

The July American Boy

"The Biggest, Brightest, Best Magazine for Boys in the World"

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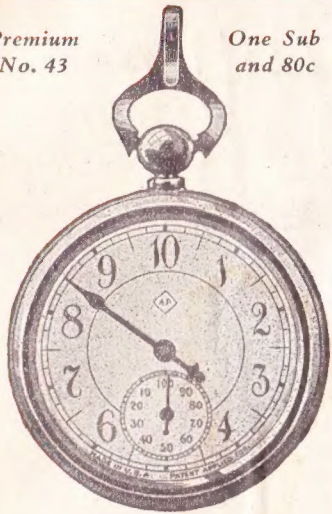
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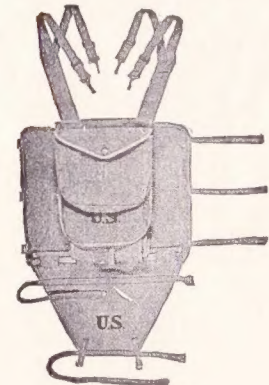
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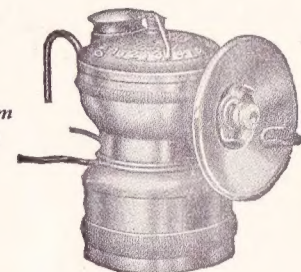
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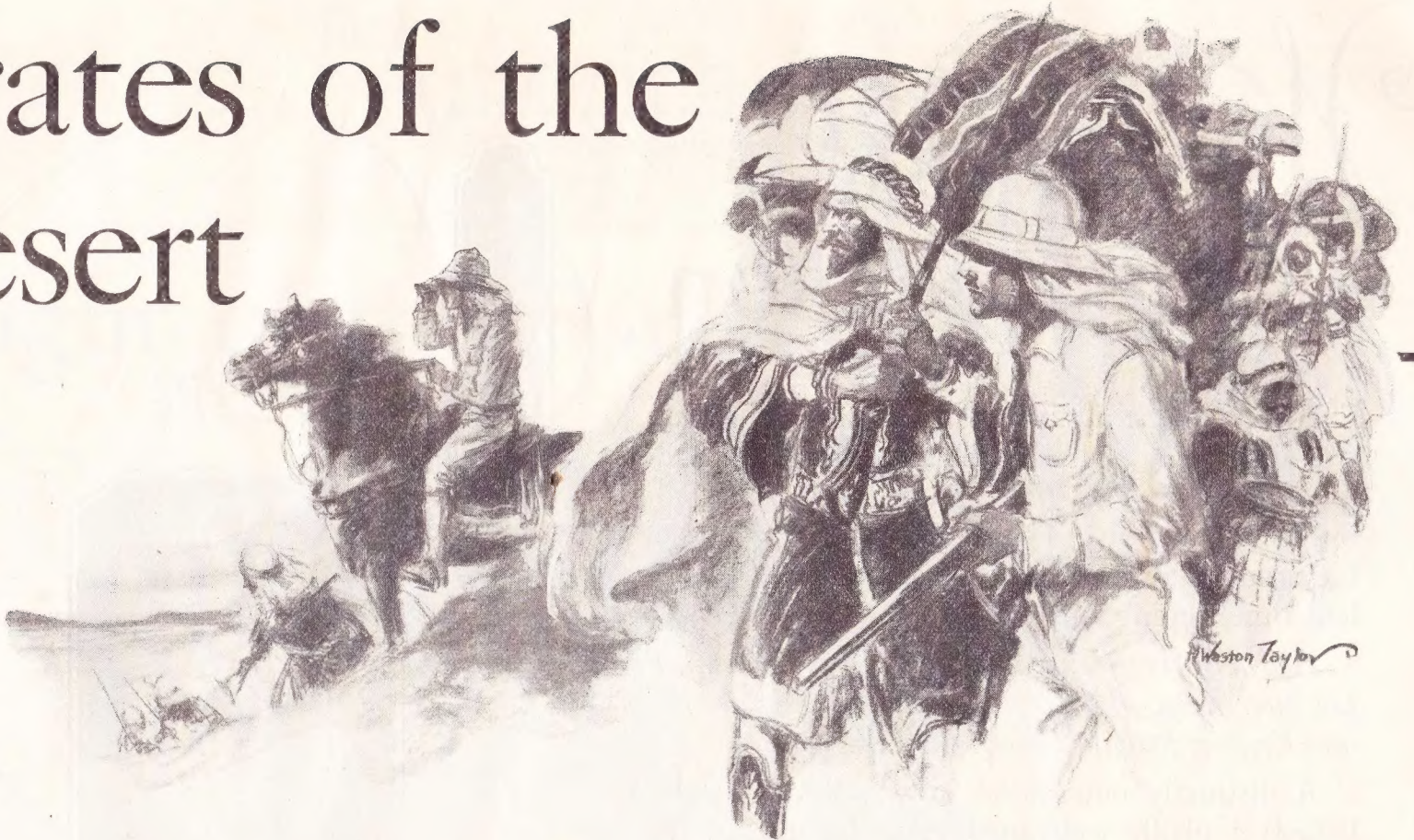


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You'll Like These, Too

Ballooning With Pilot 13

Had N. H. Arnold, famous balloonist, known what adventures lay ahead of him probably he never would have climbed into the basket of the *St. Louis II*, for the international races out of Berlin. Next month he takes you with him on that thrilling ride through inky skies and into deadly peril.

The Man Who Was Wanted

Scotty McLeod and Dick Ranney suspected something. They knew that exchange of hate-laden glances between the tutor and the "art critic" carried a hidden meaning. But Renfrew was away and so—but why not solve the mystery yourself? It's one that will make you do a lot of thinking. The story is by Laurie Y. Erskine and appears next month.

The Blow Down

The circus has an ever-threatening enemy—weather. Rann Braden sensed impending disaster that day when the clouds leered down on the Selfridge show. Rex Lee's story next month reveals with intense vividness what happens during "The Blow Down."

The Cub Dives In

Someone was smuggling opium into Honolulu and Wallace Tatum, waterfront reporter for the *Transcript*, set out to solve the mystery. Strange where his trail led and what it revealed! His detecting provided a thrilling story for him—and for you, too. It is by Mitchell V. Charnley.

Whistling Jimmy Goes to Bat

Whistling Jimmy Gaynor is back again next month—and the music he whistles is as sad as last year's straw hat, for a while! Some whaling good baseball in this story, and a surprising third baseman. Jimmy does some surprising things, too—looks as though he's throwing his team over for awhile. Gives you a sinking feeling. It's by Heyliger, of course.

and also these—

"The Tattooed Man," a gripping sea story by Howard Pease; "Circus in the Clouds," the land and air adventures of an army pilot as told by Thomson Burtis; Part Two of "The Sheriton Eight," George F. Pierrot's crew story; corking good departments; these are features that will make next month's AMERICAN BOY one you will remember.

The American Boy

The Biggest, Brightest, Best Magazine for Boys in All the World

THE SPRAGUE PUBLISHING Co.,
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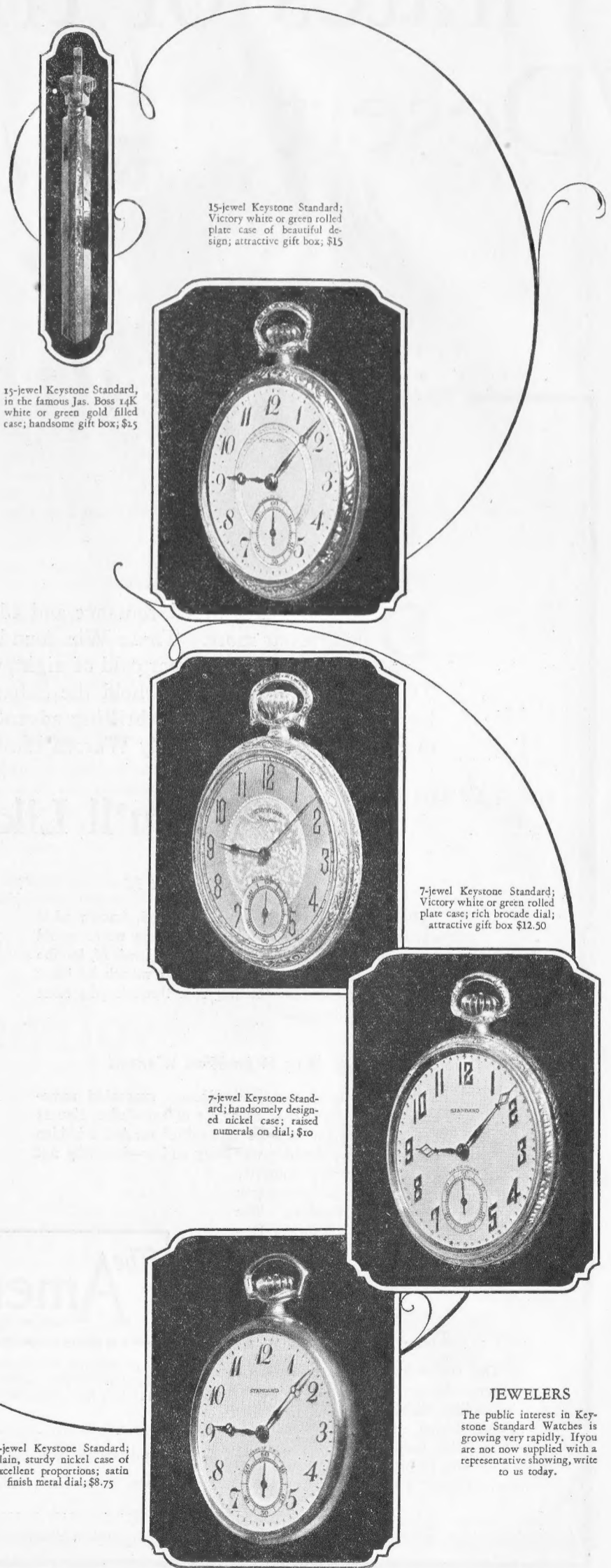
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The American Boy

The Biggest, Brightest, Best Magazine for Boys in All the World

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Volume 27

JULY, 1926

Number 9

Knight of the Fourth

By Thomson Burtis

Illustrated by J. Scott Williams

"LEE!"
"Yes, suh!"
Nineteen-year-old Captain Dick Lee stopped in his tracks, and walked between two hangars to the line. Colonel Vincent was there, and a group of uniformed men, two in French blue and five others with the arm band which marked them as war correspondents. Newspaper men were not new in the life of the young Southwesterner whose name was spread across the front pages of the world's newspapers—but still he got a thrill from being interviewed.

Tall, spare Colonel Vincent, commanding the 21st Pursuit Group, "somewhere in France," rested his eyes steadily on the small figure of the man who was, for the moment, the most famous flyer in the Allied Air Service. Lee observed silently that there was nothing of approval in the colonel's gaze. He was used to that.

"Jealous!" he told himself contemptuously.

These big army men were a bunch of red tape artists, anyway. But it took more than a few eagles and leaves and bars to hold "Crazy" Lee down!

"This, gentlemen, is Captain Lee," the colonel barked. "Captain, this—"

And he went on to introduce the French officers and the correspondents. The reporters greeted Dick with flattering interest, notebooks in hand. The Frenchmen kissed him, to his intense disgust, but their ecstatic compliments were pleasant.

"The scourge of the Boche!" one exclaimed dramatically. "In three weeks, twenty-four sheeps—official!"

A plump correspondent who was also a renowned novelist nodded, and there was a twinkle in his fine eyes as he surveyed the small youngster before him. Dick was scarcely five feet two inches tall, and hands and feet and body were in proportion to his small stature. One forgot that, though, as those dark, flashing eyes told their story. Square-jawed, with a small, straight nose which turned up a bit at the end—the face was strong, the writer saw. But it was the eyes which counted, with their bold recklessness and casual, unthinking humor. Lee's black hair was in slight disarray, as always, and it seemed to bristle with the tameless spirit of the stormy petrel of the American Air Service. He was like some wild young outlaw horse from his own Western plains—head held high, eyes daring the world to master him.

THEY asked the youngster with the rows of ribbons on his blouse a hundred questions, and he answered smilingly in his slow drawl. It was old stuff to him. His wild exploits as a boy in Texas had been told by a dozen reporters who had gone to his old home to get their stories, and most of the feature writers and war correspondents in France had "written up" this flyer who knew no fear; who'd been twice promoted within two months; who had already been given, or recommended for, every decoration the allies had to give save the Congressional medal. That, too, seemed a certainty—if he lived long enough!

Dick enjoyed it. He always did. This certainly was the life—doing what he wanted most in the world to do, and getting all this fame out of it! He'd figured that being a flyer would be a lot of fun, and he'd been right. What did he care if Colonel Vincent didn't like him, or the major, or any of the higher-ups?



He regaled them with drawing tales, while a dozen airmen sat and laughed.

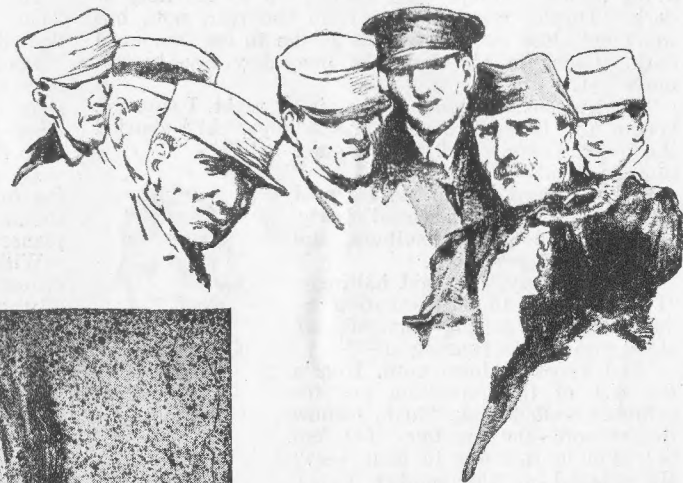
As he talked, his eyes sparkling, the low roll of far-away artillery undertoned his words. High in the sky were a few patrol planes.

"I suppose you wish you were home for the Fourth, to-morrow," suggested the plump novelist. "They're going to cut loose in the States, I hear—and you'd be king of the country!"

Dick grinned, and his small face seemed to glow when he did.

"I'll prob'ly be havin' a celebration of my own over heuh!" he stated widely. But even this glory-gorging young flyer felt at that moment a longing for home. It would be great to be back there—

"Oh, Jumbo!" he shouted suddenly, breaking in on somebody's question. He had spotted a great hulk of a man, sloppy of uniform and slow of movement, put-



tering around one of the row of single-seater S. E.5 scouts on the line, ready for patrol.

Jumbo Parks walked heavily toward the group. Dick's bold black eyes sparkled with mischief as he lectured with exaggerated solemnity:

"This is Jumbo Parks, the boy that gave the allies the laugh of theuh lives! Just got in two weeks ago, exchanged for a Boche flyuh! The man who got behind the German lines and on his way back landed on a German airdrome, thinkin' he was home!"

Big, red-faced, blonde Parks grinned determinedly, his shadowed blue eyes sweeping from face to face. The inarticulate giant had done just that—and the allied front had laughed itself sick. There he stood, smiling, but there was pain in his eyes which the heedless youngster did not see; nor would he have understood it if he had.

"There stands the man," Dick went on oratorically, "who's come closuh than any Boche to shootin' me down! I go ovuh the lines yesterday, and lo and behold, if anothuh ship doesn't show up—an allied ship, jest as I hop three Boche. In the scrap I get two of 'em, and as I'm divin' and zoomin' around, the othuh one on the run, my windshield's shot off, and I look around, and heuh's Jumbo, who's been fallin' all ovuh the sky in the fight, so excited he's shootin' at me! Did I run? Plenty!"

Colonel Vincent's severe gray face did not lighten, nor did Major Young's. Young was the C. O. of Dick's squadron—the 111th. The correspondents laughed, but they stopped, somehow, as their eyes met those of Parks'. The big fellow's determined grin failed to conceal his suffering.

"Buck up, Jumbo!" the thoughtless youngster told him, slapping him on the back which he could scarcely reach. "I—"

"It's time for our patrol!" Major Young said abruptly. "I apologize, gentlemen, to all of you. Come on, boys."

Dick's tanned face froze sardonically for an instant as Young abruptly shut him up. Jealous! There was ten minutes yet—but Young didn't want Crazy Lee making a hit with those newspaper men. Oh well, he was used to that.

"See if we can knock off a few more!" he told the newspaper men gaily. "Come on, Jumbo. There aren't any Boche in sight, at that. I guess they must know you're going to fly, eh?"

SINCE babyhood he had been a spoiled favorite, the son of old Haswell Lee and heir apparent to twenty square miles in Texas. Cow punchers had guffawed over him, admired him, and told tales of him. He had grown up a flashy, brilliant youngster who handled an outlaw horse like an old range rider—and liked to be told so. Now neither Boche aces nor American high-rankers

meant a thing. He was a Texas colt who'd never been ridden.

"You-all look glum, Jumbo!" he told the big fellow carelessly. Funny how Jumbo sort of sought him out around the squadron.

Parks gestured wearily, his heavy shoulders slumped. "Oh, I'm all right," Jumbo said vaguely. "Heard the news?"

"What news? Jest a washroom rumor, I suppose." Jumbo shook his shaggy blonde head.

"This is straight. We're celebrating the Fourth with a big attack. Troops start coming up to the lines at dark. They're on their way from the rear, now, but won't get close enough for the Boche to see 'em until dark. Going in all along the line, they say—biggest move yet."

"That means all planes in the air all night, I suppose, keepin' the Heines from gettin' the dope, eh?" drawled the young Texan. "Well, there's worse things'n flyin'."

Parks stopped beside his battered Spad. He scratched his head slowly. He wanted to say something, and finally he dragged it out.

"Listen, Crazy," he said haltingly, "I'd stick close to the formation today. They're getting sort of sore about you always running off—"

"And knockin' down more Huns'n the rest of the formation put togethuh!" scoffed Dick. "Suah, I know they're sore—the big bugs. Let 'em be! I'm in this war to fight, see?" He grinned at the somber Parks. "Cheer up, old topper—don't worry 'bout little Richard. See you at 15,000 feet!"

He strode off blithely, helmet and goggles swinging in his hand. Jumbo certainly was looking glum—

"Well, if I'd pulled his stuff I'd be hidin' with my head undah ground!" Dick reflected. "Propelluh and wings are sure the wrong brand for that maverick!"

Ten minutes later seven trim little S. E. 5s were in the air. Dick, bold black eyes sparkling, was gazing constantly eastward, toward the German lines. He hoped the C. O. would take them over.

But he didn't, to the Southwesterner's intense disgust. Up and down, just behind the zigzag lines of the allied trenches, the formation made its way. Below, the earth seemed a solid mass of shell holes and twisted trenches. Barbed wire entanglements, corpses, holes—that was No Man's land. Eastward behind the German lines several captive balloons were swaying slightly in the breeze, guarded by Boche planes. Orders for two days now had been not to bother the balloons. Because a few German ships were guarding them, Dick thought contemptuously!

FLYING his ship automatically, with the careless skill which had helped make him the flame of the western front during the past two months, he played with an idea. A balloon would count as two planes. And the formation was flying into and around small clouds—he could lose it easily enough. He would! His black eyes sparkled zestfully and his strong, slightly hard mouth widened.

Jumbo'd told him not to. That would make it more exciting. Funny about Jumbo—he certainly was a plow-horse among cow ponies. Couldn't fly very well—all right on straight stuff, but as a combat man he was bum. Good old plug, though. He'd do anything for a fellow. That had been a funny thing, Lis following over into Germany that morning and actually getting into a scrap. And then trying to shoot down one of his own planes! Dick laughed aloud at the recollection—his windshield shot off by Jumbo Parks. That would be a story to tell when he got back to the States. He'd be wined and dined and have to make a lot of speeches, of course, as the leading air hero of America. After all, it would be nice to spend the Fourth safe at home, basking—

Here was his chance. The formation spread to go through a huge cloud, and no sooner had the planes lost sight of each other in the fleecy mist than Dick had banked sharply. Soon he was reversing his course, and as he came out of the cloud a second later he was climbing steeply. The formation was out of sight.

Up and up he climbed, as the air grew chillier and the hundred and eighty-horsepower French motor ticked away like clockwork. His tiny ship was a very small craft to fly in, but it looked big for the young Texan. His head was barely above the level of the cockpit, and his short legs had to stretch to reach the rudder handily.

Nineteen thousand feet, and the ship could make no more in the thin, keen air. Now, if he could slip across under shelter of the clouds, all would be fine.

His slim steel body tense and his black eyes flashing with boyish zest in which there was more than a trace of grim maturity, he succeeded in threading his way above the clouds, unseen. There were occasional spots

where the blood-soaked, shell-tossed ground was visible, but few. He must be over the line of balloons, now. He wished he could get a look at one—and he hoped devoutly that his eight-cylinder motor would not fail him now. He worked over that motor as though it was a priceless watch, when on the ground. His ship, too, with the forty-six bullet holes in it—

There one was! A speck below him, far to his right. Just happened to see it. Three ships close by, too. There would be others to come to their rescue, but they'd have to work fast.

He could get down through the clouds, he was sure. They were great, white, fleecy, cumulus clouds, and floated along at all levels.

For five minutes he worked his way down, striving to stay in the masses of mist as long as he could. No signs of alarm below as he got to eight thousand feet. Then he plunged into another cloud, and he was less than five thousand as the earth came in sight.

He stayed within the shelter of the thin fringes of fog for a moment. Now was the time. More than two thousand feet to dive—but he'd get past the guardian planes before they knew it.

With a wild, unheard whoop of fierce delight in the chance he was taking, he went into a steep dive, motor all the way on. A flashing meteor of the air, he hurtled downward as though falling. Straight at the balloon he

rudder all the way on, the ship spun downward, nose first. The earth revolved dizzily as the plane screwed its way through the air.

The Fokkers still followed him, but more slowly, now. They thought they'd got him. Or he hoped they thought so. Five hundred feet, and still he spun.

Three hundred. They had stopped at a thousand, and his own patrol ships were coming up. They were still half a mile away, though—too far to help him.

It was one of those wildly thrilling moments which were meat and drink to Captain Crazy Lee. As he jammed on left rudder and pushed the stick all the way forward, he did not know whether he'd crash or not before the ship came level. If it did come out he might escape the Fokkers.

For a breathless few seconds he saw the ground rush up to meet him as the ship dived. Stick all the way back, now—and it came out!

Right across the German trenches, barely ten feet high, he went, and across No Man's Land like a bullet gone wild. The frustrated Fokkers were diving on him, but he streaked across the American lines unhurt, just as the patrol reached the scene of action and the Heines fled.

Chuckling delightedly, his body atingle and his eyes flashing fire, he decided to spend the night at some other airdrome, rather than his own. Young would object, of course. But wasn't he Crazy Lee, the ace? The 43rd wasn't far away. He saw the American soldiers cheering in their trenches as he passed. They knew who it was—his ship was unmistakable. That night, the conversation among thousands of men would be Crazy Lee's latest exploit. It was a great life.

The 43rd boys knew him—he'd been there before. It was his habit to go off on single prowls, and stay wherever he chose. The 111th didn't like it, but he should worry.

At the airdrome his reception was flattering. The mechanics looked at him in respectful awe, and the flyers grinned their congratulations.

"Taking a little trip, eh?" grinned Farnsworth, an ace himself, as Crazy got out of his flying clothes. "You'll get in bad for that balloon, I suppose. Why we should leave 'em alone, I don't know! But the big boys probably have a reason—"

"I'll bunk heuh to-night," Dick broke in. "Let Young cool down a little. I hate home, and I love to roam!"

FOR half an hour he regaled them with drawing tales, while a dozen airmen sat and laughed. His visits were always welcome. To the enlisted men and younger flyers of the A. E. F. he was unique and extraordinary—the darling of the Allies. His diminutive size, his marvelous record, his devil-may-care flouting of all laws—all set him apart. And in the States he was the flashing symbol of the airmen—a modern knight-errant who knew no fear. Everybody listened to him, and he reveled in it.

That was the fiery youngster who started for mess as twilight was falling, and who stopped in his tracks as he heard the roar of a motor.

"Visitors," said someone. They trooped out on the field, as a Spad landed awkwardly. A lumbering figure tumbled from the cockpit, leaving the motor running.

"Crazy Lee here?" It was Parks, and the surprised Dick came forward. "Sure, but—"

"Get into your ship, and come with me!" "I will not!" flashed Dick. "Why should I—"

"Come with me, you little fool!" Parks stepped forward, his eyes deep and formidable. He was breathing heavily, as though consumed with wrath. He darted a look around the interested group, and saw that the C. O. wasn't there.

"Somebody get his helmet!" he said wrathfully. "Don't bother!" Dick returned scornfully. "I'm stayin' heuh!"

"No, you're not, and I'll tell you why!" flared Parks. The words came in hot succession from his lips. "Because you've ruined yourself, that's why! Twice you've been court-martialed for insubordination, and this time you'll get it right!"

"You're smart, aren't you? Orders were not to shoot down balloons. Did you know why? Because they wanted to get the Boche off guard by not bothering 'em for a long time, and then hop on the whole bunch at dawn to-morrow, so the advance could be made under cover! Now, probably, you've spilled the beans. You have managed to warn 'em beautifully—if they don't send over an aerial scout or so to find out what's up, I miss my guess! You ass!"

The hot flame of his wrath seared even the cocky ace of aces.

"They know you slipped away from the formation—and they suspect you're hiding out somewhere where you've no right to be!" Parks rushed on. "Do you know where you'll be, if they find you here? In the jug, with all your pretty decorations! I really *did* get lost in the



Big Sea Adventure

WIRELESS REPORT
8 pm June 20

Tramp Freighter Araby: Clears in August from port of Best Salt Reading. Bound for Big Adventure. Heading into Danger. Master, blue-eyed Captain Ramsey. Mess-boy, green, game Tod Moran. Mysterious cook, THE TATTOOED MAN.

The American Boy Chronicle.

ABOVE: Advance good news—of a great, gripping sea story, by Howard Pease, common sailor for a time and uncommon writer for all time.

The story of a battered tramp freighter. Of storms. Of blistered stoking. Of stealthy fighting. Of strange swims in shark-infested waters. Of stark treachery in far-off ports.

The story of a queer crew, a queer captain and a queerer cook, *The Tattooed Man*. Of a boy who had no choice but to serve that cook.

The story of baffling mystery . . . Of great friendship, great endurance, great courage.

THE TATTOOED MAN

Beginning in August

went—they were hauling it down, now. Anti-aircraft bursts were all far away from him—he didn't fear them. He was below the Boche Fokkers, now diving wildly to intercept him.

Let 'em try! Ship vibrating in every strut and spar, wires shrieking above the tortured bellow of the overstrained motor, he sped downward. He was careless of the Fokkers—two coming from the side, one directly on his tail, but far back of him—

There were others—coming from the west! Well, he'd beat them, too! Crazy Lee was on the warpath—let 'em all come and dare to dive as he was diving his Spad—best ship on the front for the purpose.

HIS plane was almost falling to pieces as his coldly dancing eyes got their bead and his hand pressed steadily on the gun control. The tracer bullets sped a few feet to one side of the balloon, and he forced his trembling ship over until those lines of smoke flashed straight into the great gas bag.

He saw the balloon observers jump in their 'chutes, and the next second the big envelope was a mass of smoke, shot with flames. He'd got it!

Gradually he pulled out of the dive. Fokkers were swarming above him, now, shooting like mad. Others were ahead, between him and his own lines, coming at him at the same level—two thousand feet. Bullet holes were appearing like magic. Down below the trenches were in a tumult as the Heines watched.

Like a flash he brought his ship up in a zoom. A deadly minute it seemed to hang, a perfect target. But his miraculous luck held. The ship was riddled with bullets before he kicked it off into a spin.

Stick all the way over in the right-hand corner, right

formation, and over the German lines before I knew it, in the clouds. So I told 'em I shot down that balloon, because I've got a good record. Maybe I saved your conceited hide for you—not that it's worth it. If you get home to-night you may get away with this."

He whirled on the group of airmen. "You birds forget what I've said, see? Somebody get Crazy's flying stuff!"

"It's in my ship—" started Lee, sobered abruptly.

"Well, then, get in it. You've got to get back before the patrol returns—oh, why waste words on you!"

With one giant stride he reached Lee's side. The next second he had picked up the little airman like a feather, and was carrying his burden to the line of ships. He fairly threw Lee into the cockpit of his ship, his heavy pink-and-white face like a thundercloud.

The startled flyer was suddenly a bewildered boy who forgot he was the great Crazy Lee. Raging at his humiliation, he was nevertheless conscious of a queer feeling within him—an emptiness, a vast hollowness. The whole Allied plan of attack, the fate of regiments, might be affected by that silly desire to get a balloon!

A HALF hour later, after a swift night-flight, a sober, downcast young flyer got out of his ship. The others hadn't returned yet from the patrol. Only Curly Haskins, hobbling on a crutch, was there, and he said briefly:

"Lucky you got back. Young's boiling. And it's lucky Jumbo lied for you! He can get away with it—you'd have been shot at sunrise!"

As Dick nodded, Jumbo was coming down. As usual, he made a bad landing. Somewhere on the front guns were rumbling, and the far-off roar of airplane motors reached them. A patrol was passing up near the front. Could it be the enemy, on guard against something Lee had given away?

As Jumbo climbed wearily from his ship, the little flyer walked over to him. He scarcely reached to Jumbo's chest. He held out his hand, and the finer part of him was on the surface as he said steadily:

"Thanks, Jumbo. I was a fool to disobey orders—"

"You sure were," mumbled Parks.

They sat down on the ground, near the ships.

"You're on alert, now that you're home," Parks warned him. "No Boche wanted, with reserve troops gathering for the push to-morrow. They hope they've got the Boche fooled on this one."

Lee brushed away the statement as unimportant. He'd been doing considerable thinking on the way home. Realization of what might have happened had been a shock, even to him. Disobedience of orders by itself was bad enough. With such serious consequences, after his record for insubordination, it would have been fatal. Even yet it might mean failure to to-morrow's offensive.

And Jumbo had deliberately taken the blame.

"Listen, Jumbo," the youngster said steadily, "I don't like the idea of you bein' a sacrifice for me. I—"

"That's all right," said the big fellow slowly. "I can get away with it. I haven't been in any scrapes before. Besides, what difference does it make to me? Just another bone pulled by Jumbo Parks, the guy that landed in Germany, that's all!"

Something in his voice brought hot blood to the face of the impulsive young Texan. In a wave of comprehension the soft-hearted Lee remembered the cruel razing he had given Jumbo at odd times—and never thought Jumbo minded it! And Jumbo had sort of been taking care of him, one way and another—

"Jumbo, why are you—takin' so much trouble for me?" Lee asked haltingly. "Chasin' me over the lines and all—"

"I'll tell you!" exploded Parks, and it seemed that the flood-gates of speech had been opened, for the first time. His words were a hot stream, ringing with sincerity and bitter disappointment, as well. "Because you could be all that I'd love to be, and never will be! A flyer like nobody else—a man that's responsible for thousands of people in the United States taking more interest, and giving more money, and feeling more pride in their army, and cheering, and backing us up. You're a symbol to 'em! And I want you to go on and do more!" His voice was husky now.

"I tell you, Dick, it makes me sick to see you throwing yourself away. Not only taking too many chances, but being a conceited pup who won't obey orders, thinking of nothing but his own pleasure, as though this war was a tea-party! You're—"

"I only wanted to have a little fun!"

"Fun! I suppose you enlisted in this war for fun!"



A crash that was like the crack of doom—and a great ball of flame lit up the sky above a numbed world.

It brought Lee up short—and Parks noticed his flaming face.

"That's just what you did!" Jumbo told him. "Fun! And my two sisters are working in a factory, and my old Swedish mother taking in sewing, so I can fight for the country that was so good to my dad and her when they came in as a couple of immigrants! And you talk about having fun! Why—"

"Jumbo! Crazy!"

IT was a wild cry, reverberating through the night. Curly came hobbling from headquarters. Suddenly Crazy was aware of anti-aircraft fire somewhere in the rear, and searchlights probing into the sky.

"A Boche slipped over high and saw the concentration of troops!" yelled Curly. "Somebody hopped him high up, but he got away and he's headed for the lines now! Coming this way—five thousand feet! You've got to get him—he's got all the dope!" Curly's voice almost sobbed.

Crazy waited for no more. As his tiny form flashed across the field his heart raced—for that Boche plane was the one he'd warned! His crazy pride had told the enemy to expect something—if the Boche got back the whole American plan of attack, and perhaps thousands of lives, would be lost! Already the mechanics had his ship serviced and ready to fly when he reached it, and he was taking off before Jumbo had even climbed into his own plane.

The alarm was out—there were many anti-aircraft searchlights sweeping the sky. It would be considerable time before any other ships could reach the scene. And somewhere in the night a lone German was flashing toward the lines, bearing priceless news.

Four thousand, five thousand feet, his sturdy little Spad carried him. Two thousand feet lower Jumbo was climbing up, while Lee searched the sky for a ship. He was on edge, eyes sparkling with wild joy. He'd get that German—and even at such a moment he realized proudly that it would be another prize for Crazy Lee. Hereafter, though, he'd be himself, and obey orders. He wanted to go back as a hero, lauded and praised, but good old Jumbo was right—

There he was!

A mile back, one of the searchlights picked up the Fokker and followed it. Others joined, until the Boche was hurtling along in a pathway of light. Anti-aircraft were firing all around him, the white bursts plainly visible.

Crazy Lee was on his way, roaring back to meet his foe. He climbed as much as he could, to get precious altitude. The Fokker had a white nose, and white stripes—that was the color of the Sternberg circus. Maybe it was Baron von Sternberg himself, Germany's leading ace. It would be just like him to slip over like that, alone! And he was a foeman worthy of Crazy Lee's steel.

Dick banked slightly. Now he, too, was in the lights. Anti-aircraft had stopped shooting, to keep from hitting him. Coming at the German from a right angle, he started shooting.

And the unknown Fokker pilot, perforce, gave battle. He, too, banked, and came head-on at Lee. Until the very last minute both held their course, then Crazy dared a dive. The next second he was arching upward in what looked like the first half of a loop. But at the top of it the ship lazily turned right side up—a perfect Immelman. He wasn't shot yet, and now he was two hundred feet higher than his foe.

He forgot Jumbo. With eyes alight and tiny body tense, he handled his ship with the perfection he was noted for. Turning on a dime, diving like mad one moment and banking vertically the next, he strove to get on the Boche's tail. The two ships twisted and turned on themselves like giants in a death grapple, and the long lines of the tracer bullets were plain against the night.

What a flyer that German was! Von Sternberg himself—must be. With all his skill Crazy could not get him. He knew he'd shot the ship full of holes, but still his foe gave battle.

Down below thousands were watching that epic battle between planes whose motors were thundering along as though in human range.

Suddenly Lee, momentarily on the German's tail, pressed his gun control. He had him now—

But no answer came from his guns. A jam! There was Jumbo coming up from below. He would have to correct that jam before the German realized his helplessness.

As he banked his ship steeply, to pull to one side, his hands were pawing wildly at the ammunition belt. He looked down at that wonderful German, a hundred feet below him. He was starting for Jumbo, a thousand feet below.

The full force of the dilemma struck the taut youngster with paralyzing force. Awkward, slow-witted Jumbo, a thousand feet below that wonderful pilot in the Fokker! Jumbo would be a certain, easy victim. He'd go down to his death—and the German would escape with that priceless information he had obtained. There was not a second to spare.

In that flaming second all that was dross in Crazy Lee was burned away. The manhood of his pioneer ancestors was his that moment, and added to it was a new spirit which had stirred within him down there on the ground as Jumbo had opened his heart.

In a flash the Spad, built for terrific diving, was nose down. Motor all the way on, the squat little ship flashed earthward in a dive so terrific that Lee had to hunch behind his windshield to breathe. White-faced, in his eyes tragedy lurking behind the fearless flame which leaped and danced, he hurled himself on his enemy. He'd forgotten his useless guns. His eyes roved from the awkwardly

(Continued on page 46)

Garry Talks Turkey

By Mitchell V. Charnley

Illustrated by George Avison

BY the time Garry Banker wheezed up the hill to where his father's new sedan was parked, nearly the whole junior baseball team was jammed into it. And happy? Say!

"Easy, you birds," warned Garry. "New car, you know."

But he was all grin as he squeezed himself under the wheel and started off. And we were yelling like Indians, for we'd just trimmed the alumni 5 to 3, and that meant we got to play the faculty for the championship of the Morton Intramural League two days later. If we won, we'd all get our class numerals—Garry as team manager, me as third baseman, and so on.

"Whoeee!" shrieked Dutch Moenden from the back seat. "Us for the finals! And won't we wallop—"

"Don't forget Pinkie!" cut in Sam Tulman, second baseman. But everybody was yelling, and Garry was tooting his siren and stepping on the gas—Garry always liked his driving, and I guess he didn't realize how fast he was going. And he didn't see the little flivver coming from the right down Jefferson Street, either. I was the only one who did.

"Look out!" I howled.

Garry slammed on his brakes, and the flivver speeded up and almost got by. But Garry's swerve wasn't quite wide enough. There was a sickening smash, and broken glass tinkled on the pavement. The big sedan plowed right on, though, shaking the flivver loose like a horse twitching off a fly. Garry, his round face white, stopped the car with a screech of tires on the pavement a few feet farther, and tumbled out to inspect the damage.

None of the happy Garry grin on his face when the rest of us got out.

"Look at that!" he groaned. "What'll Dad say?"

I could guess. Brand new car without a scratch, until then. The headlight was pancaked, and there was a dent like a dishpan in the fender, and about a square yard of paint scraped off. Poor Garry looked thunderstruck—and he took it out by calling the driver of the flivver everything he could think of. Of course, he was worried—ordinarily Garry was the most cheerful chap in the world. But now he just kept looking at that smashed fender and thinking up new adjectives.

I walked around to the side of the little car—with our gang and a lot of others, there was quite a crowd already—and stumbled over what looked like a muddy, knotted pile of the flags of every nation in the world. Purple and yellow and blue and red—yards and yards of violent colors. I saw a big box beside 'em, and realized they'd been knocked out of the fliv.

"Messed things up all right, didn't it?" I said to the man beside me.

THEN I looked up and saw it was Mr. Hewitt, instructor there in Morton High in civics and history. Pinkie, everybody called him behind his back, because of his carrot-colored hair. Long and thin, old Pinkie—not so old, at that. But he was quiet, and a stiff grader—nobody knew him much. He'd been a real athlete in college, and he pitched for the faculty—the juniors knew all about that!

Pinkie didn't answer, because just then Garry let out another yell. He'd discovered that his front tire was flat—and he started to blame the other driver all over again.

"Ought to keep those oil cans in the alley!" he fumed. "Oughtn't to let hicks drive on public streets! Who is the bird, anyway? He's got to pay for—"

There was an ominous silence in the gang, and I could see Sam Tulman signaling to Garry to shut up. But I didn't know what was up—not even when Pinkie, looking kind of funny around his pleasant blue eyes, broke in.

"Nothing wrong with your driving, Banker?"

Garry was so worried he just let fly.

"No, sir! I leave it to Ed here—Ed saw it all. You saw the way that rube drove in front of—"

I was glad I didn't have to answer. Pinkie broke in again, and the way he spoke cut like a knife:

"It happens, Banker, that I also saw it all. You see,

I'm the 'rube.' You, young man, were driving too fast, and were not watching, and did not have right of way. You are fortunate it was only my bumper you hit—didn't hurt my 'oil can' badly."

Even then there was a little grin in Pinkie's eye.

"But I'm afraid you pretty near wrecked the Sultan of Turkey," he went on, almost smiling. "That's his costume on the ground. It's in bad shape."

I knew what he meant—the Turkish scene in the Morton Hi-Jinx. You see,



"Any place I put 'em," said Ray sadly, "is pie for that baby."

Pinkie was a nut, we all said, on Turkey and that kind of stuff, and he was in charge of this act for the Hi-Jinx. And those were the costumes for the act.

Poor Garry was trying to speak—and the more the snickers in the crowd, the worse he got. His jaw just opened and shut like a trap door, and nothing came out. Before he shoved into low, Pinkie started again.

"Bad business, that kind of driving, Banker," he said. "Very bad indeed. That kind of talking, too. Your trouble seems to be that you put your foot on the accelerator instead of the brake—both times—and then forgot the rules of the road."

Pinkie turned away, and without a word Garry piled all those Turkish costumes back into the fliv's tonneau. Then, his face burning, he slithered the sedan away, me beside him. Sam, in back, was suffocating with mirth, and they all ragged Garry pretty stiffly.

Well, he took it like a man. He told his father the story, and arranged to pay for repairs. He apologized to Pinkie that night, and had the flivver bumper fixed. Even took the costumes to the cleaner, and staggered into school next morning with them, all spick and span. Garry seemed his old cheerful self, too—smiling and comical. But the fellows didn't give him a chance. Guyed him to death, and Pudge Gimbel kept posing as a traffic cop in the halls and warning everyone to keep out of danger whenever he saw Garry coming!

Garry kind of enjoyed it—at first. By noon he was a little tired of it, though. And late in the afternoon,

down at the field where we were practicing, he was glum as an oyster.

"Course I expected to get razed," he told me. "But they don't have to keep it up forever! It's all old Hewitt's fault, too—just like it's going to be entirely his fault when we get a licking tomorrow!"

It was silly to blame the razzing on Pinkie, and I told Garry so. I thought the other was silly, too; but for the first time good-natured Garry was a gloom-broadcaster. He had seen Pinkie and the rest of the faculty team play, and he had always told roilingly funny stories about the way they went after flies, and Bray Mears' gray felt hat, and the outfits they wore in general.

"Sure Pinkie can pitch—they couldn't win a game without him," Garry'd always said. "He's an iceberg—and you can't rattle an iceberg. But all we have to do is get one or two past him, and the rest of 'em'll boot it around the rest of the afternoon!"

Just the same, Pinkie had pitched them to four wins, over frosh, sophs, seniors and alums, just like our record. And here we were at the final game.

That night we practiced like fiends and looked pretty good, if I do say it. Not that Garry could see it. He looked sour as the lemons he passed out for us to suck—lemon-passing was a managerial privilege and duty, he always said.

"Nobody's got to him yet," he declared gloomily. "And nobody's going to."

"Cheer up, old blue-nose!" I answered. "You talk like you're going to a massacre to-night, instead of the Hi-Jinx."

Just the same, I couldn't help feeling leery myself. As Gar-

ry and long, slim Crinkie Talbot, our first baseman, and I sat watching the show we all had the game on our minds.

"What, ho, manager!" Crinkie whispered, after Garry had clapped twice at the wrong time. "Your forehead is furrowed as the fallow field." Crinkie always talked that way.

But all through the gypsy campfire scene the girls put on, and Pudge Gimbel's song and dance act, and the tumbling by some of the best gym students, Garry sat like a frog on a log. It wasn't until Pinkie's Turkish Bazaar scene came on that Garry perked up. Even then he didn't say anything. Just sat straight and screwed his face up as the praying, salaaming priests, and the whirling dervishes and the "Turks" in all those pink and green and purple silks—same ones Garry had bumped—came on. He let out a grunt right in the middle of one of the dervish's best whirls.

"Avaunt!" snickered Crinkie. "Does yon manager find ought to yield him hope?"

From then on, Garry just looked mysterious. He shut up like a textbook in summer. I did everything but promise to buy him chocolate floats every day for a week—no use. When the show was over he dashed off without so much as a see-you-later to Crinkie and me. All I caught was something about "need four or five fellows—"

And that was that. I decided if he wanted to play a game with himself, I'd let him. Next morning I tried to get him on the telephone—it was Saturday—but he wasn't at home. So I took things easy, and went to the gym early, and got into my uniform.

When Garry didn't show up on the bench before the game, I started to worry a bit. But the worry didn't last. The faculty came out from the dressing rooms, and I got my first glimpse of them. Then I got down behind the bench, and laughed like an idiot—even if they were faculty. They were dolled up in every kind of uniform from old white tennis ducks to the football outfit little Mr. Buffington wore. Pinkie had on a faded old red sweater and golf knickers, and looked like a real athlete, too. No parlor performer, Pinkie.

Well, the faculty got first bat, and we handled them pretty smoothly. Mr. Buffington—we called him Buffy—fled out to Tommy Webster, in center. Mr. Davis, our principal, came up and knocked a measly little grounder to Crinkie, who fielded it easily. We got our first laugh when Mr. Davis decided he had to get back to home. He slowed up like a baby rhino, and charged back toward the plate. Then Crinkie shot the ball to Shorty Verran, catcher—they both saw what was up—and they kept relaying it back and forth as Mr. Davis

galloped up and down the base line. Then, suddenly, he realized he was out—and he grinned like a good sport, and walked over to his bench.

He nearly broke up the game right there. Everybody, faculty included, was howling. But we got together again, and then the demon home run hitter of the team came to bat—Bray Mears, chem instructor. He'd broken up several faculty games before, we'd heard, with his long hits. Well, he swung at the first ball Ray White, our pitcher, served up, and first thing we knew his funny peg-top trousers were rounding first, and Tommy Webster was still chasing the ball when Mr. Mears' smashed felt hat came off at second. It was a regular Babe Ruth, and Bray got all there was out of it. He whished past my corner like a cyclone, and puffed on home as Tommy started to throw in.

THAT was a run. But Ray tightened up and whiffed the next man easily. First thing I heard as we trotted on to the bench was:

"Say! What's become of our manager? Who's got the lemons?"

Nobody knew—and that brought Garry to mind for a minute. He'd never missed a minute of a game before.

Right away, though, I forgot him. For the faculty took the field, and Pinkie picked up the ball, and then who-osh! A streak of white, and a smock! in Mr. Davis's glove, and it was one strike. Did he have speed! Crink struck out in no time at all, and Sam Tulman didn't do much better—a weak pop that Pinkie didn't have to move a foot to catch. I was third up, and I just stood and watched 'em go past. Best pitching I'd ever seen.

Right then I knew our only hope was that somehow or other Pinkie would weaken. If he was going right he was uncatchable. And he went right! Second, third and fourth innings he mowed us down in one-two-three order, although old Shorty Verran did whale out a long one that lit foul by six inches.

Meanwhile, we did not do so badly. Except for Bray Mears, that is. He came up in the fourth, and did it all over again—another homer over Tommy's head. That made it two in their favor—they didn't need anybody else at bat!

"Any place I put 'em," said Ray White sadly, "is pie for that baby."

In the fifth we found a hole. Shorty hit another long one, and this time it lit fair. His dinky legs got him around to third before the ball came in. Then Tommy connected with one that should have been an easy out, the way it rolled up to "Bugs" Barron, biology teacher, at third, and begged him to field it. But he kicked it, dove after it and then lost it altogether, and Shorty got home easily. With Tommy safe on first, Dutch Moenden whiffed. Harry Fuller, shortstop, swung like a lumber jack at two, then hit smack into a double play—we thought. But Buffy, at short, leaped at the ball like a cat, and it rolled through his legs into center field. Tom got to third.

Crazy? The juniors along the side lines were yellin' fools. We boomed, and shouted, and waved arms and stamped feet. But Pinkie simply jogged the ball up and down while Ray was waiting, and looked at us with a little grin, and then threw such a sizzler that I'll bet Mr. Davis feels it yet. Ray didn't move a muscle—nor for the next, either. Then he was desperate, and he started his swing as the ball left Pinkie's hand.

The next minute we were on our feet and he was dashing for first. He'd guessed it right and connected, and it went into left for a double. Tom and Harry came in on it, and bedlam—whatever that is—would have seemed tame beside the next few minutes.

"Gadzooks!" gurgled Crinkie. "Didst see yon lusty blow?"

But Pinkie—that icicle of a pitcher just grinned kind of embarrassed, the way he does in class when somebody's made a bum recitation, and then proceeded to fan Crink and Sam on seven pitched balls. Didn't matter, though, we thought—we were a run ahead, and if only Ray could get Mr. Mears—

But little Bray came up to bat with his felt hat jammed down over his eyes in the sixth, and after looking over three wide ones he stepped out and laced the fourth so far I'll bet it's just slowing up now! What hurt was that Buffy was on base at the time, and he legged it in ahead of Bray like a rabbit. Four to three!

And when Pinkie set us down in the sixth and seventh and eighth like we were kindergarten kids, we forgot how happy we'd been there in the fifth. Glory! How we tried to figure that fast ball, and the straight one! But he was too much for us. Ray kept the faculty from scoring any more by throwing the home run king four balls so wide Shorty had to get into first base territory to catch them—that was in the first of the ninth. But when our last bat opened, with me up first, it was still four to three.

"Gang," begged Ray, his eyes pleading—he'd done some mighty good pitching—"let's get 'em now. Maybe his arm'll weaken, or something."

Slim hope, I thought. But when he gave me four balls in a row, easy as eating, I perked up. There was a regular cheer as I hiked down to first. What if we could do it!

Lefty Hogan, left fielder, came up confident as anything, swinging a couple of bats and grinning. It was just as he stepped into the box, waving his war club, that I happened to glance over toward the gate under the grandstand. I darn near stepped off the bag!

"Garry—what in thunder!" I gasped to myself. Garry, sure enough—you should have seen him!

On his head was about forty yards of purple silk, wound into a turban that looked like a giant balloon. His coat was one of those dinky little red silk jackets the pictures of Turks always show, and around his fat waist was a yellow sash a foot wide. His pants were wide, flappy big bloomers, made of shimmery blue stuff. On his feet were red shoes with long toes that turned up. And over his shoulders he carried a big brassy scimitar that looked like it belonged to the Lord High Executioner!

THERE was a gasp as, calm and majestic as the King of Siam, he marched out into the field. And another, as behind him came four chaps in our class, all of them dressed just like Garry. The ball game stopped dead. We'd all forgotten the score and everything else—so had the crowd. Then came a shrill voice from the junior base line: "Oh, you Turks!"

Well, that broke the trance. You never heard such a shout as went up—nor such a yell of laughter. Guess everybody in the crowd, nearly, recognized those costumes—they'd been in Pinkie's Turkish act the night before!

I was so weak I sat right down on the bag and gurgled. But Garry and his trailers, solemn as ghosts, stalked out onto the diamond and squarely in front of Pinkie. The tall pitcher stood there with his mouth hanging open—he was as flabbergasted as anybody I ever saw. And when Garry and the others stopped, formed a half circle in front of him, and sank to their knees, the ball slipped from his hand and dropped with a thud.

"Oh, you Turks!" kept coming from the stands. Then the five of them started slowly bowing down to the ground and up again, hands raised above their heads, just like the salaaming priests had in the pageant the night before. "Imploring Allah for victory!" choked Sam, there on the coaching line. He was holding his sides. You could see their mouths move, but there was too much noise to hear anything.

Well, I really felt sorry for Pinkie. He was red all over—red sweater, red hair and the reddest face and neck you ever saw. Guess he was rattled then, all right!

Finally the ump stopped laughing long enough to tell Garry something. Right away Garry got up, shouldered his big scimitar and started the parade toward the junior bench. His four carbon copies followed him, grave as judges. In front of the bench they stopped, wheeled and knelt again.

Out there on the field things were getting back to normal. I took a lead off, and Pinkie picked up the ball again. But Garry had got to him—he didn't have a thing! The first ball he threw hit the ground weakly in front of the plate. The second was as bad, way off to the right. Lefty tried to get out of the way of it, but it clipped him on the leg, and he jogged to first, while I went to second.

That brought Shorty to bat. Shorty was the only one who'd had any luck with Pinkie so far, and the crowd gave him a good big cheer. Looked as if our chance had come—Shorty was grinning as if he thought so, anyway. And Pinkie, kind of shaking himself, seemed to try to buck up.

But just as he wound up there was a new cheer from the juniors, and I looked over at our bench. Garry and his gang were at it again! Bending backward and forward like puppets on a string, and casting their eyes skyward. I could hear them give a long-drawn-out "Allah!" each time they straightened up.

Pinkie saw them, too, I guess. His pitch nearly got over Mr. Davis's head. The principal hauled it

(Cont. on page 53)

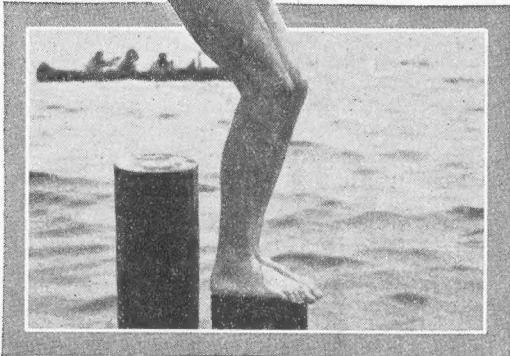


Garry and his trailers, solemn as ghosts, stalked out onto the diamond.

Are You a Swimmer?

By Robert J. H. Kiphuth, Yale Swimming Coach.

On
your
mark!



GET SET! Bang! And the swimmer, half-crouched on the edge of the pool, swings his arms forward and flashes into the air like a torpedo. Stretched out almost horizontal, head slightly lowered, he skids into the water on his chest. While he's still in the air his legs start thrashing powerfully from the hips, and when he hits he's plowing through the water under full steam. That's the racing start the way Johnny Weismuller, one of America's greatest speed swimmers, is doing it in the picture below.

WHEN you go to a big bathing beach on a hot summer day, or to the "old swimmin' hole," or to a swimming pool in a college or Y. M. C. A. gymnasium, and see the thousands of men and women, boys and girls—particularly boys—splashing and shouting and paddling and cutting through the water, you're likely to think that just about everybody there is knows how to swim.

And yet there are hundreds who are frightened into shivers at the thought of plunging into a river or lake, simply because they haven't given it the right kind of try; there are as many more who are able to paddle around and keep themselves afloat and do half a dozen strokes, after a fashion, but who will never become real swimmers because they don't take the trouble to learn properly.

All of these people are missing a lot. Swimming is a thing that everybody can do, and do right. More than that—it's a thing that supplies an amazing lot of fun, that frequently means the difference between life and death and that is an excellent body builder. It's for all these reasons that a number of colleges and universities have made it compulsory for a student to pass a swimming test before they can get their diplomas.

When I hear fellows say that swimming is a thing they'll never be able to learn, or that "water has got their goat" or something of the kind, I always think of the case of the sophomore at Yale who came to me a couple of years ago and told me he wanted to be shown how. He was a strapping big fellow, and looked like a real athlete, as I told him.

"That's what they all say," he grinned ruefully. "But I might as well admit that I've always been afraid of the water. Just the same, I want you to make me go in—push me into deep water if you want to!"

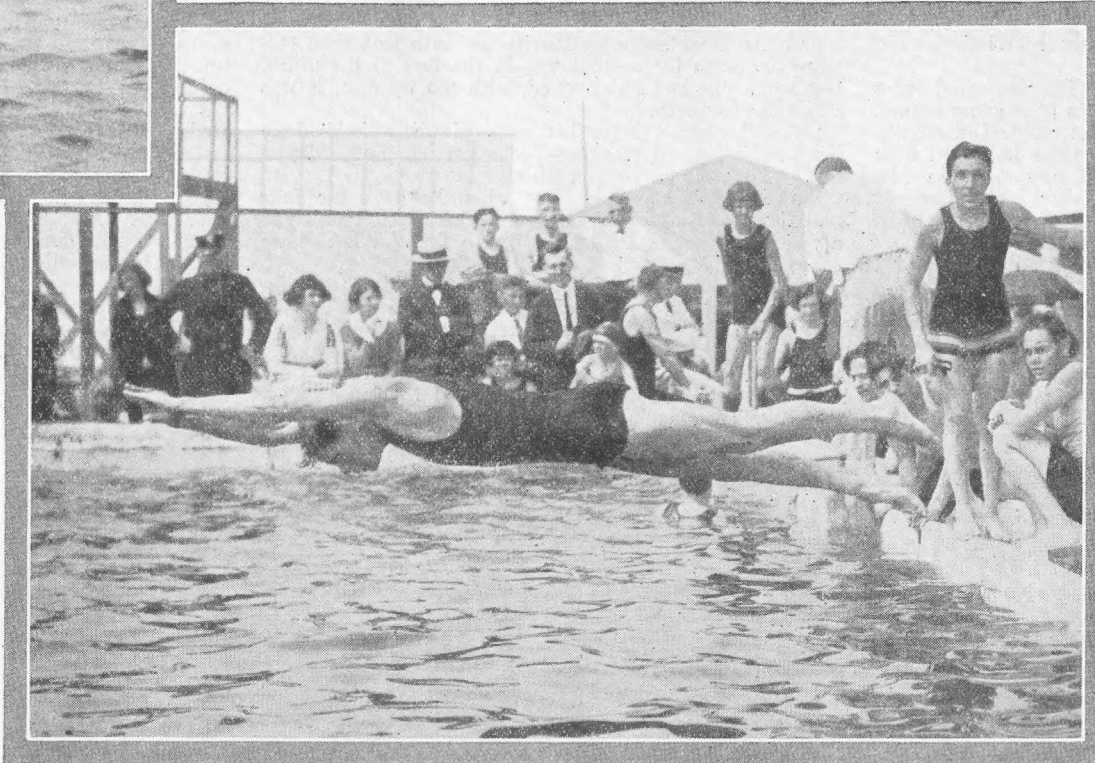
He would have let me do it, if I'd thought it best. But that would have been just wrong. Likely he would have gotten mouth and nose full, and choked, and struggled and batted the water, and sunk once or twice, and then he'd have been more frightened than ever.

I don't mean to say that everybody is afraid of getting ducked—not by any means. But some people are, and it isn't a thing to be ashamed of. Anybody can go about overcoming such a fear, and do it just as successfully as this big sophomore did.

Start by Splashing!

THE first thing I told him to do, to his surprise, was simply to step into the shallow end of the pool and play around in the water for a while. That's the first lesson—splashing and jumping and twisting in shallow water, to get accustomed to the "feel" of it. It's a good idea to take hold of the edge of the pool or of the pier or anything else and to raise your feet off bottom, so that you'll be able to practice the proper kick (I'll tell you about that later) without danger of sinking. That's the way this chap I'm telling you about went at it.

Next I instructed him to learn to breathe properly for swimming. That means breathing in through the mouth in a big gulp (ordinarily in swimming your nose is so full of water that you



can't breathe through it) and then exhaling through either mouth or nose with the face under water. This form of breathing is vital in the crawl and certain other strokes, and every swimmer must learn it. It isn't so hard as it sounds—you'll be surprised at the ease with which practice will make it effective. Remember to make it seem natural, and not to hurry it too much.

Remember, too, that you don't need a whole lake or swimming pool to practice it. A wash basin will do just as well! All you have to do is breathe in with your face above its surface, then exhale after plunging your head into it. This kind of work gets you thoroughly accustomed to the water.

Back to my sophomore again. He learned to breathe properly, and, much to his astonishment, he found that he was getting over his feeling that he'd be sure to sink the minute he got his feet off bottom. One day I looked over at his corner—he practiced faithfully, day after day—and he was swimming! It was a "dog paddle" that he was doing—the stroke that is simplest and most natural for anybody. It is nothing but alternate beats of arms and legs. It's just the right thing for a beginner, because he then establishes his proper "leg rhythm" and gets accustomed to swimming in the easiest

of the leg, and to make this drive continuous; that is why the beat must be fairly rapid and why the legs must alternate, one always on the up stroke, one on the down.

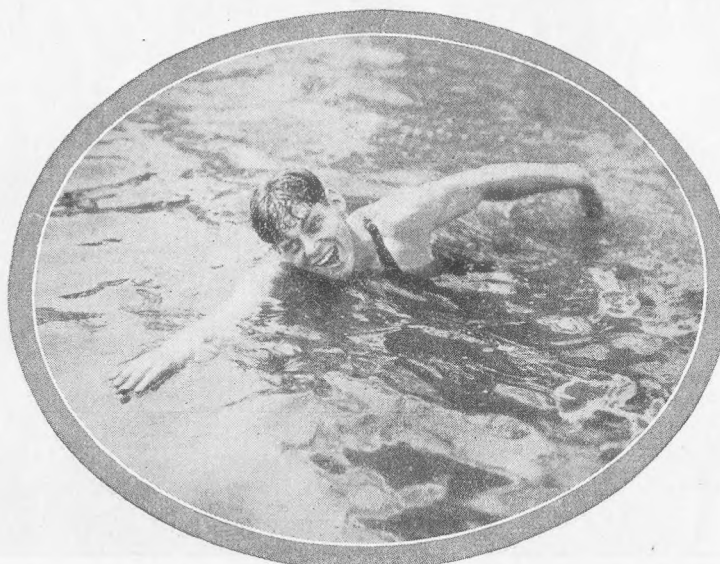
Trunk muscles are used in the leg stroke, particularly those in the abdomen. Proper use of them will bring your body naturally into a curved position, back in a concave arch. That is the proper swimming position. . . . Every swimmer has a natural tendency to accent a particular beat of his leg stroke; it's a tendency that should be overcome as much as possible, however. In the straight crawl stroke there is no accent. In the "trudgeon crawl" there may be a single beat as the arm which brings the face out of water to inhale recovers, or a double beat, one with the recovery of each arm.

Now the arms. Every chap knows that the crawl is characterized by the long, easy sweep of one arm after the other above the water, ahead of the body, down through the water to the side of the body, out and up again. It sounds and looks simple; but there are a dozen possible faults.

Let's start with the arm in its position at the completion of a stroke, trailing in the water beside the body, palm in. The first movement after a stroke is finished is a quick bend of the elbow which brings the arm out of water, elbow up and out to the side just a little, shoulder barely out of water, finger tips trailing along the surface. Extend the arm slowly until it reaches a position straight ahead of the shoulder—it should be timed to do so just as the other arm completes its stroke. Be mighty sure that the hand doesn't cross the "median line" of your body—that is, that it doesn't extend over in front of your head. It should go almost exactly ahead of the shoulder, neither out nor in.

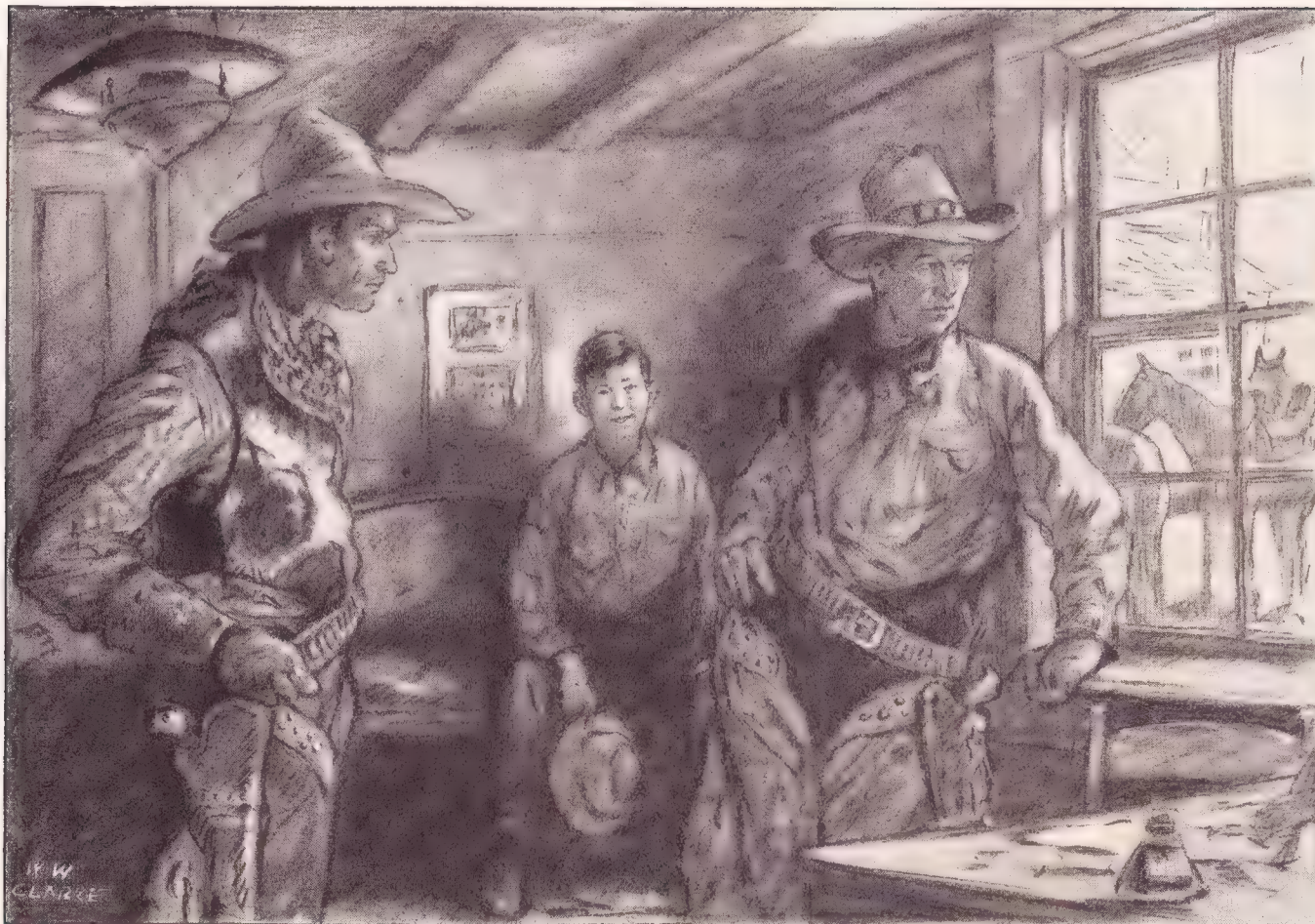
Dig your hand into the water first for the "catch" of the stroke, and make the catch hard. Follow it up with the whole arm, sweeping in a long, powerful stroke down through the water and to the position from which it started, at the side of your body.

That's the arm stroke. Tied closely with it is proper breathing—you've already become accustomed to breathing out under water. You'll fall into a habit of always inhaling on one side or the other—that is, always with the right arm out of water, or always with the left. If you inhale as the right arm recovers, you'll do so by turning your head to the right and gulping in through your mouth; then you'll exhale as the left arm recovers, blowing



Knowledge of different strokes means lots of summer fun.

(Continued on page 46)



Tin Whistle sat in a small back room in the hotel and talked with two deputy sheriffs.

Tin Whistle Turns Cowboy

By James B. Hendryx

Illustrated by W. W. Clarke

"CAN I get a job?"

Rawhide Briggs, range foreman for the Diamond 3 ranch, stared open-mouthed at the lean youngster who had stepped abruptly out of the darkness and stood just within the murky circle of light thrown by the smoky lantern that hung from a corner of the wagon box. Seated on the tongue, Rawhide had been laboriously patching his pants. He reached for the lantern and without getting up, thrust the light into the boy's unflinching face as if to verify the fact that there was really someone there. Then he set the lantern down and spat.

Beyond the wagon a saddle creaked as a night horse stamped and switched his tail at the mosquitoes.

"Well, where in tunket did you come from? An' what's yer name? An' who be you? An' how in the name of the seven wall-eyed wonders did you git here?" By which series of questions, it may be surmised that Rawhide Briggs was astonished. And well he might be. A full-grown man afoot in the middle of Lone Horse Prairie in the daytime would be an object of surprise. But, a half grown boy—at night!

Before the boy had a chance to answer, there was a thud of hoofs and a horse stopped abruptly as a cowboy, spurs a-jangle, swung to the ground and stood staring at the two figures.

"Gosh sakes!" cried Rawhide. "Second guard a'ready! I got to ketch me some sleep. Them pants kin wait. They ain't only one more hole—an' it don't show when I'm ridin'. What you gawpin' at? Go roust out second guard!"

The cowboy continued to stare at the boy. "Stray in the herd, eh? But how in the dickens—?"

"You an' me both," interrupted the boss. "But, first off, you wake up Dozey an' Slim so they kin get out to the herd an' let Red come in. First thing you know the whole bunch'll be pullin' out on us. One man couldn't do nothin' if they'd take a notion to high tail."

THE cowboy disappeared within a tent and a moment later he could be heard rousing the two cowboys who were to stand second guard. Presently all three came stumbling from the tent. Two of them, rubbing their eyes sleepily, loosened the night horses which had been tied to a wheel of the wagon, mounted, and disappeared into the blackness. The third returned to his horse, and one eye on the boy, proceeded to strip saddle, blanket, and bridle from the animal, which, finding himself free, trotted away into the night to join the remuda feeding somewhere out in the dark under the watchful eye of the "night hawk." Another cowboy rode in and all three turned their attention to the boy.

"My name's Tim Whittle, and I'd like to get a job."

"Tin Whistle!" exclaimed the boss, and the cowboys laughed.

The boy's face grew a little grim. "Yes, that's what everyone calls me. I suppose if a fellow's name is Tim Whittle, he's bound to be called Tin Whistle. Folks think it's awful funny, and I've got used to it. Can I have a job? I'll work hard. I can do a lot. I'm goin' on fifteen if I am sort of small."

"How come you to be way out here in the middle of Lone Hoss Prairie afoot in the middle of the night?"

"My horse wouldn't go any further and I could see your tent; so I walked. Then, when it got dark, I saw your light."

"Gosh sakes! You must of be'n walkin' quite a while, son! You et?"

The boy shook his head. "Not since yesterday. They didn't give me any grub. They said I'd come to a ranch in just a little while. But I didn't come to any ranch. I'm pretty thirsty, too. That water back where the horse stopped was warm and it tasted so bad I could hardly drink it."

The boss turned to the cowboy who had ridden up first: "Here you, Plunk. You slip into the cook tent an' rustle some dough-gods, an' cold meat. An' you, Red, you fetch the kid a drink of water from the bar'l! Good gosh! He must of walked clean from the Loco Hole! Did the water stink? An' was they lots of loco weed around? An' was they an old locoed white hoss hung around there?"

"Yes, the water stunk, and it tasted worse almost than it smelt. I don't know what loco weed is. There wasn't any old white horse, except the one I rode there on."

"Rode there on!" cried the boss, eyeing the boy in astonishment. "Say, young feller, what you tryin' to hand us? That old hoss ain't be'n nowheres fer to ride in on. He's hung around the Loco Hole fer the last ten year. Why, it's him this here flat is named after—Lone Hoss Prairie, they call it—an' he's the hoss!"

The cowboys had returned and Tim greedily gulped the cup of water. "Better not drink no more till you've et," advised the boss. "You might founder. Set down an' crawl outside them vittles, an' then you got some pretty straight explainin' to do. It's a good fifteen mile to Loco Hole from here, an' I'm willin' to believe you might of walked it on an empty stummick—but ridin' there on the old lone hoss—that's somethin' else again, as the feller says."

The boy devoured the huge plate of meat, cold potatoes, and dough-gods, and drank two more cups of water.

And when he had finished, the boss said: "Now, look a-here, it's time I was to bed an' to sleep—an' long past time. It's better'n forty odd years since I've lost no sleep over fairy stories; so you better tell us straight how you come to be to the Loco Hole."

"I did tell you straight," Tim sent back, drawing himself up to meet the foreman's eyes squarely. "I was trying to find Bill Watson's father's ranch, and got lost, and it was getting dark, and I was tired and hungry, and when I came to a creek I got off my horse and took off the saddle and the horse began to eat and I guess I went to sleep, and the next thing I knew there was a noise like thunder and the ground was shaking and the horses came running past and I just had time to get behind a rock or they'd have run over me, and then the men came and they saw me and they waited because the horses had all stopped anyway and were drinking at the creek—"

RAWHIDE BRIGGS, who was eyeing the boy intently as he talked, interrupted: "Say, look a-here, you! What's all this guff about hosses an' cricks? They ain't no cricks on this flat—an' they ain't no hosses, neither, except that old buzzard-head that hangs out at the Loco Hole. You're either lyin' er else you're as loco as the old hoss is—"

"Hold on, Rawhide," advised the man called Plunk. "Mebbe they's more to this yere than we savvy. This yere kid don't talk like he's lyin'—an' he don't look like he's loco, neither."

Rawhide's brow puckered into a frown and he tore the corner from a plug of tobacco with his teeth: "No, he don't talk like he's lyin', an' he don't look cuckoo. But, you know jest as well as I do that they ain't no cricks on the flat—"

"It wasn't on the flat," interrupted the boy. "It was in the hills I must have got lost, and—"

"Hold on, son," advised the boss, not unkindly. "I'm losin' sleep that I need, but dog-gone it, I'm goin' to git to the bottom of this here if it takes all night! S'pose you jest set there an' begin at the beginnin' an' works for'ads, 'stead of tryin' to work both ways from the middle. How come you to be lost up in the hills huntin' the Diamond 3 ranch—"

"I was hunting Mr. Watson's ranch—"

"Same thing. Diamond 3 is Watson's brand. This here is his roundup camp you're in right now. So go ahead an' expergate how you come to be here."

"I came from Havre—I mean from Lansing, Michigan. That is, my dad was a telegraph operator. My

mother died back in Lansing a long time ago, and Dad got the T. B. and had to come West; so he got a job in Havre, and we lived there for a couple of years, but Dad kept getting worse, and last week he died. I go to school in the winter, and so does Bill Watson—only Bill doesn't live in town, he just boards. He lives out in the mountains on a big ranch, and he's always wanted me to come out and visit him. So when Dad was worrying about not leaving me any money to go on, and wishing I could at least get an outdoor job, and not stick indoors as he'd done, I told him I'd see if I couldn't get a job from Bill's dad—cowboys don't get the T. B. The idea seemed to ease Dad's mind.

"Well, last week, when everything was all over—" the boy hesitated, then drove his voice on resolutely. "When everything was done, I hired a horse from the livery stable, and started for Bill Watson's, as I'd promised. They told me the way but there were so many trails that I must have got the wrong one. I'm green to this country, of course," he flung at them defiantly, and plunged on after their nods of quiet understanding. "I rode all day and at night I was pretty tired—"

"Where was you?" asked the boss. "Where was this here creek where you camped at?"

"I don't know. It was in some hills—"
"East side of this here Lone Hoss Prairie, or west side?"

The boy hesitated, and the foreman helped him out. "Listen, you rode out across the bench when you left town. You rode forty mile before you struck the hills. Now, when you come into the foothills, did you keep right, or left? Did you foller a creek down through a rock-wall canyon, or did you keep west, an' climb a long ridge—"

"Yes! The road led up a long ridge into the hills. The creek I stopped at was past the ridge in a kind of a valley."

"Willer Crick," said Plunk, unhesitatingly. "I guess you was lost, son. You should orter took the other trail—down through the canyon. That would of took you 'round 'tother side of Lone Hoss flats. When you camped you was a good thirty mile from the home ranch. If you'd took the other trail you'd of be'n there about dark. Wouldn't he, Rawhide?"

"Yup. But, about these here hosses, now? They ain't no one should ort to be foggin' no hosses around over on Willer Crick—"

"Onless," cut in Red, with a meaning glance toward the others, "onless someone's runnin' off a bunch—"

"Jumpin' Jehosaphat!" ejaculated Rawhide. "I wonder! They might figger we'd ort to be clean around back of Sawtooth with the roundup! They'd figger that 'fore we could find out about it an' git a-goin', they'd be clean across the Canady line!"

"Hey, you Tin Whistle!" yelled Red. "Was those animals fuzz-tails, er branded stuff?"

Tim shook his head: "I don't know—"
"Town kids don't savvy much about brands, an' such," Rawhide said kindly. "Go on, Tim. Then what?"

"Why, then the horses came—"
"How many?"

"Oh, a big herd of them. More than a hundred, I guess, and my horse snorted and ran with them, and they all ran up and down the creek and began to drink, and my horse was all mixed up with them. And then the men came. There were three of them, and they seemed surprised to find me there, and I told them about my horse, and they talked a few minutes, and then one of them—he seemed to be the boss—he come over where I was and he asked me all about myself and how I got there, and then they had supper and gave me some. The boss seemed to feel pretty friendly, especially after I'd picked some prickly pear thorns out of his back for him. Guess they were hurting pretty bad, and he hated to ask one of his men to pick them out—rather ask a kid, and probably thought I was more of a kid than I am.

"Well, anyway, he was decent enough to me, and after supper he said he was sorry about my horse getting mixed up with the others. 'We can't catch him in the dark,' he said, 'but I'll tell you what we can do. I've got a white horse here you can have. He's not exactly valuable, but he's a pretty good goer, and since he's white, we can see to catch him in the dark.'

"I told him I had to get the other horse that I'd hired from the livery stable, and he said, 'Oh, that's all right. I'll see that he's returned; I know the livery man well.' So I asked him the way to Mr. Watson's ranch, and he said: 'It's only a little ways from here. And this white horse I'm giving you used to belong to Watson before I bought him. You just give him his head and he'll take you straight to the ranch. It's beyond the flats, down in a coulee; you can't see the buildings till you get to them.'

"SO then one of the others yelled that he had the white horse all saddled and bridled, just up the creek. We walked up there and they had my saddle and bridle on him. The man had carried the saddle with him, but I asked him how he'd got the bridle if he

couldn't catch my horse. Looked funny to me. But they laughed, and the man said that he found the bridle beside the creek, and that while my horse was drinking one of the others must have stepped on the reins and jerked it off. That seemed sort of funny, too, but I was up against it. I figured that if I didn't take that white horse, I wouldn't get any; so I thought I'd better take him.

"They all said good-by, and I got on and started the horse, and he went walking off, just as the man said he would. I don't know much about managing horses; so I didn't try to manage him much. I couldn't anyway. He just stuck his head out and walked straight ahead through brush and everything. I nearly got scraped off lots of times. I couldn't make him run or even trot. I tried to make him hurry, but he'd only walk. We got down onto the flat just as the man said, and he walked all night, and in the morning we came to the water hole and the horse wouldn't go any further. He wasn't thirsty, and he just began to eat. I let him eat a long time and then I tried to get him started again, but he wouldn't go. I got a stick and pounded him, and I tried to lead him, but it was no use. He just stood there and closed his eyes and wouldn't budge a step. So,

hoss was with 'em. They rounded up that bunch of Diamond 3 mares that runs south of the ranch along Sage Crick, an' they fogged 'em across Lone Hoss Prairie, an' must of hit straight fer the Loco Hole an' the old hoss traveled along with 'em. I've know'd locoed hosses to travel with a bunch that-a-way an' keep up, too—an' he was a good hoss in his day—one of them Flyin' A's—till he went loco."

"How many was there with the hosses, young Tin Whistle—three, did you say?" asked Red.

"Yes, that's all I saw." The boy spoke curtly. It was evident that he resented Red's repeatedly calling him "Tin Whistle."

"An' would you know 'em if you seen 'em agin'?"

"I'd know the big one—the one that gave me the horse—and I think I'd know the others."

"What fer lookin' was he?"
"Why, he was tall, and wore leather chaps, and a checkered shirt, and he had a big yellow mustache and a—"

"Rainey Hale, hisself, by gosh!" cried Plunk.
"By jinx, maybe we'll ketch him at it at last!" cried Red.

But Rawhide shook his head: "Nope. Rainey, he's too sharp. He won't be with the hosses when we come up to 'em. He'll be safe an' sound on his ranch over on Clear Crick—like he allus is. We might ketch the others. But they won't squeal on Rainey. They're scairt to. We'll git the mares back—but we won't ketch Rainey."

"If them others know'd we had Rainey with the goods, I bet they'd squeal. They don't squeal, 'cause they know Rainey's too slick to git ketched, an' they know he'd git 'em when he got off. I bet they'd be glad to let them fellers off fer State's evidence."

"Sure, they would," agreed Rawhide. "But you ain't got no evidence agin' Rainey—an' he'd swear him a alibi, an' claim them others was jest tryin' to git him in bad. He's played that game before."

"Yes, but this time we got this yere Tin Whistle's word that he seen Rainey an' talked to him, an' Rainey was with the hosses."

"Yup," agreed Rawhide. "But he'd say the kid was lyin', an' it would be his word agin' the kid's. His lawyer would show how they was plenty of tall men with yaller mustache, an' a checkid shirt an' leather chaps—"

"But," interrupted the boy, "he can't say I'm lying! You see—" He paused abruptly with a cool glance at the cowboy who persisted in using his despised nickname. Not much would he enlighten him! He took a step forward and stretched up to whisper a few words in the boss's ear.

"By the humped backed camels of Gheeze!" cried Rawhide. "Mebbe we got Rainey at last! You sure yer right, son?" he asked. "You sure of what you told me—plumb, dead sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure."
"An' you ain't afraid to up an' tell it on the witness stand? Remember this here Rainey Hale's a bad hombre. Folks is afraid of him. All of 'em would like to see him behind the bars, or hung—but that ain't puttin' him there. 'Cause why—'cause they're afraid he'll git off—an' where'd they be? Witnesses, an' jury too—they don't dast to go agin' him—they're plumb buffaloed. But if we had a dead sure, open an' shut case, they'd be glad to put him away. Them was young Bill Watson's dad's mares they was runnin' off, an' Rainey tried to git red of you—an' done it like he does all his crooked work, in a way where they couldn't no one say it was murder—but it was—an' a dang ornery murder, too."

"I'm not afraid of him," said the boy, quietly. "I'll tell the truth. I'll be on hand when you need me. But until then I've got to get a job."

Rawhide stood up and clapped a hand on the boy's shoulder: "You've got a job, son! Yer hired! Yer workin' fer the Diamond 3! Go to bed now—they'll be plenty of beds in the bed tent that'll be empty! You an' the cook an' the wranglers will be the onliest ones around this outfit fer a day or so. Hey, Red! Plunk! Wake 'em up!"

AND "wake 'em up" the two did—with a vengeance. Hardly had the order left the lips of the wagon boss than the night was made hideous by a series of yells, and yowls, and screeches, and howls that would have done credit to half the coyotes in Choteau County "singing" in unison. And it produced results—quick results. Sleepy cowboys poured from the bed tent pulling on their chaps, rubbing their eyes, yelling for horses—in the befuddled brains of each the one thought: "A stampede! The herd's on the run!" The cook rolled from his blankets under the grub wagon and clawed about in the dark for his boots, and out in the blackness could be heard the thunder of many hoofs—the "night hawk," hearing the commotion, was running in the remuda! And a few minutes later the rope corral was filled with crowding, milling saddle horses.

Rawhide Briggs wasted no time. "It ain't a stampede—it's hoss thieves!" he cried when he could make him-

One Chance for Life!

AND that a mighty slim one!

They were young and inexperienced, these two balloonists—the two chosen to pilot one of United States' three entries in the international race at Berlin. What's more, they were lost—had no idea where they were. And when they'd yell down to ask the name of a town they floated over, men would shriek back at them "Balloon!" No help there.

Then came their second night in the air—came mist and hazy moonlight. And then—

They were over the open sea! Slim chance for life, they agreed. They saw a boat. They screamed at it. They sailed past it—and lost it!

It's all true, this exciting yarn of adventure in a free balloon, and it's told by Nason Henry Arnold, one of the two young aeronauts in the *St. Louis II*. You'll grin and thrill with him in

Ballooning With Pilot 13

NEXT MONTH

along in the afternoon, I saw your tents—like a little patch of snow when the sun hit it, and I took off the saddle and bridle and walked over here. It didn't look so far, but it took me an awful long time to get here."

"Well, of all the ding-blasted, ornery, low-lived tricks I ever heered tell of that takes the cake!" cried Rawhide. "By gosh, kid, you're lucky! That dog-gone skunk, he sized you up as a town kid, not wise to things out here, and he put you on the old locoed hoss, knowin' he'd take you straight to the Loco Hole out here in the middle of the flat—an' you'd never git no further! The reason that hoss wouldn't lead, he's crazy with loco weed—he'd walk straight to the Loco Hole, and you couldn't of turned him if you'd wanted to. An' if we hadn't be'n about a week behind with the roundup, you'd of starved right there at the hole or lost yourself for keeps, trying to find your way out. No one ever goes near the hole—only onct in a long while. The water ain't fit to drink."

Plunk grinned at the boss: "Roundup's goin' to be delayed again, ain't it, Rawhide?"

"You bet it is! I was jest cogitatin' where we'd run onto them hoss thieves. They run them hosses all night las' night from Willer Crick. Then they'd lay up all day to-day—that'd be along in Woodpile Coulee. They'll fog 'em all night to-night, an' to-morrow they'll lay up in Cherry Patch Basin. An' to-morrow about sundown, we'll run onto 'em—jest about the time they're ready to pull out fer the line. I see how come the old loco



"You can help with the remuda. Tell Watson I hired you," said Rawhide Briggs.

self heard above the general din. "Saddle up, an' foller Red an' Plunk. You kin ketch the thieves at Cherry Patch Basin to-night. You'll all need yer guns—Plunk's runnin' the show. He'll tole off some fer to hold the herd. The rest of you ride like sin! Cut through by the old mine—change hosses at the IX an' agin at the Two Bar. Run the mares back to the home ranch—the thieves, too—if you ketch 'em. I'm goin' to hit fer town—gotta see the shuriff, an' the districk attorney—looks like, by the lovely horn toad, we've got the goods on Rainey Hale at last! Git, now—the whole kit an' caboodle of yer! All but them that's got to stay with the dogies, an' the night hawk, an' the wrangler, an' the cook, an' this here kid—who needs a rest before he does any more ridin'!"

INSTEAD of a peacefully sleeping cow camp, the Diamond 3 roundup had become a chaos of action with horses milling, saddles creaking, cowboys yelling and bawling at each other for getting in the way—other cowboys roaring angrily: "You got my hoss!" "Tain't your'n—see that white stockin'!" "Ow! Quit whirlin' yer loop—you whammed me in the face!" "Git yer face out'er the road!" "Lay it down an' stand on it!" "Drop that kak!" "Git off'n my bridle!" Horses snorted and pitched against each other as they were led out and saddled, sparks shot out of the cook tent stovepipe, growls of protest issued from the lips of those ordered to stay with the herd—a confusing jumble of sounds—there in the night—confusing, yet strangely exhilarating to young Tim Whittle, who stood with wildly pounding heart—listening, staring, rejoicing—for he was part of it all—he was hired!

Plunk bawled an order. There was a bustle of men mounting restive horses, and a thudding of hoofs, that faded into the dark. Rawhide Briggs, bridle reins in hand, stood beside the boy. "The wagons is goin' to pull into the home ranch. You kin help with the remuda—the cook'll drive the grub wagon, an' the night hawk'll drive the bed wagon. Tell Watson I hired you. I'll be back mebber to-morrow night, er the next. An' listen, keep yer mouth shet—an' don't weaken! Pants, er no pants, I gotta go to town. So long!"

The courthouse was packed with townsmen and ranchers from miles around. The streets were lined with wagons, the livery stables were all full, and saddle horses dozed at the hitching rails. In the court room a jury was being selected to try Rainey Hale on a charge of horse stealing—and a very serious charge indeed, in the sovereign State of Montana. Within the room the closely packed crowd was silent—orderly. The only sounds were the words of the court officers, the questions of the attorneys, and the answers of the prospective jurymen—those, and the inevitable shuffling of feet on

the wooden floor, and the moving of bodies as the spectators craned their necks to see the prisoner at the bar.

Outside the room, the corridor was packed with standing men, and the crowd overflowed into the yard and clung like flies to the window ledges. These men were not so silent:

"They won't never prove nothin' on him." "He's too slick—him an' that lawyer." "He's got him off before—an' he'll do it agin." "He's guilty—" "Sure he's guilty—he was allus guilty—but he ain't never done time!" "Only way to git Rainey Hale is to call on Mr. Colt." "Yeh—but who's a-goin' to do it—not me!" "D'ye ever see him shoot?" "Quicker'n chain lightnin'—an' straight too." "Don't look to me like they had no good of a case." "He wasn't with the horses—they 'rested him to home." "He'll claim he don't know nothin' about it." "They only fetched in one of the others." "They shot one." "But this 'un agreed to squeal to save his own hide." "Yaw—lot o' good that'll do." "It's Rainey's word agin' his'n." "He'll git off." "I'd hate to be in that feller's boots, if he does." "Glad I ain't on the jury—I've got kids."

And so it went, every man in the crowd believing the prisoner guilty—convinced of it—yet, such was their fear of him, that not a man expected him to be convicted.

The jury was completed—two sheep men, four cattle men, three cowboys, and three townsmen—twelve good men and true—each sworn to do his duty as he saw it—and each seeing it in this way: "If I vote for conviction, and the jury disagrees—Rainey Hale will find out how I voted—and then where'll I be?"

Rainey Hale was on trial—but, it was going to take evidence almost conclusive to convict him. If even the slightest chance remained in the mind of a juror that some other juror would vote for acquittal—then every juror would vote for acquittal—on the first ballot. This the prisoner at the bar knew, and smiled calmly. This the district attorney knew, and beamed confidently. This the judge upon the bench knew, and frowned. This the witness who had been captured with the horses knew, and shuddered. And this, also, young Tim Whittle knew, and neither smiled nor frowned, nor did he shudder. Merely straightened himself. When the time came he would tell the truth. He was built that way.

But Tim Whittle was not in the court room. No one in all the crowd knew anything about Tim Whittle—no one, that is, except a very few, very close mouthed people. The prisoner at the bar certainly did not know. If anyone had asked him about the boy on Willow Creek, he might have shrugged his shoulders—as he thought of an old locoed white horse—and, maybe, of wolf-gnawed bones beside a stinking water hole.

Tim Whittle sat in a small back room in the hotel and read a magazine, and talked with two very capable looking deputy sheriffs, who stood guard over him with guns in their holsters. Not that they were afraid he would try to get away; they just wanted to make sure that some of Rainey Hale's friends did not get an

inkling of the boy's existence—and act accordingly.

The trial proceeded. The State introduced its witnesses—the accomplice who had been caught with the horse herd in Cherry Patch Basin, and the Diamond 3 cowboys who had captured him there. Rainey Hale listened with a leering grin while the accomplice gave his evidence, and the witness, meeting that grin and rightly interpreting its promise of dire vengeance, stumbled, and hesitated, and on cross examination, contradicted himself, and "forgot" and so comforted himself as to discredit his own testimony in the minds of the jury. The prisoner's attorney declined to cross examine the Diamond 3 cowboys beyond establishing the fact that the prisoner was not with the horse herd at the time of the capture. It looked to everyone in the court room as though Rainey Hale had again slipped from the clutches of the law.

THEN the district attorney called another witness—Timothy Whittle.

As he took his place in the witness chair, all eyes stared at him curiously. Who was this lean, wiry youngster? And what did he know of Rainey Hale and his theft of the Diamond 3 horses? All eyes stared curiously—excepting the eyes of the prisoner at the bar. Even before the boy had seated himself, a marked change came over the prisoner. The leering grin faded from his lips, and a look of terror crept into the eyes that stared at the youngster. Then the two pairs of eyes met—but the eyes of the boy did not drop, as the eyes of the accomplice had done. Cool, and unafraid, they stared straight into the terror-wide eyes of the man.

The judge, the whole court room, watched breathlessly this silent battle of eyes, and with sudden interest the men in the jury box leaned forward in their seats.

The prisoner continued to stare as the preliminary questions were asked, then, as the boy began his story of the happening on Willow Creek, the prisoner cried out hysterically: "He's a liar! I never seen him before!"

"Silence!" roared the judge, glaring at the prisoner. The counsel for the defense pulled at his client's sleeve, and the two whispered together in hurried consultation.

As Tim Whittle began his story, every ear in the court room strained to catch each word, and many were the grins at the discomfiture of the counsel for the prisoner, who was nearly beside himself with trying to listen to the testimony, and to the hoarse whispering of his client at the same time.

At the point in the story when the boy told how the two men went to catch the white horse, the prosecuting attorney interrupted with a question:

"And the man who stayed with you while the others caught this horse—do you see him in this room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Point him out to the court and the jury."

"I object!" shouted the prisoner's counsel.

"Overruled," said the judge.

Then, without an instant's hesitation, the boy pointed to Rainey Hale, the prisoner at the bar.

"You are sure?" asked the district attorney.

"Yes, sir."

"It couldn't have been anyone else—someone who looked very much like him?"

"No, sir. If that man there would take off his shirt, you'd see that his back's tattooed with a lady's head, and four snakes all coiled together, and two pistols. I picked prickly pear thorns out of his back for him, and I know!"

With a wolfish snarl, Rainey Hale sprang for the boy.

Almost at the same instant—(Continued on page 45)



The Sheriton Eight

By George F. Pierrot

Illustrated by Courtney Allen



"We've got to do some sleuthing," he whispered.

"If you and Red Barrett don't make the crew," I remarked to Rusty Nayle as we hurried across the campus toward Lake Sheriton, "I am going to get out my little red tomahawk and lay you flat."

"Careful you don't cut yourself, youngster," Rusty mocked, as he turned his broad shoulders sideways to the autumn wind. "Tomahawks were never made for infants, and—what's that?"

"It's either a grade A, extra thickness, avalanche," I answered, "or else Red in his new flivver."

Red it was, and he left the road and swung across the grass and brought up, with a thunderous clanking and groaning, almost on our toes. His flivver was an ancient touring car, at least eight years old, with bulb horn and right-hand drive and not a square inch of paint left on its battered sides.

"What do you call it?" Rusty jeered.

"Carrie A. Nation," Red shot back, a broad grin cutting his freckled face almost in half. "Get in. She'll carry three of us easy."

"As long as she's going downhill," Rusty finished. We clattered the rest of the way to the big crew house, with Lake Sheriton shimmering before it. For this was the day of the first fall crew turnout, and Rusty and Red, my two closest friends, after a summer of muscle-hardening work in the open, were candidates for the varsity. Football was my game, and I wasn't out for crew at all, but of the three of us I do believe that I, the spectator, was the most wrought up.

In a moment, the appraising eye of red-haired Russ Callison, crew coach, upon them, Rusty and Red were signing their names in the log book.

I could see an approving half smile on Callison's face as he took in Rusty's tall, muscular build—his wide shoulders, and his trim, powerful legs. Red Barrett's fiery hair, and his mob of freckles and his grin, seemed to please Callison, too. Red, though not so big, looked even stronger. He was shorter, heavy-chested, much more thickset.

Presently Callison was shouting for attention. "We have ninety-eight men turning out," he said. "That's better than a dozen crews—certainly more than we have equipment for. Which means that we can't waste a fifth of a second on slackers. Fellows who don't want to work might just as well clear out now. Besides, Berkeley has the strongest crew in seven years, and we

need to beat Berkeley if the fellows on the varsity want to win those Berkeley jerseys." Everyone grinned, because that crew tradition that the losing eight tosses its shirts to the winners means a lot. A Sheriton oarsman would rather have a Berkeley jersey than a million dollars.

"In some ways crew is the hardest of the sports. You turn out all fall, and all spring, too. Rowing is tough work—there aren't any easy spots on a four-mile course. Not much individual glory, either—people think of you as No. 6 or No. 2 or Bow—never as Jones or Smith or Peterson. If you win, you're simply one of a great crew, and nine out of ten wouldn't recognize your name.

"But fellows, it's a man's sport. No flat-chested, cigarette-smoking lounge hounds can survive it. A seat in a varsity boat, whether it's the first or the fourth, is a certificate of manhood. Are you going to earn yours?"

I wasn't a candidate, but I bellowed, "Yea, coach!" "To-morrow we'll issue as many old jerseys as we have

"Pile in," Callison directed. Presently every man was at an oar.

"Rowing is more than strength," Callison said. "The idea is to apply maximum power to the oars, with a minimum of waste energy or friction.

"Let's follow a stroke through, from beginning to end. We'll say you've just finished one, and you're leaning way back, with your oars pulled up against your chest."

Everybody assumed the position, more or less awkwardly. "First, the 'shoot.' Push your oars away from you smartly, so that they won't bump your knees when you straighten up. Feather—flatten your blade until it's parallel with the water—at the same time. Next, the 'swing'—come forward with your body. Third, with your legs pull yourself back to the starting position. You can't do that on these seats, but you can on the sliding ones in the shells. Next the 'catch'—dip your blade, slightly beveled, into the water. Then the 'drive,' in

which your legs do most of the work, and the 'draw,' in which you bring your oar handles clear to your chest. Then you drop your hands, and there you are at the end of the stroke and ready to begin again.

"It doesn't sound complicated, and it isn't, but to do it properly you need months of steady practice."

An hour later, in the shower room, I heard a commotion.

"That jersey is mine," I heard Rusty Nayle saying. "Like fun it is. Don't try to kid anybody, big boy."

There was enough "mad" in the second voice to make me elbow my way to the center of things. I saw Rusty, a smouldering look in his blue eyes, holding fast to a purple jersey and my dark-haired friend of the day before trying to get it away from him.

"What's wrong?" It was the level, friendly voice of Callison, and Bradley let go his hold.

"This is my jersey," he muttered.

Callison disappeared into the locker room, and returned with a long list.

"Is it No. 16?" he asked. "It is, sir," Rusty answered.

"Then it belongs to Nayle. Which one of you is Nayle?"

"I thought it was mine," snapped the other. "I'll get another." He gave Rusty a black look, and lunged into the locker room.

A FEW nights later, Red, Rusty and I had dinner together at the Lion's Den.

"How's the rowing coming?" I asked Red. "Hope you're not as sore as football practice is leaving me."

"I'm the fastest man on the water," Red grinned, "and what's more everybody admits it."

I looked surprised. "You see," Red went on, and his voice didn't quite succeed in being as light-hearted as he intended it, "after a couple of turnouts Callison called me aside.

"You're a junior, aren't you?" he asked. "I said, 'Guilty.'"

"Well, then, I advise you to give up trying for crew. You haven't the ideal crew build, anyhow. You are too short and heavy-set—you need more reach. I'm afraid you haven't a chance in the world to make your letter." There Red stopped short.

"And how is it you're the fastest man on the water?" I demanded.

Red's eyes sparkled. He bowed. "The vulgar manual labor I delegate to yokels like Rusty here. Me and the coach, we ride in state. I know something about marine engines, and so I run his launch."

(Continued on page 43)



Nayle shipped his oars, and tried to climb out, and landed kersplash in the middle of the lake.

on hand. You may wear old trousers for a day or so. I want men whose names begin with A to N to be out at 4:30 to-morrow, and the rest at 5:30."

On the way out, I was jostled pretty roughly from behind by a tall, dark-haired chap with a sullen face. When he didn't excuse himself my dander rose.

"Ever try steering yourself?" I asked, rather sharply. He whirled, flaming. There was so much bad temper and rage in his contorted face that I stepped back a pace. And then he bustled on without replying.

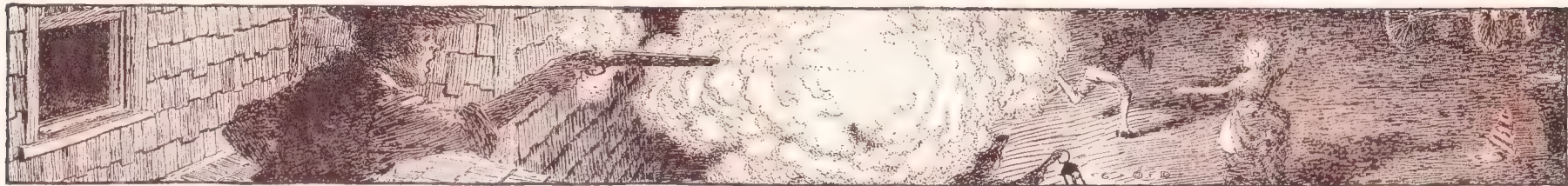
"Cheerful little playmate, that fellow Bradley," Rusty observed, outside. "Has such a loving look, like a hungry tiger."

And then we forgot him, and chattered about crew, and the chances of making it.

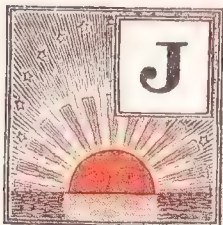
"Against fellows who have been rowing since their freshman year," Rusty said, soberly, "it's pretty tough for juniors to compete."

FOOTBALL practice was brief, the next day, so I showed up at the crew house promptly. "Rip" Van Morgan, the slim crew manager, issued jerseys. Then Callison strode through the crowd, touching men here and there. One of them was Rusty, and another was the sour Mr. Bradley. The lucky ones followed the coach out of the crew house and onto the landing. There a big barge was waiting.

He fired, too excitedly — for he missed me.



“SEVENTY-SIX!” by REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLYDE O DE LAND.



“JEFF ROWNTREE,” roared Jabez Johnson as he glowered down at my twin brother Stuart, “don’t you pretend to be asleep! Get up an’ tell me what you was a-doin’ out there with the pigeons at this time o’ night!”

And right there our pesky little sister Susanna caught sight of me on the porch roof peering in at the window, and promptly precipitated disaster.

“Why, that’s not Jeff in the bed, Mr. Jabez,” she laughed. “That’s Stuart, though I don’t know how he ever got here from Philadelphia. But I know him by the mole under his eye. And there’s Jeff—right there—looking in at the window!”

Was there ever a worse pest than Susanna? What chance had she left me to get away on this night of July 3, 1776? Yet get away I must if I were to reach Philadelphia in time to give Dr. Benjamin Franklin the news that would surely induce reluctant members of the Continental Congress to sign the Declaration of Independence.

If I could but tell Dr. Franklin what Lieutenant Pinckney and I had learned of the strength of the colonial armies—of the traitorous scheming of Innkeeper Jabez—of the forged papers Jabez was going to carry through to Dr. Franklin that very night, forged papers from Tory Talbot, designed to show the colonies too weak to justify Congress in signing the Declaration!

I must get away. Stuart, who had come by stealth to Jabez Johnson’s New Jersey inn—not to visit our mother and Susanna and me, but to find out why the pigeon messenger express he and I were running for Dr. Franklin did not work better—Stuart was fairly caught. Gallant young Lieutenant Pinckney lay hidden in the pigeon loft, seriously wounded. Only I could take word to Philadelphia. I must get away.

And Susanna of the sharp eyes and the prattling tongue had unwittingly betrayed me to the innkeeper!

XVI—The Battle of the Stable Yard

JOHNSON roared. My mother screamed. Stuart I saw rise in bed upon one elbow, his aspect a very mask of fright. Little Susanna, understanding too late that she had wrought some dreadful harm, shrank back with a gasp, which ended in a sob. They all four looked at the window, where my head and shoulders must have been framed like a pale portrait against the dark, and where my startled features must certainly have been an open book for anyone to con its comprehension of the truth concerning Traitor Jabez.

This came to me in the winking of an eye. In less than the winking of an eye, I had to make—and I made—my decision.

For Stuart’s and mine were not the only speaking countenances in that company. On the wide face, so horribly contorted by rage, of that Brobdingnagian innkeeper—in the fire flashing from his sunken eyes, even in the visible quivering of his matted hair—was writ, as plain as if it were lettering on a crossroads milepost, his sudden certitude that I knew his secret—his appreciation of the fact that I could wreck the Tory plot, and send him to Gallows Hill, if I could reach Philadelphia ahead of him, or if I followed shortly after.

The remaining shirt of concealment and pretense he flung away. Up went his pistol. He charged.

That was what was before me. I glanced below.

There stood the wagon with its restless horses and a mass of straw protecting, doubtless, some breakable materials carried as a blind for any too inquisitive passerby. Around it—alarmed by Johnson’s shout and gazing upward, ran saturnine Hanky, lank Whiteside (the waving lantern in his hand) and the pair of quaking women servants, more hindering than helpful to the men and plainly half-ignorant of what this stir portended.

“I’ve got you now, my son!” bellowed Jabez.

He meant to kill me, but he choose to make a sure job of it and therefore must needs circle the bed before firing, whereas his folk below had—great as was their ill will—received no such orders.

Between two perils I chose that which would be, for at least an instant, the lesser. No time now for use of the Franklin rod: I stood up and made a clean jump into the midst of that raging quartette in the stable yard.

The night and the confusion favored me; my lithe-

ness and small stature favored me, too. Yet what chances outweighed those slight advantages!

I lit upon my feet. Between kicking legs and under clawing hands I ducked. Hanky I tripped by design, Sarah Nicolls, the cook, mere good fortune sent sprawling. They surrounded me, like hounds closing on a fox—I bolted; I doubled. Harry swung his lantern at my head—and struck the plump maid-of-all-work, Jennie.

But could the thing continue a moment longer? Whither could I go? Even if I escaped, where could I hide?

A TREMENDOUS shadow, Johnson gained the roof by way of the window. “Shoot the little rat!” he vociferated. “Kill him!”

Himself, excited, he fired. Too excitedly—for he missed me and came close to hitting the rising Hanky.

I ducked yet again and winged my way toward the gate, open now for the wagon’s exit. Stout Sarah, afoot once more, barred the way.

Everybody was shouting enough to summon the British blockaders out at sea! Without an expedient left in my head, I jumped around from the cook and beheld, coming toward me, Harry Whiteside—not ten feet away.

The brandished lantern in his raised right hand showed his crooked mouth lolling open and a foam of hatred on its lips; he had the green eyes of a copperhead about to strike. But it was that lantern which alone rendered plain the serpent’s victim! I had a trick left, after all; instead of once more jerking by him—instead of striking at him—I swung a sweeping blow at the light and sent it, turning over and over, out of his grasp. It struck ground—and immediately the stable yard was in darkness.

The force of my blow hurled me far forward. To a renewed chorus of shouts, I must have staggered under Whiteside’s arm, raised an instant longer. I crashed headforemost into a wheel of the wagon, and outstretched fingers felt the metal step that I knew projected at one side beneath the driver’s seat.

“Where is he?” yelled Hanky.

“Oh!—Oh!—Oh!” came in duet from the women.

“Get a light!” screamed swearing Harry. “Find that lantern, you wenchies!”

At most, there would be scarce ten seconds of this, and during them anybody might blunder upon me in the dark: whatever was to be done must be done immediately, any advantage of invisibility had to be seized at a stroke. The pigeon loft? Its broken ladder I had seen a moment since, lying against the wall. That might reach, but it was too distant from where I now stood, and the loft would be among the first objects of their search: all other chances serving me, I might not gain that hidden compartment behind it before the search reached there. But a flash of

memory recalled that secret dispatch chest of which this driver’s seat framed the top. Who would ever think that I had placed myself so directly in my chief enemy’s power? Lightly I jumped into the wagon.

Would the door of that wide chest, which was the under part of the entire front seat, be unlocked? If not, then was I indeed lost.

Yet unlocked it proved to be! While still the dark hid me, I crawled in there and drew the hinged lid tight upon my entrance. Small though I was for my sixteen years, the brief length of the compartment, from one side of the wagon to the other, necessitated a considerable updrawing of my legs; but the depth was more than ample. What would eventually happen to me lay beyond all guessing, yet at least for the present I was most likely safe.

Panting, I curled there and heard the search wax in fury—saw the rays of the relighted lantern streaming through the broad cracks of my unsuspected refuge. About my mother and Susanna I durst not speculate; concerning my gallant and debonnaire lieutenant, I could but hope that his lofty Cave of Adullam would continue undiscovered; and as for Stuart, I prayed that the pursuers’ thwarted enmity toward me might not rebound against him.

For many minutes, I lay quiescent.

MEANWHILE, a crazed scurrying went on outside, more lunatic—or so it sounded—than its predecessor. Everybody cried out at once, and everybody seemed to interfere with everybody else. Hanky and the servants stumbled about, searching the yard, the women’s language scarce better than the men’s. I had done well to avoid the loft: Harry must have run right up its broken ladder, for I heard him call, “He’s not up here”—and came down again. He profaned high Heaven, vowing my destruction.

The current of events shifted only with the descent of Jabez, who seemed to have come down by the stairs and now vented his fury in thunderings. A fresh danger had presented itself to his imaginations, and changed, or rather advanced, all his immediate plans.

“What are you fools adoin’? By Burgoyne, you might think this here was a badlam! Sarah—Jennie—stop that there catawauling! Why don’t you hunt through the buildings? Hanky, take a look outside! O’ course, the boy wouldn’t be right under your silly eyes. Come along, Harry, if you’re comin’: I’ve wasted all the time I dare to. If that brat’s on the premises or near ‘em, they’ll git him, an’ if he’s been crazy enough to start up the road, we will. Never mind his mother an’ the gal, Hanky: they’re harmless. Let ‘em cry! But shoot the boy on sight. I can’t wait another minute! Why? Why, Whiteside, who knows but that spy o’ yours started afoot to Philadelphia twelve good hour’ since?”

Harry fair yelped at this mention of a therefore unguessed peril to their schemes.

“Even so, he can’t git there ahead o’ us, kin ‘e?” asked the potboy.

“Not if we start now—an’ if you’re some help. Bring the twin brother down! Tie him up an’ tuck him under the wagon straw: if he knows anythin’, he kin be made to talk, once we git him to Talbot’s—but what we got to do now’s hurry. Hurry, curse you! Ain’t we got to beat that spy?”

Ere I could have budged had I dared to, the wagon sagged in a great list to one side and creaked pitifully; the huge cutthroat was pulling himself up on it. He sat down atop the seat chest with such a crash that I thought the wood must break.

“Unhitch them horses, you Jennie!” he bawled. “Sarah, help Harry with that boy he’s a-bringin’!”

So I lay there powerless with but a couple of inches of board’s thickness between me and this bloody brute enraged and desperate—lay there through five minutes while I heard a body deposited according to his orders—heard venomous Whiteside scramble to his place cheek-by-jowl with Johnson directly above me—heard next the whip crack—and was then thrown by a sudden jolt against the back of my dark compartment, which had now become a dungeon cell. In such alarm manner began my second journey vaward from Tent Tavern.



I ran as never I had run before.

We rattled through the gateway. We had begun to follow the early windings of that road between the dunes when a great hope came to me. As if they were painted in fiery letters upon my prison wall, I recollected some words of Tory Talbot—words that I had heard him speak to Johnson and Whiteside in the dining room of "Northcote."

"Here is half the sum. The rest you will be paid at my town house *after you shall have succeeded*: I shall be waiting you there *on the afternoon of the fourth*."

So, save for necessary stops on the way, our first destination was Dr. Franklin's! The odds were a hundred to one against me—at any moment, along those intervening leagues, almost anything might happen to reveal my presence in this box—but if the sole chance won—if I could somehow manage to preserve my concealment until we arrived at our goal—why then, in the very instant of these rogues delivering their forgeries, I could appear and denounce them!

XVII—The Hand at the Box

THE night was breathless. Our horses tore over the highway. The wagon so tossed from side to side that I had to brace both hands and feet to an aching rigidity in order to prevent having all my ribs smashed and the noise thereof betraying me. Within this box, although its crevices had appeared generous, I was nearly stifled; heat and terror, exertion and excitement soon set my clothes a-sop with sweat.

However, the beasts' hoofs made no great racket upon that sandy soil whereof the road was composed until it got thoroughly inland: I could hear quite plain such talk as went on above me, even if what I did hear scarce soothed my natural apprehensions.

"Keep your eyes peeled for that there brat," Johnson cautioned his companion. "He just might be somewheres here along the fust mile."

"He'd hide at our comin'," I heard Harry answer; "but if he don't, I'll shoot straight when we overhaul the little devil."

"Your drawlin' spy, too," said Jabez—"farther on; watch for him, though Talbot's had a party out ahead o' us an' it's fair dark."

Whiteside's responsive oath was ready: "Dark or light, if I sees him, he won't slip away another time. Take a swig o' your own gut-lye, Johnson."

Glass clinked against teeth. Plainly, Edwin Talbot's prohibition of drinking was to go unheeded. But I knew my men too well to hope much in my service from their abuse of liquor. The whip cracked again, and we were hurled on faster than ever.

There was set a lantern between the feet of one of the persons outside; its unsteady rays showed me somewhat of my cell and its contents: two packets wrapped in oilskins on the floor and all around me those rough boards that might have composed a pauper's coffin. Nevertheless, my hope sustained me against discomfort, and I began to rehearse the phrases in which I should denounce these fellows to their faces in the very presence of Dr. Franklin.

"Here's 'Northcote'," I at last heard Harry say.

We were probably passing that long stone wall. At this place, I had taken it for granted, they would deposit my poor brother where, while they continued their nefarious mission, he might be maltreated until he should recount to his tormentors whatsoever he knew—or until I could lead an expedition back from Philadelphia for his rescue. But now came a new revelation.

Jabez drew rein, apparently before that gate which I had good cause to remember. Thrice he whistled, very low—one long blast and two shorts.

"Louder," complained Whiteside. "They can't hear that."

"They're a-listening for it," replied Johnson. "With that there spy runnin' free somewheres, they are all alert. Hanky told me."

JABEZ was right. An answer to his summons came almost on the instant—two shorts and a long—and when to this he had responded with a long whistle between a pair of briefer ones, the gate—wherefrom the bar must have been removed preparatory to

our coming—clanged open. But Jabez made no attempt to turn the horses inside: the wagon remained stationary!

"Johnson," he announced.

"Expectin' you," said the gatekeeper.

"All right?"

"Right as could be arter las' night."

"Talbot gone on ahead?"

"Mister Talbot has gone on ahead."

"Spy caught?"

"No."

"Any news o' him?"

"None."

"Then he never got through to the city," said Johnson, "for Talbot sent mounted men's far as Camden.—Gad-ep!"

And to my utter amazement, the whip sounded and we resumed at once our course toward Philadelphia! The thing was so unexpected that I banged against the rear of my cell and feared that the sound must sure have reached both driver and passenger. It didn't, however; yet Whiteside was clearly as puzzled as was I, for he was at once inquiring:

"Ain't you agoin' to leave that twin o' Jeff Rowntree's there?"

"Not I," rumbled Jabez. "Why should I when Talbot's in Philadelpy? Talbot's the proper one to question him. I'm agoin' to drive right to the rear o' Edwin's town house afore I go to Ben Franklin's. I'm agoin' to leave the twin *thar*—nobody's ever in that alley. 'Sides, there's some papers as Talbot forgot at 'Northcote' an' Hanky brought me to take to him. I must give him them, first thing—they're in this here seat box."

Here was an end to my fine scheming. Instead of posing as a hero before Dr. Franklin, I was to be discovered, like a rat in a trap, when Jabez Johnson opened my cell in the presence of Tory Talbot! Now despair was indeed complete: the Colonies' Cause seemed hopelessly doomed by the cumulative disasters of this wretched night of July 3rd—and I and mine were

doomed along with Liberty. I saw it all at last and but too plainly—saw not only my own plight in its true perspective, but also the plight of my loved ones which, when I thought of it—a while since, I had thought would be remedied by my expedition.

My mother and sister were perhaps safe enough for the time being, but they had observed more than would permit them to remain secure after Johnson should have dispatched his more pressing business; meanwhile, left behind at that terrible Tavern, they were totally dependent upon the scant mercies of the ruffian Hanky. The certainly continued search for me at the inn might well discover brave Pinckney and release Black George and Jim May, which pair of rogues would tell all they knew and, though more dead than alive, wreak instant vengeance. With the collapse of his Congressional faction, my father would be arrested on a charge of treason to the Crown—and here was my twin brother already being carried to the torture in Philadelphia.

And what, I asked again, of me? I was as thoroughly a captive as if these conspirators seated over me were aware of my presence, which in fact they must now sooner or later be. How ever could I get out until they descended—and how then could I escape them? The one was a Cyclops who had bragged of his murders; his accessory was a cullion who wanted my blood from sheer hatred; both guessed that my continued existence would mean the hangman's noose for them: my own life was forfeit at their ensanguined hands.

Was there no way out of this prison into which I had so impetuously flung myself?

Carefully, I felt the rear wall of my cell. Perhaps I could escape thence, creep to Stuart—separated from me by scarce a yard—and liberate him of his bonds. We might together drop over the tailboard.

Alas, that wall was both thick and solid. I could force no part of it! I carried a boy's pocket clasp knife, but, after one minute's nervous work therewith, its sole blade snapped at the haft.

Should I then push down the door of the chest, taking my chances in a hand-to-hand fight amid the subsequent confusion—the certain bolting of the horses—the probable overturn of this lurching wagon? No, for I was now altogether unarmed—and even if some wild leap saved unfettered me, in the wreck, what would befall my unhappy brother, tied hand and foot behind there?

Invention failed me. While mile after mile rolled past us, I fell into a kind of apathy.

Some thought of calling for help when we changed horses was dashed by the first passage of words between Johnson and the ostlers at the posthouse: they were of his own stripe, Talbot's men every one. Nothing short of a miracle could save me.

It was Whiteside's voice from overhead, speaking of course to Jabez, that roused me: "Let me have a squint at them papers, Johnson—they ones as is to fool old Benjy."

"I got my hands full with these here fresh horses," growled Jabez.

"Aw, you don't need to drop the reins," Harry pleaded. "I'd jes' like to see a real good forgery. Lemme lift 'em out o' your pocket."

"They ain't in my pocket—they're in the box under this here seat."

They were here where I was, then, those false dispatches! They were in one of those two oilskin packets beside me—and to get them Johnson or his companion would have to open the door of my hiding place!

"Come on," Harry wheedled. "Here: I'll pour another drop o' drink down you, an' then you'll say 'yes'."

Would Jabez agree? While he drank, I held breath. *Would he agree?* A similar request he had refused at "Northcote"—but now he was more dependent upon Whiteside, and on better terms with him. The drink gurgled.

"Now," said Harry.

"Oh, well—all right," grumbled Johnson. "But I'll git 'em myself. Here, you take the reins."

The box door fell open. A rush of night wind—the chilly wind that comes before the dawn—swept in upon me. And behind it, fairly toward my shrinking face, groped the vast hand of the man that had ordered my murder.



He put both hands to his mouth and shouted: "Ring!"

The gap between driver's seat and dashboard was narrow; so massive a creature as this assassin might not conveniently lower his head and look betwixt his knees to direct his quest; but by that fact its fatal termination appeared certain to be delayed no more than a minute. The entire space to be rummaged through was trivial—and those packets had worked under my shriveling body, lying supine, and were wedged there.

Whiteside's outstretched feet supported the lantern; its light fell from behind that great hand which groped toward me, magnifying it into something monstrous.

XVIII—"Who Goes There?"

I COWERED tight against my cell's rear wall, yet the cell seemed now very narrow; so long as the packets remained beneath me, no retreat would avail, and in my first panic I had shrunk so far that there was no room left to turn and uncover them. Above the cadence of the horses' hoofs, I heard the seeker's apoplectic breathing.

"Better let me git it," suggested the lither Harry. Jabez cursed him stertorously. Those clawing fingers scraped the floor ten inches away from me—eight inches. A few seconds more, and he would touch me—

I must somehow give him what he sought—or straight-way die.

Propping head and heels against opposite ends of the box, I made a forlorn effort: I raised the middle of my body. One hand that near brushed his I thrust under me.

"Where is the blasted thing?" his voice boomed out above.

A forlorn effort—yet perhaps successful! I could just touch a packet. I shoved it against his finger tips.

"There! I knowed I didn't need no help from you, Harry. Here be one o' them packages."

This his voice again—Johnson's. His grip had closed upon that which I had pushed into it. His fist was withdrawn from the box.

I collapsed. Had I given him the right packet—the one destined for Dr. Franklin, or that for the Tory? Should I have to do this trick all over again? Well, I could not.

But my heart soon leaped again. Jabez had retaken the reins; Whiteside, having raised the lantern, was examining the papers—and his gleeful admiration of them proved them to be those desired.

Yet peril remained acute, and the ebb and flow of hope and fear were both fierce and irregular. Perhaps I should be detected when the packet was restored to the chest—perhaps this potboy's curiosity would extend to the other documents. Moreover, that box door opened downward; Johnson and Harry, who had first placed their feet upon it now tucked those feet into my cell itself, as I should have done had I sat where they did, and this left me still less space to roll my cramped self into. With every lurch of the wagon I came within a hair's breadth of colliding against a pair of boots, and ere every movement of my enemies' legs I must execute an anticipatory maneuver. Nothing except a Heaven-guided fortune saved me.

Jabez, when Whiteside had looked his fill at those forged dispatches, said he would carry them on his person for the remainder of the journey, but, while no mention was made of the other papers, no attempt was offered to reclose the box—perhaps, because of the effects of some further potations, these things were forgotten—and I was beset by alarms thus arising.

Onward we went and onward. Furious cramps seized upon me. Again and again I but narrowly escaped bashing against the legs that almost filled my prison—and still no new event occurred to promise me the prayed-for miracle of deliverance.

THEN, at last, dawn stole into the sky—the dawn of July the fourth, 1776. Outside, Harry Whiteside noisily extinguished the lantern.

But our pace slackened not at all with the morning. If anything, it increased, and the pitching and lurching



"Who goes there?" came the challenge, and a mounted squadron drew up.

of the wagon with it. Miles and miles we covered as the day grew and waxed strong along that rough road.

At last Jabez must have consulted that cannonball of a watch of his with which I had made acquaintance when first I passed this part of the country. His comment so informed me:

"Half after seven o'clock," says he. "We should be in Philadelphia right this minute. We must go to Talbot's first with our prisoner, an' I'd rather kitch old Ben at his office fore he goes to Congress—if I kin.—Gad-ep! Gad-ep!—This won't do, Harry. We was late a startin', an' we're late still!"

"If you'd let me cut that Jeff Rowntree's throat long ago, like I wanted," Whiteside complained, "there'd not 'a' been anythin' to delay us."

Johnson seemed to acknowledge the justice of that remark, for, with an ill grace, he said somewhat about not crying over spilled milk, and whipped the horses. It was a good while later that Harry cried:

"We're nigh to Camden now!"

Huddled into a corner of my box, I scarce drew breath. Would there be help here? When we should have come into the streets of either this settlement or of Philadelphia, I would not dare cry out, for that would signal my own execution: these ruffians would then be forced to kill me first and try to explain their deed afterwards. Yet Camden, as I knew, was named by Jacob Cooper for that brave Lord Chancellor of England who opposed the iniquitous Stamp Act and was almost wholly loyal to the Colonies. Well, instead of relief, there came another risk—there came the threat of utter betrayal: I was going to sneeze.

The agonies of the succeeding struggle I need not describe, for they were vain. I knew that if my unfortunate physical tendency now triumphed over the prohibition of my will, the next moment might be my last; I knew that I had twice lately fought away the nervous paroxysms—and yet this time, from the start, I had premonition of failure. Nearer and nearer the dread moment came.

All the devices used before I now employed, but to no purpose. The greater the resistance in such cases, the louder the report if resistance crumbles. My fingers dug into my upper lip, sweat poured from my forehead—and the explosion seemed to shake my cell.

Pulled back upon their haunches, the horses stopped. I think my heart stopped with them!

"What's that noise?" roared Johnson.

By the sound of a dropped bottle, I knew that Harry had been interrupted in the act of draining the last liquor left in his spirit flask. Upon this draft his whole attention had doubtless been centered. "I didn't hear nothin'," said he, at the tail of an imprecation anent the dropped bottle.

Both pairs of legs had been pulled out of the box. Nevertheless, I drew myself back into the farthest corner.

"Then you must be stone deaf," Jabez was replying to Whiteside. "It was a noise they could 'a' heard up there in Kingdom Come."

"Was it out in the road?" asked Harry.

"It was somewheres in this here wagon," the driver

averred. "An' if it hadn't a-been so loud, I'd 'a' said 'twas a sneeze."

"Well, it must be just that there boy under the straw."

"But he's gagged.—Make sure o' that, Harry, and o' him!"

You are not to suppose I had forgotten Stuart. His peril had all along been as vivid in my mind as my own; but I knew that, to a huge extent, our fates were bound together. Now, however, they might be tied the tighter, for if he were threatened with immediate danger, I would then and there fling myself to death in his defense. You may therefore well imagine the relief with which I heard Johnson continue in response to further remonstrance from Harry.

"If you don't do it, I will. We don't want him smothered afore he tells Talbot whatever he knows."

Harry grumblingly descended. The straw rustled in the body of the wagon.

"He's right enough," Whiteside reported.

"Gag tight?"

"Of course. Didn't I put it there myself?"

"Then how—Harry, you take that there rag out, an' ask him what's he been a-doin' to make such a hullabaloo."

Now, at last, I made sure, the game was ended. The wagon creaked and a body was dragged nearer one side of it. While, of course, my brother's mouth was being temporarily freed, I heard Whiteside's question:

"Talk up! Did you make that rumpus?"

And then came finally the astounding answer in Stuart's own voice: "Yes."

Ere my mazed wits believed my hearing, Johnson bellowed from above me: "How'd he do it?"

"This straw is fair full of dust," said Stuart. His tones were hoarse and broken doubtless through terror and the strain that the gag had put upon the muscles of his mouth, but he spoke at least without hesitation of the spirit. "I—I sneezed."

"An' you gagged?"

"I—I sneeze hard," my brother mendaciously explained. "I was hurt by a fall from a horse and—since then everybody that—knows me—knows also my—sneeze."

THEREAT I understood. He was not so much lying to our potential murderers as communicating with me: he wanted to let me know that he had guessed my presence here! He had recognized my sneeze!

"Even when," he concluded—"even when my mouth is—full—I—sneeze hard."

Whiteside must have looked at Johnson—Johnson at Whiteside. There came, at all events, a pause.

Would Jabez be convinced? He had never before heard my famous sneeze, and yet he might not have been persuaded if it had not been that then there happened something enough certain to divert his mind from conjectural alarms. His voice fell to a heavy whisper:

"Pst! Cover that boy up ag'in. Here comes a patrol—an' anywheres near Camden, patrols is Congressionals."

I thrust my head toward the front of the box and listened with all my ears. Yes, there was the sound of horses!

"They all knows me an' they've never searched my wagon afore," Jabez rapidly muttered on; "but things is so tense-like now, over the ferry in Philadelphia, that you can't be certain what orders goes out, an' if this here passenger gets himself seen—Stand back there, Harry, to knife the boy if he troubles the straw or any-ways gits their attention. No more sneezes! Remember! We kin tell 'em, if we must, as he was a spy. An' let me do the talkin'. Understand?"

"Course," said Harry, and there was that in his voice which sounded hopeful for the worst.

"Knife?" demanded Johnson.

"It's out: what you think? I'm holdin' it under my coat—ready."

"Get up in back when we pass," ordered Jabez, "an' slip back the gag. There ain't no time now."

Jabez had controlled the horses and held a quiet rein, but he had also drawn a pistol. He kept it hidden from the oncomers under cover of the dashboard where, from his unoccupied right hand, (Continued on page 36)

The Potosi Trail

By L. C. Jordan

Illustrated by Stuart Hay



I put all my strength into one final effort and threw him out of the opening.

FOR months and months and months, through wet seasons and dry, over rugged mountains and through ragged canyons, in company with a wild assortment of good men and bad, we two young American engineers had been staking out a new railroad line in a remote section of the Andes Mountains of southern Bolivia. And now we were about to embark, Bill and I, upon a fifteen-thousand-mile homeward trip.

Instead of cutting through Peru and going home via Panama, we had charted a course down across Argentina and thence to various European points. From these, another crossing of the Atlantic would land us in New York, where we would part and depart to our respective haunts, Bill returning to the Texas plains and I to the Rocky Mountains.

The first part of our charted course would be a frontier-like journey of some four hundred miles over the Potosi Trail to the upper end of a new railroad on the Argentine border.

"Say," warningly remarked the railroad official from whom we had been taking orders, "you fellows may think you've been living a rough life in this nook of the wilderness, but if you ever go over that Potosi Trail and come out alive and pretty much altogether at the other end, then you'll know you've roughed it."

Cheerful! But we were young and tough and hardened to the point where we gloried in hardships and dangers and thrived on the rough life a man had to lead in that part of South America fifteen years ago. Fortified by the good-hearted official's parting gift of sufficient supplies to grubstake us through three or four weeks of rough travel, we set merrily forth with little prospect of encountering a white face or a white soul along all the weary windings and haphazard hardships of a seemingly unending journey at an altitude averaging about the same as the top of Pikes Peak.

Bill was the linguist of the expedition. He knew numerous Spanish words as well as several of Aymara and Quichua for use among the Indians. He, therefore, conducted the greater part of our incidental business affairs.

AT Challapata, on the shore of Lake Poopo, we alighted from the little narrow gauge railroad and put up for the night at the "Hotel."

A part of the evening was devoted to the business of the jaunt ahead of us. The landlord had been over a considerable portion of the trail. From him we learned the names of several villages that would be our stopping places, and made careful notes of the exact standard fees to be paid for mule hire, this being a matter regulated by meager bits of law recognized as being in force. Also we made careful note of his admonition never to pay more than the proper amount. Once having got the notion that there was easy money in sight, the Indians would leave none for others farther ahead.

Next morning we hit the trail. It proved to be sometimes merely a path that scattered itself among the rocks and other obstructions, sometimes a wide shelf cut from the steep mountain side, and occasionally a fair sort of road on which no wagon had ever turned a wheel. Travel was accomplished, or endured, by means of mules hired from the Indians. Bill and I required two pack mules to transport our baggage, bed rolls, food supply, and alcohol cooking lamp; and two saddle mules to carry what we had in and above our boots. An Indian *erriero* always went along on foot to drive the beasts of burden and to return with the empty caravan when his stage of the trip was ended, a distance between villages varying from fifteen to twenty-five miles.

Early the first afternoon we headed into an Indian village bearing the cognomen "Ancacotta." And, encountering the first hard luck of the pilgrimage, we trailed into port in the wake of some variety of Spanish *distinguido*. This yellow-skinned gentleman knew more of the local lingo and more of the native traits than we did. He therefore handed out a substantial tip and secured the pick of available mules while we looked on in unmitigated gloom. Having learned that the next treck was only fifteen miles, we were keen for navigating it before night. Besides, the Indians were indulging in one of their periodic wholesale drunks, and we were in no spirit to abide over night with them.

When the whole local population engages in a drunken spree, they will sometimes pick out the lone white man who chances to be in their midst and make an honored guest of him. Yet the spirits occasionally move them in the opposite direction and the lone white man feels very much alone in the wide, wild world until he makes his escape, if indeed he does put up a good enough fight to get in the clear.

We had heard about this particular place. A couple of years previous a lone white man had got into a squabble with the populace over the matter of money paid for mule hire. The village was on one of its drunks and demanded more money. The white man put up a fight and lost. The infuriated natives actually pulled him to pieces, relapsed into their more savage natures, and proceeded to eat their victim. However, they are not cannibals—not by any means. The eating of the man's flesh was no more than the full expression of mob violence, the token of complete revenge. Yet the incident was sufficient to prove that the Indians can, upon proper provocation, revert, in a measure, to the cannibalistic tendencies of their early ancestors.

Such occasional dangers make it necessary to travel with some artillery protection, although the mere presence of a gun is generally sufficient to ensure peace. Bill had sold his gun, taking advantage of high local prices, but I had a very companionable Colt.

After the departure of the Spaniard we dickered for mules and gladly accepted the poor specimens that were finally brought forth. Remembering the tip of the genus *Espaniol*, we knew that a similar offering would be demanded of us; so we decided that Bill should take his departure ahead of me, telling them that I had the

money and would pay for the mules, while I killed enough time messing with the bridle and saddle to give him a safe start. We reasoned that it would be best to have one of our number on the safe side of the gate in case of hostilities. We managed to get a half sober *erriero* started with the pack mules some time ahead of us.

SO Bill swung aboard and made a fairly dignified and unconcerned exit from the patteo. After waiting long enough for him to plan a campaign from the outside, I indicated that all my rigging was in order. Mounting, I rode over to the nincompoop, or whatever his official title might chance to be, and counted out the standard amount for that stage of the journey. Bidding them the usual "Adios," I bid my mule "Gaddap." He giddapped, but so did the mob. There was no tip included in the payment. The hundred odd villains in the patteo swarmed around me while I was still some fifty feet from the exit. That gateway was the closest and also the farthest thing I ever tried to reach.

Those enraged drunks came at me from all directions, came singly and in bunches, came in waves and brigades, and there was no love sparkling in their eyes. Three or four grabbed each leg and started a tug-of-war. They pulled to a tie, and I remained astride the mule. The bridle rein was one fine piece of equipment, having a long braided lash to be used as a riding whip. I used it effectively in freeing my legs from their hungry clutches. Happily, the mule proved to be a kicker. Wheeling his business end to meet each new group advance, he effectively repelled every onslaught. Soon we were whirling like a puppy chasing his tail, and always edging toward the gate. Knowing the seriousness of shooting any of them, I fought them off as best I could, trusting that in some manner I would be able to out-trick them. They kept their distance from those kicking heels and it seemed that in only a matter of time I would reach the big outside landscape and have a running chance to make my getaway.

The Indians saw my progress and sensed my plan. Then began the stone throwing. None hit as their eyes were bleary. But that business would soon put an end to my feeble fight. So I whipped out my friendly old Colt. Taking quick and accurate aim right between the leader's eyes, I slowly pulled the trigger, giving him time to think it over. As he watched the cylinder start to move, he dropped his stones and backed away. That was the closest I ever came to shooting a man, but it was fully close enough to suit me. Others followed the leader's example as I directed the gun at them and soon it had enlarged my circle of acquaintances. Always I edged toward the opening that meant escape.

At this juncture Bill should have inaugurated a riot on the outside. But no Bill. I must play a lone hand. Loud calls and an apparent agreement indicated an impending drastic move. I must go quickly or never. An opening happened to appear in the crowd in the direction of the gateway. My Colt barked viciously as it spit a bullet down through this pathway. Each hoodlum momentarily thought that I had shot one of their number. They fell back startled. And I made a dash through the gate.

Gone? Not quite. About two hundred yards away,



I bid my mule "Gaddap." He giddapped, but so did the mob.

and some distance from the trail sat Bill, impersonating an equestrian statue of General Grant, his mule completely balked in his tracks where a bolting run had taken him. So I jockeyed the crowd to gain as much time as possible. Luckily Bill managed to throw in his clutch. He hit the topography on a long slant for the trail some distance ahead. I took the middle of the road as soon as I could get onto it. But the decrepit mule was slow on his feet, in spite of his agility as a kicker. The Indians were running him a neck and tail race down the trail. Sooner or later the clumsy critter would stumble or one of the pursuers would reach the reins and halt our disorderly flight—or else I must shoot to hit.

My thoughts went back to happy days in the good old U. S. A. Happy thought! Deep down in a pocket was one of those nickel things that used to buy a long ride on a city street car. I dug it out and, with a wail of despair as though giving up all the little bit of money I had in the world, hurled it into the sand. Those curious heathens had to stop, every one of them, and scratch around to find the buried treasure and look it over and wonder what it was and how much it would buy. Possibly they are still conducting their investigation, for I joined Bill farther along the trail and never went back to learn their decision. We kept right along, conducting a little investigation of our own—finding out how fast and how far those skates could travel. In fear that the Indians would start out on other mules to catch us, we kept our weather eyes peeled to sternward throughout the remainder of the day, though probably they forgot us immediately and resorted to the usual order of business, except those that had gotten the worst of the battering during our little melee.

WE soon learned that when you have spent a night rolled up in your blankets on the earth floor of a mud hut set aside for wayfarers' use and awake to find that no mules can be had for the succeeding hitch of the hike, you may as well pick out a soft rock and placidly sit down to enjoy the enchanting scenery and watch the cunning capers of cute baby llamas and alpacas as they race about their long woolled elders. No amount of cajoling or diplomacy can induce the Indians to bestir themselves and rustle up an extra mule or two. When they say "*Manana*" (to-morrow), be sure that manana goes and don't waste any worry.

If you chance to behold a little caravan arrive from the opposite direction and the *erriero* prepare to set out with empty mules in the direction upon which your heart is set, just retain your seat and your composure. Those mules have done their day's work and you are still out of luck. Nothing doing. *Manana* still goes, and you stay. And to-morrow you may repeat your leisurely lingering.

Never try to hurry in a never-hurry land. They won't permit you, and, besides, it wears out the patience.

And you need all your patience for emergencies of various sorts. Bill and I ran somewhat short once, and I paid the piper. This is how it happened:

One evening Bill and I followed our mules' ears into the patteo of a small village, dismounted, threw off the pack mules' burdens, and established temporary quarters in the mud hut guest chamber. Darkness had already fallen. Cooking was a slow job over the alcohol lamp, and we had made no offering to the god of hunger since early morning. Consequently we were in no mood to be bothered by visitors. Yet the inevitable visitation came in the form of eight or ten big, husky Indians.

They swarmed into the hut and seated themselves comfortably upon a mud bench along the rear wall. We were accustomed to receiving such delegations, but there was something in the mien of this drove that warned us of an obnoxious prolongation of our hospitality. Although Indians were officially pronounced harmless, they were a rough-neck bunch when the stranger happened to be helpless. And it was unwise to hurt one of them unless the offender could turn in and lick the whole tribe.



He plodded methodically along.

We had long since learned that diplomacy was the most effective means of handling a ticklish situation, also that passing cigarettes was the most productive form of diplomacy. We also knew from natural instinct that the man with the gun must keep out of reach of the mob.

So I stood back while Bill passed the diplomatic cigarettes. Much to our discomfiture, our visitors settled themselves back against the wall to enjoy their smokes when they should have filed meekly out through the door which stood so suggestively open. Possibly they would go out when the cigarettes did, but more probably they would invite themselves to supper when we had it ready.

Cooking proceeded, but the delegation stuck tight. Finally Bill suggested, in the few words that we had in common, that they had about worn out their welcome. In return they sneeringly indicated their intention to remain. So Bill ordered them to move. Nothing doing, and their refusal had a nasty and arrogant flavor. It was now my turn to try some other form of persuasion. With my back to them I slipped my gun, unseen, from its holster and stuck it under Bill's coat, then advanced to the attack.

I picked out the leader. He was a bulky, raw-boned bruiser with a hard look on the front side of his head; yet I had a good fifteen pounds on him to make up for what I lacked in dirt and savagery. I grabbed him roughly and yanked him to his feet, slammed him against the wall and jerked him away again, and worked him toward the door. I didn't hit him as there was no need to get him unduly mussed, but I kept twisting and yanking him about and bouncing him off the wall in a manner designed to look rough to the rest of the party and never for an instant permitting him to recover his balance or to brace himself. Near the door I put all my strength into one final effort and actually threw him out of the opening.

Returning for number two, I advanced as ferociously as a partly shot grizzly bear. Number two tried to duck past and escape. I made a fake grab at him, being very careful to touch him but barely miss getting him. Number three was then next, and he led number four through the door by a very slight margin. Nobody relished the prospect of being that unfortunate next one, and I gladly, though with apparent reluctance, just failed to connect with any of them while they effected a retreat that left the whites in undisputed control.

One thing about a fight—the other fellow is never licked until he happens to find it out. I therefore felt called upon to continue the argument in order that there be no misunderstanding

about the matter. So I pulled off my coat, stuck the Colt into my holster, and went out into the chilly night, taking along a kettle containing some sort of mix that needed considerable boiling.

Peering into the numerous huts surrounding the patteo, I picked out the one with the most Indians. This one was very much like all the rest, simply a small hut constructed of big mud bricks and topped out with a thatch roof. Inside, lying or squatting upon sheepskins, was an assembly of redskins, all sticking close to the earth floor in order to be under the smoke arising from the cooking stove, a domelike, earthenware affair with four pot holes in the top and a stoking hole near the bottom. The only light within was a weird flicker that escaped from the cooking device.

Entering with a bluff of boldness, I stepped carefully over the Indians that lay between the door and stove, and quickly squatted, back to wall, beside this smoke producer. Removing a kettle from the fire, I substituted my own and stirred its contents with a spoon, and with outward composure and inward misgivings, until the mixture was thoroughly cooked. This process was accompanied by a series of disconcerting grunts from the numerous occupants; yet never a form stirred and never a hand raised in combat. For this I gave credit to the good old Colt that hung ominously from my belt. Cooking finished, I nonchalantly removed my kettle and replaced the other upon the fire and departed as peacefully as I had entered—and possibly with slightly more speed.

Bill removed his barricade from the door of the chamber de luxe and replaced it with all possible effectiveness as soon as we were again together and alone. As supper proceeded by candle light, we thrilled with the satisfaction that came from having put one over on the Indians in making them feel licked, fully and completely cowed, for otherwise some of them would have tried to drop something on me out in the dark. Surely they would give us no more trouble and in the morning would gladly furnish us with the desired mules, if only to have us depart from their mussed midst. Great! And a fine night's sleep on the hard earth floor brought pleasant dreams of parrots and oranges away down to the southward, and of riding on cushions instead of hard Andean saddles.

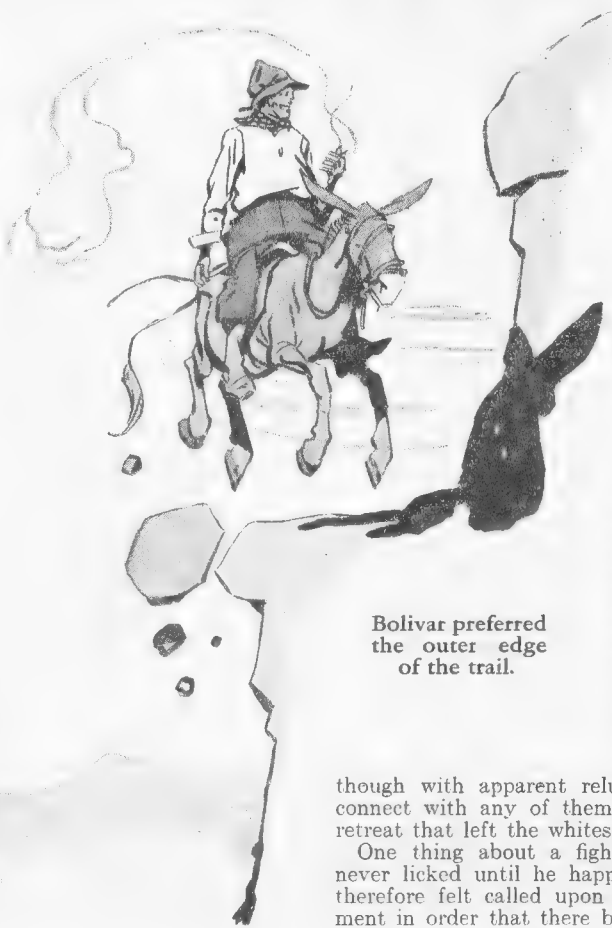
It would have been more to the point had I dreamed of Death prancing on the edge of a precipice.

IN the morning came glaring sunshine penetrating the shiver of an over altitudinous atmosphere. Also came an Indian with the sad tidings that there were in waiting two pack mules and one saddle horse. Only one riding animal, and there were two of us. One of us must walk. Still, a horse, joyous news!

But who would ride the brute? Joy again! I won the toss. Bill would walk, although some miles farther along the way I would exchange with him and he would stick his boots into the stirrups while I would stick mine into the sand and plod wearily along, mile after mile, at a pace designed to tire the toughest. Yet just now in the clear and invigorating morning freshness I would throw a leg over the back of a horse, not a mule, but a regular short-eared mount. And I thrilled with the expectation of feeling a prancing charger beneath me.

Just then the "horse" was led into our presence, saddled and bridled in the grotesque and outlandish manner that only an Indian can devise. But the horse himself—he was one of those scrawny little runts from the tropics that are called "horse" through courtesy and lack of another name. He was full of bumps where the bones were about to wear through the warty skin. However, he was called a horse, and the fates had decreed that I was to ride him. It was now Bill's laugh. Anything, or nothing at all, was far preferable to the humiliation of getting onto that silly

(Continued on page 51)



Bolivar preferred the outer edge of the trail.

Tricks and Trapezes

By Rex Lee

Illustrated by Ernest Fuhr

HIGH up under the spreading big top, higher even than the great lights suspended from the four fifty-foot center poles, Rann Braden was standing on the pedestal used in the act of the Ford Flying Troupe. It was just a long plank rigidly suspended from the oblong Shelby steel rigging that lay horizontally across the roof of the tent. Four other white-clad figures shared it with him—the other four flyers of Ford's Number One Troupe.

Rann had stood there before many times, but tonight there were tingling nerves in his supple, wide-shouldered body, and a curious light in his blue-gray eyes, and a fluttering somewhere around the heart. Down below, circling the huge hundred-sixty-foot tent, tier upon tier of spectators, their faces gray smudges in the half shadow, had their eyes raised to the rigging. The top was crowded—mobbed. It was a turn-away night, and the show had "sat 'em on the grass" when seats had given out.

It was Rann's night of nights. He had seen that sight before, from the other side of the rigging, whereon the three catchers were swinging now, each on one of the three trapezes. But never before had he looked down at it from the flyers' pedestal. Tonight would show whether or not he was what stocky, powerful, kindly Ed Ford thought he was—the greatest flyer since the days of Eddie Lane.

There were four Ford troupes in existence, two with the Selfridge Show and two more over with the Hanford-Walters outfit. All had been trained by that same master-acrobat who was swinging across the rigging now, on the center catching bar. The troupe in which Rann and Ford worked was over the lower ring of the tent, the second one up at the upper end near the entrance.

Nothing else was going on in the tent. All three rings were quiet and vacant, and the show was three-quarters over. The Ford troupe was the "kick" of the performance—the featured attraction, and so it was, naturally, "next to closing."

The loud blare of the thirty-piece band down there on the band stand softened to a dreamy waltz in harmony with the widening swing of the catchers. Rann, his slim legs, small waist, and powerful shoulders showing the result of years of gym work before coming to the circus, and then two years of intensive training with the circus, swept the seats below for those whom he knew would be there. There they were, now, crowded into the back door: Horse O'Donnell, Jack Farrell, Charley Bullion, Stella, Comby, Jack Moore, Blackshirt Mike, Emory Miles—all the managers, bosses, and many of the performers, waiting to see what kind of flyer Rann would make when actually working in a performance.

The voice of Jim James, throaty and rasping, from the other side of the pedestal, reached Rann's ears.

"You're looking scared. What's the matter with the infant prodigy?"

Rann looked across Bert Ross's shoulders, and his mouth widened in a somewhat forced smile.

"I am," he admitted.

James disliked him cordially. He had known that for many months. The tall, lanky, bony flyer, much older than Rann or even Bert Ross, had been jealous of the youngster ever since Ford had taken him in hand. James was no star as a flyer—the simpler things were all he could do, and he could not seem to improve. Somehow Rann tried to excuse the older man for the thousand petty annoyances he had subjected him to. He wished the man would not show a dislike for him amounting to a positive hatred. It was like a piece of sand in one's eye—James' perpetual ragging was a source of irritation in an otherwise perfect life.

IT was time to start. Those years of practice had not dimmed Rann's wonder at the manner in which the rigging had been figured out, and the absolute perfection of the timing. The three catchers, head down



There was Ford, but a bit too high—timing just an instant out of the way.

now and knees and legs braced, were swinging high. Rann on the left, slim, black-haired Ross in the center, and lanky, sorrel-topped James on the right, unhooked their trapezes and gripped with outstretched hands. A vague thought flashed through Rann's mind at the moment. The difference between Ross and James! Ross was a star flyer—and he wasn't jealous. Just the difference between people—

"Go!"

It was Ed Ford, and on the second Bert Ross left, hanging on the trapeze by his hands. A few seconds later, as the other two catchers swung into position on their perches—the center catcher always swung a bit in advance to make the sight more beautiful to watch—they, too, gave the signal.

His hands gripping the bar, Rann swung off the pedestal and out, in a sweeping arc, across the tight net stretched a few feet above the ground. Out, and then upward he swung, and then rushed backward on the return swing. It carried him a bit above the pedestal, which his body cleared by only a few inches.

As he started down again, he lifted his feet backward until they rested on the bar, his arms outstretched behind his body. In that back-breaking position he made the dizzy, thrilling rush across the tent again.

Came that instant of time when he must leave. Over on the other side James was matching his every motion. Rann left the bar, his body straightening as his outstretched hands reached for those of Garry, his catcher. His hands caught the catcher's upper forearms, and at the same second Garry's hands closed in a steel-like grip on his arm. Then they slid their hands down to the wrist grip as Rann swung backward with the catcher.

Meanwhile, Hardy and Coates, back on the pedestal,

had caught the bars of James and Rann. At just the right moment they released them.

As Rann and Garry swung back toward the center, Garry threw Rann, and twisted his body at the same time. Free in the air, Rann's body did a half pirouette as his trapeze swung up to him. His hands gripped it, and he swung back to the pedestal.

That was simple—those birds' nests didn't mean anything, but the clatter of applause from below was pleasant. Even more so were the gyrations of Horse O'Donnell, below, and the cordial applause of the others.

This night Rann was to do the solo work that Ross usually did and two stunts Ross couldn't do. If he accomplished the tricks, Ross was to go over to one of the Harwell-Walters troupes. The leading flyer over there had been killed recently. A property boy had slackened one of the main guys of the pedestal too soon, the pedestal had eased forward, and as he had swung back on his last trick the base of his spine had struck it—and broken his back. There was plenty of danger to spice the life of a circus flyer—and Rann never objected to spice.

Now came the first real test, and the blonde, tranquil young Southerner strove to loosen his taut muscles for the ordeal. He changed places with Ross, and that handsome performer whispered:

"Easy for you, kid."

"Huh!"

It was James' contemptuous grunt to one side, and the man's light grey eyes flickered balefully. Rann felt that James would give a month's pay to see the new flyer fail.

Already Ford was on the swing—getting below the bar and lifting his trunk-like legs into position.

"Go!"

Like a shot Rann left the pedestal. Once again that backswing, but this time he got his knees below the bar, his arms rigid behind him.

"Now!" hissed through the air, and he threw his body off and backward.

A whirling instant as he performed the back somersault, and then half of another one. Right there ahead of him were those great arms and hands that never missed—and the next second he was swinging below Ford. The one-and-one-half hock had come off perfectly.

Ford's broad, good-humored face, red due to his upside down position, smiled genially, calmly, confidently into his own, and then the boss of the troupe was throwing him outward and upward. There was his trapeze—he gripped it on the fly, and was back on the pedestal again.

Rann was working more surely now, his rippling muscles loose and writhing like snakes below his close-fitting white tights. This time a carrying somersault, by James and Coates, then a plunge done by Ross, James and Hardy. That was simply a straight layout from a position with knees under the bar.

ONCE again Rann was up, and this time he climbed to the "raise"—a small bar set three or four feet above the level of the pedestal and exactly in the center. Down below his friends were watching in motionless silence—this trick was no slouch, they knew well. Rann could not know how his perfect body-handling, every muscle under control from pointed toes to rigid arms, was obvious to kinkers, bosses, and spectators alike below. Years of practice will do much toward attaining perfection in anything.

"Go!"

He swung out mightily, going higher than ever before. Then back, and as his body started the upward arc and reached the pedestal he raised himself by his arms. Higher up he went, until it seemed that his sleek blonde head would touch the canvas. Down again in a rushing sweep that fairly tore the breath from his nostrils, Ford swinging toward him from the other side—

With a powerful wrench Rann's body left the bar, flung upward and backward by the swing and power of his arms. Two fast back somersaults—and there were Ford's hands waiting, seemingly motionless.

He'd made the double!

But more was to come immediately. He was not thrown in a half turn to his bar this time. Instead, as he left Ford, his body was spinning, and with nothing but thin air and the net below he did a double pirouette—and his hands gripped his bar safely.

The applause was thunderous then, and the boys on the pedestal were all smiles. Except James, of course.

His thin, bony, freckled face was grim and there was an unreadable look in the shallow depths of his light eyes. He cleared his throat, and spit.

But Rann was too happy and excited to mind what had looked like a studied insult then. He had made the double, and he had more confidence now. The worst was yet to come, but suddenly he felt in his steel muscles and clear brain a power and sureness that seemed superhuman. Those moments come to those whose bodies are trained and kept close to perfection.

Out he went again on the swing, his hands crossed on the bar. At the end of the swing he changed one hand over, and was swinging with his back to Ford. This time the boss held a bar between his hands as he hung straight down.

The "break" swung down toward Ford—Rann's muscles tightened. Came the moment of the beat, Ford's low, clear, unhurried voice—and Rann left the trapeze in a double forward somersault, and ended it with his hands gripping the bar held in Ford's hands.

The clatter of hands and the roars of O'Donnell fairly split the big top. Before the others could say a word to him, James' voice was saying:

"That corner pole of the net looks bad to me—a guy must be loose! I'll drop down and set it!"

Suiting the action to the word, he left the pedestal. A slow forward somersault through the air, and as the wondering audience applauded he landed neatly on his back in the net, walked across its springy surface, and tinkered with the guy and pole. Then he crawled up the rope ladder like a bony monkey, hand over hand, and was back on the pedestal again.

"All right," he said briefly, and with Ross and Rann watching he and the other two went into simultaneous ball overs—swan dives from a position over the bar into the hands of the catchers.

Two more stunts left for Rann, and somehow he knew he'd make them. A two-and-one-half back somersault to a foot catch was next, and in this one there was little he could do. It was up to Ed Ford to catch his ankles—and Ed Ford never failed. If he could get his little finger on a flyer, he had him.

Nor did he break his record this time. Rann found himself swinging in an iron grip, peering at the net thirty feet below him.

At that second a queer thought crossed his brain, and suddenly he was aware of a skip in his heart action and a feeling of sudden nausea. He thought of what would happen if that net down there didn't function correctly. James had dropped down and fixed it because his experienced eye had seen a slackness in the guys holding one of the four short posts which upheld it. And if one post fell, the body of the dropper would hit the ground with terrible force—probably crippling force. If a man had an enemy—

Rann reached the pedestal, and there was a flash of shame on his face.

"Of all the dirty-minded, self-pitying, yellow sissies I ever saw!" he lashed himself savagely, not noticing Ross's grinning compliments. "No wonder James hates me—I'm afraid of my own shadow, borrowing trouble!"

ONE trick remained, and beside it all the others were like child's play. And Rann was aware that some of his self-confidence seemed to have ebbed. One man in circus annals before him had done it—and only one. If he missed, a drop into the net—suppose the net should be weak—even if it weren't, a man could break a leg—

A significant thing had happened, and Rann himself did not realize how significant it was. He had got to thinking that perhaps he wouldn't make it.

The trick was preceded by an announcement. As Rann climbed to the raise, the band stopped, and Joe Myers, immaculate in evening clothes, mounted his

pedestal at the center ring. He was assistant equestrian director and official announcer. Then his voice was booming through the big top to the hushed thousands:

"The Selfridge Show presents the greatest living aerial gymnast—Mr. Randolph Braden. Mr. Braden will now accomplish a feat that has been done but once before in the history of gymnastic performance—a triple somersault to a hand catch. *Watch him!*"

A burst of applause, and then, with the boom of a foghorn in it, Horse O'Donnell's voice reverberated until Myers' sonorous tones seemed like the squeak of a soprano a mile away.

"Spin 'er, Rann!"

A quick warmth suffused that slender white-clad body high above the ground, and with sudden grimness in the set of his mouth Rann left the raise. Back again, lifting

There was Ford, but a bit too high—timing just an instant out of the way. Frantically Rann bent forward, his face fairly frozen with horror. He gripped Ford's right wrist, but the fingers of the other hand were merely tipping Ford's.

Then came that steel-like, unbreakable grip. Suddenly as though a warm, life-giving current had been poured through his body, he knew Ford had him, even if it was only one hand. The next instant, saved from death by the fraction of an inch, he had the normal grip, and Ford's white face was one wide grin. Then, just before he threw Rann back in a double pirouette to his bar, it changed to something bleak and cold and hard.

The death-like silence that had seemed to solidify the air and make it a physical thing that weighed upon a person, fairly strangling speech and stopping hearts, was broken by a mighty cheer of relief. Every one had gone through the heartbreaking strain. Bedlam beyond description broke loose. Rann, shaken to the depths, stood white and trembling on the pedestal. It was a full minute before he regained his poise.

His mind, clear now, working methodically, was nevertheless somewhat stunned by the unescapable inferences of the thing that had happened. James had dropped to the net to fix the pole in the first place, then dropped again as Rann was starting his triple, crashed the net down—

Was it believable that the man would risk almost certain injury to himself in order to kill Rann if he missed? James could have fixed the pole so that it would hold well for the first drop—well enough to avoid too great a shock. Could have set it at only a slightly greater angle than usual.

"Just a straight drop for you, Rann!" called Ford from across the tent.

Rann knew why. Ed figured he was thoroughly shaken by his experience, and did not want to have him try anything complicated.

The other flyers were murmuring to themselves, and words and phrases that were not pretty dropped like coals from their lips as hard eyes rested on James down below. He was unhurt, apparently.

No one said anything too explicit. They did not dare. But Rann, as he dropped into the net from the pedestal, knew in his heart that Ross and every other member of the troupe was thinking the same thing he was thinking.

THE gang was gathered at the back door, where the troupe had to wait for a moment until thirty riders galloped into the big top to start the big riding finale of the show. To boisterous, sincere congratulations from everyone, Rann grinned a contented acknowledgement, but there was an absent look in his wide set eyes, and little flecks of hazel were in their depths as his mind was busy with other things. Few outside the troupe knew of James' dislike for him; apparently none of those outside dreamed of foul play. If Horse O'Donnell and the rest noticed something strained about the gymnasts, they said nothing. Nor did any of the troupe.

James himself acted guilty. He stood a bit to one side, his face twisted as though in a

snarl of defiance as he looked from face to face. He, too, knew what the others were thinking.

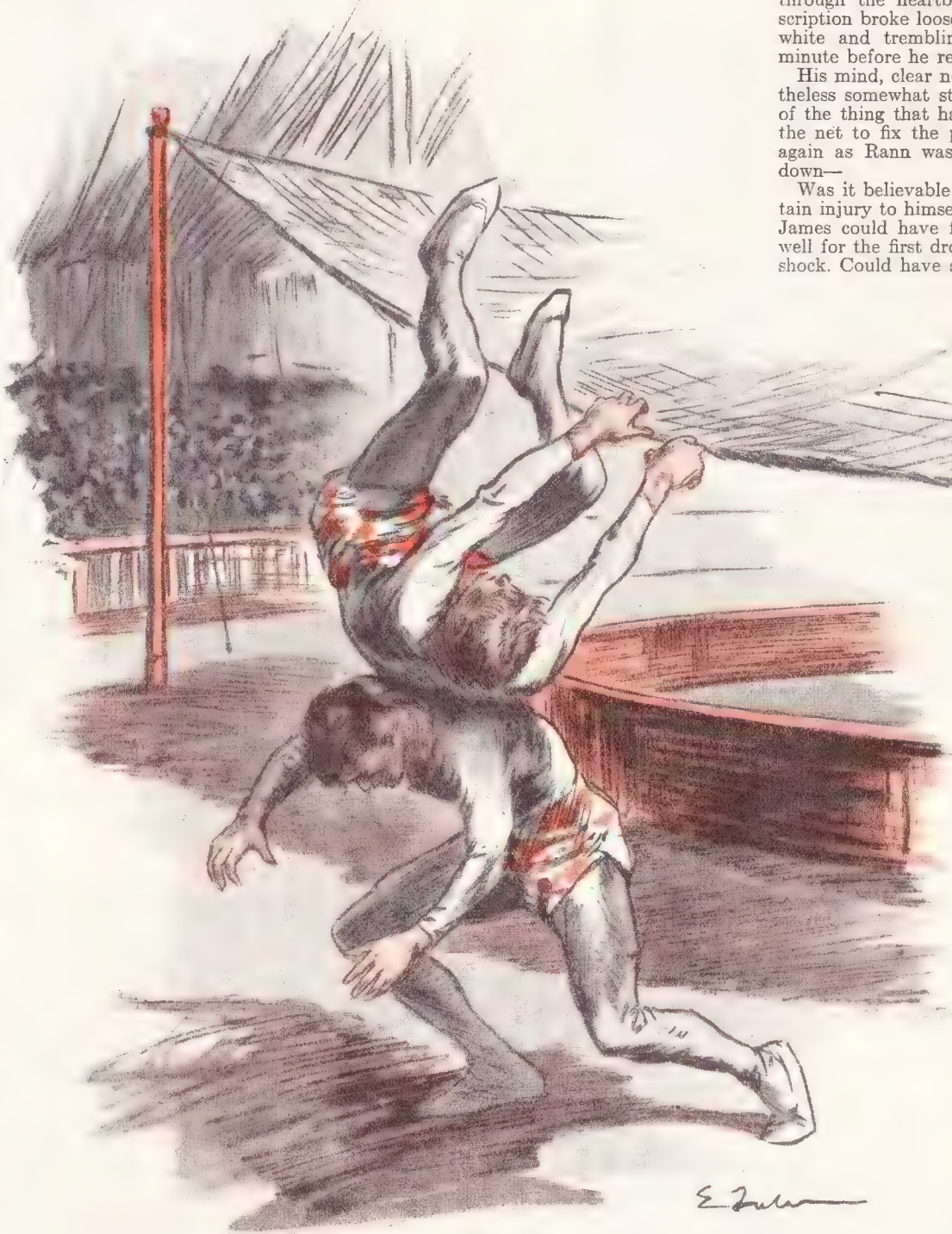
As they walked across the littered back yard toward the padroom, Rann made up his mind that there must be a showdown. Too many things could happen to a flyer by sheer accident to take any chances of deliberate foul play.

The padroom was a big tent, directly back of the big top, and the entire center of it was devoted to sheltering the ring stock. At each end of it were partitioned canvas dressing rooms, one for the men performers and the other for women.

The troupe filed into the dressing room, and to their trunks. There were four lines of wardrobe trunks, one at each side and two, back to back, in the middle. Rann's spot was next to James.

There was no one in the dressing room—animal trainers, clowns, and other performers save the riders who were then working were through for the night, and had dressed and gone. A curious tension hung over the place and Ed Ford's broad

(Continued on page 47)



He hit something that gave, and carried his body sideward. His fingers gripped the net.

himself high once more as he passed the pedestal.

"Hop to it, First of May!"

James' voice in his ears as he flew past. As he swooped down again he thought he saw James fall from the pedestal and his body hurtle through the air. Just a flashing glimpse—Rann scarcely realized it. He was tensed for the break now, his eyes like living flames and the big top as silent as death.

Ford swinging toward him—
"Go!"

With a mighty wrench Rann left the bar. And at that second his senses reeled, and for a split-second that was like an eternity his dazed mind comprehended what he had seen. Something had plunked into the net—and the net was sagging down close to the ground, almost on it, and loose. If he didn't make that triple somersault, he was dead!

Then his mind cleared. He must make it. His hunched body was spinning dizzily—two—two and a half—three. He was there, feet down in the air, hands outstretched—

The Last Barrage

By Warren Hastings Miller

Illustrated by Anton Otto Fischer

"DO we change the cutting cable, sir?"

"Not this trip, son!" Lieutenant Leeds smiled down gaily upon his junior officer, the solid and dependable Dummy. Then, noting the expression of stout disagreement on Dummy's pudgety face: "There's a reason, youngster!"

Dummy's piercing blue eyes gave back disapproval. He laid his hand on a bight of the dull and rusty mine-sweeping cable. "She's lost all her file edge, sir," he said.

Leeds sized up his attitude and then glanced out to where Mine Sweeper 57 lay wallowing in the gray swells of the North Sea. Quite evidently his junior officer needed dealing with! Leeds liked him immensely, but there were times when Dummy was obstinate.

"Will you step up to my cabin a minute, Ensign?" He smiled sweetly, but it was an order just the same. They went along the steel decks of Sweeper 52 and up a ladder to her chart house. Behind it was the captain's quarters: and as Dummy took a chair beside the desk he could see, through the polished brass porthole, their partner ship, Sweeper 57, standing by for orders. She was a huge gray tug of a ship, and a very nautical picture indeed framed in the round of the porthole. Lieutenant Helm commanded her, a beefy personage whom Dummy could not get on with. Leeds, he grudgingly admired, as a wealthy man giving time and services to the nation—the pay of a lieutenant was hardly pocket money to this man who controlled millions when in business at home.

Leeds' attitude toward the obscure Gloucester fisherman had always been just a bit patronizing and paternal, however, and Dummy found it a little hard to forgive him at times.

"Do you realize, Ensign, that this show is nearly over?" began Leeds, smiling pleasantly. "This nest of mines is the last of the barrage." He fingered carelessly an official letter. "Here are the orders from H. Q. detaching the lot of us as soon as we reach New York. Have you thought any about what you are going to do when a more or less grateful republic sets us adrift to shift for ourselves?"

Dummy's hard face showed no particular interest. "Don't know," he said briefly. "I've not spent much. 'Pay' will have quite a bit to hand me, I guess. 'Bout a thousand dollars. Some of us fellows will get together, after it's all over, and chip in to buy a small schooner. George's Banks, you know. Have her built in Rockport, mebbe."

"Isn't it about time we all begin to think of Number One?" Leeds grinned persuasively.

"Not till I get those orders you speak of, sir," said Dummy. It was a simple statement with him. It had not occurred to him that Number One was worth thinking about as yet. Taking up the North Sea mines was an aftermath of the Armistice. Until the job was done—

"Well, I've been thinking about it for all of you," said the lieutenant vigorously. "Ever hear of prize money, Bickfield?" Dummy thought of that privateer great-great-great uncle of his who had armed a Gloucester pinky and had taken fifteen Britishers with her, including a powder ship that Washington had shed tears of joy over, but he said nothing, only nodded.

LIEUTENANT Leeds drew out a map on thin onion-skin paper. It bore the stamp of the British Intelligence Office and was marked with red dots and blue crosses. The land was outlined in casual blanks, an empty Germany below a vacuous hand of Denmark. But the sea area was lined and spotted with red dots, and speckled with blue crosses. Small figures of latitude and longitude, worked out to seconds, accompanied each blue cross.

"Sunken ships," said Leeds. "Here's our nest. And here, right in the

middle of it, happens to be the Danish ship *Olga*. One mine put her down. We know that because a British patrol sub saw her go."

Dummy wondered why the other two mines had not exploded also. The barrage was laid in triplicate, a fence from the bottom of the sea clear up to the surface. Leeds looked at him keenly, guessing the thought.

"She went over to starboard and sunk clear of the lower barrage," he explained, "and she carried three millions of bullion—gold marks—for the German government," he added casually and then watched for the effect of that announcement upon Dummy.

The latter laughed shortly. "The irony of it!" he exclaimed. "We laid that barrage—seventy thousand miles across this Heligoland Bight, to protect the neutrals as well as ourselves, and here one walks right into it!"

"This one was not so innocent as she seemed," said Leeds drily. "Anyhow, here's our dope: We set off the nest, first; then sweep for those two with dull cable and drag them clear of the wreck. Then we can send down divers and recover that bullion. Big prize money, boy! What?"

His eyes gleamed enticingly at Dummy, who looked doubtful. There was daring in the lieutenant's whole attitude, the willingness to take a chance, and not a little of the rapacity of the man of money the world over. Dummy had dealt with the same kind of man, when he had come into Gloucester with a hold of fish and the commission merchant was there on the dock to rob him of his profits, if bargaining and bluff could do it. He shrugged his thick shoulders.

"Looks like a risk to the ship, sir," he objected. "Why not cut them free with a new file edge cable, as we always have done?"

Leeds listened impatiently. He did not have to argue with his junior this way. A peremptory order would settle it, for his was all the responsibility anyhow. Dummy could see that impulse to give just such a conclusive order in his eyes. The responsibility did not trouble Leeds, nor fear of courtmartial, for the Navy would simply set him on the beach if he bungled anything. Being wealthy and having large affairs of his own, it would mean little to him. Dummy, however, felt that for them to be set ashore in disgrace would be some-

thing that he could never live down. His ship to him represented the nation. To risk her on any dangerous prize-money scheme would be about the last thing he would think of. He set his jaw doggedly to receive his captain's next argument.

"Not at all!" the lieutenant was saying. "Those two mines will still have their antennae attached. Ready to set off everything the instant they touch. Probably damage the wreck so we can't get any divers into her at all. Then away goes your prize money! Your share, Ensign, I might mention, ought to come to about ten thousand dollars. Enough to buy that little schooner that we were talking of, Bickfield," he added, and grinned upon him gaily.

DUMMY, square-built and square-headed, did not respond to the grin. Instead he got to his feet and planted his sturdy legs wide apart. "I protest, formally, Lieutenant Leeds, against any such plan as you propose!" he said stoutly. "In writing, just as soon as I can get the yeoman to set it down, if you like. You go to monkeying with live mines with a dull cutting cable, and you risk this ship—or 57, it's all one—and you know it!" His voice was bitter now, and his blue eyes stern. His fist struck a thick palm with emphasis. It was the protest of a solid New England Bickfield, whose ancestors had been in the Boston Tea Party, a protest purely on principle, had the lieutenant been able to perceive it. But Leeds did not see. He grinned sardonically.

"Don't get excited, old thing!" he bantered, refusing to take Dummy seriously. "There will be no danger to the two sweepers. Helm and I keep up exactly the same speed, see? We drag away those two mines, anchor and all, at the bottom of our V of cable, until they are well clear of the wreck. I know the danger you mean, but it just can't happen, don't you see?"

But Dummy was not attending. "Helm?" he growled. "Is he in on this too?"

"Sure! To-morrow's the Fourth; and he and I thought we'd give the boys something worth celebrating for—loot! It means hundreds to every man-jack of them." He edged off on a new tack. "What do they care, at home, about the lot of us! You'll get paid off and set on the beach, and can go to blazes for all the Department or anybody else cares. A few hundred dollars prize money will feel mighty good to most of the boys about then, let me tell you!"

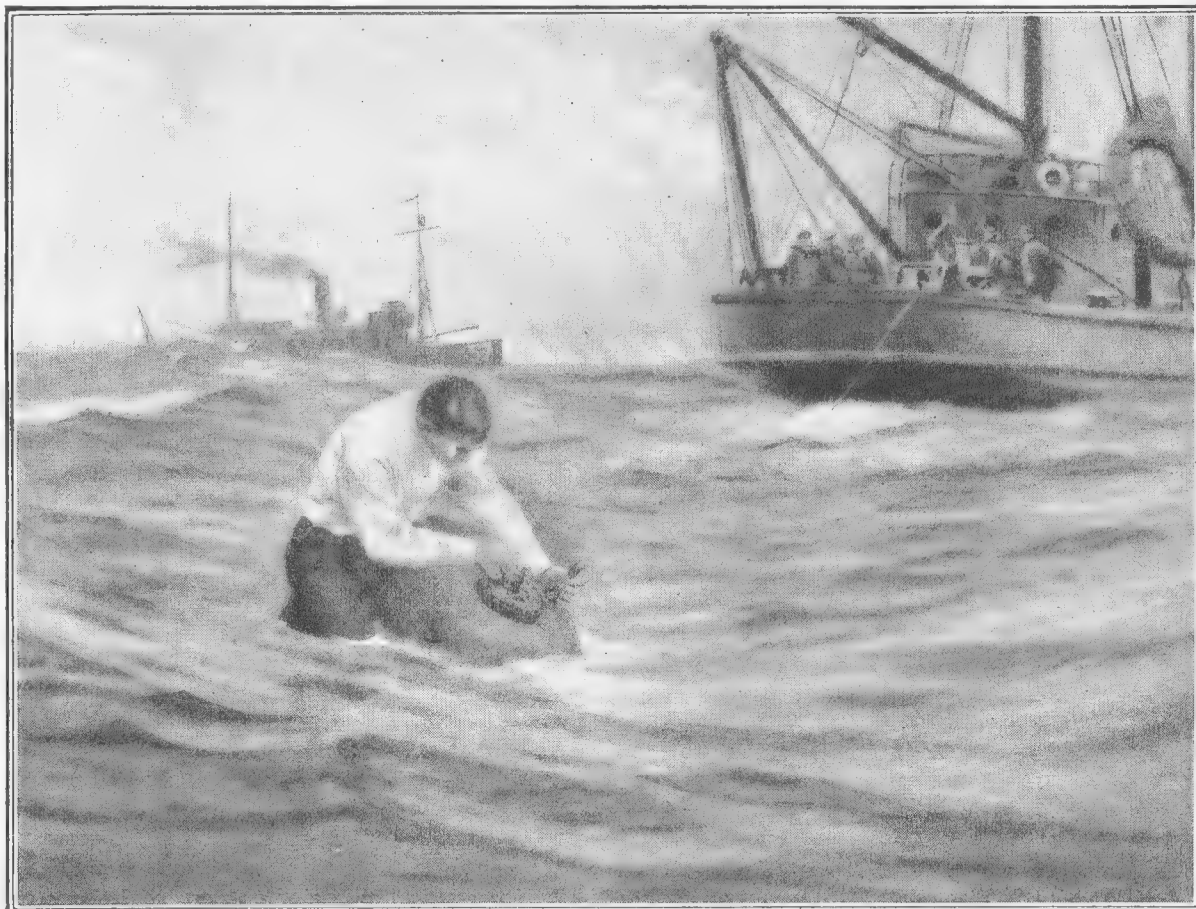
Dummy groaned inwardly. He was still thinking about Helm. Helm was a sailor, but greed, as Dummy knew, was that officer's middle name.

"That settles it!" he said grimly. "I protest, formally and in writing, sir! You can consider it as already done. The yeoman will have my protest in your hands within five minutes, sir."

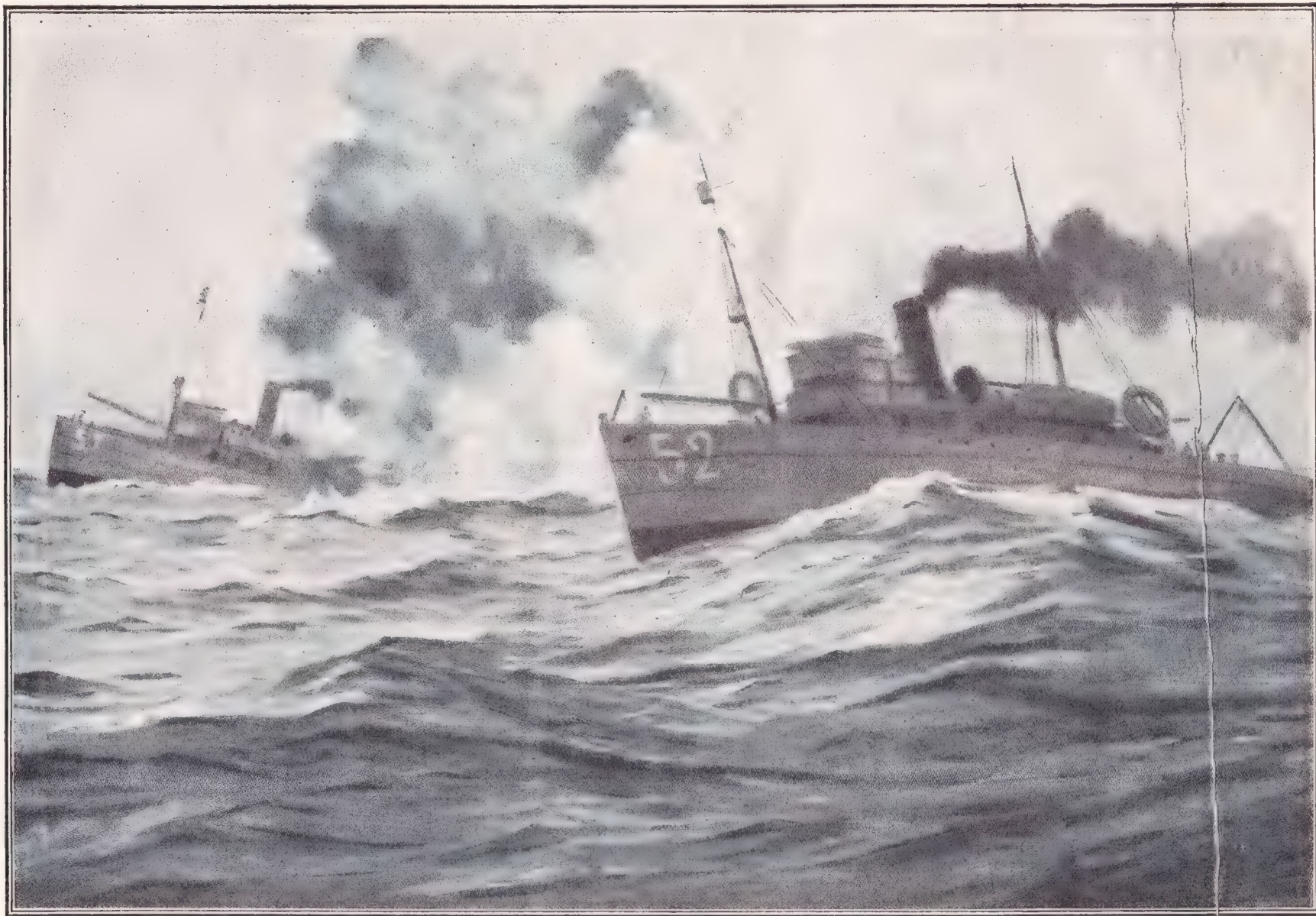
Leeds' gray eyes hardened. "Protest away, Ensign!" he said wearily. "I've talked about long enough. Sound

quarters, please—Signalman!" He called out to a sailor standing by the flag locker. Dummy bowed stiffly and went out to sound "quarters." Presently a string of signal flags containing the orders of the day rose to their yard-arm, and the sailor was semaphoring over to Helm the more intricate directions. Dummy went aft to his station on the fantail stern, his heart bursting with rebellion. He was tempted to fling his challenge in the face of the constituted authority when it came to this question of right and wrong. But there was no use in doing that. He would simply be put under arrest. Instead he went to the tool locker and took out a nine-inch monkey wrench. It made an awkward and bulgy weight in his pocket, but Dummy felt that he might have use for it before this day was over. He had made his protest, stopping at the yeoman's office to dictate and sign it; possessing himself of this wrench was all that there was left for him now to do.

He stood moodily by the mine crane a mo-



Dummy tried another last twist with his hands. He could move it.



A sudden geyser of water rose in a boiling column two hundred feet above 52's bows.

ment, planning just how he was going to handle the emergency, if it arose; then called away the towing engine gang and got the kite aft, still with that length of dull cable shackled to it. The "kite" was a huge plate of steel as large as a dining table and had a steel wire bridle attached to its corners. They and 57 each towed one astern when cutting mines adrift. Between the two kites hung the cutting cable. When it encountered the thin wire rope that held the mine to its anchor, its file edge would cut loose the mine, and they shot it down with machine guns when it bobbed to the surface. Nothing like that would happen with those mines alongside the wreck, Dummy knew. Instead, their dull cable would simply drag mine and anchor together in whatever direction the two sweepers were heading. It was the lieutenant's plan to drag them well away from the wreck, then cut and shoot them down. After that it would be easy, for both ships carried full diver's equipment. All well enough, if both captains were mighty careful about it! But—Dummy felt the wrench in his pocket and knew what he would do, then, as his bit in serving his nation.

THE first part of the day's program was to find and set off all the remaining mines of the barrage around the wreck. They had been laid in a sort of circular eel-trap, so that a Hun sub working along the fence would eventually find herself surrounded by them and unable to get out without touching either a mine bristle or an antennae. The latitude and longitude had been worked out down to seconds, but actual positions could be located only by steaming over a field and getting blown up by the first one. After that the chart would give the lay of the rest. The sweepers were designed to withstand the shock of an exploding mine. They were like big, husky, sea-going tugs, a hundred and eighty-seven feet long, built like battleships, with every third rib a huge gusset of steel. The mine kicked them out of the water like a tin can, but invariably they came down topside up and went on with their work.

52 and 57 were at that finding business now. Slowly the two ships forged ahead over the heaving gray wastes of the North Sea. Then—*Brroom!*—oh, it was terrific, that sudden geyser of brown water that rose in a boiling column two hundred feet above 52's bows. She had touched an antenna, a floating cork buoy, copper-bound, with wires running down to the mine. Dummy and his men darted for the shelter of the roof over the towing engine, while their ship rose crazily and careened far

over to one side as enormous thunders of falling waters crashed all about them. They were flung about like toys in a box. Dummy grabbed a stanchion and hung fast. He was used to this and knew that the ship would survive. He felt the beat of her engine stop, and then looked out to sea, bewildered, for that mine had set off seven others in the nest by its concussion alone. All the neighborhood was geysers, and the huge waves thrown up were rushing at them like ravening wolves. They crashed overside and swept aboard in one foaming wash that carried away everything movable and tore loose that tool box as if it had been held down by threads. Through the murk Dummy could see 57 almost on beam-ends—and held there by enormous pounding seas. Their own ship was being deluged clear over the superstructure, the yell of complaining steel groaning in unison with riven oak and thrumming wire rope in answer to the roar of the furious waters. She rocked a hundred and forty degrees, with a rapidity that hurled men about like dice. They came out of it half drowned and soaking wet, and Dummy led the charge down the reeling deck to where a marker buoy hung under the taffrail. Overboard he boosted it; and then stood by, looking forward and upward to where Lieutenant Leeds' visored cap jutted over the broken panes of the chart house. Solid water must have reached up there to have done that, Dummy thought, though he had heard nothing of the jingle of broken glass in the din of boarding seas that had swept the ship clean. Good old 52! You couldn't down the old pot; seven mines going off at once didn't feaze her!

"That's well, Ensign!" came Leeds' shout of approval as the marker buoy floated astern. "Pretty work! Guess we about touched off everything there was that trip. Leadsman away, there!"

Dummy saw that the lieutenant's mind had instantly leaped back to the thing that concerned him most, finding that wreck and beginning salvage operation on her. His sturdy New England disapproval rose with equal swiftness. They were here to clear mines. That was their duty and their business—there were no orders about looking after salvage. Tending strictly to his own business was Dummy's ideal of the fitness of things. America wasn't looking for any loot out of the war; neither was he.

But Leeds had quite evidently abandoned further search for odd mines left after that big explosion. Perhaps the chart showed him that those seven were the last, except the two near the wreck, Dummy growled

his rage. It was not the way *he'd* have done things, but there couldn't be two captains on the same ship! 52 and 57 were now coursing slowly over and over the area of the sea to the east of his marker buoy. Leads were going on both sweepers, a monotonous, "By the mark, nine! By the deep, nine! A quarter less nine!" Smooth regular bottom here; and somewhere down on it that Danish ship on her side. Presently a joyous hoot from Helm.

"We haff her, Leeds! Drop a buoy, dere, you by der stern!" Dummy set his jaw. There was a white splash alongside the fantail stern of 57 and a white buoy bobbed on the sea.

"Five fattam clears her—out wid de kites!" came the hail from Helm, as he leaned far out of his chart house window and waved thick arms with delight. Dummy's lip curled. Greed—and nothing more! In the presence of loot, patriotism, the stern sense of duty first, became mere secondary consideration. His ire waxed hot against Leeds, too. His share in this would come to thousands. Dummy seethed.

57 was now circling, while 52 went astern. She came alongside and grimly Dummy passed her the hand rope to which was attached the shackle of that dull cable. They hauled it aboard and secured it to their own kite. Then 57 steamed away a short distance, stopped, turned, faced the east where lay that marker buoy over the Danish ship. Leeds hailed Dummy through his megaphone: "All set, Ensign? Secure a marker to the kite at five fathoms."

DUMMY put on a small float so that he would know when his kite had dropped to thirty feet below the surface; then stood on the fantail stern motioning with hand and wrist to the machinist at the towing machine as they paid out the cable.

"All out, sir!" he hailed.

Full ahead jangled in the engine room. A column of foaming water from the screw boiled out astern. Abreast, both ships advanced on the marker buoy, towing their kites some distance astern, and between them sagged some sixty feet of that dull cutting cable. Bells, and hails from Dummy, adjusted the speed so that the small depth-float just bobbed awash. And steadily they neared the marker, passed over the hull of the Danish ship without touching it, and then the marker itself went under. Dummy put his ear to the towing cable and listened tensely. He did not like this, for there was hideous danger to his ship (Continued on page 30)

The American Boy

The Biggest, Brightest, Best Magazine for Boys in All the World

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Friendly Talks With the Editor

Loyalty

EVERY fellow knows what loyalty is, or if he doesn't he'd better step right off the front porch and hunt him up an education on that point. Loyalty is like good health—you can't have too much of it, nor too many varieties. And there are such a great many varieties. There is loyalty to your country. There is loyalty to your family. There is loyalty to your friends. There is loyalty to yourself. And there are a lot more kinds of loyalty if you want to go and nose them out.

Admired

EVERYBODY admires loyalty, and rightly. Even history admires it, and the ancient loyalty of Damon and Pythias is one of the finest things that ever happened in the world. Even folks who haven't loyalty seem to admire it in others. It is such a splendid thing that even people who stand outside the law and are looked upon as being very wicked hold loyalty a virtue. It seems as if some folks who haven't any other virtue at all find it necessary to hold to loyalty, and that makes it look pretty important, doesn't it?

Mortar

LOYALTY is a sort of mortar holding together the bricks and stones that make up the edifice of life. If it were not for it, the whole building would come tumbling down, and there we would be up to our necks in rubbish.

Selfishness

LOYALTY and selfishness will not ride in the same wagon. They are not on speaking terms. If you are the sort of fellow who is always out for himself, you want to stay as far away from loyalty as you can because it will cramp your style. A little bit of loyalty has ruined any number of men who have set out to establish a record for selfishness. The thing to do is to take your pick. If you want to be the sort who always plays his own game and works for his own advantage and never cares a rap for what happens to anybody else—then see to it that you eliminate every scrap of loyalty in your system. If, on the other hand, you want to be the sort other men tie to, then reduce your selfishness to as small a pimple as you can.

There Will Be Some

IN any event there will be some selfishness left. We can't get away from it. Probably a tincture of selfishness is necessary. So is a tincture of vanilla necessary in ice cream, but if you pour in the whole bottle you make a pretty bitter dish. In this world every fellow must do a certain amount of looking out for his own interests. Or, at least, we have grown to think it necessary. But the man who was most loved of all the men we ever knew of was one who seemed to have no idea at all of getting things for himself. He never got rich, and mostly he was pretty poor—if you don't count as an asset the fact that every man or woman he ever came in contact with loved him. You can't be genuinely poor when people feel that way about you.

So unselfishness seems to pay. Yet if being a little selfish will make you feel safer, we're not going to try to argue you out of it—even if it doesn't mix well with loyalty.

Knowing the Yells

LOYALTY doesn't consist merely in knowing the college yells. Cheering is all right, of course—fine as far as it goes. But it's hardly more than the outer husk of loyalty; it certainly isn't the heart.

Dogs

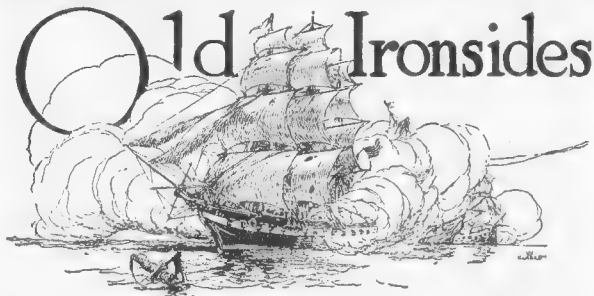
IF you really want to know what loyalty is, go and study a good dog. There are several things folks can learn from dogs and not many things dogs can learn from folks. It is a lot more valuable to a man to have a dog teach him than it is for a dog to have a man give him lessons. Dogs know all about loyalty and they work at it twenty-four hours a day. We've never seen a dog, not even a mongrel, that didn't want to be loyal to somebody if somebody would let him. And nobody ever heard of a dog who double-crossed a friend.

Workers

WE have an idea that any employer would rather have a loyal staff of workers than a brilliant staff. And once or twice we have worked for bosses who were so loyal to their workers that somehow salary didn't seem to count. The motto of one of those men who was editor of a great newspaper was, "Anybody who does anything to one of my boys does it to me." And he lived up to it. You can guess whether his boys worked for him.

Ideals

THEN there is the matter of ideals. It's fine to be loyal to people, but it is even finer to be loyal to your ideals. Everybody—even a safe-cracker—has ideals. Maybe nobody but yourself ever knows what your ideals are, but you know what they are, and you can't be disloyal to them without catching yourself at it. Now personally we would rather be caught at something by



By

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

From the Complete Poetical Works of Oliver Wendell Holmes.
Published by Houghton, Mifflin Company.

the police than by ourself. It gives you a mighty uncomfortable feeling to catch yourself in some sort of meanness. The fellow who catches himself in disloyalty to his own ideals very often will get to suspect himself. And when you suspect yourself the fat is in the fire. You've got to be able to trust yourself or the wheels won't go 'round.

On the Whole

WHEN you sit back and take a bird's-eye view of loyalty, you get the idea it is a pretty important piece of machinery. It holds governments together; it is the backbone of business organizations; it is the foundation of family life. Loyalty to yourself is the foundation of character. Why, you've even got to be loyal to your stomach or you have to call in the doctor. Two of the most despised men who ever lived were Judas and Benedict Arnold—and all because they were disloyal. So there you are. You have your choice. It doesn't require any genius to be loyal, or any extra muscles. Anybody can do it with his hands tied behind him. And that is funny, because when you've accomplished it, you have done one of the most important things a human being can do.

You Tell What You Are

RECENTLY, during a pause in a high school baseball game, we were watching the men of the visiting team, bunched together, talking things over. We'd never seen any of them before, but before the game began again, we knew two of them pretty well. In the merest flicker of an incident, they had revealed themselves. Ever stop to think how often you unconsciously tell strangers just what sort of fellow you are?

On His Job

THIS is what happened. The visitors had brought a bottle of water with them. Apparently, they were not taking any chances on strange drinking water. And most of them weren't taking any chances on drinking too much of their own familiar kind. They'd taken a conservative swallow apiece or, better still, merely rinsed the mouth, and then set the bottle down. But one lean, nervous-motioned chap wasn't satisfied with his swallow. You could see by the way he looked around for the bottle that he craved more dampening down. Sheer strung-up restlessness maybe. Anyhow, pretty soon he reached for the bottle and raised it to his lips. Just at that moment, the black-browed young captain glanced around and caught him at it. Did that captain wink at the player's slip, overlook it? Not much. Those black brows came together, and friend captain shook his head sternly. Right then we got his measure. He's no easy-going dodger of duty; when need arises, he's a disciplinarian—on his job. Good work.

A Sportsman

JUST the same, we wondered how the lean chap would take his jacking up. He turned red, and we half expected to see a flare-up or some sulking. But again, not much. Shamefacedly he set the bottle down, shot his captain an apologetic grin, and cheerfully got back into the confab. It all happened in less than a minute, but we'd got his measure, too. That lean player was strung tight over the game; he didn't get the drink he wanted, and he got a scowl he didn't want; but not for an instant did he lose his temper. He's rather reckless with the water, but he has a pretty good grip on himself after all. He's a sportsman.

The First Move

IF something goes wrong between you and another boy or you and a teacher or you and your dad, don't be afraid to make the first move in getting the difficulty straightened out. There's a lot more satisfaction in getting things cleared up than there is in nursing hurt pride.

Scrupulous

WET day . . . soft, squashy lawns and extensions . . . crowd of boys trooping along the street, crowding each other off the sidewalk on to the soft extensions. One boy in the crowd noticed the holes they were making in the extensions and good-naturedly herded the whole crowd back on the walk. He was scrupulous, had a nice regard for other people's rights. We rather like that word *scrupulous*. It isn't dashing; yet it implies something pretty fine.

The Circus in the Clouds

By Thomson Burtis

Illustrated by Fred C. Yohn

DAZED with pain, wedged precariously into the diving plane, Lieutenant Streak Somers, star wing walker of the army air circus, leaped to a bleak conclusion as he lost consciousness: Roach, his pilot, had certainly tried to kill him—had purposely dived out from beneath him, and had then nosed back up under him to batter him with that flailing prop.

Well, Roach's plans hadn't worked, that was all—and with that realization, the half stunned young airman became only a limp form wedged into the wrecked wing of the plane diving for the landing field. Lucky for him he had hit that wing instead of having the prop hit him.

And small wonder that he had leaped to dark suspicions of Roach. Everything that had gone before this near tragic slip in the first exhibition at the Kentucky State Fair would make a man suspicious.

Hadn't the surly pilot shown bitter dislike of Streak, black jealousy of the young flyer who, to rouse interest in the air service, was to do the spectacular wing walking that Roach himself wanted to do? Hadn't it appeared probable that Roach had bashed in the elevators of two planes that very day, bashed them in to prevent Streak from performing before the great crowd that had gathered?

Streak wasn't the only one who suspected Roach of dirty work. Captain Kennard did, too. And Lieutenants Don Goodhue and Jimmy Little. And, perhaps, Brush Parsons, indefatigable press agent for the motion picture company that planned to use the flying circus stunts in a picture.

But no one could prove anything. And it was only fair to give Roach the benefit of the doubt.

Well, Streak was neither exonerating nor accusing the burly, black-browed pilot as the Jenny swept them both down to earth. The young airman had lit on his spine when he hit that wing; for the time being, he was dead to the world.

IT took nearly an hour to bring Streak back to consciousness, and when he came to, he looked around in puzzled wonder at clean, white walls. Then Captain Kennard's face resolved itself out of the mental fog, staring at him over the foot of the bed.

All that had happened came back to Somers in a rush of recollection that brought with it a tingling sensation of horrified fear. Then, by natural association, came thoughts of Cocky Roach. With that, the blue eyes of the young airman blazed, and before Captain Kennard could say a word, Streak burst forth:

"Where's Roach?"

"Outside," stated the captain briefly. "How do you feel?"

As a matter of fact, Streak felt nauseated and weak, and his nerves were jumping. Never before had he known that feeling—all sense of repose and control was gone.

"Rotten," he said briefly. "Well, Roach didn't get me, did he?"

The stocky little C. O. came to the side of the bed, and sat down. He ran one stubby brown hand through his short-cut pompadour, and his face was very serious.

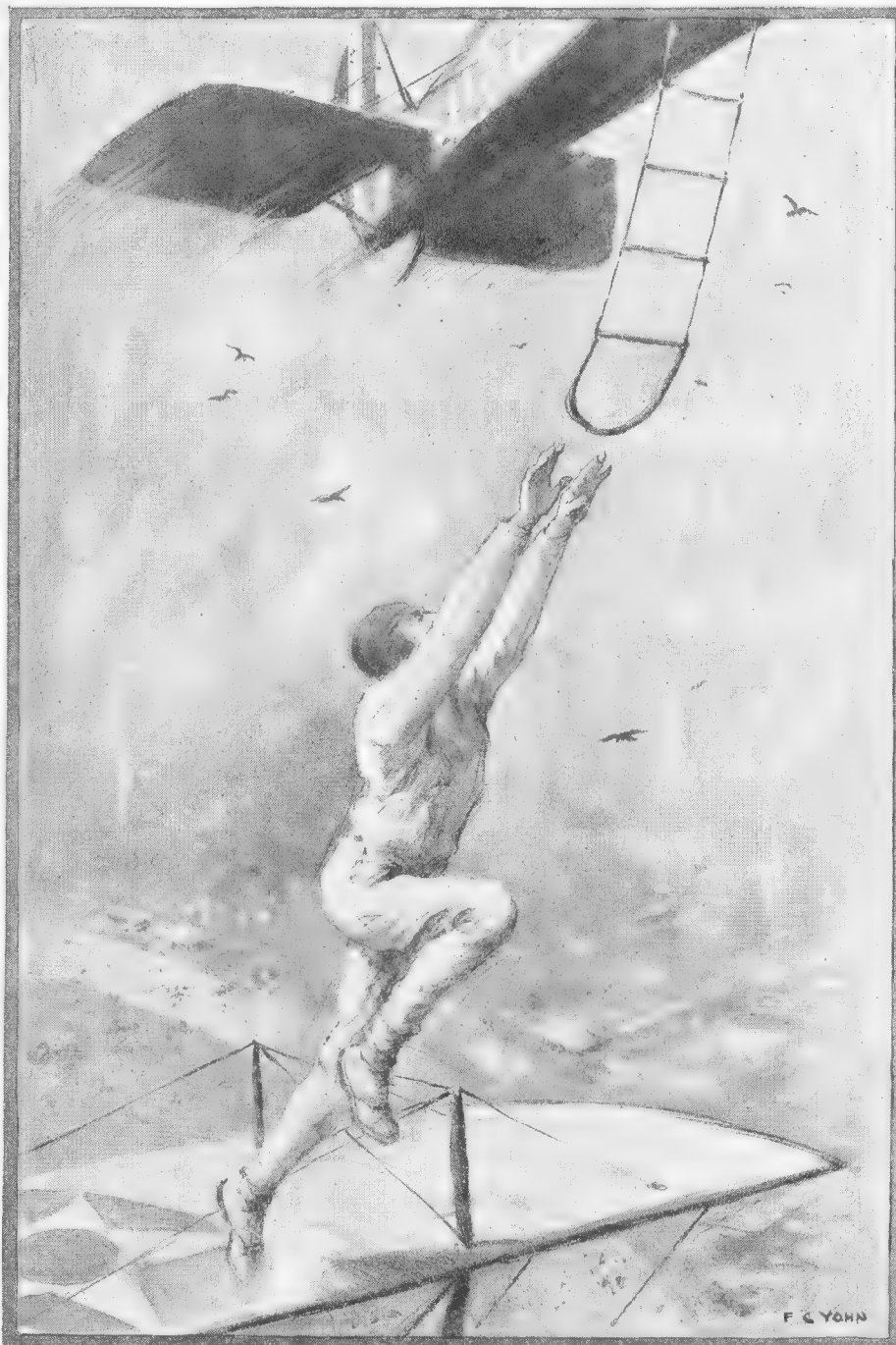
"Do you really think he deliberately dived out from under you?" he asked directly.

Streak hesitated. "I don't know. But—it looks queer. I didn't have my legs around the struts—"

"But if he wanted to get you, why did he zoom and let you hit the ship?"

"Maybe because you were up there watching, and it looked better! Then, by the mighty, he came zooming up so the prop nearly hit me—he missed me by less than an inch!"

As the remembrance of that awful minute struck him with renewed force, the overwrought pilot half rose in bed.



He strained to clutch the ladder—and the swaying loop eluded him.

"There, there, now, Streak," the captain said soothingly. "Don't get too itchy about it. An army Intelligence man is shadowing Roach all the time, and he hasn't a chance to get away. I saw it all, and I wonder—"

"Come in!" yelled Streak.

The knock on the door had made him jump a foot. It opened, and the barrel-like body of Roach filled the opening.

"Can I come in?" he asked, his deep voice slightly softer than usual.

THE captain hesitated, glancing at Streak. It would not do to subject the boy to any intense nervous strain now—

"Yes!" barked Streak, and then blurted in spite of himself.

"Well, you didn't manage to drop me, did you?"

Roach's heavy, dark face whitened. Walking with that curious, catlike lightness so like Streak's own graceful way of moving, he approached the bed.

"If you wasn't a sick man, I'd smack you for that," he rasped.

"No argument," said Kennard sharply. "Streak, you're only hurting yourself by getting worked up. Roach, you shouldn't have come in."

"If I was tryin' to kill yuh, why didn't I dump yuh off when yuh was standin' out there on the wing?" demanded

Roach slowly, his full mouth a tight, grim line across his face. "Yuh was slow gettin' set up there on the center section—and the ship hit a whale of a bump. I takes a chance on you ruinin' the ship—s'pose yuh'd hit a wing, or hit me and knocked me out, or hit the tail surfaces? I'd been as dead as you, wouldn't I? And let me tell yuh another thing, you rooster so free with your gab! If you didn't have the best trick pilot in the world flyin' yuh, that there drop the ship took would o' been bigger, and they'd be pickin' up pieces of yuh yet out there!"

There was something granite-like in the man's face, something of genuine dignity, and his cold words were compelling and impressive, yet the weakened Streak, shaken out of his customary imperturbability, could not get rid of feeling that behind the other's granite calm lurked treachery and hatred.

The young airman fought against the feeling. Roach had a case. Of course, he could have dumped his passenger off while he was standing on the top wing; and while it would have been, perhaps, obvious to Captain Kennard, no court in the country would have convicted the pilot. If Roach had wanted to get him, that would have been his best chance. But he hadn't taken it. Furthermore, there seemed to be no real reason for Roach to want to murder him. The man did want an opportunity for the wide publicity and adulation that he could get by being the wing walker of the circus—but if Streak were killed, the circus would certainly be called off, with no one the gainer. And the pilot's explanation of the near-tragic mishap was possible.

BUT there was still the thought that the man hated him like poison, that he was a peculiar type of egotistic braggart whose self-praise was founded, surprisingly, on real ability. It was hard to decide—

"I'll say this," Kennard put in steadily. "I've said the same thing in an official report; I was watching every move closely, and Roach's explanation is possible. There was a tough bump there. You were slow in finding the struts for your legs, and Roach did do a fine piece of flying in getting his ship in your path. I—"

"If he was a wing walker, he'd been ready ten seconds before it happened!" flared the irrepressible Roach. "He'd o' had a grip with his mitts, anyways!"

He stopped, and turned to Somers. "Takin' back your dirty sling about my tryin' to drop you?" he inquired slowly, his eyes challenging the sick man's.

"I'm not going to accuse you—I don't know," Streak told him steadily. He had hold of himself now. "I'm not saying anything."

"Not sayin' anythin'!" blazed the big pilot. "So that's your game—you'll play safe and plant suspicion by keepin' still and lookin' wise, hey! And I'm to be branded as a sneak and a murderer, am I?" he ranted on. "Followed around now by a dick—I know! Because of you, you baby, all because of you an' your jealousy! Tryin' to get the man that saved yuh from your own lousy awkwardness! Breakin' up your own ships so's yuh could blame that on me! Well, I'll make you pay until yuh wished—"

"Wait!"

The captain's voice reverberated like a thunderbolt, and Roach was cut off in mid-career.

"Now you listen to me," Captain Kennard said swiftly. "If you're innocent, I don't wonder that you're raging. But you landed here as a loud-mouthed nuisance, suspicion points to you, and you've got to take your medicine. You need have no fear of publicity. But remember that from this day forth, until we're satisfied, you are going to be watched every minute of the day. If nothing more happens, you'll be O. K. If you make a false move, you'll be caught. And if that false move backs up circumstantial evidence, you're going away for life."

"If you're a square-shooter, you're all right. But don't start any talk of revenge for what you've brought on yourself. You're up against the government—so be yourself."

"Now beat it, Roach," and the captain's voice was suddenly softer. "You're going to get just as much consideration as you deserve. And you've got a lucky break, remember. You will continue to take Streak's place, as you did this afternoon, until he's himself again."

"Go ahead—Streak's nerves are in bad shape now." And Cocky Roach, head back, eyes gleaming, unconquerable whether thug or not, stalked to the door. There he turned, and his eyes dwelt on the slim, white Streak, lying there in bed with flushed cheeks and unhealthy glittering eyes.

"Baby!" he spat—and disappeared.

Chapter Five

"FEELING all right, Streak?" drawled Don Goodhue. "You've picked kind of a heavy schedule to come back on."

"How so?" queried Streak.

He seemed older by years than he had been a little more than two weeks before. His eyes were clear enough, but they seemed unhealthy bright, and a bit sunken. His cheeks held deeper hollows, and there were lines etched around his mouth.

"Well, going from ship to ship and climbing that ladder's no cinch, and a 'chute jump isn't a joy ride to any man, and, what with one thing and another, I figured maybe you'd let Cocky Roach do this fair and you start in down at Atlantic City next week when the movies join up with us."

Streak's eyes roved around the great fair grounds absently. They were at Syracuse, for the New York State Fair, and their flying headquarters was in the center of the race track. On all four sides of them the grounds were rimmed with permanent Fair buildings, and there was acre after acre of gaudily painted tents and booths between track and buildings. It was morning, but already there were thousands on the grounds, and the blare of carnival calliopes, the raucous shouts of barkers, and the strains of various bands combined with the hundreds of banners and the straggling crowd to make up the atmosphere of a holiday.

Lining the outside rail of the race track were many people gazing in hungry curiosity at the canvas hangar that hid the circus ships. The outfit had flown from fair to fair, shipping a hangar ahead of them. They carried two, the one in use being shipped to the town two weeks ahead.

"Doesn't make much difference," Streak argued, his eyes coming to rest on the four mechanics, lounging near the hangar. "I'm anxious to get back to work for a lot of reasons. One is that being laid up doesn't help out the publicity on that movie much."

"Publicity!" exploded Don, his bright brown eyes blinking. "When almost every day old Brush Parsons has had a line in the paper retailing the race back to health of the famous dawn-to-dusk demon, and when the story of how you got hurt and Roach's good flying, so-called, was carried all over the dog-gone world, pretty near!"

Streak nodded.

"I know. But Parsons said the quicker I got back, the more interested the crowds would be and the bigger they'd be and the more junk he could land in the paper."

Don glanced over at his young friend, and there was the hint of a sardonic gleam in his eye. It seemed to him that Streak had spoken as though certain that the papers were waiting avidly for news of him.

And Don was right in his impression. Those mysteriously broken elevators had been good for a newspaper yarn that breathed of mysterious menace—and the accident, following, had been a really sensational news item. So Streak had read column after column in

which he was referred to in terms of exaggerated praise—and, unconsciously, he had come to look upon himself as of considerable

importance to the world.

"You're going to use Roach, then, of course," Don said finally. "Sure you—want to, Streak?"

"You're all pretty well convinced he's innocent, aren't you?" demanded Streak.

Don nodded.

"But we aren't you, and it's your funeral," he remarked. "If you're not trusting him it's liable to ruin your nerve."

IT seemed to Streak that Don must have noticed how he winced. For that was what had made him pale, hollow-eyed, and uneasy—straining to get back into harness before he went crazy. Those weeks on the ground had given him ample time to think—and no opportunity to fly himself back into normality. And he was awakening now, sometimes, in a cold sweat, reliving those terrible moments high above the ground when he had been alone in space. And every once in a while, as he thought of exposing himself to the perils he used to laugh at—he had realized that he was afraid.

Not of Roach. He was convinced now that the man would not dare to attempt to murder him. And that Roach had, by accident, or design, saved his life. The civilian was still shadowed everywhere he went, and the ships were guarded day and night, but Streak, with all the other airmen, was sure of Roach's innocence as far as that incident in the air was concerned. True, there had been no results from the secret service investigation into the mysterious ruining of those ships, and Roach might have done that.

STREAK still suspected Roach of having done that, but he believed firmly the man would dare no more funny business in the air; would lean over backwards, in fact, to avoid anything of the kind, because he knew that even an unpreventable accident would ruin him. The suspicions of him would out if there was another accident, and, even though he might not be convicted, he'd be a marked man for life. Streak would have preferred not flying with him, but the big fellow, all the unpleasantness in him now concentrated on Streak, constantly twitted his young rival with the words:

"You've lost your nerve, and you'll wiggle out of going up again, usin' me as an excuse."

Roach was trying to break his nerve—the nerve that Streak knew was already strained. No, he didn't know it—only experience would tell. But he was sick with the fear that he had turned yellow.

The everyday man would never be able to understand Streak's attitude because not one person in ten million could ever be anything but frightened at the things that were Streak's daily aerial diet. But Streak Somers, in body and brain, was a rare throwback to the perfect physical equipment of the early days of the race, before an existence growing ever more artificial had weakened the bodies of men. Somehow he seemed to have escaped the heritage of strained nerves which the noisy, bustling, taut conditions of modern life have made inevitable in the majority. Approaching perfection in his physical equipment, he had utter



The husky young sergeant gave a mighty heave at the rubber-covered loop.

been the gift of the gods. The brilliant flame of daring that sets the genius apart from his fellows would be quenched by the ashes of his old self.

NO wonder that to-day, the first on which the doctors had pronounced him fit, he was determined to go up—and dreading it with all his soul.

"Well, old man, it's your funeral," grinned Don cheerily. "Here come the boys, including Cocky. He can't kick, at that. One way or another he's got the publicity that's meat and drink to 'im. Pretty good too, I'll say. Not such a bad egg when you get to know him, Streak, at that. Too bad you two don't get along—"

"Here comes Brushy Parsons, too," interjected Somers, getting to his feet with a resilient bound that showed plainly that his muscles were themselves again. "More newspaper men, I suppose, to bother us," he added contemptuously.

Don, ten years older than Somers, grinned hilariously to himself.

"It does get to be boring to read about one's self, don't-cha know!" he drawled.

Streak shot a quick look at him. Was Don kidding him?

"Boy, the crowd's sure getting big," he said at length. "Pouring in at every gate. Look at our audience along the rail, waiting for the ships to come out. Hello, Parsons!"

The gaunt, bristling press agent shook hands nervously, his eyes shooting forth sparks of nervous energy, and introduced four newspaper men. Mr. Montmorency Parsons was the most indefatigable publicity hound that far north. He seemed able to hypnotize newspaper men into columns of space about the circus and its personnel.

He was unusually energetic that day. Hat on one side of his head, his stiff, short hair a forest of separate spikes, he was a veritable human whirlwind as he made rapidfire introductions all around. Kennard, Little, and Roach had joined the group by this time.

"I want these gentlemen to see the equipment, and note how careful the inspection is," Parsons informed them in his staccato way. "You know, gentlemen, today marks the first appearance of Lieutenant Somers following his hair-raising experience at the Kentucky State Fair. And he essays, to-day, one of the most difficult stunts he performs."

"Captain, can the ships be brought out and the inspection take place immediately?"

"Sure," nodded Kennard, taking his eyes from Streak.

Somers caught a peculiar expression in them—of doubt, was it? Did the keen-eyed C. O. realize the miserable fear that was gnawing at the vitals of his star drawing card?

That was the way Streak thought of himself, now. The star drawing card. He was, of course. But he was not forgetting it as often as he might have.

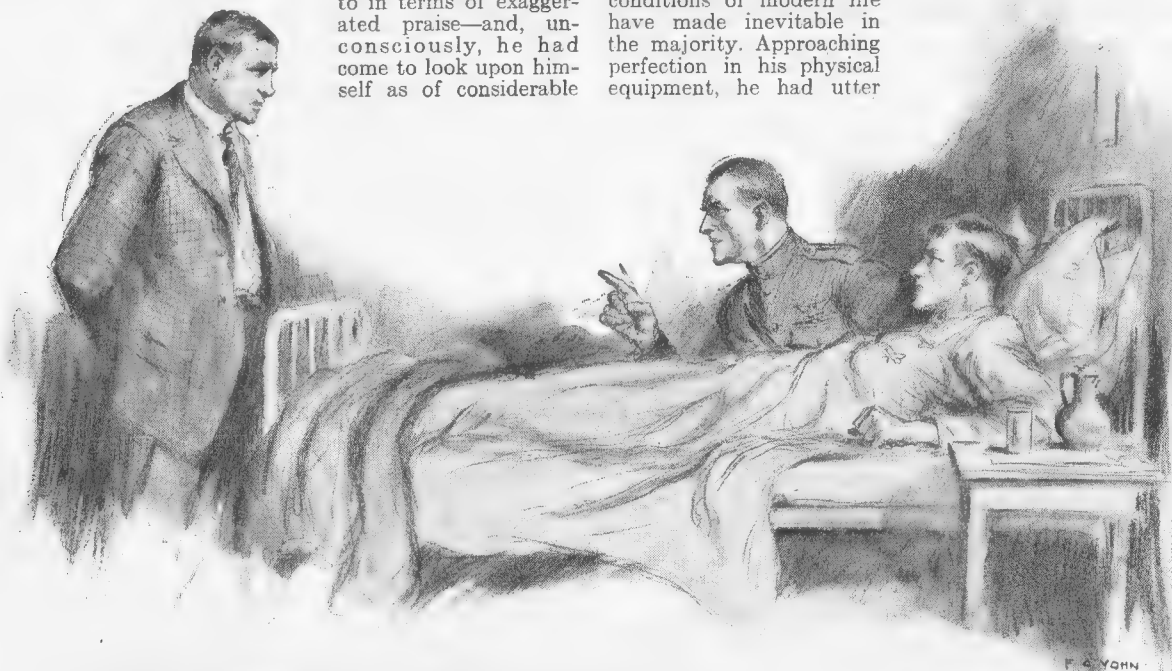
"Lookin' kind o' peaked, ain't you, Somers?" rasped Roach loudly. "Don't look like you're enjoyin' what's comin' much. Want me to carry on for you? I've been doin' it now for nearly three weeks, with no kicks."

THAT was for the benefit of the newspaper men, of course, Streak thought contemptuously. Cocky Roach undoubtedly had more unmitigated gall than was the rightful equipment of an entire army.

"Lieutenant, I'd like to get a little interview while the ships are being brought out," a frail little reporter said quietly. "About this flight of yours—the dawn-to-dusk, you know—and a little about how it feels to crawl around a ship. I—"

"Oh, I suppose you want me to spill a whole ream of stuff, eh?" interrupted Streak. "I'll swear, life is just one reporter after another these days!"

Those words were partly the outgrowth of his nervous condition and partly the result of the persistent and widespread publicity that (Continued on page 35)



"Wait!" The captain's voice reverberated like a thunderbolt and Roach was cut off in mid-career.

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Ready? Serve!

By William E. Hinchliff, Yale University Tennis Coach.

Part II

Last month Mr. Hinchliff, Yale tennis coach, described forehand and backhand drives, volleying and such fundamentals of the game as footwork, grip and selecting of the racket. Tennis players will find Part II more helpful if they study the first article in the series.

WHEN Wallace Scott of the University of Washington came East in 1924 and won the intercollegiate championship there was a lot of talk about his amazing speed of service and smash. His game reminded experts of that of Maurice McLoughlin, "California comet" who held the national championship in 1912 and 1913, and he was recognized as a dangerous player. But when his game was analyzed it was realized that he had faults of style and form—he had won his championships largely on his astonishing strength and power. "A great player potentially," said critics, "but one who won't reach the limit of his capabilities unless he overcomes his faults."

That is what Scott is doing; but it's a thing that many younger fellows don't seem to want to take the time to do. I've seen dozens of boys who insisted on shooting their rackets straight up into the air at the start of their services, robbing themselves of half their power by doing it. They hadn't bothered to get proper instructions on how to serve; and so they weren't as good tennis players as they could easily have become.

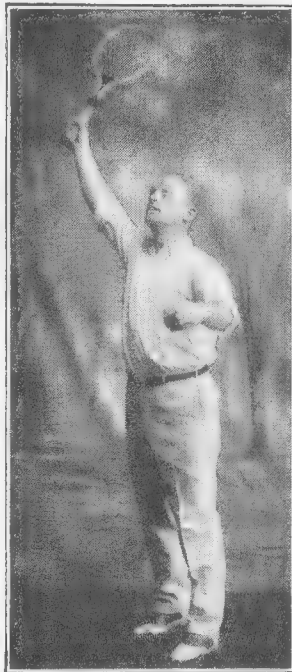
Like the forehand and backhand drive, service is one of the most important parts of a fellow's game. I remember a lad here at Yale who had excellent service and drive and mighty little else—couldn't volley or chop at all. He wasn't good enough to make the varsity team, but he could trim almost anybody else in the University simply through playing his careful base line game. That isn't the best tennis; I tell you of it simply to show you how fundamental drive and service are.

The first serve you ought to learn is a straight, hard-hit ball. Your position for this ball is just back of the base line, your left side to the court. Your left foot is about two inches from the line and at a 30-degree angle, your right 16 inches farther back and slightly advanced. At the start of a serve you must be perfectly balanced on both feet.

Your racket is held in your hand with your regular forehand grip. As you throw the ball into the air with your left hand (the ball should be just a little ahead of your body, and must go high enough so that it reaches its "dead" or stationary point in the air just as your racket hits it) you bend elbow and wrist and sweep the racket around back of your head, in the start of what becomes practically a complete circle. At the same time your weight is thrown temporarily on your right foot.

The full-circle sweep of your arm and racket brings them rapidly up overhead, arm and wrist straightening out and racket extended at full length. The head of the racket faces the opponent's court at a slight angle—just enough to send the ball into the service court. As it sweeps overhead, your weight moves forward—your body leans toward the court.

All this takes only an instant. Just as your weight shifts from your right foot to your left (which remains stationary) your racket reaches a position slightly ahead



These two pictures show the racket just before it hits the ball, and at the moment of impact.

Mr. Hinchliff holds his racket before him at the start of his serve.



of your body, at full length from you. That is the second when the ball should be hit—the second when both racket and body are in greatest forward movement and are perfectly synchronized. It's not an easy thing to work up, that timing. But it's vital. It's the perfection of his rhythm, his timing, that makes Tilden's service so devastatingly effective. Even when his opponents can return it, they can usually do little more than send an easy drive to his base line which he can return with sizzling speed. It's timing that gives speed to a ball.

Follow Through

THE service is not completed when the ball is hit. There is the follow through, just as in a forehand or backhand drive—the completion of the racket swing which brings it down in the circle it started. I don't need to tell you again of the importance of the follow through. As the swing is finished, the right foot comes across the line into the court; but neither foot must touch or cross the line until the ball is hit. The official rule says that, until racket and ball meet, the server shall "not change his position by walking or running; maintain contact with the ground; keep both feet behind the base line."

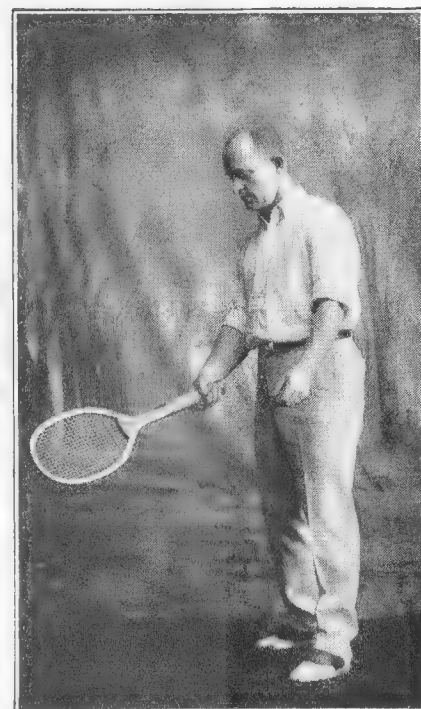
There's no such thing as spending too much time on a service. Several years ago there was a boy at a club where I was coaching who seemed always to get there in the morning before anybody else arrived, and who carried with him a whole box of balls. He never played with anybody else—"just bats balls around by himself," somebody told me. I was interested, and one day I asked him to play with me.

"Not yet," he replied. "I will some day, though."

Then, a few weeks later, he came to me and said he'd like to try a set. It didn't take me long to discover what he'd been doing when he was "just batting balls around." I've rarely seen a boy with a better straight-ball service. He hit it high and squarely, he sent it to the service line with scorching rapidity and he made it good almost every time.

"You've spent a lot of time on that, haven't you?" I asked him.

He admitted with a grin that he had used up no less than four dozen balls that summer practicing. "Took every cent I could scrape up to keep myself



supplied," he chuckled. It was worth it, though. I'd advise every boy who wants to learn tennis to do just the same thing—get a supply of balls, then go out to a court and serve one after another back and forth from court to court. Watch every move, serve every ball properly, and practice by the hour. It won't be long, you'll find, before that kind of practice will bring results.

Most leading American players, of course, use not only the straight-ball service but also what is known as the "American twist service." It gives a high hop to the ball, and is a valuable variation to a fellow's game. But it isn't fundamental; the straight-ball serve is far more valuable. Learn that first; then, if you want to know the other, get a good player to teach it to you. It's a "frill," and a rather complicated one—too intricate to be described on paper.

The smash is much like the serve. It's a shot made on a ball far overhead, and it requires the same long swing and the same careful weight-shift that you will learn in your serve. It's extremely valuable when the opportunity arises, and you should train yourself in it.

Don't try to "kill" or smash a ball from deep court, however. The ordinary place for a "kill" is at the net, when you can do with your return just about whatever you want to. Frequently you'll plan for a smash ahead of time—that is, you'll wait for a set-up and take advantage of it when it comes. For instance, you'll drive deep to your opponent's backhand corner, and you'll know that his return will have to be an easy lob. There, if the lob is high and at the net, is your chance for a "kill."

Send the Smash Deep

ONE more caution on the smash—send it deep into the other fellow's court when you make it. If you smash into his forecourt, he'll have time to set himself for the high rebound; but if you smash to the base line the rebound will probably slither past him for a point.

All these shots—drive, volley, and serve—are attack shots. You'll make them when you're in good position, when you can do just what you want to with the ball. Sometimes, though, you're going to be caught out of place; you're going to have to race to get near a ball and then have barely time to make a stab at it. There's just one thing to do in cases like that: Lob.

The lob has no technique. It is an easy, slow return that arches over the net without drive or twist; its purpose is simply to give you time to dash back to your base line and get in position again, or to lift the ball over your opponent's head when he crowds the set. There's no "best form" for the shot, for often you'll be making it in unbelievable positions and situations. Wallace Johnson, in a match

(Continued on page 30)



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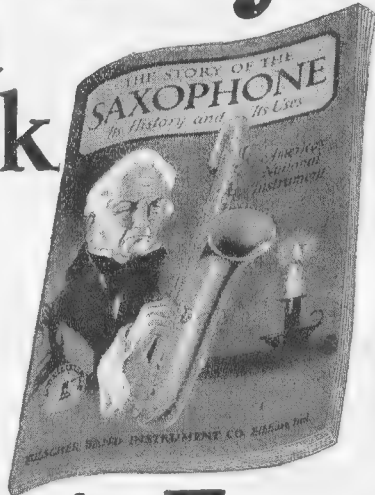
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Ready? Serve!

(Continued from page 28)

with Stanley Pearson, made a backhand return from a position flat on his face; last summer I saw a boy lob a ball over the net after he slipped and sat down violently on the base line!

The time to lob is simply—when you're in trouble. The two things to remember about it are these: Lob deep and lob fairly high.

There are other defense shots, of course, but I'm not going to try to describe them. The lob is satisfactory for almost any case. The chop stroke is something the experts use; but, like the American twist service, it's complicated, and I'd advise fellows who want to learn it to get a skilled player to teach them.

Good tennis, of course, means a lot more than making strokes properly. Here at Yale we had a player not so long ago who was wrong in footwork and timing and most of the other things I've been talking about; yet he won more matches than he lost. The reason was that he used his head.

The Brainy Player Wins

SOMEHOW boys don't seem to think much about the value of headwork in tennis. They know how brainy the quarterback must be in football, or the manager of a team in baseball. They know that the half-miler who doesn't let himself get boxed or run out in the early part of the race is the one who wins. But they frequently fail to realize that strategy is tremendously important in tennis.

Bill Tilden has two fundamental rules in court strategy: *Never let your opponent play the kind of game he prefers if you can help it and never give him the kind of shot he likes.* Simple rules—yet they mean a lot. Suppose you're playing a chap who is a crack base line man. You know that he's death on forehand and backhand drives, that he craves shots from deep court and eats 'em alive. It's folly for you to feed them to him. Your game is to make him come to the net as much as possible—make him volley or smash or lob or anything except drive.

And suppose you know your opponent is a "kill" fiend. You're cutting off your own head to give him a single opportunity to make a "kill," then. Figure out those things and you'll win more sets.

Always play with your brain. A fellow ought to have a reason for doing what he does to every single ball. He must know where he wants a return to go, and why he wants it to go there. His purpose is always to get his opponent out of position, to gain an advantage, to make the other fellow err or return such a ball that a "kill" or point-getting volley or drive can be made.

Another thing—never go dashing to the net unless you have a good reason for it. When you've driven to the base line and you know your opponent is likely to make an easy lob, you can often go safely to the net for a volley or smash; when he can make a return he likes, though, you're going to be caught helpless at the net.

Play to Improve Your Game

DON'T play every stroke for the point, either. Play, instead, for the advantage. Remember that, as long as you can keep on returning the ball, you're pretty sure to get your opponent out of position sooner or later, and that then you'll be able to make your point shot. In an average boys' match, the chap who can return three or four times on every point is the one who will win. That's been proven dozens of times. When George Lott and Emmett Pare were first becoming known in Chicago, I noticed repeatedly that that feature was a characteristic of their games. They always were able to return the ball a little more often than the other fellow, to wait for the advantage.

Here's another thing to remember: Do not continue a losing game. If you're being beaten when you're playing a net game, switch and start playing at the base line. That fits right in with the Tilden rules—don't let your opponent play the kind of game or shot he is most proficient at. If he's defeating you at net play, that likely means that's his best game. Change it.

And, finally, don't let yourself get in the habit of "patting" when you're starting to learn a stroke. "Patting" means simply wafting the ball over the net without speed or life. It's mighty bad tennis. The thing to do, every time you hit a ball, is to try to make a real stroke of it. At first you may make a lot of nets and outs; but gradually you'll find yourself becoming pretty good at the stroke, and that you can win far more points with it than you ever could by "patting."

There are the things a tennis player needs. First, he must be mechanically expert. He must perfect his footwork, his keenness in watching the ball and his strokes. At first he must be a lot more eager to learn drives, and services, and other shots than to win. And when he has his equipment he must use it to the best advantage—he must no more make errors of judgment than errors of execution.

If he keeps those things in mind and forgets winning when he's a new player, he'll find himself chalking up the victories as he becomes experienced.

The Last Barrage

(Continued from page 23)

in dragging that live mine, unless it was done just so. Almost immediately after the mine went under, he heard the rasp of wire on wire pinging up through all the steel contacts of cutting cable, kite, and towing cable.

"We've got one, sir!" he rose up to shout to Leeds.

"Good!—Full speed ahead, Helm!" yelled Leeds through the megaphone over to 57. Bells jangled in their own engine room, and the throb of machinery redoubled. The two sweepers leaped ahead, then slowed almost to a stop as the mine brought them up. Dummy hoped that its anchor was so firmly bedded in sand that the cable would cut anyhow and the mines come free. But it did not happen. Violent jerks came up the thrumming wire. The anchor, a square box of steel having the releasing drum in it, was being dragged out of its sand.

end of the cutting cable—and it meant much more, disaster, deadly, unavoidable to them, for the growl of wire slipping on wire was already coming up the cable. He waved his arms frantically.

"Stop him, Lieutenant! For Heaven's sake stop him!" he yelled up at Leeds. That officer knew instantly what was happening, that the mine was slipping toward their kite and would soon be in it. He yelled unintelligibly over to Helm and there was a jangle of bells in the engine room for yet more speed. But Helm seemed to have no idea of slowing down, either. The crazy Dutchman was pulling like a dray horse, with all the power of his ship, and chortling at them—"Dot's der stuff!—Giff her both barrels, Leeds! Avay mit him!"

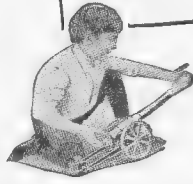
"Slow down! Slow down, Helm!" Dummy was yelling directly at him. "Give us a chance, can't you!" One would think that even an elementary intelligence could see that, if you have a mine in the V of a cutting cable, whoever has the long end of the V will inevitably slide the mine over to the short end unless it cuts clear.

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Feb. 12, 1926.

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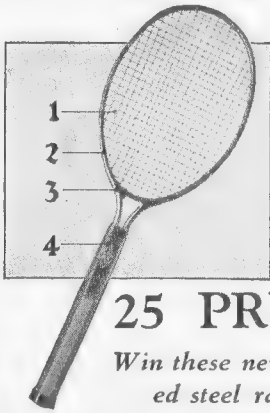
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- 5—All answers must be in this office before midnight August 15, 1926. Address New Dayton Contest, Dayton Steel Racquet Co., Dayton, Ohio.

But Helm could think of nothing but dragging her clear. Leeds and Dummy were both shouting at him now, expostulating, begging. But 57 forged steadily ahead. Then their own towing cable leaped with the force of a dull shock from below and Dummy knew that the worst had happened. The mine was already in their own kite! To this day if you want to make a sailor from the sweeper force duck, just yell, "Mine in the kite!" at him. The sweepers are invulnerable forward or amidships, but no sweeper can stand the explosion of a mine under her fantail stern. It blows the whole thing off and down she goes.

Dummy thought rapidly before he gave the alarm. It was essential for everyone to keep his head, now, and above all to manage to let Helm know what he had done and keep him from doing anything else. Dummy tapped his trousers pocket to be sure that the wrench was still there; then gave the dread hail.

"Mine in the kite, sir!" he yelled.

For a moment there was a stupefied silence all over the ship. What should they do to get free of it? The thing would have to be managed with the utmost delicacy. If you could back Helm properly, the mine might slide back along the cutting cable and establish the V between them again. Leeds was yelling to him to slow down, still keeping full speed on his own ship. But Dummy saw immediately that it wasn't going to work. The mine rope had caught in their own shackle. It was there for keeps. If they slowed up, its antennae would rise and touch—and that would be the end of 52!

"Veer off, Helm! Port your rudder, hard!" he heard Leeds shouting through the megaphone. Dummy nodded approval. Whatever he was as a civilian, Leeds was an able shipmaster! If Helm could only carry out that maneuver, they might get free. He watched her swing away. Leeds' idea was for him to keep it up until they had the cutting cable strung straight out between them. Then, veering to starboard himself, he might swing the whole business clear of the pestiferous mine.

It was all going nicely, except that Dummy noted now that 52 herself was being pulled astern by this additional drag on her. She was backing, in spite of full engine, down toward the mine! Dummy watched with his heart in his mouth. This was getting worse and worse every moment!

"Stop him, Leeds! Won't do!" he hailed.

He was too late. The strain on the mine rope had at last broken the pawl on its anchor drum. Dummy heard a dull chatter being telegraphed up the cable and then the mine rose to the surface, a great round, green thing covered with menacing copper bristles and loaded with hundreds of pounds of TNT. Its antennae reached out toward them over the seas like the streaming tresses of some deadly Medusa.

"Towing engine! Pay out!" came the thin shout from Leeds, shrill with alarm.

DUMMY revolved his hand, nervously. The towing engine thumped, grunted, paid out all the thick wire rope on its drum.

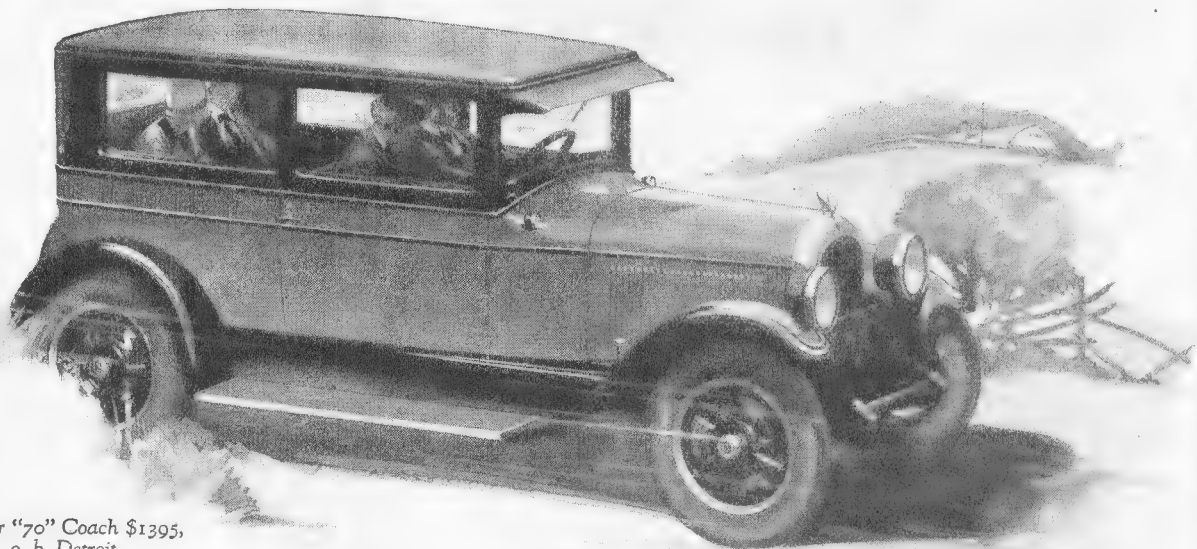
"All gone, sir!" he hailed Leeds. They both watched the mine. It was coming straight for them, like a malignant octopus, with round black body and tentacles spread far on each side. They could not hope to miss it! And they could do nothing with both kites on the bottom of the sea, and Helm pulling away from them like a donkey.

"Stop him, sir! Back him—quick!" yelled Dummy as he watched Leeds trying in vain to veer his ship out of the path of that deadly thing. With no way on her she was not minding her rudder in the least.

"I have!" yelled back Leeds. "He says he has, but I'll bet you—" He waved a hand and Dummy agreed without further words. Just like him! Afraid to risk his ship by so much as backing her down on that mine even enough to give them a chance to turn! He growled wrathfully and then took his decision, for the mine was not a hundred feet off now and drifting down on them rapidly.

"All you men forward, as far as you can get, up in the bows!" he ordered solemnly,

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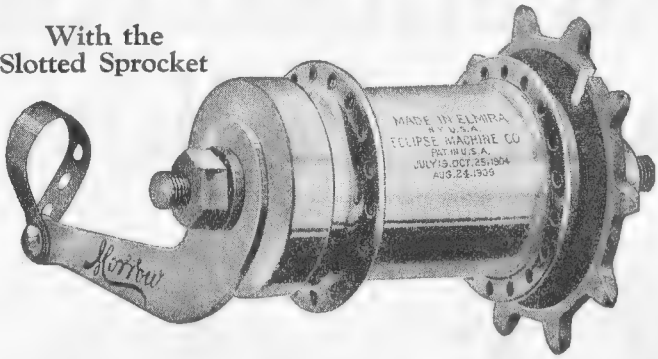
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(Continued from page 31)
ignoring Leeds' frantic yells to cut the cable. One did not cut a steel cable in one minute, nor yet in five!

"Somebody a pair of pliers?" he called out, mounting the after rail.

An electrician darted out of the re-treating throng of men. Dummy snatched them and dove overboard. The powerful currents from the screw spewed him headlong toward the mine. He snatched for one of the antennae wires as the eddies thrust him swiftly down on it, snipped the copper cord, saw it float free with a surge of relief, and came up on its short end hand over hand to the mine itself. He clung to the bristles a moment, then grabbed for the second antennae and snipped it also. And immediately flung the pliers into the sea. Any bit of bare iron was altogether too dangerous about this live mine! One contact of it between a bristle and the iron body would be the last he would ever know of this life!

Dummy gripped the bristles again and peered around. The distance was less, now, to that vulnerable fantail stern of 52, but not so much less as he had feared. Evidently Helm was backing, cautiously; but his own ship was not getting much relief by it. Her rudder was still hard over, yet she was not veering out of the way at all. The inevitable would happen soon, unless—

He drew a long breath and climbed up atop the mine. It was more than a volcano he was sitting on, more than a steam boiler with its safety valve tied down! Carefully he drew out the wrench. A small copper nut jutted out up here, the K-piece, the firing mechanism whose insides are known to only a few ordnance officers. But Dummy knew that if you unscrewed it, it would make the mine a dud. He put on the wrench with sure and careful fingers, his knees hooked over bristles and toes clenched under them. The mine bobbed and swung, and steadily it neared the doomed 52. Dummy gave a powerful heave, exercising the utmost care not to let the wrench touch anything else. The nut moved, half a turn. He hauled it clear around and made another shove. Easier that time—even though it was putting one's head into a lion's mouth. If it slipped off, just once! Electricity was instantaneous! There would be the rasp of metal on steel, a spark inside this thing under his wrench, and then it would explode. Dummy smiled grimly. No fear! Not he! It wasn't going to slip off! With all his strength he made a round turn, guiding the lips of the wrench with his bare hand.

Nearer. She was not thirty feet from the stern of 52, now. They were making frantic efforts to hew the cable in two with axes brought from the engine room. Dummy twisted rapidly. It was going to be a tight race; but somehow he felt he was going to win. Anyway he was doing his best. And if he didn't, neither he nor those on the ship would know much about it!

The K-piece nut was turning easily now. Dummy felt tempted to throw his dangerous instrument into the sea and trust to his bare hands to finish it, but an experimental twist warned him of the limits of human strength compared to steel and copper. He spun the wrench rapidly, fiercely. How many turns had the darn thing anyway!

"All hands abandon that cable!" came Leeds' megaphone from the bridge. The mine was surging down on them like a buoy, with Dummy atop of it and not five yards left between it and the thrashing stern of the sweeper. Dummy tried another last twist with his hands. He could move it. He spun the infernal K-piece between his palms; then realized suddenly

that it was free and snatched it out to shove it hastily in his pocket.

"Yeow!" he gave one exultant yell of victory and then jumped for the fantail of the ship. The plates of the fantail came down with a ringing crash on the mine he had just left, and the jar of it hurled him headlong on deck. Ponderous thumps, a jar under the counter; and the mine was gone, bobbing alongside harmlessly, a dud, a derelict of the war.

LIEUTENANT LEEDS was the first to reach the prostrate Dummy. His long arms went about his shoulders deliriously. "It was great, Bickfield, simply great!" he whispered huskily. "Simply—great!" His voice shook.

He had no words for anything more. Words were useless, futile, in the face of such emotions as these! His arm tightened fiercely as he helped Dummy to his feet, and then came the crew charging aft in a body, their hands thrust out, their faces beaming. They had had no orders to leave their station in the bow, but orders were nothing now. Dummy gripped and wrung the hard hands extended to him, met with his own burning blue eyes the gleaming ones in a ring around him. He heard words, then, words of appreciation and of deep feeling that touched him. There were tears on more than one weather-beaten face around him. He stepped back a pace, having wrung the last hand and for-

gotten no one, grinned, and then drew the K-piece out of his pocket.

"Well, here's the darned thing, anyhow!" he growled, a humorous twist on his lips.

It was like a red flag to a bull! They dove in a body for his legs and Dummy was propped frantically aloft on the shoulders of his men. The bosun threw back his head and yelled; then started a chantey as they bore him about and about the deck. Up and down, around and around the superstructure they marched, shouting at the top of their lungs.

Finally Lieutenant Leeds halted them and spoke for them all! "I need not tender you, Ensign Bickfield, the thanks of the whole ship," he said, his voice strong and firm and rich with feeling. "But tomorrow's the Fourth, and I propose that we have a little celebration. We'll dress ship, everyone in parade blues, and, if you'll present that K-piece to the ship as a trophy, we'll make it the occasion for our national salute—"

Cheers that drowned him out showed him how the crew felt about it. Dummy grinned a cheerful agreement. While on the mine he had thought of that K-piece as a trophy on the Bickfield whatnot back home—if he ever got away with it alive—to take its place beside that bit of shell that had almost sunk the *Kearsarge*, and the piece of cable taken up off Cienfuegos, and an old epaulet that had once belonged to Captain Isaac Hull of the *Constitution*. These things were precious to the Bickfields—but this was better. The K-piece really did not belong to him; it represented his bit for the nation.

"And for the present we'll ship a new cutting cable and clean up on these mines," went on Lieutenant Leeds. "The salvage we'll forget—Stations, men!" he ordered.

Dummy went aft with a singing heart. There was good stuff in Leeds. Show him a touch of real idealism, and he responded to it gallantly! It made Dummy feel good all over to know that. As for the Danish ship, her disposition and the orders concerning it were probably already issued at the British Admiralty. They had no business, really, in stepping one foot outside their own orders—and orders said simply, "Clean up the last of the last barrage."

Zip! He's Out at First!

WHAT a whale of an arm this new third baseman had! Applegate's summer team grinned in unison, and Jimmy Gaynor whistled happily. Could Grant throw!

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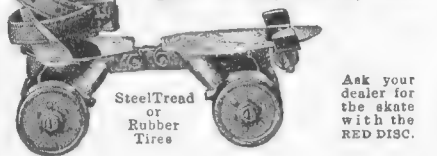
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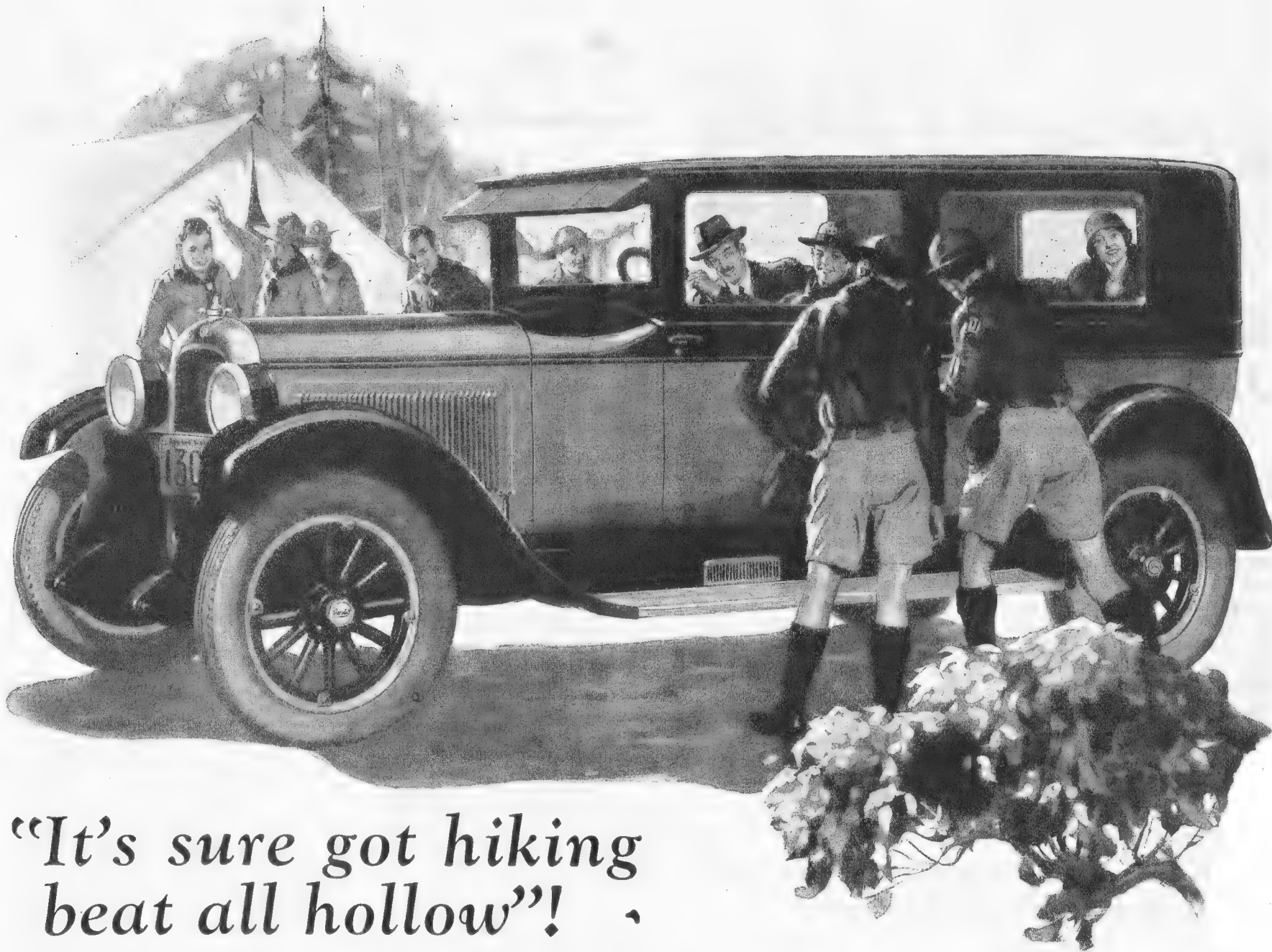
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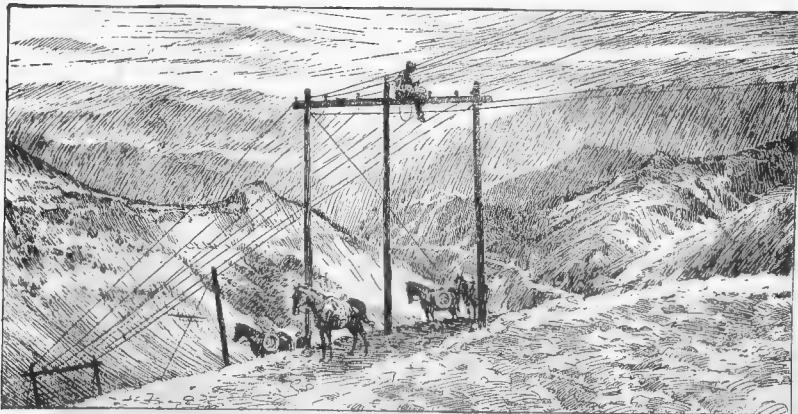
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been installed, and all over the country are buildings with switchboards and the complicated apparatus for connecting each telephone with any other. The telephone's builders have been many and their lives have been rich in romantic adventure and unselfish devotion to the service.

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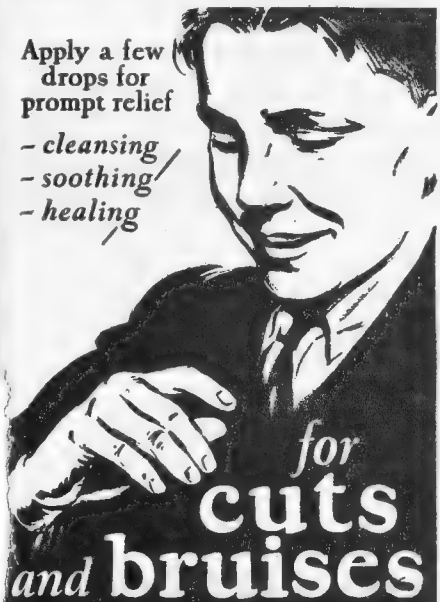
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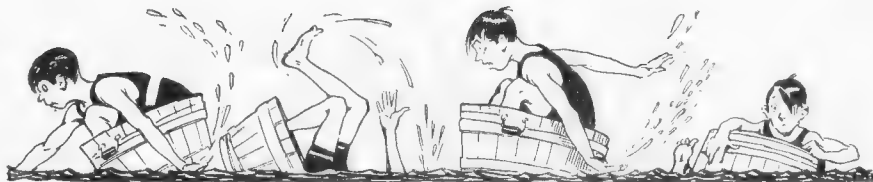
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Let's Have a Water Carnival!

By J. C. Elsom

IT takes just four things to make a successful Water Carnival—a live bunch of fellows, a place to swim, a schedule of peppy events, and a crowd of enthusiastic spectators.

All right—you've got the live bunch of fellows and the place to swim. I'll furnish the schedule of events. Schedule your carnival for Saturday afternoon, let the neighborhood know about it and there'll be plenty of spectators with the enthusiasm.

And there you are! A Water Carnival is easy!

You can have enough events on your program to keep forty or fifty contestants busy, so invite quite a lot. The secret of a successful carnival, large or small, lies in running off the events rapidly and smoothly. Short, snappy events are most relished by onlookers and contestants alike. Put the best organizer in your crowd in charge as master of ceremonies. Also provide plenty of officials to help him, for officials are the oil that makes a meet run smoothly. For a good-sized carnival (say forty contestants or more) you should have an announcer (with a megaphone), a starter, two or three judges of finish, a timer or two, and a scorer.

The announcer ought to be a man with a quick wit and a fairly high-pitched voice. He's the man who keeps the crowd informed, and if he's the right kind, he can fill in the occasional delays with a little good-natured ballyhoo.

Races Are Popular

YOUR program should include a number of swimming races. Scatter them throughout the afternoon in between the special events. Plenty of variety in your program will keep the interest keener. All swimming races except the back strokes should be begun with a diving start, from either a pier or a raft.

For shorter events you'll probably want to have a twenty yard breast stroke race, a forty yard crawl stroke, a twenty yard back stroke, and a forty yard side stroke. For swimmers who relish longer distances, include a hundred yard race and one over a course of three hundred yards or thereabouts, letting contestants choose their strokes.

Top these off with a "Human Submarine Contest"—an underwater swimming race. The contestants get off all together with a diving start, and the one swimming the farthest under water wins.

If you have a springboard, put on a fancy diving contest. A simple scheme is to select half a dozen different dives as a requirement for this event—for example, running front dive, front jackknife, back dive, back jackknife, front somersault and back somersault. Contestants alternate diving until each has executed each dive once. The judges score points for each dive on the basis of skill and execution, and determine the winner on total points.

A medley race combining running and swimming is always good fun, particularly if you put in some freak requirements to make the race more difficult. You can work out any number of variations in this contest to suit your own conditions and your own imagination. Here is one good one: Have a raft anchored about fifty yards offshore, and set a number of water pails on this raft. The contestants (in swimming suits) line up about twenty yards from the edge of the water. When the starter's gun gives them "Go!" they sprint to the water, swim to the raft, grab a pail, and swim with it back to the shore. There they fill their pails with water and

race to the starting point. Any racer finishing with his pail less than half full of water is disqualified.

Imagination Here!

THE obstacle race is another in which you may use your imagination. Try this one: Anchor your raft out where the water is eight or ten feet deep, and where there is a stony bottom. The racers start from the shore, splash out to deep water, swim to the raft, duck down and swim under it, and climb up on the far side. From here they must dive to the bottom, pick up three stones (any size), and swim back to shore with them.

If there are a number of piers along the shore near your swimming place, you can stage a sort of an aquatic hurdle race by having the racers swim parallel with the shore and climb up and over four or five piers during the course of the race.

A tug-of-war in deep water is real sport. Judges, in an anchored boat, start the contest off with the center of the rope exactly even with the prow of the boat. At the end of five minutes, whichever team has more rope wins the contest—also a rest!

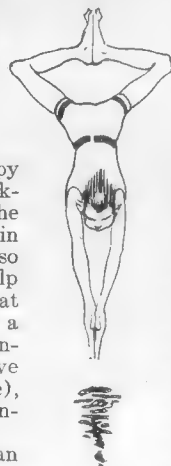
If you can muster up several canoes, try this "Man Overboard" race. The racers (in swimming suits) line up in their canoes, and at the signal start paddling at top speed down the course, which should be about one hundred yards in length. When the racers are about halfway down the course, the starter blows a whistle. Instantly the rival canoeists must jump overboard, climb back into their canoes, and resume the race. To get into a canoe from the water, pull yourself up over the gunwale at one end with a rapid but steady swing of the body. It's not as easy as it sounds.

Several comedy events should be sandwiched into the program. The tub race is a dandy. All you need is half a dozen ordinary washtubs, with half a dozen of the smallest fellows in the meet to pilot them. The racers line up their tubs in shallow water and climb aboard. A tense moment of waiting, as each sailor squats gracefully in the bottom of his tub with his hands hanging in the water over the sides, eager for the starter's gun. Then bang! and the hand-propelled vessels are under way. Sounds of splashing and shouting with grunting rend the air. This race, as you will see, is not always to the swift—and it will leave your sides aching.

Hot Stuff!

ANOTHER lively event is the candle race, in which each swimmer starts from shallow water with a lighted candle in his hand. The first to cross the finish line with his candle still burning wins the race. Use any style of stroke you wish—but don't splash too much! You can carry your candle most safely by swimming on your back, but this stroke isn't very speedy. Swimming side stroke and holding the candle high with one hand is good. Or a one-armed back stroke will give you a chance to use the crawl kick.

If you can lay hands on a set of old boxing gloves, put an aquatic boxing match on your program. The pugilists tie on their gloves and swim out to where they can't touch bottom. They shake hands in approved fashion, draw back, and the battle is on! Imagine what a job it is to swing a water-soaked boxing glove at a bobbing head, dodge an uppercut, and tread water, all at the same time. You can't get hurt



in this battle, because the gloves are just like a couple of wet sponges, but oh, boy, you sure can get some fancy duckings!

One round is almost enough.

Each contestant in the old clothes race must wear, over his swimming suit, a pair of pants, a shirt, a coat, fully laced shoes and a cap. Racers line up, dive in and race to the raft about forty yards away. Here they climb on the raft, remove all their clothing except swimming suits, and then race back to the start. The fellow who doesn't know what a drag wet clothes can be to a swimmer will have a surprise coming if he enters this race. Did you ever try to pull off soggy clothing and water-soaked shoes in a hurry? Some job!

In another comedy race each swimmer must carry an egg balanced in a kitchen spoon held between his teeth. Touching either the egg or the spoon with the hands disqualifies the racer. If the egg drops out, however, the racer may rescue it, but must return to the starting line and begin over again. Rather ticklish job to pilot that egg safely to the finish line!

The Circus in the Clouds

(Continued from page 26)

had gradually forced him to believe earnestly in his importance.

The hint of a smile touched the saturnine mouth of the bright-eyed little newspaper man.

"That's the penalty of prominence," he said softly, and suddenly Streak found himself flushing.

"Oh, we have a prima donna with us!"

The mocking words just reached Somers' ears. They'd been spoken in a stage whisper by a stout, hard-faced newspaper man a few feet away.

For a second the overwrought Streak came near leaping at him. Then, in a sickening wave of feeling, he realized just what he'd done. His answer to the reporter had been an unforgivable exhibition of conceit.

"I'm a big-headed, spoiled fool!" he told himself fiercely, and it seemed that he had never in his life been so miserable before. Yellow, he was, and a fathead along with it!

He whirled on his interrogator, and stuck out his hand.

"Mr.—er—Higgins, I'm sorry. I'm a bit nervous. That sounded nasty, but it was not intended to be. I'll be tickled to death to give you anything you want, and I won't pretend I don't enjoy seeing my name in the paper, either!"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen! If you'd like to look over the equipment, now's the time," barked Parsons from the line.

The little reporter smiled.

"At-a-boy!" he said, his disturbingly keen eye softening. "We'll talk later, eh?"

As he walked toward the ships Streak forgot the evergrowing crowd that was storming the track rails to see the famous fliers and their ships, and his mind roved back to the day long ago when his dead father had made him learn a certain poem from which two lines now seemed to glow forth like a warning motto:

"If you can meet with triumph and disaster,
And treat those two imposters just the same—"

Triumph, outwardly, disaster, inwardly, were with him now—and he must fight them both. And like magic that scene with the Chief back on the Pacific coast rose before his mind's eye and he remembered that world figure with a life of distinguished achievement behind him saying:

"There never was a brain so keen or a body so powerful that a big head couldn't ruin it!"

"Now here, gentlemen, is the ladder, you see, suspended from the first strut of the lower right-hand wing," Parsons was lecturing to the reporters. "Made of flexible wire cable, very strong, with rungs of one-and-three-quarter-inch pipe. Sergeant Fulz is testing them individually now. At

(Continued on page 55)

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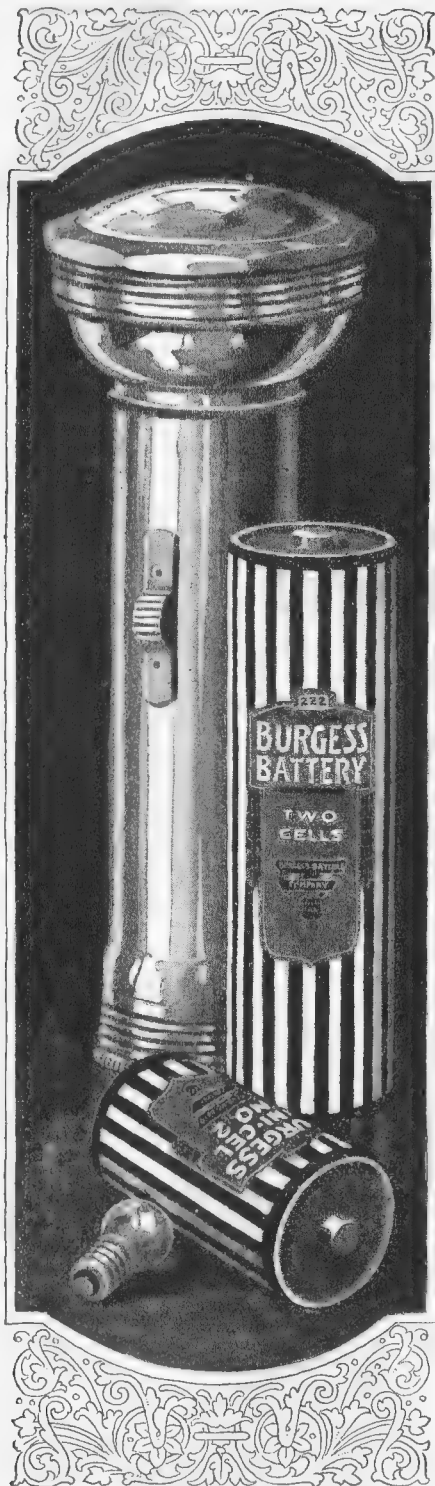


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"Seventy-Six!" (Continued from page 17)



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it dangled ominously in front of my quivering nose.

"Who goes there?" came the challenge, and then I heard a mounted squadron draw up around us.

Johnson's heartiest laugh shook the seat and prefaced his answer. "Hello, Dudley! It's me. By Benedict, I'm glad to see you again! How are you?"

I wondered, with sinking spirits, if ever blacker villainy were covered by a better mask of hearty good nature. Apparently this Dudley would no more have suspected Jabez Johnson than he would doubt Dr. Franklin or Francis Hopkinson. Here was an exchange of merry banter going on, while the seen pistol and the known knife kept me silent: that space between dashboard and box seat was so narrow that nobody outside the wagon could see into my cell—and if I cried an alarm, Stuart would undoubtedly be dead before another word was uttered.

"What have you got under that straw?" asked somebody.

"Oh," said Jabez, with another laugh, "just a trussed lamb for the slaughter!"

"Pass friend," said the man Dudley.

And Harry Whiteside leaned aboard beside my concealed brother, where I knew soon that he was refastening the gag. Almost at the instant, we rattled into Camden.

XIX—The Winged Death

"HURRY!" cried Whiteside to Johnson.

"Gad-ep!" cried Johnson to the horses.

The whip cracked. The tired beasts were terrorized into a yet more clangorous speed through the village street.

And to this trio of sounds I continued the last stage of my mad journey.

Could it end thus? Was I indeed to be caged until we came to the rear of that low, flat-roofed house of Tory Talbot in Philadelphia's Second Street, and there discovered when Johnson should look in the box for those papers which were to be then delivered to the arch spy? Again I contemplated a dive from my cell and a jump over the wagon side—and again I realized that Johnson and Harry must inevitably have me and kill me before ever I passed the barrier of their shins. Such a course might be the sole one left at the last, but it must be held until we arrived at our destination—until there was no hope of the unexpected: it was merely a means of meeting death in battle.

"Hurry!"

"Gad-ep!"

Crack!

Would this tardiness change their plans? Would they go to Dr. Franklin's first? In that case, I might still denounce them and save the Colonies, my brother and myself. But no:

"We'll try to finish at Talbot's afore Benjy's gone to his Congress," said Jabez. "Still, if we don't we kin kitch him in the session an' call him out: there had ought to be time enough for that afore the vote is taken."

My traveling prison tossed frightfully. Jabez called out his cheerful salute and his false "God save the Congress" to unsuspecting pedestrians loyal and believing his pretense of loyalty. We stopped at what I knew must be the waterfront, but no help was there for me: nobody was there save the ferryman—and he not until we

had lost more time in waiting.

"Special dispatches for Dr. Franklin, George," I heard Johnson explain to him. "Don't you wait for no more passengers: break your schedule."

And that patriotic ferryman did it! We drove aboard his flatboat, and he sped the traitors across the Delaware in the sure belief that he was conveying good Separationists.

Philadelphia! We tore off our clumsy vessel before it was moored to shore. I could do nothing more except pray for a wonder.

"Hurry!"

"Gad-ep!"

Crack!

Careless that we were now come into city streets, the spy Jabez, secure in his sound reputation and protected by his of-

Harry Whiteside jumped after him—and I jumped too!

THE wonder had happened. There I stood, swaying and blinking in the open street, my legs cramped, my arms aching, my whole body in pain—yet free. In front of me, but with their backs toward me, Jabez and Harry were tongue-lashing a stolid individual in rusty brown, whom I took to be the farmer, and at the same time shouldering and swearing at the locked wheels. A throng of excited citizens—but who of them were Tories and who were Whigs?—swept between me and those villainous two.

My mazed faculties, which had prompted my leap, again asserted their sway: here was my opportunity. Denounce Jabez? Two-thirds of these people might be royalists. Release Stuart? To rescue him now would be to risk everything. The Colonies first! If I could get to Dr. Franklin in time, help would go from him for my brother to Talbot's house. I fought my cramps and overcame them: I ducked through that crowd.

"Hi! Where are you going?"

A rough hand had collared me. I looked up into the red face of a burly stranger, whose irate sympathies were plainly with the farmer, and who had as plainly seen my precipitate descent.

Argument would be fatal. I wriggled my arms out of their sleeves and plunged between his sturdily planted, but widely spread legs, leaving my empty jacket in his grasp.

I heard his yell of disappointed rage as I circled another man, and a third, and gained the paving.

An alley lay invitingly in front of me.

Down it and around the first-presented angle, I ran as never I had run before. Not till I came to an open street and had made certain that the altercation far behind me engaged attention to the detriment of pursuit—not until then did I slacken my steps. Here folk looked at me because I was coatless—for Philadelphia was ever a seemly city even on a day that promised the excitement of July the fourth, 1776. I made bold, however, to inquire the way of the first person encountered, and learned that Dr. Franklin's shop stood but a few hundred yards' distance. You will not forget that it faced Edwin Talbot's town house: by so narrow a margin only, had I escaped being hauled to the latter.

"Where's the Doctor? Where's the Doctor?" Thus did I demand the great man as—unable to believe my good fortune—I pushed open the door. I literally tumbled into his office.

I remember yet how little it was changed since last I had seen it, and how—so much had happened to me in the interim—this made it stranger than if it were converted into King George's state apartments at Windsor. Here was the same disorder, the same simple furniture; here hung still that bill—standing out among all the others on the wall—of the broken rattler and the warning to all good colonials.

Unite or Die!

But there was one great difference: he whom I sought was absent—there was nobody to be seen save a neat little personage with a quiet face and unruffled man-

(Continued on page 38)



Little Mr. Monk: "Say, boys, I certainly appreciate your serenade all right but might I ask you to step a little further from this pesky branch. I'm afraid I might get nervous and fall in."

ficial position, lashed his horses uptown at mad speed.

We rounded one corner on two wheels, and I was bumped against the off-side of my cell. We rounded another corner—and I was thrown across the box and bashed against its near side. Would Johnson and Harry hear me? What matter now?—But so great was this last pandemonium racket of our progress that they would not have heard the trumpet call of the Archangel Gabriel.

"Hurry!"

"Gad-ep!"

Crack!

We rounded still another corner—and with the last crack of Johnson's whip, there came a tremendous concussion.

CRASH!

A rending noise—and a volley of oaths. The wagon careened to one side. It stopped dead in its tracks.

"What's thee doin' there?—Thee's spilled my purchases!" That from the outside.

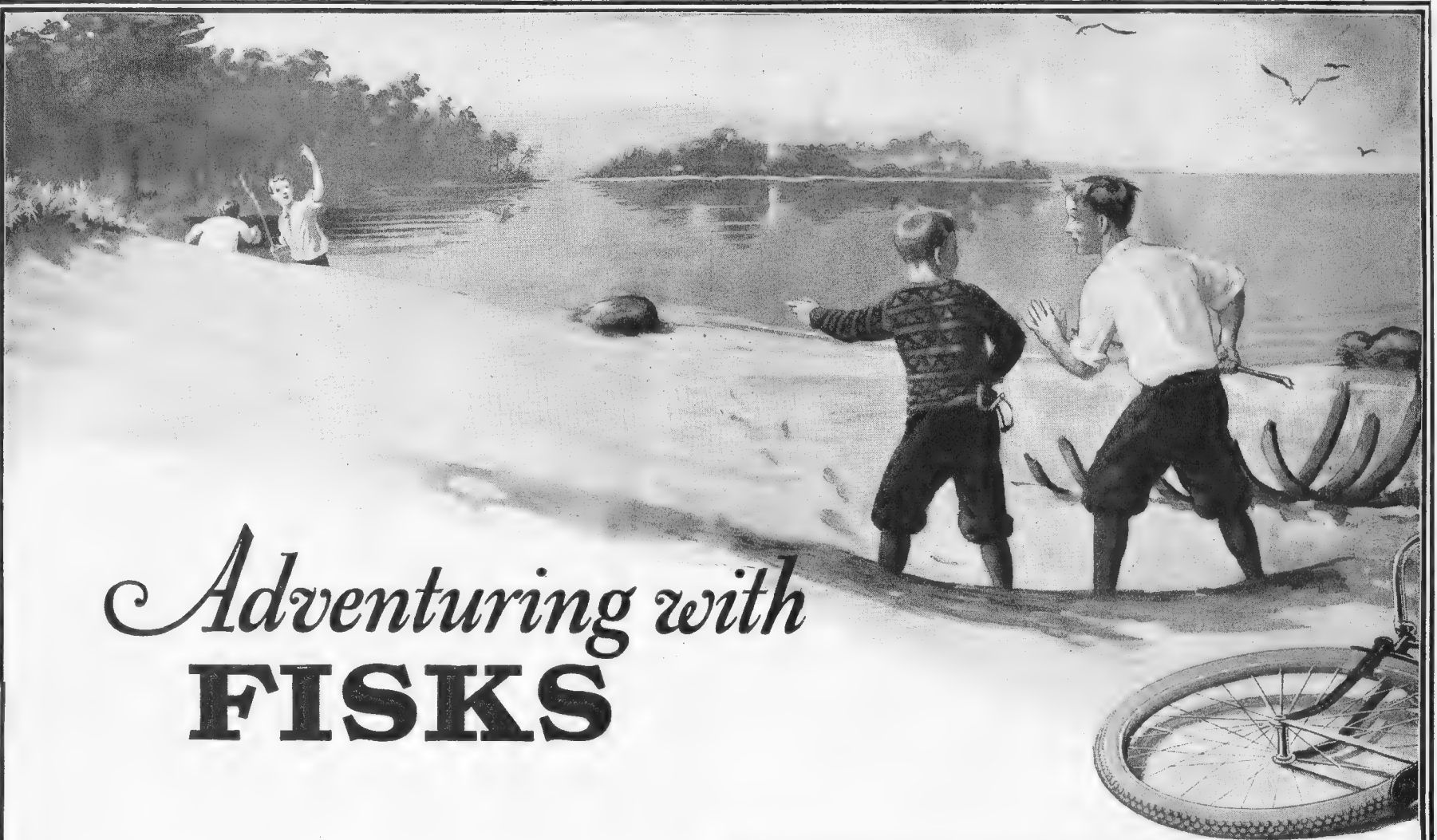
"Congressional business! We can't stop!"—This, considerably elaborated by profanities, from over my aching head.

We had collided with the cart of some not too pacific Quaker farmer, homeward-bound from market and his weekly shopping tour.

"G'out o' my way!" blared Jabez.

"Not I, my friend," came the resolute answer. "I could not move my vehicle if I would. Thee's locked wheels with me, and here I stay till thee pays for the damage."

A noise, concurring from the sidewalk, told of a gathering crowd. Johnson's huge figure jumped out: whether for fight or argument I did not pause to guess, for



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Take it along on the next hike—
for a cool mouth and throat, a
fresh sweet breath and clean,
white teeth.

THE GOUDEY GUM CO.
Boston, Mass.

It's Pure



"Seventy-Six!"

(Continued from page 36)

ners, who was occupied with some ledgers at a table in one corner of the room.

"Stuart Rowntree," said he in gentle remonstrance, "where have you been for these twenty-four hours past?"

So he irritatingly mistook me for my brother and thought I was tricking him, to save my hide, when I declared my identity!

First it took time to establish myself in his regard, and then, when I had vowed my business to be of the utmost import, he straightway verbosely informed me that the Doctor had left a half hour since for the extraordinary session of the Congress in the State House:

"Where," says Hall grimly, "the independence declaration of Mr. Jefferson is in final debate and is sometime to-day to be voted upon—where freedom will be either lost or won. The whole town waits the issue. If it is adverse—"

Rude I was, but in a good cause. "Enough!" said I.

Indeed, I had heard too much. In the midst of his windy speech, I turned abruptly away from him and swung back toward the shop entrance, for it was paramount that I should bring my news to Dr. Franklin in the Congress hall ere the fatal arrival of Jabez Johnson with his pair of Tory Talbot forgeries.

And yet, in that very doorway of the office, I stopped. My eyes had been raised heavenward (I trust, in prayer!), and outside, descending from the clear morning zenith, was a sight that brought me up short.

MARK well where I stood. Upon the top of this printing establishment, here beside old Christ Church, was the cote in which poor Stuart had trained his carrier pigeons. Directly across the street stood that low flat-roofed house which was the town residence of Edwin Talbot. Well, circling down out of the blue above intervening Second Street, there at this moment fluttered a bird that, both my instinct and experience informed me at once, was a message bearer.

The bird I had told brave Coatesworth Pinckney to dispatch! I was here, ahead of it, I said to myself! Its appearance did notify me that my lieutenant had been unharmed at least so long after my departure from Tent Tavern as to send it on its way; but its message seemed finally unnecessary, since I was safe in Philadelphia and would soon be storming the congressional doors, to whisper proudly to my hero there that both the fleet and the troops landed from it in Charleston Harbor had been conclusively beaten off by our Colonel Moultrie and Colonel Thompson.

Yet what of my mother and little Susanna? There might be news of them: they might be in peril—certainly they were in duress. That was the thought that stopped me. Someone must receive this pigeon—read its message and act accordingly therewith.

Should I run up to the roof? Or ought the Colonies to take precedence over even my own mother and sister?

"Mr. Hall," I began, "I owe you an apology, but it must wait. Has Stuart taught you about pigeons? Can you—?"

And then another ominous thing happened. That house opposite retained, below stairs, its shuttered air of desertion, but somebody in it must have been awatch from behind one of the windows above: I saw a trapdoor being lifted on its roof, a hand that held something, and therefrom a released creature, winged, flashed into air.

It was a hawk. Therein lay the answer to the mystery of that attack upon our other bird. Informed by Johnson of the postmaster general's celestial postal system, these Tory spies had trained a group of hawks to intercept such of our carriers as Jabez—bearing news of which I kept him in ignorance—Jabez, at his accursed inn, could neither check nor rob!

"I mean, Mr. Hall," I substituted, "have you such a thing as a rifle?"

He actually began to make another speech! That hawk was sweeping upward toward the bird which certainly bore testimony to the presence of a loyal Whig

somewhere about Tent Tavern, and which, I felt more and more desperately convinced, carried word of my mother and sister.

"Man," I cried, "have you, or haven't you, something to shoot with?"

He was utterly bewildered, but I saw a nervous instinctive movement of one hand toward Dr. Franklin's desk. Thither I darted. It was unlocked. I flung its top open: there, sure enough, lay a pistol, and one glance showed me that it was loaded and primed.

IRAN again to the shop door. Both birds were low now and well within range, the one racing for the safety of its home, the other endeavoring to overtake it before it reached its loft and the protection of the expected human being who should have been—but who, alas, was not, on duty there.

The two forms were exactly above Talbot House, our pigeon winging from the east, and the hawk soaring as straight upward as a signal rocket. The latter was gaining on his prey.

Below the street was nigh empty. I sprang to the middle of it, before amazed Mr. Hall could stay me. Ere even he turned on again the tap to his flow of words, I aimed and fired.

I hit the hawk—a fair shot, if I say it who shouldn't. That winged death hove over on its side and fell, first in narrowing circles and then like a dropped pebble; but my marksmanship was wasted. Immediately my bullet had been answered by another—by another from the roof opposite—by another that brought down our homer, with whatever news it carried, to the very edge of the trapdoor opening from the top story of Talbot House. So keen to secure his feathery victim's message that he spent no glance upon the slayer of his hawk, Harry Whiteside—a rifle in his hand and that crooked grin upon his face—scuttled across the roof and picked up the pigeon.

So, while fondly imagining that bird of no more consequence and believing myself within grasp of conquest, I had in reality been plunging to disaster. Except that my miserable life would be safe until vengeance overtook it, I might as well have remained in the wagon and been discovered there.

Not only was Lieutenant Pinckney's dispatch in the hands of his enemies! Since Whiteside was at Talbot House, that street brawl with the farmer must have ended; Stuart must be over there in Heaven knew what distress and danger; and Jabez, since he was not come to the shop, had doubtless conjectured that Dr. Franklin would by now be at the Congress session in the State House—Jabez must have gone directly thither and delivered his liberty-destroying forgeries!

XX—"Ring!"

WAS there yet time to bear the truth to the Congress before it voted upon, and defeated, the Declaration?

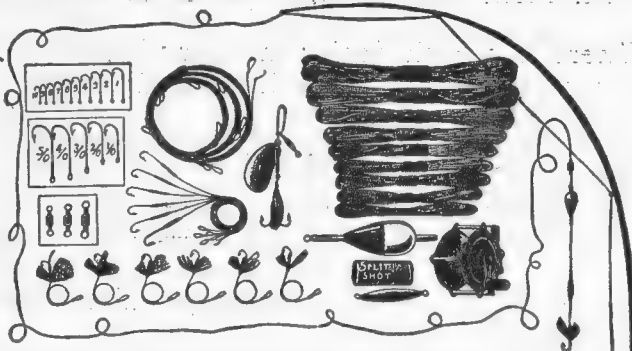
Mr. Hall's hand touched my shoulder. "Young man," said he, "what does this mean? It is unlawful to—"

I tore away—then, in my turn, laid hold of him.

"Mr. Hall—Mr. Hall, you have men working here. Lead them to that house—break in!" I pointed across the street; the roof was empty now. "Stuart is a prisoner there, and they are going to torture him! It is a nest of felons and Tory spies. It is they who have been robbing the doctor's mails!"—Mr. Hall gasped. I shook him:—"Do you hear?—Do you understand me?—I can prove it. Now they have sent false messages to overcome the Separation—and they will overcome it, unless I get at once with my news to the Congress—But Stuart must be saved—saved: do you hear?—and those criminals taken. You can command your workmen."—I thrust my pistol into his hand. "Don't forget that there's a back door. Go armed! But go—go—GO!"

Did I convince him? Would this cautious and wordy man ever rise to action? I durst not pause to see. Those shots had

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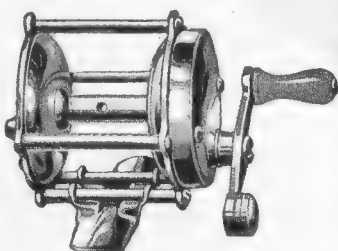
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been heard; the lately empty street was filling, for Philadelphia was in nervous mood to-day, and the usual population was augmented by the presence of many curious folk from the outlying countryside. Nevertheless, I somehow evaded this present press of people and ran down Second Street and across Market into Chestnut, where I turned west toward Fifth.

But here another crowd was gathered, and a greater I had never seen. It began halfway beyond Fourth Street and, by the time I had wedged a passage within view of the State House roof, it was packed across the thoroughfare near solid. These men and women—for there were women there, too—were here to catch at first hand any rumors that might filter through those red brick walls from the vital sitting of the Continental Congress now in session behind them.

The faces around me were fixed and anxious, most of the spectators loudly expressing hopes that Mr. Jefferson's resolution would be adopted, or fears that it would fail, but others muttering desires for its defeat, and not a few coming to blows upon the issue, while overhead fluttered in a light breeze under a cloudless sky, the Cross-and-Stripes flag of the Colonies.

I squirmed forward, was cuffed and cursed—often was hauled back, but always wriggled on again. It was a thing that only a boy could do, for nobody else, unless armed with some authority, might have passed between men thus closely placed, or so dodged blows or evaded clutchings. Time it took and strength and no end of patience, but at last I slipped under an elbow and came through the front rank.

There was the red building with its white facings. Here, just before me, was the flight of steps that leads to the main doors—but in front of those doors stood two soldier sentries in buff-and-blue.

To them I mounted. At once their crossed muskets barred further progress.

"Get back!" said one sentry, forgetting the proper military challenge.

"I must get in!" I gasped.

"You're lunatic," said the other soldier, and made to push me down the steps.

Indeed, journey-stained and soiled by all my rough tumbling—coatless, too—I must have looked mad enough. The crowd began to laugh and hoot.

Little did I know of Congresses: this impediment of arms had not suggested itself to my plan. I was in despair.

"Have they voted yet?" I asked, trying to hold my ground.

A pair of replies came in chorus: "That's their affair."—"They are just about to." Then both men said: "Get down!"

I SAW now that I should have sent the printer here and had him put under my guidance the workmen intended to storm Talbot House. But it was too late for regrets. I said desperately:

"I am from Mr. Hall, Dr. Franklin's partner, and I bear a message that *must* reach the doctor at once—at once, before that vote is taken!"

Those names were potent. The soldiers—raw men, apparently—showed some wavering. "Hand me your message," said he that had first spoken.

"It is word-of-mouth," I answered, "and it is for Dr. Franklin's ears alone."

"Put him on down!" cried the front row of the crowd, who heard nothing.

The sentries looked at each other. "We might send in word," the second one suggested. "We passed in that Jabez Johnson."

I could have shrieked with rage and chagrin.

"But he bore a card from Franklin," came the protest. "Boy, have you one?"

"No," I said boldly, "but I've something better. Let me," I pleaded, at last forced to play my trump card—"just let me get as far as the anteroom, if there is such a thing. Then at least the responsibility will not be yours, but the attendants' there, for keeping the doctor in ignorance of what he will want to know. Because"—and here I threw into my tone all the intensity of threatening I could manage—"the man that stops me will pay dear to this Congress. *My news is from New York and Charleston!*"

Well, my trump card won. Even these new recruits were aware of the significance

contained in mention of that combination of cities, and they dared not resist it. Passing to others the onus of my further ingress, they slipped me through the doors, while the crowd shouted its protest against this favoritism.

I was in a passage full of serious people buzzing with subdued talk and hurrying hither and yon. Ahead there rose a staircase, but nobody went up or down. An unguarded doorway stood at my right; before me at my left, another soldier—no green man this time—leaned upon his musket, and that, I decided, must be the entrance to the meeting hall.

I pressed toward it as the guard drew aside to let a man come out. None had an eye for a mere boy, yet you may be sure that my ears were cocked high, and you can easily imagine my consternation when, in answer to the questions flung at him, that personage fresh from the session declared excitedly:

"Yes, they are voting now. Then they will at once adjourn."

More he said, but my senses refused to receive it. First I had learned that Jabez had got into that chamber with his forgeries, and now the poll was being taken upon the issue of independence: what, save one thing, was there to conclude? I made sure that, cost what it might, I must reach either Dr. Franklin or my father before the adjournment.

What was to be done? I knew not one of these people around me: half of them, or all, might be enemies to the Separation; if I announced my tidings, they might laugh me down, or even forcibly restrain me. Nevertheless, marshalling every bit of my remaining nervous forces for a final appeal, I moved yet closer to that guarded door.

Then, of a sudden, fortune favored me and changed, in a wink, the whole complexion of my schemes. Again the double portals behind the solitary infantryman opened. Again he moved aside to permit the outward passage of another excited figure. I was just at this person's elbow, and the doors were partly open.

Daringly I shot around him. I bounded through ere the sentry could conjecture my impertinent purpose, much less oppose it—and so I passed into the session of the Continental Congress.

Oh, of course I was followed! That silly guard pursued me, but I was well before him and he dared not make a scene. The delegates if they noted me at all, mistook me for one of their ragamuffin pages, and the soldier pursuing me was handicapped by clumsy attempts at silence; so, unchecked, I kept on, my eyes seeking Dr. Franklin as I slipped along the rear wall.

Picture to yourself that since historic room—flooded with yellow sunshine—with the seat of the president of Congress at its farther end, the congressional secretary below, and before these a great table on which some sort of document now lay spread, an inkhorn and quills beside it. John Hancock, of Braintree in Massachusetts, was, as I later learned, the grave man that presided, and between him and my wriggling progress sat, in those wide, stiff-backed chairs, all the tense statesmen and politicians in whom here reposed our country's future.

"Virginia!" called the president. Across the hall, a soldierly man arose and responded in clear tones: "Virginia votes 'Aye!'"

One by one, Mr. Hancock was naming the Colonies though not in any fixed order of precedence that I could detect. In response to each name somebody would stand up and answer.

I saw my father across the room, but the sentry, edging ever nearer and wildly gesticulating at me, barred my way thither. I was wavering in the thought to shout my news aloud to the whole hall, when I realized that every vote since my entrance, was, incredibly, affirmative. Neither applause nor sound of disapproval succeeded any announcement, but none said "Nay," and only he who answered for New York replied that his Colony would reserve its vote until later.

"Pennsylvania!" came the presidential summons.

THEN at last I saw Dr. Franklin seated beside a gentleman whom I was to know soon as Mr. Thomas Jefferson. The philosopher got to his feet. Out of his



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shod member of the crew is aboard.
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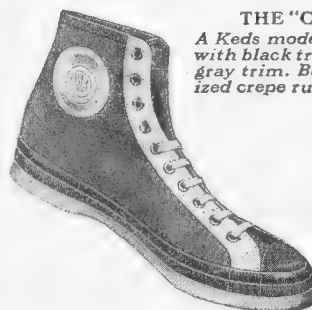
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(Continued from page 39)
broad and smiling face, his eyes shone with a grim, yet kindly humor. He pointed to the back of Mr. Hancock's chair—for Mr. Hancock was by then also risen—whereon shone the emblem of a sun.

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Franklin, "for long I knew not whether that was a rising or a setting sun; but you have heard me remark before that if we did not hang together, we should assuredly all hang separately. Therefore, I congratulate my own safety as well as the future of our new country upon the unanimous support of this Declaration."

Yes—save for that one exception, which continued less than a fortnight—the Colonies, with a sublime courage and a supreme faith, unanimously adopted Mr. Jefferson's defiance of the Crown! Some members, I now know, were absent, notably Mr. Robert Livingston, who had hurried away to persuade New York's provincial assembly; yet those absences mattered not and that persuasion was sure of accomplishment. Also there were still dissenting or hesitant delegates from several quarters, but not enough to form a majority in any one delegation. The sharp criticism had ended; the last amendment was made; naught save mere formalities remained; the engrossing of that immortal document and the affixing of most of the signatures, which occurred on August 2nd. Here, on July 4th, John Hancock, as presiding officer, and Charles Thompson, as secretary, signed it for authentication, and the great deed was done. As, hidden in a house of spies, I had been one of the first Americans to hear it, so now was I an eye witness to the Continental Congress's passage and adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

Less than an hour thereafter, I was to learn how little all that had happened in Jersey affected the decision. The Talbot forgeries came to Dr. Franklin only a few minutes before my own arrival in the hall, too late to be communicated to the Congress before its voting was begun. The Tories had hoped first to wear down their enemies' courage by delay, the suppression of vital news and, later, the issuing of false reports. But those reports were rendered too tardy by one Quaker farmer and two locked wagon wheels, and the delay had been continued just too long: a reaction set in for which not even the good Doctor was prepared, but of which he was swift to take advantage by forcing the vote. Fired by the oratory of the more intense Separationists, and deciding that desperate action was better than either surrender to unknown force or further pusillanimous postponement, sheer patriotism turned the tide.

Of so much, I say, I was subsequently informed. Now, however, I walked straight up to that still approaching guard. "Mr. Frank Rowntree over there is my father," said I. "Take me to him." The bewildered man obeyed. Even as I began my explanation of my presence here and of Stuart's plight, Dr. Franklin, looking ten years younger, ran by us without so much as seeing me. He flung open the doors. I could see him in the passage; he put both his hands to his mouth and shouted: "Ring!"

WELL do I know that there are already folk discrediting the story of the old bellman and his waiting grandson who brought him up this order—folk, who, perversely loving to destroy any beautiful thing, deny the first account of the Liberty Bell, declaring that the steeple of that State House which Andrew Hamilton designed was taken down in '74 and not replaced until long after this day when the Declaration was published to the

world, nor, truth to tell, have ever I been able to controvert them. About such details as whether a ringing occurred overhead, how can memory serve one after the lapse of years? But this I do know: that somewhere one bell straightway sounded as if in answer to the philosopher's summons and that soon it seemed as if all the bells of the city were clanging.

Inside the hall, the Congressmen were embracing one another. Some cheered. Some bowed their heads in mute communion with a Higher Power. Standing on a chair, I saw, through those opened windows, the now hatless crowd outside: even its recent malcontents seemed to have caught the enthusiasm within—what had from this instant become forever Independence Hall rocked to the shout of their loyal approval. These United Colonies were "and of right ought to be, Free and Independent."

Now, you are not to suppose that any selfish thought at that lofty moment intruded upon me to lessen the effect of such a splendid event. I realized then as clearly as I did later that no matter how little had come of the hazardous efforts of Coatesworth Pinckney, Stuart and me, none of us could or would have done less. A soldier may not be sure of his efforts; he must give his all to avert disaster to his country. We had not won the recognition given spectacular accomplishment, but the fading of my boyish dreams of glory could not lessen my deep content in what we had achieved. Regardless of risk, we had carried our information to headquarters; had got it there in time. It had been ready if needed—as it might so easily have been—in our country's crisis. Poor patriots would we have been, soldiers of small calibre, if in chagrin we had doubted the worth of our service.

But I did think at that moment, if not of my lost endeavors, at least of Stuart and of my mother and sister and of dauntless Lieutenant Pinckney, and of what might be happening to them all—and, as I tore my gaze from the window, these things were brought the closer home to me by a sudden glimpse of Jabez Johnson.

The unexpected turn of affairs must have sent him crouching behind one of those dark wood, wide-seated delegates' chairs up in the southeast corner, for now I saw him appear there and, as far as his vast bulk would permit, began to tiptoe unostentatiously out of the chamber. One look he gave it, and rarely was seen anything more horrid. His huge face was nigh black with rage and disappointment; his deep-set eyes glowed and glowered banefully, and his broad lips framed a curse.

"Stop that man!" I cried to my father, pointing plainly. "He is the chief servant of the arch spy!"

THAT was a moment so tense that any accusation would bring arrest. The very sentry who had shortly before been after me stayed Jabez, and, when he began to bluster, a half dozen members made the detention permanent, while, even as this was accomplished, Mr. Richard Hall and some six or seven of his journeymen and apprentices stormed the entrance, coming in with pistols and printers' brass composing sticks. At their midst was my brother, little the worse for his experience, and, beside him, their hands bound behind them, Tory Talbot, disdainful to the last, but an utter prisoner, and cowering Harry Whiteside. I had not trusted Dr. Franklin's partner in vain: the wordy man of peace had become a veritable Joshua in war!

"So," said Dr. Franklin, as, having at length heard an account of ourselves, he straightened his nose glasses and found

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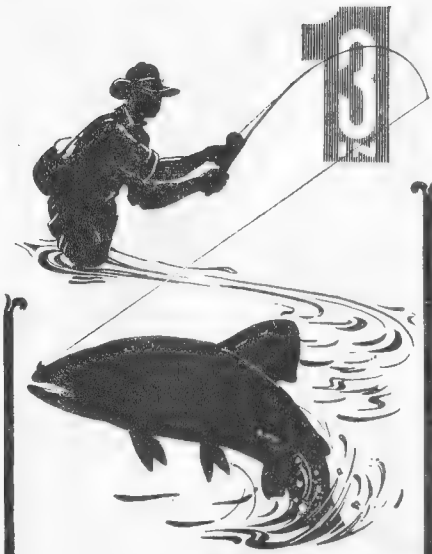
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Thru the Wood with a Compass of Course

as much leisure to talk to a pair of boys as to anybody—"so, though one of you disobeyed orders in leaving Philadelphia, both of you have done a good service to the United and Independent Colonies. We did unanimously adopt the Declaration without you. But you were good soldiers—ready for whatever might come. Moreover, you have exposed and caused the arrest of a nest of spies and traitors that might later—as time and the inevitable conflict go on—have wrecked the cause of the new republic. You have done well."

He paused to survey us with calm eyes in which there was a glint of satisfaction, a trace of pride. Then he resumed:

"Don't worry about your women folk at Tent Tavern: there's a company of our light cavalry posting there now to rescue them and brave Lieutenant Pinckney—and to save, for the hangman's noose, the lives of your—what do you call 'em?—Black George and Jim May. This blow, the taking of Johnson (how could I ever believe in him?) will clear the roads and open communication with New York as soon as, within twenty-four hours, news of it gets abroad, as I propose that it shall get, and widely—for half the Tory spies will run either to us now or to cover. I am accordingly sending news-dispatches to General Washington in Manhattan, where, God willing, he will soon be reading our Declaration of Independence before his assembled soldiers. Would you boys like to send a message to your grandfather, Nicholas Rowntree?"

And I have still with me the note that I then and there dispatched. Grandfather Rowntree proudly carried it through all the glorious War of the Revolution, but its deeply creased folds are not yet too badly broken, or its text too illegible for deciphering:

"Dear Grandfather:

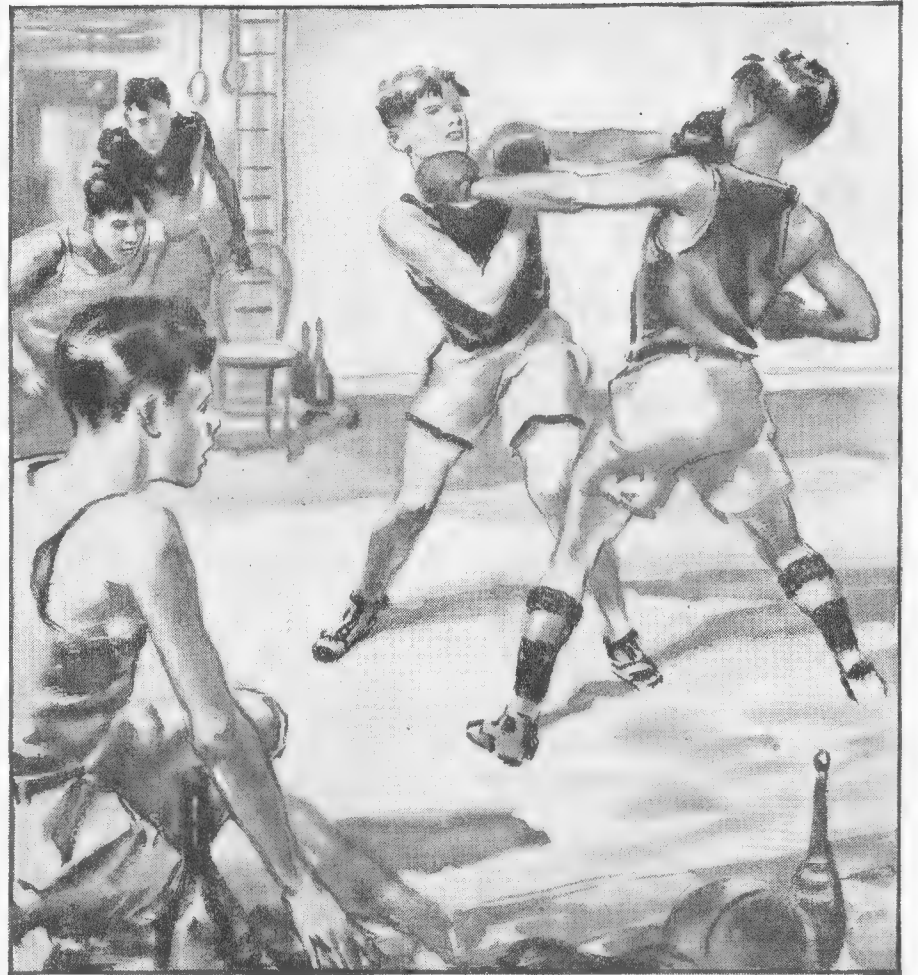
"We passed a Declaration of Independence to-day. We're free at last—and we boys came very near to helping in the decision of the Continental Congress. Love from all, and please send us a brass button from the uniform of your first prisoner. We are going to enlist as soon as they'll let us, which will be next year.

"Your Aff. Grandson & Obt. Servant,
"Jeff."

We gave that to the Doctor's runner on this fourth of July in 1776, twenty-four hours before my mother and pesky Susanna and my gallant lieutenant were brought safe to Philadelphia with the nearly exhausted Jim May and Black George, who were sentenced not long later, along with Talbot and Johnson and Harry Whiteside, too. It was, I remember, on the very day when their punishment was decreed that the good Doctor gave Stuart and me a last piece of advice for the conduct of all our subsequent lives—advice since included in a form little changed, and "for all sorts and conditions of men" in his immortal autobiography:

"Eat not to dullness, drink not to elevation. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Keep everything in order. Resolve to perform what you ought: perform without fail what you resolve. Make no expense, but do good to others, wasting nothing. Be always employed in something useful and cut off all unnecessary actions. Use no deceit; avoid extremes; tolerate no uncleanness. Be not disturbed at trifles."

Since then, I have lived long and seen many things, good and evil, in peace and at war; but I think that these precepts which Dr. Franklin laid down for Stuart and me are a good note upon which to end this part of my history. It is with them, therefore, that I close my chronicle of what befell me in the summer of that ever memorable year of '76 and of the things I did and saw at the time of the forging of our American Independence.



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BOXING is a great sport—always has been. But only in recent years has it been taken up by the rank and file of American youth. Nowadays you'll find practically every college with a boxing team—and a corking good one, too!

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You need a sturdy, physically fit body; a body that has enough in reserve to stand the gaff . . . and put across the winning blow. Have you got it? Can you give . . . and take?

You don't develop a powerful, rugged physique merely by wishing for it. You've got to treat that body of yours in the right way. You've got to give it enough sleep, enough fresh air, enough exercise. And, even more important, you've got to see that it gets the right foods; the foods which will supply the elements needed for strength, energy,

endurance! Some foods give you plenty of these elements. Others don't! Choose the foods which give you the most!

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For the Boys to Make

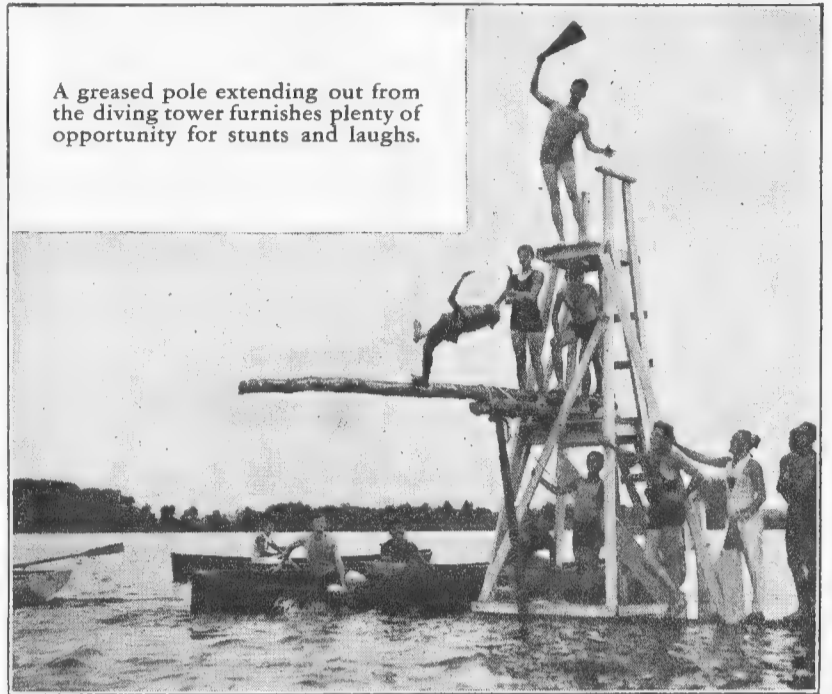
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Author of "Boy Craftsman," "Homemade Games," etc.

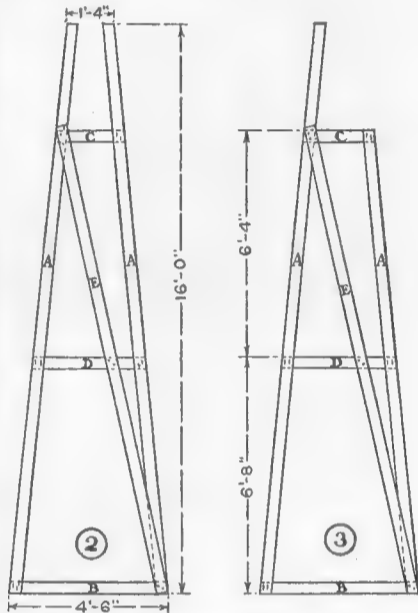
A Diving Tower

YOU can build this tower upon a barrel raft like that shown on this page last July, or upon the end of a pier. One means of support is as commonly employed as the other. The advantage of the raft tower is that it may be towed to whatever depth is desired. Often, water at a pier end is too shallow for diving. In that case it may be more economical to extend the pier than build the raft.

The framework of the diving tower requires 2-by-4s for uprights, crosspieces, and braces, and a few 1-by-6 boards for platforms. The cost of material will vary in different localities, but should not exceed \$6.00. You can cut that in half by



A greased pole extending out from the diving tower furnishes plenty of opportunity for stunts and laughs.



Details of frames for the diving tower.

persuading someone to go fifty-fifty with you, or, if you fellows have a club, charge it to the treasury, or spread a special assessment to cover it.

The tower shown in the photograph is a typical structure, of average height, correctly set up and braced. Springboards may be added if desired. The way to make a diving springboard was described and illustrated in the diving raft article in last July's magazine.

Of course, you need not adhere strictly to the plans given for the two-platform tower. Material at hand may necessitate alterations. But use sufficient bracing, place it correctly, and you cannot go wrong.

Figure 1 shows a detail of the completed tower, with its structural members lettered for the purpose of reference. The way to build the framework is to make two side frames like those shown in Figs. 2 and 3, stand them in the position they are to occupy, and connect with the crosspieces and braces. As you will see by the details, the only difference in the frames is that one upright is cut off at the height of the upper platform (Fig. 3) because there is a railing on only one side. The other upright is left long to provide a hand hold at the top of the ladder. Make the frames alike, then saw off the top of one upright.

Place a pair of 16-foot 2-by-4s upon the ground with the bottoms 4 feet 6 inches apart, the tops 1 foot 4 inches apart, and

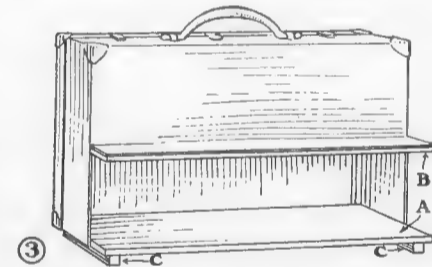
nail bottom plate B, top plate C and center plate D across them at the points indicated. The best way to do is to cut the plates the approximate required lengths, then, after spiking them in place, trim off the ends flush with the edges of the uprights. Diagonal E, another 2-by-4, will make the frame rigid. Before spiking it to the uprights and crosspieces, check up, and if opposite angles are not alike, twist the frame until they are. When you have as-

sembled one frame, build the second upon it. In this way you will get the pair exactly alike.

You can assemble the frames and cut the connecting crosspieces before calling for assistance. Another lad and you can easily set up the framework. Raise the frames to their approximate positions, and hold them temporarily with diagonals. Shift the bottom ends until the measurement from outside to outside is 4 feet 6 inches, and connect with plates F. Spread the upper ends so the distance between uprights A at the height of the top platform is 20 inches, and spike the pair of 2-by-4 plates G across the frames even with the tops of plates C. Spike crosspieces H to the frames just below the ends of plates D. Cut and spike platform joist I to crosspieces H halfway between joists D.

Brace the front of the framework with the 2-by-4 diagonal J, the rear with the 1-by-6 diagonal K and the 2-by-4 ladder rail L. Cut ladder rungs M out of 2-by-2s, plane off the edges to make them slightly round, and spike to rail L and one of the uprights A, spacing them 18 inches on centers. With the ladder completed, floor over the two platforms with 1-by-6 inch boards, and complete the railing by spiking 2-by-4 N to uprights A.

The base of the diving tower structure must be anchored to prevent its shifting on the pier. This can be done by running bolts through holes bored in base plates B and F, and the pier platform. A diagonal or two extending from the upper portion of the framework to the pier will add to the rigidity. The advantage of bolting the base is that you can remove it readily at the end of the season, when dismantling the pier.

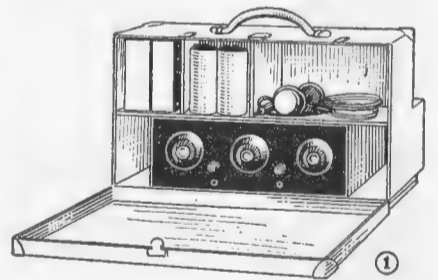


Cut away and extend the back of the suitcase like this.

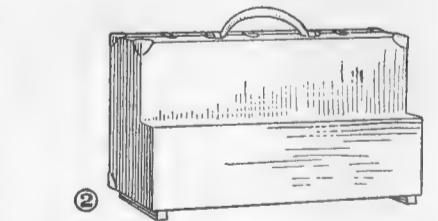
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A suitcase remodeled for a portable radio set.

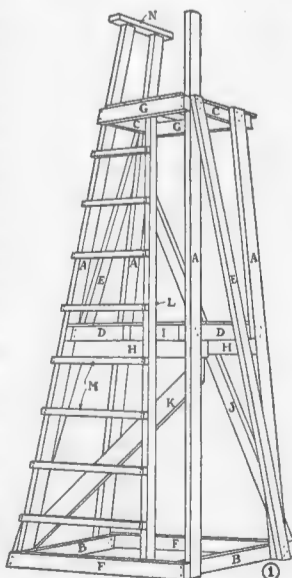


A suitcase remodeled for a portable radio set.

a couple of coats of white paint will not only make the tower shipshape, but keep the wood from weathering and splintering.

A Carrying Case for Your Radio

IF you don't take your radio set when you go camping you will regret it. If it's a crystal set, and your camp site is within twenty-five miles of a broadcasting station, its compactness makes the matter of packing simple; but a tube set hooked up as a portable requires more careful handling. A waterproof cover of



The complete framework for a two platform diving tower.

oilcloth or rubber sheeting sewed in the form of a case, with snaps by which to fasten it over the cabinet, is one solution to the problem, but a carrying case to accommodate the set, batteries, phones and spare parts is better. A suitcase will serve admirably. Possibly there is an old one about the house that you can use; if not, one of fiber-board is inexpensive.

If the suitcase is deep enough, it may be remodeled as suggested in the sketches of Figs. 1 and 2. With your jackknife cut the back of the suitcase along the bottom edge, from end to end, then along each end a distance of 8 inches, and bend out the piece between the cuts as shown in Fig.

3. Then cut two shelf boards a trifle wider than the radio cabinet and the inside length of the suitcase, and fasten them between the ends for shelves with correct spacing to accommodate the cabinet (A and B, Fig. 3). Enclose the back and extended ends of the case with wallboard, and bind the edges with strips of canvas coated with glue. Cleats C on the bottom (Fig. 3) are necessary to prevent upsetting when the front is opened.

Shellac or paint the wallboard extension, then enamel all surfaces of the suitcase.

Screw the radio cabinet to shelf A, and partition off the space above shelf B for batteries, phones and parts.

The Sheriton Eight

(Continued from page 14)

One day, perhaps a month later, I had a float hour at one o'clock, so I strolled down to the crew house. The door was open, but I saw nobody. All about me, on racks one above the other, stretched the long, slim shells of the past, shells in which Sheriton crews, for thirty years back, had fought for the Purple and Gold. It almost made a fellow choke up to see them, and something moved me to take off my cap.

"Hello, youngster."

It was Jim Chappelle, the rigger, who worked full time keeping shells and oars in order. He was at work on a new shell, and I came over and watched him.

"What's this one for?" I asked him.

"Use it next year. This is the *Sheriton's* second season. She'll do all right for the Berkeley regatta"—Berkeley was our greatest crew rival—"but next year she will be too slow. I'll have this one pretty near done before summer, at that."

And then, because I know that a rigger sees and hears a great deal, I steered the subject to Rusty.

"Nayle? Sure. He's a born oarsman. He's got rhythm, and rhythm is what a crew man needs. He's cool in the head, too, and a fighter. Callison figgers to make a stroke out of him."

A stroke! The man who sets the pace—the man who, with the coxswain, directs the race!

"And he'll make the varsity?"

"I wouldn't say that," Chappelle said. "Course, it's too early to tell yet, but Bradley looks to have the call on him. It usually takes a couple of years to make a stroke and Bradley's done some rowing before."

"Bradley pulled a neat trick on Nayle, a few weeks back. Nayle had never set foot in a shell before. Came down and wanted to go out in a single. We helped him off, and he rowed away as nice as you please. A little unsteady, but he didn't ship any water."

"Coming back into the float he found Bradley waiting for him."

"Ship your oars," says Bradley, "and step right out."

"Course you can't do that. A shell is too narrow and tippy. You have to keep one oar straight out in the water and the other across the float, to steady you. But Nayle didn't know that, and he shipped his oars, and tried to climb out, and landed kersplash in the middle of the lake."

Chappelle shook with laughter.

"What happened then?"

"Nothing. Bradley walked away, and Nayle swam out, kind of red, and grinned and hunted up dry clothes."

"This Bradley," I asked, "does he ever show up without that sullen look?"

Jim grinned.

"Well, he's no angel when it comes to disposition, but he's a mighty sweet oarsman. If Nayle beats him out, it'll be because miracles still happen."

A funny twist of fate, that. Bradley, the crabby and nasty tempered, becoming Rusty's rival. Bradley, the self-centered, beating out Rusty, the man who would almost give his life for his school. Strange things happen.

THE fall wore along. Between football and my studies I was kept pretty busy, but not too busy to watch Rusty and crew. Rusty was doing beautifully. He

was never displaced, after the first month, from the second varsity boat, which is a mighty fine showing for a man who knew nothing of rowing before his junior year. Indeed, his boat could give the varsity a tough race. Once in a four-mile trial spin they finished with less than two lengths of water between the two.

Bradley continued sullen and unfriendly, but he improved as fast as Rusty did. He was powerful, and if he'd controlled his disposition he'd have been downright handsome. He always arrived just a moment before the squad went out, and he never failed to be the first man in his street clothes and out of the crew house. He was never seen to grin, and if anybody tried to make up to him he'd snap like a turtle. Naturally, his name came to be Mud, with a capital M.

Yet Rusty, somehow, halfway stood up for him.

"He's crabby and bad-tempered, all right," he'd say, "but he's a whale of a good crew man, and anybody who can stick on the varsity boat with everybody knocking him must have some stuff on the ball."

But even Rusty, after the fifteenth of November, stopped defending Bradley.

A crew man's worst enemy is boils. You would think a fellow in tiptop condition would automatically escape 'em, but unfortunately he doesn't. Just the year before we'd lost to Berkeley in the last and biggest regatta because Struthers, our stroke, had developed a combination boil and infection on his knee that kept him out of the race.

All fall, Red told me, Callison had fought the menace. He ruled that jerseys and trunks must be laundered once a week, that each man must have the slightest scratch antisepticized at once, and must wash his oar handle after each turn-out. Despite these precautions, though, two men from the fastest boats were kept out with boils. And Callison posted this sign on the bulletin board:

Every crew man will report here at 2 o'clock Saturday afternoon, November 15, to help renovate quarters. We shall whitewash the walls and install an antiseptic tank. Next spring, after each turnout, candidates will be required to dip their suits in antiseptic.
Callison.

Rusty, the day the sign was posted, met Bradley.

"Wish I knew how to slip you a boil," he joked. "Maybe I'd get on the varsity for a minute or two, then."

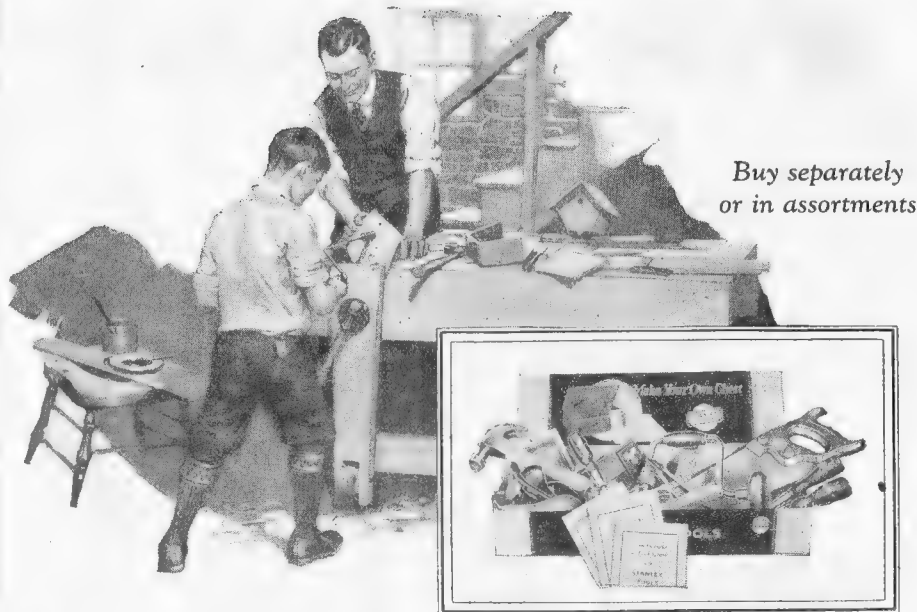
"Little kid stuff, all that anti-boil scare," Bradley sneered. "I'm not going to waste my Saturday afternoon slopping whitewash."

And he didn't. As it happened, to the varsity eight fell the job of putting in the heavy tank, and Bradley's overworked team mates loudly demanded where the big stroke was hiding himself.

Red was about to speak up angrily, so he told me afterwards, but Rusty stopped him.

"Think I want to win my seat by queering Bradley? I'll do Bradley's work and we'll shut up about it."

He did, and that was that. But afterwards, when anyone accused Bradley of lacking Sheriton spirit, Rusty hadn't anything to say.



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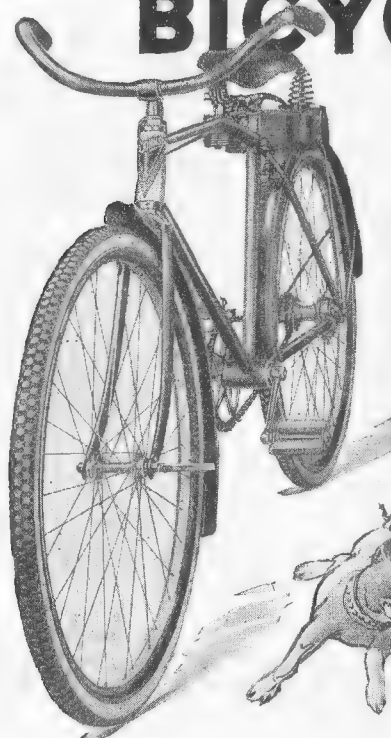
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July 10—Circus in town. Bicycle came in handy. Have been running errands for the boss canvasser. Making lots of "jack." Saw the clowns make up.

July 15—Rode over with Jim, Harry and Pete to Spoon River. Had a good swim and cats. Camped out all night. Slept fine. Up early and cooked breakfast. I won the race coming home.

July 21—The bunch had a meeting and planned a week's trip. We plan to cover over two hundred miles. We've got all the road maps. And we've picked out our camping spots. Expect to have a great time.

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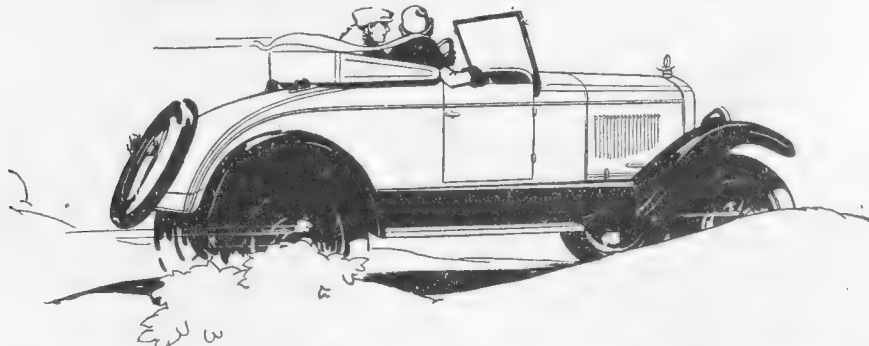
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The Rex "Collegian" is a luxurious sport roadster. And the body is specially built in a new, unique way. The joints can't loosen—no squeaks nor rattles. It's finished in a brilliant two-tone leather fabric. One piece ventilating windshield; sport top with natural wood bows. Snappy nicked handles, fitted to body doors; hood finished in two colors to match the body. Deep back and seat cushions, upholstered in textile leather, removable. Plenty of luggage space under the rear deck.

Rex COLLEGIAN

Sport Body for Fords

(Continued from page 43)

Crew practice stopped with winter weather, but Rusty kept right on going. He talked to crew men of the past, whenever he got the chance. He studied crew in books. He'd slip down to the gym, with Red and me, and work away at the weights. His earnestness promised trouble for Bradley when the spring turnout started.

BUT a few weeks later when Callison issued his call, Bradley was again stroking the first boat. And we all realized, with a sinking heart, that from somewhere Bradley had got the skill to offset Rusty's hard hours in the gym.

"It's a blooming shame," exploded Van Morgan. "Here's Bradley, with no Sheriton spirit at all, beating out a man who's working like a beaver for his school."

All of which didn't change things any. Berkeley was as usual out to trim us.

They had five varsity men back, against four for Sheriton, and as the race was to take place on their home water they were doubly anxious to win. Their margin was two lengths the year before, and they were so delighted that their crew squad was publishing a weekly pep bulletin called "Two Lengths."

According to the newspapers they had one of the rangiest, most powerful eights in their history—a crew that could hold a thirty-four stroke, if need be, all through a race, and then finish with a smashing forty.

As the day of our first regatta, with Kiefer, approached, Callison had developed one of his characteristically smooth eights that used to perfection the famous energy-conserving Sheriton stroke. We sent two crews to Kiefer, and Rusty had the satisfaction of stroking the junior varsity to victory by three-quarters of a length. He rowed a pretty race, through water sometimes rough, and I myself saw Callison throw a brawny arm over his shoulder and congratulate him in the whole-hearted way that had made him the idol of the whole campus. Our varsity won by three lengths—a not very satisfactory showing, considering that Berkeley a week later beat Kiefer by a good five, finishing without a spurt and with every man in the boat as fresh as a fiddler.

"We must try to finish our new shell for the Berkeley regatta," Callison stated, to the Sheriton Daily. "It'll save us thirty seconds in a four-mile race, and we'll need the extra speed."

Jim Chappelle shook his head dubiously, for a shell "has to be perfect and ain't turned out overnight," but he plunged into the job with all the energy that was in him.

Jennett, decisively beaten by Berkeley, came to Sheriton with the dope dead against her. The race was set for 3 o'clock, but at that hour Lake Sheriton was tossing and ugly. At 4 it was still impossible to row, and finally at 5, with a brisk wind still blowing, the referee decided to start the crews. Sheriton, in the draw, got the outside course, about fifty yards farther from the shore than Jennett. I saw Coach Callison shake his head worriedly. And then a pistol barked, and so did Red's old flivver, as Red and I followed the racing shells. Carrie A. Nation sputtered a lot, but she managed to keep up.

Sheriton, rowing a beautiful thirty-six, jumped into the lead. At the half-mile mark there was nearly a length of water between the shells, and Sheriton had slowed down to a long thirty-two that Jennett could scarcely combat with a ragged thirty-five.

"Another race for the trophy room," Red exulted. "But will you tell me what that bird Bradley has on Rusty? Not so

much, in my way of thinking."

"He's a slick oarsman, though," I grudgingly admitted. "Look at him lay on that oar. He's giving it every ounce of muscle and weight he owns."

At the mile mark Sheriton was leading by better than two lengths, and then as we watched, she lengthened it to three. Jennett had slowed down its stroke and was rowing a dogged though beaten race. And then, suddenly, Red brought the flivver to a screeching stop.

"They're gaining!"

SOMETHING had gone wrong with the Sheriton boat. It seemed to swerve a little—then the stroke slowed up—got ragged. Then the Sheriton oars went up, every fellow sitting motionless and straight.

I groaned, for Jennett, not understanding the Sheriton maneuver but sensing the chance to win, had picked up courage and

was spurring gallantly. My heart sank as I saw the bow of the shell shoot past our coxswain, and then its stern. Open water showed between the two. And then the Sheriton sank!

She'd struck a water-logged plank, I later learned, that was just about ready to sink for good. A glancing blow, but enough to poke a hole in the Sheriton's hull, and to spoil her for the Berkeley race. Of course she could be patched, but she'd be even slower. . . . Jennett, like good sports, refused credit for the victory; but we had no chance to row the race over, so we never knew how our eight stacked up.

Now we had to have a new shell, and as the varsity, with the Berkeley race in their minds, drove grimly through their training, Jim Chappelle toiled day and night. The crew house buzzed like a hive.

One night after practice, Van Morgan and I were summoned to the crew house to meet a much perturbed Callison. He came directly to the point.

"The Berkeley athletic people write us that a gang of cheap sports—none of them on the campus, of course—are dead sure their crew is going to win. They want to clean up on the race and they intend to send a representative here, to place a lot of bets among the students.

"What I want is an undergraduate committee that will give publicity to the whole rotten scheme. Betting is a disgrace to intercollegiate athletics, and I'm confident that the Sheriton student body will realize it, and will back us to a man against it. Will you help Rip with the committee?"

Of course I would, and presently was on my way to the Daily office to discuss the campaign with the Daily editor.

During the next week I didn't see Rusty very often, but Red told me that the situation hadn't changed, and that Bradley still held the stroke's seat. The crew all felt that Sheriton had an even chance to beat Berkeley, and everybody was fighting for dear life.

"I'm afraid Rusty won't make it," Red ended. "There's practically no difference between his oarsmanship and Bradley's, but Bradley has had the experience of two varsity races and that's a real advantage. Rusty has another chance next year, don't forget."

Ten days before the Berkeley race the Sheriton II was given a trial, and she was a masterpiece. She'd cut the water like a shark, and the exultant Callison figured she was even faster than the Sheriton at her best. Chappelle put her back on the horses to be touched up here and there, but it was a cinch the varsity would row her in the big regatta.

Meanwhile we'd spiked the betting party, so far as students were concerned, but we understood that one way or an-

Old Stuff, But—

WALLACE TATUM, cub reporter on the Honolulu Transcript, sat down and pounded out a thousand words about \$800 worth of opium. "Big stuff!" he thought.

The city editor didn't. "Cut it to a page," he ordered.

The old-timers smiled. Opium was too common to be news—smuggling had gone on for years and the collector of customs seemed powerless to stop it. Old stuff.

BUT Tatum liked to swim, and he had a keen, analytical mind. You'll be surprised to read what all this had to do with smuggling. "The Cub Dives In," is the story, and Mitchell V. Charnley is the author.

It's in AUGUST.

other, the gambling ring had managed to place thousands of dollars against Sheriton.

Five days before the big race was to come off two Sheriton crews, frosh and varsity and substitutes, left for Berkeley, about a hundred miles away. The train by special dispensation, carried a flat car and two shells. Neither was the new one, for Jim Chappelle demanded another day to work on it. It would be shipped on the morrow, which would give the varsity a day to practice in it. That would be plenty, considering it was in every way exactly like the *Sheritonia*, and so not different to handle.

Presently we—I drove down in Red's flivver—found ourselves on the shores of the big estuary where the Berkeley race was to be rowed. If anybody was worried he didn't show it. Callison had thoughtfully provided plenty of entertainment to keep spare hours from dragging—a radio, and a piano, and home cooking that was a delight. A couple of stunt men from the Glee Club had come along, and they helped keep everybody in high spirits. Nobody was allowed to talk crew.

The next day, as a bunch of us were trying to tune in on Egypt, Red Barrett poked his head inside the door and nodded to me to follow him. I did.

"The train is here," he whispered, tragically, "and the car that was supposed to carry the new shell is empty. Chappelle is here, too, and says he attended to the loading himself. The only stop the train made was at Summerville, eight miles up the estuary. Callison has it figured out that the gang of gamblers must be at the bottom of it. If they can make Sheriton row in a slow boat, their chances of winning are that much better."

I was so mad I trembled all over.

"Let's get the police," I said.
"Can't," said Red. "Callison doesn't want to do anything publicly because it would merely worry the life out of the crew. They've a tough enough job as it is." And he pointed to the far stretches of the lake, where four Berkeley crews were skimming swiftly across the water.

"We've got to do some sleuthing on our own hook, and quietly. If we can't find the shell, then Callison will put it up to the fellows to go out and win in the old one. My flivver is outside. Let's go to Summerville at dark, and see what we can find out. It was at Summerville that the shell must have been taken off."

At 8 o'clock we slipped out of quarters. Red's ancient flivver, clattering like a lawn-mower, carried us out of town toward Summerville.

"We'll leave the bus in a garage to be greased and oiled," Red said. "That'll give us an excuse, in case anybody is watching, for hanging around. Then we'll separate and see what we can find. You take the water front, and I'll snoop around the business section. We'll meet in an hour at the garage."

The garage man grinned at the flivver, and observed that he thought it was too

bad to waste good oil and grease. But we left it, and after casually inquiring the way to the nearest movie we went out.

Summerville is a pretty small town. It stands on a hill overlooking the estuary, with a cliff between. The railroad runs along the crest of the cliff, which is maybe fifty feet high. Below are some old boat-houses and buildings.

If the shell was taken off the train at Summerville, I reasoned, the logical place to hide it would be along the water front. And so, my heart thumping loudly, I hunted until I found a path, and then crept down to the shore.

Three houseboats—no shell there. An old dock, with nothing under it. A clump of trees—deserted. Then a ramshackle building, with runways leading from both floors to the water. Evidently a deserted boathouse or shed.

Something prompted me to approach it softly, on my hands and knees. Lucky I did, for presently I heard low voices from its front, and then low voices from behind it. Guarded!

A big tree rose parallel with the side of the building. With great caution, for a noise would betray me, I climbed it, edged along a branch, and let myself lightly down upon the roof. With my pocket-knife I parted the old shingles, and peered through. It was too dark to see anything.

I applied my ear to the aperture. No sound. Evidently the guards—if they were guards—were not inside. I enlarged the hole, and with my flashlight swept the room. Instantly I shut it off. The room was deserted, save for three sawbucks, which supported—the Sheriton shell!

I hurried down the tree, and back to the garage. Just as soon as we'd chugged out I spoke in Red's ear.

"I've news," I said.

"So've I."

Red's jaw set grimly.

"I've found the new shell. It's hidden on the water front."

"Good boy! I've discovered something, too. We've a spy on our crew."

"Spy on our crew! Our crew is at Berkeley, asleep!"

"Not all of it. Curt Bradley isn't. I saw him in an office near here, and a man was just paying him some money!"

Bradley a spy! That complicated matters. Quite likely he knew we were here, knew our errand. That would make our plans, whatever they should turn out to be, doubly hard.

We heard rapid footsteps approaching on the wooden sidewalk. A tall figure was hurrying toward us. Unfortunately we were directly under an arc light, and our flivver had no top.

"It's Bradley," I whispered. "Let's duck."

"Too late, now. He's seen us. We'll have to scrap it out."

How did Bradley explain his presence? Why wasn't he at crew quarters in bed? The answer comes next month.

Tin Whistle Turns Cowboy

(Continued from page 13)

as the whole room rose to its feet with a muffled roar—two vigilant deputy sheriffs leaped for Rainey Hale. They seized him just as his clutching hands closed on the boy's throat.

Tim Whittle's wiry young arms had gone, almost instinctively, around his attacker's body—the closer he could keep to the maddened man, the less his own chance of injury. As the deputies loosened Hale's grip on the boy, Tim held tight to the man's coat, ripping it from collar and shoulder—then ruthlessly tore at his shirt.

"There!" the boy panted, as Hale's back was bared. "There! Look!"

Men crowded round; then crowded back to make room for the judge and members of the jury. Beyond that bit of deference, all court room formality was forgotten.

The judge nodded. "Yes," he announced dryly, "the boy got it right—a lady's head, four coiling snakes and two pistols."

Again that muffled roar from the room.

And a few moments later, after a semblance of order had been restored and Tim, going on with his story, had revealed Hale's cold-blooded plans for ridding himself of a boy who had accidentally come to know too much, that roar rose a third time, and Rainey Hale cowered before the righteous anger of the crowd.

The jury did not leave the box after the judge's charge. A moment of whispered consultation; then the foreman rose and said: "Guilty—unanimous verdict."

The judge said: "Twenty years at hard labor."

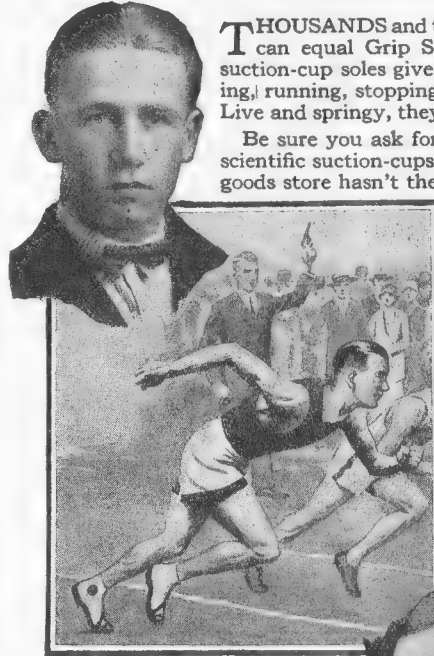
The prisoner said—well, several unprintable things.

But it was what the Diamond 3 men said that warmed Tim Whittle's heart and made his once despised nickname acceptable:

"Tin Whistle blew Rainey Hale's game for him—stopped his hoss thievin' right!" boasted the Diamond 3 men. "Tin, he jest turns cowboy and shows up Rainey's brand."

"I BROKE the neighborhood record—and also my own"

Three boys tell thrilling stories of how surefootedness pays



THOUSANDS and thousands of boys will tell you that no shoes can equal Grip Sures for all-around service. The patented suction-cup soles give you an *absolutely* sure foothold for starting, running, stopping, climbing, without danger of slip or skids. Live and springy, they help your speed as well as your confidence.

Be sure you ask for Grip Sures by name. You can't get these scientific suction-cups in any other shoe. If your shoe or sporting goods store hasn't them, write us.

ERNEST F. GOSS, St. Edwards, Nebr.
A prize-winner in the Grip-Sure "Surefootedness Contest"

"I broke the 100-yard dash record"

"The record was 13 seconds in our neighborhood, and I had made it. This time I wore a pair of Grip-Sure Shoes. At the signal I got off without a slip, as was generally my misfortune. I sped through the whole 100 yards without one little slip. The new record was 11½ seconds, which I owe to Grip Sures. I smashed the neighborhood record and also my own."

"Grip Sures sure live up to their name. Any fellow wearing them in athletics can be sure-footed, judging from my experience."

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JAMES HARE, Norman, Okla.
(Formerly of Burbank, Calif.)
Another Prize Winner

"I now wear Grip-Sures on Boy-Scout Camping Trips"

"The Boy Scouts of Troop 4, Burbank, California, were camping in Big Tunga Canyon. I was playing leader in Follow-the-Leader, and tried a difficult jump to a slanting boulder, covered with damp moss. My feet slipped, and I found myself knee-deep in an icy mountain stream, amid the laughter of my companions. One by one the rest of the boys suffered a similar fate. At this point one of the fellows came along and asked if we'd been fishing. 'Riled,' we invited him to try the jump. He did—landed on the boulder and stayed there."

"When we crowded around to examine his shoes, we found that they were Grip Sures. The suction cup had held where our own soles had failed. Since that day I wear Grip Sures for dependability and durability."



THOMAS PRATT, Detroit, Mich.
Also a Prize Winner

"My radio was tuned-in to hear President Coolidge"

"It was March 4th, 1925, and President Coolidge was to deliver his Inaugural address. I was waiting eagerly to hear it over the radio, but to my dismay the set was dead. There had been a severe storm the night before, and a glance at the roof showed the aerial had been damaged. The roof was still wet and slippery, but remembering my Grip Sures' remarkable power of adhesion I determined to trust them to get me safely to the top."

"Immediately I stepped on the treacherous roof my fears vanished. Those deep suction cups clung as a miser to his gold. I made the repairs and heard the speech clearly. The surefootedness afforded by my Grip Sures saved the day."

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GRIP SURE

Are You a Swimmer?

(Continued from page 10)



"Oh, Jack, take a look at Smitty's painted legs!"

"His legs aren't painted. The color in his bathing suit's just run."

"Huh! The colors in my bathing suit don't run—only when I do. My suit's a Bradley, same as all the champions wear."

BRADLEY Multi-feature Bathing Suits are the recognized leaders in style, durability and in-and-out-of-the-water comfort. Made of pure worsted yarns that give but don't s-t-r-e-t-c-h. All fast colors—sun-proof and run-proof.

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KNIT WEAR
and out-of-doors

the air forcibly from your lungs with your face submerged.

Swimming's on the Level

IT'S surprising how many swimmers—some of them pretty good—make the mistake of rolling their bodies too much from right to left with their strokes. The shoulders should be at all times parallel with the water, the right neither higher nor lower than the left at any time. The head shouldn't be "buried" too far in the water, either. I've seen boys who looked like submarines as they exhaled, their heads almost entirely under water. The water line should strike the head about at eyes and forehead. In practice it's well to carry your head higher than normal; that helps with the arch of your body, and teaches you not to bury your head too deeply.

Perfection of this stroke—or any other—isn't a thing you can get in a day. Sometimes it takes a lot of long, hard practice to get started on the right track. But the start is bound to come in time. You'll be working along day after day on one particular feature of a stroke, or a kick, like a fellow who came to me several years ago saying he wanted to learn a back stroke, and think that the time will never come when you can make it go right; then, suddenly, like this same chap, you will discover that you've fallen into the knack of it and that you'll improve rapidly.

The side stroke is the one generally used in life saving. Most carrying is done with it, because it can be used with only one arm free. As its name indicates, it is executed with the swimmer on his side. The lower arm makes a kind of circle under water, extending forward below the head as the upper arm (if unoccupied) pulls backward, and then making a backward sweep down through the water and to the side of the body. There the elbow bends, the arm doubles and the forward extension commences again. The upper arm, also circling in a sweeping stroke, may leave the water for the forward stroke or remain under at all times, as the swimmer desires. Its movement is much like that of the lower arm, except that its backward pull is made down across and in front of the body, instead of below the body.

The stroke for the legs is the true scissors kick—a forceful snap of the legs from an extended position to a closed position, much in the manner of a pair of scissors. It is not made so rapidly as the crawl kick, and does not supply a steady forward impulse like the other.

A third stroke that every swimmer ought to know is the back stroke—the stroke in which Warren Kealoha, Hawaiian boy, is so proficient. In rhythm, principle and execution it is much like the crawl stroke; but it is easier in many ways.

Remember this, first of all—always keep your body straight in the back stroke. If you find that, with your body straight, your knees are splashing through the surface, you can "jack" or bend at your hips. That will keep your legs just below the surface, which is the proper place for them. The kick is the crawl leg stroke, with the same rhythm you have learned to use.

Secrets of the Back Stroke

THE arm stroke is the same overhead swing, also. At the completion of the stroke your arm is at the side of your body, palm turned away from it, little finger up. Bend your elbow high, bringing the arm completely out of water; let your elbow lead as you sweep your arm backward on a line with your shoulder. Catch the water straight ahead of your shoulder, just as in the crawl; don't let your hand

cross the median line of your body.

Then execute the backward pull by bringing your arm around to the side in a wide sweep. Don't let it go more than eight inches under water; if you do you'll lose power. And remember, as it approaches your side, that you must rotate your palm so that it will end in that position with the little finger up.

When you learn those three strokes you will have equipment that will do for you just about anything you'll need as a swimmer. The crawl stroke is the fastest in the world—as you'll realize if you ever see Johnny Weismuller or Bronson, the Yale man who holds the intercollegiate 100-yard title, doing it—and it's excellent for long swims as well. The side stroke is a carrying stroke, and both it and the back stroke are good as "rests" from a long grind at the crawl.

Most fellows I advise not to bother much with the breast stroke. It's not of much use except as a kind of trick stroke for a special kind of race, and is hardly worth much time.

A thing that is worth a lot of a swimmer's time, though, is the right kind of out-of-water exercise. Long, supple trunk and arm-and-leg muscles are vital to the success of a swimmer; he can do a lot to improve his work in the water if he'll set out to develop them.

The kind of exercise he should seek is the thing that will build up chest, abdomen and back muscles—bending exercises, rapid-movement exercises and the like; or the kind that will keep his shoulder and hip joints free and well lubricated; or the kind that will flex and loosen up legs and arms. Slow, straining exercises must be avoided, for they tend to shorten and tighten up muscles, and that's fatal to a swimmer. It's calisthenics that develop speed, precision and flexibility that are valuable.

Every fellow can't be a Duke Kahanamoku, or a Norman Ross, or a Walter Laufer—these fellows are all exceptionally gifted swimmers. But any chap can make himself a capable performer in the water by following a few simple rules. He can beat the other fellows he knows, nine times out of ten, if he'll study his strokes faithfully and develop the right kind of muscle movements. And he can increase his pleasure in swimming a hundred times by doing it right. It's a lot more fun to plough through the water with a space-eating, smooth-going stroke than it is to struggle along doing a dozen things wrong. Why don't you try it?

Knight of the Fourth

(Continued from page 7)

maneuvering Jumbo to the diving Fokker which he was overtaking with terrific speed. The German wasn't watching him.

Only a hundred yards from him, now, and the German must be ready to shoot Jumbo down like a crippled duck. The Spad, shivering and shrieking, bid fair to fall to pieces at any moment.

Lee prayed that it might not, and it didn't. Fifty yards back of the Boche and a bit to one side, now. And just as the first tracers flamed from the Fokker's guns Lee, riding at death with spirit unafraid, closed his shadowed eyes.

A crash that was like the crack of doom—and he knew no more. Mercifully, he was unconscious as a great ball of flame lit up the sky above a numbed world.

And a huge figure bent blindly over in the third ship as it dived for the air-drome. His body racked with tearless sobs, big Jumbo Parks could not look down at the smoking funeral pyre that blazed below in red-shot majesty.



The pep and dash of the Original Brake Scooter make it especially suited to the popular members of the "Our Gang" comedy film troupe, and every one of these favorite stars has one!



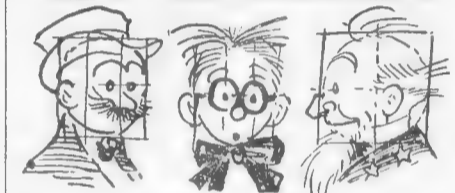
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Tricks and Trapezes

(Continued from page 21)

usually genial face was troubled.

Rann walked over in front of James, who looked at him fearfully.

"Listen, James," he drawled slowly, talking in tones too low to be heard by anyone else. "That stuff to-night was too good to be true. I believe—everyone believes, I think—that you tried to fix that net so that if I missed that triple I'd be a dead one. And I believe you figured that my seeing the net fall just as I was going into the triple would make it almost a cinch I would—"

"I know you do!"

It was almost a shriek, the way James said it, and suddenly there was murder in his light eyes. They darted from face to face as the rest of the troupe gathered close, in coldly accusing silence. Then James' ferocious eyes returned to Rann's composed face, and his words came in a torrent:

"I knew the minute it happened you'd get everybody against me, you conceited, big-headed halfwit! You've been sneaking around here for two years trying to get me in wrong—"

"You're a liar!" said Rann slowly.

"Now you accuse me of murder, blast you! I ought to kill you now—"

"That's enough, Jim," interjected Ed Ford, his face bleak and stern.

"Who says it's enough? What do I care for you or anybody else? I'm quitting this lousy troupe now—if you think I'm standing around taking the insults of this half-baked First of May that thinks he's the biggest thing around this show—"

"Listen, James," came Rann's soft, almost uninterested voice. "Ever since I got here and started training for this troupe, you've had a gun out for me. Everybody knows it. Now I have just one thing to say. From now on I'm going to watch every move you make around that net—and every other move you make that I can see. And the first time you talk out of turn or put your hands where they don't belong, I'm going to make it my business to put you where you can't do any harm! I can't exactly prove it, but I'm saying it now—that I believe you're out to get me, would stop at nothing to do it, and tried to do it to-night. That goes as it lays, and you can do what you like about it. But conduct yourself accordingly, suh!"

Those gently slurred words, so abnormally cool and slow, were twice as effective as any raving would have been. As Rann stood there in his bathrobe, his hot eyes glaring into James', it seemed that the older man wilted. He looked around at the others—and nothing but contempt and suspicion met his eyes. There was a long-drawn-out, strained silence, and then Ed Ford's voice broke it.

"It's your own fault, Jim. You've been ragging Rann for months—and it wasn't natural for you to fall off the pedestal—a man o' your experience. But as far as I'm concerned, you can live it down with me and stay with the troupe—but don't get funny again. You're technically innocent until you're proved guilty, as far as I'm concerned."

That was like Ford. Soft-hearted as a child, reflected Rann. But how he'd watch James from now on!

FOR a few seconds the harried gymnast crouched there before his trunk, like a hunted beast at bay. Then, without a word, he turned to it and started stripping off his tights—and no one knew what he was going to do.

He was going to stay, it proved. Day after day, week after week went by, and no member of the troupe, not even James, mentioned the matter further. But whereas in the past the lanky flyer had been open in his dislike and disagreeable attitude toward his younger, more brilliant competitor, now he was silent, aloof, a savagely brooding outcast—most thoroughly let alone. He had no relations whatever with any other person in the show. In the cookhouse he ate swiftly, eyes on his plate, and down at the train he was first in bed and first up. Never did one find him in the pie car after the show, or lounging along the railroad track late at

night, or in the same hotel on Sunday nights when the circus did not show. The moment he slunk into the dressing tent, his presence was like a wet blanket on the entire troupe, and even the other kinkers felt the pall of gloom that seemed to roll in with him. The only living soul with whom he associated at all was a ragged property boy whose only known name around the show was Rattle 'em Red. Red's only claim to fame was that he won money from the negroes at craps.

From the night of the near-accident to Rann, he and James never exchanged a word.

At times Rann felt sorry for James, and then the memory of months of humiliation and struggle with the man, before Rann had attained his present position, would come back to him and steel his heart against his enemy. And it had taken him weary, heartsick weeks to get over the stab of fear that went through him like a knife every time he thought of that breathless moment when he was compelled to make his first public triple while death grinned up at him from the ground. Even now the trick was successful only nine times out of ten on the first try. It has been almost a miracle on that first attempt.

Rann, however, felt the influence of James less than the others, as Mamie Ford, Ed's queenly red-haired wife, told him one night when they were sitting in the back yard. Mrs. Ford was darning stockings that had been shipped on from her three children off at boarding schools. She and Rann were sitting on the grass beside a wagon, and all around them other performers were reclining at ease beneath the stars while the blaring band in the big top told their experienced ears just what act was on and how close their own turns were.

"Ed ought to get rid of James, Rann," she remarked. "But, as he says, it takes years to make any kind of a flyer, and there's no one to take his place. Ed's just the kind who's so soft-hearted that a man down on his luck, no matter how guilty, can get his sympathy."

She glanced up at the youngster to whom she and her husband had been foster parents, almost, for two years. Although the mother of three strapping children, she was still the best woman aerial performer in the world, and to Rann the Fords were a combination of parents, brother and sister, and friends.

"You don't seem to notice it much, yourself," she remarked. "Too busy, eh? There's not much you miss around this show. Horse says you can lay out a lot and he believes put the show up right now."

"I think I could," drawled Rann. "I'm in this business with both feet—honest, ma'am. I want to own a share in one and manage it or something some day, and I am trying to learn it all."

"Saving your money, too," nodded Mrs. Ford. "I'd like Junior to come up in the business like you, when he gets old enough."

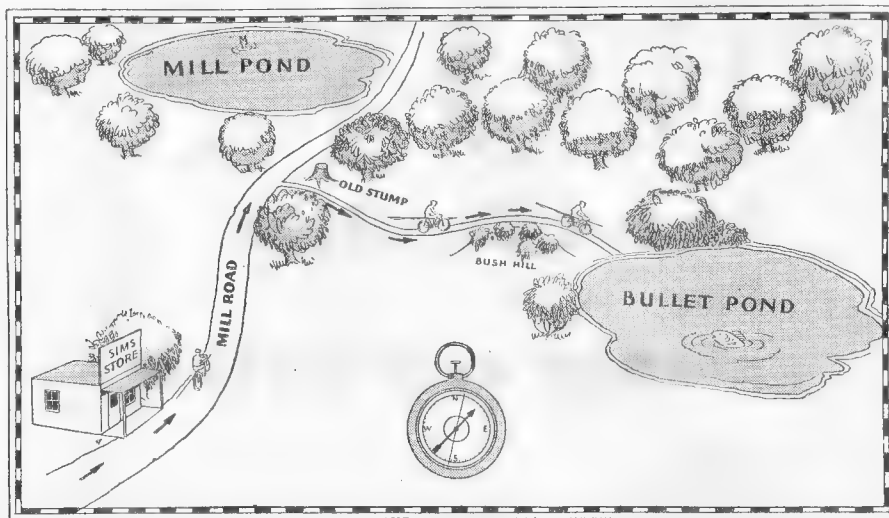
Rann chuckled—an infectious chortle that seemed to light glowing lamps in his eyes.

"He'll be out of school just about in time to join the Braden World's Greatest Colossal Stupendous Mammoth Awe Inspiring Big Show!" he laughed.

At that moment James, dressed in tights and bathrobe, passed by, head down, and somehow Mrs. Ford's tinkling laugh was stilled immediately, and the laughing report she was about to make died in her throat.

"Well, time to acrobat!" said Rann, with an attempt at levity, and went over to the back door to line up with the bathrobed crew who would march in as soon as the fifteen performing elephants, five in a ring, finished their turn by lining up for the "long mount." Already the menagerie top was down and the cat cages hauled to the runs—soon the elephants would be lined up in the starlight, ready for their march to the cars.

That very night James hurt himself. Somehow it seemed that lately his ostra-



Fishin's Always Better Off The Beaten Track

ISN'T it so? Somehow the best bass, the best perch, the best pickerel, the best of all the finny fellows always hang out in the pond that's furthest away.

But the old bike brings everything nearer. Just hop on with your pole slung out behind and go wherever you know you can get a real catch.

No need to tell a fellow who has had bicycle experience to make sure his tires are all in good shape. He knows that good tires are everything on a trip.

Of course, if you have United States Giant Chain Treads on your bicycle, there is no need to worry. These sturdy, dependable tires will dig in and take you anywhere without trouble.

In fact, United States Bicycle Tires are built for all the hard going you are apt to find. They take the roads just as they come without a whimper.

If you are in need of new tires, just remind Dad that United States Giant Chain Treads are made by the same Company that makes the Royal Cords on his car. He will know that you have the right idea on what's what in tire value.

United States Rubber Company

1790 Broadway, New York City



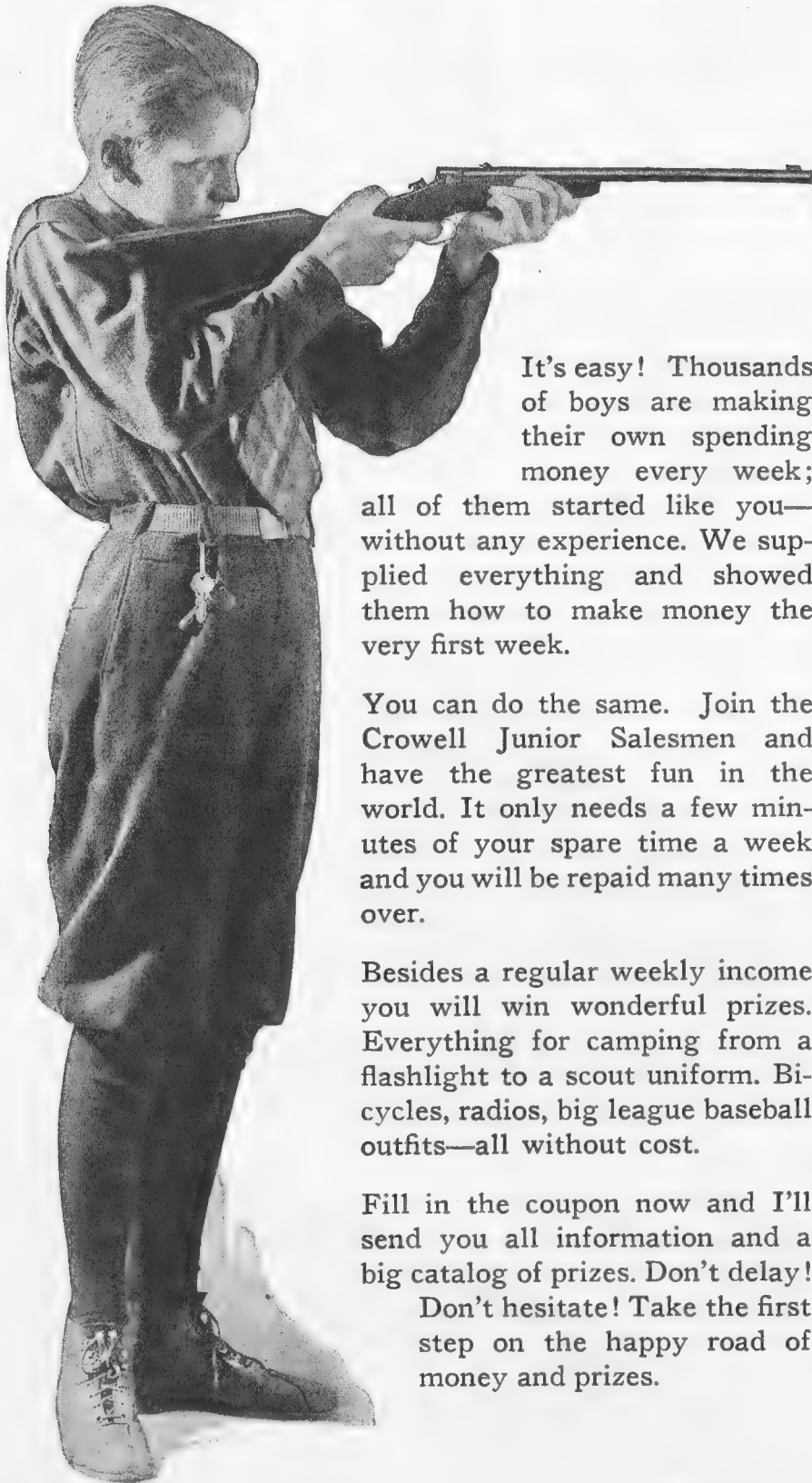
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BOYS

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It's easy! Thousands of boys are making their own spending money every week; all of them started like you—without any experience. We supplied everything and showed them how to make money the very first week.

You can do the same. Join the Crowell Junior Salesmen and have the greatest fun in the world. It only needs a few minutes of your spare time a week and you will be repaid many times over.

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Fill in the coupon now and I'll send you all information and a big catalog of prizes. Don't delay! Don't hesitate! Take the first step on the happy road of money and prizes.

JIM THAYER
Dept. 8

THE CROWELL PUBLISHING CO.
Springfield, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Thayer: I would like to hit the bull's-eye and make money and win prizes. Please tell me how.

My Name

Address

Town State

(Continued from page 47)

cism had turned him into a fiend for work. He seemed trying desperately to hold his job, as though he felt it in jeopardy. Previously, at the end of the act, his drop into the net had been a back twister somersault. For a week, now, after long practice in secret, he had been duplicating Bert Ross's drop—a full twister to start, and then a straight back somersault into the net. And this night one leg doubled under him as he landed.

They carried him off the net with a fractured knee.

THREE weeks later, in Carson, Utah, he rejoined the show, still hobbling on crutches. His face was so thin the skin seemed about to crack over the bony protuberances in it, and his eyes were sunk deeply into his head. They blazed out at the world from their sockets with an eerie light that made Rann uncomfortable. He tried to express his sympathy—and got not a word in return.

Two nights later, at the end of the Ford act, Rann was standing alone on the pedestal, hands on the main fly bar. In all the big top there was nothing to divert the eyes of a single one of the eight thousand spectators. The others had all done their drops—somersaults, dives, twist-ers, Ross's twister and back somersault, and now Rann, acknowledged star of the troupe, was about to do his own—a twisting cutaway somersault.

As he stood there while Myers was making the announcement, Horse O'Donnell, who never missed the performance of the Ford troupe, was thinking of the changes of two years. Rann had been a fine physical specimen when he joined the show, but the years of training, plus eighteen hours a day in the open air, plain food, and continuous physical work, had filled him out, increased his strength, given him uncanny control over as perfect a set of muscles as had ever been developed in a man, O'Donnell thought. The gymnastic work had developed him into a giant, and yet there was pantherlike grace in every movement.

Rann himself knew that his vitality seemed to have no bounds. He was never tired, never ill, mentally and physically on his toes from one week's end to another.

The announcement was over. The music started. At every performance there was a new thrill in that long drop—a forward somersault, then literally catching himself in the air, feet down, and wrenching into a full pirouette, and from that hurling himself into a back somersault and landing on his back in the net.

He was up on the raise, now, ready, fly bar in hand. Below he could see James, watching from some little distance. Property boys sat around the ring below, their faces upturned.

He was off in a tremendous swing across the tent, hands crossed on the bar. At the end of the swing he switched one hand and now he was facing back toward the pedestal. Back he went in a thrilling rush, passing the pedestal, and his up-turned feet were within inches of the canvas forty-five feet off the ground.

Now he was going into the break swing, back across the tent at dizzying speed. At just the right moment he'd leave the bar, high in the air, and go into the forward.

A split second before that moment, it seemed his arms would be wrenched from their sockets. Something had happened to the main fly bar, and he was thrown into a cast position, hurtling to one side through the air.

He knew what had happened. The main pulley block of the center fly bar, on which he'd been swinging, had been slacked off, the bar had not swung true, and as he'd thrown himself off he'd gone sideward, thrown.

He was a mess of flying arms and legs, temporarily powerless to control himself, and three or four feet to one side of the narrow net below! There was nothing for him to hit but the ground, forty feet down.

An instant of utter panic, and then he strove to control himself. Could he wrench and twist his body as it fell, throw it that few feet to one side? It was his only chance for life.

And he tried—tried with all the co-ordination and power that had been developed within him over the years. He was a twisting white streak, a human tangle of

muscles fighting for life.

And his abnormally clear mind knew he could not make it. It was like raising one's self by his bootstraps. A second like a year, the ground looming with the spreader of the net just out of reach of his grasping hands—

Suddenly a vague figure loomed below him. A split second of recognition before that sickening thud which would spread his body over the ground, and he hit.

But he hit something that gave, and carried his body sideward. Mechanically his fingers gripped the net for a fleeting second, and some of the nails were dragged from them.

Then darkness.

HE came to in a hospital thirty minutes later, and with him were Ed Ford, the show doctor, and a hospital doctor. Rann's first thought—after surprise that he was still alive—was: How badly am I hurt?

He was still dazed and weak, but he could move his limbs and there seemed to be nothing radically wrong. Four of his torn fingers were bandaged, that was all.

"Why—I'm all right!" he said slowly. "What did I hit?"

Ford, his face a study, told him.

"Jim James. Ran on his crippled leg to the edge of the net, half caught you—and saved you. He's here in the hospital now—will be for weeks, with his knee bad again, internal injuries, and a broken arm. As soon as you can walk he wants to see you alone."

"Know—what for?" queried Rann, striving to comprehend.

Ford nodded.

"I'm the only one who does, too. I'll go in with you."

Although his body was bruised, Rann was able to navigate in fifteen minutes. He was unhurt for all practical purposes. He followed Ford into the private room where the gaunt flyer lay.

James smiled wanly, and there was something singularly peaceful in his face.

"Did Ed tell you?" he asked weakly.

Rann nodded. He could not speak.

"Everything?" pursued the wan-faced flyer.

"No," Ford cut in, his eyes studying Rann.

"Tell him," commanded James, sinking back on the pillow again, and deep cut lines were etched around his thin lips.

"Jim didn't deliberately try to get you that time he fell in the net, Rann," Ford said slowly, his eyes on the white hospital wall. "He says so, and I believe him. We all—you most, of course—led him a hard life after it—turned a plumb cold shoulder on him. He got credit for being a murderer, more or less. It got to him. He got to be a wild man, and when he was in the hospital before, with nothing to do but think, it worked on his mind."

"He bribed Rattel'em Red to slack off the main pulley block on the fly bar tonight just as you were going into your drop. When it came to carrying it through, though—he couldn't. So he saved you—and he'll be lucky if he's ever the man he was before. He's sorry—and willing to go to jail for it. As for Red—he's blown, and he's too unimportant to bother about. Probably didn't know what he was doing—didn't realize there was life and death in it."

"I just wanted you to know," whispered James. "I—I ruined my chances to be what you are, smoking and drinking and fiddling around—and I treated you like a dog, Braden. But I wasn't a murderer, until I let the feeling after that first net affair get under my skin so bad. I'm sorry—but I don't care much what happens now—"

"Be yourself," Rann gulped huskily, and there were tears in his eyes as he thought of what James had gone through.

All he could think of was: "I'm to blame for every bit of it!" It took weeks, and the sane, sage, sympathetic council of Ed and Mamie Ford before Rann came to see the whole thing clearly, and to realize that both he and his friend James had made mistakes. And that James was most wrong of the two.

Jim didn't go to jail, of course, but he's not a flyer any more. A game leg and a far from perfect arm will always remind him of what he did, and perhaps they've helped to make him into the man he is.

He's assistant manager of the Gavin Brothers' show now, and doing well, thank you.

And he's firmly convinced that the most promising youngster coming up in the

show business is Rann Braden. He may or may not be right about the "most promising" but there's no argument about the other part.

Rann has never stopped coming up.

Camping With a Radio

By Armstrong Perry

DUSK in the woods by a rippling stream—trees sighing softly in the cool evening breeze—overhead stars and a friendly moon slowly taking on their nightly brilliance. Tucked away beneath towering trees, a ghostlike tent catches flickers of light from the crackling flames of an open fire. Lounging on the ground, staring moodily at the yellow flames, two boys are awaiting the arrival of bedtime—evening's work all done—supper dishes washed—nothing to do but get sleepy and crawl into the tent and under the inviting blankets.



Nothing to do? That's frequently the trouble with many camping trips. But with radio developed as it now is, there isn't a shadow of an excuse for a dragging moment in camp—no need to be just "waiting around for bedtime to come."

When you picture a camp radio don't think of a fancy cabinet and panel and heavy, cumbersome equipment. Remember you are going to have to carry this set right with you so it must be a knock-down set with parts distributed about your pack just as you would distribute beans or salt or bacon.

This means you must choose a simple circuit that requires a minimum number of parts. The DeForest ultraudion is a good set for the camper—it provides for regeneration and will cover, with a single tube, enough distance to bring in a number of stations.

A half pound spool of No. 22 insulated wire will be sufficient for ordinary locations. The same wire can be used for antenna, ground and connections. To string your antenna, tie one end of the wire to a strong cord, fasten a rock to the other end of the cord, throw the rock over the branches of a tree and then draw up the wire. About one hundred feet of wire will be needed to get the desired height—the higher the better. Put the other end of your antenna up the same way, allowing enough wire to run down to your set. The antenna should be connected directly with the inductance coil.

Spiderweb Coil Is Lightest

YOU'LL find that the spiderweb coil is the lightest and will fit into your haversack best. A fifty turn coil will cover a great number of wave lengths.

Next comes the grid condenser and grid leak. These are made in very small sizes. It is advantageous to have the kind that has clips into which resistances of different values can be inserted. A change of resistance may improve reception a good deal, and it is advisable to carry an assortment of resistances ranging from one to four and even six megohms. Now for your electron tube. Have you ever tried the double-end Myers tube? It is small, light and efficient and is as nearly unbreakable as any other tube. The Radiotron-UV-199 and

down set. Wrapped in a pair of socks these tubes will weather some pretty rough treatment. The filament current is but .06 amperes and the filament can be lighted by a three-cell flashlight battery. If your flashlight can't be adapted to this use, you must take along from one to three No. 6 dry cells. For your "B" battery you will need 22½ volts. A battery with this voltage measures only 3¾ inches by 2 inches by 2½ inches, so you can easily tuck it away in your pack.

Of course, you'll need a socket for your tube. Be sure to get a sturdy one.

Next in order is your filament rheostat, of the proper resistance for the tube you choose. The UV-199 tubes require 30 ohms. Vernier adjustments are very helpful in getting the best results from your tube. Rheostats in which the resistance material is carbon are more rugged and better for camp use than wire rheostats.

Several variable condensers are good for camp use. One that is particularly practical is so small that it will go in a box about 2½ inches by 3 inches by 1 inch. The condenser will probably pack better if you take off the dial and pack it separately. One of these compact condensers may have the same capacity as a big 43-plate condenser; they can be obtained in capacities equal to the 23-plate and 11-plate condensers, also.

And Then Your Ground

YOUR ground connection, which completes the outfit, can be made by sinking the end of your ground wire in a spring, stream or lake or into the ground itself.

It is not necessary to have a panel but it is more convenient to have the parts anchored. Take along some screws and then just fasten the parts to any piece of wood you pick up near your camp. Make sure the wood is thoroughly dry, however. You can dry the wood over your fire and then be careful to keep it dry. Connecting wires between the parts should be as short as possible. Just before you put your tube in the socket go over every connection carefully to make certain your hook-ups are correct. You don't want to burn out your tube—they're not for sale out in the woods. It's a good plan to draw a diagram of the wiring before you leave home and then have this diagram before you when you are hooking up your set.

Yes, it's a great sensation to tune in on an entertainment when you're out in the woods waiting for bedtime to come. The music seems sweeter, the dialogues funnier out there where the camp fire is doing its best to chase back the shadows that creep in from the dark underbrush.

With radio phones at your ears and jumping flames at your feet, there steals over you a certain peacefulness that even the insist-



others of the same type are also good for the knock-

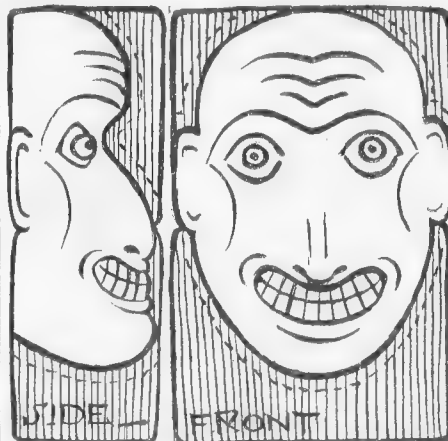
ent nips of the droning mosquitoes fail to interrupt.

IVORY SOAP SCULPTURE

LESSON NO. 18

By MARGARET J. POSTGATE

A monkey mask from JAPAN



Copied from a real Japanese mask in the Brooklyn Museum

AS LONG AGO as the 7th century wooden masks were made in Japan to use in the dances which were part of the ancient drama called the NO. These masks are still made after designs that are hundreds of years old, and they are very queer and wonderful indeed.

Japan's early art showed the influence of China and India, but later she developed an art of her own. In the great temples of Japan there are preserved to this day magnificent temple statues in wood and bronze, made about 1000 A. D.



TOOLS—A large cake of Ivory Soap, pen knife or paring knife. One orange stick with one blade and one pointed end (wooden tool A). One orange stick to which a hairpin is tied as shown in B, C, D. File bent end of hairpin to a sharp knife edge. (Wire tool.)

DIRECTIONS—With point of wooden tool draw mask on front of soap.

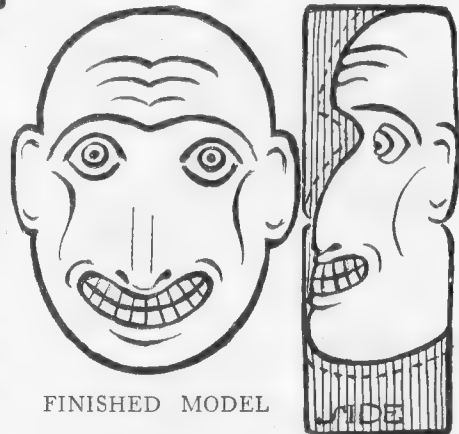
With knife cut away soap up to dotted line. Do the same with sides.

With wire tool, or blade of wooden tool, shave or carve down to the actual form of the mask.

Work slowly, turn model often and compare it with drawings.

Markings on face, eyes, nose and mouth should be done last with point of wooden tool.

Vacation Days! Lazy days or busy days, just as you like. And nothing starts any day better, or ends it better than a freshening, tingling Ivory bath. Hiking or camp-



FINISHED MODEL

ing, be sure you have your Ivory with you. It's an ideal camp soap. Fine and lathery, and of course, it floats!

REMEMBER to give the shavings from your monkey mask to your mother. She can use them for the dishes or to launder fine things.

IVORY SOAP

99 4/100% Pure —IT FLOATS!

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HOW A BOY BUILT UP A GREAT SQUAB FARM

is the title of a book which every boy should read. This boy when at school started small with no money, now has a plant worth \$30,000, is shipping to New York 150 barrels squabs yearly, receiving \$75 to \$100 a barrel. Started in the backyard of his home. You can do the same. Price of this book is 50 cents but we will mail it to you for the names and addresses of four of your friends and only ten cents, silver or U.S. stamps. Write quick. Squab Publishing Co., 201 A Street, Melrose Highlands, Massachusetts.

SIDEWALK BIKES

Boys and girls from 5 to 10 are crazy for these new midget **Rangers** with coaster brake. Safety and speed on sidewalk and playground. **Velocipedes** for children 2 to 8. Ball bearing, three wheelers that never wear out. Write today for Factory-to-Rider prices and catalog. **MEAD CYCLE CO.** Dept. P.C. 20 Chicago

Wrestling Book FREE

Learn to be an expert wrestler. Know scientific wrestling, self-defense and Jiu-Jitsu. Develop a splendid physique, and have perfect health. Join this popular school and learn by mail. The famous world's champions—the marvelous **Frank Gotch and Farmer Burns** offer you a wonderful opportunity. Wrestling is easily and quickly learned at home by mail. Men and boys write now for splendid free book. Learn all the science and tricks. Be able to handle big men with ease. Accept this wonderful offer NOW. Send for free book today, stating your age. **Farmer Burns School of Wrestling, B 105 Range Bldg., Omaha, Neb.**

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With every Ludwig Trap Drum outfit we give you complete instruction course. These easy lessons enable you to play in a short time. Go to any music dealer or write us direct for full details. **Ludwig & Ludwig** 1811 N. Lincoln St., Chicago, Ill.

Be your own speed boat!

Here's a new invention for swimming—more fun! You simply put on **SPEED MITS** (patent applied for) and go to it. They are aluminum hand-paddles that will increase the speed of any swimming stroke by making the palm of your hand more powerful and keeping the water from seeping through your fingers.

Send your name and address and \$1 and we'll see that you get a pair of them in a jiffy. **THE KING SALES COMPANY** (Speed Mits Dept.) Lincoln, Illinois.

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The one string Hawaiian Guitar

Be the first one in your "Crowd" to introduce this weird "Jazzitha."
Boy!—what music! Play all the song hits immediately; absolutely no instructions or lessons necessary—music is written in numbers.

The "Jazzitha" is made of fine grained hard wood with specially designed metal sound box. Handsomely decorated and beautifully finished in lacquer—19 inches in length. Played with bar and pick.

\$1.47

Send No Money Just your name and address.
When the "Jazzitha" and sheet music arrives, pay postman only \$1.47. We pay postage. **GIVEN** with every instrument 8 extra "Jazzitha" strings worth 25c.

THE JAZZ STUDIOS
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The American Boy Cartoon Contest

Pictures for Pluto, The Office Pup



Boys-

you can't
beat this
fishing tackle
anywhere

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Bristol Steel Rods

For example: No. 33 Bristol Bait Casting Rod—\$12.00. Double grip cork handle. Weight about 8 ounces. Three narrow agate guides. Three joints. If your dealer can't supply you, order direct enclosing price.

Kingfisher Silk Fishing Lines

Fishing lines are as different as night and day. Pick the best—it costs no more—Kingfisher Silk Fishing Lines. Made only of pure Japanese silk—no spun silk—no artificial silk. Every one fully guaranteed.

For example: Kingfisher Little Jap Silk Line for bait casting. A very speedy line. Stands hard service. Oriental design. Color, black and white. No waterproofing—not intended for trolling. Price 100 yards—12 lb. test, \$2.75. Higher tests in proportion. If your dealer can't supply you, order direct enclosing price.

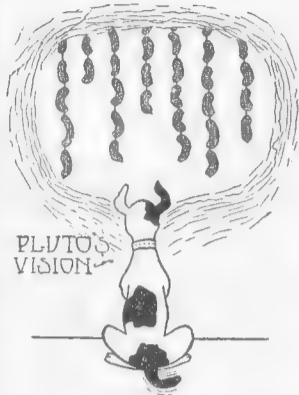
Luckie Steel Rods

Here's a wonderful, high grade rod at a price so low that it will fit any pocketbook—Luckie Steel Fishing Rods. A style for every kind of fishing.

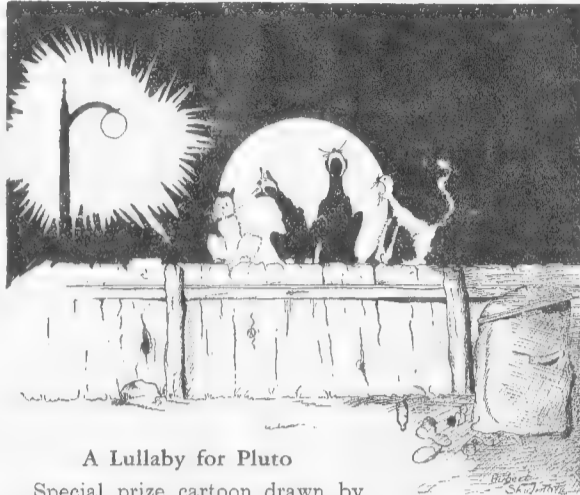
For example: No. 400 Luckie Jointed Steel Bait Casting Rod—\$2.75. 3 joints—4 to 6½ feet long. Cork grip handle, steel snake guides and one ring fly top. 8½ ounces. If your dealer can't supply you, order direct enclosing price.

Write—Free Catalog—Upon request we will send you free, illustrated catalog describing and giving prices of all Bristol, Kingfisher and Luckie styles.

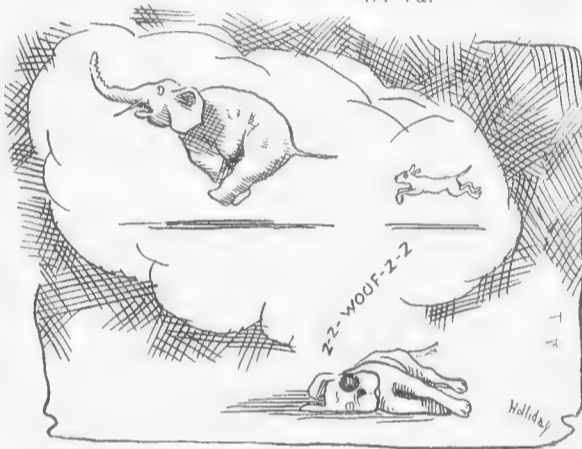
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387 Horton Street, Bristol, Conn.
Pacific Coast Agents: The Phil. B. Bekeart Co.
717 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal.



Special prize cartoon drawn by W. E. Jary, Jr. (14), Fort Worth, Tex.



Special prize cartoon drawn by Herbert Skidmore (16), Glasgow, W. Va.



First prize cartoon drawn by Eric Holliday (15), Ventnor City, N. J.

Pluto Writes a Letter

Dear Artists:

Some of you fellows have funny ideas about what an up-and-coming pup would like! One picture showed a cat chasing a dog who was meant to be I—I didn't get many wags out of that! But my tail is all out of joint from the fun I got from most of the pictures—they were rip-snorters. I wanted to use the whole magazine and print 'em all, but the Editors said NO—so this half page has the five I thought were the doggiest of the lot.

Waggishly yours,
PLUTO.



Third prize cartoon, drawn by David Morton, Jr., Detroit, Mich.



Second prize cartoon, drawn by Alan Thompson (17), Sharon, Pa.

These Boys Found a Way

WHEN Andrew Fair, of Shelton, Connecticut, was 14 years old he was a farm boy distinguished chiefly because he won more prizes than most other boys in the Boys' Clubs—mostly he went to school and played ball and did things just like his friends.

When Andrew Fair was 16—too young to obtain a driver's license in Connecticut—he found himself obliged to shoulder the responsibility of managing an entire farm with a large dairy herd and his own big poultry flocks, operating a sawmill and caring for his entirely dependent mother, grandmother and three younger brothers.

Young Fair—he is 19 now—met each of these tasks and handled them well. He was determined to succeed and he applied the brains that had won prizes for his poultry when he was younger to find a way to accomplish these bigger jobs.

At 15 Fair had surprised everybody by taking charge of the sawmill left with a huge accumulation of logs, when his grandfather died, and operating it successfully. At 16 the boy was given the added responsibilities by the death of his father. And at 19 he is a farmer who makes his crops pay, his dairy herd profitable and his poultry a paying proposition; a mill manager who knows his business thorough-

ly and runs it competently; an accountant who keeps his farm books straight; and a salesman who markets his products wisely and fairly.

Responsibility—determination—brain-



Andrew Fair.

work. Others beside Fair have succeeded before they reached 20 through those same characteristics. Take Herman Wigonitz, Madison, Wisconsin, boy who, at 15, made \$35 a week through his "honor system" news stand. Wigonitz wanted to go to school, and go swimming, and skate, and do the things that other boys did: he had to earn a living as well. So he designed a simple newspaper rack with a coin box near the top, had two of them made and painted "Herman's Honor System" on them. He filled the boxes morning, noon and night; he covered two paper routes himself; he went to school (and is going to college, too, for he believes thorough

education necessary for the boy who is going to progress); and his income reached \$1,800 a year!

"Do people cheat by not putting enough pennies in the box when they take papers?" Herman says with a smile. "No, sir! People aren't that small!"

Out at Conway Springs, Kansas, Leslie and Eugene Dudey figured a way to go to Kansas State Agriculture College. They borrowed \$1,100 from their father, bought an acre of land adjoining the college campus and put a two-room cottage on it, did all their own housework and raised hogs in their back yard! Their method of living saved them \$800 a year, and the sale of hogs furnished an income that helped meet college expenses.

Bobbie Merwin of Alba, Missouri, made an excellent living for his mother and himself, remodelled their home and built up a bank account of \$500 by the time he was 16—all by raising and selling to laboratories silver agoutis or "cavies," tiny rodents that are used for experimental purposes.

And Jack Holmes, 15 years old, of Shelbina, Missouri, turned a knack for mechanical and electrical work to advantage by becoming "trouble shooter" for the Shelbina telephone system. He is known now as a kind of genius, for he can do anything from adjusting "selective bells"—the kind that work four on a line—to locating trouble caused by Missouri lightning storms.

Hundreds of other boys are doing similar things. Fair, Wigonitz, the Dudeys, Merwin, Holmes and all the rest use the same formula—assumption of responsibility, determination, brainwork. Why not apply it to your own problems?

The Potosi Trail

(Continued from page 19)

little thing and calling it a ride. Still, it was up to me, and I prepared to sit down on him and see whether he could wiggle.

A lively and emphatic protest from the hosts of the morning halted my move. I was not to ride. That was certain. Just why? Well, Bill was rather runty in his own weigh, totaling not a bit over a hundred and forty pounds, while I was somewhat bulky and somewhere between six and seven feet in length. Naturally they wanted to ease up on the load. Besides, the memory of the night before contributed its influence. They wanted to gloat over seeing the big sucker walk. Very well, I would walk. I would walk all the way out through the open gate and onto the trail, and there Bill would calmly dismount and wink triumphantly at himself while I would needs suffer the indignity of embarking upon that flimsy thing that they exalted by the name of horse, for the fates had so ruled and we must respect the flip of a coin.

Then came another messenger with more news—this time glad tidings. They had another mule, a saddle mule. Would I ride? Sure, Messrs. Fates. Any mule was better than that equine watch charm. Then came the mule, all saddled and bridled, and a magnificent specimen he was. A strapping big fellow with a smooth glossy coat, he walked with an elasticity of step that gave full assurance of his peppy vitality. He was worth a carload like Bill's little curio. Would I ride? Would I feel a measure of pardonable pride in swinging onto the finest animal we had seen in the Andes? Would Bill be peeved with envy? Sure, for all three. No walking that day. Instinctively I named him Bolivar for the day. Just as the Bolivar of old liberated Bolivia from the oppression of Spain, this young Bolivar was the outstanding figure of the day and would deliver me from an awkward position.

BUBBLING over with keen anticipation, I advanced toward the prancing young animal. But a group of Indians intercepted my move and numerous others busied themselves at tightening the cinch, monkeying with the bridle, and just fiddling around generally. Quite evidently this was their prize property and they must make sure that never a speck of his precious hide should have as much as a hair turned the wrong way. The *erriero* departed with the baggage division and Bill rode out into the trail, where he waited developments. That left me alone. While mine hosts went all over that mule again, mine patience approached the snapping point.

After a few more tinkering they indicated that all was in readiness and some five or six or ten huskies laid hold upon the mule to keep him steady while his much annoyed rider should take the position of high honor. Now, I had long been accustomed to riding them in the rough, and never asked more than a grip on the bridle rein as a starter. No need to worry about what the mule tried, so long as he didn't buck—and mules seldom do—I would land in the saddle properly and promptly. So I resented this superfluous assistance in the small matter of getting a boot into the stirrup over on the far side. Still, they might as well be indulged for I would never pass that way again. With unconcerned dignity I seated myself in the saddle.

Instantly every heathen son of a native beat it, and beat it as though fleeing an impending explosion. And they had guessed it about right. The first wild jump and snappy side twist told the whole story, and told it with eloquent effectiveness. This was Bolivar's first experience under a man and he had objections to offer. From hut to hut we had a full two hundred feet of clear space, and we needed every bit of it for the staging of our spectacle extraordinary. Our audience was large and appreciative. From all possible vantage points peered Indians, all grinning in fiendish glee. Revenge is sweet, and those dirty-faced sons of Inca would ever have for their candy a swiftly fleeting recollection of the trick they pulled to

drag down to defeat the man who had conducted a laying on of hands the night before.

There was only one little mistake. They should have whispered into Bolivar's ear the secret that I could always be shaken loose by hard unrelenting bucking. Anything else, and I would be right there, but hard bucking, and I was already somewhere yonder. Fortunately for me, but unluckily for the Indians, Bolivar failed to include bucking on his list of performances. He went all over a wonderful assortment of marvelous accomplishments, and then he began to repeat—while I experienced a joyful feeling of relief in thus discovering the error of omission.

Suddenly and without warning, while busily engaged in changing ends near the center of the patteo, Bolivar chanced to pause while headed toward the open gateway. Here was an inspiration, a possibility for travel, a chance to explore unseen lands. He traveled. By rare good fortune he struck the exact center of the opening, instead of either jamb, and turned in the proper direction down the trail.

Bill tried to keep pace with us, but had to stay with his horse. We were speedy. No scrub of a horse could hope to compete with any such heedless headway as ours. Down at the end of a grade a half mile or so long was a stone arch bridge over the swift Pilcomayo River. Halfway down this grade one of my stirrup straps broke, but we kept right ahead. The stirrup stuck to my boot, the former being about a number nine and the latter a ten double E, and I recovered it and tied it onto the remaining part of the strap.

At the river the mule never so much as paused. A couple of jumps and the bridge was hard astern.

Beyond the bridge the trail turned abruptly to the left where it was formed by a step some twelve feet wide along the steep mountain side. At the outer edge was a loose stone wall against which the fill rested. On a general average this wall was fifteen feet high and its top was even with the surface of the trail. The trail wound up and up on a heavy grade along the mountain side, while the river went ever downward on a slope which tossed its icy water into peaks and splashes in its impetuous rush toward a warmer climate. As I beheld that steep and smooth mountain side from the trail down to the rushing torrent, I felt truly thankful for the satisfying width of roadway.

I SHOULD have preferred to stick comfortably close to the uphill side of the trail, but Bolivar seemed to be of the opinion that a far better view could be obtained from the outer edge. He slowed down to a brisk walk before we were more than a couple of hundred feet higher than the river. Below us was a vertical drop from the wall; then away, away down went the steep slope to where rushing waves lapped angrily along its lower edge. And Bolivar walked on the wall. To the right lay the trail, to the left nothing but scenery. I pulled gently on the right-hand rein and quietly eased him over toward the safer side. Even though a mule is sure-footed, there is no surplus security felt while he is picking his wayward way along the top of a wall built entirely of loose stones. With sudden starts Bolivar would bound back to the wall whenever he awoke to the realization of being tricked out of a bit of scenery.

With a strong bridle I could have managed our affairs in accordance with different plans, but the broken stirrup strap and an appearance of weakness in the bridle reins reduced my steering efforts to a mere attempt at persuasion.

So long as Bolivar could stick, all well and good, but the scenery was far from worth it. A loose stone rolled under a hind foot. My heart went down, but Bolivar went up, recovering his footing with seemingly impossible quickness. Now that he had given ample proof of his sure-footedness, why worry any further? The stone rolled, bounced, leaped, and fairly flew until it disappeared in the depths of



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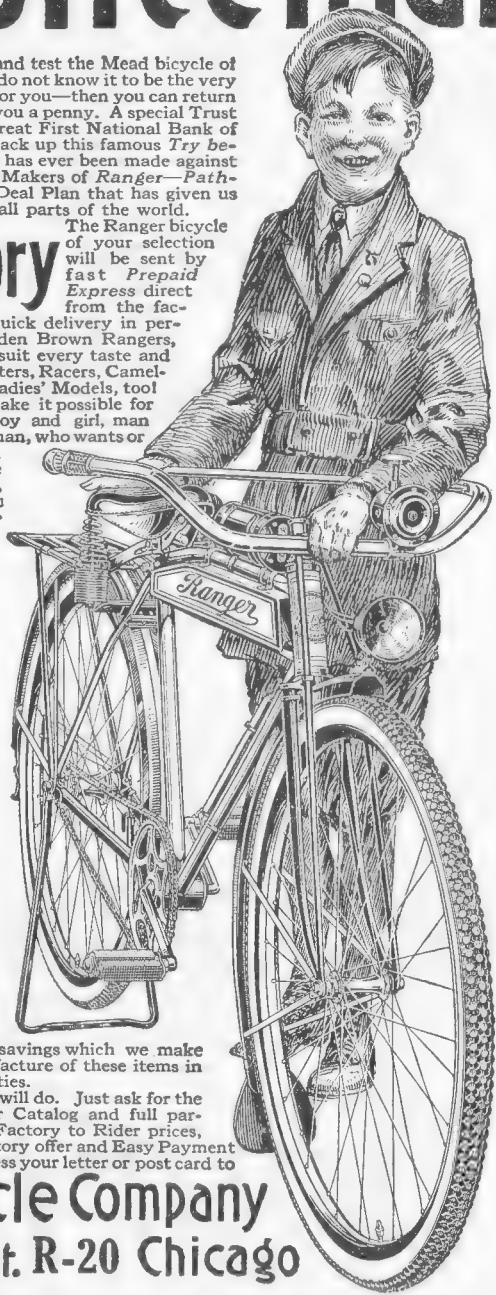
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(Continued from page 51)
the Pilcomayo five hundred feet below us. Even after it was gone the crashing sounds of its impacts came reverberating from the far side of the canyon. Farther ahead I could see the trail at apparently a full thousand feet higher than the river below. Subconsciously I somehow felt that I would be deader by far if we took our impending header there than lower down. I tried my best to steer a course close to the safe side, and Bolivar shook his head stubbornly. A harder pull, and the right-hand rein broke. What I had feared was now a realization.

All the steering gear left me was the rein on the port side, the one that had to be left strictly untouched. Realizing his freedom from any further bother on my part, my friend with the long ears struck gaily into a jog trot right along on the very outer edge of roadway where every footfall was on those loose stones that might hold to their places or might roll off and bounce, together with us, all the way down into the Pilcomayo.

Dismounting was an impossibility, for any such action would cause a misstep by the skittish beast. Yet I had little hope of staying on. Neither had I any hope that mule could long stay on the wall.

Once in the dim past, and upon only slight provocation, Bill had stated that I was a bird. But Bill had lied. I was now proving it. For had I been a bird I most assuredly would have fluttered joyfully away to a safe vantage point and twittered a sweet little carol while waiting to see Bolivar lead a personally conducted avalanche down that face of awful steepness.

The slope became higher and steeper and smoother. Still Bolivar stuck to his jog trot on the top of the wall. The distinct fascination of his newly discovered sport held him to the extreme outer edge. All I could do was to abstain from bothering him and to ride loose in the saddle, always ready to get clear on short notice.

We rounded a curve in the mountain side and with sagging spirits I looked on and on and ahead at just the same old kind of trail and wall, but with a far greater slope of mountain below. Still Bolivar stubbornly maintained his balance on the wall top. A single slip of a hoof and the certain result would be a man and a mule whirling dizzily through the air, rolling over and over each other, bouncing down that fatal slope, and plunging into the rushing torrent below. The strain was bewildering and I stuck to that saddle through instinct while Bolivar stuck to his steady trot on the well-ventilated edge of trail.

Bolivar quickened his pace, striking into a lope, shaking me from my gloomy reverie, and bounding quickly around a sharp turn in the road to the top of the mountain. The wall was behind us, forever gone but never forgotten.

BOLIVAR was still frisky and full of ginger. He now ran on solid ground and with plenty of good old solid ground on either side of us. It was all the same to him, but I now felt more at home. I even encouraged his speed to let off some of the excess steam. Letting him advance to the opposite slope, I pulled him hard apart and steered him in a wide circle, round and round, until Bill finally reached the summit. Maneuvering Bolivar slightly to the right of Bill, I suddenly pulled him into collision with the horse and he was Bill's meat for the minute required for the tying of the broken rein. Then we were away together, Bill and I, hoping that no further uncertainties would unduly hurry the day's progress.

Until late in the afternoon we rode through canyons and over mountains

until, after covering a map space of some twenty-five miles and an unguessable up-and-down distance, we reached a group of huts marking our next night's abode. And weren't we glad to get there, Bill, with his jolting little pony, and I with my green mule? And didn't we throw off our packs in jig time and turn our *erriero* homeward before he had an opportunity to hold converse with any of the inhabitants? We sure did. There was no need for him to encourage an encore of the morning's celebration.

However, before the day had ended I had developed a profound respect for that sure-footed tireless mule. By evening he was a fairly well broken saddle animal, but he had almost broken me during the first couple hours of the trip.

Did I lick any Indians? You can always trust those semi-savages to concoct some outlandish scheme of a comeback when you think you have put one over on them. They had put a wild one over on me at the particular moment when I was patting myself on the back in the happy ecstasy of victory.

During the remainder of the trip we found a hundred miles or so of country just like that we had already traversed. Sometimes we walked. Generally we rode. Occasionally we had to sit and wait.

One evening we headed into the ancient city of Potosi where we spent two nights and a day. We had caught ugly colds some days earlier and welcomed the opportunity to rest up a bit. Yet we decided to push onward toward the warmer climate lower down, for a cold in a high altitude is a serious matter. It may develop into pneumonia which up there is nearly always fatal.

The first couple of days were spent on good trail where the going was good. However, with our colds, the going was not without effort. With strength sapped and voices gone, we kept to the trail that led toward thicker air and warmer nights.

At one village no mules were to be had. We chartered a native with some burros to carry our baggage and we set forth on foot. In our impaired condition the tramp was too much for us. We began to lag behind but were unable to halt the conductor of the pack train. He was out of sight ahead.

Long before night we were ready to tuck ourselves into our blanket rolls right there along the trail had we been able to catch and stop the Indian. He continued and we followed, always fearing that we might not be able to find our stopping place in the dark.

Shortly after dark we sighted lights ahead and accepted them as our destination. With a feeling of relief we finally struggled to them, but found only the night camp of a pack train where some Arab-like and swarthy skinned Argentinians had halted on a northward journey. Our own goal was some unknown distance ahead. Onward we plodded, wending our weary way in the glimmering starlight.

Bill had recovered from his cold more than I had from mine and could travel faster. I could not speak above a whisper. Taking the lead as we staggered along, Bill kept just within sight of me to make sure that I was still following and also tried to get sight again of the Indian with our stuff. Where the trail ran through a stream of clear cold water, Bill waded in, splashed through, and walked out on the far side without so much as slackening his plucky pace. Yet I knew from my own feelings that he must be suffering from thirst. When I reached the stream, I gauged my distance, tipped over, and flopped with my face splashing in the delicious water where I guzzled my fill.

Bill stopped and called to me, wanted to know whether I had fallen or was get-

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ting a drink, and whether I could get up again. I couldn't speak and so didn't attempt a reply. Struggling slowly to my feet, I forded the stream and continued. Bill said afterwards that he would have stopped for a drink, as his throat was as dry as a clinker, but was sure he could not have gotten on his feet again.

A HALF hour later we came up with our stuff at a hut back in the bushes, opened our blankets, and stretched out with a groan of relief and never a bite to eat. Rest was sweeter than the finest meal ever served to the weary.

Down in the lower country the traveling was easier, the climate less severe. Flocks of gaily colored parrots and patches of fragrant flowers made a strange and welcome contrast to the trail in the barren regions a couple of hundred miles back. The warmer climate banished the last traces of our colds, and it was with regret that we at last approached the trail's end.

My last jaunt aboard a saddle was a corker. It was on a balmy afternoon with Tupiza as the day's destination, and it was scarcely a fitting climax to a journey of pleasant difficulties, uncertain dangers, and sometimes serious hardships. We had three mules and a horse, and the fates so flipped the coin that the horse was mine. He might have been a twin brother to the little beast Bill had ridden some two weeks before. He had a saddle but no stirrups, and a bridle rein but no bridle. Hardly a bridle rein, at that, for the thing was merely a long rawhide strap wound and tied about his head.

He hit the trail with but one thought in mind, that of reaching Tupiza and unloading. Quite evidently he had made the trip many times and knew his job, for he plodded methodically along. He needed no guiding for he knew the way. And he needed no urging for he knew his own gait. So I untied the rawhide and fashioned it into a long loop which I laid across the saddle to serve as stirrups.

We jolted and bumped with business-like precision, each bump taking us a lit-

tle nearer Tupiza. Finally we were directing a course down the main street of the town, or rather the horse did the directing for I had no means of guiding him. The strange little horse kept to the middle of the street and never hesitated. His bridleless head bobbed up and down with each jerky step and I thanked my lucky stars that I was not back home in snowball season. When we reached the hotel my steed turned in at the open doorway and continued through the passageway to the patteo at the rear. There he halted. I dismounted. He heaved a sigh. And then I heaved one on my own account. I was through with that ride, but was yet to learn that we were through with saddles for keeps.

We soon acquired possession of the joyous knowledge that there was a wagon road from Tupiza down to the Argentine border and also that there was a stage-coach making regular trips to the new railroad. By waiting one day we could take passage thereon and see the choo choo cars after a single day's drive. Save for the hair-raising plunges down steep pitches of the road, the sudden stops as the coach wheels struck the rocky stream bottoms, the uncertain pulls up opposite banks, and the lassoing of corralled mules at each changing point, the day's trip was without excitement. Shortly after dark we pulled into the little town that marked the end of Argentina's part in an international railroad building agreement.

In another day we were amid the orange groves and were eating big and juicy oranges that bright eyed boys passed in through the car windows at each station for about a penny apiece. Beyond and about us was civilization. Behind was an arduous task accomplished.

We counted noses. There were still two of them and not much the worse for wear. We justly felt that we had done something. We had gone over the Potosi Trail and come out at the other end alive and pretty much all together. But we knew that if ever two mortals of modern times had roughed it, we were those trail-toughened two.

Garry Talks Turkey

(Continued from page 9)

down, though, and I beat it back to second. Mr. Davis walked out to Pinkie and handed the ball to him, trying to calm him down. But Pinkie was too far gone, it seemed—and over there on the base line were the salaaming "Turks." Besides, Crink Talbot, coaching at third, had taken it up. In a minute there were juniors all over the place, salaaming and shouting "Allah!"

Pinkie threw another wide one. Shorty watched it sail over his head, and I took a bigger lead. Then Pinkie pulled himself together and pitched again. I could see that it was a better one—and so could Shorty.

SHORTY wasn't expecting it, either. He swung at it, and met it. But he was a bit late. Crack! went the ball, right on a line for the junior bench. It would just about have cracked one of the fellows on the knees if something hadn't interfered.



Something did. As the ball left the bat Garry and his "Turks" were on a downward bend. As it crossed the base line Garry was starting up. And as it was about to reach the bench Garry straightened out, eyes heavenward, hands in the air. Never saw the ball!

"Allah," he implored. "Allah!" Plunk! went the ball, smash into Garry's stomach. And "Unh!" went Garry, so loud you could hear him all over the diamond. Right then his dignity left him. Like a shot he was on his feet, his hands clasped across his middle. All dou-

bled up, he danced around like an Indian medicine man. The other salaamers had stopped—so had everything else. Then came a new laugh, and in a second it spread all over the park.

And one of the most enthusiastic laughers was Pinkie. Right there on the diamond he sat down and laughed, as Garry capered around like a baby hippo, and rubbed his stomach. Pinkie wasn't the only one who laughed—not by a long shot. Finally, though, when Garry painfully seated himself on the bench, things quieted a bit, and Pinkie got up and walked over to Garry. Apparently he asked Garry if he was hurt, for Garry shook his head. Then Pinkie went back to the mound.

"He's up in the air!" shrieked Crinkie from third base line.

But he wasn't. He jogged the ball a little, and then whooshed two strikes past Shorty before Shorty woke up. Webster and Moenden went the same way—left Lefty and me dead on first and second. And that was that—faculty won the championship.

Of course Garry was razzed. But he took it with a grin. And when he saw Pinkie again he brought the subject up himself.

"My foot's off the accelerator now, Mr. Hewitt," he said. "What I want to learn is how to dodge things—autos, baseball and such."

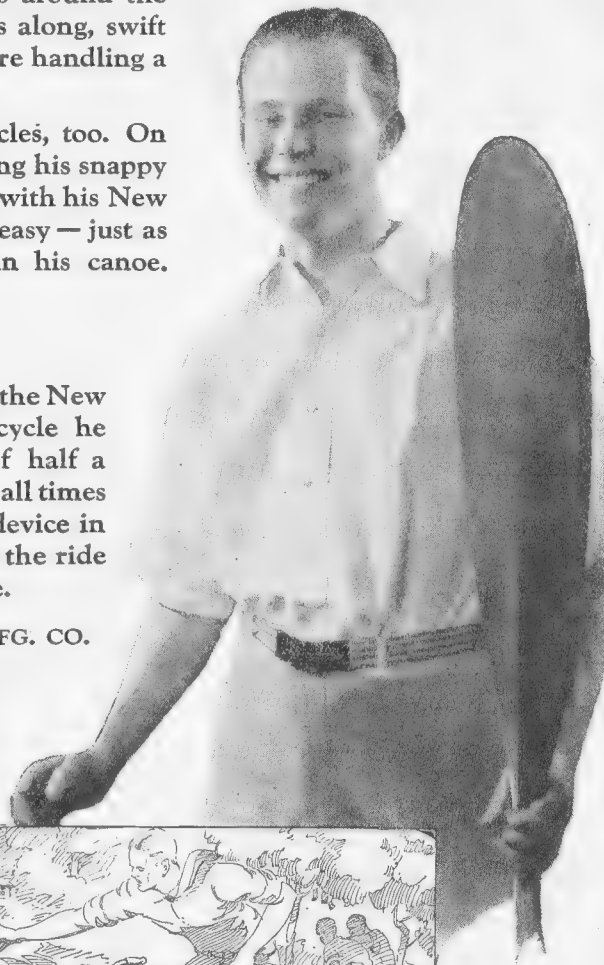
Pinkie's tone was serious, but those blue eyes twinkled away merrily.

"Fine!" he told Garry. "Why don't we begin the first lesson"—he almost grinned—"by talking Turkey?"

Watch "Red" handle that canoe!

"He can paddle rings around the other fellows—Flashes along, swift and silent, as if he were handling a feather!"

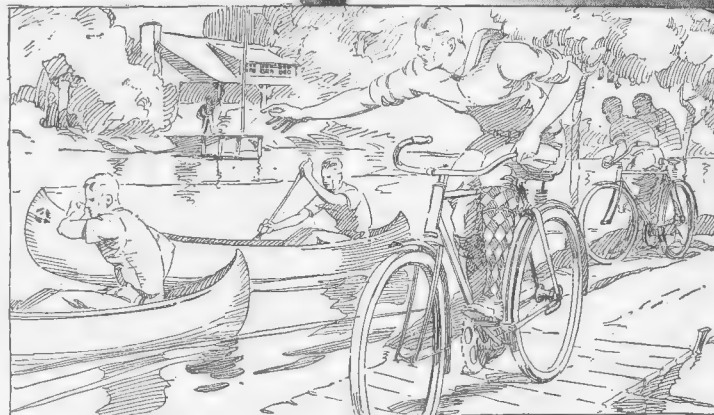
"'Red' knows bicycles, too. On shore he's always riding his snappy bike—coasting along with his New Departure, swift and easy—just as smooth as he does in his canoe. Both keep him fit."



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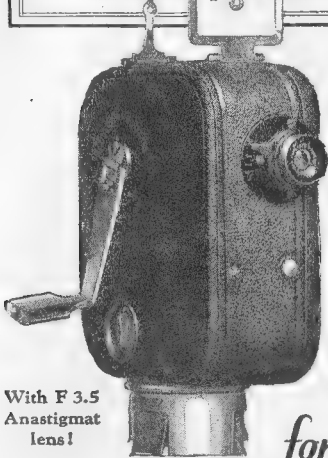
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Boys Who Used Their Brains

The Boy Who Knew What to Do

By Esca G. Rodger

"GOVERNOR!" That was the nickname given to lean, keen-eyed fourteen-year-old Jay Shaff some twenty-five years ago by the fellows in his crowd.

Now the fellows in Jay Shaff's crowd were up-and-doing country youngsters who lived near Clinton, Iowa. In the country, a boy learns to rely upon himself. Those fellows weren't any too ready to acknowledge a leader. Yet they called Jay Shaff "Governor." Not because he was bound to be boss. No. For quite another reason.

If you could listen back in on some of the talk that went on years ago among those boys who used to hunt over Iowa's rolling hills and fish the waters of the Wapsi River, you'd soon learn the real reason.

"Let's go catfishing," some fellow would suggest. "We can catch all we want now."

Sniffs from the others:

"Come off. They're not biting."

"Catch all we want, huh? Who says so?"

"Governor Shaff." Triumphant. "He told me to get you fellows together if you wanted a mess of catfish."

"Why didn't you say so then? Sure, we will go if Governor's going."

That was the way the whole crowd felt — "Governor" knew what to do.

And he was always ready to pass his knowledge along. Quietly. There was so little spread-eagling about his leadership that it sometimes puzzled people.

One fellow's mother once asked curiously, "Why do you boys all call Jay Shaff 'Governor?'"

Her son chuckled a little. "Because he tells us what to do, that's all," he told her.

"Governor" Shaff didn't lay down the law; he just knew what to do, and told the others: They could take it or leave it. Usually they took it. They knew Jay Shaff. Knew that somehow he always knew what to do; and that he got it done.

Fishing or farming, "Governor" Shaff was on the job. He was a self-starter. And a fine finisher.

Take, for instance, the matter of "Governor" and the dozen or so yearling calves always cavorting around the Shaff farm. From the time Jay Shaff was eleven or twelve, he took sole charge of these yearlings—fed them, watered them, made their beds, and slicked up their bedrooms—every day. And he did it without any jogging.

Cold winter morning after cold winter morning, "Governor" rolled out of bed without being called and went out to feed a dozen rambunctious yearlings before he fed himself. Try that on your own self-starter.

When it came to cultivating corn or raking hay or patching fence, "Governor" made the same sort of record. He knew what to do, did it without being told, and did it well.

No wonder he and his younger brother Heman could usually have for the asking time off to go hunting or fishing. No wonder their father could take an occasional hour to go swimming with them.

But even then, in the midst of work and good times, "Governor" was looking ahead, figuring out the future. He read his father's agricultural magazines, and a good many other magazines and books. Listened to the talk of older men. Muddled things over—thought them out. It was his habit of sizing up situations that made him *The Boy Who Knew What to Do*.

And it was his habit of sizing up situations that sent him to Iowa State College at Ames when few boys of his neighborhood thought of going to college. Jay Shaff didn't go from Clinton High to college because the crowd was going. Nor was college a habit in his family. Young "Governor" wasn't following tradition; he was blazing a trail, a trail to more effective farming.

He was graduated from Iowa State at the age of nineteen, in spite of specializ-



JAY O. SHAFF
College trained "dirt" farmer
and influential state senator.

They weren't afraid of Jay's getting hurt; he was far too alert for that. And they had known perfectly well what the pacer would do. She always did it if you didn't watch her; that roll was part of her method of crossing a ford.

But "Governor" knew what to do. He coolly sorted himself out from the pacer and the Wapsi, and—remembering that they'd soon be crossing back that way with the cattle—serenely announced that one of the fellows who had declared the pacer was a great cattle-chaser could have the fun of riding her the rest of the trip.

And one of the fellows did, finessing the pacer safely back over the ford with the skill of previous practice, and getting a good grin out of the fact that you could not catch "Governor" both coming and going.

"Governor" Shaff could make a quick decision, and make it right.

And he could make a big decision, and make it right. That's why he went back on the farm after he'd got his master's at the University of Wisconsin. He leaned toward the law. But his father needed his help; then, too, he liked the man-sized freedom on the farm, the variety in the work, the life in the open air—and the thought of going back to the place that had always been farmed by Shaffs.

So he went back to the home place, this boy who had had the foresight and strength of purpose to prepare himself for farming as comparatively few men are prepared.

Now, at thirty-nine, still a young man, Jay O. Shaff is one of the outstanding figures in the farming world.

On the 400-acre farm on which he lives, he has a big home with every modern convenience; his great barns are built to satisfy the most exacting cow; two Iowa State College graduates have charge of his scientifically immaculate dairy, where a big butter-maker turns out at a single making 500 pounds of the sort of butter that sets you longing for a stack of buckwheats a mile high; his own grain elevator stands down by the interurban tracks; his tenant farms dot the country, and his tenant farmers get a square deal and more.

A handful of husky young sons are hunting over the same hills and fishing the same waters where years ago "Governor" Shaff hunted and fished. They are learning to handle animals and run machinery, at the age when it's easiest to learn those things. They're getting ready to be farmers if they want to be. Not otherwise. Jay O. Shaff is leaving it to each of his sons to pick the work he likes best. Lucky young Shaffs, with an understanding dad who knows what to do!

And lucky community, too. Jay O. Shaff serves the whole state. In 1917, he was elected to the House of Representatives in Iowa's legislature. In 1922, he was elected state senator from Clinton County. As head of the Senate Committee on Highways, he holds one of the most important chairmanships in the Senate and is in a position to fight effectively for the good roads farmers need. He has been a leader in the movement to stamp out tuberculosis in Iowa herds. He is always looking ahead and planning for the prosperity of all.

Jay O. Shaff is a man of powerful influence; a farmer who has learned his business, scientifically and practically, from A to Z; a farmer with legal training who knows a good law from a dud or a back-action bomb; a farmer who is a fine mixer, equally at home in overalls among his hired hands or in tweeds among city men.

Wherever he is, his word carries weight. Associates everywhere will tell you, "Jay Shaff is the man who knows."

Not so surprising when you remember that "Governor" Shaff was the boy who knew. The boy who knows, who sizes up situations and studies out what to do, is likely to grow up into the man who knows—and does an outstanding job wherever he is.

ing in scarlet fever and tonsilitis in his senior year. Oh, yes, and mumps! One after the other, he had all three. Such a series of calamities would have wrecked the graduation chances of most students, but it couldn't spoil "Governor" Shaff's. Hoping for a chance to go to Chicago on a stock-judging team from Ames, he had worked far ahead in his studies to leave time free for the trip. That forehandedness saved his graduation date.

"Just like Governor to be ready for anything that happened," chuckled his friends.

Well, he was graduated on schedule time anyway. Then followed a year on the great farm that has been owned by the Shaff family for nearly a century—a year that gave the young Ames man a chance to size up once more the needs of the future. Then he was off again for more special work, at the University of Wisconsin this time. He packed in two and one-half years of law study there along with the valuable courses in agriculture that gave him his master's degree. A master's degree for a farmer—in a day when master's degrees were far scarcer than they are now!

That was Jay Shaff! Always looking ahead, always sizing up future needs, always studying out what to do.

He wasn't so deadly serious either. With all his hard-working ways, he was a mixer, and could hold his own in any fun-loving crowd. If a joke needed a final flip, he knew what to do.

ONE summer on one of his first days home from college, some of the cattle roved off into the bottom lands, and the three Shaffs had to saddle up to bring the wanderers home across the Wapsi. Heman, the younger brother, picked out his favorite cattle-chasing horse, and his father selected his. Jay hadn't been at home long enough to have a favorite right then; so he looked at a new horse standing there, a long-legged pacer, and said:

"She looks as though she'd be a good cattle-chaser. Guess I'll take her."

And Heman and Mr. Shaff looked at each other behind Jay's back and grinned, and said, "She's a great cattle-chaser!"

So Jay took her, and rode along all happy until it came to fording the Wapsi to get to the side where the cattle were wandering. The pacer paced to the middle of the stream—and lay down and rolled over.

History doesn't say, but doubtless up on the banks Mr. Shaff and Heman did likewise. Certainly they let out a big laugh.

The Circus in the Clouds

(Continued from page 35)

the very bottom here, you see, the cable is continuous, passing through this length of rubber hose, making a loop for the flyer to grasp with his hands as he stands up on the left wing of the lower ship—

"Great guns!"

IT was a veritable shout from Fulz, and something in the timber of it sent a chill through the onlookers. Streak found his body frozen suddenly as, with dilated eyes, he saw the husky young sergeant give a mighty heave at the rubber-covered loop. The hose parted.

A second later Fulz had stripped one half of it off. With a dozen heads clustered above him, he freed the other half. "The cable filed inside the hose!" the mechanic said feebly, as though too overcome to talk.

For a moment the shock of it seemed to numb the senses of the horrified spectators. The story was there for all to read. The tremendously strong cable, twisted of dozens of steel wires, had not merely broken. The bright ends of it showed that a file had been used.

Streak swayed on his feet as he visualized what would have happened. High in the air, a grasp at that loop, swinging clear of the bottom ship—

"Look! Even the hose was ripped a little so's to make sure it'd break an' not hold the lieutenant!" gulped fat little Glyn, his freckles standing out weirdly against his white face.

Streak, in a half-daze, was aware afterward that several things had made an impression on his subconscious mind at that moment; Roach's eyes dilated in his dark face, filled with utter astonishment, not unmixed with fear; Fulz, motionless; Captain Kennard's drawn face, like a mask of horror; lantern-jawed Sergeant Jennings chewing furiously—and the sharp, barking words of Brushy Parsons:

"This is horrifying! Sinister! And when you think of it in connection with that mysterious sabotage in Louisville—"

"Shut up, Parsons!" shouted Kennard. "You reporters, listen. What goes on now is confidential unless I tell you otherwise. No use barring you now."

"The officers of this flight are above suspicion. All friends. Am I right, Streak? Is there any officer among us three with the slightest feeling against you?"

"No, sir," stammered Streak.

"Any enlisted man?"

"Not—that I know of, sir!"

"Roach, here, I know personally, is above suspicion because he can account for every hour of his time since this ladder was last used."

The captain's voice held a tremor of excitement. And Streak knew that his closing words were absolutely correct. Despite the cessation of suspicious happenings, not only had Roach been shadowed every second of the time, by the flyers themselves or Army secret service men, but even the men to whom he talked, and the letters he wrote and received, had been carefully scrutinized. Distrust of Roach was out of the question.

"These ships have been under the guard of you mechanics every minute of the time, with the officers acting as Officers-of-the-Day in turn. Has any stranger whatever been permitted to go into the hangar, or even to inspect the ships at close range?"

Each of the four bronzed sergeants gave an emphatic, "No!" And Streak, as well as the others, knew well that their records for years back had been delved into since that incident in Louisville. Not a man of them could be logically suspected of plotting murder against Streak Somers.

NEVERTHELESS, Kennard cross-examined them severely. It was a tragic ordeal for the men, before that tense group of onlookers. Blonde little Glyn perspired and stuttered in a brogue so thick it made his words sound like a foreign tongue. Old Jennings almost cried, and young Fulz, who had discovered the sinister attempt, answered civilly but seemed cut to the heart and furiously resentful. Madden, the fourth man, had been under Kennard's command on the

border for years, and even before that had been under him in France; the C. O. knew that he would have fought to the death for him or his outfit. All four of the men were veteran non-coms, of the type that is the backbone of the army.

Not a word was spoken by the onlookers as the examination went on. When it was over, the captain threw up his hands helplessly.

"I'm completely at sea," he said slowly. "From now on one officer and one mechanic, reinforced by a policeman, will guard our stuff night and day. Such a thing will never happen again—but how did it happen this time? And who, in all the world, wants to murder Somers, for any reason?"

"Whoever it is," barked the irrepressible Parsons, bristling more than ever, radiating excitement, "is bold, ingenious, absolutely without scruples of any kind, and a fearful menace to us all. It would almost seem as though it must be a maniac whose distorted brain has conceived this thing—"

"A bird who could figure this out, and carry it through, has a whole lot of brains for a lunatic," argued Jimmy Little, his round face solemn. "Looks like he, or they, were more or less after Streak, in a way, and yet he may be just a helpless victim of their desire to put this circus on the fritz."

"Which brings up the question of why anybody should care about putting it on the fritz!" Streak burst forth.

As though his words had called the concentrated attention of the newspaper men, they gathered about him. Questions were fired from every side. He answered them mechanically. Sure, he was going up just the same—no, he hadn't a real enemy in the world that he knew of—he, in fact, was more at sea than anyone else about it.

The time was approaching rapidly when he'd have to go up, and he left the highly excited newspaper men to help in the rigid inspection of every inch of wire and square foot of linen in the ships. Roach was silent as the grave, preoccupied with thoughts apparently far from the fair grounds at Syracuse, New York. He did not even razz Somers.

That fact didn't prevent Streak from reflecting that, after all, he did have one enemy—that same Cocky Roach. But Roach was out of this, unless he'd hired someone. And that didn't seem possible. Not by wire, letter, or telephone, anyhow. And if by word of mouth, said confederate had been a man heretofore above suspicion, because the three strangers to whom he had talked, briefly, when no one else could hear, had been solid, if curious, citizens.

No use trying to explain it, Streak decided. His brain was reeling now. Somehow, though, it seemed that some unutterably sinister thing was stalking him, closing in on him out of the shadows, to destroy him. He thought of it as some tangible beast—

"Listen, kid."

IT was Roach's gruff voice, and Streak looked up quickly from his minute inspection of his parachute, which he'd unfolded for a last scrutiny. It hadn't been tampered with at all, as far as he could see.

"Well?"

"I just wanted to say—you been sick, an' maybe yuh wasn't feelin' so good anyway—all this stuff may o' got your nerve, kinda—"

Roach was fumbling for words. Never before had Somers seen him embarrassed. One thing for which Cocky Roach was noted was being sure of himself, his ability, and the impossibility of his being wrong about anything. Now he was stammering and stuttering, as though uncertain of himself.

"What I wanted t' say was that I'd be glad t' do the stunts to-day if you ain't feelin' so good."

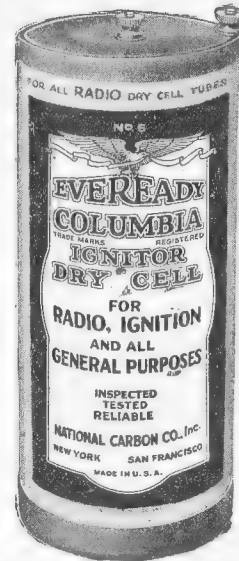
For just an instant the powerful acrobat's offer seemed to the tortured Streak to be like a reprieve from death. He would not have to go up and do the things he dreaded, the things that he was certain

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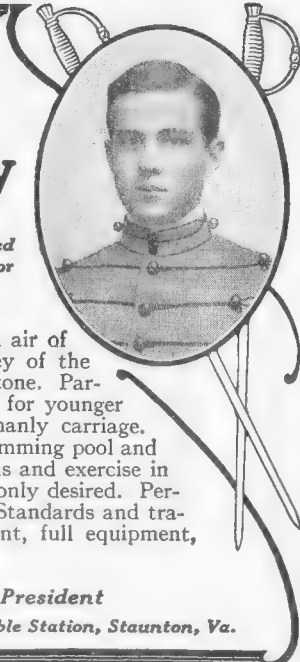
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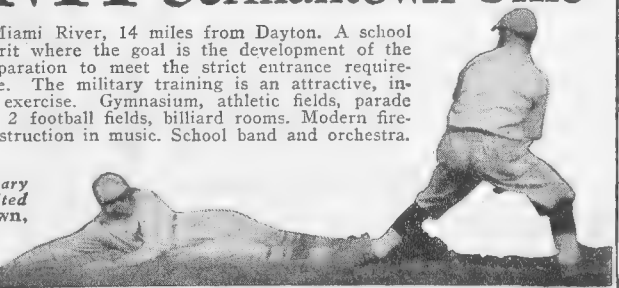
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(Continued from page 55)

would result in his death—

Then his slim body straightened. His shoulders squared, his muscles tensed, and his haunted eyes burned into Roach's. He couldn't live another day under the thrall of the fear which was making him despise himself.

"Thanks, but I'd rather go up myself," he said steadily.

Never before had he seen Roach's turbulent eyes so soft. Momentarily, his enemy, it appeared, had sympathy and understanding for him.

For just a moment they faced each other, and then Roach's massive shoulders lifted in a shrug. He turned away without a word.

"I really believe he was trying to help me, then," Streak was reflecting, when Roach's voice, familiarly loud once more, reached him.

"I just offered t' go up myself and go through the program," he was telling the newspaper men loudly. "Findin' out about that ladder'd get anybody's nerve. Don't bother me none. But the kid won't listen to me goin' up. He knows there's a big crowd here, and he'd break his neck for a crowd any time!"

Streak had too many other troubles to have time for resentment. Same old Roach, he thought indifferently—a show-off, a braggart, making that offer not out of sympathy, but to impress the newspaper men with his own unbreakable nerve.

An hour's time before the first flight—it was an eternity, and yet, paradoxically, it seemed to pass too swiftly. The air was vibrant now with the low roar of the tremendous crowd that covered the fair grounds. The interior of the track was clear, kept so by many policemen, but on all sides a sea of humanity washed against the island where the ships were lined up.

The newspaper men had rushed to town to file their stories. Just as the mechanics started the motors of the two stunt ships, Captain Kennard drifted over to where Streak was sitting, brooding alone.

"Streak, that fellow Fulz acted sort of funny to me," stated the C. O. "He's got nothing against you, has he—?"

"No! Why, he found the break in the ladder!" exploded Somers, his frazzled nerves indicating themselves in his quick outburst.

"I know," nodded Kennard. "But some way he didn't quite convince me. Chances are a million to one that one of the mechanics must be in on it. No ghost is getting at our stuff. And Fulz—well, you know it's possible for a man to fall for an awful lot of money and do almost anything. I figured maybe Fulz filed that ladder, and then came to himself and uncovered it because he couldn't go through with it."

"But who would want to hire anybody to do anything?" Streak asked wearily, and the captain shook his head.

"Search me," he said slowly. "But if it takes the entire government secret service, we'll find out!"

THE moment Streak dreaded approached with uncanny swiftness. The sides of the track were banked with thousands of people now. The two fast, powerful scouts, with Don and Jimmy at their sticks, took off, climbed with unbelievable speed, and then, a mile above the grounds, went into their stunting. Loops, spins, rolls, Immelman turns, breath-taking dives, and mighty zooms that carried them upward a thousand feet! It was marvelous flying. And Streak's blood ran cold as he watched. When Jimmy Little, master acrobatic pilot, sent his ship flashing across the sky in an upside down dive, Streak could hardly force himself to watch it.

He was in a blue funk—held in the vise-like grip of utter fear. But the iron in him refused to yield. He'd rather be dead than despise himself as a yellow quitter.

The Jennys were warming up, now, their eight-cylinder, hundred-eighty-horsepower motors whispering along at idling speed. He was to start with Captain Kennard, to-day—Roach, he was suddenly certain, would try to kill him—no, Roach had been absolved of any such intentions.

His brain was a chaos as he automatically strapped himself in the front seat of Kennard's ship, and his hands gripped

the cowlings so tightly the knuckles were white as the ship bumped along the ground.

Seven, eight, nine hundred feet, the two ships circling widely around the track. Below, a vast sea of upturned faces, the myriad tents of the carnival, the huge buildings flaunting red roofs to the sky, miles of parked cars—

A thousand feet. It was time—and he'd rather have walked straight into a machine gun nest in wartime.

He unstrapped his belt, and stood up while the throng watched. Then he stepped up on the seat. He did not dare to look down. Next, a deathlike grip around the rear center-section struts, and he literally forced himself to climb to the center section. Tiny bumps, even the vibration of a flying wire, were life-and-death emergencies to him.

As he clung desperately to the leading edge of the top center section, lying flat, it seemed to him that he was only half conscious. His body was numb, his brain dazed. He was a man in a horrible, unreal nightmare.

He knew what he had to do. He knew he was going to die. But he'd do it.

While the vast gathering below watched and shivered, Streak inched his body along the left wing, holding to the leading edge. The airstream was a demon trying to brush him off, the ship was a trembling beast striving to unseat him.

He gasped with relief as his left hand closed around the small cabane strut, a metal prong to which the control and bracing wires for the aileron are attached.

There he rode, lying flat, as Captain Kennard circled widely and headed into the wind for a straight course directly across the fair grounds. Close behind the lead ship was Roach, in the other Jenny. The twenty-five-foot ladder, due to the weight of its rungs, dangled almost vertically from his ship, attached at the first strut on the right-hand wing.

Captain Kennard had throttled his ship to the limit, now, and Roach was easing his ship forward. Streak's anguished eyes watched it creep ever closer, bringing with it death for him.

IT was time. He got to his knees, shivering as though with the ague. The slightest slip meant a sheer thousand-foot drop to the earth. He could make no mistakes—the second his fingers closed on the ladder Kennard would dive to avoid a collision.

Roach was about thirty feet higher, now, and only ten feet back of the leading Jenny. And Streak knew he could not stand up on his perilous perch. He'd fall. He must funk it entirely, fail to go through with it—

Then he took hold of himself. From somewhere within himself it seemed that a reserve of strength flowed through him. He was so frightened that feeling had left him, but at least his muscles would obey his will. Better lose his life than his self-respect.

His body under steady control, now, he slowly came upright. The acres of humanity below saw him, like a slim arrow outlined against the sky. Roach was easing down, now, and the ladder was only three feet above him.

Streak dared not think of the ground. He was keeping his balance automatically, but with such an effort that it was exquisite physical torture.

Why was Roach so slow? Why didn't he get that ladder down within reach? He couldn't stand it if he had to sway there another second—

The ladder was almost within the grasp of his clutching fingers as he leaned forward against the air blast, his head and shoulders out over the leading edge of the wing. Not one second longer could he stand it. He'd stretch slightly and reach it, without waiting for Roach.

It was just ahead and a bit higher than it should have been. Roach had throttled his ship, and at any moment the ladder would be within comfortable reaching distance, but the crazed Streak could not wait. He strained to clutch it—and the swaying loop eluded him.

He tottered on the edge of the wing. For a split second he tried desperately to regain his balance. He couldn't—he was falling—

Then all that he was, the years of train-

ing he had subjected himself to, the self-confidence which had been his—all came back to him. Neither brain nor body failed him. His decision was made like a flash, and the will to dare was backed by every atom of energy in him.

One desperate chance for life. Just a couple of feet ahead of him was the ladder, and his body was falling forward over the leading edge of the wing.

At that second he leaped outward and upward. His muscles were wonderfully resilient springs propelling him. And suddenly his alert faculties were working perfectly. His eyes never sought the ground, but held to that rubber-covered loop in the air. Down below women fainted, many of them, as the body of the man they had watched falling from his shelf in the air launched itself into space.

And his hands caught that loop. Down below a hysterical mob cried and cheered and sobbed and shrieked as they watched him haul himself upward, rung by rung, until his feet were safely planted on the bottom rung and he started climbing.

He did not hear the crowd, and they could not see his shining eyes. He was the happiest airman in all Christendom. His fear, born of horrid experience, long brooding, and physical weakness, was gone. He was himself once more. He had looked death in the eye and cheated it.

Chapter Six

TWILIGHT was falling, and the thousands of lights on the fair grounds were already blazing through the half light. Streak was alone, guarding the hangar, while Fulz, also on duty that night, ate his supper. The noise of various bands and calliopes cut through the low roar of the crowd, but the track, as usual, was deserted. No spectators on the rails, even, for the ships were out of sight.

Then a tall figure came hurrying across the infield. Brush Parsons, Streak decided.

At the same moment, from the east, there came a low, familiar drone. Streak's experienced eyes quickly picked up the dark speck in the sky. Another airplane.

"That boy'd better break into a gallop up there, or he'll have a night landing," Streak reflected.

In the four short hours that had intervened between this moment and that terrible afternoon ordeal, Streak had changed. It almost seemed that some of the hollows in his lean face had filled a usual, was deserted. No spectators on the rails, even, for the ships were out of sight.

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In the four short hours that had intervened between this moment and that terrible afternoon ordeal, Streak had changed. It almost seemed that some of the hollows in his lean face had filled a trifle. His eyes, even in repose, sparkled zestfully now, and, as he told himself gleefully:

"Saying I feel like a million dollars is putting it too cheap!"

He felt just a bit different than he ever had before. The torturing days when he had grown to despise himself because he was afraid had given him a certain self-understanding and humility. And those scathing words of the reporter had helped cure him of conceit. Thinking he was the center of attraction, and pretty darn good! That was kid stuff—small time.

"Well, well! All alone, eh? Where's Fulz? Ships all in, eh? Brought you some papers. Another airplane, eh? Flying late, what?" sputtered the bustling, bristling press agent all in a breath. "Look at these spreads, eh? Streak, the whole darn country's going to be interested in rounding up the unknowns who're trying to get you, and this circus, and our picture!"

He threw the papers down to the reclining Streak, and polished his spectacles nervously. It struck Somers that the gaunt, vigorous publicity man of the Peerless Picture Corporation was laboring under a strain of some kind.

He glanced at the huge headlines, his own pictures, and a few paragraphs of one of the stories. The government was much interested according to a Washington dispatch, and the entire Federal machinery was going to be put at work to run down the "fiends," as the paper called them, who for some obscure reason were striving to cause a fatal accident to the circus.

Parsons took out a cigaret, lighted it with a hand that trembled, and then started pacing up and down, glancing occasionally at the recumbent, khaki-clad figure on the ground.

"I'm going to Atlantic City to-morrow," he exploded suddenly. "Half a million people'll be there from all over the country Labor Day week end. Great stuff. Big

stuff. And I'll push it, never fear. Pretty good—week of swimming, eh?"

"Sure thing," returned Streak, watching Parsons curiously. Why was he hanging around, talking against time?

Suddenly Parsons stopped, and poked a long forefinger out at Streak.

"Listen, Streak!" he barked. "I—er—I wanted to tell you—"

He stopped, stuttered, and then finished lamely:

"Did you know Kennard suspects Fulz a little? Not really. Think's he's most likely, for some reason. Don't know why. Got some more dope to-night, I understand. Fulz all of a sudden banked five thousand—get me? Sounds fishy. Hope he tells who paid him the five to file that wire, eh? Maybe not him, of course. Then he discovered the thing himself, what?"

Streak nodded, saying nothing. That hadn't been what Parsons had started to tell him. The man had something on his chest he wanted to get rid of and he couldn't get it out.

"Funny," Somers reflected. "There's more dog-gone mystery around this outfit than I ever heard of!"

PERHAPS it was a slight chill in the night air, but suddenly the young pilot's body shivered a bit. He'd been feeling so good that he'd forgotten the shadow under which the gang were living—

"Gonna land here, by George!" exploded Parsons, pointing at the ship.

It evidently was. The motor's roar died, and it came circling down in wide, graceful spirals.

"Well, I must beat it—catch some morning paper offices to-night and talk business—clean everything up before I leave for the shore. The company joins us there, y' know, next Friday. Just heard from the coast that young Rod Ballard's going to direct the picture. Nice fellow. You'll like him. Been assistant director for some time. This is his first big chance. 'Night. See yuh later, maybe. Want t' talk to you."

And he was off, his long legs striding jerkily, and his rough-surfaced tweed suit flapping from his bony frame.

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"He's about as restful as a laughing hyena," soliloquized Streak. "What he's got to say must be darned important—he is making enough fuss about it."

He forgot Parsons' mysterious manner, though, to speculate about the ship that was now gliding in to land. It had drawn thousands of people from the buildings and shows of the fair already. They banked the rails to watch it land. The craft did it to the Queen's taste. On three points, and without a bounce.

It wasn't an army ship, although it was painted khaki-color. The motor sounded like one of the French eight-cylinder motors such as the circus was using in the Jenny's. The craft was fairly big and reasonably fast.

Streak got to his feet, and strolled over to greet the two strange airmen. Perhaps he might know them, at that. The company of flyers is a pitifully small one, and nearly every name, at least, is known to all the rest.

The propeller was still whirling when he reached the side of the ship. It was dusk, and the men's faces, framed in their helmets, were veiled by the darkness.

The one in the rear seat vaulted to the ground, and peered at Streak's face.

"You one of the Army Circus?" he inquired.

"Uh huh."

"Which fellow are you, may I ask?"

The stranger was very tall and powerfully built, and there was a slight accent that smacked of New York to Streak. When the stranger said, "circus," it sounded like "coicus."

"Somers is my name—"

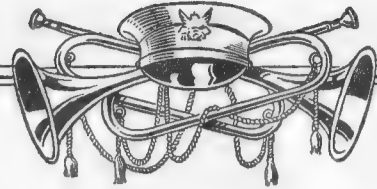
"You don't say. Glad t' know you. Hey, Bill! We're in luck! This is Streak Somers right here."

The other pilot nodded, and the motor roared suddenly as he swung the ship around, heading it down the field again.

"What do you mean?" inquired Streak. "You didn't come to see me, did you?"

"Sure thing. Say, we've got lots of spectators, ain't we?"

He gestured toward the crowd, a hundred yards or more away. Seen in profile,



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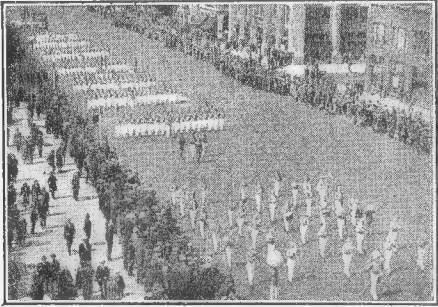
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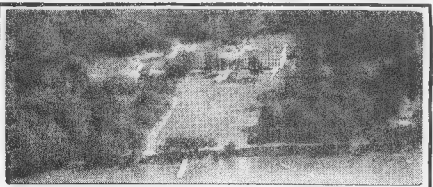


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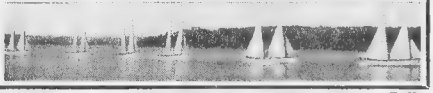
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(Continued from page 57)

his face was boldly handsome, the nose jutting forth with a hawklike sweep above a thin mouth and a rugged jaw.

The other man leaped from the plane, leaving it idling. That was queer, Streak thought. They couldn't be flying on in the darkness. Somehow a warning sounded back in his brain, just as the two men came close to him.

"Yep. We want to see you—and take you with us!"

JUST a glimpse of saturnine eyes with a curious light dancing in them, and then Streak, moving with the speed of light, was ducking to avoid a wicked blow aimed at him by the smaller of the two men. Something that looked like a blackjack was in his hand.

As Streak dodged it, the big man caught him in a bear-like grip. The next second, the blackjack hit him a glancing blow, half dazing him.

"Let's heave him in!" panted the big man, and Streak felt himself lifted from the ground.

He struggled desperately, his sole advantage being that his opponents were hampered somewhat by the parachute packs they wore. He could hear the far-away yells. The crowd must have seen what was going on, although it was very dark. Where were the police?

With a superhuman effort, he tore loose, and whirled to run for help.

"Let him go!" shouted the big man. He leaped straight for Streak, landed a right swing on his temple, and Streak fell as though he'd been shot.

As he got to his feet, the men were in the plane. With the wild idea of crashing their elevators for them, to keep them from escaping, he pursued the slowly moving ship. On he raced, gaining, but with every second the craft was picking up momentum. He was five feet back of it, now—but strain as he would, he could not gain an inch. An instant later, and the ship left him behind, the flames of its exhaust pipes like the fiery breaths of a fleeing monster.

Streak stopped himself, whirled, and ran for the hangar. He must get those stranger airmen! In their hands was the key to the menace which was stalking him, and the circus.

Three puffing policemen, followed by an unruly mob of people, were rushing across the infield. Over at the hangar was Fulz just returned from supper, fighting off a few people who insisted on seeing the ships.

Streak gasped out his story breathlessly.

"I want the alarm broadcast—everybody watching for that ship. I want the hangar guarded strongly," he finished tersely.

He ran through the crowd, which parted to speed his progress, and while yet fifty yards from the hangar yelled to Fulz:

"We've got to get one of the scouts out!"

He took a last look at the fleeing plane. Its red exhaust flames marked it plainly, and showed that its course was straight north. Bound for Canada, doubtless.

A tall, thin, keen-faced youth was next him, running beside him toward the hangar. Streak stopped, and grabbed his unknown companion by the arm.

"Listen!" he said breathlessly. "Watch that ship for a minute or two, will you, so I'll waste no time picking it up?"

"Sure! Gonna chase it?"

Streak nodded. Fulz had the hangar flaps open already, and was lifting the tail of one scout on his powerful shoulders. Streak hustled to the motor, and pushed. With the ever-increasing number of policemen keeping the crowd back, the single-seater trundled out on the line.

STREAK got in the cockpit, his goggles on his bare head, and primed the motor. The self-starter worked like a charm, and the twelve-cylinder motor, so tremendously powerful for such a small ship, wasn't missing a beat.

Streak felt that he couldn't wait a moment, even to warm up. It was taking a chance, there in the darkness, but he was so impatient to be on his way that nothing else mattered. The ship was full of gas and oil, and had been inspected carefully after the afternoon's flying, as was the circus custom.

He didn't need to ask the young un-

known where the fleeing ship was. Two tiny red dots against the black sky showed its position plainly. Fully five miles northward, about fifteen hundred feet high.

"Tell the captain about it!" he yelled to Fulz, and that husky mechanic nodded, his eyes burning through the gloom.

For a sickening moment Streak wondered whether some obscure thing would be found wrong with his ship. Captain Kennard suspected that Fulz was responsible for that sawed ladder—were those two strangers who'd tried to kidnap him in the same gang? Would Fulz try to prevent their capture?

There was nothing to do but take a chance. The suspected mechanic hadn't had time to do anything—hadn't been alone with the ship. And the chances were that he was trustworthy, too.

One last look at the instruments—oil pressure too low, of course, and the temperature less than sixty Centigrade when it should have been eighty or more. Then, with a prayer in his heart that the swift little scout might not fail him, he shoved the throttle on slowly.

The Curtis fairly leaped out from under him. The blazing lights of the fair grounds made the end of the field vaguely visible; so the take-off was not so hard as it might have been. His curly hair whipped back by the airstream, Streak handled his ship automatically while his eyes kept darting toward the north.

He was off in less than a hundred yards, and eased the stick forward slightly to hold the scout close to the ground. The cold motor did not sputter—but it might, any time. A second while the ship traveled like a bullet, ten feet from the ground—then he pulled the stick back slightly. The plane shot upward so steeply that a wartime flyer, watching and not familiar with the latest developments in aircraft, would have held his breath and turned away his eyes.

At eight hundred feet Streak, sensing that his flying speed had gone in that terrific zoom, nosed down a bit. He turned north, and roared along through the cool, smooth night air, a thousand feet above the fairy city and the fair grounds, where the lights were like loops of tiny jewels.

The young pilot had no definite idea of what he was going to do. That would depend on circumstances. But he was going to get those flyers ahead of him, and solve the mystery that was making the circus a collection of nervous wrecks and causing him to live in the shadow of disaster.

THE two strangers had abruptly changed everything. Somers reflected as he handled the stick with unconscious skill. Roach couldn't be responsible for them, or at least it didn't seem so. Of course, Roach might be an accomplice, and Fulz too, for that matter, all working under the direction of someone as yet unknown. But, for the moment, Streak's racing mind counted Roach and Fulz out of the picture.

And who on earth was so interested in the failure of the circus that they'd go to such lengths to hinder it? Why should any enemy of the Air Service pick on the circus? The failure of the outfit wouldn't give the entire Air Service a black eye, nor change anyone's opinion about the future of the air. True, that motion picture which was going to carry the gospel of the air into every tiny hamlet in the land, would be weakened, perhaps abandoned if Streak were killed. But, all in all, any possible advantage there might be, to anything or anybody, in killing Streak and ruining the Army circus, was so infinitesimal that murder and kidnapping would be the methods of a madman.

Maybe somebody, like Roach, hated him so badly that he wanted him killed. But, aside from Roach, he had not an enemy in the world that he knew of—and now, it seemed, Roach was entirely above suspicion.

"Well, those two up there'll have a chance to say something!" Streak told himself grimly, and his mouth tightened to a thin line as he saw the fugitive ship growing larger and larger ahead of him.

He was thundering through the sky at one hundred sixty miles an hour, and overtaking the strange plane was only a matter of minutes. Down there on the ground all the forces of the law should be

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searching the sky now, watching for those two ships, and prepared to close in when the flyers got on the ground.

Suddenly Streak was aware of the fact that he was having a good time! There was a thrill that made him tingle in that wild dash above the shadowed, half-invisible earth—and, at the end of the chase, unknown possibilities that were fascinating in their importance—and danger.

Streak had started the chase as a matter of course, because he had conceived it to be his duty as an Army officer. Duty, though, in this case, wasn't at all hard to choose.

The reckless youngster was leaning forward in his seat, as though to help his ship along, and fretting to be at his work.

Only a hundred feet separated the two ships now. The strangers were holding to a straight course, as though unperturbed about pursuit. Trying to make the border line of Canada, of course, Streak decided.

"Try the gun first, I guess," he determined grimly. "I'll aim at the propeller. Give them a chance to save themselves. They're wearing parachutes—they can jump. But they'll probably stick to the ship and scrap. I can get in a few shots before they start blazing back at me."

He was almost alongside the other ship, now, and slightly lower. Below he could see four small towns like pools of light against the earth, and the moon was rising as though to help him. He was still wearing the gun he had carried as a guard, and now he drew it, holding it in his right hand and flying with the left, as the two ships roared along side by side.

HE could see the line of light traced by his antagonists' propeller, and that would aid him. He had to throttle his motor to keep from sliding on ahead of where he wanted to be. The two strangers, like hooded demons of the night, were watching him. They didn't have guns out, though—

Yes, they did. One was pointing at him now. The two ships were going at exactly the same speed, and a shot would not be difficult.

Streak took the chance. With that threatening gun-muzzle pointing toward him, less than twenty-five feet away, he lifted his Colt, and sent a shot into his six-foot target, their propeller.

He'd missed—at least, the propeller was not shattered. And still the men did not return the fire. Of course, they could see he wasn't shooting at them personally—he was trying to cripple their ship. But if they did shoot, they couldn't miss, and for a second Streak was tempted to get out of range. It was awful to sit and wait for a shot—

"It's my chance and I'm going to take it!" he decided suddenly. "Shoot and be darned to 'em!"

It was a terrific ordeal. Only the thought of what was at stake in their capture upheld him.

Fighting to keep from looking over at his enemies, he aimed hastily, and the next second his gun spit fire. All five shots remaining in the clip of the automatic he poured into the propeller—and still it did not break!

Their propeller, like his own, was an all-metal one, and not wood, he thought despairingly. Their ship must be modern and up-to-date in every way. Which meant that whoever was back of them was willing to go the limit financially to accomplish his ends.

No wonder they hadn't bothered to shoot at him. Of course, they would if he started to aim at them. He could get only one of them, at the outside, before they got him.

He banked slightly, and gave his ship full gun. It darted to one side, out of range of the bandit ship. For a moment he flew on ahead, trying to formulate a plan. He must bring down that ship somehow. The men would be captured without the aid of their plane and captured easily, if the police were at all efficient. But they must be forced to the ground.

The strange ship was flying along on its course, without making any attempt to get farther away from him. He cocked his ship into a steep bank to the left, away from the enemy, and the little scout roared around in a sweeping circle. Streak

straightened it out a hundred yards back of its prospective prey, and headed in the same direction.

He adjusted his goggles a bit more firmly, and straightened in his seat. His head protruded a bit above the windshield, now, and the air blast was fairly tearing the hair from his head. His grey eyes narrowed, and his body taut and strained, the young pilot settled down to do the most delicate flying of his life.

The throttle eased back under his careful hand, until the motor was turning up only thirteen hundred. The scout, aided by its momentum of the moment before, slid closer to the fugitives. As it lost its extra momentum, it ceased to gain.

Then Streak moved the throttle the slightest bit forward. Gradually his ship gained. Head over the side, one hand on the throttle and the other on the stick, Streak handled his ship with such skill as only a thousand or more hours in the air can give. He had no brakes to help him, and he was going to try to fly a formation closer than had ever been tried before. One mistake, and he would be killed; he ran far greater chances than his enemies—they could drop in their parachutes, even though such a drop would almost certainly mean their capture.

TWENTY-FIVE feet back of them, and still gaining almost imperceptibly. Then, for a moment, he was gaining too fast, and he eased back on the throttle. The ship lost a bit of speed, and he pushed forward again. It was a nerve-wracking strain, with only the throttle to work with.

Ten feet, and exactly the level with that other plane. He was five feet or so to the left of the lead ship's course, which was where he wanted to be. Five feet, now, and the tail surfaces were very close to his flailing prop.

They must have increased their speed a bit, because he seemed to be losing a trifle again. He used the throttle again, and gained inch by inch. Only two feet, and the time had come to try. At any second they might start trying to dodge him. Now, though, they evidently had not comprehended what he was going to attempt. No wonder. It was crazy—

He was ready. His body like ice, he touched the throttle. He was hanging half out of the cockpit, to watch. The nose of his ship crept up even with the tail surfaces ahead. The tip of the prop wasn't a foot from the left elevator.

With an uncontrollable gasp of excitement, Streak pressed on the rudder bar with his right foot. The nose of the ship skidded to the right, and the prop tip cut through that elevator.

Within a split-second Streak had acted. He jerked back on the stick mightily, as he gave it full left rudder besides, and full throttle. Just as the stricken ship ahead plunged downward, the Curtis shot upward.

He was safe—had he gone too far, and ruined their rudder besides?

He leaned over the side of his ship, and watched. And his thin face crinkled into a tight-lipped smile as he saw the other ship come level, and start gliding down.

They could still control it, but one elevator had been ruined. No one could tell to what degree the empenage had been weakened, and no one but a madman would stay in the air an instant longer than he had to with a ship in that condition. But Streak could see that they weren't going to jump unless it was absolutely necessary; they meant to stick to the ship—perhaps vaguely hoping that a landing in the plane might give them a better chance for a get-away than a parachute landing would offer.

Streak swooped down above them, watching, like a triumphant eagle which has struck down his prey, and is poised for the drop to catch it. With every wire in his sturdy, steel-tubed ship whining and singing with the speed, he went into a power dive that caught the staggering ship below in a very few seconds.

Then, keeping close behind them, he followed them down, his eyes on the ground to see where they could land.

The nearest town was five miles or so away, and on its streets he could see hundreds of people, watching. A long parade of automobile headlights was crawling along a road toward them. It must have

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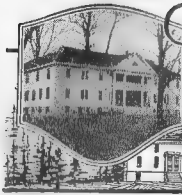
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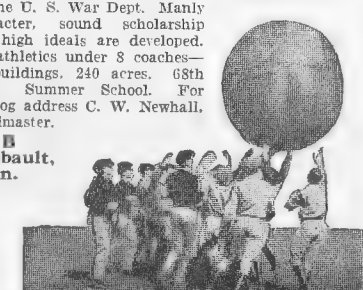
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(Continued from page 59)
looked and sounded like a collision, from the ground.

And this was rather deserted country. Three or four farmhouses within sight, but that was about all. And, with a delighted grin, Streak finally caught sight of a large field less than a quarter of a mile away. No one could tell what the ground was—it might be a swamp, or a hayfield, or merely a pasture. There might be ditches in it, or rocks. That was a chance the fugitives would have to take.

HE flew up beside them, and pointed toward that field. The big pilot nodded his understanding, and turned again to his work. The left elevator was a mass of wreckage which the wind was whipping to pieces, and the ship was hard to handle.

That big fellow was a master pilot, the army man decided as he watched the landing. The big man dropped the crippled plane over the trees at the edge of the field, and set it down in the moonlight as easily as another might have in the full light of day.

And the field was smooth. The ship came to rest without accident of any kind.

The nearest automobiles were within a mile of the field now. He'd stay in the air, Streak decided, and keep watch of the two fugitives until help arrived. They didn't have a chance in a million of escaping—

They weren't giving up, though. Streak, flying fifty feet above the field, saw them leave their ship and run for the woods on one side.

He nosed down, and dived to within a foot of the earth. The scout was moving like a comet. Leveled out just above the ground, he flashed across the field while he kept his eyes on the two dark figures ahead. He was headed directly for them. He'd make 'em think he'd hit them to keep them from escaping.

And he did. They were utterly helpless, and a flailing propeller flashing toward one is not a pleasant sight. They stopped, and held up their hands.

Streak swerved a bit to miss them, but as he hurtled by he pointed toward their ship significantly.

Then he zoomed, and fifty feet from the ground, with a world of excess speed, did a vertical bank and was faced back across the field. They were running again, for the shelter of the trees.

Once again he roared toward them, and once again they stopped. Streak didn't waste a minute this time. He sent his ship upward, and kicked right rudder. The nose dropped downward as the ship turned, and barely three seconds after he'd passed them he was headed back for them.

Five times, so close to the ground that the slightest error meant a crash at more than a hundred and fifty miles an hour, did Streak turn his ship on a dime and speed back at them before they could traverse ten feet. The scout, with Streak at the stick, was an impassable barrier, and it belloped up and down the field like a snorting monster seeking what it might devour.

Finally the fugitives resigned themselves to their fate. Doubtless they realized that they would almost certainly be captured eventually, anyhow. And at any moment Streak might decide to hit them if they continued to try for the forest. So they walked back to their ship, and waited.

"Got 'em!" the airman thought exultantly.

Surely some of those cars racing for the scene would hold policemen. If Syracuse had sent out the alarm, it would have gone north first, and when they saw the ship coming down to land they'd come out to investigate.

And so it proved. Streak saw the two airmen below surrounded by dozens of

men, while other spectators stood at one side of the field. Cars were parked thickly, and more were coming all the time.

HE landed, cut off his motor, and walked toward the group around the crippled ship. The first man to greet him was in uniform, and his cap and badge read, "Chief of Police, Skidmore, N. Y."

"You Lieutenant Somers?" demanded the beefy officer, and Streak nodded.

"Then these two is the kidnapers, huh?"

"Right."
"I got a posse here—didn't get word more'n five minutes before the hull town saw the ships," announced the chief of police. "We'll take 'em down to the hoosegow an' deliver 'em to Syracuse tomorrow."

"Sure," agreed Streak.
The two were surrounded by spectators, while another excited mob surged around the two prisoners, beside the ship.

"I'll fly back to Syracuse, then," Streak decided. "But first I want to talk to these babies."

"Sure," agreed the chief respectfully. "Accordin' to the papers, you been having a hard time, son. Any idea what's up?"

"Not a one, but maybe these fellows can give us some dope," Streak told him grimly, and a moment later was facing the two strangers.

Both men were hard-faced, but the bigger one seemed to accept his fate with peculiarly sardonic philosophy. His hawk-like countenance was composed, and his eyes met Streak's blazing gaze coolly enough.

"Good flying, kid," he said casually. "You sure wanted to get us, didn't you?"

"I'll say," snapped Somers. "Going to come clean and give me the low-down now that you're bound for the jailhouse fast?"

"We're saying nothing at all—not a word," the bandit said easily.

Streak was amazed at the nonchalance of the two. They seemed to accept their fate without any trace of fear. Years in jail were inevitable for both of them—

"You don't seem to be very down-hearted, at that," he told them.

The big man leaned over, and his narrow, saturnine eyes gleamed like a cat's.

"If you knew who was back of us, you'd know why we aren't worried," he said in low tones. "I'm just tellin' you that, for your information. You may think you're smart, but watch your step!"

"What do you mean?" barked Streak, his eyes aflame.

"Not a thing," declared the big man with a mirthless smile, and that was the last word he would speak.

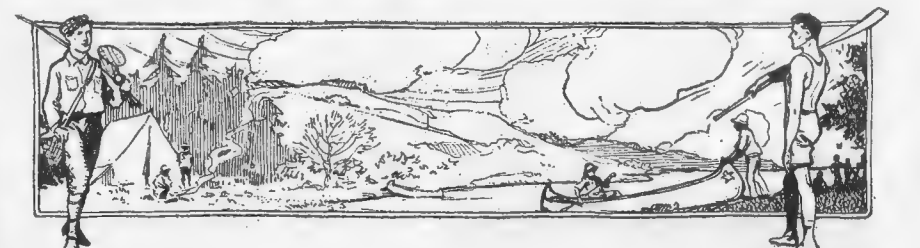
It was no wonder that Streak, speeding through the darkness toward the lights of Syracuse a half hour later, was puzzled, raging, frightened despite himself. The bandit had hinted at interests so powerful that capture for intended kidnapping held no terrors. But what were those interests? What tremendous power did they wield? Why were they after him?

To the youngster who sat there alone, high above the earth, the future was filled with dread. And yet, because he was Streak Somers, there was a tingle along his spine and a light in his eyes which were not the result of fear.

He would not have been the airman he was, had the prospect of danger and struggle not held in it something besides foreboding.

He was fighting he knew not what, nor why; and his battling must be done in the dark against unknown odds. Nevertheless, he was in full possession of all his faculties, and he'd never been known to quit. So perhaps the feeling that made his heart pound and his mouth set and his eyes glint was partly—well, anticipation.

(To be continued in the August number of THE AMERICAN BOY.)



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1-12-3-5-29 is a step.

15-13-28-21-17 is a broad expanse of
water.

19-26-14-11-4 is pursuit.

6-8-7-10-23 is an African ruminant.

24-25-20-27 is noisy.

18-9-22-2-16 is a large flat fish of the
genus Raia.

Brookhaven, Miss.



Answers to May Puzzles.

667. Grandfather had two children by
a first marriage and grandmother had one
by a first marriage; they had two children
after they were married to each other, mak-
ing five in all, "his'n, her'n, and their'n."

668. Atwater Kent, Clearodyne, Cros-
ley, Fada, Freshman, Grebe, Kismet, Mus-
ic Master, Neutrodyne, Paragon, Phan-
stiel, Radiodyne, Radiola, Stromberg-
Carlson.

669. He drew a triangle six feet on each
side, hung a lamp close to the ceiling at
each corner of the triangle, and hung the
fourth lamp from the center of the tri-
angle at such a distance from the ceiling
that it formed the apex of an inverted
triangular pyramid, six feet distant from
each of the other lamps.

670.

(The initials of the
nationality of the pris-
oner are given in the
order in which they
were incarcerated.)

I
F G I B R
B R F G
G I B R
B R F G I
F

671. Raised, razed.

672. Tint.

April Prize Winners.

Best complete list: Rho Mu Rho, Columbia,
Mo.

Best five solutions: Alvin A. Dale, Rochester,
N. Y.

Best four solutions: O. G. Whillikens, Nash,
Okla.

Best of less than four: Ralph Whipple, West
Englewood, N. J.

Best radio puzzle: Monroe Cooling, Bowling
Green, Mo.

Best to 661: Geo. S. Kylo, Kenyon, Minn.

Best to 664: John S. Weeks, New York City.

Most popular puzzle: F. E. Bruary, Sanborn,
Ia.

Books for 25 solutions: Alexander McIver, D.
C.; Amos Quito, Calif.; A. P. Rill, Ida.; Archer
& Nasmith Ltd., Ont.; Blockhead, Kans.; Boyer
W. Voisard, Calif.; B. Swaks, Ore.; Clabra,
Ala.; C. L. Spears, Tex.; Darling, S. D.; Dub-
elchyn, N. D.; Ed U. Cation, O.; E. Hartford,
Ct.; Eldo, O.; Frederick E. Wirth, Kans.; Her-
bie, O.; Ima Boob, Wash.; Ima Bugg, Ill.; Iver
E. Soap, N. J.; James Isaac Brown, Mo.;
Krazy Kat, Pa.; Ohio Kid, O.; Sara Swift
Walker, Ga.; The Gink, Mo.; Thos. J. Perkins,
Ill.

Honorable Mention.

Six Solutions: Akie Jew, Albert Bond, Alex-
ander McIver, Al Wais Wright, Ban Anna Earl,
Bob Zante*, Chinese Dragon, C. L. Spears, Dar-
ling, Desperate Ambrose, Don Key Oata, Dougl.
Ike Sixty*, Ed U. Cation*, E. Hartford, Eiggam,
Elm Burk, Essel Doubleyou, Fatty, F. E. Bruary,
Garvin Thomsen, Icky, Ima Bugg*, I. R. Ish-
man*, Jack Canuck, James III, John Lydenberg,
John Yerger, Kee Lee, Ke Te Yu, Lek Trik
Lite, Lightnin', L. M. Enopee, Maine-iac, Mc-
Intyre Louthan, Merlin, Mun Kee, Nala G. Nol,
Old Black Joe, Paragon, Pat O'Day, Powhatan,
Ray D. O'Bugg, Ray Zinn, Rho Mu Rho, Sara
Swift Walker, Sylvan Tackitt, The Gink, The
Owl, The Swede, Thomas J. Perkins, Thorpa,
W. E. Kelley, William Neely.

Five Solutions: A. A. A., Alvin A. Dale,
Amos Quito, Archer & Nasmith Ltd., Arthur
Knopenski, Blackstone, Blockhead, B. Swaks,
Buckeye, Bull O'Knee, Chester Kingsbury, Cla-
bra, Clarence Tromanhauser, Comet, Craig Mc-
Ginnis, Dan Banta, Don Key, Dray, Dub-el-chyn,
Eldo, Eric C. Edington, Excel C. Orr, Flo Ball-
wood, F-n F-n*, Geo. Ruhlen 4th, Henry Over-
holt, H. Kay*, Howard Zetterwale, Ike N. Hunt,
Ima Boob, I. M. Dumb, Ivan Itch, Iver E.
Soap, Jack Pine, James Isaac Brown*, John S.
Weeks, Judson Dutton, Kelly Lagle, Knot
Tweasy, Krazy Kat, Laurence Gibson, Lyle
Leroy Casper, Maximus Capitus, M. L. Cushing,
Monsieur X., Mort*, Nut Tea, O. G. Re, Ohio
Kid, Oh Tea Bee, Oley, Ray D. O'Bugg, Robert
Howes, Sakr-el-bahr, Sambo, Seedy Ell, Shep,
Sidney Fink, Snoozer, So Ur Wun, Sully, Te-
cumseh, Tee-n-Tee, Tryem All, Try N. Winn,
W. E. Kelley, Wm. Eddie.

Four Solutions: Al Boos, Alton Roark, Alvin
Lundy, A. P. Rill, Artie, Atlee Hall, Baron
Braynes, Boyer W. Voissard, Carl Castellan,
Carl Frye, Dan D. Dumbbell, Dirty Dalton,
Donald Stirtz, Earl W. Jennison, Ed Bower,
Eldo, Elsie & Emsie, Eugene Wilcox, Excel C.
Orr, Francis Headley, Frederick Wirth, George
S. Kylo, G. Og Grofer, Harrod, Harry Vetch,
Herbie, Howard Jahn, I. L. Wynn, Iva Rived,
Jadie, Jay Kay, John A. June Bug, Lloyd C.
Haley, Maurice Roberts, Minn E. Apolis, Monroe
Cooling, M. Scott Hunter, O. G. Whillikens, Old
Black Joe, Oley, Onk Onk, Onyx, Ory Ental,
Paul Livingston*, Percy Verance, Perk O. Later,
Pete, Ptah, Raoul Rhoades, Red Duck, Sage-
brusher, Si, Skip, Thorpa, Todd Stall, Top
Notch, Try N. Winn, Tucker, U. C. I. C.,
Whistling Rufus, Wotchama Callet.

* Two honorable mentions, not necessarily in
the same class.

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as you all know,
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Bowling Green,
Mo.

MAURICE COOLING.



No. 682. A Spelling Lesson.

My first is a verb, my second agrees,
My third is a river far over the seas.
My fourth is yourself; with the fifth we
cry out.

My whole is a force, carrying messages
about.

Harrison, Neb.

EIGGAM.

No. 683. For Mathematical Fans.

A radio fan was constructing a set with
nine dials. The fan, wishing to make the
arrangement symmetrical, made ten rows
with three dials in each row. How did he
do it?

Minneapolis, Minn.

IVA RIVED.

No. 684. Radio Terms.

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Y E U L P C A B
M G N B O V T E
A R E A M I R T
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I C W F I A S C
E V A N K T E L

Moving from one letter to another in
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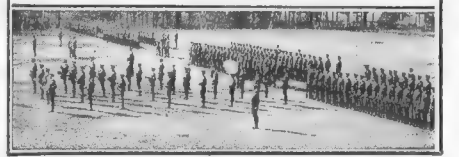


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FUNNYBONE TICKLERS

A Benefactor in Disguise?



Larkson: "I'm going up to the jail. I want to talk with the bandit who took my car."
 Parkson: "What's the use?"
 Larkson: "Maybe he'll tell me how he got fifty miles an hour out of her."

Poor Dummy

Percival: "That was the most unkindest cut of all, as the poet says."
 Penelope: "What was that?"
 "I showed her one of my boy-hood pictures with my father holding me on his knee, and she said, 'My, who is the ventriloquist?'"

A Trifling Knock-out

J. T. Thompson, owner and driver of the car in which Montano was riding, was rendered unconscious for a few months, but escaped serious injury.—*Jacksonville paper.*

An Unjust Aspersions

"And now, sir," thundered the counsel, "tell the court what you were doing in the interim."
 "I never went there," retorted the witness, indignantly; "I stayed in the drawing-room all the evening."

A Dead Game Sport

Conductor: "Change for Marietta! Change for Marietta!"
 Country Passenger: "Don't know who the girl is, but I'll chip in a dime."

Get Born Early

"What do you believe is the reason for your long life, Uncle Aaron?" the reporter asked the colored centenarian.
 "Becoz I was bawn a long time back, Ah guess," said Aaron reflectively.

Per Cent Minus

Father was making the usual inquiry about his son's day's work at school.
 "I got all my sums wrong but one," the youngster confessed ruefully.
 "And that one was the easiest I suppose," commented his father.
 "Oh, no, Dad; it was the hardest; so hard that I didn't do it."

The Retort Irascible

Mike (buried in cave-in): "Blazes, man, be careful how you handle that shovel. You hit my leg twice."
 Pat: "Say, if you can do this any better, come up here and dig yourself out."

Fancy Work

"Whah you-all goin' in such a rage, man?"
 "Ah's a' goin' to git that doctah what sewed up my appendixes with white thread."

The Man With the Iron Face

The front end of the rack struck the young man in the face and badly damaged the front end of the truck.—*Idaho paper.*

Resignation

Customer—"Have you the same razor you used on me yesterday?"
 Barber—"Yes, sir, the same identical one."
 Customer: "Then give me gas."

No Change of Menu

The National History Museum, South Kensington, has purchased 1,180 moths. I hear that a large quantity of flannel trousers has been obtained to insure that the insects will not suffer from a change of their usual winter diet.

Wanted His Chart

Harold: "When the postman comes I'm going to beat you within an inch of your life!"
 Jack: "Why wait for the postman?"
 Harold: "I'm taking a boxing course by correspondence."

A Foreign Language

Purchaser: "What is the charge for this battery?"
 Garageman: "One and one-half volts."
 Purchaser: "Well, how much is that in American money?"

A Quick Worker

"Has the son you sent away to college got his degree yet?"
 "I should say so. Why he wrote last week that the faculty had called him in and given him the third degree. That boy is ambitious!"

Guilty



Counsel: "Now, sir, tell me, are you well acquainted with the prisoner?"
 Witness: "I've known him for twenty years."

Counsel: "Have you ever known him to be a disturber of the public peace?"
 Witness: "Well—er—he used to belong to a band."

Rushing the Season

Traveler: "I want to buy a tooth brush."
 Storekeeper: "Sorry, brother, but our line of summer novelties ain't in yet."

Sizes Himself Up

It often seems that the fellow with an inferiority complex simply has a good sense of values.

An Orthodox Beginning

She: "I hear you are a great artist."
 He: "I hope to be. I've only just started."
 She: "What are you doing?"
 He: "Well, I'm living in a studio and growing whiskers."



Young Mr. Sparrow (as the worm grows longer): "Be patient, children. Your daddy doesn't know yet as to whether this is just going to be a plain little lunch or a full course dinner!"

Obliging

"You seem to have had a serious accident."
 "Yes," said the bandaged person. "I tried to climb a tree in my motor car."
 "What did you do that for?"
 "Just to oblige a lady who was driving another car. She wanted to use the road."

What!

"The Universal Watch Word—Tick!"

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Cover drawing by Anton Otto Fischer.

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