was a chance that on the way up to the copse I would get one or more of the Arabs outlined against the sky.

A sort of hide-and-peek game followed—a hide-and-peek game in which the movements were an inch at a time, with long periods of no movement at all. It is the man who lies still on such occasions that has the best chance of survival. It was an eerie business: the bushes of the copse swished and rustled in the wind. Sometimes they made little squeaking noises, and sometimes a twig broke off and fell. Once, something touched me. It was a swaying branch, but for one awful moment I thought it was an Arab, and a cold tingle that swept up my spine at that touch!

**I**N all my adventures I'd never been scared so stone cold as I was in that copse. My only consolation was a piece of advice I'd heard uttered by an old soldier of great experience with whom, as an officer of the King's African Rifles, I'd served on the Abyssinian frontier: "Never forget that however frightened you feel, your enemy is probably feeling twice as frightened." How I clung to that statement there in that copse!

Then came a sound that promptly put an end to the grim hide-and-peek—a *put-put-put* softly wind-borne and utterly menacing.

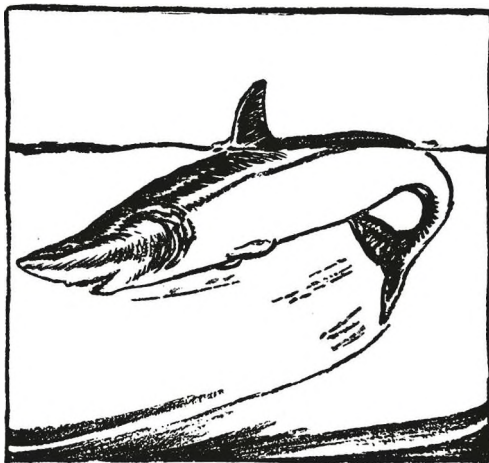
A pair of tanks had come out of their lurking place and were approaching the ridge. The searchlight people had wirelessed them that there might be somebody in or about the ridge and copse and they were coming along to see.

I had a sudden awareness that the Arabs had gone. I didn't see or hear them go, but I knew they'd slipped away—back over the ridge toward their homes. At the same time I myself dodged down over the other side of the ridge toward the settlement. That copse was going to be no place to be in when those two tanks went nosing along its edge, or through bits of it, their powerful spotlights searching it, their machine-guns ready to pour a hail of lead instantly into anything that moved.

Black-faced as I was, in no sort of uniform, looking exactly as might an Arab, there most positively wouldn't have been time for any explanations to the enthusiastic young warriors of the tanks. As speedily as was consistent with caution, I made my way back across my no-man's land to the hole under the barbed-wire entanglement, and never was so glad of anything as when at last I had crawled through and was safely inside the settlement again.

# Lost Under Water

*Trying to hurdle the reef barrier  
to a South Seas atoll, he found  
himself in water deep indeed*



By WILMON MENARD

THERE is possibly no other group of coral islands in the world which has as many dangers for the white man as the Tuamotu Archipelago, in the South Pacific. The Tahitians call this group the *Paumotu* (the Cloud of Islands). The French skippers call it *Les Iles Dangereuses*, which is more fitting.

I shall never forget my first terrifying experience in the Dangerous Isles, while landing at the isolated atoll of Rimaroa on the southern fringe of the group. I had said good-by to the captain of the trading-schooner and made myself comfortable on a mound of cargo in the schooner's long-boat alongside, which was manned by the Tahitian seamen.

I gave my attention to the approaching coral island. On the south end of the atoll I could see a narrow break in the barrier-reef, through which the sea surged wildly, but I saw that we were not heading in that direction.

"How are we to get into the lagoon?" I asked Roo, my Tahitian Man-Friday.

"We are going to do what you call 'hop the reef,'" Roo replied, pointing to the reef ahead, over which the combers were smashing high and hard. "The reef passage is too small, and the sea is running too swiftly through it, and the boat would be quickly smashed. It is much safer to ride over the reef, on a wave."

It was to be my first experience in "hopping the reef," and I can't say I was enthusiastic about the feat.

"Isn't that a bit dangerous?" I asked apprehensively.

"If luck is with us, it will be simple. If not—" Roo shrugged.

The coral reef of Rimaroa was less than a hundred feet ahead now, and the

cannonading of the sea against the coral wall was deafening. The milk-white surf on the reefs was flung high into the air with hissing explosions. The native sailors began to chant. The low eerie dirge-like song gathered volume, and Roo took up the words.

"*Mau! Mau! Mau! Mau te paina! Mau! Mau! Mau!*" The sailors were backing water with their oars now, glancing frequently up from their labors at the heavy-running sea behind. A native of eastern Polynesia believes that a sea is in reality made up of three seas, with three waves to each sea, and the last wave of the third sea the largest and strongest. My boatmen were waiting for the ninth wave to take them over the reef of Rimaroa. I glanced behind me.

A mountainous green comber was bearing down swiftly upon us. When it appeared as if we were to be capsized, the native sailors, with a loud cry of "*Haere!* (Go!)" dug deeply with their oars, straining desperately. In the next moment the long-boat was picked up and shot forward on the crest of the wave, like a surf-board, toward the reef.

The wind whistled past my ears, and the spray from the long-boat's cutwater drenched me to the skin. The boatmen had shipped their oars and were grinning. I was beginning to enjoy the crazy ride, when—a wild cry broke from the lips of the seamen. Roo's face flashed around to me for an instant, and it was tense with anxiety. He shouted something unintelligible at me, and stood up, bracing his feet as if to jump, frantically motioning for me to do the same. I rose to my feet, crouching forward to balance my body with the motion of the long-

## REAL EXPERIENCES

boat. I realized that although the boat was still moving rapidly on an even keel toward the reef, it was going to fall short.

I had only been on my feet a few seconds, when the boat was thrown abruptly forward, and then careened at an insane angle. I saw Roo leap into the white boiling sea. I waited until I saw his head and arms disappearing beneath the torn surface; then I sprang over the gunwale, catching a flashing glimpse of the sailors also deserting the boat. The water closed over me, and my body was buffeted, twirled and sucked strongly downward. I tried to see underwater, to locate the coral reef's wall, so I could maneuver clear of its poisonous razor-like edges, but the sea was too violently churned for visibility.

Something brushed against me, rough and sharp, and I thought of sharks, which have skins like coarse sandpaper. I shied off wildly, swimming blindly now against the whirlpool, trying to rise. Then a horrible thought possessed me, which was borne out a second later, when my head struck against a hard obstruction. I realized that I had been sucked down deeply along the face of the coral reef, and had innocently turned into an underwater coral cavern, thinking I was headed toward the surface. In the gloom of the underseas, I had lost my sense of direction. *Now, was I swimming deeper into the cave, or was I headed back for the opening?*

IT was black as night. Yet I had a dim perception of seeing a glimmer of dull gray light. Would I meet death in this horrible *cul-de-sac*? Was it the haunt of an ocean monster? Horrified, I flayed out wildly, only to feel my arms and legs striking against the sharp coral growths.

Something caught my arm—a shark, I thought! And shuddering, I tried to jerk free with my last ounce of strength; but the hold was firm, yet painless. I was being rescued!

I was being dragged over the smooth part of the coral reef. Roo held me upright underneath the arms on the reef, until my strength returned. He clapped me on the back, grinning.

"*Aue!* Alas! I had to swim very deep for you. And why were you swimming into that cave, instead of up? I had a hard time to catch you in time. *Aue!*"

Other forms, one by one, were now rising on the barrier-reef. They laughed heartily, making light of the accident.

The boat was half over the reef, and the sailors dragged it farther over the barrier, across the sea which broke now only knee-deep. The long-boat was undamaged. Then they rushed quickly here and there, retrieving the boxes and baled goods from the backwash of the surf.

The boat, loaded again with what had been salvaged, was dragged across the coral-reef, spongy with marine growths, to the placid lagoon, where we climbed aboard once more, and continued toward the beach. The natives of the village, who had viewed the mishap of the foundering boat casually, were more impressed when Roo told them of my predicament in the underwater cave. Shaking their heads solemnly, they all agreed it might have ended in tragedy.

A WEEK later, while on a fishing expedition outside the coral reefs of Rimaroa with the villagers, Roo, who (through a water-box) was scanning the floor of the ocean near the coral reef where we had been upset, gave a loud cry and called me to his side in the stern of the outrigger canoe. One glance through the water-box, and I felt the hair lift on my scalp. Directly below us, twenty or thirty feet deep, I saw a *tonu*, the most hideous of all marine monsters of the islands, fully fifteen feet long, resembling a monstrous rock-cod. It appeared to be all head, with great ugly eyes, a veritable nightmare of marine life. It was headed for the underwater cavern, from which Roo declared he had rescued me. The cave undoubtedly was its home. What if the *tonu* had been at home when I blundered into the coral cavern?

A loud yodeling cry from Roo sent the other natives diving down into the water to attack the monster with their fish-spears. It was a thrilling sight to see the agile fellows swarming about the awkward demon of the deep, always just out of reach, as they viciously attacked it. Before the *tonu* could escape to the underwater coral cavern, they had pierced its head through and through again with their three-pronged spears. The monster was hauled upon the coral strand, where I had a chance to inspect it closely. It was enormous of bulk, rough of body, spotted and brindled, with fins pectoral and frilled, a gigantic spiny head, and great jaws armed with long sharp teeth.

Looking down upon the dead man-eating fish and recalling my horrible plight in the underwater cavern, I felt I had, indeed, been fortunate.





# An Officer's Face

*A French commander becomes involved in a duel  
with an African buffalo.*

By ARMAND BRIGAUD

WHEN I was in charge of Fort Archimbault on the Chari River, the two greatest banes of my life were the mosquitoes and the post's doctor—a man called Ramme.

The mosquitoes were just mosquitoes, but there were millions of them always on the job, day and night, with an indefatigability that would have been astounding, if it hadn't been so nerve-racking. And since Doctor Ramme was an incorrigible insect-collector, the infirmary was eternally out of alcohol. He used up every available drop to pickle his confounded beetles and bugs.

The only white men in the fort, besides the Doctor and myself, were four sergeants, one of whom—a Provençal called Berthaud—was obsessed by the idea of making a name for himself as a big-game hunter.

The Chari River district was a natural paradise for a man bitten by the hunting bug, for it abounds in game: the most cunning and ferocious of which is the African buffalo.

So I naturally had serious misgivings when Berthaud asked for permission to go buffalo-hunting. One day, however, I finally relented and off he went joyously, with a gunbearer and guide.

But he failed to return at the appointed hour, and the following day a patrol found Berthaud—or rather what was left of the poor devil. A buffalo had evidently gored and trampled him for hours. But we were able to reconstruct what had happened, from blood-splashes on some leaves and grass quite a distance from the body. It looked as if the sergeant had fired at the big brute from a distance of some dozen yards. The wounded buffalo—still full of fight—had turned on him savagely, escaping the

second bullet. At that crucial moment the terror-stricken gunbearer had taken to his heels, avoiding the post for fear of being punished for his cowardice.

But deep in the jungle as he was, that gunbearer talked. So it became known that Berthaud's executioner had been a big bull buffalo, a veritable giant of its kind, whom Djinge and Massa tribesmen of the neighborhood had named Touh.

The Sara tribesmen—the Djinge and the Massa—are not totem-worshippers like the Bandas, but they do believe that particularly strong animals are endowed with supernatural powers. One day I heard the rumor going the rounds that, although I might be in command of the fort, the buffalo was actually mightier than I! The black soldiers of the garrison indignantly denied these slurs on my prestige for a while, and then they too seemed to recognize the "justice" of it, by the mere fact that they no longer took my side in the villages that were crossed by the patrol. To put it briefly, a buffalo was stealing my thunder and shoving me back to second place, not only with the tribes, but in the estimation of the soldiers as well!

BUT the worst of all happened when a case of liquor and some bidons of alcohol arrived by steamboat and convoy. For, incensed by the fact that I immediately seized the liquor and put every drop of it safely under lock and key, Ramme had the gall to say I was a poor sport—as proven by my not having avenged poor Berthaud's death by destroying that confounded buffalo Touh.

Well, no man could take a thing like that sitting down, so I went looking for the animal with two picked tirailleurs, and a tall bearded Djinge as a guide.

## REAL EXPERIENCES

Toward sunset of the third day, we reached a succession of glades where buffaloes grazed. Then from the corner of my eye, I saw an immense, towering beast coming out of a thicket behind us. The brute had tremendous shoulders, an enormous head with ferocious eyes, and long horns as thick as my forearm. I whipped around and fired at him, but my next shot clicked on a defective cartridge—and the buffalo was catapulting toward me like an express train.

"Fire, you fools!" I shouted to the tirailleurs.

**M**ORE action ensued in a split second than I ever hope to see again! The Djinge guide disappeared into a thicket, headfirst; the tirailleurs hurled their guns down and streaked up a tree—and I, helpless, followed their lead.

The massive head of the buffalo struck the tree-trunk a scant foot below my heels, and the terrific impact shook the tree so frightfully, that it was all I could do to hang on. But I kept on climbing with the speed of desperation; before the buffalo could charge again, I was safely ensconced in a fork.

Touh began prancing and pawing the ground below the tree. Now and then he charged the trunk. The booming sound was ear-splitting; leaves and twigs fell with a sharp crackling noise. But I had a firm grip on my perch, and for the time being I was safe.

The only trouble was that I couldn't see any way out of my predicament. The fort was only about eight miles to the west of us, but I knew the Djinge mind too well to hope the guide would ever dream of going for help immediately. Most likely he had gone straight to his own village, to tell his fellow-tribesmen about what had happened. Meanwhile, there we were up our trees.

Night came, but the bull stayed on the job. His kind often do, for days, hoping that the intended victim will lose patience and come down.

Several hours later I was tired, hungry and thirsty. Worse, some big ants discovered me, and began to have lunch.

When dawn came, I was still perched in my tree, like some sort of owl. Then in the increasing light, I noticed that the rifles which the tirailleurs had flung away were midway between their perch and mine. I realized that something had to be done, and done quickly. Danger or no danger, we couldn't go on imitating the birds forever, because there

was always the peril that one of us might get badly cramped from his uncomfortable position, and fall out of the tree, to be gored and trampled by the waiting Touh.

"Stupid, white-livered negroes!" I shouted to the two tirailleurs. "Begin cursing and howling at Touh!"

"But why, *mon Capitaine?*" one of the fools shouted back.

"To take his mind off me, for a while, fat-head!" I exclaimed.

The tirailleurs didn't wait any longer. Opening their big mouths, they let go a series of ear-splitting screeches that would have waked the dead. The buffalo didn't lose any time in charging their tree, but after about half an hour, he seemed to lose all interest in that pastime. He turned, trotted away a few paces, and pointed his muzzle toward the rising sun.

"Now's my chance!" I thought.

One of the tirailleurs had the same idea, but as soon as he began sliding down the trunk of his tree, the buffalo charged. Its apparent disinterest had been only a ruse.

Then the sun rose, and the heat of its rays added to our dreadful discomfort.

**W**HAT finally saved us from a horrible death was a smaller bull who suddenly came by. The sight of it acted like a red flag on our enemy. Its bellow rent the air. Lowering its tremendous head, it charged savagely.

I didn't wait a second to slide down out of that tree, and the tirailleurs did likewise. They lost no time in grabbing up their guns. I seized my hunting-rifle at the same moment, and slipped two big cartridges in its twin barrels.

Our buffalo, after chasing away its adversary, was wheeling about. Head down for the charge, its horns had a spread of very nearly three feet. . . . Then it came at us.

I let him have it, and shouted gleefully when the fierce beast fell, rolled over, and remained still. I didn't make the mistake of going too close to its inert body, because I knew that buffaloes often sham death, so as to leap to their feet and attack the incautious hunter.

So I recharged my rifle, and put two more bullets in the buffalo's carcass.

We brought the severed head to the fort, fastened to long poles carried by four negroes whom I had recruited from a village near by. Thus was the death of Sergeant Berthaud avenged, and my own "face" saved.

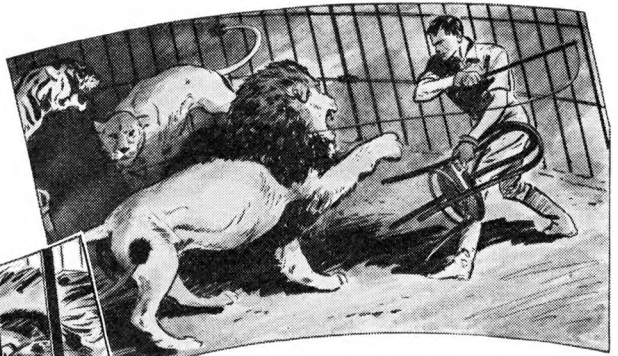
# "MURDEROUS 'JUNGLE-FEVER' WAS IN THEIR EYES"

CLYDE BEATTY, CAGED WITH SNARLING JUNGLE CATS, FACES  
BLACKEST MOMENT OF DEATH-DEFYING CAREER



① "It was one of those days when you know something's going to happen," writes Clyde Beatty, world-famous animal trainer and the only man who works with both lions and tigers at the same time.

pen," writes Clyde Beatty, world-famous animal trainer and the only man who works with both lions and tigers at the same time.



② "The animals had been sullen during the matinee. They came tumbling into the big cage for the evening performance with that murderous 'jungle-fever' still in their eyes, squalling, spitting and making passes. If they once drew blood it would be just too bad!

"And then, with that cage full of mixed cats raging at me and each other ...the lights went out!

③ "In the flicker of an eyelash the huge, glaring big-top went dead black! In the dark the snarls of the beasts sounded twice as loud. Green eyes glowed. In an instant they would leap for me!

"I jumped back, pressed hard against the steel bars of the cage. I whipped out my flashlight, flung the beam square in the startled face of the nearest cat, then gave it to another and another.

④ "In a moment (a mighty long moment), the trouble was repaired, the lights flashed on again and a tremendous sigh rose from the crowd. I was still alive. The power of fresh DATED 'Eveready' batteries had held at bay the fury of the jungle!

(Signed)

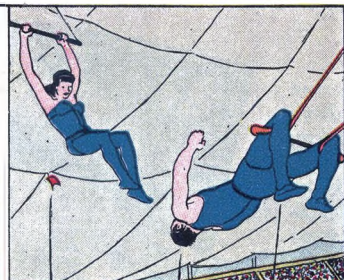
*Clyde Beatty*



**FRESH BATTERIES LAST LONGER... Look for the DATE-LINE**

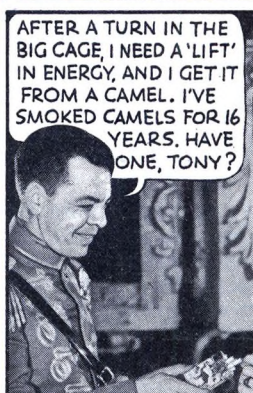
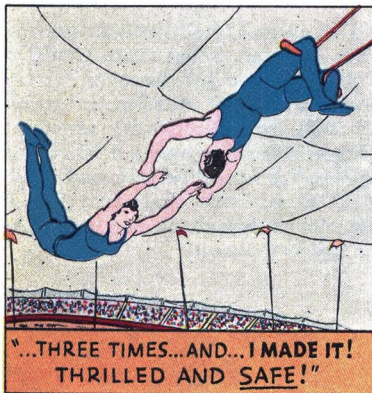
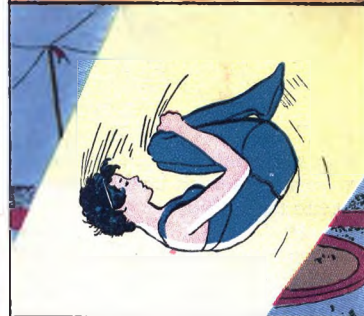
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NO WOMAN, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, HAD EVER EXECUTED A TRIPLE MID-AIR SOMERSAULT. I HAD TO DEPEND ALMOST ENTIRELY ON AUTOMATIC TIMING..."

"... BUT AS I WHIRLED OFF INTO SPACE... ONCE... TWICE... FOR A SPLIT-SECOND I PRACTICALLY LOST CONSCIOUSNESS."



One Smoker tells another...  
**"CAMELS AGREE WITH ME"**

PEOPLE DO APPRECIATE THE COSTLIER TOBACCOS IN CAMELS  
THEY ARE THE LARGEST-SELLING CIGARETTE IN AMERICA  
CAMELS ARE A MATCHLESS BLEND OF FINER, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS—TURKISH & DOMESTIC  
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