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Vol. VIII, No. 2

J. S. WILLIAMS, Editor

January, 1934

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Kendall Clough, Chief Engineer
Clouds-Breath Co. (Radio
Engineers and Manufacturers)
Karl Hassel, Chief Engineer,
Zenith Radio Corporation,
Homer Hodges, Gen. Manager,
Radio Station KFW, Chicago.
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and Sales Engineer,
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The New York Times

LARGE WAISTLINE HELD HEALTH PERIL

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FIGURES SHOW DIRECT LINK

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"By the time that middle age is reached, these figures indicate, it is a definite advantage to be under the average weight for height," says the report.

It also shows "a great excess of mortality among overweight persons, whatever the age, and also an excess among young adult underweight persons."

The conclusions are drawn from records of more than 3,000 men from 1909 to 1928, showing the ratio of actual deaths to expected mortality, according to different weight groups. In the following table, figures below 100 indicate less than the expected death rate; those above 100 indicate more than the expected death rate:

Age Group	50 and	50 and	50 and
Weight Class. 30-39. 30-39. 40-49. Over.			
26 pounds or more underweight—	118	105	83
10 to 20 lbs...101	94	76	83
5 lbs. under to 5 lbs. overweight—	92	84	87
10 to 20 pounds overweight ... 99	88	94	90
25 to 45 pounds overweight ... 113	92	128	119
50 lbs. or more overweight ... 143	143	144	130

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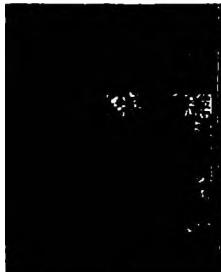
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Dr. N. T. ABDOU
New York Physician

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"GIRL RACKETS"

By Virginia Hudson Brightman

This Book Includes an Up-to-Date Dictionary of Broadway Slangage Used by Girl Racketeers.

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ALWAYS GETS THEM.

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Thousands of ruptured people are going through life thinking their truss holds safely when it is slowly increasing the danger! Thousands suffer needless torture from trusses that hold only when the pressure is so great they can hardly stand to keep them on. Thousands are putting up with trusses constructed so badly that the rupture keeps coming out, and never gets a chance to heal.

They have been fooled into thinking they are doomed to stand the pain and endless trouble such trusses force upon them.

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Yet there is one guaranteed truss of scientific design that does away with all that. Approved by the medical profession, and worn by many doctors themselves, it is made to order for each specific case, yet costs no more than ordinary ready-made trusses. It enables you to be just as active—work just as hard—as anybody, with absolute safety and remarkable comfort.

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Some time ago, Charles Cluthe, long in the surgical instrument business, set to work to see if he could improve on the best truss made. He invented and patented several exclusive features that brought new, unheard of happiness to thousands of rupture sufferers.

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exclusively—why more than 350,000 wearers can testify to its exceptional comfort and ability to hold any rupture.

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To prove that the Cluthe Automatic Easy Truss is really superior to any truss you ever wore—that it *does* hold your rupture constantly with the maximum ease—that it *does* bring sure relief and safety—we will make up one specially built to meet the requirements of your particular case, and let you wear it under a liberal 60-day trial.

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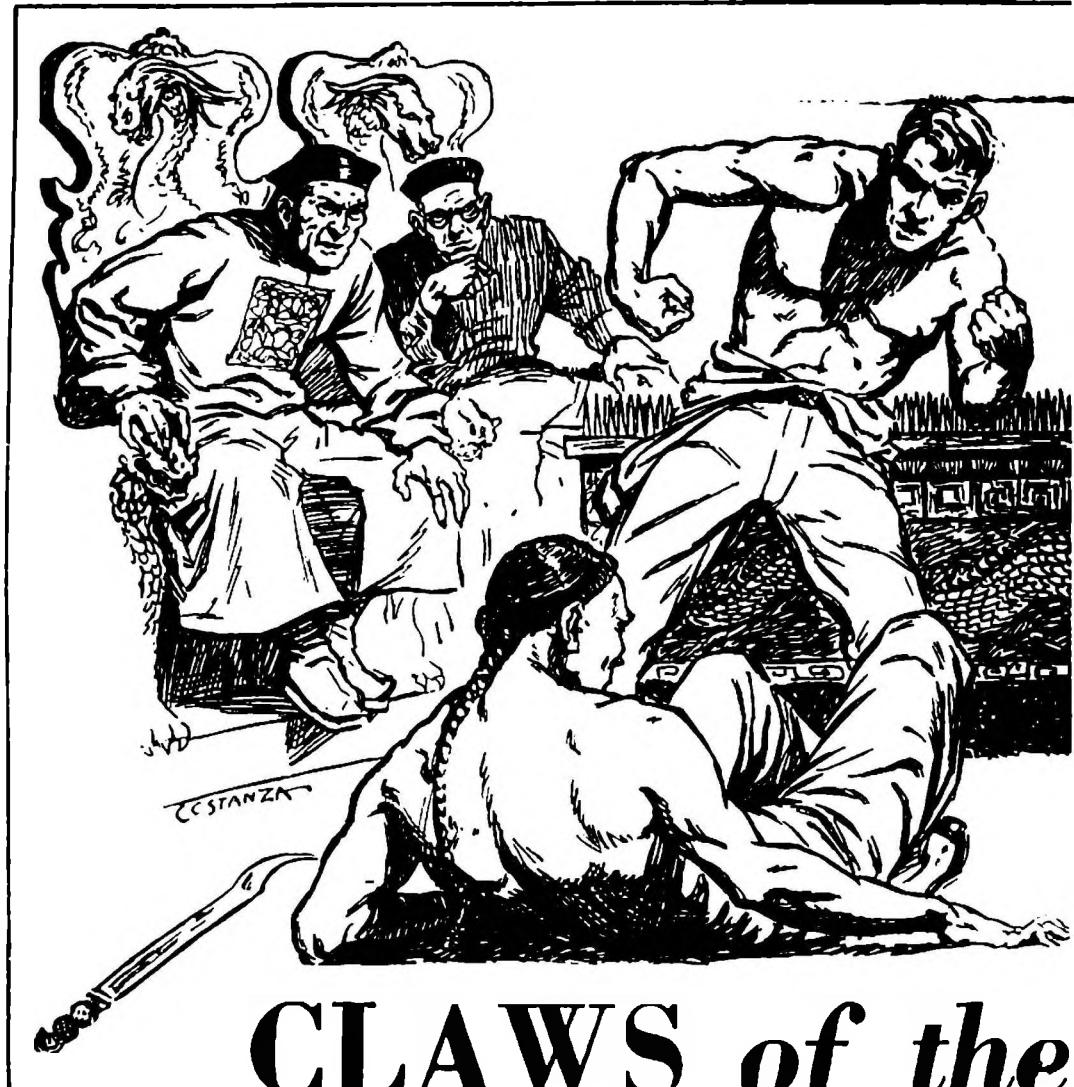


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CLAWS of the

CHAPTER I

Pirates

CAPTAIN JUDD, late of the island schooner the *Heav-
enly Star*, smuggling and trading vessel of the Banda Sea, sat at a table in Sar Tonken's dive in the Kalang district of Singapore. He fumbled his glass of whisky nervously.

His eyes were riveted on a door at the side of the smoke-laden room. Around him, the riffraff of the Orient — Malays, Dyaks, Chinese,

A Complete Book-

By JACKSON

Author of "Pearls of Peril,"

Mohammedans and Hindus — sat at tables. Their many-tongued chatter rose in a sing-song babble. The sweet, sickening fumes of opium, mingling with the hundred other odors peculiar to the Far East, filled the stuffy room.

Judd was lean of body and face, but in that lean body were strength and power. The sharply featured

Savage Conflict and Perilous Adventure in a

Judd brought the Chinese down on the floor with a crash. Maddern was cutting the ~~ris~~ with a knife



RED DRAGON

Length Novel

COLE

"The Jungle Trail," etc.

face was one that made men hesitate before attempting to cross the stubborn will behind it.

Steel gray eyes flashed forth coldly and piercingly.

Suddenly Judd stiffened, his eyes narrowing. Slipping through the crowd came a half naked Dyak, his red sarong gleaming behind the fog of smoke.

The Dyak came directly to Captain Judd's table. He said nothing. A small piece of paper dropped near the whisky glass.

And then, with the same stealth and silent swiftness, the man disappeared.

The muscles contracted on Judd's jaws as he picked up the paper. He opened it slowly and spread it flat on the table.

"Wong Chi in Singapore."

Only this brief message, with no signature. A grim smile came to Judd's face. He folded the note

Gripping Novel of Piracy on the Banda Sea

THRILLING ADVENTURES



Lung Tu

the room. Another followed. Judd grinned and bolted the remainder of his drink, then got to his feet and stalked across the room.

At the front door of the dive he stopped to scan a large poster, printed in English. Anything done by the English or American navies interested him. His relations with the English Navy had been very intimate during the past month—but not exactly pleasant.

Two weeks before, he and his first mate, Strong, had been kicked out of an English jail in Shanghai, where they had served a month for gun running. The departure had left no pleasant memories in Judd's mind. Hence his smile as he read the poster.

5,000 POUNDS REWARD!

For any information leading to the arrest and capture of the Chinese pirate working in the China and Banda Seas. The pirate calls himself The Red Dragon, and His Majesty's Government has reason to believe that he works out of Singapore.

All information to be sent to English Navy base at Shanghai.

By order of

Rear Admiral

Sir John Simon, H.M.N.

THE Red Dragon! Only two days before, this famous pirate had held up an American ship and robbed it of twenty-five millions in gold bullion. He had used the time honored method of the Chinese pirates, planting several of his men

and slipped it into his pocket.

As he sipped his whisky, his eyes darted quickly over the room. Some distance from him he saw a half naked Malay get up and leave

among the passengers. When the hour for the attack arrived, a Chinese junk appeared near the ship. Subsequently the loot was transferred aboard.

Twenty-five millions in gold bullion was a difficult loot to hide completely. But no trace of it had yet been found by either the English or American navy. The poster was, to Captain Judd's mind, in the usual stupid manner of the two navies as they sought information.

A poster in Sar Tonken's dive! Captain Judd laughed hollowly.

But outside the dive, the laugh left his face. He remembered the torn note in his pocket. His hand reached for it as he walked across the dirty mud street and turned down a darkened alley.

HE walked quickly, his tall, powerful body leaning forward a little. His fingers played with the butt of the automatic in his coat pocket.

The lane through which he progressed was called the Street of Celestial Light. Judd smiled grimly and wondered at the humor that had named it so. It was dark and narrow. The soggy smell from the river cut through the torrid, stifling heat. Dank waves of stench assailed his nostrils, with a sickening effect.

Black, silent buildings with grotesquely latticed porches, most of them broken and neglected, lined both sides. And through closed shutters, here and there, narrow streaks of yellow light penetrated into the darkness of the night.

On the street, slinking sinister forms moved ahead of Judd. Many of these belonged to men who would slash a throat for a few pennies. But Judd worried little about that, for he had neither money nor anything of value on him, save his automatic. And even on the Street of Celestial Light, a man who had his

fingers on a trigger was fairly safe. Judd's whites were rumpled and dirty. For two weeks he had slept in them, in a warehouse down at the edge of the river. The English, when they had kicked him and Strong out, had neglected to supply them with the necessary money to live. And when they landed in Singapore, they arrived as beach-combers.

SUDDENLY Judd stiffened and his automatic flashed out of his coat pocket.

He knew the shadows that moved and lurked on that dark street. He had seen them for two weeks—cowardly, sneaking forms which disappeared when he came into view. But the shadows he saw now were different.

They came out of the old warehouse that loomed darkly in front of him, the warehouse where he and Strong slept. They were phantom-like in the jet black darkness, but they moved forward steadily and stealthily. And then suddenly the whole street was filled with them.

Judd heard a dull groan come from inside the warehouse. His automatic jumped and belched a searing flash of red fire at one of the advancing forms. He had recognized that dull groan; it had come from Strong.

With a leap, his back was against the side of the warehouse. His gun spouted its deadly flashes of orange red at the shadows around him. The street was filled with the thunderous roar of the explosions. Out in the slimy, soggy night in front of him, two forms were writhing and twisting painfully in the mud.

And now men were advancing on him. Advancing in crouching positions, forming a half arc as they circled him. The blades of kris knives gleamed dully and the naked

bodies of the attackers were blotches of darker shadow against the night.

Three times more Judd's gun sent death to meet these forms before the hammer fell with a dull click. He had no time to reload. The attackers were on him in a surging wave.

He went to his knees, his right and left striking at the black groins with the precision and speed of a piston. There were howls of pain as dark bodies doubled up and rolled grotesquely in the mud. A kris knife grazed the side of his face. There was a stinging sensation and then the side of his face was wet and warm. His right and left continued to shoot out, but his arms were becoming numb. The stinging sensation on his face caused a feeling of weakness to come over Judd.

Sweating, naked bodies clambered over him. He went to the sidewalk. He tried to struggle to his feet, but his struggles were futile. Then something crashed down on his head.

JUDD felt as though the building had suddenly toppled over on him. There was a piercing pain down his neck, and then the pain left and he lay inert and helpless in the mud.

He was conscious that shadows still moved around him—silent and sinister—as if they were a part of the night. He felt fingers move over his body and then something gripped his throat.

He tried to move his body, but as he did, consciousness left him and he remembered no more.

For a long time the inert body



Captain Judd

of Captain Judd lay face down in the mud of the Street of Celestial Light. Shadows moved eerily, silently over the still form. But after a while they, too, left and silence, black and deadly, settled again over the street.

Many minutes later a voice was heard—the soft, slurring accents of someone giving orders from the door of the old warehouse. Men issued forth from the door.

They wore long, flowing robes, and they moved with a silence that rivaled the night.

And behind these new shadows was a tall, heavily built Chinaman. He it was who stood in the doorway and softly, efficiently gave orders.

A black robe was thrown over the body of Captain Judd, wrapped tightly around it. And then the body was picked up and carried into the stygian darkness that lay beyond the Street of Celestial Light.

CHAPTER II

Dead Men Must Stay Dead

CAPTAIN JUDD came to with a feeling that the world was twirling around at the rate of several million miles a minute. For some time things continued to whirl around in his stunned brain, but gradually, as his mind cleared, Judd could hear, above the buzzing noise in his head, the sound of human voices.

They came to him vaguely, as if from a great distance. The words floated softly through the air and then receded into nothingness. He opened his eyes and saw a many colored ceiling over him. The air was filled with incense, but the smell of it sickened him and he closed his eyes again.

Something warm slid down his throat. It brought strength and life

back into his body. The feeling of numbness left. ~~He moved his arms and then his legs, smiling grimly as he decided he was still alive, and, from all indications, whole.~~

"You are welcome to my mean house, Captain Judd," he heard a soft, slurring voice say, "where my poor hospitality is fit only for the humble workers of the fields. For such food as I have is poor and the wine is weak."

Captain Judd rose unsteadily upon his elbow. His face twisted in puzzlement. He saw that he was in a large room, lighted by lamps covered with red and yellow shades. Against the opposite wall was a high cabinet that reached nearly to the gaudy ceiling; a teakwood desk, three chairs, a joss, and shell-paned shutters that covered long windows completed the furnishings.

Standing near the couch was a tall Chinaman. He wore a silken robe of scarlet red, brocaded slippers and stockings of red silk. A red skull cap covered a matted queue.

It was evident from his face that he was no ordinary Chinese. The cheek bones were high, showing Manchu blood; the nose was large and bespoke daring and courage; the jutting chin was strong and belligerent; the eyes were black, and large for a Chinese. A glance at the soft, white hand and long nails indicated clearly that the man did no hard labor.

JUDD stared at him a moment; then twisted his body around and sat up weakly.

"I am just a sailor," he said dryly, "and my poor stomach knows only rice without sauce. And to be in the presence of such grandeur, in your fine home, quite overwhelms one unaccustomed to the sight of the luxuries of this mundane world."

He got to his feet slowly and



His gun spouted deadly flashes of orange red

stood with his thumbs stuck in the belt of his trousers.

"And now, Lung Tu," he added, "how in hell did I get here? And what hole of Hades did you escape through!"

Lung Tu smiled and made a gracious bow to Captain Judd.

"I thought," he said, evading Judd's question, "for the moment, that I was in the presence of a scholar. Who taught you that speech?"

"I got a tip that Professor Wong was on the Street of Celestial Light," Judd mused. "When I go down there, Dyaks knock me in the

head and I wake up in your house. Interesting, isn't it?"

"Very," Lung Tu said softly. "My men found you unconscious on the Street of Celestial Light. Seeing my old friend in that condition, I naturally brought him to my house. Were you robbed?"

Captain Judd's face remained expressionless as he looked at Lung Tu. Then he grinned and sat down on the flat couch covered by the scarlet spread.

"Sometimes," he said conversationally, "I wish I were a Chinese. You are the most convincing liars I ever met. You had me knocked on

the head so that you could talk to me. All right. But where is Strong? You took him along at the same time."

Judd's eyes darted to a part of the wall which looked like frosted glass. He realized that it was oil paper, covering a sliding door or wall. As he watched, it opened noiselessly.

A slim, dark faced Chinese entered the room. He was of medium height; the upper part of his sharp face was covered with a pair of large tortoise shelled glasses. But the chin and the mouth were small and thin and deadly cruel.

THE man slipped the panel door shut and then stopped and stared at Captain Judd.

"Now we're all here," Judd grinned, getting to his feet and eyeing the newcomer closely. "Everything is fine now, Lung Tu, since your private assassin, Professor Wong Chi, has arrived."

"And your health, Captain Judd," he said in a soft, hollow voice. "I understand the English took you to Shanghai for a short stay. You seem to have fared well."

Captain Judd wet his lips. His eyes squinted a little and the muscles on his jaws bulged. Though his thumbs remained in the belt of his trousers, every muscle in his body was tense and alert—ready for action.

"Our old friend, Captain Judd," Lung Tu announced to the professor, "was careless on the Street of Celestial Light. Some wandering Dyaks robbed him, and left him to die in the mud. I brought him to my home to give him aid and attention."

"You brought me here—and also Strong," Judd snapped. "We won't talk about the robbery, because that might be an uncomfortable subject for you. What do you want us to

do now? The last time we ran guns for you, it ~~cost us~~ all our profits and a month behind the bars. The next time—"

"Even behind the bars food comes regularly," Lung Tu broke in softly, "and since you got out, food hasn't been so easy to obtain."

Judd nodded.

"There isn't much you Chinese don't know," he replied. "But you could have called on Strong and me in a polite way and invited us up here—wherever we are. Then I might have been in a better humor to talk business."

Lung Tu shrugged wearily.

"How simple is the mind of the American," he sighed. "What we Chinese call common sense, you call being subtle. I wanted to talk to you, to give you the opportunity to make money—"

"Running more guns?" Judd broke in.

"Exactly," Lung Tu said with a bow.

"Strong and I have been in jail, in case you don't know," Judd replied. "And the English said something about a ten year stretch that made us nervous."

"And for that very reason," Lung Tu hastened to explain, "they feel you won't try to run any more guns on your next trip out. They'll give you a chance to get your nerve back. And I'm giving you a chance to make twenty thousand in gold, while you get that nerve back."

JUDD sat down and grinned at Lung Tu.

"You're smart, you Chinese," he agreed. "You don't stop thinking day or night, and I guess that's why you've beat us all. I guess Rear Admiral Sir John Simon wouldn't be expecting Strong and me to bust over again right away. But they've got their eyes on us—"

Lung Tu smiled.

"And that, my friend," he said softly, "was why I chose to bring you to my home after the Dyaks had attacked you. It was simply a precaution, because I knew Sir John was having you two watched. To make the precaution perfect, the word has gone out that you and Strong were killed."

Judd's eyes widened a little and he stared at Lung Tu. Wong Chi gave a cold, inhuman laugh, and then turned his back and walked over to the big cabinet.

"I kinda wondered why you'd fool with us alive," Judd said. "If we're dead, it's going to make matters easy. But dead or alive, you're not expecting us to sail under the nose of Sir John in the *Heavenly Star*."

"The *Heavenly Star*," Lung Tu said, "has been confiscated by the English. You are going to sail into the Banda Sea in a one-tunnel freighter, owned and operated by the Oriental Mercantile Company, a company with an impeccable reputation for honesty. The ship you will use is a floating example of virtue on the seas—"

"So you own the Oriental Mercantile Company," Judd put in dryly. "Pretty soon you'll be telling the Japs you own Manchuria."

"I conduct my business with a reasonable amount of safety," Lung Tu replied. "Ten thousand of the money to be paid you and Strong will be deposited to your credit in a Chinese bank. The balance will be paid in gold when you return."

"When we return," Judd said with a hollow laugh.

"The sin in life," Lung Tu said softly, "is to get caught. The wise tiger—"

Judd got up warily.

"My woolen brain can't dig deep

enough in the yellow soil of China to understand your words of wisdom," he said. "But I have a question I'd like to ask you, providing you take no serious offense."

"A wise man never takes offense to a just question," Lung Tu replied. "You may ask it and feel perfectly free."

"Strong and I ran guns for you on the *Heavenly Star*." Captain Judd's eyes narrowed a little. "And there is a saying in China that no wise Chink uses the same ship twice for gun running—or the same white men. Get what I mean?"

Lung Tu smiled pleasantly and nodded.

"It is not difficult to understand, Captain," he said. "But there is another saying to the effect that a wise man uses only those things that bring him profit."

"I see rather dimly," Judd replied. "It just looked kinda funny that you and Professor Wong should follow us to Singapore and bring us to your house the way you did. But I guess everything is all right. I'll take the ship for you."

Lung Tu's eyes darted a quick, almost imperceptible glance toward Professor Wong Chi. The professor caught the look, smiled. He walked to a panel door in the wall and opened it.

"Since the Chinese Pirate, called the Red Dragon, relieved that American ship of its gold," the captain pondered, "we might have an easy time slipping a few guns under the nose of Sir John."

"I ALSO thought of that," Lung Tu replied. "The Chinese Pirate who chooses to call himself the Red Dragon is a man of great resourcefulness. His activity should help us poor merchants make a few honest dollars with guns. They say this pirate has supplies on some

mysterious island—a stronghold that no navy can ever find."

"He's smart, all right," Captain Judd answered. "Stealing twenty-five million dollars in gold from New York banks and getting it all out of sight so soon. I understand he uses the old trick of planting his men on board the liners—"

"He is very successful," Lung Tu interrupted, "and I hope he may remain forever so. It makes our work easier. My ship is being loaded now and you start tonight. That door leads through an underground passage to the offices of the Oriental Mercantile Company. You can go through it and get to the ship without being seen. Strong is safe; he will join you on board. Remember, you and Strong are dead men."

"Deader than you think," Judd said dryly, starting for the door.

CHAPTER III

The Dragon

THE City of Peking lay at the river dock, a dark, unlighted hulk in the night. It was a red funnel, shabby Island steamer, with dirty white superstructure amidships, a high poop deck, and a high fo'c'le running well aft from the knightheads.

There was no sign of life aboard her. A misty, blinding rain clattered off her awnings and sluiced through her freeing ports.

Out on the river a fog horn moaned weirdly at intervals, and now and then the shrill whistle of a river boat, making its way through the shipping, broke on the night air. A door moved back and forth on loose hinges at the large warehouse of the Oriental Mercantile Company; its slamming could be heard far beyond the steamer anchored at the near-by dock.

Standing on the starboard bridge wing, their bodies almost invisible against the bridge's storm apron, were Captain Judd and his mate, Jim Strong. Both wore oilskins and they stood immovable, staring out into the darkness of the river. Below them came the subdued shuffle of feet and the soft grunts of men carrying heavy burdens. But the work was done so silently that even they had to strain their ears to hear the sounds.

The cargo sideport in the hull of the ship was open and a gangplank led to the dock. At times a ray of light from a passing ship would cut through the darkness. When it did, Judd and Strong could see the gleam of naked, sweating backs, bent over with the great load on their shoulders, moving along the gangplank. Then the light would flash away and an ebony darkness followed.

For over an hour Judd and Strong had stood there silently. Their eyes caught every movement and their ears every sound of the night. Strong was shorter in body and smaller of physique than Judd, but he was a man to inspire respect—if anyone chose to attack him.

His shoulders were broad and powerful, his arms long and heavily muscled. He had light hair, clear blue eyes that could be ruthless and cold on occasion, and clean shaven, sea-hardened jaws.

He had no desire to advance further than first mate. His one-time ambition to be a skipper had faded during the years of his association with Judd; he was entirely content to follow the tall, lean-faced captain. They understood each other and worked together perfectly.

"ANOTHER hour and we'll be moving," Judd said. "These boys work fast when they have to."

"The quicker we get out of Sing-

apore the better," Strong growled. "Sir John and his boys are twisting the hemp to ~~string us~~ up with, if they ever catch us with guns again."

Captain Judd laughed dryly.

"You can stop worrying about Sir John and the English navy," he replied. "We're dead men according to their records. And if Lung Tu and Professor Wong have their way, too, we'll be dead men sure as hell. When we get this steamer at the mouth of that mysterious river that runs into Yulla Island, it's curtains."

"YOU never did trust Chinamen," Strong retorted. "Lung Tu used us before on the *Heavenly Star* and he's using us again. It makes your theory a bit screwy."

"It wouldn't be a bad trick to use us to take this steamer up to that mysterious river, and then bump us off there," Judd answered quietly. "He's got the news spread around that we are dead. Lung Tu is smart to make plenty of use of men before he throws their bodies to the sharks."

"He wasn't enough of a business man to hold up that ten thousand," Strong protested. "It's in a bank—"

"A Chinese bank that Lung Tu owns," Judd broke in. "And if we don't come back to claim the money, it goes back to the bank. They'll be smart enough to see that it does. Lung Tu is a smart business man—as well as a good killer."

"He's going to a lot of trouble to get a shipment of arms to the Banda Sea." Strong was perplexed. "There's profit in it for him, but using this boat will cut the profits down. You know once he uses a ship for smuggling, he has to have it disappear."

Judd moved closer to his mate. His voice came low, little more than a whisper.

"You've got guts, Strong," he muttered, shaking his head, "but the one thing you lack is brains. Whoever told you we were running guns? Lung Tu doesn't throw a ship like this away just for guns."

Strong turned and looked at Judd.

"All right. What are we running?"

Captain Judd gave a cold laugh.

"You damn fool," he said, "we're running twenty-five million dollars in gold! We're headed for the mysterious river on Yulla Island which happens to be the headquarters and stronghold of the very successful pirate called the Red Dragon."

"The Red Dragon? You mean—"

"I mean that Lung Tu is the Red Dragon," Judd replied in a low whispered voice. "What do you suppose I was doing, going through this ship? It's down there in big blocks of gold, the bullion stolen from the American liner a week ago. And Lung Tu knows I know it. If we tried to run now, there would be a hundred knives in our backs."

STRONG gave a surprised little grunt and then laughed shortly.

"We won't have to worry about Sir John and the English Navy," he said. "We ain't got a darned thing to worry about except how soon we die."

"It might interest you to know, also," Captain Judd added, "that our dear friend, Professor Wong is sailing with us."

Again came the little grunt from Jim Strong.

"That's one guy," he said evenly, "that'll never get back alive, even if we don't."

"You'll have to shoot faster than I do," Captain Judd laughed, "and up to date you've never been able to do that."

Strong had taken several steps for-

ward and was peering down at the loading gangway. His right hand shot back and caught Captain Judd's arm, gripping it tightly.

"Here's something coming out of the water," he whispered, "and it doesn't look like a Chinaman."

Captain Judd moved forward and peered down into the darkness. There was a splash of water and then a low, moaning call came through the darkness. Judd and Strong moved aft on the bridge, facing toward the stern. A ladder hung down the side of the ship there, suspended from the main deck bulwarks at the bottom of the steel steps of the bridge.

THEN suddenly the ladder tightened. Two hands—white hands—came out of the darkness of the river. And then a man pulled himself painfully up the ladder, hand over hand.

Strong started down the steps of the bridge, but Judd grabbed his arm and held him back. He hurried down the steps ahead of the mate, stopping under the bridge on the main deck where the darkness was most intense.

Strong joined him. In front of them were the ends of the twisted ropes that made up the ladder. The thimbles spliced into the ropes were secured to the ring bolts in the waterways.

Out of the darkness came a bulky form, pulling itself up over the bulwark. It fell forward on the deck in a sprawled heap of drenched clothes and trembling flesh.

Captain Judd was on him in a flash. His right hand went out, grabbed the man's neck, and pulled him roughly to his feet. Then, before the man could utter a word, he was pushed through a door in the superstructure, into a little iron ness room. Captain Judd shut the

door and turned on a bulbhead light.

"Go get Professor Wong," he snapped to Strong, "and tell him a white man has called to see him. And if he doesn't hurry, there won't be any white man here."

As Strong disappeared out of the door, the drenched man came to life. He was short, heavy-set, with a scowling face and blustering manner.

"What—what's the idea?" he blurted out angrily. "I was sent to this ship and slipped into the water. I came here with a letter—"

"From Lung Tu, the rich merchant," Captain Judd broke in dryly. "I know all about that. You'll see Professor Wong in a few minutes—and your meeting may not be pleasant."

Captain Judd threw the man back on a bench seat and stood looking at him, the steel gray of his eyes not a pleasant thing to see. The man paled and his lower lip trembled.

A minute later Strong returned through a door at the far side of the mess hall. Behind him was Professor Wong Chi, calm and cool, dressed in his black blouse and black trousers, and carrying his horn-rimmed spectacles in his hand. Without glasses, his face was small and his narrow eyes gave his face a sinister look.

THE heavy set man jumped to his feet when he saw Professor Wong.

"How come," he blurted out. "I am sent aboard by Lung Tu and—"

Captain Judd pushed him back onto the bench seat roughly.

"You'll talk when you're asked to," he said. Then he turned to Professor Wong. "This white man came up the ladder on the side of the ship. He says he has a letter or something from Lung Tu. But he's out of luck if he thinks the letter is going to do him any good."

Professor Wong frowned at Judd and then turned to the man.

"Here is the letter," the man growled, giving Judd a nasty look.

Professor Wong took the paper. It was wet and soggy and he had trouble in unfolding it. Captain Judd watched him through squinted, unpleasant eyes. Wong Chi finally straightened the letter; he read it and nodded.

"IT'S from Lung Tu," he said quietly. "This man's name is Maddern. It is satisfactory for him to come aboard."

"Like hell it is," Judd snapped. "He's on board and he's staying here. But he's going to remain locked up during the trip."

"What the hell?" Maddern snarled. "Are you the Emperor of all China just because you happen to be in command of a trading steamer of Lung Tu?"

"I am captain of this ship," Judd replied quietly, "and what I say goes. You're going behind a little iron door that will be locked all the time we are at sea."

"But, Captain—" Professor Wong's eyes narrowed into little slits and his lips were pressed together. "Mr. Maddern is on board under orders from Lung Tu."

"My orders, Professor Wong," Captain Judd retorted coldly, "are to let no man leave this ship or to remain on it free if he has come aboard while we were loading. Those are my orders! I am going to see that they are carried out—to the letter."

Professor Wong Chi's face twisted in his effort to control his anger.

"You can go down and call Lung Tu," he said. "Or better than that, I'll call him and make sure that Mr. Maddern is okay to remain on board."

"You are not leaving this ship,

Wong Chi," Captain Judd said grimly, "and that friend of yours is going in the brig. And going right away."

"But you forget the orders of Lung Tu are more important—"

"I understand all about his orders," Captain Judd cut in harshly, "just as I understand why you and Lung Tu want this white man on board. A Chink isn't much force as a witness in any white man's court, and you want a white man who will testify to whatever you wish."

"If we get captured, the blame will be on Strong and myself—and if anything happens to us, you will have a white man to clean your dirty hards. Lock him up, Strong."

"Not so fast."

Professor Wong Chi's words came soft and piercing. Judd swerved to meet him, but he had moved a split second too late. The Chinese had moved with the swiftness of lightning. His right hand gripped Captain Judd's wrist and the next second the captain landed in the corner, a victim of jiu jitsu.

He pulled himself up on his elbows and turned. Not three inches from his face the gleaming blade of a long knife was poised in the hand of Professor Wong.

CHAPTER IV

A Knife in the Dark

CAPTAIN JUDD twisted his body to the right, and then as Wong Chi came lurching forward with the knife aimed at Captain Judd's heart, the captain brought his right foot up in a vicious, short kick. He caught Wong Chi on the chest and knocked him backward against the wall of the mess room.

All this happened in the matter

of seconds. Now Judd was on his feet, reaching for his automatic. From the corners of his eyes he saw Maddern riveted on the bench seat, his eyes open wide with terror and fear.

Near the door of the mess room, Strong was struggling with two powerful Chinese. They had him crushed against a wall and were struggling for his gun.

Wong Chi had hit the wall and was bounding back with a speed that was almost quicker than the eye. Captain Judd's automatic went up, but he dropped it quickly, realizing that a shot now would bring a swarm of Chinese down on them.

Besides, the fight was a personal one between the two men, to determine who was in command of the ship. And it would be of little profit to Judd to kill the dark faced assassin before they left the river. Lung Tu was too close, and that powerful Chinese had many ways to strike death on the river.

AND now Wong Chi hurled himself against Judd, his knife out and ready for use. But Judd caught Professor Wong's right wrist and twisted the smaller man backward to the floor. The Chinaman was up in a flash—up just in time to catch a terrific short uppercut from Captain Judd's right. The blow traveled only a few inches, but it carried all the power and weight of Judd's powerful body behind it.

Wong Chi's body raised itself a little. And then, with a groan, the professor plunged face forward on the floor, his body limp and inert.

Judd turned to the two Chinese grappling with Strong. A left hook caught one flush on the chin and sent him plunging to the floor. Strong took care of the other one with a blow to the solar plexus that doubled the man up and sent him

groveling and screaming to his knees.

"Now throw that stool pigeon behind the iron door," Captain Judd said to Strong. "We'll attend to him when we're out at sea."

Strong looked at Judd and grinned. He started for Maddern, both arms out in front of him like a wrestler. Maddern had jumped to his feet. His face was bloodless and his lower lip quivered. He started to run. Strong made a dive for him, caught him around the shoulders and threw him back. Maddern turned and screamed.

A hard right on the jaw sent him down to his knees. He remained in that position a second, his eyes glassy and his face frozen; then with a groan, he fell face forward. Strong dragged him out into the passage and disappeared inside the ship.

Captain Judd remained standing over Wong Chi. The professor stirred, opened his eyes.

"The next one to be locked up will be you, Professor," Judd told him, "if you don't obey orders. I'm in charge of this ship—and will be until Lung Tu decides to have me killed. That won't be until the ship is at the mouth of the river at Yulla Island, at any rate."

WONG CHI got to his feet slowly. He had regained control of himself and was again the cool, treacherous Oriental. His face was expressionless, eyes narrowed to slits and voice soft and polite.

"We will settle this matter later, Mr. Judd," he purred. "It is not well that we fight now."

"Lung Tu would have your throat slashed," Judd laughed, "if he knew the boner you had just pulled. He wouldn't expect such childishness from his private assassin."

Wong Chi smiled his deadly, blank

smile, bowed formally, and walked out of the room.

Strong returned to announce that Maddern had been locked in a small storeroom under the companionway. He handed the keys up to Judd.

The two Chinese that Judd and Strong had knocked out were sitting up. Now they sidled along toward the door, then bolted through.

"We're dead men, Strong," Judd said, "but before they bury us, we're going to be pretty active for a pair of corpses. Get your automatic ready and we'll take a look around. Let's see how many more stool pigeons have been planted on us to take part in the funeral services at Yulla Island."

CAPTAIN JUDD walked out through the passageway that led into the old dining room of the *City of Peking*. In former years, when the steamer had been used as a passenger boat, the dining room had been a rather elaborate place. But now the wooden paneled walls were dull from neglect and the tables had been torn away. Only a few of the swivel chairs remained.

Off this room, Professor Wong had a small stateroom. As Judd and Strong entered the dining room, they could see the professor lying on his bed, with a reading lamp at his head and a book in his hands.

The captain and the mate crossed the dining room, went through a side door that led out onto the main deck. Outside this door, Judd flattened his body against the wall. He motioned Strong to conceal himself somewhere in the darkness.

The soft patter of slippers feet came to them. There was a low, mumbled conversation. Judd turned his body a little, twisted toward the open door and looked into the dining room.

The lights in this room were off,

but the place was dimly illuminated by the rays coming from the state-room of Professor Wong.

A dark robed form passed through the dining room. At a far door it was joined by another robed form, this one tall and heavy set. Captain Judd smiled coldly.

"Our burial ceremonies will be complete," he whispered to Strong, who was standing at his side. "Even Lung Tu will be present at the event. He's on board now and it's an even bet he won't get off. Not with twenty-five million in gold to tuck away."

"We can still get off this damned ship," Strong suggested. "The ladder is over the bulkhead and we can leave the way Maddern came on."

"And get a knife in our backs before we got thirty feet away from the warehouse of the Oriental Mercantile Company," Judd replied. "We're in a bad enough way on this ship, but don't kid yourself that we'd be any more alive on land. Here at least we can eat for a week; on land we wouldn't even get breakfast."

"We'll get a knife in our backs or a rope around our necks trusting anyone but ourselves right now," he added. "And I don't—"

A SCREAM, piercing and shrill, cut short the captain's words. It came from somewhere overhead. With a leap, Judd was through the door and racing across the dining room. Strong followed close on his heels. Both men had their automatics out.

"It came from the lamp room upstairs," Strong yelled, "where I locked Maddern up."

Captain Judd was going up a narrow flight of steps that led to the deck above. The stairs were dark—jet black—but he went up them two at a time. His automatic

was gripped in his right hand, ready for use.

At the top of the stairs he stopped, felt ahead in the darkness. He touched the side of the corridor and started down it, walking slowly and carefully. Something moved in front of him, a fleeting mass of black. He lurched forward, grabbing for the moving object with his left hand and touched human flesh. But the flesh slipped away from him and was gone in a flash.

Behind him Strong said: "The lamp room is on the right—a few feet ahead."

JUDD was down the passageway, running blindly now. His left hand was outstretched to ward off any unsuspected blows or barriers. Then he hit something hard and his body crashed against steel. There was a low, hollow laugh near him, and then in the darkness he saw the blade of a knife flash brightly before his eyes.

For a second he stood swaying in the passageway, his senses stunned from the force of the collision. His left went out in a long, wild uppercut. It hit empty air. There was another hollow laugh.

Something grabbed him around the legs—something powerful and swift as lightning. Judd crashed to the floor. There was a stifling scream directly behind him—the same scream he had heard out on deck.

The fall to the floor brought his senses back with a jerk. With a swift, twisting whirl, he broke the grip around his legs, thrusting a body away from him. He sprang to his feet. The padding of slippers feet running from him was the only sound in the stygian darkness of the passageway.

Judd turned toward the steel door he had struck. Strong's voice close to him said hoarsely: "It's Maddern,

Skipper. They got him with a knife."

"Is he dead?"

"He's breathing, but that's about all."

"Take him to our quarters. Lock the door and stay there with him until I come back."

"My God, he's Lung Tu's spy—"

"He was, but Lung Tu has changed his mind. Maddern's a white man and we can use a white man, no matter what kind, before we get out of this."

"It sounds crazy to me," Strong protested. "But I'm here to take orders. What if he dies on my hands before you get back!"

"Then throw him overboard and forget about him," Judd answered. "He may be a load on our hands at that, but any man Lung Tu wants to kill ought to prove valuable to us, some way or other."

Strong picked up the body and disappeared in the darkness. Judd turned and went down to the dining room. The door to Professor Wong Chi's stateroom was open and the professor was lying on his bunk, still reading his book.

He nodded at the captain in a friendly manner and said, "Come in, Captain. The ship is about loaded and we are ready to start."

CAPTAIN JUDD stood in the doorway and grinned at the professor.

"Aye," he said pleasantly, "it looks like we are going to have a very pleasant little trip, considering that the night has started so well."

"It should prove most delightful," Wong Chi replied. "By the way, did I hear some noise upstairs a moment ago—near the lamp room?"

Judd nodded.

"Your friend, Mr. Maddern, got a bellyache," he said, "and I don't think he'll get over it. Since men

with bellyaches make poor sailors, I had him heaved overboard."

"You did wisely," Wong Chi replied. And continued to read his book.

CHAPTER V

Lung Tu Strikes

THE City of *Peking* lay rolling in a swell, off a long, narrow bay at the foot of Yulla Island. The engines were stopped and no smoke came from the red funnel to mark the ship's presence upon the sky. Even in the waters of that isolated, unfrequented part of the Banda Sea, a steamer or a warship might pass.

Captain Judd had seen to it that the ship's boilers carried a sufficient head of steam to make the run into the dangerous channel.

He knew the currents of the inlet; he knew that coral heads and shoals blocked his passage. With a sailing vessel the conflicting winds and currents made an entrance doubly dangerous. But a steamer, with a full head of steam, could, with careful work, get inside the inlet with a reasonable amount of safety.

But Captain Judd knew that once the *City of Peking* was safe in that inlet, his work and the work of Strong would be over. Lung Tu would see to it that they never got out alive.

Judd stood on the bridge with Strong and surveyed the long inlet that loomed before them. Beyond it was a high mountain, covered with the matted green of an impassable jungle. And at the mountain's foot, running through a narrow valley, was the mysterious river that led far into the interior, where no white man had ever ventured.

The mouth of the river was hidden from view by the dense jungle

undergrowth. It was impossible to see it outside the inlet, and difficult to discover even if a ship did manage to make the dangerous channel and get inside the bay.

The island itself was deserted and far out of the regular ship lane of the Banda Sea. From time to time, a few natives might come to the bay to fish, but none lived in the desolate jungles of the place. All in all, it made a perfect hiding place for Lung Tu's pirate stronghold.

The *City of Peking* had made the run from Singapore in fair time—about two weeks. With a Chinaman as chief engineer and a Chinese pirate crew manning the steamer, the ship had developed engine trouble. Time had been lost in repair work.

During the trip, Captain Judd and Strong remained close together. The mate really acted as a second captain, not doing any night watches, and assisting Judd. In fact, it had been arranged that when one of them slept, the other was to stay awake. They lived in Judd's quarters under the bridge, having their meals there and making no contact with members of the crew.

Their only visitor was Professor Wong Chi, who came daily to chat with them. Any feeling he might have held over from his fight with Judd seemed to be gone; he was affable and talkative.

BUT always when he came, one of the two white men was awake, on guard. And Professor Wong Chi was forced to confine his visits to only one of the rooms of the captain's quarters.

Captain Judd's quarters consisted of two rooms, which took in the whole width of the superstructure. There were doors to the deck on each side and portholes that looked out on the fore deck.

In one of these rooms Maddern

was kept locked up. The man hadn't died, as Strong had feared he would. He had showed remarkable recuperative powers and was well on the way to recovery. Neither of the two knife thrusts in his back had touched a vital spot. It was only a matter of time before the wounds would heal and Maddern would regain his strength.

By the time the ship came in view of the mountainous island of Yulla, he was very little the worse for wear.

But he did little talking. Though he growled a great deal about yellow double crossers, neither Judd nor Strong were able to get a definite word out of him. Why Lung Tu had so suddenly turned against him and tried to kill him, remained a mystery to the two white men.

STONG had him figured out as a government spy, but Judd shrugged and dismissed the implication. They were all white men in the same spot, he felt, and there was little harm Maddern could do.

If Professor Wong Chi knew of Maddern's presence on board, he did not indicate it by word or sign. And after his one fleeting view of Lung Tu, Captain Judd had seen nothing further of the tall, heavy-set Chinese.

But Judd assumed that he was still on board, that the importance of the trip was too great to trust wholly to Professor Wong.

Judd, standing on the bridge now with Strong at his side, considered all these things carefully. In his coat pockets were two automatics and Strong was armed likewise.

"Have you figured out," Strong asked dryly, "just what we are going to do if we should escape from this ship?"

"We'll worry about that later," Judd grunted. "We have to get this ship through the channel first. And

then have your gun ready, because the lid of hell is going to pop up and hit us in the face."

Captain Judd turned and blew into the engine room speaking tube, avoiding the use of the bells in the engine room telegraph on the bridge. He called for slow speed ahead. The hull suddenly became alive with the quivering of the engines as the propeller started to turn.

Judd snapped the course to the helmsman. The ship was moving slowly, swinging slightly, keeping the inlet to the starboard beam.

Then with a "Full Ahead" bell, the *City of Peking* started to race for the channel. No smoke came from the funnel, her grates needed no fresh coal. She steamed ahead, leaving behind only clean air.

Captain Judd watched the sea marks closely. He knew the white stones that were leaders. He took his bearings on a range of trees, a bearing that kept the steamer in the center of the treacherous channel. He stood near the helmsman, seeing that all his instructions were followed to the dot.

Bringing her own flood tide with her, cutting the cross current easily, the *City of Peking* surged into the channel. Her keel caused the boat to roll heavily as the sudden shifts of pressure hit it.

And the running of the channel was all over in the matter of minutes.

The steamer loafed through the inwater of the bay. She coasted up to within a quarter of a mile of the matted jungle green that masked the mouth of the mysterious river from the view of human eyes.

THE ship dropped anchor, letting the chain run as she swung back. All about rose the mountainous jungle, like a great green wall of brilliantly fresh grass. A break in

the gigantic granite cliffs at the base of the mountain was the only indication of the presence of a river that flowed back into the impenetrable wilderness.

Judd looked at Strong and grinned, then reached into his pockets for his guns.

"You lay your anchors where you want them, Skipper," Strong said. "No fooling when you deliver the goods."

"We're just starting to deliver the goods now," Captain Judd said. "Our first job is over. Pretty soon Lung Tu and Wong Chi will start theirs."

Judd motioned to the helmsman to go below. The man moved quickly and was down the steps of the bridge with startling speed.

THE sun had set in the west and twilight, fleeting and dark, was fast descending on the little bay. It came first in a haze of gray light and then rapidly gave way to the fast falling darkness.

"We can wait on the bridge," Captain Judd said quietly. "If we do, we can be sure of killing a good number of those yellow pirates. But our ammunition will run out, and we'll be trapped up here like rats. In the saloon we'll have a better chance."

"Maddern is downstairs and he's a white man," Strong said. "You insisted on having him in your cabin and you can't ditch him now."

"Maddern will take care of himself," Judd answered, and started down the steel steps of the bridge.

Darkness had fallen, but in the east the moon was coming up rapidly—a big red ball of fire, burning over the top of the mountain. The engines of the ship had stopped and no lights burned on deck. A silence, eerie and oppressive, pervaded every part of the scene.

Slowly and stealthily, the two white men made their way down the ladder. They darted under the bridge on the main deck where the darkness hid them completely. The superstructure was behind them, with a narrow passage between the bulwark and bulkhead.

FOR several minutes they waited, their ears strained for sounds on the ship. But none came. Only the deadly, piercing silence greeted their ears.

Then somewhere out in the water they heard the splash of an oar. It was followed by a sharp command in Chinese. There were more splashes and then the weird stillness descended again.

"Reinforcements," Strong muttered. "Lung Tu is taking no chances with fifty cutthroats on board to kill three white men."

Captain Judd started through the darkness without a word. Strong followed closely. They went through into the small mess room. A door from this led into the saloon. Strong opened the door slowly, and Judd slipped sideways into the room, his gun even with his hip and his finger on the trigger.

At the far end of the saloon a door to the pantry was open, and beyond this door the dark alley leading to the after well deck was visible. Judd could see through to the well deck, now covered with a silver light from the moon. Keeping his eyes on the pantry passage, Judd moved toward the center of the saloon. A light was shining from Professor Wong's stateroom, but his bunk was empty. Only one dim light was burning in the saloon, clothing it in a shadowy darkness.

At the center of the room Judd stopped suddenly and swerved to the right, bringing his gun up with a snap. On the stairs leading

to the upper deck he had heard a footfall—the soft, indistinct sound of a slippered foot.

And then, out of the gloom at the top of the saloon stairway, appeared the form of Professor Wong Chi. He hesitated for a moment, glanced down in the saloon, and then moved out of the darkness. He started down the stairs, his felt soled slippers making no sound as they touched the brass rimmed steps. As he reached the bottom, Strong moved around in an encircling movement and came up at his rear.

The professor walked up to Judd and bowed deeply, smiling pleasantly.

"You are," he said in his soft, hollow voice, "a little nervous, Captain Judd."

CAPTAIN JUDD'S lean face contracted slightly. His eyes squinted, but a grin came to his lips.

"I thought, perhaps," he answered, "that you and Lung Tu would like to get Strong and me about now."

Professor Wong shrugged carelessly.

"Get you? Why should we wish to kill you?"

"Why shouldn't you?" Judd retorted. "We've delivered your ship to the island. We know what the shipment really is and we know enough to hang you and Lung Tu on the mast of any British or American warship in these waters. The reasons for killing us are too strong for either you or Lung Tu to pass up right now."

There was a movement at one of the staterooms. And then out of the darkness appeared Lung Tu.

He remained in the doorway for a moment, looking at the three men. His head was wrapped in a sleeping turban. His pajama jacket was scarlet, and around his waist was a red sarong. The combination of jacket

and pajama trousers gave the effect a long robe of red. He looked like some old Chinese god as he stood there, immovable, with a light at his back.

"The unwelcome guest," he said softly. "I come like death—never invited, but a guest that no man can turn away. I have been listening to certain words about murder and they have interested me—interested me greatly."

His large black eyes flashed and his strong, protruding jaw stuck out a little. His face, with the high cheek bones, was cold and deadly.

"You are late on the scene, Lung Tu," Judd said dryly. "We have been in this bay for twenty minutes now and you haven't tried to kill us yet."

Lung Tu walked out into the saloon.

"You have hardly played fair with me, Captain Judd," he complained. "You have the white man I sent aboard in your cabin and—"

"If we are going to bring up the question of playing fair," Judd interrupted coldly, "I have a little speech that might interest you. You hired us to run guns for you on the *Heavenly Star*, and because you had bigger work to do, and wanted to close the eyes of the authorities to your real occupation, you tipped them off so that the English nabbed us."

"You thought we'd either get hung or ten years in prison. We got neither, and you decided that we knew too much and ought to be dead."

"WE went to Singapore, and you followed, partly on your own business, and partly to see that we didn't live long enough to talk. Then you pulled the big haul of the twenty-five millions in gold from the American ship. Somehow you trans-

ferred that twenty-five million to this ship, which had a spotless reputation and made a perfect hiding place for the gold. Then you found out you needed a captain who could handle a freighter and you thought of me and Strong.

"That's why you didn't kill us on the Street of Celestial Light. You got Strong and me aboard this ship, fully intending that we would never get back to civilization alive. Maybe we won't—but there are a hell of a lot of Chinese pirates who won't get back either."

Lung Tu smiled coldly, without expression.

"Your speech," he said, "is like the speech of all white men. Full of noise and sound, but conceived by the brain of a mouse. White men have the ears of mules, and the sense of a child. They listen big and talk loud, but think nothing, because they are stupid and easily fooled."

Judd grinned maliciously.

"THIS is one time a Chinaman did not fool me a hell of a lot," he said.

Lung Tu bowed low.

"Then," he said in his soft, slurring accent, "there is nothing more for us to discuss."

Judd's hand went for his gun, but as it did, something hit the light over him and the room was plunged in utter darkness. A shrill whistle broke the stillness, coming from the direction of Wong Chi's stateroom.

From the well deck came the rush of bare feet. Strong could be heard running up the stairs, his shoes hitting the brass trimmings of the steps with metallic rings. But Judd remained in the center of the saloon. He stared out at the silver moonlight flooding the well deck. A cloud passed under the moon and shut the deck from view; then bare shoulders and crouching bodies came under the

renewed light. A port door burst open and there was a blurred mass of yellow bodies piling into the room.

From the center of the saloon came a flash of orange red, a flash that leaped across the room into the mass of oncoming pirates. The report from the gun shook the room. Again Judd fired, but the mass came on relentlessly, furiously.

Judd turned and made for the stairway, taking the steps up two at a time.

CHAPTER VI

The Dragon's Talons

AS Captain Judd hit the top of the stairs, he heard a sharp order barked out in Chinese. A spurting, leaping line of fire came from the after end of the saloon as the pirates went into action with their revolvers. The charging line had stopped and dropped to their knees. Flickering rays of moonlight coming through the portholes fell, here and there, on a kneeling Chinese.

There was another sharp command. A second volley cut through the room at about the height of a man's waist. The bullets clicked against the brass treads of the stairs, cut through the trim and splintered the wood. The passageways on both sides of the stairs were raked by the bullets, which struck against the iron doors with twangs that sounded like bell gongs.

The saloon was riddled with bullets. The pirates no longer waited for the command to fire. They fired at will, as rapidly as they could. Lead flew at all angles and all directions in the saloon, high and low, at corners and at the ceiling.

Then there was a loud, sharp command and the firing ceased. The en-

suing silence was oppressive. Clouds of gun smoke were rising slowly toward the ceiling, passing the feeble moonlight that came in through the port holes.

"Strong!"

Judd's voice came weakly, as if from some far distance. Then came the heavy breathing of the captain, as if every breath cost him pain and misery.

But his plea brought no answer from Strong.

The sharp command in Chinese sounded again, and once more the firing commenced, wildly slicing every part of the room.

It stopped suddenly, and then above the deadly stillness came the voice of Lung Tu.

"Captain Judd," he called out, "are you hurt?"

IF the captain were, he did not answer the gentle voice of solicitude that had inquired.

"Mr. Strong," Lung Tu called.

But Mr. Strong did not heed the call; again there was no answer.

Then suddenly the room was flooded with light as the electric bulbs flashed into life. The line of pirates jumped to their feet and charged toward the stairway. But they stopped suddenly, as if struck by some unseen power.

For at the head of the stairs they saw something that their dull minds grasped instantly. Danger and death! And before they could move, the death spat out at them, mowing them down pitilessly.

On the stairs was Captain Judd, lying flat on his stomach, with a machine-gun protruding out in front of him. At his side lay Strong and Maddern, assisting him to keep the machine-gun firing at its deadly speed.

The gun jumped in Judd's hands, but he kept it down level with the

bodies of the pirates. The line wavered and seemed to jump backward. The brutal, scowling, yellow faces changed to masks of terror. Bodies stiffened and plunged forward on the floor. Some groveled and writhed in pain, while others hurled themselves sidewise, spinning as if in a devil dance.

The stream of lead came out of the muzzle of the gun as if controlled by a throttle. The walls of the saloon were ripped open. Light bulbs crashed and popped and went out. A cloud of gaseous white smoke filled the room. And through it all the roar of the machine-gun continued.

From a stateroom came loud, sharp commands. But the line of pirates heard nothing now. The few that were able crawled away through doors, while the wounded squirmed frantically to get out of reach of the rain of lead. Many lay still and motionless on the floor.

Judd jumped to his feet, the machine-gun under his arm. From outside came loud cries and the noise of men crowding over the side of the steamer from boats.

But the end was not yet.

Bare feet rushing along the port side of the deck came next. The pirates were making for the rear to attack Judd and his two companions from behind. At the same time, new yellow bodies and faces came pouring through the port doors of the saloon.

JUDD dropped on his stomach and again the machine-gun went into action. But this time he operated it alone. Strong and Maddern were firing at the pirates who were attacking from the rear. The machine-gun cut down the Chinese in front of it like wheat, and they stopped piling through the doors. Waiting outside, they contented themselves

with taking spasmodic shots at Judd from behind doors.

A roar came from behind Judd. He twisted his body around, saw Strong and Maddern crouching against the wall at his sides. Down the passageway a horde of pirates were charging toward them.

"Look out!" Judd yelled at his two companions. "I'll clean the passageway and then we'll have to make a break for it."

He swung the machine-gun around in time to send a stuttering line of lead into the charging Chinese. They stiffened in their tracks, and then went to the floor as if mowed down by a scythe. There were weird screams and curses in Chinese as the unharmed tried to duck the stream of lead that was belching out of the machine-gun.

Up and down, sideways, to the right and left, Judd moved the gun. He ripped venomous bullets through those who had fallen to the ground and those who had jumped to their feet and were running backward. The narrow passageway was choked with the powder gases from the machine-gun. Judd coughed and gasped for breath.

THEN suddenly he was conscious that the lights were dimming. He could hear the regular crack of Strong and Maddern's automatics at his side and, though he didn't look around, he guessed what was happening. The two white men were shooting out the lights in the saloon.

In front of him the mass of yellow faced pirates had disappeared. Judd heard Strong's gun crack three times more. And then the steamer was plunged into a blanket of black.

Judd was on his feet, shoving the machine-gun under his arm.

"We'll try the boat," he yelled to Strong and Maddern.

He hurdled the mass of lifeless

bodies glutting the passageway. From under him came the groans and gasps of the wounded, but he dashed madly through the dark passageway. He kicked a door open and was out on the main deck.

The moonlight flooded the deck and the surrounding waters with a silver light—soft and entrancing, it was almost as light as day. The boat hanging from the davits was only a few yards in front of Judd.

BUT from all sides slinking, half-naked bodies moved in the shadows. A gun roared and a bullet cut in front of his face. Judd jumped back, brought the machine-gun up. But on deck the weapon was useless. No mass of naked flesh came toward him; the pirates were firing from cover, firing slowly and deliberately.

Strong and Maddern came to the door. Bullets snapping through the air halted them there.

"We have the chance of a snowball in hell," Strong said weakly. "We'll never launch that boat."

Before Judd could answer, a bullet cut through the dark passageway at their rear and whined out over the waters of the bay. The three white men dropped to their knees. The pirates were growing bolder. Someone aft was yelling shrill, angry orders in Chinese.

The machine-gun dropped from Judd's arms and his automatic came out. It sent flames of death to the right and left and men screamed in answering pain. Maddern turned his fire into the dark passageway at their rear. Grimly and desperately Judd and Strong fired at the moving shadows of naked men at their right and left. The superstructure gave them a slight protection; it forced the pirates to fire at a difficult right angle. But Judd knew that this advantage would be short lived.

Aft, he heard other men climbing

on board. Mere weight of numbers would soon overwhelm them, and the matter of ammunition was now offering a serious problem. Judd's supply would last a few minutes more and then—

With a yell to his companions, Judd leaped across the open space of the deck to the bulwark. He moved in a crouching, lunging gait that sent his head and shoulders against the rail with a sickening crash.

A bullet cut his shoulder. Another creased his right leg.

He did not wait to see what was happening to Maddern and Strong. His life hung on a split second and in that split second he moved. With a lunge he was over the rail, his body diving head-first for the water. As he hurtled through the air, he heard wild cries from the pirates over him.

THE next thing he knew he had hit the water and was shooting toward the bottom of the bay. He brought his downward dive to an abrupt stop, sent his body upward through the water with powerful arm strokes.

When he finally came to the surface, his lungs were bursting for air and his body numb.

His head shot out of the water. He gasped for breath, filled his lungs, and then dived again.

Thirty seconds later he came to the surface the second time. But he came up in water which held a churning, snarling, yelling mass of yellow bodies.

Judd went down quickly. With powerful strokes he made for the shore, swimming under water. Slowly and with an ease made possible through years of training in the water, he propelled his body forward. As he swam, he slowly exhaled the air that filled his lungs,

doing it in short gasps that kept the water from his mouth.

When the last of the air was gone, he rose to the surface, turning over on his back and floating to the top slowly. Only his nose and his mouth struck the air, the rest of his body remaining under the water.

Judd took a deep breath. It seemed to him that the bay was a boiling, churning whirlpool of angry waters. Bodies were beating the surface around him. Loud yells in Chinese rent the air. He filled his lungs and then turned over on his stomach for another dive. As he did, a naked body crashed against him.

There was a frantic yell, and the next moment Judd was in the maelstrom of the maddened waters. Yellow arms reached for him and naked bodies pressed against his sides.

He dove, but two powerful arms were around his neck. He lunged upward with the speed of a shark, broke the grip, but the lunge had sent him clear of the surface. The next thing he knew, long yellow arms had hold of every part of his body.

He was sucked under the surface. He kicked and struggled, but his efforts were futile. He was pulled down and down. It seemed to him that he was moving with the speed of a comet into the very bowels of the earth.

HE gasped for breath, but water rushed into his lungs. The powerful grip was around his neck, choking him and pulling him under.

As more water came into his lungs, a strange, weird peace came over him. He felt sleepy. He relaxed his body and twisted his arms a little.

That twisting of his arms was the last move he remembered. After that all was dark—the utter blackness of total oblivion.

CHAPTER VII

Back to Life

BLACKNESS remained in front of Captain Judd's eyes, but in disjointed waves of thought, his senses would come back, linger for a passing second and then leave. In this wavering, whirling consciousness he was aware that he was struggling against something—against powerful arms that still gripped him, crushing his body until it seemed that his chest and his ribs would be smashed together.

There was no more water about him. Once he tried to open his eyes but they remained fast, as if glued down. There was a feeling of delightful weariness, a sense of utter exhaustion, in his body. He wanted to sleep, but consciousness kept returning to torment him and to prevent the perfect rest his body craved.

He heard a voice—soft and far away. The powerful grip on his chest and waist was gone. There were no more periods of oblivion. His thoughts raced around in his mind, a grotesque maelstrom of conflicting memories.

Then out of the shroud of darkness that covered him, a voice came, strong and clear.

"He will live," it said. "It is not necessary to do anything further."

Judd's body jerked and in a flash his brain cleared. He would live! And the man who had spoken the words was Professor Wong Chi. The captain opened his eyes, blinked stupidly at a dazzling light which blinded them. He closed his eyes, then opened them slowly again, permitting them to become adjusted to the brilliant glare.

He was in a small room. The walls were of cement and the only door was of heavy iron. The air

was damp and heavy; there were no windows. Small ventilating ducts lined the top of the wall where it reached the ceiling.

Judd let his eyes wander over the room; then he gave attention to the bed he lay on and the three men standing over him.

One was Professor Wong Chi and the other two were tall, half naked Chinese.

"You were dead," Professor Wong Chi offered coldly, "but we brought you back to life."

Judd threw his legs over the edge of the low couch and sat up. His head raced like a windmill and his body felt weak.

"You woke me from a very pleasant sleep," he said with a shrug. "If that was death, it wasn't bad."

PROFESSOR WONG nodded. He was wearing the heavy horn rimmed glasses and they hid the murderous expression on his face.

"The Captain must know," he said coldly, "that Chinese have certain hatreds and certain passions. We hate the white man because he has murdered and stolen—"

"Yes, I know all about that," Judd broke in wearily. "What I want to know is how I got here. Last I remember, you and your tribe were trying damned hard to kill me—"

"You murdered many of my race," Professor Wong Chi replied softly. "And when a white man does that, it is not our wish that he die pleasantly. Not by a shot or by drowning."

"I see," Judd mused. "I was pulled out of the bay, brought back to life, to enjoy some refined Chinese torture."

The lips of the professor contracted into a thin white line.

"That is just what we are going to do."

Judd's face was set and the

muscles on his jaws rose. His eyes darted rapidly around the room.

"I feel pretty weak, Wong Chi," he said. "A shot of whisky would put me in better shape to stand the strain. Right now you'd have a dead man on your hands the minute I looked at one of the tables used for the Death of a Thousand Slices."

"You will have much liquor and food," the professor sneered. "You will be well and strong when your death takes place. A well man suffers longer."

HE handed Judd a glass of whisky. The captain took it, downed it at a gulp.

"You Chinese," he said, "are gentle souls."

The professor said nothing. The two half naked Chinese stood in the background and watched Judd with faces that were utterly blank and expressionless.

"I suppose I'm in a dungeon of the pirates' stronghold, with the chances for escape very small," Judd said. "You seem to work well underground—just like a rat."

A snarl came to Wong Chi's lips, but he controlled himself.

"You are where you will not escape," he said, "until death releases your heathen soul."

"Now you are mixing religion with murder," Judd replied dryly. "That's bad."

The whisky had sent warmth and strength to his body. His brain no longer raced around in a crazy circle. His eyes, on the tall body of Wong Chi standing about a foot from him, wandered to the pirates behind the professor. In the dirty sarongs around their waists were knives, wicked and gleaming with malevolent purpose.

"What about Strong and Madern?" Judd asked Wong Chi. "Have they too been saved to participate

in this elaborate death you have planned?"

"They will die with you," Wong Chi sneered. "Three white men to die—"

But he never finished the sentence. Judd had twisted to the right, shoulders hunched, his legs bunched up for a spring. And then, like a leaping tiger, he went through the air.

His shoulders hit the professor under the right arm, sending the Chinaman to the floor in a sprawling heap. But in that same split second a knife came through the air, nipped Judd on the shoulder. The huge forms of the Chinese pirates loomed over him, their faces twisted with a savage, bestial ferocity.

Judd ducked, brought his right up in a short, vicious uppercut—a blow that traveled only a few inches.

It landed on a yellow chin with a resounding crack. Then, with his body still lurching forward, his left went out in an old fashioned haymaker, catching the second pirate on the side of the head.

The first one had gone to the floor, his eyes glassy and his body twitching. The second was knocked backward by the haymaker, but with a bellow of rage, he came forward again. His head was down and the long knife glinted in his right hand.

FROM the corner of his eyes, Judd saw the dark clothed form of Professor Wong Chi struggling to his feet, his right hand slipping a revolver from beneath the black blouse.

The glance he had of the professor was only a flash. The next second the huge Chinese pirate was on him. Judd dropped to his knees, swung his body forward and tackled the charging pirate a little above the knees.

And then, using the last remaining ounce of his strength, the captain

heaved the huge form up in the air. He swung around with his shoulders and hurled the body against the advancing Wong Chi.

In a sprawling heap the pirate and the professor went to the floor. The gun dropped from Wong Chi's hand, clattered on the cement floor. Judd reached for it, got it between the fingers of his right hand, and then backed away. He kept the weapon on the two floundering men.

Wong Chi regained his feet first, kicking the pirate out of his way. He looked at the gun in Judd's hand, smiled coldly and shook his head.

"GUNS won't save you, Captain," he said. "Twenty guns wouldn't get you out of this stronghold."

"Maybe they won't," Judd replied, "but I've had the idea I'd like to die with my boots on."

Wong Chi smiled coldly, maliciously.

"The brain of a mouse and the mouth of a braying mule," he sneered. "All white men are the same. Outside this door are men who will overpower you in a moment. You might kill one—perhaps two, but our men are paid to die. You will be taken alive. Have no other idea than that."

"Okay," Judd replied, moving closer to the professor, "but until I do, I have to put you where you won't interfere. This isn't a gentlemanly thing to do, but it serves my purpose."

His left shot out in a straight, paralyzing blow to the chin. It caught the professor flush on the button and he went down to the floor face forward.

Then Judd moved swiftly. The pirate he had sent down with the clip to the chin was getting up. Judd waved his gun at the two yellow men, and ordered them to back against the wall.

The pirates, their dumb, savage faces blank, followed his orders mechanically. He made them lie down. When they were on the floor, Judd proceeded to tear the *sarongs* from their waists and firmly tie their hands and feet. He stuffed some of the dirty cloth into their mouths for gags and then pulled them over to a corner. He left them there, prone on the floor.

Then he gave his attention to the limp body of Professor Wong Chi. The professor was out and gave little indication of an immediate return to consciousness.

Judd stripped the man of his black blouse, black trousers, skull cap, and felt slippers.

And five minutes later Captain Judd was dressed in the clothes of Professor Wong Chi, including the heavy tortoise rimmed glasses. The outfit fitted him perfectly and it would have required a close inspection to reveal that this was not a Chinaman.

Professor Wong, himself tied and gagged and dressed in Captain Judd's trousers and shirt, lay in the corner with the two pirates. He had come to, but his eyes were still glassy and his face pale.

Judd waved a friendly good-by to him and then went to the heavy iron door. With keys taken from the professor's pocket, he turned the lock. The door opened easily and, revolver in his right hand, Judd stepped out into the long, dark hall beyond the door.

CHAPTER VIII

The Labyrinth

JUDD moved swiftly, his body hugging the wall of the shadowy passageway. Out of a side corridor two Chinese came, silently and furtively. Judd continued on, walking in the patterning,

shuffling manner of Professor Wong Chi. The two Chinese looked at him, said nothing, and then disappeared into another dark side passageway.

JUDD passed many dark doors that led from the corridor. He saw many other Chinese moving in the semi darkness, but none stopped to look at him or even send him a second glance. Judd heaved a sigh of relief. He had gotten away from the dungeon room without being discovered.

But he realized the utter futility of hoping to escape from the stronghold. He had no idea how far underground he was, but he knew that this was a veritable labyrinth. It would take hours for him to find his way out. And before that time was up, the bodies of Wong Chi and the two pirates would be found.

When that moment came, Judd knew that he could not hope to escape detection. They would try to take him alive—but he looked down at his revolver. There were five for the Chinese—and one for himself.

Judd came to a stairway. He followed the cement steps up to the floor above, and then started down a passageway that was dark and foul smelling. Its walls appeared black in the sparse light, black from age and the moisture that seeped through.

It was a passageway much older than the cement one he had left. He wondered if Lung Tu had salvaged an ancient underground hideaway for his stronghold. But Judd wasted little thought on that—the important thing to him was to locate Strong and Maddern before the trussed body of Wong Chi was discovered.

What he could do, even though he did find the two white men, was a mystery to him. The three of them would die fighting; that could be their only hope.

Judd knew the Chinese language and in a pinch could, by choosing his words carefully, pass that test with a fair degree of safety. He came to a guard, leaning indolently on a rifle. The yellow body, naked from the waist up, glistened in the semi darkness.

"Take me to the white men at once," Judd said in Chinese.

The man grabbed his rifle and, without a word, turned and started down the passageway at a shuffling dog trot. Judd followed, his right hand in the black blouse gripping the revolver.

DOWN the dark passageway they went, Judd shuffling after the trotting pirate. The velvet slippers he wore hit the dark, uneven rock floor with a rhythmic patter. The pirate turned to the left and they went up a sharp incline; then they came to ancient steps, worn by the tread of centuries.

At the top they came to a corridor, lined on both sides with dungeon-like rooms. In the doors of the dungeons, hewn out of the granite, were small squares where a little air might enter.

The half-naked Chinaman trotted down the corridor, dragging his rifle after him. Here and there a light shone out of the square opening of the doors, and Chinese guards moved up and down the ancient passageway. Suddenly the pirate stopped. Another guard came up to him and his words threw open a great stone door.

Judd walked into the dungeon cell. He stopped, and stared at the rock tables that were placed on each side of the dark, foul-smelling cell. The feeble light from the passageway cut through the heavy, damp blackness, casting a shadowy, somber gloom over the dungeon.

On the table to the right was

strapped the body of Jim Strong. Maddern was on the other. Both men were stretched on their backs, bound to the stone in such a manner that they could not move a muscle of their bodies.

They were staring, white-faced, at the ceiling. Neither was able to move his head to see who had entered the room. Judd remained near the door, his body tense and his nerves taut. The pirate walked in ahead of him and took up a position beside Maddern. Two guards remained close to the door. And ever came the soft, subdued patter of bare feet, as the yellow men patrolled the passageway outside.

JUDD took the revolver from his blouse, slipped his hand down over the muzzle, making a club out of the gun. He took a step closer to the half-naked body of his guide. And on the stones the two white men continued to stare at the ceiling, oblivious of the fact that near them stood Captain Judd.

The gun in Judd's hand whisked through the air, the butt coming down on the pirate's head with a dull thud. The man sank to the floor, his rifle clattering on the stone. He lay in an inert heap, completely lost to consciousness.

But as the man sank down, the passageway outside the cell became filled with running men. Over the patter of bare feet could be heard excited, angry orders shouted in Chinese. The din increased. The place suddenly became a bedlam of noise.

The muscles in Judd's face contracted into thin ridges around his mouth. His eyes squinted and his lips pulled tightly together. So Wong Chi had been discovered! It was only a matter of minutes before his masquerader would be traced to this dungeon cell.

With a spring, Judd went into action. He slipped a long kris knife from the *sarong* of the unconscious pirate on the floor. With this knife he cut the straps around Strong's body. Strong turned and stared in amazement. In the gloomy darkness the mate saw only a black-clothed Chinese, with a black skull cap and heavy tortoise shell-rimmed glasses.

Judd did not wait to inform him that he was not looking at Professor Chi. The captain had turned and was slicing the strap that held Maddern's body. Maddern, his flat, scowling face pale, turned his head weakly when the strap around his neck was cut.

"What the hell?" he growled. "The professor has gone nuts."

"Crazy like your wooden-leg aunt," Judd retorted. "Get off those stones and grab that rifle on the floor. This place is a hell hole. My joke has been discovered."

Strong was on his feet staring at Judd.

"Captain Judd!" he cried.

But there was no time for other words. The door to the dungeon darkened as three men rushed in. Strong grabbed the rifle from the floor and Judd slipped the knife to Maddern.

THE three Chinese at the door saw only three phantom-like figures crouching close to the floor. Before they could stop their onward rush, these three phantoms were upon them. There was a snarling, writhing mass of human flesh on the floor. A man groaned and another started to scream.

His scream was cut short by Maddern's knife.

Two minutes later the white men arose. From all parts of the passageway came sharp orders in Chinese. The sound of bare feet fall-

ing on the stone floor came in muffled, indistinct sounds.

"Follow me," Judd said in a low, tense voice.

He dashed out of the door, with Strong and Maddern at his heels. The passageway was alive with darting, slinking shadows that hugged the darkness of the walls. Judd turned to the right and dashed down the corridor.

A slinking form near him uttered a shrill cry in Chinese. The cry was taken up by the others.

AND then suddenly in front of the three white men came a shrieking yellow horde. Judd swerved to the left and rushed into a doorway that led off the passage. He fairly leaped into the wall of blackness that lay beyond it. His feet hit stone—and then a stone slipped. His body hurtled down through an abyss of stygian darkness.

He heard Maddern and Strong give short, sharp cries as they followed him. Down and down Judd went. He felt as though he were falling into the center of the earth. Then suddenly his body hit something hard. He struck a stone floor with a sickening crash; the wind and senses were knocked out of him.

He groped blindly, crazily in the blackness of the pit. His sense still reeled and he felt sick to his stomach. He crawled slowly forward, moving his outstretched arms. Gradually his head cleared. He looked upward, but only coal black space greeted his eyes.

"Have we gone to hell?" he heard Strong ask weakly near him.

And then Judd laughed.

"It looks like we've got a good start in that direction," he replied. "We're in a nice little pit—Lung Tu won't have much trouble getting us. Where's Maddern?"

"I think I'm dead," Maddern's

voice came thinly through the darkness. "But I'm not quite sure."

Far to the right they heard the sound of bare feet slapping against the rock floor. Judd sprang up.

"We'll go toward that sound," he said in a whisper. "If they can come down, we can go up."

He started through the dank, heavy darkness. He moved slowly, his left arm ahead of him, his right grasping the revolver.

Maddern and Strong, on tiptoe, followed the sound of his moving body. The patter of bare feet grew louder and then seemed to surround them. Judd continued walking directly toward the spot where they first heard the sound.

Then suddenly someone was breathing close to him, the heavy breathing of a powerful man. Judd stopped short, but Strong and Maddern, unable to see him, continued to move forward.

There was a sharp, growling yell in front of Judd. The yell was taken up by other voices in the pit of darkness, and then suddenly a flashlight cut through the blackness. The beam played around on a black, moss-covered wall and then fell on an old stairway hewn out of the granite.

With a leap Judd made for the stairs. The flashlight went out. Then it flashed again, dancing over the stairs. Judd hit the first step, with Strong and Maddern at his rear. He went up three of the steps and then the pit of blackness became a howling, yelling inferno of snarling, enraged Chinese. They rushed toward the stairs, hurling knives through the air.

JUDD paid no attention to the yells or the knives. Two steps at a time, he went up the ancient stairway madly, blindly. The flashlight landed on his fleeing body.

There was a yell from Maddern at

his rear. Judd stopped, swerved around. From somewhere above him a feeble ray of light cut down through a hole. He saw Maddern standing with his back to him, holding a Chinese pirate over his head. Maddern hurled the body down the stairs into the face of the oncoming mob.

It was too dark to see what the effect was on the pirates, but there were groans. The sounds of bodies struggling up the steps continued.

Judd yelled out to Maddern and Strong: "Up these stairs as fast as you can.

"We might beat them running, but we can't beat them fighting with odds fifty to one."

HE turned and fled up the stairs. Up and up he went. He pressed through a dimly lighted section and then plunged again into jet black darkness. Out of this darkness he rushed into another stretch of stairs flooded with a soft gray mist.

And then suddenly he saw that on both sides the cement walls and the steps were new. He had gotten back to the new part of the stronghold. He stopped suddenly. Maddern and Strong raced up to his side. Below, the charging mass of yellow, naked bodies was surging forward.

Above Judd there came a sharp, staccato click. After an instant it stopped.

"God!" Judd cried. "We have one chance in ten million."

And with that he was rushing up the stairs. Everything about him was of new cement structure, and light from electric bulbs overhead made the stairs as bright as day.

He came to a wide landing. Three Chinese rushed out of a doorway. Twice Judd's revolver roared. There was no need for saving ammunition now. Two of the Chinese plunged forward. The third fled, but a bul-

let from Strong's rifle sent him crashing to the cement floor.

Judd took the steps with long, leaping strides. He came to another landing.

To his right the clicking and buzzing cut the air loudly now. Ahead he saw an iron door, slightly ajar. Behind him there were sounds of a struggle, then another shot. He heard Maddern yell and then he heard a man groan.

But Judd did not stop or turn. His racing body went against the iron door in a long, diving lunge. As it gave way, he fell face forward into the room.

Two dark-robed Chinamen, with sharp and intelligent features, jumped up. They had been seated in front of a long table, on which were instruments of a wireless set.

Judd's gun sent a long, lashing streak of gray smoke toward the first Chinaman. The yellow man crumpled forward on his knees, his hand clutching his throat. There was a roar from the hand of the second Chinese and a bullet clipped the cement wall near Judd's head.

His gun belched fire. The second Chinese followed his companion to the floor in a squirming heap. Judd's body leaped forward and he was at the table, his finger reaching for the wireless sending set.

QUICKLY, with the skill of a man experienced, Judd's forefinger made the air and the room and the instrument click with dots and dashes.

Again and again he sent his message over the set. Wires above him buzzed and hummed and the room was filled with the soft, rumble.

Judd paid no attention to what was going on behind him. Unheeding he heard someone enter the door. The patter of bare feet was at his back. He stood up and threw

his body around, but as he did, he was crushed to the floor by the weight of powerful hands.

He struggled against the arms. His gun was pulled from his hand. Straps went around his arms and legs and he was helpless to move or struggle further.

Then silently he was carried out of the room and down the long flight of cement steps. The quiet was broken only by the heavy breathing of the pirates who carried him and the feel of their bare feet on the long flight of cement steps.

CHAPTER IX

The Death of a Thousand Slices

HANDS held above their heads with long ropes fastened to the ceiling by a series of pulleys, their legs stretched to the breaking point by ropes attached to pulleys on the side of the room, the three white men hung. The very air was foreboding in the great room of Lung Tu's stronghold set aside for the exquisite torture of the Death of a Thousand Slices.

In front of them, seated on chairs that looked like thrones, were Lung Tu and Professor Wong Chi. Wong was dressed again in the black silk blouse and trousers and the black silk skull cap. Over his eyes were the heavy tortoise shell glasses.

Lung Tu wore his scarlet robe, and the red silk skull cap covered his matted queue. On his feet were silk brocaded slippers. He sat back comfortably in the throne chair, his sharp, high-boned face smiling easily at Captain Judd.

"Barbarian captain," he said, "you will hang from your arms and your feet until death will seem a relief against your sufferings. And then you will be let down, and the great table will be brought in. We here

will enjoy your pains and terror as the Death of a Thousand Slices cuts the last vestige of life from your beaten body."

Captain Judd, unable to move an arm or a leg, looked at Lung Tu from hate-filled eyes. His face was distorted with pain.

"A very ancient way of killing the enemies of China," Lung Tu went on. "It is a death that dates back before the great Ming Dynasty. With the Mings came newer and more refined modes of torture. I have made a thorough study of the manifold deaths that have come down through the ages, and I myself prefer the Death of a Thousand Slices."

Judd moved his eyes around the great room. At his right and left stood silent, scowling Chinese, with the heavy faces of coolies. They stood in two rows, like soldiers in formation.

Except for the throne chairs there was no other furniture in the room. The cement walls and ceiling were covered with pulleys and ropes. Yellow electric bulbs gave the room a wavering, sickly light. A light well suited to death.

On either side of Judd were Strong and Maddern. They had been captured outside the wireless room, as Judd's fingers had worked the instruments.

ALL this had happened hours before. How long, Judd had no way of telling.

Just the three men had been strapped to the stone tables in the dark dungeon room, strapped in such a manner that they could not move even their heads.

It had seemed ages that they remained on the stones. And then guards had come and carried them to the great room used for the Death of a Thousand Slices. And here they were, suspended in mid

air, to hang until consciousness left them.

Next they would be taken to the death table, revived, and their bodies sliced a thousand times. Not deep slices. Thin, deadly slices that would send the pain of a thousand deaths through their nerves. Until at last the combination of loss of blood and pain would kill them.

Judd tried to twist his pain-racked body a little. It seemed that his arms were leaving their sockets and his hips would soon tear away from his body.

For over an hour he had hung suspended in the air and now it was only a matter of minutes before consciousness would leave him.

ALREADY Maddern's eyes had closed and they were letting his body down. Ten Chinese were carrying in a table—a long table with spikes sticking out of the top. They set it before Lung Tu and Professor Wong Chi.

Maddern's body lay on the floor in an unconscious heap. The ropes were taken from his arms and legs and he was carried to the death table. He was placed in the center where no sharp spike bristled, but the spikes were all around him, placed in a position to gouge the flesh of the victim as he twisted and squirmed away from the deadly slices of the knives.

Three tall, animal-looking Chinese with huge shoulders and bull necks, walked up to the side of Maddern. They carried long, thin-bladed knives, ingeniously fashioned to slice the flesh as they were brought across the body.

His clothes were torn from Maddern's body. A silk-robed Chinese came up to him and poured something down his throat. Maddern quivered. The Chinese stepped back and watched the unconscious man.

Maddern opened his eyes but closed them again.

"We will give you the privilege, Captain Judd," Lung Tu said dryly, "to witness every detail of the Death of a Thousand Slices. I am quite sure you will find it interesting."

"He will have the honor," Wong Chi broke in coldly, "of seeing the death of the damned government spy he worked so hard to save."

"Strange that a man like Captain Judd should fight so hard for a spy," Lung Tu said with a cold, mirthless laugh. "This is the great joke I have saved for the Captain's last hour. Do not let consciousness leave you too soon, Captain, for this is an interesting story—a very funny one."

Judd's senses were reeling, but he heard Lung Tu's words. He struggled to keep his eyes open. His arms no longer pained him; every part of his body was numb.

"Your friend, Mr. Maddern," he heard Lung Tu say, "is a very clever man, so clever that for a moment he had even me fooled. You were quite right in thinking that I never intended to permit you and Mr. Strong to return alive once you were on the *City of Peking*. White men talk like fools, and after we use them, it is well that they die."

BUT in your case I waived the point for two reasons. In the first place, you fled from Shanghai before my men could kill you, after your release from prison. It might incidentally interest you to know that it was my influence that secured a very light sentence for you both. I was afraid if a heavy sentence were given you, you would talk.

"But it was necessary to see that you would not talk after you were out of the grip of the English Navy. I would have killed you on the Street of Celestial Light in Singapore, had it not been necessary to

secure the services of a good captain to take the *City of Peking* to this island. Among my pirates there were none having enough knowledge of the Banda Sea to do so; naturally, I much preferred to kill a white man than to use a Chinese captain and kill him.

"Killing Chinese is rather dangerous for us, but white men die and we can forget them. I trust you understand?

"It occurred to me that it would be well if I could arrange to have a white man kill you and Mr. Strong. That would leave me clean of the murder. Maddern posed as a gangster—a killer from the States. He was the man I was looking for. But hardly had he gotten on board before my agents informed me that he was a spy from the office of Commander Pearson of the United States Navy.

"THAT did not worry me much.

I He was on the ship and I knew he would never leave alive. But Professor Wong Chi became unduly alarmed, and he tried to kill Maddern. You went to his rescue because he was a white man.

"It strikes me as very amusing that Captain Judd should save the life of a spy. I am quite sure that Commander Pearson would commend you very highly—and then hang you as a smuggler."

Lung Tu ended his words with a deep, chuckling laugh.

"And now the Captain," Wong Chi said, "will be privileged to witness the death of a spy. It should please him greatly."

"The Captain," Lung Tu added, "might still be hoping that the message he sent over our wireless set would reach a warship. He is a very resourceful man and very fastidious about his tastes. A warship would hang him on sight—yet he

prefers that death to our time-honored one."

Professor Wong laughed coldly, inhumanly.

"It will disappoint and depress the Captain greatly," he said, "to learn that the wireless set he used so skillfully did not send his message to a battleship. The Captain, I take it, is well versed in wireless operations. He will understand that we would hardly use a wave length that could be picked up so easily. I was surprised beyond words to learn that he called on his friend Commander Pearson for help. But blood runs thicker than the waters of a mountain brook and a man prefers death at the hands of his own blood."

Judd heard the words of Wong Chi with a sinking feeling around his throat. It had been a hopeless, almost insane move, the sending of the wireless message. At best it would take a battleship two days to get to the island. Yet though it had been a lean hope, at best, he had continued to cling to it as a drowning man to a straw.

Now even that hope was gone. Judd realized that Wong Chi's words were true. Of course the set would be fixed to send only short wave lengths, waves that would not carry messages to warships.

THE loss of that last shred of hope caused Judd's body to relax against the ropes. On the death table in front of him he saw the body of Maddern moving a little. The government spy's eyes were open and color was returning to his cheeks.

At Judd's left, Strong suddenly groaned. Two Chinese went up to him and the ropes were let down. His body fell to the floor in a limp heap.

Judd struggled against the unconsciousness coming over him, but in

spite of himself his eyes closed. The numbness began to spread to his brain. He tried to open his eyes but—

His body jerked suddenly and stiffened. His mind was at once alert. If he could delay the death long enough—

His body relaxed and fell forward a little and his eyes remained closed as if in unconsciousness. If he could get them to lower his body—

"The good Captain," he heard Wong Chi say, "has fainted. It is not well to leave him there too long. He might die."

THE ropes clattered over the pulleys. Judd's body was being lowered. His eyes were closed and his body relaxed; yet every nerve was taut, every muscle ready to spring into action. He hit the floor, permitted his body to sprawl out in an inert heap. He felt the ropes being taken from his arms and then from his ankles.

He moved his arms and legs a little to make sure the ropes were gone. Then he opened his eyes quickly, his muscles flying into action. With a forward lunge he caught the first pair of yellow legs he saw, bringing the Chinese down on the floor with a dull crash. His body still numb and weak, he grappled with the startled pirate, throwing his arms around the man's waist and maintaining his grip with all the strength he had left.

Over him other men struggled. There were yells and above the yells came the sharp commands of Lung Tu in Chinese. Judd was holding onto the half-naked body frantically. The man had twisted around and was trying to throw Judd from him.

Fingers gouged Judd's eyes. His head went back, and a hand caught him on the face and shoved him. He

crashed on his back. Other yellow bodies were over him. Judd was smiling grimly — hopelessly. He reached for another pair of legs and as he did, his eyes went upward.

"Atta boy, Maddern," he cried weakly. "Give them hell."

He had seen the tall form of Maddern standing near the table. In his hand was one of the slicing knives of death. Maddern was cutting the air frantically with the knife, driving the yellow horde back from him. Strong had come to life and was grappling weakly with a yellow body near the table.

Judd lunged forward, falling on his face at the feet of Maddern. He got up slowly and weakly. He saw the calm, mask-like face of Lung Tu still sitting on the throne chair.

"A white man dies hard," he heard Lung Tu say, "but let them exhaust themselves. We can wait a few minutes for the Death of a Thousand Slices."

Judd grabbed the edge of the table to keep his body from slipping to the floor. It was a useless fight. Lung Tu was right. In a few minutes they would be exhausted. Maddern was hurling the knife around, but his face was ashen gray. Suddenly he fell forward in a dead faint.

Yellow arms encircled Judd. He was thrown on the table, the sharp spikes tearing his flesh. Hands ripped his clothes off and then something hot went down his throat. It warmed his body and caused his blood to flow faster; but straps were being tied around his waist and legs.

THE time for struggle and fight was finally over.

"The Captain," Wong sneered, "will die first. It was not as we wished, but it is best."

"He is a brave man," Lung Tu

said. "I did not believe that a white man could die so fearlessly."

The three executioners of the Slicing Death loomed over him. All three were holding their knives. Judd had no idea what was happening to Maddern and Strong. All he could see was the ceiling.

"Do not delay the death," Lung Tu said to Wong Chi. "Facing death, a white man is most dangerous. It is then they are smartest; at all other times they are fools."

A KNIFE came down across Judd's body, swiftly and with unerring aim. A sharp, stinging pain shot through his body. Again the knife cut his flesh. Judd writhed in agony but as he moved his body the spikes on the table gouged his flesh.

He closed his eyes. His brain went numb and every part of his body relaxed.

In a few minutes—not more than ten or twenty—it would all be over! Blood came from his lips as he bit them to keep from screaming his agony. Again the knife slashed his body. Strange, grotesque figures danced before his eyes—crazy, insane images.

Judd no longer felt pain. Hideous creatures were laughing at him, creatures that jumped and moved crazily before his eyes.

Then these creatures faded away and all was black. The eternal blackness from which there seems no awakening.

And then there was a roar. It seemed to Judd that the earth was falling away from beneath him. Dizzily he seemed to be moving through the air. Again the earth shook. Vaguely, he heard loud screams. There was a shot. The pain in his body returned, piercing, maddening.

The straps left his body and he was rolled off the table. He wondered if they believed him dead. He

hit the floor, tried to move. Every reflex of a muscle sent a terrifying pain through his body.

It seemed that he had fallen into an inferno. All around him, bodies whirled and screamed. Something cut his nostrils—a gas that was stinging and biting. He opened his eyes. In a hazy semi-consciousness, he saw blurred, strange looking figures moving around him.

Then the figures melted away and only the haze remained. His body was picked up, laid on a table. Had they discovered he was not dead? Something cool went over his pain-racked body.

After a while he opened his eyes. He stared stupidly at what he saw—and then he grinned at the face leaning over him.

It was Commander Pearson of the United States Naval Intelligence. And behind the commander stood United States sailors.

"Feel better?" Commander Pearson said to Judd.

Judd nodded weakly and tried to sit up.

"You here?" he said feebly to Commander Pearson. "You've always looked like something from hell to me, but now you're an angel—an angel with little white wings."

COMMANDER PEARSON laughed and put a flask of whisky to Judd's mouth. Judd took a long drink. The liquor warmed his body, sent strength through it, relieving the pain. He sat up and looked around—still mystified.

The room was a mass of broken concrete and rocks. Yellow bodies lay strewn over the floor. Near what remained of the door stood Lung Tu and Wong Chi, their wrists shackled with handcuffs. Sailors guarded them closely.

"Your message," Commander Pearson said to Judd, "came to us just

as we changed our receiving set to catch the short wave messages. We thought it was possible that Lung Tu was using short waves. It so happens that we were near this island. We've been following the *City of Peking* ever since it left the harbor of Singapore, after Maddern reported back through one of our agents that you were on board."

Captain Judd struggled off the table. His body was still racked with pain and his head felt foggy. He managed to stand upright, holding on to Commander Pearson.

"THE next time," Judd said dryly, "that I go after a Red Dragon, it's going to be with twenty battleships at my side. How are Lieutenant Strong and Ensign Maddern?"

"You mean Captain Strong and Lieutenant Maddern," Pearson laughed, "and I might add that you are now Commander Judd of the United States Navy. The recommendations for promotion went in when you were still in Singapore. I figured two weeks spent in an English jail merited promotion, even if you didn't get Lung Tu."

"Commander Judd," Judd repeated with a weak laugh. "Doesn't sound bad, does it?"

"Strong and Maddern have been taken aboard the destroyer," Pearson said. "We'll take you along now and get you back into shape."

Judd looked around the room.

"But how did you manage to get into the stronghold?" he said. "I sent those wireless messages as a last hope. I didn't see how you could break into this underground city, even if you did get here."

"We got enough of your message to give us the location you figured was correct," Pearson explained. "And then we started to blow this damned hill off the face of the earth. Our shells opened a gap in concrete and we rushed in. We cleaned the place out. We also took over the *City of Peking* and the twenty-five millions in gold stored below." Judd smiled grimly.

"I finally worked Lung Tu after a year," he said. "Taking that rap in the English jail helped a lot. Instead of killing Strong and me, he decided to use us. Your note delivered to me in Sar Tonken's dive started the music. But it's a long story, and I want some rest and food first."

"Your friend, Sir John Simon, is out in the bay in an English ship," Pearson laughed. "He still thinks I made a mistake asking for the release of those two smugglers called Judd and Strong."

"Break the news to him gently," Judd laughed. "He might want to put us back in jail when he sets his eyes on us."

Commander Pearson assisted Judd to the door. Lung Tu and Wong Chi were still standing there, under heavy guard.

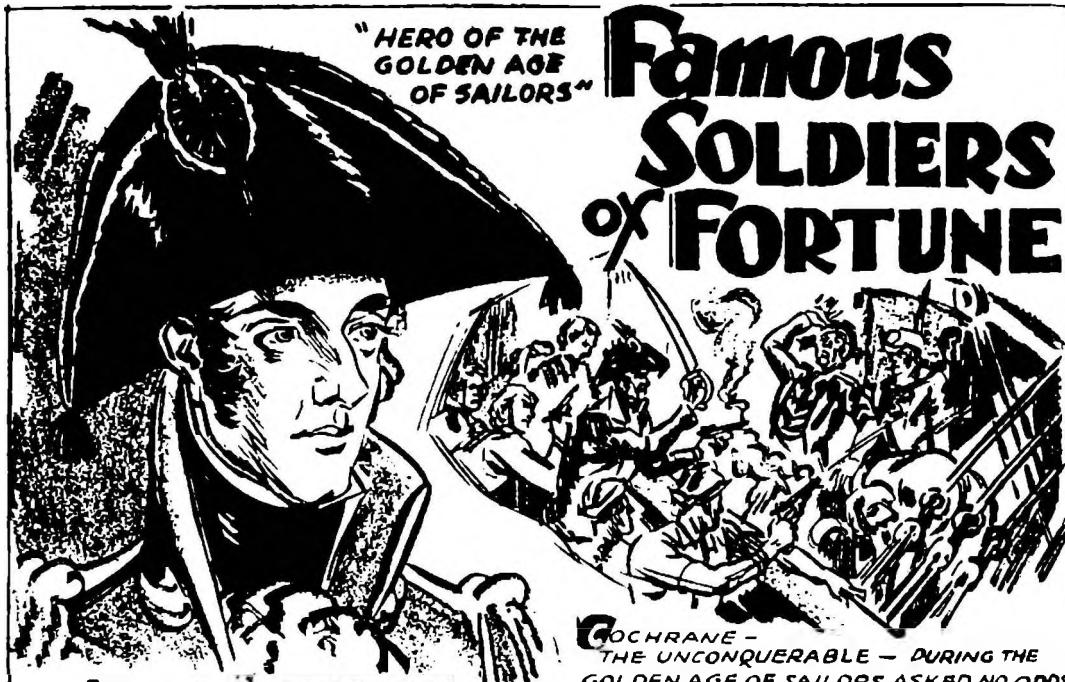
WONG CHI'S eyes blazed with murderous hatred, but the eyes of Lung Tu were pleasant and friendly. He bowed graciously as Judd approached him.

"A Chinese can honor a great man—and a very, very clever one," he said softly. "I was clever, but I made one mistake. I thought the white man was a fool."

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FIGHTING THE GREAT SHIPS OF THE SPANISH FLEET, EARNED THE TITLE OF "EL DIABLO - THE DEVIL." ONCE WITH HIS SINGLE SHIP HE LAID SIEGE TO VALDIVIA, A SPANISH STRONGHOLD OF 15 FORTS AND 115 GUNS. HE KEPT ON THE DECK HIMSELF UNTIL HE DROPPED FROM EXHAUSTION. HIS LIEUTENANT LET THE SHIP GROUND. COCHRANE, WITH HIS SHIP SINKING, LED HIS MEN ASHORE SWIMMING WITH THEIR SWORDS BETWEEN THEIR TEETH - AND DEPENDING UPON COLD STEEL STORMED THE BATTERIES, CUTTING HIS WAY TO VICTORY, SEIZING THE CITY AND THE ARSENALS!

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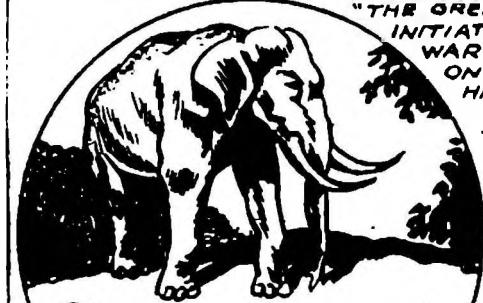


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"THE GREAT CREOLE", INITIATED THE CIVIL

WAR BY FIRING THE FIRST GUN AT FORT SUMTER ON APRIL 12, 1861. HIS SOUTHLAND GLORIFIED HIM WITH PRAISE FOR THE FEAT.

ALSO BEAUREGARD WON FOR THE SOUTH THE FIRST REAL BATTLE OF THE WAR — BULL RUN. WHEN ON THE MORNING OF JULY 21, 1861, - 20,000 UNION TROOPS ATTACKED HIS FORCE OF ONLY 12,000 CONFEDERATES AT MANASSAS THE FEDERAL'S LINE SOON PUSHED THROUGH THE DEFENSE OF THE SOUTH. BEAUREGARD RUSHED TO THE WEAK POINT AND WITH HAND TO HAND FIGHTING HELD ON UNTIL A FRESH CONFEDERATE CORPS ARRIVED.



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Feature—the First to Appear in Any Magazine

Outlaws All

*Follow Three Wanted Men
Through the Open
Trails of the
Great West*

A Complete Novelette

By RAY NAFZIGER

*Author of "Eagle Eyes," "Brand of
Wanted Men," etc.*

*For I'm a poor cowboy
and know I done wrong—*

AHORSE can travel only so far. A man can ride only so far—with a bullet hole between his ribs.

Doug Malls, "Frosty" Pilcher and the wounded "Banty" McCrea butted up against these two great natural laws as their weary horses climbed toward Doodlebug Pass. For ten days they had been fugitives, barely ahead of the posse that pursued them for holding up the Western Express.

Sleepless, harried, starved, thirsty, the three were gaunt ghosts, cradled in creaking saddle leather. Two ghosts acting as nurse to a third ghost of a wounded cowboy who kept up a delirium of broken talk.

Doug Malls rode alongside Banty, holding the bullet-punctured youngster in the saddle, encouraging him from cracked lips. They'd reach



Doodlebug Pass and rest. Yessir, rest. They'd lay down anywhere—on rocks or prickly pear beds, with a fish-hook cactus for a pillow—and they'd all sleep.

"We'll rest, Banty," promised Doug Malls, knowing that he lied. They could not rest—north of the Border.

A Mexican sheepherder had just shown them a short-cut to Doodlebug. A sullen sheepherder whose tongue Doug Malls had unloosed. Trust Doug, twenty-two, dark-faced, smiling, with a tongue that wrapped itself easily around Spanish, to make poor *pelado* or rich *haciendado* feel that he had met a friend.

THEY needed friends, being barely three hours ahead of the posse that fanned down on them from the north, racing in eagerly for the kill.

Frosty Pilcher, grizzled, with oldish bones that gouged sore flesh, pushed up to take Doug's place. "Let me swing the cradle a while,"



he said, and his arm went around Banty's waist. "Pull leather, Banty," he croaked. "Choke that biskit hard. Clamp yore teeth. Up to Doodlebug Pass we rest."

And little Banty, stabbed by the torment of pain and weariness, knowing they lied, gritted his teeth, tried to believe them. They had to lie to him; had to keep going, without sleep or grub.

Since their little trouble at the railroad, half the state at one time or other had been in slavering pursuit. Dozens of trailers—Indians, half-breeds, sheriffs, deputies, special railroad officers, volunteers. All in a gigantic man roundup, circling in relentlessly to turn the three into gray-walled corrals.

To bury them in sunless stone and brick, with other men steeped in stench and despair. To lock them in tiny cells which for a cowboy is borrowing too much of what should be reserved for Hell. For fifteen years, twenty maybe. And for what?

In the cases of Frosty, Banty and Doug Malls, top-hands for the Long H, mainly because of one thing: a late spring.

A late spring in the Southwest, where the three punchers had wintered in a narrow canyon in which the sun rose at ten o'clock and set at noon. Where for months they had ridden in the snow of the dark north slopes, nursing along steers that should never have been wintered on the high mesas. Day after day, an endless monotony of work, cold, poor chuck.

And when a late spring had delayed roundup and chuck wagon fellowship, a fever had seized them—for action—red roaring and quick.

What they needed was a dance, a free-for-all fight and a prolonged spree. These not being available, they had to make their own excitement.

In the Southwest, restless, energetic men often found excitement by holding up a stage coach, a train,

or even an army paymaster as he traveled between forts. And hatched by a long winter and late spring, Frosty Pilcher, Doug Malls and Banty McCrea got the idea of holding up a train.

The thought occurred to them that they were letting their lives slip by without that thrill. What they would do with the train after they held it up, they had no very clear idea.

THEY had made one fatal mistake at the beginning: they had confided their plan and the date to a Long H line rider up on the Pico. And the rider had passed it along—thinking it to be only a joke of theirs. The news had got out that someone was going to rob the Western Express on a certain night. Such tips at that time were very earnestly heeded by railroads.

When the Western Express was stopped by a pile of ties in Cueva Canyon, the three Long H riders were greeted by a terrific hail of bullets from the forward cars. This plainly being an unhealthy night to rob a train, the three hightailed it to their horses. Doug carried Banty who had been hit at the first volley.

Back along the train saddled horses were being chuted out of a baggage car, and men were mounting for pursuit. And since then the chase had been on for three hold-up men.

"Which is right at that," admitted Doug. "We did hold it up for anyway thirty seconds."

Banty had not been hit bad, he said, but he lied. Doug and Frosty insisted on stopping at Embudo long enough for a doctor to dig out a bullet, put in wadding cotton, tape Banty's ribs, and tell him to go to bed.

In the next eight hours they rode fifty miles, and after laying up all day, doubled back to the swollen

Little Coyote, swam it and rode sixty more miles through a driving rain. The next day they got a change of horses at the ranch of Banty's cousin and traveled seventy miles between dusk and dawn.

After that it got tougher. Banty had delirious periods; their horses began to fail them. It was hopeless. Double and turn and twist as they might, they were always cut off from the sanctuary of the Border.

Their struggles only delayed the end. Denning up days, they missed discovery by a hair's breadth. Doug and Frosty went thirsty, hoarded water for Banty to drink and to wash out his bullet hole. They stole grub for Banty from enemy camps, and went hungry themselves. Nursed him along, sang to him, razzed the game little devil, even kicked him while they apologized for it. To keep him traveling.

BUT now, driven out into daylight, riding toward Doodlebug Pass with posse behind them, clicking telegraph instruments spinning a web in front of them, they were done.

Banty had to have rest. They could not fool him any more with promises. He had to lay over. Which was just as easy as getting him a million dollars. There was only one way to win that rest—with bullets.

"It's a showdown. We got to spread our hands for all to read," said Doug. "Other side o' Doodlebug we got to stop first likely place. And fight. Mebbe there's some good men chasin' us, but most of 'em is man-hunters—hungerin' for rewards, and ready to take what they git. Same as we are."

Frosty nodded. "Our stacks is shoved out. Le's fight. 'Druther be shot to pieces than rottin' in a stone chicken coop."

He and Doug could have left Banty, stolen fresh horses and made it through. Leaving Banty, they could have slipped away from pursuit at any time. They had never even considered it. Leave Banty with his boyish face drawn and thin? Not the six-foot, dark Doug Malls, nor the heavy-shouldered, grizzled Frosty Pilcher. They'd all go to Hell together.

Leaving behind the notch of Doodlebug, they dropped along a trail that led to the canyon mouth, and an old adobe house, a corral or two, some sheds. Two wagons, both with canvas flapping from bare gray bows, stood before the house.

At sight of the place Banty went limp in his saddle. Frosty looked after him while Doug went on ahead through a screen of willows for a look-see. As he emerged from a makeshift wire gate, he could hear a hoarse, angry bellow from the back of the stable. "Git on that bronc! Git on that bronc! Climb on him or by God I'll take the hide off yore back."

Some snake-blooded men, reflected Doug, should be strung up just on the testimony of their mean voices. This was one such voice.

Rounding the corner of the stable, he saw in a corral a gaunt saddled sorrell with outlaw written all over him, from his wall eyes to his ratty tail, whistling through his nostrils at a midget of a kid.

IN the corral was an older boy and a middle-aged man, the latter a hulking elephant with one side of his big red-whiskered face curiously twisted. He held in his hand a piece of old tug a few feet in length, and swinging this menacingly, he advanced on the smaller boy near the outlaw horse.

"Git on that bronc!" he repeated. "That outlaw'll kill him, Uncle

"Red," protested the older boy. "Lemme try him first."

"Out the way!" snarled the red-whiskered man. One of his arms shoved an elbow in the bigger boy's face; the other swung the piece of tug high and brought it down whistling on the small boy's body. "Climb 'im!" he ordered. "Climb 'im."

None of the three saw Doug as he slipped into the corral to catch an arm like a small tree trunk, and to swing the man around. And as the red elephant slashed out at him with the tug, Doug put all he had in a blow that nearly broke his hand. It lifted the man from his feet and sent him crashing against a corral post with enough force to lie there.

IT was one of the luckiest blows in Doug's short life: the giant could have cleaned Doug in his weakened condition with one hand.

The boys looked at Doug with respect, while the younger got back hurriedly from the roan. The older had blood streaming from his nose.

"Hurt you bad, Kid?" Doug asked. "Yore Uncle Red oughta have a hard-twist connection between his neck and a pine tree limb. Makin' a kid fork that mean-lookin' chute swallow."

No members of a posse were to be seen about the place, and he called for Frosty to come up. They laid Banty, with his small pinched face and blond whiskers which were so fine and bleached that he looked almost beardless, on an old mattress in the house. Frosty got him some water, while Doug prepared to go out to take care of the stunned red-whiskered giant in the corral.

But at that moment the fellow came in, with his huge, twisted face bloody from contact with the post, to hold a double-barreled shotgun over them.

"Stick 'em up!" he bellowed. "I

know who yuh are. Yuh held up the Western Express. Heerd you was headed this way. One of yuh hurt bad."

Doug and Frosty looked at each other. Going out in gunpowder and lead in a fight with a posse was one thing; being blasted to bits by this gorilla with a buckshot-spreader was another.

UNCLE RED took their guns, stooping to empty the holster of the unconscious Banty also.

Frosty and Doug had stepped apart as they raised their hands, but the man sniffing a trick ordered them harshly together again.

"Micky! Jim!" he called. "Where are yuh damn kids? Bring me some rope."

While the big fellow fumed over the delay, Doug Malls' foot began tapping Banty's wounded side. Torturing the young cowboy back to consciousness. It might be their only chance—Banty's only chance. The boot pressed harder and harder into the sore flesh.

Banty responded with a little groan.

When he came fully to, he shut his eyes, all but a slit, and lay quiet, pretending to be still out.

The younger boy had brought a lariat. The red-whiskered man promptly kicked him. "Not that, you damn fool kid. Bring a piggin' string. Whoever heard of anybody tying a man with a lass' rope?"

He came back on a run, had the cord accepted with another kick. Then Red ordered Frosty and Doug to turn their backs to him and move toward the wall. Preparing to tie them, Red turned his back on the apparently unconscious Banty.

The hollows back of the knees of Uncle Red were directly in front of Banty. He clenched his teeth and raised one leg with the boot twisted

sideways. Then as Doug twisted his head over his shoulder to look back, Banty pistonned forward the leg, kicking the red-whiskered one in the hollows of the knees.

Red Whiskers bent, jack-knifing to a kneeling position as if he were going to pray. Automatically the end of the long shotgun barrels went up a few inches. He pressed the triggers of the gun, but Doug Malls had pivoted and ducking in under the path of the heavy slugs, butted Red in the stomach, sent him flying back. Frosty came in to join Doug, and they used the piggin' string for the thick, hairy wrists.

"That sorta knocks out his fangs and punctures his poison bag. And now what?" asked Frosty. There would be men coming over their fresh trail toward Doodlebug Pass and down it, closing in on them.

"We got maybe three hours before they arrive," said Doug. "Maybe we could shove our horses on a few more miles."

At that threat, Banty promptly again collapsed. Plainly they were not going to ride on.

II

DOUG stepped to the doorway and looked at the two old Mitchell wagons which, being still partly loaded, showed that these people were recent arrivals.

"You folks just come here?" he asked the older of the two boys—Jim. "Strangers to this part o' the country?"

Jim nodded. "Got in two days ago, Mister."

"Just you three in the party?"

"Yep. There was a woman," replied Jim. "But she wouldn't stand for Red beatin' up on 'er. She left her clothes in the wagon and skip-ped when we camped near El Paso."

"Anybody visit you here since you come?" went on Doug. "Or did you stop at any town close here on the way?"

"Nope; no one visited us yit. Uncle Red dodged towns all the way. He sent me in to get grub at Larsen—that's the nearest town to here. He didn't keer to show his-self. Guess he's on the dodge. He gen'rally is."

Doug looked at Frosty who was bringing Banty to. "We got to stay account o' Banty. And if we stay, they round us up. Less we work some trick. This bunch is strangers in this country. They brung two wagons and they could have brought more people, considerin' the size o' their outfit."

Frosty Pilcher stared at Doug. "Yeah; but not three cowboys like us, with one hurt."

"Supposin' they don't find three cowboys? S'posin' they find a Mexican—me. I was raised partly in Chihuahua, and I got darkish eyes and dark skin. I can mebbe locate something to touch up my skin still more. And they find a sort of slow-movin' farmer—you—workin' at farmin'."

HE thought of the bleached fuzz on Banty's thin face, thinner now from riding and pain, and of the clothes belonging to the woman who had left Red at El Paso. "They find me, a Mexican; you, a plowboy 'stead of a cowboy—and a woman."

"A woman?" echoed Frosty.

"Banty. We can fix him up—shave him, put a dress and sun-bonnet on him."

"We kin if we hawgtie him fust," agreed Frosty. "But this red-haired polecat will spill it. What do we do with him—hide him out?"

"Nope. He'll be here, but he'll keep his trap closed. And these boys won't give us away. Son," he

said to Jim, "we're in a bad way. You and your brother just don't know nothin', savvy, if a posse comes along? How about it?"

"Sure." The lad's freckled face split in a grin. He and his brother were both red-haired, scraggly, ill-fed, but quick-thinking. "Most everybody in our family has been on the dodge one time or 'nother. Even me and Mickey, we vamoosed from reform school—where we was put for stealin' us a pair horses. We run into Uncle Red Bode and he promised to take us over here."

DOUG looked at them closely. A pair of hell-raising, tough kids—ornery kids. They'd already learned to steal and lie, and helped by what they'd learned in reform school, they'd graduate in a few years to some penitentiary.

"Take a look at us and git the idea outa yore heads that bein' on the dodge is smart," Doug lectured them. "Look at us and you see three examples of cowboys gone wrong—and the three biggest damn fools west or east of the Mississippi. Stick to the straight an' narrow. Don't ever git impatient if spring comes. What say about this masquerade party, Frosty?"

"You're the doctor."

"We got to work fast. There's a team of mules in the corr', a plow in the wagon, and a patch of broke ground yuh can start makin' furrows around. You're from Missouri. Ever plow?"

"Shore. Plowed plenty. So much when I was a boy I pulled out for the West and cows."

"Dress yoreself like a home-steader. Put on a pair of Uncle Red's brogans 'stead of those Jus-tins. I'll be fixin' a corral with the boys and this Uncle Red. I'll pull the shoes off our horses, wade 'em back up along the crick, hide 'em in

that canyon box below the trail. The posse'll figger we rode down the crick in the water to cover our tracks. We'll bring in them woman's clothes and find a washtub and board. A farmer, a Mexican and wash-lady—that'll puzzle 'em some. If it don't, the fight we'll put up will."

Doug walked back to Uncle Red and untied him. "Git up. Yore name is wrote in hash if yuh give us away. We'd as soon kill yuh as spit on a ant. Yore heavy carcass hangs by a slim, frayed thread, needin' just the wiggle of one eyelash hair to bust it. You believe me, Uncle Red?"

The big man only grunted. "Say yes or no, damn you, and say it fast," ordered Frosty.

"Yes," said Uncle Red Bode quickly.

When Doug got back after hiding the horses, Banty was up and staggering around, with the aid of a bottle of Uncle Red's raw whisky. The little cowboy was already rigged out in a sun-bonnet, a calico dress, woman's high lace shoes.

Doug, helped by the boys and Uncle Red, hastily scrubbed the floors, raked the trash of the yard in a pile, burned it. Banty hung out wet towels on a wire hastily strung as a clothes-line, along with some scrubbed shirts and overalls.

DOUG re-hung the overalls, pointing out that women suspended overalls by the legs. He took out a pair of dirty pants stuffed in the broken pane of a window and tacked over newspaper: that would be a woman's idea of a more genteel way to keep out the weather.

They had over two hours for work and six pairs of hands, including the awry-faced, red-haired gorilla, Uncle Red, and the two boys.

Frosty and the mules meanwhile

were putting neat furrows around part of the big field below the house. Frosty had one overall leg rolled halfway to the knee; the other was badly torn. His brogans were odorous, and his hands and ears were full of soil. An aged straw hat replaced his sombrero.

Two hours later when a posse led by two sheriffs sifted down the canyon on sweat-covered horses, they found a hard-working nester outfit. So Sheriff Banners of Templeton County thought as he rode over the furrows of the field.

"Hello, nester," he said.

FROSTY looked up from his plow handles in surprise, said "Whoa" to his horses. "Howdy," he stated wearily and looked with bovine surprise at the visitors.

The posse was scattering out like a pack of hounds, some to ride over to the pasture fence and down to the creek, following the three tracks of the fugitives' horses, others to drift to the stable and corral where a twisted-faced reddish fellow, two boys and a young Mexican worked. A row of post holes lay ready to receive a pile of posts which had been left by the last farmer on the place.

"We're lookin' for three train robbers," Sheriff Banners told Frosty. "Cowboys. One of 'em a small feller hurt bad. Did yuh see 'em?"

"No, I didn't, Sheer'f" said Frosty. "Mebbe they snuck by, but I ain't tooken my eyes off this field sinceet I got my plowshare to scourin'. I calc'late t' git my corn in next week. Was there a reward on them outlaws, Mister? We'uns c'd sure use it. Need a few dollars to git in this corn crop and mebbe rebuild that old dam up the crick t' water this field an'—"

"Oh hell!" broke in Sheriff Banners. "What do I care about yore corn? Got any drinkin' water?"

"Up't the pump. He'p y'rself. Gourd hangin' from the handle. I got to git this patch plowed. Gid-dap, you ornery lop-ears. Untrack y'rselfs. Petel Jick! Gee-haw outa that."

Sheriff Banners rode over to the house. There was a clean spring-like smell of burning trash in the air, and odors of fresh-turned earth came from a little plot of ground which had been spaded and raked for a garden.

One of the posse brought back word that the tracks led down to the creek. The fugitives would be riding along it for a few miles, leaving no tracks. They'd passed down the little canyon without being seen by any of the nesters. That was plain, and yet Sheriff Banners stared about him a little perplexed. He saw a bunch of nesters, a down-at-the-heels, baling-wire outfit trying to squeeze out a living, and yet something wasn't quite right here.

He turned to the house. Inside, a woman with straggly yellow short hair under a faded sun-bonnet bent over a tub. Sheriff Banners, a ladies' man, didn't take a second look at this one. The woman sang a hymn in a cracked voice as she vigorously rubbed clothes over a wash-board:

*"Beulah-land, Beulah-land,
As on thy highest mount I stand."*

"I'LL git yuh a glass, Sheer'f," she said as he headed for the well.

"Nemmind," said the sheriff, who if she had been pretty would have been all too ready to accept a glass with a bow and a compliment. "I'll use the gourd."

Sheriff Tim Blake of Dos Cabezas County was at the corrals questioning the four working there—a Mexican youth who smiled engagingly, a big dour-faced man, two boys. While the big man answered Sheriff Tim Blake's questions, the Mexican

knelt by a posthole in which Uncle Red knew he had a gun concealed. No, Uncle Red had seen nobody passing, he said sullenly.

SHERIFF BLAKE rode over to re-join Sheriff Banners. "Seems a industrious bunch—for nesters," he stated.

"I guess that's what seems wrong to me," said the older sheriff. "They are workin' too hard for the pore white trash that usually takes over these places. They'll make something outa this weed patch if they keep up this lick. Le's make tracks out of here. They're 'bout run down. We'll git 'em afore night or the bunch below will. All we got to do is see they don't break back on us."

They gathered their men and rode along the creek, jogging along on their weary horses. At the farm the men continued their work, for stragglers might happen along. A half-hour later someone did come, but heading up-country instead of down.

A pack outfit, with an old rancher, long-faced, gray-mustached, leading two horses, followed by a vacant-faced young cowboy. "Hi, neighbor!" he said jovially.

"Hi, yuh!" said Frosty Pilcher, again stopping his team.

"Name's Desbro," said the newcomer. "Bill Desbro. I own the Two Bar X three canyons over. You the boss of this outfit?"

"Kind of," admitted Frosty. "My brother Red up there and his wife—we're all in together. We 'low to put us in crops; repair that old dam to irrigate this ground—raisin' us some oat hay an' 'taters an' corn an' beans."

"Means a lot o' work, neighbor," said Desbro. "Too much for the people that tried this place afore you."

"Work don't skeer us. Man was

borned to work," said Frosty. "Borned to eat his sourdough in the sweat of his brow as the Good Book says. Headin' up the crick?"

"WHO, me? Why, nope, I'm stayin' right here—me and 'Windy.' We'll be yore close neighbors. That's our camp—that shack back in the junipers. I've retired from ranchin'—lettin' my son run the outfit.

"But I couldn't stand to be idle, so I bought the J-J remnants up in the slopes back here, fifty head or so. I aim to work 'em out this spring. Probably have to trap 'em—when the water dries in the cricks. We'll be company around here for yuh."

"Yeah," said Frosty with no enthusiasm. "So yuh will."

"I'm a deputy sheriff," went on old Desbro. "Just a honorary one. Met a posse below. Said them three cowboys that held up the Western Express come down 'long here. They might o' doubled back this way. We better keep a eye open for 'em."

"Yeah," said Frosty and watched Desbro and his cowboy Windy go over to their shack in the trees.

Those two neighbors added to the tightness of the jam they were in. They had to watch Uncle Red and a couple of kids who might think it smart to turn them in, and on top of them, they had a deputy sheriff a hundred yards away. It was runnin' things too fine.

But they'd have to hold on until Banty got in shape to travel. Pulling out now meant the men hounds would be on their trail again.

Old Desbro came over after supper for a chat. A garrulous fellow, old Bill Desbro, mildly curious about his neighbors.

"My brother Red don't say much," said Frosty, explaining Uncle Red's

sullenness. "A little worm et in the crown," and he tapped his head significantly.

Doug was fooling with the wall-eyed roan Uncle Red had ordered little Mickey to ride. A sure 'nough bad horse that Red had picked up on the trail. As bad as any Doug had ever hairpinned, he found when he rode the horse to a droop-headed standstill. Desbro looked on approvingly. "That's ridin'," he said.

"Shore. That boy's a great bronc buster," bragged Frosty. "Why, up on the —uh—he uset to—Well, he's a great horse buster."

"I'M bringin' me over a few broncs. Thought I'd bust 'em while chasin' mavericks, but I'm too old to git my bones shook up, and Windy needs molasses on his saddle to stick. Mebbe we c'd make a deal for this Mex boy to break 'em.

"I like the looks of yore outfit," he went on. "You act like hard-workin' folks. This place has possibilities as a small ranch with a feed raisin' proposition on the side. You spoke of fixin' that dam. Storin' water that-a-way you could raise enough feed to put a bunch o' stock through the winter.

"And if you have the feed, I got a bunch of mares bred to a Morgan stallion over at the ranch that I'll let yuh run around here, on shares. With some milk cows, you'd make out well."

"Milk cows," repeated Frosty. "Yep, but milk cows cost a heap o' dinero. We couldn't afford to buy none just now."

"I like to help deservin' neighbors," said old Desbro. "I had six black and white cows just comin' fresh left on my hands a month ago, by a feller I loaned money to. I'll let yuh use 'em. You got a good milk shed a'ready up by the spring;

and the Missus could take care o' the milk an' make butter.

"Save yuh buyin' groceries, and it'd feed up them kids; they look sort o' like leppies. With a few hogs to drink up the surplus milk, which I c'd arrange for yuh to git."

Frosty and Doug looked at each other. This was rapidly getting to be more than they had bargained for. "What say?" said Desbro. "Want them cows?"

Frosty knew they ought to be anxious to take them. "I guess we could use 'em. Why, sure, yeah. That's real neighborly of you. With a few cows and hogs—we-uns could make out here."

Desbro wearing the glow of a man who has been a helpful neighbor went back to his camp.

"Next time we git in a jam," said Frosty, "I hope it ain't no nester's place we settle on. Six milk cows, a bunch o' hawgs, a dam and corn. An' we got to make a show of workin' at all them things until Banty gits able to ride far and fast ag'in."

"You can't git away with it that long," snarled Uncle Red.

THEY eyed him thoughtfully. "It's this red, hairy baboon that'll be most trouble," said Doug. "All he's got to do is slip a word to Desbro and it's all off. We'll go heeled 'round him an' watch him clost. An' if he makes one move, we let him have it through the guts. He ain't human anyway—makin' a ten-year-old kid ride that roan outlaw."

Uncle Red snarled at them, but they had him buffaloed.

The boys could be depended on to keep still. The two were enjoying having three live train bandits visiting them. And they liked Doug Malls. Doug had promised to make a pair of tophands out of them. That night he started work making

over two old, cast-off saddles for the pair, using a side of leather belonging to Uncle Red. They would be the first saddles the boys had ever owned.

III

“WE got a bear by the tail," said Frosty.

"You don't have to tell us," grunted Banty. The enmity of Red Bode, the curiosity of the lean-jawed, shrewd old pioneer, Bill Desbro, chance visitors.

No woman came to call on Banty, which was lucky, as Banty confronted with a woman wouldn't have lasted a second. He shaved every morning, and was very shy.

In private he swore over having to wear the skirts, finally compromising on overalls. Every day he hung some wash on the line to give the place a domestic look. Most of the time he stayed quietly in the house, while the bullet tunnel in his side slowly healed.

Frosty's hands got calloused at the plow handles of the "patch" about which he had talked so glibly of planting to corn, 'taters, oat hay and beans. It was many a weary day before he got it plowed and leveled, and it was many more before it was all seeded.

"I'll be whinnyin' like uh pot-bellied work mare when I'm done with this job," Frosty complained.

Desbro generously provided corn and oats, potatoes and beans for seed. Planting done, there came the rebuilding of the dam to fill the little reservoir that was to irrigate the field. Desbro rushed over cement and superintended the job personally. Under his eye the whole crew had to sweat and be enthusiastic about it, hauling rocks, lifting, digging.

With them toiled Red Bode,

always conscious that at least one pair of eyes was on him and a gun always ready. At night they tied him up and slept close to him. Red knew he was done for the moment he made a false move. If he mounted a horse to flee, a rifle would bring him down. Red realized he had to wait until he could not lose.

And behind Red's Duroc-Jersey bristles a plan had formed which made him willing to wait. If he escaped, he would have to notify a sheriff about the outlaws, which meant he would get small part of the rewards, if any. He could get them all for himself if he bided his time.

And he bided it—eyeing the three as a caged tiger looks at meat being shoved into his cage.

As to little Mickey and Jim, nothing could have made them betray the three outlaws. Reform school had taught them honor of a sort, and on top was their regard for Doug. They followed the dark-faced cowboy about as if he were a god. He had rigged them up somehow with outfits down to spurs, and broke two of Desbro's best colts for them.

BETWEEN spells of work they had the time of their young lives, riding out with Doug to help Desbro bring in the J-J wild cattle from the mountains, chasing steers over the canyon slopes, building traps around waterholes.

"A pair o' tough, uncurried ones," Frosty said of them, but the pair proved not tough after all. Doug was licking them into the shape of boys headed to be men. They quit stealing, quit lying, and the hang-dog look faded as good chuck and the outdoors filled their faces. The hardness left their eyes slowly, for always it had been the two against the world.

Now they could hardly believe that they had found three men who were for them instead of against them. Their thin shoulders straightened with a pride they had never before possessed. Mickey was headed to be a champ bronc stomper; the older, Jim, was going to make a crack roper.

BENEATH it all, the two admired the three men because they belonged to the class which had been their idol. Outlaws with rewards on their heads. It sobered Doug. Here these ornery little cusses had as their chief ambition the sticking up of a train some day. He tried to drive home a few lessons.

"Look at him," said Doug, indicating Banty in his sun bonnet rubbing clothes on his washboard. "You see a damn fool. Look at any outlaw and you'll see a damn fool. This Banty took a chance of servin' time in prison. And he's goin' to serve it probably. Wise yoreselfs up, young'uns, by lookin' at that fool Banty."

"Look at yoreself!" retorted Banty. "I had enough sense anyway to pick me a easy job while holin' up."

A month, two months went by. They could have left most any time, but they stayed. Banty was none too strong yet, so they argued. Secretly they admitted they hated to leave this place, hated to exile themselves in Mexico. The big wild J-J cattle they had caught grazed in the pasture.

Desbro had brought over his brood mares and a dozen long-legged colts trotted in the canyon. Twenty pigs in the pens fattened off of milk. The green leaves of the corn were shooting high. Irrigation ditches ran bank full, carrying water down to the oats, the 'taters and the beans.

There were of course drawbacks.

Weeds that had to be fought by hand. Desbro, helpful as always, brought out half a dozen heavy-bladed hoes, and they spent days chopping Johnson grass, cockle burrs, sunflowers, thistles.

IT looked like a place, although it had too much cultivated land for a cattle ranch. The milk cows dominated by Desbro were the sorest spot. A can of evaporated milk was as close as the three had ever cared to get to a milk cow.

"And why we're doing all this I dunno," grumbled Frosty. "A hell of a way for three reckless outlaws to hole up. Hell, we might as well be sweatin' out sentences at hard labor in Yuma or Leavenworth."

Between Red Bode and his nephews was an armistice. Only once did Red Bode forget himself one day to attack the two, kicking them as a substitute for the rage he felt toward his captors. Doug took off his gun, and wading in against thirty-pound odds, gave Red a battle which left marks that both men would bear the rest of their lives. After that Red sulked like an outlaw bronc and waited for his break.

It came one night when Doug was out with the two boys bringing home a big J-J steer they had trapped for Desbro. Banty was in the house getting supper. Frosty was tired, failed to watch Red as he should have. While they milked, Red crept up behind him with a club he had concealed in the stable, and knocked Frosty to the ground.

Striking again to make sure, he bound him and slipped to the house, to wait by the door until Banty stepped out. The same club that had felled Frosty brought the small cowboy down in a still heap, to be kicked about the body and the head as he lay unconscious. Tying Banty

and gagging him, securing all the guns on the ranch, Red waited triumphantly for Doug and the boys.

Doug unsaddled unsuspectingly. A light was burning in the house; there was no sign of anything wrong. Whistling, he carried his saddle into the shed. Again the club descended.

Doug was unaware that Mickey and Jim had thrown themselves at Red, to fight against the man until they were hammered into submission. Nor was Doug aware that heavy boots thudded into his ribs and his face, as Red gloatingly worked him over.

STRUGGLING back to consciousness through a welter of pain and nausea, he found Banty and Frosty sitting opposite him on the kitchen floor, tied hand and foot, while Red grinned down evilly at the battered faces and bodies.

When old Desbro came down, he said "What the hell?"

"Yeah, what the hell?" said Red Bode. "These is them three Western Express robbers. They watched me so I couldn't git out word. And these kids didn't open their mouths. I'll 'tend to 'em later. I'm hazin' these bandits into Larsen come daylight to collect the rewards on 'em."

The long-faced, genial Desbro looked down at the three. "I didn't think you boys would hold up a train," he said gently.

"Well," said Doug, "you can still keep on thinking that. We didn't. We hardly even halted it. We was just three innocent cowboys happened to be along the right of way."

"This is more serious than you think," said Desbro. "Last winter there was a Federal law passed fixing capital punishment for train robbin'. Hanging. And they mean to make an example of the first ones they get."

"Suits us," said Frosty indiffer-

ently. "I was just afraid I'd have to spend ten or fifteen years in some prison stink hole. Only I kinda hate to leave that there field o' corn before it's laid by. Bet they ain't a better patch o' corn than that in Missouri. It'll make eighty bushels a acre. And this polecat won't take keer of it."

"Won't have to," said Red. "Not after I cash in on them rewards."

The two boys came over to stand near the tree. "You won't be comin' back?" Mickey asked mournfully.

"We'll be comin' back some time, but not right soon," said Doug. "And when we come back, we want to see you boys has turned into real cow hands. If you want jobs, go on up to the Long H; tell 'em we recommend you."

"Git back from them three or I'll kill you," Red growled at the boys. "Git back. Don't try no tricks now. I'm boss ag'in here. Git away from 'em. I seen how you worked for them: damn' if I don't see how you work for me the rest of the summer."

A big paw came out to slap them away.

"Look here," said Doug. "We ain't been convicted yet. We'll come back and skin you alive if you touch those kids."

"**I**F you come back, you'll have to make it with cracked necks," said Red, and he brought around his foot to deliver a jolt in Doug's ribs.

"Hold on," put in old Desbro. "That's enough. I'm a deputy sheriff. Treat them men human. I want to ask 'em a few questions. What yuh tell me, boys, won't be used ag'in yuh. Le's go over all this here fall from grace."

They went over the story, the late spring, the flight. Desbro nodded his head and told them they'd be seeing him later. A half-hour

afterward they heard him riding away from his camp.

Red kept guard on the men all night. At daybreak he ordered the boys to hitch up to the light wagon, loaded the three men tied hand and foot into it, and drove toward the county seat.

IV

IN the town of Larsen the courthouse and its basement jail slept in a grassy square.

Red Bode drew up in front of the sheriff's office and shouted. Sheriff Banners came out and looked at the three men trussed up in the wagon.

"They're the Western Express robbers," said Red.

"What makes you think so?" asked the oldish sheriff. "And if so, why didn't you tell us the day we went by your place?"

"They had the drop on me," said Red. "I'm claimin' them rewards. I turned 'em in—me, alone. I got Desbro as witness to prove I took 'em single handed."

"You're crazy. One of 'em is a woman," argued the sheriff. "I saw her myself out there."

"Woman!" chuckled Bode. "No more woman than I be. You dumb sheriffs just walked past em."

"And you said nothin'. Been harborin' outlaws there all this time, have yuh?"

"Harborin' 'em!" burst out Red Bode. "They had the drop on me all the time, I tell you. I couldn't open my mouth. They'd of killed me in a second."

The sheriff considered. The story that he had let three fleeing men fool him would make him a laughing stock in Templeton County. With great reluctance he accepted the prisoners and put them in a cell together.

"And I ought to lock you in here, too," he told Red. "Havin' 'em out

there all this time with my deputy, Desbro, camped next yuh and not sayin' a word makes it look like yuh was in with 'em. And so yuh wanted the rewards yoreself? Rewards is given only on conviction, so yuh needn't wait in town for 'em."

THE sheriff was disgruntled about the whole affair. There was nothin' in it for him but a lot of hoo-rawing which might cost him the next election.

"Got to wire up there to find out about you," he told the prisoners. "You sure don't answer the descriptions we got from the Long H cowboys workin' with yuh. An' they didn't say nothin' about no female impersonator. How'd I know yuh had a female impersonator among yuh?" he complained.

"Aw, dry up!" burst out Banty. "I ain't no female impersonator."

"It'll go hard with you boys," the sheriff warned them gloomily. "The railroad and express company will take advantage of this new law to try to wrap some hard-twist around yore necks. And yuh don't look like bad fellas either. Just sorta wild like I was once, and old Bill Desbro out there. What got into yuh?"

"It was a long winter an' a late spring," said Doug. "We had to bust loose some way."

For dinner they had T-bone steaks. The restaurant man was feeding them well, in view of the fame they might gain later from being the first to be hanged for holding up a train.

In the afternoon the jailer appeared. "Visitors to see yuh," he announced. "They didn't gimme their cards."

Mickey and Jim trailed the officer. Mickey's eyes were red from crying.

"It ain't so, is it?" asked Jim.

"They say that you're all sure to be hung."

"Yeah," said Doug. "If we do stretch rope, let us be a warnin' to you two boys to behave."

Jim nodded. "We will. We're goin' to leave Red and git us some jobs. But they sure can't hang you—not fellas like you." At this Mickey sniffed in his shirt sleeve and Doug told them lightly to cheer up, that they hanged better men than Frosty and Banty every day in the week.

Mickey produced a round, flat package. "We brung you fellers a pie," said Jim.

"Yeah, a peach pie," said Mickey embarrassed. "Jim, he thought you would sorta like peach pie. We asked the jailer here if it was all right to give yuh a pie."

"We got it over at the bakery—it's still hot and fresh. See!" Jim shoved a thumb in an edge and poked it, while his left eye dropped in a wink. "The man wants the plate back ag'in."

"WHAT yuh know about that?" said Frosty touched by the gift.

"We was just sayin' we wished we had a pie," said Doug heartily. "The cookin' here ain't as good as the female impersonator's."

"And we brung you a coupla sacks o' smokin'," went on Jim. "And papers. Knowed you like brown papers." Again unseen by the jailer the eye dropped in a wink.

The boys shuffled their feet, prepared to depart. "Well, s'long," said Mickey. "We won't be seein' yuh ag'in."

"You better go back to the ranch before Red finds yuh sneaked in here," said Doug. "If he gits too rough with you, just pull up and ride for the Long H. The boys up there will look after yuh. Tell 'em it was our hangin' request. An' tell

'em I said you both was goin' to make the best bronc twisters between the north pasture fence and the Pearly Gates."

The two boys shook hands soberly with all three men and then trailed out miserably.

"Huh!" said Frosty. "Them ornery little coots is real concerned about us, damn' if they ain't. They might turn out all right after all."

"Mebbe if we git hung," said Banty, "it'll learn 'em to stay in the law."

"Yeah, mebbe," agreed Doug as he lifted the crust of the pie. Beneath the peach filling he found a file. Two files.

DOUG grinned. "They shore taught Jim and Mickey a few useful things at that reform school. Le's have a look at those brown cigarette papers." He pulled them apart and unfolded a slip of white paper. On it Jim had written a note:

"We got yur horses, buck, pop and silver saddled an waitin' fer yu 2 blox north in a old stabble, eatin' hay reddy fer a long ride. We'll stand by to help after dark."

"I'm damned," said Frosty. "Can you eemagine that? And I thought them kids was tough and headed for the state pen. If they ain't careful, they'll be took up among the angels afore their time."

"If that cussed Red lays his hands on 'em— Seems t' me I just saw that hippo staggerin' out of a saloon down the street. He's the kind might kill them boys if he got drunk enough."

"They can't go where we're goin'," said Doug. "We'd better head 'em over for the Long H."

The jailer come in toward evening. "Them two kids what visited you is in a jackpot," he said. "The big fella that brought you in run across 'em and beat 'em up. Then

he bundled 'em into his wagon with their saddle horses tied on behind. Said when he got back to his ranch he'd teach 'em to run away. I'd hate to be in them kids' shoes. That red-haired ape is likkered up right."

THE simple jail at Larsen was not equal to the devices of graduates of reform schools. There was only one set of close-set bars between them and the green of the courthouse lawn. They set to work at dark and it was nearly midnight before they had a space wide enough to crawl through. The courthouse yard was dark; the streets were deserted.

Clear of the jail, they made a quiet hunt for their horses, with little hope of finding them where Mickey and Jim had left them. But they were in an old deserted adobe barn, cleaning up the last wisps of hay. They saddled up and climbed aboard. With luck, some time the next day they could be crossing the border. But on the outskirts of town Doug hesitated.

"What you waitin' for?" asked Frosty.

"Those little devils," said Doug, "got us out of there. You and Banty head on south. I'm going to see that they shake free of Red. I'll be along after you later."

"No, yuh don't," said Banty. "We'll all ride up to the ranch. Yuh got no gun, and it might take the three of us to handle Red."

They pounded north, and after them a little later others galloped in pursuit, picking up the tracks of three horses on the outskirts of town, which tracks for some odd reason led north, instead of south to safety.

It had been a bad night for Jim and Mickey. They had been bundled back to the ranch, lying bound hand and foot in the bed of the light

wagon. Red had been drinking steadily all day, and he drove most of the distance on a lope that came near to jolting the two boys out of the vehicle.

ARRIVING at the ranch at midnight, Red had staggeringly dismounted, unhitched and turned loose the harnessed horses. Then he fell in a drunken slumber near the front door. Meanwhile the boys were left tied in the wagon to spend a chill, cramped night in a mist that rolled down off the mountains.

Red lay snoring not twenty feet from them. Jim eventually worked himself around to roll out of the wagon. He fell with a thud and, hunting for something to cut his rope, rolled over and over to the wood pile.

Not finding an axe there and guessing it to be in the saddle shed, Jim rolled across the yard, only to find the door closed. The best cutting instrument he could find was a roll of barb wire. Steadily he sawed his rope against the barbs.

Red, coming awake as the east paled, found the boy still working desperately to free himself.

"Smart one, ain'tcha?" Red growled, and kicked the boy in the ribs for the sheer joy of hearing him grunt. After his spree his temper was like a trapped bobcat's.

Untying both lads, he ordered them to get his breakfast. He carried the shotgun in a hand and a six-shooter in his holster. The rifles and other guns he had hidden out. He was taking no chances on one of the kids getting hold of a weapon.

While he waited breakfast, the roan outlaw came in for water. With an idea churning in his brain, Red slipped over and shut the gate on the horse.

He called for the boys to come to the corral. "Mick!" he ordered,

"you're goin' to ride this horse. We're startin' right where we left off before them three buzzards come—with yuh ridin' that roan outlaw just as I told yuh."

"That horse'll kill Mickey," Jim protested as he had before. "Doug said he was a killer. Nobody ever has rode him 'ceptin' Doug. He'll kill Mickey, I tell you, Uncle Red."

"If he does, 'twon't be no loss. Shut up, you." The big man roped the horse who submitted quietly enough to being saddled. Then Red brought out the length of thick tug leather he had wielded when Doug rode up. Muscles rippled under the hairy arm as he swung it.

"Step up in his middle," he ordered Mickey. "I'm goin' t' show you I'm boss of this ranch ag'in. Step up before I peel the hide off'n yore back. What I tell yuh here goes. Y' got t' be hard t' live with Red Bode, and I'm goin' t' make yuh hard."

MICKEY went over to the horse, shakily climbed on. The outlaw trembled for a moment, and then giving one bawl, leaped high, flinging the lad clear over the corral fence. Mickey lit with a sickening thud, tried to get to his feet, fell.

"Git back on him!" Red screeched, as enraged as if the boy had slapped his face. The man this morning was a plain maniac, his actions ruled by an insane lust to inflict cruelty. "Git up!" he bellowed and started for Mickey, just as three riders came into the yard.

The clinging wet of the mountain fog muffled the sound of their horses' hoofs until they were close. Doug, Frosty and Banty flung themselves from their horses as Red turned toward them. Doug tried to make it before Red could draw his six-shooter.

But Red, moving with desperate

speed, sent a shot from the belt gun ripping through Doug's thigh, sent him toppling over the dropped rails of the corral gate, to strike his head on a rock, half stunning him.

Banty, faster than the slow-moving Frosty, leaped over and past Doug. Red, shooting again, missed and grabbed for the shotgun. Banty charging in, managed to grab the twin barrels, only to have Red fling him off. Swinging the shotgun like a club, Red struck twice and then as Banty fell, he drove the butt squarely into the cowboy's face.

The boy Jim came in then, only to receive a terrific kick which sent him crashing against the corral rails.

RED tried to bring around the shotgun to blast Frosty into bits, but Frosty was too close. Swinging a blow at the larger man, Frosty rushed. His fist slid glancingly past Red's jaw. The two grappled, pulled apart, rained sledge-hammer blows on each other, clinched again.

Frosty for all his powerful shoulders found he was no match for the maniacal strength of the red-haired gorilla into which Red was transformed by rage. With his trunk-like arms locked about the small of Frosty's back, he bent the big cowboy until his spine nearly cracked. Struggle and strain, smash that bestial face as he would, Frosty knew he was done for; that his back would break.

Desperately he kicked, tugged and thudded short jabs to the man's jaw, but taking them all, with the power of a grizzly's hug, Red continued to bend Frosty backwards, nearer and nearer to the point at which Frosty's spine would snap.

Banty lay where he had fallen, stunned, breathing stentorously through a nose flattened by the shotgun butt. The two boys, Jim and Mickey, were out of it.

Doug alone was able to help, moving in a world that was half darkness, handicaped by a bullet-drilled leg. One of his groping hands felt something hard and round and smooth—the handle of a pitchfork. He clutched it and crawled toward the struggling figures, to jab the tines savagely at the rump of the maniac who was breaking Frosty in two.

A terrible yell came from Red Bode's lips; he released Frosty to turn on his tormentor.

Doug by jabbing out with the fork kept the brute back, while Frosty as the breath sucked back into his lungs, got back to life. And then Jim who had crawled near to the six-shooter which Bode had flung down in favor of the shotgun, caught it up and, afraid to trust his own marksmanship, tossed it to Doug.

Doug's fingers closed on the handle just as Red bent down to snatch up the shotgun, to swing it, while a stream of horrible curses came from his hate-seared face.

Doug sighting carefully, shot twice quickly, putting a smashing slug in each big shoulder, leaving the big man helpless, bellowing in futile rage. The shotgun fell to the ground.

IT was an hour later that old Bill Desbro and the sheriff rode up to the house where Frosty was acting as field surgeon for a trio of wounded men.

Mickey picked up the shotgun to face the two.

The sheriff dismounted. "Put down that gun, you little devil," he ordered Mickey. "Before we spank you."

He looked at Red's face, nodded in satisfaction. "It's him, all right," he said. "Red Smith as he was called in Montana and Idaho. Wanted for so much that they're

only throwin' out the money to take him up there to hang him. Thought I'd seen his face somewhere, and looked over my photo gallery. And so he turned sheriff's helper."

"You boys want to be careful who you associate with," old Desbro said to Doug. "Red here was a escaped convict, a real bad man."

"Yeah, we'll be careful," said Doug, forcing a grin. "But it won't do us much good to be careful—where we're goin'."

THE sheriff seemed to take little interest in the escaped prisoners. "So you're three outlaws, are yuh?" he asked. "There must be a mistake somewhere. I don't see no sign of outlaws 'round here. Funniest lookin' outlaw hole-out I ever saw. Looks like the home of a bunch o' hard workers."

"Don't it?" agreed Desbro. "These desperate characters built theirselfs a dam, planted corn and beans and 'taters. Been lookin' after a bunch of mares bred to my Morgan, Gold Boy, and helpin' me bring in wild cattle. Been bustin' some broncs for me. They're a slick lot, ain't they? If I c'd manage to git 'em a few cattle to start a herd, I bet they'd have a real outfit in no time."

"But they're outlaws," the sheriff reminded him.

"I don't know if they are or not," said Desbro. "I been at the capitol seein' a smart lawyer and investigatin' their case. I find they ain't got no real evidence ag'in these boys. Nobody is goin' to be able to swear these is the men that stopped that Western Express. And anyway, they can't prove it was a hold-up. If these cowboys was to testify that one of 'em had been shot accidental and they was just stoppin' the train to git help, I bet a jury with a few cowboys on it would

likely believe 'em. Them railroad guards was so eager to open fire that they couldn't prove these men intended to rob a train.

"Besides," went on Desbro, "who's goin' to know they're here, if they git rid of these disguises? Seems to me, Sheriff, I remember a time you stopped a train yoreself back in—"

"Whoa!" the sheriff cautioned him. "Oh, hell—have it yore own way. I guess you're right. These can't be no outlaws. Not the hard workers that put this place in order. Them outlaws must of died."

"If these three stay quiet out here and behave theirselfs, I wouldn't be surprised if nothin' come of it. 'Specially if yuh say yo're willin' to become guardian to Mick and Jim and these other boys. You'll have a reg'lar outdoor reform school."

"They'll behave theirselfs," promised Desbro. "Takin' care of that corn and makin' hay, helpin' me round up cattle and all—that work'll guarantee they behave theirselfs. How 'bout it, boys?"

DOUG grinned. "All we ask is you take them milk cows out of here."

"All right," said Desbro with a chuckle. "That was layin' it on a little thick. We'll take our milk outa cans after this. But I kinda thought them cows would be good for yore souls."

They looked at him with sudden suspicion. "Yuh knowed we was outlaws all this time?" demanded Banty.

Desbro grinned. "Mebbe; mebbe. It's pretty hard for a amateur at anything to fool a man who was oncen a professional at it. Ain't that right, Sheriff?"

Sheriff Banners, pretending not to hear, yet frowned darkly at his friend, Bill Desbro. Sometimes Bill seemed to forget that what is buried in the past should stay buried.

Hand of the Oppressor



A Dramatic Story of Desperate Combat Between Rival Traders in the White Spaces of the North

By ALLAN K. ECHOLS

Author of "Fangs of the East," "White Ivory," etc.

THIS is a story of Todd McDermett, the trader. But it is more than that, it is also the life story of Hopalong.

"Hop" was a three-legged dog. He's dead now, and he lies buried under a mound of dull granite boulders on the coast of Baffin Island, where snow covers the ground from one year's end to the other and where the water is free from ice only a fortnight in the summertime.

Eskimos and Indian trappers, taking their fox pelts to the new trad-

ing post, often stop a moment and replace a protecting stone on the pyramid that guards his body from the ravages of the storm and the wolves. And they are thankful in their hearts that old Hop once lived.

For the story of Hop is the story of their deliverance.

When Todd McDermett set his trade goods and his grown pup ashore at Pond's Inlet during a driving August snow storm, his mild gray eyes roved over a barren and rocky coastline. In the background were

low lying hills, blanketed white and enshrouded in a low-hanging fog.

The overwhelming solitude of the deserted coast and its tomb-like stillness breathed an indefinable but ominous threat.

OLD in the ways of the white frontier and schooled to sense its subtlest moods, Todd was immediately conscious of this vague hostility. Nor did even the pup miss being aware of it. He sniffed the brittle air, trotted down to the water's edge, and gazed longingly after the dirty black schooner now fading away toward civilization.

Then he looked at Todd and howled, a cry that held a warning and a premonition.

Todd—a full six feet of north-woods muscle and bone, narrow-hipped and broad-shouldered, a gray-eyed, cold-hardened man—could laugh, and he laughed at the dog. Thus he tried to dismiss that veiled hostility that greeted him.

But the sinister threat still hung on in the days that followed. They were busy days for Todd, filled with the activity of setting up his post, and establishing his contacts with the Eskimos and the few Indian trappers on the island.

Yet Todd continued increasingly to wonder at the cause of his vague uneasiness.

He sensed something like his own feelings in the few Eskimos who brought their pelts to him. Always a mild and good-natured people, these natives seemed burdened with some great secret dread strange to them, some fear they dared not voice.

They came to him furtively, the few who dared, eager to do their business and get away.

It seemed as though he was in some way a symbol of the danger they feared.

Then one day Todd had a visitor—

and understood. He knew what the man's presence indicated.

This land was ridden with oppression.

The man before him was a self-appointed tyrant, a bully who ruled with a ruthless hand, whose very brutality and ugliness inspired terror in the easy-going natives.

Todd had seen the likes of him before. He had seen these pitiful little trader-kingdoms where the lone white man with his stock of goods had become a law unto himself. Always out of the line of the police patrol, they had little to fear.

They had no one to answer to—until the Mounty came and drove them deeper into the eternal white of the Arctic, safe again for awhile from the prying eyes of justice.

Todd's visitor now was a mountain of a man, clad in a maroon and black checkered mackinaw suit, his pants legs stuffed into deerskin moccasins. Big dogskin mittens buried his hands. His right arm hung motionless by his side, as though it were paralyzed.

The black-bearded face, all but hidden in the collar of his mackinaw coat, was coarse-featured and brutal. A red, bulbous nose lay twisted out of shape, between a beady black eye on one side and a sunken cavity, empty of eyeball, on the other.

IT was a face worthy of a pirate, truly remarkable for its hideousness, belonging to a man worthy of special favor from the devil himself. A man around whom clung dark shades of evil, from whom constantly poured a sinister threat.

Todd faced the man with ill-concealed loathing.

"So yer gonna trade in these parts, eh?" a bass voice roared. "Who told yer so?"

Todd, small beside the visitor, eyed him coldly but without evident hostility. "I don't ask where I can

trade," he answered. "Do people usually have to do that?"

"You sure have to in these parts," bellowed the man. "An' you busted into the wrong neck o' the woods around here. I'm doin' all the tradin' on this island, an' what I say goes. I guess you ain't heard o' 'Big' Barker, or you wouldn't be stickin' yore nose into these diggin's."

The man's chest swelled as he pronounced his own name. He was inordinately proud of his reputation for terrorism, with which he expected to horrify the newcomer. But Todd merely looked his visitor up and down with new interest.

"So you're Big Barker, eh? Should have smelled you out by the way the trappers around here act like they're afraid to breathe. Sure I've heard of you, Barker. And my name's McDermett. I'll be trading here on the island with you for awhile."

Barker advanced a step toward McDermett, shaking with anger at this unexpected defiance of his authority. "You young whelp," he roared. "You'll pack up an' git off'n this island. *An' stay off!*"

THE light in McDermett's pleasant gray eyes was hard but not vicious; it matched his square chin in its strength. His voice was calm, and though his words were aggressive he was not belligerent.

"I'm not getting off," he said. "I've put all the money I've saved in my life into this job, into the goods and the transportation. I've spent long and cold weeks freighting with a dog team in the snow, freezing and going hungry, all for the sake of getting this business started.

"I've got as much right here as you have. Do you think that I'm going to give up the plans of a lifetime just because you want this whole territory for yourself?—Barker, you're crazy!"

Barker's face went livid with rage. "You'll get off if I have to kill you," he roared. "I'll give you just two days to pack up—"

A commotion interrupted him. The howling and snarling of dogs filled the air, echoed back and forth in the stuffy shack. In the back of the store Barker's full-grown husky had his teeth buried in Todd's young pup.

THE pup howled in pain, fought desperately against the heavier brute on top of him. He jerked loose from the fangs in his neck, sank his teeth into the husky's foreleg. They went down together, rolling, tumbling and howling.

Cases of canned goods and dried fish spilled to the floor. The air was filled with the sounds of battle and flying fur. The two dogs rolled against the hot stove, shrieked and broke loose from each other.

Todd's pup crouched, caught a deep breath, then hurled himself like an arrow at the throat of the larger dog. Teeth sank into flesh, gripped the big dog's windpipe and pinned him to the floor, helpless and choking.

Barker let out a roar as his dog went down. He grabbed a hatchet from the counter, dashed toward the dogs. He braced himself, and heaved the hatchet directly at the pup.

The sharp-edged instrument sailed through the air, missed the dog's head. It slashed viciously through his foreleg, slicing flesh and bone like a butcher's cleaver.

The dog screamed in agony, loosened his hold and rolled over, twitching with the numbed pain of a severed leg. Barker started toward him, bent on finishing the cruel job. Curses poured from his mouth in a slimy flood.

Todd leaped forward to head him

off, iron-hard fists murderously clenched. He shot a blow at Barker's jaw just as the man's heavy foot lifted to stamp out the brains of the helpless pup. Todd's blow landed with a crunch that sent Barker spinning.

Barker caught himself, staggered for a moment, then heaved forward, massive fists knotted like gnarled oaks. Todd sidestepped the blow, but not in time to completely avoid it.

The solid fist exploded under his ear. He spun around, slumped to the floor in a blinding flash of lightning, and lay still. His muscles seemed paralyzed from the force of the blow, his senses were reeling.

BARKER stood over him, leering triumphantly down. His one malignant black eye snapped in a face that was baleful in its gloating. He spat foul curses at the prostrate man, threats of what he would do the next time they met.

"You better be gone the next time I pass this way," he ended, "or I'll finish the job! An' maybe that'll teach you to come messin' around Big Barker."

Then he deliberately kicked the fallen Todd and stamped out of the place, followed by his snarling dog.

Todd painfully dragged himself to his feet, rubbed his hand over his fast-swelling jaw. The lower bone was cracked. The pain was agonizing, the flesh throbbing and feverish.

In spite of the pain, he wondered that a man could strike a blow with his fist that would crack a solid jaw.

The pup, lying in the corner, emitted a painful cry and Todd gave his full attention to it. He picked the animal up tenderly and examined its wound. The dog's leg was hanging by only a shred of flesh.

He took the animal to the back room and laid him down carefully.

Working fast, he made a tourniquet to staunch the flow of blood, then cauterized the stump with a hot poker. The dog screamed in agony, then lay limp, whimpering and shaking all over with the pain that sapped its strength.

Every cry of the poor animal cut into Todd like the blade of a sharp-edged knife. The agony in the dog's eyes seared a picture on his soul, branded in him a deep hatred for the brutal Barker. Bitter curses trembled on his lips.

He nursed the dog with tender hands. "Never mind, old friend," he muttered. "If there were no other reason in the world but this for staying in this God-forsaken country, we'd stay here. We'll whip that one-eyed step-son of the devil if it costs us our lives!"

"We have nowhere else to go, nothing else we must do, before that one job. We'll drive him out o' here, pup. This poor country needs us."

He patted the dog gently and the tortured animal weakly licked his hand.

TRADE did not improve during the following weeks. The Indians, fearing the wrath of Barker, kept religiously away from Todd except when they were ill. Then they would slip unobserved into his post and ask for his help. And Todd willingly made long trips through the bitter cold and the storm to give what aid he could to them. Thus he cemented his friendship for them.

But their fear of Barker, stronger even than their appreciation of Todd's kindness, forced them to take their pelts to the bully. It was a matter of life and death with them, unequipped as they were to handle him.

Hopalong was well now, the stump of his leg completely healed. In spite of his handicap he was now a power-

ful young pup, able to keep up and hold his own with the best of them. It was from his peculiar three-legged gait that Todd had fastened on him the name that was destined to live long on Baffin Island.

And he was a one-man dog. He had not been broken to the sleigh, but lived in the post and followed Todd on all his long journeys. He was never out of sight of the man, never too tired to stay right at Todd's heels. Or to listen understandingly to the long one-sided conversations that Todd held with him during the long nights they spent alone.

"We're facing ruin, old boy," Todd told him seriously. "Barker's whipping us by keeping the Indians away, just as badly as if he was here throwing a hatchet at you or breaking my jaw with his fist. Whipping us worse, I guess."

THE dog's intelligent face lit with a look of understanding. There was no question but that he knew something was worrying Todd.

"The trouble is," Todd continued, "we're handicapped. He doesn't do anything we can put our hands on, he stands off and fights undercover. We've got to whip him, but openly and above board."

Suddenly the dog jumped up and hopped toward the door, barking furiously. Todd followed him, unbarred the door and swung it open.

The night was pitch black, churned to fury by a driving snow storm. As Todd opened the door an Eskimo stumbled in, followed by a vicious gust of wind and snow. The native made for the fire, sank down on a near-by box and leaned over toward the stove, almost exhausted.

Todd knew him. "What's the trouble, Nooka?" he asked, pouring out a tin cup of whisky for the half-frozen trapper. Todd spoke the strange language like a native.

"Old Keedok," Nooka answered. "The one with the bad eye has hurt him, and we think he will die. Will you try to help him?"

Todd gave no more thought to the storm than the preparations necessary to face it. While Nooka thawed out he got ready to make the trip.

"What was the trouble?" he asked as he pulled on his parka.

"Since you have come, Barker has been worse," explained Nooka hesitantly. "We are afraid of our lives. Today Barker tried to rob him. Keedok said he would not be robbed, that he would bring his pelts to you.

"Then Barker got very mad. He hit Keedok and Keedok will die. Everybody dies when Barker hits them. And he says he will kill us all if we trade with you. And I think he will kill us all, anyway, while you are here. He is bad."

Todd, finishing his preparations silently, listened to the recital with growing rage. As he told his story, Nooka was the picture of despair, reflecting the helplessness of all the Indians who were the victims of Barker's greed and ferocity.

Todd realized that he was indirectly responsible for their growing trouble, that Barker's fury at him was reflected in his added tyranny over the trappers. And he resolved that things could go on no longer as they were. Here at last was something definite with which he could face the other man.

"After we see Keedok I will go to Barker myself—the first thing in the morning," Todd promised.

NOOKA got wearily off the box and started putting on his gloves for the return trip.

"There is nothing that can be done, he is too strong," he said. "There is a devil in his hand and it is death when he hits you. What can anyone do?"

"We'll see what happens," Todd answered indefinitely. He himself was not sure just what action he could take.

When they reached the shack of Keedok the old man was already dead. The place was filled with native men and women, the men moaning and the women shrieking in their wail for the dead. Outside, the noise was heightened by the howling of dogs.

Todd examined the old man while the crowd in the smoky room crowded around him, watching his every move.

The old man lay stretched on a framework of hides laced between spruce limbs. Another dirty hide was thrown over him. Todd ran his fingers over the man's skull, felt a depression. It was fractured—and that from the blow of a fist.

TODD faced the people who surrounded him half-fearfully, half-hopefully. Then he talked to them in their own language simply and with kindness. He promised them that Barker should no longer rob them of their furs nor kill their men nor their dogs. He told them that they had been patient as the white man's law wanted them to be patient.

He promised them that when the sun came up tomorrow he would go to Barker and after that Barker would no longer bother them. Then he turned and left the shack.

Todd's heart was heavy as he strapped on his snowshoes and plowed into the biting storm. He had never taken a human life, had no intention of doing so now, unless it was in defense of his own. Yet in his brain was the fire kindled by Barker's wanton murders and robberies, grown more terrible and brazen on Todd's own account.

He saw the old man dead on the

elk-hide bunk, a harmless old man with his skull cracked. It was certainly his responsibility to cease this horrible sacrifice.

The increasing wind whirled pellets of snow in his face that stung and blinded his eyes. The barren bluffs, gray in the pitch-black night, reared dark shapeless forms up before him like frozen ghosts. Todd plunged on toward his post with head down and buried deep in the collar of his parka. Hopalong darted before him, ambling from side to side on the shadowy ribbon that was the trail, alert and active.

Out of nowhere, an orange dagger stabbed the blackness and the blast of a rifle cracked the dead silence. A blow smote Todd's chest, whipped him around and flung him to the ground. He rolled over, slid over the side of the cliff at the trail's edge, down through the loose snow to the bottom.

Puffs of the powdery flakes flew around him, then settled on his motionless body. A trickle of blood poured out of a slash in the side of his moose-hide parka, staining the whiteness with a growing blot that showed dark and formless on the snow. Todd moved once, then oblivion covered him.

HOPALONG had stopped dead in his tracks at the sound of the rifle, turned to see Todd fall out of sight. The dog hesitated for a second, then realized that the sound was responsible for Todd's trouble. His keen eyes caught the figure slinking away in the dark.

Hop's three feet shot out like steel springs and his body lunged in the direction of the disappearing figure. He gained incredible speed, his dark body only a blur in the darkness. The light pad of his feet was almost noiseless in the soft snow.

The figure spun around as the dog

neared him. It whirled just in time to see a shadow with bared white teeth flying through the air toward his throat. The man screeched.

The dog's body hurled against the man, teeth groping for flesh. The collar of the man's parka protected his neck, kept the teeth from finding hold in his throat. One of his hands still grasping the rifle, the man fought with the other. His fingers sank into the dog's flesh, slid off the sinewy muscles.

The man went down in the snow, arms flailing, pounding heavy blows into the dog's ribs. The dog's teeth snapped, sank through mackinaw cloth into the flesh of arms and legs, ripped clothes and skin together.

THE man fought with the desperation of deadly fear, silent except for his labored breathing. His gun had fallen from his hand, lay half buried in the snow. He groped for his knife.

The dog's teeth ripped at the hand, laid it open. The man rolled over on his back, threw one arm across his throat to protect it from the teeth of the dog.

His other hand came into contact with the butt of his rifle, grabbed it. Clubbing it, he whipped it into the dog's ribs just behind the fore-leg and over the heart.

His breath knocked out of him, Hop rolled over, lay gasping and insensible in the snow. The man got to his feet and started to run.

But the dog recovered his breath, saw the retreating form. He pulled his pain-wracked body up, drove himself forward. The snow was deep, the going slow and painful. He barked a signal to Todd as he ran.

The figure emerged from the side wall of a bluff as Hop overtook it. In another moment he was before the man, snarling and snapping.

Gradually he drove the man back

along the path he had come, the entire way back to where Todd was just recovering from the stunning effect of the bullet in his side.

Todd clambered to his feet and faced the man. The fellow was an Indian whom he had never seen before. His swarthy face, half concealed by the parka, twisted in fear of the consequences of his failure.

Todd recovered his rifle and rewarded the dog with a slap on the head before he spoke to the Indian.

"Why did you try to kill me?" he snapped suddenly.

The Indian merely shook his head, his face frozen expressionless.

"Then I'll let the dog finish you," Todd threatened. He spoke to Hop and the dog's low growl, accompanied by a visible bristling of his hair, had an immediate effect on the man. Fear contorted his face.

"Barker said me do it," he confessed. "He kill me if I don't kill you. You not let him kill me?" he finished hopefully.

"I ought to kill you myself," Todd raged. "But I guess it's not your fault. No, I won't let him kill you. But you're going with me to see him."

The Indian cringed with added terror. "No!" he begged. "He kill me sure!"

IT was pitiable to see the fear that these people felt, to see the control Barker exerted over them by his ruthless brutality. Todd could not with justice hold any resentment toward the ignorant Indian.

But his determination to put a stop to Barker's influence took on added force, became his one driving desire. It meant more than merely establishing himself. It meant the delivery of these poor people from the hands of a tyrant, an oppressor who did not stop even at murder to accomplish his own selfish ends.

"Don't worry," Todd promised the man. "You're going with me, but Barker will not kill you. I'll guarantee you that. Come on!"

It is a peculiarity of the north country that in spite of its scattered population news travels faster and farther than in places where people congregate more. The little affairs of the individual become of vital concern to those whose lives are spent in isolation.

AND so it was that Todd saw many Indians and Eskimos congregated around Barker's trading post early the next morning. In spite of the slight wound that the bullet had given him, despite lack of sleep, he had immediately set out for Barker's.

And the natives had preceded him, hanging about the post with an air of hopeful expectancy. They had heard of Todd's trip to the dead man's place and his promise.

A dead silence greeted Todd as he approached, marching the Indian before him. Curious eyes examined him and the dog whose history they knew. The silent people were congregated, judges before whom Todd would try Barker for his crimes.

Looking neither to right nor to left, Todd marched directly to Barker's door and threw it open. Grim-eyed he stepped in to meet the man who had sworn that he should not live on the island.

Behind him a sea of brown, strained faces made a backdrop before which stood the actors—Todd, with mouth set hard and cold gray eyes boring into the defiant face of Barker; the Indian, trembling before the man whose brutality had forced him upon his mission of death; and Hopalong, growling recognition of the man who had thrown the weapon which had severed his leg.

Silence, heavy and ominous, choked the darkened interior of the post.

Boxes of canned goods, foodstuff, clothing, cluttered the place. The crackling of the fire in the little iron stove sounded loud and harsh in the portentous stillness.

"Barker, I've come to settle with you!" Todd said. His voice was quiet with restraint. It was not necessary for him to say more.

Barker's eye flashed toward the cowering Indian, the man who had failed to do his job. The Indian stood hypnotized with fear, his eyes caught and held by the tiny sparkle of flame that shot from Barker.

Barker acted! With a roar of an enraged bull he charged the Indian, his right arm swinging in a savage blow. The fist hurled through the air toward the man's head. A panic of pure terror seized the Indian, and he wilted to the floor just as the flying fist grazed his head.

Barker's heavy boot came up to crush the fallen man's skull. In a flash Todd's foot shot out and tripped the bully just as the boot descended, sending Barker off balance. Barker caught himself against the counter to keep from falling. Then he lowered his head and dived at Todd.

TODD loosened the grip that he had been keeping on the dog. He ducked in time to miss the blow, then waded into Barker, fists pummeling like sledge hammers.

Blows crunched against flesh, feet shuffled on the bare wood floor. Todd was lighter and faster and his fists beat trip-hammer punches into the iron body of Barker.

Barker tried his deadly right time after time. The arm came forward, always slowly, heavily. Todd watched it instinctively, kept clear of it. Remembrance of the stories of that hand had made him wary.

Barker's left was more effective. The massive fist sank into Todd's

ribs like the blows of a pile driver. Flesh crunched as heavy fists sank into crackling ribs. The mittens Barker still wore did nothing to soften his punches.

The crowd surged back, making room for the fighters. Todd landed a body punch that sent Barker against the counter. Cases of canned goods overturned and rolled the contents on the floor to interfere with their footwork.

Barker hurled himself back and sent a left to Todd's ribs that hurled him reeling against the stove. Todd caught himself. He rushed again. Barker's slow right hand sailed heavily through the air, landed a glancing blow against Todd's chin with the crack of a pistol.

Blinding light flashed before Todd's eyes. Then all went black and he sank to the floor, dazed and partially paralyzed.

The blow had landed on the weak point where his jaw had already been broken.

A groan went up from the crowd. Their hope of deliverance lay stunned, another victim of the deadly right hand of Barker.

SUDDENLY the air turned dark as a blurred form, a brown streak, flew like an arrow toward the snarling trader. Barker ducked. But not in time. The dog was at his throat!

Mixed growls and curses filled the air to overflowing. The stumbling writhing mass shook the walls of the building. The whirling mêlée of man and dog overturned crates, flung goods to the winds. A counter went over with a rending, tearing of wood.

The dog's amazing speed baffled the man. The animal was all over, growling deep in his throat, sinking his teeth in every hold he could find on the thick fur-clad body of the man.

Shining teeth sank into Barker's

right wrist as Barker hurled the dog from him.

The dog fell away—*carrying Barker's right wrist and gloved hand away in his teeth!*

A gasp of excitement came up from the crowd, then there was dead silence. The hand fell from Hop's jaws with a thump that was explosive in the sudden stillness. Then the dog stood still, unable to comprehend what had happened.

Barker stood with outstretched arm, a look of surprise frozen on his ugly face.

Todd, now conscious, was the first to realize the significance of the thing. The mystery of the deadly fist was solved.

Todd picked up the hand and stripped the glove off it. An ordinary artificial hand and wrist, with a leather cuff that strapped it on to the stump of the severed arm!

THE hand that was carved doubled into a fist was covered with a thin layer of moulded sheet iron! It was a genuine iron fist that had wrought death among the Indians! Barker, the one-handed man, had converted his misfortune into the means of destruction.

The natives stared first at the helpless Barker, standing with his useless arm outstretched, still overcome by the surprise that his secret was revealed.

Then they gazed at the instrument of their torture. A low rumbling of anger started among them, gradually increasing to a threatening roar. The monster was shorn of his power, and his slaves prepared for revolt and destruction.

Barker's face twisted into a horrible grimace. His good left hand darted under his parka, came out gripping a gleaming skinning knife. Shorn of his power, he lunged toward Todd in a last desperate effort

to recapture what he had lost, by destroying the cause of it.

Padded feet thumped, a dark blur shot through the air. The dog's teeth buried themselves in Barker's throat with a death grip. Hurled back by the force of the impact, Barker's aim was diverted. His hand barely retained its hold on the weapon, before dog and man sank to the floor.

The dog's teeth sunk into Barker's windpipe, shutting off his breath. The man's face purpled, his one eye bulged. A gargling sound poured from the mouth choked by his protruding tongue. Lying on his back he twisted, turned and strained to release the Nemesis at his throat.

HIS only hand still gripping the knife swung in an arc, buried the shining blade in the dog. But still the dog's grip of death held. The teeth buried in his throat were strangling him.

Blood spurted from ripped jugular veins. It covered the dog, covered the man, ran in pools over the littered floor. The dog cringed as the bloody knife came out and ripped again into his vitals, slashed the very life out of him.

The dog's jaws set tighter with

the death stab of the knife. His one front leg quivered with strained muscle. And as his life flowed out, the teeth of Hopalong were locked in the throat of Todd's enemy.

Barker's struggles grew feeble, then ceased altogether. Todd jerked at the dog's collar, tried to take him from the man.

But no ordinary strength would ever open the dog's powerful jaws. His teeth were clamped in the ripped and torn throat of the now-dead Barker.

Todd dropped to his knees beside the dog, openly caressed the animal who had given his life to save his master. Tears came to his eyes. And as he knelt there the Indians stood around, silent with the understanding that is a part of those who live close to the earth and to dumb animals.

Todd buried Hopalong with gentle hands, and the Indians brought granite boulders and made a mound over his grave.

And now when they come to Todd's trading post they often stop a moment and replace a protecting stone on the pyramid that guards Hop's body from the ravages of the storm and the wolves. And they are thankful in their hearts that old Hop once lived.

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Red-Coat Patrol

*You'll Thrill to This Pulse-
Stirring Drama of the
Royal Mounted*

A Complete Novelette

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Avatar," etc.*

SERGEANT NEIL THORNE, of the Royal Mounted, stopped and peered through the gathering darkness across the low ridge of open land that sloped down toward the frozen surface of the Great Bear, over which the full moon was just rising.

The yelping of the dogs that he had been trailing had grown into a snarling outburst, and Neil knew from the sounds that the animals were twisted hopelessly in their traces. Every moment the outburst was growing louder.

Then Neil saw the pack, some three hundred feet away, and it was as he had surmised. Entangled in their harness, five or six huskies were having the fight of their lives.

On one side of the overturned sleigh lay the pack, and beside it were two motionless figures.

Neil leaped forward into the midst of the maddened huskies. Two of the animals, with their fangs sunk in each other's throats, were wallow-



The three had begun fight

ing in a pool of blood, while the rest of the pack, wrapped round and round with the twisted traces, were struggling madly to participate in the fight.

Neil snatched off his *raquettes* and laid about him with them, hammering loins and muzzles, heaving the struggling beasts bodily aside, until he had cleared a free space about the overturned sleigh.

Then he turned to the two motionless forms that lay beside it.

One of them, to his consternation, was that of a girl, with dark hair sweeping back over the snow, and white face upturned toward the sky. She was lying in such a cramped position that it was a moment or two before Neil discovered that her knees were fastened together with ropes, and her arms lashed to her sides.

The second form was that of a man in the uniform of the Royal



steadily the bullets hitting the rock on either side of Neil viciously

Mounted, with a sergeant's chevrons on his sleeve. He was lying close beside the girl, and the blood still oozed from a knife-thrust through his heart, and widened into a dark, frost-scummed pool.

Neil recognized him. His name was Rawlings, and five years before he had been discharged from the Police for accepting a bribe to let a prisoner escape.

"I'll get you for this, Thorne, if it takes me the rest of my life," had been Rawlings' parting threat, when Neil arrested him.

What was he doing, masquerading in a uniform that did not belong to him, and why had he been with the girl?

Neil stooped and raised the girl in his arms. There was no sign of a wound upon her, and he could not tell whether she was alive or dead.

But, as he tried to raise her, he felt the drag of the body of the dead policeman, and, laying her down again, looked for the obstruction. Then he discovered it. The girl's right hand and the left hand of the dead man were linked together with a pair of handcuffs.

Neil raised the free wrist, pushed back the mitt, and felt for the pulse. It was beating steadily. Looking closer, Neil discovered the livid bruise that extended over the temple, just below the hair.

He cut the girl's bonds quickly with his jackknife, and hacked at the tangled traces till he had freed the struggling beasts. He kicked and cuffed them into submission. He went through the dead man's belt and pockets.

He threw away the regulation .45 Colt. There was nothing else, except

a plug of chewing tobacco, neither papers nor money.

And he could not find the key to the handcuffs.

He took the axe from his pack and brought down the blade upon the dead man's wrist. Again—and he had severed the hand clean from the arm. The severed wrist clipped clean out of the cuff. The iron still dangled from the girl's arm, but at least she was free of her horrible yokefellow.

Neil righted the sleigh and replaced the contents, which consisted of a single pup-tent, a small box of provisions, and some frozen fish for the dogs.

He placed the girl upon the sleigh, wrapping her fur coat carefully about her. He put the dead man behind her.

Then he discovered something white protruding from a portion of the tunic that had adhered to the ground. It was a crumpled envelope, with a letter inside it, and beside it, torn from the inner pocket, was the key to the handcuffs. In a moment Neil had unlocked the cuff from the girl's wrist.

NEIL patched up the severed traces.

He harnessed four of the dogs, and shot the two that had torn each other's throats to pieces.

He knew who the girl was—Camille Landry, the daughter of old Jacques Landry, whom he had been on his way to see. Landry's cabin could be hardly more than five miles away, though Neil had never visited it.

"Mush!"

The dogs took up the trail again, back along the frozen shore of the Great Bear. Neil trudged behind the sleigh, his eyes bent on the unconscious girl and the other ghastly freight that had been human. The

falling snow had almost obliterated the tracks that the sleigh had already made.

The trail crossed an edging of dwarf birch and reached a plateau beside the lake. In the center of the flat appeared a long, substantial cabin of logs. To one side of it was another cabin, Landry's fur and trading store. On the other were two small cabins and the dog's kennels.

There was no evidence of human occupancy in any of the buildings. Neil carried Camille's unconscious body toward the log house. He saw that the door stood wide open.

THROUGH a window he could see the faint reflection of the lighted stove. The lone, large interior, on whose threshold Neil stopped for an instant, to shift the girl in his arms and stoop under the low lintel, was in darkness, but a lamp was glimmering in a room to the left, opening off the main one, and by its light Neil could see a long couch standing against the wall.

He laid the girl down; and then he became aware of a strange whistling sound, repeated rhythmically again and again.

It seemed to come from some point within the dark room. Neil moved in that direction, but suddenly slipped and brought up against the wall. He stood, peering toward the lamplight.

Now, as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, he saw a shadow of irregular outline upon the floor between the two rooms. At first it looked like the flattened form of an animal.

Then it began to take on the semblance of a human being.

Then, as he bent over it, Neil knew that it was what he had been dreading to find. It was the body of old Jacques Landry.

II

HE had met Landry during a summer patrol in the region two years before. He had discovered him helpless, with a leg badly mauled by one of his own wolverine traps. During the week that he had cared for him, a friendship had sprung up between the two men.

Landry was one of those odd characters that are to be found on all the frontiers of civilization. According to his story, he had been a successful business man in Quebec, with a home, a wife and child, a bank account, and a span of matched bays for his *caleche*. Then—something had happened.

One moment Landry seemed to be driving the span of matched bays to his office in Lower Town; the next, he was a trapper and trader on the desolate shore of the Great Bear, with a daughter at the Moravian Mission on the Mackenzie.

The old man was a dreamer. He had talked of the vast, untapped mineral resources of the region, and of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. When Neil started back for his post, it was with the understanding that he was to throw in his lot with Landry in two years' time, after he had taken his discharge.

Almost at the end of his second period of enlistment, Neil had been sent up to the Great Bear region in connection with certain complaints that had filtered down.

Prospectors had come into conflict with a particular Jaffrey, who was wanted in Montreal, in Winnipeg, in Toronto, in connection with certain stock market frauds. His wealth, and the spectacular way in which he spent it, had made him a notorious figure, and his web of crooked finance had involved more than one provincial legislature.

From the far north stories of claim-jumping and suspicion of murder had reached the police posts. Neil's plan of joining Landry had become known. It had made him an object of suspicion. More than one member of the Force was believed to have deserted while on patrol, and joined up with Jaffrey's crew.

Neil's selection had aroused bitter resentment, particularly in the breast of one Corporal Thomas Stirrup, who had looked forward to being chosen for the job.

Neil had started north with nothing but a pack. He knew the Indians' camps, and the factors' stores where he could replenish his supplies of food. It was already late February, and after March dogs would be useless. He had departed from Fort Logan, fully aware of Stirrup's antagonism.

As Neil bent over Landry, the whistling sound began again. It came from Landry's throat, the reflex action of the throat, admitting and expelling the air. Landry was still alive.

Neil turned up the light in the inner room. Now he could see Landry's face clearly. The old man was lying in a pool of blood, and there was a hideous wound in the abdomen, which looked as if it had been made by a filed-off bullet.

Neil picked up the old Frenchman and laid him down on an iron cot. When he had torn apart the blood-stiffened shirt, he realized that he could do nothing. A glance at the old man's waxen face showed that he was almost at his end.

He went into the long room and threw two logs into the stove. He unharnessed the dogs and put them in their stables. He brought in the handcuffs and key, and set them down on a table. The body of Rawlings he left upon the sleigh. Then he

went and stood looking down at Landry, conscious of a vast, helpless rage that the murderer was beyond the reach of vengeance.

Rawlings must have murdered him and abducted Camille. But who had killed Rawlings?

SUDDENLY Neil realized that old Landry's eyes were open. They were looking directly into his, but they were as blank as colored windows.

Neil leaned forward. "Jacques, it's Neil Thorne, of the Police," he said. "Do you not know me, Jacques?"

He spoke in French, to fix the attention of the dying man. But it was minutes before consciousness, personality emerged. Then Jacques Landry knew him. He whispered his name, and Neil could see his efforts to link together the broken chain of memory. All at once Landry remembered, and the ghost of an ironical grimace spread over his features.

"*Oui, I remember you, mon ami,*" he said. "I am glad you have come. I have been on guard for weeks. I sent old Pierre to the Mission—to bring back my Camille. I thought she would be safer, even here. Where is she?"

A spasm of choking convulsed him. Neil wiped the red froth from his lips.

"She is in the next room asleep, Jacques," he answered.

"They did not get her, then. Come closer, *mon ami*, while I try to tell you. They waited until Jaffrey arrived. Tonight—was it tonight?—his men crept up here, leaving their dogs behind the ridge. I heard them, but I thought that it was Pierre, returning with Camille from the mission on the Mackenzie.

"I opened the door. They shot me down. I feigned death. After that I have known nothing. You say that she is safe in there?"

"She is safe," repeated Neil.

Landry's head rolled sidewise. The face was like wax, the features were beginning to stand out from it, as if they formed no part of it, like a hideous mask. For a while Neil thought that the end had come.

And then once more Landry's eyes opened, and he seemed, with a titanic effort, to pull himself back out of the death coma.

"You swear that you will protect her?" he whispered. "Then I shall tell you what we once spoke about. More precious than gold. It is pitch-blende—more radium than has been discovered in all the world. Long ago I found it. It is for you and for her. Wealth that shall restore her to her place in the world—in Quebec—jewels—fine horses—all the life that was mine before—before—*Ah mon Dieu, a little strength!*"

He seemed to gather all his strength for a last effort.

"You remember—where you found me—in the trap—near Lac Ste. Thérèse? It is at the outlet, at the head of McVicar Bay—under the cliff. The black and white cliff. More precious than gold. For you and her. Thou canst trust him, little one. He saved my life. He is a good man."

The muttering ceased. The labored breathing stopped, began again. It must have been another half-hour before the last tremor shook the mangled body. Landry spoke once more. He said, "My horses!"

That span of horses was the ultimate memory of all that had gone to the making of the man. Neil closed the eyelids and drew the blanket over the face.

III

Neil took up the lamp and went into the living-room. Camille lay just as he had left her. He found another room on

the other side, and, in the rear, a storeroom running the entire length of the structure. It was filled with crates and empty Standard Oil cans.

He brought in the corpse from the sleigh and deposited it here, piling up the crates and cans in front of it. Nobody was likely to suspect that a dead man lay there.

In Landry's room he read the letter that he had taken from the body of Rawlings. The ink was blotted and stained, and it was with difficulty that he could make out the contents.

"Give this to R. when he reaches Little Lake," he deciphered. "We're going to need him bad. Nobody won't know he ain't a policeman. Tell him to bring in the girl on the way. Everything jake up here."

There was no signature, but it was evident to Neil that Rawlings had assumed a policeman's uniform in order to work for Jaffrey.

Neil went into the living-room, locked the bedroom door, and put the key in his pocket. He went to the doorway and peered out. The heavy snow was still drifting down. Overhead was a dun sky, with the moon a faint halo in the zenith.

NEIL was wondering how to break the news of her father's death to Camille when she awakened. Then there was the problem of providing for the girl's safety before settling with Jaffrey and his crowd.

He did not want to turn back to take her to the Mission, nor did he think she would be able to face the winter journey across the Barrens.

Still pondering, he returned. He looked at the couch. To his astonishment the girl was no longer there. Neil groped forward in the darkness.

And suddenly a shadow detached itself from the shadowy wall and hurled itself at him, knocking him backward. A hand struck at his

breast. A knife drove at his heart. Hot breath hissed in his face, and there came a snarl of fury.

Taken by surprise though he was, Neil was able to deflect the blow sufficiently to prevent the point of the blade from more than ripping his thick coat of lambskin. He managed to grasp his assailant by the wrist, and the next moment he was fighting for possession of the weapon. His immediate thought was that i was one of Jaffrey's gang from the camp on McVicar Bay, who had somehow contrived to secrete himself within the cabin. But the curses that poured from the man's lips, in a mixture of French and Cree, told him that he was an Indian.

TO and fro they fought in the long room. A sudden spurt of flame from the stove showed Neil the dark face of his antagonist, convulsed with rage, and the lean, lithe body that grappled with him.

He swung his right in a blow that caught the Indian on the forehead, and drove him back against the wall. He leaped and caught the knife-hand, opened it, and sent the weapon clattering to the floor.

"Now, my friend, we'll find what's troubling you," he panted.

But even as he spoke he saw another shadow behind him. He swerved, to see Camille outlined against the door, in her hand a heavy billet of wood. It thudded upon his head and his knees sagged under him.

He was down on one knee, but his Colt was in his hand. He knew now that he had been mistaken for the man Rawlings. But explanation was impossible. He kept his Colt levelled through a black cloud, he heard the Indian's screaming gutturals. And then the woman and the man were gone, and outside it was the pearly gray of morning.

Neil must have been unconscious;

he was lying over the sill, his hand still clutching the revolver.

Nobody was in sight, but the dogs were yelping wildly in their kennels, and other dogs were answering them.

Then, with swimming eyes, Neil watched a sleigh and five dogs come into view across the plateau. Behind the sleigh two men were trudging. They stopped and shouted as Neil rose to his feet:

"Hey, Rawlings, we're Carroll and Leeson, Jaffrey's men!"

ON the instant Neil resolved to pass for Rawlings until he had had the opportunity to discover the situation.

The two men came up to him, looking at him curiously.

"Didn't expect to find you here, Rawlings," said one of them. "We went to meet you, and found the snow all scuffed up and two dead dawgs. Did you get the girl from the Mission? Where is she?"

"I got her, but she got away," answered Neil. "That damn Injun of hers jumped me in the dark and laid me out with a log."

They swore. "How long ago? Which way they go?" demanded one of the pair. "Gawd Rawlings, I don't know what Jaffrey's going to say to you. He was counting on you."

"I don't know nothing. I've been out for hours," said Neil. "Don't know how I got here."

"Look at his haid," grinned the other man. "That Injun must have hit you a hell of a crack, Rawlings. There's a bump as big as a hens' egg. Well, we done our part. We got Landry. You looked inside that door?"

"Yes, I've found him," said Neil. He pulled the key from his pocket and turned the lock.

"You got the old boy laid out in state," grinned Carroll, a red-haired

ruffian with a broken nose. "What's the idea?"

"Well, I like to finish up a job nice and clean," Neil answered, and the two men rocked with laughter. "But how was it you had to kill him?"

"Blossom sent him warning time and again what would happen if he didn't come through about that mine of his," said Leeson. "But the old fool was too obstinate to tell, so we got you to take the girl away from the Mission. Pity she gave you the slip, but we'll find her. Only Jaffrey's likely to cut up some. Here, take a swig of this, partner, you look as if you needed it," he added, pulling a flask from his pocket.

WHILE Neil rested upon the couch, the two rummaged around and found coffee, beans, bread, and bacon. Neil ate a little and gulped down some coffee. The wound in his head had begun to bleed, relieving the congestion. By the time the meal was ended, Carroll and Leeson were drunk and boisterous.

"Well, we got to start back if we're going to reach the camp tonight," said Carroll.

"Yeah? How about finding the girl?" demanded Leeson.

"Hell, that's Rawlings' business! We done what we were sent to do."

"Yeah, and s'posing the girl comes back? I'm in favor of staying on here and looking around for her. You take the dogs back with Rawlings and tell Blossom."

"The hell I'll leave you here to pick up the girl alone!" the other snarled.

They cursed each other. But suddenly, out of the distance, there came a droning sound that abruptly stopped the altercation, and the pair ran out to see, Neil following them.

It was the sound of an airplane

engine. High up in the south, where the sun was struggling to break through the banks of dun clouds, the plane appeared, a tiny speck blackly outlined against the gray, and swooping downward along the course of the Great Bear.

It dipped, banked, circled, side-slipped, and flew on an even keel a hundred feet above the plateau. Carroll and Leeson yelled and waved. Then, like a bird alighting, the plane touched the surface of the snow, churned up a cloud, and came to rest barely fifty yards from the door.

A man threw off his belt and stepped out. A biggish man of early middle age, blond-headed, fleshy, but buoyant and muscular.

"Gawd," muttered Carroll, "Jaffrey!"

IV

WELL, here we are, Rawlings. Here's our little home for some time to come," laughed Jaffrey.

Neil stepped out of the rear cockpit and looked about him. It was middle afternoon. The plane had dropped in an open space at the edge of McVicar Bay, with a cluster of squalid huts on one side, at the edge of a ravine, lined with black rocks, and three or four more substantial buildings a short distance away. At the edge of the lake was a long log storehouse, with a hangar. A York boat was drawn up on birch rollers.

Three or four Indians and a squaw or two were moving about among the rocks. Two white men emerged from one of the more substantial ones as the two got out of the plane.

"Here's Rawlings!" called Jaffrey. "Meet Swartz and Sinnett. Where's Blossom?" he asked.

But a third man was coming out of another hut. He was enormously

fat, and looked like a barrel in his sheepskin coat. His head was bald, a heavy dewlap hung beneath his chin, and his eyes were almost hidden in the fat of his bearded cheeks.

"Well, well," he boomed. "Back again, I see? Back from the haunts of the palefaces and the bright lights and chicken a la king, and all the rest of the iniquities, hey, Mr. Jaffrey?"

"Yes, I'm back," said Jaffrey. "Here's Rawlings. They got Landry, but Rawlings fell down on his job, and the girl got away from him. That Injun of hers knocked him silly. Well, we'll pick them up in a day or two. We know pretty well whereabouts they are. I've left Carroll and Leeson on guard, with Landry's body for bait. She'll be back."

Blossom laughed boisterously.

"Give him the empty cabin, Blossom," Jaffrey went on. "Make yourself comfortable, Rawlings. Tomorrow we'll start to pick up Camille Landry. It's a safe bet she's hiding out somewhere near the head of the Bay. We'll eat in the store tonight. Blossom's a mining engineer, by the way, and he's building a smelter. We'll all go out rich next fall."

HE nodded, turned away, and entered one of the cabins. Blossom linked a huge hand through Neil's arm and led him into the last cabin of the row.

It contained nothing but a bed and chair.

From a shelf Blossom took down a bottle of hooch and two glasses, which he half filled. "Here's how," he said, and tossed his liquor off. "Like to lie down and rest a bit, huh?"

The creak of Blossom's shoes awakened Neil, who sat up, con-

scious of his aching head. Blossom rolled into the room.

"Had a good sleep?" he asked. "I looked in once or twice, but you were hitting the hay so hard I said, 'It's a shame to wake him.' How about a little drink?"

It was nearly dark. Blossom half filled two glasses again and drained his. He sat down in the chair and watched Neil, a leer upon his heavy face.

"I'M wondering how wise you are, I Rawlings," he said suddenly. "I guess you know that Landry found a pitchblende mine. Jaffrey's sore as hell that you let that girl get away with the secret. He don't show what he feels. He strikes when he gets ready. You want to look out for Jaffrey. You and me ought to chum up together."

Blossom leaned forward, gurgling and choking.

"Easy to work on radium ore," he said. "Dilute sulphuric acid. Jaffrey's an optimist. You begin to get me?"

"Not yet," answered Neil, and Blossom chuckled more violently. He lolled, puffing and wheezing, in his chair.

"Don't take me for a fool, do you?" Blossom wheezed.

"Not yet," said Neil. "But suppose you come to the point."

"Playing the innocent?" gurgled Blossom. "There's only one little thing I've been wondering about."

"Yes?" queried Neil. "What is it?"

Blossom sat up straight in the chair and drummed on Neil's knee.

"What did you do with Rawlings?" he asked. "I'm the only feller knew him. I brought him up here to pass for a policeman. Don't monkey with that gun!"

The gross figure of Blossom had become a vast, threatening shadow

in the darkening room. The mouth was stretched into a leer. And a gun had somehow leaped into Blossom's hand. Decidedly, the fat man was not to be taken lightly.

Neil waited, with his hand upon his gun butt, yet knowing that the first attempt to draw it would mean his death.

"Best take your hand off that gun, Thorne," croaked Blossom. "That's better. Remember, nobody but me knows Rawlings."

"You came up here to work that radium mine with Landry. The old boy told you where it is, and I guess you croaked Rawlings on the trail."

"You're a good guesser, Blossom."

"All right. But now you're up against it, and there's just one way out for you. You and me are going to be partners. We're going after that mine together. And by the time we're through, I guess there won't be so many fingers in the pie. We'll be rich, when we're through. We'll put Jaffrey and his crew where we want them."

"JAFFREY sent me for you. We're going to hit some high spots at the store tonight. Squaws to dance with, and we've educated them real nice. Good liquor. We may as well be starting. Jaffrey don't like being kept waiting, and it's as well to humor him for the present. And just think over what I talked to you about."

He roared with laughter, and, linking his arm through Neil's, rolled with him toward the trading-store. Wheezing, he released him at the entrance of the store, which was brightly lit. Neil pushed his way through the little group of Indians and squaws who were gathered in the doorway. Among the latter were four young girls, tricked out in home-sewn flapper costumes. With rouged faces and carmined lips, they

stood grinning at the four white men inside.

Neil went in, with Blossom rolling in his wake.

THE long counter was piled with trade goods. At one end of the interior a huge stove sent out a volume of heat that was oppressive, even in the biting night air.

A radio was just striking up the lively strains of a jazz tune. Jaffrey was seated in a chair; Sinnett and Swartz were lounging against the counter.

"Hello, Rawlings, how you feeling?" shouted Jaffrey. "Have a drink."

Neil poured himself a small drink from a bottle on the counter.

"Come on, start up the fun. What you squaws waiting for?" Jaffrey shouted thickly.

The four girls came in, giggling. Blossom seized one of them about the waist. The radio was coming through with astonishing clearness, short wave lengths from Montreal.

"Don't dance, Rawlings?" asked Jaffrey, as Neil sat down beside him.

"Don't feel like it just now. My head's still aching."

Jaffrey refilled his glass. "You and me seem to have the same ideas, Rawlings," he said. "We'll get on well together. That fat fool, Blossom, gets on my nerves sometimes."

Blossom, Sinnett and Swartz were dancing with the squaws. The male Indians had begun an impromptu dance of their own, caroming into the white men and the squaws. Quickly the interior became a bedlam. Bottles in hands, the reeling crowd of whites and reds stamped up and down, colliding, cursing, screeching. The room vibrated to the stamp of boots, and the two big oil lamps overhead swung slowly in unison.

"Human nature in the raw," said

Jaffrey thickly. "I'm a phil-osopher. Are you a phil-osopher, Rawlings?"

The yelp of dogs outside startled Neil. Others took up the chorus. Jaffrey rose, swayed to the door and flung it open. A sleigh, drawn by a file of huskies, was coming toward the store, two men mushing alongside.

Neil slipped across the sill in Jaffrey's wake. Somebody slammed the store door shut behind them.

At first the sleigh had looked empty. But it was not empty. A form was lying on it, as stiff as frozen beef, and in the newcomers Neil recognized the men Leeson and Carroll.

Carroll began to bawl: "Look what we got. This feller must have been Rawlings. This other feller's a policeman. He bumped him off in Landry's cabin!"

V

NEIL'S reaction was instantaneous. Jaffrey and the two were bunched together. He swung his Colt and covered the three.

"Put 'em up!" he shouted, and mechanically the three obeyed.

"Kick off your snowshoes!" was Neil's next command.

The two thugs obeyed him, but Jaffrey remained standing with his hands elevated and a sneer upon his face. Neil gestured the three toward the store, and Carroll and Leeson ran, stumbling through the snow, but still Jaffrey waited.

"Clever, whoever you are," he said. "But I'll get you." He turned and began walking back indifferently. He knew Neil wouldn't shoot him in the back if he was a policeman.

Neil slipped on the *raquettes*. For a moment or two he had dallied with the idea of holding up the whole outfit. Then he had seen it was im-

possible. And Camille's safety was paramount. He turned and began plodding toward the lake. Before he reached the shore, the crew were at the door of the store, their bawls drowning out the radio.

But Neil had a lead of a hundred feet, and he was sober. He made for the broken ground that gave upon the ice-covered surface of the Bear. Without their snowshoes, the whole crowd was helpless.

Guns barked, bullets whanged. Neil turned and fired the two shots that remained in his chamber, aiming at nobody, but the crowd ducked and scattered. Curses and jeers followed him as he glissaded down the slope toward the surface of the lake.

HE gained the wind-swept ice, waved derisively as another ineffectual fusillade rang out, and mushed on. The moon would not be up for some time yet. Neil was already almost invisible. When he looked back again, the huts and buildings were no longer discernible.

It was about ten miles from Jaffrey's camp to the head of McVicar Bay, where Landry's mine was. Neil guessed that Camille and the Indian had taken refuge there. He trudged along the foreshore, threading his way among the rocks, then turned inland as he heard the distant drone of Jaffrey's airplane.

Squatting down in a clump of willow, he heard the roar of the motor grow louder. Then came the stuttering staccato of a machine-gun. Jaffrey was spraying the foreshore with bullets. But the plane itself was invisible.

The roar of the motor died away in the distance. It grew louder again. Jaffrey was flying back—but he had spent all his ammunition.

Hugging the foreshore again, Neil took up his march once more. Time passed. The moon rose up above the

banks of clouds. Neil could see the head of McVicar Bay in front of him, and the long curve of the opposite shore.

Here were high cliffs and a foreshore strewn with huge, rounded rocks, polished to marble smoothness by ten million years of ice-grinding. He removed his snowshoes, slung them around his neck, and traversed the hummocky ice in his moccasins.

A break in the cliff wall showed the ice-bound discharge from Lac Ste. Thérèse. A short distance away a flat-topped cliff stood out four-square against the sky. Neil mushed toward it, and suddenly perceived that it was scored with seams of black and white.

It was the cliff of which Landry had spoken of in his dying moments.

Ridges of rock rose on either side of it. Farther back were patches of birch scrub and a little valley containing trees of unusual height for that district. Neil was convinced that somewhere near were Landry's mine and Camille's hiding-place.

He threaded a defile through the ridges and reached the little valley. A trail ran through the dense scrub toward a higher ridge. It widened. In the moonlight Neil made out a small cabin, almost hidden from view among the trees.

HE moved forward cautiously. He stepped out into the moonlight. There was neither light nor stove within the cabin, yet Neil had the instinct that some one was within. He hesitated, then tapped lightly at the door.

At first there was no response. Then he heard a faint sound within. Slowly the door began to open. It flew wide, and a figure stood there, in one hand a glint of steel.

Neil said: "Mademoiselle Camille, I am a friend. I have come here to help you."

He caught her by the wrist just in time to avoid the desperate knife-thrust, but she fought wildly, with a strength that momentarily matched his own. Then Neil forced her right hand open, and the knife dropped into the snow.

SHE faced him, panting, her eyes ablaze in the moonlight. "You murderer!" she cried. "Pierre should have killed you!"

"Will you listen to me, Mademoiselle Camille? I'm Neil Thorne, your father's friend. Does that mean anything to you? Hasn't he spoken to you about me? Didn't he tell you that I was coming up to join him?"

"Liar! You shot him down in cold blood! You came back to make sure of your work! I recognize you!"

Neil could trace the workings of Camille's mind. The man Rawlings must have stunned her in the dark cabin. She had known nothing of her kidnaping—nothing until she had seen Neil again.

Nevertheless he went on telling her the facts. "I was with your father when he died," he said. "He told me where his mine was. He asked me to promise that I would take care of you and protect you against Jaffrey and his crew. I am here to fulfill my promise."

Camille listened with averted face. A cloud was passing over the moon and he could no longer see her expression, but he almost thought that she believed him.

"I am going to take you down to Fort Simpson, where you will be safe," he said.

"I won't go. I don't believe you."

"You must believe me. You are not safe here."

She was edging toward the angle of the hut and looking back through the trees. Suddenly a scream broke from her lips. Out of the scrub the Indian, Pierre, came running straight

at Neil, who covered him with his Colt. Pierre stopped and began to circle warily, knife in hand. Neil kept turning, facing the old man. He didn't want to have to shoot him down—

"Stick 'em up, Thorne!" sounded a voice behind him. "All right, Mamzelle, I've got this feller covered."

Neil whirled. A man in the black lambskin and winter uniform of the Police had stepped out from behind a tree, and a Colt in his hand was covering Neil's heart.

"Keep 'em 'igh, Thorne. It will be 'ealthier."

Neil recognized the newcomer. "Stirrup!" he exclaimed.

"Righto," responded the Cockney corporal. "Just drop your gun, Thorne. You ain't got a dawg's chance, and, so 'elp me, if you make one false move, I'll shoot you dead in your tracks."

He stepped forward, gun in hand. The cuffs snapped on Neil's wrists.

VI

IT was daylight, but the thickly falling snow veiled the land in a gray opacity. Neil sat in a rocking-chair beside the stove which Stirrup had lit. Camille lay, half-asleep, on a mattress, and the Indian, knife in hand, was squatting at her feet.

"Yus, you had quite a run for your money, Mister Thorne," grinned the Cockney corporal. "Well, I was on your trail from the start, as I told you. Divisional 'eadquarters wasn't going to let another crooked policeman up to join Jaffrey. So it looks as if you're booked to swing, old man, as 'igh as that Bible feller, whose name I don't remember."

All Neil's attempts at explanation had failed to make the least impression on the obstinate little corporal. The two fell into silence;

Camille stirred, looked up. She spoke to Pierre in Cree.

"It's time we mush," said Pierre to Stirrup.

"You're right," said Stirrup. He glanced through the pane at the falling snow. "We'll make my camp and wait there till the storm lets up. This feller's pals may be on our trail any time now. Watch him close, Pierre."

HE began putting a pack together, while Camille gathered up a few things. She kept her eyes averted from Neil's face. Neil waited hopelessly. He was thinking that at least he might help the girl reach safety if he could get rid of his handcuffs. If Stirrup hadn't been so pig-headed —well, it was no use thinking about that.

They started. Through the oscillating curtain of snow Neil, closely guarded by Stirrup, saw Pierre breaking trail and Camille following him. Somewhere near-by, evidently, was Stirrup's camp.

Out of the scrub, upon the higher ridge, the sudden force of the Arctic gale caught them, raving and roaring through the narrow cleft that they were approaching. Great clots of snow dropped from the whirling branches overhead.

At the entrance to the cleft the force of the wind was terrific. It was almost impossible to make headway. Then of a sudden five figures, whitened, muffled and hooded, stood in the way. They consisted of Jaffrey, Sinnett, Swartz, Leeson and Carroll. Jaffrey, in the lead, held a carbine in his hands. The rest had revolvers. They charged forward, shouting.

Before Camille could turn to run she was struggling in Sinnett's grasp. Next came a fusillade.

A bullet whipped Neil's cap half off his head. Pierre screamed,

coughed and dropped in his tracks, shot through the heart. Stirrup, cursing, seized Neil and tried to drag him into the scrub beside the trail. Then he crumpled.

Handcuffed and helpless, Neil obeyed his immediate impulse to leap into the undergrowth. There was nothing he could do without obtaining possession of the key in the corporal's pocket, and for the moment that was impracticable. He darted through the bushes, hearing the yelling throng in pursuit of him.

In a few moments, however, the shouts had become faint and distant. If the gang was in pursuit of him, they must have taken the wrong trail in the snow. Neil panted on, and suddenly debouched into a stretch of rocky ground, with the white and black cliff immediately in front of him.

There were hollows everywhere in the porous rock, and the base was fringed with a dense growth of willow scrub. Great tumbled rocks lay everywhere.

Neil, helpless in his manacles, began to move along the base, looking for a refuge. Through the willows he saw something that looked like the entrance to some beast's lair. He crept inside. The entrance widened. Then he discovered that he was in a cavern of considerable size.

HE crouched there, shivering, for perhaps a quarter of an hour, swinging his arms to keep up the circulation. There were no more sounds of pursuit. No need to hide himself. He must go back and get Stirrup's handcuff key, surprise the gang, rescue Camille — desperate work, but all in the life of a policeman.

The snow fell about him like a pall as he emerged from the cave. He made his way back into the wil-

low scrub, beating here and there, till suddenly he heard the sound of voices.

He stopped. Through the under-growth he could see the glow of the stove. He was within a hundred feet of the cabin, and Jaffrey and his crew were in possession of it—with Camille.

He beat about again and came upon Stirrup's body lying in a drift of snow. A moan came from the corporal's lips. Stirrup was still alive!

NEIL got his handcuffed wrists beneath Stirrup's body, hoisted it with a great effort, and began carrying it back to the cave. But he hardly knew how he reached it with that dead weight on his arms.

Somehow he managed to get the little corporal inside. Then he saw that Stirrup had merely been stunned by a bullet that had glanced off the frontal bone. Beneath the drying, frozen blood, the skull was uninjured.

Five minutes later Neil had found the key in an inner pocket and had contrived to insert it into the key-hole of the old-fashioned handcuffs. They snapped apart and he was free!

A half-hour later, beside a fire of dead willow branches, which lit up the interior of the cave, Stirrup was talking.

"Yus, you got the jump on me, you and your pals," the little man was saying. "But you didn't fool the detachment. We guessed what your game was. The day after you left, I started mushing up after you. And there's a patrol follering close behind. You can kill me, but they'll get you, Thorne."

"You murdered old Landry, and if I 'adn't come upon that girl and the Injun, there might 'ave been no proof on you."

"But you're as good as 'anging

now, 'anging by the neck. So do your worst."

"Stirrup," said Neil, "I'm not surprised that bullet failed to penetrate your thick skull. But I tell you once more that Camille Landry is in the hands of Jaffrey's gang and I'm going to save her. I'm going to the hut to shoot down as many of that crowd as I can get, before they get me. I'm calling on you to help—if you're a man."

"Ho, go ahead and talk," jeered Stirrup. "I like to 'ear you. It's as good as a vaudeville. But what's the use of keeping up that line?"

"Get up!" snapped Neil.

Stirrup tried to obey, got on his knees, collapsed and put his hand to his head, looking about him in a sort of daze. It was evident that the little corporal was in no position to render aid. And Neil dared not delay.

"Stirrup," he said, "I've taken your gun. But you're not handcuffed. I'm going to ask you for your word of honor to stay where you are for an hour, that's all."

STIRRUP looked at Neil, and for the first time the little Cockney seemed shaken in his convictions.

"Look 'ere," he said, "I don't know what your gyme is, Thorne. Maybe you're 'oping to make a break back to your gang. Maybe you'll bring them back to kill me. But on the other 'and, you could kill me now. I'm 'elpless. Yus, I'll take you up on that, because I've got to. But I don't believe a word of what you've been telling me."

"Good enough for me," said Neil. "But no tricks!"

Stirrup gulped assent and Neil moved toward the entrance of the cave. Then he heard a call behind him.

"Hi, Thorne!"

Neil turned. Stirrup was trying to

support himself against the wall of the cave.

"'Arf a mo'. I'm coming with you. That girl—"

"Stay where you are," said Neil. And he went out into the falling snow.

VII

NEIL found a trail through the willows and moved forward until he stood at the edge of the clearing. In front of him he could see the hut and the red glow of the stove. Beside the hut a tent had been pitched, and from within it two voices broke out in drunken chorus. Neil recognized them as those of Carroll and Leeson.

He skirted the tent and approached the hut. He could hear men talking within—Jaffrey, Sinnett and Swartz. He remembered that he hadn't seen Blossom.

He crept up and peered in at the little window. He saw Camille lying upon the mattress and apparently bound. Jaffrey and his two satellites were seated at the table playing cards, laying them down with slow deliberation.

No, not playing cards, but drawing cards. By the light of the small lamp on the table, Neil saw Jaffrey draw a small black card and Sinnett and Swartz each a red one. Jaffrey shuffled. Neil moved silently toward the door. It was closed, but there was a chink between it and the upper sill, and, standing on tiptoe, Neil could see Jaffrey still shuffling. Sinnett snarled:

"Shuffling out my luck, Jaffrey?"

"Shuffling in mine," said Jaffrey thickly. "The next queen takes her."

Neil saw Camille, her eyes fixed in an unwinking stare. Terror seemed to have benumbed her mental faculties. He understood now that the three were cutting cards for the possession of her.

"Pity our friend Blossom ain't in on this," grinned Swartz. "I'll betcha he's gettin' into some mischief with them squaws back at the house."

Jaffrey laughed and handed him the pack. Swartz cut it. Jaffrey drew a small red card, Sinnett a black ace. They drew again.

"Got her!" shouted Sinnett, turning up the queen of diamonds. He rose and flung the cards down on the table in front of him. "How about it, Jaffrey?"

"She's yours," said Jaffrey, "after she's told us where the mine is. Eh, Mamzelle?"

That was the moment when Neil hurled himself into the cabin with a force that sent the door flying from its upper hinge.

"Hands up!" The words came from Neil's lips in a moaning whisper. "Sinnett, cut those ropes!"

SINNETT snarled like a trapped wolf, but he obeyed. Their hands above their heads, Swartz and Jaffrey watched. Jaffrey smiled.

"Always on the job, Rawlings, aren't you!" he said. "You made one big mistake, though. I could have used you."

Neil motioned the three toward the wall. "Step outside, Mademoiselle," he addressed Camille.

The girl moaned and struggled up out of the severed ropes. She stumbled and Neil caught her. And the next moment Sinnett precipitated himself against the table, sending the lamp smashing down in a score of fragments, and throwing the interior of the cabin into a murky twilight.

"The door, Jaffrey! Shoot for the door!" bawled Sinnett.

Neil's gun and Sinnett's crashed together. Neil felt the rip of the slug across his upper arm. He hurled Camille bodily into the open.

But it was the sagging door that saved them. A crossfire from the three crashed into the wood, but next moment Neil and Camille were in the open.

Neil cried to Camille to run, turned, and let loose. A bubbling scream came from Carroll's throat as he received the death missile. Swartz dropped screaming, shot through the abdomen. Neil grasped the girl and hurried her across the clearing.

THEY ran together, hearing Jaffrey, Leeson and Sinnett in pursuit. Neil's left arm was rapidly growing numb, but he managed to thrust fresh cartridges into his Colt; turned and fired again.

They were in the scrub now, and the white cliff loomed up ahead of them. Suddenly they were inside. There was the fire, a red glow of willow ashes. But Stirrup was gone.

"This way!"

Camille was tugging at Neil's arm and hurrying him into recesses of whose existence he had had no suspicion.

The only audible sound now was that of water dripping from the porous limestone rock in innumerable places. Suddenly Camille stopped. She groped into the darkness and Neil heard a match struck, saw the flicker of a lighted candle. Weak and spent he leaned against the wall staring about him.

He saw a vaulted chamber, apparently in the very heart of the great cliff. Thick seams of velvet black ran everywhere, and near-by were a miner's pick and other implements, a cot bed, covered with tarpaulin, a table made of a packing-box, and a case of canned foods.

Neil knew he was in Landry's pitchblende mine. The black seams in the rock represented wealth of almost fabulous value.

Camille was at Neil's side. "You're

wounded. Lie down. Let me see. Oh, forgive me for not believing in you!"

She stripped the tarpaulin from the cot, and Neil sat down. His sense of weakness was increasing. A burning thirst was parching him. As if divining it, Camille picked up a tin dipper and filled it at a little rivulet that gushed through the rock. Neil drank and felt better. Camille removed his coat and mackinaw, and was examining his wound.

The blood was still spurting from a small, severed artery.

The girl tore off the arm of Neil's shirt, picked up a stick of wood, and improvised a tourniquet. The spurting ceased.

"Lie down!" she ordered.

Neil surrendered himself to the hay-stuffed mattress. He saw Camille looking anxiously into his face while she tightened the knot in the cloth about the stick.

"Forgive me," she sobbed again. "They killed my father and poor Pierre, the wretches. I learned everything while they had me a prisoner in the cabin. But I would never have told them where the mine was."

"I'm going to save you, get you down to Fort Simpson," said Neil. "And we'll get the rest of them." He thought of Stirrup, but everything was beginning to grow dream-like.

"WE'RE safe here for the time?" he asked. "They're not likely to find the way?"

"They've never found it yet. And there's food here, and blankets. My father always thought we might have to take refuge here some day."

"That man, Stirrup—" Neil began. "And he said there's a patrol coming along. I reckon we'll be safe till—till—"

A startled cry from Camille's lips roused him from the lethargy into

which he was falling. He sat up on the cot.

The flickering light of the candle showed three monstrous and distorted shadows upon the opposite wall of the cave. Shadows of three men, creeping forward, with heads and shoulders bent; shadows that straightened into a dancing blur as Camille's cry rang out.

Jaffrey and his gang had found the entrance to the mine!

VIII

NEIL sprang from the cot and dragged the girl back into the recesses of the cave as a volley ricocheted from the walls about them. Not into the small recess in which the candle burned, but back to where the limestone roof hallowed into a narrow arch.

They were almost in darkness now, and the second volley was still more erratic. There was more danger from ricochets and from the small stalactites, sharp as needles, sent flying by the slugs, than of a direct hit. Neil pushed Camille behind a projecting buttress of rock. He forgot his weakness. He tore cartridges from his belt and loaded them into his cylinders, waiting grim-eyed for the rush.

He could see nothing now. The three, evidently surprised by the size and extent of the cavern, were whispering together in the invisible farther end of it, and the rock walls caught up the sounds and filled the cave with murmurs.

Jaffrey's voice: "You'd better listen, Thorne. I'm offering terms. Join up with me. I need you. There'll be money enough for all of us, and we won't harm Mamzelle. How about that, Thorne?"

"No, no!" cried Camille. "Murderers! I'd rather die here!"

"We don't have to shoot it out

with you, Thorne," went on Jaffrey. "We've got you bottled up, and you haven't got a dog's chance. But them two crooks are dead, and with you on our side we've got the game in our hands. I swear I mean it."

Neil felt Camille's agitated clutch upon his arm. He knew she was hanging tense upon his answer. And he laughed.

"You can't bargain like that with the Police, Jaffrey," he called back tauntingly. "You tried it with Carroll and Leeson, didn't you, and had to murder them? I'll make you just one promise: when you swing at Regina, I'll be waiting in the gallows' yard."

With a savage oath, Jaffrey leaped forward, firing, but the two others dragged him back. Neil could just make out the dim outlines of their figures at the other end of the cave. He fired back, and the shadows vanished.

THREE was not a sound inside the cave now. Neil looked at the candle in the recess midway between them, but to one side. It had already burned half-way down. When it went out, he knew he would have to fight it out in the darkness, one against three, one wounded man against three, and Landry's daughter to protect. He must conserve his strength.

A sudden volley, a rush as the candle flickered, and bullets chipping stalactites from the walls about him. Again those huge and dancing shadows. Neil fired, reloaded, and the candle burned up brightly. Sinnett's laugh rang through the cave.

"We've got you, Thorne," he called. "Cold meat, that's what you are. And Mamzelle's mine. You'd best come over here, Mamzelle, before you stop a slug."

Neil heard the girl draw in her breath with a hiss of terror. Then,

as she fumbled with his arm, he heard a low exclamation. He realized that his arm was wet again; the tourniquet had slipped. The little light of the candle had suddenly grown into a sun, and round about it surged a white mist, fading into darkness.

THE three had begun firing steadily, the bullets striking the rock on either side of Neil with vicious phuts. A chip of limestone seared his forehead.

"I'm all right," he muttered, trying to push the girl back behind the rock. "Never mind my arm." And again, with an immense effort, he succeeded in reloading.

But the candle was flickering almost to the end. A long fragment of glowing wick dropped into the grease. Neil emptied his gun again, and there came a scurrying backward through the obscurity.

The light blazed up once more. A stream of bullets struck the rock immediately overhead, and the continuous crack of revolvers echoed along the winding cave. Neil leaped back behind the ledge. He understood what had happened. In the temporary darkness the three had gained a small recess opposite the candle, within a score of feet of him.

Neil crouched, Camille, beside him, still working feverishly at his arm. The bullets were passing less than three inches overhead, now and again impinging against the stone buttress, and sending the chips flying.

Another length of wick was drooping. When that flickering light burned out, the final rush would come, the last struggle in the dark. Neil felt Camille's body shaking with sobs as she kneeled beside him, still working at his arm, and a strange, detached pity filled him. It was all growing so very dream-like.

Somewhat he knew that he had just five bullets left. His cartridge-belt was empty.

He must save those five, he was thinking.

The three had ceased firing, and were whispering together again. Sinnett shouted a vile taunt, but Neil only crouched, waiting, behind the buttress. His whole left side was numb, but, as if by force of will, he kept his right hand and arm as steady as a rock.

Strange how that half-inch of candle kept alight! It was almost like a miracle!

The half-inch had burned down on one side to the rock base, over which a little pool of shining grease was spreading. The whisperings had ceased. A deathly tension filled the cavern. And Neil flung all his will and all his personality into that resolve to retain his grip on strength and consciousness, though the numbness was now extending over his whole body, and he could hardly feel Camille holding him.

THE light was dwindling. Not a sound from the three. No glimpse of them, where they crouched so near. At the first stir, he'd spring. He tensed his limbs, crouched lower, ready to hurl himself forward, with a blazing Colt.

The wick dropped in a red festoon. They were coming. Another rattling volley, oaths, shouts. Neil poised his limbs. Then suddenly the wick flared up, and in an instant that seemed eternity he saw the three, Jaffrey in front, Leeson and Sinnett on his heels.

And then—at the same moment, three shots rang out from the back of the cave in swift succession. Neil saw Leeson stagger and fall forward, clutching at his breast. Sinnett, hand clasped to forehead, whirled like a dervish, and in his spin collided

against Jaffrey and sent him reeling. The tiny bit of candle was blazing high. It seemed to illuminate the whole cave as Neil crouched, finger pressed to trigger, upon the act of firing, staring, wondering, hearing Camille's wild cry.

THAT cry was drowned in Jaffrey's yell. Neil saw him stagger as a fourth shot rang out, and then he fired, and a hoarse yell out of the darkness of the cave behind Neil answered him. And out of that darkness burst a monstrous form, like a man wrapped in swaddling clothes, and white with snow.

It leaped past Neil and Camille, and Neil recognized Blossom.

Blossom, bleeding from a terrible wound in the neck, which had shot some supporting ligament away, for the great head lolled upon one shoulder, and the dewlap brushed the upper arm. Next moment Blossom and Jaffrey were locked in a death-grapple.

The monstrous form had clenched its hands round Jaffrey's throat, and Jaffrey, screaming with rage and fear, was hammering at Blossom's head with the muzzle of his revolver. At his face, too, which had become indistinguishable in the light of the last quarter-inch of candle.

It was no longer a human face. Jaffrey's gun-sight had shredded the last vestiges of humanity from it, but still the throat screeched, and the hands tightened about Jaffrey's throat, until his eyes started from his head, and his screams died away

into beast-like moanings. They toppled, locked closely together, to the floor of the cave. Jaffrey's heels drummed against stone, and the breath wheezed mechanically from Blossom's mouth.

Then suddenly the light went out.

The drumming and the wheezing ceased.

Neil was not even conscious of Camille.

"Well, the best of us is apt to make mistakes," said Corporal Stirrup, three days later. "I 'eard somebody moving about in the back of that blooming cave, and went to see who it was, and I couldn't get back. Heard a sound like all the Police in Canada was 'aving a sham fight with 'eavy artillery, and blowed if I could find the way back till Miss Camille 'eard me 'ollering and found me.

"THORNE certainly cleaned up that gang neat and clean, and it's a pity none of them didn't live to 'ang in Edmonton or Regina. I'm 'anding it to him fair. We got him wrong, and he's a good policeman."

Which was the highest praise the corporal knew how to bestow.

"How's he coming on, Corporal?" asked one of the members of the relief patrol, which had arrived on the morning after the fight.

"Oh, he'll pull through," answered Stirrup nonchalantly. "Mamzelle will 'ave him out of bed in a week the way she's fussing over him. And, if you don't believe me, tyke a squint through that there window."

Read

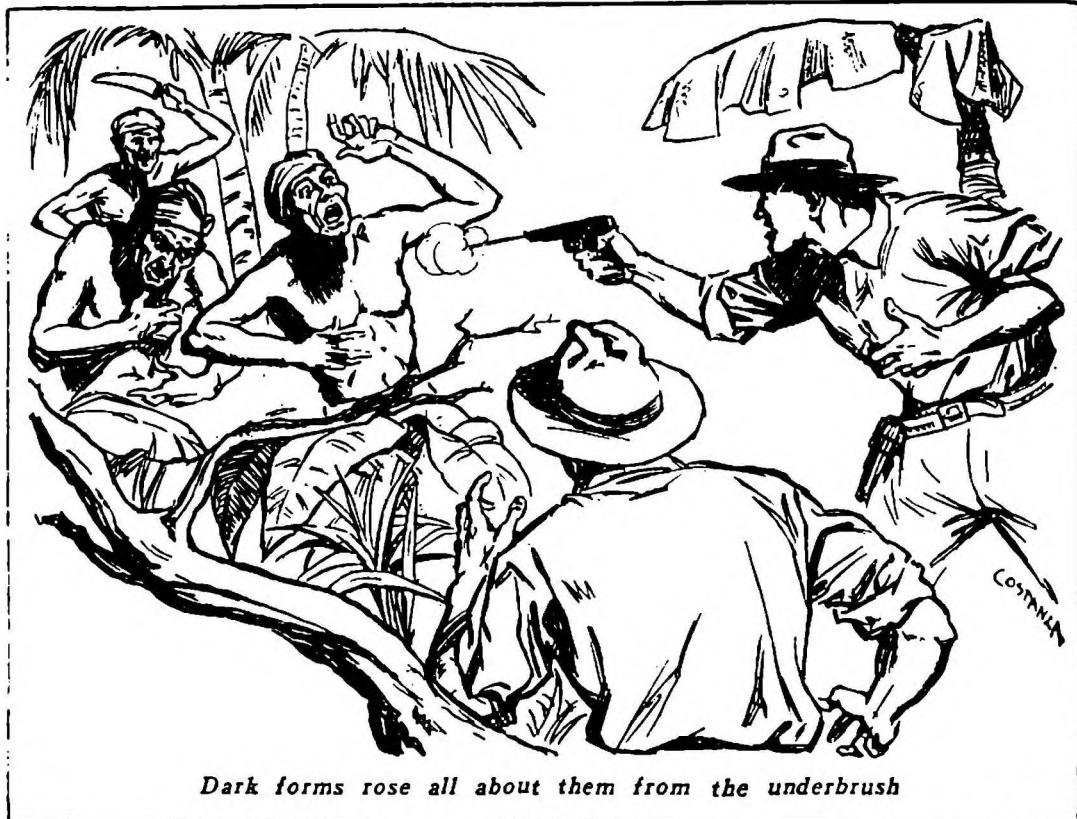
BILL THE CONQUEROR

By JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

A Western Story That Packs a Wallop—and a Laugh

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With Lead and Steel



Dark forms rose all about them from the underbrush

Two Leathernecks on the Trail of the Green Eyed Monster, Renegade of the Badlands of Santo Domingo

A Complete Novelette

By ARTHUR J. BURKS

Author of "What Price Courage," "Bare Fists," etc.

THE blazing sun washed over the exposed knoll in a veritable tidal wave of blasting heat. Every khaki shirt, every pair of washing-bleached trousers, even the heavy shoes of the leathernecks, were slick and soggy with sweat.

They had marched from San Pedro de Macoris since four in the morning through the verdant hell of the

jungle, to answer the grim challenge of the "Green Eyed Monster," that swart renegade from the Guardia Nacional Dominicana. Their quarry had "gone to the hills," deserting his colors and his uniform, to join and lead the *gavilleros*. He had organized into one group the roving bands of bandits who had never been granted amnesty.

Sweat ran in rivulets down sun-

burned faces. Sweaty palms were rubbed on trousers so that the dampness would not rust the metal of the Springfield rifles. The men, accustomed to the jungles though they were, from many months of chasing the elusive bandits, panted like spent runners.

They tried to gulp cool air into their lungs; but there was no cool air, only air that was like the breath from a furnace.

GUNNERY SERGEANT DANIEL SHIMEL, representing the Intelligence Office, grinned a little as his eyes roved over the platoon of leathernecks.

Several saw his grin and made sarcastic remarks.

"If you're leading us on another wild goose chase, Shimel," said one, "I'll personally pull your hair out by the roots and slap you over the face with the bloody end of it. Who started this yarn about the Green Eyed Monster? I'll bet you did, to give yourself a job."

Other marines had other things to say.

The officer in command, Lieutenant Smollett, was striding toward Shimel, who straightened indolently to a position that in some small degree represented "attention." The officer was trying to look trim and neat despite the sweat that seeped through his cordovan putties.

"Well, Sergeant?" he said. "What's next?"

"The Lieutenant is in command, sir," replied Shimel.

"But I was told that you would lead us to the camp of the Green Eyed Monster."

Shimel's gray, almost opaque eyes wrinkled at the corners, became almost invisible. It was as though long looking into the face of the sun had weakened them though folks who knew Shimel knew that his eyes

were sharp as dagger points, missing nothing.

"The men can't stand much more of this," prompted the officer.

Shimel snapped to attention again. His brow furrowed into a frown of disapproval.

"Sir," he said, and the officer reddened as he listened, "marines can do anything. They can stand anything. They can whip a squad of 'gooks', each of 'em, with nothing but their hats. If the Lieutenant will lead them, they'll follow—to hell and back."

The officer's face turned purple with discomfiture. Even the youngest recruit in the outfit had more service than this shavetail, and he was conscious of his deficiencies. The leathernecks listened, wondering how he would take the quiet reproof of the old-timer.

Shimel was an old-timer, though with but twelve years of service behind him. There wasn't a foot of Santo Domingo that he didn't know.

"I'll lead them, Sergeant," said the officer quietly. "Just show me where. Are you sure that you can lead us to the camp of the Green Eyed Monster?"

"Absolutely, sir. This is it."

There were gasps from the leathernecks as they stared in the direction indicated by Shimel's right hand. He was pointing toward the wilderness to the north, that led away to the shores of Samana Bay.

SHIMEL had indicated a vast ghastly wilderness into which not one of these marines had ever penetrated. But all had heard about it. The land was the badlands of Santo Domingo. Some volcanic eruption millions of years ago had blasted the terrain, and the ocean of lava had cooled in fantastic shapes. Great potholes covered the land ahead—and these potholes, some of them scores

of feet deep, were masked by the green of the jungle. Lianas hung down everywhere like snakes. Spanish moss, drooping like ghostly shrouds from tree limbs, suggested death and terror.

One might easily plunge into a concealed pothole to his death. The trails which angled in among the holes were so narrow sometimes that a goat would have had difficulty in traversing them. And the natives under Juan Culebra's—the Green Eyed Monster—leadership always made for this refuge when the marines were abroad hunting them.

Of all the leathernecks only Shimel and one other had ever penetrated the badlands far enough to look down over the oven-hot cliffs of Las Hatillas into the blue waters of Samana Bay. Both had vowed never to do it again and yet here they were.

"I'll take Corporal Fox," said Shimel softly, "and go on ahead. Stay here, but keep your men under cover—remember what gave Juan Culebra his nickname!—until you hear three reports of an automatic. When the bandits come it means we've made contact—and you'll have to reach us. Maybe one of us will be able to get back to lead you."

SHIMEL saw a tremor pass over the body of Lieutenant Smollet.

"Travel at night through this mess?" he muttered. "Half my men will get themselves killed."

Shimel grinned.

"The only difference between marines and goats, sir," he said, "is that goats don't wear leggin's! And don't use your flashlights too much if they come after dark—sir."

Smollet looked at his men. They were straightening up, grinning, flirting the sweat from their bared heads. He could see they were eager for action.

"Okay, Sergeant," said Smollet

quietly. "And one question—what would you advise me to do here?"

It was a courageous thing to do—an officer to ask advice of an enlisted man, even a high ranking one like Shimel. But it was good psychology. It showed the leathernecks that Smollet didn't believe he knew it all. He rose much higher in their estimation.

SHIMEL grinned, with a new respect in his face—and Shimel had little respect, save outwardly, for most officers.

"Get your men under cover, right here somewhere, before Juan Culebra starts his famous sniping. Have them be careful of the water in their canteens and don't let them drink from any pools or streams. If you run out of water, boil some."

"But keep your men back from the fire after it gets dark, for Juan Culebra is like an owl—and he'll drill somebody sure. Then just be patient and wait for word from us, or until you hear those shots. If nothing happens before sun-up, go back to Macoris."

"But—you—" began Smollet.

"You won't be able to do anything for us," said Shimel grimly. "Fox and I've been in tough spots before—and we've had a run-in or two with Juan Culebra. I have, especially. I held a commission in the Guardia, my last hitch down here, and Juan was in my command—and hates my guts! Come on, Fox, let's be going places."

A slender, smallish man, with a preternaturally white face—a face that never tanned—slouched out of formation. His eyes were black and deep. He was the only man in the formation who perspired not at all. He looked like a consumptive.

But Shimel knew that the smaller man could start in right now and hike from Cabo Engaño to Gonaives without stopping for food or sleep or

water. He was a strange one. He looked shy enough—but he was chilled steel. An automatic swung in a holster at his hip, unusual armament for a corporal to carry.

Shimel turned to the lieutenant.

"Are we agreed on everything, sir?" he asked, then yelled suddenly:

"Take cover!"

Instantly the leathernecks mingled with the underbrush which cloaked the knoll on which they had been standing. At the exact moment of giving the command, Shimel had hurled himself downward, hands against the chest of Smollet, while Corporal Fox plunged forward on his face. And none too soon.

From somewhere to the north came a crashing report. A bullet smashed into the bole of a tree above them. Smollet and Shimel, the former flat on his back, untangled themselves as the far away Springfield roared. Shimel grinned at his superior—and spat contemptuously into the brush.

He stood up again.

"Hadn't you better stay down?" asked Smollet calmly. "He may fire again."

"Juan Culebra fires and runs," said Shimel. "Stand up, sir, and let's do some measuring."

Shimel's grin was twisted, his eyes almost closed.

"It would have split your head open, sir," he said softly. "Juan Culebra always aims at the head—and he never misses."

"How did you know?" began Smollet. The lieutenant was a bit pale, but his lips did not tremble and there was no fear in him.

"FLASH of the sun on metal," said Shimel succinctly. "Get so you know it, every time. And it flashed from the right direction. Fox there saw it, too."

Corporal Fox raised his pale face from the brush, grinning.

"Lord," he said ruefully, "I was hoping he'd wiped you out, Sarge. I never have any luck. Didn't even make you swallow your *anduga*!"

"On your feet," retorted Shimel, "we're heading for the bundocks!"

Shimel, burly, straight and upstanding; Fox, who walked with a queer sort of shuffle and with his back bowed like a hunchback—raised their hands in salutes, started swiftly into the jungle, and vanished from sight almost at once.

II

SHIMEL and Fox were well aware of the danger of their mission—and Shimel, at least, was worried. He knew the Green Eyed Monster for what he was—a mad killer. The fellow had learned to use a rifle while he had been with the Guardia Nacional Dominicana, Marine Corps trained.

He was one of the best rifle shots in the country.

The man had been named the Green Eyed Monster by the natives because of his marksmanship—which appeared to be no reason at all. Yet the name had stuck to him. He had, apparently, been an excellent soldier while with the Guardia. He had finally been promoted to a second lieutenancy, with not a whisper of suspicion against him. Then, all at once, the whispers began.

A native was found dead at the edge of the jungle near Jaina, where Juan Culebra was attached to a Guardia company. The man had been drilled neatly through the forehead. Medicos said that the hole had been made with either a Springfield or a Kragg rifle. There was one man in the Guardia who could shoot so cleanly.

But the investigation came to nothing. There was no evidence of any sort.

Two days later another native was found dead in the same manner, and again the investigation led nowhere. Juan Culebra, all concerned because "his people" were being slain, had undertaken the task of making the investigation.

Then a first lieutenant, sent to Jaina secretly by the Commanding General, heard a rifle shot from a barracks—and far away at the edge of the jungle, saw a native plunge on his face. The innocent native had just broken from a jungle trail.

THE young lieutenant raced to the barracks where he had heard the shot. Juan Culebra was ahead of him, making an "investigation." He, too, had heard the shot, he declared. But nobody in the barracks knew anything about it—and not a rifle barrel was warm, save with the natural warmth of the tropics, and not a bore was dirty.

But the marine officer noted one thing: the Guardia soldiers walked in fear of their lives in the presence of Juan Culebra.

Juan was therefore questioned at great length.

Next day after the questioning he was missing. So was a Springfield rifle—and Juan had left a note in which he had brazenly confessed to three murders. He had shot the three natives, he said, to win a bet with himself! He'd bet himself that he could drill a man through the head as far as he could see him! The results had proved him the winner of his bet.

And now, the marines—who had taught him to shoot, mind you, and now were investigating him!—had better watch their steps, for from now on he intended to make war upon them—with the help of the *gavilleros*.

Of course the bandits, whom the marines had chased from pillar to

post, so that they were half starved, flocked to Juan's standard in comfortable numbers. Here was a man who even defied the marines!

And Juan had made good on his boast no later than yesterday. A captain, on duty as officer of the day in Macoris, had stepped out on the guardhouse porch to stare out across the Caribbean—and had dropped the next moment with a bullet hole between the eyes.

And the word had been given:

"Bring in the Green Eyed Monster, dead or alive—but bring him in!"

To Shimel, veteran of Intelligence, fell the job of taking care of details. But the Commanding General did not believe in half-way measures. He didn't think that even Shimel, and Corporal Fox, his shadow, had a chance against Juan and his minions. So a platoon of leathernecks, led by Smollet, were ordered to assist Shimel and Fox.

Now Shimel, striding ahead of Fox, balancing himself precariously on the trail where it was merely a knife blade between potholes in the shoe-cutting badlands, swore softly to himself. The Old Man shouldn't have sent so many men after Juan. It would tickle the renegade's vanity too much, and he already had more than his share. And it might cost leatherneck lives.

"Say, Sarge," said Fox, cutting in on his superior's thoughts, "What if that Green Eyed Monster takes a pot shot at us?"

Shimel chuckled.

"Why should you worry? I'm covering you, ain't I?"

"**Y**EAH, but you're so full of soft boloney that the bullet'd go right through and get me anyhow. Say, Smollet sort of stood up, at that, didn't he? Gee, if a bullet'd come as close to wiping me out as that one did him, I'd be heading back for

Macoris with my tail between my legs."

"Bullet didn't come any closer to him than to me."

"Yeah, wanna be a hero, don't you? Wanna get a letter of commendation, or be promoted to be a shavetail, don't you?"

"I wouldn't be a shavetail if they gave away commissions!" exploded Shimel. "The best billet in the whole Marine Corps is gunnery sergeant, and I'm that. A gunnery sergeant never has anything to do but draw his pay, his breath, and tell corporals and second louies where to head in at!"

Fox chuckled.

"And chase folks like Juan Culebra! I reckon that's just drawing your breath, huh?"

"Right! Juan don't scare me any. If you're afraid, though—"

At this moment Fox interrupted.

"Look, Sarge! Here's where Juan fired from!"

SHIMEL paused, spat into the underbrush, and stared. An empty cartridge case reposed beside the trail, near the white hole of a ceiba tree. There were marks near-by to show where a man had stood to take aim. Both leathernecks looked back. The knoll on which the platoon was hidden was in plain sight—but all of six hundred yards away, and at least a hundred feet below where they stood.

Shimel whistled.

"That Juan is a real marksman, Fox," he said. "How did he know how to allow for elevation and windage at this distance, tell me that? I'll bet most of our best marks-men would scratch their heads and ask for at least two sighting shots before they'd guarantee to drill a man at that distance."

"Sometimes I agree with Shakespeare that two heads're better'n

one," said Fox caustically. "Don't you suppose Juan knew we were coming this way? He knew we'd have to pass over that knoll if we followed the trail. I'll bet he took his sighting shots before we got here, yesterday maybe, so we wouldn't hear the shots today. Elemental, Sergeant!"

Shimel grinned.

"We'd better be moving," was all he said. "It doesn't pay to stand still very long hereabouts, when the Green Eyed Monster is on the prowl."

They continued on. Shimel was setting a killing pace, but he knew Fox. Chilled steel, both of the men, but Fox seemed never to tire at all.

They didn't see the black blob hidden in the lofty foliage of a bayohuna tree, a quarter of a mile ahead. Juan Culebra, giant native, crouched there, debating within himself whether to drop the two marines as they stood, or to play with them for a time and allow them to come on.

Culebra decided against firing now, mostly because a wind was sweeping across the badlands from Cabo Engaño. He was afraid that the motion of the tree, which he couldn't accurately time, might make him miss.

HE shinned down the tree, rifle slung over his shoulder—and called softly to several sandaled natives who came forth from the jungle at his words.

"Let them come on," he said. "We'll lead them far into the wilderness. Cursed American dogs! We'll take them alive and torture them. When we have finished with torture, I shall fasten both to a tree, and shoot them to death from as far away as I can see them."

"Then I shall fire off the big one's automatic, three times, so that the other American dogs will come on

this way. They shall see what Juan Culebra thinks of marines!"

Shimel and Fox knew nothing of Juan's plans concerning them. But had they been asked to guess, they would have come surprisingly close to the truth—for both knew much of Juan Culebra.

III

THE two marines had become merely spots against the jungle. There now was no time for sarcasm or horseplay, for both expected Juan Culebra to make some sort of move at any moment. Shimel's ice-gray eyes, never seeming to do so, scanned the jungle on all sides. They missed nothing.

The right hands of each man swung close to the holsters in which their automatics were. Both had fastened their holster flaps back, so that their weapons could leap into their hands at need.

"If they jump us we've got to get off those three shots," muttered Shimel, without looking back or pausing in his almost mad haste to penetrate further into the jungle.

"You're telling me!" murmured Fox. His voice was unhurried.

Shimel's chest was heaving and his green shirt was streaked with salty splotches where sweat had formed, dried, formed again. But he'd never slow down, until slowed by many men, or a bullet.

"I'm wondering how you expect to find Juan in a mess like this," said Fox. "You could look from now until Hades has icemen and not find a soul."

"Yeah, but Juan knows we're here, and he'll come hunting for us—"

"Maybe he'll do his hunting from a distance, with that rifle of his."

"Maybe. We'll simply have to be all set to duck, that's all."

"I've never heard of anybody duck-

ing bullets with much success," said Fox. "You know the old saw, you never hear the shot when the bullet kills you, because the bullet reaches you ahead of the sound."

"Yeah, but with a good nose you can smell it coming!"

In spite of their snatches of panting raillery, both were deadly serious. They knew very well that they walked in danger of momentary attack from a distance. Juan Culebra could shoot them down just as he wished. But they also knew the renegade's vanity. He'd try to take them alive. They wouldn't make it easy for him, but they wouldn't run away, either.

If they were captured the next step would be up to Smollet and his men. And Shimel, remembering how cool Smollet had been after that bushwhacking shot, did not fear that Smollet would let them down. He admitted, to himself, a grudging admiration for Smollet.

Shimel's belt was loose, hanging down on the right side. His trousers had slipped up in his leggings, and he never had looked less the "parade ground soldier." His shoes were muddy from sweat and trail dust, and scratched with thorns.

Dust and blood had settled in the sun-creases on his face. He looked ghastly. Even Juan Culebra must have taken a backward step if faced suddenly by Daniel Shimel of the ice-gray eyes, and the bulging jaw filled with *anduga*.

CORPORAL FOX was different again. He still walked with his slouch, but strength and determination could be seen in the play of his muscles across the back of his shirt. His head turned from side to side like a submarine's periscope—and he too did not miss a thing that Shimel saw.

His face was utterly blank, but his

eyes were hard as black agate. They were wide open, almost unwinking, as though he refused to blink for fear of missing something. His pupils were narrowed to pin-point sharpness.

Fox, of the two men, looked easily the more dangerous.

Yet it was a toss-up between them. Shimel was the bruiser, Fox the clever man of finesse. They made an admirable team. Smollet had recognized that, either by reason or instinct, so had offered no objection when they had crashed away from his command into the jungles.

The jungle now was filled with a waiting, expectant silence. Shimel scanned the trail at their feet, but it was hard and left no footprints. Besides, natives expecting to be trailed kept to the deeper jungles. No use looking for them. This was the logical direction, that was all.

They hurried forward. Their free left hands, while their rights hovered near their holstered automatics, pulled aside the slender whiplike limbs which crossed their paths.

Behind him, Shimel could feel the tension of Fox—Fox the relentless, the sure, the man who never looked back until he had reached his goal and attained his mission.

SUDDENLY there was a new sound in the jungle, ahead and to the left, off the trail. Instantly Fox jumped ahead, his left hand thrusting Shimel aside. Faster on the move than Shimel, he was now ahead, smashing his way into the jungle. Shimel swore and grabbed at Fox's shoulder. But Fox eeled away and Shimel raced after him. Presently they looked down at a goat with a broken leg, wedged into a cleft at the lip of a pothole.

Shimel whirled on Fox.

"What's the idea of jumping ahead of me, Fox?"

Fox's ordinarily white face flamed red.

"If there's anything doing," he said, "I intend to be in on it. I don't intend for you to hog all the glory."

SHIMEL grabbed the corporal and shook him until his teeth rattled. Shimel was trembling, almost sick. He lifted one hand as though to cuff Fox on the head. But he desisted and set the smaller man down again. There was nothing to be said. He had asked a question—and Fox had lied.

Fox, suspecting danger, and knowing that Shimel would rush right into it, knowing that Shimel was of far more importance to this task than was he himself, had deliberately jumped ahead to take the brunt in case of attack. That was like Fox. It brought a lump into Shimel's throat as big as the bulge in his cheek.

But he spat an amber stream into the brush and cursed Fox softly.

"Keep behind me, where you belong, you white-faced Hereford!" he snapped. "That's an order—and I won't repeat it!"

"That's a promise, I hope," said Fox. "I'm sick of listening to your orders anyhow. Only a fool ever obeys 'em!"

Shimel shrugged and started on again, increasing his stride to make up for lost time. Just now they couldn't waste a bullet on the goat to put it out of its misery. The safety of the leathernecks was of more importance than the sufferings of a goat. But Shimel had learned something new about Fox: the man thought with the speed of lightning—he feared nothing that walked, and was loyal to the point of foolhardiness.

In a fight he'd be great but Shimel knew that already.

Then Shimel's nostrils began to

quiver, for downwind from the northwest came a familiar odor—wood-smoke mingled with *ajo* or garlic. Somewhere up there, where only bandits lived, a meal was being prepared. Such a homelike thing, in a place where death stalked behind every tree trunk!

"It ought to happen any moment now, Fox," said Shimel grimly. His left hand went to his shirt pocket. Without taking his eyes off the way ahead he spat out his *anduga* and crammed a fresh batch into his leathery cheek. His eyes were grimmer still, as though this act had been a prelude, a sort of preparation for battle.

SHIMEL hitched his holster a bit further forward on his hip. He heard Fox's hand slap his holster and knew that the corporal had aped the movement.

He grinned to himself, a twisted sort of grin.

"Banty rooster!" he said aloud, without looking back.

Fox snorted—and at this identical moment dark forms rose all about them from the underbrush. But both had been expecting exactly this, for the smell of native had impinged ever more strongly on their nostrils. Fox drew his automatic with a lightning-like movement. Shimel's was out and into action.

Three bullets snarled from his Colts, and they weren't fired into the air. They drove through the chests of the nearest three men. Fox did not fire at all. The signal agreed upon by Smollet and Shimel had been three reports of an automatic. Shimel had just given that signal, and at the same time downed three natives.

Fox merely stopped, spread his legs far apart, gripped his automatic tightly in his small white hand, flicked off his hat—and waited for the natives to come to him.

Three shots fired, Shimel also gripped his weapon tightly. They must not fire again. Smollet must understand that those three shots were his signal. Smollet's marines, right now, would be on the move.

From deep in the woods came a burst of laughter—and a boisterous voice, mocking, sinister.

"Take them alive!" shouted Juan Culebra. "What fine hostages we have here: The White Faced Fox and Sergeant Chewer! With these two in our hands we can almost force the marines to evacuate our impoverished land!

"Take them alive! Break their bones if you will, but they must be able to recognize the Green Eyed Monster when they stand before him."

Shimel's voice was like a roar, as natives poured over him in a stinking flood. The natives did not draw their weapons; they merely detached their scabbards and used them for clubs. They had been forbidden to use the sharp edges of the machetes to destroy the two leathernecks, but the scabbards themselves, aided by the weight of the weapons inside, were savage, ghastly instruments of offense.

WITH their arms and upflung automatics, Shimel and Fox savagely parried those heavy machetes—and ducked in to bring their automatic muzzles down with savage force atop the heads or across the faces of Juan's minions.

Fox laid open a handsome native's face from ear to chin with the front sight of his automatic.

"That," he said, through set teeth, "will keep you out of the movies!"

The stricken man screamed, dropped his machete, backed away, both hands held to his face. Fox leaped forward, caught up the weapon to use as a guard, and continued

his leap until he reached the man he had just struck. He felled him with one straight, crashing blow alongside the temple. With a moan the man went down, hands falling away from his bleeding face.

Now Fox was being hemmed in. But he fought like a fury, making every blow count. Shimel saw his predicament, and Shimel's own weight, in his lunging, barging body, stood them both in good stead. For Shimel plunged through the thin circle of natives like a cutter through skim ice, laying them out with slashing, slicing smashes of his reddened automatic, until he stood beside Fox.

Then the leathernecks turned, back to back, to fight until they should be taken or their enemies driven off. The best that could be said for their situation was that Juan Culebra could not fire at them without hitting one of his own men. But both knew that that wouldn't deter Juan in the least. He was merely a killer. Whom he killed mattered little, to him. He was the Green Eyed Monster—and they would be in his hands, almost surely, within a matter of minutes.

And then what?

IV

TO JUAN CULEBRA it afforded a vast, almost childish satisfaction to look through the sights of a high-powered rifle and know that he could do things with the weapon which were beyond the capabilities of his friends. In Santo Domingo, warring natives always fired from the hip, without taking aim, and seldom were battles decisive or bloody. Onlookers were in far more danger than were the actual participants.

But with Juan it was different. He could look down the sights and say gleefully to himself:

"When I squeeze the trigger—that

man will drop; and even as he drops I'll know where the bullet hits him!"

Juan had learned to "call his shots." That act of shooting which sounds so difficult but is really so easy for the expert marksman. Expert riflemen seldom go wrong, barring tricks of wind currents and mistakes in elevation and windage. But Juan Culebra knew all the tricks, and the ways of the wind were an old story to him.

JUAN was childish, but he had no conscience, and the ghosts of murdered men haunted him not at all. He never gave them a thought afterward and was even mildly surprised that others should be so concerned about them. If Juan didn't know or care about the men he killed, why should anyone else?

And now Juan peered through the hanging brush and lianas to where two marines—one a burly husky with a jaw full of *anduga*, and one who was slight, but strong and true as a coiled steel spring—fought like furies against his men. Juan studied those men of his and his thick lips curled with contempt. He could do better himself, alone against those two, than all his men.

But why should he, and perhaps get hit by fists or automatic muzzles? It was for minions to take blows, masters to profit by them, and Juan was master of all the badlands south of Samana Bay. And one day, he promised himself, he would also be master of all Santo Domingo. Liliis had done it, and Liliis was no smarter than Juan Culebra!

But he must see that the marines left Santo Domingo, for marines had a bad way of defeating the best-laid plans even of men like himself.

His black eyes glowed with admiration as he watched the two leathernecks fight off the attacks of the *gavilleros*. They were good men! If

they would desert the marines and join him there was little he couldn't do. He'd ask them that, before he killed them!

To Juan it seemed as simple as that. He'd get the money to pay them, and money could buy anything. A swift attack on San Pedro de Macoris, or Sanchez, or Samana, would produce all the money they'd need. Very simple.

CULEBRA had overheard the plan to bring the marines by firing three shots from an automatic, and that signal had been given. Juan grinned to himself. The marines, traveling even at top speed, would come but slowly. He had at least an hour before they could arrive.

Then why not, Juan asked himself ambitiously, move further into the badlands, leading the whole platoon into a trap? Wouldn't all Santo Domingo sit up and take notice, and speak with dread the name of the Green Eyed Monster, if Juan were to conquer a leatherneck platoon?

He looked down at himself. He was a huge man. He might have been a heavyweight boxer or wrestler. His body was old ivory, and as hard—and his feet, always his secret shame, were the largest in Santo Domingo. His toes were almost prehensile. He could walk up the trunks of cocoanut palms with ease.

Once a man had called him "Juan of the Big Feet," but no matter now—the man had been a captain of marines, and the captain was dead. It was his slaying which had brought the platoon of leathernecks into the badlands, on the trail of Culebra.

Nobody dared refer to Juan's big feet. Was not his body built in proportion? Did not the native women gaze upon the huge Juan with eyes of adoration? Juan knew it. There was fear in their eyes, too, perhaps more fear than admiration, but Juan

would never admit that.

He watched two more of his men go down, their scalps laid open, red under the steaming sun. One of them was unconscious, perhaps dead. But the other moved a little. Juan studied him, pushing aside the brush a bit.

That second man, while under his arm, flung up across his bruised and broken head, he watched the surge and flow of the fight. Juan noticed that when Shimel, backing away from an attack, would have stepped on the legs of that second man, the legs were drawn away.

Juan's eyes narrowed—glittering like those of a snake. That man had signed his death warrant with that movement of his legs. He should have allowed the heavy shoes of Shimel to tread on him. Bruises were quick to heal; death at the hands of Juan Culebra was incurable. That's how Juan put the matter to himself. His right forefinger fiddled with the trigger of his Springfield. He hesitated, licking his lips.

Then—well, the marines were coming anyhow. Juan suddenly flung up the rifle, took quick aim with the battle sight, and the woods shook with the explosion of his Springfield. The legs which had moved for Shimel did not move again, save to quiver slightly.

SHIMEL, hearing, turned his head to see if Fox had been hit; Fox turned his head to see if Shimel had. Neither noticed where the bullet had gone.

That slight turning of heads almost proved their undoing, for the natives, who had seen where Juan's bullet had gone—because they knew Juan better than did anyone else—knew that they must take these two or be destroyed by the Green Eyed Monster. They redoubled the fury of their attack.

Shimel and Fox, back to back

again fought like super-men. The muzzles of their automatics were dripping with red. Each held a machette in his left hand, using it as a foil. Shimel's mouth was open as he gasped for air. Even Fox's clothing was now faintly tinged with sweat. But the eyes of both men were savage. They would never stop fighting back.

Every minute they evaded the natives of Juan Culebra was a minute in their favor, if the marines under Smollet had heard the signal. And both knew it must have been heard. Sounds traveled far in this land.

Several wooden scabbards had been broken, and many of the natives now had naked steel in their eager hands. At warning shouts from Juan Culebra they delivered their blows with the flat of their weapons. But even these blows could be savage, and in spite of all efforts, those razor sharp edges could do much damage.

SHIMEL was nude to the waist; there were streaks of crimson across his hairy chest. The muscles on his torso stood out like living serpents, dancing and writhing with every movement of his arms, which were never still.

"Come on and get us, rats!" he snarled. "I thought Juan had real fighters in his command!"

The natives answered savagely, stung by Shimel's sarcasm. But when they charged, falling into the trap, Shimel's right hand smashed down with savage strokes of pistol muzzle—and men fell before his harsh blows. Fox spoke up, answering Shimel.

"Why'n't you button up your lip, Sarge? Trying to talk 'em to death?"

In between words Fox grunted, and each time he grunted there followed, immediately afterward, the satisfying sound of automatic muzzle colliding brutally with native head.

Fox's hands worked faster than did Shimel's but when he hit men they didn't stay down as they did for Shimel. After all, weight counted, weight and strength, in a battle like this.

"All together!" shouted Juan Culebra. "Now let's charge them—I'm charging with you. This time they must go down!"

JUAN, though he enjoyed the fight, was becoming impatient. He didn't care to become a target for vengeful marines, at least not yet.

He drove into the press, swinging his Springfield by the barrel.

"Bring them down, or I'll knock the brains out of every last one of you!" bellowed Juan Culebra.

Urged by such a savage threat, which Juan was only too capable of executing, the natives outdid themselves in a final spurt. They were scared of Juan, as an audience is scared of a theatre fire, and they swarmed over Shimel and Fox as that same audience would swarm to crowded exits. They feared Juan more than they feared Shimel and Fox, and though the two men fought to their last gasp, they were overwhelmed by sheer numbers. The two leathernecks went down, all but beaten senseless.

Finally the natives, at a sharp command from Juan Culebra, stepped back.

Juan stood over the two leathernecks. Shimel, looking up, hadn't even lost his quid of *anduga*. Juan kicked him in the side.

"Get up, American dog!" he said.

Shimel sat up, unsmiling, his gray eyes boring into the black ones of Juan Culebra. Then his eyes went to Juan's big feet.

"Lord, Juan," he said casually, "don't you ever wash those *balandros* (two-master schooners) of yours? They sure need it!"

And from the wide mouth of Daniel Shimel there flashed suddenly a vast amber stream, which sprayed thickly the huge feet of Juan Culebra. Then Shimel looked innocently up at the Green Eyed Monster.

"You're not sore, are you?" he asked. "I'm merely trying to be of some use to you!"

JUAN'S face was a mask of Satan. His lips writhed and twisted, as though trying to give birth to words. When the words finally came they were like the sound of a rasp being drawn forcibly across a native potato grater. "For that you will pay, Sergeant Chewer," he said, "with the blood of your body, which shall be taken drop by drop!"

"Why," spoke up Fox, who also now was in sitting position, "don't you take my blood? I've got more of it."

"Whichever I take," said Juan Culebra, "the other will sit by and watch, and envision what it will mean to him when his own turn comes."

The two, whose wrists had been bound behind them while on the ground, were yanked to their feet. Their automatics now were thrust into the belt of Juan Culebra, who kept far enough away from the two marines so that, not even by the wildest miracle of bond-bursting could they regain their weapons.

"You look tired, my friends," drawled Juan with mock sympathy. "You need rest, so that you shall be not too fatigued to enjoy your torture. So—I shall send you deeper into the jungle to a certain clearing I have in mind. It is a big clearing, surrounded by rocky walls, masked by lianas. If your friends, back there with the *teniente*, enter that clearing—ah, my friends, they can be shot to death to a man.

"And they'll enter the clearing.

Why would they not, when they will be able to see their two spies bound to the trunks of trees—with their heads fastened so that it can't be told from a distance that they are dead? Hurry, my friends; we must hurry to give you time to rest."

Juan's cruelty was well-planned.

Tired, beaten—in body but never in spirit—the two leathernecks were started along the trail, deeper into the badlands, driven forward by natives with drawn steel who prodded them cruelly whenever they lagged.

JUAN CULEBRA alone never seemed to tire. Natives dropped out at intervals along the trail, where other natives took their places. These other natives had plainly been posted for this ghastly service. But Juan continued on at the heels of his victims, running without panting, wholly at ease. And often he chided his own men for being soft and woman-like.

"We can run the best of you into the ground," said Fox, "even after an all day fight."

"Yeah," said Shimel, trying to hide the exhaustion which fought to creep into his voice as he was forced to the limit, "you can't hurt us by making us run. We can keep it up from here to Port au Prince!"

But the eyes of the two men were all but glazed, and their hearts were near to bursting, when they finally were forced into the clearing surrounded by rocky walls. They were promptly trussed up, side by side, in the most uncomfortable way that Juan Culebra could imagine, to the trunks of a pair of young saplings.

The leathernecks sagged in the bonds which, even though they occasioned them agony, still afforded something of a support, and looked at each other. Fox managed to grin. Shimel spat wetly, and grinned back.

"What the hell," croaked Fox:

"You always said the first hundred years was the hardest, didn't you?"

"Yeah," said Shimel, his words dry and rasping. "Things get pretty tough for a while—then they get worse! But if you and me don't cut these guys, especially Juan Culebra, off at the pockets before morning—we deserve to get whatever he hands out!"

Fox answered vaguely, but his eyes were hard on Shimel's as he spoke what seemed to be a parable.

"Oke," he said. "I'll be seeing you, pal—and soon!"

Then Fox looked away, his eyes roving over the natives, who were swiftly building a campfire—while Shimel wondered. Juan would know when the marines were near, for he had left spies all along the way back.

Shimel tentatively tested his bonds. He groaned inwardly. They might as well have been steel cables. But it was in situations like this that Fox came in handy. Shimel waited, and tried not to feel his sufferings.

V

SHIMEL stared at the sun. It was crawling down the western sky. In two hours it would be dark. It seemed ages since he and Fox had left Smollet and the other leathernecks. He wondered how close help was—and what shape Juan Culebra's torture would take. The fire suggested burning splinters under the skin and fingernails, and thrust into the axilla.

Juan had merely glanced at them occasionally, wolfishly smiling. Whatever his plans, he hid them admirably, allowing his victims to suffer all the pangs of imaginative anticipation.

Shimel tried to guess, to read the Green-Eyed Monster's mind, but he found he could not. How could he indeed, when Juan probably didn't

know himself. The sun crept further into the west.

Surely the marines must be close now. Yet there came no sign from the pass by which they had entered. Had Smollet, after all, lost his courage and gone back to Macoris? Had he heard the three pistol shots? Surely he must have heard the explosion of Juan's rifle.

But there was no use in speculating. All Shimel and Fox could do now was wait and see. They didn't even fight at their bonds. That would have been a waste of strength, and they had too woefully little left.

Just before dusk Juan came and stood before Shimel.

"You and your friend," he said, "could throw in your lot with me—and I would make you rich."

Shimel's jaws began to work. His throat and mouth were dry and it was a hard task. Unsuspecting, Juan pressed his offer. He could help them to great wealth, he said, if they'd desert the marines and join him. Shimel still said nothing. Juan kept on. Finally Shimel's mouth quit working for a moment. Then his head shot forward—and again the feet of Juan Culebra suffered!

Juan jumped up in a fearful rage, wildly brandishing his rifle. He was a man beside himself with fury. Almost he brought himself to smashing Shimel across the head with the butt—but he didn't. Instead, he slapped Shimel's face so hard that the leatherneck's head rang, and his flesh crawled with revulsion and a desire to tear Juan limb from limb. But Shimel only grinned, and his mouth started working again. Juan stepped back, and snarled at his men when they would have laughed.

AN NATIVE came running across the clearing from the pass.

"They come!" he shouted. "They are here by dark, surely!"

Juan apparently forgot his anger at Shimel as he sprang into swift and efficient action. The messenger he bade remain by the fire, piling on fuel until the outguard of the leatherneck column filed into the clearing; then he was to join the others on the rim. Juan himself flung his rifle into the crook of his arm.

He turned for a last word to Shimel and Fox.

"It is better that they see you are living," he said. "The fire will show you to them. They'll rush across the clearing to free you—and when they are close enough, I myself shall shoot both of you. Then my men, with the rifles and pistols we have hidden on the rim, will destroy your men. Perhaps we may kill them first, so that you shall live to witness how Juan Culebra defeats his enemies."

"You know, every time I look at your feet, Juan," said Fox musingly, "I think of when I was a kid—and carried water to the elephants."

"For that," blazed Juan, "you shall live the longest and die the slowest!"

THE natives scattered at their leader's shouted command.

Shimel stared, white-faced, at Fox.

"Lord," he muttered, "they won't wipe out the whole platoon, but they'll kill some of 'em, sure."

"Maybe not," said Fox. "The average gook couldn't hit a bull in the flank with a wet sack, with either rifle or pistol. It's not over yet, Sarge. Leave it to me!"

For once Shimel had no sarcastic retort.

The clearing was empty now save for themselves and the native at the fire. The heat was ghastly. What breeze there was, thanks to Juan's plans, blew the heat of the fire against them. They suffered the tortures of the utterly damned. They had been without water for hours.

Their tongues were so swollen that their voices couldn't have been heard twenty feet away.

Shimel realized that he wouldn't be able to warn the leathernecks out of the clearing. He couldn't raise his voice above a whisper. His arms were bound tightly, so tightly that they seemed, now, quite numb.

There they were, pinioned like two trussed fowls—and waiting.

AT any moment now the leather-neck relief column would enter the clearing. That would be the signal for Juan to slay Shimel and Fox. If he waited until afterward, the two prisoners would be forced to watch the marines walk into the death trap.

Some of them, despite the bad marksmanship of the natives, must surely die. Juan himself would account for plenty of the marines before they could escape. And when and if they retreated through the pass, machetes must take toll of many more. Ages passed, ages of torment, of despair.

Shimel looked at Fox, to see beads of sweat break out on his forehead, to see that his face was fiery red. Shimel turned his face away. He didn't want to see a steel man like Fox lose his nerve. As for himself, he was too numb to care, one way or the other.

Then he heard, faint and far away, a familiar sound—the rattling of a canteen top against metal. Some marine, yonder in the pass, was pausing for a drink of water. Darkness had settled over the land, unbroken save in the circle of firelight. The native on duty had vanished, taking up his position on the rim.

Dimly—or was it imagination?—Shimel thought he could see moving blotches at the far end of the clearing, a quarter of a mile away. The marines were coming!

A rifle spoke spitefully—and

Shimel's heart leaped into his mouth. For Fox had dropped, a dead weight in his bonds, folding up as he slid down the trunk of the tree, until his hands and his ankles were almost touching. Fox seemed to have been shot, and Shimel knew what that meant. Juan Culebra had shot him through the head!

Shimel, his eyes blazing, stared into the darkness in the direction whence the shot had come. From there he looked toward those shadows at the pass, which had become motionless.

"Shimel!" That was Smollet's voice, but Shimel could not answer. He was fixing in his mind the general location of the spot whence Juan Culebra had fired to kill Fox. He'd forgotten that he must surely be next, that any moment a bullet would drill him.

As though in answer to his thought the rifle spoke again—but Shimel heard it! The bullet entered the sapling, so close above Shimel's head that it cut his hair. Had Juan missed deliberately? If so, what about Fox?

Shimel whirled to look at Fox—but the smaller man had vanished!

SHIMEL gasped and then he felt someone tearing at his bonds, those which held his legs. Around the tree came Fox's voice.

"Worked fine! I was wondering, after I got my hands free, how I could scrooch down and cut my legs free. Juan's bullet, just above my head, was my cue—and the fire was between him'n me. So here I am—and get ready to duck! Smart fellow, me, to have a knife up my sleeve! A guy always oughta have something."

Shimel would have fallen, but Fox, surprisingly strong, yanked him behind the tree.

"Fox," said Shimel, a rasping, hoarse whisper, "race out across the

clearing and warn the leathernecks backs. Keep to the shadows as much as possible."

"Yeah? What about you?"

"I've got a score to settle with the Green Eyed Monster!"

"Always have to be the hero, don't you, Dan'l?" said Fox, but in an instant he was away, keeping to the shadows as Shimel had directed.

NOW the leathernecks were crashing at top speed across the clearing. Maybe they'd seen the two figures against the trees, through the flames; maybe they hadn't, but they were coming. And Shimel, rushing away at right angles, heading for the spot whence Juan Culebra had fired, left the leathernecks to Fox.

Firearms suddenly spoke savagely from all sides of the clearing.

"Take cover!" Smollet's voice, a little tired, but steady and fearless, rang out. "Fire at the flashes of weapons! Roll to your right as soon as you fire! Fire again and roll back!"

Shimel, hearing, grinned.

Smollet was doing his stuff. So were the marines, but they always did. Springfields began to roar rhythmically, like poetry, like songs of war. Leathernecks, as screams of pain came from the rim, laughed aloud, jubilantly. Leatherneck-fashion, they had already, in the heat of action, forgotten the torture the day had visited upon them.

Shimel ran on—and on.

He heard a rifle speak, there ahead. But firing had opened before the leathernecks had reached the circle of firelight, so Juan as well as the attackers had to fire by guess. The natives knew nothing of volley fire—and paid with many lives.

There were sounds of bodies falling from the rim, crashing down through the trees and trailing liana.

The rifle of Juan Culebra spoke

again, much nearer—and Shimel had spotted his man. He kicked off his shoes unmindful of cutting rocks, thorns, scorpions and tarantulas. These were of small moment beside his desire to get Juan Culebra.

He finally reached the bulking shadow at the edge of the rim. He leaped, hands clutching—and when both rolled over the rim, Shimel fought to remain on top. They crashed together through limbs and lianas—and it was Juan Culebra who went limp when they struck bottom.

FOR fifteen minutes the battle raged. Men fell screaming from the heights. But none of the screams came from the leathernecks. The natives hadn't been taught how to fire upon a target from a height. Their shots went wild, and all the satisfaction they got was in the noise they made.

When no more shots came from the rim, Smollet quietly ordered "cease firing." He stared at Fox, his lips working.

"Where's Shimel, Corporal?" he asked.

"Gimme a drink of water and I'll tell you—sir!" croaked Fox.

Fox drank, and answered the officer's question.

"Shimel," he said, almost deliriously, "is a bad penny, and a bad penny always comes back."

"Yeah?" came a rasping voice from the darkness. "Trying to get in the best word, for yourself, as usual, huh?"

And Shimel came back into his own, staggering into their midst, bearing a giant on his shoulders.

"Here," he said, expectorating angrily to show his distaste, "is the Green Eyed Monster. He's alive—I hope. But somebody else'll hafta carry him to Macoris!"

"Who caught him for you, Dan'l?" asked Fox.

Shimel, before his knees buckled and let him down, grinned foolishly.

"I caught him for my own self," he stated. "I hit him over the knob with a young mountain!"

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The EYE OF SIVA



Abur Zeyd grunted and jerked his hand toward the doorway

An American Soldier of Fortune Mixes It With Hard-Fighting Pathans in the Quest for a Priceless Ruby

By RALPH R. FLEMING

Author of "Military Heels," etc.

WITH the exception of Ram Lal, the tall Hindu who sat cross-legged in one corner of the spacious room, every man present was heavily armed. Dangerous weapons worn by dangerous men!

Wail of barbaric music, swish of silk-trouserered legs, patter of naked toes on wooden flooring, odor of burning tobacco and Indian help—all these were familiar characteristics of the House of Delight, Pathan night club de luxe, situated at the

blind end of a narrow alley in the heart of the Peshawar bazaar.

Tonight a curious tension held the crowd in leash. Ram Lal sensed it with every fiber of his being. A sinister tension! Something that boded ill for Orville Steele, alias Ram Lal, American globe trotter and soldier of fortune!

And yet, the attention of the pseudo Hindu seemed to be wholly occupied with the sensuous movement of the dancing girls out on the floor.

In reality his long almond eyes, jet black against the peculiar burnt pallor of his face were taking in every detail of the room—from the small, heavily shaded windows above the smoky wall lamps to the beaded curtain that covered a doorway opposite. Unless his intuition proved to be a false prophet, Orville Steele expected to find the Eye of Siva somewhere in that shadowy region beyond the beaded curtain.

PRESENTLY the dance out on the floor drew to a close. The barbaric music died out with a final rasping wail. The girls bowed, smiling at the audience invitingly. A swarthy man who was seated on a mat next to the Hindu, clapped his hands approvingly and tossed a gold coin toward the nearest performer.

To the casual observer the swarthy man was just what he appeared to be—a nondescript breed of mixed blood, common enough on the Afghan border. But Ram Lal knew differently.

He watched as the girl scooped up the offering with a little squeal of astonishment. She minced forward to sink down beside the generous donor. Here was a spectator who really appreciated art!

"Hello, Black Eyes," said the swarthy man, and tickled the girl under the chin. "Do you savvy New York lingo?"

The girl smiled with painted lips, anxious to please, but it was evident that the words did not register.

"Yes, I think not," her admirer grinned, and shot a glance at Ram Lal sidewise. Without moving his head he swung a veiled look around the wall at the Pathan hillmen who were watching his actions, hard-eyed.

"Listen, Black Eyes," he said distinctly. "This babu has cold chills

chasing up and down his spine. Look behind the beaded curtain and you will see a certain bozo with a beak like a hawk—and a pair of lamps like U. S. A. number one quality black shoe buttons!"

The swarthy man chuckled. He winked at the girl playfully, seeming confident that she understood every word. Only Steele realized that what had been said was entirely for his benefit.

Four feet to the left Ram Lal tensed, and lit a cigarette, staring hard at the beaded curtain over his cupped hands as he applied the match.

"Do you hear a chant floating down from the upper floor?" the swarthy man continued pleasantly. "This babu thinks that Orie Steele and his faithful boy friend had better scram out of this joint— pronto!"

Ram Lal blew a cloud of smoke at the ceiling. A faint smile hovered at the corners of his mouth. Then he shot a fleeting glance at the man on his right. Dhunnu, the Bengali babu, was trying hard to cover up a bad case of jitters.

But the babu's acute senses had uncovered two things that he, Steele, had failed to note. Was the black-bearded figure behind the beaded curtain that of the infamous Abur Zeyd, fanatical chief of the Pathan hillmen? The American strained his ears to catch the low chant coming from above. Did it mean that the Eye of Siva, sinister blood-red ruby which he sought, had been restored to the five-headed effigy of Siva the Destroyer?

RAM LAL yawned politely and rose to leave. Dhunnu's advice was sound; there was nothing to be gained by tarrying longer—except, perhaps, a knife in the back.

Should the Pathans suspect his real mission, neither he nor Dhunnu

would leave the building alive. The House of Delight was open to the public, true, but merely as a blind for the activities of Abur Zeyd and his raiders. And of all the places on which the Sikh policemen of Peshawar kept a wary eye, this was the most innocent appearing and the most sinister.

At the doorway Ram Lal paused to drop a British pound note in a brass tray placed there for the purpose. He turned and bowed gravely to the olive-skinned hostess who had risen from a cushioned seat near the entrance. She stared back at him coldly.

THE American followed the momentary flicker of her eyes toward the beaded curtain. For a fraction of a second he glimpsed a scowling beaded face, and a pair of fierce eyes boring into his own; then he had turned and was making his way to the street.

In the outer vestibule Ram Lal chuckled to himself reflectively: So "Light-of-the-Stars," as the olive-skinned hostess of the night club was known, had lost her sudden interest in the Hindu stranger. An hour earlier the Pathan hostess had literally fallen all over his feet in her efforts to make him comfortable on a sheepskin mat. And now? Perhaps a glimpse of the bearded figure behind the curtain had given her something else to think about. Abur Zeyd was said to be a very jealous man.

No sooner had the door closed behind Ram Lal than two of the hillmen rose and followed hard on his heels. Dhunnu glanced up at the fellows as they passed. Then he was suddenly conscious of the hard stares of the remaining hillmen. It was as if the click of the door latch behind Orie Steele had been a pre-arranged signal. The dancing girl

by his side drew away. The smile on her painted lips was suddenly mocking.

An icy chill ran up the babu's spine. When a hand clamped down on his shoulder from behind, he almost screamed out in terror. He turned his head slowly to meet the stabbing black eyes of Abur Zeyd.

"So!" The word was a staccato explosion. "My babu friend speaks English, no?"

Dhunnu stared up at his questioner, silent, face expressionless.

"Abur Zeyd has long ears," the Pathan chief growled. His grip on the babu's shoulder tightened, and with apparently little effort he lifted one hundred and eighty pounds of bone and muscle straight upward until Dhunnu was standing on his feet. His beady eyes probed the babu's face savagely.

"What do you seek here?"

Dhunnu rolled his eyes at the scowling hillmen who had grouped about them. His lips tightened. What use to lie? And the truth? Death in either case, unless—

ABUR ZEYD grunted and jerked his hand toward the stairway. Instantly the hillmen swarmed over the babu. He submitted passively as they urged him through the beaded curtain and on up the stairway to the floor above. Why waste energy in fighting against overwhelming odds? Time might offer a better outlet for his strength, and besides, was not the Eye of Siva somewhere above?

Out in the alley the tall figure of Ram Lal glided silently through the shadows toward the faint glow of lights in the thoroughfare ahead. He stopped once, flattening' himself against a wall, peering back toward the House of Delight. Had he heard the soft pad of feet following?

Steele reached beneath his jacket

and eased the snub-nosed .45 that swung in a holster under his left armpit. Then he turned and went forward once more.

Thud!

Ram Lal dropped in his tracks. Four feet above his prone body a long-bladed dagger vibrated like a reed in the side of the building. There came a grunt from out of the black shadows across the alley.

TWO lithe figures sprang forward. A hand shot out like a striking snake and gripped the leading Pathan's ankle. The hillman screamed and turned a back flip as his foot was jerked upward. He struck on his head, heavily. The second thug lunged downward with a gleaming knife.

Ram Lal rolled sidewise and came to his feet like a coiled spring. His hand flashed toward the hillman's throat in a paralyzing blow, edge-wise, fingers stiff. The thug sank down without a sound.

The American crouched motionless, eyes stabbing the shadows for new assailants. But no living thing moved. The alley remained cloaked in stinking silence. The whole affair had taken but a few seconds.

The hillman that Steele had upset, stirred, breathing heavily with returning consciousness. Ram Lal reached out and plucked the dagger from the wall. He set the point against the thug's throat. The Pathan struggled to sit up and the dagger pricked in sharply.

"Lie quiet!" Ram Lal's voice was razor-edged.

The hillman sank back with a full realization of the sudden death awaiting his slightest move.

"Who ordered my murder?" The question was in English. The captive rolled his eyes helplessly. Steele repeated four times in as many different dialects. But it was plain that

the hillman did not understand, and the American could speak no word of the Pathan tongue.

Ram Lal grunted, disgusted. Deliberately he reversed the dagger and brought the heavy handle down on the Pathan's head with stunning force. He bent over the second hillman and saw that the man was still out, cold.

The American straightened up and produced a police whistle from his pocket. He blew three sharp blasts and then started up the alley on a dead run. At the junction with the main thoroughfare he darted around the corner and stepped into a doorway.

He watched as a bearded Sikh policeman came loping out of a side street and headed straight for the alley. The officer hesitated at the entrance, swinging the stabbing beam of his flashlight into the darkness ahead. A second policeman came pounding up the main thoroughfare and joined the first.

Steele grinned. Evidently the cops knew exactly where to look for trouble. And they didn't risk going after it singly either. He waited until the policemen had disappeared in the alley before starting up the street at a fast walk.

Orie Steele had no yen for seeing his name on a police blotter; not even in the role of complainant. He was registered at the hotel as Ram Lal, and (Dhunnu excepted) not a soul in Peshawar save Inspector Deeping, now lying in the Army Post Hospital with a cracked skull, knew his real identity.

JUST seven days had passed since Inspector Deeping of Scotland Yard, special emissary for the British Antiquarian Museum in London, had been slugged in his hotel room and robbed of the Eye of Siva, famous blood-red ruby whose history

(some two thousand years) fairly reeked with human blood spilled in the name of religion. Sayyid Bey, Maharajah of Elsapur in the northern Suleiman mountains, erstwhile owner of the jewel, had finally turned it over to the London institution with something akin to relief.

Steele grinned to himself as his thoughts ran back over the situation. He was not aware of the slinking shadow that followed several hundred feet in the rear as he struck across town toward the British quarter.

The American, as the guest of Sayyid Bey, had warned the Maharajah against making the gift at the time. But Sayyid Bey was a man of sudden and rash decisions in spite of his Oxford training. Steele suspected that his host secretly feared his own blood would be added to the ruby's crimson trail if he retained possession of it longer. Hence the gift—and the result.

DOWN in his heart Steele knew that he would have taken on the job of recovering the stolen heirloom even if Sayyid Bey had not implored him to do so. There was that affair in a Bengali jungle when Sayyid Bey's cool nerve had saved the American from sudden death under the tearing claws of a tiger.

Could a man forget such a debt easily? And besides, the Maharajah had a real affection for the Eye of Siva, a mental "something" inherited from generations of pagan ancestors, a thing that no amount of European training could wipe out.

Steele mounted the hotel steps and obtained his key from the babu clerk at the desk. He entered his room thoughtfully. In the five days that they had been working on the case, he and Dhunnu had succeeded in locating the stronghold of Abur Zeyd; a task which had baffled the

local police for months past. Not a mean accomplishment in view of the twenty thousand rupees reward on the Pathan raider's head!

Blood money?—Steele snapped the lights off and sank into an easy chair, smiling grimly. Perhaps; but there had been plenty of innocent blood streaming in Abur Zeyd's wake.

Some two hours later Steele awakened with a start. In the darkened room his wide open eyes slowly focused on the luminous square that was the window. A stray beam of moonlight filtered through the cotton netting which covered it.

The American tensed his muscles for a leap—

Through a torn gap in the netting a brown hand projected, fingers clutching the sill. Then it was gone, abruptly. A soft scraping noise sounded from the outer wall of the building.

Steele did not leap. His muscles relaxed slowly. It was as though some tiny voice of his inner being had cried out in sharp warning. A faint odor filled his nostrils. Cautiously he reached up to the wall behind his chair and found the light switch; pressed it.

With the flood of light the muscles of his throat constricted sharply, choking off the cry of horror which rose to his lips. There, not three feet distant and with its ugly head poised to strike, reared a deadly hooded cobra.

STEELE was conscious of the pricking of his skin; of the cold perspiration welling out of his pores in great beads. He saw in one glance that the snake had been infuriated; that the sudden blinding flood of light had further enraged it. The head reared higher, swaying to and fro, loathsome hood fully expanded, mouth partly open ready to sink the

deadly fangs in a lightning-swift thrust.

Slowly—so slowly as to be virtually imperceptible—the American moved his right hand up toward the gun under his armpit. The watch in his vest pocket ticked loudly in that deathly silence.

And each tick was a century of suspense. Now his thumb closed over the hammer of the .45; cocked it. Down—down—a soul-searing agony of snail-like motion!

Crash! The very walls rocked to the staccato voice of the .45. Steele left the chair in one tremendous bound. From the opposite side of the room he stared down at the writhing thing on the floor. Not until the thrashing body had settled down to the final flickering of reflex action in the tail did he draw a full breath.

OUT in the corridor there was an excited babble of voices. A timid knock sounded on the door. Steele scooped up the six-foot snake with its partially severed head and dropped it through the tear in the window netting to the ground below. Then he strode to the door and flung it open.

The babu desk clerk stood in the corridor, trembling. Behind him five or six guests posed in various stages of undress, all gaping into the lighted room.

The American eyed them gravely. "Just an accident, gentlemen," he said. "Ram Lal was clumsy and dropped his revolver. Unfortunately it struck on the hammer. See, there—" He indicated the gun lying on the bed and also the section of plaster that had dropped from the wall with the impact of the bullet.

A middle-aged guest with the manner and carriage of a British army officer eyed him sharply.

"You damned natives will never

learn to carry your guns on an empty cartridge," he growled, and padded off down the corridor in his bare feet.

Steele bowed politely to hide the twinkle in his eye. "Ram Lal is sorry to have disturbed your slumbers," he murmured, and began to close the door as a sign that the incident was ended.

Once again behind his own door, Steele mopped the clammy perspiration from his forehead and grinned wryly. A close thing, that! He strode to the washstand, poured himself a half tumbler of raw whisky and downed it at a gulp.

With the stimulation of the liquor spurring the reactive forces of a superbly healthy body, the American's nerves settled down to normal in short order. He strode to the window and glanced out at the leader pipe running from roof to ground just beyond the edge of the casing.

So Abur Zeyd had played the fox after all! The drain pipe would offer no difficulty to a monkey-limbed hillman, even though burdened with a sack containing a live cobra.

Steele grimaced as his eyes shifted downward. His disposal of the snake had been an instinctive bit of strategy. It was unlikely that the cobra's body would be discovered before morning, hence Abur Zeyd would have no way of knowing that his scheme had failed. And in the meantime—

RAM LAL glanced at his watch and blinked in surprise. 2 A.M.! He had thought that his sleep in the chair had been a matter of minutes. In reality, three hours had passed since he had left the House of Delight. Three hours, and Dhunnu had not yet returned!

"Fool!" The American cursed

himself savagely. Something had happened to the babu! Something had gone awry! But what? Steele had finally dismissed the attack in the alley as a mere attempt at robbery—a natural conclusion if one considered the reputation of the place, and the fact of a lone Hindu displaying British pound notes. The snake, however, had driven one vital fact home: Abur Zeyd had discovered Ram Lal's mission! But the American's first abrupt realization had included no thought of his babu friend and co-worker. Now it struck home like a mailed fist tearing at his heart—

What had happened to Dhunnu?

AT 2:05 A.M. the lithe figure of a man dropped from the lower platform of a fire escape which zig-zagged down the side of the hotel. His flight across the moon-drenched area surrounding the building was no more than the skimming shadow of a huge bat. Then, abruptly, the outlying shrubbery had swallowed him.

Near the army post a quarter mile down the highway, a lone sentry whirled suddenly and barked sharp challenges. The rapid pad-pad of ghostly feet was his only answer.

In the heart of a native quarter a Sikh policeman snapped alert. He glanced about uneasily, searching the shadows that hemmed in the yellow flare from a street lamp overhead.

A very few minutes later Steele was crouching at the base of the twelve-foot spike-tipped wall which encircled the courtyard of the House of Delight. Fifty yards further along the alley he could see the feeble light that marked the entrance. The house itself was wrapped in gloom and silence.

The American unwrapped a slender black rope from his waist; a supple thing of plaited silk that had

borne his weight many times in the past.

His arm moved upward in a quick cast and a running noose settled over one of the spikes above. A moment later he was perched on top of the wall. Even in the moonlight his figure was almost invisible, soot black from head to toe. The burnt pallor of Ram Lal's face and hands had deepened to the color of ebony.

Steele saw that there were but two windows of the upper story facing the court. From one of these a beam of greenish light flashed intermittently. He stared a moment, puzzled, then coiled his rope and dropped to the courtyard below. Cautiously he circled a large stone fountain, filled to the brim with stagnant water, and halted at the foot of the building.

Directly above the darkened window a cornice of the roof projected, outward clearly outlined against the sky. Steele judged the distance and flipped his line upward. It came slithering down, a clean miss. On the third cast the noose took hold, and he tested it carefully.

Up, hand over hand to the level of the window, and the American suddenly swore under his breath. The casing was studded with iron bars. He twisted one foot in the rope to ease the strain on his arms, and glanced at the second window ten feet to the left.

NOW the source of the green light was clearly revealed. The window was open and a gentle breeze was separating the close-drawn drapes which covered it. And there were no bars, Steele noted with satisfaction. For a moment he had thought that Brahma, the God of Fates, had ceased to smile on Ram Lal.

The American flexed his body like a bow and set the line swinging

back and forth, parallel to the building. Gradually he increased the momentum until the window was within reach.

Then, expertly, his hands shot out and gripped the sill. With the sudden transfer of weight, his feet came against the building with an audible thump.

He clung a moment, heart pounding, ears keyed for sign that he was discovered.

Nothing! Slowly he drew his body up and twisted until his hips were resting on the sill. His glance darted through the parted curtains and paused on a silk draped divan along the side of the room.

STEELE grinned nervously. Of all points of entry he would have to pick a lady's boudoir. In the green glow from a lamp on the dresser he could see the slender form of the hostess known as Light-of-the-Stars stretched out on the divan. He stared hard for a moment. The girl was fully clothed, but apparently asleep.

One leg came up over the sill, then the other. It was but the work of a moment to secure the loose end of the rope to a shutter cleat on the casing.

Then, slowly, wary of creaking boards, the American made his way across the room. His eyes never left the girl's face. At the curtained doorway he paused to pull the drapes aside inch by inch. Cautiously he turned to thrust his head through the aperture.

"Do not go!" The voice came from behind, softly.

Steele whirled and dropped in a half crouch, instinctively snapping the gun from his shoulder holster.

The Pathan hostess was raised on one elbow, staring at him with half-veiled eyes. Her lips were curved in a smile.

"Ram Lal have return to me," she whispered.

Steele's face was a frozen mask. His eyes bored at her with the ferocity of a cornered beast. The cords of his legs quivered like taut bow strings. Could he cover the intervening space and grip that slender throat before—?

Slowly he returned the gun to its holster.

"That is better." Now the smile was openly mocking.

Steele was secretly amazed at her composure. Was the whole thing a trap? Was the corridor alive with hillmen awaiting her signal? If such were the case, he reflected grimly, then Light-of-the-Stars would be the first to join her ancestors. He moved forward a step—

"Where is the babu? What have they done with him?"

The girl shrugged arrogantly. "Ram Lal is—how you say—so full of question. Come—" her eyes flashed with sudden anger—"let us forget that one of dunghill birth. Has Light-of-the-Stars no attraction for—"

The sentence ended on a choking gasp as the American's hand shot to her throat.

"Listen," he growled. "Get this straight: If the babu is in this house, I want to know where, and quickly. Understand?"

For the first time a hint of stark fear crept into the hostess' eyes. In the ebony-stained features of Ram Lal she read a grim finality of purpose which could not be turned aside by the devil himself. Her head bobbed frantically.

STEELE eased the pressure of his fingers.

"There," she gasped, and pointed down the hallway. "In the room of Siva!"

The American's heart leaped. Then,

he realized, Dhunnu was still alive! Expertly, and with hands more swift than gentle, Ram Lal went to work. At the curtained doorway he turned and looked back at the huddled figure, trussed and gagged with the silken coverlets of the divan. Her eyes gleamed venomously.

Then he was outside in the corridor, gliding toward the farther end noiselessly. The hallway was a succession of curtained doorways, dark with the exception of the one at the extreme end. Above this Steele saw that two tiny amber lamps were burning and that, instead of the usual curtains, a solid brass-studded door barred access to the room beyond. The room of Siva!

BELOWEATH the amber lamps the American halted and pressed his ear to the door panel. A rumble of voices came to him faintly. He listened a moment, frowning.

What was happening behind that solid teak barrier? If he could open the door a crack— But it had no handle. Was there a secret spring? Could it only be opened from the inside, perhaps by a guard who never left his post until relieved by one of his kind?

Abruptly the door began to swing outward. Steele barely had time to dart across the hallway and through the curtained doorway of the room opposite. One quick glance showed him that the place was untenanted. He turned back to the curtain.

Amber light flooded out from the room of Siva. A stocky hillman shuffled out into the corridor and passed so close that Steele might have reached out and touched him. But the American had eyes only for the long, narrow room beyond the brass-studded door.

“Dhunnu!” The name was a whispered sigh of relief on his lips. Securely bound to a chair in the center

of the floor! Surrounded by a solid ring of squatting hillmen! And in the background the effigy of Siva the Destroyer—monstrous, with a blood-red ruby gleaming in the foremost of its five grotesque heads.

The Eye of Siva!

The American stared at the flaming jewel, fascinated, hardly conscious of the footsteps approaching down the hallway until the stocky hillman had returned, carrying a stained scimitar. Then he snapped alert—The brass-studded door must not close!

Steele tensed his muscles, desperate. Could he spring across the corridor and slide a foot against the door jamb unobserved?

A chorus of grunts greeted the hillman with the scimitar. A gaunt black-bearded figure rose up from the foot of the idol and received the blade, hilt first. Abur Zeyd! And the door remained open!

Steele released the pent up air in his lungs slowly. He was suddenly cool and steady. The breaks had favored him so far, and no matter what that bearded devil in the room opposite was contemplating, there were still six soft-nosed slugs stacked against the play. And he would make every one count, Steele promised himself grimly. Six slugs. And the ace-in-the-hole! He patted a heavy object in his coat pocket.

ABUR ZEYD growled a few words and Steele saw a hillman come from a hidden corner of the room with a glowing charcoal burner. The Pathan chief plunged the scimitar deep into the white-hot embers. Then, turning to the captive:

“Look well,” he taunted, speaking in Hindustani, “for soon your eyes will see naught but shadows.”

Dhunnu stared straight before him, face mask-like.

“O father of fools,” Steele whis-

pered, and drew his gun, "thine eyes shall see even less."

"Now!" Abur Zeyd grunted, and grasped the hilt of the red hot scimitar. Slowly, amidst a dead silence, he extended the glowing blade toward the babu's face and prepared to draw the edge across his eyes. Dhunnu flinched as the heat began to singe his eyebrows. The Pathan chief grinned evilly and thrust the scimitar closer—

"Ho, twice cursed son-of-a-pig! Dost like the feel of heated steel?"

THE encircling hillmen bent forward, gloating eyes riveted on the prisoner's face. And behind the curtain, ten yards distant, death crouched, awaiting the final squeeze of a slowly constricting trigger finger. Abruptly a heavy thump and a choked cry sounded from down the hallway. Abur Zeyd spun on his heel, startled. He thrust the scimitar back into the charcoal burner and sprang to the doorway.

"Quiet!" he hissed at the hillmen who had risen to follow. "It may be the cursed police."

Behind the curtain Steele smiled grimly. So Light-of-the-Stars had managed to roll off the divan. An attempted warning that might prove to be a boomerang!

The Pathan chief thrust his head around the door jamb, and seeing nothing, stepped out into the corridor. Instantly an arm shot through the curtains close by and seized the raider by the throat, jerking him into the darkened room. The cold muzzle of a revolver bored into his back. "Let no man move!" came the voice of Orie Steele in Hindustani above the startled cries of the hillmen. "Abur Zeyd dies quickly if any man fails to obey!" The revolver prodded sharply—"Tell them it is so."

The raider squirmed in the iron

grip of fingers about his throat. He stiffened at sound of an ominous click close behind.

"Hold, fools!" he bellowed, suddenly frantic. "Abur Zeyd stands in the shadow of death. Do as you are bid." Another twenty seconds found the hillmen bunched at the farther end of the hallway in obeyance with the harsh commands coming from the darkened room. They jabbered excitedly, fingering their knives, hesitant without a leader.

In the room of Siva, Dhunnu massaged his arms and legs vigorously, trying to restore circulation, for Steele's first order had seen his bonds slashed.

"The Eye!" Steele barked from the room opposite. "Get the ruby!"

The babu staggered to the idol and scooped the jewel from its socket. Abur Zeyd growled deep in his throat, watching through the curtain together with the American.

"By the blood of Siva!" he panted. "You will pay dearly for this!"

"Get going!" Steele ordered, and thrust the raider out into the corridor. And to the babu—"Fall in behind. Keep your eyes open."

At sight of their chief, the hillmen set up a howl and began surging down the corridor.

"STOP!" Steele's voice was like the crack of a whip. "One more step and Abur Zeyd dies!" And over his shoulder in rapid English—"Fifth door on the right. Rope at the window. Go ahead!"

But Dhunnu made no move to leave. "This babu," he muttered stubbornly, "is no U.S.A. first cousin to a baboon."

Steele grinned, tight-lipped. "Imbecile! You'll get a knife in the belly for your loyalty. Reach in my pocket, then. Snappy! The mob is getting ugly."

Dhunnu jerked a queer looking

pistol from the American's pocket. He edged out into the center of the corridor and began a slow advance toward the hillmen, gun menacing. The Pathans fell back, chattering. What strange instrument of death was this? With a bore like an elephant gun!

Steele followed close behind, urging the Pathan chief along with a vise-like grip on his throat. Now they were within one pace of the fifth doorway. One pace!

AND Steele whirled round instinctively, even as a shot rang out from the opposite end of the hallway. A slug nipped his shoulder and passed on to bury itself in the broad back of Abur Zeyd. The raider went down like a sack of meal. Crack! American lead snapped back at the hasheesh-drugged sleeper who had appeared in the doorway adjoining the room of Siva. Then, abruptly, the corridor was a snarling mêlée of flashing knives; crashing guns.

"The gas!" Steele roared out, and crouched low, his right hand spitting death. A thick cloud of strangling vapor rose up. Tear gas from Dhunnu's pistol!

The American flung his empty gun full into a bearded face and struck out with his fists. Lunging, blinded, squirming like an octopus, he cleaved through the mass to the spot where the babu was half buried beneath a tangle of hillmen.

"Dhunnu!" The name was a strangling sob on his lips. "Up, boy! Up!" And his hands tore at the pile, flinging the Pathans aside.

The babu came up with streaming eyes, gasping for breath. Steele pushed him through the fifth doorway and turned, groping for the body of Abur Zeyd; found it and heaved mightily. Then the window and a life-saving breath of oxygen.

"Scram!" Steele gasped, and urged the babu down the rope. A heave, and the lifeless body of Abur Zeyd went tumbling over the sill to the courtyard below. The American dashed the tears from his eyes, poised a second, and dove headlong out and downward toward the shimmering water in the fountain. His head broke water to the tune of police whistles—shrill, imperative.

Out in the alley there was the sound of running feet, shouts, and the tinkling of glass as Sikh policemen crashed through the windows into the House of Delight.

Steele clambered out of the fountain and shook himself like a terrier. Blood streamed from his shoulder; black dye from his face. He grinned happily, advancing toward the babu who was standing over the body of the Pathan chief and sending out shrill blasts from a police whistle.

ASIREN screamed and a riot car thundered through the alley on the opposite side of the wall. Scattered shots roared out in the House of Delight.

"We'll just sit tight until the gang is rounded up," Steele grinned. "Eh, mate?"

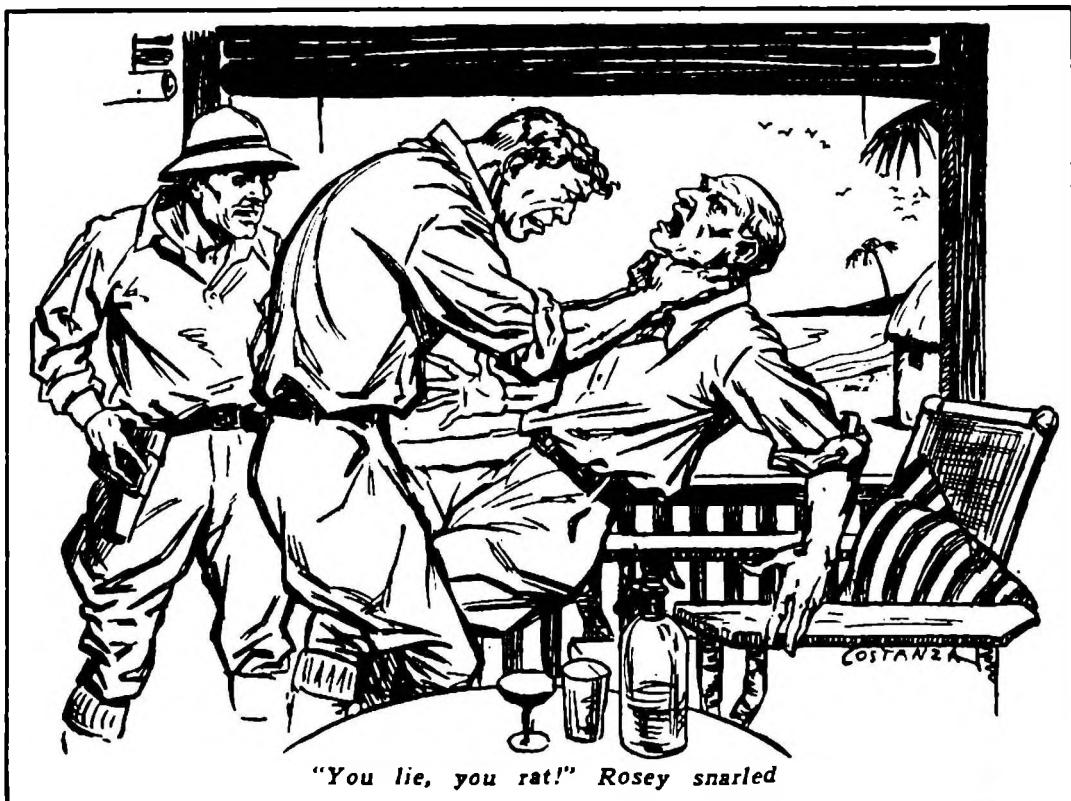
"Check!" Dhunnu rubbed his still streaming eyes. "The show is over. The curtain is down, and this babu awaits the cheers with tears."

Steele reached out and patted the lump in the babu's pocket. The Eye of Siva was safe. Then he glanced down at the still form at his feet.

Dhunnu followed the American's eyes— "Sad. Very, very sad," he sighed. "As they say in the United States, U.S.A.—X marks the spot." A tear-gas tear ran down his nose and hung suspended at the tip.

"Yeah, a twenty-thousand rupee spot!" Steele observed dryly, and squatted down to await the coming of the authorities.

*A Swift-Moving Story of Reckless Daring and Grim
Vengeance on the Marquesan Island of Hiva-Luva*



"You lie, you rat!" Rosey snarled

PEARL BAIT

By WAYNE ROGERS

Author of "Drums in the Night," "The Missing Ruby," etc.

A BRASSY morning sun beat down on Hiva-luva, transforming the narrow stretch of sandy beach into a shimmering griddle, making even the waters of the bay look hot. Above, the dense vegetation which fringed the shore wisps of steamy vapor drifted up into the torrid sky.

The little bay looked like a saucepan of steaming water, young Dan Hayden thought, as he gazed out at the cliffs of black rock which rose in a complete arc and hemmed it in.

Only at the mouth of the saucepan was there a break in the rocky circle. There the cliffs scaled down, giving way to the little inlet which connected the bay with the pounding surf of the Pacific.

A dangerous inlet, that. Too narrow—in stormy weather a vessel making the harbor must pick its way through clutching coral and beware lest the current dash it against the rocky shore.

That entrance must be enlarged, Dan Hayden considered. He had

been intending to get at the job, but because of the failing health of John Porter, his partner, most of the work of the plantation fell on his broad shoulders these days.

Dan turned worried eyes to the older man, sitting quietly on the porch of the little bungalow. The tropics had taken much from John Porter. He was thin and pallid; about his skin was an unhealthy hue that not even the searing sun could dispel. Until recently his fifty years had sat easily upon him, but of late he was suffering a decline which he strove in vain to keep from Dan.

There was a deep affection between these two, and Porter's failing health filled the younger man with uneasy concern. Now, as he was about to start out on the long trip back to the plantations, Dan hesitated and debated again the advisability of his going.

"You're sure you will be all right?" he asked for the dozenth time. "You aren't looking so well today. Perhaps I'd better stay with you and make the trip tomorrow."

"No, don't worry about me, Danny," the sick man said quietly. "I'll be all right. Ah Chen can give me any help I need."

Still Dan hesitated. Then at length he patted John Porter's shoulder affectionately and strode down the steps to where the gathered Marquesans were waiting for him. In a few moments the jungle swallowed the men up.

II

MORNING had given way to torrid afternoon, and John Porter still sat listlessly on the porch of the little bungalow in the shade of towering palms and banyans. He was failing fast, and he knew it. Yet he wanted

very much to live—for six months more anyway. Then Doris would come.

From his pocket he took the soiled and tattered letter he had re-read innumerable times. In five months she would finish her schooling in the States. It would take her an additional month to reach this little island in the Marquesas. Then she and Dan would be married, and John Porter's life would be complete.

FROM the bungalow his eyes traveled to the little wharf, then down the beach to the copra sheds. Farther back, beyond the encircling cliffs, were the fields of sugar cane. His share in all of this would go to Doris—to Doris and Dan.

But their real wedding present would be the string of matched pearls which John Porter had been collecting for years. All of his extra money had gone into them. They were beauties—renowned even in those islands where beautiful pearls are commonplace. Ever since Doris was a little tot he had been making this collection for her.

Porter stirred uneasily as the terrific heat, swept in by a tiny breeze, threatened to take his breath. He gasped, softly—but sufficiently loud to reach the attentive ears of Ah Chen. As if by magic the Chinaman stood beside his chair with a drink cooled by some magic process of his own.

"Thanks, Ah Chen," Porter said weakly as he sipped the cooling beverage. "It's all right. I'm better now."

But the Chinaman was not convinced. Worry was plainly written in his slant eyes.

Ah Chen was no regular cook and houseboy. There had been a time when he was one of the dread Two-

Knife Kai-Gingh of the Fo-Kien Province. That was before he met John Porter, and before John Porter had saved his father from a horrible death. Since then Ah Chen had been his inseparable companion and servant. Ah Chen had a debt to pay—and now he worried that it was nearing its end.

From Porter's wasted figure the Chinaman's gaze swept over the steaming bay, then stopped and focused on a sail faintly silhouetted in the inlet.

"Shipee come," he observed, then disappeared into his own quarters.

A ship in the bay of Hiva-luva was an event. Three or four times a year "Trader Bill" McCormick's *Pacific Belle* put in to take their copra and sugar. But aside from the trader, no visitors appeared for months on end.

With curiosity Porter stood up and watched the schooner as it made its way into the harbor and slowly came to anchor. Now a small boat was over-side and a white-clad figure climbed down, followed by half a dozen kanakas. The boat started for shore—but now a second boat was loading up: another white man and six more natives.

Porter was surprised. Perhaps they were after water, he reasoned. But it was not customary to dispatch a landing party of such numbers. A vague uneasiness oppressed him; he wished, now, that Dan had not chosen this day for a trip back to the plantations.

III

HARE YE!" a loud voice boomed, as the first of the white men, a big fellow with an officer's cap stuck rakishly on his curly head, stamped up onto the porch. "Jim Corrigan's the name—'Gentleman Jim', they call

me. This is 'Rosey' Rosen, my mate," as an even burlier individual with uncovered flaming thatch swaggered in behind him.

"Guess you're Porter, eh? We've been meaning to pay you a visit for some time."

John Porter's uneasiness increased with the introductions. He had heard plenty about Gentleman Jim and his red-headed mate, cutthroats and thieves both of them, according to rumor. Many an unsolved island tragedy was laid at their door.

WITH added apprehension he noticed that the kanakas—ugly, mean-looking devils—were all up on the beach. Half a dozen lingered near the copra sheds; the others were just outside the bungalow.

"We're out looking for pearls—the best we can find," Corrigan announced as he and his mate downed the drinks Ah Chen had provided. "I have a principal who has empowered me to pay big money to buy up the best pearls in the islands. We've heard about yours, so we dropped in to see them."

"I'm afraid you're about a week too late, gentlemen," John Porter told them. "My partner has taken them to Tahiti. There isn't a gem left on the island."

Gentleman Jim and his mate exchanged glances.

"How did he leave?" Corrigan demanded, a hard edge creeping into his voice. "Bill McCormick won't be here for a week yet."

"No, Dan went in an outrigger with several of the natives. They are taking him to Hiva-Oa."

"Couldn't wait for McCormick, eh?" Corrigan snapped disbelievingly. "So he took a fortune in pearls with him in an outrigger canoe." Suddenly the sneer left his voice, and with it all pretense. "We want those pearls, Porter," he put their

mission into words bluntly. "If you know what's good for you you'll produce them before we take this place apart."

Porter's fears were fully realized, he saw. But nothing would ever induce him to turn over his treasure to these thieves.

"You can search, if you wish," he told them meekly. "I have no pearls to give you."

Again Gentleman Jim's glance turned to his mate.

"You lie, you rat!" Rosey snarled, and one of his ham-like fists lunged out and grabbed John Porter by the throat. "Where've you got 'em?"

THE sick man was whisked out of his chair and off his feet, held brutally in the air. There was a commotion now in the back room—a kanaka yell and two more of the brown men dashed across the porch and into the house.

Vainly Porter struggled for breath. It would not come. Things were growing black before his eyes. Then Rosey cuffed him with his free hand, shook him violently, until his face blackened and his eyes protruded.

When the mate threw his victim down into a chair John Porter did not move. With no trace of sympathy Gentleman Jim bent over, then reached a hand down to his chest.

"Hell—you've killed him!" Corrigan spat in disgust.

From end to end they ransacked the bungalow, tearing open every conceivable hiding place in their quest for the pearls. Unsuccessful in their pursuit of the escaped Ah Chen, the kanakas soon returned and joined in the hunt, regaling themselves with whatever plunder suited their fancy.

At last the entire building had been honeycombed and wrecked.

With a snarl of rage Gentleman Jim put a match to the tinderlike floor mats and, outside, stood grinning malevolently as smoke and flame licked through the flimsy structure.

"There's that Chink! Get him!" he yelled, as a doubled-up figure darted from the burning building and sought cover in the jungle.

In a few strides Rosey Rosen overtook the Chinaman and sent him sprawling on the hot beach. From Ah Chen's arms a metal Buddha leaped and tumbled on the sand. In contempt Rosey gave the image a kick that added several more somersaults to its progress.

"Oh, velly bad luck!" Ah Chen gasped in horror. Scuttling over to the foot-high figure, he set it erect on the beach and prostrated himself, mumbling Chinese apologies to it.

Gentleman Jim viewed the scene with amusement.

"You want to keep the tin doll, eh, Chink?" he asked. "All right. We need a cook. As long as you cook damned good meals old Pot-belly stays on board. The first time you fall down, over the side he goes."

IV

FROM the plateau canefields, Dan Hayden and his column of forty cane-laden Marquesans climbed up the steep outer rim of Hiva-luva. They continued their ascent until they edged their way out onto a ledge that seemed to be the top of the world. From its twenty-five hundred foot elevation it gave a perpendicular view of the little bay beneath.

Here Dan usually paused to contemplate the majestic beauty of Hiva-luva's towering precipices and cavernous valleys. But today his surprised eyes quickly noticed the

schooner at anchor in the bay. Then he detected the smoke beginning to curl up from the roof of the bungalow, followed almost immediately by bright tongues of flame.

Through his field-glasses he surveyed the shore. He gasped in surprise at the unusual spectacle of Ah Chen making obeisance to his Buddha. In a flash Dan knew what had happened.

Yet he was powerless to avenge his partner. It would take nearly two hours before he and the Marquesans could reach the beach, and already the despoilers below were taking to their boats. Ah Chen was going unresistingly with them.

WHEN Dan reached the bungalow it was nothing but a heap of smoldering ruins. Standing fearfully about were a dozen wide-eyed Marquesans who had by now picked up sufficient courage to return from the jungle retreats to which they had fled. Tight-lipped and hard-eyed, Dan vowed bitter vengeance against these unknown murderers.

Again when he laid John Porter's blackened corpse in its grave and patted down the earth upon it, Dan swore that there would be a day of reckoning!

But first there was much to be done.

A week later, when Bill McCormick put into the bay, the new bungalow was nearing completion. Sadly he listened to the story.

"A great big red-headed devil, ye say?" he exclaimed. "That's Rosey Rosen; and the other murderin' devil was Gentleman Jim Corrigan—a bloody disgrace to his race!"

"Then I have a matter to settle with Mr. Corrigan and Mr. Rosen," Dan said grimly. "I'm sailing with you this time, Bill."

For two months Dan sailed on the *Pacific Belle* and sought in vain for

some trace of John Porter's murderers. But it was as if the sea had swallowed them up. If he had had a boat of his own—a schooner was one of the things the partners had hoped soon to acquire—he would have continued the search, but now he had to return to Hiva-luva. Trader Bill had engagements of his own which he could no longer postpone.

Before sailing for Hiva-luva, however, Dan did some unusual shopping in Tahiti. Rifles, ammunition, gunpowder, heavy wire, and a low wave radio sending outfit were some of the purchases which were delivered to the *Pacific Belle*.

"To prepare a reception for Gentleman Jim and Rosey," he explained enigmatically when he found Bill McCormick eyeing the assortment puzzledly. "They will call again—and next time I'll be waiting for them."

To be sure that they would call again, Dan talked copiously about John Porter's pearls in the saloons and shops of the island metropolis. He spent almost his last centime buying up several more beautiful gems to be added to the collection—besides a quantity of pearls that his late partner never would have considered for a moment. Then he was ready for home.

"I'll be back in a couple of months," Trader Bill promised as he left Dan standing beside the pile of freight on the little wharf.

"O. K.—but don't forget to spread the word. The Porter pearls are safe as ever and I'm adding more to them."

THEN Dan turned to the work which lay ahead of him. The bungalow had to be completed and painted and fixed up to the best of his ability. It was no longer to be a bachelor dwelling; soon it would

shelter a charming bride. The radio set had to be installed; the heavy wire had to be laid; there was much drilling and tamping of powder charges to be done.

Besides, there was the training of the Marquesans. Like delighted children the two dozen he had chosen as his guards received their rifles. For a week or so Dan's life was in constant jeopardy from wildly careening bullets, but gradually the natives became better marksmen. Before the month was up they could hit a mark with lead, almost as well as with their shorter-range throwing spears.

Daily Dan drilled them, until each was letter perfect in his part in the defense of the bungalow. Then Dan was ready. Sooner or later the pearls would bring the murderers back to Hiva-luva, he knew. His strong, rugged face was not pleasant to see when he contemplated that visit.

V

HAVENT seen a thing of the bloody murderers," Bill McCormick reported when next he put into Hiva-luva, "but I heard they was in Tahiti a week or so after we left. I kinda think, Dan, you ought've set the police on them."

"This is no case for the police. I settle my own scores," Dan snapped with unusual brusqueness. "Don't worry. They'll be back—and I'll be waiting."

Then the grim look faded from his face. "Don't forget you are to have a passenger on your next trip," he reminded. "Doris should reach Tahiti by the end of July."

Bill's Irish eyes twinkled appreciatively.

"Guess maybe there might be a little job for me when I get her

here, too," he speculated. "I'm a fully licensed master mariner an' ship's captain, ye know!"

"And not a word about her father," Dan warned seriously. "I haven't told her anything yet. It will be easier for her to learn when she gets here."

THEN Dan set himself down to wait patiently. Again and again he reviewed his plan. It was fool-proof. There could be no slip-up. He had prepared against every contingency. He hoped ardently that Gentleman Jim would put in his appearance before Doris reached Hiva-luva. That pearl bait should draw him. Daily Dan scanned the entrance to the bay a hundred times, even though he knew his Marquesan sentinels were watching hourly from points of vantage.

It was two months before his patience was rewarded. Even before the ship's sails were visible in the inlet, Kahui, chief of the watchers, came running with the news. He had been one of the workers in the copra sheds on the day of John Porter's death. He recognized the schooner.

Gentleman Jim and Rosey Rosen were coming through the inlet!

"All right, Kahui," Dan directed calmly. "Get your men to their stations—and remember, no man shoots until I give the signal!"

Then he strapped his holster around his waist, drew out the well oiled automatic, examined its clip carefully, and thrust the weapon back into the holster.

The ship had come to anchor. A boat was overside. Into it stepped a white man and six natives. Dan's pulse hammered faster, but he took a firm grip on himself and quieted his nerves.

Confidently the boat pulled toward the shore. Only one boat this time,

Dan noticed disappointedly. The other killer was still on board. Well, in that case, he would have to settle with them one at a time.

The boat was at the wharf and the white-clad figure was striding up the beach. With a last glance at the surrounding jungle Dan stepped to the edge of the porch to meet him.

"H'are ye!" the visitor greeted. "Guess you know who I am, Hayden—Captain Corrigan. You've been looking for me, I understand."

FOR a moment the two eyed each other levelly. Now that he was face to face with John Porter's murderer, hot rage possessed Dan. But his better judgment regained the upper hand; there was nothing to be gained by flying off the handle. That Corrigan was following a well laid plan was apparent. He had something up his sleeve. Dan would have to discover what it was.

Reluctantly he drew back the hand that had flashed to his automatic.

"That's better," Gentleman Jim approved, "much better. I know that you have me covered with a dozen rifles. There's one—and another there." Mockingly he pointed to little flashes in the jungle wall where the sun played on some nervously exposed rifle tip.

"I suspected that when I came ashore. But when I agree to deliver a passenger I deliver her—no matter what sort of a reception I get."

An icy chill shot through Dan Hayden as he comprehended the suave devil's meaning.

"What do you mean—a passenger?" he asked needlessly.

"Simply that I agreed to transport Miss Doris Porter to Hiva-luva. You're surprised? Surely you would not expect me to leave the young lady waiting forlornly in Tahiti? She is out there on the schooner

now, wondering why there is this delay.

"If one of your nervous-fingered natives should accidentally put a bullet in me, Rosey will up-anchor. And that is as near to Hiva-luva as she will ever get."

The fellow was perfectly sure of himself. The satisfied grin on his face was maddening. And Dan realized to the full his own helplessness. His carefully trained and stationed Marquesans were useless to him now.

Doris' anxiety to come home to him and her father had delivered her into Corrigan's hands. Instead of arriving on schedule she had caught an earlier boat—and found Corrigan waiting for her instead of Trader Bill.

DORIS' safety was paramount, and Corrigan held it as the price of his own. The slick devil's plan was airtight. Instead of bringing his whole force ashore, more than half of his kanakas were out there on the schooner, prepared to repel any attack the Marquesans might attempt.

And in their midst was Doris—an unsuspecting prisoner!

"You win, you dirty killer!" Dan gritted. "What do you want? What is your price this time?"

"The pearls we couldn't find last time," Corrigan stated his demand bluntly. "Where are they?"

"How do I know Miss Porter will be allowed to come ashore if I give them to you?" Dan asked bitterly.

"You have my word," Gentleman Jim grinned. "But, should that seem insufficient, you can show me the pearls now, and hand them to me on the wharf when I deliver my passenger. Fare to be paid at the end of the trip—that's square enough."

"All right—but if I find Miss Porter has been harmed or mistreated—by God, Corrigan, I'll hunt you out

no matter where you hide your dirty carcass!"

"A noble resolve," Corrigan mocked, "but quite unnecessary. The young lady has been a very pleasant passenger. Now—where are those pearls?"

From the kitchen Dan brought out a sieve and a bowl. Setting the articles on the table, he up-ended the big sugar bowl and poured its contents into the sieve. As the sugar ran through the coarse mesh, pearl after pearl came to the surface—until four dozen beautifully matched gems lay bunched in the bottom of the sieve.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Corrigan swore as, wide-eyed, he watched the treasure come to light. The sugar bowl was about the only place in which he and Rosey had not thought to look!

VI

NERVOUSLY Dan paced the little wharf as Corrigan's boat returned to the schooner. Soon Doris climbed down into the waiting boat. Her bags were lowered after her and, last of all, the burly figure of Rosey Rosen descended.

Anxiously Dan watched the boat approach. Doris was in the middle of the boat, right beside Corrigan. Now she was smiling and waving to him. Feebly Dan smiled back and called a welcome.

In his right hand he clutched a little leather sack filled with pearls. Once the girl was on the wharf his worries would cease. Then would be the time to deal with Gentleman Jim Corrigan.

Now the boat was at the low wharf, broadside to it. The kanakas shipped their oars. But before Doris could arise, Corrigan came to his feet.

"Fare, please," he grinned. "I'll

have to see that you have not managed a switch on me."

Nervously Dan opened the neck of the pouch and held it out for inspection. Then lots of things happened at once. With one hand Corrigan grabbed the bag; with the other he swung viciously at Dan's stomach. Dan was knocked backward across the wharf, as the kanakas pushed off and set their oars into the water.

"First we'll have to test these pearls," Gentleman Jim called mockingly to him. "They may be fakes, and I'm taking no chances!"

Sick at heart, Dan watched the boat skim across the bay toward the schooner. The girl's amazed and terrified face turned back appealingly to him as Corrigan held her firmly in her seat. The bully was using her as a shield, should Dan be tempted to fire after them.

He might have known that the slick devil would try some such trick, Dan berated himself. Close examination would soon prove the pearls to be fakes. In the sieve they had looked their part beautifully; but under a microscope and subjected to the tests that all pearl men knew, their spuriousness would only too quickly be apparent.

THE second part of Dan's infallible plan had failed dismally. There remained but one hope of squaring accounts with Gentleman Jim and Rosey. That would not, could not fail. Dan had saved it for a desperate last resort. But Doris' presence would complicate matters terribly.

As he stood watching, the small boat was pulled around to the schooner's stern and fastened there. Then the anchor started up from the bottom. Corrigan had no thought of testing the pearls; that was only a lie to cover his true intention. He

took it for granted that the pearls were genuine and he was sailing away, to carry Doris to God only knew what fate!

A puff of wind filled the schooner's sails and she headed for the inlet. Frantically Dan raced for the bungalow. "Kahui!" he called as he ran. "To the canoes! Take your men to the mouth of the bay—and remember my instructions!"

Already the Marquesans were rushing to obey. Soon a dozen loaded canoes were paddling furiously across the bay in the schooner's wake. Two shots the schooner fired at them warningly, but now the canoes made no further attempt to close in; they were content to hold their distance behind the fleeing vessel.

FROM a window of the bungalow Dan watched them tensely as he leaned over his radio and work table. The schooner was rapidly approaching the inlet. In a moment now would come the test—and he would know if he had succeeded or whether Corrigan would be able to slip through the noose.

Now!—The electric motor beneath the table was humming. Dan pressed his finger down on a key—and a dull boom filled the little bay! It was followed by another. A black cloud of shattered rock and dirt shot madly up, then rained down into the now churning waters of the little bay. When the dust cloud cleared away the inlet was widened—but in the channel were tons of rock which made it completely impassable. There could be no exit until such time as a dredge would arrive and clear the debris away. Gentleman Jim was effectually penned in the harbor!

And the Marquesan canoes were swiftly pulling to both shores of the inlet, where Dan's marksmen would take their places among the rocks

to prevent any attempt at landing.

VII

WHEN the tropic night came down over Hiva-luva, the schooner made its way to the center of the little bay and let down anchor. While daylight held Corrigan had tried in vain to find a channel, through the inlet, sufficiently deep to permit escape. Now he took a position as far away from the shores as possible.

Dan counted off his men one by one, and gave his last minute instructions. They filed noiselessly down to the water and took their places in the outriggers. No rifles did these warriors carry, only the heavy war-clubs and deadly spears of their people. Dan's plan called for swimming and he did not dare depend on water-soaked rifles and ammunition; the natives would have to rely on their own waterproof weapons.

When the schooner's bell rang midnight the canoes pushed noiselessly into the water, separated and made slow, quiet progress toward the black shape of the schooner. Tensely Dan sat in the bow of his canoe, ears straining to pick up any suspicious noises.

Now the canoe had come as close to the schooner as was safely possible. Gently Dan backed water and the other paddlers ceased their efforts. One by one they slipped into the water and swam noiselessly toward the towering black hull revealed in the waivering lantern light.

Dan's automatic was in an oilskin envelope. With a final pat to make sure it was still in its holster, he eased himself into the water and struck out. About him he could hear the soft lapping of the water as skillful swimmers cut through it. Then the hull of the schooner loom-

ed above him. And around its base, like flies surrounding a cake, the Marquesans awaited his signal.

AT the stern of the vessel Dan seized the tender rope and started pulling himself aboard. As his hands gripped the edge of the rail he kicked against the hull resoundingly—and the Marquesans clambered nimbly up the slippery sides.

"A-a-a-i-i-e-e-e-e!" screamed Kahui as he vaulted over the rail, and his fellows took up the yell with a will. Then Inferno broke loose. The kanakas on deck fell away from that fierce charge and were retreating toward the stern when suddenly the deckhouse door flew open. Corrigan was prepared, he had not been caught napping. Out poured a sheet of flame and lead, and backing it up came Rosey Rosen and his huskies, picked and trained fighters all.

It was spear and war-club against hot, deadly lead. Up and down the deck the raging men fought, the tide of battle veering from one side to another. Like a mighty giant Kahui strode through the mêlée, his deadly war-club splitting skulls like eggshells as time and again he found his mark. And again and again Dan rallied the Marquesans to greater effort, when the fire of the defenders became too hot for native courage.

Always he sought a way to enter the hold, to release Doris. But the hatches were tightly battened down and the battle raged too furiously around the deckhouse door.

Gradually Dan realized desperately that the fight was going against the islanders. Kahui was down; his mighty club no longer led the way. More and more the Marquesans were being forced up into the bow.

For a moment there was a lull in the battle, and the voice of Gentleman Jim rose above the din.

"You're licked, Hayden!" he shouted. "Throw down that gun and call off your savages, and we'll let you go back ashore alive. Otherwise you'll be shot down like a dog!"

Dan strove desperately to locate Corrigan's position and sent his last two bullets in the direction from which the voice had come. The automatic clicked futilely as he pressed the trigger again, and he hurled it fiercely into the face of a kanaka momentarily illuminated under one of the lanterns.

Corrigan's curses could be heard even above the noise of the renewed conflict. "Get the girl, Rosey!" he screamed. "Bring her up here! We'll see then whether this pup will listen to reason!"

FOR a moment the broad face of Rosey Ryan was visible in the lantern light as he strode to the door of the deckhouse.

Dan was helpless. There was nothing left but to lead a final hopeless charge against those guns and go down beneath their fire. But he would go down fighting, taking as many of the enemy with him as his strength would allow.

Dan grabbed a war-club which lay on the deck beside him and tensed himself for a spring. He would get Corrigan before the end, choke the life from that foul throat with his own bare hands. Then he stood still, struck dumb—astounded.

Rosey was almost at the deckhouse door. And suddenly out of that doorway came a shrill, piercing yell, and after that yell came Ah Chen! Not the Ah Chen of the kitchen and the galley, but Ah Chen the Kai-Gingh. His eyes flashed murderously. And in each hand he held a foot-long, gleaming knife!

Too late Rosey Ryan realized his danger. He grabbed for the revolver he had holstered, but before

he could reach it Ah Chen's arms closed around him in a terrible embrace. Those deadly knives crossed behind the bully mate's back, and when Ah Chen's arms pulled wide their scissor-like action did its work.

Rosen plunged to the deck almost cut in two!

Then Ah Chen turned upon Corrigan. But Gentleman Jim had no desire to face those knives. Horror-stricken, he gazed at their dripping blades—and all the fight went out of him. The revolver dropped from his nerveless hand and he ran screaming up the deck, straight into Dan Hayden's waiting embrace.

Down in a heap the two men went, Dan's hands closing tightly around the killer's throat.

Corrigan's fall ended the battle. With their leaders down the kanakas became scared children. Wildly they threw down their guns, fled from the clubs of the Marquesans and those terrible knives of Ah Chen's. From all sides of the schooner they sought escape in the black waters of the bay.

When Dan arose from the unconscious form of Gentleman Jim Corrigan there was not a living kanaka left on board.

VIII

DAN HAYDEN turned from his receiving set in the living room of the bungalow, and faced the trussed-up form of Gentleman Jim.

"The French patrol cutter will be here for you by tomorrow evening," he announced, "and will take you to Tahiti—if you are still alive.

"We need a schooner badly," Dan explained, "and, because of the expense you put us to, it will be some time before we can buy one. I rather think yours belongs to us anyway, by right of capture.

"But so there will be no hitch I have prepared a bill of sale conveying it to me. You may sign it if you wish—or perhaps you would rather explain to Ah Chen why it was necessary to murder his master."

"Anything!" Corrigan was trembling with fear. "Anything—but keep that yellow devil away from me! I'll give you the boat—I'll show you where I hid the pearls."

"You don't have to bother about the pearls," Dan grunted, as Corrigan scrawled his signature to the bill of sale. "Those you hid are hardly worth worrying about. John Porter's real gems have been well taken care of ever since his death."

THEN he called toward the kitchen door.

"I'm ready, Ah Chen."

Quickly the Chinaman glided into the room. Again he was the perfect house-boy, but this time instead of a tray of cooling drinks he carried the metal Buddha. He laid the image on the table on its back and his fingers expertly pressed its sides. There was a little click, and part of the bottom slid out of sight.

From the opening Dan pulled a quantity of wadded cotton, and at last a little chamois-skin bag rewarded his efforts. From its opened mouth a stream of gorgeous, lustrous pearls poured out on the tablecloth—sixty beautiful matched gems, soon to grace the throat of Doris Hayden.

"Well done, Ah Chen," Dan complimented the faithful Chinaman.

For a moment a smile of pleasure lit up Ah Chen's face; then his immobility returned. In his stolid expression was no hint of the triumph he felt over his master's murderer—or of his contempt for one too ignorant to know that the men of the Fo-Kien Province are followers of Confucius and have no allegiance for Buddha.

Seven Sons of Satan



"One crooked move outa you and I'll blow you all to hell!"

Diabolical Treachery and Deathless Valor in a Fast-Moving Story of Mutiny at Sea

By WILLIAM E. POINDEXTER

Author of "Tickets to Hell," etc.

CAPTAIN JAMES O'HARA stood on the bridge of his old tramp steamer, the *Cape-town*, glaring savagely down upon the sullen and mutinous men who moved reluctantly about the deck. Close at hand stood a loaded automatic rifle, and a long-barreled Colt's nestled comfortingly against his hip.

He bawled an order and the sailor whom he addressed turned to snarl up at him in evil fury. With a sudden pantherish movement, the fighting Irishman slid down the ladder without touching the steps, and as

his feet struck the deck his horny fist lashed out in a blow that sent the sailor crashing against the rail.

In grim, silent fury he pounced upon the man, smashing him, bruised and bleeding, to the deck. Three other sailors circled him warily, striving to get behind him, but he whirled upon them, revolver in hand, and they fell back. Once more he drove them to their work, momentarily cowed, and climbed again to his post on the bridge.

As he stood there staring somberly out over the gray, tumbled waters,

his big body slumped wearily against the rail and he shook his head to clear his aching eyes of the sleep that threatened to overcome him. But his bulldog chin, covered with a three day's growth of black bristles, still jutted forward in grim domination of the almost intolerable situation.

THROUGH sheer necessity the *Capetown* had been forced into war transport duty, when she should have been junked years before. Short-handed, and loaded with a precious cargo of airplane parts, she had started her slow and perilous journey across submarine infested waters to France, escorted by one destroyer.

On the second day out the destroyer had been forced to turn back with crippled engines. Captain O'Hara now knew that this had been caused by the presence of an enemy spy aboard her. Hence the old tramp had wheezed on her way alone until, without warning, mutiny had broken out. Through a cleverly pre-arranged plot the loyal members of the crew had been doped and killed in their bunks or at their posts, and the seven murderous mutineers, in the employ of the enemy, had taken possession of the ship.

They had made two mistakes, however. They had forgotten "Sandy" Ferguson, chief engineer, who had locked himself in his engine room in the bowels of the ship, and they had failed to get Captain O'Hara.

That fighting Irishman, young in years but old in point of experience and navy service, had acted with such sure speed and ferocity as to take the mutineers by surprise. While they thought him securely locked in his cabin, he appeared before them where they were gathered triumphantly in the forecastle, a hand-grenade in either fist, and threatened

to blow the ship to hell if they did not lay down their arms.

They looked once into his grimly determined face and knew that he meant exactly what he said. Whereupon he had confiscated all weapons, tossed them on deck and slammed the hatch shut. And there, one against seven, but that one a roaring, ravening demon of a thoroughly enraged Irish sea dog, he had beaten them to a sodden, bloody pulp and kicked them out on deck again. The only reason he had not killed them then and there was because he needed them to man the ship.

For more than two unending days and nights, with all the weapons except those belonging to himself and Ferguson thrown overboard, he had dominated the men and forced them to their work, and not once during that time had he slept or been off his feet. Not once during that time had Sandy Ferguson stepped outside his engine room where he nursed his rusty old engines and coaxed them into kicking the *Capetown* on her way.

So far, through unceasing vigilance, he had controlled the situation, but at the best it would be three more days before the old tramp would make port. Could he manage to keep on his feet for three more days, knowing that one single lapse and those seven men would be upon him like so many wolves?

THE *Capetown* had been turned into a hell ship that rivaled the horrors of those of a hundred years ago. If the seven mutineers had been Germans, fighting in the service of their native land, O'Hara would not have been so bitter against them, but they were renegades who had betrayed their country for silver, and he showed them no mercy.

Keeping one eye always on the

man at the wheel, he turned to call down the tube to the engine room.

"Hey, Sandy," he roared impatiently, "you gone to sleep down there? Can't you keep headway on the old tub, or do I have to come down and show you how to run your own engines?"

HE grinned gleefully at the steady stream of profanity that boiled up through the tube from the engine room. From the few coherent words that reached his ears he gathered that Sandy was at that moment sitting on the safety valve, that the boilers would undoubtedly burst within the next ten minutes, and that if the captain didn't like the way he was running the engines, he, the captain, could get off the ship and walk back home.

Knowing that the faithful engineer was doing all in his power, O'Hara turned back and again swept the waters with anxious eyes. There was always the possibility of meeting an Allied vessel, but the possibilities were still greater of running afoul of a German U-boat. If the latter happened it would, in all probability, be the end.

For a moment weariness and discouragement overpowered the captain and he slumped against the rail, a prey to black thoughts. He dared not sleep nor relax his vigilance for a moment, and even his great strength and vitality was breaking under the strain.

But in that moment of bitter defeat, a ghostly yet gallant procession floated before his eyes. Ever since there had been ships to sail, there had been O'Haras to sail them. History and legend were filled with the glory of their deeds.

There was that grand old sea dog, Timothy O'Hara, who had fought against the English. With his ship

on fire and a great hole ripped in her hull below the water line; with her guns wrecked and her crew dead and dying, he had towered amid the shambles, a bloody and heroic figure.

"For God's sake, man," cried the English admiral, "strike your colors!"

"Be damned to you, sir," roared back Tim, "'tis something I have never learned to do!" And he had gone down, his colors still flaunting defiance.

There were others no less heroic, and as they marched before James O'Hara in all their vanished glory, cheering him on, encouraging him, he straightened his weary body with a snap.

"By God, and I haven't learned how to strike my colors either!" he whispered to himself, and he thought that the ghost of old Tim O'Hara smiled upon him and saluted him with his cutlass.

The hours dragged wearily on to mid-afternoon, while Jimmy O'Hara stood there driving his sullen crew with blistering, blasphemous oaths, or menacing them with the rifle. At the slightest sign of resistance he was down the ladder and lashing out in grim, irresistible fury with his fists.

HIS eyes were automatically sweeping the sea, when suddenly he started and caught up his glasses. A half mile astern a small object was moving and it did not take a second look for him to see that it was a periscope. As he watched, the long gray back of a German sub broke the water and the conning tower hatch was thrown open.

Crouching, grim and tense on the bridge, O'Hara watched without a word. It was the end and he knew it, but he didn't know how to strike his colors. It was the end, but he would go down fighting.

"They won't waste a torpedo on us," he muttered to himself, but the next instant he knew he was wrong. A swift ripple of the water showed that a torpedo was racing straight upon them. He became galvanized to swift action.

"Hard aport there!" he roared to the man at the wheel. At the same instant he caught up the speaking tube. "Submarine astern!" he yelled. "Give me more steam, Sandy, if you have to tear her guts out!"

THE man at the wheel had been slow in obeying, as he knew nothing of the presence of the sub. With a savage oath O'Hara jerked out his revolver and sent a bullet smashing into the planks an inch from the sailor's heel.

"Hard aport, you scum, or I'll blow you to hell!" he roared viciously, and the man, stricken with fear, threw his weight on the wheel. Slowly, reluctantly, the old tramp obeyed her helm, and as she heeled over O'Hara strained forward, watching grimly as that menacing ripple sped towards them. For a moment he was certain that it was going to strike, then he released his breath in a gasp as it missed by scant feet.

With certain death staring him in the face, O'Hara was thinking swiftly and coolly. There was no possibility of the *Capetown* running away, nor did such a thing enter the captain's mind. With the submarine now straight ahead he roared orders to the helmsman and the steamer bore down upon the German with all the speed of which she was capable.

Backed by his ever ready revolver he herded the other six men forward near the single gun where he could keep an eye on them. Never once during the two days and nights had he allowed a man near that gun. It was a new four-pounder, and he

knew that it was loaded and ready for action.

He leaped down from the bridge and raced forward. "All right, you lousy sons of satan," he yelled, "one crooked move outa you and I'll blow you all to hell. Don't think I won't, either!" They saw the revolver in his hand, they saw the bulges in his pockets caused by two hand grenades, and they cowered away from him.

Without looking he knew that the sub was preparing to fire upon them. He jerked the covering from the four-pounder and inspected it hastily. Sailor, soldier and adventurer as he was, he was at no loss as to how to operate the gun. Carefully, coolly, he sighted and made his calculations.

At that moment a shell threw up a geyser of water a few fathoms directly in front of the *Capetown*. In a panic the helmsman threw the wheel over and instantly the captain's revolver spat once. The man fell moaning to the deck.

"Take that wheel," he yelled to another of the men, his face twisted into demoniac lines. "Hold her steady or I'll blow your guts out!" He jerked up the revolver and the man ran hastily forward and swung the steamer back on her course.

ANOTHER shell from the sub crashed down and the old tramp trembled from stem to stern. She had been damaged, but O'Hara could not tell how badly. He breathed with relief as the engines continued to throb. Yet still he held his fire. He was rushing to certain destruction, but he wanted to take that sub with him. One shot was all he asked, but he meant to make that shot count.

The men were in as much danger as he, but so great had grown their

hatred for him that they forgot the menace of the submarine and fancying that they saw a chance, rushed him. In whirling to meet the rush he fumbled his revolver and it fell from his hand. Before he could stoop to pick it up they were upon him.

A JAGGED missile hurled by one of them struck him a glancing blow on the side of the head, causing the blood to cascade down his neck. He staggered, on the verge of unconsciousness, and struck out blindly. The thud of his fist against flesh seemed to revive him and he met them with piston-like jolts from his big fists, fighting savagely and with ruthless coolness.

But they were five against one and they were desperate. They knew they were going to die, but they intended to get the captain first. Time after time he drove them back, but they pressed in again.

That fight on the deck of the doomed hell ship, threatened with instant destruction by the submarine, was as weird a battle as was ever seen on land or sea. Half-stunned by the blow on the head and weakening rapidly from loss of blood, Captain O'Hara stood with his muscular legs wide apart, his fists swinging in blows that were like the kick of a mule.

A shell from the sub swept across the deck but they did not heed nor hear it. A giant sailor succeeded in ducking under O'Hara's guard and coming to grips, his great hands clawing at the captain's throat. As he struggled to keep his feet, he saw another sailor creeping towards him on hands and knees. Swiftly the man reached out his hand for the revolver that lay on the deck between O'Hara's feet.

If they got possession of the gun,

he was done for. Watching his chance, the captain crashed his heel down on the eagerly reaching hand, grinding it into the deck, and was conscious of a thrill of satisfaction as the man screamed in agony and rolled away. With a deft twist of his arms and shoulders he broke the grip of the man who had grappled with him, and swung his fist to the jaw.

Six inches only that fist traveled, but the blow crushed the bone as if it had been an egg shell, and the giant tottered, out on his feet. With a swift movement, an almost unbelievable muscular effort, he caught the man by belt and collar and heaved him bodily at the others. They all went down in a squirming, tangled heap and he bent and caught up the revolver.

But they were beaten once more and he whirled to the gun. The Germans had not tried to maneuver the submersible out of the way, certain that they could sink the steamer before she could do any damage. The two ships were close together and O'Hara could see that the Germans were preparing to fire again. He swung the gun upon her.

IN that moment of conflict and deadly peril he knew of admiration for the way Sandy Ferguson was handling his engines. Clouds of black smoke were pouring from the stacks of the tramp, and she was kicking along at a full two knots faster than she had ever moved in her palmiest days. O'Hara expected the boilers to blow her bottom out at any moment, and he did not care much, just so he got in a shot at the sub.

He stepped back and jerked the lanyard. The four-pounder roared viciously, but on the recoil she tore loose from her moorings, crashed across the deck and disappeared into

the sea on the other side with a hissing splash. O'Hara scarcely noticed the disappearance of the gun, so intently was he watching the effect of the shot.

WITH a yell of triumph he saw the sub lurch violently as the shell crashed into her stern. She was probably not much damaged but he was certain that the shell had knocked her propellers loose and that was as much as he could ask. There was utter confusion for a moment on the submarine and the captain took full advantage of it.

With a bellowing roar he raced to the wheel, all weakness forgotten, and brushed the helmsman aside with one sweep of his powerful arm. He was certain that the U-boat was too badly damaged to follow him, but her guns were still in working order. Throwing the wheel hard over, he sheered off, striving to put as much distance between the two ships as possible before the German crew recovered from their confusion and sunk him with a well-placed shot.

He zig-zagged the *Capetown* back and forth in an erratic course, but he owed his safety to the fact that the Germans were not expert marksmen. Shell after shell sent up spouts of water on every side, but presently they began to fall short and the steamer was out of danger.

O'Hara motioned to one of the men to take the wheel, and went forward. A gaping hole had been torn high up in the bow, but so far as he could discover the shell had done no further damage. He staggered back to his post on the bridge. Reaction was setting in and a numbness was creeping over him. But he knew the men were watching him for any sign of weakness, knew that their hatred for him had been redoubled and that they would attack if they thought they had the slightest chance.

He explained the situation to Sandy through the speaking tube, then made a rough bandage for his wounded head. He had been forced to throw his rifle overboard to prevent its falling into the hands of his enemies, and he was armed only with his revolver and two hand-grenades.

Again despair was creeping over him. If the gun had not kicked itself loose from the deck he would have stayed to fight it out with the German, because he knew that she was equipped with wireless and would summon aid without delay. Those waters were infested with U-boats and German war vessels, and it would not be long until they would be down upon him like wolves.

His one hope now was that they would not arrive until after nightfall. He might be able to avoid them in the darkness, and every hour saw him drawing nearer to the shores of France and the possibility of encountering Allied ships. He cursed the inefficiency of the Naval Department in not providing him with wireless, or for that matter in sending him to sea with a priceless cargo, in a tub that was fit for nothing but the boneyard.

HE calculated that there was almost three hours more of daylight, and settled himself as comfortably as possible, conserving his strength. Almost exhausted as he was, his eyelids closed time after time, and time after time he jerked himself back to wakefulness. Finally in desperation he rubbed tobacco in his eyes, the pain of it clearing his head effectively.

He was aware that his every movement was being observed by the crew, all of whom were on deck. The man he had shot had not been wounded severely.

"Seven sons of Satan," he muttered to himself as he glared down upon

them. "They know I need 'em to run the ship so they ain't afraid. Think I'm about done, huh? By all the gods, I'll show 'em that Tim O'Hara isn't done till he's dead!"

LIKE vultures gathering about a dying animal, the men were drawing in, growing more insolent every moment as they saw his bloody, haggard figure swaying with exhaustion. But even yet the murderers had not learned the mighty spirit that dominated the captain's body.

One of them standing just below the bridge leered up at him. "We know we're dead men unless we croak you," growled the sailor. "If the Jerries don't git us we'll be hung fer murder, but we'll git you first, you—" He trailed off into a stream of filthy abuse.

As he continued to lean wearily against the rail, apparently not resenting the insult, they grew bolder, crowding in closer beneath him, laughing at him, threatening him, mocking him. They did not see his muscles slowly tighten, nor the blaze of passion that lit his blue eyes until he spoke. His voice was low, but it was vitriolic in its clipped syllables.

"Listen, you dirty scum," he rasped, "you think you've got me, huh? Think I'm at the end of my rope, do you? Well, get this and get it straight. I'm taking this ship into port and all the Jerries this side of hell can't stop me. As for a mangy bunch of wharf rats like you—"

He spat upon them in utter contempt, then with that miraculous mastery of spirit over matter which was his, he leaped over the rail in sudden dynamic action, landing squarely upon the shoulders of one of the men and crushing him to the deck.

With cat-like agility he was instantly on his feet. He was going to

teach them once and for all that he was their master; he was going to break their spirits so that they would never lift a hand to him again, and he would undoubtedly have succeeded if it had not been for an unexpected flirt of fate.

As he landed on the deck his revolver had been jolted from his belt. As it skidded across the deck one of the men snatched it up and fired blindly. O'Hara felt a terrific blow on the side of his already wounded head, then he felt himself falling into a black gulf of oblivion.

When he finally recovered consciousness to find himself securely bound, he was vastly surprised that they had not killed him instantly. But as he listened to their talk, sick with the bitterness of defeat, he realized why he had not been put to death. They were not going to let him off so easily.

The renegades were going to carry out their original plan, that of surrendering the ship to the Germans, when the tramp would either be confiscated or else the men would be taken off and the ship sunk. In either event the men would be safe enough. But in the meantime they meant to revenge themselves in full upon O'Hara.

TO one of O'Hara's fighting breed the indignity was almost unbearable but he maintained a proud silence, even when they jerked him to his feet, spat upon him, kicked him and reviled him. Tiring of that, a long length of rope was fastened to his body and he was led to the stern. Here he put up one last desperate scrap, but bound as he was they easily overpowered him and cast him overboard.

He struck with a splash that knocked the breath out of him, and sank down and down into the gray-green depths. He thought of filling

his lungs with water and ending it once and for all, but that indomitable spirit would not let him take what he considered the coward's way out. In spite of everything there was something within him that would not quite let him give up hope. He had to fight as long as life lasted. So old Tim O'Hara had fought.

As the rope tightened he was jerked to the surface and managed to fill his lungs with fresh air before he was rolled under again. There followed twenty minutes of hell that seemed like twenty years.

HE had a moment of hope when the new ropes that bound his arms loosened slightly so they stretched under the jerking. A moment later and his hands were free. Another instant and he had kicked off the ropes that bound his feet. He chuckled suddenly to himself as he found that the grenades were still in his pockets, having been overlooked by the renegades.

He did not try at once to climb back on board, knowing that would be fatal, but by spreading his arms and legs he was able to volplane through the water without being ducked under and strangled. A few minutes later he was aware that the men were no longer grouped about the stern rail, watching him, and lifting himself upon a rolling wave he saw a smudge of smoke on the horizon.

Slowly he began to draw himself towards the ship hand over hand, until he noticed a white flag flutter out from the bow. He knew then beyond doubt that the vessel which they had sighted was a German, and the thought of the dastardly surrender filled him with a sudden rage.

Perhaps the Germans would get him, after all, but first he would settle with those seven sons of satan on board the *Capetown*. With the

two bombs in his pockets which weighed him down, he could send them to hell. After that he would go down with his colors flying, knowing that he had done his best.

As he rolled from side to side in the wash of the steamer's screws, he caught sight of a black fin darting along in his wake, and dauntless as he was, it sent a thrill of horror through him.

FRANTICALLY he drew in on the rope, always keeping a wary eye over his shoulder. The shark was darting back and forth through the water, undecided as to whether to attack or not, but every moment it grew bolder.

O'Hara knew that the moment would come when it would make its final strike. And he was utterly helpless. He glanced despairingly up at the stern of the ship. Evidently the men had forgotten him, and anyway he could expect no help from them. A sudden thought came to him.

The grenades! Frantically he clawed at his pocket until he got one of them out. He held it up, inspecting it as well as he could, and thought that the water had not damaged it. He snapped out the pin with his teeth, held the lever down with his finger and waited. The shark darted back and forth more swiftly now, coming nearer each time, nervously for the final dash at this tempting and apparently helpless bait that dangled along under its nose.

But when the attack came it was so swift as to almost take the captain by surprise. With a flirt of its tail the hungry shark darted forward, and O'Hara hurled the grenade with all his strength. It struck the water directly over the shark's head, exploded with a terrific concussion that tore the giant fish to shreds.

For a moment the captain was

stunned, unable to do more than cling helplessly to the rope while the water rolled him over and over. Presently he recovered and glanced anxiously up towards the stern.

KNOWING that he had no time to lose, O'Hara again drew in on the rope, inching his body painfully along through the water, finding progress more difficult after he got within the direct wash of the steamer's screws. But so great was the indomitable fighting heart of the Irish captain that nothing short of sudden death could have stopped him.

He had given up hope of piloting his ship safely to port, but at least he would send those seven sons of Satan to hell, drag down that ignominious white flag, and break out the Stars and Stripes before he went to the bottom. Why, if he died under the white flag of surrender, even if he himself was not responsible for it, the shade of old Timothy O'Hara would hound him throughout hell!

The fact that the *Capetown* had a high, overhanging poop was all that saved him from being cut to pieces by the churning propeller blades. As it was it took the last ounce of his great strength to drag himself clear of the sucking water and up the slippery, swaying rope until he could clutch the rail with his hands.

He paused there a moment to catch his breath and look cautiously about him. The seven men were all gathered forward, staring eagerly at a German destroyer that was swiftly approaching off the port bow. To the rear of her a German U-boat was racing as fast as her Diesels could kick her along.

O'Hara nodded in acceptance of the situation. At any rate he would die honorably, and that old ancestor of his would have no cause to be ashamed of him. But he would have to work fast.

Quietly the captain drew himself up over the rail, took the grenade from his pocket and pulled the pin, being careful to hold the lever down until he was ready to throw it. Then he went forward in a pantherish rush, roaring his challenge of hate at the top of his voice. Down below, Sandy Ferguson was still nursing his engines, all unconscious of what was transpiring above decks. Stricken with consternation, the seven men turned to behold that rushing Nemesis which had risen from the sea.

On and on he rushed. His arm lifted, swept forward, and the grenade left his hand with the force of a bullet. The men scattered wildly, but they were too late. The grenade let loose with a rending concussion that mangled flesh and left a gaping hole in the deck.

Without a moment's waste of precious time, O'Hara rushed below, caught up a flag and again sped to the deck. That hateful and ignominious white rag came down with a rush and an instant later the Stars and Stripes snapped in the breeze.

HE stepped back with a smile—satisfied. Now let them sink him and be damned to them. He looked out across the water and started in sudden surprise. The two German boats had swerved from their course and were beating a hasty retreat. Unnoticed by them all, two United States destroyers were plowing the waves from the opposite direction, and as if in answer to the flag on the *Capetown*, the Stars and Stripes snapped forth from above their steel ramming prows.

Captain Jimmy O'Hara slumped wearily to the deck, but as he lay there it seemed to him that the spirit of that brave old sea dog, Tim O'Hara, stood smiling above him.



HOORAY for the N.R.A.! Adventuring in a big way is coming back, and coming back with a bang! Whether or not the N.R.A. is entirely responsible for this renewed activity in the exploration field, we are not certain. But the fact remains that there are a great many expeditions forming and getting under way after a long period of inactivity. The Blue Eagle is taking to its wings and searching for unknown lands.

BEYOND THE SOUTH POLE

Rear Admiral Byrd, Sir Hubert Wilkins and Lincoln Ellsworth are making a concerted attempt to gang up on the unknown regions beyond the bleak and barren South Pole. These three leaders are tackling the Antarctic regions from different bases, but with one single idea in mind: To fill in the blank spaces on the map, which up to this time has been marked "unknown" territory.

The old South Pole is going to get a thorough going over this coming year. When Byrd, Wilkins and Ellsworth return from their planned expeditions sometime in 1935, there will be very few regions still marked "unknown" on the maps of Antarctica.

Admiral Byrd says: "I intend this time to make a close and careful survey of the still unknown lands beyond the great ice barrier. The airplanes, which I will fly myself this time, will, as always, play a big part in my plans. But I am depending

on dogs and sledges to do the really exacting work."

A NEW DEPARTURE

This is a slightly new departure for the former Navy officer. Floyd Bennett and Harold June were his pilots on his previous flights in both the Arctic and the Antarctic. And dogs and sledges were used very little. He is taking along with him on the *Bear*, the famous old Arctic cutter, 150 specially bred and trained sledge dogs with experienced drivers.

"My purpose," says Lincoln Ellsworth, "is to fly across the vast Antarctic continent from one side to the other, a distance of almost 2,000 miles. Most of this flight will be over lands never before explored. I want to determine their aspect, and what possible effect the mountains there may have upon the weather of the Southern hemisphere, also the possibilities for exploitation of minerals."

Wilkins will base at Endbry Land and work in co-operation with Ellsworth after his flight there from the Ross Sea on the opposite side of the vast Antarctic continent.

MARVELS OF THIS ERA

All these explorers will keep in daily, almost hourly contact with the outside world by means of radio and special short-wave wireless sets.

Such are the marvels of the present age!

Such close and intimate contact

with the outside world was impossible just a few short years ago. Roald Amundsen and Captain Scott, who were the first men to reach the South Pole, had no such equipment.

When Amundsen and a few companions left his base ship, the *Franheim*, frozen in the Ross Sea and began his trek to the Pole, he plunged into a vast unknown world of silence and simply disappeared for a period of months.

"If I don't return within 60 days from the time I have told you I would," he said to the commander in charge of his base, just as he turned his feet towards the south to begin his historic dash to the Pole, "get the *Franheim* out of the ice and return to Norway. Don't wait any longer. I shall reach the Pole and return by that time or not at all."

Neither his men on the *Franheim* nor the outside world heard anything from him until he came back to his base again, some six months later, and announced through the ship's radio that he had discovered the South Pole. He had reached it on December 14th, 1911, and stayed there three days making observations.

At the same time Amundsen was sledging over the ice, Captain Scott, the Englishman, was trekking along in a like direction with three companions. Scott's base ship, the *Erebus*, was frozen in the barrier ice some 250 miles from Amundsen's *Franheim*, but he started his trek to the Pole some months earlier. At times their paths must have almost crossed when nearing the Pole, yet neither had the slightest idea of where the other was. They had no portable, lightweight radios then.

THE TRAGEDY OF SCOTT

Captain Scott reached the Pole in January, 1912, only to find that Amundsen had beaten him to it by a mere thirty days. Scott never re-

turned to civilization to announce his feat. His heart and his spirit were broken. Thus weakened, he died from exposure on the homeward trek. His companions buried him where he fell—in the everlasting ice of the Antarctic.

His successful rival, Amundsen, was to meet the same fate years later. His body lies now somewhere in the Arctic regions around Spitzbergen. On a mission of mercy, he flew to the relief of the distressed General Nobile, in the ill-fated *Italia* and was never heard of again. Though he was on none too friendly terms with the Italian explorer, his last words as he took off and was swallowed up in the Arctic mists were:

"He's a fellow explorer in distress. I must fly to his relief!"

He gave his life in the attempt. Later Nobile was saved.

INTO THE BLUE

Professor Andre, who made an attempt to reach the North Pole by balloon in 1897, met the same fate. He simply disappeared into the blue and vanished from sight. One message came back by carrier pigeon. That was all, for almost thirty years—when most astonishing news was flashed out of the north (by radio). The remains of Andre and his two companions had been found, also remnants of his balloon *Oernen*. And—what was more important—his diary, giving an authentic record of the last days before his death by starvation and exposure in the heartless, then silent wastes of the forbidding Arctic.

Exploring before the days of radio was something different than it is now. Explorers dived into the unknown and were lost to civilization for years. They heard nothing of the outside world. The outside world heard nothing of them until they came out again—if they ever did.

The airplane and the radio have

LIVING YOUTHFULLY

Even After 60

Thousands of Men Prove the Wonders of This New Drugless Gland Stimulant

MANY men have a false notion about the real significance of rejuvenation. This misinformation has been greatly fostered by the distorted newspaper accounts of European gland operations. These spectacular operations are but one aspect of a subject which is of the utmost practical importance to aging men.

Rejuvenation is not merely an attempt to turn back the hands of time. It is not just a whim or vanity that interests men past middle age in the subject of rejuvenation. Few men past the prime of life are interested in rejuvenation simply for the sake of growing younger or prolonging life.

Robust Health . . . Abounding Energy

By far the most important aspect of rejuvenation is health . . . freedom from pain, weakness, debility and certain distressing and often painful symptoms so common to old age.

So little is generally known about the subject of glands that it would probably amaze many men to learn that most of their suffering and distress oftentimes is due to the failure of the tiny prostate gland.

Symptoms of Gland Trouble

When this vital gland slows up in men past middle age it often hypertrophies — and becomes congested, swollen and greatly increased in size. In this condition it often bears or presses on the bladder and colon—thus directly causing severe bladder trouble, frequent nightly rising, broken sleep, and not infrequently, both chronic constipation and hemorrhoids.

Are You Blaming These Troubles on Approaching Age?

Prostate trouble is also the frequent cause of debility, weakness, pains in the back, feet and legs, chronic fatigue, and a general lack of ambition, a feeling of age, depression and irritability. Few people realize how widespread it is. Some medical

men believe, however, that fully two-thirds of all men past the age of 50 have some or all of these symptoms of gland disorder. Untold thousands of aging men suffer in this way and do not know the cause. For the most part they blame these troubles on approaching age.

There is no medicine known which will reduce the swollen prostate gland to normal size. Palliative treatment is by finger massage and physiotherapy methods. When the gland swells beyond the ability of palliative measures to correct, the only alternative is to remove it, which is a serious surgical operation every man would like to avoid.

A Safe Home Method of Natural Stimulation

Now you can stimulate the prostate gland in a safe, natural way. This discovery goes directly to the area of the gland without drugs, medicine, diets, or application of electricity, and greatly increases the circulation. The method is as safe and harmless as washing your hands. It is easy and pleasant to use in the privacy of your own home. It has the enthusiastic endorsement of many noted physicians. One doctor says of this treatment: "A hundred years ahead of modern medicine; a thousand years ahead of the surgeon's knife."

100,000 men have already used this remarkable treatment with the most amazing results in many cases. Often noticeable relief comes almost overnight. Quick as is the response to this treatment, it is by no means merely a temporary relief, but it is designed to relieve the distressing symptoms by correcting the cause!

Feel Ten Years Younger

While it is not claimed that the treatment will actually make you grow younger, the method is an amazingly effective that it is offered under an agreement that unless you feel ten years younger in seven days the treatments cost nothing.

Remarkable Book FREE

This new discovery is of such universal and far-reaching importance in the health, activity and robust vigor of men past 40 that it is described in a remarkable 24-page illustrated book, "Why Many Men Are Old at 40."

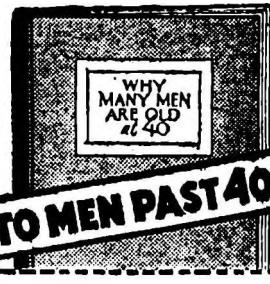
Mail the Blank at Right

If you have this gland trouble or any of the symptoms mentioned, write today for this free book. You can ask yourself certain frank questions that may reveal your true condition. Every man past 40 should make this test, as insidious prostate disorder often leads to surgery. This book is entirely free, but mail the coupon immediately, as the edition is limited. Address



W. J. KIRK, Pres., The Electro Thermal Co., 1272 Morris Avenue, Steubenville, Ohio.

If you live West of the Rockies, address The Electro Thermal Co., 500 Wm. Fox Bldg., Dept. 12-C, Los Angeles, Calif. In Canada, address The Electro Thermal Co., Park 12-C, 59 Yonge Street, Toronto, Canada.



FREE TO MEN PAST 40!

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1272 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio

Please mail at once a FREE copy of
the booklet "Why Many Men Are Old at
40" and all details of the new treatment.
I am not obligated in any way.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

changed exploring. But they haven't taken the adventure out of it. Danger lurks in the unknown sky trails as well as it does in the ice or jungles of unknown lands.

A DRAMATIC MESSAGE

This last statement is graphically portrayed by Captain Bill Erwin's attempted flight to Honolulu in the wake of the missing Dole flyers in that memorable but tragic air derby across the Pacific.

Seven planes started in that tragic race. Only two won through—those piloted by Art Goebel and Martin Jensen. The other five were never heard of again. Erwin, in a fast plane equipped with radio operator, took off two days later to make a sea and sky search for the missing flyers.

For seven hours he kept up an uninterrupted communication with San Francisco; simple prosaic reports, stating that everything was well, but that he had seen no trace of the missing planes or pilots.

Then came a hectic whining of his radio carrier wave. The shore operators, who were listening to the reports, tensed over their receiving sets. Erwin's radio sending outfit was acting up! The generator was speeding unduly. Then came the screeching signals from Erwin's operator, hectic, shrilling, high pitched.

"We're in a dive—falling—" Then a moment of silence. Captain Erwin must have been battling at the controls. Then: "We're out of it—no—we're diving again—" the sending generator began to sing dizzily—"we're in a spin—spinning—almost to the water—can't get it out—still spinning—"

Then abrupt silence. The generator hum had stopped completely.

THE SILENT SQUADRON

Nobody saw Captain Erwin's plane spin into the water. But hundreds of ears caught that last hectic mes-

sage from his radio operator. It was a drama of the *n*th degree. Navy vessels and passenger ships raced to the spot where he had last given his position, but they found no trace of him or his plane. He had gone to join the Silent Squadron of his fellows, the five he had set out to rescue—like Amundsen.

But his death, and the disappearance of the other five, gave birth to a theory which hasn't yet been disproved.

Somewhere on the Pacific, between San Francisco and Honolulu, there is a perpetual "hole in the air"—a spot where there is a sweeping downdraft of air currents. Erwin, as well as the other five, fell into this "hole in the air" and plunged into the water.

Yes, danger still lurks in the skyways and jungle trails, despite the invention of the airplane and the radio. And as long as there is danger there will be adventurers. Whenever there is no danger, adventuring will become a parlor game like tiddly-winks. But that seems a long time off.

Harry Palmer, of New York City, has written in to *Ye Olde Globe Trotter*, and the letter he has written gives us an idea. We'll print the letter first, then spring the new idea.

MORE ABOUT SNAKES

Dear *Globe Trotter*:

I am writing this letter in reply to Mr. Patty's inquiry about snakes in the September issue of *THRILLING ADVENTURES*. Please publish it so he can read it, or else mail it to him. I would write direct if I knew his address.

He was interested in snake farming and asked about the possibilities of making a living, collecting venom. I am interested in the same thing, and had intended to go to Florida—my home state—and collect about fifty diamond-backs to start my serpentarium. Ten dollars an ounce seemed like good money to me, but I thought it best to check up first, so I went to see Dr. Ditmars of the New York Zoological Society.

(Continued on page 148)

A NEW LIFETIME BUSINESS

OPEN TO ANY EARNEST MAN

NO HIGH PRESSURE SELLING NO HOUSE-TO-HOUSE CANVASSING INCOME EQUAL TO REQUIREMENTS OF THE HIGH-GRADE BUSINESS MAN

E. Lawson, of Tennessee, clears \$108 profit his first 3 days in this business. He tops off these earnings with \$118 profit on a single deal a few days later. J. C. May, Conn., cleared \$205.55 the first nine days he worked. J. E. Loomis, Oregon, earns \$245 his first nine days. A. W. Farnsworth, Utah, nets \$65.16 his first day, a Saturday. S. Clair, New York, writes he is clearing as high as \$70 a day. W. F. Main, Iowa, cleans up \$291.50 in 9 days. B. Y. Becton, Kansas, starts out with \$550.55 net for 40 days work! These men are beginners. How could they enter a field totally new to them and earn such remarkable sums in these desperate times? Read the answer in this announcement. Read about a new business that does away with the need for high pressure selling. A rich field that is creating new money-making frontiers for wide-awake men. Those who enter now will pioneer—to them will go the choicest opportunities.

FOUR \$15 SALES DAILY PAY \$280 WEEKLY

INSTALLING NEW BUSINESS SPECIALTY ON FREE TRIAL—
MAKING TREMENDOUS CASH SAVINGS IN OPERATING COSTS FOR
THOUSANDS OF CONCERN THROUGHOUT THE U.S. AND CANADA

\$4,707 Savings For One Kansas Store in Two Months

Sanders Ridgeway of Kansas installs \$88.60 and earns \$4,707.00 between April 6th and June 29th. House Lumber and Feed Co., West Virginia, installs \$12, report savings well over \$1,000 net. For Ice and Coal Co., Wisconsin, saves \$1,665 net. Baltimore Sporting Goods Store installs \$15,000 in \$1,600 net. Safety Auto-Lock Corporation, New York, installs \$15, earns \$666 net. With these and scores of similar results to display, our representatives interview every business man. In the very smallest to the very largest. No one can dispute the truth. In the photo-copies of actual letters which our men show.

NO HIGH PRESSURE SIMPLY INSTALL— SELLS ITSELF

Here is a business offering an information so successful that we make it available. Our representatives, simply tell what they offer, show proof of success in every line of business and every section of the country. Then install the specialty without a dollar down. It starts working at once, producing a cash saving that can be counted just like the cash register money. The customer sees with his own eyes a big, immediate profit on his proposed investment. Usually he has the investment and his profit besides, before the representative returns. The representative calls back, collects his money. OUT OF EVERY 175 BUSI-
NESS THE REPRESENTATIVE DOES NEARLY \$80 IN HIS OWN PROFIT! THE SMALLEST HE MAKES IN \$5 ON A 17.50 INSTALLATION. Our men are making sales running into the hundreds. They are getting the attention of the largest concerns in the country and selling to the smaller businesses by the thousands. You can get exclusive rights. Business is GOOD, in this line, in small towns or big city cities! It's on the boom now. Get in while the business is young!

F. E. ARMSTRONG, Pres., Dept. 4047-L, Mobile, Alabama.

COMPLETE TRAINING FURNISHED

Every man with us today started at scratch, without previous experience, many coming out of clerking jobs, many out of small businesses, some out of large concerns. We teach you every angle of the business. We hand you the biggest money-making business of its kind in the country. You try out this business. ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT RISKING A DED. CO-PER CENT OF YOUR OWN. Can't possibly tell you all in the limited space available here. Mail the coupon now for full information, nothing to risk, everything to gain.

Brilliant Record of Success

America's foremost concerns are among our customers: Timken Silent Automatic Co., Central States Petroleum Corp., Houghton Mifflin Co., National Paper Co., International Coal, General Brake Service, National Radio, and scores of others nationally known. Thousands of small businesses everywhere, professional businesses, such as schools, hospitals, infirmaries, doctors, dentists buy large installations and heavy repeat orders.

Customer Guaranteed Cash Profit

Customer gets signed certificate guaranteeing cash profit on his investment. Very few business men are so foolish to turn down a proposition guaranteed to pay a profit, with proof from leading concerns that it does pay. Protected by surely bonded national organization.

Portfolio of References from America's Leading Concerns

is furnished you. A handsome, impressive portfolio that represents every leading type of business and profession. You show immediate positive proof of success. Immediately forestalls the argument, "Does it fit my business." Shows that it does fit, and does make good. Close the deal.

Mail Coupon for Information

Complete training furnished. You try out this business absolutely without risking a penny. If you are looking for a man-size business free from the worries of other overcrowded lines, get in touch with us at once. Use the coupon for convenience. It will bring you our proposition immediately.

MAIL FOR FULL INFORMATION

F. E. ARMSTRONG, Pres.,
Dept. 4047-L, Mobile, Ala.

Without obligation to me, send me full information on your proposition.

Name.....

Street or Route.....

Box No.

City.....

State.....

(Continued from page 146)

He told me of a Texan who had thought of the same idea and collected a quart of venom in crystal form, but could not sell it after he got it because there is absolutely no market for it.

There is a place in Pennsylvania where they raise snakes for the venom. Also in Honduras, C. A., the United Fruit Company and Harvard University have a serpentarium, of which Mr. March is director.

If there is anything else Mr. Patty would like to know about the vipers of the New World, I would be more than glad to tell him what I know of them.

Sincerely yours,
Harry Palmer,
New York City.

P. S. to Ye Olde Globe Trotter:

What is the prospect of gold mining east of the Andes in Ecuador and Peru, also in panning the rivers of the same territory? And what is the best equipment to take along? A friend of mine and I are figuring on trying it out if possible.

Well, Palmer, I am going to answer your postscript first. Peru and Ecuador both have gold in considerable quantities, but most of it is combined in low-grade ores requiring considerable milling, therefore quite expensive equipment. The ancient Aztecs and Incas, however, must have had access to gold in the native state, for their temples show evidence of it having been used in great amounts.

These mines were never discovered by the early Spanish invaders, nor have they been found up to this time. So, of course, there is always a chance that some one may rediscover them. You might be the lucky ones, yet, let me warn you, it will be like looking for a needle in a haystack. The country east of the Andes in both the lands you mention is still much unexplored. It is a wild land, peopled by hostile tribes, and is very difficult to travel in. There are no roads and very few trails. All the rivers lead to the Amazon, and the headwaters of some of these streams have never been fully traced yet.

Anything shy of a small expedi-

tion well equipped with supplies and means of transport would have little chance of much success. Two men could hardly make it alone, just traveling through, let alone hunting for gold on the way.

Now back to the body of your letter, Palmer, and the idea it brings to mind. A wow idea! I believe. Your letter was mainly for Mr. Patty's consideration. You would probably have written him direct if you had known the address, isn't that so? Well, now read on under the next heading—

GLOBE TROTTERS CLUB

We've been thinking for a long time that you fellow adventurers, readers of THRILLING ADVENTURES Magazine, would like to get together in a vast world-wide organization. Palmer's letter in answer to Patty's questions just about cinches the thought.

You adventurers are scattered all over the globe. Why not get together in one great organization sponsored by the publishers of this magazine? We will call the organization the *Globe Trotters Club*. There will be no dues, no requirements for membership except an urge for adventure. THRILLING ADVENTURES Magazine will serve as the official publication of the club. In it each month we will publish a list of the members, giving full names and addresses. This list will be augmented from month to month as new members join up in different parts of the world.

Ye Olde Globe Trotter will see that each of you who join get a handsome printed membership card with name and number on it. This card will serve as identification for you whenever you are traveling, and identify you as a brother adventurer, a member of the *Globe Trotters*.

(Continued on page 150)

WHO SAYS Jobs are Scarce?

The True Story of Charles Slovachek Proves There's Steady Work and Good Pay Waiting for Every Ambitious Man or Woman Who Really Wants to Get Ahead

CHARLES SLOVACHEK was up against it. He'd been out of work so long he began to believe there weren't any more jobs. To make matters worse he was in poor health—a handicap that would have made less ambitious men give up in despair.

It was about this time that he ran across an advertisement in a magazine that offered honest, ambitious men and women a chance to make big money in a new kind of pleasant, short-hour work that could be done in full time or spare time with the home as headquarters.

The Secret of "Quick Money"

Slovachek was skeptical. But since it cost only a 1¢ postcard to get the facts, he decided to investigate. And that step was a turning point in his life. Almost at once his earnings commenced to climb to undreamed-of proportions. Today all his money worries are over. He drives a Ford Tudor Sedan given to him free by his employer as an extra reward for his good work. And he's making more money than thousands of men with ten times his natural advantages.

Hundreds Doing as Well

This story is just one example. Hundreds of men and women—young and old—from all parts of the country—are doing as well or better. Mrs. Harry Sayer, Pa., is a housewife with two children and yet she cleared \$23.00 in eight hours. Finds no trouble in making \$20.00 a day. H. Grossmann, Ill., had a profit of \$45.00 for just one day's work. William Walker, \$68.00 in three days. Sol Korenblit, \$110.00 in a week. Mrs. McCalmant, \$25.00 in a single day. These exceptional earning records show the remarkable possibilities.



No Experience Needed

Now I am opening up my factory to full capacity and I need many more men and women at once to fill similar positions. All you do is follow a few simple instructions and help the Company operate a "Route System" in your locality. With regular customers and an established Route it should be easy to make up to \$12.00 or \$15.00 a day, right from the start.

Even a small Route that you can handle in spare time should be good for \$30.00 or \$40.00 a week. As soon as you are established, a Ford Tudor Sedan is given to you free, as an extra reward, so you can handle even a bigger Route and make still more money.

Get the Facts

Mail the coupon at once for full details. The Company starts you at once with complete equipment. You can start working and making money as soon as your instructions are received. This Employment Offer probably will bring a flood of applications, so mail the coupon at once before somebody else is appointed for your territory. Don't send any money. Just mail the coupon. But do it today—*Sure*.



Albert Mills, Employment Mgr.
4904 Monmouth Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio

Without cost or obligation, please send information about the position now open in my locality as Route Manager. I understand no capital or experience is required to get established.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....
(Please Print or Write Plainly)

NEW LOW PRICE TIRES!

Look!

GOODRICH, FIRESTONE
Chicago's most reliable firm will give you the **STANDARD BRAND TIRES**, factory inspected, wrapped and labeled, reconstructed with Imperial's new discovery process, and protected by our **WRITTEN GUARANTEE** for 12 months service or replaced at half price. Test them reconstructed at high speed, prove their worth. Thousands of satisfied users. **ORDER NOW.** Be convinced.

FREE NEW TUBE with order for 2 TIRES

BALLOON TIRES **CORD TIRES**

Size	Rim	Tires	Tubes	Size	Rim	Tires	Tubes
Std. 40	21	\$2.15	80.50	Std. 28	22.50	\$0.65	80.50
Std. 40	20	2.35	80	Std. 28	23	2.35	75
Std. 40	19	2.40	80	Std. 28	24	2.95	65
Std. 40	18	2.40	80	Std. 28	25	2.95	55
Std. 40	17	2.50	80	Std. 28	26	2.95	45
Std. 40	16	2.50	80	Std. 28	27	2.95	35
Std. 40	15	2.50	80	Std. 28	28	2.95	25
Std. 40	14	2.50	80	Std. 28	29	2.95	15
Std. 40	13	2.50	80	Std. 28	30	2.95	10
Std. 40	12	2.50	80	Std. 28	31	2.95	5
Std. 40	11	2.50	80	Std. 28	32	2.95	2.50
Std. 40	10	2.50	80	Std. 28	33	2.95	1.75
Std. 40	9	2.50	80	Std. 28	34	2.95	1.25
Std. 40	8	2.50	80	Std. 28	35	2.95	1.00
Std. 40	7	2.50	80	Std. 28	36	2.95	0.75
Std. 40	6	2.50	80	Std. 28	37	2.95	0.50
Std. 40	5	2.50	80	Std. 28	38	2.95	0.35
Std. 40	4	2.50	80	Std. 28	39	2.95	0.25
Std. 40	3	2.50	80	Std. 28	40	2.95	0.15
Std. 40	2	2.50	80	Std. 28	41	2.95	0.10
Std. 40	1	2.50	80	Std. 28	42	2.95	0.05
Std. 40	0	2.50	80	Std. 28	43	2.95	0.02
Std. 40	12	2.50	80	Std. 28	44	2.95	0.01
Std. 40	11	2.50	80	Std. 28	45	2.95	0.005
Std. 40	10	2.50	80	Std. 28	46	2.95	0.002
Std. 40	9	2.50	80	Std. 28	47	2.95	0.001
Std. 40	8	2.50	80	Std. 28	48	2.95	0.0005
Std. 40	7	2.50	80	Std. 28	49	2.95	0.0002
Std. 40	6	2.50	80	Std. 28	50	2.95	0.0001
Std. 40	5	2.50	80	Std. 28	51	2.95	0.00005
Std. 40	4	2.50	80	Std. 28	52	2.95	0.00002
Std. 40	3	2.50	80	Std. 28	53	2.95	0.00001
Std. 40	2	2.50	80	Std. 28	54	2.95	0.000005
Std. 40	1	2.50	80	Std. 28	55	2.95	0.000002
Std. 40	0	2.50	80	Std. 28	56	2.95	0.000001
Std. 40	11	2.50	80	Std. 28	57	2.95	0.0000005
Std. 40	10	2.50	80	Std. 28	58	2.95	0.0000002
Std. 40	9	2.50	80	Std. 28	59	2.95	0.0000001
Std. 40	8	2.50	80	Std. 28	60	2.95	0.00000005
Std. 40	7	2.50	80	Std. 28	61	2.95	0.00000002
Std. 40	6	2.50	80	Std. 28	62	2.95	0.00000001
Std. 40	5	2.50	80	Std. 28	63	2.95	0.000000005
Std. 40	4	2.50	80	Std. 28	64	2.95	0.000000002
Std. 40	3	2.50	80	Std. 28	65	2.95	0.000000001
Std. 40	2	2.50	80	Std. 28	66	2.95	0.0000000005
Std. 40	1	2.50	80	Std. 28	67	2.95	0.0000000002
Std. 40	0	2.50	80	Std. 28	68	2.95	0.0000000001

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DEALERS WANTED

TUBES BRAND NEW—GUARANTEED
Send \$1.00 deposit on each tire ordered; pay balance C. O. D. or send Cash in full and deduct 5 per cent. **ORDER TODAY.**

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Married Women's SECRETS—NOW!



You can now depend on our new B. P. Relief Compound. Double Strength. Successfully relieves some of the most unnaturally suppressed stubborn delays. Very quickly. **ABSOLUTELY** safe, harmless, no inconvenience. Highly recommended and used by thousands of women. End Feminine misery. Use B. P. Relief Compound and you'll never be without it. All orders shipped, rushed same day received. In plain wrapper. Mail \$2.00. For Double Strength \$3.00. 2 for \$5.00. Total size 25c. Write for Free Rocklet on Sanitary Rubber Goods today!

Sayor Products Co., 1434 N. Wells, Dept. 94-P, Chicago.

FROM OUR SANCTUM

Our companion magazines are starting the New Year with a bang—with gals January issues containing the best novels, stories and features to be found anywhere.

THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE features an exciting full book-length novel by G. Wayne Jones, taken from the case-book of Richard Curtis Van Loan—**THE SIGN OF DEATH**. One of the Phantom's most breath-taking cases! Also, other stories of crime and interesting features. 10c at all stands.

And don't fail to get **THRILLING DETECTIVE**—with its great complete book-length novel, **THE KILLER OF SOULS**, by Norman A. Daniels. Full of chills, thrills and suspense! Also, a novelette by Arthur J. Burks and exceptional stories by Johnston McCulley and others. 10c at all stands.

For sis and mom: **THE LOVE PLOT**, a complete book-length novel by Sylvia Parker, is featured in **THRILLING LOVE** for January. A complete novelette by Helen Ahern, and many other stories of captivating interest, as well as special fascinating features, in addition to the novel. 10c at all stands.

For those who like thrilling love stories of the ranch and range. Don't overlook **THRILLING RANCH STORIES**. 15c.

And for the air-minded: **SKY FIGHTERS** and **THE LONE EAGLE**—each 10c—contain sky novels, stories and features of compelling interest.

THE PUBLISHER

(Continued from page 148)

Then again, if you are contemplating taking a trip somewhere, you can take out your files containing the roster of members which will be printed each month in this department, and find a member who is living in or near the place you intend to visit.

You can then correspond direct with that member and ask him any questions you wish answered concerning his community.

All in all, Ye Olde Globe Trotter believes it a grand idea. Whether we form the club or not depends on your response to the idea. If you want to join up, sign the coupon which appears at the end of this department. Remember there are no dues. Come on, boys, let's get it started!

The Old Globe Trotter nominates Patty and Palmer as charter members. Everyone who signs up before February 1st will be considered charter members. Just clip the application blank, on page 158, print in your name and address plainly and send to the Globe Trotter, care of THRILLING ADVENTURES Magazine, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope. We'll take care of the rest.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Here's a fellow wants to know something about rifles. Gosh, I'll bet if we had the Globe Trotters Club going now, there'd be a hundred fellows who could tell this bird more about rifles than I'll know in a hundred years.

THE FIRST BREECH LOADER WITH BOLT

Dear Globe Trotter:

When and where was the first bolt action breech loading rifle developed? I have always been of the opinion that the bolt action breech loader was distinctly a military arm and developed either in this

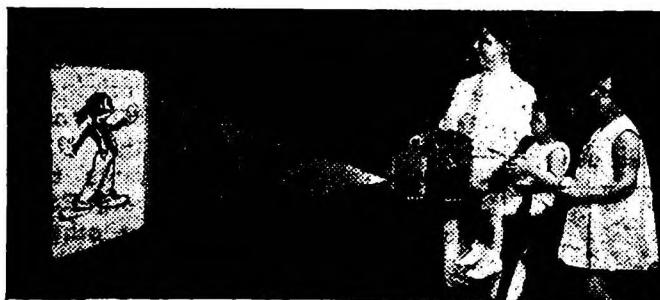
(Continued on page 152)

The Sensational New **"NIC"**

Moving Picture PROJECTOR

EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE ONE

EVERYBODY CAN AFFORD ONE



\$2.95
Complete

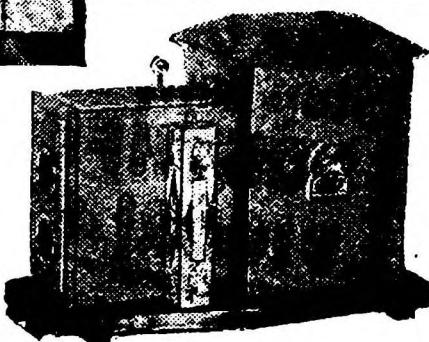


Here's a practical motion picture machine that the kiddies (and the whole family) will enjoy. It is absolutely safe and easy to operate. Never before has a workable animated projector been offered at this low price—only \$2.95 complete.

Your child will be delighted watching the antics of Billy the Bear, Jack the Giant, Killer, Little Red Riding Hood or any of the other 25 films which are obtainable at 15c each. The projector comes complete with one film.

"NIC" is all metal construction, crackled lacquer finish in green or red with black base; nickel trimmings and operates with one ordinary small light bulb. Get this film and start a film library.

In bad weather your child will have loads of fun watching the films. A supply of admission tickets comes with the machine so that your child can give a real movie show at home. Just send \$1 deposit with the attached coupon. Pay postman balance of \$1.95 plus postage when the machine arrives. DO IT NOW. It's remarkably educational. Your child will love it.



CASTLE COMPANY,
9 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Gentlemen:

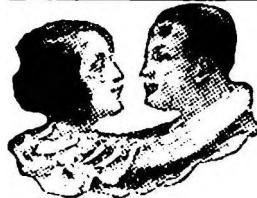
Enclosed please find \$1 for which please ship me the "Nic" Projector complete with one film. I will pay postman \$1.95 balance plus postage.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

Stopped His Whiskey Drinking



The Happy Reunion

Try It FREE

Wives, mothers, sisters, it is you that the man who drinks Whiskey, Wine or Beer to excess must depend upon to help save him from a ruined life and a drunkard's grave. Take heed from the thousands of men going to ruin daily through vile bootlegger's Whiskey, and the horrible stuff called home brew from private stills. Once he gets it in his system he finds it difficult to stop—but you can help him. What it has done for others is an example of what it should do for you. All you have to do is to send your name and address and we will send absolutely FREE, in plain wrapper, a trial package of GOLDEN TREATMENT. You will be thankful as long as you live that you did it. Address

DR. J. W. HANES CO.
483 Glenn Building Cincinnati, Ohio

Men Over 30! Stop Early Loss of YOUTHFUL VIGOR!

Keep Glands Healthy

This Tested Approved Way!

OLD at 30! Are weakened, sickly glands robbing you of youthful vigor, normal powers and pep? No matter what caused your condition—be it sickness or Youthful Indirection, you can easily acquire new energy and vitality quickly and inexpensively. WALKER-HILLS STANDARD GLANDULAR AIDS are now available without prescription! This formula, recognized and prescribed by physicians, is the tested and approved stimulant tonic used successfully by thousands. Safe, efficient, long lasting effects. Age makes no difference. Do not confuse STANDARD GLANDULAR AIDS with these so-called harmful "pep pills." Don't risk your health with injurious unknown preparations. Correct glandular dormancy this safe, sure way. Start regaining youthful energy today.

WOMEN TOO!
AMAZING results reported by tired, run down and listless women.

Special Introductory Offer!

Get WALKER-HILLS STANDARD GLANDULAR AIDS NOW! Complete Double Strength Treatment (100 full treatments in all—not 40 or 50) now only \$2.00. 3 cartons, \$5.00. Triple Strength \$3.00. 2 cartons, \$5.00. Mailed in Plain Wrapper. Send Cash or Money Order. (C. O. D., 10c extra.)

WALKER-HILLS

305 East 44th St., Dept. A-83, N. Y. City.

(Continued from page 150)

country or England at about the time of the Civil War.

Mr. Frederick Krause, a neighbor of mine says such a gun was in common use in his native country (Prussia) long before that time. Can you set me straight on this?

Phillip Lee,

Woonsocket, R. I.

Answer:

The Prussian Needle gun was the first bolt action piece. It was invented by Johann Von Dreyse in 1836. Unquestionably it is the grand-daddy of all the present day military rifles. It was first used in warfare during the Schleswig-Holstein War in 1848. Again the Prussians used it in their battle with Austria. By the time of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 it had been adopted as the principal weapon of the Prussian army. The bolt action of present day weapons varies very little from the original developed way back in 1836. Von Dreyse was a master gunsmith.

Here's another fellow wants to know why the North Star, old Polaris, serves better than any other star for getting directions.

WHY THE NORTH STAR?

Dear Globe Trotter:

I am just a young man, haven't finished high school yet, but I am very much interested in adventure and exploring. I have made some trips at night through dense woods, trying to find my way by the stars and have been very successful. I was told that the North Star was the only star that could be depended upon to give correct directions. But I never found that to be the case. Most any star serves just as well. How is that?

Yours for finding out,

Robert Sandstorm,

Bemidji, Minn.

Answer:

Somebody has been misinforming
(Continued on page 154)

LONESOME?
Let me arrange a romantic correspondence for you. Find yourself a sweetheart thru America's foremost select social correspondence club. A friendship letter society for lonely ladies and gentlemen. Members everywhere; CONFIDENTIAL introductions by letter; efficient, dignified and continuous service. I have made thousands of lonely people happy—why not you? Write for FREE sealed particulars.
EVAN MOORE BOX 908 JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

for every man!

THE WORLD IS STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN... *what is your future?*



Just one of the crowd...

Partial List of Subjects

- Part 1. How to Get the Best Results.
- Part 2. First Steps in Business Efficiency.
- Part 3. How to Do Business with Banks.
- Part 4. The Principles of Business Achievement.
- Part 5. How to Write Business Letters.
- Part 6. How to Easily Develop Your Merchandise.
- Part 7. How to Advertise Successfully.
- Part 8. The Power of Right Thought.
- Part 9. How to Make a Favorable Impression.
- Part 10. How to Become a Successful Salesman.
- Part 11. How to Prepare Sales Talks.
- Part 12. How and Where to Find Customers.
- Part 13. Your Health and How to Improve It.
- Part 14. Psychology of Advertising and Salesmanship.
- Part 15. Managing Men for More Profit.
- Part 16. The Factors of Success in Business Buildings.
- Part 17. The Money Value of System.
- Part 18. How to Close Sales Successfully.
- Part 19. How to Collect Money.
- Part 20. How to Make Yourself Invaluable in Your Position.
- Part 21. Premium and Sales Plans to Increase Business.
- Part 22. A System of Accounts for Retail Merchants.
- Part 23. Fundamentals of a Cost System for Manufacturers.
- Part 24. Points of Law Everyone Should Know.

This National Course

has put thousands of others on the **ROAD TO SUCCESS**, and it can do the same for you.

ALL IN ALL

"Your Course is all in all to me."—G. J. Linderoth, Corning, Cal.

UNLIMITED SUCCESS

"Your Course has been an unlimited success for me."—T. R. Schwer, Verona, Ill.

WORTH \$5,000

"I wouldn't sell my Course for \$5,000 if I couldn't get another like it."—J. C. Kotzum, Curtis Bay, Md.

A MONEY MAKER

"Your Course enables one to make money almost from the very start."—Charles R. Mueller, Greenwich, Conn.

BETTER THAN EXPERIENCE

"Your Course gives knowledge which the average man would not acquire from experience in a lifetime."—S. P. Parrish, Jr., Peoria, Ill.

IMPOSSIBLE TO FAIL

"Your Course has performed wonders for me. If followed, it is impossible for anyone to fail to reap actual and extensive benefits."—George Trute, Hoboken, N. J.

As far as business is concerned, the world came to an end a few months ago! Four years of depression have made rich men poor . . . it has pulled all but a few down to the same level! And now a new world of business is starting!

The Millionaire of Tomorrow May Be Out of a Job Today!

Today, millions of men are starting their business lives all over again. Most all are beginning from the bottom. The same chances . . . the same golden opportunities . . . will be within the grasp of every man.

Yet it's certain that only a few will come through with glorious success and riches. The others will be just part of the "crowd" . . . drifting, struggling, plodding, striving . . . always hopeful, but just missing the mark!

What Makes a Man Successful?

It's not a college education! Many millionaires never went to grammar school! It's not money! Ford, Carnegie, Rockefeller, and others were penniless youths! It's not luck! Many have achieved huge success despite one "bad break" after another!

The *Secret of Success* is *Business Knowledge*. You might not know geography, algebra, or history, but you must know the *A. B. C.'s of business*. Sounds simple, yet only one man in five thousand knows them!

Now You Can Discover These Facts

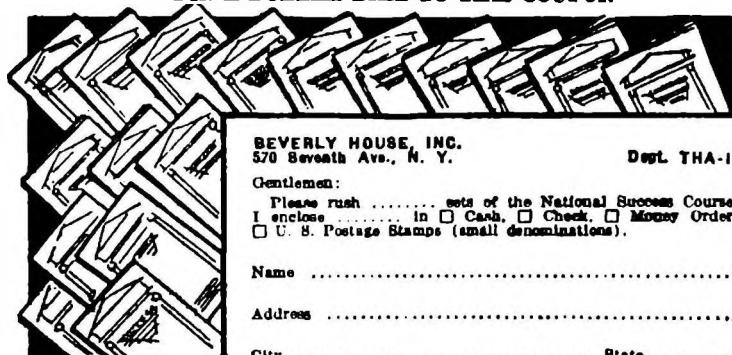
The *A. B. C.'s of business* . . . the *Secrets of Success* . . . are explained to you in a series of 18 folios, called the *National Success Course*. This course has been written by a man who is president of a \$2,000,000 corporation . . . a man who started out in life without health . . . without education . . . without a penny! He tells you his secrets of making money, and he tells them so clearly, so simply, so easy to understand: that every ambitious man can grasp them and *make them work!*

Formerly \$24.00 . . . Now Yours for \$1.00

Many smart business men paid \$24.00 for the *National Success Course*. But we've arranged a special edition . . . complete in every way . . . so that thousands of ambitious men could take advantage of it today. If you're anxious to lift yourself *above the crowd* . . . get out of the rut . . . and steer yourself to financial security . . . we urge you to mail the coupon without delay.

Beverly House, Inc., 570—7th Ave., N. Y. C. Dept. THA-1

PIN A DOLLAR BILL TO THIS COUPON



BEVERLY HOUSE, INC.
570 Seventh Ave., N. Y.

Dept. THA-1

Gentlemen:

Please rush . . . sets of the *National Success Course*. I enclose . . . in Cash, Check, Money Order, U. S. Postage Stamps (small denominations).

Name . . .

Address . . .

City . . . State . . .

\$\$ SONG WRITING \$\$

BIG ROYALTIES

paid by Music Publishers and Talking Picture Producers. Free booklet describes most complete song service ever offered. All writers will revise, arrange, compose music to your lyrics or lyrics to your music, secure U. S. copyright, broadcast your song over the radio. Our Sales Department submits to Music Publishers and Hollywood Picture Studio. **WHITE TODAY FOR FREE BOOKLET UNIVERSAL SONG SERVICE**, 872 Mayers Blvd., Western Avenue and Sierra Vista, Hollywood, California

LONELY HEARTS Join our Club. World's Greatest Social Ex-tension Bureau. Happiness awaits you, correspondents everywhere, seeking congenial mates. Quick results. Confidential service. Particulars **FREE STANDARD CLUB**, Box 607-J, GRAYSLAKE, ILLINOIS

LADIES ONLY!

For unnatural delay or irregularity use harmless H. X. MONTHLY TABLETS. Quick, painless relief even in many worst cases. Absolutely safe! No inconvenience or interference with duties! Used by thousands! Enthusiastic women report unbelievably prompt, soothing, seemingly magical relief! Used by doctors! Guaranteed! Double Strength, 12.00. Rushed 1st Class mail, in plain sealed wrapper, within 1 hour of receipt of order.

B X LABORATORIES, 1515 E. 80th St., N.Y., Chicago.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, etc., required by the Act of March 3, 1933, of Thrilling Adventures, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1933.

State of New York | ee
County of New York | ee

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared N. L. Pines, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the managing editor of the **THRILLING ADVENTURES**, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulation, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Metropolitan Magazines, Inc., 670 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Editor J. S. Williams, 670 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor, N. L. Pines; Business Manager, none.

2. That the owner is: Metropolitan Magazines, Inc., 670 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; N. L. Pines, 670 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; M. A. Goldsmith, 670 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none.

4. That the two paragraphs next above giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statement embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders, who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest, direct or indirect, in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

N. L. PINES.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 20th day of September, 1933. Philip Rosenthal, Notary Public. My commission expires March 30, 1934.

(Continued from page 152)

you, Robert. But I don't think they meant to intentionally. Certainly, any star is as good as another—if (and that's a big IF, too) if you know its relative position in the heavens for that particular night. The North Star is almost directly above the North Pole. Consequently its position in the heavens never varies, while the other stars do vary according to the seasons and hour.

When using the stars as guide, it is always best to seek out the North Star first, for it is the fixed point around which the other stars appear to move because of the rotation of the earth. The North Star doesn't appear to move in the same manner because it is right in line with the earth's axis. Hence it is always a true guide, even to one who is not equipped with a star map.

Here's a fellow who has a little kick to register. He sends in a post-card, but fails to sign his name. We don't mind kicks, like to have them in fact, but we wish the kickers would sign their names in the future. Read what he says about our authors.

Dear Globe Trotter:

All right Old Globe Trotter, you asked for it and I'm giving it to you via post-card just like you said.

Just tell F. C. Painton if he writes any more like *Skies of Doom* to tear 'em up. That story was bad. I liked all the rest of them, though. *Dry River Ranch* was a K.O. Come on with some more like it. Larry Weston is okay. Give him plenty of rope. F. C. Painton is okay if he forgets stuff like the above. If you print another one like that I hope the Empire State Building falls on your hangout.

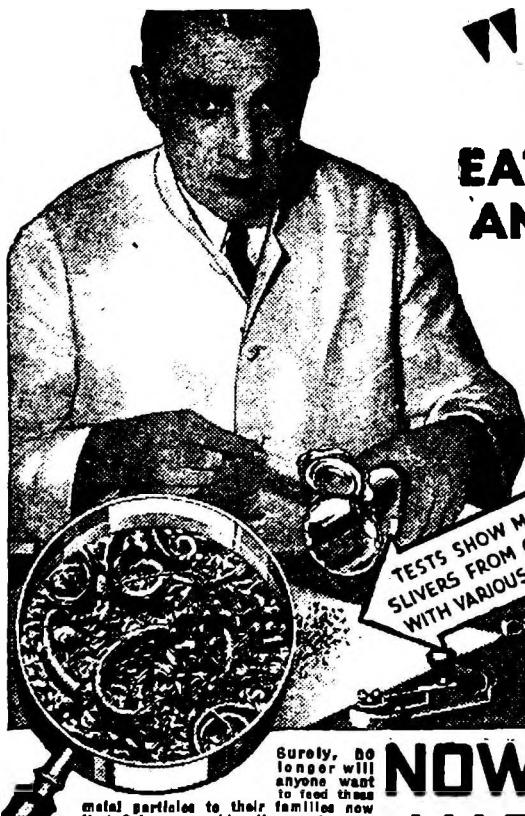
Just a Reader,
Montezuma, Georgia.

It's funny, too, a lot of you fellows

(Continued on page 156)

SAVE 50%

Write today for **FREE**
Mail Order price list of
Sanitary Necessities of
all kinds for men and women. Goods sent in plain
sealed envelope, postage paid by us.
P. O. BOX 91, Dept. D-11, **Hamilton, Ontario.**



"STOP EATING METAL CHIPS AND SLIVERS IN FOOD"

Every time you open a can with the ordinary can opener, you expose your family to dangers to health. Tests show ordinary can openers shave off metal slivers which drop into foods. Experience also shows infections from cuts caused by mishaps in opening cans. Now comes an amazing new type of can opener, built to help safeguard the nation against these possible dangers to health. The NU-DAY opens cans easily, quickly, automatically and, above all, much more safely. Coupon below brings full details and liberal No-Risk Test Offer. Rush it today!

TESTS SHOW MANY METAL
SLIVERS FROM CANS OPENED
WITH VARIOUS CAN OPENERS



Surely, no longer will anyone want to feed these metal particles to their families now that Science provides the much safer NU-DAY MAGNETIC Can Opener!



NOW... A BRAND NEW MAGNETIC INVENTION

That is **SAFE..Automatic!**

NECESSITY is the mother of invention! The can opener prescribed by Science is here! Radically new in principle and design—miles ahead of ordinary types—the NU-DAY MAGNETIC Can Opener at last assures better health and greater safety!

If this invention offered only protection against metal slivers, it would merit a rousing welcome in every home! No other can opener at any price can give you this same freedom from worry. For its new MAGNETIC principle is protected. And look at its many other great features! Hangs on wall—slips in and out of wall bracket. Holds cans for you. A few easy turns of the handle and tops of cans are cut OUT—slick, clean, smooth. Opens round, square or oval cans. Ends finger cuts, infections. Removes bottle cans, too. Guaranteed 5 years. Yet priced within the easy reach of all!

Tremendous Untouched Profits!

No wonder housewives go wild when they see the NU-DAY! Its

knock-out demonstration amazes women—they buy on sight. For nothing else can give them the same greater safety and savings in time, work, food and money. Every home urgently needs the NU-DAY now that it has been proved that ordinary can openers hold these dangers of metal slivers and cuts and infections. No woman will knowingly jeopardize her family's health or her own! The market has been swept clean—providing a steady profit chance for smart folks that comes once in a lifetime. Unlimited market! Nation-wide demand! No competition! Rush coupon for facts and liberal No-Risk Test Offer that brings big money in full or spare time! Hurry! Scientific Products, Inc., Dept. W-77, 4311 Warne Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS! What a profit chance for you! Now that the danger of metal slivers from ordinary can openers has been revealed, no housewife will continue to jeopardize the health of her family! Nothing gives the same DOUBLE protection against danger as the NU-DAY. Think what this means to you in BIG MONEY! More than 25 million homes, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, etc., WAITING TO BUY. No competition. Easy profits everywhere! Women gasp when you prove to them how this great discovery helps them to freedom from worry. No wonder they grab it right out of your hands. No wonder even inexperienced folks pocket high \$3 and more in an hour, full or spare time! Rush coupon for details and smashing NO-RISK TEST OFFER TODAY! SURE!

No Risk Test Offer
Simply Mail Coupon NOW!

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Rush full details of the NU-DAY and liberal No-Risk Test Offer, without obligation.

Name

Address

City, State,

Check here if interested in only one for your home.

A BABY FOR YOU?

If you are denied the blessing of a baby all your own and yearn for a baby's arms and a baby's smile, do not give up hope. Just write in confidence to Mrs. Mildred Owens, 1632 Contes House, Kansas City, Mo., and she will tell you about a simple home method that helped her after being denied 15 years. Many others say this has helped bless their lives. Write now and try for this wonderful happiness.



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SECRETS NOW**
SEND 25¢ FOR TRIAL SIZE

Don't be discouraged or alarmed when nature fails you. You can now depend on our new O. J. O. BELIEVE COMPOUND in Paride Regulator double strength. Often relieves menstrual irregularities, stubborn cases of long menstrual delays, generally relieved very quickly. Also aids, harmless. No inconvenience. Highly recommended and used by thousands of women to ship orders same day received in. Send \$2.00 box, double strength, 3 for \$5.00. Trial size, 25c. Don't delay, send today. A personal message in you. C. O., Dept. 221-L, 1434 N. Wells, Chicago.

TILLIE and MAC

(NEW STUFF!) Puddin and Browning, Dumb Dora, Maggie and Jiggs, Rose and Bubbles, The Gumps, French Stenographer, A Bachelor's Dream, Adam and Eve, Hip and Alice, A Model's Life, Original—"Night in Paris," Toots and Casper, A Coachman's Daughter, and over 100 more. Also over 70 Rare and Daring French type pictures incl. 18 Action Photos. Monumental type of Men and Women in various poses. Also incl. Women Alone in different positions, etc., special price with order. "Advice on How to Win at Cards" also "The Night Life of Paris" and some short rare French stories, etc., etc. Goods sent sealed in plain wrapper. You will receive all of the above. You may send cash, money order or stamps.

SPECIAL: ALL FOR \$1.00

PARIS IMPORT CO

4166 Park Ave. Dept. THR New York City

(Continued from page 154)
liked that yarn of Painton's. I'm not printing the boosts, though. I want to lean over backwards in printing the knocks, so you fellows will feel free to loosen your tongues when you feel like getting up and sounding off. This is your department and your magazine. Spout off all you want to. That's what we are here for, holding a whip lash over the authors to make them do their best.

THE AUTHOR TELLS ABOUT *PEARL BAIT*

Wayne Rogers, who is responsible for *Pearl Bait*, that interesting South Seas yarn in this issue, sends along a letter telling how he happened to write the story.

Dear Globe Trotter:

It is some years now since I was in the Marquesas, but the story, *Pearl Bait*, has been lingering in my craw ever since. Ah Chen, Dan Hayden, Doris Porter, her father, and the island brigands Gentleman Jim Corrigan and Rosy Rosen are all real characters, though, of course, they were not known by the names I gave them in the story.

What struck me about the native Marquesans, and those whites who have planted themselves in those lovely islands to live out their lives alongside the natives is their enduring patience. There is something in the South Sea air that is provocative of patience. The Chinese have always made a virtue of patience, but it was entirely foreign I am sure to Dan Hayden who was a New England Yank.

Yet, he had absorbed enough of Ah Chen's philosophy and the *laizzez-faire* of the Marquesans to await patiently the return of the murderers of old man Porter. He knew they would return, and in the interim of waiting he made doubly certain that nothing would intrude to prevent him wreaking vengeance.

The fact that a lot of things he had not figured on did intrude is—well, what makes *Pearl Bait* a fiction story. They never really happened. But Gentleman Jim and Rosey got theirs, and what is more important, Doris is now Mrs. Dan Hayden. I still get letters from them once or twice a year.

(Concluded on page 158)



LAW

Study at home

Legally trained men win high positions and big success in business and public life. Be independent. Greater opportunities now than ever before. Big corporations are headed by men with legal training.

We guide you step by step. You can train at home

during spare time. Degree of LL. B. conferred. Successful graduates in every section of U. S. We furnish all text material, including fourteen-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 64-page "Law Guide" and "Evidence" books free. Send for them NOW.

LaSalle Extension University The World's Largest Business Training Institution Dept. 1319-L Chicago, Ill.

Get the Low-Down on Modern Youth!
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SNAPPY — BREEZY — PEPPY
COLLEGE LIFE

100 Pages of America's Best Wit and Humor — Realistic, Fast-Moving Short Stories — **COLLEGE LIFE** is the last word in sophistication and the best quarter's worth on the stands today!

Don't Miss the Gala Autumn Number!

QUIT TOBACCO



No man or woman can escape the harmful effects of tobacco. Don't try to banish unaided the bold tobacco habit upon you. Join the thousands of inveterate tobacco users that have found it easy to quit with the aid of the Keeley Treatment.

KEELEY

**Treatment For
Tobacco Habit
Successful For
Over 50 Years**

Quickly banishes all craving for tobacco. Write today for Free Book telling how to quickly free yourself from the tobacco habit and our Money Back Guarantee.

Home of the famous Keeley Treatment for Liver and Drugs. Honorable Santan Bennett. Correspondence Strictly Confidential.

THE KEELEY INSTITUTE Dept. P-311 DuPage, Illinois

Men! Stimulate Energy, Pep, Physical Powers!



For
Pep
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This Safe, Quick and Easy Way!

Why suffer from loss of Pep? Why be depressed by this annoying problem when you can so easily revitalize ebbing energy. **DORAL VIGOR TABS** are safe and quick in their action. A Glandular Stimulant for failing Physical Powers. Worry, overwork, nervousstrain. Build up nerve, force, and vigor. Pep up your entire system. A normally healthy body is naturally full of pep, vigor and energy. Thousands of men have found the answer in **DORAL VIGOR TABS**. Why not you? Send for a box today. Regular Large size Box (50-time treatment) only \$1.95. **THREE BOXES, \$5.00. SUPER-STRENGTH, only \$2.95. TWO BOXES, \$3.00.** Send Cash or Money Order. C. O. D. 15c extra. **ORDER NOW!**

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Baby Ruth

Candy
Everybody
Likes



MAKES A DELICIOUS DESSERT



**OLD MONEY
and Stamps
WANTED**

POST YOURSELF! It pays! I paid J. D. Martin, Virginia, \$200 for a single copper cent. Mr. Manning, New York, \$2,500 for one silver dollar. Mrs. G. F. Adams \$740 for a few old coins. I want all kinds of old coins, medals, bills and stamps. I pay big cash premiums.

WILL PAY \$100 FOR DIME
1894 S. Mint, \$50 for 1913 Liberty Head Nickel (not buffalo) and hundreds of other amazing pieces for coins. Get in touch with me. Send 4¢ for Large Illustrated Coin Folder and further particulars. It may mean much profit to you. Write today to

NUMISMATIC COMPANY OF TEXAS
Dept. 209, (Largest Rare Coin Establishment in U. S.)
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

NEW STUFF!

WINNIE WINKLE

For men only. Tillie & Mac, Toots & Casper, Boss & Bubbles, Freddie Hill, Only a Boy, Harold Teen & Liliams, Bobb McNutt & Pearl, The Vampire, The End of Heim, What Tommy Saw Under the Parker Door, Twelve Gay Love Letters Read Two Ways, Gay Life in Paris, also 50 Rare and Daring French type pictures (Kind men like). Also 50 Montmartre type pictures of beautiful girls in thrilling snappy artistic poses with their fellows. We will forward the same day we receive them. All for only \$1.00. Send cash stamps or money order.

IMPERIAL NOVELTY CO.
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LOVE CULTS

A warning to all young girls in the most sensational book of the twentieth century—a TRUE story of exotic, unbelievable orgies—a startling exposé of get-acquainted clubs and strange and weird love societies—

The Most Daring, Frankest Book Ever Written!

Got the only work which tells the bare facts about woman's love-life, adultery, sex and nature, free love, the badger game, drug cults, Hindu love beliefs, the dance hall menace and the fruit of illicit love—

MY LIFE IN A LOVE CULT

By the High Priestess of Oom

NOW Fourteen big chapters—one hundred pages—size 6 in. by 12.
Cash, U. S. Stamps or Postal Money Orders accepted.

Mailed in Plain Wrapper
Postage Prepaid.

BETTER PUBLICATIONS, Inc.

Dept. A-1A—570 7th Ave., New York City.

I enclose 50c. Please rush my copy of
MY LIFE IN A LOVE CULT to

Name

Address

City..... State

(No C. O. D.'s. No orders filled in Canada. 80c foreign.)

(Concluded from page 158)

I hope the readers of THRILLING ADVENTURE will enjoy reading the yarn as much as I did writing it.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Rogers.

Well, the Globe Trotter's pretty sure that you liked PEARL BAIT—as well as the other stories in this issue. Let me know which story you liked best. Don't forget to clip and mail the coupon which entitles you to membership in the *Globe Trotters Club*.

Wait'll you see next month's issue! An adventure treat that will amaze you is in store for you—Lieut. Scott Morgan's great full book-length novel of the Russian steppes, THE TERROR OF SIBERIA. Full of action, it takes you to scenes of battle and intrigue in frozen wastelands where wolves prowl, lands where the icy fingers of death are chill indeed.

And don't miss THE WHIRLWIND'S REVENGE—by Johnston McCulley—a BIG NAME and a BIG STORY—a novelette continuing the adventures of *Alias the Whirlwind*, whom you met a month ago. Also, short stories by Bob Du Soe, George Allan Moffatt and L. Ron Hubbard and others. Until next month, then—

THE GLOBE TROTTER.

Application for Membership

The Globe Trotter,
THRILLING ADVENTURES,
570 Seventh Ave.,
New York City.

I wish to be enrolled as a member of the *Globe Trotters Club*. I am interested in adventure and will endeavor to answer all questions asked me by other members regarding the places with which I am familiar.

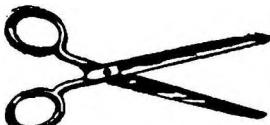
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Address

City..... State.....

My hobbies are.....

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To obtain a membership card, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.



TO MEN WHO WANT TO MAKE more money

You don't "get" raises these days—you earn them!

THESE are strenuous times in which we are living. Competition is keen . . . the demands for efficiency are constantly increasing.

The day is gone when you can "hit the boss" for a raise and get it "on your nerve."

You get raises these days on your ability — and your training!

Today a man must think about himself — and his future. Remember this: If you're just getting by, you're falling behind. Tomorrow your present job may be only a memory. The way to be sure of the future is to be sure of yourself!

Men are realizing this — a new era in the utilization of spare time to acquire specialized training is here! Men who a few years

ago thought they were "sitting on top of the world" today are coming to International Correspondence Schools for additional training. Still more are enrolling because they see the handwriting on the wall. They want to make more money.

Do you want to make more money? If you do, we challenge you to mark and mail this coupon! It has been the beginning of success for men all over the world.

But don't bother if you're a quitter! It takes fight and hard work to get ahead these days—and weak-kneed, spineless men have no more chance of helping themselves by spare-time study than they have of getting a raise tomorrow!

If you have the old fight, if you're willing to risk a three-cent stamp on yourself — mark and mail this coupon *today!*

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"The Universal University"

BOX 3966, SCRANTON, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subjects before which I have marked X:

Architect
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 Wood Millworking
 Contractor and Builder
 Structural Draftsman
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 Electric Wiring
 Electrical Engineer
 Electric Lighting
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Telegraph Engineer
 Telephone Work
 Mechanical Engineer
 Mechanical Draftsman
 Machinist
 Toolmaker
 Patternmaker
 Tinsmith
 Bridge Engineer
 Bridge and Building Foreman
 Gas Engines Diesel Engines
 Aviation Engines

Automobile Mechanic
 Plumbing Steam Fitting
 Heating Ventilation
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 Steam Engine
 Steam Electric Engineer
 Civil Engineer
 Surveying and Mapping
 Refrigeration
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 R. R. Section Foreman
 Highway Engineering

R. R. Bridge and Building Foreman
 Air Brake Train Operation
 Chemistry Pharmacy
 Coal Mining Engineer
 Navigation Butcher
 Textile Overseer or Super
 Cotton Manufacturing
 Woolen Manufacturing
 Agriculture Fruit Growing
 Poultry Farming Radio
 Marine Engineer

Business Management
 Office Management
 Industrial Management
 Personnel Management
 Traffic Management
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C. P. Accountant
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If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

Solar Telescope—\$1.25



NEARLY
3 FEET
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The new Excelsior Solar Telescope is a large and serviceable instrument, nicely made and accurately fitted. When extended it is almost three feet in length, and when closed measures not quite twelve inches in length. Telescopes of this size usually sell for many times this price, but by importing them direct from a large European manufacturer, we are enabled to offer them to our customers for ONLY \$1.25 each, at which price they ought to sell readily. The lenses are well made, the sides are brass bound, and the four sections are perfectly fitted. Here is your chance to obtain a Telescope for a nominal sum. It will be sent postpaid to any address upon receipt of \$1.25 in any convenient form. Postage stamps accepted if more convenient. 770 page Catalog of novelties, tricks, jokes, etc., 10c.

MAKE YOUR OWN RADIO



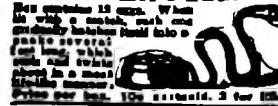
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100 eggs. 15 cents. When lit up, a match, such and suddenly a live head will appear. A live head, which looks and twists itself in a most lifelike manner. Price per box. 10c a pd. 10c for 10. 2 for 15c.

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With a bunch of these bills, it is easy for each person of limited means to appear prosperous by flashing a roll of these bills at the proper time and passing on a genuine bill or two from the ends of the roll, the effect created will be found to be all that can be desired. Price, 50c. 100 for 25c. 200 for 50c. 300 for 75c. 400 for 100c.

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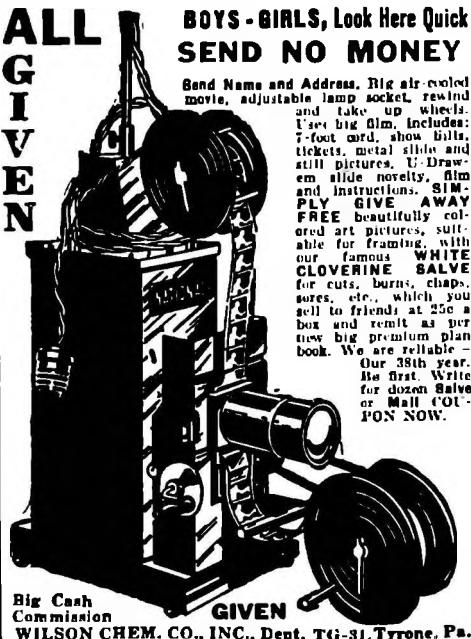
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**ALL
GIVEN**



**Big Cash
Commission**
WILSON CHEM. CO., INC., Dept. TG-31, Tyrone, Pa.

BOYS - GIRLS GIVEN

Just tank! Real bumpers, brakes, 10-inch live roller bearing wheels, leather tires. Deck, 16-inch hardwood or metal body. It's a new wagon. **SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art pictures, suitable for framing, with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** for cuts, burns, chaps, sores, etc., which you sell to friends at 25¢ a box and remit as per new big premium plan book. We are reliable. Our 38th year. No first. Write for dozen **Salve** or **MAIL COUPON** NOW.

WILSON CHEM. CO., INC., Dept. TG-31, Tyrone, Pa.

BOYS - GIRLS, Look Here Quick SEND NO MONEY

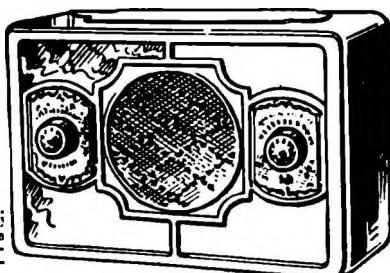
Send Name and Address. Big air cooled movie, adjustable lamp socket, rewind and take up wheels. Use big film. Includes: 7-foot cord, show bills, tickets, metal slide and still pictures. U-Draw 'em slide novelty, film and instructions. **SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art pictures, suitable for framing, with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** for cuts, burns, chaps, sores, etc., which you sell to friends at 25¢ a box and remit as per new big premium plan book. We are reliable. Our 38th year. No first. Write for dozen **Salve** or **MAIL COUPON** NOW.

GIVEN GENERAL ELECTRIC RADIO or BIG CASH

Commissions

SEND NO MONEY

Send Name and Address. Operates on either AC or DC, picks up police calls and regular broadcasts. Wonderful selectivity and sensitivity. One tone, compact. Four tubes, high quality speaker included. Shielded chassis and 25 ft. antenna. It's unusual. **SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art picture, suitable for framing, with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** for cuts, burns, chaps, sores, etc., which you sell to friends at 25¢ a box and remit as per new big premium plan book. We are reliable. Our 38th year. No first. Write for dozen **Salve** or **MAIL COUPON** NOW. **WILSON CHEM. CO., INC., Dept. TG-31, Tyrone, Pa.**



BOYS! REPEATING RIFLE GIVEN or BIG CASH Commission

SEND NO MONEY Send Name and Address

Holds 12 .22 cal. shells, good sights, walnut finish. It's great! **SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art pictures, suitable for framing, with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** for cuts, burns, chaps, sores, etc., which you sell to friends at 25¢ a box and remit as per new big premium plan book. Other choice rifles, premiums or spending money. We are reliable. Our 38th year. No first. Write for dozen **Salve** or **MAIL COUPON** NOW. **WILSON CHEM. CO., INC., Dept. TG-31, Tyrone, Pa.**

1934 Model LINDY FLYER or BIG CASH Commission

Send No Money

**Send
Name
and
Address**



To the Public!

We use this premium method to introduce **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** everywhere—the oldest and best Salve known for cuts, burns, sores, piles, pimples, chaps. Used in millions of homes. For sale by agents and to over 47,000 drug stores in U.S. Buy a box from our agent.



Send Name and Address. Latest Cherry Blossom design. First quality and modern—green or pink colors. Extremely beautiful. **SIMPLY GIVE AWAY FREE** beautifully colored art pictures, suitable for framing, with our famous **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** for cuts, burns, chaps, sores, etc., which you sell to friends at 25¢ a box and remit as per new big premium plan book. Other choices, premiums or spending money. We are reliable. Our 38th year. No first. Write for dozen **Salve** or **MAIL COUPON** NOW. **WILSON CHEM. CO., INC., Dept. TG-31, Tyrone, Pa.**

GIVEN

LADIES ! 34-Pc. GLASS Set or BIG CASH Commission GIVEN SEND NO MONEY

-----CUT OUT AND MAIL TODAY-----

Wilson Chem. Co., Inc., Dept. TG-31, Tyrone, Pa.

Gentlemen: Please send me 12 beautiful art pictures with 12 boxes **WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE** to sell at 25¢ a box, giving picture **FREE**. I will remit within 30 days, select a premium plan and cash commission as per new big premium plan book sent with order, guarantee paid.

Name _____
R.P.D. _____
St. or Bus No. _____

TOWN _____ **STATE** _____

(Print last name in blocks below) _____ **Date** _____



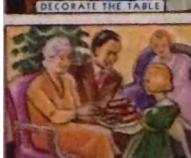
BOYS, LADIES, GIRLS Wrist Watch or BIG CASH Commission GIVEN

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