

No.2, Vol.32

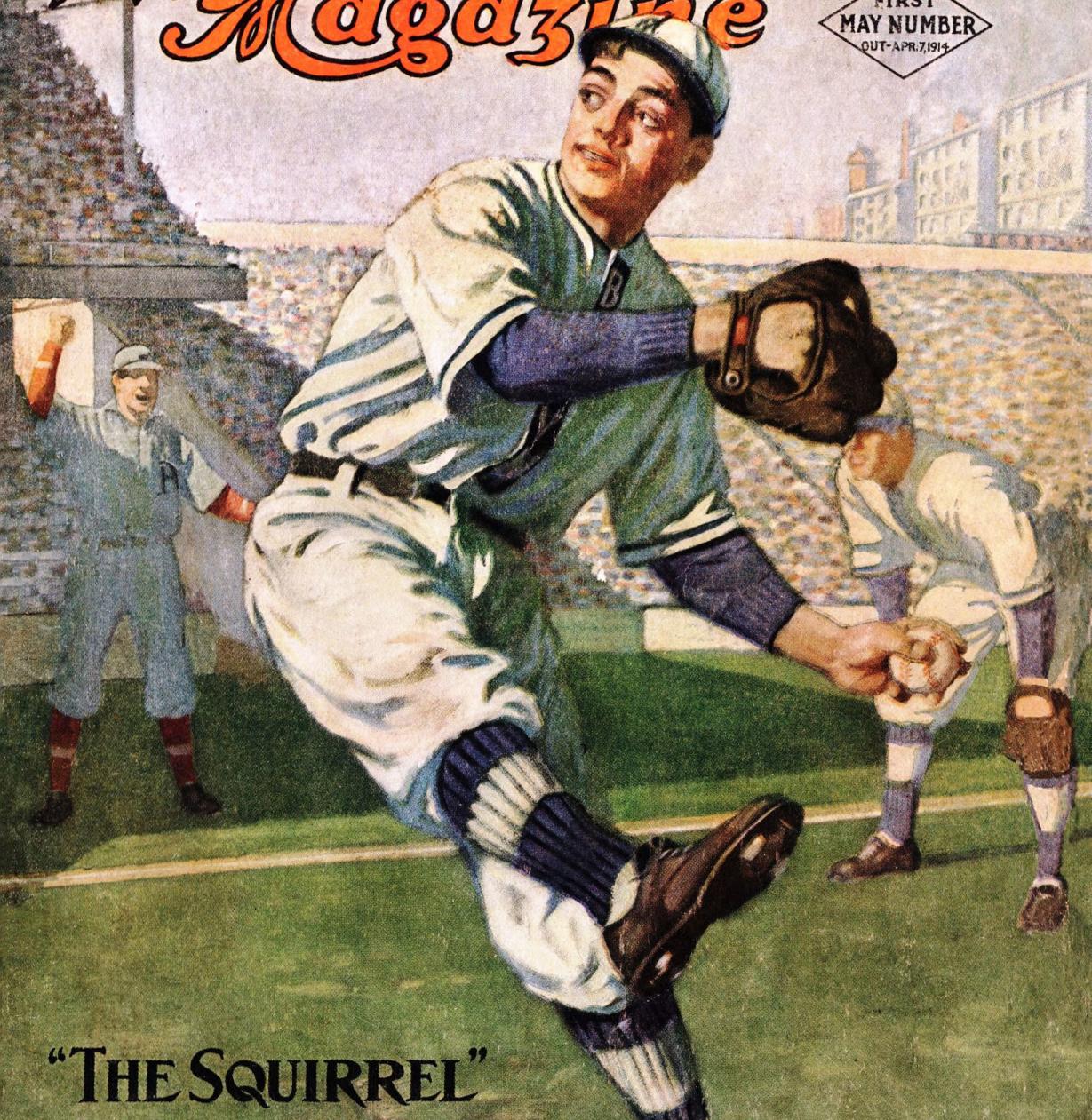
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TWICE-A-MONTH

15 CENTS

The Popular Magazine

FIRST
MAY NUMBER
OUT APR. 7, 1914

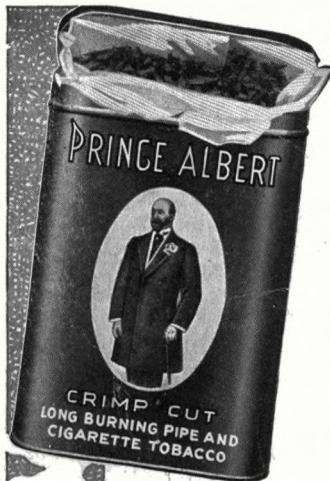


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A Baseball Yarn by

C.E.VAN LOAN

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the national joy smoke

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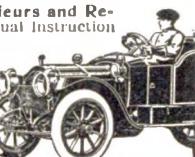
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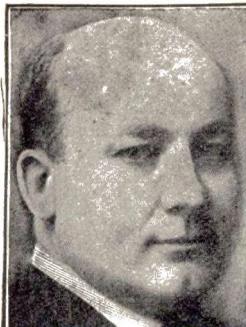
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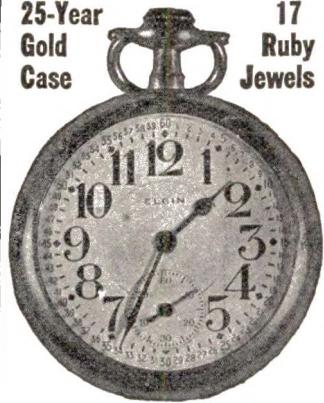
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LET America's Greatest Graphologist read your character from own writing. Will be delighted. Send 10c Beauchamp, 2583 8th Ave., New York.

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H.E.Brown, Pres.

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had his pull!”*

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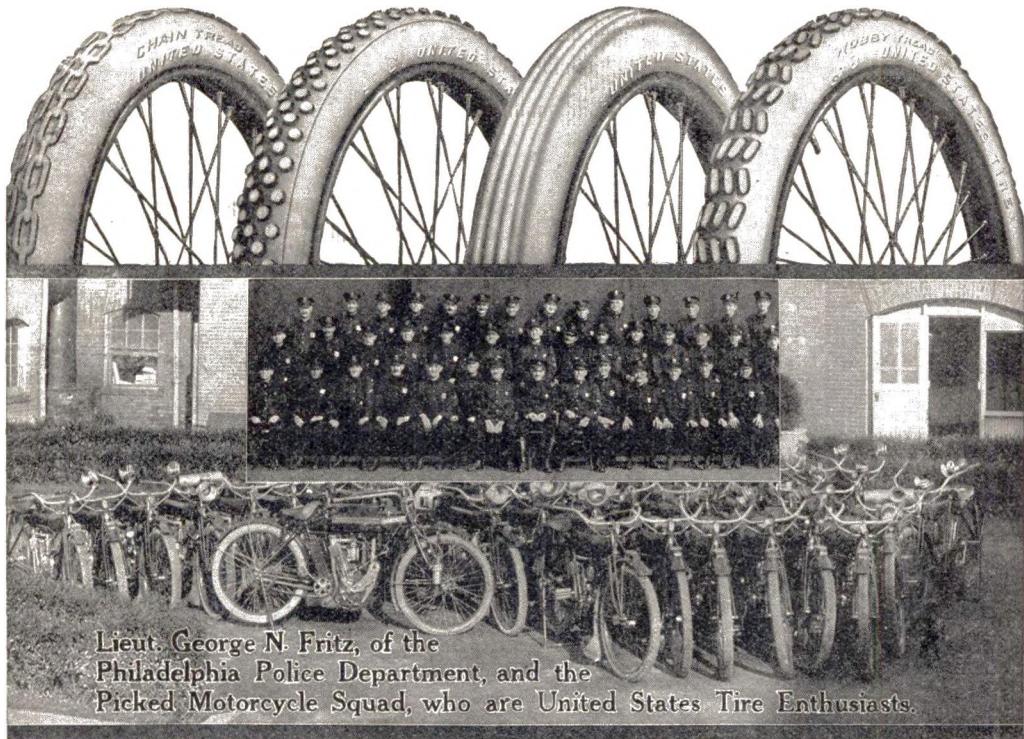
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NAME

ADDRESS

Pop. Mag. 5-14



United States Tires help police departments to rely on the motorcycle as an aid in preserving law and order.

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The Motorcycle Policeman gives his tires the hardest of service. His duty takes him over roads that other riders avoid. Frequently he trusts his very life to his tires.

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That is why a vast majority of police motorcycles are equipped with United States Tires.

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Today United States Motorcycle Tires stand alone—in a class absolutely by themselves and are acknowledged to be the standard motorcycle tires of the world.

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issue

"YANKEE GRIT"

In the next
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A VIVID NOVEL OF THE SEA, BY HOLMAN DAY, AUTHOR OF "SAND LOCKED."

VOLUME XXXII

NUMBER 2

TWICE-A-MONTH

The Popular Magazine

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MAY 1, 1914

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Henry C. Rowland

The little hard-luck fraternity of four, introduced to you in "The Movies Man," undertake a new job, which brings them many singular adventures.

1

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Again the high ideal of the brotherhood of man, and how it shall be brought to pass.

A CORNER IN OATS. A Short Story.

William Adams Simonds

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"You must get fifty thousand dollars before you can marry my daughter," the manager of the commission house says to his penniless clerk, and the lover gets busy.

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THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXII.

MAY 1, 1914.

No. 2.

The Rubber Man

By Henry C. Rowland

Author of "The Movies Man," "Corrigan the Raw," Etc.

A new job—this time of their own making—for the little hard-luck fraternity of four whose exploits in the employ of a cinematograph company were chronicled by Dr. Rowland in the first March POPULAR. The Rubber Hunter is a character whose like we have never seen in fiction.

(A Complete Novel)

DICK BEEKMAN has told of how the Bum Club, "a little hard-luck fraternity of four," as he very well expressed it, came to be organized, and of how Mr. James Buxton chartered the sixty-ton ketch-rigged yacht *Corisande*, and signed us on to help him on his southern cruise in quest of film for the movies.

Buxton was so well satisfied with the results of his venture, which have already been described, that he decided to hurry back North and get his pictures on the screen as soon as possible. So we made directly for Key West, where Buxton paid off all hands with a month's bonus for the good work we'd done, and he and Kitty Shell, the actress who had come with us to play the woman parts, returned to New York by rail, leaving us to bring back the yacht at our leisure. There was no hurry about this, as Buxton's charter had still about six weeks to run.

We chaps were in no hurry to return. It was the middle of February, and we had no desire to exchange the balmy

airs of the tropics for the sleet and slush and cold of the North. Besides, we had nothing to do when we got there but resume the rotten, aimless, bumming lives that we had been leading when Buxton came along with his cruising proposition. Marvin had turned over his office and such practice as he had to a colleague of his acquaintance; Buxton had told Hamlet, who was an actor and one of his regular staff, that there would be nothing more doing until spring; Dick had fallen in love with Kitty and wanted to keep away from her for fear she might be fool enough to marry him, and he with nothing a year and debts up into the three figures, and I knew that there was little chance of my doing anything in my line, which was in connection with a yacht agency, until late in the spring, and not much then as the times had been hard, and it looked as though the yards and basins would be more crowded than the yacht clubs during the summer season.

Our three hands and Paddy, the steward, formerly barkeep in Ruhl's

place on Broadway, felt the same way about it. All four were Bowery boys, and as hard as they make them, Murphy, who was rated bos'n, being an ex-middleweight prize fighter, who had been obliged to quit the ring because his appetite for rum made it impossible for him to keep in training. But they had all been to sea on coasters and fishermen, and two of them had served their terms in the navy, and Paddy had, also. Murphy was a useful boy with the mitts, and as I had held the middleweight championship belt when in the U. S. naval academy, and had always kept my hand in, we two used to put on the gloves for a little practice every afternoon when conditions permitted. Not the best discipline, perhaps, as I was skipper of the yacht, but the exercise did us a lot of good, especially myself. There was no doubt that Murphy was the better man of the two; for, while I may have been quicker and more scientific, he was bigger boned and could stand twice the punishment.

We all felt pretty sad after saying good-by to Kitty and Buxton. There were never two better shipmates, and we'd been through some pretty strenuous scenes together. For the first time in our acquaintance Dick was down and out in his feelings, and I couldn't blame him, as he was off soundings in love with Kitty and she with him. But there was nothing to do about it, for other reasons than Dick's inability to support a wife, or even himself, for that matter. He was the last direct descendant of one of the best families in New York with the most aristocratic connections—though most of them had turned him down after he blew in his fortune and got on the borrow—and it was probable that some day he might come into a pot of money, and take his proper place in society again. Kitty, though as good and sweet and pretty a girl as one could find, was a good way from being in the same class, socially, and marriages of that sort are never apt to be a success.

But Dick took the separation pretty hard, and that night, to cheer him up, I suggested that we take a look around

the town. Marvin and Hamlet stopped aboard the boat; Marvin because he'd sworn off booze shortly before and did not yet feel sure enough of his seat on the cart to risk a tumble, and Hamlet because he thought somebody ought to keep Marvin company, as there was no lack of liquor on the yacht.

Dick and I wandered around for a while, gloomily inspecting the different bars, and finally drifted into a big, shoddy *café-chantant* joint, principally patronized by seafaring folk. There was a little stage at one end, and some song-and-dance artists, and the audience was composed of jackies from a British gunboat, and fishermen, and spongers, and men in the merchant marine.

We found a table over on one side of the room, and, as we sat down and gave our order, I noticed at the next table a good-looking, blue-eyed, squarely built young fellow in the uniform of a mate in the merchant service. What called my attention to him was a big scar, newly healed, and still showing the stitch marks, which ran diagonally across his forehead just over the left eyebrow. He was drinking beer, but from the flushed condition of his face I judged that he must already have loaded quite a lot of it aboard. It was plain, too, that he was rather bored and in a communicative mood, for he kept looking our way as if trying to decide in what spirit any social advances on his part might be received.

Now, snobbery is something that never found any holding ground with the Bum Club. Mixing was our motto, not only in the matter of drinks, but as regarded our fellow men. Marvin was perhaps the best mixer of the four, with Dick a close second; and if the latter had not been in a state of such profound depression, he and the mate would have been in conversation almost on our sitting down, as our tables were so close together as to be practically the same. Being myself a Marylander, it comes natural to me to meet a man halfway, and, besides, I have always liked to chin with seafaring folk; so, presently, when the mate hauled out a stogie and began to overhaul his pockets vainly for a light

I handed him my match box. He thanked me, lighted up, then as he gave me back the box, glanced at the arms engraved on its side.

"You gentlemen are likely off that ketch-rigged yacht that come in this morning," said he.

"Yes," I answered.

"I'm mate o' the *Essequibo*; that little British tramp you passed on your way in," said he. "Pleasure cruisin', I suppose?"

"Not entirely," I replied. "She was chartered by a man who looks after getting the material for a big American cinematograph company. We've been sailing around collecting film. Now he's gone back North by rail, and we're taking the boat to New York."

"Well, that's interestin'," he observed, and asked me some questions about how we went about our work for the movies. I described Buxton's methods, then asked where his ship had just come from and where he was bound.

"We're just from up the Orinoco, where we've been loading cacao and copper ore," said he. "There's new mines 'ave opened up there in the 'ills some distance from the river, and we brought out some machinery and iron rails for a tram line." He took a pull at his beer and wiped the froth from his short, stiff mustache with the back of his hand. Glancing at it, casually, I noticed that the thumb knuckle had apparently been quite recently dislocated and was still badly swollen. He saw me looking at it and laughed.

"Ah, you're noticing my 'and," said he. "A sorry time I've 'ad with the bally fin, too. Now, judging merely by appearances, what would you think to be the cause of that lump?" and he massaged it gently.

"It looks as if you'd dislocated it," I answered, "and hadn't got it back quite plumb. To make a free guess, I'd say that you knocked it out in a scrap of some sort."

"And you'd be jolly well right," said he. "I did that very thing, and got my own napper bashed open into the bargain. An odd thing 'appened to me up

there. Maybe 'twould bore you to hear the yarn, sir?"

"On the contrary," I answered, and Dick, who had roused out of his gloom at the word "scrap," looked at the mate with interest.

"Let's hear about it," said he, and signed to a passing waiter to fill the three steins.

"Well," said the mate, "then here goes. We were lying a long way up the river at a little place called Cariben, above the Turtle Banks, if you know where that is. 'Twas here that we were to load the ore brought down by the tram from the mines, and precious slow work it was, I can vouch for that. There 'ad been some trouble with the labor. The getting of the stuff down was sadly in delay, but our orders were to take all they could give us, so there was nothing for it but to wait.

"Now, our skipper is a man none so badly orf 'oo likes to do a little trading on 'is own 'ook now and again, if 'e sees a good chance. One day, while we're still waiting for the jokers up there in the mines to send down another load, 'e says to me: 'Mr. Stiles,' says 'e, 'I learn from a party I've been talkin' to ashore that there's a trader up above the rapids that does a little business in vegetable ivory with the natives who bring it down the Meta from Boyaca.'

"'That's very likely, sir,' said I, "'there's corozo a-plenty all through that country.'

"'Well,' says he, 'we can do without you 'ere for a week. If you're so minded you might take the launch and one of these loafers 'ere and look into the business. If you can collar some of the stuff at a proper price 'ere's the chrance for us both to pick up a little pin money for the wives.'

"Now, the old man has picked up his hundreds of pounds 'ere and yon by just such little pin-money trading as this, and as anything was better than rottin' round the ship waiting on the blooming ore, I got a couple of 'arf-carsts, and took the launch, and started up. Leaving the boat at Atures, I hired a mule and followed the road as far as

Maipures, and then took a trail through the jungle. Everybody knew all about this Johnny I was going to see, and 'twas evident he was not popular. They called him by a Spanish name, which means 'the Rubber Man,' because he had formerly run a rubber depot on the Rio Negro, and the report was that the Araras Indians had burned his station and chased him out of the country. Before that he had been thick as thieves with the murdering brutes. Anyhow, he had worked through the Cassiquiare into the Orinoco, and there he was, trading in vegetable ivory and such rubber as he could get, and prospectin' for gold.

"I had no trouble in finding his place, and rode out of the jungle fair speckled with bites, to discover my gentleman sitting on the screened porch of a snug bungalow in his pajamas drinking whisky and water, and smoking a cigar. He was a biggish man, though a bit wasted by the climate, and mostly bone, but he had the joints of a dray horse. There was more body than manners to the lout, and if I'd 'a' known the sort of brute I 'ad to deal with I'd 'a' jolly well burked the whole business. 'Ere it was in the 'eart o' the jungle, and, instead o' his coming for'ard to greet me, 'e sat there piping me down without a word o' cheer. I might 'a' been a blooming sakawinkie in the top of a blooming mulatto tree for all 'e recked.

"'Good day, sir,' said I, and slid down off the moke.

"'And who are yeou?' says 'e, 'and what will be your business 'ere?'

"'My name is Stiles,' said I, 'and I'm mate o' the steamship *Essequibo*, loadin' ore at Cariben, and I've come 'ere to see if you might not 'ave some ivory nuts to dispose of.'

"'I dinna trade wi' strangers,' says he, and swabbed his red, hairy snout with the sleeve of his tunic.

"'Then 'ere's a mutual friend to introduce us,' said I, and, taking a bag of sovs from my pocket, I clinked the yellow boys together.

"'Well, to put a sheepshank in the yarn, I bought all the corozo 'e 'ad after a fearful lot of 'agglng and got 'is re-

ceipt, and saw the stuff started down the rapids to where I'd left the launch. It was boxed, and wired, and sealed, so I felt safe enough. 'E 'ad no chance but to put me up for the night, though I must say 'e did so with a bad grace, and I could not 'elp but wonder why, as he 'ad a tidy place and plenty o' good tucker. After supper, though, I discovered the reason."

The mate paused to refresh himself from the stein which the waiter had set in front of him. Dick and I, much interested in his story, did not interrupt.

"It was a gell," he continued. "Scarce more than a child, she was, but as pretty a bit as you'd 'ope to see. Slender and soft, with 'air the color o' the copper on that ketch o' yours, and eyes as blue as the Gulf Stream. I thought I must be dreamin' or else in my cups—for the Rubber Man was no way stingy with his spirits—when I caught sight of 'er. 'E'd gone down to 'is jetty to speak to some red Indians that 'ad just come in a canoe, and I was 'aving a quiet smoke be'ind the mosquito screens when I 'eard a light footfall on the threshold, and there she stud. The last o' the daylight was in 'er face, and 'er eyes were big and frightenedlike. It gave me quite a turn, it did, indeed, when I carst my eyes back over my shoulder and saw her standin' there as still and white as a sperrit.

"'Where is 'e?' she whispered.

"'E's down by the jetty, miss,' I arnswered.

"'Don't look round,' says she, under 'er breath. 'E'd kill you if 'e knew I was speaking to you.'

"'No fear, miss,' said I.

"'Oo are you?' she arks, 'and where do you come from?'

"I told 'er; then inquired if I might make so bold as to arsk the same question about 'erself.

"She 'ung in the wind a moment, then arnswered: 'I'm a pore, defenseless gell that this awful man is keeping 'ere a prisoner.' She was going on to tell me more when the Rubber Man turned and started up the path toward the bungalow. But I'd 'eard enough.

As she drew back into the doorway, I said, without turning my 'ead:

"Can you slip out arfter 'e goes to sleep, and meet me where the trail goes into the jungle?"

"Yes," she whispered, "I think so."

"Then 'ave a try for it, miss," I whispered, "I'll be there with my mule. It's going to be moonlight, and we can get a long way on our course before 'e discovers that the bird 'as flown."

"There was no time to say more, the Rubber Man 'aving 'auled within ear-shot. The girl slipped away like a wisp o' steam, and a second or two arfter, the Rubber Man come inside the screen. I 'ad started 'umming a little tune, on the orf charnce of 'is 'aving 'eard my voice, for 'e 'ad lugs on 'im like one o' the wampires flittin' around the clearing.

"The Rubber Man was of better humor since our trade, and arsked me to 'ave a glass with 'im, but I declined, sayin' that I must be up and orf at break o' day, and was minded to turn in, 'aving a 'ard ride before me. So 'e showed me my cot, which was in a storeroom, where 'e kept 'is tinned foods and the like. I wished 'im good night, and 'e gave me the same as civil as you might wish.

"So down I lay and waited. The night came quickly, and the jungle all about begun to 'um and boom and shrill like it does down there, what with the insect life, and the 'owling baboons, and frogs, and alligators, and the like. Then the moon come up, 'anging no 'igher than the marst'ead light and making everything as bright as day. I looked at my watch and saw that it was a little arfter nine, and pretty soon I 'eard a low, rumbling snore that seemed to shake the bungalow. So up I got and crammed a tin of beef and some biscuits into my pockets, then stole out in my bare feet, and slipped over to the wattle shack, where the mule was billeted. I saddled up and carst 'im orf, and led 'im across the clearing, keeping to the shadow as much as possible.

"There was no sign of the girl, but I 'adn't long to wait, for, presently, 'ere she come, flitting through the moon-

light like a ghost. Scarce with a word, I hoisted 'er aboard the mule, then took 'im by the bridle, and we started. There was a dark patch of jungle to navigate, and then we come out on a little savannah, which 'ad been cleared at one time for cotton or tobacco. We was 'arfway across when the girl gave a little cry.

"'Ere 'e comes," says she, and begun to whimper.

"I looked back, and in the bright blaze o' the moon I saw a white figure bounding along in our wake. 'Twas the Rubber Man, no blooming fear. I could tell that from 'is bulk. There was no charnce to scud for it, as the going was bad right there, the ground being softish, and the mule sinking almost to his knees. So I fetched up and waited, shoving my revolver around in front, though not that I had any mind to use it unless he tried to come it over me likewise.

"The Rubber Man fetched up close aboard and stopped. He was panting a little, and the sweat on his fur'ead glistened in the moonlight. 'E was in 'is pajamas, and 'ad a revolver swingin' from a belt around 'is 'ips. 'E stood for a second or two a-catching of 'is breath, and 'is yellow fangs shone in his snout like the fangs of a wolf.

"'Ye wull be 'aving a braw manner of returning 'orspitality, Mr. Stiles,' says 'e.

"'That's neither 'ere nor there,' said I. "'Oo are you to keep the young lady prisoner 'ere against 'er will?'

"'I am 'er lawful gardeen,' says 'e. 'The lass is the darter of my pardner 'oo died of beriberi back on the Rio Negro. 'E left 'er for me to look arfter; which same I wull e'en be doin', by your leave. So hand 'er over, and take yoursel' orf, and sharp's the word if ye knew what's good for ye.' And 'e tuk a step for'rard to lift 'er off the moke.

"'Old 'ard, matey,' said I, and looked up at the girl. She was white and still, but tremblin' like a aspen leaf.

"'Is 'e tellin' the truth?' I arsked 'er. "She did not answer, but began to sob. The Rubber Man growled in his throat.

"'Off with ye,' says 'e. 'Do not try my patience, young feller. I w'u'd have

ye to know that I'm a wurlent man when roused.'

"Wurlent you may be," said I, "but ye cannot 'ave the young lady until I'm satisfied in my mind that ye have a right to 'er." And I looked up again at the girl. "Is this man your gardeen, or is he not?" I asked, gentlelike.

"'Yes,' she whispered. But it was plain enough to me that it was only through fear of the Rubber Man that she said the word. I 'ope I know a lady when I see one, and it was plain as the nose on your face, sir, that the girl was all of that. Good blood will tell, and a man had but to look at her to see that she was the genuine article. How she'd come to be there I could not guess, but I blooming well knew that she was not the sort to be the darter of some filthy rubber grubber, and I said so, plain and outspoken.

"That wull do for ye," says the Rubber Man. "I am in no mind to be standin' here longer arguin' the subject in this bog. If it's trouble ye wull be lookin' for put aside yer weapon and I wull do the same, and we'll e'en settle the matter man to man."

"That's fairly put," said I, and ran my eye over 'im.

"As I 'ave said, 'e was a biggish man; not tall, but broader than most, and longish in the arms. In actool weight I must 'a' 'ad it over 'im by at least a stone, for there was little meat on 'is big bones, and 'e looked like a man that 'ad urt 'imself by drink, to say nothing of the fever. I was always a tidy 'arndful myself, as some men may 'ave learned to their cost. Besides, 'e was getting on, as was plain to see from the gray of 'is 'air and sandy snout, while I am just turned thirty. Thinks I, 'It will be no great job to give this bag o' bones a grueling that will keep 'im to 'is 'ammock for a day or two,' and I started to unbuckle my belt. 'E done the same, and 'ung it over the arfter end of the mule.

"Come over 'ere on the 'ard," says 'e. "If ye manage to prove yersel' the better man, I gi'e ye my permeesion to get on along wi' the lass," and 'e grinned."

The mate paused, took a deep draft from his stein, then passed his hand gently along the scar above his eyebrow.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "not to try your patience too far, all I can say is that I never 'ad a look-in from the start, and I've always been considered more than ordinary useful with my 'ands. 'E fair smothered me. I'd 'a' done as well to 'a' tackled the business end o' the mule. When I landed once or twice on 'is 'ead it was like I'd 'auled off and given a clump to the ball on the stock o' the anchor. All it did was to bash my fist. 'E played for my body mostly, and seemin' not to try vury 'ard like 's if he hated to spoil the sport too quick. Twice 'e grassed me, then stood by with a grin, and waited for me to find my legs again. Finally, when we'd been 'ard at it for a matter o' ten minutes, maybe, and me too groggy to land a decent blow, 'e says: 'Aweel, y're no' so bad for a lad, but sadly lacking in teckneek. Mind ye, now, if ye come snoopin' again around my hoose, I'll no be takin' all this trouble, but just put a bullet through ye, and nothin' said——' and the next I knew it seemed like I'd been 'it by a fallen spar.

"When I come to, the Rubber Man was gone, and the girl was gone, and the mule moored to a bramble bush, with my belt 'anging across the saddle. My napper was 'umming like a 'ive o' bees, and I'd lost a sight o' blood, but I tied it up with my scarf, got aboard the mule, and went on my way. I got back to the launch, and went on down the river with the corozo. When I reached the ship, I found that she had steam up and was all ready to carst off, the skipper 'avin' got orders not to wait for any more cargo but to get along downriver to take on the cacao. Jolly little sympathy I got from that old corbie crow. He told me it served me right for messin' in with what was none of my business, and 'e 'oped I'd take the lesson to 'eart. Ashore 'twas the same. They just gave me the laugh, and said that better men than me 'ad split on the same rock. They said that the Rubber Man claimed to be the gardeen of the girl, and that nobody 'ad ever managed to

prove the contrary. All 'ands were shy of interfering in the business, and the general opinion was that the Rubber Man meant to marry 'er as soon as she reached a fitting age."

The mate leaned back and relighted his dead stogie. "So there's the yarn, gentlemen, and a bit of odd it is, as I think you'll both allow." He reached for a chain which might have moored a catboat, and hauled out his watch. "Well," said he, "I must be gettin' off aboard. Coal lighters coming alongside at daybreak. Good night, gentlemen; ope to see you again if you're lying 'ere any length of time."

We thanked him for his story, and wished him good night, and when he had gone I sat for several moments thinking hard about what I had just heard. Long before the end of his curious tale something had come into my head which had given me plenty of food for serious consideration. It was this:

Some three years before when serving as a junior ensign in the U. S. navy, I had been assigned to a gunboat then lying at Port of Spain, Trinidad. A few days after I had joined the vessel, there had been a very hard gale, and when it had blown itself out, we received orders to put immediately to sea and cruise back and forth in the general locality of north latitude ten degrees twenty seconds, and west longitude sixty degrees, in search of the derelict American schooner yacht *Procyon*, which had opened up in the gale and been abandoned in a reported foundering condition. We did not find the derelict, but a British cruiser on the West Indian station was more successful; found her floating awash, dismasted, and towed her into port, where she was beached, and her hull thoroughly searched for a missing member of her party, the thirteen-year-old niece of the owner, a Chicago millionaire.

It appeared that a violent increase in the gale striking the yacht, which was an old, wooden vessel, shortly after midnight had carried both masts by the board, opening her up along the garboard strake. She filled rapidly, and, doubting that she would float when

awash, her skipper had got all hands away in the boats. In the darkness and confusion it was thought that all aboard were accounted for, but when the boats were picked up late the following day by a coasting schooner the little girl was found to be missing. She had been on deck close to her uncle while the boats were being got over in the lee of the hulk, and this gentleman had been positive that he had seen her put into the cutter with his wife. As it turned out, however, he had mistaken for his niece his wife's French maid, who had thrown about her a golf cape belonging to the little girl.

For some time afterward it was generally believed that the child had either been struck by some loose gear and flung overboard, or that, in her fright at the wash across the decks, she had crept below again and been drowned by the inrush of water. Then, about six weeks after the catastrophe, the grief-stricken relatives received a letter saying that a certain yawl—supposed to have been a smuggler—which had found itself dangerously near the coast, and had put to sea to ride out the gale, had come upon the derelict and taken off the little girl, who was alive and at the present moment well and properly cared for. As had been conjectured, she had gone below to escape the rush of the sea and possibly fainted from fright, regaining consciousness after the boats were well away, when she had gone on deck again, and clung to the wheel until the following day, when taken off by the yawl.

The rescuers demanded fifty thousand dollars, paid in a manner to avoid detection, for the return of the child. This ransom was promptly forthcoming under the conditions required, but the girl was not returned. Shortly afterward, a like sum was demanded, on the ground that the kidnapers had not been aware of the great wealth of the family on making their first requirement. Again the money was paid, but still the little girl was not restored to her family. Then, some weeks later, came a third demand, this time for the sum of the amount already paid—that is, a hundred

thousand dollars. A well-written letter explained that the persons who had the child in custody had recently learned that she was heiress to a million in her own right and that in such a case they felt justified in demanding this sum as a reward for having saved her life.

But the relatives had been by this time persuaded that the whole business was no more than a swindling device, and that the chances were not one in a thousand of the child's ever having been taken from the derelict. It was inconceivable that she should have gone below, believing the yacht to be on the point of sinking. Some wretch, probably one who had known her intimately, had profited by the tragedy to victimize the relatives.

The last letter was therefore disregarded, and there was published broadcast the offer of a reward of two hundred thousand dollars for the restoration of the child to her family, the same sum for the apprehension of the kidnapers, and fifty thousand for information which might lead to either of these results. It was reasoned that these great rewards would not only stimulate investigation of every possible clew by private individuals, but lead to possible revelations on the part of some one of the kidnapers. It is doubtful, however, if these rewards excited much interest, so thoroughly was the press and the public convinced that the child had perished in the wreck.

At any rate, the months passed and nothing more was heard of the matter, nor were any more letters received, or, if so, they were disregarded. I had not thought of the case myself for a couple of years. But the mate's yarn brought it all back, and when he described the girl, it had been all that I could do to sit still. For I remembered clearly the physical traits as set forth in the circulars: thirteen and a half years of age, and that was three years ago, and the mate had described her as a girl of about sixteen. The account said that her hair was of a light auburn, and her eyes a deep, violet blue. The mate had said: "Hair the color of the copper on that ketch of yours, and eyes as blue as

the Gulf Stream," or words to that effect. He had also been impressed by her obvious air of high birth, and the girl, as I remembered, was of an old and aristocratic St. Louis family.

I glanced around to see Dick watching me curiously.

"What's struck you, Jack?" he asked. "You look as if you wanted to go up the Orinoco, and have a whirl with the Rubber Man, yourself."

"I do."

"Well, I'm game," he answered. "I'd rather be a knight-errant than a bum."

"Look here, Dick," said I, "you remember the Stillwell case, of course."

"You mean that little girl, Mary Stillwell, that was lost in the wreck of—"

This was as far as he got. Then his eyes opened until they looked absolutely round, and his jaw dropped. He stared at me as if he had conjured up the ghost of the girl herself.

"Good Lord!" he whispered. "You don't mean to say—"

"I don't mean to say anything," I answered, "but our friend, the mate's, description of the missing Mary Stillwell just tallies up with what was published about her at the time," and I went slowly over all the points which I have just mentioned.

When I'd finished, Dick looked as if he were going to have a fit.

"By Jupiter, but I believe you've struck it!" he exclaimed.

"If I have," I answered, "there's two hundred thou up there on the banks of the Orinoco waiting for somebody to gather it in, not to mention the delight of restoring the girl to her people."

"Hold on," said Dick. "I'm gettin' giddy. Waiter—help!"

"Suppose," said I, "that the story was true, after all, and the child did go below, scared at the waves, and did keel over, or get pitched against a bulkhead, maybe, from the motion of the wreck. Suppose she came to and went on deck, and clung to the wheel for several hours, and was taken off by this yawl. Suppose the yawl was a smuggler, and was doing a little business in cigars, or rum, or pearls from Margarita or something of the sort. And suppose the girl

told them all about herself, and the scoundrels that owned the boat saw the chance to get a wad of ransom money. What better place could they find to hide her than up the Amazon or Orinoco?

"Now, this Rubber Man, who is apparently a canny Scot, is said to have come into the Orinoco from the Rio Negro, which is one of the big tributaries of the Amazon. He may have been one of the crew that found the girl on the hulk or he may be merely her hired jailer. The gang got their hundred thousand, and may then have been afraid to return the girl, thinking that she might give some information which would lead to their getting collared. They might not have been devilish to the point of making away with her, and so have turned her over to the Rubber Man to guard. She naturally would know nothing about the ransom, and it's possible that he doesn't, either, or if he does and has had a share, he's afraid to let her go or turn her over to some other person to return to her people for fear of getting collared himself."

Dick nodded. His eyes were shining, and his face red. It wasn't hard for me to guess what he was thinking about. If the girl turned out to be Mary Stillwell, it meant that our fortunes were made, and that he would be able to marry Kitty Shell.

"Well," said he, "one thing's certain, and that is that it's worth looking into. Why not? We've got the boat, and all the outfit, and eight hundred dollars in the bunch to buy grub and gasoline. I move we get going—and quick! If it's the right girl, we'll take her back to her family and dissolve the Bum Club, and if it's not, we'll have done a good deed, anyhow, in rescuin' her from this cursed Rubber Man. Let's get out aboard, and tell the other chaps about it."

So out aboard we went, and roused Marvin and Hamlet from their bunks, and dragged them into the saloon, they protesting bitterly, under the impression that our conduct was due to alcoholic inspiration of some sort. But when the

proposition was laid before them, their excitement was greater than our own, perhaps because we had had time to quiet down a little.

"There can't be any doubt but that it's Mary Stillwell," said Marvin. "The facts of the case dovetail too neatly for any mistake. First, there's the age; second, the physical description; third, the locality, as with a good breeze a smart boat could get into the Orinoco from the east coast of Trinidad in thirty-six hours." We were poring over the chart. "Fourth, she told the mate that the Rubber Man was keeping her a prisoner; fifth, his hauling off there in the wilderness to live; sixth, the fact that even the mate recognized the fact that she was a girl to the manor born. No, by George, it's a cinch, and it's up to the Bum Club to rescue her from that brute, and restore her to her family."

"And incidentally collect the two hundred thou," said Dick.

"The four hundred thou," I corrected. "Whether the Rubber Man had anything to do with taking her off the wreck or not, he's detaining her against her will, and that puts him in the same class as the kidnapers."

"Right you are," said Marvin. "We'll collect 'em both."

"Before we go about it," said Hamlet, who, although an actor, had a good level head on his shoulders, "mightn't it be a good plan to wire the family, and make sure that the reward still stands?"

This seemed a good suggestion, so I sent a telegram the following day to the lost girl's uncle, whose name was a well-known one in business circles. It read:

NATHAN P. DRUITT, Chicago: Have clew possible whereabouts Mary Stillwell. Do rewards first offered still hold good? Do not inform family in case disappointment. Answer J. Kent, aboard yacht *Corisande*, Key West.

Late the afternoon of the same day, I received a wire which read:

J. KENT, Yacht *Corisande*, Key West: Rewards for recovery of Mary Stillwell and apprehension of person or persons detaining

her hold good as first offered. Will follow advice regarding family. Beg you to write reasons for thinking her still alive. God grant success. NATHAN P. DRUITT.

I wrote as Mr. Druitt requested, telling him that, while cruising with a party of friends in the West Indies, I had learned from a reliable source of a girl who was being held captive in a certain remote locality by a man who professed to be a trader. This girl I described in the words of the mate, and I stated that, as the place was accessible to the yacht, and as there were half a dozen of us, we felt no fear of being unable to effect a rescue, should the girl prove to be Mary Stillwell. I also informed him that, as the place was about three thousand miles from Key West, and as our vessel was a sixty-ton auxiliary, he must not expect to receive any cablegram within at least six weeks, possibly longer, as there was no telegraphic communication within four hundred miles of the place where I hoped to find Mary Stillwell. I concluded by warning Mr. Druitt not to set his hopes too high, as it was always necessary to consider the hazard of coincidence.

"Well," said Dick, when I had read the letter to the others, "all we've got to do now is to go and get them."

The charter of the *Corisande* was due to expire in six weeks, and, as I figured that it might be a good ten before we got her home again, I wrote to her owner—a New York wine commission agent, who had been trying to dispose of her for the last eighteen months—that, as the yacht market promised to be very poor for the coming season, owing to the general financial depression, and, as I knew that he was anxious to get the *Corisande* off his hands, I had decided to try to sell her in the West Indies where a vessel of her type had always a certain fixed value, and that if this proved unsuccessful, and I was delayed in getting her back North, it would only save him that much yard expense. I asked him, also, to forward me the necessary papers for effecting a sale to Port of Spain, Trinidad. There was no doubt whatever of his doing this, as I knew the man to be hard up

This yarn not being a log of the *Corisande*, I will pass quickly over our run to the mouth of the Orinoco. We took on what stores were necessary, then put out to sea, running down the coast of Cuba, and through the Windward Passage, then rounded Cape Tiburon, and stood away on the long stretch across the Caribbean for Trinidad, working under sail entirely except once or twice when becalmed. Putting into Port of Spain, I found, as I had expected, a letter from the *Corisande*'s owner, inclosing the necessary papers authorizing me to sell her, and urging me to do so if possible, as he was much in need of funds. Here we took aboard sufficient gasoline to get us up the river, as I did not think that we would be able to do anything under sail against the current. Here, also, we made an important discovery.

There was a little steamer called the *Ciudad Bolivar* lying in the port, and, guessing that she might ply between Trinidad and this city, which is the capital of the Venezuelan state of that name, I went aboard her with the idea of getting some information from her skipper in regard to the river navigation. He was not aboard at the time, and while waiting I got into conversation with a young German named Schmidt, who told me that he was the manager of a general store belonging to the Hamburg Trading Company. He appeared to know the Orinoco throughout its navigable length, and I asked him, presently, if he had ever heard of a Scotchman who was known under the sobriquet of "The Rubber Man."

"Ja," he answered. "He is one of my customers, and his name is Callanish. Formerly he had a little station up above the rapids beyond Atures, but I heard before I am leaving *Ciudad Bolivar*, that he has come down the river and taken up a small cacao plantation at a place called Santa Cruz, about one hundred miles above *Ciudad Bolivar*. Do you know this man?" He looked at me with some curiosity.

"No," I answered, "but I learned from the mate of a British tramp steamer, the *Essequibo*, that this Rubber

Man, as they call him, had some very interesting curios, and, as we're going up the river, and I'm a bit of a collector, I thought I'd look him up."

The storekeeper nodded. "That is possible," said he, "but methinks you will not find him a good person with whom to deal. He is very rough. Most people fight shy of him. I have heard that he has in his keeping a beautiful young girl, who is the daughter of a man who was once his partner, but died on the Rio Negro. Nobody ever sees this girl, for the Rubber Man is insanely jealous of her. I do not think that he will do much with his cacao. The plantation has been too long neglected."

I asked him again about the place, and a few minutes later the captain came aboard, and Schmidt introduced me, saying that I was from the American yacht and wished to visit the Orinoco. The captain was an agreeable Englishman, and, on my asking him about the navigation of the lower part of the river, mentioning that we had motor power, he asked:

"What speed can you get out of your motor?"

"Nine knots in still water," said I.

"Then I'll tell you what," said he. "We're sailing to-night, and, as we don't make much over eight, you can follow us up. 'Twill save you a tidy bit, as I don't go the usual way, but take a short cut."

I thanked him for his kindness, and went back aboard much encouraged. The information which Schmidt had given me meant the saving of a good half of our river journey, while what he had told me about the girl confirmed the truth of the mate's story. So we hurried our stores aboard, and were all ready to follow the *Cuidad Bolívar* out when she sailed at midnight. Being deep, she did a scant eight knots, and we had no trouble in keeping close under her stern. Well into the main stream we left our guide, as her good-natured skipper had given me careful instructions, by following which we found no difficulty in keeping plenty of water under our keel, especially as the river was high.

We were politely treated at *Cuidad Bolívar*, where we explained that ours was a yachting trip, pure and simple, its object being merely the pleasure of seeing what was to us a new and interesting country. Our papers being in order, for we had cleared for this port from Port of Spain, we were allowed to proceed, and warned that, as the river was falling slightly, it would be well to avoid getting aground.

Up to this time we had said nothing to the crew in regard to the true object of our expedition, having told them merely that we had got on the trail of a proposition that promised big money, and that if they did their parts when the time came, they'd find that they would not lose anything by it. But as we were now approaching the scene of activities we decided to explain the whole situation to the hands in order to get their fullest coöperation, as it was not probable that we should be able to take the Rubber Man in custody without some sort of a fight. From all that we had heard of this gentleman, it did not seem likely that there would be any exchange of hospitality between us, or that he would respond to an invitation to visit the yacht.

Briefly, our plan was this: Having located his premises, Dick and I were to call on Callanish and tell him we had reason to suppose that the girl he was guarding so closely was Mary Stillwell, who had been taken off the wreck of the American yacht *Procyon*, and thereafter held for ransom. We would demand to see and talk to the girl herself, telling him that if he refused us the permission we would bring ashore our companions and crew and enforce the interview.

The Rubber Man would probably bluster, but, finding that there was no other course, would undoubtedly give way, trusting that his moral ascendancy over the girl and her fear of him might induce her to deny her identity. This we would have to overcome as best we might by gaining her confidence in our ability to protect her. If it proved that she was indeed the child of whom we were in search we would take her imme-

dately aboard the yacht. Then, once she was safe with us, we would return ashore in a body and make a prisoner of Callanish. This we might have some difficulty in doing, but the matter of principal importance was, of course, to get possession of the girl.

Once Callanish was safely aboard, we would go back down the river, slipping past Ciudad Bolivar at night, and, on getting out to sea, would make directly for Porto Rico, where we would turn Callanish over to the United States civil authorities. The legality of this proceeding might be adjusted later. None of us was worrying much over that part of it. In the case of a kidnaper, we did not feel that we had much to fear, and, if an international complication arose in consequence, so much the better for us. We would get some useful advertising.

It seemed best, however, that the crew should know the nature of our proceedings, both in case of anybody getting hurt while carrying them out, and in order that we might get their most efficient support, though I doubted that the Rubber Man would have more than a handful of mongrel half castes and Indians about his place. So I mustered all hands aft and told them the story of Mary Stillwell, and the yarn spun us by the mate. The only thing which I held back was the large amount of the reward, which none of them happened to remember, though Paddy, the steward, and two of the hands recalled the loss of the *Procyon*, and the alleged detention of the girl. No doubt, they remembered also that a considerable reward had been offered at the time.

"If you men are game for this thing, and it turns out as we hope," I concluded, "there's a thousand dollars apiece in it for the five of you. Now, what do you say?"

"Me fer it—and strong," said Murphy, our ex-prize fighter. "Say, cap'n, leave me go up alone 'n git a poke at dis guy like de lime-juicer done. I'll take me oat' he won't make no more trouble, nor kidnap no more young goils, needer."

The others, barring only the cook, who was a flabby, timorous man, were

equally keen. The cook hung in the wind a little, but the promise of the thousand fetched him in the end.

We arrived at the place described by the German storekeeper at about ten in the morning. The river expanded slightly at this point, and the country beyond the rather high banks appeared to be rolling, fairly open, and stretched away to distant, forest-covered hills. Santa Cruz looked to be a name rather than a place, as, aside from a few wattle huts under the big cotton-silk trees along the bank, and a rough jetty made of planks thrown roughly together, there was no sign of a settlement. But there were several canoes and a sailboat of perhaps six or seven tons moored to the jetty, and we could see the tops of cocoa palms at a little distance back from the river.

We came to anchor in five fathoms not far off the end of the jetty, and there being no reason for delay, Dick and I got into the gig and were set ashore. Following a path which led up from the jetty, we passed a few more huts, which appeared to be deserted and falling into decay, although banana and orange trees laden with fruit were flourishing about them. Not a person did we see, however, and the only sign of a present human occupancy of the place was in the path, itself, which was fairly well trodden, while the growth on either side had been recently cut back.

A few minutes' walk brought us to the cacao plantation, and here, through an avenue in the palms down which the path led, we caught a glimpse of a house about two hundred yards distant, and situated upon a little eminence which commanded a view of the river, though the growth of trees about the bungalow was so dense that we had not observed it from the boat. At the same time we heard the sound of hammering, and, on drawing nearer, discovered a white man in dirty khakis engaged in nailing a strip of corrugated iron to the roof of a porch, or veranda.

He swung about to face us as we approached, and it needed but a glance to tell us that this must be the Rubber Man, and, as I ran my eye quickly over

him, my regard for the pugilistic qualities of our friend, the mate, took a decided tumble. Big-framed Callanish certainly might be, but he was neither tall nor muscular, while his emaciation was of a degree to suggest either starvation or disease. His chest was broad but flat; the hands hanging nearly to his knees looked like two bunches of bananas fastened to one end of the shin bone of a horse, and his big, fleshless shoulder joints pushed up under the light khaki tunic in a way to remind one of the carpal angles on the wings of a condor in repose.

His face, too, rather suggested that of a condor in the chill, but intense, bleakness of the eye, and the thin, hooked beak, high close to the forehead and descending to end in a sharp, curved point. Beneath was an untidy chaos of sandy whisker, no two bristles of which appeared to be in accord. Both ears were large, thickened, and stuck out from the sides of his narrow head almost at right angles. His neck was stringy, conspicuous for the aggression of its Adam's apple, his chest flat, as I have said, and he was stomachless, with narrow hips and short, bowed legs, about which bony extremities his ragged khaki breeches flapped dismally when he moved.

No, he was not pretty, the Rubber Man, and yet there was a certain quality about him which prevented him from being bizarre. But as a fist-fighting proposition, he was absurd. One doubted that his fleshless arms had the power to swing the great, bony bunches on the end of them, nor could it be understood how even if they did there could be power enough to knock a man down with no weight behind to drive from, for I should not have given him more than one hundred and forty pounds, and that all in skeleton.

"Gad," muttered Dick, "that mate must have been either drunk or hypnotized. Did you ever see such a candidate for a glass case in an anatomical museum!"

We had been expecting to see a sort of ogre; a hairy, neolithic troglodyte, meager of brisket, no doubt, but thewed

and sinewed like a lean old auroch. The mate was a sturdy young chap of about my own size and weight, which is to say five feet eleven, and weighing upward of one hundred and eighty stripped—for I had thickened up since leaving the academy, where I held the middle and heavyweight boxing belts—and the idea of his having been thumped about, and finally knocked out, by this animated cadaver in front of us was too ridiculous.

The Rubber Man gave us a short, aquiline stare, and then, as though in the habit of having yachtsmen poking about his premises, turned to his work again. Within a few paces we came to a halt and stood for a moment watching him silently, merely to see if our presence would not disturb him enough to make him give some sign of being conscious that we were there. But for all the Rubber Man concerned himself, we might have been a couple of palm trees. Bending down the end of the corrugated iron strip, with which he had just roofed his veranda, he calmly proceeded to nail it to the rotting post which supported the structure.

Irritated by such churlishness, especially in a wilderness where hospitality and a friendly feeling between white folk ought to be considered a primary instinct and almost invariably is, I asked a bit curtly:

"Are you Mr. Callanish?"

He finished driving his nail; then, with two or three others poking out under his bristling mustache, and the hammer hanging from his knotted paw, turned and gave me a hostile look from under his bushy eyebrows.

"And what if I am?" he snarled, in a curious, high-pitched voice.

"In that case," said I, "you're the man that we've come several thousand miles to find."

His face expressed no more than that of a captive condor in a zoo. I had expected some sign of emotion; anger, or fear, or perhaps a look of vulpine cunning, for, while his upper features suggested the scavenging fowl of the air, his pointed muzzle was that of a coyote.

"Then y'have found him, young sirr," said he, in a dry, sardonic tone, "though whether or not y'are to be congratulated on your success, I w'u'd not yet be venturin' to say."

"Then we will act on the presumption that we are," said I shortly.

He placed the point of another nail against the sheet iron and drove it home with a few blows of his hammer.

"Do not be hasty, young sirr," said he, almost mildly. "'Tis a dangerous custom in a country where y'are strange like."

"Look here, my man," said I, now thoroughly exasperated, "there's no use in your acting like this. It's not going to do you any good to try to put us off. We've come here to find out about this young girl that you've been keeping a prisoner. We want to see her, and talk to her; do you understand?"

He turned slowly, took the nails from his mouth, looked at them for a moment as though surprised to find them there, then laid them carefully on the veranda, placing the hammer beside them.

"Oh, do ye now?" said he, and I could feel the blood surging up into my face, for the fellow was actually mimicking my voice, which I have been told is soft, and of an almost feminine quality. I have been involved in a good many unnecessary rows as the result of this unfortunate physical attribute. Few men seem to be able to appreciate the fact that a voice is not always a safe exponent of what may be behind it. "So that will be the object o' your friendly call. And what if the young lady in question is not receivin'? Come to think, I am under the deesteenct impression that this will not be her day at home. 'Tis a peety, but nae doot ye will kindly leave your carrds."

Dick gave a little snicker, and I felt my temper slip a cog or two. It was downright infuriating to have come all of this distance, only to be mocked and jibed by such a shad-bellied old scarecrow as this brute of a Rubber Man, especially when we had expected something formidable.

"Suppose you save all that humor for a better time," said I. "Callanish, we

have good reason to suppose that this child whom you are detaining here against her will is a girl named Mary Stillwell, who was kidnaped three years ago. We have come a long way to find out if this is the case, and we mean to do so. If you refuse to let us see and talk to her, we intend to do so without your permission, so you may as well make the best of it and not try to interfere."

The Rubber Man stared at me for a moment without answering, and there was something in his small, pale eyes which made me uncomfortable in spite of my anger. Perhaps it was the baffling contradiction between their uncommon brightness and utter lack of expression. They slid into mine like the bistoury of an oculist, and I wondered if there might not be in that piercing gaze some hypnotic quality which might account for the disaster to our friend the mate. Although I had always defied the possibility of anybody's hypnotizing me against my will, I was, nevertheless, a bit relieved when he shifted his gaze to Dick.

"Is the creetur daft?" he asked. "Ye sh'u'd be takkin' better care of him."

"Oh, quit your bluffing, Callanish," said Dick shortly, "and let us see the girl. If we find that she's not the one that we think she is, and that you've got a right to keep her here, we'll offer our apologies and clear out."

"Oh, will ye now?" said the Rubber Man. "That w'u'd be verra kind o' ye. I'm sure."

He turned as if to pick up his nails, but our patience was at an end. Here was a surly swine of a kidnaped in a tropical wilderness, sneering and mocking at us, as though we were a couple of mangy half-breeds, and if he wasn't a kidnaped, and we had barked up the wrong stump, his insulting manner and lack of hospitality fully earned him the crack in the jaw from which he was only saved by his ragged physical condition. There was a railing with rotten pickets around the veranda, probably to keep the pigs and poultry of the former tenant from littering up the place, and the Rubber Man was blocking the en-

trance. Dick, who was nearest him, leaned over, dropped his hands on the man's shoulders, and flung him to one side. He said afterward that the big, bony joints in his grip felt like the knees of a horse when its weight is on them.

And then things happened. Dick, though a bit slender for his height, is hard as an ivory nut, and particularly strong in his back and arms, as he pulled on the Yale varsity for the last two years of his college course, so the jerk which he gave him sent the Rubber Man spinning. But not for long. He caught his balance, and his short, spindling legs seemed to buckle, then straighten under him, as if he had landed on a pair of steel springs, and he made a bound for Dick, who squared off to welcome him.

Of course, I did not try to interfere. It seemed to me that the Rubber Man's surliness had earned him a licking, and I preferred that he should get it from Dick, who was considerably under my weight, than from myself. It seemed fairer. I hoped, too, that Dick would not punish him any more than was necessary to give him a lesson in ordinary civility.

I had no need to worry. The Rubber Man bounded in like a chimpanzee, both his feet off the ground, and landed with a spring in his thighs; like a fencer. It was the oddest form I ever saw in sparring, for he did not even put up his bunchy hands. Then, as quick as a striking snake, he feinted with his left, well out from his body. It fooled Dick, as it might have fooled anybody, and he cross-countered with a straight drive at the jaw with his right. The Rubber Man dropped his head forward and to the right, and Dick's blow skimmed his ear without landing. The next instant there was a sound like that of an ax laid into a solid oak by a husky chopper, as the Rubber Man's left shot out, and his enormous fist landed squarely between Dick's eyes. Had there been weight behind the blow there would have been a vacant membership in the Bum Club, and even as it was Dick started for a brief sojourn on the astral plane. The first thing that struck the ground was the back of his head, and

he rolled clean over like a shot rabbit and lay still.

The Rubber Man never gave him a glance. He hopped around like a game-cock with the same curious spring in his thighs, and his pale little eyes glittered at me with red in them, like the eyes of a peccary. He was a whole menagerie of unpleasant animals, was the Rubber Man.

"A dose from the same bottle w'u'd do ye no harm, I'm thinkin'," said he. "Y're in need of the bloodlettin', young sIRR. 'Tis a good thing when firrst one comes to this feverish climate."

Seeing that he meant business, I put up my hands. Even then I thought it a bit of a shame to pit a man of my size against this bone rack, and I regarded Dick's failure as the result of over-confidence and carelessness in leaving himself wide open. But there was no help for it, so I stepped forward, and waited for him to make the first pass, determined not to be caught napping as Dick had been, for I had seen that at least the man had something besides the bone in his dangling arm, and was quick as a clay-pigeon trap. His curious position bothered me, too, for he was squatting like a frog, his head about on a level with my ribs, and his body springing lightly up and down from the hips. If I'd been given a second to think, I'd have guessed that it was only his body that he was taking pains to protect.

But the Rubber Man wasted no time. With dancing eyes and his clenched, yellow fangs shining through his sandy whisker, he led at my chin with his right. I hunched my left shoulder, throwing out my guard a little, not expecting him to reach me, but he flicked out his fingers, and I got a cuff over the eye from the big knuckles, which felt as if I had been slapped with the bight of a chain. I hopped in and drove my right, but the Rubber Man ducked under it, and I got a thump on the chest which knocked a grunt out of me. It stopped me, too, much to my surprise and considerably to my disgust, for I wanted to finish the business quickly

and give first aid to Dick, who was sprawled out, sleeping peacefully.

The Rubber Man seemed in no such hurry. He had bounced back with one of his curious, birdlike hops, and was grinning at me sardonically.

"Y'have a fine fat body," said he, "but sluggish. 'Tis like bastin' a capon to gie ye a clump. Y'have style, too. Nae doot y'have practiced the sparrin'. Now here is a new one for yer deestinguished inspection. 'Tis called the Orinoco Eddy—"

In he bounced again, and for a second the air seemed full of his big, flying fists. I guarded right and left, then, thinking that I saw a chance, drove hard at the point of his chin. He did not try to guard nor duck, but pitched his head into it, and I landed on his pointed crown. A bitter pain shot through my thumbjoint, and there flashed through my head what the mate had said about hitting the ball on the stock of the anchor. I uppercut viciously with my right, but he seemed to have guessed what would naturally follow, and threw back his head so that all I gathered was a sandy bristle or two from his beard.

Then *thud*, squarely on the left midrib, and it felt as though my heart was slewed over against the esophagus, and trying to scramble back again. But I managed to land a left hook, though not very solidly, on his thickened ear, which sent him bouncing clear of me. Following it with a rush and a right-hand drive, he slipped under my arm, and, on his way through, dealt me a vicious jab in the face which put my teeth through my upper lip, and brought a gush of blood from my nose.

There is not the slightest doubt but that he could have pivoted and handled me a possible knock-out on the base of the jaw if he had wanted to, but instead he gave a sort of snicker, and put a short-arm poke over the right kidney, which made me want to sit down and think it over.

"Rest a bit, and let the orrgans re-soon their functions," said the Rubber Man, with a grin. "Y'are a bit soft, and growin' darrk beneath the eyes. Belike

'tis the champagne and truffles. Ye canna stand the sloggin' like the last gentleman came to ca' on my warrd. He was mate o' the *Essequibo*, and no bad body of a man, but too ambeetious, and gie'n to self-deception." He blinked at me with sneering solicitude. "Ye will feel better, sirr, when a bit o' the blood is out o' yer upper story."

Battered as I felt, I could not stomach this, so in I rushed again. What followed might have been likened to a blind man tumbling into a threshing machine. He was under me, and over me, and all around me. There were half a dozen of him, and each with four arms, and two fists on each. And yet he did not strike a single heavy blow. I was conscious of the fact that he was not trying to knock me out; he was having too good a time playing with me. And the infuriating part of it was that I could not seem to land solidly on him. My thumb was giving me the devil, and it was an agony to hit at all, but I set my teeth and kept at it, bruising my fists on what seemed naked bone.

Lack of breath finally fetched me up, and I stood panting, while the Rubber Man hauled off a little and stood leering at me mockingly. My heart was doing ragtime, my face was cut and battered, with both eyes nearly closed. I was sick at my stomach, and it felt as if an iron band was being drawn tighter and tighter around my waist with two knobs under it compressing the small of my back, over the kidneys. But over against me the Rubber Man showed no signs of my sincere efforts beyond an egg-shaped bump that pushed up in a ridiculous manner through the sparse, sandy hair on the top of his domed head. He was neither panting, nor sweating, nor bleeding from the least abrasion. He might have been pounding nails instead of me.

Dick was sitting up, staring at us stupidly. He did not try to rise, but seemed to find it more comfortable sitting in the blaze of the sun. It was suffocatingly hot. There was not a breath of air stirring, and through a vista of the trees I caught a glimpse of the river,

white and flat, and simmering like a pan of molten lead. Not a sound came from anywhere. The place was lying in its tropic, midday swoon when birds, and beasts, and insects bury themselves in the sheltering shade. I envied them.

"Belike ye will be havin' enough o' the pepper pot, me lad," said the Rubber Man. "I dinna like to force hospeetality upon a stranger."

Now, I have never been a quitter, but I knew that to continue the exercise as I then felt would be to invite a speedy collapse. A knock-out blow from the big fists dangling limply in front of me would have been the best thing that could have happened, and I knew that the Rubber Man had it conveniently at hand under his dirty sleeve. But apparently he had no desire to dispose of it. He saw my condition, and did not care to have a corpse upon the premises, nor was I in any way anxious to present him with mine.

"I think this will do us for to-day, thank you," said I. "How you've managed it beats me, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating." I moved into the shade of a big cotton-silk tree, and stood for a moment breathing heavily. "Come over here out of the sun, Dick," said I, then looked at the Rubber Man, who was standing with his back to the veranda rail, watching me curiously. "We'll rest up for a minute, and then go aboard and get the doctor to patch us up," said I. "To-morrow we'll come ashore with all hands, and pay our respects to the young lady."

The Rubber Man did not appear to notice my last words. "Ha'e ye a doctor aboard the yacht?" he asked. "A rale one wi' his diploma?"

"Yes," I answered, "why do you ask?"

"H'm—" he muttered, and glanced at the bungalow. "Why did ye no' tell me before?"

"We had no reason to think about him until just now," I answered, and then, an idea coming into my head, I asked: "Is the young lady ill?"

He gave me a cold glare. "Thankin' you for your kindly inquirin'," said he. "she is no' so bad. Perhaps ye will be

feelin' able to get aboard the noo. I'll e'en do meself the honor to escort ye to the landin'."

Seeing that there was nothing more to be got out of the brute, Dick and I started somewhat unsteadily down the path to the jetty, where Murphy was waiting for us with the motor dinghy or "sampan," as we called the little tub. The Rubber Man, as if to assure himself of our safe departure, clapped on his grass hat, and waddled along at our heels. Almost to the jetty, I was taken violently ill, what with the heat and loss of blood and the mauling I had undergone.

Murphy was reposing himself in the stifling shade of the bushes which fringed the bank, but at our approach he clambered to his feet. Then, catching sight of my face and the torn, bloody shirt beneath it, his square jaw dropped. His goggle eyes passed quickly from me to Dick, who also showed conspicuous signs of maltreatment, and from Dick to the Rubber Man, on whom the only mark of conflict was hidden beneath the conical grass hat with its dejected brim.

"Hully gec—" growled Murphy, "who done dat? Say, cap'n, why didn't youse blow de boat whistle?" It had been arranged that in case of need I was to have summoned Murphy in this way.

"I thought I could manage without you," I answered, "but it appears I was wrong."

"Gee, cap'n," said Murphy, who, after his first glance at the Rubber Man, standing at the foot of the bank, had taken no further notice of him, "where is dis guy? Leave me git a poke at 'im."

"There he is," said Dick, and nodded at Callanish.

Murphy took another look at the Rubber Man, and snickered.

"Dat's a sad-lookin' guy," said he.

"He was sure sad looking to us before we got through with him—or he with us, you might better say," Dick observed.

Murphy, with a rather puzzled expression on his hard, Irish mug—no other word quite fits the front part of

Murphy's head—glanced again at the Rubber Man, and, as he did so, Callanish, who had been studying the yacht and apparently immersed in his own thoughts, turned his head on his shoulders in a manner curiously like a bird of prey, and gave the prize fighter a bleak stare. This time Murphy did not snicker. I was on my hands and knees at the end of the jetty, scooping up the warm water and bathing my face, and, although both my eyes were nearly closed, I could see the growing wonder in Murphy's face. His eyes traveled over the Rubber Man appraisingly, then rested on his enormous hands, the knuckles of which were stained with blood; my blood, without a doubt. Callanish's nostrils dilated slightly, and the expression with which he regarded our sailorman was acridly inviting.

"Hully gee—" said Murphy huskily, "youse gents don't mean to say dat dis skate is de Rubber Man!"

Callanish's eyes began to dance, and I saw his meager thighs quiver under the thin khaki which fitted them snugly.

"Shut yer gawp, ye Hibernian scut!" said he, in his high-pitched voice. "'Tis not fitting for the scrapin's o' the stews like yersel' to be minglin' in the sports o' gentry."

"Aw, git back in yer egg," growled Murphy, evidently impressed, as I had been, by the fowl-like features of the Rubber Man. "Say, dat zoo keeper ought to lose his job fer leavin' open de door o' de flyin' cage." He examined Callanish with renewed curiosity. "Say, cap'n, straight goods, dis ain't de boid what done all dat t' you and Mr. Beekman?"

"It sure is, Murphy," I answered. "Take my advice, and keep away from him. He pecks."

Murphy did not immediately answer. He started to walk around the Rubber Man, as though desiring to view him from every possible angle. Callanish, after another baleful glance, appeared to ignore him. In spite of my discomfort, I felt inclined to laugh, for the pair reminded me so distinctly of two pets that we once had aboard the *Indiana*. One was a Boston bulldog, and the other

an obscene fowl of the deep known to sailors as a "stinker." This stinker had a fascination for the dog, who could not keep away from him until one day the bird grew weary of his attentions, and drilled him through the muzzle.

Just then, Murphy was the bulldog all over, and the Rubber Man, with his high, thin beak, hunched shoulders, and flapping arms, the stinker. I wondered how many minutes Murphy would take in getting drilled through the beak. It was not very dignified of me, I'll admit, but I was neither feeling nor looking dignified at the moment. I was a bit mystified, too, at the Rubber Man's complete disregard for Murphy, who was a formidable-looking chunk of a lad and evidently brimming over the scuppers with fight. He was temporarily restrained, however, by curiosity, just as was our bulldog by the uncanny aspect of the stinker. Murphy was utterly at a loss to understand how this loose-hung, ossified specimen had managed to pound to a pulp a man whom he admitted to be nearly on a par with himself, and yet show no signs of the slightest punishment himself. He inspected Callanish fore and aft, amidships and astern, then shook his head, and looked hopelessly at me.

"Say, youse gents must 'a' had de sunstroke, and he pasted ye when you was down," said he.

"Not a bit of it," I answered. "It was all on the square. He knocked out Mr. Beekman, then took me on and beat me to a frazzle."

Murphy shook his head, looking more mystified than ever.

"But where does he keep it, dat's what I wanter know?" said he.

"Well, then," I answered, a little impatiently, "if you won't be happy till you get it, ask him to show you. Seeing is believing."

"Gee, cap'n," said Murphy, "I'd hand de mutt a wallop in de breather dis minute if I wasn't afraid o' breakin' his back."

Now, if the Rubber Man was following this rather personal conversation, he had up to this point given no evidence of it. As from the first, he

seemed to be plunged in his own private thoughts, as though trying in vain to decide some knotty question. But at Murphy's last remark, he turned and fixed him with his pale, immobile eyes, then glanced at me.

"Now that will do for him," said he icily. "I am no' minded to be dirtyin' my hands wi' the scum o' the sewers, and me the Laird o' Ardvourlie, if I was to get me rights. Y'had best tell the gowk to shut his thrapple, if he does not want that crammed down it which will be harrd in the swallowin'. A bit o' fisticuffs betwixt gentry is one thing, and the latherin' of an ash cat quite another——" A sudden flame blazed up in his face, and he sprang suddenly toward Murphy. "Get in the boat, ye carrion!" said he shrilly, and one of his long arms flashed up.

I do not think he meant to strike. His gesture was, I believe, merely to point. But Murphy read it differently. He had not cared for the Rubber Man's as saying of his social standing, and, besides, he was spoiling for a taste of the man. Wherefore, with a growl that was part a gurgle, he jumped in and struck.

The blow shot over the Rubber Man's right shoulder. There was a smacking thud, another thud without the smack, and here was Murphy flat on his back, and senseless as a dead fish. Right and left had done his business quicker than the eye could follow; the right on the point of the chin, the left in the solar plexus as Murphy gathered momentum. The Rubber Man glanced down at him and spat.

"I wish ye good day, sirrs," said he, and, turning abruptly on his heel, he waddled up the bank, and disappeared in the bushes.

We hoisted Murphy into the sampan, started the motor, and chugged out to the boat, where we handed our ex-prize fighter over to Marvin, who managed to bring him around in the course of an hour. Then, ignoring the volley of questions from all hands, we went below for liquor and repose. My head was humming like an electric fan, my heart doing acrobatic tricks, and the pit of my stomach undulating undecidedly.

I have had drubbings before and since, but never one which left me in such a state as that received from the fearful hands of the Rubber Man. For a while I really thought that I was going to slip my cable altogether, and I could see that Marvin was worried. He gave me hypodermics of strychnine and digitalis, and finally I fell asleep. As a matter of fact, I believe that a good deal of my ill was due to the violent exertion in the devitalizing heat. Dick and Murphy were better off. They had got theirs before having had time to get warmed up. If it does not kill you, it is better to be knocked out clean than slowly hammered to a hash.

I slept until late in the afternoon, waking up stiff and sore, but clear-headed enough to climb on deck and flop into a chair under the quarter-deck awning. The other three were there discussing the situation. They had been arguing over our catastrophe.

"I can't make it out at all," said Dick. "The man's a prodigy; a monster. As Murphy said: 'Where does he keep it?' There's nothing to him but heavy bones, and some bands of gristle. He's got no meat on him."

"It's not the meat that counts," said Marvin, "it's the quality of the fiber and the nerve impulse that contracts it. No doubt he's got something such as you find in the lower animals. They say that a leopard can strike a gun and leave the imprint of its claws in the steel of the barrel without knocking it out of your hands. A man's hardest blow would be a shove compared to that."

"There you've got it," said I. "It's not the weight of a blow that disorganizes you; it's the speed at which it comes. Your leopard might not knock the gun out of your hands, but if the same blow landed on your head it would smash the bone to smithereens. A man can hit a harder, or at least a heavier blow than a leopard, because he's got more weight behind it, but he couldn't dent a gun barrel with brass knuckles. You might be hit by a freight train and get less damage than——"

"Than from the Rubber Man," said Dick dryly. "If Callanish is a fair sam-

ple of a Rubber Man, I shall pray earnestly never to go up against the gutta-percha article."

"How's Murphy?" I asked.

"Scared," said Marvin. "He crosses himself when he mentions the brute. Says he's not human."

"He showed a certain amount of humanity in my case," I observed.

"What is next on the program?" Hamlet asked.

"Moral suasion, backed by all hands and our arsenal," suggested Marvin, who felt that his surgery was getting rusty.

"No," said I, "it wouldn't do to shoot the beggar for two reasons: In the first place, he's too unique; in the second, we're not yet sure that he's the right party."

"And in the third," said Hamlet, "if his gunplay is on a par with his hand work, it's a cinch that there'd be some gaps in the mess."

"The point is excellently taken," said Dick. "Besides, as Jack says, it would be a shame to waste him. He's worth a hundred thousand living, and dead he wouldn't be worth a yen. He wouldn't keep, and we couldn't prove it on his skeleton. They'd claim we were trying to ring in a gorilla, or a flying reptile."

"No," said Marvin, "he mustn't be shot. If it turns out that we're on the wrong trail, we might be able to persuade him to go back with us and enter the prize ring. Think of the bets we could collect."

"Nothing in that," said Dick. "He's a proud man, and claims to be the Laird of Toor-a-loo. He hated to hit Murphy, because he wasn't class."

"Murphy doesn't show any signs of it," said Hamlet.

"This persiflage isn't buying any shirts for the Bum Club babies," said I. "Let somebody suggest something. My thought centers aren't firing right."

But nothing useful was forthcoming. It was a puzzling proposition. We were all fairly sure that the girl was Mary Stillwell, whether or not the Rubber Man was one of her kidnapers. But we had no proof, and without proof we neither wished nor dared to go to

extreme measures. To approach the bungalow armed would surely be to invite sudden death as that cold, steady eye of the Rubber Man was certainly fashioned for rifle sights, if ever human orb was. There was little doubt, also, but that he had people under his command who would spy on us and keep him informed as to our movements, and very likely lend him aid if it came to gunpowder. Then, again, there was Murphy thoroughly cowed, according to Marvin, and as he was the oracle forward, and was giving it out cold that the Rubber Man was a wizard and no good to come from mixing it with him, it did not seem likely that the support of our crew would be enthusiastic.

The hands were called to supper, which they took in the forecastle, despite the heat, in order to listen to Murphy's dissertation, that gladiator being still supine. I thought that I would like to hear it unofficially, myself, and, having no foolish scruples about eavesdropping, under certain conditions, I went quietly forward, my bare feet making no noise which could not be drowned by Murphy's growling voice, and put my ear to the wind sail, which ventilated the forecastle.

Our German cook had the floor at the moment. "Dere is no dowut abowut it," quoth he, "der feller vas a warlock. Sometimes—"

"What d'ell's a warlock, cookie?" interrupted one of the men.

"A warlock vas a feller dot can talk mit dead beeble und tell vat kinda veat'er vas goin' ter be nex' veek und can see t'ings von t'ousand miles avay und knows ven somebody vas goin' ter die. Some warlocks vas no harm und udders vas fery bad. I know, for I haf been shipmates mit 'em. Dey mide be niggers, or lascars, or Scandinavian, or Scotch, or anyt'ing, but most of 'em vas Finns. Some beeble say all Finns vas warlocks."

"Kin they do ye any hurt, cookie?" Paddy asked.

"You betcher. Vy, look at Mike! Here vas dis man, all skin und bones, like a West Indies chicken, und yet he licks dis mate der skipper tells abowut,

und he licks der skipper, und Mr. Beegman, und den he licks Mike. Und iss not hurted at all? Vy? Begause he is a warlock, und der bad kind. He mages some shpells und ven you hit a vallop he is not dere."

"Gee, dat's right," said Murphy, with conviction. "It seemed dere was a fog, like, all around de——"

"Sure," said the cook, "dat vas how dey dood it. Und if a man hits 'em, maybe he dies not long afterward."

"I'm glad I missed de bloke!" murmured Murphy.

"Dere ain't no luck in guys like him," said one of the others discontentedly. "I was shipmates onet along of one o' dem fellers like cookie's been talkin' about. Portugee, he was, and us lads for'ard was kinda leery of him from de foist, but we never t'ought he had no such goods as dat about him. We was a-mack'relin' outa Sout' Street, but it come on to blow a gale from de nor'east, 'n we run fer de breakwater. Off de mout' o' de Delaware, he says to one o' de boys: 'De air is t'ick wit' ghosts to-night.' De lad he's speakin' to says he don't see none, but dis here Portugee says he sees 'em flittin', like, all round, and dere must have been a m'rine disaster. Sure enough, a few days later we hoid about dat c'llision off Hatteras between de *Waccamaw* and de *Santiago*."

"Der feller vas a warlock," said the cook. "Dey vas most times no harm if you treat 'em right. But if you make 'em mad, dey mide mage a gale, or send you on a rock, or bring a sickness."

"Maybe dis guy ain't t'roo with Mike, yet," suggested one of that gentleman's comforters.

"Hully gee——" said Mike. "Don't tell me nuthin' like dat."

"He's done all he's goin' to," said the authority on warlocks. "Dere vas no more danger if he is not annoyed." The cook was talking through the square hole cut in the galley forward bulkhead for passing the men their food. "Vell," said he, "I must get der shen-tlemen's supper, now."

I walked aft, thinking that it was rather convenient at times to belong to the ignorant class. If one loses his nerve

or gets the hot end of anything, he can always blame it to the supernatural, and get off with his self-respect and that of others. They were great on this in the Middle Ages, and a man could always put across a yarn about sorcery and enchantments as an excuse for a licking or cold feet, and have it well received, because the rest of the crowd never knew when they might want to ring in the same bunk.

The other chaps had received no new inspiration while I'd been forward. Dick, who had quite recovered from his welt between the eyes, was of the opinion that the Rubber Man had had nothing to do with the kidnaping of Mary Stillwell, though he might be forcibly detaining the girl.

"What I think is this," said he. "The man who had her in charge may have taken her up the Amazon to the Rio Negro, where he fell in with our friend yonder, who at that time may have had a rubber station there. Callanish is a man who minds his own business, and probably never concerned himself about the girl. Then, probably not very long ago, the fellow that was guarding the girl, croaked of beriberi, and the Rubber Man took her under his own protection. The mate said that she was a beauty, and Callanish may have got a mash on her, and decided to keep her until she was old enough for him to make her his wife. But for all his surliness, he didn't strike me as a scoundrel, exactly. He's queer, and dangerous, and all that, but I believe he's a gentleman born. When he said that he was by rights the Laird of what-d'y-call-it, I believe that he was telling the truth—and he wouldn't have said it if he'd been a kidnap."

There was reason in this, though it didn't put us any forwarder, so we decided to sleep on the problem, and try to study out some scheme for getting to the girl after we had rested up a bit.

But, as things turned out, we were saved the trouble, which may have been a lucky thing for us. The next morning, as we were having our coffee on deck, we saw Callanish himself, followed by two Indians, come down the

bank to the jetty, get into a canoe, and head out for the yacht. They came alongside, and, as the Rubber Man looked up at us, I noticed that his face was puckered and anxious looking.

"I wish ye good marning," said he, "and hope y're findin' yersel's none the worrse for the bickerin' o' yesterday."

"We're able to sit up and take some light nourishment," I answered. "Won't you come aboard?"

"Not right the noo," said he. "Ye were tellin' me yesterday ye had a medical man aboard the yacht."

"This is the doctor," said I, and indicated Marvin.

The Rubber Man looked slightly embarrassed. "The young lady ye were askin' after is verra low wi' the fever," said he. "Last night she went quite daft and is so still. Perhaps the doctor w'u'd be willin' to gi'e her a bit lookin' over."

"Certainly," said Marvin. "I'll get my case, and go right in, now."

"I thank ye kindly, sIRR," said the Rubber Man.

He spoke to his paddlers, who turned and made for the shore. The canoe was a small dugout, and would scarcely hold another passenger. I decided to go in myself with Marvin, so we got into the sampan, passing the canoe on the way to the jetty, where we waited for Callanish. If he objected to my presence, he gave no sign of it, and the three of us went up to the bungalow in silence.

The habitation, though in a bad state of disrepair from some months of disuse and the work of wood ants, was fairly comfortable within. Callanish showed us into a cool and spacious room where a young girl was lying on a wicker couch. My first glance convinced me that this must surely be Mary Stillwell. Ill as she was and at the moment at the height of a raging fever, I thought, nevertheless, that I had never seen so lovely a creature. Her profuse hair, which fell across her bosom in great, disordered tresses, was as described by the mate, the color of light, burnished copper. Her features were exquisite, in spite of the congestion of her face, and when she raised her long,

curved lashes to stare up at us unseeingly, her irises were like purple violets in their bloodshot setting. I noticed also the exquisite shape of her hands, and the ivory texture of the skin of her slender arms, which were bare to above the elbow.

Marvin took his thermometer from the case, and I went out and waited on the veranda, where, before many minutes had passed, he and the Rubber Man joined me, the latter mopping his humid face, and wearing an expression of the most profound concern.

"Pernicious malaria," said Marvin. "Temperature of one hundred and six. She's had two paroxysms, the last commencing about an hour and a half ago. A third might carry her off, but we'll try to forestall it."

"And how will ye be doing that, doctor?" asked the Rubber Man, his voice trembling. "I ha'e gi'en her quinine by the handful, but she canna keep it doon."

"Very likely. I'll give her a deep intramuscular injection of the hydrochlorate solution four hours before the time for the next paroxysm. About sixty grains. But first I want to be dead sure of the diagnosis. I've got a blood specimen, and I'll take it off aboard, and look for the plasmodia under the microscope. Give her all the water she wants, but no nourishment. We've got some good preserved milk aboard, and I'll bring in what she needs when I come over later. Don't go far away from her, Mr. Callanish. These cases sometimes develop acute delirium."

"I will be followin' your instructions to the letter, sIRR," said the Rubber Man meekly.

We returned aboard, and Marvin, who was a crack on pathology, and might have had a ripping good practice in New York if he'd been able to stick to business and leave the rum alone, had no difficulty in finding the "crescents" of the malaria organisms. He gave us a little lecture on the subject, but I can't say that I paid very good attention, as my mind was entirely on the girl and how best to restore her to her people. I can honestly say that, after

my first glimpse of her lying there in that rotting bungalow and tended by that weird, uncanny Rubber Man, I never gave another thought to the reward.

Marvin went ashore again soon afterward to spend the night at the bungalow. We saw no more of either him or the Rubber Man until the following day at noon, when Callanish came alongside in his canoe, and this time accepted my invitation to come aboard. He looked worn and haggard, but happy and infinitely relieved.

" 'Tis wonderfu', the science," said he, "and your doctor will be an ornament to his profession. I canna' say I was verra strong for his method of administerin' the drug, but he knaws his business, and the results were amazin'. The fever is broken to smithereens, and the lass is sleepin' quiet and peaceful the noo."

Greatly relieved, we expressed our warmest congratulations, and the Rubber Man, after looking at us for a moment with twinkling eyes, continued:

"I made bold to question the doctor aboot your reasons for comin' here, but aside from tellin' me that ye had yer good cause for thinkin' that I was e'en detainin' the lass here against her will, he w'u'd say nothing. Aweel, I'm no sayin' that there might not be some truth in that, though feelin' mysel' justifit in my way of actin'. But that we can be discussin' later, when the lass is mended and can answer for hersel'. What I am wishfu' to ask the noo is if ye canna see your way to gi'e the twa o' us a passage to Jamaica. I dinna lack for siller, and can pay for the accommodation. 'Tis a sickly climate here on the river, and in the opinion o' the doctor, there is slight chance o' the patient's improvin' as long as she is here. For some months now I ha'e been minded to leave the country, but ha'e stoppit on for reasons best known to mysel'. What say you, sIRR?"

It is needless to say that we were surprised at this ingenuous proposition. One thing was clear, however: that the Rubber Man felt himself in no danger of prosecution from the authorities on

the ground of forcible detention of the girl. It occurred to me also, as it did to the others, that possibly he feared for the girl's life, and had determined to return her to her relatives, and claim the reward, abandoning the design of keeping her for himself. That the man loved her deeply could not be questioned. The expression of his face when Marvin had given his prognosis the day before made this conviction indubitable. But he may have decided that, as now her whereabouts had been discovered, any personal designs which he might have entertained were no longer possible, and that the only thing which remained was to make the best of the situation.

Whatever his motive, the proposition fell in perfectly with our own interests. With the two aboard the yacht, the cards would all be in our own hands, and we would take good care that the Rubber Man had no chance to give us the slip or turn the tables on us as President Valdez had done in a previous adventure of the Bum Club, which has been already narrated. As a matter of fact, when one stopped to think, Callanish was fairly cornered. He could not have shaken us off his trail, and even if he put the girl in his sailboat, and took her to Cuidad Bolivar, we would have followed him and claimed her there.

These things being so, I told him that we were quite willing to take him to Jamaica; or any other place in the West Indies, as the only object of our coming to the Orinoco was to look for Mary Stillwell, after which quest, whether successful or not, we were obliged to return to New York. He gave his bleak smile, and said that in that case he would send his personal belongings aboard the yacht, turn over the plantation, on which as yet no work had been begun, to his half-caste overseer, then have the patient brought aboard, when we might quit the place as soon as possible.

All of this was quickly effected. The sick girl was brought aboard and made comfortable in the stateroom formerly occupied by Kitty Shell. Although her

fever was now under control, she was still very low, and Marvin forbade her being questioned or otherwise excited until her strength should permit. We then dropped down the river, stopping for a few hours at Cuidad Bolivar, after which, under the pilotage of the Rubber Man, we proceeded to sea.

It was not until we had made the passage of the Dragon's Mouth, and were standing away on the long stretch to Jamaica, that the riddle was solved. Then, one morning Marvin summoned me below to the patient's stateroom, and I entered to find her resting comfortably among her pillows in one of Kitty's discarded kimonos, happily inhaling the draft of fresh, briny air which rushed through the open ventilator.

If I had thought her beautiful when I had seen her nearly comatose from fever, the loveliness which now confronted me was no less than bewildering. Though just turned seventeen, she seemed a woman grown in all but her face, which still belonged to the child. This pale, sweet face was of an ivory whiteness in its setting of burnished copper hair which lay in two heavy braids over either shoulder, reaching almost to her knees. Her eyes were like violets in the snow, her little Grecian nose, with its slightly lifted tip, as though chiseled from marble by fairy sculptors, and there was the faintest and most delicate line of pink on her exquisite lips.

I caught my breath as I looked down at her, and realized that Jack Kent, sometime ensign in the U. S. navy, and at present soldier of fortune and charter member of the Bum Club, was no longer a free and foot-loose cavalier. My fate had come to me like some rare and lovely flower gathered in the miasmic jungle of the Orinoco, and I knew that, unless I could cherish it fresh and fragrant to wear henceforth against my heart, I should never be a happy man again.

But the girl's first words in a voice still low and tremulous from illness told me that she was not the one whom we had come so far to find. I did not care.

We had her, and we had saved her from a lonely grave on the banks of the Orinoco, and were still going to save her from a life with the Rubber Man, and that was quite enough reward for me—for the present. But so far from being Mary Stillwell, of St. Louis and Chicago, the pretty Scotch accent which fell so sweetly from her lips told me immediately that she was British born, and a lady.

"Doctor van Schaick tells me that you are wishing to ask me about myself," said she, with a faint smile. "I am Mary Seaforth, of the Western Isles."

"We went to look for another Mary," I answered, "but I am glad that you are who you are."

Her smile deepened. "That is very nice of you, Captain Kent," she answered. "The doctor has been telling me of the other Mary, poor thing. I should think that you would feel sadly disappointed."

"I am sorry for her uncle," I answered, "but not for myself."

She gave a little smile, followed by a sigh, then raised her delicate hand to brush back the hair from her smooth forehead. Her eyes rested with a sort of regretful pity on my scarred and discolored face.

"It is a shame that you should have gone to such trouble, and suffered maltreatment from my guardian, only to find me," she murmured.

"Then he is your guardian?" I asked quickly, not caring much to dwell on the maltreatment received at the hands of the gentleman in question.

"I'm fearing so," she sighed. "You must know, sicc, that my father, Malcolm Seaforth, was Mr. Callanish's partner in the rubber trading. They came together to the Amazon, my father bringing me, for the mother died long ago, and there was none he was wishing to trust me to. My father was a stern man, and had few friends. Perhaps the only true one was Andrew Callanish, of Ardvourlie."

"How long have you been out here?" I asked.

"We came soon after the mother was

laid away, many years ago. But Mr. Callanish had already been in the Brazils a score of years. My father had lost his property in shares of some kind and could not bear to bide at home after the mother was taken, so he wrote to Mr. Callanish, to whom he had rendered a great service when we were prosperous, asking for the loan of enough to buy our passage out. The money was sent, and we went to Para, and later to the station on the Rio Negro. It was there my father died of beriberi, eighteen months gone by, and left me in the care of Andrew Callanish, there being no one else to do for me."

"And was he always good to you?" I asked.

She seemed to hesitate, and a faint tinge of color showed in her ivory cheeks.

"He always meant to be kind, I am sure," said she, "but he is a strange man, and often I was afraid of him. There would be at times a look in his eyes which made me wish to scream. I begged him often to let me go back to the town; to go anywhere away from that dreadful, sickly wilderness, but he would not. He said that first I must be provided for as a lady should, for we Seasforths are gentlefolk, and Mr. Callanish the same, and he the true Laird of Advourlie, though deprived of his rights by a cousin, through some trick of the law. He was doing none so badly with the rubber at the time, but the money came too slowly, and, hearing from a prospector, who was dying of the fever, that there was gold a-plenty above the rapids of the Orinoco, we went there in our canoes; a fearsome journey and one that was like to have cost Mr. Callanish his life, man of iron though he is. We built a cabin there, and he did a little trading, and I think found some gold, though he would never tell me how much."

I thought of a certain heavy box which Callanish had brought aboard, and decided that he might not have done so badly. I remembered also what he had said about having "no lack of siller," all of which led me to conclude

that it was not avarice alone which had kept him up the Orinoco.

"How did he come to leave the place?" I asked.

The long lashes swept down demurely, and the pink in her cheeks deepened.

"The folk upriver would not leave him in peace," said she. "There was a rumor got about that he was keeping a young girl there against her will. Now and again some bold spirit would come to investigate if it were true. Some he beat with his fists, for he is a terrible man to face, though one would never think it to see him. There was a young officer from a British ship who came there to buy corozo, and he offered to help me to escape, for I was wild to leave the place, and growing afraid of Mr. Callanish, he was acting so oddly. We ran away in the night, but he followed and caught us, and left the young man like one dead. But he came to his senses and got back to his ship. But others came the next week, and one of them was shot by Mr. Callanish, and, though not killed, there was talk of laying him by the heels. He heard of it, and, thinking it better to leave, we came down the river to where you found us. We had been there but a few days when you came. I do not know how many, as I was ill—"

Marvin interrupted at this point, saying that his patient had talked enough, and must not get overtired, so I thanked her for what she had told me, and went on deck.

All hands took the news of the girl's true identity with cheerful resignation. Dick being the most disappointed of the lot, for which I could not blame him, as he was still sighing for his Kitty. The Rubber Man proved a sufficiently agreeable shipmate in his harsh and dour way, which was at times not without a sense of caustic humor. There appearing to be no longer any reason to the contrary, and, in order that he might understand our motive for interfering with his privacy, I told him the story of Mary Stillwell. The tale appeared to impress him deeply. I told

him also of our own positions, and of how we were far from being the care-free yachting party which he had supposed, but, on the contrary, "a little hard-luck fraternity of four," who had been recently in the employ of a cinematograph concern, and were now doomed to return to resume the cheerless existence of the dead beat and the bum. He was greatly interested and amused at the story of our adventure with Buxton, and thereafter regarded Dick with a marked consideration and the respect which one good fighting man might be expected to feel for another.

But it was plain that the tragedy of Mary Stillwell had stuck in his dome-shaped head like a nail, for he kept recurring to the subject throughout the day, interested as it seemed to me as much in the large amount of the reward offered as in our joint conjectures on the possibility of the girl being still alive. I showed him the telegram received at Key West from Mr. Druit, on reading which he lapsed into a long and thoughtful silence.

The following day as I was at the wheel, while the hands were eating their dinner, the Rubber Man came up and planted himself alongside me. We were plowing along under sail with a fresh, reaching breeze, for, as Mary Seaforth appeared to be profiting greatly by the sea air, we economized our fuel, turning over the engine only when the wind dropped light.

Callanish stood for a few moments without speaking, his bowed, springy legs apart, and his body swaying with the sling of the sea. Presently, said he:

"I am minded to mak' ye a propo-
seetion, Mr. Kent."

"Fire away," said I. "You can't scare any of this bunch with propositions."

"Well, then," said he, "'tis like this. The lassie is profitin' by the sea air, and I find it no so bad mysel', so I am wishin' to prolong the cruise. Now, what if I were to charter the yacht, and the services of all aboard her from the time of our leavin' Santa Cruz, and keep her on for a matter of twa months?

I w'u'd be willin' to pay at the same rate as the gentleman who took her for the moovin' pictures ye were describin' yesterday."

I stared at him in astonishment. What, I wondered, could be the man's idea in wanting to sail about for a couple of months? We were rather crowded for accommodations below, Dick and Hamlet bunking in the saloon, and I could not understand Callanish's desire to remain cooped up on the little vessel when he and his ward might be so much more comfortable ashore. Besides, it would be expensive, as, besides the price of charter and the food and wages of the hands, Buxton had paid the Bum Club a hundred dollars apiece for our services. Callanish would really need but two of us, and he did not impress me as a man to spend his money recklessly.

"What's the idea?" I asked. "Why do you want to take over the boat and the lot of us?"

He seemed to hesitate for a moment; then, dropping his voice a bit, he said almost in my ear:

"Mr. Kent, 'tis in my mind to go look for Mary Stillwell."

If he had said that he wanted to sail down to Patagonia, and go up country to hunt for the giant sloth, I could not have been more surprised. For a moment I thought the man had gone off his chump, and I guess my face must have shown it, for he asked sharply:

"And what is so astonishin' if I do? Y're but just come frae doin' the same yersel', are ye not?"

"True," I answered, "but we had something to go on—"

"And so have I," he retorted, "or may have if I can find a certain nigger I have in mind."

"Then you think that she is still alive?" I asked.

"I w'u'dna' go so far as to say that I think she is still alive," he answered slowly, "but I dinna believe she was lost i' the wreck o' the yacht. I ha'e me reasons to think the contr'y. The chances are slight, I will be freely willin' to admeet, but the stake is a big one, and I'm e'en ready to tak' my try."

"And where do we come in?" I asked, for it was tantalizing to think that, after all of our efforts, another man should come along and reap the reward, especially as the result of information supplied him by myself. "Look here, Callanish, I tell you what I'll be willing to do, and there's no doubt but that the others agree to it. We'll go into the thing together, you as the party of the first part, and the four of us as the parties of the second part. If we succeed, these two parties are to share equally in the reward, but whether we do or do not, you are to pay for the charter of the boat, and her running expenses with our services, as you have just proposed."

The Rubber Man gave me a scornful look.

"Y're clever at makin' a contract, now, are ye not?" he sneered. "And wha's to prevent my tellin' ye to go to the de'il and charterin' a boat all o' my own wi' no talk o' dividin', pray tell?"

"Nothing," I answered, "but I can tell you wha' would happen if you should. In the first place, your outfit would get onto the game and put in a claim for its share. In the second, I could prove that I had started you on your search, and put in a claim for *my* share."

"I see I did wrong to tak' ye into my confidence," growled Callanish. "I should ha' gone ahead wi' me plans, and ne'er a worrd to anybody."

"Which is precisely what you would have done if you had not felt that, to carry out your idea successfully, you needed this particular combination," I retorted.

Callanish gave me one of his acrid grins. "I see y're not such a fule as one might think on firrst acquaintance," said he. "'Tis true. I will be needin' just such a pack o' young vagabones who fear neither man nor de'il. Aweel, let it be so, though 'tis a hard bargain y're drivin'. Now, suppose I go down and draft the agreement, while ye explain the turn affairs ha' taken to your mates. After that ye may shift yer course a wee bit to the north'ard,

and make for Port au Prince in the republic o' Haiti."

"Port au Prince!" I exclaimed.

"The same. 'Tis there I hope to get news o' the nigger who may or may not tell me what I wish to know." And he turned and waddled to the companion-way, and disappeared below.

Very much excited at the curious turn affairs had taken, I called an impromptu meeting of the Bum Club, and laid the matter before them. As was to be expected, all three backed my play without a limit, and so the matter was arranged, and I slightly altered our course for Cape Tiburon. The weather holding fine, it was not many days before we raised the blue, broken outline of the Black Republic, rounded Cape Dame Marie, and fetched up in the harbor of Port au Prince.

As usual, the black pilot came alongside after we had anchored and demanded his fee, when, to my surprise, Callanish not only paid it, but invited the pilot aboard for a social glass, which invitation was accepted with great alacrity. Callanish was but slightly familiar with French, but the pilot spoke fluent Spanish, and the two were soon in animated conversation under the shade of the after awning. After his third or fourth glass, the pilot took his departure somewhat unsteadily, but with many expressions of esteem, and Callanish beckoned me aft with a sideways jerk of his head.

"Our nigger is not far," said he, "and he is rich. He has retired from the sea, and is at present livin' in luxury in his handsome villa at La Coupe, which is up on the hill overlookin' the valley, yonder. 'Tis seegrificant." He ran his spread fingers upward through his sparse, sandy beard, and drew down his bushy eyebrows in a thoughtful frown. "The pilot tells me there is to be a dance to-night in the gorge below La Coupe; a *bamboula*, y'understand. So much the better. It is a common affair o' the lower classes, and it is not likely our friend will be gi'n' it his patronage. In that case we may find him alone."

"I don't quite follow you," said I.

"That is not surprisin'," he replied.

"List, now, and I will gi'e ye the yarn. A matter o' two years ago I was in Para, havin' come down from Manaos on a matter o' business, for which I was in need of a hit drogher the size o' this one. There was no lack of such i' the port, but I had some deeficulty in makin' a price, and, on lookin' about, I fell on a yawl-rigged tub hailin' from Port au Prince, and commanded by a verra intelligent black, who called himself Captain Miragoâne.

"What she was doin' so far from home I dinna ken, and my offer came to naught. But on goin' aboard her I was struck wi' the fine braw way she was found, more particular as to her deck fittin's. Though tarnished and in need o' paint and varnish, they were those of a yacht. Her skylights were o' teak wi' brass rods, her blocks o' lignum-vitæ wi' brass sheaves, and her wheel and binnacle such as ye might find aboard a private yacht. Walkin' for'ard while waitin' for the skipper, I noticed her bell, which was big for a boat her size, and saw that the name engraved upon it had been obleeterated. Thinks I to mysel', 'y'have been doin' a bit wreckin', me friend, for 'tis not like a nigger to make a good ship's husband.'

"Goin' aft I obsarved a life buoy lashed to the rail, abreast the quarter bitts, and, scrutinizin' it, I c'uid see that it bore a name which had been painted over. But the paint had worn a bit thin, and, by gettin' the right slant o' light, I was just able to spell out *P-R-O-C-Y-O-N*. '*Procyon*,' thinks I, and the name o' the yawl was '*Célestine*.'

"Now, I thought no more o' the matter, knawin' nothin' o' the *Procyon*, nor did it ever enter me mind again till yesterday, when I heard your tale. Then it cam' back to me, the name bein' a bit odd, and as nae doot ye ken that of a star o' the northern heavens near the constellation *Canis Minor*. So there ye have it. 'Tis not much to go on, bein' a single scale from which to construct the entire fish."

"So that was why you asked me if the yacht was shy any of her deck fit-

tings when towed into port by the British gunboat," said I.

"Precisely—and I was sore set aback when you told me that the same point was made at the time, and that, as nothin' had been touched, it was argued as provin' that the hulk could not ha' been sighted by wreckers, since such would ha' been sure to ha' hung onto her for salvage. 'Tis also verra possible that the life buoy might ha' been cut away, and then discarded, when the life belts were served out and washed overboard to be picked up later by the *Célestine*. But 'tis also possible that the lassie might ha' been inside the life buoy when it was picked up."

"Possible," I answered, "but not probable."

"Y'are right," said Callanish, "and had that been all I w'u'dna been puttin' mysel' to the expense o' charterin' the boat and supportin' ye all in idleness. But there was another conseederation. This same Miragoâne was verra flush. When he cam' aboard he fair dazzled a body wi' his magnificence. He was wearin' a panama c'uid not ha' cost him less than a hundred dollars, and he had a diamond in his scarf fit to blind an eagle. His clothes were of the finest quality, and he was sportin' a malacca with a gold head. Later in the day I saw him drivin' aboot the city with a stylish Portuguese woman who was o' the opera. When I tried to talk to him aboot charterin' his yawl he w'u'd not listen, sayin' he had need o' her himsel'. Now, where would he be gettin' a' that cash?"

"Some of these Haitians are pretty rich," said I, "especially if they happen to be in politics."

"True for ye," said Callanish, a little impatiently. "Now list to what I ha'e just learned from yon black thief. He tells me that Captain Miragoâne is a son by *placage* o' a former president, Simon Sam. He was educated in Europe, and lived there until Sam was forced to abdicate, when he returned penniless to Haiti, where he was not popular because of his frequentin' the society of a French Jew named Gabriel, who had collared most o' the trade at

Gonaives. Whites, ye ken, are hated here. Wi' the aid o' this Gabriel, he got his yawl, and, when not engaged in freightin' coffee and cotton, and the like, the twa o' them would ramp around the coast in search o' trade and devilment, sometimes doin' a little smugglin' and the like to help along.

"Then, somethin' less than three years ago, this pair o' beauties disappeared for more than a couple o' months when Miragoâne returned wi' gold galore. He bought him a villa at La Coupe, converted his drogher into a yacht, and lived like a millionaire, gi' in' it oot that he and Gabriel had found buried treasure i' the Bahamas. So there is all I knew, and, while it is not much, I think it worth the investigatin'."

"Yes," said I; "it is certainly worth investigating. How do you propose to go about it?"

"My plan is this," said Callanish. "We will pay a visit to this Miragoâne quite late this evenin' when 'tis likely he will be alone, not carin' for the vulgar pastimes o' the proletariat. As he speaks both the Spanish and Portuguese, 'twill be easy for me to converse wi' him. I will tell him I ha'e reason to suppose that he knows the whereabouts o' Mary Stillwell, which, o' coarse, he will deny. Disregardin' this, I will ask him if he will consider the offer o' one hundred thousand dollars gold for information o' her locality and nothing said to anybody. Now, that black scut of a pilot tells me that the man is no' so flush these last few months, and doesna pay his bills. In that case 'tis like he will be tempted. Once we find he kens aboot the lass we will tak' measures accordin'."

"Such as what?" I asked.

Callanish's face took on the bleak, stony look which it had worn at our first meeting.

"Leave that to me," said he. "Nae doot I can find a means o' persuadin' him to talk. 'Twill need the three o' us; you, and Beekman, and mysel'."

"Very well," I answered. "You're the boss."

Callanish rose. "Then I will be goin' ashore," said he, "and engage a

trap for an evenin' promenade. The moon rises at seven, and we will be startin' directly after tay."

I called away the sampan to take him ashore, and, as soon as he had gone over the side, we held a meeting of the Bum Club. The opinion that we ought certainly to investigate the clew was unanimous, though there was some doubt as to the Rubber Man's possible course of procedure. All agreed, however, that once an admission of his knowledge of Mary Stillwell's fate was obtained from Miragoâne, no measures to make him disgorge his information could be too stringent.

My own opinion was that Callanish might boldly kidnap the man, carry him to sea, and promise to deliver 'im to the United States authorities if he refused to tell what had become of the girl. But, whatever he chose to do, we were quite prepared to back him up.

Callanish returned in about an hour, saying that he had engaged the services of a ramshackle vehicle, and a driver who had a strong penchant for rum. He than gave Marvin a quart flask, and requested him to fill it with a mixture of this fluid, and a sufficient quantity of laudanum from the medicine chest to make one stiff drink a dose that would quiet a robust negro for several hours.

"'Tis for the driver," said he dryly. "I doot we will be needin' him on our return. I am no bad hand wi' the ribbons, mysel'."

"Do you mean to kidnap the man?" I asked.

He looked at me with his acrimonious grin. "Maybe I might be stealin' a page frae your ain book, and treat him as ye had planned to treat mesel'," said he. "At any rate, it can do no harm to go prepared. Many a plan fa's down for lack o' preparation. Now, if ye ha'e a bit cord; lacin' stuff or the like——"

I got him what he required, and he coiled the stuff and shoved it into his pocket. Marvin, having concocted his knock-out draft, he pocketed that, also, when Callanish, Dick, and I got into the sampan and were landed on the rotten, tumble-down wharf. Picking our way gingerly to the firm ground, we found

waiting for us the rig which Callanish had engaged and its black, unprepossessing driver, who appeared to be already about half drunk. Clambering into the ramshackle old trap, we traversed the town, and started on the six-mile steady, upward climb to La Coupe.

It was not precisely a drive which one would have chosen for pleasure. The vehicle was an ancient, half-wrecked surrey, fastened together with ropes, one of the wheels on wrong side before, the bush turning in the hub and squealing like a pig with every revolution. The two emaciated ponies behaved as though in harness for the first time, and threatened to snap the rotten traces. The road appeared to be the dry bed of a torrential cataract, and in places the outer bank fell precipitously into a black gorge of indistinguishable depth.

Before we had proceeded far, the quick, tropic twilight faded, and we toiled on through the warm, scented darkness by no other light than that of the low-hung stars. But presently there came a glow above the indigo black of the mountaintop, and a great lambent globe, jaundiced and swollen at the sides, lifted above the rounded shoulder of the heights, and soared aloft with the speed of a balloon. Its brilliant yellow rays smeared the glistening foliage in the valley beneath, lighted our dubious trail, and seemed to distill elusive odors, sickly and sweet, from the lavish vegetation on every side.

Upward we scrambled, the sweating ponies slipping and scuffling over the ruts and stones, and, pausing presently to breathe them, we looked back, and saw the deep harbor and distant sea far beneath, and beyond, the lights of the shipping quenched in the vivid golden glare. Then on upward again, and before long the hot, humid reek of the air grew less oppressive, and we filled our lungs with a sense of pleasant relief.

A little later a somber figure loomed on the trail ahead; then another, and still another, all drifting up the steep ascent. There were men and women, and their motions seemed furtive and silent. Only one addressed us. "Ou ça

v'aller?" lisped a thick voice, in throaty creole. "La Coupe" our driver grunted back, and added in the same patois: "côté bamboula là?" But the plodding negro had caught a glimpse of our white faces, and did not reply, muttering something under his breath which sounded like a curse.

Another mile or two, and, from the uncertain depths ahead and beneath us, there came a faint pulsation. At first I thought its origin was in my ears, but a faint draft of air stirring down the ravine brought the rhythmic beats of what sounded like a muffled drum. *Tum—tum—tum—tum—tum—tum—tum* it went with tireless persistence. It was like the sinister voice of the unhallored place.

Our driver, half asleep, and swaying on his seat, stiffened for a moment; then relaxed again with a grunt through his flattened nostrils. "Bamboula—" he grunted, and gave a foolish snicker. But I noticed that he kept his head cocked, and seemed to be listening as though to a continued and imperative summons. Callanish, who was on the front seat, writhed about and looked at us with a flash of his yellow teeth.

"They will soon be startin' their hellish orgies," said he. "'On wi' the dance—' I once weetnessed the like, below. De'ils, spawned i' the pit and spewed up for the further' blastin' o' their souls. 'Tis a thing to see once, and then try in vain to forget."

"We may have our trouble for our pains," said I. "It's possible that our friend has gone to the show."

"I dinna think so," he answered. "This is but a low-flung peasant affair. Nae doot he patronizes 'others far worrse, but more select. The man is an aristocrat in his way, and what they ca' in this benighted place a *marabout*, though 'tis not the genuine Arab article. These Haitian *marabouts* are a superior caste to the West Coast black. They grow fine, and straight, and tall, and, though black as coal, their hair is straight, and their features as regular as yours and mine. 'Tis said they live to great age, but do not show it."

Presently the grade up which we had

been toiling lessened, and we saw ahead the shimmering roofs of houses and an open, moonlit space. "La Coupe," muttered the driver, and yawned with a sleepy grunt. We had passed the last of the straggling figures on their way to the place of rendezvous, and there was not a sign of life in the deserted hamlet. Utter silence and the yellow moonlight brooded over all. Then, as the blowing ponies lurched out on what appeared to be the market place, we saw a spark of light through the foliage beyond.

"*M'thieu Miragoâne th'habite pa' là—*" lisped our driver, and drew rein under a plane tree before a gateway of stone and cement.

"*Attend ici,*" said Callanish, and sprang nimbly down. He drew out the flask of doctored rum, slipped the cup from its bottom, and slowly filled it, the driver watching him greedily.

"*Voilà—*" said Callanish, and gave it to the negro, who took it eagerly.

"*Oh—oh—vôt' thanté, méthieu—*" said he, and gulped it down with a smack of his thick lips. Callanish looked at us and grinned.

"Whether the gentleman is here or no'," said he, "I w'ud rather tool down this trap mysel' than to be trustin' our lives to yon black Jehu. 'Twas bad enough comin' up."

The driver handed back the empty cup with a word of thanks, then climbed into the carriage and composed himself for rest. Callanish, with Dick and I at his elbows, turned to the gate, which was unlocked, shoved it open, and we entered what looked to be in the moonlight a pretty but unkempt garden, entirely surrounded by a wall. There were orange, lemon, and banana trees, and, beside a stagnant fountain choked with weeds, the moon glistened creamy on a piece of iron statuary; an Artemis, or something of the sort.

A gravel path led up to the house, and a single light shone from an upper window. As we approached, we saw that the residence was a small but handsome one of stone construction, and probably dating back considerably over a century, when Haiti was a French

colony, and it might have been the country seat of some high official of the colonial government.

We mounted the steps of the perron, and Callanish rapped sharply on the brass-studded, mahogany door. A moment later the volets of the lighted window were flung open, and the head and massive shoulders of a man were thrust out.

"Who is there?" rumbled a deep voice, in French.

"Some gentlemen to see you on a matter of business," answered Callanish in the same tongue. He spoke French rather better than he did English, and had also a good control of German, but he preferred to use Spanish or Portuguese when possible. Indeed, Callanish was, in spite of his uncouthness, a very erudite man, as we were discovering in our daily contact with him. It was chiefly in anger or excitement that he relapsed broadly into the dialect of his youth.

Miragoâne appeared to hesitate for a moment, then withdrew from the window, and came down to learn the reason for this nocturnal call. We heard his shuffling feet in the antechamber, and a light appeared between the shutters of a room to the left. Then the door swung open, and we were confronted by a tall, powerful man in white linen, and a face so black that it stood out clearly against the murk of the antechamber.

"And whom have I the honor to receive?" he asked, in a heavy but resonant bass. His French was pure and well accented, so far as my indifferent knowledge of the language permitted me to judge. At least, it was not the syncopated patois of the lower classes.

Callanish answered in Spanish, so that I was quite unable to follow what was said. There was another moment of slight hesitation on the part of Miragoâne; then, motioning us to enter, he opened a door on the left and showed us into a salon which was no doubt a regal apartment for Haiti, but which would have been shabby elsewhere, except for some really fine pieces of French antique furniture; a long buhl

center table, several handsome Louis XIV. chairs, and a really beautiful tapestry. But the parquet was warped and ill fitting, the walls stained and discolored, and, at the farther end of the room, which was long and high-ceilinged, there hung a hideous portrait of a negro officer in full regalia. Over the table a big lamp set in a mass of shoddy brasswork supplied us amply with light and odor, and in its reflected glare I looked curiously at Miragoâne, who was glancing from one to the other of us with a polite but puzzled expression on his black but intelligent face.

Indeed, the man was handsome in a fierce, barbaric way, and, aside from his skin of jet—for sooty or sable it certainly was not—he had none of the usual characteristics which one associates with the negro. His thick hair was not straight, as Callanish had said, but curly rather than kinky, and his features were well shaped and regular, the nose straight, a little thick but neither flat nor bulbous, the lips firm and cleanly chiseled, while his forehead was high and broad, and his facial angle that of a Caucasian. His figure, too, was trim and erect, and, as he rested his hand on the table, I was impressed by its patrician shape. He was dressed in a white linen suit, which showed to advantage the broad shoulders and narrow hips, and he had thrust his bare feet into a pair of grass sandals.

We took the chairs which he politely offered us, when he seated himself and looked inquiringly at Callanish. I could not understand what the Rubber Man was saying, but as he proceeded I saw a frown slowly gathering on Miragoâne's broad forehead. It deepened as Callanish continued, and once or twice the Haitian seemed on the point of interrupting, but controlled himself and listened with an air of puzzled vexation.

Callanish seemed to have laid aside his harsh, peremptory way of speaking with his native tongue, and the tone in which he addressed Miragoâne was smooth as oil, while the lower part of his face wore a semismirk which was meant to invite confidence, but which

in reality expressed mere vulpine cunning. The fierce and ruthless bird of prey had ceded its place to the cunning fox, and, observing Callanish as he talked, I much preferred the former side of his nature.

It seemed also to get on Miragoâne's nerves, for he was growing very impatient. Presently, as though unable to stand the whining tone any longer, he turned to Dick, and asked in perfectly good English:

"What is Mr. Callanish driving at? I don't quite follow all this about your looking for a young girl lost in the wreck of an American yacht, nor why you should think that *I* know anything about the matter."

Callanish looked very foolish. "I was not aware ye spoke English," he muttered.

"Indeed?" Miragoâne's voice was dry, and he gave the Rubber Man a sardonic smile. "Yes, I studied English at Oxford." He glanced at Dick again. "I say, what is all this about? One would almost think that Mr. Callanish meant to imply that I had found the girl and was holding her for ransom."

Dick looked inquiringly at Callanish, as if asking permission to speak. Getting a sulky nod from that red-faced gentleman, he said in his pleasant voice:

"Well, you see, Mr. Miragoâne, we've been hunting all over the shop for this young girl, as we have reason to suppose that she is still alive and in the hands of people who hope some day to get a lot of money for returning her to her family. We have come to you because when Mr. Callanish went aboard your yawl in Para a couple of years ago he noticed a ring life buoy on which the name *Procyon* had been painted out. That was the name of the yacht which was wrecked off Trinidad, when the girl was lost."

Miragoâne brought his heavy eyebrows together. "I remember that life buoy," said he. "It was stolen shortly afterward by some harbor thief. I never thought about the name. You see, I bought the thing with a lot of other junk when I fitted out my boat as a yacht."

"Would you mind telling us where you bought it?" I asked.

"Certainly not. From a junkman named Grimes at Barbados, with a lot of other stuff. The chances are that he had it from that riffraff of pearlers and wreckers that hang about Margarita. All's fish that comes to their net—" He checked himself abruptly, and his eyes narrowed. "I say," he asked, "what was that girl like?"

I gave him a minute description of Mary Stillwell. He listened attentively, and his big, black eyes widened a little.

"H'mph," said he, "that reminds me of something. Look here, gentlemen, I don't mind telling you of an incident that might help you in your search, though you're not to repeat it, if you don't mind."

"You have our word for that," I answered.

"Well, then, a couple of years ago a friend of mine and I did a little pearl poaching around this same island of Margarita. Not quite legitimate, you see, and apt to lead to confiscation of your boat and a Venezuelan prison, if you have the bad luck to get nabbed by the patrol boat. But who cares for the Venezuelans? Bally pack of bandits! Well, before we cleared out we bought a deckload of unopened oysters from an old pirate who lives up in the head of the big bight on the southern side of the island. Sort of a *patron*, he is, and owns a lot of pearl fishers. While we were making our trade—and one that turned out jolly well for us, by the way, I noticed a young white girl that fills your description to the letter, loitering about. She was a mere child, and looked and acted half-witted. Her red hair attracted my attention, but I asked no questions about her as we were in a hurry to be off. Now, that might be the girl, and then again it might not."

"'Tis worth lookin' into," muttered Callanish.

Dick and I agreed with him, and, there being no doubt in our minds but that Miragoâne had given us a straight yarn, we thanked him warmly for his information, and, declining his hospitable

offer of refreshment, said good night, and went back to our carriage, where we found the driver plunged in a deep narcotic sleep, from which there was no awakening him for the moment.

We did not make any great effort in this direction, but climbed into the rickety trap. Dick, who was an experienced whip, took the reins, and conducted us skillfully back to Port au Prince, where we hitched the team in the market place, and, after shoving the price agreed upon into the pocket of the driver, who was beginning to show signs of reanimation, went out aboard the boat and put immediately to sea.

Callanish had fully determined to investigate the clew given us by Miragoâne, but he wished first to run across to Kingston, distant only three hundred miles, and leave Mary Seaforth in the care of a trained nurse. The girl had greatly improved in health, but was still invalid and requiring skilled attendance. We made the run in less than two days, and, after having provided for Mary and taken stores, we set out on our run of nearly nine hundred miles to the island of Margarita.

While in Kingston I had written a long letter to Mr. Druitt, in which I described briefly but comprehensively our adventures since leaving Key West—omitting only the unpleasant details of our first introduction to Callanish—and telling him of the clew which we were on the eve of investigating. I informed him also that we were to call again at Kingston on our return, and would cable him from that port.

Personally, I had but slight hope of our success. There are a good many red-haired, blue-eyed girls of sixteen scattered about the world, and will continue to be, in black and yellow countries as well as white, for so long as men of the fairer races continue to travel. Even supposing that girl had been picked up by some sea scavenger from Margarita, it seemed improbable that she should not have been landed at Port of Spain. Callanish met this argument by saying that the boat to find her might have been a smuggler with

contraband aboard, or one having a bad name, and not caring to undergo inspection by the authorities.

However, as the Bum Club stood to lose no money by the venture, and a considerable amount of gain, and, as Callanish appeared to be well supplied with this vulgar commodity, and willing to spend it on the off chance of possible success, we were quite content to carry out his orders. Certainly, cruising in those summer seas was better than late winter in New York, and the fumes of alcohol and nicotine in Ruhl's place. Besides, an abandonment of the quest meant the last I should probably see of Mary Seaforth, and this had now become too outrageous a calamity for me to so much as reflect upon, and I had a warm little glimmer of hope that the girl would have felt the same about it. Callanish may have suspected something of the sort when he decided to leave her in Jamaica. But it was not Callanish whom I feared. It was my own general worthlessness and lack of expectations. Dick, Marvin, and even Hamlet might reasonably expect to inherit something some day. But my family, though of good old Maryland colonial stock, were as poor as Job's turkey, and probably always would be.

Our run to Margarita was saved monotony by a wicked little southwest-erly gale which landed on us in north latitude fourteen degrees, and which had us hove to for fifty hours. But the *Corisande* was a beamy, buoyant tub, and had been built with an eye for that sort of inconvenience, and all the damage we suffered was the demolition of the sampan, which, however, we managed to repair after a fashion.

In due course of time we arrived off the mountainous island of Margarita, and, after calling at Asuncion, where we took stores, worked along the north coast to the bight described by Mira-goâne. We had no difficulty in locating the pearl fishers' camp, as there were several small sailing craft at anchor, and on the shore a number of shacks and cabins, a storehouse with a corrugated iron roof, and one rather neat little dwelling of stone or coral and tinted a

salmon pink. It was a picturesque spot, though, as we drew closer in, its effect was marred by the stench of putrid shell which came off the land nauseatingly despite the fact that the Margarita pearlers cut out instead of rotting the oysters.

It was late in the afternoon when we dropped anchor up in the head of the bight, so we decided to wait until the following morning to go ashore. We had learned something about the place in Asuncion, and, from all accounts, it was not a community with which one could safely take many liberties. The ship chandler who had supplied our stores had given it a particularly bad name, telling us that the crew which had its headquarters there was composed for the most part of refugees from all over the West Indies and Central America, with a fair scattering of escaped convicts from the penal colony of Cayenne. This cheerful gathering of cutthroats was said to do a certain amount of pearl fishing, unlicensed, for the most part, but rumor had it that this industry was rather in the nature of a blind to other even less legitimate enterprises. On thick or stormy nights it was not well for vessels working up or down the coast to place too great a confidence in such lights as were sighted, while it was also considered more prudent to take a chance with the weather than to seek shelter in the bight.

Several times the nest had been broken up, and the ill-set inhabitants of the rookery scattered, but sooner or later they reassembled until some fresh act of pillage afloat or ashore along that part of the coast directed suspicion their way and sent them scudding off again. They were commonly supposed to have a well-knit organization under the direction of a cunning old scoundrel bearing the sobriquet of "L'Encuado," or "The Leather Man," so called from the quality of his hide which local superstition claimed to be capable of resisting a bullet. This gentleman professed to be a licensed pearler, and, although lodged a number of times in the prison at Cumana, had always managed to get

himself acquitted, whether through lack of evidence, or bribery, or both.

Knowing as we did the bad reputation of the place, I was surprised when after supper Hamlet suggested a stroll on the beach. Hamlet, though keener than any of us about the sea, was not the best of sailors, and had suffered severely from seasickness during the gale. The attack had left him limp and enervated, and he claimed that he would not be right again until he had taken a good tramp on terra firma.

At first we opposed the idea, but Hamlet insisted that a little shore exercise would do us all good, and finally Dick and Marvin and I agreed to go in with him for a look at the place. Calanish, to whom dangerous localities had been for many years as his own back yard, offered no objection, merely advising us to mind our own business, and if questioned to say that we had come to the place to buy pearls of L'Encuando, and expected to call upon him the following day. This, and the fact of our being foreign yachtsmen, seemed to be quite enough to prevent any possible molestation. He himself would remain aboard to discourage any prospective visitors. It was not, of course, as though the place was peopled by self-acknowledged pirates.

Nevertheless, we armed ourselves with automatic pistols, and I slipped into my pocket an electric hand lamp with which to signal for the boat on our return. It was growing dark when one of the men set us ashore in the gig, and the place appeared to be deserted. On anchoring, we had seen several figures, both men and women, going and coming from the collection of buildings which we had taken to be storehouses for shell or loot to the scattered habitations back of the beach, and, although several had paused to inspect the yacht, none had shown sufficient interest in our arrival to put off to us in boats. This we took to mean a desire to discourage any attempt at social relations.

We dismissed the boat on landing, and started to stroll over toward the storehouses. The putrid smell to which we were growing in a measure accus-

ted, grew more violent as we advanced, and we decided that these buildings must be constructed for the safeguarding of the unopened bivalves just brought in. This opinion seemed to be corroborated by the presence of two dark figures sitting on a capsized boat in front of the larger storehouse from which the main volume of smell appeared to proceed. Their conversation ceased on our approach, and they watched us silently as we passed on toward the settlement beyond.

This was larger than it had appeared from the harbor, most of the habitations being such primitive shacks as might have been thrown together for the shelter of cattle. Many of them were lighted, and, looking within, we saw women, black, yellow, and some who looked like Carib Indians, engaged in preparing the evening meal. There was no lack of children, either, many of them playing about the doors and abruptly ceasing from their games to stare at us in silence as we passed, but there were few men in evidence, and, as the weather was fine and the sea calm, we thought it probable that the bulk of the male population was spending the night on the pearl grounds. This opinion was strengthened by the small number of boats anchored in the bight.

Our path led us by the salmon-pink cottage which I have mentioned, and, as we approached, a man came out of the door and walked down to meet us. Although it was by this time quite dark, we could distinguish him as an undersized individual well on in years, with a swarthy complexion, and a thin, black mustache and goatee. He was dressed in white, and, from the fact of his inhabiting the best house in the place, I thought it probable that he must be the notorious L'Encuando. He stopped as we drew near, and said politely in English:

“Good evening, gentleman.”

“Good evening,” we answered.

“You come from ze American yac’—yes, all right.”

“Yes,” I answered. “We are taking a little walk. To-morrow we are com-

ing ashore to see if anybody has some pearls to sell cheap."

He nodded several times. "Yes—yes—ze pearls. I have zem—very nice. Very cheap. You come in? I show you."

"To-morrow," I answered. "The gentleman who wants to look at pearls is aboard the boat."

"Yes, yes, I know. To-morrow. All right. I show you zose perlas. Goo' night, gentleman."

We wished him good night, and continued on our way down a broad, untidy street, with shacks on either side, some of them the merest hovels of palm thatch, scraps of sailcloth, and odds and ends of planks, the whole lashed together with strips of bark rope. We had not gone far when we saw at the end of this Champs Elysées a long, low barrack from which the light was streaming, and heard the tinkle of a mandolin, and the deeper notes of a guitar.

"That must be the Jardin de Paris," said Dick. "Let's look it over."

"We'd do better to keep on walking," objected Hamlet, who was thinking more of his liver than of entertainment.

"We can do that later," said Dick.

As we drew nearer, there came the confused mutter of voices, and, on approaching the place, we saw that it was a sort of café. There were a few tables and rough benches under a patched old sail which served as an awning in front of the wide-open doors, but these were unoccupied, and, looking within, we discovered a number of men drinking and smoking and listening to the music furnished by two swarthy musicians. The den struck me as being a good place to avoid, but Dick, who enjoys this sort of atmosphere, pushed his way in, and we followed.

I have seen some tough outfits in my time, but never have I found myself in the midst of a more villainous-looking crew than was there assembled. The inmates of any common American jail would have looked like a convention of Sunday-school teachers in comparison. It was the top scum of Caribbean vagabondage, and I do not believe that of

the twenty or thirty present there could have been mustered half a dozen that were not wanted somewhere for some crime. The faces turned up to us under the glare of the lanterns swung from the ridgepole were of the sort which one pictures in thinking of the early buccaneers.

Every shade of human complexion was represented, and some that did not look quite human. There were white men, negroes, low-browed Indians, and all the combinations of these races, the latter being in the majority. And the costumes were as wild and savage as their wearers. Broad, crimson sashes were twisted about narrow hips, tight Spanish trousers with brass or silver buttons down the side of the leg, stained waistcoats of what had once been brilliant hues, flaming cravats, soiled sailor uniforms traded perhaps from the jackies of men-of-war for "monkeys" of nigger rum; everything ever contained in the slop chest of a junkman.

Conversation ceased abruptly as we seated ourselves at a makeshift table near the musicians, who thrummed on without interruption, though watching us alertly. Both were wicked-looking devils; the man with the guitar a squat, thickset brute, with a big paunch, and a face that reminded one of a parchment-covered skull. He was quite bald, and the lamplight flickered on his glazed, yellow cranium. His eyes were dark and brilliant, and moved restlessly as he played. The mandolin player was almost white, with long, wavy hair, and a high-bridged nose, and a retreating chin. His hands were like the talons of a hawk. He appeared to be about eighteen or twenty, and was something of a dandy, being dressed in clean white ducks with a crimson sash. His hair shone greasily, his thin, black mustache was waxed out at the tips, and he reeked of some vile combination of musk and bergamot.

"Gad," muttered Dick. "talk about hell's kitchen! I'm glad we came."

I was not so sure about it, myself. Tough gatherings of the dregs of humanity where the folk are of a low, besotted animal type are not so bad, nor

particularly dangerous to visitors of the upper class if they mind their own business and give no offense. There is always a certain amount of involuntary respect of the lower order for the higher. But the faces turned to us here were not for the most part stupid ones. Many of them held a quality of malicious intelligence which chilled the blood. These were not slum folk; they were pillagers and outlaws; in a word, pirates, and they certainly looked the part. One felt as though carried back a couple of centuries, and dropped in some den of sea wolves on the Spanish Main.

The interrupted conversation was resumed, but we could feel the suspicious glances spraying us from every side. A mulatto waiter, with arms bare to the shoulder, came over to where we were sitting, and I ordered coffee for all of us. It proved to be excellent, and the cognac, which he served with it, was also good. We were sipping it quietly when Dick touched my knee with his.

"Look over there in the corner behind the guitar player," said he, in a low voice.

I followed his glance, and saw what I took at first for a little heap of discarded clothes of some sort. It was dark in the recess, and I stared for a moment or two before I discovered the object to be a child, huddled upon a box. It was a little girl in tarnished finery crouching with her face in her hands and her hair tumbled about her shoulders, and covering her thin, bare arms. At first I thought that she was asleep, but presently she moved uneasily, pushed back her hair, and a wan, narrow face appeared.

"Her hair is red," whispered Dick.

There was a scraping of feet behind us, and, glancing back over my shoulder, I saw that a group of men were leaving the place. They gave us another stare as they went out. The music stopped, and the mandolin player got up, and went around the room with his hat. We gave him some small silver, which elicited a grin and a "*muchas gracias, señores.*" The mulatto waiter

served the musicians what appeared to be rum.

"Let's get out of here," said Marvin, "I'm not strong for this joint."

"Wait a shake," answered Dick. "I want to see that girl. She's going to do a turn, I think."

He proved to be correct. The musicians finished their drink when the death's-head playing the guitar turned and gave a gruff order over his shoulder to the child. She rose to her feet, and in a curious, dazed way stepped out in front of the musicians and under one of the lamps, where she stood for a moment staring straight in front of her like a person hypnotized. Her unbound hair was of a light and rather colorless copper tint, and her eyes were possibly dark blue, though they looked more black to me; but my first glance convinced me that she could not by any chance be Mary Stillwell.

In the first place, I did not think that the child could be more than thirteen at the most, for, although her pallid little face had that expression of age which one sees among starved and ill-used children, her body was as unmatured as that of a little girl of ten. It was pitifully thin and meager in her sad, tarnished gauze dress, which stopped above her bony knee joints. Her dirty white stockings were too loose for her poor, spindling legs, and she wore a pair of high-heeled slippers a size too large for her feet.

Also, she did not look like an American child. Mary Stillwell was described as plump and pretty, and, while one could understand the loss of the former quality, it seemed impossible to believe that this puny waif could ever have been pretty. Her eyes were rather small and set too close together; her nose was thin and high-bridged; her cheek bones wide and prominent, and her skin distinctly yellow. Altogether, her face, both in its general shape, complexion, and individual features, was markedly Latin in type; Spanish or French. No doubt, there might have been some good blood somewhere, for the features themselves were fine, but I did not believe it could be American blood. Her

hands, as she raised them to clasp in front of her flat chest, seemed in about the same proportion to her spindling arms as the feet of a chicken to the leg of the fowl.

The guitar player said something to her in his husky voice, then struck up his accompaniment, and the child began to sing a Spanish love song in a really sweet and pure soprano. In fact, its volume was surprising when one considered its source. It was a sweet, plaintive voice which appealed strongly to the emotions, and there came a hush in the staccato conversation until the song was finished. We were the only ones in the place to applaud, and the child turned slowly, and stared at us in vague surprise. She opened and shut her eyes rapidly, then raised her hand and passed it across her forehead in a dazed, bewildered way. The guitar player spoke to her, harshly this time, but she did not seem to hear, and continued to stare at Dick, who was only a few feet from where she stood.

Then, with the same baffled look on her face, and, as though prompted by some subconscious stirring of deeper memories roused perhaps at the sight of Dick's clean-cut, typically American face, she drew a deep breath, and began in her clear, sweet soprano:

"Once in the dear dead days beyond recall,
When on the world the mists began to fall,
Out of the dreams—"

That was as far as she got. The English words falling on our ears had struck through us like a galvanic shock. Hamlet lurched forward, upsetting our coffee cups, and the next instant was on his feet. But at the same moment the guitar player dropped his instrument, reached forward with one brawny arm, and, gripping the child by the wrist, jerked her toward him, and, with his other hand, dealt her a blow across the mouth.

As her shriek rang out, Hamlet belledowed like a bison bull. Over went the table with a crash, and the next instant he was on his feet, and making for the musician.

"Hold on, Hamlet! Come back here!" I cried, for of all the places to start a row, this which we were in

seemed the very worst. Even supposing that the girl was indeed Mary Stillwell —of which I had not now the slightest doubt after hearing the first bars of Molloy's love song in her distinctly American accent—and in spite of the maltreatment inflicted on her by the devilish guitar player, it seemed no less than madness to attempt a rescue under such circumstances. We were outnumbered six or seven to one, to say nothing of the folk not in the *café*, and, although we had our pistols, it was safe to assume that we were not the only ones so armed.

Hamlet pulled up at hearing me, and stood for a moment irresolute. He could not help but appreciate that any interference on his part must risk the girl's safety as well as our own, to say nothing of the chance of its spoiling our plans, and making the rescue infinitely more difficult and dangerous. But this hesitation was fatal. Had he made no move whatever, the musician would no doubt have been content to let the girl alone after having cuffed her across the mouth. As it was, seeing Hamlet pause, and seeing also the roomful on its feet and ready to fall on the officious foreigners, he snarled like a wolf, and, shifting his hold to the shoulder of the child, gave her a vicious shake, and struck her again and again on the head and face with the back of his shaggy hand.

No white blood could stand this, even though the first blow struck in defense were to be the last. Up we rose, Marvin whipping his stool from under him, and Dick and I, moved by the same impulse, wrenching off a leg from the capsized table. The whole place was on its feet, and the growling mutter which arose behind us told that the crowd back of us was tense and waiting for some overt act.

It had not long to wait. The girl screamed shrilly as a wounded hare does when nipped by a hound; a maddening, infuriating sound. It drove the peaceful Hamlet quite amuck. With a gurgling snarl, he plunged at the guitar player; his long arm drove out like a piston, and his fist landed with a smack—

ing thud on the man's pointed chin, sending him sprawling off his stool.

Then an odd thing happened, and one which precipitated matters more quickly than it is possible to describe. The mandolin player had whipped a knife from his sash, and, as Hamlet let drive, he sprang at him like a snake. At the same moment a blade came flying from the middle of the room, flashing and flickering in the lamplight like a tongue of flame. It skimmed under Hamlet's arm, and buried itself with a nasty *chug* in the chest of the mandolin player, even as his arm was drawn to strike. The man screamed and spun about, then fell across the body of his mate.

Of what immediately followed, my ideas are confused. The yell which went up was a bloodthirsty combination of roar and shriek, and the air was filled with flying objects: stools, bottles, benches; anything which could be hurled. Following this artillery, came the swarm, knives flashing in the light of the lamps, men scuffling and stumbling over benches and tables, flinging themselves at us like howling demons. We were struck, and bruised, and battered, but managed to keep our feet, and turned to meet the rush. Marvin floored the first man within reach with his stool, then drew his pistol. I saw the act.

"Not yet," I yelled. "Save it. Keep together, and make for the door!"

The table legs which Dick and I had wrenched out were the butts of heavy oars; whaleboat sweeps, or the like, and fearful weapons. With these, we met the first rush and drove it back, striking and jabbing mercilessly as opportunity offered. In no time we had half a dozen down and began to shove ahead, Hamlet between us with the little girl in one arm, clasped against his chest, while he wielded a stool with the other, using it less as a weapon than as a shield for the child. Shoulder to shoulder, and smashing out at everybody within reach, we pushed ahead, working stubbornly toward the door.

It may seem incredible that we should not have been overborne at the very start from the actual mass opposed to us, but we were not. Our assailants

were knife men, and no knife can do much against a solid ash club the size and weight of a baseball bat. We did not strike to maim; we smashed to kill, knowing well that once down it would be all up with us. We were fighting for the life of the little girl as much as for our own.

Then reënforcements began to arrive. I saw men pouring into the place through the wide-open doors. Stones began to fly. One struck Dick a glancing blow on the head and brought him down, but Marvin, who, thought short and fat, proved himself as strong and active as a boar, jerked him to his feet again. Then some flying object struck one of the hanging lamps, which fell and exploded among our assailants, and that part of the room was quickly in a blaze.

So far not a shot had been fired, but halfway to the door there came a report from somewhere, and I felt a tearing pain in the thigh. At the same moment the crowd made a fiercer rush, and Marvin was struck down, and stabbed twice through the left upper arm. I saw the act, and dashed the butt of my club into the black face bending over him before the man could strike again. Then down came another lamp, almost at Dick's feet, and he grabbed it up, flaming, and hurled it into the thickest of the crowd. Marvin scrambled to his feet, stood swaying for an instant, then jerked out his pistol, and started to empty it right and left.

The place was an inferno. Screams, roars, bellowings, and shrieks; black billowing clouds of oil smoke, and the crashing of blows were split by the detonations of Marvin's pistol. Flames were licking up around the benches, and we were choking and gasping with the acrid smoke. In an instant the air was too opaque to see ahead; to see each other. Such of the swarm as were able, had broken for the doors. Something crashed against the side of my head, and down I went, but struggled up again, and plunged on with the others. Out into the street we lurched, and, as we stumbled across the threshold, here came a shrieking mob of leaping devils

to the aid of those still hanging on our flanks. Bullets were cutting about us, too. Hamlet was coughing like a seasick man; Dick was lurching along as if drunk, and I was gashed through the muscles of the chest, and over the top of the shoulder, the same ball plowing the muscles of my neck.

But our own weapons were out now, and, as we started shooting, the mob fell back—and some of it fell down. Acting on the same impulse, we plunged across the street, passed between two shacks, turning to fire as we went; then, seeing the beach ahead, we made for it, Marvin and I supporting Dick with our free arms. Straight down to the water's edge we went, and here fortune favored us, for there was a fishing boat stranded in about four feet of water. Splashing in, we waded out to it, and, getting on the offshore side, opened a hot fire on such of the mob as followed us.

This checked pursuit, and, as the tide was out and the beach wide, we were in no great danger. As we were reloading, we heard a hail from behind us, and here came our gig with two of the men at the oars. Dick was nearly gone as we passed him aboard, and I feared that it was all up with him. Bullets cut the water all about us as we pulled off to the yacht, and when we got alongside Hamlet also was unconscious, the little girl clasped, unhurt, in his arms.

Callanish was seething like a volcano. He had heard the uproar and guessed its cause, but did not dare go to our aid for fear of a counter attack on the yacht. Marvin started the motor, and, slipping our cable, we headed out to sea, Callanish at the wheel. I took the child below, and Marvin turned his attention to our wounded mates. Of the two, Hamlet was the more seriously injured, a bullet having entered his right lung. Besides this, he had an ugly knife wound across the chest, a stab through the forearm, two fingers nearly amputated, and was, like the rest of us, a mass of bruises and contusions. Dick, aside from minor injuries, was the victim of three knife and two bullet wounds, the most serious of all being a perforating bullet wound of the leg

which had cut the posterior tibial artery, from which he had lost a lot of blood.

Marvin, in spite of his gashed and humming head, which had stopped a bench in its aerial flight, and the two knife wounds through his arm, had Paddy bind him up, and got immediately to work on the wounded, while I took the child into the stateroom occupied recently by Mary Seaforth, and quieted her hysterical sobbing.

"What is your name, my dear?" I asked, when she had quieted a little.

"Mary—" she hesitated, as if trying to remember.

"Mary what?" I questioned. She raised her hand to her forehead, and, leaning over her, I said promptly: "Mary St—"

"Stillwell—" she whispered.

She fell asleep a few minutes later, and I went out into the saloon to find Marvin working over Hamlet, with the assistance of Callanish who, seeing that there was no pursuit, had called Murphy to take the wheel, and come below. He was administering the chloroform, as Marvin had quickly located the bullet, and was proceeding to extricate it.

"The child is Mary Stillwell," said I. "She told me her name."

"Losh!" muttered Callanish. "Nobody will be denyin' but that ye deserved her. What breed o' lads are ye to be beardin' pirates in their lair?"

"Dey're Americans, dat's what," said Paddy, who was holding the retractors, while Marvin, his face chalky from pain and loss of blood, groped for the bullet with his forceps.

"Ye should go on deck, and tak' a look at your worrk," said Callanish. "The place is blazin' like a straw rick."

"How about you, Jack?" asked Marvin. "What did you draw in that Donnybrook?"

I told him that I had nothing worse than a couple of flesh wounds which could wait, and went over to look at Dick. He was conscious, but very weak from hemorrhage. Marvin had put a tourniquet on his leg.

"You say it's Mary Stillwell?" he whispered, as I leaned over him.

"Yes, old chap," I answered. "We've pulled it off, this time."

"Thank God," he muttered, adding: "and the reward is the least of it. How many of those brutes do you think we did for?"

"More than they did of us," I answered. "I don't care much to think about it."

"I do," said Marvin shortly, "when I think about the child. Who'd ever have thought old Hamlet had it in him? He'd have done the same if he'd been alone. You can never tell about these tender-hearted ducks. To-morrow he'll be weepin' over the human lives we took. Human hell! Here's our bullet——" and he drew it out, and laid it on the table.

When he had finished with Hamlet, we carried him to a bunk and got Dick under the anæsthetic. Marvin secured the artery—but there is no use in going into all these painful details. When all were attended to, I went on deck and set our course. We had been running under motor power, and far astern a red glare against the sky marked the scene of our desperate fight. I have since learned that the place has been abandoned.

Callanish, Marvin, and I decided to run straight back to Kingston. There seemed no reason why the wounded should not do as well aboard the boat under Marvin's skilled care as in the hospital at Port of Spain. So we stood away for the fourth time on the same old course on which, as Marvin said, we must by this time have worn a groove.

Dick, Hamlet, and I improved steadily on the run, but whether because he had let his own wounds wait until the last or because the knife which had inflicted them had been used not long previously on putrid oysters or perhaps due to a fairly recent and long-continued alcoholic indulgence which had impaired his powers of resistance, Marvin's went from bad to worse, and, when finally we arrived in Kingston, he was in a pretty bad way, and we sent him immediately to the hospital.

Mary Stillwell went there also. From

the first it was evident that the poor child was not quite right in her head. Her memory was seriously impaired, and she could tell us nothing either of the shipwreck nor the events which had followed it. Marvin, having examined her thoroughly the day after our rescue, said that she was suffering from an old depressed fracture of the skull, possibly received at the time of the wreck, and that she gave symptoms of cerebral pressure, which he thought could be relieved by operation. Otherwise, he could find no evidences of maltreatment aside from neglect and improper nourishment. Physically, as well as mentally, her development appeared to have been arrested from the time of the catastrophe. She may have gained a little in general health on the run to Kingston, but was given to long periods of apathy, during which her mind seemed quite incapable of action. It was necessary to urge her to eat, and at times to put her to bed, as one would a child of three or four. Callanish assumed the care of the poor little thing, and his soothing, tenderly paternal treatment of her showed us quite a new and unexpected side of his curiously complex character.

On our arrival at Kingston, I cabled to Mr. Druitt:

Mary Stillwell recovered. Mental and physical condition impaired, but doctors hope for improvement. Now in hospital Kingston. Await instructions.

In answer, I received a wire which read:

God be praised. Sending trained nurse to bring child home. Prepare for disappointment regarding promised reward due to financial difficulties. Writing.

With a rather sick feeling in the pit of my stomach, I showed this letter first to Callanish, who had taken his ward, now quite restored to health, and gone to the Crystal Spring Hotel. He glanced it through, then passed his spread fingers through his sandy beard.

"'Tis not encouragin'," said he. "For myself, 'tis reward enough to have had a hand in savin' the lassie from yon venomous sea snakes. But t'wud be a peety if you braw lads were

to be bilked o' what y'have so well earned. Now what has happened this fule to be gettin' into financial deefi- culties when payday comes arround?"

Not being able to answer this question, I sat down patiently to wait, living aboard the boat for economy's sake, but spending the most of my time at the hotel, with daily visits to the hospital. The news of our achievement had been sown world-wide and we were in receipt of many congratulatory and complimentary dispatches, a large number being from sources unknown to us. The Venezuelan government made some pretense of investigating the matter, but without much result.

Marvin's condition improved under skilled treatment and good nursing, though he escaped losing his arm and probably his life by a narrow margin. Dick's and Hamlet's wounds healed as rapidly as might be expected of clean blood and able surgery, while I had stopped thinking about my own, which had given me no trouble whatever at any time. Druitt's cablegram was the thing which bothered me, the more so as I wanted Mary Seaforth as a stricken soul longs for paradise.

"I suppose you know that I'm in love with your ward," said I one day dejectedly to Callanish, as we sat on the veranda waiting for the girl to come down.

"I am no' blind," said he dryly.

"Well, then," said I, "don't let it worry you. I'm not going to tell her so until I hear from this chap Druitt."

"And what if he says he canna pay any reward at all?"

"Then I won't tell her at all," I answered.

Callanish stroked his whiskers meditatively. "Y're a good lad, Jack," said he, "and I like ye fine. But Mary Seaforth is not for a penniless man. He who marries her must e'en match the sma' dower I will be gi'in' her wi' money o' his own. I ha' not toiled and moiled i' the muck o' the Amazon and Orinoco to fill the wame o' some impreveident galoot. I will mak' no secret o' it that for a time I was minded

to tak' the lass to wife mesel', as why shi'd I not, bein' a hale man o' forty-five wi' a bit siller i' the bank and no so bad favored, as nae doot ye will admit. 'Twas on this account I guarded her so close and discouraged visitors, for I dearly lo'ed the lassie, and do still, only 'tis different the noo."

He drew down his heavy eyebrows, and, glancing at his face, I saw that his small, bright eyes were brimming. It gave me a curious shock, for it was hard to think of the Rubber Man as emotional.

I did not speak, and he went on presently, as though talking rather to himself than to me: "A man gets a bit odd fra livin' too long wi' savages," said he. "Nae doot he grows a bit savage himsel'. I never thought but that I c'u'd win the hearrt o' the lassie by lovin' care of her, and that she w'u'd not be wishin' to refuse me my reward, and 'twas not till she was taken wi' the fever that I learned the truth. It seems she had guessed my ambeetions, and was in mortal fear o' me; o' me, *Andra Callanish*, who was slavin' like a nigger to mak' her a home where she shi'd live like a lady borrn as she is. But when she was daft wi' fever it all came out. 'Tak' me awa'," she moaned. "Tak' me awa' fra this awfu' place, and this awfu' man, *Andra Callanish*. I am feared o' him—— and the like, over and over and over. A' that she had kept lockit in her breast cam' pourin' out like a sea frae the scuppers." He took out his handkerchief, and blew his high, hooked nose.

"I saw then that she was not for me," said Callanish, and went on with a certain impressive dignity: "and after a bit tussle wi' mysel' I gave up all my vain hopes. Donald Seaforth was my friend, and his bairn a sacred trust. Now, when we will ha' finished here I shall put her i' the convent school, go back to straighten out my affairs below, and later tak' her home. She must marry well and live her ain life as best suits her, for she is a good, sweet lassie, and deservin' o' the best."

He looked at me, and nodded several times. I held out my hand, and he took

it and gave it a squeeze that made me squirm.

"Good for you, Callanish," said I. "You needn't worry about me."

Druitt's letter came in time, and, after I had read it, I did as Callanish had done; I had "a bit tussle wi' myself," and gave up all my vain hopes.

It appeared that the man had been caught in the financial maelstrom then sweeping the country and been sucked down. He had lost everything. All that remained to him, or at least to his wife, was a modest income belonging to this lady, which had been so secured as to be inviolate. But worse than this, he had hypothecated the bulk of Mary Stillwell's fortune, of which he was the sole trustee. This he had been led to do in a vain effort to ride out the storm and under the firm conviction that the girl would never be heard of again.

This conviction, he explained, was due to the discovery that the demands for ransom were, as many had supposed, purely fraudulent, and the work of a scoundrel, who had made use of the tragedy for his own unscrupulous ends, but had happily been unearthed by detectives employed by Druitt, and was then awaiting trial. I am glad to say that he was subsequently convicted, and is now in jail.

Druitt's letter was frank, manly, and straightforward. He offered no excuses for his own act, and expressed the most sincere, and, as I think, perfectly honest gratitude at the girl's recovery. He said that, while the circumstances were such as to enable his niece to have every care and comfort, the paying of the promised reward was at present utterly impossible, but that he hoped at some later date to be able to fulfill the obligation. The letter closed with expressions of the warmest gratitude and regret that the heroic rescuers should have been doomed to disappointment, *et cetera, et cetera*. He concluded by saying that he was sending by the nurse who had known the child from infancy a certified check for ten thousand dollars, which he hoped might at least defray the pecuniary expenses of the search.

I showed the letter to Callanish, who merely grunted, and said that he would take the check when it came and pay me the five thousand in gold. This he did, and, after deducting the sum of the expenses which his charter and upkeep of the yacht would come to, he presented the balance to Marvin as a fee for professional services rendered. "I am content to split even on the business," said he, "but if ever ye sh'd collect in full, which is no' likely, ye will forward me my half share."

Here, at least, was one man who had confidence in the commercial integrity of the Bum Club!

I broke the news gently to the other three, but need not have done so, as they took it with the calm philosophy of true, world-battered bums.

"Reward be hanged!" said Dick. "We got the girl, and busted up a pirate outfit. That's reward enough for anybody. No use in being a hog about it." But he was pretty glum for a day or two, and I knew that he was thinking of Kitty Shell.

Hamlet was rather histrionic about it. "What is gold to those who have 'euchred God Almighty's storm, and bluffed the eternal sea?'" he quoted. "What is gold to one who has pasted grim Death on the point of the chin, and knocked him off his stool? What is gold to one who has rescued damsels in distress, and faced the doughty Laird of Ardvourlie in his berserk rage? Or bearded the mighty *marabout* Mira-goâne in his den at La Coupe prepared to lay him on his table and roast his heels." Such indeed had been Callanish's design as he told us afterward. "Or what is gold to one who has been chloroformed by Callanish, and operated with the assistance of Paddy Gavin? Out upon their filthy dross! Let us hope that we may receive our rewards in heaven—but not for some time yet." And he applied himself to the "blow bottles" they had given him to plaster his punctured pleura back in place again.

Marvin was less expansive. "Oh, forget the reward," he growled. "I never thought we'd get it, anyhow."

The nurse, a nice, motherly woman, arrived and wept over Mary Stillwell, and took her home. The girl has since quite recovered in mind and body, but the mystery of her being on Margarita has never been explained. From the time of the wreck to that of our rescue of her she remembers nothing. It is probable that she was picked up in the life preserver by one of the sea scavengers who, for their own good reasons, decided not to take the trouble to return her to her own.

Perhaps the disappointment in not receiving the expected reward fell heaviest on me—and, as I have since learned, on Mary Seaforth. There was my promise to Callanish, and, even if it had not been for that, how could I, a penniless adventurer, heavily in debt, ask her to confide her life to me? She was already the acknowledged belle of the place, and there were half a dozen better, and richer, and more distinguished men than I trotting at her heels, and asking no greater blessing than some encouragement to offer her their names and fortunes. Where did I belong? I, John Kent, once a naval officer, and now a bum who had been practically kicked out of the service for debt and misconduct! I belonged at a

table in Ruhl's place, searing my inside with rum.

Callanish gave us a farewell dinner at the hotel—he must have taken more than one fat nugget from that ditch above the rapids—and later, when we went out to get into our carriage, Mary found that she had left her handkerchief in her chair on the veranda, and went back to get it. I went with her, and when the tiny scrap of lace was found, she pressed it to her eyes.

"I—believe that I am—crying," said she. "Good-bys are—always wretched things—now are they not? Let us walk around. I do—not wish the folk inside to see."

I could not answer, so we strolled slowly along the path. Under the palms at the corner of the house, I paused.

"Good-by, Mary—" I said.

"Good-by," she said, and raised her tear-stained face. Then her round, bare arms slipped up about my neck—and, though I may have broken my promise to Callanish, it was not in words.

"Jack—Jack—" she sobbed, "is there anybody else?"

"No—nor ever will be!" I answered, and, for the first time in my life, I told a woman the truth.

The Bum Club have gone back to the "movies" for a second engagement. You will get the story in an early issue of the POPULAR.



IN THE NATURE OF A HINT

ANDERSON owned a pool room, and late one night his German friend, Hans, found him nodding in his doorway.

"Why don't you go to bed?" asked the Dutchman.

"I can't," replied Anderson. "Two guys are back there playing pool."

"Why don't you break up their game and make them go home?"

"I've tried to, but I can't. I gave them two or three hints, but they took no notice of them."

Hans assumed an expression of determination.

"Leave it to me," he said. "I'll give 'em a hint."

In a few minutes he returned from the back of the pool room to where Anderson was sitting.

"It's all right," he said, much gratified; "they're going home."

"How did you fix it?" inquired Anderson.

"Oh," said Hans, with an air of indifference, "I gave 'em a hint."

"How?"

"I just took the balls off the table."

The Squirrel

By Charles E. Van Loan

Author of "The Ten-Thousand-Dollar Arm," "The Quitter," Etc.

Not all the tragedies of the national game are played out before an audience; nor for that matter, are the comedies. For the life behind the scenes we know of no man who can paint a truer picture than Charles E. Van Loan. In this, Van Loan's first baseball story of the season, there is set forth the more or less tragic history of a great southpaw who refused to believe the pronouncement of his manager: "You have got just so many games up your sleeve, and when you have flung them all—bang!"

THREE ain't no use beating around the bush," said Manager Burgess to pitcher Wicks, otherwise "Wicksey" or "the Squirrel." Having thus pointed out the futility in skirting the edges of an unpleasant subject, the speaker proceeded to do the very thing which he had condemned as useless. It was in the manager's mind and heavy upon his conscience to tell the Squirrel that after nine years' faithful and continuous service he was out of a job, but as Burgess looked upon the appealing countenance of his veteran pitcher, he found it hard to put his message into words. It is just as difficult for a bush-league baseball manager to tell an unpleasant truth as it is for any one else.

"You know the fix I'm in," temporized Burgess. "They look to me to get two hundred cents out of every dollar I spend, and I can't carry any deadwood on the pay roll. Every man that draws salary has got to be able to work. Particularly the pitchers. Now this new kid, McSherry, looks middling good. He's got as much smoke as a steamboat, and if I can ever learn him to think, he'll be quite a heaver some day. You see, Wicksey, McSherry's coming and you're going. There's a whole lot of people in this town that think you're already *gone*."

"Aw, say," said Squirrel Wicks, and there he stopped. Words always troubled Wicks. He did not know what to do with them, so for the most part he remained silent. Vaguely he realized that he had arrived at a serious crisis in his affairs, and he knew from the manager's manner that something unpleasant was in store. He sat on a bench in the dirty, unswept dressing room underneath the grand stand with its litter of cast-off garments, cigar butts, and playing cards, and for lack of something better to do, he scraped at a knot hole in the floor with the toe of his spiked shoe. That knot hole was an old friend; it had been there during the entire period of the Squirrel's service.

"Aw, say!" he repeated helplessly.

"Well, I'm saying it," continued Burgess. "You know yourself that you haven't been much use to the team so far this season. Last year you got away with it on your control, but since you've lost that, it's first-degree murder to ask you to work. I slipped you in there this afternoon just to see if you couldn't find the plate once in a while, and what did you do? Walked three men, hit two, and laid one right in the groove for Feeney! What kind of pitching is that?"

"Aw, say!" This was still all that

the Squirrel could manage under the circumstances, which were beginning to be acutely painful.

"And, of course," said Burgess, "you can't expect to go on pitching forever. Even old Cy Young had to go back to the farm, you know. That bird had the greatest soup bone ever built onto a man, but he kept on pitching, and by and by he worked it out. You got just so many games up your sleeve, Wicksey, and when you've flung 'em all—bang!"

Wicks did not look up. He continued to scrape the knot hole gently with his left toe. His little world was crashing to atoms about his ears, but he could not find words in which to express his misery. The Maroons were not much of a ball club by any standard you choose; the D. L. D. League was not much of a league—"Darn Little Dough" was what the players called it—and Bowlegs Burgess was not much of a manager, but poor as they were, these things were the best that Squirrel Wicks had ever known, and the news that he was to be separated from them after so many years came as a numbing shock, temporarily paralyzing his limited powers of reflection.

"It's tough, I know," said Burgess, with the blundering kindness of a dentist who attempts to soothe the jumping nerve with conversation when cocaine is needed. "It's tough, but it might be worse. You ain't married, and there's only yourself to look out for. Just the other day McCulley was saying that he wisht he could get a steady man in the bowling alley nights. You better drop in and see McCulley."

There was an uncomfortable silence. Wicks sat motionless, save for the slight scraping motion of his left foot, now purely mechanical. He had ceased to study the knot hole, and was staring straight in front of him; but for the expression in his wavering blue eyes, Burgess might have thought that Wicks had neither heard nor understood.

"Well, I got to be going!" said Burgess suddenly.

He jumped to his feet with a great

deal of unnecessary clatter, and moving over to the broken, fly-specked mirror—sole outward evidence that vanity still lived among the Maroons—proceeded to knot the scarf which had been hanging about his neck. This task completed to his satisfaction, he pierced the cheap, knitted fabric with a long, brass pin, at the end of which was an imitation pink pearl not much larger or more valuable than a gumdrop. Real pearls of any size or color were not known in the D. L. D. League.

Burgess consumed a great deal of time in the operation, for he hoped that the Squirrel would say something, and give a hint of what was passing behind those troubled eyes. Thus the conscientious dentist listens for the patient to groan in order that he may assure his victim that the pain is trifling and will pass. Kindness is the compelling motive; well meant but useless. Some hurts of nerve and heart lie deeper than words. Burgess made a last attempt with his hand on the door-knob.

"There's nothing pers'nal in this, Wicksey," said he. "If you was able to take your turn in the box and win a game once in a while, you could stick on the pay roll till hell freezes over for all o' me, but it ain't my money. It's Joe Darnell's, and you know Joe; 'two for one always' is his motto. I like you first rate, Wicksey. We all like you first rate. You're a good feller and all that, but your arm is pitched out—see? *Ausgespielt!* I'll tell McCulley that you'll be around to see him; shall I?"

The Squirrel did not answer. He had returned to an intimate scrutiny of the knot hole. After giving him a liberal interval in which to respond, Burgess slammed the dressing-room door, and went away, his rapid steps echoing hollowly under the deserted grand stand.

The rays of the setting sun, filtering through the cracks, saw Wicks still upon the bench in front of his locker, a slouching figure in his dingy, stained uniform. When he could no longer see the knot hole, he scraped it with his toe. Not all the tragedies of the national

game are played out before an audience.

In addition to owning the Maroon franchise, a doubtful asset at best, Joe Darnell owned the Silver Star Saloon, and it was there that Burgess sought his superior. Darnell was mopping the bar, but he paused long enough to ask a question:

"Well? Did you tell him?"

"Yes," said Burgess. "I told him—and I'd rather have been licked."

"Uh huh," said Darnell. "What did he say?"

"That's the worst of it," said Burgess. "He never opened his mouth—just sat there and looked at the floor."

"He always was a nut, anyway," remarked Darnell. "Most left-handers are a little touched in the head. So long as he could pitch, I stood for him, but now—" He left the sentence unfinished, and continued to swab the mahogany.

"Poor devil!" said Burgess. "If he'd put up any sort of a holler—asked for another chance—anything—it wouldn't have been so tough. He didn't act *natural*—like a man would act when he was getting a can tied to him. You know, Joe, it wouldn't surprise me at all if he went clean off his nut any time. He's the kind that'll sit around and sit around and chew on his trouble till some day—bang! and down comes his whole upper story. Yes, sir, that's just about what'll happen to him."

"Well," said Darnell, "there's one good thing; he won't ever be violent. He ain't the violent kind."

"You can't never tell what a left-hander will do," said Burgess sagely. "Anyway, I'm sorry for Wicksey. I'm going over and ask McCulley to give him a job."

"What doing?" asked Darnell, with slight interest.

"You think any feller that's played baseball for you nine years—for the dough you pay—is going to be particular?" sneered Burgess. "Any old job would be a boost—after that."

"Oh, I don't know!" said the owner of the Maroons. "Them that ain't sat-

isfied can quit. There's no strings on 'em, my son."

II.

The Squirrel's public record was an open book; his private record was blank. He drifted into Booneville from nowhere, found the Maroons at practice, and, climbing over the bleacher fence, asked for a job, in the manner of a harvest hand accosting a farmer.

"What are you?" asked Burgess. "An outfielder?"

"I've pitched—some," said the stranger.

"Where at?" demanded Burgess.

The abruptness of the question seemed to startle Wicks.

"All around the bushes," said he at length. "I'm pretty good."

"Oh, you are, are you?" said Burgess. "Show me something."

Wicks was allowed to practice with the Maroons, and it did not take him long to demonstrate that it was as he had stated. He was pretty good; very good, in fact, for the D. L. D. League.

"He's a nut of some kind," Burgess reported to Darnell, "but there's nothing the matter with his left wing. Got speed, control, nice curves, and he fields pretty well for such a big, gangling feller. Says he's never been in a real league before."

"Ask him how much he wants if he makes good," said the thrifty Darnell. "If he's a nut we ought to get him cheap."

"I asked him already," said Burgess. "He says he don't care."

"He's a nut all right," said Darnell. "Tell him we'll give him twelve a week to start with."

Darnell was prepared to offer as much as fifteen in case the stranger protested, but Wicks accepted the pitiful stipend without comment. Thirty dollars a week was the top figure in that league, twenty was the average, for the D. L. D. was the very bottom of the baseball ladder—fit only to climb out of or fall into.

Wicks made good and forgot to ask for more money; a second reason for questioning his sanity. The players

found him a silent, colorless individual, who kept his mouth shut at all times, and attended strictly to his own business, having no business outside the pitcher's box. Attempts to draw confidences from him were useless; he met such advances with a nervous, depreciating grin. Past experience was a thing which he would discuss with nobody, and gradually the impression grew that Wicks had something to hide.

It was Bogart Ledbetter, the town humorist, who fastened the name of Squirrel upon Wicks. Bogart, who owned a pool parlor, and maintained a private menagerie for the edification of his customers, discovered Wicks endeavoring to establish friendly relations with a caged squirrel.

"Don't get your fingers too close to that feller," said Bogart.

"Why?" asked Wicks. "He's tame, ain't he?"

"He's tame all right, but he's a squirrel, and squirrels eat nuts," said the local funny man.

It was humor of too subtle a brand for Wicks, and thereafter he became the Squirrel. He accepted the name as he had accepted the twelve dollars a week—without question or argument.

"A little bit touched in the upper story, but harmless," was the popular verdict. "Baseball sense is the only kind of sense he's got, and it's all he needs. Gee, how he can hop that pill over the plate!"

Other left-handers, better known to fame, might have been described in the same terms.

Time passed on, and Squirrel Wicks became one of the veterans of the Maroon team. Almost any man who could play baseball a little and would play it for a little money had a chance to become a veteran in the D. L. D. League. Youngsters flashed for a season, and then went higher to their rewards, for they did not belong to the bottom of the ladder, but neither ambition nor envy touched Squirrel Wicks. He had found the spot where he belonged, and seemed satisfied with it. Scouts, beating the bushes in search of promising material, never looked twice at Wicks.

"He's good enough for Booneville," said they, which meant that he was not good enough for anywhere else.

Wicks had heard of cities where ball players wore real diamonds, and earned real money, but to him these cities were nothing but names—New York, Chicago, and Pittsburgh. He had also heard of the organization known as the big league, but the words possessed no especial significance for him.

"How'd you like to go up there some day?" Tacks Murphy once asked Wicks this question. Minor leaguers usually refer to the big league as "up there."

"Wouldn't like it," said Wicks, who was in a rarely communicative mood.

"You wouldn't! Why, say, do you know what some of them fellers get for playing six months?"

"Huh uh!"

"Ten thousand dollars! And they live on the fat of the land—they don't ride in no cabooses, you bet."

"That's too much money just for playing ball," said the Squirrel mildly.

"It wouldn't be too much for me if I could get it," said Tacks hungrily. "And think of all the fun a feller could have in a town like Chicago or Saint Loey."

The Squirrel shook his head.

"I don't like them big towns," said he. "Too much going on."

"I'll bet you never saw a big town!" scoffed Tacks.

"I have so. The biggest town in Ioway."

Later, having had time to think, Wicks added an illuminating sentence or two—the key to his queer character, had Tacks but known it.

"It ain't the money that I care about," said he. "Money is nothing, but I certainly do love to play ball. Seems as if the only real fun I get is when I'm in there pitching. I like to see 'em swing their heads off at the third one."

Though Wicks had never explained his point of view to the manager, Bowlegs Burgess furnished the Squirrel with plenty of pleasure. Steady, consistent pitchers, eager to work in turn

and out of turn, are as rare in the D. L. D. as any other league, and Burgess worked the uncomplaining Wicks like a horse. Under the circumstances, it was marvelous that his arm lasted as long as it did. It must have been an unusual arm to begin with, for it was later ascertained that the Squirrel had been pitching here, there, and everywhere for six years, when he drifted into Booneville. Six and nine are fifteen, and fifteen years in the pitcher's box will send most of the iron men to the scrap heap.

The breakdown of a pitcher is seldom a sudden affair; the wearing out of one is a gradual process which never varies. First the Squirrel's speed deserted him, and he was no longer able to hop the third one across the corner of the plate. Dismayed at his failing power, Wicks fell back upon his control, of which he had been gifted with rather more than a left-hander's share. Control carried him through three seasons, but when the curves began to go wide, and the ghost of the "fast one" refused to break at all, even a half-wit like Wicks knew that the end was in sight.

III.

On the night of his dismissal, Wicks presented himself at McCulley's bowling alley. Utter dejection struck at every line of his tall, awkward figure. His shoulders sagged hopelessly, and he shuffled his feet in an apologetic manner as he stood in front of the cigar counter. Twice he opened his mouth to speak, but no words would come.

"Hello, Squirrel!" said McCulley cheerfully. "Do you want that job?"

Wicks gulped, and nodded his head.

"All right. Take off your coat, and hop to it. Put up the ducks on number three."

So the Squirrel became a pin sticker at a dollar and a quarter a night—a mighty fall for one who had been a baseball pitcher, but even a squirrel must eat. Tony, the nimble little Italian pin sticker, was paid a dollar and a half a night, and the three negroes received a dollar apiece. The extra

twenty-five cents paid to Wicks may be credited to a trace of pity in the McCulley make-up. As a pin sticker, the Squirrel was not worth a bonus.

"I could have got a kid for a dollar a night that would stick pins all around him," explained McCulley to his customers, "but it seemed to me it was kind of tough to can him off the team after all the years he's been here. He's a nut, I know, but he's quiet, and he 'tends to business. Don't bawl him out so much for being slow, boys. He's doing the best he can, and when he hoists those long legs of his out of the pit, you can bet that every pin is on the spot. How does he like his new job? The Lord knows. He hasn't opened his mouth to me."

Wicks opened his mouth to no one. Night after night he sweated in the padded pits, bending his back over the splintery tenpins and dodging the flying "ducks" when small-ball games were in order. It was not a merry life, but between the hours of six and twelve it was a busy one, which is the next best thing.

At the end of the third week, Wicks moved his few possessions from the boarding house to the bowling alley, and thereafter he slept in the storeroom with Tony, the three negroes, the worn-out pins, and the superannuated pool tables. McCulley had provided half a dozen cots for his hired men, which enabled him to pay them a lower wage by saving them the item of room rent. When one earns a dollar and a quarter a night, room rent becomes an item worthy of serious consideration.

Under Wicks' cot, and guarded carefully, was a battered old pasteboard suit case, which, when new, had almost resembled alligator skin. The three negroes, noting the Squirrel's furtive manner, made up their minds that the suit case contained something of value. They discussed the matter among themselves.

"Whut you reckon the ol' Squi'l got in that box?" asked Ephraim Ballou. "Las' night I wakes up, an' there he sets on the aidge of his bed. Kind of scairt me at first because I couldn't

make out whut he's up to, but bimeby the light gets better, an' I sees that he's got that box open in his lap, an' is kind of feelin' round inside it with his hands. He set there the longes' while, never makin' a sound. Look to me like he was kind of *pettin'* something. Whut you reckon he got in there?"

"Tain't no dough, else he wouldn't be yere," said Zeke Johnson. "And yon-all hears me say it, I ain't gwine messin' round with no junk whut belong to a lunatic. No indeedy! S'posin' he'd ketch you monkeyin' with that box? They ain't no telling *whut* he'd do."

"If he ketches me," said Ephraim, "but I don't 'low to let him do that."

"You look out, Eph," said the third negro. "Them half-wise, half-nutty people is terrible foxy!"

The time came when Ephraim got a chance to satisfy his curiosity, and the result was a complete surprise. He related his experience as follows:

"The Squi'l he goes out to git a bite to eat, an' I bulges in an' drags out that suit case. He ain't even got it locked, maybe because the lock's busted. I opens her up, and whut you think I found? Nothin' but that ratty ol' Maroon uniform of his, some baseball shoes, an' a glove full o' holes. Thass every single thing they was. You don't reckon he thinks he's gwine to pitch some mo'?"

"Pore ol' devil!" said Zeke Johnson. "Pears like he jus' natchelly hates to let go. Fightehs is jus' the same way. They awluz thinks they's one mo' battle in 'em. Look at Gawge Dixon an' the Ole Marster! Could anybody tell them they was through? Even afteh they was licked, they didn't believe it. The Squi'l's the same way, an' bein' sort o' loony makes it worse."

Wicks did not relinquish his interest in baseball. When the Maroons were playing at home, they were always sure of one deeply interested spectator who came in through the deadhead gate and took up a lonely position at the far end of the right-field bleachers. Elbows on his knees, and chin in his hands, he followed every move of the game from

beginning to end, a silent, impassive figure in whom was neither praise nor blame. His old teammates often waved their hands at him, or shouted rough greetings; he responded with the slightest nod. He had never been in the clubhouse since the night he packed his suit case.

The motionless figure on the bleachers often betrayed Burgess into prophecy.

"You mark my words," the manager would say, "Wicks is going violently bug one of these days. Take a born nut like he is, and give him a grievance to brood over; and if he stays with it long enough, look out for him. I hope the old boy ain't got anything against me."

If the Squirrel had nothing against Burgess he was hopelessly in the minority in Booneville, for the Maroons were having a bad season, and, as is always the case, the manager came in for the lion's share of the blame. Poor Bowlegs was doing the best he could with the material provided, for Joe Darnell absolutely refused to throw good money after bad, as he expressed it.

"The club is all right," insisted the owner stubbornly, "the trouble is in the handling."

"I'd like to see you or anybody else handle that bunch of sand lotters!" responded Burgess with bitterness. "Connie Mack himself can't take swill and make champagne. If you'd only loosen up and let me spend a little money I could stiffen up that infield, get a hitting outfielder, and a real pitcher or two. Then we could make some sort of a race out of it. I know where I can get a whale of a pitcher, and all he wants is twenty-five a week and his board."

"Yes," said Darnell, "and I could get Ty Cobb and Walter Johnson if there wasn't anything to it but spending money. You must think I'm in this business for my health!"

"It's about all you'll get out of it unless you come through," said the harassed manager. "The crowds are getting smaller and smaller, we don't

draw flies on the road, we'll be in last place in another week, and that's where we'll finish. The only way to make money out of baseball is to put money into it, and you won't let go of a cent!"

"You bet I won't!" said Darnell. "And I'm going to throw up this franchise if the crowds don't pick up. I've got a family, I have, and I don't propose to sink a lot of good dough in a bum ball team."

This was the condition of affairs when Martin Dowling, the postmaster of Booneville, discovered in the mail a letter addressed to Elmer Wicks. It spent a week in the W box of the general delivery before Dowling had an inspiration.

"Mary," said he to his clerk, "what's Squirrel Wicks' first name?"

"I never heard him called anything but Squirrel," said Mary.

"Well, I wish you'd ring up McCulley at the bowling alley, and ask him if the Squirrel's first name is Elmer. If it is, there's a letter here for him."

"Humph!" sniffed Mary. "Who'd write to that simpleton!"

But she telephoned, and half an hour later the Squirrel, shabby, unshaven, and apologetic, appeared at the general-delivery window.

"Wicks, ma'am," said he, blushing. "Elmer Wicks."

"And I shouldn't be surprised," said Mary, later, "if it was the only letter he ever got in his life. Addressed with a typewriter, it was, and from Waterloo, Iowa. There wasn't any name on the come-back; only a post-office box. No, it wasn't from a girl; it was in a business envelope."

The next morning the Squirrel's cot in the storeroom was empty, and his pasteboard suit case was missing. The disappearance of a prominent citizen is never more than a nine days' wonder; the Squirrel was forgotten in three.

IV.

The league season in Booneville limped on to a disastrous finish. In last place since the end of July, the club had not been able to pay expenses, and

Joe Darnell, loudly proclaiming his willingness to sell the franchise, was greeted with ironical mirth.

"Sell it!" said Bogart Ledbetter. "You'll have to *pay* somebody to take the darned thing off your hands! You don't think anybody is going to be fool enough to buy a dead horse, do you?"

"I'll sell it or throw it up," said Darnell savagely. "I'm not sucker enough to hold the bag. The folks in this town make me sick! Here I've given 'em league baseball all these years, and the first time the team has a streak of bad luck, what do they do? Quit me cold. A fine lots of sports, they are! But they won't hook me, Bogey. I'll get rid of this old franchise some way!"

"Put it in a basket with a bottle of milk, and leave it on somebody's doorstep overnight," suggested Ledbetter. "That's the way they do with foundlings. If you quit, Joe, what's going to become of Burgess, and all the boys on the club? They're such rotten ball players that they can't get a job anywhere else. This is the worst team in the worst league in the whole world. Where do they go from here?"

"Let 'em go to work!" snapped Darnell. "It'll do 'em good!"

"Fine!" said Ledbetter. "As ball players, they're a swell lot of farm hands. Your pitchers ought to be pitching hay, and they would be, but they haven't got control enough to heave alfalfa through a barn door. Your infielders would make good short-order cooks, the way they scramble the eggs, and spill the beans. As for Burgess, he ought to make a fair mule driver, the experience he's had. Yes, let 'em go back to work, by all means."

"They won't work me!" said Darnell.

The Booneville season was to close on a Sunday, the Maroons playing a home engagement with the Piketown Reds. It was a six-club league, and the Reds were safely intrenched in fifth place. The outlook was a dreary one, and the final harvest of quarters and halves promised to be small.

On Saturday morning, Bowlegs Burgess was on his way to the Silver Star

Saloon for a last conference with Joe Darnell. The manager of the Maroons wore his hat tilted down over his eyes, and his hands deep in his trousers pockets, and, as he walked, he muttered under his breath. This habit is common with managers of tail-end teams, and the reason is not hard to find. Human misery seeks an outlet in words, the manager has much to explain, and, as nobody will listen to the unfortunate whose team is in last place, he talks to himself, certain of a sympathetic listener.

"It's all off," said Burgess. "If I didn't have a wife and two kids, it wouldn't be so tough, but—"

A familiar figure approached, coming from the direction of the railroad station. Burgess spied it, and a startled exclamation burst from him:

"Wicksay!"

It was indeed the Squirrel, but he had undergone a transformation. He was dressed in a cheap black suit, which draped his angular form in straight, ungraceful lines. He wore a black satin tie of the sort which fastens with an elastic band, and on his head was perched a black derby hat of an almost forgotten shape such as may be encountered on the rural free delivery routes. He resembled a cross between an undertaker and a scarecrow, and, as he drew near, his heavy, black shoes squeaked dolorously.

"Well, you old rascal!" said Burgess. "Where have you been all this time?"

"Up in Ioway," said Wicks, solemnly shaking hands.

"The devil you have!" said Burgess. "Where did you get all the clothes? You look like a dude."

"I—bought 'em," said Wicks, and, taking out a large handkerchief, he proceeded to mop his face with great vigor.

"Must have a job somewhere?" suggested Burgess.

Wicks shook his head.

"No," said he. "I ain't been working."

"Come back to stay a while?"

"Dunno. I might."

Extracting information from the Squirrel was very like drawing the cork

from a bottle without a corkscrew. The men stood facing each other for some seconds, and then Wicks picked up his ancient suit case, and fell into step beside Burgess.

"I wasn't going no place in particular," said he, "so I'll walk along with you. How's things?"

"Rotten!" said Burgess. "I guess you've got here in time to see the finish of a league team in this town."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, things have been going from bad to worse all season, and now Joe wants to sell out or throw up the franchise and quit. I've been trying to get some of the sports to chip in and buy the club from Darnell, but they can't see it." Burgess had found his sympathetic listener at last, and floodgates were opened. "You know me, Wicksey. I'm no John McGraw, but I can win ball games if I've got anything to win 'em with. A winning ball club in this town would be a good investment, but I can't get anybody to touch it because Joe let the team go all to seed—wouldn't spend a nickel on it. I told him how it would be. I wanted to go out and grab a few live ones; I wanted to pay better salaries, and get the money back out of increased attendance, but Joe couldn't see it that way. He was all for picking up kids and tramp ball players that he could get for nothing. I tell you, Wicksey, you can't draw money less you've got a winning club, and you can't have a winning club without players—*good* players—and they won't work for nothing. Joe has let the property deteriorate, and now when he wants to sell, they all give him the laugh. I don't know what we're going to do. Joe hasn't paid us for the last three weeks—he says he's waiting to see how he comes out at the end of the season. That's the bunk. He's going to try to beat us out of three weeks' dough. Joe Darnell has had this club for twelve years, and the first season he loses money, he wants to throw up his hands and quit. Lord! I wish I could get hold of a man with some sporting blood and a bank roll! If I could find somebody to buy that ball club, and

spend a little money strengthening it, I'd build him up a pennant winner, sure!"

"I'll buy it," said the Squirrel.

Burgess halted in his tracks.

"Huh? You'll *what*?"

"I'll buy the ball club," repeated Wicks calmly.

Burgess stared hard into the Squirrel's placid countenance, in which was no sign of emotion of any sort; he strove to hold the wavering blue eyes, but they slipped beyond him. A sudden suspicion flashed into the manager's brain. He laid his hand on Wicks' arm with the cautious gesture of one establishing relations with a dangerous horse, and when he spoke his voice was soothed in the extreme.

"Why—why, of course, you'll buy the ball club!" said he. "Sure you will! Ain't it funny I never thought of you before! You'd be the very man. Buy the whole darn league if you want to!"

"I could do that, too," said the Squirrel, "but it would be syndicate baseball. I think I'd rather own just one club."

"Of course! Of course!" said Burgess hastily. "You're right about that, Wicksey. And when you get ready to buy, I'll manage the club for you."

"I'd rather have you for a manager than anybody else," said Wicks.

"Now you're shouting, old boy! Yes, indeed, and I'd manage it *right* for you!" Burgess' eyes were darting up and down both sides of the street, as if seeking for something, but he continued to babble reassuringly, as fast as his tongue could wag: "We always got along first rate, didn't we, Wicksey? Always the best of friends! And that time I let you out—that was all Darnell's fault. I wanted to keep you. Sure I did. Ask anybody. Don't you remember, I told you that, so far as I was concerned, you could stay till hell froze over if you *never* won a game? Don't you remember that?"

"No, I don't remember that," said Wicks.

"Sure you do! Sure you do!" Burgess was still clawing at the Squirrel's arm. "Nine years you pitched for me, and we never had a cross word! Gimme

another pitcher like you, and this club wouldn't be in last place to-day! Not on your life! I've always said that. I told Joe Darnell so. 'You chump,' I says, 'you went and canned the only pitcher I had. You wouldn't lemme keep Wicksey, and now you'll see where we finish.' That's what I told him. You can ask anybody if I didn't."

"I can pitch yet," said Wicks, with immense conviction.

"I'll bet you can!" cried Burgess, slapping him on the back. "Remember how you used to shoot that third strike over? None of 'em could touch that fast ball, could they? Yes, and it would have made a sucker out of Ty Cobb, or the German!"

Light flickered behind the wavering blue eyes.

"I can shoot the third one over just as good as I ever could," said the Squirrel. "I ain't had any real fun since I quit pitching. Seems like I never *did* have any real fun except when I was in there working. There's a lot of games left in me yet."

"You're good for ten years more," said Burgess recklessly. "And you're going to *pitch* again, that's what you're going to do! Leave it to me, and I'll fix it all up. You can pitch as often as you want to."

"When I buy this club," said Wicks, with terrible distinctness, "I'd like to see anybody *stop* me from pitching. Come on; let's go up to Joe's place, and buy it now."

"Whatever you say," agreed Burgess. "I'm the best friend you've got. You know that, don't you, Wicksey?"

Burgess left the Squirrel standing in front of the bar in the Silver Star Saloon, and hurried into the back room, where he found Joe Darnell moodily contemplating a pile of unpaid bills.

"Telephone for a cop!" whispered Burgess. "Squirrel Wicks is out there, plumb crazy! Clean off his nut! I told you it would come some day!"

"Wicks!" ejaculated Darnell. "That loon back again? Why, he wouldn't hurt a fly!"

"He's raving, I tell you!" urged

Burgess. "I've had a terrible time stalling him along! Hurry up! Get the cop!"

"Pshaw! He ain't violent, is he? What does he want?"

"He says he wants to buy the ball club."

"*Good night!*" gasped Darnell, reaching for the telephone. "I'll tell the chief to send over a man on the run. You go out and keep him pacified—stall with him—agree to everything. I'll be there in a minute with a 'sap' in my pocket. We'll string him along until the bull comes. Hello! Hello! Police station, quick!"

A moment later the proprietor of the Silver Star Saloon strolled out of the back room, eight inches of rubber hose stuffed with duckshot in his hip pocket. He smiled across the bar at Wicks, who was leaning his elbows upon the mahogany in a well-remembered pose.

"Well, Squirrel!" said Darnell pleasantly, "it looks like old times to see you back. How've you been? Have a drink?"

"I'm pretty well, I thank you," said Wicks, "and I don't drink. You know that."

There was an awkward pause.

"Burgess tells me," said Darnell, "that you want to buy the ball club."

"I was thinking of it," said Wicks.

"I don't know anybody I'd rather sell it to than you," said Darnell, winking at Burgess.

"Yes," said Wicks, "lots of people wouldn't want to buy a ball club. I do."

"Sure you do!" prompted Burgess. "And Joe wants to sell it to you. Don't you, Joe?"

"He's the one fellow around this country that I would pick out," said Darnell. "You see, Squirrel, I'm a little particular about who I sell this club to. There's some people—"

"How much?" asked Wicks suddenly.

His direct method was rather disconcerting to Darnell.

"Well, you see," said the owner of the franchise, beaming upon Wicks, "I've got two prices. One price would

be for a fellow I liked, and that would be a low price. The other price would be for a fellow I didn't like, and that would be pretty high. Now, I like you fine, Squirrel, and I always did. You can have that ball club for a song and sing it yourself. Words and music, I'm an easy man to do business with if I like a fellow. You could have that ball club for a lot less money—*cash*, you understand—than anybody I know. That's because I'm a friend of yours." He thrust his thumbs into the armholes of his vest, and rocked back and forth upon the balls of his feet. "That's how strong I am for you, Squirrel!"

"*How much?*" repeated Wicks, striking the bar with the flat of his hand.

Darnell glanced anxiously toward the door.

"Cash?" he asked.

"Cash," answered Wicks. "Right here on the bar."

Darnell's eyes left the door, and his right hand crept back to his hip pocket. It was at this point that Burgess began to realize that he was on the same side of the bar with Wicks; Darnell could afford to smile; he was protected by breastwork of brass and mahogany.

"Well," Joe began slowly, "seeing that it's you, and that you're a friend of mine, I'd say three thousand dollars right here on the bar. That's dirt cheap for a real ball club, Squirrel, and if you wanted time—I—I—sa-a-y! What the ——" Darnell paused, with his mouth open, and not without cause. At the words "three thousand dollars," Wicks had plunged his hand into the inner pocket of his coat. The hand reappeared in an instant, grasping a roll of currency about the circumference of a strong man's arm.

"Wha-what is this?" gasped Darnell. "A frame-up? Whose money is this?"

"Mine," said Wicks. "All mine. One hundred—two hundred—three hundred—four hun—"

"Everything is off!" squalled Darnell, his piggish eyes upon the roll of bills. "I don't want to sell! I've changed my mind. It was all a joke!"

"It is no joke," said Wicks. "Burgess is a witness."

The manager of the Maroons recovered his staggered faculties with a whoop of delight.

"You bet I'm a witness!" he shouted. "You made him a price, Joe, and he accepted it! You've sold a ball club!"

Wicks continued counting calmly until a great ragged pile of currency lay upon the bar. Then he put the roll, slightly but not appreciably reduced by the transaction, back into his pocket, and pushed the ragged pile toward Darnell.

"Three thousand dollars on the bar," said he. "There it is."

Darnell gazed at the money with bulging eyes. Then he picked up one of the gold certificates, and held it to the light.

"By golly, it looks good!" said he. "Where did you get it?"

"From a lawyer," explained Wicks. "My father got mad at me for wanting to be a ball player, and I ran away from home. When he died, there was nobody to leave this to but me, and—I got it. That's all."

"Suf-fer-ing mackerel!" breathed Burgess. "How much was it, Wicksey?"

"One hundred and thirty-two thousand dollars—in cash," said the Squirrel.

Joe Darnell gave up a groan, which came from the soles of his shoes.

"And I could have grabbed him for ten thousand as easy as not," said he.

"If you wanted more money you should have asked for it," said Wicks. "Three thousand—on the bar—was what you said."

"I won't sell!" howled Darnell, with a sudden burst of fury. "I won't! I won't!"

"All right, Joe. You won't." Bow-leg Burgess suddenly thrust himself into prominence. He scooped the pile of currency from the bar, and placed it in Wicks' hands.

"What are you butting in for?" snarled Darnell. "Keep out of this!"

"I'm butting in because I'm Wicksey's manager," said Burgess quietly. Then to Wicks, who was showing signs of

impatience: "It's all right, old boy! let me deal with this stiff." Burgess moved down toward the end of the bar, and Darnell followed him, whispering excitedly:

"What's the matter with you, Burgess? Get onto yourself! Here's the softest thing that ever lit in this town! I can get the whole bundle away from him, and I'll give you a split of it! Take a tumble, and help me push it along!"

Burgess smiled a nasty smile.

"Taking candy from babies is the best thing you do, ain't it?" he sneered. "You ain't going to rob this poor nut because I won't stand for it, see? He's offered you three thousand dollars in regular money for a ball club that ain't worth three thousand cents. You've been trying to sell out for fifteen hundred, and every sensible man in town has been giving you the laugh. Now, here's something that you can write in your little brown hat; it's three thousand dollars or nothing. Take it or leave it!"

"But won't you listen to reason?" pleaded Darnell.

Burgess turned on his heel, and walked away.

"Come on, Wicksey," said he. "We'll go and buy the Piketown club."

"Hold on a minute!" said Darnell. "What's the hurry?"

A policeman dodged in at the door, and looked around the room.

"What's coming off here?" asked the officer.

Darnell looked at the money in the Squirrel's hands, and then he looked at the obstinate angle of Burgess' chin.

"All right," he grunted. "You've bought a ball club, Wicks. Gimme the money!"

Officer Shea stuffed the handcuffs back into his pocket, and looked foolish.

"I—I thought there was some trouble here," he stammered. "The chief said—"

"No trouble at all," said Burgess. "Shea, meet Mr. Wicks here. He's just bought the baseball club."

"Yes, and I'm going to pitch to-morrow," said Wicks.

V.

News of any sort wears wings in a small town. Before nightfall it was truly amazing how many of the citizens of Booneville had placed themselves on record as believing that Sq—Elmer Wicks had never been anything but—er—eccentric.

On the closing Sunday afternoon, the Maroon park held the banner crowd of the season, and when Owner Wicks, in his faded and patched uniform, stood forth to warm up with his sorry pitching staff, the cheers rattled the shingles on the grand-stand roof.

Bowlegs Burgess, who had the germ of diplomacy concealed somewhere upon his person, held an intimate conference with Lawrence McGuigan, chief of the Piketown Reds.

"Now, here's the way she stands," said Burgess. "The Squirrel is just as much of a nut as he ever was, but he's got money now, and people with money have to be humored. All these rich guys have their hobbies. John D. plays golf; Andy Carnegie gives away libraries. Wicksey's hobby is wanting to see 'em swing their heads off at that third strike. What do you say?"

Lawrence McGuigan needed no brick house to fall upon him. He grinned from ear to ear.

"What's the closing game of the season—between friends?" said he. "It wouldn't surprise me a bit if the Squirrel got the season's strike-out record this afternoon."

"Fine!" said Burgess. "But don't burlesque it too strong. Sometimes I think this guy ain't *all* crazy at that, and remember he always did have baseball sense. Make it look as good as you can, Larry, and the Lord bless you for an understanding mick!"

That game is still a joyous memory in Booneville. For nine innings the Squirrel hurled the ball in the general direction of the plate, and no less than eighteen of Piketown's noble athletes

fanned the air with giant swings. No third strike was called that afternoon. The final score was eleven to nothing, in favor of the Maroons.

The rays of the setting sun, filtering through the cracks in the dressing room, gilded the new owner of the Booneville franchise, as he sat on the bench in front of his old locker, and thoughtfully explored a knot hole in the floor with the toe of his left shoe. Bowlegs Burgess, half in and half out of his other shirt, grinned across the litter at the familiar picture.

"Does it seem like home to you?" he asked.

"You bet!" said Wicks fervently. "Say, Burgess?"

"Well?"

"How—how did I look in there today? Pretty good?"

"Great!" said Burgess enthusiastical-
ly. "You had everything, Wicksey! Speed and control, and a lot of stuff on the third one always. Nothing to it, you're some southpaw yet!"

The Squirrel heaved a long sigh, and sought the knot hole again.

"Well," said he, "I'm glad I looked all right, because I felt rotten. Seemed to me they swing at a lot of bad ones. I don't think I'll take a regular turn in the box next season. I'll just pitch on my birthday and the Fourth of July, eh?"

"Whatever you say, Wicksey. You're the boss."

"I don't want to pitch myself out," said the Squirrel gravely. "I want to last as long as I can."

Squirrel Wicks is still the owner of the Booneville franchise in the D. L. D. League, and Bowlegs Burgess is his manager. Salaries have been raised, and the Maroons are on their way to a pennant. In spite of the fact that the owner has been beaten by overwhelming scores in his last three starts, Burgess insists that he is still "some southpaw."

George Pattullo is known to you as a writer of Western stories. He surprised us by sending us a really truly baseball story. You will get it in the next POPULAR. The title is "The Southpaw Meteor."

The Man Who Disappeared

By Richard Washburn Child

Author of "The Blue Wall," "Jim Hands," Etc.

Moving-picture films of this series are being prepared by the Edison Company and will appear simultaneously with the issues of the POPULAR containing the story of "the man who disappeared." It is splendid material for the "movies"—full of plot and action. The theme will make an all-reaching appeal: an innocent man takes upon himself the guilt of another and disappears. He becomes a criminal in the eyes of the law, and as a hunted man he has his adventures extraordinary. We do not use illustrations in the POPULAR—if you except an occasional painting on the cover suggested by a story—but if we did we should want to put the very best man on the task. That's how much we think of the series. We will be curious to hear how the moving pictures strike you after reading the story. Sometimes a photograph destroys a pleasing illusion we have had about someone we have heard about but never seen. What the motion-picture people do with J. P.—the "man who disappeared," will be an interesting experiment.

I.—THE BLACK MASK

JOHN PERRITON, feeling no sense of impending disaster, had left his bachelor apartments in the afternoon, reflecting on such serious subjects as the comparative merits of two brands of cigarettes and two makes of golf balls.

Then again he had been unable to imagine why Nelson Wales and his sister Mary preferred the country to the city at that season of the year when all the smart folks of Briarwood had not yet sent their servants down to the shore to open the summer estates for the season, or at that other season when even the big, cordwood, field-stone fireplaces at the Briarwood Country Club would not take off the chill of coming winter.

It had seemed to him that it was an imposition on one's friends to ask them to a mask supper and dance when at least one hundred per cent of the guests had to motor down from the city.

Of course, he had come to the mask as every one else had come—because of Mary Wales and the originality of her entertainments. Her brother was not popular; he had been the one failure which old Owen Wales had made, and though he had a repertoire of graceful manners and could play a dashing game of polo and was not unpleasant to the eye of well-bred girls, the men seemed to scent a deficiency in his manhood. Some one had hinted at a breach of faith toward a mine superintendent's daughter in his days in the West just after his sudden withdrawal from college. Some one else, who had played cards with him, never spoke to him again. Some one else said he "did not mind Nelson's existence so much, but he resented his being Mary Wales' brother, because Mary Wales—"

Everybody loved Mary Wales. The married men admired the way in which she, in accordance with her father's last

verbal wish and with his written will, became head of the house at twenty-one. They loved her as they would love a daughter. The unmarried women loved her because she could be as well liked by all men without being a rival to any girl. They loved her as they might love a sister. The single men loved her because she was a good comrade. They loved her as some one out of their reach. A few of them, like John Perriton, just loved her as men love young women who can be as beautiful as the lightest-headed of all girls and as good and wise as the ugliest.

John was the kind of man who knew very well that he was not good enough for her. He was nearly at the end of a long journey through the check books that his mother had left him to fill out in pursuance of her last folly of indulgence toward an only son. And worse than the extravagance had been the waste of life itself—the waste of time, the waste of usefulness, the waste of a good body under the bite of alcohol, and the waste of a good, resourceful mind in the empty dallying with irregular, fleeting hours, usually clad in evening clothes.

But John's spirit was cut from the stock of take-a-chance. He would have proposed marriage to a princess. Preferring Mary Wales to any princess he had seen, he therefore proposed marriage to her. He told her all the drawbacks which would follow along with him, and because marvels happen more often in hearts than in any other quarter, Mary had taken up his hand and pressed the back of it to her soft cheek and had refused to be any more definite about it. Whereupon John had lived a new hope. The feeling of her cheek was always upon the back of his strong, sinew-strung right hand. That feeling had failed to change his habit of life much, but it was a guarantee that he would go at any time and to any place where he could see Mary and seek a chance to tell her in his awkward way how much he loved her, and ask like a boy when she would give him her final answer.

This masked affair was another

chance for him. He had complained as one used to luxury and comfort at being obliged to leave the lure of town for the journey over chilly roads, but the complaint was that of a boy of thirty. There had been no chance of his declining the invitation.

And now, after the amusement of a mask at which from the very meeting of the guests and hosts all had been disguised so that one could not even guess whether one's companion at supper were the season's new theatrical star or the daughter of one's banker, John had finally maneuvered his way through the assemblage to a girl in lavender and asked her to put on a wrap and steal away for a stroll toward the cold, eternally-restive, moonlit sea which shimmered beyond the terraced garden.

He was sure enough of his choice. The bearing of her figure, the curl of the hair at the base of her white neck, had convinced him that he had not mistaken Mary. Both disguised their voices as they stole away from the dancers in the spacious hall of the Wales' country home, but the moment after they had passed through the conservatory which had been built on part of the wide brick-paved porches since the death of old Owen, and the tang of the salt breeze was upon their faces, John snatched off his black mask and laughed with the delight of the first long breath of fresh air.

His companion raised her bare arms as if to infold in them the night, the stars, the moon, and the wind, and claim them as her own, and with a cry of gladness ran forward with John pursuing, as a guardian might follow a reckless, playful, wanton child.

"How do you know who I am?" she asked, at the end of their frolic.

"I love you," said he, in explanation.

"And shall I take that declaration on your honor?" she asked.

For a moment John hesitated. He was certain, however, that he had made no mistake, and felt the advantage which Mary's unwonted mood of daring now gave him.

"Yes, Mary," said he, drawing her

near to him. "Take off the mask. I have hated the thing that hid your face all this evening. You may have deceived the other guests, but you have not deceived me."

"And if I take it off——"

"I will not answer for the consequences now," he said, with his face close to hers.

"Ho!" she exclaimed, with mock bravado, and, snatching off the black cloth which had covered her eyes, nose, and, with its fringe, her lips, she allowed Perriton to kiss her.

"Does this mean——" he began, thrilled with hope of victory, and convinced that a kiss from her could mean nothing else.

"It means whatever you may believe," she said. "No, not again, John —here comes my brother."

John stepped away from her before Nelson Wales had seen them. Apparently he was not following them; apparently the existence of any one but himself was out of his mind. In the white moonlight a paper showed, crumpled in his hand, and he walked this way and that aimlessly, like a creature in anguish. Suddenly, sensing their presence, he raised his head, thrust the paper into his pocket, and greeted them with a forced interest.

"Hello, Perriton," he said. "What's going on? You've got Mary out here when half the people in the house are hunting for her. They've taken off their masks, and the fun is over. You're about the only one who is staying down till morning. The cars are at the door. Everybody wants to say good night, and there are hidden yawns going around as cheap as pennies."

"We'll go back then," said Mary.

"Wait a minute," her brother said. "Let's see that mask of yours. How did you tear it?"

He pointed to a hole which had been ripped by one of her rings when a moment before she had snatched the covering from her face.

"Gladys Mayberry stole mine," he added. "Let me keep this."

Mary nodded her assent and patted Nelson on the shoulder with the unmis-

takable manner of an affectionate sister.

"Don't go, Perriton," said the brother, plucking nervously at John's sleeve. "Mary can run back alone." Then under his breath, and in a significant, almost sinister voice, he added: "I have something to say to you."

"What is the matter?"

"A skeleton at the feast," said Wales. "Come with me. I'll take you to our library. I'll tell you there."

To John it was evident that a menace of no small consequence overhung the miserable man who clung at his sleeve with plucking, trembling fingers as they approached the side door which led to the library which had always been used by the family for their own private living room. The inner doors were now all closed, and in this empty room Nelson Wales pointed to a chair, and then, as John sat down, paced back and forth, snapping his fingers and pulling at his knuckles as one unnerved and facing calamity.

"Come, come, old fellow," said Perriton, trying to conceal his impression that there would be a disclosure of a nasty affair, "what's up?"

"Everything," groaned Wales.

"That means a woman, or it means money," said John. "The world eternally runs in those two grooves."

"It is money. I've got to have your help."

"Cards?" asked Perriton, picking a pack off the library table and pointing to them suggestively.

Wales shook his head.

"The market?" John went on, shaking out an evening paper which announced on the headlines of the financial page a strong recession of prices.

Nelson nodded, bent his face into the hollow of his hands, and his body shook with his emotion.

"I'm done for," he whispered.

"What did you plunge on?" asked the other.

Mary's brother took the newspaper from Perriton's hand and pointed to the quotation of a well-known mining stock which had broken into pieces directly

after the opening of the exchange that morning.

"A loss is a loss," said John, with a sympathetic hand on Wales' shoulder, and a dry smile on his face. "I wish I had been the one instead of you. It might have been the cause of my going to work. Perhaps for the same reason it will be a good thing for you."

"You have not heard it all. I wouldn't tell a soul if I didn't need help. You haven't seen this."

Perriton, taking the crumpled paper which the other man offered him, held it under the lamp on the library table. He stopped at the second sentence of the letter, and, glancing up reproachfully at Nelson, straightened his body and then continued the reading of this message:

Nelson Wales, Esquire.

DEAR SIR: We take the most effective means of reaching you at once and send this by messenger. The checks which you have advanced us in payment during the course of your speculation we have discovered, late this afternoon, beyond a shadow of a doubt bear the forged signatures of your sister. This might have remained undiscovered had your investments of the last few days been more fortunate. Of course we insist upon your covering this worthless paper with seventy-five thousand dollars before to-morrow's bank closing. A failure to do so will lead to your immediate accusation and arrest. Very truly yours,

BARNETT, BOND & PERRY.

"Great Scott, man!" exclaimed John, clenching his fists. "Where is the button in this room? Ring for old Mack. This at least is excuse for a drink."

Wales pressed a button beside the fireplace, and then the two men paced back and forth, Perriton glancing covertly at Wales with the look of the boyish, careless, irresponsible personality which often, more than any other, detests dishonesty and breaches of the code of a gentleman. On the other hand, Mary's brother looked up at John slyly, weighing perhaps the sympathy he might expect from him. He had meant to trade on Perriton's affection for his sister; his was the soul of a craven. Back and forth they walked—the sheep dog and the fox.

Even after old Mack—McIlenny, of

twenty-eight years' service in the Wales family—had brought a tray with decanter and glasses, had set it down on the library table with trembling hands, and shuffled out of the room, the two men were silent.

"Seventy-five thousand dollars!" John whispered at last. "That is staggering."

"It is when you bet it against the penitentiary!" answered Nelson. "I'm in deep—in deep in every way. I owe everybody. Can't you let me have the money? Just for a few days. Just until I can fix this nasty mess."

"You talk as if these last eight years had increased the small sum my mother left me," answered John. "I suppose I must tell you the truth. I've been a spender. I've less than fifty thousand left now. And that is all in securities."

"They could be sold. You could do that for us."

The insistence made as of right by Mary's brother now brought to John's mind the reason why he had been chosen to save the family from dishonor. The realization that Nelson was offering his sister's happiness in trade, caused a revulsion of feeling which made Perriton clench his hands and feel in his knuckles the desire of impact. He poured out a long drink. Feeling the need for strength, he turned to the stimulant with which he had long been on intimate terms, but of which he had not yet learned the truth that weakness and not strength is in its friendship.

With the glass in his hand, he again picked up the message from Wales' brokers, and then, with a shrug of his shoulders, handed it back to the other man, indicating that further discussion of the matter was useless.

"So you refuse to help me?" said Wales.

"I refuse."

At the moment John made this positive reply the sound of some one outside caused both men to look up. The door opened slowly, and Mary's head appeared; she was smiling with the mischievous smile of all women who interrupt men's quiet conferences.

"May I come in?" she said, and then seeing the glass in John's hand, she walked straight toward him and took it from him. "Not in my house, please," she said, with a laugh on her lips, but with an earnest, decided look in her eyes. She was familiar with her lover's weakness and with his susceptibility to the influences of alcohol.

"I have a mind to make you take the pledge, John," said she. "I believe I will. Here! Hold up your right hand."

He laughed, and tried to escape her by moving around the table, but she caught him, and, holding his right wrist, raised his arm into the posture of one taking an oath, and, shaking her left forefinger at him as one would caution a child, said: "Come. Promise me. No more alcohol."

"For how long?"

"A year."

Perriton's face grew serious for a moment. He answered nothing, but nodded, and that nod satisfied Mary.

"I just came in to put away these things," said she, taking a necklace of pearls from her throat and opening the door of a strong box built into the wall. "Isn't that beautiful?" she went on, holding up the necklace for John to see. "It belonged to my mother. But no woman should wear so much money about her neck. It represents enough to clothe over a hundred families for a year."

As John looked up from the splendor of the glistening necklace, he met the eyes of Nelson Wales, who had taken up the letter from the brokers from the table, and with it in his hands, now contemplated Perriton with a furtive glance in which appeared anger at Perriton's refusal of assistance and also the gleam of crafty design.

Mary, having locked the steel door of the strong box in the wall, and nodded affectionately toward John, was now going toward the door. Her brother started after her with the letter in his hand held forward, expressing as clearly as possible an intention to disclose all to her and make her share in his punishment for wrongdoing.

Into John's mind there flashed the

thought that at any cost Mary must be protected. It was unthinkable to him that she should have to know that her brother was a forger; he could not bear to see the grief and shock which would come to her when she had read that terrible news. He belonged to that class of men who still retain the chivalrous instincts, bred in the Middle Ages, which have been benumbed in our own days by the hurry of civilization to declare that a woman can take care of herself; furthermore his love for the girl cried out within him not to let her suffer.

He stepped out in front of Nelson, barring his path. He placed his finger on his own lips to indicate that Mary must not know. When the other man stepped back in an attitude of inquiry, John pointed to himself to indicate that so far as he was able he would bear the burden which Wales already had asked him to undertake. The door closed after the girl, and once more the two men were alone.

"You would not tell her!" said John, with a shudder.

"What other course can I take? She will lend me no more money—unless she knows she must or else see me in jail. Why did you stop me?"

"Because when it comes to a show-down, I love your sister too much—as you know—to let this be known to her. Give me the pen and ink."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to write to my attorneys, and you can start for town to-night so as to deliver it to them early to-morrow. I'll let you have all I've got—fifty thousand. You'll have to scrape up the other twenty-five in the city."

Nelson rang for the aged servant.

"I'm much obliged," he said suddenly. "I wanted to save Mary's feelings. Here, take your drink now. I guess you need it. I know I do."

John hesitated as Wales pushed the glass toward him, but as the old call for stimulant swept over him he raised the glass and gulped down its contents.

"Pen and ink, Mack," said Wales to the servant who had again answered the summons.

"It may be some time before I can

square this, old man," Wales said, as Perriton began to write.

John did not answer; when he had signed his name he poured out another drink and then handed Nelson the note he had written.

Parker & Gosnold, Attorneys at Law.

DEAR SIRS: As you have full authority, please sell for me at the earliest possible moment and at any price the entire list of securities held by you for me, to bring about fifty thousand dollars. Whatever the amount, turn it over to the bearer, Mr. Nelson Wales, who is known to you, and who will give you his promissory note for a like sum. Mr. Wales desires to raise seventy-five thousand dollars to-morrow morning for a business reason, and any advice you can give him to help him to obtain a loan of an additional twenty-five thousand will be appreciated by me.

JOHN PERRITON.

While Mary's brother read this with greedy eyes, Perriton addressed the envelope.

"And now you have just time to catch the last train for town. You can go to my rooms when you get there and sleep and change your clothes," said John, unfolding a local time-table and pointing to it and then to the clock, which announced the late hour. "What's the matter?"

"I don't want to go. I'm all unnerved. I need sleep," Wales complained.

"Nonsense! This is no time to play the quitter. You ought to be in the city the earliest possible moment. Call the car. I'll ride to the station with you. I'll drive you myself."

He drank again, and then almost pushed Wales out of the room. Ten minutes later the pair were scudding over the depot road past the rows of half-bare trees which skirted that famous drive. John steered the car without a word. He loathed the man at his side, and, beginning to feel the creep of liquor through his veins, abandoned himself to a vague, dreamy review of the events and emotions through which he had passed that evening—his eagerness to be alone with Mary Wales, the leap of his heart when she had allowed him to kiss her, the shock of her brother's disclosure, and the realization that he had calmly deprived himself of all

that remained to him of a nearly squandered fortune. It seemed the end and the beginning of everything.

A little light burned at the station, but no one was on the platform as they walked toward the waiting-room door. The agent was bending over some report within, and on the bulletin board on the wall was the announcement that the train was forty-five minutes late.

"What rotten luck!" said Nelson. "Don't let's wait here. Let's go over to the Commercial House."

As in many small towns a wooden hotel, with a cheap and ugly front, faced the square across from the depot; as in many such hotels, lights showing dimly through unwashed lower windows, spoke of a warm stove, a pool room, and the after-hour sale of liquors. John and Mary's brother went between the pool tables, from which came the click of the game over which hung a motley crowd of village loafers, fishermen from the Cove, and men from the railroad's maintenance-of-way gang, into a back room. The evening clothes of the two newcomers showing, as they unbuttoned their coats, attracted a little curious attention as they passed.

To the awkward youth who came to view them with a glance of inquiry, Wales raised two fingers to indicate an order of drinks.

"No, no," said Perriton.

"Why not?" asked Wales. "Your ride home will be cold."

"But I must stop and say good night to Mary. I must go and tell her that you received a message which called you away. She would be worried. I've had enough, confound you."

"Let Mary alone. She's all right. She won't worry. You've got a room at the country club," Nelson said craftily. "Besides I hate to drink alone." The ride in the cold air had freshened his mind, and in it there had formed new details of an evil design. He believed the way was open to him to procure the additional twenty-five thousand dollars, the lack of which still threatened him with disgrace and perhaps imprisonment. He had determined to take the

chance, and the more he dulled Perriton's faculties, the less the difficulties in the way.

"Well, one then," John answered.

But after one there came another, then a third, and Perriton failed to notice that Wales had poured the bulk of all that had been served to him down the leg of the scarred table. John's mood now was swinging up and down, into the clouds of his relation with Mary Wales, down into the depths as he recalled the rascally character of the man who sat across the table from him. The raw, strong whisky affected him more than usual, and Wales, noticing this, smiled in a mean triumph. Perriton was no longer himself.

The whistle of the train warned them at last; the two hurried into their coats and crossed to the station where John's car still stood waiting.

"Good-by," said Wales, climbing the steps of the last car. "I never can thank you enough."

"'S all right," said John, breathing heavily. "Good-by. I don't like your manners and customs much. No, I don't. I don't, I tell you! No, I don't! But here's my hand, chesthesame."

As the train pulled out, John stumbled back toward his car. With a fog before his eyes and the world narrowed down, so it seemed to him, to a few feet in every direction, he did not observe that Mary's brother had climbed up one set of steps of the back platform and then, unobserved, had climbed down on the other side. Hardly had the locomotive begun to gather its speed before he dropped off into a gravel bank, rolled over twice, and, rising, plunged into the brush which lined the track.

Perriton saw none of this. He was trying to gather his swaying wits. Conscious of his folly that evening, he fought against the sharp effect of the cheap whisky, endeavoring to remember the lateness of the hour, trying to recall whether he had planned to stay at the country club or not, and striving to decide whether he owed a duty to Mary to call her on the telephone or stop at the Wales house to leave a message for her, telling her where her

brother had gone, and explaining as best he might the unannounced dash to the station for the last train. In his brain there now whirled a confused mass of thoughts which, as he cranked his car, seemed to mingle in distress with the whirling objects of the physical world outside.

In a vague way he felt a stinging regret that he had not respected Mary's wish that he drink no more. Once again, as he stumbled and fell into the driver's seat, he realized, as on other rare occasions he had realized, that in driving a high-powered machine he was taking his life in his hands.

The car, however, leaped forward, flew across the square, narrowly missed the corner of a building, and sped into the long stretch. The road before him seemed a strip of tape which wriggled as a flimsy ribbon in the wind. Lurching from side to side as dizziness swayed him, Perriton steered his machine according to the swaying of his own body.

As if by magic, and created out of his fancy, a market wagon, laden with boxes of vegetables, sprang up in front of him in the moonlight. With a yell, half of terror and half of triumph, John swung clear of the horses and the heavy vehicle and laughed foolishly to himself as the sleepy driver on the wagon seat woke up and shouted a reproach as he flashed by.

The idea occurred to John that his motor car was an old friend. Surely it had an intelligence of its own. If he were not seated at the wheel, it would make no difference; the car would go on just the same to its destination. It would take the right turns. It might even stop on the country roads to read the signboards.

At the moment this fancy came to him, Perriton heard a shout. A belated villager, walking home, came out into the road after the car had gone by, and as he watched its mad, corkscrew course, he waved his arms and bellowed warnings at the man on the seat.

John conceived the idea that this man, whoever he might be, was offering an unjust criticism of some kind.

The subject was one over which, in the next half mile, he brooded with his head bowed weakly and the little attention he had given to his safety now forgotten.

At the top of the hill, from which the Wales house, perched on the cliff at the edge of the sea, was visible, there is a turn in the road. The car snorted as it dashed up the incline, and at the brow of the rise it failed to make that turn. Instead it plunged through an undergrowth beneath the trees, jumped out into a plowed field, and came up against the wall of an old barn.

The crash of the impact, the shriek of tearing wood fiber, the scream of machinery gone wrong, ended in a cloud of steam and smoke.

When Perriton regained his senses, he tried to stagger to his feet. He fell back twice into the tangle of weeds where his inert body had been lying. Finally he stood up, and staggered this way and that, trying to remember where he was and what had been the sequence of events which had brought him to a violent catastrophe. No longer did the madness of alcohol possess him; now his confusion was due to the shock of his accident. A pounding against the interior of his skull made him wonder whether he was the victim of concussion of the brain; he felt of his forehead and pressed his thumping head between his hands.

Little by little his vision cleared, and then he saw across the rolling fields the outlines of the Wales house. Without a look behind him at the wreck, he stumbled forward toward the distant summer residence. He believed that his life depended on reaching that goal. In his wild fancies he conceived the idea that only Mary could save him, and that he must reach her or die. Self-preservation displaced all other thoughts and instincts. Sometimes falling forward onto his face, sometimes scrambling to his feet, growing weaker and weaker as he proceeded, his singleness of purpose and his will power forced him on toward his goal.

His eyes and brain refused to measure distances; now the light in the

house seemed far away, now it seemed to be a glowing square which he could reach out and touch with his groping fingers. His body seemed to be made of lead, his brain of feathers tossed about by breezes of thought.

Suddenly the hedge which, at the edge of the Wales lawn, bordered the smooth, well-crowned road, brushed Perriton's staggering legs. He fell over into it. Red spots whirled about in a dizzy dance before his eyes. He remembered taking ether once before an operation; the same wafting away of the world was taking place now. He twisted his body, grasped the branches of a rosebush, ground his teeth together in one last protest against the chaos of emptiness which assaulted him. Then he fell over limp and unconscious.

How long he lay there he did not know. He was roused by the sound of a human cough. The cough was not his own. Some one else was near at hand. He tried to call out, but his throat, dry and aching, would not serve him. He rolled over onto his stomach.

The moon had crawled down the sky and was below the trees on the western rise of land. The radiance was dim, but he could see that he was not alone. Another man was there on the lawn, moving cautiously from shrub to shrub, slinking in the shadows as he approached the house. No light showed now in any of the windows, but John could see, from the attitude of the midnight intruder, that he did not want to be discovered.

As the stranger stepped softly onto the porch, he turned once as if he had heard John's heavy breathing. The man lying under the hedge believed that he had been seen, but a moment later he was reassured by the other's gesture of satisfaction. The moment of suspense, however, had given Perriton the final conviction that the intruder meant no good at the Wales home. He wore a black mask.

On the north side of the house the porch was covered, and as the man disappeared around the corner, John raised himself to his feet. Though all his bones and muscles ached, his head

was clear, and he knew that the occasion called for caution and courage, and perhaps for physical exertion. He moved his arms and legs to make sure that, in spite of his accident, he could be ready for a struggle with a criminal. He had had a long experience in athletic sports, and knew that necessity would often whip the tired or even injured human body into fitness for action; the end of the four-mile boat race, the last period of a football game, had taught him that lesson. And so, with his fists clenched and his movements confined to the heavier patches of shadow, he followed the course of the other man.

At the corner of the house, the wind from the sea struck him full in the face. Indeed, it seemed that this blast had swept the stranger whom he was stalking into thin air. The other man had disappeared.

"Great Scott, that wasn't a dream!" whispered Perriton to himself. "I'm not out of my head! No! By George, look at this!"

He stooped and picked up a man's glove. Under his touch he felt the human warmth still in it.

"A fastidious burglar," he said. "Either he has entered the house, or he is making a complete turn around all four sides."

The thought led him to retrace his steps; he intended to proceed to the south corner, and lie in wait for the enemy. Stopping for a moment, he searched the ground until he found a billet of wood. A poor weapon, it was better than none, and he grasped it threateningly.

As he did so, the momentary flicker of a match inside the library window announced that the other man was no longer outside. John felt sure that any member of the family who had been awakened would switch on an electric light. He weighed the plans of action open to him, and decided that he must be careful. No doubt the other man had a revolver. That was one danger. No doubt, also, one of the men servants, perhaps old Mack, had a revolver, too, and if awakened would come down-

stairs ready to shoot at the first man he saw. That was a second danger. John hesitated, trying to think of a plan. He walked close to the library window and listened.

He was sure he could hear the marauder inside; there was the faint sound of a metallic scratching within. He raised his head and stretched his body to have a look, but the curtain had been drawn, and as the man within scratched another match, its flicker only glowed through the window shade. Perriton stepped back from the ledge.

As he did so, the flare of the electric lights sprang up in the rectangle of the window, and from the other side of the glass came the sound of a sharp exclamation. It was evident that the stranger had been discovered.

Perriton, on the lawn, could see the black shadow of the intruder reflected on the curtain. So clearly was this shadow thrown upon the shade that John saw outlined the dismay and terror in the burglar's attitude as he crouched in a posture of defense, and the surge of vicious anger as he grasped in his hand some object which looked absurdly like a teacher's ruler. The picture was almost amusing, because it seemed so much like a pantomime staged for the entertainment of children.

A second figure appeared on the curtain. It was old Mack! His bent-backed figure, the fringe of hair at the back of his neck, identified his shadow. Before Perriton could intervene, or even guess the intentions of the oddly contrasted pair, the intruder sprang at the old man, and, clutching his throat, bent him back against the edge of the table and dealt him a fearful blow upon his bald head with the blunt instrument.

For a moment Perriton was motionless with horror, but when the hand at the throat of the old servant was withdrawn and the limp body had dropped out of sight below the window frame, John uttered an exclamation and ran forward along the porch until he came to one of the long French windows.

He placed his shoulder against it.

It yielded readily. He found himself in the hall, and for him the light under a door marked out the library. He listened. There was no sound from behind the panels, but he felt sure that the other man had not fled. Indeed, as this thought came to him, he saw a shadow move across the crack above the sill!

With cautious, silent fingers, he turned the knob, and then flung the door wide open.

The light from the chandelier was still filling the room with its glare. On the floor, staring up at it with unseeing eyes, the old servant was stretched out, motionless and white with the pallor of death. His slayer was bending over the strong box in the wall, the door of which was open. He had just grasped the pearl necklace which Mary Wales had worn that night, and at the sound of a creaking board, he jumped up and faced the second man who surprised him at his work.

For a moment John stared at the criminal, watching the black fringe of the mask flutter as the breath of the man behind it came and went; then the two men rushed at each other and were locked in a desperate grapple.

Perriton had the advantage of strength and size, but his physical condition, bad enough after years of an irregular and dissipated life, was still further weakened by the drinking he had done that night and the accident which had followed it. The masked man had an underhold which he used to rush John back over the polished floor which furnished no resistance to the feet. Perriton rained blows upon the face of the other, but his arms had no freedom to make these blows effective. He felt himself being borne back against the library table as old Mack had been. He tried to remember the tricks of combat he once had known, not so long ago.

Suddenly there came to him the memory of a place in the back of every human body where below the ribs there is a soft spot beneath which vital organs are exposed to an attack. Locking his fingers behind the other man, he dug his knuckles into that spot. The

other man writhed with pain, switching his head to the right and left in pure animal agony. A second later his legs, having lost their strength, he relaxed his hold and sought to disengage himself. John clung fast. He could hear the teeth of the other man grinding with his desperation. Finally the criminal's head fell back, his arms dropped to his side, and John knew that he had won a victory. He thrust the man from him, and, as he did so, he tore the mask from his face.

The man was Nelson Wales.

"You!" whispered John. "You!"

Still convulsed with pain, Mary's brother nodded.

"Forgery, robbery," said John, then pointing at the motionless body on the floor, "and murder! Heaven help you!"

"He attacked me," whimpered Wales.

"And you beat him over the head."

"Yes—with that," the miserable creature said, pointing to the heavy metal Japanese paper knife on the table. "Listen!"

He pointed toward the ceiling. From it came the sound of footsteps. They went across the space above the library, they sounded on the stairs.

"My sister!" cried Wales. "What shall we do?"

"What shall we do?" Perriton sneered. "You mean what shall you do?"

"You won't give me up," pleaded the guilty man, dropping on his knees and clutching John's sleeve. "You wouldn't do that. And Mary—she mustn't know! Do you hear? I love her. She is innocent. It would ruin her life. She mustn't know. I tried to rob her. Oh, she mustn't be told!"

He looked up at John's stern face.

"Don't you hear?" he whimpered. "She is coming."

Perriton shook his head. "I can do nothing," he said.

"But for her sake!" Wales went on. "She won't marry you. She told me so. But you love her? What is that worth? Isn't it enough? Can't you see that if she knew it would break her heart? Look, there is her picture."

Jumping up, he went to the mantel,

snatched a photograph of Mary from its shelf, and held it up for John to see.

Perriton stared back into the pictured girl's gaze as a man in a trance. Like lightning the thought flashed through his brain that, after all, he was not worthy to ask a woman like Mary to share his life. Suddenly it seemed to him that his career had been a jungle of errors and faults which must end in a desert of uselessness. He counted for so little! And on the other hand the girl was young. Life was before her. No doubt her brother was right. John felt that he had been a fool to suppose that she could love him. She was the one of the three of them who was worth saving. Her brother was right about that, too. She was the one to be protected. To John nothing mattered much. To her everything mattered!

"Sh!" cautioned Nelson. "She is coming."

"All right!" said Perriton. "Do as I tell you. Hand me that necklace. Give me that paper cutter. Look here! I will put on the mask. Do you understand? You discovered me here. I am the robber. I am the one who gave the blows to old Mack. All I want is a chance to escape, afterward. Now act your part as you never acted before."

He spoke just in time. The door opened. Mary entered.

She was dressed in a silk wrap. Her hair in two long braids showed that she had been awakened by the noises in the library. She blinked in the glare of the light.

"Stand back, Mary!" said her brother hoarsely. "I've surprised a masked burglar here—a regular gentleman burglar in evening clothes. It is terrible. He has laid out Mack already."

"Drop that weapon!" he commanded, pointing at Perriton.

The paper cutter fell to the floor.

"Drop those pearls!"

The necklace slid from John's fingers.

"Turn your back and sit in that desk chair!" Nelson growled. "Hello, here is the stableboy."

"I rang for him," said Mary.

"A thief," roared the groom. "Great hivins, he's done up poor Mack, he has! We must tie him up. Give me your knife, Mr. Wales. We'll use the cord on the telephone."

He cut the wires, and with Nelson's help had soon bound Perriton into the chair.

"Go to the stable and telephone for help," said Mary quietly. "This is too horrible for words."

The hostler ran out. They could hear his steps on the brick porch as he rushed toward the stables.

"Confound him!" said Wales to his sister. "He was after your jewelry and the silver! You better go now—at once. I can watch him alone. This is no place for you. Go!"

"Who is he?"

"I don't know. It makes no difference. You mustn't stay here."

"But I want to see," said his sister, and ran forward.

"Stop!" cried Nelson.

But it was too late for him to catch her. She had gone already beyond his reach and stood before the helpless man bound in the chair.

"Who are you?" she exclaimed, snatching the mask from John's face. "Oh, God!"

For a moment her face showed the agony and horror of her disclosure; then, turning white, she closed her teeth and spoke through them in a low, quiet, restrained voice.

"I might have known, I suppose," she said. "I might have known that no woman can lift a dog into a parity with men. I might have known that a life such as you have led—worthless, useless, self-indulgent, idle, dissipated—would end this way. I thought I was fond of you. I know now it was only pity and contempt. And now I hate you. Do you hear that? I hate you, and I know I've hated you from the beginning."

John closed his eyes and bit his lip. He knew it was too late for him to recall his decision to act the part of guilt. He knew that Wales would not reshoulder a crime, the responsibility for

which he had already succeeded in transferring to another. The affirmation of this appeared in the grim, cruel smile upon the brother's face. John knew that however much he might wish hereafter to establish his innocence, a confession by Wales was the only piece of evidence which would do so. And though Nelson had tried to prevent his sister from discovering the identity of the man in the chair, John knew that Mary's brother was not the man to put himself voluntarily into the cell of a man on trial for his life.

"I hate you," repeated Mary, shaking the black mask at him. "You miserable, unspeakable creature."

Nelson Wales walked across the room, turned his back on the pair as if he no longer took any interest. His attitude was that of one who would say: "I've been convinced. It is indeed John Perriton. But I might have suspected it. Therefore what comment is necessary?"

Mary, however, in spite of her denunciation, now stood beside the table with her head bowed. To her the discovery, after all, seemed to make a difference. She ran her fingers over the black mask, lost in thought.

Suddenly she started. She drew her hand away from the black silk as if the material had suddenly turned to red-hot iron.

John was watching her. He saw her make a movement as if she were about to fling another accusation at him. Once she pointed to him, as if charging him again with the crime. He was tempted to cry out to her that he was guiltless, that he loved her. It seemed to him unbearable—this thought of taking the lasting pain for the sacrifice he was making for her. She looked about the room, as if picturing to herself the scene when the old servant had been surprised by her lover. Then she met John's eyes. He knew at that moment that she must have loved him more than ever he had thought.

She was hesitating now. John could see that. His fate was at her disposal. She wrung her hands.

John had not counted upon being

unmasked, but now that Mary had seen his face, he felt his heart turn to gall at the idea that she would always have to believe him guilty. She had hesitated. She had turned first toward one man, then toward the other. Silently she had struggled with the question. And, at last, she had decided.

"Leave us," she said to Nelson and to the groom, who had returned, and was staring at Perriton with recognition and dismay.

With a shrug of his shoulders, Wales stepped out of the door, followed by the stupid stableboy.

"I have already answered all questions for you," John said. "I am sorry to know your pain. I fear I should do the same thing again."

"Don't speak to me," said Mary, with the desk scissors in her fingers. "Raise your hands!"

She cut the cords which bound him, so that he could stand. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Giving me a chance to escape?"

"Quickly!" said she. "That way."

He opened the door, and followed her through another room, which overlooked the sea.

"Out this door. There's a rowboat at the landing," she whispered. At the edge of the decline to the water she stopped, and pointed at the little craft riding the swash beside the float.

"Go," said she. "Here come the men."

John looked once more upon her face. It contained no other expression than that of determination. Her affection for him had been wiped out.

Again he was tempted to proclaim his innocence. But it was too late. She would not believe him, and, besides, he could not believe that he had been wrong in making the sacrifice for her sake. Knowledge of her brother's guilt and his punishment would ruin her life.

"Good-by," said he, holding out his hand.

"No, no," she exclaimed, drawing away with loathing. "I merely give you your liberty. Hurry!"

Perriton ran down the bank and crouched behind a pile of seaweed on the shore. He could see Mary standing on the rocks above him. Three men, one of them carrying a revolver, ran up to her.

He heard her voice.

"No, no, not this way," she said, pointing. "He ran across those fields."

When Mary and the searchers had gone, and John no longer heard the shouts of the men, he leaped into the skiff, cast it off, and rowed out toward the mouth of the harbor.

"John Perriton is dead," he said, to himself. "A new man takes his place.

Six hours ago I was a fashionable young man about town, member of clubs, thought to be wealthy, and engaged to the most desirable young lady in the world. I am now homeless, penniless, loveless, and by force of circumstances, nameless—an outcast burglar, a murderer, a fugitive from justice. That is an adventure. Very well! Adventure! Adventure is the word! Since the world is so full of it, I'll have some of it for my own. And I'll be the Man Who Came Back."

Standing for a moment on the stern seat of the skiff, John Perriton shook his fist in the world's face.

The second story in the series of "The Man Who Disappeared" is called "The Hunted Man." It will appear in the May Month-end number on sale April 23rd.



EVIDENTLY A DISHONEST JUDGE

THIS story is about a famous New York lawyer whose oratory is so stirring and powerful that his name is omitted. He might meet the writer on the street and turn loose one of his famous floods of invective and denunciation. However—

He was retained with another lawyer to argue a case before a New Jersey judge, and on the trip to Trenton asked his associate:

"How can this judge be influenced?"

"In no way at all," replied the associate.

"Oh, come now," insisted the orator. "There must be some sort of influence that can get to him, money, or social power, or political pressure. You know, most of these judges are just a little crooked in that way. Generally, you can get 'em through social influence. I'll bet we can get this one."

"Impossible," insisted the associate. "This is an absolutely honest judge."

The orator made the opening speech in arguing the case, and, in doing so, indulged in a flight of oratory that shook the courtroom and hung silver braids upon the atmosphere.

On rising to reply, one of the opposing counsel began:

"Your honor, I shall make no attempt to reply to my learned friend from New York because he has not touched the case. He has simply indulged in a lot of oratorical fireworks."

"Oh, yes," said the judge quickly; "don't bother about him at all. He said nothing about the case."

The orator, leaning over and grasping his associate's knee in a cruel grip, said triumphantly:

"I told you so! He's as crooked as a ram's horn!"

Eleven Million Dollars' Worth of Fight

By S. Ten Eyck Bourke and Charles Francis Bourke

Looking ahead. A forecast of a contingency that we may have to prepare for when the biggest battleship of the world's fleets, carrying the American flag, makes her initial trip through the Panama Canal

IT was over my own wireless, on Tiger Island, in Gatun Lake, while I was setting up an experimental wireless telephone on my instrument table, and Mac, our chief of the Panama secret service, was looking on and smoking, that I got news of the brand-new battleship *Transylvania* coming down to "dedicate" the Panama Canal. Other ships there had been since the canal was finished, but this was to be an epoch, as the chief said.

"Eleven Million Dollars' Worth of Fight! 'Tis like Uncle Sam was sending her through with a chip on her shoulder to show the nations of the earth we're boss of the marriage of the seas. Daring 'em to hands off the Big Ditch," Mac said. "Corry, lad, never was such a fighting ship as yon one coming—and never such fighting facilities as this canal affords. For all that, not an inch of that thirty thousands tons o' destruction is safe from danger whilst she's in the Ditch. The dynamiting devils that are bothering me won't let us pass her through without trying to blow her to kingdom come. It's up to us Panama wireless watchers to keep right on the job—if we want to keep them," the chief said. "One fleck of paint knocked off the U. S. S. *Transylvania* when she's wheeling through from Colon to Panama and—well, the whole service can consider itself lucky just to be fired!"

Mac was a canny Scot, but I knew what was worrying him. It had got on the nerves of all the canal guards located at the little wireless stations along the route, from Gatun Dam to Culebra Cut—and as far else as our wireless

spark would carry—from the first rumor of the *Transylvania*'s coming.

A monster battleship she was, the new bulldog of the American navy, that could flash the time o' day with her powerful wireless to the big Arlington station at Washington, and beyond. Her fourteen-inch guns, mounted in threes in the turrets, fore and aft, could pitch a carload of steel projectiles pretty near across the Isthmus, from Colon Harbor to Panama Bay and vice versa.

She was the biggest battleship in the world, and the biggest that the cut across the continent could accommodate, a floating fortress full of men, and sprinkled from stem to stern with engines of war enough to wipe any ordinary navy off the face of the ocean. Either ocean!

That was the little war toy that the wireless guard of the Panama secret service was responsible for. People generally weren't supposed to know about the wireless watchers—but when the canal was finished and the army of workers scattered over the face of the earth, the route across the Isthmus was divided off, and operators detailed to the different stations that span the ether with their aerials from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They were the signaling towers that Napoleon or somebody set up on the hills of France for telegraphing news in war time—only we modern heliographers used the wireless, and ships big and little were at our beck and call in the canal, to back up or come on as we told them, till we gave 'em the grand hailing signal to "Pass, brothers; pass in peace!"

Tiger Island, where I was located, at the only wireless station in Gatun Lake, next the dam, was the first long leg of the passage through, and lay in a nest of islets down near the southern limits of the Zone, where the channel made a sharp turn toward Panama.

It was as good a place as any for people to lurk having designs on the canal or shipping, and where the police chief and I sat at the wireless, with the department launch nosing the reedy bank below us, we could take in the whole lake and the canal channel to the north and east, where the battleship *Transylvania* would have to poke her steel nose as she followed that lane of devious turnings through the lake, past the squatting islands—watched every inch of the way, till the buglike motors on the embankment hauled her safely through and slapped her on the back with their cables at parting!

It wasn't an outlook to make us happy, knowing what we did about recent occurrences on the canal—including an attempt to wreck one of the guard stations. Judging from the chief's jaw just then, some other serious danger was threatening—as he told me.

"'Twas only this morning," he said, "I was nosing round where that last explosion happened, down the lake, and found what looked like a piece of electric battery, and a flask of acid—an explosive, with a fuse in it! On the edge of a hole as big as a house—like the one in Culebra Cut, when somebody tried to blow up the wireless station there."

"Oh, come, chief," I said, "we don't know that wasn't an accident. It might have been a baby earthquake for that matter—"

"Earthquake!" the chief said, with scorn. "Then some one tried to plant one months ago, when we found that infernal machine in the canal, when we were putting down the caissons for the dam. Systematic barratry, I call it, and the commissioner didn't get at the bottom of it when he barred the Canton coolies from the Canal Zone.

thinking 'twas labor troubles was the cause of it.

"Mark me, Corry, my lad," the chief said, scowling over the idea that had come to him, "I don't know much about scientific dynamiting, and modern up-to-date destructiveness, but I bet a button somebody has reason for making experiments with those explosives, to see will they work maybe. What's to prevent them planting powder that the wireless itself might set off when it's worked? Maybe that's the safe game they were trying out at Culebra—planning to try it on bigger game later," Mac added, thinking of the *Transylvania*, of course.

My nerves gave a jump at that. I'd made a study of electric waves, in connection with my wireless telephone, and now I remembered a secret explosive some foreign chemist or scientist had invented that could be touched off by magnetic waves at any distance almost—and nobody would ever be wiser whether the operator was next door or a hundred miles away. It looked like a safe kind of dynamiting deviltry, if any nation or any individual wanted to put the canal out of business, and they had a fine chance to kill two birds with one stone, with the big battleship coming!

"I don't know anybody that's got it in for us as bad as that," I told him, laughing at my own apprehensions. "It's to the interests of all nations to guard the canal; and as for those scientific explosions of yours, I don't know anybody who would be blowing up things, unless it's the little fish professor and that yellow fellow Gonzales he's got with him down the lake; maybe they're putting dynamite in the water to shock the fish specimens they're collecting, in that tank boat of theirs."

"Little good that would do 'em, when they're only collecting live fish as you know," the chief growled. "Just the same, there may be an idea in that; I haven't trusted that yellow Gonzales chap overmuch since we had the explosion in the canal—and your 'fish professor,' as you call him, is probably

no better than the company he keeps. It's a good rule to go on when you don't know what nation a man belongs to, and he has no better business than catching fish in Gatun Lake. I'll look into him!"

He went down to his boat, sulky that he'd got no better encouragement in his crazy theories, and I went back to passing the word along the line that "All's well on the Potomac"—meaning that the canal was clear for ships—and tinkering at my wireless telephone, that I was going to make a fortune with some day, and bring our wireless-watcher system up to date. I hadn't tried talking with my machine yet, but I had connected it up with the wireless station at Colon, so that I could hear the bands playing on the ships in harbor.

Mostly they played "Home, Sweet Home" and "Star-Spangled Banner," and it sounded funny 'way in there on Tiger Island, coming through the invisible waves of the ether.

After the chief left I got thinking about the little "fish professor," as we called him, the dried-up little scientist who had been pottering for a month round the lower part of the lake with his yellow assistant, collecting tropical specimens of the finny tribe for aquaria up North or somewhere. The professor had an idea the Gatun fishes would go out of existence once the canal got good and working, so he got busy with his nets and his tank boat.

The Zone police launch had orders to go over that big-bellied tank of the professor's every day, the same as other boats—to see they weren't planning to steal the canal, I suppose; anyway, I hadn't much use for the pair, so much as I'd seen of them, down lake.

But the *Transylvania* held the center of the stage just then; she was due to start through at daylight, and before dawn big guns were booming over the harbor outside. Colon marconied me that the battleship would wireless progress to Washington at Tiger Island—right at my front door, and I'd "better put cotton in my ears when she crashed off her spark—about a million volts!"

My own wireless-guard station was only powered to short range, but I could gather in all the air talking in reasonable distance, and all morning, while the flags were flapping 'way up at Gatun Dam, and I was waiting to see the "biggest thing that ever was," I kept glued to the receptors listening to the *Transylvania* and ships of all nations exchanging compliments—"Throwing bouquets at each other," Colon wireless called it, when maybe they yearned to throw bombshells.

Anyway, I was hunched up over the instrument table with the receiver cap pulled over my head and using my ears and all my mental energy making pictures of that great big battleship entering the biggest ditch in the world, cheered in a dozen languages and banged at by batteries of big guns beyond the big dam. Everything was big in Panama!

Zipp-clickety-click clickety clop it came into my receptors. She was passing through Gatun locks and all was well! Then the "O. K." when she left the dam. Pretty soon she would heave in sight coming down the lake to where she made the turn—a biscuit toss away.

Sitting on Tiger Island I could imagine I saw the spidery spires of her big basket masts up there at the locks, in the north. Inside of the hour she would be towering down on me, a monster battle machine, making the lake look like a millpond—thirty thousand tons of fighting metal with double rows of triple rifles lined down on Tiger Island—on me, sitting shaking in my chair, suddenly sick.

Something was happening to me. I was in the grip of something I couldn't see—I couldn't feel it at first—cunning and velvety as it closed on my neck, touching some paralyzing nerve. I thought it was my receptors that had slipped down and clasped together on my neck, clamping down on the jugular veins. A rush of blood surged in my head, and melted redly before my eyes as I sat frozen. Dumbly I realized that some one had taken me by the wrists, twisting my arms away from

the instruments and behind me—and always there was that deadening, sickening pressure kept up on the jugular, sinking in till I tried to scream, and sending my head booming millions and millions of miles. Something had flicked my funny bone, causing excruciating pain, and disabling my arms. It wasn't necessary for any one to bind my wrists. I was nearly unconscious, dying!

"*Tiger — Tiger, clickety — Z-ip!*" Some one was calling by wireless, but the headgear was jerked away from my ears and I was lying there bound hand and foot.

Whether it was five minutes or an hour that I waited for the pain to pass I don't know, but when I looked up it was into a pair of cruel little eyes that made my heart jump. Cunning, slant eyes they were, I noticed, as though for the first time, above the scraggly beard of the wizened little "fish professor," who was leering down at me where I lay sprawled out on my instrument bench.

"Ah, you did not feel me, my friend, no? That little jujutsu trick on the weasand caught you very cleverly, and put you to sleep quietly! And we came so softly—your eyes and ears being busy with the big ship in the canal!" The little villain was sitting on the headgear and took my seat at the telegraph instruments. "Now we will see what this great ship has to say before — Ah, it is our friend the chief of police who is calling, on the great warship that is going to defy the whole world, yes! But if they really knew where they were going in a few minutes they would not hurry—to the coast of the hereafter, with half a ton of my nitrous compound to hoist them thither."

Shaky and dazed as I was, in all my life I have not had such a terrible shock of pure fear. I realized that Gonzales was missing, though he had been there helping to overcome me. Then I caught the chug-chug of the professor's tank boat coming in across the water. She was out in front of the island where the battleship would

pass, and looking into those wicked little eyes I seemed to see the whole horrible plot pictured out in his brain.

"You hoary old devil!" I cried, "you've got a plant hidden on that infernal boat of yours. You're the fellow that's been experimenting with explosive stuff around here! And, by George!" I said, boiling over, "I bet you're the scoundrel that planned to blow up the caisson in the canal months ago, and you tried to blow the Culebra wireless! And now you're at the same trick with the battleship."

"Not exactly the same," he said, chuckling. He was working with the wireless, sending up answering "O. K.s" to her inquiries that made me squirm in my lashings. He gave me a yellow-toothed grin. "It is hard to bear, eh? But in this you guessed right. It is the fish boat you hear. Gonzales takes it to the head of the island, very carefully to the corner in the canal where he sinks it, and what it contains, for your brave battleship to find. Look yonder!"

I squirmed round, but I was too blind to see, and his words were battering at my brain. He laughed—a hyena laugh.

"This is a much neater job than any we have tried yet," he chuckled. "We patriots from afar who swore your country should not master the seas—why, you fools!" he cried, "what is America to the civilization older than the world? I with my science have fooled your secret police, who searched to see but never saw the nitro under the pure plate-glass partition midway down in my tank, enough explosive to blow up your navy, with the funny little fish swimming innocently over it. I waited, but I knew the time would come, and the big ship with it—to go up, up into the thin air!"

He was telling the truth. I hadn't a doubt of that when Gonzales came back and I saw the color he was—not even yellow now. He had come in on a skiff, but the thing he had left out in the front yard of Tiger Island caught my eye in the reeds—the tank boat—the infernal machine full of

nitroglycerin, or worse, settling in the water, little aerials branching up from it like a baby wireless, flickering lights showing on the points. I knew then why the liver was scared out of Gonzales. Incandescent wires they were, prepared to absorb the wireless waves and lead them to the powder mine.

I tried to bluff it out. The battleship was coming now. I could see the black smoke of her and her black iron shape looming up like a blur in the north. I wanted to know the worst.

"You poor fool!" I said, "you don't think that battleship is going to come along and bump into that boat bomb, do you? Why," I laughed, "that ship's got a hundred electrical devices to smell out just such obstacles in her path before she comes in shooting distance. If you think she's going to slow down and wait till you're ready to blow her up——"

I stopped at the look the little devil gave me. "If I thought that, I should wait and blow her up and myself with her," he said. "But I have told you I am a scientist. When Gonzales and I have gone you will see that she will come calmly on and blow herself up with her own wireless, the instant she uses it—even if the boatload of nitro does not drift under her to be blown up by contact. It is always well to have two chances! A shell of my explosive powder lies in direct contact with these imperceptible aerials——"

"Which she will pick up like a bird when she comes near enough," I chortled.

"Which she will ignite by way of her wireless," he said, calmly as ever, "and those incandescent wires you see flickering yonder, which are corroding and eating themselves away in this silent air, till only a filament is left standing—those wires will catch fire and flare downward like a train of gunpowder the instant she is near enough and sends out her bragging boast to the great government at Washington that 'All's well!' Do you think I work my brains for nothing, plotting this?"

It began to look to me as if he had

worked them to good purpose, or a mighty bad purpose. I knew enough about filament fuses—a composition that smolders away to punk till a spark strikes it and then flames, as he said, like gunpowder—to know that the battleship would never see the trap till she sailed right into it and set it off under her very nose. He knew, too, about the powerful message the ship would crash out to Washington, thousands of miles way: a wireless spark that would set off anything that was prepared to attract it, especially when the diabolical trap was right alongside of her. The *Transylvania* wasn't using her wireless now, because she was probably tuned up for that long-distance message, and the crash of it in near-by receptors would be deafening.

Oh, it was a beautiful plot the professor had cooked up. I had to give him credit for that! For a moment lying there thinking how much devilish skill he had used in planting his infernal scientific bomb right where the battleship stood a chance of blowing herself up in either of two ways—by striking or igniting it—honestly I couldn't think of a single thing to say but, "Wouldn't that jar you!"

Then I remembered how short a time I had, bound and helpless as I was, and I swore with every ounce of strength in me to beat his game. It looked as if the little professor had just stayed to gloat over me and brag about how smart and clever he was and how he was going to put one over on the whole American nation; and it struck me the sooner I sped the parting guest the better my chances of putting a stumblingblock some way in the path of the big ship booming down on me. Even then I couldn't get it through my obstinate Yankee head that I was laid out there ready to be blown to smithereens, along with the battleship and the wireless plant and everything else in range. It didn't seem natural!

"You get out of here where you're going, and take that little shrimp of a Gonzales with you, and we'll hang the pair of you as high as Haman when

we catch you!" I shot at him, mad all through.

I don't think he was going to leave me for the finish, but the way I talked hurt his feelings, I guess, and he heard Gonzales laugh—a sort of cackle like a scared wet hen—and he growled something about my lying there and looking and listening for the fireworks. I was doing that already—looking for the *Transylvania*, and she was getting to be a wide blot of black up the straight channel of the canal now, looming down from the locks.

Lordy, but she was a beautiful sight; the sun of the tropical summer glinting on her steel works and her basket masts and stack, turning it golden yellow, and her forest of burnished reflectors flashing back the sunlight, like so many calcium lights in full bloom and a perfect Fourth of July of flags of all nations festooned over her; but mostly the good old Stars and Stripes flashing out over them all—I was so proud of her that for a moment I forgot.

Then I pulled myself together. I shut my eyes for a second, but I opened them right quick.

"Governor! If only the old chief remembered the last thing I told him," I thought. "If he's fixed my big microphone somewhere on the battleship's wireless, as soon as he went aboard her— If Mac's done that then he'll be up there waiting to hear from me, and he won't be gawking on deck with the rest. And if I can only get to this telephone here—"

Frankly I would have dived from the window of the wireless, for a sensation, trusting to the officers on the *Transylvania's* bridge seeing me. But the professor had foreseen that—roped me down like a locoed maverick. He wasn't passing any bets! According to my creed it's a man's duty to do his best to help himself when he's in a hole, but with all those "ifs" jumping up and jeering at me, that one time I did ask for Higher Help, at the same time jumping up and down in my bonds like a gaffed jellyfish, doing my best to worry off the little microphone

from the hook on the telephone where it was hanging right before my face.

I made it, too. The whole apparatus came over with a crash, cutting a gash in my forehead, but I kept fumbling blindly for it, trying to turn it over with my teeth and scared to death that it might flop off the bench and finish the whole business.

The professor had left the battery power turned on—another slip. I knew it from the crackling of the static that gets in a wireless man's veins when he's working. I suppose he didn't think it worth while troubling to turn off anything with the little time there was left.

"Mac! Mac! Back up—for any sake, back her up! Breakers ahead! Anchor her out there, both ends!"

I kept barking at it like a terrier dog, snapping at the instrument with my teeth, doing anything to get some kind of a crackle over, if nothing else, to try and stop the glorious big *Transylvania*. I knew there wasn't time to explain how the professor had planted a mine under the battleship for her to blow herself up with her own wireless, and I couldn't get the receiver to my ear to see if Mac heard! But he heard all right! All the time I kept shouting at him he was shouting back to know what the warning meant. Then from my not taking any notice he realized that something was terribly wrong with me, and being the level-headed Scot that he was, he dropped the receiver and made for the commander.

What happened after that was mixed. At first the old man couldn't make out what Mac was trying to tell him, and the *Transylvania*—"Eleven Million Dollars' Worth of Fight," flags fluttering, bands playing, and about a thousand men milling over her decks and her bridge and her superstructure—was steaming closer and closer to destruction! Men cheering, the E-flat cornet tearing off "Star-Spangled Banner," and Mac chortling like a crazy man—then the commander caught on, and things hummed on that battleship!

"Stop her! Back her! Full speed astern!" Like a church falling back

into the canal, the *Transylvania* backed away from that hidden devastation out in front of her, half a dozen ship's lengths away. A thousand eyes bulged out, seeking the hidden danger; on the bridge the officers' binoculars analyzed every inch of the ominous fairway. Mac, dancing on the half bridge, was listening at the microphone again, and yelling what I was repeating to him—"Dynamite mine ahead! Back up! For any sake back up. You'll be blown to kingdom come!"

"Where? What—bomb, floating mine, or what? Why doesn't that operator answer your question?" the commander raged on the bridge to Mac, who was roaring at me into the microphone by now. "Must be something wrong with his end of that phone attachment. Better let the wireless operator raise him and find out. What's that in the reeds there? It looks like flickering antennæ—electric wires. Full speed astern!"

The ship's operator must have overheard the commander—he and Mac were shouting fit to wake the dead—anyway, he took a hand. At the very moment I was shouting to the chief not to shoot off that awful power, knowing it would explode the mine, the rattled operator threw on the full force of his wireless—the dynamo power that could throw his spark to Washington! I saw it crash and said—"G. N. Good night!"

Like the flash of a gun it blazed into the little antennæ wires in the reeds—a flash like fired gunpowder went up in white smoke, and that very second the little fish professor came running round the corner of the building waving a gun.

"Hah!" he yelped, "you will stop the sheep! You will spoil all my work. But they will come on, never fear—I will shoot them up, as I will shoot you. I will kill two birds with one—"

I guess he meant "bullet," but he didn't get any farther. Out in front the sea rose up, the crater split the sky of Panama, and the front of my wireless house caved in with the tidal wave, ramming, jamming everything

off the island. The *Transylvania* rose stiff as a church—I could see her gigantic basket masts as I went whirling round and round like a drowned rat in the smothering waters.

Where the fish professor went to I don't know, but the tidal wave that saved me from the explosion came near settling my own account. The last I remember was the *Transylvania* rising to a giant wave with unruffled dignity, officers in white uniforms on the bridge, jackies milling over everything, and the band still playing "Star-Spangled Banner" with unimpaired confidence in an American warship to take care of herself.

"They can't beat the little old U. S.!" I thought. "Just the same, J. Corry, I reckon we're on our way!"

The canal, the ship, and all but the front yard of Tiger Island were there when I woke up—there was certainly nothing to obstruct my view, after that blow-up went off!—and all around were beautiful young battleship officers, in perfectly dry uniforms. And you ought to have seen me! I was the real God from the Machine, too.

Of course the chief was there, talking all round the clock, explaining how he had been suspicious of the fish professor from the first—only he couldn't trust his subordinates (me)! But when it finally filtered into the officers how the clever little professor had planted his wireless bombshell in the canal, all ready fixed for the battleship to touch it off with her Hertzian waves when she sent up her hoot to the President of the United States—why, when they realized that they would have been in glory if I hadn't warned them in time, and their own operator got rattled and touched off the mine, without any cost to the canal commissioner to remove the obstruction—at a safe distance, luckily, from the ship—the commander patted me on the shoulder, and old Mac beamed at both of us.

"Sure, it happened, like Corry says," chuckled the chief. "It isn't only U. S. battleships that have got Eleven Million Dollars' Worth of Fight in 'em!"

The Past of Pat Moran

By Courtney Ryley Cooper

Author of "Bears and Bystanders," "The Rep Show Man," Etc.

There was nothing of the fool about Pat Moran; yet here is related how he rushed in where angels might have feared to tread. The old circus man's past made him take a risk that threatened to result disastrously at home. One of the best yarns Cooper has given us of the circus men

HARRY GRAY'S place is different from many saloons, for, instead of presenting beauty in furnishings and allurements in outside decorations to hide an evil interior, it shows without somewhat of squalor, and an entire lack of the decorative idea—that it may conceal the Samaritanlike purpose which exists within. For Harry Gray, with his little lisp and his funny, wrinkled face, is the one person in the world to whom the circus man, be he razorback or be he the king of the ring, can turn when the world has gone gray and money has flown.

They'll tell you of him in the Far North, and in the South, and East, and West. They'll show you money orders that they mail back to him, in payment of advances of the past, when the future, without him, was only a blank wall. And you'll find them there, from every direction, when the snow lies heavy, and the winter quarters consist only of painters, and car repairers, and animal men. For Harry Gray, in his little place just off Wyandotte Street, is the man who cares for the followers of the circus, when the circus has ceased to pay salaries.

In October they begin to arrive slowly, from those shows of short seasons which have ended their trail of blaring band music and fluttering banners in the North. By November there are more. By December, the rooms above Harry Gray's place—rented on trust for the winter, are filled, and the little tables at the back of the long, picture-covered barroom are fitted with extra

chairs for those who sit there from morning until night, talking away the lowering temperature without; dreaming away the long, dark days to those of sunlight and the blatant ballyhoo.

It was usually in December that Mr. Patrick Moran, business man, began daily to leave a Wyandotte Street car at Sixth Street, skirmish around a building, flank a block or two, and sidle into Harry Gray's place from a side entrance. For Mr. Moran possessed both the magnet which drew him to Harry Gray's, and the motive which required that his visits be in secret. Mr. Moran was married.

As to the magnet, it must be understood that not all those who gathered around the tables of Harry Gray's place were of the type who needed assistance. Harry Gray was always there, for one, in the dark months, and Harry could tell you the name and address of even the humblest razorback—no matter what his show might be—should you care to know.

Shifty Bill Thomas, of the Great Consolidated, was present, too, when the lonesomeness for the bright days, and the glitter of the parade would come upon him, and Shifty was never without money.

There was Bigfinger Williams, and Bigfinger owned the Amalgamated shows—twenty cars next season, with a giraffe. Mitchell—clown of clowns—Hank Lemon, who owned Rajah, the man-eater; Bertie Scott, as good a kid-show man as ever unfurled a banner.

No, it was not always that only the

penniless ones gathered at Harry Gray's. Also, it might be mentioned that it was when the more select coterie of the "big top" gathered about the big round table that Mr. Patrick Moran began his visits. For Patrick belonged to the moneyed class also, the moneyed class of ordinary business now, with society thrown in. It was the past, however, that lured him to Harry Gray's.

And it was this past which obsessed him as he sat pounding the table, and gazing hard at Dink Harvey, just off the Barnum shows, as he propounded to Dink and the rest of the assemblage his views on circuses past and present. Once or twice he turned to receive the affirmatory nod of Shifty Bill Thomas, or to notice the light in Harry Gray's eyes, as the good Samaritan leaned over the back of Hank Lemon's chair; then he warmed to his subject all the more. It was an argument which had grown and grown, through the muggy days of December, and into the realm of winter proper. And, with the growth of time, had grown also Mr. Patrick Moran's assertiveness.

"It ain't done right any more," he announced, with another bang on the table, "things aren't managed right. Why, let me tell you the circus of to-day ain't any more what it was twenty years ago than—"

"Aw, nix—nix!" Dink Harvey was interrupting. "that's the way with you guys that get out of the game for about twenty years, and then try to tell the live wires how to be real electricity. Honest, Pat, it makes me sick—all over. Why—"

"Ask Shifty!" roared Mr. Patrick Moran. "Shifty, ain't it the truth? Is the circus what it used to be? Are the new managers anything like what they were in the good old days? Shifty knows," he added conclusively, as he turned to his audience; "he follows the old methods—and look at the money he pulls down off a one-ring show. That's the thing—the good, old, one-ring show with the best talent you can buy, instead of a lot of jumbled up—"

"All I've gotta say," came the drawling, interruptive voice of Dink Harvey,

"is that if you old geeks are such great guns why don't you get out and do something? Huh? No, kidding on the level. Pat, I don't mind you coming down here, and mixing in, and all that sort of gush, but when you begin handing out this advice stuff, it makes me sore. If you're so wise, why don't you start out a big top and show us? That's all I've got to say, why don't you—"

"You know why I don't," roared Pat Moran. "I've got a—"

"There goes that wife stuff," Dink pleaded, as he turned to Harry Gray. "He can't let it out that he's been a circus man because he went and married a widow what's in society, and she wouldn't like it if she knew. A fine line o' talk, that's all I got to say—"

Mr. Patrick Moran's somewhat heavy face grew purple.

"Yes, and you'd be in the same boat, too, if you were fixed like I am. I'll leave it to Shifty—"

"Leave it to Mitch," interrupted Shifty. "I don't know anything about this marriage game—"

"No, leave it to Harry—or Hank Lemon," broke in the boss clown, as he shifted the responsibility.

"Go on; I'll take it," lisped Harry Gray, as he leaned farther over the chair, "I'll be the goat. I'd like to hear the row, anyway."

Patrick Moran, ex-circus owner, shifted in his chair.

"Well, here's the thing," he explained slowly, "seems like you ought to know it by this time; as often as I've explained it. I start out in the circus game, and I make a wad of cash. I get the hunch I want to pull out, and I pull. I go into business. Then I come into this man's town, and meet the widow. And I marry her, without telling her the story of my life, that's all."

"A fine lot—that," sneered Harvey.

"Yes, it's a fine lot," retorted Mr. Patrick Moran. "She's the widow of a Baptist minister, isn't she? She's president of the Ladies' Aid Society, or something like that, isn't she? She's secretary of the City Board of Foreign Missions, isn't she? And I guess that isn't enough. I guess I could go right

to her, and say I'd been a circus man, and have her simply kotow to the floor, and kick her heels against the ceiling for pure and simple joy. Yes, she would! Nix. When I marry her, I marry her for love, and I play the same game she plays. I let it out right on the jump-off that I'd just as soon go to purgatory as go to a circus, and I'm going to stick to it—as long as she's around. But that ain't the question. The question is whether the management of the circus of to-day is just as good as—”

“That's it,” broke in Harvey, “build up a great big excuse so you can't get stung, and then let out a lot of wise guff. Why, you boob, you couldn't any more make a living managing a circus to-day than you could pick fleas off a gooseberry bush. You're a dead one. You're mummified. You couldn't even manage a trained mosquito. Don't try to tell me—”

“I couldn't, eh?” Mr. Patrick Moran had risen. “Say, you lobber-lipped lizard, I—”

“Well, why don't you do it, then?”

“Nix on the scrapping,” interfered Shifty Bill Thomas. But he was not heard. Dink Harvey was insistent.

“Why don't you do it, then—huh?” he yelped, and Mr. Patrick Moran turned excitedly.

“Harry, how much would it cost to rent Convention Hall?”

“One day? About five hundred dollars. Why? What's the idea?”

“Shifty,” went on the excited Mr. Moran, as he pulled forth a check book, “you don't know you're president of the Circus Celebration Society, but you are. You're appointed right now. Mitch, I'll give you fifty dollars if you want to use up a day of your vacation in working. Hank, what'll you charge for Rajah in a special exhibition? Well, speak up, speak up—”

Out of the sound of many voices came that of Shifty Bill Thomas, of the Great Consolidated.

“Talk sense, Pat Moran! What you trying to say? What are you going to do? You're talking like a fish—”

“What am I going to do?” asked

Pat Moran, as the rest of the aggregation leaned forward. “Here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to spend five thousand dollars, that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to use you and Big-finger Williams and Hank Lemon for the figureheads, while I'm going to stay in the dark, and manage things. I'm going to rent Convention Hall, and I'm going to throw it open to the poor kids of the town that can't even see a circus in the summer, much less in the winter-time, and then, when I've done that, I'm going to put on the all-dangdest one-ring show ever perpetrated in this or any other country. I'm going to show an aggregation of stellar acts never before equaled in the history of the world! I'm going to show the populace, free of any charge whatever, free for everybody, come one, come all—”

“Hey, this is Harry Gray's place; it ain't no ballyhoo stand,” broke in Dink Harvey. “So you're goin' to take me up, eh?”

“You bet your B. V. D.'s I'm going to take you up,” answered Pat Moran. “I'm going to show you what real show managing looks like. But for the good Jehosophat's sake, boys,” he pleaded, “keep my end of things quiet, won't you? Just let me put up the money, and the cash, and do the managing in the dark, won't you? And when the papers begin printing stuff, just let it come from the Circus Men's Celebration Society, per Shifty Bill Thomas, president. Won't you?”

“Sure, they'll do it,” answered Harry Gray. “Say, I grab one thing right now, and that's the popcorn and the lemonade privilege, see? This is going to be a real circus, even if it is winter. And, believe me, them kids is going to have their popcorn and their red lemonade. And I'm going to pay for it—see?”

“Say,” grinned Pat Moran, as he turned, “who's managing this circus? Me or you?”

But just the same, he shook hands with Harry Gray, and turned with him to the figuring of the cost of popcorn and lemonade for ten thousand kids. Just the same he grinned as he left the little saloon with its many pictures and

its memories, and hurried up the street to begin his plans. He whistled as he entered the elevator. He sang a bit as he opened his desk—then he turned quickly, his face went blank, and he hurried out of the office. A half hour more and he was facing his somewhat surprised wife, at home.

"Mary Julia," he said, and his face was serious, "you're not looking well. I noticed it at breakfast."

"Not looking well. Patrick, I never felt better in my life."

"You're not looking well," retorted Patrick Moran doggedly. "You've got circles under your eyes. You're all run down. You choke in your sleep. It's the asthma again."

"Asthma?" Mrs. Patrick Mary Julia Moran became vehement. "My asthma's all gone. I haven't had a touch of it in six months. What's—"

"It's coming back," answered Mr. Moran insistently. "I can see it. You've got to head it off, that's all. If it'd come back this time"—he shook his head sadly—"there's no telling what'd happen, Mary Julia. Your color's off. You're yellow and soggy looking. I've been noticing it. I've noticed it every day—it's getting worse all the time. I just got to thinking about it down at the office, and I just had to come home and talk to you about it, that's all. I'm not going to have you laid up with the asth—"

Mrs. Moran had gone to the glass, and was examining herself critically.

"Pat," she said finally, and there was a little fright in her tone, "I don't look as well as I did, do I?"

"You're a sick woman, if you only knew it," answered Mr. Moran. "You've got to see the doctor, that's all. Put on your hat. He's in the office now. I spoke to him on the way up."

"But, Pat—"

"No two ways about it!" came the reiteration of Patrick Moran, and ten minutes later he hurried to the telephone, while his wife went down the steps of the veranda, for private and strictly confidential conversation with the family physician. That arranged,

Mr. Patrick Moran slouched into the big chair in the living room.

"I've got to get her out of town; that's all there is to it," he mused. "If she sticks, she'll get next to me, sure as Sunday—and I can't afford it, that's all. Let's see, freight on ten elephants, Kankakee to Kansas City—"

His notebook and his pencil came forth, and he figured for a long, long time. When at last he did look up, it was into the face of a much-worried woman, suffering already from the effects of a hundred ailments, into the features of a woman who could see salvation in only one thing—travel, and lots of it.

It was three days later that an office was rented in an obscure old building near the foot of Main Street, and a rather rotund, pudgy-faced man, who waved his hands a good deal, watched the installation of the desk and the telephones. When at last he locked the door, and seated himself, it was to Harry Gray's place that he telephoned, and concerning matters of the circus. In the days that followed, the occupants of the near-by offices noticed that the little room without a sign on the door was patronized by many callers, and that they designated themselves by strange names, such as "Dink," and "Shifty," and "Bigfinger," as they walked away.

And, too, there was opened another office, in another part of town that week, one in which the pudgy-faced man did not appear, but upon the door of which showed the name of the Circus Men's Celebration Society, per William Thomas, president. And about the same time there appeared flaring announcements in the papers, interviews with the before-mentioned Honorable William Thomas, owner and sole proprietor of the Great Consolidated One-Ring Shows, telling of the coming event in Convention Hall, a circus, the like of which never before had been seen, and free—absolutely free—to the poor of the city, just for the fun of the thing.

"No," said Mr. Thomas—the interview is being quoted—"there is no phi-

lanthropist behind this. Just a few of the boys decided to get together, and give a circus for the poor kids. That's all. Besides, you know," he added, "us circus fellows like to smell the sawdust once in a while, even in the winter-time."

And the most appreciative reader of that paragraph was the pudgy-faced man who sat signing checks and reading letters which bore brilliantly printed heads as he sat in the dingy little office at the foot of Main Street. Business was progressing.

A week went by, while freight trains rolled in from winter quarters, while the livery stables of the West Bottoms, near the depots, became young menageries, while elephants, and horses, and ring stock, and caged animals were piled in side by side, while baggage cars disgorged trunks and paraphernalia, and while fast freights whirled in with the properties of the Great Consolidated, the Amalgamated, and Hank Lemon's Only Shows. Another week traveled on, while in the rooms above Harry Gray's there echoed strange thumpings as acrobats tried out an air set now and then to test their muscles, and while the heads of the little group about the big round table went closer and closer in its conferences. Two days more—and show time.

Five feverish hours over the telephone, while the reports of the transportation of stock, the setting up of the rings, and the ring banks in the arena of Convention Hall were heralded one by one. The disbursement of money to car men, to animal trainers, to performers, and Mr. Patrick Moran pressed the button which released the catch of his door. Shifty Bill Thomas entered, and absent-mindedly rubbed a hand across his forehead to remove the sweat that wasn't there.

"We've pulled into the lot"—he said—"that is, we've got all set up in the hall. Lot of junk, Pat. Think we'll get it on?"

"Get it on?" asked Mr. Moran sarcastically. "Haven't I been working on the program for the last three weeks?"

"I know that," answered Shifty Bill

Thomas of the worried brow, "and maybe I can manage it all right. But, Pat," and he came closer, "this business of doing circus stunts in an overcoat ain't my line much, you know. I'm all to the birdseed when it comes to canvas, but—ain't there any way you could handle things from somewhere there to-night?" he asked at last.

"Handle 'em?" asked Mr. Moran, "of course, I'll handle 'em." He thought a moment. "Shifty," he said at last, "I've got to sneak in the dressing room some way. If anybody'd get next to my connection with this thing"—there was something of the air of the conspirator in his voice—"well, you know what the old lady'd—Leave the side door, the one marked 'G,' open," he said suddenly. "I'll duck in, and we'll fix up a little piece of canvas where I can work behind, and give you orders. See?"

"I got you," answered Shifty, and departed, while Patrick Moran, circus magnate, looked at his watch, and hurried for a car. An hour and a half lay between him and the time he must sneak in the side entrance of Convention Hall for his night of concealed direction. An hour and a half, and he was hungry. Quickly he walked the block between the car and his home. He ran up the steps, and threw open the door. He started down the hallway—then stopped to gasp.

A woman's coat hung on the hall tree. A woman's hat was there, and a suit case. Patrick Moran recognized them all. He wavered a bit—then he headed for the stairs.

"Mary Julia!" he gasped, as he reached the upstairs room. "Woman, what are you trying—"

"Kiss me, Patrick," ordered Mary Julia, as she came forward. "I couldn't stay away any longer. Not with this celebration going on!"

"Celebration?" Mr. Moran became a bit nervous. "What—what celebration?"

"Why, the entertainment for the poor children of the city, dearie. Didn't you know about it?"

Life was a bit easier for Mr. Patrick

Moran after that last sentence. He assumed a tired look.

"It's just a circus—or something like that," he answered noncommittally.

Mrs. Moran sniffed a bit also.

"I know, my dear," she answered, "and under other circumstances, I wouldn't go for the world. But the children, of course—you know the Ladies' Aid Society takes care of some hundred or more children, and they must be chaperoned. Mrs. Jecksniff telegraphed me, and so, of course, I had to come. Hurry up and dress."

"Dress?" Mr. Moran's face became blank. "What for?"

"Why—to go along, of course. Do you think I'm going to traipse to that thing alone?"

A vision of that side door arose before Patrick Moran. A vision of Shifty Bill Thomas, struggling mazedly to handle all the acts of the almost trebled bill of the circus flared before his brain. He placed his hand to his head.

"Dearie," he pleaded, "I've—I've got a headache. Besides, there's a contractor coming in from Independence that I've got to see—"

"I'm sorry about your headache, and the contractor can wait," answered Mrs. Mary Julia, as she dived into her jewel box. "The thing right now is to be sure that those children see the circus. So come on, dearie."

Patrick Moran shuffled silently down the stairs. He sought the telephone, and talked in muffled tones to a worried individual at the other end. Then, trying to smile, he ascended to his room, and entered the confines of another suit of clothes.

An hour later found him surrounded by sticky-fingered children, his clothes gummed somewhat by the over affluence of Harry Gray's molasses-covered popcorn, a few spots here and there where the red lemonade had splashed as the hurrying distributors fought their way through the audience, his face wrinkled, his eyes watching anxiously the flags which told of the dressing rooms and the entrance to the menagerie compartments.

Beside him in calm surveyance of it all sat Mrs. Mary Julia Moran, the children in her care quiet and obedient, while everywhere before them there showed the packed galleries, the thronging crowd which continued to pile into the great auditorium long filling the aisles and the spaces behind the seats.

A little thrill went through Mr. Moran of the popcorn-covered clothes as he viewed it all, and knew that it all was of his doing. But a chill wiped out the thrill as he thought of Shifty Bill back of the scenes, struggling with the program and minus the aid he had counted on. He felt his teeth grit a bit.

"And Dink'll blame every mistake on me!" he half groaned. "Dink'll say—"

"Did you say something about a drink, dearie—" asked Mrs. Mary Julia Moran quietly. "I wouldn't touch this lemonade. There's no telling what's in it. Wait and—"

But she did not finish the sentence. A blare of the band, the shouting of ten thousand child throats, and the parade was on. Slowly it wound its way around the great arena, while Thomas Moran, his hands somewhat wildly crushing a popcorn ball, watched with the avidity of a baseball fan in the ninth inning, score tied. The parade ended. The ringmasters entered. There came the crack of the whip. A shout, laughter. Mitch was in the ring, singing his clown song, just as he had sung it in the days of long ago when circuses were few, and when the audiences were as small as the circus. Pat Moran wabbled his head to the music. He waved the popcorn ball aloft, then suddenly subsided as he caught the eye of the woman beside him.

Again. Again. The acts changed—and changed once more. Bit by bit, the fear left Thomas Moran's heart. With the ingenuity of the old-time circus man, Shifty Bill was handling the program to perfection—and the smile in Pat Moran's heart went to his lips. Act by act went by. The cheers grew louder. The band blared more and

more blatantly. There came the chariot races as they thundered about the big arena to the popcorn-choked shrieks of kiddish throats, and to the pounding heart of Pat Moran, a pounding as loud as the horses' hoofs. More shrieks. More shouts. More laughter—then quiet.

The program was over, but the audience was not leaving. Mr. Moran strained a bit forward to see the reason. Before him, on a bit of platform, stood the mayor, shouting with all the full strength of his voice, waving his arms. Vaguely Pat Moran could hear that he was thanking Mr. William Thomas and his associates for their winter entertainment, and for the good-heartedness which had prompted it. A grin, broader than ever, came to the face of Mr. Patrick Moran. He shrugged his shoulders a bit. It was over—over, and he was safe—it was over, and the mayor was saying something about the best-managed circus ever in the history of the—

The rest of the speech was lost upon Patrick Moran, philanthropist. A figure had come within his range, a figure which stood attentively near him, and seemed to glance up at him with something more than the ordinary smile of greeting.

Pat Moran trembled and sneaked a glance out of the corner of his eye at the silent, attentive figure of Mary Julia. Warily he looked around for a means of escape. There was none. Escape was gone—gone, and below stood Dink Harvey waiting to answer the mayor's speech. And Pat Moran knew that in the heart of Dink Harvey there rested a desire for vengeance, vengeance for all their past arguments, all their past encounters, and invectives.

An imploring something came into the face of the retired circus man. With a quick jerk of the thumb, he indicated the quiet figure by his side, and beauchingly nodded his head. But Dink Harvey only grinned the more, then turned as the clapping of hands announced the end of the mayor's speech. Vaguely Pat Moran believed that he

heard Mary Julia applauding also. But he could be sure of nothing, just then.

For Harvey had ascended the platform. Harvey, in his old, circus-announcing voice, malice covered by honed words.

"We are glad to hear," he had begun, "that this is the best-managed circus which ever has been exhibited in your town, ladies-s-s and gentlemen." There came a glance in the direction of Pat Moran, while that individual withered in his seat. "We are glad to receive the thanks of the mayor in behalf of the city, but there has been one person who has not yet been thanked."

Something akin to the ague had seized Patrick Moran. The sweat rushed to the pores of his forehead. He swung his popcorn-gummed hands almost wildly at his sides.

"Good Lord!" he gasped. But the speaking went on.

"We have not thanked the real man in the affair because he has remained in the dark. He is a man, ladies-s-s and gentle-men, alone qualified to give you such an entertainment as you have had to-night. He is a man schooled in the circus from his boyhood, a man who started in this life as a common razor-back, or car loader—"

The breath was whistling through Pat Moran's teeth now. But he leaned forward to listen, and to watch that smiling little look of joyous revenge on the face of Dink Harvey.

"He is a man who rose to canvas-man, thence to boss canvasman, then to lot boss, and finally to owner of a circus. He is a man who coined money from the circus business, and then left it to adopt a more quiet life, forgetting the old days until the need of such entertainment as this came before him. And then, ladies-s-s and gentle-men, he rose grandly to the occasion. The old circus instinct which could not be downed came to the surface and this is the result. Ladies-s-s and gentle-men, I ask that you demand a speech from the man who is responsible for this, Mr. Patrick Moran, seated as you see, in the third tier, left side, with his wife!"

The world roared. It swung sideways on its axis, and wabbled over into nothingness. A thousand volcanos began their thundering—or was it the clapping of hands? Wildly Pat Moran looked about him. His popcorned hands rose into the air, and swirled there aimlessly. He tried to look at Mary Julia there at his side, and failed. Then came a voice—hers. Patrick Moran's face grew spasmotic.

"Huh?" he gasped. When the universe is jumping sideways, a person can't grasp everything at once. Patrick Moran gurgled. "Huh?" he asked again.

"Get up and answer them. Say something. Can't you understand, you dummy?" The voice of Mrs. Mary Julia contained a strange accent, a strange tone. Patrick Moran rose—a man in a dream. He croaked forth something, he grasped wildly about him, and seized the arm of Mrs. Mary Julia. Then, like a man before a plague, he hurried forth from the building, dragging her behind him.

It was on the corner that he recovered, and stared before him, slowly brushing the molasses-covered popcorn,

clothed by the cold, from his fingers. He jiggled one foot foolishly, then swung his arms.

"Well," he said plaintively, "it's out. I was with a circus. Dink told the truth. I know 'em all. The whole gang. What you going to say?"

He turned, then recoiled. For Mary Julia to smile was the last expected thing in the world.

"Lovey pet," she answered coyly, as she patted him on the cheek, "you're feverish. What's the difference? It's easier now for both of us."

"Easier?" Mr. Patrick Moran gasped a bit. "Easier?"

"Yes, angel face," answered Mary Julia, with a long-lost girlish wiggle of the forearm. "Dearie, remember the old Nickleplate shows? That was where Mr. Saunders fell in love with me, just from watching. And, dearie, I'd have been Queen of the Rolling Globe if it hadn't been for his Baptist principles. That's the way—"

Mary Julia looked sideways somewhat in alarm.

"Let's—let's hunt our automobile," croaked a goggle-eyed being at her elbow, "I'm feelin' kinda shaky!"



AN ADDITION TO THE SCRIPTURES

STETSON was his name, and the production of great dramas was his business. His great talent was success, and his weakness was that he always liked to "show off" when he was rehearsing a play. He was in the habit of sitting far back in the darkened theater; and, whenever a stranger came in to see the rehearsal work, he put himself in the foreground by jumping to his feet and bawling out the actors and actresses.

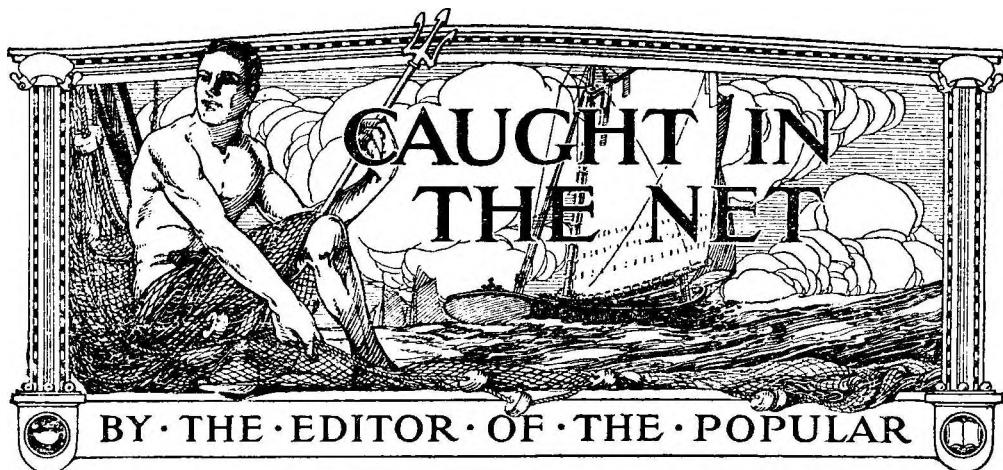
When he was putting on a big production of "The Holy City," three friends of his entered the theater one afternoon to see the dress rehearsal. As soon as they had sat down, Stetson began to fidget in his seat. He was consumed by the old fever for prominence. He wanted the visitors to see that he was the boss of everything.

There were twelve men on the stage, which was unusually large.

"Who are those men on the stage?" he called out to his stage manager in a thunderous voice.

"That's one of the big scenes of the play," the manager said humbly. "Those men are the twelve disciples."

"Oh, well," shouted Stetson imperiously, "go out and get twelve more. That's a big stage, and we want to fill it up."



HOPE

JUST now, clever youths like to shoot holes through the scheme of things. They are analysts of imperfection, and mordantly sketch failure and the sorry victims of a victorious civilization. But it should be the good pleasure of art and literature to keep us going against the dead weight of futility—not to throttle our effort—to let the light through upon our struggle—not to deepen the shadow that falls on even our brightest endeavor. If our feet are heavy, must our spirit, also, be burdened by these modern traffickers in pain? We need the great laughter of Dickens, the happy imagining of Keats—beauty and mirth, changing lights on our darkness. If this is the Valley of the Shadow, then we will tread it with song and a vision. The task is hard, so we turn to our music-makers for a rhythm to lift the routine.

Always, the artist must reveal the flaming spirit within the shabby shell, the cleaving will inside the drab routine. He must make the earth-born aware of the change and surprise which life carries like ripe seeds. He must tell of the individual soul, untamable under monotony, stanch even in despair. The spirit that craves spaciousness in a tenement and has a hunger for eternity after the twelve-hour day.

WILD WEST—AND DRESS SUITS

THEY say that the wild West is fading, and perhaps the assertion is true to a certain extent. The traditions still remain, it is true; there is hardly a town of any size west of the Colorado line which does not have its yearly "Frontier Days" celebration, its "Round-up," or its "Stampede," where the experts of the lariat and the saddle gather to compete in the exhibitions which made the West famous. They are gatherings of danger, of excitement; men—and women—are killed now and then, bucking horses plunge through fences, kick in the ribs of their wranglers, and act as viciously as any horse of the wildest range. Steers gore their bulldoggers, wild mules defy their would-be riders, and yet—

It was in a hotel in Cheyenne following the wildest of a four days' "Frontier" celebration. Hazel Hoxie, buckskinned and swinging her rope like a hissing snake, had lassoed a steer in thirty-one seconds. Walter Padgett, resplendent in blue-dyed chaps and spurs that would have brought envy to a caballero, had leaped from the back of a plunging horse to the horns of a rushing steer, and

"bulldogged" him into unconsciousness in six seconds. Charlie McKinley, wild of outfit, had ridden the vicious "Midnight" through fences, down ditches, over hills and hollows, and into submission. It had been a day in which the ambulance bell had clang'd more than once, and the Easterner, seeing it all for the first time, was interested.

In the general friendliness of the crowded lobby a woman in evening gown lifted her lorgnette, then smiled the least bit at the Easterner's question.

"Oh, yes," she said finally, "I liked the show immensely. But I always do, you know. Especially if I win a prize."

The Easterner framed a question, then gasped. Recognition had come. The woman with the lorgnette and the easy society poise was Hazel Hoxie, champion roper of the Pacific coast. And the two dress-suited, collegiate-appearing young men who accompanied her were Walter Padgett, bulldogger, and Charlie McKinley, of "Midnight" prowess. And such is the transition of to-day's wild West, from buckskin to dress suits.

THE FUTURE

IT is an uncharted sea to which we are called—but it is a sea we all must sail. There are no bell buoys for the reefs, and the topography of the new continent at the other side of the sunset is a matter of lyric guesswork. One thing is sure—we shall all be immigrants there, some day; whether the coast is rockbound, or quicksand, or fertile green. The unconquerable thing in the race is its reach after idealism. Whatever is killed out by civilization and biological change, the quest for a more perfect righteousness is never stayed. In the chemistry of our being something makes us hunt the gleam, under whatever sky, in every age. Cathedral builders and sweatshop tailors are one with Hector of the glancing helmet in the desire for holiness.

In this age in which we live, the revelation light has, for a little, lighted the final height toward which the whole creation moves, has touched it with flame and passed on, having shown us the ascent to which we are pledged. Two things impede the march—poverty and riches. Poverty—because it gives a heritage of pain and disease, making motherhood sordid, and the birth of the manchild no gift to the future. Riches—because they destroy the sense of spiritual values. The rich, they, the directors, the pilots, are steering with compasses that have lost responsiveness to the north magnetic pole. To an age that demands all the influences of the upper air—guiding electrical currents—they supply a helm unwitting of the final direction, and the haven under the hill. Our little ones are robbed of joy, and our masters are unaware of God. Till this be cured, we shall shrink from the new immensities to which we are called.

INDIAN HATE—AND GRIEF

CONSIDER the Indian of the Leather Stocking tales and the Indian of to-day. For it is by such a standard as the stories of Cooper that the Indian is judged by the ordinary person—and how faulty is the alignment in some respects!

To the ordinary person, unacquainted through contact, the Indian is a being of superhuman accomplishments, possessed of compressive powers far beyond those of the white man. No grief he shows, no happiness—at least, through the ordinary means; no pain or injury, no sorrow. But hate, once instilled, lives forever—never fading, never lessening.

Perhaps that was the picture of the Indian in the days of Uncas. But to-day—

Not so very long ago, a group of enterprising men decided to reproduce the War of the Messiah, and gathered therefore, near Pine Ridge, South Dakota, some eight hundred Indians of the Sioux tribe for the "local color." There was, among those eight hundred, many a warrior, many an old chief, who had fought through that war, who had lost ones he loved in the various battles—but they came back to fight it all over again because the white man had said it would be a good preservation of some of the Indian history. There were squaws, too, who had lost husbands, sons, sisters and brothers, and fathers, but they came back also.

Upon the battlefield of Wounded Knee they pitched their tents and their tepees; they found the spots where they had camped that December day, in 1890, when the onrush of Forsyth's troops turned a battle into a massacre—and there they remembered the past. In circles they walked, the squaws sobbing and singing the wailing death song of their tribe, the braves awkwardly handling their rifles, their lips pressed tight, their eyes narrowed with the pain of it all. Grief, twenty-three years dead, was coming to the surface, nor was there any effort to hide it. By day they sang, and walked to the great trench where the dead of Wounded Knee are buried; by night, gray shadows against the sky, they sought the hilltops, and to the muffled music of the tom-toms danced slowly as they sang again to the memory of the dead.

For this had been a massacre. Among those who sang and sobbed was a squaw who had seen her four papooses shot down as they ran for safety. Perhaps there would be the fabled hatred of the white race here—perhaps—

She sat before her tepee, threading a chain of beads. The visitor with his interpreter approached. The questions were asked, but the Indian woman only smiled.

"That is all in the past," she answered. "And why should we hate for what is gone?" Her face changed its expression. "We can only grieve," she finished.

The Indian of the past, supreme in his own country, hated and never forgot, concealed his emotions and grieved not. But the Indian of to-day is different. Stoicism has vanished. He is only a human being.

THE REFORMERS

WHEN we sally out into life in high hope that we shall find persons that can be "elevated," with results that can be catalogued, we meet life itself and discover we are dealing with a little cross-section of the eternal problem. The ordained forces of sin and folly are in tireless phalanx. There is a darkening of the hope, as we join battle with a whole array of griefs and problems. There will not again be peace of mind, not so long as the light shines to show the evil corners. The reward is the fuller initiation into life, and the conviction that, however clear-cut the other ways of going may be, however definite, there is no way but this.

THE EASIEST WORD

IT is easier to be plausible than accurate. Many men, who would reach for their hip pocket at mention of the short and ugly word, make statements every day that will not do for statistics. Many people who intend to be the soul of truthfulness speak the easiest word that sounds plausible. They say "Yes" when they mean "No," and think "No" when they say "Yes." They direct people along ways they do not know; quote definite figures when they are not certain, and make positive statements about things they have forgotten.

Where nothing depends upon it, to give a real name to a fictitious story, to name definite figures for an uncertain sum is permissible. To flavor a yarn or

give a snapper to a joke one may exaggerate and remain blameless. But to the man who has asked for facts, an inaccurate statement given with the air of accuracy is more dangerous than outright falsehood.

Plausible people who have the intention and standing of truthfulness, yet who rather explain afterward why they were wrong, than find out in advance if they are right, do far more mischief than willful falsifiers. It is so easy for them to make up what they do not know, and to fill the gaps of their information with guesses. Their motives are good and they are very obliging about it; but the results to the man with only five minutes to spare who follows their directions one block out of the way, or the one who stakes his reputation or his money on their statements, the result is just as disastrous as though they had intentionally deceived him.

In poetry or flowery speech, one may juggle facts to accommodate rhythmic and sonorous words. But in building bridges or mixing chemicals, it is not safe.

SCHOLARSHIP

WE received a letter recently from a Yale undergraduate, who is working ten hours a day chasing up news items in order to win a job as editor on the *Yale News*. He wrote while a full third of the college year was still ahead of him:

"I have worked very hard getting ready for it, and *have a good stand which will remove the necessity of any further studying.*"

THE PULSE OF THE WORLD

POETRY has been likened to the pulse of the world. Because no man of the rank of Tennyson has been poet laureate of Great Britain in recent time and because America boasts of no Longfellow or Bryant to-day, there is an idea that poetry is declining among the Anglo-Saxon people. The truth is quite the reverse. The present marks a great evolutionary period in poetic history. We are near the dawn of a new era.

For centuries the poets of Europe were animated by the spirit of the singers of Greece and Rome. The influence of the ancient bards was as dominant in Byron's day as in that of Shakespeare. They sang in heroic measure and pictured their characters in strong and glowing colors.

To-day the pendulum swings far in the opposite direction. The bard of the twentieth century searches the soul, giving expression to thoughts the poets of old never set before the people, and which, if they had expressed, probably would not have been understood as they are in this age.

It is but a mirror of the time. The Greek and Latin lived in a day of arms, passion, turmoil, intrigue, and strife. The present is one more of peace and introspection.

The Greek and the Latin school still finds voice. The robust tones of Kipling—perhaps the greatest of living poets—are attuned to those of the bards of long ago, but men and women of a promise as strong as he who gave to the world "The Recessional," are cropping up on both sides of the Atlantic.

There never was a time when there was a larger demand for poetry or when the poet was better paid. There never was a time when a really great poem was more certain of appreciation.

Two healthy signs are the evident success of the poetry journals printed in Boston and Chicago. They are edited with rare discrimination. Through one a poet who may rank with Whitman has been brought to light and in the other are seen gems that show the rays of genius.

Bob Corrigan's Bluff

By William Slavens McNutt

Author of "Con Larrigan's Pal," "The Princess," Etc

A young fellow from Boston with a taste for adventure gets a peep at the real thing when Bob Corrigan takes him to an island in the South Pacific where the pearlimg is good, if dangerous

THE brigantine *Anita*, eighteen days out from Valparaiso, was steering nor' nor'east under a cloud of canvas. Captain Bob Corrigan was standing on the weather side of the poop deck, with a length of marline, puzzling young Martin Hartman, the supercargo, with the baffling simplicity of a "tomfool's knot."

The *Anita* was one of the old Baltimore clippers, built originally for use as a slaver, and later put into the fruit trade, between New York and the Mediterranean. She had come around the Horn with a general cargo, and put into Valparaiso, with one of her butts sprung. She had been condemned there, and Corrigan had bought her for a song and fitted her out for a pearl fisher.

When she sailed from Valparaiso under tops'l's, with an old grayback souther blowing, Corrigan was walking the deck of one of the smartest vessels that ever sailed the South Pacific. The shores of the world are strewn with the bones of the old clipper ships built in Boston and Baltimore, and never a skeleton of them all but what has written a page in the history of the sea that the men who built and sailed them may well be proud of.

With him on the trip as supercargo, went Martin Hartman, a young fellow from Boston, with a weak lung and a taste for adventure.

Hartman took the marline from Corrigan's hands, and made his hundredth attempt to tie the simple knot that he had so carefully watched Corrigan carelessly tie.

"You've got that piece of grown-up string bewitched," he declared disgustedly, as he botched the knot again. "I know I did just what you did with it, but it won't behave for me."

Corrigan grinned. "There's other things besides law that need a lot of study to learn," he advised him. "There's things taught outside of college, son."

"La-a-a-and ho-o-o," the long-drawn cry quavered from the lookout on the upper foretops'l yard.

"Where away?" Corrigan sang aloft through his cupped hands.

"One point on the port bow, sir," the answer came back.

"That's Gorgona," Corrigan replied to Hartman's look of inquiry.

"Keep her on her course, Mr. Diaz," he instructed his Chilean mate. "When the south end of the island's abeam, call me."

"I can't make out any land," Hartman worried, searching the horizon through the long glass.

"You haven't got the right kind of a telescope to see through the ocean," Corrigan answered him dryly. "That land won't be in sight from the deck for another hour yet. If you want to go aloft, why—"

"Not at all," Martin hastily disclaimed any ambition to climb the rigging. "I've descended farther from my simian ancestors than the rest of you. I'm not comfortable hanging to a rope halfway between where I belong and heaven. I'll wait, thanks."

Corrigan laughed. "Have it your own way. You should have shipped be-

fore the mast with me instead of supercargo. If you had, I'll guarantee you'd be able to go aloft by this time."

"When I'm tired of life, I'll ship before the mast with you," Hartman replied. "For a landlubber, that's one of the most interesting forms of suicide I can imagine."

"I'll show you a better one when we come to sail through the channel in the reef that runs clear around the island," Corrigan assured him. "It's so narrow you could jump to the reef from the bulwarks on either side as we go through. Any time a landlubber wants a glorious finish, let him try to work a vessel through there with a little sea running. Come below, and I'll beat you one more game of crib while I've still got the time."

"Schooner in sight a point off the port bow, sir," Diaz interrupted the crib game in the cabin, a half hour later. "She's just stood off from the island, and I think from the look of her she's Beak Farley's *Albatross*."

Corrigan dropped his cards on the table and settled back slowly in his chair, staring at the mate, while his face underwent a change that sent an unpleasant tingle vibrating along Hartman's spine. Corrigan had been in an unusually good humor during the entire trip out from Valparaiso. He had the deed to Gorgona Island, bought at an absurdly low figure; young Hartman pleased him as a companion, and he had been buoyed with a born seaman's pride in the smartness of his vessel. Hartman had wondered much that the pleasant man with the quizzical gray eyes and the mocking smile should have the reputation that he knew was Corrigan's.

As he looked at him now, he understood. Anger had transformed the big Irishman's face, as a mountebank artist changes his sketch of a beautiful girl into a hideous demon with a few deft strokes. The genial host had disappeared, and a man as deadly in appearance as a coiled rattlesnake sat in the chair before him. The twinkle was gone from the gray eyes, and they gleamed from under his thick brows

like bits of ice. The quizzical face was scarred suddenly with ugly lines of hate. The wide lines were drawn into a thin, inverted semicircle of sullen determination.

"Load that long nine in the bow," he said. "If that poacher Farley's been at those beds, they're not worth the price of the crew's grub for the trip. Beak Farley, huh? I've been afoul of him before. Get those rifles up and loaded, and have them ready to hand out to the crew if we need them. I've bought the pearl rights on this island and paid for them in good money; and if Beak Farley's fished in those beds, he's only saved me the trouble. We'll take them shooting instead of fishing, and the work'll be done the quicker."

"Poacher?" Hartman inquired, when the mate had left.

"Meanest thief in the South Pacific," Corrigan answered shortly. "He's stole his last if he's fished my beds."

He took a black bottle from his locker, and poured himself a water-tumbler full of the fiery brandy.

"Here's to what's comin'," he said grimly, holding the glass aloft. "If that's Beak Farley, and he's got my pearls and shell, you'll see shark bait made in this next hour, son."

He downed the brandy at a gulp, and buckled a belt with ammunition and two forty-fives about his waist.

"Come on up if your stomach can stand the fun," he invited Hartman. "But if blood bothers you, stop below, and I'll tell you about it when it's over."

Hartman's face was pale, and little drops of sweat were noticeable on his forehead; but he managed a shaky laugh.

"It's something like this I always wanted to see," he declared. "I'll admit I'm scared to death, but I'm going to watch it from on deck if I can keep my cowardly legs from scuttling down below here with me when it starts."

Corrigan favored him with a little glance of almost admiration. "You're the kind of a coward that makes a hell-roaring fighter if you can make yourself stand the gaff just once. Grab that rifle there, and if there's need for gun

play, do some shooting of your own, early in the game. If there's any fight in your make-up, you'll forget there's any such thing as fear when you've fired the first two or three shots. Come on."

When Corrigan and Hartman came on deck, the men of both watches were in the shrouds, chattering excitedly and watching the far-off schooner. Corrigan trained the long glass on the approaching vessel and nodded.

"That's the *Albatross*, but what's she standing toward us for? If Beak Farley's been poaching, he'd be showing a pair of heels to any vessel of this size that hove in sight."

"She's signaling, sir," the lookout sang down from the foretops'l yard. "Ensign at the main peak with the union down."

Corrigan frowned thoughtfully.

"That's the distress signal," he enlightened Hartman. "Something amiss with her. Starboard, my man—steady! Now, Mr. Diaz, run down across her stern there, and heave to leeward of her within about three ship lengths with your head yards aback."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"And deal out those rifles to the crew. I know Beak Farley of old, and I don't think much of this distress signal of his. That long nine loaded?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have her manned, and stand ready to fire at the word."

"I can only see three men on deck," Hartman said, as they drew toward the schooner.

"And I don't like that, either," Corrigan growled. "I think there's a bunch of 'em hid. I can make out Farley now. That's him on the poop there with his glasses on us."

When the *Anita* was yet a mile distant, the schooner was hove to with her jib sheets to windward, and the fore-sheet eased off. The *Anita* ran down across her stern, luffed to with her head yards aback, and deadened her way, four ship lengths from the schooner.

A boat was lowered from the schooner and a mountain of a man in

white duck was rowed across to the *Anita* by one sailor. Only one man was left in sight on the deck of the *Albatross*. The big man came grunting up the ladder let over the side of the *Anita*, and vaulted over the bulwarks with an agility incongruous with his size.

He stood easily six feet four, and weighed over three hundred pounds. His tremendous head was covered with a thick thatch of short, curly black hair, sprinkled with gray. His eyes were mere glints of black specks, glinting from between the puffy eyelids. He was enormously fat and wheezed asthmatically when he exerted himself; but he nevertheless gave the impression of great physical power and agility.

He spoke in a high, thin, whiny voice, that was ludicrous in contrast with his great bulk. "I'm in a tight box, Cap' Corrigan," he wheezed. "I'd rather somebody would o' come along that wouldn't stick me for as tight a bargain as I know you'll drive to help me out, but I'm glad to see a man with nerve, who'll take a chance."

Corrigan, standing on the lee side of the poop, with his hands laced behind his back, eyed the fat man in silence.

"Where's your crew?" he demanded suddenly, after an uncomfortable interval.

"Ashore, blast 'em!" Farley answered pettishly. "The mutinous—"

"How many aboard your schooner now?"

"Only one. The rest—"

"We'll hear all that below. Keep that long nine trained on the schooner. Mr. Diaz, and if you see more than that one man aboard of her, don't wait for me to give the word to fire. If you're lying to me, you're a fool, Beak Farley."

"You're an awful suspicious man, Bob," Farley complained in his high whine. "That's the worst fault I got to find with you. You always think because—"

"Stop that, you thieving pirate! You'd cut your mother's throat for a tin dollar. Come below."

"My danged crew's mutinied on me, if you want to know." Farley com-

menced his explanation querulously, when they entered the cabin. "I was pearlimg here on—"

"Pearling, huh?" Corrigan interrupted him explosively. "On Gorgona?"

"Think I was fishing off Point Barrow?" Farley inquired caustically. "Certainly on Gorgona. I was pearlimg there and—"

"And that will be about enough for me to know. Just cast your eyes over that little document, you fat thief."

Corrigan slapped his deed to Gorgona on the cabin table in front of Farley. The fat man picked it up, fished a pair of nose glasses from his shirt pocket, and carefully adjusted them on the high bridge of his beak nose that had given him his name.

He studied the deed over judiciously, his comically pursed lips silently forming the words as he read them over. And suddenly he laughed. He laughed silently at first, tilting his great head far back and closing his tiny, piglike eyes. His whole body shook with mirth to which he gave no voice, and two tiny tears of merriment forced themselves between the clamped eyelids, and meandered aimlessly down over the oval of his cheeks.

"Heh!" he piped shrilly, opening his eyes, and winking at Corrigan. "This is a deed to Gorgona, Bob!"

"That's what I supposed when I paid for it," Corrigan answered irritably. "You acted like you thought it was a funny paper of some sort."

"The funniest I ever read," Farley assured him solemnly. "I don't recollect havin' ever read anything quite that funny, Bob. You don't see the joke yet?"

"I do not."

"You ain't got no sense o' humor. Now I see the joke the first time I ever read this thing."

"I noticed you did. But—"

"Oh, this ain't my first readin', Bob. No, indeed. You wasn't around when I first read this deed. There wasn't nobody there that time but just Don Ramon de Cruze an' me. Just us two, Bob."

Corrigan whipped one of the guns from his belt, and thrust the muzzle against Farley's forehead.

"If you know anything, you talk, and talk sense," he ordered grimly. "If you don't, say so, and stop this darned nonsense."

Farley looked fair at him, and, without the quiver of a muscle in his face, pushed the menacing barrel aside.

"Oh, put that thing up," he said shortly, in a tone suddenly grown hard and purposeful. "I'll talk sense to you fast enough. Ramon tried to stick me with that deed to the island, but his price was too low, and I smelled a rat. I went looking for Mr. Rat and I found him; found him in a law book in Valparaiso. Ramon bought the island from Frederico Alvares and paid for it; that part of it's all right. The funny part or it all is that it was not Frederico's to sell. No, it wasn't. The government deeded the island to his grandfather, and Frederico inherited it all fair enough. It was his to give to his children, but Frederico was the last of his line, and the island reverted to the Colombian government at Frederico's death. A gift of the government may never be sold by the man receiving, or any of his heirs. Now do you see the joke?"

"Ha, ha!" Corrigan enunciated solemnly. "Hear me laugh? So Ramon bled me for five thousand dollars, huh? I'll remember it. That makes no difference to me now, though; I came to fish these oyster beds, and fish 'em I will. The government can whistle. I say the island's mine, and what I say goes just now. If you've got any shell you can just deliver it up, because I've bought that island in good faith, and I consider the shell as mine. I'm going to take it unless you know of somebody that'll stop me?"

"I do."

"Who?"

"Don Ramon."

"Ramon?"

"To be sure, Ramon." Farley wrinkled his smooth brow in a tight little frown of disgust. "You show the sense of a turtle, Corrigan," he declared. "I'm

sorry to see your wits so dull, because we've got to act together if either one of us is to get out with any profit out of this trip over here. Listen to me: When Ramon found that his title to the island was no good, do you know what he went and did? No. Well, I do. He went and bought the concession from the government to fish these oyster beds, and then he went looking for a sucker to buy his deed to the island. When he was trying to sell it to me, he had his own ship fixed up, ready to sail, and he had the gunboat ready to sail at any minute under his orders to protect his rights on this island. If I'd bought that deed, I'd just about got here when he'd have showed up with his gunboat to drive me off. That's what he'd o' done to me, and that's what he's goin' to do to you, Bob Corrigan. I'll bet my whole schooner agen a moldy sea biscuit, that Ramon an' the gunboat ain't three days behind you right now. They'll nab you before you can do any fishing, and the best you can do is pocket your loss for the trip and the worthless deed; sail back to Valparaiso; oil up your gun, and wait for a good shot at Ramon when he gets back with all the pearl, and shell, and your five thousand dollars to boot."

Corrigan eyed Farley steadily. "I wonder if you lie," he speculated softly.

Farley shrugged his shoulders. "Keep on a wonderin'," he said resignedly. "An' every minute you spend wonderin', Ramon an' the gunboat are gettin' nearer an' we got less chance to go pardners, an' get away with some o' this stuff."

"You say pardners? What's your proposition?"

Farley inclined his great bulk forward till he sprawled over the table.

"I got four boats out workin' and have had for the past two months," he said. "I've got twenty-four men workin', an' they've took up about forty-five ton of shell. The shell's all stowed ashore in a bamboo shed there where they been workin'. That's twenty-seven thousand some odd dollars' worth o' shell, at the last quotations I heard; an' I claim that's worth takin' away. Good

enough. Now, my men signed on for wages. I told 'em I had the concession to fish here, and the bluff went for a bit; but they got suspicious that I was poachin', and finally they mutinied on me. They want a share in the shell; an' if they don't get it, they won't load the shell on the schooner. They would o' rushed the schooner to-day, but I found out about it an' got away to sea early this morning with my first and second mates. They've got the shell ashore and my four boats; I've got the schooner, and they can't get away without her. You've got the men, and the arms to make these men behave. Do you see it? You tame this crew for me, we split even on the shell, and get away before Ramon with the gunboat gets here. What about it?"

Corrigan laughed. "If I had a royal flush, and you held a crooked straight, would I divide the pot with you? That's child's talk. If I go ashore and tame this wild bunch of yours, why should I divide the shell with you?"

"Because the shell's only part of it," Farley answered him. "We've got some fine pearls out of that lot."

"Why shouldn't I take your schooner along with me when I leave the island, and search her for pearls when I've the time for it?"

Farley's mountainous body shook with the vibration of his silent mirth. "They're not aboard, Corrigan," he declared. "I've got them hid ashore."

Corrigan studied him intently. "I wonder," he muttered softly.

"I know you do," Farley replied. "But it's the truth, Corrigan. The pearls are hid ashore. There is thirty thousand dollars' worth there, Bob. You work half in half with me on the deal, or you'll never see them."

"I think you're lying, but I'll do it," Corrigan agreed.

Farley favored him with a sly wink. "I knew you would, Bob," he confided. "It's a shame for me to split even with you, though. It ought to be easy for me to swindle the man who was taken in by Ramon so easily."

"If you're tired o' life, start something like that," Corrigan advised him.

"You'll never get out o' gunshot o' me or one o' my men till our score is settled, Farley. My brain may be gettin' addled, but I can still drive a nail in the mast at thirty paces with a forty-five."

Farley shook his head wearily. "You will brag, Bob," he said resignedly. "Very bad habit. Very bad. I shoot a pretty good gun myself, but I wouldn't boast about it in company."

Corrigan's eyes narrowed. He drew a gun with a quick flirt of his right hand, and covered Farley with it.

"You fat snake!" he spat at him. "I'm forgetting your fangs are poison. Mr. Diaz, search him for a gun. Then take him and four men aboard his schooner. Find all their arms and lock them up. Follow me into the lagoon, and whatever you do, don't lose sight of this gob of living lard for a minute. Keep your eye on him all the time, and if you don't like the way he bats his eyes, shoot him. Those are my orders."

Farley heaved his bulk out of his chair with a great wheezing expulsion of his breath through his pursed lips. "Bragging's a bad habit," he whined dolefully. "I told you so, and I've just proved it. Bad habit, Bob; never do it."

Whatever the spirit of the mutinous crew of the *Albatross* may have been prior to the arrival of the *Anita*, their subsequent behavior was meek and mild. The *Anita* dropped two hundred yards from shore, directly abreast of the bamboo shell sheds, and the cluster of tents where the men were living. The long nine in the *Anita*'s bows sent one shot whining into the hillside just above the beach where the men were camped, and before she could be loaded again, a white shirt fluttered from the tip of a pole that was raised back of one of the tents. Corrigan made a deal with the men that they were to have double wages for the trip, and compelled Farley to sign an agreement to that effect. Then the work of loading the shell aboard the ships began. The shell was brought from shore in the sloop-rigged diving boats and stowed

away in the holds. By nightfall, the shell was well-nigh all loaded, and Corrigan went aboard the *Albatross*. "And now we'll settle, you and me," he informed Farley. "Dig up those pearls, and let's get the thing done."

"I can't locate 'em to-night, Bob," Farley wheezed. "They're buried up on the hillside there, an' there's an awful lot o' thick brush to go through, to get to where I planted 'em."

Corrigan frowned. "Quit it," he advised. "It was all right when you needed to bluff, but you don't, now. You've got the pearls aboard; dig 'em up."

The two men regarded each other for a full minute in silence, and then Farley sighed noisily:

"You're a hard man, Bob," he complained querulously, as he inched his great body erect. "A hard man to deal with. You ain't got much sense sometimes, but when you can put on the screws, you always do. You ain't got a bit o' kindness in you, Bob. Not a bit. Hi-hum."

He leaned laboriously over his berth and fumbled for a moment.

"Fine hidin' place I had fixed up here, Bob," he wheezed as he worked. "Secret panel right in the side board o' my berth here. Just a little space, but it's big enough to hold lots o' little things. Yes, sir. Lots o' little things. Things like this here, Corrigan."

Farley straightened up, and held a bulging chamois skin bag up for Corrigan to see.

"Fine for hidin' little things like that," he whined on. "Thirty thousand dollars' worth o' pearls in that little bag, Corrigan."

Big Corrigan's eyes glittered, as he peered into the gaping mouth of the poke. It held a full pound of pearls. Corrigan drew forth a handful, and let them run back into the bag through his fingers, delighting in the sensation of the touch of a valuable thing. From the average size and shape of the pearls, he knew that Farley had not underestimated their value.

"How'll we split 'em?" he inquired of Farley.

Beak shook his great head. "Have it your own way, Corrigan," he said disinterestedly. "Fix it up just as you like. I'll trust you for a fair deal, since you gave your word as a pardner. That's more'n you'd do by me, Bob."

Corrigan flushed slightly. "You'll get your half, as I agreed," he assured him.

Farley widened his tiny eyes. "I expect to get it," he said. "Surely I do. You're a hard man, but you're square, Bob Corrigan. You're square, but you're awful suspicious; suspicious of your friends, and willin' to believe anything your enemies tell you. Your judgment's bad, Bob; very bad. You mistrust me, but you believe anything a man like Ramon tells you. You're——"

"Never mind what I am," Corrigan interrupted him. "Let's split these up, and get it over. Got another bag like this?"

Farley opened the cabin-table drawer. "Right here," he said, flipping a limp chamois bag on the table top.

"Scales?"

Farley drew the medicine chest from beneath the cabin table, and handed Corrigan the scales.

"I'll just pour these out, and take them as they come from the bag," Corrigan suggested. "That fair?"

"Anything to suit, Bob; anything to suit."

Corrigan parceled the shimmering wealth carefully, until both bags registered the same weight on the scales.

"It's a gambler's chance which bag is worth the most," he admitted. "They're each of the same weight. I don't know which holds the most valuable pearls, and neither do you. That's fair for both; take your pick."

"Either one," Farley replied indifferently. "No odds to me one way or the other. You're runnin' this thing, Corrigan, an' I'm willin' to abide by what you do."

Corrigan studied the fat man intently, and the flush in his face rose and crimsoned his temples. His eyes fell before Farley's gaze, and he rose and impulsively thrust out his hand. "I guess I had you sized wrong, Beak," he admitted humbly. "I'll be frank with

you; I picked you for a crook from toe to crown, who'd knife a friend as quick as an enemy. From the way you act, I figure myself wrong and—and—I—I want—to—apologize for it."

The admission came from the big Irishman's throat haltingly, and each word was expelled with an effort. Apologies came hard to Corrigan. Farley hoisted himself to his feet, and grasped the Irish hand. "Don't mention it, Bob," he piped. "Don't say another word about it. I take your apology like you give, an' glad I am to have the chance. I always liked you, Bob, though you might not think it. We've been on opposite sides in some little deals, an' I always try to hold up my end in any kind of a game, but I'm square with a mate, Corrigan. Once I've passed my word to a man, he's got a mortgage on me that's good as gold. We'll drink to friendship, Bob."

Corrigan's face wore a miserably shamed look, as Farley took bottle and glasses from the swinging tray, over the cabin table, and poured out two tumblers of brandy. To have unjustly mistrusted a man hurt both his pride in his judgment and his Irish instinct for justice. He was eager to prove himself the equal of Farley in faith and courtesy, and he grasped the glass the fat man extended with a will.

"Here's to ourselves," Farley toasted. "Two bully good enemies to now, and friends forever after. Drink her down, Corrigan."

"Drink it is," Corrigan agreed heartily, and lifted the glass to his lips. The feel of a forgotten quid of tobacco tucked in his cheek checked him, and he turned his head for a moment, to spit it out before he swallowed his brandy. He raised the glass to his lips again hurriedly, to be in time with Farley in the cementing of their friendship, and paused with the liquor already wetting his tongue.

What stopped him he will never know. The knowledge that something did stop him, makes Corrigan tolerant of the wildest suspicions of the most ignorant sailor in his fo'c'stles. He held the glass poised at his lips, and

stared over the rim at Farley. Beak was staring back, his own glass poised in the same position as Corrigan's. The air in the little cabin was suddenly electric with portent. Slowly Corrigan lowered the glass and set it on the table in front of him. While his eyes, narrowed and shot with tiny red specks, bored into Farley, he reached and drew his gun.

Farley still held the glass to his lips, and save the fact that his great face was ghastly white, his expression changed not a jot.

Slowly Corrigan raised the muzzle of his revolver until the muzzle was lined with Farley's heart.

"Drink," he half whispered, in a velvety voice, that was deadly, with an underlying suggestion of chilled steel. "Drink her down, Farley."

Motionless, silent, expressionless, with his glass still held to his lips, Farley waited for a full, tragic minute. His fat white face crinkled in a sudden smile, and the flesh on his abdomen quivered with his silent mirth. When he spoke, his voice, like Corrigan's, had that underlying suggestion of something hard and deadly. "I'd hate to be shot," he confessed. "It makes such a mess of a man; and then it's a shock. They tell me this is an easy way."

Shaking with his voiceless mirth, he tilted the glass, and the liquor drained down his fat throat. He sputtered slightly, and slowly sat down.

"You're a hard man, Corrigan," he whined mockingly, in a high whisper, and his head relaxed against the back of his chair.

For five long minutes, Corrigan stood motionless, the gun in his hand trained on the seated man. Then he leaned across the table and applied the flat of his palm to Farley's shirt over the left breast. He held it there for a moment, his head twisted to one side, in the attitude of one listening, and suddenly he sighed deeply.

"That was close," he muttered to himself. He picked up both bags of pearls, and went out of the cabin, walking very softly on his toes.

Aboard the *Anita*, he called Diaz, the

mate, and ordered the anchor hove up. "And man that long nine and hammer the *Albatross* at the water line till she sinks," he added.

"But, captain—"

"You've heard me, Mr. Diaz."

"Aye, sir."

Hartman intercepted the captain, as he was going to his cabin.

"What are you going to do, captain?" he asked fearfully.

"Sink the *Albatross*, and get out of here," Corrigan answered.

"But the men, captain? Surely you're not—"

"Nobody aboard of her."

"But, captain, why—"

Corrigan reached out suddenly, and grasped the young fellow by the shoulder. He held him at arm's length for a moment, trembling all over with a fit of rage, and then flung him away so that he crashed against the bulwarks and lay senseless on the deck.

Diaz was bending over him when he recovered. The roar of the long nine reverberated in his ears.

"You're lucky," Diaz said awesomely. "A lucky man."

Hartman struggled to his feet, and stared about, supporting himself on the bulwarks. He was in time to see the masts of the *Albatross* disappear beneath the waters.

"You're lucky," Diaz repeated, and Hartman knew why Corrigan bore the reputation he did in the South Seas.

It was late the next afternoon when the lookout reported a smudge of smoke on the horizon.

"That'll just about be the gunboat," Corrigan guessed, when the mate called him. "Set your signals for him to heave to, Mr. Diaz."

"You're not going to try to run for him?" Hartman inquired.

"Any fool can run, but it takes a wise man to stand still and keep safe," Corrigan answered him cryptically.

The gunboat was hove to when the *Anita* was yet a mile away. The *Anita* ran down across her stern, and luffed to with her head yards aback. A boat

was sent out, and Corrigan was rowed aboard the gunboat.

The first man he spied when he climbed aboard of her was Don Ramon de Cruze. It took five of the crew to hold the infuriated Irishman from the Spaniard's throat.

"You fished that island off yourself," Corrigan raved at him. "You sent those schooners over there yourself, and then sold me the island when you knew the beds were all fished out. I'll kill you for that. I—"

A look of understanding flashed between Don Ramon, and the captain of the gunboat. The Spaniard laughed tauntingly. "Do you think it, captain?" he inquired with a meaning intonation. "Perhaps. I have the money and you have the deed; it was all according to law, and your threats weary me. Will you go now, or shall I have you thrown over the side?"

And thrown over the side Corrigan was; thrown over by half the deck watch, raving like a madman. He was hauled into his own boat, and rowed back to the *Anita*. When he was some distance from the gunboat, he lay back

in the stern sheets, and laughed until the tears streamed down his cheeks, and his sides were weak.

"There's two kinds of bluffin'," Corrigan explained to Hartman over the crib board in the cabin that night. "One kind is makin' a man believe you've got him beat when you ain't; the other is makin' a man believe you're beat when you're playin' a royal flush."

He lay back in his chair, and laughed heartily at the memory of Ramon on the gunboat.

"He never thought to have me searched when I went aboard to raise a row about having been cheated. I've got over twenty ton of good shell aboard and thirty thousand dollars' worth of pearls; the whole lot cost me five thousand dollars, and a six weeks' cruise. Pretty fair. And Ramon and Farley both played me for a fool. Yeh. There's two kinds of bluffs, and they're both good—when they work."

"And if they don't?"

Corrigan raised his eyebrows and picked up his cards.

"What's to worry a dead man?" he asked.

A wonderful story opens in the next issue, by E. Phillips Oppenheim. It will be called "The Vanishing Messenger," and holds the finest mystery you can imagine.



A GREAT BIG FINANCIAL QUESTION

THERE is in Washington a member of the House of Representatives who has won so much money at poker that, literally, he is ashamed to take the money. That sounds like an abandoned, bald misstatement of fact. Nevertheless, it is true. This bold gambooleer became so famous for his consistent winning that he quit.

A few days after he had determined on this course of self-denial, and before his reform had become a matter of general information, the Democrats of the house were in caucus on the administration's currency bill. One gentleman, who had felt the sting of the great gambler's skill, was arguing against a proposition in the bill which permitted the borrowing of money on very slight security.

"The proposition is absurd!" thundered the indignant statesman. "It is like giving money away. It practically asks for no security. To illustrate—would I loan a thousand dollars to anybody to play poker with a certain member of this house whom we all know?"

"No!" shouted all the men who had ever sat in the game with the victor.

This beat the provision in the bill, and broke up the caucus for that day.

The Terrorists

By Arthur B. Reeve

Author of "The Silent Bullet," "The Poisoned Pen," Etc.

A tango teacher figures in this story—surely a curious figure in this stirring narrative of the machinations of a gang whose creed is "Violence" and whose declaration reads: "Liberty wears a mantle of blood henceforth. Whom we cannot control we shall remove." It is Craig Kennedy, the scientific detective, who tackles the danger-filled job of routing the anarchists.

(In Two Parts—Part One.)

CHAPTER I.

THE RED WOMAN.

ONLY by the merest chance I was not blown to atoms." Morgan Hazleton, multimillionaire banker and promoter of scores of the largest enterprises in America, surveyed the wreck of a corner of his immense country home at Rockcrest, on the Hudson. His face was still blanched from the shock and his hand shook, although the explosion had occurred several hours before.

Kennedy and I had been hastily summoned from New York, and had arrived at Rockcrest at express-train speed in one of the highest powered of the Hazleton motor cars, only to find the place already prepared almost as if it were in a state of siege.

The Hazleton estate stretched along the river and back over the beautifully wooded low rolling hills for some three thousand acres. Armed men were now patrolling it, and some private detectives from a near-by town were stationed at various points.

Powerful dogs, mostly Great Danes, but including two or three bloodhounds, were kept in leash. I recall, as our car rolled up the wide, winding drive-

way to the house, the spectacle of one burly watchman pacing slowly along the road with one of the dogs tugging at a leather thong, while the man glanced sharply into the bushes on either side of the road as he went.

Ahead of him we came across two men with rifles who thrashed through the underbrush to avoid the possibility of an ambush. From the hip pockets of all three, big revolvers bulged. It was surely an adequate preparation that such sights should have given us, but the theory of Mr. Hazleton himself was more amazing than even we had conjectured on our hurried ride up from the city.

"If my den had not been bomb-proof," Mr. Hazleton continued, with what might have been a suppressed shudder, "the whole house would have been demolished."

"Bomb-proof?" queried Kennedy, looking up quickly at the novelty of the idea.

"Yes. Come with me. Let me show the wreck."

Mr. Hazleton led the way from the library upstairs, into which we had been ushered on our arrival, through a half-concealed door, down a flight of stone steps, let into the very walls of the house itself.

He was a fine-looking man, just past middle age, with close-cropped iron-gray hair, steel-blue eyes, regular features, and a massive head set on a powerful neck such as I have often observed is typical of many of the great leaders of finance and business of to-day. I could not help feeling that this was a man not easily to be frightened, that the evidences of alarm which even his iron nerves could not conceal must surely forebode a case which would try Craig's abilities to the utmost.

"It has long been my custom," explained Mr. Hazleton, as we descended the dark stairway slowly, lighted only by Kennedy's electric pocket bull's-eye, for the explosion had put the regular lighting system out of business, "to spend an hour, perhaps several, before I retire, in this den. Somehow," he added, disclosing for a moment the personal side of the great financier, which even the newspapers had so seldom had a glimpse of, "somehow, when the lights are glowing and the rest of the house is still, in sleep, my mind seems to work more keenly. I have thought out some of my greatest undertakings here, at that hour."

He had stopped at a heavy door in the side of the stone corridor. As he swung it open, instead of the den, we saw a concrete terrace.

"But to-night," he continued, "for the first time in years, I suppose, after I had started down the steps from the library, I paused, opened this door, and looked out on the terrace. I can't say that it was due to any premonition. You can readily fancy that I am not an impressionable man, that perhaps if I had had what people call a premonition I should rather have stifled it and gone on down. But whatever it was that made me do it, I looked out. The moonlight on the river below there through the clearing in the trees seemed so very attractive that I turned and stepped out. The minutes prolonged themselves into half an hour, perhaps.

"Just as I was about to go down the steps again, the earth seemed to rock under me. I clutched wildly at the balustrade, but a power, a super-

human power, seemed to dash me down to the ground. I had not even time to think whether this might not be the stroke that my physicians had been warning me against as a result of the work that it is now my very life to do. I fell—stunned, I suppose. It all happened in a flash. The last I recall was the crash of shattering glass all about, as if a thousand windows had broken at once—and then—lights moving—the cries of servants—and I staggered to my feet to find—this."

He turned and went slowly down the rest of the flight of steps.

"You had not been in the den at all, then?" asked Kennedy as we followed.

"No, and I know there could have been no one there at the time. No one could get in, except myself. Anything that I want is left for me in an antechamber which we are coming to. That was really where the explosion took place."

"No one was in the anteroom?" asked Kennedy.

"Hardly likely—hardly necessary," he replied, stopping.

"Why?"

"I shall put all that, everything, at your disposal," he said. "I have already questioned the servants. So far the only thing I have learned is that during the afternoon a package containing a book was delivered here to me, a sample, I believe, it was said to be. It had been accepted by my man Armand, and had been left down here on a table by the door of the den."

"Accepted? Accepted from whom?"

"Armand tells me it was left by a woman, a young woman in red."

Mr. Hazleton was evidently eager to get through with his part in the story and turn Kennedy loose with carte blanche to investigate. He continued through the underground passageway in the big house which led under the open courtyard, down a flight of steps, and under the rim of the terrace in front of the house for a short distance to a point where we descended three steps. At the head of these three steps was a great steel and iron door; studded

with heavy bolts and bearing a combination lock of a character ordinarily found only on a safe in a banking institution.

When this door was opened we descended the steps, proceeded a little farther in the same direction away from the side of the house, and then turned at right angles facing toward the back of the house, but well to one side of it, and underneath the open courtyard. I may say that I am indebted to Kennedy for the details. He always made a practice of counting steps or paces when entering a strange place, and often it stood him in good stead.

A few more steps brought us to a fair-sized vaulted room, the anteroom.

It was such a wreck as I have rarely seen. The terrific force of the explosion seemed to have literally torn asunder steel beams, as if they had been paper, shattered concrete as if it had been dust, and splintered the furniture beyond identification.

In the wall was another steel door which led to the den itself, either a purely precautionary refuge to be used in emergency, or a retreat where Hazleton could work or study undisturbed.

The door had been twisted off its hinges, and through it we could catch a glimpse of the den itself, a topsy-turvy chaos of overturned and broken furniture, scattered books and papers, a wreck second only to the complete ruin in the anteroom.

A light step behind caused me to start with an exclamation. It was only one of the servants, but the atmosphere was so charged with mystery that it might have been a ghost or an assassin himself.

"Mr. Morgan, junior, has just arrived from the city, monsieur," announced a musical voice.

We turned to find a quiet, deferential, soft-spoken little Frenchman in every outward appearance an ideal servant.

"You will not mind, gentlemen," asked Mr. Hazleton of us, "if I ask my son down here? The fact is that though he might not be of much use

to me in floating a bond issue, I think he can be of much more use to you than I can under the circumstances. Tell Mr. Morgan to come down here immediately, Armand."

"That is the man who received the —ah—book from the woman?" asked Kennedy, as Armand withdrew as noiselessly as he had come.

"Yes. Ask Morgan about him. He is Morgan's protégé—and a good enough one, too, I imagine," he added.

Kennedy had examined the wreckage at a glance, and was now going over it more carefully.

A quick step on the stairs interrupted us, and Morgan, junior, hurried down in a high state of excitement.

"Thank God!" he cried, as he rushed up to his father with both hands extended. "What have they been trying to do with you, governor?"

"I don't know, junior," replied the older man, with a sort of grim taciturnity. "That's what I have sent for Kennedy to find out."

"I came just as soon as I got your message. I've fixed it with the newspapers, the City News, and Associated Press, so that the thing will be minimized, but—great heavens—what a wreck!"

Morgan Hazleton, junior, was of an entirely different type from his father. He was tall, spare, and polished, with the air of one who approached the struggle for existence with quite a different attitude from that which the older man had ingrained in his nature. Yet there was something most likable about Morgan. There was a sincerity about him, a sort of contempt for dilettantism that was quite refreshing in the second generation of great wealth which so often divides its time between sport and scandal.

One could have seen at a glance that for Morgan business in itself as an end had no attractions. And yet one felt that no matter what it was that he took up, he had inherited from the elder man the inevitable faculty of leadership. Perhaps in another period of the world's history he might have gone into the church, for, with all, there was

something of the crusader in him. But, living in the twentieth century, and having at college fallen under the influence of a very practical and farsighted professor, he had gone into what has been conveniently named "social work."

I already knew that as head worker of the new Extension Settlement on the East Side of New York he was deeply immersed in the study of many of the problems of society of which his father had taken advantage in building up his colossal fortune; indeed, had shaped in doing so.

As a newspaper man it was not the least of my enjoyment to watch these two, so different in nature yet so closely bound together. I could not escape an indefinable feeling, however, that whatever the father might think of the social activities of his son at other times, now he felt that this was a case in which he might take advantage of those qualities and that knowledge in Morgan, junior, which, as a banker and business leader, he at least neglected, perhaps failed to understand. I was surprised to see that between these two there was a great deal better appreciation of what the other stood for than I had suspected.

"I'm glad I thought about the newspapers when I sent you the message," said the elder man. "We can run this thing down a great deal better if it is not a nine days' sensation. If it is some harebrained crank, you'll know better how to deal with him than I do. And if it's some one with a grievance—well, I can trust you with that, too."

"Do you have—any idea—about it?" asked Morgan keenly.

"No more than you do," replied Mr. Hazleton. I could see that, since he was now in his accustomed rôle of calling about him those in whom he could trust to accomplish what he wanted, he was more like the Hazleton the world knew. "I have told Professor Kennedy and Mr. Jameson all I know. Now, I leave them for the present with you. Of course, call on me whenever you need anything. Spare no effort or expense."

Mr. Hazleton had turned and was

slowly retracing his steps to the library upstairs, where he planned to establish his temporary headquarters until the wreck of his den could be restored.

Morgan stood for several minutes, with his thumbs in his lower vest pockets, watching Kennedy with obvious admiration as he went over the wreckage.

"I've heard about you," he said at length. "It's just like the governor to get you up here—and get you here before any one else. I never saw a man who acted so quickly and knew how to act, too, to equal the governor. Armand tells me they hadn't more than picked him up before he was ordering them about, telling them just what to do—thinking of everything from stopping a panic among the servants, to quieting the Stock Exchange in the morning. Great, isn't he? What do you make of it all, anyway?"

"Well," remarked Kennedy tentatively, still going on with his work of minute examination, "for one thing, I think it is quite out of the question that it could have been a clockwork bomb. And I can't quite see how it could have been a chemical bomb—at least, not of any ordinary manufacture. Of course it is too soon to form an opinion. We haven't started yet. But as nearly as I can reconstruct the case, there is something almost uncanny about this bomb. It was left at a time when it was easiest to leave, by a person least likely to excite suspicion, for I have heard that your father is well known as a buyer of books, and it was exploded at a time which could not have been foreseen or exactly calculated by the sender, but which was most likely to accomplish the diabolical work. I take it that he has no particular set time for retiring to the den and no regular hour for leaving it."

"No, and few people, I should say, know that he has such a place or such a habit."

Kennedy shook his head. "Only a lucky chance, as he says, saved him. Who is this Armand?"

"Armand?" repeated Morgan. "Why, he is a little Frenchman, who came

into the settlement perhaps a year ago. He had been here long enough to have most of his delusions about America rudely shattered. Just another one of those who come here to make a fortune and then find that they don't even know our language—let alone the language of success. I had him working for me down there for several months, and he made good, so when we needed a new man up here, I brought him up. My father thinks he's perfect—quiet, quick, efficient—the governor's got that efficiency fad badly, now. I think I can claim the real credit, though. I discovered him and trained him."

"I'd like to talk with him here," put in Kennedy. "As far as we've gone, it must have been that alleged book that turned this trick."

Armand was indeed that rarity, an efficient servant. One did not need to be told that to see that otherwise he could not have picked up the knowledge of English which he had acquired in a year, or the ways and confidence of the household in a few months.

"Mr. Hazleton tells me a book was delivered to you, this afternoon," began Kennedy.

"Yes, by a lady," he remarked.

"The only variety of book agent who would appeal to you," remarked Kennedy, not ungraciously.

Armand smiled. It was evident that whatever he thought of the profession he did not dislike the sex, and cared not who knew it.

"Can you recall just how she looked?" pursued Craig.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "she was a lady—such a beautiful manner, and a figure which the gown—it was a warm red—showed with such style—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Kennedy, with some impatience, "but her face. Can you remember her face?"

Armand threw up his hands to denote his inability. "She wore a heavy veil, monsieur, also of red. I could not see through well, but she must have been beautiful. Her hair, it was black. I could see that, but the features—no, monsieur, I could not see them."

Kennedy did not pursue the subject

further, but changed the course of his questioning. "What did she say to you, Armand? Was there nothing that made you suspect anything?"

"She said nothing—only that she knew Mr. Hazleton was a lover of books, and that this was a sample of some that would interest him—that if I would place it so he would see it, she would be glad to call at his convenience to talk about the rest. She was not like the agents who come around. I can drive them away. Surely, I thought, there can be no harm in assisting such a delightful young lady who seems to know of Mr. Hazleton, too."

"So you took the book," prompted Kennedy.

"Assuredly, monsieur. I placed it on the table in the anteroom near the door of the den, with the mail, the newspapers, and a few other trifles that I am instructed always to place there."

"That will do. Thank you, Armand," concluded Kennedy, in a tone at once conciliatory and calculated to convey no impression of suspicion.

Armand withdrew as quietly as he had come. I may as well admit that I had at first had some suspicion of him myself. But now on analysis I could find nothing except that as a perfect servant he was a rarity, and as a foreigner unfamiliar to us and our ways. Kennedy, too, seemed to dismiss the matter from his mind and resume his patient and laborious examination of the ruins.

"The massive door which guards this place," he observed to Morgan casually, "indicates that your father designed this to be ready for any emergency that might arise. A man might safely stand a siege here for an indefinite time, provided no one got at him at his last line of defense as in this case."

"That was in his mind, no doubt," remarked the young man slowly.

"Do you suppose he has any personal enemy whom he particularly fears?" asked Kennedy.

"People are always talking about him," answered Morgan slowly. "Not

long ago it was over his financing of some foreign loans which placed American bankers on a parity with foreign bankers. Now, I believe, it is because of his connection with the Armor Plate Trust."

"The Armor Plate Trust?" put in Kennedy, as though we had not heard and read criticisms again and again of the growing, and it must be confessed, steady influence of Morgan Hazleton in the money market and industrial expansion.

"Yes, he and several others, principally a Mr. Burton, of whom you have heard, and a Mr. Dwight, have been associated. Both the Burtons and the Dwights live in the neighborhood of Rockcrest, you know."

He paused, and I fancied I knew why. I had read of the beautiful daughter of Clinton Dwight, Margery Dwight, who had only recently been graduated from one of the foremost colleges, and had created a marked sensation by deserting society and going into social work. Sometimes I had read of her at the Extension Settlement, and I saw in her case a parallel to Morgan's own, which made me wonder whether there was anything farther than chance in it.

"I know," he went on, "that there exists, for instance, in the lawless element of foreigners employed on these big estates, a feeling of bitterness toward the Hazletons and toward others. The feeling is shared to some extent by the law-abiding, I am sorry to say. In fact, there has been so much and so bitter criticism of my father in the newspapers and magazines, that that was partly the reason why I gave up business to go into social work, part of which was starting the Extension Settlement as a sort of experiment station. I wanted to understand what was the matter with the system, to get at it, to correct it, if I could."

Kennedy was following him in silence, still going over the battered walls of the passageway and the twisted, massive door. As I watched Craig and his exploration of the den, I could not help thinking how medieval all this

precaution was, though I have since learned that other millionaires have taken similar, though not so elaborate, precautions against both burglars and mobs. I wondered why Craig was going over the walls so carefully. Could he be looking for finger prints? At last he rose, seemingly having exhausted his search, though his face betrayed nothing as to its success or failure.

"Perhaps you are right," he remarked. "There may be some fanatical and murderous social cleanser at work. If that is the case he may turn out to be a person of hitherto unblemished repute. Or we may have just a common criminal to deal with. In any case he is a man of great mechanical skill and practical knowledge of explosives, and perhaps of electricity. That, too, would not be incompatible with the theory that he labors under the delusion that he has a mission in life to rid the world of persons whom he reckons enemies of society."

We were now on our way to rejoin Mr. Hazleton in the library.

"This is a most amazing case," exclaimed Kennedy, as we groped our way up. "As far as I can see, here is a bomb that, once it was put into place, by whatever clever method or ruse, could apparently be exploded at will—whether by some one in the house or by some one at a distance remains to be discovered."

Morgan stopped short on the stairs.

"What!" he cried, almost aghast. "The house may be mined still? Another of these infernal machines may explode at any moment?"

"I cannot say," returned Kennedy. "All you can do for the present is to maintain those very efficient safeguards which I see your father has already adopted."

We had come to the library.

Briefly, Kennedy went over with Mr. Hazleton what had happened.

For a moment the cold steel eye of Hazleton seemed to weigh Kennedy, and find him not wanting.

"So far, then, you have found no clew," he ruminated.

"Mr. Hazleton," put in Kennedy,

"no crime is ever without clews. Every criminal leaves a track. If it has not been found, then it is because no one has ever looked for it in the right way."

"Let us hope this mysterious bomb will prove no exception," said the millionaire, turning again to the stack of papers he was reading. "I give you and Morgan a free hand. Call on me for any help you need—and report the results as soon as you get on the track in the right way. Good night, sir," he added, apparently conscious that he must not admit to us his own anxiety.

CHAPTER II.

"DIRECT ACTION."

Kennedy and I returned immediately to the city, he at least satisfied apparently that for the present no second attempt would be made on Mr. Hazleton at Rockcrest.

I feel sure that he must have remained up most of the night in his laboratory, plunged into the usual maze of tests and experiments by which he exhausted every possibility of a new phase of any of his cases.

"What have you found?" I asked eagerly, after I had persuaded him not to forego eating breakfast, although I was reasonably certain that his rest had consisted of minutes rather than hours during the night.

Kennedy's puzzled look was answer enough. I knew from it that he had found enough already to assure himself that this was an affair of more than ordinary fascination for his highly trained and analytical detective faculties.

"I can't say—definitely," he answered slowly. "All I can say with any positiveness is just about what you could say yourself. I have found that an explosive was used. More than that I do not know, except that it seems to have been a new explosive, and as far as I am acquainted, after a more or less careful study of explosives, something hitherto unknown."

He pondered the matter for several moments, consented to eat something,

and, after bolting a few mouthfuls, resumed his brown study.

A hasty glance at his watch seemed to remind him that at last the new day must have begun for others, as it had for him some hours before. "Will you call a cab, Walter?" he asked, gathering up some records which he had scrawled on handy bits of paper.

I did so, and in a few seconds we were speeding across the city to an address which I had not caught very distinctly when he gave it.

"Have you any clew?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered slowly, "I think there is a clew. This is an explosive, it is true, of which I have never heard, and a terrifically powerful explosive, too. More than ever I am convinced that some rare genius is at work. But the very rarity of the tools with which he works will be the means by which we may, in the end, discover him. Thank Heaven, it is the unusual, not the commonplace, criminal we have to deal with. That makes it just so much the easier."

I was still turning over in my mind the remark that Kennedy had made, with a view to combating it, when the cab paused under the brow of a thickly populated tenement row on an East Side street in the upper part of Manhattan.

Without a word, he motioned to me to leave the cab, and the moment the vehicle disappeared he dived down into a low cellar several doors beyond where we had stopped. I followed, until in the dim light I saw that we were confronted by a door of mystery.

It would have been, I reflected, under ordinary circumstances not an unusual-looking door, perhaps six feet high and half as wide. On the outside it was barred with iron, and an innocent enough looking padlock, now unlocked, held it. The door, however, was caught on the inside.

Kennedy knocked, tapping the iron with one of his keys as if the place was not unfamiliar to him. As we waited, I noted that the walls of this tenement cavern were of ordinary brick, cement, and stone. Whoever

occupied it depended for secrecy rather on the out-of-the-way location than on the strength of his fortress.

"Who's there?" came a not unpleasant voice from inside.

"Nolan, open up! It's Kennedy," Craig answered.

The door swung on its rusty hinges, disclosing a stocky Irishman of middle age, whose ready smile showed that Craig was anything but an unwelcome visitor.

"Nolan," began Kennedy, entering, "let me introduce my colleague, Mr. Jameson. Walter, Inspector Nolan, of the city bureau of combustibles. Nolan is the man, you know, who studies and dissects, inside the barricaded walls of this secret chamber of the bureau, every bomb that comes into the possession of the police and fire departments."

I gazed about me curiously. A mere glance was sufficient to tell me that the reason for keeping Nolan's workshop a secret, except for a few of the initiated like Kennedy, was well founded. In the bomb house, as it might have been called, there were sometimes collected as many as a dozen infernal machines of tremendous destructive capacity. The place was literally crammed with high explosives, chemicals, and confiscated dynamite. I could not help saying that if the bomb planters themselves had only known who it was who made their trade extra hazardous for them, they might easily conceive the idea of setting off an infernal machine at the door of mystery which would have ended everything in the dungeon, including Nolan himself.

"This is a remarkable place," began Kennedy by way of introduction to me.

"Yes," agreed Nolan, with a pardonable air of pride, "the dangerous part of this business, as the professor knows, is studying the bombs, what might be called drawing their fangs. No bomb is a safe thing to have around until it is wholly destroyed. But before you can destroy it, it's rather a ticklish job to take out the most dangerous element so that the thing can be examined safely. Just what I do the first

thing, I won't say. If one of these fellows knew, he might beat me to it and fix a bomb that would overcome even my precautions."

He paused as though waiting to see whether Kennedy had some new problem for him, or was just sight-seeing.

"Just now there are five dissected bombs in the magazine," went on Nolan, as Kennedy took his time in coming to the point. "Look," he added, taking up one as though it were almost a pet. "Here's an unusual and clever construction. The whole arrangement was incased in this wooden box. The cover was marked with skull and crossbones, and in the bottom of the box I found evidence of a chlorate mixture. On the teeth of the skull I found match heads, when I opened the box, showing the grim humor of the miscreant. Then, take this one. Here's another puzzling bomb. At first there seemed to be no way of setting that thing off. The explosive is a lot of small crystalline yellow needles which show bright yellow, green, and red in reflected light. I haven't analyzed them yet, but they are not soluble in water, though they dissolve readily in alcohol and have an intense bitter taste. Of course, I have taken the thing all apart; it is harmless now, but, for the life of me, I can't see what it all was. Yet no one ever went to all the trouble to make that for nothing. It is not one of those fake bombs that they make out of coal dust, with a firecracker fuse to sputter and merely scare people. No, it is quite different. Inside were all these little coils and wires, just like a miniature sparking machine—but no battery. It's beyond me."

Nolan was shaking his head in perplexity.

Kennedy almost seized the little coils and wires from him and examined them eagerly.

"Where was this found?" he asked.

"It came through the mail yesterday to Roger Burton, and was opened by his secretary. At least he started to open it, thinking it was a book, but something seemed to warn him, and he called the police and they sent it to me."

"Roger Burton," Kennedy exclaimed, as he continued to examine the thing. "Nolan, our wires are crossed. I came to you to tell you of a most unusual bomb that has exploded up at Rockcrest at the home of Morgan Hazleton——"

"Yes, I read something about it, this morning," put in Nolan, now all attention.

"And before I can get the words out of my mouth, you show me what, for all I know, is an exact counterpart of the thing still intact, sent to Roger Burton, who has been associated with him lately in some big enterprises. Why, the thing must be——"

A sudden knock at the door startled us. Nolan cautiously approached and opened it on a crack.

A moment later a hearty voice greeted us:

"Well—if this wasn't the wrong place to say such a thing—wouldn't this jar you! You here?"

It was our old friend Burke, of the United States secret service, with whom we had worked in running down counterfeitors and half a dozen other criminals.

I have always taken it as a tribute to Craig that when an official crime hunter worked with him, he always became a fast friend. Burke's joy at seeing us was undisguised.

"Kennedy," he cried, without waiting to learn what it was that brought us across his own trail, "have you heard the latest? Of course you haven't—but perhaps you will hear it soon, for the boys of our friend Jamieson's profession are pretty wise guys, and even the secret service can't hide much from them nowadays."

He leaned over, and, to emphasize his remark, brought his fist down hard on a workbench, with characteristic caution, even in his excitement, looking first to see whether he would land it in a sample of yeggman's "soup," or something less dangerous.

"One of the greatest secrets the government possesses has been stolen—the secret formula for the manufacture of picral."

"Picral?" replied Kennedy, showing no amazement.

"Yes, a new explosive, invented by a young government engineer, and presented to the government. It has never been patented. In fact, it was too valuable to patent. Besides that would have let the secret out, and foreign nations would have paid any sum of money to get it. So the discoverer, a Lieutenant Gardner, Howard Gardner, a mighty fine fellow, presented his discovery to the people of the United States."

"How was it stolen?" asked Kennedy, as Nolan's eyes bulged at the curious train of coincidences that had gathered us in his little bomb house.

"Of course we don't know. I thought I'd drop in and tell Nolan to be on guard, for it in case——"

"You are just in time, Burke," remarked Kennedy quietly. "There is some of the stuff over there. It came in the form of a bomb to Roger Burton, just as some more did in a bomb that exploded and pretty nearly killed Morgan Hazleton at Rockcrest last night."

"The deuce you say," exclaimed Burke, instantly getting the clew, "and both of them in the Armor Plate Trust!"

He paused, almost speechless with amazement.

"Why," went on Burke, when he had found his voice, "you didn't know it, but you know it now—Gardner is working at present for the government on some experiments in connection with the trust. I don't know what they are—armor, explosives, submarines, airships, anything for all I know. But he's out at their meadow laboratory, on the Jersey meadows, just across the river now. How much else has been stolen we don't know, but for the present we know that the secret of the latest and most powerful explosive in the world is in the hands of some one who has no right to it."

"And has already used it once with deadly effect, and has only by chance failed with it a second time," cut in Kennedy.

We four looked at each other in blank amazement at the quick succession of explanations which had only served to deepen and make more inexplicable the mystery.

Kennedy was the first to speak.

"Clearly," he said slowly, "this is a case in which it would be dangerous to waste an ounce of energy. Let us all coöperate. I shall handle the thing from the personal standpoint of Hazleton and the rest, Burke, of course, for the government, and you, Nolan, can keep us in touch with any actual attempts, while Walter can steer the newspapers off the subject so that we can work unhampered. We are up against something—gigantic," he concluded.

We parted, each on his own mission, in a state of the keenest excitement. As we walked down through the crowded tenement district I wondered what Kennedy would do next, and in the face of the startling situation that had so suddenly developed I must confess to a feeling of utter helplessness myself.

We had scarcely arrived at the laboratory again when we found a very anxious messenger waiting for us.

"Mr. Hazleton—the young man, sir—wants to see you immediately at the Extension Settlement," he blurted out.

"Have you been waiting long?" asked Kennedy, turning without entering the laboratory.

"About half an hour, sir," replied the boy.

"Let us trust then that it is a half hour that can be made up," remarked Kennedy, betraying momentarily his own anxiety, as we hurriedly followed the boy downtown.

The Extension Settlement was in a new brick building in a section of the lower East Side, which had a most conglomerate population, retaining traces of each successive wave of immigration, but now mostly composed of Russian and Polish people. It had been Hazleton's idea, as founder and head worker, to make it something more than a mere social experiment station, too. It was indeed a true neighbor-

hood center. Within its walls a most cosmopolitan crowd assembled, and it was used by the various clubs, classes, and other organizations for all manner of activities from dawn until midnight—a veritable melting pot not only of races but of classes.

Hazleton's office adjoined a modest suite of rooms on the top floor, and quarters were provided for several other resident workers, as well as means for increasing the sleeping facilities if special occasion demanded. Indeed, it was one of the foremost and most ambitious undertakings of the sort in the city.

He had been waiting impatiently for us in his office, and was pacing restlessly up and down when we arrived. A look of relief passed over his face at the sight of Kennedy, and without waiting for us to ask anything he motioned to a piece of paper lying flat on the table in the center of the room.

"I returned this morning," he said, "to find that in the mail. Read it."

We bent over the paper, rudely scrawled in a disguised handwriting, and read:

MANIFESTO.

You cannot shield your father and those who have imposed themselves on the people as rulers. None of your halfway measures of "reform" can prevent the revolution. For we, the common people, have at last in our hands the weapons to purge society. Liberty wears a mantle of blood henceforth. Whom we cannot control we shall remove. Violence is our creed. Submission and philosophy are stupid. We have a right to live. So has every man a right to live. Society has made some what they are, but the society that is responsible for them is criminal and imbecile. If it tries to prevent them from living their lives—so much the worse for society. We are no more to blame for what we do than is the employer who sweats his employees in factories, no more to blame than the fools who throw the weak into prison. Are you and those of your class going to stand in our way longer? If so, prepare for *direct action!*

THE GROUP.

I read, then re-read the paper, then looked at Kennedy blankly. Hazleton continued silently pacing the floor with knitted brows. What did it mean?

"Anarchists!" exclaimed Kennedy tersely.

CHAPTER III.

THE SETTLEMENT WORKERS.

"You are more or less familiar with anarchists and anarchism, I presume?" remarked Kennedy to Hazleton.

"Yes," he replied slowly. "At least I have heard a great deal about the subject. They used to flourish down here a few years ago, but lately there hasn't been so much talk by them or about them."

"Well," considered Kennedy, singing the "Manifesto" thoughtfully, as if it refreshed his mind on the subject, "this has the old familiar ring to it, ending up with Bakunin's idea of the group, a rather loose organization, whose duty it is to write, speak, raise money, prepare, and assassinate."

"What does 'the group' mean?" I asked.

"Why," answered Hazleton, "a group as I understand it, is, as Kennedy says, the loosest sort of organization imaginable. It has no conditions of membership, no officers, no laws. It is simply a place of meeting and a number of 'comrades,' and even the place of meeting has no great fixity—perhaps a wine shop, a *café*, or a private dwelling. They get together, read essays, poems, reports, have discussions of papers and books. I've read some of their literature, and there are some very remarkable writings by Bakunin, Reclus, Anatole France, Kropotkin, and the rest of anarchists and near anarchists. Some of the philosophical anarchists are harmless enough. Others have an ingenuity that is diabolical."

"Have you any anarchists at the settlement?"

"I do not know whether they are anarchists. Some are very earnest, and very radical. I have seen among those who come to the settlement to consult the workers, a great many refugees from Russia and other countries, some nihilists, I imagine, and there have been rumors enough of spies of the Russian government, as well as secret-service men and women of other foreign governments."

"Spies," repeated Kennedy, as if the subject interested him.

"Yes, I have known some of the revolutionaries, many who have come here from Paris, since the French police began to drive them out. Really, I think I have heard more of the spy system of the secret police than I have of their own revolutionary system. For instance, you must have heard of their 'agents' provocateurs'?"

Kennedy nodded.

"As I understand it, there are many of these secret agents whose duties consist in posing as revolutionists, obtaining the confidence of the extremists through professions, and even deeds of violence. They urge others on to plots and assassinations, and then inform on groups of terrorists and suspects when the time is ripe for their apprehension."

"And that goes on in New York?" I asked, amazed.

"Not the violence, to my knowledge," replied Hazleton. "So far as I know there are no records of violence here. But the system exists, and it is one of the most terrible in the world. There are rewards offered for each bit of information leading to the apprehension of suspected terrorists, and the terrorists tell stories of men who make their living by urging other men to assassination and then playing the traitor's part. Some of the provocateurs are high in the councils of the terrorists, and yet among the most trusted secret emissaries of the police. It is all so involved. We in America can scarcely understand it. But I have heard enough about the keen struggle between the spies and the revolutionaries to know that it can scarcely be exaggerated, although all looks quiet enough on the surface."

A young lady had entered the office, saw us, hesitated, and was about to go out.

"Miss Dwight," said Hazleton, rising quickly. "I should like to have you meet Professor Kennedy, of the University, and Mr. Jameson, of the *Star*."

She paused, and I noted that Margery Dwight was a type of what might

well be called the girl of to-day. She was tall, lithe, athletic in form, with a self-reliant air and a frankness of face and speech which showed that she was willing to discuss every topic of current interest from politics to the latest play. She was a decidedly pretty girl, with vivacious eyes, and her dark hair was dressed in the latest mode. Her well-tailored gown showed that, in spite of her interest in social work, she also had a lively interest in the things traditionally feminine.

"We were just discussing our Forum," remarked Hazleton, after the greeting was over.

It was evident to me that the head worker had a very high regard for her.

"Oh, yes," she said quickly, "one of the halfway measures we have instituted in the settlement for the expression of opinions, which otherwise prove inconvenient for the class in which I was unfortunately born."

Kennedy looked up quickly. In one sentence she had conveyed an impression of her radicalism, which seemed to interest him greatly.

He was about to make a remark, when she added, "I hope we shall see you both down here again in our little social laboratory. There are more things to study here than are written in any books. I hope you will excuse me now, though. By the way, has Nevsky been here to-day? I've been looking all over for her."

Ekaterina Nevsky, I knew, was a pretty little Russian dancer, who at the time was charming the audiences of Broadway. It seemed at first rather strange to hear her name mentioned at a settlement in one of the poorest sections of the city, but on second thought, I saw that it was, after all, natural. I knew that the radical tendencies of many professional and artistic people often brought them down to the Extension Settlement; and that Nevsky should be interested in a venture which was doing so much for people of her own race was not at all surprising.

"No," replied Hazleton, "I haven't seen her, but Davis Burton is some-

where about, and I infer from his presence that she intends to be here, or at least that he expects her."

"That pest," exclaimed Margery, in some disgust. "He is always hanging about. I can't see what she sees in the stage-door johnnies, when there are so many more interesting people in the world, people who are doing things. But I suppose it is part of the business, part of the game to jolly the theatrical managers along by letting him trail after her."

She was gone in an instant to continue her search through the building for Nevsky. Like many girls of to-day I saw she was obsessed by the catch-phrase, "people who do things."

"Is Davis Burton the son of Roger Burton?" I asked Hazleton.

"Yes," he replied, noticing my quick inquiry. "Not an especially brilliant chap, I suppose—nothing like his father. Still I don't think Davis is a bad sort of fellow, even though he does dabble in the stock market and pride himself more on being a 'first nighter' than on his knowledge of reform. Margery says he's anti-social, just the sort who breeds discontent."

He had followed Miss Dwight out of the door with his eyes, and had answered my question rather absently.

The sound of laughter echoing down the hall greeted us.

"Have you a moment to spare to meet Mademoiselle Nevsky?" he asked. "I think you will find her most interesting, and I imagine from the sounds that I hear that she has arrived. Since she came to America she has become very interested in the work we are doing down here among her people, and has even taken classes once in a while in dancing. You see, that is our idea—we claim not only to educate First Avenue, but Broadway and Fifth Avenue as well. Sometimes I wonder which is the more ignorant. But Nevsky—well, no one would accuse her of being ignorant. She seems to be miles ahead of any of us in her ideas, except possibly Mar—Miss Dwight."

We followed Hazleton into the hall. Down at the end was a large living

room furnished very plainly but tastefully in fumed oak. As we approached we saw a little knot of young people, including Margery, gathered about the popular little dancer, chatting.

Mademoiselle Nevsky was a bright, vivacious little creature, all animation and smiles, quick, witty, sarcastic, and sentimental by turns, a woman of temperament.

Hazleton waited until there came a lull in the half-serious, half-bantering conversation, then presented us to the famous Nevsky.

She held out her hand cordially, we exchanged a remark or two complimentary upon her success in America, and having nothing in particular in common, the conversation lagged for just an instant.

Near her stood a medium-sized, well-built man, whose motions betrayed a certain training in athletics, and a grace which does not ordinarily accompany it. He was a dark man, with striking features, eyes that seemed to have in them more of the mystic than of the practical, and yet a certain shrewdness which set him apart. He was clearly not an American, and I was wondering whether his race was Slavic, Celtic, or Romanic, when Hazleton said: "Professor Vassili Novikoff, let me introduce my friends who are much interested in what we are doing down here."

Novikoff shook hands much as a bear might have done, yet I could see that he was not ungracious by nature, and in fact that his quick eyes and thin lips, hiding the whitest of teeth under his scant black mustache, denoted a really sensitive nature.

"It is a wonderful place, this settlement," he remarked, with a trace of Parisian accent in his English.

"Indeed it is," agreed Kennedy. "I think Mr. Hazleton deserves a great deal of credit for endowing such an institution."

Novikoff nodded. "Indeed he does. It is time that people tried to find out what is wrong with this world."

A young man with thoroughly Anglo-American sloping shoulders, who had

been talking with Nevsky, looked up for a moment, and Hazleton, who was at our side, took occasion to interrupt, "Excuse me, Davis. I'd like to have you meet my friends," then added in a whisper, "We may be thrown together more or less in the near future."

Kennedy gave a quick glance about, then seemed to conclude that the least said for the present the better.

Davis Burton, not quite understanding the remark, and being clearly intoxicated by the mere presence of Nevsky, shook hands with something more than perfunctoriness, and as soon as possible resumed his conversation with Nevsky.

Kennedy took the occasion to hint by a look to Hazleton that he wished to get away, and under pretext that he was showing us the "plant" for social work we passed out of the living room into the hall.

"Who is this Professor Novikoff?" asked Kennedy, as we walked down the white stone steps.

"A dancing master. I believe it is he to whom Nevsky owes her discovery and early training in the Russian ballet. You have never heard of Novikoff?"

"No," confessed Kennedy, whose knowledge of things theatrical was more or less limited. "What does he do?"

"Just now he is much in demand at tango teas and afternoon dances. Some of his steps are—well, daring. He conducts classes at Port's every morning, and I understand they are well attended."

"And he, too, is interested in social work among his people down here?" I asked.

"Oh, not especially, as far as I know. At least he seldom comes to the settlement, never except when Nevsky is here."

There was something about Novikoff which I can hardly set down on paper—a sort of hypnotic fascination. Without being told, I knew that such a man would wield a powerful influence with women. Was it his eyes, or was it merely his foreign grace? I could not say, but although not a word had

passed between them I had observed that there was some unseen bond between him and Margery Dwight.

Neither did we need to be told that Hazleton with his wholesome, if perhaps a little serious, turn of mind, had little in common with either Novikoff or Nevsky; in fact, was ill at ease. Little as he had in common with Burton, still it sufficed.

One could not help thinking instinctively, however, that Hazleton and Novikoff occupied entirely different spheres in Miss Dwight's mind. She might talk as much as she pleased about "people who do things," but she was, after all, a woman, and open to that fascination of Novikoff, a man who, at least, to a degree, "understood women." I felt also that Hazleton, whatever might be his limitations, by his very openness and frankness, had penetrated the shell of Novikoff's veneer, saw in him instinctively the conflict which the American often feels with the Continental-in affairs of the heart, the conflict of the Puritan, perhaps, with the man of the world. I, for one, feel that the sincerity and stability of the Puritan are not necessarily to his discredit.

"The position of the Russian government, I understand, has undergone a change since the Russian dancers have won international popularity," remarked Kennedy, as if taking up the thread of the conversation where it had been broken in the office. "I understand that the beautiful young women of the ballet mingle in the society of the capitals of the world, make friends with politicians, social leaders, high officials, and exert a great influence in favor of their own country, wherever they go. No doubt," he added thoughtfully, "they sometimes convey valuable information to the foreign office, which could be obtained in no other way. As you were saying, Hazleton, some of these people are past masters in the art of diplomacy and intrigue. I often wonder whether the Russian dancers will be successful in winning back the public opinion of this country which departed from its traditional policy of friendliness some time ago."

Hazleton looked at Kennedy, surprised. "I am sure you must give her credit for unusual depth," he said. "The spies I meant were of an entirely different type. For instance, I have heard of them watching in the public libraries what young Russians were reading, and if it happened to be of a heavy, political, or social nature, they would follow up the man, perhaps report it to headquarters. Some of them seem to follow perfectly legitimate occupations, even attend the meetings of the 'circles,' and talk as violently against the czar as a terrorist."

"Yes," ruminated Kennedy, "I suppose that for every drop of blood that is spilled in this revolutionary work, there are oceans of printers' ink involved. Bomb throwing may be infrequent, but books and papers attacking government in general and the money power which supports government are common. It will be interesting to trace out the relation between printers' ink and bombs," he concluded, as we parted at the door. "Keep in touch with me, Hazleton—even if it should concern only unimportant things."

CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

We had scarcely arrived at the laboratory when the telephone began ringing violently. Kennedy seized the receiver, but the hasty, one-sided conversation conveyed no idea to me.

"Meet me at the ferry, then, right away," he concluded, jamming the receiver on the hook and turning quickly to me. "It was Nolan. They have found another bomb. I hope we can get there before it explodes."

"Where?" I asked, watching him curiously, as from a closet in the laboratory he unearthed a wooden box, pivoted on gimbals, like a huge compass.

"Over at the Meadow Laboratory of the Armor Trust. Come. Nolan is to meet us at the ferry with one of the city automobiles."

Nolan was already there when we

arrived, throbbing with excitement like the engine of his car.

"We didn't have to wait very long, did we?" he cried as he ran the car on the waiting boat.

"No," replied Kennedy. "I thought we should not. How do you figure in this, though? This is in New Jersey."

"Oh, they all know me, and as soon as anything turns up, I hear of it. If it seems likely to have anything to do with the city I usually investigate. There can't be any doubt but that we are interested in this one."

He had brought the car to a standstill on the boat, and, during the short trip across the river, Kennedy was engaged in fastening to the rear of the car, much as if it had been a trunk or trunk rack, the wooden box with its pivots.

Even the time consumed by the boat in pulling into the slip was irksome, and it seemed hours instead of minutes before we were threading our way out through the city on the other side to the marshes and meadows where factories and workshops were now springing up on made land everywhere.

"Isn't this a rather peculiar place for the trust to be carrying on experiments in steel, or whatever it is they are doing?" I asked.

"N-no," considered Kennedy. "I have an idea they are looking forward to a time when they can bring ore down here through the Lakes and the new canal more cheaply than to any other point on the coast, or even inland. Still, whether they have that in mind, or not, it makes little difference where they conduct experimental work, such as I imagine they are doing for the government."

We had at last reached the works, a small, low building of concrete, which looked as if it had been erected with a view to being made the nucleus of a larger plant some time.

In a corner of the works, at the end toward the road, was the office, and as we drew up before it, it seemed as if it were deserted. Out on the meadows, a considerable distance away, was a small knot of men, who caught sight

of us and waved their arms to attract our attention.

Followed by Nolan and myself, Kennedy started across the meadows in their direction, while one of them approached to meet us.

As we came nearer I saw that it was a young man whose clean-cut face and easy manners seemed not to accord with his acid-stained, greasy, and torn suit.

"I am Lieutenant Gardner," he called, as soon as we were within easy earshot. "This is Mr. Nolan and Professor Kennedy, I presume?"

We shook hands all around, and without waiting a moment proceeded in the direction of the knot of men.

"We brought the thing out here at a safe distance," began Gardner. "I'm glad you came. I was getting impatient to know what was in it, should have opened it myself."

"I think it is better at a respectful distance," put in Kennedy, "at least, for the moment. What does it look like and how did you discover it?"

"Why, to tell the truth, it looks harmless enough, like a book, or a box of cigars. I don't know that any one would have suspected anything if it had not been addressed to Mr. Burton himself—"

"Mr. Burton?" exclaimed Kennedy.

"Yes. He comes out here about twice a week to look things over. He takes a great deal of interest in the works, personally. To-day is the day he usually comes out, too. Well, I had heard something or other about a bomb that had been sent to him at his office, and when one of the men showed me this thing this morning my suspicions were aroused. I notified the police over here, and they told me about Nolan. I'm glad you've all come."

"What time does Mr. Burton usually arrive?" asked Craig.

Gardner looked at his watch. "He should be here about now," he said. "Do you know him?"

"No," replied Kennedy, "but I have met his son Davis."

"Oh, yes. Quite a difference between them. Still, I don't think Davis is so bad."

"It seems strange that every one speaks of him in the same way," I said. "He must be a rather likable fellow."

"He is," said Gardner. "See that shed over there by the bay?"

We looked at a rough shack of unpainted boards facing the water, with a sort of slide before it.

"He may not be much of a financier or business man, or even a scientist, but that boy has nerve. Do you know what he has done? Just taken up flying as a sport. He has one of these new hydroaeroplanes, housed over there in the shed, and now and then he comes down here to take a lesson, and even has got so far as to persuade a friend to go up with him for a short flight now and then. Here we are," he concluded, as we joined the group of workmen. "That's the thing over there on that little mound."

Nolan had not halted, but was going out to the infernal machine like a blooded dog to his prey.

"Nolan," called Kennedy, "I would not take any chances with that thing just yet. Besides, Mr. Burton is due soon."

Nolan fell back.

"You carried the thing out here yourself?" I asked.

"Yes," said Gardner. "Mr. Nolan telephoned not to unwrap it or to put it into water, and we couldn't have a little toy of that sort kicking about a brand-new building."

"No," muttered Nolan, "you know, putting bombs in water is about the last thing to do unless you are sure what they are made of. That in itself will often set off a chemical bomb. Some of them are made of blasting gelatin, too, nowadays, and that is about as waterproof as rubber itself."

"How was it left here?" asked Kennedy. "In the mail?"

"I really can't tell you except that it didn't come through the mail. One of the men received it. George!"

"Yes, sir."

"Who left that thing at the office?"

"A woman, sir."

"A woman?" repeated Gardner.

"What did she look like? What did she say?"

"Said that it was a technical work that Mr. Burton had ordered. She came in an automobile—had a heavy veil over her face so that you could hardly see her, but she was dressed in red—"

"The Red Woman again," exclaimed Kennedy. "When was this?"

"Yesterday afternoon, rather late."

"Looks like a clear attempt to blow up the works, if not Mr. Burton," commented Craig. "Have you had any labor troubles out here?" he added, lowering his voice so that the men could not overhear.

"Not a bit of it. On the contrary, we have about the best paid and most satisfied lot of fellows I have ever seen. Why?"

"Oh—nothing. I thought perhaps it might be the work of some of these firebrands who have attempted to import syndicalism from Europe. You know, they teach the art of putting emery into machinery, of using acids to corrode boilers and short-circuiting electrical establishments. Their idea is simply to drive the employer out of business. They don't recognize the employer's rights any more than a physician would recognize the rights of a typhoid bacillus. It is simply anarchy under a new name."

"No," pursued Gardner, "we have not had any such trouble. Of course they are not my men. The government has simply assigned me here to carry on some experiments in—er—high explosives and armor plate, and the trust, naturally, is glad to coöperate."

"Yes," put in Kennedy. "But you must have had some trouble here or the secret of your invention, picral, would not have been stolen."

Gardner glanced at him quickly. Kennedy smiled. "I have already heard about it from Burke, you know."

"Oh—Burke—of the secret service? Yes, they put the case in his hands. A fine fellow. I'm glad you know him." He had paused in his remark for a moment, as if a new idea

had flashed over him. Then he brought his fist down in the palm of his other hand and pointed out at the thing on the ground. "By heavens," he exclaimed, "suppose that bomb was made of picral?"

"I have every reason to believe that it is," remarked Kennedy.

"Say, men," called Gardner, "I think we might as well stand back a little farther from that little skyrocket."

As we moved back, Kennedy related briefly to Gardner something of what had occurred so far. Gardner listened with wide eyes.

"And they are using the government's own weapons against us, against the men who are backing me in my experiments with—"

Gardner stopped, as though he had checked himself just in time. What he was about to say, I could not guess, but that it was not about experiments with picral and armor plate, I felt certain. If it had been, he would not have checked himself, and besides such work must have been carried on long ago at the testing grounds. Evidently there was something else which Gardner was working on which he was not privileged to talk about.

"I think that is Mr. Burton's car now, sir," put in one of the men.

We looked behind us, and could see a large touring car, drawn up behind our own on the road. Gardner started at once back to the road, waving to its occupants as he had to us.

"Just the same, I'd like to draw the fangs of that thing," persisted Nolan.

"There are no return tickets from the journey that you would take if you did, Nolan," answered Kennedy. "I might possibly have let you try it when we arrived, but not now. I wanted to see if by letting it alone anything would happen to confirm a little theory I have."

I wondered what he had been waiting for. The men had been getting more and more impatient as the minutes dragged on. They wanted to see something happen.

"Well," remarked Kennedy casually, referring to his watch, "here comes Mr.

Burton, a little late. I don't think we shall have to wait long now."

We had turned and were watching Lieutenant Gardner as he crossed the open meadow, talking earnestly with Mr. Burton.

Suddenly from behind me came a terrific roar, and a vibration of the air such that it almost threw me off my feet. The men who had been standing near us were running in all directions from the shower of mud and dirt which rained down as if from a miniature volcano. Fortunately, in the silt of the meadow there were no stones, else some of us surely would have been severely injured.

As the dust of the explosion, which itself seemed to have been smokeless, cleared away, we could see in place of the little hillock on which the infernal machine had rested, a huge, yawning chasm in the earth, into which the water which filtered through the subsoil was now seeping.

We had recovered ourselves in a moment, now that what Kennedy had prepared us for had happened. Nolan looked at us, nonplussed.

"Good Heaven!" he exclaimed, as he remembered his wish only an instant before to "draw the fangs" of the thing, "how was it done?"

Mr. Burton and Lieutenant Gardner came up the next moment, Burton just a trifle shaky yet over his second escape in little more than twenty-four hours.

"What do you make of it, Kennedy?" asked Gardner. "In all my experiences with picral, assuming it was picral, I have found it the most stable compound known. I have shot it in a shell through eight-inch armor plates, and it has not been detonated."

Kennedy said nothing for a moment, then looked at Gardner quizzically, and remarked, "The bomb exploded as if by an unseen hand. Can you imagine the havoc it would have wrought inside four walls?"

Not a trace of the thing had been left, and as we turned to retrace our steps, still excitedly discussing what had happened, I felt our powerlessness

before this unknown, invisible force of destruction.

We had scarcely returned to the Meadow Laboratory when we heard the slow, methodical ring of the telephone, such as central gives when there is an important call, and no one answers. Gardner answered; then, with a word, handed the receiver to Kennedy, saying, "Burke."

A moment later Craig almost dropped the receiver, as if it were red-hot. "Another?" he cried, "at Hazleton's office in Wall Street? Clear the building, and Nolan and I will be over directly."

He had almost leaped toward the automobile, followed by Nolan and myself. As the chauffeur maneuvered to turn the car he called to Gardner and Burton that Hazleton was in no danger now.

As we turned I noted that over the Meadow Laboratory rose the masts of a wireless telegraph. There was no particular reason why I should have noticed it. It was one of those things which we do often mechanically when faced by really important facts. Still I did notice it, though it made no particular impression on me at the time, since my mind went back of itself to the startling news which had just arrived hard on the heels of the last event.

Burke was waiting for us when we arrived, having cleared the little low building in which the banking house of Hazleton & Co. had its offices, while police were holding back a curious crowd on the street in which all sorts of wild rumors were flying.

"It came in the noon mail," whispered Burke, almost before we could ask a question. "Mr. Hazleton had been detained at a directors' meeting, and knew nothing about it, but his secretary was on his guard and suspected the package. I had been trying to find Nolan, and just as I located him with you the police called up to inform him of the find. So I took charge."

"Very efficiently by the looks of things," remarked Kennedy. "Now, the question is, where is it and how are we to get rid of it?"

"It is on the steps in front of the building. The police would have taken it to the station to send on up to Nolan, if you hadn't ordered not to do so. I'm sure I don't know what to do with the thing—unless Nolan does," added Burke helplessly.

Nolan, who had just witnessed one demonstration of the terrific efficiency of the bombs, seemed to have quelled his former ardor for examination.

"What time will Mr. Hazleton get back?" asked Kennedy.

"Usually he comes back just before the market closes," said a clerk from the office who had overheard the question, which was addressed to no one in particular.

Kennedy glanced at his watch. "Fifteen or twenty minutes, then," he said, snapping his jaws tight as if they had been a watchcase.

"Nolan," he said, "have that man drive the car up to the steps."

A moment later, before any of us could restrain him or remonstrate, he was striding through the open space toward the innocent-looking little package on the steps.

My heart gave a leap as I saw him deliberately take his penknife from his pocket, slit the thing from end to end as if it had been nothing but so much waste paper, pull something out of the package, and for a moment bend over to examine it carefully.

The crowd, amazed, had backed away and held its breath as he attempted what looked like the height of foolhardiness. Now, that no blast of flame and deafening roar had followed, they gave a wild cheer, as crowds always do at such cool exhibitions of nerve, and surged forward.

That moment our car shot forward, just ahead of them, and as it came up to the steps of the Hazleton banking house, Kennedy ran lightly down, opened the pivoted box over the rear axle, tossed in the remains of the bomb, and jumped aboard.

"Straight ahead—to the river—and drive like the devil," he ordered.

Even yet I was ill at ease. What if that thing over the rear axle should

take it into its uncanny head to explode, after all? Would it not blow us to perdition?

Ordinarily I enjoy riding in an automobile, but I do not expect ever to experience such an uncomfortable few minutes as those in which we rode down the narrow lane of Wall Street with the river and safety as our goal.

"That thing back there," remarked Kennedy coolly, "is what is known as a Cardan suspension, two concentric rings on axes which keep the box perfectly horizontal, no matter how it is jolted. If this had been an ordinary bomb I should not have handled it so roughly, should have seized it with long tongs, and been careful to keep it horizontal, even before it was placed in the box. That box, by the way, is the invention of an Italian, Professor Cardono. Here we are at the river."

Craig had leaped out, and almost before we knew it, had opened the Cardan suspension, and taking out one part of the now dismembered bomb had flung it into the water as far as he could. A moment later he flung the rest of it in the opposite direction.

"There," he said, as he settled back into the car, now that the strain was off, showing the effects of it, "that trick has been confounded. Now, for the laboratory."

A few minutes later, Burke, Nolan, Kennedy, and myself were seated in the familiar laboratory surrounded by the instruments and apparatus which Craig had collected in his years of scientific warfare on crime. It was late in the afternoon, and we had decided on holding another conference to map out a course of action, provided thickening events permitted.

We had scarcely seated ourselves when the door opened, and Armand poked his head in, saw us, and bowed politely. Even his excitement could not make Armand forget the little amenities of life.

"Mr. Morgan wishes to see Monsieur le Professeur, as soon as he can come to the studio," said Armand.

"The studio?" repeated Kennedy.

"Yes. It is on Thirty-ninth Street,

back of Mr. Hazleton's house. Will monsieur—hurry?" he suggested nervously.

"What is it, Armand?" asked Kennedy, as the truth seemed almost written on the man's face. "Another bomb?"

"*Oui, monsieur,*" muttered Armand, fidgeting to be off.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Craig, as news of this latest and most incomprehensible outrage sank into our minds, "is this a reign of terror?"

CHAPTER V.

THE "TRIAL MARRIAGE."

We found young Hazleton pacing restlessly up and down the rooms of his "studio," as he called a two-story structure back of the Hazleton town house.

After the manner of many wealthy young New Yorkers he had taken an old brick stable and had turned it into a sort of an artistic den, now that automobiles had abolished horses, and land values were rising so rapidly in the section that in a few years a skyscraper wou'd probably take the place of the stable. Meanwhile he was using the building in such a way that it was both aesthetic and economical.

I looked about the place curiously as we approached. It was considered by many people to be the most picturesque of the "stable studios" of the city, and possessed many features which were both novel and artistic.

No one but Hazleton would have dreamed of the possibilities lurking in its four old-fashioned brick walls, yet he had introduced a daring decorative treatment which was as delightful as it was unusual. Approaching the place from the street one saw a pleasing two-story structure, having an entrance between two long French windows. The old brick had been painted a dull nasturtium red, pointed up with white, and the trim was done in green, while quaint, hooded caps covered the narrow door, and windows and window boxes, with bright red geraniums, surrounded them.

Two splendid bay trees stood at either side of the door, and the basement was concealed by a border of box plants. Nothing in the aspect of the house indicated the use to which it had once been put, and now with its picturesque façade it formed an element of beauty instead of an eyesore.

Quite as notable a transformation had been produced inside, as we saw on entering. A sort of reception room ended in what was apparently a glow of brilliant sunlight. It was in reality a covering of warm orange paint upon the walls, and was one of the most striking notes in the decorative treatment of the house. The orange walls provided a very good substitute by reflection for the direct rays of the sun. On the walls were scores, hundreds of autographed photographs of celebrities in public life of all branches which, with the furnishings of leather and mission, produced a very satisfactory environment.

Upstairs, as we mounted in answer to Hazleton's call, we saw the studio proper, or perhaps the library, a spacious room, the entire size of the building. On one side was built a huge fireplace, before the quaint andirons of which stretched a long, deep davenport. Everything was there, both for quiet study, such as Hazleton liked, and for a delightful evening with friends whom he considered congenial.

As we ascended the winding white staircase, he had paused in his measured pacing of the long room and greeted us at the top.

"What is it?" asked Kennedy eagerly. "Another one?"

"Yes," Morgan replied, his face contracted into lines.

"Here—in your own studio?"

"No, in the house."

"Oh, I wondered whether they might not have designs on you, too."

"No. Apparently I am immune—at least for the present, although if there is anything in the Manifesto, I suppose I shall be marked soon. No, it was evidently meant for the governor, all right. Say, I have just heard of the attempt on the governor at his office

downtown and what you did," he added, grasping Kennedy's hand and wringing it. "Kennedy, you're a brick."

"Why," replied Kennedy, ignoring the compliment by sticking to the subject at hand, "this looks like a most concerted effort—at Rockerest, the office, and now here. It's—it's devilish."

"Yes," I put in, "the thing has so many ramifications that only good luck and prompt action seem to have saved us."

"Where is the thing?" asked Craig. "In the house?"

"No one in the house would dare touch it," replied Hazleton. "They were panic-stricken. I couldn't let the thing remain there, so I carried it out into the garden. It's out there now."

"I think you had more nerve than I did," complimented Kennedy in turn, as we followed Hazleton down the steps. "I destroyed mine first—at least, I think I rendered it innocuous. How was it delivered?"

"A district messenger boy brought it. I have tried to find out where it came from, but it was left at the office, and in the rush no one noticed the woman who—"

"A woman again?" queried Kennedy.

"Apparently. The shape of the thing was changed a little bit this time."

"How did you know it was a bomb, then?"

"I didn't—in fact, no one would have noticed it probably if it hadn't been for Armand. He suspected it."

"Armand?" I broke in, and my voice must have expressed surprise, for Hazleton looked at me quickly.

"Yes. Why? Did you suspect him?"

Having nothing definite but my first impressions, I merely shrugged my shoulders. Yet so strong was the impression that I found myself actually wondering if the whole thing might not have been a "plant," after all, carefully contrived to absolve Armand from any suspicion about the Rockerest outrage. The more I thought of the man, the less I liked him—not personally, it

is true, but rather because as far as I could see he was too perfect a servant to be real.

We had followed Hazleton down and through a back door into the garden, a miniature garden, but a remarkably compact beauty spot for a large city. In the center of the flower bed lay the package as Hazleton had left it.

Kennedy advanced and picked it up, as he had the other one downtown. He had begun to remove the wrapper deliberately.

"Craig," I cried, "don't. Leave it for Nolan."

He paid no attention, but continued to unwrap the thing, even untying the knots of the string, and laying each piece of wrapping in its separate place, as if he were going to study them at his leisure.

"Your father is not at home yet?" asked Craig coolly, of Hazleton.

"No. Usually when he stays in town he doesn't come in until it is nearly time to dress for dinner."

Kennedy went on with his work, while both Hazleton and I fretted and fumed at the hazards he was taking, but kept silent. We knew it was of no use to argue. When Kennedy made up his mind to a thing the laws of the Medes and Persians were written in sand, in comparison.

As he completed his work he came to a simple wooden box. With this he was indeed more careful, prying off the lid with the skill of Nolan himself in such a way that there might be no friction which would ignite the contents.

He had been so successful so far, and it all looked so simple, after all, that I began to wonder if this might not be, after all, just a fake bomb, such as Nolan had mentioned, sent for its moral effect.

I had not long to wonder, however. As the lid finally yielded to his gentle pressure, it disclosed inside, imbedded in a mass of yellow crystals which I recognized immediately as picral, the fatal explosive, the same sort of peculiar arrangement of coils and wires which we had seen before.

Kennedy lifted it out, and casually shook off the grains that adhered to it in various places, as if they had been so much flour. Then he set it aside, and emptied the box very carefully of its contents, setting both the box and the picral in separate places as though they were merely two more interesting exhibits.

That work completed, Kennedy turned to us and said, "I am going to leave all this truck out here for the present," and we followed him back to the studio.

"What do you think about it?" questioned Hazleton, as we entered.

"Most amazing," was all that Kennedy would say.

A ring at the street bell of the studio diverted our attention. Hazleton reached for an electric push button, which opened the door, one of the labor-saving devices he had installed as an example of how electricity would in future generations take the place of servants and level all classes.

Kennedy put out his hand and halted him. "Take a look out of the window first," he said. "It may be some one we—don't want."

Hazleton rose and craned his neck carefully out of the window, then turned to us with a doubtful look.

"Davis Burton," he said, half apologetically.

"Let him in—by all means," nodded Kennedy.

Burton, debonair and dapper as ever, even in spite of the terrorism of his father, entered and mounted the stairs with a familiar air, stopped at the top, and exhibited surprise at seeing us. Then he greeted us in an easy way without the slightest bit of annoyance, and with even an assumption of pleasure, although we were strangers.

Hazleton quickly swore him to secrecy, then with Kennedy's aid he told just enough of our connection with the case to open Burton's eyes to the bursting point.

He did not say much, but I could see that he was more than interested. Not only did the thing come home to him personally as affecting his own

family, but, like all young men, it would have fascinated him anyhow.

He was sitting on the divan before the fireplace, turning the thing over in his mind. Indeed, Burton's questions to Kennedy seemed to show an ability which, if poverty had made it necessary for him to apply, might have made something out of him. It was not difficult to see why people liked Davis.

Suddenly something which our presence and the unexpected disclosures had knocked out of his mind for the moment seemed to strike him. "By George," he exclaimed, "I almost forgot for the moment what I came to tell you, Morgan."

"What was it?" asked Morgan, rather absently, thinking, no doubt, that this was the way Davis' mind worked, and making allowances for it.

"Haven't you heard the news?" asked Burton keenly.

"What news?"

"About Margery."

"What about Margery? She hasn't had a bomb sent—"

Burton laughed outright. "Well," he drawled, "it is a bomb—yes, you might call it a social bomb. She and Professor Novikoff are to be married."

Hazleton looked at Burton, speechless for the moment. I thought that he had been pale and unnerved when we came in, and found him laboring under the excitement of finding the third bomb which had been sent to his father. But it was nothing to this. He gasped his surprise, almost reeled, caught himself, and clutched the back of a chair. His lips moved, but the words seemed to stick in his throat.

Burton, his feet on a divan, puffed calmly at his cigarette with the air of a philosopher to whom nothing in the topsy-turvy social order of the day came as a surprise. I don't think he appreciated Hazleton's feelings as I did, who had been studying his face closely, for I had already guessed his feelings toward Miss Dwight.

"Yes," he continued slowly; "she is to be married. I suppose, at least, that

that is what you would call it. You know her advanced ideas better than I do. She doesn't believe in marriage—the ceremony and changing her name and all that, you know. You people talk a great deal about eugenics and all that sort of thing. I must confess that I don't understand it. I don't just get it about this ethical-marriage stuff, either. But I think they are simply going to declare that they are married, or something of the sort, and she is to be called Miss Margery Dwight just the same—same name, same individuality—that's how they put it. For people who believe in collectivism they talk a lot about individuality. And then they can separate whenever they want to, or at the end of a term of years or months—I don't know."

Burton rattled on in his inconsequential way; skimming over the surface of subjects about like his hydroaëroplane. Every word, I could see, was a knife stuck deep in Hazleton's heart, and the last casual phrase was like turning the knife around for good measure.

"Burton," he said hoarsely, when he had recovered his voice, "you—you are joking. You can't mean—"

"On the contrary, dear boy," the irrepressible Burton went on, "she told me with her own lips, not half an hour ago."

He had turned from his comfortable position, and was looking at Hazleton in amazement. Even yet, apparently, the actual truth of the situation had not dawned on him.

"Well," he added, "What of it, after all? Morgan, haven't I always told you something like that would be the outcome of the wild socialistic and anarchistic ideas down there at the settlement? Now don't repeat that I am a young fossil, and that socialism and anarchism have about as much to do with each other as the north pole and the south pole. Perhaps they do. I merely repeat what I have always said. I prefer the temperate zone—not even the equator. Perhaps I am a young fossil. I don't know. Only I seem to be getting along famously with Nevsky, and she's pretty advanced, too. You will

admit both of those last propositions, won't you?"

Burton looked at us broadly. There was no mistaking his meaning.

"Davis," exclaimed Hazleton, almost fiercely, "don't mention those two girls in the same breath."

"Heigh-o!" exclaimed Burton, at last vaguely seeming to grasp the state of Hazleton's feelings, although not quite appreciating them. "Since when did you become the moral censor? No, Morgan, I decline to get angry at you or to let you get angry at me. I'm merely a—a reporter, as your friend Jameson here might say. I don't make the news—I don't even feel any responsibility for it."

"I know," replied Hazleton with a sigh, "but Nevsky is a different case from Margery. Nevsky has a past, and it can't hurt her future."

"Well," persisted Burton pugnaciously, "isn't it all the same? If you begin to pull down one set of things, why strain at pulling down another? Suppose they do call it a new and simple form of wedding ceremony whereby the man and woman take each other as 'companions,' for as long as it pleases both, or either? Whatever I do, I don't approve of it, preach it, flaunt it. But then, my dear fellow, if you want to justify other things, why not an anarchy of love as well as an anarchy of business and society?"

Hazleton looked at Burton curiously.

"Anarchy?" he repeated, as if Burton, whatever the wealth of his ignorance on certain social questions, had made a point at last.

"Yes—anarchy. I seem to remember in one of the courses that I flunked at college that the word is made up of alpha privative, nu euphonic, and the word which means gov——"

A blaze of light seemed to fill the studio.

We jumped to our feet as if one of the terrorist bombs had been suddenly exploded in the fireplace.

"What's that?" gasped Burton, who was the first to recover his speech,

speech being a necessary function with him.

No one stopped to answer. We had followed Kennedy on the jump into the garden. As we ran, I had half expected to see the huge house on the avenue back of us in ruins. As it stood there somberly, I thought perhaps the picral which Kennedy had heaped up had exploded, though it seemed that there must have been enough of it to produce more of an effect than this flash, startling though it had been. Yet there was the pile of picral, intact.

Kennedy had picked up the peculiar arrangement which he had extracted from the bomb and which was lying alone at one side.

He was examining the thing most attentively, holding it by means of a stick. It was sputtering sparks.

"What is it?" I asked eagerly.

"The crystals of picral which adhered to this thing in spite of my efforts to brush it off," he answered. "Hazleton, will you see if your father is home yet?"

The door of the house opened, and across the yard streaked a little figure toward us in the half darkness.

It was Armand, who had seen the glare of the flash in the windows, and had been quick to suspect something.

"Here's Armand," said Hazleton. "Armand, has my father come in yet?"

"*Oui, monsieur,*" answered the servant, glancing about and seeing that we were all right and that no damage had been done. "He came in not five minutes ago, sir."

"I thought as much," muttered Kennedy, in a tone that assured me that he had tried the arrangement with a view to discovering something about the time the machine was to explode.

We four looked from one to another blankly, at least all except Kennedy, who was still examining the sputtering apparatus and saying nothing, whatever it was he thought.

"Spontaneous combustion?" asked Burton, as if he had suddenly received an inspiration.

"Too opportune—or perhaps inop-

portune," shrugged Kennedy, glancing from us to Armand, who had just shown us how well timed the explosion would have been if the bomb had not been discovered and taken apart.

"No," ruminated Kennedy, "that is the most amazing little long-distance death engine I've ever heard of."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARSONETTE.

"Walter, what do you think of this?" exclaimed Kennedy the following morning, as he glanced over the papers.

I had been dressing hastily, and now came out of my room. Over his shoulder I read the item to which he referred:

FIREBUG TERRORIZES RICH SUB-URBANITES.

A half score of fires set in the millionaire colony of Rockcrest on the Hudson last night have terrorized a number of wealthy residents. In most cases, however, the fires were fortunately discovered in time to prevent the spread of the damage. Attempts were made on the palatial residence of Morgan Hazleton, on the home of Roger Burton, and others. In both instances, owing to the efficiency of the private watchmen, the fires were discovered almost as soon as they broke out, and were extinguished before they had reached a threatening point.

The local authorities are investigating. The outbreak recalls the recent attempt on Rockcrest and the explosion at Mr. Hazleton's house in which it was said that a woman had left bombs which later exploded.

Much secrecy has been thrown about the attempts by Mr. Hazleton's actions, and he has refused to push the case with the local authorities, which leads to the belief that he has information which his private detectives are working on.

In that case, it was reported that a woman visited various estates in the neighborhood in a large red touring car. It is rumored that during yesterday afternoon this car appeared at various places in this vicinity, but as yet no definite evidence has been obtained.

A strange feature of the case, however, is that the fires must have followed several hours after the appearance of the car with its mysterious occupant.

"The 'Red Woman' again!" I exclaimed, as I finished reading the report.

Kennedy shrugged his shoulders. "Then she must have turned into an

arsonette, this time," he remarked. "It is pretty early yet, and I haven't received any word from the Hazletons. I think I'll call Morgan up."

We found him at the town house, where he had just read the papers himself, and was about to call us. Kennedy and he quickly arranged to meet at the train for a hurried trip to Rockcrest to look over this latest manifestation of terrorism.

"Do you think it has anything to do with the case, or is it a purely local affair?" asked Hazleton, when we had met before the gate in the train shed a few minutes ahead of time.

"Offhand it looks a new attempt," vouchsafed Kennedy. "By the way, Hazleton, look who's at the ticket window."

We turned, and as we did so a merry party of young folks caught sight of Hazleton and waved to him. It included Margery Dwight, Mademoiselle Nevsky, and Professor Novikoff.

A moment later they joined us. I fancied that Hazleton gripped himself with an extra tight hold as they approached, but at any rate nothing of his emotions showed in the cordiality of his greetings.

"Where have you been?" asked Nevsky. "Not at the settlement. Margery has been trying to find you all the morning. She has planned a little outing in the country, and—"

"Yes," interrupted Margery, in whom I, at least, could see no constraint, whatever Hazleton might feel. "You know mother and father are still abroad, and there is that big house of ours up there, empty. I thought we might have a little house party. You'll join us? And I'm sure Professor Kennedy and Mr. Jameson will run over with you?"

Hazleton hesitated, glanced at Kennedy, and receiving a nod, answered: "Thank you. We shall be glad to run over."

Just then the gate opened, and as we filed through, Craig leaned over to us and whispered: "Don't say too much about the fires—and nothing about our going up on that account."

Still it was impossible to keep off the subject. The others had seen the papers as well as ourselves. Nevertheless, Hazleton managed to minimize the affair, the more so as this chance meeting had brought to his mind other things.

Margery and Nevsky sat in adjoining chairs in the Pullman, with Novikoff opposite, then Hazleton, Kennedy, and myself. The conversation was soon lively enough, and I could not help observing how attentive Novikoff was to Miss Dwight. It had not escaped Hazleton.

"You are silent, this morning, Mr. Hazleton," pouted Nevsky after a time. "I hope you will find everything all right at Rockcrest."

Hazleton had not been thinking of Rockcrest; in fact, I doubt whether he had given more than a passing thought to the real purpose of our journey since we met.

"Oh," he said casually, "from what I have heard, I imagine everything is all right. The local authorities seem to have taken the case up, and, in spite of what the newspapers say, I think they can handle it for the present."

"If not," put in Kennedy, by way of approval of the tone Hazleton had assumed, "we may have to camp out on the Dwight estate."

"What a delightful idea!" exclaimed Nevsky, glancing out of the car window. "This is beautiful—beautiful—the country and the hills and those mountains of rock on the other side. Who would imagine down there," she gave a little nod of her head and a mock shudder back in the direction of the city, "that only a few minutes away from those ugly piles of brick and stone and narrow, crowded streets you had this wonderful country. Oh, what foolish Americans you are to live in a city when all this is almost at your doors."

"It will not always be so," put in Margery.

"No," said Novikoff. "Conditions which crowd some into cities and allow others to keep thousands of acres idle cannot last much longer."

"Science and invention, engineering, education, social reform, many things will change it all in the next generation," remarked Kennedy.

Novikoff looked keenly at Kennedy, but said nothing. From his face I could gather nothing of his own ideas as to how the change was to be brought about.

We arrived at last at the Rockcrest station, where an automobile was waiting for Miss Dwight and her party. We left them, promising to join them later in the day, and took a hack to the Hazleton place, where we were not expected.

"Some excitement up here, last night, Mr. Hazleton," remarked the hack driver, as we got under way.

"Yes?" answered Morgan. "I hope there wasn't much damage."

"N-no—not much damage. But the thing I can't understand, nor any of us, is how anything could happen with all those men your father and Mr. Burton have about. I don't believe I can drive past the place without being seen, let alone get in to set fire to anything."

It was queer, and the man had hit on the very point which was troubling all of us, but we said nothing.

We left the cab at the lodge at the entrance to the Hazleton estate, and walked up the driveway, accompanied by one of the guards with a dog.

"Automobile?" he answered to our questions. "Say, not even the ghost of one could get up this road, or any of the others without our knowing it, day or night. No, that was just a newspaper story."

"Some one might stop along the road in a car, and then get up across country," I suggested.

"That's the theory we are working on," he nodded. "But so far we haven't found any trail."

It was a long walk up to the house, but Kennedy had preferred to walk, since it gave us a better opportunity to question the guards whom we met. All agreed in rejecting the automobile theory in disgust as the invention of the newspaper correspondent. But the only theory that they could advance

was that which had occurred to me of approaching the house through the acres of woodland and meadow, and even that it did not account for the fact that twice the inner cordon of guards had been eluded.

Kennedy had gone over the ground quickly, but with the utmost care. It was evident that the fire, which had been confined to a little corner of the library, now Hazleton's temporary headquarters, had been set outside, and not inside the house. At first he had taken up the theory that robbery might have been the motive, but as nothing was missed in spite of the excitement, it was evident that he had set the theory up mainly for the purpose of eliminating it at the start.

"Armand was in New York?" I asked of Hazleton, as we went over the fortunately very limited area which the fire had attacked.

"Yes, with my father at the town house. I don't think Armand knows anything."

"Still," I persisted, "something might have been planted here, long ago, and timed to go off—like the bomb, however that was."

"Or, to adopt Davis Burton's theory," reiterated Hazleton, "it might have been spontaneous combustion."

Kennedy shook his head. "No," he said, "no, there is no use making wild theories that don't fit the facts. This was clearly a case of widespread terrorism. You will notice that only the largest estates were selected. Every one of the owners is a man who has been bitterly attacked in the newspapers. It was terrorism—just another form of terrorism."

It was perfectly true. The more I thought of it, the more I saw how diversified and deep must be the plot. The firebug or arsonette had consciously selected the leaders of a little Wall Street coterie, which controlled the banking situation and a number of industrial concerns. It could not have been chance. It was merely a glorified form of sabotage.

Kennedy, having exhausted the house without turning up a clew, had gone

out on the lawn, which stretched for several hundred yards in front of the house toward the river, a wide expanse of green between two clumps of trees which marked the end of the woodland on either side.

Over the grass he walked in ever widening circles, getting farther and farther away from the house, now and then stooping to examine something.

At last he paused, and, as he did so, even I could not help noticing that the grass farther along for some distance beyond where we had already been was trodden down as if by feet. He was now going along, his face close to the ground, almost as if he were a bloodhound himself.

"Marks of wheels," he said, half to himself, "narrow, like the pneumatic tires of a bicycle—two of them. They turned here—hello!"

Where he had stopped, the grass was plainly discolored, where something black had dropped on it.

"Strange," he remarked, facing us. "Those are drops of lubricating oil."

"Look!" cried Hazleton, who had been glancing keenly about in the grass with the minute care of one looking for a four-leaf clover.

We turned. He had picked up and was holding in his hand a little leather piece, cut in the shape of an elongated "D."

Kennedy took it quickly, and exclaimed almost instantly, "A piece of the heel of a lady's shoe, wrenched off, no doubt, by a sudden turn of the ankle. That must have been from our arsonette."

"The woman in red?" cried Hazleton and myself, almost together.

Kennedy said nothing. But it was plain now that we were on the trail of something. Who, indeed, was the "Red Woman"?

Search as we could, there was nothing else that we could discover in the trampled lawn. It was astounding, mysterious. In spite of all the guards, standing watch at every avenue of approach some one, perhaps two people, had been there the night before, one of them a woman, and both conveyed

there and away in some kind of vehicle with wheels and perhaps a gas engine.

We had a hasty lunch, eaten for the most part in silence, and, as we rose from the table, Kennedy remarked, "Since there is nothing more that we can do here, I suppose you have no objections to keeping our engagement, at least for the afternoon, with Miss Dwight?"

Hazleton had not forgotten it; nor did he seem to regard it with much pleasure naturally. Still, he assented, and a few minutes later we were being whirled over the splendidly kept roads of Rockcrest toward the Dwight house.

The home of the Dwights was not as pretentious as some of the other places about, yet if it had been in a neighborhood less wealthy it would have passed as a show place.

When we arrived we found that many more had been invited than we had expected. Most of them were enjoying a set of tennis that had been arranged as a result of some chaffing bet between Burton and Nevsky and Lieutenant Gardner and Miss Dwight. The appearance of Burton and Gardner had been a surprise to me, and an agreeable surprise to Kennedy.

We joined the group that was urging the contestants on, and found them to be a most interesting collection of young people, either actively or passively interested in social work in the city.

Kennedy was obviously uneasy, not that he did not care for either tennis or house parties, but because an important case was in hand, and he was evidently anxious to have a talk with Burton about what had happened over at his father's place.

One thing I noted in the conversation was that, though nothing was said about the relations of Professor Novikoff and Margery, it seemed to be understood that she looked upon him with more interest than on any of her other suitors, from which I gathered that the information about the "trial marriage," which Burton had brought us, was not

yet for publication, and had been announced by Margery and Novikoff to only a few close friends.

Lieutenant Gardner and Margery won the set, and with it the applause, as we trooped toward the house. The opponents were complimenting each other, and Lieutenant Gardner had resigned Miss Dwight to the graceful congratulations of Novikoff. Hazleton was as glum a guest as could well be imagined. Nevsky, playfully blaming Burton for their defeat, had transferred her attentions to Gardner, who seemed to have met her before, and to be on very good terms. Burton was in a fair way to rival Hazleton in gloom, when Kennedy took his arm.

"What happened over at the house last night?" he whispered. "Have you been there, or did you come here direct from the city?"

"Strangest thing yet," he answered, though his mind was not on it, but on the sly little Nevsky with whom he fancied he was getting on so well. "The men there say that it was impossible for any one to get past them. And yet some one did, and had time to set a fire. At least there was a fire."

"Have they any idea how it happened?"

"No, except that one of them says he thought he heard the whir of an automobile muffled down. But there was no trace of any having come up the road, and although he gave an alarm they found nothing. By the way, excuse me for a moment."

A bright nod from Nevsky had told him that he was in favor again, and he had fluttered over like a moth.

"Curious business, these fires last night," remarked Lieutenant Gardner, who had dropped back to speak to us as we strolled along.

"Yes," agreed Kennedy. "What do you think of them?"

Gardner thought a moment, then shrugged his shoulders. "I don't think. I don't know enough about it. However, I'm glad this place is spared. Clever little girl, Nevsky, don't you think?"

"Yes, indeed," agreed Kennedy. "You have met her before? And Novikoff?"

"I have been down to the settlement several times," he answered. "Clever chap, too, that Novikoff—well educated. Have you talked to him much? He's one of these fellows who knows something about everything. I swear I think he knows as much about the army as I do—must have served in the army in Russia, I suppose."

We reached the house, and the ladies went upstairs to dress for dinner. For the moment Kennedy and I were left alone, while the others, being better acquainted, split up into groups.

Together we sauntered from the drawing-room to the library.

"A very tastefully furnished place, isn't it?" I remarked, admiring the effect.

"Yes," he agreed absently, his eyes fixed on a huge stone fireplace in the side.

He sniffed. "Do you smell anything burning?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, now that his keen sense had stimulated mine.

There ran through my head the thought of a firebug here.

Kennedy had reached down on the hearth and was looking at a mass of charred paper in the fireplace.

"Warm, yet," he murmured. "That's it. Some one has just burned something here."

I wondered why any one should do that. On a table was a little pasteboard box. Before I could express my wonder Kennedy had opened it, found it empty, had appropriated it, and was carefully placing inside the charred bits of paper.

Just then we heard voices in the hall. It would not have looked just right to be seen with a purloined box of charred paper, so we made no motion.

"Do you think it is fair to your father?" said one voice, which I recognized instantly as Hazleton's.

"I have written to him about it," replied a woman's voice.

It was Margery whom he had evidently been seeking to speak to.

"Then you—will wait until he gets back?" he said eagerly.

"I may—I may not."

They had passed on, and we heard no more. Kennedy quickly placed the box with his hat and coat and we rejoined the others. As we entered I could see that Margery was flushed, Hazleton quite pale. Evidently the little talk in the hall had not been of the most pleasant to either.

If we had needed any further hint as to what they were talking about it would have come in the cold glare and half supercilious smile which were the mutual interchanges between Hazleton and Novikoff, who now entered. Like an eddy in the real current of affairs of the heart, was the ardent flirtation that Nevsky was now carrying on with Lieutenant Gardner to the grave discomfort of Burton.

It was late in the afternoon, and Kennedy and I, being among them as ostensible friends of Hazleton only, had no difficulty in making our excuses and pleading an engagement in the city. We managed to get away with the little pasteboard box safely tucked in Kennedy's coat, leaving Hazleton and Burton to their misery.

It was quite late when we reached the laboratory, yet Kennedy insisted on going to work, while he sent me out to order something to eat. I returned to find him far advanced in what he had planned to do.

"The deciphering of a burned manuscript," he remarked, laying aside a microscope which he had been using, and taking one of the sandwiches I had brought in, "is often a ticklish piece of work. However, it can be accomplished. For instance, the processes of color photography have recently been applied to obtain a legible photograph of the writing on burned manuscripts which are unreadable by any other known means. And as long as a sheet has not been entirely disintegrated you can get results every time."

He had arranged the charred manuscript in as near the original shape as possible on a sheet of glass and covered it with a drying varnish, after

which he had backed it by another sheet of glass.

"By using carefully selected color screens," he went on, "and orthochromatic plates a perfectly legible photograph of the writing may be taken, although there may be no marks on the charred remains that are visible to the eye."

"What did you find?" I asked.

He shoved over a photograph to me. There was no heading, and no name signed to it, nothing except the written message itself, evidently a note which had been passed to some one and then burned.

I read:

The Group meets to-morrow night after the regular meeting at Leo's. We expect you to report.

Kennedy had reached for the telephone book, then for the city directory, and was running his fingers slowly down the "L's."

"Leo's International Café, on Avenue A," he read, with his finger on the name.

"Almost around the corner from the settlement," I exclaimed, as my limited acquaintance with the neighborhood put the two together. Then I added, "What are you going to do?"

"Go," he answered laconically.

CHAPTER VII. THE ANARCHIST CAFÉ.

Leo's International was a typical East Side café on a corner in the tenement district, which with succeeding generations had seen many vicissitudes. Years ago the frequenters had been good, and even now and then aristocratic. Later the degradation had been rapid, and they had been bad and dirty, until now, with the wave of reform that was sweeping over the city, they had become merely clean and commonplace.

I had expected to find it a place such as might have been the rendezvous of the famous gunmen of the city. I had neglected to take into consideration the changes which the recent graft exposures had made. Instead, the

place looked, if anything, neat and prosperous in spite of its being in a rather decadent section of the city.

It was no longer the nucleus of waxen-faced, slick-haired crooks, as it had been only a few years before. There was no blustering swagger and glittering extravagance as in the days of the strong-arm men. Nor, to go back of that, were there any reminiscences of the solemn-faced meetings of foreign-born exiles of another generation, discussing foreign politics in deep gutturals, the rudeness of the new kaiser to the iron chancellor, the prospects of revolt in Alsace-Lorraine, and numberless other questions long since passed into the realm of history.

Kennedy and I had come down on a little scouting expedition, not that we expected to find anything in particular, but merely to look the place over and take advantage of any lead that might develop. The café itself proving to be uninteresting, we sauntered out, and then observed that through a side entrance people were passing in to what appeared to be a large hall, used for various kinds of assemblies, on the second floor.

There did not seem to be any restrictions in the way of tickets, and we entered the side door and climbed the stairs to the hall. The meeting, whatever it was, seemed to be already under way. As we entered, a girl at the door, spotting us as strangers, crammed our hands with various pamphlets and brochures. One glance was enough. This was what we sought, a meeting at which the propaganda of anarchism were being disseminated.

Already a comparatively large audience had assembled, and it was worth while to study the faces. They were plainly those of working people, and here and there one gave the impression of being widely if not wisely read. There was nothing illiterate about the group of people, and I fancied that therein lay the greater danger, in the appeal to half-baked knowledge. If they had been congregating about dirty little, beer-soaked round tables in the back rooms of dingy saloons, as in the

old days, perhaps they would have been more picturesque, although I doubt whether they would have done much proselyting among those with a little education and a big grievance.

Kennedy and I took seats in the last rows, conveniently near the door.

"In case the proceedings are too tame," he whispered.

On the platform was a speaker who was denouncing the police of another State roundly for interference in some recent labor trouble, and was recounting his experiences in prison and workhouse in the West, where it seemed even labor, as well as capital, had been against him.

I took occasion to look about me. "There are several faces that I believe I have seen at the settlement, Craig," I whispered.

He did not answer, but laid his hand on my arm, and with a nod directed my gaze at the far corner of the room, directly in front of the platform. I craned my neck. There sat Professor Novikoff and Margery Dwight. I was glad we had taken our position carefully on the other side and near the door out of sight, yet in such a position that we could study everything that went on.

"It's a good thing Hazleton isn't here to see that," I said under my breath to Kennedy.

Craig nodded, but in such a way as to discourage conversation which might be overheard by curious ears.

Therefore I fell to studying the types about us. It seemed to me, as I looked them over, that there were quite as many young women present as men. They were by no means unattractive girls. I wondered what it was that fascinated them. Was it the cutting loose from all social ties, all traditions, all conventions? How deeply did the spirit of revolt extend? Did it strike down as far as marriage and the home?

There was a spice and audacity about the adventure, in spite of Kennedy's hint as to its tameness. Respectable as it all appeared on the surface, one could not help wondering whether that young man with the pale face, the high

forehead, and the burning eyes, or this young woman with low-necked waist and earnest, soulful, even passionate glance, might not fall a prey to some vagary and blossom out a full-fledged direct actionist, instead of being merely a listener.

The speaker was denouncing the trusts in general, and especially one with which some of the sympathizers with his creed had been in bitter conflict. Nor did he stop with that. He went on to others, naming them, and ending with a flaming denunciation of the great industrial war that was going on and a flight in oratory in which he depicted the revolution when the people would seize the weapons of the war lords and turn them against their exploiters.

The burst of applause which greeted this heated peroration was at its height, when there was a stir behind me, and I started to rise to see what those in front of us were craning their necks to catch a glimpse of. Kennedy's heavy hand pulled me back into my chair.

"Nevsky," he whispered hoarsely, in my ear.

It was indeed the popular little dancer, who, now that her act was over in the Broadway theater, had come down apparently to complete the evening at the meeting at the International.

She passed down the aisle within a few feet of us, but as many were standing and some shouting, she did not see us. When the furore of the combination of the speech and Nevsky's entrance had died down, we could see that she had taken a chair in front with Margery and Novikoff, and that Davis Burton, apparently again basking in her favor, was with them, with eyes only for Nevsky, who was engaged in animated conversation with Margery.

"Perhaps we had better go," said Craig, "before we are seen. I should prefer not to have them think we are watching them, and as long as no one here has recognized us, it hasn't put any of those higher up on guard."

We slipped quietly out from our places and passed into the hall. At the

door a man who had evidently been stationed there for the purpose greeted us pleasantly, hoped we had learned something, and invited us to come again.

On the other side of the door, I heard a little man asking some one if he could see the audience well.

It was the next question that caused me to pause and not to seem interested while I strained my ears.

"Do you see Armand here to-night?" he asked.

"No. He hasn't been at any of——" and the rest trailed off at the handclapping which greeted the next speaker.

We hurried downstairs.

"You heard it?" I asked of Kennedy.

"Yes," he said. "That's the first definite reference to Armand."

If I had known Craig less well, I should probably have made more of the incident. Still, I reflected, though he had not seemed to coincide in my own suspicions of the quiet little Frenchman, he had never denied them. Then, too, there was nothing very definite, either, in the mere mention of the name.

We glanced into the back room of the café downstairs. No one was there except a waiter, and Kennedy entered.

We sat down and ordered something, and a moment later, when the man brought it, Kennedy leaned back and remarked to him, "Fine meeting upstairs, to-night?"

"Yes," he replied, and I noticed that he seemed to be a very intelligent-looking fellow.

"What do you think of it?" asked Kennedy.

"Of what?" he asked noncommittally.

"Why, of what they say up there in their speeches. I think they say some mighty true things."

"Yes," agreed the waiter, warming up with Kennedy's last statement. "they have some deep thinkers—deep thinkers."

"Have they been meeting here long?" ventured Kennedy.

"Well—yes, in the neighborhood."

"I suppose you have seen some great changes here," went on Craig,

more to disarm the man by asking a question on another subject than anything else.

But the waiter, once having started, seemed to have a mind that ran on one track.

"Yes," he said reminiscently. "The first that came—that was before my time, were Germans. There was Herr Most—you've heard of him? Yes? Well, then after that came Italian anarchists. You heard of them mostly over in Paterson—Bresci, you remember, and that paper, *La Question Sociale*. Next came many Jewish and Russian nihilists, revolutionists. Now there is another class coming. Many have fled to New York from Paris since the police there got active in breaking them up after the motor-car bandits. Others have come from London, too, at the time of those Houndsditch murders."

"I see," remarked Kennedy keenly, amazed at the information the man seemed to show for a waiter in such a humble establishment. "Making a sort of Switzerland out of New York."

"You might call it that," agreed the waiter.

"I suppose they'll come down here after the meeting breaks up?" suggested Craig.

"Some of them will."

"Do you know a man named Armand?" ventured Craig.

"He is of the French?"

Kennedy nodded.

Something seemed to stay the man's tongue, whether it was fear, or natural suspicion of strangers.

"I think I have heard of such a man," he said cautiously, with a look that told us we had run up a cul-de-sac as far as that line of conversation was concerned.

"I suppose what you would call the 'inner circle' of the group meets here?" asked Kennedy.

The man shrugged his shoulders as if "group" and "inner circle" were a foreign language to him.

There was no further use in staying, and we paid our check in apparent unconcern at the failure to answer the last two queries.

"I'm quite sure they don't," remarked Kennedy, as we went out. "It is too open a place for them to frequent regularly. And then if they had, the waiter would have made some effort to parry the question."

We could not go back into the hall above very well, and Kennedy was not willing to leave yet. We crossed the street, and made the most of our time in buying a couple of cigars in a little store.

The meeting was over, and as the audience, mostly talking earnestly over the various speeches they had heard, came down and broke up in little knots we found it possible to take a position in the shadow and watch them, without attracting attention.

The street was becoming deserted again, when at last we saw Nevsky and Burton, followed more slowly by Novikoff and Margery, come down the stairs and pause for a moment in the doorway talking to two of the speakers. The little man who had been looking for Armand came down, saluted, and went on his way.

At last we overheard Burton say. "Come, I'll drive you around to the settlement, Marjorie, and Novikoff can stop off at his hotel on the way up-town."

He had linked his arm through Nevsky's, and, with a good night to the speakers of the evening, the two did a few steps down the uneven sidewalk toward the corner, followed more sedately by Novikoff and his "trial fiancée"—assuming that that is the state which precedes the sort of marriage which they planned.

We, too, edged cautiously down to the corner. There we could see that Burton had left his car around on the avenue. A moment later the party were off, with a rattle and grinding of gears.

I turned to Kennedy.

"What does this mean?" I asked. "Are they really of the group or merely coqueting with it—playing with fire?"

"Burton is," he replied reflectively.

"But the others?"

"I decline to answer," he said, adding with a smile, "by advice of coun-

sel. Shall we walk around to the settlement?"

He said nothing as we picked our way through the dark cañons of five-story tenement streets, and at last turned a corner where we could see the imposing settlement, like a beacon in a wilderness.

As we did so, an automobile flashed past us, and I caught a glimpse under the arc light of Burton at the wheel, with Nevsky on the seat beside him, their faces close together, and her hands on his as if playfully guiding the high-powered machine. Then they slipped away into the darkness of the avenue.

"He thinks he's running it, in spite of her," mused Kennedy. "And she lets him think so."

A moment later we saw Novikoff, having taken leave of Margery at the settlement door, swinging his cane and walking in the direction of the elevated, discreetly preferring that mode of transit to the proffered trip in Burton's car.

We entered the settlement and climbed to Hazleton's room. He was not there, but a light burning on the table indicated that he expected to return, so we made ourselves at home.

As we waited, I went over the excursion of the evening. We had learned much that was interesting, but it left much to be learned. As for me, I could not fathom it.

Kennedy had pulled down a copy of the "Directory of Directors" on Hazleton's desk, which I suspect Hazleton used in sending out his appeals to public-spirited men for support in various causes.

He was running his finger rapidly over a number of names, and turning quickly from one page to another. A step on the lower stairs told us that Hazleton was at last coming.

"Walter," exclaimed Kennedy, snapping the book shut quickly, "every one of those who have been terrorized is connected in some way or other with the new Armor Plate Trust. You recall the remark of that speaker about

making war on society by stealing society's own secrets of war?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VOCAPHONE.

As Hazleton entered the room, Kennedy motioned to me to say nothing of our adventure at the International.

"Well," exclaimed Hazleton in surprise at seeing us at this late hour, "if I had known you were here, I would have hurried back. This thing keeps me on the qui vive. I never know where the next blow is going to fall, and now that there seems to have come a lull in their terrorism, it's worse than ever. I can't stay in one place very long. I've just been up to the house and all seems right there. The governor asked me if there was any news, but I couldn't tell him much. Is there?"

"No," replied Kennedy, "nothing in particular. How did you enjoy the house party after we left?"

"Rotten," replied Hazleton.

Kennedy said nothing for a moment, then quietly remarked: "It might not have been so bad; in fact, it might have been very pleasant under other circumstances. Anyhow, it gave me an idea."

Hazleton turned in surprise.

"No, nothing definite—yet," hastened Kennedy. "Just an idea. I wish you could find it convenient to give a little affair of your own, say tomorrow night, at the studio, something that would bring together a number of the workers and some of the older visitors to the settlement, the more radical the better. I'd like to have a chance to observe some of these students of social unrest outside their natural habitat. Could you do it?"

"Of course I could do it."

"Very well. And I have another suggestion. Get Burton to invite some of those of his own set to meet them. You see?—a meeting of Fifth Avenue with First Avenue. That will give some excuse for holding the thing."

"Splendid," agreed Hazleton, to whom the idea appealed as a novel sort of entertainment, possibly not unmixed

with good. "I'll see Burton in the morning and let you know how things go."

"I shall want to see you in the morning, too, at the studio," said Kennedy, as we rose to go. "You will have no objection to my putting in a few little things about the house? Otherwise, I'm afraid the party will be a purely social affair, and bring us no closer to our goal."

"No objection in the world. I shall be there all the morning, arranging things. Come any time."

We slept later than usual the next morning, and after Kennedy had dispatched a boy down to Hazleton's with a large package from the laboratory, we breakfasted and then followed leisurely.

Hazleton was already there, busy telephoning friends, sending messages, and writing notes.

"Davis has entered into it heartily," he announced. "I am sure of Margery, Nevsky, Novikoff, and half a dozen others from the settlement already, and—oh, we shall have no difficulty."

"Good!" remarked Kennedy, unwrapping the big package, which had preceded us.

From it he took half a dozen cedar boxes, oblong, with a sort of black disk fixed to a flexible steel arm on the top. In the face of each were two little square holes, with sides of cedar which converged inward in the box, making a pair of little quadrangular pyramidal holes which ended in a small round black circle in the interior. On the same face of the box was a little nicked switch or arm which turned through a semicircle, touching one after another a series of metal buttons.

While Hazleton was busy gathering his guests and arranging with caterers and others for their entertainment, Kennedy placed one of the boxes downstairs in the studio in the foyer. Another was placed up in the library, and both were very carefully concealed behind large pieces of furniture. With Hazleton's permission we crossed the garden and entered the house, where

Kennedy left one of the boxes behind the bookcase in Mr. Hazleton's library, another in his room upstairs, behind the chiffonier, and a third, as opportunity offered, in the servants' quarters at the top of the house.

Wires from each of the boxes were carefully run under rugs and behind various things, out of windows, with loose ends so that all could be hastily caught up and centralized at some convenient point.

Across the garden, perhaps a hundred feet, stood a four-story brownstone house, which was being remodeled with an English basement.

"Whose house is that?" asked Kennedy, when he had completed his work.

"My father owns it," answered Hazleton. "He has just rented it to the Howards, and is having it done over."

"May I use it to-night?"

"Certainly."

Next in the vacant house, Kennedy placed another of the cedar boxes, arranging wires from it as though it had been a telephone central exchange to which all the other boxes converged.

By the middle of the afternoon everything was completed, so that it was the work of only a few minutes after dark to connect up the various wires from the studio and the Hazleton town house with the vacant house.

Kennedy was putting the finishing touches on the arrangement, which placed him in touch with any of the parts of the house which he had wired, cutting off the others, or with any combination of two or more of them. It was a big piece of work, and had taken the better part of the day, although he had worked quickly. One thing which delayed him was his care to work as much as possible unobserved by the servants. However, I think that even if they had observed him they would hardly have known what he was doing.

Meanwhile, Hazleton and Burton were busy recruiting their various social lions and social-lion baiters. The party had been quickly arranged, but I think it probably proved more successful for its very spontaneity than if it had been planned ahead and heralded

widely. Kennedy's idea seemed to catch on famously, and many of those invited cut other engagements to be present or promised to drop in later in the course of the evening.

Perhaps half an hour before the time set for the gathering, Kennedy and I let ourselves quietly into the vacant house.

So far I had only a vague idea of just what Craig had in mind in his extensive wiring of the Hazleton house. Sure now that everything was all right with his line and the batteries he had brought, Kennedy turned the little lever which moved through a semicircle, touching one after another of the buttons on the face of the cedar box. Nothing seemed to happen as he let the lever rest at one point after another, until he reached the last one.

Then all at once it seemed as if the empty room in which we were seated was filled with the buzz of conversation. It was uncanny. I listened intently, and could plainly distinguish words.

"Good evening, Burton," said a voice. "Well, you and Hazleton have put one across, all right. Do you know we gave up the opera to come to this? The opera is such a bore, anyhow. But, say, where are the agitators? Do they really—"

Kennedy moved the switch back. It was some of Burton's society friends come to air their ignorance and affection of ignorance.

"What is it?" I asked, tapping the box.

"A vocaphone," replied Kennedy. "The little box that hears and talks. This is the master station. You remember, of course, the various mechanical and electrical ears, such as the detectaphone, which we have used for eavesdropping in other cases? Well, this is a new application which has been made of the detectaphone. You see how neat it is? It is the detective device, and more. We can 'listen in' almost anywhere in the house or studio, and we don't have to use ear pieces, either, for this is a regular loud-speaking telephone—talks right out. Those

square holes with the converging sides act as sort of megaphone to that transmitter inside, magnify the sound and throw it out here so that we can listen just as well, sometimes better than if we were in the room where the talking is being done. Listen!"

He turned the lever to the button which marked the connection with the studio library. It was evident that the room was rapidly filling up and that the gathering was going to be a notable success in a social way. Scraps of conversation, grave and gay, floated in to us.

"And she really is going to marry him, Tom?"

"So they say, Mildred. Now, don't say I told you. It is only a rumor."

"And not a regular—er—marriage?"

"That's what I hear."

"Is he—one of those—you know, anarchists?"

"Well, not one of the unwashed, anyway."

There was a laugh.

Then a third voice put in, none of which we recognized. "Say, have you seen him dance? Oh, he's splendid. Why, his classes at Port's every morning are the best attended of any in town, they say. Always by appointment, though. And you say he's an anarchist? Oh, there's Davy Burton. Davy, is it a fact that Margery Dwight—"

"Really, now," came Burton's drawl, "I don't know a thing about it, only what I hear. Let me introduce my friend, Lieutenant Gardner, of the army."

Evidently a knot of people had gathered about them.

"There is Professor Novikoff," whispered one of them.

"Where?"

"Over by the window; Davy, introduce us to him."

A moment later we could recognize the voice of Novikoff.

"What's this I hear about your taking up air boats, Burton?" put in another voice, joining the group.

"Air boats?" came a chorus, forgetting Novikoff for a new sensation.

"And do you really fly, Davy?" asked a girl.

"Does he?" said Gardner. "You should see him. I've been up with him, and the other day Mademoiselle Nevsky was over with Miss Dwight and the professor."

"Oh, how perfectly stunning. Why, Davy, I didn't think it was in you."

"I can see the headlines already: 'Society takes up the hydroaëroplane.' When are you going to take the rest of us, Davy?"

"Almost any time."

The conversation shifted, as one after another drifted to other groups, and Kennedy turned the lever again.

"One of the great advantages about the vocaphone," he explained, "is that it works both ways. I can turn this other switch at the back and add our own voices to that conversation—speaking right out into the room with them. That would raise their hair, wouldn't it? They'd think they were aviating. You see that many prove an advantage at any time over the other devices we have used. Then, I can fix it so that they *can't* hear what we say, even if they want to. I can cut out and make secret conversations on other lines. There are all kinds of combinations I can make."

He turned the switch to another point. "This is the foyer of the studio," he said. "I suspect Hazleton is down here. I couldn't distinguish his voice among any of those upstairs."

There was no sound, at least not a voice, although it seemed that some one was moving about.

"Oh, I didn't know you were down here," came a voice, which I recognized as Hazleton's.

"I ran away from the crowd for a moment," said a woman.

I started. It was Margery Dwight.

"There were too many society people," she added, "and they seem to think we are curiosities from a circus."

"I have wanted to see you again for a moment, Margery," pursued Hazleton, ignoring the last remark. "Those few moments at the house party have

made me think a great deal. I hope you didn't misunderstand me. Since then I've wanted to see you alone where we could get it right."

"Yes?" she said, after which followed a pause.

"Please don't think I have any ulterior motive in what I am going to say or in what I said at Rockcrest."

Still there was no answer.

"I don't need to tell you, Margery, that already people are talking. You can see it here, to-night. That is the only thing I mean. Believe me, there is not another thought in my mind except for you and what will be best for you—in the end."

"Morgan," she said slowly, "you know how I feel. You know that I defy the world to dictate to me about what is my own affair, not its affair. What is it to these people, except a passing topic of conversation how or whom I choose to—to marry, as they call it?"

"But, Margery," urged Hazleton, "you might say the same of me, I suppose. Still I hope you will believe that it is not in the least for myself, but wholly for you that I have sought you out, and a second time have forced myself on you in a remonstrance which, to you, I know, is very disagreeable. It is only because I want you to pause and think, before it is too late. It is not because it will bring notoriety on the settlement. Hang the settlement! It is not because I do not approve of Novikoff. It would ill become me to say anything against him, to you. I am urging nothing, nothing for myself, nothing for anybody, except yourself. You owe it to yourself to take this step, if you take it, in the regular way, and not to be blinded by any glittering theories which are so common to-day. Please think it over."

It was evident that Hazleton spoke with deep emotion, which he found difficulty in controlling.

"Well, you see, that's just the trouble. I have thought," she replied. "And the more I think, down there among the people whom we—I mean those upstairs—are keeping down, the

more I see that it is the system which we have built up that is responsible. We must abolish the whole thing, make a clean sweep, have a new deal. This thing about the relations of men and women, which you disapprove of, is only one of the means of keeping the system going by making women economically dependent. Perhaps it need not be part of the change, that that should be changed. Some think not. I think so. And I mean to lead the way with a higher form of marriage, if you choose to call it that, than we have had under our poor worn-out, faulty, old system. That's all."

"I know, Margery. I could forgive you, for instance if you were one who wanted too much law, too much interference with every form of life and activity. But to want no protection—and the protection of the law has been designed for you, believe it or not—to want no protection, I cannot understand. I suppose my father is right. He says I am a socialist. I call myself an evolutionist. I cannot see any reason in throwing overboard everything, in abolishing government, the old idea of the family, all. Margery, can't you see what I am driving at?"

"Morgan," she replied, with quiet determination, "I shall not turn back."

"But Margery, listen to me one moment. It is only one more step in the way you are going—and you'll be throwing bombs."

"I can't say that I'd blame some of those who have suffered so under the present system if they did," came the quick reply.

"And that comes from one who has devoted her life to lifting people up, not to debasing, and degrading them farther."

"Bah! I am sick of our halfway measures of reform. They are lost. We have been at it for years—and so little to show! No, we must have a complete change. We——"

"Oh, here she is. Margery!" interrupted a voice, evidently at the head of the staircase. "The boys are clearing the floor. We are going to show them some of those folk dances we are

teaching the children down at the settlement."

One after another Kennedy touched the little buttons with the lever of the vocaphone, in hope of catching something else that was significant.

From one station came the tinkle as though a telephone bell was ringing.

"Hello," replied a deep voice, which I thought I recognized as that of old Mr. Hazleton. "Yes, oh, how are you, Burton? Yes, this is Hazleton. Where are you? At the club? Oh, the other directors are going to be there? Well, that's good. Yes, I'd like to talk the matter over. I'll drop in—soon. Good-by."

A moment later came the same voice: "Armand!"

Apparently a door opened.

"Armand!"

"Yes, sir."

"What is that going on in Morgan's studio?"

"A little entertainment, sir."

"Oh, I see. Well, Armand. I am going out in a few minutes to the club. I shall be gone an hour or two. But I expect to be up rather late to-night in the library. Leave the lights. You needn't wait."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Armand. If they should stay late in the studio, I think I'd better sleep in the blue room on the other side of the house. I hear music over there now. Have the room ready, anyway."

"Yes, sir. Good night, sir."

"That was the library," remarked Craig, shifting the key again as the conversation ended.

He had turned the lever so as to throw in the studio again. The buzz of conversation had increased. Other late comers had arrived, and now and then we could catch a word. There was an attachment to the vocaphone, which performed a sort of selective faculty, playing up as it were certain tones and making it easier to pick out one voice from the rest.

"Evidently Nevsky has arrived," remarked Craig. "You see how dance crazy the world has become?"

It did not need Kennedy's observa-

tion to tell me that the arrival of Nevsky had indeed changed things.

There was a burst of applause.

"She's the cleverest of all the Russian dancers here this winter," said a voice near the vocaphone.

"Did you get that step?"

"Like this?"

"No. Oh, Professor Novikoff, will you show us how that goes?"

"So."

"Oh—I see. Isn't that the best yet?"

"Now, again."

They were practicing some of the intricacies of the most recherche dances. Social unrest was forgotten. Kennedy switched the lever to the foyer.

"Oh, I thought you were dancing with Gardner," we heard Burton say. Evidently Nevsky had been coqueting again with the army officer, and Burton was correspondingly sore.

"Oh, Davy. No. I ran off as soon as I could, for a rest. I'm so tired of dancing. It's dance, dance, dance, on the stage and off until I'm sick of it."

"I may see you home, afterward, Ekaterina?"

"Yes. Where are you going now?"

"Why, I hope you will pardon me. I was a little—er—put out when you passed me up for Gardner. Nice chap—but—well, I asked Mrs. St. John for a dance and now I must redeem myself or be a cad."

"I'll stay here—where I can rest. Can you get out into the garden from here for a breath of air?"

"Yes. I think Margery is out there. Through that door. Yes, I'll be back in a few minutes."

Hastily, Kennedy tried the studio again.

"Where is Nevsky?" we heard some one ask. "She hasn't gone?"

"No," replied Burton.

"And Margery?"

"I think she is in the garden. Perhaps they are together."

"Novikoff is quite smitten, isn't he?"

"I don't blame him. He wins where scores of others have failed."

"What do you think of the rumor?"

Is it true? Uh-huh? You don't say so. Well, what do you think of that?"

Quickly, Kennedy ran the lever over one button after another, listening in at each station, catching here a phrase, there silence.

From one came a hoarse noise. He turned a lever of a rheostat, which accentuated a whisper to almost a shout. What was indistinguishable before now became quite plain.

"But, mademoiselle, I—I can't."

"You must. You were chosen. You must tell me. Where will he be tonight? Which is his room? I must leave this for him. I am ordered, comrade. So are you. This is the chance. I have waited all the evening for it, and have slipped into the garden. I must be back before any one notices. Quick—tell me."

"Please—no."

"You must. You were chosen to help. You must tell. Remember your oath, Armand. Shall the group tell the immigration authorities? You know what that means? Deportation."

"Oh, mademoiselle — some other night."

"No."

"Quick! He may return at any minute."

"Is this his desk? There!"

"He sleeps in the east room."

"Very well."

"Quick! I must lock the door into the garden. I must have an alibi. If the one under the desk is discovered then you are sure of the one in his room?"

"Positive."

"Good night, comrade."

Silence.

"Who is it?" I whispered, almost fearful, in spite of Kennedy's assurances, that I might be overheard, too.

"I don't know," he answered. "They whispered, and although I was able to magnify the sound I couldn't recognize her voice. But we must act—quickly. She has left two of them, one in the library and the other in old Hazleton's room. We must—"

There was a noise from the vocation, as if some one were moving in the room, followed by a deep-chested cough.

"My God!" exclaimed Craig. "He is there, now. He has returned. They will know in a minute, and then we may expect the bomb at any time!"

TO BE CONCLUDED.

The second and concluding part of this story will appear in the May month-end POPULAR, on sale two weeks hence, April 23rd.

THE POLITE MR. SCANLON

DICK FERRIS, of Los Angeles, ran into his friend, W. J. Scanlon, at a railroad station in Chicago. The couple had been talking for a few minutes when Ferris was greeted warmly by two breezy Westerners, each of whom was about six feet four inches tall and built accordingly. He introduced them to Scanlon, who makes the reputation of Lord Chesterfield look like the history of a lout.

Scanlon shook hands with them, and in a few minutes saw, literally buried behind them, a meek-looking little man. Wishing to make everybody feel comfortable and to save the situation from awkwardness, Scanlon brushed past the two giants, grasped the little fellow's hand, wrung it warmly, and said:

"Glad to meet you, I'm sure. My name's Scanlon."

At that juncture, Ferris grabbed Scanlon and walked him down the platform.

"You fool!" said Ferris. "Those two marshals are taking that fellow off to do twenty years in prison!"

The Figurehead

By Francis Lynde

Author of "The Taming of Red Butte Western," "Scientific Sprague," Etc.

The star-eyed goddess of reform demanded a sacrifice. They gave her one. They put the editor of the *Hot Blast* at the head of the ticket for mayor. The campaign of Editor Blantyre was the kind of thing that people talk about for more than nine days

IT was Boss MacManus, himself, as anciently as the palmy days of Chattahoocha's first boom, who had suggested the fitness of the library of the board of education for the caucus room of the machine.

At that time the city hall was new, and the architect, being devoid of imagination, had omitted to include the unofficial council chambers.

"'Tis all one," MacManus had said. "What would the superintendent of the schools he wantin' with two rooms, I'd admire to know? We'll take the library."

Accordingly, the library had been cut off from the main corridor, and provided with a door leading to the janitor's stair on the alley. Later, a convenient push button, communicating with the city-hall bar across the alley, was concealed in the wainscoting, to the end that the wheels of the municipal machine might not run dry. "'Tis all the comforts of a home we'll have," said the honorable member from the Fifth; though he was himself—as befitted a boss—the most abstemious of men.

It was in the library, behind drawn curtains and locked doors, that the clan MacManus was assembled on a night preceding the holding of the primaries in the Year One of municipal earthquakes. The hour was late; the incandescents hung dim in a thick haze of tobacco smoke; and the white-aproned bar waiter, to whom the concealed push button appealed, had made a goodly

number of journeys, tray laden, up the janitor's back stair.

They were making the slate for the approaching election, and there was a hitch. Normally Chattahoocha was safely Democratic, and for a decade it had been quite as safely the oyster of the clan MacManus. But at the State election a year previous, a small cloud had appeared upon the political horizon. Blantyre, the editor of the *Hot Blast*, backed by the Civic League, had made war upon a monopolistic water company, the fight turning upon the question of municipalizing the water-works.

All this was a year in the past; and MacManus and his lieutenants had looked to see the Civic League fall apart when the object for which Blantyre had organized it was attained. Unhappily, it was still alive, and a factor to be taken into the account. Hence the divided counsels in the library on the night of slate-making.

"You people can talk till the planets fall," remarked Grimsby, the red-faced councilman from the Fourth, smiting a hairy fist on the library table, "but there's only one thing to do: we've got to swat this 'respectable-viter' business in the neck from the word go. If we don't, our name's Dennis. I say, give 'em a straight ticket, just the same as if we'd never heard of 'em."

"You're dead right; I'm with you, Pete," agreed the ex-pugilist member from the fighting Seventh. "Once you leave these kid-glovers to get a leg over

the ropes, an' there'll be a scrap. I seen it tried in Philadelphia."

"Dat comes my way, too," nodded Weissman, the brewery man, who, for four years, had been crammed down the throats of the good citizens of the Sixth as their representative. "I maig efery man in de Sixth' valk de plank on dat." And he had recourse to the foaming Stein which the bar waiter from across the alley had just set before him.

"That may be a safe play for you fellows in the Fourth, and Sixth, and Seventh, but it won't go in the Second," protested a little, wiry man, who sat across the table from Weissman; and there was a murmur of approval from two or three others. "I've got as many as a hundred workin' members of the Civic League in my ward, and if they take a notion to turn out, they can elect the consumm'dest crank in the whole bunch!"

The Honorable Timothy, deep-settled in the comfortable cushions of the school superintendent's swing chair, locked his fat fingers across his abdomen, and smoked his fat cigar at the reflective angle.

He had been waiting for the rank and file to thrash its way around to his own point of view, or, failing that, perhaps, to wrangle itself to a standstill. When the hope was finally defeated, he spoke as a man and a captain.

"'Tis grreat politicians ye are, the kit of ye!" he began, the sarcasm cutting keen through the rich Irish brogue. "Ye mind me of the green polisman on th' beat, clubbin' the inoffensive citizen. 'Tis not because I hate you that I bate you," says he, "nor because I dislike you: 'tis because I have the authority over you," says he. "If you haven't the sinse to turn your backs to the wind, it's Tim MacManus'll turn 'em for ye. The star-eyed goddess of rayform demands a sacrifice. 'Tis well; we'll give her one. We'll put the *Hot Blast* editor man at the head of the ticket f'r mayor; and lest he might be tempted to think he's the whole thing, we'll give him Misther Parker Headrick f'r city attorney. That'll give us the League vote solid f'r the meat an' marrow of the

ticket; and be the time the editor man has had one round with Headrick tyin' his hands, the rayformers will be out of it an' the 'respectable majority' ye're talking so grrandly about will be back at its old thirck of staying at home on Election Day. Has anny one of ye aught to say? 'Tis a vote; the motion is carried, and this meeting is adjourned."

The caucus rose, and the janitor came to open the windows, and otherwise to restore the educational atmosphere of the library. Only one man, the member from the newly created Ninth Ward, ventured a feeble protest against the ruling of the chair.

"I don't know about Headrick for a ball and chain," he said doubtfully. "Ain't he standin' in with Blantyre and that crowd since he quit bein' attorney for the water company?"

MacManus wheeled upon the doubter and pointed a fat forefinger.

"What you don't know, John Dempsey, would fill a bigger book than anny in this liberry. Do you go where you're sint, and carry the worrd sthstraight!" And then, in the ear of the self-appointed critic: "What I can do to you f'r votin' them naygurs in the Ninth, I can do to Parker Headrick whin he's needin' it. That's f'r you, John Dempsey."

It was a carefully selected committee, drawn from the Democratic wing of the Civic League itself, that called upon Editor Blantyre a fortnight later to announce officially that he was the choice of the primaries for the head of the ticket.

"So I've been reading in the paper," said Blantyre noncommittally. And then more hospitably: "Sit down, gentlemen; sit down, and tell me about it. What does it mean?"

"It means that you are the next mayor of Chattahoocha—unless you die or abscond," laughed Slocumb, the spokesman of the respectable three. "The Democratic nomination is equivalent to an election, this far south of the Ohio River."

"I know; but why have you pitched upon me for your candidate? Apart from the editorship of the *Hot Blast*,

which is by way of business, I suppose I am a Republican. I voted for President Roosevelt, and——”

“Of course, everybody knows that,” interrupted the flour magnate. “But in this race you’ll be merely the first citizen of Chattahoocha, without regard to partisan politics. Everybody knows that, too.”

“Still, I’d like to know why,” persisted the nominee.

“Because you’re at the head of the Civic League, the man most emphatically in the public eye, and unquestionably the man for the place.”

Blantyre’s smile was inscrutable.

“We are all four good friends here, and there is no need for any beating about the bush. Is that why Tim MacManus instructed his heelers to railroad me through in every ward of the city for the head of the ticket last night?”

“Oh, my dear Mr. Blantyre! it was spontaneous in my ward”—the well-behaved Second—“I assure you,” protested the chairman. “The enthusiasm was something tremendous!”

Blantyre was still smiling. “Yet you must admit that I’m the machine candidate. If you don’t know it, I do. If I accept, MacManus will elect me, and he and his fellow grafters in the council will tie my hands, and make me nothing but a figurehead; discrediting the League, and everything connected with it!”

The president of the United Flour Mills moved uneasily in his chair, found a cigar, and lighted it, looked to his colleagues for help—which was not forthcoming—and said: “But you’re not going to refuse to run, Mr. Blantyre? For the first time in its history, the MacManus gang is giving the decent element a chance to make good. You mustn’t turn us down.”

The editor rose and closed the interview.

“I don’t know; I’ll have to think about it.”

“About what comes after?”

“No; about what comes before. If I accept, it must be made clear to MacManus, and his following, that, in elect-

ing me, they are electing a man who will fight them to a finish. Good day, gentlemen; and thank you for coming. I’ll write you formally to-morrow morning.”

Blantyre did not tell his wife all that was in his mind when he went home to dinner in the remodeled cottage in Poplar Street that evening. Of course, Clarissa knew what had befallen in the primaries. She read her husband’s paper conscientiously and faithfully. But the sudden sunburst of political preferment warmed her chiefly on the side of wifely solicitude.

“Will you accept, Horace, dear? And if you do, won’t it mean a lot more care and responsibility and worry?” were the queries with which she met him at the turning of the latchkey; and they implied no more doubt of his election than the Honorable Timothy had expressed in the clan caucus.

Blantyre postponed the answer to these and all other deep-probing queries until dinner was over, and little Rick had been put to bed in his crib. Then he answered them in the mass with an asking of his own:

“How would you like to be Mrs. Mayor, little woman?”

Being a little woman, Clarissa thought first of the social requirements.

“Would we have to have state dinners, and receptions, and invite the—the cabinet officers, and——”

Blantyre’s laugh was wholly affectionate and carefree.

“Don’t get us tangled up with international affairs. No; there wouldn’t be any state receptions, or anything else to interfere with the daily round. I’m not even sure you would take precedence of Mrs. Timothy MacManus, if you should ever be so unhappy as to have to dine as her fellow guest.”

“But what would it mean to you, Horace?”

Here was where Blantyre began to conceal the shadowy things at the back of his mind.

“More work, and more responsibility, of course; with more praise for success and more obloquy for failure than

would fall to the lot of a mere newspaper man. But I'm minded to try it."

"You are not telling me all," she said, with swift wifely intuition.

For seven happy years Blantyre had been struggling doubtfully with Clarissa's limitations. In the mating season he had married a wife—a complement for the purely human, manful side of him. As many men say they do, and as most men would like to do, he could wipe his feet of business on the home doormat, and, with the sitting of his latchkey, enter a small world where the struggle for existence and the carking care of the struggle had no passports.

The price he paid was not high—save in moments of stress like the present. And he was sensible enough to know that a man may rarely find the flower of conjugal bliss and the strength-giving fruit of absolute comradeship growing in the same garden. So he comforted her, as he had many times before, by telling her only half truths.

"The disagreeable things, you mean? There will be a few drawbacks, of course. A candidate is supposed to have no privacy; and the politicians will probably say unkind things of me—and say them in print. I'll have to do some campaigning, and that will keep me out nights—which we're well used to—and make me hobnob with the ward wire pullers—which we're not used to."

"But after the election?" she queried.

"After the election—if I should happen to pull through—it will be different; and possibly less disagreeable. Or at any rate, disagreeable in other ways. Political housecleaning, and the like, you know. But I'll always have you and little Rick to come home to when the dust rises too thickly, or the floors become too sloppy for comfort."

This is how it was settled that the announcement committee should have the answer it desired. Later, when the Rubicon of acceptance was fairly crossed, Blantyre resigned his editorship, opened temporary headquarters in an unoccupied room in the *Hot Blast* Building, and began his campaign quite

independent of that conducted by the MacManus machine.

Burton, the owner of the *Hot Blast*, and Blantyre's next friend in all respects, opposed both the resignation and the independent campaign, though he was obliged to acquiesce on both counts.

"You've always had your own way of doing things," said this best friend, "but I'm afraid you're going to strain the thills and tug straps, to say nothing of the wagon itself, this time. Conscience is a good thing, but it's liable to excess—like all other good things."

"What would you have me do?" asked Blantyre, who was always open to conviction.

"As a matter of fact, you don't have to do anything but draw your breath. If you're too modest to keep on being editor, go home and play with Baby Roderick, and the machine will elect you while you wait."

"And later?"

Burton's laugh was ironical. "Later, if the Honorable Timothy finds out that he has picked up a live coal instead of the dead one he was feeling for—well, that is his own funeral, exclusively, I should say."

"None the less, I shall go on with my little side show. Is there anything else?"

"No—yes, there is, too. I've been meaning to ask you what Headrick is doing?"

"He is doing more than any other machine nominee, I take it: merely letting the dynamo do the work. He and MacManus are as thick as fleas since the primaries."

"Well, good luck to you; shout when you want anything I've got," said the large-hearted ironmaster newspaper owner; and he went his way.

It was a nine days' wonder to the gang-ridden city of Chattahoocha—Editor Blantyre's campaign for the mayoralty. Ignoring the machine program as if it did not exist, the head of the ticket arranged a speaking for each ward, in fire halls, assembly rooms, workshops; wherever housing, space, and light could be had.

In these meetings, backed by a plat-

form semicircle of rather timid Civic Leaguers, Blantyre coldly and calmly rehearsed the bald facts of the city's shame: the inefficiency of the fire department, the low standard of the public schools, the venality of the police, the truckling of the city's officials, and the greed and corruption in the common council. No public evil missed its measured denunciation; no man or set of men was spared.

This was all right in the residence wards, on Fort Wagner Hill, and elsewhere, outside of the manufacturing district. But when it came the turn of the gang strongholds, young Slocumb, the star reporter of the *Hot Blast*, who was Blantyre's self-constituted bodyguard, held his breath.

In the bloody Seventh, for example, the meeting was called to order in the ward fire hall, and it was densely packed with MacManus' henchmen and ward heelers. Slocumb looked for trouble, made sure of a rear exit out of which Blantyre could be smuggled in case of an explosion, and slipped the revolver-holding pocket of his coat around to an easy-finding position when he took his seat at the newspaper table in front of the temporary rostrum.

The precautions were entirely needless. As one man, the packed audience shouted itself hoarse in applauding Blantyre's cold-blooded arraignment of the gang rule. Every whistling bolt of denunciation evoked a fresh outburst of enthusiastic approval. Young Slocumb apprehended, after a time, and shook hands with his own perspicacity. The meeting had been packed in more ways than one, and the applauders had their instructions.

After making this discovery, the star reporter smiled when Blantyre, nettled at the blunting of his own arrows, let them fly thicker and faster, drawing each one fairly to the head. It was no use. The roaring salvos of approval went off at regular intervals, as if fired by a lanyard in the hands of an invisible chorus captain.

The next meeting chanced to be in MacManus' own ward, the Fifth, and the boss himself presided, introducing

the speaker, and sitting well to the front of the platform, while Blantyre, unmoved by the presence, went on to scarify the misrule of the machine, without malice and equally without mercy.

Here the applause was as enthusiastic as it had been in the Seventh; and, after the meeting, the Honorable Timothy complimented the candidate heartily.

"'Tis a fine, grand thing ye're doin', Misther Blantyre. Ye're stirrin' the town as it well needs to be stirred. But 'tis a worrk of supererogation, afther all. Ye might take yer wife and baby off f'r a holiday on the mountain, and we'd elect ye just the same. L'ave us have another worrd from ye in the Fi'th, if your engagemints will permit. Good night to ye."

It was during the week preceding the election, and Blantyre had made five of his nine speeches, when Headrick presented himself for the first time at the temporary headquarters in the *Hot Blast* Building.

From the night a year in the past, when he had foresworn his allegiance to the water company, walking out of the vice president's room with Blantyre, whom he had declined to persecute, the lawyer had been friendly with the editor, as a mastiff is friendly with the man he has once refused to pull down at the behest of his master. But there had been no intimacy.

Headrick's hard face was a mask of impenetrability, and his half-burned cigar was between his teeth, when he strode into the bare room and found a chair; and for a time there was silence. At the end of it the lawyer asked an abrupt question:

"Blantyre, do you want to be mayor of this town?"

The candidate had been learning many things in his campaigning round, and his reply was the blunt truth:

"I'm not at all sure that I do."

"Then why are you making the race?"

"That is quite another matter. For a long time I have been craving the opportunity to tell the voters of Chatahoocha, face to face, and by word of

mouth, the things I've been trying to say through the columns of the *Hot Blast*. I've got the chance now, and I'm using it."

Headrick's grim features wrinkled in the bronzed ghost of a smile.

"You are certainly working it for all it's worth. Do you reckon MacManus is going to let you win out on any such platform as the one you are laying down?"

"I might retort that I am the slate nominee; the head of his own ticket."

"We won't argue that point. I'm here to tell you that you'll be knifed at the polls in favor of Grantley, the Republican, if you don't quit this house-afire speechmaking. Grantley's a mere cipher, and he'll do as well as another for Tim's purposes."

"Did McManus send you here to tell me this?" demanded Blantyre.

The lawyer's impassive face afforded no index to the undercurrent of his thought.

"Let's stick to the facts," he rejoined curtly. "Get sick, or let your wife or baby need a change of air, and cut out the remainder of these firebrand rallies of yours."

Blantyre rose in his wrath, the explosive anger of a red-headed man with ample shoulders, and steely blue eyes, and a determined jaw.

"You go back to the man who sent you, and tell him I'm going to be the next mayor of Chattahoocha," he snapped. "He wanted me and he's got to take me! You tell him that, will you?"

Headrick left his chair, helped himself to a match from the box on the table, and relighted his cigar.

"That's your ultimatum, is it?" he said, in grim jocosity. "It sounds well, but it isn't politics. When the pinch comes, perhaps you'll remember that I tried to choke you off!"

"When the pinch comes, I'll remember that I have one friend less than I hoped to have," retorted Blantyre, still tingling under the flick of the whiplash. And the little incident was closed.

As was to be predicted of a man of his temperament, Blantyre took notice

of the boss' warning only on the belligerent side. At a called meeting of the League lieutenants, sandwiched between two of the ward speakings, measures were taken to bring the full strength of the organization into the field. A late canvass of the city was begun, and committees of business men were formed to rally the inert majority.

Blantyre was as determined now as he had been indifferent before; and for the entire ante-election week he figured as a man fighting windmills. People stopped him in the street to laugh at him for his strenuousness, and to tell him to keep cool, assuring him that he had only to watch the wheels go round, and see himself elected. Meanwhile, there was no sign of treachery on the part of the machine. So far as young Slocumb and other self-appointed scouts could ascertain, there was no move making in the lower wards pointing to a defeat of the head of the ticket.

The blow fell at the last moment, as such blows are timed to fall. It was the night before election; Blantyre had sent Clarissa and the baby to the hotel on the mountain three days earlier; and he went home from the final conferences with his committees a little before midnight.

At half past one there came a ring at the doorbell. Blantyre sat up in bed and tried, vainly for the moment, to gather the sleep-dispersed faculties. A second stirring peal brought him broad awake and alive to the possibilities. "Coming!" he called out of the open window; and a few minutes later he unlocked the door to young Slocumb.

The star reporter was visibly excited.

"You must come down to the office, Mr. Blantyre!" he burst out. "MacManus has sandbagged you!"

"Tell it in ten words, if you can, Richard," was the brisk command.

"It's the old dodge—so old that it'll seem brand-new to a good many people. You dictated a lot of letters and sent 'em out by messenger to some of the League people last night, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And the fool stenographer put 'em on *Hot Blast* letterheads?"

"A few of them. We ran out of stationery along toward the last. Why?"

"Somebody has swiped one of those letters, taken off everything but the date and signature, and filled in a screed over your name that will run this town plumb crazy when a facsimile appears in this morning's *Mail*!"

"You are sure of this? How do you know?"

"Don't ask me how I know. I've done everything but commit murder to get to see the proof of the thing in cold type. But I ~~haven't~~ seen it, and I've got the original letter, too. It's addressed to Mart Flanagan, a saloon keeper in the Seventh. In it you are made to say that Flanagan and his kind needn't be alarmed at your campaign speeches; that you were obliged to talk large to hold the League vote for the body of the ticket."

"And Dalton will publish it? I can make it hot for him if he does."

"He's going to publish it, all right. It's already in type. I think he and Grantley have made a deal with MacManus. The letter will be made the text for a lot of stuff calling upon the voters to swap you for Grantley. I got a glimpse of some of it, but not much."

"Good enough, Richard; you're a young man in a thousand. Wait a minute." Blantyre turned to the telephone, and called the *Hot Blast* editorial rooms. "Is that you, Cranborne? This is Blantyre. How many of the forms have gone down? All but the telegraph? All right; get ready to kill half of the first page, and wait for me. I'll be with you in a few minutes."

Half an hour later the candidate was at Cranborne's desk, casting and recasting, with young Slocumb at his elbow to give him cues, a reply to the attack in the *Mail*. It was after the reply had gone to the linotypes that Slocumb scored his greatest triumph. The forged letter, examined under a glass, and in a strong light, showed that the acid erasure of the original had been too hurried to be entirely effectual.

Also, the typewriter spacing had been such as to make the forgery appear as an interlineation of the letter dictated by Blantyre.

Slocumb dashed off to the nearest drug store, made a few experiments with reagents, and succeeded in bringing out the original typewriting, thus making a double letter of it. In this form it was photographed and printed to go with Blantyre's reply.

None the less, after all was done, and the roar of the waiting presses began to vibrate through the building, Blantyre realized even more keenly with what masterly shrewdness MacManus had planned his overthrow. He knew human nature—none better; and the homely truth that no denial, however complete, can hope to overtake and outrun the nimble campaign lie.

The dawn was reddening over the top of Fort Wagner Hill when he left the editorial rooms and the building. Half-way down the block he met the faithful Burton, upcoming from an early-morning train, a copy of the *Mail* in his hand, and the light of battle in his eye.

"I was just rushing for a phone," he gasped. "Look at this, will you?"

"I know," said Blantyre, smiling wearily. "Young Slocumb put me wise some time after midnight—you want to do something good for that boy, Rodgerick, when you get a chance; he's a genius. I have a complete refutation in the *Blast*, but we're done up, just the same."

Burton was a friend beyond price, in that he knew when to talk and when to hold his peace.

"You're done up—physically. Horace; that's plain. What are you going to do with yourself to-day? We don't need you here, you know."

"I'm going to take the daylight car to the foot of the mountain, walk up, and breakfast with Clarissa and the baby at the Alta Vista."

"That's business. And you needn't come back till you get good and ready. We'll telephone you what you ought to know."

"Forget the telephone!" said the candidate out of the heart of utter fa-

tigue; and he ran to catch the "lark" car for the mountain.

It proved to be the quietest of Indian summer days on the high-mountain plateau; and the guests at the Alta Vista, being chiefly tourists, knew nothing of the political storm raging in the city, spreading maplike below the hotel piazzas—knew nothing and cared less.

Blantyre slept like a tired boy through the forenoon, and after luncheon took to the autumn-painted woods, with little Rick in the crook of his elbow, and Clarissa for a walking mate, and a volume of Browning in his coat pocket.

These three boon companions accounted for the entire afternoon, and the sun was dipping in cloud-covered glory to the summits of the distant Cumberlands when they returned to the hotel.

"The whole town has been phoning for you, Mr. Blantyre," said the clerk, when he passed out the room key.

"I don't care," said the machine nominee; and truly, he thought he did not.

After dinner Clarissa went upstairs to put the baby to bed, and Blantyre strolled out to the thickly peopled veranda, looking for a smoking chair and a quiet corner. The inclined railway had lately made a trip, and among the passengers coming up the electric-lighted walk, he saw Headrick. He had successfully resisted the growing desire to telephone for news—the news of his defeat—but the sight of Headrick broke his resolution.

"I suppose you are safely city attorney," he said, when the lawyer came over to take the nearest vacant chair, and to light his cigar.

Headrick looked at him curiously over the burning match.

"Do you mean to say you don't know?" he demanded.

"I don't. I thought I didn't care to know; but I guess I do."

Headrick nodded. "It was a hot fight, and it got pretty bitter along toward the last. Burton and his crowd weren't going to have you lose out if they could help it. We did the best we could to turn you down, but it was no

go. You're the next mayor of Chattanooga."

"'We,' you say; that means that you stood with MacManus?"

"I stood by myself. What things one man could do to prevent your election, those things I have done this good day, Blantyre."

Blantyre smiled; he thought it would require a harder hitter than Headrick to get a rise out of him now that the strain was off.

"Well, I prefer an open enemy to the other kind," he remarked.

"But I fought you as a friend—the best friend you've had to-day," was the quick retort.

"You'll have to dig a little deeper trench in the details, if you want me to understand," said the ex-editor.

"I'll do it. You were put on the ticket because, as a reform mayor with a machine council, you'd be, as Tim phrased it, 'a cat in hell without claws.' To make sure that you'd be entirely harmless, I was put on with you, and my part in the play is to tie your hands. You can't make the first move toward reform if your city attorney isn't with you. Now do you see what you're in for?—why a man who cared anything for you personally would do his level best to get you defeated?"

There was a pause, and the persiflage of a party of chattering young people in the nearest group of chairs jarred unsympathetically upon Blantyre's ears.

"As it stands, you can't reform anything," Headrick went on coolly. "The council—it's Tim's council, swallowed whole by the decent element on your account—will vote you down on everything. If you only had a city attorney who could buck up to them—"

Blantyre turned upon him suddenly.

"Headrick, when I saw your name on the ticket with mine, I thought I should have. That was one of the reasons, perhaps the chief reason, why I accepted the nomination."

The lawyer shook his massive head slowly.

"The Honorable Timothy makes

mighty few mistakes," he commented. "What if I should tell you that he could lift his little finger and smash me —get me disbarred—chase me out of the country, or into the penitentiary?"

The new mayor smiled calmly.

"If anybody else should tell me such a thing as that, I should reply that the Parker Headrick I know is the last man on top of God's green earth to let such considerations swerve him a single hair's breadth from the course he chose voluntarily to pursue."

The incline car was up again, and a deputation of enthusiastic Civic Leaguers, headed by Burton, poured out of the little station. Blantyre saw them, but he waited for the word from Headrick. It came slowly, and with a gritting of the strong teeth through the chewed end of the cigar.

"Do you think that of me, Blantyre?"

"I do."

More chewing of the cigar, and then: "I don't know as that would have moved me; but something else did. Your wife—I met her one day when she was out wheeling the baby, and she stopped me to ask if I wouldn't stand by you,

Blantyre, and—and see that you didn't get hurt! I said I would."

"Well?" said Blantyre.

"MacManus sent me to give you the high-ball signal; and I did it. Also, he put me on the ticket to play ball and chain to you because he thought he owned me. Blantyre, it runs in my mind that I'm going to keep my word to your wife; that I'm going to fool Tim MacManus once, if I go to jail for it!"

Blantyre was on his feet, and the deputation was climbing the veranda steps.

"You fooled me," he said warmly. And then: "Come on, and we'll jolly that crowd together; and afterward, I want you to meet Clarissa—she's here."

But Headrick drew back into the shell which was his outward presentation to all crowds—and to most individuals.

"No; you go on. I'm only one of the gang to that outfit. You're the man they're looking for. Good night. I reckon I won't stay to see Mrs. Blantyre; I'll be going back to town."



IRISH COMFORT

MIKE, who was out of a job, sat under a tree and smoked his pipe, as he watched Jerry O'Toole wielding a pick under the blaze of an August sun. Jerry was using the pick on a railroad cut, and the watchfulness of his foreman was such that he found few opportunities to interrupt the ceaseless rise and fall of his implement.

Mike watched and smoked, thinking with pride of the industry of the Irish race.

"Holy Mother!" Jerry exclaimed, taking advantage of a momentary lapse in the foreman's attention. "This is the hardest job I ever tackled."

"Gwan!" said Mike, leisurely blowing out a whiff of smoke. "Sure, and it's an easy job."

"Easy!" shouted Jerry. "It's hard and it's hot! Bedad, the thermometer's a hundred and twelve in the shade!"

Mike let another whiff of smoke curl from his sensitive lips.

"What's that to you?" he asked carelessly. "You don't have to work in the shade, do you?"

Revolt

By Robert J. Pearsall

Author of "Picked for Service," "The Tuba Trail," Etc.

Peace talk is in the air; peace plans are being discussed throughout the world; yet the shock of battle is still heard; companies of men in uniform are attacking other companies of men in uniform, having no quarrel with them individually, but bent on their destruction. Some such thoughts as these are in the mind of the soldier in this novelette. No coward is he; but his obsession makes him a worse-than-useless soldier. There is plenty of food for thought in the story. It is war, the real thing, not seen through rose spectacles but with the naked eye. You are going to write us about this man's deed.

(A Novelette)

ALL the way to the front, Starr found himself conscious of a certain sense of unreality and of helplessness, as though he were in the grip of an incubus. He reminded himself frequently that he was himself, and that he had entered into the affair of his own accord; but still the impression remained. Edward Starr and Private Starr seemed two altogether different entities, and he was not sure that he liked the latter. He was not sure, either, now that he had felt the grip of it, that he was going to like the thing into which he was being absorbed; but the troop trains fed him and the others into the maw of it as a hopper feeds grain into a mill.

He thought, sitting there in the rear seat of the car, looking over the backs of the vociferously cheerful young men that filled it, that this strangeness was probably the result of the life he had led. Since his boyhood, he had felt it to be a very cramped one. He had loved Amador, but the urge of youth had been busy with him, and sooner or later it would have driven him out into the world. The war had simply opened a path of little resistance, indeed, of rath-

er the reverse of resistance. The wave of patriotism had been far stronger than the home anchorage. His mother had held him over the first call, but that had been mainly because he would have had to have lied concerning his age in order to have answered it. She had known better than he what the second call would mean, and had betrayed little emotion when he told her he had enlisted. He had been glad of that, and yet, for some reason that was not clear to him, vaguely inclined to resent it.

Now, as he recalled his departure—himself leaning out of the car window, half a hundred friends crowding the depot platform, a scattering sort of cheer, waving hats and hands—his mind dwelt much longer on the half-ashamed softness in a certain pair of youthful eyes than on the dull resignation in her old ones.

He felt that an immense time had elapsed since his departure. He found it hard to believe that the town was still as he had left it, and yet he could not imagine it otherwise. Change was an infrequent visitant to Amador. His reason told him that all was as it always

had been, except that the Central Grocery was closed. But that change, like his own departure, was a direct result of the war. The store had been run by a man of the race with which the nation was at war, and quite naturally, Amador had boycotted him.

The thought of this man brought back an incident that had occurred the day before Starr's departure. He had been mowing the meadow, and had discovered a toad in front of the cutting bar. Almost without thought, for similar things had happened many times before, he had stopped the horses, gone around in front of the machine, and with a little difficulty—for he had been taught that to touch toads causes warts—persuaded the sluggish thing to move to a place of safety. Hearing some one chuckle, he had looked up and perceived the ancient alien leaning on the fence, laughing at him.

"And so you're agoin' to the war," he had mocked. "You're agoin' for to be a soldier."

Starr tried to forget his words and tone, but could not. The memory depressed him.

He realized of a sudden that his ideas of warfare, formed largely through study of his school history, were very vague. His mental image was of a mighty sweep of titanic forces, of a glorious onrushing of a flood of heroic men. Before enlisting he had given some little thought to the possibility of death, and he had persuaded himself that he was willing to die, but in his mind it was always gloriously, at the head of a cheering column. He had not consulted his reason overmuch. He had dreamed of mighty achievements, of whirlwind events wherein thousands were saved by his personal acumen, or were inspired to the fine frenzy that wins battles by his high example. The study of maps of the theater of war had still further enthralled his imagination. It had seemed to him an unparalleled offering of fortune that he should be permitted to take part in so stupendous a drama. All thoughts of horror were swallowed up in the largeness of it, as a river dyed with blood

is always less appalling than a rivulet of it creeping out from beneath a door.

Now, however, he found something repellent in this idea of magnitude. It dwarfed him; he saw clearly how one man's will would be overruled by the mass.

The car was in a hubbub; but one isolated remark carried through to Starr's consciousness and stuck there. "Heroes!" and by the sneer in the word Starr knew the speaker, the cynic of the company, Simpson by name. "The generals are the men that'll be heroes. All we'll do is shoot and slash and stab—"

Starr turned a little sick. He always did when the idea was forced upon him that he as an individual might be compelled to take another man's life.

II.

They arrived at the training camp in the early forenoon. Starr followed his leader down the steps of the car, and fell rather clumsily into line. He was not more clumsy than his fellows, however; they were all very raw recruits. They took the attitude of attention, but immediately lost it again, with involuntary wrigglings of the body and shufflings of the feet. Their heads for the most part remained still—that was one thing that had been drilled into them at the recruiting depots—but their eyes were busy. They were very much interested in the country ahead of them, to the east. There was not much to see, however. A level expanse of brown and devastated earth; in the foreground, tents, thousands of them, shelter tents, wall tents, conical tents, kitchen tents all shapes and sizes with men popping in and out of them and drilling in front of them; after a few miles a sudden and sinister lapse into apparent lifelessness; farther on, lifting off the horizon, a curious white mist; still farther, through occasional wind rifts, the blackness of distant hills.

From somewhere near those hills there came to their ears a continual low-toned roaring, not unlike the mile-

distant pounding of the surf on a still night.

Starr, from his study, was able to read into this view more meaning than most of his fellows. North and south, he knew, the two opposing armies faced each other along a front of nearly fifty miles. The enemy were at bay in the hills, of which there were two almost parallel ranges, the rearmost of which sloped down to the sea. They controlled the harbor, and their strength was being constantly augmented by the landing of fresh troops. To dislodge them from the hills, drive them back to the sea, and force their surrender, was the task set for the Americans. To hold their own until they became strong enough to themselves take the offensive, break through the American lines, and strike at the rich cities inland, was the object of the enemy.

Starr knew that the Americans had driven their front almost to the base of the enemy's fortifications. He knew that the land between the training camp and the hills, so far from being vacant and lifeless, was honeycombed with tunnels and trenches, and vibrated with the activities of an invisible army. He had known these things before, but knowing is not realization. A warm glow swept over him as he sensed the greatness of the work, the high confidence that had been necessary to conceive it, and the devoted courage which had justified that confidence. He told himself that in such ways was the spirit of a nation expressed, the fearless, indomitable spirit of his forever free nation. A fresh and greater exultation came to him. He saw now that for an individual to be merged in such a work was to be glorified. His blood fear of an hour before seemed weak and unworthy squeamishness.

After a minute the lieutenant gave the command, "Rest!" Instantly the men relaxed, their shoulders slumped forward, they turned in their places and began to talk. They welcomed the sound of firing eagerly. "Gee, we ain't so far away." "Wonder how long it'll be before—" "Tell ye, they'll rush us right to the front, they've got to

have all the men they can get." "Hope so, 'u'd like to get a chance at the darn—" And then, from Simpson, "I'm a-wonderin' what happened to the people that used to live on these farms."

The remark and the tone of it had the disagreeable effect of a cold blanket. Several of the men replied with biting mockery. Then, stimulated by the sound of parade music near by, the conversation went on with increased heroism. One man began to give in detail the plan of the campaign. Starr listened and found he had much the same ideas. He thrilled pleasantly as he followed the flag to repeated victories. He was sorry when the sergeant's command of "Attention! By the right flank, march!" put an end to the discussion.

They were marched several miles through the interminable rows of shelter tents. Starr had a commonplace moment in which he compared the space to a vast cornfield, after the corn has been cut and shocked. The men he thought of as squirrels. Then, with a familiar feeling of discomfort, he thought of a certain man who had scattered poisoned corn— But he dismissed the idea instantly; it was plainly out of place.

They came to a vacant plot of ground, were counted off front to rear, opened ranks, and proceeded, amid vociferations from the lieutenant as to straightness of line and stability of peg, to build their own tent village. To his regret, Starr found himself paired off with Simpson. Presently, the work finished, Starr crept inside his tent to test the comfort of it, and was joined a moment later by his tentmate.

"Well, we're here," said Simpson unenthusiastically. "Home's where our haversack is; nothing like it."

Starr had been expecting some such remark. "You're right," he agreed, with an excess of satisfaction.

"Like it, eh?" queried the other. "So far as you've gone? Well, let's hope you keep on liking it. Until a machine gun hits you, and then—poof!"

Starr was suddenly resentful. He had gotten rid of his misgivings, and

did not intend to have them renewed. "What did you enlist for?" he asked sharply.

The other spat. "What t'ell! What did anybody enlist for? Not for fun, I hope." He rolled over on his side as though the answer were conclusive.

Starr stared angrily at Simpson's back. He had an impulse to drag him out of the tent and heroically denounce him as a traitor. Then it came to him that in reality the man had said nothing. With an effort he turned his attention to the diapason of the battle. He found he could hear it quite distinctly by pressing his ear to the ground. Certain phrases that might be used in describing it came to his mind. He had a boy's thought of incorporating them in a letter written on the paper cover of a cartridge clip. He was deep in the composition of this message when the police sergeant called all men out to work. Starr obeyed cheerfully, but Simpson was inclined to grumble.

After police work came drill, and they drilled again in the afternoon. The next day they had three drill periods, and the next and the next. There was no time to spare; any day they might be required for active service. That was why they had been brought direct to the front. All the niceties of execution, the parade-ground stunts, were eliminated; the men were given simply the fundamentals, the things it was necessary for them to know in order that they might be marched and maneuvered and flung in effective units—regiment or battalion or division—against the enemy.

Between times they learned to shoot round holes in the black center of a paper target. At this Starr distinguished himself, so that he was promised a sharpshooter's medal. The drill, too, came easier to him than most, and he had visions of promotion. He was really ambitious for promotion; it would be great news to send home, and, besides, would vastly increase his opportunities for distinguishing himself. He was careful, however, to keep

these thoughts from Simpson. He incurred Simpson's ridicule often enough, without openly inviting it.

Simpson was a puzzle to Starr. He always referred to his enlistment as though it had been forced on him, and yet he must have volunteered his services as freely as had Starr. But he spoke largely of "community opinion" and "family tradition" and "racial hysteria." He wrote many letters; to judge from the expression of his face they must have been very sarcastic ones. He had a large map of the country occupied by both armies, and he followed the rumors and the few published reports of the campaign very carefully. His comments were never gentle; occasionally they became very critical; when a large loss of men occurred he was apt to rave.

All this had an opposite effect on Starr from what might have been expected; it roused the spirit of argument. Starr was apt to accuse Simpson of shortsightedness, to remind him that a regiment must sometimes be sacrificed to save an army, and that the loss of an engagement to-day sometimes means the winning of a battle to-morrow. This was some of Starr's newly acquired war knowledge; but Simpson was apt to reply with a reference to the satisfaction that must be felt by the dead.

Afterward, Starr very often found himself brooding over some of Simpson's remarks. He fought against this, as he was coming instinctively to fight against anything that impugned the righteousness of war. He had need to cling to belief in its righteousness, for day by day he was seeing enough of the horrors of it. The training camp was not stationed so far in the rear but that it got the full effect of the débris thrown back by the shock of battle.

Whatever its effect on the other men, the first sight of that débris had the effect of heartening Starr for the conflict. It was a casualty camp, and after he had once located it he visited it almost daily. It furnished the stimulus he needed. Doubts might come to him

elsewhere; but they were swept away by that ghastly array of dead and wounded comrades, men clipped neatly by steel bullets, or shattered by shrapnel, or punctured variously by machine guns, or crushed and torn into indescribable shapes by unimaginable accidents. They—the vague They that was the enemy—had done this thing. It was a primeval passion that beat in his brain at those moments, the red lust for revenge. It filled him with eagerness to complete his training, fired him with a desire so fierce that he found himself standing off, as it were, at a distance, and marveling at it.

But one day, returning, he had a counteracting experience; he met a captured regiment.

He stood to one side and watched the men whom he was schooling himself to hate file by. They were dejected, as became prisoners; they walked for the most part with shuffling steps and downcast eyes; and now and then there was a lowering and hate-filled countenance among them. As frequently, however, there was a head held high, and eyes filled with frank and not unfriendly interest. Many of them limped painfully, fully a third wore some kind of bandage. Hundreds of them were mere boys, younger than Starr himself.

The thing that burned itself upon Starr's brain, however, was the fact—which he would have known already had he permitted himself to think about it—that were these men garbed in his uniform, he would be hard put to it to distinguish them from a regiment of his own comrades. They were slightly squat, according to his standards, their skins and hair and eyes varied in some little degree, but it was the uniform that made them aliens.

He wanted to follow them to their camp, wherever that might be, to get acquainted with them. He could not do it that night; but the desire, a certain haunting curiosity, stuck. Two days later he found the way. A detail of five men from Starr's company was required for guard duty over the prisoners. Starr volunteered, and his

name went on the list. It was, of course, but a temporary detail; in case his regiment moved he would return to it.

III.

It is an old adage among fighting men that a soldier is never a soldier until he has looked on his own dead. Starr had proven the truth of that saying when he had instinctively sought out the horror spots of his own army in an effort to renew his failing enthusiasm, but now he went a step beyond. As a trimly clad, bayoneted, and belted sentry, he walked up and down between the low rows of tents that had been devoted to the care of those prisoners who were too seriously wounded to be transported—which meant, in half the cases, too seriously wounded to live—and, in his hours off guard, sat by their sides and held their hands and looked into their eyes.

Starr learned to know these men very well, and the better he knew them the more a certain unlawful question pounded at the base of his brain.

One man, whose legs had been shot off at the knee, Starr came to love. He was much older than Starr, and had rugged, wrinkled features, and good eyes. It was his eyes that had drawn Starr in the first place; there was a look in them that Starr could not analyze.

As was inevitable, a mongrel sort of vocabulary soon sprang up. Starr would place his hand on certain articles and name them in English, and the wounded man would respond in his own tongue, and thereafter each made a point, if he could remember, of using the other's word. Again, the meaning of some words seemed to be learned by a process resembling divination. It seemed marvelous to Starr, the understanding that they came to have of one another.

By the light of that understanding, however, Starr knew that it was in no wise perfect. There was always a reservation, a conscious holding back, and yet Starr often had a feeling that the man was debating the confidence. Him-

self, he did not know whether he wanted to hear or not.

But one day something unusual seemed to be in the air, something that made them cling to one another mentally. It may have been the premonition that they would never see each other again. As the time approached for Starr to go, the prisoner showed signs of unrest. He stirred on his cot, hunching his body toward Starr's. Then he said something in his own tongue that sounded like an appeal and ended in a groan, reached under his mattress with his left hand, drew out a photograph, and handed it to Starr.

Starr looked at it. It was a very beautiful face, very fresh and young. Starr also had his photograph. None of his comrades had seen it; but it did not seem strange that he should produce it and hand it to his friend, the enemy.

"Girl," said Starr, looking into the other's eyes. "Sweetheart."

The prisoner expressed understanding with a nod, then looked at his own photograph and shook his head. Then he pronounced a word that was unfamiliar to Starr; but the meaning of which Starr got, without knowing how.

"Wife!" half whispered Starr. "Wife!"

The forever maimed man nodded, understanding Starr as Starr had understood him. It was pure tragedy, the expression on the prisoner's face. Starr wrung his hand when they parted that day, but an hour later had determined not to visit him again. He told himself that he must preserve his sense of proportion.

The course of events, however, made the decision unnecessary. The next morning Starr was recalled to his regiment. He found it pulsing with excitement. It was to move to the front, to engage in battle. The enemy had developed unexpected strength; they had assumed the offensive, they were attempting a flanking movement, there were a hundred explanations. Really it was the morning of September 2d, the day previous to the beginning of

the general assault known as the Battle of the Rincon.

They lay in readiness all day and night. During that time the firing to the front, which had never entirely ceased during the three weeks that Starr had been in camp, steadily increased until, even at that distance, it became thunderous. Other troops left; some of the men began to chafe at the delay; Starr thought that others grew secretly more hopeful. But early in the morning the orders came. They were to travel in light marching order. A cheer went up as the word was passed, a cheer that sounded just the least bit forced. Every one knew that that sort of equipment meant action.

Followed eight hours' hard hiking, the last twenty miles of which was through zigzag trenches which approached the enemy's works by alternate parallels and diagonals, so that at no point could they be enfiladed. These trenches were at all points deep enough so that the men's heads were beneath the surface; at exposed points they were roofed with timber; they were sufficiently wide that the regiment could usually march in column of squads. This width, Starr realized, was to make possible the passage of artillery.

The men marched in a manner that was new to them, a sort of slovenly tenseness. They made no attempt to keep in step, nor did they attend to the position of their pieces. They seemed to feel a certain joy at being able to defy the regulations concerning these things. Added to that, there was an electric something in the atmosphere which defied analysis. It probably ran the gamut of the human emotions: Starr discovered in it an uncertain sort of exultation, excited expectancy, doubt, anxiety, even a reluctantly admitted fear. But there was a great deal else. The men knew it probable that a third of them were going to their death.

As they neared the front the rumble of the cannonade changed to a harsh and rending detonation. This increase of sound was so tremendous that Starr

concluded that it could not be caused entirely by the lessening distance. The tumult disturbed his soul; he found he could not think clearly; his emotions were roused and at the same time dwarfed. Now and then he heard the rush of a projectile in the air over his head. These became more frequent as they advanced. Word came from the rear that one had ricocheted into the trench and burst, annihilating a squad. Starr wondered that the news did not give him more horror.

They passed many side trenches opening off from the one in which they were traveling; and toward the last these began to be filled with soldiers, sections of field artillery, ponderous siege guns, vicious-looking rapid-fiers, and finally great columns of infantry.

Now the noise of the battle became an inferno. Half these guns were in action. They popped and rattled and roared, according to their caliber; they whipped the very atmosphere into a mad unrest, so that it responded with loud wails, infernal screeches. Starr, in obedience to orders, shoved cotton into his ears. This partly deadened the sound, but it gave it an unnatural quality, as though it were coming from some region other than earth.

A little later, and they had come well within range of the enemy's guns. The swishing sound of projectiles was almost continuous. It furnished an accompaniment to the crashing of the guns not unlike that of escaping steam in a factory. Starr found himself stooping as he walked. He realized the foolishness of this, since the projecting walls were far above his head; but then a terrible thought came to him. Some time, somewhere, he would be called upon to leave this shelter, to conquer fresh ground. Could a man live a minute in that metal storm? His reason told him that they must, or they never would have advanced so far; but to his senses it seemed impossible.

The air was filled with a white powder reek that neutralized the light, and in the trenches they could not mark the decline of the sun; but a gradual

thickening of the darkness told them that it was twilight. Starr found himself welcoming the dark, as though it were a shelter. Also there were other reasons; at intervals in the tent they encountered bloodstains, and now and then the body of a soldier, freshly killed. These sights drove a chill to Starr's heart. He counterfeited bravado; but he wished with all his soul that he could look upon such things as his comrades seemed to.

All day, because it was forced upon him, he had been wrestling with a problem. He realized now that that problem had been in the background of his mind ever since he had enlisted, that he had deliberately kept it there because he had not dared face it. It was this: Could he force himself, if it came to the pinch, to take the life of a single one of the enemy? That he could lie and volley at long range he had no doubt—that would be mass conflict—but the other— He conjured up all manner of situations, but his imagination always balked at the ultimate moment.

There was something in him, he told himself, different from the rest, some inborn scruple against bloodshed. It tortured him, because he saw he had really surrendered his free will. Where his regiment went he would have to go, what his regiment did he would have to do. He would be compelled to, whether he would or not—but could he? Also he was troubled by the thought of his own inconsistency. He saw clearly that whether his bullet found another man's breast by accident at a thousand yards or by intent at a hundred meant little to the other man; but he could not help the way he felt about it.

His mind racked itself, trying to settle the matter one way or the other. Outwardly, however, he was more calm than the majority of his comrades.

They reached the forward trench, built at right angles to their course, parallel with the enemy's lines. This was wider and deeper than the one through which they had passed, and was

filled at the point at which they turned into it with batteries of Maxims and rapid-firers. These kept up a tremendous clattering, distinct from the more distant roar of the larger guns. The gun crews loomed up hugely in the lurid light that came from the muzzles.

Once the column passed a place where a shell had but a minute before exploded, tearing through the outer wall of the trench. Men were busy repairing it, but Starr was able to shoot a glance through the opening. What he saw appalled him.

In the darkness, it seemed that the enemy was almost immediately in front of the trench. The parallel lines of cordite flashes that half encircled the hill appeared so close that Starr mistook them for lines of rifle fire. The searchlights, sweeping back and forth across the dark space that separated the two forces, dwarfed it, as a Titan's stride would dwarf a river. Of a sudden, Starr's conception of the enemy became that of an immediately proximate danger. It was as though a dreamed-of giant were to be suddenly revealed close by, with an uplifted club. For a while, the current of Starr's thought was changed. What if *he* were to die?

They passed on. Now they were among great masses of infantry that crowded the trenches and sometimes interferred with the work of the gun crews, who cursed them nervously. The infantry, for the most part, were lying down. Some were smoking; here and there a group sang; a low hum of voices, curiously persistent through the tumult, came from among them. They had left a space clear for the passage of Starr's regiment. Apparently other regiments had passed, immediately ahead of it. Apparently, also, the whole body was waiting, under some strain—for what? Starr's reason told him that the formation could be but for one purpose. Under cover of the batteries, the infantry was to attempt a frontal attack.

Starr discovered by the remarks passed among his comrades that they had come to the same conclusion. He

was amazed at their coolness. The general tone was a large and impersonal one, though some were boisterously enthusiastic. "We'll give them the steel, boys, we'll give them the steel," one man kept saying. Obviously, the words were not his own, nor did he sense their meaning; but Starr, with a livelier imagination, did, and they sent a qualm through him. He found himself hating the man.

Simpson, at Starr's side, exuded statistics. He cited the number of pounds of steel that were expended in a modern battle in killing one man, instancing by way of explanation the apparently useless bombardment that was then in progress. He figured the cost of this steel and the cost of the powder used to propel it, and spoke, in a very matter-of-fact way, of the saving that could be effected by the use of various poisons. Then he estimated the earning power of the men engaged in the war, and the life value in dollars and cents of the men already killed or disabled, and contrasted the diminished productive capacity of the nation with its enormously increased indebtedness. Starr listened to all of this somewhat gratefully. It had a tendency to belittle by contrast his own personal problem, and so to justify him in his decision to forget it and let the future itself decide.

When they reached a place in the trench that was vacant of infantry, they were halted. It did not need an order to make them take a prone position. Their fatigue alone would have forced them down, but a stronger urge than that was the rushing shriek of the displaced air as the shells hurtled through it over their heads.

They lay there for perhaps half an hour. During the wait, the conversation seemed to grow more forced. Toward the last there were long silences, awkward affairs. When some one did speak, the words had an insincere ring.

Certain memories came to Starr: The episode of the toad and of the old alien and his laughter. His friend of the casualty camp with the amputated

legs and the wistful eyes. Other sights and sounds in the sick quarters, and the shattered fragment of a man over which he had carelessly stumbled on his way to the front. The bits of young flesh in a robin's nest at home, over which he had built a shelter that it might not be destroyed by hail or falling fruit. A certain sweet-smelling lane down which the cows came at night, the cottage, Flora, a kiss, his mother—

Those were the real things to him, those old things. Now he seemed to be living in a nightmare. The reverberations of the guns, the quiverings of the earth, the flaming rockets that were beginning to dart across the sky in great curves, maliciously searching the secrets of their position, even his comrades, pressing close upon each other as though to counterfeit safety, all these things seemed but part of it. He himself seemed part of it, merged in it, controlled by it. He wondered vaguely how many of the others were living in the same pale mist.

The captain came in front of the company and began to talk. Starr was on the extreme right; he heard only a few disjointed words. "Skirmish line . . . advance . . . cover . . . know you will . . . stop unless . . ." Half a dozen of the men raised a cheer; Starr felt a sudden unreasonable irritation.

All at once he found himself in front of the trench, on his hands and knees, rifle slung over his shoulder, creeping forward.

IV.

For the moment, Starr's one feeling was of self-admiration. Ahead the entire mountain was ringed with flame, the night was frightful with sound, projectiles snarled, shrieked, rent the air, but he had left his shelter and was advancing in the face of it all. He was still in this mood when he suddenly found himself alone, or apparently so. The figures that had been creeping on either side of him were no longer there. He stopped short, with an impulse to retreat on the trenches, when some one

slapped him from behind with a sword. "No skulking," his discoverer snarled. "Get into line!" He obeyed, savagely resentful, but ashamed.

Now Starr got his first actual experience with death. A shell came and flicked off the head of the man immediately on his right. Starr got the wind of the shell, and the body was hurled against him, knocking him down. He wondered if it were Simpson; Simpson had been on his right, but whether the first man or the second he could not remember—and he did not try to find out. It did not seem to be important.

A moment later he stumbled into a deep furrow plowed by a projectile. He followed it as far as he could, grateful for the partial shelter. The thought came to him that if he dropped down and lay in the furrow until the column passed on, his chance of escape would be even smaller than it was, since he could not hope to lie there long untouched, and it would be impossible to return directly to his own lines. That was the thought; he would not admit to himself that he had been tempted to do the thing.

Starr went on with the rest. How he was being controlled he did not know; but he was being controlled. A certain noncommissioned officer marched at the left of the squad; Starr supposed that the rest of the men guided on him. Now and then a low whistle sounded; that must have been from the captain. The men themselves were forbidden to speak.

Starr glanced over his shoulder. It frightened him to see how far they had come. The flashes of their own supporting guns and of the answering guns of the enemy seemed almost equally distant. Of a sudden his own littleness came to him; he was a gnat caught in the midst of a seething sea of flame. He had to turn his head, close his eyes for a moment, and get the shoulder touch of the man on his left in order to restore his sanity.

When he opened his eyes again he saw that a frightful thing was about to happen.

One of the searchlights had flashed to a point about three hundred yards in advance, and there stopped. Now, at about the same pace at which they were creeping toward it, it was creeping toward them. Every rock, every crevice, every mangled remains of a bush, flared into sudden vividness under that inexorable pencil of light. Still it came on, tentatively feeling its way, pausing here, darting there, never resting, never hurrying, searching, searching.

Starr felt himself shrinking in anticipation of the moment when that light would touch him, and that death spirit, whose eye it was, would strike. He knew the two things would happen simultaneously. He felt his limbs give under him; he had an impulse to burrow into the earth. But his feet touched only hard rock.

In the agony of his suspense he found himself repeating the name of his Maker over and over again.

A command came down the line, passed from corporal to corporal. The next instant Starr could not remember the words; but he had got their purport. When the light found them, they were to charge.

Charge at what? Until that moment Starr had not realized how absolutely nothing he knew of this affair in which he was risking his life. Was it a grand attack, or merely a demonstration, or something between the two; had they a chance of success, or were they being sacrificed for an advantage elsewhere? Now he wanted to know these things desperately. Especially he wanted to know the size of the unit of which he was a part, whether it were a regiment or a battalion or a division or what. He felt there was safety in numbers.

Suddenly the searchlight darted forward, directly upon them.

There was a moment during which he was blinded, quite as much by terror as by the light; and then he saw his way quite distinctly. There was no shelter, the light revealed that; the order had been to charge, and he obeyed. Up the slope he ran, at a pace that

was almost a sprint. Automatically, he unslung his rifle and fixed his bayonet. Glancing to right and left, he saw other men parallel with him, some ahead of him. Emulation seized him, and he increased his pace—and then the storm struck him.

It was heralded by a scream, almost humanlike, as a shell ricocheted from the rocks in front of them over their heads. There was a pattering as of flung hail, the venomous humming of whirling bullets, the hissing rush of straight-driven ones, *following* this, the crashing outburst of sound from in front; and then Starr was lifted from his feet and tossed back to one side by some irresistible and yet impalpable force, as though—which was actually what had happened—the air on one side of him had suddenly been compressed to thrice its normal density, and he had been caught at the instant of its expansion.

Some one was struggling under him. Starr was concerned lest he had hurt the other in falling upon him. He got to his feet, pulling the man up with him. He saw that it was Simpson.

Simpson was dripping a warm fluid from head to foot. His mouth was shaped to a grin, but his eyes were furious. He yelled something, but Starr could not make out the words. He started to run again, and Starr kept by his side.

The searchlight kept pace with them. Dozens of others had flashed into life, and were playing on either side of them. Now the held rifle was released; the whirring of bullets was as a plague of locusts. Starr realized that the line had grown very thin. He tried to believe that most of the missing ones had merely been outpaced.

He caught himself asking a question aloud, and that instant found he did not know what the question had been. He forced his lips to repeat it. It was just one word. "Why?"

Things happened which he never could remember. . . . Presently he found himself with his hand grenade in his hand. He poised it, hurled it, and, after he had hurled it, realized that he

was immediately before the enemy's parapet, that the guns hurling death out of the embrasures were the enemy's, and that it was to storm that raging hell that he had come so far.

A form brushed past him, snarling an imprecation. Starr got the flash of red, and then he leaped with Simpson for the top of the parapet, thrusting his arm through his rifle sling as he extended it. His finger ends caught in the side of a gabion, and he scrambled up with mad muscular convulsions. A bullet clipped a bit of flesh from his shoulder, but he did not know it till afterward. He dropped to his feet inside the parapet, felt the muzzle of a gun against his chest, shoved it aside just as it was discharged, and thrust out with his own bayoneted rifle. He felt the bayonet bury itself, and then he fired five times, as fast as he could pull the trigger, into the impaled body.

After that, things became very confused. Later, he was able to recall enough to make him glad that he could recall no more. It seemed that he had discarded his rifle, it not being a satisfying weapon. He remembered telling himself that civilization was only a veneer that had sloughed off, that men were back to the law of tooth and fang. Certainly the same red passion that had possessed him had possessed the others, a passion which regarded nothing but the use of its moment of license.

Starr was rather sorry when the fighting was over. For a while he hoped that the enemy would make an attempt to recapture the hill, but that stage did not last long. The full reaction, however, did not come until the sun rose.

V.

Starr the boy, clear-eyed and smiling, born with a very great love and tenderness for all living things in his heart, and reared in an environment that had the knowledge and the love of life, from man down to the green things of the fields, as its atmosphere; Starr the youth, still with this gentleness in his breast, but forced, partly by the blind reachings out of his developing strength,

partly by the awakening of the not ignoble sentiment of patriotism, into a current of life the most alien, and carried by the rush of it through a red riot of madness; and now Starr the man, writhing in the hang-over hell of a sated and soul-destroying passion, squirming in the agony of self-loathing, seeing, with the torturing clarity of vision that is one of the penalties of excess, how near to the ape he had fallen.

Now he wished that he might indeed sink himself in the mass. Were he able to do this, he thought, how small a portion of his present misery he would retain! Through the loopholes of the parapet he was able to view the whole panorama of battle. It was greater even than he had imagined, the death grapple of two world-shaking monsters, myriad-headed, with every head spitting venom, clinging with half a million tentacles to the torn and troubled earth, and straining against each other with tremendous and life-consuming convulsions. Constantly destroyed, he saw that each was being as constantly restored, not by any renewal of energy from within, but by accessions from without, great streams of life flowing down to it from the fount which had spawned it and sent it forth. He changed the metaphor, and saw each army as a vast drainage system, through which the blood was being withdrawn from the arteries of the nation and distributed as fertilizer upon the soil.

During the night the American army had forced the other back boldly, the occupation of Haystack, upon the parapet of which Starr had been one of the first to mount, having rendered untenable the entire Rincon Range. But the San Ynez Range, paralleling the Rincon, and separated from it by a valley about five miles across, still held out. The enemy had also held Peacock Hill, which was a solitary peak rising out of the valley bottom close to Haystack, its crest almost on a level with, and about a thousand yards east of, Haystack. Peacock Hill dominated the valley as Haystack dominated the range; it was evident that the Ameri-

cans must assault and capture it before they could hope to reach the enemy.

All this Starr could see. More he knew from hearsay; that the American commander, not content with having driven his opponent back, had thrown a force around each of his flanks, occupying the hills to the sea. Thus the enemy was completely encircled, on one side by the ocean, on the other by guns. But he was by no means beaten. He retained foothold and harbor control, and the transports were bringing him men much more rapidly than the Americans were able to destroy them. Since he was an invader, to merely exist was in itself a sort of triumph, and to the last there would remain the chance of a sudden concentration of attack on a single mile of the American line, a breaking through, and a swift dash inland and northward.

But to Starr, viewing these things from the lurid depths of his own personal hell, there came neither exultation at the victory nor thought of the possibility of a reverse. Interest had been burned out of him; all he could see were the bodies lying in heaps like cordwood; all he could feel was a horrible curiosity to know how many of these dead men he was responsible for. One, he knew, if no more. But which one? He wanted to look on the face, to try to read in its lines some justification of the killing, some reason that the man might well be dead. And each time he touched a dying man—he had been detailed to help the hospital corps—he felt a morbid fear of accusation, as a murderer who is compelled to attend the last moments of his victim.

He moved like an automaton; he had little mind left for anything but his own thoughts. Still he could not but observe that most of the other men were living in the same depression. A terrible atmosphere of revulsion hung over the place, as though the shambles steam were still clinging to it.

Firing had recommenced; indeed, it had never altogether stopped. All along the line the enemy was shelling the same works which a few hours before he had occupied. Heavy guns were be-

ing brought rapidly into play by the Americans; most of those within range were turned on Peacock Hill. A brisk infantry duel began between Peacock Hill and Haystack.

Starr remembered vaguely that the men who still remained active had been divided into firing details and assigned to reliefs, and that he was on the third relief. He saw men lying in the trench behind the parapet, rifle thrust through a loophole, butt against shoulder, eyes along the barrel, finger on the trigger, pumping lead across the space in the hopes that now and then a bullet would find its way home to a human target. He saw officers walking behind those men, regulating the sights, watching the elevation of the pieces, now and then risking their lives in an attempt to observe the effect of the fire through their field glasses. In a few hours he would be at one of those loopholes. What then?

He considered the problem until a dull pain began to creep across his forehead, just above the eyebrows. The answer came to him during his conversation with Simpson.

The commissary had followed the fighters into the captured fortifications, and hot coffee was being served. Starr was squatted beside an abandoned and breech-broken eleven-inch gun, drinking his, when Simpson, still as blood-drenched as Mars, started to pass in front of him. It was the first time he had seen Simpson since the fight. He spoke. Then he was sorry for it; he found he really did not want to talk with Simpson. A certain fresh memory of the night before came up, and he shuddered.

"Hello, Eddie," said Simpson. "Still kicking, I see. Good!"

"Yes," said Starr. "You, too."

Starr saw that Simpson was also embarrassed. They had shaken hands, and Simpson was passing on, when an unwonted irritability seized Starr. Of a sudden he wanted to hurt this man who had talked so glibly of the folly of war, and had then set such an example of ferocity. He felt that Simpson had in some way been to blame for

his own deeds. "I see you doing good work last night, Simpson," he said.

Simpson scowled. "Let up on that," he ordered sharply.

"Well, didn't you?" persisted Starr.

"How about yourself?" asked Simpson.

It was a strange thing, the two soldiers twitting each other with what should, according to common thought, have been a glorious memory. Starr suddenly wilted. "Can't you get water to wash yourself with?" he asked, pointing at Simpson's clothes with a frank expression of disgust.

"No," said Simpson, with a corresponding change of tone. "It's hell, ain't it?" He looked at himself ruefully.

There was a full minute of silence. Then, quite unexpectedly, Starr found himself talking.

He did not rant nor rave nor babble; he simply talked out his heart. His words were more terrible for being so dispassionate; they were a vitriolic indictment uttered in the manner of one whose judgment is fixed beyond all change. They made Simpson's flippant carpings against war sound like leaves from the book of a jester. And the statement with which he ended was so evidently not a statement of a resolution, which might be changed, but of a fact, of a thing immutable and inevitable, that it brought Simpson up staring, with a frightened look in his eyes. At bottom, for all their differences, he was very fond of Starr.

"But you've got to," Simpson remonstrated. "There's no way out; they'd have you shot."

"I know that," said Starr. "I can't help it."

"Then why— It's no worse for you— Don't you see that I—that all of us—do you think that any of us *like* it?"

"I don't know about that," said Starr. "All I know is that I can't do it."

"You infernal fool—" began Simpson.

But, of course, it was not a matter

of logic. Primarily, it was hardly even a matter of right and wrong. Starr himself could hardly have given the whys and wherefores of it. All he knew was that of a sudden he had become incapable of performing the function of a soldier, which was to kill. It was the work of the reaction, the swing of the pendulum of emotion. Nothing else was plain; he could not see any method of evasion; nor could be foresee consequences; but that one fact was perfectly clear.

Simpson left him presently; Starr could see that his attitude was one of separation. He was a little shamefaced, but it was plain by his manner that he regarded Starr as one with whom it would be no longer safe to be friendly. Still Starr knew that Simpson would hold fast to the soldier's code, that his secret would be safe with him, and he was not sorry he had told him. He had to tell some one.

Now he wanted to be alone. He had to figure a way. His body was so exhausted that it was an encumbrance, and when he stood upright he got dizzy, but he could not rest until he had settled on his course.

At first glance, one is apt to call the solution which finally came to him a compromise, but really it was not. Because there was a certain thing which he probably would not do to save his life was no evidence that his life had suddenly become worthless to him, or that the instinct of self-preservation was dead. If he were to openly rebel, he would be crushed; he knew that. To desert was a physical impossibility. He was a part of the machine, and he must do his part, or seem to. But how could he make it merely a seeming?

It was less than an hour to the time when he would be called to the loophole that a certain memory of target practice came to him, and showed him the way

For a week, a week of the hottest kind of rifle fighting, Starr took his turn in the trenches, did his share of firing, and seemingly conducted himself in every way as did his comrades. He

was always in peril, and had several narrow escapes from death. Once a bullet went through his scalp, another entered the bore of his rifle and exploded it. His coolness at those times was a matter of remark, as was also his willingness to expose himself to danger. He found himself gaining a small reputation for bravery; but also—and this puzzled him—he found himself moving in an increasing atmosphere of distrust.

But had he been able to have stood to one side and observed himself during that week, he would hardly have wondered at it. His secret affected his whole demeanor. Naturally frank, the fact that he was living a lie was continually on his mind. He brooded a great deal; the least observant of his intimates knew that there was some hidden place in his mind from which he was consciously shutting them out. Also there was a growing impatience and antagonism in him that was not to be concealed. Many times each day he wanted to shout out aloud the thing he was doing, to call upon his comrades to do the same, or, better, to rebel openly, and so to put an end forever to the horrible game in which they were being played as pawns. Had this stage lasted long enough, he would probably some day have done this. He was very rapidly developing the mania of one idea. It was only a matter of time when that mania would flame high enough to burn through his mask of silence.

It so happened, however, that he was spared self-betrayal by an accident.

One night, in the confusion of answering the call to man the parapets, Sergeant Branch, who was in charge of the firing squad to which Starr belonged, got hold of the wrong ammunition belt. He discovered the exchange shortly after he had mounted guard, and discovered something else, too, something that set his forehead wrinkling in an effort to remember who it was that had slept next him, and to his right. At last he placed his man.

Branch liked Starr, but he was a soldier. There was only one thing for him

to do. He reëxchanged belts with Starr, and took his story to the captain.

For two days thereafter, Starr was under constant surveillance. On the second night the watcher, a corporal, saw him at his work.

Starr had procured fresh ammunition that day, fifty rounds. The corporal knew that it was all in the left-hand pockets of his belt. It did not surprise him any to see Starr, directly after he lay down, work his hand around his belt, draw it to his side, and extract one of the new cartridges. He seized the brass body of it in his left hand, gripped the sharp-pointed steel projectile in his right, and strained at it. Then he replaced it in his belt pocket and withdrew another. The corporal watched him repeat this performance ten times, and then withdrew, satisfied that he was deliberately ruining his ammunition. With the bullet loosed in its socket, it would be strange if it carried one hundred yards.

Among soldiers, and especially in war time, there are more contagions to be guarded against than are known by the medical officer. Also, in the unprecedented, there is always a terrible element of uncertainty, and Starr had the misfortune to have done an unprecedented thing. No manner of reasoning declared it advisable that his act be punished by an open trial and court-martial. The colonel made that plain to the captain.

"We can't let him go on, though," objected the captain.

"No," agreed the colonel. "There ought to be a way. He's your man. Something might come up, you know."

The two were in a bullet-proof. Their ears were filled with the roar of cannon, the very ground quivered under their feet with the violence of the detonations, the deadly whistling of projectiles came down to them through the earth roof. Men were dying at the rate of about five hundred a day.

"I understand," said the captain.

"To-morrow there will be a general attack on Peacock Hill. Our part is merely to maintain the bombardment, but if it is carried, which it will be,

there should be need for some scouting. However, some ventures will probably suggest themselves that are impossible."

"Very true. And now about those gabions—"

Starr, of course, knew nothing of this conversation, nor of the fact that his trick had been discovered. When, on the evening of the second day following the capture of Peacock, he was called before the captain and given certain secret instructions, he had no idea that those instructions were virtually a sentence of death.

VI.

Starr's instructions, in brief, were these: To descend the slope of Haystack, skirt around Peacock Hill to the left, cross the valley, work as close as possible to the extreme right of the enemy's position, secure what information he could, and then return.

To do him justice, it must be said that until the last moment, the moment in which he was compelled to choose between his life, and, as he thought, the success of the army of which he was an atom, on the one hand, and his scruples against killing on the other, he had not decided whether he would carry those instructions out or fluke them. It was a nice point to decide. Hitherto he had not hesitated to assist in purely defensive work, the digging of trenches, the building of gabion shelters. This was a similar matter; it need not involve any actual killing by his own hand; in the long run, if he were able to secure any really valuable information, it might be a means of saving life by cutting short the struggle. These were his thoughts when he received the orders; they were still his thoughts when he slipped over the outer wall of the parapets and started down the eastern slope of Haystack.

He felt a loneliness that was not altogether the result of his physical isolation. That was complete enough; but the thing that oppressed him was the realization that his revolt of the past week had cut him off in sympa-

thies from all those thousands at his back that he might have called comrades. Ahead, of course, all was openly hostile. He was alone, lost in a giant circle of hate. It was just as well for his reason that he did not realize how actual that loneliness was, that instead of being sent out he had been cast out; that, although his instructions were to return, good care had been taken to make his return impossible.

Twice during the first two hundred yards shells fell so close to him that he was staggered by their explosions. After that, however, he found himself below the fire zone. Screening himself behind bushes and jutting rocks, working always for a background that would neutralize the color of his uniform, he scrambled down, tending a little to the north, so as to hit the deep part of the ravine that ran through the bottom of the valley.

He had heard that others had been sent out on the same and similar missions; but, of course, he saw nothing of them. He saw nothing of any living thing. Were it not for the thunder in his ears, for the hissing sound of the venom-laden projectiles overhead, for the fact that everywhere he looked the hills belched forth flame and smoke, he might have imagined himself in a world that had been altogether devastated of life. As it was, the forces seemed the more tremendous for their invisibility. Caught in the flux of them, he seemed as helpless as a mote of dust in a typhoon.

Something of his littleness came to him; but mostly his mind occupied itself with the old puzzles. Why was it that every force of which his senses gave him cognizance was a force of hate? To put it more definitely, why, in the name of Heaven, were those two bodies of men bent on destroying each other? Individually or collectively, what quarrel did they have with one another? (To save his life, he could neither imagine nor recall an adequate one at the present moment.) And finally, what of himself? Was he justified in aiding either party to this vast conspiracy to murder, even to the ex-

tent of his present mission? What would he do in this case, or that? For instance, if it were a matter of self-preservation, would he use the good bullets that were in one side of his belt? Or would he have courage enough, at the last, to die? He could not quite decide that point. Still he could at no time imagine himself killing another man in cold blood, no matter what the seeming necessity.

He reached the bottom of the valley in safety. He turned to the north, and followed the ravine for about five miles. Here, about the only danger was that he should encounter an opposing scout. The bombardment of big guns was still in progress—it never ceased—but only a projectile with very foul powder behind it would fall so far short.

At last, reaching the point that had been indicated in his instructions, he left the ravine and started skulking up the eastern slope of the valley.

As he advanced, nearing the zone of the enemy's fire, Starr became increasingly conscious of that atmosphere of hate in which he had seemed to be moving ever since he had left the parapets of Haystack. It was as though something were waiting to pounce on him at all points of the compass, as though each individual in the world forces around him knew of his antagonism, and returned that antagonism unstintingly.

As this feeling increased, so did Starr's sense of helplessness. For weeks he had been drawing mentally away from his comrades; now he felt a great longing for companionship. He had defied the law of the mass; now he felt all the atom's lack of completeness. In that mood, he came near to deciding to complete his mission to the extent of his ability. If he did not, he saw where he would stand, alone, infinitely weak, among forces infinitely powerful. He shrank at the prospect; he grew physically weak in regarding it.

Now he was very near the point to which he had been told to go, the peak of a conical hill, on the extreme right of the enemy's position, and about a

mile in front of it. Certainly, if he attained that position, and if he escaped alive with the information which he was able to procure, he would have valuable communications to make. That is, if he chose to make them. Again he doubted.

Starr was by now creeping on hands and knees; sometimes, where the shelter was poor, crawling, dragging himself along with his hands, shoving with his feet. The detonations from in front were becoming rapidly louder and more continuous, while the reply from the American batteries seemed to be lessening; but that might have been because of the changing distances. Rather unexpectedly, Starr came to his goal, the extreme summit of the hill.

He caught one glance over the crest, a confused vision of broken and precipitous hillside, a narrow valley, dense bodies of moving men, eddies and jets of yellowish smoke, turbulence, noise made visible, and then there was a very much nearer and more deadly crack, like that of a whiplash, and a bullet ripped its way past his head.

Starr sprang for a clump of shrubbery. As he reached it, he caught a glimpse of the rifleman. He was perched in the crotch of an oak tree, leaning out from behind a great limb.

Starr dived into the base of the brush, as he might have done into a swimming tank, squirmed around, and crouched in the middle of it, with his rifle thrown out before him. He saw instantly that, though the shrubbery was not over six yards across, it was dense enough to conceal him. At the same time, he, himself, was able to see out. He shifted his position a little, and, through a tiny opening in the foliage, caught a glimpse of his enemy.

That glance showed Starr that, if it were a duel, the advantage was all with him. The sharpshooter was still in the tree, but only partially hidden; the branch behind which he was crouching was not large enough to hide him completely. Starr could pick him off with one shot; but he was likely to need many to find Starr.

The sharpshooter could not help but

have realized this. Also he had no reason to look for mercy. His only hope seemed to be to get Starr before Starr got him, and by a chance shot. He aimed his rifle at the clump of bushes and began to pump lead into it as fast as he could work the bolt and pull the trigger.

Starr's own rifle was at his shoulder in an instant, and he was looking through the sights upon the button that secured the right-breast pocket of the other's shirt. He remembered that the cartridges in his magazine were good ones, that they had not been tampered with. He felt his hat jerk backward, and knew that a bullet had cut through the crown of it. His finger tightened on the trigger.

He would have fired; but the sharpshooter's body suddenly jerked to one side, and his rifle went silent. Starr shifted his aim, and then realized that for the moment the danger was over. The other had exhausted the shells in his magazine, and was reloading it.

That was the moment for Starr to save his life. He knew it; again his piece steadied into aim, and the instant he realized that the other was at his mercy, he found his fear-inspired resolution gone from him. He hesitated. Should he, or should he not, fire?

Starr was undoubtedly not normal at that moment. Given the same problem two weeks before, and it would not have been a problem at all; he would have obeyed the law of self-preservation. But brooding warps the mind, and constant negation of a physical act can have but one result, to finally render that act impossible. Starr found his mind palsied of decision. His rifle wavered, and his eyes traveled past the sights. He groaned in the agony of his mental wrestling.

Then he started, leaning incautiously forward. His eyes took on a fascinated look. He was seeing something that made his lonely duel on the hilltop seem too petty for words. Under his eyes was developing the vast flanking movement of the enemy that brought on the battle of September 10th.

He got it all in one glance, the volume of the movement, and the grim portent of it. Screened from view of the Americans on the west of the range of hills on the summit of which Starr was lying, on the north by the curve of the Rincon Range, the enemy was massing almost his entire strength on the right flank, preparatory to hurling it against the extreme American left.

Now Starr's mind, carried out of his own personal concerns, was working like lightning. In a flash it covered all the grounds, reviewed the past, dived into the future, and saw the immensity of the responsibility that had come to him.

He had heard the probability of this move discussed many times. He had read the opinions of military experts concerning its outcome; they had been almost unanimous in prophesying its success. The Americans, by the nature of the ground, had been compelled to extend their line over such a vast distance that such an attack by the enemy upon any one portion of it would seem sure to succeed. Then it would be a stern chase across country, with the invaders in the lead, spreading ruin over the richest section of the Atlantic seaboard.

That is, if the Americans remained unwarned. If they became aware of the attack in time, they also could concentrate their forces, repel it, and probably turn the threatened disaster into a great gain.

So now Starr's life, which had been balanced against the inhibition of his capacity to kill, hung pitifully small in the scales. Upon it had been thrown the outcome of the whole campaign, the lives and property of thousands of noncombatants, possibly the fate of the nation. By chance, or by design, he had been sent to the only point from which the beginnings of this movement could be observed; he was the only man that had the knowledge, the only man that could give the warning, and he could escape to carry it only by killing the man who was trying to kill him.

The thought sent a great thrill through Starr. He saw the realization

of his dream, that dream which he had dismissed so regretfully. The resistless uplift of conscious power came to him; he saw himself on the top of the world, on the pinnacle of achievement. He saw himself saving an army; and with that vision came such a surge of the passion that is called patriotism as he had never felt before. The scales were overbalanced; doubt was swept from his mind. As the sharpshooter's rifle swung down again to its uncertain aim on Starr's shelter, Starr's rifle steadied on the sharpshooter's chest.

So much hangs on coincidence! At the moment, when Starr had glanced down into the valley for the second time, and sensed the meaning of the moving troops, an American gunner, with his elevation newly changed, had jerked the firing string of his mortar. Now there was a rushing whir, the crashing of tree branches, a soft thud, and the decapitated body of the sharpshooter lay quivering under the tree.

Starr shrank back, his exaltation subsiding before his innate abhorrence of bloodshed. The next instant, however, he had leaped to his feet, broken out of the brush, and turned to the west, in the direction of the American line. Then he stopped short, appalled. It seemed to him that the forbidden chambers of hell had been unlocked.

The shot that had killed the sharpshooter, and been the first of the grand attack of the Americans, the attack that, catching the opposing army unprepared, two-thirds of its strength on the march, half of it in the open, crumpled and crushed it at last.

The bombardment started on the extreme left of the American position, the rain of solid steel and fused death, driving over Starr's head, to fall with calculated aim and destructive effect upon the compact and unsheltered troops in the valley. Starting there, it spread by leaps and bounds to the right; on the extreme north other guns chimed in; and then Starr stared at the evidence that the enemy's plans, which he thought he had been first to discover, had been known beforehand by the Americans; that they had laid their

plans accordingly, and were now engaged in carrying them out, and that those plans rendered almost absolutely certain his own destruction.

Far to the north, he saw long lines of skirmishers advancing from the eastern slope of the Rincon Range into the valley. These advanced steadily, double time, with little loss, although the day before such an attack would have been suicidal. But now, by reason of the proposed movement, practically all the infantry had been withdrawn from the hills in front of them—and always, in the case of an attacking line, it is the fire of the small guns that counts. Shells make a tremendous fuss, and they annihilate a man when they hit him; but the bullets slip in and sting without warning or flurry, dispatching neatly and with little wasted energy—and there are thousands of these where there is only one shell.

At the same time, troops that had been carefully moved in during the night, debouched from the ravines to the north, not half a mile from Starr's position, and advanced in a trot, holding their fire.

The circle of hate that Starr had felt had become a circle of death. To the west the American batteries, to the north and south the American infantry, and to the east the forces of the enemy. That he was in the center was the only reason he was still alive; the range of the fire gave it a trajectory that carried it far over his head. But what would happen when the circle closed on him from any direction? Or, when, which amounted to the same thing, he retreated upon either of the two opposing sides?

One thing he saw clearly, that the authority that had sent him on this mission had, by that sending, intended to condemn him to death. For a moment he felt resentment, and for another moment fear, and then the largeness of the situation filled him and lifted him up, and both those feelings were swept away in a great flood of pity, a pity that had nothing to do with rank or race or responsibility, but that embraced each and all of the human

atoms that, as he saw it, had been tricked by false teachings into destroying one another in mass.

Fear once eliminated, greatness of peril leads to greatness of vision. Starr was standing on heights spiritual as well as physical. He thought he perceived at that moment something that men had never seen before. In his heart he knew those writhing shapes in the valleys below to be lines of men, he knew those vapors were but exhalations from the mouths of purely material cannon, he knew the din that was deafening him was caused by the expansive force of the powder particles. But for a long minute his imagination swayed him, and there were neither men nor powder nor cannon, but only, grim and terrible, the living Soul of War.

Hate engendered and engendering, exponent of all unrighteousness, minister of all destruction, red, like a flaming sword; black, like a lustful night, enthroner of brutality, mocker of virtue, befooler of bravery, nurturer of all mad passions, thus he saw the Spirit he had once set out to serve. Age-wearied also, sick of its own futility, ripe to die. That last realization brought a smile to his face, as one who has looked a little way around the corner of time, and has seen a widening road.

If he was not content with what he had done, his face belied him. Still smiling, he unbuckled his belt and laid it and his rifle on the ground. Then, quite steadily, he started toward the belching guns of the men who had been his enemies.



THE ACOUSTICS THAT SUITED

H. MARTIN WILLIAMS, now a reading clerk in the House of Representatives in Washington, was a candidate for this same position years ago. At that time, descending upon the national capital from the rural districts of Missouri, he addressed the delegation of his State, thus:

"Boys, I've done a lot of work electing you Democrats, and now I want some government money. I would like to have the job of reading clerk of the house."

Of course, they said this would be an excellent arrangement, and, selecting a time when the house was empty, they put Mr. Williams at the reading desk and tested out his voice. After that, they got together, decided that they did not care to be annoyed by the Williams' claim for recognition, and appointed Representative John Tarsney to act as their spokesman in telling Williams to hasten back to the tall timbers.

"Mr. Williams," said Tarsney impressively, "you have an excellent voice. We all listened to it, and it was like the sound of lutes, and flutes, and violins. And its sweetness was equaled only by its carrying power. In fact, we never heard such a voice. But we regretfully report that the chamber of the House of Representatives is the one place in which your voice will not do. The acoustics of the house do not suit it."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Mr. Williams hotly; "the acoustics of the bright, blue skies of Missouri suit it. And I'll prove it to you. I'll go back there and beat you fellows."

In the next election four members of the delegation lost their seats in Congress because of his speeches beneath those bright, blue skies.

The Six Ages of Sandy Saunders

By George Randolph Chester

Author of "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford," "Written in Seven Figures," Etc.

If, as the ancient and well-worn adage has it, the child is father to the man, then we may expect one leading characteristic from our Sandy Saunders—wanting a thing and getting it. The red lamp globe in this opening story is, we imagine, but the symbol of a much larger globe for which he will strive later on. This new series of Chester's promises a rich store of amusement and surprise.

I.—FIRST THE INFANT IN HIS NURSE'S ARMS

EVERY nerve in the Saunders cottage was on the jump; not from the blizzard without, but from the storm within! Is a spoon a red lamp globe? No! Baby Saunders howled that opinion with all the strength of his lungs. Is a rattle box a big red lamp globe? Is an orange? Is a rubber doll? No! By all the screams and howls and passionate yells in the world, no! Will being bounced up and down on the knee of a young father take the place of a big red lamp globe; or will soothing conversation or colic medicine? No!

Within the sound of Baby Saunders' voice, and quivering from it, were four grown people, who had attained the highest possible degree of ignorance and stupidity. They had been told, with coos and smiles, with flops of the fists and kicks of the feet, with gurgles and sharp exclamations, and now with cries and shrieks, told accurately, distinctly, and continuously what was wanted; and the article was not forthcoming!

In consequence, such Sunday morning peace and quiet as could survive the black storm without was fractured within to jagged fragments. Young Father Saunders, having thrown down

his favorite comic supplement, bit in two the amber mouthpiece of his pipe, and his brows were wrinkled; young Mother Saunders, working against time in the bedroom, with flushed face and prettily disheveled hair, pricked one nervous finger and put a tiny blood-stain on the laced and ribboned christening robe which was to be the envy of the Thomases; Norah, in the kitchen, with a face the color of a beet, and preparing the christening dinner for eleven adults, spilled sugar on the hot range, and enveloped the house in palpitating smoke; Aunt Grace Saunders, who was bony but called that condition slender, compressed her lips as she spread icing on the christening cake, and mashed off a corner of it. It was all their own fault! They, or some one of them, should have given Baby Saunders the big red lamp globe, which, standing tall and tantalizing on the low table by the crib, just glowed, and glowed, and glowed!

Jane Saunders rushed in from the bedroom. There was nowhere a sweeter-dispositioned young wife than she, but there are certain aggravations which are past endurance!

"Why don't you keep that baby quiet?" she inquired of her husband,

and she almost snapped it. She bent over the infant and found it, with a face as scarlet as its hair, kicking spasmodically at all four corners, and exhibiting in its countenance a cavity of appalling dimensions. "There, there, there, baby!" she soothed, and picked it up.

The sudden silence was almost painful! Baby Saunders, with one sob, by way of a neat conclusion, had stopped screaming, and now the wind could be heard howling around the corner and rattling the windows. Renewed hope had come to Baby Saunders. He had a degree of confidence in his mother. Perhaps she had developed a trace of intelligence, and might give him the big red lamp globe!

"See how good he is when he's not neglected"—and Jane Saunders almost glared at her husband.

Young Mr. Saunders, usually placid of nature, rankled under that unjust charge, but he knew better than to say anything hasty. He looked at the discarded toys scattered around the crib.

"He wouldn't play with a thing I gave him!" and the comic supplement mechanically came up from the floor.

"No; you would read that paper!" flared Mrs. Saunders, who still had exactly one million things to do before the minister came. "Certainly baby didn't want his toys! He wanted you to entertain him! It's strange you can't amuse your own baby for one hour!"

Young Mr. Saunders threw down his paper.

"It's strange he can't be quiet for one minute! I've had him up!"

"Why didn't you keep him up?"

"It's bad for a baby to be kept up all the time!"

"All the time!" This with scorn. "I have that baby six days out of the week, and I never complain; never! You hold him for ten minutes out of an hour, and you call it all the time!"

"He hasn't been in his crib ten minutes this morning! The trouble is that you've spoiled him!"

Mrs. Saunders' gray eyes glinted, and her head came up with a jerk.

"The trouble is that you're selfish!

You never should have had a baby to interfere with your paper!"

Both young people realized, with a trace of a gulp, that they were dangerously near the verge of their first genuine quarrel. In the meantime, Baby Saunders was moderately happy. His confidence in his mother had been justified. She had sat down near the low table, with the baby over her shoulder. By stretching, he could almost touch that big red lamp globe with the tips of his chubby fingers. The globe was as warm as it looked, and he cooed and cooed.

Young Saunders walked twice the length of the room, with his hands jammed in his pockets. There were bitter thoughts in his mind. The injustice of woman was sometimes past endurance. Suddenly he caught the glisten of moisture in the eyes of his pretty young wife, and knew what a brute he was. In deep contrition he picked up a rattle from the assortment of failures on the floor, and thrust it into the chubby hand of Baby Saunders.

"Come on, Buster," he said, in his heartiest and most cheery of voices, and he was filled through and through with a noble determination to be good and helpful!

Baby Saunders did not even bother to throw the thing on the floor. The chubby fingers merely opened in passionate refusal to clutch that rattle. Was this to be borne? After solid hours of explanation, Baby Saunders had beaten down the stone wall of ignorance and stupidity with which he was surrounded, and had been brought within reaching distance of the big red lamp globe. Now a rattle had been thrust into his hand; a rattle! There was but one way to deal with this indignity. The round mouth opened and elongated into an oval. A warning howl came forth, and every nerve in the Saunders cottage resumed its jumping!

"What did I tell you!" and young Mr. Saunders rose abruptly. All his exasperation came back. "He's plain spoiled! You've let him run you with his temper!"

"If he has a temper I know where he got it!" and Jane Saunders, whom color made pretty, became prettier than ever. "I wish you'd go out for a walk!"

Contrition again seized young Saunders. He was not the man to desert his little wife in her hour of need, and leave everything on her frail shoulders. He strode swiftly over and put his arm around her and kissed her, and patted the baby on the back. Jane smiled with sweet forgiveness, and the baby kicked appreciatively. It was almost touching the red globe again!

"He'll burn himself on that lamp," warned the repentant father. "We'd better take it away."

Jane glanced hastily over her shoulder.

"We can't afford it," she laughed. "We'll just have to be careful. Sit here and hold him, Roy. You can see that he doesn't burn himself."

She pinched her husband's cheek as she transferred the baby. They were on terms of perfect understanding and sympathy again. Baby Saunders was also satisfied. Not only his mother, but his father had exhibited gleams of intelligence. For himself, Baby Saunders had patience. He was willing to struggle twenty minutes, without protest, to get a good, firm clutch on that big red globe. After that— Well, circumstances must determine what he would do next.

Jane was just at the door of the bedroom when she turned, with a worried look.

"Baby's name," she ventured, with conspicuous hesitation. "The minister will be here in two hours."

Young Saunders smiled up at her reassuringly.

"Your mother likes the name John," he stated, by way of urging again his own preference.

"Your mother likes Whittier." She was toying with her rings.

"My mother is fond of flossy names!" This with a flash of resentment.

A flash of indignation from Jane. "Remember that Whittier is my

father's family name!" She was haughty about it.

"Fine and dignified for the purpose," he promptly admitted; "but as a first name for a boy, it's a crime. I went through school defending a freak first name, and I won't have my son endure the same humiliation. What's the matter with John?"

"It's ugly! Don't I know? I've had to be called Jane all my life! I hate it!"

"But this is a boy! Jane, you may christen him what you like, but I'm going to call him John!"

"Whittier!"

"John!"

There was a rattling jar and a coo of joy. R. G. Saunders jumped up. Jane Saunders gasped.

"Did he burn himself?"

"No, but he will!"

"I told you to be careful!"

"You wouldn't take out that lamp when I wanted you to!"

"Very well." This with scornful resignation. She came over and took up the lamp. "You won't rest until I do, and yet you call the baby stubborn!"

The howl of Baby Saunders was instantaneous; it was bloodcurdling! What kind of a world was this into which he had come; a world where they took away big red lamp globes! Being cursed with small muscles, and having been given, to defend his will, no weapon but his voice, the infant Saunders used that weapon with all his might, pouring forth a volume of sound which was little short of devastating. He fairly quivered with the vibration of it, and his mother, startled, turned back toward the table. She had recognized command in that roar, and her primal impulse was to obey.

"Take it out!" shouted young Saunders. "We'll see if this child's going to run the house!" and he deposited the infant in the crib. He almost slammed the infant there.

No screaming which that youngster had ever executed could approach the effort which he now launched. The sound was deafening, it was excruciating, it was appalling! He meant that

they should bring back that big red lamp globe! He would put into that determination every ounce of energy in his body, every atom of air in his lungs! To begin with, what right had they to take it away? Whose was that red globe? His!

Aunt Grace Saunders came swiftly into the room, the tip of her sharp nose purple with vexation. Norah followed, wiping her hands on her apron. All four of the grown-ups looked as if they had the jumping toothache.

"Why don't you quiet that baby?" demanded Aunt Grace, and she strode over to the crib to remove a possible pin.

"Let him alone!" shouted the baby's father, his face red. "It's nothing but temper!" and he glared at his Aunt Grace.

"There's a many of us has temper," insinuated Norah, tightening her apron with a jerk. "What does Sandy want?"

"The lamp!" stated the baby's mother, shouting it, so as to be heard above the wild shrieks, and forgetting to reprove Norah for again calling him Sandy.

Norah, supported in her presumption by the sheer rights of the case, walked over and took the lamp from her mistress.

"If the little redhead don't get it, he'll be havin' the spasms," she said; "the darlin'!"

II.

There was peace in the house of Saunders, sweet peace, as beffited the Sabbath! On the low table stood the lamp with the big red globe, which glowed, and glowed, and glowed! Beneath it lay Baby Saunders asleep, in his beribboned and belaced christening robe, his rosebud mouth wreathed in a Cupid's bow, and one pink thumb up under his chin. He was a cherub!

Seven adorers bent above the crib: Grandpa and Grandma Saunders, Grandpa and Grandma Whittier, Aunt Grace and young Father and Mother Saunders, this latter pair with their arms about each other.

Little rascal! Wouldn't be satisfied until he'd had his own way! Must compel them to bring back his red globe. That was all he had wanted! Baby Saunders twitched in his sleep at that stupid interpretation of his calm. Having the lamp replaced on the table was only one step in his desire, and having gained that he had rested!

"What is his name to be?" softly asked Grandma Saunders, stepping hastily away, as the baby twitched again. She was a frivolous-looking little grandma, with a piquant face, and her hair waved in the latest mode, and her fluffy pink silk dress. She took Grandpa Saunders with her, and they all tiptoed to their chairs. Aunt Grace turned out the light. The storm had cleared.

"Oh, yes, the name," vaguely repeated Jane, and a look of worry set upon her brow. She turned to her husband in hesitant perplexity. Every one else turned to him. They all leaned forward expectantly.

"We don't know," he confessed.

"And on the day of the christening," laughed Grandpa Saunders, who was a big man, with neater hair and beard and clothing than he would have felt it imperative to wear on all occasions had it not been for Grandma Saunders.

"Jane rather favors Whittier," observed young Saunders, after an uncomfortable pause, and Grandpa Whittier looked pleased.

"For a boy!" protested Grandma Whittier. "Why not a good, strong upright name like John?" and young Saunders looked pleased.

"It's ugly!" They all turned to Jane in shocked surprise; that tenseness of voice was so unusual in her. Even Jane's husband did not sufficiently remember the cause of the tension. "I won't have it!" and Jane actually stamped her foot.

"I don't blame you, Jane," sympathized fluffy little Grandma Saunders. "The child should bear the name of both grandfathers. Whittier Saunders. Why, that is charming!"

"A boy doesn't want a charming

name!" protested her son, with unusual irritability, the cause of which still lay asleep with that cherub smile. "You called me Royal George, because I happened to be born on that ship! Women have no right to saddle their sons with ridiculous names!"

"Royal!" said Grandpa Saunders sternly, and his voice was big.

"I beg your pardon, mother," apologized R. G. Saunders, his face red.

The tension moved in its sleep.

"Jane, why on earth do you put all those laces and ribbons on a boy!" criticized Grandma Whittier, whose hair was pulled back so tightly that it stretched her forehead. Her black silk looked like an iron dress, edged with steel braid.

"Because he's a baby," was the prompt reply of Jane.

"One cannot begin too early to mold character," precisely intoned Aunt Grace, who, though a confirmed spinster, had read much on infants and their care.

"You can't mold the character of any one worth while," announced Grandpa Whittier, with a twinkle in his eye. He was a plump man who would have been jovial with a better chance. "Now take my Janey," and he glanced affectionately at his fluffy-haired daughter. "Ma tried to mold her plain."

They all laughed, in spite of the growing tension. Baby Saunders had flopped one chubby fist.

"You can't mold a Saunders' temper, anyhow," drawled the fluffy grandma, intending the remark as a joke.

"He has more than merely Saunders' temper!" quickly observed Aunt Grace, who was one of the stanchest of the Saunders.

"Temper can be cured," stated the iron grandma severely, and the tension increased three notches.

"That's enough!" declared Jane, jumping up. Her gray eyes glinted and her cheeks had flushed. "It's my baby, and you've none of you said a nice thing about him and this is his christening day! He may have determination, but he hasn't a trace of a temper!"

Suddenly the room shook! The glass-ware in the dining room seemed to shiver and to clink, as a whirlwind of sound emptied out of the crib, and writhed and twisted and eddied! Baby Saunders was awake, and the first object to meet his inquiring blue eyes was the big red lamp globe, which did not glow! Why did it not glow? Who had stopped the glowing of it! If there was any person within the sound of his voice who could restore that beautiful red glow, that person had better do it; and do it quickly!

Every person present understood the last part of Baby Saunders' message. They gathered that there was an imperative command for something to be done, and they sprang to their feet to be ready to do it, their nerves on the jump. They were like a handful of corn in a popper. The first one to interpret the command, however, was Royal George Saunders. He was across the room in three strides, and turned on the lamp! Baby Saunders immediately subsided. He smiled to the big red globe. He tossed his fists at it. He cooed to it.

"Lord, what a temper!" gasped R. G., though there was actually a trace of pride in the tone. "That's all he wanted; the light turned on!"

Idiot! That was not all Baby Saunders wanted! His contentment for the moment was inspired by the fact that he had at least reached the intelligence of these people. He was beginning to be able to put strength enough behind his voice to make them understand! It was an intellectual triumph. He ceased to coo, and gazed at the glowing miracle in deep thought. It would take some planning to get at that red globe, some patience, and possibly some cunning!

III.

There were two babies in the crib, and nine admiring adults in the room. The visiting baby was fatter of cheek and calmer of eye, and perfectly hairless. He was Baby Thomas, and Baby Saunders, quite delighted with him, gave samples of his best coos. He

smiled most engagingly. He flopped his fists and kicked. He even went so far, in the excess of his cordiality, as to try to investigate, with a chubby forefinger, Baby Thomas' calm eye, but this hospitable intention was frustrated by a whimper. Baby Saunders immediately paused. His guest must have meant something by that cry, and the host respected a cry. It was the universal means for the exchange of ideas. Under the circumstances, and after due reflection, it seemed to Baby Saunders that Baby Thomas did not wish his eye poked. To make sure, however, he tried it again. Logic and deduction were correct. Baby Thomas did not wish his eye poked, and he stated this with great vigor and fluency.

At this point in the proceedings interference came in the agitated persons of Mamma Saunders and Mamma Thomas, the latter a plump, broad-faced little lady with black eyes. Both mothers explained to Baby Saunders, with great care and much detail, that he must not poke the calm eye of little Nelson.

Baby Saunders heard them with disgust. It had been no part of his intention to subject his guest to any ceremony which might be displeasing. Above all things, he wished to be agreeable, and if eye-poking was not to be included under the category of light entertainment, as he had already deduced, the diversion was to be dropped. However, this principle of interference and coercion was a bad thing to encourage. He had experienced entirely too much of it in his life. For a moment, by way of protest against this continuous curbing of his will, he contemplated one final, swift, and vigorous poke. He studied the matter carefully, with his thumb in his mouth and his round head lowered, gazing at Baby Thomas the while out of the tops of his round blue eyes; then hospitality won. He felt that he was compelled to consider the preferences of Baby Thomas in the matter, so he reluctantly gave up his perfectly justifiable plan of resistance, and, jerking his

thumb from his mouth, looked up and smiled beautifully, and flopped his fists, and cooed, and gurgled, whereupon Baby Thomas laughed outright, displaying a wonderful expanse of red gums, and imitated the flops of the fists, and fell over sidewise, and was propped up again.

That incident had given Baby Saunders time for reflection. He began to regret that he had relinquished his independence. He stole forward his stubby forefinger quite slowly. Baby Thomas looked at him and gurgled. The forefinger went down. Baby Saunders leaned far forward, with his mouth open.

"He wants to kiss him!" cried Mrs. Thomas, in delight, and the two ladies held the babies close enough together for Baby Saunders to imprint on Baby Thomas' features a round wet mark; whereat Baby Thomas batted his eyes and screwed up his face.

"He's so affectionate," laughed Mrs. Saunders. "He wouldn't hurt him for worlds."

"No, indeed," agreed Mrs. Thomas, but she sat close by the crib, nevertheless. "What is to be his name?"

Awkwardness greeted that normal inquiry. No one of the seven members of the family cared to answer.

"We are considering Gerald," replied Jane, by happy inspiration.

R. G. Saunders half rose, and sat down again, accentuating the consternation of the party.

"I will now show you my proudest possession," observed Baby Saunders to his guest. "I do not suppose you have seen anything like it, because I do not suppose there is anything like it in the world. Look at my big red lamp globe!"

He said all this and more, by the mere flapping of fists and kicking of feet, and smiling and cooing and gurgling, his eyes upturned the while to that gorgeous round miracle.

Baby Thomas showed his deep appreciation of the miracle. He flopped his fists at it. He smiled to it. He cooed. He gurgled. That was a wonderful possession, a treasure, a thing

to be desired above all other things in the universe!

Baby Saunders confided to Baby Thomas his carefully matured plans regarding the red lamp globe. Baby Thomas was highly interested. The project had his entire admiration, and the two babbled at great and gleeful length over it, delighting their nine elders beyond measure.

"Now let's get it," said Baby Saunders, and his manner of saying this was to suddenly lift his voice in a loud and continuous wail, which startled the room as if a bomb had suddenly been exploded in it, and which set every nerve in the room on the jump!

Baby Thomas studied the admirable speech of Baby Saunders in open-mouthed, round-eyed silence for a moment, then he, too, added energy to his ambition, and with wonderful enthusiasm joined his labors to those of his host.

That duet was a fearful and a marvelous thing! The voice of Baby Thomas was almost as well developed and as lusty as that of Baby Saunders', but it was about two notes lower and about one-third tone off pitch. The beautiful big red lamp globe, which glowed and glowed and glowed, must come down, it must come down, it must come down!

Mother Saunders and Mother Thomas were there in an instant.

"No, no, no, no, baby!" said both ladies in unison; but Mrs. Thomas said it with more confidence than Mrs. Saunders.

The confidence of Mrs. Thomas was justified. Baby Thomas heard that voice even through his concentration, and paused to smile his friendly respect. But Baby Saunders howled straight on, adding a trifle of volume to override the interfering voices, and to make up for the loss of help.

Mrs. Thomas thrust into the hand of Baby Thomas a rubber doll, and Mrs. Saunders put into the hand of Baby Saunders a gaudy monkey on a stick encircled by bells, which the Thomases had brought along.

Baby Thomas investigated the rubber doll with some interest. It did not withstand the normal first test, for it was not good to eat; but it stood the second test fairly well, for it made a noise.

Baby Saunders did not even glance at the monkey on the stick. He was a person who could pursue but one great object at a time. He was bringing the big red lamp globe down to him, and until that task was completed, he could not consider any other impression. What did people mean by trying to turn him aside from a laudable enterprise upon which he had soberly and earnestly set himself! He dashed away the monkey on the stick with continuous jerks of his fists, and howled straight on! Baby Thomas became suddenly aware that there was no comparison in value between a rubber doll and a big red lamp globe. He became aware, too, that he had left his host to struggle on alone. Ashamed of himself for having paused by the way-side, he slammed down the rubber doll, and filled his lungs with air, and suddenly burst forth into loud and effective shrieks.

There was wild disorder in the brain of every person present, and the nerves of every person present were in tangled shreds when suddenly young R. G. Saunders strode across the room and lifted the big red globe from the lamp.

"Roy!" cried Mrs. Saunders, divining his fiendish purpose. "What are you going to do?"

"Give 'em what they want!" announced R. G. with a cruel smile. He had ceased to have pride in the temper of his first-born.

"It will burn them!" protested Mrs. Saunders, and Mrs. Thomas hastily grabbed her baby from the crib.

"Let it!" blurted R. G., with brutal decision. "It'll teach him a lesson!"

Eight pieces of mingled advice, protest and encouragement were shouted simultaneously at the heartless father; and every voice added just that much to the frantic hubbub. Heeding no one, the monster in human guise gently but firmly forced his way past his

frail wife. Young Thomas, the boyhood friend of the brute, laughingly took his own baby from his own wife, and replaced it in the crib.

"It can't any more than blister him a little, Alice," he told her, and held her away.

The wailing suddenly ceased, as the big red lamp globe came down out of nowhere, and settled in the crib between the two babies! There was a loud, double gasp of joy, and nine adults packed closely round. Baby Saunders paid no attention to the onlookers. He did not know that they were there. He did not even pause to reflect on the glory of achievement, to realize that, by his sheer strength, he had compelled this much desired treasure to waft itself down to him! Possession and seizure were his only thoughts, and while yet Baby Thomas was enjoying the mere pleasure of nearer view, Baby Saunders slammed both pink palms on the globe!

There was a sharp little cry of pain, accompanied by the shrieks of five women and the brutal laughter of four men! Baby Thomas, who was of a cautious nature, touched the globe with one pink forefinger, and quickly drew it back.

Baby Saunders held both little hands quivering before him, and he looked at them in amazement and reproach. His round blue eyes grew moist, but no tears dropped from them. He gave a fluttering intake of breath, and his lower lip trembled for an instant, then it straightened; then he slowly stretched forward his palms.

"That's enough!" cried Jane Saunders, but there was a strong arm around her. "How can you be so mean, Roy!" She was almost crying.

"Wait a minute," said her husband, holding her to him. He was no longer laughing. He was curious, interested, absorbed! It was as if he were witnessing an epoch of world-wide importance.

Baby Saunders placed his palms on the globe, at first lightly and then firmly. His eyes blinked and his shoulders winced with the pain, but his

little mouth set, and he held on! He leaned forward with a decisive lurch. He slipped his arms farther around the big red globe, and held it to him! He looked up suddenly. There were two big tears forming on his under eyelashes, and now they rolled off; but he was smiling beatifically. The holy calm and peace of the angels was in that smile. He bobbed down his head and tasted the globe. He smacked his lips curiously. They felt hot and puckered, but he was satisfied. Somehow he had known that the thing would not be good to eat. It was meant for other purposes, and he knew what! He began to tug at it, and a frown gathered on his brow. Everybody was laughing now.

Baby Thomas had touched the globe cautiously half a dozen times, but with greater boldness at each attempt. The globe, moreover, was cooler now. Why was Baby Saunders keeping it all to himself? Was this any way for a host to treat a guest? Had not Baby Thomas helped yell for the big red globe? Did not a part of it belong to him? Did not all of it belong to him? It did! It belonged to him exclusively, for this reason, it was so desirable! With a lunge of great force and determination, Baby Thomas bent forward and clasped his arms around the globe, and bumped his head against the head of Baby Saunders!

There was a double howl, and then Baby Saunders stopped yelling. He had been engaged with his globe in a serious purpose. He had dared pain and almost irresistible obstacles to attain this step in the accomplishment of that purpose, and now he was opposed by a rival claim and by a painful bump! Suddenly Baby Saunders opened his mouth and emitted one shrill yelp! It was not like his other cries; it was distinctly anger. He let go of the globe. He raised both chubby fists at once, and brought them down on the head of Baby Thomas!

Shocked, surprised, hurt, Baby Thomas suspended all functions for a second, and then he let out a scream of rage! He shot forward both tiny

fists and wiggled his whole body, so that the fists waved backward and forward at Baby Saunders, hitting him at nearly every wave!

"By George, they're fighting!" yelled young Father Thomas in delight, and young Father Saunders shook hands with him, both laughing. Grandpa Saunders and Grandpa Whittier, grinning with joy, exchanged glances of pride, and held sturdily as they felt themselves vehemently jostled.

Both babies now were screaming at the tops of their lungs, but Baby Saunders had rather the better method of insighting. He was pumping his fists up and down, with all the might of his strong back behind the blows; and every slam struck!

The women, irresistible in this crisis, broke through with shrill cries of shame to the men. They were angry through and through! Both babies had toppled over sidewise when they came to be lifted from the crib, but Baby Saunders was still pumping his fists up and down!

IV.

Baby Saunders had the world to himself, and to his lofty ideals. True, there sat by his crib his godmother, a very sweet and good and beautiful young lady, with curly yellow hair and pink cheeks and brown eyes, and at her throat a sparkling red brooch which might have been of interest had it not been for the big red lamp globe, which glowed and glowed and glowed above the crib. The young lady was taking care of Baby Saunders, while the minister and the Thomases and the family, in the parlor, were trying to decide amicably upon a name; but a large, deep-voiced young godfather, known as Bob Gates, was taking care of the young lady, a process which required a great deal of deep-voiced conversation.

In consequence of all this, Baby Saunders had plenty of time for careful thought. He judged from his recent experience, that his ideals concerning the red globe were not the ideals of his father and mother. They were

unimaginative people, and he could scarcely hope to interest them in his project. The logic of the situation was inevitable. He would be compelled to work without assistance. As a preliminary, he caught both hands on the edge of his crib and pulled himself forward, to test his muscles. They were stronger than yesterday, much stronger than the day before, infinitely stronger than last week. This was very gratifying.

His rattle box was in his way. He picked it up nonchalantly and dropped it over the edge of the crib. He batted his eyes in anticipation before it hit the floor, but the sound, when it did come, gave him scarcely momentary pleasure. This was such an old trick. He had invented it a long time ago, and it had been a great accomplishment then. How far he had progressed since he was young!

Gwen Richardson, who was the sweet and good and beautiful young godmother, picked the rattle from the floor. Bob Gates reached for it at the same time, and their heads brushed. When the pretty young godmother arose she was pinker than before. She laid the rattle in the edge of the crib, and paused to tell Baby Saunders that he was a dear. She touched a slender white finger under his chin, and wiggled it, and said, "Ketchee-ketchee," and was rewarded with a cherubic smile. Immediately thereafter Baby Saunders slammed the rattle on the floor, and resumed his elaborate planning about the big red globe.

The rattle appeared again on the edge of the crib. This was passing the point of courtesy, it was passing the point of agreeableness, it was passing the point of endurance! He threw it down violently now.

"Aaaah!" he said, by way of warning.

"Did ever you see anything so cute!" exclaimed Gwen Richardson, picking up the rattle.

"No," replied Bob Gates, looking steadfastly at her until she flushed. Bob Gates' fingers closed over the rattle and over the slender white hand

which held it. There was a hungry look in his eyes, as if he meant to eat Gwen Richardson; and she seemed frightened and timid as she should have been.

The rattle box was in Bob Gates' road, as it had been in the road of Baby Saunders, so Bob laid it on the crib; and this time Baby Saunders lost his patience completely! It was annoying, aggravating, exasperating, thus to have interruptions thrust upon his business concentration, and in choice vocalism, he stated this fact.

Gwen Richardson, in spite of her sweetness and goodness and beauty, was as stupid as the rest of them.

"He's hungry," she said commiseratingly, and ran into the kitchen, while Bob Gates solemnly inspected the baby and wondered. "Baby wants his bottle," said Gwen to Norah.

"Then you'd better give it to him," advised Norah. "That little redhead will get everything he wants as long as he lives; the darlin'," and she busied herself about the bottle. "The way a man is born, that way will he be."

It took Baby Saunders just two seconds to convince his pretty young godmother of her stupidity. He took the warm bottle with deceptive evidences of pleasure, and as soon as the slender white hand had withdrawn and was too far away for a grab, the two chubby pink ones slammed the bottle over the edge of the crib! As it went down the hrow of Baby Saunders was gathered into little knots of concern, while his big blue eyes turned upward and sidewise. Sometimes the bottle would break, and sometimes it would not. A radiant smile wreathed his rosebud lips, and he tossed his arms and cooed. The bottle had broken! There was much more satisfaction in this than in dropping a rattle, because it was a feat so difficult of accomplishment, requiring patience and quick action; and the bottle was watched so much.

Both the godfather and the godmother hurried out of the room after a dust pan and a broom and mopping cloths, for there were fragments of glass and lakes of white milk all over

the carpet. Not only from seeing them go, but from the very feel of the room, Baby Saunders knew that he was alone!

The great moment had arrived! Baby Saunders, straining and pulling as he had never strained and pulled before, drew himself up on his knees in the crib. Another might have paused to rest, but another would not have had his urgent steadfastness of purpose, that restless ambition which drives on and on, and knows no pause for fatigue, or retrospection, or change of plan. Baby Saunders had started, and now he went on. He allowed the upper part of his body to fall, face forward, on the edge of the table, and then, with his strong little arms, he raised up his head and shoulders and chest. Weaving and tottering, he drew up his knees, one after the other; and this was the first time he had crawled. Another might have paused to glory in the marvel of this accomplishment; but another would have been less single of thought, and more a victim to vain weaknesses.

A heavy book was in the way of further crawling, a book not too high for hands to rest upon and a body to peer over, but too high for a knee to climb; so all that was left was reaching. Baby Saunders reached! He stretched and strained, but still his hands would neither one of them quite reach the beautiful big red lamp globe, which glowed and glowed and glowed in tantalization!

Again and again Baby Saunders strained and stretched, and no grown man ever put into the accomplishment of any passionate desire more force, and more will, and more persistent effort than Baby Saunders put into this attempt! His brows were knotted; his mouth was compressed; his face was purple with exertion; there were even beads of moisture on his round little forehead.

Suddenly a great rage possessed him; the thing which the Saunderses and the Whittiers had called temper, but which was in fact a fury of determination. The cry which he emitted was like no cry which had ever come from him.

It was the expression of a mad passion to accomplish, the bellow of a bull in battle, the invincible roar of the devastating cyclone! When he had exerted himself to the utmost limit of his strength, when he had no more blood and flesh and sinew to summon to his effort, he added to that blood and flesh and sinew, and to the last possible atom of his energy, the terrific stayless will which is man's nearest approach to omnipotence; and in that instant he lunged fiercely forward against the globe with both his hands, and knocked it off the lamp, and it fell crashing to the floor, shattered, in one glorious, tinkling clatter, into countless fragments!

As it went over, Gwen Richardson came in at the door, and with that swift dash which only a woman can make, unmatchable because it is swifter than the thought which prompts it, she was at the side of the table, and had caught Baby Saunders before he could tumble to the floor! Immediately thereafter she staggered to a chair, pale and trembling, and closed her eyes, and the arms of Bob Gates were around her and Baby Saunders, and Bob was kissing her, and frantically calling her his darling, and a lot of other fool names, and was begging her to look up!

The seven members of the family

The next story in this series, dealing with the tardy schoolboy, will appear in the May month-end POPULAR, on sale April 23rd.



AN APPEAL TO HIS VANITY

WILLIAM D. HASSETT, one of the sharks on diplomacy and international affairs in Washington, covers the state department for a big news association. One day another reporter covering the same run rushed up to him with this request:

"Bill, fix me up a nice little story about this affair for my paper. You know more about this than anybody."

Hassett, not being particularly busy at that time, complied with the request. Half an hour later the same man came back and requested:

"Bill, please fix me up another little story. You know, you're the best-informed man in regard to this particular subject."

Bill again wrote the story. The other man came back the third time.

"Look here," said Bill dryly, "I'll write this third story for you, but I hope you don't think it's because I'm falling for this bunk of yours about how much I know."

"Well," said the other, rubbing his chin, "it was on the level the first time."

and the three Thomases and the minister and Norah were instantly wedged in the door, all trying to get through at once!

"There's no one hurt!" exclaimed Gwen Richardson, jumping up, all the color returned to her face. "Baby broke the lamp globe, that's all!"

"I knew he'd get it!" laughed R. G. Saunders, and his tone was full of pride.

"How very fortunate that the child is not hurt," commented the minister, looking at his watch. He was a small, thin man without whiskers of any sort, and he had four voices, one for babies, one for women, one for men, one for the pulpit.

"Come on, J. Whittier," called young Mother Saunders, her eyes moist with mingled emotions, though there was a smile on her lips.

"John W.," corrected young Father Saunders with a grin.

"What a remarkably good baby," observed the minister, in his voice for ladies.

Little John Whittier Saunders was indeed a good baby! There was the smile of the angels on his rosebud lips, there was the calm, clear innocence of infancy in his round, blue eyes; he tossed his arms and cooed and gurgled to Baby Thomas!

Cupid and the Rat Catcher

By Christopher Strong

Concerning a mayor of New York who executed the Gumshoe Glide when "Investigate!" began to be hurled at him by the newspapers. It is not easy to hide away from the newspapers when they want to play you up in bold type. But Cupid came to the assistance of the hunted mayor

ALMOST every time a new mayor is elected in New York, some sort of a scandal starts up somewhere in his administration. This is because the mayor, who has a few offices to fill now and then—especially now—can take care of his friends or the friends of his friends, and in a friendly way these friends can do acts of friendship for other friends. Thus quite a dust of amicability is raised, and when the dust is settled it frequently reveals some brother with his hand in another brother's pocket. There would be nothing especially scandalous in this, in America, even, let alone in New York, were it not for the newspapers.

But in New York there is one newspaper which is as moral as an old hen with a new brood of chicks. It insists on clucking to all the city's officers, cautioning them here, leading them there, shooing them around, and of course bossing them unmercifully; so that at the end of the day each officer, if he really heeded this journalistic biddy, would be so tired he could hardly stagger to sleep. This one we will call the *Standard*.

And there is another newspaper, which follows the *Standard* as a dog will follow a butcher. In practice, this newspaper, being devoid of energy and enterprise, tags around behind the *Standard* and waits until the *Standard* has discovered something. Then it starts yelping as if the discovery were its own. In policy— But it really has no policy save a general one which might be stated thus:

It is its owner's paper, and its owner plays the annoying rôle of a human hangnail on the hand that rules the world. We will call this paper the *Intelligencer*, because in this connection the word is amusing.

Once upon a time there was a mayor of New York who was not wholly corrupt nor wholly inefficient. He may have known on which side of his bread to look for the butter; but, then, that is the usufruct of tact and judgment. And this mayor appointed—see first paragraph—a friend of his to be Lord of the Exchequer and Moneys of the town, to have (in bank) and to hold (against the Comptroller's checks). It seemed a simple sort of job, and this simple man took it. Whatever mutton there may have been in his head at the time is not there now, so we will pass the item by. His name was Euclid B. Jetsom, and he had a fortune and a pleasant disposition and a daughter and a—

But why should we listen to details when we can listen to Cupid?

"Jack," she said to Jack Lantry, "he'll never consent; and I can't afford to run away with you."

"But why won't he consent? What does he say?" insisted Jack.

She shrugged her slim shoulders. The movement was honestly pretty. "He just says it's impossible. Hur-r-rumph!" she cleared her throat in imitation of her father's solemnity. "Impossible, my dear. Hur-r-rumph. Ab-so-lute-ly impossible. Just like that."

"But when does he say that?"

"Well—" She hesitated. "First, of

course, he always says: 'The young man is in the newspaper business?' And then I say: 'Uh-huh.' And then he says it's impossible for me to marry you. Jack, he's dead set against newspapers. He says they are rabble sheets, for the rabble—and gotten out by more of the rabble. And moreover he says very few newspaper men ever save any money."

"A seer," remarked Jack. "Absolutely. A seventh son of a seventh son. But, Rose, I'm not a newspaper man—that is, exactly."

"Well, what are you? You're always working some newspaper 'racket,' you say."

He patted her hand and laughed. "I don't know just what you would call me. A press agent, maybe. But it's more than that. I get publicity for vice presidents and retired navy officers and ambitious wealthy ladies on Riverside Drive. I get up monuments for folks that need monuments badly; and I get up public subscriptions for institutions. Of course, I get my percentage out of all this. And I get representation for coal-land grabbers in Alaska and silver-mine grabbers in Mexico, and all that sort of thing. I rescue all sorts of gentlemen out of tight holes when the public has located the woodpile and believes it has also found the coon. I do almost anything there's a dollar in, and when the end of the year comes round there are generally about twelve thousand of those dollars on the little ticket which says, 'Deposited by Jack o' Lantern'—for that was her nickname for him.

Rose stroked his cheek and sighed: "Oh, he'll never give in."

"Oh, yes, he will," said her sweetheart.

Another sigh. "He says it's impossible."

"We should—"

She held up her hand. "Now, Jack, don't be inane."

"We should fret and make melody on a guitar," he substituted.

"Daddies are such old nannygoats," she declared.

"Bucks, you mean," he corrected. "Old buck Jetsom, hur-r-rumph! The daddy of a little deer."

Many a similar conversation they held, not in despair; for he was six-and-twenty and she was twenty just. But in a sober contemplation of their lot, and with vague imaginings of how it would turn out. Successfully, of course. And the conversations concluded in what is undoubtedly the best way for all such conversations to conclude—in a slow, thoughtful kiss, and the tiniest ear whisper of a "Good night." Then the pavement would tingle under Jack o' Lantern's feet, and his head would hit the pillow in a whirl. And Rose sat up and munched chocolates—which is *very* unhealthful—stared wide-eyed for hours, trying to see Destiny out of her window.

Meantime the New Administration and its friends and its friends' friends, clear down to the cheapest grafted in the Bureau of Licenses—where there is some pretty cheap grafting—got together and held the green-corn dance of prosperity and triumph; and all that political lunacy which comes in with New Administrations did now come in and revel. Euclid B. Jetsom suddenly found himself a devilish popular man. Somebody was smacking him on the immaculate back of his cutaway coat every minute during the week. At first, for he really was a simple man—you couldn't quite say he was a simpleton, for he didn't weigh that much—at first Jetsom thought all this was merely a part of the jovial jamboree. Every one is happy at harvest time.

But in the ensuing weeks seriousness settled over the scene, and bankers—those odd, mysterious fish, with the goggly eyes and the very hard scales—began worrying the pleasant Jetsom sleep. Funds, the municipal moneys which come seeping in from five millions of people, have to be deposited some place. The question, of course, is: In which place or places?

History is chock jam empty with pleasant men. They loom and fade before the Eternal, as Emerson says; but mostly they fade. This is the reason

they are pleasant. Any man who has devoted a terpsichorean lifetime to doing the agile side-step when he comes face to face with a Problem is bound to be pleasant. It is all that is left him to be. Euclid B. Jetsom must have cleared his throat a million times before he finally realized the situation he was in. Of course, as soon as he realized that, he decided at once to Glide. This was just as well; because, if he had done anything on his own initiative, it would have been something wrong. And then the mayor would have had to explain a great deal of tiresome twaddle to him about "our friends." But by Jetsom faintly leaving it to the friends anyway, the funds were finally got into the right banks; and all Jetsom had to do was to sign some papers and to frown at two or three indignant men who threatened to make the matter public—whatever that meant. Then Jetsom settled back with a smile and prepared to outline his plans for a vacation.

And then also the heavens split asunder and the lightning bolt fell. One of the friendly banks curled up with a little gastric groan and went into a coma. In other words, its animation was suspended. Later on, it was to pay off about twenty-five cents on the dollar. But just now—

Just now the *Standard*, with a cluck that split the roof, wanted to know what Euclid B. Jetsom had to say for himself. It generously opened its columns to him. It also offered to have him indicted. It gave him his choice of being either an imbecile—which wasn't so far off—or a conniving rascal with a Machiavellian brain and a Napolconic tendency to loot. It, as usual, preempted all the functions of government and announced that it would put him in the Tombs, which is a jail. It would show up his past life. It would also run him off the face of the earth. But in the meantime it demanded explanations.

The *Intelligencer*, with its fondness for fauna, had a cartoonist draw a half-page picture of "Jetsom, the Jackal," and began pounding "Tammany,

the Tiger." The public, of course, was the Goat.

It requires no imagination to guess what the unfortunate Jetsom did. He went on his vacation—at once and quickly. In fact, he and his daughter dropped completely out of sight. Never was the Gumshoe Glide better executed.

That caused another sensation.

"Where is Jetsom?" shrieked the *Standard*. It decided that he was an absconder and a fugitive from justice. Outside of that, he was derelict in his duty. It printed his picture—the one with the well-known and pleasant Jetsom smile—and it offered a reward to any one who would divulge his whereabouts. The *Intelligencer* got out in the middle of its circulation and chased its own tail, with much yelping.

But Jetsom remained undiscovered. Day after day passed. The whole city was wild with excitement. Each day saw some new crime in Jetsom's past calendar raked up. He had been mixed up in horse-racing. His motor car had once hit an old crippled woman. He had been seen eating luncheon with the vice president of the now unconscious bank. His daughter was also missing; which news was accompanied by a picture of Rose "and her five-hundred-dollar Pomeranian." The Pomeranian was a Spitz, but what of that? The *Standard* showed that Jetsom was also a heavy gambler in Wall Street. In fact, the hue and cry raised after Jetsom was the most tremendous and amazing outburst the city had heard in twenty years. The district attorney presented the papers in the case to the Grand jury. Everybody awaited breathlessly any definite action, any definite news.

In the meantime, the *Standard* was sending out its best bloodhound reporters—a staff which was feared as much as the crack staff of the best detective agency in the country; a staff which had many and many a time succeeded where the police had failed—and these men were running down every possible clew. In a few days the *Standard* was able to announce that Jetsom had not

gone to Europe; and that to date he had not been discovered in Canada. Then the *Intelligencer* announced that beyond peradventure of a doubt he was in Mexico City--and printed a dispatch from that city to prove it. The only trouble with the dispatch was that it had been written by the night city editor on the tenth floor of the *Intelligencer* Building, and the nearest he had ever been to Mexico was Mexico City, Missouri.

But nothing could long elude the *Standard*. Jetsom was found.

"*Standard* at last finds Jetsom!" the hotly excited people of New York read one morning. An enterprising *Standard* reporter had followed the clew of the Jetsom house boat, *Idlewild*. Jetsom was aboard it, moored in the middle of a placid Florida stream. He, of course, refused to be interviewed; but the reporter had scooted around and around the house boat in a launch and had seen Jetsom twice: once, leaning over the rail and eating an orange; the second time, Jetsom having run into the house on seeing the reporter's craft, he was smoking a cigar and reading, of course, the *Standard*.

In large display type, inclosed in a black border, on the front page the *Standard* asked everybody to watch for the flag on top of the Standard Building. The *Standard* proposed to raise that flag as an announcement of Jetsom's return to New York. The moment Jetsom set foot within the confines of the city, up would go the flag. As usual, the paper took entire charge of Jetsom. He was their Jetsom. They had discovered him.

Inside, on the editorial page, there was the clarion demand: "Come Back, Euclid B. Jetsom, or We Will Bring You Back!"

The town was in a tumult.

Meanwhile, down in peaceful Florida, the hunted man who had once thought all politics was pie was beginning to get nervous. He did not like to have the two launches cluttering up his view of the river, and put-putting in the stilly night. Oh, yes, there were two. For as soon as the *Intelligencer*

found that the *Standard* had found the man, an *Intelligencer* launch loomed up and rode the glassy swell.

He grumbled to his daughter. He lost his appetite. He could not sleep. The sight of a newspaper made him ill. He had seen what the *Standard* had said about bringing him back, and he was shocked to find himself in such a plebeian position. So he took counsel with himself, and decided that he must have help from the headquarters of the new administration. He wrote a letter about it to the mayor.

There was one man in New York who was just as fascinated by Jetsom's position as Jetsom was disgruntled by it; and that man was Jack Lantry who, by his own word, "rescued all sorts of gentlemen out of tight holes."

When the *Standard* had finally found Jetsom, Lantry had made a bee line for a certain shabby-fronted hotel near the Bowery. He knew that whatever inside news there was would be passed among a few men in a little back room of this hotel. Day after day, as the case progressed, he made it a point to drop in there and talk to his friend Jerry, a thickset gentleman who stared straight past your left ear while talking to you, and who let his conversation dribble in whispers out of the left-hand corner of his mouth. After Jetsom's appeal had reached the mayor, it was shot onward by wireless into the shabby hotel. And in due time, Jerry hoarsely informed the tip of Jack Lantry's left ear that one Smiley Mack was delegated to journey Floridaward and talk over the situation with Jetsom.

Lantry said: "Introduce me." And by the time Smiley Mack got through listening to Lantry, he was absolutely certain that Lantry was the only man in New York who could, as he expressed it, "Give 'em the work and pull the sucker out of the scrape."

The scene in the house boat was interesting. Jetsom, fortified with dignity, was wholly unprepared for the reception of such a one as Smiley. His life had hitherto been innocent of Smileys; he knew that such creatures ex-

isted, just as he knew that slums and cheap barrooms existed. But he had never personally moved about among any of these. His daughter was present; and her eyes shone rather feverishly. She had been crying.

The gentleman on his vacation began in a testy fashion and with a secret belief that his words were over the head of this political tout:

"My situation here—er—Mr.—er—Mack, is extremely embarrassing, both to me and my daughter." Here Smiley executed a Grand Street ballroom bow. "It is undignified, to say the least; and very annoying. Very. These people have no right to establish this sort of espionage; they have no right to hound me as if I were some outlaw. They and their newspapers are humiliating me to a degree I never thought I should have to endure. As for their boasts that they will bring me back to New York and will hoist their abominable flag after having personally conducted me back, I tell you now I would rather stay out of New York for the rest of my natural life than give them their opportunity! I won't go back at all if I can't go back decently as a private citizen of my standing should. I will go to Cuba, and from Cuba I will go wherever I choose. I may take up a residence in Europe. I will do anything to thwart these atrocious scoundrels and deprive the rabble of what I presume they would call their triumph. I mean every word of what I say, Mr. Mack. I will stay away from New York forever if I can't be allowed to go back in a quiet and gentlemanly fashion."

Smiley blinked thoughtfully for a few moments and pursed up his thick lips to show that he was duly impressed. Then he said his little speech.

"There's only one gink in the whole burg, Mr. Jetsom, that I think can get you back thataway. He's got it all framed up to do the job and do it right. I spoke to several of the fellers about it and they O. K. the stunt. I unnerstand that even His Honner has give a slant at the idee and is strong fer trying it out. This feller has got

a good reptyation for turning these tricks. If you're agreeable I'll shoot him down here when I get back, and he can go to work."

"What is this man's name?" asked Jetsom.

"His name is Lantry, sir."

"Jack!" cried Rose.

Jetsom turned to her. "Is this—"

"Yes, dad."

"Hm. I think I see," said Jetsom. "All right, Mr. Mack. You may tell Mr. Lantry that I have invited him down to spend a few days with us. Wait! I will write him a note to that effect."

The *Standard* and *Intelligencer* men were there to get news. Five times a day they exchanged telegrams with their editors; and every night a full story was wired up for the next morning's paper. Smiley was heralded as an ambassador from headquarters. Evidently the organization was going to back Jetsom. However, when they tried to interview Smiley, as he was waiting in the flag station for the express north, he told them he had just run down to Florida to buy a dozen oranges. This rude sally was the subject of a highly indignant and dignified editorial in the *Standard*, wherein Tammany was cautioned against making light of so serious a matter. The people were also warned that Tammany was up to its old tricks, and that it behooved every voter in New York to defeat Tammany at the next election. (It always behooves them to do this; but behoof be hanged!)

The city editor of the *Standard* immediately became extremely cautious. He could take no chances from now on, especially with Lantry on the job. He sent another star man down to the launch with explicit instructions not to let a single move get away from him. Also he wired the men already on the launch:

- Watch house boat night and day. Put in searchlight. Rumored Lantry coming.

But good generals know when to do nothing. Lantry came—and waited.

And while he awaited his opportunity

outside the house boat, he improved his opportunity within it. Distressed as he was, Jetsom found himself beginning to like the young man. Jack's calmness and good humor were pleasing in a place which was beginning to show slight symptoms of bringing on the horrors. His laugh was infectious. At mealtimes he made the table a place of grace and jollity, where but a day or two before moroseness carved the meat and gloom lifted the cup. He was tactful and wise; he spoke of everything under the sun—except the matter in hand. He cajoled them into raking out the bathing suits and taking a morning plunge; and they killed the afternoon trying to catch fish. In the evenings he and Rose sat on the "back porch" and sang sweetheart songs to the accompaniment of a guitar.

"We're both in the spotlight," he said with a chuckle. For the two searchlights were turned full upon them.

The days went by until they totaled a week. And every day the city editor of the *Standard* wired queries as to what was happening; and every night he got the answer—nothing. There was scarcely any change in the daily routine on the house boat, except that for a time the members of the party quit trying to catch fish and sent out one of the sailors who really did catch fish. But this could hardly come under the head of news.

If ever a lover had an ideal situation made to his order, Jack o' Lantern had it. And Jetsom, as he recognized the moves in the old, old game, smiled, though his smile was a bit grim.

And then—

One evening, after the sun had set, and the night was beginning to dim the light on the water, the old sailor pushed out in his boat and made his way well out toward the opening of the river where it ran into the salty bay. The alert eyes in both launches followed him, as they had so often followed him. He shipped his oars and started fishing placidly; and as he fished the darkness became a wee bit thicker.

There was nothing extraordinary

about this until, all of a sudden, the sailor started to his feet and gave a violent tug at his line. The next instant, with a loud, echoing yell, he went overboard. In a wink, the idle, bobbing launches had turned their noses and started to his rescue. They raced each other to the spot. The man was nowhere to be seen. They trailed round and round the spot, calling to him in the dusk. (It is very hard to find a drowning man who does not want to be found.)

The reporters forgot their hostilities, and yelled to each other: "Do you see him? Found him yet?" They thought they heard him yell faintly, a little farther off. They darted in pursuit.

And while they were following the half-drowned cry, another boat on the far side of the house boat very quietly shoved clear and started through the now murky twilight for the shore. When the bank was reached, a young man sprang out, then an older man, then a girl in a black traveling cloak.

The reporters got that sailor, but to this day neither Carnegie nor their papers have issued them hero medals. He floundered to the surface at last—for he was a very good swimmer—but with the final cry which directed them to him, it seems that he shipped a chestful of water. All the well-known and highly recommended first aids to the drowning were administered; but he was a very tough sailor, and he seemed determined not to give up his hold on death. It was three-quarters of an hour and half a pint of whisky before he could tell them that he had fallen overboard. And then they replied that they knew that already.

Lantry flagged the northbound express, and when they got to Washington the train became a New York flyer.

Managing editors have developed a very sensitive tentacle in some one of their ganglia; it amounts to a sixth sense. And it generally begins registering when something has gone wrong. Ask one of them, and he will tell you he doesn't know how to describe the

feeling. Pantagruel calls it a pressing retraction in his soul; but a newspaper editor calls it a "hunch," and continues to experience its agonies and triumphs.

About the time the flyer went through Baltimore, the managing editor of the *Standard* stopped reading right in the middle of an interview with a physician who had discovered the real and only tuberculosis cure. He dropped the proof on his desk idly. He looked straight ahead of him for a moment at nothing at all; and then he got up from his desk and looked out the window at nothing. Next he grunted to himself; next he scratched his head; and next he sent a telegram.

The telegram read:

Are you absolutely sure you have Jetsom safe?

But why should we listen to the answer to a managing editor's telegram when we can listen to Cupid?

With their heads together over a very thrilling story in a magazine, Rose said to Jack: "Goody-goody-goody. Daddy says it's all right, Jack."

"Ancient information; he told me that in the smoker. What I want to know is, what have *you* to say un-to me?"

She giggled.

"Well, gee whillikens," exclaimed Jack. "Go on and say it. Just because you've said it a hundred million times

isn't any sign it doesn't still sound sweet."

"I won't say it," she whispered, "but give me your pencil and I'll write it."

"The emblem of my calling," said Jack, as he handed it over.

She scrawled something on the edge of the page. Jack leaned close to her shoulder and read:

Aisle of yew.

"That is not the way to spell it," he complained. "Spell again."

She wrote again, and looked up at him with a tickling little laugh on her lips.

He read:

Isle of view.

"Woman!" he protested. "Once more; and fail me not."

And this time she really did write:

I—love—you.

As they both laughed and squeezed hands beneath the magazine's shelter, she glanced out of the window.

"What town is this, Jack?" she asked.

"This is Philadelphia. In two hours we'll be in little old New York," he answered.

And as Lantry spoke, the managing editor ripped open a telegram from Florida. It said:

We've got him like a rat in a trap.

The most amazing message of modern times will figure in E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM'S new novel. The messenger who carries the wonderful document is himself as noteworthy a character as any you have met in fiction or real life. An astonishing story is "The Vanished Messenger." Be sure you read the opening chapters, in the May month-end number, on sale two weeks hence, April 23rd. The story will be completed in four issues of the POPULAR.

The Wall Between

By Ralph D. Paine

Author of "The Stroke Oar," "The Fugitive Freshman," Etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE mail steamer, one of the Panama Railroad line, had a full cabin list of canal commission employees and tourists. The harbor of Colon had scarcely dropped astern before John Kendall was made to realize that he was once again among his patriotic fellow countrymen, who are wont to hold the army and navy in the highest possible respect. The chief steward assigned him a seat at the dinner table beside a woman whose husband was with her. At a glance they were prosperous, cheap, ill-mannered, and well satisfied with themselves. In their own words, "business hadn't been so awful bad in the last six months, and they could blow themselves to a trip to the Panama Canal."

When Kendall appeared, she was airing her opinions of New York hotels—they "always stayed at the very best"—and her pudgy lord was noisily straining soup through a superabundance of mustache. They turned to glare in a distinctly hostile manner, nudged each other violently, and quite audibly whispered:

"He's nothing but a common soldier, Andrew. The nerve of him, mixing in with high-toned people. It ain't allowed in first-class hotels and cafés on Broadway. I've seen the head waiter tell them to skidoo."

"It ain't right on a ship when we paid for the best there was to be had. I'll speak to the steward about it after dinner. I can tell an army officer. They get by, but nix with the soldiers."

"Perhaps he's one of those marines. A lot of them came back from Nica-

ragua the other day. There was some stuff about it in the papers, but I didn't bother to read it."

"Well, it amounts to the same thing. Soldier or marine, let 'em stick in their own place. What do we pay 'em for?"

John Kendall gazed reflectively in front of him, turning once, with suave deference, to indicate to the lady the butter knife which she was persistently overlooking. These people had expressed, with more blatant vulgarity than usual, the views of a great number of Americans. Caste within the service, raw intolerance and ignorance outside the service, the self-respecting private or noncommissioned officer was ground between two millstones. And Americans such as these had wildly, grotesquely implored the government to send a fleet to protect their flimsy seashore cottages during the Spanish War, when a wave of ignoble hysteria ran up and down the Atlantic coast.

Fresh from the perils of an arduous and heroic campaign, Kendall was not in the mood to swallow insults, but these poor creatures could not insult him or his service. What they did accomplish was to focus his thoughts on the problem of his future. And while he ate in silence he began to get hold of the solution. After dinner he walked the deck for hours and threshed the thing over, slowly, carefully. It was impossible that he should marry Edith Ferris while he remained in the marine corps, whether as first sergeant, quartermaster sergeant, or sergeant major. The trifling grades of promotion open to him did not alter the case.

Inasmuch as he was most tremendously determined that Edith should

become Mrs. John Kendall, and not wait through any eternity of four years until his enlistment expired, he must promptly quit the marine corps. And why not? Lieutenant Burkett was sponged off the slate. A man could wish to leave no finer record than to have been with B Company in Nicaragua. Only one obstruction barred the way. Would the accusation that he had been dishonest in earlier years still follow and blast his career in civil life, and perhaps drive him back within the sheltering wall of the service, there to hide himself?

He had been willing to endure the blame that did not belong to him, but now was not his duty toward Edith larger and more compelling than toward the memory of a dead father? She had not thought it necessary for him to finish telling her the story of the disaster and his part in it. In her sight, his record had no flaws. Faith was all the evidence she wished to have. But more than faith was required to mend his broken reputation in the town of his birth and to build the foundation of a new start in life.

Hitherto John Kendall had accepted the self-imposed conditions with a kind of fatalistic fortitude. When Kendall's Bank had closed its doors, his father had collapsed with it, in mind and body. The rumor spread and fed upon itself, as rumors will, that the trouble had begun when young John Kendall was taken into the bank. During that year, in which the father's health was failing, the son had seemed to be the more masterful man of the two.

The fog of untruthful report thickened and could not be dispelled. To absolve himself, the son would have been compelled to reveal, not so much what he knew as what he surmised, that his father had used every desperate expedient to ward off the consequences of his feverish speculations as long as possible, anything to save Kendall's Bank from a disgraceful catastrophe. The town held the son responsible. Let the town think so, was the way he looked at it. A son who would put a brand upon his own father was

not the kind of man that other generations of Kendalls had bred. The price was too great to pay.

It had seemed feasible to go elsewhere and hammer out some kind of a career, but the shadow had followed him, thwarting his prospects. That he should have sought refuge in the marine corps when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb was a logical result of the course he had chosen. In the ranks he was merely a gentleman who had somehow come a cropper, and nobody cared so long as he was not a jailbird. It remained for Burkett to play the part of a scavenger.

But now the circumstances were strangely, brightly changed. The world was revivified for John Kendall. He had the will to succeed, the motive that inspired. Love made life seem new, marvelous, challenging. Could he not free himself of the shackles he had forged and yet not break the pledge of honor he had given to the dead? There must be a way. And as he tramped the deck of the steamer bound out of Colon, he was vouchsafed a glimpse of what might prove to be the way. It was worth attempting.

Hopeful, buoyant, he sought the smoking room for whatever diversion this interminable voyage might offer. In a corner nodded, half asleep, the pudgy man who could not let his wife sit beside a common soldier. Around a table were sociably gathered four other men of more intelligent appearance, an English statesman and traveler who had been pointed out to Kendall as a celebrity, the managing editor of a New York newspaper, a division engineer from the canal, and a retired merchant from the Middle West.

Kendall seated himself near the door, and listened to the conversation, which was confined to impressions of the colossal undertaking on the Isthmus until the Englishman remarked to the journalist:

"I was looking about the hotel for you yesterday—wanted you to go along to the camp of your marines at Bas Obispo. It was worth doing. They are just back from Nicaragua, you

know. I presume you sent a war correspondent with the expedition?"

"No. It wasn't considered important enough as news. The Associated Press service from Panama, and the official reports in Washington seemed sufficient to cover it. Of course, the political rumpus was big, front-page stuff, but that all happened at home."

"We do things a bit differently," replied the Briton. "Tommy Atkins is of no consequence until he gets marching orders. Then it's hurrah, boys, and the whole empire is looking on, even though it is no more than a punitive expedition on the Indian frontier. We're very keen on making heroes of our fighting men. Now those marines of yours"—the well-modulated voice became enthusiastic—"we should make a lot of their sort in England. I spent a rarely interesting afternoon with them. They did big things, those chaps. Not a bit of swagger, though, in telling me about it."

The New York editor was not quite so indifferent as he commented:

"It sounds odd, I suppose, but it never occurred to me to visit the camp. Picked up some good yarns, did you?"

"Well, rather! I should call that a superb little force of regulars. You will get none of the color from the official dispatches, my dear man."

The distinguished Englishman glanced over his shoulder at John Kendall, who appeared to be reading a newspaper. His khaki uniform with the white chevrons was so much like that of the army that the editor, who had not taken the trouble to look at him squarely, said to his friends:

"A noncommissioned officer from the Tenth Infantry, at a guess. The regiment was recently sent to the Isthmus."

"A fine, clean-cut style of chap," observed the Briton. "I fancied he might be a marine. That is like the uniform they wear for tropical service."

"You are right," put in the division engineer. "He is a sergeant of marines."

"I couldn't have told you that," confessed the retired merchant. "I'm not

sure I ever saw a marine. Iowa is off their cruising ground."

The Englishman laughed, and resumed in guarded tones: "I shall have to scrape acquaintance with him. Now, if I were editor of a great American newspaper, I should set my bright young reporters at work to gather that story and tell it as it should be told. You could make your whole country sit up and take notice, as you say. I wish I could make you see one episode as I got it from this man and that—how a sergeant named Kendall charged alone to break down a barbed-wire obstruction, and then led his company against it. It was gorgeous. And, mind you, this company had been shot all to pieces in a previous shindy."

The sergeant of marines dropped his newspaper and stared so hard at the speaker that the editor nudged the engineer, and the retired merchant shifted in his chair. Kendall's face reflected candid, boyish pleasure. This made amends for the scene at the dinner table. Blushing, his manner confused, he was about to slip out of the smoking room, when the Englishman intercepted him with the polite query:

"May I ask if you happen to belong to the expeditionary column?"

"Yes, I was with one of the battalions in Nicaragua," Kendall smilingly admitted. "I couldn't help hearing part of what you had to say just now. And it seemed time for me to march."

"What? And miss the compliments I was paying your comrades? May I have the pleasure of knowing your name?"

"It happens to be John Kendall."

"My word! What a jolly coincidence!" and the famous man beamed as he shook Kendall's hand. "You will join our party? Please do. Where is that confounded smoking-room steward? More cigars, and champagne to celebrate the occasion. It isn't every day we meet a man who deserves the V. C."

With an air of pride in his capture, he presented Kendall to his friends. The hero had a curious, choked-up feeling, and, at first, found little to say.

The editor quietly appraised him, and was not long in discovering that this grave, square-jawed sergeant with the iron-gray hair was not at all the type one expected to find in the ranks of the regular service. It had nettled this very capable journalist that an Englishman should have to tell him what news was, and he proceeded to draw Kendall out, adroitly, deliberately. At one time considered the best reporter in New York, he had not forgotten his training.

Soon at his ease in such congenial company, Kendall described the campaign. When he came to the defense of the viaduct, his restrained, concise narration became detailed and eloquent. There was no mention of himself, but his heart moved him to pay what tribute he could to Captain Allan Ramsay and B Company. He paused for a moment, and the editor murmured:

"And I was ass enough to say it wasn't worth sending a correspondent along. Will you accept my apology, Mr. Kendall?"

"We were not fighting to get ourselves into the newspapers," was the reply. "But I should like to have a more adequate obituary for Captain Ramsay and the men we buried on that knoll than a few lines in an official report."

"They shall have it," declaimed the editor. "That slogan, 'Keep her rolling, boys.' It must not be forgotten. By the Lord Harry, I won't let it!"

"What did I tell you chaps?" chided the Englishman. "Sergeant Kendall is due to tell us what he did, but I wager he turns balky."

"It's a difficult position to put me in, you will acknowledge," said Kendall.

"Never mind. Skip your part of it," suggested the editor. "You are not the kind to go around serenading yourself with a brass band."

"Oh, I can fill in all the gaps," the British celebrity affirmed. "In the camp yesterday I got hold of a wonderful corporal by the name of Brick Johnson. I was vainly searching for Sergeant Kendall, but this Johnson per-

son served my purpose extraordinarily well. I made him talk for an hour on end."

"The windy blatherskite!" exclaimed Kendall. "I couldn't be fonder of him if he was my own brother, but his tongue is most infernally hung in the middle."

"Lucky for me, and, incidentally, for our editorial friend. I am thoroughly competent to do you justice, Mr. Kendall."

They plied the sergeant with animated questions. The pudgy man in the corner no longer nodded. Dismay puckered his commonplace countenance. He wished he had not spoken to the chief steward about removing the soldier to another table. His wife had been pestering him to get acquainted with the titled Englishman. It would be something to brag of to add the autograph of Sir Bartlett Richardson to her collection.

The animated talk ran on until near midnight. The editor reflected that during the week at sea he could write the story himself. And, unless he had lost the trick, it would hit the public between the eyes. He joined Sir Bartlett Richardson in urging Kendall to sit with their party in the dining saloon.

The voyage was henceforth made pleasant for Kendall, thanks to these friendly admirers. Ladies snapped their cameras at him, and the editor begged permission to borrow the films, which transaction he was careful to hide from Kendall. At least one influential newspaper of New York would see to it that the marine corps had its innings, and that Sergeant John Kendall was properly "played up."

When it was found, on the last day of the voyage, that the steamer would pass Sandy Hook in the evening, the editor sent a wireless message to his office, demanding that a tug be sent to take off his copy and films which were to be used in the next morning's issue. He regarded Kendall as a prize which might be snatched by the hated rivals if they were given the chance to interview him.

So late at night was the ship in docking, that the passengers remained on board. Kendall's intention was to continue his journey to Falmouth as soon as possible. By leaving New York at nine o'clock in the morning, he would make the best train connection. He was early awake and dressed, and, while getting his few belongings together, there appeared in the stateroom door the shrewd, kindly face, the grizzled beard, and the sturdy figure of Mr. Hobart Barclay.

In his fist was a folded newspaper with which he delightedly whacked the astonished young man as he exclaimed:

"Woke up to find yourself famous, eh? Wait till David sees this. He'll shut down the mills and declare a holiday. Well, you did it this time. I am as proud as if you really belonged to the tribe of Barclay."

"So that editorial shipmate was busy with his pen," laughed Kendall. "I hope he hasn't libeled me. But seeing you is better than any newspaper blast. How does it happen? And are all well at home?"

"How is Edith Ferris, you really mean," chuckled the elderly gentleman. "Blooming when I left Windward Cove three days ago. She showed my wife your cablegram from Colon, and they held a celebration together, bless their hearts! I came to New York on business, after stopping off at Roehampton to see David. He is hard at work again. The rascal insists on putting half a million dollars into a new mill, and condescended to consult me about it. I called up the steamship office yesterday, and was told that your ship would send her passengers ashore first thing this morning. I was afraid you might skip off before I had a chance to welcome you. My taxicab is waiting on the wharf. Shall we have breakfast somewhere together?"

"I feel a trifle awkward in the uniform of an enlisted man," answered Kendall.

"Stuff and nonsense. They know who I am at my hotel. And this newspaper will soon tell them who *you* are. I should like to parade up Broadway

arm in arm with you. Sergeant John Kendall."

This was an exuberant welcome, indeed, and, as they rode uptown, jovial Hobart Barclay insisted on reading aloud from the managing editor's story which was the *Odyssey* of Colonel Percival Dickenson's marines and blue-jackets. Kendall was too honest to pretend that the swinging, thrilling paragraphs in which he figured were distasteful. He had not sought notoriety, but he was ready to accept, as a gift to Edith Ferris, such credit as he might deserve. Into a hotel whose rates would have staggered a major general, not to mention a sergeant, marched Hobart Barclay with his capture in tow. Ordinarily the most unassuming of millionaires, he passed through the lobby as though he owned it. A few words of explanation at the office, and Kendall's khaki uniform made him the mark of curious, cordial admiration.

Hobart Barclay ordered the breakfast, a twinkle in his eyes. Apparently he inferred that the marines had nothing at all to eat in Nicaragua. And, while they ate and talked, he was studying John Kendall in his quiet, observant manner. Here was a man, still youthful, thought he, who loved a girl of rare worth and attractiveness, and was loved by her. Life must be very precious to him. It could not be otherwise, notwithstanding the fact that he had hitherto failed to win what the world called success. And yet he had esteemed his life as no more than a trifle when he heard the trumpet call of duty, nor had his comrades fallen short of this ideal.

The brazen shield of war had two sides. Hobart Barclay was catching glimpses of the better side, as exemplified by these sailors and marines, who had done what they could to show that if duty was worth living for, it was also worth dying for. The older man's intonations were contemplative as he said:

"You ought not to regret enlisting in the marine corps, Kendall. I should call you a rich man. Now what plans

have you? I tried to discuss your affairs with you once before, but you were remarkably uncommunicative."

"I am afraid I was rude, sir," smiled Kendall. "It was just after the row with Burkett in the country club. I was more interested in squaring accounts with him than in anything else. It was one reason why I couldn't think of leaving the service."

"This newspaper eulogy does not include Lieutenant Burkett among the heroes, but insinuates rather than states that you took command of the company because he was guilty of cowardice in the face of the enemy. He was not really ill and wounded?"

"He was a quitter," briefly returned Kendall. "I got him where I wanted him. It seems hardly worth talking about now. And yet for a while it seemed a big issue."

"Then he is no longer a reason why you should stick to the marine corps," Hobart Barclay went on to say. "There was another reason. Possibly it still exists. You tried to put me off the track when we talked before. It was a conjecture of mine, and I still hold to it. I should very much like to know what really caused you to enlist. I share David's faith and interest in you."

"During the voyage from Colon, I made up my mind to have a talk with you, Mr. Barclay," replied Kendall. "And when you came on board this morning, it seemed as if you must have had a sort of prompting. Some might call it telepathy, but it was more like Providence to me. Yes, I am ready to leave the marine corps, if I can find the way out. I can never be a commissioned officer, as I presume you know. And I have fallen in love with the niece of a colonel of the corps, my own commander, which I am quite sure you know, sir. This is a crime which the service would never forgive or forget, for I can step no higher than a sergeantcy, ranking with a chief petty officer of the navy."

"I understand," replied Hobart Barclay. "David has sputtered a good deal about that. He has been a rampant

democrat since that visit to the navy yard when you were under arrest."

"I ought to explain to you the episode of my arrest," resumed Kendall, with a smile, "but will you be satisfied to know that both Miss Ferris and Colonel Dickenson were aware of what really happened? There were good reasons why they should keep it to themselves."

"Never mind that," was the brisk comment. "Edith has said certain things, and I have guessed others. I have formed the opinion that you had nothing to blush for in losing your grade as a quartermaster sergeant. Fortunate, wasn't it? You would have missed your great opportunity in Nicaragua. Now please return to the main argument."

Without hesitation, for he had prepared himself for this interview, Kendall began to explain:

"As you perhaps know from David, my people were New York State bankers for more than a hundred years. It was always a private bank, and a sound, conservative one until in the latter part of his life my father was tempted into trying to make money too fast. He lacked the training and the temperament to succeed in any other than the traditional lines of investment. The bank failed, and he went down with it. What I mean is that the shock killed him. The community spared him and believed in his integrity. This was quite right and proper. I was glad to have it so. My father deserved more sympathy than condemnation."

John Kendall paused. He could not defame the dead, no, not for any price. He would leave a gap in his explanation, and hope that Hobart Barclay had sufficient faith in him to bridge it.

"I was unable to salvage the wreck and try to float the bank again," he continued. "My mother had left me some property, and, of course, I turned it over to the creditors. After stripping myself of everything I owned, there was nothing more I could do to help, so I went away from Hardenwyck."

"It was a moral obligation on your part, a debt of honor? Your father

had not admitted you to partnership," suggested Hobart Barclay.

"I regarded it as a family affair, sir," answered John Kendall. "My father had bought certain industrial and mining stocks which looked like almost worthless assets when the bank failed. But before affairs were finally wound up, two or three of them jumped in value, one in particular going to par."

"What did that mean to the assets of the bank?"

"My father had bought the stuff at speculative prices, and it was closed out for about fifty thousand dollars. This reduced the total loss to the depositors to something like forty-five thousand dollars, after all the family real estate and personal property had been sacrificed. It may sound like a rather trifling bank failure to you, perhaps, but it loomed big in a town like Hardenwyck where most of the people are comfortably off, and few of them can be called wealthy. When we closed our doors, the bank owed a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars more than it was prepared to pay."

"And that deficit has been since cut down to forty-five thousand or thereabouts?" Mr. Barclay asked.

"Yes, sir. Now, I have a notion that if I could go back there, ready to pay off this indebtedness and reopen Kendall's Bank, the proposition could be made to win out."

Coming from a man in the uniform of a sergeant of marines, this should have sounded fantastic, but hard-headed old Hobart Barclay listened as attentively as though he were presiding at a directors' meeting in Wall Street.

"Wiping out the remaining debts you would regard as like buying the good will of a business, eh, Kendall?"

"Yes, and the good will of the community. It would not be like opening a new bank. A good many of my father's friends would take a favorable view of the enterprise if I should put it on its feet again."

"How much working capital ought you to have?" was the query.

"It seems to me that twenty-five

thousand dollars should set the bank going in a modest way."

"Is there another bank in the town?"

"A small State bank was started soon after our failure, but there is still room for Kendall's."

"What makes you think you could make a success at banking, Sergeant John Kendall?"

"I tried one year of it, and I was getting the hang of things pretty fast, if I do say so. It is in the Kendall blood, you know. And with all due respect to banking, it would puzzle many a bank president to qualify as a first-class quartermaster sergeant. What I mean is that in the service I have had valuable training in accounting, in business system, in office organization, and in handling and judging men."

"There is something in that, Kendall. I did not realize how efficient a quartermaster sergeant had to be until David explained the job to me. Well, you have other recommendations. Possibly I consider them more important. Character is a banker's most solid capital, after all. He can usually borrow money on it, and it brings in business for him. Have you a definite proposition to make to me?"

"I haven't got as far as that, Mr. Barclay. You have banking interests in New York and Roehampton, and you know the game. This may be only a wild dream of mine. I should want you and David to look at it on a basis of dollars and cents. In other words, is it a sound investment to back Kendall's Bank? You would have to make your own investigation. All I want is a living salary to start with, not much more than I draw in the marine corps, and a share of the profits so that I can hope to win back the bank some day and own it myself. If you care to investigate you will find that I am under a cloud at home, but it will clear if I go back, wipe the slate of the remaining debts, and reopen the bank."

"You had better let me form my own opinions of your past record," exclaimed Hobart Barclay. "I shall not pursue the methods of Lieutenant

Burkett. Why don't you wait and go to Falmouth early this afternoon? I know you want to get to Windward Cove as soon as ever the Lord will let you. From here I am going down to my New York office. David is kind enough to let my name remain on the door as president of The Roehampton Mills Company. I suggest that you come along with me and dictate to a stenographer all the facts you can recall about the business done by Kendall's Bank, the names of the influential depositors, the commercial connections, and so on. Then perhaus I may care to run up to Hardenwyck and get acquainted."

"You really might take it seriously?" almost gasped John Kendall, his tanned face aglow.

"I will go so far as to say that David and I might find riskier investments listed on the Stock Exchange this morning than a partnership with one John Kendall, now a sergeant of marines."

CHAPTER XVII.

Kendall reached Falmouth so late in the evening, that, sorely against his will, he decided to spend the night at the navy yard and proceed to Windward Cove at a more seemly hour. He found his small room in the barracks as he had left it, his personal property neatly stowed away.

The simple quarters looked stripped and bare. He sat upon his cot and wondered if he must pick up the old routine again. With a kind of deliberate carefulness, as though it were a ceremony, he lifted the lid of a trunk and took out a gray worsted suit, a stiff hat, gloves, a stick, and well-made black shoes. Possibly he had worn the uniform of a noncommissioned officer of marines for the last time. He opened the case of his watch and read the inscription aloud. His service had been worth while.

Before reveille sounded he was up and singing while he dressed. The marine-guard detachment had not yet trooped in for breakfast when he was striding toward the ferry. While pass-

ing the house of Colonel Dickenson he was astonished to see Mrs. Ferris walking to and fro on the piazza. Although expecting no sign of recognition, he raised his hat, for she was the mother of Edith.

Miracles still happen, and Mrs. Ferris proved it by halting in her restless promenade and calling out: "Oh, Sergeant Kendall! May I see you for a moment?"

Stepping nearer, he noted that she was pitifully haggard and nervous, and he forgot his dislike. In her breathless, eager manner she hastened to explain:

"I am sure I don't understand what you are doing here. I haven't slept a wink since daylight, and it seemed as if I should fly to pieces if I stayed in the house. I am worried to death about Colonel Dickenson. I haven't known what to do. The officers here persuaded me not to take the first steamer to the Isthmus, which was my intention. The colonel was having the very best of care, they assured me. Edith came right over to see me as soon as I telephoned her the news that he had been wounded. And she gave me the same advice. But I want to be with him, and perhaps I ought to go. And now you appear, and you must have come straight from Panama, and you can tell me the truth about Colonel Dickenson."

Kendall knew that, for once, she was not playing a part. Devotion to her brother was the redeeming trait which covered a multitude of sins. She showed that it was possible to respect her.

"The colonel is out of danger," he assured her. "I talked with the surgeons and nurses only a day before I sailed on furlough. You have nothing to reproach yourself for. He will be brought home to you just as soon as it is safe to move him."

Mrs. Ferris looked less woebegone and ceased to wring her hands.

"Then I have not neglected him? He is really coming home soon? He will surely get well?" she implored.

"It takes a lot of lead to finish as seasoned a campaigner as Colonel

Dickenson. Once he breathes this bracing autumn air he will get his strength back in no time."

Mrs. Ferris smiled her gratitude, then seemed to realize that she had vowed never to admit the existence of this detestable sergeant of marines, and was at a loss for words with which to end the interview. Kendall bowed and was about to hasten on, when she condescended to inform him:

"I read of you in yesterday's New York *Chronicle*, and the Boston afternoon papers reprinted most of it. You appear to have behaved very well, Sergeant Kendall."

"Thank you, Mrs. Ferris. Praise from you is praise indeed."

"Oh, I shouldn't call it praise," she returned with an amusing touch of her old manner. "An enlisted man is expected to do his duty."

"Of course. Perhaps you have already heard the story of the expedition from Lieutenant Burkett."

"I have not seen Lieutenant Burkett since he was ordered home on sick leave," she returned, rather defiantly. "There was some criticism of his conduct, I understand. A slander, no doubt. He is a commissioned officer of the marine corps."

"He needs no other defense," seriously replied Kendall, but Mrs. Ferris suspected sarcasm, and braced herself to renew hostilities.

Kendall, however, was only too glad to foster a truce. He perceived that the mother of Edith had changed her opinion of him. She followed the crowd, and just now John Kendall's star was in the ascendency. He was a notable person.

"When did you arrive?" was her pointed question.

"Last night, and I am now on my way to Windward Cove."

"Ah! Please don't let me detain you, sergeant," and Mrs. Ferris, who had slightly thawed, began to congeal. "I merely wished to ask you about Colonel Dickenson because you belong to his command."

And now John Kendall, hastening to

the goal of his heart's desire, became singularly timorous for a hero of the Nicaraguan expedition. He resolved to say nothing to Edith about his interview with Hobart Barclay. The plan had a preposterous sound. The conservative father of David had been swayed by an impulse of friendly enthusiasm and warm-hearted interest. When it came to an actual investment he would be slow to commit himself. It was an air castle likely to dissolve at a touch. And when it vanished, what would there be to offer the undaunted girl who was waiting to marry her sergeant of marines?

But when she swept through the doorway to meet him in Mrs. Ackroyd Kimberly's reception room, a radiant creature all love, and pride, and confidence, his misgivings were routed. She felt no anxiety for the future. Her own had come back to her, and the world was bounded by the circle of his arms. What they said at first was somewhat fragmentary and interrupted. Edith's voice muffled by the proximity of a gray coat. Presently she stood far enough away to survey him from head to foot, as though to assure herself that he had really returned undamaged by the accidents of war.

"But you look like a man who has just strolled out of his club," she exclaimed. "I have been picturing you in a grimy uniform with a few wounds that you were careful to write me nothing about."

"And what would Mrs. Ackroyd Kimberly have said to that? Did you expect me to turn up as a scarecrow in khaki?"

"Bless her foolish, romantic heart! She wouldn't have minded. She is on guard at this very moment to make sure that we are left all to ourselves. She vowed she wouldn't close this house and go to New York until you came back to the navy yard. And I verily believe that Mrs. Hobart Barclay feels the same way. For two persons in the humbler walks of life we are quite important, you wonderful John Kendall. Oh, yes, I saw the newspapers. And I read every word to Mrs. Kimberly."

"And I saw your mother this morning, Edith. She spoke to me."

"Poor, dear mother! Then she had seen the newspapers. She is very sensitive to public opinion. We are becoming fond of each other. But I haven't dared mention you. She can stand no more than one shock at a time. We had better wait until my uncle comes home, don't you think?"

John Kendall looked perplexed. Unless fortune blew a favoring gale before his furlough should expire, announcing the engagement to Colonel Percival Dickenson would be a stiffer task than charging barbed-wire entanglements.

"I had a dream, Edith, while coming up in the steamer from Colon," said he, resorting to subterfuge. "It was very pleasant and it seemed possible enough, while I was dreaming. You and I were going to live in my own town. The old brick house where I was born has passed out of the family, but we planned to rent a smaller house on the same street in the hope that some day we might buy back the Kendall place. I was in the bank, John Kendall's Bank, and the janitor and handy man was old Mike Devoe, the gunnery sergeant, who used to keep you from falling overboard when you were a little girl in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Mr. Hobart Barclay and David had investigated the circumstances of the bank's failure and concluded that it was a sound investment to set the business going again."

Edith listened with the most animated interest. If John Kendall could dream as sensibly as this, what couldn't he accomplish when awake? She took fire at once, advancing this plausible suggestion:

"It is easy enough to make part of the dream come true. Gunner Sergeant Devoe is hanging about Falmouth looking for something to do. His time has run out, and he has his pension, but it makes him miserable to be idle. He worships the ground you walk on, John, and he would be delighted to work for small wages. I had a long talk with him the other day. We or-

ganized the John Kendall Mutual Admiration Society."

"But Mike is not what you'd call an essential factor of the project," smiled Kendall.

"I understand that, but he makes the dream sound like a prophecy. There is something real and solid about the fat gunnery sergeant," reasonably replied Edith. "He must weigh two hundred and fifty pounds."

"Mike is no phantom, but the rest of it was too good to come true."

"I don't see why you have so little faith, John Kendall. If you don't suggest this scheme to the Barclays, I certainly shall. You don't know how much they think of you. And I have been telling them a few things behind your back. Do you care to walk over there before luncheon? Mrs. Barclay will scold me if I keep you all to myself."

"Have you asked Mrs. Kimberly's permission?" demanded the stern disciplinarian of a sergeant.

"She has given me a whole day off. I suppose you expect me to show you a pass."

"That depends on your rank."

"I rank as one of the family, if you please. Don't forget your gloves and stick. You dropped them when I came into the room. I supposed that nothing could flurry a first sergeant."

"My duty at that moment was to present arms to my superior officer," said Kendall, as they passed into the hall.

Of course, Mrs. Hobart Barclay insisted that they stay for luncheon, and John Kendall was to fetch his things out from the navy yard and make himself at home. This was to be his headquarters, and David would be very cross if he refused. To look at John Kendall, one couldn't comprehend that he had been away at all, she declared, and he must never again risk his life so recklessly, which sentiment Edith emphatically indorsed.

Kendall assured them he intended taking the best of care of his estimable self, and began a regular course of exercise that very afternoon by tramping

over the golf course with Edith and showing her how much he had forgotten about the pastime which was a gentler game than he had been playing of late.

Mrs. Ackroyd Kimberly was a lenient and ardently sympathetic employer who informed Edith at the end of this day that Mr. Kendall must not be allowed to consider himself neglected. Life was short and youth was fleeting, and it soothed her nerves and made her feel quite rested to know that Edith and her hero had found happiness. Even Mr. Ackroyd Kimberly came out of a trance among his books and manuscripts to remark that, although history was filled with tragic instances of romance that blossomed only to wither miserably, nevertheless he felt moved to wish this handsome pair as much good fortune as could be expected in a world which was a good deal of a botch at best.

A fortnight of inaction, and Kendall began to fret. Hobart Barclay had been detained in New York much longer than expected, wherefore he had to delay the promised visit to Hardenwyck. David found it impossible to leave Roehampton because of a rush of orders which kept the mills running night and day. Kendall's furlough was slipping past. Little by little Edith had coaxed him into confessing that his hope of going back to Hardenwyck was not all a dream. She showed neither doubt nor impatience. Things were bound to adjust themselves serenely whether or not her incomparable John Kendall remained in the marine corps.

Again happening to meet the disconsolate gunnery sergeant in Falmouth, she made him promise to take no permanent employment pending instructions from her.

"'Tis a chance to work for Sergeant Kendall ye have in mind?" said Mike Devoe. "I will wait, for there's no stoppin' him. An' so he will be quittin' the service. Has he asked the colonel for his discharge?"

"Not yet. But my uncle is expected home next week. I shall come in to

see him at once, and I may have news for you, Michael Devoe."

It was David Barclay who brought the news which Edith so firmly expected. He dashed in from Roehampton on the day before Colonel Dickenson was brought back from the Isthmus, violently assaulted John Kendall, and blithely explained:

"Dad is staying at the mills while I take a look at you, Jack. It was my turn. He grabbed you in New York. You certainly picked a front seat in that Nicaragua show."

"Has—has be been to Hardenwyck yet?" stammered poor Kendall.

"Sure thing. He hopped off a train at Roehampton to tell me about it, and I led him gently into the office and told him not to budge until I came back. Now, listen, Jack—listen carefully to me. Barclay and Son have sized you up as a pretty good thing—"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, Dave, get to it!" shouted Kendall. "Was I as crazy as I must have seemed to your father?"

"Sane in spots, Jack. That bank of yours is better than a gamble."

"And will you put me in there to show you what I can do with it?"

"Why not? Father has the scheme worked out in detail. He will explain it to you—"

Lifting David out of his path, and tossing him to one side, John Kendall sprinted in the direction of the Ackroyd Kimbellys'. The tidings delighted Edith, but she was not surprised to the point of agitation. How could the Barcleys have done anything else? It now remained for her to interview Colonel Percival Dickenson, which she thought advisable before Kendall applied for his discharge.

Safe and sheltered once more in his home at the Sagamore Navy Yard, the colonel found a sister whose devoted care was unselfishly affectionate. In anxious solitude, waiting for him, praying for him, Mrs. Ferris had learned to think of others. He could walk a few steps with the aid of a cane, and when he heard Edith's voice, he got out of his old leather chair, and ad-

vanced as far as the door of the library. Her strong, young arms supported him as she said:

"You are to obey orders and lie down on the cot in your 'den,' Colonel Percival Dickenson."

"Colonel Dickenson? You don't know your own uncle, Edith," he replied, making a brave effort to hold himself erect. With uncertain step he retreated to the library table and caught up a newspaper, pointing to the first item under the heading, "*Army and Navy Orders.*" Edith read it aloud:

"Promotions. Colonel Percival R. Dickenson, U. S. Marine Corps, to be Brigadier General.

Edith instantly conferred further distinction by kissing the brigadier general's white mustache while she held his face between her hands.

"Oh, you splendid old thing," she cried. "There never was an honor more deserved."

"I tried to earn it, my dear. I hardly think it came through any pull in Washington. There is another bit of news in that same list of navy orders which may interest you. Here it is: 'Second Lieutenant Thomas Burkett. Resignation accepted, to take effect immediately.'"

General Percival Dickenson's blue eyes gleamed humorously behind his glasses as he added:

"The young man's health was such that he could not remain in the service."

"I heard that he was feeling poorly," demurely observed Edith. "I am afraid he has not been quite robust enough for the marine corps since his visit to the Windward Cove Country Club. He went into a decline after that and failed steadily."

"And your opinion is that you read his symptoms much quicker than your blundering uncle?" said he.

"Our conversation is nearing the critical stage, Brigadier General Dickenson. You really must stretch yourself on the cot and try to be as calm as you possibly can. Or am I too exciting? Would the doctor forbid me? I have important matters to discuss."

"You are a tonic delightful to take," exclaimed her uncle as he let her lead him into the little den. "And if there is to be any quarreling, you will have to do it all. I don't feel up to losing my temper. Now fire away. You are still a girl of one idea, I suppose."

"Very much more so. Oh, tremendously more so. I am an enthusiast on one subject, and his name is John Kendall." Edith smiled and gazed, with a trace of anxiety, at her despotic uncle, but no frowning lines appeared between his bushy brows. So far he was beautifully calm. She spoke more rapidly, as though to forestall an explosion which might be smoldering.

"You see, my precious, distinguished brigadier of an uncle, this has been a very unusual situation. You might call it queer. When John Kendall made up his mind that he just had to marry me, he naturally wanted to ask your permission, because you were my guardian, and stood in the place of a father to me. And I felt that when a man proposed to me and I accepted him on the spot, I should tell my mother and tell you. But you were both so hostile that all this was utterly out of the question."

"So you became engaged to the fellow," growled the invalid. "It was bound to happen. Have you gone and married him yet?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" Edith vigorously protested. "He won't let me marry him. He is as stubborn as you are. It seems to be a characteristic of the bravest men. They are hard to manage. Why, look what he did after I told him particularly that he must not risk his life in action!"

"He helped me win a victory, Edith."

"But he might have been killed, Uncle Percival."

"It's a wonder he wasn't. He was to report to me the day after we entered Leon, but that rascal of a rebel popped me off my horse. I intended to prepare an official commendation. It is not too late now, of course. I want to see him about the matter."

"He wants to see you about another matter," resumed Edith, who was ex-

tremely, even loftily, self-possessed. "He desires to ask the hand of your niece and ward in marriage."

"And tell me about his prospects?" most emphatically exclaimed the brigadier. "That's the deuce of it, Edith. I respect the man. I can't help myself. It's a good riddance that he drove Burkett out of the service. I don't care what he did before he enlisted. By Godfrey, he has lived it down! But he can never be anything higher than a sergeant."

"That is precisely why he refused to marry me," returned Edith, who was the calmer of the two. "I didn't care. We could live on his pay and allowances, in a little cottage outside the navy yard. Social ostracism? Pooh! I should have John Kendall. But he wouldn't listen to it. He couldn't bear to think of the officers' wives cutting me dead, and all that sort of thing. And he was troubled about you."

"When did you discuss all this, Edith?"

"Right after he came back on furlough from the Isthmus. Mr. Hobart Barclay has a great deal of confidence in him, and took under consideration a plan to back my wonderful John Kendall in reestablishing his father's bank in Hardenwyck. While Mr. Barclay was investigating it, which he did very thoroughly, I told John Kendall that he must not be disappointed or discouraged if nothing came of the scheme. It made no difference to me. If it turned out to be best that he serve out his enlistment, I didn't propose to wait in single lonesomeness."

"And what did Hobart Barclay conclude to do?" demanded her uncle, in excited accents.

"You will have to wait a minute, Uncle Percival. I am trying to be cool and collected and proceed in a logical manner. It is the result of my training as a shock absorber to Mrs. Ackroyd Kimberly. Mr. Hobart Barclay has satisfied himself that John Kendall was never guilty of the slightest dishonesty while he was employed in his father's bank. So much for your objecting to him on that score."

"Hobart Barclay personally investigated Kendall's record in his home town, Edith, and found nothing wrong with it?"

"As clean as yours in the marine corps, General Dickenson. And now that Sergeant Kendall has become a hero, the very men in Hardenwyck who helped to defame him are declaring that he always was a fine young man. The local newspaper has been praising his valor to the skies, printing his picture, and telling Hardenwyck that it ought to be proud of him. And the friendship of such a man as Hobart Barclay made a great impression. It was a vindication to have him appear in John Kendall's behalf. Nor is there any criminal stain against John Kendall, senior. The townspeople are now inclined to believe that it was more bad judgment than intent to do wrong that wrecked the bank. My John Kendall took all the blame on his shoulders, you know."

"A habit of his," said her uncle. "That escapade of yours at the old wharf was another instance. I had to say nothing about that, Edith, but it went against my grain. I felt all the time that I owed him an apology. Well, what now?"

"He will tell you, Uncle Percival. His furlough expired yesterday, but Major Coolidge was able to get it extended for another week."

"Um-m, he wants his discharge from the marine corps, I presume."

"An honorable discharge with your indorsement," replied Edith. "It must come through you. He wouldn't have it any other way."

"But how does he intend to support my niece? What was Hobart Barclay's decision?"

"He and Mr. David Barclay will reorganize the bank in a small way, but John Kendall can explain all that. Do you want to see him right away?"

"It seems a case for prompt action," smiled the brigadier. "I shall have to send him back to duty with the battalion unless we get busy."

"You are sure it is not too exciting for you?"

"I can stand it, but what about your mother?"

"I intend to see her at once, Uncle Percival. And if you don't mind, I will telephone John Kendall to come over. He is staying at the Barclays', and he motored in to Falmouth with me this morning. I can reach him. But you mustn't let him know that I have been discussing his affairs. He thinks he is extremely capable of taking care of himself."

"I should judge so, and also of taking care of you," blandly observed the invalid. "I hate to lose him from the service, but when it comes to a choice between the marine corps and my lovely rose of an Edith—well, I can't blame him. He had the cheek of the devil, but I shall not try to keep him down."

She left him reclining upon the cot, his hands behind his head, his gaze far distant. He had manfully surrendered to the inevitable. Mrs. Ferris had been hovering between the hall and the library, curiously eying the closed door of her brother's private retreat. Edith was so upsetting and it was thoughtless of her to harrow dear Percival and perhaps cause a relapse. She dared not command Edith to leave the sick man in peace, for she was sure to defy her mother. There was no heated argument behind the closed door, and poor Percival's voice sounded affectionately interested. Mrs. Ferris looked firm and declared to herself that Edith should not wind *her* about her finger. Alas, the artful daughter, changing her tactics, disposed of her mother in a brief scene, remarking as they met in the library:

"You will congratulate me, I'm sure. I am engaged to marry a banker."

"A banker, Edith? But I thought you were in love with John Kendall."

"I am. He is. You will probably wish to make your home with Uncle Percival, but we shall be glad to have you come and see us, in Hardenwyck, where the Kendall family has been socially and financially prominent since the Revolution. You approve, of course."

"But you were going to disgrace us

by marrying a sergeant of marines," cried the bewildered mother.

"So I was. But you are not to be angry with me any more, and you are going to forgive the Barclays for introducing me to a perfectly impossible person who disguised himself as a gentleman."

"Edith, you come upstairs with me this minute, and tell me everything about it," cried Mrs. Ferris, grasping her daughter by the arm. "What are the plans for the wedding? Where is it to be? When? What have you decided to wear? How long have you known that I was to have a banker for a son-in-law? Why did you let me suffer and pine in ignorance? Then Lieutenant Burkett was deceiving me! How unprincipled of him! I had an intuition that he was not absolutely reliable, even if he did enjoy an income of twenty thousand a year besides his pay. Your position as the wife of a banker, and such a very old family, will probably be much better than if you had married into the marine corps. And Mr. Kendall had such a quiet, dignified air of distinction that, even when we first met him at the Barclays, I was sure he didn't belong in the ranks."

"Oh, mother, mother, how you do run on!" laughed Edith as they mounted the stairs. "I verily believe that you and I are to get on well together, after all."

"Percival says I am much easier to live with," was the complacent response. "And there is no doubt in the world, Edith, that if you had not been so obstinate and irritating this would have been the happiest of households. But I am willing to overlook it all and forgive you. By taking matters into your own hands, you have done very well for yourself. You might go farther and fare worse."

Within this same hour, John Kendall appeared at the front door and sent in his card to General Dickenson. This was an unprecedented act for a sergeant, but precedents were going by the board. Fastidiously dressed though he was in civilian garb, Kendall's hand

went up in salute, and he stood with heels together as his commander confronted him in the library.

"Sit down, won't you, Kendall?" was the kindly greeting. "I infer that your business with me does not precisely concern the service. Will you join me in a cigar?"

In this manner the uncle of Edith conveyed to her lover that this meeting was between two gentleman brought together on a footing of equality. The old soldier's pride of caste was still rebellious, but he gallantly paid no heed to it. He was willing to accept John Kendall as worthy to be the husband of Edith Ferris, and the barrier of the service must no longer be regarded as an obstacle unsurmountable. Kendall knew what thoughts were passing through the brigadier's mind and realized how hard it was to banish prejudice.

"I should like to get my discharge, sir, if it is agreeable to you," said the first sergeant. "Would you like to hear my reasons?"

"The principal one has been talking to me," was the reply, in tones of assumed gruffness. "You are asking a discharge by favor, not by purchase, I assume."

"I can buy my way out; that is, I have money enough," rejoined Kendall, "but I should prefer to have it the other way."

"You have won the right to ask it," stoutly exclaimed the other. "I shall take pleasure in sending your record along with the papers that will honorably discharge you from the service. But I wish you could be kept in the corps. In such a case as yours the age limit should be waived by special enactment and a commission awarded for gallant and meritorious conduct. I can't expect you to stay with us as an enlisted man. We are lucky to have had you."

"If I were a few years younger, and eligible to work for a lieutenant's commission, I should think of staying where I am, General Dickenson, but—"

"But you hope to better yourself outside, Kendall. I hope you do. You

have had some unpleasant experiences as an enlisted man, very unpleasant. Have you found any compensations?"

A strong tide of feeling was in Kendall's face, as he replied:

"There have been rich compensations, sir. Serving under you has been one of them. And I helped to 'keep her rolling' with Captain Allan Ramsay and B Company. I have learned what discipline is, what it is to obey, and it has done more than I can tell you to make a man of me. I am proud of the service, of the men and officers in it, of the work it does. And I wish my country could see it as I do."

"I am a sick man, but I could sit and listen to that kind of talk all day long," declared Percival Dickenson, his wasted features alight with gratification.

"I am carrying away no grievances, sir. I shall never hear the trumpet calls without a homesick thrill."

"Before we go any further, Kendall," and the general raised a warning hand, "you understood where I stood, didn't you, when I indorsed the revocation of your warrant as quartermaster sergeant?"

"You could not have acted otherwise. Yes, I understood."

"Then it is all clear sailing for the really important part of this discussion. Edith has been doing duty as a skirmisher. You and she appear to have organized an advance base movement. So you do not take me wholly unprepared."

"I wish to marry your niece, sir, as soon as I am discharged from the service."

Percival Dickenson offered the sergeant his hand, and said, his stern mouth twitching:

"Be good to her, John Kendall. I love her more than anything else in the world. You have fought a plucky fight for her, and she has stood by you through thick and thin. Now tell me how you plan to take care of her. I haven't got used to you at all as a banker."

"It sounds rather impressive, but it is really a modest job," Kendall explained. "The Barclays think I have

a good chance to win out. I shall have enough to live on, in a simple way, a stake in the success of the undertaking, and pride in a family tradition to drive me to do my level best for myself and Edith."

"The pride of the service—a different interpretation of it," murmured the brigadier. "Yes, I know what that feeling is, Kendall. And I shall not worry about your making good. Well, my boy, for I must call you that hereafter, Congress once voted me the medal of honor, the greatest prize I could possess. I don't know how much weight my recommendation will carry, but I should like to see you receive the same reward for what you did to save your battalion on the hills outside of Leon. And when I say this, you know what I think of you."

Edith and John Kendall went out of the house together and crossed the navy yard to the ferry landing. The niece of the commanding officer walked openly with a sergeant of marines, and the wondering sentries stared at the sight. The wall of the service, the immemorial barrier of the military caste, was no longer to stand between these two. They turned to look at the barracks, the parade ground, the gray warships, and the old wharf down beyond the warehouses.

"I am glad to go and yet glad that I served," said John Kendall, glancing up at the flag that soared from its tall mast in the center of the navy yard.

"I understand," softly replied Edith Ferris, "and I shall always be proud that I knew you and loved you when you were a sergeant of marines."

THE END.

In next issue you will get the opening chapters of E. Phillips Oppenheim's new novel—the romantic adventures of a missing messenger.



THE CORNER-LOT TRAGEDY

WHEN Frank P. Morse, publicity agent, traveler, and sight-seer, was making one of his Western trips, he struck a town which, he was assured, was about to be caught up in the golden swing of a land boom.

"Buy a corner lot in this town, and before long you'll be a rich man," a real-estate agent told him.

Being naturally of a trustful and confiding nature, Morse bought the corner lot. Explicitly speaking, it was a corner lot on the map, but a magical eye could not have picked it out of the wilderness of fields and woods in which it was located at the time of the purchase. Morse, unconsciously acting with great genius the rôle of the simplike sucker, returned to the East.

At regular intervals thereafter he received notices from the collector of taxes for the city which, being reduced to the vernacular, read approximately as follows:

"You poor boob, kick in with two hundred bucks. We are about to lay one of the streets which will put the corner into your corner lot."

After the "simp" had contributed as much in taxes as the land cost originally, he became indignant and wrote a sarcastic letter to the collector, indicating that he would like to take a recess from the tax business and sell the lot. This was the reply he received:

"Streets are a necessity for corner lots. All such improvements are assessed against the property. Your lot is extremely valuable, hence the big assessments. However, owing to the lack of any demand for property in this city, it is impossible to sell the lot for any cash consideration."

Wheezer Jones and the Wise Little Mister

By W. W. Aulick

Author of "A Joke on Gingly-Smythe," Etc.

A horse is the wisest animal in the world. Any horse is wise, but a thoroughbred race horse is the daddy of them all. By way of illustration there is this story of Little Mister, the horse that Wheezer Jones backed to win the Fountain Stakes

WHEEZER JONES, the sere, was engaged in his favorite indoor sport—the getting of Gannon's goat—an occupation at which long practice had graduated him to a proud proficiency. To be perfectly honest about it, Mr. Gannon, himself, had started the festivities, calling out to Honey Carmody, his all-round man, as the ancient Jones entered the polite pool room for proper people:

"Call up Jim Villepigue's for me, honey, there's a good boy. Tell Jim to reserve me the best table for four he's got for this evening. I want a special dinner for the party. And tell Jim to set a basket of drinking wine on the ice, and we'll be along to lap it up against the time it gets coldened."

"Yes, Mr. Gannon," said his faithful slave. "What's the answer to all this party?"

"Why, honey," said Gannon, in affected amaze. "I thought you see him come in! That there old billy-goat face that just darkened the door is Wheezer Jones, better known as Easy Money Jones. He ain't win a bet since Blaine run for president. Eat at Jim Villepigue's to-night! Well, I guess yes. If Wheezer backs his judgment strong enough, I'll eat real food all season!"

Old Jones pretended not to hear, though there was nothing aurally defective about him, if he was over the three-score line. He was a patriarchal-

looking person, with a silky, white beard, and an eye as mild as the reddest portion of a furnace interior. Just about the time a stranger would expect Mr. Jones to be on the point of saying grace, Wheezer would unload the most sulphurous collection of blasphemy it was possible to confine in one constitution. Hoyle was an authority on games of chance, Joe Choate had them coming to him to decide legal points, but when it came to the profession of profanity, the fully tutored referred to Wheezer Jones as the master.

Jones and Gannon had been battling, verbally and in a money way of speaking, for many years. They loved each other with the abiding affection of the terrier and the tomcat. They agreed almost as well as if they were married. If Gannon mentioned casually that the day was a Thursday, Wheezer Jones ostentatiously took out a pocket calendar, and tried to catch the pool-room keeper in a lie. If Jones ventured the thought that there would be rain, Gannon wrote on a blackboard "eight to five it doesn't rain" and taunted the old man to bet.

Mr. Gannon, emerging from the sanctum, where money was received and paid out, and bets recorded, saw Jones apparently for the first time, though his taunts had been loud enough to carry to Forty-second Street, and the Gannon establishment was in the Fifties.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Jones?" greeted Gannon. "Have much trouble getting out of the Old Folks' Home for a day off?"

"How are you, my son?" replied Wheezer, with suspicious cordiality. "Just thought I'd drop in and read my paper for a half hour or so."

"Got to hand it to the old fluff, at that," said Gannon, in a loud aside to Slats, the chap who dealt "bank" for the establishment, "making out he knows how to read!"

This failed to rouse the veteran, who smoothed out his paper, and proceeded to scan the news. Suddenly, old Jones jumped out of his chair, cracked his heels together, and crumpled the paper into a hard ball, which he flung at an evil-looking black cat.

"It's a lie!" he shrieked. "It's a sizz-whilking, yellow-hearted blankety-blanked lie! I'll stand for pretty nigh everything I see in print, but this here statement is too bloody awful. It gives me a sickness to my stummick."

"What is it, Wheezer?" asked Gannon ineptuously.

"Why, the rotten, lying sheet," sputtered Jones, "has got a dispatch from Chicago saying a white gal married a pool-room keeper!"

Gannon faded away into the inner office, followed by the laughter of the sixty or so players.

Jones looked up quickly, and remarked in a tone meant for Gannon to hear: "They ain't nothing to laugh about, fellows. It's a pretty serious business. Everybody that's knee-high to a tumblebug knows it's against the law in the State of Illinois for white gals and pool-room keepers to intermarry—call it miscegnation, or something."

Gannon found sufficient to occupy him in the office until he judged the effect of Wheezer Jones' pleasantries had worn off. Then he strolled out into the big room, and stopped at the little table where the old man sat, a type-written sheet with the entries and odds in the Fountain Stakes spread out before him.

"Well, old Wheezer," said the book-

maker kindly, "what do you like in the big race? I'd like to know so's I can mark up one hundred to one against it."

Mr. Gannon, as a matter of fact, knew perfectly well what Mr. Jones liked. Ever since the opening of the future betting, Jones had been backing his three-year-old colt Little Mister, not only in Gannon's book, but in every book in the country that turned for coming events. Little Mister had opened at one hundred to one. Now he was held at fifteen to one, and most of the books had all in on him they cared to handle.

Not so with Gannon. He was pretty well loaded up with Little Mister stock, but he couldn't see the colt with a Lick telescope, and, besides, he hated the colt's owner. He sneered openly as he put the question.

"Only for the fact that I like you," replied Jones, "I wouldn't tip you off, Gannon. But because we're such old buddies, I don't mind touting you onto the winner. You call up some of the other rooms, and lay off every nickel you've taken in on Little Mister. Then back my colt for your shoes."

"What did you say was the name of him?" asked Gannon insolently.

"All right, my boy," returned Jones calmly. "It's two weeks before the race; maybe you'll get good sense before then."

"Let's see that card," said Gannon, taking the list from the old man. He ran his eye over the entries. "You're right," he said. "I didn't think he was entered. First time I ever heard the name, give you my word. I see he's twenty to one."

Wheezer fell for the temptation. "It says fifteen to one here," he pointed out mildly.

"That's for the hard players," explained Gannon. "The easy fall guys I give a five-points shade."

"You got me for another century," said Wheezer promptly, peeling off a bill with a "C" on it.

Gannon called out the bet to his sheet writer, and held out his hand. "Ever

hear of the Oliver Twist boy?" he asked.

"Got all I want at that price," declared old Jones.

"If I thought I could rob you of another hundred, I'd make it twenty-five to one," taunted Gannon. "I'm going to one of those where-to-dine-well places to-night."

Jones silently sifted in another yellow bill.

"Hm!" snorted Gannon scornfully. "He'll run about as fast as an eight-day clock on the ninth day from wind-ing."

"Gannon," said Jones gratefully, "I'm glad I came around. It ain't every day I make forty-five hundred dollars without working. That Little Mister hoss of mine is going to win to a moral. All I got to do is to tell him to. He does everything he's told. He can understand English, French, and German, and whistle."

"Can he make the beds, serve tea in the afternoon, and play the grafonola?" asked Gannon. "I might give him a job as chambermaid."

"A hoss," said old Jones, "is the wisest animal in the world. Any hoss is wise, but a thoroughbred race hoss is the daddy of 'em all. Next comes an elephant. He's wise, all right, but he ain't as wise as a race hoss. Next comes a dog. Next comes the cat, the monkey, the seal, and the pool-room keeper. Pool-room keepers is pretty smart, some of them. I heard of one that lived out in Chicago that they said could read and write. I don't know if it was true or not, but I got it pretty straight. Some went so far as to say they was learnin' him to eat with a knife and fork."

"One thing they don't need no knife and fork with," said Gannon calmly, "and that's sucker players. We just swallow *that* kind whole. Well, must you be going? Drop around again when you've harnessed up another bank roll."

"So long, my son," returned Wheezer. "Don't run out on me."

The old fellow, considerably comforted by his exchange with the pool-room boss, took an electric train for a

little hamlet on Long Island, where his horses were trained by his "boy" Lincoln, a promising infant of forty. There were a dozen thoroughbreds of assorted ages in the Jones string, some of them purse winners, one or two of handicap class, several of them maidens. Among the latter class was the three-year-old colt, Little Mister. He had never run placed in a race, much less won a race, and he was the horse that Wheezer and his crowd had backed down from one hundred to one to fifteen to one to win the Fountain Stakes.

The shortened price against Little Mister marked the latter end of a speculative campaign that had had its inception rather more than a year before. When Wheezer Jones first went to the races with the two-year-old Little Mister, the colt ran five-eighths of such rare promise as to bring the senior and junior Jones into immediate serious conference.

"If he's as good as he seems," declared Wheezer, "he's worth nursing."

"Right," agreed Lincoln Jones. "If we find he's got the stuff, we can lay him up for two or three races, and get, maybe, twenty or thirty to one against him." "Laying up" being the term used by those finicky-conscienced souls who shy at the mere thought of "pulling" a horse.

"Twenty or thirty to one!" sneered old Wheezer. "I'm ashamed of you, Link! You know what those wise English trainers do? They don't waste any effort laying up a hoss for two or three races; they wear out the arms of a half dozen jocks yanking his head off for an entire season. Then, when they *do* let him run in a big stake, they get eighty or one hundred to one against him, and they got some pie to cut up. We'll watch this fellow, and if he shows all right, we'll do something with him. Meantime, you tell Cullen to give him the wraps if he gets too close to the lead."

Since that conversation, Little Mister had borne abundant watching. In his private trials, he showed amazing speed. In his public races, it took all of the cunning of Cullen, the head jockey, to

sit in the straps without attracting the attention of the judges. The horse was as full of run as a swollen stream. This condition caused the Joneses some anxiety along with their pleasure, and the upshot of it was that for quite a while Little Mister was kept out of races.

Meanwhile, the horse was prepped according to Wheezer's own original system. When there were not watchers around, Cullen would send Little Mister on what was intended to be a five-eighths journey, at full speed. A hundred yards from home, the jockey would lean over the colt's neck, and whisper: "Chuck it!" at the same time taking a yank on the bridle. After about ten of these practice spins, Cullen found that it was no longer necessary to jerk on Little Mister's mouth to make him stop; he responded to the verbal command, and responded perfectly.

When affairs had progressed thus far, Wheezer ordered the treatment changed. He pitted Little Mister against first one, then two and three and more of his stable mates, sometimes letting the colt extend himself, again giving him the word to "Chuck it" a few yards from the finish. By the time Little Mister had reached his three-year-old form, he could give everything in his barn a ridiculous beating, and had broken the track records up to a mile and a quarter. And he never made a mistake. When told to "Chuck it," he let down as gently as an old man going to sleep.

It was to these comforting surroundings that Wheezer Jones introduced himself the night he came home from his go with Gannon. He told of the encounter with considerable glee.

"For two hundred dollar bills," said he, "I get an entry on the sheet calling for no less than twenty-five hundred bills. That's probably poor!"

Lincoln Jones agreed that this was particularly deplorable, or would have so agreed had the word been in his vocabulary. "Jim's going like a light-running domestic," he advanced. There probably isn't a stable in the country

where the star of the staff—the Apollo Belvedere, Colossus, Alex the Great, or what not—doesn't respond to the more intimate, affectionate title of Jim, Jack, or Joe. Little Mister was "Jim" to owner, trainer, jockey, and stable-boy, and his secret trials showed no whit the less speed in consequence thereof.

"Twenty-five hundred from him to-day," repeated Wheezer, "and, lemme see how much before." He fished into a pocket, and pulled out a notebook, mentally adding the daily items as his sharp old eyes gathered them in. "Why, gosh darn it!" he cried, "I'll break that bull conner! I'll bend a crimp in him so deep he'll walk crooked for the rest of his life. Why, the mucker's on the bricks now, only he don't know it."

At this point of advance felicitation, Mr. Jones, senior, desired that Mr. Jones, junior, supply him with a certain stimulant and give no thought to the speed laws in bringing this about. Which Lincoln dutifully did, even the weight of two-score years having failed to bring him to an independent maturity when Wheezer gave the word.

Mr. Jones, much refreshed, and encouraged by his reflections, sent word for Master Cullen, the stable jockey, to enter the presence. Master Cullen weighed one hundred and ten pounds in his "colors," had the perennially cherubic air of an interesting infant, causing most of the lady visitors to the track to desire to cuddle him, and a son, aged ten, who was learning to ride, too.

"What can Jim step the mile in?" asked Wheezer abruptly.

"I don't know, sir," replied Cullen. "He showed me one thirty-seven this morning, and I didn't have him all in."

"That's better'n enough to win with," said Jones comfortably. "Just be sure you don't bust into any pockets, and don't take too big a lead till you hit the stretch." Then, as the little jockey went out, the old man, turning to his son, said: "You know, Link, we got more kale up with Gannon than with any other book, and I'm sort of scared of that insect. When I left him to-day,

I said, kiddingly, for him not to run out on me, but I meant it at that, sort of. I wouldn't miss that race for a fortune, but at the same time, I'd hate to see Jim win, and then get up to Gannon's in time to find he'd beat it."

Lincoln said he didn't think this a likely prospect.

"Tain't likely, no," admitted Wheezer. "Twasn't likely Baker'd get up and slain out a home run first time after doing the same thing two years before. I'm going to be at Gannon's the day of the big race. I ain't playing those 'ain't likelies.'

And old Wheezer was there on the day of the Fountain. He was there early, and he had evidently come prepared to stay late. Also, he was accompanied by a choice, and not insignificant, collection of alcoholic spirits technically termed a package.

Gannon was cordiality itself. "Wheezer," he said, "you been four-flushing so much about that Little Mister, I just thought the other day I'd hike down to your barn and see what sort of an animal it was. I met your son, the good-looking one, with the face like a hamburger steak, and he very kindly showed me around. He took me inside the stable, and says: 'Little Mister's out getting his road work now, but there's his stall, and what's left of his eats. If you want to see how fine we feed him, look for yourself.' So I looked for myself," said Gannon, and made a dramatic pause.

"Well," said Wheezer, after a time.

"His manger was half full of puppy biscuits!" said Gannon.

"He may be a dog," admitted Jones, "but if he is, he'll make eleven race horses look like rats. What you laying against him to-day?"

Little Mister had been forced down to five to one. The favorite, Serene Elegance, ridden by Harry Howe, the craftiest jockey riding, was three to one. Blue Ridge, with Frankel up, was four to one. Six Little Brothers, ridden by Cross, nine to two, and the rest were at long odds. The public hadn't been able to understand the steady play on Little Mister, but they had followed

the money, to a certain extent. The men in the market places were no better informed, but they cut the price on general principles when the coin flowed in.

Gannon was stubborn. He couldn't, for the life of him, make out what it was all about. Now he answered Jones:

"Little Mister's five to one—you can have six."

"Gimme two hundred dollars of it," said Jones. "And gimme a drink—I'm as dry as the funny page."

Mr. Gannon gave Mr. Jones a drink. Then he gave Mr. Jones another drink—and some more, and it wasn't long before Mr. Jones was beginning to feel properly sorry for Mr. Gannon.

"Better lay off if you can, m'son," murmured Jones. "My colt's got the race wrapped up in the pocket of his shiny black coat. Remember what I told you the other day about his having sense? Got a darn sight more sense than you have. Understands every word that's said to him. He can be running like a greased fish, and the jock leans over and whispers—'Chuck it!' and he'll close up like a busted umbrella. Sense! He's got a dinged sight—"

At this point, the telephone bell in the sealed booth rang. At least, it appeared to ring. When you put your foot on a concealed push button in the carpeted floor, you *do* call forth a sound like that of a phone bell ringing—that is, when all the conditions are right. Gannon dived into the booth.

Oddly enough, it was a number Mr. Gannon called, not a response he made. The number was that of the jockeys' room at the track, and this obtained, a request was made for the attention of Harry Howe.

The conversation between the gentlemen was brief—and pointed.

"Can you be opposite Little Mister's bridle a sixteenth of a mile from home?"

"Sure."

"Lean over and whisper into his ear: 'Chuck it.' Got me?"

"Sure." End of conversation.

Mr. Gannon, emerging from the booth, called to his sheet writer: "Five

hundred to nothing, Little Mister loses. H. H." Then he rejoined Wheezer.

"What was that bull you was trying on me, about a horse being wiser than me?" asked the room keeper.

"Nothing," said Wheezer shortly, the sullen period of his potations having happened around.

"Because, if you think your colt is wiser'n a man," said Gannon harshly, "say, how much would you bet if you got the proper price?"

Old Jones reached slowly into his pocket and smoothed out certain loose bills of high denomination. "I got fifteen hundred dollars with me," he announced. "What's the proposition?"

"Would fifteen thousand dollars against it interest you?" asked Gannon softly.

Wheezer nearly burnt his fingers shoving his pile of bills to the gambler. "You poor fool!" he said.

Gannon recorded the bet, then strolled down to the faro table and watched the cards sift out till they got the "They're off!" call in the stake race. Then all other business in the room was suspended while the crowd listened to the operator:

"They're off! Pinochle Pete in front, Folly Wise second, Six Little Brothers third. Others well up. At the quarter—Blue Ridge first, Six Little Brothers second, Serene Elegance third. Half—Serene Elegance in the lead by a length, Six Little Brothers second, Little Mister third."

Here Wheezer Jones leaned over and dealt Gannon such a blow in pleasantry that he, Wheezer, tumbled off his balance, and had to be assisted to his uncertain feet.

"This is my room from now on," he mumbled triumphantly.

"Shut up, you d. and d.," growled Gannon. "Give the educated op a chance to talk."

Whereupon the operator resumed:

"Three-quarters—Little Mister by a neck. Serene Elegance second, by five lengths. Blue Ridge third. Little Mister under wraps and going strong."

Again Wheezer nearly collapsed. He talked to himself, as if he had much money in the bank, or was plumb foolish.

"Stretch," called the operator, and a great hush fell over the room, so that each man heard his watch tick. "Little Mister bolted, fell, and threw his jockey. Serene Elegance first, Blue Ridge second, Pinochle Pete third. Winner—Serene Elegance; Blue Ridge second, Sanford third."

"And I want to apologize to Mr. Jones in front of all these people," shouted Gannon. "Wheezer, when you told me your colt was wise, you were right. A little while ago, I got him on the telephone in his stall, and told him to lay down a sixteenth from home, and he promised me he would. Wise! That hoss has got old King Solomon looking like the foot of the class!"



LEAVING IT TO THE PITCHER

NOT in ten years has Christy Mathewson been taken out of the box by McGraw, unless possibly under some condition where strategy demanded a pinch hitter, or a man batting from the other side of the plate, or a speedy base runner. This may surprise a million or more fans. Box scores may be produced to dispute it. But that is a case where the box scores are wrong. When Matty comes out, he takes himself out. He knows when he is not "right," and is not ashamed to admit it, and McGraw leaves it to him. Many a time he has been known to gently lay the ball on the ground, when he felt he could not be effective, and facetiously call to some comrade on the bench:

"Come out here and finish this job. It's too large for me." And then, as a parting shot to the grinning batsman at the plate: "I'll be right here to-morrow, and the first time you come up, you'll breeze."

And generally he makes good on his forecast.

The Cause or the Man?

By Francis Parsons

Author of "The Outcast," Etc.

The brotherhood of man; the nations, united under one flag: it is a high ideal. Is it to be won by anarchy and hate and the waving of a red rag? One woman thought so—for a time. This is her story

PETER SIMMONS worked for his living in a little shop where they made electric switches, but his heart was in the Troop—that is, as much of it as was not preoccupied by the image of Amy Griscome. The Troop had stood to him since he had left the army for the real business and interest of life. As to Amy—with her he was desperately in love, and she represented in his eyes all that a sweet-heart has meant to her lover since the beginning of the world. And in Peter's case it was not love alone that enchain'd him—there was genuine admiration as well as worship. Indeed, Peter stood somewhat in awe of Amy's mental attainments.

For Amy had a position in the public library, and was strong on culture. Poetry and biography and sociology constituted her favorite reading. Novels were taboo. In short, Amy cultivated transcendent thoughts and held lofty ideals of refinement and education—in all of which Peter had some difficulty in following her, though that only increased his admiration.

The strangest thing about Amy was that she did not look it. She was no spectacled bluestocking. In Peter's eyes she was, of course, the most distractingly beautiful creature any one had ever seen. She was, as a matter of fact, a wonderfully pretty girl.

There was no engagement, however, and Peter had sometimes admitted to himself a certain vague disquiet about these high ideals of Amy's. When she began to talk a good deal about woman's sphere, and took to reading up on wom-

an-suffrage questions this disquiet grew more definite, and when her intellectual excursions advanced into the outskirts of socialism his uneasiness became absolutely concrete.

Peter had to admit that he didn't know very much about socialism, but he knew enough to be confident that he had absolutely no use for it. Yet he was of the class of which socialists are made. That is to say, he worked with his hands for the wages that, with the small assistance of his mother's pension, constituted the only source from which their modest bills were paid.

He often wished his wages were larger; he frequently heard dissatisfied talk from his fellow workmen, though he worked in an open shop. But, after all, Peter was an honest, direct sort of young man, of abundant vitality and cheerfulness, contented on the whole with his lot, deeply in love, intensely interested in the Troop and the men in it, many of whom were of that capitalistic class that Amy was beginning to consider altogether a bad lot—men whom Peter, however, thought as good fellows as he had ever met.

Furthermore, Peter had served for three years in the army, chiefly in the Philippines, and would have reënlisted but for his only sister's death, which brought the care of his mother entirely upon him. The training of the regular service had left its indelible stamp upon him—and he was proud of it. Out of that training he brought not only a straightforward bearing, a personal neatness and orderliness, but a mental attitude that embraced among other

things a respect for constituted authority, a habit of doing promptly and thoroughly whatever he had to do, and a conviction that necessarily and naturally some men were placed in positions to control and direct others. It will be easily understood that socialistic propaganda—and perhaps woman suffrage—even when explained by such a fascinating advocate as Amy Griscome, did not make any very sympathetic appeal to Peter.

Their lack of harmony on these subjects was the proximate cause of their first quarrel, and as Peter sat eating his lunch during the noon hour by an open window of his shop he could not keep his mind from dwelling on the incidents of the evening before, though, indeed, such meditations added little to his appetite.

Amy had the proselyting fever, and had persuaded him, much against his will, to take her to a socialistic meeting. There were labor troubles in the town, and a labor leader from another State, who was also a socialistic theorist, was to address a widely advertised gathering. Peter was not interested, but he was putty in Amy's grasp, and he found himself seated with her at the rear of a large hall—near a door as it fortunately happened—listening to a lot of revolutionary doctrines propounded by a stout, Jewish-looking orator, with small eyes and a large mouth.

He had all the cheap art of the cheap public speaker, and the undiscriminating applause of his audience led him on from one radical utterance to another. Even Peter could see that it was not argument—it was denunciation. The man was playing on the emotion, not appealing to the reason of his hearers. As they grew more excited, Peter became more disgusted, and when the speaker ended in an outburst of inflammatory rhetoric that brought cheers from the crowd, Peter turned to Amy with the beginning of a sentence, expressing his disgust, upon his lips. But he checked himself as he noted the attitude and expression of the girl. She was leaning forward, clapping her

gloved hands, her cheeks flushed, her eyes bright.

"Isn't he great?" she asked. "Isn't he great?"

"Aw, Amy!" he returned. "Piffle!"

It was an ill-judged expression. She turned squarely toward Peter, and the exalted look in her eyes changed.

"Piffle?" she repeated. "Is that all the—the realization you have of what this great awakening means? Piffle?"

Peter was astonished. He had no idea that Amy's advanced theories had gone so far as this. But he was not going to back down.

"Yes," he said. "He was talkin' through his hat—and he knew it, too. Come on—let's go home."

He reached underneath his chair for his overcoat, but Amy stared at him, and then settled herself comfortably in her seat and fixed her eyes on the printed program.

Peter was not an adept in social finesse, and before he could decide what to do or say next there came a fresh outbreak of applause, and he saw that another speaker was walking to the center of the platform. Furthermore, he recognized the man.

"Hello!" he said. "There's Victor Meade."

The personal element had entered into the meeting. Victor Meade was a young man of indefinite occupation whose recent arrival in town was thought to have some connection with the labor troubles. Peter had met him, a few evenings previously, calling on Amy. In this other caller he had at once suspected a rival, and he instinctively disliked him, anyhow. Indeed, a casual observer would have seen instantly that Meade was not Peter's kind.

As they stood shaking hands perfunctorily in Amy's little parlor, after the girl had introduced them, the two young men formed a striking contrast—Peter, tall, spare, and straight, with fair, closely curling hair, gray eyes, and a whimsical, half-serious, half-humorous expression on his plain face—and this young enthusiast, with low collar and

loose tie, thin, rather pale, whose piercing black eyes seemed to burn with the fire of a zealot. But Meade had his share of undoubted good looks, and was clearly no ordinary person. It was at once apparent in their conversation with Amy that night that he was a man of brains and education. It occurred to Peter that very likely he was a college graduate. And yet his mind had evidently given a strange twist to his education.

As he talked, Meade made it clear that his spirit was possessed by the vision of a millennium upon the earth; he was a dreamer, a mystic, but intensely earnest about it all. The fire of an idealistic passion seemed to burn within him—he was of the stuff of which martyrs were made.

All this penetrated but dimly to Peter's understanding, but such a character has its eternal appeal to woman, and Peter was at least discerning enough to grow distinctly uncomfortable as Amy and this queer youth talked of books he had never heard of and ideas of which he had never dreamed.

Meade's obsession with these matters had carried him to dangerous lengths. Soon it was not only his dread of a rival that made Peter uncomfortable; he listened in dismay as at last he heard Meade advocate the overthrow of established institutions of law and order if necessary to attain his purposes. It sounded to Peter more like anarchy than socialism, and at this point he said good night briefly and walked thoughtfully home.

Now, as Victor Meade came forward to the front of the platform and stood there, his eyes burning, one arm outstretched to quiet the rising applause, he represented in Peter's simple creed all that was pernicious and revolutionary. Evidently regarding the occasion as a Heaven-sent opportunity, he launched his speech with a burst of fervid oratory that riveted the attention of his eager audience.

Somehow his vivid personality had a far stronger attraction for his hearers than the somewhat phlegmatic individuality of his more widely known prede-

cessor. They welcomed his points with handclapping and shouts.

Spurred on by their tumultuous approval, he rose to greater heights. What sacredness had authority under which the weak suffered? What did the rights of property amount to when that property had been wrung from the sweat and tears of the proletariat? It was the old story, but in some way he infused a new spirit into it. It seemed that here was a great cause, for which men had striven and died—and one of its prophets stood before them.

Suddenly over in one corner a little red flag appeared, waved wildly by a dark-haired woman standing on a chair. Instantly the crowd went wild. Pandemonium broke loose. Men were shouting and waving their hats. The packed hall vibrated with cries and cheers. Chairs were overturned.

The red flag brought Peter to his senses. Queerly enough, he found that he had been strangely moved, and he was therefore not so greatly surprised to find that Amy was frantically waving her handkerchief, completely carried away by the enthusiasm of the scene. He touched her gently on the arm.

"Come on, Amy," he said quietly. "It's time to get out."

She looked at him defiantly, perhaps deceived by his low tone.

"Silly!" she exclaimed. "Can't even you begin to understand now?"

She had never spoken so before, but Peter had no time to brood over the insult, for at that moment a fat, red-haired foreigner standing on a chair behind Amy leaned too far forward in the exuberance of his excitement, and as he tried to regain his balance placed a greasy hand heavily upon her shoulder. Peter grabbed the man's wrist and flung his arm aside with so much force that the fellow again lost his balance, and, as he fell in a tangle of chairs and people, Peter took Amy firmly by the arm, pushed her into the aisle, and half propelled, half carried her out of the near-by exit without a word. Amy's hat was disarranged, and as they went through the door some rough youths had laughed in their faces.

On the sidewalk under the big electric she faced him in an anger in which he saw his hopes withered.

"How dare you!" she flung at him.

He tried to carry it off easily. "Nonsense, Amy!" he returned. "It was no place for a lady. We ought to have left earlier."

"Peter Simmons," she stated, with an impersonal calmness that made the verdict more impressive, "you will have to go home with me, for there is no one else. We may have to exchange a word or two, but after to-night I shall never speak to you again!"

During the first part of that miserable walk Peter was in the depths of dejection; during the last half he felt a certain resentment growing within him. What, after all, had he done that was so reprehensible? He reflected that if he had had to live the incident over again he would have changed his conduct in no particular except that he would have insisted on leaving the meeting half an hour earlier. It came over him that it was not the mere occasion of this quarrel that was of importance; the real trouble lay deeper—in their different attitudes toward these disturbing abstract questions to which Peter had hitherto paid scant attention, but which had suddenly assumed a vital significance.

There was a certain stubbornness in Peter's character when he thought he was right—and he had not yet admitted to himself that he was mistaken in his notions of the elementary duties of a citizen of the United States, a former soldier in its army, and a corporal in the national guard of his State. Therefore when they reached Amy's door, and were hunting under the mat for the key which her mother, who kept early hours, had deposited there, he had concluded that he could not leave her without giving some expression to his own side of the case.

Some conversation necessitated by their failure to find the key immediately, relieved the tension between them, and made it easier for Peter to begin. But he began foolishly.

"Did you really mean that—about not speakin'?" he asked.

"I certainly did," she replied succinctly, one hand on the knob of the now half-open door.

"Because," he went on lamely, "it means a lot to me. There ain't any other girl for me. You know that, don't you, Amy?"

She did not answer, but there was no yielding in the impression the slight, erect young figure gave.

"Look here, Amy," he said, coming close to her. "I don't want you to think I'm a bonehead. You're so far ahead of me that I feel like the tail of the procession, but I know how you feel, too. Why, I began to get goin' myself for a minute to-night. But that red flag! Good Lord, Amy, I couldn't stand for that! And don't you suppose I've known men with ideas or ideals or what-you-call-'em? Why, I've seen men fight and I've seen men die in ways I couldn't tell you about just doin' their duty and upholdin' all those things these folks want to pull down. There was a young lieutenant of C Troop, as fine a young fellow as the Lord ever made—oh, well, there's no use goin' into it. But let me tell you, I've seen men go crazy wild at the sight of a flag before. It wasn't any red flag either; it was flyin' over a garrison post, and they hadn't seen one like it for six months, and they'd been through hell for it—c-r-cuse me, I forgot. Well, it's pretty late. I guess I must be goin'. Good night."

If Peter had only known it, he had made the most effective departure he could possibly have managed. As a matter of fact, he had got himself so worked up and was withal so embarrassed at having used language unbecoming a lady's presence, that he had gone down the steps before he remembered his intended pleading as to seeing her again, and by that time the front door had closed upon her. He had meant to say so many entirely different things that he knew what he had said had been a failure. Naturally, he did not see the somewhat surprized gaze

with which for a few seconds her blue eyes had followed his retreating back.

And now as he sat by his open window, the world looked very dismal. He knew he had lost her. He was too dull, too uneducated, too rough for the likes of her. She was a different kind of being, and he ought to have known it all along. Victor Meade might be possessed by wrong theories of life, but at least he had intellect and training. Nevertheless, Peter felt that he should like very much to punch Victor Meade's head.

Then he found his thoughts drifting into a different channel. Though his window looked out on a jumble of tin roofs and chimneys, he did not see the sordid prospect. He saw instead, the hot sunlight shining on the gorgeousness of the tropical jungle. He saw through the luxuriant foliage a long ribbon of riders, lean as greyhounds and brown as their uniforms, mounting steadily on the ascending trail. Suddenly from somewhere in front a gunshot echoed through the forest, and then the word of command, in familiar tones, came repeated down the column. He saw the men slip eagerly from their saddles, and heard every number four, told off to hold horses, curse his luck. Once again he felt the thrill that had stirred his heart when, under a young and well-loved second lieutenant, he had gone into his first fight.

Ah, that was the life—in the open, on a good horse, with rough but loyal companions, led by a trusted officer, and a scent of danger in the air! This working in a shop every day, and having one's mind upset by foolish thoughts of a woman—that was not the life for a man. Peter Simmons was homesick for the army.

He was roused from his daydream by the moving of the men to their places at the end of the noon hour, and by a simultaneous violent ringing of the telephone bell in the office, partly partitioned off, at the far end of the room. The message, whatever it was, could not concern him, and he went to his work listlessly, half of his mind still on the other side of the world.

Subconsciously, he noted that an angry conversation appeared to be in progress over the office telephone, and a few minutes later an errand boy he knew, carrying a basket of switch plates, loitered at his bench.

"Say, Pete," he whispered, "there was somebody after you on the phone a minute ago—in the dickens of a hurry, too."

Peter straightened up, interested and mystified, but well aware that under the strict rules in force in that shop about telephoning employees, he would learn little except through this informant. A hopeful vision of a relenting Amy flashed into his mind.

"See here, Burt," he said, under his breath. "Did you hear anything? Was it—was it a man or a lady—he?"

The boy looked at Peter and grinned. "Dunno who 'twas," he answered, "but from the line of talk Old Grouch put into that telephone you can betcher life it wasn't no lady. Well—thought I'd tip yer off. S'long."

Peter's first hopes were dashed, but in their place another alluring possibility came into his head. He had heard Amy talk about something called "mental telegraphy." Was it possible that his reverie about his old army days had some queer connection with this message?

He tried to shake off the thought, but it persisted, and he grew uncomfortable and nervous. At last he went to the foreman, got a half hour off, slipped off his working apron and into his coat, and ran downstairs to the street. Hurrying through an alley between high buildings, he emerged into the financial district, making for the nearest telephone, to which he knew he could get access. It was in the office of the Second National Bank, and Peter brushed aside an office boy, and burst into the room of the assistant cashier with small ceremony. A stocky young man was sitting at a desk covered with papers, engaged in busy talk with two men who were passing stock certificates and other evidences of financial solvency back and forth.

"Hello, corp," said the stocky young man cheerfully. "What's doing?"

"Put me next to a telephone, George," Peter demanded. "One where nobody can hear me."

"Sure," the young man responded, punching a button on his desk, while the two prospective borrowers sat back in their chairs, one amused, the other apparently slightly irritated at this extraordinary interruption.

When Peter returned, ten minutes later, the two men were leaving, and the assistant cashier was regarding with satisfaction a small pile of bonds and stock certificates under a heavy paper weight on his desk.

Peter's eyes were shining with excitement. "Come on, George," he said. "You'll have to put that stuff in the ice box and come along with me. There's just been the devil of a riot, and the Troop's ordered out."

II.

In the crisp, moonlit brilliancy of the October evening, the Troop emerged from its armory and rode in column of twos down the street toward the mills. The men had been ready several hours before, but it had been thought best to withhold them till after sundown. At a corner, Peter, riding near the van of the column, turned his head far enough to see from the corners of his eyes all of the men and horses behind him, and the wagons at the rear.

His heart warmed at the sight, and the clatter of hoofs, the creaking of leather, and the ringing of curb chains and accouterments were music in his ears. That afternoon he had been hungering for the old life, and here was at least a taste of it! Though this was not the regular service, there was no doubt that these men were soldiers. One look at the erect, alert horsemen would have told that. In two years Peter had come to know them well—in the weekly winter drills, summer maneuvers, tactical rides, and informal Sunday excursions into the country, when military problems, prepared by the army officer detailed for their in-

struction, were worked out. It was a hard-working, enthusiastic crowd, all good friends of his—and now it seemed that they were to be bound closer by ties of equal service together in action, like the ties of the old army.

They rode without incident into the mill inclosures, stretched a picket line, tied the horses, and blanketed them. A few minutes later they welcomed with cheers two companies of infantry that came swinging in through the gates in heavy marching order. As Peter and George Torrance, assistant cashier of the Second National Bank, were taking off their shoes and puttee leggings together, sitting on the edges of the straw-lined bunks that had been hastily knocked together for the soldiers, Torrance suddenly slapped his corporal on the back, and burst into poetry:

"Back to the army again, sergeant,
Back to the army again;
'Oo would ha' thought I could carry an'
port?"

I'm back to the army again.

"How does it feel anyhow, corp?"

"Was that that fellow Kipling you were telling me about?" queried Peter. "He knows how it is, don't he?"

And Peter settled himself comfortably in the straw, talked drowsily with George Torrance for a few moments, and then fell into a happy slumber, free from dreams of unrequited love.

III.

About nine o'clock on the fifth evening after the troops had been called out, Amy Griscome started from the public library to walk home.

She had been detained by extra work till eight o'clock, and, after waiting in vain for an hour for Victor Meade, who had promised to call for her, she decided to make her way home alone and on foot, for no car line ran in her direction, and a cab was a luxury not to be thought of.

At first her walk led her through the central business part of the city, where all was quiet.

Directly between this section and the

quarter of the town where she lived lay a corner of the manufacturing district which in her walks home she had hitherto avoided, for there had been some disorder in that neighborhood in the last few days. To go around this corner meant a long detour, however, and to-night Amy was in haste to be at home.

Furthermore, she was not without a certain curiosity as to the strike, of which, though she had seen nothing, she had read much in the newspapers, and heard a great deal from Meade.

In his eyes it was a glorious crusade—a stepping-stone on the way toward the Utopia of which he constantly dreamed. She, too, had started with this idea, and still, in a great part, held to it. Nevertheless, she was compelled to admit that in the last day or two doubts had crept into her mind.

All of Meade's intensity and earnestness could not hide the fact from her that there was little public sympathy with the strikers' attitude and demands, that the strikers themselves were of the more ignorant class of unassimilated foreigners, and that the steady-going American, German, and Irish workmen wanted to remain at their work, many of them doing so at considerable personal risk.

The quiet handling of the military soon convinced every reasonable person that the soldiers were out primarily to keep order, and to protect the men who wished to stay at work—not to fight strikers—and Amy was not an unreasonable person. Then, too, there had been ugly acts by the disorderly element.

Amy was an ambitious creature, full of fire and energy, easily led into enthusiasms, eager for what she called a "large experience," and in all this lay, in a great measure, her charm. What made that charm peculiarly appealing was that she was also essentially a tender-hearted girl whose emotions were readily roused, and the fact that she had happened to know well a little child who had been cruelly injured by a drunken striking Lithuanian had probably more than anything else to do

with the questionings that were beginning to take shape in her mind.

But the main thing just now was that Victor Meade had asked her to marry him. It was strange, when she came to think of it, that this resulted in an involuntary pause in her altruistic pre-occupations, and led to a somewhat critical examination of ideals as well as a searching of heart.

It seemed singular to her that she found her mind dwelling more on the practical problems involved in the answer she must give to his question, rather than on the happy vision he urged upon her of a life devoted together to what he called the greatest good of the greatest number.

Meade's personality, his fervor, his willingness to risk all for his cause, his sincerity—no one could doubt his sincerity—had for her a peculiar fascination.

But she found her mind coming back to the question whether everyday life with Meade would be a permanently satisfactory undertaking, viewed as a practical proposition. Meade's influence over her at the moment was so dominant, and she was so young, that she did not realize that the very recurrence of this question was proof enough that she did not love him as she should love the man who was to be her husband.

And then thoughts of Peter came in—Peter, who had never asked her to marry him, but who, she knew well, was in love with her. She had heard nothing of Peter since he left her so abruptly at her door that other evening, after his long and utterly uncharacteristic speech. She had conceived the idea that he had left her in anger.

Just now she was finding out strange things about her mental processes, and one of the strangest was that her notion of Peter's anger increased tremendously her interest in him. Nevertheless, she was still angry with him herself, and she looked down upon him as one who was content to live in the valleys of life—one, indeed, who did not even notice the mountaintops shining in the sunlight all about him.

But for all that, she felt that she would have liked to talk over Meade's proposal with Peter, as with a brother, perhaps—yet not exactly as with a brother—if things had been different.

She found herself reflecting that life with Peter might have a certain sameness, but it would be safe, and into the back of her brain were coming the beginnings of a realization that the man who does the work that is cut out for him without unnecessary talk about it, and with contentment and courage, is a man to be respected. However, the incident of Peter appeared to be closed. She herself had closed it as definitely as possible—there was no doubt about that.

And then unexpectedly, and quite dramatically for him, Peter reappeared upon the scene.

Thinking over all these matters as she walked, Amy had reached the point where the short cut would take her across part of the manufacturing district.

She hesitated a moment, looking down the narrow street that led directly homeward. It lay before her, dark, but quiet, and apparently safe. At once she started down it, walking rapidly.

It was a long street, lined with warehouses, wholesale stores, and the like, and it seemed to be deserted, though, as she advanced, she saw that something was going on at the cross street into which it led. Whatever this was, it was interesting.

There were many people, moving lights, occasional shouts of men's voices. Suddenly she heard pattering footsteps behind her, and shrank into a doorway as two men, followed by a boy, ran past. They did not notice her, and appeared too intent on what was ahead to have paid any attention to her, even if they had seen her.

Somehow reassured by this, and moved by a natural curiosity, she went on, and in a moment was close to the street's end. Here she found herself face to face with evidence of the disorder of which she had read.

The center of the cross street was filled with a crowd of strikers and their

sympathizers, flanked on the sidewalks by a rabble of small boys and other spectators, among the latter a number of rough-looking, foreign women.

The street electrics and two torches carried in the middle of the crowd illuminated a hundred or more threatening faces, all looking down the street to her left.

From this mob a continuous evil murmur arose, punctuated by shrill cries and catcalls, and reminding Amy of the imaginary growling of crowds she had often heard at the theater, which had always seemed rather ridiculous to her.

There was nothing ridiculous about these people, however. There was instead a sense of menace, of lawlessness, of brutishness in the air. If it had not been for one thing, Amy would have turned and run back on the way she had come.

But her gaze followed irresistibly the direction of the fierce eyes in the throng, and she saw in a clear space before them the solitary figure of a cavalryman sitting erect on his big horse, as rigid as a statue, quietly facing the hostile demonstration.

In the strong electric light she could see clearly his saber strapped to the saddle beneath his right knee, his pistol hanging from his belt back of his right hip, and the end of the leather boot holding his rifle, on the farther side, projecting below the horse's body. In his gauntleted right hand he held a long police club horizontally across the pommel of his saddle. He was fully armed, but he was absolutely alone.

At first she did not recognize him, but in a moment he turned his head slightly to watch some movement in the crowd, and she saw that it was Peter.

To an imaginative temperament a concrete, visible illustration, that has also an appeal to the sympathies, is sometimes more effective than all the argument in the world. Amy had plenty of imagination, as well as a sense of drama, and the subtle allegory in the little scene before her suddenly flashed over her with an overwhelming force.

Were these brutish, foul-mouthed

creatures the apostles of the millennium, in whose interests established law was to be set aside and order subverted? Were they not rather, in the most charitable view, unruly children, who must be taught and governed—sometimes sternly enough?

And facing them, strong in the sense of power, and seemingly no more concerned with their filthy threats than with the barking of an irritable terrier, was a lone representative of the force that underlay and supported all the institutions of the republic.

As she looked at him, she suddenly found that her eyes were wet, and that she had difficulty in swallowing. She had a wild impulse to rush out into the street, and stand there beside him, facing down the howling mob.

Why he was there alone she could not imagine. It was only later that she learned how Peter and George Torrance, patrolling together, had happened on this procession of strikers that seemed to rise out of the ground. Of course, she could not know that Torrance, on Peter's order, was at that moment galloping westward for help, not having dared to leave his horse to telephone.

In fact, Torrance had only left a moment before Amy arrived, and the convictions the scene forced upon her came over her with a rush, and not consecutively as here set down. For the situation was one that could not remain long as she found it. Indeed, things began to happen almost immediately.

The mob, restive and bold in the face of the single soldier, was growing instant by instant more aggressive. The men were shouting constantly, shaking fists, clubs, and brickbats at the impulsive figure on horseback.

Those in the rear pressed forward, but some wholesome respect kept those immediately in front of the horseman from advancing directly upon him. The result was that the crowd pushed ahead along the sidewalks, its front soon taking the shape of a semicircle, the ends outflanking Peter on either side. Soon they would be well in his rear, and Amy, who had slipped into a doorway,

up a low flight of steps where she could see perfectly, wondered what he would do. Even she could see that he could not afford to retreat.

What he did, was suddenly to gather his horse, and move at a slow trot directly into the crowd on the sidewalk below Amy, where, circling the animal with a tremendous trampling and clattering of hoofs, he scattered the rabble like wind-blown leaves. Then he moved deliberately, almost carelessly, across the front of the jeering strikers, and repeated the performance on the opposite sidewalk.

But on Amy's side the crowd surged in again after he left, wilder, more threatening than before. Back he came, but now with club held slightly higher, ready for a blow. Again the roughs dodged away from the whirling horse.

As he turned and walked his horse across the street once more, one man, near the center of the crowd, did catch his rein and pulled the horse's head sharply to the side. The mob's cry of delight was cut short by the crack of the heavy club, and a yell of pain.

The incident had halted Peter for an instant, however, and in that instant a big, unkempt, black-haired woman, standing just below Amy, stooped to the ground, raised herself, and broke through the press of people, making for Peter's back, with a great stone in her lifted hand.

In a flash Amy was through the crowd in her wake, crying at the top of her voice: "Peter! Look out—look out!"

As Peter turned, utterly astounded at the familiar voice, Amy caught from behind the woman's uplifted arm.

Exactly what happened then, she never could remember clearly. She knew she was down. She heard the crash of Peter's club on heads, arms, and shoulders, and the ringing of his horse's shoes striking the pavement close to her, as he rode round and round her, clearing an open space. Then, getting dizzily to her feet, she found Peter's arm beneath her shoulders and heard him yelling in her ear above the tumult to grasp the pommel of his saddle.

lle and jump up. The next instant he was holding her before him on his horse, which was trotting slowly down the street, the shouting mob following.

On a sudden from behind them came the bang of a heavy pistol, reverberating between the tall buildings like the report of a small cannon. Peter at once pulled up.

"Jump down and run," he commanded. "I can't retreat. I've got to hold 'em."

She slid to the ground, but did not run. Peter seemed to come off his horse at the same instant, and had his rifle out of its boot as his feet hit the pavement. They were barely a hundred yards ahead of the mob. He spoke to his horse, touched its forelegs, and the animal sank obediently to the ground and lay on its side. Peter dropped prone behind it, his rifle leveled over its body at the advancing figures. Then, for the first time it seemed, he noticed that Amy was still there, and looked up at her sternly.

"Didn't I tell you to run?" he asked severely, and with no trace of his old deference. "What do you mean by staying here, then?" A gleam—but a hard gleam—came into his eye. "This is no place for a lady. Beat it!"

But Amy did not beat it. She sank to the asphalt beside Peter, back of the horse. The mob was coming on, but more slowly now, puzzled at the soldier's new move, shrinking a little from that brown rifle barrel.

"Where's your pistol?" she said. "Give it here!"

Peter did not answer. His eyes opened wide in astonishment as he gazed at her—then she saw that they were slowly closing—they were shut—his head fell back and lay against the saddle.

"Peter!" she cried in terror. "Answer—look at me!"

She caught him by the shoulder, and found his blouse soaking, and her hand red with blood.

"The cowards!" she sobbed. "They've shot him from behind!"

At once all thought of self, all sense of danger, dropped from her. A primitive anger rose in her young breast, dominating all other emotions. She reached for the rifle that had dropped from Peter's nerveless hands, and as she did so her heart leaped as she heard, behind her, far away but growing louder each instant, the clanging of a gong and the pounding of galloping horses' feet.

A few moments later, when Peter's squad, racing to the support of their corporal, and followed at a block's distance by a platoon of the Troop and a patrol wagon full of policemen, reached the spot, they found Amy crouched on the ground beside their unconscious but not fatally wounded leader, his rifle in her hands still undischarged, but pointed steadily down the street, over the patient horse's side, at the retreating prospective citizens of Utopia.

HOW TO MAKE A CHERRY PIE

WILLIE had resigned his position in the big bakery, where he labored in the pie department, and had gone to work in a carpenter's shop for smaller wages. The social investigator, having heard about Willie, questioned him.

"Aren't you sorry you left the bakery and came to this shop?" she asked kindly.

"No'm." Willie answered quickly.

"But you get less money."

"Yes'm."

"Well, what was the matter with the bakery?"

"Twuz this way," explained Willie. "It hurt my mouth. I wuz in de pie part, de cherry-pie part, an' I had to stone cherries. An' dey ~~dey~~ got a rule over there dat all de boys has to whistle all de time dey's workin', so as to show dey ain't eatin' no cherries."

A Corner in Oats

By William Adams Simonds

The government's urgent need of oats, at the time when the supply was almost exhausted, makes a get-rich-quick opportunity for a tricky firm of dealers in the section where the finest milling oats in the world are grown

WHEN the Bard of Avon wrote his opinion about a certain title in the affairs of men, he neglected to include one thing. He asseverated that if taken at the flood, this mysterious phenomenon would lead on to fortune; but he failed to designate just when to look for the flood.

There are many who have projected themselves into some doubtful enterprise under Bill Shakespeare's theory, only to find that they had answered the wrong cue.

Young Jones was among them.

In justice to Jones, it must be said that he pondered the matter deeply before taking the leap. Violating all precedent, he sat at his desk in the center of Mueller Brothers' office for ten whole minutes, and stared at the corner over the manager's door ere he reached out his hand to grasp the proverbial forelock.

The stenographer with the taffy-colored hair, who had stopped to adjust her barette, noticed his abstraction.

"Like as not, he's going to strike the boss for a raise," she hazarded.

She changed her mind when Jones sprang to his feet, shoved back his chair, and headed for Mueller's office. There was a determined look on his face, and he strode quickly to the swinging door.

"It can't be a raise," she decided, for she was an observant young person; "it must be the girl at last!"

As a matter of fact, it was the girl. Jones proposed to ask Mueller for the hand of his daughter Louise, center of the old man's very existence—everything to him since Mrs. Mueller

twenty years ago had laid down her life to bring into the world the dimpled babe.

The moment, as has been intimated, was decidedly inopportune.

Just as he appeared at the manager's elbow, the telephone rang. While he stood waiting, he saw the blue veins in the bald dome swell and spread; heard Mr. Mueller assuring some one, evidently a valued customer, that it was inexplicable and would happen again never! Toward the end of the short conversation, the manager relapsed into his peculiar German accent, a sure token of excitement or anger.

Then the receiver crashed in the hook and Mueller whirled. His eyes fell on Jones, and his indignation, so swiftly aroused, burst forth on that unfortunate young man's head.

"*Gott in Himmel!*" Mueller spluttered, becoming more and more wrathy. "This thing to stop has got! Western Grocery Company has found another case of 'Caromel Oats' filled with bran instead of oatmeal! *Mein Gott!* And that the worst ain't! One of their lady customers a package opened, and found a dead mouse in the bottom of it, flat rolled! *Zum Teufel mitt them!*"

Having nothing to say, Jones remained discreetly silent.

Again the torrent of disgust poured forth; but it was only for a second this time. Jones knew that the rage of the German manager would subside as suddenly as it had risen; and even while he waited, the blue veins cooled below the surface.

Mueller cleared his throat once or twice.

"What is it, Dick?" he asked finally.

"There's something I would like to say to you—if you can spare a minute—that is—"

"Well, what is it? Speak out!" Mueller directed, not unkindly.

Jones was not exactly a coward, but he dreaded the ordeal. He knew that the shock would bring upon him a terrific storm, if the old man survived the news. But the girl was worth it, he told himself.

He continued desperately:

"It's just this, sir—what I mean, sir—I can't say just what I would like; but Louise and I love each other and—"

"Vat?"

Mueller half sprang from his chair, his arms rigid as if a blow had struck him. Jones stood speechless, dismayed, and half tempted to run for the door.

Then his employer dropped back limply into his chair, the momentary passion gone. When found, his voice was hoarse and strained:

"I—I—I'll be *verdammt!*"

He rose, looked at Jones, then sat down again hard. The thunder was passing; and the cashier thanked his stars that it had been no worse.

"So you love Louise, eh?" her father demanded.

"Yes," Jones replied eagerly, "and she—"

"How long have you—er—loved her?"

"For two years, Mr. Mueller, and she—"

"Do you stop to think that I have loved her twenty years?"

"Yes, but you're her father, and she—"

"Vat if I am her father? Haven't I given her a home? Everything she wanted? Vat if you do get married? Vat can you give her?"

"What can I give her? Why, I can give her love; and—"

"Fiddlesticks! How can you live on love? Love don't pay the grocer! I tell you, money is vat counts! And vat have you got?"

"But Louise says she's willing to live in a bungalow," the young man inter-

posed. "And I'm getting a good salary now, thanks to you."

"Bungalow, bah! Louise never tried it, I tell you!"

Suddenly the old German paused; he had forgotten something. When he walked into his home at night Louise would come and sit on his knee, and he would have to tell her about Jones. And when he had finished with his summary, and she began to wheedle him in that way of hers, he knew what would happen. He must leave for himself some avenue of retreat open.

"So Louise loves you, eh?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"As much as I love her, and that's—"

"Never mind about that; if she loves you, it's enough. Tell me, what is your bank account?"

"It isn't much, I confess; but I can make money; I'm not exactly a fool."

"No," the old man was good enough to concede, "you're not, ordinarily. But what is Louise to do in the meantime? Starve?"

"Certainly not; it shouldn't take me long; I hope in time to be worth more to you."

"You say you can make money, eh? How much? Fifty thousand a year? That's what I do. Now if you did that, I—"

Mueller paused, for the hopeful light had died out of the young man's eyes. Fifty thousand dollars was a pretty high figure!

"Of course, it took me some time to do that," Mueller mused.

He leaned forward, seeing a way out of the unpleasant tangle, which even Louise could not condemn, and yet was almost impossible.

"Maybe you could make more money for me, eh? I've got the capital, and I'm willing to give you a show—for the sake of Louise."

"But what—how—"

"Listen; make me fifty thousand dollars, and the girl is yours. Also you'll be assistant manager."

Jones had a firm, well-rounded jaw; and he could feel it set as the almost

prohibitive condition was imposed. He was not one to flinch under fire; and he believed that he had been offered the smallest kind of a fighting chance.

"I'll do it," he declared.

He turned on his heel and left the sanctum, his face wearing a do-or-die expression.

"He didn't get her," decided the blond stenographer.

II.

"Oats!"

The speaker paused abruptly, his eyes fastened on the solitary figure in the opposite window. From below him there came the clangor of trolley cars, the rattle of vans, the honking of autos, and a thousand other creaks of commerce. But he was oblivious to the noise.

His attention was centered completely on the man signaling to him from the building across the way.

Now the flags were dipping, signifying a pause between words. Now they were being swung five times to the right.

A cold sweat broke out on the brow of the watcher. He spoke aloud again feverishly, addressing the bare walls of the tiny room.

"Oats!" he repeated, "oats; and five thousand tons of them!"

The man with the flags vanished from the opposite window; he had delivered his message. Gilbert, of Guerber & Gilbert, clambered heavily down from the chair on which he had been standing; and thrust his portly form into his fur-trimmed overcoat. Then he walked out, slamming the door noisily behind him.

At the curb before the entrance a black limousine awaited him, engines chugging in restraint. As Gilbert emerged from the building, the chauffeur leaped to the ground, and assisted his employer into the car.

A moment later a lever was released; down the avenue they whirled into the weaving lines of traffic, and disappeared.

The walls surrounding the luxurious

office were padded; no sound could enter or escape. Gilbert had every reason to believe that he could discuss his plans in security, for, if the truth were known, he had frequent occasion to consider matters which he preferred to keep *sub rosa*. This was one of such occasions.

Gilbert chewed the end of his cigar reflectively, while he watched the dark, slender man who was pacing nervously up and down on the deadened carpet. The latter was the first to break the silence.

"When is this contract to be let, Gilbert?"

"In two weeks, so Barker signaled."

"Two weeks! Then the notifications will be sent out within a week, and we have only six days before the grand rush will begin."

"That's all, Pilfer. It's enough, too. You ought to be able to corner all the oats on the flats before the others hear of it."

"Under ordinary circumstances I could; but just look at that confounded rain! If it keeps on, the flats will be flooded, and you'll have me stuck up there on a muskrat house, unable to get in or come out."

"My dear Pilfer!" The junior partner's tone was colorless, precise. "It's immaterial to us how you do things; we pay your salary, and, as for you, you buy oats. This deal has got to go through. That hay slump last fall put our finances in a bad way; and, between you and me, it's a case of sink or swim with G. & G. It's up to you to pull us out."

The serious tone of his employer had its effect on Pilfer.

"How much oats does the government want?"

"Five thousand tons."

"What! Why, there aren't over three thousand left on the whole flats!"

"I know it, but we've already arranged for a week's option on two thousand tons which the Interior Warehouse Company has at Dayton, and which is practically the last of the old crop in the State outside the flats. It expires

next Saturday at six p. m., and was secured at twenty dollars a ton."

"Then you only need three thousand more?"

"Yes; that will clean up everything on the flats, and when Mueller, and the others, go out a week hence, there won't be a sack left. We put in our bid at twenty-six dollars, or even twenty-seven dollars, a ton; and they won't be able to underbid us, as they can't ship in oats from Idaho or Montana for less than thirty dollars, counting freight; and as for Oregon, you know that State is exhausted."

"But Gilbert," the buyer asked, "what is Uncle Sam going to do with all that oats? Last year he only went in for three thousand. Didn't you get the signals mixed?"

"No, no," Gilbert answered testily, "I got them right; he swung first for hay twice to the left; then five times to the right."

"Twice for hay, eh? Then the government is in for hay, also. Have you got that covered?"

"Yes, of course. We've got hay to burn left from last fall's slump, hay we bought at fifteen dollars a ton, and can't unload at twelve dollars. Well, we'll soak Uncle Sam on it! I wish he had called for five thousand of hay instead of oats. We could have filled it right from our warehouse, and cleaned up every spear."

"I suppose I may as well start tonight for the flats. Shall I secure options, or buy outright?"

"You had better buy outright; we've got this one option at Dayton, and that's enough. Those farmers up on the flats are too tricky to try options with, anyway. When they find out the contract is to be let, they'll holler their heads off as it is. Get bills of sale for everything you buy, as well as warehouse receipts; and make out your own drafts on us for each lot, whatever it costs. When we get the warehouse receipts down here, we won't have any trouble getting the money from the bank to cover your drafts. When will you be back?"

"By Sunday night, at least. I'll strike

the flats at Skagit City, and cross to La Conner by launch. It's going to be a whale of a trip!"

"I know it, Pilfer; but it's worth it. We'll do something handsome for you when the deal is finished."

"I'll leave that to you. As you say, you pay me my salary, and I do the work. So long!"

The door closed without a sound. Pilfer passed down the short flight of stairs, out into the crowded thoroughfare, head bent low in thought.

It was hardly five o'clock, but along the avenue the cluster lights blazed, for darkness settles early on the Pacific coast during the wet season. The ceaseless rain dripped on the umbrellas that blocked the sidewalks, and trickled in tiny rivulets down the back of his cravat. At the hill where the cable car comes down, a roaring stream poured from the cement gutters, and swept across the asphalt toward the sea level.

Through it all he went, to a brilliantly lighted grill, where he had just time to eat a hasty dinner before catching his train for the north.

Jones, of the Mueller Brothers Milling Company, had to speak to Pilfer twice across the table before the latter recognized him. When once he did, however, and realized that he was facing the right-hand man of the competing concern which his employers most feared, Pilfer came straightway out of his abstraction.

Once before he had found himself in a similar position, and had not given full credit to the young cashier's ingenuity. Jones had noticed his absent-mindedness, and suspected something. He scented a deal, shadowed Pilfer, discovered what was on foot; and Mueller had outmaneuvered his rivals. Pilfer resolved not to be caught napping again.

He turned his full attention to the pleasant-faced chap opposite him. They discussed tariff revision, the tightness in the money market, and other harmless topics; and finally the outlook for the new grain crop.

The young man tried every snare he

could invent to inveigle the other into some hint as to what was on his mind; but to no avail.

Pilfer was able to cross swords with the shrewdest of them; and, knowing as he did the great need for caution, he eluded successfully the little pitfalls spread for him. When he rose to leave, the utmost that he had divulged was that he was leaving on a short business trip to the north. He admitted that much, for he felt certain that Jones would trail him to the depot anyway.

Such proved to be the case. Jones, spurred on this time not only by his natural desire to "scoop" a competitor, but also by the desperate need to make fifty thousand dollars, clung like a leech to Pilfer.

Something was in the wind, he was sure. He knew that only one thing could take the buyer into the flats country—oats. But why? That was what he could not determine.

Thinking swiftly, he stood on the smoking platform of the car that carried Pilfer to the railroad station; and there heard him call for a ticket to Mount Vernon, the center of the oat-growing country.

It was too late to telephone to Mueller; he had to decide for himself quickly what he was to do. Whatever amateur-detective instincts he possessed had been aroused and were working overtime.

The gatekeeper was shouting the last summons for the northbound train, when Jones suddenly threw discretion to the winds.

Purchasing his ticket hastily, he dashed through the portal and clambered on the car just as the conductor for the last time bawled: "All aboard!"

It was a move that neither he nor Pilfer had bargained for!

III.

In the roundhouses and shops of the P. C. & N. R. R. they still discuss that memorable run made by "Lucky Bill" Sharmon and his fireman in the spring flood of 191—, when they piloted the Owl from Mill City to Mount Vernon under the drive of an unprecedented

storm across the rails covered by water for the greater part of the distance.

Two trestles, undermined by the roaring tide, collapsed behind them; and when they plunged into the last stretch just outside of the limits of Mount Vernon, so deep was it that the fire box was submerged, and they pulled out on the other side only through their own momentum.

Several hours previous the last connecting wires between Mount Vernon and the rest of the world had gone down; and for twenty-four hours following that wild ride newspapers in Mill City issued extras every few minutes inquiring as to the fate of the midnight train.

Not until communication was again established by a relay over the mountains via Spokane, and succeeding trains were detoured on the inside route some miles distant from the coast, did the excited State learn that the Owl was stalled, but safe and unharmed, in the northern city.

Pilfer sat in the smoking compartment during all the journey, puffing incessantly on strong cigars. The air had become a hazy blue, through which a group of card players could be seen faintly at one end of the car. Scattered elsewhere were passengers dozing in the uncomfortable seats.

Jones was back in the day coach, unable to sleep because of the unmerciful clamor of the rain on the windows, and the swish-swish-swish of the trucks as they splashed through the rising water. Already he had regretted his folly in embarking on an errand, the object of which he did not even know.

Had he been able to telephone before leaving Mill City, he would not have been quite so anxious; but as it was, neither Mueller nor Louise could know of his whereabouts. And when he arrived finally at Mount Vernon, there to discover all wire connection severed, and further learned that the tracks were gone so that he could neither communicate with his employer nor return home, his dismay became real and acute.

By the time Lucky Bill had driven his locomotive with its chilled fire box

into the outskirts of the city, and the wheels had ground slowly to a standstill some blocks from the depot, the one-horse trolley line had long since abandoned its efforts for the night. There was nothing for the passengers to do but drag themselves out and struggle along to the nearest hotel; or remain in the cold train till morning.

One or two men who ventured outside reported that the rain had abated in force though not in volume; and the majority decided to trek toward the downtown section, and find a resting place.

Pilfer, laden only with a light valise, was in the vanguard of the silent procession, and was one of the first to re-serve a room at the Grand View Hotel. When Jones, carrying a suit case for an overloaded traveling man, because he himself had come off sans luggage of any sort, entered the tiny lobby, Pilfer had vanished.

On the account book doing duty as register he found Pilfer's name, and pointed it out to the clerk.

"We came up from Mill City together," he explained, "and are going to do some business here to-morrow—or rather to-day. Call me when you call him, will you?"

The clerk nodded sleepily and made a note which he placed in the pigeon-hole from which he had taken a key for Jones. Assured that he would be on the scene ready to watch his competitor, the tired cashier lost no time in turning out his gas flame and creeping under the coverlets.

It was not long afterward that the tall, spare figure of Pilfer appeared on the landing; and soon the buyer, still smoking, approached the clerk's desk. He looked over the small book casually, and suppressed a gleam of satisfaction as he noted the signature of "Richard W. Jones, Mill City."

"I see my friend Jones got in all right," he remarked. "I suppose he told you we were together."

"Yes," the clerk responded, accepting a cigar. "He asked us to call him when we did you."

"That's just like the dear boy," Pil-

fer reflected. "He would work himself to death if I wasn't around. You know the kind—all nerves—never know when to stop."

Yes, the clerk knew; also he knew that the cigar was better than any he could get in Mount Vernon.

"There won't be any chance for us to get busy until after noon, anyway," Pilfer continued, "so you may as well let the lad sleep. I'll wait here for him, and he'll be glad he got the extra rest, when I tell him about it."

"Just as you say," the clerk agreed; and tore up the little note.

It was a splendid night to sleep, especially in the frame structure which comprised the Grand View Hotel. To the accompaniment of a million trip hammers beating upon the roof and the wooden walls, Jones slept like a tired youngster; and was glad, when he suddenly opened his eyes and looked about him, that the hour for rising had not yet come.

He could hear the rain pounding against the panes, and snuggled the closer into his sheets, hoping that he might steal another hour before the clerk tapped on his door. The hour sped swiftly; another passed, and still he slept.

When he finally did rouse himself with a yawn and noted that he had not yet been summoned, he looked at his watch. He was startled to find the hour hand pointing somewhere between the Roman numerals X and XI. Wondering that he had been permitted to sleep so long, but as yet unsuspecting, Jones decided to dress and await the appearance of Pilfer.

It was not until he had gone down the stairs and entered the lobby that he realized something was wrong. Through the large plate-glass window the light of another rainy day filtered in; a different clerk loafed at the desk; while about the stove a group of surveyors sat, their work spoiled by the downpour.

He lost no time in verifying his suspicions, and questioned the clerk.

"Pilfer? Let me see," that individual

replied slowly. He looked at a pigeon-hole, and found a key within. "Yes, he must have gone out some time ago."

Jones, appreciating the fact instantly that Pilfer had outwitted him, did not berate the clerk for failing to call him. It would be useless, as well as a further loss of time.

But the incident had sobered him, and also had told him conclusively that Pilfer was putting through some deal which he wished to conceal from Mueller Brothers. It required only a moment to discover that a man answering Pilfer's description had embarked on the Skagit River steamer, the only one that day, which had left an hour previous, on its long journey to Skagit City.

There was a launch owner who was willing to take chances with the weather; and him Jones engaged to follow the larger boat. He delayed only long enough to learn that the wires were still down, and might be for several days; then took up the trail with renewed zeal.

It was necessary to proceed with considerable caution, for the river had left its banks. An occasional tree roared down the channel at their side, uprooted by the gale; while débris of every sort crashed along on the swirling flood. There was a brief stop at a farmer's house for dinner; then a long afternoon of drizzling repetition of the morning.

Just before dusk they were in the midst of the flats country, where Jones had spent his boyhood and knew his waterways. Early nightfall found them rounding the bend where the hamlet of Skagit City awaited. The steamer was tied at the dock; it had arrived safely several hours before. The only available launch had been hired by a dark, tall man, who had put out immediately across the marsh stretches.

Feeling that even with this start, Pilfer could not accomplish much before morning, Jones found a place for himself and his engineer to spend the night.

At daybreak he was once more plowing the rain and wind, prepared for a two days' meandering which would bring them out at La Conner, on the other side of the flats.

At the first ranch he stopped, and inquired as to Pilfer. The answer which he received caused his heart to sink, for he learned that Pilfer was not taking options, but was buying oats outright. Apparently he was intending to clean up the entire flats.

Warehouse receipts had been given; and a draft on Guerber & Gilbert received. The farmer expected before noon to mail the draft at Skagit City for collection as soon as the trains resumed schedule.

Jones knew there was no way to secure a second option on the lot. In addition to that, there could not be a very large amount of oats in the country, as most of the crop had been moved during the winter months. He could only hope by continual driving to overtake and pass the buyer, and then adopt the same tactics, purchasing whatever remaining lots he could find.

They pulled out from the tiny dock, and shot away through the intricate mazes of the marsh country, where the finest milling oats in the world are grown. Jones, in the stern of the boat, peered steadily ahead through the descending rain for signs of a launch, which he hoped to discover before night once more fell on the flats.

Pilfer, however, had too long a start, and the handicap promised to bring him success. Oats he was to buy: oats he bought; and the stimulus of extra money urged his engineer to crowd the launch at a reckless speed through the winding channels. The swollen marshes rose and rose, covering the tall reeds almost to a level with the dikes.

The farmers welcomed him as they stood on their narrow docks, and saw their crop threatened with inundation while it lay piled in the warehouses. They sold their oats to him practically at his own figure, so that before he had reached the delta of the Skagit, he was buying as low as seventeen dollars a ton.

He realized that he was running some risk in making final contracts, for if the oats should be washed away after he had bought them, the loss would de-

volve on his employers; but, being a gambler, he took the chance.

He had already secured twenty-eight hundred tons before Thursday night set in, and found him chugging along the edge of the bay toward his goal, La Conner. In the bow of the boat squatted the engineer under a tarpaulin covering, which protected him from the rain. The heavens seemed again to have opened their floodgates.

In the stern of the launch, wrapped in a warm, waterproof bag, Pilfer slept. He had lain there ever since late that afternoon, when he had completed his last purchase; and he was hoping to regain a few hours of slumber before reaching La Conner.

The engineer was tired as well, but he held to the course evenly as darkness settled deeper and blacker on the waters.

The wind had carried them a short distance from the main channel—he had expected that—but he was entirely unprepared for the sudden crash which jolted the launch and roused him from his semidoze as the vessel struck upon the very rocks they were to have rounded.

In another instant, the shell-like craft was pounding against the jagged teeth. It splintered and filled; a second wave followed almost immediately, engulfing them in the icy waters which closed around them.

Just as the gunwale sank, the engineer, who had been fumbling madly for the bag which contained Pilfer, found it, and turned toward shore.

He was weighted down not only by the struggling buyer—now thoroughly aroused but helpless—but by his own heavy clothing. He could not make much headway; the waves splashed and swirled about him while the cold numbed his freezing fingers.

Several times he felt that he could cling to the bag no longer, but the dark line of the beach loomed just ahead. As he seemed almost to have reached it, a large wave buffeted him back, and, for a moment, he disappeared below the surface.

Gasping and gurgling for breath, he

rose again, and frantically fought with the wind and tide.

The cries from Pilfer in the meantime had become fewer; the struggling in the bag fainter until it finally stopped altogether. Though tempted to relinquish his burden, the engineer held on grimly until he felt the bottom rising up under his feet; and he staggered on shore, dragging the bag after him.

Then exhaustion overtook him; he collapsed on the sand just beyond reach of the water.

Farmer Campbell, who thought he heard cries off shore and came down with his lantern, found them there ten minutes later; one drowned, the other unconscious.

As he stood shouting for his hired man to come and assist him, a voice answered in the blackness over the bay, and an engine's throbbing became audible. Campbell rushed to his dock, and held up his light, wondering at the unexpected visitors.

Then a launch appeared through the darkness and crept slowly up to the landing. Jones, wet and tired, stood up in the prow.

"Hello!" he cried, "did you call?"

"Yes," shouted Campbell, "there's been a boat wrecked, and two men washed ashore!"

Surmising the truth, Jones clambered out of the launch hurriedly.

In another moment he was standing over the dead body of his competitor, the zest for chase altered swiftly to a deep pity. He had not expected to overtake Pilfer in this manner.

IV.

Saturday noon came and went, and the men in the outer mill were ringing in for the afternoon when the office door opened, and a somewhat wearied, bedraggled young man walked in.

"Oh, Lordy," cried the blond stenographer, for once startled. "It's Mister Jones!"

Nodding to the thronging office force, Jones continued on his way briskly until he had pushed open the glass door and confronted the German manager. From

outside the sanctum, the excited book-keeper, stenographer, and office boy peered in through the windows, and wondered what was going to happen.

They saw Mueller whirl in his chair, and greet his cashier with rather more warmth than was customary. The eyes of the old man were twinkling, but he did not smile. Something in the young man's attitude led him to forbear.

Now their lips were moving, Jones talking at considerable length, Mueller interjecting a quick, sharp question or two. Occasionally he gestured in his peculiar style. Something was said which shocked him, for he bent forward suddenly, and stared at Jones as if incredulous.

Then the cashier drew from his coat pocket a large bundle of folded papers, and placed them on the little table at his elbow. Mueller motioned toward them, and leaned far over, addressing Jones in low tones.

He seemed to be urging his employee to give them to him; and Jones was refusing.

The conversation became more audible; the attitudes more intense. Now and again snatches of words drifted through the transom to the interested audience.

Jones was speaking: "But . . . can't do that . . . stealing . . . Pilfer."

The manager's staccato came back: "Hard name . . . me decide . . . receipts . . . us fill contract!"

Jones had paled, and seemed to be distressed considerably. "Must return . . . Gilbert."

Mueller thumped his fist on his desk. "We get contract . . . big money . . . you . . . Louise!"

The cashier threw himself forward suddenly, pillowng his head on his arms. For a long time he remained there, his body shaking. Apparently he was laboring under a severe strain. Mueller watched him, with a not unkindly look on his face.

Jones straightened himself up at last. He could not speak; merely shook his head mutely. He picked up the bundle

of papers without interference from Mueller, and placed them in his pocket.

Then he stood, waiting.

Mueller rose, and closed his desk. He jerked on his greatcoat, and put on his hat.

"You going . . . Gilbert's?" they heard him ask.

Jones nodded, a look of dumb agony in his eyes.

"I'll go," announced Mueller, starting toward the door.

Meanwhile the office force, too dumfounded to work, stood aside, unnoticed, while the manager and his cashier passed out.

V.

Gilbert, of Guerber & Gilbert, sat in his padded office, puffing a fresh weed. Now and again he glanced out of the window at the incessant rain, and his mind wandered up into Skagit County, where he could picture Pilfer winding among the marshes soaked to the very skin. He was glad that he could sit in a warm office and smoke cigars.

The sap boy bringing in the afternoon mail ended his reverie. On the top lay a long, white envelope, marked:

Department of War.
Bureau of Supplies and Forage.

He ripped it open hastily, and scanned the contents.

Item the first read in black: "Five thousand tons of hay."

He looked again, thinking that he had made a mistake. The contract should have called for oats.

No, it was hay, he discovered excitedly.

He spelled it out, peering at the paper: H—A—Y!

Great heavens, he told himself, it could not be true! It was a misprint—a typographical blunder. If not—

Item the second. Where was it? He looked wildly for it.

"There it was: "Two thousand tons of oats."

"It must be wrong," he cried; "they had jumbled them."

Still, there they were in black and white. Had Guerber & Gilbert been

tricked, he wondered? If so, they were ruined!

He seized the phone feverishly; stammered the number of the quartermaster's office.

"Hello, Barker, this is Gilbert. I just received your specifications—notice they call for five thousand hay, and two of oats. That's vice versa, isn't it? Shouldn't it be five of oats, and two of hay?"

"No," came back the reply, "the bids were correct as sent out!"

Gilbert hung up the receiver, feeling about his heart a strained, clutching sensation. He knew he had been hoodwinked—by some one. Through it all he fancied he saw the hand of Heine Mueller.

He sized up the situation hastily. There was still a chance: If Pilfer had not succeeded in buying any oats, G. & G. were safe.

But if Pilfer had obeyed instructions—had fulfilled them—Gilbert knew he could never meet the drafts that would come in when he did not have the government's contract at his back. Twenty-eight hundred tons would mean fifty thousand dollars. Their account was already overdrawn at the bank. They had, they could get, no money.

Tingle, tingle! went the telephone. Gilbert grabbed the receiver. It was the *Daily News* office.

The broker replied: "Yes, this is Gilbert. What? Have we a man named Pilfer in our employ? Yes, our buyer. What's that? What's that? Drowned, you say? Where? When? Near La Conner? Well—er—er— Good-by."

Pilfer drowned! Then there was still a faint ray of hope. He seized it eagerly; he had no time just then for regrets. If only the warehouse receipts had been lost, too!

The phone rang again. This time it was the Pioneer Trust & Savings Bank. They reported sixty-two drafts against Guerber & Gilbert for oats bought, aggregating forty-eight thousand dollars.

What was the wish of G. & G.? They must know at once, as the papers were marked: "No protest."

Gilbert replied glibly that he had not

yet received the warehouse receipts, but that he would call them again before evening, and let them know.

His hopes were rising.

The Jap boy entered obsequiously, bringing the card of H. Mueller. He wondered what Mueller could wish to see him about. The card seemed to portend evil tidings.

But he ordered that his callers be shown in.

Gilbert received them easily, almost jocularly, suppressing any anxiety before his competitor. Mueller, accompanied by Jones, had merely called to express his sympathy at the death of Pilfer.

Jones had brought warehouse receipts for some oats Pilfer had bought; he gave them to Gilbert.

The broker took them gracefully, and thanked the bearers as if he had just received a great favor. He ushered them out without a smile; and, after they had left, he took a black, squat-nosed article from a drawer in his desk, and faced its muzzle without a tremor.

Mueller and Jones sat within the manager's sanctum. There was a puzzled look still on the face of the young cashier, that of a man who is both bewildered and happy. He was in a peculiar position for one who was expecting to be discharged momentarily, and even Mueller seemed decidedly gracious for an enraged employer.

"I knew you were only bluffing," Jones asserted bravely; "you wouldn't really have me steal those receipts."

"Sure not," Mueller responded, "sure not under the circumstances."

"What circumstances?"

"We didn't want those receipts. Why should we? The government only called for two thousand tons of oats; and we're protected. We took a second option on the lot of the Interior Warehouse people at Dayton. Gilbert had a first option; it will expire to-night. That's why we didn't want the oats."

"Then Gilbert—"

"The receipts will ruin him. He can never cover them in a thousand years!"

For a moment the young cashier

could not speak, so surprised was he at the revelation. Then he saw his chance.

"So it wasn't such a fool errand, after all?" he demanded.

"Suit yourself about that," Mueller evaded. "It did one thing, I admit. With G. & G. busted, it has given us a clean sweep in the Northwest."

"Mr. Jones."

The stenographer with the taffy-colored hair had thrust her head in, and was calling him.

"You're wanted on the telephone," she announced.

Jones picked up the manager's phone, and answered.

"Hello, Dick, dear," came a clear, sweet voice—the voice of the girl he loved. "Won't you come up to-night?"

An eager light came into Jones' eyes.

He placed his hand over the mouth-piece, and whispered hoarsely to Mueller:

"It's Louise—she wants me to call this evening!"

The manager looked Jones straight in the eye; and smiled.

"Tell her," he directed gruffly, "that I'm bringing you up to dinner!"



COOKING UP A PLAY

WHEN Wells Hawks, the dramatic press agent, was with Charles Frohman, on one of his trips to Paris, the theatrical producer shoved a lot of work on Hawks.

"Now we will read these plays that have been submitted to us," Frohman would begin the morning's labors. "I'll read these, and you read those."

"These" were always the good plays, and "those" were the bad ones. To this arrangement, however, Hawks could make no valid objection, because Frohman was paying him his salary. But it was the last straw when the producer one evening handed him a manuscript in French, and asked:

"Can you read French, Wells?"

"A little," replied Hawks, meaning that all he knew was the French word for "yes."

"Then," directed Frohman, "read this play and write me out a scenario of it in English. I want it immediately after breakfast to-morrow morning."

Hawks was seized with an inspiration.

"The night clerk!" he said to himself in triumph. "He knows both French and English."

But investigation disclosed the fact that a new night clerk was on duty. Hawks was in an anguish of apprehension. He couldn't read French, and none of the hotel attachés, he discovered after careful investigation, knew anything about English.

At the eleventh hour he was visited by inspiration number two.

"Ah," he whispered to the night air, "the chef!"

And an hour later he and the chef—meaning cook, biscuit flinger, hashmaker—prepared the scenario, which resulted in Mr. Frohman's accepting the play.

A Chat With You

HALF the time we are disposed to think that looking facts in the face implies something unpleasant. To glaze over our faults and imagine ourselves a great deal better than we are, to forget the many others in the world and overestimate our own importance, to pass through life surrounded by a nice comfortable air cushion of self-esteem, that saves us from many a hard knock, that is seldom pierced and then easily patched up again--these things are all such common traits that none of us can safely boast that we are entirely free from them. A sounder way of looking at things is to remember that the truth is the thing worth while knowing, even if it is unpleasant, and that the hardest, unhappiest fact may not be so bad if faced in the right fashion. A nettle won't sting you if you grasp it tightly enough, and gold mines have been discovered in ugly landscapes and insalubrious climates. Also, it is well to remember that *all* the absolute rock-bottom facts are not unpleasant ones. There is one truth most memorable, heard by many of us often in familiar words, immortalized in song, but often forgotten at the time it should be most remembered. It is that "you can't keep a good man down."



IF the novel which opens the next issue of *The Popular* were a sermon, the above statement would be the text. The novel is called "Yankee Grit," and the title fits it if ever a name fitted anything. It was written by Holman Day. It is a bigger, more stirring tale than "Sandlocked" or "Money Has Legs," the two other novels by Day, each of which appeared complete in a single

issue of the magazine. If you ever had any doubt in the world about our publishing "book-length" novels in single issues, just consider this new story of Day's when you come to read it a fortnight hence. If you have ever read any modern novel in cloth that gave you more interest, more thrill and stir, more romance and character than "Yankee Grit," you have picked out something better than most of the bookshelves we know can offer. The novel is a story of the New England coast, of a yacht captain who fancies himself in love with the owner's daughter, and who loses his job and his sweetheart at one fell swoop. To suddenly lose a post is bad enough, but Day's hero lost his under a cloud. In addition to this, his departure from the yacht where he had been living in more or less luxurious surroundings was by way of an ancient wooden windjammer beating wildly out to sea in the face of a gathering storm. When the windjammer upset and Lawrence Thornton, together with his new companions, was imprisoned in the hold of the schooner it seemed as if about all that an evil fortune could bring was his.



THE escape from this wreck, told as it is with a matchless vividness, is a tale in itself, but it is only the opening act to the real strenuous romance in "Yankee Grit." Thornton finds work for his hands to do, of the humblest and at times of the most inspiring sort. Misfortune is not finished with him as yet, and there are more unexpected mischances and blows of adverse fate. But each successive difficulty only brings out in brighter and brighter relief the real, strong man in Thornton that might al-

A CHAT WITH YOU - *Continued.*

ways have been hidden under polish and convention if his life had been cast in smoother courses. From an ordinarily likable and manly young seaman Thornton develops before our eyes, under the stress of circumstances, into a bigger, stronger, more vital sort of being, and when he finally wins position once again we feel that it is well deserved. Thornton's rise is not through the trickery and chicanery of one who lives by his wits. He wins not through ruthless selfishness, but partly because of and partly in spite of a sort of unselfish and noble devotion to the course that he considers the nobler one. When he wins he is fighting not for himself, but for other weaker and more helpless people who have been unjustly treated, and his victory is the defeat of an unscrupulous, powerful, and sordid organization. Thornton turns his own misfortunes into weapons of offense. If there isn't some lesson and some inspiration for every one in this story, "Yankee Grit," we have not read it aright.



JUST by way of contrast to Day's novel, we mention here another big feature of the next issue of *THE POPULAR*. It is the first part of a great four-part story by E. Phillips Oppenheim, entitled "Missing." You know without our telling you that as an author in his own particular field, Oppenheim is absolutely unequalled. Nothing that was ever shot across the films in the movie theater moves more rapidly, with more fascinating interest, with more surprise, with less monotony and weariness than a good Oppenheim story. Diplomatic intrigue, hairbreadth adventure, romance, the hidden struggles of the chancelleries of Europe are woven into the fabric. Oppenheim really made his greatest reputation with "The Malefa-

tor," which had its initial appearance in the pages of *THE POPULAR* a good many years ago. He has written many stories since then, all of them excellent, but never again to our own way of thinking did he strike such a high pitch of interest till he wrote "Missing." When the manuscript of this latest Oppenheim serial came to our hands, we felt that here at length was another story as good as "The Malefactor." "Missing" is a tale of diplomatic intrigue, of a threatened European war which would have destroyed England, of an American agent who for a time had in his keeping the peace of the whole civilized world. The ruling spirit in "Missing," the man whose personality is the dominant note in the narrative, is as strange, as powerful, as real a character as Oppenheim has ever called into being. The story naturally divides itself into four parts. You will have it complete in two months. We think that "Missing" is one of the most characteristic things Oppenheim has ever done, just as "Yankee Grit" represents Day's personality and style at its strongest and best. They are as different as may well be, and yet we cannot imagine any reader who will not like both. Each has a sort of universality in its appeal.



THESE are but two features of what we regard as the strongest number of *THE POPULAR* we have ever sent to press. There is a baseball story by George Pattullo, a wonderful story of crooked business and the law by Frank Blighton, and other things just as good by James Hay, junior, George Randolph Chester, J. J. Bell, Richard Washburn Child, and others. It is too good a number of the magazine to last very long on any news stand. Order your copy now.



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A house in which waste and extravagance have a loose rein is never a happy home. *Genuine economy* does much to favor domestic peace. Old fashioned heating methods afford little protection to the windward side of the rooms—waste the valuable heat up the chimney—or overheat some rooms in the effort to drive needed heat to exposed rooms. The ideal in heating comfort and fuel economy is reached and *permanently guaranteed* by an outfit of



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**The cost of these materials unassembled is only
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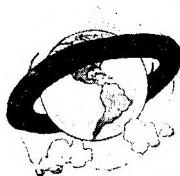


Poles
enough to build a stockade around California—12,480,000 of them, worth in the lumber yard about \$40,000,000.

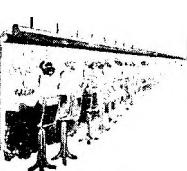


Telephones

enough to string around Lake Erie—8,000,000 of them, 5,000,000 Bell-owned, which, with equipment, cost at the factory \$45,000,000.

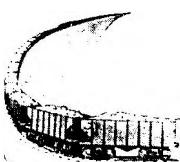


Wire
to coil around the earth 621 times—15,460,000 miles of it, worth about \$100,000,000, including 260,000 tons of copper, worth \$88,000,000.

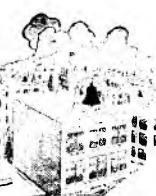


Switchboards

in a line would extend thirty-six miles—55,000 of them, which cost, unassembled, \$90,000,000.



Lead and Tin
to load 6,600 coal cars—being 659,960,000 pounds, worth more than \$37,000,000.



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sufficient to house a city of 150,000—more than a thousand buildings, which, unfurnished, and without land, cost \$44,000,000.



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to go five times through the earth from pole to pole—225,778,000 feet, worth in the warehouse \$9,000,000.



People

equal in numbers to the entire population of Wyoming—150,000 Bell System employees, not including those of connecting companies.

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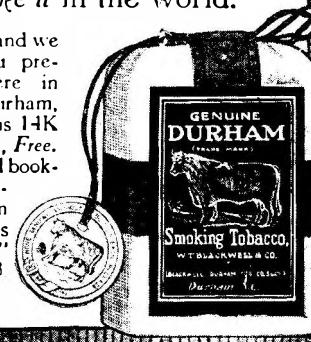
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with each 5c sack

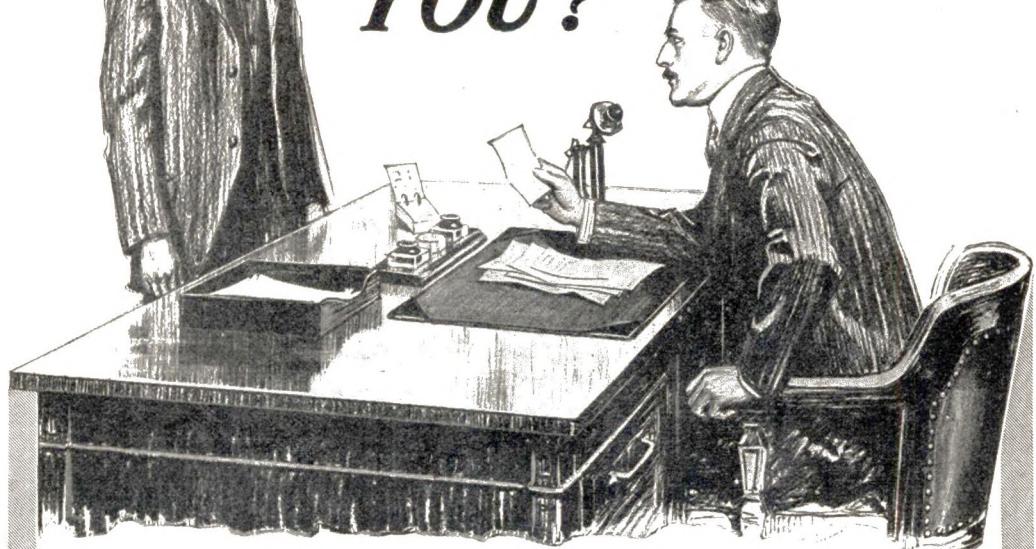


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IT'S a great combination I have for you this time—the biggest author in the United States and

a magazine you ought to have. Sitting down here in my little home in Locust Valley I just figured

out that the way to make money was to give people the best thing ever—something so good that they'd take it from these few words in a printed page. Now Robert W. Chambers is the biggest seller there is—and I always thought *Travel* a source of endless joy. So I just got the two together. And 10,000 sets of Chambers' best works will go free to the quick thinkers and quick actors.

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Not only do you get the books free, but you get *Travel Magazine* for the rest of this year 1914, and for the whole of 1915. For the rest of this year and for all of next year you will travel in its pages to the far ends of the earth. You will see Khartoum, and Calcutta, Siberia and the highest peak of the Andes; the Cote d'Azur with its fashionable, gay throng, and the dark interior of Africa. You will open your mind to cosmopolitan thought and idea; you breathe in the air of the whole wide world. You will have thousands of

beautiful pictures and thousands of gleaming beautiful pages of text. Places to which you have been before will live again for you. The places to which you have not yet gone will hold out their charm of newness and adventure.

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10,000 sets of Chambers are all I have. When you remember that 250,000 people took his last book when it appeared—and that thousands take *Travel Magazine* anyway without any persuading, you see that there are about 550,000 people who will want these 10,000 sets. To get yours, send the coupon today before one of the others gets ahead of you.

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"Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;" **OMAR**

**"I DO not know of any piece of goods that
The American Tobacco Company has
ever made, of which it should be so proud
as OMAR Cigarettes. They are perfect."**

This statement is made by a man who for twenty years has superintended the manufacture of **BILLIONS** of the world's finest cigarettes.

This man knows WHY OMAR is the greatest **SUCCESS** in cigarette history.

He knows that the combination of Turkish and domestic tobaccos in OMAR has NEVER been used in **ANY OTHER** cigarette, **ANYWHERE**, at **ANY TIME**.

He knows that **EVERY LEAF** of these tobaccos is selected in the district where it is grown, by the **GREATEST LEAF SPECIALISTS** in Turkey and the United States.

He knows that this tobacco is **AGED FOR THREE YEARS** to insure thorough **MELLOWNESS** before it goes into OMAR.

He knows that the **PERFECT** Turkish Blend of OMAR is the result of **MONTHS** of careful experiment by the **MOST SKILLFUL BLEND EXPERTS** in the world.

He knows that OMAR is **FULL OF SNAP, LIFE and CHARACTER**, yet so **SMOOTH and MILD** that **NO TRACE OF "ROUGHNESS"** mars the blend.

He knows that OMAR is manufactured as **CAREFULLY** as any **ARTICLE OF PURE FOOD**—in clean, light, modern factories; that **NO HAND TOUCHES** OMAR from the leaf to the package.

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The American Tobacco Co.

OMAR Turkish Blend **CIGARETTE**
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FIFTEEN CENTS

The OMAR Painting (shown on reverse page) in Full Color, 7x11 $\frac{1}{4}$, on heavy plate paper, without advertising and ready for framing, will be sent to any address in U. S. on receipt of 10c in stamps. Add. 111 5th Ave., N. Y.

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are shown in this beautiful Free Fashion Catalogue

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2R39 **Dainty and Becoming Blouse**, of beauti-
ful quality soft white crepe with a handsome
colored silk stripe woven through the material. This
blouse is made with three-quarter kimono sleeves which
are joined to body of waist by French veining. A chic
style feature is the turn-down Gladstone collar of plain
white crepe, and a fetching Parisian touch in back is the
pointed crepe under-collar in cowl effect, finished with
a silk tassel. (The cowl collar may be removed if de-
sired—see small illustration.) The pointed cuffs are of
plain white crepe. Blouse fastens in front with white
crepe buttons and is trimmed at neck with silk cord
and tassels. Has elastic waistband. Comes in
with light blue, pink or lavender silk stripes. Sizes 32
to 44 bust. **Price, All Mail or Express \$1.00**
Charges Paid by Us.

2R40 **Blouse of beautiful soft embroidered
white crepe**. Model is heavily embroidered
both front and back, and is designed with three-
quarter length kimono sleeves joined to waist by French
veining. Sleeves are finished with tuck around arm and
end in pointed cuffs of plain white crepe. Has turn-
down Gladstone collar, and in the back hem—the collar
is pointed and cuffed. Trimmed in silk by back.
This cowl effect may be removed if desired. Has silk
ribbon tie at neck of tafta ribbon. Waist fastens in-
visibly in front. Has elastic waistband. Sizes 32 to 44
bust. White only. **Special Price, All
Mail or Express Charges Paid by Us \$1.00**

4R41 **A Simple One-piece Frock of charming
style**, made of fine white washable crepe
with pretty Dresden floral figures. The waist has
pretty pointed collar of fancy woven crepe trimmed with
silk embroidery and edged with white Satin embroidery
every 2 inches. The kimono sleeves have a tuck
around arm and are edged with embroidery to match
collar. Dress fastens in front where it is trimmed with
crepe covered buttons to match collar and color of
figure in goods. Waist and skirt are joined by a piping
of colored crepe. There is a stitched plait down center
of front as pictured. Colors: white ground with rose,
light blue or lavender floral figures and trimming.
Sizes 32 to 44 bust, skirt length 40 inches. **Special
Bargain Price, All Mail or Express \$1.00**
Charges Paid by Us.

22R510 **Ladies' Real Milanoise Silk 16-
button length Cloak**, shown in figure,
first quality, guaranteed not to rip, two clasps, 28
inches long, double finger tips. Colors: black, white,
tan, brown, poncee, champagne, light gray, taupe gray,
navy blue, Copenhagen blue, sky blue or pink.
Sizes $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 8. **Price, Postage Paid by Us 97c**

22R512 **Ladies' 16-button length Clove
showman figure**, made of good quality
Trio Silk, not so fine as 22R510, but of excellent qual-
ity. 28 inches long, double finger tips, two clasps.
Colors: black, white, tan, brown, navy blue, gray, pon-
cey or champagne. Sizes $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$. **Price, Postage Paid by Us 69c**



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*Society for Prevention of Cruelty
to Shavers*

199 Fulton Street, New York City
February 12, 1914

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter asking what shaving soap you should use because of your very tender skin
I answer

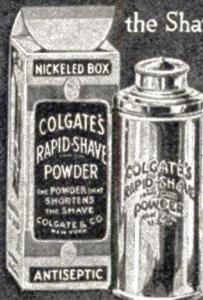
The Magic Wand
of Shaving



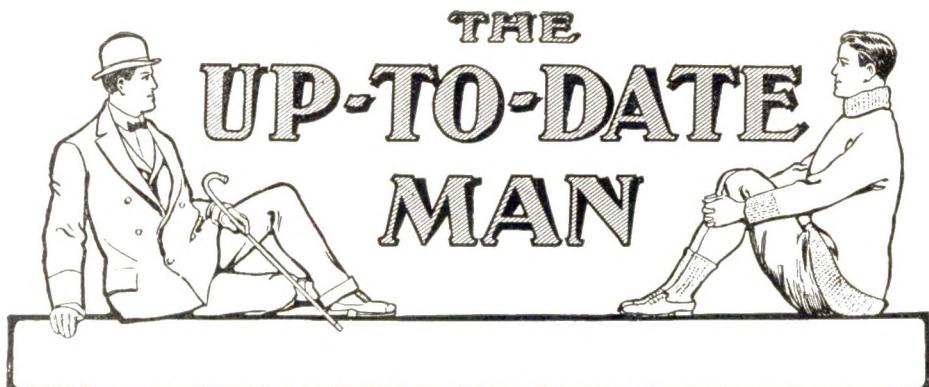
The Cream that Smooths the Way



The Powder that Shortens
the Shave



COLGATE & CO., Established 1806, New York
Makers of Cashmere Bouquet Soap - luxurious, lasting, refined.



The readers of the magazine may write to this department about any problem of dress. Every question will be promptly answered, provided that a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

FOUR summer "rig" should have the fashionable leisure lines—that is, the coat should be soft, slightly shaped, and not too tight. Many young men fall into the error of having their clothes very snug-fitting. Suits thus made soon pull and pucker and lose their "smart" body lines, because tug and strain draw them awry. Exaggerating the waistline, so that it looks pinched, is not good form. The coat illustrated here is one of the correct double-breasted styles for summer.

It has four buttons, the topmost of which is not used. The lapels are long and rolling, the cuffs are finished with a welt, and the waist-coat, if one be worn, protrudes slightly above the coat lapels. The back may have a deep center vent or two side vents, which are budding into vogue again.

There is no more appropriate color for grilling days than blue, either plain or patterned with self or contrasting stripes. However, green is a "smart" color, and blendings of green with brown and purple are also high in favor.

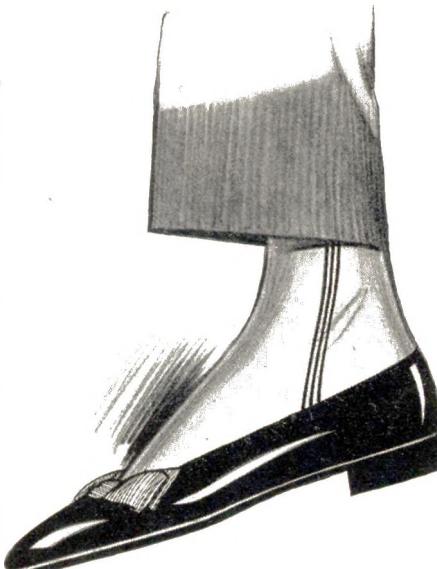
Blue double-breasted coats and white serge or flannel trousers, with bottom turn-ups, are a fetching fashion for the mountains or the shore. So are all-white suits of serge and flannel.

Perhaps you noticed last year that many men wore rubber-soled Oxfords, not only at sports and in the country, but also for business and in town. This summer rubber-soled shoes will be seen everywhere. Perhaps a description of a "smart" Oxford will help you.

It is made of soft russet leather or black gun-metal calfskin over a so-called "athletic" last. The toe is full and round, and the sole and heel are rubber, "saddle-stitched" clear around to the heel with a leather welt. This shoe is lined with waterproof brown duck. The heel is cemented to the shoe, thereby avoiding jarring or scratching from nails.

There is no more comfortable walking shoe than the rubber-soled Oxford, although, to be sure, rubber is prone to overheat the foot of those who perspire easily.

To accompany the blue serge coat and white trousers, or the all-white suit of



New Dancing Pumps and White Evening Hose.



Al. Jennings, former train robber, candidate for Governor of Oklahoma and author of "Beating Back".

This is

Al. Jennings

He says: "Jiminy! It's the Hot-test, Fastest Gun I ever Saw!"

"GENTLEMEN:

"I am a candidate for Governor of Oklahoma and no longer an outlaw. I am, therefore, returning your Savage Automatic Pistol, as I shall never need such instruments any more.

"I could not resist the temptation of trying the vicious little thing and 'Jiminy! It's the hottest, fastest gun I ever saw.' I have never used anything but a forty-five. In the wild days of the past, I have kept a tin can rolling until there was nothing left.

"I rather hate to confess that this little devil has got the poor old forty-five skinned a hundred ways. It sure is some gun. My wife wanted to keep it to guard our home, she having shot the little gun with the same accuracy as myself.

"I thank you for your good intention just the same."

AL. JENNINGS.

No burglar attacks him. But you may *to-night* have a clash with a burglar in the dark hall, or in the dining room. Will you get a Savage Automatic today and have Savage "life insurance" from now on?

No practice needed to be a crack shot. Aim just as you would point your finger. The Savage bullets hit as fast as you pull the trigger—10 pulls, 10 shots. You always know by the Indicator if the Savage is loaded—a touch or a glance tells, .32 cal. and .380 cal.

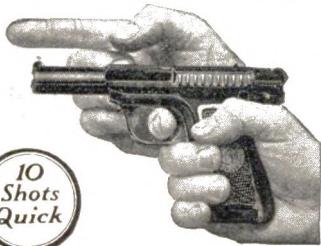
Send for Booklet about what to do if you hear a burglar. Advice by the greatest burglar detective New York City ever had. Free.

Phone your dealer now to send up a Savage on trial.

Savage Arms Co., 945 Savage Ave., Utica, New York
Makers of the famous Savage rifles

SAVAGE AUTOMATIC PISTOL

"Aims Easy As Pointing Your Finger"



flannel or serge, there is the white buckskin Oxford. It has a slender, tapering, pointed toe, and invisible eyelets for trim lacing with narrow tubular cords.

The most exclusive white buckskin Oxford—it's very extreme—is tipped with russet leather, and has a broad russet strip across the vamp where the crease falls in walking. You will see



Double-Breasted Summer "Sack."

this type of shoe only on those who dress far in advance of the crowd.

Illustrated this month is the new patent-leather pump for evening dress and summer dancing. Instead of the usual flat ribbon bow across the vamp, which looks stiff and gummed on, this "pump" has a soft, hand-tied bow with a pinched center and wide ends.

If you dance the "tango," "hesitation waltz," or any of the new steps, you can buy the "pump" described with rubber insertions sunk into the sole to prevent slipping on a waxed floor. The lining

White Frost Refrigerators

Sold direct from factory to you. Freight pre-pa'd. 30 days free trial in your home. Easy monthly payments if desired. Money returned without argument if not satisfied.

The "White Frost" was adopted by the U. S. Government, after rigid tests, for use in Panama, where perfect refrigeration, sanitation and ice economy are so vital. It proved its superiority and now the government uses them everywhere. The "White Frost" is beautiful as well as sanitary. Perfect refrigeration. Made entirely of metal. Enamelled snowy-white, inside and out. Revolving Shelves. Trimmings solid brass, nickelated. Anti-friction, roller bearing casters. 9 years on the market. Lasts a lifetime. (25 year guarantee.) Saves its price in cost of ice—very economical.

"Please, Bob, buy me a White Frost Refrigerator."

That's what thousands of women have said, after seeing the "White Frost". Buy one and pay for it on easy terms, while using it in your home. Prices low and payment so easy you will never miss the money. Remember—30 days free trial and all freight paid. Send postal for free catalog.

Metal Stamping Co.
Dept. 565
Jackson, Mich.



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FROM NEW YORK
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\$900 UP



The Greatest and Most Attractive Cruise Ever Planned

Leaving New York, January 31, 1915, by
S.S. CLEVELAND (17,000 tons) through the Canal

arriving at San Francisco in time for the Opening of the
Panama-Pacific Exposition. Price includes all necessary
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FROM the gathering, selecting and thoroughly washing of the red-ripe tomatoes—the slight cooking so that the true tomato taste is retained, accentuated by addition of pure, delicate spices—to the filling, corking and capping of the sterilized bottles, *every* step taken is with extreme care and under the strict surveillance of experts. All this tends towards making

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Delicious — Appetizing — Satisfying

Contains only those ingredients
Recognized and Endorsed
by the U. S. Government

Our other products, Soups, Jams, Jellies, Preserves, Meats, Canned Fruits, and Vegetables, you will find equally as pleasing as Blue Label Ketchup.

Our booklet of "Original Menus" is full of suggestions for dinners and dainty luncheons. Write for it today, giving your grocer's name and mentioning this magazine.

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Standard Model 2
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This is absolutely the most generous typewriter offer ever made. Do not rent a machine when you can pay \$2.00 a month and own one. Think of it—Buying a \$100.00 machine for \$28.80. Never before has anything like this been attempted.

A GUARANTEED TYPEWRITER \$28.80

Perfect machine, standard size, standard keyboard. Comes to you with everything complete—tools, cover, operating instructions, ribbon, practice paper, nothing extra to buy. You cannot imagine the perfection of this beautiful typewriter until you have seen it. I will send it to you for five days free trial. It will sell itself, but if you are not satisfied that this is the greatest typewriter you ever saw, you can return it at my expense. You won't want to return it after you try it—you cannot equal this wonderful value anywhere.

Five Days' FREE Trial On This Well-Known Durable Typewriter!

When the typewriter arrives, deposit with the express agent \$5.00 and take the typewriter for five days' trial. If you are not satisfied that it is the best typewriter you ever saw, keep it and send us \$2.00 a month until our bargain price of \$28.80 is paid. If you don't want it, return it to the express agent, receive your \$5.00 and return the machine to us. We pay the return express charges. This machine is guaranteed just as if you paid \$100.00 for it. It is standard. Over one hundred thousand people have used these typewriters and think them the best ever manufactured.

Only 200 machines at this price, so don't delay. Simply tear out this ad, sign your name and address on the margin, mail it to me and the typewriter will be shipped promptly. There is no red tape. I employ no solicitors—no collectors—no chattel mortgage. It is simply understood that I retain title to the machine until the full \$28.80 is paid. You can close. It is the greatest typewriter opportunity you will ever have. Let me hear from you.

HARRY A. SMITH, 180 No. Dearborn Street, Chicago

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President
Suspenders**

You hardly know
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"Satisfaction or money back"
Be sure "SHIRLEY PRESIDENT" is on buckles
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Write for my FREE BOOK "PHYSIOLOGICAL EXERCISES." Tells how exercising with my system ten minutes a day will improve your health and vitality, internally and externally. It tells you how to build a constitution that will defy colds and illness, that will give you muscular power, pure blood, perfect digestion, a strong heart and lungs. Send 10c in stamps to cover postage.

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14-16 Fourth Ave., Dept. 23, New York

is gray ooze leather, which is strain immune and perspiration proof.

The hosiery, also pictured, is white, with three black clocks embroidered on the side. Young men especially seem to be very indulgent to white hose for summer wear with patent-leather pumps.

Shirts for the waistcoatless days are made of the softest possible stuffs, as silk, silk and cotton, crape, "satin broche," and the like. They may have plain or pleated bosoms and soft double cuffs. The most modish summer collar is cut low in the front and high in the back, and with it one wears a broad four-in-hand tied so that it fills all the space in front and is pushed right up to the top.

G. E. M.—A double-breasted jacket of the type you describe is illustrated on another page. It is not cut tight-fitting, but to look tight and fit loose—there is a difference. A tight-fitting jacket which hinders free movement is not and never has been "smart."

R. C. G.—It is not deemed correct to wear a white waistcoat with the "Tuxedo," but only with formal evening dress. The "Dress Chart" you refer to is wrong. However, with the "swallowtail" coat you may wear either a white or a black waistcoat, provided that the black one is of a different pattern from the coat and trousers, as silk and satin, satin brocade, and similar fabrics.

W. W. F.—Manufacturers' names are not printed in this column. Ask any retailer in your town to show you the newest materials in room robes and lounging gowns. He has them, or will get them for you.

E. C. G.—1. A gray suit and a green hat, hosiery, and tie do not go well together. Blue is better. 2. Wear tan gloves with your gray suit. Gray looks too monotonous. 3. Wear black shoes with your gray suit. 4. A green or tan soft hat with russet hoots belong fitly with a blue serge suit.

ELLIS.—You are right in believing that a man should dress to make the most of his physical gifts, rather than to be "awfully swagger." In simple reason, all fashions cannot befit all men, and so each man should choose that cut, color, and cloth which sets him off best, unmindful whether or not it is "the latest thing."

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But the trade-mark does *you* no good if you don't insist on seeing it before you buy a mattress—and if you don't believe in the Ostermoor sufficiently to refuse *any* one of the hundreds of imitations which are offered in its place—at a lower price—*of course*. Their cheapness (*not their economy*) is their only excuse.

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Mattresses in two parts, 50¢ extra.
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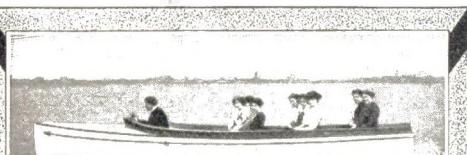


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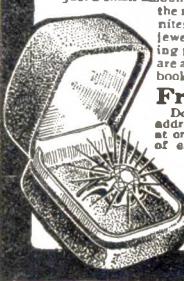
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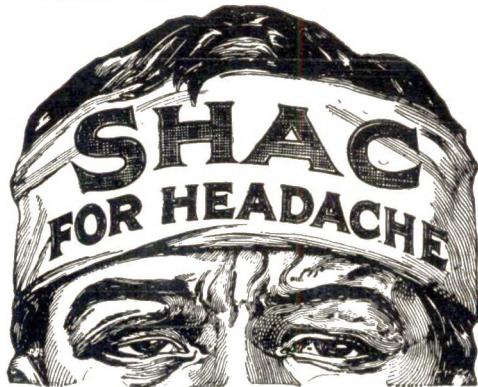


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Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment are sold throughout the world. Send post-card to nearest depot for free sample of each with 32-page book: Newbery, 27, Charterhouse Sq., London; R. Towns & Co., Sydney, N. S. W.; Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town; Muller, Maclean & Co., Calcutta and Bombay; Potter Drug and Chem. Corp., Boston, U. S. A.

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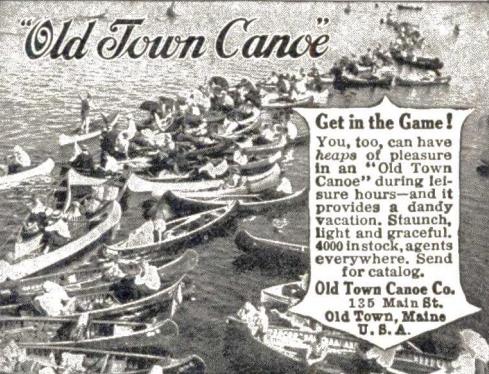
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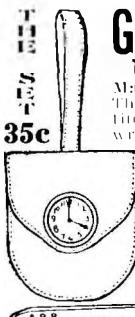


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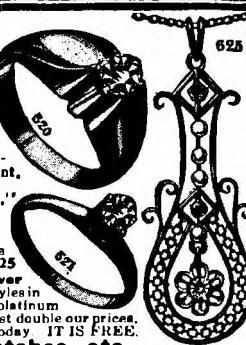
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The next time you are near one of the



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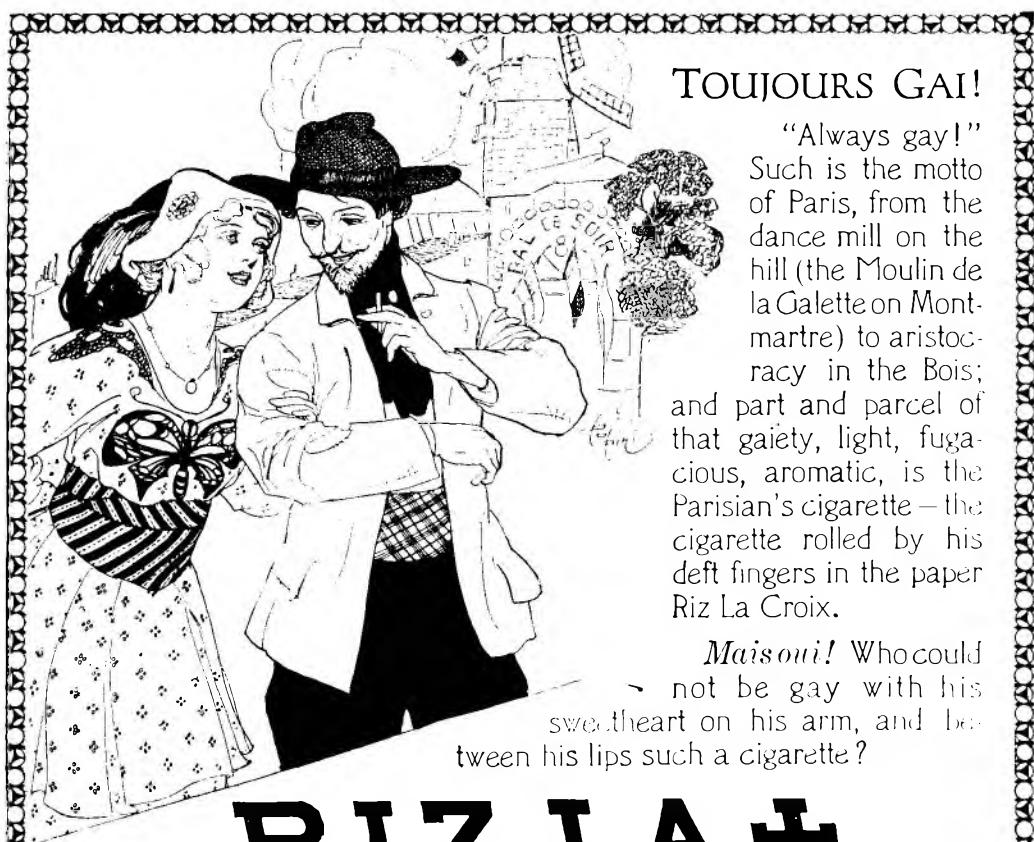
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The big, thick, tough rubber "Nobs" that prevent skidding, are made on a big, thick, extra strong additional strip.

Then this heavy strip is welded by hand and vulcanized on to an extra heavy, extra strong tire.

You have got to wear out the big, thick, tough "Nobs" of rubber before you even start to wear out the extra strong tire underneath.

Then comes the great big difference in the quantity and the

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An unusually large amount of rubber and fabric is used in "Nobby Treads," and

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Then don't forget this fact,

—rubber quality can differ and fabric quality can

differ just as much as the quality of leather can differ.

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The unusual wear-resisting quality

—the quantity of rubber —the quantity of fabric —the method of construction
all have been rigidly maintained in "Nobby Tread" anti-skid tires,

—and maintained regardless of cost —and maintained regardless of price competition.

"Nobby Tread" Tires are REAL anti-skid tires, and mile for mile, dollar for dollar, they are by far the most economical tires.

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DO NOT BE TALKED INTO A SUBSTITUTE

Your own dealer or any reliable dealer can supply you with "Nobby Tread" Tires. If he has no stock on hand, insist that he get them for you at once—or go to another dealer.

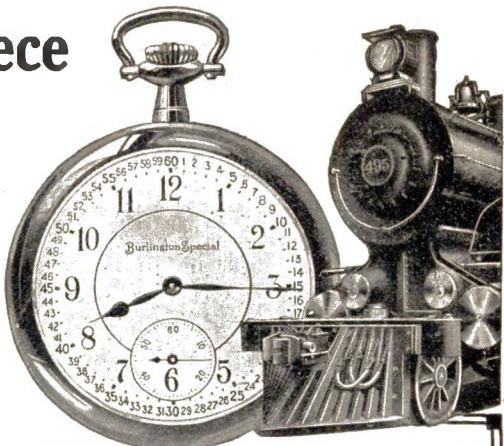
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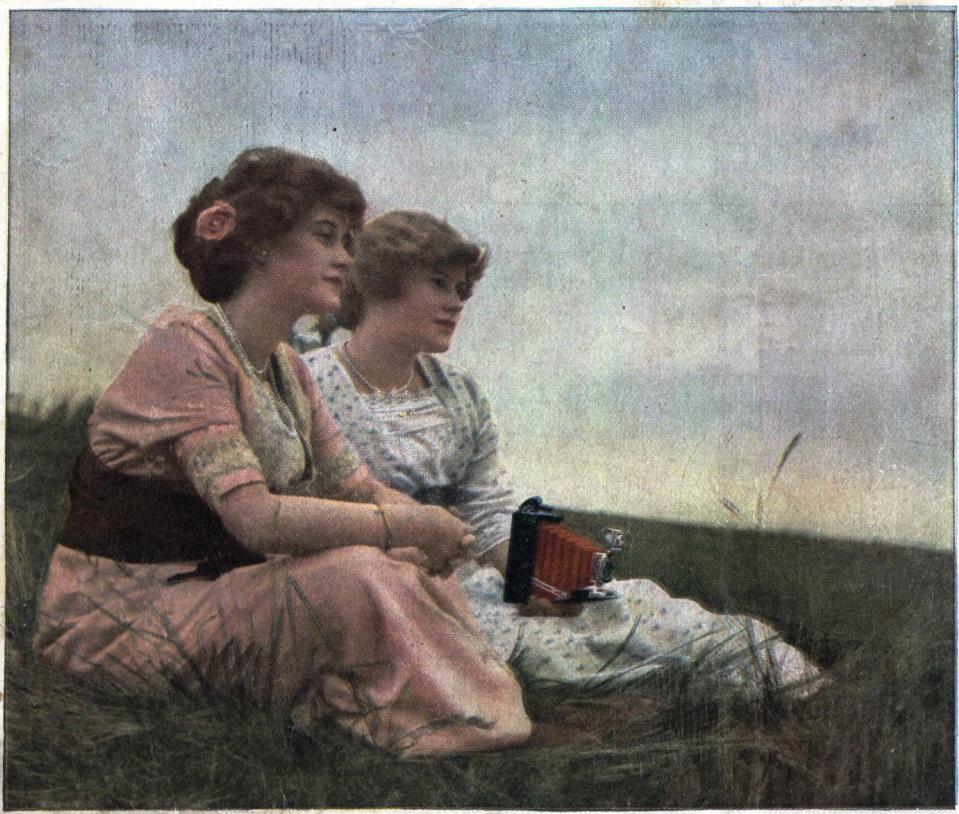
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By the use of new machinery, we are able to offer you, at no increase in price, KELLOGG'S TOASTED CORN FLAKES so perfectly sealed that, wherever and whenever you buy them, they will be as fresh, tender and crisp as the moment they left the ovens. We call this "Waxtite," the seal of quality.

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