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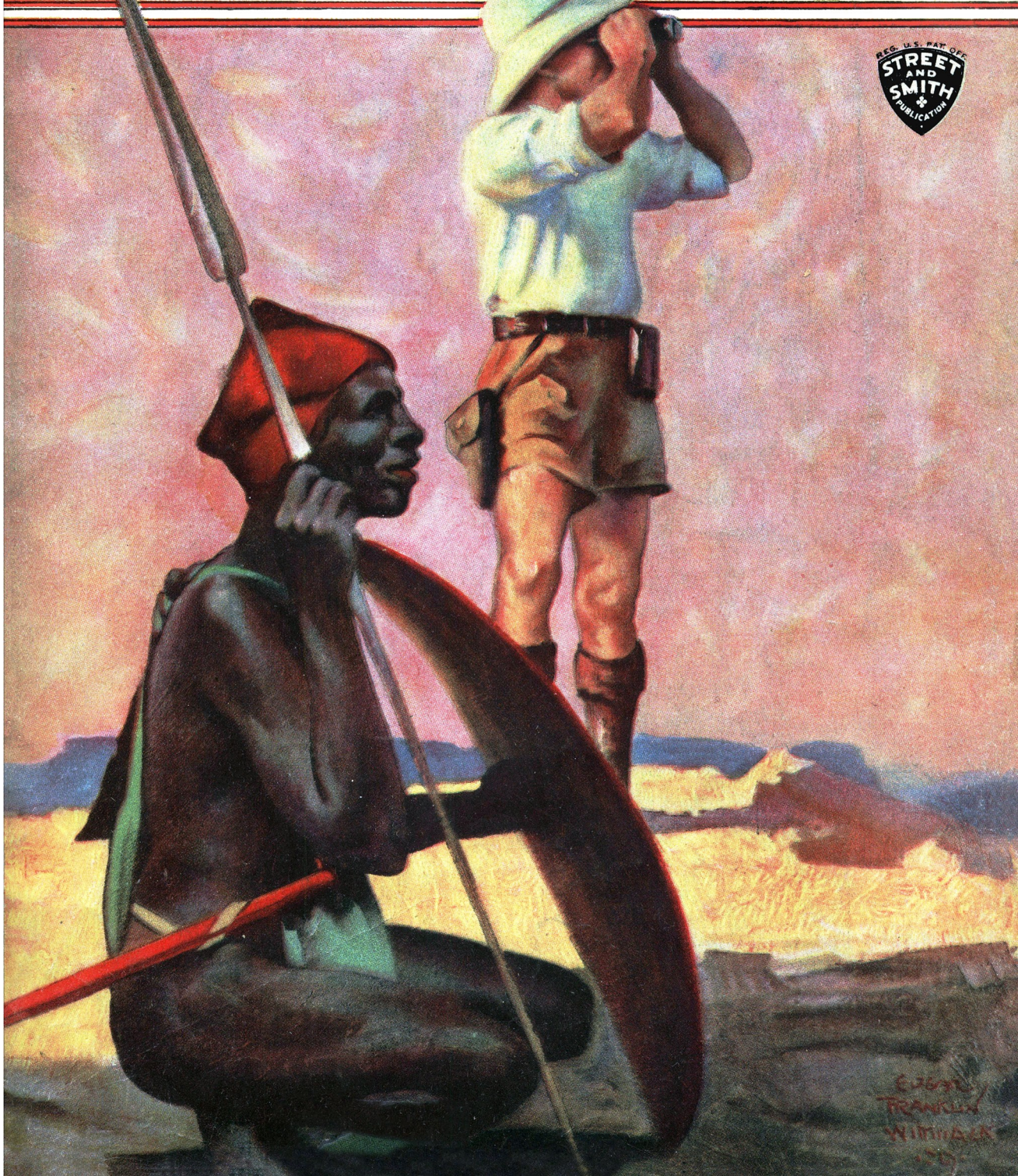

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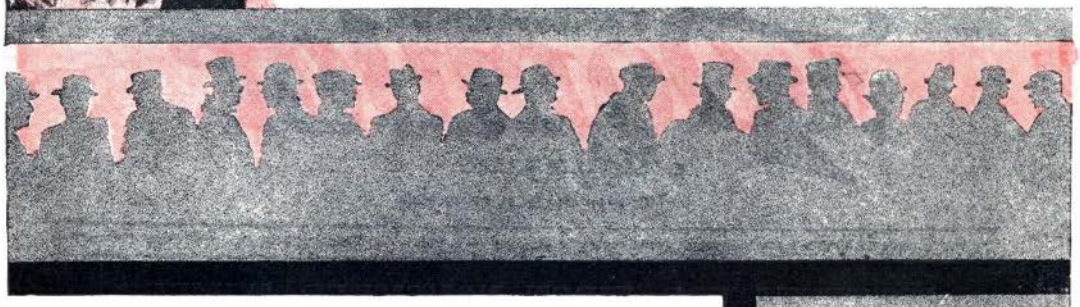

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"MR. PALMER GOES WEST," By A. M. Chisholm
A really funny story, a really human story—one that you'll remember.

Volume XCVII Number 4

TWICE-A-MONTH
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GOOD READING

By CHARLES HOUSTON

"Dear Lovers! If it were not for you, how dreary the world would be! Never shall a pair of you pass me without a kindly discreet glance and a murmured wish, 'Be happy.' Dear Lovers! Let us never forget that you are the sweetness of the bitter world."

Thus the English poet and novelist, Richard Aldington, says in his own words the age-old truth that "all the world loves a lover." And is it not true as well that all the world loves a love story? Surely the popularity of the love stories published by Chelsea House, one of the oldest and best established publishing concerns in America, would seem to bear this out.

The latest Chelsea House offerings are warm with the warmth of youth, distinguished for their fine writing, shot through and through with insight into the characters which they so masterfully depict.

Here are brief flashes on three of the outstanding love stories of the year which bear the Chelsea House imprimatur:

THE MIRACLE MARRIAGE, by Reita Lambert. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

The setting is in the beautiful little town of Standish, which "lies beneath its venerable elms, a short mile in from the Sound, in the reminiscent attitude of one whose memories

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GOOD READING—*Continued*

are no puerile affairs. The position of the ancient houses, grouped about the village common like children squatting in a ring, adds to this appearance of brooding placidity. Scarcely one of these houses—spacious, many windowed, invariably white—but has contributed its paragraph to American history."

To such an idyllic spot comes Richard Sells, fleeing from the artificialities of city life, and more particularly from the indifference and cheap sophistries of a vain and shallow wife.

But even in the outward placidity of Standish, things can happen, weird and almost incredible things, and after a brief interval of supreme happiness Richard finds himself caught in a strange net of circumstances. Almost against his will he finds himself falling in love with the beautiful daughter of the household which has taken him in. There is a snooping hag of a houseworker to rouse the suspicions of the eccentric old father and the marring of a pure love by the meanness of a petty mind.

Then of a sudden, when things seemed darkest, came the miracle. The miracle which at last brought Richard and the girl he loved safely into each other's arms.

It is difficult in so short a space to give you an adequate idea of the charm and suspense which this book contains. Rest assured, however, that THE MIRACLE MARRIAGE is a love story very much out of the ordinary, very much worth the reading.

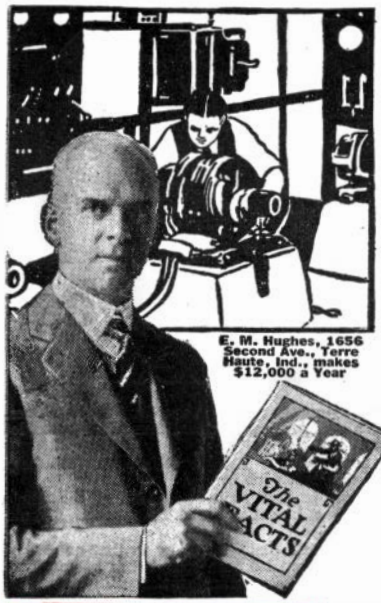
GAY CAPRICE, by Beulah Poynter. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

"Under the trees of the parks that cut the avenue in twain, lovers were strolling arm in arm. Sitting at the terrace cafés were boys and girls, hands linked together, cheek pressed against cheek—coffee, apéritifs and wine forgotten in the more pungent, sweeter quaffs of love. There were life and laughter, song and music here. Love was in the warm summer breezes that whispered through the flower-laden branches of the horse-chestnut trees; it peeped under the awnings shadowing the cafés."

And through this Paris of love's summer walked two, desperately in love themselves, yet thinking that they must part forever.

One was a young American art student, the other the beautiful Caprice, darling of

(Continued on 2nd page following)



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GOOD READING—*Continued*

the studios, who had made the greatest of sacrifices for her sensitive father.

From the idyllic surroundings of the French metropolis to the roar and thunder of New York the scene shifts. This side the water, Caprice, come to secure aid from her wealthy grandfather, is beset with the intrigues of a scheming lot of relatives, and for a while the art student fades from the picture, and it seems as though she were doomed to marry a man for whom she can have no love.

But don't look to us to tell you the ending of this altogether beautiful story of young love. The book is at your dealer's, and if you take our advice you will make it yours to-day.

HER OTHER HUSBAND, by Louisa Carter Lee. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

To be sure she had regarded it as a loan, the money she took from Gus Harmon, who had promised to marry her—some day. But the judge who listened to the indignant Harmon's charges saw it in a different light, and Connie found herself a prisoner on Welfare Island. There was something fine in the girl that brought her through this terrible ordeal and that called to the better nature of Eddie Costello, denizen of the underworld, who was waiting for her when she was released.

Eddie, however, just couldn't seem to go straight, and Connie was won by the wistfulness of a poor inventor. Together these two started out to rebuild their lives, but there were obstacles in the way. How they fought and fell and rose again and how the spirit of the great-hearted girl finally came through is a story of love and adventure that will hold you breathless to the end.

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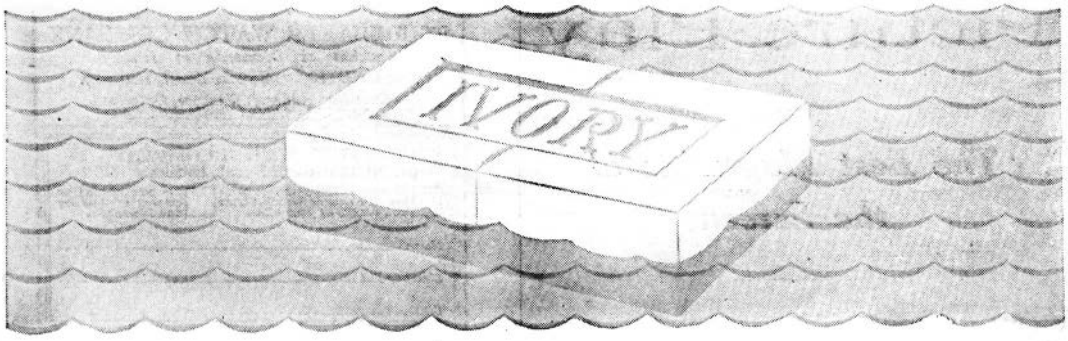


A Minute With—W. B. M. Ferguson

THE FUN OF THE FAIR

ANY American tourist paying his first visit to Glasgow in mid-July would wonder what had happened to this great city, the first in Scotland and second in the United Kingdom, the fruit of whose brains and industry are known the world over. For who at least has not heard of the Clyde, that tortuous twenty-three miles of water, that man-made river whose shipyards turn out anything from a superdreadnaught or ocean liner to a tramp or racing yacht?

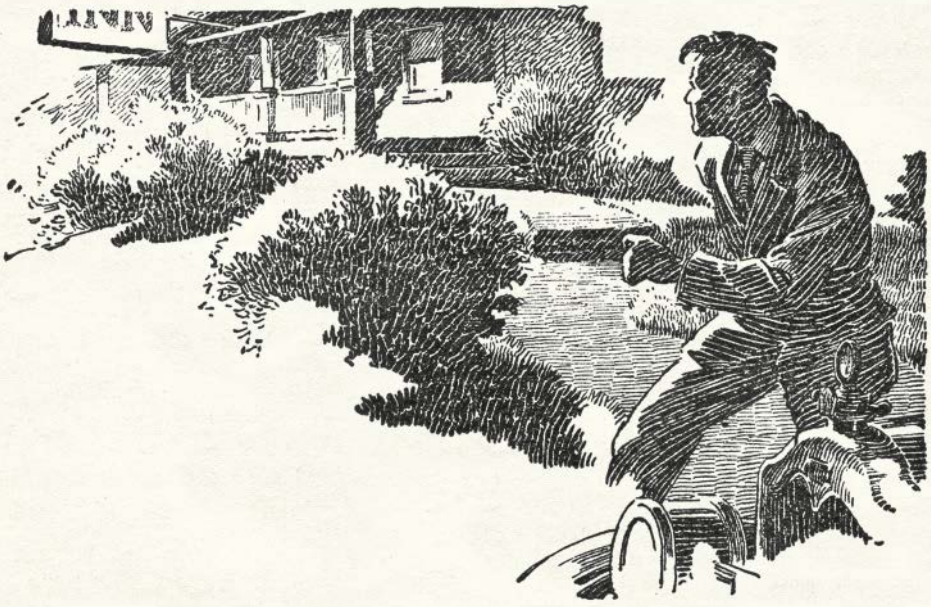
The hammer of Vulcan, clanging ceaselessly in the valley of the Clyde, has echoed round the world. But now, suddenly, it is still; a great silence has fallen, and not only on the river. All the great factories have closed down likewise, and when your steamer docks at Stobcross Quay you find this hive of industry a city of the dead.

What has happened? For this is not Sunday, and even the old Scottish Sabbath is a thing of the past. Is there a general strike, an epidemic of some kind? What has happened to the population of well over a million? Why have they left in their thousands, in a hundred and more special trains, as though the place were plague-stricken? I think this Great Silence, this Great Exodus one of the most interesting things about a city justly famous for its sights; and the more one examines it, the more interesting it becomes. For it is not a silence or an exodus of a day or even a week; and it happens every year, no matter what else may happen.

The answer to it all is that labor is on holiday; and when the man will not work, the master must of necessity do likewise. The worker, not the employer, dictates; *he* is the one responsible for the great Glasgow Fair, this ancient institution which starts on July 12th and continues for ten days. A strange paradox, this little, analogous to the "wakes" of Lancashire, for there is no "fair," in the common acceptance of the word, and it sends people out of the city instead of bringing them into it. Far, far away they go—as far as the time and their hard-earned money will take them. From the "close" to the white-capped billows of the Atlantic, or the healing peace of the green fields. To the Continent, to England, Ireland, Wales—anywhere away from Glasgow, and the farther away the better.

And this is the race whose alleged love of money has become proverbial! Oh, wise workers, indeed! There are two things, and two only, for which you know a man should go in debt if need be—health and education. Camping under the stars, singing on the hedges, dancing on the silver strand; your hat thrown into the nearest tree, and care thrown to the devil. Some new place to visit each year, something new to learn; then, revitalized in soul and mind and body, back to the workshop and the bench.

For a Pleasant Westerner Who Likes to Take a Drink Potlatch, B. C., Certainly Has a



MR. PALMER GOES WEST

On Route Train Westbound,
July 3, 1928.

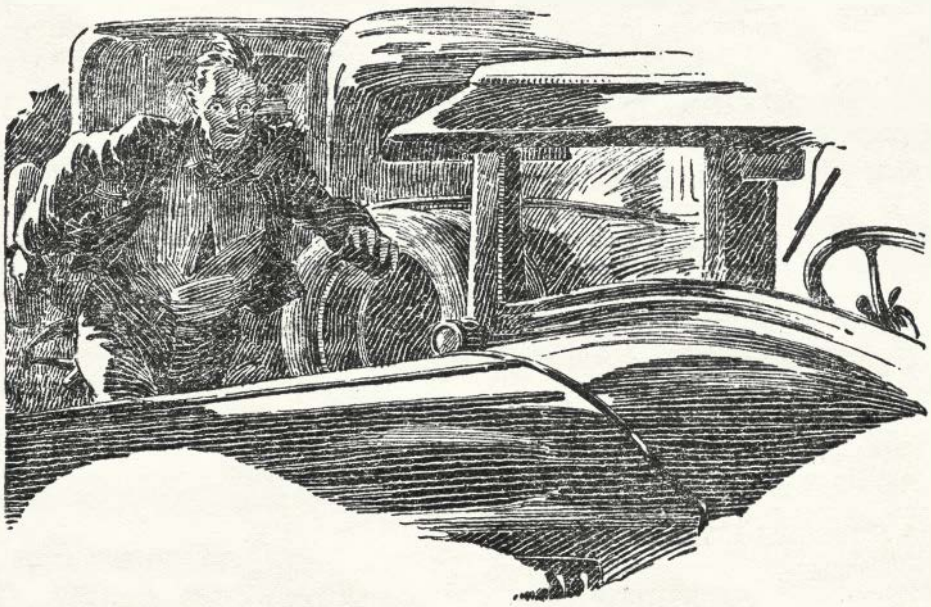
Editor, Potlatch *Pioneer,*
Potlatch, B. C.

DEAR MR. EDITOR: When I wrote you last I was on my way East to Cambyville, to attend an Old Boys' Reunion. I had not revisited the scenes of my youth since I had left them to come West some years ago; and naturally I was looking forward to a good time and a warm welcome as promised by the committee in charge of the Reunion in their advertising matter, and I was also looking forward to renewing old acquaintances.

Now, as you will observe by the above, I am headed West, and I do not give a (profane expression) about the Reunion nor about Cambyville. I am not going there no more, and in future the scenes of my youth will get along without me. As for renewing old acquaintances, it will not be before the hereafter, if I have any luck, and I do not expect to see none of them in any hereafter that you would look forward to with pleasure.

Especially I do not want to see Eddie McKeown again; and especially not in the hereafter, because if I was to meet him there I would have to put up with him through eternity, which is entirely too long, and I think one of us would have to get out. I am not going to try to rescue him from women nor be a good influence over him no more. In future he may be as henpecked as a pup in a chicken run and as dry as a wooden god for all the rescue work I will do. I am through.

with His Friends, or Anybody Handy, Mr. Palmer, of Genius for Getting into Trouble.



By A. M. CHISHOLM

I will give you one piece of advice, Mr. Editor, and that is, do not never go back to your old home town. Of course this advice may not be necessary, for there may be good reasons why you would not go back, but I am just giving it to you and you may take it or leave it and I will not be sore.

According to Scripture the Wise Men came from the East, and if they were really wise they did not go back, and if they did not I would say they were good judges; for if they had got back on Saturday, likely the reception committee of their old home town would have rounded up a bunch of lions out of meat since Wednesday to feed them to.

You may think I am a little hard on the East to write as I do, but I will leave it to you if it is a square deal to advertise a good time and a warm welcome to all old Cambyville boys, and when one of them accepts that invitation in simple good faith, to put him in jail. I do not know if you are acquainted with Eastern jails, and of course I am not asking no personal questions, but in my opinion there is too much stiffness and formality about them, and there is no attempt at all made to make you feel at home in them, even at a time of reunion. Back East they seem to enjoy putting you in jail.

In the West, as your own experience may tell you, it is different. If you happen to make a slight error of judgment while feeling genial it is not regarded as serious unless you crowd the play; and if you do land in the skookum house it is all in a friendly way, and most times they will turn you loose as soon as you are able to navigate under your

own power. Even if you come before the judge, he is libel to know from personal experience about how you are feeling, and the chances are he will look you over in a friendly way and say something like, "Well, my friend, you do not look as fresh as a dew-drenched rose this morning. What have you to say?"

And you will look as penitent as you can and say, "Well, your honor, I just got in yesterday with a bunch of furs after a pretty hard winter alone in the hills, and I thought a drink or two would not do me no harm, and all I remember having is about three. But I guess my stomach was in poor shape from so much total abstinence all winter, for they seemed to go to my head a little." And the judge will say, "From what the police tell me your memory is not in much better shape than your stomach. The defects in both are going to cost you twenty-five and five, and you will also have to pay for the glass and furniture that was broken." That is all there is to it in the West. But in the East the judges do not make allowance for human nature. Nobody does.

I arrived in Cambyville in the evening, and the first change I noticed was in the form of a fruit store across the street from the station, run by a Greek named George Hippopotamus or something like that. I have nothing against the Greeks, and I guess some of them we read of in history such as Marathon and Eugenics and Hypotenuse were good people. But in my time this fruit store had used to be a saloon run by an Irishman named Mike Powers, which is easier to say and also to remember, especially if you had ever had him throw you out.

You may think I am sentimental, but this change made me feel a little sad. As I stood looking at it across the street I felt like Lord McAuliffe's New Zealander sitting on London Bridge some time in the distant future contemplating the ruins of our present civilization. And I wondered if we are headed for a time when a man will meet a friend returning after a long absence and steer him into a fruit store and say something like, "Well, Charlie, I am glad to see you back, and I guess we had better have something. There is a great kick to the oranges and winter apples here."

And the returned traveler will say, "Well, Joe, it is certainly good to get back in this fruit store where we used to have such high old times with the gang. But I am off of the hard stuff such as oranges and winter apples, for they have been going for me lately, and I promised my wife I would cut them out. So if you do not mind I will just take something soft, such as a banana, for instance."

I do not claim to be a prophet, Mr. Editor, but in my opinion if such a time ever comes our present civilization will break down as others have done, and mankind will have to start in all over again and kill each other with clubs and rocks instead of in a civilized way with machine guns. I do not want to be an alarmist, but every student of history knows that when there was no whisky there was no civilization, and he will tell you that it is a scientific fact that history repeats herself and we should heed her warnings. However, there is no use dwelling on the morbid and unpleasant, and I would not have done so to this extent, only that I am of a sensitive nature and it saddened me to behold the ruins of once-flourishing local enterprise and one of the landmarks of the scenes of my youth.

I intended to do things right in Cambyville as long as my money held out, so I took a taxi and told the driver to take me to the Queen's Hotel, which had used to be the best one; but he said that had been pulled down and so had the Wylie House, so I told him to take me to one that had not been pulled

down yet, and he took me to one called the Grand Union.

"A room with bath, Mr. Palmer?" the clerk asked when I had wrote my name.

I looked at him pretty hard to see if he was hinting at anything, and I thought I would go him one better to show him we knew what was what in the West.

"Sure," I says, "and also with twin beds." He took a squint at my signature.

"Pardon me," he says, "but you have not registered for Mrs. Palmer."

"There ain't no Mrs. Palmer," I told him.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he says. "I understood you to say a room with twin beds."

"That is what I want," I says with dignity; and he looked at me in a peculiar way, but he did not say no more and called a bell boy.

The room was all right, with a white bathtub and other conveniences, including a stationary corkscrew and bottle opener attached to the wall for the benefit of absent-minded guests; and as I am a man who can take a hint and also had run out of stock on the train I thought I would see how this fixture worked. So I asked the bell boy who was fussing around waiting for me to stake him, if he could get me something to drink.

"Ice water, sir?" he asked innocently.

"Bring some of that if you want to be particular," I says; "but I asked for something to drink."

"Do you mean liquor, sir?" says the lad with an air of surprise. "They are very strict here, and I am not sure I know where to get any."

So I saw he was a wise youth.

"In that case," I says, "I guess we will have to use a divining rod, if you know what that is?"

"The kind they find wells with, sir?" he asked.

"This is a little different, but the principle is the same and usually it works better," I told him, at the same time showing him a bill. "If you look at this closely you will see a figure five on each corner. If there is anything to drink in this house the figures will point to it, and when you have located it to the extent of a pint they will point to your pocket."

The divining rod worked as well as usual, and when I had seen how the appliance on the wall worked, I went down to the lobby to look around. There was a young fellow looking at the register and the clerk pointed me out to him and he came over and introduced himself. His name was Mr. Kelly, and he was a reporter on the *Daily Intelligence* newspaper, and he said he had been on the lookout for me ever since his paper had received among their exchanges a copy of the Potlatch *Pioneer* containing a very interesting personal item about me, and he hoped I would give him an interview. He then handed me a clipping from your valuable paper in which you said:

> Our respected fellow citizen, Mr. Jud Palmer, expert trapper, celebrated lion hunter and mine owner is leaving for the East shortly to take in an Old Boys' Reunion at Cambyville, Ontario, his old home town. Mr. Palmer is looking forward with pleasurable anticipation to renewing old acquaintances and associations in his former haunts. While in the East he will endeavor to interest capital in his valuable mineral claim, the Mountain Lion, situated on Old Bull Creek, for which purpose he has taken with him samples of ore. Recent development work on this claim has disclosed phenomenally rich ore with every indication that it exists in a vast body.
>
> We wish Mr. Palmer an enjoyable trip and success in his efforts to develop the mineral resources of this district, which are second to none and only need capital for development. While in the East Mr. Palmer's constant companion, his accomplished lion dog, Pete, has been left in the hands of our esteemed fellow citizen, Mr. Jake Toft.

Well, Mr. Editor, that was a very

nice notice. About the Mountain Lion, I would not wonder if it is as good as you say it is, and it certainly needs capital to develop, and I did take some samples of ore with me which I borrowed from Swan Hedberg, but as his claim is pretty close to the Lion or at least is on the same creek, it is practically the same thing. If it had not been for so much snow in the hills this spring and other springs, and the fact that I could not get no money out of a stingy government to help me clear a trail to the Lion, I would have done more work.

But the affidavits the government makes us make every year about what development work we have done, will show what work I have done. Unfortunately there is some claim owners who do not regard affidavits as serious, and will take them the same as pills and in the same hopeful spirit. But I regard them as being almost the same as being on your oath; only of course with these affidavits there is no lawyer to ask you a lot of confusing questions, so you can allow yourself a little margin.

"Well, that is mostly true, though a little flowery in spots," I told Mr. Kelly, handing the clipping back. "If you want to put that in your paper it is all right with me."

"I want more than that," said Mr. Kelly. "Our readers will be interested in you and your experiences, and in your impressions of Cambyville after your long absence. We are going to run articles about Cambyville boys who have made good elsewhere, and as you are here early, in advance of the Reunion, we can give you more space."

I am not out for newspaper publicity, but I am always obliging. I thought we could talk better in my room, and when we got there I offered Mr. Kelly a drink, which he took without no more objections than a newspaperman usually makes. We talked a while and worked the divining rod again and we got quite friendly.

"I would like to know more about this lion dog Pete of yours," Mr. Kelly told me. "There is a lot of human interest about a dog; as for instance you may have noticed at the movies that when a dog comes on the screen nobody notices the human beings—assuming that movie actors are in that class, which of course is open to argument."

'I have noticed that," I admitted. "How do you account for it scientifically?"

"The scientific explanation," Mr. Kelly explained, "is that the audience intuitively recognizes the superior intelligence as well as the better acting of the dog; in which respects he puts it all over the average movie actor like a tent."

"I do not know much about movie actors," I says; "but from what I know about dogs I think you are right, especially if Pete was to go into the movies. But the weak point in your scientific explanation is that it is also open to argument whether there is enough intelligence in a movie audience to recognize a dog's superior intelligence; for if there was, there would not be a large attendance at most movies."

"That is a profound thought," said Mr. Kelly, tipping the canteen again absent-mindedly, "worthy of Tolstoy or Rabindranath Tagore or Bill Nye, or some of them deep thinkers. You are a man after my own heart, and so is your dog; so go ahead and tell me about lions and prospectors and other big game and the discovery of your mine and so on, and our readers will eat it up. You can let your fancy run a little, if you have inclinations that way, because on account of the movies and the magazines the average reader thinks that the West is now a place from which Sam Bass and 'Billy the Kid' and 'Wild Bill' Hickok would shrink from in affright."

To oblige him I did the best I could, and after a while we got hungry, so we

went out and he took me to a place where you needed gum boots more than a divining rod. It was a little late when I got back to the hotel, the streets being strange to me after my long absence, but finally I found it and got into my twin beds. Of course I do not mean that I got into both at once. I tried one of them, and when I lay down I could still feel the motion of the train on which I had been sleeping for several nights. So I got out of it and into the other, and the motion was not so bad there, and being tired I went to sleep.

CHAPTER II.

SHOULD AULD ACQUAINTANCE——

AS a rule I am an early riser, for when you have a trap line to look after you have to be, and at night there is nothing to sit up for. But that morning I did not wake up very early, and when I did I felt a little loggy and heavy in the head which I wondered about till I saw I had forgotten to open the window and had not had no fresh air all night. So I took just a light breakfast of some mush and pork chops and fried eggs and a few other little things, and then I went out to see what my old home town looked like by daylight.

The buildings were mostly the same though a good many of the store signs were different; but finally I saw a familiar one reading, "David S. McCallum, Boots and Shoes."

That sign had been there as long as I could remember, and Mr. McCallum had used to teach the Sunday school my folks made me go to, and also had used to preach now and then when the regular minister was sick or had been fired for being so grasping as to want the arrears of his salary paid. As I remembered Mr. McCallum, he was an old gentleman then, and due to get some personal information about the hereafter in the natural course of events, so I had no doubt that he had gone to his reward, and figured that the sign was kept for business reasons by his estate.

I looked in through the window and saw a girl at a cashier's desk and our eyes met accidentally. As a rule I do not notice girls much, and I did not notice this one more than to see that she had blue eyes about the shade of some of the little lakes back in the hills when the sun hits them in the morning, and hair a good deal like the light-colored placer gold you find in some diggings, and cheeks with a tint that looked like it might come from natural subirrigation instead of from top dressing, and generally speaking she was as smooth as a bird in its spring coat. But beyond that I did not notice her at all, and I would have gone on, only it struck me it would be only proper and respectful to Mr. McCallum's memory to inquire how long it was since he had gone over to vote with the great majority.

So I went in.

"I hope you will excuse the liberty," I said, taking off my hat in a gentlemanly way, "but I was passing and I saw the old sign, and I thought I would drop in and ask how long it is since Mr. McCallum was called Home."

"He has not been called home that I know of," the young lady replied. "He has went to the bank to make a deposit."

"I mean the old Mr. McCallum," I explained. "He used to teach me Sunday school; and if I knew where he was planted I think I would like to have a snapshot of his resting place out of respect to his memory, for he was not such a bad old coot in some ways."

"This Mr. McCallum has been running this store ever since Hector was a pup, which is about the time General Lee surrendered," she informed me. "He is my great-uncle, and he is not dead unless the bank has found some counterfeits or rubber checks in his deposit, for there is no telling what a shock like that would do to him."

Naturally I was pleasantly surprised.

"Well," I says, "I am glad that the old gentleman has not got around to counting up his treasures in heaven as yet, and that he has such a niece to smooth his declining years."

"You had better tell him so, and it will be news to him," she observed with a shade of bitterness. "You seem to have the right idea about it, but I do not remember to have seen you before."

So I told her my name and she told me hers, which was Miss Sophie Long. We chatted in a friendly manner, and she told me she lived with her uncle, if you could call it living.

"Here he is now," she said after a while. "No doubt he will be glad to have you tell him about that snapshot you wanted. He is a little hard of hearing, so you will have to speak up; but if I were you I would not tell him you come from British Columbia."

I did not have time to ask her why not, for Mr. McCallum entered, and so far as I could see he had not changed no more than his sign. He looked in shape to last out a few more generations if he had good luck and watched the traffic signals.

"How do you do, Mr. McCallum?" I asked respectfully in a loud voice.

"You do not need to yell at me, young man," he replied. "I am thankful to say I am in my usual health." He then looked down at my shoes and shook his head. "We do not stock no number twelves," he says.

I guess old age had affected his eyes, for I do not wear no larger than tens or maybe elevens, unless with heavy socks. His niece made a funny little sound at his mistake which mortified her so that she turned her head away, but I did not correct him. It is a funny thing, but standing there with him looking at me through the same steel-bowed specs I felt about like I did one time in Sunday school when he had picked me out to ask what was the chief end of man, and I thought there was a catch in it somewheres, and I remembered he was in the shoe business and replied that it was the feet.

"I guess you do not remember me, Mr. McCallum," I said, not reminding him of the above incident. "You used to teach me Sunday school when I went."

"I taught a lot of boys and some of them did not turn out none too well," said the old gentleman, looking me over. "I hope you have regarded my teachings and lived a consistent life."

"Well," I replied, forgetting Miss Long's warning, "I guess I have lived the usual life of B. C."

"Too many people live that way," said the old gentleman with a scornful snort. "To see the goings on nowadays, you would think it was still that darkened era of B. C. instead of Ann O' Domino."

"I did not mean that kind of B. C.," I explained, glancing at Miss Long who had turned her head away again. "I mean that I have been living in British Columbia, which we usually refer to as B. C."

"I hope there is a difference in the manner of living," said Mr. McCallum, shaking his head, "but from what I have heard I doubt it. I know one man who went out there, but he was brought back and is now in the penitentiary."

"Had he done anything besides going to B. C.?" I asked with sarcasm.

"Likely he had or he would not have gone," Mr. McCallum replied. "I have some property out there, and I wish I had not. It is a mining property called the Solomon's Glory, and it is somewhere near a place called Rossland. The man who sold me the shares said it had most kinds of mineral except coal. He said he could not conscientiously say that it had coal, though there was a possibility."

"Some of them mining shares sales-

men are too conscientious, so maybe it has coal, too," I returned. "How much money did you invest in this salesman?"

"I bought one hundred one-dollar nonassessable shares," Mr. McCallum replied, "and I paid ten cents a share. In cash. That was in 1898."

I had to look twice to see that he was not kidding me, for I had been away so long that I had forgotten how these old hardshells regarded money. But when I saw that he was serious I thought I would make a good fellow of myself and also show Miss Long that I did not care about money such as a ten-dollar bill.

"Well, Mr. McCallum," I says, "I have never heard of this mine, and I am afraid the shares are not worth very much. But as you used to teach me Sunday school and to show you that we are not all wolves out in B. C., I will take them off your hands at what you paid for them."

I thought he would jump at the chance to get rid of his wall paper; but he gave me a hard look.

"You do not put nothing like that over on me, young man," he said. "It stands to reason that you would not come all the way here from B. C. and work around to talking about those shares and offer to buy them unless you had special information. When you have made up your mind that you cannot fool me and are willing to pay what the shares are worth, call around again."

Mr. Editor, there is some people so ungrateful that if they was being hanged and you cut the rope they would accuse you of doing so to give them a dirty fall. For a moment it made me mad; but I reflected that he was an old man and his niece lived with him, and it might not be a bad scheme to call around again as he had suggested.

"I will be very glad to accept your kind invitation, Mr. McCallum," I said politely, "and I will now wish you good-by." I then raised my hat in a gentlemanly manner to Miss Long, and walked out.

I crossed the street and walked down the other side, and on the window of a ground-floor office I saw a sign which read, "Edward McKeown—Real Estate, Loans, Insurance."

Earlier in life I had knocked around considerable with a bird named Eddie McKeown, though I would not recommend him as an associate for youth on account of a tendency to drink and play horse when doing so, and a dangerous fondness for too many of the opposite sex. I had tried to be a good influence over him in both respects, but it had been an uphill pull in deep sand, and had several times got me into trouble. I wondered if this could be the same Eddie, and I went in to find out.

It was the same Eddie McKeown, though he had changed a little in appearance, his forehead being higher and his chest expansion lower, and he was quite stout. He was talking to a girl at a typewriter, though it is giving her a little the best of it to call her a girl, but still not bad looking. Besides this female there was a bookkeeper and an office boy, so I judged Eddie was doing well. He looked prosperous and dignified, but he also looked a little dispirited, like a horse that is not fed enough.

When I told him who I was he shook hands and said he was glad to see me; but he seemed a little distant, as if he was afraid I was going to work a touch, and I thought I would put his mind at rest at once.

"Well, Eddie," I says, "you look rich and respectable, though I would never have thought either of you, remembering the stuff you used to pull when younger around this town. I have not done so badly myself out in B. C., where I own a mine and have other large interests. Get your hat and come with me, and I will blow you to lunch after we have taken proper steps to work up an appetite."

Eddie cast a nervous glance toward the female at the typewriter who seemed to be interested.

"Thanks, but I seldom eat lunch," he said.

"You will never take it off that way," I told him. "It is the sedimentary life and not the eating that has put that little pot on you, and the only way to get rid of it is to burn it off by exercise. A good lunch will not add a cubit to your stature around the waist."

"I do not care for any," Eddie said a trifle shortly.

"You will when I have prescribed for you," I told him in an indulgent manner. "What you need is some of the old reliable tonic. Do you remember that night down at Mike Powers' place when we——"

"Come in here," Eddie interrupted me in a hasty manner, and he took me into his private office and shut the door. Naturally I thought he was going to produce something—not that I wanted anything, but there is such a thing as civilized usages—but he did not. "What did you want to make a break like that for?" he demanded in an injured tone.

"What break did I make?" I asked in surprise.

"Hinting that I used to drink and frequent Mike Powers' place," he replied. "Maybe I was not a model at one time, but I have cut out all that stuff, and I am married and a respectable member of the community. There is no sense in raking up boyish follies before my office staff."

"Well, I am sorry, Eddie," I said frankly. "I guess you are having a tough time trying to be respectable, and I am not out to call whatever bluff you are hanging on the community. I am glad to hear that you are married, for marriage is the foundation of the State and is useful in other ways such as furnishing employment for school-teachers and the medical and legal professions. I have not had time to lay such permanent foundations myself, but I congratulate you. I suppose you married Mabel McCarthy, and I am not surprised when I think of the way you and her——"

"S-sh!" Eddie interrupted hastily, glancing toward the door. "For God's sake, do not mention that around here. Mabel married a bird in North Bay and I have not seen her in years. And please do not talk so loud, for if that girl out in the office was to hear you it might make trouble for me."

"I am sorry to hear that, Eddie," I says morally. "I had hoped that you had turned over a new leaf, and were not in a position where a casual reference to an old girl of yours would make trouble for you with your stenographer."

"It is worse than that," Eddie said with a deep sigh. "That girl out there is my wife's sister."

"That is a bad complication," I admitted. "It is probably tough to reflect that you picked the wrong sister when you had your choice, but maybe you would not have been satisfied anyway. If you had married your wife's sister, and your wife was now your wife's sister instead of being your wife, your human nature being what it is likely you would be making love to your wife's sister just as you are doing now; only in that case you would be making love to your wife instead of to her sister."

"I do not know what you are talking about, if anything," Eddie said in a puzzled way. "Have you been drinking?"

"So far," I reminded him with dignity, "I have not even been asked to have a drink. I am merely pointing out in simple language that if you had married your sister-in-law instead of her sister, her sister would be your sister-in-law, and your sister-in-law would be your wife. That had ought to

be clear. And in that case, if your wife had been your sister-in-law and working in your office and you had followed your unfortunate tendencies and made love to her, you would still be making love to your sister-in-law, but she would be your wife. It is perfectly plain if you will give it a moment's thought. Try to look at it philosophically in that way, and shift the cut and make love to your wife as a man can do if he will exercise a little imagination. It will be safer, and any way you look at it, it is all in the family."

"So was Gettysburg," said Eddie. "If you have not been drinking you need a cot in a brain hospital. What would I make love to my wife for? And if you think I am making love to her sister you are crazy. If you had a wife who had a sister, you would know a darned sight better."

"If I had a wife who had a sister, I would know a darned sight better than to have her in my office," I says.

"You are impractical, like all mere theorists," Eddie told me sadly. "You have not got a wife, and so you do not know nothing at all about the facts of life. If that sister-in-law of mine was to hear you spring something about Mabel or any of them she would be libel to tell my wife; and while it is old stuff there is no use having to explain things, because women do not take a broad view, and she has heard too many things already, though of course the explanations are simple if I can think of them as I usually can unless they are sprung on me. My wife and her sister are both good, conscientious women, and that is the h—ell of it. They worry about my health and look after it and me in every way, only they look after me too close. At first it was funny but pleasant; and then it made me sore; but now I guess I am used to it, and I like to have peace at home." And Eddie sighed again.

I saw where he had made his initial mistake in thinking he could have peace at home without victory. I felt sorry for him, and I thought it would be an act of simple charity for which he would be grateful to me later, to help him regain his lost manhood; so I once more suggested that he come with me and have a talk about old times.

Eddie's manhood conquered and he put on his hat in a reckless manner and told his sister-in-law in a casual way that he was taking Mr. Palmer out to show him those lots in Subdivision E, and would not be back for an hour or two; and we then got into his car and drove to my hotel.

CHAPTER III.

A PERFECT DAY.

WE went up to my room where without starting any argument I fixed up a prescription, which Eddie took after momentary hesitation, but also without argument.

"It does not taste quite the same," he observed, looking at his empty glass thoughtfully, "but I guess that is because I have lost all taste for it. You may not believe me, but this is the first drink I have had in seven years."

"That must be quite an experience, the same as the itch," I commented. "I think you had better have the second one you have had in seven years, for it is coming to you."

"Well, maybe it is," Eddie admitted in a resigned manner. "I get the flavor a little better now," he said after a moment, "though fortunately I have lost my taste for it. It is a wonder to me when I think how we used to stand up to the bar and lick up that stuff. But we have more sense now."

"And also there is no bars to stand up to," I agreed.

"And a good thing for everybody and for the country," Eddie said in a virtuous manner. "Not, mind, you, that I am a crank because I have quit drinking

myself. Personally I do not see no harm in two or even three drinks, though they say the stuff is not as good as it used to be. Of course I have been off it so long that I am not a judge, but the way I used to tell was to take it straight. I think I will just take a little that way to see how much the quality has deteriorated."

He poured out a drink and took it straight in a judicial manner, and he decided that, though the quality had fell off slightly, it was not as much as he had heard. We then talked for a while, and I suggested that we might as well have a little appetizer and go down to lunch.

"That is all right with me," Eddie agreed in a manner that had more life to it than any he had shown so far and in fact was more like his old self. "I do not usually eat lunch, so possibly I need something to stimulate my appetite, though I have quite lost my taste for it."

He poured his own appetizer, and when he looked at it he was going to pour some back, but he remembered in time that that was bad luck. In the dining room he called the head waiter over and told him I was a friend of his, and he wanted me to have the best of service. The waiter looked at him and seemed a little surprised; but he said he would see that I had every attention, and he walked off shaking his head.

While we were waiting for our order to come along Eddie noticed a young lady at another table with an older lady who might have been her mother, and he asked me if I did not think she looked like Mabel McCarthy, only she did her hair different and he thought she weighed a trifle more. He remembered that Mabel had a little dimple in her left cheek when she smiled, and he said he wished this young lady would smile just to see if the resemblance held up in that respect. Just then she looked our way and Eddie gave her an encouraging and friendly smile; but he did not get one back, and the old lady gave us a hard look and glanced toward the head waiter. I did not like it, and I considered it prudent to caution Eddie.

Eddie asked me what I meant and said he hoped I was not insinuating anything, when all he wanted was to see the young lady smile for purely comparative purposes. He said he did not want to be misunderstood, and he would go over in a manly way and explain, and ask the old lady to allow her daughter to smile comparatively, and he did not see how any reasonable lady could object to that.

I told him he would be libel to see; and to take his mind off Mabel I expressed surprise that old Mr. McCallum was still running the shoe store, with the assistance of his niece who seemed to be a nice girl.

Eddie said he did not know Sophie Long very well, because since he had married and quit the seafaring life he did not keep track of the shipping news and arrivals in port, to speak in parables. He thought she was the only kin old Davy McCallum had left, and he supposed she was sticking it out with the idea that he would leave her what he had when he had to leave it. But he was pretty tough, the same as Methusaleh, and he was just as libel to leave his money to some Society for the Prorogation of the Gospel, or even to get married again in his old age like that other David, as he was a great student of biblical history.

He went on to say that Miss Long was just about the age Mabel had been when she was the same age; and it was sad to think that they got older and married in North Bay and elsewhere, and the place that knew them once knew them no more. He shook his head sadly and remarked that it was a tough old world, full of memories that bless and burn and usually the latter, the same

as in the sentimental song, "My Rosalie." He thought we did not make the most of our opportunities when we were young and helling around and constructing memories for our later years, or we would have constructed more of them; and that just in his own case he could look back and count up several tricks he had missed.

When the waiter brought our order Eddie cheered up and forgot the past. After lunch we had a smoke, and then as he was not accustomed to eating in the middle of the day he experienced a touch of indignation; so we went up to my room to get something to head it off before it got too much of a start.

When we had talked about old times for a while he thought some fresh air would be good for us, and he said he would like to show me the surrounding country and the development that had taken place in my absence. I said I would like that, so he phoned his office and explained to his sister-in-law that he had to go out into the country to look at some security that was offered for a loan, and would be away most of the afternoon.

We had a little trouble getting out of town, for some drivers did not seem to care much for the traffic regulations, and one woman drove in front of us and bent a fender. Eddie was very gentlemanly about it and told her he always made allowance for women drivers because they needed it, and that any garage would straighten out her mudguard with a rubber hammer. As she still acted sore, he drove away and left her talking, which he said experience had taught him was the only way to argue with them, as no matter how much they were in the wrong they would not admit it. He said he had a reputation as a careful driver, and as soon as we got out of town where we were not libel to meet women driving all over the road he would show me what his car could do.

He was showing me when a cop came up from behind on a motor cycle, setting a bad example by going entirely too fast, and stopped him and claimed that he was hitting sixty. Eddie said that he was obliged to him for mentioning it, but sixty would not hurt his car as it was broken in and guaranteed to do seventy-five all day. The cop took a look at him and seemed to recognize him and be surprised; but he said he would give him another chance and not to drive over forty. He followed us in an officious manner for some miles, and then I guess he got tired, for we did not see him no more.

We spent a pleasant afternoon, passing through several towns where we made brief stops for necessary purchases, and enjoying the fresh air and scenery in a quiet way, which is one of the charms of motoring. The development that had taken place in my absence was remarkable, especially in the number of prosperous-looking farms which I was glad to see, as when the farmer prospers so does everybody else. I was born on a farm and worked on one in my boyhood, and I consider it an independent and healthy existence which it is pleasant to look at from a comfortable car.

After a good many miles of country scenery we got on a nice quiet road with no traffic and trees on each side; and after a while I noticed that we were not passing the trees very fast, and in fact were standing still and were also a little off the road. This seemed strange to me, and as of course Eddie was doing the driving and was sitting behind the wheel in the easy, relaxed manner that is the sign of a good driver, I called his attention to it.

"Well, that is certainly funny," he admitted when he had taken a look at the stationary trees. "When did you first notice her acting like this?"

I told him I had just noticed it, and he said you could not depend on me-

chanics at all, as he had just had the car tuned up. He stepped on the starter and kept stepping on it but he did not get a kick out of the engine, and he decided that something was wrong with the ignition.

I am not no electrician, and while he was going over his wiring I ran a stick down the gas tank, and as it seemed dry I thought that might have something to do with it.

"That is funny," Eddie commented when I mentioned this to him. "I am pretty sure I remember stopping at a filling station back in one of those towns. I will bet they did not fill her up because I trusted them and did not look at the pump. There is something about gasoline that makes men crooked, and if civilization breaks down it will be due to gas."

"Whereabouts are we, and how far from a filling station?" I asked.

"Well, I don't know," Eddie replied when he had looked around. "This road is a new one on me, and I suppose I drove onto it absent-mindedly while we were talking about old times. Did you notice any houses on it as we came along? I did not notice any myself, for I was keeping my eyes on the road as I am a careful driver."

I could not remember any houses, so I suggested that we had better walk along the road and look for some gas. In about a mile we found a farmhouse where they let us have a few gallons, and also told us where we were, which was about sixty miles from Cambyville.

Eddie looked thoughtful, and after asking permission to use the telephone he called up his wife and told her not to wait dinner for him as he was out in the country with the appraiser of a loan-company checking up some valuations and would not be in till late. He explained that the reason he had not called her up earlier was because of ignition trouble at a distance from any telephone. His wife seemed to make some remark and Eddie said no, the appraiser's name was not Palmer, it was Quackenbush, yes, Quackenbush, starting with a capital Q the same as Quebec, and he was not the man he had left the office with to look at Subdivision E. He had got through with that man and then he had met this appraiser, and he could not refuse to drive him out as it was a matter of business, though he hated to be away from home in the evenings. He had eaten a light lunch, but he had been careful not to indulge in any stimulant such as coffee, and his digestion had not bothered him to speak of, though he had taken a little bicarbonate of soda to be on the safe side. He had not caught cold, and if his voice sounded a little husky that was due to the road dust and talking to Mr. Quackenbush, and he would take something for his throat as soon as he could, and it was thoughtful of her to suggest it. And love and good-by for now.

He hung up and wiped his forehead, and on the way back to the car he said that maybe I had noticed he had used a little diplomacy, but you had to do that now and then, or the social fabric would collapse; and he hoped that what he had told his wife was close enough to what he had told her sister before we left town, to get by. He said he would have to be careful to remember the name of that appraiser in case she should ask, for she had seemed a little curious on that point; and after thinking a minute he looked blank and said he had forgotten it already.

I told him it was Quackenbush with a capital Q as in Quebec. He thanked me and said I had a marvelous memory, the same as you get from the correspondence courses which enable you to call Mr. Jacob S. Garfinkle by name in San Diego sixteen years after you have seen him on the street in Spokane. He said he wondered how he came to think of a name like Quackenbush, and he could not account for it unless it was because

he had recently been reading a book on bird life. He said the name over several times and finally wrote it down on the back of an envelope.

The car ran all right when we had put in the gas and he had got the wires back on the right plugs, and we turned around and headed back for Cambyville.

Sixty miles is quite a distance, and it was dark and we were hungry when we came to a place alongside the road with a number of parked cars and an illuminated sign which read, "Wade Inn." It sounded promising, so we did.

The inn had a number of customers of both sexes who seemed to be enjoying themselves, and Eddie asked the waiter confidentially if we could get something to drink such as ginger ale. The waiter looked at him in a surprised manner and said we could if we were on the water wagon.

After we had had a good meal we felt better, and Eddie looked around and said it put him in mind of old times when eating was not a mere cold-blooded business of feeding your face but was a part of social life and digestions were better. He said it was a scientific fact that worry interfered with the digestive processes, and therefore it followed logically that anything which took your mind off your worries was good for your digestion. He said all the most skeptical had to do was to look around the Wade Inn and they would see good digestions working perfectly and everybody good-humored and smiling.

I was afraid he would also see some lady who would be smiling like Mabel McCarthy, and by the looks of most of their escorts I did not think it would pay him to do much comparing. But just then a lady seated at a near-by table asked her escort in a loud voice where he thought he got off at to make a crack like that to her; and he replied equally loudly that he had seen her give that ape "Bucky" Todd the glad eye, and he would fix him plenty. To which she replied in a spirited manner that Bucky would make a mess of him, and if she was not a lady she would tell him what she thought of a lousy cheap skate with a yellow streak like a boulevard, and if he opened his face again she would bounce a bottle off his bean.

Eddie was indignant. He asked me if I heard that. He said a defenseless woman was being insulted and he would go over and show that skunk he could not get away with no raw stuff like that with him in the room. But at this moment a husky individual with another lady at another table, who likely was this Bucky Todd, shoved back his chair and started over, and I told Eddie I thought we had better be going.

But before I could persuade Eddie, this husky told the first lady's escort that he would show him the kind of ape he was, which was a gorilla from the jungles, and he started to show him.

As you never can depend on what a woman says, the lady instead of busting her escort with the bottle, busted Bucky with it; at which Bucky's lady friend arrived on the run and sailed into the first lady. A rash individual endeavored to separate the ladies, and an advocate of equal rights swung on him, and somebody else swung on the advocate and things got general the same as a dog fight.

Somebody turned out the lights and a table upset and things began to break and a bottle went past my ear and somebody landed on me. So I picked up a chair and swung it a few times and told Eddie to keep behind me and made for the door which I reached without accident except to the chair which was not too well made. I was glad to get out, as I do not like rough stuff, and I ran for Eddie's car which I reached slightly in advance of him, as his running was not very good just then. He jumped

in beside me and started the car, and we left the Wade Inn.

You cannot see very much when driving after dark, and as I did not know the roads out there anyway, I left matters to Eddie with perfect confidence. After what seemed a long drive we reached town, and Eddie drove through several streets and made several turns and kept on driving and turning; but I did not see anything that looked like my hotel, and after a while I mentioned this to him.

"It is funny," he said, "but I have not seen it myself. It almost seems to me that they have done something to the streets in our absence, and I am going to speak to the street commissioners about how confusing they are after dark. It is not right, and what we need is a town-planning expert. I guess I will stop at this filling station and ask what has happened. And that is a funny thing, too, for I do not recognize this station, and I thought I knew them all."

He drove up and asked the attendant what had happened to the streets and what had become of the Grand Union Hotel; and the attendant replied that the streets were merely rotten as usual, but he did no know of any Grand Union Hotel nearer than Cambyville.

"Isn't this Cambyville?" I asked in natural surprise.

"No," he replied sympathetically, "this is Wattsburg. I guess you have got on the wrong road, boys. Have you any left, for I have had a hard day?"

I knew where Wattsburg used to be, and unless it had moved it was ninety miles from Cambyville, in another county and on a different railroad. Eddie was as surprised as I was, and he had to ask another man before he was convinced; but it was a relief to him that the Cambyville streets were not as confusing as he had thought.

"Well, Eddie," I said, "it has been a long day and we both need rest. So we will go to a hotel here and get a good sleep, and in the morning I will buy a compass and we will find Cambyville."

"That is all right theoretically," said Eddie, "though it is tough to have to use a compass to find your way with all the money we are spending on roads, and I will write the department of highways about it. But women are peculiar, and if I do not show up my wife is libel to get nervous and notify the police that I have met with an accident or foul play."

"You had better call your wife up before it gets any later and explain matters in a logical and reasonable way," I suggested.

"How am I going to explain in that way?" Eddie asked.

"I will tell you when we have garaged the car and got rooms at a hotel," I replied. "The beauty of the telephone is that they have not got this television working perfectly yet, and the party at the other end cannot look you in the eye."

Eddie thought that was providential, so we went to a hotel and got a room and had something to restore our energies.

"Now, Eddie," I says, "here is how you will explain to your wife with the advantages of long distance for moral support. Listen carefully, and do not get it mixed. After you had telephoned this afternoon, Mr. Quackenbush, the loan company's appraiser, received a telegram informing him that his wife had met with an accident in Toronto. There is not no train for Toronto passing through Cambyville to-night, but there is one on the other line through Wattsburg. So at Mr. Quackenbush's urgent request you drove him to Wattsburg to catch this night train, and as you did not have a minute to spare you could not telephone earlier. In speeding up on this errand of mercy you burned out a bearing, which forces you to remain here to-night, and in the

morning when they have put in a new bearing you will be home. Do you think you can remember that, Eddie? It is very logical and convincing as the simple truth usually is if you say it right."

Eddie said he could remember it all as clearly as if it happened yesterday, and he said I ought to be married instead of burying my talents in a napkin like the foolish virgins old Mr. McCallum used to tell us about.

"Never mind about me," I says. "The thing to do is to get this telephoning over before it gets any later, while the facts are fresh in your mind. And do not forget the name of the appraiser, and call him something else, such as Robinson or Sims."

Eddie said he would remember, and when he had taken something for his voice he called his house. There was a little delay, because as it turned out his wife had retired for the night, it being later than we had thought, and he got nervous while waiting, like a man who is going to be called on to make a speech and is not used to the sensation, so he took a little bracer to steady his nerves a little.

"Well, my dear," he said when he got his connection at last, "I thought I would ring you up to tell you I would not be home right away, and there is no use waiting dinner for me, for I will not be home till to-morrow morning. I am afraid you have been worrying, and that has worried me; but if you had met with a bad accident in Toronto and had been taken to the emergency hospital or if I had, you can imagine your state of feelings or mine, whichever of us it was, so we have much to be thankful for."

Here his wife seemed to want further information.

"Why, I am telling you, my dear," Eddie returned patiently. "I will tell you if you will listen. It is just a bearing that is burned out, and I think I will have the oil changed as well."

At this point the telephone said something that sounded impatient and crackly, and Eddie looked hurt.

"No, my dear, I have not," he said in an injured tone, "and I am surprised that you should suggest such a thing because I gave that up long ago and I have quite lost my taste for it. It must be something wrong with the line, because your voice sounds as if you had been drinking, too, but I think too much of you to make such a suggestion, and I suppose you were just joking."

Here the telephone crackled again.

"Well, it was just a joke on my part," Eddie explained, "and you do not need to get sore about it, for if husband and wife cannot have a little joke, who can, as they have perfect confidence in each other? Where am I speaking from? I am speaking from Wattsburg. His wife met with an accident in Toronto and I drove him here to catch a train. Whose wife? Why, his wife. Certainly he has a name, as I told you when I telephoned before. I am afraid you have a poor memory for names, my dear. He is the appraiser for the loan company, and his name is Mr.—uh!—Mister——"

Here Eddie hesitated and looked blank.

" 'Quackenbush,' Eddie," I prompted him in a whisper which I tried to make distinct but not too loud.

"Oh, yes," said Eddie. "Yes, my dear, his name is Mr. Onderdonk, starting with a capital Q as in Quebec. It is his wife and he is now on his way to her bedside; and you can imagine how I felt for him, putting myself in his place if you had been the accident. Well, I would have been crazy, that is all. It is very sad and we have much to be thankful for that we are well and uninjured with all the intoxicated driving there is nowadays. Well, I guess I will hang up. Good-night, my dear and be thankful and do not worry, for I have bought a toothbrush."

Eddie then hung up and drew a long

breath and asked me if he had forgotten anything.

"Only the name of the appraiser," I told him.

"I told her that," said Eddie. "It slipped my mind for a minute, till you whispered it."

"I told you it was Quackenbush," I says; "and you told her it was Onderdonk. She is libel to want to know how he changed it since this afternoon."

"You told me it was Onderdonk," said Eddie. "I heard you distinctly."

Naturally I had never said anything of the kind.

"Certainly I didn't," I says. "I said Quackenbush. Plain. I never said Onderdonk."

"How could I think of a name like Onderdonk unless you told me?" Eddie wanted to know.

"How could I think of it myself?" I says.

"You are libel to think of anything," said Eddie. "You always were. Onderdonk is the name you said."

"Anyway," I says, "I never told you it started with a capital Q as in Quebec. Look at that envelope in your pocket and you will see where you wrote down Quackenbush."

Eddie looked and he saw I was right; but he still maintained obstinately that I had said Onderdonk, and at that moment his wife probably was trying to figure out how it started with a capital Q, and as she was a good speller it might arouse her suspicions. He said it was a weak spot, and looked bad, and was my fault. The only reasonable explanation he could think of if his wife asked him, as he was pretty sure she would, was that the appraiser's name was Mr. Onderdonk Quackenbush and that he had referred to him by his Christian name; though he admitted that it did not sound any too Christian and outside geography and the early Puritans you did not run across many like it. However, it seemed the best he could do, and as I could not think of anything better myself, and as it was his wife anyway, I went to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

INGRATITUDE.

WE did not get a very early start for Cambyville on the following morning because of car trouble.

When we entered the garage where Eddie had left his car there were several tough-looking characters standing around who seemed to be giving us a hard eye. Eddie looked around but he did not see his car and he asked where it was.

"There it is," said the proprietor, pointing to a car.

"That is not my car," Eddie said.

"Well, it is the car you drove in last night," the proprietor returned.

"You are crazy," Eddie said, "or you are trying to put something over on me. I do not know whose car that is, but if you have let some crook get away with mine I will hold you responsible."

"You are a pretty wise bird," one of the tough-looking characters put in, "but we have the goods on you. Come along with me, and if you know what is good for you you will not start anything."

As he said this he took hold of Eddie and another tough-looking individual made a grab for me. As I do not like to be grabbed by a complete stranger of that aspect, I let him run his stomach against my left knee, at the same time pivoting on my right foot and hooking my left hand to his right jaw which is a good combination if you know how to time it right, and he sat down to think over how it was done. But the proprietor and two mechanics piled into me, and after a while they got me down, and to my surprise the man I had hit produced a set of handcuffs which he snapped on my wrists and I then saw that Eddie had been similarly decorated.

"What is the hock card to this, anyway?" I asked in a reasonable manner.

"You will see," the man I had hit replied. "Come along to the police station, and if you look crossways I will slug you."

"It is too much to expect human intelligence to reside in a head the shape of yours," I returned philosophically. "If you had said you were police there would have been no trouble. But when I saw your face first I took you for a criminal of the lower type until I looked a second time when I saw you had not enough brains for that and were merely a degenerate."

"Somebody will sweat for this," said Eddie. "What are you arresting us for?"

"You will find out soon enough," his captor replied and they took us to the police station which was situated in the front portion of the jail.

I have already told you my opinion of Eastern jails, and so I will merely say that this one did not look attractive from the outside. We were taken into a room where a red-faced man in uniform seated behind a desk eyed us in an unpleasant manner and asked what the charge was.

"Drunkenness, disorderly conduct, theft of a motor car, driving the same while intoxicated to the common danger, and resisting arrest," Eddie's guardian replied.

"He is crazy," said Eddie with natural indignation.

"Shut up!" said the red-faced man. "Is that all, Cullen? Have you got anything else on them?"

"Well, it's all we got on them so far," the man called Cullen replied. "These birds last night created a disturbance and raised seven kinds of h—ell out at the Wade Inn and put it on the bum. They then made their get-away in a car belonging to Mr. Gus Lawson which he had parked outside the inn. About midnight they drove into Sam Huyck's garage, soused to the gills, and left the car, saying they would call for it in the morning. After they had gone Sam recognized the car and notified me and Mr. Lawson also reported his loss, he having been driven home in a friend's car. This morning me and Cassidy went to the garage and waited for these birds to show up; but I guess their suspicions had been aroused, for they claimed they had never seen Lawson's car before and made a bluff at demanding their own. They resisted arrest, especially this big, tough-looking guy who used abusive language and kneed Cassidy under the belt and put up a pretty fair argument. We think he is Mickey McCoy and the fat slob is Willie Boomer. Anyway, Huyck identifies them as the men who brought in Lawson's car."

"This is an outrage," said Eddie. "I drove my own car into that garage last night, and when I went for it this morning it wasn't there and the lying crook who owns the dump tried to tell me I had driven in another which I had never seen before. I want him arrested for stealing my car, and I am going to bring an action for false arrest against these fat-headed cops so quick it will make their heads swim."

"What is your name and where do you live?" the chief asked.

"I don't want my name mixed up in a fool charge like this," Eddie said.

"Nor I don't," I says.

"John Doe and Richard Roe," said the chief. "Take 'em down, Cullen. Court at ten thirty. Get a remand for a week and hold 'em for identification."

"You can't do a thing like that!" Eddie protested.

"You see me doing it, don't you?" the chief returned.

Well, we did. And Eddie climbed down.

"Take a look at these papers," he said. "They will identify me and my car, but I do not want any publicity. My car is a Spinner eight, this year's

model, and the car that crooked garageman says I drove in is a last year's Spinner. This is going to make trouble for everybody if you don't go slow."

The chief took a look at Eddie's wallet with his driver's license and identification card for insurance and a few other details, and seemed surprised. He took another look at Eddie and seemed more so.

"Something funny about this, Cullen," he said.

"Likely he swiped them papers, too," Cullen suggested.

"No, he didn't," the chief replied. "Were you ever at a Rotary Club banquet?" he asked Eddie.

"Plenty of them," Eddie replied. "I was at the last one in this town."

"I thought I recognized you," the chief said in a friendly manner and frowned at Cullen. "You and Cassidy have made a mess of this," he told him. "This gentleman didn't steal anything. Where is his car?"

"How do I know?" Cullen returned sullenly. "I didn't know he had one. He never reported no loss."

"He told Huyck of it in your presence," the chief reminded him, "and instead of investigating you arrested him. I got a notion to break the pair of you. Get busy and find a Spinner eight with this number and keep your mouths shut, understand? And you tell Gus Lawson I want to see him here at once."

Mr. Lawson looked a little tired when he came in, but he was reasonable enough and said mistakes would happen, especially around the Wade Inn. He said he was not in the habit of going there himself, and had merely dropped in accidentally and he did not want no publicity. He now remembered that when he had looked for his car he had seen a Spinner eight standing in the parking space, and for all he knew it was there yet.

The chief then phoned the Wade Inn and they said the Spinner eight was still there and they wondered who it belonged to; so it seemed that Eddie had made a simple mistake, which is a thing that may happen to anybody. We said good-by to the chief and Mr. Lawson was kind enough to drive us out to the Wade Inn where we got into Eddie's car and headed for home.

"Well, Eddie," I observed in a cheerful manner, for he seemed a little gloomy, "perseverance conquers all things, and I guess we will get to Cambyville this time. We have had a nice little outing, and the rest and change will do you good. You will go back to your office feeling like an absolutely new man."

"The h—ell I will!" Eddie returned profanely in a tone such as often indicates a sour stomach. "I feel like a boiled owl, and if you do not you are one of Nature's mysteries. I have a hunch that my wife did not accept my explanation in the spirit in which it was meant; and also I will be lucky if this car business does not leak out."

"I would not worry," I said soothingly. "One of the advantages of being respectable is the stuff you can get away with, and I have a notion to try it myself some day."

"It would not do you no harm," Eddie responded in a tone I did not like. "I might have known you would get me into trouble."

"What trouble did I get you into that you did not get yourself into?" I asked.

"You get me into the wrong car," Eddie accused me.

"A man had ought to know his own car," I pointed out reasonably.

"Only for you I would not have made that mistake," Eddie insisted unreasonably. "You were ahead of me coming out of the Wade Inn, and you jumped into a car and hollered to me to hurry. Naturally I thought you would have sense enough to know my car, so without thinking I jumped in and started it."

"And drove to Wattsburg," I said. "I am not criticizing your actions, Eddie, which are all right with me as I like to take a broad view. But I think you are a little absent-minded at times as it often the case with inventive geniuses; and I think you are one of them, or you would not have invented Mr. Quackenbush whom you were subsequently absent-minded enough to refer to as Mr. Onderdonk."

"That was another wrong steer you gave me," Eddie said in an aggrieved tone. "Only for you I would not have thought of a name like Onderdonk. You were a dangerous companion when we were younger, and you are no better now."

I felt a little hurt at his ingratitude, but I could see that his nerves had not had time to benefit from our little outing and what he needed was more relaxation from business and the kind of matrimony he had.

"Well, Eddie," I said in a forgiving manner, "we will not argue about it. I will just send you a telegram in the name of Mr. Onderdonk Quackenbush saying that his wife is much better and asking you to meet him in Wattsburg to finish up your business in which there is a big commission for you. If you leave that telegram with your wife's sister she will show it to your wife; and we will drive over to Wattsburg and spend the evening with a clear conscience and Mr. Gus Lawson who seems to be a human being."

"We will not do nothing of the kind," Eddie replied in a decided manner. "I am off of Wattsburg; and for God's sake do not send no telegrams nor mess things up worse than you have done already."

There is no use in arguing with an unreasonable man, so we finished the drive without more conversation, and Eddie left me at my hotel and drove away without suggesting any further plans for renewing our old acquaintance.

CHAPTER V.

PUBLICITY.

WHEN he had gone I thought things over, but I could not see where I was to blame any more than the good Samaritan; though I guess if he was alive to-day he would know better than to stop on the road to help anybody, as we are more civilized than in Bible times. There was no use worrying over Eddie's worries and ingratitude; so I went to the hotel barber shop to get a shave, and the barber thought I had better have a face massage because I looked a little tired and dark around the eyes, especially the right one, but he said he could paint that up so it would not show much.

While he was working on me a young lady looked through a door that led into another room. As a rule I do not notice young ladies much, and all I noticed about this one was that she had nice dark hair and eyes, and she was wearing a white apron and a black dress not any too long for which it looked like there might be good reasons. That was all I noticed at the time, and after a while I asked the barber where that door led to, and he told me it led to the manicure parlor, but if I wanted a manicure I could have it while in his chair.

I told him I would not bother just then; but when he got through with me I look at my hands, and while they were all right for working with they looked a little tough and the knuckles of the left were skinned a little on account of the hardness of Detective Cassidy's and some of the mechanics' features; and I reflected that a manicure girl has to make a living and maybe this one had a poor old mother to support. So I went in.

When I saw her closer I was glad I had acted on this charitable impulse, for she seemed to deserve public support. She looked at my hands and ob-

served in a humorous manner that she was not no leather worker nor planing mill, but she would do the best she could, though one treatment would not give the best results. I told her I was staying at the hotel, and would have daily treatments if she thought the results would be good, and she said they might be though it was a little early to tell about that, and she would put my name down in her appointment book for whatever hours would be most convenient. I thought the hour just before lunch or maybe dinner would be the best for me, and she said that was thoughtful of me and would suit her, too, and she asked my name.

"Why," she exclaimed when I told her," are you the Mr. Palmer whose name is in the newspapers the same as President Hoover's and Commander Byrd's?"

"Well," I says, "I guess these gentlemen get more newspaper space than I do on account of having special correspondents. But my name is Palmer. What have the papers been saying about me now?"

She then showed me a copy of the Cambyville *Daily Intelligence,* and this is the way Mr. Kelly had started off:

CAMBYVILLE BOY MAKES GOOD

Back in Cambyville for the Reunion, bronzed by an outdoor life of thrilling adventures and radiating an atmosphere of geniality and optimism, Mr. Judson Palmer, formerly of this city but now a leading citizen and prominent mining magnate of the rising young metropolis of Potlatch, British Columbia, is registered at the Grand Union.

Mr. Palmer's career since he left Cambyville to seek his fortune in the West has been a romance of real life. Into comparatively few years—for he is still a young man—Mr. Palmer has crowded a host of experiences. He has been logger, trapper, big-game hunter and prospector. It was in the latter capacity—or possibly in the two latter capacities—that he found and staked the mine which bids fair to give him wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Seen at the hotel last night Mr. Palmer kindly consented to talk to a representative of this newspaper.

"It is a good many years since I left Cambyville," said Mr. Palmer reminiscently, "and naturally I observe numerous changes. To me old landmarks have a sentimental value, and I observe with regret that some of them are gone or much changed. However, I suppose change is inseparable from progress."

"Our readers would be interested in hearing how you discovered your celebrated mine, Mr. Palmer," it was suggested.

"You mean the Mountain Lion?" said Mr. Palmer, lighting a cigar. "Well, its discovery was really accidental and possibly a little unusual. I was not prospecting at the time, but was on the trail of a mountain lion or cougar with my dog Pete, high up on a mountainside. Suddenly I saw the cat—as I call them—loping along the hillside above me with Pete in hot pursuit. Throwing my rifle to my shoulder I drew a bead and fired. The brute rolled over and began to claw and tear up the ground, emitting hideous yells of pain and rage. I could not fire again for fear of hitting Pete, who had closed in. When I arrived on the scene he was worrying the lion, which was dead. While skinning the animal I noticed the dull gleam of mineralized rock where in his death struggles his claws had stripped away dirt and moss from an outcropping of ore. Naturally I investigated and found indications, subsequently confirmed by expert opinion, of the existence of a vast body of phenomenally rich ore which I staked and recorded under the name of the Mountain Lion."

Well, of course, Mr. Editor, I would not have told you anything like that. The actual way I happened to discover the Lion was that me and Nels Larsen was out prospecting and our grub run out and also our tobacco. We were both tired, and Nels said, "Hal, Yud, dees hills ban no gude. But we stake a claim apiece anyhow, and mebbe some day we find damfule enough to buy her." Which we done; but so far we have not found no damfool enough like Nels hoped. But I thought it would not do no harm to give Mr. Kelly's readers some entertainment as he had asked me to let my fancy run, and I did not think any of them had ever heard of old Jake and his mule's hoofs and the Cœur d'Alene, and would not recognize that yarn with a lion in place of the mule.

The paper went on with a lot more stuff which I did not say because Mr. Kelly did not ask me, except to ask me what I would recommend as a good personal system for a young fellow to play in the West. To which I replied that the system I played myself was to let every man skin his own game and not be too proud to drink with anybody. But Mr. Kelly improved on that a little as follows:

"You ask me," said Mr. Palmer thoughtfully, "what are a young man's chances for success in the West, and to what I attribute my own. The West is a country in which any man with industry, courage and determination will make good. Too many young men, however, are prone to fritter away their time and energies in amusements if not in dissipation. My own success, such as it is, I attribute to unremitting industry, made possible by an outdoor life, and to regularity in habits. Hard work is my doctrine—and more work."

Well, Mr. Editor, I would not have thought of putting it in that way, for I am modest. But it is a fact that I have good health and I have lived out of doors because you have to when you are trapping and so forth and your habits when doing so are regular enough to drive you crazy because there is nothing else to do. So on the whole Mr. Kelly was right and what he had made me say was no worse than what other successful men reply when asked the same question; but if they would admit it they would own up that success is often like a black eye, due to being there at the time and getting your head in the way.

"Well," I says when I had finished reading what Mr. Kelly had made me say, "I guess that is as near to the truth as a newspaper usually gets with public men."

"I have always wanted to meet a celebrated man," the young lady said, looking at me in an admiring way. "Is that really how you discovered your celebrated mine?"

"It is practically the way," I replied because I could not let Mr. Kelly down, "though they have left out some of the interesting features."

"I have often wanted to go West myself," the young lady said when we had sat down at a little table. "Yes, I have often wanted to get out into them great open spaces where life is real; but of course a refined girl could not hunt lions and discover a mine, could she?"

"Well," I says, "she is libel to discover a mine owner, which would give her practically the same results."

"Do you think I could discover one?" she asked humorously.

"I do not think you would have to prospect very long," I replied, which was a fact.

In the course of conversation I learned that her name was Miss Genevieve Riley, and I was right in thinking she had a poor old mother to support, though the mother did not live in Cambyville. Not only that, but she was educating her brother to be a doctor, as he had shown a tendency toward the medical profession at an early age by administering a box of liver pills to a church sociable by dissolving them in the lemonade, and also by dissecting cats and frogs alive. She had never thought she would have to earn a living, but her father had died suddenly after business reverses and allowing his insurance to lapse, and she had come to Cambyville where she would not meet none of her former society friends who had given her the cold shoulder when they found out that Riley had died broke.

It was very touching, so I staked her to a five-spot besides her regular tariff; though she was too proud to accept it till I pointed out that it would buy her brother a book on anatomy, or maybe a human leg if he knew a reasonable dealer in antiques—that is unless he preferred to do his own collecting, the

same as some people prefer to roll their own. She then accepted the five, and also an invitation to lunch, though she said it would make her nervous to eat with a man who was in the public eye through the newspapers.

After lunch, at which we got better acquainted, she had to go back to work, and I was wondering how I would put in the time when a businesslike-looking gentleman came up to me and said he had been reading with interest the account of my discovery of the Mountain Lion. He said his name was Mr. J. Morley Atchison, and he suggested that we go to his hotel for a quiet business conversation, which we proceeded to do.

Mr. Atchison knew how to open a business conversation, and when he had done so he asked me what I was doing in the way of developing the Lion; to which I replied frankly that I was not doing much at present on account of labor troubles and the unsympathetic attitude of the government which did not seem to care about the development of our natural resources, and the further fact that most of my capital was tied up in other propositions.

"Yours is the tragical history of other mine owners," said Mr. Atchison sympathetically, "and that is what is holding the country back, though me and some more men of vision are trying to put her on her feet. What would you take for this Mountain Lion if you would sell it at all?"

"Fifty thousand," I replied promptly in a businesslike way, "though that is practically giving it away."

"It is a modest figure," Mr. Atchison agreed, "and you ought to get more to compensate you for your enterprise and the hardships and privations of a prospector's life. I am an expert on mining promotion, and if you will be guided by me I think I can get you that amount and maybe more."

"If you will lead me to fifty thousand for this claim you will find me easy to guide," I replied naturally.

"It is like this," Mr. Atchison explained. "Nowadays it is not the individual large capitalist who furnishes the money for the development of mines and oil fields; but it is the general public which does so by buying shares, and also now and then holds the bag, for it is a wonder what they will buy. There is a lot of money right here in Cambyville that had ought to be in circulation developing the country's natural resources such as the Mountain Lion instead of holding back prosperity."

"How would you get it into circulation in that way?" I asked.

"It is very simple," Mr. Atchison replied, "to a student of human nature such as myself. Mankind is a funny animal, and he will dig up for almost anything that contains an appeal to his imagination or to local sentiment, which last is merely a smaller form of what is called patriotism, and you remember how everybody dug that way during the war. The Mountain Lion combines an appeal to both these human characteristics. The way you discovered it is highly imaginative, for anybody with a grain of imagination can see you standing beside the dead lion, your faithful dog by your side, staring at the vast wealth exposed accidentally or providentially, and he will think what a lucky stiff you are and wish he could strike something like that. Then for an appeal to local sentiment, you are an old Cambyville boy, and you are willing to give the folks in your old home town a chance to share in your good fortune and take them in—I mean as partners. You would like to see shares held right here in Cambyville, and a continuous stream of wealth in the form of dividends distributed in the old home town."

"I would like to see that," I admitted, "if I have about fifty thousand of it myself."

"You will get it," Mr. Atchison pre-

dicted confidently. "This is a combination that is practically made to order. In a large experience of mining I have never seen a more promising prospect. We will say for the sake of argument that you are willing to take one hundred thousand dollars for the property, as you have other large interests which keep you busy. To show your faith in the mine you want only half of that sum in money, and for the other half you will take fifty thousand shares at the par value of one dollar."

"If I get fifty thousand in money, I do not care about getting no shares," I says.

"That sentiment does you credit, but it will look better if you take the shares, too," Mr. Atchison explained. "We will capitalize for two millions, which is a small, conservative figure nowadays, and we will sell shares at fifty cents, because if we sold them for less it would look like a wildcat. One hundred thousand of them will give you your fifty thousand dollars, and you get fifty thousand shares to hold. All the rest of the two million shares will be devoted to organization expenses and the development of the property; so any business man can see what a strong financial position we are in. Of course the development of the property will be up to the shareholders through the board of directors which they will elect, and the responsibility will be theirs, which is a pleasing feature."

"Where do you come in," I asked, "and what reward does your financial genius get?"

"Do not worry about me," Mr. Atchison replied. "I will take a thirty-day option from you for one hundred thousand dollars, payable as I have mentioned, paying you one hundred dollars consideration now to make it binding, and I will take chances on turning it over for enough to pay me for my trouble."

I thought that was very generous, and I signed the option which Mr. Atchison wrote out.

"Now remember," Mr. Atchison advised me at the end of our business conference, "having given me an option, the whole thing is in my hands and you have nothing to do with it. A number of people are due to ask you questions about the Mountain Lion on account of this newspaper publicity, and you may tell the story of its discovery as often as you like, though naturally it will be better to tell it practically the same way; but you will make no representations whatever as to the property, and you will merely say that your agreement to take shares shows your faith in it. That is all you will say, except that you may express a natural hope that a large proportion of the shares will be taken up in Cambyville, because you would like to think that you had been instrumental in bringing additional prosperity to your old friends and neighbors."

That is all that took place between me and Mr. Atchison, as I am willing to make an affidavit, and would even go further and take an oath. I will leave it to you, Mr. Editor, if there was anything crooked on my part, or if I had any reason to suspect anything crooked on Mr. Atchison's. As to the discovery of the Mountain Lion which was pointed to subsequently as a suspicious circumstance, I told the story originally to oblige Mr. Kelly and not as part of a nefarious plot, and naturally I had to stay with it as I could not throw him down to his readers. On account of the publicity he had given me I had to tell the story a number of times to interested persons, and as I am very conscientious I told it the same way almost every time, except when I thought of a few improvements. Anyway, it is not how you make a discovery but what you have discovered that any investor with human intelligence had ought to be interested in.

CHAPTER VI.

AN OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE.

I GUESS you will think, Mr. Editor, that so far I had no kick coming at my old home town, and you are right; but it is often calm before a storm, and Fate is often lying out on a limb waiting to pounce down on a man like a cougar on a fawn as soon as he walks underneath.

In the next few days just before the Reunion I was pretty well occupied, as the newspaper publicity had put me in the public eye and a good many people wished to hear the story of my adventures from my own lips. And besides, there was Miss Riley, who was good company.

As to old Mr. McCallum, I had called on him one evening but had no luck in finding him away from home, so I did not stay long. The next time I called he was out, but as his niece appeared from a dark corner of the veranda where I noticed a cigarette burning while she was telling me how sorry she was that her uncle was out, it did not seem worth while to wait for him.

There was nothing special to do the rest of that evening on account of Miss Riley being otherwise engaged, and after walking around for a while I dropped into a picture show, hoping there would be a dog in it as I was feeling lonely. There was not no dog, and it was a poor picture in other respects, being about a lad who had left his home town after bidding a girl good-by beneath an apple tree, and had gone West; and after some years and adventures, including being run after by a gambler's wife and several snappy-looking señoritas who he did not give a tumble to at all on account of high principles of which luckily he had a supply sufficient for everybody concerned, he had come back and married the girl he used to lick out the same ice-cream dish with when they were kids; she having refused to marry a broker who was posing as a respectable bootlegger on account of the memory of her early love. She was not a bad looker, and one scene where she was building pies while thinking of the absent one had some heart interest, but otherwise it was a poor film.

As I emerged with the crowd I was surprised to be addressed by name by a lady whom I did not at first recognize.

"Why, I do not believe you remember me!" she said.

I then recognized her as a girl who used to be Alma Stubbs though naturally I supposed she had changed her name, as she had been of a somewhat romantic and affectionate disposition. I had known her slightly or maybe a little better before I had left Cambyville, at which time she had been a plump fry, and now it did not look as though she had been cutting out the starches; but as I do not like to call any lady fat, I will merely say mildly that she was well upholstered.

"Of course I remember you, Alma, if you will permit me to call you so still," I said, "and it is a great pleasure to see you again looking so well and not near your actual age. I suppose you are now married and respectable the same as Eddie McKeown, and I would like to meet your husband and other loved ones if any, and tell him what a wonderful wife he has, though naturally that will not be news to him. I certainly think he is lucky, for a contented husband is better than great riches, as old Mr. McCallum used to teach us."

"Oh, I am not married," she returned with what was a blush if it was not blood pressure.

"Well, you surprise me," I said, for I thought it was a safe bet that she had landed somebody.

"Oh, I do not care much for the men around here," she said in a superior

way; "and then, maybe I am like the girl in the picture we have just seen."

There were reasons why I did not make no comment on that, and I felt a little alarmed, especially when she said I could see her home, as she lived at the other end of town.

"We will take a taxi and get there quicker," I suggested.

"You must not waste your money on taxis for me, though I understand you are now a wealthy mine owner," she refused economically or for deeper reasons.

"It will not be wasted," I says. "It will be a sound investment."

"Oh, no, we will walk and talk about old times," she insisted, and what could I do?

Cambyville is more noted for the shade trees on its residential streets than for its lighting system. At one time I had not considered this a drawback, but now it seemed dangerous.

"I will take your arm," Alma said as we turned down a particularly dark street, at the same time sliding her own under mine with an eellike motion and giving it a little squeeze, "and it will be like old times. My, how hard your arm is! It is just like iron, but you always had a nice, strong arm, though inclined to be a little rough at times." I did not make no comment on that, either, and she went on in a dreamy and embarrassing way, "Yes, it is just like old times, and it seems only the other day that we were a boy and girl at night strolling beneath these old trees. What did you think of that picture we saw to-night?"

"I would have liked it better if there had been a good dog in it," I says.

"I thought it very touching and true to life as representing a girl's faithfulness to an old and absent sweetheart," Alma told me. "You remember that scene where Mary stands under that apple tree in blossom on which Joe has cut their initials in a bygone day, and the subtitle says, 'Carved in the bark—and in her heart!' and that sweet memory makes her refuse to be the bootlegger's bride."

"I guess I was asleep during that scene," I says.

"It came right home to me," Alma said in a sentimental tone. "It put me in mind of the time you carved two hearts on the board fence with 'Alma' and 'Jud' at each side of them."

"It was 'Squinty' Williams done that, and I whaled the tar out of him for it," I says.

"Anyway, I remembered it to-night when I saw the picture," Alma said, "and I thought, 'How true to life.' For when a woman loves somebody once she loves always, don't you think so?"

"I guess she always loves somebody," I says, "according to the divorce and love-nest reports and other vital statistics."

"When a girl enshrines a boy in her heart as Mary did Joe, he is there for keeps, and absence and years do not make no difference," Alma asserted positively.

I did not make no comment on that except to ask her if she had heard thunder and suggest that we should walk a little faster; but she said she had not heard thunder, and pointed out that it was moonlight. We walked along another street where the moonlight did not get no chance whatever, and she asked me if I remembered the old maple tree.

"I would be careful where I stepped here, Alma," I replied, "for the sidewalk does not seem very good."

"Do you remember the old maple tree?" she repeated in a determined way, disregarding my warning except to take a tighter grip on my arm.

"What old maple tree?" I asked.

"The one in Ethel Lawrence's pa's yard," she replied.

"Oh, that maple tree," I says.

"And do you remember the hammock?"

"What hammock?" I asked.

"The hammock under the maple tree."

"Oh, that hammock," I says.

"And do you remember what happened in the hammock?" she asked.

"You mean the time the Lawrence boys painted the bottom of it with glue, and Ethel and Sam Adams sat down in it with results similar to fish in a gill net, only they were not caught by the gills," I says, laughing heartily at the recollection.

"No, I do not mean that time, and it was not Ethel and Sam who occupied the hammock at the time I mean," Alma told me.

"Oh, now I remember," I says. "There is a lot of fond memories clustering about that hammock, the same as in the poem 'The Old Armchair.' That was a very fine poem, Alma, and I believe I could recite it for you now, if you would like to hear it."

"I do not want to hear it," Alma replied. "I want to know if you remember anything else about the hammock?"

"Oh, I know what you mean now," I says. "You refer to the occasion when the church conference had billeted the two preachers on the Lawrences, and old man Lawrence happened to come home late in a state of exhaustion with a young pig which he had won at a raffle, and they both lay down in the hammock and woke up the neighborhood singing, 'Many Brave Hearts Are Asleep in the Deep,' the pig carrying the tenor. Yes, that was certainly funny."

"I do not mean that time, either," Alma said with a trace of impatience. "Ethel's pa was the limit. I mean the night of Ethel's birthday party."

"Oh, that night," I says.

"You and me went out and sat in that hammock," she reminded me.

Personally I do not see no use in raking up incidents of that kind, and most girls have the sense to marry somebody else and do not want to; and even if they do it is just an academic discussion and quite safe. But Alma went on and reminded me of our conversation and so forth in the hammock; and if there is one thing that sounds sillier than old letters produced in court it is such a conversation. I was glad I had not written no letters. We arrived at Alma's home which was dark, as her mother had retired, but she said we would sit down on the veranda and continue our talk about old times; and I could not get out of it, though I was afraid the veranda would revive more old memories, and I was right.

"You did not write to me even once," Alma said when she had discussed some of these. "I wonder if you ever thought of me when you were hunting lions and discovering mines."

"Now and then," I replied, "when I was hunting lions."

"I suppose it is in times of danger that a man's thoughts turn to the girl at home," she commented.

"When they do he is libel to be in danger," I agreed.

"I think I would love the West," Alma stated longingly. "I would love to be like one of them Western girls in the pictures, riding along a precipice at breakneck speed to warn the man I loved of the coming of outlaws, and subsequently keeping house in a dear log cabin back in the hills close to the heart of Nature, singing happily at my daily tasks, and having the meals ready on time."

"You would not like the West at all, Alma," I said earnestly, "for it is like the old-timer said about Texas—all right for men and cows, but h—ell on women and horses. Yes, it is a tough life even for a strong man, and no place at all for a delicate, refined girl. Many such go crazy and attempt self-destruction, for they are up against

loneliness and hardships and privations and other drawbacks such as ferocious wild animals and mail-order houses, and Injuns."

"Oh, I just love Indians," Alma told me with enthusiasm.

"My God!" I says feebly.

"I think they are just thrilling," Alma went on, "and I would love to see them in their daily life and their tepees, with their squaws and papooses, smoking the peace pipe and playing wampum and pemmican and similar merry games, and returning in triumph from the hunt with the meat."

"Which is libel to be off of a white man's steer," I says. "No, Alma, the West is responsible for more than the usual amount of insanity among women, and I would not want you to try it."

"Of course I would not think of going there alone," she admitted.

"That is right," I says. "I would not want you to, for I think far too much of you."

I will leave it to you, Mr. Editor, if these words were not entirely innocent. Therefore I was not prepared for their effect, which was as unexpected as the action of old powder and resembled it in other respects.

"I am glad you think too much of me to want me to go alone, Jud, darling," Alma breathed softly, at the same time putting a hold resembling a half nelson on me, "and it will be much better for us to be married here. Of course this is pretty sudden, but I think my heart told me how you were feeling all the time."

It is easy to point out that I should have retained my presence of mind. Similarly it is all right to say that all you have to do to cow a hungry lion is to look him in the eye. I am not starting no arguments; I am just relating the bare facts. Having done so I will draw a veil over the next period, at the end of which I found myself back in my room at the hotel, without much more memory of how I had got there than on a certain occasion when, after having a quiet drink with a stranger in Kamloops, the next thing I remember clearly is the rudeness of a Vancouver policeman.

I took a drink to brace myself, and I wished Pete had been there to talk to, for you get sympathy from a dog and no bad advice, and with men it is just the other way. But Pete was not there; and I went to sleep and dreamed that I had come across the author of that moving-picture scenario and carved my name on his heart, and then cut it and the rest of him up in small pieces and salted them and threw them down a well.

I had just finished doing that when I woke up with the telephone by my bedside ringing, and I answered it, and Alma Stubbs' voice said in my ear:

"Good morning, Jud, darling! And how is my own apple-blossom sweetheart this morning?"

I ask you, Mr. Editor, is that any way to begin a new day?

CHAPTER VII.

A BUSINESS PROPOSAL.

I THINK you will agree that it is not no way at all, and while I do not say that my actions on the day in question are not open to reasonable criticism, it was the thought of being waked up that way in future that was responsible.

By this time a number of Old Boys were beginning to drift in for the Reunion, and in the course of the day I ran into some of them who were strangers to me but seemed to be a pretty lively bunch, and when we had got well acquainted we went out together to view some of the old landmarks of our youth.

After finding a number of them, or at least where they used to be, and honoring them in a fitting manner, some-

body suggested that we should buy a wreath and lay it on Mike Powers' place which was now the fruit store run by the Greek. But when we arrived there in a taxi with the wreath we did not see no place that was exactly suitable to lay it, so we decided to lay it on the Greek. This gave us some trouble, as he had no proper sentiment about the past, and in fact tried to object with a butcher knife. But finally we laid the wreath on him, and also some ripe melons and tomatoes and other fruits of the earth, and were just coming away when a policeman entered.

At first he was inclined to take a wrong view of things till we explained that we were friends of Mike Powers' and also a commission distributing certificates of merit of the kind he would not need to frame, and gave him one. He then said that his name was O'Grady, and he asked the Greek what he meant by disregarding the mayor's proclamation asking all good citizens to coöperate in making the Reunion a success. The Greek had not no answer to that, except to jabber a lot of stuff that did not make sense, and the officer said he had a notion to pinch the dump, as he had suspected him for some time of making hooch from decayed fruit without coming through. However, we persueded him not to do that out of regard for the man's family, and came away.

Soon afterward we drove past Mr. McCallum's shoe store, and somebody noticed the old sign, and stopped the taxi, and said here was another hallowed spot, and asked us to bare our heads while he recited, "Pause, Traveler, Pause; Tread Reverently Here," which we did and he did in an impressive way that drew an admiring crowd.

We then went on, as we were requested to do so by an officer, but before long it occurred to somebody that we should have gone in and offered our congratulations to Mr. McCallum. One of our number who was a doctor said he must have a remarkable organism which would be an aid to science if obtained for that purpose. He said he belonged to several organizations whose ideal was service, and he would go back and offer his own services freely; and another man who was a lawyer said he would do the same, and so did a dentist, and we all did with the exception of a sporty-looking individual in loud clothes, who said he would be glad to do so too, only he was afraid his offer would be misunderstood, as in private life he was an undertaker.

That seemed to be an objection, but the lawyer after thinking for a minute said that where there was a will there was always a way to break it, and he thought he saw a way round the objection, which was that his honorable friend should not say right out that he was an undertaker, but merely that he followed the medical profession.

This sounded reasonable to everybody but the doctor, who acted sore and wanted to know if the lawyer wished to insult him. Then somebody suggested that we should not offer our services to Mr. McCallum, but avail ourselves of his by buying a pair of shoes each, which ought to please him, so we all went back to the shoe store.

Unfortunately the idea did not work out very well, for Mr. McCallum did not seem to appreciate our motive, and not only refused to sell us shoes but also used quotations from the stronger parts of the Old Testament, so we came away. I may say that while the others were listening to Mr. McCallum I endeavored to persuade Miss Long to accept a small sum toward a wedding present, but the old man said no.

We were disappointed by our reception, and some of the boys said they would lie down and meditate upon the past and they would be fresh for the evening. But I was not sleepy and I had nothing to do till dinner, for which I had an engagement with Miss Riley.

It occurred to me that I had not seen Eddie McKeown since our little outing, and I thought I would call at his office and remind him of the mayor's proclamation, and ask him what he would tell his children he had done on that occasion.

When I entered his office I did not see Eddie, but there was a lady with a determined cast of countenance talking to his sister-in-law. On my appearance the latter whispered something, and the lady looked me over with a hard and hostile eye in response to my polite bow, and asked me if I wished to be addressed as Mr. Palmer, or Mr. Quackenbush, or perhaps as Mr. Onderdonk.

I replied that my name was Palmer, and I did not know the other gentlemen she referred to; at which she smiled in a cynical manner which I do not like to see in a woman, as innocence is their greatest charm or used to be, and informed me that she was Eddie's wife.

I said I was delighted and honored to meet her, as Eddie had told me what a wonderful wife he had, and I could now see for myself that he was lucky indeed. But that did not go so good, for she said he had no business to discuss her with his low former acquaintances.

She then went on to say that he had told her all, and how I had falsely represented myself as the appraiser of a loan company, and persuaded him to drive me out into the country, and had endeavored to persuade him to join me in a debauch; and had worked on his sympathy by appeals to old acquaintance to the extent that he had told her a silly story over the telephone with the mistaken idea of shielding me from her contempt, as one of his traits was loyalty to friends, no matter how disreputable.

She further said that Eddie did not want to see me again, and she would thank me to keep away from his office, as I was a bad influence and no company for a respectable citizen, and if I was married she was sorry for my wife. I replied that I had no wife, and she said that was good, as it saved some poor woman from a lifetime of misery, and she wound up a few more remarks of like nature by saying that if she was my wife she would tell me to go and drown myself.

As it is always best to agree with a woman when she is a little excited, I replied politely that if she was my wife she would not need to tell me, and as that did not seem to cool her down, but rather to excite her a little more, I wished her good-by in a gentlemanly manner and left that office never to return. I did not blame Eddie for protecting himself in the clinches, but I thought he had hit me pretty low. I did not know till later when I saw the newspapers after subsequent events how low he could be, but I saw plainly that it was hopeless to attempt any more rescue work in his case, as he had lost the will to reform.

I returned to my hotel and went to the barber shop and had a shave, after which I felt quite rested, and would have been happy but for thoughts of Alma Stubbs which now obtruded, though I had forgotten her during the busy hours of the day.

However, I forgot her again when I met Miss Riley, looking very pretty and attractive, in a becoming dress. By this time we had become pretty good friends, and I was thinking of making her a certain proposition for our mutual benefit. I do not know yet what caused her to act sore and abuse me and claim that I insulted her. On the contrary, I had the greatest respect for her, and considered her not only good looking but intelligent for a woman, so that I am at a loss to understand her sudden change of attitude, which had been very friendly.

We got a very nice secluded table and

ordered dinner, during which we talked in the ordinary way, and I thought it only polite to pay a compliment to her appearance.

"Oh, I guess there are prettier girls than me in the West," she returned modestly.

"I have not seen none," I replied, "though there are some very good-looking ones there."

"Maybe there is a special one?" she observed in a playful manner.

"Not in the West," I returned in a corresponding manner.

"Then maybe there is one in the East," she suggested. "I would not wonder if you had an old sweetheart right here in Cambyville, and have come to take her back with you."

For the moment I had forgotten Alma, and I experienced something like the pangs of acute indigestion.

"I do not want to take no old sweetheart back," I replied truthfully.

"Then you may get a new one," she suggested. "There are a lot of pretty girls here, and you ought to be able to find one to suit you, unless you are very particular."

"It is the pretty girls who are particular, and that lets me out," I replied; "for I am not no young stay-combed sheik."

"Oh, you must not undervalue yourself, as you strong, silent men from the great open spaces are libel to do, for you do not understand a girl's heart," she said earnestly. "A real womanly girl does not care for these parlor snakes and jazz hounds, though she has to put up with them as they are all that is dealt her most hands around here, and she finds life hollow and hard. Taking my own case, my present job is a bum one for a refined girl, as I am libel to be called into the barber shop at any time to work on the fins of some souse while the barber is steaming the alcohol and nicotine out of his map, and you have no idea of the stuff I have to stand for at times from customers.

"Yes, it is certainly a tough racket, and I would be much happier in what some might consider ruder surroundings. I think it would be ideal to live in a Western town near a good paying mine, making pies and doughnuts and jellycake, which I make swell as I have told you before, and cooking chicken with dumplings and other delicacies for somebody who would appreciate them and me. That would be real life, such as every woman looks forward to in her secret dreams."

That seemed to give me just the right opening for the proposal I had in mind.

"Are you sure you would be happy in such a life, away from the false glitter of a barber shop?" I asked seriously. "The fact is I have been thinking of making a certain offer to you, ever since you told me how good you could cook, and that you were not contented here. Your looks are no drawback either, if you will excuse the reference. However, I would not wish you to take such a step unless you were certain in your own mind, for naturally it would affect your future life. But if you are certain, and would not mind living in the rougher surroundings of a mining town, we might make a deal. At first there would be just the two of us, but if it turned out well there might be others."

Miss Riley looked down at the table with a pretty color in her cheeks, and then held her hand out to me across the table, which I took, thinking she wished to shake on the bargain.

"I am quite sure," she replied. "This is a great surprise to me and pretty sudden, but I suppose Western men are like that, and I am willing to trust my woman's intuition which is seldom wrong. Only I do not think a public dining room is a very good place for you to make such a proposal."

"It seemed a good chance, and I

wanted to know as soon as possible so as to be able to line things up," I said. "We can go into details later on when we are more private. But now that the main point is settled, when I go West I will look around for a good location including a place we can rent, and then I will send for you."

"Why can't we go together?" she asked innocently.

"It might cause talk," I replied, "if you will excuse me for mentioning it."

"How could it cause talk under the circumstances?" she asked in a puzzled way.

"There is a lot of evil-minded people in the world such as a young and innocent girl like you is happily ignorant of," I pointed out. "It will be better for me to go ahead and pick out a place for this restaurant and get it cleaned up and painted so that you can open up without delay when you arrive."

"Restaurant?" she exclaimed, staring at me in a strange way.

"It will be better to call it that than just a boarding house," I explained. "Located near a good paying mine such as you have described, with a good pay roll, if you can turn out pies and doughnuts and chicken with dumplings, there would be money in it, for miners are a hungry bunch and make good wages, and they would be willing to pay extra for a white woman's cooking."

Miss Riley seemed to turn a little pale and removed her hand from mine somewhat hastily.

"Is that the step you did not want me to take without consideration as it would affect my future life?" she asked in a strange voice.

"That is what I have been telling you," I replied. "I think I know a town where we would not have much competition and would make money from the start."

"Oh, you do!" she said in the same strangely cold tone. "And where do you come in on this step in which you said at first there would be just the two of us, but if it turned out well there might be others?"

"That is a detail we can discuss when I know how you are fixed financially," I replied. "My idea was that likely you are a little shy of capital for such a venture, in which case I would be prepared to put up about five hundred dollars, which had ought to give me about a half interest if we made a modest start. Of course you would draw a salary as well as interest on what money you put in, and later if we wanted to expand we could form a little syndicate, provided we could show that the business paid."

Of course I am aware that women have no heads for business. But that was no reason why Miss Riley should rise abruptly, and after picking up her vanity case and other belongings and addressing me in terms which I would not use to a snake, make for the door with her head in the air. As I was surprised and a little put out, I followed her with the idea of getting some explanation of her strange conduct; and it was under these circumstances that the two detectives made the serious mistake of trying to arrest me single-handed.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE PUBLICITY.

NOW, Mr. Editor, I have told you the true facts of the case so you can see for yourself how little truth there is in the following extracts from the Cambyville papers, which also show to what a low level Eastern journalism has sunk. I am not going to make much comment on them, as that would be superfluous, and so I will merely say that they illustrate the poet's remark about "man's inhumanity to man" to say nothing of woman's, and also show why I prefer dogs. In addition they show the hollowness of old friendships and the fickleness of women, and they explain

why I am now headed West and have decided not to go East no more. I will just add that these extracts were not written by Mr. Kelly, who had been fired, which is a pity as he was a young man of capacity and the right ideas about dogs:

Extract No. 1.

ALLEGED SWINDLER TRAPPED.

Arrested while dining with a young lady at a local hotel, on a charge of alleged fraud and complicity in a new variety of confidence game, the man known as "Jud" Palmer now reposes in jail. Palmer, who is said to be known also as "Onderdonk" and "Quackenbush," put up a desperate resistance in which Detectives Mullins and Coolican received injuries, and in which eventually half a dozen officers participated. The hotel dining room subsequently resembled a busy sector on the Somme during the late unpleasantness.

Palmer came to town some days ago, representing himself as an old Cambyville boy back for the Reunion, and claimed or attempted to claim old acquaintance with some of our citizens. He gave out highly colored interviews, which this journal printed in good faith, as to his experiences, one being an account of the discovery of an alleged valuable mine known as the "Mountain Lion."

It is alleged that the way thus having been prepared, an alleged confederate calling himself "J. Morley Atchison" but who is known to the police under other names, appeared on the scene posing as a mining expert and promoter. He exhibited ore samples purporting to be from the Mountain Lion Mine, and an option thereon from Palmer, and playing upon local sentiment, strong at this time, and the publicity innocently given Palmer, organized a local syndicate to take up the option, in many cases securing money for organization expenses and subscriptions for shares in a company about to be formed.

All might have been well from the standpoint of the alleged swindlers, had Palmer not made the mistake of relating the story of the discovery of his "mine" with variations from the original version, which aroused suspicion. "Atchison" has disappeared and the police are searching for him, while "Palmer" is held on the charge above stated.

Extract No. 2.

"PALMER" PLEADS NOT GUILTY.

"'Jud' Palmer," alleged Cambyville old boy, trapper, lion hunter, prospector and confidence man, appeared in court this morning on a charge of fraud. Palmer, who was not represented by counsel, pleaded not guilty and denied all charges with a vigor and unrestrained language which called down on him merited rebuke from the bench. According to his own account Palmer has lived for years in British Columbia, making a living by trapping, killing lions for the bounty on their heads, and possesses a mineral claim known as the Mountain Lion. He admitted that he had given "Atchison" an option on that claim, but stoutly maintained that he had done so in good faith, believing "Atchison," who was a stranger to him, to be what he represented himself to be. He was remanded for a week to allow the police to investigate his record. Bail was refused.

Extract No. 3.

WHO IS "JUD" PALMER?

HAS THE REAL PALMER MET WITH FOUL PLAY?

MYSTERY SURROUNDS MAN IN JAIL.

The case of "'Jud' Palmer," who was arraigned in court this morning on

a charge of alleged swindling, appears to contain an element of mystery. Among its exchanges this journal has a copy of *The Potlatch Pioneer,* published in Potlatch, B. C., containing an item which seems to point to the existence of a real "Jud" Palmer who intended to visit Cambyville. This item was responsible for the original interview with the alleged Palmer, and in fact refers to a certain Mountain Lion mineral claim.

Is this a genuine news item or part of a cunning plot beginning in the mountains of the Far West? Is the "Palmer" in jail a real or a bogus Palmer? If the latter, what has become of the real one? Is it a case of a mysterious disappearance? Has "Jud" Palmer, the honest prospector, met with foul play? These are questions to which this journal, in view of its possible responsibility in giving publicity to "Palmer," will endeavor to answer.

Extract No. 4.

THE PALMER MYSTERY.

MAN FROM MOUNTAINS MAY BE MISSING.

In its efforts to solve what may be the mysterious disappearance of a real "Jud" Palmer, this journal has investigated the actions prior to his arrest of the "Palmer" at present in jail on a charge of alleged swindling by which a number of our citizens have been victimized. Here the *Daily Intelligence* gives the net result of its investigations, which include interviews with several reputable citizens of both sexes who came in contact with "Palmer" or with whom he endeavored to claim old acquaintance. While these are not conclusive, we feel justified in publishing them as the case is of great public interest and possibly involves a graver crime.

It appears that on the day of his arrest "Palmer," who seems to have been drinking, introduced himself to a group of gentlemen back for the Reunion, and insisted on accompanying them on a tour of the city which they had arranged to make in company, in order once again to view old landmarks.

While thus engaged Palmer expressed a desire for fruit and prevailed upon them to stop at the fruit store of Mr. George Hippopopolous. There Palmer, who had procured a wreath of flowers, possibly in preparation for a later visit to the cemetery, endeavored to place it on the head of Mr. Hippopopolous, apparently mistaking him for a deceased friend, and as Mr. Hippopopolous naturally objected, "Palmer" became angry, causing some damage to the stock of fruit, and was with difficulty persuaded to leave the premises.

Still insisting on accompanying the gentlemen in their taxi, which they permitted rather than have trouble with him, as he seemed quarrelsome, he further insisted that each should recite a poem, in which they humored him. As he then expressed a desire to buy a pair of shoes, they accompanied him to a local emporium to see that he behaved himself. Shortly after that, after repeated efforts, they were successful in getting rid of his unwelcome company.

Left to his own devices "Palmer" then visited the real-estate office of Mr. Edward McKeown, but was not successful in seeing him, and he addressed remarks of an insulting nature to Mrs. McKeown, who chanced to be there, but made a hasty exit when she threatened to inform her husband.

From that time, which was in the neighborhood of four o'clock in the afternoon on the day of his arrest, his movements are uncertain—in both senses—until he appeared in the hotel barber shop and requested a shave, during the course of which he fell asleep. As a lotion was being applied to his face on the completion of the shave he

was heard to mutter, "Quit lickin' me, Pete!" doubtless referring to some bygone combat, but on being awakened he seemed refreshed and left, subsequently meeting a lady, one of our leading young business women, with whom he dined at the hotel.

"Yes, I had been dining with the man known as 'Palmer' at the time of his arrest," said this young lady, whose name for obvious reasons we withhold. "He had been in my establishment several times in the ordinary course of business, during which he had conducted himself with perfect propriety, and I saw no reason why I should refuse his invitation, as he said he had a business matter to discuss. I regarded it as a business engagement rather than as a social one. Naturally I was not aware of his condition until we were seated at table, and I then remained rather than attract attention by leaving the room. When I asked him the nature of the business which he wished to discuss with me, he replied that it was a business in a Western town for which he offered to furnish capital if I would meet him there. Naturally I refused this doubtful proposal indignantly, and immediately rose and left him. He was endeavoring to follow me when arrested."

It would appear that "Palmer" cherished ambitions to be a Don Juan, for another lady whose name also we withhold for equally obvious reasons but who knew the real Jud Palmer as a youth, states that a man, doubtless the one in question, accosted her on the preceding evening as she was leaving a picture house and, calling her by name, introduced himself as the person she had known in the past.

"I did not at first recognize him," the lady states, "but the light was not good, and I considered that years might well have wrought a change in his appearance. He mentioned several events that had occurred some years ago, so that I had no doubt of his identity and permitted him to escort me to my home. On the way he related what purported to be incidents of life in the West, including the discovery of his mine and adventures with wild animals and Indians. The mention of Indians seemed to excite him. He spoke largely of the West, praising it as a place of residence, and in fact suggesting that I should visit it. At this point he adopted a certain attitude which led me to believe that he was presuming on old acquaintance, and I wished him good night. I cannot say that he was offensive, but I was glad when he had gone."

"A telephone call to his room the following morning has been traced to you, Miss X," it was suggested.

"I was about to mention that," the lady returned frankly. "He had suggested that I lunch with him the following day, and fearing that my refusal had not been emphatic enough I rang him up to inform him that under no circumstances would I do so, and that I did not desire to see him again."

Interviewed at his place of business, Mr. David S. McCallum, leading shoe dealer, said: "The man calling himself 'Palmer' came here and introduced himself as a former member of my Sunday-school classes. I did not recognize him. I considered his appearance dissipated, but my suspicions were not aroused until he announced that he was from British Columbia. He endeavored to buy certain shares which I hold for a fractional part of their value, and later called at my house and repeated the effort without success. I cannot say that he attempted to sell me any shares, though the man 'Atchison' did, unsuccessfully.

"Yes, 'Palmer' was here on the day of his arrest saying he wished to purchase a pair of shoes, but in his then condition I would sell him nothing. He was not violent, but in an expansive and generous mood, an effect which

liquor has on some people. In fact, he endeavored to force money on one of my female employees, so that she might buy herself a wedding present, stating that he had plenty of money and that the sum he wished to give her was no more to him than—as he sacrilegiously put it—'one pin-feather to an angel.' Naturally I would not permit such a gift, which I considered impertinent. That is all that I know about him."

Seen at his office, Mr. Edward McKeown, leading realtor, made the following statement: "The person you refer to called at my office some days ago and introduced himself as a certain Jud Palmer whom I knew slightly as a mere youth. He recalled or pretended to recall certain incidents of those days, so that it did not occur to me to doubt his identity, though he had greatly changed in appearance, which, however, was but natural. If he is not Palmer he has been well instructed, possibly by Palmer himself, who bore none too good a reputation when he left this city, and was supposed to have gone West. Naturally I was unsuspicious, and to a certain extent he succeeded in worming himself into my confidence.

"Feigning an interest in real estate, he invited me to lunch with him. He had liquor in his room which he pressed upon me, but my example did not deter him from indulging in it himself, which in fact rather confirmed my impression as to his being the man he claimed to be. During lunch he was slightly though I believe unintentionally offensive to a lady, for which I was forced to rebuke him. After the meal at his urgent request I took him to look at certain properties in the country. He had taken liquor with him and it began to affect him seriously, rendering it difficult for me to drive in my usual careful manner. Under the circumstances, when we reached a town I considered it advisable to pretend a breakdown, and in his own interests to take him to the quiet of an hotel, which I did.

"As I could not bring myself to abandon a former acquaintance, even an undesirable one—for I am perhaps foolishly loyal—I remained at the hotel myself that night and in the morning brought him back to Cambyville. On the way I thought myself justified in reproving him for his conduct. Possibly this offended him, or he may have had the grace to be ashamed of himself, for I have seen no more of him. Mrs. McKeown informs me that he called at this office the other afternoon and addressed her in terms which she describes as insulting. I regret that I was not there to give him a needed lesson in manners.

"I believe he did mention the names 'Onderdonk' and 'Quackenbush' to me, and I gained a not very clear impression that they had been used to conceal an identity, perhaps his own, which naturally did not strengthen my confidence in him. The theory that he is not the real Palmer I have not considered and do not care to express an opinion on. I am quite clear, however, that he is not a desirable associate for a respectable citizen, whoever he is."

Well, Mr. Editor, that is what those Cambyville papers printed about me, and they printed it all over the front page in big type. I will conclude these extracts with the final one which was not on the front page nor in big type, but was tucked away on a back page following the notices of religious services where nobody would be libel to see it.

Extract No. 5.

ALLEGED ACCOMPLICE RELEASED.

A man named Palmer, who has been held by the police pending the investigation of an alleged swindle, was released from custody this morning, ad-

vices from the West having established his identity satisfactorily. Palmer appears to have been a mere tool in the hands of much shrewder men. He left town immediately on a westbound train.

CHAPTER IX.

L'ENVOI.

I did not see the Reunion and Old Home Town Week, because I was in jail during that week; but I do not want to attend nothing in a town where they treat you like that, and I now have clearer ideas about old home towns farther East which are mentioned in the Old Testament. When I hit Potlatch I am staying there just long enough to collect up Pete and a grubstake, and then I am pulling right out for the hills to enjoy some decent society in the form of a dog.

Now, Mr. Editor, the only thing those Cambyville papers were right about was that I took the first westbound train, and I only stayed on that till I could catch a faster one. Otherwise they are liars by the clock and so is everybody they quoted, for the true facts are as I have told you already; so you will be ready to contradict any false rumors about me which these lies may have started, which I know you will want to do in the interests of decent journalism and my good reputation, and that is why I write you.

Yours truly,

JUD PALMER.

FACT AND FICTION

PEOPLE often say: "Oh, that's a crazy story! That stuff couldn't happen in real life." The fact remains, however, that many real-life happenings read exactly like fiction stories. In the morning newspapers a few weeks past was a tale that might have come from the pen of a Josef Conrad.

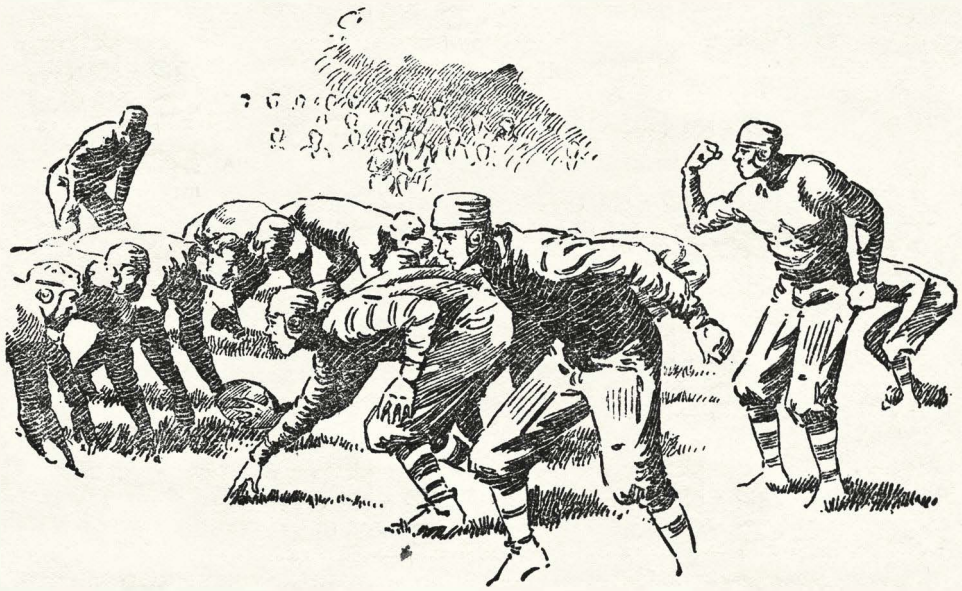
A twelve-year-boy and his father were out sailing near the coast of Maryland. They were out of sight of land. The father was suddenly stricken, and died; and the lad, even though he had never sailed a boat, kept his head like a child Lindbergh, and sailed the boat into Chesapeake Bay. To do so he had to experiment with the workings of the craft, and was forced to guess the general direction of land. The boat grounded at the mouth of the bay, and fishermen sailed out to the rescue.

Not long ago an old seaman on a fishing schooner out of Gloucester, Massachusetts, discovered a lump of ambergris at sea. Ambergris is very valuable. It comes from the sperm whale, and is used in making perfumes. This particular lump was worth about twelve thousand dollars—which is a lot of money to a seventy-four-year-old seaman. It's a lot of money anyway, isn't it? You bet your life it is! And what do you suppose he decided to do with it? Plunge in the stock market? No. He said he'd buy a farm, retire, and raise chickens!

And if you're interested in strange facts, read this and weep! In a New York building excavation some workmen dug up four bottles of rare old likker, very rare, and older than your father's parrot. How long did the likker last? Say!

SIGNALS NOT REQUIRED

By JAMES SAYRE PICKERING



When the Team's Only Other Good Player Went Over to a Rival College for Money, Megantic's Little Fighting Quarter Got Sore.

OLD MAN" THORNE—Mister Thorne, to his charges when they were within earshot of him—sat in his little, littered room in the gymnasium building, exchanging silences with Raymond Carter, graduate manager of athletics at Megantic University. Whatever the two had had to say to each other was short and soon said. Megantic was hard up—stony broke, in fact—for football material. The team which, in previous years, had romped carelessly and unfeelingly over all opposition had been reaping the whirlwind. There was a famine of football players at Megantic, and, walking away from Old Man Thorne's office and out of the college was one of the two men who had been keeping the college from actual football starvation.

"Buck" Haskell was quitting—through. He had put his proposition up to Thorne and Carter, and, strangely enough, it had been turned down. So Buck was going. He was a natural: one of those gifted youths who seem born for no other purpose than to punt and drop-kick straight and far, to pass accurately and to run broken fields. Buck was a triple threat and Megantic needed triple threats sorely. But Buck was a bit strapped.

Of course he had plenty of money for clothes, his room was paid for by enthusiastic alumni under a foundation created for the purpose; his tuition was

taken care of by a scholarship; and all his daily needs were provided for. He had, however, insufficient money to furnish him with those luxuries which make bright the long, dull winters of life in a large college. There should be, for instance, Buck thought, trips to the city now and then, for recreation, and Buck's recreation came high. There should be a car, too, this winter; and a bit of cash set by against the summer, with the alternative of working, would come in very handy.

So, with a boldness born of a knowledge of his value, he had called, this bright November morning, upon Old Man Thorne, and was pleased to find Raymond Carter in the office, too. That meant killing both his birds with one stone. Thorne looked up as Buck came in.

"Hello, Haskell! What's on your mind?"

"Morning!" Buck included both men in his nod, and sat on a corner of Thorne's desk. They looked up at him, interested, for was he not their star, their mainstay, their right-hand temple column? Buck faltered not, but came to his point.

"Mr. Thorne, I'm afraid I'll have to leave college."

Old Man Thorne raised his head and his left eyebrow slowly, and swung around in his chair, the better to face Buck.

"What's the matter?"

"I can't afford to stay. I just haven't the money."

"No?"

"No. I think I'd be better off working, anyway."

"Maybe."

Carter put in a word.

"How much do you think you need, Buck?"

Buck turned to him. "Oh, it isn't anything that's pressing right now. It's just that it costs so darn much more to go on here than I've got, that's all."

"I'll be glad to advance you some, if you think it will help."

"Thanks, Ray. It isn't just that, though. It's the idea of going to college here, when I might be out somewhere making money. Here, it's all going out and nothing coming in. Maybe—if I was able to make some, now——"

He left the sentence unfinished. Old Man Thorne, whose eyebrow was still up, looked at him even more quizzically.

"How much did they offer?"

Buck whirled around. "What do you mean?" It was very dramatic.

"How much," said Thorne, very slowly and patiently, "did whatever college that offered you money to come and play football for them, offer you?"

"Why, I don't get you!"

"No?" Thorne was very much surprised. "You'd stay on here, though, if you were paid for it, wouldn't you?"

Buck looked from one to the other.

"Why—I would if I could afford it, yes."

"Yes. Got a job, outside?"

"No."

"Know where you can get one?"

"Maybe."

"What more do you want than you're getting here? You have your room, your tuition, and probably most of your grub. You seem to be pretty well fixed for small change. If the college gave you any more, you'd be a pro. What do you want?"

Buck paused, weighing himself. He felt that his value to Megantic must carry him through. He had chosen his time carefully. It was near the end of the season and Megantic had come off with a fair showing, thanks to him and to little Randy Morse, the quarter. If he should leave now, Megantic would have nothing. Morse couldn't play the whole game alone. And the rest of the Megantic squad were just a lot of willing dubs. He squared around again toward Thorne.

"I need money to stay here. If I can't get it, I'll have to go to some less expensive college."

"Ah!" Thorne's face lighted up. "As, for instance?"

"Well—I know of one!"

Ray Carter snorted and started to rise. Buck slid quickly from Thorne's desk and stood up. Thorne, never changing his position, raised a hand to restrain Carter in whatever he was about to do. He looked slowly and thoughtfully up at Haskell.

"Good-by, Buck!"

Buck jumped. "What?"

"Good-by. I'll give you recommendations to your new employers, if you need 'em. We haven't gotten around to paying regular wages—yet! Don't forget all I've taught you!"

This was a little sudden. Buck turned and looked at Carter, who had taken his cue from Thorne, and was standing, staring out of the window. Buck looked again at Thorne, who still sat quietly, leaning back in his chair. He was puzzled.

"Good-by, Buck. Are you going, or do you want me to throw you out?"

Buck shrugged his shoulders, turned, and went out.

When he had gone, Thorne turned to Carter.

"There goes the old ball game. Well, that's that. What a bum he turned out to be!"

Carter, recently graduated, was more visibly worried.

"What'll we do now? The team was bad enough as it was. With him gone—holy smoke!"

Thorne whirled around. His jaws came together.

"What the hell *can* we do? Take our licking! If the blasted alumni don't fire me, I'll give 'em a real team in another year or two! Right now, we're licked. We've got to play it out and take the rest of the season right on the nose, that's all. I knew somebody was after him. I think it's Crawford. They're digging up a lot of ringers. I'll see to it that they don't play him until his residence year is fully up, though!"

Carter stepped over to the old man's side.

"I'll say something to the alumni. Don't worry about that part of it. You'll get your year to build up a team, if I can swing it! You've got Randy Morse, for a starter. He's only a sophomore, and he can't be bought."

Thorne nodded, his eyes on space. "Yes, I'll have a team in a couple of years. But, hell! A year's a lot of time, when you're my age. Oh, well ——" He slapped his hands down on the arms of his chair and rose. "Nothing we can do. I wouldn't buy that bird back if it took only thirty cents!"

He went slowly out of his office and down into the gymnasium, where some of his men were already getting into uniform for practice. He stood looking at them appraisingly, running over in his mind their capabilities as they had been disclosed by more than half a season of play. He shook his head, slowly. No, there wasn't anybody who could step into Haskell's shoes. Randy Morse he still had, of course, but Randy was doing four men's work in the backfield right now. With the team in its present condition, Randy might very well work himself into staleness or sustain some crippling injury in his effort to avert disaster. He was that kind. The rest—well, they were all omelets! Husky enough, but not much gray matter or speed. Game and willing, but just not there.

He went up to where the little quarter sat on a bench, lacing his shoes, and sat down beside him, his hands between his knees. Randy tied a knot with a grunt and stood up, settling the pads about his hips with vigorous pullings and shakings. The cleats on his shoes scrapped harshly over the boards

of the floor. He looked up, saw Thorne, and grinned.

"Hello, coach."

Thorne looked up with a smile. "Hello, Randy. Sit down a second. I want to talk to you."

Curious, Randy sat down. Old Man Thorne turned to face him.

"Randy, we're sunk. Buck's gone."

It didn't penetrate at first. "What?"

"Buck Haskell's left college."

"Buck left? 'D he get fired?"

Thorne shook his head. "Nope. Quit. Came and asked me if I couldn't do something for him—money—and when I wouldn't, he left. In fact, I didn't give him a chance to choose, much. I just said 'Good-by' and he's gone. And there we are!" He turned and held out a brown and wrinkled hand to Randy, marking his points on the palm with the edge of his other hand.

"Now, listen! The season's gone. Get that! I'm not going to make any desperate efforts to save it. We have a couple of good lickings to take, and we'll take 'em. What I want you to do is this: "You're a sophomore. You'll be back next year and the year after. I expect to use you to build up a good team in those years. Take care of yourself. Don't take chances. I don't want you hurt. I need you on the field, or the games would be a joke, but just as sure as I see you trying to play the whole game, I'll yank you out! Remember that!"

Randy, too much of a man to be unduly inflated by Thorne's words, nodded. He was still dazed by the news of Buck's desertion.

"All right, coach! But say—are you sure about Buck? I mean, he's really gone?"

Thorne nodded. "No doubt about it! And I'm pretty sure where he's gone."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean he's gone to another college, where they don't object to paying regular wages." Thorne smiled cynically.

Randy faced him, turning suddenly, his cheeks each bearing a tiny red spot and his eyes a trifle narrowed.

"You mean he asked you to pay him money to play here, and when you wouldn't do it, he went to some school that would?"

Thorne looked at Randy. His little quarter was obviously worked up. Thorne wondered if Randy had given a thought to the privileges and scholarships showered upon Buck Haskell, who, from the standpoint of education, could manage to read the newspapers and let it go at that. Did Randy think that Buck was given those scholarships because of any vast potentialities of learning? Randy just didn't know, perhaps. His own people could well afford to finance him fully, and scholarships and free rooms had never occurred to him. He would learn. But in the meantime——

"I mean just that," said Thorne. "Pretty, isn't it?"

"What's the matter with him? Is he crazy?"

Thorne shook his head slowly. "I don't know, Randy. I've known a lot of young fellows, and I knew what was the matter with Buck as soon as he came in here. I've seen it happen before. Don't blame him too much. The college he's going to probably made the first advances. It just caught him in his weak spot, that's all. There wasn't anything to do but let him go. What is going to be tough is having to take our cuffings this year and next without being able to tell the world why."

Randy snorted. "Huh! Where'd he go?"

Thorne shook his head. "I'm not dead certain, yet. Wait a while. It'll be in the papers." He rose, and started toward his own dressing room to get into his clothes. "Just remember what I told you—no accidents, and no wearing yourself out."

Randy nodded, stood for a moment,

and trotted up the stairs and out into the cold, gray November afternoon.

The season dragged itself on. Megantic played three more games—and lost them. An apathetic team, led by one small, slight man, with fire in his soul and voice, moved willingly but slowly and crudely against well-drilled and more heady machines. Randy contented himself with a defensive game, willing to forgo scoring if he could keep his opponents from his own goal. Twice, losing himself in the fury of the play, he was taken out by Thorne and placed on the bench to cool off. The curious stands saw their one good man called out of the game—taken out when he seemed at the top of his form, and relegated to the bench. They, the stands, were also apathetic, losing interest as the team continued to lose games, and made no outward demonstration of inquiry. Ray Carter had more wire pulling to do than he had planned, but he managed, by a little judicious politics, to keep Thorne unmolested as coach, as he had promised. No one knew the waiting game that they had to play.

Buck Haskell's absence was noted, of course, but careful work on Thorne's part, and a certain understandable circumspection on the part of the college which had acquired Buck's services gave currency to the story that Buck had been forced to leave college because of financial difficulties, which, after all, was one way of putting it. Thorne watched over Randy like a hen with one chick, nursed him through the declining season, and welcomed him with open arms the next fall, when he reported for practice.

The coach built up a team around his quarter, man by man, from last year's freshman material and from several eligible men who had entered Megantic in the upper classes. The season itself was fair, but what was most important about it was the promise it gave for a fine, all-around team the next year. Much publicity was given to Thorne's methods and to Randy Morse, his nucleus. Great things were prophesied for Megantic and for Thorne.

Buck Haskell had turned up at Crawford, as Thorne had suspected. Because of the rule that no man may represent the college on any team until he has been in residence one year, he could not play, but he had been on the field for every practice, had gone with the team to every game, and had made his presence felt by assisting the coaches with his experience and natural ability.

Randy Morse, growing every day wiser in the ways of football, had led his team this year in an ever-increasing efficiency. The soft, first games of the season were more difficult for them than the rather stiff ones of November. They struggled to win against the small colleges, and on Thanksgiving Day they walked away with the big Monitor game. Thorne had husbanded Randy still, but in this game he promised to unleash him. Randy stepped on the field with a sense of freedom which he had not felt in two years. It was a little strange, at first, and he held back from sheer habit until he realized fully that he was untrammeled—he could do as he pleased. With this realization came success.

Thorne was not being foolish. He knew that Randy had grown out of the habit of victory, and he wanted his quarter to accustom himself to letting himself go, before the third—and, it was to be hoped—triumphant season began. He watched Randy accelerate, pick up the team, now made up of heavy, well conditioned and quick youngsters, and smash it through the big purple Monitor line for one first down after another. He watched Randy and his team settle before their own goal line and hold the fighting, driving Monitor eleven for heartbreaking downs, and his soul warmed within him. He breathed a sigh of relief; thought of the next year,

with the same men, practically, as they were now, but a little better, and hugged himself.

The one sore spot of the season's schedule was a defeat by Crawford. This game was not the most important for Megantic, but, for certain reasons, Thorne and Randy wanted very much to win. Buck, of course, was not playing, and sat on the bench in a blanket, not very much in evidence. The game was played at Crawford, and was close. It was only a drop kick that caused the difference in the score; but it was a hard game to lose. Thorne and Randy alone knew how much the game meant. The team left Crawford in the weariness of defeat, and two men in the group were determined to point for that game the next year.

That next year was Randy's senior year. He had been very justly elected captain of Megantic the fall before, just after the splendid Thanksgiving game, and was now a veteran, hard and speedy, with a hard, speedy team before him. It was a beautiful team to watch. There was never an unnecessary move in their play. The team had been trained to follow, follow, follow the ball. The line moved always as one man, swiftly, incisively, on the attack, and held on the defense with all the grimness and stolidity of a stone wall. It had been drilled so thoroughly in the science and strategy of the game that it could anticipate most of the moves of its opponents. It could block and interfere until there wasn't a foe left standing.

And its backfield was composed of four wizards. There was Hemming, who could kick with the range and accuracy of a siege gun. There was Phillips, who passed with deadly skill, though all the leaping forms and waving arms in the world were flashing in front of him. There was Baker, the great running back, who was almost as fast on a muddy field as he was on the cinders, cracking off the hundred in around ten seconds and going through the line for his four yards at a clip, with ten men fighting him. There was Randy Morse, one hundred and forty pounds, little, hard and quick as lightning, with the voice of Stentor. Randy, by whose very tone the team had often been lifted in the charge that won the day. Randy, whose slap on a convenient posterior area would start a play going with the swing and dash of a good practice on an empty field, and with the same ease. Randy, whose knowledge of the game, whose cool head in crises and whose ability to command made him the great quarter of the season, was at the height of his powers. It was a sweet team!

Thorne, so long denied, reveled in this power. He sent his invincible machine against the early season cinches with a thirst for blood in his heart. Incredible scores were piled up. There was talk of a point a minute. The apparently effortless march of his men down the field amazed all who saw it. There would be the line of scrimmage with little Randy and his three paladins standing behind it. Then that tremendous voice, calling off the numbers with such fire and snap that the very stands leaped and quivered under the spell. The shift, done with beautiful precision by veterans who could not go wrong, the ball accurately passed, and, before the move could be seen, the opposing line would be scattered or overwhelmed and the runner far away. It was pretty to watch.

And, as the games became stiffer, the team improved. Of course, the late season scores were not so stupendous as those in September and early October. But Megantic showed its staying power again when it smashed back four frantic line plunges with its feet on its own goal line. This was something that many critics had said it could not do, and Thorne smiled all over his face when it was over and Hemming had

lifted the ball in a beautiful. whirling punt, out of danger.

The Crawford game came, this year, on the first Saturday in November. Randy had driven and exhorted his men all week with an extra fire and venom in his voice. His resentment, stored up for two years, against Buck Haskell and against Crawford, for its part in the dirty business, was crowding toward an outlet. Thorne was more highly strung, too, and pounced wickedly on one or two bonehead moves that showed up in practice. The whole team was set to a fine edge. The men were nervous and irritable off the field, having, collectively, the temperament of a prize fighter who is ready. They were touchy and disagreeable, but at practice they were as cool, as steady and as grim as a champion in the ring. Thorne came down to Randy as he was dressing, reminding him of a similar scene, two years before.

"He's here, Randy."

Randy looked up. He was taping his hands against a possible slip with the ball. He grinned—but with his mouth only.

"We've been waiting for him, coach!"

Thorne left him, with a tap on the shoulder, and Randy, waiting until the moment when every man was ready and aching to go, led the team onto the field. The roar of the crowd fell upon his unhearing ears. As he trotted out, his eyes roved to the Crawford bench. Where—— Yes, there he was. Two from the end. Oh, boy! Randy threw his team into formation and snapped them through three plays; and then Hemming, as neatly as though he had thrown it, kicked the ball between the goal posts with an effortless drop from the fifty-yard line. This time there was a real roar from the stands. The team went back to its blankets and Randy walked out to meet the Crawford captain and the officials. They called for the toss and Randy won. He chose his goal and shook hands. He knew the Crawford captain, a good sort by the name of Sam Hendry.

"I'm sorry for you, Sam," Randy said, and walked back before the startled Crawfordian could reply. The official grinned behind his hand and blew his whistle.

Crawford was kicking off. Randy stood well back among his men and began his familiar exhorting. His voice was clearly heard in the magnificent hush that accompanied the preliminaries to the kick-off. "Get down! Get down under it! Come on, 'Ducky'! Watch the ball, up there! Give us some interference!" He flung up a hand in answer to the referee's question. "Ready!"

The ball sailed into the air. Randy ran toward it. He saw that it was going over his head and looked back to see who had it. Baker. Good! He sped forward and across, watching Hemming and one of the guards building up a defense around the swiftly running back. He saw a red jersey speeding in toward him, changed his stride quickly and sent the man spinning with his hips. The contact changed him from a nervous, excited boy into a cog in the machine. Another man closed in, wiser, and Randy dove at his knees, rolling with him over and over. He heard the whistle blow as he got up and saw that Baker had carried the ball into midfield at about the forty-yard line. Randy ran up just in time to hear the referee announce it.

The team formed easily before him. He looked quickly at Crawford, but took no time to recognize any one. He turned and called for Phillips to take it through tackle, to give Baker a chance to rest and to test the mettle of the Crawford line. The last number was shouted from his lips, the center snapped the ball back in a perfect pass into Phillips' elbow. Randy dropped around to Phillips' right as the runner plunged, his feet drumming on the turf and hit the line with lowered head and shoulders.

Randy saw a heavy pair of legs come circling around the right end. He dropped at them and he and their owner went down together. He picked himself up and trotted over to where the referee was untangling the pile of men.

The man Randy had spilled rose in front of him and faced him. It was Buck. Randy had seen him often enough in football clothes to recognize him immediately. Buck started to speak, but Randy, in just an instant, let his eyes slide up and down Buck's figure, from his head to his toes and back again, with such an expression of contempt that the other shrugged and turned to one side.

Phillips had made his four yards. Randy turned his back on the lines and reeled off the numbers for a pass. This was Phillips' work again. From the tail of his eye, Randy watched his ends edge out, saw the Crawford ends stand up and trot out to cover them, watching Megantic's center for the pass. Randy paused and repeated his signals. Phillips stepped quickly back, his hands upraised with the fingers closed. He waited one instant, two, while Randy spun around and faced the play. Then his fingers snapped open, the ball rose and the two lines came together audibly, the one ripping and tearing to get through, the other swaying, locked against the charge. An end was free. He had dodged and circled his opponent and was away down the field, his head turned over his shoulder to watch. Phillips placed him and looked at the scrimmage. The line was holding. The backfield men had gone out and taken the places of the ends to stop the secondary line from coming around. From outside, it seemed a chaotic, struggling mass, but to Phillips' eyes, it was an impregnable and gallant defense.

It was not supposed to last indefinitely, however, and it was beginning to go. At the last possible moment Phillips drew back his arm and threw. As he did, he went down under the towering bulk of the Crawford center, who had left two Megantic linesmen flat to get through. The ball sailed off on a flat, straight pass, directly at the head of the free end. This one reached up a hand. It touched the ball, bounced it, caught it, bounced it again and settled it into his arms. The Crawford tackler reached him at that moment by a desperate lunge and they went down. But they went down thirty yards to the good, and Megantic trotted up to the new position to the accompaniment of thunders and leapings from their stands.

That was the story of the first half. Crawford had been good, as good as Megantic. Whatever moral weaknesses Buck Haskell may have had, they did not show in his playing, for he was a hind let loose. He was everywhere; and had not Randy been inspired, Megantic might have been scored on. The teams fought each other from midfield to within striking distance of their goals, only to be forced to kick and to start all over. One second of relaxation on either side would have thrown the balance overwhelmingly in favor of the other; but that second did not occur. Randy stood in his position as safety man on the defense with his nails biting into his palms, stepping with nervous tread back and forth, breathing sharply through his nose and hoping against hope for a recovered fumble—for anything that might turn the tide. When the whistle blew for the end of the first half, the team streamed into the locker room, winded and sore.

Thorne was with them. He looked at them for a moment in silence and shook his head. "They're good." He stopped again, and his voice rose. "But you're better! You've got to do miracles out there! I want that team beaten! Do you get that? That means that you've got to do better than you were—and I know you were doing your best! That's all!"

He was about to step down from his bench when Randy stepped in front of him, his eyes bright with excitement.

"Coach! Listen! Let me do something, will you?"

Thorne looked down, puzzled.

"What do you want to do?"

Randy drew him aside and explained in a low voice. Thorne shook his head at first, continued to shake it—then weakened. He finally nodded and turned again to the team.

"You men! Listen to Randy!"

Randy jumped up on the bench and faced the team. He was a grotesque figure, swathed in his blanket, his tousled hair standing out above it. His voice was big with his idea.

"Listen! I'm going to try something! Follow my cues out there this next half. I won't give signals. I'll just call the play, and you do it! You'll have to be on your toes! Get me, now, and we'll lick this bunch!"

He stepped down, and the men crowded around. To them, individually, and to his backs particularly, he gave more minute instructions. The idea took them, and they ran out on the field with new vigor.

Megantic kicked off, and Randy ran his team through the defensive plays in silence, until, at the end of a futile drive, Crawford punted and Megantic had the ball. They lined up on their own thirty-yard line and Randy took his chance. He faced the Crawford team and spoke loudly and clearly.

"Signals, gentlemen, will not be required from now on. Mr. Baker will now take the ball on an off-tackle plunge. He will undoubtedly break through your line, and will then have only your backs to face. They are practically negligible. Let's go!"

He brought his hand down resoundingly on Tubby Farnsworth's broadest surface and the center sent the ball into Baker's hands. The Crawford line, confused and not believing their ears, held badly, and Baker slid by for more than eight yards, pulled down finally by a furious and wondering Haskell. Randy lined his men up quickly.

"Eight yards through Mr. Haskell that time! Let's do it again, except that our Mr. Phillips will carry the ball. The old, familiar shift, gentlemen, and Crawford's Mr. Haskell will not be there! Now!"

Again the lines thundered together, and this time a Crawford guard, in eagerness to get at the announced scene of the play, was offside, and the ball went back, with a solemn referee pacing off the penalty in favor of Megantic. They were now in midfield. Again Randy orated to the teams.

"Thank you, Crawford. Mr. Phillips will now make another of his justly famed passes. You get it again, will you, Lonny?" he called down to the end, who, catching the spirit of the thing, stood up for an instant and bowed, one dirty hand on his chest. "Thank you. Crawford's hired hand, Mr. Haskell, will give you no trouble. One! Two! Three!"

Away went the ends and back stepped Phillips. Lonny, as Randy had calculated, was hopelessly boxed, and Phillips passed to the other end, who was tearing down the field practically alone. He caught the ball and made another five yards before he was violently thrown by Sam Hendry. The ball, in two plays and a penalty, was now a scant dozen yards from Crawford's goal, and the Crawford stands, realizing what was going on, were calling for a little holding. Randy raised his voice above the tumult.

"We shall now take the ball over the line, Crawford! Over the line for a score! And even your highest-paid player, Mr. Haskell, cannot stop us. Mr. Hemming will carry the ball and will go between right end and right tackle! Are you ready? Let's g-o-o!"

Away went Hemming, like a flash of

lightning. Crawford was so concentrated at the spot that Hemming had but to sidestep out of the way and they fell all over themselves to get at him. He straight-armed Crawford's lone safety man, swung another tackler off his hips, and plowed proudly across the line for a score. Megantic's stands shrieked their jubilation and Crawford was dumb. Randy and his men danced out from beneath the posts and formed for the play in which they were to try for their extra point. Randy turned and motioned Hemming back.

"Mr. Hemming, who just scored, will now drop-kick squarely between the posts. Stand by, Mr. Haskell, and see if you can block it!"

The line held, and Hemming's deadly toe sent the ball, spinning laterally, safely past the eleven pairs of hands which vainly stretched out for it. Again Megantic rose as one man and rent the air. The teams trotted back for the kick-off. As they lined up, a substitute ran out from the Crawford bench. He sent out a linesman and turned to face the Megantic team. Randy chuckled. The Crawford coach wanted to find out what was going on. He glanced at the bench. Sure enough! There the man was, a blanket already over his shoulders, in earnest conversation with the coach. As Randy looked, the man pointed to him, and he could see the Crawford coach staring out. Randy waved a delighted hand. Megantic kicked far into Crawford's territory and Sam Hendry caught the ball. He ran it back well, dodging and turning Megantic's eager tacklers, and with some first-class interference around him. Baker brought him down almost at Randy's feet.

Sam gave the referee the ball and got up. He looked at Randy and spoke.

"What's all this funny business?"

Randy smiled in a superior manner. "Wait and hear, Sam. I'll tell you about it as the game goes on!"

Sam shook his head and went back to his place. Randy played back of the rest of the team on the defensive, and could watch all that took place from his position. He saw the lines form, stand steady for an instant, and then disintegrate into a struggling mass. Crawford was evidently trying to break through the line. Randy grinned at the idea. Silly! He followed the play across the field, and, once, ran forward a few quick steps as a Crawford back seemed about to get around one end. Nothing came of that, and he watched two more plays. He noticed that the linesmen on the side of the field had not changed their positions, and got set for Crawford's kick. It came on the next play. He saw Buck Haskell step back, heard the thud of toe meeting ball and saw the brown oval float up into the air. A long, beautiful punt! Randy circled, ran back and got under it. It was close to his own goal, and he set himself and waited. He hoped it would not be so close that there was a chance of its bouncing over the line. He wanted to run it back, but if it went over, it was better to let it go and take the twenty yards. He took a quick look.

No! Too far, and the bounce of that oval was too uncertain. It came down and down. He shifted one step, two, and caught it, nicely. Even as it struck him, he was off, driving himself with short, quick steps, the ball held in front of him, ready to be shifted under either arm, depending on the direction of the attack. Several red jerseys came toward him in long, sweeping curves. As many more purple jerseys got in the way and upset them. One red jersey broke through and came so close that Randy could hear the man panting above the uproar. He jumped away, twisted, and ran faster. Two more came at him. He thrust an arm out at one, staggered from the shock of meeting him and was caught by the other and thrown, hugging the ball to

him. It was a good run. They were on their own thirty-five-yard line.

The lines formed quickly and Randy, panting, gasped to catch his breath.

"Three plays and a penalty, men! The program over again! Mr. Baker through tackle and past the ineffectual Mr. Haskell! Ready? Go!"

Baker got through for six yards and lay contented over the ball. Randy decided to go into more detail.

"A pass, Mr. Phillips! This will be as easy as the last one! Crawford's hired hand, Mr. Haskell, will give you no trouble whatever! One! Two! Three!"

The grinning Phillips danced back, looked over his field, and tossed the ball cleanly to Lonny, who had dodged the raging Buck, overzealous and off balance with fury. Sam Hendry slammed Lonny down with a fierce tackle only after he had made another five yards.

Hendry was furious. He raged behind the Crawford line, exhorting his men, urging, slapping them, begging them not to lose their heads and to watch the play. He spoke in a hurried whisper to Buck, whose face was getting more red at each of Randy's references to him.

Randy smiled a smile of pure joy. Again he turned to the delighted team and addressed them.

"Mr. Hemming will now kick another of his beautiful and accurate drops right over your goal, Mr. Haskell! As the highest salaried player on Crawford, you will do well to watch him! It will be a valuable lesson! Back, Mr. Hemming! Go!"

Crawford, ready for anything, murder included now, fought and tore at the Megantic line. Hemming took his time beautifully, poised the ball, stepped, dropped it, and kicked as though the straining frenzy just in front of his rather grimy nose had been miles away. The ball wabbled up, turning end for end, and the lines forgot their fury to watch it, not breathing. The stands stood, and a crescendo roar went up from Megantic as the ball neared the bar, still rising, and cleared it squarely between the posts. As it struck earth behind the goal, the whistle blew for the quarter, and the teams trotted for the sides of the field to breath and wash out their mouths.

On the Crawford side, Buck Haskell, questioned by an angry team, shrugged and stood apart. Sam Hendry talked violently to his men, gesticulating with fury under their noses. The whistle blew, and they lined up to kick off again.

Crawford received, and, with no talk from Randy to torment them now, they fell into the old ways, running the ball back to midfield in half a dozen smashing plays. Randy, from his position as safety man, watched them come on. He knew that a few well-chosen words might help. He wished that he was in that line. Buck Haskell was doing most of the carrying, and the Crawford line, furious at the treatment they had received, were spending their rage in fierceness and were hitting Megantic with all their power. At every play, men were taken out with such vigor that they rolled and slid well apart from the general scrimmage. Irresistibly Crawford came on, pounding and hammering. Randy moved back a little with each play, until he felt, rather than saw, the imminence of his own goal posts. Then he stood, and watched the lines come closer.

One first down, three plays, another first, and Randy was among his men once more. Baker was weary, and moved stiffly to his place. Hemming had a bloody nose, and had not improved his appearance at all by smearing it all over his face. Phillips limped a little, but only from a bruise. Old Man Thorne was sticking to the first-string men this trip. The Crawford game meant too much. The line was grim and panting. The men were covered

with dirt; here a stocking was torn and there a jersey showed the yellow leather of pads through a torn back. From the looks of things, it had been a fierce battle. Randy stepped up, shouting encouragement.

"It's all right, boys! Only three men in the backfield! Three men and Haskell! He's a piece of cheese! Look at him!"

Buck straightened up, red and driven beside himself, and missed the play. The Crawford back crashed into him, stumbled and was pulled down from behind. Randy chortled, careful not to interfere with the calling of Crawford's signals. The quarter shouted them angrily and most pointedly at Buck. When he had finished, in the silent instant before the play was well under way, Randy spoke: "He gets in his own way and they pay him for it!"

The Crawford center was slow. All three backs and part of the line moved before he could pass the ball, but as Megantic had moved with them, both teams were offside, and the play was a stalemate. "See!" Randy shouted, and laughed, a little, niggling, taunting laugh, of which he was a master. Haskell, lost to everything but his rage and shame, stood up just as his quarter was about to begin the signals and shouted back:

"Shut up, you mouthy little runt!"

A terrific buffet from Sam Hendry was all he got for his pains, apart from a repetition of that maddening giggle from Randy. It was all very young and schoolboyish, but it was getting results.

The play was a slight gain, and the referee, who had been working along with inward interest but with surface stoicism, announced that it was the third down with six yards to go. Crawford should have drop-kicked; but a kick meant only three points, Megantic's goal was close, and a touchdown was not beyond the bounds of possibility. Crawford staked everything on that chance and tried again on the ground, Randy, tense, realizing that time was almost up, praying that Crawford would not drop-kick, spoke again, between signals, as though encouraging his own men, but loud enough for all Crawford to hear.

"He eats 'em alive! Look out for his teeth!"

The ball snapped, and Crawford flung itself forward. Haskell, goaded beyond sense, forgot everything except that stinging, biting little man across the lines, and made for him. He moved out of position, broke his own line and made a gap through which Hemming dove to nail the Crawford back ere he could start. The play ended in confusion before Randy could get started, and as he trotted up, grinning jubilantly, Buck Haskell stood before him, his fist raised, his face contorted.

"Damn you!" he said—and choked. Randy felt it coming and could do no more than smile sweetly, but the blow never fell. Another man swung up, yanked Haskell's arm down and said, "Out, Buck!" Haskell whirled, looked into the grim and unsmiling face of his substitute and loped wearily off the field, pulling off his helmet as he ran. He was greeted in awful silence. Megantic, jubilant, took possession of the ball and kicked out of danger.

Then the game, the goal of two years' waiting, was over, for the gun barked as the ball left Hemming's toe. Randy led his men through the cheer and trotted with them from the field. His victory, this triumph for which he had given all he had for so long, was dust and ashes in his mouth. He was a sentimental little chap, for all his bunchy hardness, and the terrible silence with which Buck Haskell's own people had greeted him hurt Randy. He could see the droop in Buck's heavy shoulders still, as he had pounded his way wearily to the bench, his helmet swinging from his hand, his hair plastered down to his

head by the sweat of his effort. Randy wondered what he had done.

Two hours later, Randy sat in his room, looking out over the campus, dark with the November dusk, and still wondered. Before, it had been the team, the game; and now, it was Buck. Some one knocked at the door behind him, and he called, "Come in!" without turning. He heard the door open, and then—silence. He turned and saw Buck Haskell standing there, his back against the door.

Randy stood up. He did not know what to say—what to do. He waited for Buck to speak—to do something. He thought at first that there was going to be trouble. But Buck did not have that sort of a look on his face. Buck grinned; and Randy waited.

"Hello, Randy!"

Randy stepped forward. He wanted to put out his hand, but he didn't know how that would be taken. He swung around a chair instead.

"Come in, Buck, and sit down."

"Thanks!"

But sat down, crossed his legs, and grinned again at Randy.

"Well," he said, "we had an afternoon!"

Randy grinned, too, but rather halfheartedly and in a puzzled manner. Buck's way was not that of a cat playing with a mouse. He really seemed friendly.

"I'm leaving Crawford," he said.

Randy nodded. That was to be expected.

"I've had enough," Buck went on. "Listen, and believe me if you can. You're the only one in the world who's going to hear this. I left here full of big ideas about myself and swelled up with the big money I was going to get from Crawford. They made the offers, yes; but I was damn fool enough to take them. Oh, I know it was being done—still is—but that doesn't let me out. Anyhow, you settled my hash this afternoon—and I'm glad of it!"

Randy shifted uneasily in his chair. He, the righteous one, felt guilty.

"Buck," he said slowly, "we had to win that game. But——"

"I know. I know. I was sore myself, until I got my shower and cooled off. I had a warm session with the rest of the bunch, too. But it's all over now!" He raised his arms in a gesture of grateful freedom. "I'm out of it!"

"But Buck! What are you going to do?"

"What difference does that make? Whatever it is, it'll be something that I can get paid for in broad daylight. Listen! Two years I've been up there, trained and pampered and petted as though I were a prize fighter. I guess it was pretty rotten. And I'd still be there, if you hadn't said your say today. You didn't do anything for my sake, I know; but it worked out that way—I'm glad I'm out of it. And I don't hold anything against you."

Buck stood up, and walked over to the window. He peered out through the dark at the lights of the campus, and listened to the laughter and talk of the men passing on their way to supper. He sighed.

"I liked it here," he said. "I was a chump to leave."

Randy said nothing; there seemed to be nothing to say. Buck had lifted a load from his mind, had erased the vision of that forlorn figure leaving the field to the damning silence of his own people.

Buck turned and held out his hand.

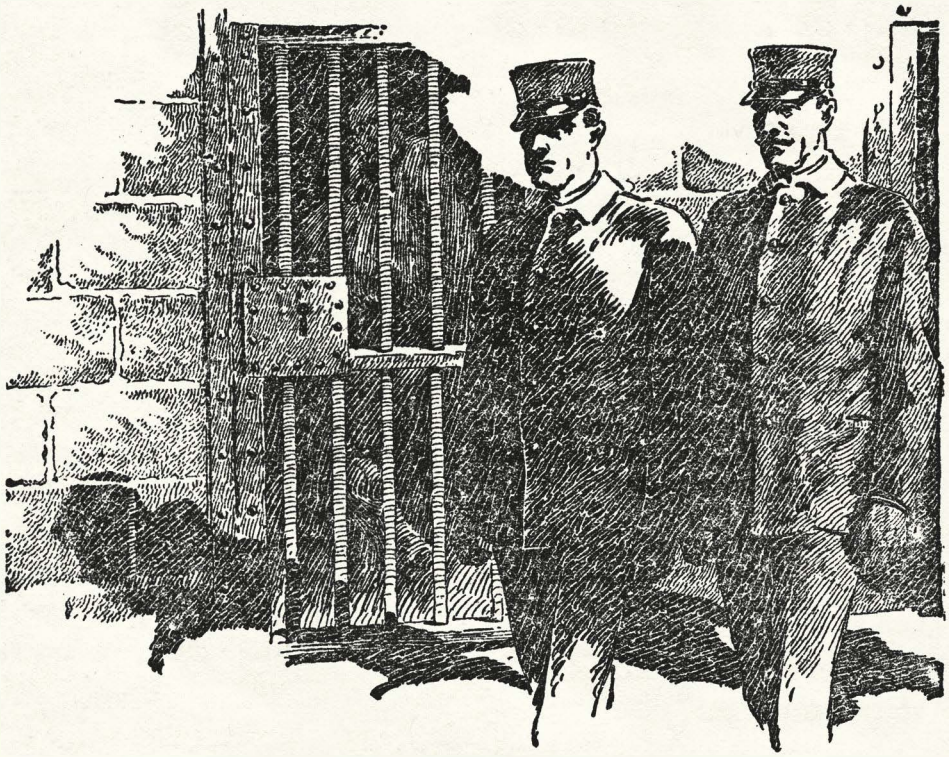
"Good-by, Randy! Good luck to you!"

Randy took his hand.

"Good-by, Buck! And all the luck in the world to you!"

Watch these pages for other stories by James Sayre Pickering.

Charley Tod Was a Great, Simple-minded, Kind-hearted Bear. Dawson—Well, Mary Was the Kind



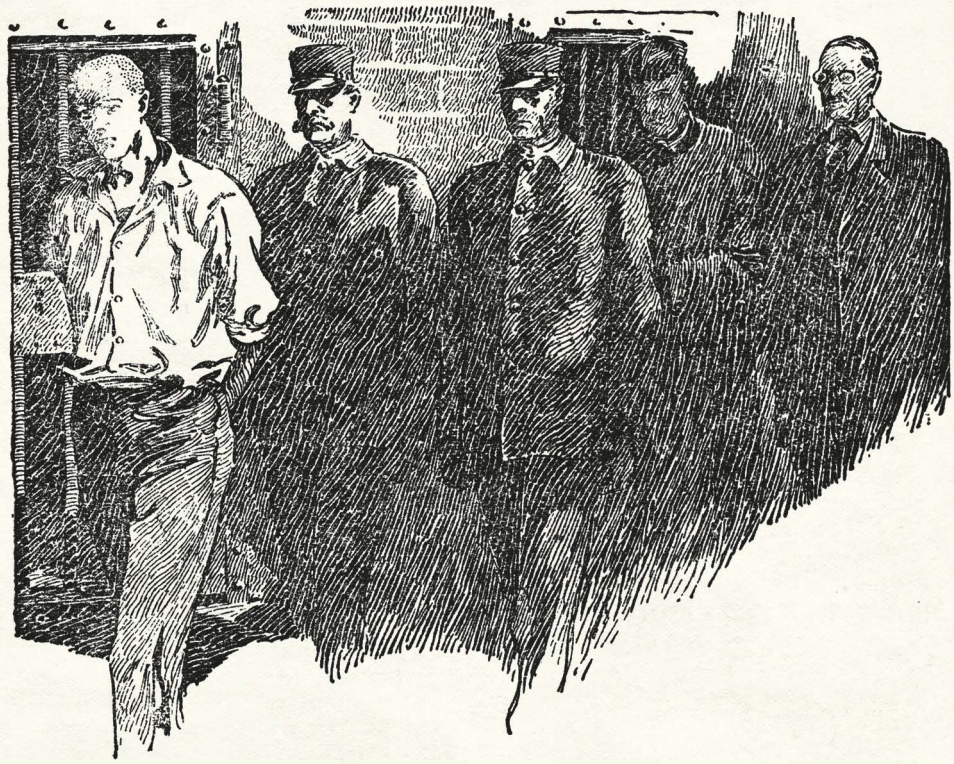
LIKE RUSHING

CHARLEY TOD knew that it wouldn't be long now—any minute, in fact. Any second. They had slit his left trousers leg and shaved his head. (The hair had grown out pretty thick after the reprieve, in spite of the weekly clipping, which let the prickly bits of light-brown hair slip down the back of his neck and stick in him like electric shocks—wake him up at night sweating on the narrow board of a cot, thinking he was already in the chair!) They would be coming for him any second now, and he wouldn't be able to look any more at his feet in the felt slippers, at his hands with the faded freckles and the veins big while they hung between his knees, and at his knees themselves, which had grown bony and white in the death house.

"Why am I thinking about dumb things like this in my last minutes?" he asked himself.

But there was the face of the guard at the grating now. The keys jingling. And there was the warden's voice, talking to the chaplain. He always lowered his voice when he talked to the chaplain. The chaplain had been in the cell with Tod up to a few minutes ago,

Linky Hitch Was a Clever, Dirty, Little Rat. And Mary of Girl that Makes Life Worth Living.



WATERS

By ROBERT MCBLAIR

when he had excused himself. The chaplain was very kind, very polite, very —deep. That was the word.

"He'll break now," the warden was saying to the chaplain in the corridor. "He'll break when he sees the chair."

"No," said the chaplain.

"He's not the tough kind," the warden was insisting. "He's held a stiff upper lip too long. He'll break."

"I don't think so," answered the chaplain, lowering his voice because they were coming nearer to Tod's cell door. "He's got something holding him up. Something inside, I mean."

"You mean religion?" The warden's voice had dropped to a whisper. But Tod could hear it. The men in the death house can tell you how sounds are carried along by the stone of the walls.

"No," the chaplain whispered.

And then the door was open and Charley Tod had risen without being told. His arms were strapped and he placed himself among the guards and began the walk to the open green door about forty feet away.

The warden's words had made him do what his defense attorney had never been able to make him do. They had

made him wonder whether he should say anything before they put the copper helmet over his head and turned on the current. Up till now he had not said a word. Not a word during the trial, or after it. Not a word before. Not a word since the cop had run into the cake and candy shop to find Mary in a faint on the floor, "Linky" Hitch dead beside her, and over them, the gun in his hand, Charley Tod standing. He had spoken then, but only three words.

"I done it," Charley Tod said then.

And now?

It was thirteen paces to the door of the room that held the chair. Charley, listening, had counted them many a time. From the door to the chair was four paces more. Seventeen paces in all before they put on the harness. Seventeen seconds in which to make up his mind.

Anything he said would go in the papers. The *Journal* would give it a full-page spread. "Candy Shop Killer Mum to the End." Something like that, if he didn't. If he spoke, they would play it up bigger. Yes, Mary would see it. "Candy Shop Killer Declares Love at the End." She would see that all right. "Candy Killer Says He Did It For Love."

"I can't do it," said Charley Tod in his clear young voice.

He hadn't known that he had spoken aloud until he noticed the guards looking at him and felt their hands on his arms. He smiled and shook his head. He hadn't meant what they thought. He could go through with the chair, all right. Their hands fell from him. He saw that the walk to the door was more than half over. And through the door now he could see the edge of the chair. It was larger than he had thought, and somehow darker. Only eight more paces now. Eight more seconds. But he had made up his mind.

What he couldn't do was tell Mary he loved her. If he told her that, if he let that outside of himself, he would break. He didn't know why. Maybe it was his pride. Maybe that was holding him up, and maybe that was what the chaplain had meant. He didn't know. But he knew that ever since he had seen Mary first he had loved her. And he began to see now that if he had told her, things would have been different. He would have found out the truth in time. He would have known from her own lips that she liked Linky, instead of hoping all the time that she liked himself. But his pride had never let him tell her. And it was too late to start now.

Too late. They were at the door. Four more paces. Four more seconds before they buckled his hands on the chair arms, clamped the lower plate to his left ankle and the upper one to his skull. When they threw the lever the body tried to break the straps and get away, but it never did. A little coil of smoke sometimes rose from the upper plate. If the first shock didn't do it, they turned on another. He knew these things. Everybody in the death house knew these things.

Too late. Even if he should tell the truth now they wouldn't believe him. If he said to this room, circled by the men from the newspapers, that he hadn't killed Linky Hitch, had not fired the gun which was in his hand when the cop ran in the candy shop, they would think he was simply lying out of funk. The time for a guy to tell the truth was when he was living. The truth had no value, wouldn't pass for currency, when he was two paces away from the wired chair.

If he turned to the newspaper men now and said:

"Gentlemen, I didn't commit this crime. I didn't kill Linky Hitch"—well, they would stare at him, as if to ask: "Who did, then? If you didn't, who did?"

And then, if he told them the truth:

"Gentlemen, Mary Dawson done it. I

run in the cake shop because I heard her talking—no, that ain't it—I run in because I heard a shot. It was the other time, the time I really shot Linky Hitch accidentally, six months before, that was the time I heard her talking. This time, I heard a shot, and run in, and there she was, with the gun in her hand, and Linky on the floor. She turned and saw me and was so surprised at seeing me—I had been hiding out, because of having shot Linky, you see—she was so surprised at seeing me, and all, she just keeled over. So I picked up the gun, and when the cop come in, I said to him: 'I done it.' And he called the wagon."

If he turned to them now he could tell from looking at their lined and disillusioned faces that they simply wouldn't believe him. And if they should, by some chance, believe him—if a few of them, the younger ones, believed him—that would not change anything now. The warden wouldn't believe; and even if he should believe, he couldn't do anything now except carry out the sentence of the court. The time limit was up. The warden already had done all he could, because he liked the chaplain and the chaplain liked Tod.

No, the thing would have to go on.

It was too late. Even if he had wanted to tell the truth it was too late. As he didn't want to, had no intention of telling, it didn't matter. Only one thing mattered, whether he should say to the newspaper men before he died that he had done it out of love for Mary Dawson. This would be a way of letting her know, because he had never told her. But if he was going to do it he would have to make up his mind. Already the four paces to the chair had been taken. They were turning him around.

As he sat down he saw the warden's and the chaplain's faces. He had seen the chaplain, who liked him, look that way before. But he was surprised at the warden. Why should the warden care, if he didn't care so much himself? People were funny that way. Even the man who was strapping him down to the chair, a man who had never even seen him before, was all of atremble, and said "Sorry!" in a scared voice when he clumsily stepped on his foot.

After they strapped you in the chair, they put on the current as quickly as possible, so as to get the thing over with. Everybody in the death house knew this. Charley Tod felt the cool plate of metal being strapped to his bared left leg. His hands were strapped along the chair arms; and next would come the cap. It was too late now to try to tell the truth to the newspaper men. For one thing, to make things clear to them, he would have to begin at the beginning, and there was certainly no time for that.

To make things clear to the newspaper men he would have to use words, which would take a lot of time; whereas, he himself *felt* the whole story at once. It was as if the story, everything which had happened to him and Mary Dawson, were on a moving-picture film; except, the difference was, that he himself *was* the film; all of the story was himself and he himself was the story. It took no time to realize all that had happened. Perhaps this is what people meant when they said that a man's whole life appears before him when he is on the verge of death. What they really meant, perhaps, was that the mind, so lazy and drowsy through life, at this last moment arouses itself and becomes briefly and brilliantly aware of the things which it contains. It knows itself at last.

Charley Tod saw himself, as plain as day, the morning when he had delivered the barrel of sugar to the Korner Kake and Kandy Koop, and had seen Mary Dawson for the first time. He saw himself back the truck to the curb in front of the tiny shop, painted green and white. Saw himself, a strapping young

fellow, white shirt sleeves rolled up over tanned and muscular forearms, no hat on his thick and obstreperous light-brown hair, jump down from the driver's seat, drop the tail board, slide out the runway, and ease the barrel down.

Mary Dawson came out of the shop door and the sunshine made her black hair as glossy as a bird's wing. Her mouth was irregular, her eyes were dark, and when she smiled her teeth were as white as sugar. Charley Tod liked to kid the jazz babies he discovered at the cake-and-candy factories on his rounds. They were so glib and fresh and smarty he liked to put things over on them, and more than once had made a date just for the pleasure of standing the fresh one up. He bridled for another conquest this first day he saw Mary. But the conquest never came off.

There was something about her. She was friendly enough when she showed him where to stow the barrel away. She was jolly enough when he made his wisecracks. But there was a softness to the outlines of her face, a softness to her voice, a quiet depth to her nature, which made him feel at a loss. Right away he planned to date her up, but he couldn't say it. After he had climbed up on the truck again, he jumped down and went to the door and said:

"Say!"

She turned from the counter of the shop and answered:

"Yes?"

He hesitated.

"Nothin'," he ended, and ran. At the sound of her jolly laughter, he laughed too, as he climbed back on the truck, and he shot the heavy machine so light-heartedly across the street and through the traffic that the cop at the corner came within an ace of giving him a ticket.

That was the first time. The next was a month or more later, because he hadn't dared to call until they had ordered another barrel. He had learned from the credit man that she ran the shop, and made the cakes and candies with the help of a cook, because her mother was sick. And she had a brother who gave them trouble. Delivering the second barrel, Charley Tod saw the brother—good looking in a lounge-lizard way, agreeable but pasty-faced and unhealthy, and obviously as weak as water. He wasn't much of a reed for Mary to lean on.

Charley asked her if she would go to a movie with him Saturday night. And he nearly swallowed his tongue with joy when she said yes.

He found it hard to find out much about her. Something was on her mind, he could make that out; something that became more and more apparent the oftener he saw her. There was a point beyond which she wouldn't answer questions, and it was beyond this point that the worry lay hidden. He was going out with her twice a week before he found out what the trouble was. And then he came upon it, you might say, by accident.

He had called for her at the shop one evening to find Linky Hitch lounging against the counter. The same Linky Hitch he had as a kid licked to a frazzle one morning on the Christopher Street docks. The gang had split up later. Most of the boys had gotten jobs and more or less settled down. A few had taken up bootlegging; two had joined the force; and Linky Hitch, rumor had it, had gotten in with the "Dopey" Diamond gang. At any rate, this evening in the Korner Kake and Kandy Koop, he looked mighty prosperous. His brown suit fitted him closer than nature, his tie was a wonder to behold, the flesh flowed over his colored stiff collar, and an expensive diamond glittered on his pudgy hand. What was more, he carried a cane!

"Hey, Linky! How's the boy? You look like ready money."

Linky had said something between a curse and a greeting out of the side of his mouth, and had ended with a question to Mary that sounded more like a command.

"Where's the kid?"

"He's gone out."

"Tell him I want to see him to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock. Tell him I said it."

And with that, pushing his panama over an eye, Linky Hitch, swinging his stocky shoulders, had swaggered out, not uttering another word.

"Linky's sore about something," Charley Tod laughed.

But Mary didn't laugh in agreement. And the reason he knew he had found the source of the trouble developed when he brought her home that night. She told him that hereafter, instead of his coming to the shop, she would rather meet him somewhere else.

Slowly, as the weeks passed, this began to burn Charley Tod up. It couldn't have happened if Mary had been like one of these flippant jazz babies. With them, you just grabbed them and kissed them. If they didn't like it, they gave you a sock; if they did, you didn't have to be told. Mary wasn't like that. Charley Tod wasn't exactly afraid of her; but he would have been deathly afraid of doing anything which would make him lose her. He couldn't tell her never to see Linky Hitch again, not unless she loved him. As to this, he was afraid to ask. Sometimes he felt that if her shadow, her trouble, her hidden worry was out of the way, she would love him. But the shadow was there. And when he tried to ask her about it, she evaded answering.

Charley was worried about it. He thought about it when he was driving the truck, and nearly ran people down. He thought about it when he was eating and when he should have been sleeping, so that he grew haggard and snappish. He thought about it so much that he came to the decision to find out about everything, whether he won or lost. And the fact that he was willing to take a chance on losing Mary showed him how crazy he had become.

He decided to call for a show-down. Without waiting for his date night, he set out for the cake shop. This business of meeting her somewhere else was "out." This business of being two-timed by a girl was over with. She had either to pass up Linky Hitch entirely, let Charley meet her at the cake shop, or call everything off.

As he rode in the subway, on the way to call for a show-down, he pictured to himself what might happen. He pictured Mary Dawson throwing herself on his breast, crying that she loved him and would give up a whole cake shop full of Linky Hitches rather than lose him. He pictured himself magnanimously forgiving her, and telling her that because she was so good and sweet he would marry her. But as he came in sight of the green-and-white front of the tiny cake shop, nestling in the shadow of the elevated trestle, he began to feel less sure. His hands began to get hot and moist and his throat got to feeling awfully dry.

"Suppose she gives me the air?" he thought. A picture of Linky Hitch, bejeweled and twirling a cane, rose up before him. His blood beat hot and he fairly ran across the street. He had licked Linky Hitch as a kid and could do it now, with one hand tied behind him. Nobody like Linky Hitch, who made his money God knows how, was going to take his girl away from him without——

As he touched the door of the cake shop he heard voices within. Peering through the glass he saw that the talkers must be beyond the screen which shut off the rear shelves and the door to the kitchen. He went in softly, in

time to hear Mary's voice, saying, in a pleading tone:

"And Linky, won't you leave him alone? Won't you leave brother alone, please, if I ask you?"

The blood began to beat in Charley Tod's temples at this actual intimate meeting between Mary and Linky, at the pleading, intimate tone of her voice.

"Why the hell shouldn't he work for me?" Linky demanded in reply. There was a shuffle of feet beyond the screen, the sound of forced breathing. "He will. And—you—will—like—it!"

Charley Tod brushed the screen aside with one movement of his arm. Beyond it, Mary Dawson was bent backward into the elbow of Linky Hitch's arm and Linky's lips were pressed to her mouth. The screen fell with a crash, and Linky, throwing Mary away so that she fell against the counter, whirled with a hand to his hip. He stood for a moment with his little eyes fiery and startled, the bend of his head forcing a fold of flesh down over his colored stiff collar, the diamond glittering on the pudgy hand pressed to the side of his wasp-waisted brown suit.

"What the hell do you want?" snarled Linky. Charley Tod saw in the little eyes a memory of that time when he had been licked to a frazzle on the docks. He saw there, too, the change that had come over the stocky fellow; a feeling of power that came from a gun on the hip when most men went unarmed. "You beat it—quick!" said Linky Hitch, and meant it.

Charley looked slowly around. Mary, on her elbow against the counter, had the back of her hand against her mouth. Under the disarranged black hair her dark eyes were wide with fear, and some unreadable expression. Her upper arm was red and white from the grip of Linky's fingers. Charley Tod felt sick and baffled. His dream pictures had not included a scene wherein Linky was kissing Mary in the intimate seclusion of the rear of the shop. A girl can always make a man behave, if she wants to; Charley had always felt pretty sure of that. If she wanted Linky, she was welcome to him.

Perhaps he would have turned and walked out of the shop forever, if it hadn't been for his intention of having a show-down. It was his way to see a thing through if he started it. Feeling as he did about Mary, he wasn't willing to leave without a clean slate. If she wanted Linky, she could have him; but if she did, she would have to say so.

Charley moved slowly closer to Linky and Mary. He was trying to think of how he should put the thing that he had to say. But Linky Hitch must have thought otherwise. Linky was not the kind, anyhow, to take a chance of meeting a man on even terms. Charley had moved forward instead of beating it—quick! Linky's hand came out of his hip pocket in a jump, and something glittered. Something hard and dull, with a snub nose, glittered bluishly.

And Charley Tod, out of the instinct for self-preservation, made a grab for it.

He caught it and kept it turned toward the floor. His large, muscular, calloused hand was clamped over the front part of Linky's hand and over the middle of the gun, to keep it pointed down and away. His right hand, so that his shoulder and the side of his back were leaning against Linky, who was against a packing box. The two of them were in balance, when Linky, suddenly, brought his left hand over and down, and caught the gun by the muzzle, to bring it around. This threw them both a bit off balance, there was a moment's slip, and the gun went off. The tension went out of Linky's stocky figure, which slipped off of the packing case and subsided very gently and quietly to the floor.

It was almost as if Linky had decided, all of a sudden, to be polite and gentle-

manly; and as if to prove it, his hand had relinquished the gun, which Charley Tod now held by the middle as he stared down at the red stain which had begun to spread right where Linky's heart would be. A red stain that was spoiling the bright pattern of Linky's beautiful tie. And Linky, polite and gentlemanly, was staring with wide and pensive little eyes at nothing at all. It was as if the present was too distasteful for a person of Linky's sudden gentility and refinement to gaze upon.

Charley Tod was startled out of his trance of fascinated horror by a hand on his arm. It was Mary, her face white, and something in her dark eyes he had never seen there before.

"Run, Charley! Run, please—quick!" she begged.

His mind was divided. He didn't want to leave her to face this alone. And he was confused by her concern for him. It made him happy in the midst of tragedy. While he hesitated, she shook his arm and begged him again to run. He looked over his shoulder at the front door, crowded with people; and, seeing a cop's uniform, he ran through the kitchen and out of the back way. It wasn't till he saw a little girl staring at him with a scared expression that he realized he still had the gun in his hand. He stooped and slung it into a sewer opening, darted through the street traffic, walked two blocks rapidly, and took the subway to Harlem. That night, late, when he was eating a sandwich in a black-and-tan lunch bar, he saw the headlines on a tabloid:

"Dying Gangster Keeps Mum."

He went out of the lunch bar quickly. Standing in a dark place, he bought a paper from a passing newsboy and sought a secluded spot to read it. Linky Hitch, sinking fast, refused to talk, but somebody, possibly Mary or her brother, had talked, for the paper sketched in a background for the shooting. Linky, it seemed, had been dealing in narcotics. It was intimated that young Dawson, Mary's brother, had been associated with him, but had been trying to break free. The account ended:

> There is another angle of the case which police are investigating. An arrest is expected shortly.

"An arrest is expected shortly." Charley Tod began to realize that this phrase, so commonplace in the newspapers, has always the tragedy of a hunted man behind it. For the next six months it became the arbiter of his every action. He left Harlem, feeling he was too conspicuous there, and went to Stamford. A man seemed to be staring at him in Stamford, and he went on to Darien, where he got a job as chauffeur and gardener. One evening his boss' wife began asking him casually about his past life and if he had ever been in love. The next morning found Charley Tod in Harbor View Beach and the boss without a chauffeur. Charley made a living clipping hedges and cutting grass until a man who was driving to Columbus offered to take him if he would do the driving.

There he found that he was too far from New York. At Stamford, Darien, Harbor View Beach, he had felt that, if necessary, he could be where Mary Dawson was in a couple of hours. In Columbus, she was too far away. He began to work his way back, hitch-hiking, riding the rods, walking—doing odd jobs along the way. With every mile the longing to see Mary Dawson grew, and finally he knew he would have to see her. Six months had gone by, but he had not a doubt that the cops were still on the case, and Linky Hitch's gang were no doubt still as willing for revenge. But whether he was arrested or "taken for a ride," Charley knew that he had to see Mary.

He got a job as truck driver in Newark and saved his money till he had enough to buy a new suit, a hat, shoes,

some striped shirts and a bright tie. Six months had gone by; if she still had any kindness for him, he wasn't going to let her see him looking like a tramp. When he reached New York and started out for her shop, he did not fill his mind with rosy pictures of Mary throwing herself on his breast. The only rosy dream he ever had was to picture Linky Hitch as miraculously restored to life and himself once more able to keep from going cold and stiff when somebody from behind touched him on the shoulder. But he knew things like that didn't happen.

When he got off the subway, two blocks from the cake shop, the sun had gone down, but the streets were still light. He did not want to be recognized by any of the cake-shop customers who might have seen him with Mary at one time or another, so he took a surface car, to ride by her place and look in. As the car was nearing the green-and-white shop he saw Mary walking along the sidewalk with a man.

The man was Linky Hitch.

Charley jumped to his feet with an exclamation. Observing that the conductor was staring at him, he jumped off as the car started, stood behind an elevated pillar, and watched Linky and Mary approach the shop. The two were differing about something. All of a sudden, Mary ran ahead of Linky, darted into the shop and closed the door. Linky ran after her, but found the door locked. He shook it and shouted, shook his fist at the glass, and turned away.

Just then Mary's weak-looking brother turned the corner. He saw Linky, whirled and tried to get back around the corner undiscovered. But Linky saw him and shouted at him. The youth refused to halt, however, and disappeared, running. Linky started to run after him, stopped, took out his watch, went back to the cake shop and knocked on the door.

"I'll be by for you to-night!" Linky shouted, so loud that Charley, across the street and down by the corner, could hear distinctly. "You tell brother to be here then! He'd better be!"

Linky then lifted his cane at a taxi, stepped in, and the cab took him off up the street. Charley Tod watched until the cab disappeared, then found that his legs were trembling so he could hardly stand. The dead had come to life. He was no longer a killer. And there was Mary, alive and well.

He started toward the cake shop, but two women were just at the door, which Mary opened for them. The glimpse of her made Charley's heart feel light. He waited at the corner, but people continued to go in and out. Mary's brother, peering around, went in; and after that a woman went in and stayed. Charley strolled up to the corner and got a sandwich, sitting in the window, where he could watch the shop door. After a long time, when nine o'clock, the shop's closing hour, neared, he went down the street again. As he was crossing toward the shop, a taxicab drove up and Linky Hitch got out. He paid the driver and went into the cake shop, slamming the front door behind him.

Charley Tod wasn't anxious to meet Linky, who probably had a gun, right at that moment. But he didn't want Linky to be bothering Mary, either. He walked softly over to the shop, intending to listen and find out if Linky was causing Mary any trouble. As he got near the front of the shop he heard a pistol shot from somewhere inside.

It reminded him so vividly of the time he had shot Linky by accident that for a moment he stood absolutely still. Somebody would rush out of the shop, he figured. But the front door did not open, so Charley leaped for it, dashed it open, and entered the shop. Linky Hitch was huddled on the floor, and standing over him, the gun in her hand, was a pallid Mary Dawson.

She turned as Charley rushed in. And the surprise of seeing him, who had vanished for six months, just at this moment, must have been too much for her. She slumped to the floor before Charley could catch her. He took the gun from her limp hand, aware of a woman customer who had entered the door and gone out screaming.

This time there was no one to tell him to run, but if there had been, he still would have done what he did. He wasn't going to let Mary get in trouble over this. He stood there, with the gun in his hand, waiting patiently. And when the big cop lumbered in, Charley held out the gun, grip forward, and said quietly:

"I done it."

At the trial there was no difficulty in proving a motive. Both men were calling on the same girl; Charley Tod had shot the deceased near to death six months before, and had returned to finish the job. The only dramatic feature, from the newspaper standpoint, was the attempt of the girl in the case to get the man off. Mary Dawson, "petite and lovely brunette," as the papers had it, submitted a handwritten letter to the court in which she swore that she had committed the crime and that Charley Tod was merely trying to protect her. The fact that the defense refused to call her as a witness, however, and the evidence as to the defendant's motive and previous acts, overweighed this effort. The defendant was convicted quickly. When sentence was pronounced, Mary Dawson was ejected from the courtroom, screaming, "He never did it!" and Charley took up his residence in the death house.

Two days before the date of the execution, there came a thirty-day stay. An affidavit had been submitted to the governor by Mary Dawson, assisted by the counsel the court had appointed to defend the man who wouldn't defend himself, and the governor had granted a stay while his pardoning board examined the facts. The board reported that this affidavit had been considered and rejected by the trial judge, and the appeal for executive clemency was denied.

This was the whole story, this was what Charley Tod *felt,* almost in a single instant, as the cool metal plate was being fastened to his bared left leg. Next they would put the copper helmet on. Then the switch would be thrown, the lights in the death house cells would go dim while the motor whined, the men in the cells would be deathly still for a moment, then break out in curses and obscene, erratic cries.

And that would be the end. That would be the end of Charley Tod's calmness, which had been the envy of his cell-corridor mates and the wonder of the warden, who seemed, almost, to regard it as an affront to the majesty of the law.

If Charley was going to speak at all, it would have to be right now.

The man who had been affixing the plate on his ankle stood up and moved out of Charley Tod's vision. They rushed it through after this. What would Mary think when she saw it in the paper? He had no way of knowing now. He had never let her come to see him; he hadn't wanted to risk having her crying and telling the warden, the chaplain, that she had done it herself. Somebody might believe her—the truth is very convincing—and she'd have to go through what he had gone through. They might let him loose; and the thought of Mary in the death house, watching the lights go dim while some man was burned alive by the State, had been enough to keep up Charley Tod's nerve.

He hadn't let her come to see him, but she of course would know that he was going through this to save her from being bothered. And he felt that he could go more happily if he knew that this act of his would touch her heart.

The man had come forward for the copper helmet now. This was the end. There was a wretched, hurt look on the warden's face; while the chaplain was trying to smile at him bravely. The man was at the copper helmet, about to lower it, when a shout arose in the corridor just outside.

"Boss! Hey, boss! Hey warden! Warden!"

And there was a terrific knocking on the door.

The warden's hands clinched and his face reddened in anger. He lifted a hand to the executioner; some one opened the green door, on which fists were pounding. A guard tumbled in, all breathless. A stay? Yes, another stay.

"It's a lie!" cried Charley Tod as they loosened him. "She never done it! It's a damn lie!" And he repeated this, with a growing emotional intensity—for his nerves were near to going—on the walk back to his cell. "It's a lie, I tell you! A lie!"

They locked him in, and in a few minutes some one came and threw him his clothes, saying he was to go out to the warden's office to be talked to. The pardoning board again, he thought, and dressed in a stupor, so far as the things immediately around him were concerned. His mind was still deep in the story he had just relived. He started once, thinking that he was dead and dreaming. And when they led him down the corridor and through the succession of clanging iron doors, he was busy trying to regain his calm, trying to persuade himself to keep still and cling to the formula which had saved Mary before.

"I done it," he said at every step. "I done it."

Suddenly he was in the warden's office. And there, before him, her little fists against her breast, stood Mary Dawson, in a black dress and stockings and a small black hat, as if in mourning. But her eyes were not in mourning. They shone; the tears seemed to dry on her cheeks as she came up to him and caught his coat in her hands.

"Oh, Charley!" she said. And suddenly she buried her head against him, trembling and shaking in a storm of weeping.

Charley Tod kept his hands at his sides and looked around. Were they trying to break him, trying to make him tell? Were they up to any such game as that? The guards had withdrawn from the room, leaving him and the girl alone, except for the chaplain and the warden, who were standing just outside the door. The chaplain and the warden, with their hands clasped; and the warden was actually near to crying. His nose was red and his face was uncertain; and the chaplain had tears on his cheeks. Why all this fuss about a stay—or did it have to do with Mary?

"I done it," said Charley Tod in a tight voice. "Mary, I done it, and you didn't have nothing to do with it. You got to remember that, you hear? You got to!"

She looked up at him and swallowed a great big lump.

"Oh, Charley! You don't have to say that now!"

"I done it, I tell you! Who let you in here? I done it!"

"No, Charley, darling. Listen! Brother did it. When I heard—heard the shot, and ran in, he had gone. Then, you were there, and I thought you did it. And so did everybody, even though I tried—— But brother—brother got—got shot by some of Linky's crowd last week. He knew he was dying and told the truth. The governor wouldn't reopen the case at first. We thought we weren't going to be able to—to—— Oh, Charley! And you kept on saying you did it! We thought we weren't going——"

Charley Tod heard her words but they didn't seem to enter his mind. His

mind was too deep in the story he had just lived through. His arms felt strapped; he lifted one of them and recognized the suit he had bought in Newark, and the same striped shirt. He looked down and recognized the bright new tie. He was dressed in his own clothes. Then it wasn't a stay. It was a pardon. Brother had confessed that he had done it. And he, Charley, was free. Free! He tried to make himself believe it, while Mary, with her head against him, sighed. But there was something he didn't understand. Something bothering his mind. Suddenly he knew what it was.

"Mary!" he said, catching her shoulders and pushing her back till he could see her face. "You—you say you thought I done it? Then, why—why did you say you done it? Why?"

"Why, Charley!" she answered, and her face grew less pale. "I did it because I love you, of course. I've never ever loved anybody but you, Charley. And I never will."

"What?" he cried. "What's that?"

She had done it because she loved him. She had tried to take the blame for the killing herself, because she thought he had done it, and because she loved him. Charley Tod raised his head and looked out of the warden's tall window; looked out to where a tiny white cloud sailed gay and free in a spacious sky.

"But you?" Mary was saying. "Why did you——"

"Mary, I thought you done it. And I said I done it because—because I—I——"

He caught her to him. Something was breaking up inside of him; something like the rushing waters that go down a river in the spring thaw. His throat swelled as if to choke him with its pain. He crushed her against him, and buried his face in her breast.

WITH THE ODDS AGAINST HIM

THIS Mr. Edward Smith is a man who, fearing no odds, makes Ajax defying the lightning look like a piker.

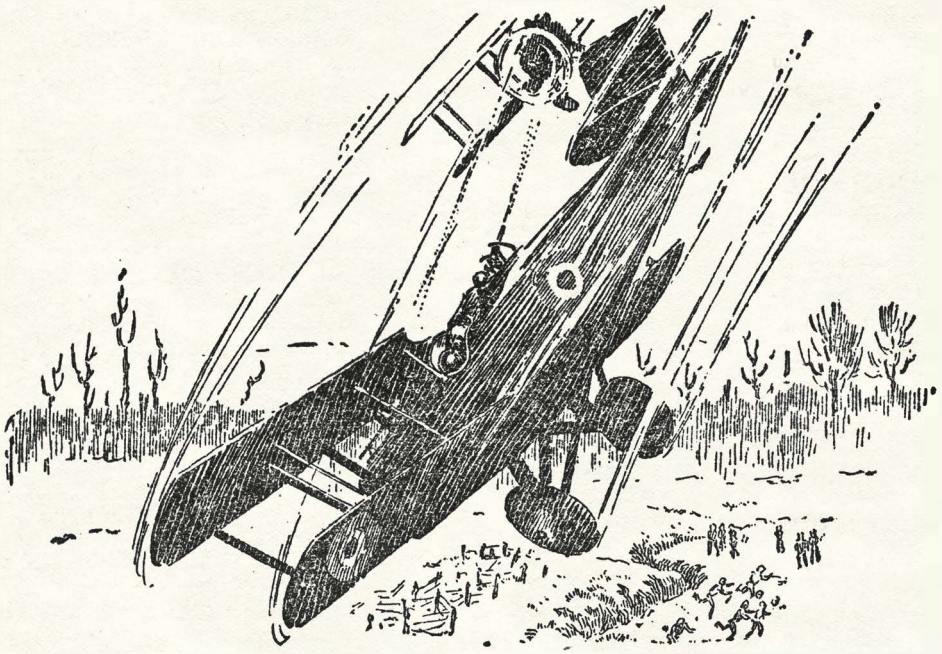
When certain corporations were charged by the Federal trade commission with monopolizing radio broadcasting and the manufacture and sale of radio equipment, they sent a million-dollar array of counsel to Washington to represent them. In the high-powered, high-paid group were such lawyers as John W. Davis, former Democratic candidate for the presidency; Harry Covington, former judge of a District of Columbia court; Cotton and Gordon of New York, and Cravath, De Gusdorff, Swain and Wood, also of New York.

Opposing them as trial counsel for the commission was one lonely lawyer, the aforesaid Edward Smith, drawing a salary from the government of five thousand two hundred dollars a year.

When the chairman of the commission announced that the defendants could have three hours for their argument, Mr. Smith displayed his contempt for the thundering odds against him.

"If the commission please," said this five-thousand-two-hundred-dollar-a-year man, "I won't need that much time. I can answer these respondents in an hour."

Outnumbered, His Pilot Shot, and Himself Wounded, His Plane Hurtling to Death, the Old Sergeant Kept Up that Grim, Bitter Stream of Live, Whining, Killing Lead!



TOO OLD *to* FLY

By IVAN MARCH

SERGEANT GALLADAY learned to shoot a machine gun "from the rear end of a mule." That was the old marine corps phrase to describe a gunner who learned all the tricks of his trade in the jungles and brush of "spiggoty land."

Quite obviously such a leatherneck was not to be mentioned in the same breath with a fellow who acquired his knowledge of projectory, windage, recoil and assemblage, safe in the lecture room or gun pits of Paris Island.

The grammar-school education of Sergeant Horatio Galladay—then Private Galladay—took place in the Spanish-American War, and his textbook was a many-barreled Gatling gun he turned with a crank. Given plenty of ammunition and a large enough target, Private Galladay caused plenty of damage while he learned. His high-school course was in the Philippines, followed by a college degree of D. B. W.—Doctor of Bushwhacking.

For a diploma he received the navy cross for distinguished service, his sergeant's chevrons and a letter from the secretary of the navy, complimenting him upon the diligence with which he

had pursued his studies—and the enemy.

During that island campaign Sergeant Galladay served as the unwilling carving block for an artistically inclined Moro chieftain. His machine gun had jammed and the entire contents of his army model .38 Colt failed to stop the maddened charge of the brown man, who danced forward, his black eyes fixed gleefully on Galladay's midriff, his bolo knife cutting anticipatory patterns in the air.

Silent as the death which he was facing, Sergeant Galladay dropped the Moro at last with a straight right to the jaw, but in the meantime the tribesman had carved his initials several times on Horatio Galladay's anatomy. The men of Company B found him weak in his own blood but still cursing the jammed machine gun which he loved with a blaspheming love.

For fear that Sergeant Galladay might forget what he had already learned about the tricks of machine guns and to keep him abreast of the times in his fine art, a philanthropic government at Washington managed to find perennial fracases in various far-flung corners of the world where a good machine gunner was worth his weight in gold.

He chased cacos through the jungles and up the mountains of Haiti; he crooned to his gun in San Domingo, Nicaragua, China and other places not so well marked on the map. And he acquired, during this post-graduate work, a marvelous knowledge of malaria fever, native liquor and man-eating insects. In addition, during the occupation of Vera Cruz, he earned two bullet wounds through his left leg, which ached abominably in wet weather, and a flattened nose from the gentle caress of a mule's right hind foot.

The entrance of the United States in the World War found the battle-scarred veteran eligible for a professorship in his favorite subject. Some one in Washington remembered the sergeant, thought twice of his stocky, erect figure, his legs bowed by the weight of the guns he had carried, his cold, blue eyes which had taken on the glint of the metal barrels he had squinted down so often, thought once more of all the knowledge and practical experience in that grizzled head. "Just the man to teach the fine art of machine gunnery to the marine 'boots,'" General Somebody decided. Forthwise, Sergeant Horatio Galladay was ordered to Paris Island.

Sergeant Galladay went. But he didn't stay. Thirty minutes after his arrival he marched up to the commanding officer's desk and snapped to attention, his square jaw thrust forward belligerently and his eyes firing two hundred shots a minute.

"Hello, 'Hod'!" greeted the C. O., grinning his pleasure at seeing the sergeant again. As a matter of past history, there had been a torrid day in the Philippines when Sergeant Galladay's bullet-spitting music box had saved the C. O.'s little company from being wiped off the earth. "Hello, Sergeant Galladay!" he added more severely, for he saw trouble in the gunner's cold eyes.

"'Lo, colonel!" grunted Galladay.

"Well, well, what's the trouble now?" And the C. O. began to turn over the foot-high stack of paper work. "Suppose you want to go straight to France, eh? Be shooting up the German high command by to-morrow night, eh? Just like the rest of——"

"Right!" barked Sergeant Galladay.

"Listen, sergeant," reasoned the C. O. placatingly, "we've got something better than that for you. Sure! We're going to give you a commission. Yes, sir, a commission! And put you in charge of machine-gun instruction. How's that, old-timer? A commission and——"

"Commission be damned!" burred

Hod Galladay. "Begging your pardon, colonel. Look here, sir. I've been fooling around in these half-pint spigotty wars for twenty-five years. Now when a real war comes along you try to give me a trick commission and shelve me away 'training boots'! Is it fair? No, it ain't! Now get this! My hitch in this man's service is up in six weeks. Six weeks! And if I don't get a promise of action pronto I'll quit. Quit cold, unless I join up with them Germans, maybe."

The C. O. reached for his pipe and waved his hands helplessly. He sensed the utter futility of argument with the old leatherneck.

"All right, all right, you old fire-eater," he said soothingly. "We'll just forget that teaching detail. Name your poison. What do you want to do?"

"I want to sign up with the aviation. I hear they're forming a marine aviation outfit. I want to fly."

"What?" The commanding officer's jaw dropped open, the pipe fell from his mouth. He stared at Sergeant Galladay as if the latter were an escaped lunatic.

"Good Lord, Galladay, you can't sign up with the air service! Why, man, that's a young fellow's outfit—got to have a bunch of crazy kids. We're setting the age limit at thirty and we'd rather have 'em around twenty. Say, how old are you, anyway?"

"Forty-three," lied Sergeant Galladay manfully.

"Forty-three! Good Lord, that's only thirteen years over the limit Guess you better forget that fool aviation idea of yours, sergeant."

"Quit, then!" the leatherneck said.

The commanding officer shook his head despairingly. These old-timers were damnably set in their ways. If they got an idea into their heads you couldn't budge it—not with a three-inch field piece. The commanding officer reached for a memo pad.

"Very well then, Galladay," he sighed. "I'll recommend that you be attached to this new air-force group. They'll need some one to teach machine gunnery. But get this! They'll assign you to that job and keep you on the ground for the duration of the war. Serve you right, too."

"Keep me on the ground?" grinned Sergeant Galladay. "Sure they will—like hell! Once I get set with that outfit I'll be flying every ship they've got!" He snorted contemptuously. "Too old to fly! Say, colonel, just give you and me twenty men from the old C Company and we could swab up a whole regiment of these here young whippersnappers they're recruiting nowadays."

Sergeant Horatio Galladay thrust his head out of the door of the armory shack of the —th Marine Aviation Group, Ardres, France, just as a bombing squadron, returning from a daylight raid on the submarine base at Ostend, swept downward over the row of French poplars which lined the north end of the drome.

"Four, five, six, seven," Sergeant Galladay counted the returning planes as their wheels touched the field. "All present and accounted for. That's good."

For eighteen months now he had watched the planes—not these particular planes, but ships varying from the old Canadian-rigged, Hispano-powered J. N. training planes and tricky, tail-heavy "Tommies" to these Liberty-motored De Haviland bombers; and always he got the same thrill, the same unsatisfied longing to fly when they took off, the same relief when they returned.

He hadn't flown over the enemy lines himself yet, but that wasn't his fault. He had begged, pleaded, cursed, pulled wires—and all he got for it was a laugh and a glance at his grizzled head, a glance which said: "Too old to fly, old-timer—a young man's game." So he

remained in charge of the noncommissioned machine gunners and the armory shop. True, by dint of threats and bribery he had managed to get a few joy rides and three of the pilots had even allowed him to handle the stick a bit. But when he requested permission to solo——

Sergeant Galladay sighed as he turned back into the shack. He supposed he *was* too old—too cautious. It took the devil-may-care young uns for air work. He looked very sad as he placed the Lewis gun he had been repairing back into its wooden case. For a moment or two he caressed the weapon absently, staring into space. Suddenly his shoulders went back, he pulled his fore-and-aft hat over the bald spot on his head and started for the door. His eyes glinted his determination. He'd try once more.

The De Havilands were taxiing up to the camouflaged hangars which lined the field. Motors roared in staccato bursts. Lieutenant "Buck" Weaver, the flight leader, a blond, wind-tanned giant, brought his plane up to No. 1 hangar with a roar, cut the throttle and leaped out of the cockpit, leaving the motor idling. He felt a hand on his arm and turned.

"Well, hello, Hod, old-timer!" he greeted Sergeant Galladay affectionately.

"What luck?" demanded the sergeant.

"Great! Six direct hits. And we picked off two Fokkers on the way home! Not bad, eh, Dad?"

Sergeant Galladay scowled. He had helped to whip the tall, gawky recruit into a real soldier and now here he was with a commission, calling an old-timer "Dad"! Well, at that, the young pilot was a son of whom any real dad might be proud.

"Yeah, Buck, suppose you'll personally claim both them Boches," Galladay said with heavy sarcasm. "And about five of them direct hits." Suddenly his manner changed. He became mild, ingratiating, pleading. "Say, when you going to give me that ride over the lines you promised?"

Lieutenant Weaver flashed a row of strong, white teeth; his young eyes smiled banteringly. "Any time, old-timer. How about this afternoon? We'll get 'Hap' Johnston to go along with us in his bus for company. Suit you?"

Little chills of excitement ran up and down Sergeant Galladay's spine; he could feel the hair prickle at the back of his neck. At last he was going to fly over the lines! With an effort he controlled himself; his face was as expressionless as a wooden image.

"Suits me fine," he agreed. "I'll be ready. What time?"

"Oh, about four. We'll take a little joy ride up to Nieuport and back. You'll learn what antiaircraft is like, anyway. I want to be back early. Got a date for six thirty."

"You and your dates!" scoffed Galladay, for something to say.

Impulsively Buck Weaver took the older man's arm and led him toward headquarters. Buck was overflowing with sentiment; he must tell some one, and it couldn't be his flying comrades for they'd laugh at him, kid him unmercifully. Yes, the thrill of the successful raid had increased his excitement and happiness; he must tell some one his secret or burst. Why not the tight-lipped old marine sergeant, Dad Galladay?

"You know any of the WAAC *femmes*, Dad?" he asked in a low voice as he strode along.

Galladay nodded his grizzled head; his mind was on the promised flight and he hadn't half heard the flyer's question.

"Then mebbe you know Miss Childers?" Buck primed, and there was a suggestion of holy worship in his tone. "Ruth Childers?"

The old sergeant shook his head. He was hoping that they'd meet eight or ten or twelve Boche planes that afternoon. He'd show 'em some plain and fancy shooting.

"Well, you got to meet her," Buck announced gravely. "She's the most wonderful girl in the world, bar none. Ask me if she's wonderful!"

"I'll let 'em have it like they never got it before," Dad Galladay muttered.

"We're half engaged," the handsome young lieutenant admitted in a whisper.

"Which half?" asked Galladay, without thinking what he said.

"Well, it's like this," Buck Weaver confessed naïvely. "She'll marry me if I give up flying. Marry me." He repeated the words and stuttered over them. "Only, of course, I can't give up flying. Not now, anyway. So we're half engaged and—— Holy mackerel! Here she comes to meet me! Ask me, dad, ask me, isn't she the neatest, prettiest, nicest—— Ruth, this is Sergeant Galladay. Dad Galladay. Miss Childers, Dad."

Dad Galladay received a faint impression of a mass of golden-yellow hair escaping from a rakish little cap, of big blue eyes, a pink-and-white complexion and a smiling little mouth. He realized dimly that in front of him stood a girl with her hand outstretched, a very attractive girl, trim and graceful in her neat, brown uniform. Very faintly, too, he understood that the girl's blue eyes were watching Buck Weaver with love akin to worship and her lips were smiling at the big, blond giant with marvelous tenderness. Sergeant Galladay took the little hand that was proffered him.

"I'll betcha I'll get eight out of them ten Boche," Dad promised inanely.

Too late Buck Weaver kicked the sergeant's ankle. The girl's blue eyes had widened with sudden perturbation.

"What'd you say?" she asked, and when the old sergeant stammered incoherently, she turned full on Weaver. "Allington," she pleaded with half a sob in her voice, "you aren't going to fly again to-day, are you? Oh, you won't, will you? Not when you don't have to. You don't know how I worry when you're out. It makes me almost sick and——"

"Oh, shoot!" scoffed Buck Weaver. "I just promised Dad a little joy ride, that's all. Just up to Nieuport and back. We won't make any contacts. Sure we won't. I just want to show him how the antiaircraft work. He's been hounding me to death for four months now and I got to do it."

"But——" protested the girl.

"I got to keep my promise, haven't I?" Buck Weaver insisted. "You needn't worry. Honest, we'll scoot home at the first sign of Boche. Honest, I will, Ruth."

Ruth Childers had taken the hands of the big aviator and was staring up into his bronzed face.

"All right, Buck," she said. "This time."

Buck flashed a grin over his shoulder to old Dad Galladay who stood there awkwardly enough, shifting from one foot to the other, still thinking about the eight Boche planes he was going to bring down out of the ten he was already fighting in his imagination.

"See you at four, Dad," Buck announced. *"Toute suite."*

"Sure!" called Galladay, and as an afterthought: "Say, Miss Childers, you needn't worry about Buck this afternoon. I'll bring him home O. K. Sure I will."

The two young people strolled away arm in arm, leaving the old marine sergeant standing there and staring after them. But he wasn't wondering about young love at all; in his mind he was already pressing the trigger of a Lewis machine gun, soaring high in the air and engaging ten huge enemy planes at once.

Four o'clock found the planes of Buck Weaver and Hap Johnston gassed, oiled, ready and on the line. Sergeant Galladay had seen to it that the motors were tuned up like Swiss watches. For the last hour the old war dog, dressed in a borrowed flying suit which was considerably too big for him, had been adjusting and readjusting the double Lewises in the gunner's cockpit of plane No. 1. Meantime Corporal O'Hara seated in the other plane, was offering unheeded advice to the old-timer.

"If we run into any Boche don't get buck fever like I did first time, sergeant!" he shouted. "Yes, sir, I sat there and couldn't fire a single shot. Not for the life of me. Now don't get that way, sergeant. Just swing on 'em like you were shooting ducks. Throw the tracers at 'em and keep pouring 'em in."

"Say, who learned you how to shoot, kid?" Sergeant Galladay snorted contemptuously. "Didn't I have to show you which end of a gun the bullets came from? Kid, I was shooting offn the rear end of a mule while you was cutting teeth. Now you know it all just because you happened to knock down a Boche plane or two! Me get buck fever! Say, I expect to get eight out of ten, at least!"

O'Hara grinned. "All right, old-timer! Only better men than you have had it and—— Here comes our two guys. Say, them two babies are the best pilots in the outfit, sergeant. The Heinies know it, too, and if they weren't scared clean out of the air they'd be on our tails this afternoon."

Galladay was deaf to everything except the beating of his own heart. He shouted to a mechanic to "twist her tail" and the motor was running long before Buck Weaver reached the plane.

"Feel a bit shaky, dad?" the pilot asked as he climbed into the cockpit. "Most everybody does the first trip over."

Sergeant Galladay shook his head. "Not a bit shaky, son," he lied. "Say, listen, this airplane stuff is tame compared with the old days."

Pilot Weaver grinned and pushed open the throttle until the tactometer registered fourteen hundred revolutions, listened intently to the motor, wiggle-waggled his controls and nodded his satisfaction.

"All right! Pull the blocks!"

Two waiting mechanics removed the heavy wooden blocks in front of the wheels. Weaver taxied to the middle of the field, brought the plane to the wind and gave her the gun. The Liberty motor roared, spitting fire from the exhaust manifolds; slowly the big De Haviland crept forward, gathered speed, skimmed over the ground, bumped gently twice, and leaped into the air.

Around the field the plane circled until the hangars became little camouflaged ant hills and the row of poplars behind them were like miniature nursery trees. Still climbing, Weaver swung his plane toward the coast. Sergeant Galladay could see the English Channel and the port of Calais with the shipping in the harbor like little toy boats. Then he noticed that Weaver had turned his head and was grinning at him. The machine gunner, exultant as a viking in the prow of a pirate ship, waved his hand and grinned back.

Weaver continued to hold the plane's nose up, and the altimeter on the instrument board indicated twelve thousand feet when she passed over Dunkirk. Beyond that point lay the skeleton houses of the ruined town of Furnes, and the blackened scar stretching to the eastern horizon which was the Flanders front.

Sergeant Galladay peered over the side of the cockpit and scrutinized the ruined landscape below with awed eyes. By glory, they'd made a mess of it down there, he thought. A hell of a way to fight a war—men up to their necks in

mud in those zigzagged lines of trenches. Day by day, month by month, hot as hell, cold as Iceland, penned up like rats in their holes, pecking at each other with machine guns and rifles, throwing hand grenades, waiting for a big shell with the right number to blow up a whole squad.

Sergeant Galladay recalled the old, wild, free days in the Philippines—Haiti—Cuba. Fever, snakes, and big tropical ticks there were in plenty—and action, too. But it had been every man for himself there and lots of territory to cover—not this rat-trap warfare.

The Germans weren't paying any attention to the American planes at all. Where the devil was the Archie—the German antiaircraft?

Whomp! Woof! Woof!

As if in answer to his wonder the German batteries surrounding the town of Nieuport sent up a welcoming barrage of high explosive shells—little clouds of black, dirty smoke which barked at the planes like ferocious dogs. Chains of flaming "onions" drifted upward lazily toward the two allied planes. Sergeant Galladay's heart leaped wildly. He was actually over the lines now, really flying above German territory. It was the realization of a dream, a realization which found him strangely shaken and breathless.

Weaver turned and grinned again, then signaled to Johnston who was in their rear. The two planes headed back toward the allied lines.

The antiaircraft was still banging away at them, but there didn't seem to be a German plane in the sky. Oddly enough, Sergeant Galladay, for all his former anticipation and bloodthirsty threats, wasn't sorry. It was a lot different away up there in the sky than it had been in the good old days down on terra firma with trees to hide behind and plenty of ammunition and a good machine gun set up on a tripod. Down there he was in his element; sky-high, he felt impotent, vulnerable, old. His mind drifted back to that day years ago when he had had the battle with the Moro chieftain and again to the storming of Vera Cruz. There a man had a chance and——

Zip—zip—zip!

Three white streaks cut past Sergeant Galladay's left shoulder. He glanced upward, an oath of surprise on his lips. Three little planes with black crosses painted on their wings had appeared out of nowhere and were diving on the De Haviland, their guns gibbering death. Tracer bullets cut through the wing fabric. A panel strut not six inches from Lieutenant Weaver's right ear flew into splinters. Sergeant Galladay stood braced in the gunner's cockpit as if paralyzed, his mouth open, his eyes bulging, his guns forgotten, too surprised to move, even to think.

Buck Weaver was thinking fast enough for two. He had counted on Galladay to keep close watch from behind and the attack had taken him completely by surprise, but he was young enough to react with lighting rapidity. Full motor he gave the De Haviland and banked it into a steep, climbing turn. He was endeavoring to shake the Fokkers off his tail and to bring his own fixed guns to bear, but the Germans were no novices. The leader zoomed upward and the other two circled right and left and dived again.

Weaver glanced quickly around him, hoping for support. To his right Hap Johnston was having troubles of his own, a private little dog fight with two other Fokkers. There was no help there, no help anywhere, only the three enemy Fokkers attacking from three directions, converging their fire.

Desperately Buck Weaver dived, twisting the plane like a snipe in flight, but the Germans' fire continued to find its mark. Bullets ripped through the fuselage, tore at the wings, splintered the struts. One cut Weaver's sleeve

and a second later another struck him in the shoulder, shattering it. He cried out, but strove valiantly to keep control of his plane.

Old Sergeant Galladay saw it all happen with wide, fear-haunted eyes. He hadn't made a move, hadn't fired a shot. He seemed paralyzed—a statue of a man. Now the De Haviland nosed over into a vertical dive. With a supreme effort Buck Weaver straightened up and momentarily righted the plunging plane.

"Dad! For God's sake, heads up!" he screamed.

Sergeant Galladay couldn't hear the words but the agonized look on Weaver's face struck him like a dash of cold water, startled him back into reality as if from a nightmare. His mind, which had been stricken numb, suddenly began to race like the motor. The predicament he had created flashed in a seering flame across his brain. Buck fever! He, the old-timer, veteran of a dozen campaigns had been stricken with buck fever like the rawest recruit! But not for long. No, sir! Hadn't he promised that yellow-haired girl to bring her man back safe and sound? Hadn't he? And here was her man, good old Buck Weaver, in desperate straits.

With the quickness of a cat the old sergeant bent low in the cockpit and swung his guns to bear on the nearest Fokker. Emboldened by the apparent defenselessness of the De Haviland, the German plane was diving straight upon its prey.

"Damn you! Damn you!" Dad Galladay screamed. "Shoot the kid, will you? Well, I'll get you for that!"

Rat—tat—tat—tat! The double Lewises jabbered staccato death. Tracer bullets streaked upward. Sergeant Galladay saw them pour into the fuselage of the Fokker, saw the plane lurch into a spin, motor full on. That was all he needed to see in that quarter. In a flash he swung his guns to bear on the Fokker to the right. The German, observing the fate of his companion, desperately whipped his plane into an Immelman turn. Again Galladay's double Lewises jabbered one short burst, but the bullets went wild and the sergeant swore coldly, violently, at his own marksmanship.

Buck Weaver, weakened and dazed by loss of blood, fighting back the blackness of unconsciousness, sat bolt upright in the front cockpit and the De Haviland flew as if a mechanical man were at the controls—flew a level course without effort to maneuver, without effort to escape. It was an invitation to the two remaining German planes. They circled and dived again, one from each side, meaning to strike the death blow to this subborn American plane and the American ace.

Crouched low in the gunner's cockpit, Sergeant Galladay waited. The Fokkers were already firing. A burst of bullets ripped through the De Haviland's tail assembly; one glanced off the gun barrel not six inches from the old sergeant's head, but still he withheld his fire. Buck Weaver cried out again. His leg was shattered this time.

"Dad! Dad!" he shouted. "I'm going—going——" His voice ceased, but his white lips slowly formed two other words: "Ruth—good-by——"

Dad Galladay was sighting along the barrels of the double Lewises, waiting, waiting. He could see the German pilot on the right peering over the side of the plane and it seemed to him that the man was laughing.

"Laugh, will you?" he muttered. "All right, laugh now!" He aimed high, allowing for distance. It was a long shot but he had made as hard ones before in his life. He pressed the trigger.

Rat—tat—tat—tat! The Fokker lurched sidewise, hesitated a moment; then, in slow, lazy circles it swung downward, the pilot hanging over the side of his cockpit.

Dad Galladay shook his fist at the doomed plane. "Next!" he shouted. "Who's next? Bring on your whole damned air force! We licked them, eh, Buck, my boy?"

But Buck Weaver did not hear the shouted words. A black veil, spotted with crimson dots, was closing down over his eyes. He felt tired, very tired. Slowly he slumped down in his seat. The pilotless plane nosed over into a dive.

Dad Galladay, clinging to his guns, at first thought that the sudden dive was a maneuver of Buck Weaver's. Then some inner sense warned him. One glance at the front cockpit told him the desperate state of affairs. Weaver was "out"; the plane was going down out of control. Just then something stung the old gunner in the leg. He glanced upward. The third Fokker, fearing a ruse or wishing to make sure of his kill, was following the American plane down, pouring lead into it. The German was so sure of his prey that he was making not the slightest effort to protect his own plane.

"Gotta get him!" Sergeant Galladay told himself. Once more he squinted along the barrels of his double weapon until the sights were on the vital section of the German plane. "Gotta get him!"

He pressed the trigger, felt the beloved vibration of his machine guns. But the plunging plane destroyed his aim and the bullets flew wild. Cursing, he pressed the trigger again. The guns fired twice—*put-put!*—and were silent. Out of ammunition! With the swiftness of a magician, the deftness of a card shark, Dad Galladay whipped a pan of cartridges from the rack at his side and fitted it on the guns. None too soon, either. The German plane was not thirty yards distant. Without aiming, almost instinctively, he threw the muzzles of the guns at the German and pressed the trigger. Above him the Fokker wavered; it burst into flames; it shrieked earthward.

The American plane was in little better circumstances. It, too, seemed utterly doomed. It had gone into a tail-spin now, the fuselage whipping around viciously. A dozen more turns and the structure, weakened by German bullets, would fly to pieces. The earth where the flaming German lay was racing up at an incredible rate. Nearer, nearer —a matter of a few hundred feet now, a few seconds—and then eternity.

Sergeant Galladay snatched the auxiliary control stick from its brackets in the gunner's cockpit; unerringly he thrust it into the socket which connected with the auxiliary controls. His motions were cool, precise, his blue eyes were icy cold. And his mind, working with that incredible swiftness which sometimes precedes death, recorded impressions as the whirling tape of a moving-picture camera records pictures—Buck Weaver's lifeless, bobbing head, the flaming skeleton of the German plane, a trench with men in pot-shaped helmets peering upward, a dead man on the barbed wire in front of the crowded trench.

He pulled the stick back gently. A weakened flying wire snapped like a tightened harp string. Every strut, every member of the wounded plane screamed under the stress. Would she stand it? Would she fly to pieces? And then gracefully the De Haviland righted itself, barely above ground, just over the heads of those white-faced men in the queer, zigzag trench.

A shout sounded, a strange mingling of exultation and savage battle cry. Dad Galladay, "too old to fly," was soloing at last! Soloing over No Man's Land, with a wounded pilot in the front cockpit!

Lieutenant Buck Weaver sat propped up in bed in the convalescent ward of a Belgian hospital, just behind the front

lines. Around him lingered a faint aroma of perfume and his eyes were fixed upon the door through which Ruth Childers had just left.

Suddenly the doorway framed a wheel chair in which sat Sergeant Galladay. His face was as red as ever and contrasted vividly with the white sheets and white walls of the ward; his grizzled hair rose stubbornly around his bald spot. At sight of Buck Weaver the cold, blue eyes of the old sergeant seemed to become several degrees warmer.

He pushed his wheel chair forward rapidly with his hands until he was beside Buck's bed, and for a long moment the two sat close, grinning sheepishly at each other.

"Well, I reckon I better congratulate you," Sergeant Galladay said at last. He threw a stubby thumb toward the door. "I met her outside."

"What did she tell you?" demanded Buck Weaver, his face beaming.

"Aw——"

"About the congressional medal of honor you have been recommended for, eh?"

"Medal be damned!" burred Sergeant Galladay. "She—she kissed me. I reckon that was for bringing you back alive, eh?"

"And all the time you had those two bullets in you."

"Aw," protested Sergeant Galladay, "I never felt 'em. I was too scared to feel 'em."

"Yes, you were!"

For a moment more there was silence, broken again by Sergeant Galladay. "I reckon you aren't half engaged any more," he said, fingering the blanket which was wrapped around his legs. "I reckon you're all engaged, eh?"

"Yes, Dad," Weaver said reverentially. "She's the finest, sweetest, prettiest, nicest——"

"Tell that to the newspapers," interrupted Sergeant Galladay brusquely. "I heard it all once before, anyway." He pointed an accusing finger at the young flyer. "Say! I bet you promised her to give up flyin'—get transferred to the damn infantry or somethin'! Didn't yuh?"

Buck Weaver nodded, but the spasm of mingled disgust and indignation which twisted the old-timer's face caused him to burst out laughing.

"It isn't so bad as all that, Dad," he chuckled. "We compromised. I promised never to climb into a ship again—after the war."

The expression of righteous indignation on Dad Galladay's face faded to a sheepish grin. Suddenly his eyes hardened, blue metal between two slits. In his imagination his wheel chair became the gunner's cockpit of a battle plane, the crutch across his lap a machine gun. Buck Weaver was in the pilot's cockpit; twenty Boche fighting planes were swooping down upon them. Dad Galladay waved the crutch wildly.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" he shouted gleefully. "Take that, and that, and that!"

A water bottle on the bed table was knocked to the floor. Its thud brought Sergeant Galladay back to earth, and the wheel chair became a wheel chair, the crutch merely a crutch. Dad Galladay leaned over and touched Buck Weaver on the arm.

"Say, Buck, old-timer," he confided in an awed voice, "we'll sure give 'em hell when we're out of here and flying together, eh?" His voice dropped. "Gosh, it ain't hardly fair, Buck. No, sir, it ain't right. We're jest too damn good for them Heinies."

Another story by Ivan March will appear in a future issue.

The CAVE *of* DESPAIR

By FRED MACISAAC

In Four Parts—Part II—*The Story So Far:*

Vincent Lander, American travel lecturer, visits Murotoru, isolated South Pacific coral island which is being mined for guano by a French company. He is made the house guest of Colonel Dupres, superintendent, and meets Hyacinth, the colonel's lovely daughter, Colombe, company chemist, Captain Lemaitre, commander of the island's Chinese constabulary, Madame Lauret, flirtatious wife of an assistant chemist, and Doctor Mulligan. The labor on the island is done by Anamese imported from Asia. They sign labor contracts, then are kept at work by the constabulary. The work, done amid ammonia fumes and the most terrific heat in the crater of a volcano, is so terrible that most of the laborers die. Hyacinth, whose mother was an Anamese princess, is openly indignant. Lander discovers that Hyacinth has been aiding Aruku, an exiled Anamese prince who signed on as an island laborer to escape death and has now escaped from his labor with sixty other Anamese and is hiding in the coral caves by the sea, planning to attack the ruling whites and liberate the workers.

CHAPTER VII.

BRUTAL PUNISHMENT.

THERE was a post in the ground and at the post was a naked man, his arms tied around it. Standing a pace away was a Chinese, stripped to the waist. Beyond, a score of soldiers were drawn up in a double line, and at one side stood Captain Lemaitre and his two lieutenants. Lemaitre's arms were folded and he glowered at the man tied to the post.

The creature was howling with agony, his back covered with blood. And, as Lander gazed, the flogger raised a whip with several tails on the end of which gleamed little brass balls, and, with all his force, laid it across the bloody back. A dreadful howl went up.

Lemaitre saw Lander and immediately walked toward him, while the brute with the whip struck again.

"Good afternoon, monsieur," said the captain pleasantly. "You have arrived to witness a punishment."

Lander was pale and trembling. The sight of blood always unnerved him and his war experience had not cured him of it.

"Surely such brutal punishment is not necessary," he exclaimed. "You would not treat French soldiers like that."

"But no, certainly not. These are Chinese." He glanced back. "The man is unconscious." He shouted something, whereupon the soldier with the whip dropped it and began to loose the wretch at the post, who immediately fell in a bloody heap to the ground. A lieutenant gave an order and several men stepped from the ranks, picked the victim up and carried him into the barracks.

"This man was a sentry last night and was found sleeping at his post. We would shoot a French soldier for that and you Americans would do the same."

"In time of war, perhaps. Not in peace."

"I do not shoot him," continued Lemaitre blandly, "because it would be difficult to replace him, and if he was not whipped into unconsciousness he would jeer at his officers for womanly squeamishness. We are alone in the Pacific, monsieur, with hundreds of laborers who would cheerfully cut all our throats, and a mob of wild men in the jungle who might attack if we were not always alert. I do not apologize, you understand, I explain."

Lander nodded curtly. "I understand you. I should be afraid that fellow would shoot me in the back at the first opportunity."

"On the contrary he will cringe like the dog he is. Please present my compliments to mademoiselle, if you are returning, and say that I shall come for a cocktail presently."

"Very well, sir," he said as he turned away. Lemaitre's statement was plausible and the punishment perhaps necessary, but the brass balls on the end of the whiplashes were uncalled for, it seemed to Lander, and there had been a gleam in the eye of the French Polynesian as he spoke which indicated that he did not grieve at the duty of beating one of his unfortunte soldiers into insensibility.

He told himself he would talk to Colonel Dupres about this form of punishment at the first opportunity, even if it were none of his business. This Lemaitre was a brute and a bully.

He found the porch deserted and he dropped into a big wicker chair, exhausted by his short walk in the sun. He sat facing the upper end of the clearing and remembered that he had worked around the brink of the cliff on the edge of the jungle that morning without encountering the barbed-wire obstruction. What he could do, others could do. And then it occurred to him to wonder how Hyacinth had returned from her tryst, for she could neither have departed or retraced her steps by the edge of the coral cliff without being visible from half a dozen cottages. That was something that he ought to know.

In the meantime, he had come a frightful distance and suffered great inconvenience to secure lecture material on this island. So far as he knew no lecturer had ever photographed the workings and the workers of a guano island and it was up to him to make a journey into that hateful crater and turn his camera upon the damned souls who delved in the holes of its bottom. His pictures so far were not much different from what might be secured upon any South Sea island.

He asked Colonel Dupres, who now came out upon the porch, when he might plan for his expedition into the crater.

"When you like, monsieur. I suggest, however, that you wait until we have a heavy rain. You will find it more endurable to make the trip during the brief period when everything is moist and, as few of our rains last more than a couple of hours, the sun will come out and enable you to make your pictures but save you half your tortures. Curiously we have had no rain for a week and water is running low. If this dry spell continued we should be in serious trouble."

"Have you no streams on the island?"

"There rarely are, on coral formations. We catch the rain water in big cisterns, and ordinarily it rains for an hour or two every day."

"The denseness of the vegetation on the island astonishes me," said Lander. "Ordinarily coral atolls are scantily vegetated."

"There is plenty of good soil over most of the island; sometimes you have to go down deep to hit the rock. The billions of sea birds who used the crater in former times are responsible for the good soil, you understand, and the heavy rains enable the trees and plants to get all they need to live on. Murotoru, in many respects, is unique among coral formations. If we had no more rain than they have in the Bermuda group, for example, it would be a desert island."

"I wonder if I may look at a map of the island."

"Of course. Why not?" Dupres entered his study and returned with a well-drawn scale map which he spread out upon a table.

"As you see, this island is almost circular. Its highest elevation is about seven hundred feet at the north end, and only one hundred feet at the south end, at this spot on the map, which was once the entrance to the lagoon. It tapers, too, for at the south end the rim is two miles wide and at the old lagoon entrance it is only a few hundred yards. Here is the cove where you landed, and the funicular railroad."

"But it's a couple of miles from the funicular to the settlement," said Lander. "I should have thought you would have constructed your village there."

"That happens to be where the cliff is least abrupt," replied the Frenchman, "but the soil is very fertile at that spot and we should have been engaged in a perpetual fight with the jungle had we built there. We selected this location because there is only a few inches of dirt above the coral and a natural clearing existed here. You have no idea how big a job it is to keep open the railroad. We have a gang of men working continually, cutting trees and clearing bush. A few weeks neglect and we could not operate the road."

"Who does that work?"

"Our Anamese. We give them some relief from labor in the crater by using them in turn upon the railroad. I assure you, despite my daughter's diatribes, we do our best for the poor devils."

"I'm sure of it," Lander declared. "Though I saw a most brutal whipping just now below the barracks. They beat a soldier unconscious and cut his back open with metal balls on the whips."

"Captain Lemaitre was present, was he not?"

"Yes."

"He is the commander of the military on the island. Although I am an old soldier, I am the civilian governor and I cannot interfere in a matter of discipline."

"Nevertheless they might have beaten the man without cutting him up."

"My friend, these Chinese of ours are not mild coolies. They are a hard lot, runaway sailors, ex-pirates, murderers, scoundrels of all sorts, who must be ruled with an iron hand. They will fight bravely but they are unruly and despise kindness."

"I should think you would be afraid to entrust them with rifles."

"They hate the Anamese and despise the Polynesians and are loyal to us because the pay is good. It would serve them no purpose to revolt against us, because they could not get away from the island and punishment would surely overtake them. In the meantime, they are well paid and well fed. However, they must be disciplined, and Lemaitre is the sort to do it. Nevertheless, I detest unnecessary cruelty and I shall ask the captain for an explanation."

"He said the man slept on post."

Dupres spread out his hands. "There you are. He should have been shot."

Lander said no more but inspected the map. After all these men knew exactly what they were up against and he didn't. A handful of whites holding down a mass of brown and yellow men by brute force and driving them to hateful labor. No wonder they feared to be kind.

"What kind of soldiers are the Anamese?" he asked to change the subject.

"Inferior to the Chinese but well enough when commanded by white officers. We made some use of Anamese troops in the World War, but they were hardly good enough to stand against the Germans. They are the best labor troops in the world, however, and we utilized them to a great extent in that way."

"Are they a patriotic race?"

The colonel shrugged his shoulders. "Like the Chinese masses, they don't know what love of country is. All they ask is to be let alone. I doubt if the common people care in the least that they are ruled in Anam by a French governor instead of their native emperors. Of course some of the upper classes receive European educations and return with notions of liberty imbibed in western universities and they try to make trouble and have to be sternly suppressed."

Evidently the colonel thought it was all right for the French to rule Anam against the will of the inhabitants, just as the English reign in India and the Americans in the Philippines. A native patriot in Anam was no more respected than a Hindu revolutionist or a Tagalog insurrectionist, and Prince Aruku, hiding on the island, was just an Anamese outlaw to Colonel Dupres.

Some day the white race in the East will have a sad awakening, Lander thought, and their surprise and indignation will be as great as if they had nothing for which to answer.

"Have you any idea where the outlaws are hiding?"

"Most likely as far away from the settlement as they can get. Aside from the railroad, there are no paths through the jungle, no watercourses to make entrance easy. And there are plenty of caves in the coral formation, some of them very beautiful, by the way. They may be lurking in such places. They are harmless enough. It might cost a dozen lives to round them up and they are not worth it. Poisonous insects, snakes, and fever will finish them in time."

"It seems rather horrible, doesn't it?"

Dupres nodded. "You see, they are not natives of the South Seas, not savages in the sense that the Polynesians are savages, and they are not in their native wild. These men came mostly from the big cities of Anam where they were porters, rivermen, ricksha operators. The island will take care of them for us."

Dinner brought the customary guests: Colombe, Lemaitre and the overseer; and Hyacinth presided at the table as cheerfully and efficiently as usual. Nothing was said by Lemaitre in further explanation of the brutal punishment Lander had witnessed, nor did Dupres bring the matter up, and to-night the conversation turned upon the coming of the Japanese cargo boat and the arrangements for shipping the phosphates which she would carry away.

Captain Lemaitre persuaded Hyacinth to walk to the edge of the cliff to regard the sea under the full moon, Dupres professed to be sleepy and talked little, and Colombe and Captain Schmidt took themselves off after a liqueur. Hyacinth returned with her suitor after less than ten minutes absence. Lander observed that she seemed perturbed and the captain sullen, though said good night politely enough when he departed. Dupres had only awaited his daughter's return to retire, and, left alone on the porch, Lander determined to do likewise.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN WITH THE KNIFE.

IT was very hot in his room despite the open windows and Vincent tossed about for hours, it seemed, before he fell asleep. But then he slept deeply.

Something was stinging him in the throat and that brought him back to consciousness. He opened his eyes and stared stupidly. The moon had set and the room was dark. He brushed at the insect which was biting him, and his hand struck—the blade of a knife, the point of which was penetrating the skin at the base of his throat.

"Silence, monsieur," said a male voice which spoke French with a curious accent. "Silence or you die." Becoming accustomed to the darkness, Lander saw two glittering eyes within a foot of his.

"What do you want?" he muttered.

"You will rise and dress without outcry and accompany me," said the man. "Have you a revolver?"

"Yes, in my belt lying on the table." He spoke calmly. He was still too sleepy to be thoroughly alarmed.

"Rise. Remember I can thrust this knife into your heart if you attempt to escape."

He saw an arm reach for the belt upon his night table. He rose, the stranger hovering near him, and drew on his linen trousers and coat.

"Have you other suits like that?" asked the knife man.

"Yes, in the closet."

"Go fetch another suit. I shall be close behind you."

There was nothing to do but obey. This maurauder now had his loaded revolver.

"Shoes, too," said the man. "Carry the shoes and clothes under your arm."

"May I put on my own shoes."

"Yes, but no trickery." Lander felt for his canvas shoes at the foot of his bed and thrust his feet into them.

"Now precede me out of the house—and be silent or you die."

Vincent's eyes were able to penetrate the darkness, now, to some degree, and he could see that his visitor was nearly as tall as himself and was naked to the waist. A suspicion of the identity of his captor arose in his mind. However, he must obey instructions. He opened his door softly and moved into the hall. The main door was open and he crossed the porch and stepped down upon the lawn. It was very dark outside.

The bundle under his arm was suddenly taken from him and then a coat was wrapped around his head from behind while a hand clutched his sleeve and began to draw him around the house. He tried to estimate the direction and distance they traveled and knew it was not very far when the man stopped him.

"Do not move," the captor whispered. Lander heard a scratching and a grunt and the hand was again on his arm. "Lie flat on the ground and move forward," was the command.

Lander wriggled forward and found himself entering a hole. He was stifling in the coat, but the unknown was prodding his legs with the knife and he made better speed. He was going down an incline upon rough ground, and this progress continued, so he estimated, for thirty or forty feet.

"Halt," came the order. "Now you

may get on your feet, but stoop or you will hurt your head."

Mechanically he obeyed, but a wave of anger was sweeping over him, for he knew he had been betrayed. Hyacinth had betrayed him. He was in the hands of Prince Aruku.

"Wait," came from behind. He felt the coat being unfastened and it was withdrawn from his head, but it did not help him to see, for they were in total darkness.

"There are steps ahead," said the man behind him. "Feel your way carefully."

Lander began to go down rude steps, clumsily hewed out of the soft coral rock. He counted forty steps while his mind was busy with the treachery of the little Eurasian, and with his own dire peril. It was too late to turn on the man; he should have fought him in his chamber. Better a knife thrust than what was in store for him. Aruku had his gun and would not now fear to discharge it.

At the end of sixty steps they stood upon the floor of the cave or passageway, and Lander had long since dared to stand upright, one hand held in front to guard him.

There was a scratch behind him and a tiny flame. The flame grew stronger, and, looking back, Vincent saw that the man held a candle. Probably matches and candles had been in the package Hyacinth had delivered that morning.

"Forward," said his captor. "We have not much farther to go."

Lander saw now that they were in a passage which widened ahead and which sloped steeply downward. They moved steadily along this passage, which had become a cave. It was a dry cave and the candlelight was reflected against white walls.

Down, down, down until he was sure they were nearing sea level. Above he saw stalactites of great size, like giant icicles, and he imagined that it was cooler. Then ahead he saw black water.

They continued to descend with no speech exchanged between them until they came to a turn in the cave. Ahead was a camp fire blazing beside the water's edge. A man sprang up as though materialized from nothing, saluted, and disappeared again. Around the fire there were dark forms which took on human shape as they neared it.

His captor tapped him on the shoulder.

"Welcome, monsieur," he said, pleasantly enough. "Welcome to the headquarters of the outlaws of Murotoru."

"What have you to gain by dragging me here?" he demanded.

"It is what we have to lose if we do not do so," replied the other. "It is chill in the cave. Seat yourself, monsieur, beside the fire."

There was a man stretched in the outlaw's path whom he kicked out of the way. The fellow scuttled off on all fours. He settled himself on his haunches, and Lander clumsily did likewise. By the firelight he was able to inspect the person who had made him a prisoner.

He was a young man, no more than twenty-eight or thirty. He had a shock of glossy, black hair and handsome, black eyes which slanted very slightly. The face was clean cut, the features excellent, only the high cheek bones betraying his Mongolian blood. The skin was as light as that of Hyacinth. He was well built and very muscular and his legs were long and slender but obviously strong.

"I presume you are Prince Aruku?"

"*Oui*, I am that prince."

"Then I have to thank mademoiselle for my predicament," he said bitterly.

"Blame, rather, your telescopic lens."

"And what are you going to do to me?"

"I am not certain. If you attempt to escape you will be killed. If you were

a Frenchman I should have killed you as soon as it was safe."

"I gave my word to mademoiselle that I would not betray you. I told her I sympathized with you. This is how she repaid me."

"You must not blame mademoiselle," said the prince with a grave look. "She met me to-night and told me what had happened; that she had promised to come no more to our trysts in exchange for your silence. She did not know that I would make you my prisoner."

"But what's the sense of it?" he demanded testily. "As soon as my absence is discovered, they will know that you have carried me off. There will be a hunt and you and your men will be killed."

Aruku shook his head. "I do not think so. They will assume you went forth early in the morning, as you did yesterday morning, and wandered into the jungle or fell over the cliff."

"Mademoiselle Hyacinth will know."

"She will tell nothing. It is your misfortune, monsieur, that you saw us on the ledge. That was bad enough, but Hyacinth was indiscreet enough to tell you who I am and how I came to this island. Sharp eyes watched you to-day when you made an inspection of the defenses of the settlement. I knew what was in your mind. You knew a man like me would wish to be revenged upon his enemies and, sooner or later, fear would have made you tell Colonel Dupres what you had learned. You were a much greater danger to me than that imbecile Captain Lemaitre, and it was a military necessity to place you where you could not do harm."

"You speak remarkable French for an Anamese," exclaimed Lander.

"Why not? I was educated in Paris. I attended the Sorbonne. I was an officer in an Anamese regiment in Syria during the war."

"Then you are a civilized man. You must recognize that I am a neutral."

"You would not be neutral in an attack on the settlement. You would fight with the French. I have no animus against you, monsieur, but I have no liking for white men of any sort and Americans are no better than others. You will remain a prisoner, sharing the hard lot of my followers, until such time as I decide what to do with you. I promise nothing."

"And suppose Mademoiselle Hyacinth tells her father what has become of me. Suppose she shows him the hole you have dug to admit you within the lines of the settlement."

"I have no fear from that source. She is Anamese and she will become my wife after I have exterminated the white worms up above."

"What do you hope to gain? You can't get away from the island. You'll be hunted down all over the earth. Warships will batter this place with their big guns if you should succeed in wiping out the settlement."

"Monsieur, I and my followers have labored in the crater. We have been beaten by the Chinese soldiers and the savage overseers. If we succeed in revenging ourselves on them we are not alarmed about what will happen after."

Lander was silent. So far as he could see, he was in a situation without hope. For a few days he might be permitted to live, and if he became a burden upon the outlaws they would murder him without a scruple. Escape from this place seemed impossible, and a night attack upon the settlement, led by this determined fanatic, would probably succeed. Prince Aruku might be an educated man, but he was as remorseless and cruel as a red Indian.

"It was kind of you to permit me to bring a change of clothing," he said, because the silence was beginning to alarm him.

Aruku's white teeth flashed. "I intend to wear your clothes myself," he said. "My trousers are in tatters."

"Oh. If you can enter Colonel Dupres' house at will, why did you not settle your feud to-night?"

"I have no especial hatred of Colonel Dupres," replied the Anamese, "and the death of one or two men will not satisfy me. At present my followers are armed only with knives and spears made of sharpened tree branches. When we strike we shall destroy the entire settlement at one blow, and there is much to do before that happens."

"How will you explain your conduct to mademoiselle?"

The prince threw back his head. "I make no explanations to a woman," he said haughtily. "If you wish to finish your night's rest, monsieur, you will find soft sand on the other side of the fire. I have things to do."

It was more a command than a suggestion and Vincent Lander got on his feet, bowed, and received a cold bow in return, then circled the fire which a small, withered man was feeding with thin sticks of bamboo, moved into the shadow, and lay down on dry sand, sensible that many men were sleeping in his vicinity.

Of course he could not sleep, his situation was too appalling; but, strangely enough, his thoughts at first were more on the subject of Hyacinth and Aruku than on his own peril.

Despite her denial, he had no doubt the colonel's daughter was in love with Aruku; and she could not be blamed for that, since he was picturesque, cultured, young, handsome, and an outlaw.

The brigand from the days of Robin Hood to the present time has always had an enormous appeal for honest and beautiful women, and Aruku was not a criminal but a patriot of Anam, whose present position was a misfortune. Hyacinth had begun by pitying him no doubt. And, as she was half Anamese, she sympathized with his ill-starred effort to set his country free.

The men in the settlement were almost all middle-aged Frenchmen and her only suitor was the unpleasant Captain Lemaitre, so Lander could understand why she preferred the handsome young Anamese prince to the brutal martinet with Polynesian blood in his veins. She had the French love of intrigue and it thrilled her to deceive her father and to act as Lady Bountiful to the outlaw whom Lander had seen in an attitude of adoration before her. She was very naïve, very unsophisticated, and filled with sentiment regarding the unfortunate native land of her mother, while knowing very little about it.

Hyacinth was the idol of her father and had tyrannized over him for years, and she, undoubtedly, expected that she would rule her lover as she ruled her father. No race of men are so completely controlled by their women as the French and no race has so little respect for women's rights as the inhabitants of eastern Asia.

Poor Hyacinth did not know that an Anamese woman was considered as little better than a domestic animal, that her husband was her lord and master who might dispose of her as he wished, might even kill her with small fear of punishment—that she was a slave, not a companion; a toy, not a goddess; a thing, not a human soul.

Assuming that Aruku succeeded in escaping with her to Anam and resumed his former state in that country, her lot as his wife would be miserable since he would lock her in his harem and give her, as companions, other women, who were also his wives and concubines. If she were all Anamese and had been brought up to accept such a fate she might endure it; but though she did not know it, she was much more French than Asiatic.

Aruku's viewpoint was that of his countrymen; but he had been educated in France and he was clever, so he had courted Hyacinth in the western fashion, made use of her for his own ends,

doubtless plotted to utilize her for the destruction of the settlement, and, if he took her to wife, would break her heart by his coldness and brutality.

"I never explain anything to a woman," he had said. That was the Mongolian attitude. As well explain to a horse or a dog as a woman.

Hyacinth, after her confession to Vincent Lander, had taken the first opportunity to reach Aruku to explain to him why she must give up her trysts with him. Lander absolved her of any complicity in his capture, for Aruku would not have dreamed of telling her his intentions. He had assured her that her father's life would be sacred, should he attack the whites, because he feared that her love for the colonel would tempt her to betray her lover, but he had no intention of keeping his word. Every white man on the island, including Vincent Lander, would be slain, and the best the American could hope for was a merciful death.

It was highly probable that Colonel Dupres would conclude, when he discovered that Lander was missing, that he had fallen over the cliff and his body washed out to sea. The electrified wire entanglement would have kept him in the inclosure of the settlement, the sentries would report that they had not seen him, and if he were wandering about in the dark it would be an easy matter for him to make a misstep and fall into the ocean. Hyacinth would know what had happened, but Hyacinth was under the influence of Aruku with whom she might plead for his release but against whom she probably would not dare to act.

Prince Aruku had treated him with some consideration and seemed to have no present intention of putting him to death, but would his savage followers be equally considerate? These had every reason for hating white men, and, to the ignorant Anamese, an American and a Frenchman would be equally worthy of destruction. It all depended upon how well disciplined the cave horde might be and whether Aruku would impress upon them that the American must not be killed.

It might be weeks before Aruku was in a position to make use of his tunnel into the settlement for an attack, and the presence of a watchful white man might become irksome to him at any time. He had told Lander he promised nothing. Lander's doom might be delayed, but it was certain unless he managed to escape.

Escape. Years before he had made a study of the coral caves of the Bermuda islands and he knew that all coral formation was honeycombed with them. These mighty cliffs of this freak island which appeared so solid doubtless contained many miles of natural passages leading from one vast cavern to another and a person unfamiliar with them might wander for weeks and months without finding an outlet. The outlaws had been living in them for six or eight months and probably were unfamiliar with a great part of the passages. It was through good fortune more than anything else that Aruku had found a way up to the settlement, and doubtless very little excavating had enabled him to reach the surface.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OUTLAWS.

THE air in the cave was pure and without excessive humidity, while the caves of Bermuda, which descend far below sea level, are usually excessively hot and damp. Sometimes the water in the pools in Bermuda is salt and sometimes it is fresh. Lander assumed that the pool beside which the outlaws were camped was fresh, an accumulation of rain water which had sunk through the porous rock from the surface.

Hours passed and then a ghostly light

permeated the cavern, a bluish sort of haze which was undoubtedly a diffusion of daylight penetrating some hole which opened in the cliff. He remembered that Hyacinth and Aruku had disappeared when they had become alarmed upon the ledge and it was possible that they had entered this very cave through that opening. From the ledge to the top of the drift there must be a path of some sort or the girl could not have reached it. Given an opportunity, Vincent would find it.

He saw the Anamese stirring about him. A man came up and peered in his face, uttered a string of strange words, and brandished a knife. From the man at the fire came a sharp exclamation which drew off the assailant, but a dozen men were now in a circle about him jabbering and threatening. They were either stark naked or wore tattered loin cloths, while one or two had utilized leaves. They were small men, very thin, burned almost black, physically insignificant. Prince Aruku seemed of an entirely different breed, as most probably he was.

As the sun rose on the outside world, the twilight of the cavern brightened enough to enable Lander to get some impression of the place, and its immensity astonished him. Ages ago the stalactites and stalagmites of this mammoth cave had joined and become columns which extended as far as the eye could penetrate on either side of the great black pool. Aruku had chosen this cave, no doubt, because the water in the pool was fresh, and there was a soft sand floor for his encampment—if one could call it a camp when there were no tents or shelters of any kind.

A shout rang out through the cave and immediately the brown men scrambled from all directions and assembled in two lines on the edge of the pool. A figure in white appeared from the left, Prince Aruku. He walked along the line, head erect, shoulders thrown back, an admirable type of military officer. His word of command was still being echoed, coming back in ghostly fashion from various crevices of the cave. It was a weird spectacle, this company of naked men drawn up on the floor of a fantastic coral cave. Lander counted forty of them. Others were doubtless on sentry duty or engaged in foraging.

Presently Aruku dismissed them, and they scattered, while their commander walked slowly over to where Lander sat and squatted beside him. The enigmatic smile of the Oriental was on his face and his manner was bland.

"I trust you were able to sleep, monsieur."

Lander smiled back. "Under the circumstances it was impossible. Have you decided what to do with me?"

"For the present, nothing. You will share our simple existence, provided you do not make it necessary for us to kill you. Have you seen military service, monsieur?"

"I was a second lieutenant in the American army in France."

"It is unfortunate that you do not speak Anamese, for I might use you as a drill master. There are few among my followers intelligent enough to be my lieutenants. On the other hand they are brave and devoted. As I am a prince of the blood, it is a matter of religion for them to obey me."

"Then I trust you will order them not to stick a knife in me when your back is turned."

"They will slay you without hesitation if you attempt to escape; if not, they will not molest you. What is your opinion, monsieur, of the discipline of the Chinese under Captain Lemaitre?"

"From what little I have seen I should say they were good soldiers."

"Yes? Their position is very strong. They have two Lewis guns, plenty of rifles and ammunition. Rather hopeless, my ambition, is it not?"

"Look here," exclaimed Lander, hav-

ing given birth to an idea. "You can't crack that nut. On the other hand you could capture the Tahitian fishing village, embark your whole band, and sail for some other island. You could get away before they could get down to the beach to defend the natives. . Don't you see that?"

Again the inscrutable smile. "That is not my ambition," said the prince. "I have delved in the vile phosphate fields. I have been beaten by an overseer, knocked down by the butt of the gun of a filthy dog of a Chinese soldier. I, whose great-grandfather was an emperor. Shall I escape, leaving my enemies alive? My intention is to wipe out the settlement of white devils. Only the girl will be spared. I love her. She is beautiful and brave."

"With half a hundred unarmed men you are going to do that?"

"Presently they will be armed. I am not a fool, my friend. If I talk freely to you it is because I enjoy discussion with a cultured mind after months of association with brutes like these and I have no fear that you will be able to betray me. There are four hundred and fifty men living in the labor village and with these I am in communication. They will rise at the word. We shall attack from all sides, in the night, and there will be no doubt of our success when we are ready to strike."

"Supposing you do succeed," said Lander earnestly. "What then? You are caught on the island. The French will send a warship and troops and you will be hunted down and slain to the last man."

"We shall have all the arms of the island, including the machine guns, and we shall retire to the caves, where ten thousand men could not overpower us. We can hold this island for years and prevent the phosphate company from working it. We shall save thousands of Anamese from slavery. And if they should succeed in killing us, of what value is life to any man, when you come to consider it?"

Lander was silent, for the argument was unanswerable. This determined Asiatic with a small army of his own people, well armed, might hold the caves indefinitely. Unwarned, Colonel Dupres and his companions might be overpowered. Hyacinth alone was in a position to give the warning and it was most unlikely that Aruku had confided to her much of his plans. Besides she hated the island, she was heartily in sympathy with the Anamese, and, loving Aruku, would not believe him capable of massacring her father and his friends.

"I am a lecturer," he said. "I came here to make pictures and report conditions, and my lecture would probably have awakened American public opinion against the entire system of Anamese contract labor. I am much more your friend than your enemy. Why should you kill me?"

"I have said I have not decided what to do with you," replied Aruku coldly. "It is possible, after I have destroyed the settlement, that I will put you in one of those Polynesian outriggers with some fresh water and food and let the sea take care of you. It depends entirely upon your behavior. With your knowledge of my meetings with mademoiselle you were a menace to me in the house of Colonel Dupres."

"Thank you for so much," Lander said bitterly.

"Are you acquainted with the mechanism of a Lewis gun?" asked the prince.

"Yes. I was attached to a machine-gun company."

"Then you will be needed when the guns come into our possession. It may be weeks before I am ready to strike. In the meantime, your existence depends upon yourself."

The prince rose gracefully to his feet and moved away, circling the pool and

ascending an incline which caused him to disappear in a few minutes. There was twilight in the cave now; undoubtedly the sun was high and it would grow no brighter. Men were distributing breadfruit and mangoes to the Anamese around him and finally he received two mangoes, a single breadfruit, and a piece of raw fish which he could not possibly eat yet.

He tried to eat the fruit but his nerves were atingle and his stomach rejected it. For the time being he was in the depths of despair.

In the center of a labyrinth, surrounded by savage men whose instructions were to slay him at the first suspicious movement, unarmed, without plan, assured of his eventual destruction, for Aruku's smooth words did not deceive him, there did not seem a single ray of hope.

Night came. He saw Aruku in the distance, but the prince did not approach him. The members of the band who had left the camp during the day returned. Some of them were carrying fruit in paniers, others brought fish. It was evident that these had been out of the caves. To-night Lander was able to eat fruit, though he could not touch the uncooked fish, and after a few hours of dreary waiting he managed to get in a little fitful sleep.

The following day Aruku was not in the cave, and the prisoner was perturbed by the threatening glances of his guards. However, there seemed to be discipline, for no attack was made upon him. That night he managed to eat the fish as well as the fruit. All his waking hours he devoted to consideration of escape, but it was evident that it would be impossible unless the guard around him grew less vigilant.

Upon the third day the prince was also absent, but early in the evening, as the American lay motionless and brooding upon the sand, he appeared, unexpectedly, beside him.

"Come," he said. "There is something I wish you to see."

Lander rose obediently, and at a sharp command three or four men drew burning brands from the fire and lighted the way of their chief. They moved upward by a winding passage for several minutes and, suddenly, to Vincent Lander's delight, he saw stars ahead and heard the roar of the surf. The men with the torches withdrew a little way and the prince grasped his captive's arm and led him through an exit, so high they did not have to stoop, out of the cave and upon a ledge. They were about forty or fifty feet above the foaming surf. A few hundred yards from shore a small tramp steamer lifted and dropped on the swell, brightly illuminated by half a dozen arc lights on her decks.

"A Japanese ship," said Aruku. "She carries away what has cost the lives of many of my people. Look!"

He pointed to the left and Lander saw a weirdly beautiful spectacle. About a quarter of a mile away a chute wound its way down the cliff from the summit and its end extended some fifty or sixty feet out over the water and ten feet above it.

The minerals were sliding down this chute and dropping from the end into small barges managed by Tahitian fishermen, who skillfully kept them in position despite the heavy swell. The phosphates were glittering, gleaming and sparkling, while a row of huge arc lights, suspended from the rocks upon which was located the fishing village, gave a brilliant though eerie light upon the night scene.

"All day to-day, all night, to-morrow, and the next night, this will continue," said Aruku. "Phosphates worth millions of francs have been sold to the Japanese steamer. That is why it is profitable to import the laborers from Anam. That is what I am going to bring to an end."

Lander was too busy calculating to be impressed. The chute was below the factory and that would place this opening almost directly beneath the white settlement. However, the cliff at this point was almost perpendicular; there was no path downward or upward from this vent hole. Below were jagged rocks; above a wall five hundred feet high. This was no exit from his predicament.

"We shall return," declared the prince. The torchmen escorted them back to camp and Lander dropped despairingly upon the ground.

"To-day," said the prince unexpectedly, "I have talked with Mademoiselle Dupres. Your disappearance has created great distress in the settlement. They think you have fallen over the cliff."

"Does mademoiselle think that?" Vincent asked dully.

"At first she thought I might have captured you," replied Aruku, "but I have assured her that it is not so. There is nothing else for her to believe. I did not think it well for her to know that you are my prisoner. After all, she is half white."

Half white. This Asiatic was unwilling to trust the girl fully because she was half white. Vincent Lander, if he were unaware that she was half yellow, would probably have been mad about her, despite his presumptive preference for tall, cool and stately blondes.

Although he had not dared to admit it to himself, Lander had pinned hopes on Mademoiselle Hyacinth. The honest, generous, impulsive girl, no matter how deep in love she might be with Prince Aruku, would blame herself for the disappearance of the American, since she had confessed to the Anamite Lander's bargain with her. Hyacinth seemed to know her way in and out of these caves and might come to his rescue. But if she believed Aruku's statement that he had no hand in the vanishing of the photographer, she would be compelled to think he had fallen over the cliff. He had been creeping upon the brink of it upon the morning when he secured the incriminating negative. The thing was possible.

It was evident that Lander, if he were to escape, must accomplish the thing alone and unaided. Three days had passed already; presently Aruku would tire of guarding a useless captive, or one of the little men whose black eyes glittered with hate when they turned on him would be unable to resist the impulse to drive a spear or a knife into the body of a white man.

Suppose he managed to elude the guards of the camp, could he locate, in the dark, the devious passage which led up to the settlement? And, if he did stumble upon it, he would find that Aruku had not neglected to place sentinels in it.

It was no wonder that Aruku had not troubled to bind him or assign to him a special guard. Upon three sides of the strand upon which they were camped were almost sheer walls and upon the fourth side the sinister waters of the black pool. Lander knew that there were paths up the apparently precipitous sides of the cave, for he had arrived by one of these and it was via another than the prince had conducted him to view the loading of the Japanese cargo boat. But these undoubtedly were patrolled.

Assuming he escaped in the direction of the sea, the most he could achieve would be access to a narrow ledge between ocean and sky, where he would be tracked and recaptured unless he preferred death by jumping upon the knife-like rocks below.

The camp fire burned eternally. It appeared to be the duty of several of the band to supply dry wood for it, and the smoke rose perpendicularly and escaped through ventholes in the roof of the cavern. Aruku, as the com-

mander, had a couch of soft leaves and moss, but the others, including Lander, slept upon the sand. The temperature of the cave was so mild that there was no hardship in sleeping uncovered and after the first night the captive found the sand comfortable enough.

He lay, now, flat on his back, and let the hours slip by. The prince was sleeping on his mossy couch some thirty feet away. On all sides lay the still forms of the Anamese. A sentinel, leaning upon his wooden spear, stood at the entrance to the passage at the right of the pool. A second watchman was standing on the ridge at the back of the camp. Away up on the wall of the cavern at the right he saw a flickering torch which marked the station of another sentry.

Two men squatted on their haunches before the fire, moving occasionally to throw fresh wood upon it. It threw a fitful, flickering light over a circle of fifteen or twenty feet. Lander lay at the very edge of its dim illumination.

From this place escape seemed impossible. He might be able to overpower the guardian of the one way of exit but he could not do it without noise and the whole band would be upon him in a few seconds. He lifted himself upon his elbow and gazed around. He must escape. He must escape now. A mighty impatience swept over him. He wanted to fling himself upon the pair at the fire, possess himself of their weapons and charge the man at the path to liberty. But the hopelessness of that course——

Plash. A fish, or something, disturbed the serenity of the black silent pool. Lander gazed upon it but could see nothing. The pool in the filtered daylight had seemed bottomless; doubtless it had inhabitants. He shuddered to think of what might lurk in its depths, but——

Dare he?

He lay a dozen feet from the edge of the black water and between him and it lay no sleeper. He cast a cautious glance at the watchers by the fire; their backs were toward him. He rolled over and he was out of the firelight. He rolled again, making no sound on the soft, dry sand. In a moment he lay upon the brink. He dipped his fingers in the water, which was tepid, and again something splashed out in the middle of the pool.

With a quiver of fear he withdrew his fingers. Yet was not this a way of escape? His progress to the water's edge had been undetected, and another twist of his body would set him afloat. If he could swim across the pool and draw himself out on the other side, there was a possibility he might find an exit from the cavern, a passage leading somewhere. True, he might wander through one passage into another, through one cave into another, until he died of hunger without ever finding daylight, but was he not doomed to death by the knife or spear sooner or later? To commit himself to the black, bottomless pool—— *Plash.* Something leaped out of the water away out there in the blackness and fell back with a second splash. There was a ripple now on the glassy surface which finally reached the edge where he lay. A tiny fish, no doubt. But what might not lurk in the depths. An octopus? No, the devil fish lived in salt water and this was fresh. But how did he know what hideous creature might make his home there? Water serpents? Crocodiles? Savage, rending, reptilian things.

A fresh log on the fire caused it to blaze up suddenly and its light fell upon him, but the watchers did not look around. Now or never. He rolled once more and lay in water which was almost as warm as the air of the cavern. Now. He gave himself a push and he was afloat. Goose pimples broke out all over him. His liver seemed to crawl, but, lying on his back, he let the water come over his ears and with gentle

movements of his hands he began to navigate himself out into the dreadful pool. The fire gave him his direction, and, after several moments, he dared to turn over and to swim with slow, noiseless strokes directly away from the blaze.

Never in his life had Vincent Lander been in such mortal terror. Once, in the Argonne, he had been on listening post and, crawling through the mud, come face to face with a German scout who covered him with his revolver. There was death for him in the man's eyes, but Lander had plunged at him, the bullet had missed him, and he had succeeded in killing the enemy with his own weapon. He had known fear then when he looked into the face of the German, but never the almost superstitious terror which gripped him as he moved through this tepid, limpid water away from the camp of the Anamese.

CHAPTER X.

THE LABYRINTH.

SOMETHING cold and slimy touched Lander's right hand as it drove through the water, and he almost shrieked. Only a tiny fish, blind, no doubt, but it might have been a tentacle. Ugh!

He swam on and now the camp fire was a pin point of light behind him. On, on. Directly ahead loomed something blacker than the water. He touched it gingerly. It was a coral wall. But there seemed to be a slight current to the left and he followed it and swept around a corner. The light no longer guided him, and he had no means of guessing whither he was going. For five or six minutes he swam in the Cimmerian darkness and suddenly something curled about his ankle. He emitted a low gurgle of terror and then his knee struck sharp rock bottom. He struggled to his feet. The thing which had hold of his left ankle clung, but he was upright and he shook his leg violently. Ah, it had dropped off, whatever it was; it had released him. Some leachlike marine creature, but, thank God, not a cave devilfish.

He was standing on coral rock and he was thankful he had kept on his shoes for there is nothing so destructive to bare flesh as coral. He waded forward and suddenly was beyond his depth. He swam once more, his teeth chattering—from fright, not cold. Again he touched bottom and this time he moved up an uneven slope and in a moment had emerged from the water. He stood upon a patch of strand like that upon the opposite side of the pool. He stood for a second, then slowly crumpled and lay prone. For the first time in his life, Vincent Lander had fainted.

Some time later he came back to consciousness and the realization that he was probably still within reach of his captors. So far as he could estimate he had been twenty minutes in the water, though it had seemed hours. In twenty minutes a man could swim a half a mile, but he assumed he had not traveled half that distance. He must go on. Gingerly he moved forward, hands outstretched, lifting each foot and feeling about before he set it down. He left the sand in a moment and was clambering over smooth rock, calcareous, fortunately, because when he stumbled he did not cut his hands as he would have done had it been coral. Several times he bumped into stalagmites. His progress, of course, was painfully slow and he had no means of knowing that he was not being conducted back into the cavern from which he had fled, but he had to chance this misfortune. Hours of slow progression, and finally fatigue conquered his zeal for escape. He dropped upon the ground and fell into a deep sleep.

When he woke, there was a faint light in the place, the source of which

he could not discover. But he was not in the cave of the Anamese; he was in a passage which was growing narrow ahead, and behind him was a blank wall. How he had arrived here he had no means of knowing, nor could he figure how far he might be from the camp of his captors. He moved on and the passage continued to narrow and the ceiling to lower until he had to stoop and eventually to go on all fours. It twisted, too, and he feared it would eventually peter out. When he had made up his mind that he had better wriggle back, he emerged unexpectedly into a cave which was larger than that from which he had escaped and which also contained a forbidding pool of black water.

Nothing would have induced him, again, to enter one of those pools, but he was able to make the circuit of this one without wetting his feet. Because he was without food, he realized that he was ravenously hungry.

He moved on. A narrow passage led upward from this cave into another but smaller one, and this he crossed. The light was dimmer here, which caused him to think he was moving toward the interior of the island and away from the sea. It reminded him also that the light eventually would fail, since these caves were three or four hundred feet below the surface of the island. Night and impenetrable darkness overcame him in a narrow passage and this night he could not sleep. It seemed weeks before a faint gray glimmer permitted him to continue; and half an hour later he came upon the skeleton of a man. It was a small man and probably had been an Anamese, but he must have perished years ago, lost in the labyrinth of the coral.

The light vanished after a very few hours and the unhappy man crept on in the dark. He knew, now, what would become of him. In a few days he would be so weak from lack of food that he would lie down and never get up again. His movements saved his reason, but he was sure they were not going to help him in any other way. He was perishing of hunger, but he was able to assuage his thirst at pools of fresh water. His rubber-soled shoes were wearing out fast on the sharp coral rock, his hands were bleeding, his coat and trousers in tatters.

Given water, it has been demonstrated that a human being can exist without food as long as sixty days, but not under the conditions under which Vincent Lander kept alive for the next three or four days. He arrived at a place in the labyrinth where the light of day penetrated not at all. He stumbled along in the dark with no idea where he was progressing, or how much, and finally he came into a region of bad air and intense heat, and, more dead than alive, lay down at last in a narrow passage, half suffocated, half mad, and in the last stages of starvation.

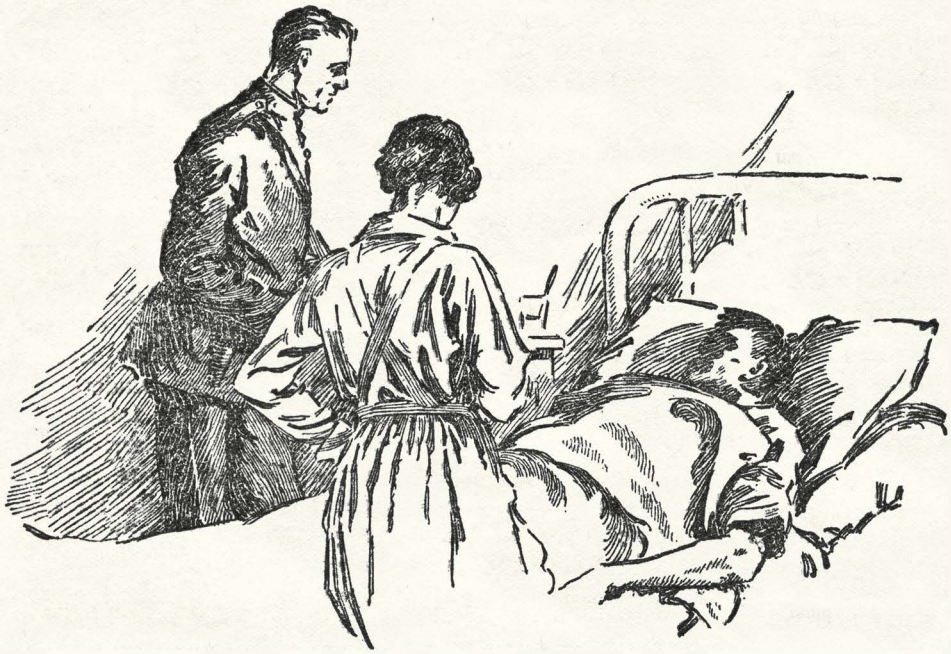
How long he had lain there, he had no means of telling, but a shower of salt dust, and the shake of a distant explosion, caused him to open dying eyes and he saw daylight only a few rods ahead.

Life returned to him then. On hands and knees, disregarding the vicious scratches of the coral, he crawled forward while the light grew brighter and the heat more intense. The air was no longer impure. On, on, and he was almost at the opening, but his strength was ebbing. On, on. The light of the sun blinded him, but he shut his eyes and persevered. And finally he had his head out of a two-foot hole, and, shading his eyes, opened them to look into the face of an Anamese.

The man gave a shout of terror and then Lander passed into complete unconsciousness.

To be continued in the next issue.

A Cop, Double-crossed, Gets His Man!



The THROW-DOWN

By John Randolph Phillips

ONCE a man has performed an important service for another man, he is apt, so to speak, to take that man under his wing. It happened thus with Dan Carrigan. The whole thing began when Carrigan was a patrolman with a beat along River Street. In those days, before the new mayor cleaned up the town, River Street was known as a crook thoroughfare.

One cold night Carrigan found a door unlocked, entered and discovered "Ace" Damron in the act of rifling a safe. Carrigan had a reputation for straight shooting and unlimited courage, so Ace gave in without a struggle.

"Can't we get together on this?" he asked.

"Sure—as far as the station," Carrigan said.

Ace sighed; he had known there was small chance of making a dicker with Carrigan.

"I'm glad," he said, "that as long as I had to be run in it was you that made the pinch. I'd hate to have some of them other flatfeet do it."

Ace went to the pen, but Carrigan, putting in a plea for him, succeeded in getting Ace the shortest sentence possible. Why he did it he hardly knew; there was just something about Ace that Carrigan liked. And then, too, in those days Carrigan had an exalted opinion of his calling and somehow believed that he could help straighten Ace up.

The men at headquarters laughed. They knew Ace Damron, knew that he was a born crook; he had the ability, the courage and the slant on life that made crime his logical vocation. But Carrigan, young and somewhat idealistic, merely shrugged his shoulders and told them that they had a grudge against Ace because he had outwitted them so long.

Time passed and Ace, having served his stretch, came back. The morning after his return he sauntered up River Street, noting all the changes that had taken place during his sojourn as a guest of the State. River Street looked almost respectable now, for the new mayor was in office; the saloons were gone, the gambling houses had been closed, and the era of the speakeasy had not yet arrived.

Ace felt almost out of place. He foresaw that River Street was doomed; respectability had come that far. But down in the twisting side streets and the alleys that fronted on the river itself respectability had not yet dared to venture. Ace consoled himself with the thought that the city yet offered plenty of opportunities for a smart man.

At the corner of River and Sheridan he saw a familiar figure—Carrigan. But it was a new Carrigan, who no longer wore the uniform of a policeman. Ace sauntered up, extended his hand and said:

"Hello, Carrigan. How's tricks? And where's the uney?"

"I've been looking for you," Carrigan replied. "The uney's gone, Ace. I'm a dick now."

"Fine," Ace beamed. "Why you looking for me?"

"Got a little message from the mayor," said Carrigan. "The new mayor. He hasn't got a very high opinion of you, Ace, and he's decided that you're not exactly a benefit to the city. Since he's cleaning up, he's made up his mind that you've got to move on."

Ace Damron grew pale. Certain plans that he had formulated during his morning stroll seemed likely to suffer annihilation.

"Ain't there nothing you can do for me, Carrigan?" he asked.

The plain-clothes man shook his head.

"Not a thing, Ace. I did all I could when they sent you up. Got you the easiest sentence I could."

Ace thought hard. Certain reports had filtered into the prison that Carrigan stood higher with the new mayor than any other man on the city force. A shrewd judge of men and their emotions, Ace knew that Carrigan had a very definite sympathy for him; the fact that Carrigan had got him a short shift was by no means the strongest evidence. Ace knew certain things, but he felt others that were more important.

"That's tough on a guy," he said. "I'd just made arrangements to buy out Stacy's pool room on Marshall Street. It's a swell place and it would mean some jack for me."

"Nice hangout for your gang," Carrigan kidded.

It suited Ace and his purpose to take him seriously.

"That's out," he said. "I done a lot of thinking down there, and I come to the conclusion that I was going straight for a while."

Carrigan was not so gullible as he once had been.

"Bull!" he said unfeelingly. "Bull, Ace. You're a crook."

"Give me a try, Carrigan," Ace pleaded. "Gimme just one try—and I'll see that you don't regret it."

"What can I do?" Carrigan muttered, already weakening.

"Well, try something. You know damned well you think there's something to me or you wouldn't have done what you did when they sent me up. Gimme a break, Carrigan."

"I'll see the mayor," Carrigan said.

Two days later he sought out Ace,

finding him in a pool room on the river front.

"I got a proposition," he told Ace. "When I went to the mat with the mayor, he raised particular hell and swore you had to leave. Finally I told him I'd be responsible. He didn't like that much, but he's got a kind of faith in me and my judgment, so we got together at last."

The eyes of Ace Damron gleamed.

"Spill me the works, Carrigan," he said.

"You can stay in town," Carrigan told him. "But you got to stay below Ballard Street. You can't ever come north of Ballard. That's the best I could do, Ace."

Damron knit his brows. Below Ballard Street meant the side next to the river. Ballard was one block below River—and River was already lost to the racketeer game. He made up his mind.

"I take it," he said. "And, Carrigan, if you ever catch me above Ballard, I won't raise any kick about being shipped outa town."

"It won't do you any good to," Carrigan replied dryly.

"I made arrangements to buy the pool room this morning," Ace continued. This was a lie, but Ace knew that Carrigan had no way of checking up. He'd have to buy the pool room now to put up a front.

"Good!" said Carrigan. "I want to talk to you a little more, though. Maybe you don't realize what I'm letting myself in for if you throw me down. The mayor did this on my recommendation, Ace. I've taken a big responsibility."

"I know it," Ace agreed simply. "And you know I appreciate it. I won't throw you down."

"I ain't talking about what you will or won't do!" Carrigan snapped. "I'm talking about *ifs*. If you cross the dead line some night to pull a job, get caught and have to shoot your way out—it's me that'll have to look the town in the face. And I'm telling you straight, Ace, if you do throw me down, I'm coming after you. And this won't be any affair for the courts, either. It'll be guns, Ace."

Ace gave a little laugh, but his flesh crawled at the note which had crept into Carrigan's voice.

"That's something you'll never have to bother about, old man," he promised. "Below Ballard is where I stay—and damned glad to!"

Thus began Carrigan's protectorate over Ace Damron. Twice in the following year Ace crossed the dead line—with a policeman on either side of him; and twice it was Carrigan who proved his innocence. Both times neat jobs had been done north of Ballard Street and on each occasion the marks of the handiwork pointed straight to Ace.

There was not another person, so the police said, clever enough to get away with those two jobs. But once Carrigan helped Ace establish an alibi, and the second time, when the evidence was most damning, he set to work and landed the real culprit.

At headquarters it was customary to kid Carrigan about Ace. The other men used to ask him laughingly what graft Ace was paying him. Carrigan, however, was good-natured about it; he knew that no man on that force had his reputation for honesty and straight dealing.

But he used to wonder a great deal why he had assumed the responsibility for a crook of Ace Damron's capacity. That Ace was still a crook he felt sure, but he believed that Ace was contenting himself with preying on the small fry of his own kind—the lesser racketeers below Ballard Street. That was all right. In a sort of backhanded way it was helping the mayor in his cleaning-up campaign. Probably, too, Ace was running a bootlegging combine. Car-

rigan didn't worry about that either; it was out of his line of duty.

As time passed, Carrigan grew even more in importance, becoming soon the mayor's special man and answering to no one on the city force. He still paid frequent visits to his old beat along River Street and below, but he never went to Ace's place of business. He did, however, quite often run into Ace on the street. The latter never failed to tell Carrigan how well he was doing with the pool room.

"A swell racket," he would say, "if you know how to run it."

"Yeah," Carrigan would agree. "But you be sure of a cast-iron alibi all the time, Ace. The boys are still laying for you."

One morning Carrigan, on his way to Sheridan Street to investigate a rumor that a certain New York dip was hiding out in the vicinity, ran into Ace on a corner. He stopped as usual to "sling the bull" a minute or two before going on.

"Listen, Carrigan," Ace said, "I want to cross the dead line."

Instantly Carrigan bristled. "Nothing doing. Not a damn thing! Keep to your side of town, Ace."

"But you don't get me," Ace persisted. "I got a real reason. Remember 'Happy' Spears?"

"Sure," said Carrigan. "He's up in City Hospital now, with one of Sergeant Mahan's bullets in him."

"And that's exactly why I want to cross the line," Ace said. "I want to see an old pal before he croaks. Happy was my best friend in the old days. You know that, Carrigan, and you ain't the man not to let a guy see a pal for the last time. I'm willing to do it any way the mayor says. Send a bull with me all the way, even into the room if you ain't got any more faith than that in me."

Carrigan pondered a long time. Finally he said:

"Ace, if anything goes wrong, I guess I don't have to tell you what'll happen."

"Right," said Ace Damron.

"I'll see the mayor," Carrigan went on, "and call you at your place tonight."

"Right," Ace repeated.

That night, in company with a uniformed policeman, Ace crossed Ballard Street, went north to Main, turned up Tenth, and so on to the hospital. The mayor had given orders that the policeman should accompany Ace to the desk, see that he was given permission to visit Happy and wait in the lobby until Ace came down. An hour and a half was granted for Ace's visit.

Carrigan was playing poker in a back room at headquarters when a man in uniform entered.

"You guys get the news?" he asked breathlessly. "Chief just got a call from Moore sayin' that Valentine's jewelry store was robbed and old Valentine bumped off!"

Every man in that room became suddenly alert, tense; and every eye went to Carrigan, sitting stiff in his chair, his hands opening and shutting on the table.

"Where's Ranson?" Carrigan asked. Ranson was the officer who had escorted Ace Damron to the hospital.

"He ain't showed up yet," somebody said. "It's too early anyway. Where you goin', Carrigan?"

But Carrigan had already gone. Fifteen minutes later he swung off a street car, hurried down Tenth Street to its junction with Marshall and turned west. Just before entering Damron's pool room, he slipped his hand into his right coat pocket and curled it around the automatic nestling there.

"I want you, Ace," he said as he went up to the desk. He was very grim, and there were little lines etched around the corners of his mouth, other little lines about his eyes.

"What for?" said Ace.

"I want to know all you did on that

trip to the hospital—and the best place to talk to you is the station."

Ace stared. "Aw, come on, Carrigan. Cut out the kiddin'."

"We'll do the arguing at the station," Carrigan cut him short.

"Carrigan," Ace persisted, "you ain't tryin' to frame me, are you?" Carrigan did not answer; he had turned suddenly to the men that were thronging about him and Ace.

In that crowd he recognized several men on whom headquarters would like to pin something, and for the first time he realized what a tough crew Ace had surrounded himself with down here on Marshall Street. Something warned him that he was on dangerous ground.

"Back up, boys," he ordered, and wiggled the hand in his pocket. "Ace'll be back in a couple of hours if he hasn't thrown me down. Come on, Ace."

The latter, turning resignedly to the spectators, said: "It's all right; I'm going with him. He ain't got a thing on me."

Stares greeted Carrigan and Ace Damron upon their arrival at the police station. Chief Gaines arose from his desk and stood behind it, eyes fixed tolerantly upon Carrigan.

"No go, Carrigan," he said. "We've already checked up on Ace. His alibi is O. K."

"I brought him in anyway," Carrigan said. "I crave a long talk with him." He was still remembering the crew seen at Ace's place, still wondering how a man who said he was going straight could be surrounded with criminals of the first rank. Even if Ace were bootlegging there should be no call for him to have with him certain men Carrigan had noticed—men who, he knew, did not ply the bootleg trade, men who were safe crackers, pickpockets and dark-alley experts. Above all else, he did not like the way Ace had taken his arrest.

"Suit yourself," Gaines said. "But it ain't no use."

"I want," said Carrigan, "the girl on duty at the desk in the hospital, the nurse who's with Happy Spears, and Ranson."

"Ranson's here," Gaines said. "I don't see how you can get the others. Guess you'll have to go up there to see them."

"I'll get 'em all right," Carrigan said. "At least you'll get 'em for me. Call up the hospital, please, chief, and tell 'em to send those two on down here. Make it snappy, will you, chief."

It behooved Gaines to follow directions and make it snappy. Even the chief did not trifle with the wants of the mayor's special man.

"Ranson," said Carrigan, as the officer came in, "tell me how the whole thing went off."

Ranson's story ran thus: He had gone at eight o'clock to Ace's pool room. Then he and Ace had gone to the hospital, arriving there at eight forty-five. Ace had gone directly upstairs.

"Did you see him take the elevator?" Carrigan cut in.

"No, I went over into the reception room after tellin' the girl at the desk to call me soon's Ace came down. They was the instructions I had. But I did see him go out in the hall toward the elevator."

Going on with his recital, Ranson said that at ten twenty Ace had come downstairs. They had then gone to Ballard Street, where he had left Ace. That was all he knew. He didn't see why the hell Carrigan was making such a fuss when in the past, at times when they might really have put something on Ace, he had worked so hard to clear him.

"That'll be enough from you," Carrigan told him, in the manner of a man reproving a fractious boy. "Chief," he said, raising his voice, "where in blazes are those hospital people?"

"Coming, coming," Gaines assured him hastily.

"Why don't you give me a chance to say something?" Ace demanded. "I'm the guy that's most tied up in this."

Carrigan, frowning a little as he thought over the case, did not answer, and Gaines took it upon himself to accede to Ace's request.

"Sure, Ace," he invited. "Let's hear your story."

"This is my case, chief, if you don't mind," Carrigan interrupted.

Gaines shrugged and held his tongue, wishing, he told himself, that it was Ace who had done the job. It would show up Carrigan—and he, Chief Gaines, didn't like city dicks who lorded it over him in his own office. Smart-Alecks, he called them.

Carrigan rose, ordered Ranson to stay with Ace, and beckoned Gaines into the back room.

"What was stolen from the store?" he asked.

"Last report," Gaines informed him, "was a couple of diamond brooches, two small necklaces, half a dozen diamond rings and a big pearl necklace that Valentine had just got for Mrs. Stoner, on Washington Street. Valentine came back to the store for some reason and found the guy at work. Valentine's head was batted in with a heavy silver candlestick. The thief must of run then."

"How was it discovered?" Carrigan demanded.

"Moore, who has that beat, found the door that Valentine had come in by unlocked. He went in and found the body. Job had just been done."

"Valentine's place," Carrigan stated succinctly, "is not quite two blocks from the hospital. That's right, ain't it?"

Gaines nodded. "It's over a block to Eleventh and down not quite one."

"And there's a side entrance to the hospital that opens into an alley," Carrigan said. "And that alley comes out on Eleventh Street, two doors from Valentine's."

"That's right," Gaines agreed. "My God, that is right!"

"But Ace has his alibi," Carrigan said grimly. "What the devil's keeping those people from the hospital?"

"Want me to give 'em another ring?"

"No, chief, but I want you to do something else."

"Shoot," said Gaines. He was beginning to be a little interested in proceedings.

"Send a squad down to Ace's place," Carrigan directed. "Have the whole place searched, safe and everything else. Wreck it if necessary. Also, have your men round up every man in the place and frisk him. If that fails, tell 'em to go round to Ace's room on Ballard and turn it upside down. If he copped that stuff he ain't had long to hide it. I want results on this, chief."

"Why don't you go to the scene of the crime?"

"I'm working on the angle that Ace did it. If he did, you know there won't be anything found up there. Ace was the foxiest I ever saw in the old days. And if there is anything found, the other boys are working on that angle. I don't suppose there were any finger prints?"

"None found the last I heard—the third time Moore called. He and that new dick are goin' over everything careful."

"Send those men!" Carrigan snapped.

Two hours later Ace Damron walked out of the station. He was smiling. The desk girl and the nurse had told all they knew. The desk girl had happened to be looking that way and had seen Ace go to the elevator and enter. Happy Spears' room was on the second floor, and Carrigan knew that there was no use questioning the elevator boy as to where Ace had left the elevator.

The nurse did not remember when Ace had come in. No, she didn't remember whether he had been there a full hour and a half. She had gone out,

thinking that the patient and his visitor would like to be alone, and stayed until just before Ace left. The patient had been resting well, and there had been no particular reason why she should remain in the room during his visitor's presence. She knew enough, she said, to respect other people's wishes for privacy.

And so Ace Damron walked out a free man.

"I'm offa you, Carrigan," he said, at the door. "You've rubbed out all past favors. I wouldn't put it past you to know who did the job. Anyway, you tried to frame me."

From his chair Carrigan looked up, startled.

"Run along, Ace," he said finally. "I'm not satisfied yet. And you know what it means if I find a slip somewhere."

"I'll be ready for you," Ace promised grimly.

Carrigan sat a long time in thought. The squad sent out by Gaines had returned half an hour before; they had followed directions to the letter, and not a thing had been found.

"You're off on the wrong foot," Gaines told Carrigan. "This is one time Ace has a *perfect* alibi."

"You fellows don't understand," Carrigan said. "You don't know what it means to me if Ace did pull that job. Oh, I knew he had his little rackets down along the river, but I thought he was steering clear of this side of town. For all we know, he may have had a bunch working over here under his instructions. This was a special job he couldn't trust to anybody."

"Good Lord!" said Gaines. "Have you forgot that he's built himself a perfect alibi? He didn't pull that job."

"A smart crook," Carrigan returned, "can pull the impossible. Ace used to specialize in jewelry hauls. That's one reason I jumped him so quick. It just looked like one of his jobs. Also, he's the best I ever saw at unlocking doors that ain't supposed to be unlocked except with certain keys."

At daylight Carrigan sat alone in the back room at headquarters. He was going over the robbery and murder from every angle; he had been doing just that since two o'clock. Over and over he asked himself what he really believed about the case. Had Ace, in some clever way devised by that cunning brain of his, slipped down the stairs and out the side entrance of the hospital down the alley to Eleventh Street, entered Valentine's and committed the crime?

Carrigan estimated just how long it would have taken him to do the job provided he worked in the quickest manner possible.

"He could have been back at the hospital in half an hour—forty minutes at the most," he said to himself. "The fact that he didn't make a big haul shows he was hurrying. And what the hell has he got Jim Parks and Billy Gayle and 'Monk' Lewis hanging around his place for if he ain't working big-time rackets?"

Thinking over this angle, Carrigan reviled himself for not having visited Ace's pool room during the past year. He had not done so because he did not want it to appear that there was anything more between Ace and himself than a friendship based on his belief that Ace was on the level. Otherwise there would certainly have been gossip about graft.

"I ought to kept track of him," he said bitterly. "Me that made myself responsible for him. Damn fool—that was me."

Carrigan was miserable. The uncertainty of the thing wore on his nerves, and when at nine o'clock he went to see the mayor, there were haggard lines about his usually smiling face.

"Come out of it," the mayor said laughingly. "Damron established his

alibi, didn't he? You've got nothing to worry about."

"None of you understand," Carrigan said gloomily.

When the mayor made no reply, he continued:

"I know my rep. There's never been a better in the city. People have known I was square and straight. It's meant a lot to me."

He stared moodily at the floor, then went on:

"And if Ace did that job, where's my record? Shot to hell—that's where it is. Why, folks could say, and with plenty of reason, that Ace and me worked together."

"But Ace didn't do it," the mayor said.

"Mr. Hammond," Carrigan muttered grimly, "a cop notices things that even you wouldn't see. He feels things, too; things he can't explain but knows are there. When I walked into Ace's place last night I had one of those feelings. The pool tables ain't in the shape they would be if a man was depending on them for his living. There's a tough crew down there—slick guys that have all done time and would do a thousand years if we could put the stuff on 'em. I could feel it in the air last night that I was butting into the headquarters of a big racket—something bigger than the bootlegging game we've thought was the only thing Ace was playing.

"Right now I'm as certain that Ace pulled that job as I am that I'm living. I got to make sure and then go after him. God knows, I won't mind doing that; it's the uncertainty—the not knowing where to look—that's making every minute a burning hell for me. It's personal between Ace and me. He threw me down when he figured that he was strong enough to do it. He's got his gang now and he figures that if it comes to a show-down he can have a big say in just how things go in this town. But aside from the personal part is the blood of old man Valentine on my hands, Mr. Hammond—on my hands. That's not a nice thing to think about, Mr. Hammond."

"What are you going to do?" Hammond asked.

"That's just it—what am I going to do? This ain't a book case where you can go out, grab off a dozen or so clews, come home, change your clothes and go after your man. But I got to do something."

He stood up, and the mayor said: "You don't want to let this thing get your nerve."

"My nerve will be all right soon as I get facts to go on," Carrigan muttered. "I ain't afraid about my nerve." He walked to the door. "Mr. Hammond, I'll phone you if I go over the line after Ace Damron, and you better send Gaines and a riot squad down there. Not that I want help with Ace—but the whole gang will cut loose, and I figure the top will blow off everything."

Carrigan went out the door. Presently he was talking with Moore, the man who had found the murdered Valentine. Moore had nothing to offer except to say:

"A smart guy did it, Carrigan. Surprised that way, a dumb-bell would have left some clew. But there wasn't a thing."

"Sure," said Carrigan, "a smart guy did it—Ace Damron."

Moore looked at him sharply. "You're sort of off your nut about this thing. Ace couldn't have done it."

"You guys quit worrying about whether or not I'm off my nut," Carrigan snapped. It was his frayed nerves that spoke now. "If I get the goods on that dirty double crosser I'm going after him like nobody was ever gone after before."

"You need a bracer," Moore said. "Why don't you step into Jimmy's place and get a drink?"

"To hell with a drink!" Carrigan growled, and walked away.

Next he visited the jewelry store, knowing perfectly well that it would profit him nothing; he merely wanted something to do while he thought. Afterward he walked through the alley that led from Eleventh Street to the side entrance of the hospital. Walking along, he studied the ground, hoping to find something that Ace might have dropped in his hurry. It was only in books, however, he told himself, that you found a clew just for the looking for it.

He stood for half an hour in front of the hospital.

"I wonder if I'm a damn fool," he said suddenly. His jaw clicked shut. "No, hell! Ace Damron did that job. If only that squad had found the swag! What could Ace have done with it?"

That, he realized, was the question. How simple things would be if definite proof were lodged at Ace's door. Then, a gun in his hand, he would be going after Ace.

And then to Dan Carrigan came a sudden thought.

"Fool!" he muttered. "Why didn't I think of that before?"

Ten minutes later he was ushered into the room of Happy Spears to find that gentleman propped up in bed, reading the latest dope on the races.

"Looks like you ain't going to kick off after all, Happy," was Carrigan's greeting. "Ace Damron was mighty afraid you were. Pity you'll go straight from here to the pen." He was intentionally brutal, wondering if he could get any kind of rise out of Happy Spears.

But Happy merely smiled and offered Carrigan a cigarette.

"None of those filthy things," Carrigan said. "Why don't you smoke a good cigarette?" He extended his own pack, and the affable Mr. Spears selected one, tapped it against a thumb nail and lit it, then held out the match for Carrigan.

"Where's your nurse?" said Carrigan.

"Out," said Happy. "Gassing with some interne, I reckon."

"Stays out a lot," Carrigan observed. "Out when Ace was here last night, wasn't she?"

"Part of the time," Happy admitted. "Say, how'd you get in here, Carrigan? Visitin' hours ain't till two this afternoon."

"Oh, I got in when I told 'em I wanted to talk to you about Ace Damron murdering old Valentine." Carrigan's gray eyes focused intently upon Happy's face; there was a terrible intensity in their depths.

"Know any more good jokes?" Happy said.

Carrigan merely grunted. Not by the flicker of an eyelash had Happy Spears betrayed that he might know something he was not supposed to. Carrigan threw his cigarette on the floor, retrieving it instantly as the nurse came in.

"You'll have to go," she said. "When you come in like this you can stay only ten minutes."

Carrigan dropped the cigarette on the floor again, grinding it out with his heel this time.

"I'll have to stay a little longer," he told her gently, rising to his feet. "This is business, miss."

There was so much finality in his voice that the nurse immediately ceased to argue. She sat down in a chair by the window. Presently she came over and gave Happy something out of a bottle. Carrigan was staring at the floor.

They sat there for an hour, no one speaking more than ten words in that time; then a new visitor entered. It was none other than Monk Lewis, whom Carrigan had last seen in Ace's pool room the night before. At sight of Carrigan he gave a start, and the detective saw a worried light creep into

his eyes. Instantly Carrigan felt a ray of light, faint but certain, breaking over him.

Monk and Happy exchanged greetings, and then Monk turned to Carrigan.

"Didn't expect to find you here," he remarked.

"You'll find me like that lots of times," Carrigan said.

"I'd of thought you'd still be working on the Valentine case," Monk next offered. "You was all hot an' bothered about it last night."

Carrigan turned to the nurse.

"Will you go outside and phone for a cop?" he asked.

The girl had seen enough of Carrigan to follow instructions without asking questions. When she had gone, Monk snarled:

"Tryin' to pull another fast one?"

"Maybe," Carrigan said. "Ace sent you up here after something, didn't he? Well, you won't get it, Monk. You're going to be the guest of the city a day or so."

"Like hell!" said Monk. His hand slipped into his pocket.

"Cut that out!" Carrigan snapped. "You know damn well I've had you covered ever since you walked in the room."

Monk had not known it, but he knew it now, knew it as soon as his eye fell upon Carrigan's right coat pocket in which his hand lay.

When the nurse returned with the officer, Carrigan rose.

"Take this guy down to the station and lock him up," he directed. "See that he talks to nobody—*nobody*, you understand. Hold him until I give the word."

"What charge?" the officer asked.

"I don't give a damn what charge! Smoking in public if you want to!"

Monk Lewis vented the choicest of his vocabulary on the quiet hospital air.

"Take him on," Carrigan said to the policeman, "and tell Gaines I said to be ready."

"What's the play, Carrigan?" Happy asked when Monk had been led away.

"You'll read it in the papers to-morrow," Carrigan said grimly. "And now, Happy, I've got to inconvenience you a bit." He turned to the nurse. "I hate to bother you again, but I've got to have another cop."

Half an hour later Carrigan stood on the threshold of Happy's room and gave implicit directions to a big man in a blue uniform.

"You stay on guard here, Harris, until somebody relieves you—if it's till Christmas. Nobody but hospital people can come in here. Understand that?"

And then Carrigan went out, down the hall to the elevator and thence to the floor below and the street outside. A new light had entered his eyes—a hard light that said plainly that Carrigan was going forth to battle. There was a bulge in his left-hand coat pocket, which he covered with his hand.

"He threw me down," he muttered as he reached the street. "Damn his double-crossing soul."

The setting sun was shining straight down River Street as Carrigan walked along the old crook thoroughfare. Golden light fell all about him there in the busy street where men hurried by without noticing the tall man striding resolutely toward Tenth Street. Carrigan remembered the old days when this had been his beat, remembered the night he had pinched Ace Damron. His jaw set.

He had phoned to them back there at headquarters, but he had given them the slip, going ahead by himself. They'd be out soon enough as it was; he almost wished he had not asked Mayor Hammond to send a squad after him.

At Tenth Street Carrigan turned south, stopping at the junction of Tenth and Marshall to stand in a doorway

while over the city long shadows fell until the street lights came on and winked cheerily in the gloom. He might not be seeing them again, Carrigan thought. He wondered if he was a fool to be going this thing alone. But he thought of Ace's promise and of old Valentine who to-morrow would be buried. He stepped out of the doorway.

Entering the pool room noiselessly, Carrigan saw that it was nearly empty. Over at the desk, with his back to the door, stood Ace, talking to Jim Parks. Billy Gayle and Pete Connell and two men that Carrigan failed to recognize were playing a four-handed game at the first table. Ace was saying to Jim Parks:

"Where the hell can Monk be?"

"Monk's in jail, Ace!" Carrigan called, and his gun covered Ace's heart.

"You again?" Ace snarled as he whirled to face Carrigan.

"Yeah, me," Carrigan said gloomily. The four-handed game had stopped. Billy Gayle had his hand stealing down to his side. "Cut that out, Billy," Carrigan said, walking toward Ace.

"Have I got to prove my innocence again?" Ace snapped.

"No," said Carrigan, still gloomily. "Not taking the swag with you last night was smart stuff, Ace—but sending Monk for it was—suicide. I found it in the stuffing of Happy's pillow."

For one moment silence, thick, heavy, oppressive, hung over the pool room. Every man could hear every other man breathe. Lightninglike, Carrigan counted the odds. Six to one. Yes, they'd bump him off—unless he could bluff. His pistol circled, threatening the entire room.

And then at once they all went into action. Even as his first shot roared, Carrigan felt Billy Gayle's bullet plow through his side. Ace whirled, clutched at his breast, staggered; and Carrigan shot Billy Gayle dead through the heart. Jim Parks dived behind the desk, and the next instant the lights went out.

Six automatics shattered the gloom with stabs of flame. Carrigan, crouching behind the first table, knew that his first hot had only jarred Ace. Billy Gayle had disconcerted his aim.

"He's behind the first table!" a voice screamed; and Carrigan fired twice in the direction from which the voice had come. Then it seemed that a hail of bullets pounded all around him, biting into the table, the floor and into Carrigan himself. He slumped forward, feeling giddy, then jerked himself upright.

Arrows of flame piercing the dark, men cursing, the staccato bark of automatics, and over all the pungent, acrid smell of burned powder. Carrigan was behind the desk now. His last shot whizzed into the huddle of bodies. He had to get Ace. They had him—but Ace had to go.

He went down then and was dimly conscious of a commotion at the door.

"The bulls!" he heard Jim Parks yell; and the next instant bodies were hurtling over him—the survivors making for the back door. A great will carried him to his feet just as the first policeman snapped on the lights. He was running toward the back, stumbling as he went, before the raiding squad could take in the scene of battle.

"Wait, Carrigan, wait!" came the shout of Gaines himself.

But Carrigan was in the alley back of the pool room now, reloading his gun as he ran. Out ahead scuttled four dim figures, crouching low, hugging the shadows along the wall. Back there in the pool room Billy Gayle and another man, one of the strangers Carrigan had noticed, lay dead. But Ace, Jim Parks, the other stranger and Pete Connell were escaping.

A man in uniform appeared at Carrigan's side.

"Get Jim—and the—others!" Carrigan gasped. "Ace is for—me."

Out the alley ran the four fugitives, and at Tenth Street Ace turned right while the others darted across the street and into another alley. Carrigan did not hesitate. His gun blazed twice as he turned down Tenth after Ace. Behind him he heard the policemen thundering into the alley after Jim and Pete and the stranger. He was all alone now —on Ace's trail.

Once Ace turned and fired; and Carrigan, halting momentarily, replied, saw Ace reel, then go on, and drove himself forward. Ace shot into an alley. Again Carrigan did not hesitate. Ace might be waiting there in the dark, but Ace could never get him before he had one more shot. As he ran he hardly felt the wound in his side.

Far behind him sounded the pounding of many feet—more policemen following him and Ace. The alley came out on a twisting, narrow, darkened street that ran parallel to the river and half a hundred yards from it. Ace was making for the river—but he would never have time to hide in the shacks that lined the bank. Yet there he was darting into one through a low, sinister-looking doorway.

Carrigan crept to the doorway. His side was wet; a spurt of blood hit the ground beside him. It did not make him faint, only served to strengthen him, to drive him closer. Tensing his muscles, he crouched and shot through the door, his body skimming the floor inside. Ace fired twice, and Carrigan lay very still, flat on his belly, his head raised barely two inches from the floor. He hoped he was not lying so the shaft of light could reveal him to Ace. A spurt of flame pierced the gloom. Carrigan knew that it was a tentative shot; Ace wasn't sure what had happened and was shooting again as a precaution.

Carrigan waited, his fingers tensing on the butt of his gun. He had got Ace's position fairly well in mind with the flash of light from that last shot, but he had to make sure. Dizziness was beginning to steal over him—and he couldn't bungle this last chance.

From outside came the drumming of feet; the police had arrived, were running up and down along the street outside, searching, shouting. Carrigan shut his lips tight. He felt very weak. Blood was oozing out of that hole in his side; he could feel it spreading on the floor. Just in front of him was a box and far over to the right another box, a crate of some kind. That was where the shots had come from. Ace must be behind that box.

A policeman came to the door, looked in, hesitated a moment on the threshold. Carrigan started to call, then changed his mind. That would reveal his position—and Ace would have another shot before the policeman could take in the situation. The officer called something to another man behind him and moved away from the door.

Carrigan heard something behind the box on the right. It was a long-drawn sigh that was almost instantly repressed. He did not move a muscle except those that served to turn his head until his eyes focused straight on that crate. Again he lay motionless, waiting for the moment when Ace would stick his head over the box to take a look. When he did that, several things would happen at once—all of them deadly.

It was funny, this waiting. But it was the only thing. He didn't have the strength to rush Ace, and Ace was afraid to come out. How long they lay there Carrigan never knew; he knew only that finally all sound died in the street outside with the receding drumming of feet as the police squad moved farther down the water front.

He fought grimly against the weakness that was stealing over him, fought it with all the stubborn strength that remained in his body. It was better for the end to come this way—he and Ace settling their feud alone here in this

hole of darkness. He who had trusted Ace, and Ace who had thrown him down.

The minutes slid away. Stillness that was as heavy as death reigned over the little room, then a mouse went scurrying from under the box just in front of Carrigan. Carrigan's nerves tingled. He wondered if Ace had the same sensation. Now, since his eyes were growing accustomed to the gloom, he could make out objects, could see clearly the outline of that big crate behind which Ace hid.

He heard Ace move, then Ace's voice.

"Carrigan—if you're still alive—let's call it off. Each let the other one off. Carrigan!"

Carrigan lay very still. He had Ace now; he knew the hell Ace was going through, the uncertainty as he lay over there and heard his own voice echo in that tomb of silence. Ace was beginning to break.

"Carrigan—are you alive. For God's sake, Carrigan, this is enough! Carrigan!"

The final words were almost a scream. When the last sound died away, Carrigan was ten feet nearer the box, having slithered forward on his belly while Ace's voice covered the sound. He waited grimly while he heard Ace shift his position; then slid forward as Ace spoke again.

"I'll get you, Carrigan. Damn you, I'll get—you!"

Ace sprang to his feet; his gun circled the front of the room, spitting lurid flashes and whistling chunks of lead that bit into the floor.

"Nothing!" he screamed. "Not a damn thing in the room!"

Then he saw Carrigan rise in front of the box, and he drew back his empty automatic—but the muzzle of Carrigan's gun pressed hard over his heart.

"Drop it," Carrigan said; and the automatic slid from Ace's fingers. "Come out!"

At the hospital the mayor was Carrigan's first visitor.

"I suppose you know you're a damned fool," he said affectionately.

"Yeah," said Carrigan. "I reckon I am—but I can look this town in the face again."

The mayor did not reply. He was wondering if the town were good enough to look Carrigan in the face.

Watch for more stories by John Randolph Phillips.

THE WILLIN' WAY

JOHN MARVIN, who used to be a guide in the Adirondacks, is a corking shot and a woodsman to his fingertips. He has a little Indian blood, and it gives a noble touch to his bronzed, heroic, bearded face. In his sixties, he is still an inspiring figure of a man. He can leap from a wagon so lightly that you can hardly hear his feet touch the ground, and he can keep right on batting a ball until the average pitcher is worn out. His humor is superb, and he has an amazing stock of rollicking, French-Canadian and mountain songs, anecdotes, and jokes.

After listening to an estimable farmer's wife singing a valiant but unmusical alto in a school festival, he remarked dryly: "She's right thar with the voice, all right; but I'll tell ye somethin'; she l'arned t' sing b'fore they invented tunes."

And he told us, out in the woods one day, what Jim Green, the darky, used to say when they asked him which way a tree was going to fall. Mr. Marvin's rendition of Jim's dialect is noteworthy. "Ol' Jim," Mr. Marvin said, "Ol' Jim he'd stretch back his neck an' then spit an' say: 'Well, um's not shore, an' um's not sartin, but um's *thinks* she's goin' t' fall the willin' way!'"

The Bad Man *of* Black Brook

By CLAY PERRY

Grosse, the River Boss, Ordered Gar Leduc to Leave Town. And Leduc Returned the Compliment.

HE came along the precarious path which followed the brink of the high granite bank above the foaming black-and-white torrent which was Black Brook. There was no doubt of his being a riverman. He walked like a panther in his heavy drive shoes, thick-soled, and studded, heel and sole, with long, sharp steel calks. His wool trousers were belted high with deerskin, tanned with the hair on.

A mop of curly, purplish-black hair flared from beneath the brim of a Stetson which had been ruthlessly trimmed down so that it would not catch too much of the whistling winds that surged through the gorges of the mountain rivers. His bronzed neck rose from an open woolen cruiser shirt, like a column. His face was lean, with an ivory hue which seemed to speak of long illness or confinement, and out of it looked a pair of eyes of startling blue.

In an accent which betrayed the Gallic strain he demanded of Macy, the boss of the river, a job.

As if anticipating questions he said, calmly: "I am just out of jail. But I am a white-water man. I am Gar Leduc."

Macy nodded with instant comprehension. June Macy, his sister, turned her head from her pad with which she was sketching a rough outline of the tangle of timber in the rapids below them, where the drive crew labored. She clipped her lower lip in her white

teeth as she regarded the newcomer. Something seemed to pass between two pairs of blue eyes, but it was so swift that Macy did not catch it. He scowled a little as Leduc removed his hat and swept a bow to the girl. Ever since he had allowed June to come for a visit to him in this little backwoods wilderness village he had guarded her carefully, never letting her out of his sight except to visit the little white-haired widow who lived in the only white house in the village, built of unpainted pine that had seemed to turn black in sympathy with the root-stained river and the dark earth of the forest. The widow woman sold butter and milk and eggs to the wanigan cook on the drive job. She seemed somehow different from the frowsy, fat females of the village, with a hint of gentility in her pale face and a hint of tragedy in her eyes.

"Well, if you are a white-water man," Macy said to the applicant for work, "I'll give you a job. Do you see that wing jam over there in the split-rock rapids? It has been hung up for three days. It's a one-man job. My drive boss, Grosse, is the best on the river and he has tried it. It's a one-man job because there isn't room for more than one man to work, and——"

"Grosse is the best?" cut in Leduc sharply. "I bet you he says no, himself, eh?"

His laughter rang out wildly above the roar and rumble of rushing water and pounding timber, and his next move was as unexpected and abrupt as his interruption. He simply turned on his heel and dropped over the edge of the bank out of sight.

Instinctively the brother and sister stepped over and looked down, June holding to her brother's arm. Leduc was already at the bottom of the almost perpendicular cliff of granite, selecting a peavey from a tool box placed beside the lower river trail. In the next moment he was dashing in zigzags from log to log and from rock to rock across the roaring stream toward the jam that had piled in the mouth of a flume formed by sharp rocks split apart and thrust up by some convulsion of nature.

"So that," breathed June, "is Gar Leduc! What a pair of eyes! He must have got them from his mother. I'm glad you gave him a job, Jim. She needs help. She is the butter-and-egg woman, you know."

"Hum!" grunted Macy in surprise. "I didn't. Well, I doubt if she will get much help from Gar. He's a bad one."

"That boy!"

"That boy. He has been in jail for almost a year on the charge of shooting a deputy game protector in the back and leaving him to freeze to death."

"But—but they've let him go!" stammered June.

Macy smiled, dryly. "For lack of evidence to convict him," he said. "A squealer is worse than a murderer, in the code of Black Brook. And a game protector is only knee-high to a skunk. Nobody would talk. I know them."

"But what evidence did they have to warrant arresting him, in the first place?" June wanted to know.

Macy pulled at one ear, thoughtfully. "It's a long story, June. Briefly, I guess it was a case of looking for the man with a motive, grabbing him and trying to get it on him afterward. Leduc's father, Antoine, is supposed to have been shot by a game protector, four or five years ago. His partner, Grosse, brought the body out and with it an abandoned rifle which was of the pattern used by the game protectors in this region. It happened in a blinding blizzard and——"

"Oh, I know that story," June interrupted. "Or some of it. I've always wondered about it. But——"

"But the fact remains, June, that Gar Leduc, for all his handsome face and

innocent blue eyes, is a bad man—a man to keep away from. You see, June, this neck of the woods is about forty years behind the times, just as it is about forty miles behind the ranges. Black Brook is out of touch with civilization for nine months of the year. It is only in summer that any one can drive over these mud roads. Why, I drove down to the Forks last October in my car and had to leave it there and come back in on snowshoes, pack on back. The buckboard ride we had when you came up is a sample of the best mode of travel during spring and fall. In winter the road is only a snowshoe trail. Black Brook is off the map and the men of Black Brook consider themselves outside the law. Especially the game laws," he added, with a grim chuckle. "And the local laws are simple. One of them, as I said, is that a squealer is worse than a murderer. You can see how hard it must be to convict a man accused of popping off a game protector."

"But you gave Leduc a job, even when he told you——"

"Sure I did. He said he was a white-water man and—— Will you look at that?"

Macy leaped to a better vantage point as he broke off with a cry of delighted astonishment, pointing to where Leduc had vanished beneath the frowning rise of the split-rock jam.

Leduc's brief-brimmed hat was in sight, bobbing up and down as he "fought foam" in a smother of suddenly released timber and water which was leaping through the flume of rocks.

"That's why I hired him." Macy called out exultantly. "He has busted that jam! He *is* a white-water man!"

"How on earth did he do it?" cried June, her eyes sparkling with interest. "Grosse and his best men have been at it, off and on, for three days, and couldn't do it."

"Well, Leduc took a chance—a crazy chance," answered Macy. "He went down and dug for the key log. He got hold of it and wrenched it loose with his peavey and then jumped it and—— He is taking some chances right now! But I think he's going to make it, all right! Dammit! He is! Whoopee! That a boy, Leduc!"

In the excitement of the moment Macy whooped like a wild river rider himself. It was one of those moments which helped make his job attractive, caused him to forget the bitter days and nights of sleepless, back-breaking, heart-breaking labor which went with the herding of thousands of the black sheep of the forest down the path of the river to the mills at the Forks.

But the moment passed. His exultation changed to angry anxiety as he saw the drive crew which had been at work on other sections of the wide-sprawled jam, quit their places and start for the shore. On the tool box bulked the giant form of Grosse, the drive boss, gesticulating with his huge and hairy hands, shaking his fist down the river toward Leduc, who was riding the flumeway on one log, then another, poking with his peavey at lingering logs, as he rode out the stampede he had loosed upon himself.

Grosse and the crew had quit because of Gar Leduc. It did not take Macy long to discover why. It was not because Leduc had been a jailbird, nor because he had done, single-handed, a job that forty men had failed to do. It was because the story had been spread about that Leduc had won freedom by charging the shooting of the deputy game protector to another man.

In brief, Leduc was branded as a squealer.

Macy understood the men of Black Brook and the primitive impulses which governed them. It seemed as if, every spring, when the brooks burst their bonds and became roaring torrents darkened by the black earth of the forest floor and the black-eyed, dark-faced,

black-bearded men of the woods came down with the drive, the bad blood of all the ancient quarrels was stirred. Fights were plenty and mostly they ended in bloodshed or broken bones. Curiously, there was seldom a fatality. It was not part of the code of Black Brook to punish even an informer with death. There were more subtle ways of meting out punishment to these despised and hated weaklings—as Macy was to learn.

This desertion of the drive, in some respects as bad as desertion by soldiers in the face of an enemy, Macy knew he must not treat as such, for these men were like children. They must be allowed to settle their quarrels themselves. The learning of this lesson had won Macy triumph in the woods for many years where other superintendents had failed.

"Well, then, Grosse," he replied to his drive boss' angry denunciation of Leduc, "it is up to you to drive him off the river if you can. I gave him a job because he asked for it, and I knew that he was a white-water man."

"Baggar den, Leduc, he weel leave town to-morrow," Grosse declared ominously. "Me, I tell heem to go—an' good-by."

He looked about into the dark, sweating, sullen faces of the rivermen. No one murmured a word. Macy nodded and turned on his heel and left them.

He met Leduc coming up the river trail and halted him.

"They tell me," he remarked casually, "that you are going to leave town. That was a good job you did. You can get time for a full day's work for that, at the wanigan—if you want it now."

Leduc blinked but his eyes became bluer and brighter, and then a look of something almost like despair came into them. But he stabbed his peavey heavily into a log.

"I quit the job," he said simply. "I will get my time. But whoever says that I am leaving town, he lies. If it is Grosse, I will tell him so."

Straight as an arrow he walked up the trail beneath the granite cliffs. Macy clambered up to where he had left June.

"He's got his nerve with him, that handsome devil has," he commented admiringly. "He is going to see Grosse and call him a liar."

"Did you discharge him?"

"He saved me the trouble."

"That man, Grosse, is a stupid old fool!" exclaimed June.

"No, he is not stupid, nor a fool," Macy contradicted. "You see, Gar Leduc, if he really shot the warden, might be tolerated, if he kept his mouth shut. But the story is that he has squealed, and that makes him a double outlaw, in Black Brook. Grosse lays the charge; and that means that Leduc must leave town—or drive Grosse out. You see?"

"And if Gar Leduc leaves—that means he admits the charge that Grosse has made? Well, I don't believe that he will go. I don't believe he is as bad as he is painted. You tell me it was Grosse who laid Gar's father's death to a game protector. Mrs. Leduc does not believe her husband was shot by a warden."

"Oho!" exclaimed Macy. "I see!"

"And she says that the deputy who was shot last winter was sent up here to investigate the shooting of her husband—to try to clear it up. You see?"

Macy nodded.

"And I talked with Gar Leduc last evening. He had just come home. And I think that he is a white man—as well as a white-water man."

"I see," repeated Macy, with a long-drawn expulsion of his breath. "I see."

Beneath his breath he told himself that it was time for Gar Leduc to leave town.

The clash between Grosse and Leduc did not come that afternoon, for Grosse went home directly after Macy left him.

But as June and her brother were approaching the ugly, black store building, early that evening, they saw Gar Leduc sitting on the high platform which served as a porch for the store. He was swinging his legs idly, as if waiting for something to happen. By his side were some parcels of groceries.

Suddenly, from the opposite direction, appeared Grosse, walking with the wide-footed, rolling stride of the river driver. He mounted the unrailed porch and came over toward Leduc, his calks biting into the planks.

"Gar Leduc," he called out loudly, "it's tam for you to ron out. It is bettaire you leave town to-morrow. Good-by!"

Leduc turned his head but he did not look up at Grosse; he regarded the drive boss' big feet in their heavy, mailed boots. As if by magic a little group of rivermen appeared about the platform. They were silent, seemingly apathetic, but beady black eyes fixed on the pair at the edge of the porch, the one standing, the other sitting with his back to him. It seemed as if every one held his breath for a moment.

"I tell you, Grosse," came Leduc's clear voice in answer, "it is long past time for you to run out. You are on your feet and ready. Good-by to *you*."

His next move seemed clumsy. He reached for a parcel, knocked it off the porch, and stooped to pick it up.

Grosse's right foot swung through the air where Leduc's head had been. Missing its mark, it went high and swung him off his balance, so that he fell from the high porch in an awkward position, twisting one knee sharply.

Leduc, looking down at Grosse as he huddled in the sand, groaning curses and hugging his knee with both hands, began to laugh—and his laugh was like a tolling bell.

"I am glad," he said, "you did not break your neck. I will enjoy, some time, to break it for you. Take care of yourself and do not fall off the river bank. If you do fall, do not say you were pushed. Any one can see how careless you are. It is a wonder you did not break the split-rock jam. If your leg is so bad, to-morrow, that you cannot work, I shall be glad to hold your job for you. And when you leave town I shall be glad to keep your job. Just now I have laid off, as the boss, he will tell you. I go home for the night. Au revoir. Be careful of your knee, for you have a long walk ahead of you."

As he passed Macy and June he bowed, silently. Macy nodded in friendly fashion, despite the anxiety which had come to him with knowledge of June's growing interest in this reckless, handsome devil. Macy felt a little sorry for him. He had come out of the first clash in triumph, because of the awkwardness of Grosse, but Macy did not believe the triumph would last long. The matter was coming to the stage of a duel or an ordeal between Grosse and Leduc. Any one could see that. Any one could sense the terrible undercurrent of hatred which ran between the two men.

That night, very late, a fire flamed up in the meadow, directly behind the little white house where Leduc lived with his mother. It was an old haystack burning. Although the flames were visible all over the village, no one spoke about it the next day. It was one of those things about which no one did speak. But every one knew what it meant. It was as significant as the burning of a fiery cross upon the mountaintop.

Every one noted Gar Leduc's answer.

"Gar Leduc is making a garden," it was mentioned at the store. "He is planting peas and corn."

Gar Leduc labored hard all day turning under the ashes of the haystack with a spade. When he had finished making the garden where the stack had stood, he erected a scarecrow, and some one

noticed that the effigy was dressed in the fashion of Grosse, the drive boss.

Leduc appeared at the store at the usual hour, the next evening. Grosse did not come. He was said to be laid up at his home with a sprained knee.

Jim Macy and June were roused a little after midnight, at the cottage where they lived, half a mile from the Leduc place, by a knocking at the door. Mrs. Leduc, white of face as her snowy hair, gasped an appeal for help. They did not need to ask why, for the sky was lurid with flames, shooting high in air from the burning barn behind the white house.

"My son, Gar, he go to sleep in the barn," she panted out, "I cannot find heem. Please come an help me! Nobody else can come. They do not dare to come."

Jim Macy was accustomed to turning out in the night. He ran across the open fields, directly toward the barn. June followed, along the road, holding Mrs. Leduc by the hand.

"My son, my son! My boy!"

June felt a cold chill creep over her at the tone of Mrs. Leduc's voice as she repeated the words over and over.

"I beg of heem to go, after the haystack is burned," she said. "I weel sell the place eef he will go! But he stayed. To-night it is the barn. To-morrow night—— Oh, my son, my son!"

They could do nothing except draw buckets of water from the spring and wet down the white house against flying embers. The barn, which had been half filled with hay, was a roaring, writhing furnace. Luckily the cows were in the pasture and the henhouse was some distance away.

As June stood watching the fire, her arm about the shoulders of the trembling little woman, she got the story of Gar Leduc's determination to defy the warning which had been given him by Grosse and by the fiery finger laid upon their haystack.

He had taken his rifle, when he went to the haymow that night, but Mrs. Leduc had seen nothing, though she sat at the kitchen window and watched, until flame burst from a little window, in the peak of the roof. She had rushed out and called to Gar, but got no answer; then she had run for help.

As the fire died down the trembling mother came almost to the point of collapse. Only June's steadfast refusal to believe that Gar had perished in the fire kept her up. As she steadied and comforted the mother, she got, little by little, the story of an ancient feud between Grosse and Antoine Leduc, as a background for the lurid events of the past two nights.

It was a feud which had sprung up between partners on a trap line. Antoine Leduc, Mrs. Leduc said, had protested against Grosse's reckless and ruthless poaching, telling him that it would land both of them in jail. Grosse had laughed at Leduc for paying any heed to those foolish laws which made it legal at one season to take furs and illegal at another. Then they quarreled, not once but many times. And finally, out of a blizzard so blinding that the trail was covered in a few minutes, there had come a shot that killed Antoine Leduc.

Grosse brought out the body of his partner with a story of a skulking game protector who had dogged them for days and whose trail he had followed, after Leduc was shot. "He swore it upon the body of my husband," Mrs. Leduc said, "that he followed until he lost the trail in the snow."

All this had been known to Gar Leduc, when he was but a boy of seventeen, and to all of Black Brook, also—but no one in Black Brook had ever expressed any doubt of Grosse's story. For one thing, every one was ready to believe any iniquity of a game protector. Gar Leduc swore vengeance. And then, five years later, came the slaying

of the deputy warden and the swift arrest of Gar Leduc for the crime.

"It would have been better—oh, so much better—had he been kept in the jail, for a while," mourned Mrs. Leduc. "While in jail they spoke of him as a hero—but as soon as he was let go, the story comes to Black Brook, from where no one knows, that he has escaped the trial by laying the crime to another —to a relative of Grosse, a sort of half-wit who lives like a hermit in the mountain forest. My son! My son, an informer? That is a lie! If he wished to tell—— Oh, my son, my boy!"

Mrs. Leduc broke down, then. But another arm clasped her shoulders, coming out of the darkness, suddenly.

It was Gar Leduc, breathing hard, his face smudged and blackened—but not from fire or the ashes of fire. It was from the black earth of the woods.

"I have been on the trail," he explained briefly. "It ended at the river. To-night, when he comes——"

"Oh! Do you believe that he—that they will try to set fire to the house?" June gasped the question, gripping Gar's hand, where it lay upon his mother's shoulder.

His eyes, when he looked at her, were more fiery than the flame of the burning barn had been at its height. His grip on her fingers hurt her, but she did not withdraw her hand.

"I shall not leave town," he said. "There is no reason that I should leave town. There is a reason why I will stay."

She read more than one reason in his eyes.

Jim Macy, as the agent solely responsible for the delivery of a considerable supply of pulp wood for the mill at the Forks, out of the Black Brook district, had kept strictly neutral in the guerrilla warfare which had been waged, desultorily, for years, between the poachers and the game protectors. Macy was obliged to make use of the man power he could find for the rough and dangerous work of logging and driving. He had found it advisable to ignore the private feuds and hatreds and to accept the code of Black Brook. But he was indignant at this persecution of Gar Leduc by the ordeal of fire and he resolved to get to the bottom of it, for the sake of Mrs. Leduc, if not for Gar. He felt that he had made a mistake in taking Leduc on as he had done, but he would not have advised him to get out of town, now, for anything.

He was the more aroused to sympathy with the Leducs when June, her cheeks burning and her eyes flashing, told him the tale of the feud, as they ate an early breakfast.

When he went down to the wanigan, the cook had a surprise for him.

"You do not wish to buy a little farm, cheap?" inquired the cook. "I am told that Gar Leduc, he is to leave town. His mother, when she bring the milk and eggs, this morning, she say that she will sell. It is cheap for a quick sale."

"If it is put up for sale I will bid on it," Macy answered shortly. "But I do not believe Gar Leduc is leaving town."

"I hear that he will leave to-night, before dark," the cook offered.

At the hour when most of the male population of Black Brook began assembling about the store, Macy was there. He found a little group studying a paper nailed to the wall of the store beside the door. It was a formal offer of the Leduc place, for sale. It was written in a delicate, wavering script and signed by Mrs. Leduc.

Grosse shoved his way through the group and read it.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, standing with his feet sprawled wide and showing little sign of lameness in his knee. "Oh, yes. Did I not say that Gar Leduc, he weel leave town?"

He had hardly got the words out of his mouth when Gar Leduc stood be-

fore him, his face grim, his eyes like coals.

"And that is a lie you have been telling," Leduc said slowly, and he reached up and tore the paper from its place. "The place is not for sale. You have said that before it is dark I shall leave town—but that is not so. Before dark you will leave town yourself—so that there will be no more fires to frighten my mother. You have told too many lies—beginning with the one about a warden shooting my father."

Grosse's eyes bulged and his bearded lips parted over his big, white teeth. He would have pinned Leduc to the wall had Gar been less agile. With a roar like an enraged bull Grosse rushed at him, his arms crooked, his fingers curved into claws—but Leduc was not where the huge hands came together in a clutch at his neck. He ducked and went under the swing of the arms and in the same move, thrust his knee hard against Grosse's stomach, doubling him up. He danced out onto the planks of the porch on his calked shoes, with the swift, sure step of a man trained to tread timber in swift white water.

The porch was cleared instantly. Macy stepped inside the door, knowing better than to interfere, for the feud had come swiftly to a climax and it was now between man and man. He felt, somehow, that the slender youth who had hurled the lie in the face of the burly giant would be able to take care of himself. Leduc had fought his battles in the lumber camps and he bore the scars of them. He was as fast as lightning. Grosse had but one way of fighting. That was to advance upon an opponent, slowly, relentlessly, with his arms ready for the bear hug, his teeth bared and ready for what was known as the nose hold, but which was as often applied to the ear or the cheek.

Macy doubted that Grosse could corner this dancing panther. Indeed, to the amazement of every one, Grosse gave way before Leduc's first rush, lifting his feet with awkward haste—and they saw that he had been foolish enough to wear soft-topped shoe-pacs with rubber soles and uppers—while Leduc had his steel-calked drive shoes. Those calks, always kept well filed at the points by a white-water man, were as sharp as needles. They tore little splinters from the planks as he circled about Grosse, leaping toward him now and then with a stamp of the foot which caused Grosse to shuffle back or sidewise—or to roar and gasp with pain as his toes were pricked with steel.

But always he advanced, again, arms akimbo, fingers ready curved. He did not strike a blow. Leduc struck at him with a whirl of his body and his fist out straight so that at the end of his spin the fist cracked into Grosse's mouth and he spat blood and a tooth. Leduc's knuckles went red and blood trickled up his forearm.

When Leduc leaped in again Grosse spread his feet wide and lunged forward, also, and he got his terrible hold, his arms whipping about Leduc's shoulders, sliding down, clamping Leduc's arms close at his sides, while the hairy fingers wove themselves together in the small of Leduc's back. All the strength of those huge arms and that powerful body were concentrated into a rib-cracking hug; he snorted as he tried for the nose hold with parted jaws.

But Leduc knew the defense for this. He bowed his back and thrust his head under Grosse's chin—and he knew the offensive, too. He planted his feet on Grosse's insteps and straightened his body like a bow released from the string.

Macy had heard it said that no man had ever broken Grosse's famous bear-hug hold. But he was being crucified by the half-inch calks thrust into the thin flesh of his insteps and his head went back so suddenly that his jaws clicked and his cap was jerked off as Leduc's

thrust came under his chin. He almost fell backward with Leduc on top of him, but he loosed his hold and Leduc sprang away. Grosse staggered and his little eyes widened. The whites began to show more and more.

The fight lasted for more than half an hour. Grosse did not get the bear-hug hold again, although he menaced Leduc with it several times, only, at the last second, to quail before the stamping of those mailed boots. The rubber uppers of the shoe-pacs became torn so that his feet showed through and the rubber was stained red. He winced and shuffled painfully, and, at last, as Leduc sprang in air and leaped for a heavy landing on his toes, Grosse backed off the edge of the porch and fell flat on his back on the ground.

Leduc poised above him. Grosse was breathless, his face contorted in the agony of emptied lungs which would not fill. He flung up his hands to ward off the expected descent of those terrible feet upon his face. It was so that they fought in Black Brook. Many men bore the scars of such conflict, their faces raked and pitted as if by smallpox, the marks of steel points that had been stamped upon them when they were helpless.

Leduc did not jump. He stood and folded his arms and looked down upon Grosse as if he were carrion.

"Is it enough?" he inquired. "Is it enough?"

Grosse, with his eyes rolling, gurgled out an incoherent answer, half gasp and half groan.

"If it is not enough," Leduc went on, in a voice that was sharp with passion, "I will jump!"

Grosse found his breath in a shriek for mercy.

"Ah! It is enough? Then you get going! You are leaving town, Grosse—before it is dark."

"But I cannot walk. Those calks have maimed me."

"Then crawl," Leduc spat at him. "Crawl—*as my father crawled after you had shot him!*"

There was a silence such as that which follows the last stroke of a bell that is tolled. Then the eager, leaning forms of the rivermen surged forward. Many mailed feet advanced upon the prostrate drive boss, and a roar burst forth from many throats:

"Murderer! Liar! Squealer! Firebug!"

Leduc stepped quickly to the door, reached inside, and brought up a rifle to his cheek.

"Let him crawl, like the snake that he is!" he warned. "Let him crawl down the river to jail. I have been in jail and it is not too bad. It is good for him. They will not let him go. If you kill him you will all go to jail. If you do not kill him, some time there will be fires in the night, again. And one of these nights there will be women and children who will be burned up as he has tried to burn me out of Black Brook. The law must take him—and the law must come to Black Brook. That is what my father taught me before he died. Unless you accept the law in this town, one day there will come an army with rifles and drive us all out. Let us see what the law will do with this murderer—this double murderer."

"The law!" jeered one of Grosse's adherents. "It could not even keep you in jail when you shot the deputy."

"Do you think that I would be free if I had shot him?" snapped Leduc. "I should be dead, at the end of a rope. Do you think I would shoot the man who came, in the name of the law, to try to find my father's murderer? The law is slow but it is sure. The law will have him, now—he who killed my father and the deputy, also. *Marche,* Grosse. Crawl! It is getting dark and you must be out of town. *Allons! Va'ten!*"

Some one raised a foot and kicked Grosse in the ribs. He got to his hands and knees. He tried, once, to get to his feet, but he stumbled only a step or two, then went to his knees again.

Through the sand and mud of the village street he crawled with an angry mob behind and about him—Leduc, with his rifle, and Jim Macy, with another he had commandeered in the store, guarding him against violence.

At the edge of town Leduc halted the mob and made them go back. The road was becoming stony. It led down alongside the river, where the cliffs sloped down and vanished and there was deep, smooth water. A bateau was tied up, here, at a landing. Two men in khaki uniforms stepped out from an old shack by the riverside.

The law was at the edge of the village of Black Brook. Grosse crawled up to the officers, blubbering and sobbing.

On the way back to the white house at the other end of the village Jim Macy and Gar Leduc became quite well acquainted, which was well, since they were soon to become related.

Other stories by Clay Perry will appear in future issues.

HE-MEN GENIUSES

A MAN who follows the arts is not necessarily lily-fingered, as so many people are apt to believe. Many a man who has written, painted, composed, or played music, or followed the intricacies of philosophy, has been a man of action, physically as well as mentally.

Socrates was a soldier, and a good one. Horace, the Roman poet, was a clerk and later a farmer. Shakespeare was a stage hand, during part of his life. Thoreau lived in a cabin in the woods, which he hewed bodily out of the living trees, chip by chip. A Concord man said of Emerson that "he was a good neighbor; he kept his fences mended."

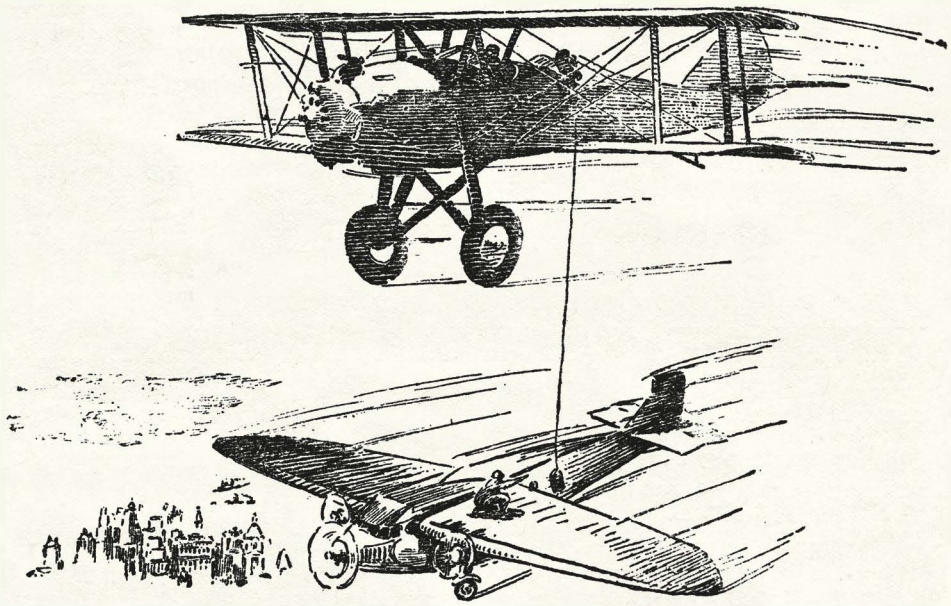
Walt Whitman was in the Civil War, and at various times in his life was a teacher, a printer, and a government clerk. Fritz Kreisler fought in the Austrian army during the World War, and was wounded. Thank God he wasn't killed! Einstein, the great mathematician, goes out in his own sailboat for hours, alone, as does Van Hoogstraten, the famous conductor of symphony orchestras. Alan Seeger, the somber Greenwich Village poet who wrote the eerie line, "I have a rendezvous with death," fought in the trenches of France, became a splendid soldier, and died in a furious charge, with machine-gun bullets ripping like fangs into his ribs. Joyce Kilmer, another fine poet, was killed in the war, too.

Lord Byron's favorite pastime was boxing. Tolstoi was in command of a mountain battery in Crimea, and fought at the battle of Tchernaya.

And even if these men had *not* been he-men as we understand the term, even if they had done nothing besides produce great works, they would still be real he-men, in a larger sense. The effort required to create a volume of profound thought, a symphony, a perfect violin technique, or a deathless painting—the mere physical effort, mind you, is terrific. Try standing before an easel for hours and hours, concentrating all your energy and judgment and experience into the tip of a brush, and see how knocked out you feel.

Try using a pencil or a typewriter for seven hours at a stretch, *creating,* and then feel the ache in your back. Try practicing a fiddle for six hours a day. Try writing a single good poem! When a creative artist arises from his toil he can point to the sweat on his brow and stand up proudly beside the brawniest blacksmith.

A Dare-devil of the Clouds Performs the Most Hair-raising Feat of His Life to Prove that He Is a Safe Pilot.



The AIR SPLASHER

By Richard Howells Watkins

Author of "Full Throttle"

LA-ADIES and gentlemun!" bawled Sam Smith, rotating his fat body on the creaking box. "The next feature on the program will be an exhibition flight by King Horn, the wild man of the air! Horn has crashed no less than twelve ships in the course of his death-defying career as 'Ace of Deuces'—an' maybe he'll make it thirteen before your eyes this afternoon!"

Sam paused to gulp air with savage intensity; then bellowed on:

"He promises nothing—the Tennant Flying Circus promises nothing—but watch him fly! He's wild—wild—wild! Watch him fly! He's as crazy as our passenger-carrying pilots are sane; he's reckless as they are careful! He's a cuckoo among eagles! Horn will now take the air and show you how not to fly a ship. No other Tennant plane will leave the ground while Horn is in the air. He's wild—wild—wild!"

Sam waved an eloquent hand toward an ancient crate that stood apart from the other ships on the field, and sank down onto his box to imbibe more air.

A thin, youngish, carefully dressed man with large and reflective brown eyes, who stood beside the stunt ship, chuckled quietly at Sam's oration.

"Ta-ra! Tara—ta!" he muttered

with a burlesque flourish of his walking stick. "You ought to wear pink-silk tights and learn to curtsy, King."

King Horn, an agile, long-limbed young man with light-brown hair that in the sun verged on the shade of gold, had already climbed into the rear seat of the old ship. He revved up the motor briskly, but paused to grin at his irreverent friend. It was an honest grin, as broad as a wide mouth would permit, and his eyes joined in it, crinkling at the corners. It was obvious that, whatever else King Horn thought about himself, he did not consider himself an artist.

"You teach me to curtsy and I'll teach you to fly!" he shouted against the beat of the motor. With a quick, impatient hand he cinched on his helmet. "Want a lesson now? The ship's sort of loose to-day."

Franklin Cross shook his head. "I've got to get back to the *Era* office to write your obit," he said. "It's a nuisance, but I've got to have it ready."

King Horn grinned again. "You gave me this reputation as a crasher, Cross," he said. "It's only fair to throw in an obituary notice to sort of round it off. 'By!"

He gunned the plane with a lean and confident hand.

Snarling like an unwilling beast, the ship surged ahead and, at the pressure of King's hand on the control stick, leaped into the air. The motor was hot and the field—part of the broad Hempstead plain that makes Long Island popular among airmen—was flat and free from obstacles. King did not bother to go after altitude; with thirty-six inches of air between his landing wheels and the ground, he started work. He had a reputation to sustain and a pay check to earn.

Giving her all the gas she would take, he set her on end. One wing cut toward earth. The ship spun around in a tight circle with the wing tip always threatening to graze the turf and yet never touching. The slightest contact would have set the ship cartwheeling, a splintering, disintegrating wreck, across the field, but King held every inch of his scant altitude.

Then, fishtailing wildly, he headed for the fence. He zoomed over it, cut back and dived at it, cleared it, seemingly by a miracle, and let his wheels swish through the grasstops. Then he zoomed again and this time went after altitude.

His face, as he handled his ship, held quick, ever changing expressions. He frowned, grinned, looked sad, alert, scared and triumphant. King Horn was living fast as he sent his ship flickering about in the danger zone just above the earth and in a single minute his countenance reflected in its mobility more emotion than he expended during an hour at any other time.

As he climbed away from the ground that had so closely menaced his wings and wheels, his face smoothed out, becoming less the face of a hard-pressed, nervy fencer and more the face of a pilot. He relaxed, sat back in his seat and loosened slightly his grip upon the stick. His eyes swept the horizon automatically, then dropped to the fields round about the one he had risen from. He did not bother to look at the crowd he was thrilling. Thousands of men and women, millions of kids—the crowd was always the same. Tennant's circus was by no means the only outfit operating on that warm June Saturday afternoon. There were ships in front of a score of hangars near and far, and more ships in the air. His eyes roved among them.

Abruptly, with a jerk of his head, he dismissed other ships and devoted himself to his own. It was time to thrill the spectators again. He flung the plane into a quick medley of contortion—loops, rolls, Immelmans, a whipstall, spirals and dives. And steadily through-

out the maze of air splashes he let the ship drift earthward, so that what had been mere routine stunting at a reasonable altitude began again a grim, breath-taking challenge to gravity and death. Again a wingtip flicked over the grass; again the wheels seemed about to plow into the hard surface of the field.

At last, after long, hazardous seconds, King Horn climbed for his final stunt. At less than a thousand feet he pulled the ship's nose higher and higher, until it stalled. Then he kicked over the rudder. The ship reeled downward in a tail spin. When it seemed certain that nothing could save the gyrating ship from plunging into the ground, King Horn got it out. That was his business, getting ships out of impossible positions, he reflected, with a grin, as he felt the diving ship responding to his insistent, steady hand on the stick.

Out of the spin, with the earth a few feet below, he ruddered the ship around into the wind, throttled and leveled off. The work was over. His wheels had already bumped once when, dead ahead, a small boy with a camera apparently rose out of the ground.

King Horn could have dodged the youngster easily enough, but out from the edge of the field there raced half a dozen would-be rescuers. They strung out in a human barrier ahead of the ship that had virtually lost its flying speed.

With an imprecation King Horn gunned his ship. It hung sluggishly in the air, wheels still reaching for the ground. King flung it over in a quick bank to avoid the men ahead. The ship reeled sidewise. Then the thing that King Horn had risked several times that day happened. The wingtip scored the ground.

King's leaping hand snapped off the ignition switch. The ship, swirling like a curving knife over the heads of the people below, hit the ground. The wingspars went to pieces first; then the landing gear and prop in a volley of splintering sounds. The heavy motor in the nose of the fuselage ended the tune of the cracking wood with its ponderous thud. The pilot felt his safety belt cut into his middle as he was flung about. Then came sudden stillness.

King Horn jerked the fire extinguisher out of the bracket below the instrument board. Then he climbed out of a thoroughly wrecked ship. He was somewhat groggy from the jolt and something had got him in the left arm, for the sleeve of his gray shirt was ripped from wrist to shoulder, revealing bloody flesh.

Training the extinguisher, he sent spurt after spurt of fire-killing liquid on the hot exhaust pipe. He was still at this when Franklin Cross, pale of face, big Walt Tennent, the boss of the circus, and a wave of pilots and mechanics reached him.

"That was a quick one," Walt Tennant commented. The circus boss inspected his pilot and his plane with the same equanimity. The wreckage did not distress him, for he knew that the story which Franklin Cross and other newspaper men would write would bring greater crowds to his field in the days to come.

"For a moment I thought I was going to lose a few cash customers, King," he added.

"For a moment I thought you were going to lose a damn good pilot, Mr. Tennant," said Franklin Cross sharply. He seemed thinner, more insignificant than ever as he turned his white, wrathful face on the tall boss of the circus.

"Losing a pilot is all in the game, Frank," King Horn interposed, flashing his quick smile upon his ruffled friend. "Nobody'd kick about one less—the sky is crawling with 'em."

King handed over the fire extinguisher to a mechanic.

"She isn't apt to flame up now," he told the man. Nodding to the others,

he added: "I'll be moving up to the shack to get Miss Lyle to put some soothing sirup on this scratch."

"I'll go with you," Franklin Cross declared.

King Horn laughed quietly as they walked together through the crowd on the edge of the field. He was paying no attention to the stares and sporadic cheering that greeted him.

"Thought you had to get to the office to write my obit?" he prodded Cross.

The aviation editor of the *Era* turned very red. He struck out vigorously with his stick at a dandelion.

"That will wait now," he said. "I guess you're good for the day, since you've come through a crash."

"Thanks for the respite," said King Horn politely. "I certainly appreciate the way you hang around the Tennant outfit just to do press-agent work for me. That's what you do hang around for, isn't it, Frank?"

Franklin Cross, still very red in the face, consigned the other man to the conventional place and switched more mercilessly than ever at the grass. As they drew near the small operations office that cowered beside one of the big hangars, he stopped suddenly, his eyes fixed upon the doorway.

Lyle Tennant was standing there. Her hands were hidden behind her back, but Cross could tell by tiny, jerky movements of her arms that they were intertwining and clutching at each other. Her lips were compressed and her face was no less pale than the white throat revealed by the small V of her dress. But all this seemed to accentuate her fragile beauty. Her eyes, the blue, scintillant eyes that Franklin Cross had studied so earnestly since the Tennant circus leased this field, were not upon him, but upon King Horn.

"Here I am again, Lyle!" King greeted her cheerily. "I've bust out in a new place—left arm. Are you all out of iodine and sympathy?"

"I'll wait here," Cross muttered and veered toward the corner of the hangar.

"Come in," Lyle Tennant said in an even voice to King.

Inside the cramped little office the girl made him sit down in a chair beside the desk. Silently she set about cleaning the long, shallow wound.

King Horn found himself oppressed by her wordlessness. He realized that it had been some time since she had last urged him to be more careful.

"This really wasn't my fault," he explained, with a laugh that didn't sound right even in his own ears. "I was all through the stunt stuff when I cracked."

"I saw what happened," Lyle Tennant said. She bent closer over his arm with her cotton swab. "I saw the whole flight."

King Horn moved uneasily. Of course, he *had* been pushing the ship a bit that day.

"That confounded kid!" he grumbled unconvincingly. His eyes rested upon the back of her neck, with its tendrils of curly, fair hair.

Lyle Tennant worked on. Her fingers were cool—very cool—on his arm. She used the swab gently but the iodine stung like a tongue of flame.

In silence she bound up the arm. The cut jumped from the forearm to the bulge of the biceps, so she made two bandages of it, leaving his elbow free.

"If you'll wait a moment I'll sew up your sleeve," she said tonelessly.

"Thanks, Lyle," he said, as she finished knitting the bandage. He fumbled at the torn shirt. "Never mind this. I've got some other shirts. If I keep on cracking 'em up like this your dad will run out of planes before I run out of shirts." He grinned at her hopefully, alert for the first symptoms of an answering smile in the corners of her mouth.

Suddenly Lyle Tennant flung the roll of bandage onto the desk. Her eyes raised suddenly to meet his. They

blazed at him as she lifted her hands in a single gesture of despair.

"Oh, I can stand a fool so much better than a man who plays the fool!" she exclaimed. She dropped into the chair that he had sat in and buried her face in her hands. Her shoulders shook with sudden, uncontrollable sobs.

Startled, utterly bewildered, King Horn stared at her. She looked so much smaller than usual in that attitude of complete abandonment to grief. He touched her on the shoulder feebly, humbly. "Lyle," he muttered. "Lyle!"

"Go away!" she gasped, recoiling from his fingers. "Go away!" She covered her face in her arms on the desk and continued to weep.

Every word, every frantic effort King Horn made to soothe her merely intensified her grief and his alarm. Finally, in response to one of those choked commands, he rushed out of the office. Unseeingly he passed Frank Cross at the corner of the hangar, pushed through the crowd and made for the road. He walked down the concrete much more dazed than he had been when the ship had cracked up.

Obviously this required thinking out, and yet he didn't seem to be able to think, except in snatches. Was he in love with Lyle Tennant? Certainly not. He saw her nearly every day and enjoyed seeing her, and felt vaguely uneasy when she did not come to the field. But that wasn't love—it couldn't be.

Was she in love with him? That was absurd. She was fond of him, of course, just as he was fond of her. Theirs was a pleasant companionship in the rough and not always pleasant business of working for a flying circus. Probably it was just the shock of his crash that had brought from her that emotional outburst.

He reflected that she had called him a fool; then he remembered that she had not. She had said that she could stand fools better than she could stand men who played the fool. Played the fool! Well, in a way that was just. He hadn't thought of it in that way, but certainly a man who could fly a ship with the best of them was a fool when he flew like a crazy kid or a drunken sot. And yet, he had been the exhibition pilot for this circus not for the applause or the notoriety or the money in it, but simply because none of the other pilots were so adept at the stick or in the least eager for the job. He understood their viewpoint and sympathized with it. They preferred the dull round of passenger carrying; he had been willing enough to sling a ship around a bit to attract a crowd and win the circus a decent notice in the newspapers.

"I guess lately I've been sort of reckless," he muttered. "Since we leased this field—since Frank Cross and the other newspaper men have been doing that stuff about me being the Ace of Deuces—the 'King of Crashers'—well, I guess I must have been trying to outdo myself."

He nodded his head. "A man can't compete against himself and win," he reasoned. "That way the flying gets wilder every day. Then some time gravity steps on you or you get a puff of wind when you aren't wanting a puff, and you lose."

He thought some more. Most—in fact, about all—the circus stunt pilots, wing walkers and crowd catchers of every sort that he knew were avid for admiration, applause, hero worship. That was what kept them going—the sort of stuff about defying death that Frank Cross wrote about him.

"Can't say I'm crazy about having a crowd's eyes pop out as if they were on sticks at the sight of me," he told himself. "And I certainly don't get anything but sort of an ashamed feeling out of reading about myself in the newspapers. What am I doing this stuff for, anyhow? To please Walt Tennant and the rest of the bunch, I guess."

He swung around suddenly and headed rapidly for the field again. "When little Lyle gets as upset about me as all that, then to hell with what the rest of 'em want!" he growled. A surge of tenderness swept over him. Lyle! What would the Tennant circus—the rest of the world—be without Lyle? Nothing! He had seen so much of her that he had not realized how much she meant in his life.

"I'm in love with her—in love!" he muttered. "I've been in love with Lyle a long, long time. And—maybe she's in love with me! What a dumb fool I am!"

For King Horn the time to do things was always now. He broke into a run. Overhead, the ships of the circus were circling on ten-minute hops. Sam Smith had made it plain to the spectators that these pilots, unlike King Horn, were safe and sane.

Back at the field, King cut a straight line through the crowd to the office. But the little room where he had left Lyle was empty. The roll of bandage was still on the desk. The sight of it made King feel strange. He laid a hand gently on the arm she had bound up.

King sought her on the field, but she was not there. Walt Tennant was, however. The boss of the circus stood just inside the ropes, slowly chewing an unlit cigar. He kept a keen eye upon the knot of waiting customers who had already bought tickets for flights, but he did not fail to see King Horn as the stunt pilot walked toward him.

"Fixed up?" he asked, glancing at King's arm.

"Sure. Look here, Walt—I'm quitting."

Walt Tennant transferred all his attention to his pilot.

"You? What for? Somebody been telling you that flying's dangerous?"

"My kind of flying—yes. I'm quitting the rough stuff, Walt. How about a job carrying passengers?"

Tennant laughed. "I'll bet Lyle's been talking to you."

King Horn ignored this and looked away in some resentment when Tennant's keen eyes probed his face. He didn't want to talk about Lyle to any one—not even to her own father.

"D'you think you could put me on carrying passengers?" he repeated.

Walt Tennant continued to appraise the younger man. "You?" he said at last. "You carry passengers!"

King Horn looked at his employer, puzzled by his tone.

"Why not?" he asked. "You're not trying to tell me you think I'm a poor pilot, are you?"

Walt Tennant clapped King suddenly on the back.

"The best in the world!" he declared heartily. "The best—bar none, otherwise you'd have killed yourself in a crash long ago instead of just cracking up a few ships."

"Well——" King paused questioningly.

"How could I give you a job as a regular pilot when your friend Cross and these other newspaper men have got you labeled all over the country as the craziest, crashingest pilot in the game?" Walt Tennant demanded. "How many customers would come near this circus if they thought they might draw you to take 'em for a ride? You—a man that's crashed or cracked thirteen ships! How long would I have a circus, do you suppose?"

King Horn was stunned by this volley of questions. He had never doubted his own ability as a pilot and none of the other airmen, he knew, had ever denied his skill at the stick. He had proved that often enough and in ways that no other pilot would follow. But the public—he saw Tennant's point.

His reputation had not only pressed him into taking more and more risks every day. It had also cut him off from the chance of earning a living in any

other way than by continuing to take risks. He was a pilot apart—a specialist in the air who was being pushed steadily toward death by his specialty. There was no job for him with the Tennant circus but the job of flying fool.

And right now, he realized, he needed a job more than he had ever needed one before. Unless Lyle put up an overwhelming defense, she was going to marry him. But she wasn't going to marry him while he was still a crasher. He'd see to that and so—he grinned rather ruefully to himself—would she.

"I understand how you're placed, Walt," he said to the boss of the circus and contrived to smile as he said it. "No hard feelings about my quitting suddenly, I hope?"

Walt Tennant laughed. "I always figured you'd quit sudden—one way or another," he said. "If I can't keep you, I can't. Any anyhow, a young fellow that sort of fancies the way he throws a ship around has been plaguing me for a job."

King Horn flushed at that last sentence. He did not notice that Tennant was surveying him keenly from under his thick, black eyebrows.

"It's easy to fill a fool's job, I guess," King said slowly. "They're sort of plentiful. Well, see you later, Walt."

"So long," Tennant replied. "Any time you change your mind, King—— There's nobody that can throw thrills and chills into a crowd like you."

King Horn took another turn about the edge of the field, just to make sure that Lyle had really gone. While he searched he came upon Franklin Cross glumly punching holes in the ground with his stick.

"Frank," King Horn greeted him grasping him by the arm, "please forget about this last crash of mine, will you? And get those other reporters to drop it, too, if you can. I'm through being a fool."

Cross looked up. The aviation editor's thin face was full of lines—lines that made it rather harsh and old.

"What made you decide that?" he asked.

King Horn remembered that less than half an hour ago he had twitted the newspaper man for spending time about the field so that he could see Lyle. It had seemed funny to him, then. Half an hour! And now he was in love—had realized he was in love—with Lyle. That made him Frank Cross' rival.

"Lyle did," he said frankly. "She called me worse than a fool. And—well, I found out somehow that I cared about what she thought of me."

Cross nodded. "All right," he said emotionlessly. "I understand. I can't suppress your crash. Thousands of people saw it. You're noted for that sort of thing. It's news. Can't suppress it. But I'll say you've quit."

Syd Scoggins, second in command of the circus, and a flying man himself, came up to them.

"King's quit, Scoggins," Franklin Cross told him.

"Quit!" Scoggins repeated. He shook his head at King. "That's good. I was thinkin' of borrowing a gun and shootin' you full of holes, King, just to save your life. You've been headed for hell in a hurry quite a while, now."

"All I'm headed for now is a regular piloting job," King Horn said. "Know of any?"

Scoggins shook his head. "Not for you," he said. "Nobody who'd ever read a newspaper would trust you to push a baby carriage full o' bricks across a quiet street, let alone flyin'."

King Horn nodded somberly. "That's what I've been finding out—suddenly, Syd," he said. "But I've got to get a job, somehow. And I'm not good for anything but flying."

He stared across the field at a ship gliding in for a landing.

"I've got to get a job, somehow," he

said again, rather desperately. "I've got to!"

"Sorry for what I've done to spoil things by writing those wild-eyed stories about you," Frank Cross muttered. He had gone back to prodding the ground with his stick.

"I didn't mind 'em—they helped the circus. But things are different now. And I've got to——"

Scoggins, who had been thinking hard, nodded toward the huge field that lay to northward of them.

"Try the Grand Trunk Airway," he suggested, though his voice was not hopeful. "They're just startin' in—lots of cash an' no sense. My brother Nat's got a job with 'em—a guy named Winship, old enough to ha' promoted horse cars, give it to him. Nat's a God-awful pilot but he looks like one and he's put in a lot of hours."

"Winship's a big man in Wall Street," Cross commented. "He's just been bitten by the flying bug, like a lot of them down there, and he's running things himself."

"Of course—they prob'ly ha' heard of you, King," Scoggins said haltingly.

"They probably have," King Horn agreed. "Well—thanks, anyhow."

He smiled at them, jerked a hand in farewell and strode away. Since he needed a job, now was the time to go after it. He caught a taxi and drove to the field which the Grand Trunk Airway had leased. There was nobody around the hangars but three disgruntled mechs.

"The big boss will be down for a hop to-morrow," one grease monkey told him. "Nothin' doing around here to-day. No orders or nothin'. We only got one ship anyhow—a three-motor job—an' no organization. This here airway is hind end to."

That afternoon King tried another barnstorming circus, two air schools, a plane-building company and an outfit that did a growing aërial-taxi business. Everybody was glad to see King Horn. They had cigarettes and conversation for him, but no job. That night he went to see Lyle Tennant at the little hotel near Garden City where she stayed with her father. She was out. At least he was told that she was out.

In the morning in his boarding house King looked at the Sunday *Era*. His exploit of the previous afternoon was on the first page:

KING HORN CRASHES THIRTEENTH AIRPLANE TO SAVE SPECTATORS

Aërial "Deuce" Wrecks Ship at End of Wild Flight

SLIGHTLY INJURED

All Through with Stunts, He Asserts.

King Horn is through. Rising from the wreckage of his thirteenth crashed plane yesterday afternoon at the Long Island field where the Tennant Circus is operating, King Horn announced that never again would he tempt death.

The pilot, whose whirlwind flying has won for him among airmen the title of "Ace of Deuces," had survived a stunt flight that turned hard-boiled brother pilots pale as lilies. Then, just as he was about to land, a boy with a camera ran into the path of his machine. In saving the boy and some spectators who rushed after the lad, Horn was forced to wreck the plane in an effort——

The story went on and on, and recounted former exploits. King dropped the newspaper to the floor in disgust. Then he picked it up again, and read it through. Franklin Cross had kept his promise to announce his retirement, but the story he wrote was a story of recklessness and folly. It was a just story, King conceded even while he frowned at it. Cross was playing fair. The story wasn't wrong; it was King Horn that was wrong. He read the other bits of news of Long Island flying activities with careful concentration.

After that he arrayed himself with great care in what is generally considered the conventional attire of a civilian

aviator. He wore his only pair of whipcord knickers, with high Cordovan boots, a gray-flannel shirt and a leather coat. It was the first time in a long while that he had been so perfectly habilitated.

He worked grimly on the details of his attire. Looks had become important. He had tried the smaller air outfits and failed; now he must tackle the larger companies—the gilt-edged concerns that carried on a transport business, with mail contracts and regular routes. It was Sunday, of course, but there was plenty of action on Long Island even on Sundays during the summer. For example, Winship, the boss of the Grand Trunk Airway, was to be down.

He decided to try the Grand Trunk first. There were jobs there to be filled, anyhow, and he felt that he needed a job so badly that it would take a lot of refusing to keep him away from it.

When his taxi stopped at the spacious field leased by the new company, he heard the throb of motors turning at idling speed. The great three-motored monoplane was out on the line in front of one of the hangars. Its broad wing glistened like the path of the sun on smooth water. King Horn eyed the ship respectfully but wistfully. Then he forgot all about it.

There were, besides the fussing mechanics, four people standing in front of the ship. Two of these were Franklin Cross and Lyle Tennant. They were together.

"Maybe I don't need that job so badly after all," King muttered to himself. His heart was jumping.

As he walked toward them, Lyle Tennant saw him coming. And quite suddenly, as her eyes spoke to him and his eyes spoke to her, King Horn realized that he did need the job. She knew—and he knew.

Lyle came toward him, and Franklin Cross came with her. There was no greeting.

"That's Winship talking to Scoggins, the pilot," Cross said rapidly. "Come over with us and let him get a squint at you in that rig."

"Frank—Frank's helping, King," Lyle murmured.

"Wait and see," the aviation editor of the *Era* retorted.

Winship was a tall, spare old man. In his pale, gaunt face his eyes seemed incongruously large and black. He was carefully adjusting a flying helmet while he catechized Nat Scoggins, Syd's brother. Scoggins was not happy. He was answering volubly, but his eyes were uneasily dwelling upon his employer, who stood within three feet of one of the whirring wing propellers.

As King Horn, in his impeccable flying kit, approached, Winship stopped talking and peered at him with keen interest.

"A friend of mine—one of the best pilots in the business, Mr. Winship," Franklin Cross said.

"Hope I'm not intruding, sir," said King Horn politely as Winship nodded. He smiled at the nervous pilot. "Hello, Nat."

Nat Scoggins grinned back, a trifle sheepishly.

" 'Lo," he said.

"You ought to wear that type of knickers, Scoggins," declared Mr. Winship suddenly. "It is very smart."

"I can fly withou—— Yes, sir," Scoggins said.

Mr. Winship turned to King Horn with a benevolent smile.

"I am sorry I cannot ask you and Miss—ah—the young lady to join us on this flight over New York, but with Mr. Cross the ship is full," he said. He waved a hand back toward the fuselage. "I am giving my board of directors a baptism of air."

King Horn looked toward the cabin of the ship. Through the windows he caught a glimpse of several heads, white, grizzled or bald, bobbing about a trifle

apprehensively. One, like Winship, sported an unnecessary helmet.

King smiled reminiscently at Winship's elaborate regrets. "Thanks," he said. "I've been over New York."

"No doubt, no doubt," said Mr. Winship. "We old-timers are children at all this." As if to prove it, he cinched on his helmet, turned and gravely walked directly toward the twirling, half-visible propeller.

With a howl Scoggins jumped for him. King Horn jumped, too, and faster. Together they pulled the startled financier away from the man-killing club.

"What—what——" stammered Winship. Then he stopped. The unfortunate Scoggins, in voiceless agony, was bent over and walking a few steps this way and that. His left hand clutched his right. His teeth were clenched and his face contorted in agony. The idling prop had tapped him on the arm.

"Broken!" he gritted. "Broken!"

Lyle went to him, and he permitted her to touch his arm. "It is broken; we must find a doctor," she said. Her voice was full of pity. "Hold it like that."

Scoggins supported his arm. His self-possession came back to him. He turned to Winship.

"Can't fly for a while," he said tersely. "Sorry."

"You must have my car," the old man replied. "Smithers will take you to Garden City." He motioned to his chauffeur, who stood at a discreet distance beside the hangar. "I appreciate what you have done for me; you'll not regret it, young man. Meanwhile, full pay during your disability."

Scoggins, brusquely declining offers of company, moved toward the car. As he passed King, he let his left eyelid flutter. It was apparent that Mr. Scoggins had recovered from the jolt of the fracture and was now privately rejoicing that he did not have to take the impressive board of directors on the flight over the city.

The door of the plane opened and one of the uneasy directors looked out at Winship.

"A mishap," the old man reported. "I am afraid that——"

He turned suddenly to King Horn.

"You are a pilot; are you—ah——" He switched his gaze suddenly to Franklin Cross.

"He's one of the best in the business," the aviation editor assured Winship. "I'll be delighted to ride with him, for one, if you intend to carry on."

"Glad to take you over, if you want," King Horn said. His heart was thumpin, but he kept his voice as casual as he could. "You understand I'm not gunning for Nat Scoggins' job."

Winship looked at him again. Obviously this young man was a pilot. He certainly looked like one and the aviation editor of the *Era* said that he was a good one. Moreover, he had acted quickly in the recent emergency—even more quickly than Scoggins, who had been nearer to him.

"We will carry on," Winship decided. "That's what men do in aviation—carry on."

"Right!" said King Horn. "'By, Lyle." He looked at her. "I'll be back."

He scrambled aboard in a hurry, lest Winship should ask his name. From behind, the nervous board of directors looked at him apprehensively as he slipped into one of the control seats in the open operating cockpit.

King Horn looked over his instrument board while Winship took his seat in the cabin and Franklin Cross came forward and sat in the other pilot's seat, beside him.

"D'you understand all these dinguses?" Cross asked, a trifle nervously, as he saw the array of instruments.

"Certainly," King Horn answered. "Don't need most of 'em except for fly-

ing blind through a fog or night." He leaned over and caught the eye of the nearest mechanic.

"All set, sir," said the young mech promptly.

King Horn opened his throttles at once. If these old birds were kept waiting much longer he was confident some of them would blow up or melt away.

With the three motors hitting in concert he held the ship on the ground until he had something more than flying speed. Then he eased it off and, still flying straight upwind, went after altitude. There was no need to circle the field; for already another field was under his wheels. He decided it would be safer—since he was now playing safe—to get some air under this ship before he tried turns.

Franklin Cross was peering backward over the side.

"There's a man back there waving at us," he reported uneasily.

"It's either fleas, St. Vitus or we've left a member of the board behind," King Horn answered. "The mech gave me the 'all set' and the motors are ticking over fine. Take a look at our wheels, though."

Cross looked over the side. "They're all right," he reported. He turned backward again. "Lyle has left. Maybe she's in a car that's heading for Tennant's field at quite a clip."

King Horn nodded. He was enjoying himself. After the obsolete wrecks he had been coaxing and hurling through the air, it was like sitting on a comet to ride this new ship. He had power—terrific power—at his fingertips, and the ship rode the infrequent puffs like a sentient thing. He found the stabilizer adjustment and moved the crank a trifle, until she roared along with no pressure needed on the wheel.

The city, an unconvincing array of tiny red buildings and black roofs, with here and there an eruption of newer white towers and spires to break the monotony, floated into sight below them. Even at the comparatively low elevation of two thousand feet it didn't look at all like the mighty metropolis or man-crushing monster that may be read of in books. In fact, when King Horn looked at it, it reminded him of warts.

He swung northwest, hopping over the East River near College Point, crossed the broad and unimpressive Bronx and swept up the Hudson a few miles to give his passengers a look at the Palisades. Then, clinging to the smoother air above the river, he came southward again. These birds, he knew, would like a close view of the financial section, so that they could bore their friends about it next day.

"It don't do to let 'em see that Wall Street's no bigger than a flyspeck," King shouted to Cross. "I'll have to come down to where these buildings size up a bit."

The aviation editor nodded.

King Horn throttled down and put the ship into an easy glide. One of his automatic glances around the sky suddenly encountered something more than vacancy—a ship coming from Long Island. Its wings were knifelike, for it was headed straight toward them.

Absorbed in his maneuvers about the lower end of Manhattan, King Horn gave the other ship only cursory attention. Suddenly, as they circled above the Woolworth tower, Cross touched him on the arm.

The other ship was almost above them and circling with them. It was a black-and-white biplane—King recognized it instantly as one of Tennant's circus; then, with narrowed eyes, he noted that it was the ship that Syd Scoggins, Tennant's lieutenant, usually flew. He stared hard at the figure in the forward cockpit. Undoubtedly that girl was Lyle Tennant.

Syd Scoggins was waving vigorously and closing in on them. Frowning, King Horn waved back. Syd Scoggins

was not one to go in for hand waving without cause.

In answer to King's upraised hand Lyle, in the front cockpit, lowered something over the side of the biplane—a bulky thing that seemed to tax her strength.

It was a five-gallon gasoline can, and by the way it hung in the wind at the end of the rope, it was a full can.

King Horn's eyes leaped to an instrument beside his seat that he had not thus far consulted—the gasoline manifold installation, with two visible-type fuel gauges. They told him at a glance that one tank in the big wing above him was empty and the other had in it about two gallons of gas—enough for about three minutes more in the air.

The mechanics at the Grand Trunk Airway field had sent him away with almost empty tanks. Another hand touched his shoulder. He looked around. Mr. Winship had left his seat and come forward.

"I—that other machine reminds me that we were waiting for the gasoline tank wagon when—when the accident occurred," he said.

"Thanks," said King Horn, somewhat grimly. "Please go back and sit down. Keep your friends sitting down, too."

He encountered Cross' agitated eyes. "Th-that mechanic certainly t-told you the ship was all set," the aviation editor stammered. "I—I remember now——" He glanced distrustfully over the side. The city looked much more solid and stony than it had before.

King Horn shook his head. "It's up to me," he said tersely. "I was too quick getting away before somebody blurted out my name." He was already throttling down and heading the ship into the south wind, toward the bay. He adjusted the stabilizer control for a flat glide, with idling engines.

As he prepared, he was wishing that he had aboard no cargo of old men, too brittle-boned to stand a rough, forced landing and too likely to drown or to catch pneumonia if he picked the bay. A mere mishap for youth would be a certain tragedy for them. Unless——

Glancing up at the biplane, which was behind the bigger ship, King Horn motioned Syd Scoggins to come on.

Glancing up at the biplane, which was behind the bigger ship, King Horn motioned Syd Scoggins to come on.

"Look here," King said rapidly to Franklin Cross. "I know you're not a pilot, but now's a healthy time to learn. Sit at that wheel. If she dives pull the wheel an inch or two toward you; If she shows less speed on that air-speed meter than is there now, push the wheel away a bit. That's all. If she should sideslip—never mind that. Remember! Dive—pull! Stall—push! Get it?"

Franklin Cross nodded. His tongue was busy moistening his lips.

King Horn stood up. If I go—let her glide as she is," he said.

The wind tugged at his leather jacket and drummed upon the earflaps of his helmet. He paid no heed. All his attention was upon the biplane above. The tip of Manhattan Island drifted under them.

The circus ship drew closer overhead. Under it, swinging in the puffy air above the city, dangled the five-gallon can of gas. King Horn pulled out his pocket knife, opened it and gripped it between his teeth. He waved again and the biplane, gaining slowly on the idling monoplane, drew down so close that the heavy can seemed almost to menace the ship below it.

King Horn suddenly jumped upon his seat, planted one foot on the rim of the cockpit and scrambled up onto the thick wing of the monoplane. There was not a single grip for hands and feet on the top of that rounded and sloping plane, but King Horn, crouching on hands and knees, transferred his knife to his right hand and leaned into the wind and waved Scoggins on again.

"Come on!" he muttered. "Pass me that gas!"

The biplane dipped lower and the bulky can swung like a giant pendulum toward King Horn. He leaped to his feet and met the sweep of the can with his chest. His left hand whipped around it while his right slashed savagely at the rope that bound it to the biplane. He felt his toes lifting on the wing.

An instant later he was flat on the plane with the can clutched in his arms. He looked up, as the biplane veered hastily away from the giant ship down below.

Lyle Tennant was leaning far over the edge of her cockpit with her frightened eyes upon him. He grinned up at her reassuringly. She essayed an answering smile; then with a mighty effort lifted another can into his view. King Horn nodded. His hands were already unscrewing the cap of one of the wing tanks. He looked down again, into his own control cockpit.

Franklin Cross sat there, rigid, immovable. His hands rested upon the wheel as if they held a very fragile egg. The ship was still in the glide. The motors still turned on the last of the gas. The water of the bay was much closer than it had been before.

"Doing fine!" King Horn shouted at the aviation editor. "Once more and we're set!"

He upended the can and sent the five gallons of gasoline gushing into the gravity tank. Five gallons—good for seven and a half minutes' time at cruising speed!

"Just once more, Lyle!" he muttered.

The biplane was drawing in again. King dropped the empty can. It was whisked off the wing by the ceaseless blast of air and spun astern, dwindling to nothingness as it fell.

King steadied himself for another effort. Again Syd Scoggins jockeyed the biplane closer. Again King's eyes followed unwinkingly the sway and jerk of the suspended can. Then the vagary of the wind and a touch of the biplane's throttle sent it suddenly swooping toward him.

Facing backward, he met the swinging can with his chest again. But this time it was coming like a projectile. It thudded on his ribs and he felt the wing disappear beneath his feet. For an instant, with both desperate hands gripping the can, he was in free air. Then, with a crash, he fell upon something solid.

He writhed about; found that the can had knocked him off the wing into the cockpit. He had landed half upon Cross and half on the empty seat. The can was still there. Lyle had cut the rope at her end. If the can had swung a bit harder or if it had not been released it would have knocked him overboard or into the propeller of the center engine.

But it hadn't. King pulled himself up. The ship was diving earthward now; his fall had flung Cross against the wheel. King grabbed the other wheel and pulled it back.

The water of the bay seemed leaping upward, catching at their wheels, but the ship's nose raised and the defeated bay dropped away below them. King slipped into the seat, revivified the congealed Cross with a triumphant smile and went after altitude.

With a thousand feet under them, he gave Cross the wheel again, mounted the wing and poured the other can into the tank.

Then he turned the plane toward Long Island and safety. The biplane winged on ahead. King followed slowly. He had to stretch that gas and slow speed was the only way to do it. Once, remembering his passengers, he turned around to smile reassuringly into the cabin where the board of directors sat. One of them was unconscious; two

others ministered to him, but Mr. Winship met King's eye.

The dignified financier shook hands with himself in most fervent pantomime. King Horn looked sideways at the still blanched countenance of Franklin Cross. Cross had been game enough in the pinch but now he was not far from fainting.

"This transport business is great stuff," King Horn confided, "but I don't know that my nerves will stand it."

"Great work," Cross said with a shiver.

King Horn grinned. "Sinful recklessness," he declared. "I'd have risked a forced landing if I'd still been in the stunt business."

"You aren't in the stunt business."

"Think the old man will give me a job?"

Franklin Cross nodded stiffly.

"He will to-morrow, if he doesn't to-day," he said.

"You mean—we'd better have an ambulance handy when he hears who he's been flying with?" King asked.

'Not just that," Cross answered. His eyes glistened. He seemed to be thinking about something.

At the field Lyle was waiting—a pale-lipped, trembling Lyle in need of comfort and reassurance.

It was not until the next day that King Horn understood what Cross' reticence had meant. King and Lyle were very busy talking to each other the rest of that Sunday, nor did King read the morning newspapers next day before seeking out Lyle again.

Consequently it was the thin little aviation editor who brought the *Era's* story to King Horn's attention. Swinging his stick with a casual air, Franklin Cross walked across Tennant's field and bowed with a certain awkwardness before Lyle.

"My wedding present," he mumbled and handed her a paper. "And my reparation for the other stories," he added, looking at King. Then he walked away across the field, trying to swing his stick with a casual air.

There was in the *Era* a story—a front-page story. But it was not about the Ace of Deuces—the wild man of the air. It was how Winship, the great financier and keen judge of men had instrusted his life and his associates' lives to an unknown pilot merely on his looks.

It told of a mechanic's blunder and the pilot's desperate and successful fight to save his passengers in the closed cabin from death by a crash landing or by drowning in the bay.

And it concluded:

The man who stood upright upon the wing of a pilotless plane and snatched fuel from the sky, saving lives with a mixture of courage and skill that would be hard to find even among transport pilots, was King Horn. Horn has crashed thirteen ships without injuring or endangering any one but himself. He was keeping his record unstained.

There was no further question of King Horn's future as a transport pilot.

Watch for more air stories by Richard Howells Watkins.

FRAME-UP

By JOHN D. SWAIN

A Prize Fighter's Revenge—Elaborate, and Satisfaction Guaranteed.

IN a profession that has developed a good many peevish dispositions, "Cyclone" Wallace was regarded as the meanest box-fighter unlicked. Wallace—born "Wladycz"—was a light heavy, and a good one. Though a dirty fighter, he was shrewd, and ably managed; and he had managed to escape suspension by any of the State commissions. Fairly clever, his reliance was on the knock-out he carried in either hand; and his aggressiveness made him a general favorite with the fans.

He had come up through the ruck with nothing worse than a few draws, and one or two close decisions against him. Opposed to which was a long series of kayos over some first-rate men in his class. His last three bouts had been against real top-notchers, and had resulted in one "technical" and two actual knock-outs. It was no longer possible for the light-heavy champ, Jimmy Lowry, to sidestep him. And Cyclone Wallace was at the time of this history training at Doc Kiley's camp up near Saratoga Springs.

Lowry was no coward. His long avoidance of this match was dictated by a wholesome respect for his tougher, and much younger opponent's hitting powers, and his ability to "take it." In common with other earthly monarchs, Jimmy Lowry had enjoyed his reign, and the perquisites thereof. It had earned him a lot of money, most of

which he had spent. He didn't want to have his crown knocked off, knowing well that he lacked the stamina for a come-back, and the long, hard grind up through the thick crop of husky youngsters. For Jimmy was getting on in years; his legs were beginning to bother him. It is the legs that always go first. The old champ was nearly as fast as ever, he still carried a sweet sock; but along about the eighth or tenth round, the aged knees began to buckle a little, the muscles along the inner sides of his thighs to quiver. Only his years of experience, his superlative ring strategy, could save him. And neither he nor his manager secretly believed that these would avail against that young man-killer, Cyclone Wallace.

When it became clear that the public wouldn't stand for any more stalling, and when the sports writers began to take up the ballyhoo, the match was made. Lowry's manager drove a shrewd pen through the contract. A fat guarantee, with an option on the gate; and a five-thousand-dollar forfeit for nonappearance for any cause whatever. They hoped that Wallace would have trouble raising the five grand; or that he would demand a bigger cut. He did neither, but signed on the dotted line. Both men then proceeded to go into training.

Lowry established himself at Atlantic City, with a fifty-cent charge for his daily work-outs—a worthwhile asset, as his position as champion and his cleverness as a boxer drew good crowds. He hired a good ghost writer, and syndicated the story of his life. He appeared in the news reels. Realizing that this would in all probability be his last shot, he and his manager frantically set out to capitalize every dollar in sight. He indorsed cigarettes, chewing gum, a gayly striped union suit, and a hair preparation—though he was quite bald. His sleep was broken with vain regrets that he had been so good a fellow, and allowed carelessly uncounted thousands to drip through his fingers.

Lowry was popular with all who knew him. A clean fighter, and a clean liver, generous, friendly. The newspaper boys wished him well, but quoted the odds against him at five to three. This despite the fact that he was the undefeated champion. But he was also, by ring standards, an old man. And he had been just a little careless of his condition, between matches. Not dissipated; but rather nocturnal in his habits, and inclined favorably toward a good time and a mild whoopee.

Up State, at Saratoga, Wallace worked hard and obeyed orders. His instincts were far more vicious than Lowry's ever were; but he was an intelligent brute, and was willing to work hard and behave himself until he had copped the title. After that, it would be another matter altogether! To the victor, the spoils. Meanwhile, he lived the life of an ascetic; and the sports writers who ran up to look him over wrote enthusiastically of his condition and spirit. As always, he had some trouble finding a stable of sparring partners. He was notorious for his treatment of the latter. Cruel and ferocious by nature, he lost many a faithful partner by hammering him all over the ring to show off before some visiting sports writer, or just because he felt in the mood. As a result, they were always packing up and leaving him in the midst of the training season; and other, and more or less unknown, tyros had to be engaged by the anxious "Greasy" Sam Engler, his manager.

Cyclone was famous, or infamous, for one trick he loved to play. At the end of his training, when he had no further use for his partners, having paid them as little as they could be induced to accept, and abused them as far as they would stand for it, he would deliberately knock each of them stiff in their final work-out. Of course, none of

them knew just when this final workout was to come; and the newcomers knew nothing of Wallace's lovable trait.

The old-timers, those hangers-on who drift from one training camp to another, knew all about it, and were on guard. But they were seldom able to protect themselves, what with Engler yelling at them from the ringside to wade in and mix it, asking them what in this-that-and-the-other he had hired them for; and with Wallace himself cursing and taunting them. Most of them were philosophical about it; took their punishment, revived to the shock of cold water and a whiff of ammonia, scowled, or grinned sheepishly, collected their pay, and beat it. But they all hated Wallace. There were a score of men who would have asked nothing better than to meet him down a dark alley at night, with a stocking full of sand ready. But pugs are not, as a rule, vindictive; they soon forgot Wallace, and many of them won money on his fights, which soothed their hurt feelings effectually.

Cyclone Wallace had pulled a lot of raw stuff in his time; and got away with it. But the man he had most deeply wronged was practically unknown. The incident had long been forgotten by the public. It had happened five years before, when Wallace was a middleweight, and just becoming prominent in the sports pages. At this time, owing to the voluntary retirement of the middleweight champion, there was a good deal of activity among his would-be successors. The most promising of them all was Joe Fogarty, who had everything. A genial chap, quiet yet confident, with a host of friends, he was the logical claimant for the vacant throne. Wallace was merely one of a dozen whose eyes were also more or less openly fixed on it. But Wallace was nowhere near Fogarty's standing. He was not even in a position to challenge him for a match at the time.

It so happened that a big charity event was arranged, a milk fund for the poor children of the slums. A variety of athletic events was on the bill, including a six round match for which Joe Fogarty gladly volunteered. From the numerous young huskies available, the committee chose Cyclone Wallace as his opponent; and this was perfectly agreeable to Fogarty. It was clearly understood by both that the match was to be a friendly one; the public was to be given a good break, but punches were to be pulled, no rough stuff attempted. Fogarty was not receiving a cent for his services. Wallace was getting a small sum. Fogarty did not even train for what he looked upon as a mere gymnasium set-to; but Cyclone secretly worked hard, and laid his plans for some big publicity.

The public, which included many society folk who had never before witnessed a boxing match, certainly got an eyeful! For, disregarding the agreement, Wallace, after a couple of rounds of easy sparring, in which Fogarty outpointed him without effort, came up for the third with a smile that he tried to make look authentic; and, with Fogarty relaxed, and just releasing himself from a clinch, Cyclone put everything he had into a sock that caught Joe square on the button. It didn't travel more than ten inches; but it packed dynamite! Fogarty slumped to the canvas, out cold before he struck it. Despite which Cyclone nailed him again as he stood helpless and unconscious before him.

It was all over so quickly that few realized what had happened. It was regarded by all save a few wise ones as a fluke. It was reported in the press as a "regrettable accident." Actually, it was cold-blooded mayhem! In falling, Fogarty's head came in violent contact with one of the posts; which, though padded, was only lightly covered, as this had been regarded as a mere sparring match. Even the referee was an ama-

teur—a young society man, a Princeton boxer. Fogarty did not regain consciousness; the doctor who scrambled up from a ringside seat sent him to the hospital, where it was found that he had received a bad concussion. This in itself would not have mattered; but it fell out that the optic nerve had been injured, and ultimately Joe Fogarty lost an eye, and passed out of the pugilistic picture without ever holding the championship all the best judges of form had conceded to be his due.

Without being a vindictive man, it may be admitted that the ruined Fogarty lost little love on the brutal Wallace. To be sure, and for his own sake, Wallace came out with a statement in which he assured the public that his heart bled for the unhappy accident; that he had not meant to hit so hard. He insinuated that Joe had been somewhat at fault; he had clumsily stepped into the punch he, Cyclone, was just starting! And as for the insufficiently padded post, that of course was not his fault.

But his statement did not deceive Joe in the least. Nor did it fool the hard-boiled half dozen old-timers who saw the affair and knew just what it meant. Wallace wanted to get a rep as a terrific hitter, and a dangerous contender; by knocking out a man rated far above him in class, he got just this. From that moment, he found it easier to get more matches, with better men, and for more coin. Greasy Sam Engler took him in tow. He began his upward climb.

As for Joe Fogarty, he began his long, weary task of learning a new trade. He had a little money, and a smart, thrifty wife. They took a small place out in the country, and began to raise market stuff. They were among the first to succeed with broccoli. Their strawberries were among the earliest, and best, of the region. They put little metal tags on their stalks of celery, and heads of lettuce, bearing Joe Fogarty's name. They prospered, and Joe's health improved. But his lost eye—and career—did not return.

The apple of Joe's eye—his sole remaining eye—was his young brother Peter. In Pete the old-timer perceived a talent far greater than he had been born with. More speed, equal courage, and a sock that was simply astonishing in an eighteen-year-old boy. And in his heart Joe nursed the thought of revenge; of a time to come when he should send in his kid brother, properly equipped, against Cyclone Wallace! It was a secret he did not share with anybody; least of all, with Pete. He was sparing in his praise of the youth; and he sternly refused to allow him to appear in any of the cheap little boxing clubs that offered ten or fifteen dollars to promising lads for six rounds of what had they to show. The elder Fogartys having died, Joe acted as parent to his kid brother—saw to it that he received good schooling, and kept good company. Being slightly old-fashioned in his views, he had more than once applied a trunk strap where it would do the most good; this while Pete was still in short pants.

Very early, he rigged up a place in the tool house, with a canvas-covered square, a punching bag, and a shower. He took Pete in hand, and taught him all he knew. It wasn't long before he had to use all his ring knowledge to keep Pete's long left, and his snappy right cross, from his own chin and eyes. Only by outguessing him was he able to retain his authority. Whenever Pete got too cocky, Joe would lay for him, feint him out of position, leave himself apparently uncovered, and then slip one over that took the confidence out of the boy, for the time being.

He encouraged him to box with his schoolboy friends, and did so himself. But never would he permit him to appear in public exhibitions. His name

was unknown in the sports columns. Joe was nursing him along, and taking his time about it. Meanwhile, Pete helped about the market garden, received his schooling, a real home, and enough pocket money, and was thoroughly and healthily happy.

By and by, when the time was ripe, Joe cautiously invited one or another of his old ring friends down for over the week-end. He confided to them his secret, under oath; had them, those who were still in the game, try the boy out. This gave Pete the advantage of meeting different styles; and as not a few of these old-timers were very clever men indeed, he got still more confidence knocked out of him. False confidence, only; Joe was careful never to allow Pete to be so far outpointed as to lose heart, or have his spirit broken. Just nursed him along. And patiently bided his time.

Meanwhile, Cyclone Wallace put on weight, graduated from the middleweight class before he had a chance at the title, and as a light heavy fought better than ever. Joe Fogarty watched his progress with a fiery and brooding eye; his left one. He always went to every scrap in which Wallace appeared, if it was within two hundred miles of home, and he took Pete along with him, and coached him from round to round as to what it was all about. Pete got to know Wallace's every move, and trick. And as Wallace grew, so did Pete. On his eighteenth birthday, he weighed a hundred and seventy-eight pounds of hard flesh and bone, tempered by working in the sun out in the health-giving earth.

It was just after the match Wallace's manager made with Jimmy Lowry that Joe Fogarty took his kid brother into his confidence. He realized that it must be a long time, if ever, before his unknown brother could hope to get a match with Wallace. And he perceived another, and even better, way to avenge the Fogarty name. He told Pete exactly what had happened at the milk-fund bout; and he related many other dirty and foul tricks Wallace had got away with. Then he outlined to Pete exactly what it was he wanted; after which the two brothers talked the matter over many times, and arranged everything to the last careful detail. These details included trifles that Joe greatly enjoyed planning. Into them young Pete entered with the zeal of youth, and the righteous indignation of a young Irishman whose brother has suffered a grievous injustice, which he is called upon to wipe out.

Pete had one asset in addition to his genius for fighting, and his unusual training. He had taken a great interest in dramatics at the high school, and had appeared in character parts successfully at the village hall. This rendered his peculiar task slightly easier than it would otherwise have been.

There appeared during the third week of training, at Wallace's Saratoga camp, a youth with all the earmarks of a village cut-up. He bore a cheap but very shiny suit case, and his hair shone even more brilliantly. His ready-made clothes were of a cut that collegians might conceivably wear several years hence. His wide trousers flopped about his feet. His Milan straw hat was beige colored, with a gaudy band. He was smoking a cigarette—distastefully—as he never smoked at home. His general air radiated a cocky self-assurance as he knocked at the front door of the little camp where, at the time, luncheon was being served.

Old Black Joe, the cook, who had once been a negro heavy with an unbroken record of defeats, opened and flashed an impressive set of golden teeth upon the visitor.

"Who you-all want, boy?" he asked.

"Is Mr. Wallace in? Cyclone Wallace, the fighter?"

"Sure he's in! Eatin' of his rations. He can't be bothered now!"

"I can wait," the youth replied, flicking his cigarette aside into a despondent bed of pansies cultivated by Doc Kiley when he thought of it. "I come here to help him train!"

The loud guffaw of Old Black Joe fetched Greasy Sam, Wallace's manager, to the door. "What's all the shootin' about?" he growled.

The big chef pointed at the boy, who, standing as he did below the doorstep, did not show his height. "Dis young sprout, he allows he done come fo' to 'sist Cyclone git into form!" Black Joe said, and guffawed again.

The manager's eyes narrowed. It happened that on this very day two bruised and sore sparring partners had remarked that they would no longer darken Wallace's doorway, or words to that effect. Greasy Sam was ready to hook up with almost anything that could stand for a few rounds against his raring young gorilla. But he didn't propose to show his anxiety. He grunted, looked bored.

"Who ever told you that you could box?" he demanded. "And who the heck are you, anyhow?"

"Name's Ernest Boyd," the visitor chirped. "And nobody don't have to tell me I can box! I guess I know that already."

"Izzat so?" sneered Greasy Sam. "Now how much was you expectin' to demand for your services—while they last?"

Ernest grinned easily. "Oh, I don't much care. I aim to get my board and keeps—and some cash. But mostly I was thinkin' I might pick up something from Mr. Wallace. You ain't never too old to learn, you know!"

Greasy Sam grunted again. "Yeah; and after Wallace rocks you once, you won't know *nothin'!* See?"

"Wallace won't rock me!" Ernest laughed. "Ain't nobody can lay a glove on me. It's been tried, mister! I'm too fast."

This confidence was too much even for Greasy Sam. He was stumped for a fitting reply. Before he could recover, Ernest spoke again. "Can I leave this Gladstone bag here while I do me an errand down to the Springs? You can be makin' up your mind what you'll offer me."

Greasy Sam nodded agreement, Old Black Joe tugged in the shiny new bag, and luncheon proceeded.

"Fresh young hick outside wants a job as sparrin' partner, Cyclone! Says nobody can't lay a glove on him. Acts like he believes it, too."

"Yeah? I met a number of them birds," Wallace replied as well as he could with a mouth full of broiled, lean chops. "Gonna take him on?"

"He left his bag here while he went to do an errand. Guess I'll give it the double-O and see what it tells about him," Greasy Sam mused. And as this proceeding seemed perfectly natural to all those about the festive board, Sam, having finished his own meal, walked over to where Old Black Joe had dropped the suit case, tried it and found it unlocked, and proceeded to run over the contents.

The result was hugely enjoyed by one and all. First of all, the scanty wardrobe was glanced at. There was a pair of running pants, and a worn pair of gymnasium shoes, a dirty sweater with the big initial "M" upon it—the same representing the Millerton High School, though this was not disclosed. There were half a dozen semi-soft collars and two shirts, and some gaudy pajamas, and the usual toilet articles. These were not sufficiently mirth-provoking, however; and Greasy Sam dug deeper. He unearthed a worn Bible, on the flyleaf of which was written: "Ernest, from his mother." To the honor of the unsaintly visaged gentry clustered about, this roused no comment, but it had its effect in building up the character of Ernest. The next find was a real prize. It was,

or appeared to be, a newspaper clipping; and Greasy Sam read it out to them.

Our promising young townsman and athlete, Ernest Boyd, delighted a large and enthusiastic concourse at the Village Hall last evening by his performance in the "squared circle." He boxed six rounds with his mentor, "Elbows" Finnegan, our esteemed tonsorial artist, and a former well-known devotee of the "manly art of self-defense." We can only say that his pupil did him great credit. His footwork was dazzling, his sparring worthy that of many a professional. Several times he landed squarely in the breadbasket—stomach—of Elbows, and in the last round he "drew the claret," and the bout was stopped by the referee, Sam Heller, our well-known gent's furnisher. Salvos of applause greeted the two performers, and at the conclusion Elbows Finnegan announced that it was his hope before long to enter his protégé in one of the bouts in some New York club, that the sporting public might see his wares. Ye scribe, who has attended more than one professional bout, is prepared to gamble a few seeds on Ernest when that time comes.

Shrieks of derision followed this remarkable account of a sporting event that none of those present had heard about before. It rendered Ernest's hiring a certainty. It never would do to let such a good thing get away! Wallace's camp had a new stable hand. No two ways about that!

There wasn't much else of interest in the suit case, excepting a cheap paper volume entitled "Kid Casey's How to Box, in ten lessons," and half a dozen photographs of Ernest himself wearing shorts and a fierce scowl, and flexing his muscles as his outthrust, glove-incased hands menaced the beholders.

"At that, the kid's got good arms," remarked "Peevish" Bill Tombs, the oldest and best of Wallace's sparring partners. "Looks husky."

"Yeah," sneered Wallace. "But lookit how stiff he holds himself. All tied up."

"'At's 'cause he gittin' hisself photygraffed," Old Black Joe sagely remarked. "I gits dat way mahself when mah pitcher's bein' tooken!"

"That ain't nothin' to the way folks that has to look at it gits," Greasy Sam growled. "Go back into the kitchen and git your dishes washed up."

The big negro retired, looking grieved. The rest of the gang loafed out onto the porch, to play cards, or, in the case of Wallace himself, to take forty winks after eating.

"Lissen, you guys!" Sam warned them. "Not a word to Ernest about us prying open his bag. But I'll kid him plenty, at dinner to-night. Leave it to me."

An hour later, when the young chap returned, he found the great Wallace asleep under a tree, his hat pulled over his face. Several men were engaged in penny ante, and did not even glance up as he crossed the threshold. Greasy Sam looked over the sporting extra he was reading, nodded toward his suit case.

"I'll take a chance," he grunted. "You're prob'ly rotten; in which case I'll fire you. If you can stand up long enough to give Cyclone a little sweat chasin' ya, I'll pay ya ten a week. And you git the same grub we do, and, Joe will show you a place to sleep. Oh, Joe!"

Old Black Joe shuffled out from the kitchen, and at a word took up the newcomer's suit case. Ernest followed him up a steep pair of stairs, to a long attic room in which stood a double row of narrow white cots. The big Negro pointed out one at the far end, and set the bag down beside it.

The boy looked admiringly at the big black.

"*Gee!* I bet you could flatten a man out if you was to try," he said. "You got awful wide shoulders."

Old Black Joe's golden teeth glittered, and his heart warmed. "Boy," he breathed, "when ah hits a man, he *stays hit!* I was a box-fighter mahself, untwil ah kilt two, t'ree men, by forgettin' to pull mah punches! That done

queered me. I couldn't git me no mo' matches. So I is a cook now."

"I hope you're as good a cook as you was a fighter," Ernest said. "I'm hungry already."

Old Joe looked cautiously about, lowered his voice.

"Eatin' betwixt meals is agin' de rules," he said. "But dinner is hours off, an' ef you sneaks down round de back way to mah kitchen do', ah'll rustle you-all a san'wich and mebbe a cup o' coffee. It'll hold yer innards together till we eats regular ag'in."

Ernest thanked him, and promised to appear shortly. When the chef had departed, he opened his suit case. A glance told him that the contents had been thoroughly appraised. A wicked grin overspread his usually friendly face, and he opened his mouth in a soundless laugh. The seed had been planted. Now for the harvest!

About an hour later, fortified by the sandwich and coffee, Ernest followed the boys out to the open-air ring, where a small crowd, including a couple of newspaper men, had gathered. Wallace sparred three rounds with Peevish Bill Tombs, the best of his stable, followed by three more with a flashy lightweight to give him speed. The boy, watching eagerly, was impressed with the power of Wallace, who lashed out savagely, and his blows shook both his partners. He did not seem to ease up any on the lighter man, though the latter was able to evade any serious punishment by his clever footwork and ducking. After a rest, Wallace went in again against a beefy fellow who knew little or nothing about boxing, but furnished opposition in a tugging and hauling match.

Later in the day, just before dinner, Wallace punched the light bag, and skipped the rope a while. Then the big Negro beat the iron triangle hanging before his kitchen door, and everybody trooped in to chow. For some time silence prevailed; silence, that is, so far as human speech goes. The men were hungry, and they wolfed their plain but wholesome rations; all but Greasy Sam, who took no exercise whatever, and was a light eater in consequence. It was he who took up a criticism of the afternoon's bouts.

"You was wide open to-day for a left hook, Cyclone. Even Peevish Bill, who telegraphs everything, got to you half a dozen times. You gotta keep your chin behind your shoulder more!"

"My chin's all right," grumbled Wallace. "And Bill couldn't squash a potato bug, anyhow. I didn't have to cover up."

"That's all right, so far as Bill goes," Sam rejoined. "But don't forget that Lowry ain't dead yet. And his left is poison. It won't take him two minutes to find out your chin is open to it. You hold that guy too light, Cyclone! Don't forget, if you miss this one, you'll never get Jimmy into the same ring with you again. I had enough trouble cornering him for you this time. It's your one chance."

The conversation continued along technical lines for some time, with everybody taking part. Nobody paid any attention to Ernest, after the brief introductions had been made. Greasy Sam, to be sure, finally remarked that he hoped he was as good in the ring as he was with his knife and fork; and then ignored him. At length, with dinner nearly over, and Sam lighting a big cigar, to the profane envy of Cyclone and his sparring mates, the manager began to reminisce.

He had, he allowed, seen all the big-time pugs of his day; and known most of 'em. A great many of the best he had handled; had, indeed, made them what they were. And were they grateful? They were not. Sam was bitter about this. He had been gypped many times. If they had played fair with him, who had made them champs—and millionaires, even—he, Sam, would not

be training a ham-and-egger now in this forsaken hole, but steaming down the Atlantic coast in his own yacht.

"Yeah, good and bad. I've seen 'em all. Wild Mike Flynn, Hairy Johnson, Elbows Finnegan——"

He paused, as Ernest choked on a mouthful of dry toast: "Whassa matter, kid? Tryin' to swaller your food without chewin' it? Take yer time, Ernest! No hurry, a-tall!"

"Did you say you knew Elbows Finnegan, sir?" Ernest asked.

"Sure, I knew him! He's dead, I understand. Haven't lamped him for years."

"He ain't dead," Ernest denied.

"He ain't? Well, that was what I heard. Not that it matters any to me."

"I heard he was doin' time, in some Western stir," Peevish Bill contributed.

"Well, that might easy be," Sam agreed. "But he was dead, all but shuttin' his eyes, all the years I knew him."

"He's alive, and highly respected," Ernest defended.

"How come you know so much about him?" Sam asked.

"I boxed with him, often."

"You *what?* Why Elbows couldn't box none! He never could keep outa the way of his own feet; and he was knocked cold eleven times in a row. Whadda ya mean, 'box' with him?"

"He can, too, box!" Ernest insisted. "He taught me."

"Well," Sam drawled in the silence that followed, "that seems to settle it. By the way, what burg do you hail from, kid?"

"I'd rather not tell," the boy said.

"Lyin' low, huh?" Peevish Bill grunted. "Well, we won't give ya away, so long as ya behave to us and don't pull nothin' crooked."

"It ain't that at all," Ernest declared. "But, you see, my folks is strict. They don't hold with boxin' and dancin' nor cards either. Not to mention drinkin' and smokin'. So I don't want they should know I am here. I am supposed to have left home to get me a job; they think I'm workin' on some farm."

"Maybe you will be, pretty soon," Sam softly suggested. "Depends on what you show to-morrow. Cheer up!"

Wallace addressed the boy for the first time.

"This Elbows bird, now; I s'pose he learned you all about sidesteppin', and feintin,' and shiftin', and the one-two, and such like?"

"Of course," Ernest scornfully agreed. "I finished with all that perlim'nary work long ago. He's been workin' me on ring generalship last few weeks."

"Now ain't that great!" Wallace declared. "Just what I need most. Hear that, Sam? You drew a prize package to-day."

"Question is, can he take it?" Sam mused, looking Ernest over as if he was some sort of bric-a-brac. "Looks frail, to me. One solid smash might ruin him for our purposes."

Ernest spoke eagerly up. "But you see, sir, I don't get smashed. Elbows taught me how to avoid that. He says it ain't at all necessary, if you keep your head. You can beat the other fellow to the punch, or get inside his leads, if you know how."

"Yeah, if you know how. And you do know, I take it?"

"Why, of course. I wouldn't be so silly as to come up here just to take a beating from a big man like Mr. Wallace. That would be silly."

"Wouldn't it!" agreed Greasy Sam. "Almost criminal, one might say. Well, bedtime is at nine, boys. As usual. All up!"

There was a little more poker after dinner, but nine o'clock came swiftly, and everybody trooped off to bed excepting Greasy Sam and Old Black Joe, who sat up and smoked and shot craps long after Ernest and his future playmates were snoring in their cots.

All were up at six, and cold showers were followed by a light breakfast. After a rest, there followed a ten-mile jog. Ernest went along with the boys, and his lithe young legs found this most irksome part of training a mere pastime. He could have run away from the field at any time; but they did not try for speed. From time to time Cyclone and Peevish Bill and the other boxers would slow down, whirl about, indulge in grotesque shadow-boxing; then sprint a ways, and resume their steady jog. Returning home, Wallace was rubbed down, and then had a bout with the heavy punching bag, into which he drove his iron fists with terrific force.

That afternoon Greasy Sam told Ernest to get into his ring things and show his stuff. The boy grinned, and was first in the ring. He ignored Wallace's savage scowl, as he advanced on him with a menacing, catlike tread. The boy danced away easily, and when Cyclone, thinking he had cornered him, rushed, Ernest stabbed him very lightly with a long left, and worked easily back to the center of the ring. Try as he would, Cyclone couldn't land a solid blow; Ernest never let him get set when he was within reach of those flailing arms. He countered, ducked, sidestepped, fled; elusive and smiling, very much at his ease. Toward the end of the last round, Cyclone got angry, and left himself wide open; but Ernest failed to take advantage of it, and danced away.

Greasy Sam howled with rage. "If the kid knew a thing about the game, he'd of murdered you," he bellowed. "Jimmy Lowry would have put you away for keeps!"

"Yeah; but it wasn't Jimmy Lowry in the ring with me," Wallace countered. "This hick ain't a boxer; he's a sprinter."

"Don't I know it?" wailed Sam. "I can't get me nobody to stand up to ya and take it. They won't mix."

Considering that Cyclone wore heavy protective armor, padding his chin and covering his eyes, and that none was provided for his sparring partners, Sam's complaints seemed a little unjust. However, though he upbraided Ernest, called him yellow, and threatened to fire him, he was secretly satisfied. His speed was just what Cyclone needed. He would have to improve his own footwork to catch Ernest.

But as the days passed, he did not catch him. To be sure, his footwork did improve, he gained in speed; but he was never fast enough to catch the new hired man. Once Sam put him into the ring with the lightweight; and Ernest showed him up so bad that Sam was able to fire him, and thus save that much expense. Saving overhead was what Sam loved best to do. He became almost fond of Ernest, though continually bawling him out, and urging him to swap punches with Cyclone, which the boy showed no slightest inclination to do.

The press reports commented on the clumsiness of Wallace, as compared with the shiftiness and dazzling speed of his opponent, the champion, Lowry. They did not say much about Ernest; it is not customary to give much publicity to sparring partners. The public isn't interested in them. But they did note that a newcomer, Boyd, was able to make Cyclone look foolish trying to corner him. They added that unless Cyclone improved, Lowry might cut him to pieces before Cyclone managed to put over one of his haymakers. It was agreed that Lowry could not weather many of them.

Lowry's manager kept close tabs on what was doing up at Saratoga. He sent a spotter up, who reported so favorably on Ernest's work that a secret, and highly lucrative offer was made to him to switch over to Lowry's camp; an offer that Ernest rejected, and did not mention to Greasy Sam or anybody else.

The training period drew to a close. Everybody in camp knew everybody else too well. Little animosities began to develop. The contender himself, as he rounded into perfect condition, displayed a nasty temper, which pleased Sam, just as it has pleased all managers since boxing began to be a professional sport. And among the things that everybody knew, was the fact that Ernest Boyd was amazingly fast, and knew perfectly well how to keep out of trouble; but that he couldn't dent a custard pie if he hit it with his full strength. Not once had he even stung Cyclone, and he had flicked him a hundred times a week in nose or chin, and pecked away at his barrellike chest. Had Cyclone been wearing a gardenia, Ernest's blows would hardly have bruised a petal. But Greasy Sam was well satisfied. Cyclone had speeded up; and Ernest, while a hearty feeder, had cost him only ten a week in actual cash. He had been a bargain. Sam decided to make him a proposition to become a regular member of his stable, like old Peevish Bill Tombs.

There came the day when Old Black Joe, who had a great liking for the boy, took him aside and imparted a dreadful secret.

"Lissen, white boy! 'At wild man, Cyclone, he aims to knock all his pardners cold, las' time dey has a bout. And de las' time draws clost. Trainin' most ovah. You watch yo' step, boy! I knows you is fast; I sees you-all work. But he can git you. Dey tightens up de ring, moves in de ropes, so's it ain't twenty-four, but only eighteen foot. Some diff'rence, boy. And den, Cyclone he corners you—used as you is to de big ring—and *bing!*—you is lissening to de li'l' birdies sing. I seen him spoil more'n a hundred dollar's worth gold bridge work. An' I seen him break jaws, too! What he cares? De season's ovah! He don' need his stable no mo'. So, you watch out, white boy."

And Ernest promised, feeling meanwhile the corpuscles creep tingling along his arteries, and setting his teeth, and smiling. The great day was finally at hand.

Peevish Bill had escaped his fate by simply tin-canning. He covered up and took it, until Cyclone was afraid he'd break his own hands. Then Ernest was ordered into the ring. Greasy Sam, who was a little sore because of some things the newspaper boys had said, had passed the word round that there would be something worth seeing this day; there were half a dozen present, including a camera man. All the camp followers clustered about the open-air ringside. They looked at the shrunken ring itself, sighed, shook their heads, or licked their chops, according to their dispositions.

The bout began exactly as all of them had. Ernest skipping nimbly about, hampered by the small space allowed him, but still managing with difficulty to save his skin. Cyclone Wallace lumbering balefully after him, a murderous red gleam in his little eyes. Greasy Sam hanging onto the lower rope, chewing his cigar, issuing orders from the side of his thick lips.

During the rest after the first round, he growled at Ernest: "Go in, you yellow pup, and mix it! *Stand up to him for once!*"

Ernest looked over his shoulder, a puzzled frown on his boyish face. "But, Mr. Engler! You don't mean I should hit him, *hard?* With the fight only two days off? I might injure him so bad it would affect his chances!"

Sam swore picturesquely. "Sure I mean you should hit him, you fly-swatter. Give him all ya got—if anything!"

Ernest sighed. "I hate to do that, sir. You don't know how hard I can hit a man when I try. But I got to take orders, I suppose, haven't I?"

He spoke loud enough so that all the reporters heard him, and they also heard

Sam's profane reply, and grinned widely thereat. Thus, under strict orders, Ernest rose at the sound of the bell struck by Old Black Joe, for the second round. It began as the first; and in an instant, Cyclone was after him, flailing away with both arms.

Then a most astounding thing happened; an unprecedented thing. Instead of slipping away, or back-pedaling, Ernest Boyd suddenly stepped right into Cyclone, and between his thick arms. His own left shot out, from a distance of a few inches, sharpshooting straight for Wallace's nose. It was about all there was to shoot at, protected as he was by his headguard. The boy's fist went home, with a hundred and seventy odd pounds back of it, and with Cyclone adding his own equal weight to the impact. His nose was flattened to his face like a rubber sponge.

A great geyser of blood shot from it; and Cyclone, stunned, and strangling, stood for a second wavering on his feet. He could take plenty of punishment; but this terrific wallop was so utterly unexpected, so miraculous, albeit so painful, that it staggered him momentarily. And before he could recover, his hands instinctively went up to protect that tormented nose; whereupon Ernest drove an equally solid jab into his midriff. Down came the arms; and once more a glove was smashed into the shapeless nose! This time Cyclone's legs crumpled, and he collapsed to the floor, fairly out. The frantic Sam leaped into the ring, shoved Ernest clear through the ropes and into the laps of two reporters, one of whom whispered into his ear: "Good, kid! He had it coming to him!"

A little later, when Greasy Sam started to bawl Ernest out, one of the press men, their senior, spoke up:

"None of that stuff, Engler! You instructed the kid to do it. We all heard you. Forget it!"

And Sam, mindful of the power of the press, subsided, though raging inwardly. Ernest got himself paid off, and returned to town with the reporters. All the way down they plied him with questions, but got nothing from him that he had not told the boys at the camp.

The fearful wallop in the nose, even though it had broken it badly, would not have mattered so much to a man of Cyclone's stolid courage; but the affair was given plenty of publicity in the papers. An unknown set-up, one of his stable, had knocked cold his principal, two days before the fight. There was a first-class photographic cut of it to prove it. And Cyclone Wallace had worn the latest model of headguard, yet it had not saved him!

Odds switched instantly, and the champion, old and slipping though he was known to be, became the favorite. There was some loss to the promoters; for readers, sensing something funny about the business, decided to stay away. Or, at least, a whole lot of those who had delayed buying tickets, decided not to do so now that this story had broken. But most of the regular fans were already hooked, their tickets paid for. And a few, who had decided to stay away rather than see a game old champ dethroned, now decided that he had a chance, and that they would have a look.

Jimmy Lowry's successful defense of his title was no real surprise. Directly he knew that Wallace's nose was a very sore member indeed, if not broken as he suspected, he knew what he had to do.

Vainly Greasy Sam sought for a postponement. He was held strictly to the five-thousand-dollar forfeiture clause. Nose or no nose, the match must take place as scheduled!

Jimmy Lowry could hit any man in the world, in any place he chose to. To be sure, his blows lacked the old sting; but they were as accurate as ever. He naturally made Wallace's nose the tar-

get of his famous left; again and again Cyclone's seconds replaced its bandage between rounds. The reporters outdid themselves finding similes for the appearance of the famous nose. The blood forced Cyclone to breathe constantly through his mouth, and even this he did with difficulty. The loss of blood weakened him. He lost his judgment; left his body wide open. Whereupon Jimmy Lowry coolly switched to the solar plexus. Then, as the arms dropped, back to the nose again. There was no knock-out scored; but Lowry was ahead by a mile at the finish. Even Greasy Sam lacked spirit to make the usual claim that he had been robbed.

It was a month later that the despondent Wallace was lunching in a restaurant with the equally gloomy Greasy Sam. There entered a straight-backed, alert man, with a single good eye, and a touch of gray in his hair. He was accompanied by a much younger companion. He saw Cyclone and his manager, paused, crossed over to where they sat.

He smiled, put out his hand, which was rough and tanned.

"Why, Cyclone! Haven't seen you since you sent me over the milk route! 'Lo, Sam! How's tricks?"

"Not so good," moaned Sam, while Cyclone awkwardly shook the other's hand. Then, as their eyes fell upon the face of the younger man, a strange, wild light filled them.

Joe Fogarty, still smiling, nodded at the boy.

"You've never met my kid brother, have you, gents? I've been nursing Pete along for a try-out one of these days. I sort of figure Jimmy Lowry is slipping. Somebody's going to snatch his crown before long. Maybe it'll be Pete, here! Who knows?"

Watch these pages for other contributions by John D. Swain.

REMINISCENT OF ROOSEVELT

THE father of Representative George Pritchard, of North Carolina, one of the members of Congress, was a great friend of Theodore Roosevelt, who appointed him to the Federal bench.

"Because of that association between the two men," the young Pritchard relates, "I, as a child, saw a good deal of the great 'Teddy,' and of course his personality and opinions were deeply engraved on my mind. And now that I'm in politics I'm always running into something that reminds me of him.

"During the last campaign in my district in the mountains of western North Carolina, I had supper one night with a sturdy old farmer and his wife and ten children, the youngest of whom, a baby about two years old, sat in a high chair next to its mother.

" 'Henry,' said the mother during the supper, 'this high chair's about worn out.'

" 'All right, Mandy,' responded the lord of the house; 'next time I go into Asheville, I'll bring you a new one, a good, strong one that will last us.'

"Teddy," Mr. Pritchard concludes, "would have liked the optimistic prophecy in that remark of a man already the father of ten."

The POPULAR CLUB

Every reader of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, man or woman, qualifies as a lover of good stories and as a good fellow, and is therefore automatically and entirely without obligation elected a member of THE POPULAR CLUB.

A RESIDENT of Fort Bragg, California, Mr. Guy H. Jackson, writer of the letter printed below, is hereby welcomed into the fold as a member of THE POPULAR Club.

Being a fairly constant reader of THE POPULAR, I believe I qualify for THE POPULAR Club. I began reading THE POPULAR when quite a young squirt. One day I was nosing around in a bookstore—that's one of my failings—and I noticed the current issue of a magazine I had never read. It was a POPULAR, and featured B. M. Bower's "Chip of the Flying U." Since then I have missed perhaps a dozen copies. That was when I was working way back in the logging woods and couldn't get out to buy anything.

Bower still continues to be my favorite author. Her story, "Haywire," in THE POPULAR some time back, was, to my mind, one of the best she has ever done. (I believe Bower is of the gentler sex. Am I correct?) As for the other authors, I am playing no favorites, for each one is a master of his own style.

I want to speak a word concerning the covers. I'll bet I have a couple of dozen of the front covers stuck around here and there until such time as I can be able to assemble them all in one big frame and hang them up in my den, just to look at.

For a while, when THE POPULAR was appearing weekly, I feared that it was going to degenerate into the same class with some of the very mediocre magazines appearing on the stands. Some of the covers were pretty lurid. But I am glad it has gotten back to normal, and is now its own conservative self.

This letter is too long, so you may tune in on another station right now.

With best wishes——

WHO HAS A COPY?

WE have had a letter from Miss Hannah E. Owens, of No. 616 North Sixteenth Street, Philadelphia, asking our aid in helping her obtain a back copy of THE POPULAR containing a story called "Mike and the Main Chance," by Henry Herbert Knibbs. This story was printed in the June 20, 1917, issue of THE POPULAR.. If any reader has a copy of that issue that he would be willing to let Miss Owens have, we are sure that she would be glad to hear from him. Judging from her letter, she certainly did like that story.

JOHN RANDOLPH PHILLIPS.

A Short Autobiographical Sketch by the Author of "The Throw-down," in this Issue.

I WAS born in the city of Lynchburg, down in the corn-liquor belt of Virginia, several years ago. Soon after my advent my parents shook the Lynchburg dust from their heels and went to live on a farm, near a small town called Scottsville. In due time I took my place between the handles of a plow, and it must have been about then that I became convinced that I would make a much better writer than plowboy. I still think so, although there are editors who have not agreed with me.

School took up some time, of course, and I graduated from the local high school with sufficient honors. Met a girl in those days that I liked mighty well. I still like her—she's my wife now.

Went to the University of Virginia fully determined to captain the baseball team and also to cavort upon the gridiron. The respective coaches proved to be my first great disillusioners in life; they never did cater to my stuff. I decided then that I would stick to writing and let athletics go jump in the pond by the gymnasium. Nobody mourned about this—except, possibly, a few editors who didn't know any better. And editors are funny, anyway.

Five years of my precious young life were scattered around the university, and then I took an M. A. degree, having previously received my B. A., and set sail in all my glory for the port of New York. I had no illusions about my ability, and I emphatically was not the stereotyped cocky young graduate. Still, I had the idea that I might be beneficial in some way to Manhattan. Well, what's wrong with that?

I endured the usual lost feeling in New York, weathered the storm and finally reached the stage where I realized that maybe, after all, it was slightly more of a city than Richmond, Virginia. That realization happened about the time I sold my first story. You get the point, of course.

If you really want to know the truth about me, I'm actually a very nice sort of fellow. I like people, and some people like me. My favorite occupations are loafing, hunting, fishing—and loafing. I'm not a good shot with a gun, but I am a good hunter. Sometimes I think I'm a crackajack fisherman—I know how to sit still. And I assure you that I am an *excellent* loafer.

I am, I suppose, what is called an outdoor man, or rather, I am a semioutdoor man, for I like a toothbrush on my hunting trips, and I much prefer a feather bed to sleeping on the ground. Weaknesses, I'll admit, however I just can't seem to get over them. I do like to hunt! Any reader who has anything to hunt, from sparrows to grizzlies, is perfectly welcome to invite me for a month's stay.

Perhaps my favorite diversion is telling the people in New York just how wonderful is the South; in fact, one of the editors of THE POPULAR calls me a professional Southerner. He was wisecracking, but I choose to view the remark in the light of a great compliment. I guess I must be just an old Johnny Reb.

Anyway, when I say good-by to New York, you may be sure that right away I'm going to begin a flirtation with one of those southbound trains "that run to Dixie, to dear old Dixie, where the fields of cotton"—et cetera. I'm going to have me a big plantation and a big white house, set on a high hill overlooking some slow, lazy Southern river. And, man! I'll have more dogs and guns and horses than you can shake a stick at! I shall secure a personal servant—a darky who can play the banjo like all get-out and who knows how to make a good julep. Yes, suh!

A LETTER FROM AN OLD MOUNTIE.

WE have all read so many glamorous tales about the Mounties, that it is mighty interesting to read a letter from a man who was once a member of the famous Canadian police outfit. Mr. E. T. W. Coulter, author of the letter printed below, has evidently had a varied career. He is now located in Flagstaff, Arizona.

I have been a reader of THE POPULAR for around fifteen years, and have thoroughly enjoyed every issue of the magazine I have read.

Unfortunately I have a very poor memory for authors' names, and for this reason I cannot say which of the many writers for THE POPULAR I have enjoyed most. However, I might say that all of the stories contain enough vim and vigor for any red-blooded person to enjoy them. Not only are they a passing pleasure, but I have found in many of the yarns educational qualities of a rare distinction.

I read my first POPULAR up in the Klondike country; came across an old copy in a prospector's cabin up near Dawson City, many miles away from what we called civilization, and it was the only bit of reading material that the cabin contained at that time. I date my reading from that particular time, although there were lapses in the ensuing years, when copies of THE POPULAR were few and far between.

I won't go into detail about my travelings, but they have been extensive enough to suit any young fellow's whim. Spent four years with the Mounted Police, and was fortunate enough to see the Hudson Bay and Yukon country. Naturally I have a very deep interest in stories touching on any of the Canadian country I have traveled in. Also spent three years rambling around the Old Country, taking life easy—or the infantry thought so—atop of a quadruped, attached to the Canadian Light Horse. It is, or was, well named, for we were "light" most of the time, though our horses may have given a different version. I had THE POPULAR mailed to me overseas, but we shifted around so much that I missed many copies. And those I did get were passed around until they would finally get so thumb-marked, or water-soaked, that one would surely have had to have a wonderful imagination to follow a story from beginning to end.

Have always regarded outdoor stories as my first choice, and more so at the present, as I follow a sedentary occupation.

Don't know what I could offer that would be of value as a suggestion or criticism, as I am more than pleased with the present copies of THE POPULAR. If you continue to keep up your high standards, and I have no doubt that you will, here is at least one Arizona reader that has not got any kick coming.

Gratitude is a fruit of great cultivation; you do not find it among gross people. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Editors,
The Popular Magazine,
79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

Dear Sirs:

I liked, in this issue, the following stories:

Best:_____ **Third:** _____

Next:_____ **Fourth:**_____

My favorite type of story is:

_____

Name: Member_____

Address:_____

Note: Any further comments will be very welcome. Special consideration is given to the preferences of our readers as expressed in their communications.

A Chat With You

SOME scientists say that if one could stand on a planet far enough away and look through a powerful enough telescope toward the earth, it would be possible to see Julius Cæsar commanding his legions.

Sounds fantastic, doesn't it? But it is scientifically true, evidently. When you look at a star, you do not see the star itself as it is at that minute. You see instead the light that has been traveling to this earth for many minutes—or years, depending on how far away the star is situated.

It's simple when you bring the thing down to a smaller scale. Looking across a valley, you watch steam arising from a whistle, and in a few seconds you hear the noise. And light, as you know, must travel just as sound does, or anything else. Nothing arrives anywhere instantaneously.

* * * *

THE light of the sun takes eight minutes to get to your doorstep. The light of the faintest planet may take thousands of years. And if, through your tremendous telescope, you gaze from some vastly distant place at this world, it follows that you would not see things here as they are to-day, but as they were in the past.

It would probably be impossible to build such a telescope, but the principle undoubtedly remains true. Isn't it interesting to reflect that, in the far-radiating light waves, those who have lived before us are still alive and moving?

* * * *

THIS, however, seems a rather laborious way of looking into the past. It's much easier to pick up a book. By the simple gesture of turning a page, you can make any person or century relive. You can even pick your centuries, or skip from one to another. On the distant star you couldn't do that. You could only see Rome, and in order to see ancient Egypt you'd have to jump to a planet still farther away. That wouldn't be much fun. The book way is best. Just walk across the room and pick up another book, and immediately you are in Egypt.

The same applies to a magazine. At this very instant, sitting in your own home, in a train or wherever you are, you can completely leave your present surroundings and go into another time and place—a fictional time and place, true, but that's much better than real life. You can even forget that you are yourself—and put yourself in the shoes of the hero of any story.

* * * *

IN this issue you chuckled over A. M. Chisholm's inimitable humor, and then by turning a page you were plunged into college football, in Mr. Pickering's clever story. Then, perhaps, you sought the tang of the South Seas, in MacIsaac's serial. Or perhaps you dashed into the wild and thrilling air adventures told by Richard Howells Watkins, and Ivan March. Perhaps you became serious, and read with understanding attention the unusual and impressive death-house story by Robert McBlair. It deserves attention. Or perhaps you found color and action in the stories of John Randolph Phillips, Clay Perry and John D. Swain.

And all this was done without a far-away planet or a telescope.

* * * *

YOU cannot look into the future with a telescope, either; but it can be done to some extent in reading. We can look into the future and tell you what will be in the next number. All

the authors in it are your favorites—Bertrand W. Sinclair, Will McMorrow, Fred MacIsaac, Roy Norton, Clay Perry, Mary Shannon, and John Randolph Phillips. There will be a new contributor—new to this magazine—John E. Gurdon.

Mr. Sinclair, who wrote that famous story, "North of Fifty-three," has written a short novel for you, called "The Finger of Suspicion."

It's a mystery story of the West. Mr. Sinclair combines those two—mystery, and the West—perfectly. In "The Finger of Suspicion" he has contrived a solution that is a radical departure from the old-fashioned black-villain-vs.-handsome-hero sort of thing.

* * * *

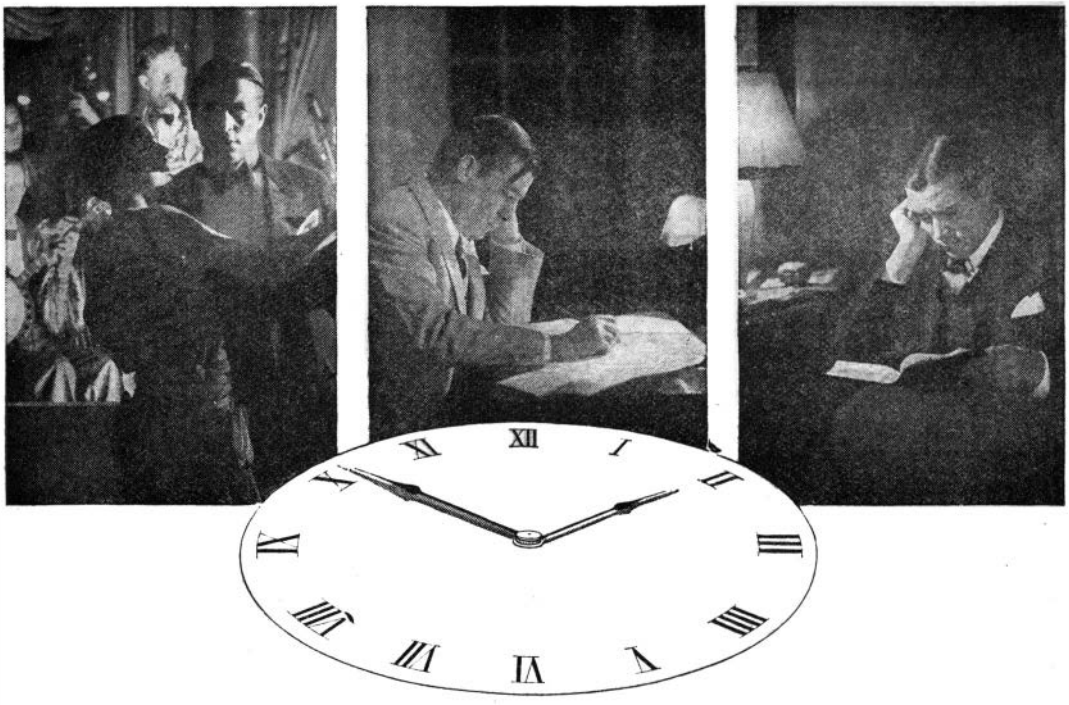
THE short stories in the coming number are all strikingly fine. Roy Norton's tale is about the airplane world we shall be living in in 1958. McMorrow has written a new, splendid "Old Frisky" adventure. John E. Gurdon's weird story will leave you gasping. There will be many other things to quicken your interest, too, rounding out a thoroughly noteworthy issue.

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

In the Second November Number — *On the stands October 20th*

A Minute With—— A Northern Night	**CLAY PERRY**
The Finger Of Suspicion A Novel	**BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR**
Remarkably Courageous	**WILL McMORROW**
Hard-boy Haines	**JOHN RANDOLPH PHILLIPS**
The Bottomless Gulf	**JOHN E. GURDON**
The Cave Of Despair In Four Parts—Part III	**FRED MacISAAC**
The Sky Octopus	**ROY NORTON**
King of the Crags	**MARY SHANNON**
The Popular Club	
A Chat With You	**THE EDITORS**

And Other Interesting Features



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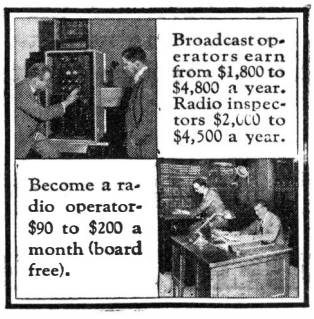

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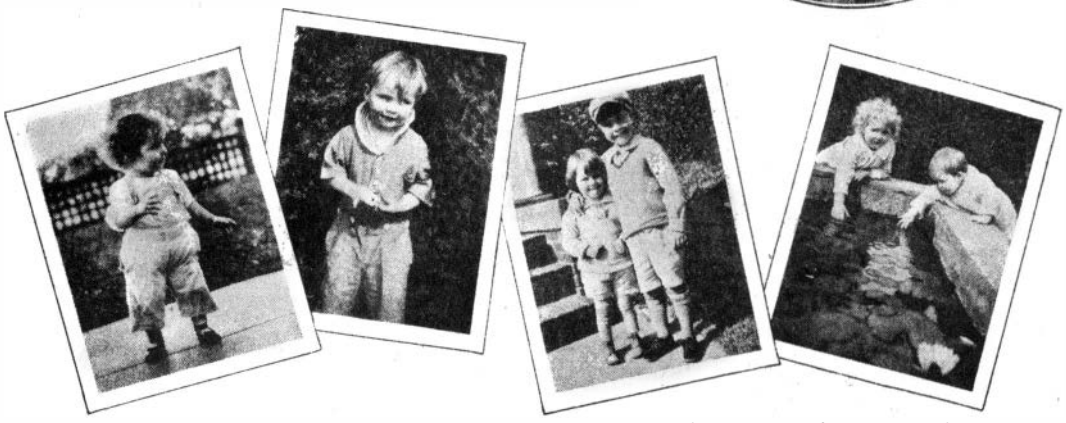
When your Boy becomes a Man and your Girl becomes a Woman you'll wish for more reminders of their childhood days



LATER on, when they step out for themselves, snapshots of their early years will become your most precious possession.

Today you are looking ahead. Tomorrow you'll want to look back, to see them as they are now, as they will never be again.

This is the time when your Kodak can be of greatest help, the time to take more snapshots than you have ever taken before.

Children Today—Adults Tomorrow

They change so quickly. You can almost *see* them getting taller, broader, more mature. Perhaps now you're tucking them into bed, buttoning up their clothes, cutting up their meat in little pieces, and keeping them away from open windows. But in only a few years more they'll be telling *you* what to do and looking the part.

When your Boy becomes a Man and your Girl becomes a Woman you'll wish for more reminders of their childhood days. Don't leave this wonderful period to the fickleness of memory. Keep your Kodak next to your hat and coat. Then you won't miss any picture chances because you meant to bring it with you but forgot.

Don't Wait for Sunshine

Then, too, snapshots are fun to take. That is another reason for the extraordinary popularity of Kodaks. They are on sale everywhere and at prices that do their bit toward bringing down the high cost of living. The Brownie, a genuine Eastman camera, sells for as little as $2, and Kodaks as low as $5.

What's more, your dealer can show you Eastman cameras that actually increase your picture-taking opportunities. These are the Modern Kodaks. Many have lenses so fast that you don't have to wait for sunshine. Everyone can take good pictures, indoors, outdoors, on cloudy days and brilliant ones, with these marvelous new Kodaks. Ask to see them.

And when you've obtained your Kodak you can rely on Kodak Film to record your subjects the way you see them in the finder. Kodak Film has speed and wide latitude, both of which minimize the danger of under- and over-exposure. *It gets the picture.* Then the developing and printing of your films will be quickly and skilfully handled by any of the thousands of expert photo finishers whose stations are located throughout the country. You'll find one not far from your home.

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