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The Popular Magazine

VOL. 48
NO. 3

20 CENTS

APRIL TWENTIETH 1918

In this issue

"THE ESCAPE"

A Complete Novel By

HENRY C. ROWLAND

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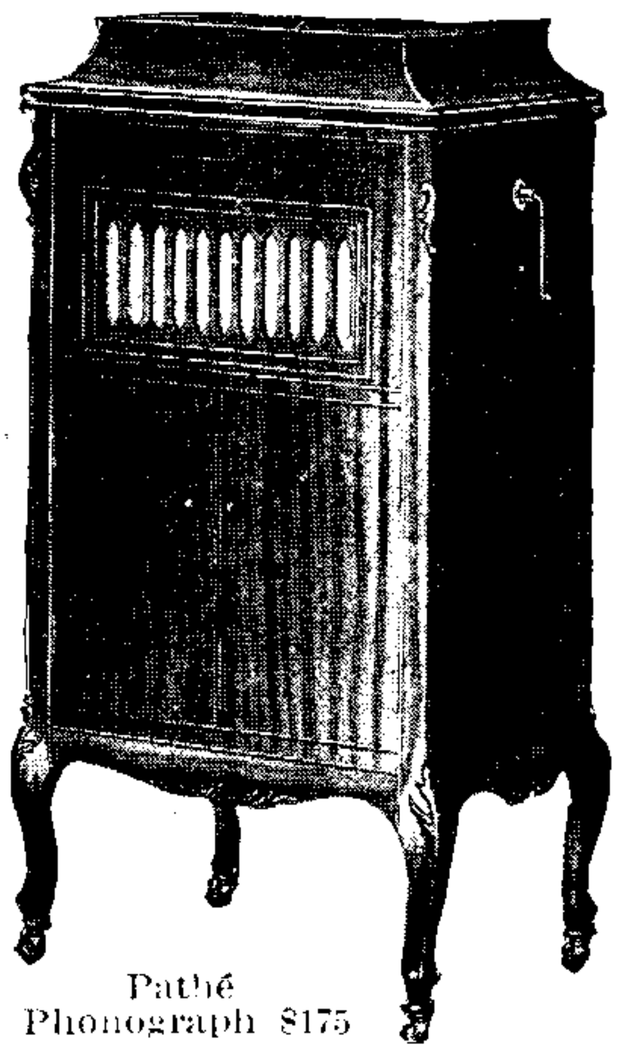

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THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

VOL. XLVIII. APRIL 20, 1918. No. 3.

The Escape

By Henry C. Rowland

Author of "The Arbiters," "The Rubber Man," Etc.

"Escape" in more senses than one: From unconscious drug addiction on the part of the heroine; from conscious drink addiction on the part of the hero; from the world of everyday for the both of them to that region where all is hope and faith and beauty. Incidentally, Doctor Rowland, the author, gives us a memorable and authoritative picture of the inside workings of one of the best modern sanitariums for the cure of those who have fallen under the spell of drugs and alcohol. The story is a "plain, unvarnished" tale, but it is one that none should miss.

(A Complete Novel)

CHAPTER I.

THE GIRL.

"THE case is unfortunately a fairly frequent one," said the distinguished specialist. "Your daughter is an unconscious victim of the opium habit. This drug has probably been administered periodically and without her knowledge during a term of several years."

Mr. Castellane, a millionaire manufacturer of whisky, received this information with a gesture of protest.

"But how can that be possible?" he demanded. "She has always been directly under the eye of Miss Morehouse."

"Precisely," answered the physician. "And Miss Morehouse is herself a drug habituée. Have you never noticed her peculiar complexion and the pupils of her eyes?"

Castellane nodded. "Now that you speak of it," he assented.

"It is probable," contined the specialist, "that the governess first began her criminal practice when she found her charge becoming a little difficult to restrain from the activities and amusements naturally desired by a girl of such splendid vitality. Being lazy and disinclined to exert herself in helping to gratify these cravings, she proceeded to dull them with the drug. She has now become alarmed at the amount required and is trying to lessen it. Hence these tantrums."

Castellane looked very much disturbed. The love which he really felt for his motherless daughter had shown itself always in material ways rather than personal interest.

"Well," said he, "we don't want any scandal. I'll get rid of the woman, and you do what you can to correct the damage."

"That may be a matter of months," said the doctor. "So far as your daughter is concerned it is going to

take, in my professional opinion, at least a year to free her system of its craving for the drug. I should therefore recommend that she be committed for this length of time to a sanitarium which makes a specialty of such cases. She need never know the real facts of her treatment. In fact, it is highly necessary that she should not. We will tell her that the condition of her nervous system absolutely demands a rest cure. I find her to be a sensible young woman and of a naturally strong and robust constitution. She ought to be a perfect Diana, what with her splendid physique and a mind which is alert and intelligent despite a lifelong course of more or less periodic poisoning. It is probable that at the end of three months in such an institution as I have in mind she will begin to feel the first real *joie de vivre* which she has ever experienced, poor girl, but in order to make sure I advise that she be committed for an entire year."

And so it happened that Helen Castellane, through no fault of hers, found herself an inmate of Doctor Moritz Brinker's excellent institution on the shore of Long Island Sound. She had made no objection at being there installed. Doctor Bright had first taken her with her father in his car to visit the place, and Helen had roused sufficiently from her recent apathetic state to display a pleased interest in the charming grounds which were not inclosed and held nothing of the prison or asylum atmosphere. The golf links, tennis courts, bowling alleys, bathing beach, and stables suggested rather the country place of some multimillionaire than a sanitarium, and the bungalows occupied by patients and attendants were delightfully homelike. Many of the inmates were strolling about, dressed as though for an afternoon at a country club, and taking tea in the little kiosks, chatting happily.

One failed to notice that the windows were all furnished with artistic iron grilles and that a patient or group of patients was never without vigilant attendant or attendants, the latter so closely resembling the patients in clothing and deportment as to be indistinguishable from their charges. Neither, in passing the men's department of the big establishment which was perhaps a quarter of a mile distant, would one ever have suspected the idle gentlemen loitering here and there in its environs, smoking and reading, of being in the nature of pickets carefully selected for their powers of persuasion, moral first and shot with infinite tact and patience, and, failing that, sufficient muscular force to make actual restraint uninjurious to the refractory inmate. They passed a number of men coming from the tennis courts to their bath, and they looked so rugged and healthy and cheerful that Helen could not believe that they were patients when so assured by Doctor Bright. He did not see fit to mention that the bulk of them would shortly be under lock and key for the night, after their simple supper and game of pool or billiards.

It all looked very nice to Helen, though her interest was blurred by the disagreeable sensation of unrest which had possessed her since a few days before Miss Morehouse had been suddenly called away to see a dying friend or relative or something, and one of the maids served her needs. Helen could not always remember the maid's name nor what she looked like. She was not conscious of any particular affection for Miss Morehouse, but felt that she needed her in some vague way. Then, learning that Miss Morehouse might not return for several weeks, she had indifferently consented to go to the sanitarium.

But now, as she sat looking about her with listless eyes, she found herself growing rapidly more and more tormented with some imperative though indescribable craving. She was neither hungry nor thirsty nor sleepy nor energetic, nor did she feel particularly nervous. She was merely conscious in a vague way of some violent unfilled want, though what it was that she wanted she could not possibly have said. Yet it threatened to grow intolerable, and she felt that if anybody were to come up and speak to her she

would scream. The sight of the people moving about was repugnant to her, especially the sight of the men in their flannels and shirts. Doctor Bright glanced keenly at her strained face and tortured eyes, and told the chauffeur to drive up to the administration building.

"You are a little tired, Miss Castellane," said he gently. "I am going to get you a demi-tasse of coffee. After that we will start back."

"I don't want any coffee, thanks," Helen answered, "and I'd rather not stop, if you don't mind. I would rather keep on going, now that we've seen the place. Let's go fast."

"In a minute," he answered, and stepped out and entered the building to return a moment later with the beverage suggested.

"Drink this," he said pleasantly. "Doctor's orders, you know."

"Oh, well, if I must——" she answered sulkily, and drained the cup. She handed it to him with an expression of faint pleasure.

"Thank you, doctor. That's the first decent cup of coffee I've had since Miss Morehouse went away. It tastes like what she used to make me. Perhaps I did need it, after all."

"I think so," he answered quietly, and told the chauffeur to return to the Castellane place, some twenty miles away.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOY.

His twin sister's lawn party was at its height when Jack O'Connor arrived modestly at his father's palatial summer estate on the Hudson. The fête was in honor of Jeanne's recent graduation from Vassar, and was a very elaborate affair. Her father, Judge O'Connor, a jurist of great renown, and at that moment very prominent politically, had promised to run out on an early train to assist.

Jack also had promised to assist, and was now faithfully observing that promise, though with considerable difficulty and great sacrifice to his own personal affairs. As they entered the imposing gates of the estate, he swayed forward in his seat, and said to the driver of the station taxi:

"Gesh you besser let me out at the back door, Bill. Don' wanner run into the judge 'til I freshen up a bit. He might think I'd been drinkin' again."

"He sure might, sir," the driver answered, and took the trail of the delivery vehicles.

"Says—'ic—'f I got drunk again he'd —'ic—gimme ninety days," mumbled Jack confidentially. "But I'll be all ri'. All I need is a—'ic—bath and about forty winks."

"If I was you I'd take about forty thousand, sir," said the driver. "I'll get ahold o' James, the butler, and he'll fix you up."

He stopped the car at the back door, quite unnoticed, as everybody was flying about full of the business of the party, then in full swing. From the lawns and groves at the front of the house overlooking the majestic river came a babel of voices and the ripple of girlish laughter. It was the first of July, and the day, though fair, was muggy and intensely hot, and thunderheads were beginning to form behind the Jersey hills.

"Just wait a minute and I'll get James to lend a hand," said the sympathetic driver, and slipped out of his seat.

"Oh, thash a' right——" said Jack, and, leaning against the door, unlocked it. He came out headfirst, and, before the driver could catch him, landed on the gravel, slightly scratching his forehead; then, with the driver's assistance, struggled to his feet.

"Damn—caught my —'ic—'eel——" he mumbled. "Here you are, Bill—b-b-blow yourself, ol' boy——" And he shoved a five-dollar bill into the driver's hand.

A footman had observed the accident from the pantry window, and he now came hurrying out and offered his arm.

"Very good," said he to the driver. "I'll look arfter 'im. 'E must 'a' 'ad a 'eat stroke." And he grinned.

"Thash it," Jack replied. "A bloomin' bally—'ic—'eat stroke. Can you wonder, me lad? Jush gimme a 'and

to me room, if you'll be so—'ic—werry kind. I'm a bit blurred in the 'ead."

The footman steered him into the house, and passed some giggling maids, then up the back stairs to his room, where he flung himself onto the bed. Had the man been less busy or possessed of a little sense, one glance at the boy's purple and congested face would have started him for the telephone to send in a hurry call for the doctor. But his own responsibilities pressing, he merely unfastened his collar, and then, seeing that he had apparently fallen asleep, hurried back to the pantry, intending to report the matter to James as soon as he happened to run across him. In the meantime, it seemed to him that the crown prince of the O'Connor dynasty was quite out of mischief and harm's way and would so remain for some hours, so with a silly chuckle he hastened back to his duties.

For about an hour Jack lay comatose, his black, curly head pillowed on one shirt-sleeved arm. Then suddenly he awoke, sat up, and looked about him wildly. The congestion had faded and he was rather pale. Through the screened window came the refreshing sound of splashing water from the big fountain on the terrace, mingled with the laughter of young men and maidens.

"All hands in swimmin'," he muttered. "That for mine!"

Whether it had entered his distorted mentality that a bathing party was in progress, or merely because to his fevered brain and body the desire to refresh himself in the cool water of the fountain became an imperative impulse, must be left to the alienist to decide. At any rate, he rose with a fair amount of stability, ripped off his clothes, and then in his hot impatience apparently forgetting the necessity of a bathing suit, he went to the closet, slipped into an embroidered silk kimono, and stepped out into the hall.

The house was deserted, except for the commissary department, and nobody observed him as he went down the broad main stairway, passed through the hall and reception room, and onto the terrace. That also was deserted, owing to the heat, but the fountain was splashing most refreshingly. Fifty or sixty yards beyond, and on two of its sides, were clusters of ornamental trees, and in the shade of these many brightly clad figures were standing or sitting or moving about, and as Jack in his flowered kimono descended the broad stone steps with a determined tread these paused in their conversation and looked curiously in his direction. No doubt they thought it some sort of joke or prank for their amusement.

But when he stepped upon the rounded coping and the kimono slipped from his shoulders and fell to the sward, there was a sudden shriek of dismay. The next instant there was the flash of a white body, a splash, and a general stampede on the part of the guests, the ladies away from and the men toward the fountain. And foremost among these latter was the lean, wiry figure of Judge O'Connor, who had been the first to recognize his only son and heir.

And none too soon did they arrive, for Jack had dived too straight, striking his forehead on the cemented bottom, and his father, standing waist-deep in the water, handed him up to the others, who bore him, stunned and senseless, to the house.

Jack's next clear consciousness was that of awakening to find himself lying upon a bed in a cool, spacious room, simply furnished and with white-enameled walls and ceiling. Sitting by the window reading a newspaper was a squarely built, neatly dressed young man with a pleasant Irish face.

"Hello!" said Jack, raising himself unsteadily on his elbow. "Where the deuce am I at?"

The young man laid down his newspaper, and rose with a smile.

"So y'are awake, sor," said he. "And how are ye feelin'?"

"Rotten, thanks," Jack answered. "What place is this, anyhow?"

"'Tis Doctor Brinker's sanitarium, sor. Ye was brought here last evenin'

sufferin' from sunshtroke and a crack in the head."

"Oh, I see!" said Jack, and fell back on his pillow. "Doctor Brinker's boozorium, eh? Well, I guess I'm in the right place."

"True for you, sor. 'Tis a foine place entirely. All the gintlemen like it. Maybe I might get you a drink?"

"I'd give a month's allowance for a drink of whisky," said Jack, "but I suppose there's no chance of that."

"Av coorse there is, sor. 'Tis that I mane. Wan minute, sor——"

He went out, to return an instant later with a tumbler containing a liberal drink of whisky, a siphon, and a bowl of cracked ice. Mixing the beverage, he offered it to Jack.

"Lap that up, sor," said he. "'Twill give ye stren'th. I am your attendant, sor, and me name is Mike."

Jack's hand shook so that he threatened to spill the precious contents of the glass. Mike took it gently from him.

"L'ave me, sor," said he. "There's dom few can manage it when they first come in." He held the glass to Jack's eager lips. "Aisy, sor—aisy does it."

Jack sank back with a sigh which was partly shudder. "Well," said he, "I must say, Mike, that for a boozorium they're tender-hearted here. A drink was the very last thing I'd expected."

Mike smiled. "Sure a drink is aisier on the patient than a strait-jacket," said he cheerfully. "You will be gettin' a slug like that every three hours for the nixt few days. Then when y'are feelin' better they will taper ye down, like. 'Tis dangerous to stop too sudden. I will go now and tell Doctor Lawley y'are feelin' betther."

He went out, and Jack lay reflecting on his situation. He had a foggy recollection of his arrival at home and being helped to his room, but thereafter all was blank. "The judge probably learned that I was there drunk when I ought to have been helping Jill entertain," he said to himself; "so he loaded me into the car and spun me over here to do my ninety days, as he threatened to the last time I got on the loose. Well, no doubt it's the best thing that could have happened me. By that time the damned stuff will all be sweated out of my system and I can stick to beer or go on the cart altogether. No more hard stuff for mine. This seems to be a decent sort of place, and all its tank alumni that I've met seem to have enjoyed their Alma Mater. Some even take postgraduate courses here."

Wherefore, Doctor Lawley, who entered presently, found his patient in as cheerful a frame of mind as badly jangled nerves and a sorely inflamed stomach would permit. Jack conceived an immediate liking for and confidence in this big, fine-looking young doctor with his strong, kindly face and keen gray eyes.

"You turned a close corner, my boy," said Doctor Lawley. "I was really worried about you last night. If it hadn't been for the blood let out of you from that crack on the head you might have slipped your cable. But you're safe in port now." He went over Jack's heart with his stethoscope, then took his blood pressure. "All right," he said. "Sound as a dollar, but too thin. You've been getting too much booze and not enough food and exercise. We'll fix that here. You ought to weigh one hundred and sixty stripped, and I don't believe you could tip the beam at one hundred and forty. Well, if you want anything just tell Mike, and if you find it too long between drinks we'll shove the clock ahead a little. So long!"

And the strong support of the weak and willful continued on his rounds.

CHAPTER III.

THE GIRL AWAKES.

"She ban vary pretty when she come," observed Madam Larsen, the chief masseuse, to Nurse Cassel, "but now she is vonderful. And so much strength! Yust look at her arms and legs. She remind me ohf our yoong Swedish gerls, with her eyes so bright and blue, and her golden hair and strrong, slender body. And her color is so goot."

The pair were watching Helen Castellane, who was being given swimming instruction by an athletic young Englishwoman on the sheltered bathing beach. It was late in August, and the girl had been nearly six months an inmate of the institution, having entered early in March. Splashing about in the warm water, with the sun flashing on her bright hair and from her creamy limbs, slightly tanned from these exercises, Helen was indeed a delight to the eye of the beauty lover or eugenic apostle. Although just eighteen, her splendid figure had still about it a suggestion of boyishness, its feminine curves as yet unaccentuated. A sculptor would have loved to depict her as one of Artemis' youthful nymphs.

"Has she still those nairvous spells?" asked Madam Larsen.

"No," Miss Cassel answered, "though sometimes she is very restless and wakeful. That creature must have given her quantities of the filthy stuff. Such a woman ought to be flogged and sentenced to ten years' hard labor in a coal pit."

"It vould sairve her ride," agreed the masseuse.

"Helen is so strong," said Miss Cassel, "that there is no doubt of her making a complete recovery, but it is going to take some time still. The trouble now is that she is beginning to get restive, and wants to know why she is being kept here when she feels perfectly well. I'm afraid that in another month she is going to be hard to hold. She is like a person who has been under a great physical strain just awakening from a long, refreshing sleep. She has been only about half awake the most of her life, poor dear, and has no more idea of people and things and life in general than a child of ten. But now she is beginning to take an interest in the world around her, and reads and asks odd questions, and very often I find her apparently deep in thought. She réminds me of a little bird that commences to find the nest too cramped and wants to try its wings."

"Ven she leafs here she should marry," said Madam Larsen sententiously. "That vould complete her cure." The masseuse had distinctly European ideas in regard to certain vital principles.

"I don't agree with you," replied Miss Cassel rather sharply. "She is far too young. Besides, she has absolutely no experience of life, and has never had the least bit of fun or gayety, as other girls have."

"Once she ban married, she vould get it altogether," observed the masseuse. "I ban married at seventeen, and it don't take long——"

Her bath finished, Helen was given her rub and bouillon and sun bath. Then came luncheon, to which she now looked forward with eager appetite, and after that an hour or two in the shade of the tall veranda, reading or chatting with her fellow patients, none of whom had the slightest inkling of the actual facts of her case, but considered it merely as the nervous breakdown of a growing girl. She was now permitted to play tennis, a game which she had never learned. She had never cared to learn. She had never greatly cared for anything or anybody, and her days had been spent principally in apathetic idleness, with few social diversions and little exercise.

But the strength inherited from a race of sturdy ancestors had supported the conditions of this unwholesome life, and aside from the toxic influence of the drug, which was not constant, but only at certain nervous periods, her atmosphere had been sufficiently wholesome. She had grown up, as it were, in a latent condition with faculties less injured than restrained. Now that the subduing poison had been gradually removed, these long-restrained potentialities were beginning to move and stir and burgeon with a velocity which was inversely proportional to the long term of their imprisonment. Physically and mentally, she was without a blemish. The sap was beginning to mount, and, like a young birch which has been held inanimate throughout the long winter frost, she could feel the life beginning

to stir and quicken in heart and branch and twig.

It amazed her to discover that the world was vastly and vitally interesting, even as viewed from the confines of a sanitarium. And so rapidly did her interest in it increase that each day brought a keener desire to get out of her narrow limits and look about with bright, awakened eyes.

Previously she had never cared for reading, and she had never cared for the society of men, but now she found herself possessed of a curious craving for both. There was a full list of magazines on the library table, and she devoured their contents with the eagerness of a vigorous intelligence hitherto deprived of such a recreation through blindness or lack of the ability to read. Stories of adventure and romance stirred depths formerly untroubled. They colored her dreams, and in her waking hours plunged her into reveries which were rather exciting than passive, and without the slightest tinge of melancholy. She found herself growing daily more impatient with the tic-tac—tic-tac smooth clockwork machinery of the institution, and eager to break bounds on a voyage of discovery. But this augmenting impulse did not affect her nerves unfavorably. She was happy enough in her growing health and strength, kindly and carefully tended, and she liked the people about her, but nevertheless she did not wish to remain longer.

Her father came out to see her every Sunday, and on his last visit Helen stated her case.

"Papa, I'm quite well now, and I want to leave," she said positively. She had always felt rather shy of her father, but this diffidence seemed to have departed.

"Oh, I think you'd better stay on a couple of months longer, Helen," he answered. "You are doing so mighty well that it seems a pity to run the risk of spoiling it all."

"There's no danger of that," said Helen in a positive tone that made her father raise his eyebrows. "I was never really ill to begin with, and if I were to stay here another six months I couldn't possibly feel any better than I do now. I want to get out and do something. I want to manage our house and meet people and do things. This place is very nice, and the people are most kind and I'm very fond of them, but I've been cooped up here long enough. I want to leave, and there is absolutely no reason why I shouldn't."

"But the doctor says——"

"I don't care what the doctor says," Helen interrupted hotly. "I know how I feel better than the doctor. I've been babied long enough. I've been babied all my life. I don't want to say anything against Miss Morehouse, but somehow I feel that if she hadn't been forever cuddling and coaxing me and telling me I looked tired and must rest and all that sort of thing, I'd never had to come here at all. However, that's passed. I'm all right now, and I want to go home. If I break down or anything, you can pack me out here again."

Castellane looked disturbed and a trifle embarrassed. Here was presented a phase of his daughter such as he had never made acquaintance with. It was evident enough to him that Helen was fairly brimming with health and vitality, but Doctor Bright had advised a year's treatment, and of this but little over four months had passed. So he temporized.

"Well, my dear," said he, "I'll speak to Doctor Bright about it and see what he says. It's a little awkward just at this moment, as the chances are that I may have to run out to the Pacific slope next week, possibly to be gone two or three months."

"I can go to Aunt Helen's."

"She's off on a cruise with the Maitlands. However, we'll see. Meanwhile, just be patient and keep on as you're going and we'll soon have you out." He glanced at his watch, and with a rather hurried farewell went out and jumped into his car.

Three days later Helen received the following note:

DEAR DAUGHTER: I have talked with Doctor Bright and explained to him your wish

to leave the sanitarium and your assurance of feeling entirely well, which fact I was able to demonstrate myself so far as it is possible to do so with one's own eyes. He was very glad to hear of your great improvement, but would not listen to the idea of your leaving for at least another three months. He tells me that the nature of the nervous disorder from which you suffered is such as takes some years to develop, and for the radical cure of which at least nine months of treatment are positively required.

"Bosh!" muttered Helen angrily.

I am very sorry, my dear, but I am afraid that we shall have to abide by the doctor's decision. You must remember that you have never been in thoroughly good health since childhood, and compare your present condition with that of past years. You are still very young, and a few months' patience now will fully repay you for the blessing of future well-being. Health, after all, is everything. Once you make up your mind to see the cure through, I am sure that you will find yourself as happy and contented for the next few months as you have been since your entrance to the sanitarium.

Unfortunately, the pressure of business before I leave will make it impossible for me to get out to see you before starting West, but perhaps it is just as well, as I fear I might be persuaded to listen to your entreaties and act contrary to Doctor Bright's positive advice. Try to be patient and cheerful, and remember that there are some good times in store once you come out into the world again a strong and healthy girl. With much love,

FATHER.

Helen flung the letter aside, and, resting her elbows on the table, dropped her face in her hands and burst into tears. Three months more! Three months of gilded prison when she was fairly brimming with eagerness to get out into the great world of which she knew so little and yearned to know so much. Three months more of smooth, smiling nurses and attendants and garrulous old cats with real or imaginary ills; usually the latter.

But she was a brave girl, and the paroxysm of despair quickly was under control. What most helped her in her disappointment was the note of tender affection in her father's letter. She had never realized that he really cared for her or that his invariable kindness to her was more than perfunctory, and the knowledge suffused her with a glow of warmth about the heart. So she dried her eyes and set her firm little chin, and, picking up her pen, wrote him an affectionate and obedient letter, promising to do her best to be cheerful and happy and to gain all the health and strength she could, hinting rather shyly that perhaps once this was accomplished they might yet have some good times together. This she posted, and then went into the library, which was deserted.

There were some voluminous Sunday newspapers scattered on the table, and to distract her mind from her disappointment Helen picked up a part of one of them, and, seating herself in one of the big wicker chairs, started to glance through it. She was scarcely thinking of the text, and almost startled when a name directly in the focus of her vision struck her retina, as it seemed, with physical force. That name was "Bright."

Then, dazed and scarcely comprehending, she read as follows:

Lafayette due to-morrow. Many distinguished passengers. Among other well-known Americans, Doctor Willard Bright.

Helen laid down the newspaper, and sat for a moment staring out across the lawn at a group of harmless neurasthenics, who were drinking tea in the shade of a copper beech.

"So papa lied to me," said she softly to herself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOY AWAKES.

The faithful Mike listened to what Doctor Lawley had to say, and his good-natured Irish face was puckered and troubled.

"If you was to ask me, docthor," said he, "'tis not a square deal to my way o' thinkin', and I am surprised that a mon like Judge O'Connor should be afther puttin' the like across on his own flesh and blood, and the lad with no rale harrm in him at all. 'Tis not like he had done some dirthy trick like forgin' or st'alin' or desayvin' some innocent gurrul. All he done was to take a dip in the fountain, and him crazed wit' booze."

"I must say I think it's a pretty raw deal myself, Mike," Doctor Lawley an-

swered. "If there was time, I'd run down and see the judge and file an appeal. But he's sailing on the *Lafayette* at three this afternoon, and here are his orders. He's got Jack legally committed for six months, so what are we going to do about it?"

"Search me, sor!" Mike answered, scratching his thick scrub and crinkling his forehead. "When the bye kem in I says to mesilf: ''Tis the best thing ever happened you, me lad,' but now I am not so sure. 'Tis not like he had the booze habit, for he has not. He is too young, and has not been at it long enough. But he might have gone down ould beer alley and gin lane the rest of his life but for this expayriunce. He has been takin' stock o' the bunch here, and they do be givin' him the hump. 'My Lawd, Mike,' says he the other night, 'if ivir I thought I'd get to be like this dead-alive outfit I'd blow me brains out,' says he. ''Tis betther to l'ave thim where they are and cut the booze out, sor,' says I. He gives a little laugh. 'No fear, Mike,' says he. 'My throuble kem from suckin' up drinks I did not want. The nixt time a man tries to crowd a drink into my face against me will he gets it in his'n, glass and all,' says he, 'and,' says he, 'I'm done with the hard stuff. Hereafter, nothin' stronger than beer, if that,' says he."

Doctor Lawley nodded. "He's been here long enough," said he. "Up to this time it's done him a lot of good. He's gained fifteen pounds, and he's in the pink of condition. But pretty soon he's going to begin to fret, and then all the good will be undone."

"Y'are right, docthor," said Mike. "Only last night he says: 'Mike,' says he, 'how the divil am I ivir goin' to stick it out another month?' says he. 'But I was warned,' says he, 'and 'twas me own dam fault,' says he, 'so I'll have to take me medecine if I choke,' says he. Now when he l'arns that he's committed for another four months there will be ructions, sor. Sure, is he not Irish stock?"

"Well," said Doctor Lawley, "I'm going to tell him this afternoon, and the judge can go to the devil. I've got troubles of my own, and I'm hanged if I'm going to have this business hanging over me for another month. He's been committed here in all due legal form, and we're responsible for him until we get our writ of habeas corpus served on us. If he tries to do a get-away, it's up to us to put him under restraint. But in my opinion it's a damned shame and I'm not going to be any party to keeping him in the dark about how he stands. It ain't as if he was a chronic souse or balmy and irresponsible."

"'Tis amazin' his father has not more sinse," Mike observed, "and him a judge."

Doctor Lawley shrugged. "O'Connor's a hard man," said he, "and he's a proud man. He's made his own way and his own social position, and now he feels that Jack's disgraced him and his sister, and he intends to have the lesson well rubbed in. That story in the Sunday papers, with the cartoon of Jack diving into the fountain and the women beating it in all directions, must have nearly killed him. Of course there was a lot of political animus in that stuff, but the write-up alone was enough to drive a man like the judge darn near crazy. Well, we'll hope for the best and prepare for the worst." And the doctor proceeded on his rounds.

Meanwhile, the object of these forebodings was cheerfully engaged in a lively mill with the athletic trainer, a square-jawed, square-shouldered young man known as Danny. The last round had been a warm one, and Danny, though a retired middleweight of some considerable local renown, had been compelled to exert himself rather more than was agreeable to maintain his prestige. A vicious left hook in the jaw had all but sent him to the mat, and realizing that it was no part of his duties to knock out a "rummy"—as the alcoholic patients were referred to by the attendants—he stepped back and pulled off his gloves.

"Geeze, this ain't no finish fight," he panted. "Say, Jack, I c'u'd ha' put you out twict if it was. You got *some* punch all right, but you're careless—in

blockin' them cross counters. Say, in another month o' good hard work you could stand up to Jimmy Flynn or Kid Allen or Black Joe 'r any o' them guys in your class. If you cut out the cigaroots and don't contribute to no liquor tax, you c'n hand his sleepin' powder to most any boob that don't like your face."

"No fear, Danny," Jack answered, and reached for his towel. "I'm off it for keeps. I've learned my lesson."

"Then mind you don't meet up with some of the old bunch and get a fit o' lost memory," said Danny earnestly. "'F I had my way, I'd put the whole country bone dry, even if it did cost me my job and put this here souse garage out o' business. It nearly got me onct, but I took *my* cure on the Island. 'Tain't just like this place, but it done the business. I got ninety days, just like you." He laughed. "That was four years ago, and I ain't tasted a teaspoonful since, and ain't a-goin' to." He examined his pupil with a critical if somewhat puffed eye. "Where d'ye keep it, Jack?" he asked curiously. "You ain't muscled up none to speak of."

"In my head, I guess," Jack answered. "Me for a swim. So long, Danny!"

The trainer looked after him thoughtfully as he trotted down to the bathhouses. "Geeze, I guess he's right!" he said to himself. "Arms and legs onto him as smooth and round as a show girl, with them little hands and feet tacked to the ends of 'em, and a punch like a steam riveter. That lad 'u'd go far in the ring, he's so jeesly deceptivelike. Sorta soft and mild lookin' in the mug, too, until he gets on the job. You can't never tell about them swell guys. But this one's sure got pep!" And he massaged the region of his eye.

Jack's reflections, as he went down for his swim, were not pleasant. The place was beginning to irk him, and it was only by the hardest sort of training that he managed to keep his natural buoyancy of spirits when he thought of the long month's incarceration still ahead. The worst of it was that the summer would then be over, and that meant the sacrifice of the cruise to Bar Harbor in the new thirty-five-foot yawl which his father had given him as a graduation present, and which was probably lying at that moment, provisioned and ready for sea, at her moorings off the Yale Yacht Club in New Haven harbor, where Jack had left her to run home for his sister's lawn party. Unfortunately he had gone home via New York, and had there encountered some classmates and taken in a ball game and divers other relaxations with tragic result. He had since written to the club requesting that the boat be kept there and looked after until further orders, and he did not believe that his father had so much as given her a thought.

But as the case now stood he would be obliged to exchange the confines of the sanitarium for those of the law school, and his joyous summer holiday had been dissolved in alcohol. Because he had been fool enough to overstep the bounds of decency and go home drunk, with the added indiscretion of permitting himself to be discovered in such a condition by a stern, uncompromising parent, many months must pass before he might hope to exult in the rush of free air and the swash of brine. Yachting was the only sport for which Jack really cared, and he was an efficient sailorman, and here were the anticipations of the whole winter ruined by one piece of stupidity. It made him very sick.

Turning the business in his mind, Jack was of the opinion that the punishment was not commensurate to the crime—for he had not the slightest recollection of the fountain episode or anything which had occurred after the footman had assisted him to his room. He had even thought of appealing to his father for a commutation of sentence for good behavior, which might have given him at least a fortnight's cruise in which to try out the boat on an offshore run. But pride—and the knowledge that Judge O'Connor was strongly opposed to the commutation

idea—forbade, so he had doggedly stuck to his determination to accept the decision with as much cheerfulness as he could muster. Being only twenty-three, and as sound as a government bond in wind and limb, and strong mentally, the illness following his debauch had lasted only two or three days, and after that he had decided philosophically that since he was "in" he might as well get as much good out of the situation as was possible to extract.

He had no fault whatever to find with his treatment and surroundings. He liked and admired the personnel of the institution, and liked—though he did not admire—his fellow patients. But these latter had now commenced to get upon his nerves. The most of them were older men, committed by their families for terms of six months or a year. Many were what might be called "repeaters," what the French penal system designates as *"recédivistes."* They were unfortunate souls who, so long as the temptation of alcohol or other drugs was removed, were able to live and move and have their beings in a calm and normal way, but who, when at large and able to satisfy their insidious cravings, lacked the moral force to resist their indulgence.

At first Jack wondered what they were all doing there, or, rather, why they were there at all. They seemed so sane and intelligent and healthy, showing no signs whatever of either physical or moral degeneracy. They were gentlemen and behaved as such, giving no evidence whatever of nervousness or irritability or discontent. They ate and slept and read and conversed and played golf and billiards and bridge and discussed current events precisely as might the members of some outing club who were spending a period of rest and relaxation. Unlike certain other institutions of similar objective, this sanitarium imposed on patients no apparent régime of habit or discipline. They got out of bed in the morning when it pleased them, took what exercise they chose, ordered what they wished to eat from the simple though sufficient menu, and smoked when and where they liked. To each one was assigned his special attendant, or keeper, to be more exact, and the duty of this pleasant and tactful young man appeared to consist as much in the entertainment of his charge as the rendering of the requisite bodily service. The attendant was always ready for a game of billiards or checkers or golf or tennis or handball or a walk or merely idle conversation.

It was some days before Jack began to discriminate between patients and attendants. His own, Mike, was rather an exception, being a trained hospital orderly and usually detailed only for acute cases which required skilled nursing. The others were in some respects more accomplished, but far less imbued with that subtle, sympathetic quality which made Mike so excellent a panacea for jangled nerves. Jack discovered, also, that the personal liberty of the patients was apparent rather than real. To the casual eye they were under no obvious restrictions, but he noticed that each and every inmate of the establishment was at all times under the vigilant if unobtrusive eye of an attendant, whether to play golf or tennis or take a walk or merely to stroll down to the end of the jetty for a quiet smoke. The attendant was always there.

Then, after a few days, he began to discover a certain peculiar difference between his companions in misfortune and the men of their class he had been accustomed to mingle with. Jack could not possibly have described wherein the difference lay, but he was disagreeably conscious of it. He felt the laxity of moral fiber; the impalpable dullness and lack of verve. It was not that they seemed emasculated, but rather resigned to a pallid grayness of existence, as though they were the animated shells of men reacting automatically to past impulses and requiring the infusion of some outside stimulus to make them quicken into potent life. Among their number was a talented musician, who would seat himself at the piano, play a few bars, then let his music ebb

away into nothingness and leave the instrument with an abstracted air. There was a noted painter, but he did not paint. There was a distinguished author who never took his pen in hand. There was a young man who for two years had held the amateur tennis championship, and when, one day, Jack coaxed him to the courts, he played a random and erratic game with certain flashes of his old form, which finally dwindled into the net in a long series of flukes, leaving Jack an easy winner. His opponent did not appear to care.

Jack's flesh began to crawl at the contact with these unsouled entities. He did not know what it was, but they gave him the creeps. He found himself avoiding them and seeking more and more the society of the attendants, if only for an after-supper chat.

"Good Lord, Mike," he said at the end of his first week, "what's the matter with this bunch, anyhow? They look husky enough, but they don't seem to have the ambish to bat a fly. What's the matter with 'em?"

"Rum, sor," Mike answered. "They can do nothin' without."

"Then for Heaven's sake let 'em have it!" said Jack."

"And if ye was to do that they could do aven less," Mike answered, "or at layste not for very long. The poor divils w'u'd be afther flooding their carburetors in no time. There do be twelve av thim now undher lock and key in the pavilion beyant, and sivin av thim walked out of here as straight as a shtring afther havin' been committed for a year and not touchin' a drop for nine solid months. Four were back a week later, sor."

A shudder went through Jack, and that night he told Doctor Lawley that he was quite able to do without his two ounces of whisky from then on.

CHAPTER V.

THE GIRL ESCAPES.

Fortunately for Helen, she had never been on terms of intimate affection with her father, so that she was spared a disillusionment which might have done her considerable harm. His letter had warmed her to the core, but the proof of his deceit followed it so quickly that the blow to her newly roused sentiment for him was minimized.

Fierce anger and resentment quickly crowded out all other emotions. Helen had no lack of temperament, though hitherto it had always been smothered or perverted by drugs when threatening to demonstrate itself, and thus revealed as a short-lived nervous crisis or "tantrum" subsiding quickly into a sullen apathy. But now, with her newfound health and strength and her faculties clear and fresh and vigorous, her anger was clean-cut and objective, as righteous wrath is meant to be.

"So papa deliberately lied to me," said Helen to herself. "He never thought of my seeing Doctor Bright's arrival from Europe in the paper. He knows perfectly well that I am entirely cured and was never better in my life, but he wants to keep me penned up here so as not to be bothered with me. He wants to take this jaunt out to California, and he doesn't care to have me on his mind, so he lies to me about Doctor Bright and leaves me here with these wheezy old cats——"

Helen could hardly be blamed for this line of reasoning, which, however, was not the truth. Castellane had lied to her, but for what he considered to be her own good. He knew that she had been poisoned by opiates off and on during her whole life, and Doctor Bright had advised a year in the sanitarium to accomplish a radical cure. Helen knew nothing of this, but thought merely that she was there as the result of a nervous breakdown from which she had now completely recovered. Castellane, realizing this, and Doctor Bright not being available, had stretched a point in veracity, considering that the end warranted the means.

Helen went to her room, where for a while she sat by the open window, looking out across the sparkling waters of the Sound and turning the situation in her mind. She was determined to quit the place, but she could not see precisely how she was going to man-

age it. She was committed for a year to the sanitarium with all due legal form. Except when in her room, the windows of which were furnished with a light, decorative, but efficient steel grille, like all the windows of the institution, she was always under the eye of an attendant. The grounds were carefully guarded both night and day, and at night there was always an attendant in the corridor. Even if an inmate were to escape the grounds, it seemed doubtful that he or she would get very far, as an alarm would be sent in immediately to the local constabulary, for the sanitarium had among its patients a number of mild cases of mental disorders; "mild mentals," as they were called, but which might easily develop acute and dangerous symptoms.

For another thing she had no money; not a penny. None of the patients, male or female, had any money. She had her rings, but these were scarcely negotiable security for a runaway girl patient of a sanitarium. Worse still, even if she did manage to escape, where was she to go? Neither friends nor family could offer any sanctuary, nor would they think of doing so. It was really a very difficult proposition, and for a few moments Helen was in despair. The place which for the past six months had been a pleasant retreat suddenly assumed the grim dimensions of a prison.

But her new-found health and vitality had developed all of her latent courage and determination, and Helen was resolved to get out if her liberty lasted only for a few hours. It would show her father what she thought of his perfidy and that she was being retained there against her will by *force majeur*. She realized that escape in the daytime was utterly impossible, and besides she had no desire to cause the dismissal of Miss Cassel, her day nurse, of whom she was very fond. The night nurse, Miss Elliot, was a taciturn and rather unsympathetic person, for whom she had no feeling of any kind, so Helen decided that if she were to escape at all it must be at night.

But how? There were the impassable windows, the night nurse, and the attendant in the corridor, also the locked front door. Helen could hit on no solution of the problem, and the more she realized her helplessness the more the enameled fireproofing of her walls and ceiling seemed to close in upon and suffocate her. And yet the situation was not without a certain exhilaration. Like most girls, she had her romantic streak, and the picture of herself as a prisoner determined to escape furnished a certain thrill of excitement.

For three days she taxed her brain impotently over the riddle, and then chance favored her. Helen's suite was on the ground floor and the nearest to the front door. It was about half past eight of a hot, muggy night, and she was in her room, reading a magazine, when there came from outside the pur of a big, high-powered motor car, which drew up under the porte-cochère. The next moment a woman's voice was raised in shrill and angry expostulation, which carried a wild, hysterical note. The other voices, a woman's and a man's, sounded in persuasion, soothing and remonstrative.

"I won't do it—I tell you I won't—I'm all right, I tell you! What license you got to shove me into this bug-house? No—you can't fool *me!* I came here once to see Lizzie wher she was takin' a poke (cocaine) cure. Leggo me——" And there was the sound of a scuffle and a smothered scream.

"Aw, come now, Kitty, be reasonable!" came the voice of the man.

"D—— you, Billy, you said we was goin' to the yacht club! Leggo, or I'll jab you!"

"Kitty, Kitty, listen!" It was the voice of a woman. "Kit, it's only for two or three days——"

"And I thought you was my friends —and—and——" sobbingly, "now you've gone and b-b-betrayed me and w-w-want to lock me up in this d-d-d——" Another muffled shriek. "You ain't g-g-got no right—let me

g-go-o-o——" Sounded shriek after shriek and the noise of a struggle.

Flying steps came down the corridor, and a crisp, authoritative voice said: "Call Doctor Lawley—quick! John, help restrain the lady, gently—careful not to hurt her. This way, please. Yes, we have her room all ready."

Then pandemonium. The drug-maddened woman was shrieking, her friends imploring, old John, the watchman, puffing and panting soothing exhortations as he struggled with the unwilling patient, and Miss Elliot, the night nurse, directing the proceedings with curt, unruffled directions. Helen, her heart beating wildly, opened her door a crack and looked out. A big, black-haired woman in evening dress was lashing about like a captive tigress in the grasp of the others, and, as Helen watched, her heavy, luxuriant hair tumbled down about her creamy shoulders, and as with a sudden and violent movement she nearly freed herself, her corsage was torn loose to expose her heaving, palpitating bosom.

She appeared to be tremendously strong, and to Helen's shocked eyes she was like a great, splendid Fury or a *La Tosca*. Her eyes were wild and staring, and there was a froth on her reddened lips, and in her insane strength she threatened to be more than the others could manage, for Miss Elliot merely stood by, calmly issuing her instructions, with no attempt to assist in restraining the raging virago. The woman's unnatural strength appeared to augment rather than diminish, and she was flinging her captors this way and that when big Doctor Lawley suddenly appeared on the scene and lent his massive strength to her control. The group surged down the corridor, the woman screaming and sobbing, the nucleus of the whole turbulent group—and the front door was left wide open!

"Here's my chance," said Helen to herself. She stepped quickly to the closet, got her hat and veil, and peered out. The struggling party had turned the corner of the corridor, and the woman's muffled shrieks were growing fainter, subsiding into sobs and strangling curses. Helen closed her door and slipped out into the night. The pallid face of the chauffeur was turned in her direction for a moment, but he made no remark. She darted behind the car, crossed the lawn swiftly, and disappeared in a grove of trees, where she knew that there was a path which led to the golf course about a quarter of a mile away.

It was very dark, but there was a moon in its first quarter somewhere behind the muggy heat haze, and Helen was able to find her way without accident. Her heart was beating as though to stifle her, and yet she was conscious of a wild exhilaration. She was free! Never mind for how long, she was free!

She had been waiting for Miss Elliot to come in before starting to prepare for bed, but Miss Elliot had evidently been waiting for this unfortunate woman who had just arrived. It would probably be some time, Helen thought, before her absence was discovered, and by that time she would be far away and in the direction least expected.

Her plan was naturally vague, but yet it had a certain coherence. She knew that the golf course was cut by a road which led down to a little port to which she had often walked with her English nurse, Miss Cassel. There were always a number of skiffs tied up to the jetty, and Helen decided to requisition one of them and pull across for Fisher's Island, where one of her school friends spent the summer with her family. Helen thought it possible that she might be able to persuade this girl to lend her some money and clothes, and thus enable her to find a retreat in some decent boarding house, where she might live under a fictitious name until her father's return.

From which it may be seen that Helen had not been taking a course in current fiction with no result. She did not know this girl particularly well. In fact, Helen had no intimate friends, and it was more than probable that her appeal might be in vain. But it appeared to be the only hope available, so she decided to take the chance. At

the worst, they could do no more than have her returned to the sanitarium.

Oddly enough, she was not in the least afraid at finding herself out there alone in the dark, viscid night. Her newly found vitality rejoiced in the wild adventure. The prospect of borrowing a skiff and rowing across the two-mile stretch of water to Fisher's Island thrilled her with a sort of exultation. She was a fairly good oarswoman, as her father had a camp on Moosehead Lake, where she had spent many summers in the care of Miss Morehouse, whom she had often rowed about for brief excursions, the governess lounging on the cushions in the stern, with her drug-ridden brain soothed by the gentle motion. These exercises had gone far to keep Helen from becoming the utter nervous wreck which many girls of less stamina would have got to be under the same poisonous influence.

It is rather pitiful when one pauses to reflect. This splendid girl, motherless from infancy, her adolescence, which should in all right have been so joyous, corroded by the evil influence of a degenerate woman and self-indulgent father, now getting her first breath of freedom and the lust of life in her escape from a sanitary institution in which in the square deal of human events she justly merited no place at all. All alone, friendless, helpless, rather bewildered, but happy. Really happy for perhaps the first time in her restricted life.

Mothers and fathers, please take notice. You would not place your real or personal property between the hands of a hired servant, but many of you do not hesitate to place your children there. What is the inference?

Helen almost romped across the links, for there the space was open and with no danger of colliding with trees and benches and things. She was well costumed for her escapade, having on a golf suit of gray linen, cool but tough as to material, and resistant to rough wear. Her low shoes were of boys' pattern and generous size, solid buckskin. The sanitarium was not a dressy place. Her hat was a panama, with a veil wound about the crown.

Now, as she came out on the links and felt the firm turf under her feet, she was conscious of a sense of freedom such as she had never felt in all her cramped and curtailed life. The place was rather like a moor, and something in its desolation instead of appalling her infused a desire to leap and dance. The murky air was thinning a little as a faint, cool draft was stirring from the west, bringing odors of dry, sun-baked grass and salty sedge from the meadows farther up the bight. Helen yielded to the impulse, and as she reached the crest, where a little kiosk marked the first tee, she flung her arms above her head and pirouetted in the pale, elusive light of the masked moon. Then, realizing the indiscretion of such performances on that open space, she was about to hurry on when to her consternation a dark figure appeared from the shadow of the small structure.

"Oh, dear!" said she plaintively to herself. "Here's one of the guards. Now I'm caught, I suppose."

For a moment she hesitated. Then the mischievous impulse to give the watcher a run for his pains swept over her. Turning suddenly, she sped like a doe down the long slope beyond.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOY ESCAPES.

Wondering what Doctor Lawley might have to say to him, and in a joyful hope that possibly his father might have seen fit to commute his sentence voluntarily, Jack hurried off to the administration building. Doctor Lawley had never sent for him during his two months of incarceration, and as his behavior had been irreproachable Jack became more convinced with every stride that there must be some good news in store for him.

"Come in!" growled Doctor Lawley, who felt that he would have given a month's pay rather than make the announcement which his sense of fair dealing had impelled him to do. As he

looked up across his desk and caught sight of the boy's glowing, expectant face, his heart sank. He had grown to conceive a great liking for this youngster who was paying for his fault with such manly cheerfulness, and he dreaded the approaching interview.

"Sit down, Jack," said he gruffly, "and pull yourself together for a jolt."

"What's the matter?" Jack asked, seating himself in a straight-backed chair at the corner of the desk.

"Well," said Doctor Lawley, "your father sailed this afternoon on the *Lafayette,* as you know. We have received orders from him that you are to stick on here for another three months."

Jack came out of his chair like his jumping namesake. "What!" he cried, aghast, disbelieving his ears.

"That's the verdict," said Doctor Lawley. "We were not supposed to tell you until the first of next month, but that seemed to me a little too stiff, so I'm telling you now. Here's a letter to you from your father which may explain the business." And he handed him one of Judge O'Connor's official envelopes. Jack ripped it open, and read as follows:

MY DEAR JACK: When some months ago I warned you that another drunken debauch of yours would mean a term of ninety days for you in some cure house for alcoholics, I had not counted on the results of such a delinquency for yourself and others. But as the case stands it seems to me that, apart from the damage wrought to yourself by your last indulgence, the mortification and disgrace which it has brought to your sister and myself quite warrants an extension of this term to another three months. I have therefore taken due legal measures to have you committed to Doctor Moritz Brinker's excellent establishment until the second day of November.

In pursuing this step I have been actuated not by the desire to punish you for the pain which you have caused Jeanne and me and your many friends, but because I have felt it to be a necessary measure for your own future well-being. Since leaving college and even while there, you have been far too frequently subject to periodical drunkenness. I believe that you are still too young to have actually formed the alcoholic habit, and I do not intend that you shall do so if any act of mine can prevent it. I have in my life seen too many good men go to the scrap heap through drink to take any chance where my own son is concerned.

The last time I visited you at the sanitarium I was so impressed by the great change in you as the result of excellent hygiene and the absence of stimulants that I decided the treatment ought to be continued for the rest of the summer in order to make assurance doubly sure. Thereafter, no possible excuse for a relapse can possibly offer itself. I was further induced to take this step by observing that you were happy, highly regarded there, and rapidly became such a son morally, physically, and mentally as I had always desired you to be.

Doctor Lawley tells me that you have no knowledge or recollection of the peculiar manner in which you ruined your sister's lawn party and brought disgrace upon us all, not only through those present, but as the result of the venomous manner in which a press hostile to myself and my political party saw fit to exploit the affair. I have asked Doctor Lawley to instruct you as to this and to show you some of the scurrilous accounts of the incident.

Do not think, however, that I am acting vengefully or with the desire to make you pay for your misconduct. My object is merely to stamp on the head of that drink viper which appears to have got you in its toils until it shall never so much as wriggle its tail again. Affectionately your father,

JOHN P. O'CONNOR.

Jack laid the letter on his knee, and stared at Doctor Lawley with a white face and wild, startled eyes.

"Good Lord, doctor! What the devil did I do?" he gasped.

"I wasn't there, Jack," said Doctor Lawley, "but this may give you some idea." And he handed him a copy of a New York Sunday newspaper, one full page of which had been given to a description of the incident. A good part of it was in cartoons of a burlesque character. Jack's horrified vision fell on the blatant leader which was something like this:

HIGH JINKS AT BEACON RIDGE.

Jack O'Connor, Son and Heir of Judge John P. O'Connor, Entertains Twin Sister's Guests.

Does a Swallow Dive in the Fountain in the Altogether.

Panic Among the Lady Guests. Why the Panic? Sure Jack's a Dom Well-built Lad.

Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera throughout the whole of the inspired article, with large pictures of Jack *au naturel* taking the plunge; pictures of Judge

O'Connor, of Jeanne, of the lady guests fleeing the spectacle with much display of skirts and legs; of Jack being hauled out by Judge O'Connor, waist-deep in the fountain; a bit of family biography and the rise of this particular branch of the O'Connors; some words anent Jack's college career and his barroom and cabaret popularity.

The sweat burst out on Jack's forehead as he perused this public record of his shame. But before he had finished it disappeared, and a dull red glow spread itself over his cheeks, while his light-gray eyes grew hard and stony. He read it through, then handed the paper to Doctor Lawley.

"Why wasn't I told about this?" he asked quietly.

"Your father's orders," Doctor Lawley answered.

Jack meditated for a moment or two, then remarked in a voice which was quite new to him and seemed to contain a certain judicial calm:

"There's no question about my having disgraced us all, of course. But I fail to see in that any excuse for my father's having extended my sentence. He admits that I did not have any idea of what I was doing by having given orders that I was not to be told. Then he goes and extends my sentence without a further trial. When a magistrate or justice or judge sentences a man for drunkenness, plus disorderly conduct, he does it all at once, and the guilty person knows about it. He does not send him up for three months and then tack on another three without the knowledge of the culprit. It is unfair and unconstitutional, and I won't stand for it."

"But see here, Jack," Doctor Lawley protested, "this is a little different."

"Different nothing!" Jack retorted. "For how long was I committed when he brought me here?"

"For three months. Then when he saw——"

"When he saw that I was taking my medicine like a good sport and profiting by it, he went and tacked on another three. Do you call that a square deal, doctor?"

"No," answered Doctor Lawley; "to tell the truth, I don't."

"Neither do I, and I am not going to stand for it. I'm going out, and I'm going out the first chance I get, and if I don't get a chance I'll make it!" The boy's handsome face had nothing girlish in it now.

"Hold on, Jack!" said Doctor Lawley soothingly. "You can't do that. Right or wrong, you are legally committed for six months, and if you try to act up or make a break we'll just have to put you in restraint and curtail your liberty."

"Then put me in restraint and curtail my liberty. Glad of it. That let's me out if anything happens. Take old Mike off the job and detail one of your strong arms. Detail half a dozen of 'em. If you can hold me, all right and good; if you can't, so much the worse for the boozorium. No doubt Judge O'Connor's got drag enough to shove me into Matteawan if he wanted to, and I wish he would. I like you, doctor, and I appreciate what you've done for me. I like the whole bunch. But my father's action in sticking on another three months is unfair and unconstitutional, and I'm going to get out of here if I have to set the damned place on fire. Now you can go ahead and do what you like about it. I've got nothing more to say."

"But look here, Jack," said Doctor Lawley; "don't you see that we are responsible for you before the law?"

"Of course. I see that perfectly. I'm not blaming you. But I'm responsible to myself, and if I were to submit to such damned tyranny I'd never be able to look myself in the face again. So lock me up. Put me in irons. Do any blooming thing you choose. I shan't blame you."

"But what if you should manage to make a break and do a get-away? Your father as good as told me that in that case he'd cut you adrift and let you go to the devil in your own way."

"Then I'll go to the devil in my own way, and my father can go likewise in his! He can give his money to Jeanne or spend it muzzling the press.

I don't want it. I played the game as long as he did, and longer. All I want now is to get out, and if you want to keep me you'll have to detail *some* guard."

Jack leaned back, white and panting, his eyes like points of white flame.

"Very well," said Doctor Lawley quietly, and leaned forward to touch his bell. But at that moment there came from the direction of the female annex the sound of a scream, followed by loud voices and excited expostulations. Doctor Lawley paused, then turned to the open window behind him.

"What the deuce is all that row?" he asked, more of himself than of Jack.

The sounds of the altercation increased. The annex was some hundred yards distant, but the night was very still, and the sounds appeared to be transmitted telephonically through the oppressive atmosphere. The clamor increased, and Doctor Lawley rose to his feet.

"Got to look into that," said he. "Wait a minute——" And he stepped out through the long French window.

But Jack did not wait. There seemed to him no reason whatever why he should wait. He had frankly declared his intention to quit the place at the first opportunity which offered, and here was the opportunity. He felt himself to be under not the slightest obligation, moral or otherwise, to wait. He much preferred to go in this way than over the prostrate body of an attendant, so he stepped out through the window which Doctor Lawley had obligingly left open and struck across the stretch of lawn for the path which led to the golf links. He went furtively, seeking the shelter of the rhododendron clumps and glancing back over his shoulder for signs of pursuit. He was quite ready to fight his way out with claw and fang should the occasion arise. Half an hour earlier he had felt like a tame rabbit on this preserve, but now the stupidity of those in a position to control his immediate actions made him feel like a wolf escaped from a trap. It is doubtful if at that moment even the faithful Mike would have found much mercy at his hands, should he have stood in the way. Jack O'Connor was an outlaw.

But nobody interfered with his going, and presently he struck the path to the golf links, and followed it to the little kiosk at the first tee. There he stopped to rest and to reflect a little as to what he was going to do next. He had not a cent in his pockets nor a hat on his head, and he knew that it would not be many minutes before attendants would be scouring the vicinity, aided by a subsidized and discreet local constabulary. Wherefore his thoughts turned most naturally to escape by water, and he remembered the little port about two miles down the road at the bottom of the hill.

And then like an inspiration came the thought of his boat lying in New Haven harbor, with a week or ten days' stores aboard and all ready for sea. He had left her, intending to return the following day, and there were aboard her clothes and toilet articles and even his check book in his writing desk. The two friends who were to have accompanied him on the cruise to the eastward had departed sadly on their different ways. "What more simple," thought Jack, "than to take the boat and clear out for the hidden inlets of the Maine coast, with later the desolate reaches and bayous of the southern sounds?" He still had a little balance at the bank, and there were quantities of places where he could cash a check without danger or difficulty.

With this splendid thought in his brain, he was about to start off again when his quick eye was caught by a gray figure moving up the slope in his direction. Jack's muscles tautened and his jaw set.

"Somebody's spotted me," he thought. "Well, he won't get me without a scrap, if it's the boss himself."

He did not try to slip away, because he knew that he would be seen and a general hue and cry promptly raised. He was in the mood to prefer an immediate show-down, when he meant to try for a knock-out which would keep his pursuer quiet long enough to give

him a decent start. So he tightened his belt and waited.

The gray figure was approaching swiftly and stealthily, and then, as it drew near, Jack discovered, to his astonishment, that it was a woman. She reached the top of the plateau about twenty or thirty yards from the shelter, and then, to Jack's horror and amazement, suddenly threw her arms above her head and began to pirouette about in the vague, screened light of the moon.

"Good Lord!" gasped Jack. "It's a lady loco that's done a get-away. Now isn't that just my rotten luck!"

For it had flashed in his head that he could not in all conscience permit this poor, demented creature to roam the country at night, even at the price of his own liberty. There was the river at the bottom of the hill, and, a little farther down, the mill pond. There were also a number of big land-improvement operations going on about the neighborhood, and labor camps situated here and there. The following day would be Sunday, and these foreign laborers roaming about.

No, his duty was very plain. This woman was probably the one whom he and Doctor Lawley had heard shrieking, and in some way she had made her escape. It was his moral obligation to see that she came to no harm. So he stepped out of the kiosk and started to walk in her direction, framing some soothing speech.

She saw him the instant he emerged from the shadow. Her dancing stopped abruptly, and for an instant she stood erect and motionless. Then, turning suddenly, she sped off down the slope toward the river, with Jack in hot pursuit.

CHAPTER VII.

BOY AND GIRL.

Helen's only object in flight was the excitement of the chase. She reasoned that her pursuer must be one of the guards and that he would naturally be able to catch her on that open stretch of moor, but she meant to give him a run for his triumph. She had no idea whatever of resistance, which would be futile and undignified. But she was long of limb and fleet of foot, and for the first two hundred yards held her distance, thanks to her splendid condition from tennis and swimming exercises.

She reached the bottom of the slope, and struck the road, but here her breath began to fail, so she stopped suddenly and faced about, panting. Within a few yards of her the man stopped also, and walked up, himself rather blown.

"Don't be afraid," said he gently. "I'm not going to hurt you."

"I'm not afraid," she answered. "It's just my horrid luck to get caught."

"You nearly managed it," he answered. "I'm supposed to be some runner, but I couldn't have held that pace much longer. How did you get out?"

"They were all busy with that crazy woman who was just brought in, and left the front door open," she answered. "I'd been waiting for a chance like that for several days."

Jack regarded her curiously, and observed that she was a very young and so far as he could ascertain in the murk an uncommonly pretty girl. She impressed him also as being entirely sane and normal.

"Why did you want to run away?" he asked.

"Because there is no longer any sense in my being kept in the sanitarium," she answered. "I have been cooped up there since early in March, and for the last month I have been entirely well. Then I found out that my father had been lying to me. He wrote me that the doctor's orders were for me to stop on another few months, and I discovered that he had not seen the doctor at all, but was having me kept there because he did not want to be bothered with me. So I made up my mind to run away the first chance I got. I suppose that you are an attendant and mean to take me back."

"Why, no," said Jack. "To tell the truth, I'm a patient and I've just done a get-away myself."

"What?" cried Helen, and drew back a little.

"You needn't be afraid," said Jack. "I'm not a 'balm' or anything like that. My father had me committed here two months ago for getting drunk and disgracing the family. He told me that I was only in for three months, and now he's gone and got me recommitted for another three. Doctor Lawley just told me about it a few minutes ago, and while we were talking that woman began to scream, and he ran over to see what was going on. So I saw my chance and flew the coop. When I saw you I thought you must be the crazy woman and that you ought not be let wander around here alone at night, so I ran after you."

"What? Are you Jack O'Connor, that boy that dived into the fountain at his sister's lawn party?" asked Helen.

"I am ashamed to say that you have guessed right. Sh-h-h!"

The caution for quiet was none too soon as two figures had appeared, silhouetted against the dim sky at the top of the slope, about three hundred yards away. Jack seized Helen by the wrist.

"Here they come," he whispered. "Slip into the bushes across the road."

Like a pair of foxes, they crept into the scrubby growth, which was barely enough to conceal them when crouched close to the ground. The two attendants came straight in their direction, striking the road a little higher up, and passed their hiding place within two paces. One was Mike, and the other a tall, strapping fellow known as William. Mike was talking volubly.

"Now there will be the divil and all to pay," said he. "Two av thim the same jump. The lad can take care of himself, but 'tis no place for a young gurrul to be chasin' around alone, and all thim dagos and huns infestin' the neighborhood. The ould mon is crazy, and small blame to him. I do not think she kem this way. She would be afeared, 'tis that lonesome."

They stopped about twenty feet away, and Jack thanked the lucky chance which had led him to put on a blue serge suit instead of remaining in white flannels.

"There ain't anything to bring either of 'em this direction," said William, "but the shoffer says she lit out across the lawn. They can't get fur with no money nor nawthin'.

"Thank hivins, Jack was talkin' wit' Doctor Lawley at the time," said Mike, "or I see where I'd be after gettin' me walkin' papers. I do not blame the lad. Sure the judge had played him a dhirty trrick, double-crossin' him like he done. Now what if we was to separate, you goin' straight on down the road and me the opposite direction?"

This idea was carried out, and the two soon faded into the gloom. Jack gave a little chuckle.

"That was a close shave," said he. "What the deuce are we to do next? You really ought to go back, Miss——"

"Never!" said Helen emphatically. "My name is Helen Castellane."

"But what are you going to do?" asked Jack.

Helen briefly told him of her plan. Jack shook his head.

"That won't do," said he positively. "In the first place, it would be dangerous for you to try to row across to Fisher's Island. The weather's going to change before morning. It feels thundery now. Listen! What did I tell you?"

A low, growling rumble filled the air, and a moment later there came a dull flash from the west. The air was heavy as a steam bath.

"What did I tell you?" Jack repeated. "We'll get a thunderstorm within an hour. I'll tell you what. There's an old hay barn about half a mile across the meadows. We'd better make for that and stay there until it passes over."

To this Helen agreed, so they set out, keeping off the high ground as much as possible. The storm was coming up rapidly, and presently it grew so dark that they stumbled along, holding each other's hands and unable to see ten feet ahead of them. But Jack's sense of direction was well developed, and the frequent lightning flashes aiding, they soon came to the old barn, which was stuffed almost to the top with fragrant hay. Jack gave Helen a hand up, then

scrambled after her, and they disposed themselves comfortably on the sweet-smelling stuff with the pleasing sense of having found at least a temporary sanctuary.

"Why did they send you to old Pa Brinker's boozararium?" asked Jack, stretching himself luxuriously, for he was tired after his daily strenuous exercise.

"Just to get rid of me, I guess," Helen answered, following his example for precisely the same reason. "I was never really ill, but I was always tired and nervous, probably from being always so bored. You see, I never had any of the fun that other girls have because my governess got it into her head that I was delicate and contrary."

"Judging from the chase you led me over the links, I should say that you were about as delicate as a three-year-old blue-grass filly," Jack answered, "and as for being contrary—well, that depends a good deal on the sort of game you happen to be up against. Is your mother alive, if you don't mind my asking?"

"No," said Helen, chewing at the end of a sweet stalk of meadow grass. "I don't remember my mother."

Jack was conscious of a sudden, strong emotion of protectiveness. He also had suffered from that greatest of all human bereavements.

"Same here," he answered. "After all, when it comes right down to brass tacks, I guess that most fathers are natural-born fools where their children are concerned. Mine is."

"Mine is worse," Helen answered, sitting up in the hay. "He's a liar."

"So is mine," said Jack, "or at least he acts the part. Well, most people are. I don't suppose we really ought to blame our fathers. No doubt they mean well—and that's damning them with mighty faint praise. They seem to think that because—because we wouldn't be here except for them we ought to be darn grateful." He felt Helen's arm brush against his as he shifted his position slightly. "Well, maybe we ought," he amended. "Here comes the storm. Lucky I happened to remember this place. I hope that bunch that's hunting for us gets good and soaked."

A sudden squall of wind struck the old shack which sheltered them and thrummed against its dilapidated cornices. Then came a vivid, instantaneous glare, which flared through the doorless opening, pierced the many crevices of roof and sides, and seemed to prick out every nail and knot hole in the flimsy structure. Followed an ear-splitting report and a crash as though of universal dissolution. Then a breathless pause followed a deluge of wind-driven rain. For a moment Jack thought that the old barn had been struck and riven, and as he reached out instinctively with a blinded sense of protection for the girl, his hand met Helen's and held it firmly. He threw his arm around her shoulder and drew her closer.

"Don't be scared," said he soothingly. "It's all right—soon be over ——"

Crash! Bang!! And this time the thunderbolt could be heard to hiss and sizzle as it rived to the heart a gaunt, half-dead oak tree on the lane just opposite them. Helen screamed and crushed her face against Jack's chest. Like most highly organized creatures, both the boy and the girl had a constitutional dread of thunderstorms, but Jack had forgot his in the desire to comfort his companion.

"There!" said he. "It's passed now. Went smack over us. Hay is a non-conductor, anyhow—just like feathers. Can't strike us here." All of which he knew to be quite untrue, but served to demonstrate his recently expressed conviction that all men are liars. "Shift over this way a little, Helen. This darn roof leaks a little bit." *Bang! Boom!!* Another thunderclap. "There!" triumphantly. "You see, I was right. That one struck way beyond us. It's all over now. Don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid, Jack," Helen whispered. "But I have always hated thunderstorms.

"So have I," Jack answered. "They don't seem to give you any chance to

hit back. There—listen to that one! Look, Helen, there's a blaze! A barn or haymow or something. Never mind. *Après nous le déluge.* And here comes the deluge! Good Lord!" A savage gust of wind threatened to lift the roof off the barn a good deal as one might remove the lid from a box of sweetmeats, and following this futile attempt of Boreas a cascade descended upon the ancient shingles, happily somewhat swelled to meet the strain. "There she comes, Helen," said Jack. "Never mind; it won't last long!" And he chanted an ancient ditty composed by a famous British admiral for the purpose of impressing certain meteorological facts on the fallow minds of apprentices:

"When the rain's before the wynd,
Then your tops'l halyards mind;
When the wynd's before the rain,
Shake your topsails out again."

The squall soon drove past, and was followed by a cool draft of air from the north. Fortunately the roof of the old barn had been recently patched, and but little water leaked through. But Jack had been doing some rapid thinking even while encouraging Helen, and he had come to the conclusion that if they were to make good their escape daylight must find them well away from the vicinity. He believed that Doctor Brinker would be careful to keep the affair out of the papers, if only for the credit of his establishment.

"If we don't want to get hauled back by the scruff of the neck like a couple of runaway pups, we've got to get clear of this neighborhood before morning," he said. "That scheme of yours for swiping a boat sounds all right to me. There's a fellow down here at Deep Creek that has boats and launches for hire. If we could manage to grab a launch or a sailboat with a motor, we could beat it down to New Haven before daylight. I've got a cruising yawl there, and once aboard her we'd be all right."

"But what shall we do then?" Helen asked.

"Run around into the Hudson and up to our place. My sister Jeanne is a good sport, and I'll get her to give it out that you've come to visit. You'll be all right there until your father comes back, and then you can put it up to him."

"And what will you do?" Helen asked doubtfully. "You couldn't stay there."

"Of course not. I'll clear out on the boat. Run down East or something. I can get money enough to keep me going until the business sort of blows over. Father may be gone three or four months, and by that time I'll have been able to prove that I'd rather drink a glass of prussic acid than a glass of booze."

Helen did not appear particularly enthusiastic over this arrangement. But she made no demur, and, the rain having stopped, they slipped down from the hay and started across the meadows for the road. The weather had cleared, and the stars twinkled brightly in the rush of the north wind, while the moon was getting low, but still furnished light enough for them to see their way. It was then about half past eleven.

For about a mile they walked briskly along in silence and watchfulness, busy with their thoughts. Jack was by far the more worried of the two. He realized, of course, that he was doing what would be regarded as a very wrong thing, possibly a criminal act, in managing the escape of this young girl from a sanitarium, where she had been placed by her father under the advice of so famous a specialist as Doctor Bright, whose name was well known to him. He had no idea of what her malady might have been, nor apparently had she, but he reasoned that it must have been of a serious character to have warranted so long an internment. To be sure, she now impressed him as in absolutely normal health and strength both mentally and physically, but for that matter so had his own fellow captives, some of whom had been recommitted several times. What if it were to prove that she were subject to attacks of periodical insanity or hysteria or epilepsy or catalepsy or some other of the many ghastly abnormali-

ties to which, in certain cases, the human economy falls heir? Cold chills ran down his back at the mere thought of such a possibility. A nice figure he would cut if it came about that he had run off with a young and beautiful victim of some incipient mental disorder.

And yet he did not see just how he could act otherwise with honor. The girl had told him a perfectly straight and rational story of having been interned by her father to get her out of the way, and explained to him how she had accepted the situation with resignation until, on seeing the announcement of Doctor Bright's expected return in the paper, she realized that her father had lied to her and was keeping her on in the sanitarium to save himself the trouble of bothering about her care. Jack could readily understand that, while such an institution as Doctor Brinker's might be a most excellent place for an ill person, it would become absolutely insupportable for a strong and healthy one. His own experience quite demonstrated this.

Helen impressed him—and Jack was not lacking in a certain amount of experience—as a very lovely and unsophisticated girl who was getting a very raw and crooked deal. Moreover, they were practically in the same boat, and she had put herself under his protection with an absolute confidence which aroused the very best instincts in his tempestuous nature, and that was saying a good deal. To betray her now and subject her to another period of incarceration seemed to him to be the very limit of unchivalry. So he determined to see the thing through, come what might of it.

Helen's reflections were far less troubled. She knew as little about young men as Jack was well informed in the matter of girls both young and old. She had never had a young man friend, to say nothing of a beau, nor desired one. She had never so much as had her hand squeezed, nor a box of flowers or bonbons sent her by an admirer. It is doubtful if she had ever been five minutes alone with a boy, and while her attractiveness had awakened strong sentiments in many a youth who had covertly observed her at dancing class or parties or in vacation time on beach or lake, there had always been the argus-eyed duenna not far distant which, coupled with a sort of apathetic aloofness on the part of the girl herself, had been discouraging to these would-be swains.

But Helen was now a different girl —strong, vital, and tingling with the life desire. The sanitarium had done this for her, and her act in running away from it would have been one of rank ingratitude if she had understood the situation. The action of many people toward their benefactors would be rank ingratitude if they understood. Her new-found vigor demanded life and action and emotion and warmth, and she turned to these qualities as naturally as a flowering plant growing in a dark, dank room turns its blossoms to the sun, even though when placed on a window sill the tendency of their growth inclines the stems in an opposite direction.

Her feminine instinct drew her to him at the first few words exchanged between them. Thereafter she had confided herself to his care with a happy sense of security which was pathetic. She had thrilled with some glorious consciousness of safety when he had taken her hand and guided her across the moor to the old hay barn, and when, during the storm, he had held her in his arms and reassured her, the terrors of thunder and lightning were forgot in the stir of new emotions. No paladin in plumes and armor ever seemed greater to a lady fair than did Jack to Helen while the thunderbolts of Jupiter Tonans were slamming about the old shack and Boreas was threatening to unroof it. For the first time in her life she felt unalone. The primordial craving for duality was satisfied.

In a word, Helen had fallen in love with Jack at first sight, at first touch, and this age-old reaction was the stronger because she did not realize it.

So they walked down the road in the same old way, the girl confident and happy because the boy was there, and

everything had to work out all right. And the boy, who had never in all his life had anything to bother about except himself, was happy, too, though worried. He had not fallen in love, possibly because he was burdened with the weight of his responsibility, but he would not have exchanged this for a great deal. The boy had been in love a good many times, but he had never before been the arbiter of any girl's destiny, and he found the situation fraught with exhilaration. He could feel Helen's absolute faith in him, and this put him on his mettle and on his honor. It made him feel a man.

As they neared the little port, Jack's vigilance increased. But the thunder squall had driven everybody under cover and drenched the place, and nobody appeared to be moving about. They turned a bend in the road, and the Sound stretched out before them, dark and glittering. At the same moment two figures stepped out from the shadow of a low building and approached them. As they drew near Jack saw that they were not of the sanitarium personnel, but seemed to be local persons. Directly in front of Helen and himself they stopped so as to block the way.

"Well, what is it?" Jack asked.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEY BOTH ESCAPE.

For a moment the pair appeared to be embarrassed. They were young men and decidedly hard looking, and might have been boatmen or hands in the little shipyard. Jack thought that he had seen one of them before, and then suddenly remembered him as an expressman who sometimes brought trunks or parcels to the sanitarium.

"Say, mister," said this one, "I guess you and the lady are wanted up to Doctor Brinker's place."

"That's right," said the other. "They want you mighty bad."

"And suppose they do," Jack answered. "What's that got to do with you? Are you two on the sanitarium pay roll?"

"Well, not exactly," said the first speaker, "but the doctor sends considerable work our way, and we agreed to keep a lookout for you two and take you back there if we happened to meet up with you. Now I got a little car right here in the shed, so if you and the lady will be so kind as to get aboard everything will be all right."

"And what if we won't be so kind as to get aboard?" asked Jack. "Then I suppose everything will be all wrong, what?"

"Look here, mister," said the other man; "you can't put a raw deal like this across. We got our orders, so the best thing you can do is to come along quiet and peaceable. Where do you think you're goin', anyhow?"

"That's my business," Jack answered, and drew slightly away from Helen, his thumbs hooked lightly in the side pockets of his coat. The two men exchanged glances and edged slightly in on him. The trim, boyish figure did not look formidable, and either of the others could have given Jack ten or fifteen pounds of weight. They knew that their act would be supported by Doctor Brinker and the local authorities and that the former would make the job well worth their while. But they had been instructed not to use force if it could be avoided, so they made another attempt at conciliation.

"Say, listen here!" said one of them. "You could be jugged for this, do you understand? You're in wrong now for making a break yourself, but takin' the lady with you is a whole lot worse, and her a patient and a young girl. Now listen to reason and save trouble for all hands. You can't put it across with us here, so you might just as well make the best of it and come along without no trouble. Do you get me?"

"Yes," said Jack, "I get you. What are you going to do about it?"

This time there was no mistaking the look which passed between the pair. If they had been attendants or persons from the sanitarium, acting under due authority, the chances are that Jack would have made the best of it and

returned without a struggle. But to be held up by a pair of rank outsiders was more than his pride could support, so as the two sprang suddenly in to grapple he went forward to meet them with a perfectly good idea of what he was about. His fierce little bouts with Danny had fitted him perfectly for such a scrimmage, while his uncommon quickness and high, muscular tonicity made these thick, awkward fellows easy marks for his skill.

So, ducking under the grabbing arms of the man on the right, he put a straight jab with all of his weight behind it squarely on the solar plexus, and then, without waiting to observe its effect he swung a left hook for the other man's jaw, and planted it with beautiful precision. It is doubtful if two knock-out blows were ever delivered so nearly simultaneously. Of course, if it had been an ordinary fight and the pair trying for a similar result, the finish might have been different, but as it was they were merely trying to clinch with him, little suspecting what he had tucked away under his loose serge coat.

Some men are singularly deceptive in this regard, and Jack was one of them. Even the experienced Danny had often been startled and surprised at Jack's vicious jabs, and had never been able quite to study out where he kept his punch. Everything lies in the quickness with which a blow is delivered, and its precision. It is said that a panther can strike so sharply as to leave the impression of its claws on a gun barrel without knocking the weapon out of the hunter's hands, and Jack had something of this quality.

At any rate, there was no need to continue the affair. His would-be captors were down and out, and Jack, glancing at their limp figures, decided that they would take the count. In fact, he did not believe that they would be up and doing for several minutes, so he seized Helen by the wrist and rushed her down to the deserted boathouse, not far distant. Two or three skiffs were tied up to the float, and farther out a number of boats were moored, among them a small, cabined launch of which the lines suggested possibilities of speed. There were no oars in evidence, but Jack picked up a small piece of plank, and, helping Helen into a skiff, cast off the painter and proceeded to paddle vigorously for the launch. He thought it probable that there would be gasoline enough in the tank, as the boats were in constant use, and in this he was correct. Snapping on the switch, he cranked up, and the motor responded with a pleasing whir. Scrambling forward, he made fast the skiff's painter to the mooring, then cast off that of the launch, and threw in the clutch. A moment later they were gliding rapidly out into the Sound, and none too soon, for somebody was shouting at them from the shore, and a moment later a light flashed out in the upper story of the boathouse.

"That was touch and go," said Jack. "We ought to make it now, though. This thing seems to be able to plug along. Unless they've got a speed launch or something and our gas doesn't give out, we'll be all right." He reached over the side, and dipped his bruised and bleeding knuckles into the water. "It wouldn't do to get collared now that we've stolen a launch. I'd probably get committed to a worse place than old Pop Brinker's rumarium."

"I'm afraid that you hurt those two men quite badly," said Helen.

Jack shrugged. "They started it," he answered. "What business was it of theirs, anyhow? They had no right to butt in, and they only got what was coming to them. Next time they'll think twice before doing voluntary police duty. If we fetch New Haven all right, I'll send back the launch with a check. Hello! Here they come after us——" And he shoved up spark and gas.

A motor was coughing and sputtering off the boathouse, and a moment later they saw another and larger launch glide out in pursuit. Jack held straight out until clear of the point, and then, catching sight of a buoy, swung off

down the coast. Looking back from time to time, he could not see that the other boat was gaining, while their own motor was running cleanly and well and the launch making excellent speed. Giving the wheel for a moment to Helen, he sounded the fuel tank, and was pleased to find it nearly full. The boat had, in fact, been hired for an evening spin, but the storm had interfered with the party.

But despite this immediate respite from trouble, Jack was not entirely content with the situation, which shows that he must have been hard to please. Although he did not always see fit to avail himself of it, he had a considerable amount of common sense, and he realized that he had put both Helen and himself in a very difficult position.

"It seems to be getting thicker and thicker," he told himself. "First I jump jail, then I steal a girl, then I knock out a couple of deputies, and now I've stolen a launch. This beats anything I ever did when drunk, and that's going some. But the worst of it is that if the business ever gets out Helen's reputation is sure to suffer. But what the dickens was I to do?"

There being no apparent solution to this problem, he put it from his mind and devoted his attenion to the present and immediate future. He had observed by the buoy that the tide was at the first of the flood, and from the speed of the launch he judged that they ought to fetch New Haven by five o'clock in the morning at the outside. So he said to Helen:

"We've got a long trot ahead of us, so you had better go into the cabin and get some rest, especially as to-morrow is apt to be our busy day."

"Very well, Jack," she answered obediently, and crept into the cabin, which was clean, though somewhat redolent of the odor of gasoline and burned oil. But these aromas were disregarded in her fatigue after the excitement of the evening, so, disposing herself comfortably on the cushioned locker, she was soon sleeping peacefully, while Jack, who was entirely familiar with the navigation of Long Island Sound, headed for Cornfield Lightship, wondering how the adventure was going to end.

CHAPTER IX.

COMPLICATIONS.

Miss Jeanne O'Connor had passed a very tedious summer. To begin with, she had missed her brother sorely, for the two were devoted to each other, as twins usually are, and Jeanne had quite forgiven his indiscretion the day after his having been immured in the sanitarium. She had passed a number of stormy interviews with the judge, insisting that she be permitted to visit him there, but her father had proved inexorable. To compensate he had made sporadic efforts to fill the void left in the family by the absence of the son and heir, and had taken Jeanne and three of her friends on a cruise to Newport and Bar Harbor in his eighty-foot motor swifty, *Jeanne*. This cruise had bored the yacht's namesake beyond all expression, first because she thought the judge rather fatuous in his attentions to her guests, two of whom were very young and very pretty and the third no longer young, but even prettier—from a point of view which disregards grace before meat—and infinitely more engaging.

Jeanne had returned from this outing thoroughly disgusted. Straws show which way the wind blows, and those sticking out of the tall glasses of the mature guest and the host as they refreshed themselves under the quarter-deck awnings, after the heat of the day ashore, became ominous weathercocks to Jeanne. The prospect of a stepmother looked to her as might a big black cloud to a French wine grower, or a funnel-shaped one to a Kansas farmer. It made her want to shoot a bomb into it to precipitate the trouble before it had time to precipitate itself.

But this was not the greatest of her ennuis. The party had been augmented at Newport by a large and capable young man who had been a classmate of Jack and who desired very much to marry Jeanne as soon as possible. Jeanne herself was quite willing and

prepared to marry him; the sooner the better. She desired exceedingly to get married, and he appeared to be in all ways the most desirable of her several suitors. He was a highly efficient engineer, and Jeanne thought that it would be fun to travel to all parts of the globe with him, building dams and bridges and things.

But, alas for these fond aspirations! Ten days of his almost constant society had convinced Jeanne that they could never possibly get on. The girl's warm Irish and French blood was first chilled and then slowed in its rapid circulation by the contact with a purely mechanical mind which was wholly utilitarian. When she admired a stormy surf he saw in it only power going to waste, and when she gloried in the beauty of a gorgeous sunset he would proceed to lecture on the solar spectrum until Jeanne wanted to yawn. When the great, luscious midsummer moon gave her sentimental yearnings he saw in it merely a satellite of the earth two hundred and thirty-eight thousand eight hundred miles distant and shining with the sun's reflected light. It was this way about everything until finally Jeanne became thoroughly bored in his society, and when at the end of the cruise he proposed matrimony, advancing his claims and specifications as precisely as though attempting to promote a railroad or mining property, Jeanne told him flatly that she would as soon think of marrying a theodolite or multiplying machine.

Two weeks later he departed for the Andes, and Jeanne returned home with the resentful consciousness of having wasted the best part of her summer and the strong desire to compensate for it by some wild and reckless adventure. She had much of her brother's lawless nature, and her college experience had infused her with a complete conviction of her ability to take care of herself under any conditions whatever. She and Jack were, in fact, ridiculously alike both physically and temperamentally. They were about of a size, though Jeanne was slightly more full of figure, of the same dark, clear complexion, with the identical gray eyes heavily fringed with black lashes, and distinctly Celtic features; the eyes well spaced, short, straight noses, wide mouths, and firm, pugnacious chins. Jack's face was rather thinner than his sister's, and his nose lacked the retroussé tendency of hers, but this was scarcely noticeable, and they had several times deceived their intimate friends by changing costumes.

At this time, that which lent itself even more to their perfect resemblance was the fact that Jeanne's hair had not yet grown very long after a typhoid fever of the previous winter, but clustered in thick, black curls about her ears. She was also well tanned from her yachting cruise, while her discontented state of mind had given her a sort of abrupt impatience of speech and manner which was rather that of an intolerant youth than a sweet girl graduate. Her voice also was of a rather husky contralto, uncommonly deep of pitch for a girl, and in its inflection precisely that of Jack's. She had always been the leader of the two until they had gone to college.

Now, on her return to the parental country house, she found that she missed her brother very sorely. She desired to see him and find out how he was getting along, and Judge O'Connor departing for Europe a few days later, Jeanne decided to run across to the sanitarium and pay him a visit, and the judge's positive instructions to the contrary be hanged. She appealed these to a court of justice composed of herself and her most intimate friend and classmate, a Miss Christine van Volkenen, who was visiting her at the time, with the result that Judge O'Connor's decision was promptly pronounced to be without proper precedent and therefore null and void.

Miss Christine was a very pretty blonde, with ruddy golden hair and an exquisite complexion. Like Jeanne, she was quite prepared for any sort of a lark which might be managed with a reasonable amount of discretion, so that when Jeanne suggested that they take the forty-horse-power runabout and pay

Jack a visit, she approved the idea without the slightest hesitation. Christine indeed entertained a certain tender sentiment for Jack, and she was glad of the opportunity to show herself his sympathetic friend in his hour of need.

"It's only about a hundred miles," said Jeanne, "and the roads are perfect all the way. If we leave at about seven, we can get there easily by noon. I'll have James put us up some sandwiches and things, and tell Mrs. Trippett that we're going to run over to the Fairfield Country Golf Club to spend the day. We can have a couple of hours with Jack and get home before dark."

"But don't you think we'd better take one of the chauffeurs—Murphy or McCall?" Christine asked. "It's a pretty long run, and we might get a tire down or something."

"That's not apt to happen," Jeanne answered, "but if it should we'd manage somehow. I got stuck on the road last summer, and before I had a chance to find out what was the matter there were four cars parked beside me and a dozen men at work on the job. Eleven of them were talking to me, and the twelfth was filling up the tank. Murphy had been to a funeral, and hadn't got back when I started out, and McCall was down by the river practicing on the bagpipes, and I was in a hurry and hadn't stopped to see if I had gas enough. Of course, a motor can't run without gas any more than a politician, but all these tanks that had come to my rescue were full to bursting, so I got started again before dark. It's not as if we were crossing the staked plains."

"All the same," Christine objected, "you'll be all tired out."

"I can't be as tired as I've been for the last two weeks, with about eight hours a day of lectures on cantilever bridges and deep alluvions and masonwork cores and canal prisms and things," Jeanne retorted impatiently. "After listening to all that stuff, a burst tire or a plugged carburetor seems like a spoke gone out of the hind wheel of a doll's baby carriage. Besides, Murphy or McCall would be sure to blab and might spoil our running over to see Jack again."

Christine offering no further objections, the expedition was promptly mobilized. Jeanne was by nature an expert driver, if she did often exceed the speed limits, and her swift runabout was as foolproof as modern invention can assure. So the two girls departed at about half past seven of a lovely morning at the end of August, the tires of their car scratching the surface of the turnpike in the same hour when the object of their kind attentions was lending his own to the matter of getting in telephonic communication with his sister with the object of preparing in some measure for providing sanctuary in behalf of a pair of runaways from a sanitarium.

Both parties, being happily in ignorance of the complications ahead, were taking a great deal of pleasant interest in the situation, particularly Jeanne. For this self-willed young lady it offered possibilities of keen excitement required by her nature after a very dull and disappointing summer. As the exhilaration produced by their rapid course increased, she began to form plans for much more trouble. Jack, in his three brief letters to her, had devoted most of the text to his admiration for Doctor Lawley, and what a strong and sympathetic personality he was and how uncommonly good looking, all of which was to a young lady of Jeanne's past successes and desire for conquest like describing to an enthusiastic angler a big trout in a deep pool difficult and dangerous of approach or to an ardent hunter the existence of a record moose or grizzly which had defied the efforts of all local nimrods.

So, as Jeanne trundled along at about forty miles an hour, her active brain was busy with a scheme for effecting the subjugation of Doctor Lawley and tying him to the wheels of her gasoline chariot, then carrying Jack off on a writ of habeas corpus which should be honored by her captive. She had understood from Jack that Doctor Lawley was practically at the head of the sanitarium, Doctor Brinker doing little

more than to cash the large checks of the inmates and potter about the grounds. As Jeanne could not recall of an instance where she had gone after her prey without success she felt very optimistic about her plan.

The road was excellent, and, soon striking the New York-Boston turnpike, it did not take them long to spin Stamford and South Norwalk and Bridgeport behind them. After New Haven was passed they stopped at a neat little inn for clam broth and biscuits, then sped upon their course again. It was not yet noon when they approached the sanitarium and observed its spacious grounds with pleasurable excitement. Rolling up to the main entrance, Jeanne parked the car where it would not be in the way when she and Christine descended, and approached the door. But scarcely had they taken half a dozen steps when a neatly dressed young man with a pleasant Hibernian face came rushing out to meet them with an expression of infinite relief and gratification.

"So here y'are back, sor, and the young lady, too!" he cried. "Sure 'twas dacint av ye to come av your own accord, and the whole place in such a stew. Where the divil have ye been, and where did ye git thim duds and the big cyar? And what have ye done wit' the launch ye shtole? Nivir has there been such a roompus in the histo'ry av the institution——" And he looked reproachfully at Jeanne, who, in riding breeches and gaiters, with a short, loose riding coat, was staring at him in astonishment. The first thought which occurred to her was that this must be one of the "mild mentals" or slightly deranged patients which Jack had mentioned in a letter. But Mike's next words gave her quick wit a clew to the situation.

"Sure, Doctor Lawley was fair crazy, sor," said he. "'Twas bad enough ye sh'u'd have run away at all, and him givin' ye the chance afther yer just sayin' ye w'u'd beat it the first chance ye got, but to take the young lady with ye was the limit. 'If ivir it gets out, Mike,' says he, ''twill be the ruin av the sanitarium,' says he. 'I w'u'd not have had it happen for a year's pay,' says he. Come, sor, and you, miss. The docthor is in his office now, telephonin' around the country. Ye will be welcome as rrain afther a long drought."

He motioned them to the door, and Jeanne, who had recovered from the shock of this reception, took her astonished guest by the elbow and passed in. As they entered, she whispered to Christine:

"Jack must have bolted off with some girl in the place. This man takes me for Jack and you for the girl. What fun! Tie up your veil and don't give the game away. We must give Jack time to get out of the neighborhood."

CHAPTER X.

THE BOY BECOMES A MAN.

The thirty-five-foot motor yawl *Fleetga* was gliding out past the New Haven breakwater under power. Jack at the wheel was cheerfully drinking coffee out of an agateware cup and munching hard-tack, while Helen, in the cabin, was experimenting in the thermic action of a gas flame on bacon and eggs. She had never cooked anything in her life, but under Jack's experienced directions was managing pretty well.

The coagulation of albuminous matter resulting satisfactorily, Helen brought the appetizing mess out into the cockpit with an air of pride, and the refugees proceeded to fortify their systems in great content. Now that the die was cast and their bridges burned, Jack had put aside his misgivings and decided to make the best of the business. He reflected that, after all, there was not much danger of their escapade leaking out, as the sanitarium would keep it quiet for its own sake, and their relatives for similar reasons. After all, there was no harm done, while there were far worse situations than to be gliding down the Sound in his roomy, comfortable boat with the prettiest and gamest girl he had ever met for a companion.

"Well," said he, munching at a liberal rasher of bacon, "we're all right now, shipmate. This beats that sultry hole of a dope house, doesn't it?"

Helen agreed enthusiastically that it did. Refreshed by a good night's rest and a stroll ashore, she now felt fit for any adventure. The fact that her father had deliberately lied to her, and the conviction that his object in keeping her at the sanitarium was merely a selfish one, made her conscience untroubled at having run away. Here was such freedom as she had never before experienced, and which, with her return to perfect health, her soul was starving for. Best of all, she was enjoying it with a man who attracted her in every sense and to whom she had freely given all her trust and confidence—and a little more.

"They must be having more fits back there than were ever thrown in the blooming shop since its inauguration," Jack observed. "I'm sorry for Doctor Lawley, but I warned him about two minutes before I did my sprint. However, I sent him a note by the man that took the launch back, saying not to worry about us, as we were all right and that I was taking you to the home of a friend."

The buoyant expression faded from Helen's face.

"I don't think I want to go to your sister, Jack," said she. "We're not acquainted, and she would be sure to think it an awful bore. Besides, it would put her in a wrong position."

"Nothing of the sort," Jack answered. "She'd be pleased as Punch. Jill's the best sort in the world and a dead-game sport. See the way I put her lawn party on the blink and disgraced the family, and she forgave me smack off. Wrote and told me so the very next day. You'll find her just like a sister, same as you can look on me as your brother. Besides, where can you go without being fired back to the sanitarium?"

"All the same, I don't want to do it," Helen said. "It's too cheeky, and I haven't any clothes except what I've got on. I'd much rather stay with you on the boat."

"But good Lord!" Jack protested. "You can't do that. It ain't proper. You've got to be chaperoned and all that."

"I'm not chaperoned now," said Helen, "and I don't care if it isn't proper. If you won't let me stay with you on the boat, I think I'd better go back to the sanitarium. At any rate, I shall have had a little fun for once in my life."

Jack set down his coffee cup, and stared at her in dismay. Then, with a gloomy face, he turned the spokes slowly in his hands, and the *Fleetga*, describing a wide arc, turned and headed for Faulkener Island.

"Where are you going?" Helen asked, setting down her cup also and staring at him with a curious gleam in her violet eyes.

"Back to the sanitarium," Jack answered. "You say that you would rather go back there than to my sister, so back we go."

"But how about you?"

"I'm going, too. I don't like to start anything that I can't finish. Well, we started this thing together, and we'll finish it together. I must say, I'd rather be shot than stick it out for another three months in that dreary ranch with that bunch of dead-alives, but it doesn't work in with my scheme of things to put you on the train and ship you back alone after my having run off with you, and then beat it myself. I took you away, and if you must go back I'll take you back and tell them why and how. Then, if anybody so much as thinks there's been anything off color in the business, I'll be there to knock that think out of his rotten block."

Helen did not answer, but sat for some moments staring fixedly at the dimpling stretch of water ahead and apparently turning this sudden and unexpected *volte-face* of their adventure in her mind. Gradually her face softened, and, as if unconsciously, her hand stole out and rested on the back of Jack's, which was gripping a spoke of the toy wheel as though steering a

five-master in a following gale instead of a play boat in a calm, where the pressure of a little finger would have sufficed.

"I like you, Jack," she said softly.

"I like you, Helen," he answered, without looking at her. "That's why I'm taking you back."

"Are you sure, Jack, or is it just because you think you ought to—that you owe it to yourself and the way you feel about such things?"

"Both," he answered, staring rigidly ahead.

"But after we get back," she persisted, "and go on the same way that we've been going on for weeks and months with those tiresome people—don't you think that you might hate me for having brought you back?"

"No. I think that I'll be able to get along all right, after this——" He glanced at her for an instant, then stood up and took a deep breath. Helen's hand, which had been resting on his, fell limply on her knee. Jack turned suddenly and picked it up as though it were something precious which he had dropped in rising. He raised it to his lips, then put it back where he had found it. "If they keep me there for the rest of my life, I'd never hate you, Helen," he said, "but there's no use talking that sort of nonsense now. You steer the boat while I wash the dishes and get some sail on her for this breeze that's striking in from the southwest."

He started for the cabin, but Helen caught him by the sleeve. "I don't want you to go back to the sanitarium, Jack. It's not necessary. You should never have been sent there to begin with, and it's too awful to think of your having to spend another three months in the deadly place. But with me it's different. I'm a girl, and have nowhere to go. But you won't let me stay with you on the boat, and I simply can't make myself a burden to your sister."

"Then back we go," said Jack doggedly. "I'm not going to skip out and leave you in the lurch."

For a while they argued the matter, but Helen's new-found will was as fixed as Jack's. Meanwhile, the *Fleetga* was gliding swiftly eastward, and Faulkener Island was soon passed. Then the breeze sprang up, and Jack, not wishing to arrive until after dark in order to avoid unnecessary publicity, stopped the motor and made sail.

But all of the joy had been quenched, and they drifted along in gloomy silence. Helen sat with her elbow on the washboard of the cockpit, staring at the dimpling water with disregarding eyes, while Jack brooded morosely at the wheel. It utterly devitalized him to think of returning to the tiresome, uninspiring routine and the gray, monotonous society of men who had abandoned all hope of moral self-supremacy and whose egos had struck their colors and surrendered to the direction of other and stronger minds. A sort of horror seized him, and he began to wonder if perhaps another three months of internment might not reduce him to the same level. It seemed to him that prison itself, with hard labor and the companionship of fierce and savage or stealthy and cunning criminal natures, might be almost preferable. In a penal institution one's associates, for all their lawlessness, are at least men in the majority of cases. Their moral natures are oblique, but not vacuous; positive, not negative; unbalanced perhaps from the point of view of the alienist; ruthless, savage, treacherous, or uncertain in their erratic lack of equilibrium between weakness and force, but yet strongly vibrant. Those of the sanitarium inmates, on the contrary, were merely inert; flaccid to the point of paralysis. Jack had long since come to the conclusion that it would be far better for all concerned to let such unfortunates work out the curse under which they lived and moved and had their being, that they might the sooner return to the melting pot.

And now he was going back to them of his own accord. He was going back with every nerve and cell and fiber in his vigorous young body tingling from high vitality and with a horror of the poison which had brought him there

to make him curse the mere thought of the stuff. He did not quite realize what the sanitarium had done for him in this respect. Youth is never grateful for its unpleasant lessons. But he quite realized that he had learned his as thoroughly as it could be learned, and that any more of the same course was bound to have the same nauseating effect as too much of what had made it necessary.

Then why go back? It was not on his father's account, as he entertained for that autocratic parent a smoldering resentment for what he considered to be an act of injustice and stupidity and lack of understanding. Moreover, he was financially independent, having inherited a small income from the maternal side of his family. So far as the sanitarium authorities were concerned he had given due notice that he could only be retained there by actual *force majeur* and that, in his opinion, it was only his father's juristic prominence which had made his further retention legal. He was no longer in his minority, nor was he an habitual drunkard.

But he looked at Helen, and knew quite well why he was going back. It was necessary to take Helen back, and he would not let her go alone. In their few hours together he had come to appreciate the extreme defenselessness of this utterly unsophisticated girl, whose knowledge of the world and its people was scarcely greater than that of some child of nature reared in a dream palace on an enchanted island. She was a Miranda who appeared to have been guarded throughout her life by some sort of a female Caliban, and utterly unable to conceive of danger or protect herself from it. As this appreciation of her character gradually permeated Jack's mind, he thought that he could understand why her father, who appeared to be much occupied in his affairs, had placed her in the sanitarium rather than risk her to the care of family or servants. Helen, he thought, was actually too innocent to be allowed at large, and the sanitarium served as a sort of convent without the rigors and plus the hygienic conditions of the latter institution. It was owing to this conviction that Jack had not insisted greatly on her going to stop with Jeanne. He was quite aware of the exuberance of his twin sister's nature, and decided that, after all, she might be scarcely qualified to fill the rôle of duenna for such a girl as Helen. That was the brother of it.

Wherefore, he decided to take her back to the sanitarium and to have a man-to-man talk with Doctor Lawley about the whole affair. Jack's brief was thoroughly formulated in his mind. He would say to Doctor Lawley something like this:

"I cleared out at the first chance, as I told you I intended to do. I met Helen Castellane on the golf links, and she told me that she had run away, too, because her father had lied to her about having her committed here for her health, but just wanted to stick her away somewhere and not be bothered with her. So I took her in charge, meaning to take her to my sister. We swiped a launch, and got down to New Haven, where my boat was lying. My plan was to run around to our place near Tarrytown and turn her over to my sister Jeanne, but when I suggested this she balked and said that she'd rather come back here, and I thought that perhaps that would be best because I talked to her and found out what a child she was, and my sister is no sort of a chaperon for a girl like that. So I brought her back, and here we are, and now, if you want to keep me here, you had better put me in double irons, because the first chance I get I'm going to make a break for it if I have to strangle good old Mike."

This argument was milling in Jack's head as he gloomed at the wheel. Then, having arrived at his decision and pigeonholed it, he looked at Helen. She looked back at him and smiled. Something went wrong with the smile to judge from its brave uncertainty. Her eyes filled with tears, which were promptly winked away, leaving the smile still intact, though slightly damaged around the edges.

"Don't cry," said Jack. "It's really

not worth crying about. We'll be no worse off than we were yesterday, and think of the fun we've had."

"That's what makes me want to cry," Helen answered. "I don't think I ever had any fun before."

"Well, you're bound to have a lot one of these days."

"But I want to have it with you, Jack. I wouldn't mind it at the sanitarium if they'd let us play golf or tennis together."

"They won't, though," said Jack gloomily. "It will probably be the lockup for mine."

"But why not stay on the boat, Jack? Nobody need ever know anything about it. You wrote to Doctor Lawley that you were taking me to a place of safety, and they'll have to be satisfied with that. The boat *is* a place of safety. I'd be safe anywhere with you, just as I would with a brother, if I had one. What could be more delicious than this?" She reached out both arms as though to embrace the fragrant, aromatic breeze wafting from the Long Island shore charged with odors of kelp and pine balsam distilled in the sun. "Think of the freedom of it, Jack. Our fathers have not treated us fairly, and besides they are not here to bother. Let's not go back, Jack. I don't care if it is scandalous. I haven't an intimate friend in the world, and I've been kept in a glass case ever since I was born. Now I want some freedom and some life!"

She laid her hand on his arm pleadingly, and as Jack looked up into her glowing face he discovered suddenly and for the first time in his life what it was to be really tempted. Here was Romance in her most gracious form enticing him with open arms. It cannot be said that he was in love with Helen, though fully conscious of her unusual charms, and this very fact may have made the temptation even stronger, since love, as many a girl has been fortunate to discover, can be a very powerful protective force. It was pure Romance which beckoned, and for a moment Jack's warm Celtic nature was on the verge of responding to the summons. It was not as though he had sought the adventure or meant in any way to profit by the situation beyond retaining his personal liberty. He had tried his best to persuade Helen to go to his sister, but she had preferred the sanitarium rather than to risk involving a girl who was an entire stranger in possible difficulty. And Jack, having managed her escape, and had her in his protection for nearly twenty-four hours, had no intention whatever of letting her return to face the music alone. He desired to make the explanations himself, come what might of it.

Nevertheless, it was a wrench. He thought of the pale atmosphere of the sanitarium and his dull existence there as it stood in drab relief against the brilliant picture of sky and water, and the draft of the sweet air striking down from the spill of the sails. Here was tingling vitality in every strong and vigorous sense. His stanch, comfortable boat was under him, and at his side this lovely, eager girl begging to sail away with him into the unknown, quite content to give him a sisterly confidence which he knew that he would never betray. She had told him that she was practically friendless, even homeless, and a care to a selfish brute of a father who had chosen to commit her to a sanitarium rather than to take the trouble to occupy himself with her welfare. Jack did not believe that Helen could ever have been really ill or in need of the treatment. It seemed to him a sheer case of tyranny.

Nevertheless, his own experience of the world told him that it would not do. Sooner or later the escapade might be discovered and Helen's good name further imperiled. It was certainly no part of a professed brother to take a young and innocent girl off cruising on his little yacht for an indefinite period of time. Better another term of imprisonment than that. So he shook his head with a sigh, and answered in a voice which admitted of no further argument:

"It can't be done, Helen. It wouldn't

be fair to you nor honorable of me. Back to the coop for ours——"

And he laid his course for Fisher's Island Sound.

CHAPTER XI.

JEANNE LOOKS IN.

Doctor Lawley had spent a very strenuous night. First there had been the refractory lady with her system overflowing a combination of cocaine and alcohol, and he had scarcely got her, to some extent, soothed when Helen's absence was reported. Rushing out in dire dismay to investigate this catastrophe, the young doctor was met by Mike, who informed him that Jack also had disappeared.

No such shocking scandal had ever befallen the sanitarium. Men patients had indeed been known to elude the vigilance of an attendant and slip off in quest of their alcoholic affinity, but these had been quickly apprehended, and in such a case the attendant was promptly dismissed, no chance being given him to offer a word of excuse. None of the patients were permitted any pocket money, and the institution had its confidential agents distributed variously about the vicinity.

But here was a double escape, that of Jack being due to the carelessness of Doctor Lawley himself in bolting off and leaving the long French window open behind him immediately after Jack had warned him that he would make the break at the first opportunity which offered itself and that only physical restraint would keep him any longer interned. Mike was in no way to blame, the custody of his charge having been temporarily relieved.

But Doctor Lawley did not worry particularly about Jack. He was a young man quite in possession of his normal faculties and thoroughly competent to take care of himself. What struck horror to the directing physician's soul was the thought of a young and helpless girl like Helen roaming about in the darkness, and a thunder squall making up in the northwest. The neighborhood was a rather desolate one, and the doctor thought it probable that she would get lost before going very far. He was nearly beside himself with anxiety.

The searching party was quickly and quietly organized, Doctor Lawley himself directing it. Neighboring villages and houses were notified by telephone, also the local garages, livery stables, and railroad station. It did not seem possible that the fugitives could get very far, with no money and all the points of egress from the vicinity watched, and the young doctor was convinced that daylight would find them both taken in charge again. But meanwhile there were for Helen the dangers of the night with the exposure to the elements and the risk of encountering prowlers from the big labor camps which were located here and there at no great distance by the Land Improvement Company.

Doctor Lawley did not think it probable that Jack and Helen had met, as the Woman's Annex was several hundred yards removed from the main building occupied by the men, and besides both would naturally be trying to avoid any person encountered. Knowing Jack to be a yachtsman, he wisely concluded that he would be very apt to attempt escape by water, so he telephoned to the store at the little port to have somebody on the lookout, and dispatched an attendant in that direction. He himself ordered his car, and proceeded to scour the highways and byways, stopping to question such few people as he met. Then the thunder squall broke in all its fury, and he found himself nearly distracted at the thought of the girl confided to the institution's care, which was to say *his* care, cowering under some tree, drenched and terrified and lost. Had he known that she was at that moment comfortably tucked away in the hayloft of an old barn on the moor, comparing notes with her fellow fugitive, he might have been partially reassured, but not entirely.

At two o'clock in the morning he returned to the sanitarium, hoping that others of the searching party might

have been more successful. The men attempting to arrest the refugees at Deep Creek had joined the boatman in the pursuit with another launch, not stopping to telephone, and the three were at that moment drifting about with an empty fuel tank some five miles offshore.

So Doctor Lawley started out again, and did not return until about eight o'clock. On entering the grounds he was met by Danny, the trainer, and the hard face of that athlete wore an expression of ill-concealed amusement.

"Jingo, doctor!" said he. "They pulled it off all right. I knowed Jack was some scrapper, but I'd never ha' thought he could of got away with two big stiffs like them guys down to the landing." And he proceeded to detail the escape with a gusto in which professional pride in his pupil quite overbore his loyalty to the interests of his employers.

Doctor Lawley groaned in spirit. So the runaways had forgathered, after all, stolen a launch, and made good their escape. They might have gone to any point on either side of the Sound, and the chances of their recapture now seemed very slight. There being nothing to do about it, however, he bathed and changed and went about his routine work.

After luncheon, being thoroughly jaded, he closed the shutters of his roomy office and flung himself down on the divan for a short nap. He had fallen into the sleep of exhaustion when he was roused by the faithful Mike's rapping at the door.

"Well, what is it?" he growled, sitting up with tousled hair and the sleeves of his shirt rolled back from his big, muscular arms.

"Sure they are back, docthor," said Mike beamingly.

"What!" cried Doctor Lawley. "Mr. O'Connor and Miss Castellane——"

"True for you, sor. They kem rowlin' up as fine as ye please in a big cyar. Mr. O'Connor is rigged out in a gurrul's ridin' suit and a new panyma hat. They are here in the corridor beyant."

"Well, I'll be—— Send 'em in!"

He flung his big frame into his official chair, mystified beyond expression. There was a rustle from without, then Jeanne and Christine entered, Mike closing the door discreetly behind them.

For a brief instant Doctor Lawley thought it was indeed the runaways, Jeanne's likeness to her brother being so exact, while Christine's features, which somewhat resembled those of Helen, were partially concealed by a white tulle motor veil. But although many would have remained deceived, Doctor Lawley's keen powers of observation, and perhaps also some masculine instinct, told him almost immediately that the trim figure in the riding suit was of the feminine sex. He knew also that Jack had a twin sister, and realized at once that this must be she. It likewise flashed across his mind that he had never seen a prettier, saucier, and generally more fascinating female face.

As for Jeanne, she found this big, handsome physician, with his strong, kindly face and keen, compelling eyes, quite all that her brother had described in the matter of physical attractiveness, and she was very glad that she had come. A sudden, mischievous impulse urged her to have a little fun with him. So she said in her throaty voice, which was smoother but more deeply pitched than Jack's:

"Well, here we are again, doctor."

"So it appears," answered Doctor Lawley, and Jeanne felt slightly uneasy. There was something in the look of his eyes which disturbed her. "Why did you come back, once you were clear away?"

"We came back to relieve your anxiety," Jeanne answered, "but we haven't come to stay."

"Oh, haven't you?" murmured Doctor Lawley. "Why not?"

"Because we don't want to," Jeanne answered, and she felt rather foolish. She had wanted to say something clever and sparkling, but there was a certain quality about this young doctor which took the effervescence out of her a good deal as a swizzle stick relieves cham-

pagne of its surplus gas. She discovered suddenly that she was still extremely young in the presence of an intelligence which was so thoroughly trained to follow the vagaries of the human mind.

"That seems to be a perfectly good reason—from your point of view," Doctor Lawley answered. "Well, what then?"

He leaned back in his desk chair, stretched his big arms, and clasped his hands behind his head. He yawned, and Jeanne received a shock. His teeth were so very white and even and his eyes had the sleepy look which one sees in those of a caged lion when the animal is reflecting and its thoughts are behind those passive disks. But Jeanne was of Irish stock, which is to say combative, and there was a certain quality in this big young man which roused her pugnacity even while it fascinated her. She had no doubt but that Doctor Lawley took her for Jack and Christine for whatever girl it was with whom Jack appeared to have escaped from the institution. The room was darkened against the glare from without, and Jeanne reasoned that if Jack's special attendant, Mike, had been fooled in the full light of day, there should be slight chance of this sleepy young doctor, who appeared to have just awakened from a nap, having any suspicion of the false identity.

"We came back here because we thought it only decent to relieve your anxiety, doctor," said Jeanne, "but having come of our own accord we felt sure that you would not take advantage of it and keep us here by force. Now that you know that we are all right, we should like to leave."

Doctor Lawley's keen eyes twinkled, but he shook his head.

"I'm afraid that can't be allowed," he answered. "So far as my own professional opinion of your two cases is concerned, there is no longer any necessity of detaining either of you. But you have been committed to our care with all due legal formality, and we have no right to permit of your leaving until so authorized."

Christine looked rather scared at this decision, but Jeanne threw her a warning glance. She was thoroughly enjoying her joke on this authoritative young doctor, and desired to carry it still farther before declaring her identity. Besides, she found his personality so decidedly attractive that she was loath to bring the conversation to a close.

"Of course I understand your position, doctor," said she, "but nevertheless I must insist on leaving, if not with your permission, then without it."

Doctor Lawley shrugged his big shoulders. "Do you think it quite the honorable thing to risk Miss Castellane's reputation by escorting her around the country unchaperoned?" he asked.

"Nobody need know anything about it," Jeanne answered. "We are going to motor straight back to my father's country place, and Miss—Castellane will be my sister's guest."

Doctor Lawley rose. "If you will step into the other room for a moment, I will explain to you certain reasons why Miss Castellane must remain here," said he.

Jeanne hesitated for an instant; then curiosity to learn more about the girl with whom Jack had escaped from the sanitarium overcome her scruples.

"Very well," she answered.

"Then come this way, please," said the doctor. He opened a door and led the way through a short corridor, off which was a simply, though comfortably, furnished room. Motioning Jeanne to enter, he himself remained standing on the threshold. "Sit down, please," said he pleasantly, and when Jeanne had complied he said: "Miss Castellane has been for a number of years the unconscious habituée of the opium habit. She had an unscrupulous governess, who was herself addicted to the drug and who used to administer it at frequent intervals to her charge. The habit is now quite broken, but the specialist under whose advice she was committed here advises that she remain here two or three months longer, so you see we are bound to detain her."

"I see," Jeanne answered, feeling

that her joke had gone quite far enough. She was on the point of proclaiming their identities when Doctor Lawley interrupted.

"As for yourself," said he, "we feel that you have done very wrong not only in running away yourself, but in assisting at the escape of this young girl. We feel also that under the circumstances we are quite justified in taking drastic measures. I would therefore advise that you accept the situation with as much patience as possible."

He stepped back quickly across the threshold, swinging the heavy door shut behind him before the astonished girl could protest. The next instant she heard his step going down the corridor and the closing of the door at the other end.

CHAPTER XII.

SAUCE FOR THE GEESE.

Miss Christine van Volkenen waited the return of Jeanne and Doctor Lawley, first with impatience and then with a growing nervousness. She could not understand the protracted interview, and was growing more and more frightened and mystified when a capable-looking woman with a face which was rather austere entered the office.

"Will you come with me, please?" she said, and the tone of her voice suggested a command rather than a request.

"I am—am waiting for Doctor Lawley—and my friend," stammered Christine.

"Yes, I know. Doctor Lawley sent me for you. Come, please."

"But—but I'm afraid there has been a mistake——" Christine faltered.

"Oh, no; it's all right," the nurse answered briefly. "Doctor Lawley understands."

"But—are you quite sure? He thinks that I am—that I am——"

"Very well. Just come with me, please, and you can explain later. The doctor has been called to see a patient."

"But where is Jeanne—Miss O'Connor?" asked Christine desperately.

"Doctor Lawley will explain everything," answered the nurse soothingly. "But you can't stay here, you know. I have my orders, so I think that you had better come with me now."

Thoroughly bewildered and frightened, Christine obeyed. She did not wish to upset Jeanne's plans in regard to Jack, but she decided that the affair had gone quite far enough. The nurse, however, was quite impervious to her attempts at gaining information and led her by a path through the gardens to a large and comfortable-appearing building some three or four hundred yards away. Christine observed a good many ladies strolling about with nurses and reading or chatting or taking tea in the high shade of the trees. She felt very dazed and upset, but decided that since she could make no impression upon her guide the only thing to do was to accept the situation until it cleared. She realized, of course, that she was being taken for the girl with whom Jack had run away, but since Jeanne was not there and the nurse would not listen to her there seemed nothing to do about it but wait for the dénouement of the affair.

So she went along submissively, resenting Jeanne's extravagant behavior even while trying to make the best of it, and was conducted up the steps of the broad veranda and into the building, where, just inside the front door, the nurse showed her into a spacious bedroom. Then, before Christine quite realized what was happening, the nurse said briefly:

"I shall have to lock the door, Miss Castellane, but that's your own fault for running away, you know. Miss Cassel will be in directly. Meantime you'd better lie down and rest a bit." And then the door closed, and Christine found herself a prisoner.

Doctor Lawley was fond of his little joke, too.

Meantime Jeanne, locked up in the confinement room for violent patients, was in far from an amiable mood. Could she have seen Doctor Lawley going about his routine work with a grin lurking about the corners of his

mouth she would have been even less amiable.

As a matter of fact, she did not blame him very much for having locked her up. She blamed herself for having walked into such a trap. Doctor Lawley took her for Jack, of course, and if Jack had been fool enough to connive at the escape from the sanitarium of a young girl who was a victim of the opium habit, and then the double fool to bring her back there again, it seemed to Jeanne that he deserved to be locked up there for the rest of his silly life.

However, after the first shock of finding herself a prisoner, she did not take the situation very seriously, because she did not think that it could possibly last more than a few minutes, and Jeanne was a good enough sport to accept the back fire of a bad joke. She reasoned that Christine would quickly explain the situation, when there would be profuse apologies, with immediate release. But when an hour had passed with no attention having been paid her, Jeanne began to feel the desperation of the newly encaged. Her first instinct was to shriek and yell and draw the attention of somebody to whom she could explain her false position, but she was deterred from doing this first because her pride forbade, and secondly because her common sense told her that shrieks and yells in such an institution would probably attract as much attention as they might in the infant ward of an orphan asylum.

There was a bell in her room, and at the end of an hour and a quarter of solitary confinement she began to push it in staccato time, and could hear it dinning somewhere not far away, but presently the sound ceased, and she knew that it had been suppressed and that she might expect to receive attention at the time ordained and not before. The prison consciousness then striking her with full force, she began to examine her confines with impatient curiosity. These consisted of two plain, fair-sized rooms and a bathroom. The windows were iron-grilled and looked out over the edge of a terrace, which dropped steeply into a ravine. There was also a large closet, and in this she discovered her brother's extensive wardrobe. Evidently these apartments had been prepared for his reception.

The double doors were very solid, while walls and ceiling were fireproofed, and Jeanne thought it probable that they were soundproofed as well. The place seemed a very practical and comfortable young prison, but as Jeanne thought of her brother's intolerance of any sort of restraint the idea of his being cooped up there struck her with a sort of horror. Also it filled her with a hot resentment against her father for having subjected Jack to such an ordeal. Yet she did not blame Doctor Lawley. It was a very serious offense to run off with a young girl who was under treatment for a drug habit, and she wondered that the doctor had not censured her more severely. She flung herself into a chair, and was reflecting pensively on the attractive personality of Doctor Lawley when the door opened quietly and the object of her consideration entered. For an instant he stood looking at Jeanne with an expression of thoughtful curiosity; then, closing the door, he crossed the room and seated himself in a wicker armchair by the window, facing her.

"Well," said Jeanne, "I suppose you have found out who I really am?"

"Yes," Doctor Lawley answered.

"Then you've probably come to offer your apologies?"

"No. On the contrary, I am waiting for yours."

Jeanne stiffened up in her chair. "What have I got to apologize for?" she demanded.

"Deceitfulness," answered Doctor Lawley. "Perhaps you may consider it a very smart joke to come here and palm yourself off as your twin brother and Miss van Volkenen as Miss Castellane, but I should call it by another name. You probably can't realize the anxiety that I have been under—and am still under. It may cheer you up to know that this business is apt to cost

me my professional reputation and very possibly my position."

He spoke quietly enough, but Jeanne was conscious of a sinking sensation under her costal arch, which is to say under the ribs. For the first time she observed the worn, tired, and worried expression of his face, and a sense of shame swept over her.

"I've been up all night scouring the country for this pair," said Doctor Lawley, leaning forward, elbows on knees, and hands clasped. "Your brother Jack can run off, and be hanged to him, but this girl, Helen Castellane, is quite another kettle of fish. I couldn't have believed that Jack would have played that sort of a game—nor his sister, either."

Jeanne's self-abasement increased. The whole affair, as presented from this point of view, suddenly took on an entirely different aspect. Jack, instead of being a dashing and debonair hero of a romantic adventure and the maltreated victim of a stern and uncompromising parent, assumed immediately the proportions of a silly young rake, while she herself presented the picture of a foolish and pampered young person who had tried to play a practical joke which had reacted against herself in most inconvenient fashion and put her in the position of some chicken-headed schoolgirl with no sense of proportion or the fitness of things. It was most humiliating for a recent graduate of Vassar.

But Jeanne, like Jack, was game, and took her bad-tasting medicine without gulping. She leaned back in her chair, crossed her gaitered legs, and reflected for an instant before speaking. Doctor Lawley, watching her keenly, without appearing to do so, thought that he had never seen a more fascinating sketch of the typical American girl, who can be light-headed at one moment and intensely level-headed the next, according to the turn of events.

Then her forensic mind, inherited from a race of distinguished jurists, began to assert itself, and her quick Celtic wit was put to the service of Doctor Lawley, whom she felt to have been grievously wronged. She saw Jack and herself entirely at fault, and her whole energy was immediately requisitioned to right the affair. It was a curious fact that these twins, brother and sister, should have been at the same identical moment working out the same principle. To do the honorable thing; to square the deal. Here was Jack voluntarily returning to his prison, and here was Jeanne, who but a few moments before had been filled with horror by her inspection of the bounds prepared for the reception of the brother to whom she was so devoted, now lending the full of her intelligence to fetch him back to them.

Wherefore, with her gray eyes fixed on Doctor Lawley's, she requested him to give her the full particulars of Jack's escape and what part Miss Castellane had played in it. Then, having heard the terse description of the affair, she thought it over for a moment and said:

"They couldn't possibly have arranged it beforehand, could they?"

"Of course not," Doctor Lawley answered. "They had both made up their minds to bolt at the first chance, and the same incident gave them both their chance. They must have met somewhere on the moor and made a common cause of it."

"Then Jack didn't run away with her at all," said Jeanne. "I don't think that the idea you gave me was fair to Jack, do you?"

"Perhaps not," Doctor Lawley admitted. "All the same, when he met up with her he ought to have brought her back. He knows just as well as we do what would be said about her if the facts of the case were to be known—and usually they are sooner or later. She must have told him that she had no place to go. What do you suppose he intends to do with her? I've made quite a study of Jack, and I know that she would be as safe with him as with her own brother, if she had one. But what the dickens could he do with a girl like that?"

Jeanne leaned back in her chair, and looked at his puzzled face with a mocking little smile pushing up the corners

of her red lips. "Can't you guess?" she asked.

"I'll be darned if I can," answered Doctor Lawley.

"And you such a wise doctor man," sighed Jeanne, "and understanding Jack's character so well. What could he possibly do with her but bring her to our house and let me take care of her? He knew that I was there."

"But how could he get her there?" Doctor Lawley protested. "They hadn't any money or anything."

"Jack doesn't need any money," Jeanne retorted. "He's got plenty of friends. Besides, that didn't stop him from getting a launch, did it?"

"No," Doctor Lawley admitted, "but all the same——"

"All the same, he's there by this time," said Jeanne. "I'll bet you an Airedale pup that Jack and Miss Castellane are at our house this very minute and that Jack is having fits because I'm not there. It doesn't matter much, because Miss Tibbetts will be having fits, too, but that won't prevent her from looking after Miss Castellane."

She leaned back in her chair and looked like a character study of malicious mischief, her pussy-willow-colored eyes examining her jailer through a double fringe of black lashes which were almost together. "They are over there now," she said, "and I'll bet you two Airedale pups, if you like. Do you take me?"

Doctor Lawley rose and stepped to the window. He did not appear to have been listening to this impassioned outburst, nor to have any interest whatever in Airedale pups. On the contrary, he seemed to be turning something in his mind. Jeanne was conscious of a strong desire to throw something at him, but there was nothing in the room to throw except the chairs, and they were rather unwieldy.

"Why don't you say something?" she demanded. "Do you take me, or don't you?"

Doctor Lawley swung about suddenly. Jeanne, impatient at his delayed answer, was startled at the abrupt swing of his big, lithe body. She was expecting some sort of personal reply and quite nerved to meet it. Instead, he answered very quietly:

"I think that your car must be at the door, Miss O'Connor. Please pardon this mistake, which has not been entirely our fault, as you must admit. Miss van Volkenen is waiting for you on the veranda. I am very sorry to have delayed you, and I hope that if you get any news of your brother and our other patient you will be kind enough to send me a wire or drop me a line." He reached in his pocket and drew out a note. "I have just received a note from your brother saying that they have arrived safely in New Haven and that he is taking Miss Castellane to some friends, who will look after her. This naturally relieves my mind of considerable anxiety, and from what you have just told me I imagine that your idea of their destination is quite correct. They are probably at your father's house, so the sooner you get back there the better."

Jeanne leaped to her feet with a flaming face. "Will you please be still?" she cried. "If they are there, I shall send them both straight back to this prison. I—I—I don't want you to think——"

"I shall try not to," Doctor Lawley answered. "We tried to do our best for them both, but apparently they were not very appreciative."

He unlocked the double doors and threw them wide, then stepped aside with a slight bow. Jeanne rose to her feet, and was in the act of passing out, chin in air, when she narrowly escaped a violent collision with Mike. This faithful attendant braked hard, stared at her for an instant; then, seeing Doctor Lawley on the threshold, threw up his hands with a gesture of despair.

"Docthor Lawley," cried he, "I have not had a drrink for ten months——"

"Well, what of it, Mike?" asked Doctor Lawley in a calm voice.

"Thin why sh'u'd I be seein' double, sor? And here is Mr. O'Connor and the young lady walkin' up the rroad to the house——"

"I'm afraid that you've been drink-

ing some of the patients' whisky, Mike," said Doctor Lawley, and the gentle tone of his voice sent a shiver through Jeanne.

"I have not, sor," Mike protested, "but here they do be comin' all the same."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GIRL BECOMES A WOMAN.

The southwest breeze freshened steadily, bringing with it a haze and gradually assuming the character of what is known to yachtsmen of the region as a "smoky sou'wester," and before long the *Fleetga* was slipping through the water at a speed which promised to fetch Deep Creek in the middle of the afternoon.

Jack and Helen had fallen silent at the prospect of returning to their prison; the very exhilaration of their surroundings resolved into a mockery rather than a joy. But it was impossible for two young and vigorous persons to remain long in a state of depression under such highly vitalized conditions, no matter what might lie ahead. The rush of the wind and dash of spray made settled gloom impossible for the moment, and presently Helen began to sing. She had a strong, pure, mezzo-soprano voice, which had received a certain amount of random training at odd intervals, and now, as if inspired by the elemental forces about her—and something else, perhaps—she burst as if unconsciously into some of the sweet old Scotch songs with their hint of melancholy.

Jack listened, surprised at first by this unexpected accomplishment, then fascinated. He was not musical himself, but he was a music lover, and it seemed to him that he had never heard a more appealing voice or one that lent itself more charmingly to the mise en scène. Also, aside from the plaintive melody welling so easily from her young throat, Helen, as she stood there holding to a lee runner, and her lithe, beautiful body swaying to the motion of the boat, was a sight to fire a far less ardent nature than Jack's. Up to this moment he had thought of Helen merely as a very young and amazingly unsophisticated girl whom circumstance had thrown in his path as a responsibility and a care and of whom the conscientious discharge of his duty meant the deprivation of his liberty for some months to come.

But this viewpoint was now suddenly changed, and as though she had suddenly stepped forward into a different light he saw her for herself; for what she really was and was destined to become, with no reference to his own selfish interests. Previously he had surveyed her in the negative, and now, in an instant, as though the sun's bright rays had printed her personality, he saw the real, living, breathing, intensely living Helen; the lovely maiden standing on the threshold of an even lovelier womanhood. It filled him with a curious sense of shame that he had been so late in appreciating her. The return to the sanitarium lost suddenly all of its bitterness.

With this awakening came also the realization of her sweet, strong nature. He thought of her fearlessness in running out alone into the night to find her freedom; of the unshrinking courage in facing him when he had overtaken her, and of the pluck with which she had controlled her terror of the thunderbolts crashing about the old hay barn. He remembered with a thrill, which he had not felt at the time, of how he had held her while she buried her face against his shoulder. Then came recollection of the game spirit in which she had gone aboard the launch and out in the dark Sound, and later her pride and savoir-faire in absolutely refusing to involve his sister in the affair, preferring rather to return to the sanitarium. And now here she was bravely singing her swan song full-throatedly into the stiff breeze before returning to her prison.

Jack's heart seemed to swell within him. "Some girl!" said he to himself. "I guess I'm just beginning to get her number."

"Then you go the high road and
I'll go the low road
And I'll be in Scotland before you——"

sang Helen, and little shivers ran down Jack's spine. His disease was overwhelming his system with no preliminary malaise or period of incubation.

"And me and my true love will never meet again——" Helen sang.

"Oh, yes, you will!" said Jack to himself. "Only it won't be on the bonny, bonny braes of Loch Lomond. It will be on the bonny, bonny braes of Doctor Brinker's boozarium, if I have to challenge good old Mike to a half-mile cross-country run."

The gloomy anticipations of reincarnation were now slipping off Jack a good deal as a cicada sheds its shell and spreads its gauzy wings for flight into a new and rosy world. It is one thing to offer one's person to penitential duress for honor or conscience sake and another for the sake of love.

How long does it take to fall in love? Authorities differ widely on this important question, but the best of them admit that, given certain conditions, the onset of the malady is almost instantaneous, taking no longer than is required by the transfer of a stimulus from the retina to the central nervous system—as in the case of Dante and Beatrice. Mr. William Shakespeare also offers an expert opinion on the matter of love at first sight. But of course these reactions are generally acknowledged to occur more rapidly in the case of poets, whose receptivity to them is apt to be in a ratio inverse to the square root of their constancy.

Jack, not being a poet in the usual sense, but, on the contrary, a rather slangy young Philistine, whose amorous propensities had hitherto been confined to his senses rather than the seat of his soul, now discovered all at once a hitherto unsuspected soul. Of course the soul had always been there, but, like an obscure and very reticent neighbor, Jack had never made its acquaintance. It was Love which introduced him to his soul.

Helen stopped singing as abruptly as she had begun, stood for a moment staring out across the white-capped water, then turned and looked at Jack with some of the mist in her blue eyes.

"I don't think that I ever really wanted to sing before," she said.

"Well, you are going to feel like it a lot from now on," Jack answered. "I guess that old Pa Brinker's shop has done you a lot of good, after all."

"Of course it has," she answered. "Running away from it has, too. But I don't much mind going back there, Jack. I wouldn't mind at all if it wasn't for you." She seated herself at his side and dropped her hand on his as it held a spoke of the wheel. "Do you feel cross with me, Jack, for wanting to go back instead of going to your sister?"

"How about you?" said Jack. "Are you sore with me for taking you back instead of sailing around like this on the boat?"

Helen shook her head. "I think that I love you for it, Jack. You are taking care of me. I don't think that anybody ever bothered much about me until I met you."

"Then I'll tell you this much," said Jack, "and you can tuck it away in your forepeak under that bale of gold straw on the top of your head. Somebody's going to bother about you a whole lot from now on—and that guy isn't a thousand miles away. But you shouldn't say that you love me for taking you back. You like me for it, perhaps—but a girl can't love a man as quick as that."

"Oh, can't she?" Helen answered, and stared pensively out across the hazy, wind-swept stretch of water. The southwest wind was raising its velocity notch by notch, and the *Fleetga* was tearing her way to the eastward as though in a hurry to hunt a shelter and get rid of her responsibility before things began to happen. Jack, easing the sheet a little, began to feel the same way about it all.

"Of course she can't." He steadied the wheel with one hand, and caught a turn of the main sheet with the other, looking rather anxiously to windward. "Especially a girl like you."

"But why not, Jack?" Helen bestowed herself at his side, apparently quite indifferent to the fact that the

Fleetga's lee deck was awash and the hoist of the mainsail aback, as Jack luffed her slightly when struck by a puff of superheated air in a hurry to fill the vacuum which nature abhors. "Do you mean that I am any different from other girls?"

"Of course you are. You're a baby so far as knowing anything about taking care of yourself is concerned. I've met a good many girls, but I never met one like you. I guess you're in a class of your own, with no other entries. It's a good thing for you that you met up with a fool like me, instead of some beautiful skunk with high ideals. Now let's forget all that and take the wagon home. The way it's starting in to blow we're going to have our hands full to get in there without scraping our paint and knocking some dents in the local scenery. Hang onto the wheel for a few minutes while I gather in the laundry off the line——"

He threw the yawl up into the wind, and, giving the wheel to Helen, proceeded to take in sail. They were by this time almost to the mouth of Fisher's Island Sound, and Jack decided not to wait for nightfall, but to go straight into Deep Creek under power, leave the yawl in the care of the boatman from whom he had "borrowed" the launch, and walk back by the lane to the sanitarium. The weather was partly responsible for this decision, as the entrance to the little port was narrow and rocky and the evening threatened to be thick and with a fresh gale which was trying to back into the southeast. But the principal reason was that the sudden change, or rather development, of his feeling for Helen made it infinitely distasteful for him to slip in with her under cover of .the darkness as though there were something to be ashamed of. Jack, in all of his escapades, had never been furtive. He was not a back-door person. When he felt that the business was his own affair he was a true disciple of Lycurgus, and could lie with the brazen assurance of a Spartan youth, and, like the Spartan youth, get his tummy chewed to ribbons rather than 'fess up. But the same spirit of *noblesse oblige* which had compelled him to return Helen and serve out his own sentence now prompted him to do it openly, if only to invite and challenge reproach, offering his cartel and defiance to any or all who might dare make any unworthy insinuations.

So he furled the sails and started the motor, then resumed his place at the wheel, Helen shifting her position for one not very far removed.

"I guess we'll go straight in," said Jack. "It's blowing up pretty hard, and there's no use taking a chance on knocking the bottom out of the box. Besides, if any of those mutts have got anything to say about this picnic, they can say it to me."

Helen apparently caught his meaning. She moved a little closer.

"I think that you do everything just right, Jack," she murmured.

"Well, it's an easy bet that you're the only living person who does," Jack answered. "All the same it cheers me up a heap to have you feel that way about it. I'm going to make it my particular business to see that you continue the movement for the rest of your life. But there's no good talking about that now."

"Why not?" Helen asked. "It seems to me just the time to talk about it."

"It isn't, though," Jack answered. "You're my sister."

"All the more reason," Helen answered. She turned and looked at him, and a little smile twisted the middle of her mouth. Jack, breathing rather hard, stared straight ahead, looking for a certain red buoy. "Do you ever kiss your sister, Jack?"

"Sometimes. She generally beats me to it. Jill is some kisser. She can kiss the judge out of a new car or a pony or a dress or something without turning a hair. He falls for it every time."

Helen appeared to reflect.

"It must be rather nice to have a father like that," she said. "My father kisses me good night, but it always makes me feel as though he were stamping a letter or signing a check or something of that sort. When my aunt kisses me I get a creepy feeling down

my back—the sort you have when a cat gets on your shoulder."

"Stand up and look ahead and see if you can see a red spar buoy," said Jack.

Helen rose and glanced ahead. "There's a red thing sticking up out of the water just in front of us," said she. "It's a long way off, though."

Jack stood up and stared ahead, then sat down again. "That's it," said he. "You've got darn good eyes. Speaking about this kissing stuff, didn't your father ever take you up in his arms and kiss you as if he really loved you?"

"No——" Helen answered.

"Well, then, he must be a d—— a—he must be a—a—well, I don't know what some men are made of. My father's stock isn't selling very high with me just this moment, but when Jill and I were kids we howled with joy every time he hove in sight. He used to grab us up and nearly eat us, and he generally had something tucked away in his pocket—a surprise—a little doll for Jill—she was always strong for dolls—and a toy pistol or something like that for me. Mrs. Tibbetts, who was mother's nurse and afterward housekeeper, was always giving father the devil for sneaking us candy and peanuts and things. When I was ten years old father was my dearest friend, and now that I'm twenty-three he's my worst. He didn't even come up to the boozarium to say good-by."

"Neither did mine," Helen answered. "The chances are that if they had come and kissed us good-by we wouldn't have run away."

"I didn't want to be kissed," said Jack. "I wanted my honorable discharge. There's that darn buoy. It rides almost under with this strong ebb tide. Well, we've got to duck in and face the music, and if anybody gives me two cents' worth of sass about this expedition you'll see some fireworks. I wish they would. It would cheer me up a heap. In about an hour and a half we have got to say au revoir, Helen, for a few months. You've got to serve out your sentence, and I've got to serve out mine. And after that ——" He reached out to grasp her hand, and his own came back without touching it. He got up and inspected the motor, which was running very smoothly, then came back to the wheel and sat down. "After that will you marry me, Helen?" he asked very quietly. "Because in all of your life nobody can possibly love you so much as I can, nor need you so much. Will you marry me, Helen, when we get out of this mess?"

Helen sprang up, throwing out her arms with a gesture which was allegoric. Her hands might have been filled with fruits.

"Of course I will, Jack," she cried. "I have been loving you and knowing you while you have been trying to find out what was happening. I knew long before you did. You are mine and I am yours, so now let's turn the boat around and go away. Let's go anywhere, Jack. What do we care? Let's just go. You love me and I love you, and what does all the rest of it matter? It's our own lives, and they belong to us. I don't want to go back there, Jack. I want you to turn your boat around—and to keep on going and going and going. And I want you to kiss me, Jack, and I want to have you keep on kissing me until I tell you to stop—but I never shall, Jack."

CHAPTER XIV.

CHECK!

The faithful Mike, rushing out again to verify the evidence of his staggering senses, met Jack and Helen at the door.

"Holy saints, sor!" gasped Mike. "And how manny of yez are there?"

"Why, there appear to be two of us, Mike," Jack answered. "What's the matter with you, anyhow? You look rather wild. Has our loss impaired your reason?"

"Faith, I think it has!" said the bewildered Mike. "There is yourself inside talkin' wit' Doctor Lawley, and here are you standin' here be the door talkin' to me. And there is the young lady under lock and key beyant, and here is her double wit' you. Sure, am I seein' things or what?"

"Both, I guess," Jack answered. "I'm afraid that you've been drinking in your sleep."

"Then I have not, sor," Mike answered, "because I have not shlept since you beat it from here. We have none of us shlept, what wit' beatin' the country for miles around. But nivir mind. Come in, sor."

They followed the dazed attendant into Doctor Lawley's office, where Jack, to his surprise, discovered Jeanne in consultation with that sorely tried physician. But his presence of mind did not desert him.

"Hello, Jill!" said he. "Good afternoon, doctor. Helen, let me present—*your* sister. Doctor Lawley, let me present you to my wife."

"Your—what!" gasped Doctor Lawley.

"My wife, sir. We were married about an hour ago in New London, and started over in a taxi, but got a tire down when almost here, so we took the trolley. I am sorry to have given you so much trouble, but it appeared to be unavoidable."

Doctor Lawley stared speechlessly at the pair, but Jeanne quickly recovered her poise. Nothing that Jack might do could ever surprise her very much, while her first glance at Helen's lovely, glowing face roused all of her warm-hearted sympathy. She stepped to the bride, dropped her hands on her shoulders, and kissed her on both cheeks.

"My love and congratulations, dear," said she, then turned to embrace her brother. "We came to see you, Jack, and Doctor Lawley held us as hostages. Here comes Christine now."

The dazed Miss van Volkenen, escorted by her prim duenna, was at that moment ushered in and made acquainted with the situation. Then Doctor Lawley, who had in some measure recovered from his shock, requested them to sit down.

"Well, you're a wonder, Jack," said he. "We get some surprises in this institution, but I must say that seeing it serve as a matrimonial bureau exceeds the wildest dreams of any dope I've ever treated here. So you are good and married?"

"We are married and good," Jack retorted, "and whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

"H'm!" mused Doctor Hawley. "That rather complicates the situation, doesn't it?"

"Of course not," said Jack. "On the contrary, it simplifies it and lets us all out. We were coming back, anyhow, to serve out our terms when we happened to hit on this scheme. So now we've come to thank you for your kindness and get our duds and say good-by. We left our boat at New London, and our plan is to start to-morrow for a little cruise to the eastward."

"But hang it all, Jack," protested Doctor Lawley, "how can I let you go when you're committed to our care for the next few months?"

"That be jiggered!" Jack answered. "I consulted a leading lawyer in New London, and he tells me that a person who is of age can be committed legally to such an institution as this with the consent and by the demand of his immediate family. Well, what is more immediate than your wife or husband?"

Doctor Lawley sighed. "In the case of you two, nothing that I can think of," he answered.

"Quite so," said Jack. "In that case, our further detention here would be unlawful and subject Doctor Brinker to a suit for heavy damages. I desire to remove my wife from the sanitarium, and in the case of any opposition to this measure I can get a writ of habeas corpus in about two seconds. The law gives her the same privilege in regard to my person. So if Pa Brinker tries to keep us here against our wills, he will find himself defendant in a damage suit for about a million dollars an hour, and one that won't reflect any great amount of credit on his blooming boozarium—and that's no idle threat."

Doctor Lawley frowned. "Look here, Jack," said he, "I don't care to have you speak to me like that. I represent Doctor Brinker and the direction of this institution, and I take that sort of talk as a direct insult. There

has been nothing in our treatment of you here to warrant such an attitude on your part, and if you say another word in the same strain I shall have you put in immediate confinement and Mrs. O'Connor conducted to her former apartment until such time as the courts may decide upon the legality of your case. Such a suit as you suggest would naturally be injurious to the sanitarium, but how about Mrs. O'Connor and yourself—especially yourself—considering the publicity which was given to the performance which led your father to commit you here? Do you get me?"

Jack thought hard for an instant, then nodded. "Yes," he answered, "I get you. I guess you're right."

"Then shut up."

"All right," said Jack. "I'll shut. Only before I shut I'd like to apologize. I'm sorry, doctor."

Doctor Lawley leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. "Then let's forget it," he answered. "As a matter of fact, you and your wife are as free as air. You can go whenever you like, and God bless you both——" He opened a drawer of his desk and drew out two slips of paper. "Before you two bolted," said he, "I sent off a couple of telegrams. One was a wireless to Judge O'Connor, saying that I considered your cure to be complete and strongly recommended your discharge from the sanitarium, as, in my professional opinion, further detention here would do you more harm than good. The other one was to Mr. Castellane, in San Francisco, and worded to the same effect. I got answers from the two of your parents about an hour ago. Your father's reads: 'Wireless received. Rely entirely upon your judgment. Discharge my son from sanitarium whenever you see fit.' The other from Mr. Castellane reads: 'Accept your decision in regard to my daughter. Am wiring her aunt to go to sanitarium for her.'"

Jack stared at him with the expression of a neophyte hanging on the rare and sacred words of his yogi, and something of the same look was reflected from the face of his twin sister, except that in her case there was depicted a certain glow which could scarcely be described as one of unmixed veneration. Neither were the impulsive words which came spontaneously from her lips precisely those with which a chelah would address his lama.

"I think you are a dear," said she, "and that this crowd ought to go and hold its head under the village pump."

Two hours later there glided swiftly out of the estuary of the River Thames from the port of New London, Connecticut, United States of America, a thirty-foot W. L. yawl-rigged, motor-auxiliary launch which was so joy laden that her Plimsoll mark was entirely submerged. It is doubtful if at that moment the largest ocean-going steam yacht in those waters was so heavily burdened with the same cargo.

Off Goshen Point, the fresh southeast gale romped down to greet the *Fleetga* with the boisterous gayety of a drunken wedding guest. But Jack was prepared for this glad demonstration, and had the *Fleetga* reefed to short skirts and high shoes. Helen was similarly reefed for this jaunt across the Sound in the teeth of a brewing gale. The motor was reposing itself, and the little yawl, under the power of sail alone, which is to say propelled by grace of the high gods, tore great rents in the surface of the Sound, which the high gods mended immediately.

In the shallow cockpit, Helen was crowded so closely against Jack as to impair his handling of the wheel. But he did not mind. The wheels of boats and buggies and motor cars and things sometimes have to take a certain responsibility of their own, and they usually manage it somehow. This Swedish girl of a yacht named *Fleetga* now took charge, and to judge from her behavior as good as said to Jack: "Carry on, lad; don't bother about me. I'm watching my steps."

So they swam out through the wind-washed dusk, and presently the lights began to prick out here and there. The night was hot and close, and their wake

flamed with phosphorescent sparks, which swirled and eddied in the surges rolling through the Race. Sprays swept over them from time to time, but they were soft and briny and refreshing.

"Where are we going, Jack?" Helen asked, crowding closely against her husband of so few hours.

His arm passed under hers and drew her down against him, so that her head fell in precisely the proper position for that of a bride in doubt as to direction.

"We are going to The Magic Isle," he answered, "and on the chart its name is Shelter and there is a very large hotel there. Perhaps they might give us a night's lodging if I talk to them politely."

"What are all those lights, Jack? Am I in your way?"

"You are, and it is my earnest prayer that you shall be in my way for the rest of our lives. Those lights are from a tow—coal barges, with the tug out there ahead, and it is not considered polite to cross them, any more than it is to cut through a funeral procession. Only in this case the punishment for the sacrilege might come quicker, so we'll just chuck her up for a minute and watch the procession go past."

He hauled on the wind, and the *Fleetga*, quite understanding the situation, waited until the long and sluggish tow had passed, then fled off on her way again in the deeply gathering dusk. In fact, it is doubtful if at this moment Jack was running the boat as much as the boat was running Jack. Perhaps they were working together for the all good, Helen assisting at times. The fresh wind had developed a gale, and as they ripped their way past Gull Island they got thoroughly drenched. But they did not mind.

Then, through the rip, the sea smoothed, and they stole quietly up and anchored off the big hotel. Jack blew his boat whistle, and presently a launch came whipping out. Jack saw it coming and turned to Helen.

"Here we are, darling," he said. "I want to kiss you before the launch gets here."

"Then kiss me, Jack. Why haven't you kissed me before? Why, Jack——"

"Because you weren't all mine. I wasn't going to kiss you and all that stuff and get us both upset in that boozorium. It would have been bad for you, and I'd have gone *amok* or *dementado* or whatever they call it."

He demonstrated what he meant.

CHAPTER XV.

TWENTY MONTHS AFTER.

"You look very nice in uniform," said Jeanne, surveying her visitor critically.

"Thank you; I wish I felt that way," Doctor Lawley answered. "After loose white hospital clothes this pseudo-khaki is stiff and hot, and it fits me too well."

"So you are really going?" said Jeanne.

"Yes. I've just been promised a billet with the first expeditionary force to France. Chucked the sanitarium for good."

"Do you think that was wise? You had a splendid position there, and it was only a question of time before you would have been at the head of the whole institution, and one day you might have owned it."

"Do you think I'd stick on there, nursing rummies, at a time like this, Jeanne?" he asked. "That's good enough in time of peace, when we attach undue value to any kind of a human life, no matter how worthless. But in time of war, when the very best are being sacrificed to duty and ideals, the rummy isn't worth consideration. Let 'em get their jimjams and D. T.'s and go back to the melting pot, and the sooner the better for all concerned. We medicos have got better and bigger work cut out for us than to listen to dissertations on the fauna of the 'tween worlds—pink rabbits and blood-red mice and horse-headed bipeds and fifty-seven varieties of reptilia. Besides, we really don't work many cures. There's only one person that can cure a drunkard, and that's the drunkard himself."

"But the doctor has got to think of himself a little," Jeanne protested, just

to hear what he would say, "and such a sanitarium as Doctor Brinker's must pay enormously."

"It has paid good dividends in the past," Doctor Lawley answered, "but as a business enterprise the death knell has sounded for all such institutions. It is only a question of time before this entire Land of the Free becomes really emancipated from the rule of John Barleycorn, or, to be more exact, his tithes. Then good-by sanitarium. When alcohol is burned only in lamps to heat baby's pap the drug habit will curl up its toes and quit likewise, and, to my way of thinking, that day is very near. There are a lot of chronic alcoholics, a fair sprinkling of them secret and unsuspected ones, who will suffer from the shortage, and it is probable that a good many of these will go flop when the prop is kicked out from under. So much the better. With all the fine men destined to lose their lives in the defense of humanity, nobody is going to cry himself to sleep over the passing of the rummy and the dope. Then, with our ironbound booze laws and strict drug dispensing, we can start fresh and get a clean, sane, stalwart race.

"You almost make me forget what I came to say," he observed. "When I get started on this booze talk it carries me away. As a matter of fact, I came here with the intention of trying to carry *you* away."

He shot these last words out so forcefully that Jeanne's high color faded, and she was not easily shocked.

"Carry *me* away——" she faltered.

"Yes, but not to Europe, so you needn't look so scared." He stopped in front of her, leaned down, and caught both of her hands in his. "I want you, Jeanne. I want you to marry me when I come back. There's no use in my trying to tell you how much I love you, because in the first place I couldn't, and in the second you must feel it yourself—just as I can feel that you care for me. Will you wait for me, sweetheart?"

Jeanne shook her head. She seemed unable to speak. Doctor Lawley loosed her hands and stood up as stiffly as though the military instinct had enveloped him with his uniform.

"Why not?" he asked curtly.

Jeanne's face was pale, and she looked rather frightened, but a little smile struggled at the corners of her mouth. She rose and faced him, dropping both hands on his big shoulders.

"I'll not wait because—because I am going with you, doctor mine," she answered.

Doctor Lawley's arms shot out and drew her closer. His stern features relaxed and there was a sort of boyish joyfulness in his smile. But he shook his head.

"No, that can't be done, darling girl," said he.

"It can, though." There was a look of malice in Jeanne's gray eyes.

"All the same, I'm going!"

"No, you're not!"

"Yes, I am!"

"But you're not!"

"I am, though. I'll bet you six months' pay that I go with you; whether as your wife or not depends on you."

"I'll take the bet. Now tell me how you're going to manage it."

Jeanne's piquant face was now frankly and mockingly malicious. Her white, even teeth flashed like those of some wild, woodsy thing.

"It's already managed," she answered. "I saw this thing coming more than a year ago, and I've taken my course and got my diploma, and lobbied and boot-licked and wire-pulled the Red Cross people until I've got myself listed to go with the very first expeditionary force—so there's your six months' pay blown in already, doctor mine, and let us hope that this will teach you not to make blind bets nor to——"

But this was as far as she got, as the strong arms drew her closer and closer and closer until she gasped for air, while her respiration was still further impeded by an obstruction which made her quite forget the necessity of breathing at all.

Wheatley's Fine Little Motor

By Everett Rhodes Castle

There were just three things in Jerry Wheatley's life—his wife, the plant, and his bus, in the order named. To all three of them he went to school, learning lessons of ideal and practical value. And his wife plus his bus taught him the great secret for his plant, otherwise called "The Clayton Stove Company, Incorporated"

THERE were three things that heralded the arrival of the breadwinner at the Wheatley residence in Elk Street at five-nineteen. First a long bleating that began in Second Avenue and ended, like an overworked banshee, just after the turn into Elk Street. Second a series of little bleats directly in front of number seventeen. Third the voice of the breadwinner, a voice intended by nature for vast purple distances or stormy nights at sea, inquiring in the general direction of the kitchen. The inquiry was always the same: "O-oo-oh! Em-i-lee! Want anything from the store?" If the answer was negative—or not at all, Jerry Wheatley pulled down the gas, shut off the ignition, "an' let 'er die." Elk Street, the portion of it that used the Second Street car line, called it the death rattle. But then, of course, they used the car line!

The breadwinner's progress during the next minute was announced by a series of different noises, all denoting a certain amount of advancement. There was the relieved sigh of the left rear spring, which was followed by a tiny treble of protest from the right rear spring as it flexed under a quick shifting of weight. Then a dull thud on the sod beside the curb, immediately followed by an echolike slam of metal. A moment later three dull thuds, one for each step. Then another slam, this of wood, a mighty "Ha-loo!" usually followed by a delighted gurgle and a tiny smack. After all this Mr. Jerry Wheatley was ready for what he joyously termed "the ol' feed bag."

The rule of three also applied to the interests in young Mr. Wheatley's big life. They were, in order of importance: The wife; the plant; the bus. Each received the maximum of return on the yearly budget of twenty-four hundred dollars. It was characteristic of him that after deciding a thing was worth while he gave it all there was in him of care, of love, of work.

Take Mrs. Jerry Wheatley, née Emily Beeley. Emily had been a stenographer in the sales department of the plant for nearly two weeks when the second assistant sales manager noted, with a sense of keen approval, that it was not necessary to wait three seconds while she shifted a cud of gum. In quick succession he noted other pleasing and worth-while qualities. For instance, he found that he could dictate to the girl direct. Mr. Wheatley was a modest young man, and he hated to have to hide his hot blushes from some unblushingly thin crêpe de Chine. Besides, dictating in the general direction of the ceiling ventilator often changed "cursory" to "cursing" and "plastic conditions" to "plaster conditions"—or that was what the owner of the unblushing crêpe de Chine had said. A month later Emily said that she liked big, strong men who wore soft collars and scattered pipe ashes. That settled the matter.

Then there was the plant. Everybody called it the plant, though the office stationery said it was "The Clayton Stove Company, Incorporated, Manufacturers of Coal and Combination Stoves." Jerry Wheatly had gone

to the plant from high school possessed of one hundred and ninety pounds of firm flesh and a nice taste in neckwear. During the knitted-tie period, Jerry progressed from filing clerk to fifth assistant sales manager, which gave him complete authority to tell the office boy to clean out the letter trays. During the time any self-respecting young man in any society at all was compelled to wear tiny, knotted ties under large, close-fitting collars Jerry spent two mornings each week in the plant itself, besides caring for the routine of his office work. With the first rush of large, open-end, flowered four-in-hands, Jerry became third assistant in consequence of the departure of the sales manager and his first assistant. It was the usual two-year promotion. For nearly thirty years it had been going on. When the sales manager left the first assistant was appointed by old Henry Bleeker. He was given a two-year contract and told to go out and make some money for the company. At the end of two years he departed, and his first assistant was given the same contract and the same instructions.

When Jerry became first assistant, the necktie world was celebrating New Art with a wide assortment of colors, among which black, blue, and quiet grays were not. It was hard to pass them by, but at twenty-seven a fellow has to be conservative when he's got an executive position that will probably open up at the end of the two-year period in September. Emily agreed to the wisdom of this reasoning.

"Besides, Jerry," she added, "they look like an attack of col-lary morbus."

But to this Jerry would not subscribe. "They got class just the same, ol' dear," he sighed, "and if I wasn't due for the big show, believe me I'd have half a dozen. You need something to brighten up these pepper-and-salt executive suits."

But New Art neckwear, Simmonds' job, "good feeds," and the other things that held the Wheatley interest went into the limbo of neglect when the little bus arrived. It was a vermilion day that made other red-letter days seem drab in comparison. Driving it down Elk Street from the F. O. B., its shining body and steady "put-put" endeared itself as no scarf ever could—even back in the early days. Passing the Elk's Club, Jerry stepped on the accelerator and whizzed by at twenty miles an hour, just to show the boys at the cigar stand that he really was an old-timer. Any misgiving he might have had at disturbing part of the account over at the First National vanished in the joyous whoop as he drew up in front of Emily, returning from the store.

After the first long Sunday-morning ride into the country, it was perfectly plain that all that was necessary to complete the Wheatley happiness on this earth was a set of demountable rims. An extra tire mounted in this fashion meant more time to skim over bending, dipping country roads. Then, because, after all, they really were beginners, they didn't appreciate just how enormously a shining, nickel-plated bumper added to the car. Made it look longer—almost like a six-cylinder. This was, of course, corrected after they became veterans of two Sunday tours and a trip to Coryopolis.

It certainly was a wonderful little motor car. Why, it was as efficient and economical to operate as a Bleeker range! Every Sunday morning it was washed with pure, running water—"merely rubbing the dust off was not for such a fine little boat as this," Jerry said. Afterward the grease cups were fed and the speedometer turned back so that the afternoon's run might be entered into the little ledger that was to show the tire mileage and gasoline consumption.

During the first two weeks, many in the sales department were inclined to scoff because the Wheatley knees showed like two dark ridges above the artistic, stream-line body.

"You guys talkin' about six-thousand-dollar motors and riding on street cars make me laugh," he told them. "Can a six-thousand-dollar motor go any farther; take you anywhere I can't

follow? Can it? Can it take you twenty-five miles on a gallon? Can it? Can it go up any hill I can't follow? Sure they're bigger an' ride a little easier—not so very much, though—but are they any more efficient? Are they?"

And then, just to prove that they were only kidding and that there were no hard feelings, all agreed to ride home with him each night.

One Sunday Jerry had Simmonds and his faded little wife complete the party. It was designed to help brighten the thin man's tired eyes. September was two months away, but the entire office knew that it stood before him, a quickly speeding milestone that was to send him out with the many, many others. Jerry tried hard to drive it away, but in scenery, bumpers, mileage, and oil consumption Simmonds was only politely interested. Suddenly it occurred to Jerry that two years hence he would be that way—afraid. He would join the has-been army of sales managers that had striven to live up to that curtly worded contract.

Speeding through the country, he spoke of the thing for the first time. He tried to speak jauntily, as if there was no cause for alarm.

"Looks like the biggest year the plant ever had," he said.

Simmonds smiled with his lips, but his thin hand clenched the shiny side, and his reply was tinged with bitterness.

"Yes," he agreed slowly, "it does. It actually looks as if we are going to break even."

His assistant opened his recently added muffler—that the rear seat might not hear—and slowed down.

"But that's a whole lot, considering many of the other years. It shows that you are entitled to another chance to——"

"My contract reads 'profit,'" Simmonds interrupted wearily, "and I—I haven't been able to show them."

"But you have——"

"Jerry, they didn't put any 'buts' into it. I'm through in September, and then it's up to you."

For several minutes the mild blue Wheatley eyes searched the road ahead for some reassuring answer. Of course everybody knew Simmonds had enough to care for his family, but it was hard. No "buts." Simmonds had been a good sales manager—had given to the men on the road something of a fighting spirit that never before had characterized Bleeker sales methods. His men had really sold stoves. Down in his heart Wheatley knew that he could do nothing to make them sell any more. In two years he would be through, turning over the heritage of failure to West. Of course there were some things he could improve—but the big leaks, the big mistakes—where were they? He repeated his unspoken question aloud.

"Mr. Simmonds, I have been with the plant ever since I quit school. I know Bleeker stoves from fire box to flue. I know, like everybody else in the trade, that Bleeker stoves are the best that can be made. I know they are well liked by every woman that owns one. I am as proud as Punch to think that I am with a company that for thirty years have been building the best stove that can be made, regardless of price. I know that the product has every essential necessary for success. Gosh, but I wish I knew what was wrong!"

The elder man seemed to wince from the exclamation, but his reply was equally fervid.

"Gosh!" he said slowly. "So do I."

Two months later Wheatley's fine little motor turned from Second Avenue into Elk Street without a single preliminary bleat. In front of number seventeen there were no little bleats. There was no "O-oo-oh, Em-i-lee!" no bang, no thud, no creak. Closing the door quietly, he passed through to the kitchen and faced Emily over a huge kettle of simmering peaches.

"They—they fired Simmonds today," he whispered.

Emily tightened her grip about the wooden spoon.

"You—you were——"

Young Mr. Wheatley nodded with his head bent.

"Yes, they gave me the job and the contract."

"It—it's like all the rest?"

"Yes."

"Two years?"

A quick duck of the big, blond head.

"With the profit clause?"

Another duck.

Mrs. Wheatley quietly let the spoon slip into the kettle, and walked around the shining Bleeker range. Standing on tiptoe, she managed to crook her arm about his neck.

"You're going out and win, aren't you, Jerry?"

"I'm going to try like blazes, but look at Simmonds an' Luce an' Hamilton. They all tried and——"

"Yes, but they——"

"They were good men—darn good men—and they tried just as hard as they knew how. So will I, but—but I'm afraid."

"But you're not going to be licked before you start, are you? You are not going to quit just because other men have failed—are you, Jerry?"

"No-o, but——"

With wifely intuition, Mrs. Wheatley saw that a stimulant of some sort was necessary. Something to bring her big boy out of this temporary slough. She knew what it was.

"How is the car running?" she asked.

Slowly the huge shoulders of the new sales manager of the Bleeker Stove straightened, and enthusiasm warmed his eyes and turned up the mouth. Boyishly he caught her elbows and lifted her to his eye level. When he spoke it was more like the assistant sales manager.

"Not a miss! Not a miss! Think of it, ol' dear, thirteen hundred miles so far an' not a miss. Ain't it wonderful? Honestly that little boat has so much pep that it wants to start in high."

"Isn't it——"

"Why, they talk about all these ten-thousand-dollar babies. Why, there isn't any one of them that could do any better than that! Think of it, Emily, thirteen hundred miles and not a single, solitary little miss! Thirteen hundred miles and only lifting up the hood to give her oil. By gosh, those little busses are the Bleekers in the automobile business!" Then, as if the name had brought with it something far more crushing than the remembrance of a promotion, he turned and walked slowly into the dining room. Alert to all the little quirks of her former boss, Emily knew that there was something else—something far more serious. When he rumpled his hair and filled his pipe before dinner, she knew that some extraordinary crisis was at hand.

A few moments later she followed him in. There he sat in the sagging armchair that had followed him lovingly through bachelorhood, with the last bit of Elk Street twilight playing about his rumpled, dejected head. After all, he was nothing but a great big, blond boy who was sadly troubled. A moment later she was seated on the decrepit, bursting arm, patting his shoulder, stroking his hair. He did not settle back with a mountainous sigh of content. Certainly something perfectly dreadful had happened, maybe——

"Jerry—what *is* the matter?" pleadingly.

Puff, puff.

"Please," caressingly.

Puff, puff.

A tiny sob brought more fruitful results. Then, like a man who has something most distressing to say and wants to say it in the least words—in the easiest way:

"Emily, we gotta sell the little bus." He might have been saying: "Emily, we gotta sell the little boy."

Behind a huge cloud of light-gray smoke she smiled. What funny things men were—but then it did mean a lot to Jerry.

"Why?" softly.

"Because every department head must have an interest in the business; must buy two thousand dollars' worth of stock, which is repurchased if he leaves. One-fifth is down; the rest

distributed over two years. Of course we got the four hundred in the bank, and the new job pays five thousand, but I'm afraid to take any money from the bank now, so I guess 'the little bus without a miss' will have to go."

"But, Jerry, you get so much pleasure from it, both of us and——"

"I know," dejectedly.

"And there isn't the particle of a doubt in my mind that you are going to upset that foolish, old, two-year hoodoo and make good. Not a particle!"

"But the chances are too——"

"The bigger they are the harder they fall," she quoted.

But "Fighting Bob's" optimism failed to make an impression.

"You know, Emily, I wouldn't do it if I felt that it wasn't absolutely necessary. You know that I wouldn't give up a little boat that never missed—even on Mountain Hill—if I just didn't feel that a sacrifice was necessary."

"But how about me? I'll miss those little trips——"

Amiable Jerry stopped the temptress with as grim a tone as he could muster. "You go into the kitchen and tend to your burning peaches," he directed, "and I'll write an ad for the Coryopolis papers."

Not because his mouth was trying so hard to be grim or because his tone was trying so hard to be commanding, but because the peaches really might be burning, she obeyed.

Looking through the door a few moments later, she saw him busy, with a pad upon his knee, battling silently.

Twenty minutes later, peaches shining through glistening glass, she stole back to his side. He was reading what he had written softly, as if to himself. After each sentence he stopped and uttered a low, fervid "Gosh!" When he noticed her, he said nothing, but handed her the paper. Holding it close to the dying light without, she read:

FOR SALE—AUTOMOBILE.

Here is the finest little car that ever climbed Mountain Hill on high.

It yields twenty-five long, happy miles to the gallon——

It gives five hundred miles of beautiful scenery and pure air to one gallon of oil.

It possesses a motor without a miss——

It has a body without a scratch——

And the owner is only selling it because he absolutely has to. Box——.

"Why, it's perfectly wonderful!" she thrilled. "Why, you won't have a bit of trouble selling it after any one reads that!"

He was smiling now as he reached forward to grasp her hands. "That's the funny part of it," he chuckled, a boy again. "I wrote it so convincingly and so enticingly that I sold it to myself. Gosh, Emily! Isn't it funny? I didn't really realize how good it was till I sat down and wrote about it."

"And you're not going to sell it?"

"Sure I am, but to myself."

"And you're not going to be discouraged—about—about the job?"

"Nope."

After dinner he suddenly dropped the evening paper to his knees. His eyes opened wide. He whistled four flat notes of incredible wonder. A moment later, with the wrinkled advertisement he had written in his hand, he was comparing it to a young lady in white apron and cap, who smiled from a woman's magazine. The young lady was gracefully dangling a beautifully manicured hand over a highly polished stove. Underneath in pleasing italics that might well indicate a polished tone were the words:

"I think Bleeker ranges are wonderful—don't you?"

For the space of three stitches on Emily's flying needles, he gazed from wrinkled paper to graceful lady. He opened his mouth, only to close it a moment later without having uttered a sound. Once more he essayed to tell the world, but all that came was a wondering, almost unbelieving: "Gosh!"

II.

When Henry Bleeker was but the proprietor of a small hardware store he had a dream—and a back room. This was many years before the big chance came. It was simple, but then many people in Clayton said Henry was simple.

Henry wanted to build the best stove in the country—that and own a pair of fierce, stiff-legged iron dogs for the front lawn. He carried a full line of stoves in the front of the store, and built his dream in the little room. It was too bad. It often hurt sales, but it eased Henry's conscience somewhat when he was directly asked for his opinion: "We-e-el, it's as good a stove as they make in these days—anyhow." In the little back room he had worked out many ideas that only needed money to prove their absolute soundness, but then Henry rarely spoke of this.

And then, one bright spring morning, Henry awoke to the astounding fact that he had more money than there was in the world—pretty near, anyhow. Who would have ever thought that Tom Bleeker could make two hundred thousand dollars, let alone save it? Not Henry, at any rate. But it was so. Henry bought the iron dogs to guard his modest cottage for one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and that left one hundred and ninety-nine thousand eight hundred and seventy-five dollars to build the best range that could be made.

Two years later the Bleeker range went onto the market. It used cast iron in place of sheet steel to guard against the tiny pin holes that appeared in the sheet steel. It cost more money, was harder to handle from a manufacturing point of view, but Henry was building a dream.

The next year the Bleeker double fire box made its appearance, and the Bleeker patented adjustable flue; both were improvements and helped sell ranges. The Clayton Stove Company lost only eight thousand dollars that year, and Henry was rather proud.

The third year production had reached the point where Henry felt that a sales manager was a necessary evil, and hired Charles Buyer, of the Clayton *News-Sentinel,* to come in and act in that capacity. Another thing that hastened his coming at this time was the fact that the Bleeker "baking equalizer" needed explaining to the trade. Henry explained the situation when he handed Charlie the two-year contract.

"We'll make the finest range that money can buy—build it as economically as a good range can be built. We do our part; now it's up to you to do yours."

There was a slight delay, however, before Charlie could get started because, just as the model was ready, Henry, working in his little private workroom behind the general office, perfected an automatic coal feeder that every woman who had used a coal scuttle would go wild over. Charlie said it was a "pip," and ought to go big. It did. At the end of the two-year period there had been three Bleeker ranges sold to one for the previous years. The loss was only something like two thousand dollars, but Charlie's contract was not renewed.

His successor was sure he could live up to Henry's requirements, inasmuch as his six months' experience as first assistant had filled him with the Bleeker spirit—the pride of putting worth before profit. To this Henry replied that he was very glad. That Bleeker men to a man were just as enthusiastic over the range as he.

"And, just to prove what a really live organization is constantly working to improve this ideal of ours," Henry added, "we have another new convenience ready for the new model."

"But the coal feeder——"

"That is already a huge success, of course——"

"But I thought——"

But previous successes were ashes in the mouth of Henry.

"Onward, always onward!" he barked. "We cannot be content with past successes; now, the new Bleeker device for grilling"—his eyes fairly danced with the joy of achievement—"is simply going to corral all the stove business in this section."

"Fine! Great!" his new sales manager shouted, his enthusiasm over this fresh triumph of Bleeker inventiveness getting the better of his first-assistant conservatism.

The road men were equally enthusi-

astic, and went out and sold Bleeker ranges in many sections where competition had reigned supreme. But September, two years later, found his enthusiasm sans profits.

Hamilton, who took his place, was backed by two years in the heart of the plant. Two years spent with Henry, trying, always trying, to make the Bleeker a better range. He had the added advantage of the new Bleeker combination coal and gas range, and sold all the ranges that a loving factory could turn out. Everybody was sorry to see Hamilton go, but the Bleeker policy was amendable to no report that began with the word "deficit."

Then Henry added two assistant sales managers. Of course the new head was a bright, progressive man, full of the Bleeker spirit, but then so had been Hamilton. It was best to be prepared. During this régime Henry added his patented "easy-lift" lids. They were a good talking point, every one agreed, but at the end of the contract period there were no profits discernible to the naked eye. But this particular sales manager refused to take defeat so easily. He fought for his position with the same grimness of purpose and mouth that he had fought for more and more business. He prepared a large sheet of figures, and then asked Henry and the factory manager to step in.

"During my two years," he said quietly, "we sold up to the capacity of the factory."

Henry—they had started to call him affectionately "Ol' Henry" a year before—pursed his lips and folded his arms and indicated thereby that this was an old argument.

The sales manager's face reddened, and he thrust a clenched fist into the astonished Bleeker countenance.

"You are charging me with your loss!" he shouted. "It isn't fair to refuse me a contract when my department has sold the product. Enlarge your plant! Cut down your overhead!"

"But——"

"I could go on selling a million Bleeker ranges and we still wouldn't make a cent. Either cut down your production costs, increase your volume, or raise the price of your product. These are the only ways out, and I can——"

Ol' Henry held up a commanding, thin white hand. When the sales manager had controlled himself by grasping the chair arms till the knuckles showed white, he spoke.

"You are doubtless," he began slowly, as if striving to be fair, "inclined to the belief you mention because you are excited. A-hem! Let me explain, sir, that I have been manufacturing stoves for twenty years—that I dreamed of them ten years before that. That I have never stopped improving, adding some device to improve what mechanically was, at the very beginning, the best, most economical range built. No, sir! You're wrong. We are manufacturing at as low a cost as possible."

"But then——"

"Further, we will not increase the price of our product until such times as the rising costs of raw material compel it. Bleeker ranges, sir, are not a commercial venture in the strict sense of the word; they are too good; they are, through this company, an institution. Of course we expect profits, and I must say that the mistake lies in your —ahem—former department."

But the next year, under the Luce reign in the sales department, the production of Bleeker ranges was increased fifty per cent; in addition, preparations were being made for another increase of fifty per cent the year following. Everybody said Luce was a lucky chap, especially as he had the new automatic gas adjuster, just perfected for Bleeker ranges, to add to his already bright prospects. But it proved a disastrous two-year period. The automatic gas adjuster was placed too close to the Bleeker baking equalizer, and many women, through different jobbers, made vigorous complaints. Each was cheerfully adjusted, but a very large barrel would have have held the deficit. And then came Simmonds!

And then came Jerry!

Afire with the inspiration from the great little bus, he could only fidget until Bleeker arrived. Both seemed to have news for the other.

"I have the big idea," said Jerry.

"I have a new damper," shrilled the boss.

"Our advertising has been done outside the plant by men—good men—but men who do not love and know the product as we do. It has been clever and catchy, but we've been playing up pretty girls and not the economy and inherent goodness of Bleeker ranges. We gotta have more punch! More knowledge of the product! More sincerity!"

His employer's face seemed to fairly radiate appreciation of this great discovery. "Wonderful! Splendid!" he complimented. "I knew the fault didn't lie in the stove or its manufacture. But as I was saying, this new damper, which should be ready in six months, will——"

Six months later the new idea in advertising was selling Bleeker stoves in great shape, but a special report for the same period showed the same old story, despite doubled capacity. Capacity sales, but no profits!

The next day the new model was to be up for discussion before production was started. It was a great little thing, this new Bleeker damper. Clever! But Jerry was afraid.

Six still found him at his desk, staring through the window with eyes that missed the foundry beyond. He was in the same rut as Simmonds. For a moment he buried his huge, blond head in the crook of a huge, blond arm. The other fingers, clutching, went feeling into space. A moment later he was looking at a glaring yellow sheet that his fingers had found among the pile of late mail:

"Buy a Pilster Sav-a-gas! Save twenty per cent of your gas bills! No more Carbon. Easier Starting, Too! Only $15."

The little bus without a miss certainly deserved one if that was so, but —— Damn!

III.

That night Emily had boiled ham and spinach for her great, big, successful boy, and just for fun demi-tasse instead of the larger cups.

"Is my big boy tired?" she cooed over the last hasty sip from the third cup. He had such an appetite!

Jerry, thinking of the little yellow slip that nestled within his coat pocket, said: "Kinda," instead of his usual, "Fulla pep, ol' dear!"

Then, a moment later:

"She passed the two-thousand mark to-day. Two thousand miles without a single, solitary miss!"

"But suppose we had been able to go four hundred extra miles on the same amount of gasoline. At twenty-two cents a gallon, we would have saved just about three dollars and a half. It would be worth saving, wouldn't it, Emily?"

"Yes, but——" No longer was there a coo.

"And then if we had been able to eliminate all the carbon——

"And made the starting easier and ——"

"Tell me how——" suspiciously.

"Of course you gotta remember that the elimination of all these things lengthens the life of the car, and consequently——"

"How much is it?" she said, as one listening to some old, old story.

"Only thirty-five dollars——" nonchalantly.

"Oh, Jerry——"

"Of course," hastily, "we don't have to get one, but here's the idea: It fits over the manifold like this, see?" His forefinger pointed out the arrangement. "And it regulates the flow of the gas and——"

"But——"

With a rigid forefinger, she stopped him.

"You are spending thirty-five dollars to save three dollars and a half," she accused.

"Let me show you something I figured out just the other day, and then let me ask you just one question. Will you, dear?"

"Sure!" amusedly.

In a moment she was over to her spindly little desk and back; in her hand was a small sheet of paper. Silently she gave it to him. Slowly he read it aloud:

One Jazz automobile	$500.00
One bumper (nickel-plated)	11.75
One set demountable rims	37.50
One set larger tires for rims (less discount for other tires)	78.00
One spotlight	3.50
Extra tire and carrier	27.25
Seat covers	14.00
Total	$672.00
Extras	172.00

"Well?" still amusedly.

She was standing before him, in what he had come to know was the characteristic Beeley attitude for earnestness.

"Jerry, did that extra one hundred and seventy-two dollars make our wonderful little car run one bit better?"

Ten minutes later, like a man grasping at the one solid shaft among a general tumbling of idols, he spoke:

"But, Emily, you do use the Bleeker baking equalizer, don't you?"

She wanted to please him, but——

"Sometimes."

"Not—not always."

It wasn't fair to quibble with one's husband.

"No," whispering; "mostly I do like all women who bake."

"How's that?" bravely.

"Use—a—straw."

The face of the sales manager of the Clayton Stove Company, Incorporated, was a curious mixture of pain and joy. His exclamation showed the death-stirring significance.

"Gosh!" he whispered to the soft, dark-brown head that rested to the left of the third frog of his smoking jacket.

IV.

Grouped about the big oak table in the private office of Henry Bleeker were the four high priests of the Bleeker dynasty. Ol' Henry, Murchison, the factory and production head, Hildreth, the advertising manager, who had come out of the factory end to write about the thing he knew and loved. Lastly, and but recently arrived, is our hero.

It had been a happy, enthusiastic group before Mr. Wheatley arrived, loaded breast-high with books and ledgers. It had been an optimistic group, for the new Bleeker damper looked like a winner.

The reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting are of no interest beyond the fact that through the entire reading the sales manager was very busy arranging ledgers and a number of large sheets covered with closely typed figures. Nobody was curious about these, however; every one knew that they were the production reports of the most efficient little factory in the world. Ol' Henry opened the discussion.

"Now, then, gentlemen," he chirped, "the new model, first——"

And then Jerry faced them from his paper-laden trenches. Ol' Henry pursed his lips in silent disapproval. Jerry was nervous, almost shaky, it seemed to the others, but his first words nearly blotted out his great effort.

"Gentlemen, I own a little five-hundred-dollar Jazz." He said it quietly, with calm dignity.

"Oh-hum!" yawned Hildreth.

"Hell!" exploded Murchison. "Let's talk business."

"That is just what I propose to do."

"How many miles without a miss now, Jerry?" indulgently from Hildreth.

"Oh, boy! These Jazz nuts!" to the ceiling, from Murchison.

Even Ol' Henry a slight, dry smile.

Jerry grinned with them. It was better.

"Laugh all you want to, but that little ol' boat has solved a problem that we have worked on for thirty years and failed."

"A gas range without a miss, yes?"

"Maybe," said Murchison, "he got the idea from having his radiator always look as if there was something cooking in it."

Every one laughed.

"That is gross libel," he told them

after the last chuckle had died. "But let it pass. I am really serious. Here's the idea: I spent one hundred and seventy-two dollars in the last eight months putting extra equipment on the car. I spent it because I was too enthusiastic. I thought a lot of people outside the Jazz organization knew just as much about the Jazz car and what they needed as any one. Gentlemen, I spent one hundred and seventy-two dollars without making my car run any better, any cheaper, or with any more satisfaction! That is what this company is up against. We were, and are, all like that about Bleeker stoves."

Ol' Henry's face was alive with twitching that forecast immediate squalls and high winds.

"We have never had any one in the organization that didn't think Bleeker ranges were the greatest stoves on earth —and they are. But we loved them too well. In our effort to make them better we kept adding and improving, and all the improvements were good, too. In our enthusiasm we lost our perspective. Our production has been efficiently handled——"

A nod of corroboration stayed the storm.

"But each year's model was handled separately. Every time we added some improvement we had to change our patterns, our designs, and if you look at these figures you will see where some of the things we have added have cost us a barrel of money each year without making the Bleeker range one bit more economical to operate. Our range of ten years ago baked as well and as cheaply as to-day's model.

"The Jazz could have many improvements, too, good ones, but each would mean some change in chassis or engine or production costs that would not make it worth while. We must standardize. The Bleeker range is too good to belong to us alone. It is——"

Just in time was oil poured on the fast-rising water of the Bleeker wrath. They were words of inspiration.

"Bleeker ranges are not for us alone; they are a public inspiration."

For several tense seconds the other three watched the struggle between the Bleeker vanity and the Bleeker inventiveness.

"My boy, I believe you are right. We are a public institution." Three men sighed with deep thankfulness.

On the third of September, six months later, two men ran down the corridor that led to the office of the sales manager of the Clayton Stove Company. They ran like men who bore great news—news that men had waited thirty years to carry. Through the door they rushed, like boys out of school. In the rear, like a schoolma'am, smilingly deprecating the exuberance of youth, came Ol' Henry. They found the hero of it all bent over a little brown-covered book, worried, anxious, preoccupied.

"Hurrah for the Jazz!" shouted Murchison.

"Hurrah for the little ol' boat!" chorused Hildreth.

"We made eighteen hundred dollars in six months," shouted Ol' Henry.

And then they noticed that he paid no heed, that the great news did not straighten the line over the brows or lift the curve of the lips. When Ol' Henry patted him on the back he only nodded absently. Like the Hooligan triplets, they demanded:

"What's——"

"The matter——"

"Jerry?"

When he spoke it was accusingly, but directed toward himself apparently. He looked solemnly from one to the other; then——

"If I only hadn't tried to be tight with it——"

"But——"

"If I only had spent thirty-five dollars and kept out the carbon——"

"What's happened? Who's dead?"

His look seemed to indicate that death was a trivial matter.

"She missed!" he told them solemnly. "She missed! She missed coming up Mountain Hill this morning—just—as—she—was—finishing—the—three—thousand—seven—hundred—an'—forty—sixth mile!"

The Way of the White Man

By Ralph Stock

Author of "South of the Line," Etc.

II.—RULES OF THE GAME

FELISI was hoeing in the family taro patch when the white man crawled out of the green cavern of the bush on to the beach of Luana.

There was blood on his face, his ducks were tattered and besmeared, and his left hand trailed lifelessly in the sand at his side. For a moment he stared along the stretch of glistening beach, like an owl strayed from its cranny in the light of day; then quite suddenly he collapsed in a little heap, and lay still.

Now, the way of the white man is beyond belief. Felisi, who for many months had lived among him and his women while selling imitation pink coral on the wharf at Levuka, had learned this great truth from the bittersweet experience that goes to make up life—even the life of a South Sea Islander. She had studied the white man in his love and in his hate, in prosperity and poverty, peace and war, and at the end of an eventful seventeen years she found herself no nearer discovering the cause of his ineffable conceit, colossal ignorance, monumental selfishness, and undoubted greatness than she had been as a tiny bronze infant playing under the breadfruit trees of her native village.

Wherefore, the genus white man claimed a good deal of Felisi's attention. His antics interested her in the same way that her own life and habits interested some white men; though, of course, it never occurred to the latter that while they were studying "the quaint customs of a quaint people," they themselves were being studied.

For instance, when the dear old gentleman on the wharf at Levuka had patted Felisi's head and bought a shilling's worth of spurious coral for the sake of studying the texture of her hair, he had not the faintest idea that the soft brown eyes that wandered languorously over his superannuated person had noted that tufts of hair grew out of his ears in a most comical manner, that his false teeth moved when he talked, and that, save for his red skin, he was the living image of a doddering lunatic that Felisi knew of in a certain village up the coast.

But there it was.

And here was another case. A white man lying in a limp heap on the beach of Luana. He was quite young, as white men went, and when Felisi had climbed a palm and given him a drink from a green coconut he sat up with startling abruptness.

"Where am I?" he demanded.

"Luana," Felisi answered, squatting in the sand and watching with interest the contortions of his pink face as he tried to lift his left arm.

"Luana—ouch—yes, I seem to have been on Luana for the last twenty years, but what part? Ouch!"

"Senai Keba," said Felisi.

The white man whistled.

"Great Scott!" he muttered. "The north end; I must have——"

But Felisi was thinking of this gentleman Scott. He was so universal and always so great. Who was he? She determined to find out at the first opportunity. At the moment she became aware that the white man was staring at her with suddenly awakened interest.

"You speak English!" he exclaimed as though this accomplishment of Felisi's had just reached his notice.

"Some," she answered glibly, using the word she had learned on the wharf at Levuka and always found so useful.

"Thank Heaven!" muttered the white man.

"Have you seen any one—a white man, I mean, a large white man who limps when he walks and carries a rifle under his arm?" He was looking over his shoulder now, and when he turned there was a furtive look in his eyes.

Felisi shook her head.

"Then you soon will," snapped the white man. "Get me out of here, kid, somewhere safe, and—and you shall have all I've got. He's after me; they're all after me. I haven't slept for three nights. The bush—I can't stand it any more." He moaned, and pitched face forward into the sand.

It was an interesting phenomenon that when the white man is strong and well he is a god in his own estimation, infinitely removed above the Polynesian race. But when he is sick or frightened he is as humble as a child. It was as a child that Felisi saw this white man. She knew of a place, a perfectly safe place, and when she had brought him round for the second time she guided him to it. The Buli of Senai Keba had built a new lookout on the edge of the beach, but the old one still remained up among the branches of a giant dilo tree. It was a big business getting the white man up the broken ladder of liana, and he had no sooner crawled onto the platform of woven branches than he collapsed again.

He was very humble.

Felisi brought him green coconuts and cooked taro root, and while he ate in great, hungry mouthfuls she examined his arm. There was a clean hole on one side, just above the elbow, and a rather larger one on the other.

"So long as it hasn't got the bone, it's nothing," mumbled the white man with his mouth full; "but I rather fancy it has. Ouch!" He leaned back against the dilo trunk while Felisi bound the wound with a strip torn from her sulu. "It was a good shot," he continued to mumble reminiscently between munches at the taro root; "five hundred yards if it was an inch. I was crawling up the other side of the valley, the only bit of open country we'd seen for—how long was it?—four—five days——" His voice trailed off into silence. He was asleep, asleep with the half-eaten taro root in a hand lying limply, palm upward, on the platform.

He slept for a day and a night and nearly half a day, and when he awoke he ate until Felisi thought he would burst. He seemed to swell with the food, just like a buli at a feast; his eyes grew brighter, and he was not so humble. He laughed.

"We've diddled 'em, kid," he said, yawning and stretching luxuriously. "This is great!"

Felisi squatted on the platform and watched him in silence. Suddenly his hand went to his hip pocket, and he drew out a joint of bamboo corked at one end. He extracted the cork with his teeth and poured out onto the platform a stream of pearls. He hummed a little air as he sat looking at them.

"Worth a bit of trouble, aren't they?" he suggested.

Felisi nodded, though personally she preferred imitation pink coral. It was easier to come by and more colorful.

"And there *was* trouble," he added reminiscently.

"Crane didn't play the game by me. Partnerships again. Never did believe in partnerships, but what's a fellow to do when he's got the will and the knowledge and the muscle, and no dibs to back 'em up?"

Felisi shook her head and looked sympathetic. Among her many other accomplishments she was probably the best listener in the world. Her attitude appeared to encourage the white man.

"Such a time!" he breathed. "First chance I've had of thinking about it or having a look at them," he added, rolling the pearls to and fro under his lean, brown fingers. "First of all, in the cutter—you get to hate the way a man hangs up his hat if you're alone with

him long enough. Lord, how I came to hate that man! He was mean—dirty mean in thought and action—and he was one of your oily sort until something went wrong; then he was peevish as a sick child, and with as much to back it up. You couldn't hit him. You felt you were up against a man-woman or a woman-man, whichever way you like to put it—worst of both you know, like a half-caste."

"Me know um," Felisi thought fit to interpolate.

"It was after we got to the lagoon," the white man went on, "after the third pearl, to be exact; the whole lot weren't worth twenty pounds, but we were gloating over them on the cabin table. Crane would pick 'em up, then I would. We were talking some bosh about the biggest being worth a possible fifty pounds—fifty pounds, when it was as deformed as a hunchback—but we liked to talk big. It kept our spirits up. I looked at Crane suddenly, and I saw his eyes by lamplight. They were fastened on me, and they hated me. They hated me as much as I hated him, but for a different reason. The pearls were the reason in his case. I laughed; I couldn't help it. It struck me as so darned funny—us two sitting in a cabin twelve feet by ten, hating one another."

Felisi laughed, too. It was white man's joke.

"I think Crane must have mistaken my laugh. Anyway, we both knew what we thought of each other as surely as though we had spoken. It got worse. We did quite well, and Crane's hate increased with the quantity and size of the pearls. Mine couldn't get any worse than it had been at the beginning, so I was out of the running. But do you suppose we said nasty things to one another? Not a bit of it! For sheer politeness you couldn't have equaled us south of the line. It was: 'An uncommonly good day, Jim' from Crane, and 'Good enough' from me. 'I think we can crack a bottle over this one, Jim,' and 'Right-o,' from me. 'If we go on like this,' from Crane, and 'Touch wood!' from me. It came to being polite at meals in the end, and I didn't laugh. I must have lost my sense of humor those days."

Felisi nodded her head understandingly. The white man might have been talking to the lady with the gold hair behind the bar in Levuka for all the difference he seemed to find in his audience. Felisi took it as an unconscious compliment, which indeed it was.

"Then came what I'd been expecting, but I'd hidden the dinghy oars, and hadn't given him credit for the pluck of swimming a hundred yards through sharks. He did it. It's wonderful what fifty first-grade pearls will do with a man-woman. Luckily it was a mangrove country we were anchored off, and there were three miles of it before you could get to real solid earth. I tracked him as easily as you would an elephant, and just before nightfall something approaching white moved on the other side of a gully. I fired, and went over. It was Crane, lying on his face, with his fat legs sprawled, dead as meat, and the pearls were in the corner of his beastly bandanna handkerchief that hadn't been washed for months."

The white man sat propped against the dilo trunk, staring out to sea with a disgusted expression still lingering on his face, presumably at the thought of the bandanna handkerchief.

Felisi neither moved nor spoke. She knew by instinct when to do either, and presently the white man went on, though slower:

"It's the first man I've killed. I'm not used to shooting at men, much less killing them. But I wasn't sorry. It rather surprised me how I took it when I found him dead. Somehow it never struck me that I couldn't go out into the world and get on with life as I had before. It seemed to me that I had rid the world of something dirty, mean, and that was all there was to it. The other came later—in the bush, and especially at night, when the mist rises and the tree fungus glows through it like a lamp in a London fog. I came to know what is it to have killed a man—even a man-woman—and what it is to be the pet of a man hunt. Lord!"

He glanced over his shoulder, then laughed nervously. "It's worse than playing spooks with the lights out. They haunt you all right. You think you've done with them—thrown them off—but you haven't; they bob up again and come creeping on through the bush. I don't know; but I think it must be Hanson that's got my track. He's a good shot—that was a classy shot, five hundred yards, and I was moving—the only man of them worth thinking about, middling tall and chunky, with a toothbrush mustache. You're sure you haven't seen him?"

"Sure," mimicked Felisi.

"I got him, though—through the leg. Waited behind a lantana bush until he was on top of me, and then hadn't the pluck to shoct him anywhere but in the leg. I'm glad I didn't, too; he's all right, and he's got to do his work. It's queer, but you positively get to like a man that sticks to you the way he's stuck to me. It becomes a sort of ghastly game, with unwritten rules to it. Through mangrove swamps and mazes of underbrush, up over volcanic rock and across rivers with the worst sort of shark in them. I was lost, properly lost, and I know *he* was, but we kept on. He never left me—day and night he never—left—me."

The white man's eyes were suddenly alert and staring fixedly at the reed brake on the far side of the beach. His voice had dropped, then ceased altogether. His jaw hung down. Out of the reed brake onto the beach limped a man with a rifle under his arm.

He was a hundred yards away, and looking out to sea, but the man up on the lookout seemed to shrivel into himself on the far side of the dilo trunk. Felisi was wearing a red hibiscus blossom, but the white man snatched it out of her hair.

"Ssh! Lie down!" he breathed.

"You all right," whispered Felisi reassuringly.

The white man seized her roughly by the wrist and jerked her down beside him.

"Lie there!" he hissed. "It *is* Hanson. How's the beach?"

"Beach, him all right," quavered Felisi, looking out through the branches. The white man forced her down to the platform.

"You little fool! I mean is it dry where we came over it—powdery? Will it show the difference—*difference*, savvy?—between a naked foot—your foot and mine?" The white man indicated his long-legged boots with a slight movement.

"Beach, him all right," pouted Felisi with the air of one defending her personal property against unfair aspersion. "Him no show diff'rance."

"What's he doing now?"

Felisi could feel the white man's body trembling against her own. She peeped out and saw the man on the beach bending over the disturbance in the sand where the white man had fallen. Felisi was at a loss. The very humble child lying beside her needed soothing.

"What's he doing?" it repeated peevishly.

"Him go so," said Felisi, drooping her head with the pantomimic art of the meke dancer. "Him very tired."

"Ah!" muttered the white man, and smiled grimly.

Felisi knew that she was committed beyond recall. She had taken sides, and she did not regret her choice. The heart of a woman instinctively goes out to the fugitive. He is the weaker. And when once the Polynesian has taken sides there is no turning back.

Presently she had to tell him: "Him come close up."

The man on the beach was limping along its edge, peering into the reed brake. He would come directly under the dilo tree.

The white man at Felisi's side lay as still as stone. His jaw was set, his muscles tense. Felisi's hand went out as stealthily as a snake, drew the revolver from its holster, and placed it in his hand. The white man seemed not to notice it, and still lay motionless, staring into the twisted branches of the dilo tree, but listening—listening with every nerve to the soft crunch of approaching footsteps in sand. They ceased directly under the platform.

Felisi could hear the beating of her own heart. A minah bird squawked shrilly in the branches overhead, and she felt her wrist crushed in a vise-like grip. There was the click of an opening lid. A match was struck. The pleasant smell of good tobacco smoke floated up to them on the still air; then the footsteps passed on.

"Wonder he didn't smell me," grinned the white man. "It's Hanson all right; he smokes Heraldic. Heraldic in a good, air-tight box, and a woody brier." He smacked his lips.

"Why you no shoot?" demanded Felisi. "Pouf, bang!—him finish."

"Not till I'm cornered," answered the white man. "I don't want to kill Hanson. He's a good fellow. I've got nothing against him."

Felisi scrambled into a squatting position to think this out. Her small, bronze face was puckered with bewilderment. Here was one man chasing another man to catch him and have him killed, yet the pursued "had nothing against" the pursuer! Was there ever such an amazing state of affairs? "A sort of ghastly game with unwritten rules to it." Then there was no need to make the suggestion that had been in her mind; namely, that she should dispatch the man on the beach herself in one of the many ways that she had at her command.

"Besides," the white man went on with a hint of apology in his tone, "it wouldn't make any difference. Have you ever heard of the law?"

Felisi nodded vigorously. She happened to know something about this thing called "law."

"Well, there it is. It never stops. The law says that I shall be strung up by the neck until I'm dead, and Hanson is the law. If I kill him, another man takes his place, and so on forever. The law never stops."

"Him big fellah, law," mused Felisi.

"I should just say he is!" muttered the white man, leaning limply against the dilo trunk and looking out to sea with melancholy eyes. "He's a bad fellah to bunt up against, too, but sometimes—sometimes he can be given the slip. Look here!" he added with sudden eagerness. "Hanson may have gone on, and he may not; I wouldn't trust him a yard. There's only one way out of this thing; you be fishing in a canoe—a canoe with a sail in it, mind you—off the beach to-night. I'll swim out—all I've got," he ended abruptly.

Felisi nodded.

"Bless you, kid!" said the white man, and fell to collecting the scattered pearls.

On her way up to the village, she met the "law." He was sitting on a fallen palm beside the track that commanded a view of the beach and the village.

"*Siandra,*" was his cheerful greeting, though his brown face was haggard with exhaustion.

Felisi giggled and squirmed in the approved fashion of island girls who have never had the opportunity of studying white human nature in Levuka.

But the "law" did not smile. His steady gray eyes seemed to burn holes in Felisi's face, and he spoke sharply, with the air of a man who is used to receiving prompt answers.

"Have you seen a white man about here?" he demanded in her own tongue.

Felisi continued to giggle and shuffle her feet in the red earth of the track.

"Answer me!" snapped the "law."

"No, sir," faltered Felisi.

"Where have you just come from?"

The question came so quickly that the answer was out of Felisi's mouth before she could properly form it.

"The beach, sir."

"Then why didn't I see you on the beach just now?"

But Felisi's mind was nimble enough when it was alert. She giggled, though it was an effort with the awful eyes of the "law" upon her.

"Answer me!" he boomed.

"I was bathing, sir," she simpered, with long, blue-black lashes sweeping her cheeks.

"Well, what of that?"

"I hid myself, sir."

The "law" laughed. He actually

laughed, though it was a mirthless sort of sound.

"There, run along to the village, my girl, and tell the buli that Breitania Levu wants him here at once. And tell him to send down something to eat and drink in the meantime."

"The village is quite close," suggested Felisi diffidently, "and the guest house is cool." A wild scheme flitted through her mind of launching the canoe while the "law" was in the village.

"Thank you," he answered, and his eyes resumed the burning process; "but I shall stay here."

As Felisi turned to go, these same eyes were sweeping the beach. They seemed to see all things.

She felt them at her back as she swung on toward the village. The "law" was certainly a "big fellah."

Not long before sunset, Felisi was fishing in the canoe, perhaps fifty yards out from the beach of Luana. It was very simple, very unexhilarating. If you dropped an old boot on the end of a string over the side, you would catch something off the beach of Luana; but Felisi's hand trembled as she continued to land fish after fish. The sun kissed the sea and went to bed, and Felisi continued to fish, with her eyes on the shore. There was no moon, and there were few stars, but there was the vague half light that never deserts a tropical night, and presently a shadow flitted across the beach and dissolved into the sea—but not entirely. A still smaller shadow, and round, was gliding on the surface of the water. Nearer and nearer it came, until it was possible to see the spreading fan of ripples in its wake, and something on its summit that gleamed even in the half light.

Then the silence of the night was split asunder by the crack of a rifle, and a bullet plocked into the water a foot from the moving shadow. It vanished, and silence closed down, but only for a moment. It was clear that the eyes of the "law" saw all things. The next bullet was nearer, and each time the shadow vanished it was for a shorter time and there was a shorter silence. Felisi strained her eyes into the darkness, and at last there was a long silence—a very long silence. Her clasped hands were pressed down over her heart. And still the silence continued. She held her breath, and presently, above the beating of her heart, she heard another rifle shot, but farther away, up the beach. She paddled swiftly in its direction, and as the canoe slid gently on the sand shots came, muffled, from the bush. The shadow had missed the canoe, then, and returned to shore.

They were fighting in a palm grove now—the shadow and the "law"—still fighting. Would it ever cease, Felisi wondered, as she followed up the sounds of conflict. Truly the "law" never stops. From palm trunk to lantana bush they flitted, the shadow always retreating, the "law" always advancing. A tongue of flame would be answered with a tongue of flame, report with report. It was an argument in flame and lead. Then quite suddenly there fell a silence—a silence that lasted an unconscionable time, and out of it came a voice in breathless jerks:

"What's—the use—Lucas?"

And an answering voice replied:

"That's—my business. You'd—have—shot him yourself—Hanson."

"I dare say, but—I must warn you—that anything you may say—will——"

A breathless laugh came from somewhere.

"You can get all that—off your chest—when you've got me."

"You're out of ammunition."

"Don't be too sure. *You* are. I know the government ration, and I've counted."

There was a short silence; then——

"What's more, I'll prove it."

The shadow emerged from behind a lantana bush, evolving into the form of the white man. He stood quite still out there in the open, his white ducks looming clear against the inky background of the underbrush. The revolver was leveled from his hip in the right hand. The other hung inert at his side.

"Now," he said, "will you let me go without killing you, Hanson? I don't want to."

"Let you go!" snapped the voice of the "law," and a glint of white showed behind a palm trunk not forty paces distant.

"Don't come out!" cried the white man, as though afraid. "Don't come out without your hands up, Hanson!"

For answer the "law" came out from behind the palm trunk. He carried his rifle clubbed, and, though he limped painfully, he came straight on.

"You're out of ammunition, Lucas," he said as he advanced, and he said it as though trying to convince himself that it was true. "You know you're out of ammunition." The revolver was pointing directly at his chest, and he still came on. "It'll save no end of trouble both for you and me——"

He was not more than five paces distant now, and he was staring at the muzzle of the revolver as though fascinated. Just so had Felisi seen fish come up out of the depths of the rock pools to see the light of the torch and be speared. The white man stood quite still, as though thinking what he would do. Then in a flash he raised the revolver to fling it in the face of the "law," and the butt of the clubbed rifle fell. Both missed their mark.

"Didn't I say——" grunted the "law," and the rest was lost in the impact of their bodies. The white man had but one arm; the other could scarce stand for lameness, yet they rocked in one another's embrace for what seemed minutes to Felisi before crashing to earth in a writhing heap. They were on the bank of a stream that ran through the grove, and Felisi caught her breath as they rolled nearer and nearer the edge. It was a four-foot drop at most, and the water was shallow, trickling slowly over the bed of powdered coral sand. But Felisi knew that stream. There were many like it on Luana.

Here, on the ground, the "law" had the upper hand, for he had the use of both arms, and his lame leg was not such a handicap. He was strong, too—stronger than the white man, though both were pitifully weak from their exertions. Would it never end? They jerked and strained.

Suddenly the white man lay still, staring up into the roof of palm leaves with agony written in every line of his haggard face. It was as though he had been seized with sudden paralysis—it *was* paralysis, for the "law" had a hold on his arm—a *certain* hold. Surely this was the end. But Felisi had taken sides, and the Polynesian never turns back. The "law" uttered a stifled cry as her teeth sank into the back of his hand. The hold was lost, the arm free. The white man kicked out with all his strength, and the "law" tottered for a moment before rolling down the bank into the stream.

The water was not two inches in depth, yet when he struggled to rise he sank knee-deep. Another supreme effort, and the glistening white sand was about his waist. After that he sank by inches, his stern gray eyes turned toward firm ground not three yards distant, but uttering no sound.

The white man had fainted, and when his eyes opened Felisi was bending over him.

"Come quick," she said. "*You* all right. Come quick—canoe him——"

"Where's Hanson?" muttered the white man.

Felisi pointed toward the river bank.

The white man's eyes opened wide.

"In the river—drowned?"

Felisi shook her head.

"Him go long road all the same pretty quick," she told him reassuringly. But for some strange reason it failed to reassure. The white man crawled to the edge of the bank, and lay there in the grass. Felisi could hear his voice:

"What about it, Hanson?"

There was no answer.

"It'll get you in less than an hour. Don't be a fool."

Still no answer, and a long pause, during which the white man could have reached the canoe. Felisi could have shaken him.

"I must get out of here, Hanson. I

shall get clean away. The girl has a canoe. What ever difference will it make?"

There was actually a pleading note in the voice.

Was this one of the rules of the game? Felisi gave it up. Her white teeth snapped together in sheer exasperation.

"Good-by, Hanson!"

The white man staggered to his feet and stood upright, swaying for a moment, then lurched off toward the beach, leaning on Felisi's shoulder.

Twice he stopped dead in his tracks and listened intently, but no sound came to them except the soft breath of the trade wind among the palm leaves.

They launched the canoe in silence.

Felisi did not speak; she sat watching him from the main thwart and noticing many things. A frown had come to his forehead, and his eyes were restless, casting this way and that at nothing save the dark waters slipping past the canoe. Sometimes, too, he would hold the paddle under his arm and pass his hand over his eyes as though trying to brush aside some vision that haunted them. But slowly she saw a change steal over him. Set purpose came into his eyes, the grim mask of his face gave way to animation—eagerness. He muttered a curse at the failing wind, and Felisi became aware that their course had changed with his mind. The canoe no longer headed for the open sea, and a little later she saw the well-known coast line of Luana looming over the bows. He had put back.

The canoe had no sooner grounded than the white man leaped ashore and ran up the beach. Felisi found him at the bank of the stream—the sand had risen to the chin of the "law"—tugging and straining with his one hand.

It took them fully half an hour of such work to extricate the "law," and at the end of it the two men lay side by side on the river bank, too exhausted to move or speak.

When at last the silence was broken, it was the "law" who spoke.

"Edward Lucas," he said, rolling onto his side, "I arrest you, in the name of the king, for the murder of Walter Crane."

The white man lay on his back, with closed eyes.

"Give me a fill of your Heraldic, Hanson," he said.

It was two days before the white man could walk. And when he crossed the room, trailing Heraldic tobacco smoke in his wake, he caught sight of the guard and turned back.

"Hanson," he said, "won't you get rid of this pantomime?"

The guard was dismissed—very smartly.

The "law" was undoubtedly the stronger man. In one night his vitality returned, and when the white man was up and about he sat talking with him in the guest house. Felisi heard the white man tell the story of the cutter and the pearls and the hate. And when it was done the "law" nodded slowly, and said: "Yes, I knew Crane."

Later that evening, he went to the door and stood looking out over the green hills that tumbled to the sea.

"It's going to be a dark night," he said absently.

The white man was lying on a pile of mats, and did not answer.

"A deuced dark night," repeated the "law." "One of those nights when things happen."

The white man lifted himself onto his elbow, but still remained silent.

"And there's a fair northerly breeze," added the other irrelevantly.

The white man was staring fixedly at the broad back of the "law" silhouetted in the doorway. An eager light flashed into his eyes and was gone.

"Yes," he said slowly, and lay back on the mats.

In the morning he was gone.

So was Felisi's canoe. But the "law" made that good, even as he scowled his displeasure at the escape.

In the taro patch Felisi often puckers her brow over the problems of an eventful life, but, in this particular case, she can get no farther in her deductions than that the "law" is a big fellah and the way of the white man beyond belief.

The Willie Boy From Yale

By Raymond J. Brown

Author of "Soft Pickin's," Etc.

Of a born baseball player, named Jeremiah Gilhooley, who loved the game better than anything else on earth, but who would accept in salary nothing more than $1873.67 for a season's work

NO, son, I ain't tryin' to tell you there ain't no bugs. Nothin' like it. Outside of my old friend Doc Sturgis, of the State Insane Asylum, I don't think there's another guy in the world has met up with more queer ones than me. What I'm drivin' at, though, is that it's wrong to get off a feller just because he acts peculiar. Maybe he's got some good, sensible reason for bein' a nut. Why, the greatest ball player that I ever seen looked like he was cheatin' in bein' out of the booby factory—until I got wise to his plans and specifications.

Ty? Who's talkin' about Ty? Ty would only be a third-rater holdin' on to his job by his eyelashes if the game had a few more like the bird I mean. Besides, Ty couldn't have been more than a little kid goin' to school when Jeremiah Gilhooley busted into the national pastime.

You never heard of Gil, eh? Well, that don't surprise me none. Gil only tarried in the game about long enough to raise a ripple—and that was probably a few years before your time.

It was in the old days, when there was only one league—with twelve clubs—and Johnny McGraw was a scrappy, little shrimp, playin' third base for Hanlon in Baltimore, and Cy Young was in his prime, and "grand old men" like Honus Wagner hadn't even been heard of. There wasn't no million-dollar salaries in them days, and there wasn't so much red tape and system and hokum about runnin' a ball club. For instance, we didn't have no regular scouts. The only way we'd get a tip-off on a promisin' player would be when he'd crash in with his bat under his arm and demand the right to show us his wares—or when some friend would see a kid playin' on the lots and let us know about it.

I had a friend named Joe Glynn, who played with me in the days when we all wore whiskers, and Joe used to tell me every now and then about a player he'd saw some place. Joe sent me a letter early one season, askin' me, when the team reached New York or Boston, to sneak off to New Haven some day and look over the kid who's playin' right field for Yale College. Now, college ball players were about as common in the league in them days as Frenchmen are in the German army now. Fred Tenney and one or two others had busted in, but there was so few of them that us managers would have thought of lookin' for players in Italy about as quick as we would of lookin' for them in the colleges. Still, I'd never knew Joe to give me a wrong steer, so I decides to do as he says.

Early in June we're playin' a series with the Gi'nts in New York—our team was the old Bluebirds—and I draw a three-day suspension for appealin' a close decision. I read in the evenin' paper that Yale and Harvard are to play at New Haven the followin' afternoon, so, as long as I was barred from the grounds anyhow, I decide to leave the team flat and run up to see the game.

When I arrive in New Haven the town is full of doin's. It's commence-

ment week, and the boys are raisin' Cain. Now, I'd always thought a college boy was a little guy with a long-peaked cap and a tennis bat in one hand and a mandolin in the other. That's the kind of pictures I always seen, anyhow. These fellers, though, was O. K. Except that some of them wore white duck pants and others had on hangman's robes and square hats, they was just like young folks you'd meet anywheres. A good, sociable bunch, I'd call them, especially a big guy I met in a barroom. He was drinkin' lemonade, by the way. I asks him about the ball game, and leads the conversation cautiouslike around to the Yale right fielder.

The big guy's eyes sparkle. "Are you Gil's father?" he wants to know.

"Gil?" I asks, puzzled.

"Yes, Gil," he says, all smiles; "Jerry Gilhooley, the feller you asked about."

I was kind of shocked. I'd always had an idea that fellers who went to them rich colleges was named Van Puyster and Montmorency, and I certainly believed that, while they might let a Jones or a Smith sneak in occasionally, they had no time for us Mc's and O's.

"No," I says, "I ain't his father. I just heard he's a pretty good ball player."

"Good!" exclaims my Yale friend. "Good! Well, I should say he is good—good at anything he tries. He's the finest all-around man I ever knew. He's president of his class and valedictorian and captain of the football team—and he'd be on the crew, too," he says, "only he'd rather play baseball."

As soon as he finds out I want to see the game that afternoon he slips me a ticket. Then he excuses himself, after givin' me his card and askin' me up to see him. I'd sized him up as bein' just a plain kid, but when I looks at the card I nearly faints. He's young Jim West, son of the Jim West who owned about every railroad and steamboat line in the country at that time. And him hobnobbin' with an old, roughneck ball player without askin' no questions! I'm beginnin' to get a whole lot of respect for this college stuff.

Well, when I gets out to the Yale ball park that afternoon, I don't have no trouble in pickin' out young Gilhooley. The college boys was much better ball players than I expected, but this bird is above them like the Eiffel Tower's above Paris. I never seen such a graceful guy in an outfield. I don't mean graceful like a dancer, for this Gilhooley is just the kind of a red-headed, rawboned young mick I was myself at his age, but he combined strength and speed and ease of motion in a way that would gladden your heart. You could see, too, by the way he capered around, that he just loved the game. About the only bad habit he had was buttin' into every play, but that wasn't such a bad habit at that, considerin' how much better he was than the fellers he was playin' with.

You could see he was a hot favorite with the Yale crowd, too. Every time he'd do anything—if it wasn't anything more than knockin' the dirt out of his spikes—a little guy down in front of the grand stand would wave his arms, and the whole Yale bunch would yell together: "Yea, Gil! Yea, Gil!" or "rah-rah" somethin' else. But they always finished by shoutin' "Gil!" It wasn't half so foolish as it sounds, for I soon found myself gettin' all worked up with them.

As a game it wasn't much. The Yale team was so much better than the Harvard boys that they win as they pleased. There's a big hullabaloo after the game, with a dozen young huskies carrying Gil on their shoulders out to the dressin' room. I follow them out, and send in word by a nigger water carrier that I want to see Gil for a few seconds after he's dressed. He asks me to wait around for him, which I do.

I get another shock when Gil comes out. I expected, with him bein' the king of Yale and all that, he'd be a nifty kind of feller—in clothes and all that, I mean. But he ain't. His suit's cheap and pretty threadbare; his shoes ain't the kind I'd let any friend of

mine wear while I had the price to stake him, and, with his freckled Irish face, he looks more like a young plumber's assistant or somethin' like that than a college boy.

He greets me with a smile that makes me like him right off. I could see he's the same kind of a lively, likable kid off the field as he is on. I get right down to business, offer him a job with the Bluebirds, and ask him how much he wants.

Gil smiles a queer kind of smile and looks awful thoughtful. "Well, Mr. McCarthy," he says at last, "I can't help but admit your offer comes as a big surprise. Playin' baseball is one means of livelihood I never considered. I had other plans for myself. I can't give you an answer now, but I shall be very pleased to write to you in a day or two and tell you if I can accept your proposal. By the way," he asks suddenly, "about how much do you think my services would be worth to you?"

"About two thousand dollars a season," I says.

"Two thousand dollars," he repeats slowlike. "I must admit I'm interested, but I can't let you know now. Can you hold the offer open until Saturday?"

"Sure," I says; "take your time, son."

I leave him, and stroll around town until train time. From some other students I find out a whole lot about young Gilhooley. It seems he comes from a little town in Connecticut, where his father's in the contractin' business. That is, his father's boss is, for old Gilhooley drives a dump cart. Gil has paid his way through college with money he earned himself, doing odd jobs that ranged between cleanin' windows to helpin' less bright but richer guys in their studies. I'd never heard of that wrinkle before, and I can tell you it didn't put Gil down any in my estimation; neither did it make me think any less of the rich college fellers, who treated Gil like one of their own kind.

True to his word, Gil sends me a letter on Saturday. I reads it through two times. Then I laugh. He'll play with the Bluebirds, the letter says; yes, gladly. But about the salary question —here's where the laugh come—he will not accept a cent more or less than eighteen hundred and seventy-three dollars and sixty-seven cents! I shows the letter to Jack Cook, secretary of the club, and he laughs, too.

"He must believe there's luck in odd numbers," says Jack.

"Yes," I agrees, "or else he doesn't want to get rusty on the figgerin' he learned at college, and thinks he'll practice on his monthly pay check."

I have Jack write back to Gil, tellin' him we couldn't think of hirin' him for eighteen hundred and seventy-three dollars and sixty-seven cents, but that we'll be glad to pay him eighteen hundred and seventy-four dollars.

Gil sends us another letter, thankin' us for our generosity, but sayin' he can't think of acceptin' the extra thirty-three cents a year. I gives it up.

"Tell him all right," I says to Jack, "but what do you think of a feller—a poor feller, too, who needs the money —turnin' down two thousand a year and bein' only willin' to take some crazy amount like he wants."

"You said it then!" Jack replies. "He's crazy."

Gil shows up two days later. "Well, my young figger sharp," I greet him, "how's the arithmetic to-day?"

"How do you do, Mr. McCarthy!" says he, kind of coldlike.

I'm a tough old bird, and ain't to be froze. "Did the railroad let you ride down for four sixty-seven instead of three-fifty?" I asks.

"I know what you're referrin' to, Mr. McCarthy," he says, "and all I can do to you, as my employer, is to ask you not to chaff me about it. My reason for askin' for the exact salary I did is an excellent one, but I can't explain it to you. I can assure you, though, I shall endeavor to earn every cent of what you pay me."

Word of Gil's queer contract had spread around the boys on the team, and they was layin' for him. Leaguers in them days was hard nuts for cer-

tain, and they was waitin' to initiate the Willie boy from Yale. I could see they was surprised—just like I was myself—at the brawny young specimen of an Irish American I sprung on them, but that didn't stop them.

While I was doin' the honors, introducin' Gil to the bunch, Lefty Flynn, our first baseman, who was brought up in the gashouse district of New York, says to Joe Matthews, our shortstop, a wild, fightin' devil from the Pennsylvania coal mines: "Poicy, when you've got your knittin' done, teacher wants you to hurry to the g'ography clawss."

He said this in a high tone of voice, like he was a little girl. Gil could see it was aimed at him. He turns a brick red through his freckles, but he don't give them a tumble.

Then Joe Matthews answers: "Oh, Clawrence, I cawn't go to g'ography clawss to-day; mother is dustin', an' I must stay home an' help her."

Now, if these guys had had any sense, they'd have looked Gil over good before gettin' rosy with him. Believe me, I like a scrap as good as the next guy, but I ain't goin' out lookin' for trouble with no six-foot baby with fists as big as pavin' blocks, red hair, and a name like Gilhooley!

Gil drops Hugh Moore's hand, which he'd been shakin', and goes across that dressin'-room floor with the same ease, speed, an' confidence I seen him use chasin' high flies in the Yale ball park. He gives Flynn a queer poke with the palm of his hand—I learned afterward it's what they call the "straight arm" in football—and Flynn goes shootin' the whole length of the room and lands flat in a water bucket. Then Gil picks Matthews up like he was a child, stretches him across his knee—and spanks him!

You should have heard the howl that went up in that dressin' room! There wasn't one of my boys who wouldn't have liked to take a crack at Matthews—only he had them all scared. And now to see him handled like a baby! After Gil had warmed Matty good, he stands him on his feet, with his face in the corner—just like a bad kid in school. We all seen the point, and cheered. Matty and Flynn, with blood in their eyes, both start at Gil at once. One or two of the boys was for interferin', but I waved them back. I never saw a guy handle himself any better than Gil. He didn't strike a single blow; just dodged, twisted, and parried. But he done more than if he'd put both Flynn and Matty out for the count; he made them look foolish before about twenty other guys. The battle ended with Gil givin' both of them the foot—a trick I know he must have learned from his Irish father. With Flynn and Matty layin' on the floor, Gil kind of rubs his hands and says:

"The only reason I didn't thrash you two ruffians within an inch of your lives is because I realize Mr. McCarthy needs you on the team. I trust both of you can handle a baseball better than you can your fists."

Another howl goes up at this. I can see Gil is gettin' awful popular with the bunch. Gil turns to me. "Mr. McCarthy," he says, "before you introduce me to any of the other gentlemen of the team it might be well for me to make a few remarks—to avoid future trouble, if possible. If any of you gentlemen," he goes on, "are laboring under the delusion that, because I am a college man, I am going to be the target for any silly jokes, you are greatly mistaken. I'm just a common feller like the rest of you. My father drives a dump cart—and I've worked with a pick and shovel myself. I've probably worked as hard as any man here. You'll find me without any frills—and able to take care of myself."

The team cheers; that is, all but Matty and Flynn, who are in the corner crabbin'. "That's the talk, young feller!" calls out Biff McCann, our star backstop. "You're all right, and we'll treat you right." The gang cheers again, and I finishes introducin' Gil around.

Gil makes good with a capital "G." Two weeks after he joined the team I drop him in right field regular, and there he stays. He was class all the way through. His battin' was immense,

his fieldin' grand, and his base runnin'—every catcher in the league used to get nervous as soon as Gil'd get perched on first.

And if he followed up the advantage he got the day he joined the team, Gil would have been the fair-haired boy with the players, the crowd, and the papers. But he didn't. He played great ball, but he done it in a way that made it look like he wasn't doin' nothin'. If there was a play to be made, Gil was always Johnny-on-the-spot. If a hit had to be made to sew up a game, Gil was always there with the bingle. But he wasn't playin' the way he did at Yale. What I mean is he done his work much like a book-keeper who never expects a raise in salary does his—so much and no more. In the college game I seen, Gil played like baseball was his one bug—kind of wallowed around in the game. He done fancy jugglin' tricks with the ball and made one-hand catches—in practice, of course, I mean—and behaved like he was havin' the time of his life. With us, he'd never take three steps where two would do. There wasn't the kind of dash and vim to him that makes Ty stand out. He was the kind of feller that plays all season without never doin' nothin' sensational—and then surprises everybody when the averages is published by leadin' the league in battin', fieldin', and stolen bases. Much like Georgie Burns of the Gi'nts.

I give Gil a little jolt about this one day.

"Am I earnin' my salary?" he asks me.

"Yes," I says, "but——"

"Am I loafin' at all?"

"No; but——"

"Am I omittin' to do anything which any other outfielder would do?"

"No, you ain't, but——"

"Well, what's the fault, then?" he demands.

"The fault, my boy," I says, "is that you could be the greatest player this game ever knew—if you'd only make up your mind to do it. All you need do," I says, "is to show more of that get-up-and-go you had at Yale. Get on your toes! Make yourself prominent! Since you've been with the Bluebirds, you've been about as prominent as the bat boy—and you winnin' games and savin' games for us every day! The newspapers don't take no notice of you, because—I don't know how you do it—because you make star plays right under the reporters' eyes, but you hide them. Up at Yale all I heard was Gil this and Gil that. Since you been with us I don't believe even the players would know you were on the team if it wasn't for that muss you had with Flynn and Matthews. Where's your ambition?"

Gil smiled. It wasn't often these days that he did smile, for, in addition to goin' about his work with all the enthusiasm a sewer cleaner shows for his, he was keepin' silent and quiet—almost sulkin'. He didn't mix in with the other boys on the team; he didn't even live at the hotel with us, but buried himself in a cheap boardin' house downtown. He was around in time for the game each day, and left the grounds as soon as he could get his clothes on. What he did the rest of the time none of us knew.

As I said Gil smiled when I asked him about his ambition, but it was a sad kind of a smile—no joy in it at all.

"My ambition's all right, Mr. McCarthy," he said. "I don't want to appear abrupt—or disrespectful—but I'll have to ask you not to bother about whether I get my name in the papers or whether the patrons of the game like me—so long as I do my work satisfactorily."

With that he turns and leaves me. Now, me bein' a fairly intelligent, if uneducated, sort of a feller, I could wonder what it was that was the matter with Gil. I often thought about his eighteen-hundred-and-seventy-three-dollar-and-sixty-seven-cent salary the same as I thought about his queer behavior, and tried to connect the two. The other members of the team, though, just put Gil down as a nut, and let it go at that. If he didn't want to mix, why they didn't want to, neither. Whether he played half as good as he

could or two times better was nothin' in their lives, so that part of it didn't bother them at all.

They did try a little friendly kiddin', but Gil took it so serious they quit. I tried to tell them Gil was a regular feller at heart, explainin' how big he went at Yale to prove my point, but they wouldn't have none of it. He was crazy, and crazy men wasn't their idea of people to associate with.

To see Gil arguin' with an empire was a sketch! Oh, yes, he did dispute a close one now and then—suppose he thought that was part of his job, somethin' he was bein' paid for. He'd go about it awful quiet and polite, which was so different from the way the ordinary run of roughneck ball players done it that the empires used to listen to him and argue back, instead of just turnin' their backs—or pullin' the watch on him. Also he done somethin' I never seen no ball player do before or since; he had at least half a dozen decisions reversed in a season! Just on the rules, for Gil knew the baseball guide better than the man that wrote it.

"I think, Mr. So-and-so," he'd say to the empire, "if you look at section two of rule fifteen, you'll find that a ball batted out of bounds——" and so forth. And the empire would get out his bible, and, sure enough, Gil would be right, and he'd be so nice about it that the empire would change his decision—and without gettin' sore, neither.

"You ought to be a lawyer, Gil," I told him after one game he'd saved for us by knowin' a section of the rules that even I had overlooked.

He smiled that funny, sad smile of his. "I'm satisfied as things are," he said.

At the end of the season, as is customary, I give the boys a little talkin' to about the next year—what I plan to do with the team, how they're to keep in condition durin' the winter, and so forth. I tell Gil I'm goin' to raise his salary.

"You're the lowest-paid player I got," I says, "considerin' the work you been doin', so your contract for next season will read twenty-five hundred; that is," I adds, not bein' able to resist havin' a little fun with him, "that is, unless you'd prefer to get twenty-four hundred and ninety-nine dollars and sixteen cents."

"No!" Gil almost shouts. "Emphatically no! I must be paid the same amount as this year—or I must refuse to play."

"Well," I suggests, "if you don't want it, let me send it to your folks. They could use it."

"No!" he barks again. "I mustn't! I can't!"

"You're the funniest feller I ever seen in the league," I tells him. "I never seen a ball player yet who'd refuse a raise in salary."

"I can't help that," says Gil. "I can play only at my own price. And, by the way," he continues, "the club made a mistake of four cents in payin' me this year. Examination of the checks will verify this."

"Is the mistake in your favor?" I asks.

"Yes," says Gil.

"I thought so," says I. "Well, give me a couple of stamps, and I'll turn them in for you. That is, unless you want it to be a cash transaction."

"I prefer it that way," says Gil, serious as though he was talkin' about thousands. And he gives me a nickel, and I gives him a cent change, and we part for the winter.

Well, Gil's second season with the Bluebirds was a repetition of the first—if not more so. He was quieter and more distant than ever. Even I couldn't get friendly with him. He played the same kind of a mechanically perfect game, and kept just as much in the background, so far as press notices and cheers from the stands was concerned.

'Long about July, I dope up what I think is a rare scheme for wakin' Gil up. I meet him after a game with the Orioles, who'd beat us eight to three, and say:

"Gil, your playin' this year ain't been nothin' to brag about. Now, that young rookie, Forsythe, is beginnin' to

look almost good enough to get a trial in right field."

I waits for this to sink in. Now, the truth was I'd have benched Gil about as quick as I'd have cut off my right arm—not so quick even. Gil blinks at me. "Thus far this season," he says, "my battin' average has been three-fifty-eight, which is equivalent to sayin' I'm leadin' the league. My fieldin' has been perfect, for I have yet to make my first error. Unless somebody elsewhere stole ten bases to-day, I am leading the league in that department. If young Forsythe can do better, I congratulate you on having a find, and I shall step down cheerfully in his favor."

Talk about gettin' the wind taken out of my sails! I'm struck dumb. I usually got an answer ready, but Gil floored me this time for sure. He'd called my bluff, and I wasn't ready to meet it.

Gil never bats an eye. "Is that all?" he asks.

"Y-yes," I stammers.

Without another word, Gil walks out of the park. Instead of gettin' sore at havin' him put it over on me like that, I laugh. Any other guy on the team, if he was told there was somebody else waitin' to grab off his job, would have started to bluster or else would have pulled a spurt in his playin' for a while. Not Gil, though. He hands me a mouthful of statistics, and the next day plays his position in the same easy, calm way. And all there is for me to do is to admit I'm beat, which I do, and me and Jack Cook have a big laugh over it.

That year we had the closest fight the old twelve-club league ever knew. The Orioles and us is neck and neck all season, and we come to the last game of the year—played on our grounds—absolutely even. Nothin' like it ever happened before, and nothin' like it happened again for almost twenty years, when the Gi'nts and Cubs got mixed up in the fracas in which Merkle forgot to touch second.

Before the game I'm nervous as a girl at her first ball. I give the team a stiff talkin' to in the clubhouse, and get so excited I'm sayin' some things I prob'ly don't mean when Gil butts in.

"Mr. McCarthy," he says—in two whole years he hadn't got out of the habit of calling me "mister"—"Mr. McCarthy, I think you would do well to let the boys go in and play without further instructions. We've been playin' together all season, we know our positions and your methods, and anything you say now I believe would have the effect of exciting us, making us nervous, rather than keying us up to our best efforts."

As I said before, I wasn't myself, so instead of seein' the sense of what Gil said, I gets peeved and turns on him.

"Shut up, you!" I orders. "If you'd been playin' the game this season, instead of layin' down on us, we wouldn't have to be playin' off no tie to-day; we'd have the pennant won already."

Now, this was untrue and unfair, and Gil knew it as well as I. So did the other fellers on the team; for, although they'd give Gil up as a bug, they all knew he was pretty near the star of the league and that it was him more than anybody else on the team—myself included—who had kept us tied with the Orioles instead of about ten games behind them.

Gil, though, doesn't get sore. "Very well, Mr. McCarthy," he says. "I was merely offering a suggestion."

"I don't want none of your suggestions!" I shouts. "I'm runnin' this team, and the quicker you find it out ——"

Here I stop sudden, with my mouth open. Nobody's payin' any attention to me. They're all watchin' Gil. He's leaped up from his chair, and run over to Joe Morris, our little third baseman. "Say, Joe," he says to him, "I've seen you practicin' dance steps and acrobatic tricks a lot. Do you think you could do this stunt?"

With that Gil gets his long legs all twisted up, and seems to kind of collapse to the floor. Then he unwinds himself, spins around on his head a couple of times, and springs to his feet. It was a funny little trick and worthy

of a circus clown. Also it went bigger than it would usually, on account of Gil never havin' done no foolin' of the kind before. The gang laughs.

Gil grins a little, sees he has the bunch goin', and cuts another caper. Then he starts whistlin' "Turkey in the Straw" while he does a queer rube dance. He don't let up none in his vaudeville specialty, but starts tellin' funny stories as soon as his dance is done. The gang's all around him, so interested they've forgotten they're playin' off a tie for the pennant and all their other troubles. I even find myself losin' my grouch—for Gil's stories sure were funny. And new. Gil looks over the heads of the bunch, catches my eye, and winks. Then I see what he's up to. He's seen that the fellers on the team was all nervous and upset from the thought of lockin' horns with the Orioles; he's also seen that the speech I was makin' to them was li'ble to get their goats so bad that they'd go up in the air altogether and not be able to play at all, so he just butts in, shuts me up, and takes the team's minds off the game with a little tomfoolery. I could have kissed him on both his homely, freckled cheeks!

Well, Gil keeps up a runnin' fire of gab all the time the bunch is dressin' and right out into the field. You could hear his big voice all over the grounds after we'd took the field for practice. He was kiddin' this feller and that feller, and they was comin' back at him—all havin' as good a time as if it was an exhibition game with twenty-five apiece and expenses in it for them. Gil's catchin' flies behind his back and runnin' around the outfield like a young colt. And for the first time since he's been a leaguer, he's gettin' a tumble from the crowd in the stands.

Practice over, Gil does a funny thing. He walks up to Ike Nelson, who's warmin' up to pitch for the Orioles, hits him a slap on the back, and says: "Nelson, we're goin' to be good to you for a few innings, but look out for the *eighth!* In the eighth we're goin' to knock you out of the box!"

He says this without a smile. Nelson turns around, and finds Gil glarin' at him. "The eighth," Gil repeats, "e-i-g-h-t-h," he spells. "In the eighth inning we're goin' to knock you out of the box. I'm not foolin'." With that he walks away.

Now, Nelson was a good twirler, but he never did have very good machinery above the ears, and what Gil said to him was puzzlin'. He looks kind of bewildered, as though he didn't know whether to believe Gil or not. He pitches a ball, and it goes clean up into the stand. Gil sees it, and walks back.

"Not now, Nelson," he says; "in the *eighth.* You can pitch all right now."

You could see Nelson's goat was bein' got, so we all follow Gil's lead. A regular parade of us passes behind Nelson, and all of us tell him somethin' about what's goin' to happen to him in the eighth inning. By the time he goes into the box to give us our first licks the sweat is poûrin' off him, and Wilbert Robinson, who's catchin' him, has all he can do to keep him from goin' up in the air then and there.

It just happens that some fast fieldin' saves Nelson in the first inning. This has the effect of bringin' him down on earth. In his ox-headed way he reasons that the eighth inning is a long way off, and that he might as well pitch ball until then. From that time on it's nip and tuck, with sensational fieldin' bein' all that keeps both teams from havin' the game sewed up on them. Gil is a marvel. Playin' his own position like a demon, he's lookin' out for every other man on the team at the same time. Much like he did at Yale. He's encouragin' this feller and bawlin' out that one, kiddin' the shirts off them tough birds of Orioles—playin' the game as I never seen no one but him do it.

It's too bad, with him really bein' responsible for the brand of ball we was playin', that it couldn't have been his bat that win the game for us, but in the eighth inning, when, true to Gil's prediction, we bat Ike Nelson out of the box, Gil's only contribution is a screamin' liner that Johnny McGraw spears by jumpin' about nine feet in the

air. Before Halon can put the skids under Nelson, the harm's done and we got three runs and the game.

Lennie Smith, our pitcher, adds insult to defeat in the ninth by retirin' the Orioles on strikes.

Gil is the first guy off the field after Lennie puts over the last ball. He's waitin' for us in the dressin' room when we file in. He runs over to me, throws his arms around me, and hugs me till I thought my ribs was busted.

"I'm free!" he shouts. "Free!"

"Wish I was," I grunts under his bear hug.

Gil lifts me clear of the floor, and swings me around.

"I'm free!" he shouts again. "Do you hear that—free?"

He lets go of me, and I feel my chest to see if there's any dents in it.

"Whatinell's eatin' you?" I asks him.

"Don't you see?" he demands, his face all lighted up like a kid's at Christmas. "Don't you see? I don't have to play baseball for a livin' any more. Whe-e-e!" he cheers, dancin' around like he was wound up.

The other guys on the team are watchin' him close, all wonderin' if he ain't even nuttier than they always thought.

"I don't know what you're talkin' about," I says to him.

"Don't you?" he asks, his eyes dancin'. "Well, I'll tell you. I've been playin' baseball for two years *for money*. Now I can play it *for fun*."

"You're goin' to play without no salary?" I says. "No eighteen hundred and seventy-three dollars and sixty-seven cents?"

"Not from you," says Gil, "nor from any other professional team. I've played baseball as a professional for the last time."

"You're goin' to *quit?*" I stammers. "And you just gettin' into your stride. Why, man, you——"

"You can just bet I'm goin' to quit," Gil breaks in. "You may not be able to understand it, but I am. Maybe I'd better explain it," he suggests.

"I should say you had better," says I. I'm plumb disgusted, disappointed, and sore. Here was my best player—the best player I ever seen, in fact—walkin' out on me because—because of some fool reason like his crazy ideas about salary, for instance.

"Well," says Gil, "this is the whole story. Baseball is my one love. It's almost the breath of my life. I love the game. I love to play it, love to see it, love to think it. It's always been so—ever since I was a little boy. Playin' with the Yale team was the one thing that kept my courage up, gave me relaxation while I was strugglin', pinchin', and scrapin' to pay my way through college. Now I've got an ambition—one that must be fulfilled. I want to be a lawyer; in fact, I *am* a lawyer, for I got word this week that I'd passed my bar examinations in Massachusetts. I took them the last time we were playin' in Boston.

"Now, the reason I say my ambition to be a lawyer must be fulfilled is because I realize I have quite a lot of talent in that direction. You fellers ought to know that," he says with a little smile, "for any chap who can argue down a baseball empire oughtn't to be afraid of the supreme court. To my way of thinkin' and in accordance with the way I was brought up, I'd be doin' wrong, committin' a sin, if I didn't use the talent God gave me—particularly since there may be some poor feller in this world, somebody I've never heard of, who may need that talent some day to clear him of a wrongful accusation. Some of you fellers may not look on it that way, but that's my viewpoint. And that's why Mr. McCarthy's offer was such a big temptation to me, a temptation I've had to fight every single day for the last two years. The chance he gave me of makin' a very good livin' by doin' somethin' that to me was just fun appealed to me strongly. That's why I couldn't let myself go, couldn't play the game as hard as I'd have liked to, couldn't form friendships and affiliations with the fellers of the team; I was afraid if I got too much interested in baseball I'd give in to the temptation

to make it my life work, and that, of course, would mean givin' up my law and my ideals and ambitions.

"The rather peculiar salary I insisted upon receivin' from the club, which all you boys have had such a lot of fun about, that was part of my plan to use baseball as a stepping-stone to the law. When Mr. McCarthy first spoke to me about joinin' the team I sat down and figgered out very carefully the exact amount of money I'd need to keep myself goin' until I'd completed my law studies. I took account of what I'd need for my folks at home, what it would cost me to live, and how much I'd have to pay to fit up my office. I went into it rather thoroughly, even estimating my railroad fares. Now, I felt at the time that the way I knew I'd have to act while I was with the club wouldn't tend to make me very popular with the other boys, so I took care of that, too. I've got about seventy-five dollars more than I can possibly need to establish myself, and every last cent of it is goin' to be spent tonight on a blow-out for you boys—just to show you that Gilhooley, the 'crazy Willie boy from Yale,' isn't such a bad feller as you probably thought him."

Gil stops. The bunch is lookin' at him with mouths open. They don't savvy him at all. His line of stuff is all over their heads. How a guy can pass up a good livin' and take a good chance of starvin' to death for what he calls "ideals"—them words don't mean nothin' to them!

Lefty Flynn—Lefty, the hard guy—is the first one to get hep to Gil's line of talk. He rushes over and slaps Gil on the back. "Kid," he says, "I proba'ly hated you worse than any guy on the club, but I take it all back. You're O. K., and it won't be long before every son of a gun here will be boastin' about knowin' you!"

With that a cheer goes up, and the gang starts to hustle Gil around much like the Yale boys used to. They're all wishin' him success and pattin' his back and apologizin' for havin' had him wrong. It was some love feast!

And we had a party that night, too. Only the gang wouldn't stand for Gil spendin' a cent of the money he'd saved. They make him keep it, and I sandbag them for fifty bucks apiece and force it on Gil to buy his law library with.

Which is why I tell you never to get off a guy that acts peculiar until you get all the inside dope on him. The chances is that the feller with nerve enough to do things different from other folks is a darn sight saner than the people that's criticizin' him and laughin' at him.

Gil done another crazy trick only a couple of months ago. He throws up a law practice worth forty thou a year—a guy like him couldn't help makin' good—to take a puny little job under the secretary of war. Figgered his Uncle Sam needed him, now that the country's in a jam, more than the corporation he was workin' for. Oh, yes, Gil's crazy—crazy like Abe Lincoln and Christopher Columbus and Garibaldi and George Washington and all the other guys who done things that was not accordin' to the rules in the official guide.

UNTOUCHED BY THE WAR

PERCY HEATH, the theatrical man, was commending the campaign of the American Library Association to give the American soldiers at the front an ample supply of reading matter in the shape of books and magazines.

"It's a great movement," said Heath. "But, so far as the fellows who stay at home are concerned, it has one flaw. I see that the association says no magazine over two years old should be sent to the front. This means that we who patronize doctors and dentists will have to go against the same old magazines we've been reading in their waiting rooms for the past ten years."

The Buttons of Bo Bing

By J. Frank Davis

Author of "Garland—Ranger," "Arrows of Circumstance," Etc.

Four copper buttons, fashioned centuries ago, are at the bottom of the singular entanglements that take place in this story, beginning with the death of young Carruth on the eve of the tennis tournament at Forest Gardens. Though worth a fortune to the curio collector, young Carruth had worn the red-gold buttons on his waistcoat, indifferent to their value and their temptation to avaricious eyes that watched. Mr. Davis gives us one of his best mysteries in this novel.

(*A Three-Part Story—Part One*)

CHAPTER I.

A TINGE OF RED.

WHO could have expected that the buttons of Bo Bing would ever appear at the Forest Gardens Inn, fastening the dress waistcoat of a lean American boy with arrogant eyes, on the eve of the Forest Gardens 1917 tennis tournament?

Not Bo Bing surely, if that really was his name. Not the yellow, shock-haired, narrow-eyed artificer who made them, either, for he died long before there was a Forest Gardens Inn; before Long Island, on which the hotel is built, ever had a white inhabitant; before ever there was a New Amsterdam.

Christopher Columbus had not been born when the artisan whose name nobody ever took pains to remember designed these four buttons, fashioning them out of the copper that glints in the mountains of Yunnan, and presently paid for his genius with his life.

The manner in which he made and lacquered them was his own accidental discovery. He was hardly more than a barbarian, and his primitive furnace and workbench stood far up in the hills, beside the headwaters of the Sang-koi River, but he wrought, as here and there men in all ages have wrought, for love of beauty and joy of creation. He paid small heed to the battles that swayed across his distant province, where the Mongol hordes were making their last stand against the armies of the great Hungwu. Perhaps he had never even heard of the all-powerful emperor.

Then the Mongols were gone, and conquerors came to the headwaters of the Sang-koi, and a Ming general, seeing the buttons, had their designer haled before him by spearmen. When the artificer, trembling, faltered that this was indeed his own invention, that there were no other such ornaments yet made, and that the process by which he had worked the marvel was still a secret within his brain, the general told them to strike. So the workman and his knowledge perished then and there upon the spears.

In this the fierce commander of Hungwu's armies thought he had played a crafty game. It seemed to him that when he should take these buttons to the emperor, telling him there were none such elsewhere in all the world—no, and never should be—his would be

a reward of favor and glory. But his foresight was not the equal of his cunning. Forehead to earth, he boastfully told the story, and the great Hungwu, smiling sadly, sent him to the Hsing Pu—the board of punishments. For Hungwu was gray with years and wisdom, and in his youth he had been a Buddhist monk and gained respect for knowledge and skill and all the arts.

So Hungwu, first of the mighty dynasty of Ming, had the general killed forthwith, and ordered that the buttons be placed in the Haniin College. And now, after more than five centuries, here they were shimmering dully upon the white waistcoat of a straight-shouldered American youth as he crossed the Forest Gardens Inn ballroom with head that nodded right and left to a dozen acquaintances, but eyes that saw only Grace Hartley, where she sat on a cushioned bench in the corner.

The ballroom was large, to match the hotel's nearly three hundred rooms, filling one end of the ground floor, so that broad piazzas surrounded it on three sides, with a half dozen wide doors, now swung open, giving access to them. Through one of these doors two men, smoking comfortably in porch chairs, surveyed the dancers.

They were men of about the same age—forty-five or so—and any one with half an eye who had seen their meeting and the quality of their handclasp twenty minutes before, and the eagerness with which they hastened to gain seats in a spot of comparative quiet, would have known them for old friends.

One was a man inclined to stoutness, without tending in the slightest toward the gross, a man of pink, smooth-shaven face, clear, inquiring blue eyes, and long white hands with firm, competent fingers. His manner was that of one accustomed to authority and a degree of deference; the hotel, where he was spending his nights for the month of August, knew him for one of its most famous guests—Perry Eaton, the general surgeon, whose skill was daily talk in every New York hospital, and whose name among the demonstrators at any clinic or the speakers at any surgical convention meant an attendance that tested the capacity of amphitheater or hall.

His friend was not so well known. He had registered at the inn only that Saturday afternoon, coming down from the city for the tennis tournament that was to begin on Monday. His appearance was in striking contrast to the doctor's well-fed rotundity, for he was very tall, rather lank, of dark, saturnine countenance, peering out upon the world through thick-lensed nose glasses. His hair, once black as an Indian's, was graying. His hands, brown and muscular, but not delicate or tapering, were attached to long arms by wrists of an almost incredible thickness; one used to thinking in police terms would say that no handcuffs could be snapped over those wrists that he could not pull his hands through. That would be a true guess; it had been tried long ago, purely as a police experiment, at his request.

He seemed to stoop a little as he walked, though this was largely a matter of appearance only, due to his myopic vision, for his shoulders were straight and muscular, and the bend that made him seem to stoop was at his neck. He smiled easily, but fleetingly. And, although he was clad in the best of taste and in a fashion that was modish without being the extreme affected by youth or by those of middle age who hope to pass for youth, he unconsciously and quite untruthfully succeeded in giving the impression that he was careless about his dress. Some one had once remarked that he fell just short of being distinguished looking in nearly a dozen ways.

He was a Bostonian by birth, a New Yorker by adoption, a man of means by inheritance, a gentleman of culture by breeding and education, and his name was Endicott Worth.

"It is one of the penalties of living in the great city that a man sees even his best friends only occasionally, unless he goes out of his way to find them," he was saying. "And when he does, he interferes with their business.

I haven't set eyes on you since February. But I've kept track of your work. It is going magnificently, old man. Those last two operations you devised —and a medical friend of mine told me the other day that a gastro-enterostomy in your hands is no more dangerous nowadays than a simple appendicitis."

"I don't lose many," Doctor Eaton admitted modestly, but with full and grateful appreciation of his own skill. "And I've kept track of you, too. What with my clinics and papers and books —I've recently written another one, perhaps you know—I don't have much time to read, but I don't miss any of those monthly Philosophy of Life essays that you have in the *Interdependent*. We get some philosophy of life ourselves, we surgeons, but those essays of yours—they're great!"

"No," Worth said. "Not great. But perhaps they're competent."

The doctor laughed affectionately.

"Still the stickler for exact shades of meaning," he said. "Well, I suppose that is one of the reasons why your articles are different. You say exactly what you mean."

"I never could see sense in using the wrong word to express an idea when there are so many words to choose from—one of them right," the essayist said. "Now, take that boy who is just crossing the room toward the girl in pink. How would you describe his eyes?"

"Which boy?"

"The tall, straight-shouldered one; he is just passing the group of young men about the girl in green. The one" —he noted the lad's peculiarity of dress —"with a tinge of red in his waistcoat buttons."

"That is young Carruth," the doctor said. "His eyes—why, I think I'd describe them as—er—bright."

"Which covers a dozen kinds of eyes," declared Worth. "The word for his, I think, is 'predatory.' He has grown taller; I didn't recognize him, although I saw him play two years ago."

"He wasn't in any of the tournaments last year; his father had just died—William P. Carruth, the globe-trotter. I guess 'predatory' is right, and if you knew old Bill, you know the youngster comes by that kind of eyes honestly."

"He is playing this year, I take it?"

"Yes—and a snappy game. A good many people are looking to see either Carruth or Alton Parke take the tournament. If they both come up through the semifinals, I should call it anybody's match at the finish. Parke was over driving an ambulance for a year, but they say he has rounded into good form since he got back. He has been West and hasn't played on Long Island yet."

"And the young lady? She is trying to look delighted to see him, and she isn't especially."

"More of your exact observation, eh? Well, at that, maybe you are right, although how a confirmed bachelor like you——— Her name is Hartley. She and her mother live over here on one of the streets back of the courts. Her father was Franklin Hartley. You must have known him; he was a senior when we were sophs."

Worth peered with freshened interest in the girl's direction.

"I knew him quite well," he said, "although not at school. He beat me at Newport in '93, the year he got into the semifinals, and might have been champion if his endurance had been as good as his stroke." Worth laughed quizzically. "If—if—if!" he said. "Just as I might have been champion in '94 if my legs had been as good as my wrists."

As Miss Hartley moved to one side to make room for the boy to take a seat beside her, the trend of Mr. Worth's thoughts changed. "Is this youngster's first name Leland?" he suddenly asked.

"Yes; at least I think so. He is always called Lee."

"That explains why he is limping slightly. I didn't place him as the same."

"What are you talking about? The same as what?"

"I suppose you read this morning's newspapers."

"As a matter of fact, I didn't—barring the headlines and the first few paragraphs of the war news, which I ran over during breakfast. I caught the seven-forty-two for town, and all the way in on the train I worked on a paper I'm preparing for a medical society. I did three private operations and a clinic before lunch."

"You didn't happen, then, to see about a riot last night up in the Thirties, near Broadway—caused by a crowd of pacifists and pro-Germans, who were holding a soap-box meeting under the name of Friends of Liberty."

"Only the headlines. Police drove them off finally, didn't they, and made some arrests?"

"Yes. You didn't notice the name of the young man who started the trouble by hauling one of the speakers down off his box, of course. It was Leland Carruth."

The surgeon looked harder in the young man's direction.

"Bully for him!" he said. "He is a red-blooded American, anyway."

"Apparently." The dry quality of Worth's voice did not escape his friend. Worth hastened to explain: "What he took exception to was an especially outrageous attack on England, and it appears from the newspaper accounts that his mother was English and that he has spent quite a little time there. Not that what the speaker said about our allies was something any red-blooded American ought not to have resented, under the circumstances; in fact, from the way the patriots in that crowd kicked the pro-German agitators all over the street before the police could rescue them, I take it for granted plenty of them did resent it. But I didn't see anything in the papers to the effect that this Carruth had gone to Plattsburg or offered to enlist or anything of that sort. He looks"—he appraised the youth, across the ballroom, closely—"like a boy who would let his temper get the better of him quite easily. It happened to be in a good cause last night; that being the case, why go more closely into his motives?"

The orchestra, without warning, crashed into the slightly discordant strains of off-pitched instruments that were the rage of ultrafashionable dance floors at this time, and the floor immediately filled with dancers. Lee Carruth and Miss Hartley rose and swung out into the rhythm of the one-step. Doctor Eaton followed them for a few seconds with a professional eye.

"Whatever happened to him in that street fight isn't likely to interfere with his game next week," he remarked. "If it were either his knee or his ankle, he wouldn't be dancing."

The rising beat of jazz music, plus the swish and shuffle of the dancers, made further conversation difficult, and the friends sat back in their chairs. When the dance came to an end, with the usual double encore, they had thought of new subjects to discuss.

Doctor Eaton and Endicott Worth were not the only persons to show more than the casual interest of acquaintanceship in the arrival at the dance of young Carruth.

On the opposite piazza, also viewing the scene through an open door, a tall, gaunt, leathery-skinned man of fifty-five, with a face singular for its expressionless immobility no less than for its peculiar coloring, smoked quietly, slumped back in his chair in an attitude of absolute relaxation. A careless observer might have thought him a man to whom intense physical activity would be repugnant; one accustomed to appraising those who live in the broad spaces on the world's frontiers would have sensed, perhaps, that he was one of those who have learned to conserve in time of inaction all the powers of muscle and nerve that may be needed in moments of stress.

His face in repose was hard and set; faded, weather-burned blue eyes looked expressionlessly out from under slightly puffy lids. There was something arrogant in his bearing even when he sat thus relaxed; one would take him to be a man always sure of himself and sometimes contemptuous of

others. His excellent clothes, his manner of wearing them, the ease with which he carried himself, all went to proclaim him a wealthy man, probably a cultured one.

Beside this tall, gaunt personage—and even the casual stranger would be justified in assuming that he was a personage—a much younger man, also well dressed, but indefinably giving the impression of less ease and assurance, watched the dance and occasionally conversed briefly with the elder. He was barely more than thirty, but in strong lights looked ten years older. In contrast to the older man's impassivity, his motions were frequent and abrupt. He gestured with short, quick movements. Obviously a rather nervous man for his years.

The pair had one thing in common; both were deeply tanned. It was not the color that a New York summer gives to those who ride and golf and play tennis. It was deeper, more solid, and its shade was not far from mahogany. Tropic suns and biting mountain winds will give the traveler such a complexion. Africa will do it, and southern Asia.

The inn, which was familiar with the pair—although nobody ever felt very well acquainted with either—knew they had gathered this color, as one of them had gathered nerve control and the other nerve tension, by adventurous journeys in the far corners of the earth.

The older man was Bayard Williams, millionaire, traveler, big-game hunter, and collector. Every reader of the Sunday supplements was familiar with his quests and adventures, his icy nerve, his hobbies, his almost priceless collection of Asian jewelry and ornaments. The younger man was Harris Camblin, Williams' secretary, traveling companion, confidential man, and Fidus Achates.

The eyes of both were fixed on Lee Carruth as he crossed the dance floor with his barely perceptible limp and took the seat Miss Hartley made for him at her side.

Camblin spoke, low-voiced, a note of incredulity in his tone:

"He's got them *on!*"

Williams nodded. "The young fool!" he replied. It was not said with bitterness, but merely as though the speaker, in passing, stated a self-evident fact.

Camblin's brows drew into a frown. "Risking that value in a place like this!" he muttered. "He might lose one. He might——"

Williams frequently ignored risks, and often did not consider them. His exasperation was as great as that of his secretary, but for a different reason.

"It is an insult to such possessions to make so common with them," he said. "Old Bill would turn over in his grave. Such lack of appreciation——" He left the sentence unfinished.

"Sacrilege is the word," Camblin put in, falling in with his employer's sentiment. "But if he loses them——"

"May the man that gets them be a better man than he is," Williams rumbled. "If he is a man who knows how to appreciate them, he has my sympathy. They are wasted on this young snob."

Camblin's eyes narrowed. "Do you suppose he is wearing them just to flaunt them in your face?" he asked. "After the way he replied to your offer——"

"Perhaps," Williams replied calmly. "He is young enough to do a fool thing like that. I didn't even know he had them here. Perhaps he went up to town and got them after you talked with him; I didn't see him around here last night."

There was a brief pause, during which the dance came to an end.

"I saw Wong Chew this evening," Camblin said.

Williams looked up quickly.

"Here at Forest Gardens? What was he doing here?"

"I don't know. We didn't speak; I don't think he saw me at all. It was while I was taking a little walk after dinner, and he was coming down Lafayette Avenue, heading toward the station. He might have come from Grafton's house, where Carruth is staying."

"The buttons come to Forest Gar-

dens, and then Wong Chew," mused Williams. "There's a connection. Where you see that old Chinese there is loot—or intrigue. Of course, you haven't any idea whether or not he saw Carruth."

"None whatever; I don't even know whether Carruth was in Forest Gardens at that hour. He may have come out from town later."

"Whom else could old Wong have been calling on? I wonder if—— Didn't you tell me there was a China-boy servant up at Grafton's?"

"No. Japanese."

"Not much chance he could be one of Wong's many handy helpers. Most Japs hate Wong. H'mm!" Williams pondered in silence for a moment, his eyes still following Lee Carruth and Grace Hartley as they returned to their place in the corner. "It's a hundred-to-one bet the old man didn't come down here either to get a line on the tennis probabilities or to pay a social call. He's in the market for them. Well, to be forewarned is to know how far you've got to go. We know Wong for a bidder who will push in chips until his roll is gone and never bat an eye—and it isn't a small roll, either. So——"

The connoisseur in Asian jewelry and ornaments sat a moment in thought, then spoke with decision and a voice that was slightly raised, although he sat as passive as before:

"Whatever the cost, I'm going to get those buttons. With old Wong after them, too, that means I'll have to hurry."

"What are they really worth?" Camblin whispered. "To you?"

"When I had you offer twenty-five thousand Thursday," Williams said, "I told you that was my limit. I thought it was. But with Wong bidding"—the passion of the indefatigable collector glinted momentarily in his faded eyes—"I shan't stop this side of fifty."

Both men noticed, at this moment, that Miss Hartley was coming in their direction, quite evidently on her way to leave the dance, young Carruth hovering gallantly at her elbow. As the girl came within hearing, she paused a second to say good night to a friend.

"Why are you going so early?" the friend demanded gayly. "You'll miss a lot. This is the liveliest party of the season."

"I promised mamma I wouldn't be later than half past ten," Miss Hartley replied. "She had to stay home with a headache, all alone."

Williams followed the disappearing figures of Carruth and the girl with his eyes. "I wonder," he said under his breath to Camblin, "how long he will stay at her house. Not long probably, if her mother is not feeling well. Then will he come back here or go to Grafton's?"

He rose a moment later. "I'm going to take a bit of a walk," he said. "Don't go to bed until I get back."

His secretary looked at him inquiringly, but Williams did not answer the implied question. "I shall be back before midnight," he said. "Perhaps quite soon."

He set off down the piazza toward the main entrance, where he turned into the big lobby. Five minutes later his secretary saw him come out with his hat and stick and set off leisurely in the direction of Lafayette Avenue. For some moments Camblin sat in thought; a twitching of his eyebrows indicated that it was puzzling, nervous thought. Then he, too, wandered quietly toward the entrance, ascended in the elevator to his room, and came down immediately, wearing his hat.

While he stood a moment on the steps, as though undecided in which direction to walk, an automobile slid to a stop in front of the hotel and a young man got out. This youth was evidently in no leisurely mood; he went into his pocket so hastily for the chauffeur's fee that he dragged out a glove, which fell to the ground, and stopped to pick it up with an exclamation of impatience. Gesturing to the bell boy, who had come running down the steps to take his luggage, he made his way into the hotel office.

Camblin went slowly down the steps as the arrival came briskly up. He

paused by the curb. A moment later, as though having suddenly reached a decision, he was swinging up the street in the direction taken by his employer.

The young man who had come in the automobile went at once to the desk and registered. The clerk on duty read his signature upside down even as he indited it, and smiled a professional smile of greeting.

"Good evening, Mr. Parke," he said. "We have your reservation all made; very nice room and bath—number three hundred and sixteen. Will you go right up?"

"Thank you, yes," the young man said. In the brilliant light at the desk it was to be seen that he was a very personable young man, clear-eyed, brown-skinned, in fine condition. Already a number of people had bowed to him, and as he turned to follow the bell boy who had his bags, a youth detached himself from a group that had come out of the ballroom to surround a punch bowl in a corner, and hurried to him, cordial hand outstretched.

"Good old Alton!" he cried. "Welcome to our fair community. How's things?"

"Every little thing is all right," Parke laughed. "Except that I have had so many delays to-day I thought I'd never get here. I've promised to start on a little trip from New London with the Thompsons—you remember Shank Thompson, don't you?—a week from to-day. After bluefish. While I was over on the other side, somebody mislaid all my fishing togs—put them away so safely for me that I couldn't find them, I suppose—and as I shall have to leave here the minute the tournament is over in order to keep my appointment with the fish, I couldn't put off getting a new outfit. And if you think it is an easy job to find bluefish line in New York on a Saturday afternoon in August, try it some time. I missed two trains—but I got it."

He waved his hand toward an incongruous brown-paper bundle that the bell boy held. "Bags were all checked at the station before I got the line," he said, "so I had to bring it à la commuter."

"Been to dinner?"

"Yes. I ate in the Pennsylvania Station."

"You'll come down and dance after you've cleaned up, I suppose. Don't take the trouble to dress; lots of people dance here in their everyday rigs, you know."

"Why—I guess so." Young Parke lowered his voice, grinning a little self-consciously as he asked a question: "Is Miss Hartley here to-night?"

The other laughed back sympathetically. "Yes," he replied. "No—hold on!" he corrected himself. "She has gone—not fifteen minutes ago. Went home. I had almost forgotten. Somebody said, now I remember, that her mother wasn't feeling quite up to the mark."

"Went home, eh? That's too bad; I had sort of expected to—— Well, I guess I'll go get some of the dust off and take a little look around; I haven't been here at Forest Gardens for two years, you know. Maybe I'll get back in time to tear off a couple of dances before midnight."

He waved cheerfully, and departed behind the laden bell hop. Not more than five minutes had elapsed before he came down in the elevator, nodding to several acquaintances, but not pausing to greet them more than perfunctorily, and passed quickly out of the hotel. People who observed his exit said afterward that he did not stroll down the street, but set out hurriedly, like one who has a definite destination in mind and is in haste to reach it.

At quarter after eleven, Doctor Perry Eaton and Endicott Worth, wearied of watching the dancers, decided to take a short walk together before going to bed. Getting their hats, they went down the steps and headed aimlessly away from the hotel.

At the second corner, where Lafayette Avenue bisected their street at right angles, they were conscious of a man coming toward them, running. He met them under a street light, turned

out without speech, passed them, and then came to a sudden stop.

"Is that Doctor Eaton?" he called uncertainly.

"Yes."

He came back quickly. They saw an all-the-year-round resident of Forest Gardens whose face was slightly familiar to the doctor; he thought he probably had seen the man on city-bound trains. It was a shocked, worried face and flushed from unusual exertion.

"Doctor Ade asked me to come and get you," he panted to Eaton. "He was at the inn earlier in the evening and said I would find you there. He wants you to come as quick as you can, please. There has been a—an accident or something. A young fellow named Carruth—he's one of the tennis players—we found him over here under a hedge. I guess he's dead."

CHAPTER II.

A KNOTTED CORD.

He led the way back up Lafayette Avenue. "Don't run; just walk fast," Doctor Eaton said, as the man showed signs of expecting them to return at the pace at which he had come. "I'm not built for running—and what time I would gain by getting there I'd lose getting my breath after I got there. When did this happen?"

"It was just after eleven o'clock that we found him," the man replied. "My wife and me," he explained. "We were coming home from a call on some friends over the other side of town. We fairly stumbled over him. It wasn't but a block to Doctor Ade's house, and I ran and got him, and the doctor and I took him over there. Doctor Ade is working on him, but it looks, I guess, as if it was all up."

"An accident, you say?"

"I don't know. It wasn't sickness; there was blood on one side of his head, over the ear. Not much; just a little. Looked to me more as if somebody had laid him out."

They had come two blocks, and were passing Jenney Street, a thoroughfare that curved around past the big courts of the tennis club and came out some distance the other side of the inn. "It was in this block that we found him," the messenger said. "In front of Bolster's house, the third one here on the left, right in the middle of the block. He was up close against the hedge, almost under it."

The block was a long one, and the electric lamps at the street corners were of limited candle power; they illuminated each a little circle that did not extend a hundred feet under the trees bordering the curbs. The middle of the block could not have been much darker if the town had been unlighted. It was a street of fairly pretentious residences, set back twenty feet or more from the front line of the lots, and the inner edge of the sidewalk, through that whole block, was marked by a breast-high hedge of squarely trimmed green. The man who led them sheered off toward the curb as he came opposite where he had found Carruth. It was as though he dreaded to step on the spot where the boy had lain.

"This is Bolster's," he said. "The —he was right there."

"He was alive when you found him, I take it," Doctor Eaton said, "or Doctor Ade would not have moved him until after the coroner had come."

"The doctor was afraid he wasn't, but he wasn't sure. But even if he had been—even if he wasn't—Doctor Ade could take him away. Doctor Ade is the coroner himself."

Worth was impressed by the absence of lights in the Bolster house and those adjacent. "Nobody," he said, "seems to have been awakened, Mr.——"

"Foster," the messenger supplied. "John B. Foster. You turn off three blocks farther to get to my house. The reason nobody is awake in these houses, mister, is because there ain't anybody at home in them. This is one of those towns where a lot of folks come to spend the summer, while a lot of other folks that live here in the winter go somewhere else to spend the summer."

"Where does Mr. Grafton live?"

Doctor Eaton asked suddenly. "Mr. James Grafton."

"In the next block, on this side; almost across the street from Doctor Ade."

"Did you know young Carruth was a guest at Grafton's?"

"I didn't, but Doctor Ade did. He was sending word over to Grafton when he told me to rush down to the inn to find you."

Just ahead, after they had crossed another intersecting street, was a large house on the left, centered in several lots. Across from it, they saw a little knot of people, standing very quietly in front of a house on the porch of which a small electric light illuminated a brass plate that bore the name of Doctor Ade. Bad news travels quickly. Already, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, there were five men and two women in the little crowd.

As the trio crossed the street a thick-set, middle-aged man went up the steps and rang the bell. "That's Chaffee, the chief of police," Foster whispered. They passed swiftly through the knot of people and up the walk, reaching the door just as it was opened by Mrs. Ade to let Mr. Chaffee in, and entered with him. The chief, who had a frayed, yellow mustache, and displayed a shiny bald head with a rim of tousled hair as he removed his hat, was perspiring and perturbed.

A door at the right of the entrance hall stood open into the doctor's office and consulting room. Beyond the desk that occupied its center, Doctor Ade, a competent-looking man of thirty-five, stood talking to two other men. On the other side of the little group, near the farther wall, an adjustable surgeon's chair of leather and nickel was thrown back to form a flat, couchlike surface, and on it lay Lee Carruth. One glance was sufficient to inform Doctor Eaton that his professional assistance was not needed, for the arms had been folded across the breast.

Doctor Ade broke off what he was saying to the two men as he saw the newest arrivals, and stepped toward them.

"I'm sorry, doctor, that I made you so much trouble," he exclaimed. "It looked at first like a temporal fracture, and I thought perhaps an early operation might be necessary. Meanwhile, although there appeared to be complete collapse, there was a chance that artificial respiration would do some good. In other words, I sent for help and made most of the examination later."

"Quite right, of course," Doctor Eaton agreed, having had much experience with what special attention doctors and surgeons are expected to give the rich. He knew what criticism Doctor Ade might have had to endure had a highly skilled surgeon proved suddenly necessary and not been summoned to give his assistance. He stepped over to look casually at the body. "We saw him less than an hour ago," he remarked. "He was dancing at the inn." His expert eye noted a small wound over the right ear. "Violence?" he asked.

"Yes. But not what I thought at first. That laceration of the scalp is superficial; there is no fracture. Death resulted from strangulation."

"Do you mean to say he was choked to death?" the chief of police demanded. "Who did it?" He seemed suddenly to repent of the excitement displayed by this inquiry, and smiled vaguely about.

"Doctor Eaton, perhaps you have met Mr. Grafton," Doctor Ade said. "This is Mr. Finch, a friend of Mr. Grafton's. How do you do, Mr. Chaffee? This is Mr. Chaffee, Doctor Eaton, our chief of police. You made good time getting here, chief."

"Came the minute I got your telephone," the chief puffed. "I was just getting in my first snooze. Gee! I know I ain't half dressed. You'll have to excuse my looks."

Manifestly the police official, confronted with a crime quite outside any former personal experience, was trying hard to act as though solving murder mysteries were his daily practice. He thought it would indicate inexperience if he showed the excitement he really felt, so he sought refuge in a jocular, hail-fellow-well-met careless-

ness that some storybook detective or other of his limited reading had possessed.

Doctor Eaton introduced Mr. Worth. The others merely bowed their acknowledgments, but the chief thought it necessary to continue his misplaced affability.

"Glad to know you," he cried. He turned to Doctor Ade: "This is a pretty serious matter, ain't it?"

The doctor nodded gravely.

"Mr. Foster, here, was on his way home with his wife when he came upon the body," he said. "He summoned me quickly, and we brought him here. There was the wound on the right temple, which you can see, and in the absence of further examination it seemed quite possible that had done the damage; it is in a very dangerous and quite often fatal spot," he explained to the laymen. "I sent Mr. Foster in a hurry to get Doctor Eaton. Within two minutes after he had gone I made a most surprising discovery; I found that a knotted cord had been drawn tightly about the neck. Death had resulted from strangulation; it must have been almost immediate."

From the top of his desk he took a bit of heavy cord. "Here it is, gentlemen," he said. "Please handle it carefully. I removed it by cutting, at a considerable distance from the knots, you will notice. Those knots may give us some inkling of how it was done and by whom; please don't disturb them."

In silence the five men examined the fatal "Exhibit A." The cord was smooth and firm and of a size and weight not far removed from that commonly used to fasten heavy express packages. It had been noosed, and the knots—there seemed to be two—were peculiar; so constructed that once the cord had been pulled tight, there was little or no chance that it would slip.

"This cord," Doctor Ade said impressively, "was so deeply imbedded in the flesh that it was hidden and did not show upon first examination. If I had not happened to see the knots, just under the ear, I might have worked on the patient an indefinite time before discovering it at all."

"How could a feller get those knots tied without this boy having a chance to holler?" the chief asked practically. "The way I understood it from what Mis' Ade told me over the phone, there didn't anybody hear any fight or anything."

"My theory," Doctor Ade replied, "is that he was unconscious when the noose was put around his neck. The wound on the temple would go to show that. He was rendered unconscious by a blow —and then finished with the cord. It is only a theory, of course. What do you think of it, doctor?"

"Plausible enough, in the absence of anything to the contrary," Doctor Eaton replied. He bent over and looked more carefully at the wound on Carruth's temple. "A glancing blow such as this one was would probably produce some concussion. It would be very likely to bring about temporary loss of consciousness."

Mr. Grafton struck at the heart of the matter with the first remark he had made. "But who would want to kill that boy?" he cried. "Why should anybody have murdered him? What enemies did he have?"

Doctor Ade's gesture toward the body was eloquent.

"I fancy the cause is quite clearly shown," he said. "There is no money whatever, except less than a dollar in small change, in his pockets. I imagine he was in the habit of carrying considerable sums."

"A hundred or two, anyway," Grafton agreed. "Perhaps more."

"And there is no watch. And you will notice, gentlemen, that the buttons have been cut out of his vest. With scissors, I should say. See? A V-shaped cut where each of the four buttons was."

With an exclamation, Mr. Grafton verified this. "Perhaps the buttons were gold or diamond-studded or something of that sort," Doctor Ade went on.

"More valuable than that," Grafton said. "He was wearing a set of antique

Chinese buttons that were of very great value indeed. They were a set his father picked up—William Carruth was a collector, you know. He showed them to me at dinner to-night. It was the first time he had ever worn them, he said. They were quite odd looking, although not particularly pretty, and—well, I should call them a trifle—er—loud."

James Grafton, known far and wide as a patron of athletics—he annually donated the Forest Gardens Cup, which was contested for on the tennis courts—was equally famous as a "dresser" to whom nothing could be more shocking than the unconventional.

"Well, I'll have to get busy," Chief Chaffee declared briskly. "It's murder all right, and the cause is as clear as anybody could want. Robbery. Money, watch, and vest buttons. You say, Mr. Grafton, that these buttons were worth a lot. Five hundred dollars maybe?"

"More likely five thousand," Grafton said, and Chaffee gasped. "I'm guessing at that, you understand," he added. "I've never gone in for such things, and I don't know their value, but Lee said to-night that his father valued them very highly—and five thousand, or ten, wouldn't have been a remarkable price for his father to pay for an unusual possession of that sort. Lee said they had a remarkable history; he said he would tell it to me some time." Grafton's voice shook a little as his eyes wandered again to the still figure. "Poor boy! He'll never tell the story."

"Was he a relation of yours?" the chief of police asked.

"No. A friend of my son; they were at school together. He has always stopped with us when he came down to the tournaments, and this year I was especially glad to have him, Earl being away. My boy is on the other side, you know—second lieutenant in the Officers' Reserve, first and second Plattsburg camp. When Lee wrote me that he was going into this year's tournament, I told him by all means to make my house his. I was mighty glad to see him; the house is a bit lonely. I am a widower, you know. He had been at the dance; I suppose he had just left there and was on the way home. I wonder how he happened to leave so early."

The chief looked at Doctor Eaton, who had mentioned seeing Carruth at the inn, for a reply to this.

"A young lady had to leave early. He saw her home, I think," the doctor said.

"What young lady?"

"Miss Hartley. She lives on Molyneux Street. If he went to her house and then started for Mr. Grafton's, he would have come through Jenney Street to the avenue here, and passed the point where the body was found. There was a sufficient margin of time; they left the inn at just about ten-thirty."

"I wonder if maybe she wouldn't know something about it," the chief said. "I guess I'll telephone her."

"It would be considerable of a shock to her, wouldn't it?" Mr. Worth asked the question, straightening up from the adjustable chair, where he had been examining at close range the slashed waistcoat where the buttons had been removed.

"I gotta do something—in a hurry," the chief said defensively. "There must be clews somewhere. I gotta get 'em."

Worth turned to Mr. Foster, who had not spoken since they came into the doctor's office. Foster was greatly shaken. Unconsciously he had been wiping moisture from the palms of his hands over and over again.

"It is very clear," he said precisely, "that the assault took place not more than fifteen minutes before you stumbled over the body, and, if Carruth remained any time at all at Miss Hartley's, not more than five minutes. You came up Lafayette Avenue, from the other side of town, you said. That means you passed the railroad station."

Foster nodded.

"Did you meet any one this side of the station—any one who might have been hastening toward a train?"

Foster caught his breath. "By gracious!" he said. "How did I come not

to think of it? This business drove all the sense out of my head, I guess. That must've been the feller that did it. Yes, sir, I bet he was the man and that he was running to get a train."

"Who? Where was he?" the chief demanded.

"About a block and a half this side of the depot," Foster said. "He was on this side of the street, and my wife and I were on the other side. Yes, sir, he acted as if he didn't want anybody to see him. He kinda slid along in the shadow of the trees. And he was breathing hard; we could hear him from across the street. But I didn't think anything about it. I supposed it was just some feller that was late getting to a train." Foster was excited and confused by the importance of his recollection. "Yes, sir!" he again exclaimed. "That was him, sure as shooting! He was kind of sputtering and coughing, too."

The chief leaned forward eagerly. "Did he get the train?" he demanded.

"I don't know. I don't remember hearing the train."

"What time was it?"

"Why, I guess it was—— Hold on! I *know*. I remember hearing the clock on the First Congregational Church strike eleven just after we came across the track at the depot—about a block this side. It must have been about a minute later, or maybe two, that this feller went by."

"Two minutes past eleven. Wait a minute." The chief, with a word of apology to Doctor Ade, picked up the telephone from the desk and gave a number.

"Forest Gardens depot?" he asked a moment later. "This is Frank Chaffee. Listen! Was the ten-fifty-eight to New York on time to-night or late? Thanks. G'-by.

"It was on time, so he didn't catch it," he said, as he replaced the receiver. "That means he had to catch a trolley, or else he is still in town. Gee! I wish I had more men; there ain't but four policemen on duty nights. Not much chance any of 'em saw him. Well—— I'd better get out and start 'em asking questions, and get hold of the trolley-company office to have them ask conductors what kind of people got aboard cars that left in that direction soon after eleven. A swell chance to get any results, but I s'pose I better do it."

"I'm going to offer a reward," Mr. Grafton said, with sudden resolution. "It may help to make them remember. I'll give a thousand dollars for the evidence that will lead to the arrest and conviction of the murderer."

Chief Chaffee beamed. "A thousand —— Well, that *will* help. Did you see the feller, Mr. Foster? What kind of a looking man was he?"

"I didn't see him at all—not close enough to make him out. I noticed there was a man running toward us on the other side of the street—noticed him when he crossed the street ahead under the light. Then we heard him pass, and he was kinda running in the shade of the trees, although he didn't need to, dark as these streets are, and the moon set more'n two hours ago. It's a wonder to me there ain't dozens of murders and holdups and things in this town, the way the town saves money on street lights!"

The chief defended the political organization to which he belonged. "Streets are light enough!" he exclaimed indignantly. "And it's an orderly town; nothing ever happens here."

"Nothing but a murder in the heart of the community," Mr. Worth remarked.

Chaffee flared up. "We don't have to have no city folks come down here to tell us how to run the town," he snapped. "This may be a pretty bad thing, but it wouldn't have happened if city folks hadn't gone around carrying big rolls of bills and wearing vest buttons worth thousands of dollars. Maybe you can tell me what I ought to do next, different from what I said."

"Certainly," was Worth's calm response. "You ought to telephone again to the railroad station and ask the station agent if he was out on the platform when the ten-fifty-eight went

through and if he saw any man board it who was panting for breath and perhaps coughing and who looked as if he were trying to avoid observation. If he did, perhaps you can get a description."

"You talk like a fool!" the chief snapped bluntly. "The train was on time, and this feller was still running for it at two minutes past eleven."

"If he was trying to get it, he caught it," Worth retorted. "He was within a block of the station two minutes after your town clock struck eleven. I happened to hear it strike—and looked at my watch. Your town clock seems to be run about as adequately as your street lights and your night police patrol. At eleven o'clock it was exactly seven minutes fast."

CHAPTER III.

CROSSED WIRES.

For three seconds the chief showed symptoms of exploding by internal spontaneous combustion. The angry flush in his face spread up to his crown and over and down to where the rim of yellowish-gray hair came up from the back of his neck. He swallowed once or twice; then demonstrated that he possessed a sound substratum of wisdom by recognizing good advice and acting upon it. He called the station, got the night agent to the phone, and wasted no words:

"This is Frank Chaffee again, Henry," he said. "Say! Were you out on the platform when the ten-fifty-eight left? And did any passengers get on here? What kind of looking men? Did you get a good look at both of them? . . . Listen, Henry! Was one of them blowin', as if he'd been runnin' for the train? . . . Which one? Describe him, can you? Did he come from the Lafayette Avenue end of the station? . . . But you say there were two together. I'm lookin' for a feller that was alone. What's that? *Which* got there first? Did they buy tickets? Did you hear 'em talk? . . . Could you identify the cross-eyed one if you was to see him again? . . . What's that about a Dutchman? Oh, the *other* one. . . . Yes, Henry, I want 'em, but I can't stop to tell you about it now; I'll be around to see you after a while. I gotta telephone to town now. What time does that train arrive in the city?"

He put back the receiver, and twiddled the hook impatiently up and down. "Hello!" he said after a second. "Give me long distance. Emergency. This is Chief Chaffee." Almost instantly he was in connection with the long-distance operator. "Chief of Police Chaffee talking," he said. "Call to be charged to police department. Get me detective headquarters in New York in a hurry. I'm here at Doctor Ade's. Call me here."

He replaced the receiver, and faced the others. In the excitement of the moment he had forgotten his anger.

"He caught it!" he exclaimed. "A thin man about thirty years old, medium height, with dark hair and very cross-eyed. He came up a-runnin' two minutes before the train come in, all out of breath and coughin'; looked like a consumptive. There was another man already on the platform—Henry don't know when he came. He was a light-complexioned feller, about the same age, talked like a German. Didn't either of 'em buy a ticket; prob'ly had round trips from New York. The cross-eyed man hurried up to the other, and the fellow that talked like a Dutchman said, 'Vell?' and the cross-eyed one said, 'Nothin' doin', Albert.' Then the German said, 'Nothin' doin' mit me, either. I thought I had him, but I made a mistake.' And that's all Henry heard, because they walked off together down the platform and the train come in. They got aboard up near the head end."

"When you get New York," Worth said, "it would be a good idea to suggest that the police, if they arrest either of those men, search them for manicure scissors."

"Huh? Manicure——"

"With a cutting blade—straight, not curved—not more than an inch and a third long." Worth gestured toward

the slashed waistcoat. "It is easy to see that no long scissors did that. And a pair of scissors that does not register exactly. You will observe that they cut more cleanly at the beginning of each clip than at the end of it."

Chaffee and the others examined the edges of the V's where the buttons had been. Worth's grounds for his deduction were apparent enough, now that he had mentioned it.

"A cross-eyed consumptive, with manicure scissors in his pocket," the chief of police repeated with satisfaction. "It ought to be a cinch."

"Except, of course, that he may not be a consumptive and might have had intelligence enough to throw the scissors away," Worth remarked dryly. "They are not in that hedge where the body was found or in the street thereabouts, I suppose."

"By gracious, we ought to search that scene first thing!" Chaffee declared. "I'll go right down there and take a look. But I can't. I've got to wait here for the phone call."

He looked from one to the other as though expecting some one to volunteer, and Mr. Foster did so with alacrity. "I'll go right over, if you say so," he said. "Have you got one of those electric flash lights?"

"I have," Doctor Ade said, and brought it from another room.

"Look all around," the chief said importantly as Mr. Foster set out. "In the hedge and back of it and in the gutter and everywhere. You can't ever tell where you might find some clew or something in one of these mysteries. Not that this is much of a mystery, but there might be something about it we don't know yet."

He reseated himself as Foster departed, and the shuffle of footsteps in front of the house indicated that some of the assembled neighbors were moving to accompany him on his belated search for evidence. "I guess that's all we can do until we hear from New York," he said. "I hope they get the connection in a hurry; the train'll be in first thing we know."

Worth, as they waited, turned to Grafton. "You were at home, I take it. Nothing happened there that could have any bearing."

"I had just got home when Doctor Ade sent for me," Grafton replied. "Finch and I had just walked over from the tennis club; we had been going over some odds and ends of detail preliminary to the tournament. When we came to the house I asked him to drop in and finish his smoke. Mrs. Finch is away, and we had just settled ourselves in the library when Mrs. Ade came across and called me. I don't suppose we had been in the house five minutes."

"You came the most direct way from the club? Through Jenney Street and Lafayette Avenue?"

"Yes. By George!" Grafton stared, startled, as the obvious deduction came to him. "Mr. and Mrs. Foster must have been not more than a block or so behind us when we turned into this street. The boy must have been lying there when we came by."

"But you didn't see him?"

"We were on this side of the street. Dear me! If we had been on the other, we might have discovered him sooner and perhaps it would have been in time——"

"I hardly think so," Doctor Eaton said reassuringly.

The chief of police was not much interested in this mere gossip. He was arranging in his mind the form of the message he would want to give as hurriedly as possible to the New York officials when the telephone connection should be made. This form took shape in his mind as a printed one, such as he was all the time receiving from other busier police departments, but never heretofore had had opportunity to send out—a circular with "Wanted for Murder" in black gothic type at the top, and at the bottom the words: "A reward of one thousand dollars will be paid for the arrest of the murderer together with evidence sufficient to convict. Franklin W. Chaffee, chief of police."

"It is too bad you can't exactly describe those vest buttons," he suddenly

grumbled. "They're about as important a clew as there is, according to my way of thinking. I ought to have a description of the watch and cuff buttons, of course, but I need a description of those vest buttons more."

"I fancy, if they are as valuable from the standpoint of age and rarity as Mr. Grafton understood they were, they will be pretty familiar to all collectors of rare jewelry," Mr. Finch said. "Most famous curios are well known to a good many people."

"But who? Who in Forest Gardens?" the chief asked testily. "I ain't got time to run all over New York looking for somebody that might be able to tell me just what they look like. I ought to know to-night. I've gotta tell the New York police."

"I imagine Williams would know about them," Doctor Eaton said tentatively to Worth. "Bayard Williams, you know, is living at the inn."

"Undoubtedly," Worth agreed. "Chinese buttons ought to be quite in Williams' line; his specialty is Asian and African objects."

"I guess I don't know this Williams," Chief Chaffee put in. "Who is he? Summer visitor?"

"He was at the inn when I came, a little less than a month ago," Doctor Eaton replied. "I believe he lives in New York winters and at various cooler places summers—when he is hereabouts. He spends years at a time traveling, you know."

Chaffee, who didn't know, tried to look as if he did. "And is he at the inn to-night?" he asked. "Could I find him there now, do you suppose?"

Doctor Eaton shrugged his shoulders. "That I don't know," he said. "I don't recall seeing him this evening, but that does not prove anything; there was a big crowd at to-night's dance."

"He's there," Grafton put in suddenly. "We met him on our way home. Walking around the block for the air, I suppose. You remember," he added to Finch. "He was just passing the clubhouse as we came out."

Finch nodded. "That's so. I hardly noticed him; but, now you speak of it, I remember." He turned to Chaffee. "Undoubtedly he was heading toward the inn. I have no doubt you will find him there when you get time to look him up."

Any further discussion of Mr. Bayard Williams or his knowledge of Asian curios was prevented by the arrival of Mr. Foster, who came hurrying up the steps and entered without ringing. He was somewhat breathless, and his eyes glistened with excitement.

"What do you think of that?" he demanded.

"That"—which he put down on the desk before the others with an air of triumph—was an object about seven inches long, of the shape of a club or billy. As he dropped it on the desk it thudded heavily. Its exterior was of leather, but every man present recognized it instantly for what it was—a loaded slung shot of a most dangerous variety.

Chaffee pounced upon it.

"That's what he hit him with in the first place!" he cried.

Doctor Ade took it from the chief, compared its shape and size with the wound above the murdered man's right ear, and nodded. "Undoubtedly," he said. "A glancing blow. If it had been a fair stroke, it would almost certainly have fractured the skull; that is a very heavy weapon."

"That makes it easier than ever," exclaimed the chief. "Anybody who carries a thing like that in these days is a professional; there ain't any doubt about that at all. A thug and a robber—and it's a cinch he followed this boy down from New York just to get his valuables. It hadn't ought to be so hard to get the man. We've got a lot of things to go by when you come to think of it. His description, including the bad eyes, and his cough, and now the fact that he's a professional. I'd bet you my salary for a year they've got that feller's picture that did this in the gallery at headquarters."

Nobody saw any reason to temper the chief's enthusiasm. His confidence and assurance grew as the evidence that came to him demonstrated that, after

all, it was a case that would fall easily into the routine variety with which policemen are familiar. He handled the slung shot carefully, hefting it and measuring it with his eyes, and visualizing again the description that he would write for those reward circulars. Doctor Ade was the first one to speak, addressing Foster:

"You didn't find any scissors, I gather."

"No, sir. We looked in the street and all through the hedge and in the yard. This blackjack was in the yard; quite a way back from the hedge, as though the feller threw it when he had finished his job. Of course manicure scissors ain't very large; they may be right there and get found later. I left several folks there with the flash light, searching. I thought I'd better hurry right up here with this thing. But I don't think anything more will get found to-night. Everything ought to be gone over again the first thing in daylight."

"I'll have it done right after sunrise," Chief Chaffee said. "But I don't figure we need to find those scissors—although they might help some. We'll have the guy that did this mighty quick, and when we——"

What boast might have been on the chief's tongue was interrupted by the ringing of the telephone bell. Doctor Ade answered it, and, after a word or two, silently pushed the instrument across the desk to the chief.

"Headquarters?" Chaffee asked excitedly. "This is Chief of Police Chaffee of Forest Gardens. . . . Forest Gardens. . . . No, not Chief Forestardens—chief *of* Forest Gardens, Long Island. . . . No, no, no! Say! What's the matter with this line? No, no! Not Long Island City. Say, listen! There's been a murder down here. The feller that was killed was——"

A soft voice broke in to say, "Operator."

"I'm talking to headquarters," he cried. "You've cut me off, and——"

"Did you call them?"

"No. Yes. I put in the call, but they called——"

"There's no one on the line. Excuse it, please."

The chief said certain things and received no reply. He slammed the receiver up on the hook and made it dance. Another soft voice said, "Number, please." He essayed to express his emotions in one brief sentence, and failed. "I was talking on long distance," he finally said lamely.

"Hang up your receiver and long distance will call you," the voice said. He did so, and looked about him, red-faced and congested with unspoken words.

In a moment the bell rang, and he seized the phone again.

"Your party in New York doesn't answer," a girl said pleasantly.

"Don't answer! What do you mean, don't answer? Do they shut the police headquarters up for the night? Say, this is Chief Chaffee talking—an emergency call. I want New York police headquarters, and I want 'em mighty quick. If I don't——"

A brand-new voice came in from somewhere, seemingly at a great distance. "There's your party, Forest Gardens," it said, and as Chaffee began again to describe who he was and where a resonant, rumbling voice, as clear as though the speaker were talking from the next room, said:

"——so we makes the pinch, and it's a Jim Hickey of a raid. Now the sergeant says for me to hit it back for Thoity-thoid Street an'——"

"Get off the wire!" demanded Chaffee, unconscious that he shouted.

"Say, Grogan," the same voice went on, "there's some guy buttin' in on this line, and I ain't got no time to wait. The sergeant says that if youse will send three men to——" There was a click, a buzzing, a youthful, feminine voice murmured: "No, honey, listen! How could I been dancin' with him when I ain't been outa the house since ——" Then utter silence fell, to be broken by a cheerful:

"Are you waiting?"

What Chaffee said would have caused Doctor Ade's telephone to be disconnected until he apologized to the

telephone management if they had obeyed the rules.

He finally got a night manager at the local exchange, and conversed succinctly. The night manager said there had been a thunderstorm somewhere in Queens Borough, and they were having a little trouble with the long-distance wires. They would do the best they could, but he was afraid he couldn't promise very speedy service. "You see for yourself how the lines are acting," he said blandly.

The chief hung up and looked at his watch. "That train will arrive at the Pennsylvania Station in just seven minutes," he said, "and once these guys scatter——"

Feet pounded hurriedly on the walk outside the house and came up the steps, and the doorbell rang sharply. Doctor Ade went to the door.

A gangling, red-haired youth of eighteen or thereabouts stood panting on the step. He wore the uniform of a bell boy at the inn.

"Is Chief Chaffee here?" he panted. Doctor Ade nodded, motioned to the lad to enter, and closed the door. Chaffee had risen at the words, and the boy saw him.

"Say, Mr. Chaffee," he sputtered excitedly, "that is all true, I s'pose, what they say down to the inn, about Mr. Carruth bein'——"

He saw the body behind the group of men, and his voice fell to an awe-struck whisper: "Gee, ain't that awful! An' him slippin' me a quarter less than an hour ago when I——"

"What do you want?" Chaffee commanded him sharply. "You didn't run all the way here just to make sure you had heard a true report, did you?"

"No," the bell boy said. "No, I didn't, Mr. Chaffee; no, I didn't. That's right, chief, I didn't. Mr. Greenleaf—Mr. Greenleaf is the head night clerk, you know—Mr. Greenleaf told me to find you just as soon as I could, and over to your house they told me you was here. This here murderer, he's ordered a tourin' car to make his get-away to N' Yawk, and Mr. Greenleaf he's fixed it with the garage so they say they haven't got one in just right now, but he's gettin' awful anxious, and he might find some way to beat it if you don't hurry."

"Who might? What are you talking about?" the chief shouted. "What murderer's tryin' to get away?"

"Are they two?" the bell boy asked confusedly. "I mean the one that killed Mr. Carruth." He looked around at the faces in the room. "Mr. Alton Parke."

CHAPTER IV.

THEORY AND EVIDENCE.

It was the chief who broke the moment of startled silence. "Alton Parke!" he exclaimed. "Who the blazes is he?"

"Why, he's—Mr. Alton Parke," the bell boy replied. "He's down to the inn. He's—why, he's just one of those young fellers."

"One of the tennis players," Doctor Eaton hastened to supply. "And I think there must be some mistake. You don't mean to say"—to the messenger from the hotel—"that he has confessed that he committed murder. Surely he hasn't; otherwise he wouldn't be trying to get away."

"No, sir. He ain't confessed. He don't even know that we know it. That's what Mr. Greenleaf wants—for Mr. Chaffee to come get him before he finds out."

"Wait a minute!" the chief commanded. "Let me get at this. What makes you think this Parke did it? He didn't confess. Well? Did anybody see him?"

"I seen him go, and so did a lot of others. And I seen him come back, too." The red-haired boy swelled with a sense of unusual prominence. "It was me that told Mr. Greenleaf about it—right after he come back and went to his room and hollered for a tourin' car."

"Right after who came back? Told Greenleaf about what?"

"Mr. Greenleaf said you'd better hurry, chief. Couldn't I be tellin' you as we went over?"

"I've got to know more than you've told me before I *go* over. Come on, son; your name is Maxey, ain't it?" The bell boy nodded without trying to conceal his gratification that the chief should thus be able to identify him. "Get busy now and tell us what this is all about. You say you saw him go. Go where?"

"Out to commit the deed. It was for jealousy, love, and revenge that he done it."

The chief stared, staggered. The others relaxed somewhat. Worth, smiling a little, made a suggestion:

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to let him start at the beginning—if there is any—and unfold his tale gradually? I suspect his course of reading has not been without its influence on this young man's life."

Chaffee, without entirely appreciating the point, accepted the advice.

"Go to it from the start," he said. "Tell all you saw this evening that made you tell Greenleaf you thought this Parke did it."

The bell boy took a long breath, beamed appreciatively on the most intelligent audience he had ever had in his life, and started in.

"I'm on duty from six to twelve tonight," he said, "so I'm there when Mr. Carruth leaves the inn, and I'm there when Mr. Parke gets there. When Mr. Carruth leaves with Miss Hartley he sends me to get his hat. When Mr. Parke comes up in a taxi from the depot, it happens to be me that juggles his bags."

"You mean he was a new arrival this evening?" the chief asked.

"He come on the ten-twenty. So I'm right behind him with his stuff when he registers—two suit cases, a bag, and a racquet case, and a package. And I hear him talk to Mr. Halladay—and that's the leadin' clew."

"Who is Halladay?"

"One of the young fellers; he's a tennis player, too. He comes over and shakes hands and asks Mr. Parke how is he, and Mr. Parke says he's been to dinner and that he's going to dance as soon as he's washed up, and then he asks is Miss Hartley there?"

"Who asks?"

"Mr. Parke asks Mr. Halladay. And Mr. Halladay says she's went. And Mr. Parke's face falls at these tidings, an' he says maybe he'll be around to dance by an' by, but first he's got something to do. So he goes up to wash up, but he don't—not thorough."

"How do you know?"

"Ain't I in the room with him, hustling his bags? He just washes his hands and dabs a little water on his face and combs his hair and is all ready to go before I've got the bags laid out and the windows open and the lights turned on in the bathroom. 'Come on, George; that'll be all,' he says, an' slips me a quarter and goes right out when I go out. And he goes right out of the hotel, and hustles like he's in a hurry, and it's a cinch he's goin' over to Miss Hartley's, ain't it?"

"Well, what else?" the chief asked.

"Then, just about eleven, he comes back. I seen him." The boy's voice fell almost to a whisper. "He's bunged up. And he comes in stealth-ly."

He repeated the word.

"Stealth-ly is the way he comes in. By the side entrance. Holdin' a handkerchief to his face, like he trusted he would not be reckernized, an' beatin' it for the elevator. An' he goes to his room immediate, and right away he telephones to the office an' says he's decided not to stay, and please make out his bill for one night, which he will pay it, and please have the garage send around a tourin' car to take him to N' Yawk, seein' the last train has gone and he finds he has to get there tonight."

Maxey stopped for breath, then came to his mouth-filling climax. "About that time somebody brings word to the inn of the crime that has been committed, so then, of course, I know he's the murderer that done the deed. So I tells Mr. Greenleaf, and he's stallin' the auto, like I said, but Mr. Parke has telephoned down to the office two or three times, and maybe if you don't hurry he might get away."

None of the men doubted the bell boy's honesty. For all his stilted language, his story carried the marks of his own conviction. The chief spoke first:

"What do you mean, bunged up?"

"He'd been fightin' or something. His clothes was all over dirt, like he had been rollin' in the street, and one of his pockets was torn out, like somebody grabbed it in a scrimmage. And where he had his handkerchief up to his face, I think it was a swellin' under it, maybe a black eye—although, of course, that may have meant that he was endeavorin' to enter his room undiscovered."

The chief weighed the story. He mopped his forehead, wagged his head, and looked from one to the other of his companions.

"It's an old saying that there's always a woman," he said sententiously. He looked accusingly at Worth. "If you hadn't talked me out of it, I'd have called her up and found out what she knew about it long ago." It came to him how many times in the past half hour he had been influenced by Worth's advice. "What business you got telling me how to run my business, anyway?" he demanded. "You ain't no Sherlock Holmes, are you?"

Doctor Eaton spoke smoothly, before Worth could reply:

"Mr. Worth is not a detective or anything of that sort, but he has happened to help in the solving of a number of fairly large criminal cases." He addressed himself more to the others than to Chaffee. "I imagine you gentlemen are familiar with Mr. Worth's writings—his articles deal with efficiency problems, especially as human nature bears upon them. He has assisted the New York police commissioner on a number of occasions. It happens also, although he does not practice, that he is a lawyer by profession." Again he spoke directly to the chief: "I hardly think you would go wrong by taking his advice."

"Well——" said the chief grudgingly. "But this woman——"

"Dragging a young girl's name into a thing of this sort would be a pretty serious matter," Worth said. "Wouldn't it be a good idea, first, to see what young Parke has to say? For my part—I know him only by sight, and I haven't seen him for two years—I would want to hear his explanation." He turned to the bell boy. "Has anybody told him that Carruth is dead? Does he even know—so far as you are aware—that a murder has been committed?"

"Ain't anybody told him anything. Don't he know it without tellin'? Why, he *done* it."

"There you are," Worth said to the chief.

"But I s'pose I better arrest him. Of course I had. I'll go down there——"

"I don't want to give any advice unless it is desired," Worth said, "but if you care for a suggestion——"

"Let's hear it," said the chief, adding hastily: "I don't have to agree to take it; I do my duty as I see it."

"Naturally. I was merely going to suggest that, before you actually make an arrest, it might be a fairly good idea to ascertain why a boy with more money in the bank than any young man really needs should want to steal a watch, a roll of bills, a pair of cuff links, and four waistcoat buttons. And I think, if I were you, I should like to know whether he ever owned a slung shot and whether he is in the habit of carrying manicure scissors in his pocket."

Chaffee looked confused.

"Also," Doctor Ade remarked, taking part in this conversation for the first time and lifting from his desk the knotted cord, "whether he had any cord of this unusual size in his possession."

The bell boy's eyes fell upon the exhibit, whose significance he could not appreciate nor understand.

"He did!" he cried. "That's a bluefish line. I heard him tell Mr. Halladay about it, and while I was carryin' his things upstairs the bundle fell out of my hand and busted, and it was full of string just like that. He bought it this afternoon in N' Yawk. I heard him say so."

"I'm going down to see what he's got to say," the chief announced with decision. "By gracious, I almost forgot the long-distance call. Well—— I can't wait here. When it comes, have 'em get me at the inn, will you, doctor? I'll be there for the present, and when I leave there I'll let central know." He looked at Doctor Eaton and his friend. "You'll be going back there, anyway, I s'pose. If you want to, you can come along with me and hear his story. I bet, if we go at it right, we'll get a confession, and if we do I'll need witnesses."

"I have already sent for an undertaker," Doctor Ade said professionally. "As coroner, I shall hold these things safely—the cord, the slung shot, and the cut vest—for production at the inquest and later before the court, if arrests are made. I told the undertaker to bring a photographer—that probably explains why he has not yet arrived—to make a picture before the body is moved. I think it might be especially desirable to have a photo that will show that imprint of the knots under the left ear."

Endicott Worth, who had taken his hat and was in the act of saying good night to Grafton, Finch, and Foster, looked up quickly.

"The *left* ear?" he said.

Doctor Ade nodded.

"So it does." Worth looked quizzically into Chief Chaffee's face and made a comment which struck that officer as intended to be smart, but meaningless:

"Before I arrested young Parke, if I were you, I should also make some inquiries as to which hand swings the bat when he plays tennis. And I shouldn't entirely forget our cross-eyed friend with the cough. He *might* turn out to be left-handed."

CHAPTER V.

TRUTHS MIXED WITH UNTRUTHS.

Blotchy lights, flickering like slow-moving superfireflies, hovered ahead of them as Chaffee and the bell boy, followed by Worth and Eaton, turned from Doctor Ade's house in the direction of the inn. Volunteers, with their own little searchlights, had reënforced the neighbors whom Foster had left at work in the Bolster yard and the street in front of that house. They looked to be searching quite unsystematically, but thoroughly. If any other clews were in the immediate vicinity, it seemed a reasonable chance they would be brought to light. The chief crossed the street and paused only long enough to ascertain that nothing whatever had been discovered since Foster found the slung shot, then caught up with the others after urging the men with the lights not to give up until they had gone over every inch of street, sidewalk, and yard in the block.

He had been turning the newest developments in his mystery over in his mind since young Maxey told his story, and he suddenly said over his shoulder to the pair behind him:

"This Parke is a tennis player, you said, and so was Carruth. Were they good ones? Rivals that way, I mean?"

"Very good," Doctor Eaton replied. "Possibly championship material, both of them."

"Um-m-m!" commented the chief, as though this did not surprise him. His next words showed the trend of his thoughts:

"Rivals in sports as well as for the same girl, eh? That might make it easier to account for."

"Tennis players do not have personal hard feelings against one another," Worth said.

"I don't know," replied the chief. "You can't ever tell. Sometimes these young fellers that get all worked up over winning championships and so forth get pretty bitter about it. I remember once a murder in New York that grew out of two fellers goin' after a boxing championship and one of them getting licked. He just went out and figured if he couldn't get the other feller one way he'd get him another. And once there was a couple of billiard players, I heard——"

"I gather you've never followed tennis much," Worth interrupted.

"I certainly have *not*," rejoined the

chief with emphasis. "Some kind of sports I know about—quite some. But tennis and golf I never got interested in. Of course, I get to the tournaments every year; have to attend to the policing and all that. But I never watched one of the matches way through. I can't say I even understand the points of the game. Or that I want to."

"I thought so. Well, chief, please take my word for it that lawn tennis doesn't develop the passions that cause murders. And I never heard of a tennis player who was a desperate character."

"Well——" the chief said. The way he said it implied that you never could tell.

"They seem to have stopped dancing. It isn't quite midnight, is it?" Doctor Eaton remarked as they approached the inn.

"They stopped it as soon as word got around about Mr. Carruth," the bell boy said. "The gentlemen, they thought, seein' as he had been dancin' there earlier in the evenin', that it wasn't any more than decent."

The chief paused, and they all came to a stop with him. "We don't want to go walking in like this, in a body," he said, "or everybody will know something is up. And I ain't got any time to talk to folks and answer questions, anyway. You run ahead, Maxey, while we wait here, and go in quietly and ask Mr. Greenleaf if Parke is still up in his room, and then come back and tell us. If he's there, we'll slip in the side door, and you can take us right up without anybody seeing us."

The boy was soon back. "He hasn't come out," he told Chaffee excitedly, "but he's been raising Cain about the tourin' car, an' demandin' that Mr. Greenleaf send to another garage or somethin'. Says it takes long enough to get to N' Yawk at the best, without havin' to wait all night before he gets started."

"Has he said anything about the murder? Has he been downstairs?"

"No. He's just stayed in his room and cussed over the telephone."

"Come on!" the chief said, unconsciously easing his coat to have his badge handy for exhibition. "You take us up and knock on his door just as if we were some guests you had showed up to his room—and then you come back downstairs."

Neither Doctor Eaton nor Worth felt particularly happy at the part they were about to play, and yet it seemed somewhat of a duty under the circumstances. They probably were also influenced more or less by natural curiosity. Having seen so important a chapter of the tragedy, it was human to want to know more. They followed Maxey and the chief in silence. Fortunately they met no one who knew Chaffee by sight or felt well enough acquainted with either of the others to want to stop and discuss the evening's happenings. They came presently to the closed door that bore the number 316. The bell boy knocked lightly.

"Well?" a youthful voice called from within. Ordinarily a pleasant voice, it was now distinctly harsh and irritable.

"Some gentlemen to see you, Mr. Parke," Maxey called.

"I haven't told the office to send anybody up," cried the boy. "I ordered a motor to go to New York. When is it going to be ready?"

"Yes, sir. The gentlemen say it is very important."

A mild swear word exploded, and Parke strode to the door and threw it open. His left hand was holding a damp towel to his cheek. He peered out over it at the three men, failed to recognize any of them, and waited, holding the door, for them to speak.

"We'd like to come in and talk to you a few minutes," Chaffee said.

"What about? I haven't any time. You will excuse me, but I am just leaving. If it is anything about the tournament, I am not playing this year."

"May we come in?" the chief asked.

The boy patted the face with the towel. Even with his back to the light, they could make out that there was a discolored swelling on his cheek bone. "Why?" he asked impatiently.

"There are a few questions I would like to ask you." Chaffee had devel-

oped a quite surprising suavity. He saw he would need to explain, unless he wanted to remain in the hallway or push his way into the room. "My name is Chaffee. I am the chief of police of Forest Gardens."

It looked as though Parke were going to expostulate; then seemingly he changed his mind. He threw open the door, and gestured for them to enter. Chaffee, when the others had crossed the threshold, closed the door. He waited a second, then opened it again suddenly. Young Maxey's shoulder was leaning against the jamb. "Go on downstairs!" the chief commanded. "Beat it! If I want you, I'll send for you." The bell boy "beat it" disconsolately, and the chief waited in the doorway until he had disappeared around a turn in the corridor. Returning to the room and again closing the door, he also shut the transom.

Parke, in the meantime, had remained standing, and had not spoken a word. Now the chief turned to him, waving a descriptive hand toward his companions. "I asked these gentlemen to come up with me," he said. "They are interested in the—er—the matter we want to talk about. This is Doctor Eaton. This is Mr. Endicott Worth."

The boy showed no interest in the surgeon's name, merely bowing with an air of impatience. At the other introduction, however, he raised his eyes quickly to his caller's face with a light of interest.

"That is not a common name," he said. "Are you *the* Mr. Worth? The man who invented what they used to call the 'Worth stroke,' back in the nineties?"

Worth smiled and nodded. Not all boys of twenty-five, even among championship contestants, identified him with the wrist stroke that he had made famous. Chaffee did not give him any chance to speak, if he had wanted to, but looked Parke in the eye in his best police-station manner, and said accusingly:

"You know what I have come here for."

Worth thought the boy was going to show surprise and ask for a bill of particulars, but he did no such thing. On the contrary, after a second of hesitation, he said: "I suppose so."

"Well?" said the chief. He was obviously taken back himself by the reply, and could not think exactly what to say next. To his and the others' surprise, the boy answered him by repeating the same word, with the same rising accent:

"Well?"

One gasping pause, and then Chaffee again said it, but this time with exclamatory effect: "Well!" And, as Parke seemed to be more concerned with holding cold water to his bruised cheek than with the chief's staccato comment, he went on: "What have you got to say about it?"

"Nothing," was Parke's surprising reply.

"Nothing?" It began to look as though Chaffee were going to act as an echo for all the boy's monosyllables. "Nothing! But you've got to say something—haven't you?" It was a lame ending, and the chief knew it, but he felt lame.

"No, I haven't," Parke suddenly asserted. "It is my own personal business, and I don't care to discuss it. He gave me a black eye, but I'm satisfied. I don't propose to have to stay in this God-forsaken village, so I haven't got anything to say at all. If you want to do any prosecuting, you'll have to do it on your own hook."

"Well, of all the nerve that I ever see!" almost whispered Chaffee. "See here, young feller! Do you realize that this thing ain't a joke? You can tell me where you were this evening and what you did, or you needn't; just as you please. But maybe it will be better for you if you speak up."

"Are you trying to threaten me? Nothing doing."

The boy's manner was not a manner that fitted in with any of Chaffee's experience in dealing with lawbreakers, and he was sadly puzzled. "Will you answer me two questions?" he asked.

"I might, if that would enable me to get away sooner. I'm beginning to

suspect, chief, that you are responsible for my not getting an automobile. All right, let 'em go. But if you want any details about my personal affairs, it won't do any good to ask. Excuse me, gentlemen, if I seem rude, but I'm in a hurry, and I've had a number of things happen to me this evening that have upset my temper a bit."

"Where did you get that bruise on your cheek?"

"You know darn well where I got it, or you wouldn't be here. Well, I haven't anything whatever to say about it. As far as I'm concerned, chief, it didn't happen."

Gasping had by now become a habit with Chaffee. But he was losing his temper, and he slammed out his second question angrily:

"Where did you leave Lee Carruth?"

To every one's astonishment, Chaffee's no less than the others, the effect of this sudden onslaught was instant and staggering. Young Parke forgot the wet towel he was holding to his swollen face, and the hand that held it dropped inertly to his side. The blood rushed into his face and then receded, leaving him pale. He opened his mouth to speak, was silent, wet his lips, and then said in an unnatural voice:

"Lee Carruth? Leave him? Why, I don't think I have seen Lee Carruth since the last tournament I played in with him; that was two years ago."

Every man present knew he was lying, and the look in his eyes convinced them that he realized it. He tried to laugh.

"Why?" he said. "What has Lee Carruth to do with it?"

"When you left this hotel this evening, right after you had come in, where did you go?" Chaffee demanded.

"Why, I went for a walk. Just a little walk around."

Endicott Worth, sitting back in the shadow, tried to make out what it was that had so changed the boy. At first he had been defiant, but truthful, so far as he went. Now he was lying, and he was not an accomplished liar. He made bad weather of it.

"Were you on Lafayette Avenue?"

"No." The answer was prompt. Worth believed it was the truth.

"Where were you?"

"Why, I walked around back of the hotel, past the tennis club, and—and then came home again." And this, Worth felt equally sure, was not the truth.

"Who did you see?"

"Nobody. That is to say, nobody I knew." He seemed to recover a little of his earlier poise. "Say!" he demanded. "Are you beating around the bush this way to get me to tell you about the fellow that held me up? Because I don't propose to tell. I've explained the reason, and it ought to be good enough. I don't propose to prosecute him or to be held in this little old town as a witness against him, and if you are depending upon me to convict him you might as well let up, because I flatly won't."

Worth leaned forward at this, and spoke across Parke to the chief.

"If you will excuse me," he said gravely, "I don't want to interfere in your method of going at this matter, but I feel quite sure that you and Mr. Parke are talking at cross-purposes. I suggest that you tell him exactly what has happened."

"He knows what's happened well enough," growled Chaffee. "And he might as well come clean."

Parke did not reply, but there was a growing look of trouble in his eyes.

"You don't suppose you can get away with it and leave town between night and morning when it's a matter of murder, do you?" the chief snapped.

"Murder!" The emotion in the boy's voice might have been surprise or it might have been fear. "Is it murder? Why—why, of course I'll stay if it's as important as that. I'll have to, of course."

He looked quickly at Worth and Doctor Eaton, perhaps to assure himself from their faces that Chaffee was speaking truth, then back to the chief, and then shot out a question that made that officer blink: "Whom did he murder?"

"Who did——" The chief became canny. "A young fellow over on Lafayette Avenue."

"All right," said Parke, after a second's thought. "I wanted to get away, but I see I can't. So I'll tell you. I suppose you want a description, and you want me to identify him. All right. He was a thickset chap, not very tall, but strong—and with a deuce of a punch in his right. It was pretty dark, but I should say he was light-complexioned, and I think he had a little mustache; I think I felt it when we were clinched." He looked at Chaffee inquiringly. "Is that the fellow?" he asked.

"Say, what are you trying to do?" Chaffee demanded. "Kid me? If you are, I'll admit you are trying to do a good job, but I don't kid easy. Come clean, now, and tell me the straight of it."

"I'm not trying to kid you," Parke protested. "It was this way. I was out taking a little walk. I was—I was just beyond the tennis club, in a dark spot, when this man jumped out at me from behind a tree. I had no suspicion that he was there, and he got me before I had a chance to do a thing. He grabbed me by the throat, and punched me—a glancing punch that didn't do any harm. I thought it was a straight holdup, for robbery, but afterward I thought different. He said only one word—sort of exclaimed it as he grabbed me. The word was 'swine!'

"The fight didn't last long, but it was a good one while it lasted. I got my right arm clear and let him have one under the heart, and he grunted as if it hurt him and loosed his hold, and I sprang back and made a pass at him, and he landed some sort of a hook, I guess it was, and I went down." He patted the bruise on his face. "He kicked at me as I fell, but didn't land, and I got hold of one of his feet and threw him. Then we rolled around a bit. And by and by I got a pretty fair punch in on his neck, and we came apart and both jumped up. We were out in the middle of the street then, and there was more light, but I couldn't get a good view of his face, because his back was to it. And then suddenly he got enough and turned and ran, and I came back here to the inn."

He shrugged his shoulders. "I had to get to New York—at least there was a matter that made me in a hurry to get there—and I didn't want to be held here as a witness, so I made no report of it, and didn't intend to. And there you are. Well?"

Chaffee's look might be described as one of severity tempered by admiration.

"A good one!" he exclaimed. "As good a one as I ever heard in my life. But of course you've had quite a long spell to think it up. Now that you've got it off your chest, come on with the truth."

"You mean you don't believe——"

"Oh, cut out the bluffin', kid! It don't go. I'm too old. Just where did you say this happened?"

"Just beyond the tennis club."

"On what street?"

"Jenney Street, of course."

"On which side of the street?"

"The east side. The side nearest the clubhouse."

Chaffee allowed himself a grim smile.

"There isn't a tree on that side of the street in the whole block," he remarked.

Parke caught his breath, paled, and was silent.

"Now tell the truth," the chief said.

Stubbornly and not entirely unconvincingly, the youth replied: "I have told the truth."

"This thug that jumped out at you from behind a tree where there ain't any trees only spoke once. And then he said 'swine.' Did you ever hear anybody—anybody real—say 'swine,' when they were mad?"

"Certainly. I've heard it quite a number of times during the last year. Fritz always says it."

"Fritz?"

"I drove an ambulance a while over on the other side," Parke said modestly. "And that's what I meant when I said that afterward I thought maybe this wasn't just a holdup. I thought maybe

it was a German that had it in for me for working in France. He sort of looked like a German. Of course 'swine' is almost the same in both languages. I didn't have time to figure out his exact shade of pronunciation." He smiled faintly.

During this explanation the chief's eyes had not left Parke's face. Now he shook his head positively. "Not a chance to get away with it!" he exclaimed. "Not a chance!"

The light of trouble in the boy's eyes grew deeper. He hesitated, then asked: "This young fellow over on—— Is Lee Carruth living at Grafton's again this year? I don't suppose——" He stopped.

"What makes you ask that?"

"Why, you mentioned Carruth's name. You asked me when I saw him last. And if he is stopping at Grafton's; that is on Lafayette——"

"How did you know he was here in Forest Gardens this evening at all? Nobody told you before you went out for your walk, did they?"

"No. I just—— It only came to me because you mentioned his name."

"When they told you, downstairs, that Miss Hartley had gone home, did anybody mention that Carruth went with her?"

"Why, no. No." Then, not sincerely: "Did he?"

Chaffee leaned forward and demanded bullyingly:

"What do you know about the death of Lee Carruth?"

"Then it *was*—— Nothing except what I've told you about the fellow that attacked me." The significance of the chief's question seemed to sink in more fully. "Why, you don't mean to say you believe that I could have any knowledge of—— You say he was murdered? How?"

Chief Chaffee pointed to a wastebasket in which was a large, crumpled piece of brown paper. "What was in that paper?" he asked.

"Fishline," was the prompt answer.

"Where is it?"

"In my suit case. I bought it in the city this afternoon, and my bags were checked at the station, so I couldn't put it in. When I decided—when I had to get ready to go to New York to-night I stowed it away in the bag."

"Open the suit case. I want to see it."

Parke looked toward the row of bags that he had set on the floor pending the arrival of a porter to take his luggage to the automobile. His eyes searched the faces of Doctor Eaton and Worth. What he saw there seemed to confirm thoughts that were running in his mind.

"See here," he exclaimed. "I don't just understand this. You aren't claiming that I—— You don't think that I had anything to do with——" Nobody spoke, and he blurted: "You act as though you suspected me of being concerned in this—death. Do you?"

"I haven't said we do," replied the chief. "Why don't you want to let us look at that fishline?"

For reply, Parke took out his bunch of keys and opened a suit case. Stowed in one corner was a bulky oval of heavy twine, wound, as large fishing lines are usually wound, about a stick. Apparently the quantity totaled at least two hundred feet.

Chaffee took the twine in silence, and looked it over; then passed it to Worth and Eaton. It was manifestly of about the same size and weight as the knotted exhibit they had so recently left lying on Doctor Ade's desk. They passed it back to the chief.

"Where did you get this?" Chaffee asked.

"At the uptown store of the Mays & Tremley Company. Why? What is the idea? What has fishline to do with——"

"May I cut off a few inches?"

"Why, I don't see—— Certainly, if you want to."

"You haven't any scissors, have you? Your manicure scissors would do."

"I haven't any scissors."

"Well, I can use my knife." The chief slashed six or eight inches from the end of the fish cord, put it carefully in his pocket, and tossed the remainder

on the bed. "Why did you buy this cord to-day?"

"I'm going fishing right after the tournament, and I wouldn't have time to get any."

"How is that, seeing you ain't going to play in the tournament, and was going back to New York to-night?"

"I didn't know I was going back when I bought the line. Something came up afterward."

"What?"

Parke hesitated a second. "If you'll excuse me," he said. "I can't see why it should concern any one but myself. It is a personal matter."

"Telegram or telephone you got this evening, or something like that?"

"Purely a personal matter," the boy repeated.

"I see. Well, we'll pass that up. Why did you bring this fishline along with you, instead of having it sent on to wherever it is you were going fishing?"

"The fishing party is from New London. I didn't send it because I wasn't sure it was exactly the right size. The clerk had never had any experience in bluefishing, and he said he thought there were two sizes used, but he didn't know which was the favorite. So I took it, with the understanding that I could exchange it, and decided to write Thompson—that is the friend with whom I was going fishing—to see if it was the right size. If he said it wasn't, I would have the line here to return."

"Where is Thompson now?"

"On his boat. At Bar Harbor."

"You wouldn't have much time to reach him and get an answer before he sailed for New London, would you?"

"I was going to mail him a sample to-night."

"Oh, you cut off a sample! Then this bunch here will total what you bought, less the piece you cut off."

"No. They gave me an odd bit at the store."

"When did you mail it?"

"I didn't."

"You just said this Thompson is the friend that you 'was' going fishing with. Why 'was?' Have you given the trip up?"

"I hadn't quite decided. There was a chance I might not be here. I—— To tell you the truth, I have been thinking a little of going back to France."

The chief looked shrewdly into Parke's eyes, and spoke forcefully: "I want to see that odd piece of twine that the clerk in Mays & Tremley's gave you."

"I can't see why you should want it," Parkle exclaimed, "and I don't understand this whole business. Will you be good enough to tell me what you are driving at?"

"I want to look at that piece of twine."

"Say, Mr. Worth, is this all right?" The youth appealed to the one whose face, perhaps, seemed most sympathetic among those in the grave triangle. "I don't know why this man should come up here and put me through a cross-examination like this. If you gentlemen think I know anything about a crime that's been committed—and it's pretty plain you do, from the way you act—oughtn't I to have some advice or something?"

"As I came here at Mr. Chaffee's request," Worth replied seriously, "I do not think it would be proper for me to advise you."

"You can have this advice," the chief put in. "You're entitled to it. You don't have to answer questions that will incriminate yourself—if that is your reason for not answering them."

"It is not," Parke declared hotly. "There isn't any reason why I shouldn't be willing to tell you whatever you ask—but I think I am entitled to know what you are getting at. As to that piece of fishline—I haven't got it."

"You haven't got it and you didn't mail it!" Chaffee exclaimed triumphantly. "Where is it?"

"I don't know. I had it loose in my pocket, and when I changed my clothes after I came in—the ones I was wearing got all messed up in the fight—I noticed it was gone. It was in a side pocket, and the pocket was torn."

"Lost it in the fight, eh?"

"I suppose so."

"If we go out and look, do you think maybe we'll find it where the man jumped out at you?"

"Perhaps."

"On Jenney Street, just beyond the tennis club, where there ain't any trees?"

Something in this question disturbed Parke more than anything since the first mention of Carruth's name.

"I—I suppose so," he stammered. "That is to say, it ought to be there. But of course I don't know where I lost it. It might have been somewhere else."

"Where else were you?"

"I told you. I walked from here to there and back. That is all. Just from here to there and back. Or I—I might have lost it on the train—or somewhere."

The wall telephone rang sharply, and Parke answered it.

"Yes," he said, and turned to Chaffee. "They want you."

"Hello!" called the chief. "Say, wait a minute. Hold them until I can get into a booth; about two minutes."

He replaced the receiver hastily. "It is my New York call at last," he said. "I'll go downstairs and talk." With his hand on the doorknob, he fixed an uncompromising gaze on young Parke.

"Leland Carruth has been murdered," he said. "I don't think I need to tell you where or how; at least, I ain't goin' to. I want you to stay right here in your room until I tell you you can leave it. Have your breakfast up here if you haven't heard from me. I've got some investigations to make, and when I've made 'em we'll decide what to do next. For the present we'll put it that I want to hold you as a witness."

He opened the door, and motioned to Doctor Eaton and Worth to precede him.

"Do you mean to say I have been arrested?" Parke demanded.

"No," the chief replied. "No. You ain't been arrested. But you will be if you try to stir a step out of this room, either into the hall or down a fire escape."

CHAPTER VI.

A SHADOW IN THE DARK.

The trio had come to the elevator, and Chaffee was pressing a nervous finger on the button before any one spoke. Then Doctor Eaton, addressing Worth, murmured:

"Well, did he do it?"

"Probably not."

"What makes you say that?" Chaffee demanded testily.

"Several things. He doesn't act guilty. One of the principal causes for suspecting him was the evidence that he was in a fight, and he has explained that—fairly truthfully."

"How do you make that out? I tell you there ain't a tree on the east side of Jenney Street in the whole block."

"Oh, he lied about where the fight took place—but his other details were true. You know that."

"I don't know any such thing." Moving shadows in the elevator well indicated the approach of the car. "Sounds to me like a cock-and-bull story, all this talk about a feller that hollered 'swine' and jumped at him. This is a quiet town. There's mighty little chance there could be two fights on the same night, at the same time. Mighty little chance. Besides, why should a man want to jump out at this Parke the way he says he did?"

"He didn't. He intended to jump out at somebody else—probably Carruth. At least, that was his own explanation."

"His own—— What do you mean? Who told you it was?"

The elevator arrived, and the door slammed open.

"You did," Worth replied, too low for the operator to hear, as they filed in. "Your friend at the railroad station told you. The German who took the train said: 'I thought I had him, but I made a mistake.' Weren't those his words?"

Chaffee was silent while the car dropped. His mind was having trou-

ble with this new viewpoint. "That's so," he agreed uncertainly as the elevator came to a stop. "But the other feller—the cross-eyed one—said: 'Nothin' doin',' too. How do you explain that?"

"I don't. You will have to ask him."

"But—— Looky here! If this Parke had a fight with a Dutchman, like he says, he lied about where it was."

"Undoubtedly."

"Well, why? Why? Tell me that?"

"I can't, because I don't know. Are you going to need me any more, chief? Because, if you are not, it is after half past twelve, and midnight is my usual bedtime."

"No, I don't think so," Chaffee said. "I'll prob'ly need to call on both of you after I've had a chance to compare that piece of twine with the one that choked him to connect the string I cut off with the piece I cut it off of. Until then I don't see as you can help any more."

They were coming from the hallway in which were the elevators into the wide lobby, and his eyes circled the room.

"Thunder!" he exclaimed. "I might 'a' known that bell boy couldn't keep his mouth shut. Look at 'em! Everybody's up and waitin' for the latest details."

Notwithstanding the hour, the lobby was filled, and through open doors it could be seen that large groups lingered on the piazzas. It seemed as though fully one-half the dancers had remained to await developments. Many of them had not known Carruth, even by sight, yet they felt a personal interest in the tragedy whose perimeter they had for a moment touched. An atmosphere of restraint was evident; occasional bursts of laughter were speedily controlled, and for the most part the people were conversing in low tones.

Over on the long seat that served as a mourners' bench for the bell boys, the fiery head of the sensation-loving Maxey was nodding emphatically as he told to two other boys some detail of his evening's experience, perhaps for the hundredth time. It would not be dignified for guests to hobnob with bell hops, but two or three were standing carelessly within a few feet of the bench, trying to look as though they were not listening to what he said with all their ears.

At the desk a knot of men surrounded Mr. Greenleaf, the chief night clerk, a young man with pale hair and tortoise-rimmed spectacles, of the type which never lets a bit of scandal die for lack of willingness to pass it along in strict confidence to all-comers. Mr. Greenleaf was speaking seriously and confidentially; Worth wondered how many groups had thus gathered to get the story at intimate firsthand since Maxey brought down the thrilling information that the chief of police and his companions had entered room three hundred and sixteen.

Chief Chaffee hurried across the lobby toward the alcove which held the telephone switchboard and booths, trying not to look as important as he felt. Doctor Eaton drew Worth back into the hallway.

"I'm going away from here!" he exclaimed. "Look at them—and fifty of them know me. If I were to walk out into that lobby, I would become a center of attraction like unto an early-Christian martyr. I'm going to bed."

Worth, smiling, hurried with him to the elevator. "It is a wise thought," he agreed. "I don't think I have many acquaintances there, but that probably wouldn't make any difference. Let's allow Chaffee all the power and the glory."

They stopped a moment to talk in the corridor of the second floor, where both had rooms.

"Is this a simple problem or a complicated one?" the doctor asked. "An ordinary holdup or a *cause célèbre?* I wonder."

"I refuse to," Worth replied. "I came down here to get a week's vacation and see tennis matches. I refuse to take other people's worries on my shoulders. It is Chaffee's business; let him do it." He shook his head seri-

ously. "I hope they don't make that Parke boy any more trouble than he legitimately has coming to him; he seems like a nice boy. But he oughtn't to lie. And he did lie, of course. He didn't have that fight on Jenney Street, and he did see Lee Carruth to-night."

"Did it occur to you that in some manner he might be trying to protect Miss Hartley?"

Worth nodded. "That could be an explánation. Well, old man Pepys gave us the advice that applies right now—'and so to bed.' If and when the New York police get the cross-eyed man and his German friend, things may be solved very speedily. Police make a lot of talk about studying the motives for crimes before making arrests, but it is my observation that most mysteries are solved by arresting the right men and ascertaining the motives afterward."

They said good night.

In his room a few moments later, Worth removed his coat and vest, and then one shoe, very slowly. He sat holding the shoe in his hand, while his mind reviewed some of the events of the evening. Out of the last sentence he had spoken to Doctor Eaton a thought came back to him, with a troublesome feeling that in some manner he had not followed it to the conclusion he ought.

"Motive," he said to himself. "Motive. Two men lay for Carruth. One is a German. Now what motive——"

The elusive conclusion came. He recalled the news item in the morning papers. "That could be it," he decided. "I'd better suggest to Chaffee in the morning that he ask the city police to look over their lists of pro-German pacifists. There have been cases where interrupters of the soap-box meetings have been assaulted afterward near their homes. Perhaps I ought to get word to him to-night. It might——"

The ringing of his telephone bell broke in upon his meditations. He dropped the shoe and crossed the room to answer it.

"Is this Mr. Endicott Worth?" inquired a feminine voice to his rather abrupt "Hello." It was a youthful voice, he thought, with distinct evidences, even in only four spoken words, of culture and good manners.

"Yes," he replied.

"I hope you will excuse me for calling you so late," the voice went on, and he noticed that it was a somewhat shaky voice, certainly nervous and perhaps frightened. "You have never met me, or even heard of me probably, but my father used to speak of you. I am Grace Hartley."

"Yes, Miss Hartley," Worth replied. "Your father and I were very good friends. I saw you this evening at the inn—Doctor Eaton pointed you out to me."

"Then perhaps you won't think it so outrageous if I—— I am terribly worried, Mr. Worth. I ought not to annoy you, of course; I *must* ask advice of somebody. At once. To-night. And Doctor Ade mentioned that you had helped people sometimes, getting at the bottom of—of things that are mysterious. He said you were a lawyer, too. Doctor Ade just left here. Mother was so overcome at the news that I had to send for him."

"Are you at home?"

"Yes. A friend telephoned my mother from the inn about—what has happened. It made her ill. And I—— I *must* see some one whom I can trust, and mother isn't well enough to advise me, and I remembered what father used to say about you, and—— I am asking a great deal, but could you come and see me? I would come to see you if I could, of course, but——"

"I understand. It isn't very late, after all, Miss Hartley; I have only this minute come to my room. I should think I could get to your house in five minutes, or ten. Your mother is there, I suppose."

"Yes. We are on Molyneux Street, you know—the first street after you pass the tennis club. In the third block from Jenney. It is a lot of trouble I am asking you to put yourself to, I know, but——"

"No trouble at all," Worth interrupted. "I'll be right over."

"Thank you so much. I will have the piazza lighted, so you will find the house easily."

Worth thoughtfully retrieved his shoe and put it on, resumed his vest and coat, and picked up his hat. He glanced at his watch, remembering with a sigh of gratification that, to-morrow being Sunday, to-day, rather, he could sleep as late as he wished, switched off the lights, went down by the staircase, and passed quietly out of a side entrance.

Miss Hartley opened her front door herself at the sound of his feet upon the steps before he had time to ring. "It was so good of you to come," she said sincerely. "It is such an imposition for me to ask you."

He followed her into a tastefully furnished living room, whose lights, without being too brilliant, were sufficient to enable him to appraise her adequately while he was saying the polite things etiquette required, and taking the chair she indicated.

Miss Hartley, he thought, was a better-looking girl in the clothes she now had on than in the pink evening gown she had worn when last he saw her. It was a simple house dress that she now wore, a dress of the blue gingham that even the best-gowned girls in the great city went in for in the summer of 1917. He observed that she had intelligent, attractive eyes, a good complexion, and an abundance of dark hair. She went at the heart of her business with him directly; it was a habit she had inherited from her straightforward father, he thought.

"You left Doctor Ade's office with Mr. Chaffee, he told me. Has—— Did Mr. Chaffee arrest Alton Parke?"

"No," Worth assured her. "That is to say, he has not done so yet. It is true, however, that Mr. Parke is under surveillance. He is not allowed to leave his room."

"Then why—— They told me at the hotel switchboard his room did not answer."

"Perhaps by instructions of the chief," Worth said. "He might want to prevent people calling him on the phone. Although, of course, Parke may have given such orders himself."

"Mr. Worth," the girl said, and the only evidence of the difficulty she felt in approaching the subject was in her beginning the sentence with his name. "All my life, when my father was living, I went to him with my troubles. My mother is—— She is not very well. I have never made a practice of going to her for advice. She could not help me as papa could."

Worth, with a mental picture of a frail woman who would be a broken reed to lean upon in times of stress, bowed sympathetically.

"It is odd that I should send for you to-night, when I have never met you, but Doctor Ade was telling me, after he had given mamma some quieting medicine, of your being in his office, and that he thought you did not believe Alton—Mr. Parke—had anything to do with what happened. And he said Doctor Eaton spoke of you as a man who had helped get at the bottom of things, and mentioned that you were a lawyer. And I knew right away that you were the man who used to know my father, because you were down here for the tennis.

"I guess it was mostly impulse that made me call you," she went on, "but father told me more than once about the time he beat you at Newport, and a man who would do what you did in that last set must have been the squarest kind of a man. He always said it was the sportingest thing he ever saw done."

"I'm afraid he exaggerated; I don't remember anything of the sort. It was a hard match, I recall, and a very close one. But he outplayed me."

"So the minute I heard your name it seemed to me you would be just the man to advise me. You would do it honestly, I knew. Will you? Because you knew my father?"

"I think I would, if I never had known your father. Having known him, nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"Why do they think Alton Parke had something to do with—with what happened to-night?" she asked.

"There are several reasons," he replied. "Personally, I do not think any of them are very convincing."

"The lady who woke mamma up to tell her about it, at midnight, said Alton left the inn to come to this house soon after I had left the dance, and that he returned at eleven o'clock with a bruise on his face and sent for a car to go to the city, saying he was not going to stay for the tournament. Is that true?"

"Yes. He explains the bruise, however, by saying that a man assaulted him—sprang at him from behind a tree."

"Alton and I have been friends for a long time," she said. "A number of years. We have—— Well——" A slight flush crept up into her face, but she looked into his eyes steadily. "We have not been engaged or anything, but we have corresponded, and in a letter that I received yesterday he said he wanted to be sure to see me when he arrived here at Forest Gardens to-night; because he had something important to say to me—something he had been keeping to himself during all the year and more he has been away. I—I was looking for him all the evening at the inn, and I thought he was not going to arrive until to-morrow. But if he did get in, and it wasn't too late, he said he would come to the house. And it seems he started to. Why didn't he? *Could* he have met Lee Carruth and—— I don't mean in cold blood—Alton couldn't do that, of course—but accidentally, in a fight or something?"

"Did Doctor Ade tell you just *how* Carruth came to his death?"

"No. Something about a blow on the head. He wouldn't speak much about that. I suppose it wouldn't be professional."

"It isn't necessary to go into details, but I think I can safely say that whoever committed the murder intended to do so."

"Then it couldn't have been Alton, of course. But I—I was worried for fear——"

"If there is something you haven't told me, and would like to——" suggested Worth shrewdly.

"I never knew Lee Carruth to act just as he did to-night," she said, low-voiced. "We stood there in the doorway, and he was going home, and he asked me when I was going to decide to marry him. He had said that before. It was"—she tried to laugh—"a sort of habit with him; I had never taken it seriously, and I always told him it was all nonsense. But to-night, after he had said it again and I had tried to laugh it off, he—he *kissed* me."

There was a little catch in her voice. "Don't think I am trying to tell you, Mr. Worth, that none of the boys have ever kissed me before, but this was—different. He was *rough.* And at first I thought I would struggle, but that meant—well, of course it wouldn't do to make a scene about it, so I just stayed perfectly still until he let me go, and then I told him he had forgotten himself and that I shouldn't marry him and he must never do it again, and shut the door, and he went away."

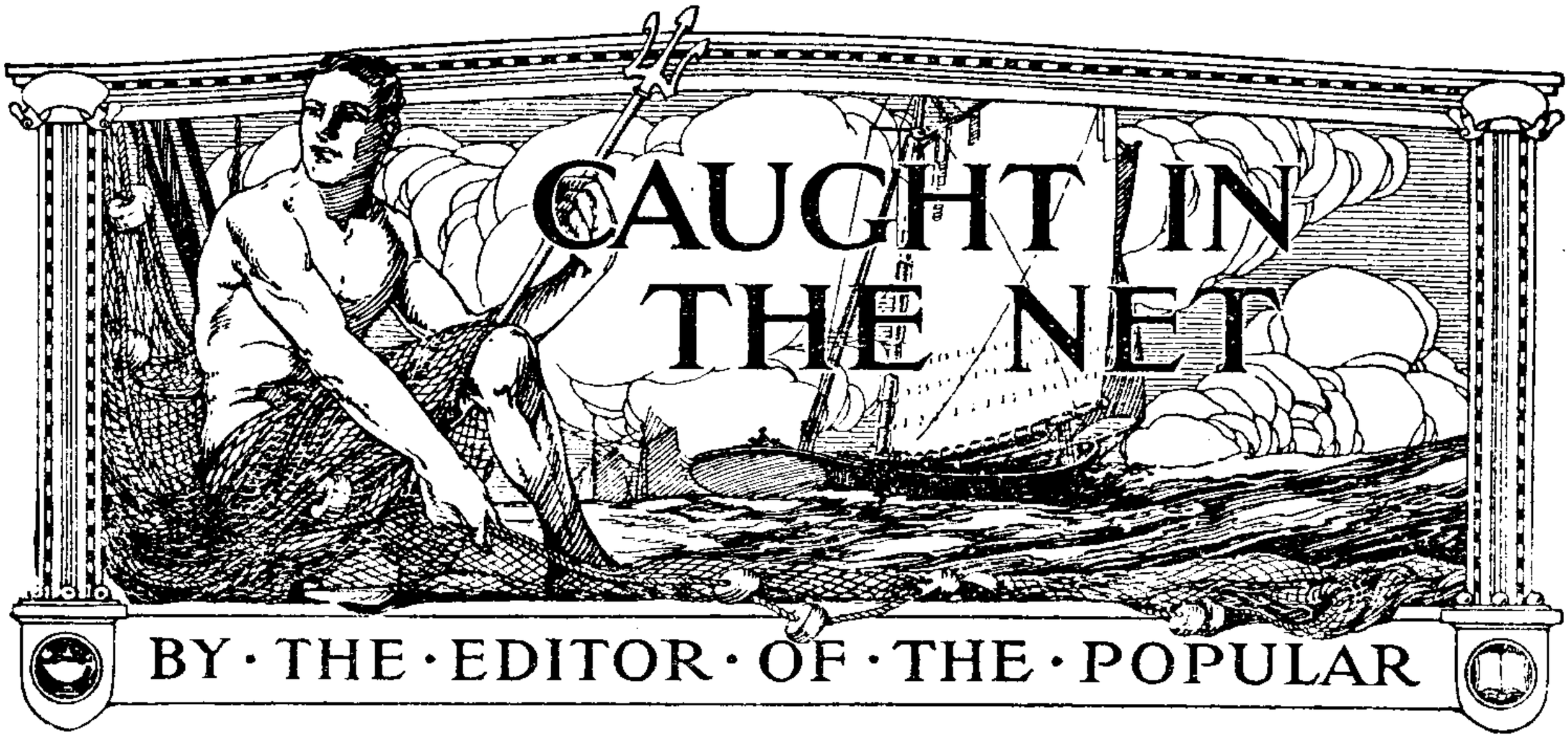
Worth was old enough to be the girl's father, but he was a bachelor, and the intimate confidences of young ladies of twenty-two had never come his way.

"Wait!" she said. "That isn't all of it; at least I am afraid it isn't. It came to me afterward that at the moment when he—when he was kissing me a shadow moved under the trees across the street, a house or two down. There was no light on the piazza, but there was one—not a very bright one—in the hallway behind us. Whoever was across the street might have *seen.*"

It did not seem to Worth that any great harm would have been done even if this were true.

"And it might—when you figure that Alton left the inn ten minutes behind us, and that we had been talking there in the hallway just about ten minutes—it *might* have been Alton."

TO BE CONTINUED.



GET BUSY

THIS is no time for complacency or sitting back. Ex-Ambassador Gerard has given us a fair idea of Germany's intentions and feelings toward the United States, and what we might expect if Germany were to win the war. The United States must beat Germany if it is to remain free and unthreatened. To win the war the United States needs not only men—it is getting the men by the draft—but money. Everybody in the country ought to dig down and help with the present Liberty Loan. It will hurt no one to do without something or other in order to save a little, and there is no better guardian of your savings than Uncle Sam. More important than this, if the blood and sacrifice of Americans already "over there" is not to be in vain, and if America is to live fearlessly as the great land of freedom and opportunity, the present loan *must* be a big success. It is up to you to make it so. It is your duty to buy a bond of whatever denomination and in whatever way you can afford. Any bank will tell you how. If we knew of stronger and more emphatic ways of saying this, we would gladly devote pages to it. It's the most important thing we know of just now.

IF FREE TRADE WERE UNIVERSAL

NUMBER THREE of President Wilson's famous peace terms, in which he advocates the removal of economic barriers between nations, has set many of our political economists and business men thinking; for in this item of his program he brings up the old, uneasy question of protective tariff which in the past has been so incitive of bitter opposition and long-drawn discussion.

Fundamentally it cannot be denied that the protective-tariff theory of trade is, and will continue to be, one of the chief underlying causes of war as long as it is maintained. Based on selfishness and suspicion, in its very nature it is fruitful of ultimate evil. And it is perhaps owing to this economic fallacy, more than to any other single motive, that the German "*weltmacht oder niedergang*" is due, for, believing in the commercial dictum that "trade follows the flag," the Teutons have pursued the ancient method of conquest to do away with economic barriers. How much nobler it might have been had Germany, in her desperate seeking for markets and supplies, agitated and led in the idea of international free trade!

Of course we recognize the difficulty and undesirability of throwing open the market of a country to competitive manufacturing agencies that undersell and make useless the labors of its own people; but, at the same time, it is not impractical to suppose that in due course the economic balance would adjust itself, inasmuch as each country produces its own peculiar genius and resources which would find adequate exchange, especially under international agreement and law.

Great Britain seventy-five years ago faced an economic condition similar to that of Germany prior to the present war, but she had the wisdom to overturn her commercial and fiscal policy which resulted in free trade. On the subject we must quote for you what the great advocate of this change, William Cobden, once said in a powerful address to Parliament:

> I have been accused of looking too much to material interests. Nevertheless, I can say that I have taken as large and great a view of the effects of this mighty principle as ever did any man. I believe that the physical gain will be the smallest gain to humanity. I look farther; I see in the free-trade principle that which shall act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation in the universe—drawing men together, thrusting aside antagonism of race and creed and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace. . . . I believe that the desire and the motive for large and mighty empires, for gigantic armies and navies, will die away. I believe that such things will cease to be necessary or used when man becomes of one family and freely exchanges the fruits of his labor with his brother man.

There is room for serious and momentous thought in these words.

BUSINESS TRAINING FOR BOYS

A UNIQUE departure in commercial training is the School for Office Boys opened in November by the Chicago public-school system.

Most of us, when we speak of the office boy, have a hazy mental picture of a combination Peck's Bad Boy and fresh imp. This is no doubt the work of newspaper "funny men" who form a standard from the gutter-snipe copy boys infesting the average newspaper office.

The office boy of the stage has been a like caricature. One of our prominent comedians—James T. Powers, if we remember rightly—started climbing the ladder in the title rôle of "The Office Boy," which depicted the youth in question as a prankish pest who made his exit whistling, smoking cigarettes, slamming doors, and executing a few buck-and-wing steps.

The office boy of reality has been and is a really important function of modern business. We read now and then of newly appointed railroad presidents and trust heads who began as office boys. In fact, the majority of us who have come up through the overhead branch of industry have all been office boys in our turn.

It is the first step in business management, and the importance of guiding this first step properly was fully appreciated by the hundreds of Chicago business men who wrote their enthusiasm and suggestions to Assistant Superintendent William M. Roberts, who heads the new field of instruction, at the head of five hundred pupils. These include entirely green hands at the game, and another batch of boys already in offices who will devote a few hours each day to learning how to rise.

In calling at general offices these days, especially in large businesses which

operate from an administration building, we are rather surprised at the business-like air of the boy who takes our card. He is an important individual—the first point of contact with the public; it is in his power to make our initial impression of the business one of irritation or good will.

This modern office boy—frequently replaced by the branch telephone operator who, by the way, has her special department in the new Chicago school—is well dressed and almost overcourteous, or he doesn't last long. He is the aid-de-camp of the general within the private office, the go-between who conveys your card and message, and much depends on his observations and analysis whether you get an audience or not.

When you enter, you find him revising and checking up mailing lists, filing correspondence, or addressing envelopes for direct-mail campaigns. All three of these functions require thoroughness and skill and genuine responsibility. Follow the average office boy about and you will be struck with the evident care exercised in his selection, for he daily goes to the bank, intrusted with a small fortune in cash and indorsed checks.

A lot of this training should be a part of the public-school system. Chicago has started it, and the courses it offers to office boys reveal the movement as an advanced type of commercial college.

ONE OF GERMANY'S GREATEST "STEALS"

WHEN the kaiser's U-boat C-5 was on exhibition in Central Park, New York, among the throngs that came to see it was William Hammatt Davis, a patent lawyer, who has devoted years of study to submarine patents and mechanism. He discovered that Germany had been "stealing Yankee brains and ingenuity and turning them against us." The C-5 almost duplicated the Holland type of submarine, the patents of which were filed in Germany some fourteen years ago.

Mr. Davis' report of the "stealings" are summarized as follows:

Steal No. 1.—Design of boat almost duplicates that of the Holland type of submarine built for the United States navy by the Electric Boat Company, even down to the characteristic spindle shape and nonwater-tight superstructure.

Steal No. 2.—The degree of submergence controlled by horizontal rudders located at bow and stern. These bow rudders are identical with the Holland type as to location, size, function, et cetera.

Steal No. 3.—Provisions for regulating buoyancy of boat. In the center is a ballast tank of considerable size, to which water can be admitted through a Kingston valve in the bottom of the hull. With this tank filled, buoyancy of boat is greatly reduced, allowing it to float in the so-called "awash" condition. Tank must be completely filled to function properly, and the most involved mathematical calculations are necessary to work this point out, and was one of the fundamental laws laid down by John P. Holland.

Steal No. 4.—The "lighter-than-water" principle has been snatched brazenly in all its ramifications. This Holland principle is as important to submarines as the "heavier-than-air" principle is to the air plane, and is the basis of good handling qualities of the Holland type of boat.

Steal No. 5.—A ballast tank is located on top of the main ballast tank in

vertical alignment with the center of gravity and center of buoyancy—another of the Holland fundamental features to which the success of his submarine is largely attributed; for by keeping the main tank filled and using auxiliary tank for buoyancy adjustment, the boat can stand practically still, with only the periscope out of the water, and lie in wait for its prey.

CANADA'S PATRIOTISM

THE Canadian general elections, held recently, resulted in a sweeping victory for a union government, composed of conservatives and liberals, headed by Sir Robert Borden, leader of the previous conservative administration. In many respects it was the most noteworthy election ever held in Canada. The main issue was compulsory military service on a basis of selective draft versus a continuation of the system of voluntary enlistment. The former policy swept the country.

Three years of war saw Canada still retaining the obsolete, unfair, and inadequate system of voluntary enlistment, under which, however, she had raised some 400,000 troops, mainly in the English-speaking provinces. But this had exhausted the volunteering material. Recruiting was dead. Heavy casualty lists made immediate reënforcements necessary, and the only way to obtain them was by compulsion.

Accordingly Sir Robert Borden, then leading a conservative government, brought down a compulsory-service measure, and at the same time proposed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then leading the liberal opposition, a coalition government of both parties on a fifty-fifty basis of cabinet representation.

Sir Wilfrid refused this proposal, and opposed compulsory service, in which he was backed solidly by his own province, Quebec.

As a result, while Laurier carried sixty-two out of sixty-five Quebec seats, and broke approximately even in the Maritime provinces where there is a large French-speaking population, his candidates were elected in ten only of Ontario's eighty-two seats, and in but two of the fifty-four seats of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

In a parliament of two hundred and thirty-five members the vote in Canada gave Borden a majority of nearly fifty. The result amounts to a line-up of English-speaking Canada on one side and French-speaking Canada on the other.

The new government takes office with a direct mandate from the people to fight the war to a finish with men, money and materials.

The Business of Looking Ahead

By James Hay, Jr.

Author of "Are You the Anarchist of Your Own Future?" Etc.

Not fiction, but a few pages of striking facts gathered from the experience of some eminent Americans

LESLIE M. SHAW, former secretary of the treasury, once told me:

"I was twelve years old when I decided what I would do with my life. I remember it as distinctly as if it had happened yesterday. I was a barefooted kid, with a big rip in the right knee of my short breeches, and I was in my father's garden, pulling weeds, the mud oozing up between my toes when I wiggled them. All of a sudden, disgusted with weeds, mud, and the whole business of farming, I made up my mind that I would be a banker. That appealed to me as the greatest destiny I could shape for myself."

At the age of thirty-two he was a banker.

Henry F. Ashurst, United States senator from Arizona, related this:

"I always wanted to be a member of the Senate. When I was ten years old, in a rather primitive school at Flagstaff, I wrote my name in one of my books and put after the name 'United States senator from Arizona.' I never lost sight of that ambition. I worked for its fulfillment until at last I achieved it."

He was thirty-seven years old when he entered the Senate. The journey from the Flagstaff schoolhouse to the United States capitol had involved his being a cowboy, a deputy sheriff, a hod-carrier, a lumberjack, a newspaper reporter, a law student, a member and the speaker of the Arizona legislature, a member of the territorial council, a district attorney, and a lawyer in private practice.

Andrew Carnegie on one occasion made this statement to a friend:

"My success in life was not due to the fact that I started out with the clear-cut object of doing a certain thing or reaching any certain position. No special and shining eminence attracted me. From the beginning my aim and my ambition was to do one job so well that I would be bound to get the one next higher up—to do that and to look around for any practical means of bettering myself financially. I progressed step by step, never knowing where I should eventually land."

That was his system for getting to the top after starting out as a weaver's assistant in a cotton factory, then as a telegraph messenger boy, and after that as a railroad telegrapher.

A genius in the advertising world arrived in Washington not long ago. Having encountered him on the street, I asked him where he was going. He informed me he was on his way to the White House. Among other things, he said:

"When I left Washington, seventeen years ago, the best I had been able to do was to draw a weekly salary of fourteen dollars in the business office of a newspaper. I determined that I would never set my foot in this town again unless I had amounted to enough to be invited to the White House by the president. I figured that a man might call himself successful if he could rise to that importance."

He was on his way to the executive mansion because the president wanted to make use of him in a national way

as a result of his influential connection with a group of powerful New York and Chicago capitalists. In order to have this invitation issued to him, he had worked in the United States and three countries of Europe, had written several books, had made a reputation as a reorganizer of corporations, had mastered the intricacies of railroad management, had become an authority on certain manufacturing methods, and had taken his place at the top of the advertising world.

I have mentioned these four men—Shaw, Ashurst, Carnegie, and the White House guest—as striking examples of the fact that there is one attribute characteristic of all successful men, no matter how widely different their ambitions, their methods, or their achievements may be. Every successful man has it. Without it no man ever succeeds.

Christopher Columbus had it. Woodrow Wilson has it. It is the explanation of why Henry Ford, at the age of fifty-four, is still the marvel of the automobile-manufacturing world. It is the ladder on which Edward N. Hurley climbed from his position as a railway-locomotive engineer to a kingship in the pneumatic-tool business and later to his present job of building the ships this government needs for war purposes.

This attribute is what I call the "soul" of success.

Many thousands of men are inquiring desperately to-day why they do not succeed, why they do not get up higher in the world, and they make the inquiry desperately because they have never been taught and have never learned that, without this "soul" of success, they cannot get to the top.

They are the human italics of the fact that for countless generations men have been getting the wrong tips, misleading steers, as to what will bring them success. By success in this connection I mean achievements which put them noticeably above the general run and ruck of men, such achievements as the accumulation of money, power, fame, or influence over their fellows.

From early childhood clear up to maturity they have had instilled into them the essence of nonsense. They have been taught, and they have believed, this highly comforting proposition:

"If you are honest, industrious, reliable, moral, punctual, law-abiding, intelligent, and dutiful, you are bound to succeed."

That is the height of absurdity. As a recipe for success, it is not worth the paper it's written on. Do you believe that honesty, industry, morality, punctuality, and the other virtues enumerated in the copybooks lead to success? If you do, take your stand on any crowded street corner of any city from seven-thirty to eight-thirty any weekday morning.

What you see there is a hurrying, bustling parade of thousands of able-bodied men and women—and the vast majority of them, if you investigate them, you will find to be possessed of the strictest integrity, praiseworthy industry, astounding punctuality, irreproachable morals, and a very lively sense of duty. And yet ninety-nine out of a hundred of them are not now, and never will be, superior to their fellows in usefulness, power, or wealth.

The men who become discouraged as to their future, the ones who want to know how they can beat the game, have discovered that all the virtues under heaven do not necessarily lead to success. They have waked up to the fact that they have been victimized by the old teachings, the ancient dope as to how to beat the game of life.

And they are right. They *have* been victimized. They have been given the shadow and not the substance. To say that a man will be a success simply because he does his duty and lives virtuously is exactly as logical as to say that a mummy, because it has hands and feet and a head, can burst its bandages and run a cross-country race.

What a man needs, in addition to right living and the virtues, in order to reach high achievement, is what Shaw, Ashurst, Carnegie, and the advertising genius possessed—the "soul" of success, the thing which, if a man

is not already possessed of it, he is able to acquire.

This soul of success may be defined thus:

"Courageous seeing ahead."

That is the best definition which all the successful men with whom I have talked have been able to give me. It means the handling of your job to-day so that you are training yourself to do a bigger job to-morrow.

It sounds as simple as pie. In a way, it is simple. Successful men will tell you almost invariably that their success seems to them, in the retrospect, quite a natural evolution. "It all came as the result of work, hard work," is the explanation you get from practically all of them.

Many men have courage. They're full of it. They will butt their heads against anything in front of them, but it is of no avail unless it is made effective by the ability to "see ahead," to know where the butting will lead and what it will produce. On the other hand, many have the vision. They can see ahead; they can tell how they would prosper and rise if they did this or that; but the planning is of no value unless it is backed up by the courage to step out and carry through the promptings of the vision.

This "soul" of success is the high spirit, the vital plunge, the incessant urge that makes a man run always on the track leading to big achievement. He works to-day because he knows everything he does must carry him to something better. And if he works in that spirit he ultimately gets what he is looking for.

I once commented on this to an eminent American psychologist. He gave this explanation:

"It is very natural, a thing grounded in a proper appreciation of human feelings. 'Birds of a feather flock together.' The man who has already succeeded, the employer, can spot every time the man who is going to succeed. It makes no difference whether the worker is a puddler in a steel mill or a draftsman in an architect's office or a salesman in a department store—the man above him, being possessed of the same characteristic, the determination to succeed, recognizes it and rewards it."

That explains how Charles M. Schwab knew at a glance that he wanted Eugene Grace, then a lowly subordinate, to succeed him as the head of Bethlehem Steel.

It is why Woodrow Wilson almost invariably asks a retiring government official to tip him off as to what man in that particular office is fitted to fill the higher job.

It shows why, if you happen to be the head of any establishment or branch of an establishment, you know at once to whom in the office you will turn over your desk while you take a vacation or while you are called out of town.

The possessors of this "soul" of success identify each other unfailingly. And the possession of it is a sure guarantee of promotion.

Any man who is without it can acquire it. The young salesman, covering a certain territory, decides to "take on" another line of stuff. From that moment he has the "courageous seeing-ahead" quality. The "bum" who braces up, quits the booze game, and pitches in to make his own way finds himself suddenly possessed of it.

The regulations, the copy-book texts, create the false impression that the mere observance of them will bring great success. It is not true. Their observance will keep you out of jail and in good health, and prossibly bring in enough money to keep the wolf from the door.

But if you want to succeed, if you want to excel, make one new rule for yourself, an eleventh commandment of work and business:

"To-day take a look into to-morrow, and make to-day bend the shape of to-morrow somewhat to your own purposes."

That's what Shaw, Carnegie, and the advertising genius did. It is what you can do. It is what you must do, if you want to succeed.

The Campbells Are Coming

By William A. Shryer

Author of "The Affair of the Missing Mummy," Etc.

Josiah Simms has a problem that has to do with radium and an astute German American and the Mann Act. In a note accompanying this story, Shryer says: "We are likely to have a discovery sprung on us any minute that radium has been found in a free state. It's got to come. It is going to revolutionize the world when it does."

THE Denver Special was ready and waiting. It lacked but a minute of a quarter of nine in the morning, and at precisely eight-forty-five the train would leave the Denver Union Station for its fast run to Chicago. The Pullman porters had already retreated from the platform, and were busily clanging the vestibule doors. Only three men remained on the platform beside the waiting train—the conductor, standing by the steps of the last Pullman, ready to wave the signal for departure; a porter at the entrance to the car next to the last; and a rather portly individual with a marked military bearing, who walked stolidly up and down before the fidgeting colored man.

The stolid passenger carried a heavy grip, which he had refused to relinquish to the porter. Instead, he had presented that obsequious menial with half a dollar, accompanying the gratuity with a request in German-American speech: "I will say when I get on; not so?" He had given this implied command five minutes before. In the meantime he had trudged up and down with marked precision, puffing at a long, thick cigar. As he marched, his attention was directed with constant, though furtive, vigilance in the direction of the entrance gate.

"Only a quatah of a minute, boss. Dis train leaves right on time, sah," the impatient porter warned the German.

As the darky spoke, an athletic, blond giant rushed through the gates and ran headlong toward the last Pullman. The German, witnessing the hurried dash of the belated passenger, calmly threw away the remaining stub of his cigar, handed his grip to the nervous porter, and with evident relief climbed aboard. Instead of entering the second car, he crossed the vestibule to the last sleeper, rapidly passing through to the smoking compartment in the rear.

From behind the curtain of the smoking room he heard the entrance of the tardy arrival, who laughed and joked with the conductor over his narrow escape from being left behind. As the newcomer yielded his baggage to a grinning porter, the German cautiously stepped into the narrow aisle and noted with satisfaction that the seat in which the luggage was deposited adjoined his own. He verified this by a covert examination of the small red slip he held in his hand.

Satisfied with his observations, and with himself as well apparently, the watcher slipped back to the smoking room and resigned himself to the alternate contemplation of a fresh cigar and his own image in the glass opposite. He smirked at his own reflection, twirl-

ing his upstanding, grayish mustache, patting his thinning gray hair, and with evident self-esteem carefully arranging a few straggling wisps that marred the even symmetry preserved by the wide, shining part directly in the middle of his round, sleek head. In spite of his clean and careful appearance, however, it is doubtful that a casual observer would have been so favorably impressed as was the gentleman himself. The end of his nose was almost flat, causing one to wonder if it had grown so or whether it had been sliced off with a razor or perhaps with a more sinister weapon. His skin also was far from smooth and regular, being marked with pits and dents, the result of acute acne years before. Altogether his smiling reflection would need more than its surface charms to induce a feeling of confidence on the critical observer.

Assuring himself of the likelihood of continued freedom from interruption, he withdrew from the inner pocket of his waistcoat a long, official-looking envelope. It was postmarked Washington, District of Columbia, dated four days before, and addressed to Major A. Dermstott, care of German consulate, 122 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

The first inclosure was a short note on the official paper of the German embassy, and contained the following instructions:

Operative No. 287 has succeeded in the discovery of sufficiently valuable data to warrant your immediate presence in Colorado. An explosive of extraordinary possibilities is being employed by one Douglas Campbell in connection with certain mining operations on his property near Trinidad.

No. 287 has been in the employ of said Campbell for a period of forty-eight days. A copy of his report is inclosed. It is apparent that further progress in securing possession of the necessary information so desirable to the imperial government is beyond the capabilities of No. 287.

The latter advises that said Campbell is about to leave for the East. Go to Denver at once and await advices from No. 287 as to the exact date of Campbell's departure. Accompany him without fail and with no regard for expense secure the secret of this explosive. You are relied upon to allow nothing to interfere with the success of this mission.

The German carefully folded this communication, and opened a second from the same envelope. It was shorter than the first, and contained the following information:

A. DERMSTOTT, ESQ., *Denver, Colorado.*

Mr. Douglas Campbell leaves Denver for Chicago on the sixth, via the Denver Special, or by the following train, which leaves around noon of the same day.

A snapshot of Mr. Campbell is inclosed, to insure unmistakable identification.

He has shipped a pound of R. to New York City, by Wells Fargo. He expects to dispose of it there. No. 287.

A persual of this message was followed by a close scrutiny of the snapshot accompanying it, which showed a tall, handsome, well-built man dressed in the rough, careless garb of a miner. Except for the change in dress to new and somewhat expensive "store clothes," the likeness between the tardy arrival of the morning and the man in the picture was perfect.

"It is not to doubt," Major Dermstott muttered to himself. Perfectly satisfied on this score, he carefully placed the message from No. 287 beside the first, as well as the snapshot. He next devoted his attention to the copy of the report from No. 287 mentioned in the first communication. Its interest was sufficiently absorbing to warrant the close study devoted to it by the methodical Teuton, as the following reproduction may disclose:

REPORT OF No. 287 (Copy).

In respect of explosive employed near Trinidad, Colorado, by one Douglas Campbell.

Following instructions, arrived in Trinidad two months ago. Two weeks later secured employment at the Dorothy Mine, operated by Douglas Campbell. For over a year all operations carried on by owner with help of but one man.

The mine is a mountain some four thousand eight hundred feet high. Title contested three years ago by Consolidated Exploration Company, carried on appeal by them to supreme court of Colorado, but decided against them in favor of Campbell.

Mine worked for silver up to April, 1914. Nothing but surface blasting carried on since, following peculiar explosion resulting in the death of one of Campbell's miners. Entire mountain shows traces of silver, gold, lead, copper, and zinc, all in more or less unim-

portant quantities. Also numerous traces of other metals common throughout the State. Unusual outcropping of uraninite over entire property. Nothing exactly similar within a radius of thirty miles.

Since my employment have witnessed two most stupendous explosions, more than substantiating advices relative to their character responsible for my presence here.

On each occasion the blasts had been prepared by Mr. Campbell himself, without my knowledge. They were shot by electricity from a distance of about a mile, Mr. Campbell notifying me of the blasts, which we witnessed together from a perfectly safe distance.

The power of these explosions was terrific. A first rather faint report was followed by a detonation terrifying in its intensity. It was followed by a concussion that would have thrown us both to the ground, but for the precaution insisted on by Mr. Campbell that we lie flat as he made the electrical connection. A blast of hot, scorching wind rolled down the mountain ahead of the flying mass of dust, steam, and smoke due to the blast, and even at a mile's distance proved suffocating and most uncomfortable.

Two days after each blast the heat around the center of explosion abated sufficiently to allow an examination of the ground. As we approached, the devastation was awful and complete. Within a radius of two thousand feet dead birds and dead game lay thick at every few steps. Every vestige of vegetable life had been reduced to ashes and cinders.

The center of these explosions resembled the crater of a volcano. There were traces of every metal previously mentioned, but all in conglomerate fusion. There were absolutely no traces of uranium, though in each case I remembered generous outcroppings of uraninite thereabouts.

The most astonishing result, however, was the presence of radium in its pure metal state. It was to secure it that Mr. Campbell had caused these terrific explosions as he set me to gathering every atom of it. From one explosion we recovered eight grams. From the other a little better than nine and a half grams.

It is worthy of mention here that this radium was not placed in lead receptacles. Instead, Mr. Campbell employed boxes of some alloy he had perfected himself. It appears to have all the properties of steel except that of hardness. Also it will not tarnish nor rust, is very ductile, is absolutely nonradio active, and possesses remarkable heat-resisting properties.

Regarding this alloy he seems very willing to talk, although he will not say a word in explanation of the explosions. It appears that he has perfected a receptacle of this alloy in which he places a small quantity of radium, and by some ingenious mechanism injects another element I have been absolutely unable to discover. The result is a rise in temperature that he claims will heat the water of a boiler containing three thousand gallons to 212°, and maintain it with no decrease in the power of the radium employed.

As near as I can estimate the cost of the radium to Mr. Campbell cannot exceed five dollars a gram. It is therefore self-evident that he has discovered a means of cheap power that will revolutionize industry, if he has his device perfected as he claims to have it. It is regarding this result that his sole interest concerns itself. With the radium he must have, he is many times a millionaire, as there are evidences of at least two hundred explosions.

After each explosion Mr. Campbell carried the radium to Trinidad, and on each occasion I attempted to reproduce the same effect during his absence. We have plenty of dynamite, and I am sure he employs it to secure his result. My use of it in locations similar to those he had chosen, however, has been fruitless. There is some secret of his method I cannot discover.

Mr. Campbell goes East with a quantity of radium soon. I am to remain while he is away. I am convinced this will prove a waste of time. I have done everything I could, and investigated every inch of the property and buildings. There is absolutely no clew to show his method of securing such formidable explosions.

I await further instructions. No. 287.

It was possibly the third or fourth time that Mr. Dermstott had carefully perused this somewhat remarkable report. With each perusal his imagination had presented new and startling possibilities.

"Marvelous," he murmured to himself. "What a weapon for warfare!"

Carefully replacing the papers and pinning them into further security, he lighted a fresh cigar and gave himself to satisfied contemplation of the success he expected to achieve.

Roused from his absorption by the first call for lunch, he arose, peered into the car aisle through the smoking-room curtains, leisurely performed a careful toilet, and betook himself to the dining car ahead. As he entered the diner he noted that the belated passenger whose arrival he had witnessed with such interest was already seated. The German waved aside the proffered direction of an important head waiter, and seated himself opposite the tall, blond giant.

"I hope you will not object," he said, with a short, curt bow. "I greatly dislike that servants should presume to direct my movements. I always do exactly contrary to their wishes. It is the only satisfaction I can get out of them in your country."

"They've got us trained a lot better than that," the young man replied with a smile that showed genuine amusement.

As he smiled, the big, broad-shouldered blond was very pleasant to look upon. He was browned with exposure, naturally suggesting an out-of-door employment. His high, intellectual forehead and thoughtful brown eyes insured studious leanings, however, and probable scholarly training. As his face settled into repose, lines of authority and responsbility disclosed themselves. Because of them it was hard to guess his age. He might be forty, or even ten years younger. As a matter of fact, he was exactly thirty-two.

"You're not an American, then?" the younger man continued.

"No. I am German, though I have done a great deal of business in America. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Dermstott. My card, sir."

The young man politely accepted the card, and read:

MAJOR ADOLPH DERMSTOTT,
Hotel Touraine,
Washington, D. C.

"Pleased to meet you, major. I'm sorry I haven't a card. I'm an engineer, and my name is Douglas Campbell. Headquarters—Colorado." As the young man gave these particulars he smiled and shook hands with the German.

"You are a mining engineer, is it not so?" inquired the major. "I have just come from a visit to a number of your Colorado copper mines. I have sought to buy quantities of copper, but it has been what you call a difficult job. So little of copper and at such terrible prices."

"That's a little out of my line," replied the American, "but I can imagine you have had your troubles. This war of yours has made copper prices hum out here. Before the war you could have bought a hundred copper holes for a side of bacon."

"I could wish I had made some of those side meat bargains then. But here is our food. It costs almost as much as copper, so let us do full justice to it."

As they ate, the German entertained his new acquaintance with a flow of talk that stamped him as a conversationalist of no mean order. To the American the experience was a most grateful one, for his four years of mining life had presented little opportunities for companionship with men of education so well informed or so affable as Major Dermstott.

Their meal finished, the new friends returned to their own smoking apartment, where Campbell was presented with a cigar by the German. Its exquisite aroma and soothing effects accentuated a feeling of well-being begun by the excellent meal.

"I believe you said you were in the mining business, Mr. Campbell," suggested the major. "If not interested in copper, I suppose you have been getting rich with gold or silver perhaps?"

"No, not exactly," the American replied, stretching his long legs comfortably. "I have done some silver mining, but it had been rather unprofitable some time before the war started, and I got out of it just a little too soon. However, I have no cause for regret on that score, as by great good luck I stumbled onto a discovery that has put me on Easy Street for the rest of my life. For almost three years I have been mining radium."

"Ah!" exclaimed the German. "So! But I thought your Colorado uranite had been proved to yield a very low percentage of radium; only fifteen or twenty grams to the ton, and even less in most cases."

"I believe that the tests of the government have proved that the ordinary method of extraction bear little promise of a practical nature. However, a discovery I happened to make bears no relation to the tedious and costly

method of securing a few grams of radium bromide from a great mass of uranium-bearing ore. 'I have discovered actual radium, free and in a metal state. Since the war radium has increased in price from thirty-five thousand dollars to fifty thousand dollars a gram. During the past three years I have recovered a little over twenty pounds, troy weight, of pure radium."

"Mein Gott!" exclaimed the German. "But such a quantity of radium would make of you a regular Crœsus."

"It ought to," replied Campbell calmly. "But you must remember it is hardly like possessing that much in government bonds, for instance. The market for radium is not what might be described as 'extremely active.' As a matter of fact, I am now on my way to New York City, where I hope to dispose of a pound of radium. I anticipate a good bit of running around, and probably the consumption of not a little time, but as I am prepared to sell it for about twenty per cent of its actual market value, it is possible that I may have better success than otherwise might obtain."

"Ah, so!" commented the major with immediate interest. "Do you mean to say that you will dispose of your radium for ten thousand dollars a gram?"

"Well," replied Campbell, "not exactly as you have expressed it. I do not propose to peddle it around at ten thousand dollars a gram. However, if I am sufficiently fortunate to discover some one man or some group of men willing to take it all I will sell it—at a reduction."

The major became soberly concerned, and extracting a gold-mounted pencil from his pocket figured rapidly on the back of an envelope. Completing his computation, he thought for a moment, and then said:

"I think I shall present myself as a prospective purchaser of a pound, if you want to let it go for a couple of millions."

"You will be as welcome as the flowers in May, major," replied Campbell, thinking his companion was attempting a bit of German humor at his expense. "I haven't a pound on my person, but if you have the two million about you I'll give you a bill of sale."

"No, no!" protested the German seriously. "It will take some few days to raise so much of money, but I think it can be done. I am all in earnest. Do you accept my offer?"

"Why, certainly, Major Dermstott. Nothing could please me better, as I fully expected to spend a month securing a buyer. The radium will arrive in New York by Wells Fargo Express several days before I get there. I am going to Detroit for three days after we arrive in Chicago, and by that time you may tell me whether or not you have changed your mind."

"I do not change my mind," replied Dermstott sternly. "I will buy your radium, if it proves to be as you claim. When do you leave from Detroit?"

"This is the sixth," meditated Campbell. "I shall visit my fiancée three days. That will be the eighth, ninth, and tenth. Yes, I shall leave for New York on the fast train which leaves Detroit at six o'clock on the evening of the tenth. That will land me in New York early in the morning of the eleventh."

"That is settled, then," replied the major. "Where shall I find you in New York?"

"I shall stop at the Hotel Furnald."

"Very good." The German made a note of the time and place in his pocketbook. "And where shall you go from New York?"

"I expect to go to Washington," answered Campbell. "I hope to interest the government in a little patent that has engaged a good deal of my time and thought during the past year."

"So!" The major nodded cordially. "I must arrange to go on with you to Washington. I have many friends there and some influence in official circles. It may be an assistance to you I shall be glad to afford."

"That will be extremely kind of you. I know no one in Washington, and any help in getting on to the ropes will certainly be appreciated."

"It is a bargain, sir," the German

said, rising and shaking hands with the American. "And now, if you do not mind, I shall take a little siesta."

Dermstott left his companion in the smoking room, and before settling himself for the nap he had expressed a desire to secure, retired to the observation car, and at one of the small tables wrote a long telegram, which he later translated into a code from a book he guarded carefully from any passing eye. The completed message he handed to the conductor, with a five-dollar bill and a stern admonition that it be dispatched at the very first stop.

Before the call for dinner he managed to secure an hour's repose, to all appearances being dead to the world as he lay stretched across his parlor-car seat. He was aroused by his companion of the afternoon, who smilingly suggested that they eat dinner together.

During the process of this important function the major did most of the talking, and regaled his companion with many stories of strange peoples and strange places.

For the remainder of the trip the two were together constantly, but only when forced by politeness did the major make any reference to their first conversation or its result.

It was only as they drew into the Northwestern station in Chicago at two the following day that Major Dermstott made direct reference to their bargain.

"I shall be busy here the rest of the day, so shall say good-by at the station. You do not leave before midnight. Be very careful, and do not let this wicked city beguile you." He laughed. "I shall see you at the Hotel Furnald before eleven o'clock on the morning of the eleventh. Au revoir."

"Good-by, major, and good luck. I'll be there, never fear," replied the American, as he left to secure a taxi for across the river.

The rest of the day passed quickly for the Westerner, who found the sights of a big city a pleasing novelty. However, he was beckoned on by an interest greater than any he found to lure him in Chicago, and as he stepped from the train in the Detroit station the next morning he wasted no time in being driven to the home of his sweetheart on Lawrence Avenue.

Despite the early hour, he was given a royal welcome, a tempting breakfast with Dorothy Simms being delayed by many excited questions, as well as by the need for loverly communion so long anticipated and so fervently enjoyed by both.

The two had been lovers for five years, and the girl, small and appealing, with deep blue eyes and a mass of curly brown hair that crowned her well-shaped head, reflected a thoughtful tenderness.

"It has seemed such a long, long time," she whispered, as she nestled in his broad-shouldered embrace. "It seems almost too good to be true that we shan't have to wait much longer."

"In a month more, sweetheart, we'll hunt up a sky pilot. We're rich, Dorothy; beastly, vulgarly rich."

"Don't joke about it, dear; it's too serious."

"I'm not joking a bit, dear heart. It's true." He then told her of his meeting with the German, assuring her that even if this means failed he had every prospect of securing twenty times as much if he wanted or needed it.

"My!" gasped the girl. "It's too big to comprehend. Come and eat before everything gets cold. Maybe in time I can school myself into realizing that my big, blond sweetheart is a millionaire, but if you tell me you can at last get away from that dirty old mine and live where people don't eat with their knives I'll be satisfied with five thousand dollars a year."

The hours passed swiftly and happily, and on the morning of the third day the Westerner suggested to his sweetheart that a visit to her uncle, Josiah Simms, was a duty and a pleasure he could not leave without performing. He made an appointment with the latter over the telephone, and just after lunch walked around the block and entered the attractive house on Burlingame Avenue, where the old retired lawyer welcomed him effusively.

"Well, well, glad to see you, my boy!

'Tain't the fashion for the young bloods to waste much time on us old ones any more. Didn't think you'd remember old Simms, but you did, eh? Regular John D. now, Dot tells me. Sit down; sit down."

The old man bustled about fussily, wiping his old-fashioned, steel-rimmed spectacles with his huge silk handkerchief, flicking imaginary dust from the furniture with the tails of his long, loose alpaca coat, and peering curiously at the smiling young man. Josiah Simms was a character in the neighborhood, having, as he repeatedly warned everybody, retired from a lucrative criminal-law practice at sixty that he might fittingly enjoy the remainder of his youth. Douglas Campbell enjoyed the old man thoroughly, and entertained a respect for his judgment that he never failed to show, an attitude that secretly pleased Mr. Simms immensely.

"You knew I couldn't leave without saying howdy, Mr. Simms, and besides I want to consult you semiprofessionally."

"Humph!" grunted the old man. "Thought so. Murder will out. Well, let's know the worst at once. Wine, women, or song?"

"Neither," laughed the young man. "I want you to draw a will for me."

"Lord love us, you'd think the man was seventy-five and expected to kick the bucket any minute. What in time do you want a will for?"

"I'll tell you, Mr. Simms," replied Campbell soberly. "Through no fault of brains or work, I am suddenly worth a good many million dollars, and it seems criminal to risk safeguarding those I love. I have in my possession actual radium worth—well, I won't try to tell you what it's worth; you wouldn't believe me. But I have the radium, and I know where there's a hundred times more that belongs to me by every good right and title."

"What's this? What's this? Colorado 'Arabian Nights,' or just having fun with an ignorant old man?"

"I was never more in earnest in my life, Mr. Simms. I have discovered a method of securing actual radium in its free state. After a terrific explosion that killed one of my men I discovered radium on the spot of the explosion. I also found close to it another metal in a free state. This would not have been remarkable except for the fact that some fourteen or fifteen other metals were present, but all in a state of conglomerate fusion. I tried for months to reproduce the conditions, and the entire story of my experiments is contained in this envelope, which I wish you to retain. In the event of my death all you need to do is follow the directions I have carefully outlined, when millions of dollars' worth of radium may be secured for my heirs, who are to be Dorothy and my mother, share and share alike."

"You are certainly loading me down with a pretty heavy responsibility, my son," replied Mr. Simms soberly. "I am not so sure that I care to undertake it at my age."

"You must, Mr. Simms," earnestly insisted Campbell. "You really must, for the most important thing I have yet to tell you, and I don't know of a soul I dare trust it to but you."

"Well," Mr. Simms reluctantly answered, "I'll listen. Won't promise, but I'm still young enough to be curious."

"I have solved the power problem of the world, Mr. Simms, and if anything happens to me you must see that it is preserved for the good of all the people. I have here a little device made of an alloy I have discovered. Within it is less than a grain of radium. It also contains a very small quantity of the other metal I referred to. By placing this little box in any boiler up to three thousand gallons capacity I can maintain a temperature of two hundred and twelve, and continue to generate steam at absolutely no cost whatever after installation. I reckon if the boiler will last for a thousand years it will continue to generate steam at no cost for that length of time."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated the interested Mr. Simms. "But what raises the temperature? The box is not hot now?"

"That is one of the secrets, but I'll tell it to you. It is raised to the high degree of heat by the simple injection of pure water. It was only by discovering this effect of the water that I was able to duplicate the original explosion. I have perfected this little device so that by setting an indicator the amount of water to be added is attended to automatically."

"It will absolutely revolutionize industrial conditions," excitedly exclaimed the little old man. "But can you explain just what the water does?"

"No, I can't. There's a lot about radium that men who have studied it for years don't even try to guess. Water on radium alone has no effect at all. In fact, it is through hidden streams that most of the radium is supposed to have been carried down to its present state. I can't explain the failure of the other metal to fuse, either, but the fact remains that I find them unfused, and side by side after every dynamite shot, following an explosion that is simply terrific. All I had to do after reasoning out the presence of water in the original explosion was to pipe water to the spot I wanted to test, arrange my shot, and fire it by electricity from a point about a mile away."

"Very curious, very," mumbled the old man. "Well, I'll draw you a will, call Ellen in, and we two will witness it. Won't take five minutes."

Mr. Simms pecked away at his typewriter for two or three minutes, and presented a document about an inch long.

"Sign here." He pointed. "Short and sweet, but the lord chief justice himself couldn't break it. Ellen—I say, Ellen—come in here and write your name."

The servant entered, Campbell signed, and the two witnessed his testament.

"My boy," Mr. Simms said in a most solemn manner, "I shall certainly accept the responsibility of guarding this secret. It is the greatest thing since the introduction of machinery. I confidently expect to have light, heat, and power at an honest rate before I grow old."

"You will live to see it before another year rolls around, unless I die. If I do die, I'll expect you to accomplish it for me. I wanted you to know, as this discovery goes to Dorothy and mother with the rest."

"I understand. Just run along now, and let me think about this as I take my nap. Quit work for that reason. Always wanted a nap in the afternoon and never got one till I quit. Good luck, and look me up when you get back."

"Good-by, Mr. Simms. I'll see you the first thing on my return."

During the few hours that remained before his departure the young man spent in discussing the immediate future with his fiancée, and before he knew it his taxi was waiting to whirl him to the station. The sadness of the usual lovers' parting was entirely absent, however, for to both the separation to be endured was fraught with every promise of an early and lasting happiness.

"Good-by, boy," Dorothy smiled. "Come back soon. If you don't get the millions I'll be watching just the same. Good luck and write me every day."

"I'll come back, if I have to get here on a stretcher, and I'll have the millions; be sure of that. Select the bridesmaids, sweetheart, and when you get my wire, 'The Campbells Are Coming,' call up the minister. Good-by, I'll be thinking of you every minute."

"Good-by, dear. 'The Campbells Are Coming' will be my daily expectation. And write me every day."

Within twenty-five minutes from his last sight of a waving handkerchief he was deposited at the Michigan Central station, where he found an unusual number awaiting a chance to purchase their tickets for the *Detroiter*. As he was preparing to crowd in for his own reservation he felt a timid touch on the arm, and, turning, saw a remarkably handsome woman, quietly but elegantly dressed, evidently disturbed by

the crowded, impatient line between herself and the ticket window.

"I beg your pardon, but I am sure you will not resent my request," she said with an appealing voice that commanded his immediate solicitude. "I wish you would secure for me a ticket and berth to New York. I have been standing here for over five minutes, and have been crowded out of the line until I am afraid I shall miss the train."

"I shall be very glad to serve you, madam," he replied with interest. "Do not worry at all. We have plenty of time, and I can assure you a berth, if one is to be had."

"Thank you so much," she replied quietly, with every appearance of relief, and stepping to one side.

Within a few moments Mr. Campbell quietly secured two tickets and berth reservations, and rejoined the lady.

"Here is your ticket, madam. Also a lower berth. It was the last one, and I fear the man has given me an upper directly above you."

"I appreciate your kindness exceedingly," murmured the woman. "You may be sure that since they are selling upper berths there was every chance of my having a much less agreeable occupant above me than yourself."

"They are calling the train," he replied with a smile at her compliment. "We may as well go through, I think."

The Westerner saw his chance companion to her seat, and with a bow excused himself and retired to the library car in the rear, where he remained engrossed in his newspapers until the call for dinner. The head waiter met him at the door and ushered him to a seat with a woman, to the back of whose stylishly marcelled brown head he gave only a casual look in passing. As he seated himself, however, he was agreeably pleased to find himself opposite the lady he had aided in the station, who smiled warmly, and with polished self-possession started a conversation as with a friend of long standing.

Throughout the meal Mr. Campbell was interested in his companion to a marked degree, and by the time they returned to their Pullman he had learned that she, too, was on the way to Washington, but expected to stop in New York for a day or two, where her husband was to join her. She also told him she would be stopping at the Furnald, where she trusted she might have the pleasure of introducing him to her husband.

After a few moments in further conversation he left her for his after-dinner cigar, during the consumption of which he engaged in chance conversation with three or four well-dressed, prosperous-looking fellow passengers.

Soon running out of fertile topics of conversation, one of the party proposed a little game, and as the limit suggested was only ten cents all four were soon settled in a corner of the car, as rapt in their game as though the limit had been table stakes.

It was with a distinct shock of surprise that Mr. Campbell discovered that it was two o'clock before he had any idea the game had extended past midnight, when, with an apology for the necessity of a good night's rest, he left the party and started for bed. As he paused opposite the section containing his berth, he was considerably surprised to note that the upper had not been lowered, and, calling the porter, he berated that servitor roundly.

"I sure is sorry, boss, but I suttenly undastood de lady to say dat whole section was hers, suh. I suttenly did. You ain't need to worry, do'. I'll have dat berth down and made up in de shake ob a lamb's tail. Right away, boss; right away."

"Never mind, and don't talk so loud. You'll have the whole car up in a minute. No need to disturb the lady, at any rate. I'll just take another upper."

"Upper twelve is all ready, boss, and thank you, suh. I sure is sorry."

"All right; all right. Shut up and get your ladder."

As he climbed into his new berth it occurred to Campbell to wonder at such a strange mistake, but being drowsy he wasted little time in falling asleep, to awake next morning, almost an hour past his usual time for arising.

As he emerged from the wash room he met the usurper of his rightful berth as she was returning from the ladies' dressing room, and was greeted by a cheery good morning. As both were on the point of going to breakfast, they went together, finding more than sufficient material for interested conversation in the mistake of the porter, which both agreed was highly typical of the intelligence to be expected from an Ethiopian mind.

They finished breakfast barely in time to allow a hasty donning of wraps and gathering of belongings as they slid into the end of the tunnel of the Grand Central Station, and together they left the train and secured a taxi for the ride to their hotel. At the door, the lady thanked Mr. Campbell cordially, allowing him to precede her, which he considered but natural under the circumstances. He secured a small suite on the twelfth floor, received his mail, and immediately was shown to his quarters.

He had left word at the desk that Major Dermstott was to be shown up at once on arrival, but on reaching his rooms he discovered in his mail a note from that gentleman, which read:

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL: I have for everything arranged, but the sum of money is a large one, and it will be impossible for me to get it to you as early as I expected. However, by three o'clock at the latest I shall be in possession of the proper exchange.

Please remain in your room until I call or send a message. It may be imperative that I leave the city to-night, so by concluding our engagement as promptly as possible you will do me a great favor.

You will see or hear from me before three o'clock. Be waiting and ready. Yours with respect, A. DERMSTOTT.

"Guess anybody could wait with patience with five hours if he saw a million or two at the end of it," Campbell said to himself with a smile, as he composed himself comfortably in the biggest chair in the room, after disposing of his belongings to his complete satisfaction.

After reading for over an hour, he wrote a long letter to Dorothy. This pleasant daily task consumed the time before lunch, which he ordered served in his room. After a cigar he sat at ease and thought, and almost before he knew it sank into a doze, from which he was aroused by the telephone announcing Major Dermstott, who appeared a few seconds later.

"Right up to the minute, major," he was cordially greeted by Campbell, glancing at his watch. "The time surely flies in this town. I'd have bet a part of that bundle of cash it was hardly one o'clock."

"You, too, are punctual, my friend," the German politely answered. "It is not the cash I have, however, but a cashier's check on the Hanover National Bank."

"Just as good, major," Campbell laughed. He pushed forward a chair for the German, and was preparing to sink into another when a peremptory knock on the door interrupted him. Swinging open the door, he was confronted by a dapper little man, correct and proper to a fault as to everything but his manner, which was excited, bellicose, and as intimidating as his stature would permit. Immediately behind him towered a coarse, bullying individual who would have been recognized for what he was in almost any company.

The oddly assorted couple pushed into the room and rudely slammed the door.

"Which one is the scoundrelly hound, officer?" the little man fairly bellowed.

"That's the guy," replied his florid companion, pointing to Campbell.

"Open that door, Burke!" again the little man barked.

As he answered the first question the "flatfoot" had edged toward the door connecting Mr. Campbell's room with the suite beyond, and as his employer's second order was given the man quickly opened the connecting door and flung it back. Standing as though listening to the uproar, and considerably perplexed by it, stood the woman of Mr. Campbell's Pullman experience. She was apparently dressed in her night clothes, over which a pink wrapper showed evidences of having been hastily donned, and her long, beautiful hair

hung loose and waving almost to her waist.

Every one in the room gasped or stared, with the exception of the now thoroughly infuriated little intruder. The German was the first to break the silence:

"Why this disturbance, if you please?"

"Shut that door, Burke! We've caught 'em with the goods on. You thought you could keep it up and get away with it, did you, my beauty?" he yelled as the door was closing. "Well, we've got the evidence now, and for more than just a divorce. You'll feel smart defending a prosecution under the Mann Act. I guess not!"

Campbell was too dumfounded to speak, and the German again directed a question.

"Will you be so kind as to explain this melodrama, my friend?"

"It's beyond me, major," replied the Westerner.

"Beyond you, is it? Well, you're not beyond me, and I'll take care to see you ain't. If you're a friend of this home breaker," sputtered the little dandy, directing his remarks to the major, "you may be interested in learning what kind of scoundrel he is. Just give the evidence, Burke."

"Been trailin' this dame a week for her husband, Mr. Deming here. Jumps from New York to Rochester, and from Rochester to Buffalo, and from Buffalo to Detroit. Leaves Detroit last night at six bells. This guy goes with 'er, buyin' the tickets and reservin' a section. Wise guy on the train, only eatin' with 'er, and playin' cards in the smokin' room till after midnight. No upper made up, breakfast together next mornin'. Same cab—same hotel—same door—connectin' rooms, unlocked and all free and easy. Stay in together all day—lunch all cozylike. Then us, open door, lady about to peek in—neglijaylike. 'Nough said."

"Yes, but not enough done—yet!" thundered the outraged Deming. "Come on, we'll get a warrant, Burke." And as suddenly as they had come they left.

"So!" grunted Major Dermstott. "It would seem we have here a pretty kettle of fish. Is there anything you would care to tell me about it?"

"Everything, my dear major. This city life is too strenuous for me, and it looks like I need a little advice." He quickly outlined the circumstances of his acquaintance with the lady.

"So, so," commented the German, nodding his head ominously. "It is all very clear. It is blackmail or a very peculiar set of very convincing coincidences. This—what do you call it?—game is quite common, if it proves to be blackmail, but it is always a serious thing for those who do not care to have their reputations smutted. The people—they will laugh and shrug the shoulders, but—— Ah, well, we are all too prone to think ill of somebody else. Not so?"

"Any way the cat jumps, major, it's bound to be hell. I'm green to these city ways, but I don't need a telescope to see trouble ahead in capital letters. What shall I do?"

"I think you may leave that to me, for the time being at least. We must first learn a little something about this precious Mr. Deming. In the meantime you shall disappear. Come, we shall go at once. Leave everything as it stands. Have you a cap? Yes—good!"

The bewildered Mr. Campbell felt that he was in competent hands, and followed the major to the elevators without a protest.

"See me to the ground floor, my friend," the major suggested loudly, pulling Campbell into the crowded elevator with him. They shot down, and at the second floor the car stopped, when the two slipped out quickly. They then took the stairs more rapidly than Campbell imagined the portly Dermstott could travel, and in a few seconds were on the street and in a waiting taxi.

"Drive fast, my man, and land us at the Fourth Avenue subway, downtown side." In three minutes they were on an express, and in a few minutes more they alighted at Fourteenth Street, immediately boarding a local, which

passed three stations before the major took his companion to the upper air.

"We shall now secure a taxi and repair to the Wells Fargo Express Company office and get your pound of radium. I think we are perfectly safe from pursuit."

"Just a moment, major," Campbell replied. "I want to mail this letter."

In hurriedly deserting his comfortable quarters in the hotel, Mr. Campbell had stopped to do two things. The first was to extract from his grip a traveling cap, which he handed to the major. The second was to pick up his daily letter to Dorothy and shove it in his pocket.

He now bethought himself of the letter, and, stepping to a mail box on the corner, dropped it through the slot. It was picked up by the mailman half an hour later, and doubtless left New York that night. Mail deliveries in the North End of Detroit, however, are not very prompt, and it was not until the second day, or on the thirteenth, that Dorothy received her first and only love letter from New York.

For, as it developed, no other mail arrived on Lawrence Avenue for Dorothy Simms from Douglas Campbell, and by the sixteenth the little lady was almost distracted. During the five years of her engagement to Douglas Campbell she had never failed to receive a daily love letter from him, except at such times as he could not get a letter to a railway mail station for her. On such unfortunate occasions the final delivery always made up for every delinquency, as a letter for every missing day invariably arrived. It was with a feeling of perfect certainty, therefore, that the disturbed little lady decided something very dreadful had happened to her absent sweetheart. Mail was too easily sent from every point of New York to explain a delay on the basis of the occasional Colorado delinquencies. A fixed habit of five years could not be so easily broken, either.

Convinced in her own mind after the second day of waiting, she nevertheless hesitated to express her fears so quickly. On the third day, however, her fears overcame her diffidence, and when the eleven-o'clock delivery brought no letter from New York she hastened to her Uncle Josiah, interrupting that gentleman in an attempt to administer a much-needed bath to a struggling, yapping fox terrier.

"Hello, Dorothy. Give a hand here. Washing's a woman's work—always was. Ellen refuses. Wish I had."

"Oh, uncle, come in the house at once, won't you? I've something serious to tell you, and I can't attempt it with that dog yelling and jumping around. Please, Uncle Josiah."

"Why, certainly, Dot. Glad to oblige. Dog's sure to go roll in the garden, anyhow. Come right in."

The two entered the long, cool library.

"Uncle, something dreadful has happened to Douglas. I can give you reasons, a woman's reason and logical reasons. You know he writes me every day of his life? Well, it is now the sixteenth, and he left on the tenth. I received just one letter, three days ago. I don't have to point out to a psychologist like yourself that habits of five years are not suddenly broken in six days. Moreover, I have a premonition that is stronger than logic. He is sick, injured, or—but I won't even think of the worst. But it's one of the three."

"There, there, Dot! I'm an old man and don't know much, but I know Campbell and I know you. You are perfectly right. If he were just an ordinary poor chap I wouldn't give your premonitions a second thought, but he isn't. Not by a long shot. Let me see the letter."

"I needn't show it all, uncle. Only the first page contains everything you want to see," replied Dorothy, blushing faintly.

"Course, course," grunted the old man. "Hand over the first page then." He carefully adjusted his large spectacles, and read:

MY DARLING DOROTHY: It's all right. The major has written me a letter, which I found on my arrival here, saying that he has made all arrangements, and will have the money

for me by three o'clock. To tell you the truth, I have felt he was either kidding me or playing for effect, until I read his letter. It's a business letter, and right to the point. I'm not to stir out till I hear from him or see him. Well, that much is settled. I'll plank the money in the bank just as soon as the deal is closed, and then hike to Washington. If everything turns out as well there as it has here I shall return a "public benefactor," and you may marry a celebrity just as soon as you like. Get your picture in the paper, maybe.

The major writes that he expects to leave town to-night, so I assume he means that he is leaving for Washington then. If he does, I shall doubtless accompany him, for he has promised to be of assistance in getting at the powers that be. In any event I shall go on to Was' 'ngton to-night if everything turns out as I expect. You will therefore hear from me to-morrow from the Touraine, the major's headquarters in Washington, unless you get a wire from me to the contrary.

I wish you were along, my dearest. The last three days were won——

"Hum!" commented Mr. Simms, peering over his glasses. "That's all that's important, is it? Well, there are several things I don't understand. First, who is this major, and what is the reference to the money?"

"The major is a German he met on the train. His name is Major Dermstott, and he lives at the Hotel Touraine in Washington. I forget his first name, although Douglas told me. He offered to buy a pound of radium from Douglas and pay him two millions for it."

"Certainly a bargain. Must be worth over five times as much. Now what does this Washington business mean? Public-benefactor pose and all that?"

"Why, I thought he had told you. He proposed to turn over to the government his invention for creating cheap power. He wants to see the common people benefit and not a few rich monopolists."

"Shades of Utopia!" exclaimed the old man. "Why didn't the blithering, misguided dreamer tell me that? He hasn't a chance in the world. Could have told him in a minute, and fixed it for him to the queen's taste. Well, well, there's nothing like being young or in love. Now, tell me, did he inform you just how much he told this German?"

"I don't know. I was interested in the big lot of money he expected to secure for his radium, of course, but you know there were a lot of things more important than what he said to some German, and what some German might have said to him."

"Hum!" grunted Mr. Simms. "I reckon so. Well, well, this looks serious, Dot. I only hope he didn't say anything about those explosions to any German major, but don't you worry. I'll go right after this Don Quixote myself. Leave for Washington immediately. Anybody's safe in New York, superstition to the contrary. Nobody safe in Washington, much less a big, innocent yokel with a secret greater than the European war. Go on right home. Quit worrying. Telegraph you every day. Oftener maybe. Just leave it to your Uncle Josiah. Ain't dead yet—not by a long shot! There, there! Don't cry. Everything will be all right."

"It's all right, uncle. I'm crying from pure relief. I was afraid you wouldn't understand, but you're a dear."

"That's all right. Too old for hoodwinking, my dear. I've got to hustle. Ellen, Ellen! I say!" he yelled, relieving the tension considerably. "Pack my bag instantly. Goin' to Washington first train. Miss Dorothy will tell you when to expect me back."

Ellen assured instant action. The old man kissed Dorothy good-by and rapidly changed his clothes. Instead of his slippers, he donned a pair of elastic-sided Congress gaiters. For his shining nankeen trousers he substituted a somewhat less shiny pair. He brushed up a derby hat that Weber or Fields would have paid fifty dollars to possess, and completed his toilet by tying a long, thin string bow tie around his long, thin neck. As he slipped into his flapping black alpaca coat, Ellen brought down his bag, and in five minutes he was aboard a street car for the railroad station.

The scurrying Mr. Simms made the

twelve-fifty-five train with but a moment or two to spare, arriving in Washington the next morning at eight-twenty-six. He repaired at once to the Hotel Touraine, and after registering asked for the manager. Despite the laughable appearance of the little man, his requests were always met with quick atention by servants, who seemed to recognize an air of authority they were at a loss to explain. In the present instance he was ushered into the managerial presence with alacrity.

"What may I do for you?" inquired that imposing individual.

"I should like to know whether there was registered here on the eleventh, twelfth, or subsequent thereto, a Westerner by the name of Douglas Campbell. If not, please ascertain whether a man of his description has been brought here," following this request by a full and complete outline of Crawford's look, carriage, and bearing.

"I shall discover at once," replied the manager, pushing a button.

From the clerk who responded it was learned that no gentleman answering Mr. Campbell's name or description was in the hotel.

"Thank you. Have you had a Major Dermstott?" asked Simms.

"Major Dermstott? Yes, we have had such a guest. He has not been here for over a month, but his wife gave up their apartment only a few days ago. On what day was that, Jules?" he inquired of the still waiting clerk.

"She left on the seventh of the month, sir," replied Jules.

"Ah!" murmured the little old man. "I wish you would tell me something of this Mr. Dermstott?"

"The major arrived early in the spring of 1914, and has spent intervals here of more or less duration from then to now. I can tell you very little about him, except to say that he is a most affable and entertaining gentleman and received many German callers."

"Thank you very much," said Josiah Simms, retiring with every evidence of a fixed, but sudden, purpose.

He took a taxi at the door, and in a few minutes had launched his card on its devious way to the secretary of state. In a remarkably short time he was shown with marked respect into the presence of the secretary himself.

"Well, well, Mr. Simms," that gentleman greeted him warmly. "You do not get down to see us with much frequency of late. You had a hard row to hoe last September, but I am pleased to have this opportunity of thanking you in person. Our operatives reported the tremendous odds, but were unanimous in praise for the results accomplished in spite of everything."

"We didn't have a chance. But we threw a little scare into them at that. I haven't come down to collect any political laurels, however. More serious than that. What do you know about a certain Major Dermstott?"

"Dermstott, eh? Major Adolph Dermstott? I'll call in Mr. Appelby.

"Appleby," he said to that quickly summoned officer, "shake hands with Mr. Josiah Simms, and tell him anything you know about Major Adolph Dermstott. He can be trusted."

"Major Dermstott, sir," replied Appleby, "is a man about whom I wish I could tell you more. He has been in a certain measure a thorn in our sides. He started out by precipitating upon us a most uncomfortable protest from the Canadian government. He was in Ottawa at the time of the destruction of the Parliament buildings, which you, of course, remember. There was every evidence at first that the Canadian government proposed to sift that unfortunate affair to the bottom, but their entire interest stopped very suddenly for reasons at which we can only guess."

"Is the major identified with the German embassy?" inquired the much-interester visitor.

"Not that we know of, but he is a frequent visitor there, and commands great respect from all of the attachés apparently. We have had him under more or less constant surveillance, and I can only regret that our efforts have not been more successful. We should like to be in a position to hand him his

passports, but no tangible cause has presented itself. He is a most resourceful and wily gentleman."

"I had half expected to meet him in Washington. Do you happen to know where he is at present?" inquired Mr. Simms.

"Yesterday evening he was in New York. He stops at the Wilhelmstrasse Hotel when he visits the big town, and if it is important I can secure advices as to whether he is there to-day."

"Never mind, never mind," grunted Simms. "Have you a picture of the man?"

"No, but you won't need one. He is a fat German, with a nose like a hammerhead shark. Dresses like a dandy and sports a Kaiser Wilhelm mustache of grayish black. Parts his hair in the middle, and looks pock-marked. You couldn't possibly miss him in a crowd of ten thousand."

"Many thanks, Mr. Appleby. I think that will be all I need," Mr. Simms replied. With a nod of dismissal from the secretary, Mr. Appleby retired.

"Mr. Secretary," Simms said gravely, "if what I suspect is true, you will be in a position to hand the major his passports. But I shall need some help from you. Will you please give me a note to the proper superior in New York City, putting at my disposal such men and such help as I may require?"

"Why, of course, Mr. Simms, gladly. This sounds like an important matter you have undertaken."

"It is, Mr. Secretary. A young friend of mine has disappeared, and I suspect this foreign gentleman of very decided complicity in the matter. My friend possesses a secret that will solve forever the bugaboo of 'adequate national defense.' At a cost of a few million dollars he can girt the entire country with a defense so adequate that no invasion could possibly avail in the slightest against it. By the touch of a button you could sit in your office and raise a curtain of fire a mile high around the entire United States. It would continue to maintain this impenetrable barrier against all comers for thirteen hundred years, if necessary, at not a nickel of cost aside from the initial installation, and the damage it would do to the surrounding country for a mile away. You wouldn't need an army or a navy, nor would you need any war department. You could do it yourself."

"My dear Mr. Simms," expostulated the secretary. "Of any one but you I should suspect softening of the brain."

"No. It is most serious fact. I shall briefly explain." As he did so the secretary expressed wonder and conviction that were unmistakable.

"I place this matter entirely in your hands, Mr. Simms. The department in New York will be warned in advance to expect you, and you will find the best men available at your beck and call. I think you shouldn't waste a moment."

Mr. Simms didn't, except to wait for the quickly written note for which he had asked.

In less than three hours he was back in New York, being met at the station by three men who escorted him to a waiting limousine. From this he alighted a block from the Wilhelmstrasse Hotel, trudging on foot to that hostelry just in time to secure his lunch. Almost the first man he saw was a large German, accompanied by a strikingly handsome woman, dark, tall, and elegantly dressed. The three completed lunch at the same moment, Mr. Simms abbreviating his usual Fletcherization by several counts that he might retire at the same moment as the couple in whom he was so interested.

"I shall be going out at once, my dear," he heard the German announce to the lady. "Expect me back at four."

Mr. Simms grabbed his funny little derby and hastened out after the German, his long coat tails flapping ludicrously in the wind, and his thin, short legs working furiously to keep his quarry in view. As he left the hotel entrance he signaled one of the three men who had driven him from the station. The man threw away a perfectly

good cigar and crossed to the other side of narrow Broadway.

Mr. Simms padded after the major, whose identity he couldn't doubt for a second, and as the latter ran into the Times Square Building the little man was just a few steps behind him. Mr. Simms ran to the starter and asked if a man responding to the major's description had just gone up in one of the elevators.

"Didn't see 'im. Lot of people go up in every car, though. Like as not he did." It was three or four minutes before Mr. Simms discovered there were three other exits from the building, one to the subway, a second to Forty-second Street through the drug store, and the other to Seventh Avenue behind the battery of elevators.

"Humph!" he murmured with disgust. "Losing my cunning. Well, the jig is up for the day."

On returning to Broadway he looked around for the secret-service man, and, seeing nothing of him, decided there was a chance that experienced man had been more astute than himself.

"Better run up to the Furnald," he decided. "No use wasting all my time, if the 'Dutchman' did make a monkey of me."

At the hotel, he discovered that Mr. Campbell had registered on the eleventh, had left suddenly the same afternoon, and had not been seen since. Mr. Simms secured the attention of the manager, who glanced at his funny clothes and all but repressed a confidence he seemed on the point of making.

"It's all right; speak up. I'm his prospective uncle. Something very funny here, and I want to know all about it."

"You are right, sir," replied the manager, with reserve. "There *is* something funny about this business. The gentleman takes an expensive suite, occupies it but a few hours, and departs following an evident disturbance, and hasn't returned since."

"Have you had no word of him?" asked Mr. Simms.

"Yes, we have. Two, in fact. The first was delivered in the form of a note, asking us to allow the bearer to bring him some clothing, as he had been taken ill and was with friends. The other was a telephone message from the Consolidated Safety Deposit Corporation. The latter wished to have word with Mr. Campbell, as in his payment for a safety-deposit box he had given them a spurious ten-dollar bill."

"What's that? What's that? A counterfeit ten-dollar bill? Excuse me, but I shall return within the hour. Have no concern; I guarantee your entire charges. Good day, sir."

Discovering that the safety-deposit vaults were but a few blocks away, the little old man repaired thither at a fast trot, securing an audience with the manager without delay.

"Yes," replied that official, "Mr. Campbell secured a box at five-forty-five the evening of the eleventh. The only size we had available was fifteen dollars a year, and he paid with a ten and a five-dollar note. We discovered the next day that the larger bill was bogus. It was a very good imitation, sir, and was only by chance detected. The gentleman doubtless secured it unwittingly himself, but we thought best to advise him immediately. We have not heard from him."

"Did he come alone?"

"No, he was accompanied by another gentleman. They were both in a great hurry, and as it was almost our closing time I paid no particular attention to either."

"Have you any idea what was deposited in the box?" inquired Mr. Simms.

"Certainly not," replied the manager, with some show of indignation.

"Of course. Of course," grunted Simms. "Well, we must determine the contents without a moment's delay."

"Impossible," said the official emphatically. "Absolutely impossible. Even granting my desire to do so, our boxes can be opened with only two keys, the master key we hold here and the other possessed by the tenant."

"Humph!" objected Mr. Simms. "It happens I have been receiver for two

safety-deposit companies in my time. Reserve your protests and kindly read this letter."

The manager read the communication from the secretary of state with growing respect for Mr. Simms. As he returned the letter he was as obsequious as a head waiter.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "This puts a different light on the matter. If it is a department investigation, I think it can be arranged. Do you suspect him of being a counterfeiter, sir?"

"It is hardly the time for me to express any opinion," replied Simms, with a quizzical half smile.

"It is most irregular, sir, but I shall make an exception in this case. Of course we have a very definite lien against the contents of the box, the payment having been made with bogus tender. I'll attend to it at once."

Within fifteen minutes, the door being swung open, the manager took the box to a private, booth, where the three peered into it. There was a single inclosure. It was a cashier's check on the Hanover National Bank for two million dollars, made payable to Douglas Campbell, and unindorsed.

"Drat my cats!" exclaimed Mr. Simms in considerable surprise. "I'd have bet a dollar to a doughnut it'd be something else."

"Plates maybe?" the manager inquired with ill-concealed curiosity.

"Maybe," replied Simms. "But tell me, do you think this check is genuine?"

"With no question of doubt, sir," the manager asserted emphatically. "I was assistant cashier in the Hanover for eleven years. It's as good as the wheat. I only wish it was payable to my order. What shall we do now, sir?"

"We'll put it back and lock it up. You will keep the duplicate key. I shall telephone at once for an operator to station himself here. This is a very important matter, and I trust you will not view this request with any reluctance."

"Not at all, sir. It will be a protection I shall gladly welcome on my own account, I assure you."

After arranging by telephone for the proper secret-service guard, Mr. Simms returned rapidly to the Furnald and again sought the manager.

"Your information regarding the counterfeit bill suggested a line of action I was somewhat precipitate in carrying out," he explained apologetically. "The results have upset certain conjectures I had formed, so I have returned to secure a little more information from you. You spoke of a disturbance that preceded Mr. Campbell's hurried departure. Will you kindly explain what you meant by that?"

"The floor matron reported loud and objectional talking in Mr. Campbell's room. Directly thereafter two men hurried out with every appearance of high excitement. Our guest and another gentleman followed them in a very few moments, Mr. Campbell being without a hat. His companion invited him to ride down to the first floor, and that was the last any one has seen of him. The floor matron reported everything quiet within a few seconds after her first call, so the house detective took no pains to interfere."

"At what time was that, please?"

"A very little after three o'clock."

"Hum!" commented Mr. Simms. "And what about this man who appeared later with a note? Can you show it to me?"

"I am sorry. The messenger came at about nine o'clock, after I had left for the day. The assistant manager reported it to me the next morning. The gentleman was taken to the suite, and stayed there but a few moments, while a bell boy stood at the door. He took the note with him."

"I must examine that room at once, sir," ordered Mr. Simms. "I think this letter will serve as a sufficient guarantee of my intentions."

After reading the letter the manager thawed visibly.

"In just a second, sir," he promised with a bow. "I shall secure the key and personally conduct you there."

The two entered the room a few minutes later, when Mr. Simms carefully examined every drawer and re-

ceptacle, expressing disappointment over his inability to locate the object for which he searched with such diligence.

"Please see that no one disturbs anything. I shall pay the amount due myself, and you may hold the room as it is for two or three days, unless you receive instructions from me to the contrary."

"Very good, sir," the manager replied. "I hope we have laid ourselves open to no particular censure?"

"Something extremely important is missing, but I have no means of knowing whether Mr. Campbell took it with him or whether it was extracted later. In any event, I can see no possible cause for blaming the management."

"Thank you, sir," replied the manager. "We shall see that your orders are carried out to the letter."

Leaving the Furnald, Mr. Simms trudged back to the Wilhelmstrasse, rather tired in body and considerably perplexed in mind. As he entered his room he found awaiting him the operative he had lost sight of in the morning.

"Sort of lost you in the shuffle, sir," the man said with a smile. "That Dutchman is a smooth one, but by good luck I anticipated him very nicely. As I suspected, he went right through the lobby of the Times Building and boarded a Seventh Avenue car. I followed him in a taxi down the avenue, and saw him enter a building that looks like a private house, but which, I was told, is a sanitarium of some sort. The drug-store man on the corner had very little of good to say of the place, but since they buy none of their supplies of him that may be the answer to that, sir."

"How long did he remain?" inquired Mr. Simms, shaking off some of his ennui.

"All of three hours and a half, when I followed him back here. I made so free as to ask for your key and make myself at home. I thought it better than loafing around downstairs."

"Sure," responded Mr. Simms. "Have a cigar," handing the secret-service man a long, black stogie. The latter viewed the offering with some mistrust, but out of politeness attempted its consumption. Between splutters he continued:

"Major Dermstott goes to the place every afternoon, sir. The neighbors report that the nurses are all men, and Germans. They have seen no ambulance draw up for a number of days. They were of the opinion that the place is doing very little business, in spite of the three or four male nurses in constant attendance."

"That sounds interesting," commented Mr. Simms. "We shall have dinner here in my room, if you would care to join me, and to-morrow morning we shall stage a little action."

The action became a reality at nine o'clock the next morning. A huge seven-passenger touring car came tearing up lower Seventh Avenue at a dangerous rate of speed. Directly opposite an old three-story building, with white curtains at every window, an old man with a cane attempted to cross the street in front of the approaching machine. Excited yells of warning arose from the sidewalks; the car attempted to veer to the right when, with a united groan from the horrified pedestrians, the old man fell headlong and lay white and still in the middle of the street.

With grinding brakes the car stopped within its length, a little man with a flapping alpaca coat jumped nimbly from the seat beside the driver, quickly followed by four other men from the tonneau behind. A heavy robe was thrown over the fallen man, who was carried quickly to the sidewalk, where the evident owner of the car ran among the fast-increasing crowd asking for information regarding the nearest doctor.

"Day's a lot o' doctors in dere, sir," a small urchin volunteered, pointing to the house with curtained windows. The excited little man directed his companion to carry the victim within immediately, and, crowding back the curiosity seekers, the four men, flanked by the chauffeur and Mr. Simms, carefully deposited their stricken burden on the top step and rang the bell.

The summons was answered by a

burly German dressed in a hospital orderly's uniform, who permitted the invasion of the sanitarium with ill-concealed reluctance.

"This man has just been run over, and has been badly hurt," one of the men explained. "Call your doctor at once."

"The Herr Doctor is but eating his breakfast below. Bring the patient this way, and shut the door on that mob," the orderly snapped. He led the way through a hall that bisected the building from front to rear, on either side of which were rooms with hospital beds, but all apparently empty. A small operating room showed at the rear on the right, and as the orderly preceded the men with their wounded burden he quickly closed the door opposite the operating room, which clicked with a patent lock.

As Mr. Simms brought up the rear he noticed this maneuver, and, quickly slipping into the room adjoining, found the communicating entrance unlocked. He cautiously opened the door, and saw a man either asleep or desperately ill. He was lying on his side, with his face away from the door, and the agile Mr. Simms tiptoed softly to the bed and peered over the sleeping head.

With a shrill whistle he announced the success of his discovery, when the room was quickly filled by the five men, followed by their erstwhile victim dragging the large auto robe behind him. The real patient was quickly wrapped in the warm robe, tenderly lifted from the hospital bed, and rapidly carried to the front door.

As the orderly witnessed these remarkable proceedings he had retreated downstairs, yelling at the top of his voice and cursing in German in a manner doubtless worthy of all praise. As the party reached the door they found it locked and barred, but with a short iron bar, carried in under his coat, the chauffeur smashed the glass and splintered the fastenings in short order. Four men rushed up from the basement, but on finding themselves confronted by drawn revolvers threw up their hands.

"This game is up, my friends. Get down to the cellar, where you belong. The first man to make a hostile move will be shot like a crow. Git!" Mr. Simms uttered this parting shot as the men carried his friend down the steps and through a wildly curious crowd upon the sidewalk. The sick man was propped as comfortably as possible in the back seat. Two men got in behind, leaving two others to disperse the crowd. To one Mr. Simms directed:

"Telephone the manager of the Furnald that we're on our way. Tell him to send up Doctor Boughton to Mr. Campbell's suite."

Doctor Boughton and the manager himself were awaiting the arrival of the party, and a trained nurse stood by the bathroom door. The stricken man was quickly put to bed between warm blankets, and carefully examined by the physician.

"Unconscious from the administration of some narcotic. Heart action and pulse very fair, and not at all alarming. Insufficient feeding also apparent. I'll just give him a weak hypodermic, and feel sure he will recover consciousness within an hour. I will order some stimulating broth, which you will give as I shall direct, Miss Gay. I shall return by ten-thirty, but should he arouse in the meantime give him the broth and a tablespoon of this medicine and allow him to go back to sleep. On no account must he be disturbed." As the doctor gave these directions he prepared to leave.

"Just a minute, doctor," pleaded Mr. Simms. "When will you allow him to talk? It is vitally important."

"The only important thing to him is recovery. Nothing is very important to a dead man. You will kindly follow my directions explicitly. He may be able to talk for a few moments to-morrow, but I can tell about that much better this afternoon."

Mr. Simms immediately cleared the room and retired to the ground floor. To his niece he sent a telegram:

Douglas found. Been ill, but doctor says everything all right.

Having carefully verified the prescribed number of words, he paid for the message, and returned to Campbell's sitting room, where he paced up and down with worried, fretful steps. Twice within the hour he was shooed from the door of the bedroom by the nurse, and as he was about to make a third attempt the telephone bell tinkled.

"Come right up to his sitting room. I'll have the door open. Don't make a sound," Mr. Simms whispered into the receiver.

The operative who had shadowed the major the day before entered in a few seconds.

"Big fire at the Wilhelmstrasse Hotel, Mr. Simms," he reported. "Started in Major Dermstott's suite. I was stationed at the rear fire escape on that floor when I heard a terrific explosion from the direction of the major's rooms. Each suite is separate and fireproof, but from the heat I expected the whole building to crumble in. I slid down the fire escape to the floor below and gave an alarm, but before the department could get there the show was over. Every last thing in that suite was burned to a cinder, and the entire water supply from cellar to garret put on the bum like a flash. I was the first man in after the steam escaped, and the place was less like a furnace. In the bathroom I found about enough of the major to wad a shotgun; his wife, almost as bad, in the adjoining bedroom. Winds up that end of the business, I guess."

"Has any one discovered the cause of the fire?" inquired Mr. Simms tensely.

"Nope," replied the operative. "But I noticed something very queer in the bathroom. There is a funny little metal box behind the bathtub, shooting sparks like a pinwheel. It was too hot to touch, and I hurried up here to see what you might think about it. I don't think any one else noticed it, and the suite has been roped off and one of our men placed on guard. It's too hot in there now to hold any inquest for some hours, and if you want anything done there is plenty of time."

"Do you know any place we may have a small lead box made?" Mr. Simms asked excitedly. "Also where we may secure a pair of aluminum pincers?"

"Right over on Seventh Avenue we can get a lead box made, and the Italian that runs the joint will know where to get the aluminum all right. I never saw him stumped on any metal job yet."

"Then let us get there at once," Mr. Simms ordered.

Mr. Simms secured a lead box with a tight cover after a half hour's wait, and the aluminum pincers were also found for him by the metal worker recommended by the operative. With these they hastened to the Wilhelmstrasse. The two had no difficulty in securing access to the Dermstott suite, the devastation of which aroused the little man's wonder and astonishment.

Behind the remains of the bathtub, Mr. Simms had no difficulty in finding Campbell's missing box of alloy with the small cap gone. With the aluminum pincers he gingerly transferred it to the lead box he had taken the trouble to have prepared, wrapping the small package in a piece of asbestos cloth he had also procured on the way.

As the two were about to retire they were interrupted by the arrival of another secret-service man. The latter held in his hands a coat and vest peculiarly entwined about a framelike object which closer inspection clearly showed to be the top of a straight-backed chair.

"One of our men found this across the alley in a yard behind the hotel," the officer explained. "There is an envelope in one of the vest pockets addressed to the unfortunate victim of this explosion, sir. It is quite evident that he had put his coat and vest over a chair near the window, and by some strange freak of the explosion the top of the chair was blown through the window, together with the clothing."

The astonished Mr. Simms grabbed the clothing, and, drawing the envelope from the vest pocket, perused the contents with growing excitement. He carefully returned the papers after

reading, and stowed them away in the capacious pocket of his alpaca coat.

"Gentlemen," Mr. Simms said, turning to the operatives, "you have performed a service I shall not fail to emphasize in my report to your superior, as well as to Washington itself. Your intelligent and faithful work has been efficient and commendable in the highest degree. Whatever remains to be done now will be purely formal. I take it upon myself to assure you of that fact now, that you may give the proper hints to the man on duty. When the civil authorities request any information, just turn the job over to them, with as much innocent fiction as your conscience will allow. I must be getting back to my boy, so good-by to you. I shan't forget."

"I guess I understand, Mr. Simms," replied the older of the two, with genuine feeling. "I never liked working with anybody so well in my life. I'll stick around and see that everything is taken care of properly."

The pleased little man hastened back to the Furnald. He learned the doctor had called, finding Douglas Campbell awake and much stronger than he had expected to find him. The physician had left word with the nurse that Mr. Campbell might talk for a short time about ten the next morning unless some unexpected development occurred.

This interval of waiting seemed to the nervous Mr. Simms an eternity, but as he met Doctor Boughton the next morning the latter assured him that he need contain himself but a few moments longer.

"I'll go in now, as he will be awake in a few moments. Miss Gay advises me that he has been consuming nourishment at a tremendous rate, and that his wonderful constitution has thrown off practically all of the narcotic's effects. Just be patient for about fifteen minutes."

With a smile of condescension that irritated the fussy little old gentleman to the point of blasphemy, the doctor entered the patient's bedroom and closed the door behind him. The fifteen minutes stretched themselves to half an hour, but at last he appeared before the much perturbed Mr. Simms.

"You may talk with him now. He is bright as a dollar and hungry as a coyote. You will find him more interested in his food than in you probably, but you may have an hour."

"When can he be moved, doctor?" inquired Mr. Simms.

"Well, if you want to take Miss Gay along I'll let you ship him to-morrow or next day at the latest. It will take more than a railroad journey to kill that young man."

Before the physician finished speaking, Mr. Simms padded into the room, unceremoniously ejected the nurse, closed the door, and locked it.

"Well, Douglas, my boy," he affectionately addressed the patient, who was ravenously devouring the last crumbs of moistened toast from the bottom of a large bowl of soup. "Took your Uncle Josiah to save your bacon for you, eh? Suppose you start in and tell me the story. Learned a few of your exciting peregrinations, but there are a lot of gaps."

"I am glad you got here, Mr. Simms. I certainly need some advice, if I ever needed it in my life. Dorothy hasn't learned any of the scandal yet, has she?"

"God bless my soul, you haven't been lady-killing, too, have you?"

"I'll have to let you judge, Mr. Simms," the young man sighed. "If you'll just move that warm broth a trifle nearer I'll start at the beginning."

He took the entranced Mr. Simms from his arrival at the Detroit station to the point of leaving the subway four stations beyond Fourteenth Street. He was interrupted but very little, and covered the ground quickly.

"We took a taxi there," he continued after another cup of broth, "and drove to the Wells Fargo office. I had no difficulty in identifying myself, and with the package of radium the major took me to a very large testing laboratory not very far from there, where the chief laboratory assistant assured him my radium was absolutely the first in a pure metal state ever submitted to

him, and a few grains over one pound troy weight.

"The major then handed me a cashier's check on the Hanover National Bank for two millions. He left the radium with the head of the institution, giving him directions for shipping it I didn't hear. It was then almost five o'clock, and the major suggested that he take me to a quiet and rather obscure hotel he knew of, where we should have dinner and where I might stay until he had fully investigated the plans of the blackmailers. I objected to carrying around even a check of such size, as I had already begun to mistrust my ability to keep out of the clutches of these high-handed grafters down here. I insisted on banking the check, but since it was too late for that the major suggested a safety-deposit vault. From the telephone directory we chose the nearest one and went there."

"Have you any idea where you picked up a counterfeit ten-dollar bill?" Mr. Simms inquired. "They are looking for you down there on that account."

"What?" yelled Campbell as lustily as possible. "I haven't committed murder, too, have I, Mr. Simms?"

"Can't say yet," Mr. Simms replied with a broad grin. "They say troubles never come singly. But you can forget that counterfeit bill; it's been made good. Go on with your story."

"Well, we took a taxi quite a distance through a rather poor part of town, and at last pulled up at a building I should know again at once, but as to where it is located I haven't an idea. It smelled of drugs on the first floor, but we were shown up to the second, where a very comfortable sitting room and bedroom looked on the street. The major ordered a fine dinner, which we finished off with a special wine he said the place was noted for. I became exceedingly sleepy long before my usual time to retire, so turned in about eight o'clock, the major leaving with a promise to look me up the first thing in the morning. But I was sick all the next day.

"Well, the doctor showed up, and while the major stood by he talked learnedly and made a lot of funny passes. I knew at once he was trying to hypnotize me, but it didn't worry me a bit. I used to go to séances, and none of them ever got farther than making me laugh. They didn't give me much to eat, though, and the second or third day moved me downstairs to a regular hospital room. The doctor and the major showed up every afternoon, but by that time I was too weak to care or talk. I'd go to sleep while the Svengali person was doing his best. I don't know how long I was there, and can't tell you anything more that I think you would like to know. Give me some more soup, please.

"I forgot about that box of alloy. I gave the major a note before we had dinner that night, directing the hotel to allow him to bring me some clothing, as I didn't have an extra thing, not even a hat. He must have had some object in desiring to search my rooms, but what he could have expected to find is a mystery. He must have taken off my box of alloy, of course, but what he expected to learn from it is certainly beyond me."

"Well, my boy," responded Mr. Simms, "if you'll just cast your innocent gaze over these papers that were found after the explosion, a good many things will be a little more clear to your unsuspecting comprehension."

As the bewildered patient read the report of No. 287 his face was a study, and his perusal of the other documents completed his astonishment.

"Well, what do you think about that?" he exclaimed. "These astonishing exhibits certainly make a number of things very clear, don't they? It is now very evident that Mr. Dermstott stole the box for a very specific purpose. It is evident, however, that his curiosity proved his undoing, as I can easily enough guess what happened. He doubtless elected to examine the box while preparing for a bath, and by some mischance dropped it into the bathtub after removing the cap. If the water happened to be running either

in or out, that would be enough to explain the explosion. The force of the steam would be more than sufficient to throw the box out of the tub, and the cap was probably blown into the wall. The force of those explosions is something terrific."

"Yes, I know," replied the old man soberly. "I saw what it can do. There is another thing, however, that took me to Washington hotfoot. If you had had enough sense to consult me about your chimerical dream of turning over your discovery to the government I could have saved you a lot of trouble. You would have spent the rest of your life and all of your two millions trying to get that across in Washington. The power barons of this country would have stopped your clock so effectually you would never have suspected it was failing to run right on time every minute. You didn't have a chance on earth."

"But it has been done, hasn't it?" inquired the surprised Mr. Campbell.

"Once," Mr. Simms replied dryly. "We got a government-owned railway in Alaska, and it looked for a while as though the busy congressmen had had one put over on them, but—well, I shan't go into that. You may take my word for it that a lot of very powerful private interests have been very profitably served on account of it already."

"But, Mr. Simms, it is the dream of my life. What can I do?"

"Consult your Uncle Josiah, of course. We can rig up a little 'Eleemosynary Foundation' that will work like a charm. We shall have a few injunction suits probably, but the objectors or their backers have unwittingly given us all the law and opinions we shall need to knock the props from under them when the time comes. If that is all that worries you, lie back and go to sleep. I'll get right on the job."

"Well, there *is* one thing that bothers me a lot. What am I going to do about that threatened Mann-Act prosecution? It's bound to ruin me for life, win or lose."

"Eh, what's that?" spluttered Mr. Simms. "I guess not. By the way, did your smooth lady friend have a little red birthmark just below her right temple and a little black beauty spot on her chin?"

"Yes, I think she did. I'm sure about the mole, and seem to recollect a little cherry birthmark such as you describe."

"Well, then your innocent young life hasn't been ruined yet," replied Mr. Simms. "The major's wife answered that description, so it's extremely improbable that her shadow or that of her suppositious husband, Mr. Deming, will ever fall across your path again. I forgot to mention it, but the explosion that sent the major to his reward thoughtfully removed his lady at the same instant."

"Thank God!" breathed Campbell, with the look of a man who has just escaped drowning. "When does the doctor say we may leave?"

"He said you might be taken home to-morrow or next day if the trained nurse was taken along."

"No!" yelled Campbell. "Fire her on the spot and get a male nurse. We'll take no chances; women are apt to be funny. We'll leave to-morrow night. And I say, uncle, send a telegram to Dorothy at once, will you, please? Say 'The Campbells Are Coming.' Do it right away, won't you?"

"All right, Douglas. I guess my hour's more than up, anyhow. I've sent for the manager of the safety-deposit vault, and he'll be here in a few moments to secure your authorization to open the box and deliver the check to us here. We'll then be all set, and can get out as soon as we are ready. Go to sleep. I'll make all arrangements."

Mr. Simms hastened below, and, securing a telegraph blank, wrote:

The Campbells are coming.

"Only four words," he grumbled. "Just because he's a plutocrat is no reason for handing it to the telegraph barons. I'll fill it out myself."

The amended telegram was carefully verified, paid for, and sent as follows:

The Campbells are coming—hungry as wolves. Wash the pup. JOSIAH SIMMS.

Indigo Pete's "Guardeen"

By H. H. Knibbs

Author of "Waring of Sonoratown," "The Amazing Tenderfoot," Etc.

Pete finds himself suffering from too much prosperity and takes characteristic measures to relieve his condition

INDIGO PETE, erstwhile local bad man for the Mohave Desert and vicinity, had recently experienced a great longing to return to the devious and unparliamentary ways of his former career. His position as foreman of the Hopper Ranch offered no greater excitement at best than the breaking of an occasional bronc, a bear hunt in the distant White Hills, or a chest-to-chest argument with some new puncher who imagined, perchance, that because Pete didn't say much that he didn't mean it when he said it. And these mild diversions, to a man of Pete's appetite, were about as novel as water is to a fish. And as a crown to his sorrow was the realization that he had been sober so long that he had forgotten what a headache felt like. Pete did not long for a headache, but he was willing to assume the risk for the sake of the preliminaries. Sheer perversity of will warring against continual well-being urged him to invent an excuse to ride to Daggett and start something. As a counterbalance to this most natural perversity weighed the knowledge that he had a comfortable bank account, a vacation coming whenever he chose to ask for it, and the best string of ponies in the county. The thing was too easy. He groaned inwardly as he realized that he was becoming a decent citizen in spite of himself. His red past had faded to a domestic pink, and the future promised nothing brighter in the way of diversion than the bucolic gray of infinity.

He leaned against the corral bars and gazed at the notches in his gun, his sagging, sardonic eyelid half veiling a mournful eye. That amazing tenderfoot, Henry Wordsworth Hopper, had tamed him. Pete had to admit it. As for Mrs. Hopper—— Pete sighed. He would have joined the church to please her or made any other sacrifice compatible with his doglike adoration for that Titian-haired and altogether lovely lady. He was her lean and weather-beaten slave. Sighing again, he took mental stock of his possessions. Sometimes such a review served to assuage his spiritual loneliness. There were his ponies, an excellent lot, and among them a thoroughbred, a present from Mrs. Henry Hopper. Then there were saddles and trappings such as delight the cow-puncher's heart—a large, aggressive gold watch, an ivory-handled gun, a bundle of stock certificates in the bank at Daggett, and, hidden in the farthest recesses of his trunk in the bunk house, were his evening clothes. True, he had never worn them, but the mere fact that he possessed them filled him with a sort of reverential awe of them—and of himself. He never knew just why he purchased such raiment, although he remembered quite well the condition he was in when he made that astounding purchase, which was possibly the explanation of it. But even the knowledge that he secretly possessed a dress suit failed to awaken joy in his melancholy heart. And the secret of its being would have died with Pete had it not been for the Mohave woman. But the arrival at that moment of Ruddy Webster, with a message from the mines

for Henry Hopper, drove all thought of evening raiment from Pete's mind.

Pete acknowledged Ruddy's presence with a nod. Ruddy looked too cheerful and heartily pleased with himself to appeal to Pete.

"What's on yore mind?" queried Ruddy, swinging down and squatting beside his old friend.

"Nothin' but me hat," said Pete rather viciously.

Ruddy smiled to himself, but maintained a gravity of manner that expressed sympathy. "Yore liver all right, Pete?"

"Was when I seen it last," replied Pete.

Ruddy winked at his horse. "Pete, will you do somethin' for me—somethin' I wouldn't ask no other man to do but you?"

Pete was taken off his guard. "Sure!" he growled.

"Then jest please to lovin'ly and trustfully go plumb to hell, and write me how you like it when you git there."

Pete's grim face relaxed. This was like old times.

"I ain't had a fightin' chance to cuss for a month," Pete complained. "I'm gettin' tongue-tied from talkin' polite. Why, it got so bad yesterday I just rid out there a piece and practiced on the scenery, which sure needs cussin'. But shucks! I'm clean forgettin' how to cuss. And it didn't do no good. Jest like shootin' holes in the air and never hittin' anything. And then I run onto Mrs. Henry as I was comin' back. She said she seen me settin' my cayuse out there, lookin' poetical at the Lizard Butte, and that she come out to take a look, jest like I done. She said she reckoned I was jest revelin' in the landscape. Did I say 'Yes, ma'am?' I did. Now wouldn't that fade yore shirt?"

"Not mine," replied Ruddy. "I ain't no ladies' pet like you, wearin' a blue shirt, 'cause somebody says it's becomin' to my hoss."

Pete swore long and eloquently, which seemed to do him good. And, "It's hell when they ain't nothin' to cuss at," he concluded.

"You got a lookin'-glass, ain't you?"

Pete ignored the soft impeachment. Ruddy yawned. "Pete, you're sufferin' from too much prosperity. You want to shake loose and blow in a few of your accumulatin' wealth. Poker or liquor or somethin' is what you need. You're dead in the shell. Honest, you look sick."

"Well, I ain't," growled Pete.

"And you ought to see a doc. I know one in Daggett."

"You talk like I didn't. Mebby you'll tell me next where the bar is."

Ruddy grinned. "I'm willin' to *show* you."

Pete eyed his companion suspiciously. "You mean it?"

Ruddy got to his feet. "Do you?"

For answer Pete stepped stealthily to the stable. Ruddy grinned. Presently Pete appeared leading a fine bay thoroughbred, saddled and bridled as through for a fiesta. With his finger to his lips, Pete stalked to the back of the stables. Ruddy followed, leading his horse. A far-away look dwelt in Indigo Pete's eyes. The hue of domestic pink, in which his vision had so lately been submerged, promised to give way to the more blushful hue of immediate adventure.

He was doing nothing wrong in leaving for Daggett without notice to his employer, but he felt as though he were, which served the purpose.

Several miles out from the ranch, Buddy reined in suddenly. "Say, Pete, I plumb forgot that message for Hank."

Pete scowled. To turn back now would take the edge off his glowing anticipations. "What was it?" he queried.

"Monty said to tell Hank that the water was getting low. He ain't gettin' enough to wash his hands in, which means he's got to lay off the men."

"That all? Huh! You're a stockholder in 'The Indigo's Chance,' ain't you?"

"Well, I reckon!"

"And I got a quarter interest, ain't I?"

"Sure."

"Well, right here is where we call

a committee meetin' of two and vote to lay off till we get more water. The other stockholders, not bein' present, don't vote, so we carries the motion. Do you get me?"

"Yes. But is that accordin' to the Constitution?"

"It's accordin' to mine—which is sufferin' for a drink."

"Course. You look it. But is it accordin' to the Constitution of these here United States?"

Pete's lean face expressed a withering contempt for the question, but he chose to answer it as Ruddy had, as it were, passed the buck to him.

"Get yore hoss movin' an' I'll tell you about that without wastin' time. The Constitution of these here United States says that all men is born free and equal, don't it? Well, I reckon we're free. I don't see nothin' to stop us. And I likewise reckon we're equal to holdin' down 'most anything we bump into. Moreover, and waivin' aside all perogatives—as Hank says—the Constitution says all citizens what ain't in jail or dead is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Waivin' aside life and liberty, which we got, we're livin' up to that there Constitution by pursuin' happiness, ain't we?"

"I reckon you're right. I ain't seen nothin' what looks like happiness yet, but little ole happiness will have to go some when we git clost enough to take our ropes down and go after her. And speakin' of funerals, did you buy that hoss for his looks or jest because he was gentle an' you was afraid of gettin' throwed ridin' a real cow hoss?"

Pete grazed across at Ruddy with murder in his eye. What he said to that happy individual would have shocked the sensibilities of a Whitechapel coster, which is all that need be said of Pete's unbridled ability to express himself when warmed up to it. The sage withered in the immediate vicinity, and a lizard shriveled and rolled over on his back. "And lemme tell you," concluded Pete, wiping the moisture from his corrugated brow, "the hoss I'm ridin' was give to me by a lady that no red-headed cowpunch livin' can make slightin' remarks about without gettin' hurt where he lives."

Ruddy grinned. "Why didn't you tell me Marion Hopper give you that hoss? Think I'm a mind reader? What I'm gettin' at is that if you want to git to Daggett afore the bank closes you got to fan it. Course mebby you got a wad on you, but I ain't. I ain't got the price of a ham sandwich."

"An' you got the nerve to ride over and ask me to go to town with you and git full! Jest for that I'm goin' to leave you where you was raised and where you belong—right out here with the coyotes and tarantulas and suchlike insects. Yah-hoo!" And Pete set his spurs in the thoroughbred and was a long jump ahead of Ruddy before the other knew what had happened. The thoroughbred could run. Ruddy admitted that as he swung his quirt and tried to overtake Pete, who had turned and was mocking him with a gesture which necessitated the use of the separated fingers and thumb of his free hand; a gesture which Pete made doubly offensive by calling into use his bridle hand as his horse swung across the sand at top speed. All would have been well—as some one once said—if Pete's horse, *not* desert bred, had seen the gopher hole before he put his foot in it.

Pete was in no position to anticipate the next move, which he made without hesitation. The horse turned over in a flashing arc, and Pete found himself sitting on the sand several yards ahead of the horse, and that much nearer Daggett. He wanted to swear, but he lacked the necessary air pressure. Instead, he spat sand from his teeth and rose stiffly. The thoroughbred, uninjured, but frightened, began to run. Ruddy tucked down to work. The cow pony, slower than his aristocratic brother on the straightaway, was seconds faster in turning. Ruddy's rope whistled and seethed through the air. The thoroughbred came up with a jerk. Ruddy sat back as Pete limped up. "Yore hoss, mister."

This crowning impudence was too much for Pete. "Yore hoss, mister!" Without a word Pete gathered up the reins and mounted. Anger could not express his feelings; nor anger, garnished with profanity. Pete was indignant; too indignant at the moment to realize that he had first played the fool. A sprained thumb was the least of his troubles. He was literally at bay, and, being at heart a good sport, he acknowledged the corn.

"I aim to buy this hoss a pair of glasses when we git to town," he informed the silence. "Then I reckon I'll send East and git him a set of them snowshoes like Hank's got over his desk. Mebby then he kin see where he's goin' and quit tryin' to git there hind end first. I got some jolt that journey."

"Yore liver all right, Pete?"

"Tickin' as reg'lar as a clock. I reckon my heart lost a couple of beats, although it was workin' when I swallered it."

"You sure done yourself proud!" said Ruddy. "When you started to climb I could see Daggett atween you and the hoss and afore you made the turn and started down ag'in I could see the Spanish Peaks. I was jest goin' to ride back and tell the folks when you lit. That fall would 'a' killed a tenderfoot."

Pete nodded gravely. "Only thing what's worryin' me is I lit on my thumb. It's stiffer than a knot on a dead log, and I cain't hold a glass or pull a gun nohow."

"Don't you worry about that, 'cause I kin do yore drinkin' for you, and you ain't goin' to need no gun. You ain't got no gun on you, anyhow."

Pete reined in. His holster was empty. "Hank gimme that gun," he said as he swung round and loped back to where he had made the grand display. Ruddy watched him with open appreciation as he swung down without stopping and picked the gun from the sand.

"Ole Pete's a long ride from bein' a dead one yet," muttered Ruddy.

"Look at it!" exclaimed Pete disgustedly as he displayed a swollen and upright thumb.

"All you got to do is act like charity," asserted Ruddy. "Jest keep yore right hand from knowin' what your left hand is doin'—and I never seen a one-armed man yet what couldn't take a drink."

Pete actually smiled. Ruddy rode up until their knees touched. "Lemme look at that hook of yourn. Huh! Out of j'int and yore plumb scared to pull it back ag'in. Like that!" And before Pete knew what had happened he heard his thumb joint click, and Ruddy was grinning at him.

As usual, Pete hid his gratitude beneath the rawhide folds of expletive. But his thumb and hand felt easier. And Daggett, glimmering on the horizon, was nearer. Pete's watch told him that it was half past two. They could not reach town in time to cash a check in the bank. And for domestic reasons Pete did not wish to apply for funds to an individual, having in mind the shrewdness of his employer, Henry Hopper, in tracing lurid events to their definite sources. It was one thing to ride into town and accept entertainment of chance-met friends and another thing to deliberately and soberly borrow cash wherewith to "start something."

But Pete's luck had changed. The first person he met in Daggett was an erstwhile companion from the mines, who owed Pete a small matter of some eighty dollars and who, much to Pete's astonishment, insisted upon paying it there and then.

Their horses stabled, Ruddy and Indigo sought the barber shop as an actor seeks the dressing room to make up for his nightly performance. They hated to do it, but felt that they had to.

Shaved, brushed, and outwardly garnished, they stepped to the street. "Let's eat," said Ruddy, anticipating, in a measure, the soundness of "safety first."

"I'd kind of like to wash the sand out of my back teeth," said Pete.

"How much sand?" queried Ruddy suspiciously.

"All that I didn't spit out or swaller. And my thumb is sure hurtin'."

"All right. One drink on the sand, and one on the thumb. Then we eat."

"Suits me. But this here thumb is good for two drinks most any time."

"Nope. Not till we eat."

Pete scowled prodigiously. "Look here, Rud, who's buyin' them drinks?"

"They ain't no sand in my back teeth," said Ruddy. "And I ain't so blisterin' dry that I thought I could beat my hoss into town afoot."

"Anyhow, the bar is right handy to the eatin' house," said Pete, gently urging Ruddy across the street.

But, somehow or other, liquor failed to stir Pete from his moroseness, but rather it seemed to dampen the anticipatory ardor that had inspired him to seek the town.

"Ruddy," he said as they waited for their supper, "they's somethin' wrong with me inside. Them there drinks didn't do no good nohow, or else they ain't hit bottom yet. I'm feelin' worse'n I did when we hit town."

"You wait!" said Ruddy consolingly.

Fortified by a large order of steak and mashed potatoes, backed up by coffee and the inevitable pie, they rose and put on their hats.

The evening was pleasant, and a low moon tinged the atmosphere with a soft and mysterious radiance. Doors and windows were open, and many men forgathered on the street, talking and laughing in corner groups or strolling lazily from store to store.

Ruddy and Pete stood on the sidewalk, undecided as to what to do next. They were in town, and the night was theirs. Entertainment offered in several varieties. Still they hesitated. With the cessation of old habit, they had become as strangers to the charms of Daggett. They knew that they could have what they wanted and all they wanted of it. Their expedition seemed a failure.

"I couldn't feel worse if I was dead," mourned Pete.

"And you couldn't look worse if you'd died of pisen," was Ruddy's comforting assurance.

"I wish Hank was in town," sighed Pete.

"And his wife, eh?"

Pete shook his head. "Nope. Just Hank. He's the cheerfullest cuss that ever shed hair, and he ain't a drinkin' man, neither. But they's always somethin' doin' when he shows up. Seems things got to move when he takes holt of the reins. I reckon you and me is gettin' old, Rud."

"We sure ain't gettin' young, you poor, sufferin' coyote. Here I go and bring you to town and you ack like you was head mourner at your own funeral. First thing you know you'll be fallin' in love."

The idea was new to Pete. He had heard of such things as falling in love and getting married, but had never investigated these possibilities at close range. "Say, Ruddy, honest to gosh, how does a fella go at it to fall in love? Does a fella jest jump, or does he kind of slip off the edge backward —and nothin' to grab holt of?"

"Some does. Jumpin' ain't so risky. Here! Where you goin'?"

Pete was halfway across the street before Ruddy overtook him. "Where you goin'?" he queried, startled by Pete's strange manner. As Pete did not reply, it was only too evident that the morose foreman of the Hopper Ranch had at last made up his mind to "start something."

"Them drinks is beginnin' to work," Ruddy told himself as he followed his companion into the adjacent saloon.

Midnight discovered Ruddy and Pete seated at a table in the Princess Café, and opposite them sat two waitresses of that regal establishment, enjoying the unusual distinction of being waited upon by one of their vestal-white sisters who was still on duty. Although Pete and Ruddy each carried weight, so to speak, they were still rather diffident to the lone waitress. But not so the twain who sat in all the glory of their "good clothes" and ordered sustenance of great price in a manner copied from the proprietor's wife, who displayed many diamonds when dining at her lord's establishment and affected

the grand air, as is often the custom of those risen from the ranks.

Pete, his lean face almost beaming, inquired solicitously of his feminine companion "if she reckoned she would like another bottle of beer?"

Josephine, of the Princess Café, was really too embarrassed to reckon, but she took the beer.

Ruddy, anxious to please and not to be outdone, asked his inamorata if she would not like to celebrate the occasion with a little bottle of "shimpane."

Cleo, whose American name was Lucy, submitted that she was not averse to the suggestion—but champagne was so expensive!

Ruddy waved the demurrer aside with noble disregard of the wine list and ordered two bottles. He kicked Pete under the table as a gentle reminder that he had no money. But Pete, striving desperately to fall in love at first sight, misinterpreted the hint and asked Ruddy if he had the stringhalt.

Ruddy would have blushed, but there was no margin left to blush in. "My foot slipped," he explained.

"Have another steak," said Pete, gesturing toward Josephine's empty plate.

"Don't mind if I do. Here, waiteress, another T-bone rare; and tell the t-sheff it's for me."

"Would you like a little oyster?" asked Ruddy, leaning fondly toward Cleo.

"You're so comic! Ain't he, Josephine? He ast me to have a little oyster! Mebby he ain't the joke!"

"Mebby I be," assented Ruddy cheerfully. "I made Pete laugh onct."

"Well, you can't string my Pete any, can he, Pete?" And Josephine touched Pete's hard-veined hand playfully.

Pete jumped at this show of affection; but, meeting Ruddy's eye, he resumed his poise, such as it was.

"We got a secret," asserted Josephine, coyly inspecting Pete's watch that he had glanced at—for no special reason.

"Mebby we ain't!" chirruped Cleo, with a languishing glance at Ruddy. "Ain't we, Mr. Webster?"

"She called me 'Pete,'" said Indigo proudly.

"Oh, I know his name!" asserted Cleo. "It's Ruddy. He's et at this joint more'n onct."

"But never like this! This here's what I call some style! Reg'lar family party—me and her and you and him. Have some pie?"

"Mag!" called Cleo the debonair. "Just slip me a slab of that lemon pie. I'm in a hurry, please."

The waitress on duty was about to comply with the graceful request when Ruddy interrupted. "Sorry to keep you lopin' up and down the track like this, lady, but if you don't mind jest bring the whole gol-durned pie. It'll save you a couple more trips.'"

"Ain't he the joke!" gurgled Cleo, touching Ruddy's arm.

"My Pete ain't no joke!" asserted Josephine surreptitiously clasping Pete's defenseless thumb under the table. Pete straightened and tried to look pleased, but unfortunately she had secured the injured thumb. "I fell on it," blurted Pete.

"Fell on what?" queried Josephine with large solicitude.

"My thumb, lady. The one you're squeezin'."

"My goodness! And to think I was that careless!"

Cleo, having consumed one bottle of champagne, giggled. To think that a man of Pete's recognized ability should fall on his thumb! The idea was diverting, and Cleo giggled again.

"He like to got hurt," said Ruddy.

"Do tell!" gurgled Cleo.

"You do an' I'll blow your light out!" threatened Pete, glowering at Ruddy.

"Don't git mad, dear," said Josephine placatingly. "No gent ever gits mad at a friend."

"And I don't want ole Pete gunnin' for me," asserted Ruddy. "Ever see him shoot?"

"My goodness, no!"

"Show the ladies how you kin shoot," suggested Ruddy. He had also consumed a bottle of "shimpane," and the

idea of exhibiting Pete's prowess with a gun seemed logical.

"I got a sore thumb," apologized Pete as he jerked his gun from beneath the table and blew out an electric-light cluster above their heads before the assembled sirens could scream. "Kind of coarse work—but when my thumb is limber I can cut it a leetle finer."

Ruddy rose to protest that one exhibition was enough, but Pete's liquid ballast had begun to work. With the airy grace of a juggler he tossed a .45 slug across the café and shattered the flower vase on the cashier's desk. Then just to show that he was not embarrassed by auditors he drew down fine and cut the wire on a picture of Custer's Last Stand—and Custer fell. Josephine, frozen with terror, clasped an empty beer bottle to her ample bosom. Cleo, alternately screaming and begging Ruddy to "stop him," finally collapsed in a semifaint. His gun empty, Indigo beamed on his auditors and poured himself a glass of beer with his left hand.

"That's nothin'," Pete assured the trembling Josephine. "When I'm feelin' right I kin——. Where's the lady what was waitin' on us? This here bottle's gone dry."

But there was no response. Those who had been on duty had vacated the premises. Pete grew suspicious of the silence, and quietly reloaded his gun. He was not going to be caught unprepared. Meanwhile, the gentle Cleo and the trembling Josephine had risen, and seeemed anxious to depart. Pete had become suddenly quiet—almost oppressively so. Ruddy, even in his beatific state of mind, realized that Pete would bear watching.

Josephine gently suggested that they depart. She murmured something about "turning off the lights and locking up" as they gravitated toward the front door. But the spring lock on the door had clicked in place as the waitress who had been on duty left in some haste and considerable agitation. Josephine tugged at the door, too perturbed in spirit to think of turning the brass knob of the lock. Pete, to whom freedom of action was dear, imagined that they had been deliberately imprisoned and that the vanished waitress had gone for official help. He gestured to Josephine to step aside, and as he gestured with the barrel of his gun, Josephine side-stepped with alacrity. Pete threw a shot into the lock, and, stepping up, jerked the door open.

"We oughta turn off the lights," said Cleo.

"I'll turn 'em off," asserted Pete. And he proceeded to shoot out the string of clusters without delay.

As the last shot boomed, some one called from outside. Ruddy grasped Pete's arm in the darkness. "The town marshal!" he whispered hoarsely.

Pete felt equal to a score of town marshals, but Josephine's tremulous contralto, suggesting that he "beat it," had its influence. With Ruddy following as best he could, Pete navigated the darkness toward the rear door, and walked serenely into the waiting arms of a deputy. Pete, who had holstered his gun, stuck out his hand. The deputy felt something hard against his ribs and immediately put up his hands. "Keep 'em there, or I'll blow the roof off your dobe!" said Pete, and he backed away, followed by Ruddy.

Making a cautious detour, they entered the rear of the livery stable, saddled their horses, and led them out the back way.

On the edge of the desert, Pete reined in and glanced back at the town. "Daggett ain't what she used to be," he told Ruddy. "No chance for a gent to spread hisself no more. I reckon the ranch is good enough for me."

"It'll be all right at the ranch till some little rubber-eared deputy comes ridin' up and presents you with a bill for grub and damages. Then what you goin' to do?"

"Pay it."

"That's awful nice of you, Pete. But what about Mrs. Henry?"

Pete declined to discuss that possibility. If Mrs. Henry Hopper heard of his latest exploit—well, he would have to bow to fate and confess that his foot had slipped. That is, unless

he could prove an alibi. He vaguely remembered having asked the gentle Josephine to marry him before she had eaten that second steak. Or was it Cleo he had asked to marry him before Ruddy changed places with him at the table? Well, it didn't matter; he had asked somebody to marry him, and an alibi was his only salvation. He shuddered as he thought of his narrow escape. "Rud," he said slowly, "which one was yourn?"

"Why, the one I bought the chimpane for."

"Uhuh. You goin' to marry her?"

"Hell, no! You loco?"

"I reckon so. I asked mine to marry me."

"Which one? The one you was settin' with when I come in, or the other one?"

"I dunno. But I done it."

"Then," said Ruddy as a bright idea overtook him, "we better do some ridin'."

The horses, fed and rested and headed toward home, máde a record run.

Two shadows, wavering slightly as they meandered toward the bunk house, mingled with the interior darkness. Two horses, on which the sweat was drying in dusty streaks, munched alfalfa and dozed complacently until dawn. Pete awoke to hear Henry Hopper's voice calling him. The foreman slipped from his bunk and padded to the door. "Have you seen anything of Ruddy?" queried Henry Hopper.

"Sure! He's bunkin' with me. Rode in late last night with a message from the mines about two"—he had almost said "ladies," but blinked himself awake to add—"about shuttin' off the men down to the mine 'count low water. Ruddy didn't want to d'sturb you—late." And Pete yawned.

"Well, that's all right," said Henry briskly. "I sent for Monty, and told him to shut down yesterday. I couldn't find you, and happened to miss Ruddy somehow or other, so Monty and I held a committee meeting and voted to lay off the men for a while. I suppose that is satisfactory to you?"

"Well," and Pete paused to give his word weight, "I reckon that's what I'd 'a' said if you'd ast me."

"All right, Pete. By the way, Mrs. Henry told me to ask you up to the house for breakfast. Tell Ruddy to come along with you. Mrs. Henry is really worried about something, and she wants your advice. Some one telephoned from Daggett last night. She didn't tell me what the message was, but she immediately said she wanted to talk with you."

"Uhuh. Well, I sure would admire to talk to her, but I busted my thumb yesterday. Dog-gone bronc stepped in a hole and piled me."

"Then you'll have to let her doctor you up, Pete. You know Mrs. Henry thinks a whole lot of you."

"Which same does me proud. Hey, Rud, wake up and shake a leg. The missus ast us up to breakfast."

Ruddy, deep in dreams, sat up with a start. "Did they foller us?" he queried, blinking up at Pete.

"He's dreamin' of Injuns," explained Pete.

"Morning, Ruddy!" And Henry Hopper waved a greeting from the doorway.

"Mornin', Hank! I was comin' over yesterday when my hoss——"

"Last night, you mean!" corrected Pete. "I told Hank all about that."

"It was Pete done the shootin'," asserted Ruddy. "I only said for him to show the——"

"He's sufferin' in his head," Pete interrupted. "His hoss stepped in a gopher hole and pitched him. That's what made him late."

Henry Wordsworth Hopper nodded gravely. He was not unfamiliar with distress signals when they were so obvious as those which flared in the red-lidded eyes of Ruddy and in the sallow cheek of Indigo Pete. That they had been up to some mischief was only too evident. But Henry Hopper, with that largeness of outlook which had made him beloved by all who knew him, declined to recognize anything wrong with his friends. Still grave, he winked slowly at the two adventurers. "I was

in Daggett last night," he said casually. "Somebody started a row in the Princess Café about midnight. I happened to be waiting in my machine for Simpson when the marshal asked me to run round to the back door of the café and hold the fort while he investigated. I dislike such experiences, but I could hardly refuse. They have a strange notion in Daggett that I am somewhat of a peacemaker. Well, to make it short, I was standing at the rear door when a rowdy ran into me and stuck a gun in my ribs. Of course I did the only thing possible, especially as he informed me politely that he 'would blow the roof off my adobe' if I made a move. The men got away. We secured a lamp and investigated the café. It was a wreck. But the strange part of it is that the rowdies who made the disturbance used to be old friends of mine. I won't mention any names—not even to Mrs. Henry—because I believe in being loyal to one's friends no matter what they do. Perhaps I was a fool to pay for the damage done—and for a most extraordinary dinner, which included several steaks, oysters, beer, and even champagne, but, as I said, the men used to be my friends. Did you ever try bromo-seltzer for a sprained thumb?"

Pete blinked and coughed. "It might help," he admitted feebly.

"Make it two," said Ruddy. "My back's hurtin' like the toothache. I sure got a bad fall last night."

"I'll send it over right away. Mrs. Henry would come, but unfortunately she is in Barstow this morning. She took the ten o'clock train from Daggett."

"Honest to gosh, Hank!" Ruddy began, but Pete's emotion overcame him. With a bound he grasped Henry Wordsworth Hopper and drew him into the bunk house. Ruddy leaped from his bunk and seized Henry's free arm. The three whirled and cavorted about the bunk house in a wild dance until Ruddy gave up and sat down with his head clasped in both hands. Henry Wordsworth Hopper adjusted his raiment carefully. "I have something a lot better than bromo-seltzer up at the house. As I said, Mrs. Henry is in Barstow——"

And Henry was gone. Pete rubbed his head and gazed at Ruddy. "Say, Rud, I reckon we need a guardeen."

"There you go! You ain't never satisfied with what you got. If Hank ain't the amazinest little ole guardeen what ever come West, why they ain't none."

Not to be outdone in eulogy of his employer, Pete rose to the occasion nobly, considering the lateness of the hour at which he had retired. "He sure is the cream off the milk of human kindness, and the fella what says he ain't gits busted wide open."

"Let's go and rub down them hosses afore Hank gits a look at 'em," said Ruddy.

CASUALTIES BY CONVERSATION

GENERAL TASKER H. BLISS, who, after reaching the age of retirement, received the unusual compliment of being again named chief of staff of the United States army, was explaining that the casualties in the present war are not so high as people believe. He pointed to the estimates of the various allies of the United States that only from three to five per cent of their men engaged in battle are killed.

It reminded him, he said, of the Confederate veteran who was paying his first visit to Arlington, one of the burying grounds of the Union soldiers.

"So all the Yanks are buried here!" communed the Confederate, looking at the ranks of white tombstones. "Humph! We did a powerful lot of shooting, and I thought we killed two or three million of them. Somebody's been lying."

Senoritas and Swamps

By William H. Hamby

Author of "Money and Mollusks," "Room at the Bottom," Etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PART ONE

Allen Dawson, a young engineer known for his fearlessness in tackling hard tasks, has just resigned from an undertaking in New Mexico when he is engaged by the Continental Sugar Company to help survey the Zapata swamps in southern Cuba. His fiancée, Lola Simmons, has come with her mother to Santa Fe, hoping that he will aid in making the visit pleasant, and she is much disappointed when he announces that he must leave. A fellow engineer, Burt Williams, accompanies him. On the steamer from New Orleans Dawson meets Señor Casada and his sister Alicia, in whose family, it afterward develops, rests the title to the Zapata swamps. Although a Spanish student whom he engages to carry the chain for him tells Dawson that the Continental Company is planning a railway for the region, the other engineers on the ground seem discouraged. Dawson hears that instructions have been given by George Halderman, a boyhood acquaintance, and now general manager of the company, to the effect that he is to have the hardest part of the swamps to survey. After a perilous trip through a crocodile-infested morass, Dawson is discharged by the chief engineer, Hardy, but later engaged again by Halderman. Williams afterward tells Dawson that he has overheard Halderman say to Hardy that Dawson must be discharged at the least possible excuse.

(A Two-Part Story—Part Two)

IX.

FOR three miles next day Allen and his two Cubans had to pull and push and even carry the boat. The water got so shallow there were spots of dry ground. This ridge, if a rise of four feet in the land can be called a ridge, ran practically clear across the swamp north and south, cutting it almost in two; the smaller or east part, where Allen had been surveying, and the very much larger west end, into which the river carried a vast amount of water.

Dawson paddled in a circle around this part of the swamp, camping wherever they found a spot of solid ground at the edge, and when they could not they swung hammocks between trees over the water, as they did when surveying. He stopped to visit with each of the surveyors—three besides Williams. Jubilee Bob looked like a mountain preacher, whose congregation had all gone to a dance. But he was plugging away, and was Hardy's favorite.

Allen then crossed to the extreme southwest corner of the swamp. He had made a complete circle, and got a rough sketch of the whole thing. Here the swamp merged into the sea; this was the outlet of the river.

"I have it now," said Allen with the grim delight of finishing a job satisfactorily. "Pull away, boys—for some place to camp."

It was late in the afternoon, and no possible place within several miles.

They turned east. Dawson thought after a few miles they would find the ledge between the sea and swamp above the water in some spots. But they did not. At sundown they were seemingly in the midst of limitless swamp—slimy water three to four feet deep—clogged here and there with growths that made progress so difficult they all had to get out and push the boat through. One of the most troublesome of these swamp growths was a sharp-bladed, coarse grass that cut their hands and faces as they fought their way through it.

It was dusk, with only a dim light of the stars on the brackish water. The

cat-tails looked like a black army in the dimness, and distant groups of swamp trees stood out, a mere dark splotch on the water.

They turned the boat toward the trees. Possibly they could camp there. If they could cook some food and stretch their hammocks, protected from the mosquitoes by pabbelons, they could rest and sleep. To sleep in the open boat was impossible.

The two Cubans were paddling, and Allen took the oars. All were tired, but they threw an extra spurt of strength into the effort to reach a camping place.

The boat struck something so suddenly Luis, at the front, was toppled into the water and Ignacio and Allen thrown to the bottom of the boat.

Even before Allen scrambled up he felt water in the bottom.

The boat was badly snagged. He began scrabbling the stuff from the front end, and called to Ignacio to bring him some cloth—shirt, sack, anything. There was six inches of water in the boat before he found the hole—a gap in the bottom as large as his fist.

They were trying desperately but vainly to plug the leak, when their efforts were cut short by Luis, who, encouraged by an alligator, took a too sudden notion to get back into the boat. The water was up to their armpits. The bottom was mud. Allen stood there, perfectly dumb, looking at the stars for several minutes.

It was probably seven miles to the nearest land; a twenty-four hours' journey under favorable conditions. They had eaten nothing since noon, and were tired from a long day's rowing. That they might be attacked by herds of crocodiles was possible; that they would be followed and harassed by them was certain.

"Well," he said, taking a deep breath, "there is only one thing to do—get out."

He chose a direction, fixed it with a star, took one of the oars, and told the Cubans to find something to fight the alligators with. Then they set out.

At times the swamp became shallower. Once they sat down in the black water and rested an hour. At places they had to make wide detours to avoid the knife grass, hundreds of cat-tails, or the hellish tangles of mangrove roots.

About midnight, when they were almost hopelessly exhausted, Allen saw land ahead. There was no mistaking it; grass and shrubs were plainly visible only a little way off.

"Come on, boys!" he called. "Yonder is land—a place where we can rest."

It seemed queer that the water grew deeper instead of shallower as he approached, and it was nearly four feet deep at the very edge.

He sprang up out of the water onto the land. It began to break under his feet, and he ran to get to solid ground. But. the faster he ran the more he broke through. He got down on his all fours and crawled—the land rising and falling as though in an earthquake—and occasionally his hand broke through to water below.

Then he began to realize that it was not land, but *tembladero*"—floating land made of leaves and deposits that had accumulated enough soil to allow grass and shrubs to grow. Several times he got onto his feet, but it began to break under him, and he threw himself flat to keep from going through. He had gone a hundred yards before he had made this discovery. He called to his Cubans to keep off, and started on all fours back.

Once again he tried standing up. The bushes and grass around him were waist-high. The ground gave under his feet, he leaped and went through into four feet of water. Already almost delirious with the strain of the day and night, the horror of it—the hideousness of being submerged in this slimy, false earth—in the midst of this weird, hellish swamp, clutched him, engulfed him. He fought like one being smothered, and clambered wildly to get back on the surface, but the earth broke under his hand, and he felt his legs and body encircled by the hideous roots and muck in that black water beneath.

He shouted desperately for help, but the Cubans could not help. They could

not even get to him had they tried, and they were too scared to try.

It took him an hour to get back to the open water.

"Ignacio," he said when he could speak, "you and Luis go on. I will have to go very slowly—and may not get out." He had fought this swamp, he had hated it, but somehow now he felt lost, sinking as though it had him.

"No, señor," said Ignacio. "I go as you do; Luis he may do as he damn please."

Luis, more from fear than loyalty perhaps, stayed also, and the three staggered on all night, resting when they could a few minutes, striking with the paddles when the heads of crocodiles appeared above the black water. Mosquitoes stung afresh the blisters already on their faces and necks; stung even through their hair. Night, a wide, weird swamp, loathsome things in the water around them—and miles and miles more of struggle.

One of the surveying party picked them up at ten o'clock next morning and got them to the shore in their boat.

Allen slept all the afternoon and night in utter exhaustion. The next morning he set out by land for his own camp.

X.

One of the theories of the idealist is that mind and body caper on the green simultaneously; that a laughing, dancing muscle makes a laughing, dancing spirit, and a joyful mind makes an exuberant body; that a strong, active physique makes a strong, active, profound thinking capacity.

But it does not—not once in a few hundred thousand times, anyway. The greatest mental adventurer is a fellow who eats corned beef and cabbage and hoes in the garden, while the greatest physical adventurer, even in the moment of taking his life in his hand, is likely to be thinking about corned beef and cabbage. The most sprightly toe dancer usually has a mind about as nimble as a sea cow, while the soul of a darner of socks may dance all over the clouds.

In the three days after his return to camp, Allen Dawson felt in every muscle a great lassitude. He scarcely stirred from his mosquito-protected hammock. He was not sick, merely tired to the very marrow of his bones. But in that time his mind went on a regular orgy. His brain staged fights, long marches, riots, fireworks, color, passion, music, beauty—and stillness.

Without pencil or paper, he figured out the entire problem of the Zapata swamps; made complete plans of the work, and closely estimated the cost. He divided it; only that east of the ridge could be drained profitably. But his plan would drain that and put it into ideal condition for cane growing for less than twenty dollars an acre. There would be nearly two hundred thousand acres of cane land, worth from fifty to one hundred dollars an acre. That meant at least five million dollars clear from the project.

Why report?

The plan was his discovery. None of the other engineers would report favorably. It would be his personal report to George Halderman that would make that money for the Continental.

The thought made him clutch the netting of his hammock and hold it tight. After the Continental abandoned the project he could then quietly get some capitalist interested, organize a company, and reap the benefits of his own hardships and his own discovery.

Next morning he told the Cubans to get ready to break camp, that they were going to Conchita. This was glad news, and they went at the work in a trot. There was drink and dance and señoritas at Conchita. The swamp was over; there would be money now and fiestas.

Allen selected a high, open place for the camp that night. It could not be too high and dry to suit him. The open plain was dotted with scattering palms and covered with brown grass; a fresh, cool wind came from off the mountains.

At the edge of a group of palms, a half mile to the south, Allen saw an automobile and a tent, and a smoke arising from a supper fire.

"I wonder who is camping over there?" he said to the Cubans. But he was too tired to go over. Instead, almost immediately after supper, he spread a blanket on the grass, threw a light cover over him, and stretched out on his back, looking up at the stars, and had begun to doze when a slow, soft voice awoke him.

"Señor"—it was Ignacio—"wish to know who in the camp yonder. Et es Señor Casada and his seester."

"Señor Casada and Señorita Alicia?" Allen rose on his elbows. "Is that so? What are they doing out here?"

Ignacio shrugged. "I do not know, señor." His duty done, he went to bed, as the rest had, by dropping down on the grass near the cart.

Allen slept—and then awoke. He sat up straight and listened. Something had awakened him. He looked around, but saw nothing stirring. There was no moon, but the stars made trees and shapes visible. He thought of his friend Casada and Señorita Alicia, and looked away toward their camp. He could dimly see the white tent at the edge of the palms, and he saw something else—something moving between him and the camp, some figure like a man's.

Allen jumped up and walked over to where his Cubans were asleep.

Vega was missing.

Allen remembered Vega's outbreak when the automobile passed on their way down to the swamp. It was Casada and his sister that Vega blamed some way about his land, and since his return, half crazed by the hurt of his shattered arm, he had been more violent than ever.

Dawson got his gun, and, without taking time to put on his shoes, started across the plain in a swift run.

He had covered half the distance when he again saw the skulking form of Vega emerge from behind some palm trees about a hundred yards ahead. Evidently he had not heard his pursuer.

Dawson slowed up, and followed the Cuban more cautiously. But Vega was getting dangerously near the camp.

Allen quickened into a run. The Cuban heard him, looked around, ducked low, and dashed for the tent.

Allen fired—not to kill; Vega was half crazy—but the shot did not stop him. He took swift, direct aim, and fired again.

The first shot had aroused young Casada. The two men were grappling. Allen could not fire again.

There was a scream. The sister dashed out of the tent. But Allen had come up and seized Vega's one arm. The two men overcame him and tied him.

"Are you hurt?" Allen turned to young Casada.

"Not much, I think, señor," replied Casada, stepping back and putting his right hand up to his left shoulder.

"Oh, et ees Señor Dawson who has saved us. I'm so veery glad. You are not hurt?" Alicia had run to her brother's side.

"No, dear," he answered.

"Oh, I'm so glad," she cried; then, glancing down, noticed her night dress and gave a little shamed exclamation. She ran back into the tent.

Young Casada staggered and fell. Allen bent over him, opened his shirt at the throat, and turned it back in search of the knife wound. He was hurt.

"Oh!" a quick, sharp breath at his side. "Ees he hurt?" The señorita had hastily thrown on a wrap, come out of the tent, and was kneeling beside Dawson.

"I'm afraid he is," replied Allen. "Bring some water and a cloth and make a light."

Alicia obeyed with swiftness. Allen had found the wound—a stab in the left shoulder. It was bleeding profusely. He bathed it, bound a hard knot between it and the heart, and then made another pack of cloth and tied that close over the wound.

The young man had fainted, and the sister was crying in fierce agony:

"Oh, ees he dead? Oh, ees my brother—dead?"

"No, señorita; no." He laid his hand on her arm to steady her. "He has

only fainted." Allen carried the slender young man to his blankets. "He will be all right directly."

"Oh, I'm so glad, so glad, Señor Dawson! You are so veery good." She was completely reassured.

"I will go to the camp and get help," suggested Dawson.

"Oh, not, señor!" The girl clutched his arm. "I so—so scared alone."

But Ignacio and Luis, aroused by the shooting, approached discreetly with stick and machete.

Allen called, and they came in. He turned Vega over to them, and told them to get the cart and start with him at once to Conchita. Vega was not hurt.

"I will take Señor Casada in the machine to a doctor."

When they had disappeared in the dark, Allen turned to the girl standing beside him. He saw her shiver, and knew she was still at a great tension. She was standing close, her head was just on a level with his shoulder, her dark hair was loose, and a strand of it blew against his neck.

"Do not be afraid, señorita." He laid his hand on her arm reassuringly. "See, your brother is coming to, now."

"Oh, señor," she said in soft intensity, "you are so brave—and so veery kind! What would poor little me have done if had not you been here? We left our mother at Conchita; we were to make camp and go back for her, but we got lost and it got dark, and we had to camp. You sure my brother is not going to be veery hurt?"

"I am very sure." He stooped and examined the shoulder. "The bleeding has stopped. He will be all right directly—and we will start."

"How veery, veery luckee—is that the word, señor?" She laughed in nervous relief. "Luckee that you camp so near." She was standing so close her round, soft shoulder touched him, almost nestled under his arm, and, lifting her face toward the stars, he could see the perfect outline of the clear, delicate features and the black hair pushed back from a smooth forehead. "Possiblee," she said softly, "it was not—not what you call hem—luck? Maybee it was something up there, señor!"

"I hope it was." Allen spoke reverently. He had never felt quite so reverent before, nor quite so human.

Ramon stirred, regained consciousness.

"I will help you into the car," Allen said, assisting Casada to rise. "I am going to drive you to Conchita."

"Thanks, señor," said Casada. "It was indeed lucky you came when you did. He was very violent. He imagines that our father took land from him. But he did not."

Allen improvised a bed of the back seat of the automobile for Casada.

"Now you are comfortable?"

"Veery, señor; thanks." He was weak, but in no pain.

"You will ride in front, señorita." Allen assisted her into the car.

"You are so veery wise and kind," Señorita Alicia said as the car started forward cautiously toward the road. "You think of everything; I feel so safe."

Dawson had known a good deal of life, but little of it was gratitude, and expressed gratitude he had known scarcely at all. And there is a difference between gratitude and expressed gratitude. Honor and salary and victory make a man's spirit rebound, give him a feeling of purposefulness. But somehow nothing so satisfies his heart and makes his blood run warm with the gladness of life as to hear a worshipful soft voice say: "You do everything so well; you are right always, señor."

That feeling of being right for somebody, a feeling that he did not have to think about it, to plan, to work, to scheme, to risk—but that already he was right in somebody's eyes regardless—gave Allen a feeling he had never known and did not recognize.

XI.

The Conchita physician had pronounced Ramon Casada's wound insignificant; he might safely proceed with his mother and sister and a hired chauffeur to their home in Camaguey.

Allen stood watching the machine down the dusty road, with a nameless sense of loss and depression. But a little white hand slipped from the side of the car, and for a moment a handkerchief fluttered, and he turned away, smiling, toward the correo. He would read his mail and write some letters while waiting for his Cubans to come up with the cart.

There was a registered letter, with currency in full payment of his time and his assistants' to the day on which Hardy had discharged him. There was also a letter from Halderman:

DEAR DARE-DEVIL: Report to me personally, not in *writing*, at Camaguey, as soon as you are through. I have ordered Hardy to pay you and your gang up to the time you had the trouble with him. I will personally pay you and one assistant, which is all you will need, until you finish your scouting observations. As ever, G. H.

"One assistant! Well, I'll be—— That means," Allen said savagely, "that the five others I've kept for three weeks get nothing." He tore the letter into four pieces and threw them into the gutter. "Isn't that like George Halderman?"

He dug into an inner pocket for his travelers' checks, and counted the leaves—one hundred and ninety dollars—every cent he had left from his sixteen years of risky jobs.

It would answer. He managed to get them cashed, and when his Cubans came paid all six of them in full and caught the evening train. His ticket left him nine dollars.

It was evening when he entered the Camaguey hotel. A bell boy that spoke a little English took his bag and led him down a long corridor flagged with brick—the same brick that had paved the old Spanish fort from which the hotel was made—and let him into a deep, cool chamber on the ground floor. It had a lofty ceiling, and a window eight by twelve feet opened upon a garden—a three-acre garden of magic.

Tired as he was, Allen put out the light and went to the window. The moonlight was on the trees and vines and flowers, and the fresh, clean breeze that stirred among the luxuriant foliage and blossoms was saturated with the mingled fragrance of coffee blossoms, of magnolia, of violets, of pungent pines.

After a cool shower bath, Dawson threw open wide the shutters and stretched out in bed, propping himself up with two pillows so he could see the moonlight on the garden. On the soft, fragrant night air was the faint tinkle of a guitar and the voice of a lover serenading his señorita.

"I wish," thought Allen drowsily, "I could stay here a century or two."

Next morning he learned that Señor Halderman had gone with some Americans to Marti and would not be back for two or three days.

"I'm glad of it," said Allen, and instead of going out to explore the town he went into the coolness of the garden and dropped into the easiest seat he could find.

What a contrast to the swamp! What a place to rest! And somehow he never before had so wanted to be still.

If Lola were here, she would like this. There was poetry and romance here. This garden stirred little, tender emotions that had never come to light before. No wonder Señorita Alicia had soft eyes and a musical voice and a gracious movement of slim white hands, living in this land of rest and dreams!

"Why!" He arose with an immediate inspiration. "They are home. I'll go call on her brother." And although he did not confess it, he hoped her brother would not be at home.

Allen got into one of those low, easy-riding coches, gave the driver the address, and let him do the rest.

The home of the Casadas was one of the twenty others in the block, all run together, with the doors opening directly back from the sidewalk. It was an old building, and the heavy knocker looked as though it had pounded for many generations.

A Cuban maid opened the door. It was a simple room—very little furniture. But he noticed the floors were marble and the finishing of choice

wood. Back through an open door he saw a patio with flowers blooming.

Señorita Alicia came at once, holding out her hand in a sort of glad, shy way.

"Et ees very nice you should call on poor little me."

She wore a simple linen house dress, her arms and neck covered.

"It is delightful that I have the chance to call upon you, señorita," he said.

She looked very charming in her flutter of excitement at the unexpected visit.

"How is your brother?" Allen asked.

"Better. He go a little while ago to meet Señor Coleman; he and Meester Simmons on business."

"Coleman? Simmons?" echoed Allen.

"Yas—are you acquaint with them?"

"I know Mr. Simmons quite well." Dawson wondered what they were doing in Camaguey.

Allen felt a distinct sense of pique as the mother entered and took a chair near the daughter. He had heard that Spanish girls never visit with a man unless the mother or aunt or an accredited chaperon is with her. But never before had he realized how effete and distasteful such a custom was.

"I'm veery sorry," said Señorita Alicia apologetically, "but my mother cannot understand one word of English."

He looked at her straightly, wondering if that was regret or an assurance. Her eyes did not meet his; she was looking at a fan in her hand, and her long lashes dropped innocently.

"It is too bad," said Allen, with a slight, quizzical twist to his mouth. "Will you tell her I said it is fine weather we are having?"

The señorita's lips quivered around a mischievous smile a second, and then she soberly interpreted to her mother. And the mother smiled and nodded graciously at the young man.

Allen was curious to know more of the life and the customs of the Cubans, especially of the señoritas.

"How do you amuse yourselves?" he asked.

Alicia lifted her arched brows and shrugged—a sober and reproving shrug.

"Oh, señor, we do not live—for—what you call hem?—fun!"

The statement struck Allen as a distinct reproof. He had thought girls always lived for fun of some sort.

"How do you spend your time? Do you play outdoor games—tennis, say?"

"N-o." Alicia touched her cheek with her fan, a very fair cheek that meant nearly pure Andalusian blood. "No, I do not go out much—the sun, he ees very treacherous with a young lady."

He laughed. "Well, what do you do to pass the time?" Allen was really curious.

"I go to dances sometimes; I veery much like to dance. But mostly I read and think."

"And what do you read?"

"I read the Russian and the French no-vels and the German philosophies and my own poets—and the English, too."

"Jerusalem, you do!" Allen was astonished, and he showed it.

She smiled, and puckered her brows a little reprovingly again.

"We are not all ignorance, señor. We go to school in Paris and New York."

"I should say you are not! And what do you think about?" he asked naïvely.

She smiled at that, bent her head until she looked out shyly from under her long lashes.

"About beauty."

"You mean yourselves?"

"No-o, you—bad man!" she pouted. "About happiness and——" Her face grew suddenly wistful, almost tragic in its still yearning. "I think veery much about some perfection—some beauty that always seems just a little farther off than I can reach."

He looked at her very soberly. She was a slender, almost frail, girl, but with latent fire in every movement and under the lightest glance.

"I have often heard," he remarked quizzically, "that Spanish people have quick, fierce tempers. Have you?"

She laughed merrily this time. "Oh, sometimes I get mad, but not often. I try to control myself. I think peoples can. It ees like a cat that came into my patio. A veery weecked cat that wanted to eat the leetle birds. But I teach hem—and train hem until he a veery good cat and will not tear up the leetlest bird."

"I never heard of that being done before. You must be a wonderful trainer. Would you train a husband like that?" he asked banteringly.

"Oh—me——" She blushed, overwhelmed at the imputation. "I could not presume to train a husband! I would expect hem to train me."

Allen cleared his throat. What would Lola think of that doctrine?

"I can't tell you how delightful it is to have had this visit," he said when he arose to go.

"It was also to me a pleasure," she said, with a little heightened color, as she halfway met his eyes. "We never get done thanking you for keeping that weecked man from kill my brother."

"I want to come again." He still held her hand.

"I will be veery glad to see you, Meester Dawson." And he knew she meant it.

He went out, and followed the narrow little sidewalk, two feet wide, which extended along the front of the house. The street was just wide enough for two vehicles to edge by. On the other side, another narrow strip of walk and another solid row of houses; a door, a big window with shutters closed; and then another door and window marking another house. Here and there he caught an eye peering between the lattice. Occasionally a woman, stirred by the germ of feminism, advanced to the bold right of having her window open and looking out on the world unscreened.

Allen, at a narrow turn, heard a scream—a rather shrill scream, it sounded—followed by a feminine laugh.

"Isn't this town awful? Just look at that street!"

The rambling coche held two American girls, and one of them was Lola.

And, without knowing why, Allen stepped quickly into a narrow alley out of sight.

XII.

Allen was in a shadowy corner of the garden, waiting for Lola. He had telephoned her soon after luncheon to announce his presence. She was quite surprised in a staccato way, and was awfully sorry, but she was dressing to go for an automobile trip. She'd meet him in the garden after dinner, say at eight. How was he, anyway?

In spite of the garden and the night, Allen felt the old, uneasy questioning, the sense of failure and depression which had oppressed him in the swamps. It had been intensified that afternoon by a forwarded telegram from a mining company in Colorado offering him a cold, wet, slippery job of engineering at an altitude of thirteen thousand and some odd feet, at a hundred and fifty a month. And he would have to accept it; there was nothing else to do. Yet that was not solving his problems. Even if he dared marry on a hundred and fifty a month, Lola would never live at Cripple Creek.

Allen drew in a slow, tired breath. He wished he could live in Cuba and have a house in a garden like this, where the wind was always balmy and laden with fragrance and one need never hurry unless he wanted to.

His mind slipped back to questions that had been puzzling him: Why had Halderman ordered him discharged and then reëmployed him secretly? He had been trying to figure that out ever since Burt Williams had told him of the overheard conversation. Why was Coleman here? He recalled Lola's quick comment on his greatness in New Mexico, and wondered if her presence had anything to do with it. But the smooth, suave Simmons was not on a pleasure trip. He was usually found only where the promoters' secret pickings were good.

Allen smiled as he recalled the

quaintness of Señorita Alicia and her manifest pleasure at his visit.

"Hello, Allen!" He jumped. It was Lola standing before him. "You are good at hiding. I've hunted for you everywhere." Even her jocularity could carry a sense of blame.

"I thought this would be—just right," he said.

"Isn't it lovely!" Lola reached up and broke a sprig of the vine that pulled at her hair and threw it down. "But aren't these Cubans awful? They are too funny for anything! I didn't suppose there were any people in the world as ignorant and behind the times as they are." Lola's laugh was not really so shrill as it sounded in that still garden.

"Well, how have you been getting along?" she inquired abruptly.

"Oh, rather swimmingly!" Allen grinned. "I must tell you about losing our boat. We had been wading all day, waist-deep——"

"Did you lose your boat?"

"Yes, got it snagged."

"Wasn't that too bad! One time when Elmer Sanders and I were out rowing the boat ran onto a snag and I thought to my soul we would drown. But Maud's cousin came along and picked us up."

Allen did not go on with his story. But directly, when the conversation lagged, told about Vega's attack on Casada and his sister.

"I wouldn't have got much excited over that," observed Lola. "Two Cubans less would not unbalance the world."

Allen tried to excuse that remark. She did not mean it.

"Casabas?" Lola repeated directly, as though remembering. "What did you say the names of those people were?"

"Casadas!"

"That's it!" Lola nodded positively. "I thought I'd heard the name before. They are the people I've got to call on. I'm so glad you know them. I'm going in the morning, and I'll take you along."

Allen shrank from the mere thought, and started to make excuse.

"Not a word!" said Lola emphatically. "You simply have to go."

"But not in the morning," he protested. "Morning is not the time for formal calls."

Lola threw up her head and laughed.

"As though it would make any difference to people like that."

Directly she put her hand to her mouth and yawned.

"Guess I'll go to bed. I'll meet you at nine and we'll go see your swamp friends."

"Swamp friends?" Allen straightened up suddenly.

"Yes," Lola replied indifferently. "Didn't you know that young fellow and his sister own the Zapata swamps?" And Allen was so astonished over this unexpected information that he kept his seat and let Lola go in alone.

And Ramon and Alicia owned the swamps! That explained many things—Ramon's visit to New Orleans, his and Alicia's trips over the plains—Casada's interest in Coleman and Simmons. But what did Simmons have to do with it?

Next morning, when Dawson started to meet Lola to take her to see Señorita Alicia, he was in a miserable frame of mind.

"Good morning!" Allen stopped with a start. He had walked down the corridor and turned into the garden in such deep vexation he had not noticed a plump, pink-faced man in a rocking-chair beside the walk. It was Coleman, leaning back comfortably, having a good after-breakfast smoke in the cool of the morning.

"How do you do!" Dawson merely nodded.

"First rate." Somebody had been flattering Coleman. He could not otherwise have been in so good a humor.

"When did you get in?"

"Two or three days ago."

Coleman took the cigar from his mouth and leisurely tasted the smoke from the last draw; they have good cigars in Cuba. He puffed out his lips meditatively so the mustache bristled;

he squinted his eyes in abstract shrewdness.

"You remember," began the president of the Continental, "I spoke to you in New Mexico about our manager, Mr. Halderman; told you the difference between him and a fellow like you in that he thinks; you merely work. Got a good example of it right here. For several years we've held an option on this swamp you've been surveying; been paying five thousand a year for the option. We decided this was the time to either buy or quit. Instead of leaving it to one or two men, he sent down a complete corps of engineers. But that was not enough. He went out to the swamp and saw for himself. That's the sort of man gets to the top—a man we can depend on.

"As a consequence, we've discovered there is nothing in the Zapata swamp project. We are throwing up our option, and will turn our attention to other cane land. You see, Bob—I forget your name—it is the man who thinks and the man who goes to the bottom of things who is invaluable to the big employer.

"Then take your own case. You did your work very well. Oh—er—let me see——" The lips went out in strong disapproval. "Aren't you the one Hardy had to discharge, the fellow who shirked because he didn't want to wade into the water? Oh, yes, you are; I remember now. You are Dawson, and they told me in New Mexico you never backed out of any hard job. Shows how little you can depend on recommendations.

"Now, as I was saying, if you had made good, stuck to your task, shown any sign of unusual intelligence, you would have found yourself permanently on our pay roll at a handsome salary ——"

"Mr. Coleman," Allen interrupted, "it doesn't require an agile mind nor an investigating habit to be president of a big corporation, does it? Maybe there is hope for me yet." Dawson passed on, leaving the mustache bristling aggressively, a frown between the eyes, and a deeper pink on the smooth, plump countenance.

And they had already thrown up the project—had not waited even to hear his report! Nothing the insolently superior and patronizing Halderman had ever done stung him like being thus brushed aside as though all his work and hardship and investigations were not even worth hearing.

XIII.

As they stood on the narrow walk in front of the Casada house and Allen swung the old-fashioned knocker, his heart seemed pounding harder than the noise made on the wooden door. Nothing he had ever done in his effort to be agreeable to Lola was as hard as this.

The señorita received them graciously; Allen had got word to her that they were coming. She wore a cool, modest summer dress that was as fine as it was simple. But there were touches of deep color in it, and gold and silver filigree on her fan, that added a note of coquetry. Her soft black hair was arranged entrancingly. She looked like the spirit of romance, of chaste intrigue; yet, with all, so simple and sincere and friendly.

Lola took the offered chair and surveyed the room as an auctioneer might do. There was not much furniture, and it was old and sedate. It was plain Lola set the Casadas down in the class of "our working people at home."

"You speak some English?" She turned from the furniture to Señorita Alicia.

"A leetle bit." The señorita lifted her brows. "And do you speak—some Spanish?"

"Gracious, no!" replied Lola emphatically. "I'm glad I don't. It is hard enough listening to it." She laughed at herself for this.

Allen attempted to draw the conversation into neutral channels, but it was not a success.

"I don't see how you people can stand to live as you do," remarked Lola. "They say you girls are never allowed out alone."

Señorita Alicia sighed and dropped her lashes. What were in the eyes bent on her fan Allen could only guess.

"We do not need to go out alone, Mees—Simmons. Why should we go alone?"

"Oh, for anything," said Lola. "I'd as soon be in jail as to feel I always had to have somebody tagging along to swear I wasn't wicked when I got back." She laughed a little jarringly. And a tinge crept into Señorita Alicia's cheeks.

"It is our custom," she said softly. "Maybe it is not so good as in America, but poor little me cannot change it."

"It is being bossed by your men that gets me," remarked Lola. "Why, here a woman does exactly as her husband tells her."

"If one loves her husband, Mees Simmons"—just the faintest flicker and lift of the long, dark lashes, and the tiniest peep at Dawson—"if one loved him veery much, he would be always right."

"Hump!" Lola dissented. "Not on your life! They are never right until they are put right." She laughed again.

"Do you ever have any fun?" she continued.

"Oh, yas, we have amusements. Sometimes we go to dances and to fiestas and—we have callers."

Allen's eyes went quickly from Señorita Alicia to Lola. But if the thrust was meant, it missed its mark. Lola's mind was already on a scarf over the arm of a chair. She got up and went to examine it.

"That is a real Spanish scarf, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"What would you take for it?" She was rubbing the texture between thumb and fingers.

"I would not want to sell eet," Alicia answered slowly. "But"—another glance at Allen—"I'll give it to Meester Dawson's friend."

As they rode away, Allen was silent.

"They haven't much manners, have they?" said Lola.

Dawson made some irrelevant remark.

"Well, I'm glad it's over. I hope dad will let me have a little peace now."

"Peace?" Allen looked at her with a dawning surprise.

"Yes, he's been pestering the life out of me to get acquainted with the Casadas. Thought if I made friends with them it would make it easier for him."

Allen forgot all about lunch as he walked his room, fitting into a solution the parts of the puzzle he had accidentally discovered.

It was clear now why Halderman had sent for him in the first place, had discharged and then secretly put him to work again. Dawson understood the whole plot.

No, Halderman had not changed. He was still, as always, working people, double-crossing them when need be. The leaping prices of good cane land had centered his greed on the rich Zapata swamps. He had planned, as general manager, to get an adverse report for Coleman and the directors of the Continental and recommend they drop the option; but at the same time to get from Dawson a thoroughly competent private opinion, and, if the swamp could be drained, then, through the wily Simmons, he would buy it on his own account, thereby making from Allen's discoveries five or ten million dollars for himself.

Yes, it was a great scheme; only he had not counted on the platitudinous Coleman and the blunt, careless-spoken daughter of Simmons giving away his decision prematurely.

Again Dawson faced the question: "Why report to Halderman at all?" He was betraying his own employers. Why should he expect loyalty from him? Did the treatment Allen had received call for any fine-spun sense of loyalty? If he kept his discovery, in time—a year or two—he might be worth a million or five million dollars. Why throw it away?

Allen went out of the hotel, walked through the garden, and passed into a coconut grove beyond. His head was bent, and he walked fiercely. He no-

ticed the ground was strewn with withered coconuts and dead fronds. He passed through the grove twice, turned abruptly, and returned to the hotel.

"Has Señor Halderman returned?" he asked the clerk.

"Yes; he is just now in his room—number thirty-four."

"Hello, Dawson!" Halderman sat by the window in a smoking jacket, an easy curl of smoke floating over his head. "Have a seat. Finished your job?"

"Yes."

"What did you find?" Halderman was still looking out through the window.

"That the swamp can be drained, and drained at a reasonably small cost." He got up and walked to the window and back, talking as he walked. His hands were clenched, but Halderman did not see that.

"It is this way," he said fiercely, as though to get it over with in a hurry. "There is a ledge—a rocky formation between part of the swamp and the sea. The swamp slopes to this ledge, and the water is almost five feet deep there. The lower part of the ledge is hard rock; above or about on a level of the swamp is a stratum of softer material. The waves have cut this in several places, so there is a shallow channel running through. At high tide water flows into the swamp and keeps the swamp on a level with the sea.

"Now here is my idea: Cut through that ledge at a number of places a little deeper than the bed of the swamp. Close these channels with locks. At low tide lift them and let the swamp drain into the sea. As the tide begins to rise, close them so the sea water cannot run back into the swamp. It is simple, but it will work, and it will not be very expensive."

He stopped walking, dropped into a chair, and looked at Halderman. He felt tired—unutterably weary.

"That's all."

When Halderman turned his face, all traces of excitement were masked.

"I'm glad to have your idea, Dawson. I wanted to get an independent opinion. That is why I hired you on my own account after you and Hardy had that come-to; that and a feeling I owed it to you after getting you down here. I'm sorry to say, however, neither Hardy nor any of his engineers agree with you. Have you anything more convincing? Any drawings or sketches?"

"No," said Allen. "You asked for a verbal report."

"Very well." Halderman reached for his pen and check book. "I believe I owe you for three weeks' work—you and one assistant."

"Five assistants; six, counting Vega, who was hurt while working for the company."

Halderman's eyebrows went up. "Oh, but I did not authorize any such a company! You needed only one. If you employed more men than that, it is your affair."

"Very well."

Allen took the check for one hundred and ninety dollars, folded it carelessly, and stuffed it in his vest pocket and left the room without a word.

Allen was in his room, standing by the big window, looking out on the garden as the moon came up and touched the opposite wall.

Two people were passing along the path, hidden by the luxuriant foliage. One of them spoke a little disgustedly:

"I can't see why"—it was Coleman—"you need to be running around with that discharged surveyor so much."

"It has been on papa's account." The propitiatory voice was Lola's. "Papa wanted me to be nice to him for some reason, but I'll give him to understand to-night that I do not care for him around any more."

"You better." Allen imagined the puffed-out lips and bristly mustache in the dark, and grinned.

Grinned—on hearing his betrothed announce her intentions of sending him about his business that she might marry an elderly millionaire! What was the matter with him?

Nevertheless, when the telephone

rang thirty minutes later, he answered it almost gayly:

"Yes, this is Dawson."

"Can I see you in the parlor upstairs right away?" It was Lola.

"I'm coming." He hung up the receiver and started.

"Well!" He sat down on the end of a lounge, and leaned back comfortably. He would let her do it.

"Allen," she puckered her forehead with intense thought and twisted the corners of her mouth into deep suffering, "I've been thinking."

"You don't look overworked," he replied lightly.

"I—I," there was a catch in her voice, "wonder if we have made a mistake."

"A million of them," he nodded agreeably. Odd, but he was feeling happier than he had for months.

"Do you think we will be happy together?" she asked in deep concern.

"Are we?" he asked.

"Why"—she attempted to pout—"when you are nice to me I'm——"

"Yes?" He waited in silence.

She fidgeted in her chair; she locked and unlocked her hands; she cried a little. She was awfully sorry to hurt him, but really, she ventured, it would be better for both to break the engagement.

"Very well. Good-by!" Allen arose lightly and held out his hand. She was chagrined, shocked, angry. It is very hard on a girl for you not to be hurt when she wants you to be.

Allen found himself walking a narrow street between low one-story adobe buildings, humming a rollicking mountain tune. The wind was soft as a caress, and the moon threw a slivery glamour over the old city. Lights showed behind closed shutters. Señores and señoritas chatted in open doorways, while the mammas knitted or sat, with hands in lap, behind them.

A guitar and the song of a serenader came from down a side street.

Allen felt buoyant, so happy he forgot to be ashamed of it. There was romance and rest and life in the world again.

He turned to the south, toward the plaza. He would warn young Casada and his sister of Halderman's and Simmons' scheme.

The brother and sister were in the front room, sitting in deep dejection. But as Allen entered, young Casada sprang up and welcomed him enthusiastically:

"Why, my good friend, that saved my life, I'm so happy to see!"

Allen noticed that Señorita Alicia was very polite to him, punctiliously polite—and distant. This quite delighted him. Nothing could have pleased him more. But the brother, not understanding the cause, was puzzled, and glanced from time to time questioningly at his sister.

"You remember, señor," the young Spaniard got up and walked the floor, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head in the deepest despondency, "when I met you on ship. I was veery, veery happy—I thought—I'd done great things for—all of us.

"But," he threw out his hands, palms up, despairingly, "it is all over. Instead of being very rich, we are veery, veery poor. It was the swamp," he went on, unburdening his trouble. "They were to pay us two hundred and fifty thousand pesos. I thought it was all settled. They now will not even pay us the five thousand upon which we live these four years. It ees veery bad, señor. I do not know what to do."

"Señor Casada," said Allen, "that is what I came to talk about." He glanced from the corner of his eyes at Alicia, and saw her brows arch a little more aloofly.

"The other engineers reported that the swamp could not be drained, but I reported it could. And it can. Look here!" He spread out on the table a sketch of his plan. "This part here at the east, about twenty-five by nine miles, can easily be drained into the sea. The new railroad would build to it and through it. It will be some of the richest cane land in the world, and it will be worth from fifty to two hundred dollars an acre.

"Now I have reason to believe they have canceled this option in order that

other parties may buy the land from you cheap.

"If an offer is made, don't sell it unless you get a good price. If I had the money, I would give you five hundred thousand dollars for it to-night and take all the risks. If you can keep from selling it at all, it will be better. If you could organize a company and drain it yourself, it would make you several million dollars."

Casada was intensely excited. His despondency vanished with one shrug of his shoulders.

"Oh, señor, what wonderful news! We despair, we were veery poor—now señor tells us we will be rich." He threw his arm about Allen and hugged him. "Señor always bring good tidings."

Señorita Alicia had also caught the spirit of the good news, and her face was radiant; but, meeting Allen's eyes, she remembered, and grew instantly aloof again.

"Don't be too hopeful," advised Allen. "I may be wrong. They may not offer to buy."

"But we ourselves will drain it," said Casada, undampened.

"It will take money," reminded Allen; "much money. At least a hundred thousand dollars to begin."

"But we haven't any money at all." The young poet collapsed in his chair, suddenly despondent again. "Where are we to get a hundred thousand dollars?"

"I don't know," answered Dawson. "You could get it from me in a minute if I had it, but I have only a hundred and seven."

Señorita Alicia smiled at this in spite of herself.

"Señor Dawson," she said, "eet is veery hard to live with a poet. Sometimes it is all the flowers that grow, and then it is snow and there are no flowers anywhere."

Allen arose and held out his hand to Casada.

"Well, don't sell cheap whatever you do."

"I will not." His hopes climbed once more. "I'll make them pay."

He offered his hand to Alicia. She took it formally, her eyes down, her brows up.

"How soon does Señor Dawson leave?"

"Señor Dawson," replied Allen, holding the hand in a firm, warm grip, "does not leave. He is going to stay in Cuba, and may he come some day to see Señorita Alicia again?"

With instant, melting coquetry the brows went down, the long lashes lifted ever so slowly, until the brown eyes looked up slantingly and twinkled as they looked.

"Will señor be—alone?"

"He will."

Just a fleeting moment of pressure, and her hand withdrew, her lids fluttered down, the color came to her cheeks.

"Oh, I shall be glad for Señor Dawson to come—veery soon. He is so wonderful a man—and so kind."

XIV.

At eleven o'clock, Allen still walked the Camaguey Gardens. The moonlight fell on three long walls that inclosed it. A brief breath of wind shook the huge vine that clambered over the balcony of a second-story window, and its thousand gorgeous blossoms added their perfume to the incense-laden air. Somewhere in the night was a stringed orchestra and the sound of dancing, and in a minor key somewhere else in the night a guitar begged eyes to sleep not until they had looked out of the lattice upon one who was dying for the love of the beautiful señorita.

On this night it did not sound foolish to Allen. He understood now. There *was* romance in the world, for in his palm still tingled that last quick pressure of a little, soft hand, and in his ears sounded the slow music of:

"I'll be glad for señor to come veery soon."

Yes, Señorita Alicia would ever be glad to see him coming, and would not find fault when he came; she would not make him feel he was always blundering, always failing. "If a woman

loved her husband—veery much—he would be always right." He smiled at that. How quaint she was—and how wise! One could do many, many things for Alicia, because it would make her happy.

Dawson was buoyant next morning. He was out early, breakfasted at seven. The night, the thought of señorita still lingered in his mind, but as a pleasing background for his fighting plans.

He had decided to fight for his idea, fight for what his brain and persistency and hardship had rightfully won for him. He had thought it out during the night.

Halderman and Simmons would move slowly. They would not so much as take him into consideration, much less fear him. They would hold off until Casada was very anxious to realize something for the swamp; then they would make a small offer, probably twenty thousand dollars. Not until they began to discover Casada had knowledge of the actual value of his possessions would they begin to bid up. But once they discovered there was opposition, they would move swiftly and fight recklessly to get that swamp.

Well, they should not have it all their own way. With a hundred and seven dollars—Allen laughed to himself—one might do wonders.

He did not know anybody else around Camaguey that was at all hopeful. He put in the day trying to think of some remote relative or friend of a friend that might risk ten thousand dollars on his word.

Late in the afternoon he picked up a copy of the Havana *Post* of the day before. In running over the arrivals—most of the news was about the coming and going of Americans—his eyes struck on one item:

> Richard Fleming, of the Southern Sugar Mill Machinery Company, arrived from New Orleans to-day. Mr. Fleming's company have extensive interests in Cuba, and he will be on the island a week or ten days.

Two hours later, Dawson was on his way to Havana, second class.

Fleming had gone to Guanajay, and he did not get to see him for two days. But Allen put in the time learning all he could about him and the Southern Mill Company. They were primarily manufacturers of sugar-mill machinery, but had immense capital, and often backed sugar companies in order to get contracts for building mills. Moreover, for years they had been enemies of the Continental Sugar Company.

This was most hopeful; for the swamp, when planted to cane, would require from four to eight sugar mills, costing about a million apiece. That would be a lot of business for Fleming's company. Allen remarked a chart of the swamp, indicating where mills should be erected.

Fleming was back at the hotel Thursday, and Allen got an interview with him. He was a well-fed, courteous Southerner, with a reckoning eye. Allen saw at once he would be very polite and probably offer to buy the drinks when he refused to buy swamps; but it would take clear, solid facts to make a jolt in his financial calculations.

After an hour—an hour of harder work than Dawson had ever done jumping thousand-foot precipices—Fleming leisurely leaned over to the table and picked up a case of cigars, offered Allen one, and took one himself.

As he smoked, wrinkles gathered around his eyes, and his lids half closed. He studied for about five minutes, talking all the time in a lazy, friendly way about Havana and the Spanish dancing and the view of the harbor.

Then, all at once, he uncrossed his legs and turned squarely on Allen:

"About you-ah swamp—how much money are you putting into it?"

"I think," Allen replied soberly, digging into his pocket, "it is now about forty-two dollars."

Fleming laughed good-naturedly.

"But I have the idea and the skill. I'll put the work through, and I am willing for the man who puts up the money to have fifty-one per cent of the stock."

"Some of those drainage projects don't work out in mud as easy as they

do on papeh. But—I'll let you have ten thousand dollars with which to convince me that we ought to put two hundred thousand more into your company."

They talked on details.

"I will get an option from Casada for a year for five thousand dollars of the money," proposed Dawson.

"Yes, that is the first thing." And he gave Dawson five hundred for preliminary expenses.

"I appreciate this a lot, Mr. Fleming." Allen's heart was beating so hard as his hand closed on the check that he could scarcely keep his voice even. "Especially trusting me with money when you know nothing about me."

"Oh," smiled Fleming broadly, "I may know moah about you than you suspect. You did some work for us once, but you didn't know it."

"Where was it?" Allen was curious.

"Never mind, boy," he said, smiling broadly. "Run along now and sew up that option; then report back about Saturday."

What a beautiful city is Havana, with its soft whites and browns and corals, its clear sky and tropical foliage, and the blue, laughing sea around it! Ah, what a wonderful country is Cuba! What a chance for a man to learn the joy of real living and to become rich!

These were only fragments of the many thoughts and emotions that swept through Allen's mind as the train crept back toward Camaguey.

He hurried directly to the hotel to leave his grip. As soon as he washed the cinders out of his eyes and off his face and hands, he would hurry to Casada's without taking time for dinner.

The ever-alert, tip-hoping Cuban boy had his grip, and was leading the way down the corridor when Allen saw a man with a tight white vest, a cigar at a cocky angle, standing at the bar to the left.

It was Simmons, who had been drinking health to himself, and Simmons saw him and came out to greet him.

"Well," he was smiling triumphantly, "you thought you had fixed us, but it didn't work, son. It never does when you run up against your Uncle Hilary's power of persuasion. In an hour I had those Casadas seeing your claws and teeth. And they signed up with tears of gratitude."

"Signed up!" Allen put his arm against the wall.

"You bet! I bought the Zapata Swamp from them—three hours ago."

XV.

Señorita Alicia herself opened the door. "Why, Meester Dawson, how veery glad I am to see you!"

Neither her tone nor handclasp indicated a belief that Allen had claws and carnivorous teeth. For a moment Dawson had a flickering hope that Simmons had lied—that he had not bought the swamp.

"My brothar will be also so glad to see you," she said after they were seated. "He has some veery good news." Her tone and eyes fairly bubbled with happiness. "But I will not steal hees pleasure. He wants to tell eet hemself about selling the swamp."

Allen swallowed hard to smother a groan that wanted to get loose. It was true, then! Oh, well, he began to rally; evidently Señorita Alicia did not despise him, anyway.

"The señorita does not wear a ring," he was surprised to hear himself saying as he looked at her soft white hands.

She dropped her lashes, and blushed a little.

"Oh, no, señor! Poor little me never wore—what you call hem?—the engagement ring."

Allen suddenly knew how it felt to hear really good news.

"Señorita Alicia," he began earnestly; her lashes fluttered, she looked at him a second and then down, yet once more she lifted her eyes with a sort of breathless waiting, "I have no money, no job—now. But when I succeed I'm going to tell you something—tell you that you are the most de-

licious, the most precious girl in all the islands and continents of the earth."

"Oh, señor," she blushed, her breath coming fast, "you—are making jest. You are what you say—joking?"

"I never was so in earnest, dear. I must not say it now, but I'm going to do something—make a lot of money down here—and then I'm coming really to say it to you."

"Oh, señor!" She was pale with excitement now, but her eyes met his quite steadily in their great earnestness. "Moneys do not count for anything—at all—when one—when one"—her lashes dropped—"one cares."

"Señorita," Allen's voice was hardly controlled. And then a step on the walk, the door flung open, and young Casada, the poet, his eyes blazing, his hair disheveled, rushed in.

"Ah, señor, how fortunate! I wanted to see you most of all." He seized both of Dawson's hands. "I've news, great news! I've sold the Zapata Swamp to Meester Simmons."

"I am very glad for you," said Allen, trying to hide his chagrin, and swallowed his own loss bravely. "Did you do well?"

"Yes—it is all settled. The check—eet is good—and we are rich!"

"That is great for you," declared Allen enthusiastically. "How much did you get?"

"At first they offer twenty thousand," he laughed. "I snap my fingers at them. They come up and up and up——" He began near the floor with his hand, and showed with each successive gesture how the price rose toward the ceiling. "At last I get two hundred and eighty thousand dollars!"

"Two hundred and eighty thousand!" Allen exclaimed. "Well, you are a good trader."

"Yes," the young Spaniard fairly danced, "I could got much more, but I would not let them have the part you want—the part twenty-five miles of the east."

Allen, as excited as the young Spaniard, leaped forward and grabbed him by both shoulders. "You did not sell that part I surveyed?"

The Cuban shook his head. "No, señor. Did not you say you want to organize company and drain that? I kept that back, and now we have money to do it with. We will put in two hundred thousand in your company—won't we, bonita Alicia?"

Allen looked at her, and she nodded assuredly. Then he sank into a chair, collapsed into a heap, and broke into a wild laugh.

"My friend," he said when he could speak, "that is the richest thing I ever heard—the finest thing the gods of jest ever let this old world pull off.

"The part of that swamp you sold to Simmons and Halderman is worthless; it can never be drained, and you got money enough from them to drain ours, make us millionaires! Oh, boy, but you are a jewel—you are a poet—you are—a daisy!"

"I must go put this check in the safe of Señor Roberts," said the young man, taking up his hat.

When he was gone, Allen and Señorita Alicia, left standing, turned, facing each other. Her hands shook a little with excitement, her face was very white, she breathed in little catches. She spoke a few words in Spanish to her mother. Then, glancing up at Allen from under her lashes, explained:

"Mothar will make us some cool drink." For another minute they stood facing each other, two steps apart. "Señor Allen," she said it very slowly and softly, "es—ees it the custom, as I have been told, in America for peoples—that are engaged—to—to kees before they are married?"

He gave one swift glance over his shoulder to see the mother was out of sight in the kitchen—and then two quick steps.

"This—and this—and this is the American custom," he said in snatches.

And very shyly and softly from his shoulder: "I think—American customs—are veery nice."

THE END.

The Bruiser

By Buck Connor

Author of "At the Gong's Command," Etc.

A yarn from the fo'c's'le of the naval transport *Dixie* in which a real honest-to-goodness scrapper is up against an opponent who refuses to be licked although he has no chance in the world to win

THE naval transport *Dixie* was rolling in the long, heavy swell of the western ocean—three days out from the Rock, as seafaring men call Gibraltar—with a fair breeze on the starboard bow. The first division of the ship's company and some of the marines of the guard were scattered over the fo'c's'le in little groups, some of them sitting on the hatches and others lying on their corking mats, all smoking their evening smokes and talking. It would not be long until the first watch was called—it was now six bells—when some would go below and turn into their hammocks, while those of the watch would take their stations for four hours' duty.

"Yes, sirree, I've seen some dang queer things in the service while I was collectin' all these here hash marks," spoke "Spud" Murphy, referring to his enlistment stripes on his arm. The bunch of homeward-bounders squared themselves around, the better to hear him. Spud Murphy had served on the *Trenton* in Samoan waters, and had been with Dewey at Manila; in short, he was now homeward bound, to be retired after almost thirty years' continuous service. His position aboard the *Dixie* was chief boatswain's mate and captain of the foretop.

After a few puffs at his pipe, he said: "The best one—the one I'm goin' to tell yuh about—was the case of a fighter, and he was a fighter, too. A *real,* honest-to-goodness scrapper. Well, I'll tell yuh, he was such a brute in his fightin' that the ship's crew called him the Bruiser.

"It happened aboard the *Paragua*—one of the mosquito fleet—at the beginnin' of the Philippine uprisin' that we got this here gent. He come in a draft from the *Buffalo,* at the time she made her maiden trip to the islands. There was four or five of 'em in the bunch that was to relieve the overtimers."

"I remember that trip," spoke up a gunner's mate. "I was on the *Charleston* then; that was a few weeks before she went down."

"'S that so?" returned Spud.

"Yes, I had the eight-inch starboard battery aboard her."

"Why, I kin remember it as well as if it was yesterday," continued Murphy. "We was layin' off Iloilo at the time the *Buffalo* hove in sight. The typhoon season was then—it was blowin' a regular gale, and the seas was runnin' mile-high through them straits.

"We made our number from the signal yard, but she never so much as dropped her mudhook—just come in and lowered one of her whaleboats an' sent 'em over bag, hammock, an' ditty-boxes. You know the kind; just a bunch of third-baked men-o'-war's men.

"When they got their luggage stowed for'ard an' was a-standin' aroun' on deck, I hears this bloke made a crack. I waited till he comes again with it; I was standin' by the wench when he spouted it.

"'This sure is *some* madhouse! *Some madhouse!*" says he.

"Now you all know that ain't no way fer to come aboard a ship that we fellers called a *home.* It's true she

wasn't any size as compared with the *Kentucky* or *Kearsarge*. She only had a few hundred tons, but what she lacked in tonnage she sure made up in hard service.

"Do yuh know, I could hardly keep from usin' a belayin' pin on that guy's head. I took a good look at 'im, an' then I told him right out that if he was as good a man as the ship was a ship, an' went where she went without wishin' that he'd never shipped in the navy, I'd be damn bad mistaken.

"'Is that so?' he answered. 'I want a real ship—a battleship for mine, cull, see?' And then he struts down onto the berth deck with a sea roll to his walk that'd make a deep-water man feel like a dock hand. I followed down the ladder, an', bein' as I was second class then an' the senior petty officer aboard, I give 'im his billet—we didn't have any station numbers—an' told him he'd pull an oar in the first cutter whenever she was called away. I wanted him in my boat so's to keep my weather eye on him. He just smiled a toleratin' grin of hisn an' said, 'All right, bo.'"

"Shake a leg with that yarn, Spud," broke in the gunner's mate. "I've got to report the battery to the chief. It's six bells past now."

"Christmas was comin' on, an' all of the army and navy officers chipped in money to make up some purses for holiday sports—the same as they most always do. Us fellers bein' tied up with the army in campaignin', moved into the dock, which was just up the river a short ways, an' we was invited to join in an' take part, too. We all gets busy an' ribbed up this Larson—that was his name—to go against a feller named Rielly, of Battery A, field artillery. We told him how we expected him to make a name for us an' the ship, an' that got 'im. Well, from that on, about all we heard round the decks was ring an' prize-fight talk. He even brought out his scrapbook an' showed us write-ups from New York papers on some of his fights; then he told us how he got to be the Boy Captain of the main top on account of his bein' able to wallop them kids about."

Two or three youngsters—ordinary seamen, they were—looked far out to sea and thought of their days spent at the training station and aboard training ship. They, too, thought of some big husky youngster who acted under the captain of the part of the ship and who lorded it over them.

"Well, sir," Murphy went on, "when Christmas did come aroun', an' the bluejackets from the *Yorktown,* which had come in port for the holidays sports, had got ashore—not to say a thing about all them soldiers in Iloilo—there was some mob at the cockpit. The cockpit's where the fights all took place—dogfights, cockfights, an' man fights—an' on Christmas night there was four bouts to be pulled off."

"A regular Madison Square Garden show," commented the gunner's mate.

"Yessir, it was a regular 'mill,' that was, and, let's see, first there was a 'doughboy' and a 'flatfoot,' as the soldiers called us men-o'-war's men, started the evenin' off with a four-round setto; they was fast ones, too, considerin' they was nothin' but a pair uh kids. That one I think they called a draw.

"Then up comes a 'mule skinner' an' a hospital-corps man, who got busy an' swapped punches like sixty for three rounds, with the skinner gettin' a shade the best of the go. An' all durin' this bout feast we could see the Bruiser, as we all was callin' 'im by now, gettin' as busy as yuh please secondin' first one an' then another of the fighters."

"Just sorta turned to an' made hisself a hand," spoke up Johnson, the quartermaster, knocking the ashes out of his pipe and throwing them to leeward.

"Exactly, exactly," replied Spud. "Then comes the real thrill of the affair for us fellers of the *Paragua.* 'Bruiser Larson, of the *Paragua,* an' Sergeant Rielly, of Battery A,' said the announcer. That was a semiwind-up, so the program, which they sold for Filipino Children's Aid, said. Well, we fellers of the navy all stood up an' cheered, uh course; didn't want them soldiers to think we wasn't for our

man. The ship's bell, that was bein' used as a gong, rang out. The two boys stepped to the center and wiggled mitts, and got the once over from the crowd, an' they lamped each other, too. They did look purty husky stripped to the bare, and then, after a few words from the officer who refereed, they went back to their corners. 'Time!' yelled the officer, an' they walked to it. The Bruiser was smilin', an' he sure did act like as if he was right at home an' knowed his business there. He just crouched down low an' kept a-goin' into Rielly's punches, a-blockin' an' dodgin' an' landin' now and then, whenever he got a chanct. Course you know how excited a bunch of enlisted men git over a thing like a fight comin' off, so's there no use tellin' yuh. The officer called it a draw.

"But," he hastened to continue, "after that night it was sure hard to live with the Bruiser. It sorta affected him in heaps uh ways. We wasn't doin' much right after that 'ceptin' scrubbin' down decks an' gettin' aboard fresh water whenever we needed. But we had the devil's own time gettin' Larson to bear a hand on any of the work—he was most always uptown at the cockpit or the keno joint—an' it was hard to stop him, 'cause we had a free gangway an' no sech a thing as a liberty list.

"We had on board another young feller that had bin with the ship since she first went in commission. He went by the name of Rogers—Carl Rogers—an' he come from out West some'ers. He was just one of them quiet kids that always had a good word for all hands an' minded his own business. He was actin' gunner's mate at the time, an' done his work well, too. The officers liked him the same as the rest of his shipmates, 'ceptin' the Bruiser; he had a pick at that boy from the first day he comes over the gangway. It didn't seem to matter much with Rogers, though. He always used to pass off the Bruiser's remarks good-naturedly. But as the ole sayin' goes, 'There come a time' when he didn't pass the remark.

"It was right after we had drawn monthly money, an' of course some of the gang went uptown to the canteen an' took on a few high ones. Among 'em was the Bruiser, an' he didn't stop at gettin' his hide full; he brought a dog aboard. He had it stowed away in his blouse. Well, he comes over the gangway an' ducked for'ard so's the Ole Man wouldn't see 'im, an' met the kid, Rogers, under the bridge—just where the superstructure went up from the spar deck. 'Take a drink, Simp!' he ups an' ordered the boy. 'No, thanks, I never touch it,' answered Rogers, an' starts aft with his gun rags to clean up his battery. 'By So-an'-so, you'll drink with me, an' when I ast a man to drink—well, he'd best drink, that's all! So down with 'er!' Rogers tried to wave him off, an' started to pull loose from the Bruiser, who had him by the jumper sleeve.

"I'll be dog-gone if I really know what followed next; it happened so suddenlike. The way it seems was that the fighter jerked Rogers nigh off his feet an' then made a pass at 'im an' hooked right under the jaw. That settled it! He only made the one swipe till that Rogers kid was tryin' hard to work 'im over. But, of course, the Bruiser was too much for 'im. Why, when he'd hit the kid it seemed as if he'd mighty nigh break his head loose from his neck. I saw just how it was goin' to end, an' jumped in an' stopped it—dang nigh got a maulin' m'self fer buttin' in, too. Rogers got a pair uh shiners an' a deep cut cross the right cheek, while the Bruiser never got so much as his hair mussed.

" 'Long 'bout supper time, the fighter comes up on deck; he'd been down below, sleepin' it off or tryin' to git rid of his jag. He looked aroun' the deck an' saw the kid a-settin' on the railin'. Then he went straight over to him, an' the boy got down on deck, but the Bruiser said, 'Let's shake 'n' be friends, Rogers.' 'Not on yer tintype!' the kid snapped back. 'Nuther thing I want yuh to know, I'll never shake hands with yuh, 'cause I ain't yer friend, an' I won't pretend that I am just 'cause

yuh beat me up. I also want yuh to know yuh didn't whip me, an' never will; that stands jes' where I put it, 'cause I don't know how to run!' The big feller looked at 'im a second, then shook his head an' walked away. We was all a-watchin' him, an' if he'd made a move to 'a' hit that boy I spect there'd bin a warm ole time right then and there."

"Don't blame the boy a bit," approved the old-timer. "Not nary a bit!"

"After that," said Murphy, with a shake of his head, "the feller Rogers never spoke to the Bruiser at all—but just sorta ignored 'im. Course we all sided in with 'im, an' would 'a' backed 'im up in it till hell froze over.

"Well, when the bad weather begin to break, the army got busy gettin' things in shape for the spring campaign, which was always hard work. Yuh never had to coöperate with soldiers, did yuh?"

"Nope," answered the old-timer, "'ceptin' in Cuba."

"It sure ain't any Sunday-school picnic; that's certain. One day there comes to the ship an officer from General Hughes' headquarters—his aid, I guess. He told the skipper that the general presented his compliments an' wanted him to take a detachment to the north coast that night an' land 'em 'fore the break uh day. I was cleanin' some bright work on the gangway railin', an' overheard him talkin' about it. He said that it was a regular hotbed of Gugus in that place called Capiz, an' that the chances was there'd be a warm scrap on hand.

"Sure enough the detail of soldiers—Ninth Infantry, it was—them fellers that later made such a record in China—that come a-troopin' aboard at six bells, when the whole blamed water front was asleep, 'ceptin' them *cargadores* working for the Q. M. an' spyin' at the same time. From the looks of the bunch, I reckon there must 'a' bin fifty men all told; I know a pusson couldn't walk for'ard without steppin' on a soldier a-layin' sprawled out on deck.

"After we got the lines all cast off, an' had floated down the river an' out into the straits, the ole man—that was Lieutenant Sterle, a son of the admiral—gives the engine full speed ahead an' a jingle. We wasn't even 'lowed to light a cigarette, an' jest had the binnacle lamp to steer by; he said for us not to smoke till we was well offshore. No one much cared to smoke, anyway, as they had 'bout all wanted to cork off on deck fer the rest uh the night, while they had the chanct.

"Yuh see," and Spud relighted his pipe for his final smoke of the evening and threw the cold match over the side, "the run from Banate to Iloilo an' them other little towns takes right at three hours er better, so for us to git to Capiz it took all night steady steamin'. We got off the reef—had it on our port bow—just as Sooie, the chink cook, was callin' the crew to breakfast. The soldiers had to hustle an' git their bacon an' coffee on the galley stove so's to be ready to land when the order was given.

"The quartermaster had been sent aloft to watch the reef, an' he saw it, too, 'cause he hollered 'Land ho!' The captain answers 'im, 'Where away?' 'Two point on the port bow!' the quartermaster shouted back. We all peered out into a mistiness, an' sure enough there it was. It lay some distance from the entrance to Capiz River, where there was a long beach of white sand a mile er so long, I reckon. The skipper got his glass on that spot, and then, hurriedlike, he focused it closer. 'There's a bunch uh hombres back there in that grove!' he says to the army officer, an' hands him the glass.

"'There's too many of 'em to be fishermen er farmers,' says the army man, bracing the glass against a bridge stanchion, as the ship rolled in the trough of a sea, an' took another squint shoreward. 'What d'yuh think 'bout us landin' there, captain?" he asks Lieutenant Sterle, after a little.

"'Now that's up to you,' I heard the Ole Man say as he ordered the man at the wheel to starboard his helm a little more. Then he went over to the

'nunciator an' jerked it back to half speed ahead an' called fer me to come to the bridge as the engines eased down.

"When I reached the bridge, the skipper an' the army officer was both inside the little chart house a-markin' off places an' talkin' 'bout the general lay of the country. I reported to 'im, when he looked up, an' he told me to arm-an'-away both cutters. He said to mount the six-millimeter automatic in the bow of my boat., then to see that both crews carried belts full of ammunition fer the Lee straight pulls. I hustled 'em all together, an' got 'em lined out to orders. By this time Harris was in the chains a-takin' soundin's with the lead as the ole tub p'inted her nose toward the beach.

"I went amidships, an', takin' Farrell with me, I got busy lowerin'—just easin' off the boat falls—dropped 'em down to the rail of the well deck so's the soldiers could git in 'em easier. Seemed to me like that ship'd never git close enough in to anchor—she just creeped along—but we was out quite away, an' then the skipper wasn't takin' many chances on them bum Spanish charts we was usin'.

"Finally he shouted: 'Boats crews, stand by!' The rest uh the boys all hustled aft to their boats an' got in 'em while they swung on the davits, an' I reported we was all ready to lower away. The army officer split his men into two bunches—one part of 'em to go in my boat an' the other to git in with Sewell. I looked up at the Ole Man on the bridge fer orders; he understood it. 'Won't anchor yet, Murphy,' he calls down to me.

"Well, we didn't come to anchor—not right then, anyway. We waited until we got back from shore, where we met a bunch uh peaceful-lookin' hombres all a-gatherin' coc'nuts. But somehow er other, or from some clew—I don't know jes' which—the skipper an' the army officer decided to go up the river. There was a small tug—it'd hold 'bout twenty men, I guess—it a-layin' at anchor in the little cove. They got it an' got some men aboard. Of our gang there was Rogers, Farrell, the Bruiser, an' m'self. The Bruiser wasn't much good at anything, but he could steer a ship fairly well—when some one watched out to see that he'd keep on his course—so I put 'im at the wheel.

"We started up the river, which had a lot of uncertain banks hidden 'neath the water. The channel, if there was one, no one knew it, but we just guessed at it by the bends an' the strong current of the muddy water. The banks on each side was just thick with overhangin' brush—that made a dandy kind of a hang-out fer Gugus—so there we was travelin' upstream, an' didn't know much just where we was goin'.

"I guess we'd been goin' along fer nearly a half hour er so, an' as there wasn't anything excitin' to it every one had kinda settled down to takin' things easylike. We didn't feel that there was goin' to be anything doin' at all. But we was wrong—all wrong!

"Pow! Whiz-z-zip! An' ole muzzle-loadin' cannon cut loose from out there in the brush. There sure was some scatterment of nails, lead, an' stones. The soldiers was a-gettin' to their guns an' startin' into work right now. We all unlimbered our Lees an' cut loose with 'em. But they kept on a-shootin' right back at us, till I dropped my rifle on deck an' jumped over an' put the Colt's machine gun to workin'. They couldn't stand that fire; no, sirree, no human can stand machine-gun fire fur's that goes. But we soon had 'em on the run. Then what got our goats was the tug. The blamed thing was swingin' plumb round, an' 'fore some one could get to the wheel she rammed her nose head on into the bank, an' the engines a-goin' kept drivin' her deeper. The skipper called for the Bruiser, thinkin' he might have quit the wheel in excitement to fire at the Gugus. But that gent did not answer. Then some one yelled: 'Look!' We all craned our necks in the direction of downstream. 'Bout a hundred yards below us, with his hands a-splashin' an' clawin' at the air, was Larson, a-callin' fer help. We also saw under-

neath the overhangin' brush of the river—'tween us an' the Bruiser, a-swimmin' with that long overhand stroke of hisn—the kid, tryin' to git there to save the Bruiser.

"It didn't take 'im long to reach 'im in that swift-runnin' stream, an' when he did reach 'im he grabbed 'im by the back of his jumper collar an' slugged 'im one in the butt of the ear. Drownin' people handle a heap easier when yuh knock 'em out the way the kid did with his pistol. He had a hard swim bringin' 'im in, but by grabbin' hold on some branches that swung out over the river he hauled 'im ashore.

"By the time I got the tug backed out of that mud bank an' lay her alongside shore decentlike, the kid had carried him out on the grass an' let 'im flop. Larson was all in.

"Several of the men jumped ashore an' run down to where they was, throwin' out a guard line to keep the Filipinos from a-comin' back at 'em.

"When I got there he was a-coughin'. Rogers was givin' him first aid for the drownin'. At a signal from the Bruiser he stopped liftin' him by his waist; the water was a-comin' outa his lungs. We started to lend a hand, but the Bruiser waved us back. Then he clawed at the kid's pants leg till he got it in his hands. There was tears in his eyes, an' he just bawled out to the kid. 'Rogers,' says he, 'Rogers, won't you be my friend—my shipmate? I done yuh dirty, kid, an' I'm the one that knows it better'n anybody. I may be a fighter an' a bruiser, but there's a devil of a difference in fights an' fighters. Just 'cause I beat yuh up, an' 'cause yuh couldn't whip me, don't turn me down after what you've just done! I thought all the time I saw yuh was yellow, but it was yellow gold I seen!'"

RUNNING TRUE TO FORM

IN the army cantonment at Greenville, South Carolina, a short time ago was a private soldier named C. McCann, who, before his enrollment in the military service, had been an exuberant moving-picture fan. He knew all the actors and actresses by name.

One night, when he was on sentry duty, he challenged an approaching man with the words:

"Who goes there?"

"Chaplain," responded the worthy divine.

McCann answered immediately:

"Pass, Charlie!"

The Gift Bearers

By Henry P. Downes

Author of "Sleazy and the Malmarte," Etc.

You must remember Billy Sleazy, the little ex=jockey, member of the powerful Malmarte organization of gilded crooks, who put over a slick hocus=pocus on a Greek hotel proprietor. He comes to the fore again, in a rural operation that promises odds against him. But Sleazy deliberately under=takes the "brick game" because it is considered impossible. It is a story calculated to provoke mirth as well as more serious emotion.

(*A Novelette*)

WITH a map taken from the wall of McShayne's billiard room spread out on a table before him, Billy Sleazy, ex-jockey and member of the Malmarte, recited the doggerel of "Hickory, dickory, dock, the mouse ran up the clock," as, with closed eyes, he rotated a pencil in the air.

"Shoot!" commanded Bob Greyson, his bosom pal and club fellow.

"Done!" cried Sleazy, dropping the pencil to the map and opening his eyes. "Ah, what have we here? The State is Vermont and the town—— Take the night glass, Mr. Greyson, and, step-ping to the rail, state what you make her out to be."

"To judge from her riggins, captain, a Dutch merchantman, outbound from the Zuyder Zee—a well-found ship, sir, of seventy tons' burden," laughed Grey-son. "But seriously, Billy, all I see is a period and some small, very small, type. Let's see—I've got her now; F-a-i-r—Fairlawn is the name. She must be a small burg, but if she has over three thousand population my bet goes; five thousand even you don't cop. What say you?"

"It goes as it lies, Bob. All set! Now to get the specifications on this here town. How shall we——"

But we must retrogress a little. An hour before, the ex-jockey and Greyson left the portals of the Malmarte, and, arm in arm, sauntered down Broadway. Sleazy, immaculately dressed always, was a diminutive fellow, popular with every one, who acknowledged to some forty years and who looked half his age. Greyson, tall and handsome, a "fine figure of a man," according to Sleazy, with a voice low and soft that belied the inherent, compelling force of the man, was one to be reckoned when deeds of daring were on foot.

By force of habit, talking and laugh-ing, they made their way toward Mc-Shayne's. Before they were aware of it, they had entered the room. The hour was well before noon, and, save for a porter or two cleaning up and a billiard mechanic engaged in repairing a table, the place was deserted.

Lighting cigarettes, they seated them-selves and watched the mechanic in silence. They were, in truth, ennuied. The Malmarte had recently enriched its exchequer to the extent of a million and a half dollars, of which Sleazy's share was fifty thousand dollars and Greyson's, who was a charter member of the organization, probably a great deal more. They had sated themselves with all that money could buy, and now

they craved for action once more, which with them, confidence men by nature and training, could take only one direction.

Presently the billiard mechanic looked up, and, with a smile of recognition, nodded to Sleazy. The jockey waved his hand easily in return, and, after a few puffs on his cigarette, asked:

"How is the old fellow who helped you fix our tables at the Malmarte? The one, I mean, who was always taking snuff."

"He's dead, sir," the mechanic returned slowly. "He has been dead over a month now. It's a funny thing about him, too. He worked for our company over twenty years and never spent a cent foolishly. He was taken with pneumonia, suddenlike, and, having no family at all, we took him to the hospital. He tried to tell me where his money was then, but he was too far gone. And when he died we had to take up a collection to bury him. Seems funny, don't it, him having all that money?"

Then shaking his head from side to side in a puzzled way, the mechanic arranged his tools in his bag and departed. After he was gone, Sleazy remarked thoughtfully:

"That was peculiar, wasn't it, Bob? I suppose that fellow's money is hoarded away in some bank or other, and nobody will ever get any benefit from it. Just think what a help it would be to the man who has just left. If he had it, he could retire from work."

"Those things happen often, Billy, and sometimes more so," observed Greyson reminiscently. "For instance: Years ago, long before the Malmarte was organized, I worked in the West with 'Silent' Carver, the greatest 'brick man' the game has ever known. Silent had a great distrust of banks naturally enough, and carried all his money on his person, and if his roll got below fifteen or twenty thousand he thought he was broke.

"Well, one time we had a deal all framed on a fellow in Denver. I had done the preliminary work, and the brick was ready to be passed. Silent, the supposed miner who owned the brick, was to do the closing, and it was arranged to have the come-on meet Silent in a place we had picked out. I was in an adjoining room, rigged up in a policeman's uniform, with my eye glued to a hole in the panel of the door. Sometimes the come-ons yapped for the police, and we always tried to have one handy.

"This come-on was a cattleman. Silent came into the room after a time and started to work at once, and a mighty smooth workman he was. At length I saw the cattleman start and get to his feet. Silent paused, and the two of them were looking each other in the eye. He was usually as pale as a cadaver, but now the color was surging to his face. Finally the other man said:

"'You're Dave, aren't you? You are my brother Dave. You must be! There is the scar over your eye that you got when we ran into the horse trough on our sled when we were boys. Oh, Dave! And I was going to take advantage of your necessities. Why, brother, half of all I've got in the world is yours. You keep your gold and come home with me!'

"But Silent wouldn't admit his identity. He stalled around for time, and then, saying he wasn't feeling well, made an appointment for the following day. After the man went, he sat for a long time turning something over in his mind, and then, telling me that he would see me later on, he left the room. I didn't say anything to him about the cattleman. Silent had a hard, cold eye that never blinked, and, though I knew him as well as anybody did, I didn't really know much about him. He was one of that kind you can never get to —polite and affable and all that, Billy, but it would never occur to you to ask him any questions about himself. You know that kind.

"That night he came in and tossed the brick on the dresser. He clasped his hands behind his neck and cocked his feet on a chair. By and by he

came to some conclusion satisfactory to himself, for he smiled. I always remembered that smile. He called for drinks and toasted me, saying: 'Here's to success to-morrow, Greyson.' Then he threw himself on the bed.

"I kept on smoking until I heard a gasping noise in the room. I glanced toward Silent. There was a froth on his lips, and his whole frame was writhing in agony. The truth came to me then.

"'I'm passing out, Greyson,' he said. 'Don't bother to call any one, and go through with our deal to-morrow. It isn't right for you to be cheated out of your share.' That was all he said before the end came.

"Now I concluded that, being his partner, his money should belong to me. So I searched through his pockets. His wallet was there—empty. Not a single dollar, Billy. He was 'clean!' And I knew for a positive fact that he had over twenty thousand with him when he left me that day. I thought it all over, and came to the conclusion that he must have sent it, by mail probably, to his brother's home. So I stored away the brick and his guns, and went down to the office to report his passing.

"The clerk, when I came to the desk, handed me a sealed envelope. It was a statement in Silent's handwriting, telling what he intended to do—an 'out' for me, you see, in the event there would be any trouble. Then his brother came back unexpectedly. I don't want to talk about the rest. After the way he took on, I couldn't possibly do anything more with the brick if I got a million dollars for it, and the more so as I saw that Silent's brother had come to have an inkling as to the real state of affairs. So I did what I could, and moved on."

Greyson threw away the dead butt of his cigarette and lit another. Presently the jockey, with the air of dismissing unpleasant thoughts, remarked tentatively:

"The brick stuff has gone out of fashion lately. I wonder at that, too. It was a big winner formerly, and human nature doesn't change. It was out of my line, of course, but I knew some people who did well at it."

"Silent turned over a hundred thousand at it in two years, Billy, but he always would fall for the old faro bank. And that kept his balance down," Greyson said slowly.

Sleazy laughed.

"The little white fish are being spawned as frequently as of yore, and they will always respond to the same bait. Do you know, Bob, I recently ran across a fellow, shy his right food hook, who thinks he has devised a system for beating the races and who wants to bet the money he got from the railroad company on it. Everything in the world has a market except a combination potato parer and corkscrew."

"Why pick that out from the grab bag?"

"I tried that—got broke once in Chi, and had to go to work. Saw an ad in a Sunday paper: 'Smith, Toledo, sold ten first hour; Carthors, Memphis, thirty first day.' I'd like to meet those fellows. Smith in an hour was ten times oversmarter than I, and I think Carthors sold his on the thirty-first day of February."

"Couldn't you fetch it?"

"One only—all day. Set it down while I was giving the patter and the baby got hold of it. They had to buy it because she wouldn't let go. But about the brick. I wonder now——"

"Off it, Billy! Off it! The farmers all own automobiles, the children are at college, and the papers come daily to the old homestead. The brick, to all intents and purposes, is as dead as the dodo or the blood-sweating behemoth. Lay off it, Billy! Besides, you don't need the money."

"I'll play both ends against the middle with you, Bob, that I can put it over—five thousand even that I can sell a brick to some one for double this amount, and that within the third parcel-post zone from here. Say something, quick!"

"You're on, Sleazy. Where do you go?"

"I'll chance it, like a woman picking a winner at the races with a hatpin and her score card. Get me down the map off the wall yonder, like a good fellow, and, seeing Willing Walter, the mixologist, has arrived, order me a drink."

"Aye, aye, sir. And I'll stake you to Silent's brick. It is somewhere among my effects at the Malmarte. Here's your map. Go to it!"

"How shall we go about that, Bob?"

"An encyclopedia from the nearest library should do. There is a branch on the next block."

They went to the library accordingly, and Greyson thumbed down a reference book to the letter "F."

"Here we have it," he declared, "and told succinctly by the editor of the *Clarion*. Sometimes a lot can be done with editors, Billy, if they are properly approached. Take it from me, this one hasn't given the old town the worst of it! H'm, let's see——

"Fairlawn; town founded October 27, 1779, Orange County, Vermont (for location see map of Vermont, ref. 6-C), sixteen miles E. of Screwdriver and nine miles N. E. of Belgo. It has seven churches, an incorporated school, great water power, and extensive manufactures of milled and roofing stone. Pop. of township (1900), 2,211; (1910), 2,791; (1916), estimated, 4,000.

"Notice, Billy, how the learned editor has shot her to the front coming down the stretch. When the returns come in from the next census the *Clarion* will have to do some tall backtracking. You best steer clear of this man. He will be dangerous."

"You think he rides them wide at the turns, Bob?" queried the jockey.

"Offhand, I should say so. That estimated jump of his at the tail end don't seem to me to come off the third rail with the proper angle. De Oro, I think, would play that shot with reverse English. No, I don't think I would bother with him."

"Consider that settled. I won't. Any other suggestions?"

"Well, Silent, who never made a mistake on his approach, used to say the best brick consumer was he who attained man's estate having the original nickel given him in boyhood for carrying a valise, superadded to the quarters donated by his uncle on birthdays. There used to be a 'sucker list' of those when I was West, but I haven't seen one of late years, and that is why the game must have gone bad."

"Leave that to me. I am sure I can dig up the proper man. That is the kind I angled for when I was advance man for Jimmy Dar's crew of footracers. That is the game that has gone bad, not the brick. Oh, the money we made and the times we had! Goldbricking! Pshaw, it is to laugh!"

Greyson laughed raucously, and threw up his arm as if fending off a blow. As an attendant called a warning "Sh-h!" he asserted:

"Your foot was over the line, Billy, on that last serve. Surely you do not intend to compare bricking, a game, in its niceties of skill and finesse, with the crude work that characterizes the foot-racing field. You may as well try to compare a selling plater with a stake horse—Passbook with Roseben. Why, that game of yours was so coarse you could not get an artist to touch it. It was rough stuff—rude, unpolished work!"

The jockey, eying his companion truculently a moment, answered:

"It was, eh? Let me tell you something: You highbrows didn't touch it because you didn't have the nerve. If you made the money we made, you'd have to wear soup tureens for hats. I thank you, Greyson, for that Passbook-Roseben stuff. Old Rose was a hoss all right, but look at his prices—even money, four to five, or three to five. And Passbook came down the line with a hundred-to-one against him on the stools. That was real money—and he won. There you are!"

"That was once in a lifetime. Roseben was a consistent winner."

The jockey grinned.

"How often would you want him to win at that price? That was us. When we won with the speed boys we took the whole town. We carried three different speeders and went along a circuit like a circus. Why, we would be

in and out of a town while you brickers were picking out the suit of clothes you were going to wear!"

"Well, it's every man to his trade, I suppose," said Greyson evenly. "However, this game of yours looks so simple to me that I will give you the same wager you made me a while back that I can pull it off in this same burg you are going to."

"That's a bet, and in exchange for that brick I'll get you a speed boy. Chet Mills, one of our old crew, has a brother that's a marvel on the paths. The boy is a nice fellow, too, and will stand without hitching. We can see Chet about him now, if you like."

"That suits me, Billy. Do we take this fellow with us?"

"No; he should have a few days' start of us. We will have to arrange for his plant in the town."

The jockey informed Greyson that the Mills brothers were both waiters in Borsen's restaurant which he frequented. They went thither and opened negotiations with the elder Mills for his brother's services. Sleazy, of course, did the talking, and the conversation took such a technical turn that Greyson was unable to follow it. The terms of hiring were, however, arranged shortly to the apparent satisfaction of the contracting parties.

"It is all understood, then," said Sleazy at length. "Frank starts for Fairlawn to-morrow."

"How does he 'town' himself, Billy?" asked Chet. "And does he work 'straight' or reverse?"

"How is he with the hooks, Chet?"

"I've showed him all I know."

"Then he better town himself as an honest toiler coming in with a sob on the rods after a bout with old J. B., with fall spuds in the kick for the ozone. He goes to the town yell and swards him if he can. This should give him an obit if the sobber is a daily and a file in the P. N. if a weekly. Greyson can turn him as he likes. The corps is passing the other way."

"Here, you fellows, get in town!" exclaimed Greyson. "Let me in on this, too. It's my money talking for the speed boy. Let's hear what it has to say!"

"We were saying, Bob," laughed Sleazy, "that when Frank gets to Fairlawn he comes in as a mechanic who has been on a bust. He gets into a row with a town officer and whips his man, if he can. He will be arrested, of course, and he will have sufficient money left to pay his fine. His arrest will give him a paragraph in the police news of the local paper, if it happens to be a daily, and half a column, if it is a weekly.

"Chet was also asking whether you intended to have Frank win his race—that is, run 'straight'—or to have him do a fall and let the other man win, and I told him that you could suit yourself about this. It is your funeral, and I have no interest in the matter one way or the other."

"Thanks, Billy," said Greyson dryly. "Now tell me why the speed boy wishes to get arrested in the first place, and the advantage or disadvantage of his running straight or reverse."

Sleazy laughed slyly.

"Let me see, Greyson," he drawled. "Were you going to sell that brick for me, or was I going to do it myself? I recall now you said a real artist would eat up this foot-racing stuff; nothing to it at all. 'No finesse,' you remember? Now I rise to a point of order. If it doesn't require finesse, why——"

"Oh, I can manage it all right, Billy; have no fear of that," broke in Greyson hastily. "I was just curious about one or two points; that's all. I'll make out O. K., I feel certain."

Sleazy grinned, and the Mills brothers laughed outright. Then Chet observed, admiration in his voice:

"That's great, Mr. Greyson! We always thought Jimmy Dar was the best in the business, but he quit it in disgust. Of course my brother clears from under when he does his part. That must be understood. He is to assume no risk at all."

"How can that be, Mills?" asked Greyson. "If there is trouble, how can he duck it without me?"

Sleazy interrupted:

"You have an out-and-out hiring arrangement with Frank, Bob; no percentage proposition whatever. He wins or doesn't win, as you direct. As for the post-mortem of how he can or can't do something or other, leave that to him. It is part of this crude game, you know. And my, what a lot of questions! There is no finesse——"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Greyson. "You fellows are working the bogy man on me. I'm on to you, and I'll show you a few twists and quirks you never suspected before."

"Say, Chet," the jockey jerked out, "does that 'ha-ha' stuff sound natural to you? It has a kind of funny curve to me. Little Reginald van Dusen laughs that way when he gets lost in the park with a box of candy and Spot Moriarity, from Avenue A, sticks him up."

"Come on, Billy," said Greyson, reaching for his hat. "Let's get back to the Malmarte. I'll hunt up Silent's brick for you, and there are some preparations I wish to make for myself."

"Come on!" echoed the jockey significantly. "Where have I heard that expression before? Chet, I'll be around to see you when I get back to town. I just know we are going to have a long laugh together over something. Frank, you leave for Fairlawn to-morrow. So long!"

At the Malmarte, Greyson brought the jockey to his room. He hauled out a steamer trunk from his closet, and, getting down on one knee, threw out on the floor various articles of impedimenta. When he had worked to the bottom, he tossed out two guns, one in the regulation holster and the other, much smaller, in a leather-pocket arrangement, with a triangular web on the outside in which were fashioned three strongly made buttonholes.

"Those were Silent's irons," remarked Greyson, still exploring the trunk.

"The one in the holster is according to Hoyle, Bob, but I don't make the little fellow. Why the drop-stitch stuff?"

"Silent was a two-gun man," explained Greyson, facing around. "The big one he kept for show, and the other he worked with. Despite what the story writers say, it takes a long time comparatively to swing a gun from the rear. Silent didn't believe in lost motion, so he carried the other, suspended by the band, on the inside of his coat. He was left-handed, and when he had occasion to draw he bluffed with his right toward his hip, and pronto! the other was covering his man. Not that he had to gun often, either; for, as I told you, he was one of that kind nobody cared to argue with."

"It must have been amusing to see him work," said Sleazy easily.

Greyson swung around, and sat tailorlike on the floor. With a frown gathering on his face, he eyed the jockey a moment, and then declared:

"I don't like your stance at the tee on that stuff, Sleazy. 'Amusing,' you said. Listen! Once in Cheyenne we cleaned up, and there wasn't a bank running in the town on account of some shooting a few days before. So Silent set into a poker game that was running in the hotel—an old-time he-one it was, with whiskers. I didn't feel lucky, so I didn't play; just sat around to watch.

"As it happened, there was a little ratlike fellow in the game who claimed to be a drummer. It turned out that he had educated fingers, but nobody suspected that at first—except Silent. Finally there came along a thundering big pot. They were all out except this fellow I mention and Silent. It came to a show-down, and Silent threw three kings on the board.

"'Those are my best, sir. Did you buy a better hand?' he said in a sort of husky, measured voice he traveled with.

"'Three aces,' answered the fellow. 'I win."

"'No, I win,' drawled Silent. 'I said "buy." The one you took from that attachment in your sleeve doesn't count.'

"Well, Billy, the fellow went around for his gun, but Silent had him covered in a trice with the little one. That, by the way, was the first time I ever

knew he carried two. And, believe me or not, the fellow went to his knees, with his hands stretched out in supplication.

"'Do you know how to pray?' asked Silent quietly. No one else in the room so much as moved. The fellow shook his head from side to side with an obvious effort. He couldn't articulate, I imagine. Then Silent said:

"'I'll teach you. Say after me: Lord have mercy on my soul.'

"'Lord have mercy on my soul,' quavered the poor fellow."

Greyson made a significant gesture with his hands, and then, as if to efface unpleasant thoughts, turned again to the trunk. Sleazy gazed moodily ahead of him for some time, with his shoulders twitching a little. Finally he observed slowly:

"I'll take it back, Bob. I'm glad now I never saw him work, but at that I can't jibe the line he followed with the way he acted. It was peculiar."

"Every man has a code of his own, and Silent had his," declared Greyson. "Inasmuch as brick buyers, he claimed, were effecting to get an advantage over the seller, they were equally culpable. I never gave much thought to the matter myself, but there seems to be some truth in his theory. At any rate, he would no more cheat at cards than the most moral man who walks the street. What he believed in he lived up to."

"Except once, Bob. You did your part that time he attempted to rib his brother. Where did your split come in?"

"Pass that! It was probably my fault for not carrying through, as he directed. At last! Here is Silent's brick; pretty dusty, but still serviceable."

Sleazy weighed it in his hand.

"Gee, it is heavy!" he exclaimed. "I'd almost buy it for gold myself. How much is it supposed to be worth when you are selling it?"

"Around twenty thousand, I should say offhand. Of course, there is some real gold run into it at several places, where the come-on makes his tests."

"How is that done, Bob?"

Greyson laughed mockingly.

"Who is going to sell this brick—you or me?" he asked. "I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll trade the desired information with you for the reason the speed boy gets arrested—'even Stephen; no sight, unseen.'"

"Done. The speed boy cabooses himself so that everybody will know who he is and how he came to town. That averts suspicion at once, and a fellow like that can always get a job where another man couldn't. It is 'an-honest-fellow-down-on-his-luck' thing. And thrashing the town cop makes him a hero with the sporty crowd. A lot of birds are killed with one stone. Now, about testing the brick?"

"Wait a moment, Billy. All the testing materials are in the trunk also; here they are in this metal-lined mahogany box Silent had made for the purpose. Now you take this acid and place it on the spots indicated on the brick, and—— Hello! The markings have become obliterated. I shall have to measure over the brick with a rule to find them, and it will take some little time. Suppose we let it go for the present. I'll show you, later on, before we start for Fairlawn. Bricking is a hard game these days. That is why it has fallen into disuse."

"You fellows take it too seriously, I'm thinking. You watch my smoke when I get started vending the cube. I know just the way to put it over. I'll surprise you, Bob."

Greyson chortled derisively.

"You will know the difference between a watchmaker and a blacksmith after you have worked on that a while," he said.

"I know that now. That's where I have the advantage over you. Adios, Bob. I'll meet you at the buffet downstairs at seven-thirty, a week from today."

"What do you intend to do in the meantime?"

"Think. I am going to do a whole lot of thinking to protect that bet I made you, and I would advise you to do the same."

II.

At the appointed time, the two friends left the Malmarte, carrying their grips, and, turning the corner, walked along the block in search of a taxi. When they had proceeded some distance, Greyson hastily deposited his bags on the sidewalk and retraced his steps. Sleazy saw him remove a coin from his pocket and drop it in the hat of a blind beggar whose post was on the corner. When he returned, the jockey said dryly:

"What is that for, Bob—a bribe to good fortune?"

"I couldn't really say, Billy. I suspect that fellow is an eye-throwing faker, but I can never get by him."

They got their train, and rode on until late in the afternoon. At a junction a few miles from their destination, they were compelled to wait for a train connection. There was a hotel across from the station, and Sleazy, taking one of his bags, went there. When he rejoined his companion, he was clothed in a rough-and-ready suit, with a shirt of the butternut pattern and minus a necktie. In the upper outside pocket of his coat a toothbrush and a pocket comb showed prominently. Greyson eyed him with amusement, and called out:

"Greetings, Hick!"

"You should cultivate your powers of observation more, Greyson," returned the jockey angrily. "You didn't lamp my nether members, did you? I'm a Western man—miner."

Turning his back on Greyson, the jockey entered the smoking car of the train. Greyson, laughing heartily, mounted the steps of a coach. When the train arrived at Fairlawn a few passengers got out. The station platform was crowded with townspeople lounging about. The hackman for the hotel was standing by, calling out: "This was for the Palatial."

Greyson, following the example of one or two commercial men, gave the fellow his grips. When the hackman, however, attempted to relieve the jockey of his, Sleazy put them behind his back.

"Aren't you going to the hotel, sir?" the driver asked.

"What are the rates?" the jockey inquired hesitatingly.

"You will get those at the office."

"No, you don't! I suppose, if I decide not to stay, you will charge me for the trip up. I had that game pulled on me once before—in the Black Hills. I guess I'll walk up. How far is it?"

"Half a mile; but there is no charge, mister. You can ride, if you like."

"That's what the fellow in the Black Hills told me. I'll walk and take no chances."

"Come on, driver!" called out one of the drummers. "We can't wait all day for one man." And the driver, with a snort of disgust, jumped into his seat and the hack moved off.

After the wagon was gone, a tall, hatchet-faced man with a cap having "Express" printed on it approached Sleazy. Easing himself against the wall of the station, he remarked:

"I heard you say you were at the Black Hills once. My cousin was out there a long time. His name was Tom Harney. Did you ever happen to run across him?"

"Sure I knew him," returned Sleazy quickly. "Him and me were bunkies together. Why did you say 'was?'"

"Tom is gone," the expressman said sorrowfully. "He came home six months ago, and only lived a month afterward; some kind of fever, the doctor said it was."

Sleazy seized and wrung the other's hand, much affected.

"Tom is the very man I came all the way across the country to see," he murmured. "Didn't he ever mention me at all? Didn't he ever talk about his old pal, Jack?"

"Then you must be Weston, but I never heard Tom call you by your first name. He always said 'Smoky.'"

"That's it! All the bunch always called me Smoky on account of me being so——"

"I know. Quick on the draw, Tom said. Do you know, I kinda had the idea you were a bigger man, the way Tom described you."

"That was old Tom!" exclaimed Sleazy, laughing. "If he liked you at all, you were always the biggest and best in the business. Why, we were out on a jamboree together one time and he wanted to bet I could snuff a candle farther away than any man in the place. Now there was a fellow present who had the reputation of—did Tom tell you about that?"

Tom's cousin laughed reminiscently. They were now surrounded by a little knot of men. As Sleazy broke off, he heard one behind him explaining to another, evidently a recent addition to the group: "It's a fellow from the West come on to see Tom Harney."

The expressman remarked:

"No, Tom didn't tell me about the affair you mention, but he did describe that fracas you had with the fire eater in Popack."

"I remember that," grinned the jockey. "It was great while it lasted, but——"

"Hey, Harney!" the ticket agent called out at this juncture. "Miss Glover is on the phone and wants to know if her trunk came. She says she is in a hurry for it."

"I will have to be going," said Harney. "Get on, Weston, and I'll give you a ride to the hotel."

After they had pulled away from the station, Sleazy asked:

"Did Tom mention our compact to you, Mr. Harney?"

"Call me Bill. No, I don't remember that he did. What was it about?"

"This," said Sleazy evenly, opening his bag and drawing out Silent's brick. "Half of this was to belong to Tom—and now he is gone. It's too bad!"

"Suffering fishhooks!" cried Harney. "Is it gold?"

"The same, Bill. Before I left the Black Hills for Alaska, Tom and me made an agreement that after a certain time we would seek each other out and divide all the money both of us made in the meantime. Well, I made something over twenty thousand dollars along the Yukon, came back to Frisco, and had it smelted into this brick. Afterward I went to the Black Hills to find Tom, but they told me he came on here. So I followed him. The poor fellow!"

"I'm his only relative," said Bill, so quickly Sleazy was compelled to smile.

"I know that, Bill, but I was trying just now to puzzle out what Tom would do in like circumstances. I was wondering if he would hunt up my old mother and give her half of all he had when he found that I was gone." And the jockey shook his head from side to side doubtfully.

"Tom would give any one the shirt from his back," said Harney meaningly.

"That is true enough, I guess," Sleazy observed slowly. Then, twisting around in his seat so as to face his companion, he observed:

"Tom was always a saving fellow. Did he leave much when he died?"

"Well, no; not much. The doctor's bills and the funeral expenses were high, of course. Still he had——"

"And not a single word of our agreement," broke in Sleazy sorrowfully. "I can't understand that of Tom."

"He was raving a lot before the end," Harney explained. "Now I remember, he was trying to tell me something, but I couldn't make out what it was. Seems to me that must be it. There is the Palatial now. But no friend of Tom's is going to stop in a hotel while Bill Harney has a roof over his head. You come along with me to meet the wife."

"I couldn't do that, Bill. I want to think over something. I'll go to the Palatial, if you don't mind."

"Then I'll go in and introduce you," Harney declared, jumping down from his seat. "Here, George," he called to a bystander, "get up and deliver that trunk to Miss Glover, and when you come back, run the rig under my shed."

As George drove away, Sleazy inquired of Bill:

"Is it customary in these parts to need an introduction to hotels? All we need in the West is money."

"They will treat you better if they know you are a friend of mine," Harney remarked insinuatingly, taking up

the grips. "My sister-in-law is the cook here, and she bakes great pies. I'll tell her to send you in something extra."

"Don't bother to do that," said Sleazy shortly. "I don't want to be under obligations to you until I make up my mind about the gold." And, taking the bags from the other's reluctant hands, he hurried into the lobby of the Palatial. Bill, after explaining to some friend that the newcomer was a friend of Tom's whom he "had been corresponding with for some time," followed the jockey up the steps.

Sleazy deposited his bags on the counter. He opened one of them and carefully removed the gold brick, stripping from it its canvas cover. Close by was Greyson, complacently smoking a fat cigar, with his chair tilted against the wall. Scattered around were several more guests of the hotel, some engaged in conversation and others writing letters. The clerk, with a pen stuck above his ear, whirled the register around toward Sleazy. His eye, extended its widest, was on the brick.

"Before I register," declared the jockey impressively, "I want to know if your safe *is* safe. This is a brick of gold I have here, and it is worth twenty thousand dollars, and when I do register I want a receipt for it."

Attracted by a gasping noise behind him, he turned to see Greyson, his face suffused with blood, making ineffectual efforts to get his chair to the floor, and trying, with nervous fingers, to unloosen his collar.

"Hello!" exclaimed Sleazy. "The altitude here has got this fellow, I reckon. Somebody had better get him out into the ozone before he chokes."

"A drink," panted Greyson.

One of the drummers rushed toward the water cooler.

"I reckon that fellow don't mean water when he calls for a drink," drawled the jockey, motioning the water bearer away. "Here, Harney," he added, "take this slug and fetch him a drink from the bar."

The expressman departed, and reappeared shortly with a glass of whisky, which Greyson drained at a gulp.

"Thanks," he breathed as he rolled an accusing eye in Sleazy's direction.

"The bartender says he will send you the change later for that thing you gave me, Weston," Harney laughed.

"Tell him to never mind, Bill," directed Sleazy. "I'll be in to barter most of it with him in a few minutes."

He took the writing pen from the clerk, and paused for a moment with an interrogative lift of his eyebrows.

"You get your receipt," said the clerk, "and your gold will be as safe in the Palatial as in the mint."

"That's where it came from—Frisco," the jockey answered as he inscribed "Jack Weston" on the book in a scrawly hand.

"You neglected to put down your home address, Mr. Weston," the clerk mentioned, revolving the book again.

"I haven't any. If this place proves out as good as it looks, I reckon I'll call Fairlawn 'home.'"

"Mr. Weston is an old friend of my Cousin Tom's," interjected Harney. "He came here on business with Tom, not knowing that he was dead." It seemed to Sleazy, the expressman threw a little emphasis on the "business." "Seeing that he will probably remain here, Joe, you had better put him on a 'home' rate."

"I'll do that gladly, Bill," the clerk remarked. Then, after placing the brick in the safe and returning the receipt to Sleazy, he smiled and asserted:

"I thought that was a regular gold brick at first, Mr. Weston."

"That's what it is," the jockey affirmed, with a show of surprise.

"I didn't mean the same thing you mean. I had reference to a bunko brick."

"Ho! ho!" Sleazy laughed. "That's pretty good! I see what you had in mind now. This is the first time that occurred to me. I reckon bunko bricks are not trotted around in this manner."

"I guess you are right," a commercial man at the cigar case laughed.

"What do you say, stranger?" asked Sleazy, turning to Greyson.

"Not that I ever heard of," returned Greyson, and only the jockey detected the biting sarcasm in his voice.

"Well, boys," the putative Weston drawled, "there is a chunk of that same stuff waiting to be liquefied at the bar. Let's go! And, Bill, you had better rustle those fellows in off the stoop, too. I don't come to Fairlawn often, and this is my birthday. Let's all be merry!"

The jockey's motion seemed to be carried unanimously. As they moved to the bar, Sleazy, bringing up the rear, observed a man coming down the steps that led from the second floor to the lobby. As it happened, their eyes met, and such was the compelling light that emanated from the other the jockey stopped in his tracks as if arrested by something physical. The man, seeing this, smiled understandingly and proceeded on. Sleazy seized Harney's arm and pointed after him.

"Who might that be, Bill?" he asked.

"That's Jeff Orms," Harney said. "He owns the hotel here, the bank, and a whole lot of other things, and what he don't own outright he has a mortgage on. He came to Fairlawn broke, from nobody knows where a dozen years ago, and started in the Palatial as a clerk. Now he is rich. Nobody around here could ever get the best of him in a dicker. Jeff is a smart man."

"He looks it," said Sleazy, entering the bar.

The hotel man walked across the lobby, and was going out the door when the clerk called to him: "Oh, Mr. Orms, come here a moment, please!"

"What is the matter now, Joe?" he laughed, returning. "Are you a dime 'over' in your cash again?"

"No, Mr. Orms, but I want to tell you something." And the clerk informed him in detail of the supposed Weston's appearance with the gold brick. When he had finished, the hotel man asked him if the cube was real gold. The clerk stated that he personally believed that it was, but suggested that Mr. Orms see for himself. The proprietor laughed at this, and inquired if "Eph Bliss had 'reported' yet."

"He is out on the porch now. I'll call him in." Joe grinned. "He will know all about it, of course."

"What's wanted, Jeff?" Bliss inquired, coming up to the desk.

"Who is this Weston, Eph?" the hotel man asked.

Bliss went on to give an account of Sleazy's appearance in Fairlawn. He informed Orms that Bill Harney and Weston had been writing to each other about some money that the latter owed Tom Harney before he died, and that Weston had come on to make a settlement. "They said" that Weston and Bill were arguing about the amount coming up from the station in Bill's wagon, and that now, as long as Tom was dead, Weston wasn't going to give Bill any part of the amount owed him.

"H'm!" grunted Orms, when Bliss finished his recital. "If I am any judge, Bill will make him talk turkey before he gets out of Fairlawn with that gold."

"Then you think that is real gold Weston has in the safe?" asked Joe.

"Without doubt," the hotel man answered. "The bunko fellows are always pussyfooting around the outskirts. We are going to see some fun when Weston refuses to give up Tom's share to Bill Harney."

Bliss inquired where Weston was at the present time.

"Setting 'em up at the bar, Eph. I guess——" Here the hotel man paused to laugh, for Bliss was on his way.

"I guess, Joe," continued Orms, "that between Bill Harney and Eph Bliss this Weston is in for a pretty good time. It isn't often a fellow comes to Fairlawn with so much visible means of support showing. Holy Cat! Here comes the first run of shad for the county fair next week. It's the Cohen brothers. Joe, tell your brother to come to work to-morrow, and when you are not behind the counter see that he is."

Two men, alike as peas, who had a moment before dismounted from a large, covered wagon at the stepping-

stone in front of the Palatial, were now approaching the desk with a miscellaneous assortment of bags, which they threw in a heap before the grating. Cut from the same pattern, one was a replica of the other down to the large diamond which sparkled on a somewhat cigarette-soiled hand. The Palatial knew them well, for they had made their headquarters there for many years during the continuance of the Orange County fair. The elder of the two was called Ike, and the other Morris.

"Hello, Jeff! Hello, Choe!" greeted Ike, shaking hands with the proprietor and clerk in turn. "Back again to the old homestead, you see! You haf the same cook? The blackberry pie should be running good now, and of course we get the same rate and the same room mid bath."

"The same, boys," replied the host genially. "Everything is the same, only the tomato crop was bad this year and we couldn't put up the ketchup as usual, and we have had no rain, so the blackberries are scarce, and we are furnishing only one piece of pie to a customer, and the old room is taken by a party named Greyson, and the rates have advanced fifty cents a day per person—and without."

"Midout what, Jeff?"

"It won't make any difference to you fellows, Ike," asserted the proprietor, tapping the largest of the bags with his foot. "I see you have brought 'em all back."

"Those things you is kicking, and maybe breaking, Jeff, are rings for the cane stands. We haf that concession this year. Again I ask you: What is the midout?"

"Towel service, Ike. We can't afford to trade our Turkish line for those huckabacks of yours—that you packed by mistake from the Hubbard House in Cambridge. The towel exchange at the Palatial went out with the old prohibition law."

"Vy, Jeff, ve——"

"Another thing, Ike. When the fair is on and we are feeding so many people that we have to let them in and out of the dining room in bunches, nobody is going to eat a T-steak down to the bone and then send it back because it wasn't cooked right; and two in a room means just that—no subletting this year. I've provided a lot of cots myself, and I'm going to put them in the corridors."

"Vy, Jeff! Those was friends of ours last year and——"

"They must have been, Ike, when they let you store them away five abreast in the bed like sardines and paid you fifty cents a head for the privilege."

"What did I say to you, Morris?" said Ike, turning to his brother. "So soon as a man makes a piece of change, somebody vants to take it from him! Ve vill go mid the Blake House. I heard last year they set a good table—mid everything mid, and nothing midout."

"When you get there, Ike, do me a favor," said Orms easily. "Tell Austin, the fellow in charge there, to hitch up a rig and go to the depot for some baggage. He can take the horse that is in the old dining room if he likes."

Joe, the clerk, laughed and observed:

"Mr. Orms owns the Blake House now, and has turned it into a livery stable."

Ike emitted a forced laugh.

"Ve was joking, Jeff. Vy, the Palatial is like home to us."

"That's the trouble," returned the proprietor quickly. "I forgot to say also that the pool table is for the purpose of playing on—pool. When you go there I want to hear the balls keep dropping in the pockets. No 'my baby wants a pair of shoes' or 'Come seven, come eleven' this season!"

The gong over the desk now pealed for supper, and the Cohen brothers, making hasty ablutions, passed into the dining room. The head waitress, with a nod of recognition, escorted them to a table near a window overlooking a stretch of green sward outside. Greyson, entering the room shortly afterward, was assigned to the same table. As he seated himself he bowed courteously to the Cohens, and in the small talk that followed he mentioned his name.

From his seat at the table, Greyson could see a knot of people gathering around some runners, who were donning spiked shoes. Presently he observed his speed boy, Frank Mills, appear in street attire, and, following him, a wild-appearing fellow, whose advent was hailed by the crowd with a burst of laughter. Morris Cohen, observing Greyson's look of interest, remarked:

"Those fellows are practicing for the 'dash' at the fair next week. Jeff Orms, who is interested in those things, has put up a large cash prize, and everybody who can run a lick at all is practicing. A bunch of runners who competed at the fair in Cambridge last week are entered also."

"I see," said Greyson, following with his eye Mills, now lumbering over the staked course. "That fellow there," he added, indicating Mills, "seems to have more motion than speed."

The waitress, putting down some dishes on the table, glanced out of the window and laughed.

"That is Austin," she said, "who works for Mr. Orms in the livery stable. He can fight better than he can run, I guess. He came to Fairlawn a week ago, whipped our constable, and got arrested. Mr. Orms was so tickled he gave Austin a job at once. But he can't run at all."

"How is that, Mary?" asked Ike Cohen.

The waitress laughed again.

"Do you see that fellow there, practicing starts?" she said. "That is Will Wirth, a college fellow, whose home is here. He won the race at the Cambridge fair. Austin and he have been running against each other three nights now, and Austin owes him all the wages he has coming to him Saturday. He can't run even as fast as 'Crazy' Sparks, the fellow out there the crowd is laughing at."

"Another piece of steak now, Mary," said Ike Cohen, and the waitress made another trip to the kitchen.

Greyson laughed knowingly, and, dropping his voice, remarked:

"I wish I knew a first-class runner. From a surface survey I should say that the pickings here ought to be very fair." Then he gazed attentively at his salt container.

Morris Cohen rolled an eye at his brother, and said, stressing the "your:" "What is your line, sir?"

"I'm traveling for my health just now."

There was a pause, occasioned by the noisy entrance of Sleazy, accompanied by Bill Harney and Eph Bliss. The former had evidently decided not to go home for supper. Ike Cohen slued around to look after them, and muttered under his breath: "The 'bugler' is in love again." Then turning to Greyson, he said in an explanatory way:

"Vell, this is as healthy a place as anoder. Last year some fellers I knew ran a shell game for three whole days outside the fair ground's gate, and they didn't work any more all winter. Wow!"

"Do you know, boys, the more I see of this burg the better I like it. Before my health broke down I was by way of doing well and I'm working 'heavy' now. How fast do you suppose, for instance, this college 'rah-rah' can step the century?"

"The track was fast at Cambridge and he won in eleven flat," jerked Morris Cohen quickly. "They thought he was a wonder there, and, I wouldn't be surprised, here also."

"How fast is the fastest man you know?" inquired Greyson.

"Well," Morris said, "we know a fellow, and if he is 'out' now and off the bilge water and one or two other things, he can give this Wirth maybe ten feet in a hundred and this Austin fifteen."

"Take off five feet for bad behavior, then, and he is still good enough to win. They're off! How soon can you get this fellow for me?"

"Maybe he is working now," Morris observed. "This season of the year is the right one for the speed boys. Zittel—that's his name—used to work with a big crew until the game went bad. When he is home he lives next door to

us. He will come for me, provided he happens to be there."

"How much?" asked Greyson, reaching for his roll.

"Let's see," figured Morris. "Six-fifty for car fare, a dollar for the eats, and say two more for the telegram, including stalling off Eph Bliss. Bliss is the fellow behind you, that came in with the little Hick, who somehow don't look natural to me. Call it a ten-dollar note. If we sent more, Zittel would only fall into temptation."

Greyson passed him the money, and said:

"Have him come on at once. But I don't get you on that Bliss stuff. Where does he tee off?"

"He is the town bugler and night watchman combined," growled Ike Cohen. "Vonce Morris and me had a deal all framed up he came along and spoiled it. Ven the fair is on he is a special officer and busier than a lot of red ants under a stone. Ve vill haf to call a friend of ours at Albany on the long-distance phone and haf him send the telegram from there. If ve left it in town, Bliss vould be sure to see it."

"That's good judgment," commended Greyson. "By the way, did this Zittel ever work with Jimmy Dar's crew, and what does he do in the off season?"

"We don't know the fellow you mention," Morris declared. "There were a lot of crews out together when the going was good. Zittel, when we left New York, was working as a waiter in a club called—what is the name of that place, Ike?"

"The Malmarte," Ike said.

"That's it—the Malmarte. Did you ever hear of it, Mr. Greyson? This club 'took' a Greek for his hotel and sold it for over a million and a half dollars."

"In a general way," answered Greyson, startled. "But, about the incident you mention, I heard it differently. The Greek sold his place and afterward became demented."

"N. G.," returned Morris, laughing. "The leader of my district, Big John Coffee, belongs to the Malmarte, and he gave us the low-down on it."

"That so? Well, it doesn't matter. When Zittel arrives I shall want to see him at once. We better have him met at the station, and I'll meet him at the outskirts some place. Will you make his entry at once?"

"Certainly. I'll arrange to have it sent from Cambridge to Orms. He has charge of the races."

Mary, the waitress, who had been making many trips to the rear, now served the dessert. Standing at the window, she laughed heartily.

"Crazy Sparks has just fallen head over heels!" she exclaimed. "It's a wonder he wouldn't quit and go home. I can run as fast as he can myself."

"Is he really a bug, Mary?" Morris asked.

"On racing only. They say he used to be a good runner at one time, too. He has been farming it on a place he owns, and a few days ago somebody discovered slate on his land. Sparks sold his place for over ten thousand dollars, and ever since he has been hanging around town doing nothing. The day after Austin came to Fairlawn, Sparks got in an argument with him about how fast they could run. They had a race and Austin fell, and ever since Sparks has been practicing with the others."

"That does no harm to any one," Greyson remarked, with a smile.

"That's so," laughed Mary; "but, you see, Wirth and Austin and the others are kidding him so that he will bet his money that he wins at the fair. They haven't got him up to that point yet, but they will later. There! They let him win that time. It's a shame." And with a frown she brushed the table and hurried away.

"I am going to get some of Sparks' money when he starts wagering," chortled Greyson. "Of course, you fellows are entitled to come in on this. How shall we arrange it among ourselves?"

"Of course, Greyson, we have some money," Morris said slowly, "and of course we are pretty well-known here, so we better not bet ourselves. I suggest that you bet as much as you can

get down on Zittel and we will take half. Is this satisfactory?"

"Perfectly," answered Greyson.

"And of course, Greyson," said Ike with emphasis, "the money must be placed in Jeff Orms' hands, and ve must know, from Jeff, Greyson, the amount you vager. Ve know Jeff vell —and you are traveling for your health —not."

"That's quite proper and fair, Ike," Greyson laughed. "There is no limit, I assume, as to the amount I shall bet."

"The more the better," said Morris. "We can always get money for a sure thing."

"And of course you vager," Ike asserted, "mid the understanding that if Zittel don't start the bets don't go."

"What's the matter with you, Ike?" Morris asked in surprise. "Of course, that is understood."

"Ven I bet money, Morris, I vant nothing 'understood.' I vant everything known, Morris," snapped Ike.

"Be it known, then, Ike, that it shall be as you direct," Greyson remarked easily. "I think I'll throw out a few lines at once. How about our genial host for a start?"

"Try him, by all means," Morris directed. "He has the coin, if he cares to wager. Ike and I will get off the telegram to Zittel. So long!"

Mr. Orms was sitting on the porch, watching the runners. Greyson approached him, and at the hotel man's suggestion drew a chair alongside. Orms had a split-second watch in his hand, with which he was timing the speeders. After a silence of a few moments, Greyson remarked:

"I see you are interested in foot-racing, Mr. Orms."

"Racing of all kinds, rather. As a matter of fact, I have put up the money for the foot race at the fair these fellows here are practicing for."

"I surmise you get part of it back by increased business at the Palatial," observed Greyson dryly.

"I always try to have one hand wash the other," Orms returned in a similar tone of voice. "It is the game itself, however, that interests me mostly. Wirth, our local flyer there, had done three 'hundreds' to-night in eleven-two. That is pretty good stepping, considering that he isn't pressed much."

"They were saying at the supper table that he is taking advantage of the other two."

"He is winning Austin's money and making a fool out of Sparks, at any rate. It is a peculiar thing about this fellow Austin. He runs the second 'fifty' faster than the first. The last time he ran it in five-four. He is out of his distance, I guess."

"Possibly he gets off badly. That makes considerable difference in a dash, I imagine."

"That is probably it. Expect to be in Fairlawn long, Mr. Greyson?"

"For the fair only. I have a friend who starts a horse in one of the races. That is why I am here."

"Can your friend's horse win?"

"He can—and will."

"I am a little partial to good horse-flesh myself. Like to have a fair-sized bet down, too, when I know something. I forgot what you said the horse's name was."

Greyson laughed, and then said evenly:

"That is kind of you, Mr. Orms. It keeps his price from being spoiled. Who is this fellow Austin; another local man?"

"I thought you sat at Mary's table at supper?" Orms said with a smile.

"She couldn't well get into her stride, Mr. Orms. Some people I sat with were hungry."

"Running to form as usual, I see. Well, this Dawson——"

"Austin you said his name was, I thought."

"That is it. He has been in town only a short time, but I guess you might say he was a local man, too. He works for me. But Sparks isn't. He lives in the next town."

"I was only trying to get a line on this foot race," Greyson explained. "I would like to bet some money on it myself, provided 'I know something.'"

Orms laughed a moment.

"Possibly we could trade," he said. "Suppose I give you a tip on the foot race in exchange for the name of your friend's horse."

"All right. But there will be pools sold on this race at the fair, and none, I take it, on the foot race. It is a question of price, Mr. Orms. Give me your tip now, and I'll give you mine the day of the race."

Orms thought a moment, then chuckled:

"That is a mixed-up proposition, but I'll do this: I'll give you the names of two boys who won't win now for the information you will give me later, and there will be a great deal of money wagered on their chances, too."

"That is a go. Name them." Greyson had nothing to lose.

"The local fellows, Wirth and Austin."

"I thought Wirth beat a big field at Cambridge," he said. "He should be able to repeat, shouldn't he?"

"Everybody thinks he can but me. I know that the fellow who came second to him in Cambridge can beat him a couple of steps. His name is Hall, and his father runs the Hubbard House in Cambridge. I saw him after the race and he told me he slipped getting off the mark."

"That sounds to me like a stall," returned Greyson quickly. "I always did say that once a fellow was beaten—prize fight, foot race, or anything else—the other man has the Indian sign on him." And he laughed inwardly, for events were shaping themselves to his full satisfaction.

After pausing a moment to let this dictum sink in, he continued:

"I am one of those, Mr. Orms, who always believes in patronizing home industries. How much should you say offhand I can get down that either of the local boys wins?"

"I don't know about you, but, knowing everybody around here, I can guarantee at least a couple of thousand dollars, but I warn——"

"Here is the money," said Greyson quickly, stripping that amount from his roll.

"I've got it," laughed Orms, putting the money in his wallet.

Greyson looked at him a moment narrowly, and declared:

"When I'm at home and somebody says that, it means that the money is already covered."

"Wherever the white man has been there is nothing new," drawled Orms. "We get the new Ford jokes here by telegraph. Consider your money covered."

"Now that I know that," laughed Greyson, "I should like to press that bet a little."

"Double it, if you like, providing nothing is said. I am president of the bank here, and some of the depositors have scruples against betting."

"All right. Put these bills alongside the others. They have been together so long it would be a shame to separate them. This town looks like a place where a man can get plenty of action. I think I'll stick around a while after the fair is over."

Orms looked at Greyson and chuckled.

"You are the second man to arrive in Fairlawn to-day who said the same thing," he mentioned. "Here comes the other one now. I'll introduce you. Mr. Weston, shake hands with Mr. Greyson."

"I met Mr. Greyson this afternoon inside," Sleazy grinned. "He was having a conniption cat fit at the time—maybe on account of seeing my gold brick. You feeling better now, Mr. Greyson?"

"Much—thank you," snapped Greyson, getting to his feet. "I forgot to take my medicine after supper. Where is the best cigar store in town, Mr. Orms?"

"Across the street, but the best cigars are in the case at the Palatial. Have Joe show you some of our 'specials.'"

"Thanks," said Greyson, walking off.

"I wonder what that fellow does for a living?" asked Sleazy.

"He's a speculator, I understand—live stock."

"He looks like a butcher fed up on his own beef at that. Did you notice

his full, short neck, with the blood trying to burst through? Somehow most butchers have the same look."

"That's true; a sort of sign of the profession. Now our men here in Fairlawn mostly all have all callous, horny hands from working with stone. That is their sign usually. I remember Tom Harney's were the same way—after he came back from the Black Hills."

Sleazy glanced at his white, well-kept hands and smiled.

"When a man gets hold of a lot of money, suddenlike, he don't know how to spend it," he said. "When I came down from Alaska there was a girl in a barber shop—I liked her because she had red hair—and I had her go over my hands every day, and now look at them."

"I am," the hotel man said. Then, after a pause, he added: "Joe was telling me you and Tom were partners in the West. Now that you are here with so much money, it is too bad he is dead. He died fast, too."

"Bill says his wife is sick, too, and I want to get your advice about something."

"Bill's wife must have been taken sick suddenly, then," Orms asserted. "I saw her coming down out of Lawyer Holt's office with Bill not over ten minutes ago."

"What's that?" said Sleazy sharply, and without waiting for a reply he went on:

"Right after supper Bill Harney made a demand on me for one half the amount of money I have in the brick. Now Tom was all right, and a good fellow, and if he lived I would be glad to give him his share according to our agreement. But I don't like Bill at all, and I'm not going to give him a single cent.

"Well, a while ago he came to me and said his wife was sick, and that she would not believe a word he said—that I was in town or that there was any agreement with Tom and so on. So, on account of him not being home for supper, Bill wanted to know if I would give him a statement about the gold so that he could square himself, and I did."

"Did Bill tell you what to say?" asked the hotel man with interest.

"Come to think of it, he did. Why?"

"That will be Holt, the lawyer's act," said Orms grimly. "I had some trouble with him, and I know how he works."

"What is the answer?" Sleazy asked, really puzzled.

"Bill couldn't hold you to the agreement on your say-so alone, I imagine, Weston, but now that he has your signed statement he can. However, you will know shortly. Here comes Holt now, and he means business."

"Well, I'll be—ditched!" exclaimed Sleazy, and he meant it. Orms got out of his chair to leave, but when Sleazy asked him to remain he sat down again.

Holt, a scrawny individual, clothed in a frayed frock coat and wearing a silk hat of ancient vintage, was approaching, arms swinging violently and heavy watch chain bobbing up and down. Following in his wake came a number of hangers-on, probably divining his errand. Standing directly in front of Sleazy, he asked formally:

"Are you Mr. John Weston?"

Sleazy nodded assent. Crook as he was, he felt his gorge rising at Harney's summary action.

"Then," Holt continued, "representing my client, William Harney, administrator of the estate of one Thomas Harney, deceased, I now make a demand on you for one half of the net proceeds of certain moneys now in the form, shape, and manner of a cube of gold, which cube is now in the safe of the Palatial Hotel, and at the same time I tender you fifteen hundred dollars, the same being one-half of the net proceeds of the estate of the said Thomas Harney, deceased—all of which is in accordance with a certain agreement entered upon between you and the said Thomas Harney and evidenced by a statement in writing, signed by you, which I have in my possession."

"It's getting rather dark now, judge," said Sleazy, "and I can't see that fifteen-hundred tender you spoke

of, aforesaid. Would you mind placing the said sum in the palm of my right hand?"

"The tender I mentioned, sir, is a fiction of law," said the lawyer hastily. "Inasmuch as half the value of the gold now in your possession, at least constructively, amounts to more than the sum tendered, the latter will be deducted from the former. Your answer, sir?"

"Well," said Sleazy, biting off each word, "according to the 'stathooks' in such cases made and provided, including tort, mayhem, and trespass on the case, and between ourselves severally and jointly—for I see the whole town is here now—you go tell Bill Harney he will never get a dog-gone cent from me, and you tell him for me, aforesaid as aforesaid, and in toto Judas-judasprudence, that I can lick him as small as I am, and you tell him, also and again, that if Smoky Weston had his gun with him he would shoot the said Bill Harney, at three hundred paces, through the lobe of his left ear."

"You heard him threaten my client, Mr. Orms? I call you to witness that you heard him," shouted the lawyer.

"I couldn't testify that I did," drawled Orms. "Flies in the dining room are making so much racket fighting over a lump of sugar that I can't hear anything else."

"I couldn't, either," came Eph Bliss' voice from out the crowd. "All I could hear was the echo of Holt's voice."

The lawyer turned to Sleazy again, and said angrily:

"In a word, Weston, do I understand you to deny your obligation in this matter?"

"In two words, Holt—you do."

"Very well, sir. We shall see to-morrow!"

"That's right, judge; it's pretty dark now. Step off with the right foot going down the steps and haul the door to—or three. The hinges are rusty and need oiling."

Frowning, the lawyer hastened away, and the crowd gradually dispersed. Sleazy lit a cigarette, and smoked on in silence for a time. Presently he laid a hand on the hotel man's knee, and said in a troubled voice:

"I need your advice more than ever now, Mr. Orms. What would you advise me to do? Do you think Bill Harney can hold me to the agreement I made with Tom?"

"Under the circumstances, I think so. If I were you, I would remove the gold from the hotel to-night. If you wish, I will rent you a box at the bank, and you can store it there. We can remove it from the hotel safe after the crowd gets off the street."

"That is very kind of you, Mr. Orms," returned Sleazy. "I'll do as you suggest, of course. But I don't understand yet why I ought to move it."

"Unless I miss my guess, you will know to-morrow," Orms said cryptically. And Sleazy was forced to be content.

When the clock in front of the jewelry store across the street from the Palatial marked the hour of one, Sleazy and Orms went to the bank. The street was completely deserted. Orms unlocked the door, and, after revolving the combination on the safe for a moment, swung the vault door open. Piled atop of one another on a shelf in the rear of the vault, Sleazy saw a number of black-japanned boxes, some with names printed across the fronts, but the most without lettering. Orms took down one of the latter and Sleazy placed the brick therein.

"I'll tell the cashier about this matter in the morning," remarked Orms, as he placed the box in its original position. "He will send you a rental bill within a few days." He then closed the vault and accompanied Sleazy back to the hotel. When saying good night he chuckled:

"Now let the learned lawyer take such steps as seem to him to be proper in the premises."

"You are pretty well up in that stuff, aren't you, Mr. Orms?" Sleazy remarked.

"I've had a reason to be," returned Orms, switching off the lights in the hotel lobby.

Sleazy piled off to bed. He lay in

deep thought for a long time. Finally he grinned in the darkness, and adjusted his head on the pillow.

"It's just bullhead luck, I know," he muttered to himself, "but it should work like a charm. Oh, you naughty Judge Holt!"

Then he heard a wagon scrunching along the gravel underneath his window. He got out of bed and peered through the curtain. The carriage stopped, and Mary, the waitress, and Sparks got out. Orms joined them, and for some time the three carried on an animated conversation, interspersed with bursts of laughter.

"That's a funny combination," murmured Sleazy. "That fellow Sparks is one of the foot-racers I saw practicing to-night. Well, they seem to be having a good time about something. I wonder how Greyson is coming on?"

Then, yawning, he sought his bed and slept the sleep of the just.

It was late the following morning when the ex-jockey appeared below stairs. To his surprise, Holt was in the lobby. As Sleazy looked at him with curiosity, the lawyer advanced, and, with a gesture that had something theatrical about it, handed him a legal-appearing document.

"Greetings, judge," Sleazy observed. "Ah, what have we here? What sayeth the little 'billit-dux?' Shame on you, judge, and so early in the morning!"

Orms, who was behind the desk, laughed. "Holt isn't playing any favorites this morning, Weston," he declared. "I've got one of those things, too."

"That's an injunction," said the lawyer shortly. "It forbids you, Weston, and Mr. Orms, or the agent or agents of either, from removing a certain package or parcel from the safe of the Palatial; to wit, a cube of gold. And this," he added, presenting Sleazy with another document, "is the bill in the action of Harney versus Weston for an accounting."

"The injunction seems to be *depropos*, judge, but why bill me? Harney retained you, not me. I am going to hire a good lawyer at once. Where can I find one, Mr. Orms?"

"There aren't any nearer than Cambridge," answered Orms innocently. "We've never had a good one in this town."

Sleazy laughed, then said to Holt:

"Have no fear, judge. I would no more think of removing that brick from the safe now than I would of letting Bill Harney get any part of it. I always respect the law. Mr. Orms, if you see me attempting to open that door, I authorize you to call the judge at once."

"You can't, Weston," the hotel man asserted, with a fleeting wink. "I have locked the compartment and have given the key to Mr. Holt. I will take no chances."

"You had better not," declared Holt, going toward the door.

Among those scattered around the lobby the jockey observed Greyson talking with the two men he had seen in the dining room the evening before. He nodded to Greyson, who bowed coldly in return, and went for his breakfast.

When the door closed behind Sleazy, Morris Cohen asked:

"What's all this to-do about, Greyson?"

Greyson explained, telling of the putative Weston's arrival in Fairlawn and relating the conversation Weston had with the hotel clerk. When he had concluded, Morris remarked:

"Weston must be on the up and up then. Maybe a fellow like that would tickle the pasteboards a bit if he was properly approached. Would you ask him, Greyson, when he comes out? And will we split his money three ways or go every man for his lonesome?"

"Sure, I'll ask him," said Greyson quickly, "but about splitting his money —I don't think that will pay. A fellow like him, who haggles about bus fare and hotel rates, wouldn't be liable to lose much money in a poker game."

"That's right," chimed in Ike. "Morris has me in over my head mid auction pinochle now, and maybe I should get

my money back from this here Weston."

"It is so ordered," said Greyson.

When Sleazy returned, Greyson called him over and suggested the game. The jockey hesitated, and asked:

"What limit?"

"Say all jacks and a fifty-cent ante," Morris urged hurriedly.

Sleazy laughed, and shook his head in negation.

"That's no game for a grown man," he asserted. "We teethe children on that in my country. But make it regular draw, sky limit, and I'll dally for a few revolving days."

"That suits us better still," Morris said. "Let's adjourn to our room."

They played until far into the night. The Cohens lost steadily. They could not understand why. Finally Ike sprang from his seat in a burst of anger, throwing the cards on the floor.

"'S enough!" he cried. "Never before did I see such a game. Ven I deal and Morris gets a hand, he don't get a bet, and ven Morris deals and I get a hand I don't get a bet—but ven Veston deals or Greyson deals I get maybe a good hand and lots of action; but I lose and Morris loses, and Veston vins and Greyson vins!"

Sleazy looked at him in mock surprise, and jerked out:

"Why, the way you talk I am justified in believing that you brothers are playing partners! Ho! ho! The devil must be in the cards to-night."

"That's vy I'm q-vitting!" Ike roared. "I can't make oud vich is vich."

"Well, so long, craftsmen," Sleazy said, getting to his feet. "Maybe some other time we will play again. I just dote on poker."

"Maybe ve vill—nod!" said Ike bitterly, looking after him.

Greyson patted Ike on the back, and laughed.

"Cheer up, Ike! Our speed boy will be here to-morrow, and in a few days we'll blow the cover off the town."

"Should ve not," returned Ike mournfully, "Morris and me vill haf to go to work again. As it is now, ve vill haf to go mid the nest egg for our share of the Zittel bet."

"How much have you up on him now, Greyson?" asked Morris.

"Four thousand, Morris, but I expect shortly to place a great deal more."

When Greyson was going downstairs to the Palatial barber shop the following day, he encountered Sleazy coming up.

"How much, Bill?" Greyson whispered.

"Three-fifty. And you, Bob?"

"Four hundred flat," Greyson returned, handing Sleazy twenty-five dollars. "That squares us on the Cohen thing." And they passed on their separate ways.

III.

The up train on the following morning brought Zittel, the speed boy, to Fairlawn. Waiting for him at the station was a conveyance from the Palatial livery driven by Austin—or, rather, Mills. As Zittel, a rangy, anæmic fellow, descended to the platform, Ike Cohen beckoned to him from some distance away. Following Ike's pointed finger, Zittel went around to the back of the station. Cohen, shaking hands, directed him to get in the conveyance and the driver would take him to a previously made rendezvous to meet Greyson.

Zittel started at the name, and asked:

"What's this fellow's name again, Ike?"

"Greyson; Robert is the first name, I think. Do you know him?"

"I knew of a guy by that name, but he was doing highbrow stuff. Is this fellow traveling with a small, flossy fellow looking like money from headquarters?"

"No—vorking alone."

"That wouldn't be my man, then. When do I run, and how?"

"Greyson vill tell you all about that. Get in the wagon now."

"Don't say 'wagon,' Ike. I don't like the sound of that woid," shivered Zittel. "Say hack, or something like that. It sounds better."

As Mills got out to let Zittel in, the latter's jaw dropped in sheer amazement. Mills, however, with a significant pressure on the other's arm, quickly boosted him to the seat, and, clucking to the horse, drove on. When a corner of the road hid them from Cohen's view, Zittel exclaimed:

"Tickle me with a feather, Frank; I want to laugh, but can't. What are you doing here?"

"I am going to run, too, Zit, and, at the present writing, win."

"Then what am I doing here?"

"Search me! Greyson will tell you in a few minutes. But as long as we are here together, chock-a-block, let's see if we can't do a little figuring for Mills, Zittel, and company. I'm pretty well heeled myself at present and——"

"Stop, Frank! Before you tempt me an' I fall, answer me one question: Is this Greyson a Malmartite?"

Mills nodded assent.

"Then it's all off between us. Big John, the boss of my ward, is a member, too, and there's a couple of indictments an' one or two other things hangin' over my head. I'm sorry, Frank, but I got to be on the level. It's too bad at that, for my mouth is waterin' an' I can smell oodles of money."

They rode on in silence for a time. At length, well out from the town, they came to a stretch of road as level as a billiard table and well shaded by trees that formed an arch overhead. A horse attached to buggy was tied to a fence by the roadside, and Greyson, some distance away, with his coat removed and shirt sleeves rolled back, was measuring off a course with a steel tape. Mills pulled up, and Zittel said with a sigh:

"It's him, all right. I was hopin' against hope, but it's no use. Though it cuts me like a knife, Frank, I've got to be on the level!"

"It's tough, I know, Zit," returned Mills with heartfelt sympathy, "but we are caught where we can't wiggle."

Greyson sauntered up and eyed Zittel sternly.

"I thought I knew you," he said significantly. "You are one of Coffey's henchmen. Is Zittel your right name?"

"Yes, Mr. Greyson."

"Who hired you, Zittel?"

"The Cohens, Mr. Greyson."

"Who are you working for, Zittel?"

"You, Mr. Greyson."

"Very well. I see you are a bright fellow. Now we will get down to cases. In this coming race, Zittel, you finish just behind Mills. You understand, don't you? Not in front of, or even with, Mills—but just behind!"

Mills laughed, and said:

"That's just where he ought to finish, Mr. Greyson. We are old pals, and last summer we worked down through Jersey together. I am a step faster in the hundred than him when we both are in training."

"Are you in training now, Zittel?" asked Greyson. "How fast can you step the century right here?"

"I've been workin' out for the past two weeks," Zittel said, "intendin' to do a little 'gypin' on my own account if nothin' better turned up in the meantime. I'm train tired now, but I ought to be able to pump it in ten-one."

"Good!" Greyson said. "Both of you fellows will have to show me some real running now. You will find spiked shoes in the wagon there. Get them on, and turn me in as low a card as you are able. I have a lot of money wagered on this coming race and expect to have more. I also have a split-second timepiece, the best made, and you fellows can take it from me I'm not going to give you any the best of it in this trial heat."

The runners divested themselves of superfluous clothing and donned the running shoes.

Greyson marked the start by drawing a line across the roadway with a piece of stick. He informed the speed-boys that he would drop a handkerchief for the starting signal. After placing them on the line, he walked a distance toward the finish in deep thought, and then retraced his steps. When he had come to the runners again he said:

"There is a hundred in it, C. O. D., boys, for the man who finishes first,

and another hundred to be split between you if the winner beats ten-two. That inducement should take a kink or two out of your leg muscles. On your marks again!"

When Greyson was out of earshot, Mills whispered out of the corner of his mouth:

"The second hundred is gone, Zit. The road is too cuppy."

"Nay, nay, Frank," returned the other. "Greyson can't see the line he drew from the finish. We will move up ten feet and start from there."

"It's a go. Move up now before he turns. We will split the whole thing fifty-fifty, and I'll lay you ten even I can trim you at that."

"That's a bet. Crouch low on the mark now so that he won't notice the difference. Make that ten twenty if you like. You can beat me at a hundred, but never at any shorter distance."

"A bet. Get off flying, Zit!"

Greyson, now arrived at the finish, turned to see his speed boys in position to start. Facing them, he held the handkerchief out at a right angle to his body, and, before releasing his fingers, pressed the stem of his stop watch.

"Now they will have to go some to get the added hundred," he muttered with a grim smile.

But go they did. Like greyhounds slipped from the leash, the speed boys came down the course with the perfect, mechanical action so characteristic of the ideal runner. As one man they came on, heads erect, chests out, and arms working with the rhythm of pistons. At the finish, Zittel literally threw himself across the line to win by a scant head. Greyson, purposely slowing the action, stopped his watch. Then he held it up in surprise. It registered ten seconds flat.

Greyson looked alternately from one to the other with suspicion.

"This is almost too good to be true," he remarked slowly.

"It's the track, Mr. Greyson," Zittel jerked out. "It is so springy under foot we couldn't help running fast." He stooped, and, gathering a handful of surface dirt, examined it closely. "What is this stuff, anyway?" he asked. "I never saw it before."

"That is shale dust," Greyson answered, relieved. "That probably accounts for the time you made."

And Mills observed: "The track at the fair grounds is made with the same stuff. I was there last night, and, if anything, it is faster than this road here. That race of ours is 'in' already."

"Here is your money, boys," Greyson chuckled. "After Mills wins, I shall do the handsome by you both. Now, then, Zittel, let's see your service on a few questions. Imagine you are on the witness stand and Ike Cohen is cross-examining you. You ought to feel at home there, I surmise. Question:

"Do you know this Greyson?"

"No; I thought I did, but he isn't the same man," Zittel responded quickly.

"Mills?"

"No, I never heard of him. Can he run?"

"When Greyson timed you to-day, how fast did you run?"

"Ten-two, but I was tired."

"Good!" ejaculated Greyson. "I like that. It shows good judgment. Question: What did Greyson say to you after the trial?"

"Don't say 'trial,' Ike; say 'test!' Greyson said: 'There's two hundred in it for you, Zittel, after the race, and five per cent of the winnings.'"

"H'm! Not so good," declared Greyson dryly, but his eye twinkling. "However, the two hundred goes, and the five per cent will be split between you and Mills. He is on a straight 'hiring,' but I will waive that. One more question, Zittel, and you may step down: Is this Greyson on the up and up?"

"Right as a church, Ike. I never met a man I liked better at first sight."

Greyson laughed and patted the witness on the back, saying: "You will do, Zittel, and the last was very nice of you. Look me up when you get back to town and I'll put you in the

way of making some money. In the meantime, think up some stall to use in Fairlawn, and keep in good shape so that the Cohens will be disposed to bet heavily on you. We will get back to the burg now.

"And as for you, Mills," Greyson continued, "immediately after you arrived here with Zittel, I sent you on to the next town to purchase some cigarettes, and when you returned Zittel and I were seated in the carriage I drove here, talking. That story goes for both of you. You understand?"

The speed boys nodded, and, getting into their conveyance, drove off. Greyson smoked for a time meditatively, and then, unhitching his horse, followed.

As his carriage vanished around a bend in the road, there was the sound of bushes crackling, and from the fringe of wood that bordered the course Jeff Orms appeared. Taking a tape from his pocket, he measured carefully the distance from the actual starting place of the speed boys back to the line Greyson had drawn. Then he muttered to himself:

"Ninety-eight yards roughly in ten-one, eh? It won't do, Greyson; it won't do at all. Austin will have to step faster than that to win. I wonder now what the other fellow is doing here. Seems to me his rear elevation was familiar. Sorry I couldn't catch the conversation. Thought there would be something doing when Austin came to town. The old, old game!"

Then, plunging into the undergrowth, he struck out across lots toward the village.

IV.

It was now Monday, and the Orange County Fair was to open on the morrow to continue for the three following days. The Palatial Hotel was filled almost to suffocation, and late-arriving guests were compelled to sleep on cots stretched along the several corridors. Strangers were everywhere, in fact, and the *Clarion* came out with a special edition devoted to the manifold attractions of the occasion.

Jeff Orms had caused to be erected in the lobby of the Palatial a bulletin board. Conspicuously posted on this was the list of entrants for the foot race, and Greyson and Morris Cohen stood before it, engaged in a whispered conversation. Cohen held in his hand a list of the runners who had recently competed at Cambridge. Comparing this list with the one on the board, he remarked:

"As far as I can see, there are no 'sleepers' here, Greyson. The lists are the same, with the addition of Austin, the plug who has been chasing Wirth home so often for the past few days, Zittel, and this crazy fellow, Sparks. Regarding him, Mary was saying at the table this noon that Austin and Wirth had worked him up to the pitch of betting his money. You had better take all he offers, I think."

"I'll page him at once," Greyson answered. "He was on the porch a few minutes ago, and some townspeople were kidding him along. Let us go out and I'll see what I can do with him."

As they came on the porch, they saw Sparks in the center of a crowd that was gyrating about, heckling him. The runner had a roll of bills in his tightly clutched fingers, and was defying the gathering to bet. Eph Bliss, laughing with great enjoyment, was leaning against a pillar watching the show.

"What is going on, Eph?" asked Morris.

"It's Sparks," grinned Bliss. "They say he has all the money he got for his quarry land with him, and he is taking all bets. Look! He has caught my eye now."

"Hey, Eph," Sparks called out, "usen't I now to beat Wirth running when we were boys?"

"Sure you used," returned Bliss, "but I'll bet you ten right now you don't win at the fair."

"Put it up!" shouted Sparks, bursting through the press. "Come in the hotel and put the money in Jeff Orms' hands, and I'll bet you as much more as you like the same way."

The crowd, pushing and jostling, fol-

lowed Sparks and Bliss to the lobby. Orms, who was seated behind the railing, talking to the clerk, got to his feet when the room filled so quickly.

"What's all this?" he cried. "The fair starts to-morrow, not to-night. Out on the porch, you, fellows, and give the guests breathing room! What is the matter now, Sparks?"

"Bliss and I want you to hold a bet for us, Mr. Orms. Do you want to bet more, Eph?"

Bliss replied in the negative. They placed the money, and Bliss walked away. Orms was remonstrating with Sparks, telling him that he stood no chance of winning, when Greyson approached, and, with a wink to Orms, said:

"I happened to overhear your conversation outside, Mr. Sparks. I'll be glad to accommodate you on any wager you may care to make that you do not win at the fair. How much shall we say?"

"This much," Sparks said, throwing a sheaf of bills on the counter.

"One moment, Sparks," broke in Orms. "This is a lot of money to invest in such an uncertain thing as a foot race. Be advised by me and don't do it."

"That's my business, Mr. Orms," Sparks retorted, "and if you don't want to hold the wager we can easily find some one else who will."

"All right, Sparks; I'll hold it," Orms replied with finality. "I'm not your guardian. Have it your own way."

Greyson, with a sly laugh, remarked evenly:

"Of course, Sparks, I am betting that you don't win—taking the field against you, as it were. That is understood?"

"Sure; Wirth can beat all the others, I guess."

"Very well. Here is my money, Mr. Orms," Greyson said, depositing an equal amount to that of Sparks'.

While Orms was putting the wager money in the safe, Greyson sought out Morris Cohen, who had stated that he would be found at the bar. Ike had joined his brother in the meantime. Approaching them, Greyson said:

"The money is up, and this is the landlord's birthday, boys. If you don't mind, I'll have your share now."

"Sure, ve vill gif you a check at vonce," Ike declared, reaching in his pocket for his check book. "How much do you say, Greyson?"

"No check, Ike, but money," Greyson bit off. "That's what I gave Orms —money."

Ike laughed.

"Then ve vill not take your say-so, Greyson, but Jeff's. Ve vill get the correct amount from him."

"That suits me, Ike. You fellows go to the case and buy some cigars. I'll ask him while you are there."

Allowing the Cohens a start of a few moments, Greyson went to the desk. Orms was seated, chuckling over an article in the *Clarion*. With his memorandum book and pencil in his hand, Greyson, calling to the hotel man, said:

"I want to verify my wagers on the foot race, Mr. Orms. How much have I bet all told?"

"Seven thousand dollars," returned Orms promptly.

"Thanks. That is as I make it. Let us have some cigars. Give the Cohens some of those 'specials' of yours. I am quite certain they will find them better than they usually smoke."

"None of those for me," Ike laughed. "Gif me stogies instead, Jeff. They vill last longer." Then the three conspirators adjourned to a table in the rear room of the café. As Ike counted out thirty-five hundred dollars, he remarked:

"Should Zittel make his feet go round now like an electric fan, I shouldn't hate him none the more."

"He should win easily," Greyson declared.

"If he don't, Ike," Morris said, "we will have to go back to the machines again. Teamwork it will be, Ike; you and me and the kid brother."

The Cohens went to their room, and Greyson, glancing at his shoes, proceeded, to the bootblack stand. Eph Bliss was just ahead of him with a muslin bag containing change for the stand. As Greyson climbed into a chair

he saw Bliss, after putting the money in the till, take a seat near by and light a cigar. Greyson nodded to him and Bliss said with a smile. "I saw you get a lot of Sparks' money, Mr. Greyson. You are lucky."

Several bootblacks were busily polishing away, and there was considerable clatter in the room. Greyson felt a nudge on his arm. Sleazy was sitting in the next chair.

"How goes it, Bob?" the jockey whispered, spilling the words from the corner of his mouth.

"A copper-riveted, name-woven-on-the-selvage cinch, Billy. It's a shame to take the money. And with you?"

"I've still got my health, the brick, and a lawsuit on my hands. However, I have an appointment with my come-on in fifteen minutes, and I ''as great 'opes.'"

"Who is it?" inquired Greyson with interest.

"One Jeff Orms," the jockey said, getting down to the floor.

As Sleazy reached the door he grinned. Greyson was whistling a few bars of "You'll Get All That's Coming to You."

"If I am any judge, I will," the jockey breathed, "but, Friend Greyson, I fear yours will come with reverse spin. Now for Jeff!"

Climbing the stairs, he knocked on the door of Orms' room. Upon the command to enter he turned the knob to meet Eph Bliss hurrying out. Assuming a look of concern, he walked in and seated himself. Orms, who was smoking, swung around in his chair with a look of inquiry. After a pause that was becoming awkward, the jockey blurted out:

"I reckon I'm up against it, Mr. Orms."

"How is that, Weston?" the hotel man asked kindly.

"Bill Harney will be able to outstay me, I'm afraid. I went over to Cambridge yesterday to see the lawyer, as you suggested. He says that the trial of the action, Harney against Weston, can't be reached until the next session of the county court in March, and I can't afford to wait that long. The truth of the matter is that, aside from the gold in the brick, I am broke."

"You have been a pretty liberal spender, for a fact," Orms said. "However, it will be all right for you to stay on here, if you wish. I'll be glad to carry you. What did the lawyer say about the injunction?"

"I didn't tell him about our removing the gold the night before the injunction was served, Mr. Orms. I got thinking that maybe on account of me being a stranger here and Bill Harney an old-timer, the jury would find for him anyhow, and so I determined to have a talk with you about something I had in mind."

"Yes?" Orms said tentatively.

"Of course, if Tom Harney was alive he would be welcome to half my pile, but Bill is another person. My mind is made up about him. But I don't like to be under obligations to anybody. I'm uneasylike when I can't pay what I owe. Now, you have been very decent to me, advising me what to do in my difficulties, and nobody could ever say Jack Weston was ungrateful."

The jockey fidgeted about for a time as if at a loss to know how to express what he wished to say. Then he continued:

"When I came to Fairlawn, Mr. Orms, all I figured I owned in that brick was ten thousand dollars. If you will give that amount for it, the brick is yours—and you make ten."

"H'm! I would have to think about that, and injunctions are bad things to meddle with."

Sleazy laughed understandingly, and remarked:

"When I was talking with the lawyer I asked him what could have been done to us if we had removed the gold before the injunction was served. He read it all over again, and replied: 'Absolutely nothing.' Then he added, winking at me: 'It's too bad you didn't. You could have disposed of it then, and, I take it, there are no ropes tying you to Fairlawn to await the next term of court.' Do you know, Mr. Orms, I think he is a good lawyer."

"That's what I thought," the hotel man laughed. "But, about buying the brick—I don't know."

"Why not, Mr. Orms? Don't you believe it is real gold?" Sleazy inquired quickly.

"Well, I'm rather inclined to, Weston, but——"

The jockey laughed again, and said frankly:

"I see how it is, and I don't blame you a bit. Do you give it any test you like, Mr. Orms—weigh it, measure it, or try it in any way that occurs to you, and if it isn't worth twenty thousand dollars the government has cheated me; that's all."

The hotel man drummed on the table for a time, turning the proposition over in his mind. Sleazy watched him covertly. At length he returned slowly:

"That is a bargain, Weston. We will bring Frank Locke, the Fairlawn jeweler, to the bank and have him test it, and if he says the brick is gold I will buy it gladly at the price you state. Is that satisfactory to you?"

"Certainly; but could you give me action on it? I met this man Greyson at the bootblack stand just before I came here, and he told me he had a sure winner at the races to-morrow. I would like to get a sizable bet on that horse."

"So that's it?" Orms said, half to himself.

"What's it?" asked the jockey.

"Oh, nothing in particular. What is the name of the horse Greyson gave you?"

"He didn't. To-morrow, he said, in front of the grand stand."

"H'm! He told me the same thing a few days ago. I guess Greyson is one of those 'to-morrow' fellows, Weston. I would steer clear of him, if I were you."

Sleazy eyed the hotel man attentively. He saw a semblance of sarcastic smile around the corners of the other's mouth. Construing this to his own satisfaction, the jockey said evenly:

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Orms. I'll take your advice, I think. What horse do you like on to-morrow's card?"

"Swallow, in the free-for-all. Bet on him after the first heat. His price will be better then. He is a slow starter—I hear; and my information is reliable."

"Now, I am more than anxious to get hold of some real money at once," Sleazy laughed. "Could you arrange to have the test made to-night?"

"I think so. Locke hasn't closed his store yet. I'll see him at once. You meet us at the rear door of the bank to-night at one, Weston. There will be people on the street till all hours, and if Bill Harney learns we have gone to the bank he will be suspicious the gold is there. Holt could get a second injunction as easily as the first one."

Orms went on his errand and the jockey to his room. Once inside, Sleazy bolted the door and drew the window curtains. Then, from a false bottom in one of his grips, he removed the mahogany casket Greyson had given him. From this he drew forth several bottles containing àcids of different kinds. From the bottle marked "Nitric" he filled a smaller bottle having a peculiar, cone-shaped attachment on the neck. Going to the washstand, he held this in a vertical position over the bowl. The acid ran from the bottle freely, but when held at any lesser angle not a drop escaped. Filling this bottle for a second time, he thrust it in his left-hand coat pocket.

"So far, so good," he muttered.

From another compartment of the casket he removed several pieces of genuine gold of various shapes, some evidently cut from the corners of a cube and others from the edges. These he placed in his right-hand coat pocket.

"All set for the test," he said. "Now for the stall."

Removing the watch which he ordinarily carried from the pocket of his soft shirt, he substituted another having a swivel attached to the stem. To this swivel he joined his watch chain, and, bending over his bed slightly, he gave a jerk of his torso. The watch

promptly fell from his pocket, and, slight as was the shock, the crystal flew off and the works dropped from the case. Placing these carefully back in their former positions, Sleazy lit a cigarette and smoked it to the end, blowing out successive rings. Presently he exclaimed:

"If the markings on the brick are still plain, I should be able to carry it through. One thing is certain: Jeff Orms doesn't suspect me."

When the clock in front of Locke's jewelry store marked twelve-fifty-five Sleazy arose and crept furtively down the stairs and out of the Palatial. Going through an alley to the rear of the bank, he met Orms and Locke at the door. The hotel man, with a nod of greeting, opened the door and they passed inside in silence. Their footsteps on the tiled floor seemed in their loudness to be unreal to the jockey, and he wondered if they could be heard outside by chance pedestrians.

Orms introduced the jeweler, and as they shook hands Sleazy noticed with satisfaction that Locke was visibly nervous. He kept glancing about as if he expected to be caught in the act of doing something clandestine. Under his arm he carried, wrapped in paper, a number of different articles, which when unpacked proved to be a troy-weight scales, an alcohol lamp with a bellows attached, and a jeweler's saw. From a pocket of his coat he produced a bottle of acid and a clay retort having abbreviated handles looking like thongs.

Orms opened the vault, and directed the jockey to bring out the gold, saying that in order to avoid any semblance of violating the injunction he would not touch it until it would have passed into his ownership. Sleazy did so, and noted that the markings of gold on one surface, put there by Greyson, were quite distinct. Sleazy placed the brick, with this side underneath, on a flat-topped desk inside the office partition.

Locke, adjusting his scales, weighed the cube, and remarked:

"An ounce of pure gold is worth twenty dollars and sixty-seven cents. This cube accordingly should be worth exactly twenty thousand dollars—if it is pure gold, which I shall determine at once."

He placed the alcohol lamp on the desk, lit it, and then attached the bellows. This done, he took his saw and removed a transverse section of the cube at one corner. Then he paused to observe:

"Before melting this piece of gold I have just removed I shall apply nitric acid to the surface of the cube. Pure gold is unaffected by this reagent, while brass, copper, and other minerals used as alloys invariably discolor, usually turning green."

With a glass dauber he flowed the acid on the surface of the brick. Sleazy, apparently an interested spectator, bent over the desk slightly and asked:

"Can I assist you in any way, Mr. Locke?"

As he spoke his watch sprang from his pocket and crashed to the floor. The crystal broke into a thousand pieces, and the mechanism, swept from the case, separated, the parts rolling in many different directions. With an exclamation of dismay, Sleazy affected to stoop, but was forestalled by both Orms and Locke.

While they were on hands and knees, the jockey turned the brick and deftly poured the nitric acid from the bottle which he took from his pocket on the markings thereon. It was the work of an instant also to substitute for the piece of gold Locke had cut another of similar shape from his coat. When the spoil retrievers stood erect, he was facing them with a wry grimace. Locke, whose quest had been more fruitful than the hotel man's, with a professional scrutiny of the fragments, declared:

"I am sorry, Mr. Weston. This was a very fine watch, but it is broken beyond repair." And Orms remarked: "That comes from carrying a watch in the pocket of a soft shirt. I've had the same thing happen to me."

"It's my own fault," returned the jockey, shrugging his shoulders. "It serves me right for being so careless.

I wonder if anybody outside heard it fall?"

They listened a moment, but all was quiet. Then the jeweler, taking the piece of gold Sleazy had substituted, placed it in the retort, and, working the bellows, blew it into a molten mass. After various tests with this he turned to Orms and said:

"It is absolutely pure gold."

"I reckon the rest of it is, too," said Sleazy, peering at the brick. "I don't see any of the green showing you spoke about."

Locke examined the brick, his head nodding affirmatively.

"It's all mint pure gold, Mr. Orms," he asserted. "You may safely take my word for it."

"I'm perfectly satisfied with your tests," the hotel man responded.

He disappeared in the vault, and returned shortly with a roll of bills, which he counted into the jockey's hand.

"That's correct," Sleazy said, with an inward sigh of relief. Then, for want of something better to remark, he added: "You had the money handy, I see."

"There is nothing like having ready money," Orms responded. "Big bargains come unexpectedly, I find."

"That is true in this case, at any rate," the jeweler laughed. "I'm sorry, Mr. Weston, you didn't come to see me first."

"If I had two bricks, instead of one, I would have," Sleazy said positively. "I am obliged to you, Mr. Locke, and I want you to take this for your trouble." And he gave the jeweler two twenty-dollar bills.

Locke thanked him, and after a few moments of desultory conversation Orms replaced the brick and closed the vault door. When they had come out of doors the jeweler said good night and went home. Returning to the hotel with Orms, the jockey went to his room at once.

"Oh, boy!" he exclaimed, throwing himself in a chair. "And Greyson calls that kind of work finesse. Poor Bob! I judge he must be up against the cushion. I wonder now—I think I'll tip him off at that to-morrow; I'll be ahead of the game no matter how things break. The horse's name is Swallow."

V.

Sleazy attended the opening of the fair with free mind, riding to the grounds with Orms. As the hotel man was one of the officials, he was privileged to go to the judges' stand. Accordingly the jockey left him just inside the gate. Recalling experiences of former days, when he "worked" just such assemblages in devious ways from "shillaberin" for other shows to operating games of chance of his own, at which the chance was taken by the players alone, he threaded his way, with an interest that surprised himself, through the crowd.

The horses were now scoring for the first race. Making his way toward the grand stand, Sleazy encountered Greyson, in the company of Eph Bliss, at the gate. With fingers on the lapel of his coat, the Malmarte signal, he passed the time of day with them. Greyson, allowing Bliss to pass with the crowd through the gate, stopped a moment.

"What is it, Billy?" he asked anxiously.

"Watch your step, Bob," the jockey counseled. "Orms is suspicious of you, and Bliss is his man. Swallow is the name of the horse you were going to give him, but didn't. Bliss is coming back now. So long!"

"Thanks, Billy," Greyson said gratefully. Then he joined Bliss.

"I thought you got lost in the crowd, and was coming back to hunt you up," Bliss remarked.

"It isn't that, Eph. I just happened to recall that I promised to give Mr. Orms a winner on to-day's card. Where can I find him?"

"In the judges' stand. Want me to deliver a message for you?"

"I wish you would." Greyson got out his pencil and scribbled a note. "Here," he said, "take this to him, if you don't mind."

Out of Greyson's sight, Bliss read the note. It said:

Swallow is the name of my friend's horse. He should win sure.

"H'm! That is certainly curious," Bliss muttered with a puzzled frown.

When Bliss came to the stand, Orms was watching the horses round the far turn of the track with his glasses. Bliss called to him and tossed up the paper. "If there is any answer, Jeff, I'll wait here for it," Bliss said.

Glancing at the note, Orms uttered an exclamation of surprise. He stood in thought for a moment, then called down to Bliss:

"Find Sam Doak, the constable, for me at once, and tell him to come here."

There was a note of alarm in Orms' voice that gave speed to Bliss' legs. As soon as Bliss had departed, Orms stepped to the telephone booth and called the bank. The cashier answered.

"Hello, Jones!" Orms said. "This is Orms speaking. Get that cube of gold out of my box at once and express it, insured for twenty thousand dollars, to the assay office in New York. I want a valuation placed on it. Don't let Bill Harney know of it under any circumstances, and send it at once. It is very important."

"All right, Mr. Orms," the cashier returned. "I'll get it off on the four-forty-seven this afternoon. I'll take it to the station myself."

As Orms came from the booth, Doak, the constable, was coming up the stairs. The hotel man drew him aside and asked:

"Sam, do you know this Weston, who is stopping at the Palatial?"

"By sight, Jeff. He is that friend of Bill Harney's, isn't he?"

"That is the fellow. He is here on the grounds some place. Have some one watch him continually until I tell you to stop. If he attempts to leave Fairlawn, arrest him at once. But don't use Eph Bliss. He is working for me. You understand?"

"Yes, but law is law, Mr. Orms," Doaks said doubtfully. "What charge shall I arrest him on, if it becomes necessary? What has he done?"

"Never mind that, Sam. If he attempts to leave town, have the man who is guarding him pick a fight with Weston, and throw them both in the lockup. I shall square it with you and your man later."

"All right, Mr. Orms," laughed the constable, "but that is a new way for holding a man on me. How did you happen to think of that?"

"I'll tell you some other time, Sam. Get on the job now like a good fellow, and keep a still tongue in your head."

"Just as you say, Mr. Orms. I'll sick 'Happy' Flith on him."

"You couldn't pick a better man," Orms returned, taking up his glasses again.

Observing that the first heat of the free-for-all race was about to be called, Sleazy repaired to the back of the grand stand, where pools on the races were being sold. He paused at the outskirts of the crowd until he heard Swallow's name called. Making his way through the press, he heard some one at his elbow bidding on Swallow, and turned to see the speed boy, Mills. A hint was enough for the jockey. He bought Swallow freely. The horse's price was constantly receding. Greyson and Eph Bliss were wagering also.

When Mills turned to go out, the jockey followed him.

"Who gave you this horse, Frank, and what do you know about him?" Sleazy asked.

"The driver, Billy. He has been rooming with me for the past week over the livery stable. Swallow is 'in.' Who do you suppose owns him?"

Sleazy shook his head from side to side.

"Jeff Orms really, but he is entered under the driver's name. Hey, wait a moment! Where are you going, Billy? I want to tell——"

"To some secluded, bosky dell, Frank, if I can find one. My head has gone hot and my feet cold. I must think." And Sleazy hurried away to throw himself full length on the sward at the uttermost bounds on the grounds. The sun was hot, so presently he moved to the shade of a tree, and, drawing

his hat well down over his eyes, he gave himself up to serious reflection.

He had given Greyson the horse, Swallow, and Greyson, of course, had passed the tip along to the owner, Orms. Hence Orms would connect him with Greyson, and Orms suspected Greyson. Now he recalled that he had not approved of Orms' eye from the first. A nervous shiver ran over his frame. He was a boob to have come to Fairlawn on any such mission in the first place when he didn't need the money. What should he do? Why, get out of town at once, of course. Let's see, what would Jeff do? Have the brick tested again, of course, and in the meantime——

"Taking it easy, Weston?"

His train of thoughts thus broken, the jockey raised his head to see in front of him a broad-shouldered, thick-chested fellow with a pugnacious face, whom he had observed from time to time during the past few days in the company of the Fairlawn constable. Eying him narrowly, Sleazy said in a querulous way:

"I got tired of the crowd, and came here—to be alone."

"The crowd bores me, too," the fellow responded, "so I guess I'll keep you company."

"There is a bigger and more shady tree yonder," the jockey remarked pointedly.

"I like this one better, Weston."

"Then you can have it. I'll go to the other."

"Now that I look again, the other is nicer," the fellow declared evenly.

"Please yourself; this is a free country."

"I heard a judge say that once, but he said some people seemed to confound liberty with license. Did you ever make that mistake, Weston?"

"Not that I remember now. Do you recall that I ever did?"

"No," the other answered hesitatingly, "it's just that you might, I guess. As far as I am concerned, everything will be all right as long as you stick around."

The jockey laughed elatedly.

"Do you know, Bill—I always call every one I like Bill—I always did say you were a fine fellow. Which do you smoke—cigs or cigars? I carry both."

"Cigs. Hello, there is Swallow four lengths ahead on the stretch turn! He lost the first heat, but I guess he will win this one and the race."

"I've got a bet on him, and I hope so. But how does that answer come to you?"

"I saw you and Mr. Greyson and a few more strangers betting on him—and then Eph Bliss. That made a quorum. Spell 'wise,' Johnny, and go the head of the class," drawled Bill.

"I get you, Bill. But why Eph Bliss?"

"Jeff Orms is on the judges' stand, so he can't bet himself."

Sleazy arose and patted Bill on the shoulders with a laugh.

"I believe you are right," he said. "Jeff gave me the tip on Swallow himself. Jeff likes me, Bill."

"I know that. So much, in fact, that he is uneasy when you are out of his sight, Weston."

"I'm commencing to feel the same way about you, Bill. Have you been up for the draft yet? No? Then when you do I hope you pass a fine physical examination."

"Thanks," offered Bill dryly. "And now that I know you like me so much, I'll stay with you till the cows come home."

"In my part of the country those animals go to roost at sundown," the jockey observed meaningly. "Is it the same here?"

"Scarcely; that was a way of speaking on my part, like the 'tender' the lawyer made you on the steps of the Palatial. Shall we go now, Weston? We will cash in on those Swallow bets. I can use the money that's coming to me."

"You never need to be short when I'm in town, Bill," the jockey said significantly. "I'll loan you any amount you say right now."

Bill laughed, and replied:

"Not now, Weston; maybe later on. Orms has had his glasses on us for the last ten minutes."

"Any time you say," Sleazy asserted. Then passing his arm through Bill's, they wandered about the rest of the afternoon like bosom pals.

After a late supper at the Palatial, Sleazy, wishing to be alone, went to his room. For a long time, ill at ease, he smoked one cigarette after another. Finally he threw himself on the bed, only to toss and turn. In succession he heard the clock in the hall strike eleven—twelve—and one. With an imprecation he sprang to his feet and rolled up his window curtain. Directly underneath, in the flare of an arc light, was Bill. The jockey cupped his hands around his mouth and called down in a hoarse whisper:

"It's one o'clock Bill; time for all decent citizens to be in bed."

"I am going directly, Weston," Bill's voice floated back. "I was afraid you might walk in your sleep, but now that I know you are awake I'm going home. I'll see you in the morning. So long!" And turning on his heel, he walked away.

Sleazy noticed now that the rope to be used in the event of fire was gone from his room. With a start, he drew a chair softly to the door and stealthily he opened the transom. Peering out, he saw Eph Bliss easing himself into an armchair at the end of the corridor. He watched him for a time. Bliss, with an alert look, was gazing straight down the hall. The jockey got down silently and flung out his arms with a despairing gesture.

"Kismet!" he jerked out. "I don't know what that is, but they always say it in circumstances like these at the end of the third act."

On the two following days, Sleazy and Bill saw the sights of the fair together, and Bill saw his friend safely to bed each night. On Friday morning, however, the last day of the festivities, Bill did not report for duty, and Sleazy became perturbed. He put out a few guarded inquiries as to Bill's whereabouts, but to no purpose. No one had seen him.

Fearing a trap of some sort, the jockey determined to go to the fair grounds as usual. Numerous hacks, many of them pressed into service for the occasion, were circling about in front of the Palatial, soliciting customers for the down trip. The jockey climbed into the front seat of the first one that passed. The driver was Bill Harney.

"What's your tax down, Bill?" Sleazy demanded, pulling a handful of change from his pocket.

"Ten cents," said Harney shortly. "Pay when you get out."

"If it's all the same, I'll pay now, Bill. By the time I get down, Judge Holt is liable to meet me with a paper or two, having seals as big as bock-beer signs, for the purpose of fastening a mechanic's lien or something on my watch and stickpin."

"Suit yourself," said Harney, taking the coin.

"That is better than being 'suited.' Lawyers are expensive."

"I got mine on speculation," said Harney dryly. "He gets his fee out of the proceeds of the suit."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the jockey. "I'm glad to know that. I never liked him from the first."

Harney spat over the dashboard viciously, and returned:

"Have no fear. Holt will win."

"When I laugh, 'ha! ha!' Bill, that means hope; when I want to express fear I cackle 'ho! ho!'"

Harney thought over this a while, and replied threateningly:

"If that brick is moved you are liable to get into a lot of trouble."

"Many a true word is said in jest, Bill," Sleazy remarked sadly. "Hello! Here we are so soon. How fast the time flies in pleasant conversation! Let me out here, Bill. I see a fellow I know." And, hopping blithely to the earth, Sleazy hastened to join his erstwhile guardian, Bill.

The latter mustered a rueful smile as the jockey approached. Sleazy gazed at him with an interrogative lift of his eyebrows, and said:

"Ha, thou recreant one! Where hast thou been?"

"Don't joke, Weston," Bill returned

soberly. "I came down here early to see the sheriff. I stalled it off as long as I could, but it had to come." Then he shook his head in sorrow from side to side.

"You were decent enough, at any rate, Bill," Sleazy managed to say.

"When does it come off?"

"To-morrow at ten a. m.—unless," he said slowly, "a certain sum of money is forthcoming in the meantime."

"How much, Bill?"

"Three hundred will do."

"Here is the money."

"Thanks, Weston. I'll go see the wife now. She will be relieved. We have lived there a long time now."

"You were saying?" asked Sleazy, puzzled.

"That we were having trouble about the mortgage on our place. It's all right now, however, and I'm so grateful to you for this 'loan,' Weston, that I'm not going to bother you any more."

Completely mystified, Sleazy ran over the situation. Nor could he come to any satisfactory conclusion. He knew that in effect the money he had just given the other was a bribe. He had read that from Bill's demeanor. Was Bill acting in good faith toward him? He would see.

"That is very nice of you, Bill. Good-by," he said, extending his hand.

Bill grasped it warmly. Then, with a sly smile, he walked away. When he had gone some distance he paused to say to himself: "Why did Sam Doak call me off, I wonder? What's it all about, anyway? I was a fathead not to have touched Weston for a couple of hundred more. He would have stood for that easily."

As Sleazy stood looking after Bill, Eph Bliss happened to pass by. Sleazy hailed him. "Who is that fellow, Eph, who is standing with his back to us?" asked the jockey, indicating his former companion.

"That's Happy Flith, Weston. He came to town a long time ago with Jeff Orms." Bliss laughed. "He is called 'Happy' because he has such a nice disposition." Then Bliss resumed his journey.

"'Happy,' eh?" threw out Sleazy. "Anybody who can pick up money as easily as Flith ought to be happy!" Well, apparently he was free for the present. He shrugged his shoulders. Taught by long experience to take good or bad fortune as it came, he refused to borrow trouble. So he purchased a ticket and entered the fair grounds.

Once inside, he was worming his way through the crowd when he heard some one calling, "Weston!" It was Jeff Orms, seated behind his driving horse.

"Get in," the hotel man said heartily, "and come along to the judges' stand with me. The foot race will be run in a few minutes. I think the runners will show us some fast time."

Nothing loath, Sleazy accepted the invitation. When they arrived at the judges' stand it seemed to Sleazy that all the people in the grounds were packed around the finish. The grand stand was so filled with spectators that standing room was at a premium, and the overflow crowd had pushed out on the track to gather in sweltering masses at each side.

The hotel man and Sleazy passed up the stairs to join the officials. These were grouped at the railing, talking together desultorily and watching the runners limber out. In front attendants were placing into position a series of ropes to afford separate lanes for each runner. This was a matter of surprise to the jockey, as such arrangements were usually reserved for important athletic meets. He divined at once that some one was taking precautions against fouling and pocketing.

Directly across from him, at the finish line, Sleazy observed Greyson talking with the two Cohens. Greyson, catching his eye, smiled reassuringly. The Cohens, Sleazy thought, had gone rather white in the face, and he wondered which way Greyson had "ribbed" them on the coming race. He felt that they were interested in some manner.

The gong over his head pealed, and the runners came to the stand to draw for positions. As they approached he marked Mills, Wirth, and the fellow

Sparks. The others he had not seen before. As Zittel breezed down, Sleazy caught his breath. "A real runner and a speed boy, if I am any judge!" he said to himself. "I wonder what he is doing here? I have seen him some place before I am certain."

As the runners were ordered to report to the starter, Orms remarked to Sleazy:

"A likely looking bunch, Weston."

"Very! Which one do you favor?"

"I rather favor Sparks. He seems a good-natured sort of fellow." And Sleazy suddenly recalled the meeting under his window of Orms with Sparks and Mary, the waitress.

At the fifty-yard mark, Mills and Sparks were running neck and neck, Zittel was a yard behind, and the rest of the field straggled out in the rear. Approaching the tape, Zittel threw an eye over his shoulder to call a warning shout to Mills. He was too late, however. Although Mills redoubled his efforts, Sparks beat him to the tape by a step, and, keeping on, disappeared in the crowd beyond.

"Ten seconds flat! Nice running indeed," said Orms in Sleazy's ear. Then he cried: "Hello, Mr. Greyson over there seems thunderstruck at the result! He wagered freely on Wirth, or possibly Austin."

"A fool and his money are easily parted," said Sleazy evenly. "Mr. Greyson should have stuck by his live stock."

"He was!" said Orms sententiously.

"Was what, Mr. Orms?" asked the jockey innocently.

"Stuck by his live stock," the hotel man said with a laugh. "Well, the fair is over. Let us get back to the Palatial. I presume you will be leaving us shortly?"

"To-night," said Sleazy, chancing it.

"I shall see you, then, before you go," Orms said casually, and the jockey breathed a sigh of relief.

After the finish of the race, Greyson and the Cohens looked at one another in dumb stupefaction. Finally Greyson managed to say:

"We lost, boys. We have been ribbed good and plenty."

"Not 'boys!'" snapped Ike, looking after him. "Infants in arms ve was, Morris."

Sleazy and Orms, in the meantime, were getting into the hotel man's carriage. Tied alongside was another horse hitched to a buggy. Sleazy glanced at this to see Sparks and Mary, the waitress, seated therein. Mary had her arm around the runner's neck. The jockey nudged Orms, and remarked:

"The last time I saw those two in a carriage they were keeping rather late hours."

"Nobody has a better right. They are married," Orms answered.

"Then it seems to me that a fellow having all the money Sparks got for his stone land should be able to support his wife," Sleazy said.

Orms gave him a fleeting wink as he replied:

"That land was supposed to be sold —supposed, I said, Weston—the day after the speed boy Austin blew into Fairlawn. At any rate, they will have money enough to start housekeeping now. I shall see to that."

Sleazy understood and laughed. Nor did he wonder at the use of the word speed boy. And yet it was to this man he had sold his gold brick. "I guess I must be a smarter guy than I thought," he said to himself.

The nine-thirty train, outbound from Fairlawn, was at the station. Sleazy and Greyson were occupying the same seat, and the adjoining one, faced toward them, contained the speed boys, Mills and Zittel. Owing to the unwonted number of passengers, extra cars were being attached and there was a considerable delay.

Jeff Orms, coming along the station platform, espied Sleazy through the open window and stopped to shake hands.

"Do you know, Weston," he said, "I got suspicious of you and your gold brick when Greyson gave me the name of my own horse, Swallow, as winner of the free-for-all, for I knew you must

have told him. I want to apologize for my seeming distrust. I, however, even sent your brick on for assay to New York. Of course the report came back that it was all right and worth exactly what you said—twenty thousand dollars."

"What's that?" exclaimed Sleazy and Greyson as one man.

"Pure gold of—— Hello, you there, too, Greyson?" he broke off, looking in the window. "And, as I live, there are Austin and Zittel, the speed boys! Well, well! All together, eh?"

At the sound of Orms' voice, Zittel bent forward in his seat and thrust his head through the window. After a moment he said:

"I thought I knew that voice! Hello, 'Fixer!' Don't you remember me?"

"Sure I do now, Zittel. I couldn't place you, though, when I saw you and Austin showing Greyson your speed outside the town. Let's see, Zittel, you were with me and the old 'G & J' bunch, weren't you? How is the graft, Zittel?"

"Punk, Fixer!" Zittel responded, and the train pulled out.

"Who the devil is this fellow, Zittel?" demanded Sleazy.

"His name is Wiggins. He used to be the 'fixer' for us when I followed the old G & J circus the first year I was out; and a first-class man he was, too. He dropped out years ago, and nobody knew what became of him."

"Well, I'll be honus-wagnered!" ejaculated Sleazy. "What's the matter, Bob? Easy, man! Easy! Don't so hard take it!"

"The brick!" gasped Greyson. "Silent's brick; all gold! You remember, Billy, I told you he went out the day he died with twenty thousand dollars, and it was gone when he returned. What a dolt I was! He turned the money into the brick, and then wanted me to get it into his brother's hands, so that his brother would believe he was on the level. And I didn't. And I've been broke a hundred times since and had all that gold in my trunk!" Then he burst into laughter that had something hysterical in it.

"I see how it is," laughed Sleazy in great good humor. "If that brick didn't happen to be gold, I'd be in jail now. As it is, I'm out and happy and in ten thousand dollars on it. Fine!"

"You blooming jackass! You lucky stiff!" hissed Greyson. "Of course in our settlement I get credit for ten thousand dollars. That brick was mine, you know."

"Of course—not, Greyson," the jockey lisped. "You traded me the brick for getting you Mills, the speed boy, there. Right, Greyson?"

Greyson nodded his head in assent.

"Now about those bets, Bob. I see you have a pencil there in your pocket. Get it out, like a good fellow, and go to work. As for me, I can figure out what I owe you in my head. It is nothing."

So Greyson drew the following account:

WON.

From the Cohen brothers on Zittel	$3,500.00
From the Cohen brothers on poker game	350.00
Total	$3,850.00

LOST.

Bet to Sleazy that he couldn't sell brick	$5,000.00
Bet to Sleazy that I could sell foot race	5,000.00
Money paid to Mills and Zittel	200.00
Money owed to Mills and Zittel	500.00
Total	$10,700.00
Out	$6,850.00

"Isn't it wonderful," Greyson exclaimed, "what bullhead luck will do sometimes! Now here——"

"Meaning me, I suppose, Bob," the jockey laughed. "But then, you know, a blind pig will garner an acorn once in a while."

"That is just it, I fancy." Then Greyson muttered, half aloud:

"Gift bearers, all."

"I don't make that," said Sleazy. "It was brother went to night school, not me. However, if you are trying to say that Fixer Wiggins has ribbed us to a fare-you-well, I guess you're aboard of the right hoss."

"Right, Billy!" said Greyson sadly.

Tears and Temperament

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Up Liberty Hill," Etc.

Like a spoiled baby, the wife herein gets everything she wants by crying for it, and each of her "weeps" was more ambitious than the last. Her husband could do nothing except give in, but an Irish politician of the good old school proved equal to the task

FOR the first four years of her married life Mrs. Targrove was normal enough to cause Allyn Targrove little annoyance. She had her occasional periods of "weeps," when she shut herself in her room and shed tears as a fountain sheds water, but these were occasioned by such things as a gown that should have turned out well, but did not, or a cook who should have been a Daughter of Temperance, but was a maudlin patron of the products of the whisky trust, sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor and whetting a murderous butcher knife on the sole of her shoe. Little things like these upset young housekeepers, so Allyn would kiss his poor Anna, feel sorry for her, and pet her the more. She still loved Allyn with young love, and her selfish egotism had not reached full growth.

The pettings she got during those early years helped to spoil her, no doubt, and in her fifth married year she began to have "weeps" because of Allyn. He was—and all honor to him for it!—grave and sedate. He had the Targrove family history to live up to and the Targrove family millions to conserve in honor.

Many said he looked more like a professor than a business man, but that was stating it loosely, and the word was used because Allyn Targrove was the only old-family man of wealth in Riverbank. What he looked like was an old-family man of wealth. His theory of what his own life should be may be set down thus: "To live with honor; to avoid diminishing the luster of the Targrove name; to die highly respected." He was a thoughtful man who had never had occasion to think.

In Riverbank, whatever we might think of other men, we thought noble things of Allyn Targrove. To use a golf term—quite unknown in Riverbank then—he never "pressed." He was far and away the most powerful man in Riverbank, employing more labor, paying more wages, sitting on more boards of directors than any other man, and owning more of the town's vitals, but he never used his power. He was an example of comely restraint, even when it came to charitable giving. His name was always well down toward the middle of the lists, as if to prove that, in all things, where a Targrove sat was the head of the table.

For these reasons of character Anna's "weeps" annoyed Allyn Targrove exceedingly. He felt they were not right. He never refused her the money for the best hat in Riverbank, nor, when she advanced in knowingness, the best hat in Chicago. He was calm when she wanted the best five hats in Chicago, and he let her have them. But when she wanted the twenty most expensive hats in Chicago, or—having got them, and feeling a slight dissatisfaction with them—jerked them from their twenty boxes and tore them to shreds with stifled shrieks of anger, he was apt to raise his eyebrows in surprise. Then she would throw herself on the bed, and weep and accuse him of wanton cruelty.

In a vague way he felt that the ac-

cusation was unjust. He never went quite as far as saying so, being a gentleman and a Targrove, but he would go so far as to say, "If I were you, Anna, dear, I would try to be calmer." Naturally enough, this made her furious. It would make any woman furious—any woman like Anna Targrove. It would make any tears-and-temperament woman furious. Justly so.

Allyn Targrove bore the tears and temperament with stoic fortitude. After all, Anna was a Targrove. By marriage, of course, but there was an unwritten law: "Once a Targrove, and however a Targrove, always a Targrove." It is delightful to see these little, charming traits of the life of English nobility rooted in our raw soil. The trouble, however, must have been that Anna was by nature plebeian. She lacked the excellent aristocratic quality of circumambulation, that going around in circles to an eternally same beginning that alone makes aristocracy possible. She retained the democratic instinct for progress. With her one thing had to lead to another, and, although Allyn discharged Pat Hogan, who had been a boy on the Targrove place, and was now a young man there and knew every hair in the coats of the Targrove horses, Anna was not satisfied. She made Allyn have the Targrove oak cut down, and Allyn was forced, by the harmlessness of the oak, to conclude that the only reason she wanted the fine old tree felled was that he did not want it felled. But down it went.

Down went the old oak because Anna, in her progress, had passed from the "weeps" to what Pat Hogan would have called "high strikes." It was reported in Riverbank that her hysterics were something awful, my dear! And so they were. Shrieks! Then she would tear her waist from her bosom and throw herself on the floor and kick the floor in a most un-Targrove style of frenzy. And she would shriek and kick until Allyn said, "You may have it, my dear; you may have it!" no matter what the thing was. Above all, a Targrove must avoid scandal.

Above all, this teary, temperamental lady dreaded scandal herself. She was, if I may say so, like a good old family musket. By nature she was an exploder. Had she not been a Targrove, she would have been a splendid town trouble maker, making scandal for herself. Being a Targrove, and having to explode, she exploded from the wrong end of the musket, and peppered Allyn full of the powder of distress.

By the time they were married twenty years she had Allyn well under control, and was making good use of the control. Pat Hogan said something quite near the truth when he said: "She's a she-divil, but I could turn her into an angel that would eat out of me hand." Pat would have listened to her one minute, and then he would have used one blow of his fist. Having felled her, he would, I am sorry to say, have kicked her. In the end she would have been a reasonable creature or a corpse. Understand, please, that I do not approve his method. I am merely mentioning it because, after twenty years of "weeps" and "high strikes," it was Pat Hogan cured her.

Give me a German philosopher for dissecting the human—what is the word I want?—and putting it on wonderful but quite useless charts, but give me the Irishman for going direct to the vital root of a matter. It is to be considered, of course, that Pat Hogan retained some resentment from being discharged on a whim. Not that he was not all the better for having been discharged; if ever a man was driven to fame and fortune, Pat Hogan was—and to fatness, too—for by the time Anna Targrove was forty-five Pat was forty-three and a fat, outspoken, well-to-do general contractor, getting his full share of anything the city had to give in the way of contracts and "seeing" the right aldermen every time. He had a twinkle in his eye, and he was the honestest man in Riverbank, barring the grafting, which was admittedly a custom of the country.

It was a pleasure to do business with

Pat Hogan, either as an alderman, a day laborer, a fellow politician, or in mere business. His word was good. Of course he was a Democrat—any Irishman not a Democrat being as rare as the great auk—but he did not claim to control his party. He was just "wan iv thim." But he was a decidedly powerful "wan iv thim," and there was never a conference that Pat Hogan was not asked to.

The Greenbackers did not have to be reckoned with in elections because they were a withering shrub. The Democrats and the Republicans split things nicely, it being understood that the one should "have" the city and the other the county, and the two solid little rings understood each other and worked together like dovetailed edges. The big men of the Democrats—Murphy, Flannahan, Pat Hogan, Dooling, and Carter—would wink an eye when they spoke of those Republican rascals, Hentz, Buddmeyer, Wright, Lawyer Martin, and Val Pierce. They played the game of politics according to their lights, and were happy and well fed. It was a nice little family party.

When the cards of the game had been dealt ten times or so, with the ace of State senatorship falling to Hentz each time, it was conceded that Hentz was the political big light of the district. He was so accepted. Before each election there were violently partisan primaries; tickets were nominated on both sides, campaign money collected and partly spent on the elections, and the voters worked themselves into frenzies hardly less hysterical than Mrs. Targrove's.

Every one was always in doubt regarding the result of the election—except the ten big men. Men sat up until after midnight to get the final returns, and—oddly enough—the Democrats always carried the town and the Republicans always carried the county, and Hentz went back to the State senate. Unless some Democratic candidate offended Murphy or Flannahan or Pat Hogan or Dooling or Carter. Then some Republican miraculously "ran ahead of his ticket." The same with the Republican candidates. The way to run a party is to run it.

By the time Anna Targrove was forty-five she had quite forgotten the existence of Pat Hogan, but it was Pat gave Allyn Targrove five full years of freedom from tears and temperament.

"Well, I don't see why I can't!" Anna Targrove said. "You couldn't—not alone—but if you ever showed the least willingness to please me in any way whatever you would be State senator and then governor and then real senator."

"My dear," said Allyn gently, but with cold fear in his heart, "I have never cared to go into politics——"

"No, you never cared! And that's all you care! What I want doesn't matter to you. Little you care what —— And I only ask you to—— Oh, I wish I had married a man! Oh, I wish I had my life to live over again! I'm so—I'm so——"

She began to weep, wiping her eyes with her lace-edged handkerchief and crying "Oh!" suddenly as she put her hands to her temples and began walking the floor.

Allyn watched her sadly as she walked up and down, going through the working-up stages of her temperamental orgy, and she stopped before him, her words coming in torrents, until she grasped the waist of her dress and tore it to shreds and grasped the hair of her head and tore out handfuls, until she looked like a fury, and reached her climax by throwing herself face downward on the floor, screaming and beating the floor with the toes of her boots.

"Anna!" he said sternly.

Then she beat her forehead on the floor. She had never done that before, and it frightened him. The floor was carpeted, but she dug her nails into the carpet and pounded the floor with her head, shrieking all the while. Her head hit her hand, covered with a dozen glittering rings, and the blood ran from the cut. She stopped and glared insanely up at Allyn, her breath coming in great gasps and her whole body trembling. She was hideous—too hideous to look

upon—and he turned his face away, hiding his eyes with his hands.

"Stop!" he cried. "Anna, stop! I'll do what you want!"

She collapsed, or seemed to, with her cheek to the carpet, with dry sobs and spasmodic tremblings, and he raised her and helped her to the bed.

"Oh, Allyn, if only when I want things——"

"Yes, yes, dear! I'll do what you want. I'll see Murphy to-morrow——"

"To-day, Allyn."

"Yes, yes, dear! I'll see him to-day."

"Send Nettie to me," she said, smiling weakly. "My forehead—is it very bad, Allyn? If only I could control myself! I am all nerves, Allyn. I don't know what I am doing when I act so. Something I can't control—— You are so good—I—send me Nettie, Allyn, please!"

It is one of the miracles of man that he bent over her and kissed her and begged her to take a long rest and a bromide. As soon as he was out of the room, she slipped from the bed and examined her face minutely in her mirror, feeling the small cut gently. She ran a forefinger across one eyebrow, which was a little dusty, and then viewed herself again at a somewhat greater distance from the mirror.

"A senator's wife," she smiled, and then found a silken dressing robe and drew it on and arranged herself comfortably on the bed to await Nettie's coming. It was quite the greatest battle she had won—this forcing a Targrove into politics.

When Allyn Targrove found Murphy—which he did by sending one of his clerks for him—Murphy came to the Targrove office.

"Well, Mr. Targrove, and what can we do for ye?" he asked, taking a chair without being asked.

"Sit down, Murphy," said Allyn, as if to indicate that men did not usually sit in his presence without being asked to do so. "Murphy, I have been thinking over conditions in this town, county, and district, and I don't approve of all I see."

It was not Anna's husband speaking; it was the great man, the fine citizen, the man of power.

"I'm with ye there, Mr. Targrove," said Murphy heartily, but with his small, piglike eyes viewing Allyn uneasily. "The way them Republicans are lootin' th' county treas'ry is outrageous. I'm——"

"Just so!" said Targrove. "One thing and another is far from sweet. Murphy, I have decided to go into politics. I mean to succeed Hentz as State senator."

"Do ye now!" said Murphy. For all the surprise he showed he might have been expecting this for years. "Well, ye'll make a good senator, Mr. Targrove. It will cost some money, but that'll not be bothering you, I'm thinkin'. Of course, it's as a Democrat you'll be running? Of course!"

He was thinking rapidly, for he did not like this idea. He knew Allyn Targrove; all Riverbank knew Allyn Targrove. This man Targrove, if he went into politics—if he went into anything—would be big. He would be Big. He would be worse than Big, because he was so innocently Big. He was the sort of man who would expect to be Big because of his family record, his wealth, and his self. For a season he would be at sea on strange waters, of course, and things could be so managed that Hentz would beat him for the senatorship this year, but there would be another term and another term and still other terms. Once in politics, this soft-handed Targrove would be something to be dealt with, and it was an infernal nuisance when all the combinations were so nicely arranged and working so pleasantly.

"It can be arranged," said Murphy again musingly. "Oh, yes! And a splendid thing for the c'munity 'twill be to have a man like you, Mr. Targrove, takin' an int'rest in things. The campaign fund——"

"In all such matters I shall be liberal. I understand some things you may think I do not. Politics is a practical matter; I understand that."

"Curse ye, I'll bet ye do!" thought

Murphy. Aloud he said: "I'm heartily glad ye are comin' into th' game," giving intentionally the impression that money did count for something, after all, with Murphy. "You'll want me to manage a bit for ye? Of course! I know well ye did not ask me here for nothin'. There are four we cannot do without—Pat Hogan, Flannahan, Dooling, and Carter. They have th' party in their pockets, as ye might say. A conference, now? As if ye had said nothin' to me, ye understand."

"At my home," said Targrove promptly. "You could manage it for this evening?"

"I was thinkin' of the room back of Jerry Timm's saloon," said Murphy with a shade of reluctance. "We come together there most times."

"At my home," said Mr. Targrove firmly. "At eight-thirty? Thank you!"

He gave Murphy his hand. Murphy sought out Pat Hogan at once, and to him expressed his curseful opinion of Targrove. It was all up with the sweet way things had been going, he said with proper profanity, and——

"Don't fret! Do not fret ye, Murphy," urged Pat Hogan. "'Tis daylight 'til the sun goes down, as me ould mother was always sayin'."

"But, dang ye, he's big!" said Murphy. "May the grave gulp me if he's not big enough to be bigger than all of us and swallow us and do for us!"

"And he is all of that, too," agreed Pat Hogan.

"He is a mighty man," said Murphy.

"We are like children beside him," agreed Pat Hogan.

"They'll flock to him. They'll go mad over him. He'll flip us away like a grain of wheat from his thumb. Saint Tweed, of New Yorruk, what a boss he'll be!"

"Even worse than all that," agreed Pat Hogan.

"So what's to be done, Paddy?"

"Nawthin'!" said Pat Hogan. "Not a dang thing! Not a dang thing until I get me wits about me. Confer as he bids us."

"Me and you, Flannahan, Dooling, and Carter——"

"And *not* Carter!" said Pat Hogan. "I'll have no more to do with that man Carter. He's a liar, and ye know it. He's a cheat, and ye are aware of it. Five hundred dollars O'Rourke gave him to buy votes with last aldermanic election, and he spent no more than two hundred, th' thief! He's not worthy the name of honest citizen. I'll have no Carter!"

"Omit Carter," said Murphy soothingly.

"Then I will confer," said Pat Hogan.

And confer he did. The four big men of the Democratic party met at Mr. Targrove's gate and went in together. Anna Targrove was in a gown that had never suffered from tears and temperament, and she had—knowing the political stomach—set the dining-room table with beer and sandwiches in plenty. She received the big men in the parlor, and led them into the library. She was beautiful and she was keyed high, because these were the men who would lead her to Des Moines and to Washington. She was effusive to Mr. Murphy, like a dear sister to Mr. Dooling, and like a first cousin to Mr. Flannahan. Pat Hogan, twenty years older than when he was last in the house, wandered around the room taking note of the changes. He paused before the revolving bookcase in the center of the room.

"This is a new jug ye've got here, ma'am," he said.

"Priceless!" breathed Anna Targrove, taking the vase from the top of the revolving case and turning it in her hand. "Peachblow, Mr. Hogan. The most prized of my possessions. I saw it at the exposition and loved it, but it was so *very* expensive Mr. Targrove let me have it most reluctantly."

"I'll bet ye clawed the floor and yelled like an Indian to get it!" Pat Hogan said to himself. "It's a pretty toy," he said to her carelessly. "I dare say ye strove hard t' keep yer husband out of the dirty pot of politics, ma'am."

"I urged him to do his part in the government of his State," she said sweetly, and Pat Hogan knew what that

meant. "Yelped like a coyote, I'll warrant!" he said to himself.

The conference lasted two hours, Mrs. Targrove sitting in the library, while the men sat at the table. It developed into a most serious affair.

"Well and good, then," said Murphy as he arose from the table. "We'll confer again this night week and arrange the preliminaries with ye, Mr. Targrove." And so it was about to be agreed when Pat Hogan interrupted.

"With Hentz and his gang of thieving black Republicans added unto us," he threw in.

"And what th' divil do we want——" Murphy began angrily.

"If we could persuade Hentz to retire on his laurels, mind ye, Murphy," said Pat Hogan, and Murphy caught his wink.

"Right!" he said, for he was astute. "We'll have the Big Five here with us. To-night a week. Good night t' ye, senator!"

Mr. Targrove smiled.

"Thank you—I hope so!" he said, and Anna went with them to the door.

"Now, what th' divil, Hogan——" Murphy began when they were outside and the door was closed.

"Like a lot of scared school children ye were!" said Hogan disdainfully. "Were ye frightened of th' plush portières, or what? Murphy, 'twas as good as a dollar show t' see ye tryin' t' stick our yer little pinky finger whilst ye was drinkin' th' beer. A swell lot of high-society gintlemin ye'll all be after ye have associated with th' aristocracy a bit more. Not wan of ye spat on th' carpet! A man would think ye had never learned barroom manners at all!"

"No nonsense!" ordered Murphy. "Shut up, Pat. 'Tis more serious even than I feared. He's a big, big man."

"He is so," grinned Hogan, "but th' biggest man in th' wurrld needs only a few more spades of earth to bury him. I'll be askin' Val Pierce—the Republican hog!—t' th' conference. You'll be attendin' to th' rest?"

It was so agreed. The news that Allyn Targrove was going into politics gave the Republican Five no less consternation than it had given the Democratic big men. They were all flabbergasted. They were lost, dethroned, done for, and they knew it.

Allyn Targrove was not exactly happy himself. He felt soiled, like a man who has journeyed three days and three nights on a soft-coal railroad. But there was Anna! She had never been happier, never more affectionate, but the tears and temperament were just beneath the eager glitter of her eyes every moment, and she watched Allyn closely. She was ready, at the slightest step backward on his part, to beat her forehead against the uncarpeted floor of the upper hall.

"Oh, Mrs. Targrove! Politics is such a dirty business! I'm that sorry Mr. Targrove is going into it!" said Nettie, playing ignorance of the knowledge that Mrs. Targrove had wept and screamed her husband into it. "If you knew! They tell me such things!"

"Nonsense, Nettie!" said Anna. "With low men, yes! Mr. Targrove will not need to come in contact with the rough element, I'm sure."

"The whole business is a rough element, ma'am," ventured Nettie, because Pat Hogan had told her to so venture. "Dirty, saloon-haunting, drinking fellows—and you can't get on without them."

"Mr. Targrove will be able to, I think," said Anna. "He will raise the tone. I shall have a little to say, perhaps."

She meant she would have a great deal to say. As it turned out, she did not say a great deal, after all. The next conference began auspiciously. The beer was opened early, and the ten men around the table, including Mr. Targrove—for Mr. Carter was not there—bent their heads together and talked straight politics. Mr. Hentz, State senator for many terms, goodnaturedly declined to refuse renomination, and smoked one of Mr. Targrove's good cigars. Both these things had been expected.

"At that, ye may beat us out this first election, Hentz," agreed Murphy.

"We will, Murph," said Val Pierce.

He was a lank, wiry man. He had been sheriff of the county six times. He looked consumptive because of the high color whisky gave his cheek bones and because of the stoop in his shoulders. He was, in fact, muscle and wire, with lungs like an ox. He had an ugly scar over one eye, and was not now sheriff, having been temporarily dropped from the running because of a brawl for which he had not been indicted for murder only because he was one of the five big ones of the Republican party in Riverbank County. "You're dam' right we'll win," he reiterated.

"Hish! There's a lady in th' libr'y!" cautioned Pat Hogan.

"I did not put her there," said Val Pierce roughly. "Them that don't like my talk don't have to stay where they'll hear it. I say you're d——d right we'll win, if that liar Carter don't go back on his word."

Pat Hogan arose and leaned his two fat fists on the table. He glared at Val Pierce, and his chin protruded like a weapon.

"And that ye'll take back!" he said with cold anger. "No man can call a man a liar when he is not here and I'm his friend, be you Pierce or the divil. Take it back!"

Murphy opened his mouth in amazement.

"I'll take nothing back!" said Val Pierce. "Carter is a liar, and born and bred a liar——"

The beer bottle Pat Hogan threw missed Val Pierce by an inch, and went thumping and bumping into the library beyond, spilling beer on the rugs and floor, but the miss did not matter much, for Pat Hogan threw himself across the table and grasped Val Pierce by the throat and struggled across the table, upsetting bottles and scattering them to the floor. Then Pierce shook him loose, but Pat Hogan's fat fist reached out and caught the Republican on the cheek, and they clinched, and, swearing and yowling, struggled and slipped and fell into the library.

The eight men shouted at them, but they broke apart and beat each other brutally with cruel, unpracticed fists. The blood ran from Pat Hogan's nose and infuriated him. He was like a mad bull, charging his enemy and mauling him and being mauled in turn. Mrs. Targrove screamed. She retreated out of the men's way, and they fell over her chair and leaped up and fought again, biting and kicking. She backed against the wall, her hands over her ears. She was frightened—frightened for the first time in her selfish little life. She had reason to be frightened, for there was murder in the way the two men fought, and Val Pierce had already killed his man in a similar brawl.

It was a strange, hideous thing to have happened in a quiet, aristocratic home on Willow Avenue, most of all in the home of a Targrove. The eight men shouted and swore, and tried to pull the two crazed fighters apart, and then swayed against the glazed bookcases here and there, sending the glass clattering in pieces to the floor. A barroom brawl!

"Push me ag'inst it!" grunted Pat Hogan in Val Pierce's ear as he pretended to bite his jugular vein. "Now!"

For the revolving bookcase and the peachblow vase were the climax of the fight, as arranged with Val Pierce by Pat Hogan.

Mrs. Targrove's eyes grew black with horror as she saw them sway toward the revolving case, and Allyn Targrove's eyes flashed anger. He uttered an oath—a genuine barroom oath—and jumped forward. Pat Hogan, his arm around Val Pierce's neck, glanced backward to make sure he would crash into the revolving case, and saw Allyn Targrove coming. His eyes glowed with the light of inspiration, such inspiration as comes seldom to mortal man, such inspiration as poets feel when penning an immortal line, and he cast Val Pierce from him and lowered his head and charged at Allyn Targrove as a bull charges, catching him full in the belt with his hard head and sending him reeling against the revolving case, which tottered, swayed, sent the peachblow vase reeling to the floor and de-

struction, and then, as if it, too, was in the conspiracy, fell forward upon Allyn Targrove, of the old-family Targroves, and quenched him temporarily. He went out with an oath.

The battle paused while they raised the case and lifted Allyn Targrove, candidate for State-senatorship honors and clean politician, and placed him on a couch, and still Anna Targrove stood against the wall, big-eyed and horror-stricken. She was too frightened to move, too frightened to breathe.

For five years thereafter she was too frightened at what her tears and temperament had brought about, and too fearful of the imminent danger of news of the desecration that had threatened the Targrove home and name, to so much as ask Allyn Targrove for a paper of pins except in proper wifely meekness. The only thing she asked was, when he opened his eyes on the couch, that he would leave politics alone forever.

"Ye done yer part well, Val," said Pat Hogan as the nine swung open the door of Jerry's saloon, "except ye forgot t' draw a knife on me like I tould ye. For an amachoor performance 'twas not so bad. Th' quarrel was well planned an' based on reasonable grounds, for there's nawthin' an Irishman resints like an attack on an absint fri'nd, and——"

He paused at the door to Jerry's back room and turned.

"Come away from here," he said disgustedly. "We'll go acrost t' Mike's place."

"What's wrong?" asked Murphy.

"I'll not come in yonder," said Pat Hogan. "That liar and crook of a Carter is there."

WARING OF SONORATOWN

THE heat acrost the desert was a-swimmin' in the sun
When Waring of Sonoratown,
Jim Waring of Sonoratown,
From Salvador come ridin' down, a-rollin' of his gun.

He was singin' low and easy to his pony's steady feet,
But his eye was live and driftin'
Round the scenery and siftin'
All the crawlin' shadows shiftin' in the tremblin' gray mesquite.

Eyes was watchin' from a holler where a outlaw Chola lay;
Two black, snaky eyes a-yearnin'
For Jim's hoss to make the turnin',
Then—to loose a bullet burnin' through his back—the Chola way.

And Jim Waring's gaze, a-rovin' free and easy as he rode,
Settled quick—without him seemin'
To get wise and quit his dreamin'
On a shiny ring a-gleamin' where no ring had ever growed.

But the lightnin' don't give warnin'—just a lick and she is through;
Waring set his gun to smokin'
Playfullike—like he was jokin',
And a Chola lay a-chokin' and a buzzard cut the blue.

HENRY HERBERT KNIBBS.

Mysteria, the Mind Reader

By E. Albert Apple

Author of "The Plans of Corregidor"

From the first, Mysteria was a knock-out and "hung 'em on the chandeliers," as the enthusiastic managers said of her drawing capacity—but she proved too impartial in her second sight

OUT through the Middle West, following the harvest belt with the shrewdness of a circus route man, came one of the original wise men of the East, Marmaduke Slocum, with a sure-fire and beautiful graft.

Marmaduke was known in every booking office from U. B. O. to Orpheum "time" as the best ballyhoo man, freak manager, illusion exploiter, and general faker in the business. He hadn't had a failure since the dime-museum days.

One glance at Marmaduke and any vaudeville manager would crowd him in on the bill. His was a personality and atmosphere that accompanies success in the show business. He wore black string ties, a cowboy hat, spats, and a Mississippi congressman's coat. Talked in headlines, quoted fake statistics by the mile, and had a repertoire of three hundred as fine adjectives as ever pulled crowd into a side show.

He sat now in the manager's office of a big-time Chicago vaudeville theater and swapped strange tales with his fellow in crime.

"It was a beautiful graft," declared Marmaduke, chuckling and slapping fat hands on his knees. "My own idea, too; lecture on 'New York, the Wickedest City in the World.' Only took three of us—myself to deliver the uplift lecture, a sniper to bill the show, and an advance man to operate between. He put his collar on backward, blew into Frogtown, looked up the local pastor. 'I'm a retired divine from the South,' was the line he put out. 'Just travelin' round fer my health. Always look up fellow clerics. I was over in Kansas City come next Tuesday week. Saw a wonderful thing there—lecture on "New York, the Wickedest City in the World." It'd have a grand moral effect if you could get it here.' The sniper follows along in a few days and makes a dicker with the rev'rend, Sunday school to get a half of one per cent of the gate in disguise. Then I come in with a phony lecture an' two hundred lantern slides. You oughta heard it: 'Here we have a night scene from the Mulberry Street police court. Three days later, this young girl's body was found floating in the East River. Her mother, a seamstress in a small Wisconsin village, was notified.' Et cetery, et cetery. Best thing since they started Esau with his writhing, rattling rattlesnakes."

"If I were you," suggested the house manager shrewdly, "I'd take that lecture right into New York. They'd eat it up."

Marmaduke shook his head stubbornly.

"Too much talkin'. I been eatin' cough drops an' throat lozenges till I feel like a corner drug store. I want to get back in some legitimate graft—managin' a mind reader, say. I know all the best codes an' have some new bunk of my own up my sleeve. The mob always falls for second-sight stuff. But I can't find the right woman. Went through gypsies an' street carnivals an' side-street palm readers like a red-hot

cinder through a newspaper. Most of 'em say, 'Hain't' an' 'them things' an' I'd get laughed off. Besides, I got ideas on this thing. I want some one that'll pass as an Egyptian princess or a Hindu priestess or a seventh daughter of a seventh daughter. There's a lot in the looks. She's got to know her grammar an' walk like a head waiter. If I get the right kind, I can buffalo the audiences so Annie Eva Fake will have to work for three cents a month."

The house manager drummed on his desk nervously, pulled at his ear, suddenly slapped his knee.

"I know the very person you want," he announced with quiet jubilation. "She's stage-struck. Been hanging around my office for a month. I tried her out one morning; she can't act, she can't sing, she'd look like bad news in a sketch. But she's got a voice that makes you think of black cats and talking with the dead, with green eyes as big as overcoat buttons and wild blond hair that shoots out albino in every direction like a bonfire. If you don't like the props, you can keep her covered with a sheet. Velma, the Veiled Seeress; that'd be a good line."

"We'll bill her as Mysteria, the Mind Reader," approved the great Marmaduke with satisfaction. "The name's been on my mind for weeks. Your description of this bird sounds like just what I want."

Mysteria, the Mind Reader, was a knock-out from the first—"hung 'em on the chandeliers," as enthusiastic managers referred to the way she drew business.

Women went wild about her and would have given up face powder for the taboo private interviews. There were special ladies' matinées and investigating committees from local-college faculties or city halls.

And it's well worth while to show you how she worked—she got four hundred and fifty dollars a week for it. Maybe you can become a mind reader yourself.

It was all done in code, but a code so elaborate and handled with astonishing swiftness, as wonderful as genuine second-sight work.

Evening. The impatient crowd has sat restlessly through the succession of cheap acts craftily slipped in by the booking offices when one good act will "save" the bill. Finally Marmaduke Slocum walks out to the footlights and ballyhoos a short lecture. It develops that Mysteria's powers became manifest at a tender age. Developed by the devotees in the Himalayas—and so on. You've heard them. Presently Mysteria breezes out, bowing and smiling. She sits in a chair up close to the piano; the committee blindfolds her; Marmaduke passes swiftly through the audience.

"How many people in this row?"

Mysteria, observing six words in his question, answers instantly, "Six!" and the theater buzzes with comment and becomes a forest of craning necks.

"How many here?"

"Three!"

"What's this now?"

"Tortoise-shell hair comb."

That was the code. If he said, "What have I in my hand?" it meant, "An open-faced gold ladies' watch." "What have I here?" indicated a diamond ring. "What have I here now?" a ruby ring.

"Can you get this?"

"Lodge pin."

"Make a suggestion on name of lodge."

"Masonic," Mysteria answers swiftly, getting her cue by combining the first letters of the words of his question.

"What's here?"

"Cigar!"

"What'll I do with it?"

"Put it in your pocket."

A man reaches into the aisle, plucks Marmaduke's sleeve, whispers, "Have her tell me about my two daughters."

Mysteria hears Marmaduke's code query: "This gentleman wants to know——"

"About his two daughters. One will be married soon——"

(Gentleman grunts, shakes head and program.)

"No—no! Think hard now! Con-

centrate, Mysteria!" shouts Marmaduke.

"I don't get this clearly," Mysteria hurries on, picking cherries out of the air. "There seems to be something around her. Oh, yes, money! She and her *husband* are about to be very fortunate. Some investment they've almost forgotten. But warn them against an invention. I see some one around them, some man friend, who is not just what you think."

"The gentleman," interrupts Marmaduke, "wants to know if he'll have any more children."

"I regret to tell the gentleman that he will have no more children—but his wife will have five."

In the roar that follows, the gentleman is glad to forget his other daughter, and Marmaduke is well up the aisle.

"Ah! What here?"

"Dollar bill."

"Give the number."

"Eighty-three million seven hundred and ninety-six thousand five hundred and four."

"Is that right, lady?"

The lady agrees, returns the bill to her purse, and now the audience is buzzing like a beehive. Marmaduke had watched purse after purse as he opened them, having Mysteria call out handkerchiefs, keys, powder puff, and the like, waiting for one with a dollar bill. When he found it he palmed the bill, opened up one of his own, ready these many minutes, and Mysteria—knowing the number—repeated it to the complete mystification of the house.

Among other stunts, she described a whole row of people in detail. Earlier in the evening, Marmaduke had come from back stage, and, standing behind the curtains of a box, looked this row over for some ten minutes, memorizing occupants for transference to Mysteria before their act.

Questions were written on paper, handed to Marmaduke, and transmitted to the stage by oral code. Or pads were passed about, questions written, torn off, and retained, and Marmaduke read them, with the help of a carbon paper in the middle of the pad.

The code was the wonderful part of the act. They had practiced three months steadily, night and day, before Mysteria's first public performance.

Working fast was another essential—surprise, mystify people, then shift their attention to the next question in another part of the theater before they had time for analysis.

From the beginning, Mysteria, the Mind Reader, was a riot. Two years slipped by. Her name was a byword wherever newspapers were delivered. Those who hadn't seen her had talked with some one who had or read about her wonderful work. Dream books bearing her name appeared, and sold into the hundreds of thousands. The unending mob of superstitious, open to easy conviction, susceptible to clever trickery, swallowed her—hook, line, and sinker.

Everything would have been all right, but Marmaduke Slocum—gazing at the conquered worlds that lay about him like fallen pears—grew ambitious.

The cause of Marmaduke's ambition was the discovery that his hat no longer covered his bald spot. It was a decided shock—much as when a father hears his son refer to him as "the old man" for the first time. He walked through nine cigarettes, up in one of the fly galleries, thinking it over, now and then stopping to watch the sceneshifting and darting about of performers below.

So he was getting old! Why hadn't he hung onto some of his money? He'd made plenty of it. There was "Sixty-Forty" Ross, so named after his inexorable rule for dividing net receipts. He and Ross had started together with Barnum. Now Ross had a big picture house in Louisville. There were scores of them, men he'd trotted with in harness from time to time, all well heeled as the sun of their declining years drooped into the hills of eternity.

Slocum, brightest of the lot, had saved nothing.

"Why, I've drunk up more than the whole bunch of 'em together ever saw!" he muttered furiously. "See here, Mar-

maduke, you better curb your ways or one of these mornings you wake up in an old people's home."

He decided to keep his eyes open. Eyes open much wider when looking about in behalf of a conscience as elastic as Marmaduke Slocum's.

In Pittsburgh, opportunity in the shape of one "Ten-strike" Penny looked him up at the theater. Penny was one of the greatest fakers in the show business—also outside. Bloated, paste-faced, but decidedly prosperous, he laid down his cards to Marmaduke and stepped back triumphantly.

"I wouldn't handle your proposition with counterfeit money!" declared Marmaduke slowly; then paused as his hand rested on his bald spot.

Penny followed up the opening quickly.

"Safe as an asbestos curtain. I got it all worked out."

"At that," reflected Marmaduke, "I believe we could put it over. And there are crookeder things—the pretzel business, for instance. We divide fifty-fifty, eh?"

"Fifty-fifty! Do you think the girl would fall in with it?"

"Mysteria?" answered Marmaduke. "Say, leave it to me. She's shallow; got a mind deep like a coat of tan. She's in a trance most of the time. Sits around, dopy, and eats butterscotch. Everything that happens is strange to her—no matter how often it happens. All she worries about is how to spend the salary I give her on awful-lookin' purple and green clothes—and more butterscotch. If her conscience ever bothers her, it must be worrying because I'm takin' two of the five hundred iron men the treasurer pays us every Saturday night. There she is now. Hi! Come here, Miss Mysteria. I want you should meet Mr. Penny."

Mysteria hesitated openly, and almost shrank back, startled. Penny was dissipated looking enough to scare any woman.

"Shake hands," encouraged Marmaduke. "He hasn't got any horns."

"It's a nice day," suggested Mysteria in compromise.

"So I read in the Japanese newspapers," retorted Penny, with an oily, wheedling, servile smile.

"This Mr. Penny," went on Marmaduke, "has a swell business proposition to make you—*us*. It's a sure winner, and there's big money in it. We want to talk private. Can we go to your dressing room?"

Mysteria led the way. The men sat on trunks after she had moved two small mountains of multicolored plumage, and she perched on the edge of a chair by her make-up shelf.

"It's this way," explained Penny. "Marmaduke here is getting old. You've only got a few more years of this stuff ahead of you, then the people'll tire of you an' you'll find it hard gettin' bookin's. You both have worked hard an' deserve to clean up while the cleanin's good. I have—er—a proposition along that line."

Mysteria produced a hunk of butterscotch from somewhere and began removing the paper wrapper. Penny watched her alertly, sizing her up, toying with a big wart on his fat neck.

"Talents such as you have," he went on, "it is my opinion, shouldn't be hid under no bushel. While you're tellin' some one where to find lost rings an' husbands, might as well find somethin' for yourself. You're booked into Lexington week after next, and if you make your second-sight powers work overtime I think you can locate some buried treasure.

"This treasure is buried in old socks and savings banks, and a little exercise out in the big, bad world would do it good. The point is this: You've played Lexington four years straight, and you've rung the bell every time. They never caught you up on nothin'. That was a swell stunt you pulled off tellin' the woman she'd find her watch in stall number sixteen out to the race track. Course, Marmaduke here happened to find the watch, but they didn't know that; they think it's the spirits or the devil or whatever guides you when you're in this hoakum thing you call a trance. Lexington is plumb nuts about you. If you told 'em New York was

goin' to fall off the island, they'd begin watching the papers for news."

"I connect," interposed Mysteria. "And what am I to tell them?"

"Fine! Fine!" cackled Penny, rubbing his hands with appreciation. "Bright girl you have here, Marmaduke. There's a new oil field opened up south of Lexington, or thereabouts, in Irvin County. Big fortunes are being cleaned up overnight, and the Lexington people are getting the family hoard out from the old sock or behind the clock and counting it in the moonlight. They're just itching to invest. When you play Lexington we'll frame up some good stunts to start things—say, send a woman on in a day or so and you follow along and locate her lost brother. I'll have some plants in the audience and they'll ask you shall they buy a certain oil stock."

"And I advise them, yes, by all means," finished Mysteria. "Is that the way the lines run?"

"Correct!" agreed Penny, very much pleased that they were arriving so quickly on common ground. "You needn't have no scruples. There'll be real stock. I'll see to that; buy it up. Have a line on what I want now; been down there. The town'll take your tip—hook, line, an' sinker—an' we'll shove the price along, clean up, and blow. You'll have enough for your share that you can buy a butterscotch factory of your own."

"Yes, I eat it a heap," admitted Mysteria. "The hard chewing calms my nerves. Well, Mr. Bunk, as long as the oil stock is worth a few cents on the dollar, I guess this is as legitimate as Wall Street or cold storage. I'm on."

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" cackled Ten-strike Penny. "Bright girl here, Marmaduke. She knows which side her bread is buttered on. Number one first for her. Business is business. Suppose you both have dinner with me to-night. We'll talk it over and arrange details. Of course we won't dare put any of our agreement in writing; too—er—uncomfortable if mislaid. We'll have to trust each other. But Marmaduke here knows me."

"I'd loan you my last nickel, Penny," Marmaduke supported warmly. "Me an' Mysteria here are both grateful you let us in on this. We can float it for you all right. They'll fall like dead leaves for the advice of Mysteria, the Mind Reader. The element of superstition is one of the most fundamental features of modern civilization. Veneer it all you want to, but as soon as it comes to money or poker or love affairs or strayed ones they all begin to watch for signs and omens. I knew a professor of atheism or something who carried a buckeye in his pocket for rheumatism. Even myself, I fall for that old superstition of the stage—bad luck if any one whistles in your dressing room. We'll probably land suckers in Lexington you'd never dream of; superstition is like lightning—never know where it'll strike next."

Penny got busy with telegraph blanks, and three days later an elderly widow with a son the size of a fox hound arrived in Lexington and took lodgings for an indefinite period at a respectable rooming house.

Almost directly she missed a cameo locket of pink coral and advertised two hundred dollars' reward and no questions asked. The size of the reward looked to the newspapers like a good human-interest story, and they took it up. It developed that the locket was an heirloom, and the widowed lady was all broken up over its loss.

"Who's this Mysteria, the Mind Reader, that I hear everybody talking about?" she queried innocently one evening.

The landlady shook a white head wise with age.

"Magic! Black art! They say she's the real thing. Done some wonderful things here; been coming for years. Most folks think she's a spiritualist."

The landlady became violently seized with an inspiration.

"Why don't you go ask her about your locket?"

No, no; widowed lady didn't believe in fortune tellers of any kind. All

right, landlady would go herself. Go she did.

"The lady wants to know something about some jewelry—a locket," chanted Mysteria. "*Your* locket, you are asking, but my control says—— It isn't yours—some one who lives with you. I see an elderly woman; she's lost some one very dear to her; there is a child around her. She will find her locket in the grass under a park bench where she was sitting the day she lost it. I get a call——" And so on.

The landlady accompanied the widow to the park bench. The locket was discovered; two hundred dollars' reward was paid—supposedly—to Mysteria.

Came the psychological night.

The theater was jammed. People sat on extra chairs in the aisles and stood at the back. The house lights were switched on, and Marmaduke stepped forth from the wings. He was in great spirits to-night, gleeful at the smooth running of the scheme to date, and in his introductory eulogy of Mysteria, the Mind Reader, seeress who defied investigation of public, science, and clergy, he called forth from old pigeonholes in his brain all the dazzling adjectives that had accumulated there in circus days when Marmaduke Slocum was with Barnum, "spieling" before the side shows.

Finally the oratory ended with the gorgeousness of a falling skyrocket, and, as Marmaduke gestured low and bowed to the left, Mysteria, the Mind Reader, swept out. She nodded haughtily but graciously, and licked her lips. The house figured it was nervous temperament, but Marmaduke, from long experience, recognized it as butterscotch.

The investigating committee blindfolded her and examined her chair and hair for invisible wires or wireless, and Marmaduke began passing through the audience.

"This gentleman!" called. Marmaduke, and passed up the aisle. They had rehearsed it many times; she was to tell him he was thinking of making an investment, Pit Hole Oil Stocks. Yes, by all means, take it. The stock would rise twenty-nine points on the morrow and go to eighteen hundred within two months.

Eagerly, hungrily, as he catfooted up the aisle, his back to the stage, Marmaduke listened for the magic words that were destined to open the coffers of fortune.

But now something was going wrong.

Mysteria, the Mind Reader, gifted seeress and psychicest of the psychic, was silent as a Ritz waiter tipped five cents.

"This gentleman!" repeated Marmaduke sharply.

Mysteria began to sputter. Finally she spoke, and Marmaduke's heart bounded to the roof of his mouth as he clenched his hands.

"You are thinking of an investment," chanted the seeress. "Pit Hole Oil Stocks. I see trouble about them. Do not invest; they are dangerous."

Marmaduke Slocum and Ten-strike Penny found Mysteria in her dressing room in hysterics. So full of words they knew not where to begin emitting, they stood very erect, puffing cigars and glaring at her. Finally Penny growled disgustedly:

"You had 'em goin'. Everything was comin' your way. Yours to play superstition for under the wire—an' you muffed it."

"I couldn't help it," sobbed Mysteria. "Two minutes before I went on everything was all right. And then, as I go downstairs, a black cat jumps in front of me. I'm scared to death of them. They mean bad luck sure. I used to hear the darkies down South talk about it when I was a little girl. This cat scairt me—made me get stage fright and cold feet on the whole business. A black cat—bad luck!"

"I was right about superstition, anyway," comforted Marmaduke as he and Penny tramped softly through the stage entrance. "I was right about it. We all got it, an' you never know when it'll show up."

"Yeh," agreed Penny shortly, with a grunt. "The doctor took some of his own medicine by mistake."

Songs of the Training Camps

(Officers' Training School)

By Berton Braley

EDUCATION

BELIEVE mé, hereafter, whenever I meet
A chap who is digging a ditch in the street
I'll bring up my hand and salute!
For I have been learning, in sap and bayou
How hard you must work and how much you must know
To be a good shovel recruit.
My hands are all blisters, my muscles are lame
From digging the sand and revetting the same
In a proper and soldierly style,
And all the night long as I lie in my bunk
I dream about dirt by the ton or the chunk,
And sand by the linear mile.

I used to think trenches were simple and plain,
Requiring no actual use of the brain,
But I was mistaken, that's clear;
From what I've observed, if you build them correct,
You need to be carpenter, drain architect
And plumber and mine engineer.
So we're getting plenty of drill from the start
Till we learn every phase of the business by heart,
And we know all the hooks and the crooks,
For when we're commanding our men at the front
We've got to know all of this trench-digging stunt
Without any help from the books.

I talk about "parados," "wattling," "fascine"
And think that in time I will know what they mean
Though at present I'm hazy, I guess;
Perhaps when I've dug out a dugout or two
I'll learn why I'm doing the things that I do,
And accumulate sense, more or less;
And meantime I'm drilling with shovel and pick
In sand that is heavy and mud that is thick
Constructing traverse and redoubt,
And doing my Sunday-school darndest to cope
With all the instructions. I'll learn them, I hope
If the arnica doesn't run out!

The Lapses of Larry Loman

By Edgar Wallace

Author of "The Man Who Knew," Etc.

II.—THE AFFAIR OF THE STOKEHOLE

LARRY LOMAN, of the criminal intelligence department, was called to a conference at headquarters, and went with a certain sense of disappointment and irritation, though there was no reason for a display of either of those emotions, for both his chief and the secretary of state, responsible for his department, had nothing but encouragement for him.

"You are not going to smash the Crime Trust in a day," said the chief commissioner for special services.

"I suppose there is no doubt about there being a Crime Trust?" asked the minister dubiously. "It seems such an extremely melodramatic idea, the sort of thing one reads in sensational stories."

"It is a very good idea from the criminal's point of view," said the commissioner quietly; "he has no worry. He is well supported, whether he is in prison or out. He is always excellently defended, and if he is convicted his unknown employers will take his case to the court of criminal appeal—if there is the slightest chance of a sentence being reduced or a trial being quashed. The man who brought together all these expert criminals—and the trust has no use for any other—was a genius. Could anything be neater than to run a forging plant in a nursing home, where all the rooms except two or three were occupied by genuine patients, and all the staff except the principal and a few of his friends were genuine nurses and doctors? How are things shaping, Larry?"

Larry Loman, his elbows on the table, his face between his hands; shook his head.

"We have settled the forgeries," he said a little hopelessly, "but the other departments of the trust are in full swing, and very successfully so."

"For example——" said the chief commissioner.

"The kidnaping and holding to ransom of Lord Frethermore's heir."

"I wanted to see you about that," said the minister; "do you think it is the work of the trust?"

"I am certain of it," said Larry emphatically. "Look at the price they are asking—sixty thousand pounds! Nobody but the trust would dare do it. Nobody but the trust has the organization which would enable them to carry out a scheme of that importance."

"There is terrible trouble about the kidnaping," said the minister. "I have brought you here to take you off the trust and put you on to that."

Larry laughed. "You can safely retain me on the trust work," he said dryly. "All the bad crimes that will be committed in this country during the next twelve months will bear the indelible hall mark of that organization."

"You know the circumstances of the kidnaping?" asked the commissioner.

Larry nodded. "The boy was out with his nurse in Regents Park. The nurse found herself in conversation with a lady who suddenly turned faint and had to be assisted to one of the garden chairs. When the nurse looked round, the child had gone, and a motor car was seen driving off in the adjoining roadway. No number of the car seems to have been taken. By the time

the nurse had found a policeman the fainting lady had also disappeared."

"Lord Frethermore is distracted," said the minister. "He has seen me twice this morning. He had a letter from the gang; here it is."

He passed the epistle across the table. It was typewritten on thick notepaper, and ran:

I am holding your son to ransom and am demanding three hundred thousand francs for his release. The money must be paid in thousand-franc notes and delivered to a messenger, who will be a perfectly innocent agent in the matter. The method of the boy's restoration will be sent to you if you advertise your agreement in the *Times*.

THE KNIGHT OF INDUSTRY.

"The trust!" said Larry confidently. "They have used that signature before. From what I have heard, the gentleman who is at the head of the business attends his 'board meetings' in complete armor, with lowered visor."

"Theatrical nonsense!" growled the minister.

"It is neither theatrical nor nonsensical," said Larry calmly. "In the first place he is protected against a chance pistol shot from a traitor or a hidden policeman, and he is so completely disguised that neither his face nor his figure is observable. I will take this letter, if I may." He folded it up and put it in his pocket. "I have an appointment with my specialist."

"How is the memory trouble?"

Larry made a grimace. "I haven't had a recurrence for over a week."

"Who is your doctor?" asked the minister. "Grayborn? A clever fellow. A man who has won the first place in his profession by sheer industry. Ten years ago a struggling practitioner, up to his eyes in debt through an extravagant wife. To-day, I suppose, he is making more money than any other man in his profession. The fees he charges me are prodigious—prodigious!"

"You are not making Larry very happy," smiled the commissioner, but Larry was incapable of further depression that morning.

He was ushered into the consulting room, and the specialist, without delay, went through the formal examination which Sir George Grayborn always gave to his patients.

"I think you're all right," said the doctor. "You have had no further sudden lapses of memory?"

"None," said Larry.

"Avoid excitement. I know it is a foolish thing to ask you, but remember that any undue excitement will produce that extraordinary lapse and blot out hours of memory from your life. *Amnesia* is a queer disease."

"Don't I know it," said Larry ruefully. "It is a nightmare to me every time I realize that all the things that happen to me after four may be completely forgotten until I recover my memory at eight. I live in dread of that little buzz in the ear which tells that memory is 'ringing off.'"

"Where are you going this afternoon?" asked the physician suddenly.

"Nowhere in particular," said Larry after a moment's thought.

"A little social recreation would not do you any harm," said Sir George. "I am going to a garden party at Regent Gardens; it is on behalf of the 'Home for Factory Girls.' Will you join me there?"

Larry had made no plans for that afternoon, and it was a rule of his life that when he had no plans he was prepared to be guided by any fortuitous development that day might bring forth.

"I will join you," he said.

"The ticket will cost you a guinea, and I will put it on my bill, which, by the way, will not be heavy," he said, looking over his shoulder as he unlocked a little cupboard behind his desk.

"You are a thought reader among other things, Sir George."

The physician did not reply. He handed the gilt-edged pasteboard to his patient.

"I will meet you at half past four," he said, "near the band stand."

Dressing for the function, Larry came to the conclusion that he might have done worse than accept the invitation. If one of his extraordinary memory lapses came on, he would have

the advantage of his doctor's society and the observation which Sir George might make, and, what was no less important, the data he might supply as to what Larry did while in the dubious enjoyment of one of his periodical fits of oblivion. He dressed himself with care, for Larry was something of a dandy and was one of the best-dressed men in town. From his varnished boots, with their white, well-fitting spats, to the top of his glossy silk hat he might have stood as a model for the beaus of the world. He seldom went abroad unarmed, and now, as a final touch to his toilet, he dropped a revolver into his hip pocket. The result did not please him, for the bulge of the weapon showed under the well-cut morning coat.

He took out the revolver, and replaced it with a little Browning, with no great improvement. He put the Browning on the table. It was against his best instincts to go out without some kind of weapon, and he pulled open drawer after drawer, and finally selected a short and what was more to the purpose, flat hunting knife in its sheath. In a rough-and-tumble it might be more useful even than firearms.

He drove to the gardens, and found, as he approached the entrance, such a block of taxicabs and private motor cars that he descended and walked the rest of the distance on foot. He crushed through the turnstiles, and was immediately pounced upon by a bevy of beautiful brigands with tickets for side shows and badges and flags and refreshment vouchers.

He parted meekly with his money, and as soon as he could make his way free of the crowd he wandered to the part of the garden which he knew would be unfrequented.

It was a glorious summer day. The hot June sun was tempered by a cooling breeze, and in the bosky sidewalks, with their high hedges of flowering shrubs, he found a certain restfulness and comfort. He passed a small telephone box placed there, as an inscription informed him, for the convenience of visitors, and he marveled at the foresight and intelligence which had induced the organizers to place this very necessary connecting link with the outside world in so quiet and retiring a spot. It would be useful when he wanted to call his car.

He strolled on slowly, for he knew the path would soon turn him back to the crush, and then suddenly he saw a girl ahead of him. She was dressed in white, and her back was turned toward him. She was evidently selling something, for she had a little tray before her. He debated the question as to whether he would return, but curiosity got the better of him. Here evidently was a kindred soul who also wished to get free from the madding throng. He was walking past her when she spoke.

"Won't you buy a little rose?" said a sweet voice.

He turned round and looked her in the face, and something buzzed in his ears and memory stopped.

He knew his memory was returning, yet the sensation was as though he was beginning life at its very commencement and that all existence must date from this moment. He felt a strong wind in his face, and he knew his hands were grasping something rough and hard.

Then he realized he was sitting on a stone ledge. He looked down, and, strong as were his nerves, he nearly swooned. Then he looked back into the black, yawning chasm behind him. How had he got here? In the name of Heaven, how had he got here?

He was sitting on the top of a high chimney stack, a hundred and fifty feet above the level of the ground. He was dressed in his shirt and his trousers. He wore neither collar nor coat. His varnished boots were split and scratched, his white spats were black. He looked at his hand. It was covered with soot, and he gathered that his face was in no better state.

He had recovered something of his presence of mind, something of the coolness which he knew he had displayed through all this lapse of hours,

even though the sudden consciousness of his position had temporarily shaken his confidence and nerve. He crawled back to the black funnel of the stack and looked down. He had evidently come up that way, for inside the stack, as far as eye could see down, were iron rungs firmly fixed in the masonry.

At the worst, he could go down that way again, he thought, but even as this method of escape occurred to him a thick cloud of smoke billowed up from the depths. He crept round to the other side of the parapet, and what he found brought comfort. Apparently the chimney had at some period been under repair, and there was a scaffolding here and a ladder which ran at an alarming angle to join a further ladder, which, so far as he could see by lying flat on his face and looking over the edge, continued to the foot of the stack. He shuddered at the thought of making the descent by this method, but, bracing himself up, he swung his legs over the platform, felt for the rungs of the ladder, and began his descent.

He was halfway down before it occurred to him that some of the sections of the ladder might not be in place. It evidently had been up for a considerable time, and one rung he touched was so rotten that his foot crashed through it. Fifty feet from the ground, he did indeed find that a short length had either fallen or been pulled from its place, but by letting himself slowly down till his feet touched the top of the next section, he was able, by grasping the staples which still remained in the brickwork, to make the rest of the descent in safety.

It was not until he had reached the ground that he realized that all the time he had been carrying the knife in his hand. He carefully examined the blade, but it afforded him no clew. Possibly a careful search of the buildings would assist him. He was evidently in the yard of a disused factory. Rusty old railway lines, overgrown by weeds, discarded machine parts in the same condition, and a general air of desolation pervaded the yard, which was inclosed by a high brick wall. He looked up at the chimney, which was now sending out thick smoke. Somebody must be here, he thought, and he moved cautiously. If only he could remember what had happened in the last few hours!

He heard the whir of a motor car, and, crouching down behind a slag heap, he saw a car carrying three people pass along the factory roadway and disappear behind some low buildings, which he judged were somewhere near the gate. In this supposition he was right, for a little while later he heard the clang of the gate as it closed.

He waited for five minutes, but there was no further sign of life. The smoke was thinning, and was now but a white, tenuous mist that floated from the top of the chimney. He had already identified the building by a heap of discarded tins bearing the label of the "Boscombe Enamel Company," a derelict firm that had been out of business for many years.

There were a number of sheds, all deserted, some of them padlocked and some windowless. He reached what was evidently the engine house without being challenged. The smoke must come from the stokehole, and to the stokehole he made his way. The fire doors were hot, and the big furnace was still filled with a red, glowing mass. He picked up an iron rake and poked about the inside, and presently pulled out a small metal bracket of a familiar shape. In its pristine days it had been part of a telephone transmitter. He raked again, and drew up pieces of red-hot wire and the metal part of a telephone receiver, and shook his head. They meant nothing to him.

Leading from the stokehole was a steel door, which he pushed and which yielded under his touch. He found himself in a small room with walls of whitewashed brick. It had been newly swept, and there was a table and chair which were free from dust.

"Somebody has been here in the last half hour," said Larry to himself, and stepped stealthily forward to the next door. He listened, for he thought he

heard voices. He gently pressed the door, and it opened. Somebody was speaking within.

"I'll bet you'll be glad to see his nibs again, won't you?"

The reply was so faint that Larry could not hear it.

"Well," said the voice, "if you are a good boy they'll let you go to-morrow. An' if you ever see me in the street don't you recognize me, d'ye hear? Because, if you do, I'll cut your throat, d'ye see what I mean?"

Larry balanced his knife in his hand, pushed the door open, and walked into the room. A man in his shirt sleeves was confronting a small and tearful boy, who sat upon what was evidently his bed.

Larry's heart gave a thump, for he recognized in the child the heir of the Frethermores. The man did not hear Larry's entrance, but something in the boy's frightened look—for Larry in his coating of soot was a terrifying sight—made the man spin round. As he did the detective closed in on him and dropped the point of his knife against the lower button of the guard's waistcoat.

"Hands up!" said Larry. "And quick!"

The man's hands went up. He shot a sidelong glance at a table, and, following his eyes, Larry saw the revolver and sprang for it.

"I think you know me," said the young man. "I am Mr. Loman, of the criminal intelligence department, and I am going to take you into custody on a charge of kidnaping."

"It's a cop," said the man. "But don't be so certain you are going to get a conviction, old friend."

"Not so much of the 'old friend,'" said Larry.

"I have seen your prisoner," said the commissioner the next morning, "and he has undergone at the hands of two experienced police officers something approaching the immoral and reprehensible third degree of the U. S. A., which we so often condemn, but which is not without its uses. Would you like me to reconstruct your remarkable story?"

"I wish you would, sir," said Larry earnestly. "I have been puzzling my brains over the matter, and I cannot for the life of me recall one single instant between half past four in the afternoon and eight o'clock that same night."

"Then stand by for a little wholesome reconstruction," said the commissioner. "I thought it would be an easy matter, because I had taken the precaution of having you shadowed by one of the best men at Scotland Yard, but he was unable to tell me a great deal, and I have the most important part of the story from the fellow you took in the works. You were seen to go into the shrubbery at twenty-five minutes to five, and you were followed at a respectful distance by the officer. You were seen to speak to a lady selling flowers, to pass your hand across your forehead, as though you were a little stunned, and then something seemed to occur to you; probably you recognized the girl, and you came striding back the way you had come and met Sergeant Jackson, whom you dispatched with orders to find Sir George Grayborn at the band stand. Evidently you were aware that the phase of forgetfulness was closing in upon you. You then turned back, and the sergeant, over his shoulder, saw you go into the telephone box. Why you went there is conjectural. I suggest that you intended to telephone for your car."

Larry nodded. He remembered that he had had that intention.

"The rest of the story is told by our prisoner as far as he witnessed it, or was able to learn the particulars from those who participated. You had no sooner entered the telephone box than two men sprang from the shrubbery and slammed the door, shutting you in. You will probably remember, if you saw it in the course of your wanderings, that it was without windows and that the interior was specially padded to make it soundproof."

"I noticed that," said Larry, "as I passed the box the first time."

"The moment the door closed on you you were helpless. The other men who were waiting in the shrubbery came out, lifted the box on their shoulders, and you were passed out of the gate, placed on a waiting motor lorry, and driven off. It was a very neat trick, and possibly, even if you had not gone in of your own accord, you would have been lured to that part of the garden and induced to enter the box.

"I suggest that finding yourself stifling, you remembered your knife and cut through the padding and the thin wood, and, having secured air vents, you awaited developments. You were taken to the old factory, my young friend, and this is where our kidnaping prisoner offers firsthand testimony.

"At a quarter past six in the afternoon the lorry came in, and the box was carried into the stokehole, which was already filled with an assortment of shavings, wood, and coal, and you and your box were thrust in. You must have realized your awful predicament and have set to work desperately to cut your way out. To escape through the steel door of the furnace was impossible, and I suggest that you squeezed your way along the little tunnel which leads to the chimney shaft, and that, minus your coat and hat and all unnecessary impedimenta, you climbed the interior of the stack and would probably have made a good descent; in fact, the same descent that you did make, even had you not recovered consciousness of the immediate past. I have had the works raided, and there is no doubt that this place has been hired and fitted up with the object of carrying out an extensive scheme of kidnaping. Frethermore's child says that he had been there and treated kindly since the day he was whisked off."

"The whole theory fits together," said Larry, "and I have no doubt that you are right."

"I am certain I am right," said the commissioner quietly. "I myself have been in the stokehole and have rescued——"

He rose and went to a cupboard, opened it, and took out a battered and shapeless object.

"Your stovepipe hat, Larry."

Larry looked at the relic and laughed.

"Also there were the marks of your toes against the soot in the interior of the stack, bits of the lock of the telephone box, and several other et cetteras."

Larry was thinking hard.

"The girl who sold roses," he said suddenly; "it was she."

"What?" demanded the commissioner.

"Something about her face. Something that reminded me of——"

The commissioner nodded.

"Yes, she was in it," he said quietly. "Our prisoner said she came back to the factory and went on her knees to the rascal in charge of the cremation and begged him to spare you."

"I think when I meet her," said Larry—"and I know I have met her—the Crime Trust will be very nearly on its last legs."

The next story in this series is called "The Cure" and will be found in the POPULAR dated May 7th.

A QUICK WAY TO RECKON TIME

ACCORDING to the authority for this story, a great many Southern darkies do not mind it very much when they are sent to the penitentiary.

A group of them were on their way to the State's prison in Georgia.

"Jack," asked one of them, "whut you in foh?"

"Aw, Bill, mah wife, she nagged me to death, an' I cut her up. Dey done sont me down foh three yeahs. How long you in foh?"

"Aw," answered Bill, "fum now on."

A Chat With You

IF, on a walk in the country, you should leave the road and cross the grassy meadow, and finally come into what Knibbs has described as "the cool and sleepy summer woods," you will probably stand still for a moment, paying an unconscious tribute to the green wonders about you. There is a quality about the cool stillness, the shaded light, the lofty branches arching high overhead to remind you of the sanctity of some cathedral. And this is not remarkable when one remembers that the model for the cathedral's groined arches is in the high branches of the ancient European woods, just as the model for the Oriental pagoda is found in the spreading tent of the Tartar nomad.

MOST of us, if our ancestry were traced back, would prove to be descended from those wandering northern tribes of Europe, who came out of the forest and left the touch of the forest on everything they built, from the homely thatched farmhouse to the gargoyle-haunted buttresses of Notre Dame. You can see the pointed pine in the towers, with their cone-shaped roofs, and the oak and the elm in the arches of castle hall and monastery. So, when we go back into the woods, it would be strange if some ancestral memory did not stir, now and then, within us to urge us to stay for a while in the land of cool silence and green distance, and to recall for a little the careless freedom of the childhood of the race.

ALSO there are other, less poetic, thoughts worth remembering in regard to the forests. Last winter, when a large number of people in the East were short of coal, we remembered that there was probably enough water power going to waste in the United States to do most of our lighting and heating for us at the very least. Without the forest there can be no water power. Save where it is fed by the eternal snows, the river is a freshet in spring and a dry gully in the heat of summer, unless there are woods on the hillsides to preserve and distill the rains, so that they flow as rivers the year round. Floods in the springtime, covering the valleys and sweeping away houses, droughts in the summer—this is the price paid for cutting away the trees. The bare hills of China and the deserts of Syria are memorials to the ruin caused by the destruction of the forests.

THE Guard of Timberline," the new novel by George Washington Ogden, which appears complete in the next issue of THE POPULAR, is a story of the fight to preserve the American forests from the spoilers. There is something broad and epical about the theme. In a large measure it has been a political fight, and in many cases it has taken the form of an actual physical struggle. We think that some time in the future the question of what we did with our forests will be a much more important one than what we did about the tariff. Ogden has written a big novel on a big subject. He knows what he is writing about, and he is essentially a novelist of the outdoors. You will remember Ogden as the author of "Th Fighting Sheepman," and that fine epical tale of the oil industry, "Unlucky Men."

NO matter what your present occupation is, it has probably been affected more or less by the Great War in Europe. Our entry into the war has produced something like a business revolution. The war brought bigger business and bigger profits to most of the Canadian industries, and it seems likely to do the same for us. Every great war in the past has been an era of financial change, and has signalized the appearance of new business and new accretions of wealth. Not all the fortunes in the present business revival are being made in munitions or shipbuilding. There are other industries, entirely new to the United States. Before the war there was practically no dye industry in America. Germany had fitted herself by long laboratory experiments to make dyes for the world, and she was making them and selling them. Just at present, American manufacturers are supplying the home market with dyes, and in a short time they will be supplying a good part of Europe.

THE Green Scarf," which starts in the next issue of THE POPULAR, is a story of big business as affected by the war. It is not a story of German spies or anything of the kind, but just a tale of modern American business men. If you read it, you will learn that a lot of the romance and adventure goes on behind office doors and in laboratories. It is by an author new to the pages of THE POPULAR, Howard Vincent O'Brien.

THE next issue is an unusually good number all the way through. There is a baseball story by Hugh Fullerton, a small-town story with a lot of human interest in it by William Dudley Pelley, a story of the American navy by Roy Churchill, a story of the South Seas by Ralph Stock, a Western story by H. H. Knibbs, a mystery story by Edgar Wallace, and a lot of other good things.

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- ☐ Sign Painter
- ☐ Railroad Trainman
- ☐ ILLUSTRATING
- ☐ Cartooning
- ☐ BOOKKEEPER
- ☐ Stenographer and Typist
- ☐ Cert. Public Accountant
- ☐ TRAFFIC MANAGER
- ☐ Railway Accountant
- ☐ Commercial Law
- ☐ GOOD ENGLISH
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Common School Subjects
- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ CIVIL SERVICE
- ☐ Railway Mail Clerk
- ☐ AUTOMOBILE OPERATING
- ☐ Auto Repairing
- ☐ Navigation
- ☐ AGRICULTURE
- ☐ Poultry Raising
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ German
- ☐ French
- ☐ Italian

Name _____

Present Occupation _____

Street and No. _____

City _____ State _____

Former United States Senator Mason

Pioneer in Pure Food and Drug Legislation, Father of Rural Free Delivery System.

Says Nuxated Iron

Increased His Power and Endurance so Much, That He Feels It Ought to Be Made Known to Every Nervous, Run-down, Anaemic Man, Woman and Child.

Opinions of Dr. Ferdinand King, New York Physician and Medical Author; Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York and Others.

Former United States Senator Wm. E. Mason, recently elected Member of the U. S. Congress from Illinois.

WHAT SENATOR MASON SAYS:

"I have often said I would never recommend medicine of any kind. I believe that the doctor's place. However, after the hardest political campaign of my life, without a chance for a vacation, I had been starting to court every morning with that horrible tired feeling one cannot describe. I was advised to try Nuxated Iron. As a pioneer in the pure food and drug legislation, I was at first loath to try an advertised remedy, but after advising with one of my medical friends, I gave it a test. The results have been so beneficial in my own case I made up my mind to let my friends know about it, and you are at liberty to publish this statement if you so desire. *I am now sixty-five years of age, and I feel that a remedy which will build up the strength and increase the power of endurance of a man of my age should be made known to every nervous, run-down, anaemic man, woman and child.*"

Senator Mason's statement in regard to Nuxated Iron was shown to several physicians who were requested to give their opinions thereon.

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, said: "I heartily indorse Senator Mason's statement in regard to Nuxated Iron. There can be no vigorous iron men without iron. Pallor means anæmia. Anæmia means iron deficiency. The skin of anæmic men and women is pale, the flesh flabby; the muscles lack tone; the brain fags, and the memory fails, and often they become weak, nervous, despondent and melancholy."

Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.) New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, said, "Senator Mason is to be commended on handing out this statement on Nuxated Iron for public print. There are thousands of men and women who need a strength and blood builder but do not know what to take. In my own opinion there is nothing better than organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for enriching the blood and helping to increase the strength and endurance of men and women who burn up too rapidly their nervous energy in the strenuous strain of the great business competition of the day."

Former Health Commissioner Kerr, of the City of Chicago, says: "From my own experience with Nuxated Iron I feel it is such a valuable remedy that it ought to be used in every hospital and prescribed by every physician in this country."

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician who has studied abroad in great European medical institutions, said: "Senator Mason is right. As I have said a hundred times over, I regard organic iron as the greatest of all strength builders. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next, take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while increase their strength and endurance in from ten to fourteen days' time while taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been going on for months without getting benefit from anything. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance which comes from having plenty of iron in the blood; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron which was used by Senator Mason with such surprising results and which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and highly satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

Senator Mason's championship of Pure Food and Drugs legislation, his fight for the rural free delivery system, and his strong advocacy of all bills favoring labor and the rights of the masses as against trusts and combines, made him a national figure at Washington and endeared him to the hearts of the working man and the great masses of people throughout the United States. Senator Mason has the distinction of being one of the really big men of the nation. His strong endorsement of Nuxated Iron must convince any intelligent thinking reader that it must be a preparation of very great merit and one which the Senator feels is bound to be of great value to the masses of people everywhere, otherwise he could not afford to lend his name to it, especially after his strong advocacy of pure food and drugs legislation.

Since Nuxated Iron has obtained such an enormous sale—over three million people using it annually—other iron preparations are often recommended as a substitute for it. The reader should remember that there is a vast difference between ordinary metallic iron and the organic iron contained in Nuxated Iron, therefore always insist on having Nuxated Iron.

SURE-FOOTED

must be the efficient man in these strenuous days when the national cry is for haste and safety.

Such a man goes about his duties secure in the knowledge that he cannot slip. He wears

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