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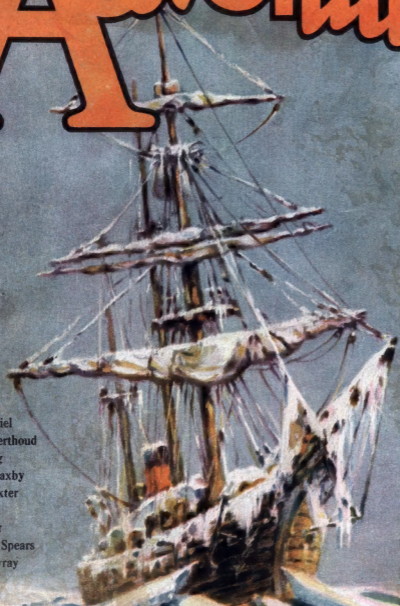
10th

1922

25c

Adventure

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Adventure

May 10th
1922
Vol. XXXIV
No. 4.

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Published Three Times a Month by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

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C. H. HOLMES, Secretary and Treasurer

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The editor assumes no risk for manuscripts and illustrations submitted to this magazine, but he will use all due care while they are in his hands.

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*Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.

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RED SAUNDERS, captain of the trading-schooner *Black Pearl*, is known from Table Mountain to Hakodate. He goes his own way and makes a joke of petty officialdom. His latest venture, in New Guinea, leaves a dead man unaccounted for at Finschaven and takes him among the fiercest cannibals in the world. "A SHOT AT A VENTURE," a novel in three parts, by Captain Dingle, starting in the next issue.

MID-WINTER of a year when a kingdom was torn by the small wars of the barons, and the weak king struggled to retain the crown he had stolen from the rightful claimant. Into the scene comes *Pierre Faidit*, most famed swordsman of France, bearing secret despatches upon whose delivery depends the future of a dynasty. "FOR THE CROWN," a complete novelette by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, in the next issue.

CCOUNTERFEITERS play a bold game in Sun Dog County. Stage robberies, murder and shooting affrays befog the real issue and make the task of Sheriff "Brick" Davidson a hard one. "TANGLED TRAILS" is a complete novelette by W. C. Tuttle in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

Don't forget the new dates of issue for *Adventure*—the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month

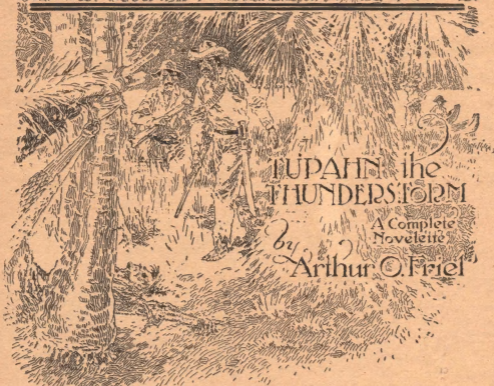
Adventure

May 10th

1922

VOL. XXIV

NO. 4



TUPAHN the THUNDERSTORM

A Complete
Novellette

By
Arthur O. Friel

Author of "The Jararaca," "Black Hawk," etc.

FOUR of us went.
Two of us came back.
And this, *senhores*, is the tale
of all four of us, but particularly
of the pair who did not return.

I—Lourenço Moraes—and my partner,
Pedro Andrada, were rovers of the jungle
of the Javary, western frontier of Brazil:
a couple of *seringueiros* in the employ of
Colonel Nunes, owner of the greatest rubber
estate along the border, who often called us

"tramps" and "scamps," but who relied on
us to do dangerous scouting for him. It
was while we ranged the bush in his service
that we met the two North Americans.

The first of these was Senhor Thomas
Gordon Mack, an explorer whom we found
a captive of brutal snake-men and saved
from a hideous death. The second was Sen-
horita Marion Marshall, whom Senhor Tom
himself rescued from the merciless claws of
Black Hawk, a negro-Indian who sought

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to make himself ruler of all the country between the rivers Javary and Jurua.

They were North Americans both, as I have said. Yet, though they came from the same country and each fell into the power of brutes, neither knew of the other's existence until we bushmen brought them together. And between the night when we snatched Senhor Tom from the fangs of snakes and the afternoon when he killed Black Hawk before his whole Indian army, there passed many days of wilderness travel.

Now, with the Hawk dead behind us and his gang of Tucuna Indians broken up and hurrying to their jungle homes, we four swung our canoes northward along a creek leading toward the Amazon town of Viciado, where the *senhorita* had been captured and her uncle murdered and robbed by renegades. She alone of our party had ever traveled that creek before, for we three had come to the stronghold of Black Hawk from the west and south; and even she knew next to nothing about it, for on her previous journey she had been a bound captive, dreading death or worse, and not gifted with the jungle-trained mind which sees and remembers without effort. But she did know that her captors had paddled only three days with her.

To us, accustomed to traveling long distances by canoe, a journey of less than half a week seemed mere play, and we pulled our dugouts along carelessly, expecting no danger nor even any trouble. Which shows, *senhores*, what fools men can be. The fact that you have just beaten Death does not mean that he is not waiting for you in another shape at the next turn of the river.

As we went, the eyes of three of us rested often on the fourth. And the fourth, as you may guess, was the *senhorita*. We admired her, as men long used to seeing only Indian women are compelled to admire a handsome white girl; but more than her beauty we approved her spirit. For she was not lolling lazily in Senhor Tom's boat and taking advantage of the fact that she was a young woman recently rescued from peril. Dressed in the explorer's spare khaki, with her black hair snugly pinned up by thorns and shirt-sleeves rolled high, she was swinging her paddle as regularly as any of us.

As she worked she kept her eyes straight ahead in a constant watch for snags. So Pedro and I had plenty of chance to watch

her and also to squint now and then at Senhor Tom, who seldom took his gaze off her swaying shoulders.

We saw that her stroke was smooth and clean, but that she was working too hard. We saw also that Senhor Tom's blond-bearded jaw was clamped tight and that he was pulling hard in an attempt to ease the toil for her. The result was that both were laboring too much and their craft was surging along at top speed. There was no sense in this, and we decided to make them ease up.

So, after Pedro had given me a wink and a side-move of the head toward their dugout, he suddenly drew in his paddle, snatched up his rifle, peered ahead, and hissed:

"Slow! Hold!"

At once they bore back on their blades. The water swashed loudly, then stilled as their boat lost headway. Senhor Tom deftly slipped his blade into the boat and rose, gun in hand. The girl leaned forward, her eyes roving along the bushy banks to see what caused our alertness.

Our canoe slid past theirs, and I kept on paddling slowly, as if we really had spied something alarming. Understanding Pedro's ruse, I expected him to grunt in a relieved way and resume paddling at an easy rate, keeping the other craft behind us. But he did not.

As we floated around a steep-banked bend he made a soft noise. I looked more sharply at the left shore, toward which his face was turned. Then I saw, only a few feet from us and lying beside a narrow cleft in the bank, a rusty rifle.

If he had not been playing that game and scanning the shore so closely we should have passed the gun without seeing it, for it was partly hidden among small stalks of driftwood. Now I turned the canoe aside and we grounded beside it. For a moment we searched the earth around us before touching the weapon. Footprints, blurred by rains, led up to the top of the incline. Whoever had been there had been gone for some time—or was still up above.

No canoe lay in the crack, and the man who owned that firearm must have gone his way. But no man is likely to abandon his rifle without a very good reason, especially in our jungle, where a gun is life itself. So, leaving the weapon where it lay, Pedro and I dug our toes into the clay and mounted

to the top of the slope, carrying our guns ready.

Less than a rod from the edge we saw a flimsy shelter of poles and palm-leaves. In it hung an empty hammock. On the ground lay what was left of the man who had slept there.

His bones were scattered about, his shirt and breeches now were only torn rags, and we saw nothing at all to show who he was. But we quickly saw why he was there. In the skull gaped a big bullet-hole.

For a few minutes we stood looking at it and at the bush round about. Then Pedro turned the skull over with his gun-muzzle.

"*Por Deus!*" he muttered. "This is a sweet thing to find lying on the river-bank, Lourenço. It is murder."

I nodded, for I too saw that the man had been shot while asleep. Only the one hole was in the skull, and it was high on the back of the crown. The bullet had been fired while he lay at rest, ranging downward and probably coming out through his throat.

"Shot in the night by a companion who then fled in their canoe," Pedro added. "The murderer dropped that rifle down below in his hurry to get away, and either forgot it or could not find it in the darkness. The gun may belong either to the killer or to this man. Let us look at it. Perhaps it may tell us a tale. There is nothing else here that will."

But just as we turned back toward the water I saw a brownish bit of wood among the rags. Stooping, I grasped it and picked it up. It was the haft of a sheath-knife.

"Here is something," I said. "A rusty blade of about seven inches, with four nicks on the back which look as if made by a file. And the wood has been checkered to give a firm grip in a hot hand. It looks like the weapon of a knife-fighter."

"And so it is," my partner agreed after studying it and feeling its weight and balance. "Those four nicks must mean four human lives. That is why this man was killed by stealth, no doubt—his killer dared not fight him. Now we have only to learn who carried this knife and who traveled with him."

"A very simple matter in this vast bush, of course," I jeered.

Yet it was much more simple than either of us expected. The answer to our problem came before we again picked up our paddles.

Down below Senhor Tom had stepped

ashore and pulled the abandoned rifle out of the driftwood, and now he and the *Senhorita* were looking at it. As we slid down to them he turned to us, his blue eyes gleaming.

"Say, fellows, this is— Hullo! What's that you've got? Find something upstairs?"

"A hammock and this knife," I answered, passing the ugly blade to him. The girl leaned forward eagerly and looked.

"Oh, now I'm absolutely sure of it!" she cried. "That was the knife of the tall man!"

"What tall man?" Pedro demanded.

"One of the two who carried me to the camp of the Hawk! He was a yellow-faced animal with a thick mouth and the eyes of a snake, and he was noisy and quarrelsome. He drew this knife more than a dozen times on the journey, threatening the other man with it, and once he pointed to these dents on the back of it. I saw this handle sticking out from his waistband all the time for three days, and I shall never forget it.

"The other man was shorter and very brown—an Indian, or nearly so—and not so noisy; but I watched his eyes once after the tall one threatened him, and they made me shiver. They looked positively poisonous. He—"

She stopped suddenly, looking from one to the other of us and up at the top of the bank. She paled a little.

"Are they—are they dead?" she asked.

"The tall one is very dead," Pedro told her. "The other is gone. But what about the rifle?"

Senhor Tom answered:

"Miss Marshall was saying she thought this gun belonged to one of those skunks, though she wasn't sure. The butt is dented. See? Looks like old tooth-marks. Some animal bit it some time, perhaps. Nothing else to distinguish it from any other repeater. Forty-four caliber, as usual, and rotten dirty inside and out."

He dropped the weapon and climbed the bank. While he was gone we examined the gun and found it just as he had said. Between rust and foulness, it was worthless. I pitched it back among the muddy sticks and rubbed the rust from my hands on to my jungle-stained breeches. And then Senhor Tom came slipping down, grinning.

"Old Lady Nemesis sure tapped that mutt hard when she called on him," he said. "Shoved her finger clear through his head—"

beg pardon, Miss Marshall. Still, I don't suppose it shocks you to know that one of your uncle's murderers got what was coming to him. Retribution, and all that."

The girl did not answer his words or his smile. Her deep eyes, so darkly blue that they seemed almost black, rested steadily on his bronzed face for a time. Then she glanced away down the creek and held her paddle as if anxious to go.

The blond man's grin faded. He rubbed his jaw, scowled, shrugged and took his place in his dugout. We boarded our own craft and shoved off ahead of them. And as we swung on down the creek I wondered what had displeased the girl.

But I did not wonder long, for women and their moods have never troubled me much. Soon my thoughts were all on the thing that had taken place on the shore behind us. I could see the night fire smoldering red in the gloom; the two men lying in their hammocks; the slow, stealthy raising of the short man's head, and his motionless watch of the tall one's breathing; the silent swing of a gun, the sudden flash of the shot; and then the hurried plundering of the body and the hasty departure down the black stream.

It was nothing to me that the yellow-faced brute had been murdered in his sleep. A man who would carry a white girl, or any other girl, to such a fate as awaited her in the camp of Black Hawk deserved a hundred deaths. It was nothing to me that the short man, murderer of his comrade, was still alive. But it was something to all three of us men that that short man was not yet punished for his share in abducting the *senhorita*.

There were others besides him, too, who had had a hand in that outrage—men of Viciado, one of the worst towns on the great river, toward which we now were journeying. And as I thought, I spoke my thought.

"We shall find him in Viciado, no doubt. Within the week we can teach him and his fellows what it means to treat white women brutally."

Pedro, up in the bow, grunted agreement. And while we stroked ahead at the slow pace we had chosen, we pictured with grim satisfaction what we should do three days hence.

What fools we were!

We did not know what awaited us down the stream.

II



NOON found us ashore, joking as we ate, but a little troubled in mind.

We were squatting on a shady point, and at each side of us the water swerved away in a different direction. The creek had split.

Part of it veered off to the northeast, the rest to the northwest; and there was nothing to indicate which of the two new creeks we ought to follow. As the water was low, one of them ought to be dried up; but both looked to be of about the same depth and width. And the girl, when asked whether she remembered the joining of the streams here, did not.

"Makes no difference anyhow," argued Senhor Tom. "Both of them are bound to flow into the Amazon, and that's where we're heading for."

"True," I said. "We head for the Amazon, but we also seek a certain place on the Amazon. One of these streams will take us there quickly. The other may wind about for many miles before reaching the great river, and then bring us out far from where we want to go. And——"

There I stopped, not wishing to mention before the girl that we had not much food. But my comrades understood.

"Quite so," the blond man assented. "Well, we'll have to trust to luck. Unless you fellows have an idea on the subject I'll flip a coin before we start. Meanwhile let's smoke and—Miss Marshall, show me your hands!"

Surprized by the sudden command, she held them out, palms down. He turned them over. Swiftly she tried to snatch them away. But he held them firmly a minute before letting go.

"Thought so," he nodded. "Blistered. Now I'll have to do all the paddling."

"Indeed you will not," she retorted. "A little blister is nothing——"

"No, a little blister is nothing," he cut in. "But seven big blisters are something. You have four on your right palm and three on your left. All caused by trying to be smart and outpaddle us. You should know better."

Her chin rose a little, but after an instant's search of his eyes she smiled.

"I'm sorry," she said simply. "I thought I was helping, and now I have only made myself a hindrance. But these canoes

are heavier than those at home, and—”

“And you haven’t paddled for a long time and your hands are out of training,” Senhor Tom nodded. “You’re forgiven. And you’re a good sport to try to hold up your end, I’ll say—and a good paddler besides. Where did you learn to push a canoe?”

“Oh, I spent several Summers in girls’ camps when I was in school. And I have a couple of big brothers who are quite active outdoor men: one played end on the Princeton football team and sprinted for the track team, and the other stroked the Yale crew in his senior year. We were always doing stunts when we were youngsters—I was a perfect tomboy myself in those days.”

“Ah, that explains a lot,” the blond man declared. “If all girls had a couple of regular fellows for brothers maybe they’d be more human. As it is, most of ‘em are bum sports—either touch-me-nots or kiss-me-quicks, and ready to throw a fit if they have to do any real work.”

She smiled again, but it was a mischievous smile this time.

“And that, perhaps, is why you bury yourself in the jungle?”

“Huh? Me? ‘Stricken to the heart, he sought the sighing solitudes to forget?’ Not Tom Mack, my lady. I’m here because I don’t like starched collars and subways and fat-headed office tyrants and the rest of the stuff the city slaves have to stand for. That’s all they are—slaves! Slaves to their bosses—slaves to business—slaves to pork-barrel politicians—slaves to selfish wives—bah! Ninety-nine per cent. of the men up home make me sick, and as for the women—”

“Grrr! Woof-woof!” she mocked. “Pedro and Lourenço, does he bite? His eyes are growing red, and I’m terribly scared.”

“Have no fear, *senhorita*,” my handsome partner laughed. “We are watching him, and when he begins to froth we shall knock him in the head.”

“And you’ll have some job doing it, my merry men,” Senhor Tom grinned. “Beg pardon for starting an oration, Miss Marshall. But I assure you I’m no lovesick calf driven from home by a hopeless passion—or by anything else, for that matter. Old Patrick Henry said it. ‘Give me liberty or give me death.’ There’s my sentiments, and the only sentiments I’ve got. Let’s go.”

He rose, looked at both of those puzzling

streams, drew a coin from his pocket, and glanced inquiringly at us. We nodded.

“Heads to the right, tails to the left,” he said, and flipped the silver disc. I caught it.

“We go to the right,” I told him, handing back the coin. “That is where chance directs us.”

“Right’s right,” he answered. His eyes went again to the girl, who was watching him with an amused expression. “Now, Miss Marshall, we’ll just open those blisters of yours and then bandage your hands. After that you’ll ride at leisure for the rest of the day.”

“But I’m going to paddle,” she protested.


“And ruin your hands completely. No, you’ll rest them until tomorrow—or later.”

Her chin rose again. It was very clear that she had no intention of riding in idleness. But nothing more was said until the hands were bandaged. Then, after a keen look into her stubborn face, Senhor Tom spoke again in a cool but determined tone.

“With all due respect, Miss Marshall, I must remind you that I am the captain of my own canoe. The captain of any craft is the supreme authority on questions of the handling of that craft. I hereby order Tom Mack to paddle this canoe unaided until sundown or thereabouts. That is final.”

His eyes twinkled a little as he spoke, but his jaw was firm. They stood for a minute looking steadily at each other. Then she smiled again.

“Aye, aye, sir,” she answered. And she stepped into her place at the bow and settled herself comfortably—with her back to him. We grinned at him, got into our own dugout, and shoved off along the right-hand stream.

 ALL through the afternoon he swung steadily down that winding creek. And all the time there grew on me a feeling that we went wrong.

Why I felt so I can not say. It was not because the stream seemed to bear more and more to the northeast—we had no way of knowing just where Viciado lay, for we were passing through an unmapped region and might be heading directly toward the town. There was no reason at all for my misgiving, except this: Somehow, when a man has roved much in the wilderness, he comes to feel that certain ways are the best to travel, even if he can not explain why. Perhaps it is the sense of direction which the

birds and the beasts have, which draws them without fail to their nests or dens after long heedless journeys after food. At any rate, that afternoon something seemed to keep telling me that we were going astray.

Pedro too felt the warning. Once he looked back at me and shook his head. But we kept on; for neither of us, once started on a path on water or land, liked to return over it and begin anew. The pair behind us said nothing whatever to us or to each other. And so we put the slow miles behind us until the shadows grew long.

Then, on the right shore, we found a little cove, at the end of which rose a slope topped by big trees. The slanting sun-rays, shooting in among the tall trunks, showed that no undergrowth was there to hinder us and to harbor *carrapatos* or other insect pests, and that a clear little brook trickled into the creek along a groove in the clay. We turned into the cove, climbed the slope, and made camp.

"Now that your order has been obeyed, captain," the girl smiled, "is your fragile passenger permitted to break the monotony by cooking the evening meal? Or must she still be little Miss Muffet and sit uselessly on a tuffet?"

"Why, since you've recovered the power of speech, you may cook if you like," Senhor Tom granted. "You've been dumb ever since noon."

"That was because you enforced ship's rules, captain. I believe one of the rules is that passengers mustn't talk to the steersman. So, not wanting to be thrown to the sharks, I had to hold my tongue."

"Tough, very," he laughed. "Hereafter you may talk as much as you like—unless you blister your tongue too. But speaking of cooking—"

He glanced at us.

"We shall try to find something to cook," Pedro responded. "Why eat our dried rations if we can have fresh meat? Wait a while, *senhorita*."

And we took our guns and slipped away into the forest.

Soon, somewhere off to the left, we heard low grunting sounds. Stealthily we crept that way, slipping around the big tree-butts, avoiding dry fallen limbs and other forest litter, making hardly a sound with our bare feet. The grunting became plainer. Then, peering over the edge of a root-but-tress, we saw near us a couple of peccaries.

Our guns roared almost together. The pigs dropped. One lay still. The other kicked several times and squealed shrilly. Then it became motionless.

Before the second animal was quiet we had reached the pair, ready to shoot again if another bullet was needed. As the wild pig stopped screaming we lowered our rifles, drew our machetes, and cut out the scent-pouches from their loins in order to keep the meat sweet. As we sheathed the long knives again we started and whirled.

A rush of feet sounded near by. More grunts and squeals—many more—blended into a chorus of rage. Between the trees came a whole herd of peccaries, charging to aid their stricken mates. In the half-light their little eyes seemed to glow green with fury.

We fired one shot each and then jumped for safety. We knew peccaries too well to attempt to fight off a big band of them. Beside us loomed a tree corded thickly with big vines, and up those vines we went like a couple of treed jaguars. And we went none too soon.

Under us the maddened beasts jammed into a heaving mass, squealing and clashing their keen little tusks and watching us in hate. Some even stood up on their hind legs against the trunk, their teeth grinning at us like the jaws of death. And jaws of death they would have been if either of us had slipped or lost his hold on the treacherous vines. But we did not climb far and thus increase the risk of falling. We clung quietly a few feet above their heads and waited for them to go.

For some time we hung there, and still they stayed. They quieted somewhat, but those wicked eyes of theirs remained fixed on us. Our hands and toes, hooked over our shaky support, grew tired. I began to think of tales I had heard of peccaries waiting for days for men to fall from trees into their power. I never had seen such a thing myself, but—we certainly could not hold on there all night, and the pigs certainly were waiting. We commenced studying our surroundings.

"There is our chance," Pedro said, moving his head upward. Then I saw that against our tree-trunk leaned a smaller one which at some time had fallen part of the way to the ground but had become lodged against a big bole above us. It did not look like a safe perch—indeed, it was likely to

crash the rest of the way groundward if we put our combined weight on it—but we must go somewhere soon, and we had nowhere else to go. So, very carefully, we climbed toward it.

When we reached it our hands were so tired that we had hard work in getting up and on it. And when we were on it we found it so trembly that we dared not try to crawl down its long slant to the ground. It needed only a little more quivering to make it slip off the bole and smash with us among the peccaries, who would surely finish us if the fall did not. But we could stretch ourselves along its leaning trunk and rest our exhausted muscles, and we did so. Meanwhile we looked down once more at the pigs.

They were moving about in a disappointed, ugly fashion, grunting but no longer squealing. Stretched along the tree as we were, our bodies were hidden from them, and probably their eyes were not good enough to make out our heads. So, as we climbed up and disappeared, there was no good reason for them to remain longer. Resting and keeping quiet, we waited again for them to depart.

Then, back at our camp, sounded a single shot.

We listened, but heard no more firing. Nor did we hear any other sound but the noises of the beasts under us.

"Senhor Tom has beaten us in getting meat," Pedro grumbled. "Probably a monkey came along. Curse these pigs! Will they ever go?"

They did not go at once, but after a time some of them wandered off. Others followed. Soon all but a few had faded away among the tall roots. Then the last ones, seeming suddenly afraid to be left behind, broke into a run and were gone. Below us nothing remained but our guns, now trampled and foul, and the two dead.

We waited a few minutes longer to make sure they were well away. Then, with great care, I let myself over the trunk and grasped the twining vines by which we had come up. Pedro followed, not quite so carefully. He had just placed his toes and one hand on the vines when he slipped.

I caught him with one hand and shoved him back against the trunk. For an instant it seemed that my own hold would break and we both would go down. But he caught his balance again and clung to the

vines with feet and hands like a monkey. While we were struggling we heard a grinding squeak, a rushing sound, a crash, and a heavy thump. Now we glanced downward. Below us lay the tree on which we had just rested.

"A close shave, comrade," said Pedro. "It fell just as I got off. That was why I slipped."

Down the trunk we worked our way until we stood safe on solid earth. There we wiped the sweat from our faces, breathed deep, picked up our rifles, shouldered a pig apiece, and turned toward the creek.



THEN came night.

Darkness swiftly blotted out all but the nearest trunks. Thankful that we had only a short distance to go, we felt our way toward camp. Before long we began to look for the glint of the evening fire among the trees and to sniff for the smell of wood-smoke. But we saw no light, smelt nothing but the damp forest, heard no voices among the night sounds of the wilderness.

We began to hurry. We felt sure that we were going in the right direction, sure that the blurring dark had not confused us, sure that we were almost at the camp. And we remembered that shot.

All at once we stopped. Two strides from us loomed the little *tambo* we had thrown up for our night's shelter. But no fire burned before it. Nothing moved, nothing spoke.

"Senhor Tom!" I called softly.

No answer came.

"*Senhorita!*" cried Pedro.

No reply.

We dropped our game and lighted matches. The *tambo* was empty of life.

With more matches glimmering, we moved across the small open space. We walked straight into the kindlings of a fire, carefully laid but unlighted. In a moment we had them ablaze.

As the light grew we circled about, fear growing in our hearts. What had happened to our North American comrades? Surely they had not deserted us.


Then Pedro made a harsh sound and dropped on his knees beside a high-rooted tree. Another match flared. As I stooped beside him we looked down at Senhor Tom.

Face down he lay, silent and still. His

hat was off, and his blond hair was now red—deep, wet red.

He had been shot in the head.

III

 WE LIFTED him and bore him to the fire.

For the moment we forgot the girl and everything else except this stout-hearted, two-handed comrade of ours. We had seen him a prisoner, but defiant, in the power of savage enemies. We had watched him walk alone into the stronghold of another brutal foe and shoot that foe dead. We had traveled many a weary mile with him, endured all sorts of discomfort and danger with him, and found him always ready to laugh in the face of death and always able to defeat it. And now he hung limp in our grip, helpless, senseless, shot down by some sneaking coward.

Softly we laid him down on the ground and swiftly we examined him. Then the oaths that had frozen in our throats came tumbling out in the warmth of sudden hope. His heart still beat.

"Water!" I demanded.

Pedro seized a blazing stick from the fire and disappeared over the edge of the bank. Both of us had forgotten the little brook near by. While I waited I peered closely at the senseless man's wound, then felt it with my fingers. My hope mounted. The bullet had not gone through the skull.

It seemed that Pedro was gone a long time before he reappeared with the water. And then he brought it, not in a gourd from the canoes, but in his hat.

"Lourenço!" he breathed hoarsely. "The canoes are gone!"

"Gone?"

"Gone. Both gone. And—" he glanced swiftly around once more—"so is the *senhorita*."

I sprang up. For a moment the only thought in my mind was that the girl had done the shooting and fled. Then, ashamed of myself, I knelt again beside our stricken comrade and commenced working to bring him back to life.

Pedro made two more trips to the water before Senhor Tom's eyes opened. When they did open, they rested on me with a blank stare.

"God be praised!" I cried. "You are

alive again, *senhor*. Lie still a little while. You have a bad head."

He made no answer. His eyelids flickered, he blinked a few times, and then his eyes stayed open. Looking down into them, I began to feel chilly. Something was wrong; something was missing in that blue stare.

Slowly I moved my head back, watching him all the time. His eyes did not turn to follow me. I passed a hand above them. He did not blink. Then I jabbed my fingers at them as if about to gouge him. Even then he gave no sign that he saw.

"*Vive Deus!*" Pedro swore softly. We stared at each other, as shocked as we had been by the discovery of the wounded man. Senhor Tom was blind.

If we had doubted it we should have had proof the next moment. His lips moved.

"What's up?" he asked hoarsely. "What ails the fire? It gives no light."

We looked at him pityingly. The firelight was bright on his face. He could feel its heat, smell its smoke, but he could not see it.

"We have concealed it with mud," I lied. "It is almost out, too, and the night is black. What has happened to you?"

He wet his lips before answering. His face knotted as if from pain and thought combined.

"Don't know," he said. "Something slammed me over the head, I guess. Seems as if I heard a shot, but can't be sure. I was getting wood—dropped a stick—bent to pick it up—head seemed to explode. Give me some water."

He gulped down a long drink from the hat. When he spoke again his voice was stronger.

"Why the — don't you fellows light a match or something? You must be owl-eyed. What's up, I asked you? Is Miss Marshall all right?"

"Not so loud, comrade!" Pedro cautioned him. "She is asleep. You have been knocked out for a long time."

"Oh, that's it."

Before we could stop him, he sat up. His face twisted and turned white.

"Gee, I'm sick!" he whispered, as we steadied him. "Head aches horribly."

"I told you to lie still," I scolded. "Now keep quiet and let us lift you."

With that I motioned toward the *tambo*, and Pedro nodded. We raised him and

carried him to his hammock. There I cut off my shirt-sleeves and bandaged the wound with one of them, after which I soaked the other in the last of our water and laid it on his forehead as a cooling pad to ease the ache.

"Now," I said, "keep quiet and go to sleep. You are feverish, but sleep will do you much good. We are going away for a little while. Do not wake the *senhorita*."

He was too sick from pain to say anything, and we left him there. Each of us carrying a fresh torch from the fire, we went down the bank to the place where our canoes had lain.

It was true—they were gone. Only the blank black water lay before us. In the clay bank were the marks of their bows, and other marks too: the prints of bare feet, and traces of something having been dragged down from above.

Saying nothing, we followed those traces back upward. We searched the ground, which was quite soft, and near the fire we found signs of a struggle. Over by the tree where Senhor Tom had lain we also found his short ax and the armful of wood which he had dropped when struck down by the bullet. And that was all.

We had moved very quietly, and Senhor Tom had not heard us prowling about. Now we went over to the little brook, let ourselves down and drank deep of its cool water, made cigarets, and talked low.

"The thing is clear, so far as it goes," said Pedro. "Some man came here while we were away, shot Senhor Tom without warning, overpowered the *senhorita*, and went away with both our canoes and all our supplies. He caught them by surprise, or he never would have lived to leave here—Senhor Tom is lightning and death with that revolver of his, and the girl is no weakling; she would have seized Senhor Tom's rifle there in the *tambo*, and used it, if she had had time to reach it. As it was, she fought him with her bare hands until he struck her down or choked her senseless. Then he got away as fast as possible, knowing we were near. If only those devil-pigs had not treed us—"

He growled and stopped talking. Thinking of the blind man behind us and the girl somewhere out in the dark in the power of a murderous brute, I echoed the growl. We smoked fiercely until the butts burned our fingers.

"And now we have only our clothes, our guns, a few cartridges—and a blind man," I said. "No boats, no food but two pigs that will quickly spoil—"

"And plenty of money, which is worth nothing."

I had forgotten the money. It was true, we had plenty; for in the camp of the dead Black Hawk we had found much money wrung from the people of Viciado and from river-traders and plundered from dead men; and this we had divided among us as spoils of war. It was true also that it now was useless to us. But it gave me an idea.


"I wonder if the vile brute who did this was one of the Hawk's crew," I suggested. "Some mongrel who knew we must have found money and has been following us to steal it and the girl."

"No, I think not. Senhor Tom was not robbed—at least his guns were not taken, and a man stopping to loot his body would also take his revolver. Either the assassin was after the girl, or he was desperately in need of a boat and food. If it was the canoes he wanted, he took the girl because he saw his chance to get her too. We may learn when daylight comes. Until then we can do nothing. Come. Let us eat."

So, though our appetites were gone, we went back to the fire and cooked peccary meat. Senhor Tom lay quiet, and we did not disturb him. After forcing down all the meat we could hold—for we did not know when we could eat again after leaving here—we squatted looking soberly at the dim hammock where our comrade lay in darkness. Finally Pedro, muttering another curse on the sneaking cur who had shot from ambush, rose and got the small ax.

With this, working as quietly as possible, we cut away sections of the thin but tough root-buttresses of a tall *matamata*-tree near the fire, and with our machetes we fashioned rough paddles. Neither of us felt like sleeping. To go stumbling through the unknown bush, dragging our companion after us, was not to be thought of. We must go by the creek.

When the paddles were made, however, we could do no more until day. We were tired, too, and our eyes burned in our heads from strain and smoke. So we crept into our hammocks. Sleep came to me after a time, and I knew nothing more until the waking birds of the forest roused me by their screams at dawn.

 PEDRO and I arose and stood silent beside Senhor Tom, dreading to tell him the truth. But we found that we need not tell him. His eyes were open, and as he listened to the noises and saw only blackness his face became like that of a dead man. He put a hand to his eyes, moved his head, and slowly let the hand fall.

"Pedro! Lourenço!" he gasped.

"We are here, comrade," Pedro said gently.

The hand came groping out, seeking us. I took it.

"What time is it?"

"Daybreak," I told him.

His jaw set. His hand gripped mine as if he were falling over the edge of a gulf. Then slowly his face smoothed out, though his teeth stayed clenched.

"So—I am blind," he muttered.

"It will pass away," Pedro tried to comfort him. "You were shot in the head, *senhor*. Your eyes were not touched. It may be a few days before you can—"

"Tell me the truth!" he cut in, his voice turning hard. "Tell me all of it! I heard you working and whispering in the night. You lied to me—I know it. Now come clean!"

We told him all.

"Now we start to find that snake who bit you from behind," I finished. "We shall make a small raft, pointed at the ends. Paddles are ready, and we shall cut poles also. First we shall look for traces that may show—"

"All right, get going!" he snapped, sitting up. "Good God! Marion's got to be found quick! Jump out of here!"

Black though his world was, he had forgotten himself already. He staggered up out of his hammock, his right fist on his revolver-butt.

"Jump!" he roared. "Find her—and put me in front of the man! — him, I'll kill him if I'm blind, deaf, dumb and paralyzed! What are you standing around here for? Move!"

"Sit down, comrade," Pedro soothed. "We waste no time. We go now."

And he pressed the blank-eyed man back into his hammock. When he sat safely we obeyed his command and jumped to our work.

As the spot where our camp stood had no small trees and we could not spend time

cutting down thick-bodied trunks, we went out along one shore of the cove to find suitable material for our raft. Having found it, we went on to the point where cove and creek met. We hardly dared hope to find any sign of the vanished canoes, but we did not neglect to look. As we had expected, the stream was bare. But as I turned back Pedro caught my arm.

"Look!" he exclaimed. "There in the mud!"

I looked, and gave thanks to *Deus Padre*. At the water's edge was a blunt dent in the wet clay, and beside it were a few footmarks. A canoe had bumped and stuck there, and a man had jumped ashore to shove it off. We knew the man had been in such haste to leave the cove that he had run too close to shore in making his turn, and one of the boats—probably the one towing behind—had struck. And by that sign we knew which way he had gone—down-stream.

This cheered us, for we had worried in the night because we could not tell where to turn when we should start in pursuit. Now we hurried back to the trees we had selected and attacked them with ax and machete. Swiftly we built, from logs and bush-ropes, a raft that would hold all three of us. When it was done we stood a minute breathing and mopping our faces.

It was then that we smelt an old camp. In the damp air hung the odor of dead ashes and decaying flesh. We turned and cut our way a short distance from the water, sniffing the air as we went. Soon we found what we hunted.

A flimsy palm-leaf shelter at the base of a fallen tree, charred embers of secret fires, bones of small animals and birds, a blood-stained club, and the half-eaten body of a sloth—that was all. It was the camp of a man without a canoe and with few cartridges, forced to exist on what little he could kill by stealth. He had seen or heard us arrive, spied on our camp while we two were away, taken a desperate chance and succeeded.

Pedro, searching the dirt floor, picked up an old cartridge-shell. It was of the same caliber as our own. We looked at each other and nodded. The thief now had plenty of ammunition, for we had left most of our bullets in the stolen canoes.

Wasting no more time in the place, we went back to our raft, and with poles in

hand we shoved it to the spot where our canoes had floated. Up above, we found Senhor Tom fumbling around and trying to make a fire.

As we built the fire for him we told him what we had found. His teeth gleamed in a deadly grin.


"Cut his trail, eh? A measly bush-bum, playing a lone hand. Thinks I'm dead and you boys are left flat with no boat. He's got another think coming. He couldn't get far in the dark last night, and that extra canoe he's towing will hold him back some. We'll be right on top of him soon, with any luck. And then may the — have mercy on him—we won't!"

"You have said it, *amigo*," Pedro rumbled. "We have no mercy for snakes. Come. This meat is roasted enough to eat, and we can chew it as we travel."

"Right! Let's go!"

Down the bank we guided him to the raft. Then we rushed our hammocks and meat and weapons from the camp to the logs and got aboard. A minute later we two were poling our sluggish craft out into the creek. Between us, silent and sightless, Senhor Tom sat grimly fingering his gun.

IV

 STANDING and shoving with the poles, kneeling and plying our paddles, we drove the raft over shallows and depths. The slow current helped us, and luckily we met no bends too sharp to let our clumsy craft pass. There were turns in plenty, but all were wide enough to allow us to swing around them. So, considering the awkwardness of the thing we rode on, we made fair speed along that winding waterway.

We ate as we worked, chewing mouthfuls of meat and washing it down with handfuls of water dipped from the creek. And all the time we kept watch for any trace of a landing by the man we followed. But the bushy, sloping banks slid past with no sign that any one had ever set foot on them.

After we had settled down to our working and watching I began to do some thinking. I tried to put myself in the other man's place and to judge what he would do.

If I had shot a man and dragged a girl from a camp, knowing that two other men with guns were near, I should do as he had done with the canoes—take both of them,

so that the other men could not follow. Having gotten away, I should go as fast and as far as possible in the first few hours. Darkness would not stop me for the night; I should stay in my boat even if I could only drift with the current, knowing that the drift would carry me several miles before dawn. When day came I should keep paddling until I was too tired and hungry to travel farther without rest and food. Then I should go ashore at some inlet where I could hide my boat and leave no sign on the shore.

But within the first mile or two, while I was doing my best to make speed, I should learn that the second canoe dragging behind was slowing me up. Since it was worse than useless, I should rid myself of it as soon as possible. The natural way to do this would be to hide it in some side stream or cove. And if the two men behind me were on the right bank, I should conceal that dugout on the left shore, where it could not be found if they followed down the edge of the stream.

Having figured this all out, I spoke of it to my companions. Senhor Tom, who had not spoken since leaving land, nodded. Pedro dryly answered that he had been watching the left bank sharply all the time. I said no more. The idea which had cost me so much thought had been in his head before we started.

But it was sound sense, even if it had taken me some time to see it. We had not gone another quarter-mile when Pedro muttered something and peered keenly at a bush-grown hollow in the left bank. The rising sun showed us dark water under those bushes. And as we pushed our raft toward them we saw that some of them had been cut by a machete.

The same thought jumped into our minds—here was the hiding-place of our canoe. And in our eagerness to reach it we both forgot what sort of thing we were traveling on. We shoved hard with our paddles. The clumsy raft tipped. Before we could right ourselves, one side of it ran up on a dark snag hidden just under the surface. We were thrown sprawling into deep water.

All three of us could swim, and we came up at once. Senhor Tom rose beside me, and I steered him to the logs. The raft had floated clear of the snag and was drifting down-stream. When we tried to lift ourselves over its edge it tilted again under our

weight. It took several attempts before Pedro and I could climb on the crazy thing, and then we had trouble in helping Senhor Tom aboard. When all three of us were again on the logs we sat panting and laughing in relief.

Then our laughter died as if somebody had grabbed our throats. We were safe on the raft. Our wet hammocks, too, still clung to the logs. But nothing else was there. Our paddles, our poles, our ax, had gone overboard. So had our guns.

For an instant I felt numb. The loss of our guns struck me like a sickening blow. We had drifted some distance during our struggles, tilting the raft time and again, and where those weapons now lay was more than we could know. Staring around, I saw only the paddles and poles floating away ahead of us.

"Hold on, *senhor*," Pedro said coolly. "We are going after the paddles."

He jumped off. I followed. We let the poles go, but saved the paddles and swam back to the logs. With them we worked the raft back to the left shore.

"We have nothing left to lose now, Senhor Tom, except our lives—and that cursed money of the Hawk's," I said bitterly. "And we may not be long in losing them. Our guns are gone."

"Good —!" he exclaimed. "Overboard? How deep is the water?"

"Too deep, I fear. It is black, and the bottom is probably mud and snags. We shall look, but I doubt if we shall find them. We have drifted."

His blank blue eyes stared ahead at nothing. His right hand felt for his revolver. It still hung in its holster.

"Well, dang it, we've still got a few shots left here," he said, with a faint grin. "What are you kicking about? Anybody'd think we were out of luck, from your croaking. Come on, let's find the rest of the guns. If we can't, let's go."

Looking into his face, I felt ashamed of myself. Blind, helpless, he sat there and said, "Let's go!" And I, with all my strength and all my senses, was moaning because our guns were lost.

"I am an old woman, comrade," I said disgustingly. "We shall go on and get our man."

"Now you're talking! Remember, there's a girl somewhere down ahead." His face tightened.

"We have not forgotten."

Then, telling him to sit quiet, we attacked the bush with our machetes as savagely as if it had been an enemy. A few minutes of swift cutting brought us back to the hollow where the dark water lay.

"Ha!" said Pedro. "A bit of good fortune at last."

There, shoved well up on the dirt, was our canoe.

It was bare as bone. Not even a paddle was in it. But it was our own stout, speedy canoe in which we three had journeyed all the way from the headquarters of our old *coronel*, back on the Javary, and it was undamaged. The thief had not spent the time, even if he had the tool, to cut through its bottom and make it useless.

Pedro loped back to the raft and got the paddles, and I heard Senhor Tom's brief comment on the news.

"Uh-huh. Luck's swinging our way again. Hurry up!"

But before we returned to our North American partner we made desperate efforts to find our guns. Both of us were poor divers, and both of us knew well that more than one kind of death or injury might be waiting under the surface; but we went down again and again by turns, clawing around down there in the muck until we had to rise exhausted. In some places we could not reach the bottom. In others our hands met oozy mud or tangles of sunken trees whose slimy touch was like that of snakes. That was all we found.

The guns were gone forever.

Taking Senhor Tom aboard, we settled ourselves to make speed—Pedro in his usual place in the bow, the blind man in the middle, and I at the stern. Pain was in Senhor Tom's face again, and he held one hand to his head, though he made no complaint. We told him to lie down, and when he did so we put wet cloths on his head. It was all we could do for him.

"Move on, move on!" he growled. "Never mind about me."

"We are moving," Pedro told him. "But before we meet further trouble, will you lend me your revolver?"

He hesitated. Then, with a grim laugh, he held out the weapon.

"Never handed over my gun before to anybody," he said. "But here it is. Only don't waste a shot."

Pedro shoved it under his belt, and we

sunk our paddles in the water. Once more we were on our way—in a real boat, but armed now only with one revolver, which neither of us two Brazilians could handle skillfully. With rifles or machetes we both could do deadly work, but we were not accustomed to hand-guns. And the man we followed had a rifle and cartridges enough to kill us twenty times over.

But there are more ways than one of fighting in the bush; and before we could fight our man we had to find him. Now we leaned on our paddles and drove downstream fast—though not too fast to keep watch along shore. We looked not so much for signs of a landing as for marks of bumps at the turns; for we calculated that the fugitive had not had time to go far from the place where he abandoned the canoe before darkness had fallen on him. Then, unless he had the eyes of a cat, he would be likely to hit the bank at times.

Before we found such a sign, though, we had rounded a number of bends, and I began to fear we had deceived ourselves. Pedro, watching keenly, knocked this fear out of my head when he pointed to a place on shore where something had struck. It was at a curve where the current ran close to the land, and a boat had grounded there so forcibly that its paddler had had to push hard against the bank to free it. I grunted in satisfaction. We put a little more speed into our stroke.

The sun-shadows had grown much longer when we slowed again. Time after time we had found bump-marks along the way, and we knew the canoe had gone on with the current all night. We knew, too, that after a night of constant strain the paddler of that canoe would be tired at dawn. Now the marks had ended, and we judged that from this point he had been able to see his way. And at the place where he had begun to gain speed, we began to lose it; for we then had to scan both banks carefully for the place where he would leave the creek. But we believed he was not far ahead, and that he thought himself safe from us.



IT MIGHT have been an hour later when our search ended. The sloping banks had sunk and drawn away from the water, leaving a rather wide hollow which, in the wet season, would be a lagoon, but which now was a mass of bush. Through this the creek wormed sluggishly,

and several inlets led off from it into the rank growth. It would be a poor place for honest men to camp, but a good refuge for a man who must have a few hours of sleep and who must hide while resting.

Very quietly we slipped our canoe up the first little waterway and looked about. We came out again with no result. The next one also was blank. So was the third. But up the fourth, which was deeper and on the other side of the creek, we found something.

There, its nose on shore, lay the canoe we had hunted.

But nothing was in it. It was as bare as the one in which we had chased it. No sound came from the bush around it, except the mournful call of some unseen bird. No smoke was in the air. The place seemed empty of all human life.

In the mud beside the deserted dugout, though, were man-tracks. Bare feet had stepped all about the bow—the feet of at least half a dozen men. Mud was in the bottom of the boat, too: wet mud which showed that the men had come into it from the shore, leaving their tracks on the wood. And the tracks were fresh.

Breathing a warning to Senhor Tom, we two bushmen stepped ashore and, with the revolver and our machetes drawn, stole along the trail made by those bare feet. It led back for about a rod into the tangle. Then we halted as if shot.

Sprawled on the ground before us was a man.

Short, stocky, ugly, brown of skin, clothed in torn shirt and ragged breeches, he lay with eyes and mouth partly open, still as a log. The shirt was sodden with blood, and the ground around him was soaked with it. In his body gaped several big wounds. From his throat jutted a broken arrow.

We had run down our man. But now that we had him, we could do nothing to him. And the girl who had been his prisoner was swallowed up by the jungle.

V



RAPID scouting of the ground around the dead man told us several things.

He had brought his prisoner ashore, taken food from the canoe, mixed up some *chibch* in a couple of gourds, and started to eat. Then he had been attacked and killed by

several Indians armed with arrows and spears. The wild men had looted the boat, and with their plunder and the white girl they had gone back into the bush.

We followed the footmarks of the killers a short distance before turning back to Senhor Tom, and found that they led almost straight eastward. We found also something very valuable to us just at that time—a bag of farinha, dropped or flung aside by some man who thought it not worth carrying. It was one of our own bags, and it held little enough; but we pounced on it as if it were gold. Returning to the dead man to pick up the two upset gourds, we spied a couple of chunks of our salt *pirarucu* fish which he had not lived long enough to eat. With these and our news, we went back to our comrade who sat patiently waiting.

We gave him the news first, of course, and half the fish and farinha next. Pedro and I shared the other half between us, glad that he could not see how we were favoring him—for he certainly would have refused to eat more than his portion. As it was, he devoured all he had before saying a word.

"I feel better," he announced then. "Wish I could have manhandled that brute myself, but since I couldn't I'm sure glad the Indians did him up so thoroughly. And Miss Marshall is at least one degree safer with the Indians, even though they are killers, than she was with the scum who dragged her here.

"This isn't cannibal country, as far as I know. The Indians hereabouts are mostly Tucunas, and they're a pretty decent lot. Likely as not they're taking her along to protect her. They'll lead her to their chief, anyway, and she's safe until then or later. Now we'll just have to trail them and talk straight to the chief, and everything will be fixed up. Let's go."

Pedro and I looked at each other and tried to grin. We knew, and Senhor Tom himself knew, that matters were not so hopeful as he said. For one thing, we did not know that the Indians were Tucunas, and the body lying near us certainly did not look as if the killers were a "pretty decent lot." Even if they were Tucunas, the Tucuna race had made up the army of the dead Black Hawk, who preyed on whites and was a destroyer of women. True, the Indians in his gang had obeyed him because they feared him, and most of them were

glad of his death. Still—no, the outlook for the girl was not at all bright.

Nor were the chances very good that three men—one blind, the others poorly armed—could peaceably rescue a prisoner from a tribe who had just shown such ferocity toward the strange man who had landed there that morning. But there was only one thing for us to do—to take the trail as Senhor Tom had said. And we could waste no more time in talking about it.

Yet, with the path plain before us, we found ourselves facing a new problem. Up to this point our blind companion had been no hindrance to us; but now, with stealthy bush-work ahead, a sightless man was likely to be the worst possible obstacle to either speed or silence. For a minute or so we pondered. There was no way out of it—he must come with us. We could not leave him alone there, even if we hoped to return soon. Many things might come about while we were gone, and if we failed to come back he could only die in misery.

"Are your eyes any better, comrade?" Pedro asked gently.

"No better. Can't see a thing. You fellows had better leave me behind. I'm no good any more."

"We shall do nothing of the kind," I refused. "We stick together. It takes only one eye to follow the track of those savages, and we have four eyes among us. I will go ahead, and Pedro will follow with you."

"But—"

"But nothing!" Pedro cut him off. "We shall do just that. The Indians probably have not come far from their village, and we ought to find them before long. You are so well used to jungle travel that you can walk nearly as quietly as we, so long as you have a guide. I will cut a short stick, which you and I will carry in our left hands. I will move the stick to right or left as we turn, lift it if we have to step high, and push back if we must stop. If you feel me drop it suddenly, squat as low as you can and keep still."

With that he cut a small stiff piece of bush and trimmed it to a bare stick about a yard long. With no more argument, Senhor Tom grasped the end Pedro gave him and stood behind him, ready to follow. I took the revolver from my partner and started away along the trail.

Once started, I gave little attention to

the pair behind me. Pedro, I knew, would give all his care to helping Senhor Tom move quietly, and I could use my eyes and ears altogether for tracking the men ahead.

On the soft, watery ground of that low flat the footmarks were easy enough to follow. I judged that eight or more men had filed through that bush, and the tracks they left behind would have been plain even to a child—that is, a jungle child. Now and then I saw boot-prints, but not often. This told me that the girl was walking with most of the men behind her. Nowhere could I find any sign of a scuffle or an attempt by her to break away from her new captors. This might mean either that she was not much afraid of them or that she knew any such effort would be useless.

The trail wound along in a rambling way, veering around dense or thorny patches of undergrowth—the path of men without machetes to cut their way. But it always swung back eastward, and I knew the men were going as straight as they could to their own little town. Either they were walking fast or they had left the creek earlier than we supposed, for I never got sight or sound of them. For that matter, my own gait was not speedy, for I paused at times to listen or to give my companions a chance to gain on me.

Senhor Tom was doing splendidly. Not once did I hear him stumble. As Pedro had said, the explorer was experienced in jungle travel and knew how to put his feet down, and with the pressure of the little stick to guide him he needed no words to make him step right. The couple walked so quietly that twice I waited until Pedro came into sight to make sure that nothing had happened to them. Both times Pedro motioned me onward, and after that I attended only to what was ahead.

The ground began to rise and become firm. Then the undergrowth thinned out and the light became more dim. Tall trees, their crowns thickly matted far overhead, towered around me. The trail became harder to follow now, as the tracks of the traveling band became much less plain on the harder dirt. Yet, by keeping keen watch of it, I remained on it until a smell stopped me.

It was the odor of wood-smoke, drifting on a little breath of air from some place not far ahead. As I stood quiet, shouting voices sounded faintly from a distance, and then

came a sound which might be either the barking of a small dog or the yapping of a toucan. The Indian town was near.

Waiting until Pedro again appeared, I gave him a warning signal. He halted at once; and so closely was Senhor Tom attending to the movements of the guiding stick that they did not bump. I signed ahead, saw him sniff the air and listen, then come on more carefully; and I resumed my way.

Only a few steps farther on I found a path. Here the tracks which I had followed disappeared. But I noted which way they turned on entering that path, observed the direction of the path itself—and then avoided it. Drawing back from it, I signaled again to Pedro, then began traveling toward the place to which the path led, though keeping well away from the beaten track. I wanted to reach the town unseen, not to be met on the way by some Indian who might alarm the others and force a fight on us before we could speak. Fighting was the last thing we wanted just then.

The voices ahead became silent, but the yapping sound continued until it suddenly ended in a shrill yelp. There was no question now that it was made by a dog, which had just been kicked by some one tired of his racket. With the ceasing of the animal's noise all became quiet.

Soon the roof of branches before us gave way to open sky, and bright light struck in among the trunks from a space empty of trees. Slipping along between the tall columns, I reached their end. Beyond was a small clearing. In the clearing stood a long house.

And that was all I saw—the house. Not a man, woman, or child—not even the yelping dog—was in sight. Smoke rolled lazily from roof-holes, though, showing that the house was not empty. It was a *maloca*, or tribal house, and just then every one was inside.

While waiting for Pedro and Senhor Tom, I studied the shelter. I had seen the *malocas* of wild men farther south, but not until recently had I been in the Tucuna country, and this tye of shelter was new to me. Instead of being circular in shape and walled with logs, it was oblong, with walls of palm-leaves; a place not built for defense, but the sort of house in which peaceable people ought to live. If those flimsy walls meant anything, these Indians were not warriors.

Still, one can not always tell, from the appearance of a house, what sort of people are inside it; and men who were peaceful yesterday may be ugly foes today.

I took my gaze off the place to look at Senhor Tom, who now had come up and stood quiet behind me. His face seemed drawn, and I judged that the heat and the fatigue of marching without sight had made his head ache again; but he made no murmur. Quietly I told him what was before us.

"Uh-huh," he breathed. "Regular Tucuna *maloca*. All inside looking at the prisoner. No use in our sticking here. What are you waiting for?"

I looked again at the house and back at him. Then I slid his revolver back into its holster and loosened my machete.

"If trouble comes, *senhor*," I said, "your gun will not be of much use to me among half a hundred Indians. At close quarters I can do much work with cold steel. So you had best keep it."

"If trouble does come," he answered, his mouth tightening, "you fellows try to cut your way out with Miss Marshall and make your getaway. I'll guarantee to damage whatever is in front of me, and I'll make such a riot that maybe you can break out with her. You two chaps are wicked scrapers with machetes, and among the three of us we can make a sizable hole in this town's population—if we have to. But maybe a bold front will turn the trick without a row."

Then, for the first time, he showed the strain of sightlessness. His blank eyes flickering, he blurted bitterly:

"God! What wouldn't I give for a pair of real eyes just now?"

"Perhaps you will need no eyes, comrade," Pedro soothed him. "Let us walk three abreast, with you in the middle. Hold your head high and look grim, and with us to guide you nobody need know you can not see."

"Right! That's the dope. Run a bluff on them if we can. When you're dealing with Tucunas, even if they're friendly, it doesn't pay to look weak."

With that we stopped our muttering and walked out into the open.

Shoulder to shoulder we strode across the open space, steering the explorer's steps by slight touches on the arms, but never looking at him. With heads up and eyes

straight ahead, we came to the narrow door of the tribal house, swung so that I was ahead of Senhor Tom and Pedro was behind him, and stepped boldly inside.

VI



THE place was very dim.

So dim it was, indeed, that after our march through the brilliant sunshine I found myself almost blinded by the abrupt change to murky twilight. I had to halt a moment to let my eyes adjust themselves. And in that moment several things happened.

Senhor Tom, unwarned of my pause, bumped me hard from behind. I lurched forward and rammed my face into a stout pole upholding the roof. The unexpected thump knocked a grunt out of me and brought from my blind follower a sharp question.

"What's the matter there?"

At the same instant a droning voice somewhere among the Indians before us stopped suddenly. There came a hiss of indrawn breath, an outbreak of hoarse mutterings from men and squeals of fright from women, a voice of authority grunting commands, and a scuffling, shuffling sound which soon ended.

Silently cursing my luck, I drew away from the post and faced a number of Indian men advancing grimly up a small aisle between hammock-hung roof-poles. All the effect of our bold entrance was spoiled by that mischance; for instead of striding among the Tucunas before they knew of us we had bumped about like drunkards. We had lost our dignity at the outset; and to white men unexpectedly invading an Indian *maloca* such a loss may prove serious.

Now I saw that the men filing toward us held spears. A growling voice spoke, and the spears were leveled at our stomachs. I reached for my machete. But a quick thought made me halt my hand and lift it, empty.

"Hold, Tucunas!" I barked. "We are friends. Here is Tupahn the Thunderstorm, friend of Tucunas and killer of that Black Hawk who enslaved the Tucuna warriors. Is this your welcome to such a man?"

It was a shrewd shot. I remembered that Senhor Tom was known among the Tucunas as Tupahn because of the roaring

voice he could use in giving commands, and that he held their respect because of his masterly ways and his straight dealings with them. Before this time I had seen Tucunas change from surliness to civility on hearing his name. And now that he had killed Black Hawk their former respect ought to have become awe.

And so it had. The menacing spearmen halted in their tracks as I stepped aside and showed them Senhor Tom standing straight and somber against the light from the doorway. My sight had righted itself by now, and, watching them peer at him, I saw how deeply impressed they were. Their spears did not waver, but they made no further move toward us.

Then from behind them sounded that same growling voice we had heard when the weapons were lowered. Speaking in the Tupi *lengoa geral*, it asked:

"Who comes with Tupahn? Why comes Tupahn to this *maloca*?"

"We two are the comrades of Tupahn—free men of the forest who stood with him when Black Hawk fell," I answered gruffly. "We come to talk with the chief. Stand back and let us pass."

Now that our clumsy entrance was forgotten for the moment, I could use the bold tones most likely to be impressive. Besides, I was a little angered by the surliness of that voice, and when angered I am not meek. As I spoke I began advancing again.

The spearmen raised their weapons now, but before moving back to the central space where the fires burned they looked over their shoulders as if seeking an order from the growler. After a short pause it came, and they pressed back out of our way. I walked on with head up and jaw out. Behind me Senhor Tom, guided by a whisper and a touch from Pedro, stalked with the dignity of a chief.

As we walked I wondered briefly why we had heard no cry of welcome from the *senhorita*, who must be standing before the chief. Then I recalled that she knew nothing of the Tupi tongue, could hardly have seen us through the pack of Indians, and probably did not recognize my voice. While the crowd divided to let us pass through I looked ahead, seeking her. And when we entered the open space where the chief's fire burned I swept the circle of faces around us with swift eyes. Then I stopped, staring all about.

No white girl was there.

Wherever I looked, only Indian faces met me. Women were there, and girls; but all were reddish of skin, painted with the short straight cheek-lines of the Tucuna race, unclothed, and adorned only with bark bracelets and anklets. They were Indians all.

"You ask for the chief," spoke the harsh voice. "You see him."

Up to that minute I had not seen him. But now I had to take my eyes off the women and look at him. Again I was astonished. The voice was that of a strong, deep-chested man. But the man sitting in the chief's brightly feathered hammock was thin, shriveled, wrinkled, and bowed with age. His lips were sunken as if his teeth had long been gone, his eyes peered dimly from hollow sockets, and his neck looked like a stick.

As my gaze went down his withered frame I saw at his feet a small pile of things which cheered me. Failing to find the *senhorita*, I had felt an instant's doubt that we had come to the right place, though her trail could lead nowhere else. But there on the ground lay the supplies stolen with our canoes by the man who had shot Senhor Tom. With them was a rifle and a machete, undoubtedly taken from that man by his killers. The girl also must be here.

"Has Tupahn the Thunderstorm lost his thunder?" asked the voice, with a mocking note. "Has he no word for Andirah the Bat?"

This time I saw the man who spoke. He was not Andirah, the old chief, but a solid-bodied Indian who stood at the right hand of the ruler. His face, like that of the Bat, was painted with a scroll on each cheek instead of the usual short lines. His eyes were narrow and cold. His lower teeth showed as he talked, giving him an ugly sneering expression. His chest bore a snaky line of red paint, and looped across it from his thick neck was a string of teeth. I guessed at once what he was.

Andirah, the Bat, was head of the tribe by blood and by right. But this other man who spoke for him was the *pajé*: medicine-man, priest, wizard, and probably the real ruler here. And he was hostile to us.

"Tupahn gives greeting to his friend Andirah," boomed Senhor Tom. "The Storm and the Bat are brothers."

Everybody jumped. Even the ancient

Bat started and the *pajé* blinked at the roar of the explorer's voice. Though blind, Senhor Tom was not deaf. He had caught the sneer in that priest's tones, and he gave back the thunder for which the wizard had asked.

In the silence that followed I spoke low but fast in Portuguese to the blind man.

"Turn your head as if looking at all faces. Then hold your eyes as they are now, toward the chief," I directed. "The *senhorita* is not in sight. Our goods are here on the ground before the chief. So are the gun and machete of the dead man. The chief is old and dried up. The one who talks is the medicine-man—an ugly brute."

Senhor Tom did as told, and did it well. I knew the *pajé* would ask soon what we wanted, and Senhor Tom must know the situation first. Every eye was on him as he turned his head, frowning as if he sought a face without finding it. All the Indians except the old Bat and his *pajé* stared unwinking at the great Tupahn. The chief sat like a post, and the medicine-man watched through lids narrower than before.

When the yellow-haired man faced again toward the chief's hammock he spoke out without awaiting a question.

"Tupahn comes to his brother for that which is his own," he announced. "Tupahn finds on the ground certain things stolen from him last night by an enemy. He seeks, but does not see, his woman who was stolen by the same enemy. Tupahn asks Andirah to restore to him the woman and his other property."

There was another silence. I looked around again, studying faces. None except the *pajé* looked hostile, but none looked very friendly either. Then I noticed that the men nearest the chief, one of whom probably had been talking when we entered, were looking sidelong at their ruler. And four of them held spears whose points were blood-stained.

They were the killers of the man on the creek. They had laid their plunder before the chief, and their tale was not finished when we arrived. Yet no girl was here. A cold fear began to grow on me. The blood on those spear-points—was it all from the veins of a man?

The shriveled lips of old Andirah opened. But before he could speak the *pajé* made answer, and the chief's words died.

"So Tupahn the Thunderstorm, killer of

Black Hawk, was unable to keep his own woman? With two men to aid him, he is robbed of his goods—and a woman?"

The sneer this time was plain. Senhor Tom's face reddened. I bit my tongue to keep from making an angry answer.

"Tupahn was shot from behind," barked Senhor Tom. "No man can guard himself against a snake that strikes from under a bush. His comrades were away in the forest. If Andirah thinks Tupahn weak, let him hear:

"Tupahn was shot in the head by a rifle. He was left without a canoe, so far from here that it took the men who shot him eighteen hours to reach the place where he was found by the men of the Bat. Yet, struck down by a bullet and with no boat, Tupahn and his comrades started this morning, followed and found that snake, trailed also the men of Andirah, and are here before the noonday meal."

A mutter of astonishment passed among the listening Indians. Knowing nothing of our raft and our finding of the hidden canoe, they supposed us to have come through the bush. Some scowled as if they could hardly believe it. Others stared as if they thought us to be demons in the bodies of men. But the *pajé* refused to be impressed.

"Tupahn could not do as he says unless he rode on the back of the storm itself," he jeered. "And have Tupahn and his men lost their guns also? We see none."

The men with bloody spears nodded at this, and their eyes looked unpleasant. But Senhor Tom answered like a flash.

"We do not insult our friend Andirah by bringing our guns into his *maloca*. And if you hint that Tupahn lies you speak false. The Tucunas know that Tupahn tells truth."

Now more men nodded; for Senhor Tom had a name for speaking straight. The old Bat himself looked pleased by the explorer's words, and his lips opened again. But the blind man, not knowing that the chief was about to speak, roared out at the *pajé*.

"And Tupahn comes to talk to Andirah, the chief—not to a dog-voiced *pajé* who snarls and growls. Perhaps the *pajé* thinks himself chief here? If not, why does he snatch the words from his ruler's mouth?"

This was straight talk in truth. The face of the priest seemed to bloat with rage, but he hesitated and shot a glance at Andirah. The mouth of the Bat set grimly. And this time he replied for himself:

"The Storm roars loud," he said in a thin but firm voice, "but the Storm strikes straight. The Bat is chief. None but the Bat rules while the Bat lives. Tupahn and his men are welcome. They shall have what is theirs. A feast shall be made for them."

There was no question that he still was chief. Old and weak, but all the more jealous of his power because of his age, he would not let the *pajé* make all his decisions for him. I gave that angry but silent medicine-man a nasty grin and began looking around again for the *senhorita*. But the next words of the Bat struck like a blow.

"But Tupahn seeks his woman in the wrong place. No white woman has come here."

For a moment we stood like staring fools, shocked dumb. Then the thought came to me that the old man lied. But, studying his face, I doubted it. It was an honest old face, and his tone had the ring of truth. And, as has been said, we had found no white girl there.

Again I looked at those red spear-points, and I spoke out harshly.

"Then what have the men of Andirah done with her? She was taken by them from the place where the man was killed. We have followed the trail and we know. Are the men of the Bat like that Black Hawk who ruled them—destroyers of women?"

Senhor Tom growled. His right hand lifted to the butt of his revolver. But Pedro's hand closed over his, holding it down.

"Tupahn is wrong," the chief answered evenly. "The man of Tupahn is wrong also. No man of the Bat ever followed Black Hawk. No man of the Bat hurts women. No woman has been brought here.

"The men of the Bat found at the water two men. One was a man of Black Hawk. That man had done evil to the people of Andirah in time gone by. For that evil he was killed today by the men of Andirah.

"The other man was brought here. It was his trail which came to this *maloca*. Tupahn has followed the wrong trail."

Numbly we stood there after the chief's words ended. The Bat, honest as ever, looked straight at us. The priest and the other Tucunas stood wooden-faced. There was no sound but the soft hiss of firewood cooking the chief's dinner.

Then Senhor Tom made a choking noise. "God!" he muttered. "Two men! They carried her down the creek—and last night while they drifted—"

He could not finish. We knew his thought: that before dawn the girl had been murdered—after those two brutes had their way.

I felt sick. Then I burned with sudden fury.

"Where is that other man?" I snarled. "Give him to us! He is our enemy. A foul, murdering dog who belongs to us. If he still lives, bring him here!"

Andirah sat a moment considering. While he hesitated the *pajé* growled again.

"Andirah, chief of the people of the Bat, does what he will with his own prisoners. He takes no command from any man."

The priest had turned Senhor Tom's own weapon against us. As before, the old chief was quick to assert his power when reminded of it.

"The man is the prisoner of the Bat," he agreed. "The Bat will deal with him at his own time. Tupahn shall have what is his. The Bat also shall keep what is his. Tupahn must hunt his woman in the forest. She is not here."

"Bring that man here!" roared Senhor Tom.

But the chief repeated stubbornly.

"The man is the prisoner of the Bat."

He was right. His men, not we, had caught that captive. And I saw that Andirah was growing angry and some of his men looked grim. To stay longer would be worse than useless.

So again I told Senhor Tom how matters stood. He gritted his teeth, but kept his head.

"Tupahn goes," he said shortly.

As if giving us a silent command, he waved a hand toward toward the chief. We strode forward and gathered up our belongings. The rifle and machete of the dead man we threw aside, though we ached to take the gun also. But that gun was not ours, and every Indian was watching. Besides, we were supposed to have left our own guns outside.

Yet we got that gun after all. As we three turned away the Bat's good nature returned.

"Tupahn will not stay to feast with Andirah?" he asked. "Then let Tupahn take as a gift the gun that shot him."

Instantly I stepped back and seized the weapon. Speaking low, I said:

"The heart of Tupahn is sore because his woman is lost. But he will take the gift of Andirah and remember his friendship."

The sunken lips smiled faintly. With no more words, I returned quickly to my comrades.

Guided by secret touches from both of us, Senhor Tom went out as he had come in; head high, blue eyes straight ahead, giving no sign of the blackness in his sight and in his heart. Through the little door we passed without a bump, and on into the bright light of noon. Shoulder to shoulder we strode across the clearing to the edge of the forest. A few steps more, and we were lost to the sight of the men of the Bat.

VII



WORDLESS, we passed along the beaten path of the people of Andirah to the point where it was joined by the trail we had followed from the creek. Still silent, we turned off there and trod again on our own footprints, heading back toward the canoes which we had lost and found again. But when well away from the Indian path, we halted.

"I do not believe it," Pedro asserted.

I looked at him. His face, usually ready to break into a smile, now was hard. His warm brown eyes had turned cold, and his jaws were shut like a trap. Through his teeth he repeated—

"I do not believe it."

"Believe what?" Senhor Tom asked dully.

"That the *senhorita* is dead, or even lost. I believe she is there in that *maloca*. Something tells me that we have been very near her, and that now we are going farther away from her at every step."

"I wish to God I could believe that too," muttered the blind man. "But that old Andirah's voice sure was that of a man talking straight."

"And so was his face," I added. "I watched him like a hawk, and I can tell when a man lies to me. Besides, why should he lie to us? We were three men, poorly armed, surrounded and badly outnumbered. He was not in the least afraid of us, and he did not want to be rid of us. He asked us to stay to a feast, gave us back all our goods, made us a present of this gun, and was more

than fair to us throughout. If he is a liar I am a fool."

Pedro nodded slowly.

"I too believe him to be honest," he admitted. "Yet I can not believe that the *senhorita* is not in that *maloca*. I think there is trickery somewhere, and that the *paje* is at the bottom of it."

Then he grinned faintly.

"Senhor Tom, you kicked that dog hard," he went on. "He showed his teeth like a savage brute when you made the chief humble him before all the tribe. He will bite you if his chance ever comes."

"He'll find me tough chewing," was the explorer's reply. "But let's thrash this matter out right here. God knows I want to believe you're right about Marion, but I've got to have some reason for that belief. What do you base your hope on?"

His haggard face was so eager that I looked elsewhere; for I believed the girl was dead. Pedro, before answering, drew him down on a fallen tree which happened to be beside us and made two cigarets—one for Senhor Tom and one for himself. I sat down beside them and made a smoke of my own.

"If you ask for cold, hard reasons, comrade," my partner said then, "I can give you almost none. For one thing, we have seen nothing to prove that two men were in this affair. True, the heel-tracks of the prisoner taken to the *maloca* were those of a man's boots; but we know that the *senhorita* was wearing your extra boots, and I believe the tracks are hers."

That was true enough. As the time when the girl was saved from Black Hawk she had had no clothing except a long shapeless garment given her by an old Indian woman, and Senhor Tom had given her his spare kit to wear until she could reach a place where she could get something more suitable. She had had to stuff leaves into the boots to make them small enough for her feet, but she had worn them.

"If they are not hers, whose are they?" Pedro went on. "Boots are scarce in this bush. Lourenço and I wear none. Indians wear none. The two dead men we have found since leaving the camp of Black Hawk had none. I do not believe there are more than two pairs of boots within many miles of this spot; and both of those pairs are your own."

"But," I objected, "even if those boots

which went to the *maloca* were Senhor Tom's the feet of the *senhorita* may not have been in them."

I meant, of course, though I did not say so, that after being murdered she had also been stripped of the boots by her killers. Such low brutes would not be likely to throw away new, stout footwear.

Pedro scowled as if he had not thought of that. After a few puffs at his cigaret, though, he said:

"Perhaps. But Senhor Tom's feet are rather small. The feet of such men as that one back on the creek are big and flat. I do not believe his partner—if he had one—would be able to wear Senhor Tom's boots. Yet the chief reasons why I believe the *senhorita* lives are because we were not allowed to see the prisoner, and because—I feel in my bones that she is in that *maloca*."

As he had said at first, they were not good reasons. Yet both of them made us think before answering. To Senhor Tom, the fact that the captives had been kept out of our sight was the important thing. But I, who had known Pedro to uncover strange matters simply because he "felt in his bones" that certain things were so, was thoughtful because of the memories of those times.

"It sure looks mighty queer that the Bat kept his prisoner out of sight," the explorer grumbled. "No reason why he couldn't have given us a look at him."

"I think there were two reasons," said I. "One was that he thought we would kill the brute. The other was that the *pajê* stopped him from granting our demands."

Pedro nodded quickly.

"And that *pajê*, as I have said, is at the bottom of it," he insisted. "He opposed us from the first. He sent those spearmen to block us before he even knew who we were. I heard his orders."

"What were they?"

"You did not hear? I remember now—you were trying to knock down a roof-pole. He said, 'More enemies come. Stop them. Take this one away. Be quick.'"

"Then he called the captive an enemy?" asked Senhor Tom. "Why should he call a helpless white girl that? I'm afraid, old man, that you're all wrong."

"Perhaps," Pedro said doggedly. "But, right or wrong, *senhor*, I am going to see that prisoner with my own eyes before I go on to the great river.

"By thunder, you're right that time!"

Senhor Tom approved. "We've got to know who and what he—or she—is before we give up. And we've got to be up and doing, not sitting here like three bumps on a log. We'd better go on back to our canoe, get aboard, and pull out down-stream as if continuing our search; then land again at a good place and sneak up on the *maloca*. The Bat—or, more likely, that lousy priest—will send men after us to be sure we're gone, of course. So let's go."

There was more snap in his tones than at any time since we left the tribal house. Hope was alive in him again, even if it lived on very scant food.

He flipped away his cigaret-butt and arose. We too stood up. As we got into line again I happened to glance back, and as I did so a head faded out of sight behind a big tree-trunk near by. True enough, we were being trailed and watched by the Bat's men.

Giving the spies no sign that I knew of this, I set my face toward the creek and passed on with my friends. Speaking low, I told them we were under watch, so that they would walk and act in the right manner. Not once on our return trip did we look back—not once did we hear a sound from the silent shapes stealing along behind; but we knew they were there, all the way.

At the creek we pretended to argue whether we should now go up or down-stream, pointing first one way and then the other. And then, as an excuse for taking both canoes, we feigned to disagree and separate. Senhor Tom and Pedro, in the bow and stern of one, shoved off in angry fashion and, at the mouth of the inlet, turned down-stream. In the other I went up the creek from some distance, then hesitated, looked back, scratched my head, appeared to change my mind, turned, and paddled fast to overtake my mates.

If the spies waited long enough to see me return they probably told their *pajê* later that I was a fool who did not know his own mind. But we had the canoes.



AFTER journeying around several loops in the wandering creek we left the flat land behind and once more entered a stretch of steep sloping banks. A little farther on we found a break in them where we could slip out of sight. This we promptly did. And when we had scouted a little in the forest above we made a camp.

"Now, *senhor*," Pedro said when we had eaten, "we leave you for a time. This morning we would not do so. But things have changed. You now have food and cartridges, your gun and your hammock and tobacco, and——"

"All the comforts of home," *Senhor Tom* interrupted. "Go ahead, fellows. I'll be here when you get back. Only—bring back our lady."

"We shall try," I told him. "Be of good heart, comrade."

And we left him; left him in a safe secret camp, but alone and in pain of head and pain of heart; left him to dreary hours of blackness. Yet it was the only way. We knew he was sick from headache and strain, and that he must rest. He knew we could move much more freely without him, and that on this spying trip of ours he would be worse than useless. So, with no *adeos*, we slipped away into the wilderness.

With us we carried the rifle given us by *Andirah*. It was a battered, dirty old weapon, badly in need of a thorough cleaning; but we had not taken time to do more than oil it a little and test the lever action. As long as it would throw a bullet it was good enough for our present use. We hoped we should not have to use it at all, but if we did we should undoubtedly shoot at such close quarters that we could not miss, no matter how worn and foul its barrel was. With it and our machetes we were well armed against anything likely to oppose us.

"A miserable old gun," I said as we started. "Yet, from a chief, a princely gift. It is the first time I have ever known an Indian to give away a rifle. I wonder if the old fellow suspected that we had none?"

"Possibly," Pedro granted. "If so, he is all the more a gentleman. Or it may be only that he felt it was fitting to give *Senhor Tom* the gun that had struck him down. An Indian has queer ideas sometimes."

With that we stopped talking and gave all our attention to the task of finding the *maloca* again without being seen.

Though we now were hunting the tribal house from a new direction and had no trail to follow, we worked onward with good speed and confidence; for both of us had ranged the jungle too much to be easily confused in finding a place where we once had been. The slant of the shadows and of the scattered sun-rays boring through the leafy top overhead was all we needed to

guide our course. And though we had traveled some distance down-stream after leaving the inlet where the dead man lay, we were little farther from the tribal house than before.

After threading the forest for awhile, hearing only a few scattered bird-calls, we almost jumped when a sudden outbreak of noise ahead struck sharply on our ears. Then we recognized it as the yapping of that cur which we had heard before. It seemed so close that I feared the brute was prowling the bush and that he now would run back to the house, barking so hard as to alarm the Indians. But a little more cautious advancing brought us to a point where we saw light beyond the trees, and we realized that the dog was only fussing around in the clearing. We had almost reached the *maloca*.

A few minutes more, and we were crouching at the edge of the open space. But now that we had arrived, we saw nothing worth looking at. One side of the building was toward us, the door was around the corner and out of sight, and all we observed was the noisy dog—a yellow pup—and some small children chasing him about.

Yet the fact that only a few children were outside was in itself worth noticing. Usually some women would be at work near a tribal house and men would be moving about; but no grown person was in sight here. That could mean only one of two things; either every one had left the place, or something inside the house was so interesting that the usual tasks of the tribe were being neglected. Since the children were here, their elders also must be here. So we began trying to find a way to look into the *maloca* without being seen by the children or the dog.

The best plan, we decided, would be to work around to the rear, creep along the ground to the thatch wall, and cut our way into it until we could see. Retreating a few steps, we slipped along just inside the edge of the trees until we found the back of the house facing us. The children and the dog were out of our sight now, though we still heard their cries beyond the house. We dropped to hands and knees and began crawling out into the clearing.

But our advance ended almost as soon as it began. Before we had gone a dozen feet we stopped short, listened, looked, and went swiftly creeping back to cover.

Around the *maloca* came the whole tribe of the people of the Bat. At their head marched the medicine-man. And they were coming straight toward us.

VIII



CROUCHING behind a tree, we waited.

We saw that the coming of the tribe was not an attack on us; saw that nobody bore weapons in a threatening manner, though all walked quietly and there was no shouting or laughter; saw that nobody, indeed, seemed to know we were there. And then we saw something else—that in the middle of a knot of armed men just behind the *pajé* traveled a thing that seemed not be human.

Just what it was we could not tell at first, for we were lying low and could not see well. But its head rose more than a foot above those of the Indians, and it was the head of a great bat—a hideous bloodsucking vampire, bigger than a man. Its mouth was partly open, red as blood, with wicked teeth grinning like those of demon of the great pit, and its eyes bulged as if glaring around for prey. Yet the Tucunas around it showed no fear of the awful thing, marching on as coolly as if it were not there at all.

Wondering, ready for anything, but keeping silent, we watched the thing and its escort approach. But they did not meet us. Not more than ten feet away from us they passed into the forest, giving no glance in our direction. The whole troop went by and was gone.

"Did you see that thing?" Pedro whispered.

I nodded. When it passed close to us I had learned what it was.

"A big mask of bark-cloth and sticks and dye, worn on some one's shoulders," I muttered. "What do you make of it?"

"This: No white face was among those passing by, and I believe the captive is inside that bat-mask. That sneaking priest is doing devil's work. Come."

He crept away toward the place where the Indians had entered the forest.

There we found a path—a plain, wide path which we had not found before because we had turned short of it. Peering along it, we found it empty. The crowd had gone around a bend.

We did not enter the path. Instead, we worked along beside it, keeping always be-

hind trees. Soon we heard a single voice talking—a growling voice which seemed to be making a short speech, but which did not speak loudly enough for us to make out the words. We knew the snarling tones to be those of the priest.

Suddenly Pedro, a few feet ahead of me, sank low. I dropped. A slight rustle sounded at our right, and through the leaves I glimpsed the Indians trooping back to their *maloca*. As silently as they had gone into the forest, they passed by us for the second time and were gone. And this time neither priest nor bat-head marched among them.

When the last Tucuna had disappeared we arose and advanced swiftly toward the place where we had heard that voice. Only two or three rods farther on we found another clearing and another house.

Both the open space and the hut in it were small; but the house was built in the same style as the *maloca*—square-cornered, and thickly thatched from ground to peak. In it we could see no door. Nothing else stood in the clearing, and nobody was in sight. To all appearances, the place was bare of life.

Yet we were sure that the *pajé*, at least, was in that house. Quietly we stole all around the little circle of trees, seeking the door. But we did not find it. The thatch walls seemed unbroken everywhere.

Whispering together, we decided on a ruse. We wanted to look into that hut without letting the priest know of it. But our only chance to do so was to find the door; for the place was so small that any attempt to cut into the walls, as we had intended to do at the *maloca*, would be heard inside. So we separated, each finding a position where he could watch one side and one end at the same time. Then Pedro gave the wail of an owl.

An owl wailing in broad day was queer enough to make even a wizard look around him; but my partner gave the call twice to make sure it was heard. A long minute passed before any response came. Then, at the corner nearest me, a black crack opened. Through it came the head of the medicine-man, squinting in the sun glare and peering around the open space.

He looked even more ugly than usual, and I suspected that he thought some youth from the *maloca* might be joking with him. But he did not come out to investigate.

After standing there a couple of seconds he stepped back. The black opening narrowed and vanished.

Pedro, who had been watching the other side, came along to the edge of the bush until he could see me and signal to ask whether I had seen anything. I pointed to the corner and motioned him out. Quietly but quickly, we crossed the bare ground to the secret door.

As we walked we heard a voice inside the hut—a voice low but harsh, which we knew to be that of the wizard.

"You will do what I tell you," it said. "You will obey, or you die."

If any one answered, we did not hear the reply. And we did not wait at the door to hear what might happen next. I grasped a handful of wall-thatch and pulled sharply, expecting the door to swing out and let us stride in. Instead, the dry leaves made a loud rustle and stayed where they were. No door opened.

Again I yanked, harder than before. Again the wall crackled but stayed shut. Inside we heard quick movements, something that sounded like a struggle, and a grunt as if a man strained at a weight. We wasted no more time trying to pull out the door. Drawing our machetes, we hacked at the palm-leaves.

"Open!" Pedro growled in Tupi. "Open, dog, or we will chop you apart as we cut this wall!"

No answer came. The door stayed barred. Furiously we slashed at the thatch and its pole framework, gouging out chunks of it but making slower progress than we wished. Then Pedro stopped, nudged me and said:

"Stop, comrade! Why toil so? Let us burn the place instead. It will blaze up swiftly, and the dog will roast in his own hole. It will be more fun to hear him scream while the red flame blisters his thick hide."

This time an answer came—a startled grunt from within. I promptly replied:

"So it will. He is so fat that he ought to sizzle well."

Then, as if speaking to others, I added:

"Move back a little, men. Fire the walls, but keep the place surrounded so that he cannot break out anywhere."

While I spoke Pedro lighted a small bunch of dry leaf which lay near the wall but did not touch it. The blaze crackled, smoke floated into the holes we had made—and again came a quick movement and a grunt

inside. A bar slid with a slithering rasp. The door jumped open. Out popped the *pajé*.

Instantly Pedro kicked the tiny fire several feet away, where it would die out with no damage. In the same move he swung to the wizard, whom I already was facing. The narrow eyes of the priest now were wide open with fear, and sweat was rolling down his cheeks and chest. Yet in one glance he saw how he had been tricked, and the fear in his face changed to a scowl of rage.

"So you do not fancy being toasted?" mocked Pedro. "Then back into your hole and keep quiet. If you should yell this machete might slip."

The point of his machete was against the bare stomach of the other. After one look at my comrade's hard face the evil-eyed Indian backed. Almost walking on his retreating toes, we followed him into the dimly lighted interior. There we looked for the prisoner.

At one side, within reach of my arm, the horrible bat-head leered at me. It stood as motionless as if nothing alive were inside it. I grabbed the thing by the nose and gave it a sharp twitch. It fell over and lay leaning against the wall. Glancing down, I found that in truth no living thing was in it. It had been resting on a tall, narrow clay jar, nearly as high as a man.

Around us stood other jars, of queer shapes and different sizes. But, except us three men, no living thing stood among them. The captive whom we had expected to find was nowhere in sight.

The *pajé*, looking poisonous but saying nothing, stood as still as the jars, with my partner's knife still leveled at his abdomen. I stared straight at him, then searched the place more carefully with my eyes. As before, I saw nothing but the clay vessels.

"Where is the prisoner?" I demanded. "Answer quickly!"

"The prisoner of Andirah is in the *maloca* of Andirah," he replied sulkily.

"You are a liar," Pedro flashed. "Where is the one who wore that bat-mask to this evil den of yours?"

"He has returned to the *maloca*."

"No more lies!" my partner warned. His knife hand moved a little. The *pajé* stepped back sharply, his skin pricked by the point of the blade.

"Who wore that mask here?" Pedro went on.

"A man of the tribe of the Bat."

We gave him hard stares. He stared back without a flicker of the eyes.

"A man of Andirah?" I repeated. "He wore that here and then returned with his mates?"

"So I have said."

"Then who was with you here after the men of the Bat left?"

"No man."

"Have care, priest! We heard you threaten one with death."

At that his eyes swerved aside. But at once they came back.

"I, *pajé* of Andirah, spoke to the spirit within that clay beyond you."

His glance went back to the same place where he had looked before. There stood another of those big jars—an odd-looking thing, shaped like half an egg, with the pointed end up. It was perhaps three feet high, and its broad circular base covered a space nearly four feet wide. From its peak jutted a wicker plug several inches across.

"One of your mystery tricks, wizard?" I started to sneer, when it seemed that a slight sound came from that jar.

Stepping over to it, I pried out the woven stopper and was about to peer down inside, when something told me not to put my face too close. For a long minute I stood watching the hole. Then something moved.

Smoothly, silently, a pointed snout rose through the opening. Eyes followed. The whole head hung there, slowly swaying—the head of hideous death; the flat, vicious head of a huge *surucucu*, or bushmaster.

As I stepped back from the deadly thing a hard chuckle sounded. The voice of the *pajé* jeered—

"You have called forth the spirit, bold hunter—now put it back again."

With that he whistled softly through his teeth. At once the head slid out farther. The snake was coming out of its home.

Probably the wizard expected to see us turn and dash madly out and away from the thing. If he did, he failed to realize that we were hardened bushmen. I put that spirit of his back into the jar, but not as he would have had it.



I SWUNG my machete. The head flew off the creature. Its body jerked back into the jar, where it thrashed about with a muffled, sickening sound. Jabbing the point of my bush-knife

into the severed head, I rammed it into the hole and shook it off. Then I ran the point into the ground several times to clean it of poison.

"So that is the thing you threatened with death if it did not obey you?" I asked.

A snarl was my only answer. The lower teeth of the priest gleamed as if he wanted to bite me. Perhaps he did.

Once more I scanned the place. The walls, I now noticed, were hung with things such as might be expected in the hut of a medicine-man—snake-skins, bones, spiders, many dried bats, and several skulls—animal and human. Nowhere in those walls, except where we had entered, was any sign of a door. None of the clay vessels was big enough to hold a man, unless it was built around him after death. Yet I went poking around among the jars and tested the walls before I would admit that no prisoner was in the place. Then I had to give it up.

"Pedro, perhaps you can find something," I said. "Look."

As he stepped away I took his place, guarding the wizard with drawn machete and giving him no chance to try any trick, human or devilish. And my partner, still unwilling to admit defeat, searched all about the one room of the house. He even probed and smelt at the other jars, finding diabolical messes and sickening stench, but nothing alive—not even another snake.

When he too gave it up we both stood eying the *pajé*. The Indian's mouth still hung in a heavy sneer. Yet in his eyes was a look that puzzled me—a look of relief and triumph together.

"You know now that the *pajé* of the people of the Bat speaks truth," he grunted.

"If you seek the prisoner look in the *maloca*. Then go your way and trouble us no more."

Pedro looked hard at him. Then he coolly answered:

"I will look in the *maloca*. Lourenço, hold him here until I return. Watch him every instant."

The sudden scowl on the face of the *pajé* told us that this was not what he wanted. His idea perhaps was that we both would go, leaving him free to sneak around us and get us killed. Pedro laughed shortly and, before I could object, was gone.

For a long time—or so it seemed—I held that medicine-man exactly where he was. He tried several times to move, but when he found it useless he shut his jaws and stood

motionless, glowering at me. Meanwhile I listened, dreading to hear some sudden outbreak that would show Pedro was caught. But none came.

At last the soft wail of the owl sounded outside, and soon Pedro came in again.

"*Pajé*, I have said you are a liar," he rasped. "I say it again. No prisoner is in that *maloca*. I have looked inside and watched the people of the Bat long enough to know."

The *pajé* answered never a word. His sullen stare did not waver.

"Now the day ends," Pedro added, "and we must go."

A grim light passed over the other's face. I read his thought—that now he could put men on our trail. But my comrade's next words brought to his forehead the blackest scowl I had yet seen there.

"Yes, we go. And since your spirit of the jar yonder is dead, we fear you may be lonely. So we shall not leave you alone. We take you with us."

"Lying priest, say farewell to the people of Andirah. Turn. Go out. Face to the east. Now march!"

IX



NIGHT was almost upon us when we came again into the camp where we had left Senhor Tom. And, for two reasons, we were glad the day was ending.

For one thing, the coming of the dark would lessen the chance that the people of the Bat would discover the absence of their *pajé* and track us. Until morning, at least, they probably would think their medicine-man was staying in his den. And we wanted plenty of time in which to make our surly captive talk.

The second reason was that gloom would prevent the wizard from detecting the blindness of Senhor Tom. The dimness in the *maloca* and the bold acting of our stricken comrade had made it possible for him to deceive all the Tucunas; and, since it is always well to conceal any weakness from Indians, we did not want his condition to become known if we could help it. We intended to free the *pajé* when we were through with him—though that might not be very soon—and the less he could tell about us, the better for us.

But we gave the priest no hint that he

was likely to be freed, or even to live. We remembered hearing Senhor Tom say once that "the way to handle Tucunas is to treat 'em rough," and we could easily see that this sullen Tucuna wizard was not likely to respond to any other kind of treatment. So, though we laid no hand on him while we drove him on through the forest, we snarled at him now and then as if we were ready to chop him to pieces; and we forced him onward at such a pace that when we neared camp he was dripping sweat.

Just out of sight of our little tambo we halted him. Leaving Pedro to guard him, I went ahead and found Senhor Tom sitting up, gun in hand, listening closely to the slight rustle we had made in approaching. As briefly as possible I told him all there was to tell. Then I built the evening fire, not too close to the hammock where the blind man sat. As it blazed up, night came.

After waiting a little longer for the darkness to become thick in the *tambo*, I whispered to Senhor Tom. At once he barked—"Bring that dog here!"

His voice was harsh enough to make the *pajé* shiver. And when that *pajé* came in and stopped where we told him to halt—across the fire from Senhor Tom—he was not the sneering, insolent priest of a few hours before. He stood stolidly enough, and he was sour and silent; but his pompous air was gone, and the black eyes peering through his sweat-soaked hair glanced this way and that as if he sought a line of escape.

In the shadows of the *tambo* Senhor Tom sat straight and motionless, his face dimly lighted by the fire and hard as stonewood. Even we, who knew his condition, could see no sign of it from where we stood; and the *pajé*, with sight weakened by the smoke rising before him, would have been a wizard indeed to guess that the eyes facing him saw nothing. However, he got little chance to stand and look in silence, for Tupahn the Thunderstorm opened on him.

"Dog of a Tucuna," he boomed, "where is the prisoner you took this morning?"

"In the *maloca* of—"

"Do not lie to me! The *maloca* of Andirah has been looked into. No prisoner was there. Where is that captive?"

"I know not. Ask Andirah, the chief."

Senhor Tom growled disgustedly.

"You call yourself *pajé*? You are the wise man of the Bat people? And yet you

do not know a thing that is known to every child of your tribe? Then you are a fool, without eyes or ears or brain."

The eyes under the greasy black hair glistened angrily. But the priest made no retort. Senhor Tom spoke to us.

"Men, he can not tell truth because his tongue is forked. If the fork were burned off the end of his tongue he then could speak straight. Heat your knives in the fire until they are red. Then slice away that thing that twists the truth in his mouth."

I held my machete out over the blaze, though not in it. The Indian started, swung partly around, found Pedro's knife-point at his ribs, and turned slowly back. He licked his lips, stared at the gleam of the fire on my blade, and grunted rapidly:

"My tongue is straight. If it burns it can talk no more."

"Better talk not at all than talk falsely," was the grim answer. "But if your tongue now has become straight we will spare it—for a time. Why was the prisoner not given to us this morning?"

"Tupahn would have killed."

"Ah. You did not want killing. Why?"

"Because more killing would follow. The men of Andirah would strike back. Tupahn and his men would kill more. Then they would be killed. Many killings over one worthless prisoner."

There was a pause. The words sounded true. We remembered the spearmen with red-tipped weapons; remembered the Bat's jealousy of his rule. To slay the captive of Andirah would have been more than likely to anger the chief into ordering his men to attack us. In that case, as the priest said, we should have been killed, taking with us in death as many as we could. Yet—was the reason this man gave us the true one?

"Then this captive is not to be killed," said Senhor Tom. "What is to be done?"

"I have not said he will not be killed. If he is killed it will be by order of Andirah, who alone has the power to command it."

I sniffed, recalling how this *pajé* had given most of the orders that day. The memory aroused again my suspicion that he was steadily lying. Soon this distrust of him became much stronger.

"How does the prisoner look?" the North American demanded.

The reply was so prompt that it seemed as if the Indian had been expecting it.

"A tall man. Yellow of face. A thick

mouth, the eyes of a *boh*—snake—and the nose of a hawk."

For a moment we were quiet. Into our minds came the thought of the man whose bones we had found on the bank above the rusty rifle; the skull with the bullet-hole, the knife with four nicks, and the words of the *senhorita*. She had described just such a man as this *pajé* now told of. And the priest did not know that man was dead.

I expected Senhor Tom to roar out at the liar, but he did not. Instead, he acted pleased.

"So the men of the Bat have caught that one? It is well. A loud-voiced beast who carries a knife with a brown handle and four nicks on the blade? The mate of the dog killed by the men of Andirah? Is it so?"

"It is so, Tupahn," the priest agreed. "Both have done evil to our people. The short one died quickly. The tall one may not die so fast."

He talked more easily now, and held himself as if gaining confidence. Senhor Tom's eager tone had fooled him into thinking us deceived. And when the North American smiled as he spoke to us in English the priest began to swell with his usual arrogant look. He would not have felt so easy if he had understood the words.


"I've caught him," said the explorer. "Caught him in a cold lie. Now maybe I can jolt him."

Changing back to Tupi, he roared:

"Snake-tongued priest! That man is dead! His bones lie beside a creek near the lake of Black Hawk. I myself have seen them. Now indeed you shall pay the price of your lies. Heat your knives, men!"

The *pajé* stood as if frozen. For a long minute he seemed not to breathe. Then he came to life with the suddenness of a bullet leaving a gun.

Straight through the fire he jumped. Straight on he bounded past the *tambo*. As we sprang after him he vanished among the trees toward the creek.

 INTO those trees we plunged in pursuit. Twice we heard him stumble and fall, tripped by something in the dark, but before we could find him he was up and away. We too bumped trees and fell over roots. Then we halted. From the water came a loud splash.

"Gone!" Pedro panted. "Back and get lights!"

Scrambling back to the fire, we snatched blazing sticks and ran to our canoes. Up and down the stream we ranged until our lights went out. We saw nothing but black water, heard nothing but the little wash of ripples along the bank. The *pajé* of Andirah was gone as if swallowed by some water-monster.

"I am afraid the fool has drowned," Pedro grumbled. "Not that I care what became of him, but now we can not make him talk."

"We could not make him talk anything but lies while we had him," I replied. "So we have lost nothing."

But I was down-hearted because that Indian had escaped from us before we could scare him into telling what he knew, as well as angry with myself for letting him get away. We knew no more than when we had taken him from his hut—except that we now were certain he was a stubborn liar. Yet, as I thought of this, I realized that even that small knowledge was a gain; realized too that he must have some powerful reason for lying so doggedly when he believed we were about to torture him. And, thinking further, I felt that his reason must be this—his fear of the consequences of falsehood was less than his fear of what we might do to him if he told us the truth.

When we reached Senhor Tom again I spoke out this thought. He nodded slowly, and for a little time he said no word. When he did speak he did not reproach us for our carelessness. It was never his way to fume over what was past and done.

"You're right, Lourenço," he said. "And so were you right, Pedro, when you said the *pajé* was at the bottom of some trickery. Now let's boil down events so far.

"We know a prisoner was taken. And in spite of the word of Andirah and his *pajé*, we have every reason to suppose that the prisoner was our Lady Marion. She must have been somewhere in the *maloca* when we were there. She must have been there when you fellows returned this afternoon and found the tribe all inside. She may have been inside that bat-mask you saw going to the priest's house, or she may not. If she wasn't, she must have been tied up tight in the *maloca* when the gang went into the woods. In that case she certainly would be there when you, Pedro, spied into the *maloca* soon afterward. And you saw no sign of her."

"No sign, senhor," Pedro echoed. "I crawled up to the rear, worked a hole in the wall, and stood there watching. I saw only Indians; and those Indians did not act as if any one else was there. They were doing the usual things—cooking, resting, working on weapons, talking. What they talked about I do not know, but they showed no excitement or sign of anything unusual."

"So. Then she must be in the hut of the *pajé* or——"

He hesitated and shut his teeth.

"—or dead," he finished. "And I don't believe she's dead. I won't believe it until I have to. Tucunas aren't butchers. They're a good bunch, on the whole, and friendly to whites. Of course they differ among themselves, just as any people do—some good, some bad; and things are upset now because of the anti-white war that measly Black Hawk tried to start. But I'm betting our girl is alive and in that priest-house."

"But where?" I protested. "We both looked everywhere——"

"Maybe not everywhere. Remember that house belongs to the *pajé*, who is a wizard and so on. A house of that kind is likely to be full of tricks. I want to go over that house inch by inch, move everything around, poke into the walls and the roof and the ground and—I was going to say 'into the jars,' but you tell me you looked into all of them. Come on, let's go."

He arose with as much snap as if it were broad day and his sight were perfect. We looked at him, at the black jungle around us, and back at him. To travel through the darkness would be slow work for us, though to him night and day were all the same now. Yet, after reaching the house of the *pajé*, we should have all night in which to search it undisturbed; for none of the Tucunas was likely to come there. And we too, though we could not imagine how that hut could conceal a captive, became eager to search it more carefully.

So we gathered bamboo torch-wood, killed our fire, and started.

Though we had our own trail to follow on this second journey, our progress through the gloomy forest would have been slow even without Senhor Tom. As it was, we advanced only by using the same plan as on our first trip to the *maloca*; I went ahead, bending over to watch the footmarks, while Pedro led our companion.

Around us the night noises resounded, and from time to time eyes gleamed at us in the torchlight. Twice we saw eyes so widely spaced that they could belong only to one kind of animal—a jaguar, slipping along through the forest and watching us. But the brute did not attack, and when we drew near the Indian settlement we lost sight of him—though he gave a snarling, coughing roar after he disappeared, and we knew he was not far off.

At last we came out in the little open space behind the hut of the *pajé*. Just at the edge of the bush I had to drop one of the torches, which had burned down so that it was almost blistering my hand; and, though I still had a couple of sticks left, I did not light another.

Now that we were in the open it was just as well to approach stealthily, even though we believed all the Tucunas to be in their tribal house.

Stepping carefully, we crossed the bare ground with ears strained and eyes peering through the gloom. Overhead the stars gleamed bright, and as we neared the hut its roof loomed plainly against the sky. Past the end of the place we went, along the side, and around the corner where the torn door hung partly open. There we paused, listening hard.

No sound came from within the priest-house. Beyond the doorway all was black and still. From the direction of the *maloca* came no noise. I stepped into the hut, Pedro following closely. Again we listened, hearing nothing near us.

Without waiting for the door to be shut, I struck a match and glanced about. While the match burned I saw nothing new. But as the flame dwindled and died Pedro sucked in his breath sharply and I realized that he had seen something.

"The jar!" he whispered excitedly. "The jar of the snake!"

Swiftly I scratched another match. As its little blaze flared out I saw what he meant.

The broad-bottomed jar holding the dead *surucucu* had been moved. It still stood on its flat base, and its wicker plug lay near, just as I had left it. But the vessel now was more than two feet farther to the right than it had been.

And in the ground which had been covered by that wide bottom gaped a black hole.

X



THE match went out.

Once more I scraped a fresh fire-stick, and this time I gave its flame to a new torch. By the larger light we looked down into the cavity.

It was empty.

But it had not been empty long. At its edge dirt was broken away, and at the break showed fresh finger-marks; marks made by the hands of some one pulling himself up out of the pit.

Lowering the light, I examined the hole itself. It looked about five feet deep, and its sides were lined by a tube of woven sticks which would keep them from caving in.

"What is it?" asked Senhor Tom.

We told him what we had found. He nodded shortly.

"That's one of the things I thought of," he said. "I'll tell you why after you look around some more. Get busy now, and move everything."

But before we began a thorough search Pedro noticed something else.

"That cursed bat-mask is gone," he pointed out.

So it was. The hideous thing had vanished.

"A queer thing for an escaping prisoner to carry off," I said. "Perhaps, though, some one else took it. Before we go, let us see if more holes are here."

Swiftly we moved every jar, stamped on the ground, explored the walls and the roof with our knives. We found no other hiding-place.

"Uh-huh," said our comrade when we told him. "That ends our visit here. I thought of the possibility of a ground-hole for this reason—the Tucunas have a habit of burying their chiefs in big jars under their houses. Knowing this, it occurred to me that the medicine-man might use a burial jar, or anyway a hole in the ground, to conceal something that wasn't dead.

"If we'd come here a little sooner we might have found what we've been hunting for. Now we haven't much chance of trailing anybody until morning. No one knows what may happen before then."

We said nothing. But I thought of that jaguar which had slipped along beside us, not quite willing to attack three men carrying fire. If he should meet a lone wanderer with no light, he might be more than willing to make his kill.

I turned toward the door. But Pedro took the smoky torch from me, lay down beside the hole, and lowered the light to the full length of his arm. Before I could puzzle out what he was doing he arose again.

"The dirt in the bottom of that hole has boot-tracks in it," he told us. "Now if we can——"

A noise stopped him. Shouts were rising in the clearing beyond us, where the *maloca* stood. One voice yelled so loud that we caught the words "*anyi*!" and "*andirah*"—devil and bat.

"Bat-devil," Pedro repeated. "The bat-mask is there at the *maloca*! Come!"

Grasping Senhor Tom's hands, we lunged out of the place and ran for the path leading to the tribal house.

Luckily we found it without loss of time, and very soon we had passed through the forest and emerged into the larger clearing. At the farther end of the tribal house lights flared, and it was there that the commotion was loudest. There was no doubt that the Tucunas were awake and that many of the men were outdoors with lights and weapons. But we ran on, determined now to see that prisoner in spite of Andirah and all his tribe.

Yet even as we ran we realized that the lights were fading out and that the noise was passing into the house. When we reached the farther corner and turned toward the door we saw only a number of Indians who seemed to be awaiting us. They peered at us in the light of our flickering torch. Into their faces came blank surprise.

"The whites! Tupahn!" they grunted.

No doubt they had thought our torch to be that of their *pajê*, running from his hut in pursuit of the escaping prisoner.

"Tell them to let us pass, *senhor*," Pedro muttered. "Most of them have gone inside, and the mask also."

Senhor Tom, though nearly out of breath after his blind run between us, had not lost his voice.

"Aye, Tupahn!" he boomed. "We come again—to tell the Bat his *pajê* is a vile liar. Stand aside and let us enter!"

Staring at us, peering beyond us to see whether their priest followed, they gave way.

Through the doorway we crowded and toward the chief's fire we strode. Tucunas in our way got shoved roughly aside. The clatter of voices ahead of us quickly died. By the time we had forced our way to the

central space the whole big house was quiet.

The silence was broken by Pedro's shout.

"At last! The *senhorita*!"



THERE on the ground before old Andirah, who sat in his hammock just as we had last seen him, lay a small figure in khaki. Our Lady Marion was there, yes; but whether it was the living girl, or only her body I could not tell. Straight and still she lay, her wonderful eyes closed and her face seeming dead white against her closely coiled black hair and the dark ground beneath. At her feet, looking like the head of a demon protruding above the ground, the bat-mask stood leering wickedly.

"Thank God!" Senhor Tom cried in a choked tone. "Marion! We are here! Speak up!"

"She seems to be in a swoon, comrade," I told him. I fervently hoped it was nothing worse. "She lies quiet before Andirah——"

"By the Almighty, if she's dead——" he rasped, his hand going to his gun.

But Pedro grabbed that hand.

"Not too fast, *senhor*!" he warned. "Slow haste goes farthest. Have care."

The North American gulped and nodded. Then he asked—

"Is the chief in his hammock?"

"Yes."

"Andirah, chief of the people of the Bat!" thundered Senhor Tom. "I come again for my woman. That is she on the ground before you. You said no woman had been brought here. Yet here she is. You hid her from me! You handed her over to that stinking dog of a *pajê*! Your tongue is forked! Now that I find her again, I will have her!"

The old chief sat as if struck dumb. His hollow eyes rested on us without a blink. Then, slowly, he bent a little and stared down at the white face upturned to him.

"Alive or dead, I will have her!" our comrade raged. "And if she be dead, you too go to death! Bat? Chief? You will be chief among the bats of —— if you have destroyed her!"

He choked again. His hand tugged once more at his holstered gun, and once more Pedro gripped it hard. As slowly as he had bent, the old man sat up. His thin voice spoke.

"The eyes of the Bat are old and dim. They see not as they saw in the years that

are gone. Yet they see. They see here a man with beardless face. If this be no man but a woman, why wears the woman the clothing of a man?"

For a moment we looked hard at him. As ever, his face was honest as the day. Suddenly our minds found light.

"*Por Deus!* That is it!" Pedro cried. "He sees dimly, as he says. The *senhorita* wears your clothing, Senhor Tom. She speaks no Tupi, could not understand what was said to her, made no answer. That rascally priest must have told the chief she was a man, an enemy, partner of the one who was killed. And the Bat, half blind and seeing what seemed to be a man, believed it all. Let us see if I am right."

Stepping close to the chief, he went on:

"Tell us, *heramuhm*—grandfather—did your *pajé* say this was a man?"

He smiled as he spoke; and that handsome, boyish partner of mine could almost smile a bird into his hands if he tried. After a tight squint into his face the old man also smiled a little.

"It is so, *herayi*—my son—. Do you tell me he spoke false?"

"I do. He is crooked as a snake, and his tongue is split at both ends. If you believe me not, the proof is plain. Ask your own people to look on this one and say whether the face and hair are those of man or woman."

"So shall it be," the Bat agreed. He spoke to those nearest. But none of them needed to look. Their eyes were better than his, and they had known what he was just learning. A droning chorus of voices answered—

"*Kunyim buku.*" (Young woman).

While the voices still sounded I stepped forward, dropped on one knee, and made a swift test of that still body.

"She lives, comrade!" I called. "She is not hurt."

Before Senhor Tom could answer, the voice of old Andirah rose in shrill rage.

"You dumb beasts! Why did you not say before that this was a woman?"

His people stood dumb indeed, looking at him and at one another. Finally a man said sullenly—

"The *pajé*—"

But he did not finish. At that instant a murmur ran through the crowd—the same words he had spoken, but in a different tone.

"The *pajé*!"

Turning, I saw coming toward us the priest himself.

He was streaked with mud, scratched by thorns, limping from some hurt received in his struggle homeward through the black bush. But he was uglier than ever. His under teeth showed now in a long line of yellow fangs, and through his wet hair his eyes gleamed like those of a mad animal. He was coming from the door in a lurching scramble, and evidently had heard only the last words spoken—his own title. So he thought himself still the power behind the chief.

At sight of us he snarled. And he lost no time in denouncing us.

"Andirah," he growled, "these men come to kill you! They have tried to torture and murder me, *pajé* of your people, but by my power I vanished from them. Now slay them quickly, before they strike at you! Warriors, spear them!"

In that moment it was easy to see that the men of the tribe had long been used to obeying the commands of the priest. Several spearmen near us promptly lowered their weapons. But then their hands halted, and no man moved toward us. Instead, all glanced at their chief.

"It is well for you, Tucunas, that you hesitate," Pedro said grimly, holding our one rifle leveled at the nearest man's body. "We do not die meekly. And it is well for you that you look for orders to the chief. This false priest of yours already has deceived your ruler as well as us; has made a fool of the Bat and brought down on him the wrath of the Thunderstorm. Andirah will no longer allow such a traitor to speak for him."

The speech, like a double-edged knife, cut two ways. It made every Tucuna realize that it was indeed unsafe to obey their *pajé* without thinking; and it madened their chief against the medicine-man. The thin old voice broke out in a screech of fury.

"Down with those spears!" The weapons sank to the ground. "You snake! You split-mouthed vulture! You filth! No more are you *pajé* of the Bat! You shall be the dog of the women! You shall be spat on by the children! You shall work in the crops, a slave, a beast! You shall—"

His shrill tones cracked. Then they were drowned by the roar of Senhor Tom's voice.

"Give him to me, Andirah! He is my enemy and yours. Tupahn the Thunderstorm will give him his punishment!"

As he spoke he swung toward the place where he had heard the priest demand our lives. But the *pajé* had stepped a little aside. So, though Senhor Tom spoke to him, his unseeing eyes rested on a post.

"Come here to me, stealer of women!" he snapped. "With my bare hands alone I will break you!"

With the words he unbuckled his gun-belt and held it out toward us. To keep it from falling, I grasped it. But I whispered:

"Are you mad, comrade, to fight a man you can not see? He is heavier than you. Let me fight him!"

"He's my meat!" was the hoarse answer. "Hands off!"

The *pajé*, who had taken a backward step, now was watching him like a hawk. Suddenly he broke out in a jarring laugh.

"Tupahn?" he jeered. "This man Tupahn? No! Andirah, these three make a fool of you indeed. This is no Tupahn, killer of Black Hawk. He is only a loud-mouthed pretender. He can not even see! He is blind!"

But before the Bat could waver and grow suspicious of us, Senhor Tom echoed the words.

"I am blind. My eyes see not. The bullet of the man caught by the Tucunas killed my sight. But I am Tupahn! And, blind or not, Tupahn can punish his foes. Unless you fear a blind man, you skulking *pajé* of a brave tribe, come and fight!"

A hoarse mutter of admiration went around the big house. Old Andirah cackled.

"Tupahn speaks well," he cried. "Better blind eyes and a straight tongue than a twisted mouth. Let Tupahn break his foe as he has promised! Men, put them together!"

This time the men of the tribe did not hesitate. Those behind the *pajé* gave him a sudden shove. Stumbling, snarling, he lurched forward at our comrade.

"On guard, *senhor!*" I warned.



INSTANTLY Senhor Tom struck out with both hands. One blow missed. The other caught the Indian solidly under the heart. The crack of fist on flesh was like a pistol-shot. The *pajé* gasped, staggered, then clutched with both hands for his foe's throat.

But the white man, having once felt his enemy, leaped and grappled. The clutching hands missed his throat, scraped past his neck, curved around behind him—then the Indian's arms clamped tight and he strove to crush our comrade down.

For a moment they strained there, the priest hissing through his teeth and slobbering like an animal, the blind man feeling for some arm-hold he wanted. All at once he gave back and stepped aside in the same instant, heaved—and the fight became a whirling tangle out of which came gasps, grunts, groans, and a sudden yell of pain and fear.

Down they thumped on the dirt. A gleam of yellow teeth, and from Senhor Tom came a short grunt. The *pajé*, like the dog he looked to be, was biting. But then came the lightning sweep of a hard fist, and the priest's head jolted as if hit by a club. Again the fist struck, and the red scroll of paint on the Indian's cheeks was blotted out by a swift rush of deeper red. He sank his head into his chest to avoid more blows.

Over they turned, and over, the *pajé* clawing and kicking and straining with sudden sobs for breath, the white man fighting with less struggling but more damage to his enemy. They wrestled up to their feet and fell again; they got each other down, only to be forced under in turn. They struck their heads and arms and legs against roof-poles so hard that it seemed they must be knocked senseless or break their bones. Yet they fought on.

Time and again Pedro and I had to grab them both and throw them, still locked together, away from the chief's fire. They kicked over the bat-mask, crumpled it under their rolling bodies, knocked it to pieces with feet and knees and elbows. They fell on hammocks, tore them from the lashings, and tangled themselves until they could hardly move. But not once did they pause to free themselves. Somehow they fought out of their entanglements as they had fought into them.

The end came all at once. They had fallen again across a hammock. It was tied up too stoutly to give way under them. Striking it almost at a run, they were thrown headlong to the ground on the other side. A violent thump sounded, and a roof-pole quivered with the shock. Then both were still.

For a little time no man touched them.

We waited for them to renew their duel. But the minutes dragged away and neither moved. Their heavy breathing, too, seemed to have stopped.

Pedro and I looked at each other. Then we moved forward, straddled over the hanging net, and stooped over them.

Their grip on each other was broken. They lay slightly apart, with the roof-pole between them. I put a hand on that pole to steady myself, and took it away smeared red.

Senhor Tom lay sprawled along on one side, his face partly in the dirt, his clenched teeth showing faintly between his parted lips. I felt for his heart.

"He lives," I told Pedro.

With a nod he turned and stooped over the *pajé*. After a sharp look he lifted the Indian's shoulders. Then he dropped him and stood up.

"Andirah and men of the Bat," he said coolly, "Tupahn the Thunderstorm always keeps his word. As he promised, he has broken his enemy with his bare hands. Your *pajé* will lie to you no more. His head hangs from shattered bones."

XI



THE *maloca* was very quiet.

Men stared at us, at the two motionless fighters, at the chief. The Bat himself sat hunched up, his dim eyes fixed on the huddled forms lying beyond the hammock. Now that the fight was ended, it took them a little time to realize fully that the arrogant creature who had been almost their ruler was now only a lump of flesh with a broken neck.

In the silence we raised Senhor Tom and carried him to the other side of the fire. There, beside the girl, we laid him down.

"They sleep together, *heramuhm*," said Pedro. "Now let us wake them together, while that one yonder who would have destroyed them sleeps on forever."

The gaze of the Bat rested on them, and a little smile came again on his sunken lips.

"So shall it be," he said. "Bring water for these two. Carry that dead dog to his house and let him lie there until the sun rises. Andirah hopes his brother Tupahn is not broken also."

The staring crowd around us came to life. While water was brought we examined our comrade more carefully. He was battered and bruised and bitten and scratched, his

head-wound was torn open and oozing red, and his clothes were ripped half from his body. But nowhere could we find a broken bone.

"He is whole, *heramuhm*," Pedro assured the Bat. "Blind though he is, it takes more than a rascally priest to break Tupahn. If his head had not struck that pole he now would be standing before you and roaring for another liar to kill."

This was good talk for the Indians to listen to, but not very near the truth. Though neither of us was sure of it—and I am not sure of it even now—I thought it might have been the priest's neck, not Senhor Tom's head, which had struck that post so hard. And we both knew well that if our comrade were now on his feet he would be attending to the *senhorita*, not yelling for more blood. But, as I say, it was just as well to keep the Tucunas in awe of the great Thunderstorm.

The water came; and with it came more than water—a jar of raw Indian rum, which some wise old woman brought up. I gave all my time to Senhor Tom, bathing his head, forcing some of the fiery liquor between his teeth, and bandaging him with a strip of bark-cloth which somebody passed to me. Pedro, who had calmly sat down and taken the girl's head in his lap, worked on her much more successfully than I could have done—for I am shy of women, awake or asleep. Above us the chief squinted downward, eager to see both awake at once.

But it was the girl whose eyes opened first. I heard a gasp and a choking cry—"Oh, don't!"

Glancing aside, I found her pushing away the rum, with which Pedro perhaps had been too generous. Coughing, she sat up and gazed around as if lost.

"You are safe now, *senhorita*," my partner soothed her. "We are here, and these Indians are friends. Do not fear."

"Oh—oh, it is Pedro!" she cried. "Pedro and—*and Lourenço?*"

My back was toward her, and she saw only the side of my face.

"Yes, Lady Marion, I am Lourenço," I told her. "And Senhor Tom too will soon speak to you."

At that her deep blue eyes widened and she caught her breath.

"Tom? Tom Mack? Why—oh no, Lourenço! It can't be! He is dead—murdered—"

Then her voice stopped. She stared at the knee-boots and khaki breeches of the man lying beside her. With a bound she was up and leaning over me, looking down into the yellow-bearded face on my knees.

"Tom!" she cried. "It is true! He is here—he is alive—but I saw him killed! I saw him——"

"You saw him shot down from behind, *senhorita*," Pedro corrected her, "but not killed. Yet he is not as he was, my lady. The bullet killed his sight. He is blind."

"O-o-oh!" she breathed, her voice full of pity. "Blind!"

"It is true," I nodded, continuing my work on him. "And yet, blind as he is, he brought us——"

Before I could say more, Senhor Tom came to his senses. And then for a few seconds I had my hands very full.

He had gone down fighting. He did not yet know his fighting was over. He clutched me, heaved, twisted himself over, and nearly forced me down. But then, as suddenly as he had attacked, he relaxed his hold.

"Lourenço!" he muttered. Shoving himself back, he rested on his knees. His face turned upward to the girl.

"Marion!" he cried out.

"Yes, Tom, it is I," she answered. "Be careful. The fire is behind you. Give me your hand and let me help you."

He stared, blinked rapidly several times, ran a hand across his eyes, stared again. Then he laughed out so wildly that for an instant I thought him mad.

"I can see!" he shouted. "I can see! Lourenço — Marion — Pedro — Indians — fires and hammocks—everything is clear!"

And, wild with joy, he slapped my shoulder so hard he nearly knocked me flat, jumped up, seized the girl, and kissed her.

Almost at once he let her go and stepped back, red to his hair.

"I—shouldn't have done that," he stammered. "I—I'm sorry. Pardon me if you can, Mari—Miss Marshall. I'm sort of crazy, I guess."

She made no answer. She stood motionless, a little pale, her wide eyes on his flushed face; and on her own face was an expression I could not read. I could not call it anger or sorrow or joy or pain, though it might have been any or all of them together. It was more like the look of a girl awaking to something she had not known before; as if

that sudden kiss had dazed her, yet aroused her at the same instant. At length she turned slowly from him and gazed around the *maloca* as if seeing nothing at all in it.

"Where is that *pajé*?" roared Senhor Tom, glaring around as if seeking something to fight. When we told him, he scowled as blackly as before. Pedro chuckled.

"You need not break another neck just because you have kissed a lady," he teased. "And let me advise you, comrade—after kissing a girl, never tell her you are sorry you did it. That is a poor compliment."

"Shut up! You poor fish, you don't understand——"

"I understand much better than you do," was the laughing retort. "But if you must roar, roar at Andirah."

But the old chief, with a toothless grin, spoke first.

"It is as you said, my son: Tupahn looks for another man to kill. Now he is whole again in truth. His eyes see his woman. Is it not so?"

"It is so, *heramuhm*," answered Pedro. "His sight is clear and his heart has dropped a heavy load. And now for the first time Tupahn looks on the face of Andirah."

At the moment Senhor Tom was not looking at Andirah. His gaze rested on the girl. But, hearing Pedro's hint, he turned to the chief.

"Tupahn gives thanks to Andirah," he said heartily. "The Bat has proved himself truly the friend of the Storm. Tupahn is sorry that in his blindness he thought Andirah not a friend. Let the Bat now tell his brother how that *pajé* deceived his chief, and what would have been done with this woman if she had not been saved."

The old chief smiled again, but this time his face held a touch of cruelty. Yet he answered readily enough.

"The dog of a priest brought her before me as a man, knowing my eyes were dim. He called her *apuyah*—man—and none of those who came with her said a word of a woman. He said the captive was companion of the man killed, and evil as the dead one. So I gave her to the bat-demon of our tribe.

"Tupahn, we are a peaceful people. We make no war. Though many of the Tucuna nation followed Black Hawk, no man of the Bat went with him. We are friends to white men. Yet we are free men of the forest, and

when we are used evilly we remember the evil, and if the doer of evil comes again into our hands he goes not out again. Whether his skin be red or white, if his heart be black he had best beware of the vengeance of the Bat.

"Whenever such a one has come back to us he has been accused of his evil and given his chance to speak for himself before me. Then he has been put into the mask of the bat-demon and given over to the *pajé* for punishment and death. After death his body was used by the wizard for his magic. His skull also was kept for making spells against further evil. On the walls of the house of the *pajé* those skulls hang.

"That one who was killed beside the water had in days not long past done evil to young women of our tribe. When he was found again near here he was killed at once because he reached for a gun. The one with him—the young woman—was seized and brought here. Because I thought her a man, because she said no word when my *pajé* called her a companion in evil of the dead one, because he demanded that the bat-demon be given his due, I allowed him to put on her the mask of the bat and take her to his house for punishment."

He paused. Then firmly he went on:

"Now that the *pajé* and his demon-mask both are destroyed by Tupahn, there shall be no more punishment of that kind in the tribe of Andirah. When next the sun rises the house of the false *pajé* shall be burned. With it the *pajé* also shall burn. And from now until Andirah goes down into the ground with his fathers there shall be no priest among the men of the Bat. Andirah has spoken."

"Andirah has spoken well," the Thunderstorm approved. "Let Andirah alone rule his tribe, and it shall be ruled well. Let no priest again twist the words in my brother's mouth and the thoughts in his brain. Yet why did not the men of Andirah tell their chief the truth? Why did they stand mute when the *pajé* called this woman *apuyah?*"

The old man's eyes narrowed still more. And of the men around him he demanded:

"You hear the words of Tupahn. Why were you dumb?"

The men shifted uneasily and looked at one another. After a short silence one replied:

"We feared the *pajé*. The woman said no

word. Why should we speak when she was silent?"

"She was silent because she knew not your tongue, fool!" Senhor Tom growled. "She knew not what was said or how to answer. She knows only the language of her own land."

Yet I wondered, and I knew he wondered, why she had said nothing at all before the chief. Even a few words in an unknown tongue would have told the ruler that her voice was that of a woman. But soon we learned that there had been a reason for her silence.

While we men talked she had stood quietly watching, and during the long speech of the chief she had not taken her eyes from his face. Now, in the silence following Senhor Tom's curt reply to the Tucuna, she turned to me. Without a glance at the explorer, she asked me to tell her what all the talk was about.

I let her know most of what had been said, though I left out the fact that the *pajé* was to be burned—indeed, I neglected to tell her he was dead. Then I asked why she had kept silence after her capture by the Tucunas.

"Because that naked leader of the Indians—the stout man with the red curves painted on his cheeks—told me to be still," she explained. "He tried to talk to me soon after we left the water, but I couldn't understand. Then he made the rest stand back a little, where they couldn't watch him well, and made many signs. He pointed ahead, put his finger to his lips, shook his head, and did other things to show me that I must say nothing when we came to some place beyond us. He was awfully ugly-looking—and I learned later that he was uglier than he looked—but then he seemed to be trying to be friendly. He gave me the idea that if I talked I should be killed, but that if I said nothing he would get me through safely. And when they brought me in here this old man looked terribly cruel. So I stood as still as I could and never said a word."

Senhor Tom growled.

"The swine! He started double-crossing you and the chief before you even got here. You see that now, of course."

"Yes, of course."

She looked around her at the crowding faces. Then she asked:

"What has become of him? I haven't

seen him since this afternoon, when he threw me into a hole and buried me alive."

We all had forgotten that she did not know of the fight. I spoke out promptly—to promptly.

"Senhor Tom has just killed him."

I have never understood women. Knowing that I am ignorant of their minds, I try not to be surprized by anything they do. Yet I was amazed and bewildered at the result of my words.

Only a little while ago our Lady Marion had been a tender, pitying girl who called our comrade "Tom" and tried to help him rise. Even his sudden kiss had not angered her. But now, hearing my abrupt news, she paled and stepped back as if he had become a monster. Into her face came the same look I had seen there when he spoke so carelessly about the death of the man shot in his sleep. Then she turned her back on all of us and walked slowly away, looking down at the ground.

XII



WE THREE looked at one another, and Pedro and I shrugged our shoulders. Senhor Tom reddened again; but this time he did not look confused. He resented her puzzling attitude. Considering what he had endured on her account, it was hardly to be wondered at.

"If it's not too much trouble, Miss Marshall," he said coldly, "we should like to know just what has happened since that sneak got me from behind. Naturally we're a bit curious."

She sank into an empty hammock near the chief, looking suddenly weary. For the first time I noticed the little hollows under the dark eyes and the tired droop of her lips. If we had passed through much since last we saw her, so had she. In fact, she must be near the end of her strength.

"Never mind about it now, though," the blond man added after observing her a minute. "Better lie down a while first."

But she shook her head.

"I'm not too tired to talk, and you may as well hear it all now," she said. "There isn't so very much to tell."

"You were collecting wood, you remember, and I was unlacing one of these boots to see if I could make it set more comfortably. There was a shot. I looked up and saw you on the ground. We had heard

Lourenço and Pedro shooting once before, and my first thought was that one of them had fired again and accidentally hit you. I started to run toward you, but then I heard something spring from the trees, and when I turned I found that man running at me.

"He was one of those two who carried me to the Hawk after I was caught at Viciado. He grinned horribly, and when I tried to run to the hut where your gun stood he got in my way and threw me down hard. It dazed me a little, but I rolled over and got up again, and then we struggled around until he hit me with his gun. After that I didn't know much for a few minutes.

"About the next thing I did know was that I was being thrown into a boat, and then I saw him paddling like mad and the trectops sliding past. When my head was clear again I tried to get up and jump overboard—I can swim well—but he knocked me down again and tied me so tightly that I couldn't get up any more.

"He stopped once and went ashore a minute, and I managed to see he was hiding our other canoe. I hadn't noticed before that he had taken both of them, and when I found he had left you men without any boat I just shivered—I thought that now none of you could follow him. But then I thought if I could only get his gun away from him I would drive him off. And so I began trying to loosen my hands. But I couldn't. They only became numb.

"It grew dark, and he kept on going. He worked all night, growling every time the boat hit anything—it bumped every now and then, and sometimes it stuck. It was long after sunrise when he finally stopped paddling and went ashore to eat and rest.

"By that time my arms were so dead I couldn't use them, and my feet were like lumps of lead—I couldn't get out of the boat when he untied me. He dragged me ashore and made a little breakfast, grinning that terrible grin at me while he worked, and keeping his rifle behind him. And then the Indians jumped out.

"They speared him and shot him—oh, it was horrible!"

She glanced around as if seeking the men who had done the killing.

"But after he was dead you were glad," I said.

"Well, I—I was relieved, and glad to be free of him. I wasn't half as much afraid

of the Indians. They didn't look mean, though they were awfully savage for a few seconds. When they took everything out of the canoe and pointed for me to go into the woods I went right along. I had to, anyway.

"I've told you how the leader tried to talk to me, and why I kept still after reaching here. The Indians hadn't been talking long when some excitement started at the door. I couldn't see what it was, for the Indians were all around me. Then several of them grabbed me and ran me over there to the rear of the place, where they made me lie down among some big clay jars and things.

"I heard loud talk, and one voice roaring so that I thought it must be you, Tom—Mr. Mack—though the words sounded like Indian language. I started to jump up and call, but one of the Indians put a hand over my mouth and the others forced me down; and then I remembered you were dead and thought Lourenço and Pedro couldn't possibly have come without a boat. After a while the talking stopped and men went out, but I was kept there among the jars for a long time after that.

"Then at last the Indians took me back, and there was a great deal of slow talk that dragged on and on. Finally they put a horrid-looking hollow head over my shoulders and led me out. We all went out back to another house, much smaller, and then all went away except the one who seemed to be friendly. He took the hollow head off me and began trying to talk again.

"I began trying to talk back, by making signs—trying to tell him if he would take me to the Amazon he would be well rewarded. Some kind of a cry sounded outside, and he looked out. I looked too, but couldn't see any one. When he came back I started making signs again. But then he began to threaten me. I don't know what he said, but his face and voice were so ugly—"

"He said you must do as he willed, or you would die," I told her. "We were outside listening."

"You were! Oh, if I had only known! Then it was you who made such a loud rustling noise at the door?"

"Just so, *senhorita*."

"I didn't know. I was afraid this old man had decided to kill me and sent his men to get me. Somehow when I'm scared I seldom scream, like some girls: I usually

keep very still. So I kept still then, watching the door. The stout Indian—you say he was a medicine man?—he grabbed a big jar and rolled it aside, then seized me and threw me into a hole in the ground. I struggled, but down I went. Then everything turned black.

"I heard some sounds overhead, but couldn't tell what they were. After a while I must have gone to sleep down there in the blackness; or perhaps I fainted; I was dead tired. But finally I felt as if I were suffocating, and I began trying to get out.

"By straining as hard as I could I managed to lift the big jar away enough to get some air. And after a long time, moving that heavy thing inch by inch and resting often, I worked it over far enough to pull myself out. Then—I guess I really did faint then. I hadn't eaten anything for more than twenty-four hours. For that matter, I haven't eaten yet."

"What!" exclaimed Senhor Tom. "Good Lord! We'll get you something—"

She raised a hand, smiling faintly.

"Just a moment. Let me finish. When I came to myself it was so black that I had to feel my way around to find the door. While I was groping about I felt that horrible hollow head, and I put it on again, thinking that if I met any Indian outside he would believe I was some demon of the night and would run from me. Then I went out and started for the woods, but I heard a jaguar somewhere ahead and thought I'd better go the other way. So I did, and found a path, and came out in the big opening around this house.

"It was all dark and quiet, and I went by and tried to find the way I had come from the creek, so that I could get back to the canoe. I dreaded to go back there where that dead man was, but it seemed the only thing to do. But I couldn't find any path. Then suddenly something hissed near me—a snake of some kind. And by that time I was so nervous that I turned and ran toward the house, and I must have cried out, though I don't remember it.

"Men came out with lights, and when they saw me they—began to yell and shout—and—they—"

Her voice died away. She went limp and dropped sidewise in the hammock.

We sprang to her side, lifted her, and worked again with water and rum to revive her.

"Plucky little kid!" muttered Senhor Tom. "Starved and plumb worn out, but never a whine. Dog-gone it, I'm a bum and a brute to get snappish the way I did."

Then, as the long lashes fluttered a little against her pale face, he turned to the chief.

"Andirah, my woman has had no food since the sun twice has stood in the middle of the sky," he said. "She dies from hunger and lack of sleep."

The girl was not dying, but the response of the Bat could not have been quicker if she had been. He snapped at women who seemed to be his wives and daughters. They hastened away.

"Food shall be brought to the woman of Tupahn, and to the men of Tupahn, and to Tupahn himself," the old man promised. "And much rum shall be brought also. Once today Andirah has offered a feast to his friends, but they would not stay while the woman was unfound. Now she is here, and my brother sees again, and the serpent who would have worked evil has been cast out. So let the friends of the Bat and the people of the Bat rejoice together."

A hum of approval went among the Tucunas, and their eyes glowed at the prospect of an all-night revel. But Senhor Tom shook his head.

"Tomorrow let it be, my brother, but not tonight," he said. "We are worn from toil and travel, and we would sleep."

With that he turned back to the girl, who now was looking up at us but lying quiet. The hum among the Indians ended, and all looked sour. But Andirah, after a minute's thought, nodded.

"It is well," he agreed. "So shall we have more meat. At dawn the hunters shall go out and kill many birds and beasts, and the feast shall be the greater. Until then all shall rest in the *maloca*, safe from the things that prowl in darkness."



AND so it was. Among the Indians who had met us men with spears and had handed the *senhorita* over to their priest without a word to save her, we ate at the chief's fire and slept in the hammocks nearest the ruler of the tribe. There was little talk. Our Lady Marion ate heartily, yet daintily, of the food brought by the chief's women, and then fell asleep without a "good night" to any of us.

Senhor Tom lay down next and relaxed with a long sigh. Pedro and I, after a look into the rum-jar, took a stiff drink apiece, coughed, grinned at the men of the Bat, and soon were sleeping like dead men.

Yet, in the little time between lying down and falling asleep, I looked at the dark-haired girl and the blond-bearded man and wondered. I marveled over the queer course of things since they had met, and wondered what might be the end of it all.

The two beast-men who had carried the lovely little lady as a victim to Black Hawk had never lived to return to Viciado. One, murdered by his partner in fear or fury, had gone out in his sleep. The other—how had he come to be caught in the bush with no canoe? His boat might have floated away during a sudden night rain, or he might have been discovered while ashore and chased through the bush by vengeful Indians until he succeeded in dodging them. But he had lived only to commit two more crimes and then to be killed by the enemies he had made through earlier evil.


The vile priest, who would have held the girl captive until he tired of her and would have driven us three out or killed us, had only wrecked his own power, restored the sight of his bitterest foe in a final grapple, and found death for himself. It was a good joke on that medicine-man, and one that made me chuckle.

And we three, seeking the girl—how we had blundered about! Four times we had been almost within reach of her, yet never seen her: once in this *maloca*, again at the edge of the clearing, a third time when we stood above her head in the priest-house, and last when we came again to that house by darkness. If that jaguar had not turned her back tonight she might have met us. Yet, if she had, we should have turned back at once; and so Senhor Tom still would be blind and the *paje* would be alive to lead killers against us at dawn.

An odd set of twists and turns, indeed. And now what lay ahead? We had not yet reached Viciado. Before we arrived there, what more might happen to our *senhor* and *senhorita*?

If I had stayed awake long enough I could have thought of many possibilities. But even if I had thought all night I should never have imagined the thing that really did come about.

XIII

 FAR more tired than we had realized, and secure in the protection of the Bat, we four slept until long after sunrise. When at length we did awake we found the *maloca* almost empty of men.

The few Indian men who were there lay or sat in their hammocks as if resting after work well done. Around them women were cleaning birds or beasts and putting them into clay pots and pans over the brisk fires. We saw that the killing and cooking of meat for the great feast were under way, and that the men now resting were the first hunters to return from the forest with their game. Even as we looked around us the doorway was darkened by several other Tucunas who brought more furred or feathered prey.

They padded in, dropped their kills at their own fires, hung up their weapons, got into their hammocks, and took their ease. The women worked with unhurried steadiness, some who had nothing to cook rolling up heavy jars which the men eyed thirstily. By the time we four had eaten a hearty morning meal the house was well filled with toiling women and lolling men.

The *senhorita*, her eyes aglow and her lips red again after her long rest and strengthening food, watched the scene thoughtfully. Senhor Tom, still a little sleepy of eye and more than a little lame of muscle, smoked and blinked lazily at the roof. Pedro and I loafed and observed all around us.

"Those jars look horribly heavy," said Marion, as a couple of women tugged another clay vessel into place near the silent chief. "Why don't the men move them? What's in them?"

"Booze," yawned Senhor Tom. "There's going to be a regular party, and you can't have a regular party without joy-juice; not down here, anyway. And the men let the women roll the kegs because they're saving their strength for the heavy job of emptying them. When they once start in they'll show you some endurance that'll make your eyes pop."

She smiled, but frowned too.

"They're just animals, aren't they? They think only of their appetites—hunting and drinking. The women do all the work."

"Oh, I wouldn't call 'em animals," he objected, sitting up. "Not in that tone, anyway. We're all animals, more or less—we've got to eat, and we kill weaker animals

to feed us. We prowl around and fight to get things away from other man-animals, and the weak get crushed and mauled and maimed by the strong, as they do in the animal world. And real animals are a lot more respectable than a good many humans; they're not hypocrites. In the animal world you never find a skunk pretending to be a lamb, but you sure do find that very thing in the highest circles of human society.

"Same way with Indians, mostly. The more uncivilized they are, the more honest and straightforward; tricky toward enemies, of course, but pretty much on the level to folks that treat 'em right. I've known many an Indian whom I could trust to the limit, but darned few white folks—male or female.

"And as for women working, why not? Maybe you think these fellows haven't done anything today. Believe me, they've worked hard to find and kill this meat, and the women haven't done a thing while they were gone but hang around the house and talk. Now they're doing something besides clack their tongues, while the chaps who have brought home the bacon rest up.

"Up home it's different, of course. There the big idea is that a man must not only bring home the aforesaid bacon but serve it on platinum plates to some pampered doll who spends her life powdering her nose. And then he's supposed to grovel in ecstasy because she condescends to honor him by eating it as fast as he can get it."

Again she laughed; and this time she lay watching him with a mischievous twinkle under the long lashes.

"Poor men! They have a terrible time, don't they?" she mocked. "Do you really believe all the girls up home are like that?"

"Oh, no. Only the majority of them. Some of them are real women, thank God! But the kind that will stick and carry their end of the log are mighty few. Most of 'em are bum sports, as I said once before. Me, I like the jungle idea better—everybody pulling together, male and female alike, without any idea that they're horribly abused by having to do something."

She watched him thoughtfully a little longer. When she spoke again she did not smile.

"Yes, you are of the jungle, I'm afraid. You have the jungle ways and the jungle thoughts. You'd never be content in the States. So I suppose you'll stay here in

Brazil until the jungle kills you, as it seems to kill everything in time."

He stared at her soberly, dropped his cigaret-stub in an absent way, and looked around the *maloca* as if comparing it and its unclothed inhabitants with the homes and the people of the North.

"Maybe you're right," he said soberly. "I've been up home twice since I first saw the jungle—and I've come back each time nauseated by the smugness and the smallness of the lives all my old friends were living.

"They weren't my friends any more. They tolerated me, that's all. They looked on me as a ne'er-do-well, a vagabond, a tropical tramp. The men four-flushed about their success in business—poor boobs! Most of 'em were salaried men, chained to their jobs for life—and some of the women acted as if they were afraid I'd contaminate their precious hubbies by my yarns about the jungle. They were getting smaller and narrower every day of their lives; and they looked down on me because I wasn't living the same picayune life they were.

"One chap told me right out that I'd better get back to the wilds—that I didn't fit any more in the States, but maybe I'd 'make good' down here if I worked hard enough. 'Making good,' of course, meant making money. That's the only rule they measure you by up home: 'How much have you got?'"

He glanced around again and then went on:

"And yet I'm not crazy about this jungle life. As you say, it kills. I like it only because of its freedom, its absence of nagging conventionalities—because, rough and brutal as it is, it's *real*. And I'd go back home gladly if I knew where I could find real things, real folks—and the right kind of a pal.

"I've had a number of pals at one time or another—men or girls—but every one of 'em dropped away after a while. Why? Because sooner or later they wanted to be boss, and I couldn't see it that way. I'll go fifty-fifty with a partner on everything, but—"

"But you must be the boss, as you term it."

"Nope. Not unless it's necessary. The right kind of a pal, mind you, will meet you half-way, and no bossing is needed. That's the sort of partner I've wanted—and never

found. So when it's come to a question of whether I was to boss or be bossed—as it always has—why, I made it clear that I wasn't going to be the under dog in the combination. So the combination busted up. I'm still my own master, and, believe me, I'm going to stay so."

"I believe you," she said—and arose.

We three also stood up. Pedro and I stretched ourselves again and grinned at Andirah, who sat as if wondering what all the talk was about. Senhor Tom, with a little laugh, added:

"Pardon the oration concerning myself. I don't often shoot off my mouth so much."

"You're pardoned, I'm sure," she smiled. "It was most— Oh, what is that frightful thing?"

After one look I did not wonder at her sudden question. From the rear of the *maloca* was advancing a great, horrible face, seeming in the smoky dimness to be a demon which had risen through the floor. But, having seen the bat-mask of the *paje*, it did not take us long to realize that this was another hollow head, mounted on a man's shoulders.

"Jurupari?" asked Senhor Tom of the chief, pointing.

"Jurupari," agreed the Bat after a look.

"That's the Jurupari, or great jungle demon of the Indians," the explorer explained. "Or, rather, a mask representing him. Guess the Tucunas are going to have a masquerade along with their feast. If so, you'll see a weird collection of nondescripts prancing around after the booze gets to working."

"Does the Jurupari demon drink, *senhor*?" I asked.

"Sure does. Gets as full as any of them, or fuller. I've seen a couple of these masked parties in other Tucuna *malocas*, and the Jurupari got spifficated along with the rest of the gang. He's not such a bad demon, you know—just a mischievous rascal who gets blamed for all the little accidents that happen; they think all their mischances are caused by his playing tricks on them."

The coming of the false-faced demon seemed to arouse all the rest of the men, and some of the women too. There was much moving about, and new heads began to appear. Some were those of huge monkeys, others were of parrots and tapirs and jaguars, and one was that of a very thirsty-looking fish—at least, the mouth was wide

open. All were so cunningly shaped and painted that in the vague light they looked surprizingly natural. And the wearers of them made them seem even more real by making noises like the calls of the birds or beasts they imitated.

From the heads, which were made of woven bark-cloth, long cloaks of the same material hung down below the knees of the men inside. Others of the Indians who wore no animal-heads appeared in loose hooded garments shaped like long sacks with eye-holes cut in them. Still others clothed themselves only with bright feathers saved from the birds now cooking in the pots.

For a little time we were busy watching the shifting forms. When we happened to glance back at Andirah we found that he too, old as he was, had blossomed out in gay colors. On his head his women had placed a gorgeous cap of toucan-feathers, from the top of which rose tall plumes of the macaw. Vivid bands of feathers also were fastened around his arms and legs. The curling lines of paint on his face had been freshened, and all in all he was a very gaudy old man. And his toothless mouth was stretched wide in a tickled grin.

"My brother the Bat looks like the noon-day sun," Senhor Tom complimented him. "Let the young bucks beware, or the girls will forsake them for the chief."

"The heart of Andirah is young again," piped the chief, "yet not so young as to be foolish about women. If girls come toward me, let my mighty brother Tupahn stand between them and me, for their name is Trouble."

"Wise words, *heramuhm*," Pedro chuckled. The old man squinted at him and grinned again.

"It is you who speak, *herayyi*?" he answered. "You talk like one who knows women. Keep them from you, my son. So shall your days be long and free from care."

I looked at Senhor Tom and found a queer expression on his face. I snickered, then saw Marion looking at me, and coughed.

"What is the old man saying?" she asked.

"He says—er—everybody but us is all dressed up like a fire-horse, or words to that effect," Senhor Tom dodged. "Too bad we didn't fetch along some party frocks, isn't it?"

"Most unfortunate," she laughed. "Really

I'd like to wear one of those masks. It would be fun."

"Better not. They've been used a lot more than that bat-mask you had, and they'd be—well, smelly. But if you want to join the crowd, how about showing these boys and girls a real American waltz? I'm all out of practise and my muscles are mostly dislocated this morning, but maybe I can dance on my own feet and not on yours."

"A waltz without music? And with these boots on? Impossible! But—I'll do it just the same!"

And before any of us knew just what they were about, they were drifting in each other's arms around the chief's fire. At first she hummed a little air to set the step, but soon she grew silent. Around and around they swung, wheeling slowly as they went, and seeming to move like two beings blended into one. And while they stepped along their eyes clung together and a deeper color rose into their faces. When at length they stopped they stood looking silently at each other for a long minute before she turned away and sank into a hammock.

Then I looked around and found the Indians gaping in vast astonishment. And up rose the voice of the Bat, who had been peering like a real bat let loose in sunlight.

"Tupahn is too gentle with his woman. Why does he not strike her or kick her? To twirl her around the fire will do no good."

We snickered.

"That was no struggle, *heramuhm*," Pedro explained. "It was a dance."

"A dance!" The old man's tone showed disbelief. "To clutch a woman about the middle and drag her around the floor? Truly the white men and women are a queer race. Let them learn to dance from the people of the Bat."

And the people of the Bat, still looking queerly at Tupahn and "his woman," drank deep of the rum and began showing them how to dance.

Their dance, of course, was no dance at all, but a trotting and hopping around in a circle, stopping often for more drink. Somewhere near by a couple of log drums boomed, and old Andirah in his hammock grinned and nodded his tall plumes, as if to say that this was dancing. Senhor Tom and the *senhorita* sat and laughed, Pedro and I chuckled and helped ourselves at the big jars, the Tucunas forgot us and gave

their whole minds to their festival, and the house shook with the shouts of the merry-makers and the thunder of the drums. We stopped trying to talk. In that uproar it was useless.

So the time passed until the feast, which the older women tended, was ready for eating. We four squatted on the chief's mats and ate our fill. After a rest, the *fiesta* started up once more.

Tiring of the scene, Pedro and I went strolling around the place, looking at the great jars, some of which would hold twenty gallons each; at big bags knitted from fiber-twine, hides of jungle beasts, blow-guns and spears and arrows, and anything else that happened to catch our eyes. Nobody paid the least attention to us now, and we examined every sort of thing the tribe owned. While we were doing this the drumming stopped and some sort of ceremony took place at the chief's place. By the time we lounged back there it was over.

Much shouting and laughing followed. We found Senhor Tom and Marion standing before Andirah and smiling as if they did not know what it was all about but were willing to help the fun along. As the crowd swarmed again around the liquor-jars I asked Senhor Tom what had been done.

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "Making us members of the tribe, I guess. The old boy held our hands and mumbled some stuff I didn't make out, and everybody held a hullabaloo. I never saw it done before, though I've been among Tucunas quite a bit. Hope this celebration ends today, so we can get back to camp and start on to Viciado. I'm getting tired of sticking around here."

He yawned, turned away, and went strolling about the house with the girl.

"Tupahn and his woman are now truly the brother and sister of the Bat. Is it so, *heramukm?*" Pedro asked.

"It is so, *herayi*. With his own hands Andirah has taken them into the tribe and put them together according to the custom."

We looked hard at the old man and at each other.

"Put them together?" Pedro repeated.

"So the Bat has said, my son. As he has put together for life many a young man and his mate, so has he done with these new ones of our tribe, Tupahn and his woman. Let them struggle no more before me as they did."

Again we stared. Then we roared with laughter.

"*Senhor! Senhorita!*—I mean *Senhora!*" Pedro shouted. "Come here!"

"Well?" boomed Senhor Tom. "Don't get fresh, old chap. Just remember this is *Senhorita Marshall.*"

"She is not, comrade! She is now *Senhora Mack!* With the proper ceremony, you two have just been married by the Bat!"

XIV



THE long shadows of another morning stretched across the clearing when we four came out through the narrow doorway of the Bat's *maloca* and walked around the corner on our way to the forest.

Behind us most of the Tucunas still were asleep. They had kept up their noisy festival until late at night, pausing only when they were too tired—and too drunk—to continue longer; and now the tribe-house was full of snores. The old chief, though, who had stayed in his hammock and taken little of the rum, was wide-awake and unwilling to have us go so soon. He had told us the holiday would not end for two or three days more, and protested stubbornly against our leaving today. But Senhor Tom had finally pacified him by saying he must settle with certain enemies at Viciado, and that the foes of Tupahn could not be allowed to escape. To this the Bat agreed.

He had told us, too, what Pedro and I had suspected—that the creek where our canoes lay did not run to Viciado. But he had also told us, after we explained where our camp was, that we could reach the right stream without going back to the fork. A short half-mile below our camp, he said, a very narrow but fairly deep arm of water connected this creek with the one on which we must travel. He would have aroused men and sent them to guide us, but we told him to let them lie; we needed no escort.

And now, with our farewells said and the new day bright around us, we walked across the open space and once more entered the shady path behind the *maloca*—the path where Pedro and I had lurked and seen the bat-mask go by on its way to the hut of the foul priest, and where we later had run through the night dragging a blind man. This time the blind man walked ahead,

taking his first view of the place where he had stumbled along in blackness. The girl walked silently beside him, also looking about as if seeing the path for the first time. Pedro and I, following at a little distance, watched them.

"She should be told," Pedro muttered. "Senhor Tom is unfair to himself and to her."

I agreed. For she still did not know of the marriage. More, she did not know the part her blond companion had played in saving her.

Dazed for an instant by the news of what the ceremony meant, Senhor Tom then had forbidden us to tell her. He declared the marriage meant nothing, because neither of them knew what was taking place and such a proceeding would not hold in "white man's law." She would be humiliated if she knew, he said, and she must not know. And when she asked the reason for our shouts and laughter he invented a joke which he said the chief had made, telling her that we had only wanted to pass the joke on to them. She looked as if she did not quite believe the explanation, but she asked no more questions.

And we knew that though he had told her something of our search for her, he had given all the credit to us and let her think he had been only a useless blind man who owed his life to us. We suspected—and we later learned it was true—that she thought the killing of the *pajé* was due to a sudden quarrel and fight which had little to do with her own position as prisoner of the tribe. Even her rescue from Black Hawk, he had told her, had come about only because we "just happened around at the right time." She knew nothing of the many miles of hard travel and the long days of lurking in ambush which had made it possible for him and us to be there at the right time.

"He does not wish her to feel obliged to him," I said now.

"Of course. He is so anxious to avoid gratitude that he makes himself seem a headstrong, reckless fellow who would as soon kill a man as smoke a cigaret. He cuts his own throat. Perhaps it is his right to do so, but I do not like it."

"Nor I. It is his right to conceal his real nature if he will. But it is her right to know the truth of what has been done for her—and the truth of the Indian ceremony yesterday."

Then I stopped talking, for the pair ahead had halted and we were near enough to be overheard.

"Why, it's burned down!" cried the girl. "Sure enough," was Senhor Tom's answer. "Fellows, the priest-house is gone. Maybe we accidentally set it afire when we came out." He gave us a swift wink.

"Perhaps so, *senhor*," Pedro replied coolly. "It is no loss to any one."

And we passed on, three of us knowing the Bat's command to burn the *pajé* in his own house had been obeyed.

At the farther edge of the bush we found our trail, and through the forest we passed silently to the camp. Soon the canoes were loaded, and out into the stream we shoved.

"All aboard once more, and bound for Viciado," Senhor Tom sang out. "Traveling again two by two, as the animals came from the ark. And thus endeth this chapter of our little story."

He sunk his paddle, and the canoe moved on.

"How many more chapters are there, do you suppose?" Marion laughed back at him. "Every well-regulated story has a happy ending, at least."

"Maybe so, up home. But here in the jungle a lot of stories aren't well regulated. The ending is just as it happens."

Her face became very sober. She looked away again, down-stream. Her paddle began to swing. So did ours.

And as I heard this and watched them, I determined to say something myself in their story. But I did not say it then. I waited for the right time.

Soon Pedro spied the narrow water-lane of which Andirah had told us. We turned into it, and until nearly noon we worked along it. Then we came out into the other creek and pointed our bows toward Viciado and the Amazon.

It was nearly night again before my chance came. I made the chance myself. Knowing we now were not more than one day's journey from the river-town, I told Pedro, before we landed—

"Take Senhor Tom hunting and leave me to make camp."

He gave me a shrewd look.

"Right, comrade. And while you work, tell the *senhorita* a tale."

"I will," I promised. And I did.

It was dark when Pedro brought the North American back with a fine fat *mutum*

turkey. By that time our Lady Marion knew the whole truth. She knew how we had come to be at the camp of Black Hawk; how, after her second capture, Senhor Tom, wounded and blind, had hung doggedly to the search for her and had shamed us and heartened us when we wavered; how he had trapped the *pajé* in a lie, started us back through the black jungle when we would have waited until morning, broken the power of the priest and then broken the priest himself. She knew, too, that according to the unwritten laws of the Bat people she now was a wife. And she knew that Tupahn the Thunderstorm was only a hard mask concealing a very lovable Tom Mack.


"What a man!" she breathed when I was through. "And I thought him callous, hard-hearted—"

There she stopped.

"A man indeed, *senhorita*," I echoed. "A gentleman who does not make a show of his gentleness, but hides it. A clean-hearted man who does not wear his heart on his sleeve. A lonely man who roves deadly places because, as he himself admits, he can not find his mate. But I am speaking now of the man himself, where I meant only to tell you the bare truth of what has been done—the truth which you have every right to know. I shall say no more."

Nor did she say more. She looked long at the forest where he and Pedro had disappeared. Then she lay down in her hammock, as if to rest; but when I passed near her again I saw that her eyes were wide.

When the two came in she pretended sleep. When I called her to the night meal she came as if drowsy and ate in silence. Then, with only a few words, she returned to the *tambo*. Senhor Tom looked after her as if wondering what she was displeased about. I managed to keep from grinning until I was in my hanging bed.

 UP AT dawn, we pushed speedily on the last miles of our journey to the big river. Still the girl gave no sign of what was in her mind. At her place in the bow of Senhor Tom's craft, she kept her eyes steadily ahead and plied her paddle as if thinking only of reaching the end of her journey. I began to wonder when and how she would let Senhor Tom know what she knew—or whether she would let him know at all.

Suddenly around a turn swept another

canoe. Behind it came another, and another. Pedro snatched up our one rifle. Senhor Tom made a quick move toward his thigh.

"*Allo lá!*" came a sharp command from the first canoe. Rifles sprang up and covered us.

"Halt yourself!" roared Senhor Tom. "Back up, you Viciado bums!"

There was a moment's silence while we drifted and the men beyond squinted at us under their hands. Then came a voice.

"*Por Deus!* It is the North American explorer, Thomaz Mack—the one who is called Tupahn! Advance, comrades."

The dugouts came on, and behind them still more appeared. In the first to reach us were Indian paddlers and several hard-faced Brazilians.

"Who are you?" Pedro demanded, his finger still on the trigger.

"River-traders, *amigo*. What news of Black Hawk? How come you to be alive in his land? And—*Nossa Senhora!* A woman! A white woman! What does this mean?"

"It means that Black Hawk is dead," I answered. "Senhor Mack killed him days ago. His army of Tucunas is scattered."

They stared. No man spoke.

"Do you go to trade with him?" I added.

The traders laughed harshly.

"*Si!* We go to trade him lead bullets in return for his robbery of many of us and murder of some of us. Since no one else would go against him, we have banded together to end him. Dead? Killed by one man? Ho-ho-ho!"

"Go on and see for yourselves. It is as I tell you. What news of Viciado?"

"Viciado has been cleaned," was the grim answer. "You will find it safe as a church. The Hawk's tools in that town have been so well plugged with lead that they will work no more. We shall go on, friend, to make sure your tale is not a dream. We want no mistakes. But who is this woman?"

Bold eyes centered on the *senhorita*. They were a hard crew, those traders, and we did not like their stares at the girl. Senhor Tom arose, hand on gun.

"This woman," he snapped in English, "is my wife. Anything else you'd like to know?"

"Nothing," laughed the leader. "*Adeos!*"

The canoes swung past. Boat after boat went by, loaded with men and guns. Each long dugout held two or three traders and

perhaps a dozen Indians—savage-looking redskins whose tribe I could not guess. Later I heard that they had been brought by the traders from the north side of the Amazon, and that they were even more fierce than they looked. In all, the boats must have held a hundred men.

At length they were gone on their useless journey. Then the girl spoke out.

"Before we proceed, Captain Mack, I think we had better reach an understanding. Why have you not told me before that I am your wife?"

She tried to look very severe.

"Why—uh—er—just a figure of speech," Senhor Tom stammered. "It doesn't mean anything."

"No? Perhaps it does, sir. We were married by the chief, were we not? And now you have publicly acknowledged me as your wife before many witnesses. Are you in the habit of marrying girls and then telling them it means nothing? That is a dangerous game!"

His mouth fell open. He stared blankly at her. Then he turned on me.

"You, Lourenço! You told her!"

"Woof, woof!" she mocked him. "Don't bark so loud, captain! You're not scaring any one this time. We know you're just a big fraud. Now that your sin has found you out, as the story-books say, what are you going to do about it?"

"Well, what are *you* going to do about it?" he dared her.

"I am going to give you one choice, sir—to fight or run. If you wish to flee into your jungle and hide there for the rest of your life, I'll set you ashore now. If not, then you must marry me again as soon as we can find a clergyman, and then come home to the States with me and fight it out as to who is to be boss. Now which is it—run or fight?"

"Say! Do you mean that?"

"Mean it?" she smiled. "You poor silly, are you still blind?"

She gave him one long look. Then he sprang up.

"You little devil!" he breathed. "You're in for it now!"

Their canoe did not quite upset, but it came near it. Not that she struggled—no, indeed. It was his swift stride and sudden swoop at her that set the dugout to rolling. But it soon grew steady again, for after his arms swept around her they stood very still.

We two slipped our own boat silently

away, and they never saw us go. The whole band of fighting traders and Indians might have come back and surrounded them, and I doubt if they would have known it. They were blind and deaf to all the world—yes, and dumb too; for how can one talk whose lips are pressed tight against others?

Below the next bend we caught overhanging branches and waited. And Pedro said, "At last we have found a use for that money we found in the foul nest of Black Hawk."

"How?" I asked.

"As a wedding gift, of course. To keep it will bring us no luck. It was wrung by the Hawk from his victims through murder and robbery and terror, and it did him no good. It was looted by us from the camp of the tyrant we destroyed, and it will do us no good either. But now, as a pledge of friendship to those who are starting together on a new trail, it will carry with it only good will and fond remembrance.

"Viciado is cleaned. The big river-steamers will call there again. These two will sail away. Before they sail, let us wrap this money carefully, so that they will not know what it is, and give it to them as a small token of our regard, not to be opened until they reach North America. Then we shall go back, empty-handed but light-hearted, to the Javary, where we have plenty of money earned by honest work."

"So it shall be," I agreed heartily. Then I grinned and added: "But which of them shall we give it to? Who is the boss?"

"There is no boss," he laughed. "We shall give it to Senhor Tom because we have known him longer, but there will be no bossing between those two. He has found at last the partner who will meet him half way in all things and will never quit. Here they come, paddling as if they did not know what they were about. Let us go."

But before we moved I called—

"Well, comrade, have you reached that understanding?"

"Sure have!" boomed Senhor Tom. "Senhora Mack promises that if she can't keep me contented in the States she'll send me back to the jungle. I'm giving her a wide-open chance to make good. This is my first attempt at marriage, but I'll try anything once. If it doesn't work, you'll see me turn up at your *coronel's* place some day. Keep an eye out for me."

But, *senhores*, he has never come back.

SWORDS WOMEN

by Lewis Appleton Barker

IT MAY be surprizing to many to learn that public combats, for gain, not only with quarter-staff and bare fists, but also with sword and dagger, were fought by both sexes as late, and even later than 1730, in England, Ireland and Scotland.

Amusements of this description were carried on at the beginning of the eighteenth century at a place in or near London, called "The Bear Garden, at Hockley in the Hole." These set-tos were frequented not only by the commonalty but by noblemen, ladies, and even by resident ambassadors. Professors of this art some times remained here issuing challenges to all comers, and at other times journeyed about the country, breathing defiance to any and all.

Thus they would challenge a particular town to furnish an antagonist, a failure to do so being customarily made up to the challenger by the town in the shape of a purse, with which to purchase his departure. Ireland seemed to predominate in producing these adventurers, and there is a quaint old volume, extant, that recounts the life of a certain Scotchman, one Donald Bane, a one-time soldier who afterward gained his livelihood both with broadsword and prize fighting.

In 1725, such a gladiator, named Figg, met in an amphitheater in the Oxford Road, all competitors. In October of 1730 he fought his two hundred and seventy-first battle with Mr. Holmes, whose wrist he cut to the bone. At the same place one Sutton, the champion of Kent, and a woman of the same county, fought one Stokes and his wife for forty pounds, to be given to the male or female who inflicted the most sword cuts, and twenty pounds for the most quarter-staff blows, beside a collection.

An advertisement in 1727 says:

In Islington Road, on Monday, the 17th of July, 1727, will be performed a trial of skill by the following combatants:

We, Robert Barker and Mary Welsh, from Ireland, having often contaminated our swords with such antagonists as had the insolence to dispute our skill, do find ourselves once more necessi-

tated to challenge, defy and invite Mr. Stokes and his bold Amazonian virago to meet us on the stage, where we hope to give satisfaction to the honorable lord of our nation who has laid a wager of twenty guineas on our heads. They that give the most cuts to have the whole money and the benefit of the house. And if sword, dagger, quarter staff, fury and rage will prevail, our friends shall not meet with a disappointment.

We, James and Elizabeth Stokes, of London, having already given an universal approbation by our agility of body, dexterous hands, and courageous hearts, need not perambulate on this occasion, but rather choose to exercise the sword to their sorrow, and corroborate the general opinion of the town, than to follow the custom of our repartee antagonists."

There will be a door on purpose for the reception of the gentlemen, where coaches may drive up, and company come in without being crowded.

Somewhat later, one O'Bryan, who had beaten all comers at the Bear Garden, issued his challenge in Edinburgh, under penalty of the usual purse. He had been in the city some weeks, parading through its streets daily, beating a drum and proclaiming his challenge, when the Duke of Hamilton engaged Donald Bane to meet him. Bane met the fellow on the street and to signify his acceptance of the defiance, promptly put his foot through one end of the drum he was beating, and his fist through the other. The actual reply to the challenge was set forth in Latin verse by a clergyman, thus showing the interest taken by the upper classes.

Donald being sixty-six years of age, his chief expressed some doubts, and asked him if he felt confident. Bane responded by drawing his claymore, making it whistle through the air, following which he leaped up to a lamp iron far above the reach of most men, and hung by one hand. Then springing down, exclaimed—

"She'll do yet."

The stage was erected in St. Anne's Yards, near the palace, and the conflict, of several hours' duration, was tried with a variety of weapons, terminating in Bane's favor. It is certainly surprizing that the law had not sooner, as it did in 1750, put an end to such encounters, the cause probably being that they seldom resulted fatally.

The LAST WOLF

by Raymond S. Spears



Author of "To Make It Self-Defense," "The Spirit Behind the Bluff," etc.

THE destruction of wolves had been reduced to a science in the Bad Lands of Clay River. Old-time ranchers had shot some, their cowboys had occasionally lassoed one, and when the nesters came, they killed a few. Trappers first cleaned out the beaver, otter, mink and other valuable furs up the river, and occasionally picked up a coyote and wolf, hides hardly worth bothering with.

Then when the deer, antelope and other big game had been killed off, and the settlers had fed their dogs with prairie-chickens, sage-hens, and the like, and shipped wagon-loads of the birds killed as they crouched in compact flocks on the ground, receiving a few cents a dozen for them, wolves turned from the bird-nests and young wild brutes to kill sheep, calves and horses, and a few trappers turned from their skinned beaver dams to pull down the bounties offered for the raiders of herds and flocks.

Wolves and coyotes were immediately swept from the face of the land. Packs of the fearsome brutes were inveigled into traps and in range of far-driven bullets. The bounties supplied the wolvers with sustenance, and the capture of the brutes gave them sport for which they gave up their ambition to become men of substance and position in the community.

The trappers and hunters were wandering strangers in the lands where they had swept the wild life from the very horizons, so that

the passing tourists could roll in automobiles from range to range of prairie, mountains, and, looking with all the eyes that they had, still fail to discover a sign of any life larger than prairie-dogs, save for an occasional lank, hungry, thirsty and fugitive jack-rabbit.

The idea that a wild live thing could be more valuable than a dead hide, farmer-stretched in the sun, and worth for its spongy, greasy, foul-smelling mass of hair, blood and fat several cents in coin of the realm, was preposterous. If this living thing took from the face of the earth a little toll in flesh—well, he was a horror to contemplate. Not one survived in the Clay River Bad Lands, in the Missouri Empire.

There was a pack of wolves over in the Pozum Range, west of the Rockies; and its dens were fifty or sixty miles from the nearest house. These wolves lived on jack-rabbits, starved prairie-dogs, birds' eggs, and various other meats—part of the time. The rest of the time they ate juniper berries, grass and anything else that would give their gaunt sides a less hungry emotion.

There were no deer, no antelope, no other wild game, except a few stunted and wobegone outlaw horses who lived in deadly, daily fear in the midst of an alkali flat, whence they could see for miles in any direction, and where a motion on the horizon thirty miles away started them, and where the dust-cloud of a passing automobile on the trail left them for hours in a shiver of alarm.

* This is an Off-the-Trail Story. See first contents page.

One day a rancher passed along that trail, and luck was with him. He saw in one pack at a distance of not more than half a mile, nine wolves skulking up a range of mountains which had been vast and grand in some long-gone geological epoch, but which were now washed-down hills and dusty knolls in a desert breadth. It had been thirty years since Old Dan Habosher had seen a pack of wolves like that! They gave him cold chills, for if they attacked his three thousand head of cattle in the next county, two hundred miles away, they would eat a heifer a week, or anyhow every two weeks.

Accordingly Old Dan notified the cattle association, and that Fall a trapper slipped over into the Pozums and spread seven dozen No. 5 traps around the Pozum Range, and in three weeks he had caught eight of the wolves. This was doing pretty well; at one hundred and fifty dollars bounty on each wolf, the trapper was an opulent citizen of the country, for who but a great man could make four hundred dollars a week, wages? All the previous Winter he had caught three hundred and eighty dollars worth of fur, but now he entered the ranks of the best danged trappers in the country.

The wolf which escaped was a yellowish-gray brute nearly four feet long, three feet high, with a broken tail and a twisted paw. Even he had not escaped unscathed, for a bullet had broken a joint in the tail, and a trap with a weak spring set for coyotes had badly cut a forepaw. In a land where wolves had attained a weight of around two hundred and fifty pounds, this dog lobo would weigh something more than a big coyote, say a hundred pounds. He heard the jangle of the traps that his unlucky mates jerked from their beds as they leaped when the jaws closed on their legs; and, when he had lifted one trap himself, he raced away in panic from the region where wolves were damned.

At night he raised his voice, yelping and howling; but it was a lonely land for wolves. Wherever he wandered he heard no reply to his call, except that from some ranches packs of hounds made answer, the meaning of which he learned three hundred miles from the terrors of the Pozum Mountains.

Having howled, and heard the reply in challenge to his call for a friend or a mate, he went off up into a clump of junipers, miles distant, to sleep. Within three hours

of sunrise he heard the hounds coming, trailing Airedales tracing out the windings of his wanderings; and as in alarm the wolf sneaked to look down into the valley he discovered horsemen riding, and a long line of dogs, perhaps a dozen or more, some rangy brutes, Russian Borzoi, or wolf-hounds, strains of greyhounds and the smaller, more intelligent Airedales.

The wolf turned and fled. He had chased rabbits by scent in the snow. It was his turn now to be trailed. He raced away, stopping at intervals to look back from some height, or from the edge of a flat that he had crossed to climb some farther ridge. He would see the hunters riding, and the dogs coming. Sometimes he heard them, the occasional shouts of the men, and the eager cries of the dogs.

Racing at top speed, the wolf would think after a time that he had distanced his pursuers. He would take comfort to himself, and crawl under the shelter of some rock or juniper, where the afternoon sun would warm his shivering, bedraggled figure. Just when he was nearly beguiled, he would hear a shrill yelp, or the rolling voice of a human; and away he would dash, breathless, frightened and looking over his shoulder.

He circled; he ran over bare rock; he tried back-tracking and jumping from high bluffs; the old-time hunters on his trail knew every trick he played, and the time came when the tired dogs and the tired horses discovered their sneaking, cringing quarry darting from cover at only a few hundred yards' distance.

Their whoops and yelps betrayed their exceedingly great joy at this, the revival of an ancient thrill long in abeyance because the source of it had been, in those parts, wholly destroyed. The wolf saw lank, lean dogs, the Russian sight-hunters cutting straight, on the sight-line, coming for him. The wolf knew the sensations of a jack-rabbit now—a jack that has been circled around by wolf after wolf, till three or four had outlasted the speed and endurance of a single rabbit.

The wolf mustered all his strength, speed and hope. He rushed over the divide ahead and down a long slope. Suddenly hope was dismayed. There was a sidehill grown to prickly-pear, cactus in lobes and spines by the acre, many feet high. The fugitive had never seen so much prickly-pear in his life.

He was cornered. Behind him were running the high-bounding, long-jawed

wolver dogs, several of them. The wild brute had no alternative. He dashed into the prickly-pear where it was thickest, preferring thorns to the fangs of the overwhelming brutes behind.

Jack-rabbits had runways amid this growth. The wolf started a score of them as he crawled and edged, cringed and whimpered along the tortuous way, pricked, stung and even torn to the living flesh. He crossed a little open space and darted into another cluster. He stopped at last, lying flat, with thorns in his sides and their points holding him down on all sides.

A moment later he heard the yelping bafflement and pain of the fool dogs behind. With all their experience, the sight-hunters didn't know prickly-pear when they saw it. They must needs bound high, looking for the game they hunted, and come down amid the thorns and spines from above. The humans and Airedales, topping the ridge, heard the squealing anguish and reckoned that the wolf was at last at bay, and was fighting five or six times its weight, tooth-armor, and agility—and winning out. The grand skedaddle was at hand at last. The joy of the kill in a riot was theirs, to reward them.

The fagged horses sprang their knees; the Airedales lost their heads. The men pulled their revolvers and carbines, and, to make the occasion one never to be forgotten, shot and yelled into the air with all the sane, intelligent and superior dignity of humanity in the presence of the lower orders of brutes and such.

They roared down to the edge of the field of un-Burbanked cactus. The noble Borzoi were crawling out of it, limping on all four paws, their faces and smug-fat sides scratched and bleeding, while they whimpered with the astonishment that fools invariably display when their utter folly brings its due reward.

The shouting and the shooting died slowly and reluctantly away. While two or three of the men rode around the edge of the tall prickly-pear and pointed their sharp noses out over the spines, blinking as they saw the reflection of the setting sun down the masses of spines and thorns, like the pathway of moonbeams on the ripples of water or across an alkali flat, the other humans in quick and hasty alarm fell from their horses, who sighed and blew with relief and wished they had a drink.

Then the dogs were caught, and thorns

were pulled out, and other thorns broken off inside the trembling flesh, beneath the dusty, muddied skins.

"My gracious!" one of the men gasped. "If we hadn't come, the dogs would 'a' tore themselves to pieces in this prickly-pear! Gosh! I never saw anything like this! Hey—Bill! See 'im anywhere? Never mind letting the dogs kill 'im! Shoot 'im if you see 'im! Don't b'lieve we better let the dogs kill 'im in here."

"Oh—Jack! Catch Prime, there! Don't let Prime into them thorns! He's a awful lot of spunk, Prime has—hang on to 'im! He might tear 'imself all to pieces, if you don't!"

When the thorns were all broken off or pulled out, and the dogs had been tied up to prevent them eating the wolf alive, night fell, and the hunters turned reluctantly in the starry desert alkali—turned from the chase. They spoke in admiration of the wolf.

"Ain't he the cunning —, though, coming here? Why, say, you know, he knowed what he was doing! My land!" one of the boys cried. "I never saw nothing like it! Say, you know, he'll be killing a lot of cattle around here. He'll eat two-three a week, he will, jes' the best parts, tenderloins an' round steaks, rib steaks, and prob'ly the kidney fat, an' so on. You take these wise old wolves an' they're bad! Yes, sireee!"

One Borzoi with points of thorns in each paw, half-blind, his shoulders poisoned by the cactus, sank back when the rope strained on his neck.

"Look't that! Look't that!" Bill cried. "I tell you, my Popsy-Doodle's the bestest, ambitiousest wolf-houn' in this country! Look't 'im! He'd ruther choke to death'n leave that wolf skulkin' there! He would! See't? Hear 'im whine? He's begging to be left here, to tackle that old he wolf alone! By gosh, I've heard of spunky dogs, but he's the limit! So—so, old boy, so-o! Come on! We'll come back tomorrow— He-uh! He-uh! Come on, old boy!"

Popsy-Doodle whimpered, limped and slavered at the jaws; but he consented to be persuaded and led away. Bill, sorry to take his dog from so noble a desire to eat up a scoundrel devastating outlaw wolf, at last hoisted the dog by the collar, kicking, choking and gurgling, to hang him dangling over his saddle like a ragged blanket.



THIRST, hunger, the urge of unremitting terror drove the wolf out of the prickly-pear patch the next night. He shrank across the alkali flat toward a range of mountains that loomed dark purple amid the stars. Beyond that range perhaps the wolf would find a happy country, where there were no humans, and perhaps another wolf—if a wolf dare dream of such bliss as another of his kind.

He caught a jack-rabbit, an old sick one, and ate it. Jack-rabbits are rank meat, but a wolf eats them. He found, in a valley an alfalfa field. He was the only wolf in all that land. Here were two hundred acres of alfalfa, and the water with which the field was irrigated was more delicious than any water the desert wolf had ever swallowed.

And here was a happy hunting-ground, too. There being no wolves normally in those parts, some four thousand jack-rabbits quarreled with some thousand mollen cottontail rabbits for the privileges of the holes in the vermin-proof wire fence.

The wolf, crouching beside one of the holes, grabbed a cottontail and ate it. He seized a young jack-rabbit and ate that. He hadn't eaten anything but a sick jack in ten days or so. Now he ate rabbits all night.

He ate till his belly dragged on the ground. Then he crawled into a clump of willows beside the run of water that flowed down out of the overshadowing mountain range, to digest. In three weeks he weighed thirty pounds more than in the palmiest days he had ever known out in the old home Pozum Range. He ate jack-rabbits and cottontails, dozens, scores of them. All he had to do was lie by a fence opening and grab.

Then one day the owner of that alfalfa field came along. He found the tracks of a wolf. No other wolf was in the country. He recognized it instantly, the crippled-paw print being unmistakable. He caught his breath. He had a flock of sheep, and suppose that wolf should get into them?

He sighed as he saw about four hundred jack-rabbits' ears above the alfalfa field. It was awful, the way nature was treating him, making homesteading such a burden on poor nesters. Not only were all the jack-rabbits for miles around come to eat his alfalfa, even learning to climb rabbit-proof fences, but now a wolf had come—that wise old scoundrel, outlaw wolf, which

the boys two hundred miles west of there had hunted with their wolf pack, and the sly old — had escaped them all, tearing the finest wolf dogs to pieces in prickly-pear, and even biting the dogs in the hind legs when they ranged through the cactus looking for the wolf, which held his scent and hamstringed the dogs, according to the hear-tell of a automobile pack-pedler who happened to be at Bill's cattle ranch over thataway.

"I better notify the sheep association!" Larens, the nester, decided. "No use any ordinary man trying to do anything with that wolf. Why, he'd likely kill a man's sheep just out of spunk an' deviltry! I better not show I'm int'rested in his tracks too much. He might notice! The secretary'll send trappers—"

Larens climbed back on his horse and rode gingerly and rapidly away. He was looking at the sky-line; and the fat, sleepy wolf saw the horse coming, having been awakened by the throb of the hoofs. The wolf crawled for half a mile in the willows, keeping under cover up the brook, scared, trembling. When Larens brought two trappers there a week later they found the old tracks and followed them, in mud and dust on the stream and on the arid land.

"He's left the country," the trappers said, reading the signs. "He's been gone a week—no fresh tracks. Just the caked mud and the dust tracks, half-filled by the wind."

"He's gone away!" Larens gasped. "How'd he know I was going to have you boys after him?"

Crook Paw, as he was now called, clambered into the mountain forests. He found the heights sheltered from wind, but cold and snowy. He found rabbits, mice, and along streams occasional dead fish, whose flavor appealed to him as a pleasant delicacy.

When the snow fell deep he made a new discovery. He crossed the track of a deer, which he followed. Somebody had shot the deer through both hams, low down, and the wolf easily overtook the animal, assaulted and killed it. Having torn the meat from the bones and feasted heartily on the thin, scrawny brute, the wolf traveled on.

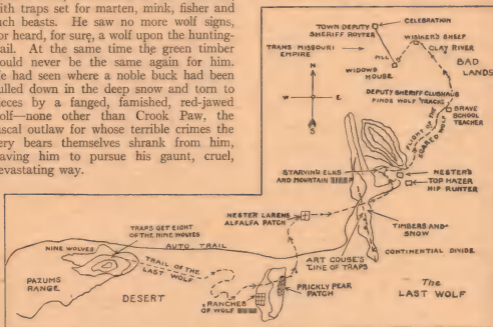
It happened that Art Couse, the trapper, came upon the track of the lone wolf, pursuing the deer, survivor of the Autumnal fusillade. The trapper turned anxiously to look over his shoulder into the dark evergreen shadows. He turned his ears to listen

to the winds, lest they bring unheard the blood-curdling, echoing, careless howls of wolves on the hunting-trail, lusting for the flesh of man!

He heard many sounds that made him start and shudder. Clutching his rifle and his side-arms, he followed his fearsome line, with traps set for marten, mink, fisher and such beasts. He saw no more wolf signs, nor heard, for sure, a wolf upon the hunting-trail. At the same time the green timber would never be the same again for him. He had seen where a noble buck had been pulled down in the deep snow and torn to pieces by a fanged, famished, red-jawed wolf—none other than Crook Paw, the rascal outlaw for whose terrible crimes the very bears themselves shrank from him, leaving him to pursue his gaunt, cruel, devastating way.

cabins, with humans waiting around the fires for Spring to come—the Chinook to open up the frozen land. Around each haystack was a high barbed-wire fence.

The elk and sheep were wandering around in these valleys, and then when Crook Paw



Art Couse made a special trip out to the settlements to buy more cartridges, obtain a better automatic pistol and give fair warning. Crook Paw had crossed the Continental Divide and was likely at any time to come raging down into the fair prairies of the Trans-Missouri Empire.

And Crook Paw, stepping gingerly over wind-blasted snows, rambled on. He shivered amid the desolation above the timberline and shambled through the evergreen forests till away down the slopes he found where there was a happy hunting-ground such as he had never dreamed of. There at the borders of the timber was a herd of game.

Deep snow had driven elk and mountain sheep down from the heights. When they reached the lower limits of forested wilderness they found that the hay, wild fodder of the meadows and sidehills, had all been carefully reaped and cut close. The snow-covered mounds of hay stood in the midst of clearings and along valley bottoms. Here and there five thousand feet below were log

came among them he was amazed to find that when he set upon these huge brutes, gay skippers in the Summer forests, they ran upon weak legs—stumbled forward with their noses in the snow when he rushed upon them and tore the living flesh from their hams.

Crook Paw had begun to have a pretty poor opinion of this world. He had found no creature of his own kind, heard no answering howl to his lonely cries flung across the landscape. Now he found all that he could eat, for the mere biting. He tore at the throats of gaunt elk, and he ate into the sides of the weakened mountain sheep. With the careless delight of his kind Crook Paw took to wandering around with his paunch distended with more meat than he had had since he found the jack-rabbit and cottontail runway out of the alfalfa field. The humans, in their cabins, were miles away, far down the mountain range.

Some one came up with a pair of bobs and a team of horses to haul a load of hay from one of those barb-wired fenced-in stacks.

He brought a neighbor with him. The two were astonished to find their sleek horses prancing. They saw ahead of them, on the snow, a crimson stain. They saw a cloven hoof sticking from a little drift of snow. They saw elk and mountain sheep pressing down to the very stack of hay for which they were headed.

There, in the snow were tracks. The tracks circled around on all sides. The two men, mere homesteaders, hardly recognized those imprints. They looked exactly like a dog's, but the longer the men looked, the bigger the tracks seemed. There couldn't be a doubt of it! They were wolf tracks; and as they stared at the elk and sheep stumbling around, they saw that the wolf had been killing these precious game animals.

They wished they had brought their guns. They wondered if the wolf would come and kill their horses. They looked around, and saw that the wolf had killed many animals. Lots of them lying around had been torn and rent before the blood had stopped flowing.

"My gracious!" Top Hazer, who had a 6.40 arid-land claim with a dandy big spring on it, gasped. "Think of it! What kind of a wolf is it—how big—that he can kill a bull elk! And there he's killed a mountain sheep, too! We better hurry up. 'Tain't safe up in these mountains, with packs of wolves running around!"

The two hastily loaded a sled full of hay; and while one held the elk at bay with a pitchfork to keep them from eating the fodder off the sled as fast as it was pitched on, the other made the load. Then they wired up the fence again good and strong, and raced away on their steep back trail down into the valley, far below, glad to escape with their lives.

There, having looked around and cleaned up the rifles, they telephoned off across the country, letting folks know that wolves were killing the elk and mountain sheep, and that if something wasn't done about it there wouldn't be any game left in the whole State. Packs of wolves that didn't think anything of pulling down bull elk and eating mountain sheep alive just had to be taken care of! The Government couldn't expect people to stand for that.

If something wasn't done to clear the range of wolves, after they'd eaten what they wanted of game they'd be coming after

the fat herds and flocks of tame meat. And next anybody knew, it wouldn't be safe for humans, no sir, not for American citizens, to follow their own public highways. Something ought to be done!

That was just scared and lonesome homesteaders—everybody knew Top Hazer, how he always was blowing, sometimes about hydrophobia skunks and sometimes about red cats in the buttes, and that sort of thing. He always had something to holler about, every month or two. Same way with Hip Runter, Top's neighbor. They traveled in a pair, and tried to out-whoop each other—and then they'd both swear to each other's lies.

People laughing at them made Hip and Top go back up to the valley of sheep and elk, carrying their trusty old .30-30s. They dusted off their saddles and patched the crumbling stirrup-straps. They took cowboy blankets, and things to eat. They burrowed holes into one of their haystacks, with their horses inside the wire fence. They killed a chunky little sheep which had found its way somehow through the wires, and had been eating a haystack all up for six weeks or so, destroying a lot of valuable cattle fodder. But they saved what was left of the stack, under the Destroying Property Act of the game laws.

That night they heard a howling. From their hole under the haystack they listened to the wolves filling the bleak valley with their horrid hunting bay, which boomed and echoed over the elk and sheep who were moving, sighing, coughing, gasping, beneath the sparkle of the cold stars and the blue-black depths of space between the glimmering points.

Happily the moon rose, bright and revealing. From their hole in the haystack the two hunters stared out over the barbed-wire fence across the eddying and wandering groups of elk and sheep. Here and there was a space of pure white snow; and into these spaces they saw the black shapes of the lank, uneasy elk walking, lifting one hoof at a time, and nosing down into the wind-packed snow, and then moving on again, and digging some more. They saw one elk walking, suddenly begin to turn around in a circle, sinking on bending knees, its head weaving.

"Gracious!" Hazer whispered. "He's got locoed! He's goin' crazy!"

Just then they saw something. It was a

dark, fleeting shadow of a thing, an animal like a silhouette against the black snow in the moonlight. They held their breaths. One end was pointed, the other a straight, long tail, and beneath were fast twinkling legs.

This thing led straight at the elk which was perhaps going mad. It circled around the elk, started to rush in, backed away, went around the other side and started in again. Suddenly the elk raised its head in a frantic, gasping bawl. It plunged and jumped about, but feebly. The two watchers whispered.

"It's—it's a wolf! Shoot! Shoot!"

They pulled their rifles up and shot, emptying their magazines, and yelling words of encouragement to each other. The horses in the haystack enclosure began to gallop in terror. One dashed past the hole in the hay, and a bullet by chance broke its neck. The two men held the fort till morning. Then they scurried away on their horses, leaving their dead pack-horse where it fell.

The battle with the pack of wolves was over, and the humans had escaped. People just had to believe now, especially as forty miles away, out over the open prairies, Deputy Sheriff Cubhaus, an old-timer, found a wolf-track in the snow, a wolf which had a crooked paw, and which was traveling for further orders eastward.



THE alarm was sent forth to watch out for the infamous old rascal.

Crook Paw was on the rampage. His insolence knew no bounds! He was raiding the Trans-Missouri Empire! Men who hadn't seen anything larger than a jack-rabbit in fifteen years thrilled to the call to battle.

Old .44s, .45-90s that had the reputation of killing grizzlies, .40-82s, and a .50-110-540, with which the last antelope had been brought down at eight hundred yards nine years before, were all brought forth, and green-jacketed ammunition was rubbed and polished till it looked like old brass, ready for the wolf that had come back to the stamping-ground of the buffalo, coyote, antelope, cattle-kings and horse-thieves, now given over to peaceful agriculture and the voice of wheat quotations in the telephone.

Once more the wild spirit of the past stirred in the breasts of old-timers. Crook

Paw had come to challenge the supremacy of humans. The Last Gore school house, nine miles east of Rosemary Butte, built of sod and old-fashioned, burning lignite in its stove, with eleven helpless little pupils and a brave school-teacher, Miss Amanda Yonson, had no idea of figuring in the annals of the prairies. Yet suddenly one of the children in all innocence and ignorance cried—"Oh, look at that!"

The teacher started at this unusual break in discipline, and saw a fearsome, bedraggled, grayish brute, with pointed ears and wide open mouth, and tongue hanging long and red over a line of gleaming white teeth.

She screamed, rushed to the door to double-bar it, seized upon the long iron poker, and, sending the children to the windows to repel any attack, held the school-house against the terror of the prairies, which was wise enough to go scurrying on at the first defiant sound. And when that night the people came to investigate they found that the wolf had been there—but in vain. Crook Paw hadn't been famished enough to attack the school, to eat anybody.

The Empire Clarion gathered and printed the story of the coming of the wolf, using the telephone unstintedly and not questioning in the least any of the accounts heard until it was apparent that the report that those parts were being devastated by raging packs of wolves could do the region no good, especially when transmitted Down East, whence prospective settlers were coming. Then the editor of *The Empire Clarion* was told flatly that he'd better tone down, so he did.

Crook Paw by some blind luck or instinct went over the brink of the prairie down into the Bad Lands of Clay River. There were a thousand square miles of clay, washes, buttes, coulées, bottoms grown to sparse cottonwood, gullies with buffalo-berry brush, lots of jack-rabbits, some grouse, mice, prairie-dogs, and such like, an occasional nester cabin, and scatterings of cattle that fed on the good bunch grass on the levels.

Wind-caves in the clay strata, ancient water-cut caves, and the broken land offered cover which Crook Paw darted into with all the relief of anxiety and dread that had known no cessation for weeks. A bullet had gashed his left hip; he had been set upon and mauled by two collie dogs and a mongrel hound; he had picked up a chicken that the

wind had blown five miles from home in a blizzard of two weeks previous, and this had saved him from actual starvation.

Crook Paw slunk up and down, eating rabbits as he could catch them. He felt comfort long denied him in the narrow aisles of sage-brush and buffalo tangles.

One thing disturbed him and made him nervous. Smoke from cabin chimneys smote his nostrils when the wind changed; he could go in no direction that he would not find the tracks and signs of humans. They came riding by day in his vicinity, their voices chilling him, and their odors contaminating the air so often that he grew to have a kind of familiarity with it.

He no longer fled when first he caught that scandalous whiff. On the deserts he had fled at the remotest appearance of a human; now he let them pass by his sleeping-place in buffalo-brush at thirty yards.

He wandered about at night, lying close by day. Warm weather came, and he rejoiced in the green stuff he could now eat. Leaves, weeds, and later on berries and such like pleased his fancy. But just when the hue and cry of his arrival in those parts had died down his loneliness led him to howl for companionship, and humans heard it. Then he killed a new-born calf when the old cow had gone to the river to drink. He killed a colt one midsummer night, and in the Fall he hamstringed a heifer; and it happened that somebody immediately discovered each felonious kill.

Worst of all, Hanyak Wisiker had a flock of nineteen sheep, and Crook Paw found them in a bottom. He killed nine, ate an outrageous meal and went off by himself to sleep half a week. Two or three days had passed before he could get up an appetite. Then he found some chickens in false security by a wheat-shed a quarter of a mile from a house. He hunted these half the night and after he had scattered them ate four or five.

The cattle, sheep, horse and homeland associations each offered a hundred-dollar reward for the killing of infamous Crook Paw. Popular subscription added another hundred, and the county offered a hundred, too. Thus the old scalawag of a wolf was worth a Winter's wages for a trapper or hunter.

Word went forth, and in the second year of Crook Paw's occupation of the Clay River buttes and washes thirty-six trappers came

in, some with horses, some with automobiles and some on the train, and they put down three thousand traps to catch him.

Times were pretty hard, for Crook Paw was about the only fur in sight. A few skunks, mink, and muskrats were abroad; and after the harassed folk had entertained about as many trappers as they could stand for a while the bounty hunters took to watching one another's traps as well as their own. There were two or three fights, and six hundred traps disappeared, one way and another.

Crook Paw had a considerable choice of baits. Some tried fish, some meat, some asafoetida, some anise, some smoked honey and singed feathers. There were so many blind sets in the bad-land cattle-paths that fourteen calves and eighty-six dogs had their legs broken in the huge steel jaws.

The reward still stood after a year and a day of intensive trapping by trappers, some of whom built large and elaborate pens, and doped their shoes with special preparations for the attraction of wolves. Crook Paw learned all about traps, from curiosity baits consisting of feathers stuck in snow or sand, to live sheep tied with chains, and traps set in groups. For his part, he preferred to catch his food running free where it listed.

The campaign to catch Crook Paw was good news. The details were too many to write, even if one knew their elaborate, boiled-trap, whipped-steel, grease-papered trickeries. Old Crook Paw, sneaking, slinking, never drawing a full breath, shuddering with eternal fear, was famous far and wide. He was an invasion, he was the menace of the herds and flocks, he was the last and worst wolf that ever roved the boundless empire.

A widow who was having hard work eking out her living while she proved up on a homestead claim made a lot of buffalo-berry jam and jelly, in the third Fall of Crook Paw's reign in the Clay River Bad Lands. She noticed that some dog was stealing her chickens, and it made her angry. She had some rat poison, which was effective for everything from ants to gophers and weasels. Accordingly she put some of it into a wad of jelly, knowing dogs like such stuff sometimes; and, having locked up her chickens, she put the "pill" out beyond the chicken shack.

Next morning she found a funny-looking brute lying dead, all drawn up in cramps.

"There!" she said; and, remembering the county reward for dogs that kill sheep, stock, domestic fowl and such, she bundled this carcass into a buckboard and took it to town. Instantly Deputy Sheriff Royter recognized the dead brute.

"Why—Mrs. Doysen!" he cried. "You've killed Crook Paw! How *did* you do it?"

"I was sick of having him around," she replied imperturbably, and that was a great joke.

And before the next morning, when the celebration of the killing of the wolf was running its course, Royter saw the reward handed to the widow, and besides that a purse of a congratulatory nature.

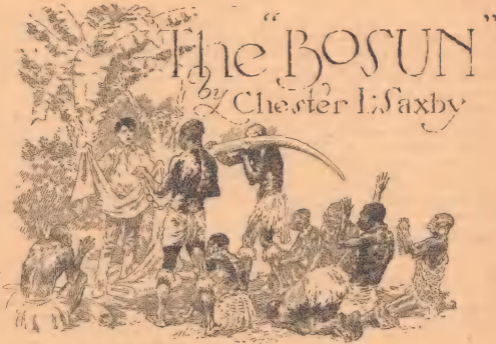
Her picture had been taken; her modest tale of the capture of Crook Paw was great news; and word came in that somebody was going to sink a wildcat oil-well down on the

Clay River bottoms in the section next east of the widow's homestead. Royter reckoned that probably his time had come.

He clinched his opportunity. He married the widow.

And the skin of Crook Paw was taken, tanned, and stuffed. And, stuffed, he stands with head erect, a defiant smirk upon his open jaws, his broken tail carefully straightened and gracefully curved, with his maimed paw raised; and he is inscribed with a list of his sins and depredations, so far as known and guessed, and a scrap-book full of the accounts of his life and times is chained to the case.

And once more no wolf voice rolls and echoes through the Bad Lands, nor in the Pozum Range, eight hundred miles away, calling for a mate that will never, can never come.



Author of "Southward," "The Pot of Gold," etc.

WHEN Captain Plack warped his vessel out of Humpher wharves for the long trip to Bombay he was virtually a beaten man. Of all that life had brought him but two things remained—his bark and his son. In the pride of the one and the hope of the

other he continued to hold up his head, although by no artificial means could he conceal the fact that he was beaten; that was manifest in his absent-mindedness, in his lack of regard for his appearance, in the slouchiness of his standing posture.

But, beaten or not, he faced the new

enterprise solidly—as he had faced them all. The mate, Mr. Jahlet, ventured to think he observed something more than customary doggedness in the captain's face, something softer than determination.

"She's got the right feel under foot this time, sir," he said. "We've pounded her full of oakum. You'll never know she had that storm off Trinidad."

Plack's big chuckle that did not perceptibly move his immense, sagging frame, included this news in a satisfaction that was bigger.

"Well, well; maybe we're due to collect, Jahlet."

The mate's shrewd eyes waited, declining to conjecture the basis for this rebirth of faith.

"Never was a stouter-hearted bark than the *Lynn Reed*; don't forget that. In spite of my mistakes in sailing her, it's been no manner of her fault. It's to be my best this cruise."

"As it should be." Jahlet heard this old declaration with no remark. On his angular face reposed no more than a bland expectation. "Did the almanac—"

"Sink the almanac!" cried the captain. "My son's coming aboard in half an hour, Jahlet. My son Charley—you've sighted the boy—he's sailing with us. The young scamp—he said, Jahlet—he said he was, for learning the ropes. Yes, sir."

Jahlet nodded and mumbled a word or two. He thought he knew what Charley had really said; a cub of eighteen who got under everybody's feet—the captain's cub at that—one need look for no luck this voyage—perhaps trouble for'ard—

Charley climbed the ladder two at a time and swung a leg inboard. He grinned at the black cook and, striding forward, shook hands all round with the crew, of whom he inquired the how and why of the windlass. He had the anchor half-way up by the time Plack bobbed out of the companionway to know what the screeching meant. Jahlet pointed to the boy and replied with vast dignity—

"I'm none of a sea lawyer, sir, and a captain's son maybe outranks me."

"Down with that anchor! Charley, leave those men alone! How's this?"

"Dad, you've got a fine ol' ship. Fill 'er up and let's make a bag of money! What's the use of waiting for the tide. We can pole out, can't we?"

The crew took to Charley *en masse* from that moment. Landlubber or not, this freshness of outlook had not strutted the *Lynn Reed's* deck-boards for longer than any of them knew. He was a good-sized boy, built upon a large model and infused with a fervid sincerity. He announced that he wanted to learn sailing, and when the mast-hands swarmed up the shrouds to loose the foretopsail he scampered up the ratlines after them and fought out the dangerous puzzle of the futtocks by himself.

Plack stood in the shadow of the mizzen and blinked with doubt of his earlier exuberance. Besides the bark, Charley was all he had. But this whilom apprehension was submerged in the thought of Charley following his profession. Over and over again he recited to Jahlet that this was to be none of the losing brand of sailing. Here was a mascot to propitiate the fates and the nineteen furies of the sea.

The *Lynn Reed*, stowed to the knocker with cotton, cloth and paper which the captain had bargained for on shares, took the land breeze northeast to the Nova Scotia coast where she picked up the westerlies and set a course nearly due east for the first long leg. It was a piping wind that an old salt revels in. Beneath the snoring draft of full-set topsails and topgallants, the bark spanked along lustily.

And as she sailed, Charley put in a joyous apprenticeship and sought to find his place in the settled scheme of things aboard. He wondered why he had never accompanied his father before; he ruminated uncomprehendingly over the list of market losses the *Lynn Reed* had showed in the last decade. Even to his landlubber's undeveloped instinct it was apparent that despite a taxing load the vessel possessed a clear buoyancy and such a pair of sea-heels as clipper ships might envy.

With "the bone in her jaws" she scampered gleefully over curling seas and shouted in her stays. Easier far it was to see the bark's worthiness than his own delicate position aboard her. Being the son of the captain, he could not without suspicion take a mast-hand's place in the fo'c'sle; regardless of the boy's popularity forward Plack saw the short-sightedness of that. With no experience at sea a regular responsibility aft was as preposterous to Charley as to the rest. Consequently, he fought as far from plain passengery as he could—

which was far indeed, with his curious nose poking into everything above decks and below—and came to be dubbed "the bosun."

A bosun, an elderly and proper member of the starboard watch informed him, was neither of the crew nor of the cabin but a man by himself, a general help and one to be respected.

"I'm hanged if I care about respect," shrugged Charley, "but is it a job with something to do? I've got to get on to this, you know; be on the jump."

So the "bosun" sat lookout in the crow's-nest and picked oakum in the forepeak, assisted the steward with the stores, wiped pans and peeled potatoes for the cook, kept tally of the cargo and provisions, took down the captain's figures when he "shot the sun" and climbed the wheel when the helmsman could not steady it.

The wind held strong considerably past the Azores, and after a period of light, changing gusts, the bark entered the north-east trades which seemed to sweep out of the Gibraltar Straits bearing dreamily the burden of heavy spices. Infinitely astonished, the boy watched the vessel put upon a southwest course. When the trade wind gradually gained power he began to understand how distance and the winds so constantly disagreed.

And one hundred miles north of the Cape Verde Islands in a morning blow that the second mate, Leiken, did not prepare for, the *Lynn Reed* lost her main-topgallant mast. In a terrific clatter that brought the watch tumbling out of the scuttle and the captain out of his berth, the whole upper structure of furled royal and belying topgallant crashed outward, carrying the vessel over nearly on to her beam's end whence she righted herself sluggishly and not altogether.

Acridly Plack watched the hacked wreckage go by the board and heard the bellow from the wheel that told him the cargo had shifted. Off battens and hatch-covers! And the roaring trades flinging a fine mist of spray over all. Down into the hold and hook the falls of rude tackle on to boxes and crates and rolls! Up on to the deck with the precious stuffs, tarpaulin-protected as best they could be!

Bang, bang, bang! With the carpenter fitting a jury-mast and belaying-pins rattling and men hoarsely intoning the chaos

of the moment. Booms thumping up and up—then the discouraged order to shorten down sail while new canvas was bent. Luffing and carrying on before the wind! Pandemonium! The old struggle against the old luck!

Plack repeated in an undertone:

"No, no! We'll have no trouble—not on this cruise."

But his eyes took on a tired light—which was no light at all—and his new eagerness waned. Only Charley, gaily active in the thick of it, held him from the power of the recurring disgust, the disgust that each time made him curse the day he took to the sea. Charley learned considerable of sheets and halyards and stays and braces and talked of them continually at dinner, which infrequently he took with his father. The glory of the battle had got into the boy's veins.

"Everything furled but tops'ls and spanker and foretopmast stays'!" he reported gleefully. "Hear the holler aloft, dad. She's madder'n a boiling hen."

"She's all we've got, boy," Plack told him plainly. "We make or break on her. Did the stuff get wet, Jahlet? I'm money out on that."

"Can't tell," said Jahlet uncomfortably.

This was the way it always began. There would be more; and the market missed by a month, if they came in at all.

Charley was letting nothing escape him. He had come on this voyage with a reason; his father was not going to lose. They had had a little reverse, of no real consequence when one looked at it with a healthy mind. What was the loss of a day or so in ninety? This was man-size business; he felt himself growing up.

His intensity of contentment infected even Plack to the point of clinging to his re-found belief. Somewhat shakily the bark scampered on ahead of that mellowing thunder that Leiken scanned hawlike with a glass at every minute.

"Thirteen knots!" bawled the youthful voice from the taffrail.

"I'll chance it," vaguely spoke Plack and went to the wheel-house to set a new course south-southwest half south. In the morning he took a chronometer sight for longitude and found himself off the Amazon a few hundred miles. By nightfall the wind had fallen off one-half—in seven hours more it had died out entirely.

Plack held stubborn council with Jahlet while Leiken walked a lazy deck that heaved with nothing but the greasy swell of a passed and gone storm.

"We can maybe get a price for the cargo in Rio," began Plack; "not nearly so good but a margin that would take us home. What do you say, Jahlet?"

"I say, hang on!" growled the mate. "You said this would be a record-breaker, and you'd best stick to that. I don't care if that boy is aboard, we——"

"Eh?" Plack interrupted. "What's the matter with Charley now, Jahlet?"

"Hm!" grunted Jahlet, who had not meant to say as much as was now forced out of him. "He's a Jonah, sir, and it's all my seamanship can do to hold the luck."

"Pon my soul! Do you take stock in that sort of thing, Jahlet?"

"I'm repeating the crew's word for it. I don't know whether I do or not. It don't matter what I think; if I can't get the watch to keep its spirit, why——"

"Pshaw! They took to the lad first off. They like him fine."

"Aye, so they do; a sailing Jonah ain't despised always. But my money's bound up with yours, sir, and to me it's a very different matter. Which is to say, I'll fight any tin-can luck he brings aboard, and fight it clean to India."

Plack batted his eyes and sat very still after the mate went out.



THE calm held for six days. It was hot weather from first to last, and the sun made a yellow light on the sea that was like scorched prairie grass in August. Occasional squalls raced down upon them, sprang into the rigging and shook the ship, then raced back whence they had come—and vanished as they departed. A steamship passed by and held Plack's hard eyes heavily. He was counting money in her. If he had passed in steam!

"Fiddle-sticks!" laughed Charley. "That's a poor way to sail. No chances in it, and what's the use when it's all cut and dried? You're not bothering, are you, dad? The old windjammer needs a rest; that's all. We won't lose on this."

The heat affected the crew as nothing else could. Their tempers became stirred so in midday that the night coolness had little power of alchemy. And in the midst of the

swelter and shortness Charley actually began to lose caste among the ship's company. What Jahlet had repeated of him had been said in merest joke; it was said now in profoundest earnest. A sailing man has the peculiar nature of sacrifice that yields up on the altar of superstition the thing he has most cherished; and the whisper came readily that Charley had brought the calm.

Oblivious of the notoriety, the boy continued to regard the heat and ennuï as part of his great adventure and to flood the ship with his high spirits. When the long-expected blow came off the land, he it was who saw its hazy warning and perhaps saved more than the weak jury-mast, for the wind struck on with the pandemonium of a thousand bellowing bulls.

Thereafter it settled down, tired out all in a moment, and sleepily prodded them on in clumsy snatches so that mates and master renounced their rest to watch for its shifting. In the crow's-nest hour upon hour, taking no account of changes of the watch, Charley outdid them all; his voice shrilled first. The crew began once more to call him bosun and to speak of him so.

Off St. Roque the rain came. It fell in sheets, in curtains, in thick streamers. The blessed rain! Every vestige of the blistering calm was wiped out; the warped boards sucked in the moisture and subsided; the nauseating smell of dry rot was washed away. From wash streak to trucks the *Lynn Reed* drank greedily and knew living again. And the rain kept on falling. There was little wind, but headway was maintained, and men laughed as they lay sprawled on the deck stark naked to get the stifling odor of the unaired fo'c'sle out of their pores. The scuttle butt was filled and many others besides. The steward and Charley did endless laundering.

Plack chuckled, once more himself, reflecting to Jahlet:

"A day saved from rafting water, and no end of good to the lot of us. Never saw so much rain."

But it did not stop, for all that. Limping along under light gusts, they rolled laboriously nearly down to Rio with water beneath and water above and water all around. The scuppers ran with it; the men could not escape it—it dripped into the fo'c'sle, and when the intoned voice of it was shut out for a brief respite below,

a regular beat—beat—beat—beat rattled on tired ear-drums.

Under their breaths both officers and hands began to voice objection. A blessing overdone; generosity grown prodigal! Constantly damp clothes were worse than sweated ones; the dripping of moisture down the back of one's neck hour after hour soon becomes disturbing. In hail of Cape Frio the rain suddenly ceased; the sun shone; the vessel shook herself and plodded south.

Said Charley, "I've seen a good many kinds of sea weather, I guess, dad. Some I liked better than others; but they're all good stuff. Glad it's getting cool."

Plack guttered a disagreement. The heat killed him, and chill weather penetrated to his bones so that he was incapable of thinking. He swore he had never known the Pampas air so cold and was almost afraid of what the westerlies would be. They reached them while he was speaking, and he was pursued down the companionway by a nipping blast. To the boy it was exhilarating, nothing less. His cheeks grew red with the glow of health; his activity increased; his accomplishments mounted. His spirits were not affected; they seemed always at a high point.

It became apparent, as soon as ever the bark began to make casting, that she was not herself. The helmsman complained that the wheel dragged and then kicked so that he stood in constant danger of being knocked down by it. The rising seas gave a peculiar motion to the vessel that could not be all of their doing. It was sluggishness, and an odd sort of sluggishness that she exhibited. When she set down her head to coast the length of a comber she invariably thrust her nose deep into the the green hill of water up which she had to scramble; at the top she spun upon her quarters. The captain's face grew long; the mate scowled and put himself into an ugly mood; the second mate, Leiken, shivered and wondered if he cared or not.

In two more days Leiken was strapped to his bunk with fever, and to all and sundry who entered he expatiated wondrously of the rain, the feast of rain, the music of rain, the opening up of the heavens. The captain, who had not given up to fever, hearkened to him for a time and then ordered the hatches unshipped. A dis-

tressful odor rose. In a voice of surrender he bawled for the carpenter. After all, the men had a right to know, as he had known, that real danger existed.

"Sound the well!" he ordered huskily, fear closing his throat.

Down went the lead and came up shiny. "Two feet o' water," was sung out.

A hush descended upon the watch gathered in the waist; plainly to their ears lifted the swish—swish of seepage rushing pell-mell from stern to stem.

"Pumps!" bellowed Plack. His countenance held a bitter disappointment.

"Great stuff!" sang out Charley, tailing on to a pump handle. "Say, this is the best ever! Just like I've read about. She's leaking, isn't she?"

The captain reeled away, his nostrils filled with the stench of mildew from his precious cargo. In the spell of the nipping wind he huddled in his cabin, shaking and staring sightlessly at the far bulkhead. Jahlet took charge.

"It's the rain, boys," he barked. "Get it out in a hurry and we'll have a look at the mischief in the hold."

At Charley's smiling nod he glared wrathfully.

That was at three bells of the first dog-watch. When the night watch had been set and the first mate's watch sent below, the port watch still pumped, and Jahlet held the deck all through the night, growing more choleric with fatigue. Charley took his turn regularly throughout the span of thundering darkness. One watch went and then the other, and he still kept to the deck, weary and aching but living every minute with a strange, sweet joy that was nothing else than the glory of the struggle. Jahlet might glare and curse, but he knew he was doing a necessary share.

"What's this sogering?" discarded the mate. "Why don't you pump her dry?"

"That's all right, sir," was Charley's blithe solo, while the others held their eyes down and their mouths shut; "we'll have the keel up for you soon."

But with the dawn glinting palely, ghostly, on cramped backs gleaming with sweat, the sea still gushed from the vessel's bowels. The captain stumbled up.

"Why don't they suck?" he protested. "Why don't they suck?"

"Well, sir," replied Charley, who could have fallen asleep if anybody had pushed

him over, "those pumps are the slobbering kind; they don't suck."

The carpenter reported from sounding the well—

"Eighteen inches, sir."

"Ah, that's it; that's it!" Plack nodded absently. The men spat on their hands. "Go at it, lads! There's grog around; we can't get tired now, boys."

When he turned his back some one laughed derisively. Plack swung about and struck an attitude. Charley flushed to the roots of his hair with the insult. They paid no attention to him, however; liberal curses of the "— rotten tub an' them as sails 'er" broke forth. The mate struck the first man he heard muttering; the others he pretended not to hear; he was too drugged with doing Leiken's work in addition to his own. The watch laughed at this sham and talked out boldly.

Disaffection spreads without information; the starboard watch, Jahlet's own, tumbled over complaining. Before noon Jahlet had gone down for his revolver; whereupon the atmosphere grew positively venomous.

Charley moved through it all in romantic fervor. It was too good to be real; he only imagined it, this glamour of spewing pumps and rumbling, nerve-whipped men and leaping, swallowing seas. He might have been dreaming, but for one thing.

The captain was that one thing. The captain had fought the —'s luck until even the man's soul of him could not bear him up. Upon this last crushing disaster he dwelt to the exclusion of all present urgencies. Charley tried to rouse him and could not; another case of the pitcher going too often to the well. Freely had he hoped before; buoyantly had he believed; zealously had he fought.

"It won't make any difference, Charley," he said now. "Let 'em do what they want." His voice was sick, sick. "I'd most rather she'd sink, my boy, than take me in to face it. It's spoiled, son, just when I thought I'd show you how—"

"Fiddle-sticks! Paper smells like bad cheese, anyway. What's the odds? Buck up, dad! We're both standing this. I don't think it's so bad."

By dint of belittling the estimated damage he lured Plack on deck. There they surveyed the mate's work of investigation. Half a dozen boxes of goods had been hoisted up and opened. Paper shred-

ded and crumpled lay about the deck; angrily flung bolts of variously colored cotton goods hopelessly smudged in a riot of hues mocked the haunted face of the master. Jahlet leaned against the fire rail emitting an uninterrupted stream of vile language. Presently he looked up.

"Get out of my sight!" he roared at Charley, too engulfed in this loss he shared to know what he said. "There's the last of your work, and the last of us. By — I'll take this hooker to Bombay, though, and cram it down their dirty necks that ordered it. Keep at that pump, — you! he flung about. "I've got a gun here!"

"Who'll pay us off in Bombay?" rose a dogged voice from forward.

"Eh? Who said that? What's that?" And suddenly Jahlet burst into mad laughing. "Who'll pay you off? Why this kid, of course! He's paying you now; I'm getting mine. He'll pay you off. Be sure you collect."

"Mr. Jahlet!" barked Plack. "I'll have no talk like that! Silence!"

Habit of obedience muzzled Jahlet and gave him time to control himself. But in a group habit is not dependable; obedience is gone. The crew talked loudly.

"A Jonah like 'e says. I seen 'im pipe the wind. — right he'll pay!"

"Bosun, ain't 'e? —'s bosun! Sellin' us out; thet 'ere's the tune 'e pipes." And a long finger shot out. "Plug up the bottom er I'll wring yer neck!"

Charley's mouth hung half-open. They were eying him. They were hurling anathema at *him*. He, Charley, had become all in a trice the center of this wild upheaval. Swimming through this impossible jamboree of emotions and occurrences, he was not simply a spectator of astounding adventure; he was a principal. Mutinous wrath launched against the boisterous wind and beating back to *him!* It was incredible. He laughed boyishly. Instantly a knife flashed past his head.

At that Jahlet's revolver whipped out and held the crew motionless.

"None o' that!" he roared in furious haste. "You go doing in a Jonah and we're all dead men! That's often enough proved. 'Vast there! Easy!"

Charley's mind had sunk into a stupor with the flash of the knife. A sensitiveness, bluntly, murderously attacked, was seared in the boy. He woke from the

dream to face a reality he understood even less. The *Lynn Reed* plunged on; the wind shrieked demoniacally; all else in life had suspended motion, and he stood in a great void ringed by enmity. This was real; this was not drama; what had inspired him in their coarse voices and postures wrung his heart in the brutal whiz of biting steel. All his joy fell away; these friends had turned him down, and where there is no friendship there is no romance. He looked at the men as if he had never before really sized them up, and now found them utterly unfamiliar. They were returning to the pumps without him; he was an outcast. Over a bolt of goods he stumbled and went dumbly down the cabin companionway. The sea was a cup of bitterness.

He lay in his bunk interminably, trying to think and succeeding only in hearing the jumbled sounds of the ship's life. Faintly the clank-clank of the pumps beat like a metallic pulse—nearer at hand Leiken's tiresome voice described the ethereal beauty of the rain—just outside his door the captain shuffled and tapped a pencil and figured the position of the ship. *Shoo-oo-o-o-sss!* hissed the sea.

Darkness fell before many years had passed; gratefully he tried to sleep and could not for the hurt to his pride. The mate stamped down the ladder and discussed him rather passionately with the captain; the captain's tired voice was a mere mumble. The wind whistled and howled; the *Lynn Reed* sobbed in her rigging and groaned as in travail. Leiken's babbling was endless.

Toward morning the taffrail log-line swirled out, thumping, to be dragged in with much banging and confusion of tread. In the early dawn when both watches were on deck, the vessel's course was changed; whereby the bawling of commands, the scurry and din as braces were hauled over, added infinitely to the boy's restlessness.

He itched to be pulling at a sheet or wrestling frantically with the wheel to put it up. Idleness—that was the thing that hurt, even more than this other thing. To lie still; to sit still—this was purgatory. And he wanted to show them—these fickle friends—what he could do and all that he was worth. After a while the captain creaked heavily down the companionway and sank into his chair to bring the chart up to the minute.

Charley opened the door and stood before his father.

"I can't stand it, dad! I'll fly to pieces doing nothing—"

Plack gazed hauntedly at him, oppressed past feeling his son's trouble; but methodically navigating his ship—which was his no longer as soon as the extent of his losses was known—as he would navigate it in the last foot of sailing.

Charley ran his fingers through his hair and watched the process. When his father's numbed mind was lost in the midst of calculation, he snatched up the pencil and began to do the work. With a sigh Plack leaned back and closed his eyes.

"There! That's right, isn't it?" Charley went over each step.

"Yes," said Plack. "Seven cents on the paper and nine on the goods—"

The next day on the basis of the reckoning the course was changed again, to bring the wind squarely abeam for the necessary northing. Eighty-five degrees east longitude, Charley figured it. The wind veered, fell off, blew from the northeast, subsided, held them in doubt for a time and then came on stoutly from the southeast. Absently the captain muttered to Jahlet:

"We're in the trades again. A quick cruise to market now, man!"

"Market?" barked the mate. "With what? Bombay won't look at that cargo."

"I forgot."

Plack's face was childishly pathetic; he had aged in the last week. Charley wrung his youthful heart with the gaunt picture of his rollicking old dad done in by a turn of fortune he did not deserve. The boy dared the crew's violent anger to stand beside him on deck and help "shoot the sun." Pride! It ran in the family. Plack had always refused to shuffle off the reckoning upon his mate. The checking in this emergency would have affected the fortunes of the bark materially, for Charley was not aware of such a thing as deviation, and Plack had lost sight of it. Plack had lost sight of all reckonings but one, and that one had no deviation.

But Charley refused to consider that reckoning. He refused every discouraging thought and demanded that he be given a share in the working of the ship besides scribbling with a pencil some plain high-school mathematics. So Jahlet heaped work upon him, while the crew nodded,

pacified by the reflection that a Jonah must be sweated until the ——'s blood runs out of his pores, carrying away the ill luck.

They held him in the foretop all one watch and immediately shipped him to the wheel where the beam wind set up a counter force that tore his muscles and fagged him to crying exhaustion; then when he ran to obey a command to cast off, and mistook a topgallant sheet for a buntline, the shouts of rage wheeling above the thunder of the rent topgallant sail cursed him to the deepest hell and themselves along with him.

Under driving canvas the bark rushed gloriously for the equatorial calms and sailed through them on a mast-high wind, after which she scented out the edge of a monsoon that Jahlet swore had an unseasonable westerliness about it. She seemed a bride flying with the speed of trust to the false altar of sacrifice. Uncanny, the crew said. Jahlet stared hard at the chart. In a day or two they would take aboard the island of Ceylon, whence they could run close up the coast.

All in due time the lookout cried, "Lan' 'ol!" and the haze collected into purple background and a tangle of tropical shoreline. Jahlet grunted and tried the glass without recognition. Coastwise sailing brought them to a village of poor native shelters. Above one of the more pretentious huts waved the Italian flag.

The captain went ashore, his struggling mind finding this too hard to fathom. Charley scrambled on to a thwart and rowed a desperate oar. When Plack turned his head the boy was gone. A wizened, yellow-faced man greeted them listlessly.

"India?" he repeated with a peculiar accent. "Nuh—nuh; Somaliland!"

Plack rubbed his forehead. They had sailed clear to the east horn of Africa; the deviation had fooled them by the width of the Arabian Sea. He shrugged.

At the water's edge he looked about for Charley. He saw instead a row of inflamed eyes, the eyes of his crew, mad eyes that the heat and the flies were making to boil with unconcealed hatred.

"Where's Charley?" he asked, wondering over them.

"The —— brung 'im 'ere an' tuk 'im into the brush," mouthed one.

"He'll stay there, too—douse my jib!" another swore.

Jahlet bellowed from the ship, and he put

out, gaping back at the gloomy woods. Ultimately he must look for his son there. Why did the boy have to pry into everything? Ship and son—they were all he had; and the ship no longer was his.

The mate reported:

"Leiken's gone. The poor fellow busted the straps. I guess he swam for it, or else he hopped on to one of the boxes we heaved over when we anchored last night. I thought I heard a splash, too. Well, he's gone."

"Organize a searching party," said the harassed captain. "Charley's gone, too. Confound that boy's curiosity! Leiken—pshaw! We can't lose Leiken!"

"They'll never say we added murder to bankruptcy," growled Jahlet. "Where's an end of this infernal luck? For'ard there! Stand by the port davits to lower away! Every man take his knife! Look alive, Baklin!"

"That ain't on the articles," disputed the man Baklin, led on by the others.


"I'll pay you, boys!" pleaded the captain. "There'll be something left; trust me, boys! Shore-duty I won't ask for nothing! An extra day and duff and grog!"

He wheedled them; he rallied them; he spoke of honor and humanity. They were ready for mutiny, and the weakness of the "old man" held them from it. When he talked of paying them, they laughed aloud; but they took to the boats and rowed for the pesky shore, just the same. Leiken was a good fellow; they wouldn't let him die because the fever had sent him off his head. If they found the boy— Their bloodshot leers were significant. Jahlet deliberately turned his back upon it.

But securing native guides required finesse, not to mention the money cost, and only after tedious wrangling that had to do with the fear of bush tribes was the forlorn captain successful in enlisting succor. A muttering band, they set out on their rolling sea-legs for a profitless journey into the nowhere. They went half-heartedly, complaining of the sand and the flies, veiling dread in petulance.

As they penetrated farther inshore the humidity increased; the demoralization grew by ogreish bounds. Through a wilderness they plodded hopelessly. Shapes flashed on both sides of the path; shadows found motion and glided away. A rank silence fastened upon every man so that the

mate fingered his revolver in the expectation of trouble. He was a just man, was Jahlet; and his brother officer seemed to beckon him on out of a sore need. He rather hoped the boy was not with Leiken.

 THE pulsating sunlight of mid-afternoon found them deep in the jungle where footsteps lagged, ready for desertion. So they toiled on, festering with moroseness. They reached a clearing at length and peered through the trees. Ah, then wind-tanned visages knew a sickish pallor, and knees shook. Packed within that natural amphitheater in undulating rows appeared a crowded circle of savages.

Terror rendered the *Lynn Reed's* crew motionless. Scores upon scores of black bodies in various degrees of nudity faced toward a common center that was thus shut off from the searchers. Too late to turn and bolt now! A horrid moment! See those greasy backs bowing to the ground! A rite of worship—Stupidly they waited, sensing destruction in any course. A voice in English wafted outward—

"—rain like rice—all bubbly—most beautiful sound—chattering down like your teeth when you've got a chill! Beautiful and lots of it—making moss on—"

A tremor went through the fo'c'sle crowd. It was Leiken's voice babbling weird nonsense. They had found him. And at sound of that fever-fed prattle of which that immense congregation understood not a word every woolly head scraped the earth, worshiping this madness that is recognizable in every language. Aye, the savage custom the wide world over! Wondrous, strange madness! But, far from worshiping, the men of the bark craned newly inspired heads and stared over that groveling multitude.

They strove to see Leiken—and there he was looking at nothing with a wrapt gaze. Instantly, however, they lost interest in Leiken by reason of another sight more impelling, the sight of Charley standing up and gesticulating to himself and to that great assembly, Charley swathed from head to feet in an outlandish disorder of cotton folds and streamers so hideously run together that their gaudiness rivaled the most brilliant sunset. Charley was pointing to the smudges and the daubs and the eccentric patterns, to their riot of discord; the work of the terrible rain upon the leaking bark.

"You see—" Charley was presenting his case for the twentieth time—"I'm bosun of the bark *Lynn Reed*, or I wouldn't be able to get you a box of this for—"

"Forty fathoms of rain running clear to Heaven," chanted Leiken.

And all the flat noses rubbed themselves with vast dignity.

Plack's eyes started out of his head. He took a step forward, but Jahlet held him back. The old man trembled like a leaf. In the midst of that concourse his Jonah son gripped a wizened, squatting old fellow by the shoulder.

"See that?"

He pointed to Leiken drawing crazy scrolls on a broken roll of paper.

"Forty fathoms of rain running clear to Heaven! He's drawing that. He's got the gift. He makes the paper talk. Brought it up from the sea. I followed him in because it's too valuable to lose. Tell 'em that now."

At once the stoical makeshift for an interpreter did his best out of his meager schooling at Zanzibar. Breathless the black ring listened and drew closer. The babbling tongue of the madman was the sermon of a Moses, and the aimless sketching of Leiken's stub of a pencil upon the rough paper—with his unwarmed changes of intention that made sleight-of-hand magic in the air was a miracle.

A few of the leaders began to gutteral. The interpreter droned the pidgin English to Charley. Charley looked doubtful.

"Well," he said, "I suppose that's all you've got handy. Oh, going to trade with the Portuguese—I'll see what I can do for you. Go slow, there!"

For eager hands were snatching at the smeared cotton cloth and fighting over the misery of color in the unmistakable tone of a great city's stock exchange. Hungry eyes gloated upon the paper that the fevered Leiken marked with black magic.

At the edge of the line of trees Plack strove to fight off interference and rush vainly to save his son. The mate snarled him down fearfully.

The offers as translated by the wizened old one began to assume proportions. The pressing circle was finding its bartering feet. A great tusk of ivory was lifted from the ground. One young buck managed to rid himself of a broad band of beaten gold he wore about his waist. Still Charley scratched his head.

"Ivory—hm! Sure it's good ivory? Shall we take it, Leiken?"

"Bubbles all over the deck skating like bugs on the sea," said Leiken.

"I thought so," Charley rejoined. "Tell 'em that! And I guess we'll take the gold; some silver, too, I think, if it's shined up properly. If you haven't got any copper I'm just as satisfied; they only make pennies out of that, and what can you get for a penny?"

Back in the thicket Jahlet groaned at this repudiation. The crew were edging perilously into the sunlight, forgetful of danger. Plack blinked his eyes.

"Understand," Charley went on, "I won't trade with 'em here. They'll have to bring a whole lot more than this and tote it down to the shore where this man of mine left the rest of the enchanted cloth and the magic paper that talks. They'll have to hurry, too, or we can't wait for 'em. We really intended to get rubies for it in India, but I like to give everybody a chance. Tell 'em that!"

Captain Plack heard this and ceased to struggle. A deep sigh he emitted from the bottom of his harassed soul. A wave of glory tumulted into his face.

"—stowed it in barrels—rain oil that's better than sperm—drink yourself to death and blow up—and full of stars and starfish," chanted Leiken.

"Five yards for the tusk!" shrilled Charley above the jabbering, and he proceeded to measure off the allowance. "Six for the band! And cheap at that!"

"Thank God!" fervently broke out Plack, rubbing his hands, oblivious of his fate now, seeing, believing, shuffling off a score of hapless years.

The sound reached Charley. He turned round eyes upon the gaping countenances of his former comrades. A youthful delight sang in his voice.

"Chase it out—how about that nose-piece there? Yes, I've got enough. You with the ear-rings, the silver necklace—bring it along!"

His ease of bearing was the outgrowth of a supreme joy that those gawking sailors

could never begin to understand. They had no use for him, hadn't they? Let them pant with greed while their hopes were as baubles in his hands. He who had lost his belief in romance upon the high seas had found it again. It was very sweet. Happiness radiated from him like an aura.

And his active gaze rested for a fleeting instant on his father. Plack was leaning forward, weighing an elephant's tusk with his eye. Where was the sadness here? Water-soaked cloth going at terrific rates for the treasures of the East! His vessel redeemed! Honor and earthly salvation—they were his.

"My boy!" he muttered. "My boy, don't haggle over yards! Bolts, Charley! Bolts; piles and cartons! Tons of paper—bless you, Leiken! Where in heaven was he going with it, Jahlet? But Charley stopped him! What a boy, Jahlet! Don't trade here Charley; that would make trouble with the authorities; lead 'em south—a good ten miles. We'll join you there."

The scramble grew too strong. Charley howled for quiet. The interpreter waved to his countrymen to be silent. The crew of the bark trod upon one another.

"Hold on!" shouted the youthful merchant. "Of course, I'm going on the idea that I'm bosun of the *Lynn Reed*, as I told you I was. There's the rest of 'em." He gestured to the trees. "If these fellows say I'm not bosun, then—"

"Who says you ain't?" hoarsely burst from a rude mast-hand. "I'll eat 'im! Go on! I'm fer yuh!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" rose the echo in a dozen mouths. "Bosun, that's you, sir! Jes' like was said—you're all the bosun we wants in oun, sir—lay tuh thet!"

"Whatever you say, boys!" grinned Charley. "Is it a go, dad?"

"Tut, Charley! Don't lose 'em! Take a turn around 'em! Due to collect, Jahlet! My boy—he's learning the ropes, man! Charley, *all* the ivory!"

Leiken described untroubled arcs in the air and nodded to a ferocious face directly before him.

"It rained blue and yellow," he declared; "and that's good luck."



WILLIAM WALKER FILIBUSTER



Edgar Young

Author of "A Few Will Remember," "The Rolling Stone," etc.

TO THE east ranged a jagged line of mountains and smoking volcanoes. Behind those mountains existed a vast territory, eastern Nicaragua, unknown save for the narrow coral beach far to the east along the Caribbean and the matted forests on either side of the murky San Juan, which connected the Caribbean with the inland fresh-water sea, Lake Nicaragua, or Gran Lago as it was commonly called.

To the west of the range lay a country of less extent but of more historical importance, a strip of land running from Honduras on the north to Costa Rica far to the south. It was in the central portion of this western section that Lakes Nicaragua and Managua were located. Shallow Tipi-Tapi estero connected them together, and the San Juan River coursed away from the larger one in a southeastern direction to the Caribbean.

The western shore of Lake Nicaragua—*El Gran Lago*—was separated from the Pacific by a neck of land which at its narrowest part was twelve miles across. An American steamship company had constructed a macadamized road across this neck of land and were using it as a link in the transcontinental journey over Nicaragua.

They ran ships from New York to the mouth of the San Juan, others up the river

and across the lake, making the portage of passengers and freight by omnibus and pack-train over the road to the Pacific coast and there reembaring them upon ships for San Francisco and the west coast of the United States of America.

The Pacific port at the end of the road was named San Juan del Sur. The port on the lake was Virgin Bay. Far down at the mouth of the San Juan was the village port of San Juan del Norte. At a point near the center of the Transit Road a native trail ran away at right angles a few miles north to the adobe city of Rivas.

On the northern shore of the lake stood the city of Granada, locally famed for its culture, the home of the local aristocrats. Inland from this city was Leon, a rival of Granada, reputed home of the Muses of Art and Literature, cradle of Democracy. A few other towns dotted the landscape from there on up to the northern frontier and a few small thatched villages served as ports for small local craft and canoes on the Pacific shore.

Upon this stage, this arena, this western portion of the republic of Nicaragua, events had taken place during the past six years. Bloody war had followed bloody war. Revolution had been followed by re-revolution. The greedy earth had drunk blood and more blood. Vultures were glutted and gorged with human flesh through six full years, and the sharks and alligators in the lakes and rivers were stupid from overfeeding.

"William Walker, Filibuster," copyright, 1922, by Edgar Young.

And yet there was reason and justice in this seeming chaos and seeming barbarity. Freeing themselves from the Spanish yoke, the native people had been set upon by local tyrants of this same inquisitorial blood. The yoke of Spain was no whit less galling than the yokes and shackles forged for the people by upstart demagog presidents and officials lusting for military power. Fifteen such crews had ruled during the six years and yet another one, the sixteenth, had clubbed its way to power.

The people had voted for kind old Don Francisco Castellon and had elected him by an enormous majority. His rival, General Don Fruto Chamorro, seized the Government by force, banished Castellon and his principal adherents from the country and started a reign of terror. Castellon got together a following of others who had been banished and returned. Patriots flocked to his standards. Chamorro was driven from the capital, Leon, to Granada, where he established another capital.

The liberals laid siege to the city and were in a fair way to winning when Chamorro called in foreign help from the republic of Guatemala. The Democrats were driven back. Defeat followed upon defeat. At last they were only holding the port of Realejo in the northwestern corner, and a few of them were entrenched in Leon. Chamorro was planning a final crushing blow which would forever still the murmurings of men who wished freedom in this Central American republic.

About this time an American, Byron Cole, passed by steamer and road across the country and saw the state of affairs. Upon arriving at San Francisco he spread the report and it came to the ears of one William Walker.

William Walker was a remarkable young man. At fourteen years of age he graduated from the University of Nashville, Tennessee. His father, a local merchant, at his request, sent him to the University of Pennsylvania to study medicine, where he received the degree of M. D. He then went abroad to take post-graduate courses and studied at Paris, Heidelberg, and Edinburgh.

Upon his return he practised medicine in Philadelphia. This did not seem to suit him. He returned to Nashville and took up the study of law. After being admitted to the bar he decided to go to New Orleans. There he had to restudy the Napoleon code,

but in a short time he hung out his shingle on Canal Street.

He quit this after a few months and took up journalism. As editor of the New Orleans *Crescent* his pen soon came to be acid and biting in the cause of liberty.

The Civil War was in the making, and his tirades against slave-holders and slave-drivers brought down much opposition upon him from rival papers. He decided to join a caravan for California. Out there he soon forged to the front. He practised law and medicine, edited papers and was jailed for attacking in an editorial the notorious Levi Parsons, a judge who was usurping too much authority. And the people of San Francisco formed mass meetings and clamored until he was released. He fought a duel with some other local tyrant and was shot in the foot.

And still that repressed idea of his was mastering him. It was the idea of liberty, human liberty, voluntarianism, the right of one human being and one set of human beings to live their lives unmolested by others.

Back from the dawn of history two ideas have sought followings among humankind. One is that a man will become more of a man if left alone to live his life in his own way. The other is that men in power can mold men better than they can mold themselves. From four thousand years B.C. these two ideas have clashed, and almost all wars and all revolutions have been caused thereby.

When Byron Cole spread the report about the struggle of the Nicaraguans for freedom from their oppressors William Walker's blood boiled with zealous sympathy. He vowed he would go down and help them. Up and down the streets of San Francisco he went, a man garbed in blue coat with brass buttons, gray trousers, huge white fur hat with the nap waving in the breeze, looking into men's faces, shaking them by the hand, telling them about the struggle that was waging in the republic to the south. He was a very small man, weighing scarcely a hundred pounds. His hair was white as tow and his eyebrows beneath the pale white forehead were like chalk-marks; but his mouth was stern and his gray eyes were glittering as diamonds and his voice was steady as steel.

"Who will go with me and help a race of men free themselves from tyrants?"

Men thrilled and grasped his hand. Hundreds promised. Walker got together a thousand dollars by popular subscription and chartered a brig, the *Vesta*, but the day she sailed only fifty-six men showed up. This did not daunt him. How he fared in Nicaragua shall be shown at closer range.

II



A CARAVAN is winding through the jungles. At the head is a zambo guide, dressed in a breech-clout and wielding a machete. Behind him is a small man wearing a black slouch hat and a blue flannel shirt, with corduroy trousers stuffed into his heavy cowhide boots. Across his shoulder is a rifle. A pistol is thrust into a holster on one side of his belt and a sword dangles from the other. The handle of a bowie-knife is protruding from each boot-top. William Walker in campaign outfit.

Behind him march in single file the fifty-six immortals dressed in similar manner and armed in similar style except that they lack the sword and in addition they were packing heavy blanket rolls upon their backs. They are big men, for the most part, tall, heavily bearded, and upon each man's hat is pinned a ribbon, the red ribbon of the liberals; for they had landed at Realejo farther up the coast and met the revolutionary chieftain and had become naturalized by the simple expedient of declaring themselves Nicaraguans. Castellon had furnished Walker with one hundred and ten native allies, and these were following through the jungles somewhere in the rear. The *Vesta* had landed them at Point Gigante, nine leagues to the north of San Juan del Sur. They were intending to surjoin the opposing army, the Serviles, at Rivas.

Suddenly the murky dimness gave place to sunlight which filtered through the thinning forest. The zambo ran forward to the edge of the plain where the jungle ended. The little officer came abreast of him. The zambo pointed to the red roofs of the city a few miles away. The officer nodded. The half-breed started back over the path they had arrived over.

As he disappeared the van of the native reinforcements began to appear from the jungle trail. They swarmed out, a motly array of Spanish mixtures with Indian. One, a lanky, dark-skinned man with pointed mustachios, wore shoes. This *calzado*, or

shoe-clad one, was Ramirez, the officer in charge of them.

The best dressed of the native forces wore shirt, breeches and straw hat. The poorer dressed wore a breech-clout or ragged drawers. They were *voluntarios* and were armed with rusty muskets, machetes or lances.

The diminutive white officer Walker explained the plan of attack. They were to march swiftly to the city and capture it. Colonel Bosque was entrenched in the city with one thousand two hundred native veterans. Walker's voice was low and tense with pent strength as he harangued the men in English and Spanish for a few moments. His words caused men's teeth to set grimly and their hair to tingle with zeal.

With the American-born white men in the van the body of one hundred and sixty-eight men began to march swiftly across the plain toward the city. A half-mile from the outskirts puffs of smoke were seen arising from the outposts and clouds of dust began to spring up around them.

Walker's orders to advance at double quick rang out. The American-born Nicaraguans dashed down their blanket rolls and started advancing. Walker dashed to the front, and, sprinting lustily, led the running men into the end of a narrow street that ran toward the plaza.

A barricade blocked the street. A hail of bullets swept over their heads. They crouched low and dashed upon it. Hurdling it, they fell upon the jabbering troupe behind it. Steel crashed upon steel. Yells rent the air. Gun-butts thudded upon heads and slashing bowie-knives ripped into panting chests.

The loud yells of Walker's men burst forth as they carried the place and swept on. Another barricade was encountered. In like manner they crossed it.

A galling rifle-fire was pouring upon them from loop-holes cut through the buildings on either side of the street. They were zig-zagging as they ran and presented poor targets. Now and then a rifle would fly to a shoulder, and with unerring aim the sharpshooter would fire through a loop-hole as he swept onward.

A horde of men charged out of the plaza and met them hand to hand. On and on came this horde in waves which began far back of the plaza and surged across it like

a sea. Walker's men began to fall. His high-pitched, nervous voice rang out.

"Charge, men!" he shouted.

The American-born had paused. They were panting from their long run and from the furious fighting. Lieutenant Crocker, a slender boy of less than twenty, raced to Walker's side. A bullet had shattered his chin, and his right arm hung loosely on account of a smashed shoulder.

"Colonel Walker—the men falter—I can not get them onward!"

Walker glanced back down the street. The native troops had failed to bring up the rear. Even at that moment Ramirez with his one hundred and ten barefoot was scuttling from the outskirts of the city toward the frontier of Costa Rica. The fifty-six had been doing the fighting unassisted. Walker's sword flashed upward, and its blade flamed in the sunlight as he drew himself up and looked upon his men with flaming eyes.

"Forward, men!"

They charged. With a dash they forged into the main body of the Serviles and were battering a lane for themselves through a living wall of men who with the force of numbers and the pressure from behind were fighting with the fury of demons.

Walker's men were falling. A man would go down mortally wounded yet with straining thews and grimacing face he would struggle erect and give battle as his body rocked with the throes of death. On up Santa Ursula Hill they fought with the gray-eyed man of destiny leading them. They were doing the impossible.

With ten of their own number dead behind them they smashed their way to the doors of a large house. Gun-butts crashed on the hardwood doors and they fell inward, and the human flying wedge surged through and into the large room.

As they entered the enemy was training a four-pounder on the door. Timothy Crocker looked back over his shoulder and saw it as he swept through the door. He shouted for volunteers. All the officers turned and sprang back to his side. As they dashed toward the gun Crocker threw up his hands and sank down dead. Another one, Kewen, pitched forward on his face.

Four others climbed upon the cannon and spiked it as the bullets rained upon them. One lone man sprang down. The other

four had been riddled. This one man was Captain Doubleday. He sprinted to the open door and dashed within.

The rest of the army had been watching with bated breaths. They now barricaded the door with tables and chairs. The mad mob milled in a wild sea outside. Colonel Bosque's big form loomed outside, and his big voice was exhorting his men to charge the building. The dead American-born were being hacked to pieces and mutilated to arouse the blood lust of the Servile forces.

A stillness reigned within the building. A sudden apathy had seized the American-born. They flung themselves upon the floor and sprawled helpless with writhing stomachs. Fear had clutched their hearts when the hopelessness of their position had dawned upon them. Five mortally wounded men had crawled into a corner and lay moaning. Walker stood silent with bowed head.

The mob bawled and roared outside with the fury of wild beasts lusting for the kill. Dr. Alex Jones, the intrepid surgeon who had once led a band of adventurers to Cocos Island in search of treasure, grew suddenly frightened. He sprang to a wall and clambered up it to the roof rafters and perched himself in the very apex of the roof. Be it remembered that many of Walker's best men had been killed. Walker himself was unafraid. The man never knew what fear was. Yet he was no veteran soldier. He was momentarily nonplused as to what to do.

Doubleday sprang into the breach. It was he who had survived the intrepid dash to spike the cannon outside. This philosopher and author had burned powder in Mexican and Cuban wars. He looked sadly upon the sprawling men and laughed tauntingly. He walked among them and grasped them by shoulders and set them up like lay figures. His voice lashed like a whip.

"Get up and die fighting! We are white men! Who fears those yellow and black devils? Each of us is equal to a score of them! Come on! Watch me!"

He bounded on top of the barricade in the doorway and screamed defiance in blood-curdling Spanish oaths. He cursed the Serviles and their mothers and the breed of them. He thumbed his nose at them and dared them to charge. A hail of lead answered him.

"See! See! They can't shoot straight!" he called back over his shoulder to the American-born.

He jumped down and seized a rifle and leaped back on top of the barricade. With the blaze of the gun Colonel Bosque outside bounded into the air and dropped down dead. The hurrah of Captain Doubleday died on his lips. A bullet thudded into his temple and toppled him backward to the floor. His body writhed for a moment and lay quiet. Walker ran over and knelt beside him.

"Poor comrade," he murmured grimly, "you died game."

Doubleday, struggling between consciousness and unconsciousness, heard the words. He rolled over and crawled painfully to his knees.

"Not this time, colonel!"

He groped for a handkerchief, and Walker helped him knot it around his head. Then he staggered to his feet. The prostrate American-born began to get up and reach for their weapons. Doubleday and Walker looked into each other's eyes.

"What would you suggest, Captain Doubleday?"

"Fight our way out, otherwise all is lost."

The room became reanimated at these words. Alex Jones clambered sheepishly down from his perch and with a pocket knife extracted the lead slug from Doubleday's temple. Doubleday cautioned him to be careful not to push the bullet through, for the temporal bones were shattered into small bits.

Colonel Walker stepped over to the five wounded men who were too weak to rise. He stood scanning their white faces for a moment.

"Men, we are in a trap, and if we remain all is lost. By fighting our way out we may save a part of the army. It seems that you men are doomed either way. Shall we stay with you or try to save a portion of the army?"

"Save the army," one of them murmured and the others nodded.

Among these men was Captain Doubleday's bosom pal, a man who had traveled for years with him through many lands. Doubleday came and knelt over him, and the two men looked into each other's faces for some moments.

"Partner, you and I have traveled for years together. We have been hungry to-

gether. We have fed upon the fat of the land. In the arctic and in the tropics, in desert and in jungle we have adventured; and you and I have stuck closer than brothers. You have never failed. You have been a man, and you have been true blue."

The hand of Doubleday's partner rested for a moment on Doubleday's shoulder, and he smiled wanly.

"And you, too, have been a man. I have watched and I have read your inmost soul, and you also have been true blue."

Tears welled into Doubleday's eyes, and he choked back a sob.

"This is the worst test I have ever had to meet," he blurted.

"Do not fail to meet it," whispered the wounded man.

Fire had been thrust through from the outside under the rafters, and the thatch beneath the tiles burst into flame.

"Clear the barricade and charge!" rasped the cold voice of Colonel Walker.

Doubleday ran to his side, and as the men dragged the barricade aside he and Walker led the charge into the ranks of the Serviles. Into the midst of them sprang the small band of American-born Nicaraguans. The battle-cries of the Serviles sounded lustily; but the American-born were also shouting. They were giving a yell that curdled the blood of the Serviles. It was the old-time rebel yell that had been handed down from father to son from the days of the Revolutionary War between the colonies and Great Britain.

And behind the rebel yell was rebel fighting. The white men were firing their rifles with such rapidity that the barrels sizzled in their hands. The Serviles fell like grain before the reaper. Their officers were driving the barefooted soldiers with whips and swords and the ever-present *demijuanas* of *aguardiente* were being handed from man to man. Scores of these demijohns were scattered under foot like spent cannonballs.

Around the corner of the house the American-born Nicaraguans surged, with rifles, pistols and bowie-knives opening a lane for them. They mowed their way on through the ranks of the Serviles. Dropping into a wide ditch, they knelt to let fly a final hail of bullets that drove the Serviles back. Then, arising, they retreated in orderly fashion down a side street.

Fortunes of war favor the brave! Not

one man who left the house to make the charge had been killed, albeit five were badly wounded. These five were shot through bodies, legs, or arms and moved with intense physical pain. The uninjured herded around them and assisted them as they marched. In this manner they left the city behind and headed toward the coast.

Back in Rivas pandemonium reigned. Two hundred of the Serviles had fallen when the white men made the charge from the house. Others had been slain in the fierce previous onslaught up the hill of Santa Ursula. The plaza and streets were littered with dead and dying men.

Vengeance was being had upon the wounded soldiers Walker had been forced to leave. Piles of fagots had been gathered, and the white men were chained and dragged upon them when they were blazing. The screams of the five men were terrible as the flames wrapped about them. A mile away the band of filibusters turned and started back. Walker halted them and explained that it was impossible to do anything. He took off his hat and bared his head and the others followed his example. Thus they stood until the screams of their former comrades had died away, and they turned with grim faces and headed toward the coast.

Darkness fell suddenly. It began to rain in a steady downpour which soon flooded the trail until they were floundering through mud and water to their knees. The injured men raved with fever. Doubleday muttered insanely from the throb of his shattered temple. It seemed that the night would never end. On and on they floundered.

It was almost sundown of the next day when they reeled and limped into the little port of San Juan del Sur. Walker had ordered the *Vesta* to cruise off this port against the time of their return. She was nowhere in sight. Down the street to the rickety little wharf the caravan proceeded.

Walker was at the head. His hat had been lost, and his towy hair matted upon his head. His shirt was in ribbons, and he was minus a goodly portion of his trousers. His boot-tops had settled limply around his ankles in an unseemly bunch. Yet his head was high, and he limped proudly, and his face was terribly earnest and serious with high resolve and purpose. The shoulders of his followers straightened as they gazed upon him.

Two transients were in the port waiting for a ship for San Francisco. They followed behind the tattered army, and, overhauling it at the wharf, asked for the details of the fight. Upon being told they went up to



Colonel Walker and declared their willingness to join. He shook hands with them and accepted them upon the spot. The "army" of thirty-five lifted their voices in a hoarse cheer at the nerve of these two strangers who would join a party in the predicament they were in at that time. Peter Burns and Henry McLeod, two names of history.

Although the *Vesta* was not in sight there was a Costa Rican schooner lying at anchor in the bay. Walker sent two men out in a rowboat to seize her. The schooner had arrived that morning with ammunition and supplies for the Serviles and besides had brought a band of Costa Ricans to assist them. The captain yielded easily to the persuasions of the two armed men who came aboard, and he readily assented at pistol's point to being locked up in his own cabin.

Walker and his army came aboard in other rowboats. Too tired to eat, the soldiers flung themselves upon the deck and sprawled asleep. All night long they slept; and all night long Walker, Doubleday, and Dr.

Alex Jones paced the deck with anxious eyes cast toward the port of San Juan del Sur for sign of the enemy.

With the coming of dawn the *Vesta* dove into the ofing and the schooner, at Walker's command, stood out to meet her. Thinking it a hostile attack, the *Vesta* put about and made for the open sea. Walker ordered a pursuit, and every inch of canvas the schooner possessed was hastily cracked on.

Many miles out to sea the brig was overhauled; and the captain of the *Vesta* was amazed to see staring across the rail the faces of some of his former passengers. The transfer was made, and the schooner put back for San Juan del Sur. The *Vesta* headed up the coast for Realejo.

III



ACROSS the indigo sky and through the powdered stars the moon sailed like a gondola of silver and dipped from sight behind the black jungle in the west. A reddish glow appeared below the horizon in the east, and dawn began to break over the land.

The red-roofed adobe buildings of the city of Rivas that had loomed fantomlike in the moonlight began to stand out more sternly. The cathedral which faced the plaza came out boldly from the shimmering gauze veil in which night had wrapped it and became a gaunt, whitewashed adobe with leaning tower and walls cracked by former earthquakes and dotted with pock marks where musket-balls had lodged. The lines of dirty white buildings along the narrow streets that ran away from the plaza appeared squalid in the gray light of dawn. Double lines of barefooted soldiers who had slept with heads toward the walls on either side and with a narrow lane between the calloused rows of feet began to sit up and yawn.

At the end of a street running toward the west came the sharp hail of a picket.

"Alerte! Who goes?"

A breathless half-breed came forward with hand upraised.

"A friend. I come from the coast, from San Juan del Sur. The *filibusteros* have again returned and are landing. I have brought the word to your general."

"Buena! Go at once along the street to the plaza. The officers are at the house facing the cathedral."

The man zigzagged along the street between the lines of awakening men. In front of the officers' quarters he was again challenged, and repeated his message. The sentry turned and knocked upon the heavy door with the butt of his musket.

A bloated face bearing a heavy black mustache was thrust forth. The owner of the swarthy face that loomed above the heavy shoulders was General Guardiola, so-called "the Butcher" from his habit of killing prisoners. He listened to the message, asked several questions and turned within to shout orders to his yawning staff.

In a moment the big officer came stalking forth. He stood blinking as he buttoned his coat and adjusted his plumed hat. Six men appeared from the room and ranged around him. The general paced up and down tugging nervously at his mustache. The staff waited expectantly.

This general had arrived a few days before to relieve General Boscha, who had taken charge when Colonel Bosque was shot by Captain Doubleday. Guardiola was a general holding much prestige in his home republic, Guatemala. A veteran of many battles, he had been sent by President Carrerra to assist the Serviles against the pretensions of the Democrats. And he had brought six hundred additional veteran Indian soldiers from the Guatemalan highlands.

Pausing, he straightened up grandly.

"We will go now, at once, and give battle! We will drive the white dogs into the sea!"

His voice rang out in a high-pitched snarl.

"Order out the men, pronto! We will go down and drive them into the ocean and save powder and ball! Have the men grease their bayonets with lard of the hog so as to enter quickly into the bodies of the white carrions! Give rations of rum!"

The staff ran to other buildings along the plaza and other lesser officers began to swarm forth. It was easy to pick the officers. They wore shoes of some description, and this badge of culture differentiated them from the barefooted privates.

The plaza became alive with men. Shouts and oaths were flying. The lines of men in the streets were forming into irregular columns, and jugs of *aguardiente* were being passed among them.

Within half an hour the horde of barefooted soldiers and shoe-clad officers were surging down the narrow streets to the west toward the Pacific. At the edge of the city

they paused for another ration of the fiery cane brandy.

General Guardiola was a psychologist. From former experiences he had learned that a primitive native who has lived a life of utter indifference is not by nature a warrior. The land was rich in food and clothing with nothing more needed but to reach out and take. It was a Mohammed's Paradise. The philosophy of the native was to be summed up in a languid *mañana*, a more languid *quién sabe?* and a drowsy *poco tiempo*. The very money grew on trees and fell to the ground therefrom; for a coconut was reckoned in current exchange at a fortieth of a *medio*.

These things General Guardiola knew; and he knew *aguardiente*, the fierce brandy. Yes, verily, it gives men heart for battle.

The jugs passed up and down. The spirit to do or die began to permeate the soldiers. Shouts were bursting from sturdy lungs.

"*Hay que morir, muchachos! Vamanós!*"

("Onward, boys! What difference if we die!")

Near San Juan del Sur the army of seventeen hundred swept into the Transit Road and raced down it at breakneck speed. General Guardiola was lashing the flanks of his lean white nag and prodding its gaunt belly with heavy spurs. Now and again he threw himself back in the saddle and a savage yell rent the air.

"Drive the white dogs into the sea!"

This passed from lip to lip and became a warwhoop. Down through the dusty street of San Juan del Sur they surged with the inhabitants seeking shelter behind barred doors or fleeing panic-stricken toward the bordering jungle.

The mob paused at the very edge of the sea and stood milling. In the offing was the *Vesta*, Walker's brig, cruising along the coast with bellying sail. A native fisherman, returning with an early morning's catch of fish, clambered out of his sailing-canoe and gasped at the army. Guardiola elbowed a lane through and placed rough hands upon his trembling shoulders.

"The *filibusters*, dog? Which way have they gone? Have they put to sea from fear of me?"

The peop shrugged and pointed up the road.

"They daybroke from their ship, *señor* general, and went east over the Transit Road."

"Ah, they will go to the lake! They crept by while we prepared to move. They plan to attack the city from the east."

Guardiola's officers were around him. He passed the order to them.

"Right about face and back over the Transit Road!"

In five minutes the army was marching back over the road in post haste.

IV



THE sun came up from behind Ometepe Island, which juts upward like a cone from the green waters of Lake Nicaragua, and shone down upon the port of Virgin Bay. At Virgin Bay stood a rough board building, the company offices, surrounded by palisades. A few other buildings housed the employees of the Transit Company and a few thatched shacks were occupied by native laborers.

Walker's men finished their sandwiches and flung themselves down to rest at the edge of the cool water. The wiry little man paced up and down. A few other transients had joined him, and he now had forty American-born. He had one hundred and twenty native barefoots under José Maria Valle, a pure-blooded Indian from Chinandega, and this officer and his command had been selected by Castellon with an eye to wiping out in Walker's eyes the defection of Ramirez and his men at the first battle of Rivas.

The swaying palms along the edge of the lake, the ripple of the green waters beneath the rising sun, the line of volcanoes which showed above the forest top far to the north, the balmy air, the kiss of the cool lake breeze—these things touched the heart of the filibuster, and he looked upon them with the eyes of a poet.

Devoutly religious, he looked upon nature as the direct handiwork of God's own mighty arms. Always had he felt himself to be an agent of this benevolent God for the accomplishment of work upon this earth, His footstool. He was a man of destiny, he felt. God's will be done. Bending his head, his lips moved in prayer.

A startled shout brought him from his reverie. A cloud of dust approached along the Transit Road. He sprang among his men, here, there, everywhere at once, giving orders. The native pickets he had stationed were firing and falling back in good order.

Colonel Walker formed squads of the natives, giving each of his white men a command of three barefoots. He studied the ground for a moment and stationed these squads to best advantage.

The little officer was never known to laugh. He was a taciturn man, very earnest and terribly serious. Yet when he glanced behind his army at the deep green waters of the Gran Lago he smiled grimly.

The jabbering mob was sweeping toward them at a steady run. The shouts of "Drive the white dogs into the sea!" had changed to "Drive the white dogs into the lake!"

Walker's high-pitched voice popped with nervous energy as he rose on tiptoe and gave on old-time American order—

"Fire when you see the whites of their eyes!"

The little squads of four with a white man at the point of each wedge stood firm. A bullet cut through Colonel Walker's coat and penetrated a packet of letters. Another glancing ball struck him in the neck and knocked him sprawling. As he struggled to his knees Captain Doubleday rushed to his side and helped him to his feet.

Then the fury of hell broke upon the little band. Hubbub was let loose. Rifles and horse-pistols banged with deafening rapidity. Swords and bowie-knives slashed into bodies.

The fierce charge of the enemy with a dead weight of seventeen hundred running men carried them clear on to the lake on either side of the little army. But at the center the ranks were mowed down. At this point the forces of General Guardiola fell like grain before a scythe.

The flanks closed in. Walker's army was borne backward by the second rush until his men stood upon the very brink of the lake. Valle, the Indian ally, sprang from group to group and exhorted his men in Spanish and Maya. Unfamiliar muskets were dropped and familiar machetes were grasped by brown hands.

Naturalized white Nicaraguans and native brown brothers surged shoulder to shoulder in a semicircle that met the howling mob on front and flanks. To the popping of guns was added the chopping slash-slash of gleaming heavy machetes. Heads were falling from bodies and being cleft in half by the short broadswords.

The semicircle widened and was thrust back upon itself time and again. A wall

of human bodies grew around the battling one hundred and sixty men. They had slain triple their number.

Walker clambered upon the wall of dead that surrounded them and gave a shrill yell. The gray eyes were flashing sparks of fire. The narrow mouth was set. His tow hair sprouted upward in an uncanny white mop. The other white men reechoed his yells with a cheer that shook the earth.


Guardiola's army paused. A hail of musket-balls rained around Colonel Walker. He threw back his head and yelled defiance, again and again. The wedge-shaped squads forged to his side, and into the midst of the enemy they charged furiously. Battling their way up the hill in a crescendo of fury and daring, they broke the ranks of the enemy and set them to running.

The rum had died in Guardiola's army. Empty jugs were being kicked under foot. Dead men were lying all about. Guardiola's officers beat and kicked to stop the retreat. The yelling white men were using gun-butts, and the native allies were chopping lanes with their machetes.

Those who had failed to run previously now broke and joined the wild stampede toward Rivas. Walker's men speeded them on their way for a few miles and then returned.

For an hour and a half they had fought hand to hand with the speed of demons. They had killed several times their own number in the struggle. Wounded men were groaning on all sides, and Dr. Alex Jones was having them gathered up so he could treat them, a thing not done before in Central America. Walker's army lost only a drummer-boy, a lad of sixteen who was at Colonel Walker's side in the last fierce charge. He now sprawled over his silent drum.

V

 BATTLE followed battle, whole books full of details of them, written by Walker and by other literary men in his command. There was no stopping this army in the cause of freedom. They seized a lake steamer and captured the fortified stronghold of the Serviles at Granada. From this base they waged a bitter and ceaseless war.

They brought the Serviles to utter defeat. The aristocratic Serviles begged humbly for

terms, and Colonel Walker had them march into Granada and surrender.

What a day that was! Church bells pealing, men and women weeping with joy at their deliverance, white American-born Nicaraguans and native brown brothers parading the streets arm in arm singing patriotic songs in English and Spanish, the cry of "Walker, Walker, Walker" on every tongue and the little man making a hundred speeches from steps of public buildings and from balconies.

They offered him the presidency that day. And he refused it. But a short time later they voted him in by an enormous majority.

All Central America was glad. Old sores between Nicaragua and other republics were healed quickly. Walker sent consuls and ambassadors to them, who were received graciously, and their ambassadors came to open offices in Granada. And he sent an ambassador to Washington who was highly complimented upon the work of regeneration Walker was doing in the former turbulent republic to the south.

And yet the country did not suddenly seem to spring into prosperity. The Servile conscripts and Liberal volunteers did not attach themselves very seriously to useful employment. Even the American-born soldiers seemed to be afflicted with tropical lassitude on the farms the Government had granted them.

President Walker studied these conditions carefully. Dressed in black broadcloth, silk hat, white-bosomed shirt and knotted bow tie, he gravely walked about the capital and pondered much over the methods to help develop the country. Also he prayed considerably, and, becoming in doubt over his religion, relinquished it and joined the local Catholic church. He really and truly wanted to help the people of this country he had adopted as his own. With very small extra exertion on the part of the people the land could be made to yield millions.

The battle of the philosophers waged in his brain. Perhaps after all those high-browed philosophers might be wrong, thought he. Under militarism, with the people under absolute orders from above, especially under orders from a man like himself? And more particularly with the brown people under such orders and with the few hundred white men to drive them? Would not great good accrue unto them?

More, vastly more, thought he, than they could do voluntarily for themselves.

He could fancy himself sitting in power, a god as it were, molding the bodies and brains of men to his liking. Yea, verily, he could do a better job, calculated he, than Jehovah Himself; and he figured out a scheme to assist God in his work in Central America and other portions of Latin America.

For why stop with Nicaragua? There were Honduras and Guatemala and Salvador and Costa Rica; and the entire continent of South America lay to the south. These other countries could be swiftly conquered, for their own behoof, after he had got the Nicaraguans into bondage, summed he up, as the idea got control of him.

Thus did William Walker desert the faith of liberty and the faith in men to live their own lives in their own way. Thus did he desert the best of the philosophers, those kind, fearless, intellectual adventurers who have suffered and wet their dried ink with tears to give their noble thoughts to the world; the philosophers of the doctrine of Live and Let Live who in all lands strive to get their country to *be* the best and help the rest of the world by becoming a shining example before them; philosophers who have failed partly in all lands, and who always will fail partly, but who do some good as the centuries roll along. Opposed to them are the philosophers of the Mailed Fist and the Iron Heel who in all lands preach the doctrine of militarism, the grabbing and enslaving of other countries and forcing men within their own borders to truckle and crawl to official commands of action and speech and who try to mold men to a preconceived pattern of thought, desire and belief.

President Walker was almost hypnotic in his manner of speech. He carefully began a propaganda upon the American-born farmers and erstwhile soldiers.

He showed these white men what a real help it would be to the brown brothers to enslave them and force them to do the work in the hot sun while the white men lolled in the shade. Some of them doubtless were easy to persuade. However, a few dissented and left for the United States, one of whom was former Captain, and now Farmer Doubleday. The gorge of these few had risen at the vain mockery of

things—that their valiant fighting for liberty should be brought to such an end.

Walker published his famous edict of slavery; and when he did, — began to pop. The Serviles rose up again, and he fought them into submission. Costa Rica sent three thousand picked men across the border. They whipped Walker's first force under command of a naturalized German, and President Walker took personal command and thrashed the Costa Ricans at the second battle of Rivas.

All Central America arose against him, and Nicaragua became a veritable bull-pen with Walker as the baited bull. England sent a fleet of eight battleships to prowl along the coast and sent money and arms to Costa Rica to fight Walker with. She had planned a conquest of Central America of her own, and even then was backing a sable monarch over on the Mosquito Coast for that purpose.

Peru came out openly against Walker and sent soldiers and money. And Walker whipped all of them and England's efforts into the bargain for good measure. He whipped the allied forces of Central America and Peru on the land, on the rivers, and upon the lakes. And the *Vesta* under command of a naval veteran blew up some of the allied sloops and schooners and chased the others up and down the coast and out to sea. The entire world stood with mouth agape at reports of the terrific defense William Walker made against inconceivable odds.

Yet he made a mistake. He needed some money; and two of the officials of the Transit Company, colleagues of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, came down and offered to advance it to him if he would revoke the charter of the company, seize the property and recharter it to them.

When old Cornelius Vanderbilt, son of Jan Aerston Van der Bilt of Stapleton, Staten Island, got back to New York from his famous trip around the world he found he had been manipulated out of control of his pet property. Livid-faced, he shook his fist into the faces of these two men in the New York offices where he had formerly held forth.

"I won't sue you, — you; the law is too slow!" he is reported to have said. "I'll ruin you! And I'll bust that — Walker if it takes my last penny!"

He began hiring adventurers by ones and twos and by dozens and sent them down the

coast on his ships. He staked any of the Central American countries who asked for money, and he egged England toward more open hostilities, and the breaking of international laws.

And the most insidious plan Cornelius Vanderbilt devised was to send emissaries with offers of cash to Walker's trusted officers. He bought some, although he couldn't buy many.

But Vanderbilt's adventurers fought Walker fiercely. Spencer, as daring a man as ever lived, boarded and captured one of Walker's lake steamers which had on board a large body of native troops, absolutely singlehanded. Other small bands of white men at the head of native troops waged incessant war in a hundred places.

And still Walker held out and was still winning until Vanderbilt played his trump card. By some contrivance, no one knows exactly how, he got the United States to send naval vessels, and invite Walker to surrender or fight the country of his birth.

President Walker surrendered to the commander of one of the vessels and came to the United States howling to the entire world that his rights were being imposed on and calling attention to the fact that he was the duly elected president of a country where he was a naturalized citizen. Many prominent men in the United States espoused his side, and he was released from custody.

As soon as he was free he got together a hundred men and slipped out of Mobile with them on a vessel and headed for the Central American coast. Landing at Puerto Cortez, Honduras, he took the city by complete surprise and captured it and was planning to march overland to Nicaragua when a fleet of English warships sailed into the bay and sent him an ultimatum to surrender or they would bombard the city.

Walker slipped away up the beach with the warships following him and his party until they were forced to pause at the mouth of a river. A rowboat was sent from the squadron and he was told to come aboard the flagship or they would annihilate him. He went aboard, surrendered his sword and was paroled. However, despite this fact he was turned over to the native authorities of Puerto Cortez. A hasty court martial condemned him to die.

The morning of William Walker's last day arrived. He was marched along the

beach behind a priest holding a crucifix. The firing-squad followed with a ragged mob at their heels. A halt was called; and Walker turned and faced them, calm, cool, fearless, and silent. The order to fire rang out, and at the rattle of the volley he pitched forward on his face and thrashed about on the sand, still living.

One of the peons ran up and placed the muzzle of his musket to Walker's temple and pulled the trigger. As the filibuster stiffened the peon bent over and beat him in the face several times with his clenched fist. Thus died William Walker at the age of thirty-six years, four months and four days.

PAY GRAVEL

A FOUR-PART STORY
PART III

By
Hugh
Pendexter



Author of "Red Sleeves," "The Torch Bearers," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form

IN AUGUST of 1876, when the gold-rush to the Black Hills of Nebraska was at its height, Peter Dinsdale with some companions from the East started out over the long trail which led to Deadwood City, the boom town of the moment.

The Cheyenne and the Sioux were on the war-path, and Dinsdale's companions, alarmed by the stories of atrocities, decided to turn back. Dinsdale continued on alone. Half-way out he met "San Juan" Joe, a gambler, returning to Deadwood City, and they joined forces. San Juan warned Dinsdale that if they could win their way through the "Gate of Hell," a cañon where the Indians lay in ambush, they would be comparatively safe.

They started through the cañon at dawn. Before they had gone far they heard screams ahead of them. Spurring their horses forward, they met a girl, running and stumbling, her hands outstretched. Ahead the Indians were dancing about the victims of their latest massacre—the seventh since May.

Dinsdale caught the girl up on his saddle and they dashed forward. Surprized by the white men, the Indians put up a poor defense, finally withdrawing, leaving five of their number dead.

Still shaken with terror, the girl—she was only

seventeen—told Dinsdale that her name was Lottie Carl, and that the party she had been with were friends of hers, but that she had no relatives.

Going forward again, they passed through several camps, abandoned for the richer diggings at Deadwood. The streets of Deadwood were filled with a mob of men and women, who called out asking for news of the troops. The Indians were getting bolder, and the miners hardly dared leave the protection of the town.

"Let's take Lottie to Kitty the Schemer," suggested San Juan. "She'll take care of her."

Dinsdale did not like Kitty's house. The rich furniture and Kitty herself, exquisitely dressed and beautiful, suggested the character of the place she ran.

"I've decided that Lottie can't stay here," he said abruptly. "We'll take her to the Widow Colt's up the street. That's decent."

Kitty was furious.

"Kill him, San Juan," she begged. "If you loved me you would!"

But San Juan had too much respect for Dinsdale as a man and a fighter, and he realized that Dinsdale would never become a rival for Kitty.

"I wish it hadn't happened," he said gravely as they left. "You've made a dangerous enemy in Kitty."

Dinsdale's entrance to the life of Deadwood City seemed destined to be stormy. Later in the day he intervened in a barroom brawl to save a man called "Scissors" from bully Allen. Scissors, a harmless fellow who was considered weak-minded since his escape from the Indians, amused the crowd and made a living by cutting clever silhouettes out of paper.

As Dinsdale forced the bully toward the door at the point of his six-gun he knew that he had made another and more dangerous enemy.

"I'll go around to San Juan Joe's and gamble a bit," he decided a moment later. "I have certainly busted into Deadwood society with a bang."

AS THE days passed Dinsdale established himself in the opinion of the town as a bad-man. No scrape was too wild for him to be involved in. At one sitting he lost three thousand dollars to "French Curly" and another time offered to cut a deck of cards for a thousand dollars a cut. In a saloon fight he shot a man's gun along the floor.

As he always paid his losses in greenbacks in a town where "dust" was common currency, suspicion was soon aroused. San Juan Joe told him frankly:

"You'd better get out of town for a while. People think you are the robber who pulled the Ogalala hold-up."

Dinsdale refused, but San Juan protested:

CHAPTER VII

SAN JUAN SENDS WORD

THEY arrived at Castle Creek, the south fork of the Rapid, above the eight-mile cañon and near where gold was discovered in June of the preceding year. Within two or three miles of where the Custer trail leaves the valley they halted for dinner. The spot was a small bar and, despite his haste to leave the band on the divide far behind him, Pyrites took time to wash out several pans of gravel. He said the bar would pay two cents to a pan in fine gold.

Dinsdale was not impressed and declared it would not pay for a man's tobacco. There were two acres of the gravel, and the work already done on it in the Summer of Seventy-five showed it to be five feet deep. Pyrites insisted that with ground-slucing it could be made to yield very satisfactorily.

If it were not for the year-old excavations one would never imagine that within the space of fourteen months this section of the creek had been the scene of great activity on the part of a hundred old Montana miners. The veterans had worked in units and had methodically accomplished prodigies of preliminary labor. There was a bed-rock drain, from three to nine feet deep and a quarter of a mile long, built to run off the water from a wet gravel-flat.

"I've had a confidential report that Jim Omaha, the famous railroad detective, is on his way here. If there were any questions I didn't care to answer I'd clear out. That's my advice; take it or leave it."

Dinsdale was shaken.

"Perhaps I'd better go," he muttered.

About this time several mysterious men, known to each other only as One, Two, Three, Four and Six, were meeting in the darkened back room of a Chinese wash-house, discussing in guarded tones their plans for a new hold-up; more spectacular than any before. Five, who had proved unreliable, must be replaced, and the chief assured them that he thought he knew the right man.

In the meanwhile Kitty the Schemer, incensed because Dinsdale had spurned her, and more dangerous than any man, was inciting the town against him. The first result was that he was obliged to kill "Bandy" Allen in self-defense, in a running fight. That night Dinsdale fled from the town with Iron Pyrites, a prospector, fearing mob-law.

While they were prospecting through the hills, Dinsdale stumbled on an abandoned cabin and, exploring it, found that it was the rendezvous of horse-thieves. Trapped in the cellar, he was obliged to stun one of the returning men with his revolver-butt in order to make his escape.

"We'll have to make tracks for Rapid City," warned Pyrites when he had rejoined him. "If they catch us we'll hang, if they don't shoot us down first."

Dinsdale's contempt diminished when Pyrites tested this flat and found it to yield fifteen cents to a pan. A second pan, luckily catching several small nuggets, he said would weigh six dollars. Besides the several pits near their halting-place they also visited pits and drifts in claydale gravel and soft bed-rock. Of all that company of resolute men, however, there was none at work now. Fear of the Indians had scattered them, or new diggings, such as those in Deadwood gulch, had drawn them away.

When they resumed their journey Pyrites bewailed their need of haste and was inclined to blame his companion for what was in fact a flight. Dinsdale irrelevantly contended he must be in Rapid City as soon as possible even if the escapade on the divide had not supplied an impetus. The way to the junction of Castle and North Fork was down a deep valley, narrow in places, and winding through a broken, mountainous country. For the full eight miles each side gulch and blind cañon was a temptation to the prospector. Continually was he for

pausing for "just one pan." Dinsdale kept him to the mark by steadily pushing ahead; nor was he willing to stop when they reached the forks but insisted on passing through a deep and narrow cañon that cuts through cliffs of slate for four miles.

Pyrites informed him that prior to the coming of the Montana miners in Seventy-five this cañon was impassable for horses because of the fallen timber and bushes. The Montana men had cut out a path and the travelers experienced but little difficulty in keeping the trail. On each side the slate rose in vertical walls for several hundred feet, and above these towered rocky hills covered with the erect trunks of fire-killed pines. As they passed through the gloomy gorge Pyrites frequently called his companion's attention to high bars along the walls, but Dinsdale could discern nothing except a débris of prostrate spruce and pine and tangled bushes.

It was sunset when they emerged from the cañon. Now the vista was more pleasing as the valley widened and the gravel flats were quite extensive and the high bars more numerous. From the banks of the creek to the hills stretched groves of oak and elm, a welcome change from the monotonous pines. Beyond the hardwood the evergreens resumed sway, only now a living wall of green instead of a blackened ruin left by the fires.

Pyrites insisted the main deposits were at the bottom of the gorge instead of in the bars, and he explained how the miners of the preceding year had been prevented from finding them because of high water. Now that the stream was at low-water mark he proceeded to demonstrate his theory by panning out some hundred pounds of gravel and finding rich color at each assay.

Among the mute witnesses of the departed miners' assiduity and their methods of operation were a discarded pan, riddled with bullet holes, a clumsy rocker, and a broken Long Tom.

"These things prove the hills are a poor man's diggings and that eastern or coast capital isn't keen to crowd them out by gobbling up all the land," philosophized Pyrites. "Last Summer some of those fellows was using pans. The pan is for the prospector, but he quits it after striking it rich." Then pointing at a twelve-foot rocker he jeered, "Some stuck to the cradle, long ago out of date and only fit for

Chinamen who flock in to take the white man's leavings."

The Long Tom, twenty feet in length but minus the iron sieve, escaped his disapproval; and he declared:

"By 'tomming' I can clear a strip in a day that'll take a week's hard work with a rocker to clear. And the rocker, in turn, is that much ahead of a pan. All this stuff shows there was — fools, plain fools, and wise men up here last season. Twenty years ago we figured it cost twenty dollars to work a cubic yard of paying gravel by pan. You could work the same amount with a rocker for five dollars, and with a Long Tom for one dollar. Yet here was miners panning and 'tomming' side by side. Human nature is a queer animal; I'd like to get up to some of those bars and see if they tried any hydraulicking. In the old days it used to cost twenty cents to hydraulic a cubic yard. Now they've got it down so fine they can make fat profits from gravel running only that much a yard. Yes, there's some who's satisfied if the dirt washes out ten cents to every cubic yard. But that's too — fine for me. And they're all gone. Injuns scared them off. And if there hadn't been any Injuns some would be running wild, quitting ounce diggings to try their luck in a new country."

This trait was so characteristic of Pyrites himself that Dinsdale smiled broadly. That night as they smoked before their tent Pyrites enlightened his friend as to the nature of traveling before them. At times they would be within four miles of Spring Creek, and again twice that distance. The valley was easy to follow, he assured him, for eleven miles beyond their camp when it changed to a long cañon. Below the cañon was their objective, Rapid City, where several hundred miners were still pursuing their luck.

"Any good pickings in the cañon?" asked Dinsdale.

"Gold is there, but there's too much water. Yet every foot of it is located and some of it being worked. Nothing for us to try for there, but we can, if we have time, test a yarn that's been floating through the hills ever since the first rush, that was known in frontier towns long before that: I'm speaking of the gold cached by one of the party that entered the hills way back in Fifty-two and went as far north as what's now Dead-wood gulch."

"I've heard that ancient yarn dozens of times," wearily remarked Dinsdale. "A hundred men bound for California. Nineteen quit the main body at Fort Laramie to investigate the gold stories told about the hills. They reached a creek, where high water prevented mining——"

"This very creek!" broke in Pyrites.

"—So they pushed on and made Deadwood gulch. They struck it rich, but were surrounded by Sioux. Only one man escaped. You see, I know it as well as you do. Queer how one man always escapes. Just one. And he always dies after telling his story to some one. If two or more men escaped there wouldn't be any story as the other survivors would speak up and say it was a lie."

"Lie, nothing!" hotly cried Pyrites. "Tom Renshaw did escape. He was out hunting when the Injuns rushed the camp. He was returning with a deer when the smoke from the burning shacks and cabins warned him to be careful. From the top of a bluff he looked down and saw the whole business. He hid in the woods and lived off the deer meat till the Indians quit. Then he went into the burned camp and found a horse that had bolted into the timber. He uncached six hundred ounces of gold——"

"Six hundred!" derisively exploded Dinsdale.

"What you hooting at? What do you know about mining? I've often rocked sixty buckets of dirt a day for every day in the week and cleaned seven or eight ounces in the seven days. That's only ounce diggings. But say that crowd laid off a day and only averaged six ounces to the man for the short week. That would give about a hundred and twenty ounces for a week. If they did that for five weeks they'd have six hundred ounces easy. Reckoned at eighteen dollars a ounce and you'd have ten thousand eight hundred dollars. Lord! But you are aggravating at times. To have luck you've just got to believe. Didn't those men sink shafts? Wasn't there nineteen of them? Didn't they have first pickings in Deadwood gulch? I can take you to old shafts with trees growing over them that are more than twenty years old. Now where's your talk? Well, Renshaw packed that gold to one of the heads of the Box Elder, not far from Deadwood gulch, and hid it in a shaft his party dug before they entered the gulch."

"How do you know all this?" sceptically asked Dinsdale.

"Because Tom Renshaw, nearly starved and with his hoss played out, managed to reach the immigrant road. He was out of ammunition and threw away his gun. He lived on choke-cherries, roots, and the pulp



of prickly pears. He traveled by night because it was too cold to sleep without blankets, and he slept in the daytime. One night he staggered into a hunting-camp of Mormons on Green River, and told his story. Among other things he said his party averaged a ounce and a half a day to the man for days and days on a stretch. Then you turn up your nose at six hundred measly ounces! Renshaw was fed and cared for, and after he got on his feet he disappeared. There was a notice in the Frisco papers asking him to come forward and make himself known. But he never showed up. Probably his hardships killed him right after he quit the Mormon camp."

"But why haven't you tried for the cached gold?"

Pyrites stared at him in great scorn. Finally he exclaimed:

"Me waste my time digging out ten or eleven thousand dollars' worth of gold when there's whole mines of it to be had for the taking? If I was a gambling man, as you seem to be, I'd tell you that the limit ain't high enough to interest me."

Dinsdale threw back his head and laughed in huge delight. Pyrites's feelings were ruffled, however, and he glowered at the fire.

"All right, partner," soothed Dinsdale; "we'll take time enough some time to corral that dust. It isn't to be sneezed at. But I've heard so many 'lost mine' stories I've kept taking stock in them."

"Still you've tried hundreds of times to make a flush. If we don't find that gold in the old shaft then some one's been ahead of us."

"No doubt about that," heartily agreed Dinsdale. "But as a business proposition I'd rather spend my time stealing horses than in hunting for cached gold. As far as the rest of it goes I'd just as soon steal horses from live white men as to take gold from dead white men, or steal gold lands from the Injuns."

"No one is stealing the Injuns' land," Pyrites denied. "Government got this country fair and square. Injuns don't want gold. White folks do."

"I'm too sleepy to argue," yawned Dinsdale.

Pyrites eyed him shrewdly and hazarded—

"I reckon your conscience wouldn't trouble you a heap if there was enough money in a game."

"Not a bit," promptly admitted Dinsdale. "Gamblers cheat and it's all right if they don't get caught. Miners grab land before the Government gets title to it. Mountain men used to sneak into the Injuns' country and trap. Grab game all around. The main thing is—don't get caught. Lots of men are honest because they're afraid they'll get caught if they go crooked."

Pyrites chuckled at this line of cynical philosophy and agreed.

"Lots of truth in your talk. But it happens that gold is what I'm keen about. I'm more interested in tracing float-quartz to the mother-vein than I'd be in the best herd of hosses ever run off. Take that slate we passed through, where it splits off in thin sheets like what they put on roofs in the East. A hoss-thief wouldn't give it a thought. Now I'd swap my share in the primest lot of hosses ever run off from a wagon train just to fool with that slate. A hoss-thief would ride slam-bang over a crack that held the price of a hundred hosses. I'd turn the hosses loose and dig down into that crack. San Juan Joe would quit the best pay-gravel in these hills just to draw to a busted flush. But how we talk! I wish we could take time to work up toward the

Box Elder. Those high bars and narrow flats are just loaded with gold I know."

"A cache of gold, a silver mine or two, and now some more new diggings," murmured Dinsdale.

"I'm looking for the big chance," explained Pyrites. "What I've found I can always come back to if I don't find something better."

"If some one hasn't come along and located it ahead of you."

Pyrites grew grave and sorrowfully admitted: "It has been done. Fellow leaves something that's pretty good. Doesn't find anything better. Comes back to find a Swede making pay gravel fly."

Then with much spirit:

"But I know I can find something that's better'n anything I've struck yet. I never failed to do it in other diggings. Now there's silver! There's Bear Butte. Judas! but there's a country for you. Mato Tipi-Grizzly Bear Lodge—as the Injuns call it. They used to visit its flat top and pray to the rocks. If Crook would ever come with the soldiers so we could get up there I'd show you some silver indications that would bulge your eyes. Injuns say that's where their thunder god lands when he drops down to earth for a little visit. They reckon the ghosts of all dead Injuns are taken there to look at the rainbow stones and pretty shells and other rubbish before going to live in the real ghost-land. Sort of keeps them from being blinded by the dazzling sights in spirit-land, I reckon."

A gentle snore informed him that Dinsdale was asleep and had missed much of his talk. Shaking the offender's shoulder he advised—

"If you can't keep awake when a man's telling you how to find a fortune you'd better crawl into a tent."



RAPID CITY boasted itself to be the "Denver" of the Black Hills, but as yet played second fiddle to Deadwood, although its location made it the logical distributing center for the southern section of the gold country. In addition to a few hundred miners, who made it their headquarters when not at work on their claims on the outskirts, there were real estate speculators and men committed to business enterprises doggedly waiting for boom times to return.

It was generally believed along Rapid

Creek that once the supremacy of the Sioux was broken there would be a general exodus from Deadwood gulch, and that the city below the long cañon would benefit thereby. The hotel did an excellent business in catering to those passing north and south over the stage-road.

Another place of varied entertainment was Calvin's eating-house. The proprietor bought gold. Next to the eating-house was a gambling-hall. This, also, was owned by Calvin. Transients and miners kept the games busy although there was not as high play as there was in Deadwood City.

Calvin, whose first name was seldom if ever used, was known to be keen in a bargain and a trader by instinct. Forty years earlier he would have made a fortune as an Indian trader. More than one man from the near-by placers complained that, on the excuse the gold was not "clean," he would blow a dollar or two of fine dust from any offering. Several cracks in the board counter, where he weighed the dust, were cited by the disgruntled as corroboration of other charges. But Calvin, sharp of nose as well as of practise, ignored all aspersions and continued to make his two houses pay a good profit. Beyond appearing in the gambling-hall at regular intervals he assumed no outward control of the place. Neither in his own, or in other places, was he ever known to risk a penny on any game of chance.

Business averaged unusually good at the tables and, in part, the owner's genius for providing a lure was responsible. The homeless man finds the easiest way to satisfy his insatiable desire for excitement is to bet on a card or a rolling ball. Calvin further stimulated such craving by providing a pretty French girl to deal Twenty-one. There was Chippewa blood somewhere in her ancestry, but she was vivacious, musical of voice and possessed an undeniably pretty face. If she were part red it made no difference to the men she kept at her table even when the other games languished.

The report that Calvin was soon to lose her and that Deadwood City was to acquire her graceful presence brought men in from the outlying diggings to make a wager before she went away. Her favor with the miners was due largely to her rule that none of the gambling fraternity could play at Twenty-one. The game was for the miner and tenderfoot exclusively. She was un-

canny in her ability to detect a professional. Let him masquerade as miner or teamster or business man and, after one glance from her cool dark eyes, the delighted spectators would hear her musical voice saying:

"*M'sieu* is mistake. Take up ze gold. This ees not for ze gambling man. *M'sieurs attendez-vous, s'il vous plait*. Make ze game."

And the favored victims would bundle the intruder aside and with additional stakes prove their loyalty to a game that frowned on the professional.

One man aroused the curiosity of the girl. He kept aloof, yet watched the game. His figure was erect and graceful and the gay tie hinted at dandyism, but it was the white cloth around his head and covering some hurt that held the girl's interest. As there was no doubt that the fellow had been drinking it was also possible, she feared, he would create a disturbance. Not that there was anything in the fellow's gait or voice to indicate overindulgence at Calvin's two bars, nor was his gaze overbold when it swung back to the Twenty-one table.

It was his propensity for song which led to the inevitable conclusion. When drunk men sang in Rapid City just as they did in Deadwood, just as they sang in the days of the first drink. But to walk alone in the street in the sunshine and sing, albeit the voice was a rich tenor, proved the fellow was fair befuddled. He did not seek acquaintance with any of the habitués of the place, and none knew whence he came, whether from north or south, by stage, horseback or on foot. The bandage around his head was clean and must have been changed soon before his first appearance in the eating-house that morning.

Three times had he sung before the noon hour and, next to the girl, Scissors the picture-man displayed the most interest in him. Scissors was well known in Rapid City although this was but his second visit there. But he had sold many pictures on his first visit, and the story of his captivity among the Indians was well known from French Creek to the Belle Fourche. Scissors stood behind the Twenty-one table and made an outline of the fair dealer and timidly placed it beside her hand. She pushed a chip toward him, but he refused, murmuring:

"Let me give it. It pleases me. I can always get dust from the men."

To prove his assertion he walked over to the stranger and began:

"It's a gift. Always could do it. Preserve your likeness in paper, the only man in the world who can do it. Can make your likeness as exact as any artist can draw it. Do it all in outline, profile preferred. I'm *wakan witshasha*. A mystery man. *Wakantanka*, the big sun mystery, smiles on me and gives me my medicine. Behold!"

He began whirling the paper and manipulating the scissors. The stranger watched him closely, alert and puzzled. His eyes widened as he glimpsed the growing outline. But it was only a glimpse, as the paper was worked back and forth too rapidly for the eye to follow. When it was completed and extended between the points of the scissors the picture-man said:

"Four bits. It's dirt cheap."

The stranger stared at the cut-out figure in amazement. He noted that not only was the characteristic pose cunningly caught but that even the bandage about his head was indicated. With an inarticulate sound he snatched the paper and tore it to bits. Scissors' lips opened to make a protest at such wanton destruction of art, but before he could speak the man was thrusting a dollar into his hand and was commanding: "Clear out! That silly stuff doesn't interest me."

Scissors deftly pocketed the coin and stubbornly insisted:

"I'm *wakan*. The Sioux know me. You've spoiled a mighty fine likeness of yourself."

"Be off with your jabber," growled the stranger. Then as he realized how deeply the group at the Twenty-one table was interested in the scene he added:

"You're spoiling my luck. Now I must have a drink before I dare bet on a card." He did not patronize the short bar at the end of the hall but strode into the street and made for the eating-house. And as he walked he obeyed his musical impulse and began singing in a rich, rollicking voice:

"I used to love a gal there; they called her Sally Black,
I asked her for to marry me, she said it was a whack;
But, says she to me, Joe Bowers, before we hitch for life,
You ought to have a little home to keep your little wife."

A rumble of laughter sounded from the Twenty-one table. With a flash of her white teeth the girl remarked—

"*M'sieu* is much wiz ze music."

"Sings the same old thing over and over," complained a miner. "If he must hoot about 'Joe Bowers from Pike' why don't he use different verses?"

Scissors watched the man enter the eating-house, and then wandered aimlessly about the room in search of customers. It was his second day in town and trade was not nearly as good as it was in Deadwood. After half an hour the stranger returned, and this time he did not halt by the door, but swung down the room and darted a lively glance at the girl. He halted and abruptly pushed his way to her table and thrust a hand in his pocket for some money or dust.

"No, no, *m'sieu*. Not here. Ze game ees not for you."

He slowly drew forth his hand and swung his gaze about as if searching for some one who might be smiling over his repulse. More to spare the dealer a scene than from fear of the stranger the men continued grave of face. With a shrug of his shoulders the man passed on to the monte table. The dealer was listless; running off the cards for the loss or profit of half a dozen men. The stranger looked on sardonically for a minute, then brusquely asked—

"What's the limit?"

"Fifty dollars," answered the dealer without bothering to glance up.

"How much behind your bank?"

"Two thousand dollars." Now the dealer deigned to look up.

"Bet you two thousand dollars the next card is red."

The dealer dropped the pack before him and rapidly darted his appraising gaze over the challenger. Head hurt, partly intoxicated; yet drunken men and fools are proverbial for luck.

"This is a monte bank."

"I know. Bet you two thousand the next card is red."

"Probably is. Probably you got a glimpse of it," sneered the dealer.

"Leave the deck as it is. Let any one here cut the cards. Bet you two thousand he cuts a red card."

"You're talking big, stranger. But money has the only voice we hear in here."

The stranger pulled a large bag from his pocket and dropped it on the table.

"Thirty ounces in that."

He reached inside his flannel shirt and

drew forth a thick package of greenbacks and dropped them beside the bag.

"Seventeen hundred odd in that. Is that voice loud enough for you to hear?"

"All right. You're on. The bank pays you two thousand if you call the right color."

"Red is my color. Shuffle them up, but don't *bend* any of them. Go ahead."

The dealer ran the cards together a few times and squared them up and left them on the table. "Any one in particular you'd like to make the cut?" asked the dealer.

The stranger bent down to satisfy himself the dealer was not "forcing" a cut by bending the cards, then straightened and glanced about until his gaze rested on Scissors. Motioning him to approach he caught him by the shoulder and pushed him forward and directed:

"Cut the deck, Paper Dolls. You're big medicine, you know. Cut a red card."

Scissors stared stupidly as if not understanding. The stranger repeated his command, now speaking sharply. Scissors timidly advanced a hand and seized the cards. The dealer bowed his head to catch an early glimpse of the color and drew a deep breath and held it. Scissors cut deep and held out his hand. He had cut the ten of hearts.

The dealer rose and from a drawer in the table counted out two thousand dollars in dust and currency and motioned for the winner to use the scales. The stranger finished counting the money and then weighed the bags of dust in his brown hands.

"They heft like they are enough," he said. "Game closed?"

"Closed until I get another stake," said the dealer, placing the meager residue of cash and dust in a bag to take with him. "You tapped the bank to the limit. It's yours to run if you wish it till I can get another stake."

The stranger laughed without making any sound and dropped a handful of coins on the table before Scissors.

"For you, Paper Dolls."

Then to the dealer—

"Maybe I'll wait till you get another stake and then tap the bank again."

"Straight monte, with fifty-dollar limit," warned the dealer as he turned to go.

The stranger walked with him to the door and broke into "Joe Bowers from Pike." He sang only two lines, his attention being attracted by two men approaching from the

eating-house. He stepped back inside the hall, and in a minute Pyrites and Dinsdale entered. Dinsdale gave him a quick look and observed the bandaged head, and walked down to the Twenty-one table. Pyrites, never given to gambling, hurried to the short bar at the end of the room, proclaiming his desire for strong drink. Dinsdale watched the girl from beneath half-lowered lids for a minute or two and then threw down a greenback.

"Pardon, *m'sieu*, but eet ees not for a gambling man. Take your money."

"But I am not a gambling man," protested Dinsdale.

"Disputing this young lady, young feller?" growled a bearded man with bloodshot eyes.

"I was setting her right," gently replied Dinsdale. "But so long as she prefers I don't play I'll take the money back."

"You have *ze* gambling look, *m'sieu*. Pardon, if I mistake. *Ze monte bank* will be running ver' soon."

The stranger laughed boisterously and in response to Dinsdale's questioning glance announced:

"The young lady sees the same brand on the two of us, mister. And I've just tapped the monte bank. I'm banker and dealer. House limit is fifty. That doesn't interest me. And monte is a slow game."

"Banker and dealer, both, eh?" mused Dinsdale, smiling pleasantly. "And what's your idea of a good game?"

The stranger estimated Dinsdale rather shrewdly, and with a drop of the lids glanced at the two big belt-guns.

"Color of the card. Five hundred a guess."

"Get to your table. I'll help you pass the time," said Dinsdale.

"La la! Oh, no! *M'sieu* is not *ze* gambling man," trilled the Twenty-one dealer.

Pyrites at the bar was taking his second drink and talking volubly to the patient bartender. A new deck was brought to the monte table and thoroughly shuffled.

"How did you tap the bank?" carelessly asked Dinsdale as he felt for his money.

"Bet two thousand a card would be red."

"Short and sweet. Red ought to be some lucky," mused Dinsdale, producing a stack of greenbacks. "There's five hundred. Give them a cut, please. I call red."

Black came up. The stranger smiled and remarked:

"When I'm in luck it sticks clear through. Some paper money you're toting. You ought to be the 'Greenback man' I've been hearing so much about."

"Deal a card! Red," called Dinsdale. Black came up. The dealer said, "I don't think you've got enough of the green to last till all these dark cards run out. But of course the deal ends when either color is exhausted."

"That wasn't specified, but let it go—Red."

Red came up—a diamond. Dinsdale swept in the money and asked—

"How did you hurt your head?"

"Think I'm a newspaper?" queried the dealer, smiling frostily. "We're playing at gambling."

"Red." A club showed.

Pyrites was showing the effect of his hurried drinks and was now leaning his back against the bar, glass in hand, and beaming joyously on the monte table. Impartially taking the whole room into his confidence he boasted of his discoveries and reached the glass over his shoulder to be refilled. While he talked two dark and two red cards showed.

"Red!" barked Dinsdale. He won.

"Red!" Again he won. "I'm even," he said as the dealer waited for him to name the color.

"And quitting?" sneered the dealer.

Dinsdale shook his head. "It's slow. It tires me. Two thousand on a single card. What say?"

The other stared up into the steady eyes for a fraction of a minute, then shrugged his shoulders and lightly said:

"All in a lifetime. I'll go you."

He counted out two thousand dollars in greenbacks.

With a dry laugh Dinsdale observed:

"They'll be calling you the 'Greenback man' next. But I'll be mighty glad to get them. Never could get enough greenbacks."

The stranger took the deck in his left hand, poised thumb and finger ready to deal a card. Dinsdale quietly informed him: "I couldn't help seeing the bottom card. I'm sticking to red."

And his hand fell to his side.

The stranger's eyes dilated until they reminded Dinsdale of Sitting Bull's, the owl's yellow orbs, and for a moment he seemed to hesitate. Then he slowly turned

the top card. It was the ace of diamonds. With his left hand Dinsdale pulled in the money, his gaze never quitting the set face across the table. Pyrites, growing noisy at the bar, alone broke the breathless silence of the room.

Leaning back and clasping his hands before him the dealer said:

"I don't mind your winning. I'd rather win, but it doesn't give me heart-trouble to lose. But I do mind your telling me that you know the bottom card."

"I thought it right I should tell you," serenely returned Dinsdale, now standing erect, the money still clutched in his left hand, his right hand hovering over a gun.

"It was the same as saying I was thinking of dealing the bottom card," continued the dealer, speaking very slowly. "Now just to prove what kind of a bluffer you are I'll bet fifteen hundred, about my whole pile, that you can't name the bottom card."

Ugly lines drew Dinsdale's face into a snarl.

"Keep your hands away from that deck," he sharply commanded. "I'll take that bet, but some one besides you must turn the deck over. Pick whoever you please in this room."

"— you!" softly murmured the dealer. Pyrites advanced toward them, shouting in a raucous voice:

"There was an old woman had three sons,
Joshua, James and John."

"Pick your man!" snapped Dinsdale. "I'll ask the young lady to turn the deck over," called out the dealer in a loud voice.

"Josh was hung and James was drowned,
And John was lost and never was found,"

howled Pyrites.

"Excuse," coldly refused the French girl. "Here you, Paper Dolls! Turn this deck over after this man has named the card," hoarsely called the dealer to Scissors.

"And that was the end of the three sons,
Joshua, James and John."

Scissors timidly sidled to the table, his eyes blinking nervously.

"The bottom card is the seven of spades," spoke up Dinsdale.

Taking great care not to touch the cards with his hands Scissors inserted the points of his scissors under the deck and tipped the pack over. Dinsdale had named it

correctly. The stranger pushed back his chair and said—

"If you had offered me ten thousand, or a million to name it, I couldn't have done it."

"There was an old woman had three sons, Joshua, James and John."

roared Pyrites, slapping a hand on the dealer's shoulder and waving a hand at Dinsdale.

The ferocity slowly left the stranger's face. With a reckless laugh he lifted his head and commenced singing—

"I used to love a gal there, and they called her Sally Black."

"Hangtown and Spanish Dry Diggings. Fall of Fifty-one!" rejoiced Pyrites. "But you ain't old enough to have been out there at that singing."

"But a certain old man is, who still sings those songs and taught them to me," said the stranger. Springing to his feet he said to Dinsdale, "You've cleaned me out. Is there any fighting blood between us? If so, we can step outside."

"Shame for two young fellows to spill blood," protested Pyrites. "Let every one be happy."

Dinsdale voted for peace by saying:

"Don't take my talk too seriously. You're a stranger to me. I was only doing what you probably would have done. If the house will join me?"

The house advanced as a man.

"I'm called Pete Dinsdale by those who know me the longest," he continued as he and the stranger followed the crowd to the bar. "Those who know me the least call me 'Greenback man.'"

"My Black Hills handle is 'Easy.' 'Easy come, easy go,' you know. I'm glad we don't street-fight. I'd have to kill you then. I'm a whale with a gun."

"So am I," heartily retorted Dinsdale. "I never met up with as good a gunfighter as I am. Lucky both of us prefer whisky. One or both would sure be killed. If you're broke I'll stake you."

"Thanks. I'm nearly broke, but not enough so to take from the man who won from me. When we meet again I'm coming after your hide. I don't want any favors standing between us. Where'll I find you when I get re-lined?"

"Deadwood City. San Juan Joe's place. Come heavy loaded."

Their glasses traveled to them over the heads of the first comers. While he was drinking Dinsdale was conscious of some one tugging his arm. He turned impatiently and looked down into Scissors' innocuous face.

"No pictures now, old man," he curtly said. "But I'm remembering you did me a favor. I owe you a rich stake. I'll settle later."

"San Juan said to give it to you the first time I caught you alone. Guess you won't ever be alone, and I've been waiting here away from my business for two days," whispered Scissors.

"All right. Hand over."

"It's in your right hand pocket."

With that Scissors backed away.

Taking advantage of the boisterous merriment Dinsdale fell back a few steps and pulled a paper from his coat pocket. He opened it and read:

Everything o. k. Come back with Scissors. Job ready very soon.—S. J. J.

Dinsdale got Pyrites by the collar and dragged him to one side.

"Are you too drunk to understand plain English?" he asked.

"I'm sober enough to locate two-ounce diggings within fifty rod of here blind-folded," proudly assured the prospector.

Dinsdale growled in disgust.

"See here. Try to remember this when you wake up tomorrow morning. I'm off for Deadwood City. Word from San Juan Joe. I make you a present of the grub-stake. Lay off that whisky."

"Lord! I hate to have you go! Stay till tomorrow and we boys will have some fun tonight. That new cuss knows the same old songs that I do—

"There was an old woman had three sons—"

"Drop it! Listen to me carefully. Sober up. Keep your mouth shut. The man who calls himself 'Easy' isn't as easy as he pretends. I'm positive he's the man I cracked over the head with my gun-barrel up on the divide."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAP AT MATO TIPI

DINSDALE was very curious for the latest news from Deadwood City, but Scissors galloped ahead until they were clear of the town and defeated all attempts at conversation. When the picture-man slackened his pace it was to ask—

"You are still carrying considerable money with you?"

"About thirty-five hundred more than I had when I left Deadwood. Took that much from the fellow with the busted head. I'm remembering that I owe you a prize for tipping the deck."

"I wasn't thinking of that. I knew you'd treat me all right. Any one could have tipped the deck, but a *wakan wishasha* is better than a common man," gravely said Scissors. "I've learned things from being around gambling-places. Only a road-agent, or a gambler would bet so much money on one card like that man did."

"I bet like he did," reminded Dinsdale, his eyes glinting.

"You're no road-agent," promptly declared Scissors. "You haven't any partners up here. You may be a train-robber. It's no business of mine if you're one or the other. But that man back there worries me. He's no gambler or I'd have seen him in Deadwood. A man willing to bet as he did wouldn't hang around Rapid City, drinking Calvin's whisky and singing his foolish songs. Not being a gambler, nor a miner, he must be an agent. As robbing folks is his business he won't knuckle down to losing so much money, nor letting you get away with what was your own. If I was a card-man I'd bet we'll be held up inside the next ten miles."

Dinsdale was frankly concerned, although he tapped his guns and grimly declared:

"Let them come. You just lay low and when they heave in sight leave it to me to receive them."

"My old owl would know better than to make such talk. He'd know the agents would never give you a chance to pull a gun. The man with the sore head will tell his mates—and he has men within call—that it'll be dangerous to give you a show. Yes, old Sitting Bull would ruffle up his feathers and tell us we're fools to be following this road to be overtaken. Your horse is tired. Mine isn't much good. They've got the best horse-flesh in the hills. This minute they're probably pounding after us, taking it easy so's not to overhaul us till we're quite a few miles from Rapid City."

Dinsdale glanced over the winding back trail, then pleased his companion by saying:

"I'm not a fool even if I do wear two belt-guns. We'll swing one side if you think best. I have quite a lot of money on me in

greenbacks and a decent pot of gold. What's more, San Juan Joe is in a hurry to see me on a business deal. I can run just as smart as I can fight."

"Good! Now you make a medicine talk!" cried Scissors; and within the next quarter of a mile they turned down a narrow gorge that ran east.

They followed this for less than two miles and then swung back until they were moving parallel to the stage-road and separated from it by a long ridge. Pointing to the ridge he announced:

"From the top of that one can look down on the stage-road. If we had time to spare we could get up there and see if the sore-headed man and his friends are after us."

"We'll take time. I'd like to be sure if that's Mr. Easy's game," declared Dinsdale.

Scissors turned in toward the ridge and galloped to a clump of spruce and secured his horse. Dinsdale did likewise. The ascent of the ridge was easy as there was no ground growth and the timber was scattering. As they neared the crest Scissors directed:

"Take off your hat and play Indian. Just below us the road narrows. Stage-drivers call it the 'bottle.' Maybe Sore-head hasn't had time to fetch his friends along. Maybe they're taking it comfortable and planning to jump us after we've camped. We'll see."

They cautiously lifted their heads and pulled aside the grass. The road directly beneath them was out of their field of vision, but toward the south there was a long stretch in full view. They watched for a minute and then beheld some objects rapidly advancing into the middle distance. They were horsemen and riding furiously. Dinsdale counted six. From their elevated position it was impossible to distinguish one from another excepting the man who rode next to the leader. He wore something white about his head.

On rushed the cavalcade and disappeared by galloping between the vertical walls of the "bottle." "My debt to you increases, Scissors," muttered Dinsdale. "The second man was Easy, and he's after my money. The way they're traveling shows they're keen to have it over with as soon as possible."

"I'm very *wakan*. My pictures are *wakan*. But the pictures I see inside my

head are *Taku wakan*—most mysterious and wonderful. I dream of hawks, which is very lucky," proudly retorted Scissors. "Now we must get back to the horses and ride fast. For there's another gorge ahead and it's possible Sore-head will begin to suspect we're off the road and ride down the gorge to head us off. I shall feel better when we are beyond it."

The gorge was reached and passed with no signs of the hard-riding horsemen. Dinsdale became absent-minded and it was some time before he gave his companion any attention. Scissors' simple face was very grave and he was studying the surroundings sharply.

"You seem to know lots about Injuns," complimented Dinsdale, now throwing off his own abstraction.

"My mind is half red," murmured Scissors.

"Do you see anything to put you on edge?"

"I see nothing, but I feel. I'm *wakan*—I feel things before they happen."

"Sore-head has guessed our trick?"

"I feel *red*. It's Indians I feel. They're very bold. They think they've whipped all our soldiers. They've made up songs about Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. There must be a big band quite close to the hills."

"Nonsense," scoffed Dinsdale.

Then he remembered the warrior he had shot between the Spring and the Rapid, and the arrow he had picked up near Custer's peak. If one or two braves would penetrate that far why be sceptical as to a much larger number venturing into the foothills?

"I take that back, Scissors. I reckon you know more about Injuns than I'll ever know."

"I have been in the ghost-lodge of the Ogalala and watched them bury the red cloth to please Unkteli, the water god, and his wife, the earth spirit. I have watched the circle dance, when they sang their songs to the *Wakinyan*, the thunderers. Many red men believe the white men are whipped and these hills are at their mercy. I dreamed of a thunderstorm a few nights ago. That means a fight."

"Your mind is red, all right."

"I refuse to believe many superstitions of the white men. Ahead is a branch of the Box Elder; we can camp there."

They crossed the head of the branch and

halted at a bend where Dinsdale found the charred sticks of old camp-fires. Scissors picked up a rusty hunting-knife and some empty cartridge shells.

"Not Indian," he said. "Too many fires. Too big. This must be where the Custer expedition camped in Seventy-four on its outward trip from the hills."

To the east was a long ridge and beyond that the plains began. The influence of the plains was also noticeable in the wild rye, wild oats and others of the taller grasses that grew on the long slope descending to the east. In the west, and only a few miles distant, extended the limestone ridges and hills. The travelers refrained from making a fire until after sunset for fear the smoke might be seen by their pursuers. They dined on cooked meat and bread brought from Calvin's eating-house. After filling his pipe Dinsdale endeavored to learn something more about his companion's experience when a captive of the Indians, also something about his earlier antecedents, his birthplace, and the extent of his schooling. But Scissors for once was not responsive. He idly snipped pictures of animals out of paper and explained they were lesser *wakandas*. When pressed for his private history he showed impatience, and answered:

"I forget. It was a very long time ago—before I became *wakan witshasha*. A mystery man forgets useless things. See, now; a new picture. I could always do it."

And folding the paper several times he worked with his usual quickness and then opened the paper to disclose a chain of horsemen, the horses going at a mad gallop.

"The fellows we saw riding up the stage-road," said Dinsdale.

"If I could meet some of them in San Juan's place I could get a dollar for it," mused Scissors as he carefully refolded the strip of figures. "Old Calvin wanted me to pay him a percentage for all I sold in the gambling-hall. I wouldn't do it. The girl dealing Twenty-one wouldn't let him order me out. I hope nothing happens to Sitting Bull while I'm gone. The Chinese cook said he would feed him just as I told him to. I think he will; he's afraid of me. Calls me a 'devil-man.' I told him if the owl wasn't all right when I got back I'd make many pictures of him without his queue. He squealed like a rat. Ah! I hear an owl now. Some one's ghost is trying to tell me things."

"You give me the creeps," sleepily said Dinsdale.

They had rigged an extra blanket over some low-hanging branches as a protection against the dew and Dinsdale crawled under this and was soon asleep. Scissors remained for another hour, blinking at the coals and absent-mindedly playing with the scissors. A long-eared owl called to the eye of the fire and a timber-wolf howled dismally. Covering the coals with gravel the picture-man crawled in beside his companion.



SUNRISE was free from fog and the two were up with the first light and eating their prepared food. Scissors was still apprehensive of danger, for he would have no fire kindled. They went without coffee, and the omission made Dinsdale sullen. Scissors led the way down the eastern slope and turned a bit south before he found the old trail over a low sandstone ridge that extended west and east.

Shortly before noon they rode through the dry bed of Elk Creek and by midday arrived at Bear Creek. They had talked but little, neither being in the mood, and they had seen no signs of white men or red. Out over the plains turkey-buzzards were circling, attracted to some unfortunate human or animal.

Halting at Bear only long enough to rest their mounts and swallow some meat and bread they entered a wide valley, running north and south, with Bear Butte showing six miles ahead. They camped on the lower fork of Bear Butte Creek and Dinsdale's mood improved when Scissors kindled a fire and placed the coffee on to boil. Scissors, too, was in a better humor and he made an elaborate picture of the flat-topped butte.

Dinsdale recounted what Pyrites had told him about the butte, and Scissors became very impatient, and at last interrupted:

"Pyrites is a fool. What does he know about Mato tipi? Only what some one has told him; what I have told him while he loafed and drank in San Juan Joe's place. Did he tell you how the Teton tribes went there to worship Tunkan, their stone god? No. Did he tell you some of the Indians say it is their oldest god because it is the hardest? Not unless I have happened to tell him. While *Wakantanka* is the great mysterious one, the Tetons fear Tunkan more. The Great One is too far off. Tunkan is always close at hand.

"And there are other mystery places more *wakan* than Mato tipi. There's the quarry of the sacred pipe-stone near the Big Missouri, where they make their *wakanda* calumets. There is Minne-wakan, or Devil's Lake, north of the Missouri, and the Mandan and Hidatsa had a very powerful medicine rock near the Yellowstone. Pyrites talking about mystery places! Pooh! He doesn't even know that Tunkan is the greatest of the dry earth gods. When he finds boulders painted red and green he doesn't know the Indians did it to worship Tunkan. Ask him about the children they used to take to the top of Mato tipi so they might place small stones in the branches of the pines and he can't tell you a thing.

"Why, old Iron Pyrites couldn't even tell you how they cut up a deer, or a buffalo, in the *wakan* way; how they leave the horns on the skull and redden the skin, and how they make a bed of wild sage for the skull to rest on. Or that a new knife must be used and the hide stripped off in a particular way. That man is crazy over hunting gold. He doesn't know enough to keep what he finds. He probably believes the Indians wear their feather bonnets when in their camps. I wouldn't be surprized if he even believed that."

"What are they saying about me in Deadwood City, Scissors?"

The query was such an abrupt digression from their former talk that the picture-man seemed to be befuddled for half a minute. He stared at Dinsdale stupidly while his wits tried to formulate an answer. At last he blurted out:

"You ain't blamed for killing Bandy Allen. Some men whisper that you're a road-agent. Others offer to bet you're a train-robber."

"How would you bet?"

"Train-robber," was the prompt reply; and Scissors reached in his pocket for another piece of paper. "You have more style in throwing money around than the agents have."

"Still you think it's safe for me to go back to town?"

"If Pyrites was asked that he'd have to squirm and twist and then say he didn't know. But I'm a mystery man. I see things other folks don't see. There's a woman who'd do you harm, yet she'd act foolish if you'd be kind to her. She's talking and trying to make medicine against

you. But folks think she's jealous. San Juan Joe is your friend. He speaks good words to the men of the city council about you. He tells them you're going into a business deal with him. Then there's the way you came through Red Cañon. Folks can't forget that. Every time they see the little girl they remember that. The woman named Colt talks in a loud voice. She says you're more foolish than wicked. She is your friend, but she tries to make herself believe she isn't. All that's against you is just talk. Bad talk."

"Scissors, I sweep my hat low to you. You have some brains. I believe you've read the cards right—all except about the jealous woman."

"Every one believes that. The woman shows it in lots of her talk. There's no other explanation for the way she gets after you. The town was stirred up a bit over Allen's death for a day or so, but now decent folks are glad he's dead. There are other things to take up the mind. Indians said to be drawing closer, and no one knowing where Crook and his soldiers are. If you go back and quiet down no one will trouble you.

"San Juan tells every one you and he are to organize a flume company to supply hydraulic power. That catches every one's fancy. Six men killed by Indians within four miles of Deadwood since you went away. Patrick and Saulsbury offer five hundred reward for the capture of any man who helped run off twenty head of their best stock from the French Creek station. They threaten to stop their stages if the horse-thieves aren't caught pretty soon. So you see the gulch has other things on its mind besides you and your doings."

"I see. Any strangers in town?"

Scissors gaped in mild amazement.

"Strangers? Why, you must know they're coming and going all the time. Only they don't go far because of the Indians."

Dinsdale puffed his pipe in silence for a minute, then asked—

"Ever you hear anything about a fellow called Omaha?"

Scissors pursed his lips and screwed up his whimsical features in an effort to remember. Then he slowly said:

"Name sounds familiar. Maybe it's because of the city by that name. Queer name for a man to have."

Dinsdale lapsed into meditation and did not hear the rambling talk of his companion, including a lengthy explanation of the various Siouan cults. He revealed his abstraction when he suddenly inquired:

"See anything of the girl I brought out of Red Cañon? Lottie Carl is her name. She's staying with Widow Colt."

Scissors nodded eagerly.

"I've seen her on the street with Mrs. Colt. She never goes out alone. That makes me remember something else—Kitty the Schemer went to the Colt house. The widow sent her out flying. They say Kitty was mad enough to chew up a harness. I'd forgotten all about that."

"So?" gritted Dinsdale. "How much more have you forgotten?"

"I don't know," was the frank reply. "Probably a lot. Since I became *wakan* I've forgotten lots of foolish stuff."

"Please don't forget we're going back to Deadwood City. When do we strike for the gulch?"

"We're wide of the stage-road, and better so," readily replied Scissors. "Those men on horseback will string out and trail along in twos and threes right into the gulch. Some of them will even risk riding into the town. Each one will be watching out for you. I've promised San Juan Joe I'd deliver you safe and sound at his back door, and if my medicine is any good I'll do it. If we follow the middle branch of this creek to its head we'll be only a few miles south of Deadwood. There's an old trail that we can take."

"Listen, Scissors; I'm not afraid of those horse-thieves trying any game close to Deadwood. Let's take the most direct way to town. I'm keen to get back."

Scissors grinned cunningly.

"Strike right out and have you get into a fight?" he said. "You'd say you'd killed a horse-thief. How would you prove it? The town would say you're a natural-born gun-fighter and always looking for trouble. They'd remember you left a dead man behind when you lit out with Pyrites. It would never do to mark your return with another dead man. San Juan Joe said—I just remember it this minute—that you couldn't stand having another killing to your credit till the first one is forgotten. He has lots of influence in town, but he can't use it all up on one man."

Dinsdale took a few farewell puffs at his

pipe and knocked out the heel, and surrendered.

"I'm not looking for trouble. I'm ready for the middle fork of this creek. We'll make town as soon as possible and without making the eagle scream."

"That's my notion," heartily indorsed Scissors. "Turning in? Think I'll sit up a while and think things out. I don't sleep well. Too many dreams. Some are bad. Price a man pays for being *wakan*."

Nor did Dinsdale rest well that night. He dreamed of Lottie Carl being in the power of Kitty the Schemer, of Mayor Farnum suddenly turning into a savage, of San Juan being killed in a fight. He was up early and wondering what could be the matter with his nerves. He walked some distance from the camp in the hope that exercise would clear away his feeling of depression. He found where some one had dug into the marly shale, and, being ignorant of geology, was much surprized to discover fish spines and a coiled cephalopod in the broken formation. He carried his discoveries back to camp to display to Scissors. The picture-man was setting out the last of their meat. Finishing his task he explained:

"Either Indians, while hunting for a new medicine, or the men with the Seventy-four expedition did it. The expedition quit the hills along about here, for they visited Bear Butte. We can visit the butte, too, if you care to. It's only five miles from here and but a short distance beyond the middle fork, where we're bound for. Won't take more'n thirty minutes to climb it. From the top we can see all over creation. If Easy and his friends are between us and Deadwood they'll be sure to have a camp and show a smoke."

As he talked he cut out a picture of the fish spine, the delicacy of the task in no way interfering with the remarkable rapidity of his execution.

The conical mass of Mato tipi, rising abruptly from the plains to a height of twelve hundred feet, presented a singular appearance and one that appealed strongly to Dinsdale's love for the unusual. Already it had a distinct personality for him, an atmosphere resting on legends and the beliefs of the red men.

Its prominence as a landmark also invited attention, and its aloofness challenged the beholder to investigate it. Its sugar-loaf outline, the regularity of its slopes and

the fringe of pines along the topmost ridge made it an ideal mystery place for the aborigine. On being questioned Scissors said it was difficult to climb unless one followed paths from the northwest or southeast sides.

"Do you want to visit the top?" asked Dinsdale.

"Only for the sake of looking for a hostile smoke. If alone I'd want to go, as it was there, at the top of Mato tipi, that I gave the Ogalala Teton the slip. I went with a band to place small rocks in the trees in memory of the dead. I came down the southeast slope in the dark."

"An hour or two won't make any difference. We'll climb it and have a look around," agreed Dinsdale.

Secretly pleased at this decision Scissors brought up the horses and a short ride brought them to the middle fork of the creek. Splashing through the shallow waters Scissors led the way toward the southeast slope. As they advanced the mystery place became even more interesting. Dinsdale was surprized to discover he was anticipating pleasure from the trip. Extending half-way down from the top was a scattering of pines and some trailing cedars. The sturdy cactus and sagebrush found their way to the very summit. The numerous and tiny furrows now grew into ravines, converging toward the top and partly filled with loose shingle. The ridges between these depressions were bare of shingle and promised a footing. Scissors pointed out zigzag lines making to the top and said they were the trails of goats and other wild inhabitants of the butte. He proposed following one of these.



THEY dismounted at a stretch of scrub-spruce at the base of the butte and Dinsdale was astounded at the abrupt change in his companion's deportment. It was as if the influence of Mato tipi, the Grizzly Bear Lodge, had reached down and gripped the picture-man and had stripped him of reason. From his pocket he produced the string of horsemen, cut out at the former camp, and singing in the Teton dialect proceeded to detach the foremost rider and pin the long strip and the single picture around Dinsdale's hat.

"What the ——!" sharply demanded Dinsdale, submitting to the decoration because of his surprize.

"Don't do anything. Don't look. Don't say anything. Don't touch a gun. We've run into a trap," whispered Scissors.

"Indians?" muttered Dinsdale, standing motionless.

"In the scrub just beyond the mouth of the path. They'll riddle us if we try to mount. Do as I do and show no fear when they break cover."

He kneeled and began picking up small rocks, searching for those round and unweathered. Dinsdale dropped down beside him and blindly imitated his example. And as he picked up the stones Scissors sang in English the song he had sung in the Teton:

"From everywhere they come flying,
From the north the wind is blowing to earth,
Rattling, flying, they come, they come,
From everywhere they come."

He ceased singing and made a little mound of the stones, using those Dinsdale had collected as well as his own. On top of the pile he placed his picture of Mato tipi with a single stone to keep it from blowing away. Then rising to his feet and throwing back his head so as to gaze at the top of the butte he shouted in the Teton—

"Men from the earth we are. I have sung about something, for which have pity on us!"

To Dinsdale he whispered:

"More rocks, and do as I do. I have repeated a Teton prayer to Tunkan."

As he spoke he finished gathering rocks, this time taking no care as to their shape, and walked to a tree and began placing them between the branches. Dinsdale did likewise.

Now came the last test. Slowly advancing toward the mouth of the path, by the side of which were crouched the Indians, and holding a rock in each hand, Scissors began shouting—

"They really say a white man turns red and comes to your mountain, O Tunkasila (grandfather), for help to escape from white men."

They passed through a fringe of sage, and Scissors stretched out his hands to brush the bushes back from the mouth of the path, and Dinsdale caught his first glimpse of the hidden warriors, several copper-colored faces glaring, several copper hands clutching rifles and revolvers. Then they were swarming out of their ambush and were aiming their weapons at the two white

men. Nimble hands plucked the revolvers from Dinsdale's belt and searched Scissors in vain for arms. A warrior ran to the two horses and secured Dinsdale's rifle. Then the two were hurled to the ground.

"Show no fight," muttered Scissors. To his savage captors he boldly cried:

"Ha-a-a, Warriors! They say I come back to you with my two knives talking. They really say I bring a man who runs from the whites to save his life. No Strong Hearts, who follow Tatankajiyotake (Sitting Bull) are here, for I see no war-bonnets made from the tail-feathers of eagles, with horns worn on the front. I see no old men who belong to the White Horse Riders. I do not see Wasechuntashunka (American Horse) my brother. Two Knives Talking sees only strange warriors. He sees one with a cross on his tobacco bag and knows he is called 'Wawokiyapi' (Helper of the Helpless) because he carried a wounded friend out of a fight. He sees a feather standing at the back of the head and knows the man has killed an enemy without any hurt to himself. He sees a man who has struck an enemy and wears his feather across the back of his head. He sees a man who has given his flesh to Wakantanka in the sun dance and carried six buffalo skulls. He sees another whose vow to Wakantanka brought him many cuts on his arms and chest.

"For such men Wakantanka has but one path. They must follow it even when it surely leads to death. Yet these men are not my friends. For they throw me down on the ground, and they throw my friend down beside me. They make ready to kill us. What have we done that these strange warriors should treat us so, when the mighty Tashunca-uitco (Crazy Horse) would call us 'brothers,' and stretch out the left hand because his heart is on that side. Tashunca-uitco does not see his friend, Two Knives Talking, and the other white man, who runs from the whites. His ears are closed, or he would hear my voice when I sing the song made for Mato tipi—'Wakahnyan maké lo mató tipi 'ca'—" he began singing. "In a sacred manner I am sitting at bear lodge."

This voluble harangue, and the fact that there was none of the Ogalala who had not seen or heard of Scissors, staved off immediate mutilation. Although deeply impressed by Scissors' speech and songs the

Indians did not release the white men, but held them flat on their backs and glared at them ferociously. While they hesitated, torn by a desire to dismember the prisoners and the fear of Crazy Horse's disapproval should they do so, Dinsdale mechanically noted their appearance. They were among the richest of the Plains Indians.

All wore loose trousers, dark-blue in color, dark woolen shirts, and buckskin or buffalo moccasins. The last were elaborately embroidered with beads. Each had caught around his loins a dark blue, or black, mackinaw blanket, decorated with a transverse strip of red cloth. For ornamentation they wore neck strings of beads and brass rings. The parting of the jet-black hair was painted red, but they wore no paint on their faces.

"Why do white men call out to *Tunkan* and sing the Mato tipi song?" harshly demanded a man whose face was crossed by a scarcely healed wound, and whose arms and chest bore many welts—Wakantanka's receipts for vows fulfilled in various sun dances.

"Are we Shoshoni and should we sing to the moon?" countered Scissors. "We come to Mato tipi to place stones to the dead. Then we would go to the camp of Crazy Horse. Now we are on our backs, looking up at the home of the thunders."

The leader's visage continued fierce and unrelenting, yet he refrained from speaking the word that would precipitate the butchery. After a minute of silence he sullenly said:

"Little Big Man has no white brothers. A voice says the white men go to fight with Wichakpa-yamani (Three-stars — Crook's Sioux name). They go to help fight against the Dakota."

"The voice lies," tersely corrected Scissors.

"What is the medicine on the hat of the white man?"

"White men tried to kill him. They say he sold a wagon of cartridges to the Cheyennes. He is a friend of High Wolf, the Cheyenne medicine-man."

The dots of perspiration on Dinsdale's face would have doubled had he understood this bold avowal. Scissors knew his statement was a desperate gamble. The effect on the warriors was pronounced, although they betrayed nothing except to look more closely at the paper pictures on Dinsdale's

hat. One of them picked it up, and all quickly understood the story the pictures were meant to tell. The spirited action of the galloping horses appealed to them.

The horseman a few inches ahead of the united string was Dinsdale, of course. That all should be identical in outline impressed them as being very *wakan*. White men had sold metallic cartridges to the hostiles, and within a month a man had been caught with a wagon, filled with munitions, bound for a northern village. But if High Wolf, famous mystery man and wearer of a necklace of human fingers, should be within reach of a messenger the lie would be exposed off-hand.

One of the warriors called attention to the paper picture of the butte. Excepting those holding the prisoners to ground all advanced to this and examined it carefully. The small mound of Tunkan stones together with the outline, formed a combination that Little Big Man dared not trifle with. He talked aside with a middle-aged warrior, then gave an order. One of the group produced a small mirror and ran into the path leading up the butte. To Scissors the leader said, "Soon it will be known in the camp of Tashunca-uitco at Slim Butte that Two Knives Talking and another white man are in our camp."

The prisoners were jerked to their feet, and no sooner were they erect than their hands were drawn behind them and fastened. Their horses were brought up and they were helped to mount. Little Big Man and the older warrior rode in the lead and struck off to the east of the butte and turned north. The white men were surrounded by the nine remaining warriors and followed at a short distance. As they drew away from the butte all eyes were turned to the summit where the warrior with the mirror was signaling the news of the capture.

It was evident that Little Big Man was out on a scout. He and the warrior beside him wore scalp-shirts. The other were clad for hard riding and had not even bothered to paint their ponies. But each man carried a magazine gun, and several had revolvers. In addition to the fire-arms four of the men carried bows and ten arrows to a quiver.

The entire party appeared to be liberally supplied with ammunition, the bows being intended for game where a gunshot might give an alarm. A brisk ride of twelve miles and the party was fording the strong, muddy

current of the Belle Fourche, where once the Cheyennes had raised their corn. On the north bank an hour's halt was made among the cottonwoods to give the man with the mirror time to rejoin them. He came up at a handsome gallop and the journey was resumed. A few miles north of the river and on the head of Crow Creek warriors and captives rode into a temporary camp. Ahead in the north was the dark-blue outline of Slave Butte with its range of hills through which the band would pass before swinging northeast to make the permanent village of Crazy Horse.

A dozen warriors rushed forward, shouting and brandishing their knives, as the prisoners were brought into camp. Little Big Man shouted for several minutes in a stentorian voice. Scissors interpreted for Dinsdale. The leader was telling of the capture and bragging mightily and demanding a new song be made for him. He talked into an anti-climax when a camp warrior informed him that the signals from the butte had been caught and a message sent to Crazy Horse. Little Big Man ordered the white men to be placed in a lodge with their hands tied behind them and their bodies roped to the center pole.

Suspended from a medicine pole beside the lodge was a strangled puppy, war medicine, Scissors explained. Hanging inside the lodge was a cavalry guidon, and an officer's glove, proofs of this particular band's participation in the fight on the Little Big Horn.

"Now what happens to us?" asked Dinsdale after they had been trussed up to the center pole and left alone.

"I'm *wakan*," doggedly replied Scissors. "I've placed stones to Tunkan. I must get you out of this. When I say for you to go, you scoot! Don't wait for me. They'll never harm me. I'm a big mystery man. I know their dream songs, their war songs. I've listened to their council songs, and I've sang their grass dance song! Little Big Man thinks he's got me in a hole because I ran away. I went away to renew my medicine—just one weak spot; just one mistake. I'm sorry I said that about your being a friend to old High Wolf, the Cheyenne. Bah! He's up on the Little Missouri. Who's afraid? We are not."

"We'd better have chanced it with Easy's gang," muttered Dinsdale.

"It would have been over the quicker,"

moodily retorted Scissors. Then with a flare of his old egotism: "But I've spoken to Wakantanka. A man is never down so long as he can hope. Crazy Horse thought a lot of my medicine. Now look happy; some one is coming."

Three men, bearing a kettle of meat, entered the lodge. Dinsdale remembered he had eaten nothing since morning, and despite his serious predicament he was very hungry. The kettle gave off a savory odor. Two of the braves unloosed the thongs so the prisoners could bring their elbows to their sides and extend their hands forward. A bowl and a wooden spoon was given to each. For some minutes Dinsdale ate as if famished, then asked—

"What is it?"

"Wild onions boiled with dog."

"I don't think I'm hungry any more."

"*Washte-helot* (Very good.) If I'd said elk or deer you'd come for a second helping. Shows what language does for a man."

And Scissors asked the brave to dish up more of the stew.

"Horse doesn't seem so bad, but dog—" muttered Dinsdale.

The kettle was removed and their arms were tightly pinioned. Scissors requested that the flap of the tent be pulled back the full width. This allowed them to see what was going on in front of the lodge. Near the entrance two men were making shields of inch-thick hide taken from a buffalo bull's neck. The hide was pegged down on a thin layer of clay and was then covered with burning coals.

This process hardened it sufficiently to turn a lance point, or a round bullet. It was a striking incongruity of the campaign, bows and arrows and shields by the side of magazine rifles and metallic cartridges. Never again would the Plains witness such a mingling of the old and the new.

Another fantastic touch was given the scene in the person of an aged warrior, who was chipping out arrow-heads from fragments of beer bottles. In his youth the old man had watched his grandfather fashion points from flint and himself had made them from the outer thickness of ribs or marrow bones. In his prime he had advanced to points of steel, and later had cut them from the frying-pans taken from trappers, traders, or soldiers.

Now he grafted the ancient craft on to the ultra-modern and utilized the white

man's beer bottles! Another influence of the white man was to be observed in a group of monte players, only their cards were made of pony skin.

"They've quit the old ways and haven't learned the new," soliloquized Scissors. "They cling to their arrows and have learned beer from the whites. Nothing remains the same except Wakantanka."

And he softly chanted in English the Sunrise Song, as sung during the sun dance:

"Here I am, behold me;
I am the sun, behold me."

Little Big Man strolled to the opening of the lodge. He was smoking a beautiful pipe of red sandstone. The bowl was inlaid with silver and the long reed stem was artistically decorated with feathers and quills. He offered the pipe to the sky and earth and to the cardinal points, but spoke no word to the prisoners.

After waiting for a minute Scissors asked—"When can Two Knives Talking see his friend Crazy Horse?"

Little Big Man smiled cynically and replied—

"If Two Knives Talking is *wakan* enough he can untie himself and go to see his friend."

"To be free of Little Big Man's clumsy cords is easy for the medicine of Two Knives Talking," gravely assured Scissors. "Will he find the road to Slim Butte open?"

And he brought his hands before him to show they were free.

With a yelp Little Big Man turned and called loudly. Warriors came on the run.

"Two Knives Talking has untied the rawhide," grunted the leader.

Two warriors advanced to Scissors and pawed about behind him, but could find no vestige of the thongs. "Two Knives Talking's medicine ate them up," explained Scissors. "Are the Ogalala afraid I will fly up among the thunder-birds that they must tie me?"

The leader snapped out an order and fresh thongs were brought and Scissors tied up for the second time.

"What the — did you do with the cords?" whispered Dinsdale from the corner of his mouth.

"In your side pocket," yawned Scissors.

Little Big Man harshly demanded—

"Why do white men ride out to Mato tipi and place rocks in trees?"

"Because we are turning red," was the prompt reply.

"Where is Wichakpa-yamani (General Crook) now?"

"When I am treated as a brother my medicine will tell you," coldly replied Scissors.

"They say you will talk with a very fast tongue when you feel the skinning-knives," threatened Little Big Man.

Scissors smiled tolerantly and said—

"Crazy Horse will soon set his friend free to walk where he will."

"Two Knives Talking has a weak medicine. It freed him once; now it is very tired," jeered Little Big Man. "My young men may not wait for you to see Tashunauitco. They say they want white skin for medicine shirts. They say they are sharpening their knives."

"Little Big Man talks like a Shoshoni singing to the moon," sneered Scissors. "A very *wakan* man never sleeps."

And to the consternation of the spectators he again brought his hands before him. Men rushed upon him, but the cords had vanished. Little Big Man glared murderously, then grew uneasy. A doubt was sprouting in his mind. Mato tipi was sacred ground, and those who prayed to Tunkan through rocks and stones must be very careful not to give offense. The prisoners were white, yet they had been captured, taken by surprise, when placing rocks in the trees. Scissors read the tumult in the man's mind and whispered encouragement to Dinsdale.

Little Big Man gave an order and both men were released and conducted outside the lodge and tied to the medicine-pole, from which hung the strangled puppy. A warrior was told to sit behind them to watch their hands. The warrior obeyed but did not fancy the task, for it was like spying on some agency controlled by Tunkan. To Dinsdale Scissors said:

"They're badly worried. Every hour we're kept alive improves our chances. Little Big Man won't dare hurt us until he hears from Crazy Horse. Already he has sent a messenger to Slim Butte to fill in the details of the mirror-message."

The warrior behind him reached a hand forward and roughly clapped it over his mouth. Scissors' left hand shot to the front and caught the offending palm and at the same time his right hand darted up under the armpit and, pulling and pushing,

he sent the guard rolling headlong. The camp was in an uproar in an instant, the warriors scrambling for their weapons.

Scissors sternly called out:

"The Ogalala are very foolish. My medicine will grow very angry. Some of you will go to Mato tipi tonight as ghosts. What do you mean by treating the friends of your war-chief in this way? Are we Crows or Poncas?"

Little Big Man chewed his lips and puzzled over the situation. To leave the prisoner's hands free was to confess failure. To tie them up was useless. His quandary was interrupted by the rapid drumming of flying hoofs. A pony raced in among the lodges and a rider threw himself to the ground.

With a gleam of hope lighting his sullen eyes Little Big Man called on the man to speak.

"Tashunco-uitco and Shunca-luta, his medicine-man, even now are riding to this camp," announced the man. "They were on the way here with a dozen warriors when Little Big Man's first messenger met them and told them about the white men. They will be here very soon."

"It is good!" cried Little Big Man in great relief.

"What's he saying?" muttered Dinsdale.

"Crazy Horse and his medicine man, Sorrel Horse, will arrive in a minute or so. I am very *wakan*, but only *Taku wakan* can straighten this mess out. If only Crazy Horse was coming it would be better. Sorrel Horse is jealous of all medicine-men. He'll work to have us skinned alive. But a man ain't done for so long as he can hope."

CHAPTER IX

THE DUEL OF THE MEDICINES

ALTHOUGH Crazy Horse and Sorrel Horse rode into Little Big Man's camp shortly before midnight the prisoners saw nothing of either. Before the great leader of the hostiles arrived the white men were conducted back to the lodge and the flap tightly closed. A small fire was lighted inside and by its light three warriors stood on guard to prevent any attempt at escape. The prisoners were allowed to recline on buffalo robes, but cords were attached to their wrists and looped around the arms of the guard. Men were also stationed around

the lodge on the outside. Dinsdale was asleep when the war-chief and his escort of a dozen men made the camp and was aroused by the commotion.

On opening his eyes he beheld the three silent figures of the guards, their eyes reflecting the light from the heap of coals. Scissors was awake, and whispered:

"If I can have a talk with Crazy Horse I think we would be all right for a while. But that Shunca-luta will try to keep between us. He ranks high as a mystery-man and is a fair magician and ventriloquist. He claims to get his help from Taskuskan-skan, their moving god, who lives in the four winds and is never seen but is represented by Tunkan, who in turn is prayed to through rocks and stones. Queer mess. Reckon a white man can never get it all straightened out. I made a picture of Sorrel Horse when I was prisoner that other time, and it scared him. He's bound to work against us. But I'm *wakan*— Wish Crazy Horse would come in to look us over."

Scissors would have felt more at ease had he known that the chief's first desire was to have the prisoners brought before him. Sorrel Horse, however, requested time for consulting his medicine, and reported back to the chief that it would be better to wait until the sun rode the sky. Although considerably disturbed that the chief should ignore him Scissors dissimulated and Dinsdale fell asleep and did not awake until morning. With the sunrise came another kettle of meat. Scissors pronounced it to be mule-deer and Dinsdale ate heartily. After they had eaten Little Big Man visited them, and he could not conceal his secret exultation. Scissors pretended not to see him, and after waiting several minutes the Indian said:

"Now Shunca-luta has come Two Knives Talking has lost both his medicine and tongue. They say the white man was tied up all night and could not get free."

Scissors, who had finished his bowl of meat and had his hands free, picked up some thongs his guards had left on the ground and rolled them into a small ball and held them in one palm. Then his fingers closed over them, contracting as if squeezing them into very small compass, then flew open and the ball had vanished.

Little Big Man scowled malevolently. Scissors said:

"Two Knives Talking finds his medicine

is still strong. It grows weary of working on children. Send in Shunca-luta with his medicine. Then we shall see."

Just outside the entrance a deep voice boomed:

"The white man's medicine is very strong. But the medicine of Shunca-luta will eat it up. Two Knives Talking once ran away from the Ogalala. Now Shunca-luta's medicine brings him back. This time, they say, he will not leave until he goes away to be a ghost."

Little Big Man's eyes glittered at this threat.

Scissors called back:

"Shunca-luta is very *wakan*, but *Taku Wakan* has not whispered in his ear. Why does he stay outside the lodge? The white man will not hurt him."

Sorrel Horse at once appeared in the entrance. Like the famous Sitting Bull, who is said to have foretold the Custer massacre, he wore a bunch of shed buffalo hair fastened to the side of his raven locks. This hair was *wakan* and was painted red and recalled the times when the buffalo filled the plains. It was also a symbol of the coming of the White Buffalo Maiden. His medicine-pouch was formed from badger paws and had bears' claws as pendants; for it was from the bear that he had learned how to treat adults while the badger told him through the medium of dreams how to cure children. He also carried the bent stick of one who has dreamed of a wolf. But it was his renown as a magician, and not his success as a healer, that elevated him high among the *wakan witshasha*, and high above the grass-root medicine-men.

Scissors invited—

"Sit down and let our medicines talk it over."

But Sorrel Horse did not intend to waste any dramatic effects before so small an audience. Outside the stage was set for convincing Crazy Horse that even High Wolf, the Cheyenne, was far below Shunca-luta in matters of magic. Ignoring the white man he said to Little Big Man—

"Bring the prisoners out in the sunlight. That man's medicine does not like the sunlight. It works best under the moon."

The prisoners were at once led forth, and seated before the medicine-pole. Dinsdale was glad to observe that the strangled puppy had been removed. Rawhide was looped around their waists and tied to the

pole, but their hands were not secured. In a half circle before them sat forty warriors. Scissors glanced anxiously about for Crazy Horse, but the chief was not present.

Sorrel Horse, sensing he was the principal figure in the scene until Crazy Horse should put in an appearance, carefully spread a wolf-skin and after seating himself cross-legged before it made much of peering into a mirror. He took pains to turn the mirror so the curious warriors could observe the new moon and sun painted in white on its face. His vanity was highly pleased as he noted how intently the spectators followed every move he made.

Little Big Man stared triumphantly at the prisoners and nodded to their guards. The signal had been prearranged as the guards promptly searched Dinsdale and took nearly four thousand dollars from his pockets. The money was mostly in greenbacks. The time was gone when the Indian was ignorant of money values, and while they still called money "white metal" they knew a piece of paper money was often worth several silver dollars. Beady eyes glittered as the bills and a bag of dust were placed on a blanket before Little Big Man. From Scissors only a small amount of money was taken; and Little Big Man tickled the fancy of his followers by ironically advising—

"Two Knives Talking should make a feast for the white man's metal god."

When the pad of paper and small scissors were held up Little Big Man hesitated, then shook his head. Paper and scissors were very much *wakan* and he did not care to assume charge of them.

The tinkling of a bell now stirred the spectators to sharp attention and heads were turned as their mighty chief stepped from a lodge back of the half circle. Crazy Horse at that time did not look over thirty years of age, and stood a few inches under six feet. He carried himself with great dignity and the stern expression of his bold features was accented by a scar. His people knew him to be as generous as he was courageous, and his practise of never retaining any property for himself, aside from his arms and war-ponies, was bound to extend his popularity among all the hostiles and their allies.

If Sitting Bull by his medicine foretold the destruction of Custer's men, then it was Crazy Horse who assumed victory at the

outset, when on encountering Reno's men he saved his followers from a disastrous panic by braining a soldier with a stone war-club and leading a countercharge. And what must place him high in the estimation of all fighting men was his insistence that no warrior should pass him when he gave the order to attack. He was a great general; intensely loyal to his people and their cause, a patriot who had no use for wealth. And *Taku wakan* could ask no more of any of his dusky children.

As he walked around the end of the circle to take a position beside Little Big Man he was wearing his feather bonnet and other war-path regalia. In one hand he carried a Winchester rifle and in the other a twelve-foot coup wand of willow. The wand was decorated with symbolic feathers, bits of fur, and the tinkling bell. He dropped on a robe beside Little Big Man and placed his rifle across his lap and rested the end of his coup wand on the ground, and stared stolidly at Scissors. His gaze quickened as it shifted to the pile of greenbacks and dust in front of Little Big Man. The treasure meant nothing to him except as it represented so many magazine-guns and fixed ammunition.

"The white man with the talking knives will tell why he came to the Teton country," he abruptly commanded.

Scissors needed no interpreter, and began to explain why he and his friend had gone to Mato tipi to make stone offerings to Tunkan so the god would send forth his "flying rocks" to learn where Tashunca-uitco was to be found.

"And while we were asking this of Tunkan our prayer was answered," Scissors continued. "He who lives on Mato tipi at times sent Little Big Man and his braves to lead us to Tashunca-uitco, and it is well. I brought this white man with me as his life was not safe among white men. He was caught while trying to take a load of ammunition to the Cheyennes. He escaped from the soldiers and fled with me to find the Ogalala. He brought some of the white man's money with him as a present to Tashunca-uitco."

"Tashunca-uitco needs no presents of money from the white men," harshly informed Crazy Horse. "What he needs he takes."

And he shook his coup wand till the little bell tinkled madly. Loud grunts of ap-

proval met this declaration. Loud cries of "*Washte-helo!*" were raised when he pointed to the greenbacks and directed—

"Give it to the men who have lost horses and lodges."

If there was one disgruntled warrior it was Little Big Man. Sticking up from between his crossed legs were the butts of Dinsdale's guns. Crazy Horse, who ever had a great love for excellent firearms and who packed three Winchester rifles with him and one or more hand-guns, touched the big revolvers and said—

"I will take only these."

Little Big Man passed them over and for several minutes the war-chief examined them knowingly and his features grew animated as he realized their excellence. Suddenly he ceased his inspection and asked of Scissors—

"This is the white man who was caught by soldiers while bringing ammunition to the young braves at Spotted Tail Agency?"

His expression was almost genial as he put the query, but Scissors shook his head and repeated—

"My white brother was carrying ammunition to the Cheyennes on the Rosebud."

A scowl of disappointment darkened the chief's visage. Had Scissors replied in the affirmative several men from the agency were ready to brand him as a liar, for they knew the man Crazy Horse had referred to. Crazy Horse stared at the ground and twirled a revolver by the trigger guard. None ventured to break the silence, and at last he said—

"They say the white man is a friend of High Wolf."

"He was welcome in his lodge in Montana one Winter ago. He hunted with some of the young Cheyenne men."

Crazy Horse fixed his gaze on Dinsdale, but understanding nothing of the Teton dialect the prisoner's face betrayed nothing. It was useless to question him as Scissors would answer for him. The chief seemed to lose all interest in the alleged friend of High Wolf and abruptly asked—

"Where is Frank?"

"Frank Gruard?" asked Scissors.

The chief nodded. Gruard, a native of the Sandwich Islands, had been captured by Crazy Horse's men while serving as mail-carrier in Montana. Because of his dark complexion he was believed to be an Indian who had been taken prisoner by the

whites while very young. He had lived with the Indians for several years and was thought highly of by both Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. Scissors truthfully answered that Guard was serving as guide and scout for General Crook's forces.

Instead of showing any resentment Crazy Horse said:

"He was a good man. I would like to see him and call him *Kola* again. Shunca-luta has his mystery glass and is seated by his wolf-robe. What does his medicine tell him?"

Sorrel Horse, who had been chagrined at the lack of respectful attention, became busy immediately. He opened a roll of red cotton cloth and from a wad of eagle-down gently picked up a small, round stone and whispered to it and then held it to his ear for nearly a minute. Carefully replacing the sacred stone on the eagle-down he boasted:

"Shunca-luta's medicine is very strong. It has teeth like the gray wolf. It will bite the medicine of Two Knives Talking into many pieces."

With the aborigine's love for the dramatic the spectators leaned forward, the copper faces revealing their rapt attention. No duel could compare with a duel between rival medicines. Crazy Horse, too, was intensely interested; and Shunca-luta was at his best when demonstrating his wizardry before an appreciative audience. After glancing haughtily about he closed his eyes for a moment as if summoning spirit strength, then swiftly extended a hand high above his head and plucked a deck of playing cards from the air. A sibilant hiss of approval rewarded his sleight-of-hand. Holding the cards face down for a moment he carelessly threw them on the ground within reach of Scissors. Then, apparently without looking at the white man, requested—

"Let Two Knives Talking pick out one if his medicine is not asleep."

Scissors selected a card and almost immediately Shunca-luta brought the tips of his index fingers and his thumbs together to form the shape of a diamond and announced—

"Squaw."

Scissors held up the card so all might see it was the queen of diamonds. Several other cards were "read" in a like manner. Then the medicine-man scooped them up and made a motion of tossing them into the

air, and they were gone and his hand was empty.

"For an Indian he's clever with cards," Scissors said in English for Dinsdale's benefit.

During the second his gaze was off the medicine-man the cards dropped before him as if falling from the sky. A murmur of approval warned Scissors he must be on his mettle. He tore a sheet of paper from his pad and did something to it with his scissors. Folding the paper he requested Crazy Horse to hold it in his left hand. The chief hesitated for a moment, then accepted the paper and clinched it tightly to make sure it did not vanish. Scissors then proceeded to pick up the cards and to shuffle them with a dexterity that would have won the hearty admiration of San Juan Joe or French Curly.

Next he extended his two hands, the deck in his left palm, and asked the medicine-man to look at the top card, to announce it and then cut the deck, placing the cut in the right palm and burying it with the remainder of the pack. Sorrel Horse unwillingly complied, his common sense warning him his rival would not embark on anything that was destined to be a failure. He held up the three of hearts and buried it in Scissors' right palm with a shallow cut.

Even as his hand was completing the cut Scissors asked him to turn up the top card. It was the three of hearts. Sorrel Horse was sullen of face and endeavored to balk the white man's skill by cutting the deck to the left hand before Scissors could speak. Then with a grin of triumph he turned up the top card only to grunt in disgust on beholding again the card he had tried to bury.

"Don't ever ask me to play poker," muttered Dinsdale.

"They never saw any one reverse the cut with one hand," mumbled Scissors. "And I'm *wakan*." As he spoke he began shooting the cards back and forth until they seemed to fly from hand to hand of their own volition, and finished by opening them in a big fan. With a flourish he shoved them toward Crazy Horse and requested him to draw one. The chief scowled and seemed disinclined to participate in the demonstration. But the warriors were like children in their eagerness to behold the completion of the mystery, and he darted his fingers toward an end of the fan.

But even more rapidly did the trickster's fingers, concealed by the opened deck, convey to the danger point the card he desired to force upon the chief. Crazy Horse had no suspicion that his choice had been influenced in any way by the white man, but when he observed he had drawn the three of hearts he was deeply irritated. He cast the card on the ground and eyed it malevolently. But Scissors was not done. He asked the chief to show the paper he was still holding in his left hand. Crazy Horse unwillingly smoothed out the paper and beheld, in a perpendicular line, three hearts.

"*Washte-helo!*" he muttered, staring thoughtfully at the piece of paper. Thus far it was obvious that Two Knives Talking could bring to light anything Sorrel Horse sought to hide, and could even foretell—as evidenced by the paper—just what the medicine-man would attempt to conceal. Sorrel Horse felt his reputation slipping. He stared off at the Black Hills, conjuring help from Mato tipi, the Grizzly Bear Lodge, where Tunkan's power dwelt.

Dinsdale's spirits mounted as he beheld his friend's legerdemain surpassing that of the red conjurer; and despite his anxiety over their situation he could not refrain from speculating on his companion's cunning. He did not believe that any one in Deadwood City suspected the picture-man's adeptness. And he wondered in how many other ways would Scissors prove to be a surprise.

Sorrel Horse now proceeded with his next trick. He drew a short knife and stabbed it into the ground several times to prove it was a genuine blade. Then throwing back his head and opening his mouth he began, apparently, forcing the knife down his throat.

This in itself was sufficient to evoke a low chorus of applause, mixed with grunts of wonder. But the medicine-man had yet to appear at his magical best. Dropping on his side he groaned. He appeared to be very ill, and a thin voice that seemed to float in the air, begged for a lighted pipe.

One was brought and placed beside him on the robe. He stuffed the bowl in his mouth and blew the smoke through the stem, then he inhaled it. As he kept this up for a dozen whiffs the perspiration stood out on his sharp features and his copper skin took on the color of ashes. Dinsdale believed he was dying. Scissors smiled com-

placently and watched closely. Suddenly tossing the pipe aside and clutching a hand to his naked ribs he plucked forth the knife, and his physical appearance quickly became normal.

"*Washte-helo!*" exclaimed Crazy Horse.

Inflating his chest Sorrel Horse haughtily asked—

"What does the white medicine say to that?"

"It says this," answered Scissors, snatching up the knife. A guard lunged forward to pluck it from his hand, and found it not. He grabbed the other hand and found it empty. Crazy Horse called out for the man to desist. Now undisturbed, Scissors made the knife appear and disappear with bewildering rapidity. He seemed to pull it from his ear, his leg, and to spit it from his mouth. It vanished for the last time only to appear from over his right shoulder, whirling rapidly and striking on its point in the wolf robe near the foot of Sorrel Horse.

Before the medicine-man could essay more of his magic the white man held up a small square of paper in his left hand. Then he waved his fingers above his head, while the nimble scissers of the left hand folded the paper several times. Then advancing the paper toward Crazy Horse he daintily snipped off a protruding corner. Opening the paper he revealed that the one movement of the blades had cut out a perfect star of five points. Until the simple trick was explained it must remain a big mystery to the wondering spectators, and a mystery is always *wakan*, therefore a medicine.

Especially did it appeal to Crazy Horse, inasmuch as the star reminded him of General Crook, or Three Stars. And how could one stroke of the two blades cut it out? His face was somber as he turned to Sorrel Horse and asked—

"Is there more medicine?"

Sorrel Horse, now desperate in his desire to prove the superiority of his magic, replied:

"Let Shunca-luta and the white man be tied fast and placed in a lodge together. We will see whose medicine comes first to take off the rawhide."

Those warriors who had come with Crazy Horse were elated over this proposed test. But Little Big Man and his braves were much concerned. They had said nothing to Crazy Horse or the medicine-man about

Scissors' ability to free his hands from bonds. But as they remembered that the presence of Shunca-luta should render futile any such power they became more optimistic.

It was Little Big Man who superintended the tying up of the two men. They were bound with many lengths of rawhide. Crazy Horse himself inspected the thongs to make sure they were right, and he directed that certain knots in the cords of Sorrel Horse be made more secure.

If a medicine was worthy of a man's devotion it needed no assistance from mortals. Scissors read the dismay in Dinsdale's face and murmured:

"The more rope the better. Four feet would be harder to get out of than a dozen."

With the last knot tied the two men were carried into the prisoners' lodge and laid on robes with the center pole between them. Then they were left and the flap was drawn tightly and pegged to the ground. The assemblage considered this the supreme test, and each warrior waited in breathless expectancy. Sorrel Horse was famous for being a defier of knots. Some of the warriors knew the white man had slipped his wrist-thongs, but conditions were no longer the same.

Not only had much more cord been used, but the tying of the knots had been under the supervision of the red man's invisible helpers. Tunkan had sent his subordinates to protect his child. True, the white man had made stone offerings to Tunkan, but the red children were ever first in the heart of the stone god.

Almost as soon as the flap had been secured there came the sound of voices from the lodge, and neither white nor red man was speaking. There was only one explanation—help for the red man had arrived from Mato tipi. One voice was high and squeaky and had been heard before when Sorrel Horse was in a trance in search of enlightenment. One voice rumbled and was quite terrifying to those grouped outside the lodge. The last would be a very mighty spirit.

The side of the lodge next to the half circle became agitated. The covering of hide shook and bulged outward and then sucked in. The voices increased in volume and gave the impression the white man's medicine was making a strong fight. Then the flap was shaken violently; and the spectators drew in their heels, ready to jump up

and run if the battle was transferred to the open.

Those outside were at the peak of their excitement and were having difficulty in controlling themselves as they waited for the climax when the voices suddenly ceased. The agitation of the lodge covering ceased. Only a deep groaning was to be heard. This groaning kept up for a minute or two, and yet nothing decisive happened. The spell was shattered by a voice behind the seated warriors calling out:

"His medicine has failed, they say. They say it is really very weak."

Dinsdale stifled back a cheer. The Indians jerked their heads about as one and were nonplused to behold the white man standing on the outer fringe of the massed group. This stupor gave away to a desire for action, and with a yell several of the men leaped to their feet and would have laid violent hands on Scissors had not Crazy Horse loudly commanded:

"Do not touch the white man. He is not running away. Open the lodge."

Scissors advanced to the medicine-pole and seated himself beside Dinsdale. Little Big Man pulled up the pegs and threw back the flap. Sorrel Horse was flat on his back in his original position, and thoroughly helpless. It was most amazing. Scissors took advantage of the moment to whisper:

"Almost beat me. Nip and tuck. If Crazy Horse hadn't made them tighten up some of his knots he would have won. Once I was loose I fixed him up stronger than ever. That's what took me so long."

"So long! It was all over in no time. Why didn't some one see you come out?" muttered Dinsdale.

With a chuckle Scissors explained:

"I shook the flap and got every one to watching it. Then I slipped out the back side and ran around behind the lodges."

Sorrel Horse was released. His face was deadly with hate as he got on his feet. He would not divulge that certain extra and very stubborn knots found in his thongs had been tied by Scissors. He preferred to explain that the white man's medicine had been allowed to appear the stronger because the red medicine was displeased at the Indians' soft treatment of the white man.

"Why should Tunkan help the red man against the white when the white man is taken by the hand and called *Kola*?" he sullenly asked.

This defense was perfectly logical in the minds of the majority of the red men, and more than one hand closed on a skinning-knife in a lust to make a fitting sacrifice to the stone god. But Crazy Horse never lost sight of the main point. He spoke up sharply, saying:

"These men speak with a straight tongue, and their medicine will help us—or else they are liars and their medicine will grow very weak. We must find out if the young man is a friend of High Wolf, our brother of the Cheyenne. If he is then Two Knives Talking has talked with a straight tongue and his medicine will help us against Three Stars and his soldiers.

"Let Little Big Man pick out two young braves who want new names, and tell them to ride swiftly to the Short Medicine Pole Hills and look for High Wolf. If High Wolf is not at the hills the two men will wait three sleeps, then one shall ride to Slim Butte to tell me. The other will wait three sleeps more and if High Wolf does not come, nor any soldiers are seen to be watched, then he will ride to my village.

"This place is not good for camp. Little Big Man has been very brave in going to Mato tipi. Now let the camp move to Slim Butte; for they say we shall have a big fight with Three Stars before many sleeps. Watch these two men, but do not put cords on Two Knives Talking. He will not run away and leave his friend; nor has his medicine the strength to take the rawhide off his friend yet."

Dinsdale was much discouraged when this was repeated to him, but Scissors optimistically declared:

"Even if old High Wolf is among the hills, as Crazy Horse seems to expect, the ride is more than a hundred miles from here. They'll go through flying unless something happens to them, but we haven't been skinned yet. So long as we can hope we're all right. I'm *wakan*. I'm *wakan witshasha*. Don't look downhearted. Look jolly. That's better. You're a friend of High Wolf, remember. He'll vouch for you. You're just hungry for him to show up."

Dinsdale was taken back into the lodge and tied to the center pole. Scissors was left free but under sharp espionage. Either Crazy Horse had no fear of his trying to escape so long as his friend was a prisoner, or else he wished to tempt him to flight, and thereby prove all his words were so many

lies. Scissors refrained from even moving about the camp, and from his position in the opening of the lodge kept his companion informed of all that was going on outside.

Two ambitious young bucks were soon speeding north in search of High Wolf, who was believed to be somewhere in the neighborhood of the Short Medicine Pole Hills. A few hours after their departure word was given to strike the lodges and pack them on *travois* poles. Dinsdale's shelter was the last to be taken down. He was mounted on his own horse with his hands still fastened behind him. Scissors was commanded to ride at the front of the band with Crazy Horse on one side and Little Big Man on the other. Sorrel Horse loitered behind to have a private conference with his medicine.

A monotonous ride of twenty-five miles, almost due north, brought Slave Butte abreast on the right. After the first few miles Crazy Horse had evidenced a willingness to talk with his prisoner and was ready to answer questions. He took much pleasure in describing how some Snake captives were killed at Slave Butte by the Dakota in the old days, thereby originating the name, and added that much had been learned since then as to the most painful method of putting prisoners to death.

Scissors appeared greatly pleased by the gruesome recital and refused to betray any concern over the veiled threat as to his own possible fate. Although the top of the butte was about the same height as that of Mato tipi its actual elevation above its base was less than three hundred feet owing to the sharp upgrade from the Belle Fourche.

The country along their route was not one to linger in. With the exception of weeds and sagebrush there was but little vegetation. The soil was hard and dry and cracked into hexagons and octagons of a surprisingly regular pattern. The prisoners hoped they would go into camp when they reached a small branch of the Moreau, or Owl River, but Crazy Horse would have none of it, and they pushed on for another ten miles to camp on the main stream. The banks were alkaline and miry, and the water—consisting of standing pools—was bad. But there was an abundance of willow and cottonwood for fuel. It was necessary to lift Dinsdale from his horse, and when he was set on his feet and left to stand alone he

collapsed in a heap. At Scissors' intercession Crazy Horse said his wrists could be freed.

No shelters were put up and after a meal of jerked meat guards were posted and the men rolled up in their blankets. Scissors was not tied, and Dinsdale was secured only by his legs. From the chief down to the youngest buck it was firmly believed that thongs of rawhide could not hold Scissors, and as an extra precaution against his attempting flight Sorrel Horse offered to stand watch over him. Nor could there have been a more zealous guard, for whenever the picture-man opened his eyes it was to find the baleful orbs of the medicine-man staring at him.

When they resumed their journey in the morning the course still held northerly, and Crazy Horse informed Scissors they were to pass through Prospect Valley between the Short Pine Hills, and then turn east and skirt the bad-lands and make a hard ride of some forty miles before reaching the Slim Butte village. The chief seemed to be very confident that his village was inaccessible for the soldiers, should they ever come.

The country continued forbidding, with the sage and weeds interspersed with small plates of gypsum. Scissors sought permission to speak with his friend. Consent was reluctantly given, but before the two could barely exchange a morning's greeting the privilege was withdrawn and Scissors was harshly commanded to return to the head of the column.

Short Pine Hills, a soft, sandy marl, were very light in color and easily could be lost against a distant skyline if not for the growth of pine extending up their five hundred feet of elevation to within twenty or forty feet of the top.

The next camp was made on a wooded branch of the Little Missouri, the valley furnishing excellent grass and water. Now the surroundings were as pleasing as they had been dismal and explained General

Custer's selection of a ~~name~~ for the valley; for in addition to the appeal of the immediate environment there were beautiful vistas in the distance.

The eye leaped the long stretch of sun-baked earth and straggling sage to enjoy the bold outlines of the Black Hills standing high and somber sixty miles away. Despite the distance Scissors had no difficulty in identifying several separate peaks. In the east rose Slim Butte. In Dinsdale's judgment the name was a misnomer, as the butte most resembled a high and heavily wooded plateau.

Some excitement was caused at this camp when several braves returned from a scout and displayed the vertebrae of an extinct species of lizard, and a description of two turtles of great size. The bones and the turtles they had found in a fossil bed on the west side of the hills. Sorrel Horse was deeply agitated and loudly proclaimed that Tunkan had sent him a new medicine and that he had dreamed it would be forthcoming at this very camp.

He requested the scouts to go back and bring in the remains of the turtles, but they insisted the turtles had "spoiled" and could not be moved without falling in pieces.

In proof of this statement one produced a thigh-bone that measured two inches in diameter and declared the rest of the structure was in too frail a condition to be moved. Sorrel Horse bartered some of his influence with the gods for this relic of ancient days and arranged for the men to guide him to the bed on the morrow.

Because of the medicine-man's desire to examine the fossils, and the likelihood of receiving information through smoke signals, Crazy Horse remained by the little stream for two days. But neither smoke, nor the return of a messenger rewarded his waiting, and as Sorrel Horse had exhausted the *wakan* possibilities of the fossil bed, the journey to Slim Butte was commenced on the third day.

TO BE CONCLUDED



TILlicUMS

By Ben F. Baker



Author of "Mis-Deal," "Goo-Lash," etc.

A COUPLE of days ago I meet up with an old codger I used to know up North, 'way back in the early nineties.

This galoot has made him a fair-sized stake an' he's out here in the States a-visitin' the scenes of his childhood an' gettin' an eyeful of the numerous contraptions an' improvments that, up to now, he's merely heard of. He's jes' startin' in, so to speak; but he's already biased an' prejudiced. An' nervous an' talkative.

He confides to me that this whole broad land is jes' one whirlin' mass of wonders an' surprizes an' war taxes; an' he allows he can't make a move or do a thing without bumpin' into somethin' unbelievable an' unreal, but plumb necessary an' expensive.

He's due to migrate back to the Yukon, come Spring; an' he figgers that the five months remainin' prior to his departure for the land of sourdough an' freedom ain't no more'n half enough time in which to sample an' assimilate the comforts an' annoyances that are bein' piled on to a defenseless public like leaves on to a new-swept lawn. He ain't been outside but a couple of months, but he's movin' right along. It's plain to me that old Tom is reg'larly playin' every hand he picks up. He ain't missin' a bet.

Already he's been up in a airyplane an' down under the Sound in a submarine; he's been yanked through a subway an' shot up

in the air by an express elevator; he's sent a wireless telegram an' bought himself a self-windin' clock; an' he's done et chop-suey an' paid a dollar for one jolt of hooch. He's got a awttymobile an' a uniformed showfer; an' he knows eight places, right here in this one town, where he can get the real stuff, any time, for four bits a drink! He's even figgerin' on learnin' to toddle! Which, I claim, is fair to middlin' for an old wolf that's nigh on to seventy.

An' when I asked him to name the most outstanding achievement of this puerile an' progressive age; when I dare him to point out the milestone that marks the farthest limit of human endeavor, he rises without tremor an' declares that the short skirt, the shimmy an' the Eighteenth Amendment is runnin' neck an' neck, 'way out in front of everything that's been done or said or even thought of since Noah squeezed out the first grapes.

An' I claim that this remark entitles old Tom to a seat right alongside the big drum. The old boy is sure a lead mule. Yes, sir, aside from him refusin' to get his hair cut an' a-wearin' moccasins all the time 'cause shoes hurts his feet, Tom's a sure-enough medicine man an' credit to his tribe.

But, is he happy? Not even a little bit, he ain't. He's beefin' an' grouchin' an' hollerin' his head off all the time. With plenty of dust an' twenty-four free hours

in every day, he's as touchy an' grumpy as a moltin' canary.

Sick? You bet he is—homesick. He's homesick for that cold, hard, silent land that has tortured an' starved him for thirty years, from Bering to the boundary; he's achin' to get back to the country where there's lots of things money won't buy; the old man is fairly bustin' with longin' for a down-river boat, a pipe an' a chair on deck an' a sight of old Jim's, his tillicum's, face.

An' when you get right down to the hole card, this last is what ails him most of all. The old boy has got a bad an' acute case of pardneritis. Also, let me stop to remark, this here disease is maybe one of the worst an' most persistent ailments that mankind is heir to. An' the rarest. Women-folks don't get it.

For it's thisaway: Somehow, Providence don't often allow two real he men to yard up together an' get sure enough acquainted; but when she does, each of them said he *hombres* has been done a favor that nothin' can't ever equal, no matter how the Luck Lady favors 'em. Not even if they falls in love an' gets away without gettin' married.

Moreover, pardners that is really an' truly tillicums is mighty near as rare as blue roses. But if ever you meet up with a pair of such, they'll sure leave behind 'em a bright an' shinin' mark for you an' your best friend to shoot at.

As an example, there was Michael Joseph Ryan an' Ole Erickson. Them two was pardners all over the Northwest, B. C., an' the Yukon for more'n twenty years; an' unless they've passed out, they're still wearin' each other's socks, sleepin' under the same blankets, carryin' their dust in the same poke—an' quarrelin'.

Yes, sir! Them two inseparables fussed an' fumed at each other about everythin' an' nothin' from mornin' until night an' even later. They beefed an' roared an' snarled back an' forth an' across until it was fairly sickenin' to be near 'em. Yet they was pardners an' real friends, an' you couldn't pry 'em apart with a crowbar.

An' right here I'm pausin' to say that no two *hombres* ever amounted to shucks as *compadres* until they learned to reserve to themselves an' to each other the right to jaw an' criticize at all times an' opportunities. Or oftener.

These here *hombres* that has a few drinks together an' then starts out as blood-

brothers an' pals, only to bust up an' separate after the first or second little rumpus, ain't pardners nor never was nor never will be—not with anybody. They ain't big enough.

But the two that can fight an' fuss steady an' contin'ous an' all the time, an' still stick together, is a sure-enough real pair, an' they outrank any set of threes in the deck. They've got Damon an' Pythias beat to a feather-edged frazzle. The Siamese twins was miles apart compared to such a twain.

Gettin' back to Michael Joseph an' Ole, I want to state that while they extracts the sweetest nectar from their joint disputes, they resents any interference in their affairs, an' they invariably presents a solid an' impregnable front to the world at large.

They might an' does come to large sometimes an' again; but let any third party take sides with either contestant an' said outsider has got a pair of wild-cats to lick, right there.

For a brief spell, I'm pardners with these two, myself; likewise, they engages in temporary arrangements of amity an' general welfare with other galoots that I know; but invariably they pulls out after a while an' resumes herdin' by themselves. I kinda get interested in these two locos after a time, an' durin' a long period of years I make it a point to observe an' study their fads an' foibles an' the free-an'-easy way of everlastin'ly engagin' in them satisfyin' controversies they pulls off. They sure do live constant in an atmosphere of harmonious discord.

An' to hear 'em talk, nobody would take 'em for anything but born Americans—which they wasn't. But they sure talked United States as good as anybody.

The first time I get a good dose of the turbulent amity they maintains is up in the Forty-Mile country.

They blow into my cabin one afternoon an' allow they're goin' to roost overnight.

Of course, I know 'em; also, I know a lot about 'em. More'n that, I got definite an' long-established ideas about the way pardners is supposed to treat each other. But long before them imbeciles pulls away from my shack, I got altogether different views on the partnership business. In a short twelve hours after the arrival of Ireland an' Sweden in my peaceful domicile, I'm firmly convinced that the first thing pardners ought to do is to kill each other.

An' I'm more than ready to help either Michael or Ole or both of 'em to accomplish this delightful task. Only my position as host prevents me from tryin' to bring about their joint demise, alone an' single-handed. Nothin' but a lot of high-proof will-power an' a most amazin' kind heart prevents me from treatin' them two wahoos to a big dose of mayhem, malice aforethought an' great bodily harm.

It sure is a struggle with me to abstain from violence. At first, everything is peaceful an' lovely. They comes in, undoes their packs, washes up an' sets down to the supper I has ready by the time they're done groomin' themselves. Each of 'em stows away a big wad of grub without remark or comment. So far, things is fine. 'Long about at this point I'm congratulatin' myself that a heavy load of food has done calmed their troubled spirits an' that a pleasant, gossipy evenin' is about to ensue.

I'm jes' as close to makin' a good guess as France is to goin' dry. We no more'n fall back from the table and get our pipes goin' when the Swede starts things.

"I hope we has a nice day tomorrow," he ventures, castin' an appraisin' eye at Michael.

An' Michael Joseph don't disappoint. He's ready.

"What for do you-all wish for a nice day for?" he demands. "A day's a day, ain't it? What's the difference if a day's a nice day or a bum day? It's one more day jes' the same, ain't it? We gotta live jes' so many days, don't we? An' jes' so many of them has gotta be good an' so many has gotta be *cullus*, ain't they? What you-all tryin' to do—wish them bum days out of their rightful turn?"

"You bet I am!" Ole affirms. "I'm doin' jes' that. I'm cheerful an' joyous by nature, I am, an' any time I can wish a miserable or'nary day offa the calendar, I'm goin' to do it. Even if it does peeve some folks to be surrounded by sunshine an' happiness."

"Say," Michael Joseph hollers, "if I had your nerve I'd write a book! Whatever do you-all mean, tryin' to interfere with Nature by wishin' them days around?"

"Well, you heard me!" Ole hollers back. "I'm wishin' for a nice day tomorrow, an' I hope I gets my wish!"

"An' I hope she's a rotten, miserable twister of a day!" the Irishman screeches. "More'n that, you quit wishin' the weather

around to suit yourself. I got a half interest in the future, myself, an' I wants you to let my days alone!"

"Now, listen," I cut in, aimin' to calm 'em. "What's the use of arguin' about somethin' we ain't got nothin' to say about? There ain't no possible chance to change the weather, so what's the use fussin' about it?"

"Who's fussin'?" they both demand instantler.

"An' who cut you in on this?" Ole further inquires. "Me an' Michael was discussin' nice an' peaceful, the physcology of wishes, an' you horns in an' tries to start a argument. What license has you got to butt in on a subject you don't understand?"

"That's more'n a hundred per cent. right," Michael Joseph agrees. "You-all ought to stay closer to the bank, where you can wade around easy. Don't get out in the middle till you know how to swim," he cautions.

"You're both right," I admit. "I'm sure out of the class of you two. An', as a atonement for flounderin' into strange waters, I'm goin' to dig up what's left of a bottle of Scotch, which I been savin' for jes' such a auspicious occasion as this here."

Michael Joseph anticipates my effort to pour him a drink by grabbin' the bottle away from me an' holdin' it up to the light.

"It seems to me," he opines, squintin' at the last bit of Smoky Heather within fifty miles, "that this here Scotch is too light-colored to be properly aged. I've drunk a heap of Scotch while huntin' around for some real whisky, an' I always notices that young, immature Scotch is lemon-colored like this here. Scotch what's properly matured is deeper in color—more like a grapefruit."

"You're crazy!" Ole declares. "There ain't no difference in color between a grapefruit an' a lemon. On top of that, it keeps me busy for the next two weeks tellin' what you don't know about whisky. Or grapefruit."

"Let me inform you of somethin'!" Michael roars. "I've drunk more whisky than the King of Sweden ever seen! There ain't nobody can tell me nothin' about whisky! I'm sure a Past Grand Sampler when it comes to judgin' whisky. Or drinkin' it. I can easy drink a pint of whisky in two swallers. An' to prove it," he adds, throwin' back his head an' takin' a deep

breath, "I'm goin' to drink what's left of this here Highland dew without takin' the bottle from my lips."

"Not without a whole lot of help from high Heaven, you won't!" Ole yells as me an' him closes in simultaneous.

Omittin' all the ghastly details, I'll jes' say that Michael gets hit three times—a pippin of a jolt on each side of the jaw, contributed by me an' Ole, an' once more when the floor rars up an' smacks him in the face. An' I'm claimin' some small credit for the singleness of purpose of all three of us when I say that the *frumenti* with the lemon color an' the grapefruit tint emerges from the fray kinder shaken up, so to speak, but with nary drop missin'.

Then, like the Gaul that Mr. Cæsar mentions, the conversation water is right away divided into three parts.



SHE was good an' noble liquor. It ain't no more'n five minutes till we all got nothin' but the kindest of feelin's for ourselves an' each other. An' she's lastin'. For more'n an hour that Scotch successfully combats the cussedness of them two an' makes them appear in the light of reg'lar, ordinary human bein's. It even gets a toe-hold on my better judgment, befuddlin' me to the point where I get light-headed enough to hope that the rest of the evenin' passes off smooth an' harmonious.

An' then Michael Joseph antes.

"I'm goin' to bed," he announces, yawnin'. "I'm sleepy."

"What for do you want to go to bed for?" the Swede snaps, real peevish. "Why don't you wait up an' go to bed like other folks? But, no—you gotta go to roost real early so's you can wake up a couple of hours before breakfast. That gives you a *hiyu* chance to roll an' toss around an' bust up the best part of my rest."

'Course right there I make another bobble.

"I got plenty blankets," I tell 'em. "You-all can bunk separate if you're so minded."

"Half of each one of our blankets is mine," Michael Joseph informs me. "An' I'm sure goin' to slumber on my own beddin'—right now!"

"All of them remarks goes for me," the Swede allows. "An' I'm warnin' you-all that I craves repose an' I intends to sleep."

Well, the extry bunk bein' a one-man affair, they make down a bed on the floor an' turn in. It ain't more'n seven-thirty;

but figgerin' that if I set up an' read the light keeps them two lunatics awake, I blow the candle an' turn in myself. I ain't takin' no chances. The quicker them sap-heads goes to sleep the better show I got of coaxin' the dove of peace to flutter back an' resume his perch on my ridge-pole.

An' in about five minutes I get to figgerin' that that is jes' what said pigeon has done. For the Swede starts snorin'! An', believe me, while I'm ready to vote an' repeat for any law that places snorin' right ahead of manslaughter, that Swede's gurglin' rumble is music to me. Him bein' the original objector to Michael's early retirin', it's a cinch the Irishman has already gone by-by, an' the night's wranglin'-bee dies for lack of nourishment.

Thinkin' them thoughts is so soothin' to me, that, in spite of the fearful noises Ole emits, me an' the Sandman is purty soon 'way off on the other side of nowhere. Everything's fine.

I must have been asleep mighty near five minutes when I hear somebody yellin'. 'Course, it's Michael Joseph.

"Hey, you," he hollers, "shut up! Cut it out! What do you-all mean by tryin' to strangle yourself thataway an' shatterin' my repose? You done got me so nervous I'm liable to bust you right in the mush!"

"Try it," the Swede invites, sittin' up. "An' don't you wake me up no more," he warns. "I'm ain't goin' to stand for it. You bald-faced dough-head, you know what you done? You jes' busted up the best dream I ever had in my whole life!"

"Yah!" Michael jeers. "It sure must have been some sweet vision. Why, you funny-faced liar, I know durn well that from the awful noises you was makin' you was dreamin' about nothin' less'n murder an' sudden death."

"I sure was," the Swede assents. "I done dreamt that I took a crack at you with the ax an' you laid down an' died!"

"Ain't that nice?" Michael sneers. "Well, lemme tell you somethin': I ain't so defunct but what I'm goin' to stop you from havin' all the fun in this life. You ain't goin' to snore into my ear no more. I'm goin' to put a *detale shookum* kibosh on your vociferous entertainment, right now!"

With that, he turns himself end for end an' lays down with his feet at Ole's head.

"Now, you wall-eyed pike, snore till you're blue in the gills," he urges.

Quiet for maybe ten minutes. Then a long, gurglin' rattle from Michael. Right away its mate from the Swede.

"By the long-lipped moose," I swears to myself, "they've both gone rock-a-by! The gods has sure rewarded me for my forebearin' attitude toward these two locos. Here's where I grab me a night's sweet slumber, same as if these here Piutes ain't present."

An' sure enough, the soul-fillin' music of them snores soothes me to rest in less'n three minutes. It's grand!

I guess maybe all hands sleeps for a good hour or more. Then, without no warnin' or preliminaries of no kind whatsoever, a long screechin' howl breaks loose that fairly knocks the chinkin' from between the logs. It scares me so that before that awful noise has half died away I'm out in the middle of the floor, fumblin' for a match an' shakin' like a jelly-fish in a tide-rip. Then she starts in again.

"Help! Leggo! Stop him! Ow-w-w!"

All the time there's the awfulest thrashin' around, mixed in with a steady smashin' an' thuddin' that tells me some guests of mine is engaged in a fight to a fare-you-well.

Right then an' there I make the worst play of the night. Instead of grabbin' my blankets an' goin' outside to sleep in peace an' comfort, lockin' the door after me as I go, I gotta fool around till I get hold of the matches an' a candle. When the tallow-stick quits sputterin' here's what I see:

Them two mavericks has got a vise-lock on each other, an' they're twistin' an' rollin' round like two Jap wrasslers. But that ain't all. They're holdin' each other, reverse ends. Each of them *hombres* has got his arms around his *compadre's* legs, an' they're hammerin' an' punchin' each other on the calves an' shins in a way that's sure satisfyin' to behold. Only, of course, they can't do hardly no damage, which is kinda too bad.

An' all the time Michael Joseph is yellin' an' hollerin' an' beggin' me to pull the Swede off. As for Ole, he ain't makin' a sound. By an' by it sort of comes to me that this here unusual silence on the part of Mr. Erickson is kinda queer—so I bend over close to have a good look.

What I mean, that tow-headed son of old man Erik has got him a copper-riveted cinch. Even an Irishman is entitled to yell under them circumstances.

For Ole has got one of Michael Joseph's big toes in his mouth, an' he's chewin' away like he ain't had nothin' to eat since last Sunday a week!

'Course, that writes a new slate right there. I can't stand to have it said that I allows such rank cannibalism to run rampant in my domicile thataway. So I throw a bucket of water into Ole's mug; an' then, to make sure, I taps him on the head a couple of times with a bottle of vinegar that I grab off of the table. Then, soon as I get Michael established on a stool, I help the Swede to navigate over to the bunk, where he immediately lays down. He's got a couple of good, healthy-lookin' bumps on his conk an' he appears to be sort of dazed. Vinegar is sure bad for some folks.

Both gladiators is quiet by now, so I reasonably figger it's my turn. An' what I'm tryin' to say, I'm mad!

"Listen," I commands, "both of you. Right now is when you two brings your evenin's entertainment to a end. I done stood for a plenty an' a lot over, an' I'm a heap weary of your efforts to enliven a dreary night. I'm aware that the rules of hospitality is plenty elastic; but I'm warnin' you that they're about due to snap! Either of you starts jes' one more of your infantile pranks an' I step right into the middle of things with evil intent an' a pick-handle! An' I sure beats you wahoos to a pulp!"

"What you hollerin' about?" Michael inquires. "You got no kick comin' about nothin'. What I want to know, what kind of a host are you-all anyway? Whatever do you mean by allowin' that taffy-haired man-eater to mayhem me thisaway?"

"That's what," the Swede chimes in. "If you-all fulfils your duties as our host, you analyzes an' studies the temperments of your guests an' prepares accordin'—then this here *mélée* never comes off. I don't hardly know when I been in anybody's shack that's so lax an' careless about the comfort an' welfare of his visitors. It's awful!

"Another thing," he goes on, turnin' to Michael. "I'm waitin' to hear your excuse for stuffin' your toe into my mouth thataway."

"I'm doin' you a favor," the Irishman allows. "I listen to you snore for maybe a half-hour; by then, I'm positive you're stranglin' your fool self to death. You

can't nohow last another ten minutes. So I sticks my toe into your gullet nice an' easy, figgerin' it acts as a gag an' that there-after you'll be compelled to take your share of ozone through your nose.

"An' how does you reward my solicitude? You clamps down on to that digit an' holds on like a snappin'-turtle on to a hunk of raw liver! How'm I goin' to travel tomorrow?"

"Lemme see that toe," the Swede demands. "'Tain't hardly nothin'," he announces after finishin' his inspection. "She's cut pretty deep on top; but bein' tougher on the bottom side, she's only jes' bit into. Also, I learns from this incident that my lower teeth ain't sharp no more. They're wearin' out."

With that he fills a pan with water, helps himself to some carbolic he finds on the shelf an' proceeds to wash out an' dress his buddy's injury, careful an' efficient as a trained nurse.

An' then, 'cause the pain won't let Michael Joseph sleep no more, them two mutts plays casino till breakfast time!

Maybe I ought to detained 'em a day or two until Michael's hurt gets healed some. But when they gets ready to hit the trail, right after breakfast, I help 'em get their packs in shape. An' I ain't ashamed of it. I'm glad!

Jes' before they starts out the Swede shakes hands an' says:

"Tom, we're goin' on into Forty-Mile, an' we're aimin' to lay us in a outfit. It's a long time till snow, but we're outfittin' now. Don't you go away from here. You're goin' to hear from us *pronto*. So long."

"You sure are," the Irishman confirms. "You're goin' to get news from us in a mighty few days, or sooner. You stay right here till you get word. So long," he says, likewise givin' me a grip.

Then they mosey down the trail, Ole in the lead, with Michael Joseph limpin' along after, slow an' careful, leavin' me to wonder what in name of smoke they're goin' to send me word about. Why couldn't they tell me now, before they done left?



RIGHT across from my cabin I got a claim staked out on a bench. She prospects a little better'n fair; but I can't work her except in Winter-time, after she freezes to bedrock. So I'm jes' layin' around, waitin' for frost, so's I can burn a

shaft down an' take out a Winter dump. Bein' idle that way, time passes mighty slow. Likewise the hints dropped by my recent visitors adds about sixty minutes to every hour. Inside of three days I'm so het up with speculatin' over the meanin' of their promise that I'm about to start for Forty-Mile an' find out whatever.

Then I hear from 'em. A Injun boy arrives at my wickiup late that night with a note. I've always kept her. Here she is.

Deer tom come on in with barer. Me an ole is redly.

Michael an ole.

p. S. We takin' you along cause us three get along so good. feed the barer, right away.

Michael an ole.

Can you beat that? The sublime conceit of them galoots is sure beautiful to contemplate. Them prattlin' babes imagines that they're gettin' alone fine together an' that their constant janglin' is nothin' more'n the outward token of a real understandin'.

At that, maybe they're right. Who knows?

But one thing is sure an' beyond argument. They're maybe loco as regards their dealin's with each other, personal; but when they're talkin' business, as this note insinuates, they're plumb wide awake an' sensible. They've got a ace or two hid away somewhere, an' they figger it's about time to bring 'em into play. I knows 'em well enough to be certain of that much.

The next mornin' I nail up my teepee an' hit the trail, followin' the Injun. We make Forty-Mile late that night.

The followin' mornin' I mosey over to the store, casual.

Jes' as I figger, there they are. They're settin' on opposite counters—fussin'. Both of 'em sees me as I came in; but they don't pay me no more mind than if I was a malemiut dog.

"You're bughouse!" the Swede is screechin'. "You ain't got sense enough to pound sand down a straight hole! Even them two-by-four intellects of your'n oughta be able to figger out that plug has got more juice into it than finecut!"

"Listen," Michael orders. "The total circumference around the inside of your head is considerable less'n a eighth of a inch. At that, there's so much waste space I can hear your peanut brain sloshin' around

tryin' to find a side-wall to lean up against. You're workin' your cerebrum too hard, a-tryin' to keep up with me. See if you can *kumtus*-this:

"When you-all takes a chew of plug, she's already hard an' solid before you bites her off. She's that firm an' dense you can't put nothin' into her. Therefor you grinds her up an' extracts the pizen, nacher'ly lessenin' her bulk. You reduces her. But when you stows away a wad of finecut she's curly an' fluffy. She's soft an' loose an' dry like a wad out of a hair mattress. Nacher'ly she soaks up all the moisture offen your windpipe an' swells up accordin'. An' she keeps on absorbin' until your gullet's as dry as the inside of a thick rock. She's the ideal chew."

"All right," Ole agrees. "Stick to your frizzled terbacker. An' one thing's certain. You an' finecut is plenty similar. You're both nothin' but a bunch of ravelin's surroundin' a lot of empty places."

Then he comes over an' shakes hands with me, same as though he ain't seen me for a year. Also the Irishman closes his trap an' follows suit. After which, us an' some of the store loafers saunters over to Joe Cooper's an' imbibes a few jolts of oil of joy.

Pretty soon Michael breaks away an' leaves—then me. A little later Ole joins us. We adjourn to their cabin an' the wah-wah is on.

"Here's the lay," Michael begins. "Me an' Ole jes' comes across country from Seventy-Mile. We strikes your cabin on purpose on our way here. We been lookin' over that Seventy-Mile country all Spring, an' we don't find ary creek that promises enough to stay with.

"We're about to quit cold when we jes' happen to camp overnight on a bar in the main stream. While I'm gettin' supper Ole pans along the tail of said bar jes' to kill time. That bar runs from ten cents to more'n four bits a pan, all along her tail, for two hundred feet! The pay's anyway a foot deep an' eight feet wide!"

"Michael's spoutin' gospel," the Swede chips in, his eyes glistenin'. "She's a whale! An' the bar lays right opposite the mouth of a creek! To say nothin' of the bar, that creek offers a lulu of a chance. But the bar's certain.

"One of us shovels off the pay, one runs the rocker an' the other one prospects the

rim-rock up an' down that creek from — a sure stake! While two of us is rockin' out a break the other is makin' certain we



MANOOCH, NOW KNOWN AS BAMPART, IS ON THE YUKON ABOUT 165 MILES, OR A QUARTER-INCH ON THIS MAP, DOWN-RIVER FROM FORT YUKON

don't overlook no bets on that creek. An' we washes that bar out in six weeks. That's all."

Well, sir, I'm sure speechless! She's the sweetest tale I've heard in many a long moon.

"But why didn't you-all tell me when you was at my shack?" I manage to inquire at last.

"Well, 'tain't exactly none of your business, but we'll tell you," Michael answers. "It's thisaway: Me an' Ole is mighty near out of grub. That's what brings us in. An' we're plumb out of dust. So we figger to come into town, first-off, an' see will Jack trust us for a short outfit. We know you-all got a little dust stored away; but we don't aim to come to you with the news of a strike an' then make a borrow. Jack has done agreed to outfit us, so we sent for you."

"You two makes me sick!" I assures 'em. "At that, I appreciates your sentiments. Maybe sometime I gets even."

"There's jes' one thing wrong," Ole warns me. "Last night Michael borrows an ounce an' gets into a stud game with a chechako. This here tenderfoot has been in camp less'n a week. He comes up-river on the *Weare*, an' he buzzes ashore with a few hundred dollars, a pack-horse an' a sawbuck saddle.

"He loses his wad in a couple of nights, but he's still possessed of this here equine when he sets in with Michael last night. Michael wins the cayuse. He's the only horse in camp, an' likely the only one on the whole Yukon. An' now this here fool harp

insists on takin' him with us, spite of the fact that he knows this ain't no country for pack-animals exceptin' they're men."

"Look here," I cut in quick. "We're goin' out to make a killin'. Don't let's allow anything to interfere with that, which is sure the main idea of this here trip. Let's make a agreement. Don't let's start no discussion about nothin', no time. You two toss a coin concernin' this ca-vye-oh."

Believe me, I'm goin' to have harmony on this journey!

Well, they fuss a while, an' then Ole finally digs up a dollar an' tosses her in the air. An' I don't s'pose I need to mention that Michael Joseph Ryan wins.

"That proves once more that I'm always right," he announces, serious as a judge. "That equine goes along. Moreover, he earns all the grass he can gather, nights, by packin' a good two hundred of grub an' extr'y stuff that otherwise we can't take. Maybe I ride some, too. We make this trip in style an' comfort."

"All' right," Ole agrees as usual. "An' remember, the welfare of this spavined charger is in your hands. You takes care of him. An' I hope he kicks your fool head off!"

Next mornin' we take the trail bright an' early, givin' it out that we're all goin' back to my claim an' that Michael an' Ole is goin' to help me do some dead work, so's to get the ground ready for Winter.

The first two days we mush along fine an' dandy. All hands, includin' Michael's mouse-colored bronc, is loaded to the limit. But the third out things begins to pop.

It's along in the middle of the afternoon an' we're swingin' down off a low ridge on to a swampy flat. Me an' Ole is ahead an' maybe two hundred yards out in the swamp when we hear Michael yell. Nacher'ly we look back. There's the Irishman standin' on a niggerhead, throwin' chunks of moss an' dirt at the horse. An' that poor, misfortunate critter, less'n fifty feet from hard ground, is mighty near out of sight! Nothin' but his pack an' his head is above ground. He's mired down for fair!

"I told you!" Ole exults, soon as we get back to the scene of trouble. "Jes' exactly what I done said. The very first piece of soft goin' we strikes, your slate-colored hoodoo jes' nacher'ly ups an' disappears. An' from now on we hit nothin' but swamp.

You oughta brung along a divin'-suit for him to wear."

"It's his own fool fault!" Michael exclaims. "Comin' down that ridge I cautions him, repeated, to step from one niggerhead to another. I explains to him careful. Now look at him! He's jes' nacher'ly stubborn. He ain't got hardly no more sense than you have," he declares, glowerin' at his pardner.

'Course, we got to save the poor plug. We go to cuttin' brush an' poles, an' we corduroy all round our pack-train; an' after about two hours' work we get him out on top. Then we skirt that bog, goin' a good two hours more out of our way. We sure put in a busy an' profitless afternoon.

That night while we're sittin' around the fire the horse comes up an' sticks his head into the smoke. The poor dumb critter is tryin' to get some relief from the meskeeters, which is sure enough plentiful an' voracious.

"Look at his eye," Michael invites, surveyin' his property. "He's cock-eyed. An', by gosh, that gives me a idea. I got a fifty per cent. uncle which I don't see but one time—an' that's a plenty. He's cock-eyed all the same like this here mustang! More'n that, they got the same expression on to their faces, by ginger!

"Whoop-e-e!" he yells. "Here's where I get hunk with that crooked-opticked relative of mine for nosin' into a otherwise perfect family. I christens this fruit of the gamin'-table after my ole man's little half-brother. His moniker from now on is 'Fagan.'"

Now I'm claimin' that the horse resents this here cognomen that his master sticks him with. Soon as he hears Michael say that name he moves away out of the smoke an' stands off to one side, where he poses, head down, a fair picture of dejection. He looks so plumb downhearted that we quit gazin' at him.

Nobody pays him no mind for quite a while. Then Ole happens to look toward him. One look's enough. The Swede springs to his feet, lettin' a whoop out of him rough enough to grind a ax on. An' he's got somethin' to holler about.

For there's Fagan, about half a slab of bacon danglin' from his mouth, chewin' away as contented as a clam!

"Look! Look at him! Look at the meat-eatin' son-of-a-goat!" Ole beseeches.

So I look.

"That's right! Stand there an' gape at

him," Michael jeers. "What does you-all think he is—a oil-paintin'? Stop him, you boggle-eyed mudhen! We only got two slabs of bacon in the outfit!"

But we don't rescue that sow-bosom with-out a struggle. The Irish, man or beast, don't give up their holdin's without a fight, no time. An' there ain't much left of that slab of grease nohow.

After the excitement's all over we chase Fagan 'way out into the brush. Then, 'cause the loss of that pork is sure enough serious, we turn in with nothin' more'n a good night all around. But not for long do we slumber.

Maybe Fagan is sore over bein' named after a cross-eyed man. Maybe he's plumb touchy, thataway. Anyhow, we no more'n get to snoozin' comfortable when all hands is roused by a tremendous crashin' around out in the brush. We slips on our moccasins an' rushes out to where the noise is—an' there's Fagan again!

An' he's sure puttin' on some show. He's whirlin' an' twistin' an' buckin' an' kickin' an' generally raisin' merry cain. He'll fall down an' right away get up again an' start to pawin' an' squealin' to beat the band. He's a-cuttin' up more didos than a Elk at a convention.

"He's loco!" Michael hollers, startin' to shin up a tree. "Climb, everybody!" he yells, soon as he straddles a limb. "He's got the rabid infantums!"

Believe me, we climb! The way that cayuse is cavortin' around is somethin' alarmin' an' scandalous. We ain't none of us ever seen no equine conduct hisself that-away before—so me an' Ole loses no time clavin' up a saplin' apiece.

By the time we reaches what we considers a safe an' secure perch Michael Joseph has recovered his wind; an' so he nacher'ly starts to talk.

"One of you slide down an' make a sneak for camp," he directs. "Get a rope an' come back easy an' toss her up to me. Then you kinda chase him over this way an' I'll snare him."

"That's a sure-enough cute an' feasible scheme," Ole declares. "An' I'll take a chance. Only, when I gets back with the rope, we changes the *modus operandi* to some extent. I'm goin' to rope this whirlin' dervish of a cimarroon, myself; an' when I gets him looped, I'm goin' to tie him up to a tree an' spit in his eye! That hammer-

headed dodo has done lacerated my feelin's beyond the limit, an' I'm out for reparation."

All this while Fagan has been conductin' hisself like a Russian dancer that's got mixed up with a Greek balley. He gyrates an' cavorts without no cease or let up until I surely marvels how he manages to keep hisself hair side out.

In the mean time Ole departs down his saplin' an' slides for camp, smooth an' easy. Right away he comes creepin' back, a long lash-rope looped an' coiled for action.

He gets almost within throwin'-distance of Fagan when all to once that sagacious quadruped stops his mad antics an' stands stock still. He's done!

Likewise his owner has got enough. Michael Joseph is so overcome by this here ontimely an' abrupt endin' of Fagan's act that he falls out of his tree. He lights in a pile of dry brush; an' the noise them dead twigs makes a-snappin' sounds like he's broke every bone in his carcass. But he ain't even jolted. Right away he sets up an' commences.

"Now, you sway-backed pelican," he addresses Fagan, "I'm jes' nacher'ly goin' to uproot a saplin' an' macerate you to a pulp! I sure mutilates you beyond repair. I'm goin' to learn you a lot of new manners, even if you does resemble my pa's law-brother."


"You ain't goin' to touch him," Ole objects. "You keep offen him. He's mine. I'm goin' to take about four doublin's of this rope an' plaster enough criss-cross welts on to your near-uncle's namesake to make him look like a blue waffle. He's sure goin' to— Hey! What's this?" he breaks off, stoopin' over an' pickin' up somethin'.

It's a half-eaten plug of chewin'!

'Course, right there's the answer to Fagan's onseemly behavior. That poor, misguided nut has snook into camp while we're enjoyin' our second nap an' nosed out a plug of Ole's Sawlog. Which he then devours more'n half of it! An' nacher'ly this potent diet affects him plenty stren'ous, like I jes' describes.

Well, we jes' stand there. Seems like we're kinda overcome.

"I ain't complainin'," Michael breaks into our meditations. "Let her go as she looks. He's a wonder. He's sure 'way up at the head of a class that ain't got nobody in it but him. Tomorrow I teaches him to spit."

 NEXT mornin' Fagan appears in camp bright an' early. An' he's mighty subdued an' meek-lookin'. He's as quiet an' gentle as a Spring dawn.

Somethin's wrong with us, too. We load up an' mush without hardly no reference to the night's activities. There's a kind of warnin' hoverin' about—somethin' depressin' an' gloomy seems to be in the air.

That night we make camp in a gulch, that, accordin' to Ole, is jes' one good day's mush from our Seventy-Mile bar. We bed down at the edge of a patch of timber that faces a big meadow where there's feed enough to satisfy a hundred Fagans. Everything's fine.

After supper we set around the smudge, talkin' an' makin' plans, happy an' friendly as a lot of bull-pups. It's maybe ten o'clock an' jes' about as dusk as it's goin' to get. Ole's got the floor. He's voicin' his plans concernin' the dust he expects to get.

"Yes, sir," he affirms, "I'm sure goin' to have one *hiyu* time. I'm goin' to buy me a whole keg of sweet pickles an' one of them big buckets of mixed candy. An' after I consume them delicacies I'm goin' to fill up on canned sauerkraut. I ain't never had my fill of sweet stuff in my whole life, an' here's where I get saturated—once anyway."

"You try to pull off any such heathen orgy anywheres near where I'm stayin' at," Michael threatens, "an'— Sh-s-s-s," he breaks off, a warnin' finger in his lips.

Then, quicker'n a cat, he picks up his rifle, whirls around, settin', an' cuts loose.

"Got him!" he exults, soon as the roar has died away.

He's sure got him. There certainly is a mighty thrashin' round about fifty yards back in the timber.

"Moose-meat for breakfast!" he whoops as we run for the scene of slaughter.

He's ahead an' runnin' like a sprinter when all to once he pulls up short—stops with a jerk. We're right behind an' comin' fast; but when we get up to where the Irishman's planted, me an' the Swede likewise slams the breaks on—hard.

I want to say, we right away lose all desire for fresh meat. For there lays Fagan, quiet an' peaceful, a gapin' hole where Michael's forty-eighty-two has done bored him, square between the eyes!

"Why, you poor, witherin' mush-head," Ole whispers, slow an' deliberate.

There's a flood of contempt in his words big enough to swamp a nation.

"You poor miserable hunk of nothin' at all! So this here is your brilliant idea of gettin' even. Why, your rotten hunk of rancid putty, why didn't you cut loose on somethin' that could fight back? Answer me, darn you, or I'll tear your fool head off!"

Michael jes' stares. "Pears to me he don't see nothin', at that.

"I wouldn't 'a' done it for a thousand ounces," he finally says, a big sob in his voice. "I thought he was a moose. I heard him come a-sneakin' through the brush an' I thought— I wouldn't 'a' done it for anything you fellers could name. Poor, lonesome, misformed —," he repeats, pattin' Fagan's head. "I guess maybe I ain't even got no right to talk to you—now," he says, twistin' Fagan's mane through his fingers; "but if it will square my rotten, fool play jes' one little bit, I'm wishin' hard that you're somewheres where you can know that I'm sure feelin' like —."

"Come on—let's go back to camp," the Swede says, soft an' low, as he takes me by the arm.



WE DON'T make the bar next day.

Fagan's absence makes it necessary for us to do some double-trippin'.

But when we do reach our destination I'm tellin' you that we done arrived somewhere! That bar was jes' nacherly about three times as rich as any of us hoped for. We work her out in four weeks; an' when we had sent the last of the pay through the rocker we estimate that we've got a little better than two hundred ounces apiece!

A little later, at Forty-Mile, Jack's scales proved that we hadn't placered for years jes' for fun. We sure guessed mighty close to right.

But the little creek, which Michael an' Ole had held in such high esteem as a possible producer, turned out to be nothin' more'n a goose-egg. While me an' Michael works out the bar, Ole prospects an' samples that pup from top to bottom an' from rim to rim; an' he never no time gets more'n a few colors. The pay on that bar come from 'way up-stream maybe; or maybe she come from somewheres else; anyway she proves once more that pay is jes' "there."

But we ain't kickin'. We mush back to Forty-Mile richer by near thirty-five hundred apiece for our four weeks' work. We're

feelin' so good that the best we can do, all the way home, is pull off five or six little dinky arguments that don't amount to nothin'.

Back at the post we weigh in our dust, lay in our Winter's outfits an' spend four or five days baskin' in the approval of the camp. Then I pull out for my bench-claim. An' that's the last I see of them two erst-while an' esteemed associates of mine for nigh on to four years.

The followin' Spring I migrates to Manook, an' that thrivin' metropolis claims me right up to now.



COMES July—the year of the big Nome rush. Manook has done organized to celebrate the Fourth, bang-up, bust-her-open style, an' I'm standin' chairman of the committee. I got to be in town a few days ahead of time, so I mush in on the first. An' the very first person I meet up with is Ole Erickson.

"Where's Michael Joseph?" I nacher'ly asks him right off.

"Don't you never mention that outlaw's name in my presence no more!" he hollers, screechin' like a Comanche. "I ain't no ways concerned over the whereabouts of the slitherin' imbecile from now on! We've quit! Let's go get a drink."

Well, sir, here certainly is some news! Michael Joseph Ryan an' Ole Erickson separated! I'm that flabbergasted I'm mighty near floored. But, take it from me, by night I've gathered all the available information that has any bearin' on this unbelievable bust-up. An' this time she's sure enough serious. Michael an' Ole has differed once too often.

Seems like they hit Manook about a week previous. They've been prospectin' on Ray River, an' they blow into town ragged, out of grub an' busted. Moreover, Ole's got the rheumatics—bad. 'Course, the store will trust 'em; but they hold off, orderin' jes' enough fodder to last 'em a couple of weeks. They're proud, them two.

They've been in camp three days when Ole buys him a bottle of liniment. The wrapper around this here cure-all is a almanac; an' that night, while Michael is anointin' him, Ole proceeds to read up some.

The almanac sets up a claim that the moon is more'n two hundred thousand miles away. Ole declares this statement sounds

correct to him. Michael snorts an' allows that our silvery satellite hangs a short fifty miles out in space.

They go to bed fussin'; for two days an' nights they keep it up; then Ole moves his traps to another empty cabin, statin' that he's through associatin' with a galoot that's so pig-headed that he won't believe nothin', even when he sees it in a book.

An' neither one gives in.

The camp is sure enough concerned over this here rupture; but we all knows 'em too well to butt in. All we can do is to let things drift. The situation does look mighty bad an' hopeless.

Then comes the Fourth.

Our big birthday dawns clear an' bright an' purty, like is fittin' an' proper for the natal day of our blessed land.

Me an' the rest of the committee has done promulgated a program that sets a high-mark in the annals of sport; an' I'm on hand bright an' early to see that she's carried out.

We aim to pull off a monster athletic carnival wherein the brawn an' sinew of the Lower River gets a chance to bust a lot of records an' show up the Outside. An' we does it. We go right down that list of events, smashin' rules an' records in a way that startles an' amazes the spectators an' even the contestants.

An' when Beans Bayo, a one-eyed Injun that's past sixty, runs a hundred yards in eight seconds, flat, we're sure we got the three speediest watches in the whole world; an' it's a safe bet that the name of our camp goes crashin' down in history with a reverberatin' roar.

The last thing we pulls off is a canoe race. This here race is open; but we don't figger anybody but Injuns enters, 'cause there ain't hardly no white man can navigate them Injun boats.

They're speedy an' they're purty; but it sure takes lots of practise to master 'em. Them little boats is that cantankerous an' tempermental, they upsets every time the paddler changes his mind. The committee has done got six of them beached on the far side of the river.

So when Michael Joseph Ryan climbs into the boat that's goin' to ferry the Injun contestants across to the startin'-point, there's a general protest.

"He's bughouse!" Dick Peters allows. "He's been worryin' about Ole so much he's

plumb out of his latitude. The poor loco aims to end hisself. Stop him!"

But Michael ain't to be denied. He waves aside all objections an' declares that he's out to annex the twenty-five dollars that goes to the winner.

"Maybe I ain't never rode no Injun canoe before," he admits. "Maybe I upsets. But any time I stays right side up, I wins out over any Injun that ever swings a paddle. I'm a white man!"

"Let the sap-headed dodo race," Ole advises the crowd. "It's a cinch he never gets ten feet away from the shore."

An' with that Mr. Erickson turns his back on his former buddy an' mushes up the bank toward the Pioneer saloon. He saunters away an' leaves us same as if canoe races is as common to him as sourdough flapjacks. It's plain that a shot of hooch is more interestin' to that Swede than Michael's efforts as a navigator.

Jes' the same, while them athletes is bein' rowed across, I notice that Ole has returned, an' he's minglin' with the crowd in a way that's mighty puzzlin'. Twice I see him approach a tenderfoot, drag his overalls pocket an' make a bet. He's careful never to come near me; but I'm positive that Swede has rustled some money an' he's placin' it ag'in' poor old Michael. It's too almighty bad.

By an' by we get the crack of the startin' gun an' they're away to as purty a send-off as any race-track ever staged. An' they surely do come whizzin' across. Them feather-weight little sheets of bark jes' nacher'ly seems to leap right off the bosom of the old Yukon with each heavin' stroke of the paddlers. Them shells is certainly real boats; an' that day some real canoe-men was ridin' in 'em.

There they come, scootin' — bent, two big bucks a little out in front, hardly seemin' to touch the surface of that brown flood; now gainin' a few feet, now losin'—as purty a sight an' race as anybody ever looked at. An' to some of us, the purtiest, finest bit of the whole show was Michael Joseph Ryan, white man, tailin' right alongside the two leaders, all the time!

We don't hardly dare to breathe as they get close enough for us to see 'em good; for Michael's boat is mighty near turmin' *kill-spie* with every stroke. That Irishman is defyin' all the rules governin' Injun canoe-work. He's puttin' his whole strength into

every stroke, totally disregardin' the fact that every time he dips his paddle he's within a ace of capsizin'.

But at that he ain't got quite enough. He's maybe a whole length behind the neck-an'-neck leaders when they reach the anchored barrel that marks the last hundred yards. Skill is goin' to count after all. She's a gone race for Michael.

So we've all jes' about give up rootin' for the paleface when that fool Irishman pulls another one. He does somethin' nobody never done to no Yukon birch-bark, no time. He stands up!

Full up on the toes of his moccasins he poises for his first mighty stroke—then he leans forward an' dips his paddle.

Well, sir, we don't dast to even wink. It ain't no ways possible for anybody to stay right side up in that crazy, narrow, one-man paper-shell—not an' act thataway. But Michael does it. An', believe me, he comes on in! He's got twice the leverage he's had; an', man, he jes' nacher'ly picks her out of the water.

Five strokes an' he's leadin'. Another five an' he's near enough for us to see the great beads of sweat on his forehead. An' another few seconds an' he knocks the whole bottom out of her as she scoots up on to the beach, spillin' Michael Joseph head-first on to the gravel. He wins by a good five yards!

Do we congratulate Michael Joseph, white man? We do not. We don't get no chance. Mr. Ryan no more'n gets hisself picked up than Ole grabs him by the arm.

"Come on home, you," he commands. "There's somethin' you gotta know, right now."

An' blamed if the conquerin' hero don't turn away from the whole admirin' crowd, meek as a sheep, an' go! It certainly is mystifyin'.

"Pears to me," Scar-Face Ed opines, "that Scangahoovian is wearin' a mighty glum an' sour look. I see him makin' a couple of bets durin' the race, an' considerin' that him an' Michael has been so sore on each other, it's a cinch he's been gamblin' wrong an' he's loser a pile of pelf. He's maybe figgerin' on soakin' Michael with the ax or somethin' to even up. Maybe some of us better accompany them to their domicile."

"Let 'em alone," Hank Sommers advises. "Let 'em be. Them two freaks is either goin' to make up or else they're due to pull

off a whale of a fight. Either way it'll be good for 'em. Let 'em settle things their own way."

Well, we all take Hank's advice—for a while anyway. But by night I'm that filled up with curiosity I'm near to bustin'; so when Ole an' Michael saunters into the Pioneer, contented-lookin' an' smilin' like they mostly always used to be, I shoos 'em into a corner an' demands details. An' for once Ole does all the talkin'.

"First off," he begins, "I want to say that me an' Michael has done settled our dispute. We've split her down the middle, each givin' up half. Me claimin' that the moon is two hundred thousand miles away an' Michael insistin' that she's a bare fifty miles from Manook makes a grand total of two hundred thousand an' fifty miles. Half of that makes one hundred thousand an' twenty-five miles, which as anybody with a lick of sense can see looks reasonable an' is plumb satisfactory an' fair to both of us.

"Continuin', I'm here to announce that I ain't got no idea that this fool Michael ever sets into a game which he don't noway savvy. Therefore I'm dumfounded an' amazed when he enters into that Injun canoe-race. I'm that peeved an' pained that I does somethin' I never pulls off before. I'm full an' plenty convinced that there ain't no way to hide the shame an' ridicule which this here harp brings down onto our heads when he enters into a game where he's bound to quit loser; so I arranges to get the only satisfaction remainin', which is financial. Therefore, soon as the contestants embarks for the startin'-point I slides

over to the Pioneer an' touches Rory Mack for two hundred. He forks it over without a murmur.

"Then I moseys back to where the crowd is, an' I circulates. Plenty language is bein' liberated concernin' this imbecile Irishman an' his chances. That's the stuff I'm movin' around to hear. Believe me, I'm so sore at Michael for the humiliatin' an' ridiculous position he done put us into that I'm out to buy me a big, juicy hunk of revenge. I'm figgerin' to invest two hundred dollars in a way that vindicates my judgment an' restores my standin' in this camp. An' I accomplishes.

"Nobody that's sane concedes Michael a chance. An' they're right. He ain't got no more right to win that race than I have to wear corsets. Consequently the bettin' public opines about five or six to one against Ireland. An' I judges an' approves them odds as fair an' correct.

"So I picks me out a couple of tenderfeet an' invests a hundred with each of 'em. Then I crowds down to the water's edge an' witnesses the fool antics of this here boilin' lunatic when he smashes a good canoe an' makes light of the public's judgment by winnin' that race."

"I'm plumb sorry, Ole," I sympathize. "It's too durn bad you had to go an' lose that borrowed money. I'm sure put out."

"What!" he shrieks. "You dodderin' old has-been, what you talkin' about?" he yells. "Whadda you-all mean? Who lose? We're eleven hundred to the good! I bet on Michael, you sap-head. He's my pardner, ain't he?"



BURNING SUMAC

by Ray M. Gillivray



Author of "Gar's Teeth"

FROM behind flowering laurel that reached upward fifteen hands to the ears of his horse, Samuel Orcutt stopped for reconnaissance. Before him lay the sullen Tallapoosa, its murky waters lapping idly at the roots of crimson-leaved swamp-maple.

A dry twig crackled behind him. Instantly the flintlock left the crook of his elbow and flashed to his shoulder, but he did not fire.

"It is only I, Sam," said a youthful voice, and a boy still in his early teens strode out, unmindful of the elder brother's frown.

"Go back to the wagons!" commanded Orcutt tersely.

"But how can I become a woodsman then? Riding back with sister and those colonist ladies—"

His protest petered out into childish petulance.

Orcutt motioned peremptorily.

"You have plenty of time, Warren," he said. "When I have these settlers off my hands I'll make it a point to teach you woodcraft and how to handle firearms. Just now—"

The words froze on his lips. A quarter-

mile distant through the tangles of white-laden dogwood and red-starred annis his forest eyes had detected movement. A brown patch had passed for an instant across the checkered frame of white and green. Another! Then still another!

While Samuel Orcutt sat immobile twenty-five Indians trotted through the brush only a few yards back from the farther shore.

Orcutt dismounted. A whispered sentence sent his brother scurrying back to the wagon-train with the dreaded order to barricade. The Creeks and Choctaws had not been on the war-path when the party left Savannah, yet Orcutt knew the latter's truce with whites endured only while Pushmataha, their chieftain, obtained none of the white trader's rum. Besides, from far in the north had come a rumor, unconfirmed as yet, which Orcutt feared more than all the drunken incompetence of Pushmataha.

It was this he wished to investigate as he tied his horse and turned down-stream toward the first eastward loop of the stream. Here, if those redskins were strangers, they would follow the bank. If they were only a hunting-party of Creeks returning to the

Tookabatcha council, Orcutt would not sight them again. Creeks, or even visiting Choctaws, would know of the short cut.

He made swift time, doubling the speed of the forty-inch lope these Indians had used in traveling. At the bend in the Tallapoosa, a mile distant, he mounted into the first branches of an oak, trusting to the scraggy trunk for concealment.

Two minutes passed. Then the bushes parted and a tall Indian, painted hideously in vermilion and white, and wearing the red feather of chieftainship, stepped out. He was followed closely by the others, and as they passed on up the shore the hidden watcher had time to examine their bows, the shafts of their arrows, and the bead patterns on their moccasins. None save the chief carried a rifle.

As the file of redskins jogged southward, the man in the tree slowly leveled his rifle. Along the sights of a gun with which he could perforate the palm of a man's hand at one hundred paces, Orcutt watched the paint-streaked back of the feathered warrior. His finger crooked the trigger—and had he but known the future as it was to befall, a slightly heightened pressure in that moment could have saved the lives and scalps of unnumbered scores of white men, women and children.

He only feared, however—as all thinking men feared the far-famed and bloodthirsty Shawnee chief—and did not fire. Cold-blooded murder, even of a dreaded enemy, did not appeal to him.

When he descended from the tree, his face was filled with grave apprehension. The Indians, without doubt, were Shawnees, down from Kentucky. Their leader could be none but Tecumseh, whose vengeful mission had been rumored weeks in advance of his arrival.

Not delaying a second, Orcutt secured his horse, and then returned to the barricade of wagons.

"I have witnessed what none will believe," he told Ralph Oglesby, the patriarch of the outfit. "Tecumseh and twenty-four Shawnee braves just passed on the farther bank of the river."

A cry of dismay greeted this announcement. Orcutt had not meant that these people, who had entrusted their lives implicitly to his leadership, would not believe the story. He was thinking far ahead.

"Then we cannot try to ford tonight!" cried one of the women.

"No, nor tomorrow!" answered Orcutt curtly. "This is the end of my contract. The Tallapoosa is reached. If you wish to leave this dangerous country, however, you may go up-river as far as you wish. Then send back my brother and sister Lillian to Georgia with the two drivers when you reach Sinquefield. War threatens."

"But where go you?" demanded Oglesby.

Orcutt shrugged. "To the stake, perhaps," he replied, grimly explicit for the purpose of warning rash members of the little company, to whose inexperience the menace of that fleeting band of painted shadows might seem to have lifted. "That is likely to rest in the hands of God and Ben Forest. Good-by!"

And without a word to the pioneers concerning the payment due him for his long trip across the flat-woods country, or even a farewell to his own kin in the second wagon, Samuel Orcutt rode southward to carry the word of Tecumseh's coming. Behind him the new settlers held their own council, and decided to remain near the Tallapoosa, on the trail to Sinquefield.



ORCUTT'S spirits were at low ebb at the beginning of his thirty-mile journey. Tecumseh's arrival, even if it did not presage long and bloody war, insured hard times for him and the seven brothers and sisters dependent upon his earning ability. The trip he made from the coast to the heart of Mississippi Territory each six months, plus the ponies, cattle, hides and tallow his wagoners took home from the trading-post at Tuskegee, represented a fair living in normal times.

When border warfare loomed, however, lean days faced all of the Orcutts. The coming of Tecumseh meant certain war—unless Benjamin Forest, the United States agent, or some other white man faced the wily Shawnee across the smoking sumac of the Tookabatcha fires, and out-matched him both in wit and eloquence.

On and on he rode, sometimes waving his hand in silent greeting as he passed the cabin of a settler, but for an hour at a time threading his way surely through the untracked piney-woods. Evening overtook him, but still he pressed on, grimly certain of his duty to all the human outposts of

civilization lying between the two log strongholds of Fort Mims and Sinquefield—both to succumb later to the red menace he strove to check.

"Sam Thlucco."

A voice from the darkness of oak scrub halted him. This was his Indian name.

"Who calls?"

The woodsman slid from his mount, keeping the gray bulk of the animal between himself and the newcomer.

"William Weatherford."

It was a name respected both by white and red, though its owner—son of the Indian princess Sehoj and the Scotch peddler Charles Weatherford—chose to cast his lot with his mother's people. Orcutt's finger loosened from its crook about the trigger and he waited while a tall, noiseless shadow glided toward him.

"By yourself, Weatherford?"

The query was sharp. While Orcutt liked and respected the half-breed, the latter traveled often in sinister company.

"No. Back there are several Creeks," admitted Weatherford readily. "Tustenuggee, Hopiéc, Far-off Warrior, Peter McQueen, High-Head Jim; Hillis Hadjo the medicine-man, and Seekaboo—a *Shawnee warrior*."

The last three words were spoken in a lowered voice, but distinctly. Orcutt fancied the half-breed leaned toward him. A chill struck into the woodsman's heart. Then the diabolical warriors from the north already had started their infamous proselyting! He could not imagine how Seekaboo could have preceded his chieftain, Tecumseh, but Weatherford answered this.

"Up-river I found him, and brought him with me in my canoe. It is against his wish that I come now to my brother, Sam Thlucco. Also, the others are lending ear to the Shawnee. Has my brother heard of a visitor from the north who comes to burn sumac instead of tobacco at the Tookabatcha fires?"

"Aye!" answered Orcutt shortly. "Saw him!"

Weatherford showed no surprize. He may have been startled, but if so it was not perceptible in the semi-dark.

"Then my hint is not needed," he said.

"The wise Sam Thlucco knows well what he must do."

"I was on my way to the fort," answered Orcutt. "Thank you for your warning,

Weatherford, but can't you come with me? Forest and I love each other but little. I fear that my word will be put aside lightly, as he is a proud man whose gall runs bitter when any one dares cast aspersions upon his authority, influence and accomplishments."

The half-breed was silent a full minute.

"I can not, Sam Thlucco," he decided then. "If I leave these hot-heads in the hands of Seekaboo, the firebrand, then will any reasoning be lost upon the agent. Torch and tomahawk will be acting whilst we argue. Instead, take this. It has never left my wrist since I passed adolescence."

He unsnapped a broad band of gold and passed it to the woodsman. Even in the faint light of stars, Orcutt could see the stippling of its beaten surface.

"That the agent must recognize," continued Weatherford. "It is the Marchand bracelet, given to Sehoj's mother many years ago. He knows well William Weatherford does not lie."

"True," agreed Orcutt. "It will stem his tide of doubt. But one thing I would know, Weatherford. If Forest believes not, and Tecumseh's sumac overpowers the senses of the Creeks and Choctaws, to which side of the fire go you?"

Another of the breed's pauses ensued. Evidently he struggled within himself, for when he spoke his usually resonant voice was throaty with restraint.

"If Tecumseh's war comes, it is the end!" he said. "Then either the white or red must die. Though I shall strive to keep the hatchet buried deep, I have seen many reasons why red men should fight. White men, not red, are the intruders. I—I am a chieftain of the Creeks!"

And then, before Orcutt could argue or protest—against a statement he knew only too well to be the truth—Weatherford wheeled, and glided back into the obscurity from which he had emerged.

Two hours later Samuel Orcutt rode into the Tensaw settlement on the Alabama River of which the heart was the abatis of Fort Mims. A single sleepy sentry accosted him, and after a short exchange of sentences he was admitted. Even then, Samuel Orcutt was a figure of some importance in the southwest, though jealousy and snob-bishness in the new officialdom made him shy at mingling with those who should have sought his counsel.

Political places, then as now, were none too secure, and a man who was respected, liked and feared by all tribes from Seminole to Achusi, and at the same time was trusted by his own fellows who knew him, was altogether too formidable a possibility for the jobs of men like Forest, Dakin and



Smith, in whose hands rested the peace and prosperity of the border. In the face of their intolerance and ridicule—the safest weapons they could adopt against him—he kept to himself, and provided for his brothers and sisters by guiding wagon-trains and trading with the Indians.

The barracks of the fort, and all the surrounding cabins were dark. Not knowing Forest's whereabouts, Orcutt aroused first General Thomas S. Woodward and Major Beasley, who kept bachelor quarters together. To these he told his story; and the major dispatched a servant to awaken the agent.

Forest, half-dressed and surly, answered the summons. When he found that he had been roused at the behest of Orcutt he was furious. Only a sharp command from Woodward kept him from stamping away. Forest was a big man, reddish of cheek even at this hour of the night, and in addition he was only nominally under the authority of Woodward while he remained at Fort Mims.

Still, he submitted with a bad grace, and listened while Orcutt repeated coldly his warning concerning the coming of Tecumseh, and the great need for a white speaker at Tookabatcha. Orcutt, broad of shoulder

and jaw, but lacking five inches of Forest's six feet three, felt an impulse next to irresistible to knock some panic or other honest emotion into that heavy-jowled, sneering face. With an effort he controlled himself, feeling that no matter what Forest might be, the fate of hundreds of pioneers lay in his hands.

Forest brushed aside the warning almost savagely.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "I have been listening to these fairy tales long enough in the daytime, to say nothing of waking me from slumber to hear the wildest of them all! Tecumseh is here, you say? Ha! Ha! And you have seen him? Let me smell the rum on your breath, my good fellow."

He motioned as if to sniff at Orcutt.

The woodsman's cheeks paled, yet he held to his inflexible determination.

"After your work at Tookabatcha is finished, Forest," he announced quietly, "I shall take great pleasure in hunting you out and killing you! These gentlemen witness my challenge.

"And now," he went on abruptly, as Forest, purpling as if in apoplexy, seemed about to hurl himself forward, "we have more lives than our own to consider. Knowing that you, Forest, would disbelieve any statement I made—in spite of the fact that I am known as a man of truth if nothing else—I have brought evidence you dare not disbelieve!"

He flung down on the table before Woodward and Beasley the hammered gold bracelet of Weatherford.

"Lamochattee's!"

"The Red Eagle's!"

The two soldiers voiced together Weatherford's Creek name and its translation. Forest was silent, yet a deepening furrow between his beady eyes showed that he was less uncertain of the woodsman's veracity.

"Weatherford tried to warn me. He does not wish Tecumseh to succeed. He sent this bracelet by me to prove to Mr. Forest that I told the truth. At the present moment we have Weatherford and Pushmataha, the two chieftains, with us. Given an able man—" and he glanced coldly but speculatively at Forest—"to speak for the whites, and Tecumseh will find the nostrils of the Creeks more hungry for tobacco than for acrid fumes of sumac. He and his twenty-five warriors will return north disappointed."

"Twenty-five warriors!" echoed Forest. "Do you mean to stand there and tell me that twenty-six lazy Shawnee traveled all the way from Kentucky to—to——"

"I counted them! Twenty-four were with Tecumseh. Seekaboo, as I said, accompanied The Red Eagle," advised Orcutt, dryly.

"The ——!" Forest stared several moments. "Hm! Well, I guess I'll have to go, then. Major Beasley, can you spare me fifty troopers for the journey?"

The major, an old Indian fighter, looked at the agent oddly, but did not answer. Woodward settled the matter.

"Where would fifty soldiers be in the midst of three thousand Indians?" he asked. "Forest, you're not on to your business yet. If you'll take my advice you'll apologize to Orcutt, and then ask him if he'll go with you—alone!"

The agent bit his lip. Apologizing evidently was not in his line.

"Will you go with me?" he demanded truculently, facing the woodsman.

"Delighted, sir!" responded Orcutt with icy formality. "After the council, however, only one of us shall return!"

"Oh, to —— with that! Be ready at daylight. To my mind this is a —— wild-goose chase, but the sooner it's over the better I'll be pleased. These Indians won't make war. You can see from your own story how Weatherford is falling all over himself to keep in with me, and Pushmataha is safe as long as he can't get rum anywhere else. You hurry up, though——"

He stopped, noticing for the first time that Orcutt had left.

"Good-by, Forest!" said Woodward significantly, standing up and shaking hands.



WITH the first graying of dawn the two men, stony in the silence of open enmity, rode forth toward Tookabatcha. Orcutt, in the lead, had discarded all his weapons save the sheath-knife on his left hip. Forest, unable for some reason to grasp the psychology of the men with whom he had to deal, carried one flintlock at his saddle pommel, another strapped across his shoulders, and had two cumbersome derringers in holsters at his belt. Beasley had remonstrated with him for launching himself on a mission of peace thus armed, but the agent, following his discomfiture before the officers, was in no

mood for friendly advice. Orcutt, after one contemptuous glance, paid him no more attention.

Tookabatcha, like all of the Indian council towns, was built about an open square or "great house," but because for more than a generation all the tribes of the Confederacy met here, the square—instead of being a hundred feet in length, was nearer three hundred yards in dimensions. Four long-houses faced the sides, and when councils affecting only the Creeks were held, the tribe met in one of these, the "hot house" or "sweating house," in which a fire burned continuously. The other three houses each was divided into three compartments, each subdivision being given over to one of the nine main ceremonials of the tribe.

On the noon of the day when Orcutt and Forest approached the town—October 27th, 1811—all of the able-bodied warriors of the Creek and Choctaw tribes were assembled. The Cherokees, Chickasaws, Achusi, Tonicas, Natches, Tensaws, Shetmashas and Yazooos no longer acknowledged the loose yoke of the Confederacy; they were absent, for which Orcutt silently thanked Providence. The two tribes represented, while by far the most terrible warriors of the lot, were of a high grade of intelligence. These, from all the southern Indians, had shown themselves able to learn from the white man in the arts of tilling the soil and weapon-forging.

Unless the fumes of sumac, the powerful cassine beverage (black drink from yaupon holly) and the differing war physics of the Wolf gens, the Bear gens, the Wind gens and all the other clans of the nation, submerged common sense, Orcutt felt that plain argument for peace might stand against Tecumseh's incendiarism.

It was the last day of *puskita* for the Creeks. This fast—enduring for eight days after the gathering of the corn—was inevitable prelude to the council. During the time men, women and children danced through every daylight hour and often long into the night, and for the only time in the year they bathed voluntarily in cold water; at high noon of the eighth day the *busk* (new fire) was lighted. Before this, upon confession, every sin or crime of the year—barring only murder—was forgiven publicly.

In the cone-shaped bark houses set up on the edges of the square for visitors' use, Orcutt saw the group of Choctaws.

Pushmataha rose from his blankets in silent greeting as the scout saluted. In a previous campaign this old rascalion had been accorded the title of "General" by the whites for his services in keeping the Choctaws in line, and any recognition of his title flattered him.

Forest, in spite of Orcutt's whispered admonition, refused to grant this courtesy.

"Salute that — old pig?" he muttered audibly. "Not I!"

Orcutt shook his head slightly, but did not argue. His way led past a single, larger bark teepee, about which no warriors were seated. From the crossed red sticks above the flap—the sign of war—he knew it to house the dreaded Shawnee chieftain and his followers. Rather out of curiosity than from any sense that good might come of it, Orcutt chose the next cone-shaped house, which was empty, for the use of himself and Forest.

"I advise you not to offer insult to our neighbors here," Orcutt remarked, as they staked out their horses.

"Who are they?"

"Tecumseh and his Shawnees."

Forest's eyes widened and he stared back at the sinister teepee, but offered no answer. Doubting Orcutt's word was becoming more and more difficult. He never before had attended the council, and the presence about him of the thousands of stolid, good-natured savages, who, in the course of one evening might metamorphose into a yelling, blood-thirsty mob hot for coups and scalps, perhaps frightened him. He was a North Carolinian born and bred, and experience with indolent, grafting *minfos*—these for the most part were not the war leaders of the Indians—had not furnished him insight into the savage heart.

A real test of his qualities was forthcoming immediately. The *pushita* ended, the *busk* was lighted in the center of the immense square, and a brand taken back to light the sweating-house fire, and then the whole Creek nation moved out in a body to occupy two sides of the square. The warriors banked themselves fifty rows deep about the central fire, which was kept constantly replenished till it leaped as high as the pine-tops of the ridge behind. The tribe-men took their place. The evening waned. Still Tecumseh did not put in an appearance.

At one o'clock in the morning, however,

the tall Shawnee with his braves, painted in vermilion and white and carrying red sticks, marched in perfect silence to the fire, circled it in their slouching, loose-hipped stride, and took their places near William Weatherford, Pushmataha, and the two squads of warriors selected for the ceremony.

Weatherford lighted the pipe, and it was passed. All of the squad of Shawnees, and some two dozen members of the other tribes sucked at it. Though Orcutt and Forest edged up close, it was not passed to them. Orcutt guessed that the refusal of Forest to salute Pushmataha might be the reason behind this slight. At the conclusion, Tecumseh and his followers rose, still silent as so many evil specters of the night, and marched around the fire and back toward their guest wigwam.

"Isn't he going to talk, after all?" demanded Forest irritably, aloud. The eyes of a thousand Indians turned in his direction.

A single shake of Orcutt's head answered him.

Later Orcutt, with cold fury shining in his eyes, pointed out to Forest the terrible breach of etiquette the latter had committed in daring to speak even so much as a syllable before the guest of honor had had his say.

"Ah, the — with all this mummery!" snarled Forest. "When do you suppose he will speak?"

"When he gets good and ready. Not before," replied the scout briefly. "And, let me tell you something more," he added, turning back toward the man who was wasting the chances for life of all white men on the border. "One more break of that sort in council, and you and I shall be spared the trouble of our duel!"

The next day dawned to find the tribes assembling again. By sunrise all were in their places except the Shawnees. Food was dumped in huge piles before the fire, so that any who chose might allay the pangs of hunger, but such was the awe and respect for Tecumseh that few availed themselves of the privilege.

Still Tecumseh delayed. Orcutt knew this was part of the crafty chieftain's plan. The longer he forced the southern Indians to await his pleasure, the greater the majority of them would think him. Forest scoffed at this explanation.

"He's bluffed out," Forest boasted. "Didn't expect to find a white man here to

rebut his arguments. Bet he doesn't talk at all."

Orcutt was silent, wishing only that he had slain this vulgar idiot before starting for Tookabatcha.

The day passed. Tecumseh sent a messenger at noon to say that he would make his talk early in the afternoon, but the afternoon waned. Later the messenger brought the tale that the sun was too far advanced in the heavens, and that the talk would have to wait for next day.

The next day and the next passed in identical fashion. That night Forest, thoroughly disgusted, and feeling that somehow this play was all for the sake of humiliating him, strode to Tecumseh's wigwam.

Orcutt guessed the agent's purpose too late. A cry of horror was checked on his lips. Writhing with an agony more real than the tearing burn of a barbed arrow, Orcutt watched, apparently unmoved, while the blundering Forest threw aside the leather flap and stared down at the assemblage of graven images within.

"I came to—to find out when you were going to give us your talk!" blustered Forest. "I'm a busy man and——"

Perhaps it was the utter silence of the braves. Perhaps the lurking devil of fanaticism in Tecumseh's eyes—calculating approval of this fool who played the red man's game so well—cut through the agent's dull sensibilities. At any rate his bluster oozed. He stared down a moment longer, and then swung on his heel.

Orcutt met him ten yards from the wigwam.

"Make ready to pay, Benjamin Forest!" he commanded tersely. "You have done that which can not be forgiven!"

And the agent, impressed in spite of himself, followed the direction of Orcutt's curt nod. He saw William Weatherford, erect and scowling, standing in the midst of his coterie of Creek braves.

"Get inside!" commanded Orcutt in a low tone, as the half-breed started forward. "Let me speak to him, for on our heads is the blood of thousands!"

Stupidly Forest obeyed. Even his arrogant self had begun to feel the atmosphere of horrified resentment. Samuel Orcutt advanced half way to meet the stern chief-tain of the Creeks.

"I know what my brother has to say,"

began Orcutt. "The sacred guest of honor has been insulted, and blood alone can pay the score. All white men are not wise, O Red Eagle, and this one is of the most foolish. Now he is learning wisdom, however, and at your service blood shall be spilled to wipe out his insult. When say you?"

Red Eagle was silent a full minute. He had not expected this, though some such demand had been in his mind. He was equal to the occasion, however.

"At Tecumseh's next coming to the fire, Sam Thlucco," he answered at last, shaking his head. "The white man has done bad business this day."

And Orcutt, bowing to the man he respected, turned back to the wigwam. To Forest's almost frantic questioning he replied not a syllable. The prayer was in his heart, however, that the agent would prove up a brave man in spite of his folly.

An hour later Red Eagle returned—alone.

"I know not what my brother plans," he said gravely, "but I fear the trouble is upon us. For him—" and the half-breed motioned contemptuously back toward the wigwam which held the agent—"I care not, but my heart bleeds at the thought of Sam Thlucco's scalp dangling from the belt of the Shawnee. Will my brother not leave now? A herd of ponies, which I well can spare, will assuage the anger of Tecumseh."

"I can not, though I thank you, Red Eagle!" responded Orcutt sadly. "My life is naught beside the damage which has been done. I shall stay for the reckoning."

Weatherford nodded. He had expected just this reply, but he had one more word of advice. Stepping near, he lowered his voice.

"Tecumseh will not lose," he said. "If you see my hand close, thus—" he made a rapid motion with his fist—"then drop to the ground. You have many friends among us——"

"I shall remember!" answered Orcutt, deeply moved by the half-breed's sincerity.

An hour later, after Orcutt and the now pale and shaken Forest had taken their places between the Creeks and Choctaws, the flap of the Shawnee wigwam was thrown to one side and out stepped Tecumseh. He was painted now wholly in vermilion, and bore in each hand a bundle of red-leaved twigs which Orcutt recognized with a sinking sensation to be sumac, the

shrub whose leaves are dipped in blood and whose smoke inflames the senses. Each warrior following carried the same burden.

Slowly, majestically Tecumseh stalked to the fire, circled it, and then halted, each of his twenty-five braves at arm's length from the next.

Suddenly, at a low cry from Tecumseh, all pitched the sumac into the fire. Orcutt saw then that to each warrior's wrist green withes were fastened—the same which bound the bundles.

A moment they waited, until the dry sumac caught fire. Then, at a further signal, each started after Tecumseh, dragging his two bundles of fuming sumac on the ground behind him.

They were silent no longer. Tecumseh, his lean knees pumping like pistons, crouched and danced his way around the fire. Up arose the Shawnee war-whoop, echoed and augmented by all the followers.

Thrice about the circle they passed, and then, at the second of Tecumseh's stopping, they loosed the withes, and threw the smoking bundles far into the heart of the council-fire.

Then Tecumseh spoke, his braves grouping themselves close about him. His words flowed slowly at first, his clear, resonant voice carrying to the extreme edge of the crowd. It was apparent what preparation he had made for the occasion, for he spoke Muskogee, the esperanto of the Confederacy.

Soon his words quickened, his black eyes flashed, and his voice raised as he sounded the clarion call to combat. All red America was to join in this war, he said. The old hunting-grounds by the salt water were to be cleared of white invaders. From the North, the South and the West a simultaneous attack would sweep the woods, the plains and the hills of oppressors.

Orcutt's heart sank as he listened, for the Shawnee was fanatically in earnest and he was a true orator. Unconsciously he flattered his audience, stimulated them to anger, flattered them again, and in the space of ten minutes had the Creeks waving their tomahawks in air and yelling till even Tecumseh's voice was drowned in the uproar. Orcutt saw that Pushmataha had arisen, and was haranguing his own tribe, but little hope could lie in the Choctaws' friendship. Unless a miracle occurred, and

Orcutt knew only too well how haltingly he would speak in the Indian tongue, the Choctaws must follow the Creeks.

Tecumseh, however, made the mistake of a clever orator. Had he ignored the white men, the two must have been swamped under a red flood of Creeks, hungry for the war-path. Instead, however, Tecumseh deemed a killing of whites must enhance the war spirit. So, in the midst of his fiery harangue, he mentioned how Forest, the agent, had broken the tacit law of the council.

Instantly Orcutt was on his feet, his hand raised to command attention. Any other man in Mississippi Territory would have failed to win the ear of the frenzied Indians at that moment, but both Creeks and Choctaws knew Sam Thlucco. Little by little the noise subsided, curiosity gaining the upper hand. In less than five minutes Orcutt began.

"Members of the Council," he said, "the honored chieftain of the Shawnees is right. He has told of unwitting insult offered to a guest of honor. For atonement white blood must be spilled. Very well. But whose? Surely not blood in the white settlements. The men who through ignorance did the deed are here. Now comes the atonement!"

He turned abruptly to Forest, who had watched him with staring eyes.

"Get up!" Orcutt commanded. "This is for the women and children. Shoot to kill!"

And the amazed agent found himself dragged to the hillock above the fires, which was clear of Indians.

Orcutt removed the two derringers from Forest's belt. Both were loaded.

"Ten paces. Shoot to kill!" he advised Forest again, curtly.

Then turning, he called down mockingly to Tecumseh:

"The Shawnee chieftain is anxious to see white blood spilled. Will he give his war-whoop as signal for the duel?"

The two men paced off their distance as Tecumseh looked on, amazed. The Shawnee was no quitter in any situation, however. When he saw these two strange white men all set, he loosed the horrific scalp cry that white men had come to dread.

Instantly Forest and Orcutt whirled about. More than his hatred of the agent now in Orcutt's mind was the knowledge that Forest was lost completely in the

council. Orcutt fired carefully at the agent's left breast.

The two shots sounded in unison, Both men staggered, but Forest sagged to his knees. Suddenly, as his eyes rolled about the assemblage below, he pitched forward like a rag doll deprived of its support. Orcutt stiffened, caught control of himself in spite of a shattered left shoulder, and retraced his steps to the center of the ring.

"There is blood to wipe out unwitting insult!" he announced. "The great Tecumseh can not say that white men do not pay their debts!"

Then he talked, as rapidly and convincingly as he could, of the great benefits brought by white men to the country, of the undying friendship of red and white in the South, and of the year of prosperity which had passed. Some of the Choctaws seemed inclined to give him ear, but Orcutt saw the impatient head-shaking among the Creeks. Tecumseh, too, gave evidence of anger and impatience. He had not counted upon this. All the while Orcutt kept an eye upon Red Eagle for the expected sign.

He was warming to his subject, when suddenly the sign came. Red Eagle closed his fist!

Quick as thought Orcutt sprang forward, throwing himself toward the ground between Pushmataha and Red Eagle. He caught the glint, out of the corner of his eye, of a shell tomahawk tumbling through the air. Quick as thought, he thrust up a hand and caught it. Then he leaped to his feet. Ten yards behind him, the firebrand Seekaboo was poised forward, drawn from his balance by the throw.

With a quick flirt of his arm Orcutt returned the missile. Its keen shell edge cleft Seekaboo's forehead in the center. Without

a sound the Shawnee dropped to the ground. From the Choctaws came a murmur of approbation.

Orcutt was up again, before Tecumseh could speak.

"The white men, too, have their rights!" he cried. "Who follows me from the fires?"

It was a bold stroke, but Orcutt knew he had to act then or never. Without a backward glance he strode away, unmindful of the turmoil which arose.

Fifty yards further on Pushmataha caught at his elbow.

"You are a brave man!" gushed the fat old chief. "The Choctaws do not wish to war on the whites. See!"

He waved his arm at the half-reluctant red men who followed. Orcutt saw, however, that no Creeks were with them.

"The accursed Creeks cast their lot with the Shawnees," went on Pushmataha, understanding Orcutt's glance. "The braves of General Pushmataha will make them hunt their holes!"

And, though the old reprobate doubtless believed little of his boasting, time, and the concerted efforts of the whites proved his prophecy true.

At the time, though, Samuel Orcutt wasted no thought upon the distant future. As soon as his shoulder wound was bound, he led the friendly red men up the trail toward Sinquefield. There, a few hours later, the detachment united with a wagon-train of settlers in a spirited defense against the Creeks.

Once, over his gun, Orcutt saw the calm, implacable face of Red Eagle, his former friend. Turning deliberately, he pumped a ball through the body of a brave who was sneaking for the shelter of a grove of scrub oak. When he looked again, Red Eagle had disappeared.





Author of "The Green Devil," "Hunger Mad," etc.



SOMETHING had happened very suddenly deep, deep down in the mysterious abyss of the wonderful, clear azure sea. You could see down—could see the exquisite, "hanging gardens" of the sea, green weed of a hundred tones and half-tones; could see the dire baracuda, as though they were monster English pike, packed close in a poised, motionless shoal, a host of staring black eyes; could see the forest-like fringe of kelp, waving under the waves and alive with parrot-fish, each as brilliant as any macaw; could see the jelly-fish of weird shape and pale, ghostly color, some with streamers yards long; could behold the golden bolt that was a yellow-fin albacore fish—a glorified mackerel—four feet long; and the silver flash where the white bass turned full in the light to engulf a strayed anchovy.

Then you could see more, much more, too much more.

It was as if, far, far down, where all faded out into blue and deeper blue haze, gigantic bubbles, nebulous and uncertain, mere shadows of the depths, had moved, and—ah!—and were coming up, were taking shapes, were changing rapidly; first shadows then bubbles of enormous size, then stupendous pearls, black pearls, then forms, then—fish! Nay, not fish merely—that were too slight a term for them that came—**BUT FISH.**

Impossible to say what they were, except that by any standard they were giants; but

not impossible to say what they did! The pure blue of the sea was streaked with that flaming crimson that can spell only one word. They fought, and here, in a word, in this warm place, in sight of the Southern Cross low down to the south, in sight of the fairy palms, just off the growing atoll of the key that was a glaring garden of coral, was a battle of the overlords of the seas.

Up they came—shooting up, and with such speed that a southern sea-lion, scandalized but inquisitive, had bare time to hurl flying out of their way with those great flippers of his—up, the fifty-foot mountain of flesh, all gleaming, glistening, a hump-back whale, the streaking, waving, weaving lesser leviathans, brown-gray and indeterminate gray and ghostly, skirmishing on, under, and variously about the first.

Then, as they broke the surface, foam, spray, and tortured water lashed, as an egg is whipped, into a blinding smother.

The greater monster, the whale—the only one of the fighters not a fish—heaved bodily aloft, stood for a moment on end, a mighty column of pure marble as seen from miles away, and fell again with a crash like the crash of a landslide.

Instantly two of the lesser terrors, sharks marked and stamped indelibly—known at a glance, with the wicked, evil, sinuous, vermin cut and rig of all the sharks, but sharks fifteen feet long—sprang bodily aloft, too. They sprang, and, falling back upon

the whale, struck it with their tails, that resembled nothing so much as gigantic razors, and, with a whack that could be heard for miles, and a force that would have cut a man in two—yes, like a cracked egg, smash! For those tails were sharp natural razors, strong and horny.

A spurt of raw crimson followed, and the sharks—thresher sharks they were, and very evil—fell back into the tortured waters with a crash as of forty broken plate-glass windows, only barely avoiding—as if by black magic—the flying flukes of the great whale's tail, that whirled like a battle-ship's broken piston-rod.

For a moment all was smothered, maddened chaos. Then the sharks showed fifty yards away, agile, alert, and skirmishing, circling like wolves.

The whale, knowing his strong card, which was ability to withstand cold and pressure of the uttermost depths more than could be withstood by any fish almost, and feeling his gashed back keenly, promptly "sounded," that is, nose-dived head first and at speed. Under the water, it seemed, the sharks could not slash him about with the wonderful, long, razor-like upper lobe of their tails in so fearful a fashion as they could when leaping upon him on the surface; and this was another reason for going down.

Then, like an evil dream, and as if the scent of combat had called it, which perhaps it had, there merged upward, out of the bottomless blue toward the whale, a great, long, sinister, misty shadow, growing plainer and clearer every moment, till it was revealed by its wriggling, jerking tail, by its eel-like flexibility, by its hateful papy eye, and by its receding chin, as if, not a shark, then the next worst thing to one. But, above all, it was remarkable for the long, flat bone, studded with villainous ivory teeth on either side from end to end, projecting straight outward from his nose—an abominable weapon not made for any innocent purpose, on the face of it.

This, too, would have been a monster if the whale had not been by, for he was sixteen feet long. And, if he had been a little flatter, he might have been a skate. And if a little narrower, he might have been a shark. As it was, it was hard to say what he was, except that he was sort of half-way between the two, and a devilish proposition in the bargain. Men knew him as the saw-

fish—not the swordfish—and the undersea folk knew him as an affliction without a soul, a calamity abroad upon the face of the waters.

The whale's little eyes—one of his little eyes—spotted this new member of the unholy alliance against him, and tried to dodge, but, though his agility in the water was amazing, he had some length of him to dodge with.

In a flash—not as mere ordinary fish shoot about, but with the hateful, wriggling, jerking, side-to-side motion of all the sharks—the sawfish was beneath him before he could dive clear. The whale tried to turn and abolish him with his steam-hammer-like tail, but the sawfish evidently knew that tail, and hugged the ponderous belly.

Then, rising literally as a prone man would rise and wield a two-handed sword, and with a power and force too awful to write about, he hacked and slashed, and wrenched and tore with his unspeakable weapon upward at the whale's underside.

The tremendous animal shot bodily upward in the blue sea, as if he had been lifted by an exploding volcano, and the sawfish was hurled to one side by the current the latter's departure had set up like the blast from a marine geyser. But his unforgettable, expressionless, paper-like eyes saw the blaze and flash as the whale broke through the white-gold, immense, inverted shield which represented the surface, and he apparently knew that the threshers, or fox sharks as they are called, would deal with him there effectually.

In a minute or so he was certain of it. Down came the whale again like a torpedoed ship, and the sawfish promptly got to work as before. And the devilish maneuver was repeated, sawfish helping thresher, each in his own particular sphere, mercilessly, brutally, soullessly, till the great whale lay out along the surface like unto a scuppered ship, and every shark which wasn't too busy eating somebody or avoiding being eaten, evolved itself ghost-like from nowhere—from a mile or two really—and joined in the feast.

But there is no need to linger here. Sharks are not educated to Hotel Waldorf manners anyway. There must have been a couple of dozen of them there—hammerhead, bonito, thresher, ground, and sawfish—a regular family party, and only sharks admitted.

They varied in length from five to sixteen

feet, all boneless, heartless, nerveless, pitiless, all with the receding jaw, the expressionless eye, and the wriggling, long-lobed tail, all rending, tearing, struggling, like wolves again, or—but forgive the simile, gentlemen in red—a pack of hounds, and no less in earnest over the “worry.”

And well they might be, for the matter of that; for it is not every day, nor every week, nor month, that such a harvest comes in the way of these hyenas of the sea. Indeed, only two combinations—and probably no *single* living thing—can accomplish it: (1) the dread killer or orca in a pack; and (2) the sawfish and the thresher shark for once in unison. Be that as it may, the feat was done, and, being done, gave “poor relief” to many, for there was a great deal of whale to that carcass.



ONLY an hour later, twenty dogfish—who were the models from which Nature built the full-sized shark—running the trail up-wind at full speed a couple of miles away, all but ran into, and respectfully pulled aside for, the sawfish, jerking and leaving his way along with the unmistakable eel-like shark gait, inshore. He had had enough, more than enough, and was fed up in two senses, being as full as he could hold, for one thing, and a twelve-foot hammerhead shark having taken a chop out of his side in mistake for the whale, for another.

The sawfish thought that they were going to follow him, under the mistaken impression that *he* was the corpse whose blood their miraculous noses could scent from afar—and to be wounded in the sea is to bring all hell about your ears, as a rule—till he pointed out to them with his saw, and the argument could not very well be ignored, that they would do no such thing.

The sawfish was as a matter of fact seeking a place where he could lie with rather more safety, or to be exact a trifle less risk than the open sea affords, and sleep off his Lord Mayor's banquet.

For that reason he went inshore, where the rocks and the great waving kelp and weed forests were; and as the bottom came up out of the fathomless blue to meet him, all alternated with sheets of dazzling sand, white as snow, meadows of gay-tinted weed, and acres of green, red, and pink algae-covered stones, each stone a study in mosaic, each boulder the buttress for a brilliant sea

anemone, he settled him down between two rocks—ousting five much scandalized crayfish therefrom—and shaded, as it were under a tree, by the beautiful chalice-like spread of a coral bunch, slept the long drowse of overrepletion.

Night slid overhead, flinging her dusky wing-shadows upon all things, and the incomparable amethyst waters became blue-black, and each fish, each shellfish, each masterpiece of delicate, lace-like jelly-fish, each worm even, became a phosphorescent firework display all on its own, and each grove of weed and rock hollow an enchanted forest, a fairy grotto of streaming or starry lights. Weird and strange dark shapes, cloaked horrors of the deep, swam and dived, and crawled and creared abroad.

In the position where he was, the sawfish's dull, nondescript, gray-brown uniform conjured him into a part of the rocks he was squeezed into even by daylight—the blue-and gold wonder daylight of the underworld of that sea. This may be one reason why an octopus chose to walk over him on its doubled arms in the night.

It was horribly cold, that abomination, but it might have been red-hot by the way the sawfish slashed after it, like a Chinese executioner with his two-handed sword. And it may have been one reason, too, why a very father of all the crayfish walked—not over him. It died before it had gone halfway, cut down in mid-spring, shooting backward and prawn-like, in horror at its own mistake.

Except for these two undoubted proofs that he still lived, the sawfish made no sign of visibly being anything but a rock or a corpse, till about midday next morn, near which time strange things happened, thus:

Up to then—though at the first glimpse of dawn many of those that had restlessly prowled through the underworld during the dark hours mysteriously vanished into nowhere—merely the ordinary ceaseless submarine traffic had passed above and about the great fish as he lay.

You can picture them; the pike-like barracuda stalking felinely for his breakfast; the red crab, late home and in a hurry; the tacking, veering shoal of silvered sardines, like Summer lightning; the magic parrotfish ablaze with colors; the big shell of a conch moving house, and really plowing its own furrow; the five-foot bonito shark, looking for prey, and the iridescent mackerel

avoiding being made into prey; the white bass, like a green-streaked bar of silver, and the yellow-tail fish, like a silver-streaked bar of gold; the sea porcupine, blown up like a football, that wouldn't sink, and fled upward, cork-fashion; and the dying anchovy that couldn't float, and sank downward stone-wise.

Down there, you must understand, it was very still—still as it will be on the Last Day; and so silent that the heart of the Sahara would have been a Babylon compared to it. Very few of those cold-blooded inhabitants of that blue world had any voice, and if they had, perhaps they could not have been heard. And, for all its beauty, it was not a sweet place; one felt that death was too near, and that nobody had any soul, and that all pity was, as the scene appeared to be, petrified.

Then, without warning, entered suddenly, with wild commotion to all, a perfectly diabolical people.

All the sawfish saw of them at first—he were awake—was a sudden darkening of one side of the sea, as a Summer landscape darkens under a cloud. But this was much worse than any cloud. It was *ink*, real ink of a kind, and filling the air, or, rather, the water, and rushing forward.

In a dozen moments the whole of the sea became a chaos of swirling film, blue-black, eddied and rocked, and torn by currents of water forced in all directions; and on the tail of the currents, as if they were making them, which they were, pumping them out, dimly seen, but seen quite enough, shot and jerked, convulsed and wriggled, as ghostly a company of ghostly, phantom devil shapes as ever spread terror upon a Summer day. It was, as the Jocks would say, "An awfu' sight, mon, th' morn."

Men in the most vehement grips of D.T.'s may picture such things as the cold, flabby sawfish lay and imperturbably beheld in the moments that followed. And yet this was only a shoal of squids, cuttlefish, from six to sixteen feet long, saucer-eyed, chameleon-colored, arrow-tailed, serpent-tentacled, and unspeakable, fleeing by means of their siphons which shot them along backward in jerks, throwing out streams of ink camouflage to worry the waters as they went—fleeing in terror, which they looked much more like imparting than feeling, before—before what?

That was the rub. That was what was

chiefly concerning the dull, chill brain of the great sawfish at that moment. Fleeing before what? No minor horror, even his slow brain could be sure. Such fiendish inspirers of universal loathing are not generally thrown into the panic abandon of stampeded fowls for just any ordinary, trifling death. Wherefore, this that drove them must be the very devil incarnate.

Not, mind, that the big sawfish had any care much for the squids. He was not above hacking one into writhing gobbets himself at times for fun—for fun, mark you, or the sheer pleasure of inflicting torture that passes for fun in that heartless underworld of the sea.

Not even the fifteen-foot squid that settled horribly, all asprawl and aspread, within an inch of his prostrate "saw," mouthing and mumbling dumbly, and "kneading bread" in a ghostly and insane manner with doubled tentacles, one over the other, rolling its huge goblin eyes villainously, changing color in waves of purple, brown, red, lilac, and white, like the play of a miniature thunderstorm, all over its beastly, sack-like body, anchored to the coral with two spare tentacles, and churning the water into a continuous maelstrom with its extraordinary large and arrow-shaped tail, or rather extremity—not even this nightmare, within spring, caused the sawfish to move a fin even.

Then came the cause.



WITH appalling suddenness, without the slightest hint of warning, and with a rush that practically terrorized every living thing into stampede, the darkened, churning, smeary gloom all about was filled with huge, dark shapes, shooting about literally like forked lightning, and in an instant — was let loose.

The scene that followed defies all hope of description. The objectionable cuttlefish—some of them quite big—terrified beyond expression and fleeing blindly straight ahead—or rather straight astern, as ahead is with them—and evidently quite cleverly driven, too, became crowded in, in seeking to squeeze out of the way and on, each one for itself; became, too, mixed up in an indescribable and most vile tangle, into which the leviathan newly arrived shapes, like great torpedoes, charged headlong, again and again, with the force of enormous battering-rams, and a speed and a fury that

showed that for the time being they had gone mad—berserk, blind, crazy, senseless to all but the lust of killing; unseeing, unheeding, maniacal—but maniacs weighing anything from three hundred to nine hundred or a thousand pounds; maniacs which cut the still depths with the speed of express trains; maniacs of nickel steel; satiated with food maybe, but insatiably drunk—blind drunk, blood drunk, and reeling in the smell of slaughter; living whirlwinds of death, masterless and loose upon the waters.

And the sawfish, jammed in among the rocks on the floor of the sea, contented and digesting, made no sign yet, even.

He knew that those hurtling, battering, insensate monsters were leaping tuna, the greatest edition of an overgrown mackerel that man ever saw or ever will see. He knew that their speed could scarce be matched, and certainly not mastered, by any living thing that swam—except, it may just be, by the thrice-dreaded killer or orca.

He knew that he had himself more than once tried to steal upon stragglers of their kind, and slay horribly and anyhow with his saw, as was his wont; and he knew that they tasted good. But—well, he knew that these same tremendous rushing bodies, these leaping tunas of the open seas, frequently travel in schools of many hundreds, and that at times they go mad with the lust of slaughter, so that they become blind to all things—pain, fear, or sudden death; and a few hundred crazy giants of that kind, utterly beyond themselves and seeing only red, were more than even he had any wish to take on. Beyond any doubt they were massacring the cuttlefish, driving the unspeakable armed devils before them to the shore, in what in those parts is called a "beat," and—if they wanted to, why, let them. By all means let the good work go forward. All the world hated the cuttlefish, the demi-ogres of the depths, and none would shed tears at their decease.

About then it was, as near as might be in the height of this madness, at the perihelion of the slaughter, when the luckless squids, whom nobody would befriend, had got themselves jammed into the most hopeless of hopeless tangles of all, in their hurry, like cattle, to get away, and the monstrous tunas were just in the zenith of their craziness, mowing swathes through the writhing inferno at each blind charge, that the thing happened which taught the sawfish how a

fellow can break—or make—himself at the inconsistent whim of the ever enigmatical feminine, and how he will do it, too, without thought of the reckoning.

It happened this way:

As has been said, the sawfish had, once or twice in his life, managed to stalk a leaping tuna, who is the swiftest of fish; but in spite of his size he had never dared tackle a whole school worked up to the insane frenzy of the "beat." That was reason, and masculine and consistent. Came now unreason, and the feminine inconsistent.

There was no warning, nothing—just she herself, all fourteen feet of her, lithe as a rapier, strong as a wire rope, deadly as any snake, and cruel as a fish—lash, lash, lashing with her diabolical weapon in the middle of the press at the leaping tuna. And she a female sawfish! Heaven knows where, up out of the steeply sloping bed of the sea, she had come from.

The sawfish nearly had a fit—an icy, stony, soulless one. The crisis had come upon him so suddenly. But so had love. Directly he clapped his beastly, expressionless eyes upon her, and rolled over, he fell in love; and, being in love, he acted.

There was no knowing what the leaping tuna would do—no precedent for such a case. They might flee like panic-stricken herring, or tackle and rend her like crazed wolves; or in their sheer, hurtling, blind, lightning-like impetuosity— Ah!

Bash!

The thing had happened. The third possibility had occurred before any one could wink.

A tuna of several hundred pounds' weight charging wildly at the squids, blind to the world, and with scarce an inch to spare in avoiding some of his equally headstrong fellows, had failed, in the fraction of a second allowed for the swerve, to see and avoid the female sawfish, and had struck her, nose first and at full speed—tuna speed, greater than motor-boat's speed, perhaps—full amidships.

The mere sheer impact was something terrible.

The great armed shark crumpled up limply, where she swam, and if she had been boned, like other fish, instead of merely gristle-skeletoned, the shock must have jarred every part of her body, and broken her utterly.

As it was, she went down, all lank and

limp as a dead eel, and the great big tuna sank with her, stunned or brained also.

The male sawfish rushed upward, jerking himself along at unexpected velocity with lashing tail and lashing saw, raging past all reason that he had lost, in the instant that he had found, his love.

One tuna he cut down in mid-career, struggling maniacally. Another, passing like a meteorite, he spun clean round in midrush by the simple force of one sidewise saw stroke; and one, two, three tuna, charging straight ahead out of the inky gloom with a twenty-foot squid ahead of them, had no time to see, and less to avoid, that lashing, slashing shark bulk.

He felt their teeth driven right into himself as they arrived open-mouthed, unable—or were they able?—to stop themselves, and his eyes, beastly enough at any time, turned horribly clean inward at the impact. He felt the squid flying helplessly and wire-like all about him, and—he felt no more. He sank like a log—stunned.

When next he came to his senses it was but to die. He was aware dimly of a boiling vortex about him, and the vortex was of ravenous, ravening, struggling, starving sharks and dogfish, tearing, like a pack of wolves smitten all together with hydrophobia, or something. At what? Dimly his deadened, sodden, slow brain realized the pain, and the question was answered. They were tearing at *him!*

Insanely, stupendously, awfully he rose up in his last leviathan death flurry, and smote at them, hip and thigh, right and left, leaped into the swishing pack of insensate ghouls; and one fell, two floated down, a third sank struggling on its side, broken utterly.

Then he drifted over backward—dead. And—and the third ghoul he had struck down, the one lying on its side struggling, was the *female sawfish*, which had only been stunned by collision with the tuna, and which was, or seemed to be, one of the delirious, devilish mob attacking his helpless body. Heigh-ho!

WHITE BUFFALO

by Frank H. Huston

IN THE wide range of Indian mythology, as concerns the plains tribes, the white buffalo is probably more often encountered than any other animal. Medicine-men, dreamers, and the ubiquitous camp story-teller alike, have based their myths and tales upon what, though very rare, yet actually did exist.

It was in all else like any other buffalo, its coat of a whitish brown. The last one seen, of which any authentic information is had, was in the vicinity of Fort Keough, Montana, about 1879, or 1880.

Credited with the faculty of transforming itself into some other shape, a white hawk, a gray fox, or, more commonly and of greater popularity, into the form of a beautiful woman, possessed of supernatural powers, with a propensity to confer benefits and good fortune upon those fortunate enough to be favored with its visit.

Held as an object of veneration, as a sacred and "great medicine," a benefactor to the tribes, it was immune to the fate that

befell all other animals. An authentic account of its killing by an Indian can not be found, although an occasional iconoclastic white man would have a hide in his possession.

One of the best and most popular stories in relation to its first appearance, and its miraculous powers, was related to the writer at his camp near Cheyenne, Wyoming, at the time of the "big pow-wow" in 1881 or 1882, by an old friend and comrade, Watan Gaa—The Black Coyote—an Arapaho, and is here given in practically his own words.

It was in the "long ago," Ta Sunka, many, many years before the Sioux had ponies, many generations before the whites crossed the salt waters, the old men called two young men, made them "wolves," or scouts, and sent them from the camp to search for buffalo.

They rambled around and one day, in their wanderings, espied a beautiful young maiden, more fair to look upon than any

of the Sioux girls. One of these young men was wise and good, his heart was brave and strong; the other was foolish.

The latter said:

"Here is a beautiful young girl on the prairie alone. Let us overpower her and enjoy her."

The young man of sense objected, saying: "No. That would be wrong. This is a holy or medicine-woman."

They were as yet some little distance from her, she having attracted their attention by singing; so after making signs to her she approached and knowing the conversation that had passed between the young men, said—

"I am alone and in your power."

In spite of the protests of his companion, the foolish young man, crazed by his passion, seized and forced her to the ground, when a great mist, or fog, suddenly arose, enveloped them, spreading over the prairie, the air being filled with terrible and hissing sounds.

As suddenly as it came, the fog lifted, and seemed to take with it numberless rattlesnakes, disclosing to the wise young man, the woman standing near him and, between her and himself, the ghastly bones of his comrade whose flesh had been entirely consumed by the rattlesnakes.

The woman then told him:

"You are wise, brave, and good. I have taken pity on you and your people. This young man was wicked; so he has suffered the fruit of his own misdeeds. Go and tell your people that I know they are poor; but that I will take pity on them."

The young man returned to the Sioux, and told what he had seen and heard, whereupon a large lodge was pitched in the center of the camp, and the beautiful young woman having followed him, she was met a short distance away, by the medicine-men and carried in on a buffalo robe.

It was noticed that when she was first seen, and while being carried on the blanket, she held a pipe high in the air, with the bowl pointed toward the sun. Meanwhile a large fire was built in the teepee. Circle after circle of men, women and children formed outside, and a great circle of fires was also made around the lodge, every one

gazing at the beautiful woman who presently said to them:

"I have taken pity on you. I have brought you four things that will be good for you, tobacco, red robe, white shield, and war bonnet of eagles feathers." Handing them to the medicine-men, and turning to the chief, she said, placing the pipe in his hands—

"I have also brought you this sacred pipe, which will tell you by its increased weight, when buffalo are near and plenty."

She then gave the people much good advice; to light the pipe, point its stem toward the earth, their grandmother, that it hold them good and strong; to the four corners, that no harsh winds, physical, or of trouble or distress, blow against them; and to the sun, their grandfather, that they may have light to see their way clearly, so as to avoid danger and death. Concluding, she mysteriously vanished from sight.

This beautiful woman was a white buffalo, who took that shape to give them the pipe that even today, when the whites have almost destroyed the buffalo, has yet great power to help us find them.

The first use the Sioux made of it was to carry it in a large circle. Nothing could pass the magic line made by its passage. Seven of the Crow tribe, happening to be within the circle, were killed with the "rest of the game." An unconcious irony, appreciated only by those who know the contempt of the Sioux for the Crows and Blackfeet. An ear from one of these Crows was cut off and glued to the stem of the pipe, where it is today.

It is the Great Medicine pipe of the Sioux, and has been handed down for generations from father to son, and now Elk Head, of the Sans Arcs, at Standing Rock Agency, is the medicine chief and keeper of it. No white man, and but few Indians are allowed to see it, for it is kept carefully wrapped up and guarded.

When game was scarce, we would go to the Tetonwan, and together we would dance the ceremony of the White Buffalo, as I have told it to you, and we would soon have plenty.

This, Ta Sunka, my brother, is all I know of it. I have spoken.

They always run true to form

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Ferdinand Berthoud



Author of "The Man Who Had Only One Eye," "Slamashla Mani," etc.

THE most miserable man on the platform in the tree changed his position and wearily made to stretch himself.

"Darned cold," he said shuddering. "To blazes with this playing dicky-bird all night for the sake of shooting a lion which ain't willing."

The older, Jimmie, held up a restraining hand.

"Keep still, Bertie. Don't make such a beastly noise."

"I'm not making a noise, Jimmie."

"Yes, you are. A lion could hear you talking a mile away."

"T — with it!"

The most miserable man subsided gracefully with his back to the trunk of the tree and for a while, but for the sounds of the still African night, all was serene. A hyena far away in the hills laughed his unholy laugh and a band of wandering jackals answered in shrill chorus. At intervals an owl hooted in a near-by tree—hooted a round, eery, hollow call. And the frogs at the water-hole in the dry river-bed croaked and piped in monotonous, dull duet.

A faint, icy breeze wandered along and fluttered the silvery leaves. The leaves in the clear moonlight gleamed and glinted like fairy jewels. And the depths of the trees threw shadows black as the dark

inside of sin. The breezes grew stronger and the branches of the tree grated against the platform—grated and rasped and groaned. The uncomfortable Bertie rose as high as the branches above him would allow, and started wearily to stretch once more.

"T — with it!" he went on just where he'd left off. "I'm going to get down and get a drink."

"S-s-s-sh!" A steady hand touched his arm. "S-s-s-sh!"

"To blazes with shishing! D'you think I'm going to freeze to death for the sake of scaring some toothless old lion? I'm going over for a drink."

Away in the bush a full mile off the faint light from the single calico "limbo"-covered window of the mud-and-thatch trading store glimmered fitfully. And from the store ever and always wandered the jumpy strains of "Selections from Carmen" played again and again and still again on an old-fashioned musical-box.

"I'm going over for a drink," Bertie repeated with firm finality as he made to get down.

"Nice chance we'll get of ever killing this brute!" Jimmie asserted disgustedly. "Last night you got down about sixty times and went over for a drink. And that blasted Italian keeps that wretched musical-box going all the time, too. The lion isn't likely

to come back another night, you know, Bertie."

"It's all right, Jimmie," Bertie assured him with plainly forced seriousness. "I'll be back in less than half an hour, and nothing'll happen before then."

"Nothing'll happen? You may as well not come back at all, Bertie. You'll only scare the beast away. I'm just about fed up with having lions come into my kraal and kill my donkeys and lug 'em off. And you're not helping a bit to stop it."

The impossible Bertie reached solid earth and in the black shadows felt gingerly with a foot to make sure of it.

"S'long, Jimmie. Don't go and shoot me by mistake as I come back."

The eyes of Jimmie peered into the blackness as he lay with his head over the edge of the platform.

"All right, Bertie," he said earnestly. "But be very careful to keep a good look-out behind you as you go along."

For a moment Bertie hesitated and stared up innocently.

"What for, Jimmie?"

"So that lion won't sneak up on you and get you by the slack of the breeches."

An occasional firefly flitted along and dodged in and out like a tiny lamp among the heavy shadows. Mosquitoes hummed and buzzed and threatened. Cussing silently the impatient Jimmie slapped at them viciously. Far, far away the unholy hyena sent his demon's laugh again and in the intervals the jumpy notes of those "Carmen" selections coming from the musical-box meandered tinklingly through the bush and trees and seemed to mock the croaking, piping frogs.

It was cold, Jimmie admitted to himself as he passed a hand over his almost freezing shirt—mightily, unpleasantly cold. For a moment he almost wished he'd gone over to the store with Bertie. Then he braced himself, and, with teeth set firm, determined to see it through.

Two nights now he and Bertie had waited perched up in that blessed tree—this was the third. And each night the lion had come and eaten a bit more donkey, and they'd never seen it. It must be a very old lion, he thought, or a sick or wounded lion or it would have made a fresh kill and not returned to the same old carcass time and time again.

All that trouble, and if that fool, Bertie,

hadn't been so sound asleep he could have shot the thing the very night it killed the donkey. There he'd slept like a log out under the veranda and the lion had pulled the donkey over the kraal fence right by him and dragged it past him in the clear moonlight not fifty feet away.

Slept like a dead man, Bertie had.

For a moment the breeze died down and the still air rose from the earth and carried straight up. Jimmie's nose twitched.

"Phew!" he whistled almost silently. "Getting high! No lion'll ever come to that rotting thing after tonight."

Slowly a half-hour passed. Gently the breeze rose again and Jimmie breathed relief. Breathed relief, yet listened intently—very, very intently. Something beside wind, he felt, was stirring through the bush.

Something on padded, creeping feet—something sniffing with little short snorts—little grunts—was coming closer through the black shadows—slowly, slowly, suspiciously, warily closer.

Twenty yards away a twig snapped. Silently, carefully, Jimmie drew himself to the edge of the platform and strained his eyes to pierce the blackness. Nothing but the shimmering, dancing leaves appeared to move.

Again a twig snapped sharply in the shadows. Quietly Jimmie changed his position. Almost painfully he tried to force his eyes to penetrate the deep gloom. Close beside him something appeared to move. Something big and strong and stealthily. With a movement so steady as to be almost unnoticeable Jimmie reached for his rifle. Another second and the thing would have to cross an open moonlit space.

Excitedly, yet with forced calm, Jimmie waited—waited it seemed a thousand years. The black shadows moved. A blacker mass moved through them. Jimmie's rifle came up. His finger felt for the trigger.

Crash! A hundred yards away something heavy sprawled in the bush.

"— the infernal rotten root!" came loudly on the clear night air. "Curse the lousy thing! It nearly made me bust 'em."

A minute later a perfectly happy young man arrived beneath the platform and looked up with a satisfied grin.

"Tor—ee—a—dor! Tor—ee—a—dor!" he bawled lustily at the top of an unusually liquid voice.

"You're a great little help, aren't you?" Jimmie said disgustedly as he guided his pal up the last few feet to the platform. "Waste a couple of nights in this uncomfortable roost and then the very second the beast comes along and I get a chance of a shot you must needs shout your head off."

"How could I see the bloomin' roost, Jimmie? D'ye think I tumbled down for fun?"

"No, you crazy fool. You tumbled down for whisky. And now our lion's about ten miles away again and going at about a mile a second."

"Aw, shut up, Jimmie. He'll come back. If he'd come back twice, he'll come again."

Contentedly Bertie sat himself down with his back to the tree. A hand went to a bulging hip-pocket and in the darkness he held something out.

"Here, take a pull at this, Jimmie. Warm up a bit and get more cheerful."

Jimmie's hand, in the shadows, felt anxiously, eagerly round.

"Did you bring the bottle over, Bertie? That's better. Save you walking back and forth to the store till you wear a path."

Mechanically Bertie felt the weight of the bottle lifted and he let go of it.

"Did I bring a bottle, Jimmie? A bottle?" he said scornfully. "I brought two."



THE silvery leaves glinted and gleamed in the moonlight. The gentle, fitful breeze danced through them and sent little silvery arrows flirting and playing about. Arrows like tiny flashes of white electric light. Quite happily Jimmie sat down beside Bertie and pushed him over a bit. His back, too, was comfortably fixed against the tree.

"Cold, eh, Bertie?"

"Darned cold, Jimmie."

Slowly at intervals the bottle passed from hand to hand. Temporarily it was warmer. Fair to warmer.

"Cold, eh, Jimmie?"

"Darned cold, Bertie."

More frequently at intervals the bottle journeyed to and fro. For the time being it was somewhat humid. Almost passable.

Two hours passed and the sitting men were stiffening. But for the breeze and the night cries far away all was still—still and quiet as nature is at rest.

The second bottle was tapped—tapped,

recorked, turned upside down and shaken. Shaken professionally to make the fusel-oil play fair.

"Lonely, ain't it, Bertie?"

"Darned lonely, Jimmie."

The bottle went from one to the other. Again the world was lively and everything was bright. Moonlight was sunlight, and sunlight filled the air.

Slowly two more hours rolled away.

"Lonely, ain't it, Jimmie?"

"Darned lonely, Bertie."

The bottle passed from mouth to mouth.

Bertie lay flat on his back. His eyes were closed and he was busily watching a pink crocodile chasing a blue tortoise with yellow horns up a thousand-foot barber's-pole. The tortoise stopped to scratch an ear with his hind foot and just at that very moment a horse with purple zebra stripes slid from the top of the pole clean on to him.

And Bertie couldn't understand it.

A mosquito hovered over Bertie's nose and loudly yelled for company. Company came in companies and sang "God Save the Queen." And Bertie was distinctly puzzled. Another mosquito with nine-foot legs and six thousand corkscrews soldered to its head descended on Bertie's forehead and commenced excavating with a steam-shovel.

Annoyedly Bertie started to lift a hand to flick it away. The hand rose lazily a few inches, then flopped back helplessly on to the boards of the platform.

And Bertie rolled over on to his face.

Somewhere above, the sky opened of a sudden and six millions of mosquitoes came down in a bucket. Seven or eight million of them settled on Bertie's right ear and began hem-stitching.

Dreamily Bertie moved a hand to slap them. The hand rose just clear of the floor, then fell listlessly down again.

And Bertie rolled over on to his back.

Ten thousand mosquitoes camped on Bertie's chin and began to drill for oil. In sheer disgust Bertie's hand started up toward them. The muscles refused and the hand bumped limply back. With a rush horse and tortoise climbed to the top of the barber's pole, then slipped and landed in the lap of a blue monkey.

And Bertie rolled over on to his face and forgot about it.

The aged lioness, tearing at the tough carcass with her gnarled, decayed teeth, came

to a gristly place. Anxiously, hungrily, she began searching for a more tender spot. None could be found. With nose and teeth working together she examined the body from end to end. Everything worth eating on that side appeared to be gone.

A loud, snorting breath came from the platform above. With one eye cocked, the ancient beast looked above her, then busily went on with her fierce hunt. The moon passed away over her and gradually made toward the horizon. Slowly by degrees the shadows moved. In a while both lioness and donkey were in the clear glare of the open moonlight.

Appraisingly the eyes of the lioness went once more to the platform in the tree. The eyes came down and gaged the deep shadows beneath it.

Gaged the black shadows cast by the spreading limbs.

With the remnant of a once great strength she turned the donkey over.

Then gripped it and dragged it out of sight.

The blue-nosed monkey was catching mosquitoes in a herring-net. The herring-net burst and six tons of red mosquitoes fell on to Bertie's neck.

Savagely Bertie raised a hand the height of a broken match-stick.

Flop! And the hand sagged down.

And Bertie rolled over on his back.

Of a sudden the tortoise got in a steeplechase with the blue-nosed monkey. Sixteen fences the tortoise took, then came to the water-jump. At the water-jump he floundered and splashed. Eleven bushels of mosquitoes rose from the foaming water and camped in Bertie's hair. Painfully Bertie's hand crept toward them to smite them. The spirit was willing but the hand was weak.

And Bertie rolled over.

Splouch! Bertie landed like a ton of bricks clean on the back of the greedily chewing lioness.

Like a startled cat the lioness half growled half spat at him. With a furious frantic swing she made one chance swipe at him. And missed. Next second she was tearing, crashing through the bush. Crashing as though ten thousand demons chased behind her. Gasping and panting in fear and outraged dignity.

Wearily Bertie wriggled his head and shoulders more comfortably on to the side

of the dead donkey. A tired hand started listlessly to demolish a busy mosquito. The tortoise came in a short head in front of the blue-nosed monkey.

And Bertie slept peacefully on.



WITH eyes half closed Bertie sat at a table. Before him was a nicely grilled split partridge with a platter of hot cookies. And on his right a cup of steaming black coffee.

Dizzily Bertie turned to "Nightmare," the Kaffir "boy," standing beside him.

"Nigh'mare, go'n tell the baas I wanna neat whisky 'bout sho long," and he held his hands a foot apart. "*Hamba cuchima*. Go quickly."

"*Lungali, M'Lungu*. All right."

A moment later a big neat whisky arrived, and with it Jimmie.

"What's the game, Bertie? You've had four already and you'll soon be back where you started."

With a trembling hand Bertie pointed to the coffee.

"Put it there?" he grinned feebly. "How you 'spec' fellow eat par'ridge if he doesn't get shtick in coffee?"

At once Jimmie poured away part of the coffee and filled up the cup with liquor.

"All right, Bertie. Kill yourself if you like. I'll get a chance then of seeing you sober for once."

For a second the incorrigible smiled wanly. The warm spirit chasing round inside him was instantly making itself felt.

"I sh'pose you think you're wunner, eh, Jimmie? You schlep' all night jus' shame's I."

"Yes, but I had the sense to stay up where I was."

With increasing vigor, but jumpily, Bertie attacked the partridge. For a while, but for the sound of eating, all was quiet.

"The lion was there right enough," Jimmie asserted presently. "Must have been to have moved the donkey. And it left deep spoor where it jumped off."

Bertie's eyes, opening wider, came round incredulously.

"Jumped off, Jimmie? I wunner what scared it."

"Don't know, Bertie. But the spoor's clear as day. I followed it a hundred yards or so in the sand. And the thing was running away as though terrified."

Satisfied Bertie turned to one side and

crossed his legs. The breakfast had pulled him round somewhat. A foot swung and he pondered deeply, a clever smile lighting up his ruddy face.

"If it's so clear let's follow it and hunt the beast, Jimmie," he suggested. "More sense than perching up in that darned tree and waiting for it."

In just as deep thought Jimmie shook his head.

"You follow it, Bertie—follow it alone. Do you good. Walk some of that whisky out of you."

"Go on, Jimmie, you take a hand, too," Bertie persisted. "Be a pal. Come 'long. We might have to follow the thing for miles. Might have to track it all day."

"Rubbish, Bertie. You're lazy," Jimmie teased. "You hunt the beast up. It'll be the first thing you've done worth while in all your two whole years in Africa. And think how proud your people'll be to hear they have a lion-hunter in the family."

In an instant Bertie's face clouded over. The swinging foot came to a halt, and the foot bumped down.

"Lion-hunter, Jimmie? Family? Africa?" he said disgustedly. "My family doesn't care if I'm in Africa or Iceland, so far as that goes. And what's more they don't know, either."

With shaky anger Bertie rose from the packing-case table and went into his hut. A moment later he reappeared with a rifle and made his way to the ramshackle bar.

"A good stiff 'un before I go, Jimmie," he said, with troubled seriousness. "And a little drop in the bottle for lunch."

"Going to have a shot at it after all, Bertie?" Jimmie laughed tauntingly.

"Dunno about a shot, Jimmie. Mightn't have the luck. But I'm not goin' let any flaming old lion make a fool of me more than three nights running and live to growl the story."

Grinning broadly Jimmie pushed the bottle over again.

"May as well give the other one a pal, Bertie."

Whimsically Bertie poured and held the glass high above him, then, with one eye cocked, looked smilingly through the liquid.

"Here's to the lion, Jimmie, and the bit of salt I'll put on his tail."

The glass came down and Bertie's face went suddenly deeply meditative—puckered and smiled and puckered.

"Funny, ain't it, Jimmie, my turning the tables?" he queried.

"What's funny? Turning what tables?"

"What's funny? Why I and the lion I'm going to bag."

Slowly Jimmie's head worked from side to side in puzzlement.

"Too deep for me, Bertie."

"Too deep, Jimmie? You're dull. Why, I'm going to be an original. I'm going to be the first and only."

"First and only what?"

"One to turn the tables, Jimmie. First and only one to turn the tables the way I'm going to do it. Did you ever before hear of a Black Sheep chasing a lion?"

Jimmie's forehead knotted—knotted tightly. Slowly one by one the knots went out. Admiringly Jimmie smiled.



BERTIE lay on his side and rested his head on an arm. The fire had long since died down, yet now it blazed cheerily again. And Bertie hadn't touched it.

With an intense effort at concentration Bertie tried to puzzle it all out. All day long he'd followed that spoor. The whole blooming, sizzling day. Not that the spoor had been unusually hard to follow. Not at all. Far from it. So far as he could count there'd been exactly six hundred and forty-seven separate sets of spoor, and by keeping approximately to the middle one he'd done pretty well—wonderfully well when he came to think of it—so well that he'd eventually lost it on a bed of flat rock in the hills. And incidentally lost himself along.

Yes, he remembered dizzily, when the moon rose he'd lighted a fire and gone to sleep by it. Gone to sleep and slept like a log. But that fire was dead long ago.

And the fire before him blazed merrily away!

His head pounded and for a while his eyes closed and he gave up thinking, determined to let things go however they were. It was all too much trouble and didn't amount to anything in any way in the long run.

Drowsily his eyes opened again and stared into the leaping blaze. Dreamily his eyes went over it and past it and to the moonlight on beyond.

And Bertie's blood froze solid.

On the far side the fire and just beyond

it was a pair of steady, glaring eyes. And the eyes stared fixedly into his.

For a second Bertie was dead. Then with a curious smile he seemed to come to himself. He'd been there before. Surely he had.

This was the lion rats. He'd had lion on the brain for the best part of a week, now he was seeing 'em.

The smile broadened. This was a new one, something unknown before and Bertie's very own. The lion rats! Who'd ever heard of 'em? And it was rather a nice sensation. Amusedly Bertie waved a hand gracefully back and forth before his face to drive the rats away. Once more he looked across the flickering blaze.

The eyes stared squarely at him!

With a sickening feeling Bertie laboriously rose to a sitting position. The eyes followed his every move.

And again he made the mystic passes.

And still those two lamps glared calmly at him.

Slowly, numbly, dumbly it entered Bertie's errant brain that it really wasn't rats. And he was disappointed.

The eyes moved and looked up. Quickly they came down and Bertie reached behind him for his rifle.

Something beside the eyes moved slightly and Bertie hesitated. The something moved again. Nervously the hand reaching for the rifle grappled for it.

The rifle wasn't there!

The staring eyes moved higher, whatever owned them was standing up.

And Bertie's heart stopped beating. Slowly his muzzy head went clear. Drops of cold, salty perspiration formed upon it. Formed and rippled down his clammy cheeks, and he was paralyzed.

The something by the eyes moved again and Bertie's gaze was fascinated by it. The something moved higher up and Bertie's gaze went higher and higher.

Far, far above in the air was a long gray beard, above the beard a face. And the face was that of an old white man.

And still the glaring eyes were fixed on Bertie. Slowly the eyes moved round the fire. Moved round toward him, came closer and closer.

With silent halting footsteps the lioness approached. Came nearer and nearer. Hypnotized, paralyzed, fascinated, frozen, Bertie sat helplessly waiting. His legs

were numb, his body was numb, his brain in hopeless terror. The lioness came to him and appraisingly smelled him over. Smelled him with little, appreciative, happy snorts. Face and chest and arms. Her nose came round to his back. And the donkey scent on his shoulders! She grunted.

With a startled, whimpering squeal Bertie was on his feet and kicking furiously. Memories of schoolboy days flashed into his tottering brain—flashed in tnaided.

"Call your darned dog off! Call your darned dog off!" he howled instinctively as he jumped and staggered backward—jumped and danced and wriggled. A tree got in the way and Bertie's back collided with it. The lioness was a yard away and still coming.

"Lie down, Cora. Lie down!" came calmly from the lips of the graybeard.

Cora's eyes turned peacefully to him. Meekly, lovingly, she obeyed.

A LEAN, sinewy Kafir stood in the entrance to the hut and called softly. The sinking moon squarely behind him threw his dense shadow clear across the floor.

"*M'Lungu. M'Lungu,*" the Kafir murmured anxiously.

With strained ear the Kafir listened intently, then came inside.

"*M'Lungu. M'Lungu,*" he said again and he stooped to shake a shoulder.

The graybeard stirred and rubbed his eyes. Once more the Kafir shook him.

"I have found them, *M'Lungu,*" he whispered earnestly. "Found them a long way off."

"Found them, *M'Poipe?* Where?"

Instantly the graybeard was up and wide-awake.

"Where?" he asked again—asked very seriously.

"In the hills near Radi Tladi's, *M'Lungu.* Six days away from here."

"Six days!" With a quick turn the graybeard was across the hut. "Six days, eh?"

"Wake up, Bertie. Hurry!" he went on. And he rocked the sleeping Bertie violently.

"Wake up. I need your help. Now!"

Lazily Bertie turned over and opened his eyes. The eyes, almost clear, looked up inquiringly. "What's the trouble, Frank? What's up?"

The graybeard pointed quickly to the Kafir.

"One of my boys has found them. Found them at last," he explained excitedly.

For a moment Bertie's brain strove to collect itself and he sat up wonderingly.

"Who? Found what?" he asked still sleepily.

"Tombs and his crowd, Bertie."

In a second Bertie's head was acting and he was on his feet.

"The fellows who lose 'em, Frank? The fellows who make a business of it?"

"Yes," the graybeard said, and his eyes seemed to look into the distance thousands of miles away. "The fellows who lose 'em, Bertie."

"——!" Bertie began eagerly. "And we'll get 'em, eh? Stop 'em this time?"

The graybeard smiled thoughtfully.

"I think so, Bertie. I think this will be about the last."

Slowly Bertie sagged back and sat on the side of his stretcher. Something unusual suddenly flashed into his mind. His face sank on to his hands and for a time he was in deep contemplation—deep, penetrating, inside meditation.

Ponderingly Bertie rose again and his eyes bored squarely into the eyes of the graybeard. His face was troubled.

"But suppose there are people who *want* to be lost?" he objected questioningly.

The two white men left the clearing and turned their horses into a Kaffir path. Behind them rode four natives and their leader, M'Poine. Trotting contentedly along was Cora.

"Men never want to get lost, Bertie," the graybeard said dreamily as they moved away. "They may appear to want to, but really they are forced."

"And when they're forced, they want to. Same thing."

"Not at all, Bertie. When they're forced, they have to. But what human man ever voluntarily shuns the world and hides out here? Hides in this wilderness of hills and plains and trees?"

"I don't know, Frank. What's your name beside Frank, anyway? I've known you now three days and yet you've never told me."

The graybeard's eyes twinkled and he looked at his companion amusedly.

"My name? Same as yours, Bertie. Just nothing. Frank Nothing."

For a second Bertie's eyes, too, twinkled, then he rode on in determined silence.

The sun shot up over the hills in the east and bounded into the sky. Quickly the heat became oppressive. An occasional harsh-voiced pheasant chased into the shade and lay there panting. Once in a while a startled hare rose and dashed frantically for safety. And ever and anon lizards and snakes with gaudy skins crawled and crept into holes and under friendly rocks—crawled and then turned to stare with wondering, unblinking eyes.

But for the rasping screech of the little green parakeets and the eternal hum and buzz of the myriads of insects the air was utterly dead. Briskly the horses in single file tripped with the curious African half-walk—half-broken trot along the winding Kaffir path.

The grass on either side stood high as their shoulders and the everlasting bush wandered away to the skyline in all the four directions.

The horses came to the brow of a hill. Away to the horizon was a sea of bush. Bush and scrub and trees. Trees and scrub and bush.

Miles and miles and miles of unbroken sameness. Miles and miles of country, each mile so like the last mile as to be its very twin.

The graybeard checked his horse and sat peering into the distance.

Away to the west on the very rim of the world was a tiny set of teeth—teeth like a faintly saw—teeth which were mighty hills.

Quietly the graybeard pointed.

"I found one over there, Bertie. Found him four years ago," he said half to himself.

"Crazy, Frank?"

"Crazy? Mad as a March hare, Bertie. I kept him for many months. Kept him till a glimmering of reason had flickered back. Then I shipped him home to his people."

For a second or so Bertie was glum.

"Bit of a bomb-shell, eh? Kind of a surprise-packet," he said smilingly at last.

"I'm open to bet it was, Bertie. A useless younger son as usual. And the Old Man in a hole—as usual. Insured him for a hundred thousand pound amongst a dozen different companies and then persuaded him to go on a hunting trip. Gave him over to Tombs and Africa. Expected they'd do it between them."

Bertie's smile was broadening.

"And the sea gave up its dead. Only it was old Africa gave up its living."

The graybeard was smiling, too.

"She did, Bertie. Old Africa loosened her hold, as I've made her do a score of times. And another Black Sheep had his lesson."

The smile turned to a laugh.

"The Black Sheep's father had one as well, Bertie. Had to cough up all that was left of the hundred thousand."

"Pleasant as pulling teeth, eh, Frank?"

"Just about. They had him in jail at first. Safe in the little stone jug. But they couldn't prove anything against him. The man-losing Tombs and Africa were much too full of mystery for any jury to come to any conclusion about them."

smile toward the dainty saw of hills in the distance. "That fellow was raving mad when we caught him. All but two of twenty-four were mad. Yet he and none of the other mad ones minded Cora in the least. She'd rub herself against them and try to purr like a cat, and they seemed just like animals together."

Hurriedly Bertie's right hand felt round to the back of his neck. Just as quickly the hand came back. With a stupid, childish grin his eyes went to the sleeves of his clean shirt.

For five days and nights the party hurried on. Days of sizzling heat and nights of almost arctic coldness. The sea of bush broke to an open, rolling, grassy plain. A plain of pure velvet. Velvet a full yard deep.



Slowly a trace of anger crept across Bertie's face.

"And no one has ever had evidence direct enough to convict Tombs and his crowd? He's still losing Black Sheep and undesirable to order?"

"Openly. Personally conducted hunting trips from which one man never returns."

"And you haven't once managed actually to stop him?"

"I've never seen him yet, Bertie."

The graybeard lapsed into silence and the horses again plodded on.

"Queer," the graybeard broke out presently, and he smiled a puzzled thoughtful

Hartebeeste, wildebeeste, koodoo, buffalo, buck of a score of kinds ambled away ahead or rushed aside to safety—rushed and then turned to stare inquisitively—buck in herds of hundreds, herds of thousands, herds almost uncountable.

Small knots of zebras, prancing along in the joy of life, wheeled and gyrated and gamboled. On the rare electric air their thin, whinnying squeals caroled and echoed for miles. And far, far away a pair of startled giraffe galloped a leisurely lope, their long necks swinging and waving like masts of a ship in a storm.

In deep meditation the eyes of the

graybeard sought those of Bertie—sought them almost with affection.

"I sometimes feel that you're right, Bertie," he said thoughtfully, pensively. "A man *can* wish to be lost—in a country like this. Myself for instance."

"And I."

"And you, Bertie. I knew you were here long ago—long before Cora and I happened to find you."

The busy Cora—busy with nose following a thousand conflicting spoor—heard her name mentioned and turned an interested eye. No one noticed her and she went merrily on.

"Knew it, Frank? How did you know it?"

"I knew it when first you came, Bertie. My Kaffirs went to the store and saw you. They've been with me years and they know a Black Sheep equally well as I do."

The old man stopped and for a moment laughed to himself quietly.

"All these years, Bertie," he went on. "And that store doesn't know I exist. Your friends there have never heard of me. Yet fifty miles away from them in these hills I've lived and watched this great land—and collected the stray ones—collected them since I first came out in 1886—just twenty years ago."

"A labor of love, eh, Frank?"

Silently the old man pondered, seemed to be dreaming it out.

"Not exactly love, Bertie," he said seriously, almost wearily. "At first 'twas a labor of love, though it may not be now."

"And what was to be the end, Frank?"

Like a flash the old man's face changed. His eyes gleamed queerly and the weariness faded away.

"The end, Bertie? The end that is coming now. Is coming within a week."

The horses had long since left all sign of track or path. Left it at least two days before. In the long grass the country was level and smooth and easy. But for an occasional dry slit with the line of scrubby trees along its banks the land was a vista of rolling green.

"Over there in the hills, *M'Lungu*," *M'Poine* said as he drew up alongside the graybeard. "It was there I saw their wagons."

A dainty fringe of hills, ever growing closer, now loomed above like natural ragged pyramids.

"In there, *M'Poine*? And that was back

almost two weeks ago? In that vast maze of hills those wagons may be anywhere."

"*Yehbo, M'Lungu*. They may be anywhere. But once we get their spoor all will be easy."

Thoughtfully the graybeard shook his head.

"Easy, *M'Poine*, to find the wagons, but different when it comes to finding the man. They may have lost their man long since and still be going on. Going on to make more sure he never finds himself or them."

"Then when we find them our hunt will only be beginning, *M'Lungu*. To find one man in this vast country is like finding any one animal."

"I know it, *M'Poine*, yet you know I have found them before."

The native pulled aside and the graybeard turned to Bertie.

"Seems funny, Bertie—doesn't it," he queried lost in meditation, "that any one should spend thousands and take all the trouble to send a man to the wilds of Africa, just to get rid of him?"

"More gentlemanly I suppose, Frank, than knocking him on the head or giving him a dose of poison back in London."

"More gentlemanly, Bertie, certainly. And more delightfully cruel. And it saves so much unpleasantness and so many nasty inquiries."

Whimsically Bertie smiled.

And the Black Sheep becomes a Lost Sheep and the Lost Sheep a Hero, eh?"

"Exactly. And the murdering father can speak of his dear brave son who lost his life hunting elephants and buffalo. Speak of him and draw tears of sympathy."

"While a rope ought to be drawing his neck," Bertie finished for him.

Again *M'Poine* drew in and pointed. Pointed clear into the belt of heavy bush and trees skirting the foothills.

"There are Kaffirs there, *M'Lungu*. Six or eight of them. And they are not wandering Kaffirs. They live round here."

Halting the white men sat and strained their eyes into the distance. Not a sign of life, nothing but the still, unbroken mass of trees.

"I don't see anything," the graybeard asserted.

"They are moving. Going across, *M'Lungu*," and the far-sighted native eyes followed them unerringly. "Seven of them. Only hunting assagais and no blankets,

M'Lungu. They are natives of the district."

Instantly the graybeard was alert.

"Take one man, M'Poine, and hurry to cut them off and hold them. If we all go together we may scare them. We will follow slowly."

With a gesture to the man next him the Kaffir moved off.

"Now we shall know who has passed, *M'Lungu*."



THE seven Kaffirs, clothed only in the monkey or leopard skin *mouchis* round their loins and their armlets and leglets, squatted on their haunches, in an open space round M'Poine. Their hunting assagais with their foot-long barbed points—barbed to twist into the skin of hapless hare or porcupine hiding in the rocks and pull it out—stood a full two yards above them.

"*Sauka bona, isindoda*," M'Poine greeted pleasantly.

In absolute silence the natives stared stolidly at him.

"*Sauka bona, isindoda*," M'Poine repeated ingratiatingly. "*Ou poumungapi?* Where'd you come from?"

Without a sign of understanding the Kaffirs sat stonily on.

For a moment the face of M'Poine took on an expression of bewilderment, then suddenly he broke to a comprehending smile. These couldn't be Matabele, they must be Makalakas. Smilingly he addressed them in Makalaka.

The natives glumly kept their eyes on him and didn't utter a sound.

In Sechuana, in pure Zulu, in Mashangaan he tried them. Never a glimpse or glimmer of intelligence.

Desperately M'Poine searched round in his mind for assistance. His face lit up. Laughing he approached them in Dutch.

No reply or attempt at reply.

M'Poine dismounted and grimly squatted before the semicircle of natives. Laboriously with hands and facial expression he strove to speak by sign language. Mimicked and muttered and gesticulated. The face of one of the seven brightened. Nodding vigorously he jabbered away in a torrent, then came to sign language himself.

With detailed illustration M'Poine made him understand "Had he seen any wagons lately?"

And the Kaffir nodded assent.

"How many were there?"

And the Kaffir's fingers said, "Two."

"Were they white men's wagons? And how many white men?"

The Kaffir's head said, "Yes"—his fingers, "Three."

"How far away were they, and going in what direction?"

Willingly the Kaffir struggled to explain, and pointed.

With hand raised M'Poine pointed to the sun, then to the horizons east and west.

"How many days ago?"

A sound of footfalls struck on the ears of the squatting men, the sound of horses at a trot. The sound came nearer, nearer. Quietly Frank and Bertie turned a corner of a mountain of bush and rode out through the shoulder-high grass, behind them in single file three Kaffirs. The white men's horses left the grass and entered the open. The horses of the Kaffirs stepped out of the grass and stood beside them.

"How many days ago?" M'Poine repeated with waving hand.

Uneasily the Kaffirs rose to their feet and nervously made to move off.

"Hold them, M'Poine. What's the matter? Can't they speak Matabele?" the graybeard inquired anxiously.

"No, *M'Lungu*. They can't speak any tongue that I know."

"Darned nuisance. But hold them. Perhaps I can get something out of them with a bit of tobacco. Bit of a bonzela."

He dismounted and began searching a saddle-bag.

"Ah, here it is," the graybeard went on more happily, and he approached the natives with a small roll of tobacco in his hand. The apparent leader stood out before him and stared at him with distrustful eyes. Quietly the graybeard cut half a yard of the twist and handed it over; sullenly the Kaffir took it.

"What tongue do you speak?" the graybeard asked in Matabele.

"Matabele, *M'Lungu*," the Kaffir, off his guard, answered quite innocently.

With a victorious grin the graybeard turned to M'Poine.

"They were fooling you, M'Poine. Afraid of you. Now we'll get all the information we want."

Smiling the graybeard turned again to the Kaffirs.

"Have you seen any white men with wagons here in the last few days?" he commenced.

Something moved almost silently round through the long grass behind the Kaffirs. Something came almost silently up behind their leader. Something like lion whiskers accompanied by a sniffing, calculating nose tickled him directly behind a knee.

The Kaffir jerked his leg away and surprisedly looked round.

"Aough!" And he rose a full yard in the air.

"Aough! Aough!"

A second later two long barbed hunting assagais dropped in terrified flight were the only signs that the Kaffirs had ever existed.

"Nice little pet!" Bertie managed to get out when at last he regained his wind. "Popular, persuading little thing to take about, eh?"

The graybeard, still laughing, mounted his horse.

"Cora's all right," he answered. "A bit too inquisitive, that's all."

"Why didn't you tell that to the Kaffirs then, Frank?"

"Something wrong there, Bertie," the graybeard went on at a tangent as though unhearing, and he shook his head dubiously, then turned inquiringly to the native standing beside him. The sounds of padding feet tearing farther away into the distance were growing less and less distinct.

"Those Kaffirs had a reason for not talking to you, M'Poine. What was it?"

"I don't know, M'Lungu."

"Do they know you, M'Poine?"

For a moment the native thought deeply.

"No, M'Lungu. When I saw the wagons I stayed a long way off. None of the white men's Kaffirs could have seen me. And there are very few kraals in the district where any could have seen me pass."

The graybeard was glum. Thoughtfully he turned to Bertie.

"There's something wrong without a doubt, Bertie. After several of Tombs' lost men turning up again in London you can bet he's not taking any unnecessary chances. Of course those particular men couldn't do anything directly to him because getting lost in this ocean of land is so easy. Always an accident. But—"

"That 'but' is exactly right, Frank," Bertie interrupted. "He must have a special job on—be staking his whole—and he's not

letting any accident chance along to spoil his business."

The graybeard's eyes flashed, and the flash was not a pleasant one.

"He *has* got a special job on, Bertie. And the joke is he doesn't know it."

For three more days the hurrying men dug deeper into the hills. The spoor of the wagons had been found and at first followed. Then it had wound and snaked in and out among the kopjes in a regular maze, and they had left it and cut straight ahead. Where wagons couldn't pass horses could easily pick a way.

"Ought to be easy enough to lose anybody here," Bertie suggested as they turned and twisted and scrambled over the foot of a mass of hills—a sea of hills each exactly the same as the other. "The country's confusing enough."

"Turn a man round twice and he'd never know where to steer," the graybeard agreed. "Surely they can't be going much farther in."

"No, they're going slower, too, Frank. M'Poine says we've several times crossed the spoor of white men apparently out hunting."

"I saw it myself, Bertie. Saw it an hour ago. And it was going in the direction of the open valley ahead."

The hills broke gradually and the white men struck into the valley. The grass, high as their heads, stretched away in all directions for eight or ten miles. Instinctively the Kaffirs separated and spread out.

"They may have shot through here," the graybeard explained. "Grass like this can hide many things."

And they pushed vigorously through it.

The Kaffir riding farthest out on the left reined in his horse and beckoned. Hastily the white men rode over to him. Dismounting the Kaffir pointed.

"Three white men," he said assuredly. "The spoor of three men walking together."

The graybeard's face went troubled. And still they pushed on.

A hundred yards ahead the tops of the grass wavered over a space twice the width of a wagon road. The grass rattled. Something moving in the grass seemed to drag through it; seemed to be dragging yet trying to rush. Fifty yards! Twenty yards!

One by one huge, clumsy black bodies with naked necks and heads rose lazily above the grass and soared up—rose and

soared up and round and round in ever widening circles. Flocks of them, droves of them, hundreds of them. Great, stinking vultures.

The graybeard was down on one knee by the horrible thing which was once a man. The eyes were gone, the cheeks were gone, the nose was gone. And blood still slowly trickled.

With a sickening, dizzying sensation the graybeard felt the chest, then looked up strangely. Under the tan his face was deathly white.

"Not quite cold yet," he said and shuddered visibly. His hand touched the top of the hideous head. "Some one hit him and thought he'd killed him. And he hadn't," he finished savagely.

Bertie, stooping over, was examining the thing with terrified eyes.

"Unconscious when the vultures found him though, eh, Frank?"

"Unconscious, Bertie, thank God!"

For a moment the graybeard looked questioningly at the tattered face, then he shook his head hopelessly.

"Only way is to search him, Bertie. No one on earth could ever even say off-hand that that had been a human head at all."

Gently the graybeard felt in the pocket of the torn gray-back shirt. Nothing. Gently he felt in the breeches pocket. Softly he turned the body over and searched the hip pockets. Nothing whatever.

For a moment the graybeard hesitated thoughtfully, then slid a hand into the shirt and groped for a money-belt. Belt there certainly was, and fastened to it a flat pouch. With jumpy hands he unbuckled the belt and pulled it away, then opened the pouch. A few folded papers and a couple of letters. Straightening himself the graybeard separated the letters and looked carefully at them—looked carefully, steadily, studiously.

Shakily he took a step backward and removed his hat and held it limply beside him. Tremblingly he handed one of the letters to the anxious Bertie.

"I wrote that letter, Bertie," he said soberly, sadly. "That man came from London with Tombs specially for me at my instruction. Came to help me finish up this — man-losing business."

Reverently the Kaffirs carried the torn body back to the line of kopjes they had last passed. At the graybeard's directions

they placed it on a soft, sandy spot, then piled rocks high above it.

"We've no means of burying it," the graybeard explained. "So all we can do is to keep it from the jackals and any more vultures."

"Keep it safely till we're ready, eh, Frank?"

"Keep it in case we ever do get ready, Bertie," the graybeard murmured thoughtfully. "We'll have to start from another angle altogether now."

"Think Tombs has done all his work for this time, eh?"

"Done it? Not at all, Bertie. This is only the beginning, and we can be sure there's something deep going on or he wouldn't take this risk so soon."

"Then this isn't the only man he wants to lose this trip, you think?"

The graybeard smiled wanly.

"To Tombs this man was only an incident. Whatever his real work is it is still ahead."

The work finished, Bertie turned to his horse. The sun above the hills on the far side the valley was casting long, heavy shadows.

"We'd better be going then? Get across tonight if we can," he suggested.

The graybeard looked away at the shadows, looked at the height of the grass and the width of the valley.

"No," he said quietly. "We'll wait here till morning. In this kind of country we can miss so devilishly much in the dark." The wan smile came again and for a second time flickered faintly. "Besides we must give Cora a chance. Let Cora do her own private bit of foraging."

"What's the use of Cora going hunting, Frank?" Bertie objected. "She's too old to catch anything."

"I know it, Bertie. But we must let her think she's not. Mustn't hurt the poor old beastie's feelings."

Bertie's eyes glistened.

"Frank, you're an old fool," he said laughing. But a funny lump came into his throat.

By a fire blazing in a rock-surrounded hollow the two white men lazed wearily and smoked. On the far side of the fire the Kaffirs squatted and talked in fitful, muffled tones. And away in the gloom the horses rested and shuffled uneasily.

From somewhere deep in the sea of grass

came a shrill monotonous piping, broken occasionally by the hoarser bark of the bigger bull-frogs.

At times night-hawks passed swiftly, silently by. And always huge bats flitted in and out the shadows.

"I thought you were staying here just for the sake of Cora's hunting," Bertie broke out presently. "She seems to be in no great hurry to be off."

"She'll go when we get to sleep, Bertie. She's just hanging round for company's sake."

The ancient lioness, rubbing her head and shoulders against the graybeard, was trying everything in her power to be petted. Trying pitifully and pitifully trying to purr—a purr as wheezy and regular as the notes of a broken accordion.

Patronizingly Bertie smiled.

"Splendid company, isn't she? Wonderful companion? Kind of walking attar-of-roses."

In an instant the graybeard was up in arms and on the defensive.

"She's my pal, Bertie. Been my pal for twenty whole years."

"Twenty years, Frank? No wonder you're accustomed to her. Don't you notice the sweet hum and buzz, eh?"

"Hum, Bertie?" The graybeard was aggressively serious. "She's no worse than any dog. Just as quiet and gentle, too. And if she does smell a bit we're not bound to notice it."

The old man's hand gently fondled the scratched, age-worn head, and the purr that struck the inoffensive air was as a nutmeg-grater being ill-used.

"Twenty years, eh, Cora, girlie?"

The old man turned again.

"I had two of 'em once, Bertie—Cora and Jack. Shot their mother when they were neither of them much bigger than a fox terrier. The merriest little kittens you ever saw in all your life, Bertie."

"All right as kittens," Bertie agreed. "But a bit of a risk when they grow up."

"Not at all, Bertie. There's scarcely an animal in the world, Bertie, that's dangerous if you rear it from babyhood in its own surroundings—and never attempt to fasten it up or cage it. It's the fastening up that does it."

"Then you've never tied Cora up, that's certain."

"Never for a moment, Bertie. If I tied

Cora up for a week I'd be afraid to go near her. Yet nothing more loving nor gentle exists."

Stiffly Bertie changed his position and for a while he was silent.

"What happened to the other one?" he asked presently. "What happened to Jack?"

"He's dead, Bertie. Died two years ago."

"How did that happen, Frank? Old age?"

The old man hesitated. Something seemed to be forming to hinder his speech.

"No, Bertie, an accident. Jack went hunting alone for koodoo. You know what long, sharp, dangerous horns the koodoo has? Jack miscalculated his spring and a koodoo ripped him."

"Poor —! The biter bitten. Bled to death, eh?"

Cora, raising her grizzled muzzle, tickled the graybeard on the chin and tried to kiss him. Like flicking a fly he tapped her gently away.

"No. Cora smelled the blood on him when he came crawling home. Cora killed and ate him."



THE silent night dragged out. The ice-cold moon had long since sunk over the horizon and the myriad stars gleamed like diamond pin-points in an arctic sky. Soon the sun would shoot up and the day start in again. A slight breeze rustled the grass. Sleepily the graybeard opened his eyes, and listened. The breeze came regularly and evenly, and he closed them again.

With a start his eyes flashed open once more. Flashed open wide and remained open.

Dark figures innumerable were moving in the grass, moving among the Kaffirs, moving among the horses. Lithe, active, sinewy figures—figures all armed.

For an instant the graybeard's eyes peered searchingly around, searched to distinguish friend or enemy. Then his heart seemed to stop.

Armed Kaffirs at daybreak! And Kaffirs always attack at dawn!

Nervously the graybeard reached over to Bertie and shook him to consciousness. His hand came back and felt under his blanket for revolver and rifle. With a sickening, hopeless sensation he found that they were missing.

Dazedly the graybeard rose to a sitting position. Still half-asleep and not understanding Bertie rose along. For a moment they looked at the host of busily moving figures as though hypnotized—looked as though going through some strange, awful dream.

A foot caught the graybeard fiercely in the back. Startled he yelled and turned.

A revolver, six inches from the end of his nose, was pointing at him unflinchingly.

"Stand up," a vicious voice commanded, qualifying the command with a further furious kick.

Stiffly the graybeard rose to his feet and stiffly beside him Bertie rose as well, a revolver touching the back of his head.

"Now put both your hands behind you," the vicious voice went on.

For an instant the old man hesitated and made to argue. The cold barrel of the revolver touched his neck.

"Would you rather die now or wait till sundown?" the vicious voice inquired mockingly. "It's all the same to me."

Frank's hands went behind and his eyes peered over to his own Kaffirs. They already had their hands tied.

Four Kaffirs singled themselves from the surging crowd and came up. Roughly, firmly, methodically they tied both pairs of hands, then knelt and tightly bound each pair of legs.

The first rays of dawn were shooting up behind the hills. In a few minutes the sun would bound up and the world be moving. The cold barrel of the revolver left the graybeard's neck and his captor turned him to face him squarely—turned him round and peered closely into his eyes.

The eyes of the graybeard bored into eyes set in a face old as his own, but much more wrinkled and haggard.

And each pair of eyes knew the other.

With a furious kick on the legs and a violent jab the graybeard was thrown heavily and a top-boot crashed into his ribs.

"So you'd interfere, would you? Been interfering all the while? Elected yourself into a police force, eh?"

The top-boot crashed again and the graybeard stifled a groan.

"Hunting for us to finish us, eh? When we've finished with you the vultures'll be too heavy to fly, or I'm a Dutchman."

Quietly the Kaffirs knelt. With deft

hands they completely bandaged the eyes of the two prostrate men.

"Now roll them into the *meshilas* and carry them," the vicious voice directed.

Hour after hour in the blazing sun the Kaffirs plodded patiently along. The *meshilas*—blankets slung beneath poles—were hot and tight—so tight that the men, sunk deep in them, were bathed in dripping sweat, burning and boiling at one and the same time. Mosquitoes settled on them and bit them furiously, the clinging blankets made it quite impossible to change position in any way. The fierce heat seared their tanned chests and faces till they couldn't move a muscle.

At first the graybeard had angrily asked question after question. A mocking laugh or a snarling curse was the only reply he got. And he lapsed into hopeless silence and simply listened. By listening carefully, he soon found that the horses were being taken along; and by the trend of the hushed conversation he knew that M'Poine and the four Kaffirs also were with them, but whither bound or why never once reached his ears.

The rasping and scratching of the grass ceased and the graybeard felt that they had left the open valley. By the angle of the sun it must be noon. Roughly the bearers dropped the *meshilas* and turned aside to eat; then, finished, on again and still on.

At first up, up, up, then down a jagged, broken slope; then round and round and up and down again. The way twisted and turned a thousand times, the bearers jolting the *meshilas* as they stumbled over rocks and stumps. At times the welcome shade of a belt of trees tempered the baking heat—then again into the sweltering sun.

The afternoon wore on. For an hour past the bearers had gone consistently up—and up, twisting and zigzagging, but always up. The rays of the sun, striking from away over the horizon, told of approaching night. Anxiously the graybeard licked his parched lips and prayed for the cool of darkness.

The party came to a halt. Roughly the bearers dropped their *meshilas* and for a while a hum of excited conversation droned along—argument and cursing almost in whispers. Then just as suddenly the *meshilas* were picked up again and the crowd moved on—on, but in single file. The going became smoother; the jerks and bumps finished; the road was sandy.

With every sense alert the graybeard listened intently—held his breath and listened. All signs of conversation came from behind, came in a long, enclosed trumpet. The bearers were going through a tunnel or passage, and yet up and up. Then the *meshilas* were lifted almost straight up—and at a furious angle down again.

The sounds of conversation carried farther, became more hollow. Instinctively the graybeard judged that the passage had broadened out.

Five minutes later the *meshilas* fell with a jolt and the white men were rolled unceremoniously out. Their hands and feet were untied, the bandages taken from their eyes.

In solid, unfathomable, impenetrable blackness they peeped around—blackness that could be felt, blackness that could be tasted.

Whispering and grunting, the bearers turned and moved away. The pad-pad-pad of their bare feet echoed and echoed, grew fainter, died completely out.

"Frank! Frank!" Bertie called with cracked, dry lips. "Frank!"

And the eeriness of his own voice made his flesh fairly creep.

"Here," the graybeard answered, quite close to him.

"What the — next, Frank? Now what's happened?"

"I don't know, Bertie. Don't know at all. And I certainly don't like it."

In his misery Bertie somehow had to smile.

"I don't suppose you do, Frank. I'm not impressed with things myself, either."

Carefully the graybeard pulled himself over to his pal and touched him softly.

"There's a lot more to dislike than you know of, Bertie," he said very seriously. "Have you got a match?"

At once Bertie searched himself and produced a box. Nervously he took a match and tried to strike it. The damp heat of the *meshilas* had wet the heads of the matches and turned them into a pulp.

"No use, Frank," he said. "Sopping wet. I'll have to take care of them till they get dry."

"Well, we must wait," the graybeard went on still seriously. "Wait I don't know what for. If it were only Tombs we had to deal with, Bertie, I wouldn't be worried so much. But did you see the face of the old man who held me up?"

"No, Frank. I was too busy watching my own man."

"You didn't? I saw that face this morning, Bertie—for the first time in almost twenty-five years. The face of Rodney—the man who caused me to lose myself in the heart of Africa, to give up my whole life to the wilds."

Bertie's hand reached over to the graybeard.

"—!" he muttered faintly.

The awful blackness strained the eyes, and the tired men, still talking, closed them. Then for a while they lapsed into silence.

A sharp clicking fell on their ears and their eyes opened. A score of yards away an occasional bright spark glinted, then died out.

"Is that you, M'Poine?" the graybeard called quietly.

"*Yehbo, M'Lungu.* I and the four Kaffirs."

"Any of you hurt?"

"No, *M'Lungu.* I am trying to make fire." And M'Poine went busily and mechanically on with flint and steel, too bewildered to think if wood were there or not. A spark fell into the tinder and held. Anxiously the Kaffir blew and fanned it. The spark glowed and spread. Then of a sudden his scattered thoughts collected themselves and the Kaffir stood aghast.

"No wood, *M'Lungu.* Nothing to burn." he said, in blank dismay.

For a second or so M'Poine whispered, then the soft sound of four men carefully crawling off and feeling their way in different directions was heard. And at intervals the men called nervously to each other. From far off, perhaps a hundred feet, came a crackling of twigs, a snapping of dry wood.

"Wood here," a Kaffir called. "Wood laid down for bedding."

Directed by M'Poine's voice the Kaffir came back and placed an armful of dry twigs at his feet. Patiently with flint and steel M'Poine worked, then set it ablaze. The flames danced up.

A huge cavern stretching in utter blackness far past the range of human vision. A towering bubble blown into the side of the earth.

The eyes of each white man sought those of the other in mutual bewilderment.

"Buried alive, Bertie," the graybeard broke out queerly.

"Looks like it, Frank. But if we came in surely we can get out, can't we?"


"If ever we find the way. And if we live. But you can bet they wouldn't bring us here so carefully unless they meant to keep us mighty safe."

The graybeard licked his parched lips thoughtfully.

"If they meant well, they'd at least have left water," he went on. "Not a drink for twenty-four hours and more."

The leaping fire died down and in its dying flicker two of the Kafirs went over for more wood. Again it blazed up. Deftly M'Poine twisted half a dozen bundles of twigs into the form of torches.

Lighting one he handed the others to a native, then spoke a few words to him. The lighted torch moved away into the distance, moved till it seemed but the tip of a safety-match—moved over a full two hundred yards. The torch came to a wall of stone rising in an arching dome hundreds of feet above. Fitfully the torch moved away and round it—moved in an irregular curve hundreds and hundreds of feet. The torch commenced to die down and M'Poine lighted another. Still the flame drew into the distance and became fainter. The forms of the men were but little specks in the tiny glare. The flame came to a black spot, entered it and turned a corner. Next second, but for the suggestion of haze where the torch had been, the darkness was impenetrable, solid, choking.

 "M'LUNGU! M'Lungu! M'Lungu!"
For more than an hour the cave had been utterly silent.

"M'Lungu! M'Lungu! M'Lungu!" came again in a shrill whisper.

Excitedly a native whispered back and continued whispering.

The sound of footsteps came nearer; careful, searching, nervous footsteps. The footsteps of one barefooted man. The man came up and felt for his comrades, then sank limply beside them.

"Where's the other man?" one of the three asked anxiously.

"I know not. He went," M'Poine said with very apparent horror.

"Went where?"

"Down."

"Down?" the graybeard queried.

"Yehbo, M'Lungu. My brother and I found the passage in a long winding passage

going up and down. We followed it, M'Lungu, till our last fire was almost finished. Then my brother stepped into nothing and went down. And down and down."

"Down?"

"He went down, M'Lungu, and as he went he shouted and shouted again. Each time he shouted he was farther down. And when I heard him last he was in the very middle of the earth."

"Was there no other passage except the one you went along, M'Poine?"

"No, M'Lungu, only one road. The road wound right along, then down."

The very souls of Bertie and the graybeard went cold. For a while they were speechless.

"I believe he's quite capable of doing it," the graybeard remarked presently.

"Who's capable of doing what, Frank?"

"Rodney, the man who brought us here. He's brought us here where we can't get out, and he's capable of starving us to death. He starved hundreds in London twenty-five years ago."

"The —!" Bertie said perplexedly.

"Starved 'em to death, Bertie, and thrived on it. Started a workingman's Bank. Friend of the poor, and all that kind of stuff. Got me in and used my good name and capital to run it, then crashed."

"The —!" And Bertie whistled softly.

"And broke you?"
"No, not directly. But it ruined others. And Rodney'd spent and gambled and speculated every penny; then tried to throw the blame on me because I was best known."

"And you were pinched, eh, Frank?"

"No, Bertie, I had some money left. And at marriage I'd settled my wife for life. But the disgrace of it all sent me crazy, Bertie, and I did the exact wrong thing. Got on a — of a bust."

In the darkness Bertie smiled his sympathy, but didn't speak.

"I got on a — of a bust, Bertie, and went down and out. Then in desperation I sold all that I possessed and divided it up among the depositors and sneaked out here without telling a soul. And here I've always been."

Impulsively Bertie felt for a hand and squeezed it. The graybeard felt the grip and held it.

"And that wasn't the worst of all, Bertie. The moment I disappeared it looked as

though I really were to blame, and Rodney went free, bluffing it through—became a martyred hero. And then I couldn't have gone home even if I'd wished."

With a depth of understanding very few men can know the two hands squeezed again. Squeezed, and each hand led straight up to a heart.

"The Black Sheep," Bertie said soulfully. "The Black Sheep as usual. When they turn on us there's nothing too bad to say. The world can love a murderer, but don't they love to hate a Black Sheep?"

"Hate us, Bertie? Of course they do. Every blessed time. To them we must always run true to form, eh?"

"Always—always—always, Frank."

The graybeard turned to where, in the dark, he fancied M'Poine would be.

"M'Poine, make more fire, make more torches. Let us go and see where this man has fallen to."

The Kaffirs rose to creep off for the twigs. "Get much wood," M'Poine impressed them. "The passage runs a long way, M'Lungu," he added, "and the way is dangerous."

With torches preceding them the white men carefully moved over to the passage and entered it. A passage which towered high above them and seemed to be formed by a crack going up to nowhere. A rift rising up into blackest darkness. And for half an hour they picked their tortuous way along.

"No great difficulty in finding one's way," Bertie remarked hopefully. "That is if we don't run into anybody."

"And if we get anywhere when we do find our way," the graybeard expanded.

The guiding M'Poine reached a corner and turned it and immediately went slower—went slower and slower, went at a creep. His torch was close to the ground and examining it minutely. For a hundred yards he proceeded, every step taken in horrified anxiety.

The Kaffir came to a standstill and turned. His eyes bulged in stupefied terror.

"Nangu! There!" he said as he faced ahead again and pointed. "Nangu, M'Lungu!"

The white men came up to him and lighted another torch—lighted it and held it high. The passage came to an abrupt sheer end. Before them a dense, inky black, bottomless pit.

And no far side to it!

"——!" Bertie said as he stood utterly awestruck and stared before him.

"——! —— or the way to it," the graybeard agreed more thoughtfully. "It doesn't seem to lead anywhere else."

The torches, glaring and flickering, cast a fitful glow tiny and pitiful in the vastness. The crack above went sheer to infinity, the blackness ahead on without end.

A Kaffir knelt and held his torch out over the precipice.

The cliff went down straight as if gashed by a knife clean to the very vitals of the earth.

Laboriously the graybeard pried loose a rock from the wall of the passage and dropped it over the edge. The sound as it struck the bottom could never reach human ears.

The two white men straightened themselves and looked nervously into each other's eyes.

"We never came in that way, that's certain," the graybeard asserted. "Yet there's a ripple of air moving all the while, so the hole somewhere twists to daylight."

"It must," Bertie agreed. "And somewhere the roof of that cavern back behind must have some kind of crack or else there'd be no ventilation."

"That's what I thought, too, Bertie. But cracks hidden hundreds of feet above can never be a help. All we can do is find our way back while we still have a light. Go back and search around that huge hole there and try to find some other exit."

"Go back and sleep sounds better."

Wearily the men slowly ambled back. The passage seemed interminable. Each step the torturing thirst, forgotten in the excitement of hoping to get out, became more and more painful. The hollow stomachs seemed to rattle.

The passage ended and the great hall loomed before them. Totteringly they wandered along till they found the bed of twigs, then limply collapsed and sprawled on it.

"May as well sleep," Bertie said listlessly. "It's about all we can do."

"All we can do, Bertie. Rest and conserve our strength till morning." A sudden thought appeared to strike the graybeard clear between the eyes. "By Jove! Is it morning? It may be morning for all we know."

The torches were dying and Bertie beckoned for one to be brought nearer.

"It's half-past one by me," he said as he held up his watch. "And surely it must be night. Half-past one. What does your watch say?"

The graybeard's watch was of gold, and he held it close to his face. The torches were spluttering and low. "One-twenty, I think, Bertie. But the light's so mighty bad. One-twenty, I think. Just look. Perhaps the watch is losing a little."

The tired Bertie took the watch and held it beside a smoldering brand. Peering close he studied it.

"One-twenty it is, Frank. Let's set both our watches to the half-hour. Have both alike. Shall I move the regulator a bit for you?"

"Please," the old man assented.

Thoughtfully Bertie moved the minute hand, then opened the back of the case. And again he peered close and studied it.

"There. It oughtn't to lose now."

The case came to with a snap and the watch was handed back.

"A present, Frank, eh? A relic of happier days?"

"Yes," the other said in a whisper so quiet as scarce to be heard. "A ghost—a ghost of the might-have-been."

Bertie's mouth opened to speak, then thoughtfully closed again.



UNEASILY Bertie opened his eyes and strained them into the blackness. But for the sound of the steady breathing of the weary sleepers he might as well have been in his own grave.

With an effort he rose to sit up, and clasped his knees with his arms. And still he stared into the blackness.

A score of yards away something moved—something soft and almost silent. Anxiously Bertie listened and held his breath. The something moved again, then the sharp click of flint on steel struck through the air.

"M'Poine! M'Poine!" the white man called quietly.

Without hesitating the clicking went on, but never a word.

"M'Poine! M'Poine! Is that you, M'Poine? Don't make a fire yet. Some one may come and take your flint and tinder."

But the clicking went steadily on.

A spark dropped into the tinder. Gently the striker nursed it and blew on it. Quickly it spread and a tiny flame sprang up. Bravely the flame held and brightened, then grew and grew. The fire leaped to a glare.

On the far side the fire was a squatting man, and behind him a host of others.

The leader of the hunting Kaffirs! Behind him his own six men and a host of others!

Inquiringly the man's eyes came over to Bertie and he smiled craftily.

"*Nangu skoff, M'Lungu,*" he said in kitchen Kaffir, and he pointed to an iron pot full of steaming corn-meal. "*Nangu mansi.* There is water." And he pointed to a calabash.

The men sat around the pot of food and with wooden spoons whites and Kaffirs alike dug in. For a while only the noise of eating filled the vast cavern and rustled away to the far roof above.

With one eye on the crowd of waiting Kaffirs the graybeard and Bertie eagerly, savagely killed their mad appetites.

"Where are we?" the graybeard asked as he put down his spoon and turned to the leading Kaffir.

"Safe, *M'Lungu,*" the Kaffir answered readily, willingly.

"I know that, *madoda,* I know that, man. Too safe. But where?"

Lazily the Kaffir made an all-embracing sweep of the arm.

"Inside the mountain."

With a friendly smile the graybeard moved over closer.

"Yes, but where is this mountain? And why are we here?"

The crafty smile still stayed.

"This is the prison of Malan, *M'Lungu.* The only safe place my chief can use for a prison."

With serious eyes the graybeard turned aside. "Malan, Bertie. D'you know him?"

"No, Frank. Never heard of him. Who is he?"

"He's chief of all this district, Bertie. Paramount chief. And he's a beauty!"

"Bad 'un?"

"He's no friend of the whites, Bertie, that's absolutely certain. The howls of a tortured white man are the sweetest music to his ears. Only good point is that he always keeps his word—if he promises to harm you."

"Sounds nice," Bertie commented with

a sickly grin. "But why's he feeding us if he means harm?"

The craftily smiling Kaffir seemed to divine their thoughts.

"The white men will rest long," he said quite placidly.

"How do you know, *madoda*? How do you know, man?"

"Because Malan has said so, *M'Lungu*."

"But why—what for?"

The smiling Kaffir rose to his feet.

"For one moon the white men will stay here," he told them frankly. "The white chiefs with the wagons gave them to Malan to keep for one moon. At the end of one moon the white men will be free."

And the Kaffir laughed unpleasantly.

"Can't you get us out?" the graybeard asked unhopingly. "If my brother will show us the passage out we will make him a rich man. Many sheep and oxen."

The Kaffir motioned to the men with him to collect the pot and spoons; then with an assagai flung the fire apart. Stolidly he shook his head.

"*Ikona!* I will not!"

"So, that's the idea, eh?" the graybeard queried as the fire slowly died down. "Got Malan to promise to keep us here till their work's done and they're safely sailing home again. You can take my word for it, Bertie, Tombs has something mighty particular on his hands this trip."

"Playing his last stake, eh?"

"Playing it, and somehow we've got to beat him. We've got to reduce that one moon to a day."

"And that means getting out, Frank, and getting out means finding how. Let's start."

"No. Wait a minute." the graybeard counseled. "Let's let those beggars get out of the way a bit first. They're not taking any chances of being followed. That's why they move so confidently."

"You mean they'll leave men straggling behind to stop any one who tries to creep along with them."

"That's what our own Kaffirs must appear to think, Bertie. Or else they're far too terrified to try to trace those fellows in the dark. Anyhow we may as well get ready."

With arms full of torches the Kaffirs made the circuit of the widespreading hole. Minutely the white men examined each foot of the walls of the tremendous dome. Each

rock and gap and shadow. Almost as if worn by some huge tide of oil the walls were bare and smooth and even. Round the vast bubble for a thousand yards and never passage or cranny with space enough to hide a human form.

Unhappily the men crept back to the few smoldering sparks and kicked them up together. Thoughtfully the two whites looked into each other's eyes as if for inspiration.

"We've got to try that passageway again, Bertie. I thought perhaps these Kaffirs may have taken the passageway out simply because it was easiest, but it seems that it is absolutely the only way. There must be some means of crossing that awful gap. Must be some far side to it."

The graybeard's voice was hopeless, but yet he appeared to hope.

"I don't know, Frank. There may be a far side to get to—if we fly."

"Well, they came in and they've gone out. We've got to find just how."

But never a hole was there in either wall, nor nook or break or crack. Never a place to hide a man or even a little dog.


"And there's your end, and there's your cliff," Bertie explained, as they came to a stop and stared into the vacant distance. "And we're just as wise as ever."

Flat on his stomach the graybeard lay and strained to see below him. With minute care he felt the rock below and on each side, then painfully forced his eyes to pierce the blackness on beyond. With a stiffness that was not all age he rose and turned his face.

"Malan was right," he said dispassionately. "We're safe. Safe for one whole long moon."

Shakily Bertie raised a hand and stroked his forehead.

"And then?" he asked suspiciously.

 SLOWLY the long day passed—a day in a pit of blackness. The supply of dry wood was small and to save it they lay in darkness. Night came, and with it hunger renewed. Gradually one by one the Kaffirs breathed more regularly. Slept to forget their emptiness.

"It's all that there is to do, Frank," Bertie murmured drowsily. "If we've got to stay here for a month we may as well sleep most part of it."

"It's about the best thing, Bertie. Sleep,

yet be ever alert in case there's a chance of leaving," the graybeard agreed.

Intermittently in muffled tones the conversation drifted along. Drifted aimlessly and just for company's sake. The white men yawned, stretched, turned over and lay flat and dreamed. The blackness was still and solid, the air as motionless as in a catacomb. One of the Kaffirs stirred and scratched, then the great hole was lifeless and at peace.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!"

"Ha-ha-ha!"

With a ghastly, sickening start Kaffirs and white men were awake. Awake yet dead. Awake and frozen. Each man's eyes were opened wide, and each man scarcely breathed. In the still blackness each man's heart sounded to him like a drum.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha!"

A hollow, quavering, cackling voice laughed out once more. The laugh rose to the unseen roof and filled the ghostly cavern, then echoed and rolled back and back again.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Shivering the men rose to sit up and tried to force their eyes to pierce the gloom. The horrid laugh halted and the silence could be heard.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" came within twenty feet of the white men, a laugh as of one exulting at the sight of torture. "Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

With trembling hand Bertie reached out and touched a hand of Frank. Each tried to speak, yet each man's tongue was tied, and each man's face was wet.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

The silence fell again and on the silence rose the sound of creeping feet. Feet moving as the whisper of a walk, moving in circles, moving far away.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

"Ha-ha!"

"Ha-ha!"

Then silence—absolute twittering, fluttering, jibbering, unholy silence.

"What on earth was that, Frank?" Bertie muttered, and his voice shook off to nothingness.

"By —! I don't know, Bertie. But the sound had feet."

"Not human feet."

The graybeard crawled over toward M'Poine and touched him. The native jerked aside and yelped a terrified howl.

His teeth clicked in a chattering chorus.

"What was that, M'Poine?"

For a moment the Kaffir struggled to form words and failed, then with an effort his ashen lips moved shakily.

"*Tagati! Tagati! M'Lungu!*"

"*Tagati!* By Jove! I don't blame you for thinking so, M'Poine. If that wasn't witchcraft it was worse."

"*Tagati!*" the shaky lips assured mechanically. In the black darkness the old man shook his head.

"Not witchcraft, perhaps," he said quietly, "but something that wasn't human. And something that meant us no good."

"*Tagati!*"

The harsh sound failed to come again, and Bertie dried his dripping face. The face was icy cold.

"If that wasn't human, Frank, how did it get in?"

"I don't know, Bertie. Or why."

"But it got in," Bertie insisted, "and it's gone out. And it did it in the dark, too."

"That's no help to us, Bertie. Dark or light we'll never find a way unless we're shown."

The men lapsed into silence. The quaking Kaffirs, squatting together to gain courage, were far too terrified even to murmur. Their bulging eyes, still fastened on the spot where the laugh last came from, in the darkness were frozen open.

For hours the men sat silent and waiting the next uncertainty. Sleep for that night had vanished.

"It must be almost morning," Bertie said after a time interminable. "Feels like we'd been here about a thousand years."

"It must be morning I should think," the old man agreed. "I'm stiff enough for it to be next week."

"So'm I, Frank. Let's get a light."

The graybeard turned to where he thought the Kaffirs squatted.

"M'Poine—" he began.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!" came back in croaking, taunting mockery.

Next instant the two white men lay flat on their backs and maddened Kaffirs charged clear over them and shrieked in frenzied terror. Charged and plunged into the darkness far away.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!" echoed hoarsely from the spot the Kaffirs left. "Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

The laugh moved off in the direction the

charging men had taken. The sounds of their striking as they hit the cavern walls floated directly, loudly back.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" came from behind hurrying feet pattering round the edge of the cave, and snorts of dismay echoed as one or another struck the wall in a different place. Grunts and groans as head or toe bumped fiercely into solid rock.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

The rushing Kaffirs circled the chamber and started round again. The natives reached the walls of the passage and in the darkness passed them.

"Ha-ha-ha!" came from behind a wall of stone. "Ha-ha-ha!"

The laugh of a sudden grew duller and duller. Duller and still more dull.

"Ha-ha-ha!"

The laugh in the passage was fainter and farther away.

"Ha-ha-ha!"

The laugh went out.

Shivering as with ague the two whites huddled together. Each felt the trembling of the other, yet neither felt ashamed.

"If that thing's going to haunt this place a month, Frank," Bertie at last said jumpily, "it'll haunt at least one dead man."

"It's wicked, Bertie. It's a horror, whatever it is."

"Horror! If that thing's got anything to do with — I'm not going there."

The laugh was quite gone and the old man's quivering spirits were trying to collect themselves.

"It's alive, Bertie, that's certain. And we've got to find out what it is and catch it. That's our way out."

"Like catching the wind, eh?"

"No, this thing must be catchable. Some of us must wait by the passage end, and, if the thing comes in again, bar it from going out."

In the denseness Bertie smiled an unhappy smile.

"Bar it! We two? Those Kaffirs will never help catch ghosts."

The old man's brain was going clearer.

"If they see what it is they'll help. But maybe the thing'll not come if there's fire."

"Likely not, Frank."

"If we had plenty of dry twigs ready and could quickly start a flame. But how? We can't use flint and steel."

Suddenly Bertie's hand went to a pocket.

His heart pounded with the excitement of hope.

"The matches, Frank! The matches! If only the things are dry and of any use."

With anxious care Bertie cracked away a single match from the solid mass of sulphur. Nervously he scratched it on the box. The match spat, sputtered, flamed up, burned out. A faint glow from the passage entered the cavern. The glow became brighter. Kaffirs came in. Kaffirs with pots of water and food.



"WE'LL wait one each side," the graybeard said as the white men reached the entrance of the passage.

The meal was long since over, and the Kaffirs, uncommunicative and unapproachable as ever, had left.

"We'll wait one each side, Bertie, and we'll let the thing get well into the middle of the cavern. Then both make a light, and if it charges to get out, stop it."

"Yes, and get clawed to pieces, Frank. I haven't even got a pocket knife."

The graybeard grimly smiled.

"Clawed to death in a minute's better than starving to death for a month."

"And having that thing laughing at us doing it," Bertie agreed lamely.

"Well, it's something the Kaffirs outside know about, Bertie, and that's reassuring. And it's something, they must have seen come in in daylight, so it can't be so bad," the graybeard argued.

"Ugh! Anything's bad inside here in the dark."

With great care the two men fixed themselves and made ready for the anxious wait. In the darkness and silence, though but feet apart, the loneliness was creepy.

The long black morning hazed away, the never-ending afternoon dragged on. The straining ears, tuned to the solid silence, easily caught the sound of each man's breathing.

The graybeard gently stirred. Like the noise of the waves dashing on a beach the rustling seemed to fill all space.

"Getting stiff, Frank?"

"S-s-sh! Just a little. But keep quiet, Bertie."

"Let's give it best, Frank. I'm about fed up. Let's give it best till tomorrow. Another day can't—"

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!"

The laugh, close inside the chamber, rang up to the roof and fairly split it. And, in the huge quiet after, the sound of rushing feet close to the farthest wall came pad-pad-pading over.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

The two white men went frozen numb. Then of a sudden came the noise of nervous scratching. Two faltering flames sprang weakly up. Quickly the white men lighted their wisps of tiny twigs and rose in readiness and nursed their fires.

And as they rose a filthy figure rose and stood alongside them.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

The figure rose to its full height and from a pair of glaring eyes came the wild vacancy of utter madness. The eyes fixed on the blazing twigs and the great tousled head shook its long hair in insane fury.

And with its tousled hair shook a long beard which straggled to a sunburned waist.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

With hands raised high above, and fingers clawing at the empty air, it yelled its cackling laugh. Yelled it and croaked it with face set hard and hideous. The hands came down and fiercely beat the breast as though to stir up smoldering courage.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Again the hands went up, although the body crouched, and down beneath the hands the eyes blazed bloody murder.

And then it came!

With feet and hands in air and almost bunched together, the thing leaped up, and coming down it scored. The graybeard's torch fell twenty feet away, and as it fell the graybeard's back lay flat and sprawling.

The thing jumped back. Just as a monkey it bounded to one side, then made to charge the passage. And Bertie blocked it with threatening fist and spluttering torch.

The thing leaped back, then charged with jabbering gasps. And Bertie's fist, passing the hands that wildly clawed caught it upon the bearded chin. And still it clawed.

The clawing hands like lightning gripped the outstretched arm. Two jaws of vigorous, healthy teeth almost met in it.

And Bertie winced, then tried to draw the arm away. The clenched teeth held and the head shook as that of a dog. Quickly the clawing hands let go and reached for Bertie's throat. Ripped and tore at it and wildly scratched and gashed.

The flaming torch crashed cruelly in the

tousled beard. At once a smell of singeing hair went up.

Loudly the thing howled, and jumped backward to run away. And as it howled the graybeard gripped it from behind. And both went down.

Like eels they rolled and writhed, the graybeard's hands failing to hold a single grip; the naked body, naked as Adam's at the Day of Dawn, slipping away as easily as though well greased.

The graybeard's head crashed down and for a tiny second—a fleeting atom of nothing—he didn't struggle. The agile thing sprang up and to the passage. With Bertie right ahead.

Fiercely the thing charged and backed, and charging howled and screamed. Back to his feet, a fresh torch in his hand, the graybeard held his end. Backing and charging, with blood streaming from him, Bertie tried hard to stop the thing from getting by.

With lashing, ripping, inch-long nails the thing gashed and tore, slashed round and cut. With yammering teeth it strove to bite and maul.

The thing gripped Bertie and crashing he went aside. An arm came out and Bertie found a grasp. Side by side, each tightly gripping the other, the two struggled a full hundred yards.

And Bertie's torch was dying, but wasn't yet quite dead. Savagely he raised it and banged it into the face once more. Squealing, the thing relaxed its hold and turned. A yard away and facing it and ready the graybeard held his ground.

Wildly the thing turned back and Bertie caught it as it passed. Madly again they rushed along together. The graybeard hesitated and fixed his last remaining torch, then ran into the distance and the dark, for Bertie's hands had now become too busy for one of them to worry about light.

The graybeard reached the ever-shifting struggle. Vainly the white man strove to keep his grip. The thing tore loose and rushed away—rushed into darkness with that same certainty as in the light of day. And close behind it, heeding no rock or hole, the white men chased along.

The thing reached the last remaining corner and turned round it. Blindly it leaped away and on like a startled buck—a frightened hare.

The yawning abyss loomed up black and dense ahead. The flames struck the sheer

end of the passage and the vast nothing out beyond.

Twenty more feet!

The flickering, battered torch was failing, the light was dim.

Twenty more feet!

And yet the thing charged on.

Ten feet! And then the jump!

The thing leaped up. Leaped high above their heads. A jutting rock, standing out from the wall, loomed in the dimness and threw black shadows above it.

The thing's hands gripped the outstanding rock. The thing pulled up, rose above it, went down.

And disappeared!

"Phew!" And the sweltering Bertie leaned against a wall and wiped his dripping face.

"—!" The graybeard limply leaned and struggled for breath. "That was a fiendish scrap if ever there was one."

"Wicked, Frank. I'd sooner face a million wild cats than that mad thing again."

"Mad! I should say so, Bertie! If we'd been the surprized instead of him that man's strength might have finished us."

Panting the men were silent and for a while stood still; the last remaining twigs of torch caught fire and were fading.

"No use following even if we could get up, Frank, is it?" Bertie queried presently. The blood still oozed and dripped upon his shirt and he was weakening.

"Not a bit, Bertie. We must get fresh torches and get the Kaffirs to help us up."

"All right then. Let's go back."

Slowly, stiffly they turned and felt their way along; soon it was dark; darkness with the feel of satin.

"Hopeless, eh, Frank?" Bertie surmised as they carefully touched the walls for guidance.

"Hopeless—quite hopeless, Bertie. I never saw a white man quite so bad as that."

"One of the Tombs' lost ones? Some of Tombs' business?"

"Undoubtedly. Some chap who's disgraced some notable family. And that kind family calmly paid this Tombs to bring him here and lose him."

"Just murder, eh? Technical murder and nothing else?"

"Murder! Yet so far off it missed their brazen consciences."

"It couldn't, Frank. It couldn't miss 'em. They hadn't any."

"I think you're right," the graybeard moralized, then relapsed into thought.

The winding passage ended and by the quaking Kaffirs the two men slumped and rested.

"All here, M'Poine?" the graybeard presently asked.

"*Yehbo, M'Lungu,*" the Kaffir answered shakily. "All here. Where did the spirit go, *M'Lungu?*"

In the still darkness the graybeard's smile was grim.

"That was no spirit, M'Poine. That was a white man."

But in the still darkness the Kaffir shook his head.

"*Thona, M'Lungu. Tagati! Witchcraft!*"

With wounds bound with strips torn from his shirt, Bertie stood beneath the outjutting rock, and looked appraisingly up.

"If you and the Kaffirs will lift me, Frank, I can pull you up after me," he suggested.

"I'll need some pulling, Bertie. Only a monkey can make that leap alone. I thought I felt a sudden sloping drop when they brought us in."

"So did I, Frank. The angle almost spilled me once."

With ease the crowd raised the white man above them, and he pulled himself up and out of sight. Then quickly his head and arms appeared again.

"Come on up, Frank. There's a passage here just as big as the one you're in."

Together the two men stood upright, and, lighting torches, looked around them. The outjutting rock had come up four feet in front of a hole the height of a crouching man, and from below it had but sent a further shadow to mix with the blacker shadows all about. Once through the hole the passage broadened out so that four could walk abreast.

"Now we shall have to be careful, Bertie," the graybeard cautioned. "We may turn a corner any second and run bang into daylight, and then our torches will finish us."

For a moment Bertie thought. "I'll go ahead, Frank," he said. "Keep ahead a score of feet or so and only you carry a light. Then, if there's any sudden daylight I'll see it all the quicker."

For ten, fifteen, twenty minutes—for a whole mile—the men went easily along. The way was sandy, the turns but few and the roof always far on high.


The road turned and the air came sweeter. Again it turned. A faint breeze wafted by. Warningly Bertie held up a hand. The torch went out.

A faint glimmer of light came streaming in. Carefully, carefully, the two men peered round the edge of a wall of rock. Only the tips of their noses and their eyes were showing. Slowly the eyes became accustomed once more to the feel of day.

Outside, fierce glaring white sunlight beating back from a gleaming baking earth.

Sunlight, and in the sunlight hosts of men with arms—men standing, men squatting, men moving—hosts of dark men, lithe and alert—troops of dark men within a huge stockade—men with assagais, shields and axes, men with knobkerries.

And on the ground were pots and fires. The men were there day and night!

 QUITE hopelessly Bertie sat back in the middle of their old cavern, and listlessly Frank wilted and sat by him.

"That about settles it, Frank, eh?"

"It looks like it, Bertie. Looks like we had to serve out our month."

Miserably Bertie grinned, then went on seriously.

"Well, Frank, I've done one good job in my life in any case. I came out here to get lost and I couldn't very well get much lobster, could I?"

The graybeard grinned, too.

"No, Bertie. Your creditors aren't very likely to find you here."

Aggrievedly Bertie snorted.

"Creditors! T' — with 'em! I haven't any. I didn't clear out for that."

The old man's grin was a smile—a smile of understanding.

"What was it, Bertie? No harm in telling. Girl?"

For a second Bertie hesitated, and in the darkness killed a guilty, sheepish laugh.

"Um-um!"

"Out with it, Bertie."

"It's nothing, Frank — nothing. But, Frank," and a hand reached out unconsciously, "you ought to have seen her hair."

The smile of understanding broadened.

"Nothing, eh, Bertie, yet your mind carries a vision."

"It was a vision, Frank—" and the truth of enthusiasm rang clear. "Not golden, Frank, and not red—I can't describe it."

"They mostly can't. What was her name?"

"Eileen. She was the finest little kid who ever lived, Frank. Full of outdoors—hunting, shooting, adventure. The best-hearted, the best—"

"They always are, Bertie. Then you fellows come out here."

Again for a second Bertie hesitated, then, searching his mind to find if he were causing sympathy or amusement, decided it was sympathy.

"I thought all the world of Eileen, Frank, and she thought all the world of me. Honest, Frank. She was an orphan and an heiress, and she—"

And Frank smiled right out loud.

"The heiress, Bertie, not the hair. The heiress."

The reaching hand pinched viciously.

"No, Frank. Can't you be serious for a single second? She was the—"

"And then you came out here?"

"All right, if you must have it, Frank. Eileen had an old guardian who lived on her, and who tried to fix it for her to marry the son of an old cronny of his. Crooked old beast, he was. Crooked old —. Both crooked."

"They always are, Bertie, where there's a girl concerned—and you're the other fellow."

Puzzled, Bertie pondered.

"Yes, but they *were* crooked. Eileen didn't like that son, but they persuaded her and persuaded her, and lied about me and fixed things up to discredit me. And in the end she came to believe them."

"They always do, Bertie. All little ladies have receptive minds for the little wrong things in life."

"But this one hadn't, Frank. And then I heard Eileen was going to get married."

"And then you came out here?"


Abruptly Bertie stopped. For one full minute his brain went dumbly back.

"No, Frank," he quietly said. "Then I did the very silliest thing in the world. The very exact thing I shouldn't have done. Got on a — of a bust and made a perfect, complete, full-sized, egregious ass of myself."

"And then you came out here?"

"Yes," Bertie finished seriously. "And I dropped the family name."

In the darkness a hand came down, and Bertie felt a grip. And Bertie knew that sympathy was right.

 THE endless day dragged on and still the two men sat fitfully talking. The Kaffirs, but for their breathing, had long since given up every sign of life.

"A whole month with that poor, crazy — yelping round here," Bertie broke out disgustedly for the dozenth time. "The thought of that poor brute gives me the creeps."

"Oh, well, it isn't so bad now we know what it is," the graybeard said consolingly.

"That's right enough, Frank. But the expectation of hearing that thing cackling at any moment sends cold shivers racing up and down my spine."

"Let it cackle, Bertie. It's harmless if we don't annoy it."

But Bertie wasn't satisfied.

"It's hard to say it, Frank, but I wish the Kaffirs had killed the darned thing. I wonder why they haven't."

The old man's eyes, in the blackness, looked far into the distance.

"Human nature, Bertie. Just human nature. People always either destroy or adore those things which they least understand. And Kaffirs are only people."

"I know, Frank. But that thing?"

"That thing to them's a puzzle, Bertie. A madman—and a mad white man at that—must be possessed by witches. To them he's supernatural. They don't dare to offend him, and his crazy word is law."

"——!" Bertie said in awed amazement. "Then I hope the darned thing's struck eternally dumb."

"That's it. By that crazy laugh perhaps he is."

"I don't know, Frank. When I lit up his whiskers he cursed me in Kaffir. And he seemed pretty fluent."

The old man pondered deeply.

"He's harmless as a kitten, Bertie. He's too far gone even to think up trouble."

But Bertie wasn't satisfied.

"I don't trust any madness that's carried above two legs," he muttered soberly. His head shook with the vast wisdom of a sage.

In the long, still, eery wait night was day and day was night. Numbly the men slept and woke and slept. Hunger was always worrying, and thirst was a continual trouble. Only the feed of meal once a day, and the pot of water was never left behind.

"—— it, but I'm hollow," Bertie groaned as he lay with eyes open and listened to gage the graybeard's breathing.

"Hollow! If I get up I'll fall apart," the graybeard whispered weakly. "What time is it?"

Without the faintest interest Bertie produced his watch and struck a match.

"Ten o'clock, Frank. Morning or night?"

"Morning, Bertie. It must be. By my stomach."

"Strange, isn't it, Frank, they haven't brought in food yet?"

"It is, rather. Perhaps——"

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!"

The watch fell flat, so did the match. And just twelve feet away the horrid laugh rasped out again.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Away in the distance a dim, dim wraith of light filtered into the chamber—a dim, small mist of wavering brightness.

The wraith grew brighter, came closer. A shaft of brilliant light shot from the passage. Torches in many hands came in, torches almost uncountable. And as they came the cavern grew lighter and lighter, and still more light.

And still there was no roof above, and the high far walls were lost in blackness.


The scores of torches approached and scores and scores of men. Men all armed, all serious, all with a savage gleam upon their faces which meant no good.

Weakly the white men rose and as they rose the mad thing jumped before them and mouthed and grinned and slavered.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!"

The armed men quickly crowded round, Quickly, roughly, they pushed the white men's hands behind them, and tied them tightly. Quickly they fastened up the quaking Kaffirs and prodded them into a line.

And with the madman dancing before them they moved off. With a man each side to grip an arm, and the tickling point of an assagai touching each back they kept on marching.

 THE sun was beating down in a pitiless glare. The earth, one huge bright sparkling sheet, shot its rays back in dazzling, shimmering shafts. Like owls blinking in the gleam of a suddenly-turned-on searchlight the men struggled and strained to look about and get their eyes attuned.

With one vast, glowering mob ahead, beside and all round them the small procession

walked the full width of the high stockade—walked with the happy knowledge that a dozen willing sharp iron points were ready to aid each one along should he so much as falter.

With more accustomed eyes the two white men stared mutely. Upon each scowling Kaffir's head a towering headdress of ostrich feathers swayed and flowed as they hit the breeze. Around each arm, each leg, strips of long, hairy monkey-skin streamed and flowed as they moved. They carried shields and arms as though prepared for war.

Numbly each white man's brain fought to conceive their purpose—sought to conceive their purpose, yet prayed his thoughts were wrong.

This must be some great, great occasion—some feast, some rite, some dance. Some —?

And they to provide the show?

The party left the great stockade, passed through the gateway, down the steep mountainside and out into the smiling veld. Always before them danced a mouthing man.

One mouthing, frothing man ahead, and at his heels two others. Two men in strips of monkeyskin with necklaces and belts of snake and lizard skins, and armlets and leglets of fluttering hair.

And, watching and mimicking, exactly as the madman did, so they did.

The scowling, scuttering mob pushed through a sea of brown, dry grass as high as most of their shoulders. The stockade became farther and farther in their rear; the rocks all round it hid it. Nothing but the innocent sides of the huge hill remained. Abruptly the tall grass broke in a straight line as though mown down by some machine. Away for perhaps a mile was a square, rolling patch of sand—sand broken by myriads and myriads of hills—ant hills each as big as any Kaffir hut, and made by raids on trees and built up where those trees had been.

The crowd stood still. Swiftly the gibbering, mouthing man danced wildly out a full hundred yards away across the open. Dancing he teetered back and halted dead before the nearest scared white man.

Jabbering he leaned his face close to the white man and snapped as though to bite him.

The white man winced.

The crazy thing laughed and jumped back, then beckoned for the crowd to move again. With padding feet the multitude went on.

Wildly the thing gyrated, screamed, and shrieked. And on each side a hideous thing with flapping monkey skins spun and howled with him in wracking unison.

The nearest hills were but a dozen yards ahead. The mouthing thing sprang lightly as a young monkey to the top of one and loudly squealed.

Naked and bronzed by months of burning sun his body shone as though of burnished copper. Roughly the mob straightened the single winding line of prisoners and brought them all abreast, then drew behind and in awed silence waited.

And Frank's weak knees were knocking, his legs quite past control.

And Bertie's lips went hard and dry.

The jabbering man leaped down and bounded on from hill to hill, as though each foot of ground were known, and known quite well. At one great hill he stopped and, stooping, pointed wildly to four defined, yet unmarked spots—corners which formed a rough, though wide-topped, square.

The two men with him bent over and carefully watched his hand, then, howling, moved away with him again.

Six times the mouthing, frothing thing came to a stop. Six times the stinking men beside him stared to where he showed and bowed to his command.

Sickeningly the white men watched them, and Frank's big heart stood still. The points upon each hill were on the sloping side of the hill, the widest points above, the narrowest below. And there, but a short hundred yards away, still lay a pegged-out, sun-bleached skeleton.

Waveringly the eyes of Frank came round to those of Bertie. Painfully the eyes struggled to carry a message. The eyes were dim and misty, and black spots flew about. The filmy eyes, unseeing, carried no word at all.

Painfully the graybeard licked his lips and tried to speak. The trembling lips mumbled together, then uttered a querulous crack.

Shakily Bertie came to whisper, then the eyes of both men came ahead again.

And inside each man's skull there seemed a cold, cold wind.

From out the crowd of scowling blacks

four men with wooden clubs stepped sharply. Beside each man strode one more huge, tall black, and that man carried pegs. The men came to the first hill, and, with the jabbering man's satellites to point where, drove in their pegs and then moved on.

Then out stepped four more men—men with small pots of honey.

For the moment Frank was really dead.

And for the moment Bertie was paralyzed.

For Frank had seen and Bertie knew that this was torture—torture so fierce that— itself would blush.

With arms spread-eagled to the widest pegs and feet to those below, with lines of honey running from the ant hills and ending in their mouths—that was to be their torture!

Slowly to be eaten to death and at the very end a tiny bonfire upon each stomach.

The eager, grinning mob in grim anticipation watched, and watching pushed ahead. Limply both whites collapsed upon the men behind and roughly were pushed up again. The gray-faced Kaffirs—M'Poine with face quite green—huddled together with lower jaws sagged down.

The pushing mob came close, came up and stood around. Howling in insane fury the naked man leaped down from off a hill among them, his long arms thrashing as though two living flails.

In desperate fear the natives jumped away, and as they jumped he followed till a space was cleared.

In the clear space the two white men stood shivering, but neither knew it. In the clear space the Kaffirs leaned together, yet didn't comprehend.

For all six brains were paralyzed and scared to twittering numbness.

The crazy thing signed to its two assistants, and, jabbering, took them aside. Jabbering, its face went close to each and there for just a second stayed.

The hideous man came back and split the mob in twain, then drove each half aside—drove it and herded it as if to find a better place for it to watch the show. And through the passage in between, like dogs with sheep, the willing helpers snapped and yapped and drove their prisoners backward the whole distance to the dried-up grass and just inside the grass. Then, screaming, they drew the white men from

their servants, and left them standing yards apart.

The crazy man began to sing in Kaffir—a howling, senseless song. As he sang he danced away across the open sand, his helpers dancing and rotating, leaping and spinning and screaming in chorus with him. Right out across the open sand he went, then howling, back again.

The six men in the grass shivered, their six brains shivered, too. The eyes of the four Kaffirs bulged till they seemed as though about to burst.

Right there behind them a sea of grass, and yet to run with hands tied firmly behind them meant death just the same and but short minutes sooner. And could they run? Could quaking, thumping legs have made the slightest move?

The naked, sun-bronzed thing motioned with both its hands, and one hand held a knife. Howling the two men with him ran and stood each man upon a hill. With hands above they watched and howled a hideous tune. The thing turned back and chased like one possessed, and came up but scant inches from the whites. With bared long teeth it snapped and clicked close to the frightened Frank, and laughing jumped away. Then madly chased before the four tottering Kaffirs, and in chasing, with foot and elbow knocked each man down flat.

M'Poine squealed.

With bounds just like a buck the thing came back again, and, foaming, made a savage bite. The bite, within an inch of Bertie's cheek, startled the trembling legs, and he almost collapsed.

Then back again, and as a playful pup, the maniac bounded along above the sprawling blacks, and bounded back once more.

The thing came to M'Poine, halted as though shot stiff, then stooped. And stooping waved his knife, glittering and darting, a foot above the Kaffir's throat.

The Kaffir howled.

The knife came closer, the hideous face came closer. The Kaffir's eyes were bursting, popping from out an ice-cold head. The knife came down to an inch from quivering skin, the face came down to inches from an ear.

Loudly the mad thing shrieked and raved and howled. Then stopped for just one second dead. And M'Poine's squeal rose to a thin, sharp wail.

"Tell all your men to lie upon their stomachs," the madman fiercely ordered.

Then he stooped still closer, and, as M'Poine's head jerked away in terror he spoke a second time. And M'Poine's thick lips—ashen gray—turned to a bewildered smile. His mind, drilled to obey, knew that a bigger mind than his was working.

The thing rushed back and passed the wilting white men as the wind. Passed them and dodged around and to a spot where the tall grass was much more dense. Howling it stooped, and howling rose, a flowing robe of hairy monkeyskin in both hands. The robe seemed weighted as though inside were heavy solid things.

The robe went round its shoulders and it danced out into the open square, then danced and charged almost against the whites. Halting it held its face so close to that of Frank that its sweating heat fanned like the stench of carrion. And then it spat.

The crazy thing leaped back and howled and squealed and laughed. Laughed and gyrated, grimaced and danced around.

Again it charged, a furious maddened charge, and as it charged Frank moved to step aside. Frank's legs were useless and he couldn't lift a foot.

The thing drew up stock still, its glaring eyes peering like knives just off from Frank's nose-end. The snapping teeth opened and snapped again, the mouth made as if to spit. The monkey cloak flapped against Frank's broad chest; the madman's hand felt in a pocket of the cloak, and something from beneath it fell inside his shirt.

Something quite cold, and many smaller things.

The maddened thing squealed loud and then flew off again. Rushed to the prostrate Kaffirs and jumped from man to man, came to the last, then turned to jump again.

Flat on their stomachs the trembling Kaffirs lay—and screamed.

The glittering, darting knife flashed in the sunshine like a streak of living silver light. The knife came down and down and down. Down four swift times in some quick, ripping, tearing way. And then the wild thing laughed.

The thing dashed out again, left the long grass. In easy animal stride it reached the whites and passed by them. Shrieking it came again and spat on Bertie's cheek. Halting to spit again, it held its face at

Bertie's chin. The skin robe touched him flat across the chest. Inside his shirt something cold glided, then other little things. And all were cold.

The mouthing thing leaped back, then leaped ahead once more. The face came snapping and wincing, Frank's dead legs fumbled back. The frothing mouth was howling, the eyes were bloodshot now.

The jaws came wide apart, the strong teeth gleaming. Working, the teeth began to close. The wild thing howled—and then the face became serious.

"Don't move till I say 'go,'" he quietly said.

The thing sprang back a score of feet. Halting, it raised its head and faced the sky above. Shrieking it cursed the sky and howled and squealed and laughed.

The thing turned round and leaped toward the hills—charged through the crowd of waiting men who, shivering, drew aside clear to the foot of the hills with the two men standing high upon them. And there it stood and loudly screeched—screeched and instructed; admonished, cursed and laughed.

Again it leaped away, the Kafir crowd, happy in torture, yet awed unto their souls, leaving a path for it to dance in peace. And dance it did—danced and gyrated, mouthed and jibed and foamed—danced to the white men and round and round and round them.

The gleaming knife, like a circle of living sparks, flashed before Bertie's eyes and close to those of Frank. Again the man went round and round and round.

M'Poine's gray face was high up in the grass waiting for just the sign he wasn't sure of, waiting to give the word if he was right.

The mouthing thing danced round, the knife flashed high and low in circles gleaming up and down.

The thing danced back again, and Bertie felt the touch of iron. The thing danced around again and Frank's hands winced from the feel of moving metal.

The crazy man howled loud, bounded away out into the sand-strewn space a score of yards and then stood still.

His hands went up, his face went up, his cackle rose to the sky. Loudly he laughed, a mocking, snarling laugh—one loud, grim laugh; one loud, mad—

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Like lightning he spun round.

"Go!"



M'POINE'S charging Kaffirs beat through the long grass as if no one of them knew it was there. And close behind and side by side the crazy thing and the two white men brought up the rear.

Like a flash each white man's hand dashed down inside his shirt. Each hand came back with a revolver loaded and ready for immediate use. And as they ran spare cartridges beat a tattoo against each dripping waist.

Quickly the naked white man drew well out ahead and led the way. Bounded along and almost out of sight in the long grass before the waiting mob could even know what they had lost.

Then things began to fall. Behind and on the right and left assagais fell as though a shower of leaves, and quivered in the sand; and howls of fury, howls of flaunted savagery rent the still tropic air.

The assagais fell closer, fell with better aim. The howls came closer and ever closer still. The naked savages, agile as the beasts with which they lived, were gaining. Still running, the graybeard turned and fired at random.

The fleeing men came to an open space, passed it and darted into the tall grass on beyond. A Kaffir—crazy satellite of his more crazy chief—bounded into the space behind them and madly tore away an assagai which still quivered where it struck the earth.

Raising himself he went to throw. A chance shot caught him in the leg, and, howling, down he went.

And still the fleeing men tore on.

The chasing Kaffirs halted around their fallen man and chattered, then went on with the race. But not so certainly or eagerly.

Panting and firing as they ran the white men charged along, the Kaffirs running much more falteringly. On and yet on, a mile, two miles, and more. On the clear air the shouts behind grew fainter and fainter—and fainter still.

The grass ahead grew thicker—thicker and still more high. The grass turned into bush; the bush was dense. A huge, dark clump of bush was right ahead. With a squeal, a hideous howl, the mad thing leaped straight for it. Leaped round the bush and into it and into an open space. And in the open space stood two cringing awestruck Kaffir "boys" whose dumb obedi-

ence to the madman's slightest look showed their great fear, and seven horses ready saddled, and seven loaded rifles lying by.

For a second Frank looked around bewildered, then smiled as it sunk into his head.

"Must have had the horses out grazing and told them to drive them off this way; then while the row was on they stole the rifles and saddles from the kraal," Frank's old mind reasoned. "More system than I ever dreamed he had."

Quickly each panting man gripped his rifle. Stiffly each mounted his horse. The howling madman, now silent as the grave, waited till all were up, then sprang to the remaining horse.

The horses broke to a canter, to a gallop.

The grass alongside rattled, waved, moved wildly. From out the grass, with joyous leaps the ancient Cora gamboled. And playful as a kitten she leaped her happy way along.

The sun had sailed away overhead; the afternoon was passing. Wearily the graybeard drew rein and slid limply to earth. Sweating and weary the other men drew in and they, too, dismounted. Shakily they rubbed their horses down and tried to collect their fluttering nerves.

"I couldn't go through that again and live, Frank," Bertie remarked, and he slowly shook his head. "I wonder I'm alive and breathing as it is."

"I wonder I am, too, Bertie," the old man said, scarcely above a whisper. "I've been through many experiences in my long life, but never such a horror as that. And think, Bertie, of the many poor devils who've gone through it all and died that awful death."

"I can't think, Frank; it makes me want to vomit."

The graybeard turned his head and looked toward the madman. The crazy man, fresh as a healthy animal, slouched by the purring Cora and gently scratched her ear. And Cora, fawning, nuzzled her gnarled old head against him as she would against a fellow beast.

"I can't make out whatever kind of idea was running through his head," the graybeard murmured thoughtfully. "To make him put us through that agony. He had some deepest reason, of that we can be sure."

"Must have had, Frank, but he needn't

have gone to all that trouble to make that crowd there believe he was mad."

The madman seemed to hear and looked up with a vacant smile. Both white men's eyes were on him, and the smile broke to a silly cackle.

"What are you trying to do?" the graybeard asked as pleasantly as he could force himself to speak. "What was your bright scheme in frightening us almost to death, and then at the last minute snatching us away? And what comes next?"

Again for a moment the silly cackle sounded; then of a sudden the mad eyes seemed to clear, the lips to strive to speak.

"I want—I want—" the mad mouth started saying. "I want—" Then the great effort failed; the mind refused to act; the stupid cackle came again.

The graybeard's eyes came round to Bertie.

"He knows what he wants, Bertie, but now the big excitement's over his wandering brain's gone back. And he wants us. We'd better see it through, eh?"

"Of course, Frank. If I should guess, I'd say his wants are pretty closely bound up with what we're wanting, too."

"I think you're right, Bertie," and the old man's eyes looked hopefully far away into the distance in the direction they were going.

"What's more," he added. "I have a very strong idea that our madman has been through all that scene before—and that he's been the intended victim. And I think that, although his madness saved him then, it made him still more mad, if such could be. That's why his streaks of almost-sanity, then breaks into howling craziness, are so terribly inconsistent."

"Mad in two ways at once, eh, Frank?"

"Yes, Bertie; or else the worst half of his madness has been staged for reasons of his own."

A short half-hour they lolled in the long grass and fitfully rested—rested a trembling, quivering, sick, uneasy rest. Again the small crowd mounted and headed to the horizon. The grass turned to dense scrub, the scrub to bush. The bush skirted a maze of kopjes—hills muddled and mixed as though thrown wildly together by some giant hand.

The horses entered the hills and twisted in and out around them, the madman leading with an assurance which clearly

showed he had some definite aim. The hills were closer, more difficult and more confusing. The way wriggled along as the trail of a crazy snake. Swiftly the glowing sun slid down and out of sight. The short, clear African twilight glowed and faded; the African night commenced to fall. The bush broke to an open twisting crack and in the crack they found the spoor of passing wagons—spoor in which the crushed grass lay flat. Eagerly the naked man slipped down and closely scanned the tracks. Eagerly, but at a quite safe distance, M'Poine on hands and knees looked at the spoor.

Kaffir and brain-dead white man squatted together and inquiringly peered into each others' eyes. Kaffir and white man drew their horses into the shade of a clump of trees. Silently they lay and looked up at the stars.

Round a bright fire Kaffirs and white men squatted in silence. Gradually, one by one, they crept aside and slept—slept the dead sleep of men whose very souls are racked till the quivering shock of speech is far too great to stand.

The sun had barely risen before M'Poine came in with a young duiker. Under the trees he dropped the buck and instantly knelt to dress it.

The white men, pulling the smoldering ashes of fire together, looked wonderingly at him.

"All right, *Izim'Lungu*," the Kaffir assured with confidence. "The wagon passed two days ago. No man has heard me shoot."

The graybeard shook his head.

"We've got to eat, M'Poine, that's sure enough. But after all this I'd rather starve for two more days than lose the game at last."

"We shall catch them, *M'Lungu*, because they think they are safe."

The quiet, demented man listened intently. The eyes, still bloodshot, gave no sign of reason, yet the lips yammered, the head gave vigorous nods.

Eagerly the starved men fed, the hungry Cora gorging her empty maw just beyond sight within the grass.

Then they rode off and all that day rode—rode for two tireless days along the zigzagging trail. The spoor became fresher; the ashes of the fires were newer. The wagons were going slower, and the distance from

outspan to outspan grew regularly less and less.

The morning of the third day passed and still they pushed ahead, pushed though the horses in the blazing sun were caked with hardened sweat.

The madman, riding out ahead, dismounted. For a moment in the deep grass he disappeared from sight; then with a waving hand he stood erect again, and, with face gleaming queerly, mounted his horse.

The ashes of the fire in the outspan were hot, the wagons but one trek away.

Swiftly the crazy man drew farther out in front of the crowd. Silently he drew away from the track and plunged into the bush. In anxious excitement the two white men and the Kaffirs followed.

The track twisted around a sloping hill, rose and then dipped and rose. The rise was steep, and at the top a belt of trees streamed down into the valley beyond. The madman came to the top of the hill, dismounted and crept behind a tree. Minutely he surveyed the scene below.

A warning hand went up.



"ZZ-Z-Z-Z-ZING!"

The hand came down and the man threw himself flat.

"Z-z-z-z-zing!"

A second Mauser bullet tore into tough bark and ricocheted past the heads of those close behind.

Unconsciously Bertie's head went round, his eyes stupidly trying to follow the course of the bullet.

"—!" he said guiltily. "That looks like business, Frank."

"It does," the graybeard said with slow grim seriousness. "My plan to get Tombs and give him to the police is smashed already."

"Z-z-z-z-zing! Zing! Zing! Zing!"

More bullets fired at random squealed and whistled through the trees and clipped a leaf here and there.

Mutely the men dismounted and dropped the reins before their horses' heads. Eagerly in the thick bush they crouched and ran dodging to the brow of the hill. In the valley below, but a scant hundred yards away, were two outspanned wagons. Around the wagons and scurrying behind them for safety were a half-dozen startled natives; close by a bunch of saddled horses. In each wagon, nothing but the top of the

head and tip of crouching shoulders, showing behind sacks and boxes, appeared a white man waiting and prepared.

Flat on his stomach the graybeard lay and slowly studied the scene. Scanned it and painfully saw his greatest hopes gone wrong forever. Watched it and knew that things must end exactly there.

"It's no use, Bertie. They've got wind of our coming and it's now or never."

"Seems like it, Frank. But we'll never rush those wagons in safety."

"No, Bertie," the old man answered quietly. "But there's one thing—they can't get away in safety either."

"Not with our mad friend round, I think."

The crazy man, crouched as a monkey poised to spring, was smiling—a smile hideous, devilish and grim. As he smiled his teeth clicked, as a cat watching a bird just out of reach.

The madman moved, and as he moved a twig beneath him snapped.

"Zing! Zing! Zing!"

Three other twigs snapped round him. Gently the graybeard raised his rifle; slowly he took a careful aim.

"Pop!"

A bullet tore a wagon-seat and skimmed past a man's head.

"Let 'em know we're in earnest," the old man said and smiled. "Make 'em a bit more careful, eh?"

The head inside the wagon moved. Creeping from behind a provision box it slowly rose again.

"Zing! Zing! Zing!"

"Spread a way out and fire every now and then," the graybeard told the Kaffirs. "Bertie—" and he eyed the young man queerly—"when our fellows fire and keep them down you dodge with me from tree to tree. We may get to them even yet."

Intermittently the Kaffirs fired. And at each shot the firing white man in the one wagon dodged and came again.

Then from the second wagon came a quick, excited firing.

"Zing! Zing! Zing!"

The firing ceased and in the bush the graybeard beat his way for fifty yards. With the greatest care he ever used in all his life Bertie dodged quickly from tree to tree along behind him.

In the brief silence the white man in the second wagon moved his head higher,

craned it to one side to watch the on-coming men. The head came into clear daylight, and instantly the graybeard looked to Bertie.

"That's Rodney, right enough, Bertie," he quietly called. "Wish I could get that partner of mine alive. I don't care what we do to Tombs."

The old man knelt, and from behind a rock emptied his magazine. Quickly he re-filled it and made ready to fire again. Both men inside the wagons raised up their rifles to fire, and snatched them down again.

A scattering volley from the hill behind drove them to cover, and, for a moment, quietness. And in the quietness the Kaffirs by the wagons jumped from behind them and ran unarmed, dodging and crouching to safety in the bush.

The graybeard moved once more, a dozen yards or so. Once more he found a sheltering rock and sent a warning; then pushed on again, cautiously, carefully.

Rodney, in the wagon, opened out more recklessly. A head dodging away struck on his sight and instantly he fired—fired at the place it had dodged, fired at the tree—fired as one crazy, till his rifle clicked on nothing. Nervously he held the rifle aside and ripped away a clip of cartridges and made to put it in. A bullet shivered the rifle butt and jarred his trembling hand—jarred it and made him wince.

Wincing he squealed, and, squealing, dropped both rifle and cartridges.

Then he rose bolt upright and for one single second stood stock still. His grizzled, sun-lined face went gray. For a second he stood and looked, and, looking, looked at nothing. Then Rodney turned and, leaping from the back of the wagon, seized the first horse he came to and madly tore away.

And as he tore through bush and scrub the other graybeard, heedless of whining bullets whizzing round, raced up the hill and, mounting, bounded after him.

Tombs' head and shoulders in the other wagon rose once more.

"Zing!"

A bullet whizzed past Bertie's ear. Nervously Bertie dodged, then, grinning childishly, splashed a bullet on a wagon wheel.

"Zing! Zing! Zing!"

Then from the hill behind a scattering, sputtering volley.

And Bertie fired again—fired and dodged closer and closer in. A dozen yards and

then an open space and one quick rush. Uncertainly Bertie turned his head toward the hill. Not one small sign of life was visible, yet from the innocent bush came a popping threat of death.

Bertie's eyes came back. Inside the wagon, calm behind the seat, was the huge Tombs. His rifle, firm against his shoulder, pointed direct and true to Bertie's chest. A hard face smiled.

Limply Bertie fell and rolled behind a rock.

"Aough! Aough!"

Up over the tailboard of the wagon a frantic, howling creature leaped—clear through the wagon a streak of living ——. A lithe, sunburned, mouthing animal, with murder in its soul.

The huge Tombs turned his head—and that was all. With one mad bound the thing's whole weight came on him, its long nails deep into his neck. One arm gripped his waist.

Just as a toy the mad thing picked him up—lifted him clear, and twisted round; then threw itself and him clear out and on to the ground.

The huge man attempted to squeal. The talons tore his skin and stopped the rising shriek. Then with that strength few men know they have the mad thing turned Tombs over, knelt on him, and sprawled his legs around and held him as in a vise.

And laughed!

The huge man tried to howl. The gripping hand on throat squeezed till his breath stopped short. Wildly the huge Tombs strained to move the grip. Clawed, hit, and scratched. The wild thing might have been of steel for all the effect it had.

A hand came up to the huge man's eyes and made to gouge at them.

Shouting, Bertie dashed from behind his tree and yelled at the mad thing to stop.

The mad thing laughed!

Its teeth crashed into the throat. Like a dog shaking a rat it shook it and growled. Shook it until it lay quite still.

High in the wagon a hidden slender figure rose and stepped across the seat. A figure in breeches and top-boots, in light-gray coat and wide, gray, soft, felt hat.

The figure gained the ground and stood beside the quivering man. Silently, calmly it looked on. The mad thing loosed its grip, rose up and yelled. Its head went back, its face toward the sky.

And then it laughed—one great victorious shriek—one howl of sweet revenge. And as it laughed foam flakes and blood dripped from its mouth.

The laugh turned to a hideous yammering—a working of the jaws. Gradually the jaws moved slower and still more slowly. The madman's hands went to his hips and rested there; his face went calm. His eyes became almost clear, and with a smile of grim content he quietly admired his handiwork.

The slender, breeched, top-booted figure stood beside the lifeless Tombs. Dispassionately it looked down on him; dispassionately it removed the wide, gray, soft hat. Hair fell down to its shoulders, hair right down to its waist. And the hair wasn't exactly golden, neither was it exactly red.

As one who's been unconscious and suddenly comes to life, the wondering Bertie turned his head. His eyes went open wide, his mouth went open wide, and for a moment stayed so. Then the mouth closed and opened wide again.

"Eileen!" he fairly shouted.



THE fleeing Rodney charged into the tangled bush. Madly, at an angle, the chasing graybeard followed and fiercely tried to head him off.

The bush went thick, then thin, then thick, then thin again. Twisting and dodging, the fleeing man rushed off—and twisting and dodging, the cold, grim Frank pursued.

The bush went thick, then thinned away to nothing. Ahead were two towering kopjes, a passageway between. Wildly Rodney turned his horse and headed for the pass and into it.

The passway closed—a huge high *cul de sac*.

But feet away from a great wall of rock Rodney paused and loudly, vengefully cursed. Cursing he drew a gun and held it toward the onrushing man. The bullet caught the horse squarely in a foreleg, and, crashing, down it went with Frank beneath.

Frank fought savagely to free himself, but a leg was firmly held.

Above the horse's back Frank's head came up. A revolver was pointing at it.

A frantic twist, a painful turn and Frank's revolver blazed.

Squealing at the graybeard Rodney's horse collapsed, and threw its rider clear. And

then Frank pulled again and his revolver jammed.

As a rubber ball Rodney bounded tottering to his feet, his revolver, jerked from his hand, was somewhere in the bush. Cursing he charged upon the pinioned man. He kicked and swore and hit and mauled.

With grim set teeth the prostrate Frank tugged to free himself. The wounded horse, hard-breathing, wouldn't budge.

With kicking feet and flailing hands the wild old Rodney pounded. Pounded and smashed at Frank from head to foot, smashed at his ribs, his chest, his face.

A furious kick and Frank's head dodged aside. The fierce kick missed and struck the horse's spine. Groaning, it winced, and struggling tried to rise.

Both Frank's legs now were free, and Frank rolled over, then rose on hands and knees and quickly gained his feet.

Wild as two white-haired tigers, fierce as two savage-souled baboons the old men circled and tore into each other. Never a word, but just snarling curses. A snarl and deep, hard, hissing breath.

And round and round, staggering at rocks and crashing back through bush, stumbling at roots and grating against trees. The wild eyes gleamed, the cursing mouths went closed. Thin, sinewy arms beat the air and stiff legs staggered round and foundered.

A sharp rock caught Rodney's foot and rasped against it. Twitching he tried to raise the foot above it and back away. The rock was high and big and rough, the feeling foot failed to pass over it.

Cruelly Frank's hand, clutching his useless revolver, crashed squarely into the other's face, smashing in his nose and gashing a wrinkled cheek.

The man fell flat, and, reeling with the force he'd spent, Frank fell upon him.

And both men rolled apart and rose.

Blindly the bleeding Rodney charged in again and Frank dodged to one side. Hand and revolver echoed as they hit.

Rodney squealed, then, head down, charged again. And Frank jumped back.

The groaning horse behind went silent; the thin, clear air was not enough support for wildly clutching hands; reeling, Frank staggered, then rolled down in the sand.

Rodney screamed, then with both feet came down—came down full on to Frank's flat stomach and jumped and hit again.

Then staggered off and staggered back,

and kicked—kicked at Frank's gray-locked head, and cursed with wheezing breath. And Frank lay still.

The panting Rodney's arm wiped once across his face; came down; went up again.

Dizzily, dazedly, almost unconsciously, the bleeding man reeled back—tottered and staggered to the bush—dipped into the bush and, staggering, crept away.

A joyfully moving dragon-fly sailed out across the marshy water-hole—sailed out, sailed back again—sailed out on wings which moving yet were still, on wings which could reverse.

Weakly the aged lioness looked up and watched the glinting tail of gold which flashed in passing by. Then watched the sun about to fall.

And Cora whimpered—whimpered and chewed upon a folded, tired paw in little all-accusing cries.

Why should she be alone in her old age? Where was her pal, and why neglected now?

Three long days since she'd last had fresh meat. Three awful days her stomach'd known an aching void.

Three days! And Cora whimpered and sucked her paw.

A bullfrog croaked and Cora went to see it. Bull-frogs meant silence, and silence creeping things. A buck perhaps?

The dragon-fly passed by; the day was dead. And Cora's hungry tongue lapped the still water, and let it drop again.

And Cora mouthed, and, mouthing, sniveled sand.

Then Cora rose.

Her right paw shivered—held high above the ground—trembled as she raised her eyes and calmly questioned with her nose. The moving grains of sand stood still beneath her feet, yet Cora heard the sound if one grain moved.

And Cora thought—thought loudly—thought with a stomach urging, driving mad, then came down to a silence deep almost as death.

Her nose came down, a nervous spoor led off and through the reeds. Sniffing she followed it and wondered what it was. The spoor went dead, then opened up again. And Cora knew.

This was a bull eland, too big for her to tackle, too dangerous for her in her old age. And Cora whimpered.

A tiny mincing spoor crossed right ahead,

a spoor of many things. Her nose went down and answered to her brain.

Guinea fowl! Pshaw! Who wanted guinea fowl? Who wanted little birds? Besides, their feathers always jammed the corners of her mouth, and got stuck in her whiskers. Who wanted them?

Whimpering she moved away. Once more her nose came down and snorted.

No, that was buffalo. In her strong youth she'd struck down many such beasts, but now—it wouldn't do.

Sadly she left the spoor, yet eagerly tried again. Then her ears cocked, a lifted paw stayed up. And Cora listened.

Something uneasy, something big and careless was moving on toward her. Something that crashed and staggered, something that didn't care. The thing came up, came past her and made for the water back behind.

Three short, quick steps. Her nose came down.

A blood spoor! New blood!

Softly the tongue touched at the spoor, touched it and licked round to find from whence it came. And Cora followed.

Staggering, the thing went blindly on, reeling and holding wildly to its head. Close alongside, but out of sight, Cora looked up, and looking up she wondered.

This wasn't Frank—this two-legged thing. Yet was it Frank? No, she was sure—quite sure—that it was not. This was some other one of those she knew as master. Her old nose sniffed, then sniffed and sniffed again. The nose came down and gently touched the blood.

And then her stomach called.

A frightened shriek rose to the throat, rose and then stuck there dead. And Rodney crashed.

The broken neck had stayed all sound—stayed it for ever.

And Cora, glugged, slept there till break of dawn.



WITH back to counter Jimmie stood in the store and stared out over the shimmering, blazing sand. For two long months he'd looked across that sand, hoping against hope. A miracle might have happened. Limply Jimmie wiped his soaking, dripping chest.

"Sweltering!" he said to the Italian by him. "I think I'll strip and put pajamas on."

The Italian didn't answer, but lazily

turned away and wound the old ramshackle musical-box, and "Carmen"—"Selections from Carmen"—hit the poor, unoffending air. The sound struck into Jimmie's memory and Jimmie hesitated.

"I think we were about right in putting up that tombstone," he went on. "Bertie'll never come back now, no matter what the old lady says. Yet it's funny we never found any trace—any remains. I often wish, Brusoni, that I'd gone out with him."

"No, Jimmie, he's dead right enough. The old lady's suffering from some dream, some—what you call—hallucination."

"You're right, I think, Brusoni. Yet she declares he sent for her and even shows the cable she received in London."

Lazily Jimmie took the three steps to the doorway and lazily looked out—then jumped back as though shot.

Over the shimmering brow of the rise three hundred yards away came the gnarled head of a lioness. Behind it came her body.

Jumpily Jimmie rushed and brought a rifle.

And put it down.

With smiling face the lioness trotted on. Behind her calmly tripped four horses, upon their backs four human beings—three white men and one girl.

"Bertie!" Jimmie rushed frantically out. "Bertie!"

The lioness came up and Jimmie backed away like a frightened kid, yet tried to smile.

"Bertie!" Jimmie shouted again.

"Hullo, old top! Don't mind that silly old girl. She's harmless," Bertie replied excitedly.

Quickly he sprang to earth and rushed to meet his friend.

"Jimmie! Old Jimmie!" And two warm hands gripped tightly. "Jimmies, you rotten old angel!"

"Bertie, you drunken old dear!"

The two shook hands, and shook and shook again.

"Bertie!"

"Jimmie!"

"Bertie! Bertie come back to life. We buried you once, old man."

"Jimmie! Old Jimmie!"

Then round the corner of the doorway came a smiling head, a head with cheeks of healthy pink and hair of shining milk-white. A face as pure as ever two eyes danced in. Bertie leaped forward.

"Mother!" he said as his two strong arms

went round her. "Mother! You got my cable, then? And here he is, safe and sound as ever."

Then all was silent, and salt tears mixed with his.

Bertie broke away. Quickly he turned with one hand holding hers. The other hand reached out and felt for Frank, and tightly gripped him. Then Bertie brought two hands together—and Bertie's damp eyes gleamed.

"Mother," he said, "here's Frank, the old Black Sheep I cabled you to come for—the whitest Black Sheep that ever stood upon two human feet."

"Yes," the old lady said when they were more composed, and had talked things over a little. "Bertie cabled me two months ago that you were in the police hospital, and he was waiting by you for you to get well enough to move, and I came out at once."

"But why, Nellie? Why, after all these years?"

"All these long years, Frank. All these twenty long years I've waited."

"Waited for me—a Black Sheep?"

"No Black Sheep, Frank. You never were anything like that. Why, Frank, I paid the bank debts quite fifteen years ago. Paid every single penny."

"Paid them?" Frank almost collapsed.

"Yes, paid them. You remember when you made our marriage settlement? When it was all over you laughingly threw a bundle of paper at me and said, 'If ever you need new wall-paper use this, Nellie. It only cost twenty thousand and it isn't worth the paste to stick it on with.'"

"Ye-e-es."

"Well, all that stock came back and almost smashed the sky. And then I paid your debts. And all these years I've wondered where you were, and hoped."

"But why did you pay them, Nellie? Why?"

"Of course I paid them. I knew that you'd come home some day and I wanted you to come home absolutely clear. Then Bertie saw inside the watch which your club gave you. He was too young when you went for him to remember you, but when he saw that watch he knew at once you were his own father."

The old graybeard was silent, his filmy eyes went round and fixed upon the girl.

"And that brute, Rodney," he broke out

thoughtfully, "came down to losing women. I knew a dozen years ago that he was in with Tombs and finding custom for him. But women!"

The white-haired lady looked in wonderment, but didn't speak.

"Yes, Nellie. Rodney tried to delude Eileen into marrying his worthless son, and couldn't manage it. Then fixed it up with his old crony, her guardian, to lose her and divide. Took advantage of her obsession for hunting and adventure to get her on a trip to Africa—and she'd never have been seen again. Just as they lost this crazy man—the sanest crazy man I've ever come across."

"This man crazy?" Nellie's eyes went wide in wonderment.

"Yes." Frank smiled affectionately. "He's one of Tombs' victims, Nellie. A victim of a year or so ago, who came unpleasantly close to killing us in saving us. In his anxiety to make the whole thing real, Nellie, he came within an ace of scaring us to death. As I told you, after Tombs had killed my detective, he got Malan to hold us prisoner until he'd lost Eileen and got safely away again."

"But why would Malan help a white man, Frank, if he hated them so?"

"It wasn't the pleasure of helping, Nellie, it was the pleasure of hurting by helping. And when this friend here saw us he at once saw a way of getting at Tombs through us. Came in and watched us and nearly frightened the lives out of us in his cackling efforts to think it all out."

"Not very pleasant, Frank. It all must have been terrible."

"Awful, Nellie! Just awful! And this poor, crazy beggar knew he couldn't get Malan to free us under the month, or in time to catch Tombs; so he worked on Malan's fears and superstitions to let him torture us to death, just as they once must have commenced to do with him, so as to get us safely outside the cavern."

"I wonder you didn't fall dead anyway, Frank," the little lady said and shuddered.

"I almost did, Nellie. I was so scared I couldn't even try to run to save myself. You see the madman had worked himself up to such a pitch that he couldn't hold himself, and he came mighty near going through with the whole torture business before he could stop."

"And what are you going to do with the

poor mad thing, Frank? Send him back to England?"

Jimmie, listening quietly, softly shook Frank's arm. Smiling he pointed to where the madman squatted and gently caressed the crouching lioness.

"What's the matter with me, Frank?" Jimmie asked. "Can't your mad pal and Cora stay with me for good? Bertie and I tried our best to get her less than three months ago, and I consider that she half belongs to me. And perhaps in time kindness may make the man's mind flutter back to reason. I'm willing to try."

Old Frank's eyes glowed, and he held out a hand.

"Are you?" he said with a smile of great satisfaction. "Think you can break him in and make a friend of him? Think you can handle a madman?"

"Handle him?" and Jimmie grinned and cocked a curious eye. "Of course I'll handle him. Handling batty men's my specialty. Didn't I get enough experience handling Bertie?"



THE afternoon wore on. Lazily the Italian stepped over to the music-box and wound it up, and Carmen rose haltingly and floated out into the air.

Happily hand in hand the two old people passed the back door and wandered into the bush; Eileen, content and smiling, walking with them.

For one whole mile they walked, then a large tree loomed up. A crooning voice close to it rose on the still air and silently they tiptoed over to it.

"Tor-ee-e-e-a-dor! Tor-ee-e-e-a-dor!" the crooning voice sang over and over again and yet again.

Beneath the tree stood a rough-hewn six-foot pole and upon it a straggling painted sign:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

of

BERTIE THE BLACK SHEEP

Last seen alive at this spot.

Aug. 15, 1906.

High in the tree was a platform, and down below it the glistening, sun-bleached skeleton of what was once a donkey.

The creeping three drew up and watched. In front of the painted sign on a large stone

sat Bertie. One arm round Cora clutched her tightly, and hugged her as a child a doll, the other hand beat jumpy time.

"Tor-ee-e-e-a-dor! Tor-ee-e-e-a-dor!"

The music trailed away and Bertie's eyes came round to Cora,

"You poor old beast," he murmured softly, "to think I stayed up in that tree night after night to kill you, and now we're just the best of pals."

The young man stopped and for a moment thought, then quietly murmured on again.

"The best of pals, eh, Cora, and at the very minute I begin to find that life's worth living, hanged if I haven't got to leave you."

Then Bertie's lips went close to Cora's ear, and very seriously he loudly whispered:

"They'll get me back to London, Cora girl, but they can't keep me. I'll soon be out with you again."

A dried-up twig snapped sharply, and Bertie turned his head. Grinning he sprang to his feet, the color forcing its way under the skin.

"Just saying good-by to Cora," he said lamely. "Just having a last fond look at the old life."

Frank stood close in front of him, his kind old eyes quite queer. The women halted a dozen feet away.

"A last look, eh, Bertie? One last fond look at—freedom?"

"Yes, freedom, Frank. The only kind of life that God meant human beings to live."

Whimsically Bertie turned and jerked his head toward the painted board. For one fleet second the old Black Sheep was boss.

"Seems a darned shame to bury that poor fellow without a little wake," he finished up.

The eyes of the two men looked fondly, fixedly almost into each other's brain and each man smiled sympathy; then the old graybeard's face took on a painful tenseness.

"I'll have to go back home and fix up things, Bertie," he said sorrowfully. "Give

the horses and stuff to M'Poine and the other Kaffirs and settle with them. Then we can drive the ten days down to the station by Cape cart, and take the train to——"

A warning hand went up and Bertie's face said, "Listen." Both men listened—listened as they'd never done in all their keen-edged lives.

"But what's over the horizon? What's away behind the haze in the distance!" a clear, sweet voice was asking.

The two men's eyes came round. Just a few feet away, with backs toward them, and arm in arm, stood the two women. The white-haired lady was pointing, her whole frame eagerness and curiosity.

"What's behind the haze?" she repeated.

"Just another line of deep blue haze, and another far horizon," Eileen was telling her.

"And away behind the hills?"

"More hills and more deep blue horizon."

The old lady's face came round, her mouth close to Eileen's ear.

"I wonder would Frank and Bertie let us stay a while," she whispered audibly. "I'd like to go on and on and on and find it all out for myself."

And Eileen's face, all gleaming, came close to the rosy cheek.

"And I. I started once—I'd dearly like to finish," she eagerly, anxiously said.

Then Frank's eyes spoke to Bertie, and Bertie's eyes spoke back. And both men's hats came off.

"The lure—the lure—the mystery—the glamour of Old Africa!" Frank's smiling lips were saying. "She's got 'em! She's got 'em! She's got 'em, Bertie."

The white-haired lady's head came round, her face bright as the girl's.

"Well, can't we stay, Frank?"

Frank's eyes once again sought Bertie's.

"The lure—the mystery," the graybeard said again, and then his happy eyes went damp. "She's got 'em, Bertie. Got 'em! Old Africa's got 'em. Got 'em! She always runs true to form."

AS THE SPILE-DRIVER TOLD IT

by Frank Parker Stockbridge

YES, I've been runnin' steam engines f'r more than fifty years,
An' more I studies their habits, the certainer it appears
That human bein's came closest to God an' the angels when
They first created steam engines an' set 'em to work f'r men;
F'r of all of man's inventions, from now 'way back to the Flood,
Steam engines comes the nearest to bein' like flesh an' blood.

Gas engines has their merits—they pack 'more power to the pound—
But that's no great advantage, so long as you stay on the ground,
An' when it comes to flyin' I'll wait till they make a machine
That ain't so darned dependent on havin' its gasoline.

Steam engines, now, are human, just like a man or a mule.
They ain't so darned partic'ler about what they have f'r fuel.
If there ain't no coal pile handy there's other tricks you can turn,
F'r there ain't no part o' creation you can't find somethin' to burn;
Blubber or hay or cactus—I've got up steam with 'em all—
An' I even fired a b'iler without no fuel at all!

That was up in the Andes Mountains, atop o' the timber line,
On a pumpin' job—unwaterin' the Cerro de Pasco mine.
Seventy miles from the railroad, three miles up in the sky—
She'll bile at a hundred an' eighty—when you get up that high.
We fired her a while on cordwood that we packed up on llamas, which
Is a stinkin', half-baked camel, till the cholo choppers got rich
An' quit in a bunch, one payday; we might ha' been shut down yet
If me an' the head geologer we hadn't ha' made a bet.

He said right where we was workin' was an old volcano's spout,
An' there must be fire in the mountain still if we only could get it out.
I told him if he'd locate it I'd hook it up some way,
An' he said I couldn't do it, so I bet him a whole month's pay.
I thought the youngster was bluffin'; but the boy was there with the dope,
F'r he showed me a hot spring b'ilin' a little ways down the slope.

Well, I screwed up a coil o' steam pipe an' shoved it down in the hole,
An' she turned that engine over just like we was burnin' coal.
She wouldn't get up much pressure, but I rigged a condensin' gear,
An' we pumped them Spanish workin's dry on a half of an atmosphere!

I never seen a gas engine that hadn't a yellow streak.
But steam engines act like people; they'll do everything but speak.
A Diesel comes in handy—if you're talkin' o' submarines;
But the whole internal combustion tribe—they're nothin' at all but machines.
They'll deliver their rated horsepower, but when they've done that they stop;
Just give 'em a pound of overload, an' there's junk all over the shop.

Now, a good steam engine is human; it's got what you might call guts
 To tackle a job that's twice its size without any "ifs" or "buts."
 Like a man that's gone to his limit but still makes good on his nerve,
 It's the same with your old steam engine—there's always power in reserve.
 Throw all your drafts wide open, fasten your pop-valve tight,
 Give her the steam an' watch her pull you over the peak all right.

At Rangoon, with a floatin' derrick, I was loadin' teak on to ships
 An' I made good friends with an elephant that worked in the timber slips.
 We used to chin in the evenin's, when he came down f'r his bath,
 An' I'd toot good night with my whistle, an' he'd toot back up the path.
 One day we shifted our moorin's, an' when this big boy come along
 He started to wade up toward us, when I seen there was somethin' wrong.
 He stopped short off in his splashin' an' hollered to me f'r help,
 An' I never heard nothin' more pitiful-like than to hear that elephant yelp.
 He'd stepped right into a quicksand, a dozen feet from the scow,
 An' 'twas up to me to save him, an' the only question was how.

I grabbed the end of a log-chain an' went right over the side
 An' yelled to my Burmah fireman to open his dampers wide
 An' throw some pitch in the firebox, to get all the head we could,
 While I got a hitch round the elephant, a-sinkin' there where he stood.
 I dived right under his belly an' I hauled that log-chain tight
 Right back o' the big boy's shoulders, before he sank out o' sight;
 Only his trunk was showin', a-tootin' a farewell blast,
 Before I could swing the derrick round an' make the h'ist-gear fast.
 Then I pulled my throttle over, an' I reckon I prayed a bit
 That my old steam engine 'd tackle the load—an' she stood right up to it!

I don't suppose no engine has never took no such strain
 Since steam was first discovered, an' none won't never again.
 It stretched that wire cable, it buckled the derrick mast,
 It sprung the boom like a fish-pole—but all the tackle held fast.
 F'r mebbe a couple o' minutes I didn't know what to think,
 F'r instead o' the elephant risin' the scow was beginnin' to sink;
 But just as the strain got tightest an' the engine almost stopped
 The sand let go in a hurry, an' up the elephant popped
 Like a mud-cat caught on a fish-hook an' squealin' to beat the band.
 He looked more scared than happy as I swung him over to land.
 He pretty near wrecked the derrick before I could save my chain;
 Then he ran down the road a-tootin' an' I never seen him again.



THE CAMP- FIRE



A
Meeting-Place
FOR
Readers
Writers and
Adventurers

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us turn to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of heaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to the world the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you ever come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, nothing except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

A BRIEF word from Ben F. Baker in connection with his story in this issue:

San Francisco, Calif.

In submitting the enclosed tale I wish to offer an explanation of how I came to use "Tillicums" as a title. *Tillicums*, as you probably know, is Chinook for partners, friends, companions, chums. Sometimes it is used to convey all these meanings at once. It is the only word I know that defines the tie that bound *Michael Joseph and Ole*.—BEN F. BAKER.

JUST how far the movement for a national Sullivan Law has gone I don't know, but if comrade Harriman asks me or any other unprejudiced citizen of New York whether the New York law has proved wise in practise he will hear either a laugh or a snort. It seems to do just what Mr. Harriman says—results in the criminal's having guns and the honest man's being unarmed. When you see U. S. Marines with rifles in the big railway stations in the heart of the metropolis, guarding U. S. mail, and read day after day of hold-ups and armed rob-

beries you can guess how successful this law has been in keeping guns out of the hands where they do most harm.

It's sort of funny, too. Several years ago, being then a citizen of New York City, I wanted to do a little shooting down in my own cellar and planned to use a .22 target pistol that would not disturb the neighbors. To be quite lawful about it, I asked a policeman where to get a license. He didn't know. I asked another and another and another. None of them knew, but several of them said, "Aw —! Go get your pistol and say nothing about it." Not at all; by that time I was going to get me a license or perish in the attempt. Also I wanted to see whether any one knew.

I tried the local police-station. They treated me politely but seemed to consider me a freak for wanting a license. They didn't know, but sent me to Central Headquarters. As I remember it, they sent me back to the local one, which sent me back

to Central. I think it was on my third trip to Central that I got a license.

I found it entitled me to have a "concealed weapon" in my house, but *not* to carry it off my own premises. That required another kind of license. Also, I found it took another kind of license to hunt, or have hunting-weapons, or something like that. Well, I had a license to cover what I really wanted to do.

Then I got a notice to the effect that, while I could have that .22 in my own home, I couldn't fire it off anywhere in the city of New York without a license from the Fire Department!

AND all this time it was not safe to be out at night in our entirely respectable residential district—hold-ups and robberies right along. When I went out for a walk in the park at night I took my dog along and took pains to see that no one got close to me "accidentally." I carried no gun, for after my experience, as a law-abiding citizen, with the police, I figured I'd rather be held up than stand off a hold-up or two and then spend thousands of years in jail for carrying concealed weapons for the purpose of getting the protection the police couldn't give me. I don't know whether the hold-ups had licenses or not, but they had guns.

Well, anyhow, the Sullivan Law saved New York City from the menace of having me shoot .22 bullets up against the stone walls of my own cellar. Though they had to call in the Fire Department to do it.

I've moved into the country, but if they pass a national Sullivan Law I don't know what I can do. As it is, I have to let the deer eat the tips off my young fruit-trees and twist off the branches with their horns. I'm allowed to have rifle, shotgun and such, but I can't shoot deer with them. Complained to the State Game Commissioner, who solemnly sent one of his men to wait around parts of two or three days for the deer to attack him in the daytime and get killed. But they didn't; they waited till dusk and fixed some more fruit-trees. Maybe the Fire Department wouldn't let him shoot his rifle.

BUT the present laws work out nicely for the deer and the criminals. If you're neither one of these you get the short

end of things. And I don't suppose the deer are helping the agitation for this national Sullivan Law.

Here are Mr. Harriman's sentiments:

Los Angeles, California.

Certain reformers—our chief of police is one—propose to secure the passage of a national Sullivan Law. They argue that it will stop the killings, hold-ups, burglaries, *et cetera*, if the decent citizen is disarmed. Every sane man knows the thug with murderous tendencies will have his gun anyhow, law or no law. It simply means putting it beyond the power of the decent man to defend his home or himself.

ONE of the things specifically guaranteed to the citizenry is the right to bear arms. See our Constitution.

These addle-pated reformers wish to take this right from us and to leave us helpless before the gangster, the thug and robber. One of my correspondents writes me that when such a law is passed he is going to go to Brazil. I won't. I will stay and fight the law in the courts. If need be, I will fight the men who try to raid my house for arms. It is an un-American law, a fool law.

Has it benefited the good citizens of New York to have such a law? I am willing to bet ten dollars against a buffalo nickel that it has not. I call on every man who reads Camp-Fire to let his ideas on this proposition be known in Washington.

A law providing that every man owning a gun of any kind should be compelled to show himself a law-abiding citizen might do good. If every gangster caught packing a "rod" had to prove to the court his entire respectability, it might lessen the gun-packing by toughs.

I am in favor of any law that helps the good citizen against the bad. I am in favor of any law that will lessen the number of homicides. But I am not in favor of breaking down the last barrier that keeps the thug at bay, which is the sole object of this proposed law.

My correspondent writes that a friend in New York was stopped on the street recently and robbed of three hundred dollars. The man who was robbed tried to get a permit to carry a gun and was refused.

Do we want this condition all over the United States?

I say we don't. I say we are fools if we allow it.

THERE is only one remedy—to bring such pressure to bear upon our Congressmen and Senators that they will fear to put it over. The point that allowing our citizens to own and carry guns when needed will increase the number of homicides is well taken. It will conduce to a sad depletion in the numbers of our hold-up men.

Here in Los Angeles within a fortnight two or three of these men have gone down for the long count, before determined citizens. At Redondo Beach, only a few miles away, two scoundrels tried to rob a meat-market. The proprietor had a six-gun and knew which end to put in front. One hold-up artist died and the other, together with the one who waited outside in the flivver, beat the record for a Henry in the way they left town. Our sissy bill-makers would reverse this.

THEY propose to leave you and me and the rest helpless. To them a gun is a dreadful menace. They are like Mrs. — of St. Paul.

She overruled her husband regarding their boy. He must never, *never* touch a gun. So the boy received no instruction about guns. Then, at the age of eighteen, he went to Longworth's resort on Big Lake. With other young men he crossed the lake, followed the river to another lake near Fair Haven and landed from the boat.

So far, all was well. But the other boys had guns and they had placed them in a safe position, butts against a boat knee, muzzles pointing outboard over the bow. —, in his utter, abysmal, useless ignorance, noticed them while on the shore.

"Here!" he exclaimed. "You must not leave those guns like that."

He caught a gun by the muzzle and jerked it toward his body, before any one could interfere. The hammer caught, slipped, fell, and an ounce of chilled shot tore through —, tearing his stomach out in a third its length, reducing half his liver to mush. He died that night, a victim of his mother's foolishness.

If — had been properly instructed he would never have taken a grip on a gun and yanked it toward his body.

NOW our national stepmothers are prating against guns. I have used rifles, revolvers and shotguns for more than half a century. I have never shot any one. The possession of a gun and a reputation of being skilled in its use has been of use to me. It saved a friend from a coat of tar and feathers at the hands of a drunken mob, saved me from a crazy fool armed with a pitchfork, from a hold-up, from a few other unpleasant things. I shall stick to my guns.

As a deputy sheriff, a pair of .44s on my hips prevented certain "wabbles" from carrying out a destructive plan of some magnitude. Must I give up my guns? Not on your life. Get busy, boys.—
E. E. HARRIMAN.

THROUGH the kindness of comrade H. J. Templeton and the courtesy of the *Arkansas Gazette* we give here an interesting article printed in the Centennial Edition of that newspaper. The spelling "Reason" instead of "Rezin" is as used in the article.

THE BOWIE-KNIFE AND THE MAN WHO MADE IT

THERE were three Bowies—Reason, John and James—all men of mark. They were brothers, and at the time this story opens James Bowie lived at Nacogdoches, Texas; Reason and John in Arkansas—the former in the southern part of the State, near the Texas border, where he was a prominent planter, and John in the eastern, at or near Helena, on the Arkansas side of the Mississippi. The latter was a member of the territorial legislature.

THE encyclopedias are full of misinformation about these men and the origin of the famous knife which bears their name. One describes the

bowie-knife as "an American hunting-dagger named after its inventor, Col. Jim Bowie. In a *mélée* near Natchez (1827) in which six men were killed and fifteen wounded, the colonel despatched an opponent with a knife made out of a blacksmith's rasp, or big file; and his knife he afterward had fashioned at Philadelphia into the weapon with which his name is associated."

Another biographer of Col. James Bowie says: "In 1827 he was involved in a *mélée* which grew out of a duel opposite Natchez and resulted in the death of six persons and the wounding of fifteen, Bowie having killed one with a rude knife after he himself had been shot. This knife was remodeled by a Philadelphia cutler and became the murderous bowie-knife of frontier fame."

Judge W. F. Pope, in his "Early Days in Arkansas," says the knife was named after Reason Bowie, but was the invention of an artificer named Black, who then lived at Washington, Arkansas. According to Judge Pope, he charged Bowie \$10. for making the knife, but so well pleased was Reason Bowie that he gave Black \$50. Judge Pope adds: "I do not hesitate to make the statement that no genuine bowie-knives have ever been manufactured outside the State of Arkansas."

IN MAY, 1836, the *New York Star* said of this knife: "It was invented by Col. James Bowie, who was killed by the Mexicans at the capture of Alamo. About eighteen months ago, three brothers named Bowie, in the State of Mississippi, had a deadly conflict with seven other persons, armed with every species of weapons, among the rest with a large knife. This was handled by the brothers with such dexterity as to decide the conflict in their favor, although numbers were against them, and it has since been called the "Bowie-knife."

Copying this, the *Red River Herald* of Natchitoches, Louisiana, in June said: "This account is entirely inaccurate. The first weapon of this description was manufactured in the parish of Rapids, in the State of Louisiana, near the plantation of Capt. Charles Mulholland, on Bayou Bouef, in 1820. This knife was made according to the instructions of Col. James Bowie, then known by the appellation of 'Big Jim' Bowie. It was intended to answer the purposes of blazing trees and of a hunting-knife. The colonel carried this weapon for five or six years, when the dreadful conflict, yet fresh in the recollections of many, took place in the State of Mississippi, a circumstance which at once gave it an unrivaled reputation. All the steel in the country was immediately converted into bowie-knives."

And out of such conflicting statements history is manufactured!

NONE of these accounts of this famous weapon is, in my opinion, correct. It is the pleasure of the writer to present herewith for the first time what he feels is the only accurate account of the bowie-knife ever written or published. It is from the pen of the Hon. Dan. W. Jones, governor of the State of Arkansas from 1897 to 1901. The truthfulness of Governor Jones's statements can be verified by many old citizens of the town of Washington, Arkansas. It is a pathetic story. No tragedy ever had a more startling conclusion. No one of the Bowies was the inventor of the knife which bears their name. Their honor belongs alone to

James Black. Governor Jones's article is given just as he wrote it:

TRUE HISTORY OF THE BOWIE-KNIFE, WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ITS INVENTOR, JAMES BLACK

by Dan W. Jones

James Black was born in a village in the State of New Jersey, May 1, 1800. His mother having died when he was quite young, his father married a woman with whom James could not agree. At the early age of eight he ran away from home and went to Philadelphia, where he was apprenticed to a manufacturer of silver-plate ware, named Henderson, which apprenticeship subsequently was approved by James' father.

At the time of being apprenticed James did not know his age and, judging by his size, it was placed in the indentures at eleven years. Some time afterward, upon a visit to his old home, after his father's death, he discovered his true age in the family Bible, but did not disclose the fact to his mother. Consequently his apprenticeship expired in 1818, when he was only eighteen instead of twenty-one years old. He had become quite expert in the silver-plating business, and intended to make it his occupation for life, but (as he often stated to me), owing to the want of a sufficient tariff, this "infant industry" was unable to stand against British competition and it "went to the wall." This fact made him a Whig in politics.

After being released from his apprenticeship, in 1818, young Black came west until he reached the Ohio River, thence down that stream to the Mississippi, going down the latter to Bayou Sara, in Louisiana, where for a short time he obtained employment on a ferryboat. Soon tiring of this, he engaged as a deck-hand on a steamboat going up Red River and finally landed at what is now known as Fulton, on that stream, and went into the interior fourteen miles, a little east of north, where he found a small settlement, which subsequently he helped lay off into a town, since then and now known as Washington, in Hempstead County, Arkansas. Here he found employment with a blacksmith named Shaw.

In those days the village blacksmith was a far more important man than he is now. He was the general utility man. He made all the plows, hoes, wagons and other farming-implements. He made guns and knives and did all repair business in iron and steel. In fact, no community could then get along in the new country without its blacksmith, and in social as well as business circles he stood with the best.

Shaw had a large family of boys and girls. The oldest boy was about Black's age, and a strong attachment grew up between them. The oldest girl, Anne, was some three or four years younger than Black and was quite pretty, intelligent and attractive. She was one of the belles of the town and greatly admired by all the young men. Her father seems to have had "great expectations" for her, for, when he saw that Black had won her heart, he was unwilling to let her go to this young man who was "without fortune or a name," and he bitterly opposed their marriage.

Nevertheless, Black was a general favorite in the

community. He was tall, well-formed, handsome, full of life, vigor, energy, courage, genius and ambition, and Shaw could not well get along without him. He soon mastered his new trade, and far and wide was recognized as the best blacksmith in the country. Shaw took him into partnership with himself, rather than let Black set up an opposition shop, and they did an immense business for those days. Notwithstanding this, Shaw's opposition to his daughter's marriage with Black continued, which so disheartened the young man that he concluded to leave Washington and go farther west, but not until he obtained the girl's promise to keep her troth with him until he should return.

Acting upon this impulse, he journeyed westward—not in a railroad car, as nowadays, or in a carriage or wagon, or even on horseback, but afoot and alone—until he reached what is now known as the Rolling Fork of the Cassatot River, a beautiful mountain stream. There was no white man to the west of him and none for twelve miles to the east. Here he built a log cabin and took up his habitation. He had his ax and his rifle. With the former he cleared a small field in which he planted corn, and with the latter he killed game with which the woods abounded. He traded with the settlement twelve miles east, bartering the skins of the deer and the bear he killed for such things as he needed. His location was an ideal one, the land being exceedingly fertile, and the clear, rippling stream was filled with game fish.

Soon others came and settled around him, and Black conceived the idea of building a dam in the river and erecting a grist mill. This he commenced, and, with the assistance of his neighbors, whose labor he hired, had almost completed it, when the sheriff appeared and read a proclamation warning them that the land had been ceded to the Indians and that they would be required to leave. Black examined the proclamation and saw that it was signed by Andrew Jackson, president of the United States. Knowing it would be futile to resist, he notified his laborers that the work must stop, that he would return to Washington, resume his trade as a blacksmith, and, as rapidly as he could, would pay them what he owed them, which amounted altogether to seven hundred dollars. This debt he paid in the course of three years.

THIS occurred in the Fall of 1830 after the passage of the Act of Congress of June, 1830, ceding to the Indians that portion of the country known as the Indian Territory. Black had succeeded in establishing a comfortable home on the Cassatot, where he hoped to bring the "girl he left behind him," and with her live the life of which young lovers dream. I am informed that a large portion of the dam he constructed is still in existence, having withstood for more than seventy years the ravages of time and the assaults of the river.

On returning to Washington, Black married Anne Shaw, who had remained true to him, although her father still opposed the union. He opened a blacksmith shop and soon had all the work he could attend to. At that time Washington was a frontier settlement and nearly all men went armed, the weapon most relied on being the knife. All kinds of characters came there, the most desperate of desperadoes as well as men of gentle mold, but all understood that each man must look out for himself. Finding the demand for the knife to be so

great, Black applied himself largely to manufacturing them, and specially to tempering the steel of which they were made. It soon became well known that his knives were the best that could be obtained, and his reputation spread far and wide. The shape of the knife was according to the taste of the person ordering it, it being the custom for each man to furnish a pattern, made of wood or pasteboard, of the exact size and shape of the knife wanted.

Black's experience during his apprenticeship as a silver-plater enabled him to plate his knives with silver or gold, when required by the purchaser, which gave them an additional charm and a higher value. It was his rule, after shaping and tempering a knife, and before polishing it, to cut very hard wood with it, generally an old hickory ax handle which had been used for a long time and had become quite tough and hard. This he would do for a half hour, and then if the knife would not easily shave the hair from his arm, he would throw it away. His knives ranged in price from five dollars to fifty-two dollars each—the price varying according to the quantity of gold or silver used in plating, the five-dollar knife having no plating at all—but the temper of each was the same, each being submitted to the severe test above mentioned.

About 1831 James Bowie came to Washington and gave Black an order for a knife, furnishing a pattern, and desiring it to be made within the following sixty or ninety days, when he would call for it. Black made the knife according to Bowie's pattern. He knew Bowie well and had a high estimation of him as a man of good taste as well as of unflinching courage. He had never made a knife which suited his own taste in point of shape and concluded this would be a good opportunity to do so. Consequently, after completing the knife ordered by Bowie, he made another, and when Bowie returned Black showed both of them to him and explained the difference, at the same time giving him his choice at the same price. Bowie promptly selected Black's pattern.

Shortly after this Bowie became involved in a difficulty with three desperadoes who assaulted him with knives. He killed them all with the knife Black had made. After this, when any one ordered a knife from Black, he would order it to be made like Bowie's, which finally was shortened into "make me a Bowie-knife." Thus this famous weapon acquired its name. Bowie himself was not a mechanic of any kind. He was killed in the Alamo with Davy Crockett, and the legend runs that his body was surrounded by dead Mexicans whom he had killed with that same knife.

Other men made knives in those days, and they are still being made, but no one has ever made the "Bowie-knife" except James Black. Its chiefest value was in its temper. Black undoubtedly possessed the Damascus secret. It came to him mysteriously and it died with him in the same way, as I will presently show. He has often told me that no one ever taught him the secret and it was impossible for him to tell how he acquired it. His apprenticeship only gave him experience in plating iron and steel, not in working in them. Large offers were made to him for the secret, but he refused them all. He was stealthily watched, in order that his process might be discovered, but his reputation for courage was such that no one approached him too closely after being once warned to desist.

After becoming the mother of four children—
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three boys and a girl—Mrs. Black, the wife of James Black, died about the year 1837 or 1838. In the meantime, Black had acquired a comfortable little fortune for those days and had the confidence and esteem of all his neighbors, but had never succeeded in appeasing his father-in-law, Shaw, whose dislike seemed to have been intensified after his daughter's death.

During the Summer of 1839, while Black was alone at home, suffering from the effects of a protracted fever, and considerably enfeebled, Shaw came there and made an assault upon him with a heavy stick, striking him over the head a number of blows and almost killing him before relief came in the shape of Black's dog, which, hearing the noise, rushed in and seized Shaw by the throat and almost killed him before loosening his hold. The beating caused inflammation in Black's eyes which resulted in loss of his sight.

AFTER sufficiently regaining his strength he started to Philadelphia for treatment, but on the way was persuaded by some one to stop at Cincinnati and try a celebrated eye doctor there. He did so, but the doctor proved to be an unprincipled empiric and completely destroyed his sight. He then returned to Washington, after an absence of about a year, coming by way of New Orleans, where he went to see the justly celebrated Doctor Stone, who examined his eyes and informed him that the Cincinnati quack had forever destroyed his eyesight and that his remaining days would be in darkness. This proved to be true.

Upon returning to Washington, Black found that Shaw had administered upon his estate. Administration upon a live man's estate is certainly an anomaly in the law, but this is one instance of it, and Black was never able to recover his property. Black was blind and without a dollar, and in those days lawyers were scarce in that section and not much given to charity or wholly contingent fee practise, while Shaw had money and had already employed the best lawyers in the country.

But Black was not altogether without friends. There then lived on Red River, at a plantation owned by them, two most estimable gentlemen named Jacob and John Buzzard. Their home was on a high bluff on Red River, known as Buzzard's Bluff, then in Lafayette, now Miller, County, Arkansas. They knew Black well, and, learning his condition, invited him to make his home with them, which he accepted. Here he lived for about two years, or until some time in the year 1842, when he learned that Dr. Isaac N. Jones, who had removed from Bowie County, Texas, to Washington about a year previously, was becoming widely known as a skillful physician and surgeon. At his request the Buzzards sent him to Washington to see Dr. Jones and have him examine his eyes. After examining them the doctor informed him that the sight of the left eye was irretrievably lost, but that there was a slight possibility of restoring the right eye, but it would be necessary for him to come to Washington where he could see him constantly. Black replied that his utter destitution would prevent this.

"No," said the doctor, "you can come and live with me. I am able and willing to take care of you, and trust to the future for compensation."

Dr. Isaac N. Jones was my father, and at that time I was an infant, just beginning to prattle.

Black came to my father's house, and lived with us as a member of the family until his death, June 22, 1872—some thirty years. My father used his best skill to restore his eyesight, but without success, and finally told him that it would be useless to torture him longer with treatment when there was no hope, but that he should be a member of his family while he lived, and that he would feel sufficiently compensated if he would see after and advise his young boys—there were then four of us—while he was away from home attending to his patients, of whom there were very many. My father died in February, 1858—killed by the explosion of a steam boiler on his plantation—but Black, by common consent of the family, remained with us. After the death of my mother in January, 1867, I took him to my home at Washington, where he lived until his death.

My earliest recollections are connected with James Black. His kindness and fatherly advice to me and my brothers endeared him to us all, and my father felt that he was sufficiently repaid by the manner in which he executed the trust of looking after us. He was greatly attached to us all, but especially to my oldest brother, Isaac, and, after his death, at the age of fourteen, his affections were transferred to me. His room was my father's office, in the same inclosure with the family residence. By his own request his meals were brought to him there and he ate there alone, but his meals were always taken from the family table before any one was served.

I slept in the same room, read to him both light literature and history, and led him about when he desired to go anywhere from the place. He was a man of extraordinary memory and was always made the referee in all controversies among the old settlers when they failed to agree as to any occurrences of the early times. He was universally esteemed as a man of the strictest integrity and uprightness. Night after night I have listened to him till midnight, reciting to me incidents of the early days of that section of the State, and I have often regretted that I did not write them down as he told them.

Time and again, when I was a boy, he would say to me that, notwithstanding his great misfortune, God had blessed him in a rare manner by giving him such a good home, and that he would repay it all by disclosing to me his secret of tempering steel when I should arrive at maturity and be able to utilize it to my own advantage.

On the first day of May, 1870, his seventieth birthday, he said to me that he was getting old, and, in the ordinary course of nature, could not expect to live a great while longer; that I was then thirty years old, with a wife and growing family, and sufficiently acquainted with the affairs of the world to utilize properly the secret which he had so often promised to give me; and that, if I would get pen, ink and paper, he would communicate it to me and I could write it down.

I brought the writing material, and told him I was ready. He said, "In the first place," and then stopped suddenly and commenced rubbing his brow with the fingers of his right hand. He continued this for some minutes, and then said, "Go away and come back again in an hour," while he still rubbed his brow.

I went out of the room, but remained where I could see him, and not for one moment did he take

his fingers from his brow or change his position. At the expiration of the hour I went into the room and spoke to him. Without changing his position or movement, he said, "Go out again and come back in another hour." I went out and watched him for another hour, his conduct being the same. Upon speaking to him at the expiration of the second hour, he again said, "Go out again and come back in another hour." Again I went out and watched, the same things continuing.

When I came in and spoke to him at the end of the third hour he burst into a flood of tears and said, "My God, my God, it has all gone from me! All these years I have accepted the kindness of these good people in the belief that I could repay it all with this legacy, and now, when I attempt to do it, I can not. Daniel, there were ten or twelve processes through which I put my knives, but I can not remember one of them. When I told you to get the pen, ink and paper, they were all fresh in my mind, but they are all gone. My God, my God, I have put it off too long!"

I looked at him in awe and wonder. The skin from his forehead had been completely rubbed away by his fingers. His sightless eyes filled with tears and his whole face was the very picture of grief and despair. I could only say, "Never mind, never mind, Mr. Black, it is all in the wisdom of God. He knows best. Don't worry."

For a little more than two years longer he lived on, but he was ever after an imbecile. He lies buried in the old graveyard at Washington, and with him lies buried the wonderful secret which God gave to him and was unwilling for him to impart to others.

YOU may remember there was a dispute at Camp-Fire as to who did much entertaining at the Eastern State Penitentiary of Pennsylvania. A letter from Robert J. McKenty, the warden, tells me that "Mr. Edward Kraupa and Miss Mae Russell used to furnish moving-pictures and vaudeville to the inmates of this institution." So if that settles it, it's settled.

OUR Camp-Fire Stations are spreading steadily over the map.

Below is an outline of the idea and a list of the Stations to date:



A STATION may be in any shop, home or other reputable place. The only requirements are that a Station shall display the regular Station sign, provide a box or drawer for mail to be called for and preserve the register book.

No responsibility for mail is assumed by anybody; the Station merely uses ordinary care. Entries in register to be confined to name or serial number, route, destination permanent address and such other brief notes or remarks as desired; each Station can impose its own limit on space to be used. Registers become permanent property of Station; signs remain property of this magazine, so that if there is due cause of complaint from members a Station can be discontinued by withdrawing sign.

A Station bulletin board is strongly to be recommended as almost necessary. On it travelers can leave tips as to conditions of trails, etc., resident members can post their names and addresses, such hospitality as they care to offer, calls for any travelers who are familiar with countries these residents once knew, calls for particular men if they happen that way, etc., notices or tips about local facilities and

conditions. Letters to resident members can be posted on this bulletin-board.

Any one who wishes is a member of Camp-Fire and therefore entitled to the above Station privileges subject to the Keeper's discretion. Those offering hospitality of any kind do so on their own responsibility and at their own risk and can therefore make any discriminations they see fit. Traveling members will naturally be expected to remember that they are merely guests and act accordingly.

A Station may offer only the required register and mail facilities or enlarge its scope to any degree it pleases. Its possibilities as headquarters for a local club or resident Camp-Fire members are excellent.

The only connection between a Station and this magazine is that stated above, and a Keeper is in no other way responsible to this magazine nor representative of it.

Alabama—50—Fairfield. Percy E. Coleman, 405 Forty-fifth St.

Arkansas—104—Pine Bluff. B. C. Jordan, 1215 E. Second St.

California—44—Oakland. Lewis F. Wilson, 836 Seventh Ave.

28—Lost Hills. Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Monson, mrm of Gen. Del. No. 2.

38—Los Angeles. Colonel Wm. Strover, Westlake Military School, Mount Washington.

60—San Bernardino. Charles A. Rouse, Hotel St. Augustine.

73—Galt. E. M. Cook.

74—Eagle Rock. John R. Finney, 100 Eddy Ave.

89—Magalia. Butte Co., K. W. Mason.

Colorado—105—Grand Junction. Bart Lynch, 236 Main St.

Connecticut—86—New Haven. C. S. Roberts, 457 Fawcett Hall, Yale University, Elm Street and Blount Ave.

103—New Haven. Ralph Pierson, 3 Yale Station.

Florida—87—Miami. A. C. Smith, 13th St. and First Ave. N. E.

Georgia—98—Hinesville. R. N. Martin, *The Liberty County Herald*.

Indiana—18—Connersville. Norba Wm. Guerin, 112 East Eighteenth St.

99—Linton. Herschell Ison, 73 Tenth St., N. E.

Illinois—47—Peoria. B. H. Coffeen.

66—Mt. Carmel. W. C. Carter, 1122 Chestnut St.

67—Plainfield. J. P. Glass, The Linshield Co.

77—Chicago. John Bradford Mann, H. Company, 1st Inf. Ill. N. G., 16th St. and Michigan Ave.

Maine—10—Bangor. Dr. G. E. Hathorn, 70 Main St.

50—Cape Cottage. E. Worth Benson, P. O. Box 133.

59—Augusta. Robie M. Liscomb, 73½ Bridge St.

Maryland—53—Baltimore. Henry W. L. Fricke, 1300 E. Madison St. at Asquith.

82—Baltimore. Joseph Fattl, Jr., 4014 E. Lombard St.

Massachusetts—26—Malden. Arthur R. Lloyd, 16 Cross St.

49—Fitchburg. G. R. Wyatt, 66 Lundenburg St.

Michigan—27—Marquette. T. Mitchell, Box 864, G. P. O.

69—Grand Rapids. Dr. A. B. Muir, 1133 Lincoln Ave., N. W.

79—Lansing. Geo. H. Allen, *Lansing Industrial News*, 100½ N. Washington Ave.

80—Detroit. R. A. Taylor, 5120 Maybury Grand.

106—Gaylord. Sidney M. Cook.

Mississippi—38—Tunica. C. S. Swann, The Electric Shop.

Missouri—31—St. Louis. W. R. Hoyt, 7921 Van Buren St., phone Riverside 250.

94—St. Louis. C. Carter Lee, M. D., 3810 Olive St.

Nebraska—95—Omaha. C. Wolff, 119 No. 16th St.

New Mexico—96—Silver City. Edward S. Jackson, Box 435.

New Jersey—17—Caldwell. Chas. A. Gerlard, P. O. Box 13.

16—Bayonne. J. D. Gray, 92 West Sixth St.

91—Tenafly. Ed Stiles, care of Reed, P. O. Box 431.

New York—23—Jamestown. W. E. Jones, 906 Jefferson St.

42—Yonkers. A. F. Whelan, 133 Elm St.

34—New York City. St. Mary's Men's Club, 142 Alexander Ave., Bronx, N. Y. C.

93—Rochester. Thomas C. Murphy, 62 Swan St.

109—New York City. Bronx Division U. S. Junior Naval Reserves, 3112 Webster Ave.

North Carolina—92—Asheville. B. Taylor and C. M. Gravatt. The Southern Spar and Mica Co., 322 Haywood Bldg.

Ohio—13—Cleveland. Wayne Eberly, 602½ National City Bldg.

58—Cleveland. J. F. Thompson Community Pharmacy, 9505 Denison Ave.

75—Columbus. Chas. W. Jenkins, 54 S. Burgess Ave.

53—Ulrichsville. Anthony Sciarra, E. Third St.

93—Ulrichsville. Chas. F. Burroway, 312 Water Street.

Oklahoma—37—Haskell. Roy Holt.

Oregon—43—Salem. D. Wiggins.

Pennsylvania—20—Philadelphia. Wm. A. Fulmer, 252 S. Ninth St.

24—Philadelphia. Alfred A. Kromback, 4150 N. Eighth Street, and Spring Mills Station, P. & R. Ry. Co., Montgomery County.

100—Philadelphia. Veterans of Foreign Wars, 926 N. 41st St.

78—Pittsburg. Peter C. Szarmach, 330 Barton St.

21—Braddock. Clarence Jenkins, Union News Co.

South Carolina—8—Allendale. Ed. N. Clark, Editor-owner *The Tri-County Record* and Allendale Advance.

97—Charleston. Jack Mettze, Navy Yard.

Texas—54—Houston. M. B. Couch, Route 2, Box 189.

59—Beaumont. D. E. Johnson, 784 Orleans St.

Virginia—108—Cape Charles. Lynn Stevenson, Custom House Building.

Washington—37—Republic. A. E. Beaumont, Box 283.

12—Ince. A. S. Albert, Albert's Billiard Hall.

61—Burlington. Judge B. N. Albertson, Fairhaven, Ave.

83—Seattle. Chas. D. Raymer, Raymer's Old Book Store, 1330 First Ave.

7—Mount Vernon. Ed. L. Carson.

71—Charlton. Elmer E. McLean, Box 561.

West Virginia—48—Huntington. John Geiske, 1682 Sixth St.

Wisconsin—41—Madison. Frank Weston, Room 9, Tenny Bldg.

5—Milwaukee. Paul A. Buerger, Apt. 2, 150 Biddle St.

72—Kenosha. Leland Birchard, 304 Marion Ave.

Australia—39—Melbourne. William H. Turner, 52 Emaline St., Northcote; and Carters' and Drivers' Union, 46 William St.

76—Melbourne. Chas. M. Healy, "Oora," Abbott St., Sandringham.

Canada—31—Vancouver. B. C. C. Plowden, B. C. Drafting & Blue Print Co.

84—White Rock. B. C. Charles L. Thompson.

22—Burlington, Ontario. Thos. Jocelyn.

4—Dunedin, P. E. Island. J. N. Bergan.

20—Deseronto, Harry M. Moore, *The Post Weekly*.

43—Norwood, Manitoba. Albert Whyte, 172½ De Meurons St.

10—Montreal. P. Q. Nelson J. Cook, 2037 St. Catharine St.

30—Winnipeg. Man. Walter Peterson, 143 Kennedy St.

62—Tweed, Ontario. George L. Gattson.

53—Toronto. W. A. Bach, 206-208 Victoria St.

85—Ontario. J. Wonal, Simcoe St. S., Oshawa.

102—Amherst. Lloyd E. Mac Pherson, 3 Belmont St.

Canal Zone—37—Cristobal. P. E. Stevens.

Cuba—15—Havana. Ricardo N. Farres, Auditor, No. 1 Cerro.

France—61—Paris. Walter Denman, 10 rue Auber.

Great Britain—65—North Wales. William J. Cooper, "Kin Cra," Plasstrion Ave., Prestatyn.

Honduras, C. A.—32—Galeras. Olancho. Dr. Wm. C. Robertson.

Mexico—68—Guadalajara, Jal. W. C. Money, Hotel Femix, Calle Lopez, Cotilla Nos. 260 & 281.

Porto Rico—46—San Juan. M. B. Couch, P. O. Box 944.

Spanish Honduras—70—Jos. Buckley Taylor, La Ceiba.

RESULTS of our vote by readers on the stories published in the magazine for 1921 will be published in an early issue. In the meantime be marking down your favorites for 1922.

Don't let the stories in the later issues overshadow those earlier in the year merely because you read the former later and have them more vividly in your mind. And don't let the mere length of a serial, novel or novelette outweigh the shorter stories.

Voting is simple and easy. On any sheet of paper write your list of ten stories (giving authors' names), numbering them in order of preference. If you like, add as many as ten stories more by way of complimentary mention or second choice. Add your name and address. But don't send in your vote till the end of the year.—A. S. H.



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These services of *Adventure* are free to any one. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you read and observe the simple rules, thus saving needless delay and trouble for us. The whole spirit of the magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we can help we're ready and willing to try. **Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.**

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Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of the last issue of each month.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply *Adventure* back through 1918, and occasional copies before that.

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Our Camp-Fire is extending its Stations all over the world. Any one belongs who wishes so. Any member desiring to meet those who are still hitting the trails may maintain a Station in his home or shop where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book and maintain his Station in good repute. Otherwise keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the first issue of each month.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

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General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask *Adventure*" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Addresses

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.
Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.
(See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask *Adventure*.")

Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure Magazine* by Our Staff of Experts.



QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for general information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections,

subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and full postage, not attached, are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.
2. Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.
3. No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.
4. Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your aims sufficiently to guide the expert you question.
5. Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.

Please Note: To avoid using so much needed space each issue for standing matter and to gain more space for the actual meat of "Ask Adventure" the full statement of its various sections will be given only in alternate issues. In other issues only the bare names of the sections will be given, inquirers to get exact fields covered and names and addresses for full statement in alternate issues. Do not write to the magazine, but to the editors of the sections at their home addresses.

- 1, 2. The Sea. In Two Parts
3. Islands and Coasts
- 4, 5. New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. In Two Parts
6. Australia and Tasmania
7. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
8. New Guinea
9. Philippine Islands
10. Hawaiian Islands and China
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12. Asia, Southern
- 13-19. Africa. In Seven Parts
20. Turkey and Asia Minor
- 21, 22. Balkans. In Two Parts
23. Scandinavia
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26. Central America
- 27, 28. Mexico. In Two Parts
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36. Alaska

37. Baffinland and Greenland
- 38-42. Western U. S. In Five Parts
- 43-45. Middle Western U. S. In Three Parts
- 46-49. Eastern U. S. In Four Parts
- Weapons, Past and Present. In Three Parts
- Old Songs That Men Have Sung
- Fishing in North America
- Mountains and Mountaineering
- Standing Information

Big-Game Hunting in the Arctic

HERE'S a trip that will make the old sourdoughs green with envy:

Question:—"Noting that you are named on the staff of "Ask Adventure" as representing the Arctic district, I am writing you for some information, as I am at present organizing a party to go up into the Arctic regions for the purpose of hunting big game.

My ideas are that we will proceed into the Arctic regions in my power cruiser, which is 150 feet in length, twin screw, with two 300 H. P. engines (oil) and a speed of approximately 18 miles per hour.

The cruiser, however, will have to be arranged specially for an Arctic trip, and what I am desiring information upon is as follows—

1. What routing would you advise us to take, so that we would be in a country where there is an abundance of polars, walrus and seal, also fox and other smaller game?

2. Will there be any danger of being crushed by ice when we become frozen in for the Winter, if we should decide to do so? The intention of the party is to take along provisions and supplies, and spend one close season in the Arctic region.

3. Would it be necessary to proceed far from the location of our cruiser to find game?

4. What means of travel or transportation would you advise, if necessary to go overland, or over ice, when looking for game?

5. Would we be able to find timber which we could utilize for fires, so as to enable us to heat up the cruiser with wood stoves, during the time we were lying frozen in? We would not be able to use oil for this purpose, as we would find it necessary to conserve the oil supply for the return trip.

6. What restrictions are there on the big game of the Arctic regions, and what duty must one pay to bring any pelts or hides into the States when we should return, providing, of course, that we should be lucky enough to get some game?

7. When would be the best time to start, so that we could get up into the regions, and find a good location before the freezing started?

8. Will it be possible to use sleds for transportation purposes which are propelled by motors and aeroplane propellers, or would we find the surface of the ice and snow too rough for this means of transport?—R. O. STOKOE, Kiowa, Oklahoma.

Answer, by Mr. Solomons:—Your letter is an oasis in a desert of piling inquiries which are mainly directed to the problem of "getting a job" or "striking it rich" in Alaska. They get very monotonous.

My field covers really the Arctic regions adjacent to Alaska, so far as topography goes. However, my suggestions as to equipment and the like will apply pretty well to any part of our northern coasts, as I keep fairly well informed. I have not personally lived in the region about Labrador and Greenland. My belief is that the Alaska Arctic will suit your purposes far better than the Labrador-Greenland side. Settlements are nearer; so is fuel; and I believe game to be equally abundant if not more so.

I assume you are now provided with maps. If not, immediately obtain the Government maps and the Coast and Geodetic Survey maps of Arctic Alaska. By the former I mean, of course, those of the Department of the Interior.

1. Partly answered above—the northwest Alaskan coast, approached on the Pacific side from San Francisco, or, better, from Seattle as the port of final supply, thence through Unimak Pass to Nome, where you would call for mail and obtain final supplies of certain commodities and stock up on oil. Nome imports a lot of it cheap for use on its numerous dredgers, it being imported in tankers. Thence through Bering Sea, stopping if you wish at Wales (Cape Prince of Wales) and taking on a few Eskimo hunters and helpers (or you could take these on farther up) who are educated and very capable.

I could, if you wish, give you some letters to old native friends of mine in Kotzebue Sound, your next and last ports of call, who would give you cordially friendly assistance in dealing with natives. The latter are perfectly peaceable, and the finest people in the world, but they are shrewd and wary of

white voyagers, having had bitter experience with the whalers.

I would advise going on to Point Barrow and rounding it to some distance along the northerly shore if the season was a propitious one, leaving time to return to some point in the vicinity of Cape Lisburne or the mouth of the Noatak River for your Winter quarters. You would get all the bear, walrus and seal as well as fox and other fur-bearers you wished, with a good chance at caribou.

2. Your boat will be perfectly safe in any of the lagoons of sufficient depth for safe anchorage. You will merely have to keep out of the direct channel from the sea to the tide-water limit of the river emptying into the lagoon. You could no doubt Winter at the mouth of the Colville, beyond Point Barrow, but your range of game would be less, fuel distant and impracticable to obtain, and you would be taking a chance on getting out as it sometimes happens that a whole Summer passes without a clear way around Barrow. South of that point, however, you would be perfectly safe, and could carry out your purposes.

At Lisburne you could get all the coal you wanted, gratis, and go on a little distance to an appropriate anchorage and freeze in. This would be but a short distance. You could winter at Hotham Inlet or Keewalik, at both of which places are white mining and missionary settlements, but here the game would not be so plentiful.

3. With reference to the proximity of game to your cruiser, you know that seasonal variations make this question a difficult one. You could undoubtedly Winter with safety to your boat in several places covering a thousand miles of coast line—I mean at any point you might select along such an optional limit—assuming your craft does not draw more than the usual amount of water for a vessel of its size. And in the vicinity of that place you would find seal, walrus and bear, and also narwhals (the "white whales" out of which the Eskimos make soles for their muckluks and cover their large skin boats—"oomiaks"). But for fur the section of the line southward of the Point would obviously be the best, for the timber is there found fairly near salt water. Expeditions after game, especially land game, would have to be made anyhow, but you need not fear that your anchorage must necessarily be remote from your sport. Such is emphatically *not* the case.

4. For transport you would want dogs, sleds and canoes. I would advise, by all means, picking up these in Nome or Kotzebue Sound, but you ought to take some light Eastern-made canoes of the Peterboro type, and have them sheathed, on the cutwater especially, with copper. A few *kayaks* and an *oomiak* will be mighty handy in the ice in hunting, as they are much lighter than any wooden craft and this is highly desirable in getting seal, walrus and polar bears. The natives use a sled and a *kayak* or *bidarka* (two-holed *kayak*) in floe-ice hunting in the Fall and Spring.

Across the "lanes" and open spaces they paddle with the sled forward of them, laid across the *kayak*. On the ice they reverse things. Thus they bid defiance to drift, breaking away of sections of floe-ice, and the like hazards. No satisfactory ice hunting can be done in any other way except in the dead of Winter at the time of greatest solidity of the ice zone offshore.

But remember that on extended ice journeys *there is no safe season*. Take the word of one who

knows—almost to his greatest cost! That is, safe with only a sled. More than once I have had to cross a lane on a sled, discarding most of my gear and game, sinking the sled in the water and paddling across any way, with the sled out of sight underneath me and myself half-submerged in mighty cold water. With sled and canoe one is practically safe—assuming one has grub and bedding, of course. On land you use a canoe or *oomiak* up the rivers in Summer and the sled and dogs in Winter; and sled and dogs for all ice journeys, too, of course. Dried salmon, obtainable in Nome, is their all-sufficing food.

5. From the foregoing information you will see that you can carry oil for all heating-purposes. Also that if you Winter anywhere near Lisburne (or Kotzebue Sound) you may obtain coal. Further, wood is to be obtained on the beaches along practically the whole length of the Arctic coast. This is drift from the mouth of the Yukon largely, plus flotsam from the seven seas—Japan, China and the Lord knows where. Hard woods are often found. Further still, there is spruce on the rivers above the coastal deltas, clear around the Alaskan Arctic, but in the vicinity of Barrow and eastward this is many, many miles inland.

At Lisburne, or rather southward of it, clear down into Kotzebue Sound, the timber is much nearer. The drift is all sufficient, however. Many cabins have been made of it.

6. There are practically no restrictions. As for the animals classed as game, there are certain restrictions which apply in southern Alaska, for which for accuracy and detail I would refer you to the Bureau of Fisheries publications obtainable from Washington, D. C.; but such "game" as you would get in the Arctic—and you would get it all right—you will be able to handle without molestation. You will be in precisely the case of the whalers, who take themselves and in trade from natives and others, just what you are after, or at least most of the game you are after. However, get the pamphlet.

7. You ought to start when the first boats leave for Nome. These, which expect to encounter the last of the floe ice in Bering Sea, leave Seattle about the middle of May. The larger steamers don't want to be delayed by ice and start about June first. A little time in the Bering ice will initiate you nicely into the condition of your future work. You would then have nearly five good months even in the northern part of the field I have described before freezing in, or about four actually in Arctic waters.

8. There is nothing impracticable about motor-driven sleds on river and *smooth* sections of sea-ice; but it is out of the question on land for reasons which you will not desire me to go into. While you will always encounter a barrier of rough ice or an occasional wall of ice a foot to eight or ten high on the coasts where pressure has driven one floe into another and splintered the edges, which have then been crushed up, if your sled is not too heavy to be handled over such obstructions you would be able to effect the transport of heavily loaded sleds and trailers great distances in a short time with power.

I do not think that your work up there would require such extensive transport, but since you have a small ship's space at your disposal I should certainly provide myself, if I were you, with such a motor or two and propellers. The aeroplane propeller is a little long for the purpose, but it could be rigged as high as possible, even if it had to be geared to the motor set in the bottom of the sled.

As to the type of sled, of course you would want one strong but fairly light. Ordinary dog transport is done usually in "basket" sleds, with sides and handle-bars at the rear, but on coasts and rivers where narrow tracking is not essential the range in type of sled is very wide. Of course you would take on basket sleds in Nome for ordinary "mushing" about. No doubt most of your traveling in Winter would be done in these.

I should be glad to answer further specific inquiries as you get your plans further advanced. It is a pleasure to answer such a letter as yours. I am almost tempted to apply for a berth on your little craft. I lived ten years in the region you are going to visit—if you take the Alaska end of the Arctic.

Names and addresses of "A. A." department editors and the exact field covered by each section are given in alternate issues of the magazine. Do not write to the magazine itself.

Do Sunken Ships Hit Bottom?

THE "ayes" seem to have it:

Question:—"The motive for this letter lies in the fact that I wish to act as an intermediary, and rely upon your advice to settle an argument of long standing which has a decidedly nautical trend—and in explanation would like to make you aware of the fact that this argument has been a bone of contention for quite a long time between several of the boys in my squadroom, here in the Marine Barracks.

The boys down here, having nothing much to avail themselves of in the way of good amusement, usually resort to pinocle—and argument—and it so happens that a particular aggregation of pinocle hounds are the sea-lawyers of the outfit, and in the natural course of events some one introduced the subject of sinking ships. One faction has it that a ship will always sink to the bottom, while the other party upholds that a ship can only sink to a certain distance, where it will remain suspended, due to resistance and pressure, specific gravity and all of that dope. Frankly, I sort of favor the last argument as it seems the most logical, in view of the fact that almost every one is aware of such a thing as water pressure. Also, in addition to the other argument some of the boys contend that the pressure of the water is no greater at a depth than at the surface—that's why I call 'em sea-lawyers; they use that as their argument to prove that a ship will sink to the bottom of the ocean every time she goes under.

One ham down here wrote to the Bureau of Navigation to get a few notes on the subject, and got a letter from an admiral or some such animal, who styled himself, "Hydrographer, U. S. N.," and while this old salt spun a tolerable yarn about meters, atmospheres, and so forth he didn't really answer the question in a correct manner and say that a ship would sink to dead bottom—all he said was that after it reached a depth of 400 meters it would sink faster and faster. His information was so technical and complicated that it was just like an umbrella in April—over every one's head; and so I told the boys that I knew of an old deep-water

windjammer who had been shipwrecked more than this coal-barge admiral had ever made port, and that I would write you to get some real logical dope.

If you can give us the correct stuff on all of this bunk, try to put it in the sort of English "as she is spoke"—so that even most of our brilliant minds down here can catch the gist. I know that's a big order, skipper, but that's the only way some of these dummies can be convinced—they read and write English, you know, but they speak United States.

When these buddies got the idea in their think-tanks that here at last was a chance to get to the real information from a reputable source, they jumped at it. I'm interested myself, so here's a hope that you can slip us a hatful of information relative to all that I've mentioned.

NOTE:—Stamped and self-addressed envelop enclosed."—ROBERT H. STOV, U. S. Marines, Parris Island, S. C.

Answer, by Captain Dingle:—Because I don't believe any Marine can shoot well or far enough to hit me here, I'll answer that — fool question about the sinking ship to the best of my own belief. Get the belief. Nobody knows by actual visual proof. It's like a trick question anyway.

All that stuff about pressures is right. But there's one simple fact which is sometimes ignored when talking pressures. All water-pressure increase enormously with depth.

See a fish hauled up from only thirty fathoms. Down there he's accustomed to resisting high pressures; when he's dragged up fast to the top, giving him no time to adjust his resistance, all his innards poke out of his mouth, simply because outside pressure decreases too quickly.

But about the ship: If she has a quantity of air absolutely imprisoned within some compartment, she undoubtedly would take a very long time to get to bottom—as long, in fact, as it took for that imprisoned air to get out, either through gradual leakage or decay of the structure. But if no air remains inside the hull, then, coming down to pressures, since the pressures are equal all around, outside and inside the hull, there remains the actual intrinsic weight of the ship to pull her down eventually.

This is my personal belief, shorn, as you ask, of all pretense to highbrow dope. I believe that every ship sunk eventually reaches bottom in some state or other, though it may not be intact, and Lord only knows in what time.

Game of Southern Nigeria

IT'S there, all right; oodles of it:

Question:—"My chum and I are about to be discharged from the Army, and we are planning to make a trip to Africa for big-game hunting for pleasure and profits. We are each twenty years old, and are pretty fair shots with a rifle. We have had practically no experience. Please answer the following questions:

1. Could two men of our qualifications make this trip with success?
2. What are the possibilities in hunting elephants for ivory?
3. What part of Africa is best for this kind of hunting?

4. What are the laws for hunting in Africa, if any, and licences, etc.?

5. Where could a man dispose of ivory and furs?
6. Are there any markets for skins of fur-bearing animals?

7. Please give all the dope you can about insects, fevers, etc., and their prevention and cure.

8. Could two men get along in the jungle without help of natives, guides, etc.?

9. Could we get along with the natives, speaking only the English language?

10. What is the best make of rifle for this work, and what size bore? Which is the best cartridge, lead ball or steel jacket? Can we buy rifle and supplies in Africa?

11. About what would it cost to finance an expedition of this kind?"—K. C. S., Schofield Barracks, H. T.

Answer, by Mr. Miller:—There is no reason why two wide-awake young men with the tropical experience of Hawaii should not get along very well in West Africa, or southern Nigeria, which would be your best field. But you could hardly look for financial success. In the first place elephants are getting rare, so rare that even experienced hunters often fail to bag a single one. A "visitor's license" costs ten pounds—say forty dollars at present rate of exchange. That allows you to kill birds, water-buffalo, leopards, gazelle, etc., within certain prescribed areas and a limit on the bag.

A "special license" is required to kill elephants; to wit, one elephant, fifty pounds, two elephants, a hundred and fifty pounds—about six hundred dollars. It is not permissible to kill less than a fifty-pound tusker, or to kill a female elephant at all. There's a Government royalty of two shillings a pound on ivory. In fact, you had better put elephants off of your mind.

Under a general license you may kill 1 hippopotamus, 1 bongo, 4 buffalo, 4 roan antelope, 4 water-buck, 4 bush-buck, 4 reed-buck, 4 hartebeest, 8 buffon's kob (cobus kob), 4 red-fronted gazelle, 4 situtungs, 2 addra gazelle, etc., etc., with modifications according to the district hunted. With a bird license only—which costs but a dollar—you may shoot guinea fowl, sand-grouse, red-eyed and green pigeons, rock fowl, francolins, florincas, partridges, quail, geese, duck, teal, snipe, lesser bustards, etc.

There are markets for skins and hides in all large seaports. Bring them to America, or sell them in England. All the papers run ads. of fur-buyers.

Yes, two men used to roughing it could make the jungle, but would want guides, or they must keep in touch with villages. Mostly the blacks are friendly, and if the white man is tactful and careful to avoid running foul of the superstitions it would be all right. You would want to go to a public library and read up the books on the West African shelf before you went, or it would be like monkeying in a chemical laboratory without any knowledge of chemistry.

If you are hardened and not finicky and can "live off the country" as we say in Africa—live by your rifle and such native foods as you can buy with the flesh you bring down—it would not be expensive, less expensive than roaming the States. But you would have to hire carriers for your pelts and guns and camp equipment, and sometimes hire canoes. As for language, a white man can generally make himself understood by signs.

Steamship passage *via* New York and England or the Grand Canaries would cost you second-class about five hundred dollars each. For clothing, nothing beats the U. S. Army regulation stuff for the Philippines.

As to battery. A hunter once told me he got along with one .405 repeater—American. But most insist on a heavy double-express English rifle for close and dangerous work. For all but such heavy game as elephants, buffalo and rhino the Army Springfield will answer. Say one modern Springfield and a double-express. That would cover all contingencies.

As to insect pests, the worst is the mosquito. You would take out mosquito bars. The white ant is a terror, but easily avoided. Centipedes, tarantulas, very few poisonous snakes, though in the jungle the constricting python is an ugly customer. Same as anywhere else in the tropics. Take quinin, for you are bound to have a touch or two of malaria.

It all depends on your mental and physical fitness. It is no soft man's game. I have hunted days in supposed good districts without bagging a thing. At other times I ran into game of all kinds in abundance. For the smaller game—leopards, gazelle, birds, etc.—northern Nigeria is the best field.

You would go to Lagos, on the Gold Coast, thence take the railway to Zungeru or Kano and start off from those places.

Horses can be bought in northern Nigeria for twenty dollars, and good mounts at that. But take out your own saddles.

Hope I have been able to help you, and wish you luck, but by no means advise the adventure.

If you don't want an answer enough to enclose full return postage to pay for it, you don't want it.

Bits and Spurs

CALIFORNIA and Texas each has something to say on both subjects:

Question:—"You are a bit of a horse expert, aren't you? Well, I'd like to bother you again if you will be good-natured enough. Horse-gear is a regular hobby of mine, and I have a good collection gathered all up and down this earth. Now the subject of this letter is bits and spurs.

As a Native Son I learned to ride with the usual silver-mounted spade of California, Oregon and Nevada. For some years the only spurs I ever saw were the California drop-shank with heel-chairs.

I believe there are more spurs of this pattern used in the range States than any other; but if you show this pattern of spur to a Texan he will either laugh at it or run it down. It is in his opinion no good; but I notice he can not tell you why.

In Texas, New Mexico and Arizona the favorite spur seems to be a Kelly Bros., mounted with nickel, very large, heavy and clumsy and of the most remarkable shapes I have ever seen.

Some of them are so built as to make it a work of difficulty to spur a horse with them. I have one pair here with which I can not touch a horse without causing the spur to run up my boot. It is made to be used without a heel or understrap. I have seen medieval spurs in my father's collection

and in Europe which appear to be better shaped than those curiosities affected by Texan riders.

These men favor a swinging button on the heel-band too. They claim a straight heel-band, California style, won't lie straight on the boot. This may be true. In my buckaroo days we used to wear the spur loose and let it droop right down on the boot-heel. Every time we dismounted we took the spurs off. The Texan keeps his on. You may not believe me, but I have seen Texans in Kansas City with their spurs on; and they were *not* curbstone cowboys. They had come in with cattle on the cars and were waiting to get back on the train. Now on the Miller and Lux outfits along the Humboldt they would have laughed (at least fifteen years ago; it may be different now) at this. Also in those days we wore small hats and never saw high-heel boots. Buckingham & Hecht, cowboys' favorite medium heels, \$5 to \$8. Can you give an idea of the different shapes and sizes of spurs? Are they affected in shape any by the country they are used in, the work done and the horses used on?

I use the California pattern yet. I prefer them; and when packing in the mountains where boots, which now cost a fortune, can not be worn by a poor man, these California spurs are the only pattern I have ever used that will stay in place on shoes. The Texas style with turned-up or swinging button and no heel-strap—You can't put one on either; the stem of the button is too short—are all over your feet, and ankles.

Regarding bits, now, after Army, hunting and polo experience I have acquired a strong dislike to the spade bit. Was it every really necessary, do you think? The Texas bit with low port and short checks appears to be far sounder in principle than the spade or half-breed. I am using one now—a one-piece, silver-mounted one and a far more than any horse I've had down here.

I have recollections though of Oregon, Idaho and Washington horses—half-cayuse—that go up to 1,100 lbs. in weight and get so gay if they have a few weeks spell that you can hardly ride them. Do you think the Texas bit would work on them?

Also Mr. Texas still uses the big square-skirt saddle—double—he claims you could not do heavy roping on a round-skirt, as it would turn. How far is this correct? They have used round-skirts since I was born; but I must confess that the roping is heavier in the Southwest than it is in Oregon, Nevada and up North. In fact few men in the North could rope, throw and tie down because they don't have to do it. In "screw-worm" country it is part of the work. All our branding was in corrals—two men to a beast—heads and tails.

What do you think about the square-skirts? I use round and don't give a hoot what people say; but I like to know *why* they say it. Any way a Texan is about the narrowest-minded cuss I've ever met; they know it all. I can say that because our family helped to build up the Lone Star State."
—DICK HALLIDAY, Santa Rita, Grant Co., N. M.

Answer, by Mr. Harriman:—Glad to hear from you again. You write like a man who knows what he wants to know. I like to answer such letters, even though I may not be posted quite as well as I should like to be.

In re the spurs: It reminds me of the old argument about the double cinch *versus* the center fire.

That argument has been going hot and strong ever since I came to California in 1886; and old-timers tell me it was a hot subject in the early 80's.

I seldom wore spurs when I was riding daily, having horses that I had broken myself and who would take a signal they understood with all the enthusiasm of a setter dog. I had a signal code of my own, with which I could start my favorite, a brown stallion, into walk, trot, lope, rearing, caracole or walking a log. I could make him shake hands with foot or mouth or cause him to send out the stallion yell. And more.

The spurs I wore then were the little kind such as cavalry officers wore in the seventies. Out here I took to the California spur. I have worn the Kelly and wouldn't give a buffalo chip for a pair.

I have a spur without a rowel, which was found in a cave in Santa Cruz County, Arizona. It is of Mexican blacksmithing. The double shank is open work of fancy design, an inch wide and 4¾ long. I'll bet the cuss who made it had a rowel in there with points two inches long. In my opinion the style of spurs is due to a racial habit, not to any difference of actual work required. I have seen a few spur-jinglers like the cowboys in Kansas City you mention, and they look silly.

In the matter of spade bits I have decided opinions. I never used one except on one horse and I have the cussed thing a mile after one week of use. I have taken horses that were supposed to be semi-outlaws and have handled them and ridden them with a plain snaffle bit.

In doing this I took my time and gained the good-will and confidence of the brute first. I rode one once when the bit broke, and I stopped him by laying forward and gripping his nose. I was along his neck like a Comanche engaged in circling an enemy. He was running, not bucking.

In those days I thought I could ride just as fast as they could run.

I say the Texas bit is plenty severe enough. I have taken a man off a horse endways for using a spade bit brutally. Give me strong reins, in the old days when I was twenty-five to thirty, and a good bit without any cruelty contraption on it, and I got there with the rest of the procession, even though I never claimed to be a star buster. I like 'em gentle now, since I am almost 61 and weigh 235 without any bulb at my waistline either.

Regarding saddles: I never used the square skirt as a steady diet. I did occasionally, but my own saddles were round. I have handled a bull which weighed better than 1,200, alone on a round-skirt saddle. The whole gist of the matter was I never took him on a cross pull, save when I jerked his legs out from under him; and then it was only half-across, sort of diagonal pull. But then I was not a cowboy, only a fool volunteer who helped a crew out here in California.

My horse came from New Mexico's mountains. A gray with speed and strength, kind and true.

I think I can imagine a situation where the square-skirted rig might be advantageous, however. For a' that, a Texan can't stuff me with any arbitrary rulings on bits, spurs and saddles.

Have I answered to your satisfaction? I hope so. Come again at any time that suits you.

Free service, but we don't pay the postage to get it to you.

Buenos Aires

A BULLY town—and just as “American” as any community in the United States, as Dr. Goldsmith points out.

Question:—“I am especially interested in the city of Buenos Aires—population, approximate number of American citizens and number of American business houses; climate, average temperature and if considered healthy for an American citizen; customs, industries, and any additional information you would consider valuable to a person contemplating locating there.”—C. B. Cook, Clarksdale, Miss.

Answer, by Dr. Goldsmith:—The city of Buenos Aires has about 1,700,000 inhabitants. I have no way of knowing how many United States citizens or business houses are to be found in the city. There must be several thousand of the former; there are not a great number of the latter, although there are many direct agencies, and many Argentine, French, English, Spanish and Italian firms represent United States firms and act as their agents. There is an “American Commercial Club” with headquarters in the Plaza Hotel, and an American chamber of commerce (that is, a United States chamber of commerce).

In dealing with the southern countries, we try to avoid the use of the word “American” and “America” as descriptive of the people and things of the United States and the United States, as all the natives of America—that is, of the western hemisphere—are Americans.

The climate of Buenos Aires is about like that of southern Georgia or Florida or southern Mississippi, except that the Winter comes in June, July and August, etc. It has snowed in Buenos Aires once or twice within the last twenty-five years; the Summers are pretty hot. The country is healthful enough. Buenos Aires is one of the finest cities I have ever seen, and it represents as high a type of civilization as anything we have.

The customs of the people vary according to the locality; in Buenos Aires they are similar to those of any large city of the United States or continental Europe. The population is cosmopolitan, and the customs vary somewhat according to the particular type of nationality with which one is dealing.

The chief industries are agriculture, cattle-raising, the refrigeration and export of meat, the preparation of hides and leather and the export of hides, the production of sugar and wine, the taking out of *quebracho* (used in tanning), etc.

If I knew more about your business, or what you intend to do in Buenos Aires, I could give you more definite information.

More About “Rattling Up” Deer

IN THE issue of February 10th Mr. Spears had one explanation of the term as it is used in the Adirondacks; here's another emanating from down Texas way:

Question:—“I noticed an article regarding the “rattling up” of deer. Whoever wrote the answer to this inquiry had evidently not hunted in the State of Texas. It is a method not widely known,

and one that I have never heard used except in the border counties in this State, and then only in those where the mesquite and live oak are thick, and where it is very difficult to get your shot.

During the rutting season, when the bucks are fighting, the hunters will equip themselves with two deer-horns, which they usually carry suspended to their belts. They then pick out a locality where the deer are running and establish themselves on one side of a clearing down the wind. By rattling the deer-horns in imitation of the noise produced by deer fighting, they call the bucks just as one would call turkey. When the buck rushes up to join in the fight, he is shot.

This method is not used a great deal now, as most of the hunting in those localities is now done by driving with dogs, but I understand that the Mexican ranch hands and a few old-timers still use this method. The writer believes that he knows the man who originated this method, and which was very popular at one time.

Like most other things it was discovered by accident. The man that I speak of was on a deer-hunt when a youngster. He entered a small clearing, leaned his gun against a tree and sat down to rest. While sitting there he noticed a pair of old deer-horns on the ground near by and picked them up.

He was sitting there playing with the horns, knocking them together to see if he could lock them, when a large buck jumped over a nopal into the clearing in front of him. His gun was too far away for him to get this one; but it gave him the idea, and he killed a large buck the same morning by the same method. It gradually became known that deer would respond to this noise and most deer-hunters down there always carried a set of horns with them during the season.—H. W. MITCHELL, Breckenridge, Tex.

Answer, by Mr. Spears:—I guess you have the advantage of knowing what you are talking about in that matter of "rattling up" deer, although I know the guides and woodsmen, starting out in the morning for a man-drive of deer, shout:

"Rattle 'em up, boys! Rattle 'em up!"

I never had heard of the clattering deer-horn lure for bucks in the running season, and I'm right glad to know about that Texas phase. I was hunting deer in the Adirondacks (N. Y.), years ago, making an unconscionable amount of noise in dry spruce knoll underbrush. A big buck came smashing through at me, within fifteen feet. He saw or smelled me, stopped, stared wildly, and left—quite unharmed—and I think your letter explains that incident. That buck thought I was another—for a doe was just over the knoll, as I found a moment later.

Thank you for getting me straight in the matter.

Just yesterday an old friend, Lathrop, of the Lazy One Eleven (Danbury, Tex.) asked me to come his way, and I reckon I'd better, and see Texas!

Pitcairn Island

MR. BROWN finds it a synonym for lots of nice things:

Question:—"I am writing requesting information concerning Pitcairn Island. I am very much interested in this island at present. I wish you would kindly answer the following questions:

At present are there any natives or other human beings living on this island?

What is the history of this island?

How is travel, good or bad?

If any natives live there what are their main sports?

Lastly, how are the climate and commerce (if any) of this small land?"—CHARLES WEBER, Chicago, Ill.

Answer, by Mr. C. Brown, Jr.:—Pitcairn! A synonym for Adventure, Love, Tragedy, Happiness. After Sydney and Norfolk Island Britain's oldest colony in the southern hemisphere. An inspiration for Byron's poem, "The Island." A hiding-away place of enchantment for Fletcher Christian and his *Bounty* mutineers, good men driven mad by a tyrant. An isolated, mountainous South Sea island, two miles in length and hardly a mile in width, "truly a delightful land to live in" and dream away the remnants of a troubled life. And always Home for the great-great-grandchildren of the mutineers of the *Bounty*. Pitcairn!

When Fletcher Christian, who was a scion of an ancient and illustrious English family, and his fellow-mutineers fetched Pitcairn in 1790 it was uninhabited. Soon they learned they were not the first to dwell on it.

Stone axes, stone pillars and weird gods of the same material lay everywhere. Too, skeletons sprawled with pearl mussels beneath their heads. But one sign of life was seen, a species of land bird, a tiny tree creeper. Who these first inhabitants were and why they disappeared forevermore from this lonely island is another enigma of the South Pacific, as baffling and unsolvable as the mystery of the laughing stone gods of Easter Island.

But the mutiny of the *Bounty*. A Christian, a great-great-grandchild of Fletcher Christian, talked of it one night in far-away Tahiti while he and I sat taking the breeze on the deck of an island schooner.

"Fletcher Christian—he was the officer of the *Bounty*—was made so miserable by Captain Bligh that he almost committed suicide," he said slowly. "While he was pacing the deck, he heard a voice say, 'Take the ship!'"

"He turned about, but could see no one. Again he heard the voice whisper: 'Take the ship! Take the ship!' Then he saw one of the men, a Quintall, leaning out of the fo'c'sle. And in that way the mutiny started."

"But how did Christian come to settle on Pitcairn?" I wanted to know.

"After Bligh and several men were set adrift in the small boats, Christian had to get away from the English law," responded Christian. "The law did grab a few of the *Bounty* men later on up here in Tahiti.

"On the *Bounty* was a book about the voyage of H. M. S. sloop *Swallow* in the Pacific. Philip Carteret was in command of the *Swallow*. He visited Pitcairn in 1767, and named it after the midshipman that sighted it for the first time.

"Now Fletcher Christian, along with eight others, sailed the *Bounty* to Pitcairn. They took six Polynesian men and a dozen women from Tahiti. At Pitcairn they ran the *Bounty* ashore and burned her.

"Bligh and his men reached Australia in forty-four days. That's as much as I know about the mutiny."

Not until 1808 did the retreat of Fletcher Christian and his fellow-mutineers become known to the outside world. In that year a whaler, the *Topaz*, put into Pitcairn for water and fuel. Her captain was greeted in English by some boys in a canoe. He learned, to his intense surprise, that they were the half-caste sons of the mutineers.

Just one mutineer remained, Alexander Smith. He took, for a reason known only to himself, the name of John Adams. The fourteen men that landed on Pitcairn with him in 1790 were dead by 1800. With one exception they had come to a violent end.

By the middle of the 19th century Pitcairn became almost a regular place of call for American whalers cruising in the South Pacific. And in 1849, when the golden morning of California dawned, many vessels, all of them on the "rush" across the Pacific from Australia, came into contact with the island, where vegetables and other fresh provisions were taken on.

Pitcairn islanders tell one story of that period. Lying off the island was a vessel bound from San Francisco to Australia. A child fell overboard. George Adams, a son of the patriarch, sprang into the water and rescued the boy. The grateful father, who had found a fortune in the goldfields of California, pressed a bag of gold into Adams' hands. The islander refused it.

"Why," he said, "I have done nothing but my duty."

Because the numbers of these long-lost British subjects were growing too numerous for their little island, two attempts were made to carry them away for good. In 1831 the entire population, who had resigned themselves to the will of the British Government, were moved to Tahiti. But the climate did not suit them. In just a few months seventeen died from disease, so that in 1832 the islanders returned to Pitcairn.

Again, in 1856, the inhabitants, then 194, were all removed to Norfolk Island, which had been, until the removal of its convict population, the one-time "Hell of the Pacific." But soon some of them became homesick. A passing ship was persuaded to take two families back to Pitcairn in 1858, while others followed shortly after. Now the great-grandchildren of Fletcher Christian and his mutineers are divided between these two islands, more than three thousand miles apart.

Situated about twenty-five degrees south of the equator, Pitcairn has so perfect a climate that there are no extremes of temperature. Most islands of the tropics are subject to diseases. But not Pitcairn.

This island, of volcanic formation, has all the seeming of a range of mountains leaping up out of the warm, blue sea. Possessed of a rugged and precipitous coastline, the highest point attains fully to one thousand feet above the sands of the island shore. Paths run across the whole of the land, while on the north side the thatched roofs of Adamstown peek through flowers and foliage. In the thirty-three homes reign the love and peace that the long, quiet years have instilled in the hearts of Pitcairn—the very love and peace for which all the world at this moment is crying.

With very little exertion an abundance of food is grown. The principal crops are the sweet potato and the bulb taro. Root crops are water taro, yam, manioc, and arrowroot. Pumpkins, watermelons,

French-bean and cow-pea do well. Too, there are pineapple, passion fruit, custard apples, snow fruit, mango, alligator pears, breadfruit, nine different kinds of bananas and some of the finest oranges produced in the world.

Is this not "truly a delightful land to live in"? And doesn't Byron, in "The Island," sing:

Once more the happy shores without a law
Receive the outlaws whom they lately saw;
Nature, and Nature's goddess—woman—woos
To lands where, save their conscience, none
accuse,
*Where all partake the earth without dispute,
And bread itself is gathered as a fruit.*

Surely Pitcairn, sleeping so far out in the sunlight and blue of the South Pacific, is a Garden of Paradise for sick-o'-the-world people!

But for passing ships and the infrequent visits of British men-o'-war, there is no communication whatever with the outside world.

Pitcairn is under the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and is governed by an elective body of seven.

The islanders have adopted the tenets of belief held by the Seventh Day Adventists. Almost every one on Pitcairn speaks English as well as a patois derived from the language of the Tahitian women that were carried to the island by the mutineers.

Now, Mr. Man of City Pavements, of what are you thinking this moment? You would know something of the joyousness of that island and more about its settlers and the simple, kindly people that inhabit it today, would you? Then read the works that I shall list below.

These should be found in all well stocked public libraries:

"The Eventful History of the Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H. M. S. *Bounty*; Its Cause and Consequences," by John Barrow. Published by the Oxford University Press, 1914.

"Letters from Mr. Fletcher Christian, Containing a Narrative of the Transactions on Board H. M. S. *Bounty* Before and After the Mutiny," by Fletcher Christian.

"Pitcairn" (in "Three Voyages of a Naturalist") by M. J. Nicoll.

"Pitcairn" (in *Encyclopædia Britannica*).
"Report on Pitcairn Island," by R. T. Simons. London (Colonial Office), 1905.

"Mutiny of the *Bounty* and Story of Pitcairn Island, 1790-1894," by Rosalind Amelia Young.

Also, Jack London's beautiful story, "The Seed of McCoy," which will be found in his "South Sea Tales."

Mosquito Dope

HERE are some preparations that will make 'em run:

Question:—"Do you know of any preparation which can be used as a protection against mosquitoes? If so, please let me know.

I spend quite a good deal of my spare time in the woods, and mosquitoes bother me quite a bit.

I used a preparation some years ago, but can not find the formula for it now. No doubt you can tell me what I don't remember about it. This preparation contained oil of citronella, oil of cedar

and one other ingredient. I am pretty sure it was an oil of some kind.

If possible let me know the name of this oil and what proportions of each to use."—C. W. GUSTAFSON, Rochelle, Ill.

Answer, by Mr. Thompson:—The kind of mosquito dope I have found to be most effective is made of equal parts of pine tar, olive-oil, oil of cedar and oil of citronella. It has been used successfully from Alaska to Central America. "Nessmuk's famous 1-2-3" is also good: one ounce pennyroyal oil, two ounces castor oil, three ounces pine tar. Simmer together over a slow fire. Such mixtures are dirty but they do the work. Kephart's "elegant" preparation, to be used in civilization, is borated lanolin with enough oil of lavender to give it a pronounced odor; it must be genuine lavender, however, and not the artificial.

Our colorless dope is made by rendering mutton tallow and while it is still warm adding all the pulverized camphor it will take up.

"Ask Adventure" service costs you nothing whatever, but reply postage and self-addressed envelop.

The Sahara Caravan Trade

WRITING treatises of general educational value for the benefit of school-children is rather off the beaten track of this department, which was founded to supply outdoor men *only*, with outdoor information *only*. But apparently it's all in the day's work as far as Captain Giddings is concerned; and if he is willing to accommodate, we don't mind:

Question:—"I am a sixth-grade pupil in the Hackley School. We are studying about Africa, and I would like all the information you can give me about the Sahara Desert and the trails of the caravans."—EARL SHANEBERGER, Muskegon, Mich.

Answer, by Capt. Giddings:—The principal caravan routes through the Sahara are:

1. From Tripoli City to Sokoto and Kano, *via* Ghadames and Ghat.
2. From Tripoli City to the Sudan *via* Murzuk.
3. From Tripoli City to the Sudan *via* Socna and Murzuk.

Tripoli, formerly a vilayet of Turkey, but since 1912 under Italian rule, is called the "Gateway to the Sahara," and the caravan trade to and from the city through the desert is enormous. All goods are transported by baggage-camels—the Arabs call them "jamal." Ivory, ostrich feathers, gum arabic, cloth from the Kano Dye-Pits, rhino horns, leather, etc., are brought in great quantities from various parts of central Africa.

The Sahara interior is peopled by a very fierce tribe—or rather several tribes—called Tuaregs, who levy upon the caravans enormous taxes as tribute for safe conduct of the caravans through the desert. Nor does this always suffice; more times than are pleasant the caravans are raided, the

personnel killed or captured, and all goods and animals taken.

Notwithstanding this scourge, the caravan trade is a prosperous one.

Life in Olancho

TAKE along some garlic for insect-bites; and view the ruins of Olancho Viejo:

Question:—"I have noticed in *Adventure* that you are familiar with Spanish Honduras, Central America, and I am writing to ask if you will be so kind as to give me some information about the country.

A party of five of us will leave in about two months for the Patuca River. We have a concession from the Government of a strip of land along the river on which we have discovered gold in paying quantities. We expect to live out in the open but do not know what we will need to get along with.

I would appreciate it very much if you will write me as to what kind of arms and ammunition we will need, medicines, etc., what precautions to take in regard to mosquitoes, snakes, wild animals, etc., the attitude of the natives and in fact any information that will be of value to us.

I am enclosing stamped envelop and will certainly thank you for this information.—PERCY F. BLACK, Montgomery, Ala.

Answer, by Mr. Emerson:—The southeastern part of Honduras, including the Department of Olancho, may be generally described as follows: No exact survey of this department has (up to date) been made; but it is variously estimated to contain from twelve to fifteen thousand square miles, which is about the size of the State of Maryland, and (as you can see by consulting Rand-McNally's Pocket Map) is about one-fourth the total area of Honduras, and bounded on the south by the republic of Nicaragua.

Olancho has a population of about 45,000, half of whom are pure-blooded Indians and "breeds." The southeastern part is practically unexplored, even by the Indians, who have a superstitious dread of this section and always refer to it as "The Unknown Mountains" (Las Montañas Desconocidas), and there are said to be some very fertile tracts of land in this region.

Olancho is divided into five districts, *viz.*, Jutilcalpa, Catcamas, Alvarado, Manto and Yocon. The district of Jutilcalpa is the most important. The town of Jutilcalpa, its capital, has a population of between ten and fifteen thousand. The altitude at this point is approximately 1,200 feet above sea-level. It has several well-equipped stores which are owned by natives who trade for hides, coffee, rubber, sarsaparilla, cheese and also placer gold. The storekeepers take this barter stuff to Tegucigalpa, where they exchange or sell same. The inhabitants of this city are very proud of the fact that three of the Presidents of Honduras were born there.

Years ago the department of Olancho was noted for its cattle-raising industry, for at that place were raised the many heads to be exported to Guatemala, Cuba and Panama, and as a result much money came to Jutilcalpa from this source; but of late years owing to lack of modern methods of refrigeration and packing (and to the increasing desuetude of the race) this industry has gone into decline.

The historic volcano, El Boquerón, is located in the Candeleros and San Roque Mountains about twenty miles east of Juticalpa. At the foot of this mountain the ruins of an ancient city have been unearthed and many antiquities fashioned out of gold and silver have been found. These ruins were supposed to be of the ancient city called Olancho Viejo, which was destroyed by a slide of the mountain side in 1611. It is said or claimed that the survivors of this city founded the city of Jorge de Olancho in the department of Yoro. This range is known as Las Montañas del Rey, and beyond as the Culmi and Agalta Mountains.

A greater part of the country between Juticalpa and Catacamas (45 miles) is well wooded and covered in places with heavy underbrush. There are some one hundred varieties of hard and soft lumber woods in the forests of Olancho. One of the most peculiar trees is the Coyal, or Coyal, a somewhat similar palm to the Corozo. Both are a species of palm and when tapped yield a sap, which when allowed to ferment, in a trough cut in the body of the tree, closely resembles wine. This drink is called Coyal or Corozo wine (*vino de coyal o corozo*), and is greatly "appreciated" by the natives. A tree will yield about two bottles of this wine per day for a month. This highly stimulating liquid sells for 13 centavos per bottle.

The valley of Juticalpa extends as a level plain as far as Catacamas, but northeast of there becomes rougher and less fertile. From Culmi to the Pecuyo region many pine-trees are found. From Culmi to the Guampoo River is virgin forest where exists a great quantity of valuable hardwoods, some of them measuring six feet in diameter.

The village of Culmi is a settlement of Paya, or Poya, Indians. It is 36 miles northeast of Catacamas. Valuable hardwoods are found in this country extending from Pecuyo district to El Dorado in the Mosquitia.

The principal products of the districts of Olancho are as follows:

COFFEE, in Catacamas, Campamento, Agalta, and Gualaco.

SUGAR CANE in Jano, Guata, Yocon, El Rosario, La Union, Mangulile, and Jutiquire.

PALM FIBER in San Felipe (Junco palm fiber for making hats).

In the valley of Azacualpa and on the headwaters of the Cuyamel and Cana Brava rivers are found RUBBER and SUGAR CANE.

GOLD-WASHING is an important occupation in Olancho. This work is done principally by pure-blooded Indian women, using large wooden bowls about two feet in diameter and from four to five inches deep. A great number of these women one may see at work in the gold sands of the Guayape, Janan, and most of the creeks emptying into the Guayape from Concordia to El Plomo where the Guayape enters the Juticalpa Valley. These streams are fed by small blanket and stringer veins. The gold is sold to local buyers in Juticalpa for \$18.50 to \$19 per ounce (according to condition of cleanliness); it runs from 700 to 800 fine.

A large part of the Guayape is covered by Government grant. This includes the famous Murcielago bar, recently leased by a firm of California mining-men.

The distance is 36 miles from Juticalpa to Manto, 60 miles to Salama, 36 miles to Catacamas, 48 miles to Gualaco, 45 miles to Campamento, 24 miles to

San Francisco, 54 miles to Guata, also to Jano, 84 miles to Yocon, 90 miles to La Union, 69 to Rosario, 45 to Concordia, 90 to Manquilla, also to Guayape, 60 to Selca and 81 to San Esteben. The means of travel in Olancho are by mule, dugout, raft, and on foot.

RIVERS. The Patuca River rises at the base of the La Flor Mountain near the town of Orica; the upper part is called the Guayape. It runs in a large curve from east to west, passing through the department of Olancho and Mosquitia. Its mouth has two outlets—one which opens directly into the sea and another called Toom-toom Creek which empties into Caratasca Lagoon. It is the longest river that runs exclusively in Honduran territory, its length being 328 miles. It has numerous tributaries, few of which are large.

On the left it receives, in the upper half of its course, the following rivers: Juticalpa, Telica, Tinto, Cuyamel, Wasprassni and Guampu. On the right it receives: Janan and Guayambre, both rich in gold-bearing sands. Its banks are lined with rich forests. It is navigable for small boats from Ochoa, 12 miles south of Catacamas. It has an average depth of six inches to its confluence with the Guayambre, and from there a depth of from five to seven feet.

The most notable rapids are called "Portal del Inferno," and consist of a gigantic series of waterfalls where the river breaks through the mountains in its course to the sea. The Spanish name signifies "Hell Gate."

You probably already have the mining-laws of Honduras, but if not then let me know and I will give you all the help possible.

Always have some garlic along with you and squeeze some of the milk of it on to any bite that you may get from bugs, spiders and "100-legs." For mosquitoes use oil of citronella. By burning a powder (it is furnished in Panama district by the Gov't) in a closed room the mosquitoes die quickly.

You can buy ponchos of native make for about one dollar each, and they will shed water properly. Keep bowels open with salts. Hit the booze very sparingly if at all. As to guns, over .38 is forbidden by local law, and you can buy ammunition in any large town.

Drop me a line telling of your adventure; and, believe me, I wish you SUCCESS on your trip.

When you get something for nothing, don't make the other fellow pay the postage on it.

N. R. A. Krag

A GOOD buy if the actions are O. K. If you don't know what "N. R. A." stands for, see the last item on page 180:

Question—"Will you please answer the following questions about the Krag carbine as issued to members of the N. R. A. at a cost of \$3.50. These carbines have no rear sight or hand-guard.

What I want to know is this: If I get one of these carbines will I be likely to get one that is all worn out, and whose barrel is all rusted up and pitted inside? Are the Krag carbines a magazine gun? Do they load with a clip like the Springfield?

Where could I get a sporting stock for the carbine, either blank or finished ready to put on? About how much would they cost?

What length barrel does the carbine have? Also what is its weight? Does it handle all the Springfield cartridges cal. .30 1906?

Well I guess that I've asked you enough questions for a while anyway. If you will please try and answer the above I certainly will be much obliged to you.—WILLIAM C. RICHARDSON, JR., St. James School, Md.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—I think all the Krag carbines now on hand in the War Dept. depots are in poor shape as to the barrels, but the actions are all right. I would advise the purchase of one of these carbines, a new barrel at \$3.25, and a rear receiver sight; this will give you a sporting rifle second to none, in my opinion, for one who prefers the bolt action for hunting.

The Krags are all magazine rifles, holding five shots in the magazine, and an extra can be carried in the barrel, with the action locked for safety's sake.

No, no clip is used; you just pour the cartridges into the magazine when it is open.

You can secure a sporting stock for the carbine from Sportsmen's Service Station, Tenafly, N. J. I don't know the cost, but suppose about \$8-\$10 perhaps.

The carbine has a twenty-two-inch barrel.

It weighs about nine pounds.

The Krag handles the .30 Army or .30-40 ammunition, instead of the .30 '06 Springfield cartridges. With the standard load they are less powerful than the Springfield, but with some of the more modern loadings, with 150-grain Spitzer bullets, they have the same energy and velocity as the Springfield.

"Hour of the Monkey"

IN WHICH Charles Beadle, author, shakes hands with an "Ask Adventure" expert named Charles Beadle:

Question:—"A while back I came across a couple of phrases in your story 'Buried Gods,' and I would like to ask a few questions about them.

In places in your story you refer to a 'closed district.' What is meant by that?

Then in another part it says this party was up at the 'hour of the monkey.' Just what time is this?

What religion is practised mostly in this territory?"—CHARLES RUSSELL WHITEHOUSE, Cambridge, Mass.

Answer, by Mr. Beadle:—Always glad to clear up any vagueness. "Closed district" means a district closed to whites by the government as being unsafe on account of the natives.

"Hour of the monkey" is the equivalent in English of cock-crow or the crack of dawn, etc.; *i. e.*, when the monkeys begin to awake and chatter.

Usual religion is represented in such districts by a primitive form of animism—rivers, trees, etc., having spirits which are malignant. The white, being an unknown phenomenon, at first was looked upon as supernatural—a god, and therefore to be kept in the tribe, as his presence in itself was looked upon as being of very powerful magic. Yet obviously if he were loose he might be difficult to control. Therefore logically the best thing to do with your god was to keep him in a nice safe place. But the whole subject is very complicated.

On the enclosed list I have marked a few books which apply to the subject.



LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name if possible. All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal Star to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

LA PORTE, HARRY. Last heard of in 1907 or 1908, Lumberman, miner and adventurer. Believed to be in Mexico. Don't know if he's still living. Uncle if you see this write to your nephew.—Address R. H. SAVANA, care of Humble Oil Co., Box 188, Wilson, Okla.

STEWART, DONALD or **RUSSELL.** Brothers from Tombstone, Ariz. Ages between forty and fifty years. Would like to hear from you. Your cousin.—Address M. E. MANN, 1264 Ionis St., Los Angeles, Cal.

HALL, LAMAR, DR. Last known residence in Villa Hermosa, Tab., Mexico.—Address C. E. ATHEY, M. D., Apartado 1768, Mexico, D. F., Mexico.

RELATIVES of John Seabourn (Shebourne or Seabourne). Born in England 1863, died at Passavant Hospital, Chicago, Ill., Dec. 5th, 1921. He lived at my house one year up to the time of his death.—Address JAMES A. WARDE, 25 West Grand Ave., Chicago, Ill.

BOYTON, JOSEPH A. Reward for information. He left New York in 1875. Heard from at Atlanta, Ga., 1881, also from Helena, Montana, 1911. Supposed to be a traveling printer.—Address CAPT. PAUL BOYTON, Shespehead Bay, N. Y.

CLYDE C. of Texas write home, everything is straight—**MOTHER.**

STOCKER, ETHEL C. Please forgive me for being so mean to you when in Buffalo with brother. Paul wants you to forgive and forget the past and return to him. Please write. Sister Jessie.—Address Mrs. JESSIE MAHONEY, 107 Prospect Ave., N. W., Cleveland, Ohio.

HUSBAND. Where are you? Am very worried about you. My health is failing.—"PETE."

HALL, C. J. Conductor for mining co. Last known address Mimal, Arizona.—Address C. E. ATHEY, M. D., Apartado 1768, Mexico D. F. Mexico.

BILLY. R. E. S. wants you to write.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

EVERETT, E. Address wanted. Mining civil engineer and assayer. Last heard from at a mining town on Colorado River in Arizona; name of town forgotten but later was burned down entirely.—Address I. C., 8867, care of *Adventure*, New York, N. Y.

SEE, JOHN. Uncle. Last heard of at 12th or 21st St., New York.—Address L. PRICE, 47 Henson Ave., Mayfield, East New Castle, N. S. W., Australia.

IRVINE, THOMAS M. Plumber. Last heard of at 1574 Reid St., Collingwood West, South Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.—Address L. PRICE, 47 Henson Ave., Mayfield, East Newcastle, N. S. W., Australia.

BALDWIN, HARRY. Write your wife Mrs. H. H. Baldwin and send your address as she wants you to sign a deed so she can get the property straightened up. Please write through a lawyer.—Address Mrs. J. WARD, Sharon, Pa.

DE BRUYEKER, VALENTINO. Last heard of fifteen years ago in Buenos Aires, Argentine. Age forty years. Height five feet ten inches. Blue eyes, blond hair. Used to work around camps. Anybody knowing whereabouts of the above please notify his aged father and mother living with Miss ELODIE DE BRUYEKER, London Straat No. 3, Antwerp, Belgium.

THE following have been inquired for in either the April 20th or April 30th issues of *Adventure*. They can get the names of the inquirers from this magazine:

BLUM, ALBERT (Shorty); Brassel, John H.; Breffin, Jsgo (James Young); Burns, Harry; Carley, M. R.; Cawley, Charles; Cohen, Alf E.; Cross, Verde; Doyle, Mrs. Eddie; Donohew, Mrs. Gertrude; Haigh, Mason C.; Hicks, Marien; Kavanagh, John; Klein Blackie; Levine, (first name not known); Melius, Fred; Mittler, Edward J.; Moore, Bill; Nichols, Frank; Pelley, Wm. C. A.; Roy, John or Fruit, Wm.; Russell, Juel C.; Whitlatch, James Monroe; Winnie, George.

MISCELLANEOUS: Any one who saw the accident of the Harry Wright Amusement Co. Boat *Marion* a few miles below Helena, Ark., on the Mississippi River, April 26th, 1908. Bob; Boys of U. S. S. *Rondo*; Cal.; Dubs; Ex-Member of Battery A, 3rd Batt. Hannigan Joe; Mang., Freddy; Parlen, Pinky; McCarthy or any of the boys who worked for the S. P. U. at Camp Merritt, N. J. in Summer of 1919. Relatives of Eslick's or Pierce's who settled in Webster and Polk counties, Iowa about 1850; R. E. H.

A LIST of unclaimed manuscripts will be published in the January 10th and July 10th issues of *Adventure*, and a list of unclaimed mail will be published in the last issue of each month.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

MAY 20TH ISSUE

Besides the two complete novelettes and the opening instalment of the new serial, which are mentioned on the second contents page, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

TAKING OVER GETTISON

Drink-madness at an African trading-station.

Robert Simpson

JACK OF CLUBS

J. Wallpole Frost, Thespian, hits Alaska—"Frost" is right.

Ben F. Baker

THE CALABOOSE NOMINEE

Trail of a railroad bandit.

Russell A. Boggs

PAY GRAVEL A Four-Part Story Conclusion

A showdown with stage-robbers in the Black Hills.

Hugh Pendexter

CATNIP

Baiting a mountain feudist.

Hapsburg Liebe

TIME COMES

Tavern-inspired evil comes to friction on the high seas.

Bill Adams



Missing Page

Inside back cover

"I like 'em"



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